



# China president makes rare visit to meet coronavirus patients, medics

## Overseas cases may be 'tip of the iceberg': WHO

### 'Parasite' makes Oscars history with stunning best picture win



**HOLLYWOOD:** South Korean film director Bong Joon Ho poses with his engraved awards as he attends the 92nd Oscars Governors Ball at the Hollywood & Highland Center on Sunday. — AFP (See Pages 19-23)

**BEIJING:** Chinese President Xi Jinping donned a face mask and had his temperature checked yesterday while visiting medical workers and patients affected by the deadly coronavirus that has killed more than 900 people. The Chinese president, who has called the virus a "demon", made a rare visit yesterday to meet frontline medical staff at a hospital treating infected patients. Calling the situation at the virus epicenter "still very grave", Xi urged "more decisive measures" to contain the spread of the epidemic, said state broadcaster CCTV.

Xi has largely kept out of the public eye since the virus outbreak spiraled across the country from the epicenter in Hubei province to infect more than 40,000 people. He appointed Premier Li Keqiang to lead a working group tackling the outbreak, and it was Li who visited ground zero in Wuhan last month. Yesterday, Xi donned a blue mask and white surgical gown to meet doctors at Beijing Ditan hospital, observe the treatment of patients and speak via video link to doctors in Wuhan, state media said. He then visited a residential community in central Beijing to "investigate and guide" efforts to contain the epidemic, said CCTV.

Video footage showed Xi having his temperature taken with an infrared thermometer,



**BEIJING:** Chinese President Xi Jinping wears a protective facemask as a health official checks his body temperature during an inspection of the novel coronavirus pneumonia prevention and control work at the Anhuili Community yesterday. — AFP

then speaking with community workers and waving at smiling residents leaning out of their apartment windows. The outbreak has prompted unprecedented action by the Chinese government, including locking down

entire cities in Hubei province as well as cutting transport links nationwide, closing tourist attractions and telling hundreds of millions of people to stay indoors.

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Local

# Kuwaiti Amir receives Sheikh Nasser, London's Lord Mayor

## Sheikh Sabah offers condolence over 'martyrdom' of Algerian soldier



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Lord Mayor of the City of London William Russell.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with NBK Chairman Nasser Musaed Al-Sayer, and NBK CEO Essam Mohamed Al-Saqr.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the State of Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met yesterday at Bayan Palace with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Minister of Finance Mariam Al-Aqeel and the visiting Lord Mayor of the City of London William Russell and his accompanying delegation. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad also received Chairman of the Board of Directors

of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Nasser Musaed Al-Sayer, and NBK CEO Essam Mohamed Al-Saqr, where they extended an invitation to His Highness the Amir to attend the opening ceremony of NBK's new headquarters building. Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah attended both meetings. In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as the State of Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of condolence to Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune over the "martyrdom" of an Algerian soldier in a vehicle

blast. In the cable, His Highness the Amir voiced Kuwait's emphatic denunciation of this terrorist act and restated rejection of all forms and manifestations of terrorism. 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 expressed similar sentiments in a couple of separate cables sent to the Algerian president. —KUNA

## Kuwait PM chairs Supreme Petroleum Council meeting

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah headed on Sunday the 123rd meeting of the Supreme Petroleum Council at Seif Palace. The meeting discussed the items listed on the council's meeting agenda.

Separately, His Highness the Prime Minister received yesterday at Bayan Palace Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, accompanied by members of the Board of Trustees of Al-Sumait Prize for African Development and its winners.

His Highness the Prime Minister also received the winners of both Kuwait Awards and the Scientific Production Award of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) for the year 2019. The meeting was attended by Director General and Board Chairman of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development Abdulatif Yousef Al-Hamad, and KFSD Director General Dr Adnan Shihabeddine. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the 123rd meeting of the Supreme Petroleum Council. —KUNA

## Amir sponsors Gulf sea festival's closing ceremony



KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and other state officials attend the closing ceremony for the Gulf sea heritage festival. —Amiri Diwan photos



A folklore band performs during the ceremony.



Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah presents an award to a winner in a contest featured in the festival.



Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Sabah delivers a speech.

KUWAIT: Under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the closing ceremony for the Gulf sea heritage festival was held late on Sunday to bring down the curtain on the 10th edition of the maritime spectacle. Addressing the ceremony, Sheikh

Salem Nawaf Al-Sabah, the head of Kuwait's sea heritage committee, said that the event proved to be a resounding success over the course of the last decade. He pointed out that the festival conjures up fond memories of the nation's forefathers, giving the younger generation an inkling of the

struggles they have had to endure. He went on to thank the participants from all over the Gulf region for coming out in droves to take part in the event, saying he was impressed with the competitiveness of the contests the festival featured. The official was equally grateful for His Highness the

Amir's sponsorship of the annual event, wishing him good health and wellbeing. Meanwhile, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir's representative at the event, bestowed awards upon the winners of contests held during the festival. —KUNA

Local

# Crown Prince attends KFAS award ceremony, patronized by Amir

Kuwait pioneer in launching initiatives to encourage creative scientific thought: KFAS chief



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior state officials attend the ceremony.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah presents an award to a winner during the ceremony. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized yesterday the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) award ceremony, which was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on His Highness the Amir's behalf. His Highness the Crown Prince arrived at the ceremony at 10:00 am, where he was received by KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shihabeddine and members of the foundation's board. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and senior state officials attended the ceremony as well.

After screening a documentary on KFAS achievements and projects, Dr Shihabeddine delivered a speech on how Kuwait has always been a pioneer in launching initiatives for an enlightened culture of encouraging creative scientific thought. Establishing KFAS was within the vision of the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The KFAS chair carried on saying that the past year witnessed the continuation of providing specialized services to all segments of society. Among them was The Scientific Center, which became a distinguished cultural landmark in the Middle East in spreading knowledge and promoting the

concept of sustainable development, with over 11 million visitors to date. Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Center for Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging; the most advanced scientific center established by KFAS, offers high-quality services in medical diagnosis of chronic diseases, such as brain tumors, cancer and cardiac diseases. Other centers include Dasman Diabetes Institute, which has a mission of preventing, controlling and limiting the effects of diabetes, as well as Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, which provides an appropriate environment for Kuwaiti creators to unleash their potential, he pointed out. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is welcomed upon arrival by KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shihabeddine.

## Deputy FM heads Somalia education support meeting



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah chairs the meeting. — KUNA

KUWAIT: A committee entrusted with making arrangements for a conference due in Kuwait this year for promoting education in Somalia convened a meeting yesterday. Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign

Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah presided over the committee's meeting, which focused on ongoing preparations for the conference, with the committee members attending. —KUNA

## Kuwait's Matouq re-appointed UN chief's advisor

KUWAIT: Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) said yesterday that its chairman Dr Abdullah Al-Matouq has been chosen as UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' special advisor for the fourth consecutive year. In a statement, the charity official thanked the UN chief for his trust in him, saying he would continue to work diligently to serve humanity at a time where the world is rife with conflicts. He said the UN's renewed confidence in him is a testament to Kuwait's penchant for altruism and an acknowledgement of the Arab region's humanitarian efforts. Matouq has served as the UN secretary



Dr Abdullah Al-Matouq

general's advisor since 2017, having also been appointed as the UN chief's envoy for four years. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti diplomat urges promoting nuclear security

VIENNA: Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative at UN Organizations in Vienna Sadeq Marafi said yesterday it is essential to promote nuclear security worldwide. The Kuwaiti diplomat made the remark on the sidelines of the third International Conference on Nuclear Security held by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He commended the gathering as a good opportunity for the conferees to share views and weigh progress regarding the promotion and development of national nuclear energy. He also underscored that it is imperative to curtail threats posed by nuclear materials and other hazardous radioactive

substances. Marafi added that Kuwait attaches much significance to the IAEA's integrated nuclear security plan. The conference, entitled 'Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts' kicked off at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna earlier in the day. Held between February 10-14, the conference provides a forum for ministers, policymakers, senior officials and nuclear security experts from over 130 IAEA member states and 35 regional and international nongovernmental organizations to formulate and exchange views on experiences and achievements, current approaches, future directions and priorities for nuclear security. — KUNA

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## National program to spread coronavirus awareness in schools



KUWAIT: Students watch an instructional video on coronavirus infection at a school in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Social development manager at the Patients Helping Fund Jassem Al-Rabee announced launching the new national awareness program "My School Improves My Health" designed to boost public awareness of the dangers of the new coronavirus. "The program launched at the beginning of the second semester aims to present 240 lectures in over 200 schools in various educational stages," Rabee said, noting that the program was launched on Thursday through a social partnership between the patients fund, Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education (MoE) and the private sector.

"The project aims at realizing Kuwait's 2035 vision of achieving sustainable development in terms of social partnerships and the role of NGOs in improving health and life quality," he added. The first activity was held at Abdullah Ahmad Al-Roumi primary school in Sabah Al-Nasser with

a lecture about the coronavirus' dangers and prevention presented by Dr Safinaz Mahmoud and Dr Iman Hussein, in addition to another lecture presented by nutritionists Mariam Al-Enezi and Rawan Al-Hamad at Qamriya school in Jaber Al-Ahmad about the dangers of energy drinks.

In the meantime, Kuwait's Health Ministry stated Sunday that no case of new coronavirus infection was recorded in Kuwait so far. In a press statement, the ministry spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad reiterated that the ministry has taken all precautionary measures and has been coordinating with relevant ministries and organizations to maintain the state's health security. He added that the ministry closely follows up the latest updates of the deadly virus outbreak as well as all relevant World Health Organization's statements and recommendations for controlling and stopping it. Dr Sanad advised citizens and residents to follow up the ministry's official channels to know the latest updates, precautionary measures and instructions.



KUWAIT: Dr Meshari Al-Hajri and college officials with ABK staff during the job fair.

## ABK participates in business college's job fair

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced its participation in Kuwait University's College of Business Administration's Job Fair, which was held under the patronage of Ali Mohamed Thunayyan Al-Ghanem, the Chairman of the Kuwait Chamber of

Commerce and Industry. The job fair is held at the Kuwait University Campus, and concludes on February 13, 2020.

The ABK Human Resources team are present at the job fair to engage with students and to share insights on how ABK could support them as they embark on this new journey. ABK's participation reinforces its commitment to supporting Kuwait's youth, which is one of the bank's primary focuses. It provides fresh graduates with training and career opportunities in the banking sector and works towards developing their skills and knowledge through the 'ABK Academy' in line with the nationalization policy.



## CBK: Money supply down 0.2% in Dec

KUWAIT: Money supply (M2) declined 0.2 percent in December on monthly basis, recording KD 38.1 billion (\$125.7 billion), the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said yesterday. The CBK economic research department reported that deposits in the Kuwaiti Dinar by the private sector in local banks were steady in December at KD 33.7 billion (\$111 billion). Those of foreign currencies went down 7.5 percent reaching KD 2.5 billion (\$8 billion), where this sector overall deposits amounted to KD 36.2 billion (\$119.4 billion). Local banks' claims on the CBK in the Kuwaiti Dinar, represented by the CBK bonds, also in December, settled at KD 2.97 billion (\$9.8 billion). Total local banks assets increased 0.5 percent, reaching \$7 billion (\$23 billion). Net foreign (currencies) assets in the domestic banks climbed 1.7 percent to KD 7.1 billion (\$23.4 billion), while time deposits with the CBK were down 8.7 percent, reaching KD 2 billion (\$6.6 billion). Meanwhile, average interest rates on treasury bonds of one-year maturity settled at three percent. Financing of Kuwait imports jumped in 35.9 percent in December, whereas the average US Dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti Dinar steadied, at KD 303.4, the CBK report concluded. — KUNA

### News in brief

#### Tests end before Eid

KUWAIT: Education Minister Saud Al-Harbi approved the dates of the end of the 2019-2020 school year exams in all educational stages. He decided the start of the exams will be on May 10 - which falls during the holy month of Ramadan - for grades 5 to 11. They will end on May 18 for classes 5 to 9 and on May 21 for 10 and 11 grades. All exams will end before Eid Al-Fitr. Harbi decided 12th grade exams will start after Eid Al-Fitr - from May 31 until June 11, while the makeup exams will take place from June 29 until July 8 for the secondary stage. The summer break for the education and administrative departments will start on May 21 for kindergarten, June 18 for elementary and intermediate stages, and June 25 for the secondary stage, while students' break will be of 111 days. — Al-Rai

#### KD 5.5 million saved

KUWAIT: Oil sources revealed 41 investigation committees were formed at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) internally since Jan 2016. Informed sources said 28 investigation committees completed their duties and 140 written warnings were issued, four terminations were made without indemnity, seven cases were sent to the investigation department, 17 workers belonging to contractors were terminated, while three companies were blacklisted. Sources said KOC recovered KD 5.5 million until the start of this year at the instructions of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Prime Minister to fight corruption. — Al-Rai

#### Plastic waste to oil products

KUWAIT: Official oil sources said the Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) plans to build a plant to produce oil products out of plastic waste. The sources said the company will run a feasibility study by one of the largest consultancy offices specialized in this field, expecting the technical consultant contract be put out by May. They said the project will change the way plastic waste is viewed and benefited from, by transforming it to oil without the need to burn it or get rid of it in a harmful way to the environment. Sources estimated the amount of plastic rubbish in Kuwait at 18 percent of solid waste, ie 220,000 tons per year. — Al-Anbaa

Local



MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri



Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem

## MP Muwaizri calls for special session to uncover 'saboteurs'

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Leading opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri yesterday called on the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem to convene an emergency session to debate allegations that "saboteurs" were plotting against the country.

In a letter Muwaizri sent to the Speaker, he said that the Speaker revealed in a speech in the assembly last week that some people were plotting to sabotage and destabilize the country and that a decision had been taken by corrupt people and thieves of public funds to unseat His Highness the Prime Minister.

**'Extremely serious'**

Muwaizri added that such claims are extremely serious and pose a threat to the country and the Kuwaiti people and therefore an urgent special assembly session must be held and televised live to the public to expose and discredit those traitors and hold them to account.

The lawmaker said that the speaker should not wait for the request to be signed by 10 MPs as required by the internal charter to convene a special session and should invoke his constitutional powers to call for the session immediately.

Ghanem's claims were made last week during a lengthy speech in which he tackled a large number of highly sensitive issues including the issue of stateless people or bedoons, the presence of thousands of Kuwaitis with fake citizenship and others.

Asked to comment on Muwaizri's letter, Ghanem told reporters that he will comment later as he and many lawmakers were still busy with the Palestinian issue. The speaker has just returned from an Arab parliamentary meeting where he strongly rejected the US-sponsored peace plan called the "deal of the century" and threw a copy of the plan in a dustbin.

**Bedoons' rights**

Meanwhile, head of the assembly's human rights committee MP Adel Al-Damkhi called yesterday for giving priority to debate a draft law that provides tens of thousands of bedoons basic humanitarian rights ahead of finding a fair solution to their decades-old plight.

He said that the report of the committee on the draft law is on the agenda of the assembly and that 29 MPs have demanded giving it priority but so far it has not been debated. Damkhi called for employing bedoons in government jobs where there are not enough Kuwaitis. The main object is to find a fair solution for some 100,000 bedoons living in the country and there is no need to exchange accusations.

Damkhi was speaking to reporters after visiting the central jail. He said there will be new good decisions regarding those jailed for expressing opinion, adding that he met with a number of prisoners for writing tweets deemed offensive. In the meantime, MP Abdullah Al-Kandari yesterday asked the Minister of Finance Mariam Al-Aqeel about alleged bribes in the Airbus deal.

percent of the cases examined by the early detection team and they were all treated," Ibrahim explained, pointing out that the program is considered the first of its kind in the Middle East.

**Strategic payroll**

Official government sources said that the government would re-propose the strategic payroll alternative bill which it had previously submitted to the parliament but withdrew for amendments suggested by lawmakers. The sources added that the government believes that the bill should be adapted to handle the problem of payrolls consuming over half of the state's budget, which is already suffering from huge deficit. The sources also noted that the bill would be submitted to parliament soon so that it can be discussed by the parliamentary human resources or financial committee.

Another team toured Jahra and filed three citations in Kabd including for not displaying goods' prices and offering used tyres for sale. Meanwhile, Jahra municipal teams inspected Sulaibiya, Salmi and Subiya, said Jahra municipality cleaning manager Fahd Al-Quraigfa, noting that the campaign resulted in removing 10 abandoned vehicles, five truckloads of wood and four truckloads of used tyres, and filing seven citations.

## Program helped detect 4,466 benign tumors

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Head of the Ministry of Health's national program for early detection of colon cancer Dr Fahad Al-Ibrahim said that the program helped detect 4,466 cases with benign tumors, which were successfully removed. Ibrahim added that Jahra Governorate came first in terms of the number of cases diagnosed with benign tumors, followed by the Capital Governorate. "Advanced cases with cancer represented only one

## Municipality teams carry out inspection tours in Fintas, Jahra

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** During an inspection tour in Fintas, Kout municipality emergency team recently filed four citations for not displaying goods' prices, printing receipts in English only, which is a violation of the law that requires items to be listed in Arabic on the receipt, and not mentioning the origin of meat displayed for sale.

## Arab farm lobby opens Kuwait office

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) launched yesterday the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development's (AOAD) regional office in the country. The initiative will allow for greater cooperation among farm lobbies in the Arab region, PAAAFR's chief public relations officer

Hamid Al-Azmi said, citing a "widening food gap" that needs to be remedied through broad agriculture reforms. "The beautiful city of Kuwait is a fitting location for our regional office in the Arabian Peninsula," said AOAD's Director General Ibrahim Al-Dukhari, who hoped the office would be a launchpad for future success. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Salmi customs foiled a bid to smuggle subsidized supplies and seized the goods.

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Merkel party in crisis after 'heir' quits over German far right row

## Philippines moves to shut down top broadcaster

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NORD: Rescuers work on the A2 motorway in Marly, northern France, after a truck was tipped over in the early morning from strong winds brought by storm Ciara yesterday. — AFP photos

# Storm Ciara sows trail of destruction

## Violent storm wreaks havoc across Europe

**LONDON:** Storm Ciara caused travel chaos yesterday, severely disrupting commutes and grounding hundreds of flights as swathes of Europe were left without power by torrential rain and winds of up to 180 kilometers per hour that also caused flash flooding and the cancellation of sporting fixtures.

In one of the most violent storms for years, one man died and another was reported missing in southern Sweden when their boat capsized, while three people were seriously injured in Germany by falling trees and branches. Parts of northern France were put on orange alert and 130,000 homes had electricity cut off. The Netherlands closed one of its big storm surge barriers as the tempest approached on Sunday night. Police said it caused yesterday morning traffic jams over 600 kilometers of roads.

Around 220 flights were cancelled during the morning at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport - Europe's third-busiest - most destined for other European cities. Around 240 never took off on Sunday. Another man was injured by a tree in the Czech Republic, where winds reached up to 180 kph on the country's highest mountain, Snezka. The storm left 100,000 without power there and even toppled over a truck. Tiny Luxembourg cancelled school classes and morning rush hour traffic ground to a halt in Brussels due to street closures and flooding.

### Britain cleans up

Britain began a clean-up after bearing the brunt of one of the most violent and destructive storms in years. "While Storm Ciara is clearing away, that doesn't mean we're entering a quieter period of weather," Met Office meteorologist Alex Burkill warned. "Blizzards aren't out of the question."

Transport was disrupted across the country with planes and trains cancelled or delayed.

The highest wind speed recorded was 150 kilometers per hour in the northwest Welsh village of Aberdaron. More than 15 centimeters of rain fell over 24 hours at Sleddale Reservoir in northwest England's Lake District national park. More than 170 flood warnings remained in place yesterday. The West Yorkshire towns of Hebden Bridge and neighboring Mytholmroyd were among the worst hit by the storm. Cars were submerged in the floodwaters and tens of thousands of homes had their electricity cut.

### Wind farm shut

Much of the initial damage and disruption in Europe was along the coasts. Channel ferry services between the southern English port of Dover and Calais in northern France resumed yesterday morning after being halted Sunday. The whole Belgian offshore wind farm was shut down as powerful gusts caused the turbines to stop automatically for safety reasons. The storm was so violent that "we are forced to completely stop mainline train traffic in Germany this Sunday evening," Deutsche Bahn spokesman Achim Stauss said. The disruptions in Germany also began Sunday with more than a hundred flights across three big cities cancelled.

### Sports events hit

Sports events were also hit. Sunday's English Premier League fixture between Manchester City and West Ham was called off due to "extreme and escalating weather conditions", City said in a statement. The entire Women's Super League football program was also called off. Sunday's Scotland-England clash in the



BADEN-WURTEMBERG: Debris of the roof of an apartment building which was blown down during storm Ciara lie on the street in Bietigheim-Bissingen, southern Germany yesterday.

