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# Court says article 16 ruling is correct, must be implemented

## Panel makes changes to early retirement law

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The constitutional court yesterday said a ruling it issued last month declaring article 16 of the National Assembly charter as unconstitutional is correct and must be implemented without delay. In a new verdict, the court, whose rulings cannot be challenged, rejected an objection submitted by MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei asking the court to suspend the implementation of its earlier ruling and subject it under legal revision.

The new verdict clearly means that the memberships of MPs Tabtabaei and Jamaan Al-Harbash must be revoked and by-election called to elect two members to replace them. This is the most likely scenario when the Assembly convenes for its regular session on Wednesday. The controversy began last summer when the court of cassation, whose rulings are final, sentenced Harbash and Tabtabaei and a dozen other opposition activists and former lawmakers to jail terms for storming the Assembly building in Nov 2011 following a protest.

The membership of the two lawmakers should have been revoked after they were convicted, but the Assembly decided in a vote to retain their membership on the basis of article 16 of its internal charter. A case was immediately filed at the constitutional court arguing that article 16 violated the constitution. The court agreed and scrapped the article and called for dealing with any consequences that may have resulted from using the article.

However, several opposition MPs said the court had exceeded its mandate by encroaching on the powers of the Assembly and insisted that the court cannot scrap the membership of the two lawmakers. Yesterday's ruling is likely to end the legal controversy over the membership of Tabtabaei and Harbash, who have been living outside the country since the jail sentence was issued against them.

In another development, the Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee yesterday made a number of changes to the controversial early retirement law, the head of the panel said. MP Salah Khorsheed said the committee agreed a proposed two percent deduction from the pension of Kuwaiti employees who opt for early retirement should not continue for life. Khorsheed said the committee said the panel decided that the deduction must stop at the age of 65 for men and 60 for women who retire five years ahead of the official retirement age. This has remained as the main stumbling block for the passage of the law in its second and final reading. Khorsheed said the law will be sent to the Assembly for voting on Wednesday.

## Zain KSA 2018 profit soars to \$89m

RIYADH: Zain Saudi Arabia (Zain KSA), announces historical record-high financial results for all key indicators for the full-year and fourth quarter ended Dec 31, 2018, with the operator serving 8.1 million customers. For the full-year 2018, Zain KSA generated revenues of SAR 7.5 billion (\$2 billion), a 3 percent Y-o-Y increase of SAR 225 million, while EBITDA for the year increased by 20 percent Y-o-Y to reach SAR 3 billion (\$800 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40 percent. Net income soared to reach SAR 332 million (\$89 million), reflecting a 27-fold increase on the 2017 full-year net income of SAR 12 million (\$3.1 million).

For the fourth quarter of 2018, Zain KSA recorded revenues of SAR



Bader Al-Kharafi

2 billion (\$546 million), a 19 percent increase to the same three-month period in 2017.

EBITDA for the quarter reached

SAR 1.1 billion (\$292 million), reflecting a 54 percent EBITDA margin, up 86 percent from SAR 590 million (\$157 million) recorded in Q4 2017.

Net income for the three months reached an unprecedented SAR 399 million (\$106 million), reflecting a marked improvement on the loss of SAR 45 million (\$12 million) recorded for Q4 2017.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO and Vice-Chairman of Zain KSA, commented: "Zain Saudi Arabia has experienced an incredible year placing the company in a much stronger fiscal position that will only get better. The year shall go down as a milestone for us and shall be looked back on many years from now as the year Zain KSA truly came into its own." (See Page 11)

### News in brief

#### Majority believe in 2035 vision

KUWAIT: Around 87 percent of Kuwaitis feel the country's 2035 vision fulfills their aspirations, the ministry of information said yesterday. According to an IPSOS poll, 83 percent of nationals feel that it is incumbent upon the government to provide a supportive environment for more job opportunities, 67 percent agree that the government should provide services in a prompt and orderly manner, while another 58 percent are apprehensive that corruption could hinder national development plans. Ninety percent of Kuwaitis are cognizant of the enormity of a project to develop Kuwait's northern islands, saying the success of the project will help bring the vision to fruition. — KUNA (See Page 3)

#### Pregabalin, gabapentin by prescription

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah yesterday issued a decree on the distribution of all pharmaceutical preparations containing pregabalin and gabapentin. Assistant undersecretary for pharmaceutical and food control at the ministry Dr Abdullah Al-Bader said the decree stipulates that these medicines should be distributed with a prescription specifying the name of the medicine with the name of the doctor and his signature. He explained that the drugs should be for a maximum of 60 days in one prescription. He added these drugs will be distributed only by specialists in rheumatoid arthritis, psychological treatment, diabetes and endocrinology. — KUNA

## Malaysia stripped of para swim event over Israel stance

PARIS: Malaysia has been stripped of the right to host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships for threatening to refuse to allow Israeli athletes to take part, the International Paralympic Committee said yesterday. The decision was taken after the Malaysian authorities "failed to provide the necessary guarantees that Israeli Para swimmers could participate, free from discrimination, and safely in the Championships", the IPC said in a statement.

IPC President Andrew Parsons said: "When a host country excludes athletes from a particular nation, for political reasons, then we have absolutely no alternative but to look for a new Championships host. All World Championships must be open to all eligible athletes and nations to compete safely and free from discrimination." The championships, a qualifying event for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, were due to take place in Kuching on July 29-Aug 4.

Continued on Page 24

## Manila vows to crush 'terrorists' after twin church bombings kill 20

MANILA: The Philippines vowed to destroy those behind twin bombings that killed 20 people during a Sunday church service in the country's restive south, six days after a referendum on autonomy for the mainly Muslim region returned an overwhelming "yes" vote. The attack wounded 81 and was one of the deadliest in recent years in a region long plagued by instability. It came amid hope and excitement about the ratification of a devolution plan that aims to bring development, jobs and peace to one of Asia's poorest and most volatile places.

The first explosion went off inside the cathedral on Jolo island, in Sulu province, and was followed by a second blast outside, which was detonated as security forces raced to the scene, officials said.

Continued on Page 24

## Sudan's Bashir says protesters trying to copy Arab Spring

CAIRO: Protesters in Sudan are trying to imitate the Arab Spring uprisings that shook the region in 2011, President Omar Al-Bashir said yesterday during a visit to Egypt. Bashir is facing the most sustained challenge since he came to power in a coup in 1989. Demonstrators have turned out almost daily across the country to call for an end to his rule. Bashir's trip to neighboring Egypt is his second foreign visit since unrest began on Dec 19. He has also visited Qatar.

Speaking next to his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, Bashir blamed



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (right) meets his Sudanese counterpart Omar Al-Bashir yesterday. — AFP

unnamed "harmful organizations" for working to destabilize the region. "We do not claim there is no problem, but it is not of the size or dimensions that some of the media portray. This is an attempt to copy the Arab Spring in Sudan, these are the same slogans and appeals and the very wide use of social media sites," he said. Citing what he said was the "harmful agitation" that such countries had witnessed, he added: "The Sudanese people are alert and will not allow for any intrusion or attempt to destabilize the security of Sudan."

In Khartoum sit-ins began in some public squares in response to an appeal from a professionals' association that has led calls for protests. One of the slogans used by Sudanese protesters - "The people want the fall of the regime" - was made famous by uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and other Arab states. Sudanese security forces have deployed tear gas, stun grenades and live ammunition to disperse protests, as well as arresting hundreds of people.

Authorities say at least 30 people have died in the unrest while rights groups and local opposition figures say at least 45 have been killed. Sisi, who has been Egypt's president since 2014, says he is working to restore stability following the turmoil triggered by the country's uprising eight years ago, overseeing a widespread crackdown on opposition. He said Bashir's visit was "the culmination of the numerous efforts we made in the past year to reinforce bilateral relations". — Reuters



JOLO, Philippines: Philippine security personnel carry a body bag containing the remains of a blast victim after two bombs exploded at a church yesterday. — AFP

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# Amir, Crown Prince receive senior state officials at Bayan Palace



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir then met National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-

Ghanem. He also met with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He then received Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional Court Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. His

Highness Sheikh Sabah also met with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad,

Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received Kuwaiti Ambassador to Turkey Ghassan Al-Zawawi. —KUNA



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



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



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad 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 Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Turkey Ghassan Al-Zawawi.

## Defense Minister meets new Chinese Ambassador

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met yesterday with the new Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang. They discussed during the meeting a number of issues and matters that concern both countries, the Defense Ministry said in a press statement. Sheikh Nasser praised the deep bilateral relation between Kuwait and China, according to the statement.

In other news, National Security Apparatus (NSA) Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah met yesterday with the visiting Deputy Secretary General of European External Action Service Jean-Christophe Belliard and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, they reviewed aspects of cooperation and relations between Kuwait and Europe, and means of enhancing them, the NSA said in a press statement. They also discussed key issues and subjects at both regional and international levels, according to the statement. —KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the new Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang.



National Security Apparatus (NSA) Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Deputy Secretary General of European External Action Service Jean-Christophe Belliard.



## Local

# Majority Kuwaitis believe in prosperous outcome of Amir's New Kuwait vision: Poll

## 66 percent call for foreign administration of the Silk City

**KUWAIT:** A majority of Kuwaiti citizens believe His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's New Kuwait vision 2035 would meet their ambition to see the Gulf country's future more prosperous, an official said Saturday, citing an IPSOS poll. Mohammad Al-Awash, Acting Information Ministry's Undersecretary, said 87 percent of those polled believed the vision honored their future ambitions. He noted that 83 percent of citizens polled in Kuwait's six Governorates said the government should create suitable environment that would help the private sector provide jobs.

Awash, who did not mention the number of citizens polled, said the vision aimed at achieving high living standards for Kuwaiti citizens and future generations. He said 67 percent of citizens believed the government should organize and supervise services against 69 percent who said the private sector should do this job. The poll was conducted by an international firm in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and office of Minister of State for Youth. Fifty-eight percent, showed the poll,

supported government's anti-corruption efforts and said corruption was the major obstacle against achieving the vision. As many as 45 percent of people called for confronting nepotism.

Awash said the poll also covered the ambitious Silk City project, which was about the development of Kuwait's northern islands. He said 90 percent of nationals said this mega project would make the vision more concrete, thus taking Kuwait to new development levels. He said around 80 percent of citizens said the Silk City should have an autonomous administration but in compliance with the constitution and State's sovereignty. Sixty-six percent of people called for assigning the administration of the Silk City to a foreign company with vast experience in running similar zones, like Hong

Kong and Gibraltar. Awash said New Kuwait vision aimed at transforming Kuwait into a sustainable and diversified economy in a manner that meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. He asserted that Kuwaiti citizens were a major component of the vision. —KUNA



**67 percent believe govt should provide services**



**KUWAIT:** The Silk City, one of the most ambitious projects of the New Kuwait vision 2035.

## Kuwait urges dialogue to end political standoff in Venezuela

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait's Representative to the United Nations called on politicians in Venezuela to put the national interests of their country above those of their parties and engage in a peaceful, substantive and comprehensive dialogue to end the current crisis. Delivering his country's address to an emergency session by the UN Security Council on Saturday, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi urged all actors in the South American country to exercise maximum restraint and avoid any acts that could escalate the tension or reignite violence.

While the Council members remained divided over the appropriate approach to addressing the volatile situation in Venezuela, he echoed the significance of the call of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in this regard. He underscored the need of commitment to the principles of the UN Charter relating to preservation of international peace and security and responding to challenges facing the world today.

Article 34 of Chapter VI of the Charter empowers the Security Council to respond appropriately to any conflict that might endanger the world peace he said, noting that the Council is, therefore, mandated to activate its preventive diplomacy to deescalate the tension. Citing Article 24 of Chapter V of the Charter, Ambassador Al-Otaibi said the Security Council should shoulder a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the UN member states.

"Since assuming its non-permanent membership in the Council, the State of Kuwait has shown firm commitment to the principles of the international law, activation of preventive diplomacy and adoption of peaceful means to settle disputes," he pointed out. "We have a strong belief that preventive diplomacy is a mainstay for nipping in the bud any crisis in order to avoid unnecessary human or material losses, not to mention the economic or political losses."

## Jordanian Senate chief to discuss ties in Kuwait

**AMMAN:** Chairman of the Jordanian Senate Faisal Al-Fayez said yesterday that he will discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations with Kuwait, as well as current issues in the region. Fayez made his remarks before his visit to Kuwait today upon an invitation by National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem. The visit comes within the framework of joint action between the Jordanian Senate and the Kuwaiti National Assembly to enhance bilateral relations in various fields, he pointed out, adding that the visit will also discuss the Palestinian issue and the Syrian crisis and the latter's impacts on Jordan, which hosts hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees. With regard to the Kuwaiti support for Jordan, Fayez valued Kuwait's stand and continuous support for Jordan amidst the difficult economic



**NEW YORK:** Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Headquarters in New York Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi delivers his country's address to an emergency session on Saturday. —KUNA

"With great concern, we have followed up the developments of the situation in Venezuela and regretted the reports of civilian victims in the political protests there," he stressed. "The State of Kuwait urges respect for the people's right to the freedom of expression and the peaceful assembly pursuant to the provisions of the international law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1966."

"The covenant commits its parties to respect civil and political rights, including, inter alia, the freedom of speech and freedom of assembly," Ambassador Al-Otaibi went on. "Some member states of the UN, such as Syria and Libya, have seen, in recent years, protests that were peaceful in the beginning but regrettably turned violent and left huge human loss and extensive material damage, he said, noting that "all of us are still concerned about how to address the tragic impacts of these conflicts."

He called on the Security Council member states to double their efforts to prevent recurrence of such tragedies in any part of the world through strict commitment to the internationally-recognized principles and provisions of the UN Charter, including those relating to protection of sovereignty of the UN member states and non-interference in their domestic affairs. He voiced hope that Venezuela will be able to emerge peacefully from the current crisis, and ensure security, stability and prosperity to its people. —KUNA

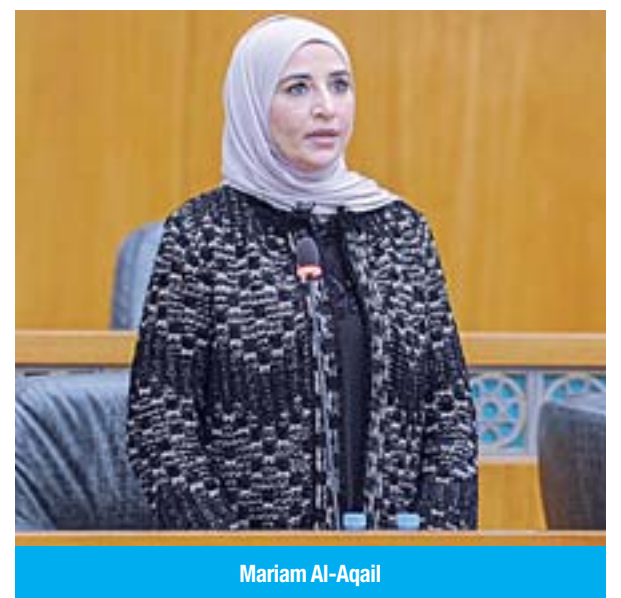


**Faisal Al-Fayez**

circumstances. He underlined deep-rooted historic relations, stressing Jordan's keenness to strengthen those ties under the wise leadership of King Abdullah II and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —KUNA

## Kuwait joins development efforts in Oman

**MUSCAT:** Kuwait's participation in Omani talks over national development is part of efforts to support economic growth and prosperity in the Gulf sultanate, a Kuwaiti minister said yesterday. "Oman's vision 2040 seeks to translate the country's ambitions into success stories," Kuwaiti Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqail said on the sidelines of the conference. The Kuwaiti contingent attending the talks will look into Muscat's development plans, she added. The conference also provides a viable opportunity for knowledge-sharing and to assess how much progress the Omani vision has made. —KUNA



**Mariam Al-Aqail**

## KIC hosts Maker Faire exhibition

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Investment Company (KIC) announced that it continues preparations for the launch of the 'Maker Faire Kuwait 2019' exhibition, which takes place for five days under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. KIC has confirmed its readiness to host this great event from the 5th to the 9th of February 2019 at the Kuwait International Fair in Mishref (Hall 8).

The company stated in a press statement that it continues to organize the largest international festival to host the technological, technical and educational industries in Kuwait for the third year successively. This exhibition is the largest of its kind in the Middle East especially after the increased numbers of participants and manufacturers.

KIC explained that the exhibition's activities this year are full of programs and workshops that help promote the special projects of young innovators and creators. The Company pointed that the number of projects participating in the third version increased by 40 percent compared to the previous year.

KIC pointed out that the exhibition was able to leave

its print on the map of global exhibitions, including the United States and other countries where Maker Faire was organized. The exhibition has embraced the energies and talents of citizens and participants from the countries of the region, Europe and America, who exhibited their projects in the areas of technology, arts and education, which contribute to the growth of different industry sectors. The exhibition also has an active and influential role to promote and accelerate development in the country.

KIC has announced the participation of 10 public and private sector institutions and companies as sponsors of the 'Maker Faire Kuwait 2019 Exhibition', especially after having achieved remarkable success in its previous two versions. They include Kuwait National Bank, Kuwait Telecom Company VIVA, Kuwait Airways, Kuwait International Fair Company, Oil and Gas Fields Services, National Industries Company, Petroleum Corporation, ACICO Industries, Industrial Bank, and Buthat Company, as well as Al-Ray media sponsorship.

The company noted in its statement that the 'Maker Faire Kuwait' offers means of communication between manufacturers and different government departments. Maker Faire Kuwait 2019 is one of Kuwait's most important investment initiatives, which aims to establish its leadership in the concept of sustainable social development. KIC has allocated prizes to the winners of the participating projects for \$20,000. The final results will be announced at the end of the exhibition on February 9 at 7 pm.

## Excellence award develops Arab parliaments: Official



**BEIRUT:** Kuwait's National Assembly Secretary General and head of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) Allam Al-Kandari (second from left) attends the meeting. —KUNA

**BEIRUT:** The parliamentary excellence award of the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union (AIPU) boosts efforts in developing the work of General Secretariats of Arab parliaments. The remarks were made by Kuwait's National Assembly Secretary General and head of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) Allam Al-Kandari yesterday, on the sidelines of the meeting of the award's special committee in Beirut. The meeting aims to discuss amendments to the committee's by-law, presented by several Arab parliaments

including Kuwaiti one. The meeting will continue today to approve recommendations that will be presented to the Executive Committee and later to the AIPU, he said. The meeting includes Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Algeria, Somalia and Arab parliamentary experts. The award aims to honor outstanding current and former Arab heads of parliaments, secretary generals and researchers in the field of developing methods to enhance the legislative and monitoring role of Arab parliaments. —KUNA



Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Cars drive on a main road under heavy fog in Kuwait City on Saturday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# National Library of Kuwait: Bastion of culture, knowledge

## Director speaks on history of libraries in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** The National Library of Kuwait (NLK) is a significant cultural body aiming to preserve knowledge and history for those seeking them. The history of libraries and bookstores in Kuwait dates back to the early 20th century through the opening of the first private library in 1923 by intellectual figure Sheikh Youssef Bin Issa Al-Qinaie at the house of Ali Al-Amer. Librarian Abdullah Al-Omran supervised the location. Kuwait's ruler Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah also was a keen book enthusiast, owning a collection of valuable books: a passion inherited by his son Sheikh Nasser, who was the first to own an extensive private collection in Kuwait numbering at 3,000 books and rare manuscripts.

Speaking on the history of libraries in Kuwait, NLK's Director General Kamel Al-Abduljalil said that the late ruler Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in the company of various intellectuals and officials, decided on the formation of a private library project, which was headed by Abdulhameed Al-Sanee and Sultan Al-Kulaib. However, the project fell short due to a series of economic crises, which struck Kuwait, indicated Al-Abduljalil. In 1935, public figures revived the idea with funding coming first from Shaha Al-Saqer and then in 1937, the Kuwaiti government

took over the mantle of supervising over public libraries and included it in various facilities under the umbrella of 'Daerat Al-Ma'aref' (the department of knowledge), chaired by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

After independence in 1961, the department was transformed into the Education Ministry, which then promoted the idea of public libraries under the jurisdiction of the



First private  
library  
opened  
in 1923

National Council of Culture, Arts and Letters in 1979 until the establishment of a central library in 1982, which was headquartered in Mubarakiya school. Central libraries also

spread throughout Kuwait's governorates and areas, he indicated, saying that central libraries in Kuwait were subjected to destruction and looting during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 with some 130,000 books stolen or damaged. Abduljalil said that through support from the UN, Kuwait managed to retrieve around 75 percent of the central libraries' collection from Iraq. By 1994, another transformation occurred with the Amiri decree 52/1994 issued, establishing the NLK, which has a collection of around one million books and documents.

On the mission of the NLK, Abduljalil said that the library is embarking on a project to establish a unified national index covering all books currently in Kuwaiti libraries. The NLK is also putting the final touches on digitization project, as some 600 essential books are already saved in digital form with more to undergo the same process, he revealed. The NLK consists of 12 halls, including the Public Hall, the 'Kuwaituna' Hall, Private Libraries' Hall, Children Hall, Teens Hall, Special Needs Hall, Audiovisual Hall, Government and UN Publications' Hall, Periodicals' Hall, NCCAL Publications' Hall, Master and PhD Thesis Hall and Arabic Heritage Hall. The NLK's building is located in Al-Qibla area on the Gulf Road. — KUNA



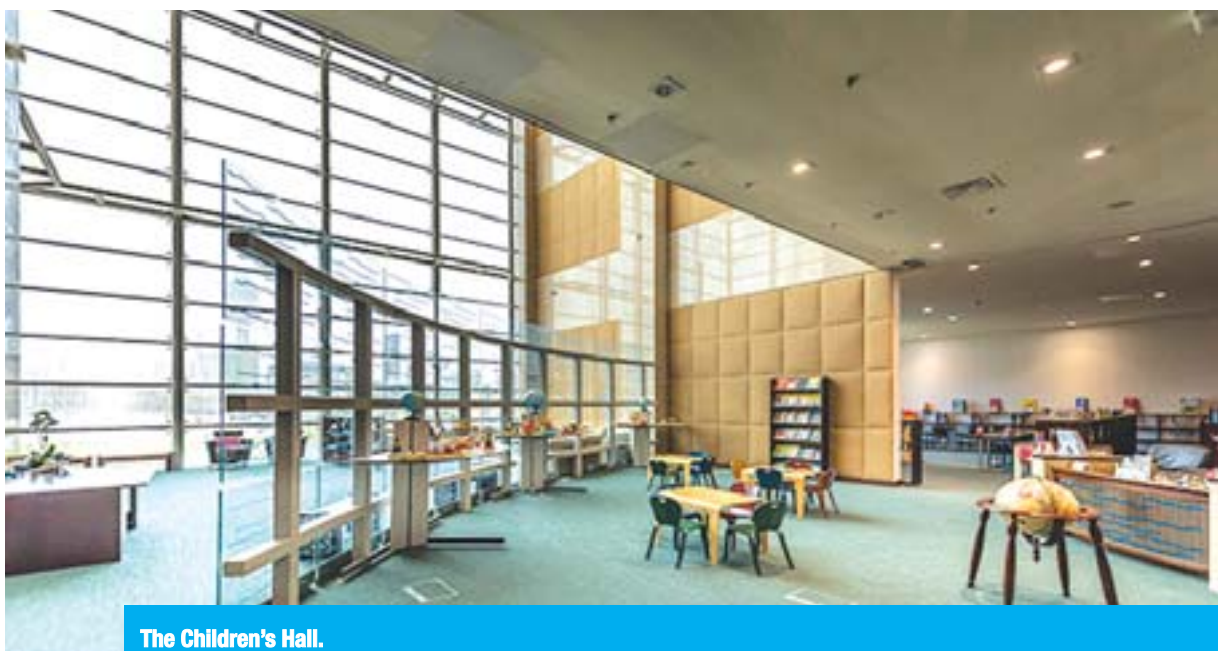
Kamel Al-Abduljalil



KUWAIT: The 'Kuwaituna' Hall. — National Library of Kuwait photos



The Private Libraries' Hall.



The Children's Hall.



Publications at the Special Needs Hall.



# Govt seeks 'quick' mechanism to eradicate 'bachelors' in model areas

## Assembly panel supports new medical practice law

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality is looking to find a quick mechanism to eradicate the presence of 'bachelors' in model residential areas, a senior government official said. "We are in need of quick mechanisms and strict punishment," Awqaf and Municipal Affairs Minister Fahd Al-Shula told reporters after chairing a meeting of the higher planning committee at Kuwait Municipality yesterday. He said the committee proposes plans and implementation programs and follows them up, as well studies organizational and administrative situations, proposes procedures necessary to develop means of work and enhance performance efficiency, expresses opinion over the budget and follows up work and co-ordination.

Several MPs and public figures have increasingly been demanding in recent weeks for a stronger government action against the illegal practice in which homeowners offer areas in their government houses for rent to single expatriate men. In some cases, like in Salmiya's block 12 for example, residents often complain that entire buildings were abandoned by their original owners and divided into dormitories that are rented entirely by unmarried men who residents accuse of disrupting their privacy and causing 'rampant violations' in the area.

Last week, MP Saleh Ashour called for immediately expelling all single men from block 13 of Salmiya

because of the "danger" he said they pose on families living there. While official and public complaints have mostly targeted tenants, it remains unclear whether any governmental procedures taken in the future would expand to cover the original property owners who are in violation of the law.

### Medical practice law

Chairman of the parliamentary health committee Humoud Al-Khudair said he supports the new medical practice law and patients' rights, as its draft was released



## Non-Kuwaiti imams' children accepted in govt institutes

at Kuwait Medical Association, adding that doctors have the right be protected with a law that guarantees their rights, while patients also share the same right. He was speaking during the release of the draft in the presence

of MPs, health ministry leaders, the general investigations department, Kuwait Lawyers Association, Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and a number of NGOs.

He said the old medical practice law 25/1981 must be improved to reflect the most recent medical developments, and praised doctors' efforts and allied professions. KMA chief Dr Ahmad Thuwaini Al-Enezi said the new medical practice law and its features will be ready soon. He said a copy of the new law is on KMA's website so that opinions can be received, in addition to a month-long survey for doctors and concerned legal practitioners. He said the law is a right of patients and doctors, adding that after the survey is completed, KMA will seek approval of the law.

### KD 250 million budget

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said a study conducted by a team from the ministry's information technology department for a unified computerized system for public hospitals and specialized health centers is a preliminary study of the current situation and not for implementation. He said the ministry did not seek any offers or studies from local or foreign companies. With regards to allocating an estimated budget of KD 250 million for the unified computerized system, he said the ministry has not asked the finance ministry for it because the project is just a proposal among many proposals.



Minister Fahd Al-Shula

### Imams' children

Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi issued a decision accepting children of non-Kuwaiti imams and muezzins in religious institutions provided that the parents live in the geographical location of the institution. The decision will be implemented starting from the 2019-2020 academic year. But the decision stipulates that the priority of admission will be for Kuwaitis.

## 50,000 Kuwaiti families could be eligible for social aid

**KUWAIT:** It is possible for the number of Kuwaiti families that are eligible for social aid during the current year to reach more than 50,000, after the amendment of the social aid law to add Kuwaiti woman married to non-Kuwaitis, Al-Qabas reported yesterday quoting government sources. This means that a quarter of Kuwaiti families benefit from assistance, bearing in mind that the increase has reached 28 percent since 2013 compared to an earlier rate of 6 percent annually.

