



**11** Burgan Bank reports net income of KD 19.2 million



**24** Mystery shrouds 'sabotage' of oil tankers in tense Gulf



**27** History made as women to referee men's AFC Cup clash



## Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:17
Fajr	03:27
Dhur	11:44
Asr	15:20
Magrib	18:33
Isha	20:00

# Spain pulls its frigate from US military build-up in Gulf

## Saudi shuts oil pipeline after Houthi drone attacks • Kuwait condemns terror attack

### Amir expresses confidence in the army

**KUWAIT:** The region is witnessing conflicts which resulted in a state of instability and insecurity, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said. However, His Highness expressed full confidence in the Kuwaiti army's ability to "be vigilant and ready to defend the nation from all dangers."

His Highness the Amir made his remarks in an address to officers at the Kuwait Army Officers Club on Monday, during which he underlined that the government would spare no effort to the development of weapons and field training of the armed forces. His Highness the Amir reassured during a later visit to the Kuwait National Guard Presidency Headquarters that regional developments required vigilance.

Meanwhile, Army Chief of Staff General Mohammad Al-Khodhr praised His Highness the Amir for his endeavors that contributed to addressing many challenges in the region, particularly relentless efforts to reunite the Gulf countries, a matter that was supported by all countries of the world. He warned against the war of information through which social media were used to undermine national security.

"We are closely following the dangerous impacts of social media abuse, which have negative impact on national unity, and has become a tool to destroy and is used by saboteurs to spread rumors and foment sectarianism," he said. — KUNA (See Page 3)



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah addresses officers at the Kuwait Army Officers Club on Monday. — Amiri Diwan photo

**MADRID:** Spain has recalled a frigate accompanying a US aircraft carrier to the Middle East because of rising tensions between Washington and Tehran, the defense ministry said yesterday. "For the moment the frigate Mendez Nunez has left the combat group of the USS Abraham Lincoln," a ministry spokesman told AFP, confirming a report in the Spanish daily El Pais. "It's a temporary withdrawal, decided by Defense Minister Margarita Robles, as long as the American aircraft carrier is in this zone," the spokesman added.

He said the Spanish frigate had joined the aircraft carrier's strike group for a military exercise. "No possible confrontation or warlike action is envisaged (by Spain) and it is for this reason that the participation is suspended for the moment," he added. On May 5, the United States announced it was deploying the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and a bomber task force to the Middle East in response to a "credible threat" from Iran.

Last Friday, the Pentagon announced the deployment of the amphibious assault ship the USS Arlington and a Patriot missile battery to the region. Washington reiterated that intelligence reports suggested Iran was planning some sort of attack in the region. Robles later told reporters in Brussels that the US decision to deploy the aircraft carrier to the Gulf "went beyond what was scheduled in the terms of a cooperation agreement that placed the Mendez Nunez frigate with the US fleet for training."

"This is not a problem of discrepancies with Iran or. It's a question of interpretation of a techno-military



**HARADH:** File photo shows a general view of an oil plant in Haradh. Two pumping stations on a major Saudi oil pipeline were attacked by drones yesterday. — AFP

agreement," she added. The Spanish frigate is currently in Mumbai, the minister said. The spike in tensions between the United States and Iran comes a week after Tehran announced it was suspending some of its commitments under the 2015 nuclear agreement. That came a year after President Donald Trump withdrew from the accord and slapped tough sanctions on the Islamic republic.

On Sunday and Monday, US allies Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates said oil tankers belonging to them were damaged in "sabotage attacks" in the Gulf. Neither country released further details.

Continued on Page 24

Ramadan Kareem

### Ramadan therapy

By Dr Teresa Leshner

**M**odern life, which is characterized by computerization, communication, and globalization, has made work easier and given us more leisure options, but has also contributed to mental and social problems. "Modern man" is often characterized by lack of purpose, distraction, low stamina, isolation, loss of community involvement, decreased empathy, and general depression.

Given the busy schedules that we often feel we have little control over, it's hard to make major lifestyle changes. But our Creator has prescribed a treatment for whatever social, emotional or personal challenge we face in life - it is called Ramadan. Feeling a lack of purpose in your life? Fast during Ramadan.

Nobody would undertake such a long and difficult commitment without a reason, whether or religious conviction, health benefits, personal challenge, or solidarity with Muslims. The Quran says, "Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may learn God-consciousness" (2:183). If you sincerely fast, observing the restrictions on food, drink and sexual intimacy in daylight hours, you will develop a strong sense purpose - which for most is to obey and worship Almighty God.

You will also become a more sincere person, since fasting cannot really be observed by another person - only you and God. Ramadan is the perfect time to ask, "What is the purpose of my existence?" Most people nowadays are distracted due to busy schedules, incessant phone messages and emails, and the demands of media for our attention. We lack focus and can hardly finish one task from start to finish without distractions.

Some people cannot even eat a meal without their phones nearby so they can check WhatsApp messages. If this describes you, I recommend fasting the month of Ramadan, which will eliminate one major distraction in our lives - eating - during daylight hours, which increases productivity and focus on other activities. And then, when the meal is finally served after sunset, I guarantee you will put your phone away so you can enjoy your breakfast.

We generally have less physical strength and lower stamina than our parents and grandparents had due to our sedentary lifestyles and the prevalence of desk jobs. Fasting Ramadan will improve your fortitude and determination; how else would you be able to refrain from satisfying your basic needs and desires for such long periods? How else would you be able to ignore hunger, thirst and fatigue while you carry on with life's usual demands? Ramadan is a perfect time to show yourself what you're capable of.

Continued on Page 24

### WhatsApp calls for update after security breach

**JERUSALEM:** WhatsApp said yesterday a security breach on its messaging app had signs of coming from a government using surveillance technology developed by a private company and may have targeted human rights groups. WhatsApp, which is part of Facebook, said it had notified the US Department of Justice to help with an investigation, and encouraged all WhatsApp users to update to the latest version of the app, where the breach had been fixed.

WhatsApp, one of the most popular messaging tools in the world, is used by 1.5 billion people monthly. It has touted its high level of security and privacy, with

messages on its platform being encrypted end to end so that WhatsApp and third parties cannot read or listen to them. The company said it was still investigating the breach but believed only a "select number of users were targeted through this vulnerability by an advanced cyber actor."

But its advice to all users to update came "out of an abundance of caution" and a recommendation by Citizen Lab, a research group at the University of Toronto. It did not disclose how many users were affected. A WhatsApp spokesman said the attack was sophisticated and had all the hallmarks of a "private company working with governments on surveillance."

WhatsApp said it was "deeply concerned about the abuse" of such surveillance technologies and that it believed human rights activists may have been the targets. "We're working with human rights groups on learning as much as we

Continued on Page 24

### The Moon 'shrinking'

**WASHINGTON:** The Moon is steadily shrinking, causing wrinkling on its surface and quakes, according to an analysis of imagery captured by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) published Monday. A survey of more than 12,000 images revealed that lunar

basin Mare Frigoris near the Moon's north pole - one of many vast basins long assumed to be dead sites from a geological point of view - has been cracking and shifting.

Unlike our planet, the Moon doesn't have tectonic plates; instead, its tectonic activity occurs as it slowly loses heat from when it was formed 4.5 billion years ago. This in turn causes its surface to wrinkle, similar to a grape that shrivels into a raisin. Since the moon's crust is brittle, these forces cause its surface to

break as the interior shrinks, resulting in so-called thrust faults, where one section of crust is pushed up over an adjacent section.

As a result, the Moon has become about 150 feet "skinnier" over the past several hundred million years. The Apollo astronauts first began measuring seismic activity on the Moon in the 1960s and 1970s, finding the vast majority were occurred deep in the body's interior while a smaller number were on its surface.

The analysis was published in Nature

Geoscience and examined the shallow moonquakes recorded by the Apollo missions, establishing links between them and very young surface features. "It's quite likely that the faults are still active today," said Nicholas Schmerr, an assistant professor of geology at the University of Maryland who co-authored the study. "You don't often get to see active tectonics anywhere but Earth, so it's very exciting to think these faults may still be producing moonquakes." — AFP



**HERZLIYA, Israel:** An Israeli woman uses her smartphone in front of the building housing the Israeli NSO group in Herzliya, near Tel Aviv. — AFP

### Opposition MPs urge PM to quit

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** In a series of dramatic developments yesterday, the National Assembly approved a request by the government to refer a grilling against the Prime Minister to study if the grilling was in line with the constitution. Opposition MPs immediately called the measure as illegal, called on HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah to step down and held Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and pro-government lawmakers responsible for violating the law.

The Assembly decision was taken in a secret session demanded by the government and came after a debate, Ghanem told reporters. He said the Assembly approved the government request and the grilling has been referred to the committee without providing further details. He also declined to say how long the committee was given to study the issue.

Continued on Page 24



**KUWAIT:** MPs chat during a session of the National Assembly in Kuwait City yesterday. — KUNA



## Local

# Amir phones Abu Dhabi Crown Prince to condemn sabotage acts against oil tankers

## Sheikh Sabah receives water association, conference committee members

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah phoned Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on Monday to condemn the sabotage acts carried out against four oil tankers near UAE territorial waters on Sunday. In his call, His Highness the Amir denounced the sabotage acts and hoped the investigations launched by the UAE authorities would reveal the perpetrators of those acts that threaten the maritime navigation, international trade, and world energy supplies. His Highness the Amir wished the UAE and the whole region everlasting stability and security.

In other news, His Highness the Amir received yesterday at Bayan Palace Minister of Social Affairs Saad Ibrahim Al-Kharraz and Chairman of the Kuwait Water Association Dr Saleh Mohammad Al-Muzaini and its members. His Highness also received head of the supervisory committee of a conference dubbed 'Our Unity is Our Strength' Yousef Muhalhal Al-Yassin and members of the committee. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received separately at Bayan Palace His

Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent yesterday cables of condolences to the Lebanese President Michel Aoun and the Maronite Patriarch for Antioch and the East Cardinal Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi on the demise of former Cardinal Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, Maronite Patriarch of Antiochia. In the cables, His Highness the Amir underlined Sfeir's pivotal role in the service of Lebanon and his distinguished national contributions to consolidating the bonds of the Lebanese nation and promoting the unity of the Lebanese people throughout his life. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir praised the strong bilateral relations with Algeria. In a letter to Algeria's interim president Abdelkader Ben Saleh on Monday night, His Highness the Amir asserted both countries' everlasting keenness to bolster frameworks of cooperation in various spheres so as to serve joint interests of both countries, according to a statement by the Algerian Presidency. The statement pointed out that Ben Saleh expressed his country's support of Kuwait's efforts aimed at consolidating ties among Arab states. "His Highness the



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Social Affairs Saad Ibrahim Al-Kharraz and members of the Kuwait Water Association. — Amiri Diwan photo

Amir expressed to the Head of State his views on the importance of continuing consultations and coordination between the two brotherly countries on all issues at the regional and international levels as

well as its efforts on resolving disputes and bridging the gap between brothers," the statement said. On May 5, Foreign Minister Sabri Boukadoum paid a working visit to Kuwait at the invitation of his

counterpart Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, during which he was received by His Highness the Amir and handed him a letter from the Head of State, Abdelkader Ben Saleh. — KUNA

## Legalese

## Kuwait's diversity is a blessing



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

I strongly believe that there are so many reasons to be grateful for when living in Kuwait, and one of the things to be most grateful about is the diversity of our society. Kuwait is a really small country, and unlike other countries in the region of a similar size as ours - for example Lebanon that has 18 different religious sects - Kuwait is very homogeneous. And I strongly believe that we are very blessed to have a diverse culture even though we are homogeneous. We have so many different nationalities, religions and languages, and so many Kuwaitis that have mixed-race parents because of this diversity. There is so much to learn from other cultures and religions and there is so much culture to embrace.

The laws unfortunately sometimes do not embrace these differences. I am not sure if the laws are a reflection of society or if the laws are affecting society, or both. One thing is for sure though - that regardless of what some people say against expats, especially those with power to change the law, they should not be considered as the society as a whole, because in reality there is no way that we can differentiate "expats" from non-expats. It is not us against them - non-Kuwaitis and Kuwaitis are an integral part of our society. Not only are we dependent on each other, we are part of each other, something that I am sure the general public is very aware of.

Here are a few things to consider from a legal point of view:

- Although it is illegal to eat in public, we might consider what other neighboring countries are doing, which is allowing cafes and restaurants to have the choice whether to serve food or not. They are asked by law to put curtains up, so if anyone is fasting and passing by, they do not have to see people eating.

- I have spoken about this for years and will continue to speak about this - I cannot explain the amount of emails that I have received since the start of Ramadan with people asking if their hours should be less because it is Ramadan. The answer is you should not be working more than 36 hours a week, for Muslims or non-Muslims alike.

Again, Ramadan Mubarak to those that adhere to such practices, and let's all remember that Ramadan is not just about abstaining from drinking and eating, but also about being kind. So let's be kind to one another.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@fil-legal.com.

## Defense Minister visits Mohammad Al-Ahmad Naval Base

**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited the Mohammad Al-Ahmad Naval Base on Monday, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement. Sheikh Nasser, accompanied by Army chief of Staff General Mohammad Al-Khodhr and his deputy General Abdullah Nawaf Al-Sabah, was briefed about missions and tasks of the naval forces, said the ministry. He also got acquainted first-hand on the armament and technical capabilities of the forces. Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah conveyed Ramadan greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He expressed pride and gratitude for the naval forces for their dedication in defending the country. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visits the Mohammad Al-Ahmad Naval Base. — KUNA

## Medics drill at Jaber Causeway

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The health ministry's medical emergencies department carried out an exercise on Jaber Causeway in coordination the Public Authority for Roads and Transport (PART) and the interior ministry's traffic department. Health Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Allied Medical Services Dr Fawaz Al-Refai said the aim of the exercise is to train paramedics and emergency teams on the shortest roads to exits and entrances of the bridge and the nearest emergency rooms and hospitals during rescue operations. He said there were 10 cases during the simulation and eight ambulances, in addition to back-up vehicles and air ambulances, as cases were sorted and sent to hospitals accordingly.

### Farmers' demands

Official spokesman of the social affairs ministry, assistant undersecretary for cooperation affairs Abdul Aziz Shuaib announced an initiative by the social affairs ministry to hold a meeting between the social affairs and commerce ministries, Kuwait Farmers Union and

## Jaber Causeway islands put up for investment

**KUWAIT:** Upon instructions from His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to put up the two artificial islands attached to the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway for investment for touristic and entertainment purposes, the Cabinet formed a ministerial team including representatives of the concerned bodies to accelerate the procedures for developing the two islands.

The Cabinet also reviewed the recommendation of the Public Services Committee concerning the request of the Ministry of Public Works from the General Authority for Agriculture and Fisheries to utilize the water produced by the new Al-Wafra and Al-Khairan water treatment plants and the



Medivac used in the drill.

the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources in response to farmers' demands on social media expressing their displeasure on the lack of cooperation by cooperative societies with regards to their produce despite its quality and reasonable prices. Shuaib said in a press statement that the reasons behind the farmers' displeasure were discussed, besides the reasons for the lack of cooperation and not supporting and allowing national products in cooperatives.

treated waters of Sabah Al-Ahmad and Al-Naseem residential areas for floriculture purposes.

During its weekly meeting on Monday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the results of the recent visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq Dr Mohammad Al-Hakim and his accompanying delegation to attend the seventh session of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi Joint Committee.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet expressed its strong condemnation of the sabotage operations against four ships near the territorial waters of the sisterly United Arab Emirates, which is a flagrant violation of international law and a threat to the safety of maritime navigation and the movement of world trade. It also expressed sincere condolences to the Iraqi President Barham Salih, following the recent suicide bombing in Al-Sadr City, east of Baghdad, which resulted in a number of casualties and injuries. The Cabinet voiced sincere condolences to the Pakistani President Arif Alavi, for the recent bombing of a security point in the city of Lahore, which resulted in a number of casualties. — KUNA

## SME Fund paid KD 177.1 million for 1,035 projects

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Services Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan said the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (SME Fund) had funded 1,035 projects with the total of KD 177.1 million over the past three years - 2016-2019. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry by MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Roudhan said commercial enterprises took the lion's share with KD 61.2 million funded to finance 411 projects, followed by service projects with KD 64.8 million for over 406 projects, 147 industrial projects funded with KD 38.2 million, 43 craft projects funded with KD 5.2 million and 28 agricultural projects funded with KD 7.5 million. Roudhan said the fund had rejected 1,807 projects in the same period for various reasons including lack of financial and technical studies, inaccurate or exaggerated assessment of total cost, unclear sale, marketing and pricing policies, lack of experience and many other reasons.

### New subsidized foods

A study by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry showed that the ministry is about to add new supply items to the subsidized rations given to Kuwaitis including frozen meat, cereals (cornflakes), new brands of milk and burgers.

### Temporary tents

Kuwait Municipality has prepared a draft ministerial resolution pertaining with regulating the use of marquees and temporary tents, said informed sources, noting that the resolution will include eight articles. The sources added that the conditions include banning pitching any tent or marquee on government property without prior license from the municipality, limiting the license validity to one month renewable for a further one month, paying a KD 500 insurance deposit to be refunded only after the site is handed over the way it was before using it, collecting fees of KD 1,000 for areas up to 500 sq m, KD 2,000 for areas between 500-1,500 sq m and KD 3,000 for areas larger than 1,500 sq m.

### 12 assessment factors

The Ministry of Social Affairs has over the past few months been setting the standards needed to transparently select outstanding cooperative societies before holding an honoring ceremony, assistant undersecretary for cooperation affairs Abdul Aziz Shuaib said. Shuaib said the honoring was done using 12 assessment factors including hiring more citizens, entrepreneurship, facilities for people with disabilities, profitability and others.



# Amir commends 'vigilant' Kuwaiti army, national guard forces

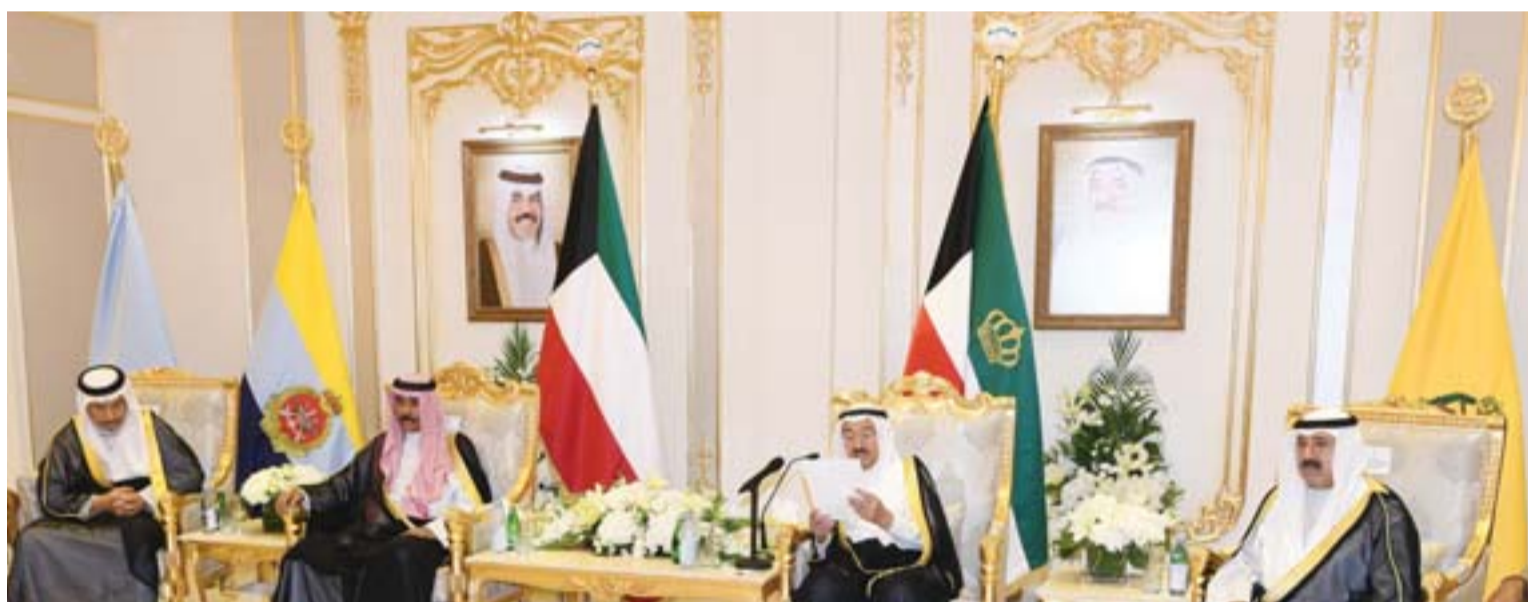
Sheikh Sabah visits Kuwait Army Officers Club, National Guard Presidency Headquarters



KUWAIT: (Form left) First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Head of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait National Guard President His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah pose for a group picture with national guard officers at the KNG Presidency Headquarters. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is welcomed by Kuwait National Guard President His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah addresses officers at the Kuwait Army Officers Club.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a visit to the Kuwait Army Officers Club on Monday, accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Head of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir was received upon arrival by First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Army Chief of Staff General Mohammad Al-Khodhr and Defense Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Sabah.

In an address to officers, His Highness the Amir warned that the region was witnessing conflicts which resulted in a state of instability and insecurity, but expressed "full confidence in your ability to be vigilant and readiness to defend the nation from all dangers." His Highness also underlined that the government would spare no effort to the development of weapons and field training of the armed forces. Meanwhile, Khodhr praised His Highness the Amir for his endeavors that contributed to addressing many challenges in the region, commended the armed forces for being fully responsible in defending Kuwait and pledged that the Kuwaiti army would always remain the shield that defends Kuwait

in all times. Later yesterday, His Highness the Amir visited the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Presidency Headquarters, accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister, Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad and Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. He was received upon arrival by KNG President His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and KNG Undersecretary General Hashem Al-Rifae.

His Highness the Amir said that KNG has always been an important entity within the security and defense structure of the country. He praised KNG President His Highness

Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and his deputy Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad for their efforts to develop KNA through modern equipment and state-of-art training methods.

Meanwhile, Rifae congratulated His Highness the Amir for receiving a certificate of appreciation from the World Bank for his role in supporting regional and international economic and social development, as well as peace. He said KNG leadership has been exerting efforts to develop the military and security aspects of the forces. Rifae said KNG was supporting Kuwait Army, the Interior Ministry and the Directorate General of Fire Services in their military and security missions. KNG, he added, was protecting vital

facilities and infrastructure. He said KNG played a major role during the 2018 floods, and the institution was successfully implementing its strategy to establish a helicopter force to participate in transport of forces, search and rescue, and medical evacuation.

Rifae said KNG joined the International Association of Gendarmeries and Police Forces with Military Status (FIEP), and established 25 stations for the monitoring of chemical and radioactive pollution. KNG has been active in social responsibility field, said Rifae, providing training for first aid, prevention, rescue, nutrition, car repairs and electricity appliances for the youth in age group of 18-35 years old. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets officers and attendees at the Kuwait Army Officers Club.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets officers at the Kuwait National Guard.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers a speech at the Kuwait National Guard Presidency Headquarters.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signs the guestbook at the Kuwait Army Officers Club.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signs the guestbook at the Kuwait Army Officers Club.



Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff General Mohammad Al-Khodhr delivers a speech.



Kuwait National Guard Undersecretary General Hashem Al-Rifae delivers a speech.





## History of Kuwait



KUWAIT: A lady with traditional clothes walks next to a government building near the coast of Kuwait in the 1960s. (Source: The KOC archive. Researched by Mahmoud Zakaria, Researcher in Heritage, the Ministry of Information)

## Marina hotel celebrated spirit of Ramadan with local media



### I like Ramadan's night atmosphere

By Ben Garcia

Ramadan is a joyful time of year in the Muslim world as fasters gather at sundown to break their fast with family and friends. In Kuwait, there are many traditions and activities that take place every year. To commemorate Ramadan and the experiences of our readers, this year the Kuwait Times is asking readers what they love about Ramadan. What is your favorite food, activity, memory, event, or thing that you absolutely adore and look forward to each year? We want to know. Email [local@kuwaittimes](mailto:local@kuwaittimes) with your answer and it might end up in the newspaper.

"I am happy every Ramadan because I can earn extra money that I need," says Mina. "There are many extra jobs available for me, like in the catering business. They contact me to work for them in exchange of money. I also do extra jobs at hairstyling and beauty salons. The extra money I get is what I came for, so I am really working hard for my family. These are the most unforgettable moments during Ramadan, but there are more, like the night atmosphere - imagine, Souq Salmiya and many other malls



are open till 2 am. There are some things that you really treasure during Ramadan that are unique to Muslim countries. During Eid, people are also very generous, and give out money easily. They are very polite and kind people. There is no Ramadan that passed without hadiya from my boss, mostly in the form of money."

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, Marina Hotel hosted a special media ghabqa to thank them for the ongoing support throughout the year. The ghabqa took place in Kamar Al-Marina tent in Six Palms. Nabil Hammoud, General Manager of the hotel and the entire management team welcomed guests upon arrival and invited them to enjoy the distinctive hospitality of the unique event. The evening revived the traditions of this occasion by offering a range of sumptuous buffet tables filled with delicious Arabic dishes and other cuisines from the live cooking stations.

The special ghabqa buffet included a large array of food, drinks, and desserts to be the perfect place for such a meaningful night during this holy month. The evening was enhanced by the sounds of soft oriental music as well as many activities and competitions to engage all attendees.

The highlight of the evening was an exciting Raffle Draw held on the entrance tickets, which granted a range of fabulous prizes adding more joy to the evening. The ghabqa lasted till after midnight and Marina Hotel ensured that each guest had a truly memorable evening filled with fun and exceptional delight.

Nabil Hammoud thanked the media for their efforts and for taking part in the hotel's success. He also extended his gratitude to Kamar Al-Marina tent sponsors which included KLM airlines for the entire period of Ramadan.

Kamar Al-Marina tent is specially prepared every Ramadan with new selective decorations, and Oriental music to reflect the traditional feel of the Holy month. With a capacity to accommodate up to 200 guests, Kamar Al-Marina tent has proven to be the favorite venue for companies and individuals to host their own private ghabqas during the whole month of Ramadan.







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# International

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019



The Indian 'Miss Marple' snooping on poll candidates

## Deported Honduran migrant gives up on American dream

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MINUWANGODA, Sri Lanka: Heavily-armed Sri Lankan soldiers ride a motorcycle in front of the Juma Mosque after a mob attack yesterday. — AFP

## Lanka anti-Muslim riots claim first life

Mosques, shops, homes vandalized • Curfew slapped for second night • 13 people arrested

**MINUWANGODA, Sri Lanka:** Sri Lanka announced yesterday a curfew for a second straight night after a man was killed by sword-wielding rioters in an escalating anti-Muslim backlash following the Easter terror attacks. Violence broke out late Monday, three weeks after Islamist extremist bombings killed 258 people, with rampaging mobs carrying out arson attacks and 2,000 people vandalizing a mosque, witnesses said.

Police announced another nationwide curfew for a second night to try and stop the violence, beginning at 9:00 pm (15:30 GMT). The curfew had been in place all day in North-Western Province (NWP), where police said a 45-year-old Muslim man was slaughtered in his carpentry shop late Monday by a crowd carrying swords. Fauzul Ameen was buried yesterday at a Muslim cemetery in Nattandiya under tight security. Heavily armed troops and police backed by armored personnel carriers guarded a service attended by around 100 people.

Police said yesterday that 13 people had been arrested including Amith Weerasinghe, a man from Sri Lanka's majority Buddhist Sinhalese community on bail for his role in similar riots in March last year. Elsewhere in NWP, north of Colombo, attackers outnumbering police and security forces set fire to Muslim-owned shops, vandalized homes and smashed windows, furniture and fittings inside several mosques.

In the adjoining Gampaha district, men on motorbikes led arson attacks in the town of Minuwangoda, 45 km north of Colombo, local residents told AFP. "They were from out of town," an owner of an electronic goods store told AFP by telephone. "After they started smashing Muslim shops and throwing petrol bombs, the locals joined in."

### 'Police did nothing'

He said police and security forces appeared to be overwhelmed and that by

the time troops fired in the air to disperse the mobs it was too late. A pasta factory owned by a Muslim businessman burned to the ground after unidentified attackers threw burning tyres inside. "Police and security forces also did not do anything to put out the fire," the owner of Diamond Pasta, Ashraf Jithy, told AFP by telephone. "Three of my Muslim workers were injured while trying to escape from the burning factory."

In the NWP, attackers have systematically targeted mosques for two days, local clerics told AFP. In the town of Kinyama, two mosques were smashed as outnumbered armed police and troops stood by. "About 2,000 people surrounded our mosque and smashed everything inside, even the bathroom fittings," cleric M.I.M. Siddeeqe told AFP by telephone from the curfew-bound town of Bingiriya. Video footage of the unrest showed burning shops as mobs armed with sticks and stones roamed the streets attacking

Muslim-owned shops. "Security forces are assisting police who have been ordered to use maximum force to contain the violence," police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said.

### Politically orchestrated?

Political commentator Victor Ivan suggested that the violence was politically orchestrated. "The opposition feels that they can gain when there is instability and the government appears to be weak," Ivan told AFP. "There is evidence of junior level opposition figures instigating communal violence." He said the political establishment, including the opposition, had failed to provide leadership and restore confidence after the April 21 attacks claimed by the Islamic State group.

In an address to the nation on Monday night, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the unrest would hinder investigations into the attacks that targeted three churches and three luxury

hotels. In a separate TV address, police chief Chandana Wickramaratne warned of stern action against rioters, and said that constables have been issued orders to use maximum force. The attacks came during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. Muslims make up around 10 percent of Buddhist-majority Sri Lanka's population, and Christians about 7.6 percent. A state of emergency has been in place since the bombings and security forces have been given sweeping powers to detain suspects.

Internet service providers said the telecoms regulator yesterday extended a social media ban to Twitter. Earlier, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram had been blocked to prevent the spread of messages inciting violence. Sri Lankan cricket legend Kumar Sangakkara was among those to call for calm, earlier tweeting: "STOP. BREATHE. THINK. OPEN YOUR EYES. If we lose ourselves in violence, racism, thuggery and hatred we lose our country." — AFP

## Russia, US ready for better relations

**SOCHI, Russia:** Moscow and Washington's top diplomats said yesterday they were ready to improve ties, ahead of the countries' highest-level talks in nearly a year as President Vladimir Putin hosts Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Pompeo arrived in the sunny Black Sea resort of Sochi yesterday amid a raft of disagreements, from arms control to the raging Venezuela and Iran crises. At the start of talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and before a planned evening meeting with Putin, Pompeo expressed hope the two rivals could "stabilize the relationship."

