

# Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 18055

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## Local

## Visa traders



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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I usually receive via email inquiries or complaints about the visa and residence system in Kuwait. I do not have the answers, because this issue in Kuwait is left to the sponsor. The sponsor decides the fate of the worker and agrees or refuses and sometimes bargains until the worker feels helpless and is forced to accept the conditions or complain to the authorities.

I believe that the Public Authority for Manpower is trying to end fraud by residency traders by applying international labor standards and administrative development to enforce employment laws. In fact in recent years, the files of such companies have been closed, because Kuwait has signed many agreements on protecting employees and preserving labor rights. So it is time for such complaints to end.

I know well that the residency departments of the interior ministry are also doing their part, but unfortunately, Kuwait's

history of humanitarian and charitable work is being damaged by residency traders, who harm the expatriate workforce and Kuwait's international reputation. I think government intervention in this matter is necessary to fight these saboteurs who are harming us as a community.

The number of expats in Kuwait, according to official statistics, has reached more than three million. Most of them have employment contracts, but there are also some who sold everything they own in their countries in order to obtain a visa to enter Kuwait, only to find themselves victims of residency traders and becoming hunted by security men. I know that it is natural that security forces campaign against expats who do not have valid residence permits, not allow them to stay here and end their presence by sending them back home. But does this end the problem for good?

What about those who brought them here, who get away scot-free, looking for other expatriates to sell them the illusion? Also, obtaining a work visa in Kuwait is not easy and requires relationships and money. The misfortune here is that the owners of these companies get a lot of money. There are those who have paid thousands of dinars to obtain a visa to enter Kuwait, in addition to a large amount of money to renew their residency for one or two years! I think these expats did not violate the labor law by their own will, but they were exploited. Sometimes they have valid status, but without real

work or business relations with the company that brought them to Kuwait, except on paper or when a problem occurs.

The problem here is that the owners of the companies defend themselves by saying that they do not force anyone to pay in exchange for entering the country, and this is an agreement that takes place between two parties by mutual consent - that I bring you to Kuwait and guarantee your residency. But, bringing people without real work is not beneficial to any expatriate, because it is likely that they will not find a job.

I have a few tips for new expats. There is a hotline and an email to receive complaints linked with the Public Authority for Manpower for urgent complaints from foreign workers specialized in resolving labor disputes. An expatriate can file a complaint if they don't receive their financial dues, want their passport, want to transfer their residence or cancel the residence for travel or any other complaint.

The interior ministry has developed its visa process with the Kuwait e-visa website. It is available in both Arabic and English and I hope everyone reviews this site before coming to Kuwait to learn about the laws and legislations here. But this may not be easy for uneducated laborers, so embassies should direct anyone who wants to come to Kuwait to check this site to know what they must know before they take up any offer.

## LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait launches Online Shopping Portal & App



LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retailer, announced the launch of its online shopping portal and shopping app for Kuwait. The online portal and mobile app were announced by Mr. Ashraf Ali M.A., Executive Director of LuLu Group International along with our chief guests Mr. Bader Al Otaibi, Head of Department Municipality, Mr. Fahad

Al-Nassar Sheikh, Department of Municipality & Rashed Saad Al-Hajeri, Expert Consumer protection, in the presence of Mr. Stuart Davidge, LuLu Group Operation Manager & top Lulu management in Kuwait, special invitees and shoppers at the hypermarket's Egaila outlet on 3rd February.

The new online initiative complements the many iconic brick-and-mortar LuLu Hypermarkets located strategically around Kuwait, and provides customers with a cutting-edge online shopping experience 24x7.

With the tagline of 'Shop Online. We deliver', the new LuLu online shopping and app offer online customers a seamless shopping experience, while retaining the brand's commitment to quality, affordability and customer service excellence that are hallmarks of LuLu hypermarkets. The website can

be accessed through luluhypermarket.com, while the shopping app is available for free download from both, Google's Play Store and Apple's App Store.

In addition to the services offered by LuLu Hypermarkets stores around the country, the best-in-class online shopping and mobile app allows customers to shop for over 20,000 products right from the convenience of their homes and have purchases delivered to their door-step.

Among the products available at the online shopping and through the shopping app are groceries, fresh food and lifestyle products such as fashion wear, as well as electronics and home appliances and so much more. Moreover, online shoppers also get access to all the excellent deals, promotions and discounts regularly offered by the hypermarket at its stores.



A highly skilled team of personal shoppers work behind the scenes to fulfill all orders placed online and ensure that the right products and brands requested online are delivered to customers. A fleet of customized temperature-controlled delivery vehicles also make sure that orders are delivered freshly, hygienically and rapidly to any part of Kuwait.





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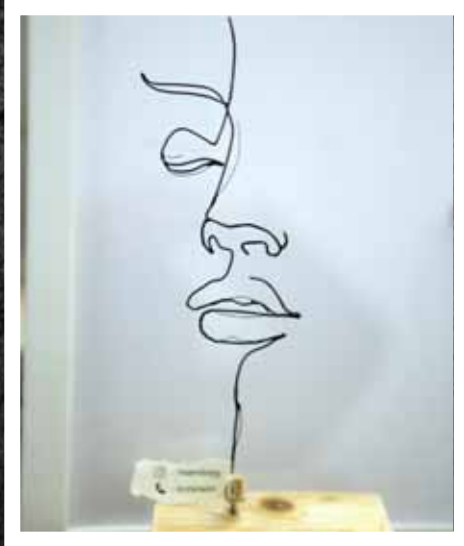
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# Art on a wire

## Sculptor transforms medium of wire into works of art

By Faten Omar

Many artists use interesting materials to create. Wire - the tough can slim hardness of a string - hardly seems like a creative medium and yet, manipulated in the right way, it can be. In 3000 BC, ancient Egyptians were using various materials including wires in their sculptures and pieces of jewelry. Various artists have now taken the concept to a whole new level. Khaled Hamdan, 28, a road and bridge engineer, has found wires to be an interesting material for his artwork. Kuwait Times spoke with the Jordanian artist to learn more about this art and how he embarked on this path.



Khaled Hamdan creates art by sculpting wire into various shapes - sometimes in exquisite detail and other times representative forms. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

**Kuwait Times: Can you tell us about your journey as an artist - when did you start working with wires?**

**Khaled Hamdan:** When I saw wire artworks by Khaled Nawsreh displayed in a cafe in Jordan. I loved the idea and started to make random pieces, learning by myself and hoping to turn a piece into a 3D form. In 2014, I worked on my first piece - a motorcycle - and it was not that good. Piece after piece, I began to master the art.

**KT: What initially drew you to the material and how does it compare to other mediums that you have worked with?**

**Hamdan:** Originally, I'm a cartoonist and calligrapher, and when I saw this kind of art, I thought converting my drawings into tangible shapes would be something unique. I chose wire art because it gives you freedom in shaping. I found the wires unique materials, where the artist can easily shape, twist, wrap, braid and coil.

**KT: How do most of your pieces come about? How long does it take?**

**Hamdan:** The pieces that I like to do over and over again are motorcycles, because of their cool and detailed design. Also, I shape faces and random shapes and write names with wire in dream catchers. Small pieces usually take up to one hour and the largest one took me 10 hours to make.

**KT: Do the people of Kuwait show interest in your work?**

**Hamdan:** People of Kuwait liked my art when I participated in the Boulevard exhibition and had a booth in Kuwait City twice. People are attracted to this kind of art. They said this is the first time they've seen such art here in Kuwait.





**KT: Can you talk us through creating one of your sculptures, from inception to realization, and what challenges you face during the process?**

**Hamdan:** In the beginning, I turn my idea of the piece into a drawing, as it will be easier to shape later. After drawing and designing it, I determine the required dimensions and sizes accurately, particularly if the shape is under fixed standards and sizes with scale (such as bicycles). Then I start to shape it with wires and spray it with customized colors. One of the most challenging things I face is trying to match the shape with the original form.

**KT: Do you take customized orders? What is the strangest order you have done?**

**Hamdan:** I take customized orders on my Instagram account @theartology. But the orders are delivered after a week because it is hard to work on them while working full-time as an engineer. Average prices range between KD 1 to 20. The strangest order was for a woman who ordered her signature on wire artwork.

**KT: Who are the artists that influenced your work?**

**Hamdan:** Amjad Rasmi is an Arab artist who inspired me in the field of art.

**KT: What is your future plan in the field of wire art?**

**Hamdan:** My future plan is to support and develop art, especially for children, by organizing educational art workshops in schools. Practicing art is like practicing sports. It is a responsibility that should not be neglected - it must be developed and improved. Art should be a part of our lives. Hopefully, one day there will be more acceptance and appreciation of handmade art in Kuwait.







His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and senior state officials attend the drill.



## KUWAIT FIRE DEPARTMENT EXECUTES DRILL ON CATASTROPHES AT ARIFJAN



**KUWAIT:** Patronized by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) carried out the 'Shamel 6' drill titled 'the joint command for managing crises and catastrophes' in Arifjan, southeast of Kuwait City yesterday. The exercise was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, ministers, MPs, Governors, senior officials of the min-

istries of defense and interior, the Kuwait National Guard, and KFSD, as well as ranking officials of the state, the Diwan of the Prime Minister, and officials of international and regional organizations specialized in the realm of tackling repercussions of crises and catastrophes. KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad addressed the attendees affirming in part the government's keenness on setting up a fully integrated civil-military system for optimum fashion of coping with crises and emergencies. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Firefighters, rescuers, emergency medical personnel and others joined forces to participate in the crisis management drill. — KUNA photos







## Local

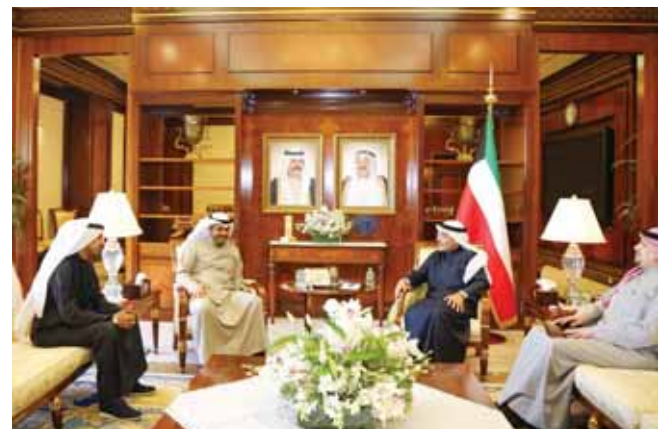
# Kuwait FM receives Bahraini, Libyan Ambassadors' credentials



**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with the new Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Malki. — KUNA photos



**Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah receives credentials of the new Libyan Ambassador to Kuwait Suleiman Lesahli.**



**Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with Kuwaiti Bar Association members.**

**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah yesterday received credentials of the new Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Malki, and new Libyan Ambassador to Kuwait Suleiman Lesahli. Sheikh Dr Ahmad, during the receptions held at the ministry headquarters, wished the envoys success in their service in the country, hoping that the solid and historic re-

lations between Kuwait and their respective countries would be cemented further. The meetings were attended by Ambassador Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah, the Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Dhari Ajran Al-Ajran, the Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs, Counselor Ahmad Abdulrahman Al-Shraim, the Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister for Affairs of the Foreign Minister's

Bureau, and a number of senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah received president of the Kuwaiti Bar Association Sharyan Marzouq Al-Sharyan. He also hosted attorney Abdulrahman Al-Tahous, the deputy president of the association. Sheikh Dr Ahmad, during the meeting, expressed good wishes for attorney Tahous for his appointment

as member of the International Bar Association, as Representative of the State of Kuwait. In the meantime, Sheikh Dr Ahmad received General Secretary of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) Abbas Ali Al-Naqi on the occasion of approaching end of his tenure in the organization. The Foreign Minister praised Naqi's efforts in boosting Arabs' cooperation. —KUNA

## Romania follows up issue of missing Kuwaiti

**VIENNA:** Kuwait Ambassador to Romania Talal Al-Hajri said Wednesday he discussed with a senior Romanian police officer the latest developments of the issue of the Kuwaiti national who's been missing in the European country for over four years. The acting inspector general of Prahova County police directorate reaffirmed the keenness of the Romanian authorities on following up the efforts to determine the fate of Mohammad Al-Baghli, the ambassador said. Kuwait is in contact with the Romanian authorities to know what happened to Baghli, a Kuwaiti businessman who mysteriously went missing in the county more than four years ago, he added. — KUNA



**Kuwait's Ambassador Talal Al-Hajri with the senior Romanian police officer.**

## Kuwait, Jordan discuss regional, int'l events

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received at his office yesterday his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Al-Safadi, on the occasion of the latter's visit to the country. During the meeting, both sides discussed bilateral relations on all levels, as well as latest regional and international updates. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Arab World Ambassador Fahad Al-

Awadhi, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Office of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ambassador Aziz Al-Daihani, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the State of Kuwait Ambassador Saqer Abu Shattal and other senior officials.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah had received the visiting Jordanian Foreign Minister at Seif Palace on Wednesday. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and ways to bolster them in various fields, including tackling developments in the region and international arena. The meeting was also attended by Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah, Khaled Al-Jarallah, Aziz Al-Daihani, as well as Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Fahad Ahmad Al-Awadhi. Safadi and his delegation arrived to Kuwait on Wednesday, where he was received at Kuwait International Airport by senior Kuwaiti officials led by Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

## Amir congratulates Queen Elizabeth II

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of congratulations to Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom on the anniversary of her accession to the throne. His Highness the Amir wished Queen Elizabeth II good health, and the United Kingdom everlasting progress and prosperity, lauding the exceptional and historic bilateral ties, and wishing they would see further growth and development. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar congratulatory cables. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Al-Safadi yesterday. — KUNA



## Local

# Deployment ban on Filipino skilled, semi-skilled workers lifted; domestic helper ban remains

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Governing Board has approved a partial lifting of the deployment ban for Filipino workers seeking employment in Kuwait. This means all skilled, semi-skilled and professional workers may now return to work in Kuwait.

This includes workers who were temporarily stopped at the airport in Manila and were barred by immigration authorities from leaving for work in Kuwait. "We lifted the ban for professionals, skilled and semi-skilled workers, meaning they can now be deployed to work in Kuwait and if they wish to come back, they can now come; new and returning. Those who were temporarily barred from leaving Manila at the time of ban may now work in Kuwait," said Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello III during an interview with the local re-

porters in Manila.

One reporter asked if domestic labor are now able to return. Secretary Bello answered, "Domestic helpers still cannot come, and this includes returning housemaids. We lifted the ban because the Kuwaiti government finally listened and agreed on the proposed harmonized contract of employment. This is a measure that would provide effective and sufficient protection to our overseas workers. The harmonized contract covers those that are mentioned by President Duterte," he told reporters.

The Philippine government has imposed a total deployment ban of Filipino workers to Kuwait from January 15, 2020 following the death and re-autopsy of the body of Jeanelyn Villavende, who was heavily tortured and sexually abused by her employers. An embalming certificate from the Kuwait government has confirmed that Villavende,

who was reportedly beaten 'black and blue', died of 'acute failure of heart and respiration' as a result of shock and multiple injuries in the vascular nervous system. However, a separate autopsy by National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Manila showed that Villavende's brain, heart, and some internal organs were missing; and that she also suffered multiple, severe traumatic injuries including genitalia injuries - an indication she was sexually abused.

The Philippines demanded explanation as to why the earlier autopsy of Jeanelyn Villavende's body did not match the autopsy done in Kuwait. In Kuwait, Bello has been assured of Kuwaiti official's unequivocal support and cooperation with regards to the issues of mistreated workers. Bello met with Kuwait's Finance Minister and Acting Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fahad Al-Afasi



Philippines Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello III

and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh. Villavende's employers have been charged with her death, and they have pleaded not guilty. More than 60 percent of 250,000 Filipinos in Kuwait work in the domestic labor sector.

## Search on for Jahra child rapist

**KUWAIT:** Criminal detectives are searching for a man who kidnapped an Egyptian child from a Jahra public park, raped him, then brought back to where he kidnapped him. The 10-year-old boy was reportedly playing in the park with his family, when the suspect kept an eye on him. As the child went further from his family, the suspect lured him to the outside, put him in his car, then took him to an isolated area where he raped him before bringing him back to where he picked him up from and left him crying. The child's cries alerted passersby, who helped him look for his family and managed to reunite him with them. When the family members became aware of what happened, they rushed the victim to the nearest police station and filed a complaint. An investigation was opened to identify, arrest the suspect and send him to face legal procedures. — Al-Rai

## Ministry bans sheep, Arabic coffee exports

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued a decision yesterday to ban the export of domestic and imported sheep and goats starting March 1, 2020, and another decision to ban the export and re-export of cardamom and Arabic coffee for three months. The two decisions were made following inspection tours at local markets, the ministry said, explaining that they would help the ministry have more control over the market and avoid price manipulations. "The crackdowns revealed that some suppliers were storing cardamom and coffee for re-exporting to neighboring countries where they can sell their products for higher prices compared to Kuwait," the sources explained, noting that this practice has created a shortage of the two items in the local market.

## Kuwait still looking for other countries to recruit domestic helpers

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is eyeing more countries to start allowing workers to come to Kuwait from in order to work as domestic helpers in addition to India, Sri Lanka and Eritrea, which are the only three remaining countries that export domestic workers to Kuwait following the Philippines' ban last month. Eritrea's market had joined India's and Sri Lanka's in sending domestic helpers to Kuwait in November 2019, Finance Minister and Acting Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel revealed.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) proposed other markets that include Nepal and Vietnam, in addition to Ethiopia and Indonesia which both used to send domestic helpers to Kuwait before authorities in each country banned this practice a number of years ago. The authority had written to the Foreign Ministry asking it to sign memorandums of understandings to bring in domestic helpers from Ethiopia, Guinea, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh and Kenya, Aqeel said. However, the minister explained that Vietnam did not show willingness to allow its national to seek jobs in Kuwait as domestic helpers, while Indonesia remains adamant on agreeing on a new mechanism for domestic helpers' recruitment before it lifts its ban.

In the meantime, Aqeel revealed that PAM crackdowns uncovered a number of violations committed in some domestic helpers' recruitment offices, and suspended the licenses of 66 offices for three months as a result. The violations include the way offices handled the recruitment



of helpers returned by their original employers, signing maids to contracts not approved by PAM, and failure to report to the relevant department at PAM when summoned. The violations also include failure to deliver the domestic helper to the employer within 24 hours after arrival.

### Expat engineers

In other news, expatriate engineers whose college degrees are not approved by the Kuwait's engineering society could face problems in the near future as local authorities prepare to embark in a mission to verify the authenticity of degrees of the country's foreign engineers. In this regard, informed sources at PAM re-

vealed that the authority will start next month checking university degrees of expatriate workers who have engineering-related jobs in Kuwait, noting that the operation will be done in cooperation with Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE). "Those whose certificates are not officially approved at KSE will not have their work license approved by PAM," the sources warned, noting that a worker in this case would be considered in violation of labor regulations. Furthermore, the sources indicated that engineers "of all specialties" will have to pass tests taken at KSE before they wish to issue a work permit from PAM with the job title matching their engineering skill.





Train drivers killed  
in Italy's rail crash

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In political triumph, US president acquitted in impeachment trial

Page 14



YOKOHAMA: The Diamond Princess cruise ship, with over 3,700 people quarantined onboard due to fears of the new coronavirus, is seen through a fence while anchored at the Daikoku Pier Cruise Terminal in Yokohama port yesterday. — AFP

# Coronavirus death toll hits 563

## From cruise liners to supply chains, China virus hurts

**SHANGHAI:** China's fast-moving coronavirus spread among passengers of a quarantined Japanese cruise liner yesterday and dragged down production at more global businesses, as scientists across the world searched for a vaccine. The death toll from the virus in mainland China jumped by 73 to 563, with more than 28,000 confirmed infections inside the workshop of the world and its second-largest economy. Moored off Japan, about 3,700 people on Carnival's Diamond Princess face testing and quarantine for at least two weeks on the ship, which has 20 virus cases.

Japan now has 45 virus cases. Gay Courter, a 75-year-old American novelist on board, said he hoped the US government would take the Americans off. "It's better for us to travel while healthy and also, if we get sick, to be treated in American hospitals," he said. In Hong Kong, another cruise ship with 3,600 passengers and crew was quarantined for a second day pending testing after three cases on board. Taiwan, which has 13 cases, banned international cruise ships from docking.

In China, cities have been shut off, flights cancelled and factories closed, shutting supply lines crucial to the world economy. Companies including Hyundai Motor, Tesla, Ford, PSA Peugeot Citroen, Nissan, Airbus, Adidas and Foxconn are taking hits. Financial analysts have cut China's growth outlook, with ratings agency Moody's signalling risks for auto sales and out-

put. Nintendo Co Ltd said yesterday delays to production and shipping of its Switch console and other goods to the Japan market were "unavoidable" due to the coronavirus.

Honda Motor Co was considering keeping operations suspended for longer than planned at its three plants in Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus, Japan's Nikkei newspaper reported. Indonesia said it stands to lose \$4 billion in earnings from tourism if travel from China is disrupted for the whole year. Chinese-ruled Hong Kong, hit by months of sometimes violent anti-China, pro-democracy unrest, said the coronavirus was hurting its economy and urged banks to adopt a "sympathetic stance" with borrowers.

But global stocks extended their recovery, cheered by record closes on Wall Street and China's announcement of a tariff cut on some imports from the United States, which analysts saw as a move to boost confidence. China, which has bristled at being ostracized over the virus, was considering delaying an annual meeting of its highest legislative body, the National People's Congress, from March 5, sources said. "The situation doesn't look likely to be contained by March," a government official told Reuters.

### Rush for HIV drug

Several countries, including the United States, have banned entry to visitors who have been in China over the previous two weeks. News of an-

other virus hot spot emerged, linked to a mid-January company meeting in Singapore. At least three people caught the disease after a conference held with 94 overseas staff, including one from Wuhan. Authorities have not identified the company, but the World Health Organization (WHO) said it was investigating. Singapore has reported 28 infections, some involving person-to-person transmission.



### People turning to HIV drugs in desperation

Health officials in the United States and China want to get a vaccine to initial human testing within months, but drugmakers have cautioned they have a long way to go. "There are no known effective therapeutics," WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said, when asked about reports of "breakthroughs" that boosted markets on Wednesday. China's National Health Commission said the HIV drug lopinavir/ritonavir could be used for coronavirus patients, without specifying how.

That triggered a rush, specifically for Kaletra, also known as Aluvia, which is drugmaker AbbVie's off-patent version of lopinavir/ritonavir and the only version approved for sale in China. Devy, a 38-year-old freelancer in Shandong province, said he was among hundreds who had contacted people with HIV to ask for medicine. "When you are left alone, seeing the blur shadow of death far away, I think no one can feel calm," Devy told Reuters.

Hundreds of experts will gather in Geneva on Feb. 11-12 to try to speed research into drugs and vaccines, the WHO said, adding that a multinational WHO-led team would also visit China. National officials said 3,694 cases were reported throughout China on Wednesday, the first day in more than a week to see a fall in new daily cases. Two deaths outside mainland China, in the Philippines and Hong Kong, have both involved visits to Wuhan, where more than 400 people have died.

Nearly 260 cases have been reported in 31 countries and regions outside mainland China, according to a Reuters tally. More than two dozen airlines have suspended or restricted flights to China and hundreds of foreigners have been evacuated from Wuhan and placed in quarantine. The virus is also stirring animosity in the decades-old dispute between self-ruled Taiwan and China, with the island complaining that China is providing the WHO with wrong information about its cases. — Reuters



## International

Friday, February 7, 2020

# Israeli-Palestinian violence rises after Trump peace plan

## Unrest spreads amid Palestinian anger at Trump plan

**JERUSALEM:** At least two Palestinians were killed and 15 Israelis were hurt yesterday in a string of incidents in Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, where violence has risen after the US announcement of its Middle East peace plan. In the West Bank, Israeli troops shot dead two Palestinians, one during violent clashes, authorities said. In Jerusalem, a car ran down Israeli soldiers and a gunman wounded a policeman in suspected Palestinian attacks.

Long-simmering Palestinian unrest has been stoked by anger at US President Donald Trump's Middle East plan, which was embraced by Israel and rejected by the Palestinians when it was announced last week. The plan would give Israel most of what it has sought during decades of conflict, including the disputed holy city of Jerusalem and nearly all the occupied land on which it has built settlements.

At the entrance to Jerusalem's walled Old City, a gunman shot at a border policeman, lightly wounding him, Israeli police said. Police opened fire on the assailant and killed him. The shooting took place not far from a popular nightlife venue where a few hours earlier, a car rammed into Israeli soldiers who were sightseeing after coming to the city to be sworn after basic training. One soldier was badly injured and another sustained moderate injuries, the Magen David Adom ambulance service said. Twelve others were lightly injured.

Police said they were treating the car-ramming incident, which took place near the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, as a terrorist attack. The driver was still at large, police said. "It is just a matter of time - and not much time - until we get our hands on the attacker. Terrorism will not defeat us, we will win," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. In the West Bank city of Jenin, a 19-year-old man was shot dead by troops while throwing rocks at them, Palestinians said.

An Israeli military spokesman said soldiers came to Jenin to demolish the home of a Palestinian who was involved in the 2018 killing of a Jewish settler. Troops opened fire at Palestinians who shot and threw bombs at them in Jenin, the spokesman said. Palestinian authorities said another Palestinian man, a police officer, had been killed at a Jenin police station by Israeli gunfire. Israeli officials did not comment and it was unclear whether that incident was directly linked to the clashes in the West Bank city.

On Wednesday, Israeli troops shot dead a 17-year-old Pales-



**BETHLEHEM:** Israeli security forces carry out a raid in the Bethlehem area in search of a suspect wanted for a car-ramming attack earlier in Jerusalem that left several people injured yesterday. —AFP

tinian elsewhere in the West Bank, saying he had thrown a firebomb at them during a violent protest against Trump's plan. He was the first fatality since the plan was announced. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned Israel for the deaths, linking them to what Trump has billed as the "deal of the century". The Palestinians, who have long shunned the Trump administration, accusing it of bias towards Israel, say the plan falls far short of their demands for a viable independent state and other rights.

