

# Friday Times

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## Zain revenue up 56% to reach \$1.33bn; profit rises 15% in Q1 2019 to reach \$155m

**EBITDA grows 111% in Q1 • 50 million customers served**

**KUWAIT:** Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the first quarter (Q1) ended 31 March, 2019. Zain served 50 million customers at the end of the period, reflecting a 6 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

Zain Group generated consolidated revenues of KD 404 million (\$1.33 billion) for the first quarter of 2019, up 56 percent compared to the same period in 2018. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 178 million (\$586 million), up 111 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 44 percent. Net income for the quarter reached KD 47 million (\$155 million), up 15 percent Y-o-Y reflecting Earnings Per Share of 11 fils (\$0.04).

Commenting on the results, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said: "The impressive first quarter 2019 results were achieved through the board's and executive management's focus on implementation of the digital transformation strategy that has seen substantial investments in network upgrades, fiber optics and 5G readiness. These initiatives have been aimed at diversifying income sources primarily from digital-related areas and at the same time improve customer experience. We will continue driving cost optimization initiatives to improve the efficiency of the operations and seek new



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi



Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous

lucrative opportunities in driving the business forward and increasing shareholder value."

Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi said: "Given the sweeping technological developments in the ICT sector and challenging regulatory environment, the management teams across all operations are being dynamic in their

transformational and digitization efforts, supported by the group. This has resulted in sound operational progress and the reporting of robust results in key markets, highlighted by the vastly improving profitability in our home market of Kuwait and even more impressively in our Bahrain, Iraq and Saudi Arabia operations." (See Page 39)

### Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for Q1, 2019

<b>Total Active Customers</b>	<b>50 million</b>
<b>Consolidated Revenues</b>	<b>KD 404 million - (USD 1.33 billion)</b>
<b>EBITDA</b>	<b>KD 178 million - (USD 586 million)</b>
<b>EBITDA Margin</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>KD 47 million - (USD 155 million)</b>
<b>EPS</b>	<b>11 fils - USD 0.04</b>

- EBITDA for the quarter grew by 111% to reach KD 178 million
- Consolidation and strong performance of Zain KSA bolsters Group financials for Q1 '19
- Net income growth of 11% in Kuwait, 55% in Bahrain and 77% in Iraq also highlight Q1
- Data revenue grew by 118% Y-o-Y, representing 37% of Group revenue
- Chairman, Ahmed Al-Tahous: "The Board is focused on implementation of strategic growth plans to increase shareholder value"
- Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi: "Profitable growth across all key operations due to ongoing digital transformation and efficiency initiatives"

## Local

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



**KUWAIT:** This photo shows a portion of the Sheikh Jaber Causeway, which was officially inaugurated on Wednesday. The nearly 36-kilometer-long causeway shortens the driving time between Kuwait City and Subiya to less than 30 minutes, as opposed to 90 minutes through the regular 104-kilometer-long route. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Mistakes in names

Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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**T**he Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) announced the launch of an online service that will allow expatriates to confirm and amend their names in English prior to the issuance of their civil ID cards. In a press statement, it was said that the launch of this service is aimed at easing the procedures and expanding the use of computers in order to avoid repeated visits to PACI and ministry of interior.

Also, the service will enable expatriates to access the PACI site and ensure correctness of their personal data, and in case there is a mistake, they can request

for corrections for spelling mistakes in their names in English. The ministry of interior expressed concerns about some technical issues related to the cancellation of residency stickers on the passports of expatriates, which are meant to avoid data entry mistakes and ease procedures, since this service will reduce typing errors when it comes to names written in English.

I think this is a good step to avoid any mistakes in spelling that could lead to trouble. Similarity of names is also a big problem for many people when traveling or arriving from abroad. This is an issue for some people not only in Kuwait, but also in the Arab world, because Arabic names are repetitive and similar. In 2017, the court forced the interior ministry to compensate a citizen after he was imprisoned due to having a similar name with another wanted person.

In Iraq, for example, the issue of similar names and their non-correction is a matter of concern for victims. The similarity of names is one of the problems experienced by many Iraqis, and impedes Iraqi secu-

rity from reaching the real culprits. This year, Lebanese authorities detained an Egyptian musician when he arrived in Beirut because of the similarity of names with a Syrian citizen wanted by the Lebanese authorities, and the verification procedures took some time until he was cleared.

Today there is a problem of similarities in names in many countries that results in freezing of funds of other persons who are not connected to any terrorist acts or wanted by authorities. Therefore, joint action to develop new procedures related to the similarity of names is important.

I believe introducing modern technological systems and methods to record the personal data of the population, whether working in ministries or government institutions or private sector or even unemployed, with the correct data is essential. So when everything is being linked to the civil ID, it helps identify people who are actually wanted and end similarities and mistakes for good.

# Moody's maintains Kuwait credit rating at Aa2 for 2019 with stable outlook



**KUWAIT:** Moody's Investors Service (Moody's) yesterday affirmed Government of Kuwait's long-term issuer ratings at Aa2, with a stable outlook. In a report, Moody's said its rating affirmation is underpinned by view that Kuwait's exceptionally large wealth, with sovereign wealth fund assets estimated at around 370 percent of GDP and vast hydrocarbon reserves, will continue to support the sovereign's fiscal strength and creditworthiness. The stable outlook reflects Moody's expectation that Kuwait's extremely high fiscal strength will be largely preserved through oil price fluctuations and long-term demographic pressure. In particular, it assumes that the authorities overcome the current legislative hurdles and pass a debt law that allows the government to finance its deficit without depleting its most liquid assets.

Kuwait's long-term and short-term foreign-currency bond and deposit ceilings remain unchanged at Aa2 and Prime-1, respectively. Kuwait's long-term local-currency bond and deposit ceilings also remains unchanged at Aa2, the report added. It carried on saying that Kuwait's fiscal position is one of the strongest among the sovereigns rated by Moody's. Although the government will likely continue to run large fiscal deficits, under Moody's assumptions that oil prices fluctuate between \$50-70/barrel in the medium term and that these deficits will lead to a gradual increase in the debt burden, it

will be from a very low base. And while, in the near term at least, the deficits will be financed by drawdowns from the General Reserve Fund (GRF), the country will continue to accumulate wealth in the Future Generations Fund (FGF) which forms the majority of the country's SWF assets, reflected in broadly stable SWF assets relative to GDP at extremely high levels.

Moody's estimates that the budget deficit (post-FGF transfers, excluding investment income) narrowed to 5.2 percent of GDP in the fiscal year 2018/19 due to windfall oil revenues from higher than budgeted oil prices, which averaged \$71/barrel in 2018. In the last two years, higher oil prices coincided with diminished reform momentum. At the moment, the deficits are fully financed through drawdowns of the GRF, which Moody's estimates has been reduced to 54 percent of GDP as of March 2019, compared to 70 percent of GDP in March 2018, with the liquid portion of the GRF comprising around two-thirds of total assets. Without legal authorization to issue new debt, the deficits will continue to be financed from the GRF, which will shrink further.

Moody's expects that the fund will decline to 26 percent of GDP by the end of fiscal year 2020/21. However, Moody's assumes that, as the GRF's size diminishes rapidly, Kuwait will pass a debt law allowing the issuance of new debt. As a result, Moody's projects gross government debt to rise 38.8

percent of GDP by fiscal year 2023/24, from 13.8 percent at the end of fiscal year 2018/19. Still, at these levels, Kuwait's government debt burden would remain below the Aa-rated median, and its debt affordability would remain significantly stronger than that of most Aa-rated peers. Moreover, while the GRF is eroded and gross government debt will rise if legislation is passed, Kuwait continues to accumulate 10 percent of its government revenue and all investment income in the FGF, whose assets are estimated at \$442 billion, maintaining the overall SWF assets broadly stable in relation to GDP.

Additionally, Kuwait's low external breakeven, which Moody's estimates at around \$51/barrel, will ensure that the country continues to accrue wealth through sustained current account surpluses under our \$50-70/barrel oil price range assumption. The country's hydrocarbon reserves are plentiful and at the current rate of production, proven reserves of oil and gas would last around 90 years, providing a significant source of wealth for the foreseeable future. The stable outlook reflects Moody's expectation that Kuwait's extremely high fiscal strength will be largely preserved through most plausible scenarios. This wealth provides ample capacity and time to absorb potential shocks, in the short to medium term related to oil price fluctuations and, in the longer term, related to demographic pressure on demand for employment.

For the foreseeable future, Kuwait's fiscal exposure to lower oil prices will remain very high. However, the net credit implications of a potential fall in oil prices will be mitigated by the country's large wealth which Moody's expects to be made accessible in case of need and sizeable current account surpluses. While oil production is currently constrained by the OPEC production cuts, Moody's expects that output will increase slightly towards current production capacity of 3.15 million barrels per day (mbpd) once these are lifted. Longer term, Kuwait faces a large and sustained increase in demand for jobs from its young and fast-growing population, which under a system that favors entry into the public sector will inflate the government's wage bill.

Moody's estimates that the demographic pressure will be intense, only somewhat less intense than for Saudi Arabia and Government of Oman (Ba1 negative) in the region. However, the government's much stronger fiscal position gives Kuwait more time to implement reforms that very gradually rebalance the incentives between public and private sector employment. Over the long term, positive rating pressures would arise from measures that reduce the direct exposure of the government's finances to oil price declines. Such measures would involve a diversification of government revenue and a reduction and improvement in the flexibility of government expenditure. — KUNA

## Local



## Mixed use Sabah Al-Salem needs attention, residents say

By Faten Omar

**A**s part of our occasional series exploring various areas of Kuwait, Kuwait Times visited Sabah Al-Salem to discover the main features of this area. Sabah Al-Salem is a suburb belonging to the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate. It is bordered by the Sixth Ring Road to the north, Adan to the south, Sabhan to the west, and Fahaheel Expressway (highway 30) to the east and southeast with population of 88,641, according to the statistical report of the public authority for civil information.

Sabah Al-Salem is a mixed one with residential, commercial, educational and entertainment facilities. It includes the well-known American United School, a stadium and sports area and will be home to the Sabah Al-Salem campus of Kuwait University. The Sabah Al-Salem coop opened in 1982 and the area includes parks and playgrounds, skyscraper apartment buildings, gyms and restaurants and blocks of Kuwaiti single family homes.

Upkeep and maintenance of the area, however, are an issue.

Bader Al-Mutairi, 45 years old, told Kuwait Times that Sabah Al-Salem suffers from several issues that need to be fixed as soon as possible. "The public park needs maintenance. Families do not have any entertainment place to go on weekends. Also, the roads are not suitable and need to be repaired, as some areas do not have suitable parking spots for our cars," he said.

Mutairi added that the area's clinic needs to be 24 hours because there is great pressure on it "We must have addi-



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tional health centers specialized in the area to meet with the increasing numbers of residents from citizens and expats,” he added that the elderly also need a place to gather like a diwaniya or similar places.

Ahmed bin Jedi, 51 years old, said that the area of Sabah Al-Salem has 13 residential blocks and was named after the 12th ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

As for his complaints, he said “Some of the waste containers in front of houses are not suitable for use and must be removed from the streets because they were damaged,” he also called on the municipality to replace them with new ones, adding that the parks need to be repaired and increase the number of trees and flowers.”

Abdul Rahman Al-Fadhli, 38 years old, said that block 1 is always crowded because there are many schools there and this has become a problem that disturbs the residents of the area, causing traffic congestion that remain all morning when people are trying to go to work.

Fadhli noted that many residents of the area complained about a large number of single men in some residential blocks which is a problem of safety for some families, adding that citizens stressed that the area was forgotten by the services provided by the ministries.

Massive construction of new roadways has also disrupted traffic flow and creates havoc in the morning and afterschool commutes.



— All photos by Joseph Shagra

## Local



## Domestic helpers dominate music, dance app in Kuwait

By Faten Omar

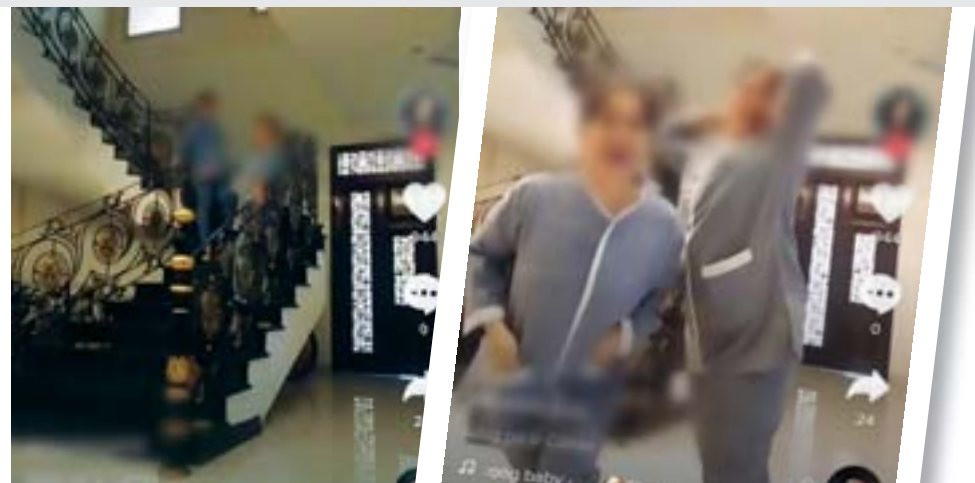
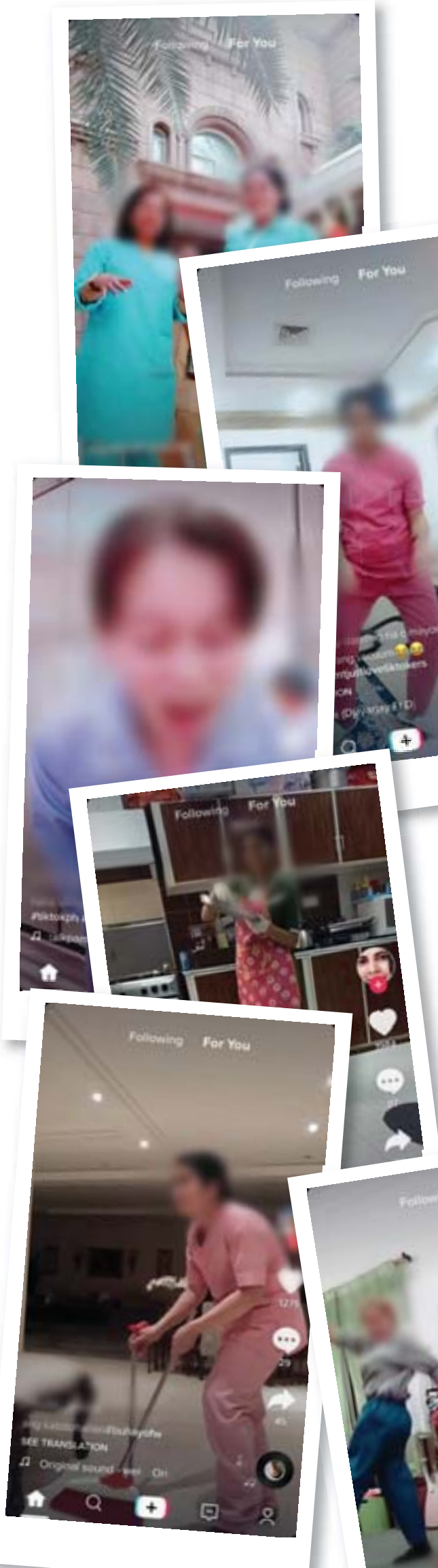
I had spent endless hours on the Internet during my boring weekend, when suddenly an ad pops up suggesting I download 'TikTok'. I'm unfamiliar with the app, but have seen its videos and read articles about it. So I gave it a chance and checked it out. In the hours I've spent on TikTok, I've witnessed a diverse composition of subcultures in Kuwait - it seems the app is a huge deal for teens, women and men, and even some people who promote their businesses. The app allows the creation of short videos, which can be lip-synced to any soundtrack.

I knew that such apps are popular among teens, but domestic workers in Kuwait?! This was news to me! I saw dozens of short videos of maids in uniform, dancing, lip-syncing or acting while standing in the kitchen, bedroom or living rooms of their sponsors' homes. Not just one or two videos by the same women but dozens and dozens of different domestic helpers - sometimes mimicking each other or making fun of their sponsor's constant demands. In some videos, one helper will be in uniform while another dresses up as the 'madame' who then proceeds to verbally abuse the maid. In others, the helpers line dance in the kitchen while washing dishes or cleaning up after a meal.

For the most part the videos are harmless fun, with simple dance routines done in a few seconds.

Unfortunately, the popularity of TikTok among Kuwait's domestic helpers - many of whom post while wearing their uniforms and with their faces clearly visible - has exposed them to sarcastic comments and abuse by the community at large. I read many offensive comments criticizing them. I understand that some people may feel uncomfortable seeing their maid in a video in an inappropriate situation, but what if she is not doing anything except having fun during her break? Is this a crime?

In recent years, cases of abuse and mistreatment of domestic workers have been on the rise. People need to recognize that maids are humans too, and deserve to be treated fairly; although there are a few who acknowledge that a maid needs to be treated with equal dignity. They are here to work for us, and they play important roles. There is no reason for them to be treated so poorly. These maids are not as fortunate as us, and we cannot expect them to meet all our expectations. Just let them be human - they feel bored and want to spend time on social media just like the rest of us.



# NBK hosts 'Graish' Pre-Ramadan gathering for its employees



**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) recently hosted a glamorous Pre-Ramadan gathering (Graish) in honor of its employees at the Four Seasons - Kuwait. The socially fun and friendly gathering drew a large number of NBK's Executive Management and staff members. NBK Group CEO, Issam Al-Sager and NBK-Kuwait Deputy CEO, Sulaiman Al Marzouq attended the occasion alongside a large number of other NBK Executives. NBK employees were treated to an evening of traditional Pre-Ramadan hospitality in addition to an array of entertaining activities and contests. All attendees were enrolled into a draw to win a new Nissan -Altima.

## Local

# Prince Charles receives Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah



LONDON: Prince Charles of Wales meets with Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in presence of Sheikh Hessa Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA

LONDON: Prince Charles, of Wales, welcomed on Wednesday Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Dumfries House in Scotland. During the meeting, Prince Charles expressed his pride for the deep and historical relations between Kuwait and the UK. He commended His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's role mainly in the humanitarian field and on the international level. Sheikh Nasser

Sabah conveyed sincere greetings from Prince Charles to His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince. The British Prince wished a successful visit to Sheikh Nasser Sabah and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Sheikh Hessa Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the wife of Sheikh Nasser Sabah and head of Kuwait's House of Islamic Antiquities (Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah) and Flight Lieutenant Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

## South Korea would play vital role in 'New Kuwait': Health official

KUWAIT: The expertise and experiences of South Korea in the establishment of the healthcare system and preventive health management policy will be helpful in the New Kuwait 2035 vision, a Korean health official said yesterday. South Korean Vice Health and Welfare Minister Kwon Deok-cheol said that his country would play a role by sharing experiences and cases in IT-based medicine and the management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

The HIS of Seoul National University Bundang Hospital (SNUBH) was established in six general hospitals, 70 primary healthcare centers in 2016, and Royal Commission Health Service Program (RCHSP) in Saudi Arabia in 2017, he explained. The IT-based HIS reduces waiting time for patients and helps to effectively manage drug and clinical information and hospital finance, he noted. Korea established the National Health Insurance Information System (NHIS) and Drug Utilization Review (DUR) to connect all clinics, hospitals, and pharmacies with the health insurance information of all citizens, he added. In addition, the IT-based HIS of Korean hospitals accounted for the 6th largest share in the global HIS market, which demonstrates that the stability and effectiveness

of the system is receiving recognition. Moreover, preventive health management policy has been adopted so that people can recognize the importance of taking care of their health and actively manage health risk factors including drinking, smoking, and obesity, he said.

On cancer treatment, the Korean official said that his country has advanced clinical technologies in this field, as well as in organ transplantation. The five-year survival rates of major cancers such as colorectal and gastric cancer and organ transplantation, including heart and pancreas, stand at a world-class level, he confirmed. "For this reason, 20 percent of inbound patients to Korea, 90,000 patients received internal medicine treatment, including cancer and organ transplantation in 2018," he said. Furthermore, an increasing number of foreign patients visited specialized departments, including plastic surgery, infertility, Korean Traditional Medicine, and medical check-ups, not to mention treatment for serious diseases, he added.

Korea and Kuwait signed the MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Healthcare and Medical Sciences in 2015, he said, adding that based on the MoU, the two countries started to accelerate cooperation. — KUNA

## Speaker receives South Korean PM, French senate president



KUWAIT: Speaker of Parliament Marzouq Al-Ghanem receives South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon at the National Assembly yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Speaker of Parliament Marzouq Al-Ghanem received in his office yesterday the visiting South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, both sides discussed relations between the two countries and ways to enhance them in all fields, Al-Dostour news network said in a press release. They also considered volume of trade exchange and projects carried out by South Korean companies in Kuwait, in addition to the latest developments on the regional and international scenes. The meeting was attended by the head of Kuwaiti-Korean Parliamentary Friendship Group MPs Dr Adel Al-Dumakhi, Safa Al-Hashem, Kuwait Capital Governor Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Ambassador to South Korea Badr Al-Awadhi, and South Korean Ambassador to Kuwait Hong Yong Jie. Also yesterday, Ghanem received World Bank Group (WBG) Resident Representative in Kuwait Ghassan Khoja.

Meanwhile, Ghanem held official talks with visiting President of the French Senate Gerard Larcher and the delegation accompanying him. The discussions dealt with the friendly relations and a range of regional and international issues of common concern with emphasis on the parliamentary cooperation, according to Al-Dostour news network. The meeting gathered the Kuwaiti MPs Abdulkarim Al-Kandari, Khaled Al-Shatti, Abdulah Al-Anzi, Humaidi Al-Soba'ie and Mubarak Al-Hajraf, as well as Ambassador to France Samie Al-Suleimani and Secretary General of the National Assembly Allam Al-Kandari. Following the meeting, Ghanem hosted a dinner banquet in honor of his guests.

### Kuwait's efforts

Larcher had stated that Kuwait is strug-

gling to maintain Gulf and world stability in the light of multilateralism, lauding its "diplomatic wisdom." Speaking on the sidelines of his visit to Kuwait, Larcher applauded Kuwait's parliamentary democracy as an "exceptional one," saying that it is a "milestone in consolidating the values of parliamentary democracy in the region." He added that Kuwait is seeking to help Iraq restore its balance and stability, while dealing carefully with the Syrian dossier just out of its firm position on backing political, rather than, solutions to all political problems.

The top French senator pointed out "exceptional" relations between both countries' parliamentary friendship committees, boasting that he is the first French senate president to visit Kuwait. He emphasized that it is necessary to develop a mechanism for promoting joint committees and sharing expertise between both countries' parliaments for the common interest of their people, noting that his country stands side by side with "Kuwait's diplomatic wisdom." On the economic cooperation between the two countries, the President of the French Senate pointed out efforts to strengthen economic ties and participate in the projects of the Kuwaiti development plan, stressing his country's eagerness to overcome obstacles to Kuwaiti investments.

On Wednesday, His Highness the Amir received Larcher at Bayan Palace, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. During the reception, Larcher conveyed to His Highness the Amir the greetings of French President Emmanuel Macron, wishing His Highness wellness and the people of Kuwait further prosperity. His Highness the Amir conveyed his greetings and appreciation to President Macaron and his wishes for well-being and the French people all progress and development. — KUNA



## Local

# Govt replaces over 2,000 expats this year

## Rights panel may invite premier over bedoon rights

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The Civil Service Commission informed a National Assembly panel yesterday that the government has so far this year replaced between 2,000 and 2,500 expat civil servants with Kuwaitis, a lawmaker said.

Rapporteur of the assembly human resources committee MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah said the commission also said that it replaced 3,150 expat employees last year, in a bid to create more jobs for Kuwaiti graduates.

The recently-established committee aims at

pressuring the government to accelerate the process of replacing some 80,000 expatriates still employed in the government departments, mostly in highly-skilled jobs, mainly in the ministries of education and health.

The committee has held several meetings with government officials and stepped up pressure on the civil service commission and ministries to find jobs for some 8,000 Kuwaitis listed as job-seekers.

In the meantime, the assembly human rights committee said it may invite the prime minister to a meeting to discuss reported pressures on

thousands of stateless people or bedoons in a bid to force them to reveal their actual citizenship. Head of the committee MP Adel Al-Damkhi said the committee yesterday met with the interior minister and discussed a draft law providing broader civil and humanitarian rights for bedoons. Damkhi said the bill is expected to be debated in the national assembly in the next session amid a controversy between supporter and opponent lawmakers.

He said the government did not give a clear opinion on the bill which seeks to give bedoons full human rights until their decades-old problem

is resolved. MP Safa Al-Hashem meanwhile said she was opposed to the draft law for fear it could open the way for large-scale naturalizations and therefore undermine the identity of Kuwait.

MP Riyadh Al-Adasani threatened yesterday to file to grill Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri a second time if the session next Wednesday to vote on a no-confidence motion turns into sectarian or tribal session. The lawmaker, who grilled the minister along with MPs Damkhi and Mohammad Al-Dallal, said the minister did not answer many accusations in the grilling.

## Education ministry accountants protest 'excessive' workload

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Accountants working at the Ministry of Education (MoE) yesterday demonstrated in protest of the amount of work they are required to do and the lack of financial incentives, according to their statements. Protestors said they have to process and input the data of over 100,000 MoE employees' salaries every month, while the allowances paid to accountants are inadequate compared to the efforts exerted. They also stressed that their claims had been falling on deaf ears and that nobody in MoE cares about them.

MoE's assistant undersecretary for financial affairs Yousef Al-Najjar said that he had been urging the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to increase accountants' wages since he assumed his post. Najjar explained that accountants get a KD 300 allowance for those holding university degrees, while those with lower degrees get a little less. He also stressed that there is no shortage in the numbers of accountant as new recruits are being constantly ap-

pointed in the sector.

In another educational concern, MoE recently authorized various schools to adjust the data of bedoon students in grade 12 before approving the final version and handing it to the exam control, as some of them had been facing nationality-related problems. In this regard, educational sources said the adjustments will be done according to the ID cards issued by the central apparatus for illegal residents, which was welcomed by parents who rejected the presence of other nationalities in their children's birth certificates.

### Solar power plant

The Cabinet's economic affairs committee will meet Sunday to discuss building, operating and maintaining Al-Debdebeh solar power plant. In a letter addressed to the Cabinet's secretariat general, Oil Minister and Minister of Electricity and Water Khaled Al-Fadhel stressed that the project aims at achieving HH the Amir's vision to provide 15 percent of the power Kuwait needs from renewable resources by 2030, and this is why the Cabinet authorized Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to build a plant to generate electricity using solar power.

Fadhel added that the project, due to be built by KPC's subsidiary Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) over a total area of 32 sq km at Shaqaya renewable energy complex, will provide 1-1.5 gigawatts of energy. Fadhel said the project was offered for public bidding in Sept 2018, adding that the winning contractor will build, operate and maintain the plant for 25 years effective from expected operations in 2022.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Service Directorate officers are seen during an inspection tour of a hospital under construction.

## Ministry announces drug seizures for Q1

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry assistant undersecretary for criminal security Maj Gen Khalid Al-Dayeen announced statistics and efforts of the sector and allied departments in the field of fighting drugs during the first quarter of 2019. He appreciated the support of Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. He said the criminal security sector exerts major efforts and provides all facilities to employees to support programs of fighting against and preventing drugs. He said efforts during the first quarter of 2019 resulted in confiscating 220 kg of hashish, 6 liters of liquid shabu, 15 kg of heroin, 25 kg of marijuana, 13 gm of cocaine, 50 gm of powdered chemical, 94,577 psychoactive tablets and 137 liquor bottles.

In other news, the firefighting sector at Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) carried out a mock exercise at Al-Hamra Tower in Sharq. The scenario began with two fires on floors 58 and 66, with two people missing and a third needing medical attention. Hilali and Capital centers responded, while officers from the prevention department were at hand in the control room to solve any problems in the tower firefighting systems. The team succeeded in fighting the fire and rescuing the missing.

