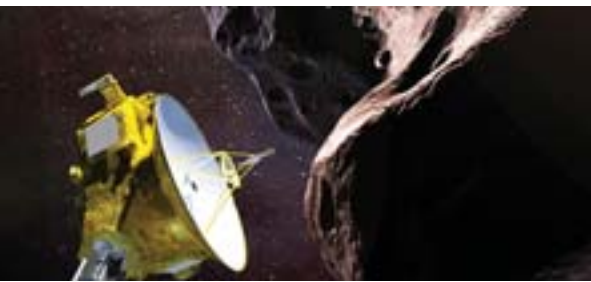




4 Call to stop shrimp imports at Doha Port amid shrimping ban



15 NASA succeeds in historic flyby of faraway world



22 Barbie will soon be 60: And is still going strong



28 FIFA should expand 2022 WCup to 48 teams if possible: Infantino



# Syria opposition outraged as regime cements comeback

## Efforts underway to bring Damascus back into Arab fold

**BEIRUT:** Almost eight years into Syria's devastating war, opponents of the regime are watching in dismay as President Bashar Al-Assad's government looks set to secure its comeback at home and abroad. Holed up in the last major rebel stronghold or unable to return home after fleeing abroad, they are frustrated to have been abandoned by the international community. "Today, I'm looking for a homeland," activist Shady Matar told AFP from exile in neighboring Turkey. "I can't go home while the regime is still in power," said the 27-year-old, whose hometown of Daraya near Damascus was retaken by the government in 2016. And "most countries whose governments say they support the Syrian people have closed their borders" to us, he said.

Sparked by the brutal repression of anti-Assad protests in 2011, the conflict has killed more than 360,000 people and displaced millions at home and abroad. But fighting has failed to topple Assad, endless diplomatic efforts have been unable to reach a peaceful transition, and the regime now appears stronger than ever. With backing from Russia and Iran, the government has expelled rebels and jihadists from large parts of Syria, and now controls almost two-thirds of the country. The government also looks set

to increase its influence in a large swathe of territory under Kurdish-led control, after the shock announcement last month of a US military pullout.

On the diplomatic front, efforts seem underway to bring the Damascus regime back into the Arab fold after years of frosty relations. The Arab League suspended Syria's membership in Nov 2011 as the death toll mounted and several regional powers bet on the demise of the Assad regime. But Sudan's president last month made the first visit by an Arab leader to Damascus since the start of the conflict. The United Arab Emirates last week reopened its embassy in the Syrian capital, and fellow Gulf state Bahrain has followed suit.

Bilal Bayush, a media activist in the last major rebel stronghold of Idlib, said he was not surprised. "Their interests with the opposition have ended, and they now have interests with the Assad regime," he said. Political opposition chief negotiator Nasr Al-Hariri was outraged. "While our people are dying of cold in refugee camps drowning in cold winter rain, some of our Arab brothers are racing to open up to the criminal who is responsible," he said last week on Twitter.

Continued on Page 24



DAYR BALLUT, Syria: A Syrian boy carries firewood as he returns to a camp for the displaced northwest of Aleppo province yesterday. — AFP

## Netflix drops satire episode critical of Saudi

**WASHINGTON:** Netflix has removed an episode of a satirical comedy show from its service in Saudi Arabia over its criticism of the kingdom, following a legal request by officials in Riyadh. In the episode of "Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj", the American-born Muslim lashed out at the kingdom after the October killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. He was also critical of the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen.

"We strongly support artistic freedom worldwide and removed this episode only in Saudi Arabia after we had

Continued on Page 24



Hasan Minhaj

## Romney in biting attack on Trump's character

**WASHINGTON:** Incoming Senator Mitt Romney has written a scathing op-ed targeting President Donald Trump, saying he "has not risen to the mantle of the office" and his actions have alienated America's allies. The barbed remarks from the 2012 Republican presidential candidate came as he and other lawmakers prepare to take up their seats in the new Congress. "With the nation so divided, resentful and angry, presidential leadership in qualities of character is indispensable," Romney wrote in the op-ed piece in The Washington Post on Tuesday. "And it is in this province where the incumbent's shortfall has been most glaring."

He added that Trump's actions had caused "dismay around the world" and alienated traditional allies in Europe. His comments seemed to suggest Romney is positioning himself to take over the role of Jeff Flake, a departing senator who was a vocal critic of Trump. The US leader responded the next morning in a relatively restrained tweet. "Here we go with Mitt Romney, but so fast! Question will be, is he a Flake? I hope not," he wrote. "Would much prefer that Mitt focus on Border Security and so many other things where he can be helpful. I won big, and he didn't. He should be happy for all Republicans. Be a TEAM player & WIN."

It is the latest twist in a relationship that has run hot and cold for years. Romney called presidential candidate Trump a fraud and a phony in 2016. But last year he thanked Trump for his endorsement as Romney ran for a senate seat from Utah. In the op-ed piece, Romney noted he had not supported Trump as the Republican Party's nominee in 2016. He said he had hoped the Trump campaign would refrain from



Donald Trump



Mitt Romney

name-calling and had not. He said he was initially encouraged when Trump brought into his cabinet steady-hand figures like James Mattis as defense secretary and John Kelly as chief of staff.

"But, on balance, his conduct over the past two years, particularly his actions

this month, is evidence that the president has not risen to the mantle of the office," Romney wrote. His comments even prompted suggestions online that he sounds like he is considering challenging Trump for the nomination in 2020.

Continued on Page 24

## Six dead in rail crash on Danish bridge; Amir expresses grief

**KNUDSHOVED, Denmark:** Six people were killed yesterday after debris apparently from a cargo train smashed into a passenger train in high winds on a bridge connecting two islands in Denmark, the

rail operator and officials said. The passenger train appeared to have struck an empty truck trailer that had blown off a cargo train travelling in the opposite direction, as strong winds lashed the region. The passenger train braked suddenly, survivors said. "An empty truck trailer on a carriage seems to have fallen off. It either hit the train, or the train hit it," accident investigator Bo Haaning told Danish public broadcaster DR.

He said it was too early to know why or how the trailer fell off. "All I can say is that there is a trailer missing on the

Continued on Page 24



NYBORG, Denmark: Men work at the accident site next to a passenger train standing on the rails after a railway accident yesterday. — AFP

## Indian father, son battle for textile empire

**NEW DELHI:** Vijaypat Singhanian thought he was keeping his billion-dollar Indian textile empire in the family when he gifted control of the Raymond Group to his son Gautam three years ago. But their relationship has disintegrated spectacularly since, with the father accusing the son of cheating him out of an exclusive apartment and of unceremoniously kicking him out of the company offices. Vijaypat now bitterly regrets his decision, which he claims was made because of "emotional blackmail", marking the latest in a long line of high-profile family feuds to scar corporate India.

The 80-year-old transformed a small textile business into a household name

Continued on Page 24



Vijaypat Singhanian



Gautam Singhanian

## Clashes after women enter Indian temple

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, India:** Protests and violence erupted in southern India yesterday after two women defied traditionalists to enter one of Hinduism's holiest temples for the first time since a landmark court ruling. Police fired tear gas, stun grenades and water

cannon as protests and clashes between rival groups erupted across the southern state of Kerala, local media reported, with several officers injured. The Supreme Court in September overturned a centuries-old ban on women of menstruating age - deemed as those between 10 and 50 - setting foot inside the gold-plated Sabarimala temple.

In recent weeks Hindu traditionalists - backed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - have prevented attempts by women to access the hilltop site, with some

Continued on Page 24



SABARIMALA, Kerala: An Indian priest closes the doors of the Ayyappa shrine at the Sabarimala temple after performing "purification" rituals following the entry of two women yesterday. — AFP



# Crown Prince meets state officials at Bayan Palace

Amir expresses grief over building collapse in Russia



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Crown Prince also met Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, in addition to Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. His

Highness the Crown Prince's meeting spree also included an encounter with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of condolences to Russian President Vladimir Putin over victims of a collapsed building in

Magnitogorsk in Russia. In the cable, His Highness the Amir extended his condolences over the tragic accident that resulted in the death of tens of people, and wished the injured speedy recovery. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Russian President. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khedhr received at his office yesterday the Defense Attache at the Australian Embassy in Saudi Arabia Colonel Brad Robertson on the occasion of the end of his tenure. Lt Gen Khedhr expressed gratitude to Col Robertson for his efforts and wished him the best in his future endeavors, the Defense Ministry's Moral Guidance Department said in a press release.

## Kuwait seeks more services for pilgrims

KUWAIT: Kuwait has signed a number of agreements with Saudi Arabia to facilitate services for the pilgrims and increase their numbers, the Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Undersecretary said on Tuesday. Farid Amadi, in a statement upon his return from the kingdom, said an agreement was inked with the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umra to set the number of the Kuwaiti pilgrims and work out some arrangements for the upcoming rituals. Amadi, who was accompanied by a delegation from the awqaf ministry, said another accord was signed with Arab pilgrims' escorts for additional services at the sacred sites and erect state-of-art tents for the faithful. A third one was inked to facilitate pilgrims' arrival in the kingdom and speed up their transfer to their residences in Holy Makkah. Moreover, the Kuwaiti delegation has requested increasing the number of the pilgrims to be allowed to perform the services, adding more services, allowing the devotees to arrive via Taif airport and bedoons (stateless) to perform hajj and umra. The ministry is keen on enabling the largest possible number of the devotees to perform the pilgrimage, Amadi has affirmed. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait Louis-Pierre Emond visited Kuwait Times yesterday and discussed matters of mutual concern with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of the Republic of Guyana to Kuwait Professor Dr Shamir Ally and Dr Maryann Beebe Ally presented a memento to the Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan during their visit to Kuwait Times yesterday, in which they also discussed matters of mutual concern. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Kuwait denounces Manchester railway stabbing attacks

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait strongly condemned on Tuesday the stabbing attacks that took place at Manchester Victoria railway station shortly ahead of the New Year's Eve celebrations. This criminal act which led to serious injuries to three people reflects a serious tendency to violence and terrorism, which requires concerted efforts by all countries, an official of Kuwait's Foreign Ministry said this evening. The State of Kuwait stands by the friendly United Kingdom in its efforts to protect its security and stability, the official said, wishing the wounded a quick recovery. — KUNA

## Kuwait delivers 124 housing units to Gaza

GAZA: Kuwait has delivered some 124 residential units to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as part of efforts to reconstruct a central village, the Palestinian ministry of public works said. Six housing complexes comprised of 124 units financed by Kuwait have been opened, all of which will go to Palestinian families whose lives have been upended as a result of the 2014 Gaza war, the Palestinian Minister of Public Works and Housing Mufeed Al-Hussainiya noted. The project is part of a Kuwaiti grant worth \$200 million to fund reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip, \$75 million of which will be allocated for the housing sector, he added. He went on to urge the international community to ratchet up support for the Palestinians, highlighting the enormity of the task to rebuild Gaza. — KUNA



## Local

# Woman killed, man injured in SUV-truck accident

## Two citizens hurt in second car-truck crash



KUWAIT: A sports utility vehicle crashed into a truck in an accident reported on the Seventh Ring Road.



A vehicle crashed into the rear of a truck in an accident reported on King Fahd Highway.



ATVs impounded during inspection campaigns in Khairan and Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City.



A fireman battles a blaze reported in a shopping mall in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A woman was instantly killed and a male citizen was injured when their sports utility vehicle (SUV) collided into a truck along Seventh Ring Road. Rescuers were dispatched to the scene to release the couple from the wreckage, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the accident.

In a separate accident, two citizens were injured when a driver lost control over his vehicle and it collided into the rear of a truck along King Fahd Highway, said security sources, noting that KFSD rescue forces had to be dispatched to the scene where they used hydraulic gear to disentangle the two vehicles. The injured persons were sent to hospital for treatment.



### No injuries in three reported fires

#### 80 ATVs impounded

The Interior Ministry's relations and security media department said Ahmadi security forces impounded 80 all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) during inspection campaigns in Khairan and Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City for violating traffic rules, using them on highways and disturbing residents in residential areas, which is a violation of Cabinet resolution number 900/2009.

The Interior Ministry's relations and security media

department said Ahmadi security forces impounded

80 all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) during inspection

campaigns in Khairan and Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City

for violating traffic rules, using them on highways

and disturbing residents in residential areas, which

is a violation of Cabinet resolution number 900/2009.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.

The fire was controlled

without any casualties.



Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharraz

## 23 fake disability documents relayed to public prosecution

KUWAIT: Twenty-three cases of fake disability documents were relayed to the public prosecution, said Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharraz yesterday. In a press release, the minister indicated that a number of employees at the Public Authority of the Disabled were referred to the public prosecution for their involvement in forgery of disability documents for individuals so that they would benefit from privileges given to this sector of society. Discrepancies were found during the process of digitizing and archiving documents, resulting in the outing of the perpetrators and the discovery of the violations, said the minister. Minister Kharraz affirmed that the authority will work with other state entities on making sure that public wealth would be protected and that finances given unlawfully to the perpetrators would return to their rightful owners. —KUNA

## Minister reforms supreme committee for treatment overseas

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah issued resolution number 351/2018 pertaining reforming the supreme committee for treatment overseas by adding two more specialties in otolaryngology and orthopedic surgery. According to the resolution, only two of the previous members were included in the new committee.



Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah

#### Airport traffic

Traffic at Kuwait Airport's Terminal 4 (T4) increased by 7-10 percent on Jan 1, 2019, a Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) official said, stressing that all flights were on schedule and without any delays despite serving 334 departing and arriving flights carrying 47,436 passengers. DGCA's engineering department

manager Saleh Al-Fedaghi also noted that a duty free shop will soon open in T4 after DGCA signed 12 contracts for a duty free shop, stores, restaurants and money-changers. He noted that 10 more contracts will be signed soon.

#### Housing charter

The grace period given by the director of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare Bader Al-Waqayyan to Mutlaa and South Abdullah Al-Mubarak residents to swap or waive their allotted houses ended at the beginning of the year and a new charter took effect to include all future projects. In this regard, informed sources said that the new charter aims at regulating the housing process and provide citizens with housing welfare without bidding or profiteering, as practiced by some applicants. The sources added that the new charter suspended blueprint swapping until the house is actually built and handed over.

#### Bonus payment

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) provided the Interior Ministry with a list of Kuwaiti employees needed in various civilian positions, well-informed sources said. The sources also noted that the CSC made a final decision on linking the payment of excellent performance bonuses to performance assessment reports including employees' commitment to the fingerprint systems, adding that in addition to this penalty, employees of different ranks would be excluded from promotions and scholarships unless they respect the system regularly.

## Speaker reveals agenda for next parliament session

KUWAIT: Constitutional Court proceedings over parliamentary rules will be part of the Kuwaiti parliament's agenda for its next session on January 8, chief lawmaker

Marzuouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday. The second round of voting over a law dealing with early retirement and legislation on the exchange of credit information are among issues that will be addressed in the forthcoming session, Al-Ghanem said in a statement. Lawmakers are also scheduled to discuss His Highness the Amir's address to parliament, in addition to what Ghanem said was a dearth of legislation over major issues affecting citizens. Kuwait's constitutional court has declared some parliamentary procedures unconstitutional, prompting major debate over an overhaul of parliamentary rules. —KUNA



The National Assembly.

## Over 1,000 C-suite, Director Vacancies on Bayt.com

DUBAI: Bayt.com revealed that over 1,100 jobs for C-suite talent (i.e. Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Marketing officer) and top executives such as General Managers and VPs have been advertised on the site so far in 2018. Many more CV Searchers were conducted for similar positions as well. With over 50 percent of the online labor force being registered on jobsite Bayt.com, companies are able to find and hire more top management talent.

Hiring top management talent is traditionally a challenging task for companies and organizations as it requires extensive vetting and a longer search process. Nonetheless, the growing use of online hiring tools to



Omar Tahboub

recruit the top chain of management can reduce time-to-hire. Currently on Bayt.com, there are close to five million job seekers with over 10 years of professional experience. Additionally there are nearly a million with "Director" or "Head" job titles, nearly 170,000 with "Senior Executive" job titles, and close to 60,000 with C-suite job titles.

Over 40,000 companies use Bayt.com for recruitment, many of which are hunting for top level executives either by making public job postings, by searching through the CV database and contacting prospects, or by utilizing Source2Hire; an assisted search service that provides a shortlist of verified, qualified, interested, and available candidates.

Omar Tahboub, General Manager of Bayt.com says: "Online recruitment makes it far easier and far more cost-effective for businesses, organizations, and governments to find their top management and senior executives. One in two people who are part of the online labor force are already on Bayt.com. This makes our database the largest and most comprehensive in the MENA region."

Bayt.com is now offering a dedicated executive level job search interface, a tailored recommended job feature for top career levels, and a bi-weekly newsletter for senior professionals with first look on top management jobs in the region; latest industry news and research; and the most recent tech updates that support senior job seekers and professionals.



## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A flock of Socotra cormorant birds flying over a flock of flamingos at Sulalikhath beach. — Photo by Ghazi Qafaf (KUNA)

# Fishermen call for banning fresh shrimp imports at Doha Port

‘A day will come when local shrimp will disappear’

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The seven-month ban on shrimping in Kuwaiti waters began from Jan 1, 2019. The ban also prevents Kuwaiti trawlers from shrimping in international waters and the delivery of shrimps during this period, which ends on July 31, 2019. The decision, a copy of which was obtained by Kuwait Times, however allows the import of fresh and frozen shrimps by air and via Shuwaikh Port.



Thaher Al- Suwayyan

President of the Kuwaiti Fishermen Union Thaher Al-Suwayyan told Kuwait Times that Doha Port should ban fresh shrimp from neighboring countries “Challenges are many and the profession is unappealing. A day will come when local shrimp will disappear,” he warned, calling on concerned authorities to tighten supervision and close Doha Port completely to imported

fresh shrimp. He added the fishermen’s union extends a helping hand to government authorities, mainly the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).

Suwayyan praised the efforts of the fisheries sector, hoping that the ban will be sufficient for PAAAFR to study a new mechanism for shrimping in Kuwaiti territorial

waters, pointing out that Kuwait this year lost hundreds of tons of local shrimp harvested from territorial waters. He hoped that the ban will be implemented in cooperation with neighboring countries and that supervision will be tightened so as not to sell fresh shrimp exported from



## Shrimping ban in Kuwait underway

neighboring countries that are presumed to be bound by the ban, according to agreements.

Suwayyan praised the efforts of customs officers, who from time to time seize tons of foul fish before it enters the country and is sold in the markets, stressing the need to hold accountable anyone trying to manipulate public health. As for the challenges facing the fishermen, he highlighted the lack of a fishing village and a special zone where all services are available, along with the need to increase support to fisheries in the same way as other sectors. He urged concerned authorities to support the fishing sector and resolve its problems “before it is too late.”



KUWAIT: Local shrimp catch displayed at Sharq's fish market in these file photos. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat





# Three domestic helpers rewarded for their dedication, loyalty in Kuwait

‘I stay because they treat me not as a housemaid, but part of the family’



KUWAIT: Zenaida Ramos thanks FILCRO officers for the award. — Photos by Ben Garcia



Cathy Hadcan (third from left) poses with her award along with embassy officials and FILCRO officers.



Aisha Husain (third from left) poses with her award along with embassy officials and FILCRO officers.



The three awardees pose with FILCRO President Maripol Abdullah (far right), FILCRO Vice President Tina Barrios (second left), and reporters during the ceremony.

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Filipino Clients Relations Officers (FILCRO) recently awarded three Filipina domestic helpers for dedication and loyalty to their work, their contribution to uplifting their families' lives and for helping the Philippines' economy. The awards were given during a Christmas party organized by FILCRO at Holiday Inn in Salmiya. "They deserve to be recognized for their hard work, dedication and commitment to their sworn duty. They were able to demonstrate perseverance and loyalty too and showed the world that not all stories of our fellow workers in Kuwait are sad," said FILCRO President Maripol Abdullah.

"Two of the awardees have remained at their sponsors' houses for almost 30 years and they deserve recognition. This is how we thank them for their hard work. One of them received 50,000 pesos (around KD 300) as a reward. We also consider the kind of service rendered and how they were able to make a positive impact on their families," she stressed.

## 28 years

Aisha Husain started working as a domestic helper when clearing operations were being conducted after the 1990-1991 Gulf War by members of the coalition forces in Kuwait. Aisha, who hails from Basilan in the Philippines, was 13 when she entered Kuwait. Her employer had no idea of her real age since she was wearing a hijab and her face didn't reveal her real age. "This was probably because I started working in my childhood - I was already helping my mother at the age of seven," she said.

"My only dream was to help my mother and my family," Aisha said. Her passport was altered so she could be allowed to enter Kuwait. She worked and stayed at her first employer for a year and requested a transfer as she felt exhausted. "Their house was really big with eight family members. I was the only housemaid at that time, so I asked for a transfer, and they allowed it," she recalled.

When she arrived in Kuwait, she didn't know what to do, with no training and no family to lean on. But her guiding principle was to take her family out of poverty. "Why did I stay this long? Because they treated me not as a housemaid but part of the family," she said. "My employers never raised their voice against me when I committed mistakes. I was really touched by this gesture. They even warned the kids of consequences if I were disrespected," she recalled.

When her employer needed another helper, Aisha's brother joined her at her sponsor's house as a houseboy. "My brother worked as a gardener and took care of the hard labor at the house of my employer. He stayed with me in the same house for six years. He left after he got married," she said. Even though he left Kuwait many years ago, he still gets a KD 30 monthly allowance to help his family. "My boss told him it is the reward for the work done," she said.

His brother also got a rickshaw from his boss in Kuwait. After his brother's departure, she recommended hiring the brother of her sister-in-law. "From 2009 till now, he is with the family of my employer. In 2008, I also brought my mother from our place in Basilan - she is now with me working as a cook in the same house. Our driver is also our relative and has been working with our boss for 12 years now," she said.

Aisha noted that her employer trusts her so much that she even withdraws cash from her employer's ATM. "My Indian colleague has also worked with my boss for over

40 years and is still with them. She never attempted to leave the house and look for another opportunity because she is also very contented with the way we are being treated. My employer's house is really heaven for us. I want to thank our sponsor for this treatment," she said.

In 2015, Aisha decided to marry her longtime boyfriend in Manila. But the marriage did not last long and they separated, leaving her lonely and brokenhearted. She then requested her boss to take her back again, so in 2016, she returned to Kuwait. During her employment, she has visited London, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Cairo, Tehran and several cities of Saudi Arabia with her boss. She is a proud domestic helper as she enjoys weekly days off, a free telephone and recharge provided by her employer and air tickets back home.

## 15 years

Cathy Hadcan has been working as a domestic helper for a Kuwaiti family for more than 15 years. "Since I arrived here as a housemaid, they have never changed. Their attitude is kind and I didn't get any reason to leave them," she told Kuwait Times. "What I need is a monthly salary for my family back home and good treatment - that's it," she said. Her employer had three more Filipina housemaids. "I was hired as a nanny to take care of their small kids," she noted. "When the kids grew up, some of my colleagues left for good to get married. But I was already married, so I decided to stay," she recalled.

Like other OFWs, Cathy decided to go abroad to look for a better future for her three kids. She hails from Cagayan Valley in Luzon but got married to a man from Capiz in Visayas. Her husband takes care of their children - 20, 14 and 12 years old. "My husband

is doing everything. I have a day off but I don't go out often because it is very expensive out there," she said.

One of many acts of kindness Cathy got from her employer was during the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan. "When Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines, one of the provinces devastated was our place in Capiz. My boss immediately sent a large amount of money so we could rebuild our destroyed house. I thought it was a loan, but my boss told me he doesn't want to be repaid. I was really touched and I cried. I am really grateful," she said. Cathy has traveled with her employers outside Kuwait. "Almost every other year they take me with them to other countries," she said.

## 28 years

Zenaida Ramos started working as a domestic helper at the age of 24. She came to Kuwait in 1991, two months after the liberation. Since then, she never transferred to any other sponsor. "They are kindhearted employers. I have never had any problem with them. I brought my sister here to work along with me but she had to cut short her stay because she got married. She stayed for six years. They treat me as one of their children, so in return I respect them as my parents," she said.

At 52, Zenaida is still single. She had a boyfriend but the man couldn't wait and got married, leaving her heartbroken. "It was the most painful and devastating event in my life that took a lot of courage before I finally moved on," she said. Zenaida said she is winding down her stay in Kuwait. "Maybe in a year or two I will finally leave Kuwait to attend to my personal life back home. I want to run my own business and I have the money to start it now," she said. During her job as a housemaid, she has travelled around the world, including to London, US, Lebanon, Dubai and many more places.

## Two remained at sponsors' houses for 28 years



• Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**

• Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**

• Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

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





Brazil leader Bolsonaro targets crime and left-wing ‘ideology’

## Tears as Japan emperor gives last New Year speech



BEIJING: A banner is reflected on a polished surface as China's President Xi Jinping (C) speaks during an event to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan at the Great Hall of the People. — AFP

# Taiwan reunification is ‘inevitable’: Xi

## ‘We make no promise to give up the use of military force’

**BEIJING:** Taiwan's unification with the mainland is “inevitable” President Xi Jinping said yesterday, warning against any efforts to promote the island's independence and saying China would not renounce the option of using military force to bring it into the fold. Xi's comments provoked a swift rebuke from Taipei, where President Tsai Ing-wen said Taiwan's people would never willingly give up the kind of democratic freedoms unseen on the mainland.

China still sees democratic Taiwan as part of its territory to be reunified, despite the two sides being ruled separately since the end of a civil war in 1949. “China must and will be united... which is an inevitable requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people in the new era,” Xi said in a speech commemorating the 40th anniversary of a message sent to Taiwan in 1979, in which Beijing called for unification and an end to military confrontation. “We make no promise to give up the use of military force and reserve the option of taking all necessary means” against Taiwanese separatist activities and “outside forces” that interfere with reunification, he said.

In his speech, Xi described unification under a “one

country, two systems” approach that would “safeguard the interests and well-being of Taiwanese compatriots”. Taiwan considers itself a sovereign state, with its own currency, political and judicial systems, but has never declared formal independence from the mainland.

**‘Suspicion’**

Relations have been strained since the 2016 election of President Tsai, who has refused to acknowledge Beijing's stance that the island is part of “one China”. “Democratic values are cherished by the Taiwanese people, it's their way of life,” Tsai told reporters in a press conference arranged in response to Xi's speech.

She also accused Beijing of provocations that strained people's “emotional connection” to the mainland such as “buying off” Taiwan's few diplomatic allies and increased military drills near the island. Taiwan's foreign ministry released a terser response. “If the Chinese government cannot treat its own people kindly, cannot guarantee human rights and will not let its own people vote... then Taiwanese will look at China's intent with suspicion,” it said. Though Xi's speech takes a strong stance against Taiwanese separatists and pushes

for reunification, it is aimed mostly at domestic audiences, analysts say.

“It's rather empty and doesn't have any new points except that cross-strait unification would not affect the interests of other countries,” said Fan Shih-ping, political analyst at National Taiwan Normal University, adding that Xi's words may also be intended for the US. In 2018, the US sent multiple ships through the Taiwan Strait — which China considers its territory but the US and others see as international waters open to all — infuriating Beijing.

Washington remains Taipei's most powerful unofficial ally and its main arms supplier despite switching diplomatic recognition to Beijing in 1979. Xi's speech is likely to be “very poorly received,” by the US, said Jean-Pierre Cabestan, a professor at Hong Kong Baptist University, who studies Chinese foreign policy.

**‘One country, two systems’**

To accommodate differences in Taiwan's political system and civil society, China has proposed adopting the “one country, two systems” policy, which was implemented in Hong Kong after the British handed the

city back to China in 1997. But some say the erosion of civil liberties in Hong Kong sets a negative precedent for Taiwan. “They (China) are gobbling up Hong Kong, not just politically but culturally and economically too”, Claudia Mo, a pro-democracy Hong Kong lawmaker, told AFP. “It's so obvious that they're trying to assimilate Hong Kong into wider mainland China in every way. How would any Taiwanese think that's going to work for them?”