"I am here today because President (Donald) Trump is committed to improving this relationship," he said. "We have differences - each country will protect its own interests and look after its own people - but it's not that we have to be adversaries on every issue." Lavrov said Russia was ready to open a new page in ties. "I believe it's time to start building a new, more responsible and constructive model of mutual perception of each other," he said. "We understand that a lot of suspicions and biases have accumulated on both sides. We win nothing from this."

Pompeo's visit to Russia - his first as Secretary of State - came as tensions mounted dangerously in the Gulf, with Iran and the United States engaged in a new war of words over Tehran's nuclear deal. Pompeo is the highest-ranking US official to see Putin since last July, when Trump met him in Helsinki. Then, Trump stunned the US political establishment by appearing to accept the Russian leader's statement at face value that he did not meddle in the US election, contrary to US intelligence evaluations. Pompeo was greeted on arrival by local officials including the may-

or of Sochi, with whom he exchanged pleasantries on the tarmac.

### Sabre-rattling

Ahead of the negotiations Putin toured a top military flight test center in southern Russia and inspected a new nuclear-capable hypersonic missile dubbed Kinzhal (Dagger). His spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied that the display of military muscle was designed to send a message to the Americans. At a meeting Monday, Putin also tasked his top brass with developing defenses against hypersonic weapons. Peskov slammed what he called Washington's "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran, saying it would only drive Tehran into a corner.

Pompeo cancelled a stop in Moscow on Monday to instead have an unscheduled meeting in Brussels with European foreign ministers, who have been uncomfortable with the hawkish direction of the United States on Iran. The United States has pulled out of the nuclear deal which was backed by the Europeans, Russia and China and slapped sweeping sanctions on Tehran in an all-out effort to curb its regional clout.

The United States has recently ramped up the pressure by saying the deployment to the region of an aircraft carrier strike group and nuclear-capable bombers was to counter vaguely described threats from Iran. The renewed diplomacy between Moscow and Washington follows a long-awaited report by investigator Robert Mueller. He found that Russia interfered in the 2016 election but that there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the Trump campaign colluded with Moscow.

Besides Iran, Washington and Moscow are at loggerheads on an array of urgent strategic questions, including Venezuela, the Syrian civil war and the conflict in Ukraine. The United States has been trying for more than three months to topple Venezuelan President



SOCHI, Russia: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (right) shakes hands with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during a meeting yesterday. — AFP

Nicolas Maduro. Pompeo has repeatedly blamed Russia for giving him a lifeline. Both the United States and Russia hope to make some progress on arms control. Moscow is seeking a five-year extension of the New START treaty, which caps the number of nuclear warheads well below Cold War limits and is set to expire in 2021.

The Trump administration this year pulled out of another key arms control agreement, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty, with NATO allies saying a Russian missile system was in violation. Moscow has denied the claims. Last year Putin revealed a new generation of "invincible" nuclear weapons and warned of a new arms race if America pulled out of weapons treaties.

Trump on Monday announced that he expected a "very fruitful meeting" with Putin at the G20 summit in Japan next month, only for Peskov to deny Washington had requested such a meeting. The US president's enthusiasm for courting Putin has little support in Washington, even within his own administration. —AFP

## UN chief meets NZ mosque victims, decries online hate

**CHRISTCHURCH:** UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned hate speech was spreading online "like wildfire" at a meeting with victims of the Christchurch mosque shootings yesterday, vowing the world body will lead efforts to extinguish the problem. Guterres visited the Al Noor mosque, one of two Muslim centers in the New Zealand city where a self-described white supremacist killed 51 people in a March 15 shooting that the attacker livestreamed on Facebook.

The UN chief is travelling the South Pacific to highlight the impact of climate change but said he also wanted to show his support for Christchurch's Muslim community during Ramadan. "I know there are no words to relieve the hurt and sorrow and pain, but I wanted to come here personally to transmit love, support and total and complete admiration," he said. He told victims of the worst mass shooting in modern New Zealand history that there had been "a dangerous upsurge in hatred" as social media was exploited to promote bigotry.

"Hate speech is spreading like wildfire in social media. We must extinguish it," the Portuguese diplomat said. "There is no room for hate speech - online or offline." He highlighted a previously announced plan for his special adviser on genocide prevention Adama Dieng to combat online extremism. He said Dieng's mission was to "bring together a United Nations team to scale up our



CHRISTCHURCH: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres lays a floral tribute to the victims to the twin mosque attacks at the Linwood Islamic Centre yesterday. —AFP

response to hate speech and present a global plan of action".

His remarks come as New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who hosted Guterres when he arrived in Auckland on Sunday, embarks on her own quest to tame social media in Paris this week. Ardern will co-host a meeting of world leaders and tech firms to promote a "Christchurch call" aimed at curbing online extremism. She has been highly critical of social media giants in the wake of the Christchurch killings, saying they should be "taking ownership and responsibility over their platforms". —AFP



## International

# Sudan talks recommence after shootings cloud breakthrough

## Army major, five protesters killed by unidentified gunmen

**KHARTOUM:** Protest leaders resumed talks with Sudan's military rulers yesterday seeking to build on a political breakthrough overshadowed by deadly shootings at a long-running protest sit-in outside army headquarters. The protest movement is demanding a civilian-led transition after 30 years of ironfisted rule by president Omar Al-Bashir but the generals who toppled him have been pushing for a continuing leadership role.

An army major and five protesters were killed by unidentified gunmen at the Khartoum sit-in late on Monday just hours after the two sides announced they had reached agreement on the structure and powers of the bodies that will oversee the transition. The Alliance for Freedom and Change—the protest movement umbrella group that has been negotiating with the military council—said the shootings were an attempt to “disturb the breakthrough” and blamed militias still loyal to Bashir's regime.

The military council said that it had “noticed some armed infiltrators among the protesters” at the sit-in, but did not specify who they were. Protest leaders resumed their talks with military council representatives in early afternoon, one of the protest leaders told AFP. They were expected to discuss the all-important composition of the transitional bodies. The protest movement has been demanding that they be led by civilians and have civilian majorities with military represen-

tation. The military is ready to accept a mainly civilian cabinet but has been demanding a military majority in a proposed sovereign council that will have the final say in matters of state. Also on agenda is the duration of the transition, with the military calling for a two-year timeframe while the protesters want four years to allow time for the array of preparatory reforms they say are necessary. The renewed talks between the two sides that opened on Monday come after a break in negotiations that saw protest leaders threaten “escalatory measures” to secure their central demand of civilian rule.

The issue has kept protesters camped outside army headquarters around the clock ever since Bashir's overthrow. The sit-in has become the focal point for the protest movement in place of the near daily protests that had been held around the country while the veteran president remained in power. But yesterday, following the previous night's violence at the Khartoum sit-in, protesters vented their anger on the streets of capital's twin city Omdurman.

Protesters gathered in the Abbassiya and Al-Arbaa districts, just across the Nile from the capital, with many chanting slogans against the military council, witnesses told AFP. “Protect your homeland or prepare to die!” the protesters chanted. In Arbaa, some blocked roads with burning tyres, a witness

said, adding that troops deployed to the area. In Khartoum, the square outside the army complex was calm after the previous night's violence, AFP correspondents reported.

Graffiti artists had sprayed portraits of the killed on the makeshift barriers thrown up around the sit-in. “What happened yesterday was the dirty work of the ousted regime,” said protester Hisham Al-Sayed. “They are playing the game of dividing the people in order to control the situation. We have to ensure that the barricades are not removed.” Protester Aboud Hassan, 45, blamed paramilitaries from the Rapid Support Forces for the shootings. “I accuse the RSF of yesterday's assault because they are illegal forces,” he said. “We are not trusting those guys anymore. They are supposed to guard the protesters.”

The RSF is made up of former militiamen but comes under the ambit of the army. Its irregulars are routinely seen deployed at key junctions in pickups mounted with machine guns and their commander Mohamed Hamadan Dagolo, widely known as Hmeidi, is now deputy chairman of the military council. Doctors, who along with other professionals have played a major part in organising the protests, have set up field clinics at the sit-in where they treated the wounded from Monday's shootings. “So far all cases are stable, and those unstable have been transferred to hospital,” a duty doctor said. — AFP



**KHARTOUM:** Sudanese protesters chant slogans as they march beneath the shade of a giant national flag at the protest outside the army headquarters yesterday. — AFP

## Row as France remembers troops slain in hostage raid

**PARIS:** France paid its emotional final respects yesterday to two commandos killed during a raid to rescue four hostages in the Sahel region of Africa last week that has sparked a row over the risks taken by the freed tourists. French special forces Cedric de Pierrepont, 33, and Alain Bertoncello, 28, who died in the operation in Burkina Faso, were honored at a ceremony at the Invalides military complex in Paris led by President Emmanuel Macron.

Crowds joined soldiers, firefighters and veterans in lining the bridge leading up to the imposing 17th-century building as the motorcade carrying their coffins made its solemn procession through a sun-lit Paris. “France is a country that does not abandon its children, no matter the circumstances,” a visibly emotional Macron said in his speech during a 45-minute ceremony attended by tearful family members and masked fellow special forces.

“We're here today, before these coffins draped in the colors of the country, to honor the suffering of your families,” Macron continued. “We're here to affirm, with all the force this anger and sadness gives us, that we will never retreat from the fights for which you committed yourself and gave your lives.”

### Warning to tourists

The raid last week freed French hostages Patrick Picque and Laurent Lassimouillas, who were seized on May 1 while on a safari trip in a nature park in Benin close to the border with Burkina Faso. An American citizen and South Korean tourist - both women whose presence was a total surprise to the French forces - were also sprung from captivity in the operation overnight on Thursday-Friday. The kidnapping has shone a spotlight on the rising instability in the vast Sahel region that lies south of the Sahara desert, where Islamist groups aligned to Al-Qaeda and Islamic State have been gathering in strength.

There has been an outpouring of grief in France over the sacrifice of the two soldiers, but also criticism of the French tourists who were vis-



**PARIS:** Slain special forces soldiers Cedric de Pierrepont and Alain Bertoncello are posthumously awarded with the medal of Commander in the Legion of Honor by French President Emmanuel Macron (left) as he stands in front of their flag-draped coffins during a national ceremony at the Hotel Invalides yesterday. — AFP

iting an area subject to a travel warning by the foreign ministry. Leading French daily Le Figaro in an editorial Monday said the freeing of the tourists had “left a bitter taste”. “This tragic event should serve as a warning to our tourists. Our forces are in Africa for a hard and long war and not to pay the price of carelessness,” it wrote.

On Saturday, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian reprimanded the freed men, aged 51 and 46, for taking “significant risks” by visiting an area that was considered a “red” no-go zone under travel advice issued by his ministry. French far-right leader Marine Le Pen also criticized Macron over the weekend for going to a military airport south of Paris to meet the tourists off the plane when they arrived back from Burkina Faso. “The president shouldn't have gone to greet them almost as if they were heroes,” Le Pen told the BFM news channel in an interview.

### Essential travel?

French officials have argued that the raid came in a key window of opportunity as the hostage-takers were planning to transfer their victims to Islamist groups in Mali aligned to either Al-Qaeda or Islamic State. Lassimouillas admitted that he

and Picque should have taken into account the foreign ministry advisories, in a statement read out as the men arrived back in France. France's special forces units were in attendance for their fallen brothers in arms yesterday, prompting warnings to broadcasters not to show any faces that could jeopardize their safety.

Relatives of the slain soldiers held photos of the men as a visibly moved Macron spoke with their tearful partners and parents in the vast cobbled courtyard of the Invalides complex, accompanied by his wife Brigitte. The hostages were snatched by an armed group while visiting the Pendjari National Park in Benin which borders Burkina Faso. The border area was considered a red “no-go” zone, while the whole of the park was classed in the intermediate “orange” category by the French foreign ministry, meaning only essential travel was recommended.

The deaths were a reminder of the risks encountered in the region by French forces, who have been deployed in the Sahel since 2013 when France intervened to drive back jihadist groups who had taken control of northern Mali. A total of 26 French soldiers have died in the deployment including de Pierrepont and Bertoncello. — AFP

## Egypt teaches about love, marriage to curb divorce

**CAIRO:** During a recent class at Cairo University, students laughed as they watched a skit acted out by their peers about a married couple. The husband came home from work and asked his wife, who was sweeping the floor, why dinner wasn't ready. “I pick up the kids and I go to work ... Am I neglecting something because the food is still on the stove?” the wife asked, to which the husband responded: “The apartment looks like a rubbish dump.”

The skit was part of a new government project called Mawadda, which offers lessons to university students about how to pick the right partner and how to handle conflicts in marriage. The goal is to prevent divorce after the number of divorces reached more than 198,000 in 2017, a 3.2 percent increase from the year before. Mawadda, meaning affection, is still in a trial phase, but the goal is to target 800,000 young people yearly starting 2020 and to eventually make it mandatory for university students to take a class before graduating.

After watching the skit, some students and the teacher pointed out that the husband should carry out more household tasks. “It's not her obligation to do all that,” said Salah Ahmed, the teacher, adding that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) helped his wife with all tasks and his example should be followed. But he also said the wife should have been more understanding and tried to look good for her husband instead of welcoming him while sweeping the floor.

Julia Gosef, a 23-year-old student who attended the class with her fiancé, said she worries that Egypt's economic hardships could harm her marriage. The couple will not be able to rely on one income so she would be forced to work, which could lead to arguments similar to the one in the skit, she said.

“I think I won't be able to take care of our home well enough,” she said. Mawadda's lessons will be accompanied by YouTube videos, a radio program and educational plays. The church and Egypt's top Sunni Muslim authority, Al-Azhar, are partners.

“If we want to solve the problem from the root we need to target people before they get married,” said Amr Othman, manager of Mawadda at the Social Solidarity Ministry. He added that there's a correlation in Egypt between divorce and problems such as child homelessness and drug addiction. At a youth conference in July, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said divorce and separation meant that millions of Egyptian children were living without one of their parents.

Islam allows men to end their marriages verbally, only by telling their wives they are divorcing them. Sisi has said he wants to see an end to this practice in Egypt because the divorce rate is too high. The Mawadda project was launched in response to Sisi's concerns, officials said. It typifies some of Sisi's efforts to drive social change. “He is patriarchal and speaks to Egyptians as if he was their father,” Barak Barfi, research fellow at New America, a think tank based in Washington, said of Sisi. “It (Mawadda) reflects his belief that transformation can be instituted from the top rather than from below at the grass roots level.”

Adhab Al-Hosseiny, 26, who played the role of the husband in the skit, said he hoped to get married in the near future. He also worries financial difficulties might lead to arguments between him and his future wife. “What might cause problems after I marry is external pressure,” he said. “If there are money issues in terms of affording school fees and food... all that affects my mental state.” — Reuters

## French first lady to return to classroom

**PARIS:** French first lady Brigitte Macron, a career-long teacher, is set to return to the classroom in a new chain of adult training colleges that she is helping set up. Macron, a French and drama teacher until 2015, has accepted a supervisory and teaching role for two schools being built, one in a suburb of Paris and another in a rural area of southeast France. On Monday, she visited the first of the schools by the “Institut des Vocations”, which is also backed rap star Ben J and celebrity chef Thierry Marx and is being financed by French luxury giant LVMH.

The school in the poverty-wracked Clichy-sous-Bois suburb in northeast Paris will open its doors in September along with another facility near Valence in southeast France, offering courses to around 50 school dropouts aged 25-30 every year. “It won't be like the lessons that I gave to pupils before, but more in the Anglo-Saxon style, interactive,” the 66-year-old, who taught at prestigious private schools in her home town of Amiens as well as in Paris, told reporters.

She said the school aimed to give its students, who will be paid 1,000 (\$1,100) a month, “the foundations to be able to enter the workplace. We know they need to know the four operations in maths, to know how to write French, to express themselves, to construct arguments in a written text. I want to give them a taste for literature,” she added.

Brigitte met Emmanuel Macron, 41, while he was a student in her school in Amiens and began a relationship with him while he was still a teenager, causing a minor scandal locally and anger in their families. — AFP

## Erdogan accuses Syria regime of undermining deal

**ANKARA:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the Syrian regime of “seeking to sabotage” Ankara's relationship with Russia through its latest offensive in the northwest of the war-torn country. Clashes in Idlib province in northwestern Syria have killed at least 42 fighters in 24 hours, a monitor said Monday, and the regime bombardment on the region has devastated health services. Idlib's three million inhabitants are supposed to be protected by a buffer zone deal signed last September by Russia and Turkey.


Erdogan told his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, during a phone call late on Monday that the offensive by President Bashar Al-Assad's forces “sought to sabotage Turkish-Russian cooperation,” according to Fahrettin Altun, communications director at the Turkish presidency, on Twitter. The readout of the phone call made no mention of the fact that Russian forces are involved in the Syrian government's offensive.

Russia and Turkey are on opposing sides of the conflict, with Moscow strongly

supporting Assad, while Ankara has called for his ouster and supported Syrian rebels in the civil war since it began in 2011. But Turkey and Russia have worked closely, along with Iran, to find a political solution to the conflict. Erdogan lamented that “the regime's ceasefire violations targeting the Idlib de-escalation zone over the last two weeks have reached an alarming dimension.” He said it was impossible to explain it as a counter-terror effort given the number of casualties and damage to health services.

The Turkish leader also warned that the attacks risked undermining the fate of the political process in Syria. Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar also spoke by phone with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu yesterday to discuss “measures to de-escalate tensions” in Idlib, the state-run Anadolu news agency reported. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate, controls most of Idlib province as well as parts of neighboring Aleppo, Hama and Latakia provinces.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 16 loyalists and 19 jihadists died between Sunday and Monday in clashes in the area of Jabal Al-Akrad in Latakia province, which lies on the bastion's northwestern edge. Russian and regime aircraft bombarded the area on Monday, while they also hit southern parts of the jihadist stronghold, said the Britain-based war monitor. — AFP



## Condolences

The Management and Staff of  
EQUATE Petrochemical Company  
wish to offer their heartfelt  
condolences to

## Sakthivel Dorairajan

Utilities Department  
On the sad demise of his  
**Mother**

May her soul rest in peace and may  
God grant comfort and strength to the  
bereaved family members during this time



## International

# Deported Honduran migrant gives up on American dream

## Migrant caravans here to stay, socioeconomic conditions main drivers

**SIGUATEPEQUE, Honduras:** Honduran Ruth Elizabeth Gomez gave up on her American dream after US immigration authorities locked her in a cold cell and then deported her back home. After reaching Mexico by foot, the 25-year-old had paid a "coyote" to smuggle her across the US border by boat, only to be arrested after arriving in Texas. "After the whole journey, (the detention) was the hardest part. Until then I had never suffered, even though I'd walked for long days feeling hungry," Gomez told AFP.

After leaving her five and eight-year-old children with her mother, Gomez and her brother Jose Tulio joined the first Central American caravan that set off from San Pedro Sula in Honduras on Oct 13. She left in the hope of joining her father, a taxi driver who emigrated to the United States 14 years ago and hasn't returned home since.

Despite US President Donald Trump sending troops to guard the country's southern border with Mexico and making threats to cut off aid to the Central American countries of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador if they didn't halt the flow of migrants heading northwards, new caravans have continued to set off on the long journey.

Things hit rock bottom for Gomez on Nov 25, when she tried to scale a border wall between Mexico and the US. She was among 2,000 migrants at whom US immigration agents fired tear gas to force them back. "At that moment I felt like I was going to lose consciousness... I was on top (of the wall), I fainted and fell," she said. She was transferred to the northwest Mexican border city of Tijuana, where she spent six hours in a hospital and received treatment for her injured back.

### 'The worst experience'

She remained in Mexico, working in a supermarket

before deciding to try her luck again. She was caught and deported on Jan 19 to San Pedro Sula, with her "hands and feet in chains". Though her brother has remained in Mexico working in construction, Gomez says she won't try heading north again "for fear of American migration". "For me it was the worst experience," she said. Gomez said she was kept in a "cooler", a very cold room where she had to sleep on the floor. The detention center was "totally overcrowded," she added.

While she's given up on the hope of a new life in the US, Gomez said she met some people who had far more to lose than her. "A friend took her three children. She went because (gangs) wanted her oldest son, who's 12, to sell drugs," said Gomez. Migrant caravans usually set off after dozens or even hundreds of people respond to a social media message announcing a gathering point. "That's the power of social media," said Sally Valladares, who studies the migration phenomenon. But the motivation comes from elsewhere. "People are totally desperate because of the lack of work and the violence," Valladares said in an interview.

### Migrant caravans here to stay

The Honduran government blames people smugglers and political opponents for organizing and instigating this form of collective mass migration, though Gomez says the fault lies with President Juan Orlando Hernandez himself and that "the situation was better" with previous governments. Meanwhile, experts say socioeconomic conditions are the caravans' real drivers. "It doesn't matter who calls them, the caravans are... formed due to unemployment, violence and for family reunification," said Ricardo Puerta, who studies migration.

More than a million Hondurans live in the US and send



**SIGUATEPEQUE, Honduras:** Honduran Ruth Elizabeth Gomez is seen with her children Dorian, 5, and Alejandra, 8, in the living room of her house on May 5, 2019, after being deported from the US. — AFP

home upwards of \$4 billion a year in remittances, a staggering amount that makes up a fifth of the country's gross domestic product. "Water doesn't enter a coconut, the coconut grows on its own. That's how caravans are... They're formed of people who have no money and have decided to emigrate," said former opposition lawmaker and journalist Bartolo Fuentes.

Puerta said caravans are here to stay as that's how

migrants have always traveled. And while Trump against the waves of migrants heading for the US, Puerta said the brash president is the person who stands to benefit most from migration. He's used it both as a campaign theme during last year's midterm elections, and also pointed to it to justify his project of building a wall stretching across the US's border with Mexico - an issue popular with his core supporters. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Priest charged with rape

**VERSAILLES:** A Catholic priest in Versailles, west of Paris, has been charged with rape and the sexual abuse of a minor, the regional diocese said in a statement Monday. Father Laurent Thuillier was charged on Friday with raping an adult and sexual abuse of a minor as well as "psychological harassment" and "sexually soliciting a minor under the age of 15," the local church authority added. An enquiry had been opened in late 2016 after a complaint by a female parishioner and her then 13-year-old daughter. The accused priest has been banned from contacting the complainant or her family members. He has also been relieved of all his parish duties, including conducting mass or hearing confessions. — AFP

#### Victims sue to open Vatican archives

**WASHINGTON:** Five Americans who were sexually molested by Catholic priests will sue the Vatican to get the names and details of priests involved in abuse, an attorney for the group said yesterday. The lawsuit in US federal court, which was to be formally announced in the city of St Paul, Minnesota yesterday, aims to compel the Vatican to open its archives and "release all the identities of thousands of offenders known exclusively by the Vatican and held in strict secrecy," lawyer Jeff Anderson said in a statement. The petition also asks for the offenders' "files and pertinent histories". The lawsuit comes after Pope Francis announced this month that every Catholic diocese would have to come up with a plan for reporting abuse. — AFP

#### 5 dead as floatplanes collide

**WASHINGTON:** Five people died and one person was missing Monday after two floatplanes collided mid-air in Alaska while carrying passengers from a cruise ship's sightseeing expedition, officials said. Emergency rescue operations were under way after the two aircraft carrying 14 passengers from the Royal Princess ship crashed near Ketchikan, a popular tourist spot on southern Alaskan cruise routes surrounded by fjords and dense forests. Four passengers and a pilot were killed, Princess Cruises said in a statement circulated by US media. Ten people were rescued and were receiving medical care. One of the wounded was in critical condition and three others were seriously injured, a spokesperson for Ketchikan Medical Center told a local CBS affiliate. — AFP

## NYC policeman tried 5 years after black man's death

**NEW YORK:** Five years after an African American father of six died after being apparently held in an illegal police chokehold, a video of which triggered the Black Lives Matter Movement, a disciplinary trial of the policeman accused of killing him got underway Monday in New York. "I Can't Breathe! I Can't Breathe!" Eric Garner cried out with his last breaths as five police officers tried to handcuff him. This was caught in a video shot by a friend that was viewed around the world.

The 43-year-old, who was unarmed and accused of illegally selling cigarettes, died minutes later. His death, listed as a homicide by the medical examiner, triggered the Black Lives Matter movement denouncing police violence against unarmed African American men. His death in July 2014 was the first of a wave of high-profile, racially charged incidents in the United States in which officers have been accused of using unreasonable force or being too quick to fire at black suspects. For years, New York police held back from proceedings to try Daniel Pantaleo - the officer who appeared to hold Garner in a chokehold - on the grounds that they had to wait until a federal civil rights investigation first ended. The federal case has yet to produce its conclusions. Although he has been restricted to administrative duties, Pantaleo is still a member of New York police. — AFP

## US police seek to evict activists from Venezuela embassy

**WASHINGTON:** US police Monday launched a bid to evict Americans who have been occupying the Venezuelan embassy in Washington for weeks in protest against opposition leader Juan Guaido. The administration of President Donald Trump and some 50 other countries recognize Guaido as Venezuela's legitimate acting leader as he tries to force the departure of President Nicolas Maduro amid an acute economic meltdown.

Police with flashlights approached the Washington embassy compound Monday night, removed chains attached to its gates by the pro-Maduro activists, and spoke briefly to those inside. The activists - who are seeking to bar the entry of Guaido's representatives - were "offered the chance to leave voluntarily," according to Rafael Alfonso, a member of Guaido's delegation in the US. Three left, and the estimated four who remain inside were given notice that they "have to leave the building," Alfonso

told AFP. But the standoff continued as, after five minutes, the remaining activists returned to the second floor, where they raised their fists in a gesture of victory through the window. Police then left the gate and re-sealed it with tape. The activists "are defending international law, defending the Vienna Convention and they are worried about the cascade effect," said Mara Verheyden-Hilliard, an attorney representing them with the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund. "That is a very dangerous path."

A Venezuelan source who asked not to be named said police were now waiting for the right conditions to enter the building. Last week, electricity to the building was cut off. Around 100 Venezuelans waving the red, yellow and blue flag of their country sang the national anthem outside as the US activists peeked out from inside the four-story building. Carmen Ruzza, a 46-year-old Venezuelan scholar from American University, said she had been visiting the embassy every day with coffee and donuts while a group of people surrounded the diplomatic compound to pressure the activists to leave.

"This is a microcosm of the struggle we have in Venezuela," she said. Ruzza called the Maduro government a "criminal regime, a drug trafficking regime that kills, represses." For weeks, an unclear number of Americans belonging to a



**NEW YORK:** People protest outside the police headquarters while a disciplinary hearing takes place for officer Daniel Pantaleo on Monday. — AFP

group calling itself the Embassy Protection Collective has been living in the embassy, with the consent of the Maduro government.

The American squatters aim to block

the entry of the Guaido delegation. The final Venezuelan diplomats who had been posted to Washington by the Maduro administration left the embassy last month. — AFP



**NEW YORK:** New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio speaks at Trump Tower about the Green New Deal on Monday. — AFP

## New York mayor takes protest to Trump Tower

**NEW YORK:** New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, seen as a potential Democratic presidential hopeful in 2020, on Monday organized a protest inside Trump Tower, charging that President Donald Trump's buildings are among the city's worst polluters. De Blasio led about 70 demonstrators chanting "our planet is not your profit," and charged that former developer Trump's buildings emitted as many greenhouse gases as 5,800 cars each year.

Three weeks after the adopting a law that requires buildings of more than 2,300 m<sup>2</sup> to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions by 40 percent by 2030, De Blasio looked to be positioning himself at the head of the fight against global warming. "Clearly, the Trump Organization is a little sensitive to the fact that we're calling them out for what they are doing to the climate and the way this building is a part of the problem. But we will not back down. We don't back down in New York City, do

we?," De Blasio asked, stirring the crowd to reply "No."

"My message to the president is simple - respect New Yorkers, pay attention to what your own home town is going through, fix your buildings, and while you are at it, fix your policies, rejoin the Paris Agreement, make the United States of America a leader on fighting global warming, not a follower," the mayor said. The demo location was beside the same golden escalators where Trump launched his campaign for president in June 2015. De Blasio said Trump Tower, where the president lived before moving to the White House, could be fined up to \$500,000 a year if it does not respect the new law. Indeed, his eight New York skyscrapers could cost him up to \$2.1 million in fines, the mayor said.

At times it was difficult to hear the mayor: his protest was countered by a score of pro-Trump protesters who shouted "This is not my mayor!" and waved banners reading "Trump 2020" and "worst mayor ever" as they went up and down the escalators. De Blasio said he will announce this week whether he will take part in the Democratic Party's presidential primaries. He is not wildly popular in this tough hometown: an April poll showed 76 percent of New Yorkers said they did not want him to run for president. — AFP

## Trump praises Orban for keeping country 'safe'

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump on Monday praised Hungary's hardline authoritarian Viktor Orban as a leader respected throughout Europe who kept his country safe with his crackdown on immigration. "Viktor Orban has done a tremendous job in so many different ways," Trump told reporters ahead of Oval Office talks with the controversial prime minister. "Respected all over Europe," Trump said, adding: "Probably like me a little bit controversial, but that's okay. You've done a good job and you've kept your country safe."

Trump gave Orban a warm welcome at the White House, where they were planning discussions on European regional issues, NATO, energy and trade. The two share similar stances on immigration and both are critics of NATO and the European Union, while seeking better ties with Moscow. "I know he's a tough man, but he's a respected man, and he's done the right thing, according to many people, on immigration," Trump added. "You look at some of the problems they have in Europe that are tremendous, because they have done it a different way than the prime minister."

The one-on-one talks with Trump offer the eurosceptic Orban a podium less than two weeks before EU parliamentary elections in which far-right parties are expected to make a strong showing. "I would like to express that we are proud to stand together with the United States on fighting against illegal migration, on terrorism and to protect and help the Christian communities around the world," Orban told reporters. Trump replied: "You have been great with respect to Christian communities. You have really put a block up, and we appreciate that very much."

### Controversial visit

The run-up to the visit drew strong criticism from Democrats and activists who accused Trump of giving a platform to an anti-democratic leader. US ties with Budapest were chilly under Trump's predecessor Barack Obama, who often chided Orban for cracking down on civil liberties and freedom of the press in Hungary. But Washington reversed course under Trump, whose anti-immigration campaign echoes Orban's, as well as what his critics say is an alignment with white Christian nationalists.