Israel supports the Trump plan, which would give it much of what it has sought for decades. Some Arab nations oppose it, while the European Union has also rejected parts of it. "The deal of the century caused such escalation and tension by trying to impose fake facts on the ground," Abbas' spokesman Nabil Abu

Rudeineh said. "We have repeatedly warned that any deal that doesn't answer the minimum of Palestinian rights and that doesn't aim to make a just and lasting peace will definitely lead to the tension we are witnessing today." The Israel-Gaza border has also been shaken by several days of violence.

Palestinians have launched mortar fire, rockets and balloon-borne explosives into Israel, causing panic but no serious casualties. Israel has carried out nightly air strikes against sites belonging to Gaza's ruling Hamas Islamists. Hamas praised the rising violence. "The spreading resistance and clashes by our people in the West Bank and their resistance in the heart of occupied Jerusalem is an active response against the destructive Trump deal," Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said. — Reuters

## Woman spared prison for bringing dog into mosque

**JAKARTA:** A Christian woman charged with blasphemy has escaped jail for bringing a dog into a mosque, the latest religious case to draw headlines in Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation. The case of Suzethe Margareth, 52, sparked outrage last summer when a video emerged showing her in a mosque in Bogor, near the capital Jakarta, wearing shoes and letting her dog run loose.

Dogs are considered impure in Islam, and wearing shoes is forbidden in a mosque. A Bogor court ruled Wednesday that Margareth was guilty, but decided not to impose a prison term because she has paranoid schizophrenia. Prosecutors had demanded a nine-month jail term. But Margareth testified that she went into the

mosque because she was being chased and heard voices in her head saying her husband was getting married there. Her lawyer welcomed the decision, saying her condition was clear from the way she spoke.

But mosque representative Ruslan A Suhady slammed the mental health defense. People will mental illnesses "usually roam on roads naked. This woman wore neat clothes," he said. The dog involved in the incident reportedly died soon after being hit by a car. This is the latest in a string of controversial blasphemy cases in Indonesia, where rights groups have long campaigned against laws they say are frequently misused to target religious minorities. Blasphemy convictions can result in up to five years in prison. — AFP

## Saudi to punish residents who flout China travel ban

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia has banned all travel by its citizens or resident foreigners to virus-hit China and introduced penalties for any breach, state media announced yesterday. "Trips to China by citizens or (foreign) residents are suspended in accordance with the preventive health measures the kingdom has adopted against the virus," the official SPA news agency said.

Expatriates who flout the ban face being barred from returning to the kingdom. China's coronavirus crisis has deepened with the death toll soaring to 563 yesterday, as thousands of people trapped on quarantined cruise ships add to the global panic about the epidemic. More

than 28,000 people have now been infected across China as authorities struggle to contain the outbreak despite compelling millions to stay indoors in a growing number of cities.

Two dozen countries have confirmed cases of the respiratory disease which emerged from a market selling exotic animals in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year. Saudi Arabia is not among them, although the neighbouring United Arab Emirates has reported five confirmed cases, all among Chinese arrivals from Wuhan. Elsewhere in the Gulf, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman have advised their citizens against all travel to China but without any compulsion. — AFP



# Israel's air strikes kill 12 pro-Iran fighters in Syria

## Syria clashes test Erdogan-Putin relations

**BEIRUT:** Israeli air strikes killed 12 pro-Iran fighters in Syria yesterday, a monitor said, the latest in a spate of raids Israel has said targeted Iranian ambitions to develop a military presence on its doorstep. Israel has pledged to prevent its main enemy from entrenching itself militarily in Syria, where it is backing President Bashar Al-Assad's government alongside Russia and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

The pre-dawn raids killed seven foreign fighters in the Kisweh area south of Damascus, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Iranian and pro-Iran foreign fighters were present in the area, the Britain-based war monitor said, but the nationality of the dead was not immediately clear. Five Syrian members of a pro-Iranian group were also killed in the Ezra area of the southern province of Daraa, Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said.

A Syrian army source quoted by state news agency SANA said air defenses responded to two waves of Israeli strikes after midnight that targeted the Damascus area and then positions in Daraa and the adjacent province of Quneitra. "The attack wounded eight fighters," the source said, without elaborating on where they had been stationed or their nationality.

AFP correspondents in Damascus heard loud explosions around 1:15 am. State television broadcast images showing explosions in the sky. An Israeli army spokesman declined to comment on the strikes when contacted by AFP. Israel has carried out repeated strikes in Syria since the civil war erupted in 2011, mainly targeting government forces and their Iranian and Hezbollah allies. Israel's political leadership has spoken

publicly of the bombing campaign, although the army rarely comments on individual strikes.

### 'Will not save' Idlib

Last month, Damascus accused the Israeli air force of carrying out an attack on the T4 airbase in central Syria, which the Observatory said killed at least three Iran-backed militiamen. In December, the Observatory said Israeli air strikes killed three foreigners fighting alongside government forces south of the capital. The previous month, the Israeli army claimed responsibility for a wave of air strikes against Syrian military sites and Iranian forces that killed 23 people including 16 foreigners.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said positions of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards foreign operations arm were among the targets. The war in Syria has killed more than 380,000 people and displaced millions since it started in 2011 with the brutal repression of pro-democracy protests. The reported Israeli strikes come as government forces press a blistering offensive against Syria's last major rebel bastion, in the Idlib region in the northwest.

### Erdogan-Putin relations

Meanwhile, deadly clashes between Syrian and Turkish forces are again testing the delicate relationship between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, though they have become masters at managing their competing interests. Once bitter rivals, Erdogan and Putin grew far closer after the failed coup in Turkey in 2016, when the Russian president took the opportunity to express his



**ARIHA, Syria:** An aerial view shows the rebel-held town of Ariha in the northern countryside of Syria's Idlib province following an air strike by pro-regime forces. — AFP

full support at a time when Ankara's Western allies were more lukewarm in their support.

Despite being on opposing sides of the conflicts in both Syria and Libya, they have also found it expedient to keep negotiations under their control as much as possible, leaving Western powers at arm's length. Still, it re-

mains a tricky balancing act, particularly in Syria, where Turkey backs several rebel groups while Russia is the key supporter of President Bashar al-Assad. A Syrian offensive in the last rebel bastion of Idlib has sent another huge wave of refugees towards Turkey's borders. — Agencies

## Iraq protesters defiant as they bury 7 killed in overnight clash

**NAJAF:** Iraqi anti-government protesters yesterday vowed to push on with their wave of rallies as they buried seven fellow activists killed overnight in violence blamed on supporters of a powerful cleric. Loyalists of Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada Sadr—a militiaman-turned-politician with a cult-like following—had raided a protest camp in Iraq's shrine city of Najaf late Wednesday. Seven anti-government demonstrators were killed by bullets to the head or chest, medics in the city said, and dozens more were wounded. In the melee, tents where protesters had slept for weeks were burned down.

It marked the bloodiest episode yet in escalating tensions between the bulk of the demonstrators and Sadr, who had initially backed the rallies but split with the movement suddenly last weekend. Sadr then endorsed Mohammad Allawi as the country's new prime minister designate, in stark contrast to most of the protesters who reject the politician as an establishment figure. Allawi, 65, served as communications minister twice since the US-led invasion of 2003 but also stepped down twice, citing corruption in the government.

In Baghdad's Tahrir Square yesterday, anti-Allawi demonstrators said they were determined to continue the protests that started in October and have repeatedly been marred by violence. Nearly 490 people have been killed and 30,000 wounded, most of them demonstrators, according to a count compiled by AFP from security and medical sources. "We've finally got used to it," said Tayba, a Baghdad high school student who had the Iraqi flag tied around her shoulders. "In fact, we're even more determined. Before, the students used to hold just one demonstration a week, now there are three."

In the Wednesday night attack, Sadr supporters flooded the main anti-government tent city in Najaf, witnesses said, and clashes erupted before security forces intervened to separate the two sides. Sadrists went on to occupy the site themselves, AFP journalists said. Tensions between the two camps had already boiled over, with Sadr supporters—typically identified by blue caps—storming squares and harassing rival demonstrators, who have taken up chants against the cleric. — AFP

## Libya 'den of mercenaries', say war-weary citizens

**TRIPOLI:** After 10 months of fighting that has torn their country apart, exhausted Libyans voice deep fears and say their fate is no longer in their own hands. The oil-rich North African country has been mired in chaos since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising that killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi, with two rival administrations vying for power. The conflict deepened last April when military strongman Khalifa Haftar, who controls much of Libya's south and east, launched an assault to seize Tripoli, the base of the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA).

A fragile ceasefire, brokered by Moscow and Ankara, was established on January 12. And at an international summit in Berlin a week later, world leaders agreed to end all foreign interference in Libya and to uphold a weapons embargo. But on the streets of Libya, war-weary citizens are increasingly hopeless, telling AFP that their resource-rich country has become a plaything of foreign powers. The fighting has drawn in a range of foreign combatants, among them reportedly Russian mercenaries, Sudanese militiamen for hire and

members of pro-Turkish Syrian units. Mohammad al-Barouni, a student from Tripoli, charged that foreign players had been sending weapons and fighters into Libya "without fear or shame". "After 10 months of fighting... the capital and its suburbs have become a den of mercenaries where arms are flooding in, in broad daylight", he said.

Nouri Bengharsa, a civil servant, complained that "since the fall of Kadhafi, Libyans have allowed foreigners to meddle in their affairs, and now they can't get rid of them". Libyan politicians were partly to blame because they are "incapable of dialogue in their own country," he said while shopping in a vegetable market in Janzour, west of the capital. "Yet they run to foreign capitals where they have specific agendas dictated to them." The UN Security Council has been plagued by divisions over Libya and has been unable to adopt any resolution on the conflict for the past 10 months.

Salem al-Mahmudi, a vendor, said the international community had "not managed to tame" the countries that support eastern commander Haftar or Fayeze al-Sarraj's Tripoli-based GNA. Those countries were exploiting the truce to dispatch new military reinforcements ahead of a "great battle" in Tripoli, Mahmudi said. Haftar has the backing of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Russia, among others, while the GNA is mainly supported by Qatar and Turkey. — AFP



## International

# Record number of anti-Semitic incidents logged in UK - again

## Rise comes amid global warnings of rising attacks on Jews

**LONDON:** The number of anti-Semitic incidents logged in Britain last year hit record levels yet again amid accusations the opposition Labor Party had failed to tackle the issue within its ranks, a Jewish advisory body said yesterday. The Community Security Trust (CST), which advises Britain's estimated 280,000 Jews on security matters, said there had been 1,805 incidents in 2019, a rise of 7% and the fourth consecutive year the figure had reached a new high. CST chief executive David Delew said the record came as no surprise and the organization believed the real number was likely to be far higher.

"It is clear that both social media and mainstream politics are places where anti-Semitism and racism need to be driven out, if things are to improve in the future," he said. World leaders

warned last month of a growing tide of anti-Jewish sentiment, driven both by far-right white supremacists and those from the far-left, as



### Labor Party accused of failing to tackle issue

they commemorated victims of the Holocaust in World War Two. In Britain, the CST said there was an increase in incidents in months when Labour's problems with anti-Semitism

were in the news. Ever since veteran socialist Jeremy Corbyn, an ardent supporter of Palestinian rights, became leader in 2015, the party has faced accusations that it has failed to stem anti-Semitism among some members. Corbyn, who is stepping down as leader in April, has said anti-Semitism is "vile and wrong" but the party is now under investigation by Britain's Equality and Human Rights Commission. Last February, a number of Labour lawmakers left the party citing the issue as a reason, while ahead of December's national election, Britain's chief rabbi said Corbyn was unfit to be prime minister.

Of the total number of incidents, 224 were connected to Labor, said the CST, which has collated such data since 1984. "It is hard to precisely disaggregate the impact of the continu-

ing Labor anti-Semitism controversy upon CST's statistics, but it clearly has an important bearing," the report said. The charity said the main reason for the overall increase in incidents was a sharp rise in online anti-Semitism.

But there were also 157 assaults - a 27% increase on 2018 - with almost 50% of these occurring in just three areas of the country - Barnet and Hackney in London and Salford in northern England which are home to some of the largest Jewish communities. A rise of intolerance after Britons voted in the 2016 referendum to leave the European Union and the Brexit discourse since, which brought nationalism and immigration to the fore, had also led an atmosphere where people might have felt able to express their "hatred of otherness", the report said. — Reuters

## Train drivers killed in Italy's rail crash

**LODI:** Two rail workers were killed and about 30 people injured yesterday when a high-speed train derailed before dawn near Milan in northern Italy, authorities said. The crash occurred just after 5:30 am near the town of Lodi, about 50 kilometers south of Milan. "It was a serious accident that had a tragic end with the death of two rail workers" aboard the train, Lodi Prefect Marcello Cardona told reporters, who added that an investigation was underway.

Cardona said none of the injuries suffered were life-threatening and all casualties had been taken to hospital. The Lombardy region's health department put the number of injured at 31. "It could have been a lot worse," Cardona said, adding that there were only 33 people on board the train. Only one person was in the first car and two people in the second when the accident occurred, he said.

"I thought I was dead," a survivor told local newspaper Liberta from hospital in Piacenza where he was being treated for minor injuries. "I closed my eyes and prayed." "The train was going very fast, perhaps 300 kilometers per hour," said the unnamed man in his 20s. "Suddenly, I felt a violent blow. A really loud roar," said the man who was travelling with a friend in the second carriage. "We held hands tightly to avoid falling. The wagon overturned and while waiting for help we went out through a hole to save ourselves," he said, adding that they were stuck on the crashed



**LODI, Italy:** Italian firefighters remove rubbles from the wreckage of a derailed train, outside the city of Lodi, near Milan, northern Italy yesterday. — AFP

train for 15 minutes. The interior minister has been informed and the prosecutor was already at the scene of the accident, the cause of which was unknown, he said.

Two helicopters, hundreds of firemen, police and other authorities descended on the open farmland area outside of Lodi. "We are greatly saddened by the two deaths, the two rail workers, and we express our solidarity with the families," said Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. "We can't yet say anything" about the cause of the crash, he told journalists in Rome.

### Ripped metal

The Milan-Salerno train was en route to Bologna when it came off the tracks before dawn. Video images showed ripped metal at the front of the first car, where the engine separated from the train. The first car was flipped on its side and appeared to be still attached to the rest of the train. The engine car could be seen resting on its side on the other side of a

nearby railway building several dozen meters away.

According to initial findings reported by the media, the engine went off the rails and struck a freight wagon on a parallel track before hitting the building. Italian media reported that work had been done on the track on Wednesday night, but Cardona said it was premature to jump to conclusions on a link between that work and the accident.

"Line maintenance is done continually and it's much too early to associate the accident to maintenance," he said. Italy's last serious train accident occurred in January 2018, when three women died and about 100 passengers were injured when a packed train derailed near Milan due to poor track maintenance.

Managers and employees of Italy's state railway, RFI, as well as two former members of the national railway safety agency were charged with negligent homicide and other crimes. — AFP

## Saudi Arabia using special court against dissidents: Amnesty

**DUBAI:** A secretive criminal court in Saudi Arabia is being used to silence critical voices including clerics and rights activists, in the name of the fight against terrorism, Amnesty International said yesterday. The kingdom is frequently criticized by human rights advocates who accuse it of violently repressing opponents and activists, including feminists and the kingdom's Shiite minority.

Riyadh's Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) was established in 2008 to handle terrorism-related cases but has been widely used to try political prisoners. "The Saudi Arabian government exploits the SCC to create a false aura of legality around its abuse of the counter-terror law to silence its critics," said Heba Morayef, Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa regional director.

"Every stage of the SCC's judicial process is tainted with human rights abuses, from the denial of access to a lawyer, to incommunicado detention, to convictions based solely on so-called 'confessions' extracted through torture." Saudi authorities were not reachable for comment, but the kingdom insists that its judicial system is independent. Amnesty said its report was based on examination of court documents, government statements and national laws in a review of eight trials of 68 Shiite Muslims accused of taking part in protests and 27 people accused of campaigning for human rights.

It said the "grossly unfair" trials before the court saw harsh sen-

tences, including the death penalty, being handed out on the basis of vague charges such as "disobeying the ruler" and "inciting disorder by calling for demonstrations". Under the rule of the powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has launched ambitious economic and social reforms, allowing women to drive and for sports and entertainment events to be staged in the kingdom.

However, the brutal murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018 and the sweeping crackdown on dissent have tarnished the kingdom's reputation. Amnesty said that virtually all Saudi Arabian "independent voices", including human rights advocates, writers, and religious clerics are now behind bars. It cited in particular the case of Mohammad Al-Otaibi, who was sentenced to 14 years in jail for founding the Union for Human Rights, and faces new charges for seeking political asylum and communicating with international organizations.

The London-based group also detailed the case of Salman Al-Awda, a religious cleric arrested in September 2017 who faces the death penalty after calling for reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and its Gulf rival Qatar.

"If the King and Crown Prince want to show they are serious about reforms, they should as a first step immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience," Morayef said. — AFP



# In political triumph, US president acquitted in impeachment trial

## Breaking with Republicans, Romney votes ‘guilty’ in impeachment trial

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump was acquitted by the US Senate on Wednesday following a historic impeachment trial that shone a harsh light on America's divisions, without ever shaking the loyalty of his voter base. In a political triumph for the US leader, Trump drew on staunch Republican support to easily defeat a Democratic effort to expel him from office for pressuring Ukraine to help bolster his re-election effort.

The president immediately claimed “victory” while the White House declared it a full “exoneration” — and Democrats rejected the acquittal as the “valueless” outcome of an unfair trial. But the vote in the Senate showed just how solid a grip the former real estate mogul holds over the Republican Party — an asset nine months before he seeks a second four-year-term.

Even though several conceded Trump's behavior was wrong, Republicans ultimately stayed loyal in voting to clear the president of charges of abuse of power, by 52 to 48, and of obstruction of Congress, by 53 to 47 - far from the two-thirds supermajority required for conviction. “Two thirds of the senators present not having found him guilty of the charges contained therein, it is therefore ordered and adjudged that the said Donald John Trump be, and he is hereby, acquitted,” said Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, who presided over the trial.

One Republican, Senator Mitt Romney, a longtime Trump foe, risked White House wrath to vote alongside Democrats on the first count, saying Trump was “guilty of an appalling abuse of public trust.” He voted not guilty on the second charge. Trump's impeachment and trial will leave a permanent stain on his record, as it did for the only two presidents to have encountered the same fate, Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998.

But the Senate verdict was never truly in question since the House of Representatives formally impeached Trump in December, and it has now cleared out a major hurdle for the president to fully plunge into his campaign for re-election in November.

Responding to the verdict, Trump announced he would deliver a formal statement from the White House “to discuss our Country's VICTORY on the Impeachment Hoax!” The president had earlier tweeted a montage depicting a fake cover of Time magazine declaring him president for all eternity. Trump later tweeted a video attacking Romney, the first senator in US history to support convicting a president from his own party.

While the White House declared that Trump had obtained “full vindication and exoneration,” Nancy Pelosi, the House Speaker, warned that by clearing Trump Republicans had “normalized lawlessness.” “There can be no acquittal without a trial, and there is no trial without witnesses, documents and evidence,” said the top Democrat in Congress — who a day earlier ripped up her copy of Trump's State of the Union address on live television.

“Sadly, because of the Republican Senate's betrayal of the Constitution, the president remains an ongoing threat to American democracy, with his insistence that he is above the law and that he can corrupt the elections if he wants to.” Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer said the acquittal was “virtually valueless” since Republicans refused witnesses at his trial, something which Democrats said had never happened before at any impeachment trial.

### ‘Forever impeached’

The Democrats' intense 78-day House investigation faced public doubts and high-pressure



WASHINGTON: This still image taken from a US Senate webcast shows Senators voting during the impeachment trial of the US president in the Senate Chamber at the US Capitol on February 5, 2020 in Washington, DC. — AFP

White House stonewalling, a tactic which led to the obstruction charge. Concerned about the political risk for the party, Pelosi rejected a call early last year to impeach Trump on evidence compiled by then-special counsel Robert Mueller that he had obstructed the Russia election meddling investigation. But her concerns melted after new allegations surfaced in August that Trump had pressured Ukraine for help in his 2020 campaign. Though doubtful from the outset that they would win support from Republicans, an investigation amassed with surprising speed strong evidence to support the allegations.

The evidence showed that from early in 2019, Trump's private lawyer Rudy Giuliani and a close

political ally, Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, were scheming to pressure Kiev to help smear Democrats, including Trump's potential 2020 rival Joe Biden, by opening investigations into them. “We must say enough — enough! He has betrayed our national security, and he will do so again,” Adam Schiff, who led the House prosecution, argued on the Senate floor this week.

In the trial, Trump's defense was not seen as having undermined the facts compiled by Schiff's probe, and several Republican senators acknowledged he did wrong. But his lawyers and Senate defenders argued, essentially, that Trump's behavior was not egregious enough for impeachment and removal. — Agencies

## From sex scandals to impeachment: The unsinkable Trump

**WASHINGTON:** Impeached for abuse of power, President Donald Trump's acquittal by the Senate is just the latest escape for the real estate tycoon turned politician who has repeatedly defied the odds. The following are some of the events that could have torpedoed his political fortunes:

### ‘Grab ‘em’

On October 7, 2016, one month before the presidential election, a decade-old recording is released on which Trump is heard talking about women in extremely crude terms. The now infamous “Access Hollywood” tape features Trump - then the billionaire host of the hit reality show “The Apprentice” — boasting that his celebrity gave him license to

grope women with impunity. “When you're a star, they let you do it,” he said. “You can do anything. Grab ‘em by the p\*\*\*y. You can do anything.”

As prominent Republicans voiced their disgust, the scandal appeared set to derail Trump's White House bid - as pundits widely predicted it would cost him the women's vote. They were proven wrong. Trump defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton to win the presidency the following month, ultimately garnering 52 percent support among white women voters. At least 17 women have accused Trump of sexual harassment or sexual assault - accusations the president has denied.

### Charlottesville

On August 12, 2017, white supremacist, neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic groups - emboldened by Trump's election on an anti-immigration platform - gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia for a rally. Counter-protesters flocked to the city and clashes broke out. One neo-Nazi deliberately ploughed his car into a crowd of protesters, killing a 32-year-old woman. Trump reacted to the clashes by saying there were “very fine people” on both sides. His comments sparked a wave of indig-

nation including in his own Republican Party. But the outrage soon faded, and Trump was able to move on from the incident.

### The porn star

A year into Trump's presidency, in January 2018, a former porn star known as Stormy Daniels — real name Stephanie Clifford - came forward to allege she had a tryst with Trump a decade earlier, and that he paid her to keep quiet. Trump's longtime lawyer Michael Cohen later admitted paying Clifford \$130,000 in hush money just weeks before the 2016 election. But while Cohen has since been jailed for violating campaign finance laws, Trump escaped largely unscathed by the lurid revelations - which did little to dent his support even among religious conservatives.

### Mueller investigation

In May 2017, former FBI director Robert Mueller was named as special counsel to investigate whether any members of Trump's presidential campaign conspired with Russia to get him elected, as well as subsequent efforts by the president to obstruct justice. The Mueller probe uncovered a trail of misdeeds that led to charges against half a dozen former

Trump associates including his former campaign manager Paul Manafort, confidant Roger Stone, former top aide Michael Flynn and Cohen. Rejected by Trump as a “witch hunt,” the probe cast a long shadow over the White House throughout the first half of his presidency. Although the 22 month investigation did not exonerate Trump, Mueller adhered to a Justice Department policy against charging sitting presidents - which ultimately allowed Trump to declare himself cleared.

### The elusive tax returns

Trump is the first US president since Richard Nixon not to have made his tax returns public, claiming they are under audit by the Internal Revenue Service. In October 2016, The New York Times revealed that Trump reported over \$1 billion in business losses in 1995 - potentially allowing him to avoid paying income tax for two decades. Democrats in the House of Representatives have since turned to the courts to force the release of Trump's tax returns and other records in cases that are considered a crucial test of the separation of powers. But the president has so far managed to rebuff their demands, with the cases tied up in the US court system. — AFP



## International

# US astronaut returns to Earth after longest mission by woman

## Koch stays almost 11 months aboard, shatters spaceflight record for female astronauts

**ALMATY:** NASA's Christina Koch returned to Earth safely yesterday after shattering the spaceflight record for female astronauts with a stay of almost 11 months aboard the International Space Station. Koch touched down at 0912 GMT on the Kazakh steppe after 328 days in space, along with Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency and Alexander Skvortsov of the Russian space agency.

Koch was shown seated and smiling broadly after being extracted from the Soyuz descent module in the Roscosmos space agency's video footage from the landing site.

"I am so overwhelmed and happy right now," said Koch, who blasted off on March 14 last year. Parmitano pumped his fists in the air after being lifted into his chair while Skvortsov was shown eating an apple. Local Kazakhs on horseback were among those to witness the capsule landing in the snow-covered steppe as support crews gathered around the three astronauts, NASA commentator Rob Navias said.

"I've never seen this," Navias exclaimed, reporting that the men stopped to chat with engineering personnel. Koch, a 41-year-old Michigan-born engineer, on December 28 last year beat the previous record for a single spaceflight by a woman of 289 days, set by NASA veteran Peggy Whitson in 2016-17.

Koch called three-time flyer Whitson, now 60, "a heroine of mine" and a "mentor" in the space program after she surpassed the record. She also spoke of her desire to "inspire the next generation of explorers." Koch also made history as one half of the first-ever all-woman spacewalk along with NASA counterpart Jessica

Meir—her classmate from NASA training—in October last year.

The spacewalk was initially postponed because the space station did not have two suits of the right size for women, leading to allegations of sexism. Ahead of the three-and-a-half hour journey back to Earth, Koch told NBC on Tuesday that she would "miss microgravity". "It's really fun to be in a place where you can just bounce around between the ceiling and the floor whenever you want," she said, smiling as she twisted her body around the ISS. She will now head to NASA headquarters in Houston, via the Kazakh city of Karaganda and Cologne in Germany, where she will undergo medical testing. Koch's medical data will be especially valuable to NASA scientists as the agency draws up plans for a long-duration manned mission to Mars.