A concerned source said the law allows 15 needy categories to receive social aid with amounts starting from KD 559 up to KD 1,200 per month. He said not having rules for the process of financial payments and directing aid only to those who deserve it has increased the financial cost to more than KD 260

million per year, after it was KD 210 million in 2013.

### Mubarakia Market

Owners of shops in Mubarakia Market plan to go to the public prosecutor to resolve the problem of their contracts, which they consider as null because the company collects money before the due date, Al-Rai reported yesterday. An owner of a shop, Anwar Al-Qinae, said a detailed memo will be sent to the public prosecutor in order to lodge a complaint with regards to Souq Mubarakia because of the collection of rent 15 months before the contract goes in effect.

### Travel ban

More than 200,000 Kuwaitis and expats who are wanted or banned from travel are listed at the civil implementation departments at the justice and interior ministries. Many banks and companies have lodged complaints against citizens and expats for non-payment of dues, Al-Anbaa reported yesterday quoting sources. The sources said around 29,000 Kuwaiti women have been ordered arrested and banned from traveling among the 170,000 Kuwaitis listed, along with 30,000 expats.

## Three killed, two wounded in car crash

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Three people were killed and two others were injured in a road accident reported yesterday near Mina Abdullah bridge. The victims - all expats - were trapped inside their vehicle which flipped over as a result of the crash. Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's public relations department said in a statement. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the accident.



KUWAIT: The vehicle seen after the accident.



KUWAIT: Heavy traffic was the main scene at major roads and highways around Kuwait yesterday, simultaneously with the beginning of the second term in Arab schools and Kuwait University colleges.

— Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

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US, Taliban make significant progress to end Afghan war

## ‘El Chapo’ trial: A plunge into the bloody drug trade



SINGAPORE: In this file photo taken on June 12, 2018 North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un (R) walks with US President Donald Trump (L) during a break in talks at their historic US-North Korea summit, at the Capella Hotel on Sentosa Island. — AFP

# Peace deal on cards for US-N Korea summit

## Removal of crippling economic sanctions may lead to breakthrough deal

**WASHINGTON:** As Donald Trump seeks progress with North Korea at a second summit, the United States has a series of cards it can play including easing sanctions, signing a peace declaration or even pulling troops from South Korea.

After the historic handshake between the US president and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore in June, Washington policymakers are adamant on the need for tangible concessions by Pyongyang on its nuclear program at the sequel meeting, which Trump says will take place around late February, with Vietnam the most likely venue. But much depends on the mercurial Trump, who has declared his outreach to the longtime US adversary to be a diplomatic coup and angrily denounced criticism that his first summit was mere symbolism.

North Korea watchers believe that Kim’s primary goal is relief from international sanctions and doubt he will suddenly give up his nuclear arsenal, which his dynastic regime has built for decades even through famine. The sanctions “are not strong enough to create serious economic problems in the country, but they are strong enough to make economic growth difficult or unachievable,” said Andrei Lankov, a professor at Kookmin University in Seoul who studied in

Pyongyang. “In order to maintain stability in the country and to stay in power, the North Koreans know they will have to end or at least narrow the yawning gap between their economy and the economies of the neighboring countries, especially South Korea and China,” he said.

### Complicated options on sanctions

When Kim met Trump, the first-ever summit between the two nations, North Korea was seen as seeking a treaty or at least statement formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended in an armistice. But Victor Cha, the director of Asian studies at Georgetown University and former US negotiator with North Korea, said a peace declaration was ultimately symbolic. “I don’t think they would say no to it. A peace declaration would be a sign of non-hostile intent. But they want tangible evidence of non-hostile intent, which would be removing some of the sanctions,” Cha said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has vowed no let-up in sanctions until North Korea denuclearizes. And many US sanctions involve human rights or corruption laws and cannot be lifted without intervention by Congress, which is unlikely to be sympathetic. But Cha said the United States could offer relief indirectly through South Korea’s dovish

government, working at the United Nations to remove sanctions that impede the restart of inter-Korean projects such as the Kaesong industrial complex.

The US is already preparing to ease restrictions on humanitarian aid and could offer to exchange liaison offices with Pyongyang, a step before diplomatic relations. Trump points to North Korea’s halt of missile and nuclear tests as progress, two years after fears soared of war. US officials want a full accounting of all North Korean weapons sites as well as inspections. But experts fear North Korea will agree only on dismantling outdated facilities while keeping its capacities. In 2008, North Korea invited international media to watch as it blew up a cooling tower at Yongbyon, which remains the regime’s main nuclear site.

### Focus on long-range missiles?

South Korea and Japan have increasingly wondered if Trump — who has made “America First” his guiding worldview — would focus on ridding North Korea of its fast-moving program of intercontinental ballistic missiles, which threaten the mainland United States. Pompeo in recent interviews has described North Korea diplomacy as a way to protect Americans.

“Fairly or unfairly, that’s being interpreted by our allies as a potential US willingness to cut a deal that only protects America and disregards the safety of our allies,” said Bruce Klingner, a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative Washington think tank. The summit also comes amid a prolonged impasse in negotiations on how much South Korea should pay the United States to maintain its 28,500 troops in the country.

“There are concerns that Trump may be so eager for a success that he may agree to signing a peace declaration, signing an ICBM-only agreement and even reducing US forces on the peninsula either in return for perhaps a freeze on Yongbyon production or in response to the ongoing stalemate in Seoul,” Klingner said. Trump is a longstanding skeptic on the cost value of alliances and is demanding more from South Korea.

But any promise by Trump to Kim to pull out troops would likely meet wide opposition in Congress, fury from Japan’s conservative government and quiet unease from South Korea, where President Moon Jae-in is more supportive of the US presence than previous left-wing leaders. And it is not even a given that North Korea would welcome a withdrawal. —AFP

## ‘Yellow vest’ leader ‘handicapped for life’

**PARIS:** A prominent French anti-government “yellow vest” activist, badly injured in the eye at a protest, was struck with one of the controversial rubber bullets used by police, his lawyer said yesterday. Jerome Rodrigues’ lawyer fears he will be “handicapped for life” after he was injured in clashes with police in Paris on Saturday during an 11th straight weekend of protests against President Emmanuel Macron.

Rodrigues was placed in an artificial coma overnight after the incident at the Bastille monument in central Paris. “He is in shock. He will be handicapped for life. It is a tragedy for him and his family,” lawyer Philippe de Veulle told BFM television, adding that he was lodging a complaint against police. The bearded Rodrigues, who has become a well-known figure in the “yellow vest” movement with 50,000 followers on Facebook, was live-streaming the protest on the website when he was hit. De Veulle said Rodrigues was struck with a “flashball”, referring to the 40-mm rubber projectiles used by French riot police. The devices have become deeply controversial in France since the protests began in November, blamed for dozens of serious injuries. On Saturday, police using the bullets were for the first time deployed wearing body cams in a bid to increase transparency. Rodrigues, speaking to LCI television from hospital, said he was also hit by a stingball grenade, another controversial riot control device.

“Everything happened very quickly. They threw a grenade at me and I took a (rubber) bullet. I was



PARIS: Eric Drouet (R), a leader of the “Yellow vest” (gilets jaunes) movement, poses for a selfie with a protester during an anti-government demonstration. —AFP

attacked twice — a grenade to the foot, and the bullet,” Rodrigues said. He accused police of carrying out “all the violence the rules allow”. Witnesses picked up the projectile that struck Rodrigues and police are set to investigate the circumstances of the incident. Originally sparked by rises in fuel taxes, the “yellow vest” protests quickly snowballed into a widespread revolt over accusations that Macron, an ex-banker, is out of touch with rural and small-town France.

Named after the emblematic luminous road safety vests worn by protesters, the demonstrations have drawn tens of thousands of people to the streets. But their numbers have eased in recent weeks after Macron announced a series of policy climbdowns and launched a two-month consultation to allow people to vent their anger. The interior ministry estimated that 69,000 turned out across France on Saturday, compared with 84,000 a week earlier. — AFP

## Record breaking floods hit Australia

**CAIRNS:** Communities were cut off, farmers stranded and cows washed offshore as heavy rain pelted northeast Australia yesterday, with one major river breaking 118-year-old floodwater records. The Bureau of Meteorology said Queensland’s Daintree River rose to 12.60 meters — a level not seen in over a century — and local authorities warned that some residents in remote areas could be cut off for days.

The heritage listed Daintree Rainforest received more than 300 millimeters of rain in just 24 hours and Northern Queensland is bracing for monsoonal conditions for the rest of the week. Residents in this tropical region of Australia are used to a heavy wet season, but the recent deluge has cut off a ferry line that is the only means of accessing some areas. Port Douglas Shire Council Mayor, Julia Leu, told AFP those who are still in their homes could be cut off for two days, with no power or phone service.

Meanwhile the conditions have caused havoc for farmers and livestock. One family of four were stranded on the farm they manage, with live power lines falling into floodwaters. Local paper Newsport Daily reported the caretakers of the “Tranquility” farm were stuck with their two children for 16 hours until the State Emergency Services helicopter could rescue them. Residents rushed to a downstream beach to help a handful of livestock washed away by floodwaters. —AFP



International

# Pressure on Venezuela’s Maduro with opposition amnesty offer, protests

‘We cannot nor should we attack the people’

CARACAS: Bolstered by growing international support, Venezuela’s self-proclaimed president Juan Guaido is increasing pressure on the rule of Nicolas Maduro by calling for new elections and street protests, and offering amnesty to members of the military who defect. The first major military officer to publicly switch his support to Guaido was Venezuela’s military attache in Washington, Army Colonel Jose Luis Silva.

In a video posted online Saturday Silva urged “my brothers in the national armed forces” to recognize Guaido “as the only legitimate president,” in accordance with Venezuela’s constitution. He said the constitution does not allow the military “to attack our equals, our brothers... Don’t forget comrade commander, captain, everyone in a command position — we cannot nor should we attack the people.” Guaido, who has galvanized a previously divided opposition, is offering an amnesty to anyone in the military who disavows Maduro, even suggesting amnesty for Maduro himself.

At a Caracas rally the 35-year-old opposition leader said he will announce a date for “a grand march” for change, and called on supporters to distribute on Sunday print and electronic copies of amnesty measures approved by the opposition-controlled National Assembly, which he has headed since January 5. Some 26 people have been killed and more than 350 people have been detained in clashes this week between anti-Maduro activists and security forces, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said Friday.

**Guaido’s support grows**  
The United States on Saturday pressed all nations to

“stand with the forces of freedom” in Venezuela, encouraged by a tougher European line on Maduro. Russia however backed the embattled Venezuelan president. At a special UN Security Council session US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described Maduro as part of an “illegitimate mafia state” responsible for Venezuela’s economic collapse.

Pompeo asked that all nations recognize Guaido as Venezuela’s interim president, and urged them to end financial transactions with Maduro’s government, which has struggled to pay bills despite the country’s oil wealth. Pompeo denounced Russia and China, which have stood by Maduro, saying that they were “propping up a failed regime in the hopes of recovering billions of dollars in ill-considered investments and assistance made over the years”. Russia denounced the United States for interference. “Venezuela does not pose any threat to peace and security. The intention of the United States is to orchestrate a coup d’etat,” said Russia’s UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia.

**Europeans set deadline**  
President Donald Trump’s recognition of Guaido has been supported by many Latin American powers including Brazil, Colombia and Argentina — but not all. European powers on Saturday warned that they will recognize Guaido unless Maduro calls elections within eight days. “If within eight days there are no fair, free and transparent elections called in Venezuela, Spain will recognize Juan Guaido as Venezuelan president” so that he himself can call the vote, said Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.  
Britain, France, and Germany followed, with French President Emmanuel Macron tweeting: “The



CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition supporters holding up letters reading “Justice” gather to listen to the head of Venezuela’s National Assembly and the country’s self-proclaimed “acting president” Juan Guaido, during a rally. —AFP

Venezuelan people must be able to freely decide on their future.” The 28-member European Union however is not united, with Greece’s ruling left-wing Syriza party voicing “full support and solidarity” for Maduro. Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza rejected the ultimatum. “From where do you get the power to issue deadlines or ultimatums to a sovereign people?” he told the Security Council.

**Tense days ahead**  
Maduro’s reelection last year was considered illegitimate by the opposition, and rejected by the United States, the EU and the UN as a sham. Up to now however Maduro has retained the loyalty of the powerful military. Both Guaido and Maduro have called for demonstrations next week, raising fears of further violence. — AFP

## Cambodia’s bid to be ‘New Macau’ stirs old wounds as China cash in

SIHANOUKVILLE: A businessman leaves a smoky room \$1,500 poorer from a game of Baccarat at a casino in Sihanoukville — an increasingly common scene in the Cambodian beachtown as it becomes a honeypot for Chinese gamblers and investors at a pace worrying marginalized locals. “It’s not so bad if I lost tonight,” said Dong Qiang, adding: “I will try my luck tomorrow.”

The coastal capital of Preah Sihanouk province — named after Cambodia’s revered late king — was once a sleepy fishing community before being claimed first by Western backpackers, and then wealthy Russians. Today it is Chinese investment that is transforming the province — into a sizeable gambling playground for mainland tourists. “Some gamblers lose hundreds of dollars in less than 20 minutes,” an employee from a casino told AFP, requesting anonymity. Casinos are banned in China, although the enclave of Macau — often dubbed the “Las Vegas of Asia” — has special laws allowing a massive gambling trade.

But Sihanoukville is becoming a popular alternative. There are around 50 Chinese-owned casinos and dozens of hotel complexes under construction. Around 30 percent of Sihanoukville’s population are now Chinese, according to the provincial governor, who said this number ballooned in the past two years. At the Oriental Pearl Casino, business is brisk. Ten Chinese men sit silently while their cards are shuffled across the green felt table, chain-smoking under the neon glare from a nearby bank of “50 Dragons” slot machines. But while millions of dollars change hands on the casino floors, insiders say the big money is made in “secret rooms” hosting online gambling sites.



SIHANOUKVILLE: This photo taken on December 14, 2018 shows Chinese tourists enjoying the beach in Sihanoukville, the coastal capital of Preah Sihanouk province. — AFP

**China’s largesse**  
Cambodia’s love affair with its communist neighbor has meant a sizeable cash injection for the once-impooverished Southeast Asian country. Billions have flowed into its economy but with few questions asked about China’s abysmal rights record. Preah Sihanouk’s governor said \$1 billion has been invested by Chinese government and private businesses between 2016 and 2018. And China’s largesse is none more apparent than in Sihanoukville, a nexus of Beijing’s “One Belt, One Road” infrastructure plan, which includes a planned highway to Cambodia’s capital Phnom Penh.  
China has also sought high-profile military exchanges, fuelling speculation that it wants to build a naval base off the Cambodian coast in Koh Kong province, north of Sihanoukville, with ready access to the flashpoint South China Sea. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen vehemently denied the port-building claims, despite the recent docking of three hulking Chinese warships at Sihanoukville’s port. He also returned from a recent trip to Beijing with the promise of \$588 million in aid and an increase in bilateral trade to \$10 billion by 2023.

**Price hikes**  
Real estate prices in the town have skyrocketed in the past two years, increasing from \$500 per square metre to five times that for homes close to the sea, real estate firm CBRE told AFP. The provincial governor describes Chinese money as “a diamond and golden chance for all”. “They bring money to invest because they see our potential,” Yun Min said. Yet swathes of new development make it harder to settle old disputes over ownership in a kingdom where land has been commandeered by prominent, government-connected tycoons and wealth and influence trump the rule of law.  
“The huge Chinese investment in Preah Sihanouk province has no benefits for the poor,” said Sun Sophat, a representative of the Spean Chheah community, which has camped out on a roadside refusing to be moved from lands they say have been sold from under them by a local tycoon. “The benefits go only to the wealthy and the powerful.” Boeun Kang, who has lived on the road next to the disputed land for 11 years, said her desire is simple — to own a 20x30 metre plot of land, which she is willing to die for. — AFP

## Desolation, dismay await Libya displaced

AL-GAWALESH: “Our town has been looted, homes wrecked and olive trees torched,” Moftah Mohammed said in dismay on returning home to Al-Gawalesh in western Libya after years wandering from place to place. Al-Gawalesh, perched on the slopes of Jebel Nefussa, 120 kilometers west of Tripoli, paid the price for its support of former dictator Moamer Kadhafi during a 2011 NATO-backed revolt in which he was captured and killed.

Once home to close to 10,000 people, the town is a scene of desolation: wind- and dirt-swept, burnt-out homes, destroyed schools and other public buildings, devoid of any public services. “It was July 6, 2011” when he and his family like all other residents had to flee Al-Gawalesh, Mohammed said. “To stay would have meant death,” in the face of NATO air strikes on Kadhafi’s forces. Fear of reprisals by neighboring communities which had sided with the victorious rebels kept it a ghost town for the past seven-and-a-half years.



AL-GOUALICHE: A Libyan boy walks in a burnt and destroyed building in the town of Al-Goualiche, 120 kilometers west of the capital Tripoli, on October 25, 2018. — AFP

In the face of often entrenched bitterness and a hunger for revenge, the United Nations mission in Libya has been working for reconciliation through the return of displaced communities to their pre-war homes. The way was cleared for a return to Al-Gawalesh with a reconciliation deal signed back in 2015 between representatives of the towns of Jebel

Nefussa that came along with promises of financial aid. But Mohammed said the pledges have remained a dead letter due to inaction by successive government commissions. Another recent returnee, Mohammed Bukraa, a man in his 70s who uses crutches, said he “broke down” when he saw his home and those of his two sons had been set ablaze. — AFP

## Pope winds up World Youth Day events with giant mass

PANAMA CITY: Pope Francis winds up a global gathering of young Catholics yesterday with a giant open-air mass for hundreds of thousands of pilgrims before leaving Panama. The pope, who on Saturday admitted the Church had been “wounded” by a deepening clergy sex abuse crisis, will celebrate the second open-air mass of his visit at a park on the outskirts of Panama City.

After mass, scheduled for early in the morning to avoid high temperatures, the 82-year-old pope will meet young people living with AIDS and HIV at the Good Samaritan home in the city. Francis will thank hundreds of World Youth Day volunteers at a stadium in the afternoon before a farewell ceremony and a flight back to Rome. The pope acknowledged Saturday that the Church was “wounded by sin” in a homily addressed to priests and seminarians reeling from sexual abuse scandals and coverups.

**Church ‘wounded by sin’**  
Celebrating mass at the landmark Cathedral of Santa Maria La Antigua in Panama City, Francis warned of the “weariness of hope that comes from

seeing a Church wounded by sin, which has so often failed to hear all those cries.” At a lunch meeting with 10 young pilgrims, Francis said sex abuse by the clergy was “a horrible crime,” according to one of the guests.  
Later, at a massive vigil that the organizers said drew 600,000 pilgrims, the pope called on young people to reject the temptation to live their lives online and urged them to get involved in their communities. Life was not “in the cloud, waiting to be downloaded, a new app to be discovered, or a technique of mental self-improvement,” the pontiff said during his grandfatherly discourse.  
The Argentine pope has used his encounter with young people in Central America to speak out repeatedly in defense of migrants, and address other problems affecting the region such as poverty, drug trafficking, violence and what he said was a regional “plague” of murders of women. In a swipe at US President Donald Trump’s plans to build a border wall against migrants, the pope said at a giant prayer meeting on Saturday that it was “senseless” to condemn every immigrant “as a threat to society.” — AFP

## Baghdad to summon Turkey envoy over death of Kurd protester

BAGHDAD: Iraq yesterday said it would summon the Turkish ambassador over the death of a Kurdish protester after Turkish troops opened fire on demonstrators in the country’s northwest. On Saturday night, Kurdish protesters stormed a Turkish army position in the Shiladzeh region of northwestern Iraq to protest the deaths of four civilians they said were killed last week in Turkish bombardment.

Witnesses said Turkish troops opened fire on the demonstrators, causing casualties and damage. Iraq’s foreign ministry yesterday denounced the incident, saying one person was killed and several others wounded when Turkish forces “opened fire on citizens in the Shiladzeh area”. “The foreign ministry will summon the Turkish ambassador to hand a protest note about the incident and demand that it not be repeated,” it added.

Turkish forces are deployed in Iraq’s northern autonomous Kurdish region

and often carry out raids and air strikes against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), seen as a “terrorist” group by Ankara. On Saturday, the Kurdish regional government said it was “saddened” by the casualties and material damage at Shiladzeh but only referred to an “incident” without mentioning Turkey or the protest. Footage distributed by activists appeared to show protesters setting Turkish military vehicles on fire.  
Turkey’s defense ministry said one of its bases was attacked after “provocation by a PKK terror group,” resulting in some damage to vehicles and other equipment. Yesterday, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the PKK was “troubled” because Ankara was hitting its “terror nests”. “They are provoking the local community. And we know that the PKK is behind this (the attack),” he told reporters in the southern city of Antalya.  
Cavusoglu said he had spoken to the prime minister of autonomous Kurdistan, Nechirvan Barzani, who reportedly told him authorities would conduct a “comprehensive investigation”. The PKK has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984, but also operates bases in the Qandil mountain area of Iraq’s Kurdish region. In December, Baghdad summoned the Turkish ambassador to protest Ankara’s “repeated” air strikes as a “violation of its sovereignty”. Turkey has pressed Iraq to play a bigger role in fighting the PKK, and last month announced deeper bilateral cooperation on the matter. — AFP



# French debates rally Macron’s supporters but rebels hold out

## Attempting to defuse yellow vest anger over inequality

**SAINT-SEBASTIEN-DE-MORSENT:** On a midwinter evening in northern France, a group of people gathered in a local hall with the air of barely suppressed excitement of those about to witness a momentous event. The 30-odd residents from the small town of Saint-Sebastien-de-Morsent were rallying to a call by President Emmanuel Macron to take part in a “great national debate”, a key component of his fightback after two months of often violent “yellow vest” anti-government protests.

Deputy mayor Florence Haguet-Volckaert urged the participants — most of them pensioners — to speak freely on four themes Macron has put up for debate: taxation and public spending; democracy and citizenship; the functioning of government and public services; the environment. “We’re here to listen to you,” she assured as councilors sat, pens poised, to note complaints that will be forwarded to Macron as part of a two-month democratic experiment.

Across France, dozens of town hall-style debates are planned as Macron attempts to defuse yellow vest anger over inequality and his perceived indifference to the struggles of rural and small-town France. Every week since mid-November, tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets to protest high taxes, low spending power and what they see as the 41-year-old’s arrogance. Though their numbers have ebbed, some 69,000 turned out across France again on Saturday, with more clashes between police and the 4,000 demonstrators in Paris.

### ‘Another France’ speaks

The worst social unrest in France since the May 1968 student uprising forced Macron to back down on some of his reforms in December, leaving him weakened. The “great debate” launched last week marks a return to the kind of grassroots politics that Macron championed during his presidential campaign, but promptly ditched after taking office.

“This is a big evolution in French life. Usually we elect MPs and no longer get to ask questions,” Didier Grimoin, a retired building engineer, enthusiastically told AFP as he scurried from the “tax” to the “citizenship” table. Christophe Menant, a 51-year-old engineer who like

Grimoin backed Macron for president, also welcomed the chance to have his say. “For the past two months the TV has only been giving voice to the yellow vests. I feel as if finally another France is speaking up,” he told AFP.

While a fuel tax hike lit the fire of the protests, Macron’s perceived arrogance — he famously told an unemployed gardener he only had to “cross the road” to find work — has been its oxygen. In an attempt to reconnect with voters he has given more than three days in the past week to debating, a sport in which he excels. He took on hundreds of mayors in two sessions each lasting over six hours before turning up unannounced Thursday to a meeting in the southern town of Valence, holding forth with 250 citizens including yellow vests.

### ‘Book of grievances’

The public grievances inscribed in a hard-back notebook set out in Saint-Sebastien’s town hall — a tradition launched by King Louis XVI just before the French Revolution and now resurrected around the country — run to several pages. Many echo yellow vest demands, from repealing a recent lowering of the speed limit to bringing back a highly popular tax on the rich.

Such is the anger among protesters towards the political class that some have burned effigies of Macron. But the tone of the debate in Saint-Sebastien — a suburb of Evreux, where protesters have regularly occupied traffic roundabouts — was courteous.

Macron has used the debates to launch a spirited defense of his policies, while admitting to “errors” and leaving the door open to some corrective measures. Polls show his approval ratings, which had sunk to the early 20s, rising four points in the past month to 31 percent, suggesting he may finally be on the rebound.

### Fires still burning

The yellow vests, some of whom have announced plans to run in the European elections, have so far resisted his overtures. The debate in Saint-Sebastien, a town of around 5,000, drew only two representatives of the movement. Casting a skeptical eye over the mostly middle-class gath-



**BOURG-DE-PEAGE:** French President Emmanuel Macron (R) gestures as he answers questions during a meeting with local residents as part of the “Great National Debate”. — AFP

ering, one of the two, a 62-year-old retired printworks technician who gave his name as Lucien, remarked: “These are not the type of people you meet on the roundabouts. There, you find a lot of misery.”

At a roadside camp 20 kilometers north, six young protesters huddled around a fire in a barrel. “Yes, we’re tired, but we’re not going to give up,” said Vanessa, an unemployed former shop manager. Stephane, a 47-year-old

photographer who has regularly travelled down to Paris for the protests, also vowed to keep up the fight. The father of two admitted to recently crossing a personal rubicon when he picked up a paving stone and hurled it at a police van. It missed its target. While regretting his act, he says violence may ultimately be necessary for the movement to achieve its goal of a new model of people power. “You have to stir things up,” he said. — AFP

## Italy’s Salvini threatens to sue migrant rescuers

**ROME:** Italy’s interior minister Matteo Salvini said yesterday he was gathering legal evidence against the crew of a Dutch-flagged rescue ship as calls grew for 47 migrants to be allowed to land. “We have concrete elements to declare that the captain and crew of the Sea Watch 3 have put the lives of those on board at risk by disobeying precise directions days ago to disembark them in the nearest port, not Italy!” he said.

“The evidence will be handed to the judicial authorities,” he said, accusing captain and crew of “a crime and a clear desire to use these immigrants in a political battle”. Salvini has refused to open the ports to the mainly sub-Saharan African migrants rescued in the Mediterranean over a week ago, saying the ship had had a chance to make port as it sailed through Libyan, Tunisian and Maltese waters. “The interior minister is gathering elements to evaluate whether to press charges against the entire Sea Watch crew for favouring illegal immigration,” the ministry said.

Members of parliament who had been refused permission by the ministry to board the Sea Watch 3 made their own way onto the vessel which has taken shelter from bad weather off the coast of Sicily. “We will verify the situation on board and we continue to ask that those shipwrecked and the crew be allowed to disembark in line with international law,” left-wing member of parliament Nicola Fratoianni said. Rights group Mediterranean said the members of parliament would be “checking the psychological and physical state” of the rescued migrants, as well as gathering testimony of the violence they suffered in Libya. Save the Children and other aid agencies have appealed to Italy to allow at least the 13 minors on board to land. — AFP

## ‘Listen to Europe,’ Dublin tells MPs ahead of Brexit

**LONDON:** British MPs seeking to pressure Prime Minister Theresa May this week to renegotiate her Brexit deal should heed EU warnings that it will not succeed, Ireland’s foreign minister warned yesterday. Simon Coveney said attempts by Brexit supporters to remove or set a time-limit on a controversial “backstop” clause on the Irish border would never be accepted by Brussels.