Women's Six Nations rugby tournament was rescheduled yesterday. But there was an upside for passengers flying British Airways to London from New York. The storm helped the flight to finish in the sub-sonic flight record time of 4 hours 56 minutes, according to flight-tracking website Flightradar24. A British man wearing

only a pair of swimming trunks braved the weather on a charity walk the length of mainland Britain from Lands End, southwest England, to John o'Groats, northeast Scotland. "Speedos are designed to get wet and mine are absolutely soaking in this weather," said fundraiser Michael Cullen as he trekked in Glastonbury. — AFP

## Online dating changes lives and the economy

**NEW YORK:** Online dating is not only transforming the way people hook up, it is changing the way single people spend their money and shaping the nature of household spending, according to one investor taking an interest in the emerging sector. "It's driving pretty much everything, if you think about all the things people spend money on around finding a romantic partner, courting them, getting married, having kids," said Daniel McMurtrie, the young co-founder and CEO of Tyro Capital Management, a New York hedge fund.

McMurtrie, 28, has tracked the rising tide in people going online to find a partner "from a kind of niche category, which was a little bit of a joke to some people, to being the dominant form of dating." According to a Pew Research Center study published Thursday, 30 percent of American adults have used a dating app or website. For people

under 30, that increases to 50 percent. The proliferation of smartphones and the ease of using apps have been game changers. All a user has to do is enter a small amount of personal information to start seeing photos of potential matches. A simple swipe of the finger can show interest, and if it is reciprocated, start a conversation. The financial cost of arranging a date has been drastically reduced, as has the cost in time from wasted encounters or rejections. "Historically people have dated within their social circles, their friends, their family, their church, their social groups," said McMurtrie. "That's really maybe 100, 200 people max."

The social penalties have also been reduced. "If you date someone who's a friend of a friend and it doesn't work out, that can be very awkward." "Because everyone can get a number of dates

instantly through an app, it doesn't really make sense to take that risk anymore," noted McMurtrie, who published a research paper on the phenomenon in November. Younger generations may lack the financial means to buy a house, and roadtesting life as a couple before potentially splitting up is less complicated if you only pay rent, rather than a hefty mortgage.

These days, couples in the US tend to marry later and divorce less. Longer educations or economic uncertainty are commonly cited as reasons for that delay, but McMurtrie believes online dating plays a part as well. "People are ... dating more, meeting more people and understanding more about what their preferences are, and what they can and cannot deal with in a long-term relationship," he said.

### Cosmetics for men

This evolution is having an economic impact "because it's driving consumer spending, it's driving household formation," McMurtrie explained. He points to the boom in men's grooming products as an example: his theory being that male skin

creams and hair and beard care products are flying off the shelves in part because men want to appear more attractive in their dating profile pictures.

By contrast, sales of fragrance have not been affected in the same way because "you can't smell a selfie. Everything is becoming Instagram-ified." The main players in the market, such as Tinder, Bumble or Hinge, earn money by offering subscriptions that give users access to more features or more profile visibility.

But the biggest opportunities, according to McMurtrie, are in partnerships with restaurants, entertainment venues and clothing and cosmetic stores. "To go on a date in New York City, you are spending at least \$100, maybe \$200," said McMurtrie. "Right now, Tinder earns 59 cents daily per paying user. So the question is ... what percentage of that hundred dollars can Tinder take if they can help facilitate that transaction."

### Taboo topic

There isn't much financial research on the subject because "online dating is inher-

ently a topic related to sexuality, and I think in a professional context, it makes people somewhat uncomfortable, or it's very hard to take it seriously," McMurtrie observed. "It would be very hard to talk about this business at length in any serious boardroom environment because you're having to consider things like, 'What is the rate at which people (who) go on a first date start going out?'" For McMurtrie, the most underestimated impact of online dating is the agency it can potentially provide to women, particularly in more conservative countries where romantic hopefuls may be limited to a very small circle of family friends.

But with apps, women can go from a choice among "10 or 15 men ... to potentially having millions of options," said McMurtrie. Furthermore, female users "realize that they can say no to a man without any risk, and without any reputational downside." "It's not only a great social thing," said McMurtrie. "It's also a great economic thing because ... half the population actually have agency and have some equal say and participation." — AFP

## International

# Syria regime shelling kills 5 Turkish soldiers in Idlib

## 700,000 displaced in NW Syria • 30 civilians killed as bombardment spikes

**QAMINAS, Syria:** Syrian regime artillery killed five Turkish soldiers in Idlib yesterday, Turkey's defence ministry said, as the number of people displaced by violence in the region neared 700,000 since December. The barrage also wounded five soldiers in the violence-plagued northwest, prompting the Turkish military to respond by "destroying targets", the defence ministry added. The exchange was the second in eight days and took place in the area of Taftanaz, which was recently reinforced by Turkey, said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Yesterday's incident comes a week after earlier regime shelling killed eight Turkish soldiers, prompting a deadly response by the Turkish army. The clashes are further straining relations between Damascus and Ankara, while also increasing tension between Russia and Turkey - the conflict's chief foreign protagonists. Syrian government forces backed by Moscow have pressed a blistering assault against the last major rebel bastion in Syria's northwest for more than two months.

Violence in the provinces of Idlib and Aleppo has displaced 689,000 people, said David Swanson, spokesman for the United Nations humanitarian coordination office, OCHA. "The number of people being displaced in this crisis is now spiralling out of control," he told AFP yesterday. The exodus is one of the largest of the nine-year civil war and risks creating one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes of the conflict.

It has sparked alarm from rebel backer Turkey which already hosts some 3.7 million Syrian refugees and fears another influx.

Turkey's defense ministry said the troops targeted yesterday had been sent "as reinforcement to the region with an aim to prevent clashes in Idlib, ensure our border security, and stop migration and human tragedy".

## Airlines face growth warning as virus curtails Singapore Airshow

**SINGAPORE:** Asian airlines face "drastic" cuts in their planned growth because of the coronavirus crisis, an industry group warned, adding gloom to an already depleted Singapore Airshow as more companies scaled back plans yesterday. The Singapore Airshow from Feb 11 to 16 is proceeding, but the exhibition centre is pockmarked with empty spaces that would have held displays from Chinese companies and others skipping the show because of the epidemic, which has killed more than 900 people.

More than 70 exhibitors, including major US defense firms Lockheed Martin Corp and Raytheon Co have pulled out over concerns related to the new coronavirus. Few deals are expected at the biennial event, where the epidemic has triggered new safety measures and cast a shadow over airline profits and demand for airplanes. Before the coronavirus hit, the International Air Transport Association had expected passenger numbers to rise by 4% in 2020 and cargo traffic to be 2% higher.

"All bets are off in terms of traffic forecasts for this year," Andrew Herdman, the director general of the Association for Asia Pacific Airlines, said in an interview. "If you look at the schedule cuts and the actual operations they have been cut by 50%,

## Olive oil 'for peace' in divided Cyprus

**NICOSIA:** In a field bathed in winter light, Hasan Siber patiently harvests his olives. It's a common sight in Cyprus, but his "oil for peace" represents a rare glimmer of hope on the divided Mediterranean island. Turkish-Cypriot Siber's oil is to be sold via Coliveoil, a start-up he founded with his Greek-Cypriot friend Alexandros Philippides. The pair in their early 30s, who met at university in London, want to "take the peace process forward" by selling oil from both sides of the island. "You never know where an entrepreneurial adventure and friendship might lead," says Philippides.

Based in the buffer zone of Nicosia, the last divided capital in Europe, Coliveoil is a rare example of a start-up bringing together the island's two communities. Cyprus has been split since 1974, when the Turkish army invaded and occupied the northern third following a coup aimed at incorporating the island into Greece. Reunification talks have been suspended since 2017 - but that same year, Siber and Philippides set up their company that same year with the aim to building bridges across the divide.

The project has enthused Siber's family, some of whom fled the south during years of conflict. "Working here today

60%, 70% within China. It is pretty drastic," he said. The Pentagon reduced the size of its delegation to the air show, which had been set to include its chief weapons buyer, US Undersecretary of Defense Ellen Lord, Reuters reported on Friday.

"Sure, there were some adjustments by some colleagues but it has not changed our footprint," US Department of State Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs R Clarke Cooper said yesterday, adding that his agency's delegation remained fully intact. "The United States still remains the largest international presence at the air show for 2020," he told reporters on a call.

Singapore on Friday raised its alert level for the coronavirus outbreak to orange, the same level reached during the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory System (SARS) outbreak, sparking panic buying at supermarkets across the island. There are 43 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Singapore. The orange alert level advises organizers to cancel or defer non-essential large-scale events and recommends precautions such as temperature screening and more frequent cleaning of common areas for those that do proceed.

Health experts, however, said they were concerned that temperature screening might not be effective, given reports the coronavirus could be spread by people without symptoms. "Temperature screening is okay to pick up people already sick - and those people should not be coming to the show anyway - but doesn't pick up people incubating the virus," said John McBride, an infectious disease physician and professor at Australia's James Cook University.

fills me with hope," says Ayhen Eminel, Siber's retired uncle, who himself tried to set up a bi-communal business in the early 2000s but faced rejection by Greek Cypriot authorities. He uses a rake to pick olives in a sunlit grove owned by Greek Cypriots, in the formerly mixed village of Agios Ioannis. The septuagenarian, who speaks Greek as well as Turkish, recalls fleeing the Paphos area in southwestern Cyprus after having been a prisoner of war.

Siber's aunt Sidika Hudaoglu, a primary school teacher in her 50s, said the project has brought back memories of a childhood spent among the olive groves in the island's south, which she fled in 1974. And the entrepreneur's father Turgut, a 65-year-old cardiologist, has invested in his son's start-up and has come from Istanbul to support it. "Working together, it's the start" of living together, he says. "I think others will follow... It sets an example."

### 'Bring down the barriers'

While bi-communal projects enjoy some support among Cypriots, this one faces several obstacles. Without a legal framework for registering bi-communal enterprises, Coliveoil has two legal entities, two bank accounts, two phone numbers and two addresses-one of each on each side of the divide.

The company in the south must buy from the one in the north in order to

### Turkish reinforcements

Since Friday, large convoys of vehicles carrying commandos, tanks and howitzer artillery pieces have reinforced 12 Turkish military posts in Idlib installed by Ankara under a 2018 deal with Russia to stave off a regime offensive. But the agreement has failed to stop the government's advance, with Turkey saying regime forces have surrounded three of its outposts, despite repeated warnings against such a move.

Following the latest attack, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Defence Minister Hulusi Akar immediately met for talks, Turkish broadcaster NTV reported. Fahrettin Altun, Erdogan's top press aide, wrote on Twitter that "Turkey retaliated against the attack to destroy all enemy targets and (avenge) our fallen troops". He added: "The war criminal, who ordered today's heinous attack, targeted the entire international community, not just Turkey."

Erdogan has given Damascus until the end of the month to retreat from its outposts, and urged Russia to convince the regime to halt its offensive. A Russian delegation has been in Ankara for talks on Idlib since Saturday, with further meetings expected yesterday. The two countries have worked closely together despite supporting opposing sides of the war.

### Intensifying bombardment

The escalation between Turkey and Damascus comes as intense bombardment by the regime and Russia killed 29 civilians in less than 24 hours. Six children were among nine civilians killed early Monday in raids on the village of Abin Semaan, in Aleppo province where Russian-backed regime forces have been waging a fierce offensive to retake a key highway, the Observatory said. At the site of the raids, a rescue worker carried a dead girl in a thick blanket, while one of her relatives pleaded for the body, said an AFP correspondent.

Volunteers shivering in near-freezing tempera-



**IDLIB:** A Syrian rebel fires a rocket from the area of the Idlib countryside towards regime forces positions in the southern countryside of Syria's Aleppo province. —AFP

tures dug at mounds of rubble, rescuing a dust-covered man and a child who had been trapped beneath. The latest air strikes follow a night of heavy bombardment by Russia and the regime that had already killed at least 20 civilians in the neighboring provinces of Idlib and Aleppo, according to the Observatory.

Around half of Idlib province, along with slivers of

neighboring Aleppo and Latakia provinces remain outside government control. Some 50,000 fighters are estimated to be in the shrinking pocket, including many jihadists from the dominant Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance but mostly their rebel allies, according to the Observatory. Some three million people, half of them already displaced at least once by violence elsewhere in Syria, live in the area. —AFP



**SINGAPORE:** Women wearing protective facemasks take photographs with their mobile phones along Marina Bay in Singapore yesterday. Singapore, which has reported 33 cases of people infected with novel coronavirus, raised its alert level to 'orange' - the same as during the deadly 2003 SARS outbreak, indicating the virus is severe and passes easily between people. —AFP

SIA Engineering Company Ltd and GE Aviation yesterday said they had postponed plans to hold a groundbreaking ceremony for a new engine overhaul facility in Singapore today until further notice because of the raised alert level. Qatar Airways said yesterday it was postponing plans for its chief executive Akbar al-Baker to open a new airport lounge after his country issued a warning advising citizens to reconsider travel to Singapore due to the virus. He had been due to host the official opening of the lounge on Friday.

Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Military Industries withdrew from the show

late Sunday, citing concerns associated with the coronavirus. The air show's organizers said on Sunday they were expecting more than 930 companies from 45 countries and 45,000 trade attendees - down from the 54,000 at the last show in 2018. They also plan to limit public attendance.

The lobbies of major hotels, usually bustling with attendees, were noticeably quiet. A spokeswoman for the organizers yesterday declined to provide an update on numbers and why the air show was going ahead when many smaller associated events and briefings were being cancelled over coronavirus concerns. —Reuters

## Rulings spark hope for Egyptian Copts fighting estate law

**CAIRO:** Egyptian Copt Amal Hanna says she is determined to fight the long-standing application of Islamic inheritance laws to Christians, as recent court victories embolden Coptic women. For decades, Egyptian courts have largely applied Islamic inheritance laws - which mostly allocate a bigger share of inheritances to men than to women - to both Muslims and the country's significant Coptic Christian minority. But Coptic Orthodox customs call for gender equality in inheritance matters.

Hanna has twice been faced with the unbalanced division of family estates. The first was more than 20 years ago, when a court granted her brother double her share of their parents' property. Then, after her aunt died last year, another court awarded the entire inheritance to Hanna's brother. "I was dumbstruck," she said. "It really upset me, especially as my family raised us - me and my brother - as equals." Hanna has appealed against the ruling.

But Christian women's hopes were rekindled late last year after Coptic lawyer Hoda Nasrallah and her brothers were granted an equal share of their father's inheritance. The November ruling by a Cairo family court took into account a constitutional article allowing Christian principles to be the basis of rulings on the minority's personal status affairs. Nasrallah's rare victory generated a buzz across Egypt, but it was not the first of its kind. In 2016, a Christian woman won a legal dispute with her brother, obtaining equal inheritance.

### Overcoming resistance

Coptic Christians have long complained of discrimination and underrepresentation in Egypt. They are the largest non-Muslim religious minority in the Middle East, and account for 10-15 percent of Egypt's predominantly Sunni Muslim population of 100 million. They have also been the target of Islamist militant attacks that have left more than 100 dead since December 2016.

Elizabeth Monier, an expert on Coptic affairs at the University of Cambridge, said applying Christian inheritance rules would meet resistance from within the legal system. Their application "has had to overcome resistance from entrenched practices and norms, both in the judiciary and society," she said. Though Nasrallah had already agreed with her brothers to split the estate equally, it took her around a year to have a court rule in her favor. She said she pursued the case in order to set a legal precedent for other Christian women.

"My fight was about ensuring that the constitution is applied," Nasrallah said. "Many judges are against applying Christian norms," she added. "It can be even more challenging when the heirs are in disagreement." Hanna also criticized a lack of legislation forcing judges to apply Christian rules. In building her case, she said she invoked the constitution and used the 2016 ruling as precedent. Hanna said she feared her appeal would be rejected, but would keep on challenging the decision. "I will even take it to the constitutional court if I have to," she said.

Lawyers say the lack of a personal status law for Christians is partly to blame for courts' resistance. "Coptic males sometimes push for Islamic laws to be applied since it's in their interest," lawyer Atef Nazmy said. "It is vital that a personal status law for Christians be created to regulate these issues." —AFP



**MORA:** Turkish-Cypriot Hasan Siber, co-founder of Coliveoil, holds freshly picked olives in Mora (Merice), a village in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) near the divided capital Nicosia. —AFP

export to the European Union. Complicating the export process is the fact that EU laws are not applied in the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), only recognized by Ankara. Olives harvested in the TRNC can't be registered as organic by the EU, even though the pair say all the olive groves they use are.

"We have to bring down these barriers," Siber says. On the northern side of the checkpoint, Siber and Philippides examine olive groves in Merice, a village surrounded by hills bearing a huge Turkish flag visible for miles across the buffer zone. When they first took olives

into the south in 2017, customs officers asked them to clean the northern olives for export to the south, they recall, even though nothing in the European regulations indicates this.

Resolving the Cyprus problem would more than double the island's overall gross domestic product to 17.4 billion euros (\$19 billion) over 20 years, according to a study by the Peace Research Institute Oslo Cyprus Centre (PCC). But since a summit in Switzerland collapsed in July 2017, there has been no movement in UN-sponsored negotiations for the divided Mediterranean island. —AFP

## International

# Girl's drowning sparks water riot in thirsty South African township

## Protest over shortages turns violent after death

**QWAQWA:** Eight-year-old Musa and her older sister Moleboheng trudged down the ravine with buckets and drum bottles to fetch water from a filthy stream because they were thirsty and tired of waiting for trucks meant to deliver emergency water that never showed up. But Musa never returned, her mother Phindile Mbele recalled, choking back tears. The little girl drowned in the stream, which is thick with sewage, mud and algae, probably pulled down by a strong underwater current.

"We rushed down there. She was still under the water... Two boys from the neighborhood went in and one carried her out," Mbele said. "The house is empty without her. She was such a sweet, quiet child". Musa's death last month further enflamed the mood among residents of Mandela Park township on the edge of Qwaqwa in South Africa, turning inter-

mittent protests over water shortages into a full-blown, week-long riot.

Protesters torched shops, overturned government vehicles and hurled bricks and bottles at riot police who responded with rubber bullets. South Africans have protested for years over unreliable supplies of water and power, but chronic mismanagement has been compounded by the effects of last year's drought, the worst in a century, which has been linked to climate change.

"It rains here all the time but they say there's

drought. Then how did that little girl drown because that stream was full?" said Malgas "Skinny" John, 39,

who used rocks and burning tyres during the January riot to barricade the road leading into Qwaqwa in a face-off with police. "We have to strike and burn things, only then do we get water," said the unemployed father of two, as he queued with neighbours to fill his container from a water truck. "We'll do it again, we'll keep

burning things if we have to," John added.

Officials fear riots like the one seen at Qwaqwa could be a sign of worsening climate-linked instabili-

ty to come, as dams and water pipes deteriorate further and the urban population continues to mushroom. South Africa's water minister Lindiwe Sisulu has promised 3 billion rand (\$203 million) to end the shortages in Qwaqwa. Its municipality owes half a billion rand for water, out of a national unpaid bill of nearly 9 billion rand.

But even Sisulu's own department has a 3.5 billion rand shortfall in maintenance funds, which it says risks a "detrimental impact on the national economy", especially if water supplies to the thirsty power utility Eskom and liquid fuel maker Sasol are disrupted. "We've been drinking this brown, filthy water since 2016," said little Musa's mother Mbele. "Nothing will change. I know, soon, I will have to go the same stream where my daughter died to get water." —Reuters



### Eight-year old drowns while fetching water

## Merkel party in crisis after 'heir' quits over German far right row

**BERLIN:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel's party and her plans to stay on until 2021 were plunged into disarray yesterday, after her heir-apparent gave up her leadership ambitions in a deepening crisis over ties between the centre and far right. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the leader of the centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU), opted out barely a year in the post - a period marked by internal battles over whether to cooperate with the anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD).

She announced that she was standing down as CDU leader and would not seek to be the party's candidate for chancellor in next year's general elections. AKK, as Kramp-Karrenbauer is popularly known, blamed the "unresolved relationship of parts of the CDU with the (far-right) AfD and (far-left) Left party" for her decision, a party source said. "This is an unusually serious situation for the CDU," said close Merkel ally and Economy Minister Peter Altmaier. "This is about our future as a modern

people's party of the centre."

While the party has a policy of no cooperation with either far left or far right at a national level, regional CDU lawmakers last week rogue and voted with MPs from the AfD to oust a far-left state premier in tiny central Thuringia. The breach in the political dam towards the AfD in Thuringia prompted Merkel's junior partners in the national government, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), to call urgent talks at the weekend about the partnership's future.

AKK's departure, the most prominent political head to roll after the Thuringia crisis, was "unsettling," SPD board member Michael Roth tweeted yesterday. It remains uncertain "whether decent democrats stand together in the battle for democracy and against nationalism," he added. With the race to the chancellery wide open again, Sueddeutsche Zeitung said the aftershocks could be huge. "It's very possible that the chancellor's exit is coming closer," it wrote.