### 'Make space for women'

Koch's return comes after an advert for a skincare brand ran during an intermission in the American football Super Bowl with a call to "make space for women". The advert featured NASA astronaut Nicole Stott and saw the company promise to donate up to \$500,000 to the non-profit Women Who Code, which works with young women seeking careers in tech and scientific fields.

The first woman in space was Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova whose spaceflight in 1963 is still the only solo mission carried out by a woman. Russia has sent only one woman to the ISS since expeditions began in 2000 — Yelena Serova whose mission launched in 2014.

Both Tereshkova and Serova are now law-



Ground personnel carry NASA astronaut Christina Koch shortly after landing in a remote area outside the town of Dzhezkazgan (Zhezkazgan), Kazakhstan, yesterday. — AFP

makers in the Russian parliament, where they represent the ruling United Russia party. Unlike Koch, whose ISS stay was extended, Parmitano and Skvortsov were rounding off regular half-year missions. Parmitano handed over command of the ISS to Roscosmos's Oleg Skripochka on Tuesday. The 43-year-old Italian posted regular shots of the Earth while aboard, highlighting the

plight of the Amazon rainforest and describing the Alps as "like a spinal column, never bending to time". Four male cosmonauts have spent a year or longer in space as part of a single mission with Russian Valery Polyakov's 437 days the overall record. Scott Kelly holds the record for a NASA astronaut, posting 340 days at the ISS before he returned home in 2016. — AFP

## Child safety groups urge Facebook to halt plans for encryption

More than 100 child protection organizations yesterday urged Facebook to halt plans for strong encryption of all its platforms, saying that would allow predators to operate freely. The social network is working to extend end-to-end encryption across its messaging applications, including Facebook Messenger and Instagram.

The groups said they were concerned that stronger encryption of online exchanges would facilitate the sharing of child pornography. "We urge you to recognize and accept that an increased risk of child abuse being facilitated on or by Facebook is not a reasonable trade-off to make," the groups led by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children said in an open letter to Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

"Children should not be put in harm's way either as a result of commercial decisions or design choices." Rights groups have applauded Facebook's move to stronger encryption but the governments of countries such as the United States, Britain and Australia have called on the social network to allow authorities to circumvent encryption to better fight extrem-

ism, child pornography and other crimes. The child protection groups said they recognized users have a legitimate interest in ensuring their data is protected. "However, as you yourself have stated, Facebook has a responsibility to work with law enforcement and to prevent the use of your sites and services for sexual abuse," their letter to Zuckerberg said.

The groups urged Facebook not to go ahead with its encryption plans until safeguards were in place to ensure children's safety. Facebook already encrypts WhatsApp exchanges from end to end—meaning only the sender and recipient can read the messages.

"Strong encryption is critically important to keep everyone safe from hackers and criminals," said David Miles, Facebook's head of safety for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"The rollout of end-to-end encryption is a long-term project, protecting children online is critically important to this effort and we are committed to building strong safety measures into our plans." Miles said Facebook was already working with law enforcement, government and technology companies to keep children safe online. — AFP

## Guaido meets Trump but overshadowed by impeachment

**WASHINGTON:** Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaido on Wednesday visited the White House like a head of state, but President Donald Trump's impeachment drama overshadowed the moment.

Guaido, who with US support has been seeking for more than a year to topple leftist president Nicolas Maduro, pulled up to the White House in a black SUV as Trump gave a thumbs-up sign to the cameras, in front of Marine sentries stationed at the doors. But the White House abruptly cancelled a press availability in the Oval Office, which had been scheduled to take place shortly before the Senate voted against removing Trump from office.

While Trump's acquittal had been widely expected, he was deprived of a complete party-line vote when Republican Senator Mitt Romney revealed he would vote to convict the president.

Despite Washington's focus on impeachment, which stemmed from Trump's pressure on Ukraine to dig up dirt on a political rival, Guaido



WASHINGTON, DC: US President Donald Trump walks with Interim President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, after his arrival at the White House, on Wednesday in Washington, DC. — AFP

appeared buoyed by the US support. Writing on Twitter after meeting earlier in the day with Vice President Mike Pence, Guaido said he was working together with the United States "for the freedom of Venezuela."

"We appreciate the firm and clear fight from the US government together with the Venezuelan people and our region," Guaido tweeted. In a brief statement, the White House said the meeting "was a historic discussion about how we can work together with our partners in the region to achieve a democratic transition in Venezuela." Guaido, a 36-year-old engineer turned politician, is considered interim president by the United States and most other Western and Latin American nations. — AFP



# Chinese tourists stranded in Bali over virus fears offered flights

## Indonesia warns of \$4bn hit to tourism if virus disruption extended

**DENPASER:** Thousands of Chinese tourists stranded in Bali after Indonesia suspended flights over coronavirus fears will be offered charter flights home, China's consulate on the holiday island said yesterday. A diplomatic notice said Beijing was arranging flights for today back to Wuhan—the epicenter of the deadly outbreak which has killed over 500 people and spread around the world.

Many of the marooned tourists are from the stricken city and surrounding Hubei province, the consulate said, but it added their return would be voluntary. "Passengers' temperatures will be measured before boarding," the notice said. "Those with novel coronavirus symptoms will not be allowed to board the plane." It was not immediately clear how many holidaymakers would take up the offer or who would pay for their tickets.

"The Chinese consulate general has offered repatriation to the mainland, but no one has agreed to fly back home," Bali's vice-governor, Tjokorda Oka Artha Ardana Sukawati, told Indonesia's MetroTV.

The consulate did not respond to requests for further comment yesterday. A day earlier it said at least 5,000 Chinese tourists were in Bali, the centerpiece of Indonesia's tourism industry.

### Refused entry

The Southeast Asian archipelago country attracts about 2.1 million Chinese visitors annually but the number has fallen from about 6,000 arrivals per day to just 1,000 since the outbreak

began in mid-December. Also yesterday, Bali officials said they had refused entry to 17 foreign tourists who had recently been in China, including visitors from Russia, Brazil, New Zealand, Morocco and Britain. Indonesia has yet to report a confirmed case of the virus, which emerged in a Chinese market at the end of last year. Tourism minister Wishnutama Kusubandio warned his country stood to lose up to \$4 billion this year if travel from China and elsewhere is disrupted.

Jakarta is also expected to unveil details of a plan to temporarily ban some livestock imports from China due to the coronavirus.

Indonesia stands to lose \$4 billion in earnings from tourism if its worst-case scenario materializes and travel from China is disrupted for the whole year by a virus epidemic, the tourism minister said yesterday. The main tourist destination, the holiday island of Bali, had already seen around 10,000 cancellations by the end of last month, according to the Bali Tourism Board.

"We had two million (Chinese) visitors last year with an average spend of \$1,400 per arrival," Wishnutama Kusubandio told a news conference. "With the negative trend seen in tourists from other countries, the loss would be even more significant. We will lose \$4 billion." The minister said he was extrapolating numbers for the whole year, despite uncertainties surrounding the virus, because bookings for summer holidays, which have usually started to trickle in by now, have been low.

The government has encouraged airlines to discount fares for routes to Bali, the tourist island



**DENPASER:** Thousands of Chinese tourists risk being stranded in Bali after the Indonesian government suspended flights to and from mainland China over fears of the deadly coronavirus outbreak. —AFP

of Bintan south of Singapore and Manado city in North Sulawesi to attract visitors from outside China, said Adita Irawati, a transport ministry official. Indonesian authorities have said they expect little overall economic impact despite the hit to tourism, pointing to the industry's relatively small contribution to the economy.

Travel and tourism accounted for 6 percent of Indonesia's GDP in 2018, the World Travel and Tourism Council said. Frederico Gil Sander, the

World Bank's lead economist for Indonesia, told a forum with foreign correspondents recently that although 10 percent to 15 percent of total tourists coming to Indonesia are from China, tourism's share of the economy is small. The coronavirus epidemic has killed 563 people in China and two deaths have been confirmed elsewhere. Though the virus has been found in more than two dozen countries, Indonesia has no confirmed cases of infection. — Agencies

## Australia receives bushfire reprieve with floods, battens down for cyclone

**SYDNEY/MELBOURNE:** Many Australians were experiencing a bitter-sweet break from the threat of bushfires yesterday, with flooding rains deluging some parts of the eastern states and miners preparing for a tropical cyclone to hit the country's iron ore heartland over the weekend.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) issued severe thunderstorm warnings for the southeast of Queensland state and a flood alert for more than 20 areas in New South Wales (NSW) after the start of heavy rainfall that is expected to continue for several days.

Warm, moist air feeding in from the east was bringing the rain, BOM forecaster Mike Funnell told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "We are expecting those larger totals and heavier rainfall to come into the northeast coast of NSW and then sort of track slowly southwards," he said.

Cricket Australia said a bushfire fundraising match which was set to be played in Sydney on Saturday had to be rescheduled for Melbourne on Sunday because of the rain. Miners Rio Tinto and BHP Group said they were monitoring the situation and making preparations ahead tomorrow, when a tropical low off the coast of Western Australia is forecast to develop into a category three cyclone that was set to make landfall in the Pilbara area.

"With strong winds and heavy seas predicted, both Port Walcott (Cape Lambert) and Dampier ports are being cleared, as this impacts the ability to safely moor vessels," Rio said. — Reuters

## False virus cure claims infect the internet

**HONG KONG:** Gargle salt water, use herbal eyedrops, steam-clean a face mask—false claims about how to combat a deadly coronavirus epidemic emerging out of China are flooding the internet.

Social media giants have promoted their strategies to combat misinformation related to the epidemic, which has claimed more than 560 lives in China and spread to 24 countries. Twitter, which reported 15 million coronavirus-related tweets in January, said it had suspended auto-suggest search results that would likely produce untrustworthy content. Facebook also said it was targeting false claims aimed at discouraging treatment or taking appropriate precautions with the respiratory virus.

"This includes claims related to false cures or prevention methods—like drinking bleach cures the coronavirus—or claims that create confusion about health resources that are available," Kang-Xing Jin, Facebook's head of health, said in a statement. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also launched a campaign to discredit specific claims, such as that sesame oil and mouthwash can effectively kill the virus.

Yet the misinformation continues to pollute social media platforms and messaging apps.

Here is a selection of the false claims that AFP, which

has a specialized fact-checking team, has debunked in recent days:

### Boiling fresh garlic

A claim that the coronavirus can be cured overnight if sufferers drink freshly boiled garlic water was shared across Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in Pakistan.

"There is no scientific evidence to substantiate the claim that garlic boiled water cures the novel coronavirus nor is there any proper medical research available on the subject," said Dr Wasim Khawaja, an expert at the Pakistani Institute of Medical Sciences, for an AFP fact-check report.

### Antibiotic eye drop

In the Philippines, videos viewed many millions of claim the virus can be cured with an eye drop made of sap from a local shrub that is commonly used to treat fever and stomach issues. One 11-minute video, claiming the *tinospora crispa* plant is an effective "antibiotic" for the virus, was viewed more than 1.5 million times on Facebook. There has been no medical evidence to back this claim.

### Steaming face masks

A video of a purported doctor advising people to steam disposable surgical face masks to reuse them was viewed hundreds of thousands of times in multiple Chinese-language posts on Facebook, Weibo and Youku. In Hong Kong, the video was viewed almost 900,000 times within a day after a lawmaker shared it on Facebook.

The WHO, the Hong Kong Red Cross and the Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection have all issued warnings against steaming-or reusing at all—single-use masks. — AFP



## International

Friday, February 7, 2020

# Modi's party battles to unseat 'common man' in Delhi election

## Kejriwal symbolizes the 'power of common man'

**NEW DELHI:** A diminutive former tax inspector is in the cross-hairs of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party as it battles to take back power in Delhi state elections tomorrow.

Arvind Kejriwal, chief minister of the sprawling capital of 20 million since 2015, is standing for re-election—much to the chagrin of Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is reeling from protests and a faltering economy. Despite being swept to a second term in national elections last year, the BJP has not run Delhi since 1998 and it has campaigned heavily to try and unseat Kejriwal, who has been giving Modi a run for his money in appealing to the city's poor.

Many ordinary voters see Kejriwal, 51, a co-founder of the Common Man Party, as "one of them", political strategist Amitabh Tiwari told AFP. "He symbolizes the power of the common man—that the common man can also contest and win elections." The stakes are high for the BJP after it lost control of Maharashtra state, whose capital is Mumbai, late last year. Economic growth is its slowest in six years, unemployment is high, inflation is accelerating and India has seen weeks of at-times violent demonstrations over a new citizenship law.

The law, making it easier for non-Muslim persecuted minorities to become Indian, has stoked suspicion that Modi wants to turn officially secular India into a Hindu nation, something he denies.

A poor showing in the capital this weekend

would be another blow to the party—and galvanize an opposition demoralized by last year's national election defeat.

If Kejriwal wins, he will have "shown a way of beating Modi", Mohan Guruswamy from the Centre for Policy Alternatives think-tank said. "Geographically Delhi might not be big, but politically it is big. A defeat will be highly symbolic." Kejriwal's popularity in Delhi's teeming slums rivals that of Modi, 69, the son of a tea-seller who has carved out an image as a man of the people.

"Before Kejriwal came to power, most of our money went on electricity bills and we didn't receive proper water supply," said slum-dweller and mother-of-five Salatun, who survives on the meagre salary of her ragpicker husband. "Now, both these problems have been solved. We hope that... Kejriwal comes back to power. It'll be great for us."

### Popular heroes

Kejriwal and Modi have much in common. Both swept away years of government by the grand old party of Indian politics, Congress, promising a new style free of corruption and the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. Their parties are mass movements centered on their personalities, both have been the subject of films, both have doled out freebies to voters—and promises from both have fallen short.

The difference though is that Modi's politics also carry a heavy dose of "Hindutva"—hegemony for India's majority Hindus—while Kejriwal's do not,

doing so. Without a well-known leader in the capital, analysts say the BJP has intensified a policy of campaigning on Modi's personal appeal, rather than on development issues.

At the same time, the protests have highlighted the communal fault line, which could help his party secure the Hindu vote in the capital and elsewhere, analysts say. "Rightly or wrongly, they are largely seen as Muslim protesters. There is a polarization between Hindus and Muslims that suits the BJP," said Harsh Pant, a fellow at New Delhi-based think-tank the Observer Research Foundation. The BJP's main challenger tomorrow will be the liberal Aam Aadmi Party, led by the city's chief minister, Arvind Kejriwal.

It has focused on its work over the last five years, such as fixing state-run schools and healthcare in the city of more than 16 million people. The BJP, however, has highlighted the work of Modi's federal government since its re-election last May, in particular changes that have appealed to the party's Hindu base such as reforms in the disputed Kashmir region and a court ruling, backed by the government, clearing the way for the construction of a Hindu temple on a long-disputed site in northern India. "What they seem to be doing is fighting state elections on Modi's popularity," Pant said. Other issues, such as Delhi's woeful air pollution, have not

figured prominently in the election although all main contenders promise to tackle it.

### Pleasing Pakistan?

In Shaheen Bagh, a working-class, majority-Muslim area of southeast Delhi, protesters have blocked a major road for months, demanding the repeal of the citizenship law. In neighborhood meetings, election rallies and road shows snaking through narrow streets, BJP workers and leaders have focused on the site, attempting to discredit the protesters and sometimes going as far as to accuse them of being aligned with Muslim-majority arch-rival Pakistan.

Polling data for Delhi shows the BJP narrowing the gap with—but still trailing—the Aam Aadmi Party over the past week. BJP leaders have called Kejriwal a "terrorist", and accused protesters of being rapists. "Pakistan will be pleased if you vote for Kejriwal," a leader of the BJP's women's wing, Sukhpreet Kaur, told an election gathering of about 100 women in the working-class Delhi neighborhood of Mayapuri on Tuesday. Yogi Adityanath, a firebrand Hindu monk and BJP chief minister of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, which flanks Delhi in the east, mentioned Pakistan eight times in 48 seconds in a speech in Delhi this week. —Reuters



**NEW DELHI:** In this file photo, Aam Aadmi Party (Common Man party) leader Arvind Kejriwal (center) waves to his supporters during a rally for the upcoming Delhi state elections in New Delhi. A diminutive former tax inspector is in the cross-hairs of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party as it battles to take back power in Delhi's legislative elections tomorrow. —AFP

analysts say. "The BJP is using its identity-based appeals, political polarization to win elections," political scientist Neelanjan Sircar from Ashoka University told AFP.

"The strategy is quite clear in that sense, but it's a very dangerous game. These are not wounds that heal easily." Indeed in the Delhi election campaign the BJP's tone has become ever shriller, with some members implying Kejriwal is a "terrorist" backing Muslim-majority arch enemy Pakistan.

The party also has sought to turn the election

into a referendum on a women's sit-in protest against the citizenship law that has snarled traffic for weeks. The heightened rhetoric has sowed doubt in the poll outcome, with analysts saying it is not clear if voters will be drawn to the BJP's dog whistling.

"That is what is going to be tested," Guruswamy said. "In the last five years... the economy has tanked and yet Prime Minister Modi has been re-elected, so he thinks that sloganeering will get them in." —AFP

## India's divisive protests could help BJP in poll

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party this week face their first electoral test since deadly anti-government protests erupted nearly two months ago, with the divisive turmoil likely to win them votes at polls in the capital. Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a bigger majority in a general election in May, but it has lost a string of state elections since then.

The protests, in which at least 25 people have been killed, erupted across the country in mid-December, after the BJP passed a new citizenship law critics say violates India's secular constitution and discriminates against minority Muslims. New Delhi is due to hold its elections tomorrow with tension high after three incidents of gunfire at or near protest sites in four days. In two of the shootings, people shouted Hindu-nationalist slogans. Protest organizers have stepped up security as a result, and blame the BJP for inflaming the tension. The party denies

## World food prices rise for 4th month running, cereal outlook up: UN

**ROME:** World food prices rose for the fourth month running in January, boosted by jumps in quotations for vegetable oils, sugar and wheat, the United Nations food agency said yesterday.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food price index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar, averaged 182.5 points in last month, up 0.7 percent on the previous month. FAO also predicted that cereal production would hit a new record in 2019 and come in some 2.3 percent higher than the 2018 crop. The FAO cereal price index climbed 2.9 percent month-on-month in January to record its highest value since May 2018, with the prices of all major cereals rising, led by wheat.

The vegetable oil index jumped 7.0 percent last month to reach a three-year high and the sugar price index climbed 5.5 percent, while the dairy index was up 0.9 percent. By contrast the meat price index fell 4.0 percent, ending 11 consecutive months of increases, with the price quotations for all meat categories heading lower, "pressured by reduced purchases, especially from China and the Far East," FAO said. FAO also issued a new forecast for world cereal production, predicting a record high of 2.715 billion tons this year. "This month's forecast remains nearly unchanged from December, as downward revisions made for wheat and rice production are offset by upward adjustments for maize and barley," FAO said. —Reuters



# Malaysia's PM-in-waiting, Anwar says he is ready to wait for 6 more months

## Anwar says willing to bury the hatchet with Mahathir

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday he was ready to wait for six more months beyond the initially agreed May deadline to take over as prime minister from Mahathir Mohamad, and that he had enough support in parliament to do so.

Mahathir led the Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition, or Alliance of Hope, to a stunning victory in a general election in May 2018, joining hands with former enemies including Anwar to bring down Najib Razak, who is facing multiple charges of corruption mostly linked to the looting of sovereign fund 1MDB.

Mahathir had promised to hand over the premiership to Anwar within two years of the general election result, but later said he would stay on until at least November to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in November. The 94-year-old also said Anwar would have to secure parliamentary majority to become prime minister.

"You've waited 20 years, extending six months doesn't actually matter," Anwar told Reuters at his private office, expressing confidence that the coalition allies would stand behind him, as they did for Mahathir. "If there's a request to go back to parliament, of course it can be done, but PH has the majority right now. Even those who are not in PH, some would support the PM of the day. I also have been given that assurance. They support Mahathir as the PM, and they will continue to support me when I assume the premiership."

Anwar had served as deputy prime minister and finance minister during Mahathir's first 22-year stint in office, but was sacked in 1998 after falling out with Malaysia's "Old Man" over how to defend the economy against the Asian Finan-

cial Crisis. Going into opposition, Anwar quickly drew support from a large section of Malay Muslims, the multi-cultural country's dominant ethnic group, to form the Reformasi movement, before being jailed a year later on corruption and sodomy charges that he said were politically motivated.

In the years following his release, Anwar rebuilt his following and came close to defeating Najib, another Mahathir protege, in the disputed 2013 general election. Two years later, he was jailed, once again on sodomy charges that he denied. He was released on a royal pardon soon after Najib lost power in the 2018 election.

In total, Anwar had spent close to 10 years in prison as a result of the two convictions.

But controversy continued to dog the 72-year-old, after a former aide last year accused him of trying to force him to have sex in September 2018. The solicitor-general last month ruled out pressing charges against Anwar over the allegations, which the politician described as "politics at its worst".

Same-sex acts are illegal in Muslim-majority Malaysia, and carry penalties of up to 20 years in jail if convicted. "Of course I have many political foes. The corrupt few will do whatever it takes to ensure that I do not assume office," said Anwar, dressed in a casual blue chequered-shirt.

### Buried hatchet

The protracted feud between Mahathir and Anwar, the country's two most charismatic politicians, has dominated Malaysian politics for decades. Since his release, Anwar has stayed out of government, biding his time while his wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail has served as deputy prime minister to Mahathir. Anwar said he was



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian politician Anwar Ibrahim gestures as he leaves a hospital where he is receiving treatment, ahead of an audience with Malaysia's King, in Kuala Lumpur in this file photo. — Reuters

ready to move on from the bitter past, and that he would be willing to carve out space for Mahathir to continue to contribute after he takes over as prime minister.

"His presence in a way... would certainly help boost the general confidence and give some sort of semblance of stability and order," Anwar said, using Mahathir's honorific. "There will be no real drastic policy difference. There would be different emphasis, of course, but on a personal basis, I certainly welcome very much his presence and contribution in any way."

He would, however, look to mend soured ties with India after Mahathir's criticism of New Delhi's two recent policies led to a massive fall in palm oil trade between the countries. One

thing that will not change is Malaysia's demand for reparations from Goldman Sachs over its role in the multibillion-dollar scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), Anwar said.

He repeated Mahathir's position that the US bank's initial settlement offer of over \$1 billion was too small, but declined to say how much he felt was sufficient compensation. "Certainly the amount has to be substantial, because we're looking not only at the loss of dollars, but the loss of reputation, investments, and the perception about Malaysia," Anwar said. Goldman has said it is discussions with authorities on a possible resolution of investigations relating to 1MDB. — Reuters

## US contractor kidnapped in Afghanistan

**KABUL:** A US security contractor has been kidnapped in eastern Afghanistan, an official confirmed yesterday, the latest instance of a foreigner being taken in the war-torn country where abductions are common. An Afghan security official with knowledge of the incident told AFP the former US Navy member had been working in Afghanistan as a contractor when he was abducted last week in eastern Khost province, near the Pakistani border.

There was no indication whether a militant group or a criminal organization was behind the kidnapping, while the Taliban told AFP they had "no information" about the matter. Afghanistan's former intelligence chief Amrullah Saleh was quick to

blame the insurgents, saying on Twitter the abduction had been orchestrated by "the Taleban & their Pakistani backers. Kidnapping must end & end without ransom".

Pakistan has long been accused of backing the Taliban but has repeatedly denied supporting the group.

The US State Department said it was aware of reports of the kidnapping, but declined to comment further. The incident comes after the Taliban in November handed two Western hostages over to US forces in southern Afghanistan, three years after they were abducted, in a swap for three high-ranking insurgent prisoners.

The exchange of American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks for the militants-including Anas Haqqani, brother to the Taliban's deputy leader—was widely believed to be instrumental in kick-starting stalled talks between the two sides. The Taliban later described the exchange as "a step forward in good-will and confidence-building measures that can aid the peace process". — AFP

## Nobel laureate Yunus facing over 100 lawsuits

**DHAKA:** Bangladeshi Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus is facing more than 100 lawsuits from disgruntled employees at the telecoms unit of his poverty-busting microfinance Grameen Bank, lawyers said yesterday. The cases filed against him and other senior managers in a Dhaka court relate to claims from Grameen Telecom (GT) employees for a share of profits, their lawyer Jafrul Hasan Sharif said.

Yunus has faced mounting legal problems in recent years. In 2011 he was sacked as head of Grameen Bank in a move his supporters said was orchestrated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"According to Bangladesh's Worker's Profit Participation law, Yunus's Grameen Telecom was bound to share five percent of the company's profit with the workers," lawyer Hasan told AFP. "But for the last 10 years, the GT didn't do so." Grameen Telecom operates a service called "Village Phone" dedicated to getting cellphones to the rural poor in the South Asian nation of 165 million people. The company also owns a 34.2-percent stake in GrameenPhone, Bangladesh's largest mobile phone operator with some 75 million subscribers. Yunus, 79, who founded Grameen Bank in the 1980s and was awarded



In this file photo, Bangladeshi Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus talks prior to address the opening session of the Salon des Entrepreneurs (owner managers' fair) in Paris. — AFP

the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, could not be reached yesterday. A spokesperson declined to comment.

Last month the economist was granted bail by a labor court after an arrest warrant was issued when he failed to appear at a hearing in a separate case. He has been at odds with premier Hasina since a brief and unsuccessful foray into Bangladesh's fiery, high-risk political scene in 2007. Hasina has accused him of "sucking blood" from the poor amid allegations his bank charges interest rates of around 20 percent. In 2013, he was the subject of a state-backed hate campaign that painted him as un-Islamic and a spreader of homosexuality, which is illegal in Bangladesh. — AFP



A black and white close-up portrait of actress Nadia Lotfi. She has dark, wavy hair and is looking slightly upwards and to the left. Her face is partially framed by thin, dry branches in the foreground. The background is a light, textured surface.

# Friday Times Lifestyle

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**Famed Egyptian actress  
Nadia Lotfi dies at 83**

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## Famed Egyptian actress Nadia Lotfi dies at 83



In this file photo taken on May 02, 2000, Egypt's veteran film star Nadia Lotfi flashes a broad smile during a Lebanese cultural event in the Egyptian capital Cairo. —AFP

Veteran Egyptian actress Nadia Lotfi died Tuesday. Egyptian media reported the actress was admitted into the intensive care unit in Maadi hospital in Cairo earlier this week and died at the age of 83 in Cairo following recent illness. Nadia Lotfi, who picked up her stage name after a character from one of the novels of Egyptian author Ihsan Abdel Qudoos, popular for tackling women's issues.

