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# Tabtabaei implores Amir to pardon Assembly 'stormers'

Lawmaker warns government over raising charges

## Amir meets Austrian Chancellor



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets visiting Chancellor of Austria Sebastian Kurz at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 3)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Islamist former MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei yesterday pleaded to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to issue a pardon for 15 opposition activists, including several ex-MPs, who were handed jail terms for taking part in the storming of the Assembly building in Nov 2011. This is the first time that a leading opposition figure has called on the Amir to pardon the activists, a majority of whom have been living abroad since before the final verdict was issued in July.

Tabtabaei said on his Twitter account that "everyone knows" that the activists, who include eight former lawmakers, were not guilty and were handed tough jail terms not for entering the Assembly building during a protest, but for allegedly assaulting two police officers. He added that even after the two police officers withdrew their accusations, the cassation court still issued a three-year jail term.

"Therefore, we plead to His Highness the Amir, the father of all and the symbol of the nation, to kindly issue a special pardon for all those jailed in the case of entering the National Assembly building to erase an unfair sentence against them," Tabtabaei said. The former lawmaker said such moves are not strange for the Amir, whose great

deeds have reached many other countries. Tabtabaei and Jamaan Al-Harbash were stripped of their parliamentary seats as a result of the jail term. That led to holding a by-election last week to replace them.

Meanwhile, opposition Islamist MP Mohammad Al-Dallal yesterday warned the government against hiking charges of any public service, because this involves a violation of the country's law. He said the Assembly issued in Dec 1994 a law barring the government from increasing charges on public services without a law from the Assembly. He said that in recent weeks, a number of government departments like the Municipality increased charges for some of their services, which is a clear violation of the 1994 law. Dallal said that if the government wants to increase any charges, it should do it through a law passed by the National Assembly.

In the meantime, MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said that a decision on allegations of inflated accounts of some MPs and businessmen is expected to be issued on Thursday. The lawmaker had told the government that some local banks have complained to the Central Bank and the finance ministry about an abnormal increase in the accounts of some MPs and merchants. Adasani then called on the government to take action against those involved and warned that if no action is taken, he will grill the finance minister.



Waleed Al-Tabtabaei

### News in brief

#### Trump to recognize Golan as Israeli

JERUSALEM: US President Donald Trump will sign an order recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights when he meets Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington today, Israel's foreign minister said. "President Trump will sign tomorrow in the presence of PM Netanyahu an order recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights," Foreign Minister Israel Katz wrote on Twitter yesterday. Trump said on Thursday that the US should acknowledge Israeli sovereignty over the strategic plateau it seized from Syria. — AFP

#### Kenya teacher world's best, wins \$1m

DUBAI: A maths and physics teacher from a secondary school in a remote village in Kenya's Rift Valley has won the \$1 million Global Teacher Prize for 2019, the Dubai-based Varkey Foundation said. Peter Tabichi, who organizes say gives away 80 percent of his monthly income to the poor, received the prize at a ceremony Saturday in Dubai hosted by Hollywood star Hugh Jackman. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta congratulated Tabichi in a video message, saying "your story is the story of Africa, a young continent bursting with talent". — AFP

#### \$7.5m donated for NZ families

CHRISTCHURCH: More than NZ\$10.8 million (\$7.4 million) in public donations has been received so far to help families of the 50 people killed in New Zealand's mosque shootings, according to a pair of fundraising websites. A support fund on New Zealand site GiveALittle.co.nz had received NZ\$8,271,847 from more than 91,000 donors as of yesterday, while LaunchGood.com, a global crowdfunding platform focused on Muslims, had netted NZ\$2,546,126 from over 40,000 donors. New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said last week that the country would cover the costs of burying the 50 victims as well as "repatriation costs for any family members who would like to move their loved ones away from New Zealand". — AFP

#### Philippine bikers protest regulation

MANILA: More than 10,000 motorcycle riders staged a motorcade yesterday in the main highways of the Philippine capital Manila to protest at new regulations forcing them to display bigger license plates, saying the measure would not solve the problem. President Rodrigo Duterte signed the measure into law this month, requiring all licensed motorbikes to display bigger front and rear plates to make them more visible to the authorities and any witnesses to crimes. At present, registration plates are displayed only on the back. Under the law, the font style of plates should be readable from a distance of 15 m. For quick and easy identification, the plates need to be color coded for each of the country's 17 regions. — Reuters

## With eye on Iran, US clinches port deal with Oman

WASHINGTON: The United States clinched a strategic port deal with Oman yesterday which US officials say will allow the US military better access the Gulf region and reduce the need to send ships through the Strait of Hormuz, a maritime choke point off Iran. The US embassy in Oman said in a statement that the agreement governed US access to facilities and ports in Duqm as well as in Salalah and "reaffirms the commitment of both countries to promoting mutual security goals."

The accord is viewed through an economic prism by Oman, which wants to develop Duqm while preserving its Switzerland-like neutral role in Middle Eastern politics and diplomacy. But it comes as the United States grows increasingly concerned about Iran's expanding missile programs, which have improved in recent years

despite sanctions and diplomatic pressure by the United States.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the deal was significant by improving access to ports that connect to a network of roads to the broader region, giving the US military great resiliency in a crisis. "We used to operate on the assumption that we could just steam into the Gulf," one US official said, adding, however, that "the quality and quantity of Iranian weapons raises concerns".

Tehran has in the past threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil shipping route at the mouth of the Gulf, in retaliation for any hostile US action, including attempts to halt Iranian oil exports through sanctions. Still, the US official noted that the agreement would expand US military options in the region for any kind of crisis. Duqm is ideal port for large ships. It is even big enough to turn around an aircraft carrier, a second official said. "The port itself is very attractive and the geostrategic location is very attractive, again being outside the Strait of Hormuz," the official said, adding that negotiations began under the Obama administration.

Continued on Page 24

## Norway liner reaches port after airlifts

OSLO: A cruise liner that ran into trouble in stormy seas off Norway reached port under its own steam yesterday after hundreds of passengers were winched to safety by helicopter in a spectacular rescue operation. Escorted by tugboats, the Viking Sky arrived in the port of Molde at around 4:15 pm (1515 GMT), television images showed. Nearly a third of its 1,373 passengers and crew had already been airlifted off the ship.

The cruise liner lost power and start-

ed drifting on Saturday afternoon two kilometres off a stretch of Norwegian coastline notorious for shipwrecks. The captain sent out a Mayday prompting authorities to launch the airlift in difficult conditions rather than run the risk of leaving people on board. Some 460 of the 1,373 people on the ship had been taken off by five helicopters before the airlift was halted. Police said 17 people had been taken to hospital. One person more than 90 years old and two 70-year-olds suffered serious fractures.

With three of four engines restarted yesterday, two tugs towed the vessel away from dangerous reefs before it set sail for Molde, 500 km northwest of Oslo, under its own power.

Continued on Page 24

## Egypt-Israel pact lives on in troubled region

CAIRO: The US-mediated 1979 treaty between Egypt and Israel may only have resulted in a "cold peace" but their ties have survived four decades in a turbulent region, analysts say. The watershed treaty brought together late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and Israeli premier Menachem Begin for a March 26, 1979 signing ceremony in Washington as a beaming Jimmy Carter, then-US president, looked on. The peace deal,

the first ever between Israel and an Arab state, and which cost Sadat his life at the hands of an Islamist extremist, has kept Cairo out of any armed conflict with its neighbour.

The treaty has emerged unscathed from upheavals in Egypt, notably the 2011 revolution that toppled longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak, proving its "stability", said Amr Al-Shobaki, political analyst with the Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. The 40th anniversary comes as armed conflicts roil several countries across the Arab world, from Libya in the far west to Yemen in the south. It also comes at a time of major US policy changes. In 2017, President Donald Trump's administration

Continued on Page 24

## 27K Filipinos leave Kuwait in 9 months

KUWAIT: The number of Filipinas in Kuwait dropped in 2018, according to statistics by the central statistics department. The number of Filipinas dropped from 161,500 at the end of 2017 to 138,500 by the end of the third quarter of last year, ie 23,000 in nine months. Sources analyzing the situation said the reason may be related to the crisis over domestic helpers that flared up last year.

The total number of Filipinos of both genders dropped during the same period from 243,400 to 216,200, ie 27,000 (12 percent), who left the country in nine months. The percentage of females of the total Filipinos who left the country is 86 percent. Filipinos form the fourth-largest nationality among expat workers after Indians (889,000), Egyptians (484,000) and Bangladeshis (271,000).

Statistics showed the total number of domestic helpers at the end of the third quarter of 2018 was 689,000, an increase of nearly 9,000 compared to the end of 2017, distributed equally between males and females. — Al-Qabas



The cruise ship Viking Sky is pictured on Saturday near the west coast of Norway at Hustadvika near Romsdal. — AFP



WASHINGTON: In this file photo taken on Sept 17, 1978, Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat (left), Israeli Premier Menachem Begin (right) and US President Jimmy Carter sign a peace agreement in the East Room of the White House. — AFP



## Local

# Saudi King welcomes top Kuwaiti lawmaker, receives Amir's greetings

## Crown Prince thanks King Salman for hospitality at Camel Festival

**RIYADH:** Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud met yesterday with the visiting Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and his accompanying delegation. At the onset of the meeting, the speaker conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Saudi King, who, in turn, asked Ghanem to deliver good wishes to His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people. The speaker said the Kuwaiti government, parliament and people appreciated the crucial and significant role played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in safeguarding the region's security and stability and maintaining Gulf, Arab and Islamic unity. He underlined the distinguished and peculiar historical relations between Kuwait and the kingdom as an example for ties based on absolute confidence, integration, coordination and harmony. Several senior Saudi officials and the Kuwaiti speaker's accompanying delegation attended the meeting. Ghanem arrived in Riyadh earlier yesterday on an official visit at the invitation of Speaker of the Saudi Shura Council Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sheikh.

In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Saturday a cable of thanks to King Salman for the hos-

pitality and warm reception during the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival held in Riyadh. In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince expressed his great pleasure to meet King Salman and the representatives of GCC states during this great event. His Highness the Crown Prince said the meeting was dominated by the spirit of fraternity and affection embodied in the bonds of deep-rooted historical relations between "our noble families, and our brotherly states and peoples."

His Highness the Crown Prince lauded the high level and efficiency in organizing and managing this big event, which embodies a key part of Arabs' traditions inherited by the upcoming negotiations. He voiced his great pride for brotherly strong and close ties and culture that affirm the Arabs' original identity. His Highness the Crown Prince prayed to Allah Almighty to grant King Salman good health and wellbeing, wishing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its brotherly people further security, progress and prosperity under the King's wise leadership. His Highness the Crown Prince also sent a similar cable to Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. — KUNA

“Kuwait hails Saudi role in safeguarding region's security”



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud meets with Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf meets with French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy. — KUNA photos



Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf meets with Croatian Ambassador to Kuwait Amir Muharemi.



Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf meets with UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Sager Al-Raisi.

## Finance minister meets French, Croatian, UAE envoys

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf met separately yesterday with French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy, Croatian Ambassador to Kuwait

Amir Muharemi and UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Sager Al-Raisi. According to a press statement by the Ministry of Finance, Hajraf discussed with the French ambassador the

latest developments of the 14th session of Kuwaiti-French joint ministerial committee and his country's participation in the Paris Club of creditor countries meeting due in

Paris in May. On the other hand, Hajraf discussed with the new Croatian ambassador ways to enhance bilateral relations in trade and investment fields, it added. The finance

minister received the UAE Ambassador on the occasion of starting his duties in the country, indicating that both countries discussed ways of enhancing bilateral cooperation. —KUNA

## Many students benefit from COFE offer: KFH

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH), the world leading Islamic financial institution, and COFE App, Kuwait's first and favorite online COFE marketplace, celebrated Kuwait Youth Day on March 13, 2019 with exclusive promotions. This comes as part of KFH's commitments toward the Kuwaiti youth, Hesabi account holders and university students, and under its continuous special initiatives.

Based on the cooperation between KFH and COFE App, Hesabi Account users, who receive their student allowance in their KFH accounts, received SMS with unique codes enabling them to order their favorite coffee for free via COFE App. The highly-appreciated offer attracted a multitude of students in Kuwait's universities. The offer was much appreciated by students across Kuwait, leading to COFE App ranking at No.1 in Kuwait App Store above all the other applications in the food and drink category.

Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at KFH, Youssef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh, said that KFH constantly keeps pace with its customers' requirements, providing the offers, products and services that suit them. As part of its strategy to support

the community, especially the young, KFH, in cooperation with COFE App, celebrated Kuwait Youth Day with special promotions, expressing its interest in this key pillar of the future of Kuwait.

Ruwaieh added that the partnership with COFE App reflects KFH's interest in supporting Kuwaiti youth projects, especially the innovative ones that add value to the economy, enhance the business environment and develop youth skills. KFH is proud to be a strategic partner to the leading youth enterprises such as the first ranking app in Kuwait, COFE App which has shown tangible success in a short period of time, he added.

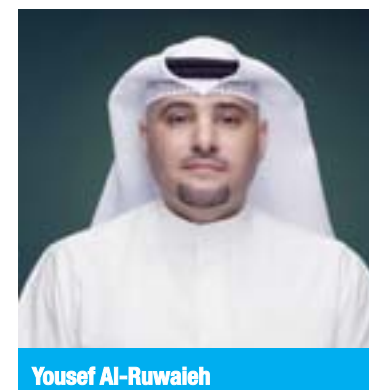
Ruwaieh praised KFH's in-demand offerings, in particular the initiatives that reflect the digital transformation and technology, which made services accessible to all and helped create a rapid shift in the banking sector's services and products.

Meanwhile, Ali Al-Ebrahim, Founder and CEO, COFE App said, "Kuwait's market is evolving rapidly and much of its changes are driven by new age generations, who are coming up with fresh ideas. We want to play our part in encouraging today's youth to become

the leaders of tomorrow and in helping Kuwait move forward, be it through a free beverage that puts a smile on their face, or through our Get COFE to classroom service that makes getting their daily coffee much easier."

COFE App enables customers to order and pay for their coffee online. With the app users can get COFE at the coffee shop counter, office, car, classroom, hospital, and airport departures or have it delivered to their preferred address. The entire selection and purchasing process takes place in the app, which offers comprehensive menus and drink customization options.

With the year-long partnership, KFH and COFE App aim at enhancing the added value to the bank's customers and App users through the exclusive promotions and offers. Among these initiatives, the KFH Golden COFE Contest that enables users ordering their coffee using COFE App, to win an entry into the weekly \$1000 cash prize draw. The more a coffee-lover uses the app, the greater their chances of winning. Over the year, KFH will be awarding over \$50,000 through this contest. In addition, KFH has supported many initiatives to promote youth activities, entrepreneurship and innovation, participating in events that support technology and digital solutions, including the KFH People's Choice Start-Up Award, the first award of its kind in Kuwait, which went to (Serrap). Also, KFH signed a partnership agreement with the special football app (Li3ib), launched by a group of young Kuwaiti initiators. KFH was a Platinum Sponsor in the third edition of ArabNet Kuwait and signed a strategic partnership with CODED Juniors Summer Camp that aims at teaching children the basics of coding and technology using the latest tools. KFH continuously invests in technology, promote the digital transformation and startup initiatives and improve the entrepreneurial environment.



Youssef Al-Ruwaieh



## Acting Speaker meets German lawmaker

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's acting parliament speaker Essa Al-Kandari met yesterday with the visiting Vice President of the German Bundestag Thomas Oppermann and his accompanying delegation. The meeting discussed ways to enhance and develop cooperation between the two sides in all fields, especially in parliamentary affairs, Al-Dustur Network said in a press release. They also addressed issues of common interest and the latest regional and international developments, it added.

The meeting was attended by Chairman of the parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee MP Dr Abdulkarim Al-Kandari and German Ambassador to Kuwait Karl Bergner. After the meeting, Kandari held a luncheon in honor of the visiting guest at Kuwait's national assembly building where a number of Kuwaiti parliament members attended.

Earlier yesterday, a Kuwaiti diplomat held a working breakfast in honor of Oppermann, where they discussed matters of mutual concern. The Assistant Foreign Minister for the Affairs of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah's talks with the German lawmaker, who is in the midst of a visit to the country, also revolved around bilateral ties, in addition to current happenings around the world. The Kuwaiti envoy appreciated Berlin's contributions towards peace and security in the region in an encounter attended by the German ambassador to Kuwait, along with senior foreign ministry officials. The visiting vice-president and his official delegation arrived in Kuwait on Friday for a three-day official visit. — KUNA

## Nuclear medicine meeting starts

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is keen on providing the best equipment and advanced programs in the field of nuclear medicine to ensure best quality services, said Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha yesterday. His remarks came in a speech during the opening of Kuwait Annual Meeting of Nuclear Medicine: held under the auspices of Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah. He stressed the importance of this specialty in treating many diseases. — KUNA



## Local

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

## Amir to attend PAAET outstanding graduates' ceremony today



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



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

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday after representing His Highness the Amir at King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir met Chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional Court, Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. His Highness the Amir also received Acting National Assembly Speaker Essa Al-Kandari and First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah separately.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Kandari, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince then met Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

In other news, His Highness the Amir is set to patronize and attend the honoring ceremony of outstanding graduates of colleges and institutes of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) for the academic year 2017/2018. The event takes place at 10:30 am today at PAAET's new building in Shuwaikh.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President of Mali Ibrahim Boubacar Keita yesterday, over the victims of the attack on Ogossogou village in central Mali. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent similar cables to President Keita.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to President of Sudan Omar Al-Bashir over the victims of an explosion in Omdurman city. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to President Bashir. In the meantime, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Chinese President Xi Jinping over casualties of an explosion that ripped through an industrial park in the city of Yancheng, north of Shanghai, resulting in scores of injuries as well. In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed heart-felt sentiments towards the victims and wished a speedy recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister have sent similar cables. — KUNA



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



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting National Assembly Speaker Essa Al-Kandari.**



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



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



**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the council's sixth meeting. — KUNA

## Defense Minister heads planning council meeting

**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, chaired yesterday the council's sixth meeting of the second session for 2019. The council discussed the articles of the draft law for Silk City project, which is a key pillar of New Kuwait vision 2035, the Council said in a statement. The project aims to draw private sector invest-

ment, provide an attractive environment for investors from local and international companies, and create jobs for Kuwaiti youth. Members of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel, the Secretary-General of the Council Dr Khaled Mahdi and the Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Council Affairs and Future Foresight Bader Al-Rifai also attended the meeting. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah holds official talks with the Chancellor of Austria Sebastian Kurz. — KUNA

## Prime Minister, Austrian Chancellor hold official talks

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held official talks with the visiting Chancellor of Austria Sebastian Kurz at Bayan Palace yesterday. Bilateral ties and ways of strengthening them on all levels were discussed during the talks, as well as recent regional and international issues of common interest. The meeting

was attended by First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and several senior state officials.

Chancellor Kurz held a separate meeting later yesterday with Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad at Bayan Palace. Bilateral ties and

issues of common interest were discussed during the meeting, which was attended by Ambassador to Austria and Kuwait's permanent representative to international organizations Sadeq Maarafi. His Highness the Prime Minister also held a luncheon banquet in honor of the visiting Austrian Chancellor and his accompanying delegation. —KUNA



## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A view of Kuwait City from Al-Hamra Tower. — Photo by Maysoon Al-Fares (KUNA)

# Unique performance of Shakespeare's works at the British Embassy in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** The British Embassy in Kuwait hosted a unique performance of extracts from some of William Shakespeare's best known works by the One World Actors Centre CIC. These works include 'As you like it,' 'Henry V,' 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'The Tempest,' 'Othello,' 'Anthony and Cleopatra,' and 'Much Ado About Nothing.'

"Shakespeare has inspired generation after generation of poets, writers, actors, directors and film makers," British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport said. "For over 400 years, his plays have endured, expressing our frailties and strengths, our wisdom and our folly. They have continued to capture us with the unparalleled beauty and vigor of their poetry. It is specially exciting to see Shakespeare back at the Embassy in 2019 as we mark the 120th anniversary of the Kuwait-UK Friendship Treaty of 1899."

"It is my pleasure to congratulate Kuwait and Great Britain on 120 years of friendship," famous British actress Dame Judy Dench said. "Over 400 years ago, William Shakespeare wrote the iconic 'All the World is a Stage,' which stated that all men and women are performers of their own lives in their own rights. It is therefore fitting that his famous plays be performed by a company of multicultural actors as envisioned by Kuwaiti Director Hamad Al-Jenaie for the UK Enterprise One World Actors Centre OIC."

It is worth mentioning that as part of the celebrations to mark 120th anniversary of the UK-Kuwait



Friendship Treaty the British 9 Bach band and the Kuwaiti Nawaf Gheraibah band held a successful concert in Abdulhussein Abdulridha Theater last month in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters. The famous British Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, which is one of the world's leading orchestras, will visit Kuwait on 11-13 April and will perform in the prestigious Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.



## Int'l forum honors Sheikha Suad Al-Sabah

**KUWAIT:** Suad Al-Sabah Publishing and Distribution House announced that Sheikha Dr Suad Al-Sabah was awarded in the Belgian capital Brussels, as part of International Forum of the Culture of Peace organized by Euro-Arab Organization for Cultural Exchange (OEAE) in the cities of Liege and Brussels between March 12-25. The forum aims to spread culture of tolerance and acceptance among people, and define the Arab and European civilizations, with the participation of African, Arab and European bodies, Suad Al-Sabah House said in a statement yesterday.

Dr Suad was chosen as one of the most influential figures in the cultural and creative work, where Sheikha Fadhila Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah attended the ceremony on behalf of Dr Suad Al-Sabah. Sheikha Fadhila said in her speech that Dr Suad is an Arab citizen from Kuwait who strongly believes in civilization, knowledge and culture. — KUNA



Sheikha Fadhila Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah receives the award on behalf of Sheikha Dr Suad Al-Sabah.

## Future generations festival concludes

**KUWAIT:** The 30th session of future generations festival came to a close on Saturday with displaying a play. The festival attended by a large number of children was organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). The play, performed at Abdulhussein Abdulridha Theater, contained varied educational values in a comic way and a simple dialogue to benefit children. The performance included beautiful songs for children and aimed to help children be responsible for themselves and maintain their homes and families. It also gives lessons to children on cleanliness and punctuality as well as respecting the youngest and the elderly. The play was acted by Somoud Al-Kandari, Iman Al-Huseini, Maitham Bader, Aziz Bahbahani, Jana Al-Failakawi, Rahaf Mohammad, Iman Faisal, Khaled Al-Ahmad, Abudllah Haitham and Layli Dehrab. The festival which was kicked off on March 14 included several activities and performances directed to children and their parents. These activities and performances aimed to create a humorous culture for children, and help them discover their talents and develop their skills. The event also contained several cultural events, lectures, programs and workshops for children. —KUNA





## Local

# Engineers protest suspended allowances; auditors say no proof sites were visited

## Thunderstorms, dust predicted for today

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** A number of Ministry of Public Works (MPW) engineers working at outdoor sites organized a sit-in yesterday in the ministry's parking spaces in protest against Minister Jenan Bushehri's sudden decision to suspend their site allowances. Protestors said the decision came suddenly without prior studies and was unfair for staff members working at outdoor sites. "Rumors about us not showing up at our work-sites are absolutely untrue and have to be proven," said one of the protestors. "The minister must reconsider the decision."

Meanwhile, MPW's official spokesperson Iman Al-Omar stressed the ministry's keenness towards engineers and explained that the ministry's auditors refused to authorize paying the allowance because there was no proof that those sites had been visited. "Payment of this allowance will continue as usual for engineers regularly working on sites unless the technical sector the engineer works for reports otherwise," Omar explained, adding that field visits of other engineers will have to be monthly reported using the official forms as per directive number 4/2019 dated Feb 5, 2019.

### Weather forecast

Meteorologist Adel Al-Saadoun stressed the period preceding the 'Wasam' season, known locally for its unstable weather, had already started in Kuwait. Saadoun accordingly predicted scattered thunder and rain in some areas, in addition to high wind speed leading to dusty weather and high waves today.

### Early retirement

The Public Institution For Social Security (PIFFS) will start implementing the early retirement law from April 1, Deputy Manager Khaled Al-Fadhalah said. He added that the total number of retirees is 136,000 and employees still in service are 360,000, of whom 6,600 match the early retirement conditions as per this month's statistics. Fadhalah noted that citizens covered by social security abroad are 716, including 580 working in other GCC states and 136 elsewhere. He added that some of the citizens working in Europe and US are not covered by Kuwaiti social security and prefer those followed in those countries. Fadhalah added that the total number of GCC nationals working in Kuwait and covered by social security is 6,061 in the public sector, 3,240 in the private sector and 2,890 in the military, including defense and interior ministries.

### Food inspections

In preparation for the upcoming holy month of Ramadan, Public Authority for Food and Nutrition inspections teams in Jahra started inspecting various food facilities to make sure all health conditions are fully observed. Jahra food and nutrition manager Nawaf Al-Enezi said Jahra is one of the largest governorates in Kuwait, and has three inspection departments. He added that all inspection teams are on full alert and ready for Ramadan, with strict control on food supplies at the fruit and vegetable market, co-ops, grocery stores, restaurants and various food facilities.