In the meantime, the Public Relations and Information at KFSD said in a statement said the prevention sector went on an inspection tour of a hospital under construction over an area of 22,000 sq m with two basement car parks. They also inspected a 140-m-high medical tower including car parking basements and 27 floors in Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate. Meanwhile, KFSD introduced a new collection of support vehicles to join the previous fleet at various fire centers. The number of vehicles is 26 with a value of KD 1.5 million. KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad said the administration was keen on introducing the vehicles before the summer season as well as the next rainy season. He said the administration is keen on upgrading their vehicles and equipment in the short term and long-term.

## 95-99% children in Kuwait vaccinated: MoH

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Ministry of Health's (MoH) assistant undersecretary for public health affairs Dr Majeda Al-Qattan stressed Kuwait has come a long way in terms of vaccinations, with a 95-99 percent vaccination rate in children below five against polio, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, measles, rubella, mumps, meningitis and hepatitis, which put an end to many pediatric diseases and reduced others by 85-94 percent. But despite the achievements in this field, Qattan said that the number of people hesitant to take the vaccines is increasing worldwide and has affected some countries like the US, where over 110,000 children were diagnosed with measles in 2018.

"This hesitation is limited to 1-2 percent in Kuwait," she noted. Speaking on the occasion of celebrating World Immunization Week marked worldwide in the period of April 24-30, Qattan stressed that this week aims at boosting public awareness about the significance of immunization in various age categories, adding various activities were organized in various areas around Kuwait under the slogan "Protected Together, Vaccines Work" for various age categories. Qattan added that the activities included awareness lectures for both the public and medical staff working in over 70 health facilities, health expos in various hospitals and clinics, distributing brochures and flyers to the public and putting up hundreds of posters and rollups.

### Iftar campaign

Kuwait Food Bank (KFB) announced launching the iftar campaign through which it aims, in collaboration with the awqaf secretariat general, to distribute around 120,000 iftar meals during Ramadan. In this regard, KFB Director Salem Al-Hamar said that the campaign will start from the first day of Ramadan in various mosques and labor camps around Kuwait with the help of a large team of well-trained volunteers. "We already started preparing for the campaign long enough before Ramadan as part of the bank's strategic plan and charity program," Hamar explained, adding that the campaign is part of KFB's social responsibility activities to highlight Islamic regulations and the values of compassion amongst the people of Kuwait. Finally, Hamar invited donors desiring to take part in the campaign to donate online through the bank's website: [www.kuwaitfoodbank.org](http://www.kuwaitfoodbank.org) or by visiting KFB's headquarters in Qurtuba.



Minister resigns over Cyprus' serial killings

War on the phone front: Combat game all the rage in Libya



ALMATY: Gaukhar Kurmanaliyeva attends an AFP interview at the office of the informal Almaty office of the Atajurt volunteers organization, which helps victims of China's crackdown in Xinjiang. — AFP

# China using app for mass surveillance

## Xinjiang surveillance app targets legal, everyday behavior

**HONG KONG:** Chinese authorities are using a mobile app designed for mass surveillance to profile, investigate and detain Muslims in Xinjiang by labeling “completely lawful” behavior as suspicious, a Human Rights Watch report said yesterday. Beijing has come under international criticism over its policies in the northwest region of Xinjiang, where as many as one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities are being held in internment camps, according to a group of experts cited by the UN.

Human Rights Watch has previously reported that Xinjiang authorities use a mass surveillance system called the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) to gather information from multiple sources, such as facial-recognition cameras, wifi sniffers, police checkpoints, banking records and home visits.

But the new study, entitled “China’s Algorithms of Repression”, worked with a Berlin-based security company to analyze an app connected to the IJOP, showing specific acts targeted by the system. Xinjiang authorities closely watch 36 categories of behavior, including those who do not socialize with neighbors,

often avoid using the front door, don’t use a smartphone, donate to mosques “enthusiastically”, and use an “abnormal” amount of electricity, the group found.

The app also instructs officers to investigate those related to someone who got a new phone number, or related to others who left the country and have not returned after 30 days. “Our research shows, for the first time, that Xinjiang police are using illegally gathered information about people’s completely lawful behavior—and using it against them,” said Maya Wang, senior China researcher at Human Rights Watch. “The Chinese government is monitoring every aspect of people’s lives in Xinjiang, picking out those it mistrusts, and subjecting them to extra scrutiny.”

### ‘Moving red-line’

The rights group obtained a copy of the app and enlisted cybersecurity firm Cure53 to “reverse-engineer” it—to disassemble it and look at its design and data—and examined its source code. Along with collecting personal information the app prompts officials to file reports about people, vehicles and events they find sus-

pect—and sends out “investigative missions” for police to follow up. Officers are also asked to check whether suspects use any of the 51 internet tools that are deemed suspicious, including foreign messaging platforms popular outside China like WhatsApp, LINE and Telegram.

A number of people said they or their family members have been detained for having software such as WhatsApp or a Virtual Private Network (VPN) installed on their phones during checks by authorities, according to the report. The rights group said its findings suggest the IJOP system tracks data of everyone in Xinjiang by monitoring location data from their phones, ID cards and vehicles, plus electricity and gas station usage.

“Psychologically, the more people are sure that their actions are monitored and that they, at anytime, can be judged for moving outside of a safe grey-space, the more likely they are to do everything to avoid coming close to crossing a moving red-line,” Samantha Hoffman, an analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute’s International Cyber Policy Centre, told AFP. “There is no rule of law in China, the Party ultimately de-

termines what is legal and illegal behaviour, and it doesn’t have to be written down.”

The IJOP app was developed by Hebei Far East Communication System Engineering Company (HBFEC), which at the time of the app’s development was fully-owned by China Electronics Technology Group Corporation, a state-owned technology giant (CETC), said Human Rights Watch. CETC could not be reached and HBFEC did not respond to requests for comment. Washington last year imposed export controls on key Chinese companies including HBFEC and other institutions under CETC, citing risks to US national security and foreign policy interests.

Greg Walton, an independent cybersecurity expert who advised on the report, said while the system is a “blunt instrument that may be directly contributing to the massive numbers of people in internment camps”, the data if stored could be used in the future for more advanced policing algorithms. “This means that data collected through the app today may well be analysed in a few years’ time by far more sophisticated logic,” he said.—AFP

## International

# Turkey 'Communist mayor' tears down walls with fresh approach

## Macoglu winning fans - but also draws criticism

**TUNCELI:** On his election, Fatih Macoglu's first move as mayor of his Turkish city was to knock down the walls around his office as a symbol of his transparency. He refuses to use his official car and has posted his administration's finances on a banner on the front of his office building to show people how he is spending their money.

As Turkey's only Communist party mayor, Macoglu, 50, is winning fans but has also drawn criticism with his novel approach, in a country dominated for 17 years by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling AKP party. "There is nothing more natural than the public knowing what's going on," Macoglu told AFP, in an interview at his office. "This shouldn't be an insult or a curse word for anyone." In the March 31 local polls, Macoglu was elected mayor of Tunceli in eastern Anatolia—formerly known as Dersim—a majority Kurdish Alevi city, which is very secular and left-leaning.

It's not his first mayoral term. In 2014, he was elected mayor of the town of Ovacik, also in Tunceli province, and also for the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP). During his term in office, he instigated popular initiatives, including promoting agriculture and free public transport. Macoglu, often dubbed "the Communist mayor", said he took over an "emptied" municipality in Tunceli, with all its income confiscated.

The city was previously controlled by the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and then by a "kayyum"—a government-appointed trustee put in place by Erdogan's government after a 2016 coup attempt. The married father-of-two said that he doesn't see himself as "a communist mayor". "I am a socialist," he said. But he added: "If you ask 'Are you a socialist?"

Are you aiming for communism?' Of course I am, but at a time when capitalism has gone wild, to be a communist or to be seen as a communist city seems like an exaggeration."

### Leftist history

Tunceli has a long history of leftist resistance. In 1938, the Turkish military bombarded and attacked the region to crush a Kurdish rebellion that was resisting the authority of the new republic founded in 1923. In 2011, Erdogan-then prime minister—apologized for the killing of more than 13,000 Kurds in the attack, marking the first time a state representative had done so.

Most residents still prefer to use the name Dersim, but nationalists see that as an insult to Turkey's modern republic, founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who himself named the city Tunceli. Macoglu put up a sign in his room stating "The word, the power and the decision rest with the people of Dersim", which sparked criticism on social media. Asked if he was feeling isolated because he defended communism, Macoglu told AFP: "To the contrary, there is a lot of sympathy from the people of Turkey.

"If today, even the representatives of bourgeois politics talk about production and cooperatives, this is a win for us." Nationally, the Communist Party of Turkey is a marginal party and has no MPs in parliament. As Ovacik mayor, Macoglu opened a cooperative to promote organic honey and chickpeas whose sales funded university students from poor families. Macoglu wants to expand his model all around Turkey. Cihan Durna, of the Ovacik cooperative, praised Macoglu's production model. "He has done a lot to develop the town," he said.

was later that day convicted of skipping bail. The 47-year-old was subsequently confronted with a warrant for extradition to the United States.

The US indictment charges him with "conspiracy" for working with former US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to crack a password stored on Department of Defence computers in March 2010. Manning passed hundreds of thousands of classified documents to WikiLeaks, exposing US military wrongdoing in the Iraq war and diplomatic secrets about scores of countries.

The charge carries a maximum jail term of five years. A lawyer for the US government, Ben Brandon, told the court yesterday that investigators had found chatroom conversations between Assange and Manning in March 2010. He said they "engaged in real-time discussions regarding Chelsea Manning's dissemination of confidential records to Mr Assange". He added that Assange "actively tried to crack the password (to the classified computer) and encouraged Ms Manning to provide more information".

Assange's supporters, who protested outside the court yesterday, believe that more serious charges could be filed if he is transferred to the US, and he fears the death penalty. WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Kristinn Hrafnsson said on Wednesday that all efforts would be focused on preventing Assange's extradition. — AFP



**TUNCELI, Turkey:** Dogs play next to a statue of the Kurdish-Alevi tribal leader Seyit Riza in the eastern Turkish city of Tunceli, where Fatih Mehmet Macoglu from the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) was elected mayor in the last election. — AFP

### Cuba Cafe

Senem Yerlikaya runs Cuba Cafe in Ovacik which she opened in 2014 because of "similarities between the people of Cuba and Ovacik". "He (Macoglu) has done a lot for the people here in the last five years. Mayors are usually very formal but he integrated well with the locals," she said. Tunceli province has been battered by a conflict between Turkish forces and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), listed as a terror group by Ankara and its Western allies.

The military still has checkpoints around the region, which has mountainous areas where mil-

itants hide out. But locals are happy with Macoglu, and the province is changing. Mahmut Tutan, who owns a small hotel in Ovacik—which often draws comparisons with the Swiss Alps—said tourists flocked to the region last year. "He comes from a poor family in that valley," Tutan said, pointing to a village in the mountains. "One day the people around him asked him to work for the good of others. That is how he started."

Metin Kahraman, a wellknown singer and researcher who works on oral history in the region, said he hoped that Macoglu would lead a "positive change". — AFP

## Assange fights US extradition

**LONDON:** WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange told a court yesterday he would oppose extradition to the United States as the legal process began in London, a day after he was jailed for breaching his bail conditions in a former case. He appeared via videolink at Westminster Magistrates Court, where a lawyer for the US authorities briefly set out his alleged involvement in the release of classified documents.

"I do not wish to surrender myself for extradition for doing journalism that has won many awards and protected many people," Assange told the judge, who set the next hearing for May 30. The Australian was jailed on Wednesday for 50 weeks for breaking his bail conditions in 2012, when he fled to Ecuador's London embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden. He was accused of sexual assault and rape but strongly denied the claims, saying they were linked to the whistleblowing work of WikiLeaks. Assange feared they were a pretext to get him in custody and eventually transfer him to the United States to face prosecution. He was dragged out of the embassy and arrested on April 11 after Quito gave him up. The Swedish claims had been dropped, but he

## S Sudan rivals meet in bid to save peace deal

**ADDIS ABABA:** South Sudan's rival parties began two days of talks in Addis Ababa yesterday in a bid to salvage a peace deal, with just days left before a unity government is meant to be formed. President Salva Kiir, rebel leader Riek Machar and a handful of other groups inked the peace deal in September 2018, the latest in a string of efforts to end a devastating conflict now in its sixth year. But the parties have failed to resolve several crunch issues before a power-sharing government is to be installed on May 12.

Representatives of the parties gathered in Addis for a meeting called by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional bloc for East Africa, holding prayers before going into a closed session. Government has insisted the meeting focus on how to push forward with the formation of the unity govern-

ment. Machar's camp, though, wants a six-month delay to resolve security and other issues that, it says, prevent him from making his return. "There are key issues not implemented according to the matrix of the revitalized peace agreement," Kang Pal Chol, a senior member of Machar's SPLM-IO party, told journalists at the start of the meeting. "We've proposed a timeline that for these key issues to be implemented, we need this six months for us to achieve the unfinished business." "We expect the meeting to come out with the solution as the 12th of May is approaching. We expect the leaders of South Sudan will come to their senses and agree on what will move the country forward."

South Sudan's information minister, Michael Makuei, told journalists that "if the government wasn't ready for the May 12 deadline, we wouldn't have come here." Machar is living in exile in Khartoum, having been hounded out of Juba in a hail of gunfire in 2016 when a prior deal collapsed. He is supposed to return as first vice president under the new deal. An official with the body overseeing the implementation of the peace agreement, Augustino Njoroge, said that of 59 key tasks to be implemented, only 27 have been completed. — AFP

## International

# Russia, Syria troops step up attacks on rebel held northwestern Syria

## Air strikes, shelling force thousands to flee

**AMMAN:** Russian and Syrian forces intensified air strikes and shelling in northwestern Syria overnight in the heaviest assault on the last rebel-held area since it was declared a demilitarized zone under a Russian-Turkish deal, sources said yesterday. The targeted villages and towns in northern Hama and southern Idlib fall within a buffer zone agreed last September between Russia and Turkey as part of a deal which averted a major offensive on the area. Earlier this week Washington warned violence in the buffer zone “will result in the destabilization of the region”.

Since Tuesday the Russian and Syrian military attacks have forced thousands of civilians to flee to camps further north along the Turkish border and damaged four medical facilities, according to Idlib civil defense officials and a US

medical aid organization working in the area. “Medical facilities are being evacuated, leaving the most vulnerable with no access to medical care. We are on the edge of a humanitarian catastrophe,” Khaula Sawah, vice president of the US-based Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations -USA (UOSSM US) said in a statement on Wednesday.

Syrian army helicopters have dropped barrel bombs, which are drums or cylinders packed with explosives and shrapnel that cause indiscriminate destruction, killing at least 15 civilians and injured dozens, rescuers in Idlib province said. Opposition-run civil defense agencies say hundreds of people, mostly civilians, have been killed by Russian and Syrian strikes since the September deal which prevented a potentially devastating offensive on Idlib and nearby areas

controlled by rebels and now home to over 3 million people.

Syrian state media, quoting army sources, blamed rebels for the attacks and said it had targeted “terrorist groups” in towns in northern Hama including Kfr Nabouda. It also said al Qaeda-inspired groups have stepped up drone attacks on Russia’s main air base near the Syrian Mediterranean coast, but that these have been unsuccessful. Idlib is held by an array of rebel groups. The most powerful is Tahrir al-Sham, an amalgamation of Islamist groups dominated by the former Nusra Front - an Al-Qaeda affiliate until 2016.

Turkey, which has supported the rebels and has troops to monitor the truce, has been negotiating with Moscow to halt the strikes with little success. The main Turkey-backed rebel grouping said they were rushing extra fighters to the

main fronts to face all “possibilities”. In response to the escalation, rebels said they mounted several rocket attacks on army positions including the Breideej army base in northern Hama, injuring and killing at least four Russian soldiers in a mortar attack that hit their vehicle.

“We have stepped up our readiness and sent troop reinforcements to confront any attack the regime and the Russians on any area,” Naji al-Mustafa, spokesman for the National Liberation Front coalition of rebel groups told Reuters. “We cannot leave matters like this.. we are preparing for any possibility..” he added. A military defector told Reuters on condition of anonymity that the latest campaign could signal a ground offensive aimed at taking control of territory in northern rural Hama province and southern Idlib countryside. —Reuters

## Death toll in Nigeria attack rises to 30

**KANO:** Residents of a northeastern Nigerian village torched by Boko Haram fighters said yesterday that nine more bodies of their relatives had been found, taking the total mass-cred to 30. The jihadists, packed into four trucks and flanked by gunmen on motorbikes, swept into Kuda in northeast Nigeria’s Adamawa state late on Monday afternoon, shooting down villagers as they ran away. When survivors returned on Tuesday to bury the dead left amid the smoking ruins of their homes, they counted 21 people killed.

Later, the villagers said they found the bodies of nine more people in the surrounding forest, murdered as they tried to escape. “They were pursued and shot dead as they tried to flee into the bush,” resident Paul Waramulu told AFP on Wednesday. Two-thirds of homes in the village had been burnt and grain stores looted, he added. “The total number of the recovered bodies is now 30,” said Simon Damina, a villager on the search team scouring the bush. “The toll may increase, as we are still searching for more bodies.”

Kuda lies in the Madagali district of Adamawa state, 285 kilometers north of the state capital Yola. The attack is the latest in a long line of massacres carried out by Boko Haram in the area, who have hideouts in the dense forests nearby. There was no immediate official response from the army or police. The decade-long jihadist conflict has killed tens of thousands of people and forced millions from their homes. The violence has spread to neighboring Niger, Chad and Cameroon, prompting a regional military coalition against the jihadists. —AFP

## War on the phone front: Combat game all the rage in Libya

**TAJOURA:** It’s a day of rest from fighting on the front line in Libya and Abdelaziz and his comrades down their weapons only to pick up their phones and resume combat. “(Khalifa) Haftar’s guys are coming to get us,” shouts Abdelaziz, referring to the military strongman who launched a bid to capture Tripoli last month. The eyes of the young men are fixed on mobile phones as they shoot it out in PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds, or PUBG, a brutal “battle royale” game in which the winner is the last survivor. The online multiplayer video game is among the world’s most popular with more than 360 million downloads.

The Iraqi parliament voted last month to ban the game for “inciting violence” and it has also been outlawed in Nepal and the Indian state of Gujarat. In Libya, PUBG is all the rage, especially on the front line in the suburbs of Tripoli and around the city where forces loyal to the internationally recognized Government of National Accord have been fighting Haftar’s self-styled Libyan National Army for the past month.

“We play it when we come back from the front, and sometimes even on the front,” the burly Abdelaziz says in his raspy voice. The 25-year-old and his fellow fighters from a “katiba” or battalion in Misrata are battling alongside other pro-GNA forces in Ain Zara, a district in Tripoli’s southern suburbs. That afternoon, they rested at their camp in Tajoura, a coastal town in the eastern part of the capital.

Under a large awning, Abdelaziz and his comrades - mostly in their 20s - put their Kalashnikov assault rifles patched up with tape and their rocket-propelled grenade launchers on a table. They reach for their



**TRIPOLI:** Fighters loyal to the internationally-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) play online video game PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) on their phones during a break from fighting, in a military base in Tajoura, south of Tripoli. — AFP

phones, go online and fire up the game with their carefully selected outfits and avatars, some more colorful than others. They jump out of planes along with 100 other players and are parachuted onto an island where they collect weapons and eliminate each other until the last one is standing.

### ‘We learn tricks’

“I discovered the game a year ago thanks to these guys. I tried it out of curiosity and fell in love,” says Abdelaziz. “At night, we play. You don’t sleep,” another player says with a laugh. Mohamed Shaafi, a 19-year-old in a camouflage cap, chips in. “Whether it’s morning, afternoon or night, we have to play,” he says. “It excites us and we can even learn tricks (for the real battlefield): where to look, how to crawl, how to train. “It motivates us when we play it before going to the front line,” he says, looking from under the visor of his cap raised like a cyclist’s. Around the table, the first crackles of gunshots are heard from their phones.

Without ever taking their eyes off their

screens, the four young men talk to each other as though in battle. “There’s someone under the tree: watch out!”, “Get down!”, “You’re far away!”, “You don’t have a gun? I’m here, don’t worry.” For Abdelaziz, his virtual opponents are the same as “Haftar’s guys” who he fights in the potholed streets of Ain Zara. “The front is PUBG in real life. That’s why we love this game,” Akram says with a smile, his combat helmet still on his head, as he watches the gameplay.

Abdelaziz says “there’s a big difference between real life and gaming”. “In gaming, when you die, you can come back. In real life, it’s over.” Mohamed, on the other hand, almost prefers the reality of the front. “In the game, when you get hurt and call for help, no one comes, but on the battlefields, someone comes to help you,” says the young man with a bandage on his leg. After 10 minutes of play, one of the players finally lifts his head from his screen. He appears upset as he drops his phone on the table, before saying: “I’m out of battery”. — AFP

# Saudi-led coalition hits Yemen rebel drone site

## 8 migrants dead as UN fears 'inhumane treatment' in camps

**RIYADH:** The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen raided a drone facility used by Houthi rebels at an airbase in the capital Sanaa, a spokesman said. The coalition has ramped up attacks on such sites after the Iran-aligned rebels warned last month they could launch attacks against the capitals of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which lead the military coalition against them.

The latest raid late Wednesday targeted "drone maintenance sites, a communications system and locations of drone experts and operators" at the Al-Dulaimi base adjoining the airport in rebel-held Sanaa, the official Saudi Press Agency quoted coalition spokesman Colonel Turki Al-Maliki as saying. The Houthi-controlled Saba news agency said 13 air strikes targeted the base and airport. The coalition last month said it targeted a cave in Sanaa used by Houthi rebels to stockpile drones.

The raid came after the coalition reported last month that Saudi air defenses had intercepted two drones launched by Houthi rebels that targeted Khamis Mushait, home to a major airbase in the southwest of the kingdom. And in January the Houthis launched a drone attack on Yemen's largest airbase, Al-Anad, north of the southern port of Aden, during a military parade. Eleven people were wounded in the attack, including Yemen's deputy chief of staff Major General Saleh al-Zandani who later died of his injuries. Seven other loyalists - including a high-ranking intelligence official - were killed in the attack.

Yemen is mired in a grinding conflict between the Iran-aligned Houthi rebels and a government

backed up by a Saudi-led coalition. The Saudi-led coalition launched its first raids on rebel strongholds in March 2015 in a bid to bolster President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, who now lives in Riyadh. Since then the conflict has killed some 10,000 people, according to the World Health Organization, although human rights groups say the toll could be five times higher. The unrest has also pushed the country to the brink of famine.

### 8 migrants dead

In another development, at least eight Africa migrants have died in makeshift camps in war-hit Yemen, the UN's migration agency said yesterday, warning thousands were living under "inhumane conditions". The International Organization for Migration said they had died of complications related to acute watery diarrhea at the Ibn Khaldoun Hospital in Lahj, a southern district controlled by the Yemeni government in its war with northern rebels.

The IOM said it learned of the deaths on Wednesday. Most were Ethiopian. "I am deeply saddened by the deaths of these eight migrants, who were among the thousands of migrants being held in deplorable conditions across Yemen," said Mohammed Abdiker, the IOM's director of operations and emergencies. "We have decried this policy to the authorities, urging them to take a humane approach to irregular migration."

Abdiker said the IOM had evidence guards had fired on migrants at a sports stadium in Aden, bastion of the embattled Yemeni government, wounding two and leaving a teenage boy "likely paralyzed for life". "IOM stands ready to support



LAHJ, Yemen: Africa migrants receive treatment at the Ibn Khaldoun Hospital in the southern city of Lahj. — AFP

Yemen and other regional partners to identify sustainable responses to irregular migration, which do not involve the shortsighted abuse of vulnerable migrants and fully respects international law," he said. "I am greatly concerned that this dire situation will further deteriorate."

Yemen has descended into chaos in the past four years of conflict, with both the Iran-linked Houthi rebels and a rival pro-government military alliance led by Saudi Arabia accused of acts that could amount to war crimes. But the country remains on an established route for migrants from the Horn of

Africa, who typically first travel by land through Djibouti before eventually undergoing perilous boat journeys across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen. Many say they aim to travel by land to oil-rich Saudi Arabia to find work. But many do not even survive the journey, dying at sea or at the hands of panicked smugglers. The IOM said an estimated 5,000 African migrants, mostly Ethiopian and some from Somalia, were currently being held in makeshift camps in the government strongholds of Lahj, Abyan and Aden. More than 1,400 people were "detained" in the Lahj camp alone, it said. — Agencies

## Myanmar army kills 6 Rakhine detainees as violence worsens

**YANGON:** Myanmar's army said it shot dead six detainees in a village school yesterday while holding 275 men on suspicion of being Rakhine rebels, as fears over military impunity grow in the escalating fighting. Security forces are battling the Arakan Army (AA), a group pushing for more autonomy for the state's ethnic Rakhine Buddhists. Thousands of troops have been re-deployed to the poor western state, which in 2017 was the scene of the mass expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims.

UN investigators say the violence against the Rohingya amounted to "genocide". More than 30,000 people have been forced from their homes in clashes with the AA since January. On Tuesday, troops descended on Kyauk Tan village in Rathedaung township, separating men aged between 15 and 50, local and military sources confirmed. Army spokesman Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun said yesterday that 275 people "were being temporarily held in the village school for investigation".

Shots were fired in the school yesterday morning when the detainees tried to "attack the security forces" who had no option but to shoot, Zaw Min Tun said. "Six were killed, eight were injured and four escaped," he said, adding warning shots had been first been fired and the wounded had been sent to hospital. The six bodies were placed "in front of the school in plain view," villager Aye Maung told AFP by phone. "They (the remaining detainees) are being held hostage and we're worried for their safety too," he said.

By yesterday evening, the village was still completely sealed off, said 57-year-old local resident Tun Aye Thein, adding there were "no AA members" in the village. "We don't know what they (the military) will do as they've surrounded us," he said. Local MP Tin Maung Win tried to enter Wednesday but said he was turned away by the army, adding he was "worried" for local residents. The north of Rakhine state is in strict lockdown, making any independent verification difficult.

The latest killings come after outrage triggered by the deaths in April of three ethnic Rakhine in military custody - and the secret cremation of their bodies. The armed forces said two of the deaths were due to "heart failure" but did not give details of the third, cremating all three before their families could see them. Campaign group Fortify Rights said the deaths show the military continues to act with "total impunity". Rakhine is one of Myanmar's poorest regions and is deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines. — AFP

## Like Uber, but for organs: First kidney delivered by drone

**WASHINGTON:** A kidney needed for transplantation has been delivered by a drone for the first time ever, the University of Maryland Medical Center said, a development that could herald faster and safer organ transport. The specially designed high-tech drone was fitted with equipment to monitor the kidney along its three mile (five kilometer) journey to its recipient: a 44-year-old woman from Baltimore who had spent eight years on dialysis before the procedure.

The drone, which required a special clearance from aviation regulators, took off at 1:00 am on April 19 and flew at a height of 400 feet (120 meters) for about ten minutes before touching down at its destination. Doctor Joseph Scalea, who was among the team of surgeons that performed the transplantation, hailed the project's success and said drone deliveries could help overcome delays that destroy an organ's viability.

"The next run could be over 30 miles, or 100. The distance is relatively unimportant," he told AFP Wednesday. "The most important part is, we were able to implement drone technology into the current system of transplantation and transportation." Current transport methods involve expensive chartered flights or even variable commercial flights, occasionally resulting in delays, and cost typically around \$5,000. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, there were nearly 114,000 people on waiting lists for an organ transplant in the US in 2018. About 1.5 percent of deceased donor organ shipments did not make it to their intended destination while nearly four percent of organ shipments had an unanticipated delay of two or more hours. Scalea, who has founded a company that manages data for organ shipments, likened the system to an Uber-like service that would prove eventually prove less costly. — AFP

## International

# Cyprus justice minister resigns over serial killings and uproar

## Seven female victims, including two children

**NICOSIA:** Cyprus's justice minister resigned yesterday amid public uproar at how police handled disappearances of foreign women, victims of a suspected serial killer whose actions went undetected for almost three years. Four women have been found murdered in the past three weeks, their bodies dumped in three locations west of the capital Nicosia. Investigations are under way into three other disappearances, including two girls aged six and eight.

A 35-year-old career army officer is in custody and police say he has confessed to seven killings in total after having connected with the women on an online dating site. "I informed the president of the republic that I am resigning for reasons of political sensitivity," Justice Minister Ionas Nicolaou told reporters after meeting President Nicos Anastasiades.