Lotfi, whose real name is Paola Mohammad, was known for her role in Shady Abdel Salam's classic, *Al-Moumia* (The Mummy). Lotfi took several daring roles in films directed by Egypt's leading film makers and based on scripts by the country's most prominent authors through the 1970s before retiring. Lotfi made her silver screen debut in 1958 at the age of 24. She starred in the movie "Sultan" alongside renowned late actors Fared Shawqi and Roshdi Abaza. She was most famous for her roles in "Al-Nadara Al-Sawdaa," "Al-Khataya" and "Aby Fouq Al-Shajara." She is also known for her political activism and support for the Palestinian cause and Women's Lib issues. —AFP/Arab News

## Hatidze, the Macedonian beekeeper charming Hollywood

Watch out at the Oscars on Sunday for Hatidze Muratova. You can't miss her. She will be the only Turkish-Macedonian peasant in the starry audience at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood. Until "Honeyland"—the "non-fiction masterpiece" in which the village beekeeper appears—won a record three awards at the Sundance film festival, Hatidze lived in a tiny mud and stone house without electricity and running water in the wilds of North Macedonia. Now it has become the first film ever to get Oscar nominations for both best documentary and best foreign language movie, Hatidze has become a full-blown celebrity who gets stopped in the street by Hollywood stars.

"Sarah Jessica Parker was very excited to meet her after seeing the film," "Honeyland" producer Atanas Georgiev told AFP. Having lived 56 years quite happily without television, Hatidze wasn't all that aware of "Sex and the City", although she graciously told the star-struck actress's fortune "by reading the coffee grains in bottom of her cup." When Hatidze went for a dress fitting for the Oscars in the North Macedonian capital Skopje, it took "20 minutes for her to walk 200 metres because so many people wanted to have a selfie with her," Georgiev revealed. "People love her. She has become a star. We have no option but to cope with it somehow," said Georgiev, who also edited the film.

### Oscar buzz

"Anthropologically, we were not supposed to do this," Georgiev said of Hatidze's Hollywood adventure, fearing she might be seen "as a lion in a cage... But there was big pressure from the public in Macedonia" for her to go to the Oscars. Indeed, the contrast could not be more stark to Hatidze's solitary life in Bekirlija, where she tends her hives of wild bees, only ever taking half the honey so the bees would always have their due. She and her dying, half-blind mother, Nazife, were the last residents of the abandoned mountain village. Life was hard but peaceful in this forgotten corner of the Balkans.

That is until their nomadic neighbors, Hussein and Ljutvie Sam, moved in with their unruly herd of children, cows and chickens. The story that unfolds in "Honeyland" is such a perfect



(From left) Macedonian film editor Atanas Georgiev, Macedonian director Tamara Kotevska and Macedonian director Ljubo Stefanov nominees for "Honeyland" attend the Oscar Week: Documentary at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, in Beverly Hills, California. —AFP

parable of our times as we fret over the planet, that the New York Times declared it "the best movie of the year". With eight hungry mouths to feed, Hussein tries his hand at honey. But under pressure to produce more from a local merchant, he breaks Hatidze's golden rule of leaving half for the bees, with disastrous consequences for everyone.

Critic A.O. Scott hailed "Honeyland" as "nothing less than a found epic, a real-life environmental allegory and a stinging comedy about the age-old problem of inconsiderate neighbours." Georgiev said it didn't quite fall so easily from the sky. The shoot lasted three years, with co-directors Tamara Kotevska and Ljubomir Stefanov camping in the village with their cameramen until their batteries would run out—since there was no electricity for miles. Because the crew couldn't understand the old Ottoman Turkish dialect she spoke to her mother, Georgiev did the first rough edit on mute. —AFP

## US has lost its 'moral leadership,' actor Harrison Ford says

Harrison Ford, in Mexico City on Wednesday to promote his latest film, decried the collapse of US "moral leadership" on issues such as improving the environment and immigration policy. "We need moral leadership. We've lost some of our credibility and we are anxious to regain it," the Hollywood star told reporters. Ford was in town to talk about his starring role in "The Call of the Wild," an adventure film set in Alaska in the 1890s and based on a novel by US author Jack London.

Relaxed and smiling, the veteran actor also touched on his iconic Hollywood roles in the "Star Wars", "Indiana Jones" and "Blade Runner" movies. A fifth "Indiana Jones" movie, starring as the swashbuckling archaeologist with the unusual first name, is also in the works. "To do another 'Indiana

Jones' movie, it seems like a good idea, if we had a good script and I believe we are very close to have the script that we really want, so I am excited about the idea," he said.

Speaking on the day the US senate acquitted President Donald Trump on impeachment charges of abusing his office and obstructing Congress, Ford got sidetracked talking about politics. "We need a complete reform of our immigration policies," said Ford, 77. Cracking down on migrants has been a primary focus of Trump's administration. "We need to invite people into the country, and not to keep them out. This is the history and America depends on immigration," Ford said. Yet "despite the lack of commitment from the United States government, efforts are being made" towards immigration reform and improving the envi-



US actor Harrison Ford speaks at a press conference for the premiere of his new movie 'Call of the Wild,' on Wednesday, in Mexico City. —AFP

ronment, he said. He was especially impressed with Swedish teenage environmental activist Greta Thunberg. "I admire her role representing to young people, her courage. Also, I admire her capacity to express herself... It seems young people have a leadership role" in environmental activism. —AFP



# 'A true Spartacus': Hollywood legend Kirk Douglas dead at 103

**K**irk Douglas, one of the last superstars of Hollywood's golden age of cinema who was renowned for his intense, muscular performances in "Spartacus" and "Paths of Glory," died Wednesday aged 103. The US leading man, producer and director came to prominence in the late 1940s and never lost his popularity, taking on nearly 100 movies over a six-decade career that endured beyond a severe stroke in his later years. His death at his family home in Beverly Hills was confirmed by his son Michael, the Oscar-winning actor and filmmaker. "It is with tremendous sadness that my brothers and I announce that Kirk Douglas left us today at the age of 103," Michael Douglas said in a statement posted to Facebook.

"To the world he was a legend, an actor from the golden age of movies who lived well into his golden years." Tributes poured in from across Hollywood and around the world on social media, with many declaring "I am Spartacus!" in a nod to Douglas's legendary role as a rebellious Roman slave. Director Steven Spielberg said Douglas "retained his movie star charisma right to the end," while actor Danny DeVito tweeted: "103 years on this earth. That's got a nice ring to it! Great hanging with you man." "Seinfeld" star Jason Alexander praised Douglas as "an absolute legend of a star and human" and added that "we could use a true Spartacus." The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which awards the Oscars, tweeted: "Goodbye to a Hollywood legend."

Not unlike his title character in "Spartacus," Douglas was known throughout his life for his fiercely rebellious streak. In his early movie days he would clash with studio heads over his choice of roles, before ultimately splitting off to form his own production company, Bryna—one of the first major post-war stars to do so. "It was pretty rare then," Variety senior vice president Tim Gray told AFP. "Kirk Douglas was very stubborn but he wasn't self-indulgent—he wasn't a party boy wasting people's time showing up late, things like that."

## 'End the blacklist'

Douglas also defied more established directors by teaming up with a young Stanley Kubrick for both "Paths of Glory" and "Spartacus." And on "Spartacus," Douglas hired Dalton Trumbo—one of the "Hollywood Ten" blacklisted as a suspected communist under the McCarthy era—to write the screenplay. Unlike many producers during the time, Douglas refused to hide this fact, instead using Trumbo's real name in the credits. Gabrielle Carteris, head of Hollywood's actors union, Wednesday praised Douglas as "a powerful voice who helped end the blacklist in our industry," as well as "an extraordinary actor."

Nonetheless Douglas missed out on taking home the trophy on each of his three Oscar nominations, the last for his performance in the 1956 film "Lust for Life," and never won a com-



In this file photo taken on September 1, 1978 US actor Kirk Douglas and his wife Anne pose at Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle airport near Paris.



In this file photo taken on March 25, 1985 US actor Michael Douglas (left) applauds his father US actor Kirk Douglas during the 57th Annual Academy Awards.

petitive Academy Award. He was instead granted an honorary lifetime achievement statuette by the Academy in 1996 — just months after his stroke—"for 50 years as a creative and moral force in the motion picture community." Douglas, born Issur Danielovitch to Jewish-Russian immigrants in upstate New York in 1916, began as a stage actor before serving in the US Navy during the Second World War. He graduated to movies when "Casablanca" producer Hal Wallis signed him in 1946, and he became a star for his portrayal of a double-crossing and womanizing boxer in 1949's "Champion."

His subsequent roles would often mirror his real-world, larger-than-life and intense persona, including Oscar-nominated turns as a ruthless movie producer in "The Bad and the Beautiful" and tortured artist Vincent Van Gogh in "Lust for Life." Douglas told The New York Times in a 1984 interview that he had "always been attracted to characters who are

part scoundrel," adding: "I don't find virtue photogenic."

## Life well lived

In his personal life, Douglas married twice, with the second to Anne Buydens in 1954 enduring over 65 years. Douglas himself would admit to a colorful life as a ladies' man including affairs in his memoirs, but always carefully controlled his image. "He was Mr Hollywood, he was always part of the scene—he would always attend functions," said Gray. "The public saw him as this larger than life actor but he could also be very subtle." Douglas is survived by Buydens, 100, and three of his sons. A fourth child, Eric, died of a drug overdose in his 40s, in 2004.

His son Michael praised Kirk's "commitment to justice and the causes he believed in" which "set a standard for all of us to aspire." He added: "Kirk's life was well lived, and he leaves a legacy in film that will endure for generations to come." —AFP



In this file photo taken in 1960 US actor Kirk Douglas and British actress Jean Simmons are pictured during the filming of "Spartacus" directed by Stanley Kubrick. —AFP photos

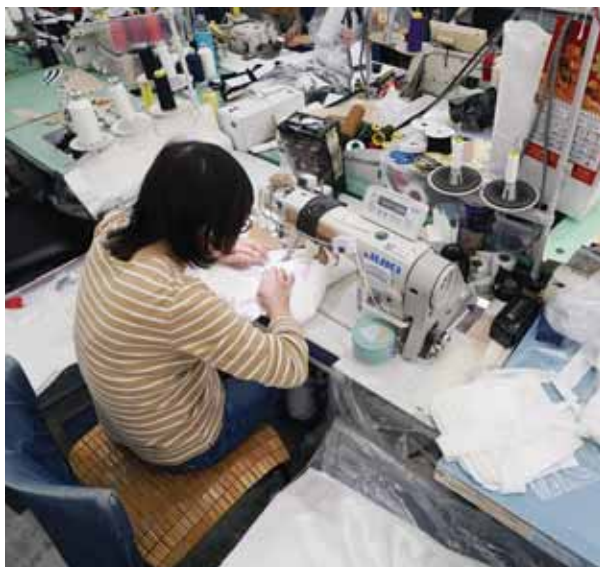


In this file photo taken on March 7, 1999 US actor Kirk Douglas raises his arms after receiving a Life Achievement Award at the Screen Actors Guild Awards show.



In this file photo taken on December 31, 1959 shows a movie still of US actor Kirk Douglas in the 1960 Hollywood film "Spartacus".





A worker uses a sewing machine at Ferrara Manufacturing.



The 8-foot bronze permanent sculpture called "The Garment Worker", created by Judith Weller, is seen at 555 Seventh Avenue (also known as Fashion Avenue) between 39th and 40th Streets in midtown Manhattan. — AFP photos



A worker uses an iron at Ferrara Manufacturing.

# Garment district decline threatens fabric of New York

**S**ewing machines hum and steam comes off irons as thousands of workers, mostly Asian and Latino migrants, make clothes in the few surviving workshops of New York's threatened garment district. In the weeks leading up to New York Fashion Week, the factories are abuzz with activity as they get high-quality garments ready for the catwalk, but for how much longer? The small neighborhood, nestled amid skyscrapers close to Times Square, has lost 95 percent of its workforce since its heyday in the 1950s, when it employed hundreds of thousands of people.

"It was part of the soul, the texture, the heart of New York," says Robert D. Parmet, professor of history at the City University of New York. Exorbitant rate increases have forced many manufacturers to move production abroad; not to China but to Paris, Milan, and London. Those European cities are home to more prestigious fashion weeks than New York's and receive more government support. Some 400 companies producing clothes, buttons and other fashion accoutrement still operate in the area also known as the fashion district, according to the Garment District Alliance. The companies employ about 5,000 workers, the alliance says.

"I've seen a lot of businesses close this year and last year. Once

several close you see a domino effect," says 29-year-old Gabrielle Ferrara, who co-owns Ferrara Manufacturing with her mother and father. Her parents founded the clothing factory three decades ago but Ferrara says she's far from certain that the district will survive as a garment center. "I am not sure what the solution is but we're definitely in a critical point in the neighborhood's history," she told AFP.

Ferrara has up to 75 people stitching clothes in the three weeks before New York's first fashion week of 2020, which started yesterday. Designers say the garment district is a unique one-stop shop that is difficult to replicate anywhere else. "As a designer you can wake up in the morning and envision a suit or a dress or a blouse and within 24 hours or less have selected a fabric, made the pattern, selected a matching thread, buttons, zipper, a model, a photo studio, all in one place," says Yshai Yudekovitz of B&J Fabrics, a family-owned store established four generations ago.

## Skilled work

As shops in the area have closed down, clientele has dropped off, with stores having to switch their focus from fashion designers to other customers. Now the stores mostly sell clothes for Broadway

productions, movies and series on Netflix and Amazon Prime, such as "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" which is set during the district's golden period. For Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, it is imperative the area survives, in large part because it provides thousands of well-paying jobs. "Many of the workers there are very skilled. The work that goes on often can pay 40 dollars or more an hour. We cannot lose these seamstresses and these manufacturers. They are very unique," she told AFP.

Corey Johnson, leader of New York's city council, says the district is "a key part of the fashion economy of the city which is both an economic driver and cultural anchor in NYC." "Although the location of that industry has shifted it still is a significant part of who we are as a city and will be, we hope, for many years more," he added. Advocates of the garment district were outraged when Mayor Bill de Blasio's city government eliminated zoning rules that had forced landlords to provide space for clothing manufacturers in 2018. He also invested millions in a new garment-producing campus in Brooklyn. Brewer and Johnson led a fightback, forcing de Blasio's administration to offer tax cuts to property owners who rent to garment manufacturers. —AFP

## What you need to know about New York Fashion Week

**N**ew York Fashion Week started yesterday, kicking off this year's catwalk season. Here is everything you need to know about the autumn-winter 2020 shows.

### Oscars clash

The 92nd Academy Awards take place on Sunday, bang in the middle of Fashion Week, far from ideal scheduling for an event trying to recover from several underwhelming seasons. Designers purr when celebrities sit front row at their shows, but actors and actresses are more likely to be in Los Angeles enjoying Hollywood's biggest party of the year than in New York. Scott Studenberg and Margherita Missoni have opted to showcase their 2020 fall collections in LA instead of the Big Apple, as they try to tap into an Oscar buzz.

Even Tom Ford—chairman of the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA), which helps run Fashion Week—has plumped for heading out west. "There is an excitement in LA

on that particular weekend and the relationship between film and fashion is a strong one," Ford, 58, told Women's Wear Daily website recently.

### Notable absentees

Several other famous designers are skipping New York too, despite organizers sticking to a reduced five-day schedule, introduced for September's spring 2020 showpiece, in the hope of attracting big names. Some commentators had suggested that New York Fashion Week was hot again after the return of high-profile stars such as Tommy Hilfiger last autumn.

However, the momentum appears to have lost steam with loads of top designers choosing to unveil their new collections at London, Paris or Milan instead. Ralph Lauren, Hilfiger, Jeremy Scott, Kerby Jean-Raymond of Pyer Moss, who produced one of the standout shows in September, and Tomo Koizumi are among those missing this week. Rihanna's Savage X Fenty lingerie collection is also taking a runway break.

### Headline grabbers

Despite the absentees, there are certainly enough big names to keep fashionistas happy. Marc Jacobs, Michael Kors, Carolina Herrera, Vera Wang and Oscar de la Renta are all presenting. And Rag & Bone, whose show is set to feature AI-generated content, is back at New York Fashion Week for the first time since 2016. There is also a host of promising young

designers that buyers will be keeping an eye on. Vogue magazine has tipped Kee Kim, Olivia Cheng, Tia Adeola's and Kenneth Nicholson to shine.

Other up-and-comers to watch include Sies Marjan, Eckhaus Latta, Monse, Gabriela Hearst and Brandon Maxwell. New York diversified in recent years and this season's lineup includes Sukeina's Senegalese creator Omar Salam, Grenadian designer Fe Noel, LaQuan Smith and Christopher John Rogers.

### Coronavirus fears

In recent seasons, New York Fashion Week has opened its doors to Chinese designers, who have attracted buyers and social media influencers from China, as it tries to tap the lucrative market. But a cloud hangs over their involvement this year due to the deadly coronavirus. The CFDA says it has no information about possible show cancellations and Chinese fashion houses such as Mukzin and Sheguang Hu have said their parades would go ahead.

But it's a moving feast after Chinese fashion houses Angela Chen, Ricostru and Hui canceled runway appearances at Milan Fashion Week because of the virus. They said they could not take part in Italy as factory closures have stopped them from finishing collections in time for the event, which begins on February 18 and runs to February 24. Around 1,000 Chinese buyers, journalists, stylists and other industry staff are also going to miss the event, Italian officials have said. — AFP



# Thespians battle prejudice and poverty in wartime Mali

Once the play is over and theatre-goers have gone home, Awa Bagayogo, an actor in Mali's capital Bamako, breaks into a smile at another completed performance. One of a small and often maligned number of actors in the conservative West African country, she and her friends stage plays about topics like migration while outside the capital, a jihadist conflict rages. Staging plays in Bamako, though, means coping not only with Mali's daily struggles, but also with family resistance, social prejudice about acting and a lack of funding. For most, only the love of their art keeps actors motivated.

"We want to tell the stories of our lives, the lives of young people," says Bagayogo. "We have to be able to stage what we think." Mali is struggling to put down a jihadist revolt which first broke out when rebels captured the north of the country in 2012 — just when Bagayogo began dreaming of becoming an actor. The conflict has since killed thousands of people, and spread to the centre of the country as well as to neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger.

Bagayogo, 23, a dramatic arts graduate, says that she is motivated by "passion," which was first kindled by watching her favorite film actors. Mali has a strong tradition of indigenous theatre known as "koteba," but poverty and war mean few students now opt for theatre. Bamako has two drama schools which produce about ten graduates every year. They are often viewed with suspicion. "There are a lot of problems, but we stick together, like a family," says Bagayogo, sitting with the nine other actors in her performance.

## Battling prejudice

The main barrier, according to the actors, is how Malians perceive their profession. "Families are against it," says Aly Badra Dembele, 20, a student at the National Arts Academy of Bamako, adding that the older generation thinks theatre is a waste of time. "A lot of people think actors are thugs," he says. One of Dembele's friends, who declined to be named, pays a high price for his passion. His parents forbade him from appearing on stage for years, dismissing plays as "degrading". And he and his uncle, with whom he lives in Bamako, no longer speak.

"We're there for him," says another of his friends, who declined to be named, adding that actors need to stick together. Dembele, the more optimistic of the troupe, says there's no point to being an actor in Mali unless "you give it everything".

But others were more dispassionate, pointing out getting a the-



A Malian comedian performs the play "Je venais de defier le ciel" by Jean Marie Ambroise Traore, during the theatre festival "Les Praticables", in Bamako. — AFP photos

atre company job in Mali, as in other sectors, often depends on family contacts. The profession is poorly paid, too. All have other jobs on the side. Some work as masons, for example, and others have internships with the customs agency. "We've got to eat," Dembele says.

## 'The adventure'

Theatre has always been prolific in Mali because of its important place in the culture of the country's largest ethnic group, the Bambara. But traditional performances are giving way to plays with contemporary social themes, often financed by the government, international organisations and NGOs. Although it received no funding, Bagayogo's troupe recently staged a play about migrating to Europe—a perilous journey across desert and sea which they simply call "the adventure". Many Malians dream of migrating because of poor job prospects and war at home. Performed in an open-air night club, the play also featured in one of Mali's few theatre festivals in December, called "Les Praticables" after the French term for modular stage. — AFP



A scene of the play "Je venais de defier le ciel" by Jean Marie Ambroise Traore, during the theatre festival "Les Praticables".



Malian artist Gadiaba Kodio poses for a portrait in front of a car covered in ties.

## Walt Disney Co results lifted by 'Star Wars,' 'Frozen'

Walt Disney Co. on Tuesday delivered better-than-expected results in the past quarter, fueled by box office hits from its latest "Star Wars" and "Frozen" films and a strong response to its new Disney+ streaming service. Profits in the three months leading up to December 28 dipped 24 percent from a year prior to \$2.1 billion, while revenues surged 36 percent to \$21 billion. "We had a strong first quarter, highlighted by the launch of Disney+, which has exceeded even our greatest expectations," said chairman and chief executive Robert Iger.

Iger said on an earnings call that "our hearts go out to all those affected by this devastating" coronavirus outbreak in China, where the entertainment colossus has closed its theme parks in Hong Kong and Shanghai as a health precaution. The



financial hit to Disney's revenue will depend on how long the parks remain closed, and could be more than \$135 million if they remain shuttered for two months, chief financial officer Christine McCarthy estimated on an earnings call.

"The current closure is taking place during the quarter in which we typically see strong attendance and occupancy levels due to the timing of the Chinese New Year holiday," McCarthy said. The earnings report showed that 26.5 million paying subscribers had signed up for the freshly-launched Disney+ by the

end of last year, and Iger told analysts that figure reached 28.6 million this week. Disney, which is the leading force in Hollywood and operates major theme parks and television operations, has been betting heavily on its move to streaming as it takes on rivals such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. "It is a very unique product," Iger said of Disney+. "There is obviously more competition coming into this space, but there isn't any competition that is like our product."

## Going international

Disney+ will go international next month, launching in Britain, France, Germany, Spain and other parts of Western Europe on March 24. The streaming television service will launch in India less than a week later, timed for the start of the Premier league cricket season there, according to Iger. Disney is intent on bulking up its original streaming content, taking advantage of beloved franchises such as "Star Wars" and the Marvel superhero movies. The hit "Mandalorian" series—a spin-off itself—is likely to lead to spin-offs starring popular characters, Iger said. "These same characters and actors from the Marvel cinematic universe, along with events from these new shows, will factor into future Marvel films as we integrate storytelling across these platforms," Iger said. "We also have the highly anticipated return of 'The Mandalorian' in October." — AFP



# The fading world of *Mauritania's* Nemadi hunters

Cheih, from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania, fixes his turban before heading out into the sun along the caravan route from Tichitt to Aratane in Mauritania. —AFP photos



A man is seen at one of the few water wells along the caravan route from Tichitt to Aratane in Mauritania.



Cheih, from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania, poses for a portrait.



Karnadi poses for a portrait outside the Touijinit Camp along the caravan route.



Cheih (left) and Ahmed (right), from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania are seen leading a caravan.

In the arid West African country of Mauritania, the way of life of the traditional group of hunters known as the Nemadi is slowly disappearing. Experts say the small ethnic group of black Mauritians, also known as N'Madi, now numbers in the hundreds at most, their livelihoods hit by repeated droughts and declining game. Those that are left mostly scour the desert for ostriches, oryxes and white antelope to hunt.

In January, AFP travelled for five days between the desert hamlets of Tichitt and Aratane in central Mauritania, guided by three Nemadi: Ahmadou, his son Ahmed and a third man named Cheih. All three, dressed in tunic-like robes, have abandoned their traditional way of life to become camel herders. More and more Nemadi have given up their old ways since the great drought in the Sahel region in the 1970s. True hunter-gathers are now few and far between. In Loudeyatt, one of the nomadic Nemadi's campsites, a dozen tents are home to about 50 people, and a few bleating goats. There is also a French-language school, although it has few supplies.

The Nemadi have few physical possessions and traditionally, no livestock. They are marginalized in wider Mauritanian society for their poverty, according to experts. But some, such as Ahmadou, now own camels, a traditional symbol of wealth in Mauritanian society. —AFP





Ahmed (20), from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania, pulls water out of one of the few water wells along the caravan route.



A woman and her children are seen at the Toujinit Camp.



Ahmed (20), from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania, is seen leading a camel.



Ahmed (20), from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania, fills put a bucket at one of the few water wells.



Ahmadou (57), from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania, stops to pray in the desert.



Cheih, from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania is seen with a camel.



Ahmadou (57), from the small Nemadi (hunters) tribe in Eastern Mauritania walks east as he leads a camel caravan.



# Japanese enjoy traditional bean-throwing ceremony



Bean-throwing ceremony at Japanese shrine. — KUNA photos

Known as 'Setsubun' (the division of the season), February 3rd traditionally marks the last day of winter in old Japanese lunar calendar. Its most famous ritual is "mame-maki" (bean-throwing), in which people throw toasted soybeans around their houses while shouting "Oni wa soto, fuku wa uchi!" (Ogres stay out, good luck come in!) to drive evil spirits and pray for good luck. Usually, the father or the eldest man in the family wears a red mask as a demon, and the rest of the family members throw the beans to him.

After mame-maki, people eat the same number of beans as their own age to wish for good health and happiness during that year. Originating from Chinese folk beliefs, the bean-throwing tradition was introduced to Japan in the 8th century and gained its popularity in the Muromachi period (1336-1573). "Mame-maki" rituals can be also observed major temples and shrines throughout Japan, where high-profile celebrities toss beans from the stage to the crowds. People rush and knock each other over in an attempt to catch the beans. — KUNA



A mother and baby pose with a man dressed as an ogre



People visit shrines for bean-throwing ceremony.



Toasted soybeans for bean-throwing.