Enezi noted that the authority is understaffed due to early retirement of some staff members, which places

more burden on staff members still in service. "We hope inspectors' numbers will be increased," he remarked. Responding to a question about lack of incentives as the main reason why young people refrain from joining the authority, Enezi said Director Essa Al-Kanadari and his deputies are in constant contact with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to approve pay hikes for the authority's staff as soon as possible.

Commenting on the violations that inspectors detect, Enezi said all violations are dealt with according to the authority's regulations and in accordance to the violation's severity. "Some violators can be fined KD 100 to 1,000, while others, such as selling food items that do not match specifications or are not fit for human consumption are fined by up to KD 100,000 and referred for commercial prosecution," he explained, adding that in the period starting on Dec 21, 2018 till now, Jahra inspectors had destroyed 100 tons of foul food items confiscated through 2,267 citations and closed down 28 facilities.

### Legal action

Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharraz said the ministry had taken proper legal actions in relation with 16 financial violations the State Audit Bureau detected in the fiscal years 2015 to 2018, adding that those behind 10 of the violations (63 percent) had been penalized by the ministry, three referred to disciplinary litigations and one referred to public prosecution. Kharraz stressed that the ministry takes the State Audit Bureau reports into full consideration and works on avoiding all kinds of violations.

## Twelve stripped of Kuwaiti citizenship

**KUWAIT:** Twelve Kuwaitis lost their citizenships in two decisions issued by Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and Head of the Higher Committee to Determine Kuwait Nationality Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, which were published in the Kuwait Al-Youm official gazette. The decisions stripped the nationalities from nine dual citizens who got it by establishment, two female original citizens and one by naturalization, after they were given the choice between keeping their Kuwaiti citizenships or other nationalities they hold. They are: Wadha Saeed Mohammad Al-Hajeri, Noura Jaber Saleh Al-Merri, Obaid Mujally Talaq Al-Otaibi, Meshaal Mehmas Talaq Al-Otaibi, Khalid Nasser Tarjam Al-Hajeri, Sarah Salem Jarallah Al-Merri, Fatima Tami Hazza Al-Hajeri, Maitha Rashid Misfer Al-Hajeri, Wadha Rashid Misfer Al-Hajeri, Munira Mohammad Saleh Al-Merri, Munira Faraj Salem Al-Merri and Juma Mohammad Ali.

### Cabby mugged

A Pakistani taxi driver was mugged by an unidentified person at knife-point in Fintas, who stole KD 300. The man said after he took a passenger to his destination, he pulled a knife and asked for his wallet. The driver handed the money to the suspect, who disappeared in the dark. Police are investigating.

### Thieves caught

Criminal detectives arrested a Kuwaiti and a bedoon who used to break into cars. They confessed to committing three thefts. Jahra detectives acted on complaints about cars near buildings and mosques being broken into, and learned through sources that a Kuwaiti and a bedoon were involved. The two were placed under surveillance and arrested in Jahra.

### Garage fire

Firemen put out a blaze in a Sharq garage. Capital fire station men responded and prevented the fire from spreading to nearby garages before putting it out. No injuries were reported.

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

## Ministry spreads awareness on residency sticker procedures

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's public relations department distributed brochures and printed material in all governorates according to the strategic plan to educate citizens and expatriates on matters related to scrapping the resi-

dency sticker from passports and how to process transactions online at the ministry's website (www.moi.gov.kw), which saves them time and effort. The department said the civil ID must be kept safe and its data should match the passport number and the name in Arabic and Latin, to avoid any mistakes.

### Truck stolen

Kuwait Fire Service Department commented on the theft of a pick-up truck from Al-Zour fire station and not a fire engine as reported on social media. The department said the culprit is a lance-corporal from Al-Zour fire station. All

legal procedures have been taken towards him.

### Smuggling foiled

Member of the Customs Information Committee Nawaf Al-Mattar said 1,965 tablets were found with a passenger, who was sent to concerned authorities.



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PROUDLY MOVING FORWARD







More than 130 die in Mali ‘massacre’

## The making of militants in India’s ‘paradise on earth’

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DEIR EZ-ZOR: Fighters of the US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) take part in a parade to celebrate near the Omar oil field in the eastern Syrian Deir Ezzor province, after announcing the total elimination of the Islamic State (IS) group's last bastion. —AFP

# Detained jihadists are ‘ticking bomb’

## Foreign jihadists - a time-bomb world urgently needs to defuse

**BAGHOUZ:** Syria's Kurds warned yesterday that despite the demise of the Islamic State's "caliphate", the thousands of foreign jihadists they hold are a time-bomb the world urgently needs to defuse. World leaders were quick to hail Saturday's announcement by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces that the last shred of land controlled by IS had been conquered. But as the SDF swept the devastated the riverside village of Baghouz where jihadists made their dramatic last stand, the top Syrian Kurdish foreign affairs official warned that IS members captured during the assault still posed a threat.

"There are thousands of fighters, children and women and from 54 countries, not including Iraqis and Syrians, who are a serious burden and danger for us and for the international community," Abdel Karim Omar said. "Numbers increased massively during the last 20 days of the Baghouz operation," he said. As the SDF's month-long, US-backed assault against the last IS strongholds in the Euphrates Valley closed in, jihadists and their families gradually

gathered in the final refuge of Baghouz. While some managed to escape, many foreigners stayed behind, either surrendering or fighting to the death.

According to the SDF, 66,000 people left the last IS pocket since January, including 5,000 jihadists and 24,000 of their relatives. The assault was paused multiple times as the force opened humanitarian corridors for people to evacuate. It screened droves of people scrambling out of Baghouz in recent weeks then dispatched them to camps further north, where most are still held. Most of the jihadists' relatives who fled have been crammed into the Al-Hol camp, a facility built for 20,000 people but which now shelters 72,000.

**'Future terrorists'**

The de facto autonomous Kurdish administration is northeastern Syria has warned it does not have capacity to detain so many people, let alone put them on trial. But many of the suspected jihadists' countries of origin are reluctant to take them

back due to potential security risks and the likely public backlash. Some have even withdrawn citizenship from their nationals detained in Syria. "There has to be coordination between us and the international



World leaders hail the demise of IS 'caliphate'

community to address this danger," Abdel Karim Omar said.

"There are thousands of children who have been raised according to IS ideology," he added. "If these children are not re-educated and re-integrated in their societies of origin, they are potential future terrorists." The SDF's main support has been

the international military coalition launched by the United States in mid-2014 to counter the expansion of IS. The coalition has provided weapons and carried out 34,000 air strikes in support of local forces in Iraq and Syria, most of the recent ones to back ground advances by the SDF Kurdish-Arab alliance.

The aerial campaigns against IS hubs across a "caliphate" which once spanned territory the size of the United Kingdom have leveled major cities and contributed to the biggest wave of displacement since World War II. According to the Airwars monitoring NGO, at least 7,500 civilians have died as a result of coalition actions in four and half years. The conflict in Syria has killed more than 370,000 people since it erupted eight years ago, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor says.

**'New phase'**

US President Donald Trump has vowed to drastically scale down US military presence in Syria once IS is defeated, leaving

the Kurds exposed to threats by Damascus and Turkey. Ankara sees the SDF as a terrorist organization and Abdel Karim Omar warned that any cross-border offensive risked leading to mass breakouts from the jails where jihadists are currently held. "Any new threat or new war would give an opportunity to these criminals to slip out," he said. The International Rescue Committee has warned of an acute humanitarian emergency, saying the Al-Hol camp has reached "breaking point".

While the conclusion of the Baghouz battle capped draining years of battle, the SDF's top commander said Saturday that anti-IS operations were entering a new phase. IS, faced with multiple offensives in Syria and Iraq since 2014, has morphed from a territorial force back into a clandestine insurgency group carrying out hit and run attacks in both countries. Mazloum Kobane said during the victory ceremony in Al-Omar base on Saturday that the new focus would be IS sleeper cells that "are great threat to our region and the whole world." —AFP

## Disease fears mount for Africa cyclone survivors

**BEIRA:** Disease is threatening to aggravate the already dire conditions facing millions of survivors following the powerful tropical cyclone which ravaged southern Africa 10 days ago, officials warned yesterday. Cyclone Idai smashed into Mozambique's coast unleashing hurricane-force wind and rain that flooded swathes of the poor country before battering eastern Zimbabwe-killing 705 people across the two nations. "It is inevitable that cases of cholera and malaria will arise. In many areas we are already fighting with malaria cases," said Land Minister Celso Correia at a briefing in Beira, 1,000 kilometers northeast of the capital Maputo.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, also at the briefing, warned that disease outbreaks in inaccessible areas could be "really problematic". The World Food Program said Friday that the humanitarian disaster unfolding in Mozambique is on a par with the situation in Yemen and Syria which are both in the grip of civil wars. Aid workers from across the world are continuing to arrive in the region to bring help to more than two million affected people across an area of roughly 3,000 square kilometers.

**'We suffered a lot'**

Survivors are struggling in desperate conditions with some still trapped on rooftops and



BEIRA: An owner (2nd right) stays at his destroyed bar after the cyclone Idai hit near the beach in Beira, Mozambique yesterday. — AFP

those rescued in urgent need of food and medical supplies. "The government is already setting up a cholera treatment centre to mitigate cholera. We should not be frightened when cholera issues arise," added Correia, describing efforts to control the emerging humanitarian crisis.

"It is normal. It's almost inevitable. Malaria, we know how it arises. We have lots of wetlands and we're going to have malaria that is sure to come up (there)." Wilfried Deloivre, a 19-year-old resident of Beira which was caught in the eye of the storm, said he felt "sorry for our town, our city, because we suffered a lot to build it". "Houses are completely destroyed, and some people don't have money to rebuild their businesses-and many

businesses are going to fail," he said.

**'People don't know what to do'**

More than two million people have been affected in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi where the storm started as a tropical depression causing flooding which killed 60 and displaced nearly a million people. Hundreds are still missing in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The International Committee of the Red Cross said it had recorded two cases of cholera so far but the UN was unable to confirm the reports. Stampa described efforts to re-open the main access road to Beira as a "big victory". "We will be able to bring more help to families living in this affected area," he said. —AFP

## Australia hit with second 'severe' cyclone in 2 days

**SYDNEY:** A severe category 3 cyclone blew into the key mining region of Pilbara in Western Australia yesterday, forcing evacuations and a halt to port operations, as the north of the country dealt with the effects of an even more powerful storm that hit the previous day. Cyclone Veronica weakened from a category 4 storm before its core winds hit the coast near the mining centre of Port Hedland, but officials warned the system was slow moving and would continue pounding the region with gale force winds and heavy rain for 24 to 48 hours.

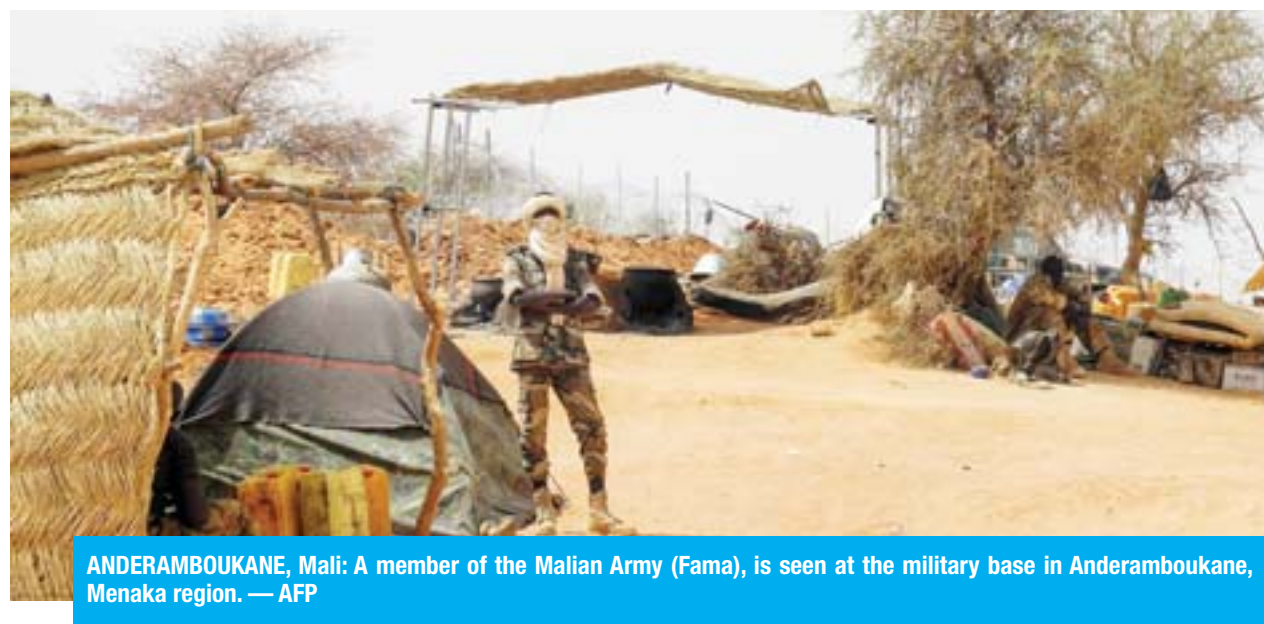
The Bureau of Meteorology said Veronica's forward movement had stalled around midday yesterday before its eye made landfall, and was forecast to weaken to a category 1 storm overnight and then veer west along the coastline. It said the "severe" storm was producing wind gusts of up to 200 kilometers per hour (120 mph), pushing a storm surge of up to two meters (seven feet) onto the coast. Rainfall was expected to hit 20-40 centimeters, it said.

"Tides are likely to rise significantly above the normal high tide mark with damaging waves and very dangerous coastal inundation," the bureau said. Major mining and energy companies took precautionary steps across the region, a hub of liquefied natural gas and iron-ore exports, with ports cleared of ships and non-essential staff evacuated, according to [australianmining.com.au](http://australianmining.com.au) website. Australia's western coast usually sees three or four cyclones per year and emergency services said residents were well prepared for this storm. Meanwhile, Cyclone Trevor, which hit northern Australia on Saturday as a powerful category 4, weakened to a tropical storm overnight as it moved inland in the sparsely populated region. Officials said no deaths, injuries or significant damage had been reported from the storm, but that heavy rains were continuing and flooding was still a danger. The army and police had evacuated more than 2,000 residents from outposts in Trevor's path, many of them indigenous communities, and people began returning to their homes yesterday, police said. —AFP



# More than 130 massacred in Mali; UN shocked, outraged

Victims shot or hacked to death with machetes



ANDERAMBOUKANE, Mali: A member of the Malian Army (Fama), is seen at the military base in Anderamboukane, Menaka region. — AFP

**BAMAKO:** More than 130 people were killed in an attack on a Fulani village in central Mali on Saturday, the United Nations said, as a delegation visited the country. Survivors accused traditional Dogon hunters of carrying out the deadly raid in Ogossagou, according to Boubacar Kane, the governor of Bankass district which covers the village. A security source told AFP the victims were shot or hacked to death with machetes.

“The Secretary-General is shocked and outraged by reports that at least 134 civilians, including women and children, have been killed,” Antonio Guterres’s spokesman said in a statement, adding he called on Malian authorities “to swiftly investigate it and bring the perpetrators to justice”. The attack was launched at dawn on Saturday in the village near the border with Burkina Faso, said several sources. The district has been the scene of frequent inter-communal violence. Two witnesses questioned separately by AFP said hunters had burned down nearly all the huts in the village.

Guterres’s spokesman said the UN mission in Mali, MINUSMA, provided air support to deter further attacks and assisted with the evacuation of the injured. The massacre took place as a delegation from the United Nations Security Council visited the Sahel region to assess the jihadist threat there. Earlier the UN said the visiting

ambassadors from the Security Council countries met on Saturday with Mali’s Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga and discussed with him the volatile situation in the centre of the country.

**Land disputes**

While local attacks are fuelled by accusations of grazing cattle on Dogon land and disputes over access to land and water, the area is also troubled by jihadist influence. In the past four years, jihadist fighters have emerged as a threat in central Mali. A group led by radical Islamist preacher Amadou Koufa has recruited mainly from the Muslim Fulani community. Since then, there have been repeated clashes between the nomadic Fulani herders and the Dogon ethnic group. Last year that violence cost the lives of 500 civilians, according to UN figures.

In January, Dogon hunters were blamed for the killing of 37 people in another Fulani village, Koulogon, in the same region. The Fulani have repeatedly called for more protection from the authorities. The government in Bamako has denied their accusations it turns a blind eye to - or even encourages - Dogon attacks on the Fulani. Once considered a beacon of democracy and stability in Africa, Mali in recent years has been dogged by a coup, civil war and Islamist terrorism. — AFP

## Millions malnourished in Sindh despite abundance of food

**KARACHI:** A frantic mother cradling her seven-month-old baby rushes towards the special paediatric ward in a desolate Pakistan town, his eyes are blank and he is smaller than most newborns. He is starving in a country that has no shortage of food, but which has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world and where malnutrition is rife. The infant weighs just 2.5 kilograms - the average for a healthy child of that age is almost three times that.

His case is not unique for the doctors at the Mithi Civil Hospital in hunger-stricken Sindh province where millions survive on less than \$1 a day. Of the 150-250 patients who come in each day, roughly one fifth are suffering from malnutrition, Dr Dilip Kumar, head of the paediatric department, tells AFP. Inside the ward, nine other malnourished infants are crying inside glass incubators. A young mother, Nazeeran, clutches the hand of her toddler. “Her weight is dropping, even though we consulted many doctors,” the 25-year-old says.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), a poverty and hunger watchdog, estimates around one in five of Pakistan’s more than 200 million people are malnourished. And yet, the nation is not short of food - in fact, according to the US Department of Agriculture, it is projected to export 500,000 tons of wheat from May 2018 until April 2019, and 7.4 million tons of rice in the same period. Dawn, the English-language daily newspaper, even reported a potato glut earlier this month.

### Extreme deprivation

The issues, experts say, are socio-economic - that is, just because food is available, does not mean people can access it. “There are four key pillars of food security in Pakistan: The first is availability, then accessibility, utilization and stability,” says Dr Ambreen Fatima, senior research economist at the Applied Economic Research Centre of the Karachi University. In Tharparkar, where Mithi Civil Hospital is, all four are lacking, she explains, adding that in other parts of the country they are present only to varying degrees.

## Jihadists blow themselves up

**BAGHDAD:** Three suspected Islamic State group suicide bombers blew themselves up yesterday in northern Iraq, the army said, a day after the jihadists’ ‘caliphate’ was wiped out in neighboring Syria. Army spokesman Yahya Rassoul said the incident took place in a region near the Syrian border, where jihadist sleeper cells are believed to be present. He said the suspects died as troops surrounded them but there were no casualties among government forces. Local officials said the suspects were killed as they were trying to attack troops in the village of Qayrawan, south of the mountainous region of Sinjar which borders Syria. Fighters of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces on Saturday pronounced the death of the nearly five-year-old IS ‘caliphate’ which once stretched across a vast swathe of Syria and Iraq. — AFP

## Traffic-choked Jakarta launches its first mass rapid transit system

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia’s capital inaugurated its first mass rapid transit system yesterday, a \$1.1 billion project seen as crucial to tackling some of the world’s worst traffic congestion. President Joko Widodo and other officials joined a ceremony in Jakarta to give a green light for the 16-kilometre line, almost six years after construction began on the Japanese-backed project.

Tens of thousands of excited Jakartans were in attendance and eager to try riding on the subway for the first time, mobbing the president for selfies while music blared and traditional performers danced on a nearby stage. “Honestly I am so happy,” office worker Mutia Fitrianti told AFP. “Now we don’t have to go abroad just to ride an MRT!”

The train system runs above and below ground and stretches from the central Hotel Indonesia to the southern reaches of the Southeast Asian megalopolis of some 30 million people. It aims to cut travel times between the two points to just 30 minutes from around two hours, offering some relief to frustrated commuters long used to spending much of their day stuck in traffic. The new line is set to open to the public today, with tickets free during the first week. Construction on a second line linking downtown to Jakarta’s northern port also kicked off yesterday with completion slated for 2024, and more lines are envisioned in the future.

A separate elevated rail network is also being built to link satellite cities with Jakarta, nicknamed the Big Durian after the pungent fruit that bitterly divides fans and its detractors. The public transit projects are part of a sweeping infrastructure push that Widodo hopes will boost the fortunes of Southeast Asia’s biggest economy-and get him re-elected in national polls next month. “If we have and integrated transportation system, it will be easier for people to go places and they will leave their cars or motorcycles at home,” Widodo told journalists yesterday. — AFP



JAKARTA: Photo shows parked Jakarta mass rapid transit (MRT) coaches at its main depot in the city. —AFP

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## International

# Brexit up in the air as Prime Minister faces possible plot

## British parliament tries to grab control

**LONDON:** The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union was in disarray yesterday as Prime Minister Theresa May faced a possible plot by ministers to topple her and parliament prepared to grab control of Brexit from the government. At one of the most important junctures for the country since World War Two, British politics was at fever pitch and, nearly three years since the 2016 referendum, it was still unclear how, when or if Brexit will ever take place.

With May humiliated and weakened, ministers insisted she and the British government were still in charge of the country, and that the best option was still for parliament to ratify May's twice-defeated Brexit divorce deal. As hundreds of thousands of people marched across central London on Saturday to demand another Brexit referendum, May was the subject of what The Sunday Times said was a "coup" by senior ministers seeking to oust her.

The newspaper cited 11 unidentified senior ministers and said they had agreed that the prime minister should stand down, warning that she has become a toxic and erratic figure whose judgment has "gone haywire". When asked by Sky about reports in The Sunday Times and other newspapers of a plot and whether she had run out of road, finance minister Philip Hammond said:

"No. I don't think that is the case at all."

"Changing prime minister wouldn't help us," Hammond said. "To be talking about changing the players on the board, frankly, is self-indulgent at this time." Hammond said the best way forward would be for parliament to back May's deal, although he said that it might not be approved and so parliament should then try to find a way to end the impasse. "I'm realistic that we may not be able to get a majority for the prime minister's (Brexit) deal and if that is the case then parliament will have to decide not just what it's against but what it is for," he said.

### Array of options

Brexit had been due to happen on March 29 before May secured a delay in talks with the EU on Thursday. Now a May 22 departure date will apply if parliament rallies behind the British prime minister and she is able to pass her deal. If she fails to do so, Britain will have until

April 12 to offer a new plan or decide to leave the EU without a treaty. Some lawmakers have asked May to name her departure date as the price for supporting her deal, though it was unclear when a third vote might take place.

If May's deal is dead, then parliament will try to find a different option. That opens an array of options including a much softer divorce than May had intended, a referendum, a revocation of the Article 50 divorce papers or even an election. Brexit Secretary Steve Barclay said May's deal was the best option and urged people to get behind the prime minister. "The government and the prime minister is in charge," Barclay said. May went to her usual church service near her Chequers country residence on Sunday with her husband.

## Changing PM wouldn't help: Finance Minister

### Possible successors

The Sunday Times reported that May's de-facto deputy, David Lidington, was one contender to be

interim prime minister but others are pushing for Environment Secretary Michael Gove or Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt. "I don't think that I have any wish to take over from the PM, I think (she) is doing a fantastic job," Lidington told reporters outside his house. "One thing that working closely with the prime minister does is cure you completely of any lingering shred of ambition to want to do that task," he quipped.

Lawmakers are due on Monday to debate a government motion saying parliament has considered a statement made by May on March 15 which set out the government's next steps on Brexit, including the plan to seek a delay. They are likely to propose changes, or amendments, to this motion setting out alternative ways forward on Brexit. These are expected to include a proposal to approve May's deal only if it is put to a public vote.

While amendments are not legally binding, instead simply exerting political pressure on May to change course, lawmakers could use one to attempt to change the rules of parliament to wrest control of the Brexit process from the government. A British election could be the consequence of parliament seizing control of the Brexit process if lawmakers back proposals contrary to the pledges the government was elected on, Barclay said.— Reuters

## Could 'witch hunt' Mueller report turn into Trump victory?

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump says Robert Mueller ran a "witch hunt." But what if the special prosecutor turned out to be a fairy godmother sprinkling magic dust on the president's 2020 reelection bid? With Mueller's long-awaited report into Trump's Russia links only delivered late Friday to Attorney General William Barr, there are still few clues as to the contents. The stakes, though, are crystal clear.

Mueller's brief was to probe extraordinary allegations that Trump and his 2016 election campaign were in league with Russian agents and that Trump sought to obstruct the investigation. Democrats, who control the lower house of Congress, had already begun talking of impeachment. But while a damning report could, in theory, signal Trump's political death knell, a report that fails to land serious new blows could instead supercharge an angry presidential reelection campaign.

And the very first signal coming out Friday pointed to the second scenario. This was the fact that in handing over his report, Mueller indicated that he did not want any more indictments. Over the course of the last two years, Mueller had already charged 34 individuals, including six former Trump associates. But speculation had been rife that he might go deeper into the president's circle, snaring even son-in-law Jared Kushner and son Donald Trump Jr. Now it appears they will be able to enjoy their weekend.

Certainly the White House's first reaction, minutes after the report dropped, sounded calm. Down at Trump's Florida golf resort Mar-a-Lago,

where he flew earlier Friday, officials said the president would have no more events open to journalists, reversing an earlier indication of possible movements. "The next steps are up to Attorney General Barr and we look forward to the process taking its course," Trump spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said.