Last October, tens of thousands of Taiwan independence campaigners took to the streets in the first large-scale protest calling for an outright independence vote since the island first became a democracy more than 20 years ago. But some in Taiwan say worsening relations with Beijing have harmed business, as cuts to pensions and a reduction in public holidays compound frustrations over a stagnant economy where salaries have not kept up with the rise in cost of living. Last year, President Tsai's ruling Democratic Progressive Party suffered a massive defeat in mid-term polls, causing Tsai to resign as party leader, while the main opposition Kuomintang, which oversaw an unprecedented thaw with Beijing before Tsai took office in 2016, made gains. — AFP

## More bodies pulled from rubble of gas explosion

**MOSCOW:** Rescuers hunted for survivors yesterday in the rubble of a Russian apartment building wrecked by a New Year's Eve gas explosion, but found only bodies as the number of confirmed dead rose to 21. Twenty people were still missing following the explosion, which destroyed 35 high-rise apartments in the Ural mountains city of Magnitogorsk.

Braving temperatures that fell as low as minus 27 degrees Celsius (minus 16 degrees Fahrenheit), rescue workers were combing through mangled concrete and metal. Their efforts were given a boost on Tuesday when a 10-month-old baby boy was found alive and reunited with his mother. But hope was starting to fade of finding many more survivors. The emergency situations ministry said in a statement that as of 2:30 pm Moscow time (1130 GMT) the bodies of 21 people, including two children, had been recovered from the partly collapsed building. Six people, including two children, had been rescued.

“Work is continuing to find another 20 people” still missing, the ministry said, noting that 800 square metres of debris — loaded into 50 dump trucks — had been cleared from the site in the last 24 hours. The explosion, believed to have been caused by a gas leak, tore through the 10-storey building in the industrial town nearly 1,700 kilometres (1,050 miles) east of Moscow, in the early hours of Monday. Witnesses described a “wave of fire” and said the blast was strong enough to shatter windows in nearby buildings. The Soviet-era apartment block was home to about 1,100 people and the explosion left dozens homeless over the New Year — the biggest holiday of the year in Russia.

**‘New Year's miracle’**

Tuesday's recovery of the infant offered a rare moment of hope, with officials describing his rescue as a “New Year's miracle”. The boy was found in his cradle after rescuers heard him crying from under the rubble. He was brought to his mother, who had survived the blast, and then flown to Moscow for treatment.

Russian television showed footage of the boy lying in



MAGNITOGORSK: This handout still image shows a rescuer carrying a 11-month-old child said to have been found alive, after a gas explosion rocked a residential building in Russia's Urals city of Magnitogorsk. —AFP

a hospital bed watched by his tearful mother. Medical officials in Moscow said he was in serious but stable condition after suffering from severe frostbite, a head injury and multiple fractures. Residents left homeless by the explosion were being housed in a nearby school and helped by a team of psychologists.

Yesterday was a day of mourning in the region, with flags lowered and entertainment events cancelled, in a country where New Year's celebrations are an annual highlight. Mourners laid flowers and lit candles near the site of the building. “We are all grieving,” a middle-aged man told Rossiya 24 television. “Nearly everyone in the city knew someone” caught up in the accident, he said.

Investigators have said there is no reason to suspect foul play. Rumors have swirled on social media of a possible terror link, especially after a minibus explosion on

Tuesday that killed three people. “No traces of explosives or their components have been found” at the scene, the federal Investigative Committee said in a statement. Local authorities have said the minibus explosion was the result of leaking gas tanks and that there was no link between the two blasts.

Gas explosions are relatively common in Russia, where much of the infrastructure dates back to the Soviet era and safety requirements are often ignored. Investigative Committee chief Alexander Bastrykin told Russian television that gas equipment in the Magnitogorsk building had not been checked for more than six months prior to the explosion. Located in the mineral-rich southern Urals, Magnitogorsk, with a population of more than 400,000, is home to one of Russia's largest steel producers. —AFP

## Hariri warns Lebanon must form govt after months of deadlock

**BEIRUT:** Lebanon's prime minister-designate, Saad Hariri, warned Tuesday a government needs to be formed as the country faces a tough economic situation after months of political deadlock. “We have fallen behind — we must form the government”, he told reporters at the presidential palace, after a long meeting with President Michel Aoun.

“The president and I are determined to meet again and finish this issue, because the country cannot continue without a government,” Hariri said. He called for political factions in the multi-confessional country to cooperate on reviving the political process. Lebanon is governed by a complex system that guarantees a delicate balance between religious communities and their political parties, so decisions are made by consensus, making for protracted bargaining.

The country's parliamentary elections in May were the first for nine years but lawmakers have since failed to form a government. In mid-November, Hariri accused his main political rival — the Shiite movement Hezbollah — of obstructing the formation of a new cabinet. A month later, he promised that Lebanon would have a government “by the end of the year”. The slow process has worried observers, as the economy is teetering on the brink of disaster, hit hard by the fallout from the conflict that has ravaged neighboring Syria since 2011.

“The economic situation is difficult, but this is not to say it is impossible,” Hariri said Tuesday. The international community pledged up to \$11.5 billion (10 billion euros) in aid and loans for Lebanon at a conference in Paris in April. But the promised funding is largely destined for infrastructure projects, which cannot be actioned without a new cabinet. — AFP



## International

## Tears as Japan emperor gives last New Year speech to record crowd

154,800 people had flocked to the royal residence

TOKYO: Japan's Emperor Akihito delivered his final New Year's address yesterday before his abdication later this year, telling a record turnout of well-wishers that he was praying for peace. The Imperial Palace provisionally said some 154,800 people had flocked to the royal residence for a final chance to see the 85-year-old royal deliver his traditional annual greeting.

It was the largest number of visitors to the palace for his New Year speech since he ascended to the throne in 1989. The emperor appeared seven times at the balcony — up from five originally scheduled — as he “strongly” wanted more people to attend after seeing the vast number of well-wishers still gathered outside the palace in the afternoon, a palace spokesman said. He will become the first Japanese monarch to abdicate in around two centuries when he steps down from the throne on April 30, ending his three-decade reign.

“Happy New Year. I'm sincerely glad to celebrate the new year together with you under the clear sky,” he told the crowd, many waving Japanese flags and shouting “Banzai”, meaning “long live”. “I hope this year will be a good year for as many people as possible,” the soft-spoken Akihito said in a dark suit, flanked by Empress Michiko and other family members. “I pray for the peace and happiness of the people of our country and the world,” he added.

Some in the morning crowd yelled “Thank you very much” as the emperor waved, while others sang the national anthem. One woman in the front row shed tears as she looked up at the balcony. “I came here with my mother to imprint his last appearance as emperor in our memories,” said Yume Nishimura, a university student, as she waited in a long queue to enter the palace. “I want to tell him we appreciate his

hard work for the country,” she told AFP. Kazuo Iwasaki, a 68-year-old pensioner, said: “I hope he will be able to spend his post-retirement years in a healthy and relaxing manner with Empress Michiko.”

## Pacifist views

Akihito shocked the country in 2016 when he signaled his desire to take a back seat, citing his age and health problems. His eldest son, Crown Prince Naruhito, is set to take the Chrysanthemum Throne a day after his father's abdication, continuing the rule of the world's oldest imperial family. The status of the emperor is sensitive in Japan given its 20th-century history of war waged in the name of Akihito's father Hirohito, who died in 1989.

Akihito has keenly embraced the more modern role as a symbol of the state — imposed after World War II ended. Previous emperors including his father had been treated as semi-divine. The palace, surrounded by stone walls and mossy moats, is opened to the public twice a year — on the emperor's birthday and the second day of New Year — for the royal family to greet well-wishers. In a rare emotional address to mark his 85th birthday last month, Akihito pointed to the “countless lives” lost in the war.

“It gives me deep comfort that the Heisei Era (his reign) is coming to an end, free of war in Japan,” he said in a press statement. Akihito has used his speeches and travels to express his strong pacifist views, which are sharply at odds with the aggressive expansionism Japan pursued under his father's rule. The emperor has also worked to bring the royal household closer to the people and frequently visited the disadvantaged and families hit by natural disasters. —AFP



TOKYO: Japan's Emperor Akihito (4th L), Empress Michiko (5th L) and members of the royal family extend New Year's greetings to well-wishers at the Imperial Palace. —AFP

## Trump keen on meeting with Kim Jong Un again

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump is looking forward to another summit with Kim Jong Un, he said Tuesday, after the North Korean leader warned Pyongyang could change its approach to nuclear talks if Washington persists with sanctions. “I also look forward to meeting with Chairman Kim who realizes so well that North Korea possesses great economic potential!” Trump said in a brief tweet.

The two leaders made global headlines with an unprecedented summit in Singapore in June, where they signed a vaguely-worded pledge on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. But progress has since stalled with the two sides disagreeing over what the declaration means, and the pace of US-North Korean negotiations has slowed, with meetings and visits cancelled at short notice.

The North is demanding relief from the multiple sanctions imposed on it over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, and has condemned US insistence on its nuclear disarmament as “gangster-like.” Speculation of a second Trump-Kim summit has ebbed and flowed, with the US president saying that he hoped it would take place early this year. But a proposed visit by Kim to Seoul before the end of December did not materialize.

## 'Practical actions'

Culminating in late 2017, the North has carried out six atomic blasts and launched rockets capable of reaching the entire US mainland, but has now carried out no such tests for more than a year. In his New Year speech Kim called for the sanctions to be eased, saying

that the North had declared “we would neither make and test nuclear weapons any longer nor use and proliferate them,” and urged the US to take “corresponding practical actions.”

If Washington instead continues with the measures, he added, “we may be compelled to find a new way for defending the sovereignty of the country and the supreme interests of the state.” He was willing to meet Trump at any time, he said. Kim's remarks were “apparently designed to revive the momentum of the negotiations,” South Korea's centrist Hankook Ilbo newspaper said in an editorial yesterday. But he was also “signaling that he would never be pushed around”, it added.

Joshua Pollack of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies tweeted that Kim was insisting “the onus is now on the US to deliver”. “The bottom line: Kim remains dug into the same positions on nuclear diplomacy he has occupied over the last six months,” he added.

Kim delivered his speech sitting in a leather armchair in a book-lined office with a patterned blue carpet, presented as being at the headquarters of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea. Large paintings of Kim's predecessors, his father Kim Jong Il and grandfather Kim Il Sung, looked on and a white phone lay on the side table next to Kim's chair. It was a marked departure from previous New Year speeches — always a key moment in the North Korean political calendar — which Kim has usually delivered much more formally, standing at a podium.

One thing that was different from past speeches by the North Korean leader was that it was “a relaxed, indoor setting, with him sitting in a comfortable chair rather than standing and speaking in a huge square,” the Korea Times said. “It seems North Korea was once again trying to establish a new identity as a normal country on the global stage and distance itself from the image of the impoverished authoritarian state that the rest of the world associates it with.”



SINGAPORE: In this file photo taken on June 12, 2018 US President Donald Trump (R) gestures as he meets with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un (L) at the start of their historic US-North Korea summit, at the Capella Hotel on Sentosa island. —AFP

## Southern comfort

Kim dedicated most of his 30-minute speech to calls to shore up the nation's moribund economy and curb chronic power shortage — a goal impossible to achieve without lifting of the sanctions. South Korea — a key US ally in Asia and the North's capitalist neighbor — praised Kim's speech, calling it a reaffirmation of Pyongyang's commitment to denuclearisation.

Seoul and Washington have at times pursued divergent approaches to the Pyongyang, with the South pushing cross-border co-operation projects, including connecting railways and roads across the heavily-fortified border and upgrading the North's tattered infrastructure. But such plans also require some of the sanctions to be lifted. The South's dovish President Moon Jae-in, who played a role of peace broker between the two mercurial leaders, met Kim three times last year — twice at the border truce village of Panmunjom and once in Pyongyang. Kim sent Moon a message on Sunday, vowing to meet him “frequently” to discuss denuclearisation. —AFP

## British teacher who arrived in Pakistan with the Raj dies

ISLAMABAD: A former British officer who arrived in Pakistan with the Raj and stayed to become one of its most famous educators, with students including Prime Minister Imran Khan, has died in Lahore aged 101, officials said yesterday. Major Geoffrey Douglas Langlands was posted to the Indian army during World War II. After independence in 1947 he volunteered to stay on a while longer to help train the new Pakistani military. But his brief posting turned into more than seven decades in Pakistan, during which he left the army to become one of the country's most revered teachers.

He was briefly kidnapped in the tribal areas, spent decades building a school in the mountainous northwest, and for years taught future Pakistani presidents and prime ministers including Khan at the prestigious Aitchison College — known as the Eton of Pakistan — in Lahore. Profiled repeatedly in the British press, which documented among other things his daily breakfast of porridge, a poached egg and two cups of Lipton's tea, he finally retired in northwestern Chitral in 2012 at the age of 94.

“Aitchison College mourns the passing of Major Geoffrey Douglas Langlands, who left us quietly yesterday after a brief illness,” the institution announced on its official website. “Born on October 21, 1917 and affectionately known to all as ‘The Major’, we acknowledge the life of a soldier, teacher, gentleman, story-teller, mountaineer and humanitarian whose life was devoted in service to others and especially his adopted country Pakistan,” the college said.

Langlands, who in his lifetime was awarded two of Pakistan's highest civilian awards, told Britain's Telegraph newspaper in 2012 of his experience being kidnapped while working as the principal of a cadet college in the Waziristan tribal district near the Afghan border. He said the militants made him walk for hours through the mountains in winter to their village. “The military could not assault the village because we would have been killed, so they got a party of elders to approach the kidnappers. They said, ‘Look, you can't kidnap the principal.’ So they agreed to release me,” he said. —AFP

## Bangladesh arrests journalist over his election reporting

DHAKA: A Bangladeshi journalist was arrested and another was on the run yesterday for publishing “false information” about voting irregularities in an election won by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, police said. Hedayet Hossain Mollah, who works for the Dhaka Tribune newspaper, was detained late Tuesday under a controversial digital security law which rights groups say gives authorities broad powers to stifle dissent.

Mollah was arrested in the southern Khulna region after he reported that in one constituency 22,419 more ballots than the number of registered voters were cast, local police chief Mahbubur Rahman said. “The actual votes cast were only 80 percent of the total votes,” Rahman told AFP, adding that Mollah was accused of “providing false information in an effort to make the election look questionable”.

If convicted Mollah could face up to 14 years in jail under a draconian anti-press law that was toughened by Hasina last year. The police chief said another journalist was wanted for questioning after a local government administrator filed a case against the two under the controversial law. Hasina, 71, is accused of creeping authoritarianism, including muzzling the media and jailing prominent journalists such as Shahidul Alam, an award winning photographer, who spent four months in prison recently. —AFP

## India's flashpoint temple: Background on the verdict

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Two women in their 40s defied traditionalists yesterday to enter the Sabarimala temple, one of Hinduism's holiest sites, sparking violent clashes in southern India. It was the first time that women aged between 10 and 50 entered the site in the southern state of Kerala since India's Supreme Court overturned a ban in September. Here follows some background on the temple and the landmark verdict.

## Gold-plated

The gold-plated Sabarimala Sree Dharma Sastha Temple complex sits atop a 3,000-foot hill in a forested tiger reserve. It contains a shrine to Lord Ayyappa, believed to have been the Earth-born son of two of Hinduism's three main gods, Vishnu (in his female avatar) and Shiva. Legend has it that Ayyappa was found abandoned as a baby. A king of the Pandalam dynasty, which is still active in temple operations, found and raised him. At 12 Ayyappa revealed his divinity when he emerged from the forest riding a tigress. The boy fired an arrow which landed at the site where the temple now stands.

## No sex or shaving

Those wishing to visit undergo a 41-day period of introspection and detachment known as vratha abstaining from sex, meat, intoxicants and even shaving. After this period many devotees, wearing ritual bead necklaces, walk barefoot for dozens of kilometers including, and especially, the final steep climb. Only those who have observed the vratha and carry the irrumude, a symbolic offering, can enter the main courtyard up 18 divine golden steps. The sacred offerings, tied in a cloth usually carried on the head or shoulders, include coconuts, rose water, rice and pepper.



SABARIMALA: In this file photo taken on October 18, 2018 Indian Hindu devotees are pictured at the Lord Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala in the southern state of Kerala. —AFP

## Marriage proposal

Legend says that the goddess Malikapurathamma asked Ayyappa to marry her. He said he would only do so if first-time devotees decide not to visit him — which has never happened. Worshipers celebrate a festival each year when a procession of the goddess is taken to a spot close to the temple three times — and she is forced to wait. The reason for Ayyappa's refusal is because of his celibacy — one of the arguments against allowing women of menstruating age to enter. The ban lifted by the Supreme Court also rested on the belief — not exclusive to Hinduism — that menstruating women are impure. Women can however access most other Hindu temples in India. Their entry at Sabarimala was taboo for generations and formalized by the Kerala High Court in 1991.

## Legal wrangling

The Supreme Court order is opposed by supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). It was one of a string of recent decisions to have eaten away at some of India's traditions, including outlawing bans on gay sex and adultery last year. The BJP is not in power in Kerala. Instead the state is run by a coalition of left-wing parties which have said they will enforce the court ruling. But efforts by women to enter the temple in recent months have been angrily rebuffed by Hindu devotees, with police having to step in to escort the women away to safety. In October, devotees clashed with police who arrested more than 2,000 people. On Tuesday, tens of thousands of women formed a human chain across Kerala to back the demand for access to the temple. —AFP



## International

# Tear gas fired as migrants try illegal crossing into US

## New Year's Eve celebrations mired by another border clash

**TIJUANA:** US Border Patrol agents used tear gas and pepper spray to counter rock-throwing migrants when a group of about 150 tried to illegally cross the border from Mexico, leading to 25 arrests, the agency said on Tuesday. It is the second time since November that border officers have used tear gas during an attempted mass migrant crossing in the San Diego area.

The migrants in the latest case New Year's Eve were among 1,500 who have remained in Tijuana, Mexico, just south of San Diego, California, after a once-5,000-strong caravan of travelers — which raised the ire of President Donald Trump — largely gave up and dispersed. An AFP journalist reported the crowd size at about 100 and observed the group of Central Americans gathering around 8:00 pm Monday night (0400 GMT Tuesday) in an area called Playas de Tijuana on the Pacific coast, often used by migrants as a departure point for attempts to sneak across the border. There, the border is marked with fencing and a large vertical plate that juts out into the water. On the other side of it, US border agents were seen mobilizing.

As night fell and people on both sides of the frontier prepared to celebrate New Year's Eve, the migrants tried to cross over but at least two smoke bombs were fired and they were ultimately held back. Those who tried to cross included adult men, women with small children and adolescents. After that attempt, part of the group stayed near the border and other Central Americans arrived to join them. Shortly after the New Year began, dozens of migrants stood on a hill from which they could see US border agents, who watched them closely.

When people in this group rushed the border in a second incident, US authorities fired tear gas to disperse them, an AFP photographer observed. In a statement, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

said an initial group of 45 migrants turned back towards Mexico, due to the increased presence of Border Patrol agents. Shortly after, migrants began throwing rocks over the fence at CBP officers.

"Several teenagers, wrapped in heavy jackets, blankets and rubber mats were put over the concertina wire. Border Patrol agents witnessed members of the group attempt to lift toddler-sized children up and over the concertina wire and having difficulty accomplishing the task in a safe manner," CBP said. It added that agents could not assist the children "due to the large number of rocks being thrown at them."

### 'Minimum force'

Agents used smoke, pepper spray and tear gas "to address the rock throwers assaulting agents and risking the safety of migrants attempting to cross who were already on the US side," CBP said. "The rock throwers were located south of the fence, in an elevated position both above the border fence area and the incursion attempt."

Most of the migrants returned to Mexico using a hole under the fence or by climbing over it, CBP said, adding 25 people including two teenage migrants were detained. Agents "used the minimum force necessary," Katie Waldman, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, said in a statement. In late November, also in the Tijuana area, US border officers used tear gas and rubber bullets when about 500 men, women and children scrambled over a rusted metal fence and surged into a concrete riverbed before they encountered a second fence.

Rights groups raised questions over the use of force, in which at least one man was wounded. CBP said 42 people were arrested on the US side. The migrants in both cases were part of a caravan that



**TIJUANA:** A Central American migrant jumps over the US-Mexico border fence from Tijuana, Mexico, into the US (L) on January 1, 2019, as seen from Tijuana. —AFP

left Central America in October and traveled 4,300 kilometers to Tijuana in the hope of reaching the US and requesting asylum. Many were fleeing gang violence and poverty. They arrived in Tijuana in early November and today about 1,500 still remain. The rest asked to be transported back home or dispersed to other parts of Mexico.

Trump used the caravan to stir up fear of immigrants as he pressed his drive to build a wall on the border. He has also made it harder for people to request asylum at the frontier. An impasse with legislators over funding for his border wall project is behind a partial shutdown of US government services which is now in its second week. —AFP

## UK forced marriage victims charged repatriation costs

**LONDON:** Britain is charging young women rescued from forced marriages abroad for the cost of their repatriation, The Times newspaper revealed yesterday. Four British women who were liberated from a punishment institution in Somalia were each charged £740 (\$940, 820 euros), the daily said. Victims are told they have to fund their flight back to Britain, basic food and shelter costs, it reported.

Those who are aged over 18 and cannot pay have to sign emergency loan agreements with the Foreign Office. The ministry helped bring back 55 forced marriage victims in 2016 and 27 in 2017. The four young women who were found in a "correctional school" in Somalia had been sent to the religious institution by their families, and reported being chained to the walls and whipped with hosepipes.

Some had their legs shackled, spent days locked in a small box, were burned with hot sticks and forced to sit in their own urine unless they accepted a forced marriage, The Times said. The Foreign Office and the Home Office interior ministry run the Forced Marriage Unit and from 2009 to 2017, the FMU has given advice or support to nearly 12,800 people. Marriages without consent, or their refusal, have led to suicides and so-called honor killings in Britain, with several cases coming to national prominence.

Since 2014, forced marriage has been a crime in Britain carrying a maximum seven-year prison sentence. In the past two years, the Foreign Office has lent £7,765 to at least eight forced marriage victims who could not pay for their repatriation. Around £3,000 has been repaid, although debts of more than £4,500 are outstanding. A 10-percent surcharge is added if an emergency loan is not repaid within six months.

"Given these are from public funds, we have an obligation to recover the money," a Foreign Office spokesman said. "The FMU provides funding for safe houses and non-governmental organizations to ensure victims of forced marriage can get a place of safety as soon as possible. "We do not charge British nationals for this service and work with organizations to support them on their return." However, news of the compulsory charges has prompted criticism in Britain. Tom Tugendhat, the Conservative chairman of a parliamentary committee that monitors the work of the Foreign Office, called it "astonishing", and vowed to scrutinize the policy. —AFP

## Far-right rise would give conservatives majority in Spain: Poll

**MADRID:** Spain's far-right party Vox would enter parliament with 43-45 seats if an election was held yesterday, giving conservative parties an absolute majority, a poll showed yesterday. The poll comes amid rising speculation that Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will call a snap general election this year. His ruling Socialist Party would be unable to stay in power, even though it came in first place with 22.6 percent of the vote, down from 26.3 percent in July, according to the survey published in El Mundo.

That would give it just 92-96 seats in 350-member parliament. Even if it joined forces with far-left party Podemos and tiny Catalan and Basque nationalist parties it would not be able to form a majority. Sanchez came to power in June after a surprise no-confidence vote against his conservative predecessor with the support of these parties but this coalition would now only have a maximum of 167 seats, according to the poll conducted by Sigma Dos. His government is struggling to approve a draft budget for 2019, sparking expectations of a snap national election in 2019. Vox, which clinched a surprise 12 seats in a regional election in Andalusia last month, would capture 13 percent of the vote.

### Opposition to migrant surge

The last Sigma Dos survey carried out in July did not give Vox enough support to win seats in parliament. In the survey published Wednesday the conservative Popular Party (PP) was second with 19.2 percent support while centre-right Ciudadanos was third at 18.8 percent. If the PP, Ciudadanos and Vox joined forces

## Congo curbs French radio station RFI in tension vote

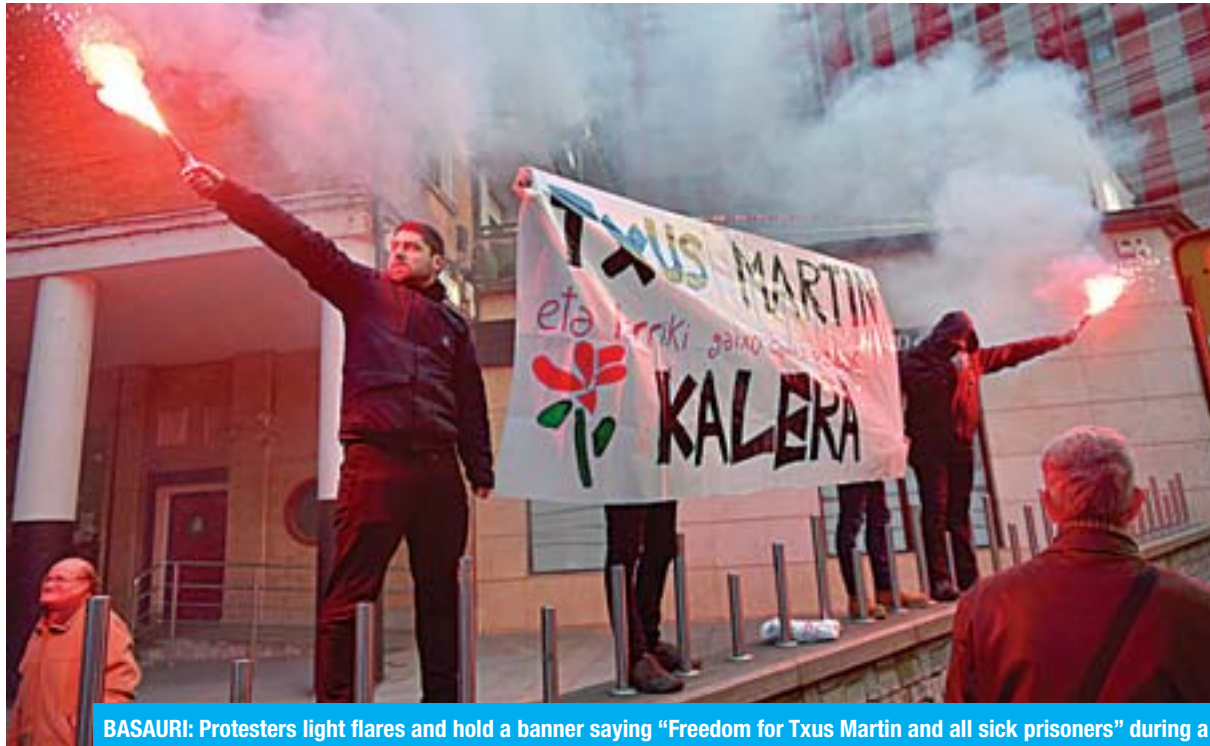
**KINSHASA:** DR Congo yesterday said it had pulled accreditation for a French radio journalist and cut off the station's broadcasts amid tensions over the counting of votes in crucial elections. The authorities said accreditation for the Radio France Internationale (RFI) correspondent in Kinshasa, Florence Morice, had been withdrawn. Government spokesman Lambert Mende accused Morice of violating electoral law and "the code of good conduct for foreign journalists covering the elections".

Accusing the station of stirring controversy, he said, "RFI's broadcasts have been cut off in all of Congo's cities." "We are not going to let a radio station throw petrol on the flames at a time when we are waiting for the compilation of the provisional results," Mende said. RFI, a

French public-service broadcaster, has a very large audience in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a French-speaking country of around 80 million people. It has been closely covering Sunday's presidential elections and the marathon vote tally. RFI issued a statement saying its coverage had been impartial and expressing full support for Morice.

She had been "merely working as a professional journalist," it said, and urged the authorities to reverse their decision to withdraw her accreditation. On Tuesday, RFI said that its broadcasts had been blocked since Monday evening.

The elections will determine who succeeds President Joseph Kabila, at the helm of sub-Saharan Africa's biggest country for nearly 18 years. Kabila refused to step down after his two-term constitutional limit ended in 2016, sparking protests that were quelled at the cost of scores of lives. Among the DRC's opposition, suspicions run deep that the vote will be rigged to let his preferred successor, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, be declared winner. —AFP



**BASAURI:** Protesters light flares and hold a banner saying "Freedom for Txus Martin and all sick prisoners" during a demonstration demanding the release of prisoners affiliated to the Basque separatist group ETA. —AFP

they would have an absolute majority in parliament of as much as 189 seats.