Nicolaou, whose ministry primarily supervises police, said his resignation was not an assumption of any responsibility, while adding there were "apparent shortcomings" in how police investigated the reports of the women's disappearances. "The consequential extension of

this abhorrent crime doesn't only affect police, but society in general, and I refer to a mentality and perception which does not honor any of us," he said, without elaborating. In a statement, Anastasiades said he was "deeply saddened" to accept the resignation, calling Nicolaou one of his closest associates.

### Uproar

Cypriot police have faced a torrent of criticism over how they handled each case - the magnitude of which was unknown when tourists

accidentally found a bound body in a mine shaft flooded by heavy rain on April 14. That victim, Marry Rose Tuburcio, 39, from the Philippines, is the only one formally identified of the four women discovered since then. She

went missing with her six-year-old daughter Sierra in May last year. When acquaintances reported her disappearance to police they were told she and her daughter had probably crossed into the northern part of the divided Mediterranean island, a breakaway Turkish Cypriot state.

A fresh search for other victims was under-



### Minister says there were gaps in the inquiry



**MITSERO, Cyprus:** Journalists film as Cyprus forensic police officers probe the Red Lake out of the village of Mitsero, southwest of the capital Nicosia. Police recovered the remains of a victim of a suspected serial killer after a string of grisly murders that have shocked the Mediterranean island. — AFP

way yesterday in a man-made lake near a copper mine. One victim was found in a suitcase weighed down with a block of cement in the lake on Sunday. British police are also assisting inquiries. A mother and daughter from Romania,

thought to be the first victims, disappeared in September 2016, and the last of the victims, from the Philippines, around August 2018. Police say they will conduct an investigation into any perceived shortcomings. — Reuters

## New look, old ways? Benin's leader and authoritarian past

**COTONOU:** President Patrice Talon of Benin, a multi-millionaire businessman who dresses in sunglasses and sharp suits, presents himself as part of a new generation of modern, finance-focused and ambitious African leaders. Elected in 2016 by defeating the preferred successor of former president Thomas Boni Yayi, Talon won the top job without a traditional political power base. "He wants to change attitudes," his communications advisor, Wilfried Houngbedji said. But the businessman, who entered politics late after making his money in cotton and ports, has done more than change attitudes.

He has shifted the political rules of the small West African state that had previously been held up as a model for democracy in the region. Tough new eligibility criteria effectively barred opposition parties from fielding any candidates in last Sunday's parliamentary elections. Talon argued the higher threshold would help to consolidate the country's fragmented parliament, but critics condemned it as a gag that choked democracy. On the day itself, more than three-quarters of the country's five million registered voters stayed at home.

Talon, 61, now commands control of the 83-seat parliament. But it comes at the cost of sweeping away the fervent political climate that had been a hallmark of Benin's democracy since its shift to democracy in 1990. To some, the spectres of authoritarian control and political unrest have risen once more. Protestors have taken to the streets, torching businesses, hurling stones and smashing the windows of government buildings. Police responded with live rounds and teargas. One woman died and another man was seriously hurt, a medic said yesterday.

### Business tycoon

Three years earlier, it had looked good for Talon, who promised to modernize the country. Ranked the 15th wealthiest person in sub-Saharan Africa with a fortune topping \$400 million (357 million euros) in 2015 according to Forbes, he presented himself as part of a new wave of can-do African leaders. Aides said he was a perfectionist, keen to show he would sweep out corruption and cronyism. Lowly government officials were dismissed if they turned up late for work, as they had done for years, or if they helped themselves to public cash.

Talon also helped push Benin's economic growth to 6.8 percent in 2018, although this was largely due to the forced regularization of the informal economy. Since coming to power, he is as much hated by the poor who see him as arrogant as he is admired by the elite who sees him as a visionary. And the election-widely criticized by rights groups-is a turning point. The internet was shut down on polling day, which watchdogs denounced as a blatant violation of freedom of expression.

"The wave of arbitrary arrests of political activists and journalists, and the crackdown on peaceful protests, have reached an alarming level," Amnesty International researcher Francois Patuel said in the run up to the April 28 poll. The vote, according to preliminary results, saw a record low turnout of 22.99 percent—a slump of more than half since the advent of democracy nearly 30 years earlier. For Talon it was "a referendum in all but name" on his rule, political scientist Expedit Ologou said.

It is quite a contrast to Benin's competitive elections, which it had held since leaving behind authoritarian rule almost two decades ago. Just five years ago, voters could choose from 20 parties. This time round, only two parties—both allied to Talon—contested seats. Some critics fear that a parliament entirely loyal to the president will give him power to change the constitution and engineer a way to meet his goal of extending the presidential term. Arguing in favor of strong leadership, Talon has spoken of prolonging the term from five years to seven, albeit for a single mandate. — AFP

## Qatar says tightening Iran sanctions harms oil consuming nations

**DOHA:** Qatar, which hosts the largest US air base in the Middle East, has spoken out against Washington's decision to block all exports of Iranian oil, saying unilateral sanctions were unwise because they hurt the countries that rely on the supplies. The United States has demanded that buyers of Iranian oil stop purchases by May 1 or face the prospect of sanctions, ending six months of waivers that had allowed Iran's eight biggest customers, most in Asia, to import limited volumes. "The sanctions should not be extended because they have an adverse impact on countries benefiting from Iranian oil," Qatar's foreign minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said.

"In Qatar, we do not believe unilateral sanctions bring positive effects for crises which must be solved through dialogue and dialogue only," he told a news conference following a meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue in Qatar's capital Doha, which was attended by his Iranian counterpart. Qatar, the world's leading exporter of liquefied natural gas, is at odds with other Gulf Arab states who are strong supporters of tighter US sanctions on Iran. Saudi Arabia and its allies accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism, which Qatar denies, and of cosying up to their regional foe Iran. They cut trade and diplomatic ties with Qatar in 2017, a boycott that Qatar says is aimed at curtailing its sovereignty. The White House has said it is working with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to ensure oil markets, which have already tightened this year due to supply cuts led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), were "adequately supplied". —Reuters

# Biden's rise in 2020 race catches Trump's eye, unnerves his allies

## A CNN poll gives Biden a 15-point lead

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden's rapid emergence as front-runner in the race for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination has caught the attention of President Donald Trump and unnerved some of his allies, who believe Biden is a potentially dangerous rival. Biden soared from "will-he-or-won't-he-run?" status to the head of the crowded Democratic field just days after announcing his candidacy last week, pulling away from Senator Bernie Sanders and a host of other rivals in opinion polls. A CNN poll gave Biden a 15-point lead in a field of 20 Democratic candidates. Some Trump advisers see the former vice president, with his mainstream blue-collar appeal, as a tough opponent in the three states that carried Trump to his improbable victory in 2016 - Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

Losing any of those states in 2020 would make Trump's path to re-election more problematic. "They think they're in trouble there and they think he's a real threat," said one outside Trump adviser, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Trump's initial response to Biden's entry into the race was to use a well-worn playbook - give him a mocking nickname - "Sleepy Joe Biden" - and insult his intelligence. "I have known Joe over the years," Trump said on Fox News. "He is not the brightest light bulb in the group, I don't think, but he has a name that they know."

Trump later went on a Twitter tirade after the

largest US firefighters union endorsed Biden, including posting dozens of retweets on Wednesday from purported firefighters and their friends and families professing support for the Republican president or criticizing Biden. Despite his focus on Biden, some of Trump's friends said he did not seem particularly concerned about him, at least at this stage, given that the first votes in the nominating process will not be cast until early next year. White House counselor Kellyanne Conway played down the idea that Trump saw Biden as his biggest threat.

"No, I think it's just fun to remind everybody about him. ... Maybe he's an easy mark, and he just announced for president of the United States," she told reporters. Trump allies said Biden, who was vice president under Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, could still get chewed up by a large, diverse field of Democratic rivals, many leaning to the left of Biden and discussing policies such as tax hikes for wealthier Americans and government-run healthcare. As long as Democrats are moving left, said David Urban, a political consultant and Trump campaign aide in 2016, "I like our chances whoever is at the top of the ticket for the Democrats."

### Warning signs

The Trump re-election campaign said it believed that whoever emerges as the Democratic nominee would have adopted policy stances out of tune with most Americans. "There is no centrist



DES MOINES: Democratic presidential candidate and former vice president Joe Biden speaks to guests during a campaign event at The River Center in Des Moines, Iowa. — AFP

lane in the Democrat primary," said Trump campaign communications director Tim Murtaugh. "We view them as one big liberal organism right now with 28 heads." Still, there are warning signs for Trump.

He won narrow victories in 2016 over Democrat Hillary Clinton in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania with the help of blue-collar voters who

once voted Democratic but switched to Trump. Trump's advisers said repeating his victories in those crucial states next year might be a tall order. Biden, a longtime US senator from Delaware, held his first campaign rally in Pennsylvania and has quickly sought to make the campaign into a battle against Trump rather than against his rivals for the Democratic nomination. — Reuters

## Warren Buffett: Beloved American billionaire with humility

NEW YORK: Legend, icon, guru: Warren Buffett cuts a unique figure in the United States as a billionaire with a long track record of brilliant investing whose renown is softened by folksy midwestern charm. Donning classic gray suits and colored ties, the 88-year-old "Oracle of Omaha" has managed to cultivate a humble and accessible persona despite his standing as the world's third-richest person.

His following in his home country is cult-like, with thousands of small investors making a pilgrimage each spring for the annual meeting at Berkshire Hathaway, Buffett's company. The event takes place in Omaha, Nebraska, right in the middle of the United States, in the city where Buffett was born and has always lived. "He is such a down-to-earth person," said David Kass, a finance professor at the University of Maryland and the author of a blog on Buffett and Berkshire Hathaway. "He's a hero who's generally popular with the public," said Gregori Volokhine of Meeschaert Financial Services.

### Nothing fancy

Buffett evinces few of the trappings of the generally loathed "one percent." He has lived in the same house since 1958 in a quiet neighborhood of Omaha. His gastronomic tastes are also decidedly humble and include



In this file photo, investor Warren Buffett speaks during the 'United State of Women Summit' at the Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC. — AFP

McDonald's chicken McNuggets at least three times a week. He also favors potato chips for snacks, ice cream for dessert and an average of five cans of Coca-Cola per day.

Equally telling, Buffett eschews big-ticket art-collecting and other pursuits emblematic of the high life. "I don't need fancy clothes," Buffett told CBS in 2013. "I don't need fancy food." Though raised middle class, Buffett did not have an easy childhood in some ways. He has described going through a shoplifting phase and was forced to navigate around his abusive mother Leila, who used to berate his sister Doris as "stupid."

In the biography "Giving it all away: The Doris Buffett story," Warren Buffett acknowledges he did not stand up to his mother on Doris' behalf, saying "I never did because I was afraid of becoming the target myself." Buffett's commitment to philanthropy has further helped insulate him from popular resentment. He has donated billions of dollars to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and has, like Gates, called for the wealthy to pay higher taxes. —AFP

## Ice cream, insurance, trains: Many sides of Buffett's empire

NEW YORK: Since making his first stock purchase at 11 years old, Warren Buffett has built a business empire that extends to insurance, rail transport and frozen desserts, not to mention a bulging portfolio of financial market investments. Berkshire Hathaway, Buffett's holding company, takes its name from a textile business he acquired in 1965 and which went bust in the 1980s. But that unsuccessful investment did not stop the company from becoming one of the biggest in the world, with a market value of more than \$500 billion and with nearly 400,000 employees.

### Insurance companies

GEICO, the US auto insurer known for its mascot, a green, British-accented gecko, was one of Buffett's first big moves. But Berkshire also has stakes in life and health insurance coverage as well as reinsurance.

The multi-billionaire describes this business line as Berkshire Hathaway's growth engine, allowing the company to invest policyholder premiums and pay out claims as needed.

### Trains

The BNSF Railway Company in-

cludes nearly 400 companies acquired over 160 years. With more than 8,000 locomotives rolling on more than 32,000 miles (50,000 kilometers) of railways and 45,000 employees, the company hauls passengers as well as grain and autos in the central and western United States.

### Energy

With coal, natural gas and solar power, Berkshire Hathaway produces and delivers energy to nearly 12 million customers worldwide. The company also this week pledged \$10 billion to help finance Occidental Petroleum's bid to beat out rival Chevron take over Anadarko Petroleum.

### 4 dozen different companies

Always on the lookout for a good deal, Buffett over the years has scooped up a diverse array of companies like the metal components maker Precision Castparts; wholesale supply chain firm McLane Company; underwear maker Fruit of the Loom; carpet manufacturer Shaw Industries; Duracell batteries and the Dairy Queen chain of fast food restaurants. — AFP

## International

# Florida lawmakers approve bill allowing teachers to be armed

## Slain US student saved lives tackling gunman

MIAMI: Florida's House of Representatives have approved a bill allowing teachers to carry firearms—a controversial step whose effectiveness in countering school shootings remains unproven. The aim of the measure, which was previously approved by the state's Senate and now goes to Republican Governor Ron DeSantis's desk, is the prevention of school shootings such as one that left 17 people dead at a high school in Parkland, Florida in February 2018.

Supporters of the bill—which permits teachers to carry firearms on school campuses on a voluntary basis after they have completed 144 hours of training—say armed teachers could save lives in the event of a school shooting. But its opponents warn of the danger of accidents among teachers who would effectively be tasked with policing as well as education, and who, in the event of a school shooting, could be mistaken for a shooter by law enforcement.

“Arming teachers is a recipe for disaster—a reckless plan which will complicate active-shooter situations,” Representative Val Demings, a Florida Democrat and former Orlando police chief, said of the measure. “The real solution is to keep guns out of the wrong hands,” Demings tweeted.

### Tackling gunman

Meanwhile, a 21-year-old student gave his life to save others by tackling a gunman who was

shooting up a university classroom, police in the US said yesterday. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Kerr Putney said the authorities were still trying to find a motive for Tuesday's attack at the University of North Carolina, which left undergraduate Riley Howell and another student dead. Trystan Terrell, 22, a former student, was arrested following the shooting at the school's Charlotte campus, which also left four wounded.

Putney said he had spoken to Howell's father about the youngster's heroism. “When I spoke to the father – one father to another – I told him personally, I wished I had words,” he said. “What I did tell him is, we're committed to the work, we're going to get to the bottom of it. We assured him we're going to find out the why,” Putney said. “We're going to give them closure.” The officer said Howell, an environmental studies major from Waynesville, North Carolina, had taken the assailant “off his feet.” “(He) did exactly what we trained people to do,” Putney said. “You're either going to run, hide and shield or you're going to take the fight to the assailant,” he said.

Having no place to run or hide, Howell chose the last option open to him. “But for his work, the assailant may not have been disarmed,” Putney said. “Unfortunately, he gave us life in the process. But his sacrifice saved lives.” The other slain student was identified as Ellis Parlier, a 19-year-old computer science major from Midland, North



CHARLOTTE: UNC Charlotte students participate in a vigil on campus where the previous day a gunman killed two people and injured four students in Charlotte, North Carolina. — AFP

Carolina. Three of the four injured students remain hospitalized. One of those still in hospital was identified by the Charlotte Observer newspaper as Rami Al-Ramadhan, a 20-year-old engineering student from Saudi Arabia.

Terrell is facing two counts of murder and four counts of attempted murder. As he was being led into a police station following his arrest, a television reporter asked him what happened. “I just

went into his classroom and shot the guys,” he said. The latest in a string of mass shootings in the US came just days after a teenage gunman opened fire on a synagogue in Poway, California, killing one person and injuring three others. According to government figures, 40,000 people were killed by firearms in the United States in 2017 – two thirds of them suicides – the highest annual toll in five decades. — Agencies

## Afghans call for ceasefire amid peace summit

KABUL: Afghan officials called for a ceasefire yesterday as a huge peace summit wound down in Kabul after thousands of delegates spent days discussing possible conditions for a peace deal with the Taliban. This week's “loya jirga”, or grand assembly, saw more than 3,000 religious and tribal leaders, politicians and representatives from across the country gather under tight security to discuss the possibility of peace.

The Taliban, who were not at the talks, are this week separately meeting in Doha with US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in a bid to make a deal with Washington that could see the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. While the full results of the summit may not be announced until Friday, several committee leaders said they wanted to see an immediate pause in violence, which has continued apace across Afghanistan even with various peace summits taking place.

“Every day, Afghans are being killed without any reason. An unconditional ceasefire must be announced,” said Mohammad Qureshi, head of one of the jirga's many committees. Huge swathes of Afghan society

worry that if the US does make a deal with the Taliban, the militant Islamists would try to seize power and undo advances in women's rights, media freedoms, and legal protections. The Taliban has steadfastly refused to talk to the Afghan government, which it views as a puppet regime.

That means that even if the US and the Taliban can agree to a deal to end the war and a timetable for an eventual troop withdrawal, the insurgents must still forge some kind of an accord with Afghan politicians and tribal elders before an enduring ceasefire could kick in. “We don't want such a peace that women's rights are not respected, freedom of expression are not ensured, elections are not held,” committee member Faizullah Jalal told the summit. Several delegates also rejected Taliban and opposition calls for an interim government when President Ashraf Ghani's term expires this month.

“It is you who will show the government the way towards peace and the government will do what you demand,” jirga chairman Abdul Rab Rasul Sayyaf said. “No one will impose anything on you.” Several opposition figures had boycotted the assembly, complaining it amounted to a political rally for Ghani, but Sayyaf said the summit was not aimed at supporting any particular candidate for the September presidential elections. The loya jirga is a centuries-old tradition in Afghanistan that has been convened at times of national crisis or to settle big issues. — AFP

## Missile contracts surge as US exits arms treaty: Study

GENEVA: Washington has signed more than \$1 billion in new missile contracts in the three months since it announced plans to withdraw from a key Cold War-era arms treaty, campaigners said yesterday. “The withdrawal from the INF Treaty has fired the starting pistol on a new Cold War,” warned Beatrice Fihn, who heads the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

US President Donald Trump announced last October that his country would leave the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement concluded between the US and the former Soviet Union in 1987. Washington, which accused Russia of violating the treaty through a new missile system, began the official process of withdrawing from the pact in February. Russian President Vladimir Putin responded by saying Moscow would also leave the INF treaty, which is considered the cornerstone of global arms control.

In the three months following the October announcement, the US government “proceeded to arrange no less than \$1 billion in new missile contracts”, according to a report by ICAN and another anti-nuclear campaign group, PAX. The

report detailed over \$1.1 billion in new contracts with six mainly US companies. US defense contractor Raytheon saw the biggest windfall, tallying 44 new contracts worth some \$537 million. Lockheed Martin meanwhile scooped up 36 new contracts, worth \$268 million, while Boeing grabbed four new contracts totaling \$245 million, the report found.

### ‘Congress should investigate’

“Congress should investigate the lobbying roles of Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon who took the lion's share of these contracts,” Fihn said in a statement. The report authors acknowledged that it was unclear if all of the new contracts awarded between October 22, 2018 and January 21, 2019 were for new nuclear weapon production. “What is clear is that there is a new rush towards building more missiles that benefit a handful of US companies and intend to flood the market with missiles regardless of their range,” they said. At a global level, the report found that governments are currently contracting at least \$116 billion (102 billion euros) to private companies in France, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Britain and the US for the production, development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, it stressed that the private sector involvement in the arsenals of China, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and Russia remain largely hidden, with little insight into how much is being contracted and which companies are getting the deals. Many of the outstanding contracts identified in the report were granted around 2015 and are set to expire in 2020, but some of the contracts have far longer time frames. — AFP



## International

# Venezuelan President Maduro hangs on as protests peter out

## US and Russia accuse each other of intervention

**CARACAS:** Venezuelans heeded opposition leader Juan Guaidó's call to take to the streets on Wednesday in a bid to force President Nicolás Maduro from power, but there was little concrete sign of change in a crisis that increasingly looks like a political stalemate. Guaidó had called for the "largest march" in Venezuela's history and said on Twitter that "millions of Venezuelans" were in the streets in "this final phase" of his move to oust Maduro.

But by late afternoon, many of the protesters in the capital Caracas had drifted home. National Guards fired tear gas at a hardcore of demonstrators who remained, and one injured demonstrator was carried by others to a first aid truck, Reuters video showed. Rights organizations said a young woman died in surgery after being shot in the head during a protest in Caracas. Guaidó confirmed via Twitter that a woman died after being shot.

The standoff in the South American country increased tensions between the United States and Russia, which accused each other of interference in the OPEC-member nation's affairs. Despite Guaidó's calls for the military to support him, the armed forces leadership has so far remained loyal to Maduro, who has been in power since his mentor, the late President Hugo Chávez, died in 2013. "If the regime thought we had reached maximum pressure, they cannot even imagine," Guaidó told thousands of cheering sup-

porters. "We have to remain in the streets." It was unclear what more Guaidó can do at this point. The Venezuelan opposition has often staged huge street protests against Maduro but failed to dislodge him despite a deep economic recession and hyperinflation. Demonstrators said they were prepared for the process of ousting Maduro to last a long time. "We need to keep going," said Laila Amezcua, a 52-year-old nurse from Caracas' downtown Candelaria district. "In three months, Guaidó's been able to do what they have not done in 20 years, and one has to be patient."

Others are frustrated that nothing has changed more than three months after Guaidó, head of the opposition-run National Assembly, invoked the constitution to assume an interim presidency, arguing that Maduro's 2018 re-election was illegitimate. Guaidó is recognized as Venezuela's legitimate head of state by the United States, the European Union and others, while Maduro is backed by countries including Russia, China and Cuba.

### US-Russia friction

Those fault lines are increasingly putting Venezuela at the heart of global geopolitical tensions. US President Donald Trump's administration has imposed sanctions on the Maduro government and refused to rule out military intervention, although it says it prefers a peaceful transition. "Military action is possible. If that's



**CARACAS:** Anti-government demonstrators rally in Caracas to commemorate May Day after a day of violent clashes on the streets of the capital spurred by Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó's call on the military to rise up against President Nicolás Maduro. — AFP

what's required, that's what the United States will do," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Fox Business Network. The Pentagon appeared to downplay any active preparations to directly intervene in Venezuela, but acknowl-

edged detailed contingency planning. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Pompeo on Wednesday that further "aggressive steps" in Venezuela would have grave consequences, Russia's Foreign Ministry said. — Reuters

## Powerful, rich and shrouded in secrecy: Thai King Rama X

**BANGKOK:** A king married four times with a penchant for piloting jets; a shrewd tactician with a hefty fortune and the army's loyalty-snippets from the closely-guarded life of Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn who remains an enigma to his subjects. The 66-year-old heir will be crowned in a royal ceremony this weekend as Rama X of the Chakri dynasty, more than two years after the death of his beloved father King Bhumibol, widely revered as a figure of unity and man of the people.

But little is known about the incoming monarch, Bhumibol's only male heir who spends much of his time abroad, lives in privacy and rarely addresses the Thai public. His inscrutable image is carefully curated by a trusted advisers, guards and strict press rules about how the royal family can be depicted in a country with some of the world's toughest lese majeste laws. He is often represented performing royal duties or charity in the Thai official royal press.

Less guarded moments overseas have been relayed in the foreign media, but they have not been widely disseminated inside the kingdom. "This great mystery... makes him distant," said a Thai businessman who once worked for the palace, speaking under condition of anonymity. Vajiralongkorn rarely gives interviews, but in a sit down with the BBC in 1979, he gave a nod to the conundrum of being born a prince. "It's difficult to say what it is like to be a fish when you're a fish, or what it is like to be a bird when you are a bird," a soft-spoken Vajiralongkorn said.

### Pedaling and protocol

Born on July 28, 1952, Vajiralongkorn completed his secondary

education in Britain before training at Australia's Royal Military College. He developed a passion for flying, piloted fighter jets, and served as a career officer in the Thai military, training for periods with US, British, and Australian armed forces. In the twilight of his father's reign the then-crown prince took on a more prominent public role.

A fan of the outdoors, Vajiralongkorn donned spandex to lead two choreographed mass cycling events through Bangkok in 2015. Vajiralongkorn is a study in contrasts with his father, who toured the country with camera and maps in hand for much of his 70-year reign. He rarely gives speeches and has spent much of his life overseas, particularly in Germany, where he owns lavish residences on the shores of Lake Starnberg in Bavaria.

From there he likes to fly his Boeing 737, which was briefly seized in 2011 as part of a financial dispute between the Thai government and a German company. "It's a way to escape the yoke of protocol in Thailand," said Sophie Boisseau du Rocher, a senior researcher specializing in Southeast Asian politics at the French Institute of International Relations. Bound by centuries of straightjacketing rules revolving around officials events and ceremonies, Thailand's king is nominally above politics.

But some analysts speculate that a 2014 coup was staged to ensure a smooth succession as Bhumibol's health waned. After his father died in 2016, Vajiralongkorn surprised many by requesting to delay his ascension to the throne to allow the public to mourn. In the intervening years he has taken further actions widely seen as smudging the separation between the constitutional monarch and the state. He shored up control of the fantastically wealthy Crown Property Bureau, requested changes to the constitution giving the king more executive decision-making powers. "He is involved in politics in a much more direct way than his father," says Eugénie Merieau, a specialist in Thai politics. Vajiralongkorn on Wednesday announced his fourth marriage, this time to former Thai Airways flight attendant Suthida Vajiralongkorn na Ayudhya, who was named as Queen. A member of his personal security retinue seen with him at public events, Queen Suthida was made a general the day Vajiralongkorn took the throne in 2016. — Reuters

## From flight attendant to Thailand's new queen

**BANGKOK:** Thailand has a new queen just in time for the coronation of King Maha Vajiralongkorn in elaborate Buddhist and Brahmin ceremonies this weekend in Bangkok.

The 66-year-old king unexpectedly married the deputy commander of his personal bodyguard unit on Wednesday in a surprise ceremony, giving her the title Queen Suthida Vajiralongkorn na Ayudhya. Suthida, 40, is expected to participate in some of the coronation events. Here are some facts about the new queen from the palace's household bureau, past royal decrees and media. She was born June 3, 1978, as Suthida Tidjai.

She graduated from Assumption University, a private university in Bangkok, with a bachelor's degree in communication arts in 2000, according to the Thai Rath newspaper. She worked as a flight attendant at Thai Airways before joining the protection unit of then-Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn. Criticizing or insulting her is a crime under Thailand's lese majeste laws, which carry punishment of up to 15 years in prison. The king, queen, heir to the throne and regent are covered under the law.

She already held the rank of general in the Royal Thai Army before her marriage, having been promoted to the position in December 2016 by King Vajiralongkorn by royal decree shortly after he took the throne following the death of his father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Before the wedding, she was deputy commander of the King's Own Bodyguard Regiment. The king himself is commander of the unit, and he first designated her to the special officer unit of Crown Prince's Bodyguard Regiment in 2013. — Reuters

## International

# China's furtive underwater nukes test the Pentagon

## Satellite reveals nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines

**HONG KONG:** Recent visitors to the bay surrounding a submarine base on the southern coast of China's Hainan Island describe a curious nocturnal phenomenon. Powerful spotlights are sometimes trained directly on the ocean frontages of neighboring hotels at night, making visibility out to sea virtually impossible. Some of the lights are mounted on land and others on passing naval patrol boats. "The effect is incredible," said one recent visitor. "The glare is so great you can hardly stand it on the balcony. You go inside and draw the curtains tight."

The blinding lights cannot obscure something of intense interest to the world's military intelligence agencies: evidence that China has made a breakthrough in its drive to rival America and Russia as a nuclear arms power. Satellite imagery reveals the regular presence of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines at the strategic base near the resort city of Sanya.

Specialized surface warships and aircraft designed to protect the subs are prowling key waterways off the coast. Facilities at the base appear to have been built to store and load ballistic missiles. Antenna arrays that support the hunt for foreign submarines have appeared on Chinese-held islands in the hotly contested South China Sea. And a veteran submariner has been appointed to command Chinese forces in the south of the country.

Taken together, this means China has a force of missile submarines that can launch nuclear attacks from beneath the waves and now appear to be heading out on patrols, according to serving and retired naval officers, diplomats and security analysts. That gives Beijing something it has until recently lacked: a more reliable "second strike" capability if its land-based nuclear arsenal comes under attack.

After six decades of battling to master complex and challenging subsea military technologies, China has joined the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom and France in the nuclear ballistic missile submarine club. In its most explicit assessment so far of this Chinese capability, the Pentagon in its latest annual report on China's military, published in August, said that Beijing now has a "credible" and "viable" sea-based nuclear deterrent.