### Battle over message

Barr says that he could send Congress a summary, or "principal conclusions," as early as this weekend. The real battle will be over demands from Congress - and from the wider public - to be given both the entire report, as well as the underlying legal documents. This is because even though Mueller may not have landed a killer blow, through lack of evidence, Democrats believe his findings will fuel their own more politicized probes. Adam Schiff, the intelligence committee chairman in the House, said on CNN that he still intends to pursue "whether the president and others around him were acting as agents of a foreign power."

Democrats are especially keen that legislators be allowed to peruse the report before the White House. They know that as soon as Trump gets hold of a copy he will use his formidable online presence to shape public perceptions of what the report says. Trump has boasted several times this week about having more than 100 million followers on various platforms, principally on Twitter, and throughout the Mueller drama he has used that bullhorn to paint himself as victim of a political vendetta.

"Witch hunt," "hoax," he says constantly. "Drug Dealers and Human Traffickers are treated better," he tweeted when one associate was arrested. And even if the Mueller report is damning, even if it leads to further peril, Trump will likely interpret the lack of an actual smoking gun as total vindication. That would be just the gift he needed to rally his right-wing base, saying that he'd been right all along. — AFP

## Slavery reparations debate resurfaces in White House race

**WASHINGTON:** In January 1865, as the US Civil War was drawing to a close, some freed slaves were promised "40 acres and a mule" to begin new lives. The audacious experiment was fleeting - repudiated within months by president Andrew Johnson, successor to the assassinated Abraham Lincoln, and the land returned to its former owners. More than 150 years later, the question of whether the United States should provide compensation to African-Americans for past wrongs is still on the table. Reparations for centuries of slavery and racial discrimination has emerged as a spirited topic of debate among the slew of candidates seeking to become the 2020 Democratic nominee for president. Civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, during his failed 1988 White House bid, raised the controversial subject but it has never figured so prominently before in a presidential race.

Barack Obama, America's first black president, and 2016 Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton did not support compensation for the descendants of slaves. Among the 2020 Democratic presidential candidates, Senator Elizabeth Warren and Julian Castro, the former mayor of San Antonio, have come out strongly in favor of reparations. "America was founded on principles of liberty and freedom and on the backs of slave labor," Warren, a senator from Massachusetts, said recently at a CNN event in Jackson, Mississippi.

"This is a stain on America," Warren said. "I believe it's time to start the national, full-blown conversation about reparations in this country." Castro, seeking to become the first US president of Hispanic origin, said he backed reparations while acknowledging there is a "tremendous amount of disagreement" on what they should be. "If, under the Constitution, we compensate people because we take their property, why wouldn't you compensate people who actually were property?" he said.

### 'Injustice, cruelty, brutality'

Warren has thrown her support behind a bill in the US House of Representatives that would appoint a commis-



**CALIFORNIA:** California Senator Kamala Harris speaks at a rally launching her presidential campaign in Oakland, California. Reparations for centuries of slavery and racial discrimination has emerged as a spirited topic of debate among the slew of candidates seeking to become the 2020 Democratic nominee for president. — AFP

sion to examine the subject. The bill, HR 40, calls for a panel "to address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865."

The commission would "consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery," HR 40 - so named for the unkept "40 acres and a mule" pledge - was first introduced in the House three decades ago and has been resubmitted every year since, but has never reached the floor for a vote. Senators Kamala Harris and Cory Booker, the two black candidates in the race, have also signaled support for reparations while former Texas congressman Beto O'Rourke has said there should be a "conversation" about the subject.

"We need to study the effects of generations of discrimination and institutional racism and determine what can be done, in terms of intervention, to correct course," Harris said on National Public Radio. Marianne Williamson, a self-help author considered a long shot for the nomination, is the only Democratic candidate for the moment advocating direct payments to African-Americans.—AFP

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# The making of militants in India’s ‘paradise on earth’

## Families of militants say crackdown may fuel more militancy

**KULGAM:** Kashmiri farmer Yusuf Malik learned that his son Owais, a 22-year old arts student and apple picker, had become an armed militant via a Facebook post. Days after Owais disappeared from his home in this picturesque valley below the Himalayan ranges, his picture appeared on the social network, posted by a user the family said they did not recognise. The short, thin, curly-haired young man in casual jeans and a T-shirt stared resolutely at the camera, both hands clutching an AK-47 rifle.

In blood red font on the photo was scribbled his new allegiance: the Hizbul Mujahideen, or ‘The Party of Warriors’, the largest of the militant groups fighting to free the mostly-Muslim Kashmir from Indian rule. “He was a responsible kid who cared about his studies,” said Yusuf, 49, staring down at the carpeted floor of his brick home where he sat on a recent winter morning, clasping his folded hands inside his traditional pheran cloak.

The family said it has not heard from Owais since. Owais is one of a rising number of local militants fighting for independence of Kashmir – an insurgency being spread on social media amid India’s sustained, iron-fisted rule of the region. Hundreds of thousands of Indian troops and armed police are stationed in this lush region at the foot of the Himalayas. India and rival Pakistan have always disputed the area and in the past three decades, an uprising against New Delhi’s rule has killed nearly 50,000 civilians, militants and soldiers, by official count.

Historically, that insurrection has largely been led by militants from Pakistan, who have infiltrated into the valley. But now, an increasing number of locally-born Kashmiris are picking up arms, according to Indian officials. About 400 local Kashmiris have been recruited by militants since the start of 2016, nearly double the number in the previous six years, according to government data. India says Pakistani groups continue to provide training and arms – a claim Islamabad rejects.

Just a month before Owais Malik showed up on Facebook, another young man, Adil Ahmad Dar, left his

home in a nearby part of Kashmir to join a militant group. This February, his suicide attack on a paramilitary convoy killed 40 Indian policemen, and took India and Pakistan to the brink of war. After Dar’s attack, Indian security forces launched a major crackdown, searching Kashmiri homes and detaining hundreds of supporters, sympathizers and family members of those in armed groups.

At least half a dozen gunbattles broke out between Indian police and militants. The families of Dar and other young militants, as well as some local leaders and political experts, say run-ins between locals and security forces are one of the main reasons for anger and radicalisation. After the recent crackdown, they expect more young people to take up arms.

**‘Freedom, martyrs’**

Outside the narrow lane that leads to the Malik family home in Kulgam in southern Kashmir, children walk to school past shuttered shopfronts and walls spray-painted with the word “azadi”, the local word for “freedom”. The graveyard at the end of the lane has an area for militants, who are remembered as “martyrs”. Dar’s family claims he’d been radicalized in 2016 after being beaten up by Indian troops on his way back from school for pelting stones at them. “Since then, he wanted to join the militants,” said his father Ghulam Hassan Dar, a farmer.

India’s home and foreign ministries did not respond to requests for comment on this story. In news conferences since the suicide bombing, Lt Gen KJS Dhillon, India’s top military commander in Kashmir, has dismissed allegations of harassment and rights abuses by Indian troops as “propaganda”. He said the recent crackdown by security forces has resulted in the killing of the masterminds of the attack, and militant recruitment has dipped in recent months. Syed Ata Hasnain, a retired army general who has served in Kashmir for over 20 years, said the rise in homegrown fighters does not surprise him. “Those who were born in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the conflict started, have now come of age,” he said. — Reuters



### India launches crackdown in Kashmir after suicide attack

## Thai coup leader, ‘democratic front’ face off in election

**BANGKOK:** Thais voted yesterday in a long-delayed election following a 2014 military coup, a race that pitted the country’s junta chief seeking to retain power against a “democratic front” led by the populist party he ousted. Turnout was expected to be high as 80 percent of the 51.2 million eligible voters, the Election Commission said about an hour before the polls closed at 5 pm.

The commission said that unofficial results of Thailand’s first general election since 2011 would be announced from around 8:30 pm. After polling stations had closed, Reuters incorrectly reported Thai PBS TV channel announcing numbers from an exit poll but the seat numbers for the competing parties that it aired were from the last pre-election opinion poll. Thai PBS’ figures came from research centre Super Poll. “We apologize for our staff’s miscommunication to Reuters that we conducted an exit poll,” said Paweenrat Sukpongpinon, a statistician at Super Poll.

The election will determine the make-up of the 500-seat parliament’s House of Representatives. The lower house and the upper house, the Senate – which is appointed entirely by the ruling junta – will together select the next prime minister. Thailand has been under direct military rule since then-army chief Prayuth Chan-ocha overthrew an elected government linked to exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who himself was thrown out by the army in 2006.

Critics have said a new, junta-written electoral system gives a built-in advantage to pro-military parties and appears designed to prevent the Thaksin-linked Pheu Thai Party from returning to power. Pro-Thaksin parties have won every election since 2001, but the past 15 years have seen crip-



**BANGKOK:** A man watches election results on television in his home in Bangkok yesterday after polls closed in Thailand’s general election. — AFP

pling street protests both by his opponents and supporters that destabilized governments and hamstrung business. Prayuth is hoping to stay on as prime minister with the backing of a pro-military party that campaigned on maintaining order and upholding traditional values of loyalty and devotion to the monarch.

**Royal message**

On the eve of the vote, King Maha Vajiralongkorn made an unexpected and cryptic statement, recalling a comment made by his late father in 1969 on the need to put “good people” in power and to prevent “bad people from ... creating chaos”. Although he did not refer to any of the sides in the race, the king’s message was a departure from the approach of his late father, who died in 2016. The former king, in his latter years, usually kept a distance between the monarchy and politics. King Vajiralongkorn also weighed in on electoral affairs last month followed a startling turn of events when a pro-Thaksin party nominated Princess Ubolratana, the king’s sister, as its prime ministerial candidate. — Reuters

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Geneva	138	618
London	168	603
New York	235	930
Washington, D.C.	300	1,080

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12 Al-Sayer, Jiblah Holding sponsors Sustainable Development Award



13 Zain adds new smart home plans to Zain LIFE portfolio



14 Kuwait generated \$24bn worth of debt issuances over last 10 years



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, an image of a Boeing 737 MAX 8 is pictured on the exterior of the Boeing Renton Factory in Renton, Washington. A fix to the anti-stall system suspected in October's Lion Air Boeing 737 MAX 8 that killed 189 people in Indonesia is ready to roll out, industry sources said. — AFP

# Fix to 737 MAX anti-stall system is ready: Boeing

## US airplane maker tries to avoid a lengthy grounding of its planes

NEW YORK: A fix to the anti-stall system suspected in the crash of a Boeing 737 MAX 8 jet that killed 189 people in Indonesia is ready, industry sources said Saturday, as the company tries to avoid a lengthy grounding of its planes. Boeing was due to present the patch to officials and pilots of US airlines-American, Southwest and United-in Renton, Washington state, where the plane is assembled, other sources said. "Boeing has already finalized the necessary corrective measures for the MAX," an aviation sector source told AFP on condition of anonymity. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will receive the patch "early next week," a government source added. Asked how long the certification process could take after the patch is in the hands of the authorities, this source said that nothing has been decided yet. The FAA declined to comment. The Lion Air crash in Indonesia last October and another accident this month involving an Ethiopian Airlines jet, which killed 346 people between them, have raised major concerns about the safety certification of the 737 MAX 8 model. The Ethiopian Airlines crash on March 10 led to the global grounding of 737 MAX planes. Although it will take months to determine the exact

cause of both crashes, investigators in the Lion case have honed in on the MCAS automated anti-stalling system designed to point the nose of the plane downward if it is in danger of stalling, or losing lift. American Airlines and Southwest pilots were set to test simulators with the updates on Saturday, according to the sources. Boeing neither confirmed nor denied the information. The FAA had given until April for Boeing to make the necessary changes to the critical anti-stall system, and on March 15 two anonymous industry sources told AFP the upgrade would be ready in about 10 days. A spokesman for United Airlines, whose fleet includes 14 of the 737 MAX 9 planes, confirmed the company's attendance at the training session. **Consumer protection** Southwest and its SWAPA pilots union "have subject matter experts from our Technical Pilot Team and Training Teams headed to Boeing to review documentation and training associated with the modification to the B737 speed trim system," a spokeswoman said. The company is one of the biggest 737 MAX 8 customers, owning 34 of the planes. "We've been working

diligently and in close cooperation with the FAA on the software update. We are taking a comprehensive and careful approach to design, develop and test the software that will ultimately lead to certification," a Boeing spokeswoman said. "There will be training provided by Boeing." In addition to the software modification, the industry sources said Boeing has also finalized updates to its flight and pilots' training manuals, as the FAA asked. "We have been engaging with all 737 MAX operators and we are continuing to schedule meetings to share information about our plans for supporting the 737 MAX fleet," the Boeing spokeswoman said, declining to confirm the timeline for the changes. In another modification, the 737 MAX will be outfitted with a warning light for malfunctions in the anti-stall system, an industry source told AFP on Thursday, standardizing a feature previously sold as an optional extra. Neither the Lion Air aircraft nor the Ethiopian Airlines jet had the feature, the industry source said. US and Ethiopian authorities have said this month's crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight ET302 near Addis Ababa bore "similarities" to last year's Lion Air crash.

Since the Ethiopian crash, pressure has intensified on Boeing and the image of the company-which also makes combat aircraft and space equipment-has been eroded. Share value of the firm, which says it is the world's largest aerospace manufacturer, has dropped 12 percent since the accident, wiping out \$28 billion in market capitalization. Boeing and the FAA are under investigation by the Transportation Department over how the rollout of the jet was handled, including the anti-stall system. The acting FAA head is among transport officials who are to testify on Wednesday before a congressional subcommittee. Questioning is likely to focus on tight links between Boeing and the regulators, who maintain offices in the airplane factories and delegated a large part of the certification process for the 737 MAX and its anti-stall system to employees of Boeing, sources said. Press reports say that the Department of Justice has also opened a criminal investigation into the 737 MAX's development. Ralph Nader, the veteran US consumer protection advocate who lost a relative in the Ethiopia crash, called Friday for an organization to defend passengers' rights. — AFP

## Sri Lanka opens work on \$3.85bn refinery near strategic port

HAMBANTOTA: Sri Lanka began construction yesterday of a nearly \$4 billion oil refinery it hopes will revive foreign interest in its shipping facilities after Beijing's takeover of a nearby port spooked international investors. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said Hambantota, a district in Sri Lanka's south which lies on one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, would become a global investment hub with the addition of the oil refinery and storage complex. The \$3.85 billion project is the single largest foreign investment in Sri Lanka's history. It is jointly funded by Oman and Singapore-registered Silver Park International, a company owned by an Indian business family. The oil facility is near the port of Hambantota, which was controversially leased to a Chinese state-owned firm in 2017 for 99

years after Sri Lanka failed to service a loan from Beijing. The circumstances surrounding China's acquisition of the port generated concern in neighboring India and beyond over Beijing's expanding presence in the Indian Ocean. But the government pointed to this new line of cash pouring into the region as proof foreign investors were not deterred by that experience. "The interest shown by the Oman government, the interest shown by many other investors from other parts of the

world shows that Hambantota will become a truly international investment zone," Wickremesinghe said yesterday. Wickremesinghe also said he hoped to strike a deal within three months with Indian airport authorities to revive a \$210 million airport in Hambantota dubbed the "world's emptiest" international terminal for its lack of flights. The oil storage tanks are expected to be completed within two years while the refinery is due to be up and running by 2023.—AFP



HAMBANTOTA: Sri Lanka Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe (second left) and Oman Oil and Gas Minister Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Rumhy (center) attend the groundbreaking ceremony of a \$3.85 billion oil refinery and storage complex in the southern port city of Hambantota yesterday. — AFP

## Abu Dhabi aims to lure start-ups with investment in new tech hub

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi will commit up to 1 billion dirhams (\$272 million) to support technology start-ups, it said yesterday, in a dedicated hub as part of its efforts to diversify its economy. US tech giant Microsoft will be a strategic partner, providing technology and cloud services to the businesses that join the hub as the capital of the United Arab Emirates continues its push to reduce reliance on oil revenue. Abu Dhabi derives about 50 percent of its real gross domestic product and about 90 percent of central government revenue from the hydrocarbon sector, according to ratings agency S&P. The emirate launched a 50 billion dirham (\$13.6 billion) stimulus fund, Ghadan 21, in September last year to accelerate economic growth. Ghadan means tomorrow in Arabic. The new initia-

tive, named Hub 71, is linked to Ghadan will also involve the launch of a 500 million dirham fund to invest in start-ups, said Ibrahim Ajami, head of Mubadala Ventures, the technology arm of Mubadala Investment Co. The goal is to have 100 companies over the next three to five years, Ajami said. "The market opportunities in this region are immense," he added. Mubadala, with assets of \$225 billion and a big investor in tech companies, will act as the driver of the hub, located in the emirate's financial district. Softbank will be active in the hub and support the expansion of companies in which it has invested, Ajami said, adding that Mubadala is also aiming to attract Chinese and Indian companies, among others. Mubadala which has committed \$15 billion to the Softbank Vision Fund, plans to launch a \$400 million fund to invest in leading European technology companies. Incentives mapped out by the government include housing, office space and health insurance as part of the 1 billion dirham commitment, Ajami said. Abu Dhabi will also announce a new research and development initiative today linked to the Ghadan 21 plan, according to an invitation sent to journalists. — Reuters





# Al-Sayer and Jiblah Holding diamond sponsor of Kuwait Sustainable Development Award

## We are committed to supporting Kuwait Vision 2035: Al-Sayer

KUWAIT: Al-Sayer and Jiblah Holding companies are the diamond sponsor of the Kuwait Sustainable Development Award, launched on March 18, 2019 by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Planning and Development (GSSCPD), to recognize and promote best sustainable business practices.

Mohammad Nasser Al-Sayer, Executive board member and chairman of the Sustainability Committee, commented that Al-Sayer Holding has demonstrated a clear commitment to supporting Kuwait vision 2035 and the goals of the United

Nations as a key player in the Kuwaiti economy by embracing the framework of the sustainability compass since 2014 covering Environmental aspects, responsible economy, community service, customer and employee welfare.

Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Deputy Group Manager, Corporate Excellence, referred to recent achievements of the Group such as:

- The Group was the first to launch two-engine hybrid cars in Kuwait and now the number of five hybrid models to reduce the carbon footprint

- The reliance on renewable energy sources in its buildings to date is 550 kw watt has been installed in some of its locations and the number will soon reach 2MW.
- The adoption of Green buildings systems in three buildings. Al-Sayer main building has achieved GORD platinum Certificate from GSAS as the first private building in Kuwait for the year 2018.
- Adopted the sustainability Compass in 2014 as a sustainability framework for the group's work and

evolved into a sustainability gear later.

- Won the first runner-up at Arabia CSR award in Dubai in large companies across the region for the year 2018.
- Recently won the first place in 12th KNPC Annual HSE Performance Award for the year 2019 which is an honor for us.

Barrak Al-Maraghi, CEO of Jiblah Holding company ended that we are together with Kuwait to align the Pillars of excellence and sustainability with the objectives and vision of the new Kuwait 2035.

## NBK-France is our new banking arm in Europe: Shaikha Al-Bahar

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) successfully established NBK France SA after completing all procedures required to convert NBK (International) PLC in Paris into a full subsidiary, as the bank continues to expand its global footprint, especially in the European market through its presence in France, the second largest economy in Europe and the sixth largest economy in the world.

This important step is part of NBK's strategy to strengthen its presence in core markets in line with its strategy aimed to diversify income sources and increase the contribution of international operations to the Group's net profits which jumped to 30.4 percent in 2018 compared to 29.4 percent in 2017. International Banking Group's (IBG) total assets

increased by 7.5 percent year-on-year, reaching KWD 9.8 billion by the end of the year.

"The conversion of NBK (International) PLC in France to a full branch is a major milestone in the bank's contingency plan to maintain our leadership in the European market no-matter how Brexit ends up", NBK's Deputy GCEO Shaikha Al-Bahar said.

Al-Bahar highlighted that the new subsidiary provides access to the European Union (EU) member countries through passporting rights, thus taking over the role performed by NBK London in the event of Brexit. 'NBK France SA will continue to pursue the Group's strategy to expand in EU markets and focus on supporting trade between Europe and the MENA region, as well as performing its role in providing banking services to NBK clients in Europe. It will also focus on reinforcing relations with European companies that work in Kuwait or intend to further extend their activities



in the region", Al-Bahar added.

Moreover, Al-Bahar highlighted NBK's focus on offering both residential and commercial real estate financing facilities, as well as other real estate related services in the French market, expressing its importance as a key destination for real estate investments as it attracts great interests from Kuwaiti and GCC investors due to the great opportunities it provides.

International Banking Group (IBG) continues to capitalize on extending our product and service offering through reaching NBK customers in the various geographies that we operate in.

NBK has the widest international presence in four continents, with operations in 15 countries, 3 of which are in Europe, namely; the UK, France and Switzerland.

## Brussels warns of new row brewing over Italy finances

BERLIN: The EU warned yesterday of a new row brewing with Italy over its budget, barely a few months after both sides agreed on a hard-fought deal with Rome's disputed 2019 finances.

"I'm really worried. In no other EU member state has the economy cooled so dramatically. Already in our winter forecast, we had expected Italy to post growth of only 0.2 percent (in 2019)," said European Commission Vice President Vladis Dombrovskis. "It shows clearly that the direction taken by the government in Rome is damaging for the economy. The interest rates have risen, instability also," he told Welt am Sonntag newspaper, noting that investor confidence has failed to improve in the country.

The commission will take stock of the situation in June and discuss next steps.

Italy's public debt is a big problem and now sits at 2.3 trillion euros (\$2.6 trillion), or 131 percent of Italy's GDP-way above the 60 percent EU ceiling. After a bitter row, Italy's populist coalition government committed to not adding to its colossal debt load this year.

But Rome's projection for its 2019 budget was based on growth of 1.0 percent of GDP, which international organizations now view as too optimistic. The International Monetary Fund sees growth reaching only 0.6 percent, while the European Commission's forecast is far more pessimistic, at just 0.2 percent. "Rome's growth forecasts are too optimistic," warned Dombrovskis.

"It doesn't make things easier that the spending program decided by the government for 2019 will be pushed back and hit the budget in the coming year. "We see the situation as problematic and expect difficult discussions" with Rome, he added. The Italian economy contracted in the fourth quarter of 2018 because of a slowdown in exports, plunging the eurozone's third-largest economy into recession and increasing the government's budgetary problems. Despite the difficulties, he believes it is still possible to find an accord with Rome. "We have also had difficult discussions with the previous governments but at the end, they managed to find solutions to limit their debt. — AFP

## 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. Sohail Shahzad Khan Fadhelalrahma
  2. Bader Hussain Abbas Ashknani
  3. Amani Ibrahim Hussain

Alsayed Hashem

4. Ali Hasan Ismail
5. Mayyar Mohammad Hesham Alghareeb

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.



### EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.	
<b>EUROPEAN &amp; AMERICAN COUNTRIES</b>	
US Dollar Transfer	304.200
Euro	347.700
Sterling Pound	405.650
Canadian dollar	228.980
Turkish lira	55.040
Swiss Franc	309.620
US Dollar Buying	303.000
<b>ASIAN COUNTRIES</b>	
Japanese Yen	2.768
Indian Rupees	4.425
Pakistani Rupees	2.208
Srilankan Rupees	1.703
Nepali Rupees	2.754
Singapore Dollar	226.850
Hongkong Dollar	38.763
Bangladesh Taka	3.603
Philippine Peso	5.804
Thai Baht	9.627
Malaysian ringgit	77.801
<b>GCC COUNTRIES</b>	
Saudi Riyal	81.174
Qatari Riyal	83.606
Omani Riyal	790.903
Bahraini Dinar	808.290
UAE Dirham	82.877
<b>ARAB COUNTRIES</b>	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.500

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD	
<b>Rate for Transfer</b>	
US Dollar	303.840
Canadian Dollar	226.765
Sterling Pound	404.040
Euro	345.975
Swiss Frank	304.465
Bahrain Dinar	808.025
UAE Dirhams	83.125
Qatari Riyals	84.365
Saudi Riyals	81.920
Jordanian Dinar	429.830
Egyptian Pound	17.590
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.706
Indian Rupees	4.410
Pakistani Rupees	2.177
Bangladesh Taka	3.611
Philippines Peso	5.784
Cyprus pound	18.080
Japanese Yen	3.765
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.770
Malaysian Ringgit	75.740
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.655

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL	
<b>CURRENCY</b>	
British Pound	0.395789
Czech Korune	0.005482
Danish Krone	0.042333
Euro	0.337624
Georgian Lari	0.131957
Hungarian 0.001147	0.001337
Norwegian Krone	0.031975
Romanian Leu	0.065177
Russian ruble	0.004724
Slovakia	0.009090
Swedish Krona	0.029169
Swiss Franc	0.300102
<b>Australasia</b>	
Australian Dollar	0.207789
New Zealand Dollar	0.203415
America	0.221662
Canadian Dollar	0.300100
US Dollars	0.300600
US Dollars Mint	0.305400
<b>Asia</b>	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003050
Chinese Yuan	0.043799

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036960	0.039710
Indian Rupee	0.003793	0.004565
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002686	0.002866
Korean Won	0.000257	0.000272
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070938	0.076938
Nepalese Rupee	0.002608	0.002948
Pakistan Rupee	0.001597	0.002367
Philippine Peso	0.005771	0.006071
Singapore Dollar	0.219815	0.229815
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001362	0.001942
Taiwan	0.010153	0.010333
Thai Baht	0.009259	0.009809
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
<b>Arab</b>		
Bahraini Dinar	0.792326	0.803826
Egyptian Pound	0.017636	0.020236
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000209	0.000269
Jordanian Dinar	0.424149	0.433149
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022101	0.046101
Omani Riyal	0.783812	0.789492
Qatar Riyal	0.079266	0.084206
audi Riyal	0.080033	0.081333
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.096760	0.104760
Turkish Lira	0.048484	0.059984
UAE Dirhams	0.081398	0.083098
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069



# Zain adds new smart home plans to Zain LIFE portfolio

## New plans feature smart devices that cover entire home with powerful Wi-Fi

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of new smart home plans as part of its Zain LIFE portfolio of innovative solutions designed for a smarter lifestyle. The new plans feature a number of unique smart devices from TP-Link, a global provider of reliable networking devices and accessories.