The telephone poll of 1,000 eligible voters was carried out December 21-27. It is the first survey of voting intentions to be published this year. Vox's performance in Andalusia last month was the first time that a far-right party has won representation in a Spanish regional parliament since the country returned to democracy following the death of longtime dictator Francisco Franco in 1975.

The party, formed in late 2013 and led by former PP member Santiago Abascal, was energized by its tough opposition to Sanchez's handling of Catalonia's separatist push and a surge in the arrival of migrants. The PP and Ciudadanos reached an agreement last week to form a government in Andalusia, and are now negotiating to get the support of Vox, setting up the end of 36 years of Socialist rule in Spain's most populous region. The three parties have a majority in the regional parliament of Andalusia. —AFP



**BUKAVU:** Independent National Election Commission (CENI) workers load a truck with voting materials that will be distributed from the CENI warehouse to various polling stations. —AFP

## Australia's move to strip IS suspect of citizenship in doubt

**SYDNEY:** Australia's decision to strip a suspected Islamic State fighter of citizenship was thrown into doubt yesterday, after it emerged he was not a dual citizen as once believed. Neil Prakash is accused of being a mem-

ber of the jihadist group, and was named late last month as the 12th Australian dual-national to lose their passport over terrorism links. But authorities in Fiji told local media that Prakash was not in fact a Fijian as Australian authorities believed, prompting questions about the legality of the Australian government's move.

Australian law allows citizenship to be revoked only if that person is a dual citizen. Prakash — a suspected senior recruiter for IS who has been linked to terror plots to kill Australians — is currently facing charges in Turkey of joining the organization. Fiji's Immigration Department director, Nemani Vuniwaqa told the Fiji Sun that "Neil Prakash has not been or is a Fijian citizen. He

was born in Australia and has acquired Australian Citizenship since birth." He is thought to be eligible for Fijian citizenship through his parents, but "he has not entered the country nor applied for citizenship," Vuniwaqa was quoted as saying.

The revelation was embarrassing for Australian home affairs minister Peter Dutton, who was accused of incompetence by the opposition Labor Party. "At a minimum he needs to fulfill the basic responsibilities of his job and talk to the Fijian Government to get the facts, something he should have done before chasing headlines," the Labor Party said in a statement. Dutton indicated that the decision to revoke Prakash's citizenship still stood and

was taken in consultation with "several government departments"

"The Government has been in close contact with the Government of Fiji since Mr Prakash was determined to have lost his citizenship," Dutton said. "Australia will continue our close cooperation with Fiji on this issue and the many other areas of mutual interest," he said in a statement. But the decision now appears certain to face further legal scrutiny, with debate centering on whether eligibility to hold another passport is enough to revoke Australian citizenship. Australia is also a party to a decades-old UN convention on stateless persons. —AFP



## International

# Brazil leader Bolsonaro targets crime and leftwing 'ideology'

## 'Brazil will return to be a country free of ideological bonds'

**BRASÍLIA:** Brazil's new far-right President Jair Bolsonaro declared a crusade against crime, corruption and leftwing ideology as he took office Tuesday for a four-year term at the helm of Latin America's biggest nation. In his first public speech wearing the presidential sash, Bolsonaro said Brazil will "start to free itself of socialism" and "political correctness," breaking with policies brought in under decades of leftist rule. The 63-year-old former paratrooper and veteran lawmaker received swift congratulations via Twitter from US President Donald Trump, with whom he shares a similar, brash style and outlook.

"Congratulations to President @jairbolsonaro who just made a great inauguration speech - the USA is with you!" Trump wrote. Bolsonaro responded by saying: "I truly appreciate your words of encouragement. Together, under God's protection, we shall bring prosperity and progress to our people!" In his inauguration speech before Brazil's Congress, Bolsonaro called for "a true national pact" to restore his country's lackluster economy, "without ideological bias."

While Bolsonaro enjoys sky-high approval ratings, many in Brazil fear his nostalgia for the military dictatorship that reigned from 1964 to 1985, his hardline approach to fighting crime and his record of disparaging women and minorities could herald a harsh shake-up. Even before being sworn in, Bolsonaro tweeted he would issue a decree easing gun laws to let "good" citizens own firearms to counter armed criminals — a measure opposed by 61 percent of Brazilians, according to a Datafolha survey. His promise to extend immunity to security forces who use lethal force against suspected wrongdoers has also sparked unease in a country where some 5,000 people a year are already killed by police.

### Embracing US, Israel

In his speech to Congress, Bolsonaro repeatedly hammered leftwing "ideology" that he said had brought Brazil low. His past remarks made it clear he was referring to policies implemented by the Workers Party, which governed

between 2003 and 2016 but ended up reviled for a string of corruption scandals. Brazil "will return to be a country free of ideological bonds," he said.

He later told a crowd of supporters in front of the presidential palace: "We will re-establish order." Bolsonaro has already said he will do all he can to challenge the leftist governments of Venezuela and Cuba. In a sign of his leanings and alliances, Bolsonaro warmly welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Brazil for his inauguration, and both leaders spoke of their "brotherhood."

Netanyahu said Bolsonaro had assured him Brazil's embassy will be moved to Jerusalem. Bolsonaro also admires Trump, with whom he shares nationalist instincts and a disdain of multilateral organizations. He has vowed to pull Brazil out of a UN global migration pact, and is considering doing the same with the Paris climate accord. The new leader's open hostility to the left prompted leftwing deputies to spurn his investiture.

Bolsonaro took over the presidency from a center-right figure, Michel Temer, who succeeded the Workers Party Dilma Rousseff — impeached in 2016 — but who made little headway with needed fiscal reforms. Temer, Brazil's most unpopular leader ever, faces a number of corruption accusation on leaving office. Bolsonaro supporters hope their man will do better, politically and economically. He has promised to govern for all of the country's 210 million Brazilians, though his initial declaration suggests it will be on his terms, as he seeks to remake the country around his agenda.

### 'Change'

While his government, which takes over today, features a US-trained free market advocate as economy minister, and a star anti-corruption judge as justice minister, nearly a third of the 22 ministerial posts are held by ex-military men. There are also concerns for Brazil's extensive and diverse natural environment, with Bolsonaro's pro-business push

his inauguration, unfolded his nation's green and yellow flag in Brasilia and proclaimed: "This is our flag, which will never be red." Like Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru have all swung to the right in recent years, unseating leftist governments.

Maduro paid tribute to the "heroic Cuban people" in a tweet, lauding their "resistance and dignity" in the face of "60 years of sacrifices, struggles and blockade." Another surviving leftist leader, Bolivia's Evo Morales, said Cuba's revolution gave birth to "the light of hope and invincible will for the liberation of the people." The streets of Santiago were adorned with flags and posters. In one, a vigorous Fidel raises a rifle next to Raul, with the legend "60 years of victories."

Diaz-Canel wasn't even born when Fidel Castro declared victory for his revolution on January 1, 1959. US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista had fled the country earlier that day, opening the way for Castro to install a one-party communist system. Today Cuba remains one of only a handful of communist states left in the world, and has been under a US economic embargo since 1962. Last week, a defiant Diaz-Canel wrote on Twitter: "The Cuban revolution is invincible, it grows, it lasts." But not everyone is convinced.

Dissident Vladimiro Roca, whose father Blas Roca served as a high-ranking official under Fidel Castro, insists that "the revolution died a long time ago." Abroad, Cuba's government has faced heavy criticism for its authoritarian nature, intolerance of opposition and persecution of detractors. Vladimiro Roca was jailed from 1997 to 2002 for his protests. And while US-Cuba relations thawed under Obama, the Caribbean island of 11 million people has had to contend with an increasingly hostile administration under Trump these last two years. Change is coming, though.

In February, the communist regime is to submit to referendum a new constitution that will officially recognize private property, markets and foreign investment. However, the document also ratifies communism as the nation's "social goal," insists the country will "never" return to capitalism, and defines the Communist Party as by nature, single, and the "supreme political force of state and society."



**BRASILIA:** The presidential convoy, led by Brazil's new President Jair Bolsonaro (C-L) and his wife Michelle Bolsonaro (C-R), heads towards Planalto Palace to receive the Presidential sash during his inauguration ceremony. —AFP

sidelining preservation — especially in the Amazon, sometimes called "the lungs of the planet," which is at risk from increasing deforestation.

Bolsonaro, meanwhile, has said his education ministry will stop "Marxist trash" being taught in schools and universities — another swipe at the Workers Party, which greatly boosted access to education for the poor and blacks. Tens of thousands of people attended Bolsonaro's inauguration ceremony in Brasilia, which was held under tight security

that included warplane patrols, anti-drone technology and multiple crowd barriers.

Precautions were more stringent than in years past, in part because Bolsonaro survived a stabbing attack by a mentally unstable man when he was campaigning for the presidency in September. "This inauguration is a turning point," said one in the crowd, 36-year-old teacher Mauro Penna. "We are very optimistic — this time our country is going to change." —AFP

## Cuba: 60 years of revolution amid challenges and change

**SANTIAGO DE CUBA:** Cuba, long a source of inspiration for leftist Latin American governments, celebrated the 60th anniversary of its revolution on Tuesday facing increasing isolation in a region dominated by a resurgent right. Ex-president Raul Castro lashed out at what he called a return by the United States government to "confrontation with Cuba" after restoration of diplomatic ties and a friendlier tone under the former administration of Barack Obama.

"Now, once again the US government seems to take the course of confrontation with Cuba and to present our peaceful and supportive country as a threat to the region," said Castro, first secretary of the Communist Party. He gave his address at the grave in Santiago de Cuba of his brother Fidel Castro, Cuba's revolutionary leader who died in 2016.

"Increasingly, senior officials of the (Donald Trump) administration, with the complicity of some lackeys, disseminate new falsehoods and once again seek to blame Cuba for all the ills of the region," he added in the presence of President Miguel Diaz-Canel, 58, the first president since 1976 who is not a Castro. Diaz-Canel took over in April as president from Raul Castro, who retains the top party post and called in his speech for living side-by-side with the US "in a mutually beneficial relationship of peace and respect." It is the first such anniversary of the post-Castro era, and coincided with the inauguration in Brazil of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, whose recent election victory is one of several for right-wing governments across the region.

Bolsonaro, who had made a point of not inviting Diaz-Canel and Venezuela's Socialist leader Nicolas Maduro to



**SANTIAGO DE CUBA:** People are pictured near a poster of Cuban late leader Fidel Castro (R) on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Communist Revolution. —AFP

### 'A new cycle'

Economic changes are on the way as well. One deal, between Major League Baseball in the US and the Cuban Baseball Federation, will allow the island's top talents to sign multi-million dollar agreements with MLB clubs. "For sure, a new cycle is being opened. This cycle is continuity and change," academic Arturo Lopez-Levy, from Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota, told AFP. That's not the view of Jorge Duany, director of the Cuban Research Institute at Florida International

University. "For now, it looks like Castrism without a Castro" in power, he said. Russia and China remain allies, but neither has shown willingness to subsidize the country's economy in the way the former Soviet Union did for 30 years. Diaz-Canel has repeatedly said that the "most important battle is the economy," which has grown barely one percent in recent years, not enough to support its population. The president and his team are left "with the challenge of applying a contradictory policy," said Lopez-Levy. —AFP

To see your ad here, call: **+965 248 35 616 / 617**  
E MAIL: [info@kuwaittimes.net](mailto:info@kuwaittimes.net)  
[ads@kuwaittimes.net](mailto:ads@kuwaittimes.net)  
Website: [www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)

**HAPPY NEW DEALS**

SHARP ES-T1275A-R  
9 kg WASHER  
59,890 KD  
30% SAVE

SHARP ES-MM95Z-H  
7.5 kg WASHER  
69,790 KD  
10% SAVE

SHARP ES-FE710BZ-W  
7 kg WASHER  
79,119 KD  
39% SAVE

SHARP ES-MM125Z-S  
10 kg WASHER  
89,109 KD  
20% SAVE

**best** **بست**  
AL-YOUSIFI

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

**1 809 809**  
[www.best.com.kw](http://www.best.com.kw)

Best Alyousifi | @BestAlYousifi | BestAlYousifi | alyousofiBEST







THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2019

**12** Kuwait's non-oil growth seen at 3% in 2019; fiscal position solid



**13** Macron govt on tenterhooks as new tax regime takes effect



**14** UAE growth to rise as non-oil sector gathers momentum



SEOUL: South Korea's Financial Services Commission chairman Choi Jong-ku (3rd right) holds onto a bull during a ceremony celebrating the South Korea stock market's first trading session of the year at the Korea Exchange in Seoul yesterday. — AFP

# Global stocks open 2019 on a downbeat note

## Data from China to France confirm fears of economic slowdown

**LONDON:** World shares began 2019 on a downbeat note, bond yields skidded lower and the Japanese yen strengthened yesterday as data from China to France confirmed investors' fears of a global economic slowdown.

The US S&P500 and Dow Jones index futures slipped around one percent and Nasdaq futures fell 2 percent, signaling Wall Street would open in the red on the first trading day of the New Year after closing 2018 with the worst annual loss since 2008. Weak manufacturing-activity surveys across Asia were followed by disappointing numbers in the euro zone, sending MSCI's index of world shares 0.4 percent lower.

China in particular was in focus, after factory activity contracted for the first time in over two years. The gloom continued in Europe, where the Purchasing Managers' Index for the eurozone reached its lowest since February 2016. Future output PMIs were at a six-year low.

The data suggests there will be no respite for equities or commodities after the 2018 losses. A pan-European share index recovered some losses to stand 0.6 percent lower. The Paris bourse led losses with a 1.4

percent fall, as France's PMI fell in December for the first time in two years.

"It's a continuation of the worries over growth. You can see them in the Asian numbers, which all confirm that we have passed peak growth levels," said Tim Graf, chief macro strategist at State Street Global Advisors. The knock-on effects from China's slowdown and global trade tensions were rippling across Asia and Europe, he said.

"I don't think the trade story goes away, and Europe, being an open economy, is still vulnerable," Graf added. Copper, a key gauge of world growth sentiment, fell to 3 1/2-month lows, while Brent crude futures lost almost 1 percent after shedding 19.5 percent last year.

Commodity currencies' losses were led by the Australian dollar. Often used as a proxy for China sentiment, the Aussie fell as much as 0.7 percent to its lowest since February 2016.

There were also renewed fears in Europe over the clean-up of Italy's banks, with trading in shares of Banca Carige suspended. Carige failed last month to win share-

holder backing for a share issue that was part of a rescue plan. An index of Italian bank shares fell 2.5 percent.

**Safety first**

The stock market rout drove investors into the safety of bonds. Ten-year German Bund yields slumped to 20-month lows of 0.16 percent, their biggest one-day fall in two years. Gold and the yen benefited too. While gold topped six-month highs, the yen extended its rally against the dollar to seven-month highs around 108.9. It strengthened to 19-month peaks against the euro.

"Traditional safe-haven type flows are going into the yen. As we see increased volatility (on world markets), Japanese (investors) are probably repatriating foreign assets," said Charles St Arnaud, senior investment strategist at Lombard Odier Investment Managers.

However, the dollar edged up 0.3 percent against a basket of currencies, rising half a percent to the euro and 0.8 percent versus sterling.

The greenback is under pressure from a fall in US Treasury yields as investors wager the Federal Reserve

will not raise rates again. While the Fed itself still projects at least two more hikes, money markets imply a quarter-point cut by mid-2020. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell may comment on the outlook when he participates in a discussion on Friday, while manufacturing and jobs data due Thursday and Friday should also shed light.

Yields on two-year debt have tumbled to 2.49 percent from 2.977 percent peak in November. Ten-year yields dived to their lowest since last January at 2.647 percent. The spread between two- and 10-year yields has in turn shrunk, narrowing last month to the smallest since 2007 and heading towards an inversion which has portended recessions in the past.

The German 2-10 yield curve is the flattest since November 2016. What is clear is that the global synchronized growth story that propelled risk assets higher has come to the end of its current run," OCBC Bank told clients. "Inexorably flattening yield curves ... have poured cold water on further policy normalization going ahead." — Reuters

## US-China trade war takes toll on global manufacturing

**LONDON/HONG KONG:** Factory activity weakened across much of Europe and Asia in December as the US-led trade war and a slowdown in demand hit production in many economies, offering little reason for optimism as the new year begins. A series of purchasing managers' indexes for December released yesterday mostly showed declines or slowdowns in manufacturing activity across the globe.

"We are really seeing a global slowdown into this year, and in Asia, particularly, export-oriented countries are hurting," said Irene Cheung, Asia strategist at ANZ. "Our expectation for central banks is that most of them won't change policy in 2019 and these numbers coming out on the weak side won't change that outlook."

Euro zone manufacturing activity barely

expanded at the end of 2018, providing disappointing reading for European Central Bank policymakers, just after they ended their 2.6 trillion-euro asset-purchase scheme. Earlier PMI surveys showed Italy remained in contraction territory and was joined by France, where data showed a first deterioration in operating conditions for 27 months.

Manufacturing growth in both Germany and Spain was modest, easing to the weakest in around two-and-a-half years. British factories, however, ramped up stockpiling as they prepared for possible border delays when Britain leaves the European Union in less than three months' time.

The UK manufacturing PMI rose to a six-month high, stronger than all forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists. Survey compiler IHS Markit cautioned the improvement did not herald a big change in the outlook for Britain's stuttering economy—it was caused in large part by manufacturers stockpiling inputs and finished goods.

"Despite the headline index rising to a six-month high in December, the manufacturing PMI still suggests that the sector stagnated in Q4," said Andrew Wishart at Capital Economics.

Later yesterday, surveys were expected to

show US activity was a tad slower, but still expanding, in a sign China has suffered more from trade frictions than the United States. But world shares started 2019 on a downbeat note, oil prices and bond yields slid, and the Japanese yen strengthened on Wednesday as the factory survey data confirmed the picture of a global economic slowdown.

**China brakes**

In China, the Caixin/IHS Markit PMI slipped into contraction territory for the first time in 19 months, broadly tracking an official survey released on Monday. China's weakness spilled over to other Asian economies. Malaysian manufacturing slowed to its weakest pace of expansion since the survey began in 2012, and Taiwan fell to its lowest since September 2015.

Meanwhile, official economic data out of Singapore showed its gross domestic product grew more slowly than forecast in the fourth quarter as the city-state's manufacturing contracted on a quarterly basis. With growth slowing and inflation below or barely within target in most countries, Asian central banks are unlikely to continue their tightening cycle this year, barring any shocks in currency markets. — Reuters

## Oil falls to \$53 on economic fears, growing supply

**LONDON:** Oil fell towards \$53 a barrel yesterday, under pressure from rising output in major OPEC and non-OPEC producers and due to concerns about an economic slowdown that could weaken demand.

Russian production hit a post-Soviet record in 2018, figures showed yesterday. Other data showed US output reached a record in October and Iraq boosted oil exports in December.

Brent crude was 33 cents lower at \$53.47 a barrel at 1214 GMT. On Dec. 26, it hit \$49.93, the lowest since July

2017. US crude slipped 40 cents to \$45.01. "The omens are far from encouraging," said Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM, citing rising non-OPEC supply and the likelihood of further increases in oil inventories.

"The current bearish bias will therefore continue in the near term and it stands to reason that oil will struggle to break out from its current trough," he said. However, Nitesh Shah, director of research at WisdomTree, saw the prospect of a rebound for Brent because of an OPEC-led supply cut that starts this month and moderating US supply growth.

"We believe we will see an upward correction," he said. "Recent weakness in prices should slow the growth of US shale production." Oil prices fell in 2018 for the first year since 2015 after buyers fled the market in the fourth quarter over growing worries about excess supply and the economic slowdown. — Reuters



## Business

NBK Economic Report

# Kuwait's non-oil growth seen at 3% in 2019; fiscal position solid

## Growth to remain above 2% despite crude output cuts

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's economic performance has steadily improved over the past two years, and the outlook for growth remains broadly encouraging. The downgrade to our oil price forecast implies a weakening fiscal outlook, but with the budget now close to balance following a period of successful consolidation and government reserves still very large, we do not expect a major change in fiscal policy that would negatively affect growth.

We also look for some pick-up in project activity in 2019, delays in which weighed on growth last year - as did slow credit growth and property market weakness, both of which may now be fading. This should help offset the impact of a weaker external environment and possible rises in interest rates over the next couple of years.

After rebounding to an estimated 2.9 percent in 2018 due in particular to recovering oil output, GDP growth is set to ease to 2.2 percent in 2019. The moderation is entirely due to slower growth in oil GDP reflecting changes in OPEC+ strategy. Although country-level quotas have not been announced, we assume that Kuwait's crude production falls by around 2 percent in 2019 from its October reference level of 2.76 mb/d, broadly in line with the proposed aggregate cut for the group overall. However the impact on oil GDP is more than offset by the continued rise in condensate output - not part of the OPEC agreement - which is projected to reach 0.18 mb/d in 2019 from 0.1 mb/d in 2018 (a further smaller rise is projected for 2020). Overall oil GDP therefore rises 1.5 percent in 2019 from 3.0 percent in 2018. Recent news suggests that an agreement may soon be struck with Saudi Arabia to restart production in the Neutral Zone. But any rise would likely be offset by a lowering of output from other mature fields such as Burgan.

Over the past two years the non-oil economy has experienced a mild cyclical upswing, but upward pressures are still not very strong. Non-oil growth is estimated to have risen to 2.8 percent in 2018 from 2.2 percent in 2017, and is forecast at 3.0 percent in 2019. The recovery in consumer spending that helped growth through 2017 may have peaked, though with inflation still low and employment growth steady, prospects remain reasonable. Meanwhile, despite lower oil prices, fiscal policy should remain broadly supportive, with capital spending forecast to continue to rise. The pick-up in business credit growth recently also suggests that private investment may be recovering, potentially helped by the central bank's decision to hike interest rates more slowly than the US Fed.

In the medium term, however, growth will remain constrained by the slow pace of reforms, a lack of economic diversification and a potential slowdown in global growth. The most serious challenge facing the government is arguably the employment situation, with the private sector recently accounting for only 15 percent of job growth for Kuwaiti nationals which is, in turn, pressuring the public sector wage bill. In addressing this, the government should focus on the skills mismatch and on measures to improve growth and the business climate, where the latest World Bank report shows that Kuwait continues to lag behind its Gulf peers. Political opposition to the government's agenda, which includes plans for the introduction of the VAT and excise tax as well as further fuel subsidy cuts and a new debt law, are slowing reforms.

### Project awards to rise

A further reason for modest growth in 2018 was a reduced pace of project activity. This has been important in supporting growth in earlier years. Project awards had reached a disappointing KD 1.6 billion by early December 2018, less than half of the KD 4 billion expected at the beginning of the year, and significantly below the average of the last five years. The low level of awards was due to delays in the implementation of megaprojects such as the KAPP Al-Zour North IWPP and the KIPIC petrochemical complex. Further setbacks came from cancelled roadworks that were scheduled to take place in the 1st half of 2018. Restructuring of relevant government agencies (PART, KAPP) may have been at the root of the delays, among other factors.

With pressure increasing from parliament and the State Audit Bureau arising from the setbacks, and given the critical role key projects play in Kuwait's five-year (FY2015/16-2019/20) development plan and Vision 2035, awards are expected to pick up in 2019. The bulk of

awards is expected to come from the power and water, oil and gas, and construction sectors, and will include rescheduled projects from 2018.

Accelerating consumer spending growth has played an important role in the recovery in the broader economy over the past two years, but there are signs that the improvement may be tapering off. Growth in ATM and POS transactions eased to 8.6 percent y/y in 3Q18, while growth in the NBK consumer spending index slowed to a one-year low of 4.1 percent y/y. However, inflation is low, and other fundamentals, such as employment and credit growth, remain reasonably strong, so any slowdown in spending seems unlikely to be sharp.

Encouragingly, employment growth appears to be gradually picking up, reaching 3.3 percent y/y in 2Q18 from 2.4 percent y/y in 4Q17. The shedding of expatriate jobs in the public sector, down 14 percent y/y in 2Q18 mainly due to Kuwaitization initiatives, has been more than offset by stronger growth in the private sector. But for Kuwaiti nationals, much of the rise in employment (around 85 percent) continues to come in the public sector, which will be difficult to sustain longer term. Another softer spot for the spending outlook is wage growth, which for Kuwaiti nationals (for whom data is available) has been anemic in recent quarters. This could in part reflect the low inflation environment, but also potentially poor productivity growth.

### Inflation to pick up in 2019

Inflation has come in even softer than expected in 2H18, and reached a 15-year low of just 0.1 percent y/y in November. Weakness continues to be driven by deflation in housing services (mostly rents), where price falls have intensified this year due to ongoing softness in the real estate market. Low rates of food price inflation - reflecting international food price trends - have also been a factor. But one measure of 'core' inflation, which excludes both of these items, also decelerated to 1.3 percent in November, half its rate of the end of last year.

We expect inflation to pick up next year to an average of 2.0 percent from a downwardly-revised 0.6 percent in 2018. But much of this rise reflects a rise in food and housing inflation after pronounced weakness in 2018. By contrast, core inflation will accelerate more modestly, to 2.2 percent from 1.9 percent in 2018, with most of the factors containing price pressures recently remaining in place. These include only moderate economic growth, the strong Kuwaiti dinar (reflecting the partial tie to the strong US dollar) bearing down on import prices, and the absence of planned subsidy cuts that pushed inflation higher in 2016 and 2017. We also do not expect the VAT to be introduced until 2021 at the earliest, while the impact of a proposed excise duty on tobacco and selected drinks would be modest.

### Fiscal position

The past two years have seen a major improvement in the fiscal position, thanks to a combination of higher oil prices and spending restraint. The deficit narrowed to 9 percent of GDP in FY17/18 from nearly 14 percent of GDP a year earlier; this year a further narrowing to just 0.5 percent of GDP is forecast and a balanced budget, which would be the first in four years, cannot be ruled out. Despite a recent fall, oil revenues - worth 90 percent of the total - are projected to rise 27 percent in FY18/19 based upon an average price of Kuwait Export Crude of \$68/bbl, before slipping next year as oil prices fall back. Non-oil revenues are projected to see notable rises due to the resumption in 2018 of UNCC compensation payments.

The reduction in the deficit over the past two years has seen the government switch tack and boost spending to support the economy. After rising 9 percent last year, spending is projected to see another solid rise of 5 percent in FY18/19, boosted by some one-off factors but also higher transfer payments due to rising oil prices. This still leaves spending 6 percent below its FY14/15 peak due to large cuts in the intervening years. Expenditures are projected to fall back slightly in FY19/20 as the drop in oil prices reduces transfer payments and as some of the one-off spending items drop out. This limits the impact of lower oil revenues on the deficit, which climbs to 1 percent of GDP.

Thanks to surpluses accumulated in previous years,

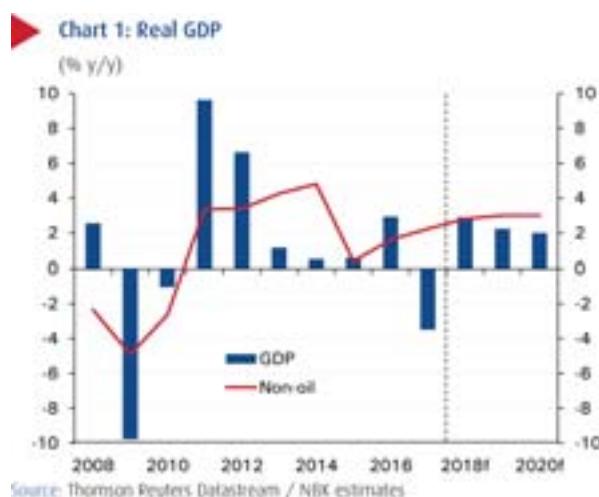
the stability of (Carige)," the ECB said in a statement. Their appointment would lead to the removal of Carige's management and control bodies, the ECB added. Italy's market watchdog earlier suspended trading in Carige shares for a day yesterday after a request from the bank.

Shares in other Italian banks fell on the news, with Italy's banking index down 2.5 percent by 1120 GMT. Carige said the administrators would continue working on measures to strengthen the bank's capital, shed non-performing loans and search for a possible merger partner. One of their first tasks will be to hold talks with Italy's depositors' guarantee fund (FITD), which bought a Carige convertible bond for 320 million euros last year in a bid to help the bank meet the year-end deadline to boost capital.