— Photos by KUNA

# Da Vinci's Interactive museum.. new gateway in Florence

A permanent interactive museum has recently opened for public in Florence, includes the most prominent creations of renowned artist Leonardo Da Vinci, not only in the field of art but in science and technology among others. The museum, which is located between Galleria dell'Accademia and Museum of Opera of Saint Maria of Fiore, in one of the ancient palaces, built in 1513, features invention models, designs and reproduced art of Leonardo Da Vinci, plus a bookshop. It displays more than 50 life-size machines, modeled after Da Vinci's designs executed by skilled craftsmen, identical to the original details, accompanied by numerous explanatory panels in Italian, French, English, Spanish and Russian that accompany you during the entire exhibition.

The unique environment of the Leonardo da Vinci museum involves your visit in a direct, interactive, extraordinary experience of sharing and learning. Inside the Museum, there are numerous explanatory panels in Italian, French, English, and Spanish and Russian, that accom-

pany you during the entire exhibition, in addition of rental audio guide service. In addition to the real interactions with his inventions, visitors can admire and compare, in a unique context, high-resolution reproductions of Da Vinci's main pictorial works from the Mona Lisa to the Last Supper and the Annunciation to the Lady with the Ermine.

The exhibition, which uses virtual and augmented reality techniques, displays the "ideal city" project planned by Da Vinci to establish a comfortable, spacious city characterized by rational and functional architecture, organized roads, buildings with high walls, strong, and public squares. Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452 in Florence, Italy, and was educated in the studio of the renowned Italian painter Andrea del Verrocchio. Much of his earlier working life was spent in the service of Ludovico il Moro in Milan, and he later worked in Rome, Bologna and Venice. He spent his last three years in France, where he died in 1519. — KUNA







Golden Age canals lined by tilting gabled buildings are the backdrop for Amsterdam's treasure-packed museums, vintage-filled shops and hyper-creative drinking, dining and design scenes.

Rijksmuseum

The Rijksmuseum is among the world's finest art museums, packing in works by local heroes Rembrandt, Vermeer and Van Gogh as well as other masterpieces in the 8000 works on display over 1.5km of galleries. To avoid the biggest crowds, come before 10am or after 3pm. Start on the 2nd floor in the Gallery of Honor with the astounding Golden Age works. Prebooking tickets online provides fast-track entry. Intimate paintings by Vermeer and De Hooch allow insight into everyday life in the 17th century, while Rembrandt's The Night Watch (1642) takes pride of place. Initially named Company of Frans Banning Cocq (the militia's leader), The Night Watch title was bestowed years later due to a layer of grime that gave the impression it was an evening scene.

Other must-sees are the Delftware (blue-and-white pottery), intricately detailed dollhouses and the Asian Pavilion. The sculpture-studded gardens around the exterior are free to visit and the Rijks restaurant has a Michelin star. There is also a cafe inside the museum serving light lunches. I Amsterdam and Museumkaart cardholders get in free with no need to queue at the ticket office.





## Lifestyle | Travel



Van Gogh Museum



It's a moving experience to visit this museum, which traces Van Gogh's life and development via the world's largest collection of his work, both familiar paintings and wonderful little-known pieces. It's fascinating to see his work change from tentative beginnings to giddily bright sunflowers, and on to his frenzy of creative brilliance towards the end of his life. There are also paintings by contemporaries Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Monet and Bernard.

While you can try your luck for tickets at the entrance, it's highly recommended to book online and choose a time slot to avoid missing out, as tickets can sell out a few days in advance. I Amsterdam cardholders must reserve online at the I Amsterdam website ([www.iamsterdam.com](http://www.iamsterdam.com)). The museum gets packed and the best times to visit to try to avoid the crowds are before 11am and after 3pm.

## Bike &amp; Boat Travel

Two-wheeling is a way of life here. It's how Amsterdammers commute to work, go to the shop, and meet a date for dinner. Abundant bike-hire shops make it easy to gear up and take a spin. If locals aren't on a bike, they may well be on the water. With its canals and massive harbor, this city reclaimed from the sea offers countless opportunities to drift. Hop aboard a canal boat (preferably an open-air one) or one of the free ferries behind Centraal Station, or rent your own for a wind-in-your-hair ride.



## Royal Palace

Opened as a town hall in 1655, this resplendent building became a palace in the 19th century. The interiors gleam, especially the marble work - at its best in a floor inlaid with maps of the world in the great burgerzaal (citizens' hall) at the heart of the building. Pick up a free audioguide at the desk when you enter; it explains everything you'll see in vivid detail. King Willem-Alexander uses the palace only for ceremonies; check for periodic closures.

When it was designed by architect Jacob van Campen, the opulent structure showcased Amsterdam's wealth in a way that rivaled the grandest European buildings of the time. Most of the palace's rooms spread over the 1st floor; highlights include 51 chandeliers, damasks, gilded clocks, and rich paintings by Ferdinand Bol and Jacob de Wit.



Urban Explorations

Amsterdam’s canal-woven core is laced by atmospheric narrow lanes. You never know what you’ll find: a tiny hidden garden; a boutique selling witty, stylized Dutch-designed homewares and fashion; a jewel-box-like jenever (Dutch gin) distillery; a flower stall filled with tulips in a rainbow of hues; an old monastery-turned-classical-music-venue; an ultra-niche restaurant such as an all-avocado specialist or one reinventing age-old Dutch classics. Fringing the centre, post-industrial buildings in up-and-coming neighborhoods now house creative enterprises, from art galleries to craft breweries and cutting-edge tech start-ups, as well as some of Europe’s hottest clubs.



Vondelpark

A private park for the wealthy until 1953, Vondelpark now occupies a special place in Amsterdam’s heart. It’s a magical escape, but also supplies a busy social scene, encompassing cycle ways, pristine lawns, ponds with swans, quaint cafes, footbridges and winding footpaths. On a sunny day, an open-

Admiring Art

You can’t walk a kilometer without bumping into a masterpiece in the city. The Van Gogh Museum hangs the world’s largest collection by tortured native son Vincent. A few blocks away, Vermeers, Rembrandts and other Golden Age treasures fill the glorious Rijksmuseum. The Museum het Rembrandthuis offers more of Rembrandt via his etching-packed studio, while the Stedelijk Museum counts Matisse and Mondrian among its modern stock. And for blockbuster displays, the Hermitage Amsterdam delivers: the outpost of Russia’s State Hermitage Museum sifts through its three-million-piece home trove to mount mega exhibitions.

air party atmosphere ensues when tourists, lovers, cyclists, in-line skaters, pram-pushing parents, cartwheeling children, football-kicking teenagers, spliff-sharing friends and champagne-swilling picnickers all come out to play. The Vondelpark receives over 12 million visitors per year, so it’s rarely tranquil, but always a lot of fun.



Feel Gezellig

Amsterdam is famously gezellig, a Dutch quality that translates roughly as ‘convivial’ or ‘cozy’. It’s more easily experienced than defined. There’s a sense of time stopping, an intimacy of the here-and-now that leaves your troubles behind, at least until tomorrow. The easiest place to encounter this feeling is a bruin cafe (brown cafe; traditional drinking establishment). Named for their wood paneling and walls once stained by smoke, brown cafes have gezelligheid (coziness) on tap, along with good drink. You can also feel gezellig lingering after dinner in snug restaurants while the candles burn low.



Museum het Rembrandthuis

This evocative museum is housed in Rembrandt’s former home, where the master painter spent his most successful years, working on major commissions such as The Night Watch and running the Netherlands’ largest painting studio. It wasn’t to last, however: his work fell out of fashion, he had some expensive relationship problems and bankruptcy came a-knocking. The inventory drawn up when he had to leave the house is the reason that curators have been able to refurbish the building so faithfully.

The museum owns a large collection of Rembrandt’s etchings and there is a small selection of these on display in the Print Room. You can also watch an etching demonstration and visit Rembrandt’s studio, which looks as if he’s just popped out. Queues are not as extensive here as at some of Amsterdam’s other attractions, but you may book ahead online or get free entry with the I Amsterdam City Card or Museumkaart. —www.lonelyplanet.com





Comic

Word Search

More 70's Songs

Find and circle all of these songs from the 1970's that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters will spell the names of ten music groups from the 70's.

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

- AFTERNOON DELIGHT

AMERICAN PIE

AMERICAN WOMAN

ANNIE'S SONG

BAD GIRLS

BARRACUDA

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

BROTHER LOUIE

CRAZY ON YOU

DELTA DAWN

DON'T STOP
- DREAM ON

DREAM WEAVER

DRIFT AWAY

EBONY EYES

FIRE AND RAIN

HELP ME

IMAGINE

LAST DANCE

LET IT BE

LOVE HURTS

LOW RIDER
- MAGIC MAN

MAIN STREET

MARGARITAVILLE

MY LOVE

MY SHARONA

NIGHT FEVER

PHOTOGRAPH

PIANO MAN

REUNITED

ROSE GARDEN

SHADOW DANCING
- SHE'S GONE

SIGNS

SOUTHERN NIGHTS

SUMMER NIGHTS

SUNDOWN

SUPERSTAR

THE GAMBLER

WITHOUT YOU

WOODSTOCK

Y.M.C.A.

YOU'RE SIXTEEN

Yesterday's Solution

More 1950's Songs

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

- ALL SHOOK UP

ALMOST GROWN

AT THE HOP

BIRD DOG

BLUE MONDAY

CHANCES ARE

CHANTILLY LACE

CRY

DON'T BE CRUEL

EL PASO
- FLAMINGO

GET A JOB

GOODNIGHT IRENE

I'M A MAN

I'M WALKIN'

JIM DANDY

JUKE

LITTLE DARLIN'

LONELY AVENUE

LOUIE LOUIE
- LUCILLE

MAYBE

MONEY HONEY

MR SANDMAN

PERSONALITY

REBEL ROUSER

ROLLIN' STONE

SEA CRUISE

SINCERELY

SO WHAT
- SOUL ON FIRE

STAGGER LEE

THE BELLS

THE WIND

TIPITINA

TOM DOOLEY

TRY ME

WHITE LIGHTNING

YOUNG BLOOD

The hidden sentence is: PLEASE SEND ME SOMEONE TO LOVE

Crossword 2430

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	13	14
15					16								17		
18					19								20		
21				22			23					24			
25						26				27		28			
			29			30					31				
32	33	34				35			36				37	38	39
40			41					42			43				
44						45	46		47	48			49		
50				51		52						53			
54					55		56					57			
			58						59		60				
61	62	63		64				65					66	67	68
69			70				71						72		
73					74	75							76		
77					78								79		

ACROSS

1. Someone who works (or provides work-ers) during a strike.

5. Shrubby tree widely distributed along tropical shores.

12. Acute delirium caused by alcohol poi-soning.

15. The inner and longer of the two bones of the human forearm.

16. French philosopher and theologian.

17. Any of various long-tailed rodents sim-ilar to but larger than a mouse.

18. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.

19. Act in unison or agreement and in se-cret towards a deceitful or illegal pur-pose.

20. The compass point midway between northeast and east.

21. A tranquilizer (trade name Navane) used to treat schizophrenia.

23. Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.

24. A native or inhabitant of Iran.

28. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.

29. A public promotion of some product or service.

30. Of or relating to the Iberian peninsula or its inhabitants.

32. Having undesirable or negative quali-ties.

35. An official prosecutor for a judicial dis-trict.

36. Younger brother or sister.
40. Small genus of perennial herbs or sub-shrubs.

43. Italian histologist noted for work on the structure of the nervous system and for his discovery of Golgi bodies (1844-1926).

44. A German man.

45. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.

49. The fatty flesh of eel.

50. A genus of Indriidae.

52. A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.

54. Cast again, in a different role.

56. A member of the British order of honor.

57. (prefix) In front of or before in space.

58. The 19th letter of the Greek alphabet.

59. The face of a timepiece.

61. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.

64. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.

69. Aristocratic Italian family of powerful merchants and bankers who ruled Flo-rence in the 15th century.

72. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

73. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.

74. A tricycle (usually propelled by ped-alling).

76. The principal activity in your life that you do to earn money.

77. The probability of a specified outcome.

78. Mites and ticks.

79. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.

DOWN

1. A member of the branch of Islam that ac-cepts the first four caliphs as rightful successors to Mohammed.

2. Clear to the mind.

3. A statistical method for making simulta-neous comparisons between two or more means.

4. Any of several tropical and subtropical treelike herbs of the genus Musa hav-ing a terminal crown of large entire leaves and usually bearing hanging clusters of elongated fruits.

5. (trademark) A liquid that temporarily disables a person.

6. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Euro-peans arrived.

7. A loose cloak with a hood.

8. European shad.

9. Cheap or pretentious display.

10. Goddess of fate.

11. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.

12. Causing fear or dread or terror.

13. A form of Japanese poetry.

14. Water at boiling temperature diffused in the atmosphere v l.

22. Mild form of diabetes mellitus that de-velops gradually in adults.

24. (archaic) The emperor of Japan.

26. Some point in the air.

27. The former capital and 2nd largest city of Brazil.

31. The month following July and preced-ing September.

33. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trademarks Aleve and Anaprox and Aflaxen).

34. English theoretical physicist who ap-plied relativity theory to quantum me-
- chanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).

37. Gather, as of as crops.

38. Eliminate from the body.

39. German poet (born in Austria) whose imagery and mystic lyricism influenced 20-th century German literature (1875-1926).

41. A Buddhist who has attained nirvana.

42. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.

46. An important seaport on the Island of Cebu in the Philippines.

47. Italian poet considered the national poet of modern Italy (1835-1907).

48. A worker who makes glasses for reme-dying defects of vision.

51. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.

53. A large bundle bound for storage or transport.

55. Eurasian perennial bulbous herbs.

60. Jordan's port.

62. A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.

63. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.

65. A set of two similar things considered as a unit.

66. A Hindu prince or king in India.

67. Very dark black.

68. A Chadid language spoken south of Lake Chad.

70. The bureau of the Treasury Depart-ment responsible for tax collections.

71. A federal agency established to regu-late the release of new foods and health-related products.

75. An international organization of Euro-pean countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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




TV Listings

Friday, February 7, 2020



00:15 Internal Affairs  
02:15 Guardians  
03:55 Code Of Silence  
05:50 Power Rangers  
08:00 The Monster Project  
09:50 Shanghai Knights  
11:55 Power Rangers  
14:15 The Wrath Of Vajra  
16:20 Encounter  
18:05 Escape From L.A.  
19:55 The Taking Of Pelham 123  
22:00 End Of Days




00:00 The First 48  
01:00 Homicide Hunter  
02:00 PD Cam  
02:25 PD Cam  
02:55 Ghost Hunters  
03:45 It Takes A Killer  
04:10 It Takes A Killer  
04:30 Live PD: Police Patrol  
04:55 Live PD: Police Patrol  
05:15 The First 48  
05:55 Homicide Hunter  
06:40 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
07:30 It Takes A Killer  
08:00 Live PD: Police Patrol  
08:25 Homicide Hunter  
09:10 Homicide Hunter  
09:55 The First 48  
10:45 The First 48  
11:40 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
12:35 The First 48  
13:30 Crimes That Shook Britain  
14:25 Live PD: Police Patrol  
14:55 Live PD: Police Patrol  
15:25 Homicide Hunter  
16:20 Homicide Hunter  
17:15 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
18:10 Live PD: Police Patrol  
18:40 Live PD: Police Patrol  
19:10 Live PD: Police Patrol  
19:40 Live PD: Police Patrol  
20:05 It Takes A Killer  
20:35 It Takes A Killer  
21:05 The First 48  
22:00 Homicide Hunter  
23:00 Live PD Presents: Women On Patrol  
23:30 Live PD Presents: Women On Patrol



00:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
00:30 Impractical Jokers  
00:52 50 Central  
01:17 Comedy Central Presents  
Comedy 3alwagef  
01:42 Broad City  
02:05 Friends  
02:30 Friends  
02:55 Lip Sync Battle  
03:20 Comedy Central Presents  
Comedy 3alwagef  
03:45 Broad City  
04:09 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
04:35 Lip Sync Battle  
05:00 Friends  
05:25 Friends  
05:50 Friends  
06:15 Friends  
06:40 Friends  
07:05 Impractical Jokers  
07:30 Impractical Jokers  
08:10 Impractical Jokers  
08:35 Impractical Jokers  
09:00 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party  
09:25 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party  
09:50 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party  
10:15 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party  
10:40 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party  
11:05 Friends  
11:30 Friends  
11:55 Friends  
12:18 Friends  
12:40 Friends  
13:05 Key And Peele  
13:30 Key And Peele  
13:55 Key And Peele

14:20 Key And Peele  
14:45 Key And Peele  
15:10 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA  
15:40 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA  
16:10 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA  
16:40 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef  
17:10 Friends  
17:35 Friends  
18:00 Friends  
18:30 Friends  
19:00 Friends  
19:30 Martha And Snoop Potluck Party Challenge  
20:00 The New Negros  
20:30 50 Central  
21:00 50 Central  
21:30 50 Central  
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
22:30 Roast Of Alec Baldwin



00:00 People Magazine Investigations  
01:00 Relatively Evil  
02:00 Shattered  
03:00 Homicide City  
04:00 Homicide City  
04:45 Homicide City  
05:30 Reasonable Doubt  
06:20 Nightmare Next Door  
07:10 Welcome To Killer Town  
08:00 Shadow Of Doubt  
08:55 Shadow Of Doubt  
09:50 Scene Of The Crime With Tony Harris  
10:45 Scene Of The Crime With Tony Harris  
11:40 Nightmare Next Door  
12:35 Reasonable Doubt  
13:30 Reasonable Doubt  
14:25 Murder Comes To Town  
15:20 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen  
16:15 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen  
17:10 Nightmare Next Door  
18:05 Grave Mysteries  
19:00 Grave Mysteries  
20:00 Murder In The Heartland  
21:00 Murder In The Heartland  
22:00 Your Worst Nightmare  
23:00 Primal Instinct



00:10 Evermoor Chronicles  
00:35 Binny And The Ghost  
01:00 Alex & Co.  
01:25 Alex & Co.  
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
02:15 Evermoor Chronicles  
02:40 Alex & Co.  
03:05 Binny And The Ghost  
03:30 Binny And The Ghost  
03:55 Evermoor Chronicles  
04:20 Evermoor Chronicles  
04:45 Alex & Co.  
05:10 Alex & Co.  
05:35 Violetta  
06:25 Binny And The Ghost  
06:45 Rolling With The Ronks  
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks  
07:00 Shake It Up  
07:25 Raven's Home  
07:50 Disney Mickey Mouse  
07:55 Bunk'd  
08:20 Stuck In The Middle  
08:45 K.C. Undercover  
09:10 Bizaardvark  
09:35 Jessie  
10:00 Jessie  
10:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
10:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
11:15 Bizaardvark  
11:40 Bizaardvark  
12:05 Liv And Maddie  
12:30 Liv And Maddie  
12:55 K.C. Undercover  
13:20 K.C. Undercover  
13:45 Bunk'd  
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir

14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
15:00 Shake It Up  
15:25 Shake It Up  
15:50 A.N.T. Farm  
16:15 A.N.T. Farm  
16:40 Bizaardvark  
17:05 Disney Mickey Mouse  
17:10 Amphibia  
17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
18:00 Raven's Home  
18:25 Coop And Cami Ask The World  
18:50 Sydney To The Max  
19:15 Bunk'd  
19:40 Stuck In The Middle  
20:05 K.C. Undercover  
20:30 Shake It Up  
20:55 Shake It Up  
21:20 Liv And Maddie  
21:45 Liv And Maddie  
22:10 Jessie  
22:35 Jessie  
23:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
23:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
23:50 Lolirock



00:00 PJ Masks  
00:15 PJ Masks  
00:30 The Lion Guard  
01:00 Sofia The First  
01:25 Playtime With Puppy Dog Pals Puppy Playcare  
01:30 Gigantosaurus  
02:00 PJ Masks  
02:30 PJ Masks  
03:00 Zou  
03:15 Zou  
03:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:00 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:30 Paprika  
04:40 Zou  
04:55 Zou  
05:10 Zou  
05:25 Paprika  
05:35 Paprika  
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:00 Gigantosaurus  
06:30 PJ Masks  
06:45 PJ Masks  
07:00 PJ Masks  
07:15 PJ Masks  
07:30 Gigantosaurus  
07:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
08:00 The Lion Guard  
08:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
09:00 Vampirina  
09:30 Bluey  
09:40 Bluey  
09:50 Bluey  
10:00 Sofia The First  
10:30 Elena Of Avalor  
11:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy  
11:30 Bluey  
11:40 Bluey  
11:50 Bluey  
12:00 Vampirina  
12:30 PJ Masks  
13:00 PJ Masks  
13:30 Doc McStuffins  
14:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
14:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
15:00 PJ Masks  
15:30 PJ Masks  
16:00 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Adventures  
16:30 T.O.T.S.  
17:00 Elena Of Avalor  
17:25 Playtime With Puppy Dog Pals Puppy Playcare  
17:30 Elena Of Avalor  
18:00 Bluey  
18:10 Bluey  
18:20 Bluey  
18:30 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Adventures  
19:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy  
19:30 Vampirina  
20:00 PJ Masks  
20:15 PJ Masks  
20:30 The Lion Guard  
21:00 Sofia The First  
21:25 Playtime With Puppy Dog Pals Puppy Playcare  
21:30 Bluey  
21:40 Bluey  
21:50 Bluey  
22:00 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Ad-

ventures  
22:30 Elena Of Avalor  
23:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy  
23:30 Vampirina



00:15 Dual Survival  
01:05 Richard Hammond's Big Abandoned Engineering  
01:50 Abandoned Engineering  
02:35 Impossible Engineering  
03:20 Kindig Customs  
04:05 Kindig Customs  
04:50 How Do They Do It?  
05:15 How Do They Do It?  
05:35 Garage Gold  
06:00 Salvage Dawgs  
06:20 Garage Gold  
06:45 Dual Survival  
07:35 Deadliest Catch  
08:20 Gold Rush  
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
09:55 Salvage Hunters  
10:45 How Do They Do It?  
11:10 How Do They Do It?  
11:30 Kindig Customs  
12:20 Kindig Customs  
13:05 Salvage Dawgs  
13:30 Garage Gold  
13:55 Salvage Hunters  
14:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
15:30 Contact  
16:15 Wheeler Dealers: Dream Car  
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
17:50 Gold Rush  
18:40 How Do They Do It?  
19:05 How Do They Do It?  
19:25 Kindig Customs  
20:15 Kindig Customs  
21:00 Wheeler Dealers  
21:50 Wheeler Dealers: Dream Car  
22:40 Mighty Truckers  
23:30 Deadliest Catch




00:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
00:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
01:00 Space Chickens In Space  
01:20 Space Chickens In Space  
01:45 Counterfeit Cat  
02:10 Counterfeit Cat  
02:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
02:55 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
03:20 Space Chickens In Space  
03:40 Space Chickens In Space  
04:05 Counterfeit Cat  
04:30 Counterfeit Cat  
04:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
05:15 Furiki Wheels  
05:35 Supa Strikas  
06:00 Lab Rats  
06:25 Lab Rats  
06:50 Phineas And Ferb  
07:15 Phineas And Ferb  
07:40 Gravity Falls  
08:05 Gravity Falls  
08:30 Phineas And Ferb  
08:55 Phineas And Ferb  
09:20 Big City Greens  
09:40 Big City Greens  
10:05 Phineas And Ferb  
10:25 Phineas And Ferb  
10:50 Lab Rats  
11:10 Lab Rats  
11:35 Phineas And Ferb  
11:55 Phineas And Ferb  
12:20 Gravity Falls  
12:45 Gravity Falls  
13:10 Big Chibi 6: The Series  
13:15 Phineas And Ferb  
13:40 Phineas And Ferb  
14:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
14:30 Phineas And Ferb  
14:55 Phineas And Ferb  
15:20 Big City Greens  
15:45 Big City Greens  
16:10 Supa Strikas  
16:35 Supa Strikas  
17:00 Disney 11  
17:25 Disney Mickey Mouse  
17:30 Lab Rats  
17:55 Phineas And Ferb  
18:20 Phineas And Ferb  
18:45 Lab Rats


19:10 Lab Rats  
19:35 Lab Rats  
20:00 Disney 11  
20:25 Gravity Falls  
20:50 Phineas And Ferb  
21:15 Phineas And Ferb  
21:40 DuckTales  
22:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
22:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
22:55 DuckTales Shorts  
23:00 Furiki Wheels  
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost  
23:50 Dude That's My Ghost



00:00 Flip It Like Disick  
01:00 Flip It Like Disick  
02:00 Nightly Pop  
02:30 Nightly Pop  
03:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
04:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
05:00 Botched  
06:00 Botched  
07:00 E! News  
07:30 E! News  
08:00 Pop Of The Morning  
08:55 E! News: Daily Pop  
09:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
10:45 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
11:40 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
12:35 E! News  
13:00 E! News  
13:30 Pop Of The Morning  
14:25 E! News: Daily Pop  
15:20 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
16:15 Botched  
17:10 Botched  
18:05 Very Cavallari  
19:00 Very Cavallari  
20:00 Very Cavallari  
21:00 Generation Me  
21:30 Generation Me  
22:00 Meet The Frasers  
22:30 Meet The Frasers  
23:00 Nightly Pop  
23:30 Nightly Pop



00:30 Ancient Impossible  
01:15 Patton 360  
02:00 In Search Of Aliens  
02:45 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
03:30 The Universe  
04:15 Cities Of The Underworld  
05:00 Ancient Aliens  
05:45 Knight Fight  
06:30 America's Book Of Secrets  
07:15 Ancient Impossible  
08:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
08:45 The Universe  
09:30 Cities Of The Underworld  
10:15 Ancient Aliens  
11:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence  
11:45 America's Book Of Secrets  
12:30 Ancient Impossible  
13:15 In Search Of Aliens  
14:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
14:45 The Universe  
15:30 Cities Of The Underworld  
16:15 Ancient Aliens  
17:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence  
17:45 America's Book Of Secrets  
18:30 Ancient Impossible  
19:15 In Search Of Aliens  
20:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
20:45 The Universe  
21:30 Cities Of The Underworld  
22:15 Ancient Aliens  
23:00 Cowboys & Outlaws  
23:45 America's Book Of Secrets



00:20 Mountain Men  
01:05 American Pickers  
01:50 Pawn Stars  
02:10 Pawn Stars  
02:35 Storage Wars  
03:00 Storage Wars  
03:25 The Food That Built The