Trump has shown a preference for authoritarian leaders over Washington's traditional Western allies, as underscored by his warm welcomes for Egypt's Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the White House. "Hungary's prime minister does not belong in the Oval Office," Rob Benschinski, of Human Rights First, and Johns Hopkins professor Hal Brands wrote in a Washington Post opinion column.

"The visit is a grievous mistake - not just because it will be seen as an endorsement of a leader who has successfully dismantled a democracy, but also because it will signal affirmation of an agenda that is fundamentally threatening to transatlantic security." In a letter ahead of the visit, several Democratic lawmakers said Trump should postpone their meeting until Orban "returns his country to the path of democracy and respect for human rights". — AFP



**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban during a meeting in the Oval Office on Monday. — AFP



## International

# The Indian 'Miss Marple' snooping on poll candidates

## Pandit's team busy 'integrating' into political parties

**MUMBAI:** As India's best-known female private eye, Rajani Pandit has posed as crazy, blind and deaf to solve murders and unmask unsuitable fiances. But election time is boom time for the woman dubbed "Miss Marple". In the world's biggest election ending on Sunday, Pandit and others like her are in high demand from political parties to dig up dirt on the opposition and make sure their own candidates are squeaky clean.

"It's confidential but whenever a party finds one of its own candidates or an opposition candidate suspicious they ask us to investigate them," Mumbai-based Pandit told AFP. "Often we are asked to look into their finances and how they have procured money to fund their campaigns. We try to maintain a low profile," the 57-year-old added.

### Inundated

Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi is up against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the world's largest democratic exercise, which is awash with cash. Some experts say the polls could cost \$10 billion. Pandit says her team has been busy "integrating" themselves into political parties since January, inspecting finances and attending rallies before submitting reports to their clients. "There's usually a surge of cases ahead of the

elections. We've been inundated with requests and were only able to take on a few," she said. Kunwar Vikram Singh, chairman of India's Association of Private Detectives and Investigators, said "there's a lot of due diligence". "(A candidate's) local reputation, influence, his stance in his own caste... all these things are looked into," Singh told AFP.

### Magnifying glass

Private detective agencies are popular in India, with sleuths tasked with solving everything from petty household thefts to business deals gone wrong. Pandit has been conducting covert operations across India for over 30 years out of her small office in the Asian giant's financial capital. The investigator - who does own a magnifying glass - was dubbed India's first female private detective by media outlets when she began cracking cases in the early 1980s.

She has been featured in countless newspaper articles, often referred to as India's "Miss Marple" or "Nancy Drew". Agatha Christie's fictional spinster sleuth and the ever-evolving US amateur detective. This has encouraged scores of women in male-dominated India to follow in her footsteps. Several women-dominated investigative firms now operate in the country, such as Lady Detectives India and Venus Detective which

are both headquartered in the capital New Delhi. "Clients are open a lot more to having a female investigator. They feel we are more empathetic and that they can talk to us," Lady Detectives CEO Tanya Puri told AFP.

### A suitable boy

Pandit first started snooping as a 22-year-old at college, informing the parents of a fellow student that their daughter was drinking, smoking and hanging out with boys. Her most difficult case was when she worked undercover for six months as a maid for a woman who was suspected of poisoning her husband to death and then killing her son through a hitman. She gathered evidence and handed it over to police who arrested the hitman and the woman.

Pandit has won numerous awards, written two books, and says she has completed more than 80,000 cases - most of them pre-matrimonial investigations. Parents in the ultra-conservative country seeking a suitable husband or wife for their offspring will ask her to investigate the potential spouse and their family. She looks into whether they have the job they say they have and tries to find out if there is anything in their past that might be deemed to bring shame to the family they are marrying into.

Pandit has had to be the master of subterfuge to gather evidence, including donning



**MUMBAI:** In this photograph taken on Jan 29, 2019, Indian detective Rajani Pandit speaks with a client at her office. — AFP

"various disguises". But she says she received no formal training. "Detectives are born, not made. I will keep doing this job until I am no longer alive," she said. — AFP

## 'Dead livestock, water running out' in Myanmar village

**YANGON:** Rakhine villagers trapped by a Myanmar army lockdown said yesterday they are fast running out of water as the operation against suspected ethnic rebels - which killed six and saw mass detentions - entered a third week. Thousands of troops have been deployed across northern Rakhine to root out Arakan Army (AA) insurgents in violence which has displaced more than 30,000 people since December. Myanmar's armed forces are using heavy artillery against the AA, who are fighting for more autonomy for the state's ethnic Rakhine Buddhists, but civilians say they have been caught up in the operations.

Complex ethnic and religious divisions cut across Rakhine state. It was also the scene of the military's brutal crackdown against Rohingya Muslims in 2017, which forced some 740,000 over the border into Bangladesh in violence branded as "genocide" by UN investigators. On April 30, security forces raided the ethnic Rakhine village of Kyauk Tan in Rathedaung township, taking 275 men for interrogation at a school. They admitted shooting dead six detainees and wounding eight more two days later, claiming the men tried to attack them.

Eight men have been arrested and taken to state capital Sittwe, military spokesperson Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun said, adding that six of them had confessed to being AA members. He said all the remaining detainees were released Monday. But residents told AFP by phone yesterday the village remained sealed off - and food and water supplies were running dangerously low. "Both humans and animals are thirsty as we still cannot go outside the village," said village elder Tun Thein, 56. "Some animals have died from starvation and thirst," he said, adding soldiers were still preventing residents from moving freely.

Another woman, asking not to be named, said the villagers were forced to boil "muddy water" to drink. Zaw Min Tun said as far as he knew the only people still facing constraints were the released detainees in case they were needed for "further investigation". Access to the north of Rakhine state is heavily restricted, making independent verification difficult. In the absence of oversight, fears are mounting of military impunity. Zaw Naing was one of the final detainees released from the school Monday. — AFP

## 'Rise up': PNG female police chief's battle cry to women

**KOKOPO, Papua New Guinea:** In a nation where sexual violence is endemic, women are still targeted and attacked for witchcraft, and female representation in parliament is non-existent, police chief Julie Palakai is blazing a trail for change. The 43-year-old inspector, a domestic abuse survivor and 18-year veteran of the force, is one of the most senior female police officers in Papua New Guinea - and is calling on the nation's women to take a stand against sexism with her. "Women must strive and rise up against any discrimination, abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace," she tells AFP. "For young girls who are still struggling: Do not give up but strive for the best to achieve your goals and to find a better and happy life. Nothing is impossible," she insists.

Human Rights Watch named Papua New Guinea "one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman" in a report which estimated 70 percent of women would be raped or assaulted in their lifetime. The NGO added that sorcery-related violence remains an issue, adding that women and girls are the "primary targets", though men too have been attacked in witch-hunts. None of the country's 111 par-

liamentarians are women and there are few women in the police force.

Palakai is the only female commissioned officer - an umbrella term for senior management from inspector grade upwards - in all of Papua New Guinea's northeastern Islands Region. She has worked hard to get to her position battling institutional discrimination, abuse, and rigid cultural expectations. Palakai now heads the Public Safety Unit at Kokopo Police Station: It's a role that's highly visible - she leads the prestigious Guard of Honour parade.

Dressed in crisp police blues and wielding a large silver sword, she proudly marches judges, superior officers and other dignitaries - almost always male - up and down Guard of Honour lines. It's a rare sight in the male-dominated nation, and a role that requires total respect from subordinates. "When inviting and escorting an important officer or VIP on parade, we are actually inspecting each individual on parade," she says.

Palakai came from a broken family and while she finished secondary school, any plans for further education were disrupted when her home town of Rabaul, was devastated by twin volcanic eruptions in 1994. Instead, she took a job as a sales rep for a stationary firm in the area but soon became restless. By chance, she saw an advert from the police in the local paper and decided to respond to their search for new recruits. She was shocked to be selected, Palakai conceded, but happily took the six-month training course near capital Port Moresby before being posted to Lihir, an island best known for gold-mining.

## More protests in Kashmir over child's rape

**SRINAGAR:** Police in Indian-administered Kashmir fired tear gas yesterday as thousands of students protested for a second day over the alleged rape of a three-year-old child. On Monday more than 70 people were injured, at least 50 of them from the security forces, as demonstrations raged across the restive northern territory. Yesterday, students mostly protested at a university campus in the main city of Srinagar, but hundreds of female students assembled near the city center demanding quick justice.

Police fired tear smoke shells to confine the students to a college, an officer said. No one was injured. School students also protested across many other towns in the region. Authorities imposed restrictions on the assembly of

## Duterte loyalists dominate midterm Philippines vote

**MANILA,** Allies of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte have dominated a mid-term Senate election according to unofficial results yesterday, indicating growing support for the maverick leader and broad public endorsement of his controversial rule. Nine of 12 Senate seats available look set to go to pro-Duterte candidates and the rest to independents, unofficial results showed, with the opposition that campaigned strongly against his presidency failing to make the cut.

Monday's ballot for more than 18,000 posts, among them hundreds of mayors, governors, and Congressmen, was billed as a referendum on the firebrand president, with special focus on his bid to consolidate power in the all-important upper house. A Senate majority would be a boon for Duterte, lessening the chance of censures and house probes against his government and making it easier to co-opt independents and sideline opponents to push through bills vital to his ambitious reform agenda.

"This president's popularity and transferability of his popularity is unprecedented to say the least, despite all the controversies," said political analyst Edmund Tayao. "You expect normally two or three candidates from the opposition to win but this is a wipe-out." Candidates lead-

people to prevent protests from spreading by deploying thousands of police and paramilitary troops across the territory. The demonstrators have been calling for the accused to be given a harsh sentence.

Police have set up a special investigation team to fast-track a probe into the alleged rape of the child last week by a 20-year-old neighbor in the northern area of Sumbal. But that has not calmed the anger across the Kashmir Valley where protests over even civic issues often morph into anti-government and anti-India demonstrations. On Monday, police also arrested a school principal who allegedly issued a fake age certificate declaring the accused to be a minor in order to help him evade being punished as an adult. Another case of alleged rape of a teenager came to light yesterday in the northern Ganderbal area. Police have arrested the accused man and also promised a fast-track investigation. In Jan 2018, an eight-year-old girl was abducted, starved for a week and murdered after she was raped by several people in the southern Kathua area of Jammu & Kashmir. That incident caused widespread outrage and protests in Kashmir and many Indian cities and towns that lasted weeks. — AFP

ing the Senate race include the president's closest aide, the daughter of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, the wife of the country's richest man, a jailed politician recently cleared of plunder, and a police general who led a war on drugs that killed thousands in its first few months.

### Opposition decimated

They would join 12 Senate incumbents of which only four are from the opposition, including the biggest critic of Duterte's war on drugs, Leila de Lima, who has been in detention since 2017 on narcotics charges. The mid-term results leave the political opposition in tatters and changes the dynamic of a Senate that has traditionally been a vital check on state power and a bulwark against the kind of political dominance that Duterte is demonstrating. Duterte is expected to retain control in the lower house also.

The opposition vowed not to give in. "We acted not for the certainty of victory but the certainty of our beliefs and conviction," said incumbent Senator Francis Pangilinan. "Our fight for justice, for sovereignty and a more progressive future for our people continues." The mid-terms came at a time when Duterte, 74, is seemingly untouchable, with last year's spiralling inflation now under control and a recent poll showing his public approval rating at a staggering 81 percent.

Duterte's down-to-earth appeal and his diehard social media support base has so far insulated him from domestic repercussions for his misogynistic remarks, jokes about rape, tirades against the Catholic church, an embrace of rival China, and a crackdown on drugs that killed thousands of users and small-time peddlers in slum communities, many execution-style. — Reuters



**KOKOPO, Papua New Guinea:** This picture taken on March 4, 2019 shows parade commander Julie Palakai (left) escorting East New Britain's new residential Judge Justice Stephen Kassarman during a guard of honor parade outside Kokopo police station. — AFP

"I was just a young policewoman officer posted out there to lead, manage and command officers older than me, very experienced and long-serving policemen and women," she said of the role as station commander. "You have to learn to think fast during states of emergency or in everyday situations whilst on normal police duties, and make prompt and wise decisions," she added.

Palakai was ambitious, but like many women in Papua New Guinea, she found her partner was not receptive to her career aspirations. "I had to leave him as I could not see any better future with him given...the disrespectful behavior that I could not stand any longer," she told AFP.

"He often argued telling me that I was just a woman and policemen and women will not listen to my instructions and orders and that women had no power to lead," she recalled.

In May 2013 she became a commissioned officer, graduating along with four other female officers placed around the country, and 20 male colleagues at a ceremony overseen by Prime Minister Peter O'Neill. Since then she has championed the push to encourage women to actively invest in their future. She explains: "Education does not stop when you are young or old. Where there is opportunity, go for it, as education is your future." — AFP

### News in brief

#### N Korea demands return of ship

**SEOUL:** North Korea yesterday demanded the return of a cargo ship seized by Washington last week for violating international sanctions, calling it an "unlawful and outrageous act". On Friday, the US Justice Department said it had taken possession of the North Korea-registered bulk carrier M/V Wise Honest, one year after it was detained in Indonesia, citing illicit sanctions-busting activities. A spokesman for the North's foreign ministry slammed the move yesterday, saying it was an "outright denial" of the spirit of a statement signed by leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump at their landmark summit in Singapore last June. The move was an "extension of the American method" of seeking to bring Pyongyang "to its knees" through maximum pressure, he said. "The US should ponder over the consequences its heinous act might have on the future developments and immediately return our ship," the statement added. — AFP

#### BJP activist gets bail for meme

**NEW DELHI:** India's top court yesterday granted bail to a ruling party activist who was arrested last week for sharing a meme of opposition leader Mamata Banerjee, one of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's challengers in the general election. Priyanka Sharma's arrest for sharing a meme on Facebook that superimposed Banerjee's head on a picture of actress Priyanka Chopra sporting frizzy hair at the Met Gala in New York was criticized as a curb on free speech. Sharma, who had been remanded in custody, is a member of the youth wing of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "Sharma is directed to be released immediately, without any condition," Supreme Court judge Indira Banerjee said in a ruling after withdrawing an initial order that Sharma apologize to the Bengal leader. — Reuters

#### Nigerians charged over love scam

**SINGAPORE:** Two Nigerian men believed to be members of an Internet love scam syndicate were charged in Singapore yesterday with recruiting local women to collect money for them, police said. Such scams, where victims part with cash after a fraudster feigns romantic interest in them, are a growing concern in the city-state, with police reporting 660 cases last year. The Nigerians - identified in local news reports as Oladayo Opeyemi Awolola, 34, and Gbolahan Ayobami Awolola, 37 - were arrested by Malaysian authorities in Kuala Lumpur last month and sent to Singapore on Monday. The men allegedly recruited two Singaporean women "as money mules to receive criminal proceeds linked to Internet love scams in Singapore" between 2017 and 2018. The women received Sg\$85,700 (\$63,000) during that period and turned the money over to syndicate members in Malaysia, police said. — AFP

#### New Bangladesh court to try Zia

**DHAKA:** Bangladeshi authorities have set up a new makeshift court adjacent to a jail outside the capital Dhaka to try imprisoned opposition leader Khaleda Zia, a prosecutor said yesterday. Zia, a two-time former prime minister, is already serving 10 years in two cases of graft that her supporters say were politically motivated. She has faced a trial on new charges in a courtroom inside the abandoned prison in old Mughal-era Dhaka where she is the only prisoner. Her supporters say this has affected her health and the 73-year-old has been in hospital since April. But with a move under way to shift Zia to a new prison at Keraniganj, just outside the capital, the government has set up a new court adjacent to the jail, prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain told AFP. Zia's lawyers condemned the decision to set up the makeshift court, saying it reflects a "cruel attitude" on the part of the government. — AFP



## Analysis

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## After crisis, Greek youth divided about EU

As she ponders her future abroad, Greek university graduate Alexandra is unsure she wants to vote on May 26 for an EU structure she holds responsible for ravaging her country after its debt crisis. Meanwhile, 20-year-old Erasmus student Thanassis suspects that Greece was a "testing ground" for EU austerity policies but still believes the bloc "has a lot to offer."

In a country where the minimum salary is 650 euros (\$728) and youth unemployment is around 40 percent, young Greeks have an ambivalent relationship with the European Union. "On the one hand, the connection (with Europe) is stronger, the exchanges and friendships more numerous. But on the other, young Greeks are living through a difficult situation that is directly linked to Europe", said Ioannis Kouzidis, a social policy professor at Athens' Panteion university.

"Some 350,000 Greeks emigrated during the crisis, including many youths who could not find adequate job opportunities here," Kouzidis said. Only 54 percent of Greeks believe their country has benefited from joining the European Union in 1981, according to an October 2018 survey by the European Parliament. The Greek crisis erupted in 2010 after its fiscal deficit was revealed to be several times over official figures.

To avert bankruptcy, successive Greek governments were forced to adopt a barrage of spending cuts and tax hikes in return for three European bailouts - two of them with additional funds from the International Monetary Fund. Greece exited its last bailout in August, but lost about a quarter of its national output amid countless layoffs and business closures over the past decade. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that in 2018, nearly 40 percent of Greeks aged 15 to 24 were unemployed, compared to a European average of 15.2 percent.

### 'More Europe, more solidarity'

The son of civil servants, Thanassis knows about job and salary cuts, growing up in Kozani, an industrial region hit hard by the crisis. But "despite the mistakes... more Europe and more solidarity (is needed) to stand up to the spectre of the extreme right," he said. Thanassis will spend the third year of his international relations degree program in Brussels, and considers the Erasmus program "the best of Europe's policies." But with Greeks being portrayed as lazy and wasteful in European coverage of the crisis, spending time abroad has not been easy for many.

Eliana, who left Athens in 2010 to study architecture in London, said she faced "a lot of racism" and decided to return after five years to launch a design brand. "You may feel more integrated than previous generations because (we) travel more and speak several languages, but you are bombarded with stereotypes about the laziness of Greeks," she said. As to whether she felt European, she replied: "Do the Europeans consider us European?"

Alexandra said she doesn't think decision-makers in Brussels are listening to people like her. "I'd like to be able to feel that I have the same opportunities as the rest of EU citizens in member states. But that's not the case," she said. Alexandra hopes to have more luck in Germany "to make a living and begin adult life." Though still the lowest in Europe, the sense of European citizenship in Greece has nevertheless made some progress. It stands at 51 percent according to a June 2018 report by the European Commission. — AFP



A young woman looks on as she attends an event of the Greek European Committee in Athens. In a country where the minimum salary is 650 euros (\$728) and youth unemployment is around 40 percent, young Greeks have an ambivalent relationship with the European Union. — AFP

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This handout picture shows an MH-60R Sea Hawk Helicopter, assigned to the 'Grandmasters' of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 46 aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Nitze (DDG 94) as it takes off from the ship's flight deck. Nitze is underway as part of Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group (ABCSG). — AFP

## Could Gulf tensions lead to Iran-US war?

A surge of tensions in the Gulf has shown the risk of a military confrontation between arch-foes Iran and the United States, even if any conflict would likely be marked by guerrilla warfare rather than full-scale battles, analysts say. A series of mysterious attacks on ships off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, the key ally of Tehran's Gulf rival Saudi Arabia, prompted President Donald Trump to warn Iran would "suffer greatly" if it harmed US interests.

The United States and Iran have had no diplomatic relations since the seizure by Iranian radicals of American embassy staff in the wake of the 1979 Islamic revolution. The two sides have at times been close to conflict - in particular during a tense period under former US president George W. Bush - but analysts see a series of factors as making the current moment particularly combustible.

Trump dismayed European allies by pulling out of the 2015 deal on Iran's nuclear program unilaterally and is now ratcheting up the rhetoric against Tehran. Iran and Saudi Arabia, a close ally of the United States for decades, are both enmeshed on opposing sides in the conflict in Yemen. And in US ally Israel, which Iran refuses to recognize, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is pushing for a hard line against Iran.

### 'High odds of clash'

"The Trump administration has significantly increased tensions in the region and has therefore increased the odds of some sort of inadvertent or even deliberate mili-

tary clash with Iran," said International Crisis Group (ICG) Iran project director Ali Vaez. "The odds of a clash occurring, even without provocation, are quite high," he said.

He said a belief on both sides that the other does not want a conflict "creates plenty of room for miscalculation" especially at a time when both sides have no direct communication channels. The war in Yemen also intensifies the risk of an incident between Iran and Saudi Arabia - such as an attack by Tehran-backed Houthi rebels on Saudi interests - being magnified and then pulling in the United States. Drone attacks on Tuesday, claimed by Iran-aligned Yemen rebels, shut down one of Saudi Arabia's main oil pipelines, further ratcheting up Gulf tensions.

There are "a lot of non-state actors in the region who could take steps that would push the two sides into a direct confrontation," said Vaez. But Washington and its Gulf allies have so far stopped short of blaming Tehran for damage to four ships, including two Saudi oil tankers, a Norwegian tanker and an Emirati ship. Iran has also distanced itself from the incidents, condemning "acts of sabotage" and a "criminal act".

Denis Bauchard, advisor for the Middle East at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), said there were elements on all sides who wanted no further escalation. "Looking at this rationally, this should not go any further as there are people who want to calm this down," he said, pointing to the US and Israeli military establishment. He said that Iran had so far kept a notably "low profile" in the current tensions but a risk came from

hawks on both sides such as US national security advisor John Bolton in the United States and the Revolutionary Guards in Iran.

### 'Guerrilla warfare'

Any escalation between the United States and Iran would likely be played out at sea and have immediate global implications for energy markets if it affected shipping in the key transit point of the Strait of Hormuz. Analysts say that in the event of a conflict, Iran would most likely resort to its tried and trusted strategy of asymmetric warfare which it has seen since the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war as the best way to outflank a more powerful enemy.

"A US-Iran war wouldn't be a naval war at all in the strict sense of the term," said James Holmes, from the Naval War College in the United States. "Guerrilla warfare, not the traditional sea fight, makes a better analogy for Iranian maritime strategy," he said, adding Iranian ships would concentrate firepower in narrow parts in the Strait of Hormuz.

Jean-Sylvestre Mongrenier, researcher at the Franco-Belgian think-tank Institut Thomas More, said Iran is well aware it has no match for the aircraft carriers of the United States. He said Iran would not aim to inflict a naval defeat on the United States, but make clear its engagement in the Gulf has a military and material cost. Such actions could include placing mines in the Strait of Hormuz, harassing US navy craft with smaller warships and also using anti-ship missiles, he said. — AFP



This file photograph shows the logo of WhatsApp, the popular messaging service, seen on a smartphone. A security flaw in WhatsApp, one of the most popular messaging apps in the world, allowed sophisticated attackers to install spyware on phones, the company said yesterday in the latest trouble for its parent Facebook. — AFP

## Israel firm NSO operates in shadowy cyber world

An Israeli spyware company named in a Financial Times report on a WhatsApp security flaw prides itself on "rigorous, ethical standards" despite previous links to alleged espionage.

### Pocket spy

Founded in 2010 by Israelis Shalev Hulio and Omri Lavie, NSO is based in the Israeli seaside hi-tech hub of Herzliya, near Tel Aviv. It produces Pegasus, a highly invasive tool that can reportedly switch on a target's cell phone camera and microphone, and access data on it, effectively turning the phone into a pocket spy.

### Khashoggi denial

In a January interview with Israeli daily Maariv, Hulio was asked about reports that telephone spyware was used to bug Jamal Khashoggi prior to the Saudi journalist's killing last October in Istanbul. "As a human being and as an Israeli, what happened to Khashoggi was a shocking murder," the company's CEO said. "I can tell you on the record that Khashoggi was not targeted by any NSO product or technology, including listening, monitoring, location tracking and intelligence collection."

### A hit in Mexico?

In Mexico, where investigative journalist Javier Valdez was shot dead on the street in broad daylight in 2017, prominent journalists and activists say the government of former president Enrique Pena Nieto targeted them using Pegasus. The New York Times reported at the time that at least three Mexican federal agencies had purchased some \$80 million of spyware from NSO Group since 2011.

In one case, international experts investigating the disappearance of 43 students in Mexico in 2014 were targeted with the spyware after it had been sold to the government, the experts said. In 2016, Apple rushed out a security update after researchers said prominent Emirati rights activist Ahmed Mansoor was targeted by UAE authorities using Pegasus spyware. The software has been pinpointed by independent experts as likely being used in a number of countries with poor human rights records.

### Court challenge

NSO's website says the company has "a pioneering approach to applying rigorous, ethical standards to everything we do". It says it has a vetting process on sales which combines licensing by Israeli export-control authorities with an internal review by a business ethics committee. The firm said yesterday that it only licenses its software to governments for "fighting crime and terrorism". UK-based rights group Amnesty International, however, said its members and supporters in Israel would on Wednesday petition the Tel Aviv district court against continued government export approval for NSO software. — AFP

## The missing of Brazzaville 'Beach', twenty years on

Twenty years ago, Congo-Brazzaville's new president urged conflict refugees to come home across the River Congo from Kinshasa. Then 353 returnees disappeared who were widely believed to have been murdered. "It's like it happened yesterday," said 75-year-old Marcel Touanga, grief-stricken for his son, one of those listed as missing in a troubling episode in the long career of President Denis Sassou Nguesso. In May 1999, the oil-rich central African nation was trying to turn the page on three successive civil wars since 1993.

Sassou Nguesso, a military man, took power back in 1997 from Pascal Lissouba, with the stated aim of achieving "national reconciliation" in the former French colony. He encouraged people who had fled over the broad river to the capital of the newly named Democratic Republic of Congo (the former Zaire) to return via the "Beach"-Brazzaville's port area. The two Congos on opposite shores jointly signed a repatriation agreement with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and people who were prepared to return did so during the week of May 5-14, 1999.

### 'Shot on the spot'

"Once on the Beach, a kind of sorting process took place, with women on one side and men on the other. The men were subjected to a full body search" for firearms, said Touanga, who heads the main support group for families of the missing. The authorities were at the time hunting members of the rebel Ninja militia loyal to former prime minister Bernard Kolelas, who were active in Brazzaville's Bacongo district and a forested region adjoining the capital known as The Pool.

Kolelas said that the Ninja insurgency had only been crushed when Angolan soldiers moved in to support Sassou-Nguesso and secure the city. Sentenced to death in his absence in May 2000 on charges of kidnapping, rape and illegal arrests by Ninjas, Kolelas was granted amnesty in

2005. He died after receiving medical treatment in Paris in 2009. "We have inventoried 353 missing youths, but there were many more because some bodies were burned," said Touanga, who now lives in France.

"There was brutality, there were executions. Some people were shot on the spot and their bodies were thrown into the water," he added. "They didn't even give me his body," Touanga said of his 28-year-old son, a paramilitary policeman. Some of the missing were executed on the premises of the security forces, including the General Directorate of Presidential Security, according to a 2012 UN report based on testimony by people claiming to be survivors.

### 'Truth and reconciliation'

Under pressure from families, Congo's parliament launched a probe in 2002, broadening the scope to cover all forced disappearances recorded in the country since 1992. A trial finally opened in Brazzaville three years later with 15 defendants in the dock, mostly serving officers in the security forces. They were all acquitted in August 2005. However, the court ordered the state to pay compensation to close kin of 86 of the 353 missing men, to the tune of 15,000 euros (\$16,850) for each victim. Separately in France, several human rights NGOs joined forces and went to court with a suit alleging "crimes against humanity, disappearances and torture."

The case, lodged in early 2002, targeted President Sassou-Nguesso and three senior officials in his regime. Congo asked the International Court of Justice in The Hague to freeze the French legal proceedings. In April 2004, Sassou-Nguesso's police chief, Colonel Jean-Francois Ndenguet, was jailed in France on a charge of crimes against humanity. But he was freed on the grounds that he held a diplomatic passport, which led rights activists to cry scandal.

"French justice for the moment remains the only hope for justice and truth," Tresor Nzila, executive director of the Congolese Organization of Human Rights (OCDH), said in Brazzaville. However investigations in France have ground to a standstill. "Twenty years on, the case remains unfortunately bogged down," said prominent French lawyer William Bourdon. "The pain is still there," said Vincent Niamankessi, the 70-year-old father of one of the missing. "We are finding that our missing children are simply victims with no perpetrators." — AFP



## Business

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

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# Burgan Bank reports net income of KD 19.2m for first quarter of 2019

## Operating profit of KD 29.2m with stable cost-to-income ratio of 41.8%

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank Group (Burgan) announced its financial results for the first quarter of 2019. Beginning this year, Burgan has revised its financial statements' closing process by changing the reporting date of its subsidiaries to one month earlier than the Group's reporting date. Accordingly, Burgan's Q1'19 financial results include only two months' (January 2019 & February 2019) results of its subsidiaries instead of three months (as included in the prior periods). This change will enable Burgan to accelerate its financial closing process and the required procedures for earliest possible release of the Group's financial statements to its stakeholders.

### Key highlights of Burgan Bank Group's Q1'19 financial results are as follows:

- Revenue of KD 50.3 million while maintaining healthy Net Interest Margin of 2.7%
- Net income of KD 19.2 million with low Cost of Credit of 0.7%
- CET1 Ratio of 11.8% and CAR of 17.3%, indicat-

ing optimal capital levels

Our Kuwait operations, which is the core engine of the Burgan Bank Group, continues to perform strongly as reflected in the below mentioned key business metrics:

- Q1'19 Net Interest Margin of 2.3% (vs Q1'18: 2.3%)
- Q1'19 Cost-to-Income Ratio of 28.4% (vs Q1'18: 36.8%)
- Q1'19 Cost of Credit of 0.4% (vs Q1'18: 0.5%)
- Q1'19 NPL Ratio of 1.8% (vs Q1'18: 1.7%)

These results reflect the stability of the operating business model of Burgan Bank Group despite headwinds in certain markets in the region.

Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, Chairman of Burgan Bank Group said: "the Bank's business model continues to prove its resilience, while maintaining good progress on key initiatives aimed at mitigating risk, improving operating competences and capitalization levels."

"On behalf of the board, I take this opportunity to thank our customers and shareholders for the trust they have in our capabilities and our regulator, the Central Bank of

Kuwait, for their support. I would also like to thank our executive management team for their leadership and the excellent execution of the corporate strategy, and our staff for their continued support and commitment." concluded Al-Ajeel. The consolidated financials encompass the results of the Group's operations in Kuwait, and its share from its regional subsidiaries, namely Burgan Bank - Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria, Bank of Baghdad, Tunis International Bank. Burgan Bank Group has one of the largest regional branch networks with 165 branches across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Iraq, Tunisia, Lebanon and representative office in Dubai-United Arab Emirates.