“Listen to what people are saying in Europe,” he told BBC television, saying May’s Brexit deal was “a balanced package that isn’t going to change”. “The European Parliament will not ratify a withdrawal agreement that doesn’t have a backstop in it, it’s as simple as that,” he added. He was speaking ahead of another showdown between May and the House of Commons over Britain’s withdrawal from the EU, which is scheduled for March 29. MPs this month rejected the divorce agreement she struck with the bloc last year.

One Tuesday night, in a series of votes on parliamentary amendments, they will set out what they want her to do next. Some MPs want to delay Brexit or adopt a whole new strategy, but others are demanding changes to May’s deal that they suggest could allowing them to support it. These focus on the backstop, an arrangement intended to keep open the border between the UK and Ireland by temporarily tying London to the EU’s trade rules.

May has already spent months trying to amend the backstop with no success, but has promised to return to

Brussels if that is what her MPs want. Health Secretary Matt Hancock denied Coveney’s comments meant she could not succeed, telling the same BBC program that he was taking a “negotiating position”. He said Dublin did not want Britain to leave the EU without a deal, which is the default position if MPs cannot reach agreement.

The European Commission this week conceded that without a deal, controls would be re-imposed on the Irish border, which all sides have warned could undermine the Northern Irish peace process. “The idea the EU and the Irish government would drive this process to a no-deal exit in order to try to achieve something which is intended to avoid no-deal Brexit, that is not going to happen,” Hancock said. Coveney repeated that Dublin would be open to amending an accompanying political declaration on future trading ties, to emphasize that the backstop may never be used.

### Scrap MPs’ holiday

The rejection of May’s EU deal on January 15 left Britain hurtling towards the exit door with no plan. If her efforts to salvage her deal fail, Britain runs the risk of severing ties with its closest trading partner overnight, with no new arrangements in place. Numerous MPs have put forward amendments for debate on Tuesday rejecting this “no deal” scenario, and calling variously for Brexit to be delayed, negotiations be reopened with the EU, or a second referendum.

Increasing numbers of ministers have also warned they will not accept the potentially catastrophic prospect of Britain leaving with no agreement. May says the best way to avoid this is to agree to her deal, but says Brexit will happen on March 29 either way, and planning continues for every option. The Sunday Times newspaper raised eyebrows by reporting that officials are looking at what powers they might need in the event of any civil disorder,

cations chief, US government agents intercepted some 200 conversations between the cartel boss and his associates, hired killers, and corrupt Mexican officials. Investigators also intercepted encrypted messages between El Chapo and others, sent on Blackberries that the trafficker used to spy on his associates and his mistresses.

In one message read to the jury, El Chapo speaks with associate and a former mistress known as “la Fiera” about setting up dummy corporations in Germany and Ecuador in order to export drugs “to Europe, to Canada, to Australia and to the United States.” They also discuss the purchase in Belize of 700 kilograms (1,540 pounds) of cocaine.

### Friends in Chicago

Pedro Flores, a Chicago-based trafficker, testified that he and his twin brother had received 38 tons of cocaine from El Chapo and from the cartel’s other boss, Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada, between 2005 and 2008, along with 200 kilos of heroin. He said he sold it all in the United States — the cocaine for a total of \$800 million and the heroin for \$10 million. After surrendering to American agents, the brothers secretly taped dozens of conversations with El Chapo. In one of them, in 2008, Pedro Flores negotiated with El Chapo over the price of 20 kilos of heroin.

### A steep price markup

El Chapo’s accountant, Jesus Zambada, brother to “El Mayo” and the cartel’s boss in Mexico City, told the jury how El Chapo purchased Colombian cocaine for \$3,000 a kilo and then sold it in New York for \$35,000 a kilo — a markup of more than 10 times the cost. All the drugs, an average of 80 to 100 tons a year, were sent to the United States, he said.

including imposing martial law. Hancock confirmed the government was looking at “all the options in all circumstances”, but said martial law “isn’t the focus of our attention”. Separately, May’s office said it was considering extending House of Commons hours and cancelling MPs’ week-long February holiday to make time to pass all the laws needed to prepare for Brexit. These include bills relating to trade, fisheries and agriculture, immigration, the environment and healthcare, as well as a law to implement any divorce deal with the EU that MPs might yet agree to. — AFP



**LONDON:** Souvenirs portraying the Big Ben tower are seen at a gift-shop in Westminster. — AFP



**NEW YORK:** Emma Coronel Alspuro, the wife of Joaquin ‘El Chapo’ Guzman, arrives at the US District Court for the Eastern District. — AFP

### Airplanes full of dollars

El Chapo’s former pilot and business manager, Miguel Angel “Gordo” Martinez, testified that the cartel boss would sometimes receive as many as three cash-filled airplanes from the United States in a single day. Each plane carried “eight to 10 million dollars,” he said. He also told how El Chapo worked with Colombian suppliers to finance deliveries of up to 14 tons of cocaine — transported by boat to international waters off Mexico, where Colombian crews would transfer the drug to El Chapo’s employees. Martinez estimated that from 1990 to 1993 El Chapo thus imported 25 to 30 tons of cocaine into Mexico each year.

### Torture and killings

Isaías Valdez Rios, described as a hired killer for El Chapo, testified that he saw the drug king torture and execute three rival drug traffickers, burying one of them alive. The two others had bones broken before being killed. Their bodies were then burned. While El Chapo has not been directly accused of murder, the hired killer’s testimony — the bloodiest and most macabre heard so far — could help seal his fate. Other witnesses said they had seen El Chapo order kidnappings and killings of rivals or of police who refused to accept bribes. They said El Chapo had a permanent security guard of perhaps 100 men armed with pistols, automatic arms, bazookas, grenades and rocket launchers. — AFP

## Boko Haram attacks military bases in northeast Nigeria

**KANO:** Boko Haram jihadists attacked two military bases in northeast Nigeria’s Borno state, near the border with Cameroon, injuring six soldiers, two military sources told AFP yesterday. The attacks were the latest against military targets in the region with security becoming a major campaign issue ahead of presidential and legislative elections next month. President Muhammadu Buhari, who came to power in 2015 on a pledge to end the Islamist insurgency, is seeking re-election in the February 16 polls.

Early yesterday, troops fought off an attack by fighters believed to be from the Abubakar Shekau faction of Boko Haram in the town of Pulka along the border with Cameroon. “The terrorists attacked around 1:15 am (0015 GMT) and soldiers engaged them in a 30-minute fight, forcing them to withdraw,” a military officer said in an account confirmed by another officer.

The fighters’ intention was to attack and loot the town after overrunning the base, said the officer, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media. Late on Saturday fighters from the same faction attacked another base in Logomani village near the town of Gamboru, leading to a fight that left six soldiers injured. “Troops came under attack by Boko Haram terrorists who came in four gun trucks around 6:30 pm (1730 GMT),” the second officer told AFP. — AFP



## International

# US, Taleban make significant progress to end Afghan war

## Trump has been eager to end America's longest war

**WASHINGTON:** The United States and the Taleban said Saturday they had made substantial headway in negotiations to end the 17-year US war in Afghanistan, although sticking points remained. Zalmay Khalilzad, who was named by President Donald Trump's administration to find a way out of the war, held an unusually long six days of talks with Taleban representatives in Qatar.

"Meetings here were more productive than they have been in the past. We made significant progress on vital issues," Khalilzad wrote on Twitter. Khalilzad — who headed to Qatar after talks in Afghanistan and its key neighbors — said he was returning to Kabul to discuss the negotiations. "We will build on the momentum and resume talks shortly. We have a number of issues left to work out," he tweeted. "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, and 'everything' must include an intra-Afghan dialogue and comprehensive ceasefire."

While he has not given details, floated proposals include a withdrawal by the United States of its troops in return for Taleban guarantees not to shelter foreign extremists — the initial reason for the US intervention. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo later tweeted he had heard "encouraging news" from Khalilzad. "The US is serious about pursuing peace, preventing #Afghanistan from continuing to be a space for international terrorism & bringing forces home," he added.

"Working with the Afghan gov't & all interested parties, the US seeks to strengthen Afghan sovereignty, independence & prosperity." Trump has been eager to end America's longest war, which was launched shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Trump has already said he will pull half of the 14,000 US troops from Afghanistan.

### Dispute on Kabul's role

Taleban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that while there was "progress" at the meetings, reports of an agreement on a ceasefire and talks with Kabul "are not true." "Since issues are of critical nature and need comprehensive discussions, therefore it was decided that talks about

unresolved matters will resume in similar future meetings," he said in a statement. But a senior Taleban commander sounded optimistic after the talks with the Afghan-born Khalilzad, who played key diplomatic roles in former president George W. Bush's administration.

"The US has accepted many of our demands and both sides are very much agreed on major points, but some points are still under discussion," the Taleban commander told AFP on condition of anonymity by phone from Pakistan. "We are moving forward and a lot of progress has been made so far. Efforts are underway to find some middle ground to solve the remaining disputed issues. The Afghan government is one of them," he added.

Qatar's Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani also hailed the dialogue, tweeting: "This progress marks a significant step in the history of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan." The Taleban in the past have refused to deal with the internationally recognized government of President Ashraf Ghani. Abdullah Abdullah, the de facto prime minister of Afghanistan, recently voiced frustration that the Taleban was excluding the Kabul government, warning that a peace process "cannot take place by proxy."

### Heavy toll by Taleban

Afghan authorities have put a brave face on the negotiations, noting that Kabul has already taken charge of security. Ghani said Thursday that 45,000 Afghan security forces have died since September 2014 — a stunning casualty rate of more than 28 dead per day that analysts say has contributed to low morale. Ghani is running for reelection in July, which could come at the height of the Taleban fighting season — unless a ceasefire is reached.

The length and apparent breadth of the Taleban talks are unprecedented, signaling that both the United States and the Taleban see a path forward. In a sign of the seriousness, the Taleban appointed a co-founder of the hard-line Islamic movement as its Qatar-based negotiator with the United States — Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. He was



**JALALABAD:** In this photograph taken on January 21, 2019, an Afghan boy pushes a wheelbarrow carrying a child as they play on the outskirts of Jalalabad. — AFP

arrested in Pakistan in 2010 but released in October as the United States stepped up diplomacy. He was considered the number two to Taleban chief Mullah Omar, who died in 2013.

Joe Cirincione, president of the Ploughshares Fund, a US foundation that promotes peace, said that Baradar's return showed the hubris of war, recalling that he had

offered to surrender soon after September 11. "Bush administration refused. They wanted to defeat the Taleban, not negotiate. Now, he's back to make a deal, and he's going to get a lot more," Cirincione tweeted. Khalilzad last met with the insurgents last month in the United Arab Emirates, which has jockeyed with Qatar for influence in Afghan diplomatic circles. — AFP

## Thai pop idol condemned for Nazi swastika T-shirt

**BANGKOK:** A member of Thailand's most popular all-girl band has apologized for wearing a shirt with a Nazi flag featuring a swastika, after her TV appearance drew "shock and dismay" from the Israeli embassy Saturday. Images of Hitler, swastikas and other Nazi regalia are fairly commonplace on T-shirts and memorabilia in Thailand, a phenomenon blamed on a lack of awareness about world history.

The latest faux pas was committed by Pichayapa "Namsai" Natha, one of the singers of BNK48, when she wore the red-and-black top complete with swastika during the group's televised rehearsal on Friday. The deputy chief of mission of the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok took to Twitter to express "shock and dismay" at the outfit, noting that Sunday is International Holocaust Remembrance Day. "Presenting Nazi symbols by the band's singer hurt the feelings of millions around the world, whose relatives were murdered by the Nazis," said Smadar Shapira.

Following the uproar, Namsai apologized onstage during a concert on Saturday night. "I want this to be an example for everyone, please forgive me," the 19-year-old singer said, bursting into tears. In an extended apology posted on her official Facebook page, she later wrote: "Please give me advice so that I can grow

up to be a good adult in the future". "I cannot fix the mistake but I promise I will not let it happen again," she wrote in Thai.

Yesterday afternoon, the singer and the manager of BNK48, both dressed in somber grey and white clothing, met with Israeli ambassador Meir Shlomo to apologize for the incident. Diplomat Shapira tweeted photographs of the meeting, adding that the group "discussed the importance of... awareness to the Holocaust and Antisemitism". The band agreed to participate in an educational workshop on the Holocaust, she said, adding that the ambassador was "pleased" and understands that Namsai's act came from a "lack of knowledge and lack of awareness". Georg Schmidt, Germany's ambassador to Thailand, also extended an invitation to the group "to discuss the terror of the Nazi Dictatorship with us," he tweeted yesterday.

### Nazi imagery

Fans of BNK48, a domestic offshoot of Japanese girl group AKB48, came to Namsai's defense. "I'm over 40 and I don't know anything about this topic. When I saw the shirt, I didn't think it would be a problem," said fan Prasit Rudeekriengkrai. Others blamed Thailand's education system, which does not focus much on world history.

"What do you expect? When we were in school, they teach only about Thailand and Myanmar wars," Samruay Kraspra said. Thailand has gotten in trouble in the past for its flippant use of Hitler and Nazi-related imagery. In 2013, Bangkok's prestigious Chulalongkorn University was forced to apologize after its students created a mural depicting Hitler during graduation celebrations. A Catholic school was also left red-faced in 2011 after students dressed up in Nazi uniform for a sports day parade. — AFP

## Blasphemy lawyer returns to Pakistan to aid in Bibi appeal

**THE HAGUE:** The Pakistani lawyer of a Christian woman acquitted of blasphemy Saturday jetted out of the Netherlands to "hopefully assist his client for the last time" in a Pakistani court hearing, a Dutch MP said. Saif-ul-Malook fled to the Netherlands from Pakistan in November last year after violent protests erupted over the Pakistani Supreme Court's decision to overturn the conviction of Asia Bibi, who was on death row.

Pakistan's Supreme Court will decide tomorrow whether to allow an appeal against Bibi's acquittal, lawyers in the case have said. Christian Union party parliamentarian Joel Voordeewind tweeted a picture of himself and Malook saying "this afternoon (Saturday) I escorted Asia Bibi's lawyer, Mr Malook to Schiphol airport."

"He's going back to Pakistan to hopefully represent Asia for the last time in her case," Voordeewind said. The Netherlands last year granted Malook a temporary stay, but Voordeewind said Malook will "unfortunately lose his asylum status in the Netherlands." The allegations against Bibi date back to 2009, when Muslim women accused her of blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed, a charge punishable by death under the colonial-era legislation.

Her case drew the attention of international rights groups and swiftly became the most high-profile in the country. If the court refuses to allow the appeal, it will remove the last legal hurdle facing Bibi, who is a prime target in conservative

Muslim-majority Pakistan and remains in protective custody. Bibi was on death row for eight years for blasphemy, a hugely sensitive charge.

### Ambassador threatened

Meanwhile, the Dutch ambassador to Pakistan is to return to Islamabad next month after receiving a death threat last year, reportedly from Islamists angry over anti-Islam tweets by far-right politician Geert Wilders, Dutch media reported earlier Saturday. Ardi Stoios-Braken "will fly back to Islamabad in early February," the daily tabloid Algemeen Dagblad said. She was on leave in the Netherlands in late October last year when she received word "that a letter arrived at the embassy from Pakistani authorities."

"The letter spoke of a 'specific threat' and was related to the Mohammed cartoon contest which had already been cancelled months before," the paper said. Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok said in November that Stoios-Braken, a veteran diplomat, faced "threats" in Pakistan, apparently over "blasphemous depictions" by Wilders on Twitter. Wilders in August called off a planned Prophet Mohammed cartoon competition that stirred anger in Pakistan.

Pakistan's interior ministry in October wrote a secret memo on plans to "target" the Dutch ambassador by the hardline Islamist Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan party (TLP), media from both countries reported at the time. The TLP, founded in 2015, led protests in August calling for Pakistan to sever diplomatic relations with the Netherlands over the Wilders cartoon contest. The TLP has denied making any threats. The Pakistani government however has since launched a crackdown on the TLP, charging its leaders with sedition and terrorism. But authorities also struck a deal with the protesters to end the violence, forming an agreement which included allowing a final review of the Supreme Court's judgment. — AFP



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12 US shutdown ends temporarily as Brexit remains at a stalemate



13 GAC Motor unveils the captivating ENTRANZE at Detroit Motor Show



14 Boursa Kuwait signs MoU with KCST to promote Boursa Academy online



# A historical record for Zain KSA

## Zain Saudi Arabia 2018 full-year net profit growth soars to reach \$89 million

RIYADH: Zain Saudi Arabia (Zain KSA), announces historical record-high financial results for all key indicators for the full-year and fourth quarter ended 31 December, 2018 with the operator serving 8.1 million customers.

For the fourth quarter of 2018, Zain KSA recorded revenues of SAR 2 billion (\$546 million), a 19 percent increase to the same three-month period in 2017. EBITDA for the quarter reached SAR 1.1 billion (\$292 million), reflecting a 54 percent EBITDA margin, up 86 percent from SAR 590 million (\$157 million) recorded in Q4 2017. Net income for the three months reached an unprecedented SAR 399 million (\$106 million), reflecting a marked improvement on the loss of SAR 45 million (\$12 million) recorded for Q4 2017.

Key Operational and Financial notes for the 12 months ended 31 December, 2018:

1. On 16 December 2018, Zain KSA signed an agreement with the Kingdom's Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), and Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) to consolidate and reduce the annual royalty fee for commercial service by 5 percent from 15 percent to 10 percent of net revenues retrospectively, backdated to 1 January, 2018. The financial impact of applying the unified annual royalty fees in the first nine months of 2018 resulted in a decrease of fees payable and provisioned for an amount totalling SAR 220 million (\$59 million). The royalty reduction thus positively impacted the full-year 2018 and Q4 results when applied at the updated rate, with this 5 percent reduction set to positively impact the company's financial results going forward.

2. Furthermore, this aforementioned agreement included the settlement of disputed

- 2018 full-year revenues reach SAR 7.5 billion, EBITDA amounts to SAR 3 billion (40% margin)
- Q4 2018 revenues reach SAR 2 billion, 54% EBITDA margin
- Bader Al-Kharafi: "An incredible year underpinned by the Kingdom's leaderships' visionary wisdom of the ICT sector in supporting our turnaround strategy, placing the company in a stronger fiscal position"



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

amounts related to the payment of annual royalty fees by Zain KSA to the CITC for the nine-year period between 2009 and 2017, under the condition that Zain invests further in expanding its infrastructure in addition to other conditions over the coming three years. Financial impact of this settlement is expected to reach SAR 1.7 billion (\$453 million).

“ We couldn't have achieved these record-breaking results without the team work and dedication displayed by Zain KSA ”

3. Additional relevant financial issues of note include:

a) Revenues increased by SAR 225 million (\$60 million) as a result of the increasing demand for the company's appealing array of products and services.

b) Earnings before Interest and Tax (EBIT) improved by 35 percent (SAR 316 million), reflecting an EBIT amount of SAR 1.2 billion for the full-year 2018.

4. Zain KSA was able to reduce its accumulated deficit to SAR 1,800 million for 2018 representing 30.8 percent of its Share Capital of SAR 5,837 million, a marked improvement when compared to SAR 2,263 million for 2017 which represented 38.8 percent of its Share Capital.

5. Total capex investment for the full-year ended 31 December, 2018 was SAR 1.924 billion (\$513 million)

6. During the fourth quarter of 2018, the Company made a second early voluntary payment for the Murabaha financing agreement amounting SAR 525 million, following a SAR 600 million voluntary payment in September 2018. The total voluntary payments since the

refinancing of the Murabaha financing agreement in June 2018, brings the total voluntary payment to SAR 1.125 billion. These early payments in reducing debt portray the company's solid cashflow generation ability and shrewd cash management in containing interest charges as interest rates rise.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, and Vice-Chairman of Zain KSA commented, "Zain Saudi Arabia has experienced an incredible year placing the company in a much stronger fiscal position that will only get better. The year shall go down as a milestone for us and shall be looked back on many years from now as the year Zain KSA truly

came into its own."

Al-Kharafi continued, "This phenomenal performance was achieved as the company celebrates a decade of commercial operations in the Kingdom, underpinned by the dedicated efforts of the operation's talented team together with the committed support of Zain Group resources to implement our turnaround strategy."

Furthermore, Al-Kharafi said "Numerous favorable regulatory and financial developments in recent times has created an air of confidence for the future prosperity of Zain KSA. We feel extremely confident that the decisions we are making with respect to company's positioning are the correct ones. The programs around driving operating efficiencies; investment in 4G and 5G network upgrades and fiber (FTTH) expansion; customer service and acquisition strategies, and new innovative service developments (including digital wallet in partnership with Halalah) and B2B projects such as cloud computing in partnership with AliBaba Cloud are all proving to be gaining significant momentum and creating greater shareholder value."

Al-Kharafi concluded by expressing his sincere gratitude to the leadership of Saudi Arabia for creating an environment in which companies such as Zain can thrive, stating, "The Boards and executive management teams of both Zain Group and Zain KSA are committed to playing a key role in the Kingdom's ICT sector and offer customers quality and life empowering telecommunication services in line with Vision 2030. It is gratifying to have authorities at all levels of government support and commit to our presence in the Kingdom in such a positive manner. Such support further increases the attractiveness of the Kingdom's economy, contributing to its ongoing prosperity."

### Zain KSA Key Performance Indicators (SAR and USD) for the Full-Year 2018

Total Active Customers	8.2 million
Revenues	SAR 7.5 billion - (USD 2 billion)
EBITDA	SAR 3 billion - (USD 800 million)
EBITDA Margin	40%
Net Income	SAR 332 million - (USD 89 million)

### Zain KSA Key Performance Indicators (SAR and USD) for Q4 2018

Revenues	SAR 2 billion - (USD 456 million)
EBITDA	SAR 1.1 billion - (USD 292 million)
EBITDA Margin	54%
Net Income	SAR 399 million - (USD 106 million)

## Businesses struggle as cracks appear in China's economy

BEIJING: Cracks are opening in China's mighty economy: investors are backing away from deals, factories are moving abroad and companies are shedding jobs. The world's second-largest economy is losing steam, hitting its slowest growth in almost three decades last year, and flagging further in recent months. While gross domestic product grew at 6.6 percent in 2018 — a rate that would be the envy of most nations-China's efforts to cut its debt mountain have weighed on the economy. Private businesses in particular face new hurdles as costs rise and financing becomes harder to come by, while the trade war with the United States has not helped. Here is a look at some of the struggles faced by Chinese companies and people:

Feeding China's addiction to video games seemed an easy bet for Beijing Yixin Technology, a tech startup behind the mobile game Farm Take Home. The game allows players to harvest wheat, raise chickens and plant apple trees—a bucolic refuge from the pressures of urban China.

But in real life, the tech firm has struggled to find investors. "In December our company's funding ran out, we had an investment lined up, but the money never came through," said chairman Cui Yi. "This month I arranged another investor, then he backed out too. I think we can't hold out." His company is not alone.

Venture capital funding dried up at the end of last year. Total investment in the fourth quarter fell 13 percent from a year earlier, according to data from Preqin market research.

Policymakers are partly to blame, pushing a war on debt and financial risk that has cut the funding flowing into investment firms, industry insiders say.

Another government diktat halted new video game approvals for months—officially due to youth gaming addiction concerns—sending firms like Beijing Yixin into a deep freeze. Other companies are facing the fallout from the trade war with the United States. More than a handful of exporters have sought to get around US tariffs by building factories outside China, according to a review of public stock filings. Others are sending workers home early for Chinese New Year or cutting overtime. Last



BEIJING: People are seen outside the Chaoyang Arbitration Centre in Beijing. Cracks are opening in China's mighty economy: Investors are backing away from deals, factories are moving abroad, salespeople are struggling to sell cars, and companies are shedding jobs. — AFP

month China's exports fell. "It has hit our profits," Harry Shih, manager of Runfine Bearings in eastern Zhejiang province, said of the trade war. Washington slapped 25 percent taxes on many types of ball bearings in July. Shih said he had shared the cost increase with his customers, roughly half of whom are from the US.

"Business is going down for most companies including factories. Like me they have the same problems, profits are going down" as costs rise, said Shih.

Slowing disposable income growth and tighter credit have hit consumer spending, with car sales falling last year for the first time in more than 20 years. "Volumes have fallen by half," said Wang Jingjing, a fast-talking 23-year-old salesman at a Ford dealership in Beijing, noting about one third of the salespeople had been fired or left. Wang's own salary has roughly halved, he said, from around 10,000 yuan (\$1,474) a month in 2017 down to less than 5,000 yuan (\$737). "I've definitely controlled my own

spending, going out to eat less, buying less, cutting down on these things," he said, adding he believes things will turn around this year with new car models coming out.

Official data shows unemployment at a stable rate, rising slightly to 4.9 percent last month. But independent data paints a different picture. In October-December advertised tech positions fell by 20 percent from a year earlier, after declining 51 percent in the third quarter, according to data from Zhaopin, China's largest recruitment website and Renmin University.

China's economy "faces downward pressure, and to some extent this pressure will be transmitted to the job market," said Meng Wei, a spokeswoman for the National Development and Reform Commission, China's state planner. A lawyer who consults on labor disputes, Guo Xuehai of Beijing Zhonghai Law Firm, said, "there are definitely more employees coming for help than before," but added this was usually the case at this time of the year. — AFP

## Saudi seeks to attract \$427b with industrial program

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia aims to attract private sector investments worth 1.6 trillion riyals (\$427 billion) over the next decade through an industrial development program aimed at diversifying the economy, Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said on Saturday.

Investments will be made through the National Industrial Development and Logistics Program (NIDLP), one of the programs set out under Vision 2030, a wider reform strategy led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and intended to wean the economy off hydrocarbons and create jobs for Saudis. Falih said the kingdom would today announce projects worth 70 billion riyals that are "ready for negotiations" under the NIDLP to boost industry, mining, energy and logistics.

At a later stage, it plans to announce projects in the military, chemicals and small businesses industries worth \$50 billion, he added without giving a timeframe.

"The (NIDLP) program targets 1.6 trillion Saudi riyals ... it is quite ambitious but it is over a 10-year period so we have got the time to do it," Falih told a press conference.

The program will seek to raise money from both domestic and foreign investors. "We will have a huge contribution from the private sector outside the kingdom, but we will leave the bigger share for the Saudi private sector," Falih said.

The program will integrate the mining, industry and energy sectors, which Falih said were each vital to the kingdom's plan to empower the private sector and make it the main driver for economic growth. After decades of spending on development projects, the government has made attracting greater foreign investment a cornerstone of its Vision 2030 plan.

But foreign investors have been rattled in recent months by Saudi Arabia's deteriorating relations with Western governments after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October. Transport Minister Nabeel Al-Amudi told the press conference that NIDLP would launch 60 initiatives in the logistics sector, including five new airports and 2,000 km of railways, and aims to attract more than 135 billion riyals of investments. — Reuters



# US shutdown ends temporarily as Brexit remains at a stalemate

## Trump’s approval rating drops to 34% from 42%

**KUWAIT:** US President Donald Trump has agreed to temporarily end the historic 35-day governmental shutdown with no backing for his proposed border wall. On Friday, the president announced that he had agreed towards a measure to re-open the government for three weeks while he discusses funding with lawmakers. The conflict over the Mexican border wall funding had kept 800,000 federal employees without pay as Trump battled for his 2016 campaign promise. Frustration in public opinion grew as a poll by CBS revealed that seven out of 10 Americans did not believe the border wall issue called for a shutdown. Furthermore, a poll found Trump's approval rating dropped to 34 percent from 42 percent in one month. Nevertheless, Trump reiterated his stance claiming, "If we don't get a fair deal from Congress, the government will either shut down on February 15 again, or I will use the power afforded to me under the laws and the constitution of the United States to address this emergency. We will have great security."