#### Broken taboo

Voting alongside the far right breaches one of the fundamental taboos of post-World War II German politics—the refusal of mainstream parties to work with the extremes. AKK's attempts to impose rigid no-cooperation discipline from Berlin have foundered especially in Germany's former communist east, where strong showings

for the AfD and Left in some states threaten the ability of mainstream parties to form functioning coalition majorities. Germany's next national elections must take place by autumn next year, although the fractious coalition between the CDU, its Bavarian CSU allies and the centre-left SPD may not hold until then. By this summer, AKK hopes to have organized a process to find the person to lead the CDU into the next federal campaign. "It is clear that the party leadership and the chancellorship must be held by the same person," a party source quoted her as saying—an implicit rebuke to Merkel's 2018 decision to split the offices. The veteran chancellor gave up on the party leadership as a string of regional defeats and the growth of the far right undermined her popularity within her own ranks.

#### Race to the top

Despite Merkel naming her defense minister last July to lend her the gravitas of federal office, AKK never managed to stamp her authority on the CDU after her hair's-breadth win over challenger Friedrich Merz. Merkel has been in power since 2005 but said she would not run again for the highest office at the same time she gave up the CDU leadership.

Merz, a former rival of Merkel's, has been waiting in the wings, and still enjoys strong backing from the pro-business and more con-



**BERLIN:** Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (left), leader of Germany's conservative CDU party, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel pose during a meeting with their party's leadership yesterday. —AFP

servative wings of the party. Just last week, the former CDU parliamentary leader gave up his job at giant asset manager BlackRock "to support the party more strongly in its renewal and

re-enter politics", he said. Asked to comment on AKK's retreat yesterday, Merz said: "In a situation like this, smart thinking is more important than commenting quickly." —AFP

## Long road home for the Cape Town's apartheid dispossessed

**CAPE TOWN:** "It was just here. My house was number 41 Clifton Street," said Cassiem Morris, his voice catching as he points to where his Cape Town home was razed to enforce apartheid. Morris, a South African of Malay origin, took his first baby steps 56 years ago in the house in District 6, then a multiracial neighborhood of the coastal city. South Africa's white minority government in 1966 listed District 6 as a "white" area under its racial segregation policy. Most residents were forcibly moved because they were black or mixed-race and bulldozers destroyed their homes.

A quarter of a century after the fall of apartheid, this page in South Africa's dark history may have turned. But a court decision has raised hopes of returning home for the dispossessed people of District 6. "Whatever the color of your skin and whatever you believed in, we were a big family of almost 50,000 people," Morris said. "That was the amazing part because there was never a problem. It is sad, it is extremely sad." Scant trace remains of the little streets that crisscrossed at the foot of Table Mountain. Only a handful of churches and mosques were left standing when the area was cleared.

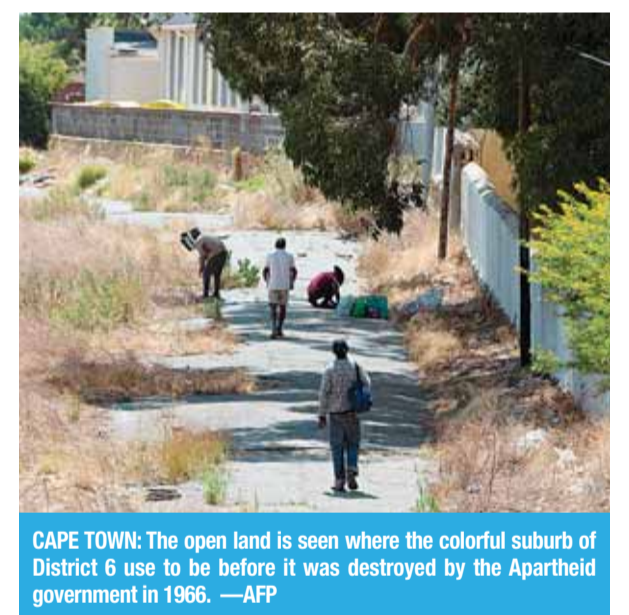
#### 'A blot cleaned up'

Though he was a child, Cassiem Morris has never forgotten the expulsions of February 11, 1966 under the Group Areas Act that assigned different racial groups to separate areas. "I can still see the day where the Group Areas Act people went to my grandfather and told him that he has to move. He said 'You can literally demolish everything around me, I will wait until my time comes to move.'"

The head of the household held out for four years before being driven away. "When we returned just to come and see the place one or two days later, the whole house was flattened already," Morris said. Future head of state PW Botha, then minister for community development and colored affairs overseeing segregation, praised the operation, calling District 6 a "blot" that needed cleaning up. All non-white residents were forcibly displaced to Cape Town's distant shanty townships.

"At that time, we colored people were treated like nothing," said Salie Davis, who described eviction as "traumatic". "We had to leave in such a hurry. We had to leave so many things behind and move to an area we didn't know nothing about, to live in a jungle," Davis, 59, said. His family wound up in Hanover Park, more than 20 kilometers away. Retired, he lives in a small apartment in a crowded neighborhood overrun by crime and drugs.

"There was a better life back then in District 6," Davis said, adding that people are "determined to move back to their land." The fight to return began with the end of white minority rule and the arrival of democracy under the late president Nelson Mandela in 1994, with a brand-new constitution. When the District 6 dispossessed mark their evictions on Tuesday, the country will also be commemorating the 30th anniversary of Mandela's release from jail on February 11, 1990.



**CAPE TOWN:** The open land is seen where the colorful suburb of District 6 used to be before it was destroyed by the Apartheid government in 1966. —AFP

#### 'Very inept government'

A law passed that year was intended to provide restitution of rights in land to people or communities dispossessed because of past racially discriminatory laws or practices. Former residents of District 6 hoped for a swift return, but it took a decade for the first ones to be resettled in 2004. Even today, only a few hundred people have been reinstated. "I don't think that they had any idea or clue on how to handle restitution," said Shaheed Ajad, the District 6 Working Committee chairman.

"Most of all, although there was money, the money was squandered. In a nutshell I would say we had a very inept government for 24 years," the 62-year-old official said. Running out of patience, Ajad and about 1,000 other former residents of District 6 turned to the legal system two years ago. To widespread surprise, a judge last December ordered the government to take action.

The authorities swiftly presented a proposal for 954 new homes and the resettlement of the plaintiffs and their families by 2024. Approached by AFP, Land Reform Minister Thoko Zile did not respond, but her services stated that a rebuilt District 6 "should be as close as possible to the urban environment from which they were so unjustly removed, within the constraints of available funding and the exigencies of contemporary lifestyles." Cape Town, the stronghold of the opposition Democratic Alliance, could give District 6 "a look of the new century", declared the city councillor handling the matter, Alderman Marian Nieuwoudt. "This is not the time to play political games. I'm determined to make sure that they all come back," she said. Renamed "Sonneblom" ("Sunflower" in Afrikaans) under apartheid, District 6 has seen its original name restored to road signs and Nieuwoudt hopes that building work will start "in the next month or two".

"We have suffered enough, we now only want what is rightfully ours," Ajad said. "We need to heal and... come back to the land that we love." It may prove an example in South Africa, split over a constitutional reform that would enable the expropriation without compensation of land held by the white minority to benefit the black majority. "We believe that this small enclave that we call District 6, where life started for many of our forefathers, whether they were white, black or brown, this is where transformation and change can come in South Africa," Ajad said. —AFP

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## International

# Taiwan scrambles jets to intercept Chinese planes as tensions spike

## China says Taiwan is 'playing with fire'

**TAIPEI:** Taiwan's air force scrambled for a second day in a row yesterday to intercept Chinese jets that approached the island claimed by Beijing as its own, as tensions between the two took on a potentially dangerous military dimension. Taiwan's Defense Ministry said Chinese jets, accompanying H-6 bombers, briefly crossed an unofficial mid-line in the Taiwan Strait that separates the two, prompting its air force to rush to intercept and give verbal warnings to leave.

The Chinese aircraft then withdrew to the western side of the line, the ministry added, without identifying the jets. The H-6s were on a training mission in the Pacific having passed through the Bashi Channel that separates Taiwan from the Philippines, the ministry added and shared a picture of a Taiwan F-16 accompanying one of the H-6 bombers.

China has been flying what it calls "island encirclement" drills on-off since 2016 when Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen first took office. Beijing believes Tsai, who won re-election last month, wishes to push the island's formal independence. Tsai says Taiwan is an independent country called the Republic of China, its official name. On Sunday too, Chinese jets, including J-11 fighters, flew into the Bashi Channel then out into the Pacific before heading back to base via the Miyako Strait, located between Japan's islands of Miyako and Okinawa, to the northeast of Taiwan.

According to Taiwan's official Central News Agency, the F-16s scrambled on Sunday carried live missiles. There was no immediate comment from China yesterday's incident. This is only the second time since 2016 that Taiwan has said that Chinese jets had crossed the strait's median line. Their military aircraft tend to keep to their own sides. China's Taiwan Affairs Office, though, urged Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) "not to play with fire".

The DPP have been "adopting a stance that increases cross-strait confrontation, intensifying new moves for Taiwan-US collusion, using the opportunity to seek independence and openly carrying out dangerous provocations", it added. China's Eastern Theatre Command described Sunday's fly-by of military's combat ready patrol as a "completely legitimate and necessary action aimed at the current situation in the Taiwan Strait and safeguarding national sovereignty".

### Taiwan-Beijing tensions

The latest fly-bys came as Taiwan's vice-president elect, William Lai, was returning from a visit to Washington, where he attended the high-profile National Prayer Breakfast, at which US President Donald Trump spoke. China denounced Lai's trip. Washington is Taipei's most important backer and arms supplier, despite the absence of official diplomatic ties.

China says Taiwan is the most sensitive issue in its relations with the United States. Relations with the Taipei and Beijing have further soured recently over the coronavirus outbreak, with Taiwan accusing China of preventing the island from accessing full information from the World Health Organization or attending its meetings. China should focus on controlling the spread of the virus, rather than threatening Taiwan, Tsai said yesterday. Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council said the island's 23 million people would not bow down to threats. "In recent years, Communist aircraft and warships have frequented the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait and attempted to use arms to force unification," it said. "Various provocative acts have seriously damaged the status quo of the Taiwan Strait and have increased regional tensions." — Reuters



**IN THE AIR:** Photo shows a Taiwanese F-16 fighter jet flying next to a Chinese H-6 bomber (top) in Taiwan's airspace. Taiwan said it scrambled fighter jets yesterday after Chinese military aircraft briefly crossed into its airspace, the first major military provocation since the island's Beijing-wary president was re-elected in a landslide. — AFP

## On Thai Buddhist holy day, gunman's carnage shatters temple peace

**WAT PA SATTHARUAM:** Thai nun Amornrat Putta-ariya-wong was washing dishes in preparation to host Buddhist devotees on a holy day when a military Humvee pulled up just inside the temple gates and the driver started shooting into the road. "When the first round of shots was fired, everyone thought it was one of those firecrackers going off," Amornrat, clad in white robes, recalled on Sunday.

Instead, a Thai soldier fleeing his military base after killing a guard and his commanding officer was gunning people down in the early stages of an 18-hour shooting spree in which he would kill 29 people. "Anybody, any vehicle within his eyesight, he'd shoot them all," Amornrat said.

The soldier, identified as Jakrapanth Thomma, was finally shot dead early Sunday in the basement of the Terminal 21 shopping mall in the northeastern city of Nakhon Ratchasima. But the rampage began before he reached the mall, and it included a stop at Wat Pa Saththaruam, where the gunman started shooting from just inside the gates of the normally serene temple.

### Passers-by targeted

In all, nine people, including two police officers, died outside the tree-lined temple as the gunman shot at his pursuers and then targeted passers-by, according to



**NAKHON RATCHASIMA:** Buddhist monk Phra Manasawin looks at the aftermath of the mass shooting inside the grounds of Wat Pa Saththaruam temple in the Thai northeastern city of Nakhon Ratchasima. — AFP

residents who witnessed the shooting. Police have not yet confirmed exactly how many people died at each location. "When the first round of shots was fired, we were all still going about our usual business."

The monks were sweeping and I was washing dishes and talking to a dog," nun Amornrat said. Saturday was Makha Bucha day in Thailand, a holiday in the Theravada Buddhist tradition that honors the Buddha ordaining some of his first followers. Temples typically host candlelight ceremonies, but this year the carnage overshadowed the event.

Saffron-robed monk Luang Phi Kla, said he was

sweeping the road in front of the temple at around 4:30 pm on Saturday when the Humvee pulled up. When he heard gunshots, he turned around. Witnesses say the soldier - who military officials said had training in ambush techniques - positioned himself at an intersection just meters (yards) from the gate where he could see vehicles coming from two sides but could remain hidden. He began firing at police vehicles in a standoff that lasted about 30 minutes. At some point, however, the gunman also began targeting passers-by.

### 'One by one'

Luang Phi Kla vividly remembers watching the soldier gun down a student on a motorbike. "The shooter still went over and shot the student in the head, even though he already fired many bullets," he said. Another car, with five passengers, was already backing away when the shooter fired at the tires. "He then went back to his vehicle, picked a new gun, and went over to open the car doors and shot them one by one," Luang Phi Kla said. Four of the five passengers died. The soldier then got back into the stolen Humvee and drove away, reaching the shopping mall where he made his last stand.

By Sunday afternoon, yellow police tape cordoned off the street with dozens of circles marking where bullet casings were found. The temple's stunned monks and nuns were left with the memory of authorities piling up bodies on the road outside their gates. "I never dreamed this would happen in a temple, in our country," said the monk, Luang Phi Kla. "It's like he didn't see the value of other people's lives, just shooting at them like they were vegetables or fish," he said. "He didn't even spare a child." — Reuters

## Opposition cries fraud; Azerbaijan ruling party wins

**BAKU:** Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev's ruling party celebrated yesterday a win in parliamentary polls but the opposition claimed the election was "totally falsified". Faced with public discontent over a slowing economy, Aliyev, 58, hoped to boost the government's image by holding early elections and replacing discredited old elites with younger technocrats.

Counting showed the Yeni (New) Azerbaijan party with 65 seats in the 125-member parliament, after 87 percent of electoral precincts declared results in the first-past-the-post ballot, said central election commission chief Mazahir Panahov. The sole opposition politician who made it to the new legislature was Erkin Gadirly of Republican Alternative Party (ReAP) party while all the other parties represented in the parliament, the Milli Majlis, are seen as pro-Aliyev.

On Sunday night, Vice Prime Minister and Yeni Azerbaijan executive secretary Ali Ahmedov congratulated his party on "yet another great victory" after exit polls put it on a course to win a majority of seats. "We are grateful to those who have voted in support of our president's policies," Ahmedov told journalists.

The ruling party - which faced little challenge from the embattled opposition - had promised a democratic election, but opposition parties accused the government of limiting their ability to campaign and several parties boycotted the vote. "The elections were totally falsified," opposition leader Arif Gadjiyly of the Musavat party told AFP after the polls closed, denouncing what he claimed was widespread ballot stuffing and multiple voting. More than 5.3 million people were eligible to vote, and turnout stood at 47.8 percent, election officials said.

### Public anger

Elections had originally been scheduled for November this year but in December Aliyev called early polls after a surprise dissolution of the legislature that is dominated by his ruling party. The move followed the replacement of the prime minister and a number of veteran officials within the presidential administration and the government.

Analyst Anar Mammadli noted that public anger over economic problems has been growing in the South Caucasus country of nine million people. "Aliyev chose to hold elections eight months ahead of schedule as he fears that protest sentiment would grow further by November," he said. Highly dependent on oil exports, the country has since 2015 been hit by a drop in energy prices and the global economic downturn, and has sharply devalued its currency, the manat.

### 'Arrested and tortured'

With most powers concentrated in the presidency, parliament has a limited role in the Caspian nation's political system. Electoral commissions are controlled by Aliyev's party and all of the oil-rich country's television stations refused to allocate airtime to the opposition parties. Prominent opposition leader Isa Gambar decried draconian restrictions on freedom of assembly in Azerbaijan where "people are being arrested and tortured" for taking part in peaceful protest rallies. None of the elections held in Azerbaijan since Aliyev came to power have been recognized as free and fair by international observers.

Aliyev has ruled the ex-Soviet state with an iron fist since he was first elected in 2003, after the death of his father, Azerbaijan's Soviet-era Communist leader and former KGB general Heydar Aliyev. Under the Aliyev dynasty, Baku has faced strong international criticism for persecuting political opponents and suffocating independent media. Sunday's ballot has been monitored by international observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. — AFP

## Heavy rains bring both relief and new dangers to bushfire-hit Australia

**MELBOURNE:** A four-day downpour across Australia's east coast has brought relief after months of devastating bushfires and years of drought, but also widespread storm damage and forecasts of more wild weather to come. The weekend drenching represented the biggest sustained run of rainfall in Sydney and surrounding areas for 30 years, dousing some bushfires and replenishing depleted dams across New South Wales, the country's most populous state. Some rural areas received more rain in recent days than they had in the entirety of the past year - a startling and swift turnaround from the bushfires that have killed 33 people and ravaged large parts of the east coast.

"It's amazing what the smell of the rain can do to people's spirits," Ben Shields, the mayor of the inland city of Dubbo, told Reuters on the phone. Like many other rural towns, Dubbo has been beset by duststorms and subjected to water restrictions on the back of a three-year drought. James Jackson, a sheep and cattle farmer in the drought-hit Guyra district some 500 kilometers north of Sydney, told Reuters the region was starting to turn green again.

"This one event won't replenish the whole soil moisture profile. We'll need a couple of these, but this is certainly a good start for those people who got it," said Jackson, who is also the president of industry body NSW Farmers. "I have two-year-old sheep who are seeing green grass for the first time." Bushfire warning signs were almost swamped by floods in several areas as the weekend rainfall cut power to tens of thousands of homes, caused travel chaos in Sydney and closed scores of schools for the start of the week.

Almost 400 millimeters of rain fell in the Sydney area and surrounding areas. The Warragamba Dam, which supplies about four-fifths of Sydney's water, jumped from about 40% to above 60% full in just over a week, the state's water authority said, shoring up water supplies for the city of 5 million. The NSW Rural Fire Service's Sydney headquarters has been reconfigured to respond to floods and storm damage because of the rapid shift in the weather threat.

Parts of northern and inland NSW, along with southern Queensland, have been in drought since 2016, severely reducing river and dam levels while also creating the tinder-dry conditions that have fuelled this season's deadly bushfires. The weekend rain extinguished some of the worst bushfires in NSW, including the Gopspers Mountain 'megafire' in the Blue Mountains and the Currawon blaze on the south coast.

Each burned for months, together razing more than 1 million hectares (2.5 million acres) of bushland and destroying hundreds of homes. — Reuters



**MANILA:** Staff and supporters raise their clenched fists during a protest in support of broadcaster ABS-CBN in Manila yesterday. — AFP

## Philippines moves to shut down top broadcaster

**MANILA:** The Philippine government yesterday urged the Supreme Court to cancel the franchises of the country's top broadcaster, ABS-CBN Corp, a move slammed by opposition lawmakers and activists as an attack designed to intimidate independent media.

The government said the 66-year-old entertainment and media conglomerate, which drew the ire of President Rodrigo Duterte during his 2016 election campaign, had violated ownership laws and was involved in "highly abusive practices". Duterte's opponents said the complaint was timed to deny Congress the chance to renew the franchise of ABS-CBN, which employs nearly 7,000 people and engages hundreds of celebrities in radio, television and online content.

Solicitor-General and staunch Duterte loyalist Jose Calida said ABS-CBN had for too long shown greed and abuse of what was a privileged franchise. "We want to put an end to what we discovered to be highly abusive practices of ABS-CBN benefiting a greedy few at the expense of millions of its loyal subscribers", Calida said in a statement. ABS-CBN denied that and said the complaint appeared to be

"an effort to shut down ABS-CBN to the serious prejudice of millions of Filipinos".

Duterte has threatened for three years to torpedo the franchise renewal of ABS-CBN, which Duterte accuses of refusing to air his campaign commercials. ABS-CBN has not directly responded to Duterte's claims, but its chairman, Eugenio Lopez said at the company stockholders' meeting in 2017 that it was "part and parcel of our work being a media institution". Lopez also said the company deals with these problems privately.

The move comes at a time of concerns among some investors about regulatory unpredictability following a Duterte-ordered review of government contracts, which included big losses for two water firms whose billionaire owners Duterte has criticized. ABS-CBN has lost 65% of its share value since Duterte assumed office in June 2016. It fell as much as 2.9% on Monday. In 2018, the government revoked the license of Rappler, a news website known for its tough scrutiny of Duterte, who called it a "fake news outlet" sponsored by American spies. Rappler still operates pending appeal.