Zain launched the new plans under its Zain LIFE portfolio of innovative solutions and in line with its strategy to continue transforming into an integrated digital lifestyle provider, which is centered around digital transformation leadership and empowering the community to enjoy a smarter portable lifestyle, as well as using advanced technology solutions to enable an easier and more flexible life.

The new plans, which come with FREE installation, feature the Mesh Deco M5 and Mesh Deco M9 Plus devices from TP-Link, a global provider of reliable networking devices and accessories. The devices are designed to cover the entire home with powerful Wi-Fi through multiple units that work together seamlessly to create an integrated home network and eliminate dead zones. In addition, the devices can link all smart home devices inside the house together for easy and simple control. The devices also protect connected devices from online threats like viruses and malware, and make it easy to customize Wi-Fi access for family and guests. The devices deliver Wi-Fi up to 510 square meters to cover homes of all sizes and shapes.

The Smart Homes sector is one of the main aspects of the digital transformation journey undertaken by telecoms around the world, particularly with respect to securing homes and protecting them with the use of modern technology. Zain is continuously working on designing new plans to match these transformation processes to be included in Zain LIFE in addition to its existing portfolio of smart solutions.

Zain always aspires to new levels of



excellence in all services it offers to its customers. Through the launch of these new plans, Zain affirms its continuous efforts in meeting its customers' needs and aspirations, and deliver its promise to offering the best services and latest technologies.

## AUB -Kuwait introduces robotics for intelligent automation journey

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank yesterday announced the partnership with Edge Verve Systems, a subsidiary of Infosys for automating banking processes using the Assist Edge Robotic Process Automation platform. This initiative will increase efficiency and efficacy of all the processes across different business functions.

As part of its digital transformation drive, Ahli United Bank has initiated automating of the banking processes using Robotics. This will enable unlocking of sustainable value for the bank which will help AUB-Kuwait in achieving the goal of being a next generation bank and also pave the way for their AI journey.

Commenting on the solution, Jehad Al-Humaidhi DCEO Banking Support Group, Ahli United Bank, Kuwait said, "We are thrilled to implement Robotics. We have been continuously focused on enhancing the overall customer experience and digitalization remains at the core of our strategy. We have always endeavored to introduce new innovations, bringing efficiencies to customer's financial value chain through futuristic technologies like Robotics, Biometric identification, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. With introduction of Robotics, banking operations will be streamlined and we will derive major cost efficiencies. This initiative is



Jehad Al-Humaidhi

another milestone in our continuous endeavor towards digitizing the financial value chain."

Atul Soneja, Senior VP & Global Head - Edge Products and Infosys Nia, said, "With AssistEdge RPA, we provide end-to-end automation to our customers by discovering the right processes to automate, leveraging AI to make the automation smarter, and finally helping customers manage several complex digital workflows effectively. From this partnership, we are looking at not just automating processes and reducing costs but also aiming at a larger strategic initiative of improving quality of all processes and transforming the business itself."

## Colombia's coca growers facing stark choices over crops



Colombian Luis Portilla, 63, checks a cocoa plant, at his farm in the Catatumbo region, Norte de Santander department, Colombia. — AFP

CATATUMBO, Colombia: Decades into the US-led war on drugs, coca plantations continue to surge like a green tide across ally Colombia's Catatumbo region. Their spread has left former coca growers like Alex Molina embittered, having convinced others to rip up their illicit crops-seduced, he says, by promises the state has failed to keep.

For community leader Molina and others, choosing to forsake coca for traditional crops has been a costly choice and one they warn they may be forced to reverse. "The substitution program has ruined me and left me in total insecurity." His situation is emblematic of a debate sweeping rural coca growing communities, at odds over the implementation of Colombia's 2016 peace agreement with FARC guerrillas.

Under the agreement, coca growers, or "cocaleros" in former FARC-controlled areas would voluntarily replace their plantations with other cash crops like bananas, coffee or cocoa-in exchange for cash incentives. It's a vital component of

Colombia's US-backed war on drugs, both countries having a shared stake in the drive. Colombia remains the world's largest producer of cocaine, the US the largest consumer.

But more than two years later, many cocaleros here are furious over repeated failures to implement the program, under which each household was to receive aid equivalent to \$10,330 in cash and equipment over two years. Payments have been intermittent or non-existent and the anger is palpable in the hamlet of Puerto Las Palmas, in the middle of the coca-growing region on the Venezuelan border. "There are hungry children, and families that are desperate because they have no income," Molina told AFP.

Meanwhile, neighbors who rejected the state's offer continue to cultivate coca, making hay while the sun shines-knowing the time will come when the army will rip up their crop.

### Regrets

The result is that Molina-who harvested his first coca leaves as a 12-year old-has gone from an enthusiastic supporter of substituting coca to defending its cultivation if there are no alternatives.

Only 34, he's determined to lead his community away from coca cultivation if he can, but he says he can well understand those who have opted to stay on the dark side of the law.

If it came to it, he said: "I would protect the coca plants with my body, with the people around me, because it is the only option." The peasants of Puerto Las Palmas are hoping the government will unblock funds before they are forced to replant, according to Molina, aware that a return to coca could lead to prison. Luis Portilla, 63, faces the same choice. He destroyed his coca crop, weary from the anxiety that a seek-and-destroy army raid would leave him with nothing. — AFP

ing from terminal non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, who had sued the company over the glyphosate weedkillers Roundup and Ranger Pro.

Monsanto was initially ordered to pay \$289 million to Johnson, before the damages were reduced to \$78.5 million. Bayer has filed an appeal.

The company suffered a new set back this month as a US jury ruled that Roundup was a "substantial factor" in another case brought by an amateur gardener who was suffering from cancer.

It now faces a total of 11,200 US cases over Roundup and its active ingredient glyphosate, a herbicide key to Monsanto's business model that has come in for intense scrutiny around the world.

Werner insisted the acquisition of Monsanto was carried out after careful due diligence. Bayer has also pointed to findings from regulators around the world, especially in advanced economies like the US, Europe and Canada, and reams of scientific studies as proof of the safety of its product.

"Regulatory authorities around the world consider glyphosate-based herbicides as safe when used as directed," the group has argued, highlighting "800 rigorous studies" of glyphosate's effects. — AFP

## Despite lawsuits, Bayer boss calls Monsanto takeover 'a good idea'

FRANKFURT: The boss of German chemicals giant Bayer insisted yesterday its multi-billion dollar takeover of Monsanto was a "good idea", despite huge legal costs piling up over its Roundup weedkiller.

"The Monsanto acquisition was and is a good idea," Werner Baumann told newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, when asked if he would have changed his mind about buying the US group if he could. Bayer bought Monsanto for \$63 billion but the deal has turned out to be plagued with other massive costs.

Just two months after the acquisition was completed, Monsanto lost a case to a school groundskeeper suffer-

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## Business

# Kuwait generated \$24bn worth of debt issuances over last 10 years

## NBK Capital sponsors GBSA's Kuwait debt capital markets conference

**KUWAIT:** Watani Investment Company (NBK Capital), in partnership with the Gulf Bonds and Sukuk Association (GBSA), held the fourth annual Kuwait Debt Capital Market Conference, which was attended by a number of government and private sector representatives that were invited to participate in the conference.

On this occasion, Rani Selwanes, Managing Director and Head of Investment Banking at NBK Capital, said, "We are very proud of our partnership with GBSA and of our sponsorship for this year's conference. At NBK Capital, we have consistently worked towards contributing to the development of Kuwait's debt capital market to create an encouraging environment for both issuers and investors to participate in as diverse and robust a market as possible. Collaborating this year with GBSA for its annual Kuwait conference is one of the multiple ways that we believe furthers this goal."

Selwanes noted, "Since 2009, the GCC's debt capital markets have generated nearly \$530 billion in debt issuances, more than half of which has been issued over the past three years. The significant growth in issuance volumes since 2016 has been driven primarily by sovereign issuances from GCC governments, which have accounted for more than 65 percent of total issuances during this period."

He further explained, "The average annual issuance volume in the GCC has more than doubled over the past three years to \$81 billion, compared with its \$36 billion historical average between 2009 and 2015; and that with this increase, the region has leaped into a new level of market maturity rivaling that of its emerging market peers."

Selwanes confirmed that Kuwait's debt capital market activity has, for the most part,



Rani Selwanes speaks at the conference

mirrored that of the region. With more than \$24 billion worth of issuances over the past 10 years, 70 percent has been generated since 2016. He then added, "Much like the three-year trend observed by its GCC counterparts, 47 percent of the \$17 billion issued out of Kuwait, is attributed to the state's \$8 billion debut sovereign issuance in 2017." However, he further noted, "total Kuwaiti debt issuances during 2018 declined by more than 80 percent from the year prior to a mere \$1.3 billion."

Selwanes attributed the decline in issuance volumes to several factors including uncertainty surrounding interest rates, low lending rates from alternative sources of funding and modest growth in the Kuwaiti economy. NBK Capital's Managing Director further clarified, stating, "Despite the decline in issuance volumes last year, we should continue to highlight the multiple benefits of debt instruments to prospective issuers, including their ability to diversify the sources of funding for potential issuers and their flexible terms and conditions."

Selwanes also spoke of the importance to support local and regional Kuwaiti government issuances to further develop Kuwait's

sovereign yield curve, an important benchmark that guides the pricing of issuances by Kuwaiti companies and institutions. He explained that "With the prospects of recurring sovereign issuances by the State becoming lukewarm, perhaps it is time to consider taking prominent Kuwaiti government related entities to market as an alternative to a purely sovereign yield curve".

### Credit ratings

Later on during the conference, Zaid Al-Sager, Director - Investment Banking participated in a panel discussion on the state of Kuwait's debt capital markets, along with a group of other leading professionals in the local debt capital market. The panel collectively discussed the need for the further diversification of issuers in the local debt capital market.

Al-Sager further noted, "There has been an increasing interest amongst both government related entities and prominent Kuwaiti conglomerates to obtain credit ratings as a first step towards their potential participation in the debt capital markets, which is a positive indicator for the potential to further diversify and grow Kuwait's debt capital markets".

Al-Sager continued, "2019 may prove to be an opportunistic window for prospective issuers to obtain debt at historically low borrowing rates, given the Federal Open Market Committee's revision of its monetary policy."

### Global economic slowdown

During the Kuwait Debt Capital Markets Conference, Dr. Saade Chami, Group Chief Economist at National Bank of Kuwait highlighted the synchronized slowdown in major economies and expected the global growth



KUWAIT: Adel Al-Mutairi from Boubyan Bank, Khalid Al-Rukhayes from Kuwait Finance House, Zaid Al-Sager from NBK Capital, Amro El-Banna from Gulf Bank and Rani Selwanes during the conference.

rate, which was lowered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to 3.5 percent in 2019 back in October, to be revised downward again as risks have tilted to the downside.

Dr Chami added that GCC region would likely be insulated from the global slowdown due to its limited integration with the rest of the world in terms of trade. The impact will come mainly through oil demand and oil prices-which he projected to hover around current levels-and interest rates which are expected to remain unchanged given the Fed pause on rates hikes.

"GCC growth expected at around 2 percent in 2019 driven mainly by public spending while non-oil activity seen at 3.0 percent. Oil sector growth would be about flat due to OPEC's decision on production cuts" he pointed.

He mentioned, "Fiscal deficits are set to widen in most GCC countries due to elevated spending, as the need to clamp down on

deficits has become less urgent with the rise in oil prices from their lows in 2014-15."

He also pointed out that there is a greater need for debt issuance in 2019 due to moderate oil prices, more relaxed fiscal policies, and large part of public debt maturing.

Finally, Dr Chami stressed that GCC sovereign debt issuance could reach about \$50-60 billion this year but this is subject to uncertainty related to oil prices and budgets implementation, adding that Saudi is expected to be the largest borrower in 2019 with an estimated issuance of about USD 30 billion.

The conference offered a variety of presentations: Standard and Poor's credit rating agency presented and discussed the process and criteria for obtaining a credit rating. Acreditus, a regional advisory firm, concluded the conference with a presentation on the potential applications of Blockchain technology for sukuk issuances.

## KIB awarded 'Deal of the Year' by Islamic Finance News

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently received the 2018 'Deal of the Year - Kuwait' award for its \$250 million syndicated financing deal by Islamic Finance News (IFN). KIB's General Manager of Wholesale Banking, Ahmad Al-Kazemi and Deputy General Manager of Wholesale Banking and Head of International, Mohamed Khadiri, received the award on behalf of the Bank at the 13th annual Islamic Finance News Awards Ceremony which was recently held in Dubai. The event was attended by a number of notable figures and representatives from leading Islamic financial institutions and international banks from across the globe.

This latest accolade came after extensive deliberations by a panel of experts from non-competing organizations evaluating various financial transactions that took place in 2018 against several key criteria, including the impact of the deal, its significance as well as its degree of complexity.

On this occasion, Al-Kazemi said: "This award is a testament of the outstanding work and progress achieved by KIB, and a clear indication of the high confidence and strong reputation that we enjoy in the banking industry. It is a great honor to be recognized by such a prestigious organization which further confirms our strong track record and growth prospects."

Commenting on this award, Khadiri said: "A number of regional and international partners contributed in achieving the remarkable success of the syndicated financing, which helped us continue pursuing our strategic objectives of diversifying funding sources for future asset growth plans." He also added: "We are adamant on delivering effective and efficient banking services that contribute to a steady



and healthy national economic growth."

Established in 2004, with offices in Dubai and Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Finance News (IFN) organizes the annual Islamic Finance News Awards Ceremony. IFN is also recognized as the industry's leading publication in the Islamic banking and finance industry across the globe. With a worldwide audience, IFN provides exclusive and comprehensive coverage of the global Islamic financial markets and leverages an unrivalled network of connections to provide unmatched insight into global Sharia compliant markets. IFN's Deals of the Year Awards Ceremony offers winners a truly global audience, serving as an excellent platform to reach existing and potential clients, as well as industry peers.

## Ooredoo Kuwait signs a strategic partnership with Z Services

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait announced yesterday a strategic agreement with Z Services who is representing Z Scaler in the region, to bring in-country SaaS security services. This partnership will bring to Kuwait's enterprises the industry's broadest and deepest cloud-based and telco-delivered security solutions portfolio, thus enabling customers to build strategy for cybersecurity without the need for up-front infrastructure costs associated with on premise security deployments.

Amine Tazi, Chief Strategy Officer at Ooredoo Kuwait, said: "We are happy to announce our strategic partnership with Z Services and become the first and only operator in Kuwait to provide easy-to-use and high standard cybersecurity services. Cybersecurity is an increasingly growing business risk; by leveraging Z Services leading security solutions, we will help our customers to secure their data and users through its in-country, multi-tenant cloud security architecture that includes web, email, cloud application, unified access management, incident response and endpoint security-as-a-service. This is a new milestone for Ooredoo's digital transformation journey and towards delivering our mission of becoming the one-stop-shop provider for our customers."

Saed Sakran, Regional Sales Director, Z Services, said: "Cyber Security threats are constantly evolving; sophisticated attacks such as ransomware, malware, and phishing have placed the assets and data of cor-



Amine Tazi

porations and enterprises at a high risk. At Z Services, we are committed to make it easy for organizations to access the world's most innovative security technologies through their trusted national service provider and it is precisely for this reason that we have made our commitment official via our partnership with Ooredoo Kuwait.

We are thrilled to join

forces with Ooredoo Kuwait and looking forward to further build on this partnership by leveraging our innovative security solutions portfolio to Kuwait's leading enterprises and bringing them one step closer to New Kuwait 2035 Vision strategy."

### About Z Services

Z Services is a full-service, cloud-based cybersecurity provider headquartered in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with operation coverage across the MENA region. It is the only company in the Middle East and North Africa to offer an in-country, multi-tenant cloud security architecture that includes web, email, cloud application, forensic, incident response, unified access management and endpoint security-as-a-service (SaaS).

## Warba Bank announces 5 winners of Al-Sunbula draw

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, held its weekly Sunbula draw number 12. The draw announced the 5 lucky winners in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and bank officials.

The bank proudly announced the lucky five winners of the KD 1,000 prize: Ahmad Mohammad Adel Al-Sayrafi, Adel Yaqoub Youssef Al-Qatami, Abdulhadi Bekheet Ghesen Al-Ajmi, Mohamad Atallah Al-Taleb and Ali Shehab Salem Al-Shammari.

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

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

## Infiniti Al-Babtain: Exclusive leasing offer continues on Infiniti vehicles

**KUWAIT:** Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, continues to offer its loyal fans exclusive leasing deal that accompanies the purchase of models ranging from Infiniti Q50 to QX80 at Al-Rai showroom.

Starting at a leasing price of KD 169 per month, the Q50 is driver centric, powerfully elegant coupled with a striking performance and is available with 2.0-liter 208HP turbo-charged engine. The Infiniti Q50 is also available at 3.0 liter Turbo generating 300 HP. The INFINITI Q50's fuel efficient engine is designed to offer enhanced performance while maintaining high levels of efficiency. The steering wheel is sleeker and more performance based than ever, ensuring flawless drivability that triggers the senses. The Q50 delivers a confidence-inspiring and personalized experience behind the wheel, which epitomizes INFINITI's dedication to developing innovative driving technologies.

A family-friendly, high performance car - the QX60 starts at a leasing rate of KD 275 per month - it reflects the concept of high-end hybrid cars, and is designed to be a masterpiece of all standards. This innovative icon is equipped with a Rear Entertainment System with dual 8-inch monitors and wireless headphones followed by a 295-horsepower, 3.5-LITER V6 direct injection engine. From the double-arch grille to the LED taillights that accentuate the D-pillar, the confident curves cap-



vate attention not usually given to a 7-passenger SUV.

Now starting at KD 369 per month, the QX80 has a refined and spacious cabin that features high-quality materials, a hand-crafted finish and advanced drive-assist technologies. With a taut yet comfort-oriented suspension, and ample performance from its 5.6-liter V8 engine, the QX80 gives drivers an assured feeling of control and confidence at the wheel. The rear entertainment system has also been upgraded. Higher-resolution screens provide the interface for connectivity and entertainment devices. The system also now supports 31 languages, up from three in the outgoing QX80. Infiniti Al-Babtain encourages its customers to explore the advantage of the exclusive deal by visiting the designated showroom located in Al-Rai.



What's On

# ACK aims at expanding to meet Kuwait Vision 2035

As Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) celebrates a huge milestone of completing 15 years in Kuwait, ACK President Professor Isam Zabalawi speaks about the vision and belief that will take the institute 15 years ahead in the future.



**What makes PBL such a unique methodology? What benefit can ACK graduates obtain from it?**

PBL or Project Based Learning is an experiential, hands-on approach to education, which not only ensures that students gain requisite knowledge but also applied skills and a workplace team focused attitude. Within increasingly competitive and globalized markets, employers now expect graduates to be productive from day one. Therefore, the traditional emphasis on academic knowledge is not sufficient to empower students with a first-hand appreciation of how they will be required to perform upon recruitment to industry or commerce. To bridge this gap, PBL is a learning methodology that involves the application of classroom theory to a workplace related scenario.

For engineering students, PBL is focused on Project Based Learning usually involving a physical outcome whereas for business students, PBL relates more to Problem Based Learning where the students develop a clear and documented plan in response to a workplace related situation. An example of PBL in an engineering context might be "The design and development of a solar powered or other renewable energy water cooler for the ACK football field" whereas a PBL task within a business setting might be "Identification and solutions to issues associated with splitting ACK and having a separate campus for engineering and business students".

As students research the various factors associated with their task, the focus is toward an achievable end result that solves the challenge. The result for engineering students is usually a physical product that successfully works or a design or proposal that meets the required specifications. For business students, the result is an efficient and achievable plan as a solution to the problem. In the course of progressing with their task, students discuss scenarios with their peers, teaching staff who act as mentors, and wherever possible industry/commerce representatives for workplace related advice.

In comparison to an academic assessment that is usually to demonstrate understanding of theory, PBL requires competence not only regarding concept understanding but also application in a workplace related context. Accordingly, ACK graduates are immediately able to productively participate in workplace teams upon recruitment, as they are already familiar with the process and dynamics associated with industry/business operations.



**To what extent is ACK implementing the CDIO approach and what motivated the decision to apply it to ACK?**

CDIO is a holistic experiential approach to learning that links the life-cycle phases of Conceiving, Designing, Implementing and Operating a product, system, service or process. CDIO may be regarded as an umbrella model used by educators to cover the four separate pillars of learning identified by UNESCO as needed to prepare students for careers and community engagement in the 21st Century. CDIO recognizes and addresses disciplinary knowledge (UNESCO pillar of learning to know), personal and professional skills and attributes (learning to be), interpersonal skills (learning to live together), and conceiving, designing, implementing and operating systems (learning to do).

The CDIO approach therefore takes into account the wider formation of students so they are not just technically competent but also have the ability to sit back and consider, as a contributory team player, workplace situations from an evolving lifecycle perspective. This involves taking an embryonic idea through all the various steps associated with research, design, development and introduction, through to final ongoing operation.

Beneath the life wide and umbrella approach of CDIO, various methodologies have been used to apply the model within particular learning contexts. At ACK, CDIO has been applied through the following:

Internships go a step further and enable students to spend time within industry or business settings and work with supervisors as well as alongside other employees on day-to-day projects. ACK students have the opportunity to undertake their internships locally or outside Kuwait, as a result of our membership of the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE).

Innovation and Entrepreneurship programs that challenge students to develop creative ideas that have market potential and then develop strategies, with the support of industry and faculty mentors, to take product or service notions to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Graduation Project as the culmination and synthesis of course learning, and challenging students to link together key elements of learning within their particular discipline and express these in the form of a product, design, plan or proposal that has industry/business significance. In

addition to the physical or written dimension to the graduation project, students are also required to present and defend their work to a panel including workplace representatives.

The various means of experiential learning within the CDIO umbrella are all targeted, within a supportive learning environment, at empowering ACK graduates with the capability and confidence to step into their futures.



**In what ways is ACK helping its graduates meet the requirements of the private sector therefore increasing their employability?**

All engineering, business and aviation graduates from ACK receive a qualification that not only meets the academic standards of our international partner universities but also industry recognition as a result of accreditation from transnational professional associations. In this regard, our engineering programs are accredited through Engineers Australia (EA); business programs through the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP); aviation through the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Kuwait and the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the English Program through EAQUALS (Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services).

To gain accreditation from international professional associations, ACK was required to demonstrate that our programs of study meet the graduate attributes expected by industry for career entry. By way of illustration, Engineers Australia specifies ten graduate attributes required of a professional engineer, covering technical proficiency, soft skills related to such competencies as teamwork and communication, ethical standards and a sustainability mindset.

The international industry recognition of ACK qualifications is important within global markets; however, since the vast majority of graduates will build their careers inside Kuwait, all curriculums with the college are developed with input of local industry and business representatives through the ACK Industry Advisory Board. This ensures that program content and levels of assessment cover particular standards and practices relevant to the Gulf region.

In the design of individual course content and assessments, faculty members identify the employability and learning outcomes from the particular unit and then prepare a range of methods to cover the theory and enable demonstration of understanding and workplace application by students. As a result of focusing on graduate attributes needed for successful career entry, ACK has developed a reputation of preparing students for immediate employability.



**How is ACK expanding vertically and horizontally in order to meet the Kuwait Vision 2035?**

One of the goals expressed by the national government in the Kuwait Vision for 2035 is "Reform the education system to better prepare youth to become members with competitive and productive capacities for the national workforce." As one of the original private tertiary institutions within Kuwait, ACK is well positioned to play a continuing role toward achievement of this vision. In relative terms, ACK not only has considerable local experience in tertiary education but at the same time it is one of few providers that has expressly focused on experiential learning to prepare graduates with "competitive and productive capacities".

Since establishment in 2004, ACK has remained committed to forming students with a combination of knowledge, skills and attitude. The college has steadily expanded from initial diploma level offerings in engineering and business and a student population of 228 to a current level in excess of 3000 students up to degree level in engineering and business as well as programs in aviation and maritime studies. Professional accreditation of engineering was gained from Engineers Australia in 2009, followed in 2017 by the English Language Program through EAQUALS (Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services), and in 2018 by the School of Business through ACBSP (Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs). To further enhance the professional standing of ACK graduates, the college is presently working with ACBSP to gain higher-level accreditation.