An effective fleet of nuclear ballistic missile submarines, known as SSBNs, marks a dramatic boost to China's nuclear capabilities. Each of China's four Jin-class submarines is armed with up to 12 ballistic missiles that can carry a nuclear warhead with an estimated range of 7,200 kilometers, according to the Pentagon. That would put the United States within striking distance from the Western Pacific. Analysts at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies estimate these missiles could fly at least 8,000 kilometers.

The US believes China has up to 100 nuclear missiles based on land. Beijing's enhanced nuclear capability is one of the hallmarks of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's ambitious revamping of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest fighting force. China's nuclear submarine

fleet, Western strategists say, has added to the challenge that the increasingly powerful Chinese military poses to U.S. dominance in Asia.

"The opposing side can never be exactly sure that it knows where all of the submarines are," said Peter Horobin, a retired Australian submarine commander and veteran of the Cold War battles to detect and monitor Soviet subs. China's Ministry of National Defense, the US Indo-Pacific Command and the Pentagon did not respond to questions from Reuters.

It is still unclear if the Chinese are deploying fully armed submarines to maintain a round-the-clock deterrent, as the other ballistic missile submarine powers do. Some analysts doubt China has advanced that far. But the United States and its allies are behaving as if China has. Western military officials say privately that in operational terms, America and its allies - including Japan, Australia and the United Kingdom - are already attempting to track the movements of China's missile submarines as if they are fully armed and on deterrence patrols.

Asked about their role in tracking Chinese subs, Japan and the United Kingdom said they don't comment on operational details. "China's military modernization is consistent with its rapid economic growth," the Australian Department of Defense said. "As with all countries, we encourage China to be transparent about its military capabilities and strategic intentions to provide greater assurance to its neighbors."

### Growing stockpile

"An armed Jin-class SSBN will give China an important strategic capability that must be countered," Admiral Harry Harris, then head of the US Pacific Command, told a congressional committee last year. That response appears to be happening. The United States and its allies are expanding their anti-submarine naval deployments across East Asia. This includes stepped-up patrols of America's advanced, sub-hunting P-8 Poseidon planes out of Singapore and Japan.

With its relatively small force of nuclear missiles, Beijing has always worried that it might be vulnerable to a debilitating first strike. These fears were magnified as Chinese military planners watched Washington employ precision-guided weapons in conflicts like the Gulf wars, Afghanistan, Syria and the Balkans.

As it strengthens and improves its nuclear arsenal, Beijing is the only major nuclear power to be adding warheads to its stockpiles. China is developing an air-launched ballistic missile and plans to build a long-range stealth bomber capable of carrying nuclear weapons. With the sea-based second-strike deterrent in place, those programs suggest Beijing eventually intends to field a triad of air, sea and land-based nuclear weapons like the United States and Russia.

In the past two decades, the PLA Rocket Force, the service which controls China's nuclear and conventional missiles, has invested heavily in expanding its stockpile of nuclear warheads and boosted the range and accuracy of the missiles that deliver them. It has also hardened the pro-



BEIJING: A paramilitary policeman stands guard near Tiananmen Square as people gather to mark May Day in Beijing.—AFP

tection of its silo-based nuclear weapons, according to reports in China's state-controlled media. The Pentagon and official Chinese military publications have reported that China has also deployed modern, road-mobile missiles that are more difficult for an adversary to find and attack.

Still, China lags far behind the United States and Russia in overall nuclear firepower. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimates that China has a total of 280 nuclear warheads. China does not disclose how many of its warheads are deployed and ready for conflict. The United States has 1,750 deployed warheads and Russia 1,600, the institute's 2018 report said. The United States and Russia each have thousands more warheads held in stockpiles, according to the report. Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project of the Washington-based Federation of American Scientists, said he had yet to see hard intelligence suggesting China had placed fully armed ballistic missiles on its submarines at sea, despite the intense activity. Just because the submarines exist, he said, "that doesn't mean that they have the weapons aboard the vessels."

While acknowledging that China has significantly enhanced its nuclear deterrence, the Pentagon isn't convinced that Chinese subs are yet conducting around-the-clock patrols. In a January report, the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency said the Chinese navy would need a minimum of five Jin-class submarines to maintain a continuous nuclear deterrence at sea. China now has four.

### Undersea duels

A fleet of nuclear missile submarines hidden in the vast expanses of the ocean would help offset Beijing's nuclear shortcomings, say Chinese and Western strategists. Chinese naval designers and nuclear technicians have been working to build a force of nuclear missile submarines since the late 1950s. A single vessel was launched in the 1980s, but it was never fully operational. This submarine served as a test bed as Chinese technicians and designers struggled to overcome problems with nuclear propulsion technology, missiles and excessive noise that would have made the vessels easier for an adversary to detect and target.

To maximize its second-strike capability, China's missile subs would need to be stealthy enough to go undetected as they sail to their patrol areas in the open ocean. US and other foreign naval analysts say the Jin-class submarines are a sharp improvement over China's earlier efforts, but they remain less stealthy than their US, Russian, French and British counterparts.

The 11,000-tonne Jin-class submarines are stationed on the southern coast of China's Hainan Island, close to deep water channels leading into and out of the South China Sea. The geography of China's coastal waters has forced Beijing to base its missile submarines in this area, astride one of the world's most important shipping lanes. In the north, the Yellow Sea is too shallow to conceal big, ballistic missile submarines. The East China Sea is deeper but it's confined by the Korean Peninsula, Japan's island chain and Taiwan.

And Japanese and US forces can deploy advanced anti-submarine warfare ships and aircraft based in Japan to closely monitor these waters and the channels that pass out into the Western Pacific, where the submarines are ultimately headed. The Chinese need to reach these waters to be in a position to fire on the United States. The South China Sea, by contrast, is much bigger and in parts deeper, making it more suitable for concealed submarine operations, according to Western submariners with extensive experience of patrolling in this area.

China would need to get its submarines out of Hainan, past surveillance and into seas east of the Philippines for their missiles to be in striking range of the United States. This is a key reason why China has gone to such lengths to reclaim and fortify islands and reefs in the South China Sea that are expanding Beijing's control over this area, according to Western submariners and military attaches.

The sub fleet's vulnerability to detection also explains China's extreme sensitivity to the surveillance operations of the United States and its allies in these waters. A Chinese destroyer sailed within 45 meters of the American destroyer USS Decatur in late September, as the American warship patrolled in the Spratlys, a highly contested island chain where China has expanded its foothold in recent years. It was the latest in a series of close encounters in the past decade.—Reuters

Friday | **Tim**

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2019

# Lifestyle

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



Drake accepts Top Artist onstage during the 2019 Billboard Music Awards at MGM Grand Garden Arena.— AFP

## Drake is the new king of the BBMAs

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## Tales of Leonardo, enigmatic genius

Leonardo da Vinci, who died 500 years ago yesterday, lives in the collective memory as an enigmatic genius who embodied the Italian Renaissance. Here are some anecdotes about his extraordinary life and work.

### 'Fake news': Leonardo died in the arms of King Francis I

An 1818 painting by French artist Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres shows Leonardo da Vinci breathing his last with his patron, France's King Francis I, at his bedside. The scene was inspired by an account in "Lives of the Artists" by Giorgio Vasari, first published in 1550. Vasari, seen as the father of art history, wrote that Leonardo "died in the arms of the monarch". The problem is that it could not be true. According to historical records, the king was a two-day ride away in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, near Paris, for the baptism of his second son on May 3, the day after the Renaissance master died.

While the Ingres painting, which hangs in the Petit Palais in Paris, is the best-known depiction of the sentimental fiction, it was itself inspired by a 1781 painting by Francois-Guillaume Menageot, which is on display at the royal chateau of Amboise after meticulous restoration work for the quincentenary.

### Lover of birds, and flight

A story about Leonardo speaks to both his love of nature and fas-

ination with flight. He would often pity cooped up birds on sale in markets, plunk down the asking price for them and then release them into the air. Leonardo had a legendary obsession with the flight of birds and how understanding the mechanism could lead to the creation of a human flying machine.

### The face of a traitor

Leonardo was in the habit of roaming the streets of Milan in search of beautiful or unusual faces, according to Giorgio Vasari, the 16th-century father of art history. "He would follow any such... through the whole day, until the figure of the person would become so well impressed on his mind that, having returned home, he would draw him as readily as though he stood before him," Vasari wrote.

But when it came to the face of Judas for The Last Supper, Leonardo was at a loss as to how to portray a man who "possessed a heart so depraved as to be capable of betraying his Lord". Work on the famous mural at the Santa Maria delle Grazie monastery dragged on, and its prior grew so impatient that he complained to the Duke of Milan. He fumed that Leonardo would "sometimes remain half a day... absorbed in thought before his work, without making any progress that he could see," Vasari related. "This seemed to him such a strange waste of time."

Summoned by the Duke, Leonardo explained that "men of genius

are sometimes producing the most when they seem to be laboring the least" and revealed his difficulty finding a face for Judas, as well as that of Jesus, which he feared that "he could not hope to find on earth." At least for Judas, Leonardo had a fallback plan. He told the Duke he could always use the prior's face. Henceforth, "the poor prior, utterly confounded... left Leonardo in peace," Vasari wrote.

### Oh, that smile!

One of the many artistic conventions that Leonardo da Vinci upended was the portrayal of people smiling, with no smile more famous than that of his Mona Lisa. Facial expressions were a source of deep fascination for Leonardo, who conducted meticulous anatomical studies to determine the nerves that trigger them. Biographer Walter Isaacson writes that while by day Leonardo was painting Mona Lisa, by night he "was in the depths of the morgue... peeling the flesh off cadavers and exposing the muscles and nerves underneath." And how did he get the young wife of a Florentine silk merchant to smile through hour upon hour of sittings? Contemporary biographer Giorgio Vasari wrote in the 1550 work "Lives of the Artists" that Leonardo saw the need to keep the lady entertained, and hired musicians and jesters for the purpose. An 1863 painting by Cesare Maccari shows such a studio scene, with Leonardo's subject flanked by musicians. The work is housed at the Museo Cassioli Pittura in Siena, Italy. — AFP

## Drinks with Mona Lisa: A special night at the museum

Daniela Molinari dreamed of offering a drink to the famous Mona Lisa and asking her all about the great Leonardo Da Vinci. On Tuesday night she enjoyed a very special night at the museum, at the famous Louvre in Paris. The Italian-Canadian art conservation student was chosen from over 180,000 entrants in a competition, launched by the Louvre in Paris and the home-sharing platform Airbnb, to mark 30 years since architect I.M Pei's glass pyramid was erected in the art museum's courtyard. It is the first time that any member of the public has been allowed to sleep in the famous museum overnight.

The experience also included a special guided tour by an art historian, like those previously offered only to the likes of Barack Obama, Beyonce and Jay-Z. All the contestants had to do was answer the question: "Why would you be the Mona Lisa's perfect guest?" "I wrote about offering a drink to Mona Lisa, to ask her about Leonardo... we would share a spritz, because she never had a chance to taste one," the 26-year-old Molinari wrote. "I didn't take it seriously, I didn't think it would work," she added.

### Dinner with Venus de Milo

The night was spent sleeping beneath the iconic Pyramid in the heart of the City of Lights. But before that there was indeed time for a Renaissance-inspired aperitif with Mona Lisa, and Molinari's guest for the special night Adam Watson, 29. Dinner alongside the Venus de Milo followed-though it wasn't clear how the

armless ancient Greek statue managed the cutlery-and an intimate music concert in Napoleon III's opulent apartments in the former royal palace. A guided tour of the otherwise deserted museum was another highlight.

The tour took in highlights of the 37 kilometers (23 miles) of galleries, with the Louvre's director of protocol Sabine de La Rochefoucauld, as their guide. These included Italian renaissance masterpieces, the old palace stables and, in between works by Leonardo and Delacroix, the vivid colors of the 16th century Pieta by Rosso Fiorentino, a piece de La Rochefoucauld had already shown to singer Beyonce, who filmed an elaborately choreographed video inside the Louvre. Unlike in the "Night at the Museum" movies, none of Leonardo's or Raphael's subjects sprang to life in front of the nocturnal visitors.

The magic for the two lucky guests was in being able to hear their own footsteps in the galleries and look the Mona Lisa right in the eye without being shoved sideways by people taking selfies on their cell phones. Instead they could admire her from two armchairs and a coffee table on which stood a bowl of cherries and the aperitifs. "The last time I came to visit her I was small and it was such a crowd of people," Molinari recalled. "I couldn't even look at her... And I didn't appreciate her as I do now, because I have been studying art."

### 10 million visitors last year

"You see posters, you see pictures, but this is completely different to see her for good," said consort Watson. For the competition organizers it was also a successful event in which 182,000 people took part, a quarter of them French, another quarter North Americans and the rest from all over the world, said Emmanuel Marill, the head of Airbnb in France. Paris is the top destination for the home-sharing site, he said. But the idea of finding a bed inside the Louvre "is what dreams are made of".

Last year the Louvre welcomed more than 10 million visitors



for the first time, making it the most visited museum in the world. The couple's special night was aimed at conveying "a message of hospitality, to show that we are able to welcome everyone in the best possible way, even people who are not really used to visiting" museums, explained Anne-Laure Beatrix, deputy managing director of the Musee du Louvre. — AFP

# Experts comb through DNA from possible Da Vinci hair

A lock of what some historians think is Leonardo da Vinci's hair went on display yesterday at a museum in his Tuscan birthplace as they seek to prove it contains his DNA 500 years after the genius died. Presenting what he called a "relic" at the Leonardo library in Vinci devoted to the painter and Renaissance giant, art historian Alessandro Vezzosi told AFP how the whitish-blond hairs emerged from the shadows. "This lock remained secret for a long time before we discovered it three years ago in the United States," he said.

"It will allow us to do DNA research on Leonardo," Vezzosi added. "After studying Da Vinci's genealogy for 40 years, in 2016 we presented 35 living descendants of the master, and a short time later I was contacted by the collector who owns it and who agreed to show it." Leonardo da Vinci was born April 15, 1452, in Vinci, northwest of Florence, the illegitimate son of a wealthy landowner and a teenaged peasant. He died May 2, 1519, in Amboise, central France, where he had lived as the guest of King Francis I. Leonardo had no children but he had a dozen half-siblings on his father's side and several more on his mother's side.

Less than a decade later, Leonardo's patron left the Loire Valley for Paris and Fontainebleau. Although the chateau would again become a royal seat, it gradually fell into decline. Vezzosi chose



A lock of what Italian experts believe is Leonardo da Vinci's hair are being displayed at the "Leonardo Lives" exhibition marking the 500th anniversary of the death of Renaissance artist Leonardo Da Vinci, yesterday in Vinci, Tuscany. — AFP photos

the symbolic 500th anniversary of his death to present the lock of hair as part of the "Leonardo Lives" exhibition curated with Agnese Sabato. The lock is accompanied by a notice reading "The hair of Leonardo da Vinci" in French, along with a bronze ring that documents describe as having



A lock of what Italian experts believe is Leonardo da Vinci's hair (Top right) are being displayed at the "Leonardo Lives" exhibition.

been worn by the Florentine genius.

## Living descendants

"We are not 100 percent sure it is his hair, we are saying it is possible through genealogical research to compare the genetic material's DNA with that of Leonardo's living descendants who have been found in Tuscany," Vezzosi said. Other

comparisons are to be made with material recovered from tombs in France and Spain, the Renaissance specialist added. Eike Schmidt of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence doubts the hair is authentic, however. "No specialist thinks so, and it is extremely unlikely that a lock of Leonardo's hair could wind up in an American collection," he told Italian media yesterday. — AFP

## France, Italy mark 500th anniversary of Leonardo's death

French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian counterpart Sergio Mattarella yesterday kicked off commemorations to mark 500 years since Leonardo da Vinci died in France, paying their respects to the Renaissance genius in a show of unity after months of diplomatic tensions. "The bond between our countries and our citizens is indestructible," Macron said after the two men lunched at the Clos Luce, the sumptuous manor house where Leonardo spent the last three years of his life. The two heads of state began their visit at the royal chateau in Amboise, where they laid wreaths at Leonardo's grave.

The joint celebrations come after months of mounting diplomatic tensions between Paris and Rome over the hardline policies of Italy's populist government and its support for France's anti-government "yellow vest" protesters. In the worst diplomatic crisis between the two countries since World War II, Paris briefly recalled its ambassador from Rome.

Amboise, a sleepy town on the Loire River where Leonardo died in 1519, was in virtual lockdown because of fears of protests by France's grassroots "yellow vest" movement. Traffic in the town of just 13,000 was banned within a five-kilometer (three-mile) radius and the usually teeming restaurants and shops shuttered. On Wednesday, dozens of cars were towed away, with some foreign owners apparently unaware of the draconian security measures.

The presidential helicopter arrived on a river island in the heart of the town, touching down on a pad usually used to launch hot-air balloons over the chateau-studded valley. Yesterday, the two presidents headed to the sprawling chateau of Chambord—whose central double-helix staircase is attributed to Leonardo though the first stone was not laid until four months after his death.

Among glitterati attending the events were Italian star architect Renzo Piano, French astronaut Thomas Pesquet and historian Stephane Bern, a prominent French television personality. But a new scandal hung over the event after a French arts magazine revealed Tuesday that an investigation had been opened into the alleged de-



Italian President Sergio Mattarella (left) and French President Emmanuel Macron hold busts of Italian renaissance painter and scientist Leonardo da Vinci during a visit at the Chateau du Clos Luce, as part of a commemoration of the 500th anniversary of his death, in Amboise, central France. —AFP photos

struction of listed property during extensive renovating work at the Clos Luce in 2017. The online La Tribune de l'Art said workers removed 18th-century woodwork and a fireplace and made major alterations to floors and ceilings in the privately owned mansion.

## 'Architect of the king'

Francis I, known as the "Sun King of the 16th century", is widely credited with bringing the Renaissance to France, even if his predecessor Louis XII had begun the process by bringing in architects and artisans from Florence, Milan and Rome. Leonardo was 64 when he accepted the young Francis I's invitation to Amboise, at a time when rivals Michelangelo and Raphael were rising stars. With Leonardo's commissions drying up, it came as a great relief and no small vindication for the Tuscan artist, who received a handsome stipend as the "first painter, engineer and architect of the king". At the time, Francis I was barely 23, and his ambitious mother Louise of Savoy "knew that Leonardo would be the man who would allow her son to flourish", Catherine Simon Marion, managing director of the Clos Luce, told AFP. — AFP



The Chapel of Saint-Hubert, where the tomb of Italian renaissance painter and scientist Leonardo da Vinci is located.



Italian President Sergio Mattarella (left) and French President Emmanuel Macron lay flowers on the tomb of Italian renaissance painter and scientist Leonardo da Vinci to commemorate the 500th anniversary of his death.

## Lifestyle | Awards



US rapper Drake poses in the press room during the 2019 Billboard Music Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena on May 1, 2019, in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP photos



US rapper Drake poses in the press room during the 2019 Billboard Music Awards.



Drake accepts Top Male Artist onstage.



Juice Wrld accepts Top New Artist onstage.

# Drake is the new king of the BBMAs but numerous other artists also had a good night



English singer Ella Mai poses in the press room during the 2019 Billboard Music Awards.



Cardi B poses with the awards for Top Rap Song 'I Like It,' Top Hot 100 Song for 'Girls Like You,' in the press room.

The 2019 Billboard Music Awards hit the MGM Garden Arena in Las Vegas on May 1. With Kelly Clarkson hosting and Cardi B leading the nominees with 21 noms in 18 categories (and absolutely dominating the ac-

ceptance speech game), it was a massive night for many A-listers. But for Drake, it was history-making: He became the most-awarded artist in BBMAs history, nabbing 12 awards to bring his all-time total up to 27.



J-Hope, Jimin, Jin, RM, and V of BTS accept the Top Duo/Group award onstage.



BTS performs onstage.

Host Kelly Clarkson performs onstage.

Winners list of the 2019 Billboard Music Awards:

**ARTIST AWARDS Top Artist**

- Drake
- Top New Artist**  
Juice WRLD
- Billboard Chart Achievement Award**  
Ariana Grande
- Top Male Artist**  
Drake
- Top Female Artist**  
Ariana Grande
- Top Duo/Group**  
BTS
- Top Billboard 200 Artist**  
Drake
- Top Hot 100 Artist**  
Drake
- Top Streaming Songs Artist**  
Drake
- Top Song Sales Artist**  
Drake
- Top Radio Songs Artist**  
Drake
- Top Social Artist**  
BTS
- Top Touring Artist**  
Ed Sheeran
- Top R&B Artist**  
Ella Mai
- Top R&B Male Artist**  
The Weeknd

**Top R&B Female Artist**

- Ella Mai
- Top R&B Tour**  
Beyoncé & JAY-Z
- Top Rap Artist**  
Drake
- Top Rap Male Artist**  
Drake
- Top Rap Female Artist**  
Cardi B
- Top Rap Tour**  
Beyoncé & JAY-Z
- Top Country Artist**  
Luke Combs
- Top Country Male Artist**  
Luke Combs
- Top Country Female Artist**  
Carrie Underwood
- Top Country Duo/Group**  
Dan + Shay
- Top Country Tour**  
Kenny Chesney
- Top Rock Artist**  
Imagine Dragons
- Top Rock Tour**  
Elton John
- Top Latin Artist**  
Ozuna
- Top Dance/Electronic Artist**  
The Chainsmokers

**Top Christian Artist**

- Lauren Daigle
- Top Gospel Artist**  
Tasha Cobbs Leonard

**ALBUM AWARDS**

- Top Billboard 200 Album**  
Drake "Scorpion"
- Top Soundtrack**  
"The Greatest Showman"
- Top R&B Album**  
XXXTentacion "17"
- Top Rap Album**  
Drake "Scorpion"
- Top Country Album**  
Luke Combs "This One's For You"
- Top Rock Album**  
Panic! At This Disco "Pray For The Wicked"
- Top Latin Album**  
Ozuna "Aura"
- Top Dance/Electronic Album**  
The Chainsmokers "Sick Boy"
- Top Christian Album**  
Lauren Daigle "Look Up Child"
- Top Gospel Album**  
Tori Kelly "Hiding Place"

**Top Streaming Song (Audio)**

- Travis Scott "SICKO MODE"
- Top Streaming Song (Video)**  
Drake "In My Feelings"
- Top Selling Song**  
Maroon 5 ft. Cardi B "Girls Like You"
- Top Radio Song**  
Maroon 5 ft. Cardi B "Girls Like You"
- Top Collaboration**  
Maroon 5 ft. Cardi B "Girls Like You"
- Top R&B Song**  
Ella Mai "Boo'd Up"
- Top Rap Song**  
Cardi B, Bad Bunny & J Balvin "I Like It"
- Top Country Song**  
Bebe Rexha & Florida Georgia Line "Meant to Be"
- Top Rock Song**  
Panic! At The Disco "High Hopes"
- Top Latin Song**  
Casper Magico, Nio Garcia, Darell, Nicky Jam, Bad Bunny & Ozuna "Te Bote"
- Top Dance/Electronic Song**  
Zedd, Maren Morris & Grey "The Middle"
- Top Christian Song**  
Lauren Daigle "You Say"
- Top Gospel Song**  
Koryn Hawthorne "Won't He Do It"

**SONG AWARDS**

- Top Hot 100 Song**  
Maroon 5 ft. Cardi B "Girls Like You"

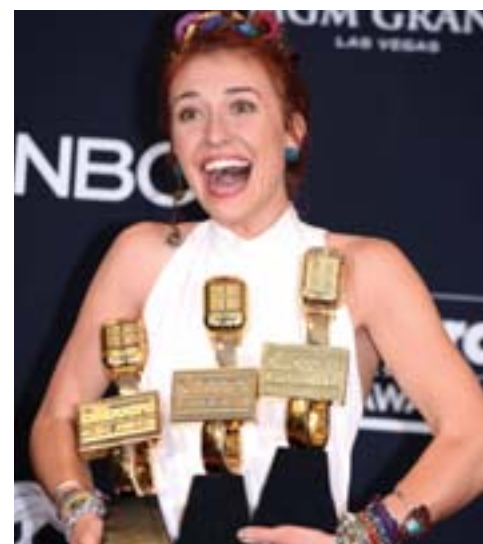
— www.billboard.com



(From left) Dan Smyers of Dan + Shay, Tori Kelly, and Shay Mooney of Dan + Shay perform onstage during the 2019 Billboard Music Awards.



Ozuna accepts the Artist of the Year award.



US singer Lauren Daigle poses with awards in the press room.

Lifestyle | Awards



Host Kelly Clarkson (center) performs onstage.



Rob Gronkowski (left) and Terry Crews present an award.



Ella Mai accepts Top R&B Artist onstage.



Zedd attends the 2019 Billboard Music Awards.



(From left) Joe Jonas, Nick Jonas, and Kevin Jonas of Jonas Brothers attend the 2019 Billboard Music Awards.



Host Kelly Clarkson speaks onstage.



Shay Mooney (right) and Dan Smyers of Dan + Shay pose in the press room with their award for Best Country Duo/Group Artist.



Lauren Daigle performs onstage.



Lifestyle | Awards



Mariah Carey performs onstage.



Nick Jonas, Joe Jonas, and Kevin Jonas of Jonas Brothers perform onstage.



US singer Mariah Carey poses with her Icon Award.



Brendon Urie of Panic! at the Disco and Taylor Swift perform on-stage.



Maluma and Madonna perform onstage.



Ciara performs onstage.



Brian Kelley (left) and Tyler Hubbard of Florida Georgia line pose in the press room with their award for Best Country Song for "Meant to Be".

# Buttermilk and salt key to this crispy oven-fried chicken

**S**oaking chicken in seasoned buttermilk guarantees that your crispy chicken will come out of the oven moist and juicy on the inside. Salt doesn't just enhance flavor when you soak meat in a salty solution (a brine), the salt reshapes protein molecules and helps them hold onto moisture when the meat is cooked. Buttermilk contains lactic acid, which is a mild acid that gently breaks down some proteins and makes chicken more tender. Follow this recipe with your kids.

## CRISPY OVEN-FRIED CHICKEN

### Ingredients

Servings: 4  
 Prep Time: 10 minutes  
 Cook Time: 1 1/2 hours  
 Prepare Ingredients:  
 2 cups buttermilk  
 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
 Salt and pepper  
 1 teaspoon garlic powder  
 3 pounds bone-in chicken pieces (split breasts, drumsticks, and/or thighs)  
 Vegetable oil spray  
 4 cups cornflakes  
 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning  
 1 teaspoon paprika  
 Gather Cooking Equipment:  
 2 large bowls  
 Whisk  
 Paper towels  
 Plastic wrap  
 Rimmed baking sheet  
 Aluminum foil  
 2 cooling racks  
 Large zipper-lock plastic bag  
 Rolling pin  
 Instant-read thermometer  
 Oven mitts

### Preparation

In large bowl, whisk together buttermilk, mustard, 2 teaspoons salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, and garlic powder. Use paper towel to grasp skin on one piece of chicken, then pull off and discard skin. Repeat with remaining pieces of chicken. Add chicken to buttermilk mixture and turn to coat well. Wash your hands. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or overnight.

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 F. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and set cooling rack inside baking sheet. Spray rack with vegetable oil spray. Place cornflakes in large zipper-lock bag. Add poultry seasoning and paprika. Seal bag and shake to combine. Use rolling pin to crush cornflakes into small pieces. Pour cornflake mixture into second large bowl.

Remove one piece of chicken from buttermilk mixture, add to bowl with cornflake mixture, and toss to coat. Use your hands to gently press crumbs onto all sides of chicken. Place chicken on greased rack in baking sheet. Repeat with remaining pieces of chicken. Wash your hands.

Spray chicken all over with vegetable oil spray until each piece is shiny. Place baking sheet in oven and bake until chicken breasts register 165 F on instant-read thermometer and drumsticks/thighs register 175 F, 35 to 45 minutes. Use oven mitts to remove baking sheet from oven. Place baking sheet on second cooling rack and let cool for 5 minutes. Serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 438 calories; 166 calories from fat; 18 g fat (2 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 155 mg cholesterol; 1160 mg sodium; 26 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 7 g sugar; 39 g protein.