### Existing home sales disappoint

Existing home sales - a key pillar of economic growth given that it makes up about 90 percent of US home sales - fell to its lowest level since November 2015. According to the National Association of Realtors, data on Tuesday revealed existing home sales tumbled 6.4 percent month-on-month in December to an annualized pace of 4.99m. The data follows a 2.1 percent increase in November to an annualized pace of 5.33m. The drop is mainly attributed to higher mortgage rates and tight inventory, which has weighed on the housing market despite the strength in the US labor market and improving wages.

### Equities

Stocks swung between gains and losses after Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross stated that the US and China, the worlds' two largest economies, remain far from any trade resolution. However, he later added that there is still a fair chance of a deal in an effort to calm apprehensions. With fears over the global trade outlook and the health of the US economy, investors now face a rocky month ahead as the governmental shutdown threatens to hinder activity and limits the flow of economic data. The Dow Jones rose 1.36 percent to 24,737.20, while the S&P 500 gained 1.22 percent and is currently trading at 2,644.76.

### Commodities

Oil prices rose on Thursday heightened by the US threat of sanctions on Venezuela, an OPEC member and major exporter. On Wednesday, US President Donald Trump recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido as interim president of Venezuela. In response, the current president of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro said the country was cutting ties with the US and gave diplomats 72 hours to leave the country. The Trump administration reacted by vowing to impose sanctions if the political turmoil continues. Venezuela still exports about 350,000 barrels to the US a day, though production has fallen sharply over several years due to mismanagement caused by the socialist regime. However, gains were limited after US data revealed an unexpected build up in crude stockpiles. According to the Energy Information Administration, crude inventories rose by 8 million barrels in the week to January 18 compared to expectations of a 42,000-barrel decline. Historically the US, Russia, and Saudi Arabia have each taken turns dominating the top of the global list of producers. Oil prices remain steady: Brent

## Zimbabwe scrambles to ease passengers’ woes after protests

**HARARE:** An ecstatic Zimbabwean passenger Shylot Sibanda screams with joy as he boards a bus from downtown Harare to the township of Budiriro. The fare has been slashed to a third of what he paid last week. It's the result of government action-after nationwide demonstrations over fuel hikes earlier this month-in a country suffering from spiralling inflation and regular shortages of necessities. Under pressure following international criticism of its brutal put-down of the protests, the government has scrambled to revive its public transport company Zupco after years of mismanagement and corruption. "We are happy with what the government has done and we hope it continues," Sibanda, 40, yelled through an open window as the bus pulled out of the busy terminus.



crude is currently trading at the 61.64 level, and the West Texas Intermediate is at around 53.53.

### Time runs short for a Brexit deal

UK Prime Minister Theresa May unveiled her Brexit plan B last week, which largely resembles the original Brexit deal with just a few added tweaks. Two weeks ago, May's deal was rejected in what was dubbed the biggest defeat suffered by a British government in the House of Commons. In the time since she lost the vote, the prime minister has tried and failed to reach a consensus on a way forward. The UK parliament is now moving closer towards a delay for Brexit to avoid dropping out of the European Union with no deal. Time runs short and opposition to May's deal remains strong from members of the parliament. If parliament refuses to endorse the exit terms, the UK will be on course to exit the EU with no agreement on March 29th. Consequences may be dire for the British economy: the BOE estimated a 25 percent hit to the pound and a 30 percent hit to house prices if Britain exits the EU with no agreement. Imposition of tariffs on goods moving between the EU and UK would begin, igniting jams at ports and shortages of supplies. MPs will vote again on January 29, and plans ranging from tweaks to the existing agreement to calling Brexit off altogether are all possibilities as of now. The main opposition party will likely support a proposal to extend the March 29 deadline if the Prime Minister fails to negotiate a divorce agreement. So far, the pound is down around 13 percent against the dollar since the UK voted to leave the EU in 2016.

### UK pay growth surges

The number of people currently working in the UK has reached a record high of 32.54 million according to data released by the Office for National Statistics. Average weekly earnings excluding bonuses rose to its highest level in a decade at 3.4 percent in the year to November, as wages continue to outpace inflation currently at 2.1 percent. Adversely, unemployment also increased by 8,000 to 1.37 million. The rise in both employment and unemployment is explained by two main factors: the UK's rising population, and fewer individuals who have been classified as "economically inactive" (those on long-term sick leaves, students, and those who have given up looking for a job). It appears that the jobs market has brushed off Brexit chaos in its surroundings with a record 24 million jobs in the UK. However, given that job figures trail the rest of the economy, investors will have to wait a few months to know if Brexit uncertainty has hit the jobs market or not.

### European Central Bank

The European Central Bank left its policy unchanged on Thursday in the face of weaker momentum across the Eurozone. The benchmark interest rate was left unaffected at 0



percent, and the rate of bank's deposits at the ECB remained at -0.4 percent. The bank stated once more that it would keep reinvesting the bonds bought under the Â2.6tn QE program which are now maturing. ECB president Mario Draghi later explained that "risks surrounding the euro area growth outlook have moved to the downside", and pointed to an increase in general uncertainty as the cause. Eurozone growth fell to its lowest level in four years in the third quarter of 2018, and data published since then has proved disappointing. Just last week, the PMI figure fell to 50.7 in January, slipping closer to stagnation. The Fed had also blamed political uncertainty for softer growth, and has said it expects fewer rate rises this year. Expectations are for the key ECB rates to remain at their present levels through the summer of 2019. The euro hit a 2 month-low of 1.1305 as Draghi spoke and later recovered 0.94 percent to a one week high of 1.1412.

### Slowest growth for China in 29 years

China's economy grew at a rate of 6.6 percent in 2018 according to data released last week, revealing the slowest GDP growth since 1990. Fourth quarter GDP growth was in line with expectations at 6.4 percent, down from 6.5 percent in the third quarter of 2018. The Chinese statistics bureau Chief Ning Jizhe told Reuters's reporters that the country's trade dispute with the US has affected the domestic economy substantially, though added that the impact was manageable. Prior to trade tensions, China was already trying to manage a slowdown in the economy as it struggled to balance high debt levels and economic growth. Due to the trade dispute, export orders and production metrics have fallen, adding to the struggle facing the domestic economy. Manufacturing for the month of December showed factory activity contracted for the first time in 19 months. The PMI index fell to 49.8 in December from 50.2 in December (a reading above 50 indicates expansion while a reading below 50 indicates contraction). Looking forward, policy tweaks such as tax

cuts and infrastructure may provide hope for a steady economy.

### BOJ cuts inflation forecast

The Bank of Japan kept interest rates on hold last week at -0.1 percent and reiterated its plan of buying government bonds to maintain yield on the 10 year note at around 0 percent. After six years of extreme stimulus, it appears the bank has few tools left at its disposal. The BOJ again stated that momentum towards its 2 percent inflation target is integral, though not yet concrete. The bank's radical program may now widen the gap between itself and global peers given that the ECB and Fed are aiming to return to pre-crisis policies. Looking at core inflation, the BOJ cut its forecast for the current fiscal year to 0.9 percent from 1.4 percent, marking its fourth downward revision for 2019. Outlook appears to be just as grim for 2020 as the BOJ trimmed its view from 1.5 percent to 1.4 percent. The central bank currently faces several setbacks: an escalation of the US-China trade war, a "hard" Brexit, and a slowdown in China which would weigh heavy given that Japan's economy is largely export-dependent. Early Wednesday data revealed that Japan's exports fell 0.7 percent for the second time in the four months to December. If global political and economic friction persists, the question will be whether the BOJ has the tools to respond to such a shock or even a recession. BOJ Gov Kuroda warned of the growing risks to the economy from trade disputes and faltering global demand, adding that the US-China trade war would significantly harm both economies (China and Japan). However, he added that the BOJ has sufficient policy measures left to choose from in response to these risks, and maintained an overall optimistic tone

### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD opened at 0.30305 yesterday morning.



HARARE: A Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) soldier stands guard as passengers leave a bus of the public transport company Zupco at the Market Square bus station in the Zimbabwean capital Harare. —AFP

## EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.		Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.221	Turkish Lira	58.045	Hong Kong Dollar	0.036985	0.039735
ASIAN COUNTRIES		Tunisian Dinar	103.720	Singapore dollars	222.970	Indian Rupee	0.000375	0.004487
		Jordanian Dinar	428.480			Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
		Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.026			Japanese Yen	0.002690	0.002870
		Syrian Lira	0.0000			Korean Won	0.000262	0.000277
		Morocco Dirham	32.295			Malaysian Ringgit	0.070293	0.076293
US Dollar Transfer	303.900			BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL				
Euro	349.790							
Sterling Pound	404.340			CURRENCY	BUY	SELL		
Canadian dollar	231.980			Europe				
Turkish Lira	59.010			British Pound	0.394918	0.408818		
Swiss Franc	309.130			Czech Korune	0.005497	0.014797		
US Dollar Buying	304.300			Danish Krone	0.042378	0.047378		
				Euro	0.340188	0.353888		
				Georgian Lari	0.131870	0.131870		
				Hungarian 0.001146	0.001336			
				Norwegian Krone	0.031668	0.036668		
				Romanian Leu	0.065123	0.081973		
				Russian ruble	0.004631	0.004631		
				Slovakia	0.009081	0.019081		
				Swedish Krona	0.029671	0.034571		
				Swiss Franc	0.300054	0.0311054		
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## Business

# GAC Motor unveils the captivating ENTRANZE at Detroit Motor Show

Automaker underlines human-centric approach to family vehicles



Rod Alberts, Chairman of the North American International Auto Show (second from right), Wes Lutz, Chairman of National Automobile Dealers Association (second from left), Zhang Qingsong, Member of the Executive Committee of GAC Group (third from right), Yu Jun, President of GAC Motor (third from left), Wang Qijiang, President of GAC R&D Center (first from right) and Pontus Fontaeus, Executive Design Director of GAC Advanced Design Center Los Angeles (first from left) attended the press conference.



The concept car ENTRANZE

**KUWAIT:** Automaker GAC Motor impressed audiences at the 2019 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) on January 14 with the world premiere of its ENTRANZE concept car, emphasizing the automaker's human-centric approach to family vehicles. The ceremony was attended by distinguished guests, including media, global suppliers and partners.

Developed by the GAC Motor's Advanced Design Center in Los Angeles, the bullet-inspired ENTRANZE concept is designed to meet the needs of American consumers. It offers a revolutionary vision of future mobility, showcasing new energy breakthroughs, an upgraded user experience (UI), unique interior and exterior design concepts, and technology features including:

- Replacement of traditional control panel with an advanced voice-controlled UI and dynamic buttons on the steering wheel
- New 3+2+2 seating arrangement and 'aircraft inspired aisle'
- Two-side mounted displays for functional feature control, plus curved displays for passenger entertainment
- Integrated cargo system with a central movable storage unit in the second row, removable backpacks doubling as in-vehicle storage and folding rocker panel for leisure seating.

"Ultimately, automotive products are a means for people to connect during life's great journey. The ENTRANZE concept embodies our vision to provide mobility solutions that enrich lives," said Yu Jun, president of GAC Motor.

GAC Motor has also displayed its portfolio of star vehicles of SUVs, sedans, minivans and NEVs, including GS8, GS4, GS5, GS7, GS3, GA4, GM8, GM6 and GE3 530 at NAIAS 2019.

## California headquarters announced

At the show, GAC Motor officially announced that it has registered its North American Sales Company in Irvine, Calif., near Los Angeles. The regional headquarters will be responsible for branding, marketing, product planning and financial affairs.

## GAC's global R&D network

GAC Motor also announced at the press conference that the GAC R&D Center Detroit has officially begun operation. Located in Farmington Hills, Mich., the new R&D center was built with an investment of US\$ 4.4 million and encompasses nearly 50,000 square feet of real estate.

It will serve as a hub to assist the design and R&D of GAC Group's products for the US and other overseas markets. Specifically, the center will focus on product development, ground-breaking technologies, talent recruitment and training.

The Detroit hub connects GAC's two additional California R&D centers with the GAC R&D centers in China. These centers will contribute significantly to the advancement of the company's global R&D and automobile manufacturing network.

Established in April 2017, the GAC R&D Center Silicon Valley (GAC-SV) in Sunnyvale aims to promote academic research in the development of a new generation of R&D talent for the region and support local product collaboration. Other GAC-SV highlights include:

- More than 30 leading engineers on site
- Ongoing self-developed projects include in-vehicle gateway firewall, big data enabled battery performance prediction, user-based insurance (UBI), development of an autonomous driving architecture, safety simulation and



## thermal motor analysis

- Development of the self-driving sensory system installed on the GE3, including LIDAR and video perception mechanism
- Collaboration with world-renowned research institutions and enterprises in the fields of artificial intelligence algorithm, smart transportation and the development of advanced electric vehicle powertrains

Located in Newport Beach, Calif., the GAC Advanced Design Center Los Angeles opened in April 2018 and is responsible for advanced design, UI/UX development and brand visuals for GAC Motor. It's led by executive design director Pontus Fontaeus, an internationally recognized car designer who introduced their latest creation ENTRANZE at 2019 NAIAS.

"In the future, we will continue to make our products



more intelligent and transform to a mobility service provider so as to share the unique charm and value of new era of "Made in China" with global consumers," said Yu.



## Abu Dhabi awards Eni, OMV key stakes in oil refiner

**ABU DHABI:** Abu Dhabi's state oil firm said yesterday it had signed partnership deals worth \$5.8 billion with Italian oil giant Eni and Austria's OMV, awarding them key stakes in its refining arm. Under the agreements, Eni will own 20 percent and OMV 15 percent of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co's ADNOC Refining, with the state firm keeping the remaining 65 percent.

The firm also announced the formation of a joint venture between the three companies to sell refined oil products on international markets, ADNOC said in a statement. The deal values ADNOC Refining, which has a capacity of 922,000 barrels per day, at \$19.3 billion, it said. A signing ceremony in UAE capital Abu Dhabi was attended by Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and Hartwig Löger, Austria's finance minister.

"These innovative partnerships will support our ambition of becoming an international downstream leader

with the flexibility to respond quickly to shifting market needs and dynamics," ADNOC's CEO Sultan Al-Jaber said. The deal is expected to be finalized in the third quarter of this year after securing regulatory approvals, with implementation commencing the following year. Eni chief Claudio Descalzi said the transaction boosts the firm's global refining capacity by 35 percent.

OMV executive Manfred Leitner said on the company's website that the deal boosted its refining capacity grew by 40 percent. Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz wrote on Twitter that "today's entry by OMV into ADNOC Refining will further strengthen our extremely close bilateral relations with Abu Dhabi."

The wealthy emirate, one of seven states making the United Arab Emirates, holds more than 90 percent of the federation's 98 billion barrels of crude oil reserves.

Last year, it renewed several key concession agreements with leading international oil majors to add further crude and natural gas production. In November, it earmarked \$132 billion over the next five years to boost crude output capacity to four million bpd in 2020 and to five million bpd a decade later. Its current capacity stands at 3.3 million bpd. ADNOC last year approved \$45 billion in deals to develop its downstream activities by raising refining capacity to 1.5 million bpd by 2025 and boosting its petrochemicals production. —AFP

## US, China resume high-stakes poker in trade talks

**WASHINGTON:** With a month left in their truce, senior US and Chinese officials will meet in Washington this week, hoping to move toward a bargain to end their unprecedented trade war.

Beijing's trade envoy, Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, will lead a 30-person delegation at the invitation of US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who is heading up the American effort. At a meeting in Argentina last month, US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping agreed to bury the hatchet provisionally—with Trump delaying a sharp increase on US duties for \$200 billion in Chinese goods until March 1.

Washington has made its demands clear: China must agree to far-reaching "structural" reforms in its trade practices, curbing massive state intervention in markets and the alleged theft of American technological know-how, including through hacking and the forced transfer of intellectual property.

Trump also wants to cut the soaring US trade deficit

with China, which in 2017 hit a record \$375 billion, not including trade in services. Since last year, the world's two largest economies have exchanged tit-for-tat tariffs on more than \$360 billion in two-way trade, with the largest amount, more than \$250 billion, imposed by Washington. The American president's protectionist moves have begun to weigh on the Chinese economy, which last year posted its slowest economic growth in nearly three decades, causing Trump to claim he has the upper hand in the talks.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said Thursday Washington and Beijing remained "miles and miles" from the finish line in their talks, cautioning against putting too much hope for a final resolution at this week's talks. "I think next week's negotiations will be critical in determining whether the Chinese are willing to talk about any of the structural issues the United States is concerned about," Edward Alden, a trade expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, told AFP.

## 'Made in China 2025'

Early this month, Chinese officials signaled they were open to reducing the trade imbalance but there has been scant sign of movement on Washington's tougher demands. A deal could be especially hard to reach should Beijing prove unwilling to cede any ground on the state subsidies at the heart of Xi's vision for industrial pre-eminence.



## Business

# Boursa Kuwait signs MoU with KCST to promote Boursa Academy Online

## Students will be offered seminars, lectures and on-site tours among others

**KUWAIT:** Highlighting its commitment to advancing capital market awareness in Kuwait, Boursa Kuwait has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) to promote Boursa Academy Online among university students.

As part of the MoU, KCST will allow Boursa Kuwait to conduct workshops, and lectures on its campus to promote the stock exchange's digital education portal, which aims to create greater stock market awareness among new and professional retail investors.

Boursa Kuwait will also set up booths at KCST and distribute brochures and other promotional materials among its students to encourage them to gain a basic understanding of the exchange market, how to invest and the instruments available in the market. Furthermore, the agreement stipulates that Boursa Kuwait shall conduct on-site tours at Boursa Kuwait to provide students with a firsthand experience of stock exchange operations.

Commenting on the signing of the MoU, Khaled Abdulrazzaq AlKhaled, CEO of Boursa Kuwait said: "At Boursa Kuwait, we continue to focus on broadening our investor base as it is one of the four strategic objectives of our ongoing market development plans. We believe that the advancement of stock market education is the key to enhancing investor participation in our equity market and plays a pivotal role in creating and sustaining a thriving capital market in Kuwait. Our collaboration with Kuwait College of Science and Technology to promote Boursa Academy Online among the next generation of investors is closely aligned with this vision."



Khaled Abdulrazzaq AlKhaled and Prof. Khalid Al-Begain

Professor Khalid Al-Begain, President of Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) said: "The collaboration with Boursa Kuwait through the Boursa Academy Online will expose our students to a new set of skills. These are essential toward creating a well-informed and rounded experience which forms a key component of the university's aim to graduate engi-



neers with entrepreneurial and leadership capabilities. This relationship will become even more essential with the vision of the KCST to start new programs in Accounting and Finance in the near future subject to the appropriate approvals."

Boursa Academy Online was established in 2018 to educate investors on a wide range of topics, ranging

from how to trade, common investment mistakes as well as risks of investing to enable them to make informed investment decisions. The free-of-charge portal provides educational and training facilities, such as 'Market Watch', 'Virtual Trading', 'Statement of Account', 'Portfolio', among others, to investors of various experience levels.

## VIVA platinum sponsor of 3rd 'Maker Faire' exhibition



**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced its platinum sponsorship of 3rd Maker Faire organized by Kuwait Investment Company from 5 to 8 February 2019 under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, at Kuwait International Fair Hall 8, in line with the national celebrations.

The exhibition is an international occasion to highlight the emerging youth industries and innovations that combine modern technology with handicrafts, and support talented youth who are considered the essence of the future of Kuwait and the region.

On this occasion, Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA said: "VIVA's platinum sponsorship for this significant exhibition that focuses on small businesses, proves that VIVA's strategy always revolve on embracing the Kuwait Small businesses and the creative Kuwaiti youth at different aspects, and 'Maker Faire' exhibition is a great opportunity to highlight these projects and grant its owners the chance to engage through displaying their innovations and ideas."

## Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi draw

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

### The lucky winners are:

1. Mohammad Hashim Mohammad Saber
2. Noor Abdulhadi Mohammad Almousawi
3. Kazem Abbas Hasan Abal
4. Baherin Wala Hakimuddin
5. Rashed Khaleel Ibrahim Rashed

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

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

## KFH upgrades its Auto Platform kfh.com/auto

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) offered the first-of-its-kind in the Kuwaiti banking sector electronic platform kfh.com/auto that represents a destination for browsing through a wide range of vehicles, marine equipment and motorcycles. KFH auto financing services, offers and much more. This comes after the great success of KFH.com/cars.

The electronic platform kfh.com/auto has been redesigned to be more comprehensive and user-friendly. The all-new platform encompasses new cars, used cars, lease with maintenance, lease to own, insurance, offers, subscribe, showrooms, sell your car and finance calculator, in addition to marine equipment and motorcycles.

## Wake up the artist in you!

Photography is a sensational activity. From ferreting out art in ordinary scenes to learning how to capture it best, photography continuously educates the artist while fascinating the viewer. However, taking courses and buying a professional camera is a real bank breaker, which is why these HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro features can help you get there without cost. So if you've always wanted to bring out the artist in you, it's not too late!

### Wider shots with the ultra wide angle lens

You've probably already heard the buzz around the Ultra Wide Angle Lens. It enables you to take wider shots without having to crop anything out. Try standing at the bottom of a skyscraper and capturing the entire building. It will fit in its entirety in an artistic, professional looking shot. The same applies to horizontally large views such as fields of flowers or mountains. So experiment with different angles and shoot, your view will be complete.

### Exploring details with macrophotography

There is still so much around us, waiting to be discovered. The naked eye cannot grasp the small details on objects, which is why Macrophotography is an excellent photography feature for unveiling hidden beauty. Use it to photograph animate or inanimate objects as close as 2.5cm. Insects, fabrics, plants - you will end up with clear, interesting and very unique shots.

### Highlight your subject

Master AI is probably one of the most powerful

Group Deputy General Manager Products, Mohamed Ghandour said that users can access kfh.com/auto platform through internet browser on computers or mobile phones, indicating the platform has been designed to be compatible with mobile phones and as per highest standards of accuracy and security.

"KFH made great strides in offering electronic services. This comes as part of the Bank's strategy of embracing technological innovation and utilizing it for the best interest of customers especially that technology is paramount to superior customer service", he added.

The platform offers "lease with maintenance" service that provides wide range of benefits. It gives the opportunity to customers to ride a brand new vehicle of their choice from different models. Maintenance is covered throughout the leasing period with full Takaful insurance and road assistance service, in addition to providing alternative car when necessary. Customers may also travel and cross the borders as per terms and conditions.

Lease to own program offers brand new cars with

suitable monthly installments, in addition to benefits of full Takaful insurance valid throughout the contract duration, and the guarantee of the agent. By end of leasing period, customers can own the car by paying the remaining value or simply return back the car.

When customers want to purchase any of the products on the platform: vehicles, marine equipment and motorcycles, they only need to click on the button "I am interested", and will be contacted by one of the Bank's staff to respond to their queries, and complete the transaction easily. The platform kfh. com / auto is managed by a specialized and qualified team that updates the data and follows up customer requests in a timely manner.



Mohamed Ghandour



Taken with the HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro by Ali Bin Thalith, nominated by Hamdan International Awards Photography (HIPA)

features to ever find its way into a camera. Powered by Artificial Intelligence, it has the ability to identify what you are trying to photograph, and adjusts colors accordingly. Try it on different landscapes like food, landscapes - or even animals - as it has the ability to recognize so much across different category. You will be able to get effort-

lessly professional shots with no editing needed, giving you the ability to experiment more with photography, hassle free.

Giving the artist in you a chance is easier than ever, as the right tools are now available and accessible. All you need to do is experiment and develop your own style!

## 26 new winners in Al-Hassad Islamic account

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 23rd of January 2019. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve

their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Nawaf Thaar Al-Saeedi.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Hani Farhsn Al Farhan , Adel Abdylwahab Al-Eissa , Fadhel Haidar Al-Taleb, Faisal Abdullah Al-Subaiei , Mohammad Ghloum Abdullah, Abdullatef Salah A Al-Ateeqi, Avileli Babu Rao , Mona Ahmad Al-Mashmoum, Danah Fhhd Al-Qahtani, Faisal Ahmad Al-Shallal, Hanan Al-Hooly, Amani Abdulsamad Mohammad, Shaddad Cindy Al-Rasheedi, Taha Sultan Borisly,

Ali Abd Hussain Ismail, Khatoun Ali Al-Haddad, Suhail Ahmed Amanuaaah, Mohammad Esmail H Redha , Turki Naser Hussain, Fadullalah Abbas , A.Wahid Ali Khalil, Salah A Rahaman AlBassam, Ghaneya Radhil Ali, Mohammed Mohsin Ali, and Nawal Yusuf Ali.

Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year."

Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.



## Technology

# Big week for Big Tech as quarterly earnings loom

**WASHINGTON:** Big Tech firms face a critical test in the coming days with quarterly updates that may offer clues on whether the world's largest companies are seeing growth or retrenchment ahead.

Apple reports its latest quarterly earnings tomorrow, with Facebook and Microsoft on deck a day later, followed by Amazon on Thursday. Google parent Alphabet rounds out group with its update on February 4. The results come after a roller-coaster period with drops of more than 20 percent in the value of Apple and Amazon, which have lost their trillion-dollar status, and with Facebook and Google seeing increased pressure to deal with concerns on privacy and data protection.

Here are some of the challenges facing the major technology firms:

## Apple: another reinvention?

Apple, facing sluggish growth in the global smartphone market, has been pushing harder in services but still relies on the iPhone for the lion's share of revenue and profit. For the upcoming results, Apple will no longer detail the exact number of iPhones sold in the quarter, leaving analysts to

guess the mix of devices based on revenues. Apple delivered a stunning admission earlier this month that iPhone sales and overall revenues would be below most forecasts, citing economic weakness in China and trade frictions between Washington and Beijing.

"The mobile market is reaching saturation, and so is the smartphone market," says Benedict Evans of the investment firm Andreessen Horowitz, in a recent blog post. "This is not 'the fall of Apple' - it's just the shift of smartphones to boring maturity, as we look for what's next." Analysts will be looking at growth in services such as Apple Music and Apple Pay, and what might be coming for a Netflix-rival streaming television service from the Cupertino company.

## Facebook: safety first

2018 was a horrific year for Facebook, marked by a series of scandals over privacy and concerns that the leading social network had been manipulated by foreign interests for political purposes. Shares were down as much as 40 percent from their peak at one point in the year.

Facebook boosted revenues and profits during the year and managed to increase its user base to more than 2.2

billion although growth appears to have stalled in North America and Europe. In 2019, Facebook is likely to see further scrutiny with US lawmakers mulling privacy regulations-potentially impacting how Facebook monetizes its user data with its sophisticated advertising technology-following new rules in the European Union.

"Costs are still likely to rise much more quickly than revenues as Facebook is having to recruit humans to police its content because its AI (artificial intelligence) is not up to the job," said Richard Windsor said, an analyst who writes the Radio Free Mobile blog.

## Microsoft: steady in the cloud

Microsoft has been the steadiest of the major tech firms of late and has been jockeying with Amazon for the title of the world's most valuable company in recent weeks. While Microsoft has stepped back from many consumer offerings including the smartphone business, it has leveraged its strength with business customers to bolster its cloud computing platform known as Azure.

"People are now seeing Microsoft as a growth company," said analyst Jack Gold of J. Gold Associates.