The bond was meant to be reimbursed early this year after a successful share issue or otherwise convert into equity, which would make Italian banks the main shareholders of Carige. The bank's top investor, the Malacalza family of steel entrepreneurs, blocked approval of the latest cash call at a Dec. 22 shareholder meeting, plunging the bank into a fresh crisis.

### Merger partner

The European Central Bank, which directly supervises Carige, has told the bank to complete its capital strengthening plan and seek a merger with a stronger partner. To stay afloat in recent years Carige has sold off its best assets, such as its insurance units, and so would struggle to attract a merger partner as recommended by the ECB. The Malacalza family holds 27.6 percent of Carige after investing more than 400 mil-



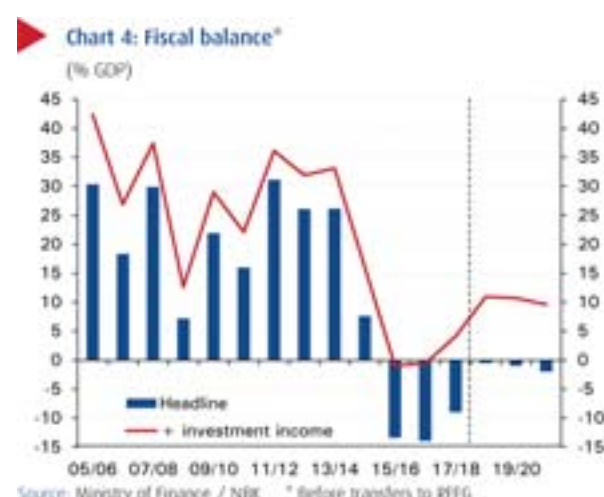
Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream / NBK estimates



Source: MEED Projects \* Reported up to early December



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream



Source: Ministry of Finance / NBK \* Before transfers to RFFG

the government's broader financial position remains very strong, with sovereign wealth fund assets estimated at nearly \$600 billion. Moreover, annual returns on these assets are worth up to 12 percent of GDP and not included in the headline fiscal accounts. These assets also underpin the government's very strong AA credit rating, which has been maintained in recent years. Nevertheless, the government's room for maneuver on fiscal policy in the near term is slightly more limited than these figures imply. General Reserve Fund assets, which are used to finance deficit shortfalls, had declined to \$88 billion at end-FY17/18, and could be depleted in a few years if the oil price weakens and if non-oil revenue-generating reforms are absent. Also, the government is unable to issue any further debt until the new debt law has been passed by parliament.

### CBK maintains low interest rates

Monetary policy remains geared towards maintaining the dinar's peg to a basket of currencies dominated by the US dollar. Unlike some other GCC countries whose currencies are fixed to the dollar, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) left its lending rate on hold at 3.0 percent in December following the 25 bps hike by the US Fed. The bank has now followed four out of the Fed's nine rate hikes during the current tightening cycle which began in 2015, though the repo rate, a benchmark for deposits, has risen more frequently. In keeping rates low, the bank is taking advantage of the flexibility provided by the peg to an exchange rate basket to support economic growth while using other monetary policy instruments to ensure the stability of the dinar. The CBK implied that banks can raise their deposit rates without changing lending rates, which are benchmarked to the discount rate.

Following a rough start to 2018, credit growth is gradually recovering and reached 2.9 percent y/y in October from a low of 0.8 percent y/y in May. The improvement has been driven by a pick-up in business lending, helped by the unwinding of base effects (due to repayments in 2017) that have weighed on loan growth in that sector. Household lending has also picked up, and remains comparatively strong at 6.4 percent y/y. We expect credit growth to end 2018 at 4-5 percent y/y and to maintain that pace in 2019, supported by a pick-up in project awards. The CBK's relaxation of lending restrictions late in 2018 should boost household borrowing in 2019.



ROME: The logo of Italian bank Carige Italia is pictured atop a bank's branch in downtown Rome yesterday. The European Central Bank (ECB) appointed three temporary administrators and a three-member surveillance committee to take charge of Banca Carige and replace its Board of Directors. —AFP

lion euros for a stake worth 20 million euros at current market prices. Explaining their decision to block a new capital increase, the Malacalzas said they first wanted more clarity on the bank's future business plan and possible merger options as well as any further requests from the regulator.

One source familiar with the matter said the administrators were tasked with trying to convene another shareholder meeting to seek approval for the cash call, but doubts remain over how the Malacalzas can be persuaded to change their stance. —Reuters

The current account has recovered after falling into deficit for the first time in modern history in 2016, and is forecast to record a surplus of 15 percent of GDP in 2018. The improvement was due to a 32 percent rise in oil exports driven by higher oil prices (oil receipts account for around 90 percent of all merchandise exports). Data for 1Q-3Q18 show goods imports up 10 percent y/y, boosted by imports of intermediate goods, but imports of capital goods were weak at 2 percent. In 2019, the surplus is forecast to dip to 10 percent of GDP as the fall in oil prices lowers export revenues, but import growth is expected to remain reasonably solid. We note also that income from investment (mostly government) was worth a huge 16 percent of GDP in 2017, more than double the level of five years earlier.

The dinar had, by mid-December, edged lower year-to-date against the US dollar (USD), but risen 5 percent versus the euro and 6 percent against the British pound. These changes reflect movements in the USD, which has appreciated by more than 5 percent on a trade-weighted basis due to a combination of strong US economic growth and rising US interest rates. It also reflects some reversal of USD weakness from 2017, when it had fallen by 8 percent. On a five-year basis, the dinar is still up more than 10 percent against the euro due to the longer-term rise in the dollar.

### Stock market sees heightened interest

Boursa Kuwait performed relatively well in 2018 to end-November, supported by improved sentiment linked to continued market development efforts and inclusion in the FTSE Emerging Market index. Despite a drop in monthly trading volumes relative to previous years, 2018 has seen a record KD 177 million of net capital inflows, helping the All Share price index gain 5.8 percent year-to-date - the GCC region's third best performer. Market capitalization stands at KD 29 billion. While volatile global markets, rising interest rates and the drop in oil prices in 4Q18 may weigh on market sentiment going forward, foreign interest will be helped by the second phase of inclusion in the FTSE EM index, scheduled for late December and also by a possible upgrade by MSCI in 2020 to be announced in June 2019. Moreover, the Ministry of Commerce in December proposed to remove the current 49 percent limit on foreign ownership of banks.

## UK factories build up stockpiles before Brexit, boosting PMI

**LONDON:** British factories ramped up their stockpiling in December as they prepared for possible border delays when Britain leaves the European Union in less than three months' time, a survey showed yesterday.

The IHS Markit/CIPS Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 54.2 from an upwardly revised 53.6 in November, the highest reading in six months and stronger than all forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists. Markit said the improvement did not herald a big change in the outlook for Britain's stuttering economy and was caused in large part by manufacturers stockpiling inputs and finished goods, both of which were near record highs.

"Any positive impact on the PMI is likely to be short-lived, however, as any gains in the near-term are reversed later in 2019 when safety stocks are eroded or become obsolete," IHS Markit director Rob Dobson said. Many manufacturers are building up inventories to protect themselves against the risks of customs delays at the border after March 29 when Britain is due to leave the EU. —Reuters

## ECB-appointed administrators to manage Italy's Banca Carige

**MILAN/FRANKFURT:** The European Central Bank appointed three temporary administrators yesterday to take charge of Italy's Carige bank in an effort to save the struggling lender after it failed to raise new capital. Italy's 10th largest bank failed last month to win shareholder backing for a 400 million euro (\$459 million) share issue, part of a rescue plan financed by Italian lenders to shield the industry from the risk of another banking collapse. The ECB stepped in after months of growing concern over the financial strength of Genoa-based Carige, the last major Italian bank considered to be a problem after the sector was hit by the financial crisis and Italy's weak economy.

The central bank acted after the majority of Carige's board, including Chairman Pietro Modiano and CEO Fabio Innocenzi, resigned over the failure to win approval for the cash call.

The ECB named Innocenzi and Modiano as temporary administrators, together with Raffaele Lener, an outside legal expert who has worked at both Italy's market regulator Consob and the Bank of Italy.

The administrators were "tasked with safeguarding



## Business

# Macron govt on tenterhooks as new tax regime takes effect

## Pay-as-you-earn tax system could fan flames of a revolt

PARIS: The French government sought yesterday to downplay fears that workers will be left out of pocket as the country transitions to a pay-as-you-earn tax system that could fan the flames of a revolt over spending power. After years of delays, France on January 1 ditched a system whereby residents file income tax returns based on the previous year's earnings, replacing it with a system where the state deducts the taxes directly from people's salaries or pensions each month.

Opinion polls show the French broadly supporting the change but the shift presents risks for President Emmanuel Macron, not least that workers may feel poorer when they receive their new net pay—even if they will no longer have to save up to pay their taxes three times a year.

Any glitches in the new system which could see taxpayers pay more than they bargained for could further infuriate the “yellow vest” anti-government protesters who have been demonstrating around the country since mid-November over Macron's fiscal policies, which they see as skewed towards the rich. Visiting a tax query call center in the northern city of Amiens, Budget Minister Gerald Darmanin attempted to assure the French that the change would be painless.

“Taxation at source is like the mobile phone. In a month's time we'll be wondering how we ever managed without it,” he said, calling it a “big step forward for the French”.

He attempted to silence the doomsayers, noting that so far there was no sign of the much-propheesied chaos and that the number of queries received by the call center were on a par with an average month.

### 93 million letters

The shift to a pay-as-you-earn system was adopted by the Socialist government of Macron's predecessor Francois Hollande, but is only now being implemented, after some dithering by Macron on the issue.

To prepare the French for the change the government has sent 93 million letters and emails explaining the new system. The move, which will only affect the 43 percent of households liable for income tax, brings France in line with most Western countries but comes at a critical juncture for the Macron.

Over the past six weeks, “yellow vest” demonstrators—so-called after the high-visibility jackets they wear—have repeatedly clashed with police in Paris and other big cities, plunging Macron's presidency into crisis.

The “yellow vest” movement began in rural France over fuel taxes and quickly ballooned into a wider revolt against the 41-year-old president's pro-business policies and perceived arrogance by low-paid workers and pensioners. In mid-December, he attempted to calm the rebellion by backtracking on a planned increase in anti-pollution fuel taxes. He also announced 10 billion euros (\$11.4 billion) in tax breaks and income support for the low-paid and retirees, setting back his deficit-reduction drive in the process.

Since then the protests have appeared to lose steam.

In his New Year's address to the nation on Monday, Macron vowed to resume his reforms programme in 2019, including trimming the sprawling public sector and shaking up the unemployment and pension systems, all potential political minefields. — AFP



AMIENS: People wearing yellow vests (gilets jaunes) hold placards reading “Macron is the president of the rich” (left) and “Let's go get Macron” as they take part in a demonstration in front of the tax center in Amiens, northern France, during a visit of French Minister of Public Action and Accounts yesterday. — AFP

## In abject poverty, Cambodia's farmers fight debt bondage

PHNOM PENH: Bopha should be in school but instead toils seven days a week in a searing brick kiln on the outskirts of Phnom Penh—a 14-year-old trapped in debt bondage in a boom industry preying on the poverty of Cambodia's farmers. Unpredictable weather linked to climate change is laying waste to Cambodian fields.

Saddled with debt from failed harvests, tens of thousands of farmers are turning to brick factories, where owners pay off their bills in exchange for labor. The factories feed a surging construction sector, with high-rises cropping up around the capital Phnom Penh and beyond as money—much of it from China—pours in.

But for the farmers who shape and bake the clay bricks, Cambodia's newfound urban prosperity has passed them by. “I'm not going to school, I'm trying to help pay back the \$4,000 that we owe, even if it will take years,” Bopha told AFP, as she loaded clay blocks on to a cart.

“For 10,000 bricks transported, we receive \$7.50.”

Cambodian labor law prohibits those aged 12-15 from working if the job is hazardous or interferes with their education. Yet Bopha works all week with her family.

They were driven into the industry two years ago after drought ruined their rice harvest, leaving them with no way of paying back money they borrowed to plant crops.

A factory owner took over the debt and they went to work in the kilns about an hour's drive from the capital. There, a dirt road leading to the sprawling facility is lined with hundreds of kilns resembling small pyramids.

Bopha and her family are likely to be trapped for years as they try to clear their debts, in what campaigners warn amounts to modern-day slavery.

Like most workers interviewed for this article they asked that their full names not be



PHNOM PENH: This photograph shows Cambodian laborers unloading bricks at an under-construction luxury high-rise building complex in Phnom Penh. Saddled with debt from failed harvests, tens of thousands of farmers are turning to brick factories, where owners pay off their bills in exchange for labor. — AFP

used for fear of losing their jobs. The University of London said in an October study that brick factories in Cambodia were creating a “multi-generational workforce of adults and children trapped in debt bondage—one of the most prevalent forms of modern slavery in the world.”

And the link between climate change and debt bondage is stark, explains Naly Pilorge, head of Cambodian rights NGO Licadho.

“Many industries around the world employ climate refugees,” she said. “But what is unique in the brick factories in Cambodia is that the vast majority of workers are imprisoned in debt bondage.” Compensation is not enough to pay off debts quickly, and the workers become virtual prisoners of owners who do not let them leave until they pay what they owe—with some living there indefinitely.

### ‘They ignore their rights’

Sov will soon be able to take a two-day holiday to return to her village in Stung Treng province in the north. But her husband and children must stay at the factory. “The boss is afraid we will run away without paying,” she said, standing in a maze of bricks.

about whether conditions are right for more IPOs. Angst over higher Federal Reserve interest rates and projections for slower global growth have been the key factors behind the swoon in December by a market already unnerved by escalating trade tensions.

IPO activity through the first 10 months of 2018 topped 2017 levels by 42 percent, but tumbled 66 percent in the final two months of the year as stock markets gyrated.

Several offerings that planned for the end of the year were pushed into 2019, according to a person with a major exchange. Volatility is “definitely a priority in terms of IPO conversations,” said this exchange source.

### Too much volatility?

Waiting in the wings and expected to launch in 2019 are several prominent “unicorns”—a private company worth more than \$1 billion. This group includes ridesharing service Lyft, which filed confidential papers to go public, and its archrival Uber, according to US business press.

Others that are expected to go public include the lodging service Airbnb, messaging service Slack, content website Pinterest

and data analytics company Palantir. Market specialists are confident these firms should be better equipped to navigate the more challenging environment given their size.

“Volatility is one of the key factors when companies plan for their IPOs,” said Jeff Thomas, who supervises introductions of IPOs at Nasdaq.

Companies have even been known to accelerate a plan to go public if they anticipate even greater volatility down the road.

Still, the market turmoil could affect how much money companies raise. “If current market conditions presage a US economic slowdown in 2019, investors may want to haircut valuations to incorporate slower earnings growth,” said Nicholas Colas, co-founder of DataTrek Research, who noted that Uber, Lyft and Airbnb are all dependent on consumer spending, while Slack and Palantir rely on corporate spending.

“None have been tested by a US recession in their current forms,” Colas said. “Bankers and lawyers are definitely aware” of the spike in volatility, said Douglas Ellenoff, a securities attorney. But stock market jitters won't derail offerings as long as it is “moderate.” — AFP

## French new car sales up

PARIS: The sale of new cars in France increased nearly three percent last year, but the market for diesels was markedly down, the French automakers' association (CCFA) said Tuesday.

A total of 2,173,481 private cars were first registered last year, in line with automakers' expectations.

France's PSA and Renault saw sales jump by 8.32 percent over the previous year while foreign car sales dipped 3.44 percent. Renault was up 2.48 percent, boosted by its Dacia low-cost subsidiary whose sales soared by 19 percent. PSA with

698,985 new registrations was climbed 13.36 percent. Much of the increase was due to the takeover of Opel from US giant General Motors.

Toyota sales rose 9.93 percent, Fiat-Chrysler 12.67 percent and Hyundai 16.54 percent. But the Germans Volkswagen and BMW were down 1.1 and by 3.21 percent respectively. The CCFA estimated that the share of diesel cars was down from 47.3 percent in 2017 to less than 40 percent last year, a result of increasing fuel costs and possible future traffic restrictions in major cities.

In 2012, when diesel sales were at their peak in France they represented nearly three out of every four cars sold. The sale of electric or hybrid cars increased by only six percent, with petrol-powered engines still very much leading the market. — AFP

## Big IPOs eyeing a brittle Wall Street in 2019

NEW YORK: Investors have been priming themselves for a potentially huge influx of companies selling stock to the public for the first time, led by ridesharing game changers Uber and Lyft, but the outlook is more uncertain with the vicious return of volatility to the market.

For companies trying to raise capital, volatility is the enemy. “We enter 2019 on uncertain footing,” said Renaissance Capital, a research firm focused on initial public offerings (IPO).

The market is coming off an outstanding 2018 for stock offers, with 231 companies going public and raising \$61 billion, the best year since 2014 when Alibaba entered Wall Street, according to Dealogic.

But financial markets have been on a roller-coaster of late, generating questions

The Middle East premier trade show for the metal working, metal manufacturing and steel fabrication industry

**STEEL FAB**  
The 15th Edition  
Machinery, Equipment & Tools

**14-17 January 2019**  
EXPO CENTRE SHARJAH, UAE

**Show Highlights**

- Exclusive live display of machinery & equipment
- Largest exhibition of its kind in the Middle East & Africa region
- Leading brands of sheet metal machinery
- Major manufacturers of structural steel fabrication machines
- 1<sup>st</sup> Time UK Pavilion
- Other Attractions: Seminars, Technical presentations

**Download our Visitor MobileApp**  
that's filled with loads of features for you...

Get it on Google play | Scan this QR Code or search for "Sharjah Expo Visitor" in your App Store | Get it on the App Store

**Concurrent Event**  
**Fasteners & Fixing Technology Middle East**

**Show Timings:** 10 am to 7 pm daily

Supported by: LEJUNE, ITA, MESS ESSEN

Organized by: World Association of Steel Fabricators

Tel: +971-6-5770000  
Fax: +971-6-5770111  
Email: steel@expo-centre.ae

Register Now to Visit [www.steelfabme.com](http://www.steelfabme.com)

@SteelFabME



NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

# UAE growth to rise as non-oil sector gathers momentum

## Real GDP growth to pick up from 2.2% in 2018 to 2.7% in 2019

**KUWAIT:** Real GDP growth in the UAE is projected to continue to trend upwards over the next two years, rising from an estimated 2.2 percent in 2018 to 2.4 percent and 2.7 percent in 2019 and 2020, respectively. While headline growth will see only a moderate contribution from the oil sector, on account of the UAE's participation in another round of OPEC+ production cuts in 2019 in order to balance oil supply (and thus support oil prices), it will, nevertheless, benefit from elevated construction activity and government spending ahead of the Expo 2020 on the non-oil side.

The UAE cabinet, in October, approved a record federal budget of Dh60.3 billion for the 2019 fiscal year. Credit growth will likely continue to recover as gains in business lending activity offset some of the monetary tightness stemming from higher interest rates. Further falls in oil prices represent the greatest risk to the outlook, in terms of lower government revenues, which could possibly force the government to scale back spending, and in terms of business confidence and banking sector liquidity.

### A marginal boost in oil GDP expected

In 2019, according to the OPEC+ production agreement, the UAE is expected to pare back crude production by 2.5 percent (from October 2018's reference level) to 3.10 million barrels per day, starting January. Despite the cut, output in January will still be 8.2 percent higher y/y, and as such, we think real oil GDP growth is still likely to rise next year, from an estimated 0.6 percent in 2018 to 0.8 percent in 2019. It should accelerate further to 1.0 percent in 2020 as the UAE expands its oil production capacity in anticipation of higher demand.

Meanwhile, the non-oil sector is expected to remain supportive of overall growth, expanding by a healthy 3.0 percent and 3.4 percent in 2019 and 2020, respectively, mainly due to increasing construction activity ahead of Dubai's Expo 2020 event.

In an effort to prop up growth, the federal authorities and the governments of Dubai and Abu Dhabi announced a raft of pro-growth reforms throughout 2018. At the federal level, the authorities approved the issuance of residency visas of up to 10 years to investors and highly skilled expats, such as specialists in the scientific, technical, medical and research fields, and will allow expatriates to seek extended residency visas after retirement. The authorities also raised the share that foreigners are permitted to own of local businesses (based outside of designated "free zone" areas) from 49 percent to 100 percent.

Moreover, in further support of foreign direct investment (FDI), the UAE president issued a new law to establish a Foreign Direct Investment Unit in the Ministry of Economy. The unit will be responsible for promoting initiatives that



help create a more attractive investment environment. The UAE is determined to boost inward investment and diversify its financing options away from public funding. According to the finance minister, FDI is expected to increase by almost 6 percent y/y in 2018 to reach \$11-11.5bn, which is by far the largest in the region. The authorities are eyeing a further 15-20 percent increase by end-2020.

Meanwhile, Abu Dhabi recently revealed further details of its new three-year, Dh50 billion stimulus plan, which will be called "Tomorrow 21" and directed at four main sectors: business and investment; society; knowledge and innovation; and lifestyle. Additionally, companies based in the capital's free zones will be allowed to operate on the mainland under a dual license. This should help reduce the cost of doing business, improve competitiveness and boost foreign investments.

The most recent figures showed real growth in Abu Dhabi rising from a mere 0.1 percent in 1Q18 to 1.5 percent y/y in 2Q18, thanks to increased crude output and non-oil activity.

Dubai also announced its own plans to improve the business climate and stimulate foreign investment, including waiving some fees on aviation, real estate and school and reducing those on businesses. Along with Abu Dhabi, it also agreed to exempt businesses from any administrative fines until the end of the 2018.

Dubai's economic growth registered 2.5 percent y/y in 4Q17, driven by the emirates' construction and hospitality sectors. The measures announced above are likely to give these sectors a further boost. Indeed, the Dubai Economy Tracker index leapt from 52.5 in October to a five-month high of 55.3 in November, as growth in the construction sector accelerated ahead of the Expo 2020.

Tourism was also a major contributor, with the number of passengers passing through Dubai International Airport coming in at a record high of 24 million in 3Q18, above the average of 22 million recorded in 2017. Dubai's residential property prices maintained their downward trend in 2018.

The impact of more stringent loan-to-value regulations on Dubai's residential property market continues to be compounded by the effects of increased supply, higher interest rates and changing demand patterns-tenants are increasingly

Table 1: Key economic indicators

		2017	2018e	2019f	2020f
Nominal GDP	USD bn	387	396	405	416
Real GDP	% y/y	0.8	2.2	2.4	2.7
- Oil	% y/y	-3.0	0.6	0.8	1.0
- Non-oil	% y/y	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.4
Inflation	% y/y	2.1	3.5	2.0	1.5
Budget balance	% of GDP	-3.8	-1.2	-0.7	1.2

Source: Official sources, NBK estimates

opting for more affordable housing units. According to Asteco, the average prices of apartments and villas fell at a faster rate (-13.6 percent y/y) in 3Q18 than in 2Q18 (-9.3 percent y/y).

### Inflation higher in 2018

After rising in January following the introduction of a 5 percent VAT and the paring back of fuel subsidies, inflation trended downwards in 2018 as the initial impact of the tax/fuel hikes wore off, food price rises moderated and housing costs fell deeper into deflationary territory.

### Fiscal balance to gradually improve

The fiscal deficit is expected to gradually narrow to 0.7 percent of GDP in 2019 from an estimated 1.2 percent of GDP in 2018, on mainly higher non-oil revenues, in-line with an improvement in the business climate. A surplus of 1.2 percent of GDP should be on the cards for 2020. In October, the UAE cabinet approved a balanced budget of Dhs 60.3 billion (\$16.4bn) for the 2019 fiscal year, 17.3 percent higher than 2018's expected outlay. This is the highest budgeted spending on record.

Having bottomed out at the end of 2017, total credit growth has since trended upwards, reaching 3.7 percent y/y in November 2018 on increased corporate lending.

Lending to the business and industrial sectors increased by a strong 6.5 y/y in November. With construction activity expected to continue apace ahead of Expo 2022, credit growth should continue to gain traction. Despite slowing from 7.5 percent y/y in October to 6.5 percent y/y in November, deposit growth has also been on an upward trend in 2018. The recent slowdown was attributed to an easing in

both government and private sector deposit growth. Broad money supply (M2) growth, however, continues to hover in the low single digits, near multi-year lows.

Meanwhile, in response to the tightening in monetary policy in the US, the cost of funding in the UAE has been on the rise. The most recent federal funds rate hike, of 25 bps in December-the fourth rate increase this year-was followed immediately by a 25 bps increase in the UAE's benchmark rate to 2.75 percent. At least one, possibly two more rate hikes are expected in 2019. Also, the 3-month interbank rate (EIBOR) was up 109 bps year-to-date (ytd) as of mid-December.

### Real estate sector woes

Equities on the Abu Dhabi Exchange (ADX) and Dubai Financial Markets (DFM) were on opposite trajectories in 2018. While the ADX was up almost 10 percent ytd (as of mid-December), thanks to the improvement in oil prices, the DFM was down 26 percent on continued weakness in the property sector. Indeed, real estate stocks were down almost 40 percent ytd.

### Downside risks to the outlook

As ever, oil prices are central to the outlook. Government spending and hence non-oil activity is largely determined by it. Oil also has knock-on effects in terms of banking sector liquidity and broader consumer confidence. Moreover, with the US Fed expected to tighten interest rates further in 2019, borrowing costs are rising, potentially dampening business activity. However, Dubai's Expo 2020 expansive public investment program and the UAE's broader economic reforms should prove to be positive for economic growth.

## Wall Street stocks end their worst year since 2008

**NEW YORK:** The US stock market concluded its worst year since the global financial crisis on Monday following a late-season collapse that also raised doubts about the prospects for 2019.

Major indices notched modest gains in the year's final session, but it barely made a dent compared with the rest of December, the market's worst month in nearly a decade. Ending in the red for 2018 did not appear in the cards in the first weeks of the year, when Wall Street repeatedly shot to new records on the heels of a sweeping tax cut signed into law in December 2017 by President Donald Trump.

But it did not take long for a host of worries to shake that confidence, from unease over an unpredictable series of trade wars launched by Trump, to angst over rising interest rates, to nervousness over economists' warnings of slowing growth, or worse, a possible recession.

And the declines rapidly accelerated in the final weeks of 2018, erasing all the gains since January.

Concluding the year with losses is "astonishing," Manulife senior portfolio manager Nate Thooft told AFP. "From an investor perspective, it probably shakes them a bit." There was a spurt of renewed optimism on Monday, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average finished the final session with a gain of 1.2 percent at 23,327.46.

The broad-based S&P 500 climbed 0.9 percent to end at 2,506.85, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index advanced 0.8 percent to 6,635.28. But even with Monday's boost, the Dow finished 2018 with loss of 5.6 percent compared to the end of 2017, the S&P 500 with a drop of 6.2 percent and the Nasdaq with a decline of 3.9 percent.

That was after a year in which they indices jumped 25.1 percent, 19.4 percent and 28.2 percent-before companies logged massive jumps in profits this year due in part to the tax cut.

### Euphoric start

At the start of 2018, investor sentiment ranged somewhere between optimism and euphoria as the Dow surged above 25,000 for the first time



and then hit 26,000 less than two weeks later.

But after that frothy start, stocks experienced their first cracks in late January, just ahead of a leadership transition at the Federal Reserve as Jerome Powell took over as Fed chairman, after Trump declined to nominate Janet Yellen for a second term.

Wall Street suffered an especially profound wobble on Powell's first day, February 5, with the Dow plunging nearly 1,600 points at one stage before ending a grim session down more than four percent.

At the time, analysts cited worries the Fed would have to hike rates too aggressively.

But Trump's escalating trade wars and tariff threats soon took over as the main focus of investor concern. He announced the first salvo on March 1: tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. The following day on Twitter he proclaimed that "trade wars are good, and easy to win."

That has been followed by increasingly aggressive tariff moves against China. Many key US economic indicators stayed robust even as business leaders recoiled at Trump's rising protectionism, with unemployment lingering at a 49-year low, corporate earnings notching their strongest growth in eight years, and business and consumer sentiment remaining well above historic trends.