# Cauliflower on the grill?

## Don't be scared it's easy

**T**o make grilled cauliflower with a tender interior and a flavorful, nicely browned exterior, we first microwaved it until it was cooked through and then briefly grilled it to pick up color and flavor. To ensure that the cauliflower held up on the grill without falling through the grate and to provide sufficient surface area for browning, we cut the head into wedges. Dunking the cauliflower in a salt and sugar solution before microwaving seasoned it all over, even in the nooks and crannies. Look for cauliflower with densely packed florets that feels heavy for its size. Using tongs or a thin metal spatula to gently flip the wedges helps keep them intact. This dish stands well on its own, but to dress it up, serve it sprinkled with 1 tablespoon of Almond, Raisin, and Caper Relish (recipe follows).

### GRILLED CAULIFLOWER

#### Ingredients

Servings: 4-6  
Start to finish: 35 minutes  
1/4 cup salt  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 head cauliflower (2 pounds), cut into 6 equal wedges  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon minced fresh chives  
1 tablespoon topping (recipe follows)  
Lemon wedges

#### Preparation

Whisk 2 cups water, salt, and sugar in medium bowl until salt and sugar dissolve. Holding wedges by core, gently dunk in salt-sugar mixture until evenly moistened (do not dry residual water will help cauliflower steam). Transfer wedges, rounded side down, to large plate and cover with inverted large bowl. Microwave until cauliflower is translucent and tender and paring knife slips easily in and out of thickest stem of florets (not core), 14 to 16 minutes.

Carefully (bowl and cauliflower will be very hot) transfer cauliflower to paper towel-lined plate and pat dry with paper towels. Brush cut sides of wedges with 1 tablespoon oil.

For a charcoal grill: Open bottom vent completely. Light large chimney starter three-quarters filled with charcoal briquettes (4

1/2 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

For a gas grill: Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Turn all burners to medium-high.

Clean and oil cooking grate. Place cauliflower, cut side down, on grill and cook, covered, until well browned with spots of charring, 3 to 4 minutes. Using tongs or thin metal spatula, flip cauliflower and cook second cut side until well browned with spots of charring, 3 to 4 minutes. Flip again so cauliflower is sitting on rounded edge and cook until browned, 1 to 2 minutes.

Transfer cauliflower to serving platter. Drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon oil, sprinkle with chives and topping, and serve with lemon wedges.

### Almond, Raisin, and Caper Relish

Makes about 1/2 cup

Golden raisins plus briny capers, crunchy almonds, and white wine vinegar make for a sweet, salty, and tangy topping. Champagne vinegar can be used in place of vinegar and regular raisins in place of golden raisins, if desired.

2 tablespoons golden raisins  
1 teaspoon vinegar  
1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted and chopped fine  
1 tablespoon capers, rinsed and chopped fine  
1 teaspoon minced fresh parsley  
Pinch red pepper flakes  
3-4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Combine raisins and 2 tablespoons hot water in small bowl and let stand for 5 minutes. Drain raisins and chop fine. Toss raisins and vinegar in bowl, then stir in almonds, capers, parsley, and pepper flakes. Stir in 3 tablespoons oil; mixture should be well moistened. If still dry, add remaining 1 tablespoon oil.

Nutrition information per serving: 233 calories; 145 calories from fat; 16 g fat (2 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 1021 mg sodium; 18 g carbohydrate; 6 g fiber; 10 g sugar; 6 g protein.



# The da Vinci road:

## A tour through the life of Leonardo



Florence's world-class Uffizi Gallery, which contains two of the master's works.

Few geniuses have left as powerful an imprint on art, science and popular culture as Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). Paintings like the Mona Lisa and The Last Supper remain mysterious and compelling, spawning endless reproductions and parodies. The Renaissance Man's staggering body of scientific work is still studied, with many of his theories only proven in modern times. The 500th anniversary of Leonardo's death has inspired dozens of exhibitions across Europe. Whether or not you plan a trip for an anniversary event, Leonardo's native Italy has numerous attractions dedicated to his life and work - as does France, where he spent several productive years. Here's how to travel through the polymath's life, from his undistinguished beginnings in the village of Vinci to the stately French palaces of his final years.

### Rome: Da Vinci's marvelous machines

Begin in the 'Eternal City', where Leonardo designed prototype helicopters, diving suits, armored tanks, even a robotic knight, hundreds of years before technology made it possible to build them. At Rome's Leonardo Da Vinci Museo you can see 50 ahead-of-their-time contraptions crank into life.

Two floors are filled with marvelous machines built according to Leonardo's original designs: a multi-directional machine gun, trench digger, hang-glider and webbed gloves (a precursor to modern flippers). Finish with a primer on Leonardo's paintings; a gallery room houses reproductions of Leonardo's major works.

For the real deal, one of Leonardo's most treasured paintings hangs within the storied halls of the Vatican Museums (1km west). The unfinished oil painting San Gero-lamo (St Jerome), thought to date to 1482, shows the agonized saint paying penance in the desert. The walnut-wood canvas was sliced into pieces - as if St Jerome hadn't suffered enough - and used as a table-top before being rescued, restored and hung alongside the work of other genre-defining artists of the Renaissance.

Just south of the museums is the Vatican's Cortile del Belvedere (Belvedere Courtyard). At the behest of Pope Leo X, Leonardo was installed in an apartment here from 1513 to 1516. Centuries of change have reshaped the Vatican (and split the courtyard in two) but it's irresistible to glance up at the windows and imagine the great genius, brow furrowed, staring out for inspiration.

### Florence: The making of a master

Three and a half hours north of Rome by road, Florence is where Leonardo perfected his craft under the tutelage of Andrea del Verrocchio. Most significantly for admirers of his art, this is also where he began to work on the iconic La Gioconda (c 1503), better known as the Mona Lisa (though today the lady with the enigmatic smile hangs on a wall in Paris' Louvre).

On the north bank of the Arno River, the Uffizi Gallery has one of Italy's finest collections of Renaissance art, including Leonardo's Annunciation (c 1472) and Adoration of the Magi, (c 1482). Both are part of Leonardo's prolific artistic output as a young man in Florence (and both are in room 35). A few steps north of the Uffizi are more elusive treasures. Guarded by the 94m Torre d'Arnolfo, the Palazzo Vecchio is believed to hold a fresco by Leonardo, concealed behind another artist's work in the Salone dei Cinquecento.



A visitor views a portrait of Leonardo Da Vinci by Francesco Melzi (left) and a Da Vinci self-portrait (right) at the Leonardo Da Vinci museum during an exhibition marking the 500th anniversary of the death of Renaissance artist yesterday in Vinci, Tuscany. —AFP



The Vatican's Cortile del Belvedere (Belvedere Courtyard), where Leonardo once lived.



Head to the Basilica di Santa Maria delle Grazie to see one of Leonardo's landmark works - The Last Supper

### Vinci: An artist's humble beginnings

Some 45km west of Florence is Vinci, where Leonardo was born. Most of the details of Leonardo's early life have been lost in time... not that this has deterred local restaurants and guesthouses from naming themselves after the great artist.

A couple of noteworthy monuments warrant a visit. The Museo Leonardiano showcases Leonardo's technical drawings and recreations of his inventions. Across two adjacent buildings, the museum attempts to join the dots between Leonardo's ideas and their modern-day equivalents, such as his designs for textile manufacturing machinery (now considered precursors to factory-made clothing), mechanical clocks, weapons of war (including a squat prototype tank) and flying machines.

Two kilometers north, just outside town, is Leonardo's Casa Natale (Birth House), a blushing sandstone building in the Tuscan hills. Inside, recreations of his work (and a Leonardo hologram) invite visitors inside the artist's mind. But it's the bucolic setting that fires the imagination. Some of the town's gnarled olive trees are centuries old; it's possible that Leonardo himself would recognize the view.

### Milan: The pinnacle of genius

Another three or four hours north by road, Milan is where Leonardo created some of his most celebrated works. Begin in the Basilica di Santa Maria delle Grazie, a showy Gothic-meets-Renaissance church capped with a tiered dome. Where the church building meets the refectory is The Last Supper, capturing the moment of

drama when Jesus is said to have foretold his imminent betrayal (book ahead for a viewing time). Even after centuries of neglect and destruction, the artwork holds power: the vivid emotions on each face, the play of light behind them, and unearthly blues that hint at the heavenly kingdom to come.

Five minutes' walk south, in a 16th-century monastery, is Italy's largest science museum, the Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia. The 10,000-item collection is alive with inventions that whirr, rattle and huff steam, including more than 130 models of Leonardo's inventions (like bat-wing-shaped flying machines, cannons and propeller-powered boats). Ideal for inquiring young minds is the Laboratorio, a hands-on exhibition designed to get kids using the same problem-solving strategies as Leonardo - brace yourself for a eureka moment in the car later on.

Finish the day east in picturesque Piazza della Scala, where stands a Carrara marble Monument to Leonardo, dating to the 19th century. Nearby streets are lined with restaurants; after a day spent immersed in Leonardo's brilliance, you might feel inspired to sketch a flying machine or dabble in anatomical drawing while you wait for the dessert menu.

### Amboise: Journey's end for the Renaissance Man

Much of Leonardo's artistic work is displayed in Paris, but it's France's Loire Valley that lays bare the last years of his life. Leonardo arrived at Le Clos Luce in Amboise in 1516, on the invitation of the French



The Vatican's Cortile del Belvedere (Belvedere Courtyard), where Leonardo once lived.

## Lifestyle | Travel

king. Francois I offered him the title 'Premier Painter, Engineer and Architect of the King', along with several hundred gold crowns per year. To embrace the opportunity (and its astonishing salary), Leonardo undertook a difficult Alpine crossing aboard a mule. For present-day travellers, it's much more comfortable: an overnight train (or budget flight) to Paris, followed by a scenic onward connection to Amboise.

Now in his 60s, comfortably ensconced in this elegant chateau, Leonardo spent his final years feverishly finessing scientific theories. Peep inside Leonardo's old bedroom, complete with richly carved four-poster bed and a huge fireplace, and imagine him at work in his old study.

Close by is the Chateau Royal d'Amboise, formerly a pleasure palace for French royals. In a solitary chamber within this marvel of Flamboyant Gothic architecture, an ageing Leonardo wrote a will to bestow land and vineyards upon his brothers and a cherished pupil. His final resting place is the castle's Chapel of Saint-Hubert, where he was reinterred after an archaeological dig in 1863 unearthed his bones. Debates still rage over whether these are truly the master's remains - yet another of Leonardo's many mysteries.

#### Honoring Leonardo: Special events in 2019

Museums and galleries across Europe are marking the polymath's 500th anniversary with special exhibitions:

**Florence, Italy:** Events at the Museo Galileo include a spotlight on Leonardo's library (June to late September 2019) and the quest for perpetual motion (mid-October 2019 to mid-January 2020). The Palazzo Vecchio explores Leonardo's relationship with Florence (late March to late June 2019) and probes the mystery of his lost painting *The Battle of Anghiari* (late February 2019 to mid-January 2020). The Palazzo Strozzi offers a retrospective on artist Andrea del Verrocchio, under whom Leonardo was a pupil, and displays the only known sculpture by Leonardo (mid-March to mid-July 2019).

**Paris, France:** The Louvre's exhibition promises the grandest showing of Leonardo's art, including *The Virgin of the Rocks*, *La Belle Ferronniere* and the *Mona Lisa* (late October 2019 to late February 2020).

**Milan, Italy:** The Pinacoteca Ambrosiana's series of exhibitions shines a light on Leonardo's engineering acumen (mid-March to mid-June 2019), his years in France (mid-June to mid-September 2019) and his legacy (late September 2019 to mid-January 2020).

**London, UK:** The British Library's *Mind in Motion* exhibition will display three of Leonardo's most important notebooks together, allowing visitors to see his scientific insights in his own handwriting (early June to early September 2019).

**Vinci, Italy:** In the town of Leonardo's birth, the Museo Leonardiano will host an exhibition of Leonardo's early drawings (mid-April to mid-October 2019).

**Rome, Italy:** The *Science Before Science* exhibition at the Scuderie del Quirinale examines Leonardo's technological and scientific achievements (mid-March to June 2019). — ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))



The marble statue of Leonardo in Milan's Piazza della Scala



Chateau Royal d'Amboise - Leonardo's final resting place

## Comic

### Word Search

#### Fantasy 3 - Word Search

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

- |                   |                    |                |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>BARD</b>       | <b>LORDS</b>       | <b>SPRITE</b>  |
| <b>BATTLE</b>     | <b>MAGIC SPELL</b> | <b>THRONE</b>  |
| <b>COURT</b>      | <b>MEAD</b>        | <b>TOWER</b>   |
| <b>CROWN</b>      | <b>MINSTREL</b>    | <b>WARLOCK</b> |
| <b>GOBLET</b>     | <b>PALACE</b>      | <b>WRAITH</b>  |
| <b>GOLD COINS</b> | <b>PEASANTS</b>    |                |
| <b>GUARDS</b>     | <b>SHIELD</b>      |                |
| <b>HEADSMAN</b>   | <b>SILVER</b>      |                |

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Fantasy 2 - Solution

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

- |                   |               |                |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>ARCHERS</b>    | <b>FOREST</b> | <b>PRINCE</b>  |
| <b>CASTLE</b>     | <b>GNOME</b>  | <b>QUEST</b>   |
| <b>CENTAUR</b>    | <b>GOLD</b>   | <b>WEAPONS</b> |
| <b>CHALICE</b>    | <b>HERO</b>   | <b>WINE</b>    |
| <b>CROSSBOW</b>   | <b>HORSE</b>  | <b>WITCH</b>   |
| <b>DAGGER</b>     | <b>MACE</b>   |                |
| <b>DRAWBRIDGE</b> | <b>MOAT</b>   |                |
| <b>DUNGEON</b>    | <b>OGRE</b>   |                |

### Crossword 2199



#### ACROSS

- Someone who is morally reprehensible.
- An early Christian church designed like a Roman basilica.
- A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
- An overwhelming feeling of wonder or admiration.
- Any period of seven consecutive days.
- An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
- Handsoma tree of central and eastern North America having large bipinnate leaves and green-white flowers followed by large woody brown pods whose seeds are used as a coffee substitute.
- More than enough in size or scope or capacity.
- The cry made by sheep.
- A thin morbid discharge as from a wound or especially chronic gonorrhoea.
- Whiten with Blanco.
- Coming at a subsequent time or stage.
- A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.
- Used of a single unit or thing.
- Castrate, used with animals.
- A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
- Shrubby tree widely distributed along tropical shores.
- Activity involved in maintaining something in good working order.
- Avatar of Vishnu.
- A member of a rural Finnish people living in eastern Russia.
- Tall woody perennial grasses with hollow slender stems especially of the genera Arundo and Phragmites.
- Make editorial changes (in a text).
- A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- A card game for 2 players.
- Cereal grass widely cultivated for its grain.
- A flexible container with a single opening.
- A period of time equal to 1/24th of a day.
- Freshwater fish of Central America having a long swordlike tail.
- Fit or ready for use or service.
- A Dravidian language closely related to Tamil that is spoken in a hilly section of southwestern India.
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- Tall New Zealand timber tree.
- The basic unit of money in Peru.
- A fabric with prominent rounded crosswise ribs.
- African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).

#### DOWN

- Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
- Absent without permission.
- The brightest star in Cygnus.
- A landlocked principality in the Himalayas northeast of India.
- A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
- A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
- A state in the Rocky Mountains.
- Capital and largest city of Togo.
- African antelope with ridged curved horns.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- Bar temporarily.
- An administrator in charge of a division of a university or college.
- Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
- Caused to be slower or later.
- Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
- A large medieval helmet supported on the shoulders.
- A less than average tide occurring at the first and third quarters of the moon.
- A protocol developed for the internet to get data from one network device to another.
- The topmost one of two.
- A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
- A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
- Edible body of any of numerous oysters.
- Widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions for its fragrant flowers and colorful fruits.
- Manufactured in standard sizes to be shipped and assembled elsewhere.
- Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
- Destruction of heart tissue resulting from obstruction of the blood supply to the heart muscle.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
- Indigo bush.
- At any time.
- A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
- A town in northwestern New Mexico near the Arizona border.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.
- Suggestive of the supernatural.
- A grouping of a number of similar things.
- Tropical tree of Central America and West Indies and Puerto Rico having spikes of white flowers.
- The content of cognition.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- A vigorous blow.
- A narrow thin strip of wood used as backing for plaster or to make lattice-work.
- English essayist (1775-1834).
- An artificial language that is a revision and simplification of Esperanto.
- (informal) 'johnny' was applied as a nickname for Confederate soldiers by the Federal soldiers in the American Civil War.
- A Russian river.

### Yesterday's Solution

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

### Daily SuDoku

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

### Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings



00:20 Hyena Road  
02:30 Bushwick  
04:20 Dark Paradise  
06:00 Fishing Without Nets  
07:50 Bushwick  
09:25 Dark Paradise  
11:00 The Monster Project  
12:45 Fishing Without Nets  
14:45 Six Gun Savior  
16:35 Cyber Case  
18:10 The Hitman's Bodyguard  
20:15 Galaxy Quest  
22:10 The Great Wall



00:45 North Woods Law  
01:40 Expedition Mungo  
02:35 The Beauty Of Snakes  
03:25 Lone Star Law  
04:15 North Woods Law  
05:02 Wildest Latin America  
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
06:36 Animal Battlegrounds  
07:00 Animal Battlegrounds  
07:25 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life  
12:50 The Beauty Of Snakes  
13:45 The Vet Life  
14:40 Extinct Or Alive  
15:35 Expedition Mungo  
16:30 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
17:25 Animal Cops Philadelphia  
18:20 Shark City  
19:15 Hanging With The Hendersons  
20:10 Extinct Or Alive  
21:05 Wildest Latin America  
22:00 Expedition Mungo  
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
23:50 Hanging With The Hendersons



00:15 EastEnders  
00:50 The Last Post  
01:45 Holby City  
02:35 Uncle  
03:10 Mum  
03:40 Doctors  
04:10 EastEnders  
04:40 Bad Move  
05:05 Death In Paradise  
06:00 Doctors  
06:30 EastEnders  
07:00 Last Tango In Halifax  
07:55 Call The Midwife: Christmas Special 2017  
09:15 Death In Paradise  
10:15 Father Brown  
11:05 Bad Move  
11:30 Doctors  
12:00 EastEnders  
12:30 Holby City  
13:25 Casualty  
14:15 Death In Paradise  
15:05 Father Brown  
15:55 Five By Five  
16:00 Bad Move  
16:25 EastEnders  
16:55 Doctors  
18:30 The Coroner  
20:10 The Last Post  
21:05 The Level  
21:55 Doctor Foster  
22:50 Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators  
23:40 Doctors



00:00 Kingpin  
01:55 I Didn't Do It  
02:50 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
03:45 Escaping Polygamy  
06:00 Homicide Hunter  
07:00 Live PD: Police Patrol  
07:20 The First 48  
08:05 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
08:50 Homicide Hunter  
10:30 Bloodwork  
11:25 The First 48

12:20 Cults And Extreme Belief  
13:15 Live PD: Police Patrol  
14:10 It Takes A Killer  
15:05 Homicide Hunter  
16:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
17:00 Monster In My Family  
20:00 Homicide Hunter  
21:00 Live PD: Police Patrol  
21:30 PD Cam  
22:00 It Takes A Killer  
23:00 Live PD: Police Patrol



00:20 Comedy Central Presents  
Comedy 3alwagef  
00:50 Broad City  
01:15 Review  
01:40 Teachers  
02:05 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
02:30 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
02:55 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show  
03:17 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show  
03:40 Are We There Yet?  
04:05 Comedy Central Presents  
Comedy 3alwagef  
04:35 Impractical Jokers  
05:00 Are We There Yet?  
07:05 Lip Sync Battle  
07:30 Lip Sync Battle  
07:55 Ridiculousness Arabia  
08:25 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
08:50 Comedy Central Presents  
Comedy 3alwagef  
09:15 Comedy Central Presents  
Comedy 3alwagef  
09:45 Comedy Central Presents:  
Menna W FINA  
10:20 Friends  
12:30 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
14:30 Police Interceptors  
17:10 Friends  
19:30 Ridiculousness Arabia  
20:00 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
20:25 Comedy Central Presents  
Comedy 3alwagef  
21:25 Comedy Central Presents:  
Menna W FINA  
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
22:30 The Half Hour  
23:30 Review



00:30 Space Dealers  
01:20 America's Cutest Pets  
02:10 Bad Dog  
03:00 Ultimate Survival  
03:50 How It's Made  
04:15 How It's Made  
04:40 Weather Gone Viral  
05:30 Space Dealers  
06:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
07:00 Mysteries At The Museum  
07:50 Ultimate Survival  
08:40 How It's Made  
09:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
10:20 America's Cutest Pets  
11:10 Bad Dog  
12:00 Mysteries At The Museum  
12:50 Weather Gone Viral  
13:40 Space Dealers  
14:30 How It's Made  
15:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
16:10 Xtreme Waterparks  
16:35 Xtreme Waterparks  
17:00 America's Cutest Pets  
17:50 Bad Dog  
18:40 The Carbonaro Effect  
19:30 The Next Great Magician  
20:20 The Carbonaro Effect  
21:10 Ultimate Survival  
22:00 How It's Made  
22:50 Xtreme Waterparks  
23:40 The Next Great Magician



00:00 People Magazine Investigates  
01:00 Dead Silent  
02:00 What Lies Beneath  
03:00 Body Cam

03:45 People Magazine Investigates  
04:30 Reasonable Doubt  
06:10 Swamp Murders  
07:00 Disappeared  
07:55 Blood Relatives  
08:50 Hometown Homicide  
10:40 Swamp Murders  
11:35 Gone  
13:25 Disappeared  
14:20 Bad Henry  
16:10 Swamp Murders  
17:05 Gone  
19:00 Shadow Of Doubt  
21:00 Shattered  
22:00 Grave Mysteries  
23:00 Betrayed



00:00 Alex & Co.  
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
01:40 Alex & Co.  
02:05 Binny And The Ghost  
02:55 Hank Zipzer  
03:45 Alex & Co.  
04:35 Violetta  
05:25 Binny And The Ghost  
05:45 Rolling With The Ronks  
06:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
06:25 Raven's Home  
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
06:55 A.N.T. Farm  
07:20 Shake It Up  
07:45 K.C. Undercover  
08:10 Bizaardvark  
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
09:25 Tangled: The Series  
10:15 Bizaardvark  
11:05 Liv And Maddie  
11:55 K.C. Undercover  
12:45 Tangled: The Series  
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
14:00 101 Dalmatian Street  
14:15 Shake It Up  
14:40 K.C. Undercover  
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse  
15:10 Miraculous: Heroes Day  
16:00 Kim Possible  
17:40 Bizaardvark  
18:05 K.C. Undercover  
18:30 Bunk'd  
18:55 Descendants Wicked World  
19:00 Raven's Home  
19:25 Liv And Maddie  
19:50 K.C. Undercover  
20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
20:20 A.N.T. Farm  
20:45 Bizaardvark  
21:10 Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure  
21:35 Stuck In The Middle  
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
22:50 Lolirock  
23:10 Evermoor Chronicles  
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 The Lion Guard  
00:25 Doc McStuffins Shorts  
00:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
01:00 PJ Masks  
01:50 The Hive  
02:00 Zou  
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
03:20 The Hive  
03:40 Zou  
04:25 The Hive  
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:35 The Hive  
05:45 PJ Masks  
06:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
07:00 Disney Muppet Babies  
07:20 Paprika  
07:40 PJ Masks  
08:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
08:15 Puppy Dog Pals  
08:30 Vampirina  
08:45 Fancy Nancy Splits  
09:00 Sofia The First  
09:30 Elena Of Avalor  
10:00 PJ Masks

10:20 PJ Masks  
11:00 Disney Muppet Babies  
11:20 Paprika  
11:40 Doc McStuffins  
12:20 Vampirina  
13:20 Gigantosaurus  
13:40 Paprika  
14:00 PJ Masks  
14:40 Doc McStuffins  
15:20 Puppy Dog Pals  
16:00 Disney Muppet Babies  
16:30 Elena Of Avalor  
17:00 Gigantosaurus  
17:25 PJ Masks Shorts  
17:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers

18:00 Fancy Nancy  
18:30 Vampirina  
19:00 PJ Masks  
19:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
20:00 The Lion Guard  
20:25 PJ Masks Shorts  
20:30 Elena Of Avalor  
21:00 Gigantosaurus  
21:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
22:00 Fancy Nancy  
22:30 Vampirina  
23:00 PJ Masks  
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals



00:15 Dual Survival  
01:05 Sinking Cities  
01:50 Mythbusters  
02:35 What On Earth?  
03:20 Fast N' Loud  
04:50 How Do They Do It?  
05:35 Garage Gold  
06:00 Storage Hunters UK  
06:20 Garage Gold  
06:45 Dual Survival  
07:35 Deadliest Catch: The Bait  
08:20 Gold Rush  
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
09:55 Salvage Hunters  
10:45 How Do They Do It?  
11:30 Fast N' Loud  
13:05 Storage Hunters UK  
13:30 Garage Gold  
13:55 Salvage Hunters  
14:40 Railroad Australia  
15:30 Megaquake: Hour That Shook Japan  
16:15 Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings  
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
17:50 Gold Rush  
18:40 How Do They Do It?  
19:25 Fast N' Loud  
21:00 Wheeler Dealers  
21:50 Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings  
22:40 Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings  
23:30 Deadliest Catch: The Bait



00:15 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
00:35 Boyster  
01:25 Counterfeit Cat  
02:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
03:00 Boyster  
03:50 Dude That's My Ghost  
04:40 Counterfeit Cat  
05:00 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
06:29 Marvel's Avengers: Secret Wars  
07:00 Phineas And Ferb  
08:00 Gravity Falls  
09:00 Lab Rats  
10:00 Mighty Med  
11:00 Kickin' It  
12:00 Lab Rats  
13:00 Mighty Med  
14:00 Kickin' It  
15:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
15:29 Space Chickens In Space  
16:00 Big City Greens  
16:29 Big Hero 6 The Series  
17:00 Milo Murphy's Law  
17:29 DuckTales  
18:00 Phineas And Ferb  
19:00 Lab Rats Elite Force

19:29 Lab Rats Elite Force  
20:00 Big City Greens  
20:29 Supa Strikas  
21:29 Star Wars Resistance  
22:00 Milo Murphy's Law  
23:00 Dude That's My Ghost  
23:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja



00:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
02:00 Second Wives Club  
04:00 WAGs LA  
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop  
08:55 Live From The Red Carpet  
10:45 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
11:40 Very Cavallari  
14:25 Live From The Red Carpet  
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
19:00 E! News  
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
22:00 Live From The Red Carpet



00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:30 The Family Chase  
03:25 The Jonathan Ross Show  
04:20 One Night With My Ex  
05:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
06:15 Chopping Block  
07:10 The Family Chase  
08:05 The Jonathan Ross Show  
09:00 One Night With My Ex  
09:55 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
10:55 Chopping Block  
12:45 The Family Chase  
12:50 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street  
14:15 Chopping Block  
15:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
16:00 Big Star's Bigger Star  
16:50 Wedding Day Winners  
17:55 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
18:50 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
21:00 Big Star's Bigger Star  
22:40 Wedding Day Winners  
23:10 Emmerdale  
23:40 Coronation Street



00:15 Breaking Mysterious  
01:00 Engineering An Empire  
01:45 Bible Secrets Revealed  
02:30 Ancient Aliens  
03:15 Ancient Aliens  
04:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved  
04:45 The Colour Of War  
05:30 Clash Of The Gods  
06:15 Breaking Mysterious  
07:00 Engineering An Empire  
07:45 Bible Secrets Revealed  
08:30 Ancient Aliens  
10:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved  
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18:15 Breaking Mysterious  
19:00 Engineering An Empire  
19:45 Bible Secrets Revealed  
20:30 Ancient Aliens  
22:00 The Greeks  
22:45 The Colour Of War  
23:30 Clash Of The Gods



00:20 Swamp People  
01:05 Pawn Stars South Africa  
01:50 American Pickers  
02:35 Storage Wars  
03:25 Ax Men  
04:15 River Hunters  
05:05 Forged In Fire  
06:00 Truck Night In America  
06:45 Swamp People  
07:30 Pawn Stars South Africa  
08:15 American Pickers  
09:00 Storage Wars  
09:45 Ax Men  
10:30 River Hunters  
11:15 Forged In Fire  
12:00 Truck Night In America  
12:45 Ice Road Truckers  
15:00 Big Easy Motors  
18:00 Detroit Steel  
19:30 The Curse Of Civil War Gold  
21:00 Knight Fight  
22:40 The Warfighters  
23:30 Big Easy Motors