Majed Essa Al-Ajeel



## China says 'no information' on Xi-Trump meeting

**BEIJING:** The Chinese foreign ministry yesterday said it had "no information to offer at present" on a possible meeting between president Xi Jinping and his US counterpart to avert a trade war. As trade tensions escalated between the two countries, Donald Trump on Monday told reporters that he expects to meet with the president of China and Russia next month at the Group of 20 summit in Japan.

"The two heads of state maintain contact through various means," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a regular briefing yesterday. But when asked whether China was making preparations for a possible Xi-Trump meeting, Geng said: "I have no information at present about the specific question raised."

China said Monday it will raise tariffs on \$60 billion worth of US goods from June 1, in retaliation for the latest round of US tariff hikes and Washington's plans to target almost all Chinese imports.

The announcement came after the latest round of US-China trade negotiations ended Friday without a deal, and after Washington increased tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese products. US President Donald Trump had also ordered the start of a process to impose new duties on another \$300 billion worth of

Chinese items.

The world's top two economies ended two days of negotiations in Washington on Friday with no deal.

Both sides have indicated that discussions will continue. Beijing's top trade negotiator, Liu He, likewise said Friday the next round would start in the Chinese capital at an unspecified date. The United States is pressing China to change its policies on protections for intellectual property, as well as massive subsidies for state-owned firms, and to reduce the yawning trade deficit.

Beijing had offered several concessions, including passing a new Foreign Investment Law that promises to cut red-tape and ban the illegal transfer of technology. A meeting between the two leaders was expected in March, but it never materialized as the two sides failed to reach a deal.

The US Trade Representative's office said it planned to hold a public hearing next month on the possibility of imposing duties of up to 25 percent on a further \$300 billion worth of imports from China. Cellphones and laptops would be included in that list but pharmaceuticals would be excluded, the office said.

The prospect of the global economy being derailed by the United States and China sliding into a fiercer, more protracted dispute has rattled investors and sparked a sharp selloff on equities markets in the past week.

"My understanding is that China and the United States have agreed to continue pursuing relevant discussions. As for how they are pursued, I think that hinges upon further consultations between the two sides," Geng Shuang told a daily news briefing, without giving details.

But China will not be bullied, he



HONG KONG: A container ship sails under the Stonecutters Bridge near Kwai Tsing Container Terminals in Hong Kong yesterday. —AFP

added: "We hope that the US side does not misjudge the situation and will not underestimate China's determination and will to safeguard its interests."

Sources have said talks stalled after China tried to delete commitments from a draft agreement that its laws would be changed to enact new policies on issues from intellectual property protection to forced technology transfers.

Geng said China had shown sincerity by still sending a high level delegation to the United States for talks last week and that China has remained calm in the face of pressure.

He put the blame on Washington for going back on its word in some previous rounds of talks, including last May, when the two reached an agreement in

Washington but then the United States backed out a few days later. "So you absolutely can't put the hat on China of reversing positions and going back on one's promises," Geng said, adding China had shown goodwill in the talks and kept its promises.

The Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.7 percent and the blue chip CSI 300 was 0.6 percent lower yesterday. But both indexes rebounded from opening down 1 percent, supported by suspected state-backed purchases. However, the onshore yuan weakened 0.1 per cent to its lowest level since Dec. 27, 2018, trading at 6.8874 per dollar, after the foreign ministry said it hoped the United States would not underestimate China's determination to defend its interests. —Agencies

## India fears US-China trade war will lead to dumping of Chinese steel

**NEW DELHI:** India fears China could soon start flooding excess steel into its market after the United States raised tariffs on Chinese products due to the escalating trade war between the world's two largest economies, according to three government sources and four industry officials.

As a result, the Indian steel industry has asked the Indian government to put in so-called safeguard duties of as much as 25 percent to protect it from growing imports. These would be imposed on steel that the government determines has been dumped in India at prices below the cost of production.

Since last year, China and the United States have been locked in a trade conflict as Washington seeks to fix the trade balance, currently tilted in favor of Beijing. The two nations have raised or threatened to raise tariffs on each other's goods, moves that could re-draw trade flows and

that have threatened to derail the global economy.

"China has excess (steel) capacity and there is a concern they could re-route it through other countries like Vietnam and Cambodia into India," an Indian government source with direct knowledge of the matter said. "Steel sector is vulnerable," the source said, declining to be identified due to the sensitive nature of discussions. India, the world's second-largest steel producer, turned net importer in the year ended March 31, 2019 after a gap of three years. That is because the country lacks the capability to produce high-quality steel and has lost some of its global clients to cheaper exports from China, Japan and South Korea.

"China, Japan, Korea which are major exporters to US, Europe and Canada, because of trade actions, they are also diverting steel into India," Seshagiri Rao, joint managing director at JSW Steel Ltd, told Reuters.

### Safeguard duties

"It is very much essential for government of India to increase the safeguard duty to 25 percent as soon as possible," said Rao. Currently, there are a range of such duty levels. Last month, steel companies JSW, Steel Authority of India, Tata Steel, Jindal Steel and Power - controlling over 45 percent of India's total steel production - met with government officials to ask for safeguards, according to a source who attended the meeting. During the meeting, Steel Secretary Binoy Kumar, the top bureaucrat in the Ministry of Steel, also said that the steel industry was at

risk from global excess capacity, the source said.

Kumar said India need to act soon to protect its fragile steel industry from predatory imports as it would be difficult to revive it if the situation was allowed to deteriorate for three-to-four years. However, he said a decision on safeguard duties has not yet been taken.

The steel ministry did not respond to Reuters' emails and phone calls seeking comments. Neither did SAIL, Tata and JSPL. "What we are seeing is that part of displaced exports is already making inroads," said Arnab Kumar Hazra, assistant secretary general at the Indian Steel Association, which represents major steel producers. There was therefore every reason to argue for safeguard duties given the perceived threat, he said.

India had imposed a slew of safeguards in 2015-2017 on several steel products to curb cheaper imports and protect local industry, prompting Japan to refer India's behavior to the World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute panel. India's trade deficit with China jumped more than a nine fold over the past decade to \$63.05 billion in the year ending March 2018. With the latest US tariffs on Chinese goods, India fears Beijing could also re-route exports of electronic items, toys, furniture and organic chemicals to India through other Southeast Asian nations. New Delhi and Beijing have been negotiating over greater market access as China wants to export milk products and apples to India while New Delhi wants to sell China bovine meat, sources said. —Reuters

## China's state media hits back at US on trade

**BEIJING:** Beijing unleashed its tightly controlled media this week after keeping a lid on rhetoric for months as the trade war with Washington reignited, with fiery clips from state media ricocheting around the internet. The spree of editorials and commentaries in China's state media on Monday and yesterday ramped up attacks on Washington and its trade tactics, with Beijing rolling out the propaganda campaign in sync with its retaliation on US goods.

China announced Monday it would raise tariffs on \$60 billion in US exports by next month, responding in kind to President Donald Trump's decision last week to hike duties on hundreds of billions of dollars in Chinese merchandise. The barrage began Monday night during state broadcaster CCTV's primetime newscast watched across China.

"China has already given its answer: talk and the door is open, fight and we'll fight you to the end," an anchor read, looking directly at the camera.

"Through 5,000 years of ups and downs, what kind of battle has the Chinese nation not seen! During the great process of realizing national rejuvenation, there will inevitably be difficulties, obstacles and even storms," he read. "China's policy toolbox is ready and prepared for a comprehensive response."

The clip ricocheted around the Chinese internet, trending on Twitter-like Weibo and going viral on Wechat, inviting a massive show of support from the country's legions of netizens.

Official news agency Xinhua yesterday accused the United States of "using underhanded means to achieve its aim" and "downright bullying" in an editorial. If the US thinks it "can achieve its goals with trade bullying, it is really underestimating the will and determination of the Chinese people to defend their core interests," the editorial said. The editor-in-chief of nationalist daily Global Times Hu Xijin said, "For China it is the whole country and all the people who are being coerced, and for us this is a real 'people's war,' in a Monday commentary and accompanying online video. "Previously the Chinese government always understated the trade conflict with the United States, only said this is trade friction but now the trade friction has hit this level," said Shi Yinhong, director of the American studies center at Renmin University.

"This is only too belatedly they've accepted the fact that it is a trade war," he said.

For months as American and Chinese officials faced off at the negotiating table, China's media downplayed the trade tensions. Propaganda directives handed out last year instructed media to play down the trade war's effect on the stock market, refrain from whipping up public opinion, and halt mentions of Made in China 2025, an industrial policy that drew global criticism, according to China Digital Times, which publishes propaganda directives. —AP



Business

# NREC reports KD3.6m net profit in Q1 2019; EBITDA KD 6.1m

## Operating revenue reaches KD 4.2 million

KUWAIT: National Real Estate Company (NREC), which is presently developing properties valued at over \$2 billion in the Middle East and North Africa region, yesterday reported its financial and operational earnings for the first quarter of 2019, announcing KD 4.2 million in operating revenue, and KD 6.1 million in EBITDA.

The net profit reached KD 3.6 million for the quarter, while its EPS was 2.93 fils. The total assets stood at KD 468.8 million by quarter-end.

NREC Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa, said: "NREC's earnings continue to be driven by our operating properties owned in Kuwait, Jordan, Libya and Iraq, in addition to sale of units in the developing mixed-use project in Egypt, and positive earnings

announced from our associate. The Company has also progressed in the development of the landmark project, Reem Mall, in Abu Dhabi. Together with Grand Heights in Egypt, the Company is set to grow and diversify its sources of operating cash flow in the coming years.

"The Company's debt reduction strategy has also continued to move forward through the completion of asset sale. The strategy aims to strengthen our cash position and enable us to focus on our promising landmark projects which are under development and our existing income-generating portfolio."

Located in Reem Island in Abu Dhabi, Reem Mall is a major new retail, leisure, dining and entertainment destination that comprises 450

stores and has a confirmed tenant-mix of leading retailers in the region and world. Grand Heights in Egypt is a residential development covering a total of four million square meters and caters to the housing needs of a growing population in Cairo and its suburban areas. In Kuwait, NREC manages the waterfront destination, Souq Sharq, and the El Joan resort. In Jordan, the Company owns and operates the South Aqaba Investment Park, a 1.5 million square meters property dedicated for warehousing, factories, companies and logistics in an attractive investment climate that provides access to major international markets and Free Trade Agreements. In Libya, NREC's Palm Residences is a residential project offering high-end facilities and security on the Mediterranean

coastline in Janzour, a suburb of Tripoli. In Iraq, the Company operates an existing property and is seeking new investment opportunities in close to largest and busiest ring road in Erbil.

Established in 1973 and listed on Boursa Kuwait, National Real Estate Company (NREC) is a real estate investment, development and property manager based in the Middle East and North Africa, developing assets exceeding \$2 billion. The Company's portfolio comprises a mix of retail, commercial and residential properties in the region. In addition to its core real estate business, NREC is the largest shareholder with a 22.3 percent share in Agility Public Warehousing Company K.S.C.P. which is one of the top ten logistics companies in the world.



Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa

## Vodafone slashes dividend after vast annual loss

LONDON: British telecoms giant Vodafone announced yesterday that it recorded a vast annual net loss of 7.6 billion euros (\$8.5 billion), hit partly by the sale of its Indian assets. The loss after tax in the 2018/2019 financial year to the end of March contrasted with profit of just under 2.8 billion euros last time around, Vodafone said in a results statement. Europe's biggest mobile phone company also slashed its shareholder dividend to lower debt, simplify activities and increase investment as part of its ongoing transformation strategy.

"The loss for the financial year of 7.6 billion euros was primarily due to a loss on disposal of Vodafone India (following the completion of the merger with Idea Cellular) and impairments," Vodafone said. Net losses including non-controlling interests hit just over eight billion euros. That compared with a profit of 2.4 billion euros a year earlier. The poor performance was sparked partly by a 3.4-billion-euro loss from the sale of Indian operations.

The London-listed firm also took a 3.5-billion-euro writedown on the shrinking value of its activities in India, Spain and Romania. Revenue meanwhile slid 6.2 percent to 43.7 billion euros, hit also by competitive pressures. "We are executing our strategy at pace and have achieved our guidance for the year, with good growth in most markets but also increased competition in Spain and Italy and headwinds in South Africa," said chief executive Nick Read. "These challenges weighed on our service revenue growth during the year, and together with high spectrum auction costs have reduced our financial headroom."

Vodafone cut its full-year dividend to nine cents per share, down from 15 cents per share the previous year. Back in November, Read launched a 1.2-billion-euro cost-cutting plan aimed at transforming the company's fortunes.

"The group is at a key point of transformation," he said yesterday, adding Vodafone was "radically simplifying our operations, generating better returns from our infrastructure assets and continuing to optimize our portfolio". "To support these goals and to rebuild headroom, the board has made the decision to rebase the dividend." Yesterday's results come after Vodafone sold its New Zealand subsidiary this week to an investment consortium in a deal worth NZ\$3.4 billion (\$2.2 billion). In August last year, Vodafone's Indian division merged with Idea Cellular to become the country's biggest mobile phone company with more than 400 million customers.

Vodafone and Idea flagged the tie-up in March 2017 and the deal is expected to further shake up India's giant telecom industry. The nation's telecoms sector was jolted in 2016 when Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani launched Jio with market-defying tariffs for consumers, sparking fierce competition and sector consolidation. —AFP

## Nissan profits hit 'rock bottom' as Ghosn weighs

TOKYO: Crisis-hit Japanese car company Nissan yesterday unveiled net profits at a near-decade low as it battles to recover after the shock arrest of its talismanic former boss Carlos Ghosn.

Net profits for the fiscal year to March 2019 came in at 319 billion yen (\$2.9 billion), the lowest since 2009/10 when the company was struggling in the wake of the global financial crisis. It was a decline of 57 percent compared to the previous fiscal year and the profit outlook for the current fiscal year was forecast to be even worse-at 170 billion yen.

"The performance is a challenging one and we want to change this," Chief Executive Officer Hiroto Saikawa told reporters. Yesterday's figures represented a "rock bottom" for the company, he said, adding: "Please give us time to recover."

The firm has been crippled by the reputational damage caused by the legal woes of former chairman Ghosn, who faces four formal charges of financial misconduct that he denies.

"There are many negative legacies inherited from the previous management," said Saikawa.

"To tell you the truth, there was a period when we could not concentrate on business" during the Ghosn affair, said Saikawa. But analysts point to several problems for the Japanese firm beyond Ghosn, including apparently declining relations with its French partner Renault and a dearth of new products.

"They've got to let go of Carlos Ghosn, he's out of the company, he's no longer a director, they have to move beyond that, it's a distraction," said Christopher

Richter, an analyst for the CLSA brokerage based in Tokyo. Saikawa "has been in the top job for more than two years—that's half of a model cycle—so I don't think you can lay all the blame with Mr. Ghosn," Richter said.

He said Nissan has an "old and unattractive portfolio" and "desperately need new products", the development of which has been delayed both by the difficulties surrounding Ghosn and the Renault-Nissan relationship. Saikawa said sales had held up in Japan and China but was "tough" in the United States and Europe.

He is coming under increasing pressure, with several shareholders demanding his departure at a meeting last month. His term is up for renewal at the end of June.

But he brushed off calls for his resignation saying he wanted to launch a fresh start for the firm and would discuss the timing of his stepping down "at the appropriate time."

### 'Differences of opinion'

Nissan, along with Renault and Mitsubishi Motors, make up an unusual three-way alliance that has grown to become the top-selling car group. Ghosn was the driving force between bringing the firms together and has since alleged that Nissan launched an investigation into him over fears he was hoping to merge the Japanese and French companies.

The appointment of new Renault boss Jean-Dominique Senard should open a "new chapter" in ties, said Saikawa earlier this year but the Japanese firm continues to resist anything approaching a merger, which is being pushed by the French firm.

Saikawa admitted "differences of opinion" with Senard on the future make-up of the Alliance, including the capital partnership between the two companies. "But what I (and Senard) agree on is that now is not the time for that discussion. Nissan should fully focus on the recovery and stabilisation of its business performance. "Mr Senard gives us full support on this point," said Saikawa.



YOKOHAMA: Nissan Motors president and CEO Hiroto Saikawa speaks during a press conference to announce the company's 2019 financial results at its headquarters in Yokohama yesterday. —AFP

A spokesman for Renault contacted by AFP said the figures were "regrettable".

"What is bad for Nissan is bad for Renault and vice-versa. And these results are not good news for the Alliance. These results reinforce the idea that we need changes," the spokesman said.

"Joining forces is necessary to fight our competition which is not waiting around for us."

Ghosn was released on bail of \$4.5 million last month under strict conditions, including restrictions on seeing his wife—which the tycoon described as "cruel and unnecessary".

Local media have said that any trial of the former boss may not start until next year.

Ghosn denies all the charges against him and has vowed in several statements to "vigorously defend himself against these baseless accusations". —AFP

## EU regulators helping Google, Facebook, says Snapchat chief

LONDON: The head of Snapchat warned European regulators yesterday that their efforts to protect user data were entrenching the positions of internet giants such as Google and Facebook.

Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel's comments in London came three months after the UK parliament published a scathing report accusing Facebook of acting like "digital gangsters" who brazenly violate privacy rules.

The European Union took the lead last year by implementing a strict General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policy making platforms' access to customer data more transparent and easier for users to control. Spiegel called the European approach well-meaning but potentially self-defeating.

"I think that some of the regulation like GDPR, for example, may end up entrenching very large players," he told a business conference organized by The Wall Street Journal. "If you're a small publisher today and

you want to run ads on your website, it's very very hard to do that because you are not at scale, you don't have a giant ads platform, so you might want to plug into Google, for example, or Facebook," he said. "And if you do that, you're basically going to have to tell your customers that you are selling your data to Google or Facebook." Snapchat is a picture and video sharing tool especially popular among teens.



Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel

Spiegel said the mobile phone app is regularly used by 75 percent of all 13- to 34-year-olds in the United States. It now has 190 million daily users—about 60 million more than Twitter—but is still operating at a loss.

The Financial Times estimated that the company will have to raise new capital in three years if it continued burning through cash at current rates. Snap's inability to make a profit reflects other platforms' struggles to generate ad revenue. The industry is going through a thorough re-think that tries to balance growth with a rising backlash against how personal details are bought and sold for targeted ads. —AFP

## UK unemployment rate hits 45-year low

LONDON: British unemployment has fallen to a 45-year low, official data showed yesterday, with the economy holding up despite prolonged Brexit uncertainty. The unemployment rate eased to 3.8 percent in the three months to March—the lowest level since the final quarter of 1974, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. That compared with a 44-year low of 3.9 percent in the quarter to February.

"The UK labour market has been remarkably resilient in the face of Brexit-related uncertainty," Hargreaves Lansdown senior economist Ben Brettell said in reaction to the latest data. "These are really strong numbers given the headwinds the economy is currently facing." The ONS said that the UK employment rate was estimated at 76.1 percent, which was the joint-highest figure on record. However the strong jobs figures were not necessarily translating into higher productivity, analysts noted. "There are valid concerns that UK firms are hoarding labor instead of much-needed capital expenditure," said Brettell. "Why would you invest large sums in new plant or machinery in such uncertain times, when you could hire an extra worker and get broadly the same result?" —AFP

## EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.		Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd		BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL	
<b>EUROPEAN &amp; AMERICAN COUNTRIES</b>		<b>Rate for Transfer</b>		<b>CURRENCY</b>	<b>BUY SELL</b>
US Dollar Transfer	305,000	US Dollar	304.340	British Pound	0.387142 0.401042
Euro	345.110	Canadian Dollar	227.315	Czech Korune	0.005252 0.014552
Sterling Pound	398.480	Sterling Pound	400.840	Danish Krone	0.041727 0.046727
Canadian dollar	229.240	Euro	342.770	Euro	0.334492 0.348192
Turkish lira	52.630	Georgian Lari	0.110269 0.110269	Hungarian Lari	0.009964 0.009964
Swiss Franc	303.630	Norwegian Krone	0.030767 0.035967	Romanian Leu	0.054867 0.071717
US Dollar Buying	303.800	Bahrain Dinar	809.355	Russian Ruble	0.004650 0.004650
<b>ASIAN COUNTRIES</b>		UAE Dirhams	83.265	Slovakia	0.009109 0.019109
Japanese Yen	2.729	Qatari Riyals	84.500	Swedish Krona	0.027590 0.032590
Indian Rupees	4.379	Saudi Riyals	82.055	Swiss Franc	0.295907 0.306907
Pakistani Rupees	2.187	Jordanian Dinar	430.540	<b>Australasia</b>	
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.743	Egyptian Pound	17.753	Australian Dollar	0.203241 0.215241
Nepali Rupees	2.737	Sri Lankan Rupees	1.721	New Zealand Dollar	0.193997 0.203497
Singapore Dollar	225.760	Indian Rupees	4.390	<b>America</b>	
Hongkong Dollar	38.875	Pakistani Rupees	2.154	Canadian Dollar	0.220638 0.229638
Bangladesh Taka	3.603	Bangladesh Taka	3.605	US Dollars	0.300500 0.305800
Philippine Peso	5.893	Philippines Peso	5.865	US Dollars Mint	0.301000 0.305800
Thai Baht	9.616	Cyprus pound	18.105	<b>Asia</b>	
Malaysian ringgit	78.005	Japanese Yen	3.750	Bangladesh Taka	0.003010 0.003811
<b>GCC COUNTRIES</b>		Syrian Pound	1.590		
Saudi Riyal	81.388	Nepalese Rupees	2.748		
Qatari Riyal	83.826	Malaysian Ringgit	74.240		
Omani Riyal	792.723	Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.330		
Bahraini Dinar	810.420	Thai Bhat	10.526		
UAE Dirham	83.095				
<b>ARAB COUNTRIES</b>					
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.850				
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.726				
				<b>Chinese Yuan</b>	0.042800 0.046300
				<b>Hong Kong Dollar</b>	0.036718 0.039468
				<b>Indian Rupee</b>	0.003761 0.004533
				<b>Indonesian Rupiah</b>	0.000017 0.000023
				<b>Japanese Yen</b>	0.002693 0.002873
				<b>Korean Won</b>	0.000246 0.000261
				<b>Malaysian Ringgit</b>	0.069584 0.075584
				<b>Nepalese Rupee</b>	0.002680 0.003020
				<b>Pakistan Rupee</b>	0.001524 0.002294
				<b>Philippine Peso</b>	0.005772 0.006072
				<b>Singapore Dollar</b>	0.217068 0.227068
				<b>Sri Lankan Rupee</b>	0.001376 0.001956
				<b>Taiwan</b>	0.009654 0.009834
				<b>Thai Baht</b>	0.009310 0.009860
				<b>Vietnamese Dong</b>	0.00013 0.00013
				<b>Arab</b>	
				<b>Bahraini Dinar</b>	0.793387 0.809887
				<b>Egyptian Pound</b>	0.017586 0.020186
				<b>Iranian Riyal</b>	0.000084 0.000086
				<b>Iraqi Dinar</b>	0.000210 0.000270
				<b>Jordanian Dinar</b>	0.424715 0.433715
				<b>Kuwaiti Dinar</b>	1.000000 1.000000
				<b>Lebanese Pound</b>	0.000151 0.000251
				<b>Moroccan Dirhams</b>	0.020503 0.044503
				<b>Omani Riyal</b>	0.784851 0.790631
				<b>Qatar Riyal</b>	0.079399 0.084339
				<b>Saudi Riyal</b>	0.080140 0.081440
				<b>Syrian Pound</b>	0.001291 0.001511
				<b>Tunisian Dinar</b>	0.097496 0.105496
				<b>Turkish Lira</b>	0.043990 0.055490
				<b>UAE Dirhams</b>	0.083507 0.083207
				<b>Yemeni Riyal</b>	0.000990 0.001070



## Business

# NBK Capital advises VIVA on acquisition of 100% of the capital of QualityNet

## Batelco Group, NBK sell their stakes for \$93 million

KUWAIT: NBK Capital, one of the leading investment management firms in the region, announced that it has successfully advised VIVA on its acquisition of 100 percent of the capital of QualityNet General Trading and Contracting Company, a Kuwait-based internet services provider.

In a press release, NBK Capital stated that Batelco Group and National Bank of Kuwait, who owned 90 percent and 10 percent of QualityNet respectively, sold their stakes for a total consideration of KD 28.3 million (around \$93 million).

On this occasion, Faisal Al-Hamad, CEO of

NBK Capital, said: "The success of this transaction and its positive outcome is a reflection of the robustness of NBK Capital's business model in managing the transaction with transparency, professionalism and adoption of international best practices in investment banking, while fully complying with local regulations."

Al-Hamad praised VIVA for its trust and cooperation throughout the process, and the effective role and outstanding performance of NBK Capital investment banking team in ensuring the success of the transaction. This success reflects the high proficiency in dealing with various transactions,

and the commitment to meet the needs of the growing and diverse customer base.

In addition, Rani Selwanes, Managing Director and Head of Investment Banking at NBK Capital, commented: "VIVA's choice of NBK Capital as an advisor is proof of confidence in our capabilities and our leading position locally and regionally. We are proud of the success of this transaction." Selwanes emphasized that NBK Capital constantly strives to deliver the best advisory and financial services to its clients, which will strengthen the leading position of NBK Capital in the investment banking sector locally and regionally.



Faisal Al-Hamad

Rani Selwanes

## Trump says US farmers to get \$15bn in aid amid China trade war

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said on Monday that his administration was planning to provide about \$15 billion in aid to help US farmers whose products may be targeted with tariffs by China in a deepening trade war. "We're going to take the highest year, the biggest purchase that China has ever made with our farmers, which is about \$15 billion, and do something reciprocal to our farmers so our farmers can do well," Trump told reporters at the White House.

He did not provide more details on what kind of an aid package it would be. American farmers, a key constituency of Trump, have been among the hardest hit in the trade war. Soybeans are the most valuable US farm export, and shipments to China dropped to a 16-year low in 2018. Sales of US soybeans elsewhere failed to make up for the loss. US soybean futures fell to their lowest in a decade on Monday.

US Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said on Friday that Trump had asked him to create a plan to help American farmers cope with the heavy impact of the US-China trade war on agriculture.

A new aid program would be the second round of assistance for farmers, after the Department of

Agriculture's \$12 billion plan last year to compensate for lower prices for farm goods and lost sales stemming from trade disputes with China and other nations.

"Out of the billions of dollars that we're taking (in on tariffs on Chinese imports), a small portion of that will be going to our farmers, because China will be retaliating, probably to a certain extent, against our farmers," Trump said. The tariffs are not paid by the Chinese government or by firms located in China. They are paid by importers of Chinese goods, usually American companies or the US-registered units of foreign companies. On Monday, China said it would impose higher tariffs on a range of US goods, including frozen vegetables and liquefied natural gas, striking back in its trade war with Washington after Trump warned it not to.

Last year, Beijing imposed tariffs on imports of US agricultural goods, including soybeans, grain sorghum and pork as retribution for US levies.

While farmers have largely remained supportive of Trump, many have called for an imminent end to the trade dispute, which propelled farm debt to the highest levels in decades and worsened credit conditions for the rural economy.

Trump's pledge on Friday to buy American farm products that China normally imports and distribute them to poor countries drew criticism from Canada. "Dumping products in developing countries is not the way we do things," Canadian Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau told reporters on a conference call from the G20 meeting in Japan, adding such efforts required multilateral coordination. "It seems easy, but it is complicated to do it the right way," Bibeau said. "Obviously, it may create some distortion in the market and this is what we want to avoid." —Reuters



OMAHA: Clare Duda inspect rotten soybeans on a field destroyed and flooded by the Missouri River flooding near Omaha, Nebraska. —AFP

## South Africa unemployment rises to 27.6%

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's unemployment rate rose by half a percentage point to 27.6 percent, official data showed yesterday, underlining the challenge facing President Cyril Ramaphosa after his ANC government won elections last week. The job losses focused on the construction, finance and social sectors, with 6.2 million people unemployed in the first quarter of 2019 — the highest level since the third quarter of 2017.

Of the 20.3 million South Africans aged between 15 and 34, 40.7 percent were not in employment, education or training, according to the data released by Statistics South Africa.

South Africa's unemployment crisis was a key battle-

ground in the May 8 vote, which the ruling ANC party won with its lowest share of the ballot since the country embraced democracy with the fall of apartheid in 1994. "They were saying 'president: we want jobs'... that is what we are going to do, we are going to work hard to create jobs for our people," Ramaphosa told ANC activists on Sunday after the count gave the party 57 percent of the vote.

Ramaphosa, 66, took over last year when the ANC forced Jacob Zuma to resign after nine years in office. A former trade union leader and a wealthy businessman, Ramaphosa has vowed to boost sluggish economic growth and attract foreign investment to tackle unemployment.

"Within days of the election, the rise in unemployment figures is a stark reminder that without policy shifts and confidence-building initiatives, South Africa will continue to under-perform... and more ominously, will alienate its youth even further," analyst Daniel Silk said on Twitter. Selected by lawmakers in parliament, Ramaphosa is set to be inaugurated on May 25. —AFP

statement. "The latest escalation in the trade conflict between the United States and China has once again increased uncertainty about German exports, and thereby a central factor for GDP growth," he added. While direct exchanges of trade blows across the Atlantic have so far been limited, Germany is indirectly harmed by any impact on the Chinese economy—one of the Eurozone heavyweight's biggest export customers—from the trans-Pacific showdown.

The ZEW survey period from May 6 to May 13 covers last weekend, when US President Donald Trump announced a hike in import duties on hundreds of billions of dollars in imports from China starting next month. Beijing has already said it would fire back with higher border taxes on \$60 billion of US wares.

Brighter spots in yesterday's investor survey came in judgments of Germany and the Eurozone's present economic situation, which both gained, although views of the single currency bloc remained negative overall. Looking ahead, economic expectations for the euro area dropped sharply, entering negative territory at -1.6. —AFP

owns HVB, a large German lender based in Munich. But the Italian bank, which has been concentrating on its own turnaround plan that concludes this year, had been waiting first to see the outcome of merger talks between Commerzbank and its larger Frankfurt neighbor, Deutsche Bank.

In recent weeks, those talks unravelled, placing Commerzbank, which has a market valuation of around 9.3 billion euros (\$10.4 billion), back on the agenda for UniCredit Chief Executive Jean Pierre Mustier.