The focus at ACK must now to work closely with local employers and especially through our ACK Industry Advisory Board to revise existing programs and develop new curriculums to meet emerging workplace needs. Discussions have already been held with the Kuwait government through the Private Universities Council (PUC) toward granting of university status for ACK to reflect the increasing emphasis on research across the institution and to enable the college to provide higher degree pathways for Bachelor Degree graduates. ACK also wishes to offer expanded programs of study in both engineering and business covering new areas of learning.

In the past two years, additional classrooms and other infrastructure were completed to enable further growth in the aviation programs. A separate building was also constructed to house growing numbers of faculty and to offer expanded restaurant and recreational facilities for students. Presently, foundations are being prepared for a new structure to provide additional School of Engineering facilities as well as generic learning and meeting spaces. Other capital projects are also in design phase, together with a rolling program of ICT hardware and software upgrades together with ongoing expansion and enhancement of laboratories and workshops.



Prof. Isam Zabalawi



**How is ACK promoting diversity within its institution? What have been the benefits of it creating a global and international community within the institution?**

Currently, the ACK family includes over 3000 students from 34 nationalities and over 400 staff from 47 nationalities. As a result, there is a rich diversity of cultures and backgrounds on campus. The Student Life team deliberately organizes a cultural celebration each year and invites all students and staff from any background to have an information booth and communal activities to raise awareness and understanding of their culture and traditions. Equally, every February, a college wide and week-long series of activities is organized in the lead up to Kuwait National Day and this provides and important opportunity for Kuwait students to express their love for their country and share this with students and staff from other backgrounds.

The college established the ACK International Office to facilitate communications and collaborations between local staff and students with our international learning partners. We actively encourage students to consider undertaking part of their existing program or a higher degree at one of our partner universities. All students are invited to apply for an international internship that is available as a result of our membership of the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE). Each semester, the Student Life staff arrange for participation by ACK student teams in international sporting competitions and other gatherings. Faculty are actively encouraged and supported to attend and present papers at international educational and professional conferences across the globe.

The very name 'Australian College of Kuwait' confirms the link between our local infrastructures with the international community through the highly regarded Australian education system. ACK is truly both local and global.



**What are your expectations for the year ahead?**

Every student and every staff member at ACK is important. Our Chairman, Mr. Abdullah Al Sharhan, always speaks of the "ACK family" that covers not only present and past students but also current and past staff members and all associated families. As a result, despite the very large numbers on campus at any one time, all staff members are dedicated to providing the best possible academic and wider formation of students. Later this year, ACK will co-host the third Symposia of Private Higher Education - Road to Excellence (SPHERE) event in association with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The central theme is "E-learning" and international participants will share their experiences and expectations with regard to the future of electronic learning.

We live and work within increasingly instant and global contact and commerce. Accordingly, ACK will continue to ramp up our collaborative research projects locally with bodies such as KFAS, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and others, as well as internationally especially with our strategic learning partners. Through our graduation projects, I am delighted that it is not only our faculty but also our students who are contributing to research across both engineering and business. During this next year, we will put further resources into our learning and support services to students who develop innovative and entrepreneurial ideas that have real potential for the marketplace.

This year, 2019, represents a milestone for ACK as we celebrate our first 15 years. I can only imagine how the campus will look in 2034 when we complete our next 15 years. Perhaps we will see driverless cars arriving on campus, drones delivering packages to our Purchasing Department, students using Artificial Intelligence programs as part of their research and learning, and faculty delivering their materials through more immersive means such as virtual reality technology. When you consider that it is barely 10 years since the widespread availability of smart phones and how much they have changed our lives, nothing will surprise me.



# Aiming for reinvention, Apple eyes streaming, services

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Apple looks to begin a fresh reinvention today as it rolls out Hollywood stars for its new streaming television service, part of a broad shift of direction for the California technology giant. Having seen a pull-back in the once-sizzling smartphone market, Apple will seek to diversify by getting deeper into the television business, and with the likely launch of a subscription news service. The iPhone maker, which has officially been mum on its plans, was expected to bring in Jennifer Aniston, Reese Witherspoon and "Star Wars" director J.J. Abrams to a launch event at its Silicon Valley headquarters.

"It seems fairly obvious they are launching a new video service," said Techspontential technology market analyst Avi Greengart. Big questions to be answered include how compelling content will be; how much the service will cost, and what makes it unique in an increasingly crowded streaming television market, according to the analyst. "If the content is compelling enough, people will subscribe," Greengart said. "This is not new, but it is hard to do well."

The event comes with Apple under pressure to diversify its revenues amid sluggish growth in smartphones, which have delivered the bulk of Apple's profits for the past decade. While iPhone sales remain enviable, growth has stalled. Meanwhile, money Apple takes in from selling services or digital content has climbed. The Cupertino-based company recently stopped

disclosing iPhone sales numbers with quarterly earnings releases and has taken to stressing the money-making potential of selling services, apps, music, movies and more to the millions of people using its devices.

The new service will be "a pivotal step for Cupertino in further driving its services flywheel and entering the 'streaming content arms race' which is clearly starting to take form," said Daniel Ives of Wedbush Securities in a research note. Ives said he believes Apple's services business will be "worth roughly \$400 billion on a standalone basis."

## Crowded stage

In streaming, Apple is taking on not just Netflix and Amazon but some of the biggest names in the media-entertainment world. Walt Disney Co. has announced its new streaming service Disney+ will launch this year, as will another from WarnerMedia, the newly acquired media-entertainment division of AT&T. The new entrants, with more expected, could launch a formidable challenge to Netflix, which has some 140 million paid subscribers in 190 markets, and to other services such as Amazon and Hulu.

These rivals are coming into the segment which has been transformed by the spectacular growth of Netflix and a growing movement by consumers to on-demand television delivered over internet platforms. Subscriptions to online video services globally climbed 27 percent last

year to 613 million, eclipsing cable television subscriptions for the first time, according to the Motion Picture Association of America

## What's new in news?

Apple is also widely believed to be set to launch a subscription news service described as a "Netflix for news" with partners in the media world. A New York Times report said the Wall Street Journal would be part of the Apple service likely to cost \$10 a month, but that many other news organizations including the prestigious New York daily and the Washington Post were balking due to Apple's demand for a 50 percent slice of revenue. According to Bloomberg News, the website Vox would also be part of the Apple News effort. The move comes amid deepening woes for the news sector facing a difficult transition to the digital world where few people want to pay for information and advertising is problematic.

## Adding to the mix

Along with investing some of its considerable war chest in original shows, Apple could try to spice up its streaming service by adding in benefits such as access to its music library or online storage capacity at iCloud. Amazon uses that kind of tactic, making its video service available as part of Prime subscriptions that include free shipping on purchases from the e-commerce colossus and loyalty program discounts at its



**BEIJING:** Apple CEO Tim Cook waves as he arrives for the Economic Summit held for the China Development Forum in Beijing. — AFP

Whole Foods grocery shops.

For its video service, Apple may be investing as much as \$2 billion a year in original content, according to BTIG Research analyst Richard Greenfield, but that will be less than Netflix and some others. A big question remaining is whether Apple will offer its content free for its device owners, and how it will work with third-party television services, according to Greenfield. Laura Martin, an analyst with the

research firm Needham & Co., said Apple's prospects are strong as it shifts from being a "product" company to an "ecosystem."

Martin said in a research note Apple can count on 900 million people with at least one Apple device to feed this ecosystem of services which includes Apple Pay, music and other digital content. "Apple's business model is essentially a subscription business model," Martin said. — AFP

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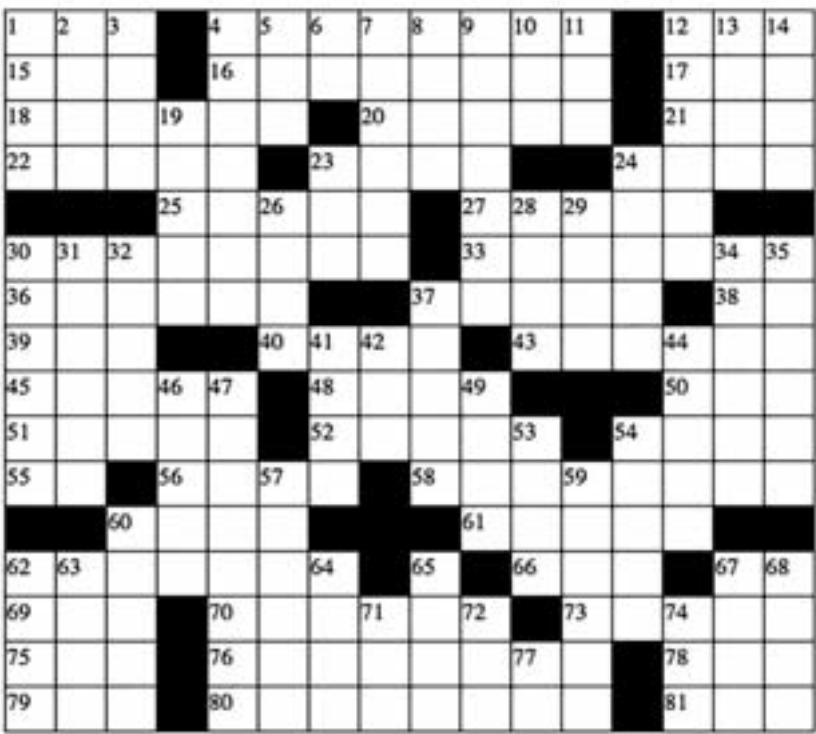
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CROSSWORD 2166



ACROSS

- 1. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- 4. Deserving a curse.
- 12. (informal) Uncomplimentary terms for a policeman.
- 15. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
- 16. Of or relating to or in the manner of the playwright Henrik Ibsen.
- 17. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
- 18. Resembling a twig.
- 20. The facial expression of sudden pain.
- 21. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- 22. Rock star and drummer for the Beatles (born in 1940).
- 25. A fertile tract in a desert (where the water table approaches the surface).
- 27. An iconic mental representation.
- 30. Someone who lives at a particular place for a prolonged period or who was born there.
- 33. Genus of North American and east Asian perennial herbs.
- 36. A ridge that forms a seam between two parts.
- 38. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- 39. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
- 40. The basic unit of money in Myanmar.
- 43. United States minimalist painter (born in 1936).
- 45. An upward slope or grade (as in a road).
- 48. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
- 50. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
- 51. Of or relating to or affecting a lobe.
- 52. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
- 55. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
- 56. The Hebrew patriarch who saved himself and his family and the animals by building an ark in which they survived 40 days and 40 nights of rain.
- 58. Uneaten and saved for eating later.
- 61. A large gathering of people intended to arouse enthusiasm.
- 62. Having unattractive thinness.
- 66. A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.
- 69. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- 70. A device providing a connection between a power source and a user.
- 73. Deciduous shrub of North America.
- 75. (nautical, aeronautical) Situated at or toward the stern or tail.
- 76. Any of a class of highly reactive chemical compounds.
- 78. A resource.
- 79. Towards the side away from the wind.
- 80. A great raja.
- 81. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.

DOWN

- 1. A book of the New Testament.
- 2. Small usually bright-colored semiaquatic salamanders of North America and Europe and North Asia.
- 3. An elaborate song for solo voice.
- 5. Make amends for.
- 6. A chronic progressive nervous disorder involving loss of myelin sheath around certain nerve fibers.
- 7. In accord with the most fashionable ideas or style.
- 8. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
- 9. Executed with proper legal authority.
- 10. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- 11. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- 12. Make a cackling sound.
- 13. Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.
- 14. Having nine hinged bands of bony plates.
- 19. For or by a group rather than individuals.
- 23. Strong liquor flavored with juniper berries.
- 24. An impure form of quartz consisting of banded chalcedony.
- 26. A branch of the Tai languages.
- 28. A master's degree in library science.
- 29. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing.
- 31. The largest Chilean island and the only one to be settled.
- 32. A member of an American Indian peoples of NE South America and the Lesser Antilles.
- 34. Not like.
- 35. The upper house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
- 37. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- 41. Not only so, but.
- 42. The month following March and preceding May.
- 44. Everyone except the clergy.
- 46. A Dravidian language spoken in south central India.
- 47. Light carriage.
- 49. Report or maintain.
- 53. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- 54. East Indian tree yielding a resin used medicinally and burned as incense.
- 57. A republic in southwestern Africa on the Atlantic Ocean.
- 59. Submerged freshwater perennials.
- 60. Feeling or showing extreme anger.
- 63. A small restaurant where drinks and snacks are sold.
- 64. The 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- 65. A tributary of the Rhine.
- 67. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- 68. An informal term for a father.
- 71. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
- 72. 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.
- 74. The airforce of Great Britain.
- 77. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your birthday might find you at work in a managerial role and you're not alone even though it's the weekend. People gravitate towards you when you're thinking this well about what and how to make your workload better. Besides, you want to be with people today. You may be doing something for the workplace outside the work building. This could be speaking with others on work related programs or just meeting with new clients. If not with workmates then you're with friends and family. You bring special excitement to the air when with others now. This day will be spent in the company of others because you desire it. Your Aries energy is high now and others emotional vibrations stay up there with you creating a sort of vicious cycle in a good way.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

It's a good time to be with friends and family. Getting out and meeting new people gives you the opportunity to make new friends. If you're meeting with people with whom you're working such as in sales or other work place ways you may find you have new friends there as well and all with a common goal. Enjoy working your rooms, so to speak. Your concise thoughts on any chosen subject help you make points. This is a good time to be alive for you, Aries and not just in a work way. Go to a museum or take a tour of something you've not done before.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The last few days have burst your bubble and brought you squarely down-to-earth. You don't appreciate anything you think might be a foolish notion. Playing isn't an option either. You're serious and you want to get down to planning and making things better for yourself. Swinging from one mood to another can be disastrous and can make you, Taurus, just a tad bit irritable. Ask your friends today if you're coming off emotionally hard. Simple and ordinary is your motto now and you mean to stick to it when in truth you could lead a group admirably today with these very ideas. It's all in the manner in which you state it.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You're quieter now because you're thinking of how to manufacture the success you crave. You may be getting the group on financial success you want to start activated in your mind, doing the research and getting the place ready to meet. Without you're ever uttering a word of intention others know you're seeking something they can enjoy as well. Because you're quietly doing this, you'll find that your querulous energy makes you're the center of attention for those in need. They may be looking for help on an emotional issue or they are in search of the same items you are. At any rate let them talk about their needs.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Do something different today. Go biking or walking whichever you like best. Try to do this with the minimum of talking because your feelings are on your emotional shoulders today. You want to try to stay in a good mood. That could end quickly if someone hits that last nerve. Perhaps you should spend the day to yourself maybe gardening or doing something in nature. If you're a painter, paint a woodland scene. Do something that comforts you. Cancer. You need all the peacefulness you can get right now to start your week off right.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Work, health and diet are your main goals today. Perhaps you want to work outside in your garden or visit the vegetable seed store on this spring day. Enjoying yourself in the presence of nature can bring a peaceful feeling while still allowing the latitude of thought you need to complete. Friends help you slow down in making major decision now by telling you to make sure and get the facts. Then you can move on the decisions you've made. Try to make this a day of leisure and hope. Renewal is the word of the day for you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You're loaded for bear today if that is what you need. Moreover, you're probably at home with family on this good Sunday. That could be the source of a very bad time with those you love. Waiting to be set off isn't the best way to spend your day. You may be upset over something a family member did which was very sensitive in nature to you. Be sure they meant to hurt before you unload on them. Family loves and will generally stay around even when they've been hurt but don't temp fate now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Someone you love may hurt you in the deepest sense today. This could totally be innocent but the wound is there nonetheless. No matter how pure the thoughts of your friend when the incident occurred it'll take time to get over. Sensitive issues can trouble your whole mindset. This is one of those times. Prepare yourself but don't let yourself down. This is a time you decide to take better care of your physical and mental self too. Perhaps getting outdoors more doing things that exercise your body and mind. Keep loving others and trying to help. It's your way.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Do a mental evaluation of where you're at now. Stay home, read a book, crochet or anything that gives that quick-thinking mind a break. Have those around you that make you feel good and wanted. That doesn't mean you have to do what they want either. Plan to spend a quiet, healthful, enjoyable time with someone who doesn't require too much maintenance or spend it alone. Scorpio. Soak in a nice hot bath and chill. This is what you need today. No harsh words, no bad feelings, just be and enjoy the sensation.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You're aware of how good life is. Sometimes it takes having the bad times in order to appreciate the good. You want to help others help themselves which is an extraordinary way to spend your time but you get comfort from being unselfish and sharing. You've got your life's issues which have created understanding. You're able to offer advice and communicate in such a way that the person you're counseling can relate. Take some time to enjoy yourself today. There's no time like the present to do something you like.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Getting together with family, swapping stories about growing up and good food gets your attention today. Emotionally you need this time to wind down after the week of hard work. Generally working hard is what you consider best for you and it's very unusual for you to need those you love close but today you do. Enjoy your comradery with those you've known all your life. Taking care of business is your modus operandi for this morning of work. You need everything in its place so that you can see at a glance what you need to work on most. Generally, your work place is neat as a pin for that very reason. Keep your irritations to yourself although you meet with a few today.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

That's the best thing for you right now. You're not feeling quite yourself but you want to be around friends. Invite some of them to join you but be specific in your social requests. A friend you generally can count on isn't in the best mood and may start an argument. You won't take that too well, especially today. This isn't the time to argue either. If this occurs, step back, take a look at the situation and move on to another subject. Let your friends know that some subjects are off limits.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Adverbs 2 - Word Search

Q W N H L S U S O N N L R H D D P  
L U N I L L E W Y A M O E G N R H  
I H W E A E A M D Y J U W I I J U  
I I O Y A G V R I L E D O H H F X  
M F N M Y R A H Y T L L R S E I Y  
C Z T Y E W L L K F E Y Z S B R O  
A P J V R Q W Y N O D M L I U S E  
A D E O S O C A Y S O Z O E H T F  
K N F H L Y L K E E W Y H S R B X  
Q X O S F R O F T E N X P D W A L  
P R E S E N T L Y G W N W I D Y R  
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NEVER  
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PRESENTLY  
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RARELY

SLOWLY  
SOFTLY  
SOMETIMES  
WEEKLY  
WELL

Adverbs 1 - Solution

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

ACROSS  
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LOUDER  
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NEARBY  
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THEN  
TODAY  
TOMORROW  
UPWARD

Yesterday's Solution

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

Yesterday's Solution

				5	6	
	3		9	7		4 5
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Yesterday's Solution

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



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2019



People wearing costumes and face paint pose as they take part in a “Zombie walk” in Tel Aviv as part of the Jewish holiday of Purim on March 23, 2018. The carnival-like Purim holiday is celebrated with parades and costume parties to commemorate the deliverance of the Jewish people from a plot to exterminate them in the ancient Persian empire 2,500 years ago, as described in the Book of Esther. — AFP

## Offbeat art fest puts deserted California town back on map

By any stretch of the imagination, Bombay Beach is an oddity, starting with its exotic name, its location by a dying lake and the post-apocalyptic landscape that greets visitors. The desert town, once a thriving resort set along the Salton Sea, is among the poorest communities in California, its 250 or so residents seemingly forgotten by the rest of the world.

Most of the homes have been abandoned for decades, their yards filled with beat-up trailers and rusted cars. But the tiny hamlet is experiencing a rebirth of sorts as a group of artists and well-heeled sponsors have taken up residence, buying up dirt-cheap property and organizing an annual three-day festival called the Bombay Beach Biennale.

Launched in 2016, the festival, which is being held this weekend, is the brainchild of three Los Angeles-based friends — Tao Ruspoli, a filmmaker and artist, Stefan Ashkenazy, an art collector and hotelier, and Lily Johnson White, a philanthropist and member of the Johnson & Johnson family. Ruspoli said he learned about the town about a decade ago after he stumbled on a book about the Salton Sea — the largest lake in California, created in 1905 by an engineering error and now shrinking — and was enthralled after a first visit.

### ‘Mystifying and weird’

“It’s mystifying and wonderful and weird,” said Ruspoli, 43, who is the son of an Italian prince and was once married to actress Olivia Wilde. “It’s so removed from the kind of homogeneity that exists in the rest of America where you have a Denny’s and a gas station at every corner,” he told AFP on a recent tour of the town.

Ruspoli said he plunked down \$20,000 for his first house in Bombay Beach in 2011 — right after his divorce from Wilde — and the idea for the offbeat festival took shape on a weekend trip there with Ashkenazy and White. The tiny town — one square mile — today boasts a museum called the “Hermitage,” a drive-in movie theater filled

with junkyard cars and an opera house decorated with disused flip-flops recovered from the beaches of Lagos, in Nigeria.

Eccentric artworks — a dome made of discarded metal, an aircraft fuselage representing a fish, a slide made of twisted iron rods and two shipping containers in the form of a cross with the inside painted with religious figures representing “persecuted scientists” — make up some of the pieces on display at this year’s festival.

“If Andy Warhol were here today, this would be his thing,” said Kathy Suder, one of the participating artists whose work features 100 white tents set up across an empty lot and representing the homeless and displaced.



An attendee on a swing installed in the Salton Sea on the first day of the Bombay Beach Biennale.

### “A little Peter Panism”

The draw of Bombay Beach, White said, was a space in which artists could be creative outside the boundaries of accepted conventions. “There is such a spirit of the misfit here and a little Peter Panism,” she said. “We’re inviting people to come and create and really manifest their dreams that they are not able to realize within the commercial art world.”

For Belgian photographer Kirsten Thys Van Den Audenaerde, who is taking part in this year’s fest, there is no better place for someone to let their imagination run wild. “It’s like a bomb has been dropped here and we’re the last ones standing,” she told AFP as she surveyed the surreal landscape. “Mad Max would feel at home here.”

Much of the artwork made for the festival is gifted to the town afterwards, a welcome distraction for most of the locals as well as the increasing number of puzzled-looking tourists driving through. To avoid hordes of people descending on the town during the festival, the dates of the event are kept secret. Attendance is by invitation only, with only about 500 tickets distributed to local residents, artists and financial sponsors. “We have no financial agenda, no merchandising, we don’t take a dollar from this,” Ashkenazy, who sponsors many of the artists at the fest, said. “This is more like a block party, it’s not a spectator event.”

### Sprouting back to life

He said the ultimate goal is for the artists and sponsors to help the town get back on its feet and recover some of its faded glory. “It’s important to note that the ‘us and them’ component is pretty much dissolved,” he said. “We are all locals now and active participants in the community.” That message appears to resonate well among longtime residents who say the festival is breathing life into a ghost town that once hosted the likes of Frank Sinatra and the Beach Boys but had become a backdrop for zombie movies and fashion shoots.

“I have been coming here since the 1960s when you couldn’t even find a place to park and when the marina was packed with boats,” said Debi Cagle, 67, who owns a home in Bombay Beach. “It was absolutely amazing, the fishing was absolutely great and you had six bars across town.” Dean McAfee, 77, who started coming to Bombay Beach as a child and who has now retired there, said while he may not connect with all the quirky artwork, the festival is a welcome change. “It’s bringing the town back to life,” he said. “And that’s fine by me.” — AFP



Attendees view an art exhibit by artist James Ostrer.



An installation piece by artist Kenny Scharf, which features disused toys and plastic figures embedded on an abandoned home is seen in Bombay Beach.



People visit an installation sculpture of a crashed plane by artist Randy Polumbo, on the first day of the Bombay Beach Biennale, March 22 2019 in Bombay Beach, California. — AFP





Bangladeshi architect Suhas Nahian, 29, reacts as he shows his painting on his computer at his office in Dhaka. — AFP photos



Bangladeshi architect Suhas Nahian, 29, draws a painting on his iPad at his office.



This combination of pictures created on March 23, 2019 shows (top) painting of Bangladeshi architect Suhas Nahian, 29, in Dhaka on March 23, 2019 (down) Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (R) shoots to score a goal during the Spanish league football match between Real Betis and FC Barcelona at the Benito Villamarin stadium in Seville on March 17, 2019.

# HAND OF GOD? BANGLADESHI'S MESSI DRAWING COMES ALIVE

A young Bangladeshi architect has earned fame after his digital drawing of footballer Lionel Messi was matched in real life six years later. Suhas Nahian's 2013 artwork shows Messi dribbling past a group of players in green and white, leaning his head forward as one of the defenders grabs his red-and-blue Barcelona jersey. Photos of Messi shot during a recent match against Real Betis show him in an almost identical pose, complete with one defender on the ground as the Argentinian charges through.

"I painted something 6 years ago, and football gods made the image come true," Suhas, 29, said on Instagram. He told AFP that he watched the La Liga match, which saw Messi

score a hat-trick as Barcelona won 4-1, but noticed nothing exceptional until a friend phoned him and excitedly pointed out the striking similarities. "I looked back and found those are actually very similar," he said. "It was fascinating. I was surprised."

Suhas, who now owns an architecture firm, said the digital painting he drew as a student in 2013 was shared by a football fan page called Plaantik at that time. "I am glad my only painting brought me so much fame, as it has been published in many Spanish, Argentine and Indian media," he said. Suhas said he did not choose Betis's white and green jersey for his artwork consciously.