World  
05:05 Forged In Fire  
06:00 Road Hawks  
06:45 Mountain Men  
07:30 American Pickers  
08:15 Pawn Stars  
08:35 Pawn Stars  
09:00 Storage Wars  
09:20 Storage Wars  
09:45 The Food That Built The World  
11:15 Forged In Fire  
12:00 American Pickers  
15:00 Forged In Fire  
17:15 Mountain Men  
20:15 Forged In Fire  
21:00 Swamp People  
21:50 Swamp People  
22:40 Ancient Aliens  
23:30 American Pickers



00:10 Fish Of The Day  
00:35 Fish Of The Day  
01:00 Exploring Malaysia  
01:25 Peter Kuruvita's Mexican Fiesta  
01:50 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces: Snow Special  
02:40 Inside Singapore Airlines  
03:30 Ugly House To Lovely House With George Clarke  
04:20 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
05:10 Ultimate Airport Dubai  
06:00 Extreme China  
06:50 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
07:40 The Food Files  
08:05 The Food Files  
08:30 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen  
08:55 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen  
09:20 Heathrow  
10:10 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure  
10:35 Exploring Malaysia  
11:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai  
11:50 Extreme China  
12:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
13:30 The Food Files  
13:55 The Food Files  
14:20 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen  
14:45 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen  
15:10 Heathrow  
16:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure  
16:25 Exploring Malaysia  
16:50 Ultimate Airport Dubai  
17:45 Extreme China  
18:40 A House Of Its Time  
19:05 A House Of Its Time  
19:35 The Food Files  
20:00 Miguel's Feasts  
20:30 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen  
20:55 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen  
21:25 Heathrow  
22:20 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure  
22:45 Exploring Malaysia  
23:15 Ultimate Airport Dubai



00:00 Inside The Ss: Rise To Power  
00:55 Primal Survivor  
01:45 Locked Up Abroad  
02:35 Nazi Megastructures  
03:25 Cruise Ship Diaries  
04:15 Inside The Ss: Rise To Power  
05:05 Primal Survivor  
06:00 Locked Up Abroad  
06:55 Nazi Megastructures  
07:50 Inside The Ss: Rise To Power  
08:45 Primal Survivor  
09:40 WWII's Greatest Raids  
10:35 Brain Games  
11:30 Fly Me To The Stars  
12:25 Access 360 World Heritage  
13:20 WWII's Greatest Raids  
14:15 Airport Security: First Class  
15:10 Yukon Gold  
16:05 Live Free Or Die  
17:00 Brain Games  
18:00 David Rocco's Dolce India  
18:30 David Rocco's Dolce India



Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your way is the only way today. Others may not show great appreciation for this overly independent side of you. You may be dealing with some personal issues today. This may find you at odds with others. This is a very sensitive matter and others can not understand what you refuse to share. Your independence can be a blessing and a curse. You may feel as if no one is there for you when you need them most. This comes from you always putting on a strong front. Everyone needs a shoulder to cry on once in a while. Let your guard down and let others help you for a change.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find yourself realizing how special you are today. Appreciating all your gifts and talents and feeling a sense of pride. This is a great time of communication with those around you as you are able to express your emotions clearly to others. Dedication and devotion have gotten you to this point in life and you in a position you can provide much help to others. You are in touch with not only your emotions but also very in touch with the needs and emotions of those close to you. This is a very nice time in your life. You may find someone close shows great support and sympathy to you today when a situation you encounter puts you in need of a listening ear.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time you desire peace and harmony in your world. Make peace with your past. This is a great day to reach out and mend fences with those you have had differences with in the past. This is a great day in the workplace for you. It is your time to shine. Know that all you do will be noticed. You may be asked to represent your company in some way. Your communication skills are on point today and you will be a huge success.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Look for a rainbow today. Something good is happening in your life. It may lead to something important in your career or your personal life. Even if the pleasure you derive from it is not permanent, you can find pleasure in the moment. You're getting a break you deserve. Don't discount it by projecting the future. If you take a "live today" attitude, the future will take care of itself-and you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A friend will seek your advice today. What she really wants is your approval for what she has decided to do. If you tell her what to do, it may lead to a rift in your friendship. You can give your opinion, but make it clear that she has to make the decision for herself. You might offer some options and point out the possible consequences of each. That mean she takes responsibility for her action. Regardless of how her decision turns out, your friendship will be strengthened. You are a rock in the lives of many.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You don't need a shovel for the type of digging you are about to begin. This is an emotional venture. Digging deep into your inner workings. What has happened in your life that has molded you into the person you are today? Remember, stress is brought on not by circumstance, but by our reaction to circumstances. Take a step back, take a deep breath, and remember you are in control of your reaction. You have successfully turned stumbling blocks into stepping stones in the past. This has made you who you are today. You not only have the strength, but also the wisdom to make your world a happy place.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a time you desire peace and harmony in your world. Make peace with your past. This is a great day to reach out and mend fences with those you have had differences with in the past. This is a great day in the workplace for you. It is your time to shine. Know that all you do will be noticed. You may be asked to represent your company in some way. Your communication skills are on point today and you will be a huge success.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find yourself tense and anxious about a situation you have found yourself in. You may feel under pressure and feel somewhat anxious. This may lead to you mentally checking out. You may use this as a coping mechanism for the stress you are under. An out of body feeling in a dreamy state may be the way your mind chooses to handle this conflict. Others may not be fond of this side of you and this could result in conflict with someone close to you. You will find your way and through your ability to get to the root of your problems, this too will be solved. Scorpio. You may find a negative result from the escape you take from reality as it may cause an opportunity you have been hoping for to pass you by.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you find someone challenging your good taste or choices today just brush it off. You may find your mind is a million miles away. Focus may not be a strong point for you today. This probably isn't a great day to make decisions but that is ok. Take a break. Get out and enjoy some of the beauty that surrounds you and enjoy what the world has to offer. Good fortune is soon to come your way. A break from reality may be in order to truly appreciate and recognize the opportunities that are placed in your path.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

All that is dear to your heart takes priority today. you need to love and be loved. Take a chance today. You may receive a great reward. Love is a huge factor in your life today. You are learning to love yourself and pay close attention to the needs and want of those close to you. Getting in touch with your emotions and the emotions of those around you will cause others to be drawn to you. Capricorn, others will value your opinions and sense of independence. You are becoming someone others look up to.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be faced with a career opportunity that goes against what you value. You have always prided yourself for clearly seeing things in life in black and white. There is no room for a grey area. If an opportunity that presents itself to you seems to good to be true, it probably is. Be sure you are able to lay your head down at night and sleep peacefully. You know right from wrong and this is a time for you to make the right choice. Actions have consequences and these consequences will have a lasting effect on your world. Do what satisfies your soul.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

If you ask you shall receive. You seem to have a way of getting exactly what you want. You are most persuasive today. Your words are sweet like honey. This is one of those days that seems to fall right into place for you. Enjoy because it just doesn't get much better than this. A great evening to spend time with someone you love. This could be very beneficial to your relationship.

Country Codes

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



# CLINIC PAGE



**Kuwait Times**  
248 33 199

Friday, February 7, 2020

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

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

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

**ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:**

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

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- o Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- o Body & Face Contouring.
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**DR KHALED ALMERRI**  
Consultant Interventional Cardiology  
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

**Specialized in:**

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- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4- Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

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

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

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- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

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

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

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

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

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

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

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Neurosurgery Doctor

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

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



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

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

**Academic Certificates – Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

email: wbuhaimeed@gmail.com Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228  
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# Kuwait Times Classifieds

Friday, February 7, 2020

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### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Warm and Clouds will increase gradually with light variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain later on.

**BY NIGHT:** Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

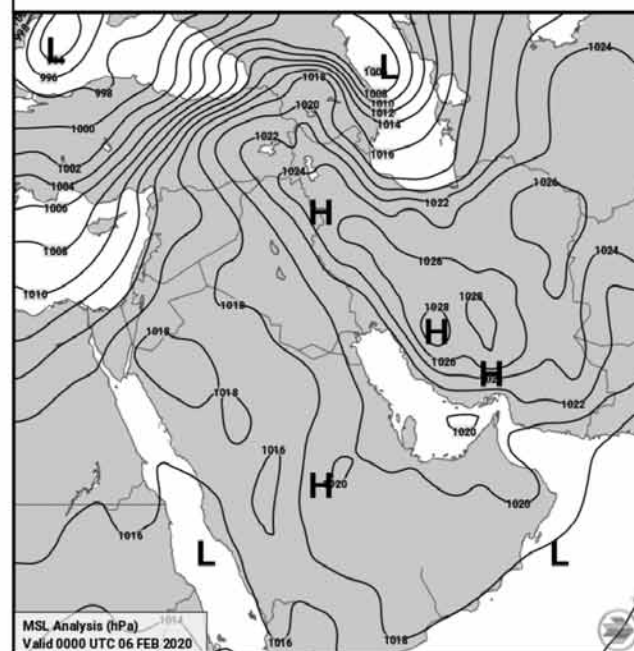
#### WEATHER WARNING

No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	13 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	25 °C	08 °C
ABDALY	24 °C	06 °C
BUBYAN	20 °C	09 °C
JAHERA	25 °C	10 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	19 °C	11 °C
SALMIYAH	19 °C	15 °C
AHMADI	19 °C	16 °C
NUWAISIB	22 °C	10 °C
WAFRA	25 °C	09 °C
SALMY	25 °C	09 °C

#### SFC. CHART

06/02/2020 0000 UTC



#### 4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	02/07	Warm and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	27 °C	14 °C	SE	12 - 40 km/h
Saturday	02/08	Warm + chance for raising dust	25 °C	11 °C	SW-NW	12 - 40 km/h
Sunday	02/09	Fair	19 °C	06 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Monday	02/10	A significant decrease in temperature with a chance for rising dust	11 °C	02 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h

#### PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	05:14
Sunrise	06:36
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:07
Sunset	17:29
Isha	18:48

#### RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	20 °C
MIN. Temp.	07 °C
MAX. RH	79 %
MIN. RH	30 %
MAX. Wind	SE 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

#### CHANGE OF NAME

I, **formally** known and addressed as Akalezi John Kelechi, now wish to be known, called and addressed as Akalezi Stephen. The wrong date of birth is 27/12/1983 and the right date of birth is 27/12/1986. All former documents remain valid. The general public, banks and concerned authorities should please take note.

I, **SHAHID** ABDUL KADIR ANSARI (Indian Passport No. Z5183824 issued in Kuwait) hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: SHAHID ABDUL QADEER, surname: ANSARI for all purposes. (C 5631) 7-1-2020

I, **Javed** Ahmed Abdul Hamid holder of Indian Passport No. M4640773 having permanent address House No. 76-106-A11-A5, Guru Raghavendra Nagar, near Bellary Chowrasta, Kallur, Kurmool, Andhra Pradesh, India, Pin Code No. 518003. Residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Given name Shaikh Javed Ahmed S/o Shaikh Abdul Hamid and surname Shaikh. (C 5628)

I, **Abdul** Jabbar father of Aasiyah Zareen holder of Indian Passport No: S9728352 issued in Kuwait on

16/8/2018. Do hereby declare that my daughter's given name is Aasiyah Zareen and Surname is Abdul Jabbar. (C 5635) 6-2-2020

I, **Raees** Ahmed Bashir Ahmed, holder of Indian Passport No: S3694625, Civil ID No. 265011101812 and Aadhar Card No. 299382056264, have changed my name as Given Name: Raees Ahmed Bashir Ahmed, Surname: Shaikh. Hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by the name of Raees Ahmed Bashir Ahmed Shaikh. (C 5629)

**Shaikh Aslam** Shaika Farid, holder of Indian Passport No: R5454580 issued at Kuwait on 16/04/2017, Civil ID No: 267060106811, permanent address room 403 4th floor A Wing Tagore SRA CHS Ltd. 90 feet road Anna Nagar Kumbharwada Dharavi Mumbai Maharashtra 400017. Has changed my name Shaikh Aslam Shaika Farid to Given name: Shaikh Aslam Shaikh Farid. (C 5627)

## EMERGENCY



## 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

## 1889988



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2020

# Business

## Ooredoo reports revenue of KD 633.5 million for FY 2019

### Dividend of 50 fils per share recommended

**KUWAIT:** National Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.C.P “Ooredoo” announced yesterday its financial results for year 2019:

#### Financial highlights:

- Consolidated customer base decreased by 3 percent to 26.1 million in 2019, compared to 27.0 million in 2018.

- In local currency terms Tunisia and Maldives recorded good growth in revenue. However, revenues in KD were impacted due to 10 percent depreciation of the Tunisian Dinar and 2 percent depreciation in the Algerian dinar. Consequently, consolidated revenue decreased by 5 percent to KD 633.5 million for 2019, compared to KD 665.0 million for the same period in 2018.

- EBITDA increased by 7 percent in 2019 to KD 232.6 million, compared to KD 217.1 million in 2018, supported by the implementation of IFRS 16, a new accounting standard, in addition to operational efficiencies.

- Net profit attributable to NMTC was KD 30.1 million for 2019, compared to KD 29.7 million for the same period in 2018. Net profit growth was supported by good performances in Kuwait, Tunisia and Maldives.

- The consolidated earnings per share was 60 fils for 2019, compared to 59 fils per share earned for the same period last year. The Board of directors recommends a dividend payment of 50 fils per share, subject to shareholder approval at the General Assembly scheduled for 10 March 2020.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani, Chairman of the Board of Directors commented: “In 2019, we leveraged our strong digital capabilities to deliver unparalleled user experiences to our customers as we deployed the infrastructure for the next generation of connectivity. Ooredoo Kuwait (NMTC) reported a steady set of results with net profit for the year increasing by 1 percent to KD 30 million and EBITDA increasing 7 percent to KD 233 million. Our financial performance is testament to our continued investment into the implementation of our digital transformation strategy.

Strong revenue performances in the Maldives and Tunisia, in local currency terms, were offset by intense price competition in Kuwait and challenging macroeconomic environments in Algeria and Tunisia, where the local currency depreciated 2 per-



Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani

cent and 10 percent respectively, against the Kuwaiti Dinar. Consequently, NMTC reported revenues of KD 634 million in 2019 compared to KD 665 million in the previous year.

Our consolidated customer base at the end of 2019 was a healthy 26 million, as we focused on serving the needs of an increasingly sophisticated and digitally savvy user base with the launch of a number of new services that simplified our user experience while providing a greater degree of flexibility and control.

In Kuwait, the implementation of our digital transformation agenda, harnessing the latest technologies to drive efficiency as well as the positive impact from the implementation of IFRS 16 contributed to a 32 percent increase in EBITDA. In Tunisia, revenues increased 7 percent in local currency terms,

as the company intensified its focus on increasing smartphone penetration and driving data usage.

Our performance in Algeria continue to be impacted by challenging economic conditions, intense price competition and currency depreciation. In Palestine we continued to grow our user base, which was up 3 percent to 1.3 million and focus on cost optimization, resulting in a 13 percent increase in EBITDA to KD 9.0 million.

In the Maldives we reported strong results across the board, with EBITDA increasing 12 percent to KD 22 million, supported by a 5 percent increase in revenues to KD 40 million.”

#### Review of operations

The Group's operational performance can be summarized as follows:

##### Ooredoo - Kuwait

Ooredoo's customer base in Kuwait increased to 2.6 million in 2019, up by 12 percent compared to 2018. Revenues for 2019 were KD 231.3 million, a decrease of 4 percent compared to KD 240.9 million in 2018. EBITDA was strong, increasing 32 percent to KD 72.4 million in 2019, compared to KD 55.0 million in 2018. The increase of 32 percent reflected good operational efficiencies across the business as well as a positive impact of the new IFRS 16 accounting standard.

##### Ooredoo - Tunisia

Ooredoo's customer base in Tunisia increased by 1 percent to reach 9.2 million customers in 2019, compared to the previous year. The Tunisian Dinar depreciated by 10 percent year on year, leading to a decrease in revenues from KD 126.6 million in 2018 to

KD 123.1 million in 2019. In local currency terms, revenues were up by 6.8 percent. EBITDA was KD 56.9 million in 2019 compared to KD 49.3 million in 2018.

##### Ooredoo - Algeria

Business in Algeria was negatively impacted by the devaluation of the Algerian dinar, intense price competition and a weak economic environment. Customer base declined by 9 percent to 12.6 million in 2019, compared to 2018. Revenues also decreased to KD 208.7 million in 2019, compared to KD 228.9 million in the previous year. EBITDA was KD 72.4 million in 2019, down from KD 85.3 million in 2018. Algerian dinar depreciated by 2 percent year on year.

##### Ooredoo - Palestine

Ooredoo Palestine customer numbers increased by 3 percent to 1.3 million comparing to previous year. Revenue slightly decreased to KD 30.2 million, compared to KD 30.3 million in 2018. EBITDA was strong, increasing 13 percent to KD 9.0 million in 2019 compared to KD 8.0 million in 2018, driven by operational efficiencies across the business and the implementation of IFRS 16.

##### Ooredoo - Maldives

Ooredoo Maldives reported a 5 percent increase in revenues to KD 40.2 million in 2019, compared to KD 38.2 million in 2018. EBITDA was increased to KD 22.1 million in 2019, an increase of 12 percent compared to KD 19.7 million in 2018. Ooredoo Maldives now serves a total of 405k customers.

Post period Ooredoo Maldives was issued a 15 year telecommunications license, encompassing mobile, fixed and internet services, starting as of Feb 1, 2020.

	Quarterly Analysis			Full Year Analysis		
	Q4 2019	Q4 2018	% change	2019	2018	% change
Consolidated Revenue (KWD m)	163.5	162.7	0%	633.5	665.0	-5%
EBITDA (KWD m)	58.1	55.0	6%	232.6	217.1	7%
EBITDA margin (%)	36%	34%	-	37%	33%	-
Net Profit attributable to NMTC (KWD m)	6.7	13.5	-51%	30.1	29.7	1%
Consolidated Customers (m)	26.1	27.0	-3%	26.1	27.0	-3%



## Business

# Stocks climb further after China slashes US levies, Trump win

## Investors look beyond virus, bullish on growth outlook

**LONDON:** Stock markets rose further yesterday after China's move to slash levies on US imports soothed concerns about the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

Investors cheered China's announcement that it would halve levies on \$75 billion (68 billion euros) worth of US imports after the two last month signed their mini trade deal that dialled down a long-running and painful trade war. Investors were already on a roll with another surge on Wall Street where the S&P 500 and Nasdaq chalked up new record highs Wednesday after figures showed private firms added a forecast-smashing 291,000 new jobs last month, marking the biggest gain since December 2014.

Wall Street closed just ahead of US President Donald Trump defeating the gravest threat yet to his three-year-old presidency, winning acquittal in the Senate on impeachment charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. In Europe yesterday, "stock markets... pushed higher by the announcement that China will halve the tariffs it imposes on \$75 billion worth of US imports", said CMC Markets analyst David Madden.

"The cut on levies will be introduced on 14 February—the day the US will reduce tariffs on \$120 billion worth of Chinese imports," Madden added. "The move by Beijing is a nice way to take the pressure off the Chinese economy in light of the coronavirus situation."

Equities gained ground also on optimism that

the deadly virus, which has spread to more than 20 countries, can be contained and the economic impact limited.

After last week's big share price losses, and a near eight-percent drop for Shanghai's main stocks index on Monday, observers said traders have been coming back on relatively low valuations, with reasonably healthy earnings reports also providing much-needed support.

Analysts generally have expressed confidence the illness will be largely contained to China and the economic harm will not be lasting. Huge cash injections by the Chinese central bank into the country's financial markets have also soothed investor concerns.

"The markets are not only holding up, but they're going up," added AxiCorp analyst Stephen Innes.

"And to suggest risk appetite continues to 'creep' back in favor might be the biggest understatement of the week as equity markets just burst higher," Innes said that while the World Health Organization has played down reports that a cure might soon be developed, "any progress on treatment may also be a comfort to investors that the longer-term secondary effects of the outbreak are contained".

Markets were looking ahead to today's key non-farm payrolls data in the US that will provide a clearer snapshot of the world's top economy, dealers said. Meanwhile after his political triumph Wednesday, Trump can "fully concen-



**TOKYO:** A pedestrian walks past a stock indicator displaying share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo yesterday. Tokyo stocks closed more than two percent higher, boosted by record-setting advances on Wall Street on strong US economic data and hopes over containing the deadly new coronavirus. — AFP

trate on his (presidential) election campaign and he probably has a good chance to win a second term", noted Ipek Ozkardeskaya, senior analyst at online lender Swissquote Bank.

"The anticipation of a Trump win should continue boosting demand in US equities." In commodities, oil prices also extended a rebound as

investors bet on OPEC and other major producers led by Russia cutting output on fears the virus slashes crude demand.

Observers said kingpin Saudi Arabia was looking for a reduction of half a million barrels a day, with some reports saying twice that amount was possible. — AFP

## Qatar Airways bids to acquire RwandaAir stake

**DOHA:** Qatar Airways is negotiating to acquire 49 percent of RwandaAir, the national carrier of the central African nation, to cater for growing demand in Africa, its chief said Wednesday.

"It is a 49 percent stake that we are negotiating for in RwandaAir," the CEO of Qatar Airways, Baker al-Baker, told a press conference on the sidelines of an international aviation conference in Doha.

"The attraction of Kigali is its location, the stability of the country and the very favorable business environment that exists in that country," Baker said. With a small fleet of 12 aircraft, including two Airbus A330 and six Boeing 737, RwandaAir flies to 27 destinations across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. "In Africa, there is big demand for air travel and today Africa is very poorly connected so we always look at opportunities in our field for investment," Baker said.

Qatar's sovereign wealth fund is financing the expansion of Kigali Airport to raise its capacity to 10 million passengers a year, the Qatari official said. One of the world's fastest growing airlines, Qatar Airways has a fleet of 250 modern aircraft and flies to 160 destinations. The state-owned airline has been hit by an embargo slapped on Qatar since June 2017 by neighboring Gulf countries. In the fiscal year to March 2019, it posted a loss of \$639 million, in addition to a loss of \$69 million the previous year.

Despite the embargo, Qatar Airways has been trying to expand its foothold internationally. In January last year, it acquired a five-percent stake in China Southern Airlines, one of the Asian giant's three big carriers. Qatar Airways also owns a 20-percent stake in International Airlines Group, which holds British Airways under its umbrella, as well as shares in LATAM Airlines Group, Italy's Meridiana and Hong Kong-based Cathay Pacific. Baker also said Qatar Airways was still interested in investing in IndiGo, India's largest budget airline. — AFP

## Malaysian PM downplays AirAsia probe

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Receiving money to "offset" buying planes and equipment did not necessarily constitute bribery, Malaysia's prime minister said yesterday, days after AirAsia boss Tony Fernandes stepped aside temporarily in the wake of a \$4 billion Airbus graft scandal.

AirAsia founder and CEO Fernandes and company executive chairman Kamarudin Meranun deny allegations of misconduct, but have stepped aside after Airbus last week settled a court case in Europe which alleged the planemaker paid bribes to win contracts. Airbus agreed to pay \$4 billion in fines to regulators to settle the case, but the scandal was further illuminated by Britain's Serious Fraud Office (SFO) releasing the names of several airlines allegedly involved—including AirAsia and its long-haul unit AirAsia X.

AirAsia said Fernandes and Kamarudin would step aside temporarily while the issue is investigated further. Asked about the case, Malaysia Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said he

was not in a position to make any decision about it, but added: "Usually when the government purchases anything, we always ask for an 'offset'".

"If we get something for buying at a high price tag, why shouldn't we accept it?" he said at a press conference. "If the money that we receive goes into our pocket, then that is bribery. But if the money is for a specific reason, it is an 'offset', not bribery."

A French court last week said Airbus had agreed to pay 3.6 billion euros (\$4 billion) in fines to Britain, France and the United States to settle corruption

inquiries sparked by suspicious sales.

Court documents on the British SFO website said EADS France SAS—which was later renamed Airbus Group SAS—paid \$50 million as sponsorship for a sports team owned by two unnamed AirAsia executives. "Key decision-makers" in AirAsia and AirAsia X allegedly rewarded the firm with an order of 180 aircraft from Airbus, it said.

AirAsia is Airbus's biggest customer, but Fernandes and Kamarudin have denied their former Formula One team was involved in any bribery scandal. — AFP



**An AirAsia plane carrying Thai nationals who had been evacuated from Wuhan, the epicenter of the novel coronavirus outbreak, after it landed at U-Tapao Airport in Rayong. — AFP**



## Business

# China to halve tariffs on \$75bn of US imports

## Officials look to calm markets unnerved by deadly virus outbreak

**BEIJING:** China yesterday said it would halve tariffs on \$75 billion-worth of US imports as part of its trade truce with Washington and as officials look to calm markets unnerved by the deadly virus outbreak. The State Council Tariff Commission said the reductions would come in a month after Beijing and Washington signed a deal to dial down a long-running trade war that has hit the global economy. It also comes a day after Donald Trump hailed relations between the superpowers as the "best" ever in his State of the Union address, with observers saying Beijing was likely keen to get moving on the next phase of talks towards a wider agreement.

Levies of five and 10 percent on more than 1,700 items imposed in September will be cut from February 14, the same day Washington is expected to halve tariffs on \$120 billion worth of Chinese goods. Products affected include fresh seafood, poultry and soybeans as well as tungsten lamps for scientific and medical purposes, and some types of aircraft.

The move is aimed at "promoting the healthy and stable development of China-US economic and trade relations", the Commission said in a statement.

"To alleviate economic and trade friction, and expand cooperation in these areas, China has also made relevant adjustments," it added, referring to the US cuts. "We hope to work with the US towards the ultimate elimination of all increased tariffs."

The Commission also said it "hopes that both parties will be able to abide by their agreement, strive to implement its relevant content, (and) boost market confidence". Other retaliatory tariffs, however, remain in place.

The two in January signed a partial deal that eased tensions in their bruising trade war, with Beijing agreeing to buy an additional \$200 billion in US goods over the next two years. As part of the phase one deal, the US said it would halve its

tariffs on \$120 billion of Chinese goods to 7.5 percent, while Donald Trump called off additional levies that would have taken effect last December.