The advances of UniCredit come as the Dutch bank ING Groep has also shown interest in Commerzbank, sources familiar with the matter said. One person with knowledge of those informal talks described them as "intensive". Mustier has hired Lazard in the hope that Assmussen can lobby for the deal with finance minister Olaf Scholz. Both have roots in the German Social Democrat Party.

UniCredit, JPMorgan, Lazard, Commerzbank and Germany's finance ministry declined to comment. Assmussen did not immediately respond to a request for comment. —Reuters

## US-China trade battle knocks German investor confidence

FRANKFURT: Confidence among German investors fell back in May, a closely-watched survey showed yesterday, as Europe's largest economy fretted over the knock-on effects of the US-China trade conflict. Expectations for economic performance in the coming months dropped 5.2 points compared with April, to -2.1, according to the ZEW institute's regular sounding of almost 200 analysts and financial players.

"Financial market experts continue to expect restrained economic growth for the coming six months," ZEW president Achim Wambach said in a

## UniCredit advances toward takeover bid for Commerzbank

FRANKFURT/LONDON: UniCredit has stepped up preparations for a potential bid for Germany's Commerzbank by hiring investment bankers, including a former top German official, three people familiar with the matter said.

UniCredit had engaged Lazard and its banker Joerg Asmussen, the former German deputy finance minister, along with JP Morgan on a possible takeover, the sources said, for a potential deal that could see one of Italy's largest lenders pivot away from its struggling home country towards Germany.

Although it is unclear whether and when a bid could be made, UniCredit's top management has long been interested in expanding in Germany, several sources familiar with their thinking said. It already

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## Business

# Easa Husain Al-Yousifi and Johnson Controls launch York DX, VRF in Kuwait

## Product seminar held to unveil state-of-the-art energy efficient residential equipment



Managers of Easa Husain Al-Yousifi &amp; Sons and Johnson Controls



Dr Adel Al-Yousifi



Trophy being presented



Managers of Johnson Control



Guests attending the event

**KUWAIT:** Over 200 guests joined Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons Company and Johnson Controls at a product seminar on 1st May 2019 in Kuwait to witness the launch of York DX and VRF, state-of-the-art Energy Efficient Residential Equipment. In partnership with their exclusive agent in Kuwait, Johnson Controls successfully showcased units at the seminar which was warmly accepted by the customers, consultants and engineers who participated at the event. Abdelrhman Obeid (Johnson Controls VP & GM Ducted DX - EMEALA region) and Dr Adel Al Yousifi (Senior Vice Chairman of Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons Company) welcomed the attendees to the seminar.

As per official statement by Johnson controls, "The main objective of the seminar was to launch the new products from York, namely the new high efficient rooftop package series fully made in US factory's. Moreover The product will be meeting the minimum KW/TR as regulated by MEW & PAI.

Kuwait has some of the highest temperatures in the Middle East region, a high per capita income and a rapidly growing population. Likewise, the region records one of the highest ambient temperatures during summer time. Therefore, the government decided to consider the efficiency of the equipment at 48 degree C (118.4 degree F) ambient temperature. The regulations are imposed on new installations of all types of air conditioning equipment and is measured in terms of (kW/Tr). Considering all these factors, the air conditioning market in this region is undoubtedly an attractive growth opportunity that Johnson Controls is keen on leveraging on.

The new revision of the Ministry of Electricity & Water (MEW) requirement was issued on 2018 and the need for energy savings will be an important consideration for these MEW requirements. Likewise, the Public Authority of Industry (PAI) also introduced a new requirement of energy label, applicable to AC

units of 70k BTU/h with minimum energy efficiency of 1.5 Kw/Tr."

Johnson Controls Kuwait proudly worked together with Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons Company at this product seminar, a family-owned and managed official distributor of YORK brand in this region. The Engineering Service Group is divided into three divisions related to York brand, build and design for villas, direct sales and MEP divisions, with the biggest warehousing facilities in Kuwait for York PACU and DS only, with service center and fully-equipped central workshop for duct fabrication. Al-Yousifi Group is a financially strong and a well-reputed local company in Kuwait.

"We are happy with the turnout of the seminar and truly this is proof that good partnerships result to successful initiatives. Together with Johnson Controls, we are aiming to continue serving the Kuwait market by providing them with solutions to their requirements and these new YORK products

launched tonight will definitely be a valuable addition to our current portfolio," said by a high official spokesman from Al-Yousifi group.

As the seminar ended, a short honoring ceremony was carried out by Johnson Controls in recognition of the long-term partnership that started in 1989. A plaque of appreciation was presented to Easa Husain Al-Yousifi Co, and was presented by Abdurrahman Obeid (Johnson Controls VP & GM Ducted DX - EMEALA region) to Eng Jasem Al-Yousifi, Managing Director of Al-Yousifi Group.



Abdurrahman Obeid

## Burgan Bank's contact center recognized as best 'Contact Center'

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank recently won the best 'Contact Center' awards in recognition of its outstanding efforts on customer service. Driven to provide unique services to its customers through advanced solutions and integration of international standards, Burgan Bank was presented the distinction by INSIGHTS Middle East. The ceremony took place in Dubai with the participation of more than 200 centers in the Middle East.

Demonstrating exemplary performance in customer contact and experience, Burgan Bank's 'Contact Center' participants were commended for their high level of professionalism, state of the art services, and efficient approach to managing customer relations. Burgan Bank's contact center operates 24/7 providing full retail banking inquiries and services, where in all calls are recorded for monitoring and training purposes. The Contact Center operations include handling both incoming and outgoing inquiries, quality assurance and complaints management to ensure seamless banking operations.

INSIGHTS Middle East, a Dubai-based enterprise is the only Call Centre dedicated professional services organization in the Middle East. Now in its fourteenth year, the INSIGHTS Middle East Call Centre Awards Competition is the undisputed regional benchmark for remote customer interaction success. It is widely acclaimed as the most comprehensive, rigorous and strategy-aligned contest of its type in the world. The award was presented by Dominick Keenaghan, CEO, and President of INSIGHTS Middle East to Munther Al-Saleh, Burgan Bank Contact Center Senior Manager and Assistant Manager, Ali Zaarour during the event.



Munther Al-Saleh, and Ali Zaarour



Munther Al-Saleh, Senior Manager - Contact Center at Burgan Bank receiving the award from Dominick Keenaghan, CEO and President of INSIGHTS Middle East.

## Jazeera launches special flight to Baku for UEFA Europa League final

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, yesterday announced that it has scheduled a return flight to Baku to allow football enthusiast to enjoy the final game of the UEFA Europa League which will see Chelsea play against Arsenal at the Olympic Stadium in Baku.

The flight departs from Kuwait on Wednesday, May 29 at 11:30am and arrives in Baku at 14:50 local time. The return flight leaves Baku on Thursday, May 30 at 5:00am and arrives in Kuwait at 7:20am.

Announcing the scheduled flight, Jazeera Airways CEO, Rohit Ramachandran, said: "We are excited to transport football fans from Kuwait to Baku to watch the UEFA Europa League season's biggest game just two hours away from Kuwait."

Jazeera Airways flies to 28 popular destinations across the Middle East, India and Europe comprising high-demand business, leisure, family and weekend destinations including Dubai, Bahrain, Doha, Beirut, Amman, Alexandria, Cairo, Sharm El Sheikh, Assiut, Luxor, Sohag, Jeddah, Riyadh, Taif, Najaf, Mashhad, Kochi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Lahore, Istanbul, Bodrum, Baku and Tbilisi.

## Gulf Bank launches Ramadan Card campaign with Lulu Hypermarket

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank has launched its Ramadan Cards Spend campaign in partnership with Lulu Hypermarket. The campaign, which will run from May until 30th June 2019, gives Gulf Bank cardholders the chance to win up to 500,000 Gulf points when using their credit cards at Lulu Hypermarkets across Kuwait. From 1st May until June 30th, 2019 customers using their Gulf Bank credit cards will be automatically entered into the final draw. For every KD 10 spent, Gulf Bank cardholders will receive one entry into the final draw, which will take place on 21st July 2019 in the presence of officials from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Ten lucky winners will win the Gulf Points at the conclusion of the campaign. The first prize winner will receive 500,000 Gulf points, while the second prize is for 250,000 Gulf points. The third prize, which will be given out to eight customers, is for 100,000 Gulf points each.



Flight	Date	From	To	Departure	Arrival
J9 603	May 29	Kuwait	Baku	11:30am	14:50
J9 604	May 30	Baku	Kuwait	05:00am	07:20am



Ahmad Al-Amir

The Gulf Points program is Kuwait's most rewarding program, giving Gulf Bank credit cardholders valuable points that can be redeemed on flights, hotels and seasonal travel packages from Al-Ghanim Travel. "Gulf Bank is committed to adding value to our customers' daily lives by enhancing their experiences at the places they frequent the most. As such, Gulf Bank is proud to partner with Lulu Hypermarket to introduce its newest campaign and give its cardholders the chance to win up to 500,000 Gulf points," said Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank. "We would like to wish Gulf Bank cardholders the best of luck, as well as extend our warmest wishes during the holy month of Ramadan."

Mohammed Harris, Regional Director of Lulu Hypermarket noted "We are happy to be associated with Gulf Bank, whose credit cards are among the most popular and frequently used cards in the country with some of the best benefits to its customers. He said that Lulu was glad that their customers will have the opportunity to benefit from the Card



Campaign. Lulu Management also extended a Happy and Blessed Ramadan to all their customers." Gulf Bank credit card comes packed with powerful travel benefits and convenience, which customers can avail during their summer holiday travel. Gulf Bank Credit Card customers can get free travel insurance for self and family. This travel insurance can also be used for getting Schengen Visa. Gulf Bank Credit cards provides customers with variety of travel offers and benefits such as discount on hotel booking, flight, car rentals such as Avis, Hertz etc. Additionally, Gulf Bank Credit card customers can also avail complimentary airport lounge access at over 600 airports across the world. Moreover, Gulf bank credit card customers earn Gulf Points on all their card spends during the summer campaign which can be redeemed for free flights, hotel booking or travel package.



What's On



Adriana Martin from Malaga FC speaking to the players.



# Ooredoo announces its sponsorship of the Women's Football Tournament 2019

Ooredoo Kuwait, has recently announced its sponsorship for The Women's Football Tournament 2019, taking place in Jaber Al Ahmad Stadium over the course of two weeks. This tournament gives female football players in Kuwait and the GCC the opportunity to participate in a unique sporting experience that elevates human conditions and empower a new generation of female athletes. The Women's Football Tournament is being hosted and managed by the Eighty Percent Sports Company that cares to cre-

ate a professional brand under which the best female talents in football compete and shine. The Tournament also has the support of the Spanish League (La Liga) represented by the Spanish player from the club Malaga CF Adriana Martin, in which she will hold exclusive workshops for all the players that signed up. Commenting on the sponsorship, Mijbil AlAyoub, Senior Director of Corporate Communication, at Ooredoo said: "Our main goal of sponsoring the Women's Football

Tournament is to support women with athletic skills and to encourage them to participate in events that contribute to creating a healthy lifestyle. This tournament offers a unique opportunity for women to demonstrate their skills in a challenging and energetic environment. AlAyoub further added that Ooredoo will look forward to participating in similar events in the future that care to empower Kuwaiti women." Worth mentioning that Ooredoo was the communications sponsor for Hana Eleven

Expo that is tailored for women, in which the exhibition gave visitors the chance to view a unique selected range of products and services local, regional and international companies, as well as creative, individuals, all within a unique showcasing experience targeting fashionable and empowered women. The Hana Eleven exhibition was held at Al Raya Ballroom where it provided support to Kuwaiti women participating with their business and projects, by marketing and supporting their products and ideas.



Mijbil AlAyoub



## LOYAC holds special ceremony to honor Dr Ali Al-Youha



LOYAC recently held a special ceremony to honor the NCCAL chairman, Dr Ali Al-Youha. The ceremony was attended by dignitaries and included a screening of a short documentary about Al-Youha. Speaking on the occasion, LOYAC's board chairperson, Fare'a Al-Saqqaf stressed that the ceremony held under the title of 'Thank You' brings both joy and worries after Al-Youha left his position as NCCAL secretary general.

Al-Saqqaf also noted that ever since assuming the role of NCCAL secretariat general in 2011, Al-Youha strongly believed that social responsibility is one major condition to achieve sustainable development. "It was not a coincidence that Kuwait made considerable progress and attracted much of the Arab and international media attention over the past seven years", Al-Saqqaf added.



## Jumeirah's E-Butler mobile platform introduced for personalized service

Guests staying at Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts can now experience a new personalized and convenient Jumeirah E-Butler service, direct from their smartphone anytime, anywhere. The service enables guests to communicate with our teams via instant messaging applications, to request room service, book spa treatments, request housekeeping services, make dinner reservations, order drinks and snacks to the beach or even book a future stay. The new 24/7 service allows guests to communicate via mobile, quickly and efficiently at the touch of a button.

The Jumeirah E-Butler service will be rolled out across the entire Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts portfolio by June 2019. Offering service beyond expectations is a key brand pillar and this is one of numerous initiatives being implemented. Jose Silva, Chief Executive Officer, Jumeirah Group, said: "We are

dedicated to continuously look for innovative, new and faster hospitality solutions to assist guests seamlessly and intuitively. Jumeirah E-Butler brings a more personal approach to service and is in line with our commitment to offer service beyond expectations."

Pedro Deakin, President of Operations, Jumeirah Group, said: "With Jumeirah E-Butler, we can delight guests by offering personalized service and more meaningful engagement, which goes hand in hand with high and luxurious levels of service. Through improved dialogue, we get a better insight into guests' personal preferences and can tailor our service individually to each guest. Jumeirah E-Butler is a forward-looking service to connect with our guests in an increasingly digital world. Guests can connect with us in their own time, wherever they are." The service will be rolled out through WhatsApp in all hotels.





Health & Science

# Catapulting spider winds up web to launch itself at prey

WASHINGTON: Just when you thought spiders couldn't get any more terrifying. A study published Monday has found that an arachnid species is capable of winding up its web to store up elastic energy, before releasing its grip and catapulting itself at furious speed toward its unsuspecting prey. The development places the triangle-weaver spider, or *Hyptiotes cavatus*, alongside humans as the other known species to amplify muscular energy with external devices, a feat people achieve with crossbows or ballistae.

Researcher Sarah Han, a doctoral student at the University of Akron in Ohio, said she had been intrigued by the spider during her walks in the woods. "It did this interesting mechanism while hunting we didn't really know that much about," she said. "People had written about it in an observational way, but no one had quantified it."

Han and colleagues observed the spiders under lab conditions, recording high-speed videos of them as they hunted flies. "The spider uses its muscles to wind back the web — like you use your arms to hold a bow string — then holds it in that position till a prey comes into contact with the web," she said — maintaining tension on its anchor line for hours on end. "When the spider releases the web, both

spider and web accelerate forward very rapidly." The rapidly moving web tangles around the prey insect, starting the capture process from a distance. The team's paper, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), found that the spiders launched themselves forward at accelerations of up to 772.85 meters per second squared — or the equivalent of 400 body lengths in a second.

They confirmed that the action was a result of latent energy stored in the silk being released, as opposed to just jumping using the power of its legs, by calculating the total power generated and finding it vastly exceeded the potential output of its muscle mass alone. The spider also maintained a fixed body posture after releasing its hind tarsal claw. According to the study, using a constructed device as a weapon offered numerous advantages, freeing the spider from the need to evolve specialized anatomy to generate and store energy.

It also allowed *Hyptiotes* to attack their prey from afar, reducing the potential for taking damage — advantages that also led humans to develop power-amplifying weapons. According to Han, there could be more species of spiders using stored energy in silk to capture prey, an area for potential fur-



This recent updated handout photograph courtesy of the University of Akron shows the *Hyptiotes cavatus* spider holding its web in tension, the anchor line at left, and the trap line (connected to main web) on the right. — AFP

ther study. Moreover, the team was unable to determine the spider's "catch mechanism" for holding on to the web, which could yield practical applications for humans down the line. "It's valuable in understanding how it can hold such a large amount of energy compared to its body size," said Han. "Maybe it's come up with something novel that we can use." — AFP

## 415.26 parts per million: CO2 levels hit historic high

PARIS: Scientists in the United States have detected the highest levels of planet-warming carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere since records began, sounding new alarm over the relentless rise of man-made greenhouse gas emissions. The Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii, which has tracked atmospheric CO2 levels since the late 1950s, on Saturday morning detected 415.26 parts per million (ppm).

It was also the first time on record that the observatory measured a daily baseline above 415 ppm. The last time Earth's atmosphere contained this much CO2 was more than three million years ago, when global sea levels were several meters higher and parts of Antarctica were blanketed in forest. "It shows that we are not on track with protecting the climate at all. The number keeps rising

and it's getting higher year after year," Wolfgang Lucht, from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) said. "This number needs to stabilize." But far from stabilizing, levels of CO2 — one of a trinity of greenhouse gases produced when fossil fuels are burnt — are climbing ever more rapidly.

Ralph Keeling, director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography's CO2 Program, said the trend would probably continue throughout 2019 — likely to be an El Nino year in which temperatures rise due to warmer ocean currents. "The average growth rate is remaining on the high end. The increase from last year will probably be around three parts per million whereas the recent average has been 2.5 ppm," he said. "Likely we're seeing the effect of mild El Nino conditions on top of ongoing fossil fuel use." — AFP

CLINIC

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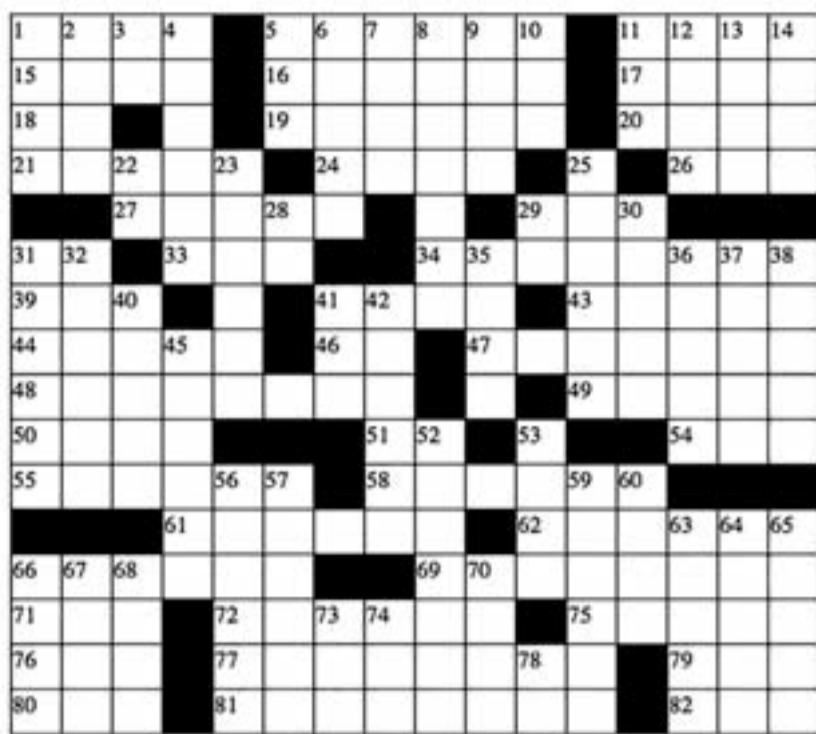
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2208



ACROSS

1. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
5. A loose narrow strip of skin near the base of a fingernail.
11. An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
15. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
16. Two performers or singers who perform together.
17. Toward the mouth or oral region.
18. A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.
19. Exultantly proud and joyful.
20. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
21. (Mesopotamia) God of agriculture and earth.
24. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
26. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
27. The formation of frost or ice on a surface.
31. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
33. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
34. A port city in northwestern Germany.
39. (British) Your grandmother.
43. Something (often something deceptively attractive) that catches you unawares.
44. An evergreen tree of the family Ulmaceae that grows in tropical America and Africa and Asia.
46. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
47. The trait of lacking restraint or control.
48. Mended or put in working order.
49. Of or relating to Saudi Arabia or its people.
50. The sixth month of the civil year.
51. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
54. School of Mahayana Buddhism asserting that enlightenment can come through meditation and intuition rather than faith.
55. A person of Polish descent.
58. Small genus of Eurasian herbs.
61. Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy (100-44 BC).
62. United States writer of poems and plays about racial conflict (born in 1934).
66. A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
69. Covered or wrapped with a bandage.
71. The cry made by sheep.
72. Spider monkeys.
75. Jordan's port.
76. A decree that prohibits something.
77. The front limb (or homologous structure in other animals such as a flipper or wing).
79. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
80. A egg unit of work or energy.
81. Agarics with pink spores but lacking both volva and annulus (includes some that are poisonous).
82. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. The (prehensile) extremity of the superlimb.
2. English essayist (1775-1834).
3. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
4. The basic unit of money in Macao.

5. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
6. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
7. Not far distant in time or space or degree or circumstances.
8. A specialist assigned to the staff of a diplomatic mission.
9. A distinct part that can be specified separately in a group of things that could be enumerated on a list.
10. Having leadership guidance.
11. The supernatural being conceived as the perfect and omnipotent and omniscient originator and ruler of the universe.
12. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
13. A small cake leavened with yeast.
14. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
22. Of or relating to the stomach and intestines.
23. Large Indian antelope.
25. A state in midwestern United States.
28. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
29. A hard brittle gray polyvalent metallic element that resembles iron but is not magnetic.
30. An Italian woman of rank.
32. A city in southern Texas on the Rio Grande.
35. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
36. The capital and largest city of Liechtenstein.
37. Become ground down or deteriorate.
38. A proteolytic enzyme secreted by the kidneys.
40. A small Asian country high in the Himalayas between India and Tibet.
41. (informal) Of the highest quality.
42. A member of an agricultural people of southern India.
45. A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
52. A bar to which heavy discs are attached at each end.
53. The compass point that is one point north of northeast.
56. A bottle with a stopper.
57. United States comedian and actor in silent films noted for his acrobatic skills and deadpan face (1895-1966).
59. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
60. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
63. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
67. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
68. A special way of doing something.
70. A genus of European owls.
73. The universal time coordinated when an event is received on Earth.
74. A zodiacal constellation in northern hemisphere between Cancer and Virgo.
78. A metric unit of length equal to one thousandth of a meter.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You can't ignore responsibilities today even though you'd like to get away and go on a grand adventure which may include sitting in the back yard reading a good book. Though you're nice and sympathetic to people, especially at work, you may find yourself at odds with some of them. You can't make everyone happy. Don't even try when you see how they're acting towards you. This is a great time to work with others as long as you give them their space. Harmony in all situations is something you crave now. Go out and laugh with friends you know feel as you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taking your time to think is the tone in life you're taking now. You'll be doing a lot of this for a few more days. If you're going to change jobs, think about making it one that serves others. You're in that mode because of things you've seen while working where you are now. If you don't get a job like that, then join a group that does good works for people. In that way you can get your "feel goods" in an even better way though you aren't being paid with money. Close personal ties are at the top of your mind now. Try to enjoy time later tonight with those you love.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You're going into an emotionally challenging time. This affects the parts of life that you really want stable such as your love life, family life, career and so much more. Changing course in your life is never easy but may be a must at this time. Outside influences could demand that you fix what's happening. Refinements and relationships are two items you require. They're the key to your emotional stability. Marriage may be a part of this issue that causes you to put work into your foundation or strips it from you. Harmony and peace are all you think you request. They'll happen after the work is done. Things will get better for you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Learning from others includes meeting with friends, neighbors, coworkers and any other group capable of telling you something you don't already know. Because of this, you find yourself socializing more at this time. That's not a bad thing even if it is time consuming. You're having fun with those who can help you. Make the most of it while you can. Take time to visit your siblings now. After all, they've been with you for most of your life, if now all. They're the best friends you didn't have to search out and who also has some of the same memories you do. Enjoy this enlightening day.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

What you were involved in yesterday has created considerable frustration both for home and your job. The blockage comes from not being able to push forward easily with your dreams. Getting what you want can bring other challenges. You have a strong desire to help another but you want to be helped at the same time. You may be very tense now because you realize you're going against the conventional grain which may bring hardships later. The devil on one shoulder says do what you want and the angel says do another. Who's going to win? Hopefully, it's you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Letting your emotions get the best of you can produce flare ups that may not be quenched anytime soon. You're sharp minded but that can be a problem as well as a solution. After making a decision, take a moment before you put your mouth into gear. You'll be glad you did. When you get off work today, take some good time to yourself. Possibly you may want to catch up on your favorite author or play with your pets. At any rate, you need the time. Everything needs to be in a state of harmony for you now. Make the effort to make items in your life better for you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

New beginnings mark this time. You become emboldened, even willful and impatient. An urge to strike out into something new leads you down a different path than you normally take. Suspicion pops its ugly head up making you look at everyone in a critical manner especially when they've given you reason before. Even with that happening, this is a time to make amends too. As you note, you may be pushed to because of your mindset and how you relate to others. They can't all be bad now. A good relationship is key to your feeling good about the world and yourself. Take chances but keep the best things handy.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Emotional flareups with someone younger on the job may damage your work in a way which can't be tolerated and can cost you money. Don't push too hard. Watch your words. Harmony is what you're looking for but you probably won't find it at work today. That's left for home and loved ones. If you don't have the unity you need, your life is upside down. Have a safe environment before letting your feelings be known. Right now, you need close personal ties which may come from marriage. If you're not married now, you may have a proposal soon made by either you or your lover.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Independence is what you're feeling now. Though you know the old saying, "No man is an island," is true, you want to do it yourself at work. Tradition has no room in your plans for work related ideas. You crave different. Be thoughtful of what you're doing now. Having to change what you've done today may be the problem you have tomorrow. Thoughts don't come that easily currently. Actually, your mind is on intimate items like being in love. Marriage could be in the cards for you. At least you're thinking about it in spite of all this independent nature your exhibiting. Love is about the only place you'll give any partnership at this time.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Marriage or other close personal ties are about the only thing that brings you pleasure now. You feel as if you're spitting into the wind at this time. That's as frustrating as it can get for you besides having to worry about losing your financial savvy. Know it will get better. There could be one or two bright spots in this day but that would be with your spouse or pets. Thinking of peaceful and harmonious subjects brings some ease since you love to keep things in your life on an even keel. Keep to yourself or loved ones today. Think with energy about what you want and plan to make it happen. That's manifesting.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Relationships are the key to what you need now. Having loving, not sexual, relations with friends and coworkers makes you feel better about the whole affair. Moving isn't always easy no matter what kind of movement it is, work or personal. Leaving people you care for is never the easiest thing to do but you're probably having to look that situation in the eye now. If not, try to realize that others are just like you and have some of the same issues. They don't like having to break up their lives either. Sympathy and understanding aids in what you're going through now more especially if it includes your home life.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Emotional support comes in the form of those you love from family to friends to your lover. Marriage may be in the cards if you're not already hitched. Loving your work and any practically motivated endeavor is what you are thankful for now. You're at your best helping others and making what they consider good choices on their issues. Being harmonious is something you take great stock in at this time. You want refinement. If it's not there, then your world is topsy-turvy. Relax when you can and breathe in a meditative manner to keep stress down. Look to your home life for feeling better mentally as well.

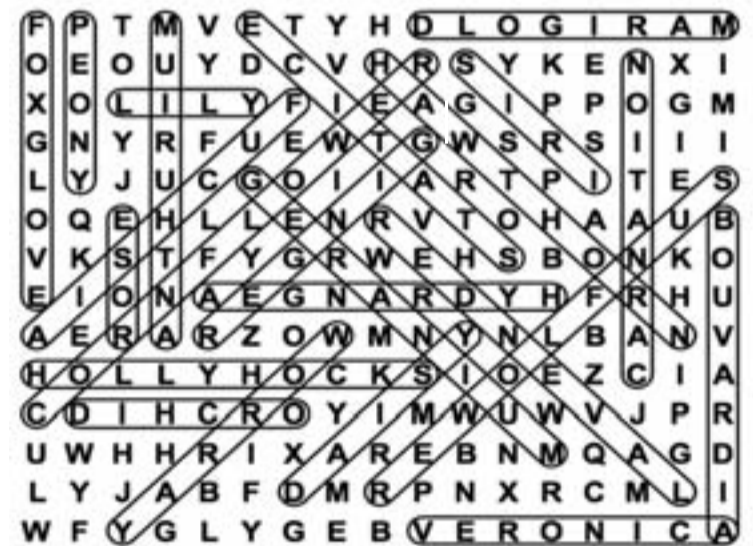
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Geometry 1 - Word Search



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|---------------|---------------|-------------|
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| CHORD         | PARALLELOGRAM | TRANSVERSAL |
| CIRCUMFERENCE | POLYGON       | TRIANGLE    |
| CONGRUENT     | POLYHEDRON    | VERTEX      |
| CYLINDER      | PYTHAGORAS    | VOLUME      |
| EQUATION      | RADIUS        |             |
| EQUILATERAL   | SCALENE       |             |
| HYPOTENUSE    | SLANT         |             |

Flowers 2 - Solution

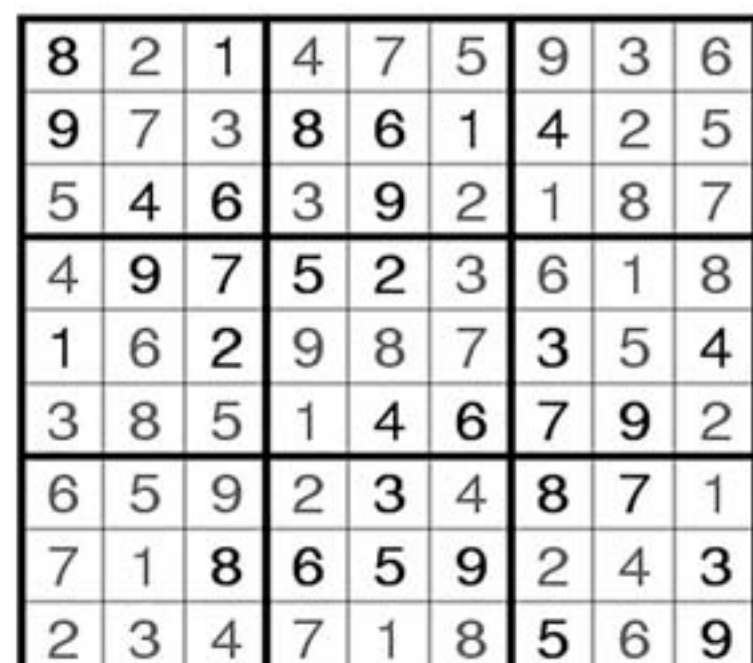


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| ANTHURIUM  | GINGER     | ORCHID    |
| BOUARDIA   | HAWTHORN   | PEONY     |
| CARNATION  | HOLLYHOCKS | ROSE      |
| CORNFLOWER | HYDRANGEA  | STATICE   |
| DAISY      | IRIS       | SUNFLOWER |
| FOXGLOVE   | LAVENDER   | VERONICA  |
| FUCHSIA    | LILY       | YARROW    |
| GERANIUM   | MARIGOLD   |           |

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019



Pedestrians walk past a mural of actress Marilyn Monroe, on the eve of the opening of the 72nd Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southeastern France. — AFP

## Cannes pressed to drop Delon award over claims French star hit women

The Cannes film festival opens Tuesday amid a row over its decision to honor the veteran French star Alain Delon who has been accused of being violent towards women. Women and Hollywood, one of the US lobby groups at the head of the #MeToo movement in the film industry, said the decision to give him an honorary Palme d'Or "sucked". Last year the festival vowed that there "must be zero tolerance with sexual harassment or abuse of any kind" amid red carpet protests led by Cate Blanchett of more than 80 Hollywood stars and women directors.