## Amazon: limits on growth?

Amazon's seemingly unstoppable growth has been one of the main stories in technology in recent years as it expands into groceries, robotics, artificial intelligence, streaming media and more.

But Amazon's value has dropped some 20 percent since it peaked at \$1 trillion last year. "Amazon is really multiple companies," said Gold, noting that its highly profitable cloud computing segment has enabled Amazon to invest in e-commerce and media. Amazon claims some 100 million subscribers to its Prime service, giving it a consistent revenue stream. But in the US market, Amazon may have trouble growing that base further, with an estimated 60 percent of US households already members.

One new segment that appears promising for Amazon is advertising, according to some analysts who point out that its customer relationships could help it challenge the online ad "duopoly" of Google and Facebook. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos-now facing divorce proceedings-has been known for favoring investment over profits and will likely continue that, according to Gold. —AFP

## How Kirin 980 enhances the photography, videography experience

**KUWAIT:** Mobile AI is the buzzword about which all smartphone makers are obsessed. Yet, only some are leading the way with innovative new developments, both in their chips and their smartphones. Huawei, a global leader in high-end smartphones, launched Kirin 980 in August 2018, which was the world's first 7nm mobile AI chipset.

Manufactured with TSMC's 7nm process, Kirin 980 comes equipped with new CPU, GPU and Dual-NPU, which not only offer great performance, efficiency and connectivity, but together, they represent Huawei's greatest leap forward yet. All of this helps to power Huawei's next generation of smartphones, meeting the demands of the most discerning consumers.

## Kirin 980 powers the HUAWEI Mate 20 Series.

The HUAWEI Mate 20 Series of smartphones is powered by the Kirin 980. It makes sense to consider the details and explore what this means for users of the devices in the series, in particular for photography and videography.

What 7nm Means for SoC-and Smartphone-

**Performance** The cutting-edge 7nm process technology enables Kirin 980 to pack 6.9 billion transistors within silicon the size of a US penny. Compared to the 10nm process, the 7nm process delivers 20 percent improved SoC performance and 40 percent improved SoC power efficiency, at 1.6 times the transistor density.

In fact, Kirin 980 delivers 75 percent better CPU performance and 58 percent better CPU power efficiency than even the previous Kirin 970 chip. Kirin 980 features an octa-core CPU consisting of four Cortex-A76-based cores and four Cortex-A55 cores.

This means that the Kirin CPU Subsystem designates the large high-performance cores to handle immediate, intensive workloads; the large, high-efficiency cores to provide sustained performance; and ultra-efficiency cores to tackle light, background activities with extreme power efficiency. Essentially, this means that users have a high-powered engine in their phone that enhances both the photography and videography experiences in particular. In addition, Kirin 980 enables quicker app launch times, better multi-tasking and a generally smoother user experience.

Due to the natural evolution of social media and constant connectivity, everyday smartphone users have become more like content creators rather than simple sharers of photos and correspondence for personal use. Because of this, the next generation of AI processors like the Kirin 980 are critically important in powering advances in sophisticated high-end smartphones like the HUAWEI Mate 20 Series.

## Better support for multi-camera configurations

Huawei integrated its proprietary fourth-generation image signal processor (ISP) into Kirin 980. In addition

to a 46 percent increase in pixel throughput compared to its predecessor, the new ISP also provides better support for multi-camera configurations, like the Leica Triple Camera on the HUAWEI Mate 20 Series, as well as an all-new HDR color reproduction technology that can manipulate picture contrast to highlight objects on various parts of an image.

The Kirin 980 also utilizes the multi-pass noise reduction solution that accurately removes artifacts without scrubbing away image details, resulting in better quality on images taken in low-light scenarios. This rewards the smartphone user with clearer photos and more professional looking videos, contributing to an overall enhanced mobile technology experience.

## Improved motion tracking

Another new feature of the ISP is improved motion tracking. When a user attempts to take a photo of a moving person, the ISP can still recognize the subject with 97.4 percent accuracy, so any user can capture fleeting moments with ease.

The surge in user demand for the latest and greatest smartphone video capture features have also been considered with the innovations included in the Kirin 980. The chip adopts a new pipeline dedicated to processing video captures, allowing the camera module to shoot videos with 33 percent shorter delay.

## Faster connectivity

Connectivity is key for a superior photography and videography experience, primarily because once today's sophisticated users create their visual content, they want to immediately upload to social media or otherwise share with family and friends using their smartphones.

To deliver the best connectivity, Huawei integrated the



world's first modem supporting LTE Cat.21 with a peak download speed of 1.4Gbps into the Kirin 980. Additionally, the Kirin 980 supports carrier aggregation, even across frequency bands. This is just another reason why Kirin 980 is ideal for pushing the envelope in terms of photography and videography, or any types of work that involves large data transfer.

In summary, Kirin 980 and the AI it enables make for a smartphone that takes photography and videography exactly where today's smartphone users want to go. No longer do they want to simply share basic images with family and friends; they are now sophisticated content creators, and the HUAWEI Mate 20 Series is an important tool. Kirin 980 provides the improved performance, power efficiency, support for multi-camera configurations, improved motion tracking, superior connectivity, and much, much more, to give the new generation of smartphone content creators just what they want.

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## What's On



# LOYAC launches 'Knights of Industry' program for fourth consecutive year

In cooperation with the Federation of Kuwaiti Industries, the LOYAC Foundation organized the "Knights of Industry" program for the fourth year in a row for two weeks for the age group 12-17 years. The program is aimed at developing the industrial sector in Kuwait and educating young people before their graduation. They are taught on the importance of this sector and its role in the development of the local economy. The program has 26 students and was honored last week at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

For her part, Fattouh Al-Dulami, Board Member of LOYAC, praised the success of their partnership with Kuwait Industries Federation, pointing out that the community culture has changed and there is a great interest and interest from

young people in participating in programs that develop their talents such as the Knights of Industry program.

"We have introduced students to the importance of an alternative source of income through field visits to factories and have linked them to job development workshops such as goal planning skills, effective communication, positive innovation and team building. This age group by providing educational activities and linking them to reality" she said. The participants in the program were honored by the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the presence of Fattouh Al-Dalali, Latifah Al-Saleh and representatives of Kuwaiti Industries Federation Dalal Al-Arabi and Huda Al-Baqshi.



## Al Mulla holds award ceremony for 'Paint Our 2019 Calendar contest'

Al Mulla Exchange held the awarding ceremony of their 'Paint Our 2019 Calendar Contest' on 19th January 2019. The ceremony attended by the winners, parents and principals of the major schools was a grand success. This year's theme for the painting competition was "Sustainable Planet for a Better Future", a topic which is on top of our minds, the importance of recycle and reuse for a better tomorrow. The competition ran from 28th October 2019 to 28th November 2019 and had more than 1,500 entries from various students across Kuwait. These paintings were shortlisted to 60 winners, who then had to undergo a live painting contest in the second round out of which 12 winners were selected.

The awarding ceremony was held in Salmiya, in the presence of the principals of various schools, parents and well-wishers of the students and the management team of Al Mulla Exchange. With great excitement, 12 winners were awarded cash prizes of KD 100 each. The excitement didn't end there, out of the 12 winners there were three winners who won an all-expense paid family trip to Ferrari World and Warner Bros in Abu Dhabi.

On this occasion, Praveen Singh Divisional General Manager, Al Mulla Exchange said "Our children surprise us with how much they can express themselves through painting. I'd like to thank all of you for attending the ceremony to celebrate their outstanding innovative talents."

"Special thanks to all the Principals of the school who attended the event and boosted the morale of the students, the judges of the contest and the every cheerful Ms Rachna for hosting the event and making it so lively and interactive" Singh said adding: "Our children are our future. Raising awareness about the importance of keeping our planet means better future for



them. We aspire in such a contest not only to encourage them to show their talents, but also to help them shed light on a basic issue which is preserving our planet."

The winners expressed their joy and thanked

Al Mulla Exchange for its ongoing contests and offers that are not only creative, but also purposeful. As a remembrance, Al Mulla Exchange also gave a plant sapling to instill the importance of preserving the environment.

## TIES class announcement

You are cordially invited to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the last Testament) today, January 28th at 7pm in which we will focus on Surat As - Saff (The solid Ranks), verses 12 and 13. In this class, we will discuss the reward for believing in Allah (SWT) and

striving in His cause, and some aspects of striving in His path. We will also explore some signs that prove Allah's existence, the types of submission to Him, and the reward for surrendering to Him willingly. Finally, we will discuss the sins that aren't forgiven of a martyr, the justification for that, the victory that Allah (SWT) promised the believers in this world, and how it was achieved. We will also explore Prophet Muhammad's description of Paradise and his reply when he was asked about the materials it is constructed of.

## ABK sponsors LOYAC 7th Blood Donation Drive

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced its sponsorship of the Lothan Youth Achievement Center's (LOYAC) 7th Blood Donation Drive for the fourth consecutive year. The event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, the February 2nd and will commence with a bike motorcade that will start from the LOYAC offices in Al Qibliya School and end at the Boulevard Mall in Salmiya. The bikers participating in the motorcade will be donating blood upon arrival at the Boulevard Mall in Salmiya, which will also be open to the public for interested donors. A number of ABK staff who are motorcyclists will participate.

Commenting on this sponsorship, Fawzy Al Thunayan GM, Board Affairs said: "At ABK we firmly believe in the importance of supporting initiatives that encourage individuals to contribute and make a life changing difference. By sponsoring the Blood Donation Drive, we are raising awareness among the public, and hope to elevate the spirit of giving and coming together to donate blood in support of those who need it the most. We would like to encourage everyone that is able to donate to support Donate & Save a Life."

LOYAC is a non - profit organization that works towards the overall development of the youth. It designs and develops many programs to facilitate the professional development and personal growth of the youth, ages 6 to 30. ABK continuously seeks to make a solid presence in the communities in which it operates by joining hands with active organizations that aim to create a more prosperous future for Kuwait.



## Lulu Hypermarket launches Flavors of India 2019 festival



Lulu hypermarket, the largest retailer in the region, launched the 'Flavors of India 2019' festival at the hypermarket's Al-Rai outlet on 24 January. The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. K. Jeeva Sagar inaugurated the event in the presence of top Lulu Hypermarket management in Kuwait, and a large presence of shoppers, well-wishers and media

personnel. Spectacular Indian traditional dances were performed to entertain shoppers, as part of the inauguration-day festivities.

During the 11-day promotional period, from 23 January to 2 February, all Lulu Hypermarket outlets in the country are offering special promotional prices on a variety of Indian products. A range of food products,

including groceries, fresh foods, vegetables and meat are available at unbeatable prices. The special promotion also covers Indian-made garments, and other goods imported for India.

Another attractive aspect of the festival is the Indian food stalls laden with food-delights from the country. Adding to the festival mood at the hypermarket's ven-

ues are several large cut-out displays of well-known heritage monuments of India that emphasize India's rich culture and history. Lulu Hypermarket is the destination of choice for discerning shoppers in the country largely due to its customer-centric approach and commitment to providing the widest range of high-quality products at attractive prices.



CROSSWORD 2121



ACROSS

- 1. Extremely pleasing.
- 4. A common complex mineral consisting of calcium fluoride phosphate or calcium chloride phosphate.
- 11. An interior passage or corridor onto which rooms open.
- 15. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- 16. A siren of German legend who lured boatmen in the Rhine to destruction.
- 17. Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
- 18. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- 19. The ability to form mental images of things or events.
- 20. A contagious skin infection caused by the itch mite.
- 21. Any skeletal muscle having three origins (but especially the triceps brachii).
- 23. Having or showing knowledge and skill and aptitude.
- 25. Unknown god.
- 26. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- 28. A worker who attaches something by nailing it.
- 30. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- 34. Absence of the mammary glands (either through surgery or developmental defect).
- 40. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.
- 42. An antiviral drug used in the treatment of AIDS.
- 43. Small arboreal tropical American insectivorous lizards with the ability to change skin color.
- 44. Work that you are obliged to perform for moral or legal reasons.
- 45. A Protestant layman who assists the minister.
- 48. (Spanish) Sweetened red wine and orange or lemon juice with soda water.
- 50. At or constituting a border or edge.
- 51. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- 54. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 55. To make a mistake or be incorrect.
- 56. The sacred writings of the Christian religion.
- 58. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- 60. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
- 63. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
- 66. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- 70. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 74. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- 75. A serve that strikes the net before falling into the receiver's court.
- 76. A support or foundation.
- 77. A recurring sleep state during which dreaming occurs.
- 78. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- 79. (British informal) Stark naked.
- 80. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.

DOWN

- 1. A notable achievement.
- 2. South American armadillo with three

- bands of bony plates.
- 3. Capital city of the Apulia region on the Adriatic coast.
- 4. Arouse hostility or indifference in where there had formerly been love, affection, or friendliness.
- 5. Ancient city southeast of Naples that was buried by a volcanic eruption from Vesuvius.
- 6. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
- 7. Two-year-old sheep.
- 8. (anatomy) Of or relating to the ilium.
- 9. Have a tendency or disposition to do or be something.
- 10. German chemist who did research on high-speed chemical reactions (born in 1927).
- 11. A republic in the West Indies on the western part of the island of Hispaniola.
- 12. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
- 13. English empiricist philosopher who believed that all knowledge is derived from sensory experience (1632-1704).
- 14. An avalanche volcanic water and mud down the slopes of a volcano.
- 22. Perfume esp. with a censor.
- 24. A civil or military authority in Turkey or Egypt.
- 27. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- 29. Free from duties or responsibilities.
- 31. Filled with the emotional impact of overwhelming surprise or shock.
- 32. Disparaging terms for the common people.
- 33. A small cake leavened with yeast.
- 35. Type genus of the Hylidae.
- 36. A particular environment or walk of life.
- 37. Ctenophores lacking tentacles.
- 38. Without qualification.
- 39. United States physicist (born in Germany) noted for her research on the structure of the atom (1906-1972).
- 41. Affected manners intended to impress others.
- 46. An important seaport on the Island of Cebu in the Philippines.
- 47. Tag the base runner to get him out.
- 49. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- 52. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
- 53. A person who enjoys reading.
- 57. Fishes having large mouths with a worm-like filament attached for luring prey.
- 59. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
- 61. In bed.
- 62. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 64. A source of danger.
- 65. Not far distant in time or space or degree or circumstances.
- 67. A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
- 68. A primeval personification of air and breath.
- 69. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
- 71. The unit of frequency.
- 72. Of flax, hemp, or jute, so as to promote loosening of the fibers from the woody tissue.
- 73. A caustic detergent useful for removing grease.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Wisdom rather than knowledge is what counts most in your life to you now. You have been down troubled roads and turned each stumbling block into a stepping stone. You have lived and learned and may have an opportunity to share this wisdom with a troubled friend. Don't get discouraged if your advice is overlooked. Remember, no one could have changed your mind about some of the mistakes you made. Realize others too, may have to experience trouble to learn the lessons that are to be learned in their lives.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may encounter an unusual amount of stress today. Counter it by taking time for yourself to do what you enjoy most. Paint, write, or escape with a good book. Yoga or meditation may even be something you should consider making a part of your daily routine. Be careful not to shut yourself off from those who care about you. Their support is important. Do not try to conquer every problem on your own.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Teamwork is strongly indicated, but those you work with aren't fond of your day dreamy mood today. Your required tasks pull you into a most productive cycle and you overcome any obstacles you may encounter. You could have a secret you're having trouble keeping; consider the consequences of sharing this. Someone - a younger person - could demand that you decide today when you're just not ready; this could lead to some difficulties. You have an understanding heart when it comes to a friend in need.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Are you getting mixed signals? That's not unusual. Feelings are complicated, and what one wants from you may change daily, or even hourly. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification. Feelings are abstract. Actions are concrete. Find out what you need to do. Take action and do not look back. Keep your eyes on the prize.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today is a day you have been longing for. You need an escape. Let your hair down and head for wide open spaces. Take a ride in a convertible. Just get outside and breathe in the fresh air. You crave a sense of freedom. Decide exactly what you want out of life and make it happen. This is a great time to make clear decisions about your future.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You will make a new acquaintance today. Don't assume the person is insignificant. There may be connections or influence here that will lead to opportunities for you. Or, it may be that this is the very person you need in your life right now. Be accessible. Make it clear that you are open to what the person has to offer. You may find sharing your feelings openly with others, helps them open up to you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find that anything unusual and different catches your eye today. Your wild side is rearing its head. A new outfit, a new hairstyle, or an outing to somewhere you have never been will help satisfy what you are craving. Live a little. Others may be caught off guard by your high energy and the way you seem to express yourself today. You be you! This day will be spent with a smile on your face and an usually high amount of confidence. Live out loud.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes the do the things they do? What makes them tick? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes. You know this may only be accomplished by turning your back on all you believed and starting over with an open mind and a new outlook on life in general.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today is a great day to just go with the flow. Go ahead and take advantage of opportunities that present themselves to you. Don't be surprised if taking a chance brings great reward. You may feel extra close to a loved one today. This may be the day you learn to truly learn to love and an appreciate yourself for who you have become and where you are in life. You have been feeling a that need to be needed and appreciated and today may just the day you receive that reward you have been longing for.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Let your hair down and take a drive. A horseback ride would be even better. Turn the music up loud and throw your cares out of the window. Find an escape and route to peace. Enjoy this day and all it brings. Spoil yourself. You may find you are more materialistic than usual. A shopping trip is in order to satisfy this need. Head to the mall and go for it! You work hard and deserve to be free from want.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Close relationships take on more emotional depth, power and importance in your world now. You feel as if you are needed and cared for. When these two feelings are missing you automatically have a feeling of uneasiness come over you. You were not made to be alone. Expressing your desires and vulnerability, helps draw your special someone closer to you. You may find the more you allow yourself to open up the closer you two become.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are being noticed in the workplace. It may become very obvious to your superiors at work that you are talented beyond the title you hold. You may find that you are in line for a promotion or you will be assigned a special project due to your leadership abilities. Everyone has their eye on you. From your personal life to your career, you are beginning to outshine those around you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Word Search Puzzle With Hidden Message

**Spiders 1**

Find and circle all of the spider species and anatomy words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

O	T	R	I	H	W	O	I	W	K	C	A	L	B	E	G	R	O	L
E	G	O	N	I	T	A	P	E	D	I	P	A	L	P	S	E	T	H
S	O	R	T	R	A	E	H	F	M	S	I	A	R	F	D	D	N	E
U	R	R	E	A	T	A	X	O	U	E	G	R	B	W	A	A	T	V
O	C	I	S	F	A	R	N	A	N	S	E	I	D	M	N	I	R	I
M	H	M	T	A	A	E	X	A	S	I	N	D	L	S	O	O	N	R
T	A	U	I	L	V	C	C	A	L	R	O	E	T	T	L	M	A	S
I	R	Y	N	S	T	I	E	K	R	W	E	N	L	I	H	E	E	D
Y	D	E	E	L	L	L	H	D	A	O	U	C	N	W	R	G	E	N
N	E	L	S	E	G	E	K	E	R	H	H	D	L	S	E	X	I	S
H	E	K	L	P	T	N	H	S	C	N	O	N	T	G	U	O	B	S
E	C	O	L	G	E	C	F	E	O	A	O	N	T	S	S	A	C	C
C	A	W	E	O	S	R	D	I	L	C	U	D	K	U	R	E	A	L
I	B	G	A	P	W	L	E	G	S	L	A	E	P	I	D	R	A	I
L	D	A	W	T	O	S	K	N	K	H	L	E	M	A	C	E	D	W
E	E	R	E	G	E	L	A	O	N	E	I	R	P	H	R	A	I	S
I	R	D	B	N	I	R	O	C	T	I	Y	N	T	P	H	T	N	E
W	O	E	S	S	R	B	L	O	D	B	E	G	O	Y	E	A	W	A
E	I	N	A	L	U	T	N	A	R	A	T	S	S	S	G	S	L	H
G	I	A	N	T	H	U	N	T	S	M	A	N	T	E	H	E	A	D

ABDOMEN	FANGS	MOUSE	SPINNERETS
BLACK WIDOW	FISHING	OGRE FACED	TARANTULA
BOOK LINGS	FUNNEL WEB	ORCHARD	TEXAS RECLUSE
BRAZILIAN WANDERING	GIANT HUNTSMAN	PEACOCK	THORAX
CAMEL	GOLDEN HUNTSMAN	PEDIPALPS	TRAPDOOR
CARDINAL	GRASS	PELICAN	VENOM
CHELICERAE	HEAD	REDBACK	VIOLIN
CLAWS	HEART	RED WIDOW	WATER
EIGHT LEGS	INTESTINE	SETAE	WEBS
ESOPHAGUS	lichen	SILK GLAND	YELLOW GARDEN
EXOSKELETON	HORROR	SILKHEDGE	YELLOW SAC
EYES			

Yesterday's Solution

**Songs From the Year 2003**

L	U	F	I	T	U	A	E	B	U	L	C	A	D	N	I	U	F
H	P	T	C	T	U	R	E	R	Y	O	B	Y	B	A	B	O	I
Y	G	N	I	T	I	N	O	R	D	A	S	E	Y	Y	A	S	Y
S	N	I	N	T	O	Y	O	U	M	I	S	S	Y	A	S	T	H
U	O	P	U	N	A	I	S	H	O	R	W	E	L	L	N	T	T
B	R	A	T	T	R	O	N	E	S	T	O	O	S	W	E	A	E
T	T	Y	S	U	P	E	R	M	A	N	T	O	N	O	W	R	
E	S	K	L	O	F	F	I	S	S	O	G	H	O	M	M	I	A
G	D	U	I	L	I	G	Y	O	N	O	S	T	I	E	E	G	N
A	A	E	M	I	S	N	A	A	N	S	O	S	I	U	C	H	
E	E	V	W	K	O	S	T	E	M	A	E	N	S	R	O	W	
L	B	A	I	T	E	M	N	T	E	M	E	A	R	I	L	O	
B	A	H	T	G	E	C	C	R	I	G	I	S	I	T	I	L	
U	N	I	H	L	D	O	I	O	I	T	I	U	E	C	S	T	
O	G	L	Y	U	A	C	I	I	S	I	S	I	N	A	M	K	E
R	E	L	O	E	Y	C	E	T	S	G	O	N	R	H	O	G	
T	L	A	U	L	A	N	S	L	I	D	E	N	A	D	T	C	

ALL I HAVE	GET LOW	LANDSLIDE	SO GONE
ANGEL	GOSSIP FOLKS	LIKE A STONE	SOMEDAY
BEAUTIFUL	HEADSTRONG	LIKE GLUE	STAND UP
CLOCKS	I CAN	MESMERIZE	STUCK
COME OVER	I WANT YOU	MISS YOU	SUGA SUGA
DRIFT AWAY	I'M WITH YOU	PICTURE	SUNRISE
FIGHTER	IGNITION	RAIN ON ME	SUPERMAN
FRONTIN'	IN DA CLUB	RIGHT THUR	TROUBLE
INTUITION	INTO YOU	SAY YES	UNWELL
SENORITA			

The hidden song title is: HOW YOU GONNA ACT LIKE THAT

Daily SuDoku

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

medium

Yesterday's Solution

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

very hard



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2019



Mexican cosplayers dressed like their superhero Spiderman pose for photographers on Reforma Avenue in Mexico City. — AFP

## Supreme skateboard collection auctioned for \$800,000



Sotheby's New York displayed the only privately owned collection of every Supreme skate deck ever manufactured for the online-only sale "20 Years of Supreme" in New York. — AFP photos

A collection of all 248 skateboards produced by streetwear brand Supreme has been sold for a record \$800,000 at a Sotheby's online auction. Supreme, founded by British designer James Jebbia and established in 1994 in New York's Soho neighborhood, gained a special status among skateboarding connoisseurs with its streetwear-inspired clothing. Starting in 1998, it also began offering quality, limited-series boards designed by big-name artists like Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst and Richard Prince.

The collection, sold in a two-week online auction that ended Friday, included Louis Vuitton-monogrammed decks, a series of Last Supper decks and a tribute to Nike Air Jordan sneakers. Also in the collection was a custom-made Louis Vuitton trunk worth several thousand dollars. The entire Supreme production was brought together by Los Angeles collector Ryan Fuller, who began his yearslong quest in 2005. "I tried to hold off on buying decks for as long as possible because I knew once I started I'd have to have them all," Fuller said in a video released by Sotheby's. While the collection was sold on the lower end of its estimated value-up to \$1.2 million, according to Sotheby's-it is by far a record for skateboard sales. In 2012, a board owned by skater Jamie Thomas was purchased for \$38,425 at a charity auction organized by the Tony Hawk Foundation.

And in June 2018, at a sale organized in Hong Kong by Sotheby's, a series of eight custom boards designed by American artist Kaws was auctioned for \$55,700. "We've seen an increase in value of skateboards over the last five years and it's a category we're really interested in doing more," said Sotheby's global head of e-commerce Noah Wunsch. "It's considered art. People like living with these boards," he told AFP. —AFP



## Banksy work stolen from Paris terror attack venue



In this file photo a man takes a photograph of an artwork by street artist Banksy in Paris on a side street to the Bataclan concert hall. — AFP

A painting in homage to terror victims by famous street artist Banksy has been stolen from the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, where 90 people were killed in 2015 in a jihadist attack. The white stencilled oeuvre showing a sad-faced girl on one of the emergency doors of the famed Parisian venue was cut out and taken away. "Banksy's work, a symbol of recollection and belonging to all: locals, Parisians, citizens of the world has been taken from us," the establishment said, stressing the staff's "deep indignation." A source close to the investigation told LCI television that "a group of hooded individuals armed with angle grinders cut the painting and took it away in a truck" on the night of Friday to Saturday.

This work along with other similarly-themed paintings popped up in Paris last June and has been attributed to the reclusive British street artist, Banksy, whose identity is known to only a handful of friends, caused a sensation in October when one of his paintings began shredding itself, just after selling for \$1.4 million (1.2 million euros). —AFP





A floating restaurant in a marina in the Aberdeen area in Hong Kong. — AFP photos

# Above the concrete canopy: Hong Kong from the sky

A giant container ship sailing under a suspension bridge; Chinese cemeteries as densely packed as the housing blocks their occupants once lived in; lush rows of paddy fields-aerial shots offer a whole new perspective on Hong Kong. Internationally it may be best known as a high-octane finance hub filled with skyscrapers, but there is much more to the city-from bustling ports and picture perfect beaches to rolling hills and verdant forests. AFP photographer Dale de la Rey spent three months training his drone camera lens down on Hong Kong, in a bid to capture the rarely seen sides to the city.

"I wanted to do a package showing the density, uniformity and contrast of the city to give a sense of living in Hong Kong," he explained. Hong Kong, which is made up of more than 260 islands, plus the Kowloon peninsula and New Territories which stretch up to mainland China, is now home to more than seven million people. There are districts such as Causeway Bay and Quarry Bay on Hong Kong island, and Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei in Kowloon that seem suf-

focatingly busy. Even the cemeteries are densely packed. Usually nestled on steep slopes, they are chosen for their auspicious locations and boast row upon row of rectangular shrines or columbariums-small niches to place remains. Visiting and cleaning the graves of ancestors is hugely important in Chinese culture with competition for the limited spots intense. Space in private columbariums can go for as much as HK\$1 million (\$130,000). Yet within easy reach of the dense urban bustle are a plethora of hiking trails and protected parkland, where it is possible to walk for hours without seeing many others.