00:45 The Food Files  
01:10 Places We Go  
01:40 A Is For Apple  
02:35 World's Best Beaches  
03:30 Fish Tank Kings  
04:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita  
05:20 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
06:15 Eat Street  
07:10 A Is For Apple  
08:05 World's Best Beaches  
09:00 Fish Tank Kings  
09:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita  
10:50 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
11:45 Eat Street  
12:40 Survival Of The Fittest  
13:35 World's Best Beaches  
14:30 Fish Tank Kings  
15:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita  
16:20 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
17:15 Eat Street  
18:10 Celebrity Chef: East vs West  
19:05 World's Best Beaches  
20:00 Fish Tank Kings  
21:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita  
22:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
22:55 Eat Street  
23:50 Celebrity Chef: East vs West



00:10 Nazi Megastructures: America's War  
01:00 Primal Survivor China  
02:00 To Catch A Smuggler  
03:00 Beyond Magic With DMC  
04:00 Nazi Megastructures: America's War  
05:00 Mine Kings  
06:00 The Witch Doctor Will See You Now  
07:00 Plastiki  
08:00 Surgery Ship  
09:00 Mine Kings  
10:00 Hard Time: Locked Up  
11:00 Egypt With Greatest Explorer  
12:00 Lost Treasures Of Egypt  
13:00 The Witch Doctor Will See You Now  
14:00 Surgery Ship  
15:00 How To Win At Everything  
15:30 How To Win At Everything  
16:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware  
17:00 The Lost Tomb Of Alexander The Great  
18:00 Disaster Earth  
19:00 How To Win At Everything  
19:30 How To Win At Everything  
20:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware  
20:50 The Lost Tomb Of Alexander The Great  
21:40 Disaster Earth  
22:30 How To Win At Everything  
22:55 How To Win At Everything  
23:20 King Fishers



## Stars



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

You get a sense of satisfaction because you've studied your past and come to grips with issues you may have had which still pop up occasionally. You may find this day frustrating because you'd rather be off somewhere navigating the woods instead of being tied down to your job now. You seem to feel bored. Good decisions for others seem to come easily today. If you can take off, then you may be in need of some down time because of your expectations of self. After work try to enjoy friends and your lover in a social group.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are appreciated for your ability to look at issues in a practical analytical manner. Others seek you out for just that. They know you'll give the best advice they could get from anyone. Your business acumen causes the same notice. Today is a great day for having those you know find you and give you a good story if you like gossip. The only thing is you probably will never repeat that good story so others can't enjoy the situation like you. Your Zodiac Sign symbol might be the bull who tears up the china shop but you keep your mouth shut when necessary.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You find yourself psychoanalyzing yourself as you come into contact with others today. You may be seeing if they are like you in any way. People find you amicable, think you're a great person and may allude to that fact. An ability to grasp abstract and spiritual ideas is your forte today. Putting them into play is part of your genius. Someone you know is emotional and confronts you on work that came from your deepest levels. This makes you question items you've created at work. You may not let this go but it would be best if you did. Nobody wins when two are talking at one time.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You're full of information and putting it to use when you work towards financial betterment at this time. People tend to want to follow your instructions especially after hearing your no-nonsense speech and seeing your attitude. Practical, well thought out decisions and the natural application of those choices make sense. It's too bad you can't use these resources at home. Family doesn't seem to notice when you use that tone with them. At work you play the role of facilitator. At home you play the role of family, two entirely different jobs. Get some petting from your pet. You may need it now.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

You've got a lot of energy and drive. This day is almost a carbon copy of yesterday's events. Only this time you're more in the public eye too. Don't think about moving or buying a home right now. You won't have the time for anything but work and perhaps some time with your spouse or lover. You'll make that time because it's a crucial need in your life along with making your work life better too. Finding that you're more powerful now where you work makes you feel good about yourself. With power comes responsibility. That can be a two-edged sword.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This isn't the best time to make a point when speaking with others. Blocks are up because of your ability to call it like it is. Wait until another day to try to get your point across. Coworkers know you're intelligent and have a great sense of what's going on but they aren't willing to get too close now. Problem solving is your greatest asset at this time. Going over each detail no matter how long it takes and rethinking afterwards, that is your forte. It's one that you love doing. Puzzles interest you and you find it better when you can solve issues which pay you well. Besides you give yourself the kudos if need be.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

You look good at work today. In fact, you may shine. This comes from the transit that occurred yesterday and will be with you for a while. Enjoy the feeling. A promotion may be in the making as could be more money. You'll take that if it comes, won't you? You may even be recruiting for your company. You feel a need to change where your friends are in your life. You long for the new and different and you welcome people as friends with a like mind. Making friends is easy for you. Remember true friends are a valued item which not just any person can become.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You're still in the mood you were in yesterday. Be thoughtful of what you're doing. Unforgiving energy now can cause you trouble on the job. Work is what makes you happy because you can see what you've done immediately and know you're doing a great job, Scorpio. You have no patience for those you consider thoughtless at this time. When they bother your work ethic, "Katy bar the door." It's because you feel emotionally frustrated over the situation losing you time, energy and money. Energy is the item you have in excess. That's the best thing going on for you now.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Straight laced and all work describes your day today. You want no emotional outbursts at all, even when you're explaining "How to." Others seem to think you're one lucky person now and you are. Everything you touch turns to gold, much as King Midas. When making career choices you're a master. You're at your mental best in clarity and decision making. Life issues seem to melt away under your instruction. Surround yourself now with friends, neighbors and family. They help you with anything you need. Plus, they allow you to be yourself and enjoy life. Enthusiasm for the life you've made is uppermost in your thoughts. That along with being thankful for what you have.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You're motivated to change your career and life at this time. Friends stand behind you and cheer you on. There are some that you'll lose in this process but you're willing to go on with the modification anyway. You need the new and different, you think. This motivates you in your decision for change. Social situations are more of what you desire now, meeting new friends and learning to excel at conversations in which you're involved. If it's exclusive to what you're used to, you're all in. Be thoughtful. Learning can be hard sometimes.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Caring for others intimately and family wise is a craving right now. On top of that you need their return care as well. Life may have you doing a double take at this time. Those you love will help keep you on your feet. Feeling reflective and going within to try to understand what's happening is what you're doing today. Although you have energy to spare on your job and at home, it's not enough. Ignorance on others parts has you wishing you'd taken a vacation and wondering when this will stop. The frustration from all of this will be gone too soon.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Force is behind your every movement and thought. Communication is part of the package where you make others want to help by prompting them with your drive. This forcefulness is used at home as well. Yearning for bigger and better has you studying politics and getting more involved in local and national elections. Be watchful while driving that you don't get a ticket. Religion takes on more importance or at least delving into religious issues have you thinking. Someone older isn't sure they like the manner in which you're living now or your motivation. Let it go.

## Country Codes

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antigua	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Niger	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

# CLINIC PAGE



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Friday, April 26, 2019

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

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

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

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

**ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:**

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

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Email: dr.fahad@beautyandbeyond.com.kw

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

Telephone: 1830003 Ext: 2400  
alsalam.int.hospital

**Specialized in:**

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

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

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

**Specialized in:**

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

**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ YAAT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment  
◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass  
◆ Transanal minimally Invasive surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

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

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

**daralshifa**  
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

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

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

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Sunday, Monday and Tuesday from 9:30 am until 5 pm  
Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm.

**Friday is a holiday.**

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Mobaile: 90974754/ 99166746

saharpolyclinic    Dr.saharghannsmclinic    Email: drsgderma@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

**Academic Certificates – Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

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

**Dr. Husain Alenezi**

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

**Expert in diagnosing and treating:**

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
- 4- Tumors And Malignancies Of The Urinary Tract (Kidney, Adrenals, Ureter, Bladder And Testes)
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# Classifieds

## CHANGE OF NAME

Varughese for all future purposes. (C 5524)

2-5-2019

I, **Gayathri Vinodkrishnan D/o Vinod Krishnan Erath Unikkat** holder of Indian passport No: S9918782 has changed my name from **Gayathri Vinodkrishnan** to **Gayathri Vinod Krishnan** hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of **Gayathri Vinod Krishnan**. (C 5522)

1-5-2019

I, **Mustafa Sabbir Virpurwala** father of **Husaina**, holder of Indian Passport No. M4642603, issued at Kuwait on 21/01/2015, permanent resident of **Bhawani peth Vishal** apts 3rd floor Pune, India and presently residing at **Salmiya**, block 10, building no. 13, Kuwait do hereby change my daughter name from **Husaina** to **Husaina Mustafa Virpurwala**, with immediate effect. (C 5521)

**Hakimuddin S/o Shabbir Husain Jawddiya** Passport No. Z2689498 has change my name from **Hakimuddin I** want to add my surname as **Jawddiya**. Given name: **Hakimuddin**. Surname: **Jawddiya**. (C 5523)

I, **Hakimuddin** father of **Munira**, holder of Indian Passport No. L9664327, issued at Kuwait 19/06/2014 and presently residing at **Khaitan**, do hereby change my daughter name from **Munira** to given name: **Munira**, surname: **Jawddiya**. (C 5523)

I, **Varughese Benoy**, Indian Passport holder No: L3819609 issued in Kuwait hereby change name as it appears in my passport from given name: **Varughese Benoy** to given name: **Benoy**, surname:

STATE OF KUWAIT  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

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

**BY DAY:** Hot and Clouds will increase gradually with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 02/05/2019 1200 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	38 °C	26 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	40 °C	22 °C		
ABDALY	41 °C	23 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	42 °C	26 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	38 °C	24 °C		
SALMIYAH	34 °C	27 °C		
AHMADI	33 °C	28 °C		
NUWAISIB	37 °C	24 °C		
WAFRA	42 °C	23 °C		
SALMY	40 °C	25 °C	<small>MIL Analysis (hPa) Valid 1200 UTC 02 MAY 2019</small>	

## 4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	05/03	Hot and Clouds will increase gradually	41 °C	22 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Saturday	05/04	Hot and Partly cloudy + rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	39 °C	26 °C	SW-SE	15 - 45 km/h
Sunday	05/05	Relatively hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	36 °C	24 °C	N-NE	12 - 40 km/h
Monday	05/06	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	39 °C	24 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h

## TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	03:39
Sunrise	05:05
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:21
Sunset	18:25
Isha	19:48

## RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	38 °C
MIN. Temp.	21 °C
MAX. RH	62 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	N 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Airlines

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

Business

# BoE sees higher British growth ahead of Brexit

**LONDON:** The Bank of England yesterday raised its forecast for UK economic growth this year to 1.5 percent from 1.2, as stockpiling offsets lower business investment elsewhere ahead of Brexit.

Economic activity was given a temporary boost as companies rushed to stockpile components and goods before the original March 29 Brexit deadline, the BoE said alongside an announcement that it had kept its main interest rate at 0.75 percent. "Brexit-related uncertainty has led to a reduction in business investment and an increase in stockbuilding," it said yesterday.

"In comparison, household spending has been relatively resilient, although the housing market has remained subdued." The BoE added that the UK economy was expected to expand by 1.6 percent in 2020, up slightly from its earlier guidance of 1.5 percent.

Britain is now due to leave the European Union on October 31 after two delays that were triggered by MPs rejecting the divorce deal British Prime Minister Theresa May had struck with the bloc.

The delays boosted gross domestic product (GDP) in the first three months of 2019, but the BoE anticipates a moderate slowdown in the second quarter. "GDP is expected to have grown by 0.5 percent in the first quarter, in part a reflection of a larger-than-expected boost from companies in the United Kingdom and the European Union building stocks ahead of recent Brexit deadlines," the central bank said. "That boost is expected to be temporary, however, and quarterly growth is expected to slow to around 0.2 percent in the second quarter."

It added: "Smoothing through those developments, the underlying pace of GDP growth appears to be slightly stronger than previously anticipated, but marginally below potential."

"That subdued pace reflects the impact of the slowdown in global growth and ongoing Brexit uncertainties." The BoE announcement comes one day after the US Federal Reserve dented prospects for a possible cut in American interest rates as solid US economic growth helps to offset a slowdown elsewhere.

News of the BoE's growth upgrades also comes after it recently fired the starting gun on the search for a replacement for governor Mark Carney. The Canadian leaves his role on January 31, having extended his tenure twice owing to Brexit turmoil. Carney, 54, took up the post in July 2013, with the UK economy struggling to recover from the global financial crisis and with the Bank of England's main interest rate at a then record-low 0.50 percent. — AFP



Mark Carney

**zain**

Net Income  
**47**  
Million KD  
**+15% Growth**

Metric	Value	Change
Customers	50 Million	+6%
Revenue	404 Million KD	+56%
EBITDA	178 Million KD	+111%
EPS	11 fils	+15%

Q1 2019 results

zain.com A Wonderful World

## Business

# NBK holds event at 360 Mall to award winners of unique campaigns in 2019

Bank announces winners of 'Transfer Your Salary,' 'UEFA Champions League 2019' and Al-Jawhara draws



**KUWAIT:** As part of the ongoing efforts to reward customers and ensure they enjoy a unique banking experience, National Bank of Kuwait held an event at 360 Mall to announce the winners in the draws of the campaigns launched at the beginning of the year, including the "UEFA Champions League" campaign and the quarterly draw of the "Transfer Your Salary" campaign, in addition to the monthly draw of the Al-Jawhara account.

Held live on Kuwait Pulse FM 88.8 Radio, attended by large numbers of customers and audiences, and supervised by a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the event also included a series of activities for children and adults to give them a chance to win instant gifts throughout the event.

#### Winners in UEFA Champions League 2019:

- Meshal Sabeeh Ahmad Al-Asbehi
- Ahmad Hamzah Abbas Al-Qattan
- Firas Jassem Yousef Al-Rumaidhin

#### Winner in Al-Jawhara monthly draw:

- Shafaika Khedair Habeeb

#### Winner in Transfer Your Salary:

● Mohammad Abdulrazzaq Sharyan Alhajri  
NBK's heads of branches took the opportunity to showcase the features and benefits of the campaigns, which fall in line with the Bank's commitment to reward customers and enhance their banking experience. Commenting on the event, Mohammed Al-Othman, General Manager of Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait, said, "NBK holds such engaging events to interact with its customers and reward them. These events continue to show their success thanks to the increasing number of attendees we see each time."

Al-Othman added: "We launched a series of campaigns this year, leading with the Transfer Your Salary campaign for which we held its first quarterly draw. Three more draws will be held for the same campaign this year. We also launched the UEFA Champions League campaign, which gave football fans the chance to enjoy the tournaments, while we congratulate the winner in the much awaited Al Jawhara monthly draw."

NBK continues to reward customers of Al-Jawhara account by entering them automati-

cally in the weekly, monthly and quarterly draws, giving them the chance to win KD 5,000 weekly, KD 125,000 monthly and the grand prize of KD 250,000 quarterly.

To enter the Al-Jawhara valuable draws, customers must deposit the minimum opening amount of KD 400 while the maximum amount that can be held is KD 500,000. Customers can easily open an account through NBK On-line Banking Service and NBK Mobile Banking Service. Customers' chances of entering the draws double for every KD 50 when the amounts are not used for a given period of time. Al Jawhara account holders receive many benefits which include a free Visa debit card that can be used in over 650 ATMs.

The Transfer Your Salary campaign gives customers many benefits and exclusive advantages and enables them to win instant gifts that range between KD 100 and KD 10,000 or an interest-free loan by simply transferring their salary to NBK.

Existing and new salary account holders also automatically enter the quarterly draw for a chance to win the equivalent of their full year

salary without exceeding the limit of KD 1,000 per month.

NBK has also partnered once again with Mastercard to offer customers the chance to win one of three all-expenses paid trips for two to the final match of the UEFA Champions League in Madrid. NBK customers automatically entered the draw by using their NBK Mastercard Credit Card. For every KD 1 spent locally on purchases, online transactions and cash advances, customers received one entry into the draw, while a KD 1 spent in restaurants and food delivery providers gave them two entries, and KD 1 spent internationally or on international websites, or purchases and cash withdrawals done during UEFA days gave them three entries. NBK Mastercard Credit Cards customers benefit from an array of advantages and features including the NBK Rewards Program which comprises 850 participating stores, free access to airport lounges around the globe, free travel insurance, NBK secure shopping, free valet parking, local concierge service, and many other exclusive offers.



# Zain revenue up 56% to reach \$1.33bn; profit rises 15% in Q1 2019 to reach \$155m

## EBITDA grows 111% in Q1 • 50 million customers served



Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi



Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous

**KUWAIT:** Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the first quarter (Q1) ended 31 March, 2019. Zain served 50 million customers at the end of the period, reflecting a 6 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

Zain Group generated consolidated revenues of KD 404 million (\$1.33 billion) for the first quarter of 2019, up 56 percent compared to the same period in 2018. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 178 million (\$586 million), up 111 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 44 percent. Net income for the quarter reached KD 47 million (\$155 million), up 15 percent Y-o-Y reflecting Earnings Per Share of 11 fils (\$0.04).

For Q1 2019, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 48 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from an average of 24.9 in Q1 2018 to 47.5 in Q1 2019 (SDG / USD), cost the Group \$59 million in revenue, \$27 million in EBITDA and \$10 million in net income.

### Key operational notes for three months ended 31 March, 2019:

1. The company held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 20 March 2019 and approved the distribution of a cash dividend of 30 fils (\$0.10) per share for the 2018 financial year.

2. The consolidation of Zain Saudi Arabia (KSA) into Zain Group started in Q3 '18 resulted in an additional \$559 million in revenue and \$255 million in EBITDA during Q1 '19.

3. The adoption of new accounting standard IFRS 16 - 'Lease' from the beginning of 2019 resulted in a benefit to EBITDA by KD 19 million (\$61 million), and a minimal increase in net income of KD 1.75 million (\$5.8 million)

4. Group data revenue experienced a 118 percent growth in Q1 2019, representing 37 percent of the Group's total revenue. It should be noted that the data growth is predominantly due to the consolidation of Zain KSA results.

5. The three-month period was further highlighted by the notable 77 percent increase in net income in Zain Iraq; healthy net profit

growth of 11 percent by Zain Kuwait and 55 percent by Zain Bahrain; with Zain Sudan continuing to perform exceptionally well in all key financial indicators in local SDG currency terms.

Commenting on the results, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said, "The impressive first quarter 2019 results were achieved through the Board's and Executive Management's focus on implementation of the digital transformation strategy that has seen substantial investments in network upgrades, fiber optics and 5G readiness. These initiatives have been aimed at diversifying income sources primarily from digital-related areas and at the same time improve customer experience. We will continue driving cost optimization initiatives to improve the efficiency of the operations and seek new lucrative opportunities in driving the business forward and increasing shareholder value."

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi said, "Given the sweeping technological developments in the ICT sector and challenging regulatory environment, the management teams across all operations are being dynamic in their transformational and digitization efforts, supported by the Group. This has resulted in sound operational progress and the reporting of robust results in key markets, highlighted by the vastly improving profitability in our home market of Kuwait and even more impressively in our Bahrain, Iraq and Saudi Arabia operations."

Al-Kharafi added, "Zain Group's overall growth in many key indicators was underpinned primarily by the strategic consolidation of Zain KSA, combined with its strong performance and the beneficial regulatory changes in Saudi Arabia, which has driven the operation to profitability for three consecutive quarters. It is unfortunate that the unavoidable currency devaluation in Sudan continues to impact our results, however we draw confidence on this particular issue as we have recently seen the currency appreciate."

The Vice-Chairman and Group CEO con-

cluded, "One of the key pillars of Zain's innovative digital strategy '4Sight' is built on future-proofing our telecom operations. We are continuing the digital transformation journey we started several years ago to maximize value for all stakeholders and offer our customers an improving customer experience. The data monetization, Enterprise (B2B) and smart city initiatives implemented across all operations continue to grow and we will continue to develop the required infrastructure and invest resources to further benefit from these lucrative and strategic business areas."

Operational review of key markets for the three months ended 31 March, 2019

**Kuwait:** Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation of Zain Group saw its customer base serve 2.6 million in a very challenging period that witnessed improving net profit for the quarter. Revenue generated for the quarter reached KD 82 million (\$271 million), and net income increased 11 percent to reach KD 21 million (\$70 million). Zain Kuwait's EBITDA amounted to KD 32 million (\$105 million), a 21 percent increase Y-o-Y, with EBITDA margin standing at 39 percent for the quarter. Data revenue grew by 9 percent Y-o-Y, representing 38 percent of total revenue.

**Saudi Arabia:** Despite the fierce competition present in the Saudi telecom market, the operation's ongoing transformation has resulted in Zain KSA having recorded net profit for the last three consecutive quarters with revenue growing quarter-on-quarter. For Q1 2019, Zain KSA recorded revenue of SAR 2.1 billion (\$559 million), a 24 percent increase to the same period in 2018. EBITDA for the quarter amounted to SAR 955 million (\$255 million), up 67 percent from SAR 571 million (\$152 million) in Q1 18. The operator's EBITDA margin for Q1 2019 stood at 46 percent. Net income for Q1 2019 reached a healthy SAR 129 million (\$34 million); a marked improvement on the loss of SAR 77 million (\$21 million) recorded for Q1 2018. Impressively, data revenue represents 44 percent of total revenue.

**Iraq:** Zain Iraq performed exceptionally well

in Q1 2019 when compared to the corresponding three-month period in 2018, with revenue reaching \$262 million, and EBITDA having reached \$109 million, up 13 percent Y-o-Y and reflecting an EBITDA margin of 42 percent. The operation reported a net profit of \$14.2 million, up 77 percent on the \$8 million profit recorded in Q1 2018. The operator added 1.5 million customers (up 10 percent Y-o-Y) to reach 16 million and witnessed significant growth in data revenue, as well as profitable progress in the enterprise (B2B) segment.

**Sudan:** In local currency (SDG) terms, the operator continues to perform well, as revenue grew by 50 percent Y-o-Y to reach SDG 3.1 billion (\$66 million, down 23 percent in USD terms) for Q1 2019. EBITDA increased by 54 percent to reach SDG 1.2 billion (\$26 million, down 21 percent in USD terms), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39 percent, while net income increased by 67 percent to reach SDG 509 million (\$11 million, down 22 percent in USD terms). Data revenue formed 18 percent of total revenue, with an impressive growth of 63 percent (Y-o-Y) in SDG terms. Zain Sudan now serves 15.1 million customers, reflecting a 9 percent growth compared to Q1 '18.

**Jordan:** Zain Jordan serves a customer base of 3.7 million customers as at the end of Q1 2019, maintaining its market leadership. Revenue reached \$117 million, with EBITDA increasing 18 percent to \$56 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 48 percent. Net income was relatively stable increasing 1 percent to \$18 million. With the continual expansion of 4G services across the country, data revenue grew by 2 percent Y-o-Y, and now represents 40 percent of total revenue.

**Bahrain:** During Q1 2019, Zain Bahrain generated revenue of \$41 million. EBITDA for the period increased 48 percent to \$15 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 35 percent, while net income increased 55 percent to \$5 million. The operation's focus on new, attractive packages coupled with a totally revamped 4G network resulted in data revenue representing 47 percent of overall revenue.

## Business

# OPEC is determined to avoid a global 'energy crisis': Barkindo

## Iran oil tanker forced to seek repairs in Saudi port

**TEHRAN:** OPEC is determined to avoid a global "energy crisis" as some of its members are facing international sanctions and others struggling with unrest, the cartel's secretary-general said in Tehran yesterday.

"As an organization, we will remain focused on our goal of avoiding an energy crisis that may affect the global economy," Mohammed Barkindo said on the sidelines of an oil and gas exhibition. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will pursue this policy "despite current troubles in several of its member countries," he said.

His comments came as the end of US sanction waivers for purchases of oil from key OPEC member Iran was due to kick in yesterday.

Venezuela, another cartel member, is also facing sweeping US sanctions and in the throes of political troubles while fighting rages between rival forces for control Tripoli, capital of oil-rich Libya. Barkindo did not name any country but said some OPEC producers were "currently under unilateral sanctions"—a reference to Iran and Venezuela. Another country "is also going through transitional challenges with all its potential consequences," Barkindo said, also apparently about Venezuela where opposition leader Juan Guaido is trying to rally demonstrators against President Nicolas Maduro.

Another cartel member he said, alluding to Libya, "is fighting day in and day out to avoid an all-out war". OPEC is "committed to stay united" and "not slip back into the chaos" it has faced in recent years, Barkindo said.

Iran, as a founding member of the organization, has regularly slammed some of the cartel's members for going along with Washington's policies against Iran and lacking solidarity.

On Wednesday, Iran's oil minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh accused OPEC members he did not name of sowing "division" and threatening the cartel's "disintegration".

These countries—he said referring to Iraq and oil kingpin Saudi Arabia — were "exaggerating" their production capacity to reassure markets after the US lifted sanction waivers for buyers of Iranian crude. The end of the exemptions announced on April 22 have sparked fears of supply shortages and pushed prices up.

Meanwhile, an Iranian tanker was forced to seek repairs at a Saudi port after suffering "engine failure and loss of control", the Iranian oil ministry's SHANA news agency reported yesterday. The rare docking in Iran's regional arch-foe, came as Washington was poised to end all remaining exemptions to crippling sanctions on Iranian oil exports, a move strongly supported by the kingdom. SHANA said that the incident began on Tuesday morning when the tanker issued a distress call.

"One of the National Iranian Tanker Company's tankers, moving through the Red Sea towards the Suez Canal, failed to continue its path due to water leaking into its engine room," it reported. "With the coordination of the relevant officials, the ship was guided to Jeddah as the nearest safe port to fix the problem and take the necessary measures."



**TEHRAN:** OPEC's Secretary General Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo and Iran's OPEC Governor Hossein Kazempour Ardebili (2nd R) attend the 24th International Oil, Gas, Refining & Petrochemical Exhibition at Tehran Permanent Fairground in the Iranian capital yesterday.—AFP

SHANA identified the tanker as the Happiness 1, with a crew of 26 — 24 Iranians and two Bangladeshis. The crew are safe and sound, it said. SHANA quoted the tanker company as denying that the incident had caused any environmental damage. It did not specify whether the ship had continued on its way by Thursday or remained in port in Jeddah. Yesterday was the

date set by Washington for the end of all waivers it granted from its renewed sanctions on Iranian oil exports. All Iranian exports, including to key remaining customers China, India and Turkey, are now subject to the sanctions imposed in November.

Tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia have intensified in recent years.—AFP

## European alliance to invest 6bn euros in electric car batteries

**PARIS:** European governments and companies will form an alliance for developing next-generation batteries for electric vehicles, investing five to six billion euros (\$5.6 to \$6.7 billion) in the project, the French and German finance ministers said yesterday.

France's Bruno Le Maire said a maximum of 1.2 billion euros in public subsidies would be granted to the alliance, at a press conference with his German counterpart Peter Altmaier.

"Other member states have already expressed interest in joining this project," Le Maire said, including Italy, Belgium, Poland, Austria and Finland. He said at least four billion euros would come from private companies, citing automaker PSA and the French battery maker Saft, a unit of French oil giant Total.

"Today we are seeing more interest than

ever" in the project, Altmaier said, adding that 35 companies had already pledged to sign up, including Europe's biggest automakers.

Political leaders across the European Union have long called for a coordinated effort for home-made batteries that would free carmakers from having to rely on Chinese batteries as the industry shifts away from combustion engines. A pilot factory with around 200 employees will be opened in the coming months in France, with a goal of opening two production sites, in France and Germany, that would generate 1,500 jobs at each.

European automakers have been ramping up electric vehicle production after years of scandals over diesel pollution and as tougher rules on cutting carbon emissions come into force.

But EU carmakers buy cells from foreign manufacturers, mostly in Asia, which they use to build the high-capacity batteries needed to power electric vehicles.

Germany and France in particular have been pushing for a pan-European consortium to develop new battery technologies that would be built domestically, along the lines of the European aircraft manufacturer Airbus. —AFP

## Fed leaves key rate unchanged amid mixed economic signals

**WASHINGTON:** The US Federal Reserve decided Wednesday to keep its benchmark interest rate unchanged amid mixed signals about the direction of the US economy.