Yesterday's announcement comes as China grapples with a shortage of resources as it struggles to combat the coronavirus, which has claimed more than 560 lives and infected more than 28,000. On Tuesday, a top US trade official said the virus outbreak would delay Beijing's plans to buy goods from the US under the phase one deal. But Washington expects "minimal impact" from the virus on the US economy. China's outbreak has caused Beijing to impose travel restrictions across cities, with millions of consumers staying home during its otherwise busy Lunar New Year holiday. The crisis is expected to hammer China's already stuttering economy, as companies and factories delay the resumption of operations. Over the weekend, Beijing announced that US imports that can be used in its fight against the deadly virus will also be exempted from retaliatory tariffs imposed in the trade war.

### 'Sweet carrot'

AxiCorp chief market strategist Stephen Innes said the tariffs cut was a "small but rather a sweet carrot to dangle". "In the wake of the coronavirus economic tumult, it's not much of a stretch to assume China is eager to start the negotiations," he said.

Moody's Analytics economist Xu Xiaochun told AFP a reduction in tariffs "makes sense" as China is expected to import more US goods as part of the phase one deal.

But the timing might be more than a coincidence. "Perhaps it has got to do with market sentiment," he said, noting that the Shanghai Composite and Shenzhen Composite indexes fell Monday when markets reopened after the recent holiday and reacted for the first time to the outbreak.—AFP



**NANTONG, China:** A worker wearing a protective facemask transfers bags of chemical fertilizer that will be exported at a port in Nantong in China's eastern Jiangsu province. China yesterday said it would halve tariffs on \$75 billion-worth of US imports as part of its trade truce with Washington. —AFP



## Financial Results for 2019

The Board of Directors of National Mobile Telecommunication Company K.S.C.P (Ooredoo) is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company achieved a consolidated Net Profit attributable to shareholders of **KD 30.1 million**, translating to an earnings per share of **60 fils** for the year 2019. The revenue for 2019 reached to **KD 633.5 million**, compared with KD 665.0 million in the same period of 2018.

The Board of Directors takes this opportunity to express their gratitude and appreciation to NMTC (Ooredoo) shareholders, customers and to all our employees for their continuous efforts.

### Customer Base

**2019**  
**26.1**  
Million  
Customers

### Revenue

**2019**  
**633.5**  
KD Million

### Net Profit to NMTC

**2019**  
**30.1**  
KD Million



## Business

# Britain eyes early free trade pact with Australia after leaving EU

## Britain takes 3% of Australia's goods and services

**SYDNEY/LONDON:** British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab hopes a free trade deal with Australia will be one of the first such pacts to be secured, now that Britain has left the European Union, he said yesterday.

After formally leaving the EU on Jan. 31, Britain entered a transition period that allows it to negotiate future ties with Brussels and begin talks with other major economies, such as the United States and Japan. "We have a trade relationship already worth 17 billion pounds, but we have the potential to do so much more," Raab told reporters in the Australian capital of Canberra. The figure is equivalent to \$22 billion.

"Australia hopefully will be part of that first wave of high priority deals that we are pursuing," added Raab, speaking after he met Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne.

Neither Raab nor Payne gave any timetable for the start of free trade talks. Australia is in the midst of talks with the EU for a trade deal, but Payne said the talks with Brussels would not slow the progress of a British deal. Although Australia has strong ties with Britain as a former colony, the trading relationship has waned significantly over the last 50 years.

Britain now takes just 3 percent of Australia's exports, while China takes nearly 40 percent. Britain's entry into the Common

Market in 1973 was widely considered a betrayal in Australia, upending decades of tradition and a host of tariff deals. Supporters of Britain's exit have argued, however, that "family ties" with Commonwealth members, such as Australia, could compensate for the partial loss of Europe's 444 million customers.

During his two-day visit to Australia, Raab will also meet Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Trade Minister Simon Birmingham. Talks are expected to focus on trade, but Britain's decision to allot a limited role for Chinese telecoms giant Huawei in building its 5G network could also be discussed.

The world's biggest producer of telecoms equipment faces intense scrutiny in the West over its relationship with the Chinese government and accusations of enabling state espionage, with the United States urging allies not to use its technology.

Although no evidence has been produced publicly and Huawei has denied the claims, the accusations have prompted several Western countries, including Australia, to curb the firm's access to their markets. In January, Britain said high-risk vendors would be excluded from the sensitive core of networks, and there would be a 35 percent cap on their involvement in the non-sensitive parts. — Reuters



**CANBERRA:** Australia's Foreign Minister Marise Payne (right) talks to Britain's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab (left) prior to their bilateral meeting at Parliament House in Canberra yesterday. Raab is on a two-day official visit to hold talks on bilateral issues with Australian officials. — AFP

## Societe Generale profit slumps, abandons target

**PARIS:** Net profit slumped at Societe Generale last year as it paid the price of restructuring efforts and the French bank dropped yesterday a key profit target. The 21 percent fall in net earnings to 3.25 billion euros (\$3.58 billion) was less than the 3.43 billion euros consensus forecast of analysts surveyed by financial news firm Bloomberg.

Meanwhile net banking income—a measure of what a bank is earning from lending operations after paying interest to depositors—dipped 2.1 percent to 24.7 billion euros.

Moreover, the bank abandoned the target it had set of attaining a return on tangible equity (ROTE) of 9 to 10 percent by the end of 2020. Instead, it said it now only aims to improve the indicator which stood at 7.6 percent at the end of 2019. ROTE was at 9.7 percent in 2018.

Last year the bank began a deep restructuring of its Global Banking and Investor Solutions unit to focus on its most profitable areas, pledging to sell off billions of assets. This weighed on earnings as the bank took 409 million in charges as it carried out the plan, and

the selling-off of operations translated into a reduction of revenues. But it helped Societe Generale increase over the year its CET1 ratio—a key measure of the capital it can call upon in case of a crisis—from 10.9 to 12.7 percent.

Meanwhile the bank was able to cut costs and activity remained solid in many of its business lines, but the ultra-low interest rates in the eurozone continued to weigh on its traditional retail banking operations in France. The bank's chief executive Frederic Oudea highlighted the "considerable progress" the bank achieved in restructuring in 2019.

Fourth quarter results were encouraging, with operating and net earnings both rising from the same period in 2018 when exceptional items are removed.

"We are therefore entering 2020 with confidence, with a more compact business model based on leadership positions in high added-value businesses and a presence in buoyant geographical regions," he said in an earnings statement. Societe Generale shares climbed 1.3 percent in early trading, with the blue-chip CAC 40 index in Paris rising 0.7 percent. — AFP

## EU trade chief Hogan returns to Washington as auto tariffs loom

**BRUSSELS:** European Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan returned to Washington yesterday for talks with US counterpart Robert Lighthizer designed to improve transatlantic ties as the threat of auto tariffs looms. Hogan first visited the United States as EU trade chief three weeks ago, declaring at the time that the European Union's bid to reset EU-US economic relations had got off to a good start.

However, US President Donald Trump said after meeting European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen in Davos a week later that he would impose tariffs on imports of cars from the European Union if no trade deal were struck. Hogan had been due to address a conference on the digital economy in Brussels yesterday morning, but abruptly changed his plans.

A European Commission spokesman said Hogan would hold talks in Washington with a number of US administration officials, including Lighthizer. "These meetings are part of the regular bilateral contacts being held at technical and political level in the framework of the discussions for a positive bilateral transatlantic trade agenda, launched by the European Union and the United States in July 2018," the spokesman said.

In July 2018, Trump agreed to hold off on im-

posing car tariffs while Washington and Brussels discussed ways to improve economic ties. The EU has since agreed to boost imports of soybeans, liquefied natural gas and beef from the United States. — Reuters



**European Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan**



## Business

# India's RBI keeps interest rates on hold as inflation skyrockets

## Govt budget raises little hope for a revival of economy

**MUMBAI:** India's central bank kept interest rates on hold yesterday due to soaring inflation, even as the government's annual budget announcement last week raised little hope of an economic revival.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the benchmark repo rate—the level at which it lends to commercial banks—would remain unchanged at 5.15 percent, a nine-year low. Inflation in Asia's third-largest economy surged to 7.35 percent in December, far above the four percent target set by the bank's monetary policy committee (MPC), and driven up by a rise in the price of onions and other essential items. "The outlook for inflation is highly uncertain at this juncture. On the other hand economic activity remains subdued... Given the evolving growth inflation dynamics, MPC felt it appropriate to maintain status quo," the central bank said in a statement.

A survey of analysts by Bloomberg predicted the central bank would avoid cutting rates. The bank added that the outbreak of coronavirus in China had also affected global growth prospects.

Analysts had hoped Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget announcement last Saturday would help kickstart the economy, but the absence of any major reforms dashed those expectations. The government instead elected to relax its fiscal deficit target for the current financial year to 3.8 percent of GDP from a previous 3.3 percent in order to accommodate increased spending.

The central bank raised its growth projections for financial year 2020-21 to 6.0 percent from a December estimate of 5.0 percent, in line with New Delhi's belief that a recovery remains imminent.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's right-wing government has



**CHENNAI:** Women plant paddy sprouting in a field set up at a village Culture Fair in Chennai yesterday. — AFP photos

been trying desperately to revive the economy, which has flagged for several quarters, with per capita consumption falling for the first time in four decades. Growth for the September-ended quarter came in at 4.5 percent, the lowest in six years, and sharply below the 7.0 percent level recorded a year earlier.

That is well below the level needed to provide the jobs



**The MG Motor eMG6 plug-in hybrid version car is displayed on stage at the Auto Expo 2020 at Greater Noida on the outskirts of New Delhi yesterday.**

sought by 1.2 million entrants to the labour market every month, posing a major headache for Modi.

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das—a Modi ally—cut interest rates five times in a row starting in February 2019, bringing them down by 135 basis points. But India's banks, saddled with bad loans, have failed to pass on these benefits to consumers. — AFP

## US warns energy firms like Rosneft, Chevron over ties to Maduro

**WASHINGTON:** The Trump administration is ramping up pressure against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government, and energy companies with ties to it, from Russia's Rosneft to US-based Chevron Corp, should "tread cautiously," a senior administration official said on Wednesday.

The comments came in response to a question about possible sanctions against Rosneft on a call with reporters ahead of a White House meeting between Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido and US President Donald Trump. "Everything is an option as regards creating pressure, whether it's towards Russian entities that are supporting Maduro or others. So, absolutely, that ... remains on the table," the official said, emphasizing that the administration was "concerned" by more than just Rosneft's behavior.

"Whether it's Rosneft, whether it's Reliance, whether it's Repsol, whether it's Chevron here in the United States, I would tread cautiously towards their activities in Venezuela that are in support, directly or indirectly, of the Maduro dictatorship because ... we're halfway through our maximum pressure campaign," he added. Rosneft, India's Reliance Industries, Spain's Repsol and Chevron did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

But some company executives were surprised by the tone of the remarks, since the US government has not taken action since it threatened oil firms dealing with Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A., or PDVSA, in August, sources told Reuters. Rosneft, Reliance, Repsol and Chevron have emerged as the

main business partners for PDVSA since the United States imposed the steepest sanctions yet on the state-owned Venezuelan company last year.

Most of them share oilfields with PDVSA in Venezuela, and they also act as intermediaries for sales of Venezuelan oil to markets such as Asia. In 2019, Rosneft was the main receiver of Venezuelan oil, followed by China National Petroleum Corp - which suspended direct purchases from PDVSA, Cuba's Cubametale and Reliance, according to PDVSA's internal documents and Refinitiv Eikon data.

Washington imposed a first round of sanctions on PDVSA a year ago, depriving the state-run firm of its main market, the United States. In August, it announced new sanctions targeting non-US firms buying Venezuelan oil.

### Very significant consequences

The official also warned against any interference by the Maduro government in Guaido's trip back to Venezuela. "Any harm that may be caused on Juan Guaido on his return to Venezuela will have very significant consequences," the official said. Guaido, president of the opposition-held National Assembly, is recognized as Venezuela's rightful president by dozens of countries including the United States.

He was a guest at Tuesday's State of the Union address, when Trump, a Republican, praised him as a "very brave man who carries with him the hopes, dreams and aspirations of all Venezuelans." Guaido received a standing ovation from Democratic and Republican members of the US Congress.

The senior administration official also described "good momentum" since Maduro's party failed to wrest control of the national assembly from Guaido last month, and said there would be some "impactful measures" within the next 30 days to further cripple Maduro's rule. The only possible topic up for negotiation with Maduro's government was a discussion of "certain guarantees" upon his exit, the person added. — Reuters

## Eurozone demand slump hits German industrial orders

**FRANKFURT:** New orders at German industrial firms slid in December, official data showed yesterday, driven entirely by plunging demand from the country's eurozone neighbors.

Overall, new business for manufacturing firms fell back 2.1 percent month-on-month in seasonally-adjusted figures, statistics authority Destatis said, disappointing analysts who had foreseen a 0.6 percent lift. A breakdown of the data showed that while domestic orders rose by 1.4 percent and those from non-eurozone countries gained 2.1 percent, eurozone demand tumbled 13.9 percent.

"Incoming orders have progressed more weakly in the past months, marked by developments in the capital goods sector," the economy ministry in Berlin said in a statement, adding that volatile large orders for items such as aircraft had had a particularly large impact in December.

Looking forward, while "confidence among businesses has recently improved, overall the outlook for industrial growth remains muted," the ministry added. Looking at sector-by-sector figures, makers of capital goods and consumer goods both reported falls of almost four percent in new orders in December, while producer goods makers added 1.4 percent.

Compared to December 2018, the volume of new industrial orders was 8.7 percent lower. "2019 was not only the worst year for industrial orders since 2008, it was also the first time since 2002 that German order books shrank for two years in a row," ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski said. — AFP



# Ibaka sparks Raptors over Pacers for 12th straight win

**LOS ANGELES:** Spanish center Serge Ibaka scored a season-high 30 points and powered the defending NBA champion Toronto Raptors to a club-record 12th consecutive triumph on Wednesday by beating Indiana 119-118. The 30-year-old Congo-born big man sank a go-ahead 3-pointer with 30 seconds remaining to cap a game-ending 11-0 Raptors run as the Raptors rallied from a 19-point third-quarter deficit. "The key is we keep our composure during the game. We just didn't give up. We kept digging and digging," Ibaka said.

"We have the mindset of 'Don't give up.' We don't point the fingers when things go bad. We stay together and I think that's what makes us special." Raptors guard Kyle Lowry scored 32 points, passed out 10 assists and grabbed eight rebounds while Cameroonian star Pascal Siakam added 25 points and nine rebounds for the reigning NBA champions. Toronto, which trailed 69-50 early in the third quarter, improved the third-best record in the NBA to 37-14.

Ibaka, who won his first NBA title with Toronto last year in his 10th league campaign, was bolstered by Raptors coach Nick Nurse to keep firing 3-pointers even though he was only 1-for-7 from beyond the arc until hitting the decider. "I missed a couple open threes earlier. Coach told me keep shooting with confidence and moving the ball," Ibaka said. "That gave me

a lot of confidence." Nurse likes what he has seen lately from Ibaka, saying: "He is getting better. He has been really good. He's way more than pick, pop and shoot."

Paul George and reserve guard Landry Shamet each scored 23 points to lead eight double-figure scorers from the Los Angeles Clippers in a 128-111 home victory over Miami. Heat star forward Jimmy Butler left after scoring 11 points in 26 minutes with a strained right shoulder. Serbian center Nikola Jokic's triple double of 30 points, 21 rebounds and 10 assists sparked the Denver Nuggets over host Utah 98-95, although Jamal Murray led the visitors with 31 points. Jokic hit a go-ahead jumper with 59 seconds remaining and Murray sank two free throws with five seconds to play while Utah's Bojan Bogdanovic missed a 3-pointer at the final buzzer. Jayson Tatum netted 33 points and grabbed eight rebounds to lead the Boston Celtics over visiting Orlando 116-100. Frenchman Evan Fournier led the Magic with 26 points. Atlanta All-Star guard Trae Young scored 32 points and passed off 11 assists to power the Atlanta Hawks over host Minnesota 127-120, dealing the Timberwolves a 13th consecutive defeat.

German guard Dennis Schroder scored 30 points off the bench to power Oklahoma City over visiting Cleveland 109-103. Andre Drummond scored 31 points and grabbed 19 rebounds



**TORONTO:** Serge Ibaka #9 of the Toronto Raptors drives to the basket during a game against the Indiana Pacers on February 5, 2020 at the Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

while Reggie Jackson added 25 points to lead Detroit over visiting Phoenix 116-108. Brooklyn's Caris Levert had 23 points and eight assists in the Nets' 129-88 rout of visiting Golden State.

Ja Morant's 21 points led six double-digit scorers for Memphis in a 121-107 victory at Dallas, while Latvian center Kristaps Porzingis had 32 points and 12 rebounds in a losing cause.—AFP

## Chiefs celebrate Super Bowl title with parade, rally

**WASHINGTON:** Kansas City Chiefs players and coaches celebrated their Super Bowl victory over San Francisco with supporters on Wednesday with a two-mile downtown parade and pep rally. "This is the most beautiful scene I've ever witnessed in my life," Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce said. "I love this city to death. I promise you from here to the end, I cherish every moment with y'all and I promise you everybody here feels the exact same way."

The Chiefs won their first Super Bowl title in 50 years on Sunday by rallying in the fourth quarter to defeat the San Francisco 49ers 31-20. Kelce, whose older brother Jason gave a popular speech two years ago when the Philadelphia Eagles celebrated their Super Bowl triumph over New England, drew huge cheers for his emotional speech.

"I'm wearing about half the beers I've been trying to drink," Kelce said. "It has been a long time coming. We had to fight for our right to party." Chiefs coach Andy Reid, who captured his first NFL crown, was praised by Kelce for waiting 21 years for the victory. "That's how long this has been turning for my guy Andy Reid....and what did we do? We unleashed a can of whoopass on everybody," Kelce said. Reid told the crowd that they should prepare for a similar jubilant bash in 2021. "Next year, we're coming right back here," Reid said. "One more time baby."—AFP

## Hair-raising barbs and Blues blows: 5 Super Rugby talking points

**WELLINGTON:** Wellington Hurricanes travel to Buenos Aires to face the Jaguares this weekend after a drubbing in Cape Town, while the Auckland Blues have a mini-injury crisis just a week into the new campaign. Here are five talking points ahead of this weekend's second round of the Super Rugby 2020 season:

### Stormers in eye of a Hurricane

The Wellington Hurricanes have reminded Western Stormers about people in a "glass house" not throwing stones, after the South African side's coach John Dobson raised hackles by saying the Hurricanes had indulged in hair-pulling and cheap shots in Cape Town last weekend. The Stormers crushed the Canes 27-0 in a match that included two yellow cards for the visitors and an off-the-ball tackle that left World Cup winning Springboks captain Siya Kolisi with a torn knee ligament.

"Pieter-Steph (du Toit) went through quite a hard time (and) there was one movement where Seabelo Senatla's hair is pulled twice. We weren't happy with that game at all, lots of stuff happened on the field," said Dobson. But Hurricanes assistant coach Chris Gibbes hit back in Buenos Aires, where his side play the Jaguares next. "It's a pretty big glass house there to be honest," he said. "There are a few clips that we've looked at -

TJ (Perenara) getting tackled off the ball, head shots and guys getting their head hit. "I don't know where he's coming from with that. He's entitled to his opinion, but it's a bit surprising, and a bit disappointing," said Gibbes.

### Injuries sting the Blues

The luckless Auckland Blues have been dealt a triple injury blow after their opening defeat to Waikato Chiefs, including a broken hand for All Blacks winger Rieko Ioane. The Blues have been bottom of the New Zealand conference for the past six seasons but looked much-improved in the 29-37 loss to the Chiefs. But it came at a cost and the Blues said Ioane, who scored two tries, will be sidelined "for several weeks". Hooker Ray Niuia suffered a season-ending knee injury that will require surgery while prop Alex Hodgman tore a calf muscle. The depleted Blues face the NSW Waratahs in Newcastle tomorrow.

### Rebels pack pays the price

Melbourne Rebels coach Dave Wessels has reshaped his forwards pack ahead of facing the ACT Brumbies this weekend after admitting his team "let each other down" in their shock opening 36-27 defeat to Japan's Sunwolves in Fukuoka. Wessels complained the Rebels were "a good team that played badly". "We feel like we have let each other

down to be honest and that's a good thing, maybe we didn't have enough of that last week." He defiantly added that "Super Rugby is not won in round one" as he axed two-thirds of his front row, with Matt Gibbon coming in for Fereti Sa'aga and Ruan Smith taking over from Jermaine Ainsley while experienced former Brumbies and Waratahs flanker Michael Wells takes over at number seven from Rob Leota.

### Rare win, Sunwolves style

Japan's Sunwolves sit atop the Australian conference after one week of their farewell season in Super Rugby, but a quirk of the fixture list means their multicultural squad will lose the chance to keep the momentum going this week as they have a bye. It's pity for the hastily-cobbled together squad who fielded only three Japanese players in the starting side as they shocked the fancied the Melbourne Rebels 36-27 in Fukuoka last weekend. They made up the numbers with a committed band of nomads from Australia, England, New Zealand, South Africa, Tonga and Georgia who had trained together for less than a month. "We only assembled four weeks ago," said Australian-born Jake Schatz, captain of the perennial strugglers who recorded only two wins in the whole of the 2019 campaign among a total of eight wins since joining in 2016.—AFP



## Sports

# French sports minister urges abuse victims to speak up

**PARIS:** French Sports minister Roxana Maracineanu yesterday urged abuse victims to speak up after a series of rape and sexual aggression allegations in figure skating. French prosecutors launched a preliminary investigation on Tuesday into former figure skating coach Gilles Beyer for the alleged rape of a minor and sexual aggression.

Former figure skater Sarah Abitbol, a bronze medallist with partner Stephane Bernadis at the 2000 world championships, recently published a book in which she said Beyer had raped her multiple times from 1990 to 1992. In a statement to Agence France Presse, Beyer admitted to "intimate" and "inappropriate" relations with Abitbol. He could not be reached for comment. Maracineanu told reporters at Global Sports Week in Paris that she was "launching a solemn appeal to all victims, past and present, to speak up so that we can find the offenders and prosecute them."

She added that she wanted children to be able to practice sport safely. Three other skaters have said they were sexually assaulted by former coaches, prompting Maracineanu to ask ice sports federation president Didier Gailhaguet to resign. Gailhaguet has been president of the FFSG since 1998, with a hiatus between 2004-

07. He has said he made mistakes, but that he was "not at fault." "This is a serious situation. Educators, athletes, associations, we all need to face the problem and find a solution together," said Maracineanu.

Tony Estanguet, the head of the Paris 2024 Olympics organizing committee, said they would guarantee a safe games for children. "It is time to draw conclusions from what has been happening. It is serious, it is shocking and it puts the whole system at risk," Estanguet told reporters. "Everyone must take their responsibilities." French athletes on Tuesday wrote in a letter published by Le Parisien newspaper that it was time to "break the wall of silence" around sexual abuse in sport.

Double Olympic champion Judoka Teddy Riner, former skater Nathalie Pechalat and four-times X Games gold medalist Ophelie David were among those to sign the letter. Estanguet promised measures would be taken ahead of Paris 2024. "We will commit to having a safe event," he said. "We will check that every person who has access to athletes will go through a thorough background check to make sure they have no record or that they're not a liability. It will allow us to guarantee the safety of the athletes."—Reuters

## McDowell eyes another Pebble Beach victory after the Saudi title

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Ten years after winning his only major title at Pebble Beach, Graeme McDowell returns to the seaside California layout coming off a victory in Saudi Arabia and hungry for more. The 40-year-old from Northern Ireland, who won the 2010 US Open at Pebble Beach, seeks his first victory on US soil since 2013 this week at the Pebble Beach Pro-Am, played over three Northern California courses.

"It's a fun week, but at the same time I'm here to try and continue to play well," McDowell said. "Feel like the game is certainly trending in the right direction and obviously would love to have a nice week this week." McDowell won last week's Saudi International title, defeating defending champion Dustin Johnson by two strokes to capture his first European Tour title since 2014 and jump from 104th to 47th in the world rankings.

"The win last week was important at a lot of levels, just to get me back up the rankings, get me back in a couple of the WGC events, which is really important, the major championships, and get me back in the right direction again, so very pleasing," McDowell said. "Ticked a lot of boxes and hopefully I can use it as a springboard to kick on for a big year, big season ahead."

McDowell recalled how it felt to win his first major title a decade ago at Pebble Beach, which along with Spyglass Hill and Monterey Peninsula courses will host the first three

rounds. Sunday's final round after the cut will be at Pebble Beach. "Lots of great memories," McDowell said. "Probably coming up the last and just having that two putts from 25 feet to win a US Open—you visualize that as a kid standing on the putting green and then all of a sudden you're like, 'I've got two to win a major championship here.'"

"So just special memories. And obviously, kick started a pretty amazing five or six years of my career. Can't believe it's going to be 10 years in June, but a lot of good stuff has happened. "Excited to be kicking back up into the top-50 in the world. And one of my big goals is get myself back up in the top-20 and have a chance to experience that back nine at a major championship again with a chance to win. So that's really the goals for the next three or four years."

US left-hander Phil Mickelson, who turns 50 in June, claimed his fifth Pebble Beach crown and 44th career US PGA title last year. The 72nd-ranked five-time major winner makes his 24th career start at Pebble Beach. "I believe I can play at an extremely high level. I just need to show it," Mickelson said. "Physically, I'm swinging the club better, more on plane, striking it more solid, hitting the ball longer, swinging the club faster than I have in many, many years. "But there's a lot more to winning than just hitting bombs. I'm trying to put all those pieces together and I'm enjoying the challenge."—AFP



Alejandro Canizares

## Canizares sets pace at pioneering Australia golf tournament

**GEELONG:** Spain's Alejandro Canizares blitzed a nine-under-par 63 to top the leaderboard among the men yesterday while in-form Swede Madelene Sagstrom shared the women's spoils at an innovative tournament in Australia. The Vic Open is the only event in the world with male and female fields teeing off, in alternate groups, on the same course and for equal prize money. It has been running as a dual event for seven years. But the tournament took on added significance last year with the European Tour and the US-based LPGA Tour jointly sanctioning it for the first time, with prize money significantly boosted.