The city's dockyards are the fifth busiest in the world-a far cry from the 1990s heyday-but still a cornerstone of the economy and so popular with the Instagram generation that it is now possible to tour them. De la Rey said map software offered a great way to spot potentially exciting shoot locations ahead of time. He added: "The city looks great at night and I spent a lot of time looking at Google Maps... so when I found a place to launch I had the shot in mind." —AFP



A general view of Hong Kong at night.



Commercial and residential buildings in Hong Kong.



Farms next to a residential estate in Hong Kong.



Commercial and residential buildings in Hong Kong at night.



Commercial and residential buildings in Hong Kong.



Commercial and residential buildings in Hong Kong at night.



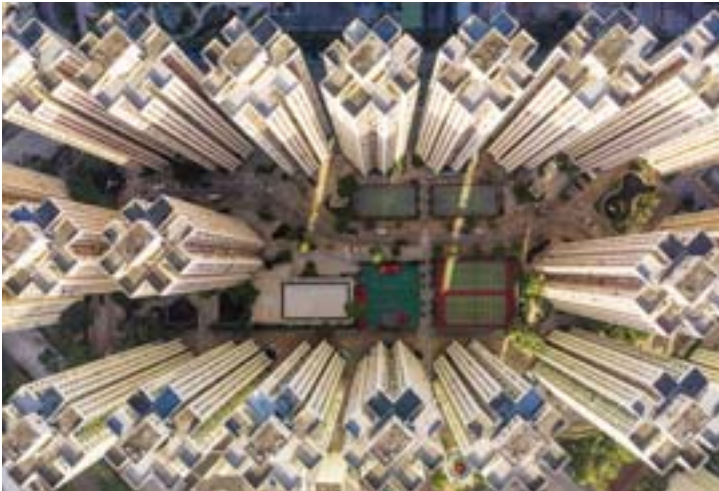
A cemetery in Hong Kong.



Boats moored at a typhoon shelter next to residential buildings in Hong Kong.



Commercial and residential buildings in Hong Kong.



A high rise residential housing estate in Hong Kong.





Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Fahad Al-Awadhi. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub.



Palestinian artists perform on stage.

# Embassy of Palestine celebrates 54th anniversary of Palestinian revolution



A Palestinian artist performs on stage.

By Faten Omar

The Embassy of Palestine to Kuwait celebrated the 54th anniversary of the start of the Palestinian revolution on Saturday at Abdulhussain Abdulredha Theater. In his opening speech, Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub commended Kuwait's major role in the launch of the Palestinian revolution. "Jerusalem is not for sale and this is the message of the President of the State of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas to the whole world," he said. "Kuwait was the spark of this great revolution, with the strong faith of this country in the right of the Palestinian people to liberate their country and return and build their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital," he added.

Tahboub affirmed that Palestinian people are proud that the revolution's birth started from Kuwait. "Kuwait embraced the founders of the Palestinian revolution, headed by Yasser Arafat, and provided them with all the support they needed for Palestine and the cause. We commemorate this anniversary to preserve our national project under a conspiracy to eliminate the Palestinian cause by

the so-called 'deal of the century', but the Palestinian people have been steadfast against any conspiracy over the years and they still are. Today, more than ever, we are called upon to unite with the Palestinian national project to get our Palestine back," he pointed out.

Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Fahd Al-Awadhi said Kuwait hosted and supported the Palestinian revolution since its inception, and continues to do so at present. "Kuwait continued its support and has always been backing the decisions of the Palestinian brothers and their political system," he said. He assured that the state of Palestine will be independent and its capital is Jerusalem, and Kuwait will maintain its commitment to the Palestinian cause. "This feeling comes from all the Kuwaiti people and we hope to celebrate soon with our Palestinian brethren with victory in Jerusalem."

Awadhi praised the courage of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and everywhere else. "I salute them for their steadfastness and struggle. We assure them that their Kuwaiti brothers are loyal to their covenant and that in the near future they will receive their rights," he said.



A Palestinian artist performs on stage.



Palestinian artists perform on stage.



People react during the event.

## In wartime Yemen, children find solace in music



Children attend a music class at the Al-Nawras school in Taz, Yemen's third city, in the country's southwest. —AFP photos

The sound of music fills the halls at a school in the Yemeni city of Taz, where little Nazira Al-Jaafari sits at a keyboard as a teacher takes her through the notes. "I love music," said Jaafari, a pupil at the Al-Nawares school where tutors are trying to help students temporarily forget the ongoing war. "Whenever I feel sad or uncomfortable, I play music."

She has built up an eclectic repertoire, including happy birthday and cult songs by Arab icons Fairuz and Umm Kalthoum. "I just hope that Yemen will win this war," she said before exhaling deeply, then smiling and adding: "And that we can live a new life." Taz, a city in the southwestern Yemeni highlands, was once known for its coffee beans, grown at high elevation and exported through the famed port of Mokha. Today, the city is home to some of the most intense fighting in a war between Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels and rival

government forces allied with a regional military coalition led by powerhouse Saudi Arabia.

The United Nations has urged both parties to open humanitarian corridors to besieged Taz, where state troops are embedded inside city limits-surrounded by rebel forces. The three-storey Al-Nawares school was hit in 2015-2016, right after Saudi Arabia and its allies joined the government's fight against the Huthis. When it reopened its doors, walls still pockmarked with bullet holes, educators decided to expand the music program, making it part of the core curriculum alongside maths and Arabic, with the hope that it would restore joy to their students' days.

"The psychological state of the students was very difficult when we reopened here, after all the shelling and bombing and fighting," said principal Shehabeddine Al-Sharabi. The head of a university in neighboring

Mokha recommended music, loaning instruments to Al-Nawares free of charge. "Music is not an extra-curricular activity here. We can see how it impacts our students, how they are more responsive through music. It yields purely positive revenue," Sharabi said.

**'Education is my weapon'**

While the lessons are not part of a formal mental health program, music therapy has been used around the world to support those who have experienced trauma. And in the humble classrooms of Al-Nawares, dozens of boys and girls find daily, albeit temporary, reprieve from atrocities in a country the UN says is home to the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Smiling and tapping on their desks, a class of bright-eyed students sing, in English, "My face, my face, this is my nose".

In a class later in the day, slightly older children sing

"Education is a weapon". But around two million Yemeni children are missing out on school, with half a million dropping out since 2015, according to UN figures published last March. In Taz, teacher Abir Al-Sharabi takes the time to help students-like Jaafari-learn to play the tunes themselves. "There's a sense that students feel more comfortable here than in their other classes," Sharabi told AFP. "Their energy in this class is different. "And some students even have experience in singing! All their voices are beautiful. Singing helps the psyche," she told AFP.

"War is the cause of so much pain, and sometimes it's easier to express that through song." The Yemen conflict has killed some 10,000 people since the Saudi-led military intervention in March 2015, according to the World Health Organization, although human rights groups say the real death toll could be five times as high. — AFP





# Composers draw out peace from Beethoven in new works

When Israeli-American pianist Yael Weiss asked Sidney Marquez Boquiren to write a piece inspired by a Beethoven piano sonata, the composer highlighted the “unheard” victims of extrajudicial killings in his native Philippines. The work, part of an ambitious project commissioning 32 composers from countries plagued by conflict to create pieces responding to each of Beethoven’s 32 sonatas, premiered on Thursday at the Mansion at Strathmore outside Washington. “The title ‘Unheard Voices’ refers to how the voices of the innocent are not heard, even the voices of those who are expressing anger, expressing desire for change or just going against what’s happening... and are fearful for their own lives,” Boquiren told AFP.

For many in the Philippines, those voices are the victims of President Rodrigo Duterte’s brutal war on drugs, in which police say they have killed nearly 5,000 alleged users and pushers—although rights groups say the toll is at least triple that. “What scares me is that Filipinos are willing to forgive, or accept, the fact that there will be collateral damage,” Boquiren added. During the performance, Weiss listens to a recording of the tragic second movement of the seventh sonata on headphones—unheard by the audience, which only hears her play Boquiren’s composition that carves away or echoes notes from the 1798 piece.

Like the other solo piano works in the “32 Bright Clouds” project, there is also a nod to a passage in the final movement of Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis, a mass composed at the height of his career. The piece closes with “sforzando” attacks on clusters of notes at a point when the Beethoven sonata would be at its quietest. That’s an epic challenge for the performer.

### ‘Unique, fresh, delicious’

Weiss, 46, also premiered works by composers from Ghana, Iran, Jordan and Syria, and played another previously performed from Indonesia. Malek Jandali’s work is dedicated to the “noble quest for peace” of Syrian children, up to 30,000 of whom have died in the war in Syria according to opposition groups, with government forces identified by far as the biggest killer. Juxtaposing the Missa Solemnis motif with a rhythm from the first movement of “The Hunt” sonata, Jandali then integrates Arab maqamat, or melodic modes, with Western harmonies in what he calls his “unique, fresh, delicious vocabulary.”

“When I meet Syrian children in refugee camps, you can see in their eyes beauty and truth and hope and peace, but at the same time you can also see anger and sadness and injustice and pain,” Jandali said by telephone. “So it’s a mix of emotions and that’s what the piece tries to capture.” George Mensah Essilfie of Ghana composed around Beethoven’s Sonata Number 16 in G major, and donated his commissioning fee to a psychiatric hospital in Accra to help end mistreatment of those with mental disorders.

He quoted some of the first movement’s chords, played in stutter-like fashion that gives the sense that the pianist’s hands are unable to play together. Weiss hopes to eventually host a marathon, daylong performance of the new works paired with Beethoven’s, much like a collaborative concert featuring all 32 sonatas in which she once participated as a student of Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Institute conservatory. “There are stories that need to be heard, and I felt that they need to be heard from a point of view of oneness, of connectivity,” said Weiss, who calls for “celebrating differences.”

On June 11, she has a concert planned in Havana. Her project has even taken her to remote Bhutan, where oral tradition predominates. There, Kheng Sonam Dorji transposed material for the dramyin, a Himalayan lute, to the piano. Venezuela’s Adina Izarra, whose “Arietta for 150 Kids” Weiss will premiere in Ann Arbor, Michigan on March 15, dedicated her work to the youths killed by President Nicolas Maduro’s security forces in 2017. It’s a conversation with Beethoven’s extraordinarily forward-looking, final sonata.

### Call for peace

The complete cycle of new compositions is set to be completed in 2020, as part of celebrations around the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth. A cornerstone of the piano repertoire, the Beethoven sonatas themselves demonstrate the gradual transformation that saw the German composer blow apart musical conventions, resolutely push music into the Romantic period and even foresee ragtime. Above the mass motif Weiss chose, Beethoven wrote “A call for inward and outward peace” in the score. It’s a call that resonates in more ways than one. Just hours before Weiss premiered the new compositions, Indonesian authorities released Jakarta’s former governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, to whose “bravery” a sixth piece by Ananda Sukarlan was dedicated. — AFP



Israeli-American pianist Yael Weiss (right) and Filipino composer Sidney Marquez Boquiren (left) talk during an AFP interview at The Mansion at Strathmore, in North Bethesda, Maryland. — AFP photos



Israeli-American pianist Yael Weiss plays the piano during an AFP interview at The Mansion at Strathmore.

## Netflix puts ‘Fortnite’ in crosshairs as streaming wars heat up



Netflix, moving to fend off the challengers in the war for streaming media dominance, is taking aim at competitors from the video game world, notably “Fortnite.” The dominant online television service has begun efforts to become more interactive as part of an effort to keep its viewers from turning to service like Epic Games’ Fortnite and Microsoft Xbox video games. Netflix chief executive Reed Hastings spoke of competition from the video game sector this month as he discussed the quarterly results from the company with 140 million worldwide subscribers. “I think about it really as us winning entertainment time away from other activities... Xbox, ‘Fortnite,’ or HBO or a long list,” Hastings said. “We compete so broadly with all these different providers.”

A billion hours of television content is watched daily in the US, and Netflix accounts for about a tenth of it, according to Hastings. Hastings was asked about plans by Disney to launch a streaming television service this year, pulling coveted content such as shows starring blockbuster Marvel action heroes in the process. But he appeared to focus on how consumers spend their screen time, including the growing market for participatory games and eSports including Fortnite.

### Battle for time

“The idea is that time is a lot more finite than money seems to be, so getting people engaged and stuck is how you can generate dollars,” NDP Group video games industry analyst Mat Piscatella told AFP. Microsoft has focused intensely on building ranks of users and getting them to spend more time on Xbox consoles. The technology titan is working on streaming games from the internet cloud. Amazon-owned Twitch boasts that it streams game play to online audiences that surpass those of Netflix. “Interest only seems to be growing,” Piscatella said of game play on a gamut of internet-linked devices. “I think people like to be participatory instead of sitting back; although sitting back definitely has its time and place.”

Netflix has been interested in making videos more interactive for some time, and recently released a “Bandersnatch” episode of technology dystopia series “Black Mirror” that lets viewers make choices that influence the story. “We are starting to see Netflix figure out interactive elements,” Piscatella said. “It will be fun to watch.” Netflix executives promised there will be more interactive shows at the service. “This one has storytellers salivating,” Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos said of the interactive “Black Mirror” episode during the earnings presentation.

### ‘Double Whammy’

Video games and sleep may vie for people’s time, but rival streaming services rank much higher when it comes to real competition for Netflix, contended eMarketer principal analyst Paul Verna. Verna thought it unlikely that Fortnite is a major rival for Netflix when it comes to winning people’s leisure time. While people have a wide array of entertainment options, television streaming services such as Hulu, HBO Now, and Amazon Prime are more viable threats to Netflix, the analyst reasoned. “Discretionary spending and entertainment media all play into the same ecosystem, but I would put them on a spectrum,” Verna said. He placed rival television streaming services at the high end of the competitive spectrum for Netflix, while Fortnite along with Facebook Watch and YouTube were at the low end. “What Netflix should be worried about is the direct competitors and the services coming down the pike within a year,” Verna said.

Some of the services come with a “double-whammy” of companies behind them, such as Disney, also pulling their content from Netflix to lure away subscribers. Despite the competition, streaming television market leader Netflix is in a strong position, according to the analyst. Netflix has been relentlessly investing in original content, and having success with films such as “Roma” which won Golden Globe awards along with Oscar nominations, including one for best picture. “They have a lot going for them,” Verna said of Netflix. “That doesn’t mean they don’t have a lot of competition and growth won’t slow, but I expect them will remain at the top for a good long time.” — AFP

# ‘A Star Is Born’ leads pack for Screen Actors Guild Awards



In this file photo Bradley Cooper, Lady Gaga, and Steven Spielberg attend The National Board of Review Annual Awards Gala at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York City. — AFP photos

Popular musical romance “A Star Is Born”—featuring the powerhouse duo of Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga—leads the field for yesterday’s Screen Actors Guild Awards, which are seen as a major predictor of Oscars success. This year, the SAG Awards comes at a key point in the race to next month’s Academy Awards—just after the Oscars nominations, and before the voting for the winners begins. The Screen Actors Guild accounts for a major percentage of the 8,000-odd Oscar voters, so the SAG winners crowned Sunday at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles will earn a lot of awards season momentum.

“A Star Is Born,” the latest iteration of the classic Tinseltown story of an aging star and the ingenue he discovers, earned four SAG nominations for Cooper, Gaga, Sam Elliott and best ensemble cast—the top prize. “BlackKkKlansman,” Spike Lee’s latest film, is just behind with three and could spark a surprise, pundits say, due to the great respect for the veteran US director among Hollywood’s actors. And superhero juggernaut “Black Panther” could pull a major upset in the best ensemble category—giving its star-studded cast the chance to give the signature “Wakanda Forever” salute from the stage.

One major absence at the 25th edition of the starry event is Alfonso Cuarón’s “Roma”—the top Oscar nomination getter was left out of SAG contention. Longtime Oscar watcher Sasha Stone sees the race as a major toss-up. “A Star Is Born” could win big, setting it up as once again the season’s frontrunner. “Bohemian Rhapsody” could win—yes, even still,” Stone wrote on her website, Awards Daily. But she ultimately put her money on “BlackKkKlansman,” which is based on the true story of a black cop who successfully infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan with the help of his white partner, who acts as his surrogate. She notes it’s the only film to earn nominations at all the major awards shows and in the key categories, while acknowledging: “We all must agree that it’s a weird year and stats don’t matter.”

### Sure bets and toss-ups

In the individual races, best actress is seen by industry experts as a near-lock for Glenn Close, who has taken home a Golden Globe and a Critics’ Choice Award so far for her work in “The Wife.” Outside contenders are Gaga and Olivia Colman, who wowed critics with her portrayal of Queen Anne in the off-beat royal romp “The Favourite.” For best actor, Christian Bale’s disappearance into the role of former US vice president Dick Cheney in “Vice” is seen as the one to beat.

But Rami Malek’s star-making turn as Queen frontman Freddie Mercury in “Bohemian Rhapsody” earned him a Golden Globe, an Oscar nomination—and a chance to win yesterday. Colman’s co-stars Emma Stone and Rachel Weisz are nominees, as are “BlackKkKlansman” co-stars John David Washington and Adam Driver. In the supporting acting categories, Mahershala Ali (“Green Book”) is expected to continue his march to the Oscars, but the actress trophy is a toss-up, as early favorite Regina King (“If Beale Street Could Talk”) is not nominated. Many have since put their money on Amy Adams, who plays Cheney’s wife Lynne in “Vice.” While SAG-winning casts have only gone on to win a best picture Oscar about half the time, the awards are better at predicting best actor winners (79 percent) and best actress (75 percent).

In the television categories, shows will look to build up some momentum ahead of the Emmys later this year. Those include new Netflix comedy “The Kominsky Method” starring Michael Douglas and the streaming giant’s returning dark drama “Ozark.” Perennial favorites such as Amazon’s “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” powerhouse FX drama “The Americans” and NBC family drama “This Is Us” are also in the mix. Tom Hanks will present a lifetime achievement award to veteran actor Alan Alda, the star of the long-running TV comedy “M\*A\*S\*H” who revealed last year that he is battling Parkinson’s disease. — AFP

### Here is the full list of nominations:

**Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role:**  
Christian Bale, “Vice”  
Bradley Cooper, “A Star Is Born”  
Rami Malek, “Bohemian Rhapsody”  
Viggo Mortensen, “Green Book”  
John David Washington, “BlackKkKlansman”

**Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role:**  
Emily Blunt, “Mary Poppins Returns”  
Glenn Close, “The Wife”  
Olivia Colman, “The Favourite”  
Lady Gaga, “A Star Is Born”  
Melissa McCarthy, “Can You Ever Forgive Me?”

**Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role:**  
Mahershala Ali, “Green Book”  
Timothee Chalamet, “Beautiful Boy”  
Adam Driver, “BlackKkKlansman”  
Sam Elliott, “A Star Is Born”  
Richard E. Grant, “Can You Ever Forgive Me?”

**Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role:**  
Amy Adams, “Vice”  
Emily Blunt, “A Quiet Place”  
Margot Robbie, “Mary Queen of Scots”  
Emma Stone, “The Favourite”  
Rachel Weisz, “The Favourite”

**Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture:**  
“A Star Is Born”  
“Black Panther”  
“BlackKkKlansman”  
“Bohemian Rhapsody”  
“Crazy Rich Asians”

**Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries:**  
Antonio Banderas, “Genius: Picasso”  
Darren Criss, “Assassination of Gianni Versace”  
Hugh Grant, “A Very English Scandal”  
Anthony Hopkins, “King Lear”  
Bill Pullman, “The Sinner”

**Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries:**  
Amy Adams, “Sharp Objects”  
Patricia Arquette, “Escape at Dannemora”  
Patricia Clarkson, “Sharp Objects”  
Penelope Cruz, “Assassination of Gianni Versace”  
Emma Stone, “Maniac”

**Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series:**  
Jason Bateman, “Ozark”  
Sterling K. Brown, “This Is Us”  
Joseph Fiennes, “The Handmaid’s Tale”  
John Krasinski, “Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan”  
Bob Odenkirk, “Better Call Saul”

**Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series:**  
Julia Garner, “Ozark”  
Laura Linney, “Ozark”  
Elisabeth Moss, “The Handmaid’s Tale”  
Sandra Oh, “Killing Eve”  
Robin Wright, “House of Cards”

**Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Comedy Series:**  
Alan Arkin, “The Kominsky Method”  
Michael Douglas, “The Kominsky Method”  
Bill Hader, “Barry”  
Tony Shalhoub, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”  
Henry Winkler, “Barry”

**Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Comedy Series:**  
Alex Borstein, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”  
Alison Brie, “GLOW”  
Rachel Brosnahan, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”  
Jane Fonda, “Grace and Frankie”  
Lily Tomlin, “Grace and Frankie”

**Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series:**  
“The Americans”  
“Better Call Saul”  
“The Handmaid’s Tale”  
“Ozark”  
“This Is Us”

**Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series:**  
“Atlanta”  
“Barry”  
“GLOW”  
“The Kominsky Method”  
“The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”

**Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Comedy or Drama Series:**  
“Glow”  
“Marvel’s Daredevil”  
“Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan”  
“The Walking Dead”  
“Westworld”

**Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Motion Picture:**  
“Ant-Man and the Wasp”  
“Avengers: Infinity War”  
“The Ballad of Buster Scruggs”  
“Black Panther”  
“Mission: Impossible – Fallout”.



# Classifieds

Monday, January 28, 2019



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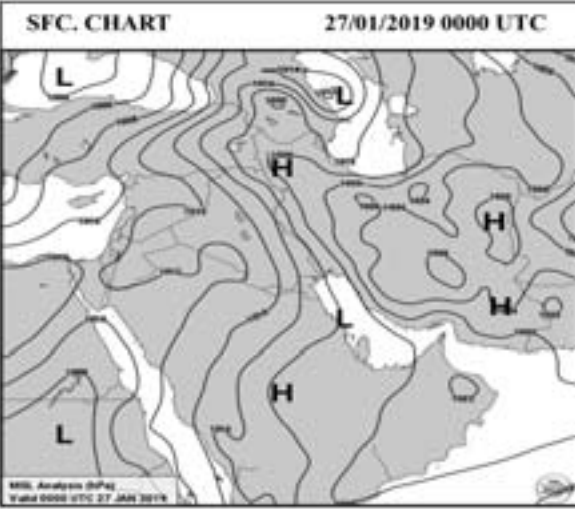
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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Warm and Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind to easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

**BY NIGHT:** Cool and Partly cloudy to cloudy with moderate to fresh south easterly wind, with speed of 20 - 45 km/h

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART27/01/2019 0000 UTC</div>	
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	15 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24 °C	14 °C		
ABDALY	25 °C	14 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	24 °C	14 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	19 °C	15 °C		
SALMIYAH	19 °C	14 °C		
AHMADI	18 °C	15 °C		
NUWAISIB	24 °C	16 °C		
WAFRA	27 °C	15 °C		
SALMY	25 °C	16 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST					
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.	
Monday	01/28	Warm and Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rising dust and a chance for rain that might	27 °C	17 °C	SE-S 25 - 60 km/h
Tuesday	01/29	A significant decrease in temperature and some scattered clouds will appear	20 °C	14 °C	NW 15 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	01/30	Cool and Partly cloudy	19 °C	09 °C	NW-VRB 06 - 26 km/h
Thursday	01/31	Cool and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	20 °C	11 °C	SE-VRB 08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:18
Sunrise	06:40
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:01
Sunset	17:22
Isha	18:41

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	25 °C
MIN. Temp.	11 °C
MAX. RH	100 %
MIN. RH	49 %
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

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- Transferable residency
- Driving License
- Experience in the local market for projects sector

CV to be sent on e-mail:  
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## Airlines

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



Flight Schedule

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 Monday 28/1/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 28/1/2019				Arrival Flights on Monday 28/1/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 28/1/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:30	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	QTR	1079	Alexandria	14:45
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	KAC	364	Colombo	14:30	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05	KNE	382	Doha	15:00
THY	766	ISL	00:30	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	IRA	666	Taif	15:00
JZR	254	Amman	00:40	KAC	618	Doha	14:40	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:15	FDB	060	Esfahan	15:10
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45	JZR	111	Doha	01:45	GFA	222	Dubai	15:10
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:00	KAC	363	Colombo	01:50	KAC	673	Bahrain	15:25
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50	SVA	501	Dubai	15:40
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:55	KAC	775	Jeddah	15:45
JZR	722	Alexandria	00:55	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	KAC	743	Riyadh	15:50
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	JZR	222	Riyadh	15:30	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:25	KAC	730	Dammam	15:55
DLH	625	Istanbul	01:00	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
RJA	642	Dammam	01:25	KAC	562	Amman	15:35	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05
UAE	853	Amman	01:35	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:40	IGO	1758	Kochi	02:55	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
THY	764	Dubai	01:45	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	THY	767	ISL	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
IGO	1757	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
GFA	211	Kochi	01:55	SYR	341	Damascus	16:00	PGT	819	Istanbul	03:45	KAC	283	Dhaka	16:30
PGT	818	Bahrain	02:30	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
QTR	1086	Istanbul	02:40	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:05	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
OMA	643	Doha	02:40	KAC	118	New York	16:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
KKK	1268	Muscat	02:55	JZR	212	Jeddah	16:25	KKK	1269	Istanbul	04:00	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
ETD	305	Istanbul	03:05	KAC	542	Cairo	16:30	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	SYR	342	Damascus	17:00
MSR	612	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	502	Beirut	16:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
JZR	502	Cairo	03:15	QTR	1072	Doha	16:35	JZR	701	Asyut	04:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
QTR	1076	Lahore	03:35	FDB	051	Dubai	16:40	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
IGO	1751	Doha	04:00	JZR	114	Doha	17:10	KAC	203	Lahore	05:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50
KAC	418	Chennai	04:10	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	KAC	203	Bahrain	05:30	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	784	Manila	04:25	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	DHX	173	Doha	05:30	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:00
DHX	170	Jeddah	04:30	JZR	104	Bahrain	17:45	QTR	1077	Doha	05:50	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
FDB	069	Bahrain	04:35	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:45	FDB	070	Dubai	05:50	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	382	Dubai	05:00	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	JZR	215	Jeddah	06:00	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	1544	Delhi	05:05	FDB	063	Dubai	18:15	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	404	Cairo	05:10	JZR	124	Dubai	18:20	JZR	713	Sohag	06:15	KAC	621	Doha	18:25
THY	770	Hyderabad	05:10	QTR	1080	Doha	18:30	JZR	121	Dubai	06:35	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	284	Istanbul	05:10	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	THY	771	Istanbul	06:40	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
JZR	112	Dhaka	05:15	KAC	744	Dammam	19:00	KAC	167	Paris	07:10	JZR	253	Amman	18:40
KAC	346	Doha	05:25	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25	RJA	643	Amman	07:15	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
KAC	332	Ahmedabad	05:30	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	344	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:20	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
JZR	402	Chennai	05:50	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	KAC	163	MXP	08:40	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
KAC	678	Mumbai	06:10	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	161	Geneva	09:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
BAW	157	Dubai	06:55	KNE	381	Taif	20:00	KAC	501	Beirut	09:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	354	London	07:05	KAC	620	Doha	20:15	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	JZR	1735	Cairo	20:20
FDB	053	Bengaluru	07:35	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	BAW	156	London	09:10	KAC	357	Kochi	20:30
KAC	384	Dubai	07:50	DHX	172	Bahrain	20:20	JZR	731	Cairo	09:10	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	358	Delhi	08:00	AZQ	4565	AJF	20:30	KAC	541	Cairo	09:30	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
UAE	855	Kochi	08:05	KAC	674	Dubai	20:35	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
ETD	301	Dubai	08:35	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	KAC	101	London	09:45	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
ABY	125	Abu Dhabi	09:05	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
QTR	1070	Sharjah	09:05	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
FDB	055	Doha	09:30	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
GFA	213	Dubai	09:40	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
AXB	395	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	164	MXP	21:25	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
JZR	702	Kozhikode	10:50	KAC	168	Paris	21:30	KAC	617	Doha	10:35	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
AXB	889	Asyut	11:05	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
JZR	122	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	JZR	211	Jeddah	10:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
QTR	1074	Dubai	11:20	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50	QTR	1071	Doha	10:45	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	216	Doha	11:35	KAC	162	Geneva	21:55	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:45	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
MEA	404	Jeddah	11:45	KAC	564	Amman	21:55	KAC	117	New York	11:25	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
JZR	714	Beirut	11:55	JAI	574	Mumbai	22:00	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
UAE	871	Sohag	12:35	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05	AXB	396	Kozhikode	11:50	AZQ	4566	AJF	22:30
MSR	610	Dubai	12:50	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
QTR	1078	Cairo	13:10	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25	AXB	890	Jeddah	12:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
KAC	774	Doha	13:35	KAC	622	Doha	22:30	MEA	405	Mangalore	12:10	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
RBG	553	Riyadh	14:00	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30	KAC	1075	Beirut	12:55	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
KAC	204	Alexandria	14:05	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:45	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
KNE	231	Lahore	14:05	KAC	502	Jeddah	22:45	JZR	113	Doha	13:30	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
IRA	667	Riyadh	14:10	SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10	QTR	1083	Doha	23:25
FDB	059	Esfahan	14:10	MSC	501	Alexandria	23:05	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
KAC	672	Dubai	14:20	JZR	128	Dubai	23:15	JZR	103	Bahrain	14:40	SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45
		Dubai	14:25	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45								



# Hezbollah’s Nasrallah warns Israel against continuing strikes in Syria

## Hezb chief says ‘surprising’ Israel took so long to find tunnels

**BEIRUT:** The chief of Lebanon’s Hezbollah movement has warned Israel against continuing strikes in Syria targeting mainly Iranian positions, saying it could fuel war in the region. Israel’s army has since 2013 claimed hundreds of attacks on what it says are Iranian military targets and arms deliveries to Tehran-backed Hezbollah, with the goal of stopping its main enemy Iran from entrenching itself militarily in neighboring Syria.