"Barcelona's jersey is very vibrant with blue

and red, so from the point of color I wanted to paint the rest of the painting in green so that Messi stays in focus," he said. "So I chose this green and white jersey, not specifically thinking of Betis but from the sense of color." Suhas said his artwork was part of a football-themed series that he wanted to do including Messi's dribbling, Cristiano Ronaldo's header and Xavi's turn. "I am a Barcelona fan but I admire all great players. This is why I wanted to draw this football series. But after the painting on Messi's dribbling, I could not complete the rest," he said. — AFP

## Miami Beach calls time as Spring Break party gets out of control

Spring Break is a US holiday known for excessive partying, but in Miami Beach, one of the centers of festivities, residents have had enough. Every March, the bar-lined ocean-front area fills up with students from across the country, drinking, partying and stripping down to the bare essentials. The drunken revelry has reached such chaotic heights this year — with drunken brawls on the beachfront and a tourist falling to her death out of a car window — that the authorities have decided to call time on the wild festivities.

Riot police have begun patrolling the waterfront, with police vans parked nearby to detain party people who go too far. The authorities have said they will no longer ignore people consuming alcohol or lighting up joints on the beach. "We are here just to have fun," said 18-year-old student Jack Rogers from Towson University in Maryland. "It's spring break." "Obviously, people are getting a little out of hand," he said, sitting on a seafront wall with friends.

As night falls, the crowds move towards Ocean Drive, the road running along the beachfront and filled with bars and restaurants offering happy hour discounts on monster-sized cocktails. In the mornings, as the tropical heat rises, the streets reek of urine. Partygoers have been filming their antics and sharing them on social media. One posted video of a driver serving drinks to another passing vehicle on a major causeway, while a separate clip shows people brawling in the street with a woman knocked out by a man who punches her in the face.

The clips shed some light on the atmosphere in which Mariah Michelle Logan, a

tourist from Chicago, met her end around daybreak last Sunday. The 23-year-old fell out the window of a speeding car on the road to the airport as she leaned out to yell, "Bye Miami!" She was then hit by another car and killed. The tragedy, combined with images of stampedes and 20-year-olds drinking alcohol through plastic funnels, forced the authorities to come up with an emergency plan on Tuesday to establish order next week, the last stretch of the holiday. "I think we need to eliminate this Spring Break phenomenon as soon as possible," said John Elizabeth Aleman, city commissioner for Miami Beach. "I think we need to make it a lot less fun to be here, unfortunately, for that type of tourism," she said.

### 'You will be arrested'

"You can't stop people from having fun," said Marta Ramirez, a 70-year-old resident of Miami Beach. "But they should try to show a little more respect. Let them dance and have fun, but with order." The police slogan for those heading to Miami for Spring Break this year was: "Come on vacation, don't leave on probation." Clearly, the message has not got through, even though last November police chief Daniel Oates sent his own message to fraternities and sororities of colleges across the country: "If you come to Miami Beach for Spring Break, you must obey our laws. If you do not, you will be arrested."

At the emergency council meeting there was even talk of imposing a curfew. In the end, city commissioners decided not to go that far, but they did pledge special measures, including extra police and patrols on quad bikes confiscating alcohol on the beach. Residential areas of the island will be closed off with barricades for the last weekend of the break season, and there will be license plate checks and plainclothes police officers mingling with the crowds. "This is not a place where everything goes, and if that is their reason for coming here, they should go elsewhere," said Mayor Dan Gelber. — AFP



Miami Beach police officers stand across the street from the night clubs and hotels on Ocean Drive in South Beach, Florida. — AFP

## Tintoretto's bold innovations highlighted in US art show

When he was just a teenager, Tintoretto was sent to Italian Renaissance painter Titian's studio, only to be kicked out within days because the older master got jealous. Or so goes the legend. What is clear from the first major Tintoretto retrospective outside of Europe, opening today at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, is that the "impetuous genius" critics reviled for his free, "unfinished" style was a bold innovator whose impact can still be felt today.

The exhibition, a debut for the museum's first woman director Kaywin Feldman, comes on the heels of city-wide celebrations and shows for the artist's 500th birthday in his hometown of Venice. Jean-Paul Sartre called Tintoretto the "first film director," a theatricality seen in paintings like "The Conversion of Saint Paul" (circa 1544). The eponymous scene happens in one corner of a canvas otherwise dominated by extravagant, zigzagging brushstrokes deliberately left clearly visible — then a groundbreak-

ing innovation — to depict events like horses tumbling down an outdoor staircase.

The nearly 50 paintings and more than a dozen works on paper that span the artist's career, on view until July 7, demonstrate how he lived up to the motto he wrote on a wall as a youth: "The draftsmanship of Michelangelo and the paint handling of Titian." There's a proliferation of superhuman, hyper-muscular bodies sometimes tumbling out of the sky and almost always in motion, as though Michelangelo's sculptures themselves were brought to life with unhampered energy in an explosion of colors.

Religious or historical subjects and mythological themes are rendered with spirited virtuosity lacking spatial cohesion, earning the man born Jacopo Robusti his other nickname, "Il Furioso." His bravura, shocking at the time, foretold of innovations that came centuries later. "We would make the case that it's possible to draw a direct line from Tintoretto's dynamic compositions and eloquent brushwork through

(Peter Paul) Rubens to (Eugene) Delacroix and (Theodore) Gericault and right on up to (Willem) de Kooning and to the abstract expressionists and to painters of the present day, such as Gerhard Richter," said co-curator Robert Echols.

Despite dominating Venetian painting in the second half of the 16th century, Tintoretto later became somewhat of a neglected master. Museum officials through the ages had to contend with his oeuvre being rooted in Venice, works by assistants and followers being wrongfully attributed to the master and the pieces' colossal size. His "Paradise" in Venice's Palazzo Ducale is considered the largest Old Master painting in the world at some 70 feet wide. A preparatory oil sketch crossed the Atlantic instead. Painted entirely by the artist, unlike the larger work completed for most part by assistants, it's still more than 16 feet wide. — AFP



A man looks at Jacopo Tintoretto's painting "The Virgin and Child with Saints" (1540) during a preview of "Tintoretto: Artist of Renaissance Venice" at the National Gallery of Art in Washington. — AFP photos



Exhibition co-curators Frederick Ilchman (R) and Robert Echols (L) speak with a visitor in front of Jacopo Tintoretto's "Doge Alvise Mocenigo and Family before the Virgin and Child" (circa 1575).



Exhibition co-curator Robert Echols (L) points at the massive oil sketch "Paradise" (circa 1583) believed to have been painted entirely by Jacopo Tintoretto as a model for the final picture of the same name covering the wall behind the doge's throne in the Hall of the Great Council of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, which a then aging Tintoretto delegated largely to assistants including his son.



People look at Jacopo Tintoretto's painting "Saint George and the Dragon" (circa 1553/1555).

## Beverly Hills high with pot delivery and Gucci ashtrays

High-end department store Barneys New York has given the marijuana lifestyle the luxury treatment, launching a range of pot-themed products this week in the latest sign a drug once associated with bohemians and deadbeats is moving up the social ladder. Customers at the upscale retailer's Beverly Hills store on Friday perused a new section with hand-blown glass bonges, Gucci ashtrays, jewelry inscribed with the words "Lighten Up" and cosmetics labeled as containing cannabidiol, a non-high inducing part of the cannabis plant.

Marijuana remains banned by federal law, although California is one of 10 US states that has legalized the drug for recreational use. Barneys New York does not sell any marijuana in stores, but the retailer has given space at its Beverly Hills store to another company, Beboe. Beboe's sales representatives at the store can help customers use an iPad to order marijuana for home delivery by another company called Emjay, said Beboe co-founder Scott Campbell.

"It's designed to replace the bottle of wine that you

bring to a dinner," Campbell said. "Our stuff is what we call very socially dosed, which is something you can puff on and get warm and tingly but you're not going to get trapped in your sofa for four hours like a lot of other cannabis products." Barneys New York's move into the pot lifestyle market comes more than one year after California, following a 2016 referendum to legalize weed, allowed dispensaries to sell the drug to adults for recreation.

"Legalization is only a year old and it's opening up our eyes to what's there in the market, what's missing in the

market, what our customer wants," Matthew Mazzucca, who is the creative director of Barney's New York. The retailer known for lavish fashion items, including leather bags and high fashion jackets and shoes, plans to bring its cannabis-themed "The High End" products to other stores, the company has said.—Reuters





# Tokyo Fashion Week



Models display the creations from the 2019 Autumn/Winter collection of Indonesian fashion brand "(X)S.M.L." at the Tokyo Fashion Week. — AFP photos





Lifestyle | Gossip

# Sarah Lyland has been released from hospital

The ‘Modern Family’ actress - who recently underwent a second kidney transplant after the first one failed - was being treated for a respiratory infection and conjunctivitis, but she’s relieved to be back home with boyfriend Wells Adams. She shared a video of herself and Wells and said: “Well, I’m out of the hospital. Wells just informed me that it’s National Puppy Day. Every day is National Puppy Day.” The former ‘Bachelorette’ star also posted a series of videos, including one of himself and the 28-year-old actress singing together. While Sarah is “still sick”, she’s also taking the time to pamper herself. She said in another Instagram Story post: “I got my roots touched up yesterday.” The actress had previously used her social media account to reveal she was at the hospital, posting a picture of herself with a face mask on as she advised her fol-

lowers to “always bring face masks and a silk pillow to the hospital”. Sarah’s health problems come after she recently said she was left feeling suicidal when her kidney transplant failed, as she felt as though she was letting down her family, particularly her father who had given up his own kidney to save her life. The actress - whose second transplant was donated by her young brother - said: “I would write letters in my head to loved ones of why I did it and my reasoning behind it, how it was nobody’s fault. I didn’t want to write it down on paper because I didn’t want anybody to find it. That’s how serious I was ... It ended up being myself that got me out of that. I had to do it on my own. I told myself I had to do it on my own.”



## Diana Ross defends ‘magnificent’ Michael Jackson

The 74-year-old singer took to Twitter to speak up for her late friend after he was accused on documentary ‘Leaving Neverland’ of abusing Wade Robson and James Safechuck when they were children. Referencing her own Supremes hit single, she posted: ““This is what’s on my heart this morning. I believe and trust that Michael Jackson was and is A magnificent incredible force to me and to many others. STOP IN THE NAME OF LOVE (sic)” Diana’s defense of the ‘Billie Jean’ hitmaker comes after Barbra Streisand recently received a huge backlash for suggesting the parents of James and Wade were partly to blame for their allegations, and insisted if they were abused, it didn’t “kill” the two men. She said: “His sexual needs were his sexual needs, coming from whatever childhood he has or whatever DNA he has. “You can say ‘molested’, but those children, as you heard say [the grown-up Robson and Safechuck], they were thrilled to be there. They both married and they both have children, so it didn’t kill them. “It’s a combination of feelings. I feel bad for the children. I feel bad for him. I blame, I guess, the parents, who would allow their children to sleep with him. Why would Michael need these little children dressed like him and in the shoes and the dancing and the hats?” But the ‘Funny Girl’ star has since “profoundly apologized” for her remarks. She said in a statement: “I am profoundly sorry for any pain or misunderstanding I caused by not choosing my words more carefully about Michael Jackson and his victims, because the words as printed do not reflect my true feelings. “I didn’t mean to dismiss the trauma these boys experienced in any way. Like all survivors of sexual assault, they will have to carry this for the rest of their lives. I feel deep remorse and I hope that James and Wade know that I truly respect and admire them for speaking their truth.”

# Holmes spends time with ‘incredible women’ of a refugee camp



## Sam Mendes can imagine giving up making movies

The 53-year-old British director has an enormous passion for the theatre and although he still very much loves to take “vacations” on movies he “always returns” to stage productions and he can imagine himself stepping away from Hollywood sooner rather than later. Speaking on the Variety Stagecraft podcast, he said: “I’m a theatre person really, that’s how I think of myself. I take vacations in the movies and they’re long and extremely hard working vacations but never the less that’s how they feel. Movies for me are where I want to go when I feel a little trapped or a little claustrophobic in the theatre. Theatre is where I tend to want to go when I feel a little exhausted and over travelled in movies and I’m lucky enough to go back and forth - but for me theatre is where I always return to. “I can imagine myself directing plays into my 80s, I can’t always imagine myself directing movies if I last that long.” Although he loves the theatre, Mendes - who helmed the last two James Bond movies, ‘Skyfall’ and ‘Spectre’ - admits musicals have not really appealed to him over the years but he did love working on ‘Cabaret’ - which he helmed in 1993 in London’s West End and again on the show’s third Broadway revival in 2014 - and it is one of the “few productions” he misses working on. He said: “I don’t think there are that many that haven’t been done pretty damn recently or I’ve already done them and that hasn’t always been my happy space. I loved ‘Cabaret’, that was a great experience for me and it’s one of the few productions that I still miss.”



## Mel B claims she had a fling with band mate

The 43-year-old singer is set to reunite with the ‘Wannabe’ hitmakers for a special tour in just a few weeks time, and has revealed that during her original run with the girl group over 20 years ago, she had “one time” fling with Geri, which she insists will never “happen again”. She said: “We were best friends. It just happened. It wasn’t a thing. It just happened. We just giggled at it and that was it. It just happens one time and then you talk about it and it does not really happen again. It was just that one time.” But Mel fears 46-year-old Geri - who is now married to Christian Horner - won’t be too happy with her decision to come clean about the romp. She added: “Hopefully when Geri gets asked she won’t deny it, because it was just a thing. It was not anything major. It was just a fun thing. You asked me a question and I answered it. “She is going to hate me for this because she is all posh in her country house and her husband. But it’s a fact. She is going to kill me and so is her husband.” And although she only had a sexual encounter with Geri, Mel insists she kissed “all” the other group members, made up of Mel C, Emma Bunton, and Victoria Beckham. Speaking to Piers Morgan in a promotional clip for his ITV chat show ‘Life Stories’, she said: “When I got my tongue pierced we all kissed. But that was just a kiss because I wanted to know what it felt like. It was just a silly kiss.” Mel’s full ‘Life Stories’ episode is set to air in the UK on ITV this summer.

## MALIK apologizes for being a bad person

The 26-year-old singer took to Twitter on Saturday (23.03.19) to make a public apology, although he didn’t reveal why he believes he is a bad person. In the tweet, which has since been deleted, the former One Direction star wrote: “I’d like apologize for basically being a s\*\*t person, (sic)” Despite not giving any further information, Zayn’s comments come after his former band mate Louis Tomlinson recently revealed he fell out with Zayn when he refused to show up to support him when he performed on ‘The X Factor’ just days after the death of his mother Johannah Deakin in 2016. Louis said: “Truthfully it never really got better to be honest. “I had a couple of calls with him after I lost me mum and, you know, all the boys had agreed to come to that performance and he didn’t show and that really bugged me.” Whilst the ‘Pillowtalk’ hitmaker was a no show at the event, Louis’ other band mates Harry Styles, Niall Horan and Liam Payne all turned out to show their support, and Louis said their presence gave him the strength he “needed” to complete the emotional performance. He added: “Everyone showed and it was a moment of ... I got goosebumps there, and seeing Harry, Niall, and Liam, that was what I needed that night, that support.”



## Kate Wright throws step-daughter a pink-themed b’day party

The former reality star has been romancing soccer star Rio Ferdinand for two years and has embraced her step-mother duties, and on Friday she threw a lavish birthday party for seven-year-old Tia, whom Rio had with his late wife Rebecca Ellison. The party was complete with pink decorations - including hundreds of pink balloons, pink roses, and a pink telephone box - three towers of cupcakes, and stacks of Domino’s pizza. In a post on Instagram which showed off the decorations, Kate wrote: What a party Thank you so much to the amazing Brenda from @nerib-aeventstyling (first pik) for making our little girls dreams come true! It was more than we could wish for. Two happy princesses dancing all night. Thank you so much (sic)” Another snap, which showed the boxes of pizza, was captioned: When I cheat .... I don’t do it in halves pizza party @dominos\_uk (sic)” Kate, 28, got engaged to 40-year-old Rio in November, and it has been said Tia and her brothers - Lorenz, 10, and Tate, eight - adore the former ‘The Only Way Is Essex’ star. The children even want the couple to give them a new baby brother or sister. Kate said: “The kids would like a little brother or sister; they say ‘I dreamt that you were pregnant.’ But right now we’re just happy with our little unit.” Rio’s wife Rebecca Ellison was just 34 when she died from breast cancer in May 2015 and he started dating Kate in 2017, who previously said she was hugely impressed with how he has coped since Rebecca’s passing.



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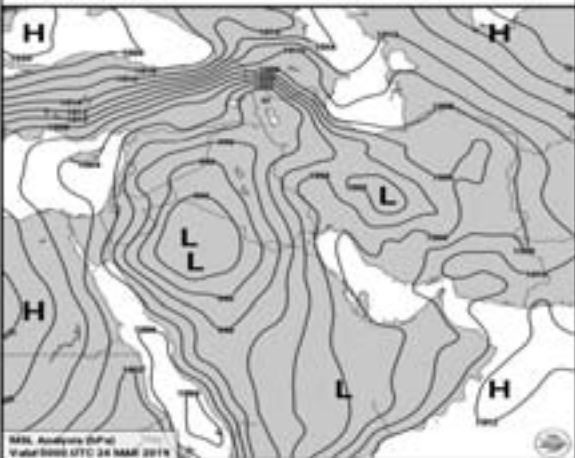
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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Warm and Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times north easterly wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 50 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery

**BY NIGHT:** Cool and Cloudy to partly cloudy with moderate to fresh south easterly wind, with speed of 20 - 55 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

WEATHER WARNING			Unstable weather	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 24/03/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	28 °C	20 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28 °C	18 °C		
ABDALY	30 °C	15 °C		
BUBYAN	--- °C	---- °C		
JAHRA	30 °C	18 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	27 °C	19 °C		
SALMIYAH	23 °C	19 °C		
AHMADI	23 °C	20 °C		
NUWAISIB	25 °C	17 °C		
WAFRA	28 °C	15 °C		
SALMY	28 °C	17 °C		
			MPL. Analysis (Ref. 1) Valid 0000 UTC 24 MAR 2019	

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	03/25	Relatively hot and Cloudy with a chance for rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery	31 °C	20 °C	SE-S	15 - 50 km/h
Tuesday	03/26	Warm and Clouds will decrease gradually with a chance for rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery	29 °C	18 °C	SE-NW	20 - 50 km/h
Wednesday	03/27	Warm	28 °C	14 °C	VRB-N	06 - 26 km/h
Thursday	03/28	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	27 °C	14 °C	VRB-E	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:29
Sunrise	05:48
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:01
Isha	19:19

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	28 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	58 %
MIN. RH	16 %
MAX. Wind	E 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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Arrival Flights on Monday 25/3/2019							Departure Flights on Monday 25/3/2019									
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10	
THY	766	ISL	00:30	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05	JZR	872	Dubai	14:15	
JZR	254	Amman	00:40	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	RBG	554	Alexandria	14:40	
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	KAC	672	Dubai	14:25	JZR	111	Doha	01:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00	
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	364	Colombo	14:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50	KNE	382	Taif	15:00	
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:30	KAC	363	Colombo	01:50	IRA	666	Esfahan	15:10	
KAC	102	London	00:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:55	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10	
JZR	722	Alexandria	00:55	KAC	618	Doha	14:40	KAC	417	Manila	02:20	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25	
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:25	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40	
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:00	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45	
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50	
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10	IGO	1758	Kochi	02:55	KAC	743	Dammam	15:55	
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	THY	767	ISL	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00	
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	JZR	222	Riyadh	15:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05	
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	KAC	619	Doha	16:10	
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	562	Amman	15:35	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	563	Amman	16:10	
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20	
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50	KKK	1269	Istanbul	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35	
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40	
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45	
JZR	502	Lahore	03:35	KAC	118	New York	16:05	JZR	701	Asyut	04:30	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00	
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:45	JZR	212	Jeddah	16:25	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:55	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35	
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	502	Beirut	16:30	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40	
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	542	Cairo	16:30	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45	
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1072	Doha	16:35	FDB	070	Dubai	05:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45	
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	FDB	051	Dubai	16:40	JZR	215	Jeddah	06:00	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50	
JZR	716	Sohag	04:40	JZR	114	Doha	17:10	JZR	713	Sohag	06:15	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00	
UAE	873	Dubai	04:55	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	JZR	121	Dubai	06:35	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:00	
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	THY	771	Istanbul	06:40	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10	
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	JZR	104	Bahrain	17:45	UAE	874	Dubai	06:50	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15	
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:45	KAC	167	Paris	07:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20	
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	RJA	643	Amman	07:15	KAC	621	Doha	18:25	
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	FDB	063	Dubai	18:15	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35	
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	124	Dubai	18:20	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:20	JZR	253	Amman	18:40	
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	JZR	115	Doha	07:30	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40	
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	QTR	1080	Doha	18:30	KAC	173	Munich	08:20	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55	
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	744	Dammam	19:00	KAC	163	MXP	08:40	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20	
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25	FDB	054	Dubai	08:50	UAE	876	Cairo	19:30	
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30	KAC	161	Geneva	09:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55	
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:30	IGO	1756	CNN	09:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05	
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:25	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	KAC	501	Beirut	09:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15	
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	KAC	357	Kochi	20:30	
BAW	157	London	07:05	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	BAW	156	London	09:10	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35	
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	KNE	381	Taif	20:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:10	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:35	
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	620	Doha	20:15	KAC	541	Cairo	09:30	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40	
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50	
IGO	1755	CNN	08:00	AZQ	4565	Baku	20:30	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45	JZR	709	Luxor	20:50	
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	674	Dubai	20:35	KAC	101	London	09:45	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55	
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55	
KAC	304	Mumbai	08:20	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20	
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	174	Munich	21:15	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30	
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50	
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00	
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	KAC	617	Doha	10:35	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10	
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	164	MXP	21:25	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15	
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	168	Paris	21:30	JZR	211	Jeddah	10:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15	
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35	QTR	1071	Doha	10:45	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20	
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:50	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:45	JZR	715	Sohag	22:20	
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50	KAC	117	New York	11:25	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25	
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	162	Geneva	21:55	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25	AZQ	4566	Baku	22:30	
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	KAC	564	Amman	21:55	AXB	220	Kozhikode	11:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30	
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:00	KAC	303	Mumbai	22:30	
MSC	415	Sohag	11:15	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30	
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50	
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30	MEA	405	Sohag	12:15	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00	
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	622	Doha	22:30	QTR	1075	Doha	12:55	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05	
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:45	JZR	113	Doha	13:00	QTR	1083	Doha	23:25	
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30	
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	MSC	501	Alexandria	23:05									
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	JZR	128	Dubai	23:15									
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45									





A picture taken yesterday shows the demolition of the “Weisser Riese” (White Giant), a high-rise residential building from the 1970s in the Homberg-Hochheide district in Duisburg. According to a plan aiming at upgrading the district, the block of flats was blown up with around 290 kg of explosives, enveloping neighboring houses with a huge cloud of dust. — AFP

# More shale, who cares? Saudi Arabia pushes at least \$70 oil

DUBAI/LONDON: Budget needs are forcing Saudi Arabia to push for oil prices of at least \$70 per barrel this year, industry sources say, even though US shale oil producers could benefit and Riyadh’s share of global crude markets might be further eroded. Riyadh, OPEC’s de facto leader, said it was steeply cutting exports to its main customers in March and April despite refiners asking for more of its oil. The move defies US President Donald Trump’s demands for OPEC to help reduce prices while he toughens sanctions on oil producers Iran and Venezuela.

The export cuts are designed to prop up prices, sources close to Saudi oil policy say. Saudi officials say the kingdom’s output policies are merely intended to balance the world market and reduce high inventories. “The Saudis want oil at \$70 at least and are not worried about too much shale oil,” said one industry source familiar with Saudi oil policy. Another source said Saudi Arabia wanted to “put a floor under oil prices” at \$70 or slightly lower, and added: “No one at OPEC can talk about output increases now.”

Officially, Saudi Arabia, which plans to raise government spending to boost economic growth, does not have a price target. It says price levels are determined by the market and that it is merely targeting a balance of global supply and demand. Even a price of around \$70 a barrel would not balance Saudi Arabia’s books this year, according to figures cited by Jihad Azour, director of the International Monetary Fund’s Middle East and Central Asia department in February. For that, he said, Riyadh needs oil prices at \$80-\$85 a barrel. Saudi Arabia, the world’s largest oil exporter, also wants to make sure it avoids a repeat of the 2014-2016 oil price crash below \$30 per barrel, sources familiar with Saudi policy said.

Saudi Arabia plans to reduce March and April oil production to under 10 million barrels per day - below its official OPEC output target of 10.3 million bpd. A Saudi official told Reuters this month that despite strong demand from customers, state oil giant Saudi Aramco had cut its allocations for April by 635,000 bpd below nominations - requests made by refiners and clients for crude. Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said such swings were not unusual because last year the kingdom had raised output and exports above targets to avoid imminent shortages. Saudi Arabia has also been advocating an extension of OPEC-led supply cuts beyond June

until the end of 2019.

Russia, which is not an OPEC member but is cutting output in tandem with OPEC, can balance its budget at oil prices of \$55 per barrel and has not made clear yet whether it is prepared to extend them when OPEC next meets in June. “With budget needs at above \$85 per barrel, the Saudis desperately need prices at above \$70 per barrel,” said Gary Ross, CEO of Black Gold Investors and a veteran OPEC watcher. “They also need to convince Russia that the strategy of output cuts makes sense despite the loss of market share to the United States,” he said.