An online petition calling for the Delon prize

Melissa Silverstein tweeted that she was appalled that Cannes was honoring Delon given that he "has publicly admitted to slapping women and he has claimed that being gay is against nature."

### Eight broken ribs

"He has aligned himself with the racist and anti-Semitic National Front," she added, which was founded by his life-long friend Jean-Marie Le Pen, which has been renamed as the National Rally by his daughter Marine, who now leads the far-right party.

Delon admitted hitting women in November

But Cannes director Thierry Fremaux came to Delon's defense Monday, saying they were honoring his career not his views which the festival did not condone. "Alain Delon is allowed to think what he likes," he told AFP. "I think it's important to take a step back. What he's said sporadically here and there—we generalize and blend it all together." It's complicated to judge someone through today's lens, and judge things that were said and that happened years ago," Fremaux said, adding: "We're not giving him the Nobel Peace Prize."

### Kechiche denies sex assault

A petition calling for the honorary Cannes prize to be withheld clocked up nearly 18,000 signatures on the Care2 website. The festival unveiled a huge poster of a youthful Delon which will be draped above the red carpet on Sunday when he receives the honor. It pictures the actor in his breakthrough 1960 film, "Purple Noon", where he played a devastatingly handsome serial killer.

Festival director Fremaux refused to be drawn on the case of Kechiche—who won the Palme d'Or in 2013 with the lesbian love story "Blue Is the Warmest Color". A judicial source told AFP they are still investigating a complaint by a 29-year-old actress made against him in October—although they have yet to interview the director. The woman said she woke to find him fondling her after a dinner party in Paris in June. His lawyers said he "categorically denies the veracity of these accusations".

Kechiche, whose four-hour-long new film, "Mektoub, My Love: Intermezzo", is one of 21 movies vying for the Palme d'Or, was accused of harassing his crew on the gruelling shoot of "Blue Is the Warmest Color". Its two female stars Lea Seydoux and Adele Exarchopoulos complained about Kechiche's behaviour. However, Seydoux later said that she was proud of the movie and "I really like him as a director. The way he treats us? So what!"

A host of music as well as screen legends are due in Cannes for the 12-day festival including Bono, Iggy Pop, Selena Gomez and Elton John, who organizers hinted may play before the premiere of his biopic "Rocketman". Sylvester Stallone will also make an appearance to promote his latest "Rambo" movie.—AFP



In this file photo French actor Alain Delon gestures as he arrives to attend a state dinner for the Chinese president at the Elysee Palace in Paris, as part of a state visit. — AFP

to be stopped branded the 83-year-old actor a "racist, homophobic misogynist". The row came as the world's biggest film festival opens with one of the starriest line-ups in years. A host of Hollywood big names from Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio and Bill Murray to Julianne Moore and Elle Fanning are due on the Croisette.

The controversy broke after a new movie by Franco-Tunisian director Abdellatif Kechiche was selected to compete for the top prize despite police investigating him for an alleged sexual assault on a young actress. Kechiche denies the claim. Women and Hollywood founder

when he was questioned on French television about claims of domestic violence from his estranged son Alain-Fabien Delon.

"If a slap is macho, then I am macho," he said, adding that women had hit him and that he had never "broken" a woman. His son said the star of such screen classics as "The Leopard", "The Swimming Pool" and "Le Samourai" had beaten his mother, breaking eight of her ribs and her nose twice. Another son, Anthony Delon, took to Instagram earlier this month to confirm that he was locked in a cage with dogs by his father as a child "to toughen me up".

## S Korean court to rule on arresting K-pop star Seungri

South Korean pop star Seungri went to court yesterday for a hearing over whether he should be arrested on charges including prostitution in a snowballing sex scandal. The 28-year-old singer from popular boy band BIGBANG and his business partner are accused of arranging sex services for potential investors and rich clients at a nightclub owned by the pair. Dressed in a sharp black suit, Seungri—real name Lee Seung-hyun—quickly walked past a mob of reporters at the Seoul Central District Court, tight-lipped as he brushed off questions.

Hours later a somber-looking Seungri stepped out of the building, his hands cuffed and covered with a cloth, to be taken to a nearby detention centre to await the court decision, expected yesterday night. Police investigations have shown that Seungri and his partner procured a dozen prostitutes for a group of Japanese investors in 2015 at their upmarket Burning Sun nightclub, according to Yonhap news agency.

The pair also allegedly embezzled around 530 million won (US\$450,000) from the business and face charges of violating sanitary codes at Burning Sun, where drug peddling was allegedly commonplace and women are said to have been regularly raped. Seungri—who announced his retirement from showbusiness in March as the scandal ballooned—has denied the charges.

Other stars have been embroiled in the allegations, which have cast a shadow over the K-pop industry after investigations into Seungri revealed an online chatroom where a handful of male celebrities shared illegally filmed sex videos. Singer-songwriter Jung Joon-young, who ran the chatroom, was arrested in March after admitting to filming himself having sex and sharing the footage without his partners' consent. A member of boy band FT Island was arrested earlier this month while another figure has announced his retirement from the entertainment industry amid an ongoing probe.—AFP



Former BIGBANG boy band member Seungri, center, real name Lee Seung-hyun, is taken into custody as he leaves the High Court in Seoul. — AFP



## Lifestyle | Movies

## Edgy, dark and tolerated: 'China noir' seeks Cannes breakthrough

Tales from the shadowy edges of modern Chinese society aim to turn heads at the Cannes film festival, showing the growing scope and sophistication of the world's second-

Both films are part of a growing "mainland noir" film movement that is expanding the boundaries of a Chinese film industry strictly controlled by government censorship over topics such as violence, corruption and sex. Shot and situated far from the gleaming lights of modern China's metropolises, these films feature haunted anti-heroes dwelling on the edges of society. The box office success of 2017's critically lauded "Looming Storm"—about one man's hunt for a serial killer stalking a small town—showed that previously taboo subjects are increasingly tolerated by China's National Film Administration.

Diao's last crime thriller "Black Coal, Thin Ice" picked up the Golden Bear top prize at the Berlin Film Festival in 2014 with its gripping tale of a wronged policeman looking for redemption. It was also a global box office ground-breaker for low-budget Chinese films, collecting around \$17 million after successful domestic and limited international runs. "These are exciting times," said Alexandre Mallet-Guy, producer of "The Wild Goose Lake". "Our film is noir, with a very complex plot and it is very stylish."

#### Crime and corruption

Diao is currently locked away in an editing suite in Beijing working on a final cut of his new production, made with the support of companies in both China and France.

"It's even more stylish than 'Black Coal Thin Ice,'" said its Paris-based producer Mallet-Guy. "He is very influenced by noir. Most of the films from China that go international are genre films, actioners and those with big budgets. But hope-

fully we are seeing a new generation and a new style of film."

Over the past two decades the Chinese film market has gone from being very humble beginnings to one that produces around 600 movies a year with box office receipts now topping \$8.5 billion—second only to the North American market's \$11.4 billion. Chinese audiences have previously flocked to a string of locally produced blockbusters such as the bombastic military-themed "Wolf Warrior 2" (2017), which became China's biggest-grossing locally made film with takings of an estimated \$870 million.

But tastes appear to be changing. Last year saw the surprise phenomenal success of the Wen Muye-directed "Dying to Survive", which focused on the illicit trade for cancer drugs, and made an estimated \$450 million for its investors. At the same time, China's arthouse scene has been hotting up.

International festival heavyweight Marco Muller was among the first to introduce Chinese cinema to the world through his work with the Venice and Rotterdam festivals. Since 2017 the Italian has hooked up with leading Chinese director Jia Zhangke to put together the annual Pingyao Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon International Film Festival. Jia's last film "Ash is Purest White", which featured his long-time partner Zhao Tao, was in competition at Cannes last year, and also played with themes of crime and corruption.

#### Zhang film pulled

"Those are the films that sell well internationally," said Muller. "They are edgy, dark and

exciting. They still have to be approved by the various departments of government but it seems that more and more filmmakers are looking into noir." Like American "film noir", which first emerged in the 1920s and enjoyed its heyday in the 1940s and 1950s when movies' moral fiber was strictly controlled by the notorious Production Code, its Chinese variant centers on stories around crime set mostly in the shadowy fringes of society.

China recently introduced regulations that require filmmakers to be handed a "dragon seal" of approval before films are permitted to screen at festivals. But the production team behind "The Wild Goose Lake" say they have been given the all clear. Less is known about Zu's production, although the film has reportedly been officially passed to screen. However, Chinese officials are capable of last-minute interventions—and fame is no protection.

Zhang Yimou, the maker of "Raise the Red Lantern", and one of the country's best known auteurs, had to pull his latest movie, "One Second", from Berlin in February on government orders on the eve of the festival. Another Chinese movie "Better Days" that had been scheduled for a screening, did not get shown because it failed to get the go-ahead in time from Beijing's censors.—AFP



In this file photo Chinese director Diao Yinan poses with the Golden Bear for Best Film and the Silver Bear for Best Actor trophies during a press conference following the awarding ceremony of the 64th Berlinale Film Festival in Berlin. — AFP

largest movie market. The Diao Yinan-directed crime thriller "The Wild Goose Lake" is going head-to-head with the likes of Quentin Tarantino's highly anticipated "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" for the festival's top prize, the Palme d'Or. Similar gritty themes are expected to be explored in director Zu Fen's "Summer of Changsha", which is competing in the more edgy Un Certain Regard section.



Palm trees are seen seeping through a palm, similar to the Palme d'Or, on the opening day of the 72nd Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southeastern France. — AFP

## Cannes ups the glamour with \$1 billion facelift

After years of living off their glamorous reputation, Cannes's five-star hotels are getting a \$1-billion makeover to make them fit to host Hollywood's A-listers. With eye-watering room rates during the film festival—which starts Tuesday—the French Riviera town's ageing grand behemoths are spending a fortune to get back their glitz.

Its seafront strip, La Croisette, has become a long line of luxury boutiques in recent years, with top-end French and Italian brands like Chanel, Dior and Gucci vying for the jet set's petty cash. But over the years, some of the town's historic hotels have been caught resting on their laurels—a fact not lost on clients. "We went to sleep a bit," admitted Michel Chevillon, head of the Cannes hoteliers union, which counts 133 establishments among its members.

"Bookings didn't fall but there was a drop in customer satisfaction levels. And then the big international chains arrived. "So to keep our share of the market, we had to get it just right," he added. Huge sums are now being invested in the town's luxury hotels, Chevillon said, none more so than by the Qatari owners of the Belle Epoque Carlton hotel, whose domed turrets elegantly dominate the seafront strip. Their spending on the facelift is likely to reach 300 million euros (\$337 million), he said.

#### 34,000 euros a night

But such an outlay was crucial, Chevillon argued, admitting that the sector had "got into a bit of a rut". He reeled off a string of hotels that have undergone major work or expansion in recent years—the Radisson Blu and the Marriott in 2009, then the Majestic in 2010 with a new wing. The Martinez, Cannes biggest hotel with 409 rooms, reopened last year after an "unprecedented" 150-million-euro upgrade in which everything was redone. Today, its swankiest suite costs 34,000 euros a night during the summer—a rate that soars to an undisclosed amount during the film festival.

"And if you look at all the smaller independent hotels, which account for half of the 5,500 rooms in town, and which have been investing all year round... you're not far from a billion euros over the decade," he calculated. "For a town of 70,000 residents, that's rare." The myth of the French Riviera began in the late 19th-century when

the European aristocracy began wintering there, with Cannes quickly becoming a destination to rival Paris, Barcelona, Vienna and Budapest.

Today its palatial villas are owned by Russian oligarchs and wealthy Gulf potentates, with Cannes a key destination on the luxury yacht circuit with Rolex, Louis Vuitton and Chopard just a few of the 70 top brands jostling for space along La Croisette. It is also one of Europe's top conference destinations drawing thousands for MIPCOM, the world's biggest television and streaming market, and dozens of other prestigious events.

#### Buffing up 'the Bunker'

This week some 40,000 people from the world of cinema will descend on the town, among them 5,000 media professionals, with hotels facing increasing competition from the explosion of private lets organized by the likes of Airbnb. Roughly 6,000 homes will be let out this year. In such a competitive market, hoteliers need to stay ahead of the curve in terms of design, using fabrics and materials that are bang on-trend and technology that is cutting edge, Chevillon said.

"After five years, decor is no longer fashionable. After seven, it's not considered chic and after 10 it's somewhat obsolete," he added. The Martinez has bet on an unusual mix of pastel tones to complement its Art Deco heritage, which no hotelier would have dared in the past. The Palais des Festivals—where the films in competition are shown—has also undergone a major makeover.

Known as the Bunker, this white concrete colossus with tinted windows brings in an annual \$65 million euros from more than 50 events per year, of which 190 million euros is generated by the film festival. Hastily built in 1982, it has recently undergone 100 million euros of renovation work, with a further investment of 62 million euros due by 2024, to add another cinema on the sixth floor and revamp areas around the red carpet. "It will never be the Louvre but it's definitely more attractive than it was," admitted Cannes mayor David Lisnard.—AFP

## Five rising stars to watch for at Cannes film festival

With the Cannes film festival's main competition bursting with big-name stars and directors like Quentin Tarantino and Terrence Malick, we pick five rising talents to watch out for at this year's festival:

#### Camila Morrone

Up to now she may be best known as Leonardo DiCaprio's impossibly glamorous girlfriend, but the Argentinian model is about to make a name for herself as an actress to be reckoned with. Her stand-out performance as a daughter of an opioid-addicted Iraq veteran in "Mickey and the Bear" brings real depth to the US indie film, which is showing in the festival's ACID section. Morrone, 21, has not picked her acting talent—nor her looks—up off the ground.

Both her parents were models and her mother Lucila Sola is a television star in Buenos Aires, although the 43-year-old is probably best known as Al Pacino's erstwhile partner. The pair are no longer together—the 75-year-old Pacino having taken up with a younger actress last year. Morrone had regarded him as her "stepfather" during their nine years her mother and Pacino were together. The two will be reunited on the Cannes red carpet with Pacino starring in Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"

#### Mati Diop

The first black African woman to compete for Cannes' top prize, actress-turned-director Diop comes from Senegalese film royalty. She is the niece of Djibril Diop Mambety, the pioneering maker of "Touki Bouki", a 1973 film premiered at Cannes which went on to inspire Beyonce and Jay-Z. The pop power couple referenced the movie, in the form of the bull-horn handlebars of its heroes' motorbike, in the poster for their 2014 tour "On The Run II".

French-born Diop, 36, the daughter of musician Wasis Diop, has already made a documentary about her uncle's ground-breaking story about a couple who try to ride their bike all the way to France. Now she is making history herself, she told the Hollywood Reporter she feels a "mixture of apprehension and joy... What I represent exceeds me and doesn't belong to me." Her film, "Atlantics", is also about a group of construction workers who decide to leave Senegal for a better life in Europe.



Argentinean model Camila Morrone

#### Robert Eggers

His debut film "The Witch" is regarded as a modern horror classic, and the famously obsessive young US director seems to have made no compromises for his second, "The Lighthouse", which is premiering in the Directors' Fortnight. Conditions on the set were so harsh, according to Robert Pattinson, who heads the cast alongside Willem Dafoe, that it was the "closest I've come to punching a director", the actor admitted. An exhausted Pattinson described how he remonstrated with Eggers after he had to do one take five times on a freezing Nova Scotia beach.

"I feel like you're just spraying a fire hose in my face," he told the director. "And he was like, 'I was spraying a fire hose in your face.' It was like some kind of torture," said Pattinson. The pair are still firm friends, however, with the star sworn to silence on the plot of the historical black-and-white horror film "set in the world of old sea-faring myths".

#### Waad al-Kateab

The Syrian documentary maker faced an uphill struggle bringing her film to Cannes. "For Sama" records five years of al-Kateab's own life as an aspiring journalist in her besieged hometown of Aleppo, marrying one of the last doctors in the city and giving birth to her daughter, to whom the film is dedicated. The documentary is a kind of letter to the little girl, explaining how she was born into the conflict and what happened to her home.

Al-Kateab, who now lives in London, won an Emmy award in 2017 for her films from inside Aleppo for Britain's Channel 4 News, which are believed to be the most watched of any reports from the war. Her shocking footage of the struggle to save babies and children in the city's final hospital—in which she ended up living—brought home the horror inflicted on civilians.

#### Jessica Hausner

The Austrian director who began as a script assistant on Michael Haneke's "Funny Games" is the running for the Palme d'Or with her first film in English, "Little Joe". This science-based chiller with Ben Whishaw, Emily Beecham and Kerry Fox about a genetically engineered plant which affects every living creature it comes into contact with could well be her break-out film. After making her Cannes debut with "Lovely Rita" way back in 2001, Hausner, now 46, has slowly built a glowing reputation with a handful of films such as "Hotel", "Amour Fou" and "Lourdes", which picked up four prizes at Venice in 2009.—AFP



Austrian director and producer and member of the Un Certain Regard Jury Jessica Hausner



Actress Mati Diop



## Schumacher documentary headed to Cannes

Former Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher will be the subject of a new documentary featuring unseen archive footage and rare interviews, producers announced on Sunday before the Cannes Film Festival. The film, directed by German duo Michael Wech and Hanns-Bruno Kammertoens, was made with the blessing of the

driver's family and will include interviews with them as well as companions and competitors, the filmmakers said.

Schumacher turned 50 on Jan. 3 but has not been seen in public since a skiing accident in the French Alps five years ago which left him with severe head injuries and in a medically-induced coma. The film is in

post-production, with international rights sales to be launched at the Marche du Film, a business event held in parallel to the cinema showcase on the French Riviera that kicks off on May 14.

Other films set to be introduced to buyers include a documentary about rock band Led Zeppelin. As yet untitled, it will feature band members Jimmy Page,

Robert Plant and John Paul Jones. Schumacher remains motor racing's most successful driver, with a record 91 grand prix wins. He won his first two titles with Benetton in 1994 and 1995 before five in a row with Ferrari between 2000-2004. In January his family released a statement saying he was in "the very best of hands". —Reuters

## 'Angry Birds' fly to Cannes for movie sequel

The parade of glammed-up movie stars at the Cannes Film Festival got off to an unorthodox start on Monday with a crowd of enormous, fluffy birds hogging the limelight on the Croisette boulevard to mark the launch of the "Angry Birds" sequel. On the eve of the 72nd Cannes film fest - set to kick off officially with the premiere of Jim Jarmusch's zombie film "The Dead Don't Die" on Tuesday - producers of the animated movie celebrated its planned release in early August.

"The Angry Birds Movie 2", like the first installment in the franchise, is based on a Rovio video game where players use a slingshot to attack pigs who steal the birds' eggs. The first Angry Birds, released in 2016, earned about \$350million at the box office and gave a boost to Rovio's game sales, helping the company swing to an annual profit after years of falling earnings, job cuts and divestments.

The sequel - in which the birds join forces with their green pig rivals to defeat a common foe - features Jason Sudeik as lending his voice to Red, the main protagonist, with Bill Hader, Josh Gad and Danny McBride also voicing characters. "We have an amazing crew that we have been working with, and together, we played around, we experimented, we found really funny moments," said director Thurop Van Orman, as people wearing oversized Angry Bird costumes entertained onlookers. Producer John Cohen said he hoped there would be a third movie to follow. —Reuters

## 'Harry Potter' actor to star in new S Africa jailbreak drama

"Harry Potter" star Daniel Radcliffe has finished filming a new thriller where he plays a white anti-apartheid activist who escaped from one of South Africa's toughest jails, its distributor said yesterday. Based on a true story, the breakout tale "Escape From Pretoria" is drawn from Tim Jenkin's account of his dramatic escape from the notorious Pretoria Maximum Security Prison with his friend Stephen Lee in 1979.

Already in post-production after shooting was wrapped up in South Africa three weeks ago, fresh footage will be on show at the Cannes film festival which began yesterday, Arclight Films said. Jenkin, now 70, was sentenced to 12 years in prison for handing out leaflets supporting the then banned African

National Congress. But he managed to make a set of wooden keys for a series of doors inside the jail, which housed the country's death row.

Using a device made from a broom handle and a mirror he had hidden in his cell, Jenkin opened his cell door and then freed his neighbor and friend Lee. Both managed to slip out of the tightly guarded prison and eventually flee to London. The movie is directed by Francis Annan, a rising young black British director who also wrote the script. Radcliffe, 29, is also playing the lead in the action comedy "Guns Akimbo", which is now in post-production. —AFP



In this file photo British actor Daniel Radcliffe reacts after unveiling his dedicated beach locker room on the Promenade des Planches in the northwestern sea resort of Deauville, as part of the 42nd Deauville US Film Festival. — AFP

## Who's who on the Cannes film festival jury

After a female-majority jury last year when the festival was dominated by the #MeToo movement, five men and four women will decide this year's winner of Cannes' top Palme d'Or prize.

### Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu

He may now have five Oscars under his belt for the likes of "Birdman" and "The Revenant", but it all began for the Mexican director at Cannes way back in 2000 with "Amores Perros". A regular on the Croisette since that staggering debut - although he has never picked up the Palme - this year he returns as the head of the jury. Now 55, Inarritu is one of the "three amigos" of Mexican auteurs with Alfonso Cuaron of "Roma" fame and Guillermo del Toro ("The Shape of Water") who have been lording it over arthouse cinema lately. Like them, he is a director with a strong social conscience, bringing a virtual reality installation on the migrant crisis to Cannes in 2017 that went on to win a special Oscar.

### Elle Fanning

At 21 the American actress may be the baby of the jury, but the sometime model has a long career behind her. She made her Cannes debut at just eight in Inarritu's "Babel", six years after making her screen debut as a toddler in the Oscar-nominated "I Am Sam" alongside Sean Penn and her older sister, Dakota Fanning.

A regular for Cannes favourite Sofia Coppola, appearing in "Somewhere" and "The Beguiled" in 2017, she turned up on the Riviera again the following year in Nicolas Winding Refn's "The Neon Demon" as a teenage model whose beauty sparks not just jealousy among her peers but a veritable bloodbath. Despite her status as a screen and catwalk queen, the young star has been spotted queuing up with the hoi-polloi for an ice cream at Cannes when not on red carpet duty.



Mexican director and President of the Jury of the Cannes Film Festival Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu poses during a photocall at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

### Maimouna N'Diaye

Best known to millions of children as the voice of the mother of the heroic little boy from the animated classic "Kirikou and the Sorceress", N'Diaye is one of west Africa's biggest stars. A documentary maker and activist as well as actress, she grew up in Guinea, but her parents hail from Senegal and Nigeria. She has also spent large parts of her life working in neighboring Ivory Coast and in Burkina Faso after studying in France. She first came to notice in Georgian Otar Iosseliani's "Chasing Butterflies" in 1992 and won the African Academy best actress award in 2015 for "Eye of the Storm", where she played a lawyer defending a former child soldier on war crimes charges.

### Kelly Reichardt

The queen of US indie "slow cinema" made a big critical splash - ever so quietly - with her last film, "Certain



Elle Fanning

Women", a restrained but heartfelt portrait of women in small-town Montana with Michelle Williams, Laura Dern and Kristen Stewart. It won the top prize at the London film festival with The Guardian's Peter Bradshaw marveling at how even an opening hostage drama never ruffled its quiet force. "It's directed so calmly it feels as if we're watching a mild disagreement at a church coffee morning," he wrote.

Williams was also the lead in Reichardt's first film at Cannes, "Wendy and Lucy", which was also widely acclaimed, and her next movies, "Meek's Cutoff" and "Night Moves" were both premiered at the rival Venice film festival. Many had predicted that her latest film, "First Cow", might make the Cannes' line-up this year, but it is still in post-production.

### Yorgos Lanthimos

The Greek director who scored a huge hit this year with his Oscar winning "The Favourite", scored his first big international success with "Dogtooth" at Cannes in 2009. He was back to win the jury prize in 2015 with another original off-kilter look at the world in "The Lobster", his



Maimouna N'Diaye

first film with Rachel Weisz and Colin Farrell. He teamed the Irish actor with Nicole Kidman in his even freakier "The Killing of a Sacred Deer", which also made its bow at the festival, where he explored family and power relationships with an unforgettable twist.

### Pawel Pawlikowski

The passionate Polish director, who won best director last year for his black-and-white love story "Cold War" which went on to get three Oscar nominations, made his name with a string of brilliant documentaries for the BBC about post-Soviet Russia and the war in the former Yugoslavia. He switched to fiction in 2001 with the acclaimed "Last Resort" which he followed up with "My Summer of Love".

He made his dark masterpiece "Ida" after moving back from Britain to his native Poland. His story of a nun who discovers she was born Jewish during World War II won him the best foreign language film Oscar but the wrath of some conservative Catholics at home. But few - even hardened hearts - could resist the romantic force of "Cold War", which was based on his own parent's stormy relationship, and which made a star of actress Joanna Kulig.

### Alice Rohrwacher

The great female hope of the Italian arthouse cinema won best screenplay at Cannes last year for "Happy as Lazzaro" having won the grand prix (second prize) three years earlier for "The Wonders" starring her sister Alba Rohrwacher and Monica Bellucci. The 36-year-old philosophy graduate made her Cannes debut in 2011 with "Heavenly Body" about a teenage girl going through a religious crisis.

### Robin Campillo

The writer of the Oscar-nominated "The Class", which also won the Palme d'Or in 2008, created something of a sensation at the festival two years ago with "120 BPM (Beats per Minute)", his sweeping portrayal of AIDS activism during the darkest years of the crisis in Paris. It was a huge hit and France and proved a big international break-out for the screenwriter, who came to directing rather late. Campillo, 56, also wrote and directed "Les Revenants" which was later turned into an acclaimed television series, "The Returned".

### Enki Bilal

The Belgrade-born author of futuristic and apocalyptic graphic novels is something of a legend in his adopted home of France, where his books are often instant bestsellers. At 67, he has also directed three feature films including "Bunker Palace Hotel" (1989) with Jean-Louis Trintignant and Carole Bouquet and "Tykko Moon" (1996). —AFP



Jury members pose during a photocall at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.





A view of the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies in Yerevan.



## In robotics classes, Armenian teens dream of high-tech future

In a sleek classroom in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, one of the poorest post-Soviet republics, 14-year-old Nazeli Ter-Petrosyan peers at the screen of her Apple Mac. During a computer programming course offered at the high-tech Tumo school, Ter-Petrosyan and her classmates learn how to digitize medieval texts. "I'm developing a program to enable artificial intelligence to read old manuscripts," said the teen. Her computer screen features a page from a 15th century Bible held at Armenia's famed repository of ancient writings, the Matenadaran.



Pegor Papazian, chief development officer of the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies, speaks during an interview in Yerevan. — AFP photos

Armenia, which is known for its rich history and troubled past, has grappled with poverty, unemployment and a brain drain since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. But despite a stagnant economy, Armenia's tech sector has been booming over the past decade, boosting hopes that

one day the resource-poor country can become a global IT powerhouse. Tumo is a cutting edge, after-school learning centre, where around 7,000 Armenians aged 12 to 18, from all walks of life, study for free.

Packed with hundreds of computers with industry standard software, 3D printers, video cameras and an animation studio, Tumo gives youngsters an opportunity to study web design, robotics, animation, music, digital media and more. The project has been so successful that there is already a Tumo school in Paris and plans for others in Europe and the United States are under way.

In one of the centre's workshops, students are buzzing with excitement as they learn how to build robots from Lego kits and program them to perform tasks like collecting rubbish or making a salad. "We are working on projects that we will be able to later use in our everyday life," said Davit Harutyunyan, 14, as he showed off a half-assembled robot.

### One third in poverty

The South Caucasus country of three million people boasts a vibrant startup scene and its tech workers have been a driving force behind a wave of peaceful protests that ousted the old elite from power in 2018. Tumo aims to raise the next generation of tech professionals and play a role in creating a knowledge-based economy in a country where 30 percent of the population live in poverty. "We've got very ambitious plans," chief development officer Pegor Papazian said. "We want to become one of the world's most competitive labor markets," added Papazian, who holds a master's degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States.

The non-profit centre was founded in 2011 by Sam and Sylva Simonian, a US-based couple who are part of the influential Armenian diaspora formed largely as a result of



This handout picture shows German Chancellor Angela Merkel visiting the center's premises in Yerevan.

World War I massacres by the Ottoman forces. The school occupies two floors of a six-storey pink tufa stone building, located on the outskirts of Yerevan in the shadow of Mount Ararat which stands just across the border in Turkey. The Simonians provided the initial investment of \$60 million to set up the project but it is now largely self-sustaining, with the centre renting out several floors to tech companies.

The school's gleaming facade and huge windows contrast with dilapidated Soviet-era residential buildings nearby. Inside the futuristic, open-plan premises, mobile computer workstations allow students to move around freely. "In Armenia what Tumo offers is extraordinary," Julian Sefton-Green, a professor of new media education at Deakin University, in the Australian city of Melbourne, told AFP in emailed comments. Tumo offers "a particular vision of a techno future," said Sefton-Green, who visited the school and studied its educational model.

### From Merkel to Kanye West

On average, students spend two to three years at the centre. They create their own learning plans and are assisted by instructors, many of whom come from companies such as Google and Pixar. There are no grades and, at the end of their studies, students receive digital portfolios showcasing their work. Tumo has established three satellites across the country and Azerbaijan's breakaway region of Nagorny Karabakh. Plans are under way to open more than 20 centers over the next 10 years.