In August, the S&P 500 celebrated the longest-ever "bull market," with 3,453 straight sessions-more than nine years-without a drop of 20 percent. In October, the Dow surged to an all-time high of 26,828.39. But it's been a rough ride ever since.

### Bruising finale

Besides worries over the difficult US-China trade talks, much of current angst is focused on the Federal

Reserve, which faces a tricky balancing act of boosting interest rates enough to contain inflation without choking off the economic expansion. Market watchers are always nervous about Fed tightening cycles, especially as they reach their end, fearing they might overdo it, but Trump has dialed up the jitters with repeated attacks on Powell. Economists warn that such criticism can easily backfire by compelling the US central bank to continue to raise interest rates to demonstrate its independence.

White House officials have denied Trump intends to fire Powell, but many market watchers say the possibility has further pressured stocks, especially given the president's penchant for setting policy by tweet without consulting his advisors.

A US government shutdown over Trump's desire to fund a wall along the border with Mexico will extend into 2019 also has dented sentiment, especially amid signs economic growth has peaked.

"To be clear, the challenges we see ahead don't look to us like the makings of another financial crisis," said a recent investor note by JPMorgan Private Bank said in a recent investor note.

"Our base case assumes slowing growth in the US economy throughout 2019 and a moderate recession in 2020." Thooft of Manulife said the gloom of December feels "a bit overdone" given that most data is still strong.

But he warned that investors are unnerved, and the sense of waning optimism could soon show up in consumer and business sentiment indexes. "You're going to need more than one (positive) outcome" to push stocks higher in 2019, he said. "It's probably bigger than just the trade issue." —AFP

## Huawei 2018 sales revenue expected to reach \$108.5bn, up 21% year-on-year

**KUWAIT:** In a New Year letter sent by Huawei Rotating Chairman Guo Ping to the company 180,000 employees worldwide, he expresses his confidence about the company business performance as Huawei never stopped pushing forward, and as a result the company 2018 sales revenue is expected to reach \$108.5 billion, up 21 percent year-on-year.

Listing some 2018 milestones, he mentioned that Huawei has signed 26 commercial contracts for 5G with leading global carriers, and have already shipped more than 10,000 5G base stations to markets around the world. More than 160 cities and 211 Fortune Global 500 companies have selected Huawei as their partner for digital transformation. Huawei shipped more than 200 million smartphones, and has made remarkable breakthroughs in PC business and IoT ecosystem for smart homes.

Huawei Cloud has launched over 140 cloud services in 18 categories, and Huawei is working with partners to serve global customers with 37 availability zones across 22 regions. This year, the company also announced AI strategy and launched a full-stack portfolio of AI solutions for all scenarios. This portfolio includes the world's first all-scenario AI chips-our Ascend series-as well as related products and cloud services.

As a result of all the previously mentioned milestones, Gou Ping said: "Our business performance remains strong, and this is by far the most direct form of validation that we can receive from our customers. It is also our best response to negative conjecture and market restrictions".

"In the coming year, we will see new waves of development in digitization and intelligence, and we may very well encounter even greater difficulties. In times like this, we must summon our inner strength, improve the quality of our operations, inspire passion across the organization, and continue forging ahead to satisfy customer needs and achieve strategic leadership". He added.

About 2019, he said: "In 2019, we will focus on strategic businesses and strategic opportunities and build a more resilient business structure. He highlighted that Huawei products and solutions have earned the trust of customers in more than 170 countries and regions, and stressed that Huawei has a very strong track record in cyber security, emphasizing that "Huawei has never and will never present a security threat".

In 2019, the company intends to look out for others, collaborate for shared success, and build a favorable business ecosystem. As the dynamic between world powers becomes more intense, we will see even greater uncertainty in the macro business environment. "We aren't equipped to change the macro environment, but what we can do is keep our feet on the ground and improve the business ecosystem for our own industry".

On compliance, Guo Ping said: "Going global means complying with the laws of all countries and regions where we operate. This is the most important basis for us to survive, serve, and contribute to the world at large.



BEIJING: A man looks at his mobile phone as he walks past a Huawei store in Beijing. — AFP

We must continue to incorporate compliance requirements into all business activities through carefully aligned policy, systems, organizations, processes, culture, training, and communications. These requirements must be ingrained in the awareness and behavior of each and every Huawei employee. We must not be discouraged by malicious incidents or temporary setbacks, and must remain determined to achieve global leadership. Setbacks will only make us more courageous, and incredibly unfair treatment will drive us to become the world's number one".

Huawei today is a member of more than 380 industry organizations, where we serve in 300+ key positions and submit more than 6,000 proposals each year. We are ahead of others in domains like wireless, optical, data communications, and smart devices.

Commenting on the current 5G challenges and allegations Huawei is faced with, Guo Ping said: "For 5G markets that choose to not work with Huawei-they will be like an NBA game without star players: the game will go on, but with less deftness, flair, and expertise".

"As for new developments in technologies like AI, big data, and cloud, we are in sync with the industry and primed to take the lead" he added.

In his letter closing remarks, he said: "the years ahead, the ICT industry will continue to overflow with excitement and promise. Digital transformation is in full swing, and we find ourselves at the cusp of an intelligent world. Consumers are actively looking for more advanced, more trustworthy digital technologies and services. Going digital and intelligent will be a long process, so we need to keep innovating and delivering cutting-edge results".

On a related note, Huawei said it will ramp up 5G development efforts. The company is rolling up its sleeves, vowing to push on with its 5G network development despite its technology being banned by some Western nations. Huawei Chairman Liang Hua told media last week that the firm's operations remain "normal" even as it faces a "complicated environment".

"In the face of a crisis of confidence from the West, first we must do our own work well, and continue to build Huawei's competitiveness in the field of 5G," Liang said. "We believe that customers will make their own decisions." To that end, Huawei is planning to release its first 5G-enabled smartphone in the first half of 2019, and will achieve "commercial scale" of those phones by the second half of 2019, Liang added.



## Health &amp; Technology

# NASA succeeds in historic flyby of faraway world

## Flyby offers up-close look at ancient building block of planets

**TAMPA:** NASA rang in the New Year on Tuesday with a historic flyby of the farthest, and quite possibly the oldest, cosmic body ever explored by humankind—a tiny, distant world called Ultima Thule—in the hopes of learning more about how planets took shape. A series of anxiously awaited “phone home” signals arrived after 10:30 am, indicating that the spacecraft had made it, intact, through the risky, high-speed encounter. “We have a healthy spacecraft,” said mission operations manager Alice Bowman, as cheers erupted in the control rooms at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Maryland.

About 10 hours earlier, NASA celebrated the New Year’s flyby, as mission managers—alongside kids dressed in space costumes—blew party horns to mark the moment at 12:33 am when the New Horizons spacecraft aimed its cameras at the space rock four billion miles away in a dark and frigid region of space known as the Kuiper Belt.

More images and data will start arriving later Tuesday, offering scientists the first up-close look at an ancient building block of planets, Bowman said. The flyby took place about a billion miles beyond Pluto, which was until now the most faraway world ever visited up close by a spacecraft. Hurling through space at a speed of 32,000 miles per hour, the spacecraft made its closest approach within 2,200 miles of the surface of Ultima Thule.

“This is a night none of us are going to forget,” said Queen guitarist Brian May—who also holds an advanced degree in astrophysics—and who recorded a solo track to honor the spacecraft and its spirit of exploration. Lead plane-

tary scientist for New Horizons, Alan Stern, said Ultima Thule is unique because it is a relic from the early days of the solar system and could provide answers about the origins of other planets. “The object is in such a deep freeze that it is perfectly preserved from its original formation,” he said.

“Everything we are going to learn about Ultima—from its composition to its geology

two pieces orbiting each other, but he would wait until more, clearer images arrive Wednesday to say for sure.

The highest resolution images are expected in February, Stern said. Ultima Thule was discovered in 2014 with the help of the Hubble Space Telescope. Scientists decided to study Ultima Thule with New Horizons after the spaceship, which launched in 2006, completed its main mission of flying by Pluto in 2015, returning the most detailed images ever taken of the dwarf planet. Stern said the goal was to take images of Ultima that are three times the resolution the team had for Pluto.

“We have a healthy spacecraft”

to how it was originally assembled, whether it has satellites and an atmosphere and those kinds of things—are going to teach us about the original formation conditions of objects in the solar system.”

### Coming into focus

Scientists are not sure exactly what Ultima Thule (pronounced TOO-lee) looks like—whether it is cratered or smooth, or even if it is a single object or a cluster. But a new, though still blurry image released Tuesday showed its oblong shape resembles something like a bowling pin or a peanut, and its dimensions are about 22 miles long and nine miles wide. Stern said his bet is that the object is a single body, not

### Frontier of planetary science

Ultima Thule is named for a mythical, far-northern island in medieval literature and cartography, according to NASA. Project scientist Hal Weaver of the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory said humans didn’t even know the Kuiper Belt—a vast ring of relics from the formation days of the solar system—existed until the 1990s. “This is the frontier of planetary science,” said Weaver.

Another NASA spacecraft, OSIRIS-REx, also set a new record on Monday by entering orbit around the asteroid Bennu, the smallest cosmic object—about 1,600 feet in diameter—ever circled by a spacecraft. NASA said the orbit some 70 million miles away marks “a leap for humankind” because no spacecraft has ever “circled so close to such a small space object—one with barely enough gravity to keep a vehicle in a stable orbit.”

The twin planetary feats coincided with the 50th anniversary of the first time



**IN SPACE:** In this file photo this artist's illustration shows the New Horizons spacecraft encountering 2014 MU69 - nicknamed "Ultima Thule" - a Kuiper Belt object that orbits one billion miles beyond Pluto. — AFP

humans ever explored another world, when US astronauts orbited the Moon aboard Apollo 8 in December, 1968. “As you celebrate New Year’s Day, cast an eye upward

and think for a moment about the amazing things our country and our species can do when we set our minds to it,” Stern wrote in the New York Times on Monday.—AFP

## Koala drinks from water bottle in Australia heatwave

**SYDNEY:** As Australia swelters in an extreme heatwave, a video of a woman in the state of Victoria pouring water into the mouth of a thirsty koala has melted hearts online. The vast continent has experienced intense heat over the past week, with the mercury up 16 degrees Celsius (60 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than usual for this time of year in southern Australia. Numerous towns set new December records,

according to the Bureau of Meteorology, while emergency services have been on high alert for bushfires.

Local Chantelle Lowrie was at a camping ground near the Murray River in the southern state of Victoria on Friday when she saw the koala. “It was 44 degrees Celsius—very, very hot day,” Lowrie said on Tuesday. “I stopped because he looked as though he could use a drink of water.” Lowrie posted on Facebook footage of herself giving water to the furry marsupial, who drank from the bottle before climbing back up the tree.

The footage is reminiscent of another video of a koala, later nicknamed Sam, who drank from a bottle offered by a firefighter during deadly bushfires in Victoria in 2009. High temperatures are not unusual in the Australian summer, with bushfires a common occurrence. But climate change has pushed up land and sea temperatures, leading to more extremely hot days and severe fire seasons. — AFP

## Lion kills worker at US wildlife park

**WASHINGTON:** A lion attacked and killed a young American woman who had just started working at the facility where it was kept, the center said Sunday. Alexandra Black, 22, was passionate about wildlife and had worked just 10 days as an intern at the facility in Burlington, North Carolina. “The Conservators Center is devastated by the loss of a human life today,” it said in a statement.

“While a husbandry team led by a professionally trained animal keeper was carrying out a routine enclosure cleaning, one of the lions somehow left a locked space and entered the space the humans were in and quickly killed one person. “It is unclear at this time how the lion left the locked enclosure. At no time did the lion ever enter a space that was not enclosed by the park’s perimeter fence,” the statement added, expressing its condolences to Black’s family and announcing it would close temporarily.

The lion was killed so Black could be retrieved, the center said. Black, a recent graduate of Indiana University, had worked a few weeks at the facility home to dozens of animals and 21 different species, its website says. — AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



**Kuwait Times**  
248 33 199

**WELCOME**

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

Follow-up of the royal college of surgeons in UK and Ireland.  
10 years work experience in Zaki Hospital, Wadi Al-Rawas.

In Head of ENT department in Al-Farwani Hospital, Wadi Al-Rawas.  
10 years work experience in UK and Ireland.

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

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

qmc-kuwait

**To advertise on this Page**

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

**Dr. Husain Alenezi**

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

**Expert in diagnosing and treating:**

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

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

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

**Book your appointments today!**

**Dr. Kiran Turaka**  
Ophthalmologist

**Dr. Zareena Zahir**  
Ophthalmologist

**Dr. Hasan Khan**  
Senior Cardiologist

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

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

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

Tel : 24568857 / 24568859 info@exircenterkw.com www.exircenterkw.com

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES



CLINIC  
PAGE

Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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

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

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

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

**ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:**

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

**SPECIALIZED IN:**

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

**SHARD, Ahmad Alshar st., Building 14, Floor 13.**  
Tel.: (+965) 22060777  
@DrFahadmed, @Renovabb, @dardondabb  
Email: drfahadmed@beautybeyond.com.kw

**BEAUTY & BEYOND**

**Global Medical Center Welcomes**  
**Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader**  
Consultant vascular and general surgery

All general and specialized surgeries such as:

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

**Global Medical Center, Bneid Al-Qar**  
**Bour Saeed Street, Block-1, Building-128.**  
**Telephone: 1871111** **@globalmedcenter**  
**www.globalmed-center.com**

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

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

**مستشفى دار الشفاء**  
**Dar Al Shifa Hospital**  
**Tele:1802 555** **@daralshifa**

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

**Specialized in:**

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

**alsalam.int.hospital**

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

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

**Specialized in:**

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

**alsalam.int.hospital**

**IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC**  
Al Salam International Hospital  
Telephone: 1830003 Ext: 2400  
**alsalam.int.hospital**

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

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

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

**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFI Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

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

**Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad**  
Surgery Department  
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo – Rectal Surgeon

**مستشفى دار الشفاء**  
**Dar Al Shifa Hospital**  
**Tele:1802 555** **@daralshifa**  
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

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

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

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

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

**Academic Certificates – Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

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



## What's On



# LOYAC volunteers visit Nepal sponsored by NBK



Under the auspices of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), 12 LOYAC volunteers aged 14-18 visited Nepal in the period of December 25, 2018 till January 1, 2019 where a diverse cultural program had been prepared for them to visit UNESCO's international heritage sites in Nepal, they took part in a volunteering in an Earthquake

aid program, went camping and visited many social and cultural sites in Nepal. In this regard, LOYAC's Social Services Manager Yosra Al-Essa said that the program was designed to develop volunteers' self-reliance skills and focus on cultural exchange with nations in order to eventually achieve peace and prosperity.



## DWC holds meeting



Diplomatic Women's Committee (DWC) Kuwait held a meeting in presence of Samargiul Adamkulova Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic and representative of DWC, Anara Musuralieva Second Secretary of the Embassy of Kyrgyz Republic, Narjis Al Shati Counselor of the DWC, Fouzia Abdul Basit media and public relations for DWC. The meeting was held with Yousef Mustafa Abdullah Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism Sector at Ministry of Information to present

and discuss proposals for exhibitions and cultural activities in the month of March 2019 for the occasion of International Women's Day.

Yousef Abdullah gladly welcomed the DWC team and their ideas and assured of his full support for media and logistics preemption, specially the proposed tourism tour in Kuwait for diplomats and cooperates for Silk Road exception. He assured his assistance to DWC for the upcoming events and cultural activities proposed by the team in this meeting.

## China Council holds inauguration meeting

China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification in Kuwait was formally established. "Message to the compatriots in Taiwan" was issued on the 40th anniversary of their history, looking forward to brighter prospects for peaceful reunification across the strait. "Representatives from all walks of life with our compatriots in Taiwan with confidence, insist on the premise of one China, to carry forward the Chinese nation's strong vitality and cohesion, artificial divided and end on both sides of the reunification of the motherland, as soon as possible in order to more effectively promote contemporary world peace, development, prosperity and progress."

The meeting progressed in a friendly and harmonious atmosphere. Chairman Taikang Dong, reviewed the message published by the Chinese Government on



the 40th anniversary of compatriots in Taiwan's history and development. Vice Chairman Sun read the organization's constitution of China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification in Kuwait. Standing Director Zhao Hong read congratulatory letters from homeland and abroad. Cao Shuquan on behalf of State Enterprise delivered a speech to promote cross-strait peaceful reunification and responsibilities. Taiwan compatriot Cao Shudai spoke touching words of brotherly affection. At the end of the meeting, group pictures were taken as a memento.



## Armenian Bishop sends New Year wishes

Bishop of the Armenian Prelacy in Kuwait and the neighboring countries, Father Masis Zobouyan recently extended heartiest congratulations 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 on the occasion of celebrating the glorious Christmas and the New Year wishing them both abundant health and prosperity to maintain Kuwait as a center of humanity.

"We always mention HH in our prayers praying that, with his wisdom, he leads this beloved country to more prosperity and stability". Father Zobouyan added noting that Armenians in Kuwait enjoy a great deal of freedom to practice their rituals in a most positive co-existence atmosphere where people from over 120 different nationalities peacefully live together.

Further, Father Zobouyan hailed Kuwait's efforts in sending humanitarian aid to the distressed and displaced worldwide and expressed his prayers for more global peace. His holiness also announced that Christmas Mass will be held in the morning of January 6, 2019 and that he will then receive visitors from 1-3 pm.



## NAFO organizes picnic

National Forum Kuwait (NAFO), a prominent socio-cultural organization organized its annual Winter Picnic on December 28, 2018 at Julaiah Beach Farm House. The picnic party started with members all gathering at Salmiya Garden car park at 8 am where pre-arranged buses awaited them to ride to the picnic venue. NAFO Vice President Rajive Menon flagged off the day named 'Ullassam'. General Secretary MS Nair welcomed all attendees, their families and friends to the fun-filled day arranged by the Picnic Convener Anil Kumar and his team.

Excellent weather and scenic background of the venue, set a motivating turf for members to have fun and frolic. The program started with ice-breaker game so that the group could mingle and mix with each other. The group split into three teams and wore



different color T-shirts. Various fun filled team games were arranged with healthy competition and enjoyed by all ages. The climax of the day was the women's and men's tug-of-war on the lovely beachfront, a real crowd puller.

A sumptuous and delicious Arabic lunch buffet was served which all participants very much enjoyed.

In the post lunch session the picnic committee had arranged a live music and dance staged by the participating family members as a variety entertainment and to climax it all an enthralling bingo game was the last event of the day where a lot of gifts were won by the members.

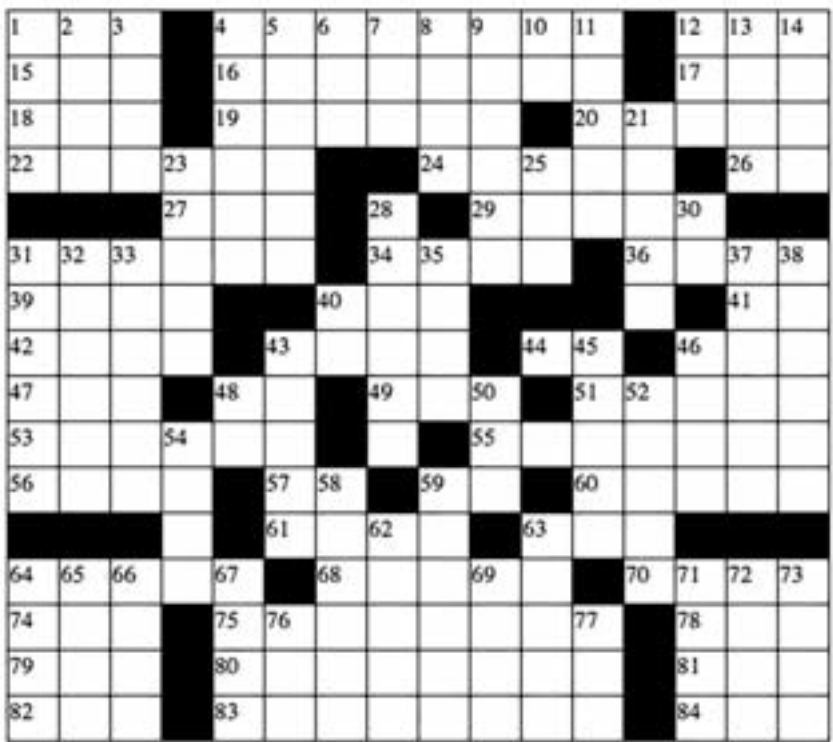
The day concluded with a gala prize distribution to

all winning team members in the group games conducted during the day. Treasurer Vijayakumar Menon proposed vote of thanks and he made special reference to immense support received from Ladies Wing for the success of the picnic. NAFO once again is proud and thankful to all its esteemed members for having made this outdoor "Family Day", a grand success.





CROSSWORD 2100



ACROSS

- 1.The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- 4. Designed for defense against armored vehicles.
- 12. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 15. (informal) Of the highest quality.
- 16. Italian painter and sculptor and engineer and scientist and architect.
- 17. Primitive predaceous North American fish covered with hard scales and having long jaws with needle-like teeth.
- 18. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- 19. A linear unit of measurement (equal to 6 feet) for water depth.
- 20. Jordan's port.
- 22. Move away from a place into another direction.
- 24. A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
- 26. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- 27. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity equal to 10 decibels.
- 29. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus Draba having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scape or leafy stems.
- 31. Not subject to change or variation especially in behavior.
- 34. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 36. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- 39. Informal terms for a meal.
- 41. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- 42. A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
- 44. Being one more than one hundred.
- 47. (prefix) Reverse of or absence of.
- 49. A young woman making her debut into society.
- 51. An island republic on Nauru Island.
- 53. Pertaining to or containing any of a group of organic compounds of nitrogen derived from ammonia.
- 55. Submersible vessel for one or two persons.
- 56. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.
- 57. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
- 60. Remove from memory or existence.
- 61. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- 64. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- 68. (South African) A camp defended by a circular formation of wagons.
- 70. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 74. Slender bristlelike appendage found on the bracts of grasses.
- 75. A large estate in Spanish-speaking countries.
- 78. The act of slowing down or falling behind.
- 79. Wild and domestic cattle.
- 80. One who agitates.
- 81. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
- 82. In or of the month preceding the present one.
- 83. Any lichen of the genus Lecanora.
- 84. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.

DOWN

- 1. Any of a group of Indic languages spoken in Kashmir and eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan.
- 2. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
- 3. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
- 4. King of Wessex.
- 5. With neatness.
- 6. A small amount (especially of a drink).
- 7. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydrazid) used to treat tuberculosis.
- 8. A member of the Pueblo people living in northern New Mexico.
- 9. A large fleet.
- 10. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- 11. Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
- 12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 13. A small cake leavened with yeast.
- 14. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- 21. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 23. Lower in esteem.
- 25. Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
- 28. The basic monetary unit of Portugal.
- 30. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 32. A city in west central Washington on an arm of Puget Sound south of Seattle.
- 33. Relating to or being a member of an ethnic group.
- 35. (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
- 37. (Greek mythology) Son of Daedalus.
- 38. The 2nd longest European river.
- 40. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- 43. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
- 45. Located inward.
- 46. Type genus of the Musaceae.
- 48. A heavy brittle diamagnetic trivalent metallic element (resembles arsenic and antimony chemically).
- 50. The rate at which heat is produced by an individual in a resting state.
- 52. Open to or abounding in fresh air.
- 54. Type genus of the Nepidae.
- 58. Derived from or containing calcium or lime.
- 59. Of or relating to or characteristic of the prehistoric Aegean civilization.
- 62. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
- 63. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
- 65. Absent without permission.
- 66. In or of the present month.
- 67. Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
- 69. (prefix) Within.
- 71. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- 72. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- 73. A city in northern India.
- 76. How long something has existed.
- 77. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.

Monday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Deep thought and meditation may be in order. The easy way is not always the best way. You may have learned the biggest rewards come with the biggest challenges. All work and no play also can cause your sensitivity to be stifled. Work on finding a balance between your personal life and career. We all need to step back and take a deep breath sometime. This is your time to breathe. Personal growth is a priority. Do not let pursuit of wealth and your career stand in the way of this.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

What a day! It seems as everything is happening all at once. It is all good news. Things just don't get any better than this. Today is a day you will find easy solutions to old problems. A day of happiness. You may find you have a special bond with someone older or in authority. You may feel as if you are living in a fairytale. Enjoy your time to shine.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

It is time to get your affairs in order. Focus on your health. Develop new and healthy routines and stick to them. A new and improved you will be the results of these actions. A healthy body will create a healthier mind. Out with the old and in with the new. Treat every day of your life as it the gift it truly is. If you listen to your body, it will tell you exactly what it needs. Aches and pains are there for a reason. Respect what your body is trying to tell you and provide what it is asking for



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A desire to fit in and become part of the crowd seems to come over you today. You will find great satisfaction surrounding yourself with others. Playing a part in the lives of those you care deeply for is where you will find the most satisfaction. Different opinions and being able to share your thoughts with others will be very beneficial to you today. Seeing problems from the eyes of someone else always seems to make finding solutions easier and helps you put things into perspective. This should be a very enlightening time for you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a time that choices you make concerning your living situation could leave you in a bind. Think long and hard before you act and look for alternate solutions to any problems you are dealing with. You may feel isolated and as if you are not getting the support you need now. A desire for a social life may come over you. Be sure to choose your company wisely. Remember when it comes to friends, quantity is never better than quality. Good times could go south quickly this evening if you make the wrong selection of company. Try to clear your mind and make an attempt to connect with one of your longtime true friends this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Just because something is easy doesn't mean it is the right thing to do or the right way to handle a situation. You may find yourself involved in a situation you need to put great thought into before you act. Actions have consequences. Be sure you are ready to face them. Hard work and determination will help you acquire your goal. Remember, avoid taking the easy way out.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Phonetic Alphabet

Find and circle the Phonetic Alphabet words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional word from the Phonetic Alphabet.