The United States and Russia produce 12 million and 11 million bpd respectively. Unlike Russia, the United States pumps at will via its commercial energy sector, led by shale. The International Energy Agency forecasts its output will soar by another 4 million bpd in the next five years. Those increases would be likely to outpace the growth of global demand and give Washington an even bigger share of the global market, making it a bigger exporter than Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh has long been a close ally of the United States and the two countries have coordinated oil policy more closely since Trump became president than under his predecessor, Barack Obama. Trump has supported Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman despite a global outcry over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a critic of the Saudi government, and has made clear he expects OPEC to help lower global oil prices.

Last year, Saudi Arabia raised output steeply under pressure from Washington. But it later heard that the United States had granted Iranian oil customers unexpectedly generous waivers and the price of oil subsequently fell to \$50 per barrel. On Monday, OPEC and its allies, led by Russia, scrapped a planned meeting in April and will decide instead whether to extend output cuts in June, once the market has assessed the impact of new US sanctions on Iran due in May over its non-compliance with a deal to curb its nuclear program.

“We have to wait and see what the Americans will do first,” a second OPEC source said. There is, however, no guarantee Saudi policy will remain unchanged if Washington puts pressure on Riyadh to raise supply. “They (the Saudis) do care about Trump, but they can’t do whatever he says every time,” an OPEC source said. — Reuters

## Norway liner reaches port...

Continued from Page 1

Dramatic footage of the passengers’ ordeal showed furniture and plants sliding around the lurching vessel as parts of the ceiling came down. Dozens of passengers wearing lifejackets were seen seated waiting to get off the ship.

“I have never seen anything so frightening,” said Janet Jacob, who was rescued. “I started to pray. I prayed for the safety of everyone on board,” she told the NRK television channel. “The helicopter trip was terrifying. The winds were like a tornado,” she added. “We were sitting down for breakfast when things started to shake... It was just chaos,” said another passenger, American John Curry, as quoted in Norwegian by local media.

Passenger Rodney Horgan said he had been reminded of the Titanic. “The best word, I guess, is surreal,” he said. “Sea water six-seven feet (about two metres) high just came rushing in, hit the tables, chairs, broken glass and 20-30 people just... went right in front of me. I was standing, my wife was sitting in front of me and all of a

sudden, she was gone. And I thought this was the end,” Horgan said. But it all ended well for Ryan Flynn. “Here’s my 83-year-old dad being airlifted from the #vikingsky,” he said. “We are all off the ship safely!”

The ship was sailing south from Tromso to Stavanger when engine trouble struck mid-afternoon on Saturday in an area off More og Romsdal that has claimed many vessels. “It is dangerous to encounter engine problems in these waters, which hide numerous reefs,” said Tor Andre Franck, the head of police operations. A reception center was set up in a gym on shore for the evacuees, many of whom were elderly and from the United States and Britain.

The area where the ship got into problems, known as Hustadvika, is notoriously difficult to navigate. The shallow, 10 nautical mile section of coastline is dotted with small islands and reefs. “Hustadvika is one of the most notorious maritime areas that we have,” Odd Roar Lange, a journalist specializing in tourism, told NRK. In their time, the Vikings hesitated to venture into the Hustadvika, preferring instead to transport their boats by land from one fjord to another. Operated by the Norwegian firm Viking Ocean Cruises, the Viking Sky was launched in 2017 with a capacity of 930 passengers plus crew. In addition to US and British nationals, there were also passengers from 14 other countries on board, Fjeld said. — AFP

## US pro-Israel lobby seeing partisan cracks

WASHINGTON: Powerful has long been the word used to describe America’s pro-Israel lobby AIPAC, which for decades has helped assure nearly universal support in Washington for the Jewish state. But as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee met for its annual conference starting yesterday, it is seeing rare partisan cracks with none of the Democratic presidential candidates confirmed to attend. The shift comes under the cloud of politics in Israel, whose right-wing prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is flying to Washington for AIPAC weeks before he faces elections.

President Donald Trump, who will warmly welcome Netanyahu, seized on the Democrats’ non-attendance, telling reporters Friday: “They are totally anti-Israel. Frankly, I think they’re anti-Jewish.” Democratic candidates have cited scheduling or given no reason, although an aide to Senator Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish, said the socialist was concerned that AIPAC was giving a platform to “leaders who have expressed bigotry and oppose a two-state solution.”

Trump has rallied in full force behind Netanyahu, backing his hard line on Iran and taking once taboo

steps such as recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and, just Thursday, accepting Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which the Jewish state captured from Syria in 1967. But American Jews lean left and only 24 percent approved of Trump’s job performance in a recent survey by the Pew Research Center. “AIPAC is in a difficult position because it is supposed to be the voice of the pro-Israel community, but in reality the Jewish community as a whole is opposed to the government of Israel as well as the government of the United States,” said Jeremy Ben-Ami, president of the liberal Jewish advocacy group J Street.

AIPAC has hardly lost the Democrats. While candidates will stay away, its top brass in Congress will speak at AIPAC including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. And AIPAC’s legislative goals face little serious pushback. Israel is the largest recipient of US aid, receiving more than \$3 billion in military financing in the 2018 fiscal year.

“I think it’s an established fact that on Capitol Hill there is overwhelming, bipartisan support and that support is just as deep in the Democratic Party as in the Republican Party,” said Jason Isaacson, who heads the Washington office of the American Jewish Committee. “I think it’s not surprising that people in their visceral, passionate resistance to the US president associate him with the prime minister of Israel and from that draw the conclusion that to oppose the president you must oppose people who share common strategic concerns,” he said. — AFP

## With eye on Iran, US clinches port...

Continued from Page 1

For Oman, the deal will further advance its efforts to transform Duqm, once just a fishing village 550 km south of capital Muscat, into a key Middle East industrial and port center, as its diversifies its economy beyond oil and gas exports. The deal could also better position the United States in the region for what has become a global competition with China for influence. Chinese firms once aimed to invest up to \$10.7 billion in the Duqm project, a

massive injection of capital into Oman, in what was expected to be a commercial, not military, arrangement.

“It looks to me like the Chinese relationship here isn’t as big as it appeared it was going to be a couple of years ago,” the second official said. “There’s a section of the Duqm industrial zone that’s been set aside for the Chinese ... and as far as I can tell so far they’ve done just about nothing.” Still, China has in the past shown no qualms about rubbing up against US military facilities. In 2017, the African nation of Djibouti, positioned at another geostrategic choke-point, the strait of Bab al-Mandeb, became home to China’s first overseas military base. The US military already had a base located just miles away, which has been crucial for operations against Islamic State, Al-Qaeda and other militant groups. — Reuters

## Egypt-Israel pact lives on in...

Continued from Page 1

recognized the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, causing uproar in the Muslim world. He followed up on Friday with a pledge to recognize Israel’s annexation of the Golan Heights.

Israel seized mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem, Syria’s Golan and Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula in the 1967 Six-Day War, when it also occupied the West Bank and Gaza. But under the 1979 peace treaty, Israel returned the Sinai to former enemy Egypt. Successive leaders in Cairo have kept the treaty in place even after Egypt’s uprising and the army’s 2013 overthrow of its first democratically-elected president, Islamist leader Mohamed Morsi, who himself did not move to scrap the accord. “In all cases, the peace treaty has remained in place,” Shobaki said. Instability since 2011 has thrown into disarray the

North Sinai region along the border with Gaza and Israel where a local affiliate of the Islamic State group has spearheaded an insurgency. Political commentator Abdel-Azim Hammad pointed to increased security cooperation with Israel, which has agreed to Egypt’s military presence in the Sinai being boosted to fight the militants. In an interview with US television network CBS, Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi acknowledged heightened cooperation with the Jewish state. “We have a wide range of cooperation with the Israelis,” he said.

Egypt and Israel have also developed strong economic relations with the 2018 signing of a \$15-billion deal on Israeli gas imports. In January, Israel’s Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz made a rare visit to Cairo to participate in an Eastern Mediterranean Forum. Under the peace treaty, Egypt has received more than \$40 billion in military aid and \$30 billion in economic assistance from the United States since 1980. The aid was partially suspended between 2013 and 2015 following Morsi’s ouster, but it was quickly restored. “For the United States, the Egyptian army is a stabilizing element in a region bristling with tensions,” Shobaki said. — AFP



## Sports

# McKenzie, Retallick star as Chiefs run riot to end five-match winless run

## First victory by the Chiefs in Pretoria since 2001

**JOHANNESBURG:** All Blacks Damian McKenzie and Brodie Retallick starred as the Chiefs ended a five-match winless run since the Super Rugby season began by hammering the Bulls 56-20 in Pretoria Saturday.

Full-back McKenzie was involved in almost every attacking move of the New Zealanders, who outscored the lethargic South Africans by seven tries to two at Loftus Versfeld Stadium.

He was also immaculate with his goal-kicking, slotting nine consecutive kicks before a difficult conversion rebounded off the post with his last attempt. Lock Retallick scored pushover tries just before and after half-time with the first giving the Chiefs a 24-6 half-time lead and the second effectively ending the match as a contest.

It was the first victory by the Chiefs in Pretoria since 2001, and was achieved without All Blacks centre Anton Lienert-Brown, a late withdrawal due to injury. From start to finish, the visiting team dominated possession and territory, belying the fact that they began the match bottom of the 15-team combined standings.

Before the match, the teams, replacements and match officials formed a circle and observed a brief period of silence in memory of the victims of the Christchurch massacre last weekend. "That was a really good result because it is never easy beating the Bulls on the Highveld," said man-of-the-match McKenzie.

"Our attitude was great, there was a lot of energy within the team, and we scored some really great tries by playing good footie." Winger Solomon Alaimalo, who was sin-binned for a high tackle in the second half, scored two tries for the two-time champions.

Retallick and centre Alex Nankivell also scored two tries each and replacement back Te Toiroa Tahuriorangi one for the New Zealand outfit. McKenzie slotted six conversions and three penalties for a 21-point tally that lifted him to second behind Handre Pollard of the Bulls in the Super Rugby scoring charts.

Centres Jesse Kriel and Burger Odendaal scored a try each for the Bulls and fly-half Pollard kicked two conversions and two penalties. Later, brothers Robert and Daniel du Preez contributed 23 points between them as the Sharks coasted to a 28-14 victory over the Melbourne Rebels in Durban.

Loose forward Daniel used his strength to barge over for a seventh-minute try and open the scoring at Kings Park. Fly-half Robert then took over, scoring a try and kicking two conversions and three penalties while a try by winger Makazole Mapimpi completed the South Africans' total.

Winger Tom English and full-back Jack Maddocks scored a try each for the Australians and fly-half Quade Cooper converted both. Defeat completed a disappointing tour by the Rebels, who arrived boasting a three-match winning streak only to squander a 28-point lead when losing to the Lions in Johannesburg last weekend. The Sharks were happy to get back on the winning trail after losing their last two matches having begun with two victories. "We are very disappointed having come to South Africa aiming for at least one victory," admitted Rebels skipper and loose forward Angus Cottrell. "The positives included our line-outs and scrums, but we missed too many tackles and conceded a lot of penalties." — AFP



PRETORIA: Chiefs' Te Toiroa Tahuriorangi runs to score a try during Super Rugby union match between Bulls and Chiefs at the Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Pretoria. — AFP

## Reds revival rolls on as Brumbies brushed aside

**BRISBANE:** A revival by the Queensland Reds gathered pace yesterday with their second win in a row, storming past a tired and outplayed ACT Brumbies 36-14 in energy-sapping conditions. The Brisbane-based team crashed to defeat in their opening three Super Rugby games, but stunned the Sunwolves in Tokyo last weekend with a gritty 34-31 win and dominated the Brumbies.

Scott Higginbotham, Chris Feauai-Sautia, Tate McDermott, Brandon Paenga-Amosa and Bryce Hegarty all scored tries for a bonus-point victory. It was testament to their fitness levels in a game played

in stifling 34 Celsius (93 Fahrenheit) heat and high humidity that saw the Brumbies flag in the second half.

"Really pleased with how we started, it's something we've been working on for the past few weeks," said dynamic Reds skipper Samu Kerevi. "Really proud of the boys," he added, saying their "intent" throughout the entire 80 minutes was what pleased him most.

Brumbies captain Christian Lealiifano admitted his team deserved to lose. "They came with a lot of energy and probably beat us in the physicality area. We're disappointed but we'll go away and look at that and look to improve," he said.

The Brumbies opened with a period of intense pressure with virtually the entire first 10 minutes played in the Reds' half, including an epic 27-phase play from the hooter. But the home team's defence was rock solid and they soon took the attack to their Canberra rivals, with Higginbotham wriggling his way over the line from a ruck five metres out to open the scoring.

It was the ever-reliable number eight's 39th Super

Rugby try, extending his own record as most ever by a forward. Hegarty slotted the conversion, then a penalty as the Reds began to dominate, going into half-time with a 10-0 lead in front of Wallabies coach Michael Cheika.

Seemingly revived by the break, the Brumbies quickly worked the ball to the Reds' 22 before sending it out wide to Henry Speight who crashed over, with Lealiifano nailing the conversion.

But it was a futile effort with two quick Reds tries reasserting their authority. For the first, Kerevi beat a Brumbies defender on the sideline and as space opened up offloaded to Feauai-Sautia who ran unchallenged to the line.

Feauai-Sautia was at the heart of the next, picking up a loose ball and passing to McDermott who sprinted from the half-way line. Debutant Jahrome Brown pulled one back for the Brumbies barely 20 seconds after coming on before Hegarty got the Reds fourth with a long-distance run and Paenga-Amosa put the final nail in their coffin on the siren. — AFP



SYDNEY: Stormers Pieter-Steph du Toit is tackled during the Super15's rugby match between Australia's Waratahs and New Zealand's Crusaders at the Sydney Cricket Ground in Sydney. — AFP

has thrown the southern hemisphere competition wide open, with Gibson saying his team, who have three wins from five, took a lot of confidence from beating the best. "We've dropped a couple of close games but we're in the fight and it's pleasing," he said. "It's confidence building no doubt, particularly around those areas we've spoken about. We scrapped and you've got to against a team like that." —AFP



PALM HARBOR: Paul Casey of England plays a shot during the third round of the Valspar Championship on the Copperhead course at Innisbrook Golf Resort in Palm Harbor, Florida. — AFP

after 197 starts over eight seasons, aced the par-3 15th with an 8-iron from 218 yards. Kokrak delivered only the third ace in tournament history at 15 when his ball bounced twice and rolled 25 feet into the cup, briefly giving him a share of the lead at seven-under.

"We had 194 to carry it into the downgrain part," Kokrak said. "It was into the wind. We knew if we flushed it, it would go right in and it was perfect." Britain's Luke Donald, a former world number one who has battled a back injury, began and ended with birdies in shooting 70 to share fourth on 207 with American Scott Stallings. —AFP

## Hend pips Elvira in playoff after lightning strikes at Maybank

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Australian Scott Hend beat Spanish overnight leader Nacho Elvira with a birdie on the first playoff hole to win the co-sanctioned \$3 million Maybank Championship after wild weather triggered a dramatic finish yesterday.

Hend was leading Elvira by a single stroke when the leading pair on the final fairway when torrential rain started falling on the Saujana Golf and Country Club. The first crack of thunder came as Elvira hit his approach shot to the 18th green and, with lightning flashing around them, the players were forced off the course before either could attempt a putt.

They returned after a delay of 100 minutes and Elvira nailed his birdie putt from 30 feet for a two-under-par 70 to tie the scores at 15-under 273 and force the playoff.

"What a putt by Nacho... it was fantastic," Hend told reporters. "If I was to go out there and hit that putt you would say you would hole it one in 10 times. It was an amazing putt, and in the situation he holed it."

Hend looked in trouble when he landed in a greenside bunker on the first playoff hole but it was his turn to celebrate minutes later when he landed a four-footer after his opponent's birdie putt had stopped just short of the hole.

It was a third European Tour and 10th Asian Tour title for the big hitting 45-year-old, who spent two years on the PGA Tour from 2004. "Obviously I had a bit of luck on the playoff hole. If you don't have any luck you won't win," Hend added. "I had the luck today, unfortunately for Nacho. His time will come, he's going to win. He's a great player."

Earlier Hend, who started the round three shots behind the Spaniard, had made all the running on another day of stifling heat in the Malaysian capital with six birdies and a single bogey as he hit a 67 for the second day in a row.

His drives, although typically long, were not always accurate and he had to scrap for some of his birdies on the green, not least at the sixth and seventh holes when he drained lengthy putts to join Elvira at the top of the leaderboard.

An accurate drive and an aggressive approach shot to within six feet at the ninth earned the Queenslander another birdie and the sole lead.

He bogeyed the 10th but Elvira did too and when Hend extended his lead to two shots with his final shot at the 13th, it looked like the title was his. "I felt like I played fantastic on the back nine. I nearly holed a lot of putts, just missing," Hend said. "I just had to keep my head on and stay patient. The worst case scenario was a playoff."

Elvira, who led by two shots coming into the final round, had never really got going but a birdie at the 16th finally put him under par for the day, and a shot behind Hend overall, to set up the late drama.

Thailand's Jazz Janewattananond threatened to challenge when he bagged three birdies in his first seven holes but failed to kick on and he finished third two shots behind the leaders and a shot in front of fourth-placed American Johannes Veerman. South Africa's former world number one Ernie Els finished in share of seventh on 10-under after a 71. — Reuters

## Crusaders will bounce back after loss ends traumatic week

**SYDNEY:** Canterbury Crusaders coach Scott Robertson has said his team will bounce back after the New South Wales Waratahs ended their 19-game winning streak, refusing to blame the defeat on an emotional and traumatic week.

The reigning Super Rugby champions lost 20-12 on Saturday in their first match since a white supremacist shot dead 50 people at two mosques in their home city of Christchurch. The attacks deeply affected the Crusaders hard, with their match in the immediate aftermath cancelled so the players could return home to their communities.

In Sydney on Saturday they were subdued, starting slowly and uncharacteristically making a series of handling errors on a wet evening. "We were really desperate to play well and represent our people and show how much we care," Robertson told reporters.

## Casey clings to one-shot PGA lead over No 1 Johnson

**MIAMI:** Defending champion Paul Casey clung to a one-stroke lead over top-ranked Dustin Johnson despite a closing bogey in Saturday's third round of the US PGA Tour Valspar Championship. The 41-year-old Englishman missed a 14-foot par putt at the par-4 18th and settled for a bogey and a three-under par 68.

Casey stood on nine-under 204 after 54 holes at the Innisbrook Resort Copperhead course in Palm Harbor, Florida. "It feels really good," Casey said. "I was patient for the most part and aggressive when I had opportunities." Johnson, a winner at last month's WGC Mexico Championship, was next on 205 after a 67 with fellow American Jason Kokrak third on 206 after a hole-in-one on his way to matching the week's low round on 66.

Casey relishes the challenge of playing alongside the world number one in today's last group. "Playing with Dustin is going to be very exciting," Casey said. "Any time I've got a chance to go up against world number one I'm excited about that."

"I do what I do because I want to play against the best in the world. And obviously he's the prominent one in the group of guys near the lead. "Who is the favorite tomorrow? Probably Dustin. So I actually feel very kind of little

pressure... it's pretty simple. If I go out tomorrow and beat him I actually might win. Plain and simple. Great scenario."

Casey has struggled to defend titles and turn 54-hole leads into victories but he stands a chance of doing both today. He has won only once in five tries, and never broken 70, when leading a US PGA event after 54 holes. The win came at the 2009 Houston Open with a bogey on the first playoff hole to beat American J.B. Holmes.

Casey, who edged Tiger Woods and Patrick Reed by a stroke for the title 18th Valspar crown, has never defended a professional title. But the British star has taken back-to-back titles multiple times as an amateur. He won the 1999 and 2000 English Amateurs and three consecutive Pacific-12 Conference trophies while studying at Arizona State University. "My mindset now is I've won it, I have nothing to lose," Casey said. "I'm feeling a good position, like I don't have really any pressure. Now I've got one of those trophies. Yeah, I want another one, but it's not as much urgency." Casey opened birdie-bogey, added a six-foot birdie putt at the par-4 sixth and made back-to-back birdie putts from three feet at the par-5 11th and eight feet at the par-4 12th. Casey made a 10-foot birdie putt at the par-5 14th, but at 18, Casey found a greenside bunker and blasted out before rolling his par putt just off the right edge of the cup. Johnson fired his 14th consecutive round in the 60s, the longest such run of his career or by any tour player this season. The World No. 1 sank a 33-foot birdie putt at the par-5 14th and curled in a tricky 10-footer for birdie at 18 to join Casey in the last pairing.

"It was a big birdie," Johnson said. "I'm in a good position going into the round tomorrow. I played a solid round. Missed a couple birdie opportunities but other than that I played really well." Kokrak, seeking his first PGA crown



Sports

# Jets blank Predators, clinch playoffs on Connor's hat trick

## Mantha tallies two goals, Red Wings beat Knights in OT

**WINNIPEG:** Kyle Connor recorded his first career hat trick, Kevin Hayes tallied four points, Connor Hellebuyck made 33 saves and the Winnipeg Jets notched a 5-0 shutout over the visiting Nashville Predators on Saturday. The victory clinched a postseason berth for Winnipeg, which is in the Stanley Cup playoffs for just the fourth time in the 19-season history of the Thrashers/Jets franchise. Winnipeg (45-26-4, 94 points) also extended its Central Division lead over Nashville to four points as the Jets chase their first-ever division title. Nashville (42-28-6, 90 points) has lost two in a row and missed a chance to clinch its own playoff spot. Hellebuyck now has shutouts in consecutive starts. He improved to 4-0-0 with a .959 save percentage over his last five appearances.

### BRUINS 7, PANTHERS 3

Visiting Boston scored five times in the second period en route to defeating Florida. With the win, the Bruins surpassed 100 points for the second straight season and clinched a playoff spot for the third straight year. Boston, which has won four straight games, got goals from Noel Acciari, Brad Marchand, Zdeno Chara, Karson Kuhlman, Steven Kampfer, David Pastrnak and Patrice Bergeron (empty-netter). Bruins goalie Jaroslav Halak, who took a 5-0 beating from the Panthers on Dec. 4, made 31 saves to earn the win.

### RED WINGS 3, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2 (OT)

Anthony Mantha scored two goals, including the game-winner in overtime, as Detroit snapped Vegas' six-game home winning streak. Mantha's game-winner, his 19th of the season, came just 19 seconds into overtime. Dylan Larkin intercepted a Reilly Smith pass in front of the Vegas goal and then backhanded a pass to Mantha, who beat Malcolm Subban with a wrist shot from the slot on the glove side. Luke Glendening also scored a goal and Andreas Athanasiou had two assists for Detroit, which won for just the fourth time in 17 games. Jimmy Howard had 28 saves for the Red Wings, who picked up their eighth overtime win of the season.

### BLUES 4, LIGHTNING 3

Vladimir Tarasenko capped a three-goal surge in 75 seconds as host St. Louis completed a season sweep of Tampa Bay. Robert Thomas and Alexander Steen also scored in the first period, and Brayden Schenn tallied in the second for the Blues, who improved to 4-0-1 in their last five games. Rookie Jordan Binnington finished with 39 saves. Brayden Point scored his team-leading 40th goal

and Alex Killorn and Steven Stamkos also tallied for the Lightning, whose seven-game winning streak came to an end. Tampa Bay remained four wins shy of Detroit's NHL record of 62 victories in 1995-96 with six contests to go.

### AVALANCHE 4, BLACKHAWKS 2

Wilson scored the go-ahead goal on a 5-on-3 advantage in the second period as host Colorado beat Chicago in Denver in the opener of a home-and-home series. Wilson added an assist on Sven Andrighetto's goal in the third period, and J.T. Compher and Derick Brassard also tallied for the Avalanche, who have won four in a row heading into today's rematch in Chicago. Philipp Grubauer finished with 29 saves on Saturday and has turned aside 131 of 135 shots in his last four starts. Colorado (34-29-12, 80 points) moved into sole possession of the Western Conference's final wild-card spot, with Arizona and Minnesota each a point behind.

### HURRICANES 5, WILD 1

Teuvo Teravainen had a goal with two assists, and Jordan Staal recorded one of each as Carolina beat Minnesota in Raleigh, NC. Brett Pesce, Andrei Svechnikov and Lucas Wallmark also scored for the Hurricanes, who bounced back from Thursday's 6-3 home loss to Tampa Bay. A winner in five of seven, Carolina (41-26-7, 89 points) owns the first wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. Minnesota (35-32-9, 79), meanwhile, fell to 2-5-1 over its last eight.

### DEVILS 2, COYOTES 1 (SO)

Pavel Zacha scored the decisive goal in the sixth round of the shootout for New Jersey, which edged Arizona in Newark, N.J. After neither team scored in the first four rounds of the shootout, the Devils' Blake Coleman and the Coyotes' Conor Garland traded goals in the fifth round. Zacha then fired a shot between Darcy Kuemper's legs for his first career shootout goal, and New Jersey locked up the victory when Richard Panik's shot rang off the post. Drew Stafford scored in the first period for the Devils, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Goalie Mackenzie Blackwood recorded 24 saves.

### PENGUINS 3, STARS 2

Jared McCann scored twice, including a short-handed goal off a spin move to break a third-period tie, to pace visiting Pittsburgh in a win over Dallas. Jake Guentzel also scored, and Phil Kessel had two assists for the Penguins (41-24-11), who have won two straight. They also have



NEWARK: Miles Wood #44 of the New Jersey Devils skates against the Arizona Coyotes at the Prudential Center on Saturday in Newark, New Jersey. The Devils defeated the Coyotes 2-1 in the shoot-out. — AFP

points in seven of eight and kept pace in points (93) with the second-place New York Islanders in the Metropolitan Division. Tyler Seguin and Andrew Coglian scored for Dallas (38-31-6, 82 points), which finished a five-game homestand 1-3-1 and remains in the top wild-card spot in the West.