Papazian said the staff had been struck by the poverty in which some of their students live. "We are helping them discover a new world," he added. The authorities have embraced the initiative and it has become a ritual for foreign dignitaries and other top guests to visit the school. Grammy-award winning rapper Kanye West, whose wife Kim Kardashian is of Armenian descent, toured the premises in 2015.

Last year, the school also earned rave reviews from German Chancellor Angela Merkel. "This Tumo is not for Armenia only. It's international. It's a philosophy," she said in August during the first visit to Armenia by a German chancellor. In some ways, the Tumo project could be viewed as being ahead of its time for Armenia, which still lacks the rule of law and a stable economy, among other things.

Sefton-Green said that only time would tell if the pioneering school would help reshape the country. "Unless there is structural economic response to the kind of investment Tumo has offered, it is possible that benefits will not be felt," he said. "However the country itself is in a good place to be able to rise to these kinds of challenges." —AFP

## OMEGA celebrates 50th anniversary of first lunar landing

OMEGA hosted a star-filled tribute to the 50th anniversary of the first lunar landing with George Clooney and an impressive line-up of NASA veterans: including Charlie Duke and Thomas Stafford. It was a gathering of greats at Florida's Kennedy Space Center when OMEGA paid tribute to the mission that made history. After a day of discussions on a range of space-related subjects, media and VIP guests enjoyed a "Golden Moments" dinner served beneath the impressive Saturn 5 rocket, which was attended by George Clooney, Amal Clooney, Charlie Duke and Thomas Stafford.

Clearly proud of the Swiss brand's claim-to-fame as the first watch worn on the Moon, President and CEO of OMEGA Raynald Aeschlimann summed up the spirit of the occasion. "It's a huge achievement to land on another world. I can't think of a better reason to raise a glass in tribute." Though OMEGA Ambassador George Clooney drew a great deal of media attention, the self-effacing actor was

determined to ensure the spotlight stayed focused on his fellow guests.

"It's a great pleasure to be here - and an honor. I have enormous respect for the people who made the Apollo missions such a success," George Clooney was joined on stage by veteran of four NASA space missions and commander of Apollo 10 Lieutenant General Thomas Stafford, along with CAPCOM for Apollo 11 and Apollo 16 lunar module pilot Charlie Duke. Reflecting on the pioneering spirit of the Apollo era, Charlie Duke described it as an exciting time but stressed that the success of the 1969 mission was down to hard work and commitment.

"We were heading to the Moon, but we were also grounded, very realistic, and we never took success for granted, not once." Apollo 10's Thomas Stafford talked about the "alien yet familiar" qualities of the lunar surface, and spoke proudly of his role in Apollo 11's glory. "It was a great honor for me to play my part in the successful mission

that followed." Also in attendance were Astronaut and artist Nicole Stott, NASA pilot and ISS commander Terry Virts, ESA astronaut and NASA veteran Jean-Francois Clervoy, and former NASA engineer and the man behind the Moonwatch, Jim Ragan.

To mark the 50th anniversary OMEGA released a 42 mm Speedmaster in 18K Moonshine gold - an exclusive new alloy which offers a paler hue than traditional yellow gold and higher resistance to fading over time. The design is replete with lunar history as well as modern materials and a superb new movement: OMEGA's Master Chronometer Caliber 3861 - a manual-winding OMEGA Co-Axial escapement movement with Moonshine gold plated main plate and bridges, as well as burgundy markings.





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[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)

## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Hot with light to moderate freshening at times variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 40 km/h causing rising dust over open areas and some high clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 14/05/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	42 °C	32 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	42 °C	21 °C		
ABDALY	42 °C	25 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	42 °C	26 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	40 °C	24 °C		
SALMIYAH	39 °C	30 °C		
AHMADI	37 °C	29 °C		
NUWAISIB	40 °C	26 °C		
WAFRA	42 °C	25 °C		
SALMY	40 °C	25 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	05/15	Hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	43 °C	26 °C	NW	12 - 45 km/h
Thursday	05/16	Hot	42 °C	27 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	05/17	Hot and some high clouds will appear	41 °C	25 °C	NW-SE	10 - 32 km/h
Saturday	05/18	Hot and Partly cloudy	38 °C	24 °C	SE	15 - 38 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:27
Sunrise	04:56
Zuhr	11:44
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:33
Isha	20:00

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	41 °C
MIN. Temp.	24 °C
MAX. RH	39 %
MIN. RH	11 %
MAX. Wind	NW 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID CARD is  
**1889988**

**EMERGENCY**  
**112**



## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22087426
FlyDubai	22924455
Qatar Airways	22414400
KLM	22423888
Royal Jordanian	22425747
British Airways	22418064/5/6
Air France	22425635
Emirates	22430224
Air India	22921555
Air India EXPRESS	22456700
Sri Lanka Airlines	22438185/4
Egypt Air	22424444
Swiss Air	22421578
Saudia	22421516
Middle East Airlines	22426306
Lufthansa	22423073
PIA	22422493
Bangladesh Airlines	22421044
Indian Airlines	22452977/8
Oman Air	22456700
Turkish Airlines	22958787
Aeroflot	22453820/1
	22404838/9

**Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)**

**DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 15/5/2019						Departure Flights on Wednesday 15/5/2019							
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	QTR	1078	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	RBG	554	Alexandria	14:35
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	KNE	231	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	RBG	218	Asyut	14:35
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	KAC	672	JZR	713	Sohag	00:10	JZR	1223	Jeddah	14:35
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	FDB	5059	MSC	412	Asyut	00:15	QTR	8595	Beirut	14:45
KAC	102	London	00:50	GFA	221	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30	KNE	382	Jeddah	14:55
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	SVA	500	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	GFA	222	Taif	15:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	KAC	364	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:40	FDB	5060	Bahrain	15:00
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	KAC	304	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05	QTR	1079	Doha	15:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	618	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:15
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	562	JZR	409	Delhi	01:10	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	788	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KAC	512	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	KAC	286	JZR	101	Bahrain	01:50	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:55	KNE	118	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:00	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	412	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ETD	303	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	OMA	645	JZR	111	Doha	02:10	ETD	304	Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	127	MSR	619	Alexandria	02:35	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	UAE	857	JZR	707	Luxor	02:50	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	546	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	SVA	504	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	222	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	051	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:35
KAC	796	Madinah	04:25	JZR	732	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	QTR	1072	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
JZR	102	Bahrain	04:50	KAC	502	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	SAW	705	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	JZR	116	KAC	103	London	05:20	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	SVA	510	JZR	1219	Jeddah	05:25	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	124	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	GFA	215	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	JZR	253	Amman	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	JZR	214	RJA	649	Amman	07:00	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:10
BAW	157	London	06:10	QTR	1080	KAC	167	Paris	07:15	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	MSR	620	KAC	165	Rome	08:00	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	GFA	217	BAW	156	London	08:00	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	RJA	640	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	ABY	123	JZR	211	Jeddah	08:00	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	744	IGO	1756	CNN	08:10	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	776	JZR	151	Mashhad	08:15	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	JZR	1224	KAC	501	Beirut	08:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KAC	104	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50	KAC	331	Trivandrum	19:55
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	166	KAC	561	Amman	08:55	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	KNE	381	KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	FDB	057	KAC	117	New York	09:05	KAC	351	Kochi	20:30
JZR	708	Luxor	08:45	OMA	647	KAC	511	Mashhad	09:05	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	DLH	624	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	MEA	402	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	FDB	058	Dubai	20:50
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:15	KAC	620	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
FDB	5055	Dubai	09:20	QTR	1088	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	RBG	217	ETD	856	Dubai	09:50	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	172	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	KLM	445	KAC	101	London	10:05	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	ETD	307	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:15	RBG	214	Sohag	21:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR	1234	FDB	5056	Dubai	10:15	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	UAE	859	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	1220	Jeddah	10:55	ALK	229	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	168	KAC	617	Doha	10:40	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
JZR	410	Delhi	11:50	THY	764	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	KAC	616	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	RBG	1551	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35	RBG	1552	Alexandria	22:30
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	GFA	219	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	KAC	564	JZR							



# Mystery shrouds 'sabotage' of oil tankers in tense Gulf

**DUBAI:** Investigators sought yesterday to shed light on a series of mysterious attacks on ships off the coast of the UAE, as President Donald Trump warned Iran against doing anything to harm US interests. Washington and its Gulf allies stopped short of blaming Tehran for what the UAE and Saudi Arabia called the "sabotage" of four ships, including two Saudi oil tankers, on Sunday. But Trump vowed that Tehran would "suffer greatly" were it to "do anything" to threaten US interests.

"If they do anything, it would be a very bad mistake," Trump warned at the White House. "If they do anything they will suffer greatly." Iranian President Hassan Rouhani hit back, saying the Islamic republic was "too great to be intimidated by anyone." "God willing we will pass this difficult period with glory and our heads held high, and defeat the enemy," Rouhani said at a late night meeting with clerics. The attacks came after the United States deployed B-52 bombers and an assault ship to bolster an aircraft carrier in the region.

The dispatch of the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier group, the amphibious assault vessel, a Patriot missile battery and the bombers has triggered fears of a possible military confrontation. "In an environment of rising regional tensions, limited Iranian operations against the UAE and Saudi Arabia might be designed to dissuade Abu Dhabi and Riyadh and signal that war with Iran will not be limited to Iranian soil," said Alex Vatanka, senior fellow at the Middle East Institute.

A UAE government official said the Saudi oil tankers Al-Marzoqah and Amjad were attacked off the emirate of Fujairah along with the Norwegian tanker Andrea Victory and an Emirati ship, the A. Michel. No casualties were reported and none of the vessels sank. Saudi Arabia, Iran's regional arch-rival, condemned "acts of sabotage" and a "criminal act". The UAE minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, said the Emirates will probe the "deliberate sabotage". "The investigation will be conducted in a professional manner, the facts will be made clear, and we have our own readings and conclusions," he tweeted. Saudi Arabia said its two tankers suffered "significant damage" but there was no oil spill.

The attacks raised many questions, including the nature of the sabotage. The Andrea Victory's managers, Thome Group, said the ship had a hole in its hull "after being struck by an unknown object on the waterline". Asked whether the United States believed Iran played a role in the attacks, Brian Hook, the US special envoy for Iran, declined to comment, saying only that US authorities would be assisting the investigation at the request of the UAE.

Acting Pentagon chief Patrick Shanahan proposed a revamped military plan at a meeting with senior national security aides, The New York Times reported. The plan would see up to 120,000 US troops deployed to the Middle East were Iran to attack American forces or speed up nuclear weapons develop-



**AT SEA:** Photo shows the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) while conducting a replenishment-at-sea with the fast combat support ship USNS Arctic (T-AOE 9), as the MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters assigned to the 'Nightdippers' of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 5, transfer stores between the ships. — AFP

ment, the newspaper said. The United Nations called on all sides to "exercise restraint for the sake of regional peace."

Oil prices initially spiked in response to news of the attacks, but were largely flat in trading yesterday. Fujairah port is the only Emirati terminal located on the Arabian Sea coast, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz through which most Gulf oil exports pass. Iran has repeatedly threatened to close the strait in

case of a military confrontation with the United States. "If, and it's an 'IF', there really has been a deliberate attempt to damage these oil tankers, then it's possibly a warning from Iran about the consequences of anybody taking military action against Iranian targets anywhere in the region," said Middle East analyst Neil Partrick.

Iran and the United States have engaged in a war of words in recent weeks since Tehran

began to roll back commitments set out in a landmark 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Trump withdrew the United States from the deal last year and has unilaterally reimposed tough sanctions on Iran. Last month, Washington designated Iran's revolutionary guards as a "foreign terrorist organization", the first time the classification has been applied to a branch of a foreign government.— AFP

## Opposition MPs urge PM to quit...

Continued from Page 1

A few weeks ago, the committee ruled that a similar grilling filed by MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri was in breach of the constitution and it was not debated. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kundari, who filed the grilling this time accusing the prime minister of failing to implement development programs and curb corruption, said by refusing to face two grillings, the prime minister who cannot face a lawmaker is incapable of running a country.

In the meantime, opposition MPs issued two statements, each signed by seven MPs (a total of 10 MPs in both) calling on the prime minister to resign, saying that there is no hope to establish any cooperation with the government. In the first statement, the opposition MPs described the procedures in the Assembly yesterday by the majority of MPs to refer the premier grilling to the legal committee as "unconstitutional and illegal".

The statement held the Assembly Speaker responsible for accepting the motion and allowing the voting to

take place in violation of the Assembly internal charter. The statement described what happened as an attempt to stop grilling and weaken parliamentary supervision which calls for non-cooperation with the government for violating the constitution and the law.

MPs Abdulkarim Al-Kundari, Riyadh Al-Adasani, Abdulwahab Al-Babtain, Bader Al-Mulla, Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, Hamdan Al-Azemi and Omar Al-Tabtabai signed the statement.

The second statement, also signed by seven MPs, said that the government boycott of the special session on Sunday and the killing of two grillings against the prime minister, indicates that the aggression of the government on the rights of the National Assembly has become a permanent methodology.

The lawmakers declared their non-cooperation with the government, calling for the resignation of the government and appointing a new prime minister. Kundari described the eight years since the prime minister was appointed as the worst political period and the worst National Assembly with some MPs refusing the government to be touched. The Speaker said that the Assembly will hold sessions today and tomorrow and that it will hold six sessions in June to approve the budgets and a number of legislation.

bility and quickly fixed it. "This isn't someone trying to steal private messages or personal details," Storey said that disclosing vulnerabilities was a good thing and likely would lead to other services looking at their security.

The Financial Times initially reported on the WhatsApp vulnerability that allowed attackers to inject spyware on phones via the app's phone call function. The FT said the spyware was developed by Israeli cyber surveillance company NSO Group - best known for its mobile surveillance tools - and affects both Android and iPhones.

Asked about the report, NSO said its technology is licensed to authorized government agencies "for the sole purpose of fighting crime and terror," and that it does not operate the system itself while having a rigorous licensing and vetting process. "We investigate any credible allegations of misuse and if necessary, we take action, including shutting down the system," the company said. "Under no circumstances would NSO be involved in the operating or identifying of targets of its technology, which is solely operated by intelligence and law enforcement agencies."

Social media group Facebook bought WhatsApp in 2014 for \$19 billion. Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes last week wrote in The New York Times that fellow co-founder Mark Zuckerberg had far too much influence by controlling Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, three core communications platforms, and called for the company to be broken up. Facebook's shares were down about 1.1 percent in New York. — Reuters

son in empathy and compassion, one that is never forgotten after fasting the month of Ramadan, and which makes it so much easier to share our resources with the disadvantaged.

Finally, all the above symptoms of the modern man lead to depression, which is common today. Fasting Ramadan is a way to start overcoming depression because it has several positive results simultaneously: a renewed sense of purpose, realizing your personal strength, increased involvement with others, awareness of blessings that you formally took for granted, taking control of yourself through managing your needs, desires and thoughts, and drawing closer to your Creator and the Provider of all your needs.

Fasting the month of Ramadan definitely has its benefits in this life, especially in the modern age. And this is just the tip of the iceberg, because there are medical and spiritual benefits, as well as blessings that accrue in the Hereafter. The total benefits of fasting are known only to God, who says in the Quran, "... and it is better for you to fast, if you only knew" (2:184).

*Courtesy of the TIES Center: the TIES Center aims at empower Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, you can contact TIES at Tel: 25231015/6; Hotline: 94079777; e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.*

## Warships and wives: Debate in Indian election turns ugly

**NEW DELHI:** From jibes over the prime minister's wife to criticism of the main opposition leader's family holiday three decades ago, one trend stands out in this year's general election campaign in India: this time, it's personal. The world's largest democracy, with around 900 million eligible voters, wraps up polling held over six weeks on Sunday. Results will be known on May 23.

Election observers say this has been an unusually hostile campaign even by Indian standards, devoid of real policy debate to the expected benefit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "The last few elections were about corruption or inflation," said Harsh Pant, a political analyst at the Observer Research Foundation think-tank in New Delhi. "This time, there are no real issues being discussed."

Modi won a surprise majority in 2014, riding a wave of anger over perceived graft by the Congress party, which has governed India for the majority of the seven decades after the end of British rule in 1947. He entered

this election cycle under pressure, losing three state polls in December amid rising anger over weak farm incomes and unemployment.

But the early phase of campaigning was dominated by national security after a suicide car bomb attack by a Pakistan-based militant group killed at least 40 Indian paramilitary police in the disputed region of Kashmir. "The opposition were caught off guard by the national security narrative and after that it became very difficult to contest on that," Pant said. "Then it became all about Modi, to the advantage of the BJP."

On Monday, the leader of a powerful regional party urged women not to vote for Modi because he had abandoned his wife as a teenager. "How can he (Modi) respect others' sisters and wives when he has left his own innocent wife for political gains," said Mayawati, head of the Bahujan Samaj Party. The BJP has previously said that Modi's marriage was arranged by his family and existed in name only. — Reuters

## WhatsApp calls for update after...

Continued from Page 1

can about who may have been impacted from their community. That's really where our highest concern is," the spokesman said. Citizen Lab tweeted: "We believe an attacker tried (and was blocked by WhatsApp) to exploit it as recently as yesterday to target a human rights lawyer."

Ireland's Data Protection Commission (DPC), WhatsApp's lead regulator in the European Union, said WhatsApp had notified the agency late on Monday of a "serious security vulnerability" on its platform. "The DPC understands that the vulnerability may have enabled a malicious actor to install unauthorized software and gain access to personal data on devices which have WhatsApp installed," the regulator said in a statement. Cyber security experts said the vast majority of users were unlikely to have been affected.

Scott Storey, a senior lecturer in cyber security at Sheffield Hallam University, believes most WhatsApp users were not affected since this appears to be governments targeting specific people, mainly human rights campaigners. "For the average end user, it's not something to really worry about," he said, adding that WhatsApp found the vulnera-

## Ramadan therapy...

Continued from Page 1

You will find a self-disciplined, patient, flexible and resilient person. Another byproduct of our modern lifestyles is isolation. Families are often separated and must resort to social media to keep in touch. Social media also enable us to have friends from around the world that we meet in virtual spaces. However, this has had a negative impact on the "in-person" relationships with those around us, with many people preferring to relate to others through their phones. Ramadan helps this situation because there are many communal meals, whether at home, in mosques, or special gatherings for social groups.

In addition, the extra attention on prayer brings neighbors together in the mosques daily, which builds stronger communities. Finally, zakat ul-fitr, or the pre-holiday charity, requires us to reach out to someone less fortunate in the spirit of sharing and celebration. Modern life can sometimes lead to apathy, which is caring little for others, and a sense of entitlement, which is overestimating your rights.

Feeling the hunger and thirst of fasting makes you keenly aware of the blessing of food and clean water in your life, and more aware of the fact that many people do not have what you will now consider a luxury. Feeling the deprivations of the poor is a wonderful les-

## Spain pulls its frigate from US military...

Continued from Page 1

No link has officially been drawn between the incidents and US accusations concerning "imminent" attacks by Tehran against US interests in the region. Britain, France and Germany on Monday urged the US not to further escalate tensions over the Iran nuclear deal.

### Houthi drone attacks

Meanwhile, drone attacks claimed by Iran-aligned Yemen rebels shut down one of Saudi Arabia's main oil pipelines yesterday, further ratcheting up Gulf tensions after the mysterious sabotage of several tankers. Days after the United States deployed bombers and an assault ship to bolster an aircraft carrier in the region, the world's largest crude exporter said two pumping stations had been targeted yesterday.

They lie on the East West Pipeline, able to pump five million barrels of oil a day from the oil-rich eastern province to a Red Sea export terminal. The announcement came hours after Yemen's Houthi rebels said they had targeted vital installations in Saudi Arabia, which leads a military coalition against them. Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said Saudi Aramco had "temporarily shut down" the pipeline to "evaluate its condition" but added that oil production and exports had not been interrupted.

"The company (Saudi Aramco) is working on restoring the pumping station before resuming operations," he said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The stations reportedly targeted lie west of Riyadh, at Dawadmi and Afeef. Falih said yesterday's incident was an "act of terrorism... that not only targets the kingdom but also the security of oil supplies to the world and the global economy". Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdusalam wrote on Twitter that the attacks were "a response to the aggressors continuing to commit genocide" against the Yemeni people.

### Kuwait condemns attack

Kuwait condemns in the strongest words the terrorist drone attack on two pumping stations in Dawadmi and Aff Governorates in Saudi Arabia, said an official source of the Foreign Ministry. The source affirmed that Kuwait stands side by side with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and fully supports all measures taken to maintain its security and stability while fighting terrorist acts that undermine the security and stability of the kingdom and the region. The source prayed Allah Almighty to bestow security and stability on the kingdom, and safety on its citizens.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates intervened in the Yemen war to bolster the internationally-recognized government's efforts against the Houthis in March

2015. The 1,200-kilometre pipeline reportedly hit yesterday serves as an alternative for Saudi crude exports if the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf were to be closed. Iran has repeatedly threatened to close the strait in case of a military confrontation with the United States.

The reported pipeline attacks came after the UAE said four ships were damaged in "sabotage attacks" off the emirate of Fujairah, close to the Hormuz, on Sunday. Washington and its Gulf allies stopped short of blaming Riyadh's regional arch-rival Tehran for the sabotage, but US President Donald Trump warned Iran against doing anything to harm US interests. "If they (Iran) do anything, it would be a very bad mistake," Trump warned at the White House. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani hit back, saying the Islamic republic was "too great to be intimidated by anyone".

The attacks came after the United States deployed the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier group, an amphibious assault vessel, a Patriot missile battery and B-52 bombers, triggering fears of a possible military confrontation. "In an environment of rising regional tensions, limited Iranian operations against the UAE and Saudi Arabia might be designed to dissuade Abu Dhabi and Riyadh and signal that war with Iran will not be limited to Iranian soil," said Alex Vatanka, senior fellow at the Middle East Institute.

### 'Deliberate sabotage'

A UAE government official said the Saudi oil tankers Al-Marzoqah and Amjad were attacked off the emirate of Fujairah along with the Norwegian tanker Andrea Victory and an Emirati ship, the A. Michel. No casualties were reported and none of the vessels sank. The UAE minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, said the Emirates will probe the "deliberate sabotage". Saudi Arabia said its two tankers suffered "significant damage" but there was no oil spill.

The Andrea Victory's managers, Thome Group, said the ship's hull had been pierced "after being struck by an unknown object on the waterline". Asked whether the United States believed Iran played a role in the attacks, Washington's Iran envoy Brian Hook declined to comment, saying only that US authorities would help the investigation at the request of the UAE. The United Nations urged all sides to "exercise restraint for the sake of regional peace."

Oil prices initially spiked in response to news of the attacks, but were largely flat in trading yesterday. Fujairah port is the only Emirati terminal located on the Arabian Sea coast, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz through which most Gulf oil exports pass. Iran and the United States have engaged in a war of words in recent weeks since Tehran began to roll back commitments set out in a landmark 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Trump withdrew the United States from the deal last year and has unilaterally reimposed tough sanctions on Iran. — Agencies



Sports

# Bortuzzo, Blues blow past San Jose Sharks, even series

## Jones stopped 21 shots for the Sharks

**SAN JOSE:** The last time Robert Bortuzzo scored a playoff goal, he was in the first of his three seasons in the Ontario Hockey League. It was the spring of 2007, and he was 18 years old.

The emphatic celebration from the St. Louis defensive defenseman was more than understandable when he scored a jaw-dropping goal that ended up the game-winner Monday night in the Blues' 4-2 victory over the San Jose Sharks that tied the Western Conference finals at one win apiece.

"It's not really my game," said Bortuzzo, 30. "Jaden (Schwartz, a Blues teammate) will remember, I told him 'If I do score a playoff goal, you'll like the celebration.' You never plan what you're going to do, but it's a rush of emotion." Thanks to that emotion, and the victory that came with it, the Blues return home even in the series heading into Game 3 tomorrow.

With the score tied 2-2, Bortuzzo scored his surprising goal at 16:34 of the middle period. After bolting from his point position, he took a return feed while heading toward the goal and lifted a top-shelf backhand for his first tally in 31 career playoff games-and just the 15th in 366 regular-season and playoff NHL contests.

Bortuzzo was visible in a more familiar manner in the third period making a goal-saving block on a Kevin Labanc chance, but his goal was certainly the talking point of the night.

"I loved his celebration," Schwartz said. "He's got a lot of emotion. Right now, it's a big time of the year, and the intensity's high and everybody's doing a good job of embracing that and having fun with it."

Jordan Binnington made 24 saves for the Blues, 11 of them in the third period while the Sharks pushed for the

equalizer. San Jose's hopes were dashed when Oskar Sundqvist provided the much-needed insurance goal with 3:08 remaining in the third.

In all three postseason series this spring, the Sharks have won the opener but then lost the second game.

"We've been here before, and we know how to handle this," San Jose coach Pete DeBoer said. Jones stopped 21 shots for the Sharks. DeBoer took the defeat in stride, but he has the benefit of coaching a veteran-laden club that knows it wasn't up to snuff.

"One thing about our group is they're smart. Their self-analysis is very good," DeBoer said. "They know when they played well. There's games this year we played really well and lost, and tonight wasn't one of them. We have to find another level."

Curiously, the Sharks had all the momentum before the game-winning goal, having erased a 2-0 deficit.

After Schwartz put the visitors on the board first at 2:34 of the opening frame, ripping a glove-side wrist shot into the top corner, Vince Dunn doubled the St. Louis lead at 4:16 of the second period with a long wrist shot that beat screened Sharks goalie Martin Jones.

However, Logan Couture quickly tallied twice for the Sharks to even the count. Just 39 seconds after Dunn's goal, and with San Jose short-handed, Couture stole the puck at his own blue line to create his own break-away and finished it by tucking home the puck.

Couture tied the game with another breakaway goal two minutes later. This time, he was sent a long pass from Timo Meier and converted a five-hole shot for his 13th goal of the playoffs, most among all players this spring. — Reuters



**SAN JOSE:** Logan Couture #39 of the San Jose Sharks scores a goal against Jordan Binnington #50 of the St. Louis Blues in Game Two of the Western Conference Final during the 2019 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at SAP Center in San Jose, California. — FP

## Zain strategic partner of Rijeemy health program

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership of the seventh edition of Rijeemy, Kuwait's biggest health and sports challenge during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The event, organized by Rijeemy Center and supported by Zain for the third year, is held during the first 20 days of Ramadan on Sundays through Thursdays from 4:45 - 6:00 pm at 360 Mall with aim of promoting a healthier and more active lifestyle during fasting.

Zain's strategic partnership of this health program is an extension of a series of partnerships the company is continuously adopting to serve its strategic and sustainable goals with the aim of contributing to the well-

being and health of the community. Zain's contribution falls under the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, and shows its keenness in having a productive role in social and health activities, especially during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Zain has prepared many special activities for Rijeemy participants, including the "Challenge Zain" activity that witnessed the participation of Kuwait National Football team Captain Bader Al Mutawa, in addition, the daily Walkathon, one of the event's most exciting main activities, will offer participants a chance to speed walk in 360 Mall alongside renowned Clinical and Sport Nutrition consultant Dr. Abdullah Al Mutawa, who offers daily live health and sports tips related to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle during fasting.

This year's edition of Rijeemy will witness the participation of many certified experts from Rijeemy Center, who will be providing health and nutrition advice to participants as they join the daily activities. In addition, Zain was keen on inviting its own employees to participate and volunteer in the program's activities to further affirm its commitment towards its own human



**Dr Abdullah Al Mutawa and Captain Bader Al Mutawa with Zain's team.**

resources.

Zain's solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy primarily focuses on the wellbe-

ing of the entire nation. For that reason, the company has maintained its support to all kinds of initiatives that spread awareness and help make a difference.



**Rijeemy's daily activities.**



**Part of the tournament**

## KIB organizes 9th Ramadan football tourney for staff

**KUWAIT:** As part of its social responsibility program for the Holy Month of Ramadan, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) kicked off its 9th Ramadan Football Tournament for its staff. Held at Dasman Bilingual School, the one-day tournament saw the participation of 8 teams composed of KIB staff. Additionally, a large number of the Bank's staff cheered in the crowd - all within an exciting and encouraging atmosphere full of sporting spirit.

The tournament was also attended by Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of KIB, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, who awarded first and second place winners at the tournament with valuable cash prizes and trophies. Additionally, all attendees of the tournament were given a chance to win one of two Apple Watches, as well as enjoy light snacks and refreshments during the game.

On his part, Senior Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "We make sure to organize this event every year as part of KIB's Ramadan program. The annual



**Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of KIB awarding Bank's staff**

Ramadan program features a number of activities and initiatives for diverse segments of the community, including customers and employees as well as their families. Our leading social responsibility program aims at positively impacting all members of the community. For this reason, we believe that this sporting event provides numerous benefits for our employees, encouraging them to practice sports, strengthening teamwork and cooperation outside the workplace, and boosting their morale and productivity."

Najia also added that the tournament has become one of the most highly-anticipated sports events, bringing in an increasing number of participants every year to compete for the winning title. He also lauded the sporting spirit demon-

strated by all players in the tournament as well as the fans in the crowd.

It is worth noting that KIB always strives



**Part of the tournament**

to support youth-based initiatives and sports activities, particularly during the Holy Month of Ramadan, as part of its commit-

ment to promote the local sports scene and improve the physical fitness and skills of diverse segments of the community.



**Group picture**



## Sports

# Lehmann tips Smith and Warner to shine for Australia in World Cup

## Watson 'gave blood' for Chennai during IPL final

MELBOURNE: Former Australia coach Darren Lehmann expects Steve Smith and David Warner to play a big role in their title defence on their return to international cricket at the World Cup. Smith and Warner have returned from year-long bans following a ball-tampering scandal in South Africa which also prompted Lehmann to step down as coach of the side in March last year.

The top order duo made impressive return from elbow surgeries for their respective franchises at the Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament and Lehmann was convinced they will shine at the World Cup in England and Wales.

"Smith at number three or four, he'd be exceptional at the World Cup," Lehmann told Macquarie Sports Radio. "People are worried about the break they've had with 12 months out, but you see them in the IPL performing and making runs."

"David Warner is an excitement machine, at the top of the order, he can set it alight. "If he has a really good tournament, he set us on the road to winning a lot of games in the last World Cup. If he does it again at the top of the order with Aaron Finch, they'll be hard to stop." Warner, who will never captain Australia for his role in the scandal in South Africa, looked particularly impressive at the IPL finishing as its leading scorer with 692 runs from 12 innings that included nine 50-plus scores.