But Fed Chair Jerome Powell seemed to tamp down growing expectations that officials might lean towards a rate cut, something President Donald Trump has demanded of the independent central bank. After raising the key lending rate four times last year, the Fed voted unanimously to keep it in a range of 2.25-2.5 percent.

Conflicting economic data has complicated the Fed's decision-making. While the central bank noted the continued "strong labor market" and "solid" gains in economic activity, it also highlighted a slowdown in investment by businesses and households as well as weak inflation, which has fallen further below the Fed's two percent target to around 1.6 percent.

Asked whether there was a case building to cut

rates to push the price measure closer to the target, Powell told reporters factors that "appear to be transient or idiosyncratic," such as apparel and airfares, likely are behind the low inflation rate, adding that central bankers are "comfortable" about policy at the moment. "We think that our policy stance is appropriate at the moment. And we don't see a strong case for moving in either direction," he said, but added policymakers will be "watching inflation carefully."

In his latest Twitter attack on Tuesday, Trump slammed the Fed for "incessantly" raising interest rates despite low inflation, and called on officials to cut the rate by a full percentage point.

Those attacks have left the institution open to concerns it might bow to political pressure. But Powell dismissed those fears as he has done repeatedly. "We don't think about short term political considerations, we don't discuss them and we don't consider them in making our decisions one way or the other," he said. The statement by the rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee offered just a few key changes of language.

Data since the March policy meeting show "the labor market remains strong and that economic activity rose at a solid rate," the FOMC said, somewhat more optimistic than the prior statement that noted slowing activity. But the FOMC also noted that growth in household spending and business fixed investment had "slowed in the first quarter," and that key inflation measures "have declined and are running below two percent." —AFP



## Business

# Global factories on the mend in April but still struggling

## Asia PMI data mixed, Eurozone contracts, US growth lags expectations

**LONDON/HONG KONG:** Global factory activity recovered a little last month but still appeared to be in the doldrums as demand remained weak and trade protectionism concerns prominent, while stimulus measures had yet to fully kick in.

In the eurozone, business survey data yesterday pointed to a third straight month of contraction and while manufacturing is still growing in the United States, it missed expectations by a wide margin on Wednesday. The picture was similarly gloomy across much of Asia.

That left the outlook for central banks predominantly skewed towards either easing - or at least not tightening - policy. Malaysia and New Zealand are prime candidates for potential rate cuts, and monetary authorities in Australia are facing growing calls to do likewise.

The Bank of England, meeting yesterday, is almost certain to remain on hold but keep its options open for later in the year, in what will be its first policy decision since the postponement until Oct. 31 of Britain's scheduled departure from the European Union. As the eurozone's economic prospects have dimmed - in part due to a lack of clarity over Brexit - expectations for interest rate hikes from the European Central Bank have been pushed further into next year.

The Federal Reserve held interest rates steady overnight, saying it saw no strong case for either hiking or cutting, disappointing US stock markets. "We see the May meeting as more evidence that this pause has legs. We con-

tinue to expect the Fed to leave rates unchanged through this year and next," BNP Paribas economists told clients.

A resolution in the trade dispute between Washington and Beijing would go a long way towards improving the mood.

While there is still great uncertainty, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the two countries completed productive talks on Wednesday and were nearing a deal that would roll back a portion of the \$250 billion in US tariffs on Chinese goods. Beijing in March announced additional tax cuts and infrastructure spending this year worth hundreds of billions of dollars, while bank lending in the first quarter hit a record 5.81 trillion yuan (\$863 billion).

The People's Bank of China has also been cutting banks' reserve requirements and keeping short-term money market rates low.

### Floundering factories

Purchasing Managers' Indexes showed manufacturing activity shrank again in the euro zone, and that the boost to British factories from record rates of pre-Brexit stockpiling slowed in April. Uncertainty over the terms of Britain's EU departure, long scheduled for March 29, had previously prompted factories to load up on parts and materials at the fastest rate in the 27-year history of the PMI surveys.

The same factor affected the rest of Europe. Activity in the continent's manufacturing powerhouse Germany shrank for a fourth month run-

and operation," said Steinman.

The United States has banned government agencies from buying equipment from Huawei over fears Beijing could spy on communications and gain access to critical infrastructure if the firm is allowed to develop foreign 5G networks offering instantaneous mobile data transfer.

Washington is adamantly opposed to Huawei's involvement because of its obligation under Chinese law to help Beijing gather intelligence or provide other security services.

Steinman was echoed by Julian King, an EU commissioner in charge of the Security Union, who spoke in a video message screened at the conference. "There is an urgent need for coordinated action when it comes to protecting our critical digital infrastructure, especially in the case of 5G networks which represent a technological tipping point of potentially profound significance," King said.

"National decisions need to be coordinated because they have European-wide implications," he added, while insisting that his recommendations were not "targeted at any one company or any one country."

In December, the Czech Republic's National Cyber and Information Security Agency warned against using Huawei software and hardware, saying they posed a threat to state security.

However, the EU member's pro-Russian, pro-Chinese president Milos Zeman met a Huawei official in Beijing last week to express his solidarity with the telecoms giant.—AFP



**HONG KONG:** A general view shows residential and commercial buildings towering over commuters driving along a main road in Hong Kong. — AFP

ing and in Italy it contracted for a seventh month. It accelerated in Spain but only stabilized in France. In China, both official and private factory surveys suggested an unexpected loss of momentum last month, though overall activity still expanded, albeit at a more subdued rate. While many analysts agree the worst may be over for the world's second-

largest economy, the disappointing readings - which followed surprisingly upbeat March data - suggested it is still struggling for traction. April's downbeat reading, coupled with a soft outlook for trade, have raised questions over how much more stimulus is needed to generate sustainable growth in China without risking a sharper jump in debt.—Reuters

## US calls for cautious EU policy on 5G networks

**PRAGUE:** The United States yesterday urged "like-minded governments" from the European Union to be cautious and coordinate their policies on 5G network security in light of suspicions over the system proposed by Chinese giant Huawei.

"Only with the leadership of like-minded countries we'll be able to develop and deploy and manage secure and reliable 5G communications infrastructures," said Joshua Steinman, a special cyber security assistant to US President Donald Trump.

Speaking at a conference in Prague organized by the Czech government, he singled out national security as "a mandatory criterion in evaluating suppliers of information and communication technologies, products and services." "We hope that like-minded governments will avoid committing to any one system or vendor until they're able to properly vet and compare available technologies and fully assess risks across the life cycle of 5G network installation

## Scandal-hit Aussie banks earmark billions to repay customers

**SYDNEY:** Australia's big banks—once among the world's most profitable—are being forced to amass war chests worth billions of dollars to reimburse customers for years of dodgy fees.

Industry heavyweight the National Australia Bank yesterday became the latest financial house to outline the mounting cost of refunding ripped-off customers following a government probe into the sector. The company announced it had set aside Aus\$1.1 billion (US\$770 million) in the last financial year to remediate customers.

A Royal Commission exposed rampant bank malpractice that included charging fees to dead people, charging fees for no services at all, aggressive selling tactics and poor advice that led to significant financial upheaval for clients.

The year-long investigation singled out NAB for especially harsh criticism, forcing the departure of the firm's CEO and chairman.

It "forced us to confront broader issues of how

we treat customers", the bank said in a statement yesterday. Earlier this week NAB's competitor ANZ said it had set aside Aus\$928 million in remediation costs since the first half of the 2017 financial year and contacted more than 276,000 customers. Commonwealth Bank and Westpac have taken similar steps. The total cost for the sector could be as much as Aus\$6 billion, according to a Macquarie Research estimate. The costs—although a fraction of revenues—are beginning to be felt on the banks' bottom lines, at a time when the housing market is slowing, and they are being asked to increase capital holdings.

Announcing half-yearly earnings, NAB said it would defer the "majority" of management bonuses and cut shareholder dividends by 16 percent to protect the firm's balance sheet during a "challenging" period. NAB said that in the past six months it had put aside Aus\$525 million for "customer-related remediation costs", bringing the total provisions to Aus\$1.1 billion.

The bank said there was "potential for additional costs, although the amounts and timing remain uncertain". The process is likely to take "a considerable period of time to complete" according to Fitch Australia and New Zealand bank analyst Tim Roche.

He said that banks are only booking the charges that they can quantify, so new issues could surface or existing ones could be more complicated than expected.—AFP

## Sports

# Semenya to run in Doha as storm rages over new IAAF rules

## Semenya 'made to suffer', says Indian gender-row sprinter

**CAPE TOWN:** Double Olympic champion Caster Semenya will run her last 800-metres today before the International Association of Athletics Federations imposes hugely controversial new rules limiting testosterone in female athletes.

Semenya, who has spent years trying to get the new IAAF regulations thrown out, will compete at the Diamond League meeting in Doha against 2016 Olympic silver medallist Francine Niyonsaba - who recently revealed she had similar difference in sexual development (DSD) characteristics to the South African.

Both must then begin taking medication to lower their testosterone levels if they wish to compete over that distance based on the new rules, which the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) said on Wednesday were necessary to ensure fair competition.

IAAF president Sebastian Coe, speaking in Doha yesterday, said he was grateful to CAS for the verdict. "It is very straightforward for any association in sport," Coe told a media briefing. "Athletics has two classifications - it has age and it has gender. We are fiercely protective of both. We are really grateful that CAS has upheld that principle."

Coe refused to take more questions, but the case is likely to have far-reaching consequences for women's sport, and has split opinion around the globe. Athletics South Africa likened the new IAAF regulations to apartheid, and both it and Semenya's lawyers have said they could contest the CAS ruling dismissing her appeal against their introduction.

Under the rules to take effect on May 8, female athletes with high natural levels of testosterone wishing to compete in events from 400-metres to a mile must medically limit that level to under 5 nmol/L, which is double the normal female range of below 2 nmol/L.

Testosterone increases muscle mass, strength and haemoglobin, which affects endurance. Some competitors have said women with higher levels of the hormone have an unfair advantage. Barring further legal action, Semenya finds herself at a crossroads: Either she submits to the regulations or looks to compete in longer distances.

She claimed the 5,000-metres title at the South African Athletics Championships last week, an event not covered by the IAAF regulations, but in a modest time of 16:05.97, well below the qualifying standard for the world championships of 15:22.00.

This potential lifeline means Semenya may not abandon the 800-metres yet, though any advance to the Swiss Federal Tribunal could take months to reach a verdict and leave her career in limbo.

Former sprinter Michael Johnson, who won four Olympic gold medals between 1992 and 2000, believes the regulations are right for women's athletics. "It was always going to be a difficult situation because through no fault of her own she just happens to have this condition," Johnson told Reuters.

"The IAAF has to make a decision on the line that's drawn between the female races and the men's races. I think the decision was based on the fairness of sports, so that there is a level playing field for all of the athletes in any given race."

Semenya, 28, has vowed to fight on, whichever distance she races in. "I know that the IAAF's regulations have always targeted me specifically," she said in a statement released via her lawyers on Wednesday.

"For a decade the IAAF has tried to slow me down, but this has actually made me stronger. The decision of the CAS will not hold me back. I will once again rise above and continue to inspire young women and athletes in South Africa and around the world."

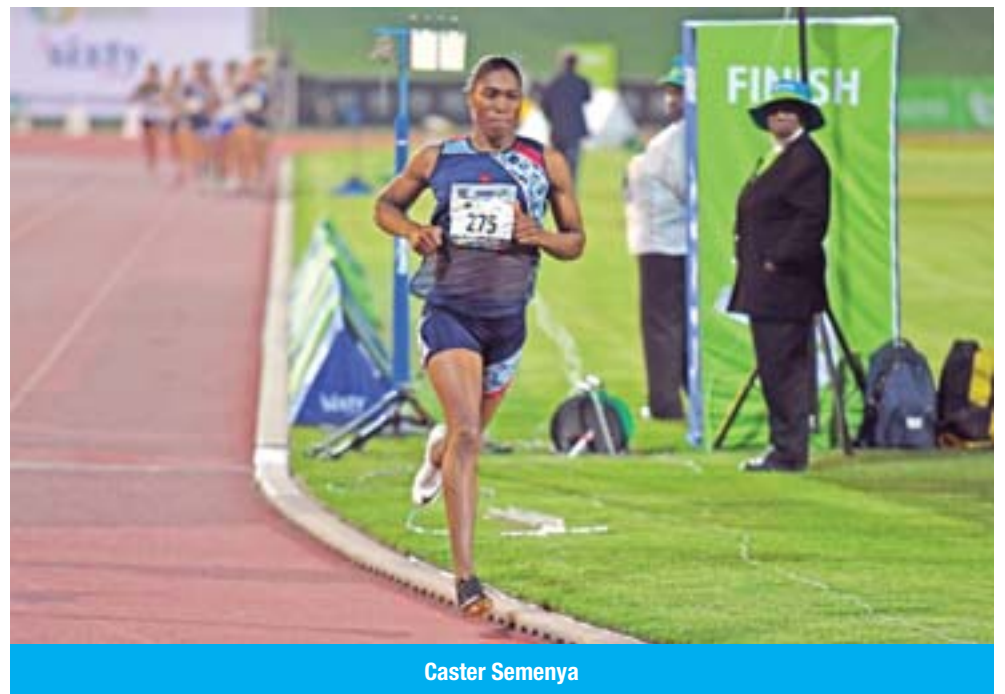
from the canoeing and paddling traditions of his Tongan ancestors. "Kayaking is a sport that is part of being a Polynesian. They traveled all throughout Polynesia hundreds of years ago and that's more of a natural sport to me than, say, the skiing, and I just love being out on the ocean."

The image of Taufatofua-oiled up, shirtless and wearing a traditional Tongan ta'ovala (mat) at the head of the country's tiny delegation at Rio's Maracana stadium in 2016 — went viral online.

Taufatofua became the first UNICEF Pacific ambassador and made an appearance at UNICEF headquarters in New York in that capacity.

In addition to his passion for the Olympics he wants to promote greater awareness of the oceans and the planet.

He said he is brimming with confidence despite his taekwondo tournament in Rio in 2016 ending quickly with a 16-1 thrashing in his first match. He also finished 114th out of 119 in his cross-country race in Pyeongchang. Asked to rate his confidence level, he set it at "12 out of 10." "One of my biggest things is self-belief," he said. "I have extreme self belief in myself but it's not something that's unique to me," he said. "It's something I want to put across to people." — Reuters



Caster Semenya

Her personal best of 1:54.25 in the 800-metres will make her the quickest in the field in Doha's Diamond League meet, the first time she will compete over the distance in 2019. Meanwhile, Indian gender-row sprinter Dutee Chand yesteryday said Caster Semenya's court defeat over testosterone rules was "wrong", but backed the Olympic 800 metres champion to overcome the potentially far-reaching ruling.

Chand, who fought and won a long battle over her own hyperandrogenism, or elevated levels of male sex hormones, said she felt sorry for the South African star, whose career has

been plagued by controversy. "This is wrong. I feel sad for her, she has been made to suffer like me," Chand, 23, told AFP. Chand, who was subjected to humiliating gender-testing as a teenager, was finally cleared to compete last year after winning a court appeal against International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) regulations. Chand successfully challenged the IAAF's stance on hyperandrogenism, prompting the world governing body to change its rules to target only middle-distance events, arguing these were most affected by elevated testosterone. — Agencies

## Tongan Taufatofua looks to be dual threat in Tokyo

**TOKYO:** Tongan Pita Taufatofua, who set social media ablaze when he went shirtless during the opening and closing ceremonies in the past two Olympics, on Wednesday said he is aiming to qualify for the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo in two sports.

The Australia-born 35-year-old hopes to make a second appearance in taekwondo while also hunting for gold in sprint kayak, which he said he only took up recently.

"Taekwondo is my first love. You never forget your first love," he told Reuters at a training session in New York. "We're trying to do two sports in one Olympics." If successful he will be the first person in the modern era to compete in three completely different Olympic sports following his unlikely foray into cross-country skiing in Pyeongchang last year.

Taufatofua says his interest in kayaking comes

## Wambui slams Semenya testosterone ruling

**NAIROBI:** Kenya's Olympic 800m bronze medal winner Margaret Nyairera Wambui, who has herself faced questions over her testosterone levels, yesterday slammed an IAAF ruling against her rival Caster Semenya.

Semenya on Wednesday lost a court challenge against IAAF rules forcing women with elevated levels of testosterone to take suppressive treatment if they wish to compete as females in certain events. Wambui, who has often raced against the South African champion, has also faced questions over her testosterone levels, but unlike Semenya has not been forced to undergo tests for hyperandrogenism.

"This life sometimes is so unfair", Wambui wrote on Twitter. "Everything that happens, happens with a reason Caster." "This is life we Africans have nothing to say

in this world and (there is) nothing we can do about it, so pole (sorry) my dear —so painful." Semenya's testosterone levels are not publicly known, but the IAAF rule compels female runners in certain categories to cap their testosterone levels at five nanomoles per litre (nmol/L) of blood.

The rules will come into effect on May 8 and will apply to races over distances of 400m to the mile. Wambui, who finished third behind Semenya in the 800m at the 2016 Rio Olympics, and silver medallist from Burundi Francine Niyonsaba-also considered hyperandrogenic-will take part in the Doha Diamond League on Friday. At the Doha Diamond League meet in May 2017, both Semenya and Wambui posted the world leading times of 1:56.61 and 1:57.03 respectively in finishing first and second in the event. — AFP

## Sports

# Dhoni delights as New Zealanders struggle for gametime in IPL

## Former India captain finished with 44 not out from 22 balls

**CHENNAI:** Trent Boult's final-over humiliation at the hands of MS Dhoni in the Indian Premier League on Wednesday only added to a sense of unease about how New Zealand's best players are tracking ahead of the World Cup.

Former India captain Dhoni was in vintage form as he smashed the spearhead of New Zealand's bowling attack for a four and two sixes as the Chennai Super Kings took 21 runs from Boult's final over to post an impressive 179 for four.

Boult's Delhi Capitals were then dismissed for 99 runs in the 17th over at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium to allow the Super Kings to move above the visitors at the top of the table. As troubling as it was to see Boult leaking so many runs, New Zealand fans might be as much concerned by how little he and his compatriots have played in the marquee Twenty20 tournament this year.

One of the key players in a New Zealand side that reached the final of the 50-overs showpiece in 2015, Boult had not bowled a ball in anger since March 24 before Wednesday's match. What was only his second IPL match of the year started well enough when he conceded just two runs in his first two overs but that was followed by 14 runs in his third then the final-over onslaught to leave him with figures of 0-37.

Dhoni, who led India to their 2011 World Cup triumph and has been included in the squad for this year's edition in England and Wales, finished with 44 not out from 22 balls

and was named man of the match.

Boult's lack of gametime is typical of his compatriots in the tournament, which restricts the number of foreign players allowed per game. His new-ball partner Tim Southee has played just three matches and taken one wicket at the cost of 118 runs. He had to wait 17 days between his second and third games.

All-rounder Colin de Grandhomme, whose lower-order power-hitting and medium-pace bowling could be crucial for New Zealand at the May 30-July 14 World Cup, did not play at all for Royal Challengers Bangalore in April.

His last game, just his third in the tournament, was against Kane Williamson's Hyderabad Sunrisers on March 31. New Zealand captain Williamson, the mainstay of New Zealand's batting, has made the most appearances of his World Cup-bound compatriots with six IPL matches under his belt.

He has managed a paltry 55 runs at an average of 11 in his six innings, although his poor form might in part be explained by the pectoral injury he carried into the tournament.

By contrast, his Sunrisers team mate David Warner has scored 692 runs and leads the run-scoring table despite only ending a 12-month ban from international cricket for his role in a ball-tampering scandal in late March.

Warner has now left the team to join Australia's squad in Brisbane for a pre-World Cup training camp, which could be good news for New Zealand's Martin Guptill-his most likely replacement in the Sunrisers team.



**CHENNAI:** Chennai Super Kings cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni plays a shot during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. — AFP

Guptill, the second-highest scorer in Twenty20 international cricket with 2,272 runs, has not faced a ball in the IPL this year

nor played any cricket since he was dismissed for a duck in a first-class game for Auckland in early March. — Reuters

## Banished Hales to feature for Notts after England controversy

**LONDON:** Controversial England batsman Alex Hales will be available for Nottinghamshire for the rest of the white-ball season. Hales was axed from all England squads, including the provisional 15-man party for this year's World Cup, after reportedly failing a second test for recreational drugs.

But his English county Nottinghamshire believe it is in the interests of "all concerned" for the batsman to return to playing cricket, starting with Friday's game against Durham. "The recent events in relation to Alex Hales have been difficult for everyone involved with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club," a statement from the club read on Wednesday.

"Alex's off-field actions have, at times, fallen way short of the behaviours the club expects from any of its staff. "Following his withdrawal from all England squads this week, we have met with Alex to express our concerns and to re-iterate that such actions cannot continue.

"The meeting was open, honest and constructive and a way forward was agreed between both parties. Alex has expressed a great deal of regret and contrition for his actions and he has ultimately paid a heavy price.

"He accepts that the position he finds himself in is of his own making. He knows he has a long road back to redeem himself in the eyes of many people, but that now has to be his aim. "After much deliberation, we believe it's in the best interests of



**GRENADA:** File photo shows Alex Hales of England hits 6 during the 4th ODI between West Indies and England at Grenada National Cricket Stadium. — AFP

all concerned for him to get back to playing cricket for Nottinghamshire as quickly as possible."

Current procedures treat recreational drug alerts as a welfare rather than a disciplinary issue and allow only three individuals - the ECB's chief medical officer, chief executive Tom Harrison and Ashley Giles, managing director of men's cricket - to be made aware of the results. With national selector Ed Smith and head coach Trevor Bayliss among those in the dark, Hales was named in the preliminary World Cup squad earlier this month and invited to a training camp in Cardiff despite being in the midst of a 21-day ban. — AFP

## Pakistan's Shadab fights hepatitis ahead of World Cup

**KARACHI:** Pakistan's fast-rising all-rounder Shadab Khan was Wednesday battling to be fit for the World Cup after contracting hepatitis, reportedly from a dentist's non-sterilised instruments.

The 20-year-old was last month ruled out of Pakistan's ongoing tour of England after blood tests revealed he was suffering from hepatitis. Pakistan media reported that Shadab contracted the virus during dental treatment in Rawalpindi.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Shadab had a check-up with a UK-based doctor and was advised two weeks rest. "Shadab had a check up with Dr Patrick Kennedy, a world renowned gastroenterologist and hepatologist who specialises in liver disease in elite sportsmen and was put on medication," said a PCB release.

After two weeks rest, Shadab will undergo another round of blood tests in Lahore after which his availability for the World Cup will be assessed, a PCB spokesman said. Shadab was included in Pakistan's 15-man preliminary World Cup squad announced last month.

All ten teams in the tournament have until May 23 to change their squads for the World Cup which starts in England and Wales from May 30. A leg-spinner of great potential, Shadab has been Pakistan's key bowler in one-day internationals and Twenty20 cricket since his debut in 2017. He has 47 wickets in 34 ODIs and 44 wickets in 32 T20Is. — AFP

# Campillo hunts more glory after stunning 65 in China

## Wu Ashun and Jin Daxin lead home charge with a pair of 66s

**SHENZHEN:** Spain's Jorge Campillo kept up his red-hot form with a flawless seven-under-par 65 to stand in a three-way tie for the lead after the first round of the 25th Volvo China Open yesterday.

The Spaniard won his maiden European Tour title at the 229th attempt at Morocco's Trophée Hassan II last Sunday and showed no sign of slowing down in good scoring conditions in Shenzhen.

An eagle three at the par-five ninth, allied to four birdies saw him complete a stunning front nine in six under par at the rain-softened Genzon Golf Club layout. A 20-foot putt to save par at the 12th crucially kept a bogey off his card and a further birdie at the par-five 17th saw him share top rung on a packed leaderboard with David Lipsky and Tapio Pulkkanen.

"I got a few nights sleep so it was good and I played all right," said Campillo of his dash across seven time zones from North Africa to play in the far east. "The eagle on nine was the highlight. I hit a great hybrid on nine. I got an easy putt uphill and I made it.

"If I can keep playing like this I'll hopefully have a chance on the weekend." American Lipsky and Finland's Pulkkanen, who both enjoyed top 10 finishes in Morocco, had set the early clubhouse target with their own rounds of 65 in the morning.

"I played well and I got my putter working today," said the in-form Lipsky who was fifth in Morocco. "I hit it all right, not great, but I think I holed 150 feet of putts today so that always helps."

### WU LEADS HOME CHARGE

Pulkkanen, who finished eighth in Morocco, birdied four of his last six holes to join the American. "I started slowly with only two birdies in the front nine but five birdies on the back nine so it was great," said Pulkkanen.

Wu Ashun and Jin Daxin led the home charge with a pair of 66s to lie just a shot adrift, in a tie for fourth alongside John Catlin. "I will just stay with my game," said the 2015 China Open champion Wu. "A lot of things can happen, let's see."

Catlin was also trying not to get ahead of himself. "We have a long way to go - 54 more holes - so you've just got to keep going," said the American.

China's number one and crowd favourite Li Haotong received one of the biggest ovations of the day when he birdied the 18th in rain and near darkness to join an eight-way tie for seventh on five-under 67.

"It was a solid round," said the world number 39. "I played well today, only missed one green." Li squeezed in the trip to his national open in between major



SHENZHEN: Jorge Campillo of Spain hits a tee shot during the first round of the Volvo China Open golf tournament in Shenzhen yesterday. — AFP

commitments at the US Masters and the US PGA Championship this month and was rewarded by a massive gallery cheering his

every move. "It feels great, I hope they enjoyed the golf today and thanks for their supporting," said Li. — AFP



KUWAIT: Dean of Daeya Stable Sheikh Abdullah Salman Al-Sabah held a ceremony to honor winning nominees of Kuwait Horse racing tracks network for the 2018-2019 for the second consecutive year. First place went to Mutlaq Al-Otaibi, second place went to Omar Al-Mutairi, third place to Abdullah Al-Jadaah, and fourth place went to Rakan Al-Khader. The winners thanked the dean for his support of horse racing, and encouraging fans to attend and participate in activities.

## Riding legend Walsh bows out after 24 yrs

**DUBLIN:** Ruby Walsh, one of the greatest jump jockeys of all time, announced his retirement on Wednesday after landing the Punchestown Gold Cup on Kemboy. The 39-year-old Irishman announced to a surprised winning trainer Willie Mullins after he came back to the winners enclosure that was the last time the formidable duo would team up.

He hangs up his boots having ridden a record 59 Cheltenham Festival winners—including two Gold Cups on the remarkable Kauto Star—and two Grand Nationals including Papillon in 2000, especially emotional as it was trained by his father Ted.

Walsh said he had always aimed to bow out with a big win—it would have come earlier had Mullins's Rathvinden landed the Grand National last month where he finished third. "That's it, you'll never see me on a horse again—I'm finished," Walsh told reporters. "I'm not going out for the next one."

Walsh, who rode nigh on 2,800 winners in his 24-year career, had his fair share of injuries in his career. "When I broke my leg in Cheltenham last year I felt I couldn't do that again," said Walsh. "When my mind's made up that's it. I don't like sitting on the fence."

Walsh, who plans to focus on TV work, said it was hard to list the greatest horse he had ridden—aside from Kauto Star there was also another Paul Nicholls-trained great champion staying hurdler Big Buck's.

"If there's been a good horse there's a good chance I rode them," said Walsh. "I worked with the two best trainers, Willie Mullins and Paul Nicholls."

Both Mullins and Nicholls—who was present at Punchestown which is Irish jump racing's equivalent of Cheltenham—paid handsome tributes to Walsh. Mullins, the most successful trainer of all time at the Cheltenham Festival, had been surprised by the 12-time Irish champion jockey's sudden decision. — AFP

## Sports

Friday, May 3, 2019

# Indians' Kluber breaks arm in loss

**MIAMI:** Light-hitting Rosell Herrera went 2-for-4 with three RBIs on Wednesday, leading the host Miami Marlins to a 4-2 win over the Cleveland Indians, who lost right-hander Corey Kluber to a non-displaced fracture in his pitching forearm. Kluber, an All-Star in each of the past three seasons and a two-time American League Cy Young Award winner, left the game with two outs in the fifth inning after he was hit by a Brian Anderson line drive that was clocked at 102 mph. Kluber (2-3) left the game immediately due to what was initially described as a contusion. An X-ray found the fracture, and the team announced that Kluber would be re-evaluated in Cleveland on Thursday. He allowed eight hits and three runs in 4 2/3 innings. Drew Steckenrider pitched a scoreless eighth, and Sergio Romo worked around a one-out solo homer by Carlos Santana in the ninth to pick up his fifth save as the Marlins split the two-game series.