### ISLANDERS 4, FLYERS 2

Josh Bailey scored the tie-breaking goal with 3:57 remaining and added an insurance goal 83 seconds later as New York rebounded from a pair of shutout losses and edged host Philadelphia. Bailey recorded his first goal in 13 games since Feb. 26. The clutch tally moved the Islanders to within one point of the Washington Capitals for first place in the Metropolitan Division and lowered their magic number for clinching a postseason spot to eight. The win also occurred after the Islanders came off a 5-0 loss to Boston Tuesday and a 4-0 loss at Montreal two nights later.

## Warner fires on IPL return but Sunrisers lose

**KOLKATA:** Australia's David Warner smashed 85 from 53 balls on his Indian Premier League comeback yesterday but his knock went in vain as Sunrisers Hyderabad lost to Kolkata Knight Riders. Warner, who along with compatriot Steve Smith returns to the Twenty20 tournament after missing the previous edition due to a ball-tampering controversy, steered Sunrisers to 181 for three after being put into bat.

His efforts though were not enough, with Andre Russell hitting an unbeaten 49 off 19 balls as the Knight Riders won by six wickets with two balls to spare at Kolkata's Eden Gardens. A pause for a floodlight failure in the 16th over re-charged Knight Riders' chase as Russell put together an unbeaten 65-run stand with Shubman Gill, who hit 18 runs including the winning six. Russell struck four fours and four sixes.

Earlier Warner stood out during a 118-run opening stand with England's Jonny Bairstow, who made 39, to lay the platform for their big total. "It is good to get out there and contribute. It looked a nice wicket to bat on but it slowed down a bit which made us reassess after six overs," Warner said after his knock.

The Australian admitted some anxiety before his big return to IPL-and an unusual solution. "I was a bit nervous in the dressing room and kept drinking pickle juice," he said. Opener Warner survived a reprieve on 38 after Knight Riders captain and wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik dropped him off left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav.

Warner, who captained Sunrisers to their only IPL



KOLKATA: Sunrisers Hyderabad captain David Warner plays a shot as Kolkata Knight Riders captain Dinesh Karthik looks on during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Eden Gardens Stadium, in Kolkata yesterday. — AFP

title in 2016, made the most of the spill and raced to his 37th IPL fifty with a six off Russell to signal his aggressive intent. Bairstow was bowled by leg-spinner Piyush Chawla but Warner took the attack to the opposition, hitting nine fours and three sixes during his blitz.

Warner, who recently recovered from an elbow injury he picked in the Bangladesh Premier League, finally fell to Russell after driving the ball to cover. Warner said his elbow "wasn't all too bad" after doing a lot of work with his trainer back home.

Year-long bans from state and international cricket for Warner and Smith end on March 28 but the duo are

keen to get among the runs in the IPL, ahead of the 50-over World Cup starting in May.

The suspension did not include club games but IPL's governing council decided not to allow the disgraced duo in the 11th edition of the T20 league last year in a bid to avoid controversy.

The pair were banned for cheating in a Cape Town Test in March last year along with teammate Cameron Bancroft, whose nine-month ban has already finished. Smith is expected to appear for his team Rajasthan Royals in their opening match against Kings XI Punjab in Jaipur today. — AFP

Defending champions Cameroon, originally named hosts of the 2019 finals before the tournament was moved to Egypt due to concerns over preparations, confirmed their qualification with a 3-0 home win over Comoros Islands.

The Indian Ocean islanders needed a win to usurp Cameroon in the group but were never in the match in Yaounde. Jeffrey Schlupp scored eight minutes from time to give Ghana a 1-0 home win over Kenya in Group F. Both teams had secured qualification last year.

Senegal and Mali completed their campaigns unbeaten with home wins on Saturday. Mbaye Niang scored twice as Senegal beat Madagascar 2-0 and Mali overcame South Sudan 3-0.

Manchester United defender Eric Bailly was among the scorers as Ivory Coast beat visiting Rwanda 3-0 but Egypt, who allowed Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah to miss the match, were held 1-1 at lowly Niger. The last five places at the finals will be decided when qualification wraps up with seven games later.

The 19 countries qualified are: Egypt (hosts), Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia and Uganda. — Reuters

## Give finger spinner a role at WCup, says Harbhajan

**MUMBAI:** Harbhajan Singh dismissed a trio of top batsmen in the Indian Premier League's opener on Saturday before underlining the importance of a finger spinner to India's cause at the upcoming Cricket World Cup.

Playing for champions Chennai, Harbhajan sent back Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) skipper Virat Kohli, former South Africa batting mainstay AB de Villiers and England all-rounder Moeen Ali on a MA Chidambaram Stadium track that offered significant assistance to the slow bowlers.

Wrist spinners, once considered a luxury for their penchant to bleed runs in the chase for wickets, have taken the limited-overs formats by storm and banished their finger spin cousins to the fringes.

Five of the top 10 spots in the International Cricket Council's rankings for one-day international bowlers are occupied by wrist spinners-Afghanistan's Rashid Khan, Imran Tahir of South Africa, Indian pair Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal, and England's Adil Rashid.

Harbhajan, who played 103 Tests and 236 ODIs for India, said there is a perception that wrist spinners have more chance of success as they possess more variations in their armoury.

"I have played all my cricket as a finger spinner and never complained about it. I did okay, not bad, quite happy with whatever I have achieved," said the 38-year-old, who has taken over 700 wickets in the three formats of international cricket.

"It's come down to the people and their belief whether finger spinners could do the job or not. I feel finger spinners have a role to play provided you back them. "Of course, spinners also need to back themselves to spin the ball rather than not spinning them. New generation they don't look to spin the ball... As long as you are looking to spin the ball, you are there in the game."

On Saturday, the former India off-spinner's 3-20 spell at the start of the innings left RCB reeling and they were eventually bundled out for 70, leaving Mahendra Singh Dhoni's side to win the opening match of the 2019 IPL by seven wickets.

Tahir also picked up three wickets and India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja took two while also taking the catches to dismiss India skipper Kohli and De Villiers. The success of Chahal and Kuldeep rendered Jadeja and off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin surplus to India's limited-overs requirements but the former has battled back into contention for the May 30 to July 14 World Cup in England and Wales.

"Someone like Ravindra Jadeja, he's always in the game," Harbhajan said of his left-arm spin colleague. "I don't want to talk way too much about the World Cup but he could be a key member for Team India to win that."

"He's a factor, he bowls, he bats and he's a brilliant fielder. Finger spinners should be given the responsibility, they will deliver it." — Reuters

## Burundi qualify for first African Cup of Nations finals

**JOHANNESBURG:** Burundi qualified for the African Cup of Nations finals for the first time as they kept Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang in check to get the point they needed in a 1-1 draw on Saturday.

The result secured them second place in Group C to join Madagascar and Mauritania as countries going to the finals for the first time and their achievement sparked wild celebrations in the tiny east African country.

They were joined later on Saturday by Cameroon, Guinea Bissau and Namibia, who qualified despite losing 4-1 to Zambia in dramatic circumstances. While Burundi needed only a draw, visitors Gabon, who hosted the last finals in 2017, had to win in Bujumbura to join group winners Mali in the expanded 24-team finals in Egypt in June and July.



Sports

# Ramos helps Spain edge Norway, Juventus Kean stars for Italy

## Ireland struggle in Gibraltar, Sweden wins

**PARIS:** Sergio Ramos scored a second-half penalty to help Spain beat a spirited Norway 2-1 on Saturday in their opening Euro 2020 qualifier, while teenage striker Moise Kean netted in Italy's win over Finland.

Spain were not at their clinical best in Valencia, but got their Group F campaign off to a solid start despite Norway threatening an upset. The 2010 World Cup winners have been unpredictable of late, having been dumped out by Russia in the last 16 of the World Cup and then missing out on the Nations League finals after a home loss to England.

"The team responded well to their equaliser. You always have the dream and aim of achieving something important," Ramos told Spanish television channel TVE. "We're in a new stage with a coach who has a fantastic style of play. We'll take things game by game. We'll pick up more confidence from winning."

Coach Luis Enrique named an attacking line-up, with Marco Asensio, Alvaro Morata and Rodrigo all starting, and it was the latter who volleyed home the opener from Jordi Alba's cross in the 16th minute.

Winger Jesus Navas created several other early chances for his teammates on his first Spain appearance since March 2014, but Rodrigo headed over and Morata was denied by away goalkeeper Rune Jarstein.

Norway started to grow into the game and were handed a chance to draw level in the 65th minute when Inigo Martinez grabbed Bjorn Johnsen, and Bournemouth striker Joshua King stepped up to slot past David de Gea.

Spain wasted little time in getting their noses back in front, though, as Jarstein felled Morata to concede a 71st-minute penalty. Centre-back Ramos stepped up and confidently dispatched a 'Panenka' spot-kick down the middle to score his 16th goal of the season for club and country.

Juventus youngster Kean, 19, became the youngest striker to start for Italy in more than a century as Roberto Mancini's men saw off Finland 2-0. Italy got off to a flying start in Udine, as Nicolo Barella gave them a seventh-minute lead with his maiden international goal.

The 22-year-old Cagliari midfielder hammered home a low volley after a free-kick was only half-cleared by the Finnish defence. The day belonged to Kean, though, as he slotted in the second with 16 minutes to play to mark his full debut in style. "To become part of Azzurri history is an added incentive to keep working," said Kean. "There are many goals ahead of me and my aim is to achieve them. I wanted to show that I deserved this chance from Mancini."

Italy are top of the early Group J standings ahead of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who edged out Armenia 2-1 as captain Edin Dzeko became the first player in their history to be capped 100 times. The other game in the group saw Greece win 2-0 against Liechtenstein in Vaduz. Earlier on Saturday, Mick McCarthy made an inauspicious start to his second stint in charge of the Republic of Ireland as his team laboured to a 1-0 victory over Gibraltar. The 60-year-old McCarthy, who led Ireland to the 2002 World Cup last 16 before resigning later that year, was reappointed manager last November, replacing Martin O'Neill.

The result leaves Ireland second in the early Group D table behind Switzerland, who beat Georgia 2-0, but McCarthy will know he has plenty of work to do after seeing his men struggle to claim just their second win in 12 matches.

Gibraltar almost took a shock lead early in the second half, but captain Roy Chipolina saw his header brilliantly saved by Darren Randolph. Ireland took the lead less than two minutes later, though, as Burnley midfielder



UDINE: Italy's midfielder Nicolo Zaniolo (L) tackles Finland's forward Lassi Lappalainen during the Euro 2020 Group J qualifying football match between Italy and Finland at the Friuli stadium in Udine. — AFP

Jeff Hendrick slotted home his second international goal from David McGoldrick's cutback.

But the 194th-ranked team in the world did not give up and almost found an equaliser when 37-year-old forward Lee Casciaro curled wide after a fine team

move. Elsewhere, World Cup quarter-finalists Sweden made a winning start in Group F as midfielders Robin Quaison and Viktor Claesson both scored in the space of seven first-half minutes in a 2-1 success over Romania. — AFP

## Grealish must play in Premier League for England call-up

**LONDON:** England manager Gareth Southgate said Aston Villa midfielder Jack Grealish, who plays in the second-tier Championship, needs to prove himself in the Premier League to make his senior national team debut. Grealish, 23, switched allegiance from Ireland to England in 2015 and played

seven times for the England Under-21s. But he has now seen younger players such as Declan Rice, 20, and 18-year-old Callum Hudson-Odoi given England debuts ahead of him.

"Jack worked with us in the Under-21s briefly," Southgate told reporters. "Although we can see the quality, when the evidence of the opponent is a different level, that's where it's hard to directly correlate what that's going to look like at a level above."

"With Callum (Hudson-Odoi), he's playing Europa League, he's playing Premier League, that does make a difference.

"I'm not going to say we won't pick a player from the Championship because that could happen but it's far more difficult to assess his level." Grealish has been crucial to the sixth-placed Championship side's push for promotion to the top flight, with four goals and five

assists this season.

He last played in the Premier League in 2016 when Villa were relegated after finishing bottom of the standings. "You see certain parts of the game but not others (in the Championship). Not the physicality at times, nor the tactical discipline," Southgate said. "That's another level in the Premier League: the speed, the pace.

"He's a player we know all about, he's a player we track, but that last bit of evidence that could give you confidence to pick him at the moment we won't see. But as an ex-Villa man I hope it's not too long before we do see it." Grealish made headlines earlier this month, scoring the winner in a heated 1-0 derby win at Birmingham City when he was attacked by a pitch invader who was later jailed for 14 weeks. — Reuters

## Osaka, Zverev stunned, injured Serena withdraws

**MIAMI:** Naomi Osaka crashed out of the third round of the WTA and ATP Miami Open on Saturday as Hsieh Su-Wei exacted revenge for a painful Australian Open defeat with a 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 victory.

World number one Osaka had looked in little danger after winning the first set and moving a break ahead in the second. But Taiwan's Hsieh, who was a set and 4-1 up in Melbourne earlier this year before losing to the Japanese star in the third round, battled superbly.

"This was a very emotional win for me," said Hsieh, whose 39 winners were one less than her opponent. "Any time you beat one of the top players it is amazing." It wasn't the only shocker of the day, as Spanish veteran David Ferrer rallied to beat world number three Alexander Zverev 2-6, 7-5, 6-3 to reach the third round.

Ferrer, 36 and ranked 155th in the world, received a wild card into the tournament as he continues a limited schedule in a 2019 billed as his farewell tour. Zverev, runner-up to John Isner here last year, coughed up 12 double faults as he suffered his second straight early exit in succession after a third-round departure at Indian Wells.

Osaka was coming off a fourth-round exit at Indian Wells, but Hsieh's coach said her victory wasn't all that surprising. "She has enough experience to stay strong and you saw that," French coach Frederic Aniere, who has worked with Hsieh for the last two years and is also her boyfriend, told AFP.

"Yes it's huge, but for her it's not a big surprise." Osaka's second-round win over Belgian Yanina Wickmayer on Friday saw a second set wobble from the two-time Grand Slam winning star and it was more of the same against Hsieh, who simply refused to give up the fight.

"I was kind of immature because I was thinking too much, like everything was on my racquet," admitted Osaka. "I got ahead of myself. Of course I want to win every match and I think I have dealt with people always asking me if I am going to win because I have



MIAMI GARDENS: Naomi Osaka of Japan in action against Su-Wei Hsieh of Taipei during the Miami Open Tennis in Miami Gardens, Florida. — AFP

number one next to my name," added the Japanese star. "I thought I was doing fine with that but I guess I am not."

The 33-year-old Hsieh will play Caroline Wozniacki in the fourth round of the women's draw, which now looks wide open following Osaka's defeat and former world number one Serena Williams's surprise exit with a left knee injury.

The American has completed just seven matches this year, withdrawing in Indian Wells with illness midway through a round of 32 match with Garbine Muguruza.

There are surely doubts now that the 37-year-old can add to her tally of 23 Grand Slams, something which has so far proved beyond her since returning last year after taking time out following the birth of her first child.

With Williams out, Wang Qiang, the 18th seed from China, advances to the fourth round on a walkover. In the late game, unseeded Canadian Bianca Andreescu beat Angelique Kerber for the second time in a week 6-4, 4-6, 6-1, outlasting the German

eighth seed in a two hour, nine minute three setter. The duo also met in the WTA Indian Wells final, with Andreescu winning 6-4, 3-6, 6-4. Elsewhere, Roger Federer survived a scare but battled back from a set down to beat Radu Albot 4-6 7-5 6-3.

Albot posed plenty of problems for the 20-time Grand Slam winning legend, who took a while to get adjusted to the tournament's new Hard Rock Stadium venue. But the Swiss star's class and experience eventually shone through, even though he was severely tested in his first ever meeting with the in-form Moldovan.

"I've never really seen him play live matches so I watched some video to get an idea about him," Federer said. "I see where he can cause problems. I have a lot of respect for those types of players who don't have the size, so have to find a different way to win. "I'm happy I was able to find a way." Federer next faces 103rd-ranked Serbian Filip Krajinovic, who beat three-time Grand Slam winner Stan Wawrinka 7-5, 2-6, 7-6 (7/5). —AFP

### Euro 2020 qualifying tables

Euro 2020 qualifying standings after Saturday's Group D, F, and J matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Group A							
England	1	1	0	0	5	0	3
Montenegro	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Bulgaria	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Kosovo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Czech Rep	1	0	0	1	0	5	0
Group B							
Luxembourg	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Portugal	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ukraine	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Serbia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Group C							
Netherlands	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
N. Ireland	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Germany	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estonia	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Belarus	1	0	0	1	0	4	0
Group D							
Switzerland	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Rep. Ireland	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Denmark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gibraltar	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Georgia	1	0	0	1	2	0	0
Group E							
Slovakia	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Croatia	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Wales	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Hungary	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Group F							
Spain	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Sweden	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Malta	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Norway	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Romania	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Faroe Islands	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Group G							
N. Macedonia	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Poland	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Slovenia	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Israel	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Austria	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Latvia	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Group H							
France	1	1	0	0	4	1	3
Iceland	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Turkey	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Albania	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Andorra	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Moldova	1	0	0	1	1	4	0
Group I							
Cyprus	1	1	0	0	5	0	3
Kazakhstan	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Belgium	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Russia	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Scotland	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
San Marino	1	0	0	1	0	5	0
Group J							
Italy	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Greece	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Bosnia	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Armenia	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Finland	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Liechtenstein	1	0	0	1	0	2	0



**25** McKenzie, Retallick star as Chiefs run riot to end five-match winless run



**26** Warner fires on IPL return but Sunrisers lose



**27** Osaka, Zverev stunned, injured Serena withdraws



## Hornets storm back to stun Celtics

### Doncic notches triple-double as Mavs pound Warriors



CHARLOTTE: Marcus Morris #13 of the Boston Celtics shoots the ball against the Charlotte Hornets at Spectrum Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. —AFP

**CHARLOTTE:** Kemba Walker had 36 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists, and the Charlotte Hornets rallied from an 18-point fourth-quarter deficit for a stunning 124-117 victory over the visiting Boston Celtics on Saturday night. The Hornets closed out the game on a 30-5 run after falling behind 112-94 with 8:21 left in the fourth quarter. Walker keyed it all, and his 3-pointer with 1:19 remaining gave his team the lead for good. Charlotte (33-39) has now won two straight, while the Celtics (43-30) have lost three in a row. The Hornets also got 20 points from Miles Bridges, 13 each from Marvin Williams and Malik Monk, and 11 from Dwayne Bacon. Williams hit four free throws in the final 41.2 seconds to help salt away the win.

#### Hawks 129, 76ers 127

Rookie point guard Trae Young scored 32 points, including the game-winner with a tenth of a second remaining, to give Atlanta a win over visiting Philadelphia. The Hawks tied the game 127-127 on a

layup by Taurean Prince with 27.5 seconds left, then got a final shot when the 76ers allowed the 24-second clock to expire. With 3.5 seconds left, Atlanta's Kevin Huerter inbounded the ball to Young, who made a floater over Jimmy Butler to put the Hawks ahead. After calling timeout, Philadelphia's inbound pass hit the rim to end the game.

#### Mavs 126, Warriors 91

Luka Doncic recorded his sixth triple-double of the season, and Dallas exploded for 74 first-half points in a shocking demolition of Golden State in Oakland, Calif. Dirk Nowitzki bombed in five 3-pointers, while Doncic and Maxi Kleber buried four apiece as the Mavericks hit 21 shots from beyond the arc, one shy of their franchise record, and outscored Golden State 63-12 on 3s. The loss came on the front end of a home back-to-back for the Warriors, who chose to rest Stephen Curry, Shaun Livingston and Andrew Bogut. The 35-point margin of defeat was the largest of

the season at home for Golden State.

#### Trail Blazers 117, Pistons 112

Damian Lillard scored 28 points, and Portland outscored visiting Detroit 14-3 over the final 4 1/2 minutes en route to the victory. Al-Farouq Aminu chipped in a season-high 22 points for the Trail Blazers, who won for the sixth time in seven games. Blake Griffin tallied 27 points, Reggie Jackson added 24 points and Andre Drummond collected 19 points and 11 rebounds for the Pistons, who lost for only the fourth time in their last 12 games.

#### Jazz 114, Bulls 83

Rudy Gobert notched a double-double of 21 points and 14 rebounds, and six other teammates scored in double figures to boost visiting Utah to a rout of Chicago. The Jazz raced to a 33-18 lead after one quarter, and their 70-36 halftime lead was their largest on the road at the half in the history of the franchise, which began play in the 1974-75 season in New Orleans.

Donovan Mitchell added 16 points for the Jazz, while Joe Ingles (13), Derrick Favors (13), Ricky Rubio (12), Jae Crowder (11) and Raul Neto (10) followed to complement a balanced attack that overwhelmed the Bulls.

#### Heat 113, Wizards 108

Dwyane Wade scored 11 of his team-high 20 points in the fourth quarter as visiting Miami defeated Washington. The Heat (36-37) are fighting to hold on to the Eastern Conference's final playoff spot, and this victory gave them a one-game edge over idle Orlando (35-38). The two teams will meet Tuesday in Miami. Wade went 5-for-7 from the field in the fourth quarter as Miami took charge of a game that swung back and forth throughout the first three periods. The veteran guard helped the Heat take a 109-99 lead late.

#### Timberwolves 112, Grizzlies 99

Karl-Anthony Towns totaled 33 points and 23 rebounds as Minnesota halted a

nine-game road losing streak by dominating the third quarter in a victory over Memphis. The Timberwolves recorded their first road win since beating New York on Feb. 22. They also halted a five-game losing streak, a night after being eliminated from playoff contention. Towns recorded his seventh straight double-double and 49th overall. He also recorded his 19th 30-point game and fifth career game with at least 30 points and 20 boards.

#### Kings 112, Suns 103

Buddy Hield and Harrison Barnes scored 25 points apiece to lead host Sacramento to a victory over Phoenix. Marvin Bagley III added 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Kings. Nemanja Bjelica recorded 13 points and a career-best 17 rebounds and De'Aaron Fox had 13 points and nine assists. Hield made seven 3-pointers to set a franchise single-season record with 245. He broke the mark of Peja Stojakovic (240 in 2003-04), who is now the club's assistant general manager. — Reuters

## Wales start Euro qualifiers with Slovakia win

**CARDIFF:** Daniel James was Wales' goal-scoring hero as they launched their Euro 2020 qualifying campaign with a 1-0 win over Slovakia in Cardiff yesterday. Swansea winger James, making his first competitive start for Wales, struck in just the fifth minute with a goal that ultimately saw the hosts to victory. "It was a good start after we got that early goal," James

told Sky Sports. "From then on, we had to dig in. The only thing I had in my head was to shoot and luckily it went in." Wales star Gareth Bale, captaining the side in place of benched regular skipper Ashley Williams, added: "Everyone put in a shift today.

"We built our success off a good solid defence. We work hard in units. We always knew we could nick a goal. "In the second half we came under a lot of pressure but we started the game well, got the early goal then shut up shop and we know how to do that," the Real Madrid forward insisted.

Wales manager Ryan Giggs made 11 changes from Wednesday's 1-0 friendly victory over Trinidad and Tobago. Slovakia, by contrast, were unchanged

after beating Hungary 2-0 in their opening qualifier on Thursday. The Cardiff City Stadium was bathed in sunshine and Wales made an equally bright start. Harry Wilson and David Brooks combined well down the right but any threat seemed to end when Brooks' pass went straight to Slovakia defender Peter Pekarik.

But Pekarik was then dispossessed on the edge of the box by the 21-year-old James, who then shot powerfully past Newcastle goalkeeper Martin Dubravka to fire Wales in front. Shortly before half-time Brooks came close to making it 2-0 with a superb solo effort that saw him beat two defenders.

His swerving shot evaded Dubravka only to curl just past the far post. The only

concern for Manchester United great Giggs at half-time would have been that Wales were just 1-0 ahead, with plenty of time left for Slovakia to get back into the game.

Slovakia then created their best chance of the match thus far early in the second half when Albert Rusnak was one-on-one with Wayne Hennessey only for the Wales goalkeeper to block his shot, with the ball rebounding off the Slovakian before it went wide. Hennessey had to be alert to deny Rusnak a second time before Wales hit back, with Wilson shooting narrowly wide past a beaten Dubravka from James' cross. Wales found themselves pinned in their own half late on and Slovakia should have equalised with seven minutes left.

Rusnak's cross found Michal Duris, but the substitute's header was tipped away by Wayne Hennessey into the six-yard box rather than clear of danger. David Hancko, following up, had a superb chance to level from close range but instead miscued his shot completely and that allowed Wales to clear the ball. The fifth and final minute of stoppage time saw Slovakia awarded a corner following Miroslav Stoch's deflected effort. But the referee then blew for the end of the match, a decision that saw him surrounded by angry Slovakia players, with Juraj Kucka then booked-one of seven yellow cards collected by the visitors for dissent. Wales' next two qualifiers are away fixtures against Croatia and Hungary on June 8 and 11 respectively. — AFP