Calida said ABS-CBN started a pay-per-view channel without approval and charges fees not supposed to be levied. He said that like Rappler, ABS-CBN had breached foreign ownership restrictions behind an "elaborately crafted corporate veil". The National Union of Journalists in the Philippines said the Supreme Court and Congress had the chance to prove they were independent and not beholden to Duterte. — Reuters

## Analysis

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## No phones, no leaks: Lagarde is making her mark on ECB

Gathered in a German mountain castle last November for an evening retreat that ended with a whiskey-tasting, rebel European Central Bank policymakers and Christine Lagarde, their newly confirmed president, made a pact. Lagarde pledged to spend more time listening, and not to front-run decisions before policymakers had weighed in, as her predecessor Mario Draghi was often accused of doing. In return, she asked for discipline from the Governing Council, the ECB's top policymaking body, which comprises national central bank chiefs from the 19 euro zone countries and six Executive Board members, including Lagarde herself.

Governors had to stop trashing policy decisions once taken and keep internal disputes out of the media, presenting a common external front, 11 sources - both critics and supporters of the ECB's last, controversial stimulus package - told Reuters. A look at her first three months in office suggests Lagarde is using the entente of Schlosshotel Kronberg to make subtle but significant changes at Europe's most powerful institution. "The change is cultural but quite profound," one of the sources, who asked not to be named, told Reuters. "Culture drives how we make decisions so it impacts policy."

A greater emphasis on consensus has boosted the Governing Council's role and given more voice to critics like Germany whose support may be vital whenever the next downturn comes, most of the sources, all with direct knowledge of the inner workings of the ECB, said. But Lagarde has also made clear that Draghi's disputed September stimulus package will not be revisited, and has kept on his key aides, architects of the plan. In Europe, the role of ECB president is uniquely powerful: backed by the Governing Council, she or he is the face and voice of the institution, carrying its message to businesses and households and to world leaders.

### Dissenters

Meetings now start several hours earlier, leaving more time for deliberation and giving policymakers time to speak. Lagarde mostly presides over the debate, many of sources said, talking relatively little herself and keeping her own views quiet to foster open debate. "When governors talk, she listens. That doesn't sound like a big deal but Mario was often on his phone or iPad," a second source said. "Madame Lagarde tells people to put their phones away."

Meeting proposals are now handed to governors up to a week in advance, some of the sources added, not just hours before for fear of leaks. These changes have shifted power away from the close circle of advisers that Draghi relied on and given Governing Council members more capacity to shape the debate, reducing the need to bring disagreements into the open. All of the sources said they consider Draghi - known as 'the man who saved the euro' - a superb central banker. But his willingness to forego consensus - as in September, when he pushed through the new stimulus package despite strong opposition - annoyed some policymakers, prompting open dissent.

In another sign the peace is holding, Governing Council members have largely accepted Lagarde's request not to publicly discuss the substance of the ECB's wide-ranging policy review. Colleagues said Lagarde's charm and approachability contrasted with the more aloof Draghi. She takes the staff elevators inside the ECB tower, asks people's names and happily chats to colleagues. But the former French finance minister is a ruthless timekeeper, keeping meetings on schedule and often reminding people to keep their messages short and to the point. "In one (European Systemic Risk Board) meeting, when a speaker ran out of time and pleaded for leniency, she said sorry, we need to move on, and that was it," a third source said.

### Politically savvy

What didn't change is also significant. ECB Chief Economist Philip Lane continues to lead policy discussions, given the necessary space by Lagarde, a former International Monetary Fund chief and a lawyer by training who lacks the monetary policy expertise of her predecessors. "Christine knows her limitations on monetary policy and knows that she needs to preside over the debate and not dominate it," a fourth source said. "She is more presidential."

Former colleagues at the IMF describe her as a tough negotiator whose strength was consensus-building. Regarded as more politically adept than Draghi, Lagarde is said to be on cordial terms with European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Their support could be vital as the ECB's depleted policy arsenal puts the onus on governments to drive growth. In her first speech in charge, Lagarde praised German ex-finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, a stern ECB critic. "They listened to Draghi during the crisis but not so much when things were going well," a fifth source said. — Reuters

All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.



(Clockwise from top left) Rana, a 20-year-old Iranian biology student, is pictured in the upmarket Tehran district of Tajrish on Feb 9, 2020; An Iranian man plays the violin in a commercial area in northern Tehran; Iranian businessman Mohammadreza Khademi, vice-president of the Delham Tabesh company that sells smart technology devices from Italy for luxury homes, speaks with AFP during an interview in northern Tehran; An Iranian craftsman works at a workshop in the southern Tehran district of Molavi. — AFP photos

## Iranians feel strain of turmoil and sanctions

On a crisp winter's day the snow glistens on the mountains above Tehran, but the mood is as heavy as the pall of pollution that often shrouds Iran's capital. In a country weighed down by sanctions, shaken by protests and stressed by military tensions with the United States, many Tehranis struggle to hide their pessimism. "Life is really hard right now. The situation here is unpredictable," said Rana, a 20-year-old biology student walking in the upmarket district of Tajrish.

It is a part of the city where young women subtly thwart the Islamic republic's conservative dress codes, opting for short coats, stylish make-up and scarves revealing ever more hair. But, despite such relative liberties, Rana said she feels trapped. "The quality of life isn't good at all - we have pollution, angry people, high prices," she said, pointing also to a "huge class gap" and Iran's deepening "isolation".

Iran's economy has been battered since US President Donald Trump in 2018 abandoned an international nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions and a "maximum pressure" campaign. When Iran hiked petrol prices in November, nationwide protests erupted and turned violent before security forces put them down amid a near-total internet blackout. Tensions with Washington escalated in early January when a US drone strike killed powerful Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad.

Iran retaliated by targeting US forces but then accidentally shot down a Ukrainian airliner, killing all 176 people on board, in a tragedy that sparked anger at home and

abroad. Rana said she still feels "sad" about the disaster that claimed the lives of many young people who had left Iran to study abroad.

### 'Angry with Trump'

One young Iranian who has chosen to stay in her country is Pegah Golami, a 25-year-old engineer who was shopping three days ahead of her wedding. "The country's economic condition is now really difficult, especially for youths," she said, dressed in a chic coat and suede boots. "I feel very bad... my friends have decided to leave. But I, as an Iranian, decided to stay and build my country." The strains of a violin filled the air as a busker tried to make himself heard above the noise of the heavy traffic.

It is increasingly difficult to make a living, said Bahram Sobhani, a 47-year-old electrician who was unshaven, nervous and almost completely toothless. "It's a little difficult to find work these days, but it is out there," he said. "The sanctions have of course affected us, but we have to tolerate it because we can't do anything else. We live in Iran, not somewhere else."

The economic situation is also hurting Mohammadreza Khademi, vice-president of the Delham Tabesh company that sells smart technology devices from Italy for luxury homes. His company took a hit after the renewed sanctions tripled costs, forcing it to lay off 20 of its 30 employees. "The end of 2018 was awful and all of 2019 was not good at all," said Mohammadreza. "I will continue to run my business. I will try to have that line of production in Iran

locally, but it is super difficult to change," he said, adding that "I am angry with Mr Trump".

### 'We feel hopeless'

If the mood is glum in Tehran's middle and upper class districts, it's even worse in the poorer areas of the sprawling city of eight million people. In the southern district of Molavi, a melange of architectural styles gives way to a maze of alleyways and shops where craftsmen practice time-honored trades. Only a few women are seen on the streets, most of them dressed in chadors and many carrying freshly baked flatbread.

Mehdi Golzadeh, a businessman who imports goods from Asia, looked exhausted as he walked out of a grocery store. "Living in Iran has become very hard. With this economic situation, one can't import anything, and Iran doesn't have the materials" needed to make such products, he said. "I am single... One can't start a family on this meagre income. We feel hopeless."

Akbar Gharibvand, a 50-year-old shop-owner and father of five, said his income is "just enough to eat and survive". "These sanctions of course do affect things... It's the lower class that has come under pressure." But, despite the hardships, he said Iran "is not a bad country" and that he considers himself lucky compared with people living in strife-torn neighboring nations. "We aren't like Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan, or other countries where there are killings every day," he said. "We are better off because we have security." — AFP

## Small businesses suffer as China virus shuts communities

Wang Li's guesthouse sits a stone's throw from the Great Wall, an idyllic setting for a weekend getaway. But in these uncertain times of the new coronavirus, Wang and her family are the only occupants. The 35-year-old woman now spends her days disinfecting Jingfangyuan Farmhouse and its empty restaurant near Beijing, as millions of people across the country stay home, either under government orders or out of caution.

As the virus claims more lives and infects thousands of people every day, it is also taking a toll on the country's small businesses that rely on spending from China's growing middle-class. "We used to be able to have up to 10 tables of guests a day during this period," she told AFP. "There is no one now." While she usually earns around 10,000 yuan (\$1,400) during the Lunar New Year holiday, her business was closed this year. "We rely on this for our livelihood. We can only wait for the epi-

dem to pass," she said, noting that she will face problems if the situation persists for more than two months. I don't have other (backup) plans."

### Fewer buyers

Across Beijing's rural outskirts, guesthouses, restaurants and tourist attractions have been deserted for almost two weeks. The Great Wall and Ming dynasty tombs remain closed and people are urged to stay home - with many working remotely even after the Spring Festival break ended. Many bus and train services have been suspended across the country, and central Hubei province, the epicentre of the outbreak, has effectively been locked down. Supermarkets are struggling to sell their food as families have enough after stocking up for holiday gatherings that have not been held - in line with officials' advice.

At the Shijihualian Supermarket in Heishanzhai village, boxes of Lunar New Year goods, including food items such as persimmons, remain stacked and unsold. "They are bought as gifts, but people have not been visiting their relatives this year," said its shopkeeper surnamed Yang. "With no relatives to host this year, it will take time for them to deplete their supplies." With analysts warning that the virus could cut into the country's already slowing economy, China's central bank has urged financial institutions to continue stepping up support for small and micro

enterprises. But this has not stopped business owners from fretting over an uncertain future.

### No outsiders

Adding to the isolation of rural communities, villages have closed themselves off from "outsiders" in a bid to ensure the new coronavirus, which has claimed more than 900 lives, stays out. Bright red banners proclaiming the importance of epidemic prevention drape across the entrances of villages, and masked volunteers stand guard at each entry point. Residents who would have typically returned to work in cities after the Spring Festival break are still in their hometowns as well.

In the Heishanzhai village north of Beijing, there are blockades on roads leading into its residential areas. "We stopped allowing people in from the second day of the Lunar New Year," said Zhang Xinao, a 25-year-old volunteer manning one of the entrances. "We also disinfect the entire village every day in the mornings and afternoons," he told AFP, as another volunteer walked around spraying a can of disinfectant. In the background, announcements blaring over loudspeakers remind residents of the importance of donning masks. Zhang added that he does not usually work in the village, but has a job with a railway-related business in nearby Changping district. But his company, like many others across the country, has yet to confirm when regular operations will resume. — AFP

## Virus transforms daily life on fearful Hong Kong streets

Hunkering down in cramped apartments and raiding supermarket shelves for food and masks, Hong Kongers are fretting about the future as fear of the new coronavirus sweeps one of the world's most densely populated cities. Many in the Asian financial hub of seven million - where the 2002-03 SARS outbreak killed 299 people - are weighing up their options against an unseen danger. "I feel like I'm in a washing machine with other pregnant women trying to figure out what to do," says Natalie Belbin, 35, who is expecting her first child and frantically considering her choices. Her baby is due in early April, a period some experts warn could be the peak of the outbreak.

Hong Kong's already under-pressure public hospitals have asked partners and family not to attend births to reduce pressure on wards. Some expectant mothers in her WhatsApp groups are scraping together cash to go private, while others have travelled overseas or are considering it. Belbin is leaning towards staying the course despite knowing her partner may not be able to be there. "I've

accepted that," she said. "But my main concern now is whether the baby will be safe in the hospital."

Many of Hong Kong's inhabitants are having similar discussions about life in a city that has firsthand experience of a deadly outbreak. In 2002-03 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, swept through hospitals and homes. The epidemic left profound psychological scars and saddled locals with a deep distrust of authorities in Beijing who initially covered up the outbreak.

### Panic-buying and protests

With 36 cases of the novel coronavirus confirmed so far in Hong Kong, one of whom died, everyone fears a repeat. At the most extreme end, fear and distrust of authorities have sparked extraordinary, and at times unnecessary, scenes of panic. Supermarket shelves in many districts have been stripped of hand sanitizers, toilet paper, rice and pasta, spurred by false rumors of shortages that the government has condemned.

An acute paucity of surgical masks is real however, with long queues whenever a consignment comes in. At one pharmacy last week a crowd of 10,000 people turned up, some camping out overnight. Kris Choi, a new mother, said trying to find masks is all her neighbors talk about these days. One 70-year-old neighbor was looking for ways to make her dwindling stock last longer.

"I wanted to stop her from washing the surgical masks, but I don't have more to share with her as I have elderly



Shoppers wearing protective facemasks walk past bare supermarket shelves, usually stocked with toilet paper and kitchen rolls, in Hong Kong on Feb 6, 2020. — AFP

parents and a child to look after," Choi told AFP. Attitudes have hardened compared to the city-wide solidarity that permeated Hong Kong during the SARS outbreak. Police have clashed with protesters opposed to arrivals from mainland China or quarantine facilities in their neighborhoods. One planned quarantine block was even fire-bombed. Thousands of medics, including frontline doctors and nurses, went on strike last week calling for the border to be sealed. — AFP

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020

**12** NBK-Egypt reports KD 39.6m in net profits in FY2019, up 8.31% Y-o-Y**13** Action-packed Toyota Gazoo racing event**14** KIB sponsors the Tenders Forum for SMEs

## Zain Kuwait signs MoU with Tamdeen Real Estate Company

### Tamdeen Square to feature Kuwait's first 5G-connected smart residential towers



KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, Tamdeen Real Estate Company CEO Mohammed Abdulhamid Al-Marzouq, Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti and the executive management teams from both companies during the signing ceremony.

- Eaman Al-Roudhan: Our partnership with Tamdeen is a clear reflection of Zain's leading role as a main partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait.
- Mohammed Al-Marzouq: We aim to redefine residential real estate projects in a unique and unprecedented way as per the highest international standards.

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tamdeen Real Estate Company, a subsidiary of Tamdeen Group Company, to offer the latest and most advanced 5G-connected solutions to power the three residential towers of the Tamdeen Square real estate project in Sabah Al-Salem. With this announcement, Tamdeen Square features Kuwait's first 5G-connected smart residential towers.

The announcement came during Zain's participation as a Strategic Sponsor in the Kuwait Tech Expo 2020 at the International Fairground in Mishref. The signing ceremony witnessed the presence of Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, Tamdeen Real Estate Company CEO Mohammed Abdulhamid Al-Marzouq, Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, as well as the executive management teams from both companies.

As part of this MoU, Zain will offer a number of the latest and most advanced smart services and solutions in networking and home security to power the three residential towers in the Tamdeen Square real estate project at Sabah Al Salem area. The solutions will be fully powered by the revolutionary fifth generation wireless technology (5G), including superfast 5G Internet coverage, integrated VSaaS surveillance platform for video recording, storage, remote viewing, and management alerts, as well as a wide range of cybersecurity solutions. Zain will also offer many of its Zain LIFE smart home services and solutions to power the residential apartments in the three towers, including indoor surveillance cameras, smart doorbells, motion sensors, smart smoke detectors, and much more.

Tamdeen Square is considered one of Kuwait's leading and largest real estate projects for residence, shopping, and hospitality. The project comprises three impressive 40-story high-rise residential towers, one of the highest residential towers in Kuwait, that are strategically located in Sabah Al-Salem with access to two of Kuwait's main highways - the Fahahel Expressway and the Sixth Ring Road Expressway. The project features 256 sea view residential apartments, a shopping center with 74 retail stores, as well as two buildings with hotel apartments and a business hotel, all over 37,000 square meters.

During the signing ceremony, Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan said: "Today we are pleased to sign an MoU with our partners at Tamdeen Real Estate Company to power Kuwait's first 5G-connected smart residential towers. This partnership is a clear



KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan and Tamdeen Real Estate Company CEO Mohammed Abdulhamid Al-Marzouq sign the MoU.

reflection of Zain's leading role as a main partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait, where we offer the latest and most advanced tech solutions as per the highest international standards to the local business community".

Al-Roudhan added: "In the past few years, we have put forth many strategic goals through which we demonstrate our utmost commitment in expanding in smart life and digital transformation applications in the country, with the aim of achieving the goals of Kuwait's National Development Plan (New Kuwait 2035) that stems from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's conceptualized vision of a New Kuwait by 2035. With today's partnership, we take a new step forward into achieving these goals".

Al-Roudhan explained: "To affirm its leadership, Zain was the first telecom operator to commercially launch fifth generation wireless technology (5G) last year in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas. As the telecom sector is currently directing towards digital transformation with significant

pace, it was evident that mobile telecom networks were not capable of meeting the future needs of the business sector with what was available back then. For that, Zain's early commercial launch of 5G services came to keep up with the fast-paced and ever-evolving lifestyle patterns of the community on all levels".

Al-Roudhan continued: "After we succeeded in designing an integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure, we are proud to announce that 5G technology will be the cornerstone for powering all the solutions and services we will be offering to Tamdeen Square's three residential towers. This will make them the first 5G-connected smart residential towers in Kuwait, and we are excited to see the innovative services this revolutionary technology will allow on our network, the biggest and most advanced in the country".

During the signing ceremony, Tamdeen Real Estate Company CEO Mohammed Abdulhamid Al-Marzouq said: "We are delighted to sign this MoU with Zain to power the residential towers of our unique project,

Tamdeen Square, with the latest innovative solutions, especially 5G technologies, to make them the first smart residential towers of their kind in Kuwait. The project features a cutting-edge blend of innovation, smart design and the highest quality standards, as well as high-end services and facilities, making it a premiere address for a modern lifestyle".

Al-Marzouq added: "We selected Zain to power Tamdeen Square with the latest communications and home security solutions due to the fact that it is the leading provider of the most advanced digital services in Kuwait. We were keen on offering our customers a comprehensive package for a full residence, shopping and hospitality experience, powered by the latest technologies that meet the highest international standards. Through this project, we aim at redefining residential real estate projects in a unique and unprecedented way, while offering the real estate sector an added and refreshed value".

Zain recently announced its strategic sponsorship of Kuwait Tech Expo 2020, considered Kuwait's biggest event for technology and telecommunications services. The event aimed at offering effective solutions to the country's various bodies with the aim of serving the community's needs.

Zain's support to the event came to affirm its commitment in being present at the various activities and programs that contribute to pushing the national economy wheel and achieve the country's developmental goals, especially those centered around technology and telecommunications. As the world goes through comprehensive digital transformation, Zain expressed its commitment and readiness to be a main contributing partner of Kuwait's digital transformation journey.

Through its dedicated booth at the Kuwait Tech Expo 2020, Zain showcased its capabilities as an active partner in empowering a smart life, a safe community, and an efficient business sector to achieve the goals of the Kuwait National Development Plan (New Kuwait 2035), which is based on five expected outcomes and seven key pillars. Zain considers itself a main partner in the achievement of this plan.

Zain strongly believes in the crucial role played by private sector organizations in supporting social and economic sustainability projects, as well as further pushing the entrepreneurial community's growth in the country. Springing from its growing commitment towards practicing its social responsibility, the company is committed to printing a positive print through all its activities. This has led Zain to embrace the most influential issues in the community, including the support of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Business

# NBK-Egypt reports KD 39.6m in net profits in FY2019, up 8.31% Y-o-Y

KUWAIT: NBK-Egypt - a member of NBK Group - reported EGP 2.169 billion in net profits (KD 39.6 million) by the end of 2019 up 8.31 percent compared to EGP 2.002 billion in 2018 (KD 34.2 million).

Customer loans and facilities to customers stood at EGP 31.55 billion up by 5.40 percent compared to EGP 29.93 billion by the end of 30 September 2019. Total customers' deposits grew to reach EGP 51.57 billion, whereas Owners' Equity grew by 6.31 percent to EGP 8.01 billion compared to EGP 7.54 billion by the end of September 2019. Net Interest Income stood at EGP 3.09 billion, up by 11.53 percent compared to EGP 2.77 billion in 2018. Meanwhile, Net Operating Income increased by 9.01 percent as it jumped to EGP 3.77 billion compared to 3.46 billion in 2018.

Return on Average Assets (ROA) increased by 0.13 percent as it stood at 3.15 percent compared to 3.02 percent by the end of December 2018, while Investment Income grew by 31.83 percent to reach EGP 21.95 billion by the end of 2019, up from EGP 16.65 billion by the end of September 2019.

Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO, National Bank of Kuwait and Chairman of NBK-Egypt, said that NBK-Egypt's outstanding financial performance over the years is a strong testament to NBK Group's insightful vision and great trust in the Egyptian market's rapid growth and huge potential it offers over the past 12 years.

Al-Bahar highlighted that NBK-Egypt is considered one of the main markets where NBK strives to expand its activities. Most recently NBK Group has developed a strategy targeting the Egyptian retail sector to capitalize on the economic reforms which resulted in the restoration of confidence in the Egyptian market.

"NBK-Egypt successfully managed to leave a remarkable footprint in the Egyptian banking sector, as one of the fastest growing banks in the market. The bank's leading position is reflected in its financial indicators which strongly affirm the great strides it managed to achieve in expanding its market share and in maintaining its leading position", Al-Bahar said.

Al-Bahar confirmed that NBK is currently striving to expand its market share in Egypt as it seeks to strengthen its growth and product integration as part of its diversification strategy as it continues to increase the diversity of its income across geographies and segments, adding that NBK-Egypt provides almost third of the profits attributed to NBK Group's international branches. "NBK-Egypt aims to further develop its banking offerings and enhance their quality to cater to the growing demand. We are also interested in supporting the private sector by increasing SMEs credit portfolio, in addition to expanding and diversifying the scope of the bank's operations to increase its geographical footprint and reach more customers", Al-Bahar concluded.

Meanwhile, Managing Director of NBK-Egypt, Yasser El-Tayeb highlighted that 2019 financial results reflect NBK-Egypt's continued growth and its solid performance across most financial indicators, thanks to the prudent policy adopted by the Bank as a member of NBK Group and

its business model based on the diversification of its income and credit portfolio while offering flexible financing solutions and providing innovative banking products to cater to its customers' needs. "NBK-Egypt's financial results reflect its solid financial position, strong balance sheets, successful strategy and the experienced and accomplished team enriched with comprehensive banking knowledge and expertise", El-Tayeb said.

El-Tayeb added that most of NBK-Egypt's profits are driven by corporate credit services, with a highly diversified portfolio drawing on the diversification of the Egyptian economy itself, as the bank expands its reach to cater to SMEs in addition to mega corporations.

He also highlighted that NBK strives to further strengthen its position in retail banking over the coming period through offering innovative services and products to its retail clients and ingrain the concept of "one stop shop", as the bank of choice that is able to fulfill all their financial needs and requirements.

Speaking of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), El-Tayeb confirmed that since NBK Group entered the Egyptian market in 2007, it has always maintained an active role in serving the local community through introducing various CSR initiatives and contributing to the great causes of various charitable and nonprofit organizations that have a great role in developing the society and leave a great impact on people throughout various fields. CSR is an integral part of NBK's culture as it strives to achieve sustainability and positively contribute to society. To that end, NBK-Egypt has aligned its CSR goals with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Egypt Vision 2030 through adopting a new CSR strategy aimed to support the Egyptian endeavor in developing the following pillars:

1. Economic Development;
2. Urban development of poor areas;
3. Education;
4. Healthcare.

El-Tayeb indicated that NBK-Egypt always strives to enhance its developmental role through adopting the latest initiatives promoted by the Egyptian government, in addition to initiating partnerships with the most active and credible community members to join forces with the bank as the operational arm in bringing its development strategy to life.

He further added that NBK-Egypt has a wide network of 52 branches spread over premium locations in various Egyptian governorates and cities including:



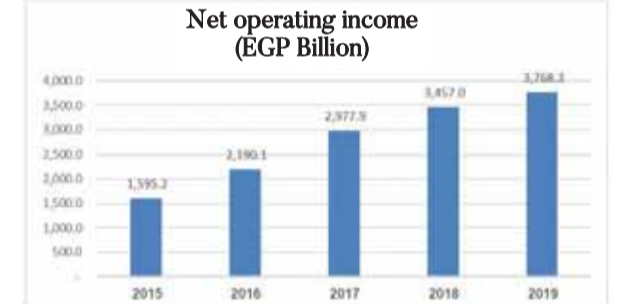
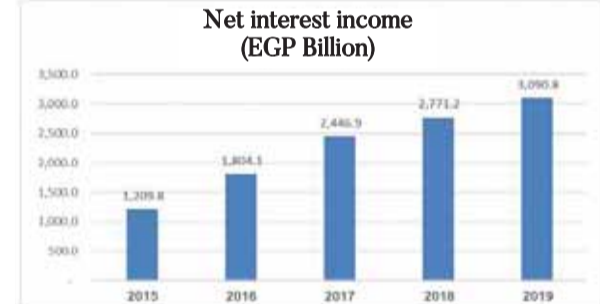
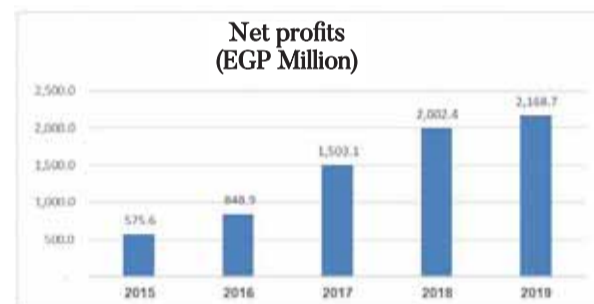
Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Delta, Sinai, Red Sea and Upper Egypt, in addition to the industrial zones in 6th of October and 10th of Ramadan cities. The bank is also privileged to be among the elite banks within the Egyptian market that hold an Islamic banking license in addition to its conventional licensing. It has two Islamic branches, one in Cairo and the other in Alexandria, thus enabling the bank to offer a comprehensive selection of Sharia compliant products and services in addition to its traditional offerings.

Moreover, NBK-Egypt has a wide network of ATMs spread across the country to service the bank's clients around the clock. NBK-Egypt also provides a range of e-services that provide its clients with unique banking experiences, enabling them to execute many of their banking transactions anywhere anytime without having to visit the branch.

National Bank of Kuwait was incorporated in 1952 as the first local bank and the first shareholding company in Kuwait and the Gulf region. NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its strong financial indicators, asset quality, high capitalization in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team, as well as strategic vision and stable funding base. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for the fourteenth consecutive time. NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network exceeding over 150 branches and

- Al-Bahar: NBK-Egypt's outstanding financial performance over the years is a strong testament to NBK Group's insightful vision and great trust in the Egyptian market's rapid growth the huge potential it offers
- NBK-Egypt successfully managed to leave a remarkable footprint in the Egyptian banking sector as one of the fastest growing banks in the market
- We seek to increase our market share, develop our banking offerings and enhance their quality to cater to growing demand
- El-Tayeb: NBK-Egypt maintains its strong results, achieving high growth rates across all financial indicators
- NBK credit portfolio is well diversified across the corporate sector, thus reflecting the diversification of the Egyptian market itself.
- CSR is an integral part of NBK's culture as it strives to achieve sustainability and positively contribute to society
- We strive to strengthen our leading position in the retail market through offering the most advanced services and products
- Owners' Equity grew by 6.31% to EGP 8.01 billion and Customers Deposits stood at EGP 51.5 billion

subsidiaries reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including the United States of America, Europe, GCC, the Middle East, China as well as Singapore.



## China producer prices break deflation spell despite virus risks

BEIJING: China's factory-gate prices snapped six months of year-on-year declines in January, although prolonged business closures from the coronavirus outbreak mean positive momentum is unlikely to persist. The virus has killed more than 900 in China and has also added to price pressures, with consumer inflation hitting a more than 8-year high as government restrictions on movement drove residents to stock up on essentials. China's producer price index rose 0.1 percent from a year earlier, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Monday, in line with expectations tipped by a Reuters poll of analysts and reversing a 0.5 percent drop in December.

The epidemic, which originated in the central China city of Wuhan, has infected

over 40,000 people in the country, forcing Beijing to extend holidays in key manufacturing bases and impose severe controls in major cities.

Movement of goods and people has also been severely disrupted, with some firms including South Korea's Hyundai Motor and Japan's Nintendo expecting major disruptions in their supply chains.

This has prompted some economists to drastically lower their GDP growth estimates for the first quarter and the full year. Beijing is mulling slashing its 2020 growth target of around 6 percent and readying fiscal and monetary stimulus to counter the effects of the outbreak, policy sources have told Reuters. China's consumer price index rose 5.4 percent from a year earlier in January, surpassing a 4.9 percent rise tipped by a Reuters poll of analysts and a 4.5 percent rise in December.

The NBS in a commentary on the data attributed the acceleration in consumer prices to the Lunar New Year holiday, the coronavirus outbreak and lower base from last year. Food prices surged 20.6 percent in January from a year earlier while pork prices rose 116 percent. —Reuters



HANGZHOU: People wearing protective masks buying vegetables in Hangzhou in China's eastern Zhejiang province. China consumer prices rose at their highest rate in more than eight years, official data showed yesterday with inflation more than expected on the back of Lunar New Year demand and a deadly virus outbreak. —AFP

### EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.782
Indian Rupees	4.279
Pakistani Rupees	1.976
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.678
Nepali Rupees	2.665
Singapore Dollar	221.760
Hongkong Dollar	39.326
Bangladesh Taka	3.554
Philippine Peso	6.026
Thai Baht	9.022
Malaysian Ringgit	78.069

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.454
Qatari Riyal	83.894
UAE Dirham	793.372
Bahraini Dinar	811.080
UAE Dirham	83.163

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	22.270
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	19.401
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.226
Tunisian Dinar	114.330
Jordanian Dinar	430.810
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.204
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.439

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	305.250
Euro	338.830
Sterling Pound	398.050
Canadian dollar	231.600
Turkish lira	52.630
Swiss Franc	316.650
US Dollar Buying	297.800

#### Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.590
Canadian Dollar	230.005
Sterling Pound	396.755
Euro	336.485
Swiss Frank	299.425
Bahrain Dinar	810.020
UAE Dirhams	83.330
Qatari Riyals	84.570
Saudi Riyals	82.120
Jordanian Dinar	430.890
Egyptian Pound	19.321
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.677
Indian Rupees	4.272
Pakistani Rupees	1.971
Bangladesh Taka	3.556
Philippines Peso	6.006
Cyprus pound	18.120
Japanese Yen	3.770
Syrian Pound	1.595
Nepalese Rupees	2.667
Malaysian Ringgit	74.835

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.205
Thai Bhat	10.780
Turkish Lira	51.370
Singapore dollars	220.428

#### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.387740	0.401640
Czech Korune	0.005405	0.014705
Danish Krone	0.040780	0.045780
Euro	0.327700	0.341400
Georgian Lari	0.110745	0.110745
Hungarian	0.001151	0.001341
Norwegian Krone	0.029057	0.034257
Romanian Leu	0.065461	0.082311
Russian Ruble	0.004815	0.004815
Slovakia	0.009139	0.019139
Swedish Krona	0.027706	0.032706
Swiss Franc	0.306199	0.317199
Australian Dollar	0.196049	0.208049
New Zealand Dollar	0.189626	0.199326
Canadian Dollar	0.224157	0.233157
US Dollars	0.301150	0.305700
US Dollars Mint	0.301650	0.305700
Bangladesh Taka	0.002880	0.003681

Chinese Yuan	0.042257	0.045757
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037348	0.040098
Indian Rupee	0.003626	0.004398
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002701	0.002881
Korean Won	0.000246	0.000261
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070190	0.076190
Nepalese Rupee	0.002602	0.002942
Pakistan Rupee	0.001323	0.002093
Philippine Peso	0.005853	0.006153
Singapore Dollar	0.214654	0.224654
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001318	0.001898
Taiwan	0.010154	0.010334
Thai Baht	0.009467	0.010107
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013

#### Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.803526	0.811594
Egyptian Pound	0.019302	0.022042
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260
Jordanian Dinar	0.425634	0.434634
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000104	0.000254
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021103	0.045103
Omani Riyal	0.787723	0.795632
Qatar Riyal	0.083188	0.084024
Saudi Riyal	0.080313	0.081613
Syrian Pound	0.001294	0.001514
Tunisian Dinar	0.103671	0.111671
Turkish Lira	0.044531	0.054376
UAE Dirhams	0.082475	0.083303
Yemeni Riyal	0.000992	0.001072

# Action-packed Toyota Gazoo racing event entertain visitors at Kuwait Motor Town

Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons concludes exciting Toyota track and family day



KUWAIT: Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer, Bengt Schultz, Martin Aherne, Ibrahim Al-Fouzan, Desmond Lew, Krishna Kumar, Stephen Cleary, Takeshi Harada and other dignitaries during the official opening ceremony of the event.



KUWAIT: Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer addresses the gathering.



Toyota Supra track session



Briefing for track experience

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons, a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding successfully concluded the exciting Toyota track and family day at Kuwait Motor Town. The official opening ceremony of the event was attended by Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO, Bengt Schultz COO, Martin Aherne Toyota Sales Business Director, Ibrahim Al-Fouzan Business Director Toyota Group Service, Desmond Lew, Business Director Group Parts Accessories and Logistics, Krishna Kumar, General

Manager Tires, Oil, Paint Division, Stephen Cleary, Chief Marketing Officer, Takeshi Harada, General Manager Yokohama, Middle East & Africa Representative Office along with distinguished members of the press and media. Speaking during the occasion Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer said "We dedicate this event to our valued clients our loyal customers of Toyota. We are confident this is a unique entertaining experience for them. The spirit of this mega event is Toyota

Gazoo Racing. It represents Toyota's commitment to overcoming every limit in the pursuit of creating 'ever-better' cars through motorsports." Highlight of the event included Toyota Supra track experience, drifting sessions with Champion Mohamed Abdulzaq, 4x4 obstacle course, petrol versus hybrid electric test drive. The venue also featured display of full range of Toyota sedans, 4x4, hybrid electric cars for visitors to explore assisted by dedicated sales team.

Guests benefitted from the exclusive special deals from special banks such as KFH, NBK, Boubyan and Warba to facilitate suitable financing options. This fun-filled event also featured family entertainment such as Go Kart, DJ and music, food trucks, spot raffle for attractive prizes, as well as games for kids and adults including the presence of Osama Fouda as MC to cover the big event. "The teamwork towards this mega event has been extraordinary whether it is

from new car sales team, ALSayer accessories, ARB, spare parts, tires and our partners who are associated through Hayyak Loyalty Program. I extend my sincere gratitude to all our partners of this event who stepped forward with enthusiasm to be part of this important occasion. I also thank Kuwait Motor Town Management, the event Organizers and Al-Sayer team members for their support and efforts towards setting up this event" added Mubarak Sayer.



Toyota Sedan display



Toyota hybrid electric and petrol



Toyota Gazoo Racing



4x4 obstacle course



## Business

# Huawei sponsors and participates in Global IEEE 5G-IoT Summit Kuwait

## World's leading provider of 5G equipment contributes to making 5G a commercial success in region

**KUWAIT:** Huawei Technologies Kuwait, a leading global Information and communication technology solutions provider, recently participated in the Global IEEE 5G-IoT Summit Kuwait which took place at the Kuwait College of Science and Technology. Leading the world in terms of 5G deployment and as a prominent partner of Kuwait and the world's industries digital transformation, Huawei shed light on the infinite potential applications of 5G in the era of commercial use.

This 5G Summit focused on exploring and elucidating all facets of the 5G technology, business and societal gaps and challenges between the current 3G-4G-LTE access-only Internet models and the proper vision of 5G. The event witnessed renowned global experts share their views and cutting-edge knowledge of the emerging 5G community in the Middle East and GCC and around the world in view of facilitating the worldwide harmonization of research and best practices for deployment of viable user scenarios in the global 5G ecosystem.

Speaking on the current 5G trends across the globe and its unlimited opportunities, Chtourou Slim, Senior

Solution Manager, 5G RAN & Core, Huawei Technologies Kuwait Co. WLL said, "5G has the power to transform the way businesses operate. It is essential as a next step, to educate and for regulators to adapt to the market's needs by integrating operators into the ICT ecosystem. Having evolved from 3G and 4G, the newly improved 5G provides wider coverage, larger bandwidth, and low latency and is adaptable to a variety of complex industrial applications. Driven to contribute to the sustainable development of a digital economy, Huawei believes that through many 5G-enabled applications, AI, IoT and cloud, the world can embrace new and more dynamic dimensions like never before."

Addressing from various perspectives, such as policy-making and regulation and industry digitization, the platform was designed to bring to light the built-in security and privacy by design in 5G, demystify 5G health related concerns and explore different ways to enable Internet protocols over the next generation of empowered devices in order to reach convergence and end to end transparency led by the IEEE 5G Technical subcommittee.



## KIB sponsors the Tenders Forum for SMEs

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently offered its main sponsorship of the Tenders Forum for SMEs, which was organized by Emtidad Co. under the patronage of the Central Agency for Public Tenders at Shaheed Park Phase 2. The forum was attended by a number of members from the National Assembly, representatives from public and private entities, tender organizations, as well as a group of young entrepreneurs and small and medium sized business owners.

The forum featured a group of speakers who participated in four main sessions. During which, several important issues concerning SMEs were discussed, namely: a thorough explanation of Law No. 74/2019, opportunities available for entrepreneurs to bid for government projects, as well as a dynamic debate entitled 'Government support for SMEs: political courtesy or economic benefit?'. Additionally, the forum discussed legislative gaps with decision-makers from the National Assembly in order to develop solutions that will help serve SMEs.

On this occasion, Deputy General Manager of Wholesale Banking - Head of Domestic Commercial Banking, Hesham Al-Mubarakhi said: "Our sponsorship of this forum came as part of our strong belief in empowering youth and supporting local entrepreneurs. As part of our leading social



Hesham Al-Mubarakhi

responsibility program, we recognize the importance of promoting the culture of SMEs in order to improve the local labor market and diversify the economy, as well as increasing private sector participation in boosting economic development and encouraging youth to innovate."

Al-Mubarakhi also noted that KIB supports Amiri and government initiatives that support SMEs across the nation, as well as endorsing Law No. 74/2019 that allows entrepreneurs to benefit from tenders won by major companies. He also pointed out that this type of law

empowers entrepreneurs to be more confident in their abilities as self-employed individuals to deliver more ideas that improve their position in the market.

Moreover, Al-Mubarakhi added that KIB has established a special unit for financing SMEs that aims at helping young entrepreneurs understand the ins and outs of entrepreneurship. The Bank also supports and funds them in order for them to achieve their dreams, while also introducing them to possible risks they may face along their journey.

It is worth noting that KIB has always sought to empower youth, support their ideas, and adopt their projects whenever possible. As a cornerstone of its social responsibility program, the Bank strongly believes in the importance of investing in young local talents, thereby enabling them to reach their full potential as they are the key drivers of the nation's future.



## Global shares sink on virus uncertainty, dollar eases

**LONDON:** Global shares sank yesterday as the death toll from a coronavirus outbreak exceeded the SARS epidemic of two decades ago, though Chinese shares rose as authorities lifted some work and travel curbs, helping businesses to resume operations.

The dollar took a breather, edging lower against a basket of peers after gaining over 1 percent last week. The greenback gained last week as a strong US employment report stood in contrast to both the expected economic hit to China from the virus and weakness in the euro zone from weak German industrial numbers in December. European shares edged lower as fears over the coronavirus' economic impact still weighed on sentiment. The pan-European STOXX 600 index was down 0.1 percent by midday in London.

Ireland's main index fell as much as 1.2 percent, mainly dragged down by banks after Irish nationalist party Sinn Fein secured almost a quarter of first-preference votes in a weekend general election. MSCI's All Country World Index, which tracks shares across 47 countries, was down 0.14 percent.

Shares in Asia registered a mixed performance. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan reversed some of its early losses but was still down 0.3 percent. Japan's Nikkei was off 0.6 percent, South Korea's KOSPI was 0.5 percent weaker while Australia's benchmark index eased 0.14 percent. China's indexes were the only ones in the black in Asia with the blue-chip index adding 0.4 percent and Shanghai's SSE Composite up 0.5 percent.

More than 900 people have so far died



**NEW YORK:** Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City. As concern continues over the global economic impact from the Coronavirus, global stock markets fell. — AFP

mainly in China's central Hubei province as of Sunday with most of the new deaths in the provincial capital of Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak.

To contain the spread, China's government had ordered lockdowns, cancelled flights and shut schools in many cities. But on Monday, workers began trickling back to offices and factories though a large number of workplaces remain closed and many white-collar workers will continue to work from home.

"Despite the ongoing uncertainty, we continue to filter out the short-term noise and remain overweight emerging market equities," said Mark Haefele, chief investment officer at UBS Global Wealth Management in a note to clients. "While we continue to monitor the risks to our position, we are optimistic that the decisive actions taken by governments will bring the outbreak under control."