Played at the 13th Beach Golf Links south of Melbourne, Canizares fired 10 birdies to one bogey in his 63 to be two ahead of a chasing pack of four Australians—Matt Griffin, Travis Smyth, Jake McLeod and Justin Warren. "I putted really well. It was one of those days where you saw the hole pretty big," said Canizares. Sagstrom shares top spot in the women's field after a 65, matching South Korea's

Kang Haeji and Taiwan's Peiyun Chien.

The Swede, who claimed her first LPGA win two weeks ago in the United States, started with six birdies in her first seven holes before breaking a run of pars with birdies at each of the last three. "I think after my first win it definitely added confidence to everything, just knowing that I can compete out here, knowing that I can win on tour," she said. Incredibly, two strokes behind is English veteran Laura Davis, who has been on tour for 35 years but was playing her first event in six months after taking time off to look after her ailing mother.

"That's the best I've putted in 20 years," said the 56-year-old, who has 87 worldwide victories to her name. "I don't know how many putts I had, but it wasn't many. "This might even be my favorite tournament," she added. To accommodate the dual fields, there are two cuts—one as usual after round two, and another reducing the men's and women's fields to 35 players after 54 holes. —AFP



# Kuwait volleyball team to face Oman's Al-Seeb team

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait sports club volleyball team will meet Oman's Al-Seeb team in the third round of the 37th Gulf Champion Clubs Championship which is hosted by Kuwait Club until February 10. This match will be preceded by a match between UAE's Al-Ain with Qatar's Police, followed by a match between Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal and Bahrain's Dar Kulaib.

## Kuwait Club lost

Kuwait's team lost to Qatar's police 3-0 during their match on Wednesday during the second round with the scores of (20-25, 20-25, 17-25). The match was at a medium level. The Qatar's team had a well organized attack as well as good smashing and blocking skills. Kuwait players attempted to confront the strength and experience Qataris, but all to no avail. Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal had its second victory against UAE's Al-Ain 3-0 (25-19, 25-19, 25-21), while Bahrain's Dar Kulaib recovered from their loss to the Qatari team by beating Al-Seeb 3-0 (25-18, 25-21, 25-23). Qatar's police top the table - followed by Al-Hilal with 6 points each; Dar Kulaib grabbed third while Kuwait took the fourth position with Al-Seeb fifth and Al-Ain on the sixth.

Kuwait team is required to recover from their loss to Qatar's police in order to compete for top positions in case the two front runners suffer setbacks in the remaining rounds. Kuwait's coach Khalid Baleid said "we still have hope. The loss does not mean we are out of the competition".



## Kuwait Stars wins 3rd match against Lebanon Cedars

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Stars ice hockey team won a decisive match against Lebanon's Cedars Club 5-2 on Wednesday, their third consecutive win in the first Kuwaiti open Championship for Arab clubs, in which six sides are participating. Meanwhile, UAE Thebes won a deserved victory in the championship, at the expense of its Saudi counterpart, Jeddah (5-1), to confirm the Emiratis' determination to compete strongly for the title. On another front, Egypt Pharaohs succeeded in beating its Bahraini counterpart, Bahrain (5-4). The Egyptians achieved their first victory in the championship, while the Bahraini team remained without any victory after receiving its third loss. —KUNA

## 'NCM Premier League' Cricket Tournament

**KUWAIT:** As part of corporate social responsibility initiative towards the society, NCM Investment Company (NCM) is hosting "NCM Premier League" T20 Cricket Tournament during the auspicious occasion of HALA February Kuwait.

Tournament will start tomorrow with opening ceremony at 1pm at Sulaibiya Sea side UPL ground and will conclude with Final match on the 7th of March 2020. The league tournament will have eight corporate teams from various sectors. Teams will be distributed in two groups in a T20 league format, facing each other's. This initiative is to encourage everyone to attend and participate through this cheerful and competitive event as NCM Investment supports the never-ending benefits and importance of sports in our lives.



# NCM PREMIER LEAGUE T20 TOURNAMENT

STARTS FROM 8TH FEB 2020

8 TEAMS WILL BE PLAYING IN 2 GROUPS  
EACH TEAM WILL PLAY 3 MATCHES FROM EACH GROUP  
2 SEMI FINALS AND FINAL

## 1st Winner

Prize & Trophy



## 2nd Runnerup

Prize & Trophy

**Man Of The Match For All Games**

**TROPHIES & PRIZE FOR FOLLOWING**  
WINNER & RUNNERUP FOR FINAL  
BEST BATSMAN & BOWLER OF THE LEAGUE

\*FOR FURTHER TOURNAMENT DETAILS REFER RULE BOOK





**KUWAIT:** Rafael Nadal of Spain (right) holds his trophy after winning an exhibition game against compatriot David Ferrer, to inaugurate the Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait, at Shaikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex in the Kuwaiti capital on February 5, 2020. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



**KUWAIT:** Rafael Nadal of Spain signs autographs for fans after an exhibition game to inaugurate the Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait.

# Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Tennis complex launched

## Rafa Nadal Academy inaugurated in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex located in Al-Zahraa has been inaugurated and Rafa Nadal Academy at the facility was launched on Wednesday. It is the largest tennis academy in the Middle East launched under the patronage of Kuwait Tennis Federation Honorary President Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

This came during a ceremony to open the complex and launch the academy in the presence of National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General of Public Authority for Sport Humoud Flaiteh and his deputy Saqar Al-Mulla, Hawalli Governor Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Sabah and a

number of Sheikhs, officials and dignitaries.

The ceremony witnessed an exhibition match held between Spain's Rafael Nadal and his fellow challenger David Ferrer. Nadal won 19 titles at the four Grand Slam championships. Speaking in a statement on the sidelines of the ceremony, Jabri said that the academy would contribute to improving and reviving grass-roots tennis in Kuwait through training players and national teams under the supervision of well-experienced trainers.

This will help make further sports achievements and disseminating the game on the local level, he added. The academy would be a key sport edifice as it is the only branch of the main facility in Spain, he noted. It will help attract a new generation to make Kuwait a hub for the game on the regional level, and raise awareness on this game, he pointed out.

Meanwhile, President of Arab and Kuwait Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said, in his opening speech, that the academy would allure players and the lovers of the game in Kuwait. The edifice is fruit of partnership between the public and private sectors and in line with His Highness the Amir's 'New Kuwait Vision 2035' vision that will help place Kuwait on the global map of tennis.

Furthermore, Mohammad Al-Marzouq, Chairman of Tamdeen Group, which launched the academy in cooperation with the main academy in Spain, said the aim of this facility is to prepare a promising generation of players and developing their talents to be champions. He added cooperation with the academy in Spain would boost and develop the game in Kuwait and the Middle East region.

The ceremony also involved some perform-

ances of the Kuwaiti national team juniors. The complex includes 18 tennis courts, the inside main court accommodates 5000 spectators, while the outside one's capacity is 1500. The complex also contains a hotel with 300 rooms, and special utilities for tennis as well as Kuwait Tennis Federation's headquarters. The complex will host the first championship next April, as part of the third Gulf sports games.

The facility, built on an area of 70,000 square meters, contains several utilities and services regarding the game. The courts are well equipped in line with world-class standards. The Kuwait Tennis Federation, in co-operation with the academy, is set to organize local tournaments to benefit national teams to take part in international events and raise Kuwait's status in international arenas. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Rafael Nadal of Spain returns the ball to retired compatriot David Ferrer (unseen) during an exhibition game.





Sports

# Mueller shines; Bayern squeeze into German Cup quarter-finals

**BERLIN:** Thomas Mueller weighed in with a goal and an assist as holders Bayern Munich edged a 4-3 thriller with Hoffenheim on Wednesday to reach the German Cup quarter-finals. Mueller's golden run continued at the Allianz Arena to leave him with seven goals and nine assists in the 14 games since Hansi Flick replaced Niko Kovac as coach last November. Not to be outdone, Mueller's strike partner Robert Lewandowski claimed two goals in the third-round tie.

However, Hoffenheim's Israeli forward Munas Dabbur caused Bayern a few nervous moments with two late goals as the visitors threatened a fightback from 4-1 down. "In the second half, we gave too much ball away and let them come back into the game," admitted Bayern winger Serge Gnabry. "We have to look at that, however we had a lot of fun going forward in attack." It was Mueller who had calmed Bayern's early nerves, forcing an own goal from Benjamin Huebner to equalize after Bayern defender Jerome Boateng had turned the ball into his own net.

Mueller then gave Bayern a 2-1 lead before Lewandowski netted either side of half-time to extend their lead before Hoffenheim's late fightback. Bayern are the biggest name into the last eight after RB Leipzig and Borussia Dortmund both crashed out on Tuesday to Eintracht Frank-

furt and Werder Bremen respectively.

After Lewandowski had an early goal disallowed for offside, Hoffenheim threatened an upset when Boateng turned a shot by Hoffenheim winger Ihlas Bebou into his own net on eight minutes. However, the lead lasted just five minutes. Canadian winger Alphonso Davies crossed to Mueller in the middle, but the ball clipped the knee of Huebner and looped into the net.

Bayern were 2-1 up on 20 minutes when David Alaba's cross found Mueller and the Germany star fired home from close range. Lewandowski then pounced when Hoffenheim goalkeeper Philipp Pentke failed to claim a high ball under pressure from Mueller. The Poland striker was on hand to head the stray ball into an empty net on 36 minutes and appeared to have settled the matter with a well-taken fourth goal after the break.

Lewandowski has scored in all four of Bayern's matches so far in 2020 and boasts a season tally of 35 goals in 29 games in all competitions. Union Berlin are also through after seeing off fourth-tier minnows Verl with a 1-0 win thanks to a late goal by midfielder Robert Andrich. A goal by Argentinean striker Lucas Alario helped Bayer Leverkusen to a 2-1 win at second-division side VfB Stuttgart.— AFP



**MUNICH:** Hoffenheim's midfielder Christoph Baumgartner and Bayern Munich's German defender Jerome Boateng vie for the ball during the German Cup (DFB Pokal) round of 16 football match on February 5, 2020. — AFP

<div>Live</div> <div>Matches on TV</div> <div>(Local Timings)</div>		
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Deportivo Alaves v SD Eibar		23:00
beIN SPORTS		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
AS Roma v Bologna FC		22:45
beIN SPORTS		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Eintracht Frankfurt v FC Augsburg		22:30
beIN SPORTS		
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Angers SCO v LOSC Lille		22:45
beIN SPORTS		

## Betis return recalls pain and glory for Barcelona's coach

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona visit Real Betis in La Liga on Sunday as coach Quique Setien returns to the club which catapulted him to fame only to cut him loose after a bitter fallout. Setien was seen as a surprise choice to succeed Ernesto Valverde at Barcelona last month and was also an unexpected hire when he took over Betis in the summer of 2017, going on to have a successful yet divisive two-year reign at the Seville club.

He achieved the highest win percentage of any Betis coach in the top-flight and oversaw some spectacular displays, including stunning away victories at Barca, rivals Sevilla, AC Milan plus successive wins at Real Madrid for the first time since 1934. Yet his undying devotion to possession football began to alienate fans in the latter half of his second season as results dried up and Betis were thrashed by Leganes

and Levante. At the team's lowest ebb, the club's most vocal supporters refused to enter the stadium for a game against Espanyol, protesting outside with a banner reading 'Setien, take your ego out of our club'. Despite beating Real Madrid on the last day of the season, Setien was sacked by Betis with a year left on his contract. The 61-year-old spent over seven months out of work and was walking among cows in a village when he got the call from Barcelona.

His short time with the champions, however, has been far from smooth. Barca have fallen three points behind Real Madrid in the title race after a defeat to Valencia and captain Lionel Messi appears to be at loggerheads with sporting director Eric Abidal. The coach is also short on personnel, with forwards Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele ruled out for the rest of the season and influential defender Gerard Pique suspended for Sunday's game against Betis, who are 12th in the standings.

Setien, however, says he has no regrets. "When you arrive at a club like this you expect things to happen and for them to be amplified," he told reporters on Wednesday. "I'm convinced we can keep moving forward on the pitch." Elsewhere in La Liga, leaders Real Madrid visit Osasuna, who have only lost two home league games since April 2018, while Atletico Madrid will be seeking a reaction to last week's derby defeat to Real when they host Granada. — Reuters

## Payet dedicates win to Marseille's fans

**PARIS:** Dimitri Payet scored a brilliant goal as second-placed Marseille claimed a 2-0 victory at Saint-Etienne on Wednesday to cut the gap to Ligue 1 leaders Paris Saint-Germain back to 12 points although hundreds of their diehard fans were stopped from watching the game. Andre Villas-Boas' Marseille opened up a six-point lead over third-placed Rennes, who lost 1-0 at Lille on Tuesday, by bouncing back from successive goalless stalemates against Bordeaux and Angers.

The match was delayed by 15 minutes after clashes be-

tween the two sets of fans outside the Stade Geoffroy-Guichard. According to firefighters and the Saint-Etienne prosecutors' office, there were no injuries or arrests. However, the game was played without visiting supporters—believed to number around 400 - who left under police escort despite making a round trip of around 650km.

Payet gave Marseille a seventh-minute lead with a magnificent individual goal, shaping to cross before cutting onto his left foot and hammering the ball past bewildered home goalkeeper Stephane Ruffier from what seemed an impossible angle. The former West Ham United star has scored 10 goals in all competitions this season. "I was looking for the cross, but I saw that he (Ruffier) wasn't in his goal at all, so I took the opportunity to hit it hard," Payet told Canal. "I will dedicate this match to our supporters who unfortunately this evening made the round trip but couldn't reach the stadium."

Saint-Etienne rarely threatened, although Marseille goal-

keeper Steve Mandanda had to be alert to keep out Lois Diony's effort shortly before half-time. The away side made the points safe in the 85th minute, as Nemanja Radonjic drilled a fine left-footed shot into the bottom corner. Earlier on Wednesday, Lyon failed to close the gap to the top three as they were held to a goalless draw at home by lowly Amiens. Rudi Garcia's side sit sixth in the table, seven points adrift of Rennes, who occupy the third and final Champions League qualification spot.

Rayan Cherki, 16, came off the bench but was denied a winner when his effort struck the post. "Too many players have been below their normal level," said coach Garcia. "We gave our best and it wasn't much." Elsewhere, bottom club Toulouse were cut further adrift with a 1-0 loss to Strasbourg, while Montpellier moved into fifth despite a 1-1 home draw with Metz. On Tuesday, PSG edged to a 2-1 victory at Nantes to strengthen their position at the top of the table.—AFP



## Sports

Friday, February 7, 2020

# ‘Mosque on wheels’ rolls in to help Muslims pray at the Tokyo Olympics

**TOKYO:** For the thousands of Muslim athletes, officials and supporters arriving in Tokyo for the Olympic Games later this year, it may be a struggle for them to find an appropriate place to pray. The answer might just be found roaming the streets of Tokyo on the back of a truck. By the time the Games start in July, there will be prayer rooms available at the currently under-construction athlete's village. However, some venues may not have a designated space.

There is also a dearth of prayer spaces in hotels and public areas across the Japanese capital. This is where the Mobile Mosque, a fully-equipped 48-square-metre prayer room that opens up on the back of a parked truck, comes in. The back of the modified truck can be

widened in seconds and the vehicle also includes Arabic signage and outdoor water taps for pre-worship cleaning.

The Yasu Project, the organization behind the enterprise, plan on pitching up outside venues during the Olympics, which run from July 24 - Aug. 9. The organization's CEO Yasuharu Inoue hopes athletes and supporters alike will use the truck. "I want athletes to compete with their utmost motivation and for the audience to cheer on with their utmost motivation as well. That is why I made this," said Inoue, pointing to the white truck parked next to Tokyo Tower on Wednesday.

"I hope it brings awareness that there are many different people in this world and to pro-

mote a non-discriminatory, peaceful Olympics and Paralympics." Tokyo 2020 said on Wednesday that they were looking at various avenues to provide appropriate facilities for all religious groups. "The Organizing Committee is preparing a list of religious or faiths centers that could be contacted or visited if requested by residents of the Villages during the Games," Tokyo 2020 told Reuters in an email.

"In the Games' venues, multi-faith prayer spaces for athletes and spectators are under consideration in venue operations planning." According to a investigation by Waseda University, there were 105 mosques in Japan at the end of 2018. But with these spread across the country and many of them small and on the outskirts of

Tokyo, it may be difficult for Muslims who need to pray five times a day. Inoue said he has already spoken to several Olympic committees, including most recently Indonesia, about helping their athletes.

Topan Rizki Utraden, an Indonesian who has lived in Japan for 12 years, came to the Mobile Mosque for the first time with his daughter. He said it can be challenging to find a quiet place to pray in Japan, particularly outside Tokyo. "It is really difficult to find mosques near your place," said Utraden. "If you are in the city there is no problem but if you take a road trip outside Tokyo it is difficult. 'Sometimes I pray in a park but sometimes the Japanese look at me like 'what are you doing?'" —Reuters

## Nike unveils new footwear for sprints and distance races

**LOS ANGELES:** A retail version of Nike's Zoom Alphafly NEXT footwear was unveiled Wednesday by the shoe-maker, only days after new World Athletics rules-tightening on prototype shoes. The Air Zoom Viperfly is aimed for the 100-meter sprint crowd, while Nike's Air Zoom Victory is designed for 800m to 10-kilometer races, with sales expected to begin this summer. Just five days earlier, the global track and field governing body introduced tougher rules on footwear for competitors. Nike's controversial Alphafly prototype shoes were worn by Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge when he broke the two-hour marathon barrier in Vienna last October.

"For runners, records like the four-minute mile and two-hour marathon are barometers of progress. These are barriers that have tested human potential. When someone like Eliud breaks them, our collective belief about what's possible changes," says Tony Bignell, Nike's vice president of Footwear Innovation. "Barriers are inspiring to innovators. Like athletes, when a barrier is in front of us, we are challenged to think differently and push game-changing progress in footwear design." The NEXT designs are aimed at maximizing sports science with design to boost body performance through technological enhancement.

The latest version adds air pods in the forefoot and foam in the heel. "The groundbreaking research that led to the original Vaporfly unlocked an entirely new way of thinking about marathon shoes," said Carrie Dimoff, an elite marathoner and member of Nike's Advanced Innovation Team. "Once we understood the plate and foam as a system, we started thinking about ways to make the system even more effective." "That's when we struck upon the idea of adding Nike Air to store and return even more of a runner's energy and provide even more cushioning."

Viperfly incorporates an innovative new carbon plate in the shoe sole designed to provide responsiveness and energy, following deep study of race strategy and performance and runner's needs over the final 20 meters of a sprint. Victory has foam, a carbon fiber plate and a unique welded sole that divides the unit into two separate pockets, provides impact protection and allows for a smooth transition without sacrificing control.— AFP

## Son sends Spurs into the FA Cup 5th round

**LONDON:** Jose Mourinho admitted Tottenham got lucky after Son Heung-min's late penalty secured a dramatic 3-2 win against Southampton in Wednesday's FA Cup fourth-round replay. Mourinho's side were 12 minutes away from being knocked out after squandering the first-half lead given to them by Jack Stephens' own goal.

Shane Long and Danny Ings scored as Southampton hit back to take the lead at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. But Lucas Moura equalised before Son won and converted the decisive penalty with just two minutes left. "I have to be honest and say I think the best team lost on the pitch but my team were the ones with more heart and went to their limit," Mourinho said.

"We suffered but we deserved to win because we were in our limits. Southampton were fresher than us but we played with our souls and heart and gave absolutely everything." Tottenham, who last won the FA Cup in 1991, will host struggling Norwich in the fifth round in the first week of March. Aiming for the first trophy of his reign, Mourinho, who replaced Mauricio Pochettino earlier this season, will be relieved Tottenham avoided a surprise exit from a competition he has not won since 2007 with Chelsea.

Taking credit for the win in classic Mourinho self-promoting style, he said: "I think I did very well because I had to manage a team with so many difficulties. 'The priority is to survive. We have lots of difficulties. I'm not speaking just about Harry Kane, I'm speaking about injuries to Giovani Lo Celso and Erik Lamela. 'Today was a team completely unbalanced, really hard to organize it.' Tottenham are without a major trophy of any kind since the 2008 League Cup and Mourinho would dearly love to end that drought, but his team will have to improve significantly on this erratic display.

Mourinho will also have to get Jan Vertonghen back onside after the defender's dejected trudge off the pitch following his substitution. "I understand his sadness, it is normal. He is always respectful and always professional. It doesn't make me happy to make a substitution. I did it for the team, Jan is happy for the team," Mourinho said. Tottenham had won eight of their last nine home games against Southampton, including a 2-1 success in the Premier League earlier this season, and they were in front after 12 minutes.

Ryan Sessegnon's burst opened up the Southampton defense and when the ball bounced to Tanguy Ndombele on the



**LONDON:** Tottenham Hotspur's Brazilian midfielder Lucas Moura collides with Southampton's Danish defender Jannik Vestergaard (right) during the English FA Cup fourth round replay football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Southampton on February 5, 2020. — AFP

edge of the area, the midfielder drilled a powerful shot that took a big deflection off Stephens into his own net. Ings should have equalized when he ran onto James Ward-Prowse's pinpoint pass and got to the ball ahead of the hesitant Hugo Lloris, but the in-form striker's shot cannoned back off the bar. Southampton's 34th-minute equaliser carried more than a whiff of blame for Lloris, who limply parried out Nathan Redmond's shot for Long to slot home.

There was a blow for the visitors before half-time when Ward-Prowse was stretchered off after needing oxygen for a knee injury suffered in a challenge with Sessegnon. Ralph Hasenhuttl's side deservedly took the lead in the 72nd minute. Redmond made an incisive surge from deep inside his own half and slipped a pass to Ings, who cut past Japhet Tanganga before curling a fine finish into the far corner from 18 yards for his 17th goal of the season.

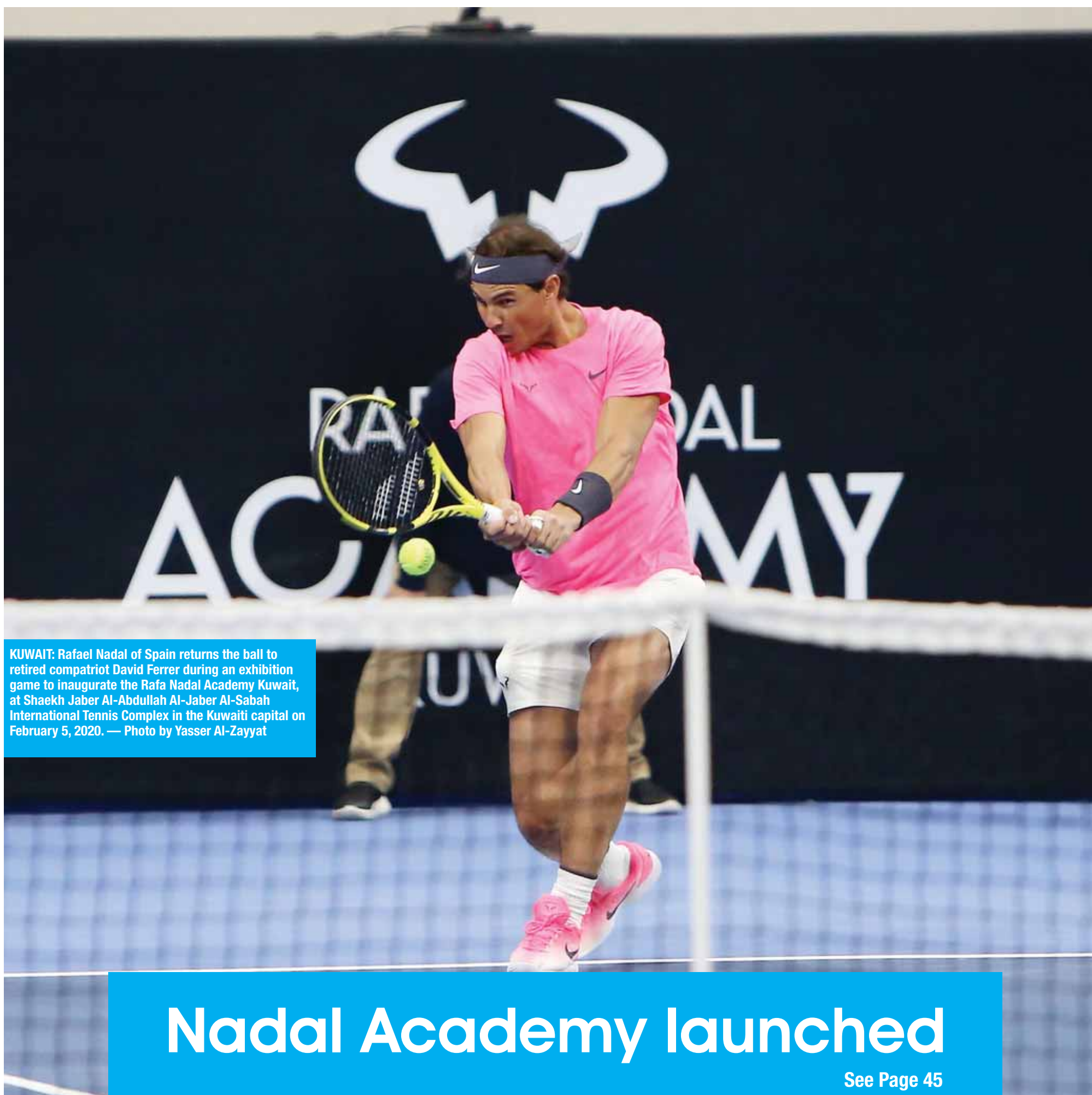
But Lucas came to Tottenham's rescue in the 78th minute when he took Dele Alli's pass and cleverly turned into the space on the edge of the area before drilling a superb strike into the far corner. The momentum had swung in Tottenham's favor and Son won it in the 88th minute when he charged into the area and went down under minimal contact from goalkeeper Angus Gunn. Son stepped up to take the penalty himself and fired home to send Tottenham into the last 16.— AFP



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KUWAIT: Rafael Nadal of Spain returns the ball to retired compatriot David Ferrer during an exhibition game to inaugurate the Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait, at Shaekh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex in the Kuwaiti capital on February 5, 2020. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Nadal Academy launched

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