## ROYALS 3, RAYS 2 (GAME 1)

Host Kansas City scored three runs in the first inning and made them stand up for a victory over Tampa Bay in the first game of a doubleheader. Jakob Junis (3-2) picked up his second straight win against the Rays. He allowed two runs on six hits in 6 1/3 innings. Ian Kennedy pitched two scoreless innings to pick up his second save in three chances. Ryne Stanek (0-1), who grew up in the Kansas City suburb of Stilwell, Kan., took the loss. He gave up three runs on three hits in one inning.

## ROYALS 8, RAYS 2 (GAME 2)

Host Kansas City scored three runs in the first inning and defeated Tampa Bay to complete its first doubleheader sweep since July 7, 2015, also against the Rays. Glenn Sparkman (1-1), who took the 26th roster spot because of the doubleheader, picked up his first major league win. He pitched seven shutout innings, scattering three hits, walking one and striking out six. The Rays had won 11 of 12 games against the Royals coming into the day. Reigning Cy Young Award winner Blake Snell (2-3) allowed seven runs on six hits in three-plus innings as the Royals knocked him out in the fourth inning for the second straight game.

## ORIOLES 5, WHITE SOX 4 (GAME 1)

Richie Martin scored the tiebreaking run on an eighth-inning sacrifice fly, and visiting Baltimore erased a four-run deficit to earn a victory over Chicago in the opening game of a doubleheader. Martin, who had an RBI double in Baltimore's three-run fourth inning, slapped a triple into the right field corner off Kelvin Herrera (0-1) to lead off the eighth. Martin didn't stay on third base for long, as he scooted home on Jonathan Villar's sacrifice fly to center. Dwight Smith Jr. had an RBI double and scored a run for the Orioles, who overcame three errors to snap a four-game losing skid.

## WHITE SOX 7, ORIOLES 6 (GAME 2)

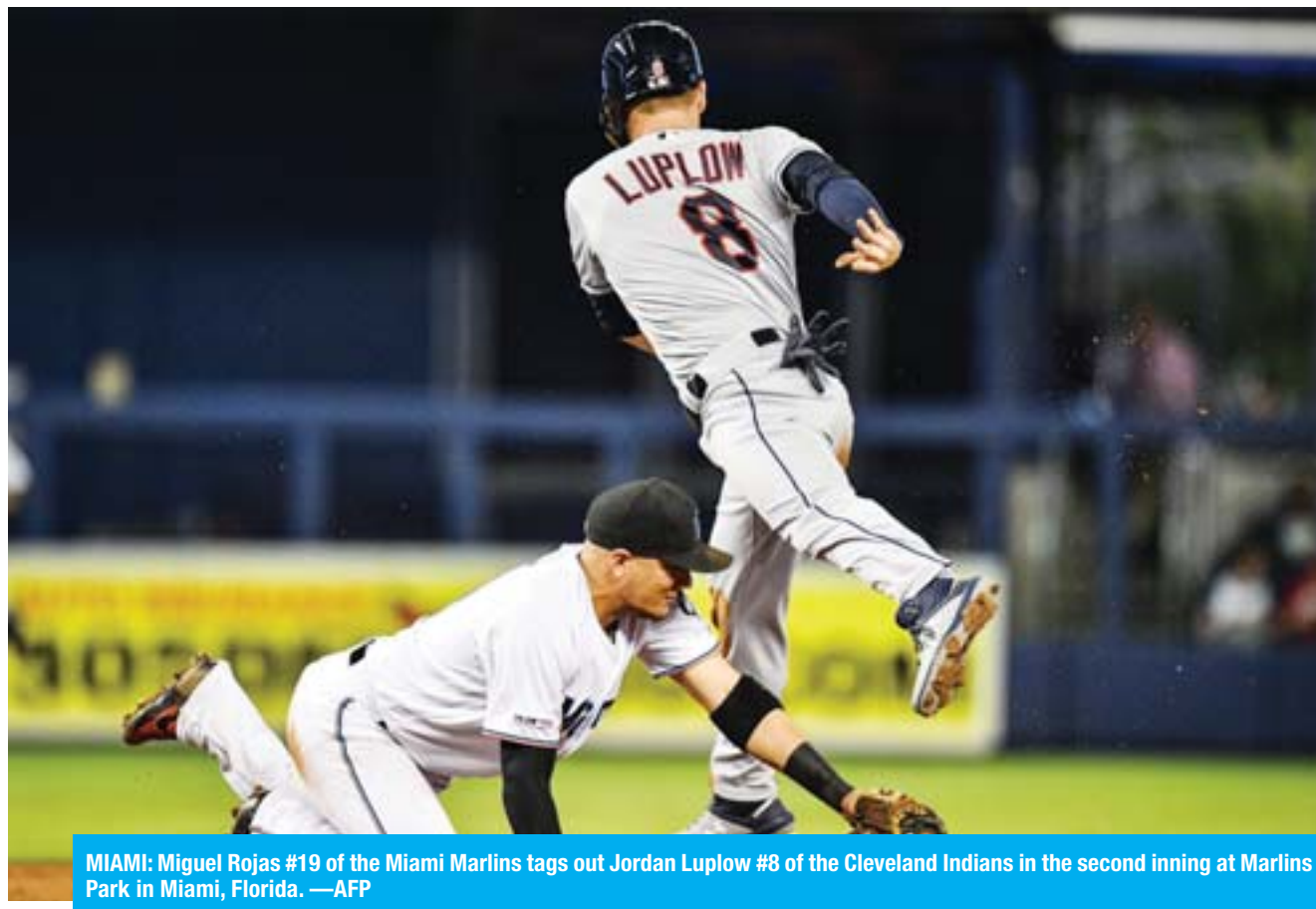
Yonder Alonso hit a walk-off, two-run single to lift host Chicago to a victory over Baltimore and a doubleheader split. Adam Engel had three hits, and Jose Abreu amassed two hits and four RBIs in the nightcap for the White Sox. Alonso was 0-for-8 in the doubleheader entering his ninth-inning at-bat against Miguel Castro. With the bases loaded and two outs, he hit an opposite-field single to short left field, cementing a come-from-behind victory. Baltimore's Dwight Smith Jr. had three hits and an RBI, and he executed an effective take-out slide to help the go-ahead run score in the seventh inning.

## RED SOX 7, A'S 3

Marcus Walden tossed three innings of one-hit relief, Christian Vazquez and Mitch Moreland homered, and Boston rallied to complete a three-game sweep of visiting Oakland. Andrew Benintendi capped a three-run sixth inning with a two-run single, helping the Red Sox break open the game and salvage a 5-4 homestand after losing four of the first six games. Walden (4-0) took over after starter Hector Velazquez was pulled after two innings in a 1-1 tie. The rookie produced his sixth consecutive scoreless relief stint, striking out three of the 10 batters he faced. He did not walk a batter.

## GIANTS 2, DODGERS 1

Buster Posey greeted Los Angeles reliever Pedro Baez with



MIAMI: Miguel Rojas #19 of the Miami Marlins tags out Jordan Luplow #8 of the Cleveland Indians in the second inning at Marlins Park in Miami, Florida. —AFP

a two-out, walk-off single in the ninth inning, delivering host San Francisco a victory over its National League West rival. The win was the Giants' second in the three-game series and came two innings after manager Bruce Bochy was ejected for arguing balls and strikes. With one out in the ninth, Steven Duggar's third hit of the game and a single by Gerardo Parra put two on for the Giants before Brandon Belt struck out. The Dodgers then opted for the right-handed Baez to face Posey, who stroked his game-winner to left field, with Duggar beating Chris Taylor's strong throw to the plate.

## CUBS 11, MARINERS 0

Jon Lester allowed one hit in seven shutout innings, and Chicago hit three home runs in a victory at Seattle. Willson Contreras, Anthony Rizzo and Javier Baez hit solo shots for the Cubs, who won their fourth consecutive game. The only hit Lester (2-1), a native of Tacoma, Wash., allowed was a one-out single to Ryon Healy in the second inning. The left-hander walked one and struck out eight. The Mariners have lost four in a row, all at home, with three of those defeats by 11 or more runs. They have been outscored 46-7 over that stretch.

## PIRATES 7, RANGERS 5

Bryan Reynolds hit a three-run double in a four-run fourth inning, and Pittsburgh held on to sweep a two-game series in Arlington, Texas. Melky Cabrera and Starling Marte each had two hits and an RBI for the Pirates, who are back at .500 after losing eight in a row prior to arriving in Arlington. Pittsburgh starter Jameson Taillon (2-3) went 6 1/3 innings, allowing four runs (three earned) and five hits, striking out five and walking two. Felipe Vazquez pitched the ninth and stranded the tying run at second for his eighth save.

## DIAMONDBACKS 3, YANKEES 2

Archie Bradley escaped a jam in the top of the eighth inning, and Arizona held on to beat New York in Phoenix, completing a two-game series sweep. Greg Holland pitched the ninth and notched his seventh save in as many opportunities. Ketel Marte homered, scored on a wild pitch by Masahiro Tanaka and reached base three times as Arizona won for the seventh time in nine games. Nick Ahmed added an RBI single for the Diamondbacks. The Yankees got a sixth-inning solo homer from Luke Voit

and an eighth-inning RBI single from Mike Tauchman.

## CARDINALS 5, NATIONALS 1

Marcell Ozuna had three hits and a walk, and Miles Mikolas pitched six effective innings as visiting St. Louis beat Washington, winning for the fifth game in a row. Mikolas (3-2) gave up one run on seven hits with one walk and four strikeouts. St. Louis has won 10 of 11 while the Nationals have lost nine of their last 12 games. Washington starter Max Scherzer (1-4) allowed three runs on eight hits and two walks with eight strikeouts in seven innings. He passed Christy Mathewson on the all-time strikeout list and is now 34th with 2,511 K's in his career.

## PHILLIES 7, TIGERS 3

Maikel Franco hit a three-run double in the seventh inning to rally Philadelphia past visiting Detroit. Rhys Hoskins added a homer and Andrew McCutchen and Cesar Hernandez ripped three hits apiece for the Phillies. J.T. Realmuto, Jean Segura and Franco had two hits each. Jordy Mercer hit a solo home run while Jeimer Candelario, Niko Goodrum and Ronny Rodriguez each collected two hits for the Tigers.

## REDS 1, METS 0

Jose Iglesias homered with two outs in the ninth inning to lift visiting Cincinnati past New York. The Reds have won two of the first three games of the four-game series. Cincinnati earned both victories with two-out, tiebreaking homers in the ninth off Mets closer Edwin Diaz (0-2). On Monday night, Jesse Winker took Diaz deep in a 5-4 win. Iglesias' homer made a winner out of Zach Duke (2-1), who got the final out of the eighth. Michael Lorenzen earned his second save with a perfect ninth.

## BRAVES 5, PADRES 1

Max Fried allowed only one run over seven innings to lead Atlanta past visiting San Diego, the team that originally drafted him. Fried (4-1) allowed only a 415-foot solo home run to San Diego slugger Manny Machado in the fourth inning. He gave up four hits, didn't walk a batter and struck out seven. Fried, the No. 1 pick by the Padres in 2012, reduced his ERA to 2.11. Padres left-hander Cal Quantrill (0-1) took the loss in his major league debut. He tossed 5 2/3 innings and allowed two runs on six hits and one walk with three strikeouts.—Reuters

## Sports

# Trail Blazers hold off Denver Nuggets to level playoff series

**LOS ANGELES:** C.J. McCollum scored 20 points as the Portland Trail Blazers held off a late rally from the Denver Nuggets to score a series-leveling victory in their NBA Western Conference playoff duel on Wednesday.

McCollum led the scorers in a hard-fought 97-90 victory on the road at Denver's Pepsi Center to tie the best-of-seven series at 1-1. Portland talisman Damian Lillard had a relatively quiet night, restricted to just 14 points after shooting five-of-17 from the field.

However, double-digit contributions Enes Kanter, Zach Collins, Rodney Hood and Al-Farouq Aminu helped Portland get over the line. "I really liked our approach in the first half, particularly the first quarter," Blazers coach Terry Stotts said.

"I thought we were a lot better offensively than in game one. We did a better job on the ball. I liked the tone we set for most of the game." The Blazers looked to be cruising towards a comfortable victory after a dominant first half, surging into a 50-35 lead at the break.

They opened up a 17-point lead early in the third quarter, and led by 14 heading into the final period. That, however, was the cue for a sustained Denver assault, with the Nuggets slowly chipping away at the Portland lead.

A driving layup from Nikola Jokic put Denver within five points at 95-90 with 34 seconds left on the clock. But a foul by Mason Plumlee gifted

two free throws to Hood, who coolly drained both attempts to take the Blazers 97-90 clear with 17 seconds remaining.

Jokic led the Denver scorers with 16 points while Jamal Murray added 15. Paul Millsap finished with 14 points. Stotts meanwhile praised the defensive effort that restricted Jokic, but was unhappy that the Serbian managed to haul down 14 rebounds throughout the game.

"I thought we pressured him a little bit more," Stotts said. "He didn't get the clean looks that we gave him in game one. He got too many offensive rebounds in the fourth though. We were very fortunate that we weren't hurt as badly as we could have been."

Game three in the series takes place in Portland today. Nuggets coach Mike Malone said Denver had struggled to match Portland's physical approach in the first half. "In that first half they were the aggressor, they were much more physical," Malone said.

"But I'm extremely proud of the way they came back in the second half. But we've got to do it for 48 minutes and that was the most disappointing thing about tonight—we brought it in the second half but in the first half it was not there."

Stotts meanwhile had raised eyebrows earlier, wearing a bowtie on the sidelines during the game. The Blazers coach revealed it was a tribute to video co-ordinator



**DENVER:** Zach Collins #33 of the Portland Trail Blazers shoots the ball against the Denver Nuggets during Game Two of the Western Conference Semifinals of the 2019 NBA Playoffs at the Pepsi Center in Denver, Colorado. — AFP

Jonathan Yim, who was injured in a car crash with his family last week.

"On Wednesdays, Jon would wear bowties

to the game, so tonight was bowtie Wednesday," Stotts said. "I think bowties are undefeated this year." — AFP

## Stars double up Blues, even series

**DALLAS:** Mats Zuccarello, Tyler Seguin and Alexander Radulov each collected a pair of assists as the host Dallas Stars beat the St. Louis Blues 4-2 on Wednesday night and evened their Western Conference semifinal series at two wins apiece.

Four different players scored goals for Dallas, which got 27 saves from Ben Bishop. Game 5 of the best-of-seven series will be Friday in St. Louis. With his team trailing 1-0, Jason Dickinson put the Stars on the board with an on-the-spot tally at 11:23 of the first period. A point shot went wide, but Seguin whacked at the loose puck, and it came to a wide-open Dickinson to bury his third goal of the playoffs.

Jason Spezza scored the go-ahead goal on the power play with 52 seconds remaining in the opening frame when he fired a rocket of a slap shot from the top of the right circle. Blues goalie Jordan Binnington made a series of big saves early in the second period, but his team's

loose play finally proved costly when John Klingberg scored the eventual game-winning goal just before the midway point. After yet another St. Louis neutral-zone turnover, the Stars rushed up the ice, and Klingberg ripped a top-corner shot after taking a cross-ice pass from Seguin.

The hosts didn't let up, and rookie Roope Hintz made it a 4-1 affair late in the second period with his fifth goal of the playoffs. Hintz joined a three-on-two rush and finished a perfectly executed rush with his wrist shot.

Vladimir Tarasenko opened the scoring, putting the Blues ahead 1-0 five minutes into the clash, and Robert Thomas rounded out the offense by scoring his first NHL playoff goal with 6:16 left in the third period.

Binnington stopped 27 shots for the Blues, who lost on the road for the first time in the playoffs. Binnington also took a pair of penalties at the end of the second period, a rough call against Jamie Benn and a slashing infraction on Bishop as they headed to their respective benches. The blood was boiling after David Perron earlier slashed Bishop on the back as the Dallas goalie was behind his net playing the puck. — AFP

## Leicester boss Rodgers needs no extra incentive to beat Man City

**MANCHESTER:** Leicester City manager Brendan Rodgers says he has no extra motivation to do his former club Liverpool a favour in the Premier League title race when his side face Manchester City on Monday.

Liverpool can return to the top of the table if they beat Newcastle United on Saturday but will only be in pole position to clinch the league title on May 12 if Rodgers' Leicester can claim a point or better at the Etihad Stadium.

Yet Rodgers, who went agonisingly close to winning the league with Liverpool in 2013-14, is only focused on his job at Leicester. "I am employed by Leicester. My

## Everton to play friendly in Kenya

**NAIROBI:** English Premier League side Everton will travel to Kenya in July for a friendly against local champions Kariobangi Sharks, officials said yesterday. Everton will play Kariobangi, the 2019 title holders of East Africa's biggest football tournament, the SportPesa Cup, in Nairobi on July 7.

Ronald Karauri, the chief executive of Everton-sponsor SportPesa, said Kariobangi would put up a fight after coming out victorious in a number of local competitions in re-

focus is on Leicester City. There's no comparison really," Rodgers told a news conference yesterday. "It's exciting to be involved but my thoughts are solely with Leicester and doing what we can to get a result. "Liverpool back then was at a different stage. We had young players, loan players. We went from eighth to second in a couple of years so it's a different dynamic. We deserved to finish second."

Leicester, who beat Arsenal 3-0 in their last league outing, are in contention for a potential Europa League qualification spot, lying three points behind seventh-placed Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Youri Tielemans, on loan from Monaco, has contributed three goals and four assists in his 11 league games since arriving in January and Rodgers remains hopeful the midfielder will sign a permanent deal to extend his stay at the end of the campaign. "He came here in January because he wasn't getting game time," Rodgers added. "I think what Leicester have shown him is the opportunity that is here for any player, and in particular a young player. "He has got a wonderful platform and base here to continue that development if there is something that is agreed between the clubs." — Reuters

cent months. "These boys have all it takes to host Everton for this historic match. It will be a record-making match as well as a much-needed catalyst to boost careers in local football as well as sports development in the country," he said in a statement.

Everton became the first Premier League club to ever play in East Africa when they visited Tanzania in July 2017 to face Kenyan side Gor Mahia. The visitors won 2-1 in that friendly sponsored by betting company SportPesa, which is the official sponsor of both Everton and Gor Mahia. The Kenyan side travelled to Liverpool in November 2018 to face Everton again, where they lost 4-0 at Goodison Park. Football, particularly the top European competitions, is hugely popular in Kenya and across the African continent. — AFP

## Sports

# Captain Messi showing Barca the way

**BARCELONA:** Lionel Messi has shown many different faces during his spell-binding career but in Barcelona's win over Liverpool on Wednesday, the dominant one was of a leader. Barca were not at their best at Camp Nou, instead made to sweat and suffer against a Liverpool side that were just as dangerous in the first half and then dominant for at least a 20-minute period in the second.

But when his team were struggling, Messi delivered, two goals in seven minutes turning a disappointing night into a disastrous one for Liverpool and leaving Barcelona with one foot in the Champions League final.

"In these moments, he is unstoppable," Jurgen Klopp said. "I knew before that he was a world-class player and I saw it again. I am not surprised." "I am always surprised," said Ernesto Valverde. "I don't know how he does it."

In the end, 3-0 seemed harsh, lacking the away goal Liverpool deserved and requiring now a comeback in the second leg at Anfield that would surely rival the 2005 miracle in Istanbul. Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane terrorised Barca's defence, the latter perhaps even the game's stand-out player during a breathless opening 45 minutes, in which both teams might have scored two or three.

But while Liverpool's deadly duo have an impressive 50 goals between them this season, Suarez and Messi have 75, their knack of finding, creating and converting chances unparalleled and, in this first leg, decisive.

## Liverpool have no time to lick wounds after Barcelona defeat

**LONDON:** Liverpool have no time to fret over their chastening Champions League defeat at the hands of Barcelona as they scramble to prevent their season from fizzling out without any silverware to show for it.

After the hammer blow of two late Lionel Messi goals at the Camp Nou, which gave Barcelona a 3-0 win in the first leg of the semi-final, Jurgen Klopp's men must raise themselves for the challenge of Newcastle in the Premier League on Saturday.

Despite already posting a club record points tally of 91 with two games remaining, a Liverpool defeat would give Manchester City the chance to retain the title at home to Leicester on Monday. "They don't have to think about the next game against Barcelona, now we play Newcastle," said Klopp after Wednesday's defeat in Spain.

"That's all our focus. We go to the hotel, have a proper sleep, get up in the morning, fly home and then prepare for Newcastle. "Whatever happens, these boys, I couldn't be more proud of them." There was plenty for Klopp to be proud about in Catalonia despite a first defeat in 20 games.

Liverpool had more possession and shots on goal as they pressed and penned the Spanish champions back, particularly after Luis Suarez had come back to haunt his former club with the opening goal in the 26th minute.

"I can work really well with this game. I will use this game to show the boys what is possible," added Klopp. "It was brave performance that

Between Mane firing over from eight yards and Salah hammering the post, Messi tapped into an open net and arced a free-kick, past the right hand of Alisson and into the top corner.

It was his second goal on the night and 600th for Barcelona, after 683 games, 14 years to the day since his first. He now has 12 goals in this season's Champions League, only two short of his best in 2012.

"He's a fantastic player, it's obvious," Virgil van Dijk said. "I think the hard part is that when we attack, he is waiting somewhere, in the corner or anywhere, you can never switch off."

### IMPORTANT MOMENT

It was also the 100th time he had worn the captain's armband for his club and in some ways, this season has ushered in another cycle of Messi. From dribbler, to scorer, to creator, Messi, at 31, is now Barcelona's leader too.

He walked them out, scored two goals and walked them back in, saluting the crowd as he went. He defended Philippe Coutinho, by gesturing to the fans not to whistle as he was substituted and then admonishing them during a frank post-match interview.

"It's ugly to say goodbye to a player like that," Messi said. "We were in a defining moment, we are in an important moment where we have to be more united than ever, all of us, as a team."

"We said at the beginning of the year that we are going to achieve this together and it is not a moment to criticise anyone but to support, to

was very passionate, very lively and in a lot of moments creative and direct.

"There will be a moment when I can convince the boys again how important this game was for us for our development because I really think it was the best away game we played in the Champions League. That's a very important message for us, not for the world outside." However, while Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah missed huge chances, the magic of Messi swung the tie heavily in Barca's favour.

If Messi's first goal 15 minutes from time was opportunistic, his second was out of this world. The Argentine's 600th goal for Barcelona was fired into the top corner with unerring accuracy from a long-range free-kick.

"In these moments he's unstoppable," admitted Klopp. A second leg at fortress Anfield is still to come, but ending a 29-year wait to win the Premier League was always Liverpool's primary target for the season.

Now into his fourth season in charge, Klopp has still to win a trophy with Liverpool. But if his maturing side were denied by individual brilliance in Barcelona, it is the collective class of City, led by former Barca boss Pep Guardiola, that looks likely to deny them a much-desired title.

For the seventh game in a row, Liverpool would go back on top with a victory over Newcastle, led by their former manager Rafael Benitez. However, with City on a 12-game Premier League winning run, Liverpool still need the champions to slip up either at home to Leicester or away at Brighton on the final day of the season to stand a chance of winning the title.

"I think mentally, we shouldn't be affected," said Liverpool defender and Professional Footballers' Association player of the year Virgil van Dijk. "I won't be. It was a tough game but we have a big game at the weekend and we are still in the race. We want the same performance without conceding the goals." — AFP



**BARCELONA:** Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (R) challenges Liverpool's Scottish defender Andrew Robertson during the UEFA Champions League semi-final first leg football match between Barcelona and Liverpool at the Camp Nou Stadium in Barcelona. — AFP

push forward and to do this all together." Valverde was keen to point out that Barcelona threw away a three-goal cushion against Roma in the quarter-finals last season but, avoid a repeat at Anfield, and his team are within touching distance of a treble. With La Liga wrapped up,

they face Valencia in the final of the Copa del Rey this month before a potential Champions League decider against either Tottenham or Ajax in Madrid on June 1. "We have only a few games left and hopefully two finals," Messi said. "We will do it all together." — AFP

## Zenit eye Russian league title on trip to Akhmat

**MOSCOW:** Russian Premier League table-toppers Zenit St Petersburg head to Akhmat Grozny tomorrow eyeing a fifth title with four games still to play. Zenit are eight points clear of second-placed Lokomotiv Moscow, the defending champions who need to win away at Arsenal Tula to keep alive their slim chances of retaining the title.

Krasnodar, who beat CSKA Moscow 2-0 last week, sit third, three points further back. Zenit need just a point to get an automatic qualification for next season's Champions League—their season's main goal.

But the Saint Petersburg outfit, who are in the hunt for their first domestic title in four years, are gearing up to extend their four-match winning streak at Grozny. "We're all focused on the upcoming match at Grozny," manager Sergei Semak told the club web site.

"The win there may bring us a title if Lokomotiv will lose points at Tula. But first of all we must focus on our own performance to avoid any unpleasant surprises." Lokomotiv may still be in title contention but have a worrying injury list.

"We still have title aspirations as we still are the reigning champions," Lokomotiv press service quoted coach Yury Syomin as saying. "In the upcoming games we will experience serious problems in defence as we've missed a number of first-line players through injuries including two full backs and two defensive midfielders.

"Zenit are unlikely to squander their solid

advantage but we will continue to battle as an automatic qualification for the Champions League is at stake." Krasnodar, who have been inconsistent since the league resumed from the winter break, will have to pass a tough test in the southern derby with Rostov on Sunday.

"We have been criticised for our unstable performance in recent matches," Krasnodar head coach Murad Musayev said. "We understand that it's a deserved criticism, we don't try to find an excuse for it and we all work hard to show our best football."

"CSKA are just two points behind and we have no room for mistakes in the remaining matches as we all dream to win a place in the Champions League for the first time ever." — AFP

Live MATCHES ON TV LOCAL TIMING	
<b>ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE</b>	
Everton FC v Burnley FC	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
<b>SPANISH LEAGUE</b>	
Sevilla FC v CD Leganes	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
<b>ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE</b>	
Juventus FC v Torino FC	21:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4	
<b>GERMAN BUNDESLIGA</b>	
FSV Mainz 05 v RB Leipzig	21:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
<b>FRENCH LEAGUE</b>	
RC Strasbourg v Olympique Marseille	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 6	

# Red Bull Neymar Jr.'s Five Returns to Kuwait this May



forward's signature football tournament – and a truly global phenomenon. Across 6 continents and more than 40 countries, five-a-side teams battle it out in 10-minute matches with a twist. Every time one team scores, the opposition loses a player, which makes it fast, technical, tactical – and unique in the world of football.

The 2019 tournament is again open to teams of five to seven players aged 16 to 25, with two over-aged players allowed as part of each squad. Tens of thousands of players will set out with the hope of making it all the way from regional qualifiers to their national final and on to the World Final at the Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr in Praia Grande, Brazil. Neymar Jr. himself is dreaming

too – of more success with FC Paris Saint-Germain in 2019, and a long-term future in the country that excites him most.

Neymar Jr. expressed his excitement about the upcoming tournament saying "I hope you are as excited as I am to get out there and outplay as many teams as possible. Gather your team, sign up and I hope to see you and your friends in Brazil".

The qualifiers in Kuwait will occur over a span of four days; May 14 – 15 at Boulevard and May 20 - 21 at iCorner (Kuwait Towers). 8 teams will then head to the final on May 23, at Marina Crescent fields. Teams can now sign up to participate in one of these qualifiers

by visiting [www.redbullneymarjrfive.com](http://www.redbullneymarjrfive.com)

The winning team from Kuwait will head to the World Final in Brazil in July to battle it out against over 40 other countries and outplay them all. It will be held at Neymar's Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr. in Praia Grande, an organization aimed at providing extracurricular educational and sporting activities to the most socially disadvantaged children and their families in the area.

Red Bull Neymar Junior's Five Kuwait national final is held in partnership with Honda, Snapple, Acqua Eva Kuwait and X-cite by Alghanim Electronics. Media partner, Kuwait Times, will cover this popular event.



Neymar Jr's Five is the Brazilian