ALPHA	HOTEL	OSCAR	UNIFORM
BRAVO	INDIA	PAPA	VICTOR
CHARLIE	JULIET	QUEBEC	WHISKEY
DELTA	KILO	ROMEO	X-RAY
ECHO	LIMA	SIERRA	YANKEE
FOXTROT	MIKE	TANGO	ZULU
GOLF			



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are pumped. You feel as any and all goals are within your reach. You have the strength and determination to make great things happen. Success is not an option. You feel healthy and natural. A positive attitude is your best quality now. You have found yourself in a sense of divine wanderlust. You are able to deeply explore your feelings now and find yourself in touch with new needs, wants, and emotions. Enjoy this.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today may find you feeling as you encounter a road block at every turn. Perhaps, today is not the day for big decisions. You may find yourself a bit frustrated and preferring a bit of isolation. You are simply not in the mood for people. You may feel as if you are not able to get your point across to anyone and may feel greatly misunderstood. You could find yourself at odds with those close to you and should remember to try and remain calm as conflict and confrontation seem to be seeking your company today. Today would be a great day for reorganizing and reflection to get yourself back where you want to be.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

All eyes are on you today and that is just what you crave. You have a great desire to be the center of attention. You crave appreciation for your gifts and talents. This will be a time you are able to look back on with pride. You are drawn to romance. This is a great time to spend with a special someone. Share your passion, whether it be cooking a meal together or painting a picture. Involve the one you love in a project tonight. This may bring you closer and the results good be amazing.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You've made a breakthrough in a relationship. Your patience has paid off. Don't take anything for granted though. This one will require continuing cultivation. A small conflict could undo all of your work. You can be assertive without being aggressive. You can make suggestions and not demands. The reward is worth the effort.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

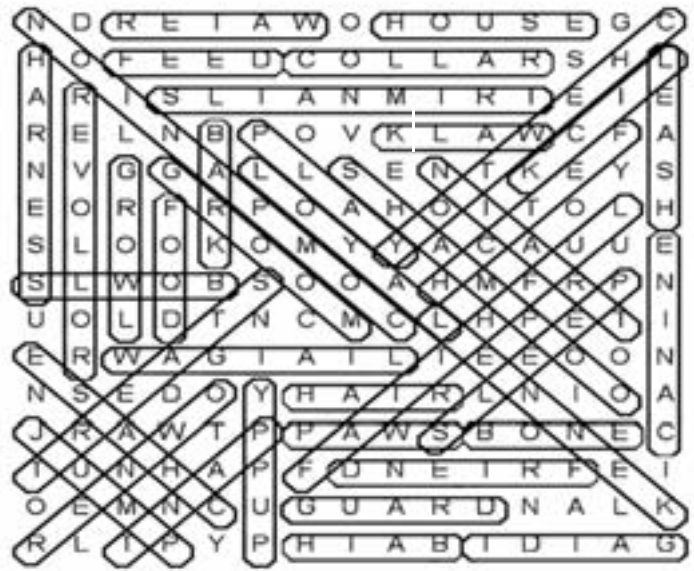
A sense of curiosity is overwhelming today. If you have a tendency for addiction, you want to be aware of your use of the internet. The temptations offered by social media, games, and unhealthy sites can be as real as the lures of alcohol and drugs. You may want to take stock of the time you spend on your electronic devices. Be aware how this time affects your health and outlook. Does it contribute to your mental health? Does it make you feel better or worse? Is it constructive? Social media can be a good thing; but too much of a good thing can become a negative.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

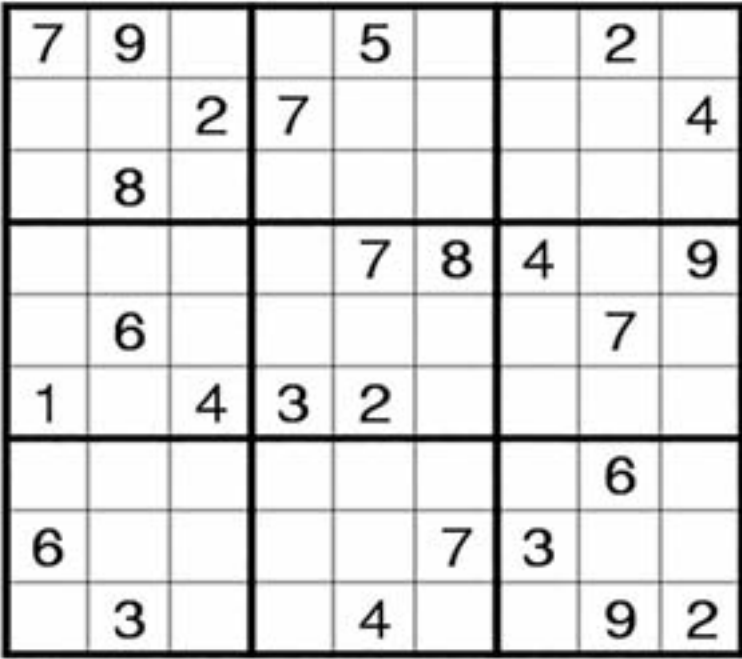
Live, laugh, and love. We see this saying everywhere we turn. This is the motto of your day. Your wit and sense of humor attracts others to you today. You are a ray of sunshine in the lives of many. A positive attitude is the only attitude to have. Others admire this about you and are drawn to you. This is an excellent time to present new ideas to others and perhaps ask someone to come on board concerning your most recent venture. Share the wealth and surround yourself with like-minded supportive people.

Pet Dog

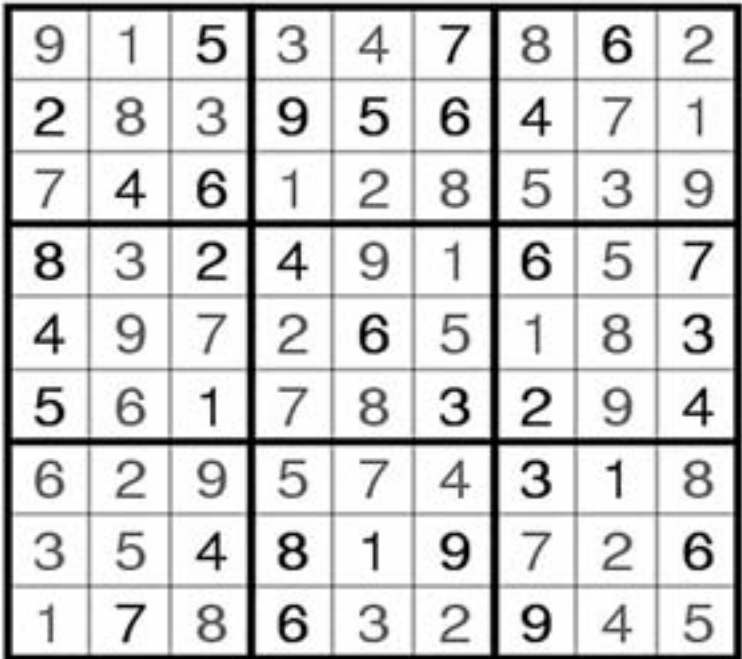


The hidden message is: DOGS LOVE YOU UNCONDITIONALLY

Daily SuDoku



Monday's Solution





# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2019



This combination of pictures created on January 1, 2019 shows a sound and light show under the theme 'fraternity' projected on the Arc de Triomphe at the west end of the Champs-Elysees avenue, part of the New Year's celebrations in the French capital Paris. — AFP photos



Fireworks explode at the Burj Khalifah, said to be the world's tallest building, on New Year's Eve to welcome 2019 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



The youngest couple, groom Jimmy (left) and his bride Rizka, both 19, join over 500 other couples in a mass wedding event in Jakarta.

## Big Apple joins in ringing in New Year after rough 2018

New York City's iconic crystal ball dropped as usual and rain-soaked crowds in Times Square cheered and smooched in celebration, as Americans joined revelers around the world in welcoming the New Year on Tuesday and saying goodbye to a tumultuous 2018. For many, the sparkling sphere's time-honored descent came after hours spent in cold, wet weather—a wait made easier by performances from entertainers such as Christina Aguilera, Sting and Snoop Dogg. Just before the ball fell, Bebe Rexha sang John Lennon's "Imagine," and in the first moments of 2109 many in the square sang along as Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York," boomed from loudspeakers.

The festivities in New York and elsewhere in the US were the latest stop in a celebratory wave that swept west across the globe from Asia to Europe before reaching America. Out west, fireworks lit up the sky over the Embarcadero in San Francisco and vendors sold pretty, lighted balloons. Los Angeles City Hall was illuminated in red and violet.

In Rio de Janeiro, the Christ the Redeemer statue briefly came to colorful life through light projections while pyrotechnics lit up more than two million white-clad Brazilians dancing to free concerts on Copacabana Beach below. The global party kicked off on Sydney's waterfront with the Australian city's biggest-ever fireworks display, thrilling 1.5 million people. Signage beamed onto a bridge pylon got the year wrong—it said happy 2018 — but city officials laughed off the gaffe.

In Hong Kong, hundreds of thousands packed streets along Victoria Harbor for a spectacular 10-minute show that illuminated the night. In the Indonesian capital Jakarta, more than 500 couples tied the knot in a free, mass wedding organized by the government to mark the arrival of a new year. Fireworks shows, however, were cancelled out of respect for victims of a December 22 tsunami that killed more than 400 people.

In Japan, locals flocked to temples to ring in 2019. But the night was marred by tragedy in the Japanese capital as



A performer entertains the crowd at Manege square in central Moscow.

a man deliberately drove into a celebratory crowd, injuring nine people, one of them seriously, police said.

### Leaders' addresses

In Dubai, fireworks lit up the sky over the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa, to the delight of onlookers, while nearby Ras Al-Khaima tried to enter the Guinness Book of Records with the world's longest fireworks show. Almost eight years into Syria's civil war, people in Damascus celebrated their first New Year's Eve since regime forces expelled the last rebels and jihadists from the capital's suburbs earlier this year. Dozens of families headed to restaurants and bars in the Old City. Among them was university student Kinda Haddad, who had decided to leave home to celebrate for the first time in years. "This area was really dangerous in previous years. A mortar round could have fallen on the area at any moment," the 24-year-old said, alluding to past rebel fire on the capital.

Russia saw in the new year over several time zones. Concerts and light shows featured in Moscow city parks, and more than 1,000 ice rinks opened for merry-makers. But

a tower block gas explosion that killed at least four people cast a shadow over festivities. In his annual New Year's address broadcast just before midnight, President Vladimir Putin called on Russias to work together to "increase well-being and quality of life".

In Paris, fireworks and a light show were held on the Champs Elysees, with "yellow vest" anti-government protesters among the 300,000-strong crowd. French President Emmanuel Macron, in a televised address, acknowledged his government "can do better" but added: "I believe in us".

In Berlin, music lovers partied at the Brandenburg Gate. London ushered in the new year by celebrating its relationship with Europe, despite Britain's impending departure from the European Union. Mayor Sadiq Khan said the capital would remain "outward looking" after Brexit. In some African countries, election considerations shadowed New Year revelry.

Election officials in the Democratic Republic of Congo were busy counting votes from Sunday's presidential election. As the world celebrates, many are wondering whether the turmoil witnessed in 2018 will spill over into the next year. In Britain, the political row over Brexit was one of the key stories of this year, and is still to be resolved ahead of Britain's scheduled March 29 departure. US President Donald Trump dominated headlines in 2018, ramping up a trade war with China, quitting the Iran nuclear deal, moving the US embassy to Jerusalem and meeting his North Korean counterpart Kim Jong Un.

Kim warned on Tuesday that while Pyongyang wanted good relations with Washington, it might consider a change of approach if the US maintained its sanctions. In Syria President Bashar Al-Assad is reasserting control after Trump's shock announcement of a US troop withdrawal from the country. The war in Yemen, which has killed about 10,000 people since 2014 and left some 20 million at risk of starvation, could take a crucial turn in 2019 after a ceasefire went into effect in mid-December.—AFP



Fireworks explode over the Atlantis Hotel at The Palm Jumeirah, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



Fireworks explode behind the quadriga of Berlin's landmark the Brandenburg Gate to usher in the New Year.



This handout out photo provided by Riotur (Rio tourism board) shows a view of Christ the Redeemer above Rio De Janeiro during the new year fireworks celebration on January 1, 2019.



Fireworks explode over Victoria Harbor during New Year celebrations in Hong Kong.



Revelers enjoy the concerts during New Year's Eve at Times Square celebrations.





## Fly in style with Turkish Airlines

A media delegation flew in Turkish Airlines' Business Class, where he had the most pleasurable experience, with mouth-watering dishes, latest in-flight entertainment system and comfortable seating. Business Class offers high level comfort with special features such as

in-chair massage, reading lamp, power supply, and the facility to screen off your own private area. The flying chefs present the finest examples of Turkish and world cuisine, served up on stylish porcelain tableware. Turkish airlines flies to more than 100 countries worldwide and sepa-

rates itself from its competitors by continuously developing its innovative approach in this regard, and permanently investing in its workforce which regarded as the most important factor in going from strength to strength by the carrier.



## Explore Istanbul and Helsinki with Turkish Airlines and LHW



Awarded with City of Design status by UNESCO, Helsinki is a modern city that offers functional design, unique gastronomy and maritime appeal. Helsinki, the capital of Finland is a compact city easily explored on foot. Design, architecture, culture and shopping are all great exploration angles and large park areas, forests, lakes, and the coastline with numerous islands sprinkled off it make certain there's no shortage of natural presence. Needless to say, there's something going on in Helsinki every day of the year.



A media delegation from Kuwait was invited to explore this enchanted city by Turkish airline. The journey embarked with a stopover in Istanbul's very first 5-star luxury hotels in Istanbul, The Grand Tarabya which has hosted generations since 1907 with the highest quality and has been a landmark of the area. Combining Turkish hospitality with high standards in service and architecture, The Grand Tarabya is a classic in local collective memory with its unique location has been one of the most prestigious hotels in Turkey. The media delegation was really impressed by the hospitality that was offered by the Grand Tarabya's General Manager Cansu Yorukoglu.

The Grand Tarabya, built in 1966, debuted its life as "Tarabya Tokatliyan" which was rebranded as "Buyuk Tarabya Otel". With all its glory and glamour, the hotel was entirely rebuilt and rebranded after the hotel was bought by Bayraktar Holding. Since five years The Grand Tarabya is being a member of Leading Hotels of the World (LHW), has been hosting generations with the highest quality.

### Therapia spa

The 4500 square-meter luxury Therapie Spa at The Grand Tarabya is the perfect escape from the hard-earned tensions and stresses. With most exclusive therapies and treatments and encased in floor-to-ceiling windows with spectacular views of the magnificent Bosphorus, the natural daylight of the Therapie Spa will complete your vacation for the body and soul. The brilliant combination of Therapie Spa with the fully equipped state-of-the-art fitness center is brought



together for the entire well-being experience you desire to get. The hotel's Spa area will provide you endless relaxations during mental vacation, while the active area will revitalize you and wake all your senses.

### Kempinski

Dating back to the 17th century, Ciragan Palace Kempinski Istanbul is the one and only Ottoman Imperial Palace and Hotel on the Bosphorus and it is unique in every sense. With its splendid style, superb location, fascinating view and resort ambiance, including a spacious green garden with palm trees, it has been an Istanbul icon since its opening.

With its 313 rooms, including 20 suites in the hotel and 11 suites in the historical palace, it reflects a harmonious blend of the heritage, haute couture service and Turkish hospitality ideal for leisure and the business travelers alike. With 80 percent of rooms offering a Bosphorus view, rooms facing the Bosphorus or the

Yildiz Park, which was once the hunting forest of the Sultans, are spacious, comfortable and offer a fine definition of refined luxury. Rooms with a Bosphorus view can see the Asian coast from Europe, and depending on the wing they are located in they may have a view of the Old City, including the famous Maiden's Tower or the Bosphorus Bridge.

During their time at the hotel, guests may also enjoy rich variety of restaurants and feel themselves like an oasis in the city center with its extensive leisure facilities including an infinity pool, spa services and spacious lush green garden which is exclusively available only for Ciragan Palace Kempinski. The infinity pool located in the gardens of Ciragan Palace Kempinski Istanbul also gives a feeling of floating on the Bosphorus and is heated in winter and open all year. It is also numerous featured as the best pool in the city via many leading local and international publications.

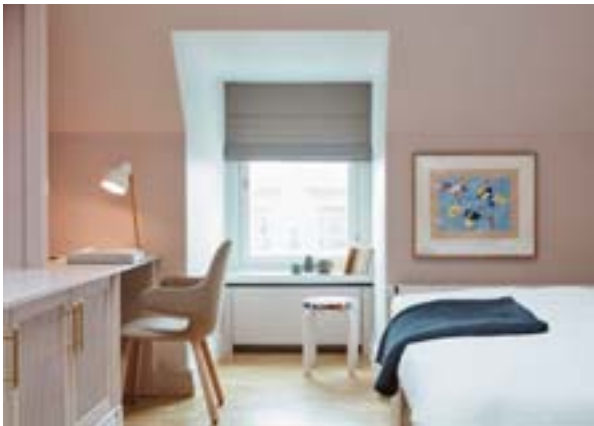






Helsinki

After embracing the historical city of Istanbul, Turkish Airlines set course to the ultimate winter destination in Finland - Helsinki, which is only 3 hours 30 minutes away. Also known as "the Daughter of the Baltic," Finland's capital city Helsinki sits on a peninsula and is nestled right against the water. Bringing together nature, sea and history, it's a place where the sun never sets in summer, and never rises in winter. It's a great city for those who like surprises.



Finland's southern capital displays layers of history while modern architecture and cutting-edge style stake the city's claim to the future. Hotel Kamp has been the landmark of Helsinki since it was established in 1887. As the leading luxury hotel in Finland, Hotel Kamp offers guests both prestigious frames for the stay and all the modern luxuries and services of a five star Grand Hotel. Hotel Kamp is like a celebrity of the Finnish hotel business, the one everyone knows and whose fame and success are both envied and admired. Kamp is a hotel for cosmopolitan, quality-conscious, fashionable, cultivat-



ed, demanding customers. Staying here has nothing to do with age or occupation: it is all about lifestyle - at Hotel Kamp, the customer always expects to receive the very best.

While Hotel Kamp has been the landmark of Helsinki's growth into a national and European capital, it has also provided a residence for Finnish artists, ruling elite and intelligentsia. Its history has been colorful and it certainly has been growing and developing alongside Helsinki.

Kamp's rich, prestigious past continues to define its soul and being, while it offers all the modern luxuries and services one can desire. Kamp wishes to maintain many of the traditional and timeless elements embedded in its and city's past and to integrate them with modern luxury features to balance heritage with high functionality. This will create the best overall hotel experience.

Hotel Kamp contains 179 rooms. These luxurious rooms range from a Deluxe room to the illustrious Mannerheim Suite which boasts a maximum floor space of 258m2. Additionally, the hotel is fitted with ten conference rooms for meetings and banquets, with the popular Mirror Room being the jewel in the crown.

Hotel Kamp Brasserie, with a magnificent view of the Esplanadi Park, is the choice for elegant and pleasurable moments. Our 24-hour room service and exclusive concierge service will make your dreams come true. And if you are driving, our valet will park the car for



you. Bellboys will, of course, bring your luggage to your room. Our stay at the hotel was an exceptional experience and very welcoming by the Hotel Kamp's General Manager Tuomas A. Liewendahl.

Hotel St. George

Opened in May 2018, Hotel St. George presents 148 guestrooms and five suites spread across an historic building located opposite the capital's Old Church Park. Rooted in this thriving neighborhood, the hotel is a re-imagining of the 'grand hotel' in the most contemporary sense and meets tomorrow's travelers with a seamless amalgamation of new luxury, and authentic, original experiences.

The result is a property that brings together a num-

ber of national creative from the realms of art, gastronomy and design with a concept and script that combines various touch points-from alchemy and science, to culture and enlightenment-for unforgettable stays defined by holistic wellbeing and contemporary design. A new icon has emerged.

Located in a city that spends a significant amount of time cloaked in darkness, Hotel St. George presents a series of singular social spaces which invite guests and locals alike to lounge, dine and relax. Restaurant Andrea, helmed by Mehmet Gurs, is a contemporary destination restaurant that marries Nordic and Mediterranean flavors via a menu of sharing plates and slow cooked meats, served in an atmospheric space filled with wall-mounted sofas and wooden chairs.







Barbie doll prototypes are displayed at a workshop in the Mattel design center as the iconic doll turns 60 in El Segundo. — AFP photos



A Barbie doll prototype is displayed at a workshop in the Mattel design center as the iconic doll turns 60 in El Segundo.



Barbie dolls are displayed at a workshop in the Mattel design center as the iconic doll turns 60.

# Barbie will soon be 60 — and is still going strong

She is turning 60 this year and still doesn't have a single wrinkle. Blonde or brunette, slender or curvy, black or white, princess or president, Barbie is a forever favorite for young girls, even if she has caused controversy over the years. The iconic doll has evolved to keep up with the times-check out her Twitter feed. And despite fierce competition in the toy industry, 58 million Barbies are sold each year in more than 150 countries. "In an industry where success today is three to five years, 60 years is a huge deal!" said Nathan Baynard, director of global brand marketing for Barbie.

"The problem here is not an 11.5-inch plastic object. The problem is the larger culture and the idea of femininity." In 1965, four years before Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon, Barbie became an astronaut. In 1968, the first black Barbie doll, a friend named Christie, hit store shelves. Lisa McKnight, senior vice president and global general manager for the Barbie brand, said that today, 55 percent of the dolls sold around the world have neither blonde hair nor blue eyes. Mattel has more than 100 people working in the El Segundo design studio, a massive hangar-like building wedged between Los Angeles International Airport and a freeway.

Designers begin with a simple sketch. From there on, every bit of a prototype is made by an army of experts—from sculpting the doll using state-of-the-art software and 3D printing to painting the face, styling the hair, choosing fabrics and crafting the clothing patterns.

The entire design process for a new Barbie can last 12 to 18 months. Then, the prototype is sent from the California workshop to factories in China and Indonesia for mass production. "Sometimes, you see her on a shelf and then it gets back to you: oh yes, I designed this one!" Nuera said with a smile.

## Instagram photo shoots

Barbie is not only a toy store success-she has a massive social media presence, and is something of an "influencer," with millions of followers. She has an actual identity: Barbie Millicent Roberts, who hails from the made-up town of Willows in the Midwest. And now, she speaks directly to girls about her life, and important current topics. In 2018, the brand launched a sweeping campaign to help young girls close the so-called "Dream Gap"-using Barbie to teach them to believe in themselves, and not to buy into sexist gender stereotypes.

Barbie has a hair stylist, makeup artist and photographer who travel with her "for real" in the United States and abroad for Instagram photo sessions (check out @barbiestyle). The account has nearly two million followers. So, does Barbie have it all as she hits 60, but remains forever young, still single and without kids (so far)? "The narrative of the Barbie brand is that she's a young woman and she's independent and pursuing careers," McKnight said. — AFP



Barbie doll prototypes are seen at a workshop in the Mattel design center.

Around the world, Barbie is as universally known as Coca-Cola or McDonald's, Baynard said during a recent visit to Mattel's design studio in El Segundo, a suburb of Los Angeles. In all, more than one billion Barbie dolls have been sold since she made her debut at the American Toy Fair in New York on March 9, 1959. She was invented by Ruth Handler, the co-founder of Mattel, who was inspired by her own children to create the doll. "Her daughter Barbara was limited in the choices of her toys-the only ones were baby dolls," Baynard recounted.

"The only role she could imagine through that play was caregiver, mother," whereas Handler's son "could imagine being an astronaut, cowboy, pilot, surgeon." Barbie is, of course, a shortened version of Barbara. The doll was supposed to teach girls "that they had choices, that they could be anything. In 1959, it was a radical idea!" Baynard said. Barbie was an instant success. In the first year, 300,000 dolls were sold, he added.



Stylist Carlyle Nuera works on fashion for Barbie doll prototypes.

## Unattainable ideal?

From the start, Barbie's pinup measurements didn't immediately seem all that feminist, and would spark criticism for decades to come. "In 1959, her body structure was exaggerated to match the aesthetics of the time and the fabric available," said Barbie designer Carlyle Nuera. Since the blonde beauty first hit stores, and after a torrent of complaints over what was seen as unrealistic proportions, Mattel has made many changes-introducing multiple body types and dozens of skin tones. MG Lord, author of "Forever Barbie," also argued that the original criticisms were unwarranted. "She is what the child wants her to be. How a child sees the Barbie doll is often framed by how the mother of that child feels about the idea of femininity," Lord told AFP.

## Barbie turns 60 - a few key dates

- Here are a few key dates in the history of Barbie, the iconic doll turning 60 in 2019:
- March 9, 1959:** Barbie makes her debut at the American Toy Fair in New York.
  - 1961:** Creation of Ken, Barbie's on-off boyfriend. The two dolls are named for creator Ruth Handler's children.
  - 1965:** Barbie becomes an astronaut, four years before Neil Armstrong walks on the Moon. To date, she has tried nearly 200 careers.
  - 1965:** Barbie gets bendable legs.
  - 1967:** The first celebrity Barbie is issued-in the form of British model Twiggy.
  - 1968:** Mattel markets the first black doll, a friend for Barbie named Christie.
  - In 1980,** the first Black Barbie is marketed.
  - 1970:** The first fully articulated Barbie is created.
  - 1992:** Barbie is a presidential candidate for the first time.
  - 2004:** Barbie dumps Ken for a surfer named Blaine, the brother of one of her friends. But the relationship only lasts a short time.
  - February 14, 2011:** Ken officially returns to Barbie's life.
  - 2014:** Mattel produces Ella, a bald friend of Barbie suffering from cancer. She is given free to children going through chemotherapy who have lost their hair.
  - 2016:** Barbie makes the front page of Time magazine when she is introduced in several new looks: tall, petite and curvy. — AFP



Barbie doll prototypes are displayed at a workshop in the Mattel design center.



Stylists Nini Tun (left) and Carlyle Nuera speak at a workshop in the Mattel design center.



Ken doll prototypes are seen at a workshop in the Mattel design center.



Framed portraits of famous Barbie doll designers are displayed at a workshop in the Mattel design center.



Barbie doll prototype painter Alexandra Stoyan Lopez adds color at a workshop in the Mattel design center.



A designer adds hair to a Barbie doll prototype.



Stylist Carlyle Nuera works on fashion for Barbie doll prototypes.



A designer adds hair to a Barbie doll prototype.



# Classifieds

Thursday, January 3, 2019



Now you can browse

[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)

e-mail: [info@kuwaittimes.net](mailto:info@kuwaittimes.net)



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



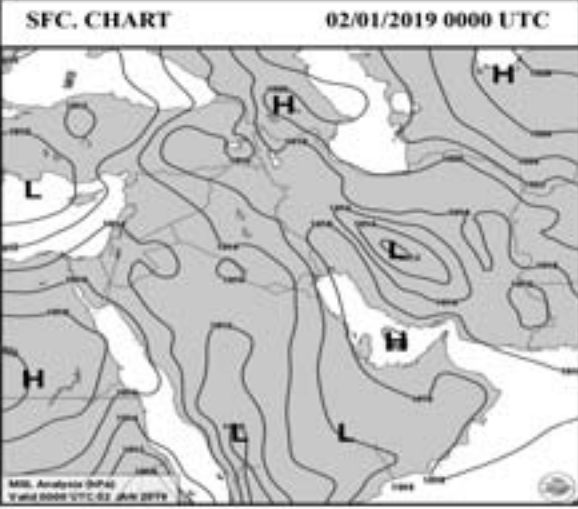
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)



## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h with a chance for drizzle at times.

**BY NIGHT:** Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 42 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div><div>SFC. CHART</div><div>02/01/2019 0000 UTC</div></div>	
KUWAIT CITY	-- °C	-- °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	13 °C		
ABDALY	22 °C	12 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	21 °C	14 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	19 °C	15 °C		
SALMIYAH	19 °C	16 °C		
AHMADI	19 °C	17 °C		
NUWAISIB	22 °C	13 °C		
WAFRA	21 °C	12 °C		
SALMY	22 °C	12 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	01/03	Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain at times with a chance for rising	24 °C	14 °C	SE-NW	15 - 45 km/h
Friday	01/04	Mostly Sunny	20 °C	09 °C	NE	10 - 32 km/h
Saturday	01/05	Clouds will increase gradually	19 °C	08 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h
Sunday	01/06	Partly cloudy	23 °C	12 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:18
Sunrise	06:43
Zuhr	11:52
Asr	14:43
Sunset	17:01
Isha	18:23

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	18 °C
MIN. Temp.	09 °C
MAX. RH	99 %
MIN. RH	43 %
MAX. Wind	N 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

## NOW HIRING

Oceanic General Trading and Contracting Company, Kuwait, is looking for a competent person to develop their Medical Distribution Department

### SALES EXECUTIVE

for Physiotherapy, Dermatology and Rehabilitation Departments.

### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Scout for brands and increase the Company's product portfolio. Develop, implement and monitor annual sales forecast. Increase sales and market share of the Company in M.O.H and Private Hospitals through sales execution.

### PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Biomedical Engineering (B.E./B.Tech) / Business Administration (MBA)

### REQUIREMENTS

2-4 years working in Medical Distribution.

If interested please send your resume to [info@oceanickwt.com](mailto:info@oceanickwt.com)



## NOTICE

December 13, 2018

Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy Bandi, son of Mr. Obul Reddy Bandi, Indian national resident of 2-268-E-1, Mehru Nagar, Chinna Chowk, Kadapa Town, YSR District - 516002, AP and Ms. Sarah Sazon Aldabon, Philippines national, daughter of Mr. Cesar Buscor Aldabon, resident of 39 F Calderon, St. Sta Lucia, Novaliches Quezon City, Philippines, both presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email ([welfare2@indembkw.gov.in](mailto:welfare2@indembkw.gov.in), [welfaresection@indembkw.org](mailto:welfaresection@indembkw.org)) letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(To attopliwar)  
Second Secretary (Cons)  
and Marriage Officer.