In his absence, Finch and Usman Khawaja have formed a steady opening partnership for Australia but Lehmann expected Warner to slot back at the top of the order. "Opening with Finch and Warner, I think that's a certainty," the former Australia all-rounder said. "And

then there's Khawaja or Shaun Marsh at three I'd think and Smith at four - this is your top four."

Meanwhile in Hyderabad, there were bloodstains on the leg of Shane Watson's trousers during the IPL final as he scored a blistering 80 for Chennai Super Kings were revealed yesterday to be from a cut that needed six stitches when he finished.

The 37-year-old Australian batsman was on the losing side in the end, but teammate Harbhajan Singh hailed Watson's courage in continuing to play despite suffering a gashed knee while diving for a catch.

"Respect brother what a LEGEND @srwatson33 given sweat, blood and everything for the team.. INSPIRING," Singh wrote on Instagram.

The Indian off-spinner posted a picture of Watson with blood-stained yellow trousers while batting in the Twenty20 final against the Mumbai Indians, and said the opener needed six stitches after the valiant innings.

"Can you guys see the blood on his knee.. He got 6 stitches after the game," Harbhajan wrote. "Got injured while diving but continue to bat without telling anyone," the bowler added.

Watson smashed 80 off 59 deliveries only to see his team lose by one run. Watson was run out going for an unlikely second in the final over, and Mumbai paceman Lasith Malinga denied Chennai the two runs needed off the last ball to win the game and a record fourth title.

Watson's return to the IPL next season remains uncertain. He has already bid farewell to Australia's Big Bash T20 tournament, and Chennai captain M.S. Dhoni indicated he would make changes to the batting lineup for next year. — Agencies



HYDERABAD: In this file photo taken on May 12, 2019 Chennai Super Kings cricketer Shane Watson (L) plays a shot — with blood staining his uniform behind his pads on his left knee — during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 final cricket match between Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad. —AFP

## International cricket gets first woman match referee

NEW DELHI: The International Cricket Council yesterday named G.S. Lakshmi as the first woman on the international panel of match referees, making her eligible to take control of men's games. The 51-year-old Lakshmi, who first officiated as a match referee in domestic women's cricket in 2008-09, has overseen three women's one-day internationals and three Twenty20s.

Her appointment came just after Australia's Claire Polosak became the first woman umpire in a men's ODI last month. "To be selected in the international panel by the ICC is a huge honour for me as it opens up new avenues," Lakshmi said in an ICC statement. "I have had a long career as a cricketer in India and also as a match referee."



G.S. Lakshmi

"I hope to put my experience both as a player and as a match official to good use on the international circuit." Meanwhile, Australia's Eloise Sheridan has joined Polosak on the ICC's umpires development panel, taking the number of women on the

body that provides umpires for all internationals to eight.

Lauren Agenbag, Kim Cotton, Shivani Mishra, Sue Redfern, Mary Waldron and Jacqueline Williams are the other women on the panel. — AFP

## Lillard, Blazers aim to give Warriors a battle

OAKLAND: Damian Lillard hopes to close down his hometown arena on his own terms when the Portland Trail Blazers take on the two-time defending champion Golden State Warriors in the Western Conference finals, a best-of-seven series that tips off tonight in Oakland, Calif.

Lillard, who is rapidly ascending the list of most accomplished Oakland High graduates that currently boasts of David Carradine, Jackie Jensen, Jack London and Bill Rigney, bombed in a game-winning 3-pointer on what many believed would be his final shot at Oracle Arena in a one-point overtime win in December.

It was part of a 113-point, four-game season series the Oakland native had against the Warriors, the most points scored against Golden State in the regular season.

But now, perhaps fittingly, he must return in a postseason series that will be the last for the Warriors in Oakland should they fail to advance to their fifth straight NBA finals. Golden State will move into the Chase Center in San Francisco next season.

"He can score the ball with the best of them," Warriors forward Draymond Green gushed of Lillard earlier in the postseason. "Dame has a chip on his shoulder. Has since the day he walked into this league. He play like a guy from Oakland, with a chip on his shoulder. A guy who's been doubted forever."

Lillard and CJ McCollum, hero of Sunday's Game 7 win at Denver that propelled the Trail Blazers into their first Western finals since 2000, will go head-to-head with Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson in the marquee matchup of the series.

Unless there's a clear winner in the duel of two of the NBA's premier backcourts, the series could turn into a battle of attrition in the front court, where five key players have different degrees of injuries.

The only certainty among the five is that Portland center Jusuf Nurkic, who suffered a broken leg in March, won't play in the series. He contributed double-doubles to two Portland wins over Golden State this season, and added a third in a December loss.

Meanwhile, Nurkic's counterpart, DeMarcus Cousins, has expressed a desire to return from a torn quad at some point in the series for Golden State. If Cousins could return and in what capacity loom as two super-sized question marks.

Then there's Kevin Durant (strained calf), Enes Kanter (separated shoulder) and Rodney Hood (hyperextended knee). Durant already has been ruled out of Game 1, but the Warriors' star will be re-evaluated Thursday, while Portland's Kanter and Hood are expected to continue to play, but probably not at 100 percent.

Hood is the biggest uncertainty. He had an MRI exam on his left knee on Monday. It was negative, which is exactly what the super sub had been expecting to hear after a postgame exam Sunday. "They checked my knee and everything is stable. Major relief," Hood told reporters after the game. "Hopefully the pain goes down. Hopefully it's feeling better by Tuesday. I'm going to try to shoot for Tuesday, if possible."

The teams split four games in the regular season, including a two-game, playoff-type, home-and-home series in December that began with Lillard's heroics in Oakland.

Two nights later, the Warriors went to Portland and extracted a measure of revenge, with Thompson (32), Curry (25) and Durant (25) combining for 82 points in a 115-105 win.

The teams have met twice in the playoffs in the last three seasons, with Golden State prevailing 4-1 in the Western semifinals in 2016 and 4-0 in the first round in 2017. —AFP

## Dutch F1 Grand Prix returns at 'iconic' Zandvoort next season

PARIS: The Dutch Grand Prix will return next season at Zandvoort after a 35-year absence, Formula One organisers announced yesterday. A deal to stage the race at the historic seaside resort circuit near Amsterdam has been signed for at least three years.

"I am pleased to see that Zandvoort will be part of the proposed calendar... and thankful for the hard work of Formula 1 to bring the sport back to the Netherlands", Jean Todt, president of the sport's ruling body the FIA, said.

Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen, born 12 years after Niki Lauda took the last chequered flag in a McLaren in 1985, hailed the prospect of lining up in his home race. "It's just an iconic, historic track," Verstappen said in a team statement.

Formula One chief executive Chase Carey said the return of racing to the Netherlands was in line with their twin policy of "respecting the sport's historic roots in Europe" whilst also looking for new venues.

"Next season therefore, we will have a brand new street race that will be held in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi, as well the return to Zandvoort, after an absence of 35 years," Casey said. "In recent years, we've seen a resurgence of interest in Formula 1 in Holland, mainly due to the enthusiastic support for the talented Max Verstappen, as seen from the sea of orange at so many races."

Zandvoort will now be modernised to bring it up to the F1 world championship standards. If none of the existing venues drop out the addition of Hanoi and Zandvoort would mean a record 23-race season in 2020.

But five races in Britain, Germany, Italy, Mexico and Spain are out of contract next year, with reports that two or even three of these group could be ditched. A deal to continue the Italian Grand Prix at Monza until 2024 is waiting to be signed, and Silverstone say they are close to securing a new contract. — AFP

## Afridi lambasted over sexist remarks in autobiography

KARACHI: Former Pakistani all-rounder Shahid Afridi batted away accusations of misogyny this week as critics lashed out at the cricket star's admission that he refuses to let his daughters play outdoor sports.

The remarks were just the latest controversy stemming from Afridi's tell-all autobiography "Game Changer" - released in Pakistan and India last week. "It's for social and religious reasons that I've made this decision regarding my daughters not competing in public sporting activities and their mother agrees with me," wrote Afridi.

"The feminists can say what they want: as a conservative Pakistani father, I've made my decision," he added. In the book, the cricketer also unleashed withering criticism against old teammates including erstwhile World Cup captain and current Prime Minister Imran Khan and admitted to being slightly older than previously reported, drawing accusations he was not the youngest player to set the record for scoring 100 runs in an international.

However, his comments about his four daughters - who are aged between 10 and 20 years old - may have proven to be the most galling to the public with social media users labeling the all-rounder a "misogynist" and "hypocrite".

## From street cricket to world's best spinner: Pakistan hails Sana Mir

KARACHI: Pakistan showered praise this week on Sana Mir, the former women's cricket team captain who rose from bowling in the streets to become the most successful spinner in women's one-day international history.

The 33-year-old took her 147th wicket in her 118th game when she dismissed South Africa's Sune Luus in the third one-day international (ODI) of the ICC Women's Championship in Benoni on Sunday. That took her past Anisa Mohammad of the West Indies and Australia's Lisa Sthalekar - both at 146 wickets - to the pride of Pakistanis, who hailed the achievement with joy on social media and in proud newspaper editorials.

"Congratulations, @mir\_sana05!" the ICC tweeted, as Pakistan's largest English-language newspapers - Dawn and the Express Tribune - both published editorials Tuesday celebrating the feat in a deeply patriarchal country where women's sport has long been marginalised.

"Kudos to you girl!" tweeted the German embassy in Islamabad. "Makes us all proud," added Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan's ambassador to the UN. Mir recalled the obstacles against her in an interview published by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

"The journey started by proving at every street, where I played cricket, that girls could play this sport. We didn't have any role models, girls taking part in cricket

"Afridi is no better than a typical middle-aged average Pakistani guy, who wouldn't mind hanging out with someone else's daughters but would balk if his own did the same," tweeted Salman Siddiq.

"His daughters, his decisions? Really?? So the girls' voices and choices don't matter? Not even when they're adults? Because #FatherHasSpoken," added Asha Bedar on Twitter.

Pakistani author Bina Shah also roasted Afridi, telling the BBC his decision was an example of "Pakistani macho culture that says I am the father, I can say what my daughters are going to do and not do, and there is not a thing that you can do to stop me."

Others pointed to the examples set by other athletes on the issue, including Egyptian football star at Liverpool Mohamed Salah who has advocated for the equal treatment of women in the Islamic world. Salah made headlines over the weekend after a viral video showed him proudly celebrating as his four-year-old daughter scored a goal ahead of Liverpool's last game of the season at Anfield.

But back in Pakistan, Afridi pushed back at the criticism. "I don't judge anyone or meddle in people's life," Afridi tweeted on Sunday. "I expect the same too from others. May Allah bless my daughters and daughters/women all over the world! Let people be. My daughters are very precious to me! My life revolves around them."

Afridi retired from professional cricket in 2016 but he continues to be a mainstay on Pakistani television, frequently starring in commercials while also attending high-profile sporting events. — AFP

was not that common," she was quoted as saying.

"From street cricket to playing on the grounds and moving to stadia donning the Pakistan kit were moments of immense pride." Former Pakistan captain and current chief selector Urooj Mumtaz congratulated her former colleague, calling her an inspiration for women.

"Sana has been a great role model for our cricket, in fact, world cricket, her hard work, dedication and humility is absolutely admirable," said Mumtaz. The pride was underscored as former Pakistani all-rounder Shahid Afridi batted away accusations of misogyny as critics lashed out at the cricket star's admission in his autobiography "Game Changer" that he refuses to let his daughters play outdoor sports.

"The feminists can say what they want: as a conservative Pakistani father, I've made my decision," he wrote in the book, unleashing the fury of many Pakistanis. Afridi later tweeted his congratulations to Mir, prompting further accusations of hypocrisy.

Mir took six wickets, including a match-winning 4-11, in three one-day internationals against South Africa to help Pakistan square the series 1-1, with one match tied. She is now third on the all-time list of most successful bowlers in women's cricket, behind fast bowlers Jhulan Goswami of India (218) and Australia's Cathryn Fitzpatrick (180). — AFP



## Sports

# 'We're here to stay': Robertson vows Liverpool will battle City again

## Guardiola admitted Liverpool had given them their toughest test

LONDON: Liverpool defender Andy Robertson has warned Manchester City that Jurgen Klopp's close-knit team are determined to stay together until they win the Premier League. City pipped Liverpool to the title on the last day of the season with a 4-1 win at Brighton that rendered the second placed Reds' victory against Wolves irrelevant.

Liverpool finished just one point behind City, but despite the agonising near-miss, morale among Jurgen Klopp's team remains high as they prepare for the Champions League final against Tottenham on June 1. And Scotland captain Robertson is confident Liverpool's key players will remain at Anfield for the long-term, making them perfectly placed to renew their rivalry with City for years to come.

"We are a tight-knit group, a young group, so hopefully we will be here for many years and we will be a better team in terms of maturity and experience next year," Robertson said. "It is an incredible squad and I love being a part of it. I am sure we have learned a lot of lessons this season, and we just need to take that into next."

"Fingers-crossed we don't lose anyone. We are a tight group and we don't want to lose anyone. We will go into next season as strong as ever." With a second successive Champions League final on the horizon, Robertson's fellow Liverpool defender Virgil Van Dijk feels this season is the beginning of something special at Anfield.

Van Dijk also referenced the spirit within the club as a whole, and the relationship the players have with supporters as being key to that success. "With the level we have shown this season, the consistency we have, we

have to build on it, try to do it again next season," Van Dijk said.

"That's what we all aim for, and I am looking forward to it already. There is a togetherness we have throughout the whole club. It is also the connection we have with the fans that helps us through tough, tough moments, through tough games."

"The fans will always be there and that's a special thing to know, and one of the big reasons I joined Liverpool." City manager Pep Guardiola admitted Liverpool had given them their toughest test, forcing them to win their final 14 league matches to finish on 98 points—the second highest total in the Premier League era.

Liverpool finished 25 points ahead of third-placed Chelsea and 31 in front of sixth-placed Manchester United. Robertson backed Liverpool to stay a step ahead of the chasing pack next term and made it clear City can expect another powerful challenge from Merseyside.

"Man City know, hopefully, we are here to stay. We know they are definitely here to stay, they are incredible," he said. "It's been a very good season for us and we have just fallen short to a world-class team."

"Ninety-seven points wins every single league apart from last season so if we do that again we will keep knocking on the door and we won't be far off it."

"Man City were 14 games unbeaten and for them to do that without dropping a point was incredible. Fair play to them. All the teams have to catch us as there was quite a gap between second and third. They all need to come up to us, and if they do, it will be an incredible title race next season." — AFP



NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE: File photo shows Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (R) celebrates with Liverpool's Scottish defender Andrew Robertson (L) after scoring their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Newcastle United and Liverpool at St James' Park in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, north east England on May 4. — AFP

## History made as women to referee men's AFC Cup clash

KUALA LUMPUR: The Asian Football Confederation announced yesterday that for the first time an all-female referee team will take charge of a men's continental club cup clash. Japanese referee Yoshimi Yamashita and assistants Makoto Bozono and Naomi Teshirogi will officiate the AFC Cup match between Myanmar's Yangon United and Cambodia's Naga World at the Thuwunna Stadium today.

"This will be the first time three female referees preside in the Asian Football Confederation's club competitions, marking a new milestone in Asian refereeing," the AFC said in a statement. The AFC Cup is the second-string Asian club competition, a rung below the AFC Champions League.

Women officials have only previously

been employed as assistant referees in AFC Cup matches, with Australians Sarah Ho and Alysson Flynn becoming the first in 2014. "This is one of my dreams," said the experienced Yamashita, who officiated in the 2016 and 2018 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup and 2018 Women's Asian Cup.

"We've worked very hard and this is the result." Assistant referee Teshirogi said her appointment will inspire female referees in Asia while Bozono said the experience will help in her preparations for the FIFA Women's World Cup in June, where the trio will be among 12 officials from the AFC. "It is exciting to work with Yoshimi and Naomi. They are very experienced and have been very supportive. I will learn a lot from them," Bozono said. — AFP



Yoshimi Yamashita

## Roma pull plug on 'beating heart' De Rossi

ROME: Captain Daniele De Rossi will bring the curtain down on his 18-year career with Roma at the end of the season after confirming yesterday that the Serie A side had decided not to renew his contract.

The 35-year-old former World Cup winning midfielder will play his final game at home against Parma on May 26, but will not be retiring from professional football. "For 18 years, Daniele has been the beating heart of AS Roma's team," said club president Jim Pallotta said.

"We will all shed tears when he pulls on the Giallorossi shirt for the last time against Parma but we respect his desire to prolong his playing career - even if, at almost 36, it will be away from Rome. On behalf of everyone at Roma, I'd like to thank Daniele for his incredible dedication to this club and ensure him that our doors will remain open for him to return to the club in a new role whenever he wants."

De Rossi told a press conference he only learned on Monday his contract would not be renewed. "If I had been a manager I would have renewed the contract of player like me," he said. "I think I'm important to them, but the decision must be taken by the club. My only regret is that we only talked a little this year."

"I hope this (communication) will improve in the future because I am a fan, but I understand it's the club's decision." De Rossi has spent his entire senior career with his hometown team coming through the club's academy system.

He made 615 appearances and scored 63 goals for Roma in all competitions winning the Coppa Italia in 2007 and 2008, and the Supercoppa in 2007. He took over the captain's armband from club legend Francesco Totti - the one player ahead of him for Roma appearances - in 2017.

De Rossi is also the fourth-most capped player for the Italian national team with 117 appearances. He retired after Italy failed to qualify for last year's World Cup, missing the tournament for the first time in 60 years.

De Rossi, who has never lifted the Serie A title having finished runner-up eight times, said his biggest regret was last season's Champions League semi-final defeat to Liverpool. His final game could be a crucial one for Roma's Champions League ambitions next season as last year's European semi-finalists are sixth in Serie A just one point off fourth place with two games to play.

"I haven't talked to other teams. Until the game against Genoa, I was convinced about the Champions League and I didn't want to distract anyone," he added. "I've received 500 messages. I didn't check to see if there were any offers."

"I still feel like a footballer and I want to continue. I'd be wrong to myself if I stopped now." De Rossi said he could move away from Italy or eventually join Totti as a Roma director. "Being a director doesn't appeal to me that much, but it would make sense to do that here at Roma," he added.

"I was lucky to have played for the team of my heart." — AFP

## Germany announce Women's WCup squad

BERLIN: Germany coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg announced her 23-woman squad for the Women's World Cup in France yesterday. The squad, led by captain and striker Alexandra Popp, contained no surprises.

"We had intense discussions and there were some tough decisions in the end, because we have a high-quality team," said Voss-Tecklenburg, 51, who took the reins in January. Voss-Tecklenburg's team touch down in Rennes on June 3, three days ahead of their opening group game against China, as they look to secure a third World Cup title in July.

### Germany squad for Women's World Cup:

Goalkeepers: Laura Benkarth (Bayern Munich), Merle Frohms (Freiburg), Almuth Schult (Wolfsburg).

Defenders: Sara Doorsoun (Wolfsburg), Johanna Elsig (Turbine Potsdam), Lena Goessling (Wolfsburg), Giulia Gwinn (Freiburg), Marina Hegering (SGS Essen), Kathrin Hendrich (Bayern Munich), Leonie Maier (Bayern Munich), Carolin Simon (Lyon).

Midfielders/Forwards: Klara Buehl (Freiburg), Sara Daebritz (Bayern Munich), Linda Dallmann (SGS Essen), Svenja Huth (Turbine Potsdam), Turid Knaak (SGS Essen), Melanie Leupolz (Bayern Munich), Dzsenifer Marozsan (Lyon), Lena Oberdorf (SGS Essen), Alexandra Popp (c) (Wolfsburg), Lea Schueller (SGS Essen), Verena Schweers (Bayern Munich).

Reserves: Lisa Schmitz (Turbine Potsdam), Pauline Bremer (Manchester City), Kristin Demann (Bayern Munich), Lena Lattwein (Hoffenheim), Felicitas Rauch (Turbine Potsdam). — AFP

## Bayern icon Arjen Robben dreaming of fairytale farewell

BERLIN: Departing Dutch star Arjen Robben has said that he is still undecided about what to do when he leaves Bayern Munich, and admitted that he may still retire from football altogether. The 35-year-old winger is set to leave Munich after 10 years at the end of the season, and has been linked with clubs as diverse as Inter Milan and his hometown club Groningen.

At a press conference in Munich yesterday, Robben said that he still didn't know what life after Bayern held for him. "I am late making my decision because of my injury. I wanted to get back on the pitch first," said Robben, who had been sidelined since November before returning to action against Hanover two weeks ago.

"My wife would have preferred it otherwise, to be honest," he said. "It is not an easy decision to make. If you decide that you are going to keep playing, you have to find a place where everything is just right, not just in terms of football but also for my family."

Asked whether he might stop playing altogether, Robben said it was possible. "It is an option, but I don't know whether it will happen," he said. He said that were he to play against Bayern in the future, he would have no problem celebrating against his old club.

"Everyone is different, but with all due respect I think it is a bit silly when players don't celebrate against their former clubs. Football is football," he said. The Dutchman won the Champions League with Bayern in 2013, and now hopes to win an eighth Bundesliga title in his last home game for Bayern this weekend.

Bayern can wrap up a seventh successive league title if they beat Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday, and Robben said that he had "goosebumps" thinking about the game. "To be crowned champions on Saturday, after 10 years, in front of 70,000 fans at a full Allianz Arena. There is nothing better."

"It will be a very special game, I have played it out three times in my head already. Maybe I can play for 90 minutes and score two goals," said the Dutchman, whose Bundesliga tally currently stands at 98.

Robben said that he had not expected to become a club legend when he joined Bayern from Real Madrid in 2009. "It was a difficult step for me. My aim was to win the Champions League, and it didn't look very likely at Bayern then," he said.

Robben scored an 89th minute winner for Bayern in the 2013 Champions League Final, a year after missing a cru-



Arjen Robben

cial penalty in their painful final defeat to Chelsea a year earlier. Boored by some Bayern fans after that defeat, Robben said his relationship to the supporters is now strong.

"For me, the appreciation of the fans, not just as a footballer but also as a person, means almost more than winning titles," he said. Robben's Brazilian team-mate Rafinha also gave his farewell press conference yesterday, after the club confirmed on Saturday that he would leave after eight years in Munich.

The 33-year-old full-back broke down in tears as he said goodbye. "I got an SMS from my mum just after training and she told me to say thank you to my team-mates, to everyone at the club," he said. "The friendship I have with people here is the most important thing." — AFP



**25** Bortuzzo, Blues blow past San Jose Sharks, even series



**26** International cricket gets first woman match referee



**27** History made as women to referee men's AFC Cup clash



SEATTLE: Third baseman Matt Chapman #26 of the Oakland Athletics makes a diving stop before throwing out Edwin Encarnacion #10 of the Seattle Mariners at first base during the first inning of a game at T-Mobile Park in Seattle, Washington. At left, is shortstop Marcus Semien #10 of the Oakland Athletics. — AFP

## Mariners overtake A's in 10th inning

### Ohtani hits 1st HR as Angels top Twins

SEATTLE: Omar Narvaez drilled the game-winning single to left field with two outs in the bottom of the 10th inning as the host Seattle Mariners scored twice in the frame to rally to a 6-5 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Monday night. Seattle was one strike away from losing when Domingo Santana tied it up by lacing a 2-2 fastball from Oakland right-hander Joakim Soria (1-3) down the left field line for a double. The ball landed about one foot fair, and pinch runner Dee Gordon easily scored the tying run from second base. Narvaez followed with the winning hit, and Santana easily scored as the throw from Athletics left fielder Robbie Grossman was off the mark. The Mariners halted a four-game losing streak and won for just the third time in 15 games. Ramon Laureano homered with two outs in the top of the 10th inning to give Oakland a 5-4 lead. Seattle had tied the game 4-4 in the eighth on Daniel Vogelbach's three-run shot.

#### ANGELS 5, TWINS 4

Tommy La Stella went 3-for-5, hitting what proved to be the game-winning home run in the sixth inning, and Shohei Ohtani hit his first home run of the season to lead Los Angeles past Minnesota in Minneapolis. Mike Trout and Albert Pujols both went 3-for-5. Ohtani went 2-for-3 with two walks and two RBIs, and Kole Calhoun added two hits for Los Angeles, which won for the fifth time in seven games. Jorge Polanco and Marwin Gonzalez each homered for Minnesota, which has lost back-to-back games for just the third time this season.

#### DIAMONDBACKS 9, PIRATES 3

Eduardo Escobar drove in three runs with a homer and a triple. Robbie Ray reached a strikeout milestone, and Arizona cruised past Pittsburgh in Phoenix. Arizona scored in each of the first five innings to storm back after the Pirates took a 2-0 lead

off Ray (3-1) in the first inning. The left-hander settled down to pitch five innings, allowing six hits and two runs (one earned). He walked two and struck out six. When Ray fanned pitcher Nick Kingham (1-1) to end the fourth, he recorded his 800th career strikeout to become the second-fastest left-hander (125 games) to reach that level. Clayton Kershaw (128 games) had been second behind Frank Tanana (120).

#### ASTROS 8, TIGERS 1

Robinson Chirinos, Jake Marisnick and Alex Bregman hit two-run homers, and Houston extended its winning streak to six with a victory over at Detroit. Chirinos and Marisnick reached base three times and scored two runs apiece. George Springer, who had five hits against the Texas Rangers on Sunday, supplied two hits and an RBI on Monday, and Aledmys Diaz added a solo homer among two hits. Brad Peacock (4-2) allowed one run on three hits

in five innings to pick up the win. He walked four and struck out three.

#### PHILLIES 7, BREWERS 4

Cesar Hernandez homered and had two hits, two RBIs and three runs to lift host Philadelphia past Milwaukee. The game was delayed at the start by rain for 52 minutes. Andrew McCutchen, J.T. Realmuto and Maikel Franco each added two hits for the Phillies, who won their third in a row. Adam Morgan (2-1) picked up the win with 1 1/3 innings of shutout relief. Pat Neshek earned his second save with a scoreless ninth. Lorenzo Cain led the Brewers with his first career five-hit contest, but he grounded out in his sixth at-bat to end the game. Milwaukee's Mike Moustakas added a solo homer, his 10th of the season.

#### WHITE SOX 5, INDIANS 2

Yoan Moncada drilled a pair of solo home runs against Shane Bieber, who gave

up four in all, and Reynaldo Lopez pitched 7 2/3 strong innings to lift host Chicago over Cleveland. Jose Abreu and Wellington Castillo also went deep for the White Sox. The power surge proved to be plenty of support for Lopez (3-4), who scattered two runs—one earned—and two hits in his longest outing of the season, walking two and striking out six.

Aaron Bummer and Alex Colome contributed 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief to complete Chicago's combined two-hitter and help the White Sox to their third straight win. Colome pitched the ninth inning to earn his eighth save.

#### ORIOLES AT YANKEES, PPD.

The game between New York and Baltimore was postponed after a rain delay, with an apparent botched removal of the tarp by the grounds crew leaving Yankee Stadium with unplayable field conditions. — Reuters

## Muguruza beats Zheng to find her clay feet in Rome

ROME: Former French Open winner Garbine Muguruza warmed up for this month's clay-court Grand Slam at Roland Garros by easing into the second round of the Italian Open on Monday with a straight sets win over China's Zheng Saisai.

Muguruza—a former world number one now ranked 19th—came through 6-3, 6-4 for her third win over 46th-ranked Saisai this season. The 25-year-old Muguruza, who won the French Open in 2016 and Wimbledon in 2017, has twice reached the semi-finals in Rome.

"It was a slow start but I'm happy because last

week wasn't a good week for me," Muguruza, who exited the Madrid Open in the first round, told the WTA website. "I love Rome and it is very important for me to get as many matches as I can for the Grand Slam at the French Open."

She next plays either Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki, the 11th seed, or American Danielle Collins, for a place in the third round. It was not a good day for Chinese players at the Foro Italico with two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka crushing Zhang Shuai 6-2, 6-1, and next meets two-time defending Rome champion Elina Svitolina.

Chinese 15th seed Wang Qiang also fell to Czech Katerina Siniakova 1-6, 7-5, 6-4. Former world number one Serena Williams returned from injury to book a rematch with her sister Venus, 21 years after they last met in Rome.

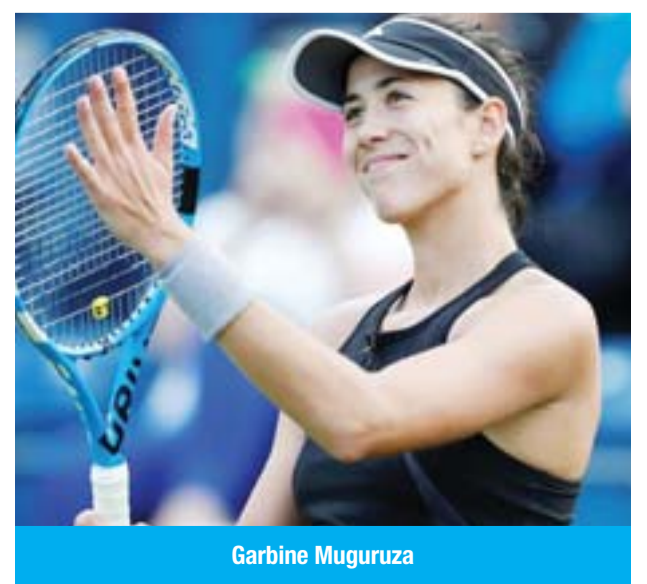
Four-time Rome winner Serena, 37, eased through 6-4, 6-2 against Swedish qualifier Rebecca Petersen after nearly two months out with a knee injury. But 38-year-old Venus, whose only Rome title came back in

1999, needed more than three hours to battle past Belgian Elise Mertens 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4).

The sisters last played each other in the quarter-finals in Rome in 1998, with Venus the winner. "I love the clay season and wanted to do everything to be a part of it," said Serena, who is one title short of Chris Evert's record of five Rome crowns.

"It's not about today or tomorrow. Obviously the slams, et cetera, just getting ready for those events," added the 23-time Grand Slam winner. Former world number four Dominika Cibulkova, won her match 6-2, 6-3 against Aliaksandra Sasnovich, and next meets US Open and Australian Open winner Naomi Osaka of Japan.

Britain's Johanna Konta swept aside Alison Riske 6-4, 6-1, and next plays Sloane Stephens. Italian wildcard Sara Errani fell 6-1, 6-0 to Slovak Victoria Kuzmova. US 18th seed Madison Keys, a semi-finalist in last year's French Open, beat Slovenia's Polona Hercog 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), and next meets fellow American Sofia Kenin. — AFP



Garbine Muguruza