In the latest strikes nearly a week ago 21 people were killed, the majority of them Iranians, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor. Addressing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu directly, Hassan Nasrallah said Saturday in an interview with Al-Mayadeen television: “Don’t make an error of judgment and don’t lead the region towards war or a major clash. At any moment the Syrian leadership and the axis of resistance can take a decision to deal with the Israeli aggression in a different manner,” he said, referring to the alliance between Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad’s government, Iran and its ally Hezbollah.

When asked whether a retaliation could take the form of air strikes on Tel Aviv,

Nasrallah said “anything is possible”, adding that Hezbollah possessed “high-precision missiles” capable of hitting anywhere in Israel. The Israeli army announced the strikes against facilities it said belonged to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards’ Quds Force on Monday as they were occurring. It said they were in response to a medium-range missile the Quds Force fired from Syria at the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights on Sunday, which Israeli air defenses intercepted. Israel has carried out hundreds of air strikes in Syria and its warplanes have been targeted by anti-aircraft fire during such raids, but it has rarely faced surface-to-surface missile fire in response.

“Part of our plan in the next war is to enter into Galilee, a part of our plan we are capable of, God willing. The important thing is that we have this capability and we have had it for years,” Nasrallah said. He added that all of Israel would be the battlefield and reiterated that the group now had precision rockets that could strike deep into Israel.

Israel has warned it will continue to target positions in Syria held by Iran and its ally Hezbollah. Netanyahu and other Israeli officials have been speaking more openly about the country’s strikes in Syria in recent

days, which some analysts partly attribute to the premier wanting to burnish his security credentials ahead of April 9 elections. Others say it carries a strategic military purpose as well by sending a stronger message.

But Israel also risks an escalation with Syria and Iran, as well as possibly further angering Russia at a time when the United States is seeking to withdraw its forces from Syria. In Saturday’s rare television interview - which was more than three hours long - Nasrallah also said that Israel took “years” to discover cross-border tunnels from Lebanon. “The Israelis discovered a number of tunnels after many years, and it’s not a surprise, the surprise is that these tunnels, they took some time to find,” he said.

Earlier this month Israel concluded an operation to unearth and destroy tunnels which the army accused Hezbollah of digging across the border from Lebanon. “Yes, there are tunnels in southern Lebanon,” Nasrallah said, in his first comments on the issue since Israel announced the operation on Dec 4. The Hezbollah leader refused to specify whether they were built before the 2006 war between the militia group and Israel, or who had constructed them. The



**BEIRUT:** Lebanese leader of the Hezbollah movement Hassan Nasrallah speaks in a television interview on Al-Mayadeen channel on Saturday. — AFP

month-long war killed more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and more than 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers.

Nasrallah indicated the tunnels had been dug long ago and that it was “a surprise” Israel took so long to locate them. “One of the tunnels discovered goes back 13 years,”

he said, asserting it predated resolution 1701, but without discussing how old other tunnels were. UN Security Council resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 war, said both sides must stick to their side of the blue line and that Hezbollah must leave the area around the frontier. — Agencies

## Plastic dhow sails Kenya coast to highlight waste crisis

**WATAMU, Kenya:** A traditional dhow sailing boat made entirely of trash and flip-flops has set off on an expedition along the Kenyan coast to raise awareness about the harmful effects of plastic waste. Dhows, with their billowing triangular sails, are an icon on the Kenyan coast, having traversed these Indian Ocean waters for some 2,000 years. Yesterday, the one-of-a-kind dhow, dubbed the Flipflop, set off from the coastal town of Watamu for the fourth leg of a 500-km expedition that began on Lamu island on Thursday and is set to finish in Zanzibar on Feb 6.

The boat is made of 10 tonnes of shredded plastic waste, molded and compacted to form the hull, keel and ribs with only the mast made out of wood. It is covered in a brightly-colored patchwork of 30,000 flip-flops, which like the rest of the raw material was collected from Kenyan beaches and towns.

Dipesh Pabari, a Kenyan tour operator and environmentalist who led the project, said the boat was merely a vessel to carry a message about recycling plastic, and how harmful it is, to coastal communities. “It was never about just building boats, it was a symbol about giving plastic a second life. It is about saying if this material is so amazing that you can make a seaworthy boat, it is really stupid to think about it as single use,” he told AFP onboard the Flipflop. Like much of the world, where plastic bottles, caps, food wrappers, bags, straws and lids are made to be

used once and then tossed away, Kenya is battling the scourge of plastic pollution, which chokes turtles, cattle, and birds and blights the landscape. The United Nations Environment Program estimates that more than 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic has been produced globally since the early 1950s, about 60 percent of which ended up in a landfill, or the natural environment.

To accompany the arrival of the Flipflop, residents and schoolchildren from Watamu village took to the streets with large bags to pick up waste, while several local associations work hard to keep the idyllic white beaches clean. With over 12 million people in Africa working in fisheries, and many more relying on fish for their diet, marine debris is a severe threat on the continent.

James Wakibia, who is credited with starting the grass-roots movement that saw Kenya ban plastic bags in 2017, was also in Watamu to support the Flipflop, which he sees as part of the next step in educating people about the menace of plastic. “Before there was plastic everywhere... it was like a Kenyan flower... right now you can see plastic bottles, but not plastic bags,” he told AFP.

The nine-metre Flipflop was built by hand by traditional dhow craftsmen from Lamu, with low-tech techniques which were honed over three years, but which can now be easily copied, said Pabari. Everyone involved in the project was a volunteer, with money coming from their own pockets, crowdfunding and small donations, before UNEP got involved and funded the expedition.

Pabari hopes to next build a 20-metre plastic dhow and sail it all the way to Cape Town, South Africa. “The Flipflop is living proof that we can live differently. It is a reminder of the urgent need for us to rethink the way we manufacture, use and manage single-use plastic,” Joyce Msuya, UN Environment’s Acting Executive Director, said in a press statement. — AFP



**LAMU, Kenya:** A dhow made by recycled plastic floats during its official voyage launch on Jan 23, 2019. — AFP

## Mixed emotions in Germany as €500 note bows out

**FRANKFURT:** As the ECB takes the final step in phasing out the 500-euro note, few are expected to mourn a bill favored by criminals but rarely seen in daily life. Except perhaps in cash-loving Germany. From yesterday, central banks in 17 of the 19 euro-zone countries stopped issuing the violet-colored banknotes. Only the German and Austrian central banks are clinging on a while longer, until April 26, to “ensure a smooth transition”, the European Central Bank said in a statement.

Medical technician Rolf, from the German town of Marburg, said he found the demise of the single currency’s highest-denomination note “hard to accept”. Standing a stone’s throw from Frankfurt’s blue-and-yellow euro sculpture after a meeting in the city, the 61-year-old said he had made a point of paying for

his car in 500s. “I prefer using cash for large payments, it doesn’t mean I’m involved in anything dodgy,” Rolf said, declining to give his last name.

The ECB decision to end the note’s issuance will lead to fewer and fewer circulating as commercial banks gradually return them to their countries’ central banks, where they will be replaced by lower-denomination bills. But anyone hoarding 500s under their mattress needn’t worry, as all existing bills remain legal tender. “They can continue to be used to spend or to save, and they will always retain their value,” said ECB spokeswoman Eva Taylor. The 500-euro bill accounted for just 2.3 percent of all euro notes in circulation last month.

**The ‘Bin Laden’**

The banknote’s death warrant was signed in 2016 when the ECB formally ended its production over concerns it could “facilitate illegal activities” after research linked its use to money laundering, tax evasion and terrorism financing. Sometimes dubbed the “Bin Laden”, the note has proved a compact way to transport illicit money. A million euros in 500-euro notes weighs just 2.2 kg, fitting

easily into a laptop bag. The same sum in \$100 bills, the US currency’s highest denomination, would weigh almost six times as much and require a much larger case.

While the plan to slowly kill off the 500 made few waves abroad, it sparked an emotional debate in Germany where many feared it was a prelude to abolishing cash altogether. Among the fiercest opponents was Jens Weidmann, chief of Germany’s powerful Bundesbank central bank, who said scrapping the note would do little to combat crime but could “damage trust” in the single currency.

Critics also said the move would make it more difficult and expensive for banks to physically store large amounts of cash in order to bypass negative interest rates. The ECB’s deposit rate currently stands at minus 0.4 percent, meaning banks pay to park excess funds with the Frankfurt institution.

### ‘Won’t miss it’

When the euro was created two decades ago, Germany was keen to have a 500-euro bill as the closest equivalent to its cherished 1,000-Deutsche Mark banknote. But even in Europe’s top economy,

where privacy is prized and cash is king, the 500 isn’t any more widely used than in other countries, and won’t be universally missed. Suzanne Spenner, a Frankfurt-based nanny in her mid-fifties, said in her experience the slightly oversized note - an awkward fit in most wallets - was a pain to get rid of. “They wouldn’t take it in the shops. I have no need for it.”

A 2017 Bundesbank study found that over 60 percent of Germans have dealt with the 500-euro note at least once, often as a gift, a way of storing money or to pay for large purchases. Across the euro region, the ECB said “more people than often thought use high denomination banknotes”. In a major 2015-2016 ECB survey, almost 20 percent of eurozone respondents said they had handled a 200- or 500-euro bill in the preceding year.

Lucia Bassing, owner of a high-end store selling beds and mattresses in Frankfurt, said while card payments were on the rise, it wasn’t unusual for customers to pay for a 3,000-euro bed in 500s. “I personally don’t like carrying a 500-euro note on me so I won’t miss it,” said the 49-year-old. “But I’m always happy to accept them from customers,” she laughed. — AFP

## Manila vows to crush ‘terrorists’...

Continued from Page 1

“The enemies of the state have boldly challenged the capability of the government to secure the safety of the citizenry in that region,” said Salvador Panelo, spokesman of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. “The armed forces of the Philippines will rise to the challenge and crush these godless criminals.”

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but police suspect the bombings were the work of Abu Sayyaf, a militant group that has pledged allegiance to Islamic State and is notorious for its bombings and brutality. “They want to show force and sow chaos,” national police chief Oscar Albayalde told DZMM radio, suggesting Abu Sayyaf was the prime suspect.

Jolo is a stronghold of the group, which runs a lucrative piracy and kidnapping operation that successive governments have failed to break up. The group, which operates in the waters and islands of western Mindanao, has beheaded numerous foreign captives when ransom demands were not met. Pictures distributed by the military of the inside of the Jolo

church showed several rows of wooden pews destroyed, with debris strewn across a blackened floor.

The attack followed Friday’s announcement that the region, a mainly Muslim part of the predominantly Catholic Philippines, had ratified the creation of an autonomous area called Bangsamoro, with 85 percent of voters behind it. Although Sulu was among only a few areas that rejected autonomy, it will still be part of the new entity when it is fully formed in 2022.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana called the attack a “dastardly act” and urged the local population to cooperate and “deny terrorism any victory”. National Security Adviser, Hermogenes Esperon, called those responsible “mass murderers” and “extremist criminals”. “We will not allow them to spoil the preference of the people for peace,” he added. Civilians bore the brunt of the attack, which also killed five soldiers. Police lowered the death toll from 27 to 20, after discovering duplications in initial reports.

The referendum came amid concerns about the presence of extremists in the Philippines and the possibility that foreign radicals will join those of Indonesia and Malaysia in gravitating to Mindanao to capitalize on porous borders, jungles and mountains, and an abundance of arms. The Philippine military in mid-2017 encountered its biggest and longest battle since World War Two when an alliance of extremists loyal to Islamic State, among them foreigners and children, overran Marawi City and tried to establish a caliphate. — Reuters

## Malaysia stripped of para swim event...

Continued from Page 1

Parsons said that in Sept 2017, the IPC received assurances that all eligible athletes and countries would be allowed to participate in the event with their safety assured. “Since then, there has been a change of political leadership and the new Malaysian government has different ideas... We are disappointed that Israeli athletes would not have been allowed to compete in Malaysia,” he said. Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon tweeted: “This is a victory of values over hatred and bigotry, a strong statement in favor of freedom and equality. Thank you @Paralympics for your brave decision.”

Malaysia - a predominantly Muslim country - said earlier this month it would refuse to host events that have Israeli participation. Responding to yesterday’s decision, Malaysia’s Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman said: “If hosting an international sporting event is more important than standing up for our Palestinian brothers and sisters who get murdered, maimed and tortured by the Netanyahu regime, that means Malaysia has

truly loss its moral compass. Malaysia stands firm with our decision on the ground of humanity and compassion for the Palestinian plight. We will not compromise.”

At least 245 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since March, mostly during protests and border clashes but also by tank fire and air strikes. Two Israeli soldiers have also been killed. Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accuse Hamas of orchestrating the protests and argue that Israel’s actions are aimed at defending the border.

Malaysia is one of several Muslim states that have no formal diplomatic ties with Israel. It is forbidden to enter the country on an Israeli passport. The Palestinian cause has widespread support in Malaysia and thousands took to the streets in protest when US President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital in 2017.

Malaysia has prevented Israeli athletes from competing in a sports event before. Two Israeli windsurfers had to pull out of a competition on the island of Langkawi after they were refused visas in 2015. Kuala Lumpur also refused to host a conference for world football’s governing body FIFA in 2017 as an Israeli delegation was due to attend. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, now 93 and in his second stint as premier, has in the past attracted criticism for his verbal attacks on Jews, including calling them “hook-nosed”. — AFP



## Sports

# Thurman returns to beat Lopez, retain WBA welterweight title

## Thurman ready to take on Filipino ring icon before the year is out

**NEW YORK:** Keith Thurman returned from a near two-year layoff to retain his World Boxing Association welterweight world title with a 12-round majority decision over Josesito Lopez on Saturday. America's Thurman, showing no sign of rust, knocked down Lopez with a massive left hook to the chin in the second as he controlled the early rounds.

He weathered a storm in the middle rounds, with Lopez unleashing a fierce barrage in the seventh that had the champion in trouble. Thurman was deemed the winner by two judges by scores off 115-111 and 117-109 with the third seeing it a 113-113 draw.

"The champ is back!" said Thurman, who was forced to surrender his World Boxing Council belt as he was idled by injury but retained his WBA "super" world title, one rung above the "regular" WBA belt held by Manny Pacquiao.

Thurman, who improved to 29-0 with 22 wins inside the distance, said he'd be ready to take on the Filipino ring icon before the year is out. "Maybe Brooklyn, maybe Vegas, wherever Manny Pacquiao wants it," Thurman said. "I'd even fight him in the Philippines if I have to."

Thurman was fighting for the first time since edging Danny Garcia by split decision in March of 2017 to unify two 147-pound titles. The next month he had surgery to remove calcium deposits from his right elbow, and as he was readying to return to the ring he suffered a left hand injury in March of 2018 that forced him to take more time off.

Nevertheless, he quickly took control against Lopez, moving well against the aggressive challenger and landing solid punches. But Lopez had him on the run in the seventh, connecting with a huge left hook to Thurman's jaw and backing up the champion.

"He had me buzzed, he had me shaken up," Thurman admitted. "I was trying to stay on the outside. I just was a little off in my prediction of his long arms and the way that he was lunging in, willing to really swing and commit for the knockout. He was coming for me."

### 'WORLD TITLE PERFORMANCE'

After another solid performance from Lopez in the eighth, Thurman regained control and said he'll only get better from here. "I told everybody, you're not going to see the best Keith "One-time" Thurman after 22 months, but you will see a world title performance."

On the undercard, Polish-born, Brooklyn-based heavyweight Adam Kownacki remained unbeaten with a spectacular second-round technical knockout of former world title challenger Gerald Washington.

Kownacki improved to 19-0 with 15 wins inside the distance. He sent Washington to the canvas with a massive right hand in the second round. Washington beat the count, but the referee called the halt moments later at 1:09 of the second round-as he failed to put up any defense under a barrage from Kownacki.

In a World Boxing Association featherweight eliminator, Mongolia's unbeaten Tugstsogt Nyambayar improved to 11-0 with nine knockouts with a unanimous



**NEW YORK:** Keith Thurman (R) punches Josesito Lopez during their WBA welterweight title fight at Barclays Center on Saturday in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. — AFP

12-round decision over Claudio Marrero. Nyambayar won by scores of 114-113, 115-112 and 116-111 as

Marrero, who had a point deducted for a low blow, fell to 23-3 with 17 wins inside the distance. — AFP

## DeChambeau wins by seven shots to set records in Dubai

**DUBAI:** Bryson DeChambeau showed imperious form as he secured his first title outside the American soil, winning the \$3.25 million Omega Dubai Desert Classic on Sunday by a record margin of seven shots.

The highest ranked player in the field at world No5,

DeChambeau pulled ahead from the chasing pack with three birdies in his first three holes, and then almost assured himself of his fourth win in last nine starts with an eagle on the 10th hole and a birdie on the 11th.

At that stage, he was six ahead of the field. After making his only bogey of the day on the difficult par-4 12th hole, he added further birdies on the 13th, 14th and 17th holes to finish on eight-under par 64 for the day and 24-under for the four rounds, also the lowest in the history of the tournament. The previous biggest margin of victory was six by Ernie Els over Greg Norman in 1994. The old record for lowest tournament aggregate was set last year by Li Hao-tong (23-under par). England's Matt Wallace (68), the most successful player on the European Tour last season with

three wins, made a stunning birdie after spraying his tee shot wide right into the waste area on the 18th, to break out of a logjam on 16-under par and finish solo second at 17-under par 271.

Two more Englishmen, Ian Poulter and Paul Waring had set the target by finishing on 16-under par with rounds of 64. They were later matched by 2017 champion Sergio Garcia (66) and 2001 winner Alvaro Quiros (both Spain), and the defending champion Li Hao-tong (71) of China to tie for third place.

South Africa's Justin Harding shot the best round of the day in the morning - a nine-under par 63 elevating him to tied eighth place at 15-under par in a group that also included Lee Westwood (67) of England. —AFP

## World champion Ogier wins season-opening Monte Carlo rally

**MONACO:** Reigning world champion Sebastien Ogier won the season-opening Monte Carlo Rally for a sixth straight year yesterday. The Frenchman collected his first victory since returning to Citroen this season in the World Rally Championship (WRC) by just 2.2 seconds from Belgian Thierry Neuville in a Hyundai.

Ott Tanak (Toyota) completed the podium, 2min 15.2sec behind Ogier. The Estonian passed nine-time former winner Sebastien Loeb, making his debut for constructor Hyundai, on the closing Power Stage. The Frenchman finished fourth, a further 13sec back.

Ogier, who is from Gap in the Alps where the rally started, equalled Loeb's record of seven Monte Carlo victories as Citroen won for the 100th time in the WRC.

Ogier led from the seventh stage onward but was never able to put more than a few seconds between himself and Neuville. The Frenchman started Sunday with a 4.3sec lead, but finished just behind Neuville on



**MONACO:** French driver Sebastien Ogier (R) and his co-driver Julien Ingrassia (L) celebrate after winning the 87th Monte-Carlo Rally yesterday, in Monaco. Reigning world champion Sebastien Ogier won the season-opening Monte Carlo Rally for a sixth straight year on. — AFP

the morning's first three stages.

The gap was just 0.4sec entering the last stage and Ogier was having problems with his accelerator pedal. But Ogier drove an error-free final stage to finish second,

3.9sec behind Briton Kris Meeke (Toyota), who ended up sixth overall, but 1.8sec ahead of Neuville. Tanak, who won the day's first two stages, finished fourth on the stage to overhaul Loeb, who was seventh. — AFP



Ahmad Al-Amir

## Gulf Bank sponsors third Edition of BeInspired Series

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank announced the sponsorship of the 3rd edition of the BeInspired Series. The 2019 series will begin with the RoadRun on February 2nd, 2019. Taking place at Al Murooj Phase 3, the first race of the series is a 7.2KM road race, and it will test participants' mental and physical endurance. With five days to go before the event, registration is filling up quickly. Secure your spot



and register now through the website: <https://www.events.pro-vision.com/>

Kicking off at 7.30am, this year's start and finish line has moved to Al Murooj Phase 3, offering spectators a larger viewing area, with fantastic views of the race. Come down and watch the runners while relaxing at one of Al Murooj's numerous restaurants and cafes.

Ahmad Al Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank, said of the series: "Gulf Bank is proud to continue its sponsorship of the BeInspired Series for another edition. Promoting and encouraging health and fitness is a key component of the Bank's commitment to Kuwait, and the BeInspired Series is the perfect event to spread the message. Good luck to everyone participating in the BeInspired 2019 Road Run, we look forward to seeing you all on the day!"

Ghada Hussein, CEO, Inspire Sahara Health Club added: "The BeInspired Series has grown in popularity years, and we are very proud of the success the Series have achieved since its inception in 2016. We would like to thank Gulf Bank for their continued support and commitment to the health and wellness of Kuwait, and we are excited to welcome everyone to 2019 Series kick-off event, the Road Run."

Promoting health and fitness is a key pillar of Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility strategy. For more information about Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility initiatives and activities, please log on to [www.e-gulfbank.com](http://www.e-gulfbank.com) or visit its social media channels.

For more information about the upcoming BeInspired events, please visit [www.events.pro-vision.com](http://www.events.pro-vision.com), or follow their social media channels.

## Swim star Sun Yang threatens legal action over doping report

**BEIJING:** Chinese swimming star Sun Yang threatened legal action against a British newspaper yesterday over claims that he faced a lifetime ban after allegedly clashing with anti-doping testers and smashing a vial of blood with a hammer.

The 27-year-old, who has won Olympic gold in the 200m, 400m and 1,500m freestyle and is also a multiple world champion, strongly refuted the accusations contained in The Sunday Times.

The newspaper alleged that a confrontation took place and Sun-who was banned for three months in 2014 for taking a stimulant-missed an out-of-competition test on September 4 at his home in Zhejiang province.

"A clash with anti-doping testers ended in him and his security guard using a hammer to smash a sealed vial containing the swimmer's blood," The Sunday Times reported. After the story broke, Sun's lawyer Zhang Qihui issued a statement saying that the newspaper had "a malign intention" and "severely damaged Sun Yang's reputation and violated his privacy".

"We reserve the right to file a lawsuit against the relevant international media which reported the incident," the statement added, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency. The statement stressed that a doping panel for FINA, swimming's world governing body, ruled in Sun's favour on January 3 and said that testers for IDTM-the body which conducts tests-had breached several rules.

Those included failing to produce authorisation letters and a nursing licence, the lawyer said, so Sun elected to reject the testing. "And they fabricated an untruthful report claiming Sun Yang broke anti-doping rules and sent it to FINA," said the statement, making no mention about a smashed blood vial or hammer.

Zhang separately said Sunday in an interview, according to Xinhua: "Sun is entitled to reject any invalid doping test and safeguard the reputation and integrity of Chinese athletes." The Sunday Times also noted that FINA had cleared Sun, but said that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) "has demanded to know more about the extraordinary events".

The newspaper added that the doping panel "handed him (Sun) a series of cautions" and cited the panel as saying that his avoiding an anti-doping rule violation was "a close-run thing".

### 'ZERO TOLERANCE'

Sun is one of China's greatest-ever athletes and an Olympic and world-record holder. But he has faced controversy on several occasions and previously indulged in a long-standing war of words with Australian rival Mack Horton.

Emotions boiled over at the 2016 Rio Olympics when Horton branded Sun "a drug cheat" in reference to the Chinese star's 2014 ban. Sun maintains that he took the banned stimulant for a heart complaint.

He is hugely popular in China, however, and Sun received the backing on Sunday from the country's swimming association, which said that he had cooperated fully with FINA over September's incident.

The China Swimming Association "has zero tolerance towards doping", it said in a statement. "The association will continue to strengthen anti-doping work and strictly abide by anti-doping regulations," it added. Later Sunday, Xinhua published what it said was a copy of a letter from Sun's lawyer demanding an apology and retraction. The Sunday Times story was "an infringement on Mr. Sun Yang's right of reputation and privacy" because the FINA doping panel had stated that the case should not be made public, the letter said. —AFP



Sports

# Pakistan square one-day series with crushing eight-wicket win over S Africa

## Four-match suspension imposed on captain Sarfraz

SCOREBOARD	
Final scores in the fourth one-day international between South Africa and Pakistan at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg yesterday.	
<b>South Africa</b>	
H.Amla b Imad Wasim	59
Q.de Kock lbw b Shaheen Shah Afridi	0
R.Hendricks c Mohammad Rizwan b Shaheen Shah Afridi	2
F.du Plessis c Mohammad Hafeez b Shadab Khan	57
H.van der Dussen c Mohammad Rizwan b Usman Shinwari	18
D.Miller lbw b Mohammad Amir	4
A.Phehlukwayo c Babar Azam b Usman Shinwari	11
D.Steyn b Usman Shinwari	0
K.Rabada c Mohammad Rizwan b Usman Shinwari	0
B.Hendricks not out	2
Imran Tahir c Imad Wasim b Shadab Khan	5
Extras (lb1, w5)	6
Total (41 overs)	164
Fall of wickets: 1-3 (De Kock), 2-18 (R. Hendricks), 3-119 (Du Plessis), 4-130 (Amla), 5-140 (Miller), 6-156 (Van der Dussen), 7-156 (Steyn), 8-156 (Rabada), 9-157 (Phehlukwayo)	
Bowling: Usman Shinwari 7-0-35-4 (1w), Shaheen Shah Afridi 8-1-24-2 (3w), Mohammad Amir 7-1-26-1 (1w), Imad Wasim 10-0-36-1, Shadab Khan 9-0-42-2.	
<b>Pakistan</b>	
Imam-ul-Haq c De Kock b Phehlukwayo	71
Fakhar Zaman c Van der Dussen b Imran Tahir	44
Babar Azam not out	41
Mohammad Rizwan not out	4
Extras (lb1, w7)	8
Total (20 wkts, 31.3 overs)	168
Fall of wickets: 1-70 (Zaman), 2-164 (Imam)	
Bowling: Steyn 5-0-26-0 (1w), B. Hendricks 7-0-31-0 (2w), Rabada 5-0-29-0, Imran Tahir 10-1-51-1 (2w), Phehlukwayo 2.3-0-17-1 (2w), R. Hendricks 2-0-13-0	
Did not bat: Mohammad Hafeez, Shoaib Malik, Shadab Khan, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Amir, Usman Shinwari, Shaheen Shah Afridi.	
Result: Pakistan won by eight wickets	
Series: The five-match series is tied at 1-1	

**JOHANNESBURG:** Pakistan shrugged off a four-match suspension imposed on captain Sarfraz Ahmed with a crushing eight-wicket win over South Africa in the fourth one-day international at the Wanderers Stadium yesterday.