Embassy of India, Kuwait.  
Email: [welfare2@indembkw.gov.in](mailto:welfare2@indembkw.gov.in)



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

## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 3/1/2019										Departure Flights on Thursday 3/1/2019									
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15				
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	JZR	602	Baku	14:10	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05	JZR	394	Kozhikode	14:15				
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	MSC	502	Alexandria	00:05	IAW	158A	Bahrain	14:40				
KAC	503	Beirut	00:45	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	IAW	158B	Al Najaf	14:55				
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	14:25	JZR	707	Luxor	01:00	KAC	661	Al Najaf	14:55				
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KAC	618	Doha	14:40	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:15	QTR	1079	Abu Dhabi	15:00				
SAI	441	Lahore	00:50	FDB	8065	Dubai	14:40	JZR	111	Doha	01:45	KNE	382	Doha	15:00				
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50	IRA	666	Taif	15:00				
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:00	SAI	442	Lahore	01:50	FDB	060	Esfahan	15:10				
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	JZR	125	Dubai	15:10				
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:25	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25				
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40				
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30	FDB	8066	Dubai	15:40				
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	KAC	562	Amman	15:35	IGO	1758	Kochi	02:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45				
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:40	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50				
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55				
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05				
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	KAC	563	Amman	16:10				
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55	KAC	619	Doha	16:10				
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	118	New York	16:05	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	619	Doha	16:10				
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20				
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	JZR	212	Jeddah	16:25	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35				
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	542	Cairo	16:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40				
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	502	Beirut	16:30	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40				
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	QTR	1072	Doha	16:35	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45				
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	FDB	051	Dubai	16:40	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55				
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	FEG	341	Sohag	16:55	DHX	173	Bahrain	05:30	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00				
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JZR	114	Doha	17:10	FDB	070	Dubai	05:50	KAC	675	Dubai	17:05				
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:35	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	JZR	215	Jeddah	06:00	KAC	691	Muscat	17:15				
SGL	9053	Tbilisi	04:40	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15				
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	JZR	104	Bahrain	17:45	JZR	713	Sohag	06:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40				
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:45	SGL	9053	IL76	06:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45				
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	JZR	121	Dubai	06:35	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45				
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	FDB	063	Dubai	18:15	THY	771	Istanbul	06:40	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50				
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	JZR	124	Dubai	18:20	JZR	251	Amman	07:05	FEG	242	Alexandria	17:55				
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	QTR	1080	Doha	18:30	KAC	167	Paris	07:10	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00				
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	RJA	643	Amman	07:15	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00				
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	RJA	640	Amman	19:00	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10				
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:20	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15				
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	RBG	555	Alexandria	19:25	KAC	173	Munich	08:20	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20				
KAC	362	Colombo	06:10	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	JZR	601	Baku	08:30	KAC	621	Doha	18:25				
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	NIA	161	Cairo	19:30	KAC	163	MXP	08:40	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40				
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:30	BAW	156	London	08:50	JZR	253	Amman	18:40				
BAW	157	London	07:05	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30	FDB	054	Dubai	08:50	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55				
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	19:35	KAC	501	Beirut	09:00	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:20				
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20				
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50	KAC	613	Bahrain	09:05	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30				
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	126	Dubai	19:55	QTR	8512	Doha	09:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30				
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KNE	381	Taif	20:00	KAC	791	Madinah	09:10	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55				
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	620	Doha	20:15	JZR	731	Cairo	09:10	RJA	641	Amman	20:00				
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	DHX	172	Bahrain	20:20	KAC	117	Shannon/New York	09:15	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05				
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	KAC	541	Cairo	09:30	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05				
MSC	411	Asyut	09:00	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15				
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	DLH	624	Dubai	20:35	KAC	101	London	09:45	NIA	162	Cairo	20:30				
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	174	Munich	21:15	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35				
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50				
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55				
IAW	157	Al Najaf	09:55	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55				
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30	KAC	164	MXP	21:25	MSC	412	Asyut	10:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00				
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	168	Paris	21:30	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20				
IRA	675	Lar	10:50	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30				
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50				
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	KAC	676	Dubai	21:45	KAC	617	Doha	10:35	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00				
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	KAC	445	Amsterdam	21:50	KAC	155	Jeddah	10:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10				
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	KLM	564	Amman	21:55	QTR	1071	Istanbul	10:45	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15				
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	574	Mumbai	22:00	IAW	158	Doha	10:55	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15				
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	JAI	405	Sohag	22:00	GFA	214	Al Najaf	11:25	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20				
JZR	252	Amman	12:30	MSC	1082	Doha	22:05	SAW	704	Bahrain	11:30	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25				
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15	IRA	668	Damascus	11:50	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30				
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30				
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	RBG	213	Sohag	22:30	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50				
ABY	121	Sharjah	12:55	KAC	622	Doha	22:30	JZR	405	Kochi	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55				
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:45	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00				
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	KAC	692	Muscat	22:55	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00	MSC	406	Sohag	23:00				
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	BBC	043	Dhaka	23:00	JZR	113	Doha	13:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00				
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	13:55	MSC	501	Alexandria	23:05	ABY	122	Sharjah	13:35	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05				
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	14:00	GEC	8456	Frankfurt	23:10	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40	RBG	214	Sohag	23:10				
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20				
KAC	792	Madinah	14:05	JZR	262	Beirut	23:55												



## Yemeni hip-hop dancers barred from dancing despite Qaeda exit

**MUKALLA, Yemen:** Five Yemeni hip-hop dancers thought their problems had ended when the Islamist militants who had banned them from performing were defeated in the port city of Mukalla nearly three years ago by forces backed by the United Arab Emirates. But last month Yemeni security forces briefly detained the five members of the WaxOn band, broke their equipment and only released the dancers after they had signed a document saying they would stop dancing hip-hop in public. “The police said it was a religious sin,” band member Salman Basuad said. Another band member, Mohammed Al-Ameeri, said: “The officers were very violent...They treated us as if we were terrorists.”

## Netflix drops satire episode...

Continued from Page 1

we received a valid legal request - and to comply with local law,” a Netflix spokeswoman said in a statement Tuesday. The streaming giant added it had received a takedown request citing an article of its cybercrime law as the reason. Article 6 of the law states that “production, preparation, transmission, or storage of material impinging on public order, religious values, public morals, and privacy, through the information network or computers” is a crime punishable by up to five years in prison and a fine not exceeding 3 million Saudi riyals (\$800,000).

The episode can still be seen in other parts of the world - and in Saudi Arabia on YouTube. The

## Indian father, son battle for...

Continued from Page 1

in India, and the Raymond Group today claims to be the world's biggest producer of high-quality worsted wool suits. It is yet another success story for one of South Asia's great entrepreneurial families - different branches of the Singhanian family have interests in cement, dairy and tech. India ranks third in the world for the number of family owned conglomerates, behind China and the United States, according to a recent Credit Suisse report.

And with more than its fair share of power struggles and a new generation itching to take control, some analysts say the country needs more global corporate standards to better govern such businesses. It may help avoid the kind of sparring that happened in the Ambani family. Mukesh Ambani, currently Asia's richest man, fought with his brother Anil for years over the Reliance conglomerate after their father Dhirubhai died without leaving a will. Hostilities were far more intense between liquor and property baron Ponty Chadha and his brother Hardeep, who killed each other in a 2012 shootout as they fought over their company. And assault accusations have flown between billionaires Shivinder and Malvinder Singh as they battle for the family pharmaceutical empire.

Vijaypat Singhania's troubles started after he handed over his 37-percent controlling stake in 2015. Under a 2007 agreement to settle a separate family tussle, Vijaypat says he was supposed to receive an apartment in the Singhanian family's 36-storey JK House in the upmarket Malabar Hill area of Mumbai. India's financial capital. The price agreed was far below the market value of the flat - which is in the tens of millions of dollars - and Gautam advised the Raymond board against selling a valuable company asset.

As the feud escalated, the board also took away Vijaypat's “chairman emeritus” title, accusing him of using abusive language in letters to the company. And he claims he was physically removed from his office and his possessions - including a Padma Bhushan, one of India's top civilian honors - were stolen. Vijaypat,

WaxOn band leader Mohammed Basaud said the ban reminded him of the “Al-Qaeda era” when the dancers were also barred from performing in public. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) ran a mini-state in the southern port city of Mukalla in 2015-16 before being defeated by forces backed by a Saudi-led coalition, which intervened in Yemen's civil war to restore its ousted president, Abd-Rabu Mansour Hadi.

Since AQAP was driven out, Mukalla has been largely peaceful compared to the rest of Yemen, which has been devastated by nearly four years of fighting between the Saudi-led coalition and the Iran-aligned Houthis. WaxOn, formed in 2014, resumed their public performances in 2016, dancing at graduation and birthday parties among other events. Yemenis like coming to the main square of Mukalla to watch the street performers for free.

Basaud, said Mukalla's residents accepted WaxOn and would offer them money to perform, allowing them sometimes to make as much as 40,000 Yemen rials (\$160) for a 10-minute performance. He said the security forces had not moved against other bands performing traditional Yemeni dances on the square. “We just want the security forces to accept our position.. Our equipment and other things were damaged and lost. — Reuters

Netflix spokesperson added that the Saudi government had not asked the company to remove the clips from YouTube, and it had not done so. “Saudi Arabia's censorship of Netflix... is further proof of a relentless crackdown on freedom of expression in the kingdom,” said Samah Hadid, Amnesty's Middle East campaigns director. Karen Attiah, Khashoggi's editor at The Washington Post, said Netflix's action was “quite outrageous”. The Saudi information ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Online platforms and tech companies face increasing scrutiny and growing public skepticism in the face of controversies about data sharing and the steady erosion of privacy. Minhaj, 33, has seen his profile rise steadily in recent years. His routines combine personal history and pointed political commentary wrapped in edgy topical humor. In 2014, he became senior correspondent on Comedy Central's popular “The Daily Show”, and in 2017 was the featured speaker at the White House Correspondents' dinner. — Agencies

who says he has not spoken to his son in two years, now plans to test a recent Indian court ruling that allows parents to take back gifted property from their children under a 2007 law if they do not have their basic needs met.

He describes handing Raymond over to Gautam as “the height of stupidity”, and the start of a campaign to oust him from the 93-year-old business he once helmed. “I would advise parents everywhere not to make the mistake of giving away all your savings to your children during your lifetime,” said the elder Singhanian, an accomplished aviator who in 2005 set the world record for the highest flight in a hot air balloon.

But Gautam has said he was simply doing his job. “It was the right thing to do. My responsibility as a son is different from as chairman of Raymond. Here is a board member (Vijaypat) who is using his position of the board to take company assets,” Gautam told India's Economic Times last year. “I am the victim. What have I done wrong?” Raymond Group has apparently not suffered from the dispute. It reported a 50-percent profit rise for the second quarter of 2018, recently opened a major factory in Ethiopia, and is now exporting to more than 55 countries.

India's corporate family quarrels need to be addressed, according to Pranav Sayta, a partner at the Ernst and Young consultants. “The business environment today is far more complex and the stakes are much higher,” he said. “Culturally too, youngsters today are more impatient and they want to have a say in the business affairs. Some global best practices have not been implemented fully in India,” particularly on separating ownership from management, he added.

And as was the case with the Ambanis and the Chadhas, succession and family politics are often at the core of these bitter disputes. “Family feuds were always there but in light of these factors their probability has gone up several notches now,” said Sayta. “The need to adopt best practices and put in place a clear and robust succession plan is more critical today.” A new style of management made all the difference at Raymond, Gautam Singhania claims. “The whole game for me changed when I took shareholding control from my father,” he told the Economic Times. “I could take a lot of decisions to enhance growth which I was not able to do earlier.” — AFP

“The Trump presidency made a deep descent in December,” he wrote. Romney said he will treat Trump as he would any president, either in or outside his party. “I do not intend to comment on every tweet or fault,” he wrote. “But I will speak out against significant statements or actions that are divisive, racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, dishonest or destructive to democratic institutions.” Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel criticized Romney on Twitter, calling his essay an “attack” on Trump that was “disappointing and unproductive.” McDaniel is Romney's niece. — Agencies

Analyst Nawar Oliver said the opposition - both political and armed - was in dire straits. “The military opposition has no choice except to follow what is decided on an international level,” said the analyst at the Turkey-based Omran Center. It must do this “to preserve what it still has”, he said. Naji Mustafa, a spokesman for the Turkey-backed National Liberation Front rebel group in Idlib, said the international community had dropped the Syrian opposition. “The revolution has been orphaned,” said the 38-year-old, who defected from the Syrian army in 2012. “The whole world abandoned it.”

But in the town of Azaz, close to the Turkish border, lawyer and human rights activist Muthana Nasser was determined years of death and destruction would not go to waste. “The sacrifices and suffering of Syrians will not be in vain,” he said. Whatever the final outcome, “I will tell my children when they grow up about the greatest revolution in contemporary history,” said the father of three. I will recount “how the international community watched the bloodshed of innocents only to denounce it and not intervene to stop the massacres,” he said. — AFP



The Houses of Parliament, comprising the House of Lords and the House of Commons, are pictured on the bank of the River Thames in central London yesterday. — AFP

## Clashes after women enter...

Continued from Page 1

hardliners turning violent. But in a surprise predawn operation yesterday that was heralded by activists but that enraged conservative devotees, police enabled two women to penetrate the temple and then leave again undetected, officials confirmed. Video images showed the 42-year-old women, Kanaka Durga and Bindu Ammini, wearing black tunics with their heads bowed as they rushed in. “We did not enter the shrine by climbing the 18 holy steps but went through the staff gate,” one of the women later told reporters.

As soon as news of yesterday's breach spread, the temple head priest ordered the shrine closed for a purification ritual. It reopened after around an hour. Later clashes were reported between scores of people chanting slogans in front of the state parliament in Kerala's state capital Thiruvananthapuram. Some reportedly set fire to tyres. The standoff petered out around five hours later after police intervened. Five female protesters who tried to barge into the state parliament were arrested.

Journalists were also assaulted in Thiruvananthapuram and in the city of Kollam while clashes were reported elsewhere. Police with batons charged at demonstrators who were trying to enforce a shutdown of shops and businesses in the area called for by the Sabarimala temple hierarchy. Public bus services were suspended after protesters blocked their path and pelted vehicles with stones.

Modi's government did not immediately react to news of the women entering the temple, but activists celebrated. “Watching the visuals of them making their way into the shrine makes me cry in joy - how long it has taken for us to claim space, to write our way into history,” wrote feminist author Meena Kandasamy on Twitter. “This is a good beginning for women in the new year,” said activist Trupti Desai.

The possibility of more confrontations was raised by a call from an umbrella group of rightwing Hindu groups in Kerala, the Sabarimala Karma Samithi, which is supported by the BJP, for a state-wide protest strike today. The BJP called for protesters to be peaceful.

## Six dead in rail crash on Danish...

Continued from Page 1

cargo train and there's a trailer involved in the accident.” Sixteen other passengers were hurt in the accident, but police said none had life-threatening injuries. Police said the drivers of both trains were being questioned and video surveillance footage of the bridge was being examined to determine the cause of the accident. Divers were also searching the waters under the bridge for debris that might provide clues.

Images from the scene showed the cargo train standing still on the tracks, the tarpaulin covers of its carriages torn open in places to reveal jumbled cases of beer, while the metal tracks appeared mangled in places. An unidentified object - presumably the truck trailer - could be seen lying across the front of the passenger train on another track. Rail operator DSB said six people died in the accident, which occurred around 7:30 am (0630 GMT) on the Great Belt Bridge connecting the islands of Zealand, where Copenhagen is located, and Funen. There were 131 passengers and three crew on board.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of condolences to Queen Margrethe of Denmark over the victims of the train crash. In the cable, the Amir extended his condolences over the tragic accident, wishing the injured speedy recovery. 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 to the Danish queen. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem also sent a cable of condolences to Speaker of the Danish parliament Pia Kjaersgaard, expressing his deepest sorrow and grief.

Passenger Heidi Langberg Zumbusch had just

Earlier, the Kerala state president of the BJP described the women's visit as “a conspiracy by the atheist rulers to destroy the Hindu temples”. The party's state president, P S Sreedharan Pillai, told TV channels the BJP would “support the struggles against the destruction of faith by the Communists”. “Let all the devotees come forward and protest this,” he said.

Officials from the main opposition Congress party in the state, in a rare alignment with their main rival for power at the national level, the BJP, also called for protests. “This is treachery ... The government will have to pay the price for the violation of the custom,” K Sudhakaran, vice-president of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee, said in a statement.

The state government defended its decision to protect the women as they went into the temple, saying it was a matter of civil rights. “I had earlier made it clear that the government will provide protection if any women come forward to enter the temple,” said Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Vijayan told a news conference the women faced no obstruction yesterday. It was not immediately clear how they managed to avoid devotees guarding the temple.

September's verdict was the latest progressive ruling from the court, with judges also overturning bans on gay sex and adultery last year - posing a challenge to Modi's traditionalist BJP. In rare comments regarding the Sabarimala temple on Tuesday, Modi - running for a second term in elections later this year - appeared to support the ban, saying the matter was related to tradition. “There are some temples which have their own traditions, where men can't go. And men don't go,” Modi told Indian media.

The restriction on women at Sabarimala, situated on top of a 915-m hill in a tiger reserve that takes hours to climb, reflects a belief - not exclusive to Hinduism - that menstruating women are impure. Traditionalists argue also that the temple deity, Ayyappa, was celibate. Repeated efforts by women to enter the temple since September have been angrily rebuffed by Hindu devotees with police having to step in to escort them away to safety. The Supreme Court is to start hearing a legal challenge to its ruling on Jan 22. Women are still barred from a handful of Hindu temples in India. The entry of women at Sabarimala was taboo for generations and formalized by the Kerala High Court in 1991. — Agencies

boarded the train and taken her seat when the accident happened. “There was a loud crash and the windows started smashing onto our heads. We went flying down onto the floor, and then the train stopped,” she told DR. “We were lucky. The people in the carriage in front of us were not so lucky,” she said, adding that her fellow passengers told her they saw the side of that carriage had been ripped off.

Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen sent condolences to the families of the victims. “Regular Danes on their way to work or on their way home after the holidays have had their lives torn apart. It's deeply saddening. My thoughts are with the victims and their families,” he said. A Funen police spokesman told reporters he could not provide details of the accident, but added: “We know that an object hit the train.” Another passenger, 19-year-old Simon Voldsgaard Tondering, told daily Politiken that the train suddenly began to shake violently. “I looked out the window and there were sparks flying up the side of the train. And then all the windows broke and shards of glass flew over us and panels broke loose. And then everything went black,” he said. “We had to walk over dead bodies lying under the wreckage to help” survivors get out.

Strong winds were reported across Scandinavia overnight Tuesday to yesterday, causing power outages, bridge closures and ferry cancellations. Water levels near Funen were 1.4 to 1.65 m above normal yesterday, according to the Danish meteorological institute DMI. The Great Belt link consists of a road suspension bridge and a railway tunnel between Zealand and the small island of Sprogø, with a bridge for both road and rail traffic between Sprogø and Funen. It is the third-longest suspension bridge in the world, measuring 1.6 km along its main span, and the longest outside Asia.

The bridge was closed for several hours due to the accident. Car traffic later resumed while rail traffic was to remain shut in both directions for the rest of the day. Yesterday's accident was Denmark's deadliest train incident since 1988 when eight people were killed and 72 injured when a train derailed at high speed in Soro, on Zealand. — AFP



## Sports

# Top seed Svitolina crashes out in Brisbane International

## Nadal pulls out of Brisbane with thigh problem

**BRISBANE:** Top seed and defending champion Elina Svitolina crashed out of the Brisbane International at the hands of Belarusian Aliaksandra Sasnovich yesterday. In a replay of last year's final, Sasnovich reversed that result as she ousted Svitolina 6-4, 0-6, 6-3.

The Belarusian displayed some breathtaking shot making in the first set before Svitolina stormed back in the second. But Sasnovich continued to go for her shots and broke Svitolina twice in the third set to seal victory and book a quarter-final against Croatian Donna Vekic.

Vekic continued her good form when she downed Dutchwoman Kiki Bertens in three sets 7-6 (7/5), 1-6, 7-5. Vekic looked in trouble when she was down 4-5 in the third with Bertens serving for the match, but the Croatian fought back to win the next three games and book her place in the quarter-finals.

"I'm really happy to have this kind of match in the first tournament, to see how much I can push myself," she said. "Obviously I can play long, play good and win, so I'm really happy about that."

Estonia's Annet Kontaveit caused a boilover when she beat fourth seeded Czech Petra Kvitova 7-5, 7-6 (7/1). Kontaveit, whose compatriot Kaia Kanepi won this tournament in 2012, was too consistent for Kvitova,

who was backing up after a three-hour first-round win over Danielle Collins late Tuesday afternoon.

"We played each other quite a lot of times last year so I knew it was going to be tough from the beginning," Kontaveit said. "I was just trying to hang in there in the second set. I'm just so happy." Latvian Anastasija Sevastova earlier thrashed British qualifier Harriet Dart 6-2, 6-0.

Former champion Karolina Pliskova downed fellow countrywoman Marie Bouzkova 7-5, 6-2 and will face off against Australia's Alja Tomljanovic in the quarter-finals. Tomljanovic secured her place in the last eight with a 6-2, 7-6 (7/2) win over Britain's Johanna Konta.

Meanwhile, Rafa Nadal has pulled out of the Brisbane International due to a left thigh problem, with the Spaniard saying he did not want to risk an injury ahead of this month's Australian Open.

"It's a small thing that can become a much bigger... when you compete the intensity on the muscle it can get worse," Nadal was quoted as saying by the tournament organisers. "I feel better than I did four days ago... It's a risk to damage my body for one month if I play here." Lucky loser Taro Daniel will replace Nadal in the second round against Jo-Wilfried Tsonga. — Agencies



**BRISBANE:** Ukraine's Elina Svitolina hits a return against Belarus' Aliaksandra Sasnovich during their women's singles second round match at the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

## Medvedev shows Murray there's still work to be done

**BRISBANE:** Russia's Daniil Medvedev showed Andy Murray just how much work he still has to do, when he beat the former world number one in straight sets in the Brisbane International yesterday. Murray is making a comeback to the sport after a disastrous 2018, during which he played just six tournaments and was out of the game for 11 months with a hip injury.

He had a comfortable first round win over James Duckworth but found the step up in class too much against Medvedev, the 22-year-old Russian cruising to a 7-5, 6-2 win in just 80 minutes.

Medvedev is a rising star of the sport, winning seven titles in 2018 on his way to a world ranking of 16. He broke Murray early in the first set and although Murray got back on level terms, Medvedev broke again late in the first set to gain the advantage.

Murray was broken twice at the start of the second to fall behind 0-4 and there was no way back for the 31-year-old Scot. "In the second set I made a few too many mistakes, and obviously there was a period in the match from 5-5 where I lost six games in a row," Murray said.

"And I think when you obviously play better players, I mean he's 15 in the world or so, they will expose any errors that you make in your game or any shots that you're not hitting particularly well. "And he did that tonight." Medvedev will meet Canada's Milos Raonic in the quarter-finals. The huge-serving Raonic fired down 21 aces in his 6-3, 7-6 (7/2) win over Serbian qualifier Miomir Kecmanovic to go with the 18 he served in the first round.

Earlier, Japanese star Kei Nishikori eased past American Denis Kudla 7-5, 6-2. Nishikori had too many answers for Kudla, breaking him towards the end of the first set and twice in the second for a comfortable vic-



**BRISBANE:** Daniil Medvedev of Russia hits a return against Andy Murray of Britain during their men's singles second round match at the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

tory. "After 5-5 I think he dropped a little bit his level, and I was also able to play better," Nishikori said. "I start playing better, playing more aggressive and started getting more rhythm, and my serve got better in the second. I think it was a good first match."

Nishikori will now play sixth seed Grigor Dimitrov in the quarter-finals, a rematch of the 2017 final won by the Bulgarian. Dimitrov played some sublime tennis to down local favourite John Millman 6-3, 6-4.

Nishikori was joined in the quarter-finals by fellow countryman Yasutaka Uchiyama, who stunned British

number one Kyle Edmund 7-6 (8/6), 6-4. Uchiyama, 26, is playing just his fifth tournament on the ATP World Tour and next takes on Frenchman Jeremy Chardy in the quarter-finals.

Chardy came back from losing the first set to beat Australian Nick Kyrgios 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-3. After an even first set, Chardy's game picked up while Kyrgios's fell away. Kyrgios will now fall out of the top 50 for the first time since 2014, while Chardy still has a chance of reaching the top 32 and guaranteeing himself a seeding at the Australian Open. — AFP



**SHENZHEN:** Maria Sharapova of Russia hits a return against Wang Xinyu of China during their women's singles second round match at the Shenzhen Open tennis tournament in Shenzhen in China's southern Guangdong province yesterday. — AFP

## Struggling Sharapova progresses at Shenzhen

**BEIJING:** Former world number one Maria Sharapova qualified for the quarter-finals of the Shenzhen WTA after struggling against China's great tennis hope Wang Xinyu, who was forced to retire from the match in pain.

The fifth-seed Russian was surprised early on by the power of her 17-year-old opponent, who took the final game of the first set 7-6 and broke in the second. But Wang Xinyu had to retire hurt, apparently after feeling pain in her thigh, while she was leading 5-2 in the second set.

"You played unbelievable," Sharapova told Wang, after the Chinese player announced she was retiring from the match, adding that the teenager had a great career ahead of her. "It's not the

way either of us wants to finish the match, win or lose," said Sharapova, who is ranked 29.

"I thought (Wang) was absolutely the dominant player in this match, and had all the opportunities to win it, even though I felt like I was finding my stride and getting a little bit closer to the line and being more aggressive."

Wang won two junior doubles titles last year at two Grand Slam tournaments (at Wimbledon and the Australian Open). She was given a wild card for the tournament in Shenzhen. In the next round, Sharapova takes on top-seed Belorussian Aryna Sabalenka, who had an easy win over Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova yesterday 6-3, 6-3. — AFP

## Zverev, Kerber put Germany on track for Hopman final

**PERTH:** Alexander Zverev and Angelique Kerber steered Germany closer to a second successive Hopman Cup final after winning their singles matches against lower-ranked French opponents in Perth yesterday.

The German top 10 duo, beaten in last year's final of the mixed teams tournament by Swiss duo Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic, made it two wins from as many group outings, beating France 2-1.

Kerber had to come from a set down to beat feisty Alize Cornet, while Zverev squandered a second-set match point before defeating Lucas Pouille in three sets. In the mixed doubles, both sides took a very relaxed attitude to the dead rubber match and the French gained some consolation with a straight sets 4-3, 4-3 win.

Ranked second in the world, Kerber served for the first set in her singles match against the 45th-ranked Cornet, but then dropped three successive games as the Frenchwoman claimed the set. However, Kerber settled and claimed the next two sets to win 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 in just over two hours and maintain her perfect singles record in Perth, with six wins from as many outings. Kerber said Cornet was always a tricky opponent. "She is a fighter," Kerber said. "I had my chances in

the first set, but she was playing good then and I missed a few balls. "I was trying to find my rhythm in the second set, trying to still keep going and then the third set I think it was just two or three points that decided it."

Ranked fourth in the world, Zverev started well against the 32nd-ranked Pouille and took the first set comfortably on the back of a service break in the eighth game. However, the match tightened up in the second set, with both players holding set points. Zverev had a match point during the second set tie-break, while it wasn't until his sixth set point that Pouille levelled the match.

The pair traded service breaks early in the third set, but Zverev gained a second break for a 4-2 lead when the Frenchman double faulted and that sealed Pouille's fate. "Lucas fought well and played very well in the important moments sometimes," Zverev said, after winning 6-3, 6-7, 6-2.

"He is a very tough opponent. "I just hope to keep going with Angie and seeing how far we can go." Unbeaten in their two group outings, the Germans will be guaranteed a spot in Saturday's decider if they beat Australia on Friday.

France are out of contention after losing both their ties. — AFP

## Wozniacki cruises in Auckland ahead of Australian Open

**AUCKLAND:** Caroline Wozniacki began her warm up for her Australian Open title defence with a comprehensive 6-3, 6-2 win over Laura Siegemund in the first round of the WTA Auckland Classic yesterday.

With tournament sixth seed Venus Williams an interested spectator, top-seed Wozniacki gave herself a pass mark against German qualifier Siegemund and declared the signs were good. The 28-year-old Dane, the runner up in Auckland last year on her way to winning in Melbourne, said she was looking forward to meeting Williams in the Auckland quarter-finals if both get through their second round matches today.

"I know how she is playing, and she has been playing well, apparently, so I know she is ready," Wozniacki said. "Let's hope we both get there." Against Siegemund, Wozniacki broke in the fourth game of the first set and mostly controlled the match from there apart from dropping her service once in the second set.

"I was a bit rusty out there. Playing my first match it definitely wasn't my prettiest match but I just tried to hang in there, and tried to serve well and hit a lot of balls back and tomorrow's going to be better," she said.