Yesterday's losses in Asia extended from Wall Street on Friday where the Dow fell 0.9

percent, the S&P 500 declined 0.5 percent while the Nasdaq lost 0.5 percent. US stock looked set to open positive on Monday however, with E-mini futures for the S&P 500 up 0.04 percent. Stock markets have recovered some ground since the initial news of the outbreak impacted markets, as the rate of increase of reported cases appears to slow. "Whether the coronavirus-related relief is lasting depends on whether this epidemic can ultimately be contained. The new global infections numbers hint at some stabilization suggesting that the speed of the spreading of this virus has come down," said Martin Wolburg, senior economist at Generali Investments in a note to clients.

"The data imply that the spreading of the epidemic could stall by the end of February. Therefore, we view last week's equity market improvement as backed by fundamentals and continue to see the epidemic as a buying opportunity." — Reuters

## Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 9th February 2020 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 2 - 6 February 2020. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

**The winners this week are:**

Mazen Abbas Bou Fakhruddin  
Yousef Mohammad Ahmad Salem  
Adnan Mohsen Al-Saad  
Mary Beth Ortawa Alawadh  
Abdulghani Ahmed Mohammed

Gulf Bank announced that Al-Danah is now bigger, and that the prize of the annual draw will be KD 1,500,000 as of 2020. The annual draw will be held on 14 January 2021, and the last chance to participate by depositing in the Al-Danah account will be on 30 September 2020.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts

at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al-Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al-Danah customers in 2019, have been added to their 2020 chances, and the same process will take place in 2021, and so on. Terms and conditions apply.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days.

## Volatile Turkish lira slips again after attempt to quell selloff

**ISTANBUL:** Turkey's lira slipped in volatile trade yesterday after new government limits on banks' foreign-exchange helped the currency briefly erase Friday's sharp losses before selling resumed.

Investors and traders said the whip-saw trading - after weeks in a narrow range - suggested Turkish state banks were again intervening to attempt to buffer the lira after they sold tens of billions of dollars over the past year. The lira strengthened to as low as 5.975 against the dollar before reversing course. It was worth 6.0180 at 1200 GMT, a bit weaker than Friday's close.

It had tumbled to as far as 6.05 on Friday, its weakest level in regular trading since May, as a late-week rally in the dollar prompted a selloff across emerging markets.

The BDDK bank regulator on Sunday cut the limit for Turkish banks' forex swap, spot and forward transactions with foreign entities to 10 percent of their equity, from a 25 percent ceiling set in August 2018 during the worst of Turkey's currency crisis.

The new FX limits are one of a series of government steps taken to stabilize the currency after the 2018 crisis cut its value by 36 percent in two years and tipped Turkey's economy into recession. "This reflects the desperation of Turkish officials to keep the lira artificially stable," said Piotr Matys, senior EM FX strategist at Rabobank. "If it was a free-floating currency it

would be much higher but it is a managed float."

Yatirim Finansman said the BDDK move "is another step towards avoiding potential FX rate volatility and to shore up reserves." The currency's one-month implied volatility spiked on Friday and Monday to its highest level since mid-January. A week earlier, it touched its lowest level since mid-2013 after a broad downward trend since May of 2019.

The overnight lira swap rate jumped to as high as 75 percent and touched its highest level since April of 2019, before falling back to 9.7 percent in London. While economic growth rebounded in the fourth quarter of last year, official data yesterday showed that unemployment remained elevated at 13.3 percent, down from 13.4 percent a month earlier.

While a jump in industrial sector job growth could help lower unemployment, youth unemployment remained elevated at 24 percent. Istanbul's main stock index was off 0.3 percent with the banks sector down 0.5 percent after the BDDK separately reduced fees lenders can charge clients, squeezing a key source of income.

Turkey's dollar-denominated sovereign bonds tumbled including one issue logging its sharpest drop since October, while credit default swaps jumped. Friday's lira weakness came after the Treasury minister said state banks had agreed to lower loan rates, suggesting more rate cuts from the central bank, and as the Turkish military girded for more confrontation in Syria's Idlib region.

"Trading volumes look significantly larger than usual which is suspicious of (state bank) interventions, and which then feeds suspicions that we might have done better recently than we perhaps should have," said Koon Chow, an EM macro and FX strategist at UBP. —Reuters

What's On

# ACK wins second and third place in KOC's Science Innovation competition



Two teams of engineering students from the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) succeeded in securing the second and third place in the second Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) Science Innovation competition. The competition was held on the 27th and 28th of January 2020 at Ahmad Al Jaber Oil and Gas Exhibition Center, while bringing together groups of students from different universities around Kuwait to create projects which promote innovation in design and engineering.

The competition witnessed the participation of 14 team projects in total, five of which were from ACK. The second place was won by a project from the Electrical Engineering Department, while the third place was won by a project from the Petroleum Engineering Department. An awarding ceremony was held by KOC to announce the competition winners on Thursday, January 30th 2020 at Ahmad Al Jaber Oil and Gas Exhibition Center.

Second-place winning project was titled

"Autonomous Garbage Collector Robot", supervised by Dr Alireza Gheitasi, Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering, and the students responsible for the project were Fatemah Al Ajmi, Hana Al Mutairi, Maryam Al Qallaf, and Shouq Al Enezy. The project which received third place was titled "Development of an Automated Drilling Fluid Mixer for Laboratory Applications", supervised by Dr Mortadha Al Saba, Assistant Professor of Petroleum Engineering, and the students who worked on it were Ali Al Amir, Hasan Al

Matrouk, Nour Boshehri, Shahad Al Marhoun, and Shahad Al Saffar.

Commenting on this accomplishment, Dr Al Saba said: "We are very proud of this achievement which shows clearly the quality and dedication of our students as well as the continuous efforts and commitments made by our faculty."

ACK would like to thank the Kuwait Oil Company for organizing the competition and for giving its students a priceless opportunity to show their talents.



## Seafood Night every Wednesday at Sheraton Kuwait Hotel

The Al Hambra Restaurant known for its daily lavish buffet brings the most delectable offerings of the sea with its "Seafood Night" every Wednesday. Led by our seasoned Chefs, carrying with them a lot of experience and creativity, be prepared to indulge in an extravagant buffet of your most craved seafood, prepared in a diverse way to meet the tastes of sea lovers and gourmets, a wide variety, distinctive and innovative meals that includes the best of local Kuwaiti dishes true to its flavors and cooking methods, as well as live music throughout the evening.

Rich dishes prepared by the most skilled Chefs starting the feast with soup, array of traditional salads, sushi, sashimi, lobster, avocado salad and a seafood corner. For your main course, a staple of Kuwaiti seafood dishes: such as Mourabian, Mutabbak Zubeidi, Hammour, fried shrimps and a variety of hot seafood dishes. Not to miss out on the Seafood Paella and other international favorites.

We have also added - a roasting corner to grill fish or any seafood of your choice, grilled over charcoal. Topping of the mouth-watering ocean feast, no meal is complete without sweet treats. The dessert bar rounds off the dinner buffet with all-time favorite assorted Arabic & Western sweets to give the experience more luxury.

"The iconic Al Hambra Restaurant, an all-day dining restaurant of the Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel, offers new and exciting surprises for our guests with every visit. We look forward to welcome everyone as we take your dining experience to a completely whole new level.



## Gulf Bank celebrates national holidays at Qout Market

As part of its ongoing efforts to support the creative local community in Kuwait, Gulf Bank is participating in Qout Market, which is currently in its seventh season and taking place at Abraj Park in Adaliya. As part of several entertainment activities at the market, Gulf Bank distributed coloring books for children with drawings that celebrate the upcoming national day holidays.

Throughout the day, visitors enjoyed taking instant photos at Gulf Bank's booth next to models of famous Kuwaiti landmarks, including the Kuwait Towers, Liberation Tower, Al Hamra Tower, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Gulf Bank Head Office in Kuwait City. Gulf Bank also entertained visitors with several activities celebrating Kuwait's heritage.

Qout Market launched its seventh season last December at Abraj Park in Adaliya. The upcoming market, set to be the last of the season, will take place on March 7 with continued support from Gulf Bank. The market receives visitors

from 9:00 AM to 5:00 pm.

Commenting on this year's Qout Market, Lujain Al-Qenaei, Assistant Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "February is a special month for our country, and we were delighted to kick off our February celebrations at Qout Market surrounded by so many members from our local creative community. Qout Market is always an incredible opportunity to engage with our community as part of our efforts to support our youth in a variety of their creative endeavors. We are always looking for opportunities that allow us to engage with local entrepreneurs in the region, and we look forward to meeting even more young talents next month."

Qout Market is an artisanal farmer's market established in 2013 with the aim of empowering the local community through seasonal initiatives. The market focuses on small and medium-sized vendors specializing in farm produce, artisanal crafts and locally made food products.



Lujain Al-Qenaei



## Joy Homes project by Joyalukkas Foundation reinforces the Rebuild Kerala initiatives

The role undertaken by the Joyalukkas Foundation in the rehabilitation of flood victims of Kerala is nothing less than great, said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in his inaugural speech during the second get-together of the Joy Homes beneficiaries held at Dr Alexander Marthoma Auditorium at 11:30 am today. In his speech the CM also expressed the gratitude of Kerala Government towards Joyalukkas Foundation.

The foundation has built and handed over 250 houses to the unfortunate families who lost their dwelling places during the devastating floods, at a cost of Rs 15 crore. The Joyalukkas group has extended highly commendable voluntary services during the floods, the CM added. The state is witnessing the

astounding progress of Rebuild Kerala initiatives employing advanced and contemporary technologies and methods, he said.

A number of dignitaries attended the function where MA Arif MP gave away the mementos to the elated home owners and Mathew T Thomas MLA launched the Joyalukkas Foundation Handbook. As part of another noble initiative by Joyalukkas Foundation, NK Premachandran MP distributed Dialysis kits to the needy.

Over a 100 families who are beneficiaries of the project, from Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Alleppey, Quilon and Idukki participated in the get-together. The function was presided by Cherian Polachirakkal, Municipal Chairman, Thiruvalla. Joy Alukkas, CMD of Joyalukkas Group, Jolly Joy Alukkas, Elsa Joy

Alukkas, both Directors of Joyalukkas Group, Anto Antony, MP, Pathanamthitta, Veena George MLA, Pathanamthitta, Raju Abraham, Saji Cherian, both MLAs, Rev. Dr. Joseph Marthoma Metropolitan (Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Arch Bishop Mar Severios Kuriakkos, Chngavanam Diocese, Rev. Dr. Joshua Mar Ignathios Bishop, Vallamkulam Syrian Orthodox Bishop Mar Gregorios Kuriakkos, Brahmasree Akkeeramon Kalidas Bhattathirippad, Bishop Rev. Thomas Samuel, Town Masjid Imam KJ Salam Sakhafi, DYSP Jose ER also participated in the grand function.

Currently about 160 families have moved in to their new homes and the rest of the houses will be handed over soon, said Joy Alukkas, CMD of Joyalukkas group during the event.



Hon. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurates the get-together of the beneficiaries of Joy Homes project, an initiative by the Joyalukkas Foundation.

# Satellite data brings farming advice to Zimbabwe's remote areas

**NTABAZINDUNA, Zimbabwe:** Deep in rural western Zimbabwe, where tarred roads are nonexistent, Japhet Ngwenya used to spend every season worrying that the people who advise him on how to protect his crops from dry spells and pest invasions would not be able to reach him.

Ngwenya's farm - in Ntabazinduna, 40 kilometers (24 miles) north of Bulawayo - is so remote that he can go a year or more without seeing the agriculture extension officers who are sent by local charities to assist small-scale farmers like him.

"It has always been difficult to get expert advice. There are no proper access roads here and you drive this far at your car's peril," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation as he readied his fields for a crop of maize, tomatoes and cabbages.

Then, last year, two extension officers from the consortium Turning Matabeleland Green (TMG) managed to make their way to Ngwenya's farm to show him their solution: climate and crop information collected by satellite and sent to farmers' phones.

Zimbabwe has been slow to embrace satellite-based systems for its agricultural sector, but now the country is seeing the benefits of using the technology to help farmers adapt to the impact of climate change, agricultural experts say.

More than seven million people work as communal or small-scale farmers, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Many still rely on traditional weather-predicting systems and occasional visits by on-the-ground extension officers to get crucial information and advice.

But using satellite data, groups like TMG can access weather information that is more accurate than the general forecasts supplied by the meteorological department, said Lwazi Mlilo, an agronomist working with TMG. And with mobile phone technology, they can get that information to farmers faster than they would by sending people out to hard-to-reach farms, he added.

Mlilo showed Ngwenya how extension officers can look at the farmer's 27-hectare (67-acre) holding on Google Maps and combine that with satellite data available online to track everything from weather patterns to the health of crops.

"I can monitor the activity on your farm from my office. We do not need to come here to check the progress of your crops," he explained to the visibly awed farmer. Experts might then advise farmers in the low-rainfall Matabeleland region on what seeds to plant and which techniques to use to keep their crops thriving, Mlilo said.

Because most rural farmers in Zimbabwe have no internet connection - many have no electricity at all - TMG communicates with them via SMS, he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The organization can quickly tell farmers if a plot in their area has suffered a pest invasion or send out warnings about sudden changes in climate conditions to all the farmers in a particular area at once, he explained.

"Farming is not as tough as some imagine - as long as one has access to relevant, up-to-date knowledge, especially now with new technologies," Mlilo said. He said about 2,000 small-scale farmers have joined the project since it launched last year.

### Embracing technology

Approximately 80 percent of Zimbabwe's rural people depend on rainfed agriculture for a living, making them highly vulnerable to more extreme weather associated with climate change, agricultural experts say.

Last year, the FAO said satellite data had the potential to help Africa's farmers "be better prepared for drought and increase agricultural production with less water use." Much of the satellite-based information that TMG uses to craft advice it sends to small-scale farmers comes from a new database launched in Zimbabwe last September.

It was built as a collaboration between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the University of Zimbabwe, with information collected by high-resolution satellites. It provides highly detailed information that enables experts to follow the effects of climate change across the country, backers said.

A year earlier, the government launched the Zimbabwe National Geospatial and Space Agency (ZINGSA), made up of five departments focused on encouraging the country's economic and social development. Both projects use satellite technology for crop surveillance, drought monitoring, tracking soil conditions and documenting the most effective use of water, among other things.

All of that information can be relayed to farmers to help them use their resources most efficiently and safeguard their crops against drought, said Elisha Moyo, principal climate researcher at Zimbabwe's agriculture and climate ministry. "The use of satellite technology is encouraged as an early warning strategy," he told the

Thomson Reuters Foundation. The goal is to improve farming yields and shore up food security in a country where, during times of peak production, up to 80 percent of staple maize is grown by small-scale farmers, according to government figures.

Vangelis Haritatos, the Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement deputy minister, said he is confident satellite technology will help farmers adapt to the country's shifting climate. "I definitely believe technological interventions will have a great impact on food production and food security as a whole for our nation," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

### 'What we really need is rain'

As droughts grow longer and harsher in southern Africa, Zimbabwe is looking for ways to support its embattled farmers. In the latest budget presented in November, the government announced it was setting aside 340 million Zimbabwe dollars (\$900,000) towards agricultural extension and advisory services, a significant hike from the previous budget.

At the time, finance minister Mthuli Ncube said the funding would go toward spreading the use of new technologies - including precision-farming tools such as satellite and GPS - to track land use and water availability. For many of Zimbabwe's long-struggling farmers, the move to satellite data and other modern technology offers hope that they might break the cycle of poor harvests. Ngwenya, the farmer in Ntabazinduna, said he is willing to try anything that might help. "What we really need is rain," he said. "But we will certainly appreciate anything that will bring us relief." — Reuters

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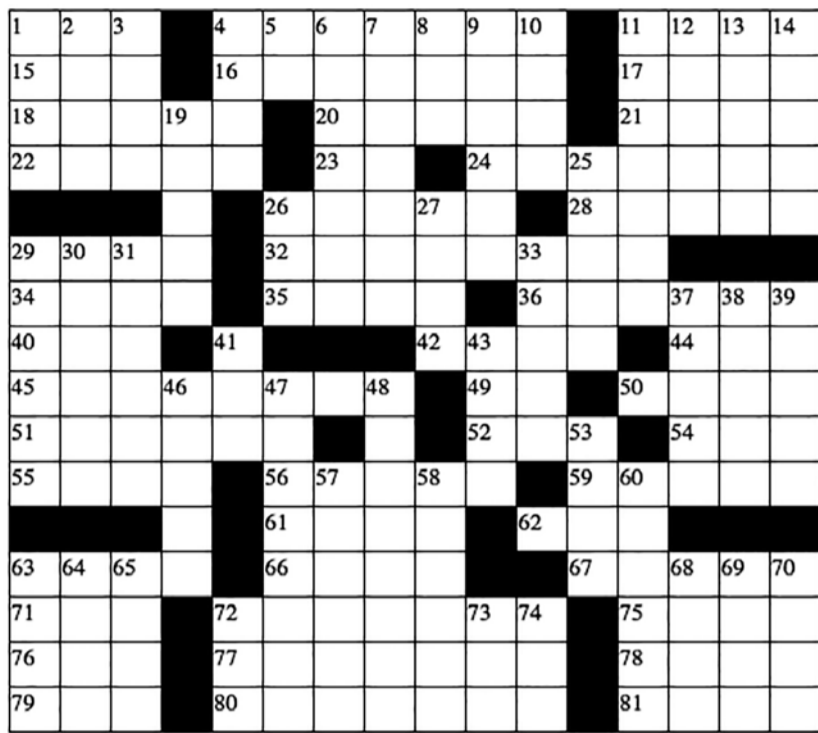
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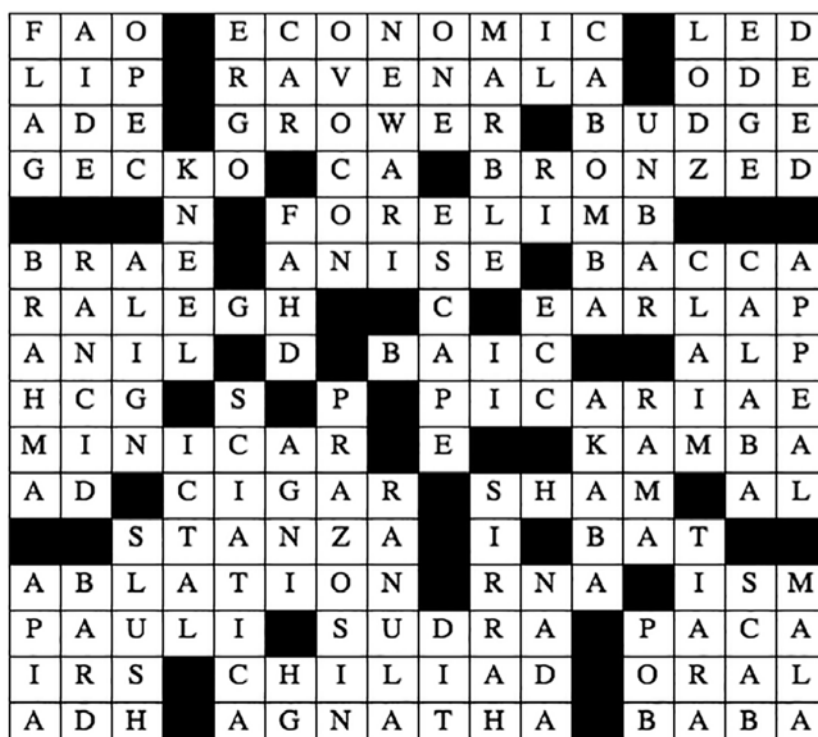
1. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
4. A Powhatan Indian woman (the daughter of Powhatan) who befriended the English at Jamestown and is said to have saved Captain John Smith's life (1595-1617).
11. The income arising from land or other property.
15. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
16. The trait of lacking restraint or control.
17. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
18. Productive work (especially physical work done for wages).
20. The dried meat of the coconut from which oil is extracted.
21. Fearless and daring.
22. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
23. One thousand periods per second.
24. Fit or ready for use or service.
28. United States comic actor in silent films.
29. Blockage consisting of an object designed to fill a hole tightly.
32. Being of the age 13 through 19.
34. Type genus of the Ranidae.
35. The fleshy part of the human body that you sit on.
36. (chemistry) Being or containing an acid.
40. Automatic data processing by electronic means without the use of tabulating cards or punched tapes.
42. A notice of someone's death.
44. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
45. Ice cream or water ice on a small wooden stick.
49. A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.
50. Made agreeably cold (especially by ice).
51. A large waterfall on the border between Argentina and Brazil.
52. A fatal disease of cattle that affects the central nervous system.
54. An emergency procedure consisting of external cardiac massage and artificial respiration.
55. (New Testament) The sages who visited Jesus and Mary and Joseph shortly after Jesus was born.
56. Become ground down or deteriorate.
59. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
61. Tear down so as to make flat with the ground.
62. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
63. By bad luck.
66. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
67. Any plant of the genus Erica.
71. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
75. Acquire or gain knowledge or skills.
76. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
77. (British) A minicar used as a taxicab.
78. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.

79. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
80. A small constellation in the northern hemisphere between Cygnus and Aquila and crossed by the Milky Way.
81. An informal term for a father.

DOWN

1. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
2. (informal) Exceptionally good.
3. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
4. God of death.
5. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
6. A football player who tackles the ball carrier.
7. 1 species.
8. An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.
9. The basic unit of money in Slovakia.
10. Type genus of the Anatidae.
11. Italian operatic soprano (born in 1922).
12. (Philippine) A dish of marinated vegetables and meat or fish.
13. United States circus clown (1898-1979).
14. Having come or been brought to a conclusion.
19. The ending of a series or sequence.
25. Selected as the best.
26. A nucleotide derived from adenosine that occurs in muscle tissue.
27. (prefix) Within.
30. A lake in northwestern Russia north of St. Petersburg.
31. Of electrical appliances.
33. Roman Emperor who succeeded Tiberius and whose uncontrolled passions resulted in manifest insanity.
37. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
38. Not elegant or graceful in expression.
39. A genus of Pyralidae.
41. Informal terms for your occupation.
43. A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
46. (Greek mythology) King of Thebes who was unwittingly killed by his son Oedipus.
47. Genus of woody Asiatic vines.
48. Not used in all classifications.
53. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
57. The sport of engaging in contests of speed.
58. Make a subtraction.
60. One of two flaps attached to a cap to keep the ears warm.
64. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
65. The sixth month of the civil year.
68. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
69. The yield from plants in a single growing season.
70. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
72. A syndrome that occurs in many women from 2 to 14 days before the onset of menstruation.
73. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
74. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Some welcome visitors from far away could come to see you today and cause temporary chaos in your home. You'll be glad to see them, however. Aries, as they'll have some great news and fascinating information to pass on to you and your family. You'll want to introduce them to other friends who share your interests. This could give rise to a horrendously messy house, but you'll have fun anyway. Prepare for a highly social evening!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

News could come your way, perhaps through local magazines or newspapers, about possible renovations occurring in your community. These changes could be rather controversial. Taurus, so don't be surprised if you hear a lot of gossip and a number of opinions, both pro and con, on the matter. You might want to delve more deeply into the facts before forming an opinion of your own. This could prove quite enlightening!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

If you've been striving for success in the field of writing, speaking, or publishing, Gemini, you have the chance for a real breakthrough today. A large sum of money or an opportunity to earn it in one of these fields might come your way, and you'll definitely want to take advantage of it. It may involve legal papers, such as contracts. This definitely boosts your ego, your mood, and your motivation.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Success and good fortune might be in the wind for you today, Cancer. Whatever it is will probably have you feeling especially elated and satisfied with your accomplishments. You'll want to tell everyone, but this could prove frustrating since some of the people you want to tell might not be reachable today. Hold off on spreading the word until you can inform those closest to you. You'll need and want their support.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Successes have been coming your way continually for a while, Leo. The downside is that excessive celebrating and overindulging in food and drink could have you feeling physically out of sorts today. Nonetheless, your mood should still be very high, and you should still be strongly motivated to continue whatever it is you've been doing that has brought such positive results. Let your imagination flow freely, and keep on going.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Upheavals within a group with which you're affiliated, perhaps professionally, might cause you to alter your goals slightly, Virgo. In the long run, this could well prove to be a positive development, although the conditions leading to it could be a bit disconcerting. Think of this as an opportunity to pursue new hopes and dreams that you may not have considered before. Plan carefully and then go for the gold.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A number of people in interesting fields, such as law, education, or writing and publishing, could cross your path today, Libra. This could involve your job, or perhaps these people attend a social event that you host in your home. Either way, some fascinating and useful information could come your way that alters your thinking and nudges it subtly in a new direction. You'll want to make the most of it. Have fun!



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

A chance to take a long journey, perhaps to a distant state or foreign country, could suddenly present itself to you today, Scorpio. This trip is apt to be far more significant than a simple vacation. It may be career related or involve an opportunity to expand your education. It could also concern a relationship. Whichever it is, you're likely to make the trip and it will probably change your life in subtle ways.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Some traumas, phobias, or hang-ups from the past that have been limiting you in some way could suddenly come to the surface today, Sagittarius. You might get the most insight by analyzing your dreams. The release could be so profound that you have to spend some time alone today, perhaps away from the house, in order to fully grasp it all. At the end of the day you should feel elated because you'll now see your way toward getting past some of your obstacles.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Romantic novels and movies might have caused you to feel especially passionate and sensual. Today you long to schedule a romantic evening alone with a love partner. Capricorn. Other social obligations could get in your way, however. You might have made these other commitments a long time ago and they may be business related. It might be far later than you'd hoped before you're able to see your friend. Better late than never!



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Although you may have been feeling somewhat out of sorts for the past few days, Aquarius, today you could feel as if you just got a new lease on life. You're in excellent physical, mental, and emotional shape, so you should be raring to go. Both immediate and long-term goals should be easy to achieve while your energy is strong today. Begin working on them; don't put them off. This high level of motivation should continue for a while.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today you're likely to be longing for a little break from your daily routine, Pisces, and for an evening alone with a love partner. You're feeling sensual and passionate, but you also have much to report concerning new opportunities that have recently come up. Some of these, if implemented, could well change your life in a profound way. You'll want your partner's opinion, since it concerns him or her as well. Choose your words carefully and get the enthusiasm going!

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Actors 2

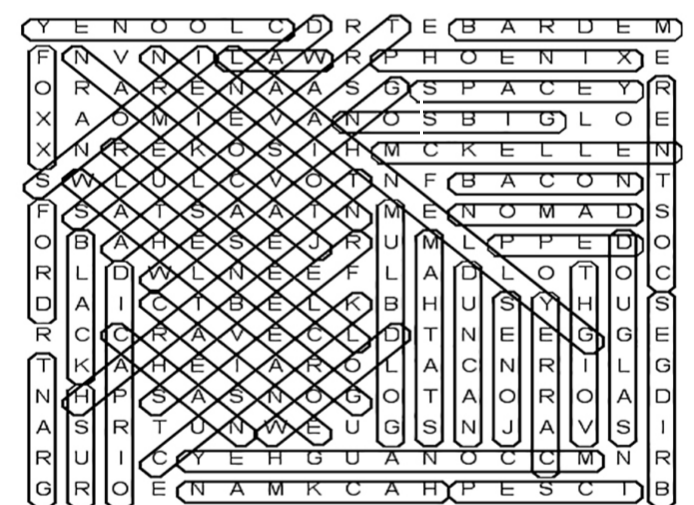
Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which William Hurt won an Oscar.



- |                   |                         |                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| ASTIN, Sean       | FIENNES, Ralph          | MARTIN, Steve       |
| BLOOM, Orlando    | FREEMAN, Morgan         | MORTENSEN, Viggo    |
| BROSNAN, Pierce   | GERE, Richard           | MYERS, Mike         |
| BUSCEMI, Steve    | GOSLING, Ryan           | PATTINSON, Robert   |
| CAGE, Nicolas     | HAWKS, Tom              | PENN, Sean          |
| CONNERY, Sean     | HARRELSON, Woody        | REYNOLDS, Ryan      |
| CROWE, Russell    | HOFFMAN, Philip Seymour | ROGEN, Seth         |
| CRUISE, Tom       | HOWARD, Terrence        | RUDD, Paul          |
| DAFOE, William    | HURT, William           | SMITH, Will         |
| DE NIRO, Robert   | JACKSON, Samuel L.      | STALLONE, Sylvester |
| DIESEL, Vin       | JONES, Tommy Lee        | STEWART, Patrick    |
| DOWNEY JR, Robert | KEATON, Michael         | VAUGHN, Vince       |
| DREYFUSS, Richard | KILMER, Val             | WILKINSON, Tom      |
| DUVALL, Robert    | LABEOUF, Shia           | WILLIAMS, Robin     |
| EVERETT, Rupert   | MAGUIRE, Tobey          | WILSON, Owen        |
| FERRELL, Will     |                         |                     |

Yesterday's Solution

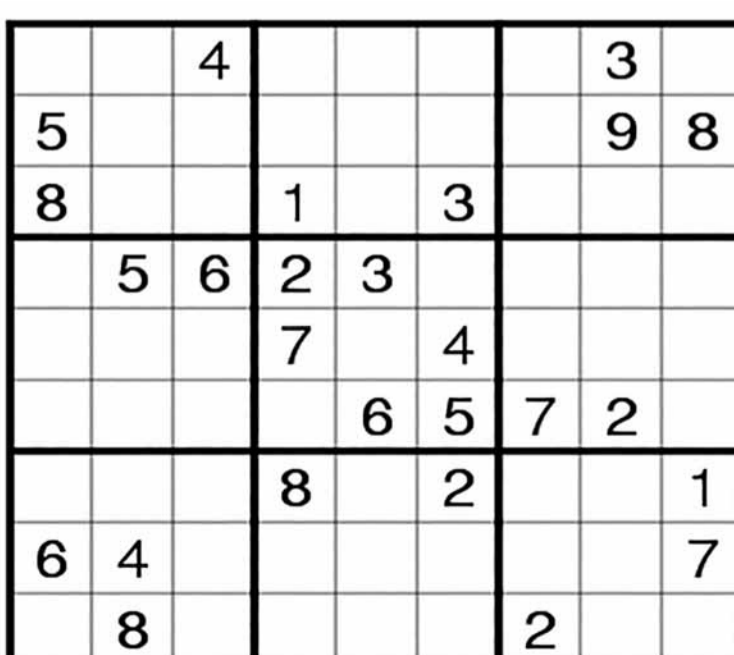
Movie Actors 1



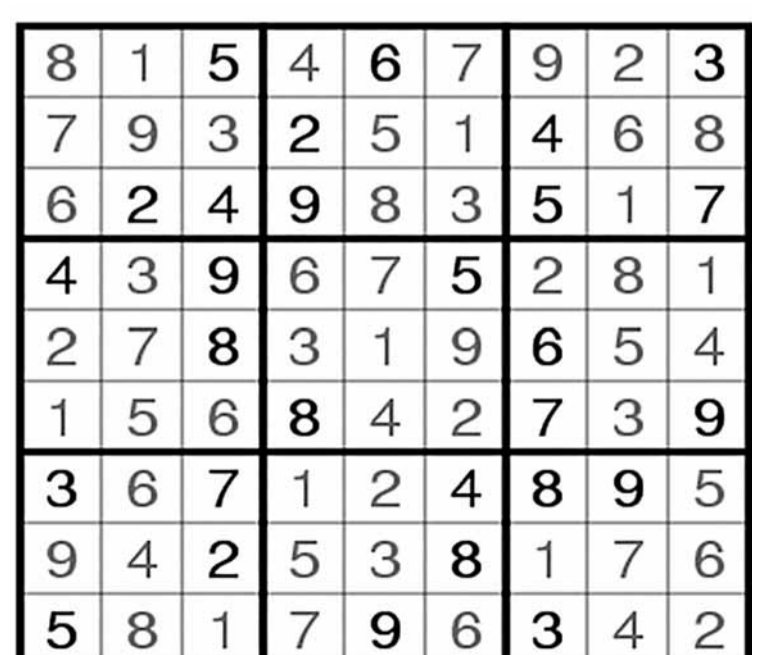
- |                    |                        |                  |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| BACON, Kevin       | DUNCAN, Michael Clarke | MCKELLEN, Ian    |
| BARDEM, Javier     | FORD, Harrison         | NEESON, Liam     |
| BLACK, Jack        | FOXX, Jamie            | PESCI, Joe       |
| BRIDGES, Jeff      | GIBSON, Mel            | PHOENIX, Joaquin |
| CAINE, Michael     | GOLDBLUM, Jeff         | REEVES, Keanu    |
| CARREY, Jim        | GRANT, Hugh            | RUSH, Geoffrey   |
| CHAN, Jackie       | GYLLENHAAL, Jake       | RUSSELL, Kurt    |
| CLOONEY, George    | HACKMAN, Gene          | SPACEY, Kevin    |
| COSTNER, Kevin     | HARTNETT, Josh         | STATHAM, Jason   |
| CUSACK, John       | IRONS, Jeremy          | TRAVOLTA, John   |
| DAMON, Matt        | JACKMAN, Hugh          | VOIGHT, Jon      |
| DANIELS, Jeff      | JONES, James Earl      | WAHLBERG, Mark   |
| DEPP, Johnny       | LAW, Jude              | WEAVING, Hugo    |
| DICAPRIO, Leonardo | MCCONAUGHEY, Matthew   | WOOD, Elijah     |
| DOUGLAS, Michael   |                        |                  |

The hidden movie title is: REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020



"Parasite" cast and crew accept the award for Best Picture for "Parasite" during the 92nd Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP

## KOBE, BRAD AND BAD 'CATS': BEST OSCARS MOMENTS



US director Matthew A. Cherry pose with the Oscar for Best Animated Short Film for "Hair Love".



Janelle Monae performs onstage.

The Oscars ended with a bang Sunday, as South Korean movie "Parasite" became the first non-English-language film to scoop top honors on Hollywood's biggest night. The wide-ranging, three-and-a-half hour show had plenty of memorable moments in the build-up to the awarding of the top prize.

Here are some key takeaways:

### Women's 'fight club'

In a year that saw female directors snubbed, the big question was—who would speak out about gender equality? The answer turned out to be: almost everyone. In her opening musical number, Janelle Monae praised "all the women who directed phenomenal films." "Alien" star Sigourney Weaver quipped on stage that she and female superheroes Brie Larson ("Captain Marvel") and Gal Gadot ("Wonder Women") were starting a "fight club." "Men are all invited, but no shirts allowed," Gadot joked. "And the loser gets to answer questions from journalists about how it feels to be a woman in Hollywood," she added.

### Pitt does politics

Brad Pitt has won multiple awards for "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood," and earned a reputation for delivering the season's wittiest, most entertaining speeches. Following his Oscars win, the Hollywood heartthrob struck a more serious, political note, slamming President Donald Trump's recent impeachment trial.

Backstage, Pitt expanded on the theme, telling journalists: "When gamesmanship trumps doing the right thing, it's a sad day and I don't think we should let it slide." Asked about his earlier wisecracks at o-

ther galas, including jokes about his Tinder profile, Pitt added: "I have some really funny friends that help me with some laughs."

### Kobe tributes

Expected tributes to Oscar-winning basketball star Kobe Bryant, who was killed in a helicopter crash two weeks ago, were surprisingly understated. The Lakers icon was the first entry in the traditional "in memoriam" video of those Hollywood has lost this year. Matthew A. Cherry, collecting his award for best animated short film, dedicated his win to Bryant, saying: "May we all have a second act as great as his was."

### Down syndrome first

Another moment of Oscars history was made when Zack Gottsagen, of the indie hit "The Peanut Butter Falcon," appeared on stage alongside co-star Shia LaBeouf to hand out the best live-action short award. Gottsagen became the first Oscars presenter with Down syndrome, slightly hesitating over his lines before being gently encouraged by LaBeouf.

"Shia was offered to present an Oscar. He said he would do it if he can share that moment with his beloved co-star Zach Gottsagen who we all adore," tweeted Alma Har'el, who directed LaBeouf in "Honey Boy."

### 'Cats' stars get the joke

One day after "Cats" scooped the most nominations for the Razzies-Hollywood's annual celebration of its most terrible movies—the flop's own stars took to the stage dressed in feline suits. The film-an adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical-used computer-generated effects to morph its all-star cast into deeply unnerving half-human, half-cat hybrids.



(From left) Brie Larson, Sigourney Weaver, and Gal Gadot speak onstage.

"As cast members of the motion picture 'Cats,'" began Rebel Wilson. "Nobody more than us understands the importance of..." added James Corden. "Good visual effects," they concluded in union, before batting playfully at the microphone stand. — AFP



US actor Brad Pitt waits for his award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role to be engraved.



(From left) Shia LaBeouf and Zack Gottsagen speak onstage.



James Corden and Rebel Wilson speak onstage during the 92nd Annual Academy Awards.

Lifestyle | Awards



'Parasite' cast and crew such as Cho Ye-jeong, Park So-dam, Choi Woo-shik, Kang-Ho Song, Yang Jin-mo, Jin Won Han, Kwak Sin-ae, Ha-jun Lee, Yang-kwon Moon, Kang-ho Song, Ye-jeong Jo, Bong Joon-ho, and Sun-kyun Lee accept the Best Picture award onstage during the 92nd Annual Academy Awards at Dolby Theatre.— AFP photos



Writer-director Bong Joon-ho, winner of the Best Picture, Director, Original Screenplay, and International Feature Film awards for "Parasite," attends the 92nd Annual Academy Awards Governors Ball.



South Korean director Bong Joon-ho accepts the award for Best International Feature Film for "Parasite".

# 'PARASITE' MAKES OSCARS HISTORY WITH STUNNING BEST PICTURE WIN

South Korean black comedy "Parasite" made movie history at the Oscars on Sunday, becoming the first non-English-language film to win the best picture award—Hollywood's biggest prize of all. A genre-defying thriller about a poor family infiltrating a wealthy household, "Parasite" won four awards, stunning the pundits who believed the Academy would never crown a subtitled Asian movie. "It's such a great honor. I feel like I'll wake up to find it's all a dream. It all feels very surreal," a jubilant Bong Joon-ho, who also won best director honors, told journalists backstage, calling the night "crazy."

very opportune moment in history is happening right now," producer Kwak Sin-ae told an audience of Tinseltown A-listers, who cheered the film's wins throughout the night at the Dolby Theatre. Bong predicted that "naturally we will come to a day" when "a foreign language film winning this won't be much of an issue."

**Phoenix and Zellweger win**

The pre-Oscars favorite "1917," Sam Mendes's innovative and personal World War I movie about two soldiers crossing no-man's-land, had to settle for best cinematography, visual effects and sound mixing prizes. The movie-filmed to appear like one continuous shot—had swept up trophies at several other galas in the build-up to Sunday. Joaquin Phoenix won his first Oscar for his turn in super villain origin story "Joker," the film that started the night with the most nominations.

In an emotionally charged speech, the actor railed against injustice and "an egocen-

tric worldview" that leads to environmental destruction, before paying tribute to his actor brother River, who died of a drug overdose in 1993. Renee Zellweger sealed a remarkable comeback by winning best actress for "Judy," dedicating the award to the Hollywood screen legend she portrayed. "Judy Garland did not receive this honor in her time. I am certain that this moment is an extension of the celebration of her legacy," she said in accepting her second Oscar.

**Politics reigns**

Pitt, who claimed his first acting Academy Award for his supporting turn in Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood," was one of several winners to strike a political note. "They told me I only have 45 seconds up here, which is 45 seconds more than the Senate gave John Bolton this week," he said, referring to President Donald Trump's recent impeachment trial. "American Factory"—the first film from Barack and Michelle Obama's production house, about a Rust Belt factory reopened by a Chinese billionaire—won best documentary.

Best adapted screenplay went to Nazi satire "Jojo Rabbit," about a young boy corrupted by fascism. Taika Waititi, who is of Maori origin, said he hoped the win would inspire "all the indigenous kids in the world who want to do art and dance and write stories." Laura Dern won best supporting actress for her turn as a feisty divorce lawyer in "Marriage Story."

**Musical tributes**

The event's luxury and glamour contrasted with the grief in Los Angeles over the recent deaths of Golden Age film legend Kirk Douglas and Oscar-winning basketball star Kobe Bryant. Record Grammy-winning singer Billie Eilish sang a moving version of "Yesterday" to accompany the "in memoriam" montage for those Hollywood lost this year.



In this handout photo Best Picture Award winners for "Parasite" pose onstage.

which opened with Bryant and closed with Douglas. Music was a prominent theme throughout the night, which began with a medley addressing a swirling row over the lack of minorities and female directors on the star-studded nominee list.

"We celebrate all the women who directed phenomenal films and I'm so proud to stand here as a black, queer artist," singer Janelle Monae said. Elton John won for best original song from "Rocketman," a film about his life. Rapper Eminem, who won an Oscar in 2003, made a surprise appearance on stage to perform his winning song "Lose Yourself"—which was heavily bleeped out by censors.

Icelandic composer Hildur Guðnadóttir won best original score for her haunting music for "Joker." "To the girls, to the women, to the mothers, to the daughters, who hear the music bubbling within, please speak up," she said. "We need to hear your voices."

**No women directors**

No female directors were nominated this year—a theme referred to by several celebrities. Natalie Portman, a best actress Oscar winner in 2011 for "Black Swan," literally wore her feelings—she had their names stitched into



Joaquin Phoenix, winner of the Actor in a Leading Role award for Joker.