The result levelled the five-match series at 2-2. The deciding match will be in Cape Town on Wednesday. Pakistan's bowlers set up the win, bowling out South Africa for 164. Imam-ul-Haq made 71 before playing a loose shot when the scores were level as Pakistan cruised to victory with 18.3 overs to spare.

Stand-in captain Shoaib Malik said at the after-match presentation that Pakistan only found out after they arrived at the ground that Sarfraz had been banned under the International Cricket Council's anti-racism code for remarks aimed at South African all-rounder Andile Phehlukwayo during the second match in Durban on Tuesday.

The ban had still not been announced by the ICC when Malik walked out for the toss. Malik handled his bowlers and fielders astutely and South Africa were kept under pressure almost from the time he won the toss and sent them in on a pitch which had early life.

"It is a great honour to represent your country, as a player or a captain," said Malik. "When the responsibility comes you should make sure to give it your best shot." Shaheen Shah Afridi made two early strikes before Hashim Amla (59) and captain Faf du Plessis (57) made half-centuries and put on 101 for the third wicket.

Malik's use of spinners Imad Wasim and Shadab Khan kept the scoring rate in check and both batsmen fell to the slow men before the fast bowlers returned. Mohammad Amir dismissed the dangerous David Miller before fellow left-arm fast bowler Usman Shinwari claimed four wickets in six balls. He finished with four for 35 and was named man of the match.

Shinwari had Rassie van der Dussen caught behind for 18 and bowled Dale Steyn for a two-ball duck. Kagiso Rabada was caught behind first ball and Beuran Hendricks survived an appeal for leg before wicket with what Shinwari hoped was the hat-trick



**JOHANNESBURG:** Pakistan's Imam-ul-Haq plays a shot during the 4th one-day international (ODI) cricket match between South Africa and Pakistan at the Wanderers Cricket Stadium in Johannesburg yesterday. — AFP

ball. The ball was crashing into the stumps but Shinwari acknowledged that umpire Bongani Jele had made the right decision because there was a faint inside edge. Du Plessis gave credit to Pakistan's bowlers but said it was not a typical Wanderers pitch. "The ball spun quite a lot and was sticking in the surface," he said. "But you have to adapt. They have fantastic bowlers and they are putting pressure on us."

Malik deflected praise for the way the Pakistan players had shown energy and commitment in the field. "Not just today, in the previous games as well," he

said. "You need a bit of luck to get across the line. We are all professionals and today our bowling attack did the job and they took wickets."

Imam, the top scorer in the series, looked in control from the start of Pakistan's reply. He and Fakhar Zaman (44) put on 70 for the first wicket before he was joined by the in-form Babar Azam, who finished with 41 not out. It was South Africa's first defeat in eight matches on what has become known as 'Pink Day' with their players and many spectators dressed in pink in aid of breast cancer awareness. —AFP

## Cook blasts England's preparations after West Indies defeat

**LONDON:** Former England captain Alastair Cook has questioned the team's preparations for their West Indies tour, after the visitors crashed to a humiliating 381-run defeat in the first test in Barbados on Saturday.

England came into the contest having drawn their two warm-up games in the Caribbean against a Cricket West Indies President's XI team earlier this month but Cook said the two-day matches had not fully sharpened the instincts of Joe Root's side.

"Fail to prepare and you prepare to fail. That has become a cliché in sport but overuse does not erode its essential truth. Look at England over four days in Bridgetown," Cook wrote in his column for the Sunday Times.

## Warriors topple Celtics for 10th straight win

**BOSTON:** Klay Thompson broke the eighth tie of the final 9:07 with two free throws with 46.1 seconds remaining Saturday night and the Golden State Warriors held on to beat the host Boston Celtics 115-111 in a nationally televised showdown of streaking teams. The win was the Warriors' 10th straight overall and ninth in a row on the road, the longest in the NBA this season. Boston, which had won its last five games, had a 10-game home winning streak snapped. Kevin Durant led the Warriors, the two-time defending champions, with 33 points and nine rebounds, while Stephen Curry finished with 24 points and Thompson 21. Thompson's free throws came after Marcus Smart nailed a 3-pointer with 1:08 to play to draw the teams even at 111. The Celtics took two shots at reclaiming the upper hand, but Smart and Al Horford missed 3-pointers.

**GRIZZLIES 106, PACERS 103**

Mike Conley scored 22 points and Jaren Jackson added 20 as Memphis ended an eight-game losing streak with a victory that sent visiting Indiana to a defeat in their first game since Victor Oladipo's season-ending injury. Marc Gasol scored 18 points as the Grizzlies won for just the second time in their last 16 games. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 21 for the Pacers, whose three-game winning streak came to an end one game after Oladipo was lost for the year because of a ruptured quad tendon in his right knee suffered in Wednesday's victory over the Toronto Raptors.

**NUGGETS 126, 76ERS 110**

Nikola Jokic registered 32 points, 18 rebounds and 10 assists for his seventh triple-double of the season as host Denver knocked off short-handed Philadelphia. Mason Plumlee scored 17 points and Will Barton added 16 as the Nuggets won for the 12th time in their past 16 games. Torrey Craig tallied 15 points, Malik Beasley added 14 and Monte Morris had 10. JJ Redick scored 22 points and Corey Brewer added season bests of 20 points and four steals for the 76ers, who were without Joel Embiid (back), Jimmy Butler (wrist) and Wilson Chandler (hamstring).

"They didn't have their fighting edge, and that is not surprising when you consider their pre-test schedule."

West Indies, underdogs in the three-match series, bowled out England for 246 in the second innings after dismissing them for 77 in the first to seal the match.

"I know what it's like at the start of a tour. Physically, you might feel a bit tired by the end of the first week after the fitness training and nets, but mentally you're relaxed," Cook added.

"It's imperative that you then undergo proper competition... England did not get that. However hard they tried in the two warm-up games, those fixtures added up to less of an experience than four-day first-class cricket would have offered.

"At the bare minimum, they should have had a two-day game in which 15 players were used... followed by a four-day match featuring the probable test XI."

Cook, who retired in September as England's most prolific batsman, said the tourists would be hurting ahead of the second test which begins in Antigua on Thursday. "If they weren't match hardened before, they will be now. This side has a history of bouncing back," Cook added. — Reuters



**BOSTON:** Kyrie Irving #11 of the Boston Celtics goes to the basket against the Golden State Warriors on Saturday at the TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

**TRAIL BLAZERS 120, HAWKS 111**

CJ McCollum notched his first career triple-double with 28 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists as host Portland defeated Atlanta. All five starters scored in double figures for the Trail Blazers, who won for the fifth time in six games. Seth Curry scored a season-high 22 points, while Al-Farouq Aminu had 17. Moe Harkless 16 and Jusuf Nurkic 15. Trae Young scored 30 points on 11-for-15 shooting to go with eight assists for the Hawks, who have split the first two games of their seven-game road trip. John Collins added 21 points for Atlanta. Portland guard Damian Lillard sat out the game with a sore left knee.

**SPURS 126, PELICANS 114**

LaMarcus Aldridge poured in 28 points in just three quarters of play, and Rudy Gay added 22 points, including 16 in the third quarter, as visiting San Antonio rolled past short-handed New Orleans. Aldridge, who also had 12 rebounds, was questionable to play right up until tipoff because of a sore left wrist. He scored 10 of the Spurs' first 20 points on the way to his 15th double-double of the season. San Antonio led by just three points at the half but scored 13 of the first 17 points of the third quarter to build its lead to 73-61. The Spurs eventually pushed their advantage to as many as 18 points in the quarter before settling for a 96-85 lead heading for the final period. — Reuters

## Selection changes have developed depth: Paine

**SYDNEY:** Australia's three-day demolition of Sri Lanka and the promising performances of some of their less experienced players has helped the side build depth ahead of the Ashes series later this year, captain Tim Paine has said.

Australia, who beat Sri Lanka by an innings and 40 runs in Brisbane on Saturday in the opener of a two-match series, have struggled over the last nine months following the suspensions of Steve Smith and David Warner for their role in a ball-tampering scandal.

Since the year-long bans were imposed last March, selectors have handed test debuts to seven players, including five batsmen, and recalled others like openers Joe Burns and Matt Renshaw, giving them the chance to press their claims for the Ashes series that starts on Aug. 1.

Fast bowler Jhye Richardson also made his debut in Brisbane and impressed with his pace, while uncapped all-rounder Marcus Stoinis has been called into the squad for the second test in Canberra starting on Feb. 1.

"There's no doubt you have to have options to adapt to different conditions but what we are seeing over the last 12 months is that we have developed depth in all our areas before we go to England," Paine told reporters after the Brisbane test.

"When Smith and Warner are back on the scene and a Cameron Bancroft, all of a sudden you've got a number of batters. "We are building a real depth of talent in all of our areas. "I think we are building quite nicely to having an all-rounded squad of 15 or 16 players in the next 12 months which is a great place to be."

While Pat Cummins delivered an impressive match haul of 10-62 in Brisbane, the absence of Josh Hazlewood from the series due to back issues and the wayward bowling of Mitchell Starc will give Paine pause for thought.

Starc has come in for some criticism over his form and he was spraying deliveries all over the pitch in Brisbane, failing to take a wicket in the second innings. Since Australia regained the Ashes on home soil early last year, he has taken just 31 wickets in 19 innings at an average of 36.67, well above his lifetime average of 29.11.

However, Paine said Starc was just one spell away from recapturing his best. "Sometimes he can be a bit erratic, but when he's on he is literally the best in the world," Paine added.

"Starcy has been really good for a long period of time, but anyone at any level of cricket goes through times when it does not go your way ... he is one wicket and one spell away from being devastating." — Reuters



## Sports

# Napoli draw blank in Milan amid heightened security

## Quagliarella equal Gabriel Batistuta's record of scoring in 11 consecutive Serie A games

**MILAN:** Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli settled for a point in a goalless draw amid high security at AC Milan on Saturday as evergreen Sampdoria forward Fabio Quagliarella equalled a Serie A record by scoring in 11 consecutive games.

Napoli defender Kalidou Koulibaly returned from the two-match ban he received a month ago after being targeted by racist chanting by Inter Milan fans at the same San Siro stadium.

Anti-riot police took up positions around the San Siro as part of stringent security measures Saturday, but the match took place without incident apart from some anti-Neapolitan songs beforehand.

Napoli's Lorenzo Insigne also returned from suspension and formed a four-man attacking line-up along with Dries Mertens, Arkadiusz Milik and Jose Callejon. "It was a totally different atmosphere and this is what we want to see in the stands. I applaud all the fans," said Ancelotti.

Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said it had been the right decision not to limit ticket sales or access to the stadium. "Happy that #MilanNapoli was played nice and quiet, outside and inside the stadium," tweeted Salvini, a passionate AC Milan fan.

On the pitch most of the action occurred in the final half an hour. Napoli finished with ten men after Fabian Ruiz received a second yellow card in injury time for a disputed handball, with Ancelotti banished from the sidelines for swearing.

Both goalkeepers pulled off saves with Gianluigi Donnarumma denying Napoli's Callejon after six minutes, and David Ospina saving a point-blank Mateo Musacchio volley. The two sides meet again in Milan on Tuesday in a Coppa Italia game. Second-placed Napoli stay eight points behind champions Juventus who travel to Lazio on Sunday, while Milan, in fourth, missed a chance to close the gap on city rivals Inter, and could

be overtaken by Roma who play Atalanta.

"Napoli are an opponent who always keep you on your toes and had all their forwards out there today," said Milan coach Gennaro Gattuso. "We began to get stretched out in the second half and were struggling with fatigue, but I am happy with a good point."

### Quagliarella keeps scoring

Earlier, Sampdoria forward Quagliarella bagged a brace to equal Gabriel Batistuta's record of scoring in 11 consecutive Serie A games, in a 4-0 win over Udinese. Quagliarella, who turns 36 next week, matched the mark after converting a penalty after 31 minutes, and added a second, again from the spot, on 56 minutes. The evergreen forward also had a role in the other two goals-in the build-up to Karol Linetty's third on 68 minutes, and the decisive cross for Manolo Gabbiadini to tap in ten minutes later. "I'm speechless, just naming Batistuta gives me goosebumps," said Quagliarella.

"I kept thinking with every game that the run would surely be interrupted, but it kept going." Batistuta scored at least one goal per game in the opening 11 games of the season in 1994-1995 for Fiorentina. The Argentine went on to finish the campaign as the top scorer with 26 goals. Quagliarella has had one of the best seasons of his career with Sampdoria. He has scored 14 goals in his 11-match run for a total of 16 this season, to go top of the Serie A scorers ahead of Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo (14).

The 25-times capped Italian international scored a career best 19 goals last season. Sampdoria moved up to sixth, the final Europa League berth, and just two points off the Champions League places. Sassuolo shrugged off the shock departure of Kevin-Prince Boateng to Barcelona by ending their four-month home win drought with a 3-0 success over Cagliari, keeping their Europa League push alive. — AFP



MILAN: Napoli's Spanish defender Raul Albiol (L) attempts to tackle AC Milan's Polish forward Krzysztof Piatek (R) during the Italian Serie A football match AC Milan vs Napoli on Saturday at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

## Advantage Iran at Asian Cup as 'big sharks' lack bite

**ABU DHABI:** Iran coach Carlos Queiroz warned of toothy predators after reaching the Asian Cup semi-finals, but the shock exits of South Korea and Australia suddenly make "Team Meli" clear title favourites.

First though they have the little matter of overcoming four-time winners Japan today—a tasty "amuse-bouche" before hosts United Arab Emirates square up to Qatar 24 hours later in a clash bristling with political tension.

Under heavy pressure to win Asian football's most coveted prize for the first time since 1976, Iran have swept imperiously through the tournament as some of their most feared rivals have faltered. "We know the big sharks will come for us," said Queiroz after Iran thrashed China 3-0 in the quarter-finals, pointing to the Koreans, Japan and Australia—two of whom ultimately lacked the bite to match the hype.

"What we did against China will not be enough." After Son Heung-min's South Korea were stunned 1-0 by 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar and UAE upset defending champions Australia by the same score, Iran's

players will be daring to dream.

But a new-look Japan side will be no pushovers as they look to extend their 10-game unbeaten run under Hajime Moriyasu. "We need to be at it from the start," said Japan captain Maya Yoshida after the Blue Samurai beat Vietnam 1-0 thanks to a VAR-assisted penalty—their fifth straight victory by a single-goal margin.

"If we can't get on the front foot early on, we're not going to win." Iran have hit 12 goals in their five games—four of them scored by the "Iranian Messi" Sardar Azmoun—and conceded none. But the Japanese, who were only denied a World Cup quarter-final spot by an astonishing Belgian comeback from two goals down, have defied the odds at previous Asian Cups.

### HOSTILE CROWDS

Qatar's run to their first semi-final is all the more remarkable given the hostility shown towards them from local crowds over the Gulf blockade of the tiny, energy-rich state. After ambushing South Korea, Felix Sanchez's side-like Iran yet to be breached defensively—will back themselves to beat the Emirates and silence the haters in Abu Dhabi.

Sudan-born striker Almoez Ali, who needs one more goal to equal Ali Daei's 1996 record of eight in a single Asian Cup, warned that Qatar were hungry to get to the final on February 1.

"We're proud of what we have achieved," he said. "But we're not planning to stop at the semi-finals—we want to go further." UAE, runners-up the last time they



Iran's coach Carlos Queiroz

hosted the Asian Cup in 1996, have enjoyed considerable fortune along the way.

Disputed late penalties earned the Emiratis a point against Bahrain in the tournament curtain-raiser and a 3-2 extra-time win over Kyrgyzstan in the last 16. But UAE coach Alberto Zaccheroni backed the 2015 semi-finalists to cope with Qatar's offensive threat.

"Beating one of Asia's top teams in Australia will give our players great confidence," said the Italian, who steered Japan to a record fourth title in 2011. "My players are an honest bunch who will be hugely motivated to go further." — AFP



LONDON: AFC Wimbledon's Ghanaian striker Kwesi Appiah (R) scores the opening goal as West Ham United's Italian defender Angelo Ogbonna (C) tries to block during the English FA Cup fourth round football match between AFC Wimbledon and West Ham United at Kingsmeadow stadium in London on Saturday. — AFP

set-pieces. Richardson's long range effort squirmed through Jordan Archer's grasp to give the visitors a lead that lasted just four minutes when Lee Gregory's header levelled in first-half stoppage time. Substitute Cenk Tosun restored Everton's advantage before the moment of controversy when the ball ricocheted off Cooper's arm and into an unguarded net. But with VAR not in use, referee Michael Oliver had to uphold his original decision to give the goal despite Everton's furious protests as the incident was replayed on the big screen. Worse followed for the Toffees, when Murray Wallace turned home another free-kick into the box in the 94th minute.

"If the competition has VAR for some stadiums then it has to have it in all," said Silva. "Because it doesn't make sense. It was a clear handball." City boss Pep Guardiola labelled talk of a quadruple as "fantasy" earlier in the week but, after Saturday's performance, Burnley manager Sean Dyche said: "Who is going to stop them winning everything if they are in that mood?"

Goals from Gabriel Jesus, Bernardo Silva and Kevin De Bruyne left City on top before Kevin Long's own-goal and Sergio Aguero's penalty completed the rout. Wolves knocked out Premier League leaders Liverpool in the last round, but needed a late fightback from 2-0 down to force a

replay at Shrewsbury. Greg Docherty fired Shrewsbury into the lead just two minutes into the second-half before Luke Waterfall's towering header made it 2-0. Raul Jimenez came off the bench to give the Wolves a lifeline and Matt Doherty equalised three minutes into stoppage time.—AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)		
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Deportivo Alaves v Rayo Vallecano		23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Empoli v Genoa CFC		22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
ASIAN NATIONS CUP 2019		
Iran v Japan		17:00
beIN SPORTS		

## Monaco plight persists in wake of Henry exit

**PARIS:** Monaco suffered another damaging defeat as they lost 2-0 at Dijon in Ligue 1 on Saturday, just 24 hours after reappointing former boss Leonardo Jardim to take over from the sacked Thierry Henry.

Former France and Arsenal star Henry was suspended and later axed by Monaco after just two wins in the league since his arrival in October. Jardim, who led Monaco to the French title in 2017, is returning to the club only three months after he was dismissed following a dreadful start to the season.

His first game back in charge will be tomorrow's League Cup semi-final against Guingamp, as Henry's former assistant Franck Passi oversaw the trip to fellow strugglers Dijon. The abject nature of this latest defeat further emphasised Monaco's perilous position in the table where they remain second from bottom, a point above last-placed Guingamp.

"We're giving everything but it's not enough," said Monaco captain Radamel Falcao. "Each player has to continue to give more, all of us together. We're all in the same boat. "We didn't manage to change things with Thierry Henry and now we must carry on with a better spirit and all fight together."

Dijon's Kwon Chang-hoon notched his first league goal since May, having recently returned from an Achilles injury, with a calm finish on 24 minutes after a static Naldo played the South Korean aside.

Monaco were reduced to 10 men on the hour when Brazilian Naldo saw red for a clumsy challenge on Julio Tavares, and another defensive lapse allowed Naim Sliti to wrap up what was just Dijon's second league win since August.

It was Naldo's second red card in a week after he was also dismissed in the 5-1 loss to Strasbourg last Saturday. "We had chances just like in the past four of five matches but we always make a mistake that kills us," said Passi, who refused to be drawn on his own future.

"We let the other team go ahead and we're chasing after the result and that obviously makes it harder," he added. "These players have the quality. They have what it takes to stay up but they just need for things to click and for it to happen quickly."

Youssef Atal and Allan Saint-Maximin scored for Patrick Vieira's Nice in a 2-0 home win over Nimes, while Kenny Lala fired home a sweet half-volley with practically the final kick to give Strasbourg a 1-0 victory over Bordeaux.

Reims climbed into the top half as a 1-0 win at Guingamp stretched their unbeaten run to six matches. On Sunday, leaders Paris Saint-Germain will host Rennes without the injured Neymar. The world's most expensive player limped out of Wednesday's French Cup win over Strasbourg after hurting his foot, an injury similar to the one that ruled him out for more than two months last season.

PSG coach Thomas Tuchel has said it is "still too early" to assess the seriousness of Neymar's injury, leaving the French giants sweating over his fitness ahead of their Champions League clash with Manchester United next month. — AFP



**25** Thurman returns to beat Lopez, retain WBA welterweight title



**26** Pakistan square one-day series with crushing eight-wicket win over S Africa



**27** Wimbledon shock West Ham, Millwall stun Everton in FA Cup



## Djokovic wins seventh Australian Open

Djokovic completes hat-trick of Slams with wins at Wimbledon and US Open



MELBOURNE: Serbia's Novak Djokovic (R) celebrates with the championship trophy during the presentation ceremony after his victory against Spain's Rafael Nadal (L) in the men's singles final on day 14 of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

**MELBOURNE:** An imperious Novak Djokovic won a record magnificent seventh Australian Open title by routing Rafael Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 Sunday with a display of flawless tennis. The Serbian world number one dominated the Spanish second seed to win his 15th Grand Slam title in just 2hr 4min on Rod Laver Arena.

It put Djokovic, 31, out on his own ahead of Roger Federer and Roy Emerson, who both won six Australian Open men's singles titles. Djokovic dropped to his knees and kissed the ground after vanquishing his greatest rival.

"I'm just trying to contemplate on the journey in the last 12 months," said an emotional Djokovic, pausing for breath to compose himself and not become tearful. "I had the surgery exactly 12 months ago," he added, referring to an elbow operation that saw him slump out of the world's top 20 before bouncing back to win Wimbledon and the US Open.

"To be standing now here in front of you today and managing to win this title and three out of four Slams,

this is amazing. I am speechless." The pair's only previous final in Australia, in 2012, developed into a record-breaking 5hr 53min slugfest—the longest in Grand Slam history.

A repeat of that epic never materialised with Nadal uncharacteristically nervous at the start and Djokovic taking an immediate advantage that he would never relinquish.

### 'FIGHTING SPIRIT'

"Even if tonight was not my best day of course I had someone that played a lot better than me tonight," said Nadal. "I have been going through tough moments in the last year. I was not able to play until the first round here. Even if tonight was not my night it's so important for me to be where I am coming back from injury."

Djokovic noted that the duo had both endured injury-ravaged 2018 campaigns. "Obviously a tough match tonight, but ... you came back from an injury that took you out from the tour since September last year,"

Djokovic said of Nadal.

"You're showing to me and to all your other colleagues and many young tennis players around the world what is definition of the fighting spirit and resilience." The Spaniard had not had his service broken since the third set of his first round match but that streak ended in a flash as the Serb came sprinting out of the blocks.

### TOTAL CONTROL

Djokovic was in total control on his own delivery and won his first four service games without conceding a single point, even inducing Nadal to miss a forehand completely on the way to grabbing the set in 36 minutes.

The second set followed a similar pattern, with Djokovic racing through games on his own serve, while Nadal struggled to hold. The pressure told in the fifth game and Djokovic broke again when Nadal hit a lob volley long after an exchange at the net.

The on-song Serb was so fired up he broke Nadal again to go to 5-2 before serving out for a two-set lead with three aces in a row with just 1hr 16min on the clock.

The statistics were as telling as the scoreline: Djokovic had served eight aces to Nadal's one and made just four unforced errors while the Spaniard had coughed up 20. When Djokovic broke again in the third game of the third set it was just a matter of how quickly he would finish off Nadal.

The end was swift, as Djokovic withstood one break point at 3-2 before administering the last rites in a flurry of winners off both wings. Victory extended his win-loss record against Nadal to 28-25 and squared the Grand Slam final count between the pair at 4-4.

Djokovic has now completed a hat-trick of Slams following his wins at Wimbledon and the US Open. He will go to Paris in May for the French Open seeking to become the only man in the Open Era to win all four majors twice. — AFP

## Morata edges closer to Atletico Madrid move

**MADRID:** Chelsea striker Alvaro Morata appears close to securing a move to Atletico Madrid after the striker was pictured passing a medical with the Spanish club yesterday. Morata was shown leaving Atletico's medical clinic on Sunday morning, with the 26-year-old giving a thumbs up and telling reporters, "everything has gone well". Atletico have not made any official statement but

Morata spoke to reporters at Madrid's Barajas Airport, after landing in the early hours of the morning. "I'm very happy. I have been waiting for days," he said. "I am looking forward to everything being closed so I can start training with my teammates."

Morata spent two years in Atletico's youth ranks as a teenager but later joined their city rivals Real Madrid in 2008, where he enjoyed two separate spells either side of a move to Juventus.

Some of Atleti's fans have not forgotten Morata's links to Real, with a minority even chanting against his arrival during the team's La Liga victory over Getafe on Saturday. "Their opinion is respectable and people can say what they want," coach Diego Simeone said after the match. "I look for players that serve the club and the team." After an impressive start at Chelsea, Morata lost

form and confidence, with coach Maurizio Sarri admitting last week the Spaniard had requested to leave at the start of this month.

Morata will bolster Simeone's options up front, which already include the in-form Antoine Griezmann and Diego Costa, who is expected back from injury next month. Croatia's Nikola Kalinic, who joined Atletico in August, could be allowed to leave.

Meanwhile, speculation over the future of Chelsea's Cameron Hudson-Odoi intensified following press reports yesterday saying the teenage winger has handed in a transfer request. The 18-year-old has previously been linked with a move to German giants Bayern Munich, who have made clear how highly they regard the England youth international.

But with the January transfer window closing on

Thursday, Chelsea refused to comment on the latest suggestions that Hudson-Odoi could be on his way out of Stamford Bridge when contacted by Britain's Press Association. The London club have stated repeatedly they want Hudson-Odoi, who helped England win the Under-17 World Cup two years ago, to remain a member of their squad.

With 18 months remaining on his contract Chelsea could now be faced with deciding whether to take advantage of a big money offer for Hudson-Odoi in the next few days or instead letting him stay at Stamford Bridge in the hope he will sign a new deal at the end of the season. Hudson-Odoi made his senior Chelsea debut in an FA Cup win over Newcastle in January last year and has now made a total of 14 senior appearances for the Blues, scoring one goal. — AFP