"I'm just so happy I'm back here and warming up in the same way and hopefully that will lead me to also having good luck in Australia this year." Wozniacki will play Canadian qualifier Bianca Andreescu in the second round while Williams plays fellow American Lauren Davis.

Canadian Eugenie Bouchard's comeback was almost derailed in an error-filled encounter with the 30-year-old Dutch journeywoman Bibiane Schoofs. Bouchard, the 2014 Wimbledon finalist, dropped her serve seven times but still managed to beat Schoofs 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-4 to set up a quarter-final clash with defending champion Julia Goerges.

Goerges, who did not get on court until after 10:00pm, raced through her match against fellow German Mona Barthel 6-4, 6-4. Tournament seventh seed Kirsten Flipkens was stopped in the second round by Spain's 22-year-old Sara Sorribes Tormo, losing 6-4, 1-6, 6-1 with Sorribes Tormo moving on to play Hsieh Sui-Wei in the quarter finals. — AFP



**PERTH:** Angelique Kerber of Germany hits a return against Alize Cornet of France during their seventh session women's singles match on day five of the Hopman Cup tennis tournament in Perth yesterday. — AFP



# India reverse Ashwin decision as injured Ishant misses out

## Kohli brushes off injury fears as back ‘niggles’

**SYDNEY:** India reversed an earlier decision about the availability of Ravichandran Ashwin for the fourth and final Test against Australia and named the off-spinner in their 13-man match squad yesterday.

With a 2-1 lead, India need only draw the Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground to secure their first series triumph in Australia and something of a standoff on team-namings appeared to develop on the eve of the match.

India skipper Virat Kohli's press conference was prefaced by an announcement from a team spokesman that Ashwin was not 100 percent fit and would not be considered for selection.

Australia's Tim Paine followed and said the hosts were waiting to finalise their team-one of their considerations being whether the Indians played two spinners at a ground that traditionally offers something for the slow bowlers.

Half an hour later, the India team sent out a message saying Ashwin was in the squad and a decision on whether he played would not be made until the first morning of the match today.

KL Rahul, dropped after the Perth defeat, was recalled to the squad and looks set to open with Hanuma Vihari dropping down the order to bat at number six in place of Rohit Sharma, who has returned home to be at the birth of his first child.

Ishant Sharma, one of the disciplined pace trio that have done so much to put India in such a strong position, was left out because of what the team said was "rib cage discomfort".

Umesh Yadav will offer a third pace option but given his laboured performance when India played four quicks in Perth, his inclusion might be seen as a strong indication that the tourists will go for a twin spin threat.

Ashwin took six for 149 as India won the series opener in Adelaide but was forced to sit out the second Test defeat in Perth and the win in Melbourne because of a side strain.

He underwent fitness Tests yesterday and Paine said he had been surprised to hear that he was not available for the match. Kohli spoke at length about his disappointment that Ashwin was not fit for such an important match. "It's quite unfortunate that he's had two niggles that are quite similar on the last couple of away tours," he said."He's very important in test cricket, he's a vital part of this team and we want him to be 100 percent fit so he can contribute."

Meanwhile, Indian skipper and master batsman Virat Kohli yesterday played down fears that recurring back spasms could hinder his stellar career, insisting all players get "niggles" and they were "nothing new".

Kohli received treatment from the physio on day two of the Melbourne Test against Australia last week, appearing to be in pain just before he was out for 82 in the first innings. He has a recent history of back problems and was forced off the field during the second Test in England earlier this year.

But the 30-year-old, widely considered the best batsmen across all three formats of the game and crucial to India's success, said it wasn't a major concern.

"I've had this issue since 2011, it's nothing new," he said in Sydney ahead of the fourth and final Test against Australia. "I've been able to manage it because of the physical effort I've put in over the past few years. And when you have a back that has these issues you can only maintain it that way."

The passionate Kohli, who admits he is obsessed with winning cricket matches, added that he was "not too bothered" about the issue.

"If the workload gets high it can get into a spasm, I mean you don't necessarily get serious issues, you get fine in two or three days," he said.

"I'm not too concerned with it, you just have to manage it physically and stay ahead of the injury and I have been able to do it for now,

"I'm sure I'll find other ways and more options to



SYDNEY: India's players warm up before a training session ahead of the fourth and final Test against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

keep countering that.

"I mean, it's impossible to keep going without niggles and I think it's fine to have a few niggles here and there. You just need to be able to manage it."

The prolific Kohli has been at the forefront of Indian cricket for a decade, playing 76 Test and more than

200 one-day internationals.

India squad - KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (captain), Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Umesh Yadav. —AFP

## WADA must act now on Russia missing deadline: NADO

**DUBLIN:** The World Anti-Doping Agency should act now over Russia's failure to meet a December 31 deadline to hand over data from its anti-doping laboratory in Moscow, the National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADO) said yesterday.

WADA, whose underfire president Craig Reedie declared himself "bitterly disappointed" by Russia missing the deadline, have scheduled a Compliance and Review Committee (CRC) meeting in a fortnight's time, but NADO said in their statement it must be brought forward and dealt with immediately. "NADO leaders now call on WADA to acknowledge the gravity of this missed deadline and call for an immediate review and recommendation from the CRC," it said in a statement which was supported by the National Anti-Doping organisations of 16 countries including France, the United States and Australia.

"After more than three years of review, indecision and compromise in response to the worst doping scandal in the history of sport, the time has come to demonstrate that no individual nor nation is exempt from compliance with the World Anti-Doping Code."

The end-of-year deadline was set in September, when WADA lifted a ban on the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA), paving the way for Russian athletes to return to competition across all sports after a report which uncovered a state-sponsored doping programme in Russia. The decision to lift the ban aroused a wave of criticism directed at WADA and especially at 77-year-old Reedie. WADA personnel travelled to Russia in December but were unable to extract all of the promised data.

WADA said at the time its team could not complete its mission "due to an issue raised by the Russian authorities that the team's equipment to be used for the data extraction was required to be certified under Russian law".

With WADA waiting and the December 31 deadline looming, RUSADA chief Yuri Ganus asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to intervene to stave off another ban that put Russia "on the brink of the abyss".

However, the Kremlin said RUSADA's concerns about new sanctions were "without foundation". "We recognise RUSADA has been working with WADA in an effort to resolve these issues, but the conditions agreed on 20 September 2018 were unequivocal and without the data there can be only one outcome," the NADO statement went on.

"The importance of this situation does not warrant providing a further two weeks for Russia to comply." NADO took a markedly different line to Russia returning to the sporting fold to International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach. The German insisted sporting superpower Russia had been sufficiently punished, but his thoughts are not reflected throughout the sporting world. Organisations such as the governing body of world athletics (IAAF) have said they were maintaining Russia's ban from track and field.

"A return to international sport should only be considered for Russia once full confidence in a clean Russian sporting culture is restored," said NADO. "In other words, only once WADA has received and verified the electronic LIMS data as well as access to the samples in the Moscow Laboratory. "NADO leaders implore WADA to use its full authority and resources to expedite this matter." — AFP

## Paine aims long-term improvement as India series loss looms

**SYDNEY:** Australia captain Tim Paine insisted yesterday that his priority was to develop his inexperienced cricket team for the future even as they face the prospect of losing a home series against India for the first time.

But he pledged that Australia would still pick the "best XI that we think is the best combination to win this Test" once they had seen the Sydney pitch. Australia, who have never lost a home series against India, go into today's fourth Test 2-1 down and in danger of Virat Kohli's men completing a historic landmark Down Under.

While Australia must win to level the series, Paine said that his aim was on improvement, particularly in the batting department, with home Tests to come against Sri Lanka ahead of an Ashes tour to England this year.

"It doesn't for me personally," he said on whether preventing an India series win was his key motivation. "Other guys may use it but my focus has been on us improving and on us playing the best possible cricket that we can and when we haven't, making sure we learn

## ‘Enforcer’ Olivier confirmed for second Test against Pakistan

**CAPE TOWN:** South African captain Faf du Plessis said yesterday that fast bowler Duanne Olivier would be used in an "enforcer" role as part of a pace barrage in the second Test against Pakistan starting at Newlands today.

Du Plessis said he wanted to keep the pressure on the Pakistan batsmen after Olivier took 11 wickets in South Africa's six-wicket win in the first Test in Centurion. There had been speculation that Olivier might have to sit out at Newlands because of the return to fitness of Vernon Philander. But Du Plessis said he would definitely play.

"He brings variety to our attack," said Du Plessis, adding that Olivier provided a contrast to the skill and control of South Africa's other fast bowlers, Kagiso Rabada, Dale Steyn and Vernon Philander. "Duanne is more of an enforcer who puts you on the back foot and can be a bit challenging for batters, especially when they come from the sub-continent where the ball doesn't bounce as high," said Du Plessis.

"He's a fit guy and he can bowl long spells. He's different, he runs at you, he's around your head most of the time, it's not comfortable." Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed acknowledged that Olivier had caused problems for his batsmen in Centurion.

"We will definitely talk about him. He's a different type of bowler with a fast bowling action," he said. Du Plessis said South Africa did not want to let Pakistan off the hook following their collapse in the second innings in Centurion.

"You could see there were one or two things in their batting line-up that we could get through. For me it's about making sure we keep that pressure on them," he said. Sarfraz said Haris Sohail had not recovered from a knee injury that kept him out of the first Test and was unlikely to play again in the series. He said Pakistan would keep the same batting line-up that played in Centurion.

Sarfraz admitted there were big challenges for his batsmen on fast, bouncy pitches. "We are used to playing on low bouncing pitches. But our players are good enough and they have been working hard in the nets and talking to the batting coach."



Duanne Olivier

Du Plessis said the Newlands pitch looked similar to those used in recent years, with help for the fast bowlers and the possibility of taking spin later in the match. A Test against India last January was completely in what was effectively three days of cricket.

He admitted that bowler-friendly conditions were difficult for South Africa's batsmen as well as those of the visitors. "Our success rate in home conditions in the last three years has been very high," he said. "It's been tough on the batters when you're playing against quality seam attacks, which most teams have these days. —AFP



Tim Paine

of spin. That would likely put all-rounder Mitch Marsh's spot at risk.

Paine said it was crucial that the batsmen play their part in Sydney, with none of them getting more than 50 in Melbourne with the exception of tailender Pat Cummins. "This Test is going to be a real focus for our batting group. We know we're not going to win Test matches without scoring hundreds," he said.

"That's something we've spoken about and something we are really keen to improve and address." Australia were skittled for 151 and then 261 in Melbourne. — AFP

## N Zealand to use S Lanka ODIs as World Cup trial

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand have put a line under their Test series win over Sri Lanka and switched to World Cup mode with the first of three one-day internationals in Tauranga yesterday. "It's really now about looking ahead to the World Cup, being clear on the game plans we want to use," coach Gary Stead said after New Zealand beat Sri Lanka 1-0 in the Test series to move up to third in the rankings behind India and England.

New Zealand, who are also third in the ODI rankings, face eighth-ranked Sri Lanka in the opening round of the World Cup in Cardiff in June. Stead described the home ODI series against Sri Lanka as being "about tweaking, looking at the style of play and how we want to play and looking at the options who fit those roles as well. It's definitely a trial period still".

Both sides have made a number of changes from their Test line-up, with Sri Lanka bringing in six new faces including Lasith Malinga, while New Zealand have brought back big-hitting Martin Guptill and are resting regulars Tom Latham and Colin de Grandhomme.

With de Grandhomme out and Corey Anderson injured, Jimmy Neesham and Doug Bracewell have been recalled as all-rounder options. At the World Cup in England and Wales, 300-plus totals are expected to be the norm and Stead wanted "to see more of the all-rounders" as well as back up wicketkeeper Tim Seifert.

It's been a year since Guptill last played for New Zealand and four years since he lit up the last World Cup when he blasted an unbeaten 237 off 163 balls against the West Indies. The tall opener said he doubts his role will change under new coach Stead and he will be tasked with "having a bit of fun" at the top of the order.

"Pretty much business as usual to be honest, I don't see my role changing too much in the side," he said. "I haven't played for New Zealand since last summer which is quite a long time ago so to be back here is extremely exciting and I'm looking forward to getting back into it." — AFP



## Sports

# Charging Liverpool challenge Man City to prove their greatness

## Klopp's men conceded just eight times in 20 Premier League games

**MANCHESTER:** "I start to read and then I start to think 'Liverpool and Jurgen Klopp' and I cannot focus," said Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola last month, admitting Liverpool's charge to depose the Premier League champions has been in his head for some time.

But in their very first game of 2019, City already find themselves in must-win territory to haul Liverpool back into view by inflicting the leaders' first defeat of the season and cutting a seven-point lead to four at the Etihad today.

"With the position of Liverpool, if we drop points then it is over, it is finished: it would be almost impossible," said Guardiola after Sunday's 3-1 win at Southampton. Guardiola's obsession with Liverpool and Klopp in particular is not surprising. For a serial winner, no side and no manager has caused the Catalan as many problems as the German.

City have won just one of seven meetings since Guardiola joined Klopp in England after locking horns in charge of Bundesliga giants Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund. A shock run of three defeats in four Premier League games in December has left City playing catch up to a Liverpool side eyeing history by ending a 29-year wait to win the league.

But even when seemingly no one else could stop City as they stormed to the title with a record 100 points last season, Klopp's men were a constant menace. Last January, it was City who were on course to equal Arsenal's 'Invincibles' of 2003-04 until they went to Anfield in January and were blown away by a three-goal salvo in nine second-half minutes to lose 4-3 despite a late rally.

In the documentary "All Or Nothing" which chronicled City's title triumph, Guardiola is seen admitting to his coaching staff ahead of returning to Anfield for the

Champions League quarter-final, first leg: "They scare me. They're dangerous, I mean it."

It takes a lot to frighten a coach who has won 24 trophies in three different countries, but Guardiola's fears were realised as another Liverpool blitz secured a 3-0 win. Six days later, Liverpool won again at the Etihad, withstanding a City onslaught for 45 minutes to take control in the second period once Guardiola had lost his cool and been sent to the stands.

Now Liverpool have extended that ability for short destructive bursts into a title challenge for the long haul. The addition of Brazilian goalkeeper Alisson Becker and a first full season with the world's most expensive defender Virgil van Dijk has seen Klopp's men concede just eight times in 20 Premier League games. And after a slow start, the prolific front three of Mohamed Salah, Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane that terrorised City last season are beginning to hit top form once more.

All three scored in the same Premier League game for the first time this season on Saturday as Arsenal were blown away 5-1 at Anfield. "Unfortunately we lost two (games) and have a rival that is the best team in Europe or in the world in top form like Liverpool," added Guardiola.

"That's why it is a challenge for us next Thursday to try and win there to try and sustain this position as long as possible to arrive at the end of the season fighting for the title." However, the City boss has also been keen to reiterate just how good his own side are, despite their recent blip.

Until mid-December City were heavy favourites to back up a record 100-point season that saw them compared to the greatest sides English football has seen with another significant landmark of becoming the first side in a decade to retain the Premier League.



**LONDON:** File photo shows Manchester City's Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero (R) shakes hands with Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola as he leaves the pitch after being substituted during the English Premier League football match. — AFP

Consistent success is the mark of a truly great side and if City should reel in a Liverpool side seemingly hell

bent on making history, that is a tag they will deserve.—AFP

## Pochettino happy with Spurs' show despite fixture congestion

**LONDON:** Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino has praised his squad's resilience following their third victory in four Premier League games during a busy festive period for the north London side.

Spurs have moved up to second in the league table, six points behind leaders Liverpool. They beat Everton, Bournemouth and Cardiff City while going down 3-1 to Wolverhampton Wanderers at home.

"Us and Everton, we were both teams that suffer a little bit more without much rest between the games, and I think the players' effort was magnificent,"

Pochettino told Sky Sports after their 3-0 win at Cardiff on Tuesday. "I congratulate them because in 10 days to play four games is so tough and the performance was fantastic," Pochettino chose not to focus on the title race, stressing on the need for consistency during the second half of the campaign.

"The Premier League is so tough, if you want to be in a good position you must be consistent for the whole season and you can't afford to lose the three points like we did against Wolves," he said. Spurs, however, might not end the current round of fixtures in second place with third-placed Manchester City, who are one point behind, set to host Liverpool today.

"It will be an unbelievable game, and of course I am going to enjoy football too," the Argentine manager added. "Both teams I think are the best in England. But the day after we are going to play (in the) FA Cup, and we need to be ready again, because we have a very busy schedule."

Spurs play League Two side Tranmere in the third round of the FA Cup at Prenton Park on Friday followed by the first leg of the League Cup semi-final against Chelsea on Tuesday. — Reuters



**CARDIFF:** Tottenham Hotspur's Argentinian head coach Mauricio Pochettino (R) reacts ahead of the English Premier League football match between Cardiff City and Tottenham Hotspur at Cardiff City Stadium in Cardiff, south Wales on Tuesday. — AFP

Live		
Matches on TV		
(Local Timings)		
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Manchester City v Liverpool	20:00	
beIN SPORTS HD 2		
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Villarreal CF v Real Madrid CF	20:30	
beIN SPORTS HD 3		

## S Korea counting on Son to shine on Asian Cup quest

**ABU DHABI:** South Korea are hoping Son Heung-min's dazzling pace and goals can help them end a 59-year wait to be crowned continental kings as the newly expanded Asian Cup starts at the weekend.

Holders Australia, four-time winners Japan, Carlos Queiroz's Iran and hosts the United Arab Emirates are all formidable opponents, but none will relish facing Paulo Bento's Koreans. The 2015 runners-up have put their stamp on the international scene in recent times, stunning holders Germany at last year's World Cup before winning the Asian Games football tournament in September.

Son, 26, was at the heart of both successes and his delight was plain to see at the Asian Games in Indonesia, where victory earned the team an exemption from South Korea's compulsory, 21-month military service.

The Tottenham Hotspur forward, who has a deadly shot with either foot, has been in scorching form for his club, scoring seven goals in his last seven Premier League games. But he will sit out South Korea's first two games next week under a deal with his club in return for his release for last year's Asian Games.

Son, the most prolific Asian in Premier League history, will hope South Korea get the job done against the Philippines and Kyrgyzstan before he jets in for their final Group C clash against China on January 16.

The Koreans, edged 2-1 by Australia after the 2015 final went to extra time, haven't won the Asian Cup since 1960 — a puzzling record considering their 10 World Cup appearances, including the 2002 semi-finals. Japan are among their chief rivals in UAE, after they were the only Asian side to reach the World Cup knock-outs before narrowly going down to Belgium in the last 16. The Blue Samurais, winners of four of the last seven editions, will demand improvements on 2015, when as defending champions they slipped up with a penalties defeat to UAE in the last eight.

Recent results have been encouraging, including a 4-3 win over Uruguay, and Hajime Moriyasu has picked on form after ditching World Cup stars Shinji Kagawa and Shinji Okazaki in favour of younger players.

Australia, however, seem to have gone backwards since they lifted the trophy in Sydney in 2015, and it's a tall order for new coach Graham Arnold who is plunged into the title defence just four games into the job.

After record scorer Tim Cahill retired, Arnold's predicament worsened last month when midfield lynchpin Aaron Mooy suffered a serious knee injury and was ruled out of tournament. Three-time winners Iran look much more settled, and after winning plaudits for their narrow 1-0 defeat to Spain and 1-1 draw with Portugal at the World Cup, Carlos Queiroz's side have gone unbeaten in their six games since.

With attacking talent including Rubin Kazan's Sardar Azmoun, with 24 goals in 40 internationals, and Brighton winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Iran will expect to do better than 2015, when they were ousted in a combustible quarter-final against arch-rivals Iraq.

UAE received a body blow with the loss of playmaker Omar Abdulrahman to a knee injury, but they have plenty of firepower and are redoubtable on home ground, where they were runners-up as hosts in 1996.—AFP

## Bruins best Blackhawks in Winter Classic

**CHICAGO:** Sean Kuraly's tiebreaking goal midway through the third period carried the Boston Bruins to a 4-2 win over the Chicago Blackhawks in the 2019 Bridgestone Winter Classic at Notre Dame Stadium in South Bend, Ind., on Tuesday. Kuraly broke a 2-2 tie when he backhanded in his fourth goal of the season at 10:20 after it bounced off fourth-line teammate Chris Wagner. Boston won the 11th Winter Classic in front of a sellout crowd of 76,126, the second-largest in event history. Jonathan Toews hit the post with 1:37 left and with the Blackhawks' net empty, Brad Marchand scored into the empty net for the final margin. David Pastrnak and Patrice Bergeron each had a goal and an assist, and Tuukka Rask made 36 saves in his 469th outing, setting the mark for most games played by a Boston goaltender. Brendan Perlini and Dominik Kahun tallied for the Blackhawks, and Cam Ward stopped 32 shots.



**SOUTH BEND:** Sean Kuraly #52 of the Boston Bruins scores a goal past Gustav Forsling #42 and Cam Ward #30 of the Chicago Blackhawks in the third period during the 2019 Bridgestone NHL Winter Classic at Notre Dame Stadium on Tuesday in South Bend, Indiana. — AFP

## Chelsea kick start transfer window with Pulisic splurge

**PARIS:** Chelsea made an early splash in the January transfer window yesterday by making Christian Pulisic the most expensive USA footballer as clubs across Europe geared up for business. The Premier League club signed Pulisic-regarded as one of the hottest properties in European football-on a five-and-a-half year contract for a reported fee of £58 million (\$74m) from German Bundesliga leaders Borussia Dortmund a day after the winter window opened.

The sum smashed the previous highest transfer for an American, the reported 20m euros German club Wolfsburg stumped up for John Brooks in 2017. "It's a privilege to have signed for such a legendary club and I look forward to working hard towards being a contributor to their team of world class players," said Pulisic in a statement published on the Chelsea website.

Dortmund will keep the 20-year-old right winger on loan until the end of the season as part of what they described an "extraordinarily lucrative offer from Chelsea" as they look to win their first league title since 2012.

Pulisic made his Bundesliga debut for Dortmund aged just 17 after rapidly progressing through the team's academy and quickly established himself as one of the most exciting prospects in Europe. In November he became the youngest player to captain the United States' senior side, aged 20 years and 63 days.

In France, Ligue 1 club Montpellier signed promising Uruguay international defender Mathias Suarez, choosing to reveal neither details of the transfer fee nor the player's contract. The 22-year-old arrives in France from Defensor Sporting, a club based in the Uruguayan capital Montevideo where he played more than 100 matches since making his debut as a teenager in 2013.

"It was a dream of mine to come and play in Europe and today I have made this dream a reality by signing for Montpellier," the player said on the club's website. Suarez made his debut for the national team in a 1-0 loss against Brazil in November, before playing the full 90 minutes days later in another single-goal defeat against France.

In Spain, Villarreal released former Chile international Manuel Iturra after the 34-year-old defensive midfielder, who played 33 times for his country, started just one match for the La Liga strugglers this season after signing from Malaga in the summer. — AFP



**25** Top seed Svitolina crashes out in Brisbane International



**26** India reverse Ashwin decision as injured Ishant misses out



**27** Charging Liverpool challenge Man City to prove their greatness



## Leonard scores 45 as Raptors top Jazz

Jokic's triple-double helps Nuggets sink Knicks



TORONTO: Dante Exum #11 of the Utah Jazz shoots the ball against the Toronto Raptors on Tuesday at the Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

**TORONTO:** Kawhi Leonard scored a career-best 45 points-including 19 in the third quarter-and gathered six rebounds to help the Toronto Raptors defeat the visiting Utah Jazz 122-116 Tuesday night. It was a career-best 14th straight game in which Leonard has scored at least 20 points. Pascal Siakam scored a career-best 28 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Raptors, who won their second game in a row. Reserve Jae Crowder scored a season-best 30 points for the Jazz in the opener of a four-game road trip. Utah lost for the third time in five games.

### TRAIL BLAZERS 113, KINGS 108 (OT)

Justus Nurkic had a monster night — 24 points, 23 rebounds, seven assists, five steals and five blocked shots-as Portland rallied from a nine-point deficit with

three minutes remaining in the fourth quarter to pull out an overtime victory at Sacramento. Damian Lillard collected 25 points, six rebounds and six assists, and Seth Curry came off the bench to produce a season-high 18 points for Portland. Buddy Hield scored 27 points and Nemanja Bjelica contributed 14 points and 16 rebounds for the Kings, who trailed by 14 points at halftime but stormed back to lead 101-92 with 3:10 remaining in regulation.

### 76ERS 119, CLIPPERS 113

Joel Embiid returned after missing a game with a sore left knee and had 28 points and 19 rebounds to lift Philadelphia to a win at Los Angeles. Embiid, the team's leading scorer and rebounder, missed the Sixers' 129-95 loss at Portland on Sunday. JJ Redick,

who spent four seasons with the Clippers, scored 16 of his 18 points in the first half for the 76ers. Lou Williams, who was drafted 45th overall by Philadelphia in 2005 and played his first seven seasons with the 76ers, scored 22 points off the bench for the Clippers.

### NUGGETS 115, KNICKS 108

Nikola Jokic had 19 points, 15 assists and 14 rebounds, Malik Beasley scored a career-high 23 points off the bench, and host Denver beat New York. Jokic notched his third triple-double this season and the 19th in his career. Paul Millsap scored 16 points in his second game back from a broken toe to help the Nuggets win their third straight. Luke Kornet had 19 points, Kevin Knox scored 18 and Enes Kanter had 17 for the Knicks, who have lost eight in a row. Emmanuel

Mudiay finished with 15 points in his first game in Denver since the Nuggets traded him to New York last season.

### BUCKS 121, PISTONS 98

Brook Lopez poured in 25 points, hitting seven 3-pointers, and streaking Milwaukee romped to a victory over visiting Detroit. Khris Middleton supplied 22 points and Eric Bledsoe contributed 18 with six assists for the Bucks. Giannis Antetokounmpo had 15 points, eight rebounds, seven assists and three blocks. Blake Griffin topped the Pistons with 29 points, nine rebounds and four assists. The Bucks, who own the league's best record at 26-10, have won four straight and eight of their past nine. The Pistons have lost three straight and 12 of their past 15. — Reuters

## FIFA should expand 2022 World Cup to 48 teams: Infantino

**DUBAI:** FIFA should if possible increase the size of the soccer World Cup in Qatar in 2022 to 48 from 32 teams, the global governing body's president Gianni Infantino said. Last month, Infantino said a majority of national soccer federations were in favour of expanding the tournament and a decision was expected ahead of the qualifying draw in March.

Infantino, speaking at a sports conference yesterday, also said FIFA was seeing whether it would be possible for some of Qatar's Gulf neighbours to host some of the

matches. He said last month that it would be "difficult" to stage an expanded tournament in Qatar alone.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt launched a diplomatic and trade boycott of Qatar in June 2017 that has complicated the prospect of sharing the tournament. The countries accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism, which it denies.

FIFA voted in 2017 to increase the size of the tournament from 32 to 48 teams starting from 2026 but, since then, Infantino has been mulling the possibility of bringing the change forward to 2022. "If you think it's a good thing to have 48 teams in the World Cup, why not try four years before, that's why we are analysing whether it's possible to have 48 teams already in 2022," Infantino said yesterday.

"The World Cup will take place in Qatar with 32 teams. Obviously, if we can increase it to 48 teams and make the world happy we should try it." Qatar said it would not take a final decision on the tournament expansion until it has seen details of a feasibility study from FIFA.

The study is expected to discuss aspects of scheduling, the number of required venues, training sites, and how many games per day would be played under an expanded format. Qatar, a tiny but wealthy Arab nation, has moved ahead with ambitious plan to scale up infrastructure ahead of the 2022 tournament that includes \$6-8 billion on eight stadiums and sporting facilities.

"If we can accommodate some of the neighbouring countries in the gulf region which are very close by to host a few games in the World Cup this could be very beneficial for the region and the entire world," Infantino added.

"There are tensions in this particular region and it's up to their respective leaders to deal with that but maybe it's easier to talk about a joint football project than more complicated things. "If it can help all the people in the Gulf and all the countries in the world develop football and bring a positive message to the world about football, then you should give it a try." — Reuters



DUBAI: FIFA president Gianni Infantino speaks during a session of the 13th edition of the Dubai International Sports Conference, at Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai yesterday. — AFP