"Parasite" also won the Oscar for best international feature, and became the first Asian film to scoop best original screenplay. "I thought I was done for the day and ready to relax," Bong had said earlier after his best director win, promising to "drink until next morning." Bong also paid tribute on stage to his childhood hero and fellow nominee Martin Scorsese, drawing a standing ovation for the veteran director of "The Irishman"—which went home empty-handed.

But a bigger shock was in store as the movie beat frontrunner "1917" to win best picture, the night's final prize. "It feels like a



Renee Zellweger, winner of the Actress in a Leading Role award for "Judy."



(From left) Best Actor Joaquin Phoenix, Best Actress Renee Zellweger and Best Supporting Actor Brad Pitt pose in the press room with their Oscars.



(From left) Laura Dern, winner of the Actress in a Supporting Role award for Marriage Story, and Renee Zellweger, winner of the Actress in a Leading Role award for Judy.



Laura Dern, winner of the Actress in a Supporting Role award for "Marriage Story".



Brad Pitt, winner of the Actor in a Supporting Role award for "Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood."



Taika Waititi, winner of Best Adapted Screenplay for "Jojo Rabbit."

# Lifestyle Awards

## List of Oscar 2020 winners

- BEST PICTURE**  
Parasite
- BEST DIRECTOR**  
Parasite, Bong Joon-ho
- LEADING ACTOR**  
Joaquin Phoenix, Joker
- LEADING ACTRESS**  
Renee Zellweger, Judy
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**  
Brad Pitt, Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**  
Laura Dern, Marriage Story
- BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**  
Parasite
- BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY**  
Jojo Rabbit
- COSTUME DESIGN**  
Little Women
- SOUND MIXING**  
1917
- SOUND EDITING**  
Ford v Ferrari
- MUSICAL SCORE**  
Joker
- ANIMATED SHORT**  
Hair Love
- LIVE-ACTION SHORT**  
The Neighbours' Window
- BEST DOCUMENTARY**  
American Factory
- DOCUMENTARY SHORT**  
Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You're a Girl)
- BEST INTERNATIONAL FEATURE FILM AWARD**  
Parasite
- PRODUCTION DESIGN**  
Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood
- BEST EDITING**  
Ford v Ferrari
- BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY**  
1917
- MAKEUP AND HAIRSTYLING**  
Bombshell
- BEST ANIMATED FILM**  
Toy Story 4
- BEST VISUAL EFFECTS**  
1917
- ORIGINAL SONG**  
Rocketman



"1917" visual effects team Guillaume Rocheron (center), Greg Butler (right) and Dominic Tuohy pose in the press room with the Oscar for Best Visual Effects.



Sound editors Mark Taylor and Stuart Wilson, winners of the Sound Mixing award for 1917, pose with Salma Hayek (left) and Oscar Isaac (right) in the press room.



(From left to right) Julia Reichert, Lindsay Utz, Steven Bogner, Jeff Reichert and Julie Parker Benello accept the Documentary - Feature - award for 'American Factory' onstage.



Jacqueline Durran, winner of the Costume Design award for Little Women.



British cinematographer Roger Deakins poses in the press room with the Oscar for Best Cinematography for "1917".



(From left) US producers Mark Nielsen, Josh Cooley and Jonas Rivera, winners of the Oscar the award for Best Production Design for "Once upon a Time...in Hollywood".



(From left) Matthew A. Cherry and Karen Rupert Toliver, winners of the Animated Short Film award for Hair Love.



US film editor Andrew Buckland (left) and US film editor Michael McCusker pose with the award for Best Film Editing for "Ford v Ferrari".



US production designer Barbara Ling (left) and US set decorator Nancy Haigh (right) pose in the press room with the Oscar for Best Production Design for "Once upon a Time...in Hollywood".



US filmmaker Carol Dysinger (right) and director Elena Andreicheva (left) poses in the press room with the Oscar for Best Short Subject Documentary for "Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You're a Girl)" along with US actor Mark Ruffalo.



Icelandic composer Hildur Gudnadottir poses in the press room with the Oscar for Best Original Score for "Joker".

## Trippy shoutout to women, Odd Eminem drop-in: The Oscar performances



Idina Menzel (center) and fellow singers such as Gisela Castellana, Lisa Stokke, Anna Buturlina, and Maria Lucia Rosenberg perform onstage.



British singer-songwriter Elton John performs onstage.



Finneas O'Connell (left) and Billie Eilish perform onstage.

Janelle Monae, Elton John, Randy Newman, Billie Eilish and... Eminem? Sunday's 92nd Academy Awards featured a wide-ranging, at times puzzling slate of performances—including a surprise visit from the rapper who won an Oscar for "Lose Yourself" in 2003, but refused to stage it at the time. Here's a round-up of the night's notable musical performances:

### Storytelling with song

Funky pop futurist Monae delivered a jaunty, surreal performance to open the show, including an ode to the year's women directors, who were snubbed in the nominations. "We celebrate all the women who directed phenomenal films and I'm so proud to stand here as a black, queer artist, telling stories," she said.

Monae sported a Mister Rogers-style red cardigan and black trousers to sing the theme from the children's television show that inspired this year's film "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" starring Tom Hanks. She then swapped the sweater for a wearable floral bouquet inspired by the folk horror film "Midsommar," and danced with a troupe of Jokers wearing the comic book villain's signature suit.

"Happy Black History month," she belted out during the performance that had the star-studded audience vibing to the music before rising to its feet. "Pose" star Billy Porter rocked the stage in a glittering gold cape, red jumpsuit and sparkling platform boots as he sang Elton John's "I'm Still Standing" before a mirrored grand piano that belonged to Liberace. It was a quirky opening number for the Academy Awards ceremony, which is often accused of triggering yawns.

### 'Another shot, another opportunity'

Eminem, fresh off the release of his 11th studio album, left the audience nonplussed with a surprise performance of his hit "Lose Yourself" from the 2002 semi-autobiographical drama "8 Mile," in which he starred. The rapper who built his brand on stoking controversy had refused to perform the song during the gala that made him an Oscar winner nearly two decades ago, because the Academy told him it would have to be censored. There were several bleeps on the network broadcast during Sunday's performance. "Look, if you had another shot, another opportunity... Thanks for having me @TheAcademy," he tweeted, along with a video of Barbra Streisand



Janelle Monae and Billy Porter perform onstage.

presenting him with his Oscar in 2003, a ceremony he did not attend. "Sorry it took me 18 years to get here."

### Still standing

Sir Elton—who took home the award for best original song for "(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again from the musical biopic about his life, "Rocketman"—gave a rollicking performance of the tune backed by a full band. The British icon donned a purple jacket with a rocket pinned to the lapel as he smashed the keys of a bright red piano. He shared the Oscar with his longtime collaborator Bernie Taupin for the song, the only original composition from the "Rocketman" soundtrack. "This is a dream for us," a visibly moved John said on the Oscar stage.

### Regal Erivo, plenty of Elsas

Cynthia Erivo, nominated for best actress for her role in "Harriet," performed "Stand Up"—the song she co-wrote for the film—wearing a regal, futuristic gold gown that resembled an Oscar itself. Erivo, who was flanked by a gospel-style choir, was this year's only non-white acting nominee. Idina Menzel graced the stage for a rendition of "Into the Unknown" from Disney's animated feature "Frozen II."

Menzel was joined by a coterie of singers who play Queen Elsa in foreign versions of the film, and delivered verses of the song in a variety of languages. The Irish-born composer-conductor Eimear Noone became the first female to conduct the in-house orchestra in a medley of music from the nominees for best original score. Troubadour Randy Newman, a perennial Oscars darling, returned to his spot at the piano after recovering from hip surgery, performing



Eminem performs onstage.

the nominated "I Can't Let You Throw Yourself Away," from "Toy Story 4."

### Eilish reigns

Music's artist of the moment Billie Eilish—who swept the Grammys two weeks ago, winning in all four top categories—performed a smoky, soulful rendition of "Yesterday" by the Beatles in tribute to the artists lost over the past year. The "In Memoriam" performance was particularly notable in light of the recent deaths of Kobe Bryant and Kirk Douglas. It also honored the careers of French director Agnes Varda and actress-singer Doris Day, among others. "Honored to be performing during the In memoriam segment for the Oscars tonight covering a song I've always loved," the 18-year-old Eilish—soon to perform the new James Bond title song—wrote on Instagram just before Sunday's show. — AFP



Janelle Monáe



Regina King



Cynthia Erivo

## Oscars red carpet: Soft pink, basic black and some big statements

Oscars night is the most glamorous in Hollywood, and the best in showbiz did not disappoint with their sartorial choices on Sunday. Pink gowns were a serious trend, along with basic black and statement necklaces. And then of course, there were showstopping fashion moments that don't neatly fit into any category. Here is a look at the highlights from the Oscars red carpet:



Saoirse Ronan



Penelope Cruz

**Pretty in pink**  
Several A-listers went for feminine elegance in shades of pink. Laura Dern, who won the best supporting actress crown for her work as a divorce lawyer in "Marriage Story," wore a custom Armani gown with a bead-encrusted, tasseled black bodice and a flowing baby pink skirt. And she brought the ultimate accessory: her actress mom Diane Ladd, a three-time Oscar nominee herself. Regina King, who won the same award last year for her role in "If Beale Street Could Talk," stunned in a blush Versace gown with an asymmetrical neckline, one strap and sparkling silver detailing across the bodice.

And Idina Menzel—who performed the nominated song from "Frozen II" with several other actresses who voice Queen Elsa in foreign-language versions of Disney's animated film—wore a strapless magenta J. Mendel gown with a voluminous sash. Completing the look was a massive teardrop diamond necklace. Young Julia Butters, the child actress who featured in Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood," joined the pink parade in a frothy cotton candy pink Christian Siriano dress.

**The showstoppers**  
Some outfits just pop the instant you see them. Janelle Monáe, who opened the gala with a rousing medley number, shut the red carpet down in head-to-toe glittering silver Ralph Lauren. The backless gown had long sleeves, a full ball skirt and a slouchy hood. Pop iconoclast Billie Eilish, the big winner at the Grammys two weeks ago and a performer on Sunday, kept up her signature "pajama couture" look in a white Chanel jacket and trousers, blinged out in the interlocking double-C logo. Her lime green hair and claw-like black fingernails provided major contrast.

And actor Billy Porter, who rocked the Oscars red carpet last year in a head-turning Christian Siriano tuxedo gown, donned a daring Giles Deacon gown with a sleeveless, gold, feather-detailed bodice and a wild print skirt.

**Making a statement**  
Natalie Portman, a best actress Oscar winner in 2011 for "Black Swan," let her feelings about the lack of nomi-



Scarlett Johansson



nations for female filmmakers be known—she had their names stitched into the black Dior cape she wore over her gown. Those names included Lorene Scafaria ("Hustlers"), Lulu Wang ("The Farewell"), Greta Gerwig ("Little Women") and Marielle Heller ("A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood"). "I wanted to recognize the women who were not recognized for their incredible work this year in my subtle way," Portman told the Los Angeles Times.

**Basic black**  
Portman was not the only Hollywood star in basic black. Penelope Cruz turned heads in her Chanel halter gown with the house's signature white camellia on the bodice. Saoirse Ronan, a nominee for best actress for her turn as Jo March in "Little Women," wore a Gucci gown with a black bodice that exploded in a cream-colored flounce at the waist and a pale lilac skirt. And by and large, the men went for the classic black tux, including best actor winner Joaquin Phoenix, who has worn the same Stella McCartney suit for the entire awards season.

**Remembering Kobe**  
Veteran director Spike Lee, who won the best adapted screenplay Oscar last year for race drama "BlacKkKlansman," rocked purple on the red carpet once again this time to honor late basketball legend Kobe Bryant. His jacket lapels bore the number 24, worn by the Lakers icon and Oscar winner, who was killed in a helicopter crash two weeks ago. "Tribute. Honor. Homage. We all miss him," Lee told ABC. — AFP



Billy Porter



Natalie Portman



Joe Manganiello (left) and Sofia Vergara



Winnie Harlow



US actress Laura Dern and mom actress Diane Ladd



Tonya Lewis Lee and Spike Lee



Kim Kardashian and Kanye West



Renee Zellweger



Idina Menzel



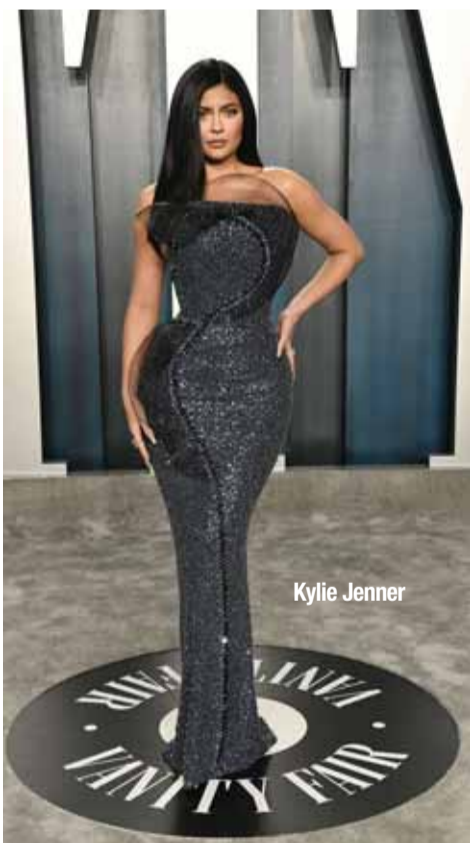
Beanie Feldstein



Egyptian actress Yousra



Julia Butters



Kylie Jenner



Gal Gadot



Margot Robbie



Sandra Oh



Sandy Powell (left) and a guest



Charlize Theron



Salma Hayek Pinault



Patricia Taylor (left) and Keanu Reeves



America Ferrera



Billie Eilish



A resident wearing a protective facemask walks in the Patan Durbar Square area in Kathmandu yesterday. —AFP

## Solar Orbiter launches on key mission to reveal Sun's secrets

**MIAMI:** The US-European Solar Orbiter probe launched Sunday night from Florida on a voyage to deepen our understanding of the Sun and how it shapes the space weather that impacts technology back on Earth. The mission, a collaboration between ESA (the European Space Agency) and NASA, successfully blasted off from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral at 11:03 pm (0403 GMT yesterday) and could last up to nine years or more.

At 12:24 am yesterday (0524 GMT) the European Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt, Germany, received a signal from the spacecraft indicating that its solar panels had successfully deployed. Space Orbiter is expected to provide unprecedented insights into the Sun's atmosphere, its winds and its magnetic fields, including how it shapes the heliosphere, the vast swath of space that encompasses our system.

By journeying out of the ecliptic plane - the belt of space roughly aligned with the Sun's equator, through which the planets orbit - it will acquire the first-ever images of our star's uncharted polar regions. Drawing on gravity assists from Earth and Venus, Solar Orbiter will slingshot itself into a bird's eye view of the Sun's poles, reaching its primary

science orbit in two years' time.

"I think it was picture perfect, suddenly you really feel like you're connected to the entire solar system," said Daniel Muller, ESA project scientist, shortly after the launch. "You're here on Earth and you're launching something that will go close to the Sun." "We have one common goal and that is to get the good science out of this mission. I think we're going to succeed," added Holly Gilbert, director of NASA's heliophysics science division.

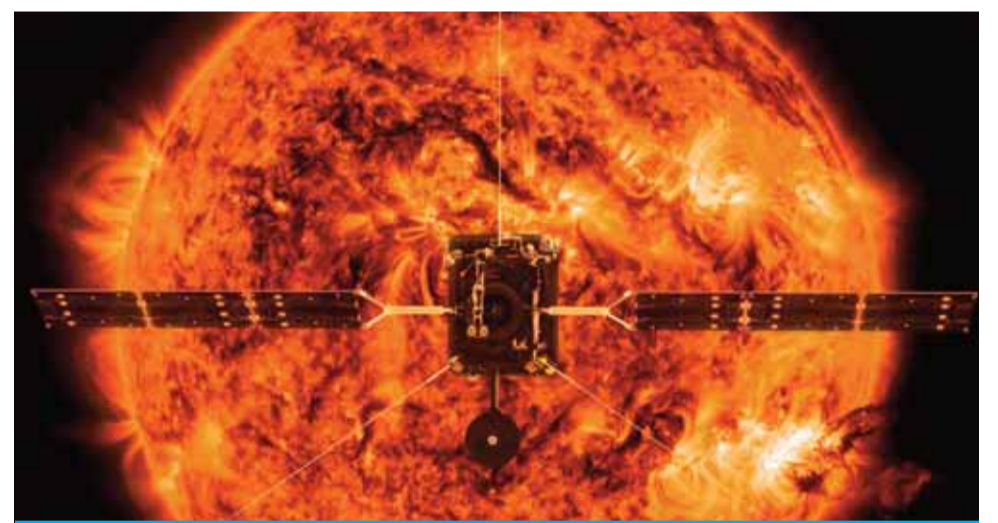
Ten state-of-the-art instruments on board will record myriad observations to help scientists unlock clues about what drives solar winds and flares. These emit billions of highly charged particles that impact the Earth, producing the spectacular Northern Lights. But they can also disrupt radar systems, radio networks and even, though rarely, render satellites useless. The largest solar storm on record hit North America in September 1859, knocking out much of the continent's telegraph network and bathing the skies in an aurora viewable as far away as the Caribbean. "Imagine if just half of our satellites were destroyed," said Matthieu Berthomier, a researcher at the Paris-based Plasma Physics Laboratory. "It would be a disaster for mankind."

At its closest approach, Solar Orbiter will

be nearer to the Sun than Mercury, a mere 42 million km away. With a custom-designed titanium heat shield, it is built to withstand temperatures as high as 500 Celsius. Its heat-resistant structure is coated in a thin, black layer of calcium phosphate, a charcoal-like powder that is similar to pigments used in prehistoric cave paintings. The shield will protect the instruments from extreme particle radiation emitted from solar explosions.

All but one of the spacecraft's telescopes will peep out through holes in the heat shield that open and close in a carefully orchestrated dance, while other instruments will work behind the shadow of the shield. Just like Earth, the Sun's poles are extreme regions quite different from the rest of the body. It is covered in coronal holes, cooler stretches where fast-gushing solar wind originates.

Scientists believe this region could be key to understanding what drives its magnetic activity. Every 11 years, the Sun's poles flip: north becoming south and vice versa. Just before this event, solar activity increases, sending powerful bursts of solar material into space. Solar Orbiter will observe the surface as it explodes and record measurements as the material goes by the spacecraft. The only spacecraft to previously fly over the Sun's



WASHINGTON: This handout illustration shows the Solar Orbiter. \_ AFP

poles was another joint ESA/NASA venture, the Ulysses, launched in 1990. But it got no closer to the Sun than the Earth is.

"You can't really get much closer than Solar Orbiter is going and still look at the Sun," ESA's Muller said. Solar Orbiter will use three gravity assists to draw its orbit closer to the Sun: two past Venus in December 2020

and August 2021, and one past Earth in November 2021, leading up to its first close pass by the Sun in 2022. It will work in concert with NASA's Parker Solar Probe, which launched in 2018 and will fly much closer to the Sun, passing through the star's inner atmosphere to see how energy flows through its corona. — AFP

## China president makes rare visit...

Continued from Page 1

The sweeping measures turned cities into ghost towns - but there were some signs of normality returning yesterday.

Roads in Beijing and Shanghai had significantly more traffic and the southern city of Guangzhou said it would start to resume normal public transport. However, for those at work, it was not an easy balance to strike. "Of course we're worried," said a 25-year-old man surnamed Li in a Beijing beauty salon that reopened yesterday. "When customers come in, we first take their temperature, then use disinfectant and ask them to wash their hands."

The Shanghai government suggested staggered work schedules, avoiding group meals and keeping at least one meter away from colleagues. Many were encouraged to work from home and some employers simply delayed opening for another week. State media reported that passenger numbers on the Beijing subway were down by about half yesterday compared to a normal work day. Large shopping malls in the capital were deserted and many banks closed.

One bank employee in Shanghai was heading to work for a half-day, with other workers due to take over in the afternoon. The rest of the day he would work from home. "It makes our work more difficult because we need to access the systems in our office," he told AFP. Schools and universities across the country remained shut.

The toll has overtaken global fatalities in the 2002-03 SARS epidemic when China drew international con-

demnation for covering up cases - though it has drawn praise from the WHO this time. Chief of the UN health body, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said there had been some "concerning instances" of cases overseas in people with no travel history to China. "We may only be seeing the tip of the iceberg," he tweeted, as a team of WHO experts departed for China.

In Hong Kong, thousands of people stranded aboard the World Dream cruise ship for five days were allowed to disembark Sunday after its 1,800 crew tested negative for the coronavirus. But another 65 people aboard the quarantined Diamond Princess cruise ship moored off Japan have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus, the health ministry said yesterday, bringing the total number of known infections to 135. The Diamond Princess has been in quarantine since arriving off the Japanese coast early last week after the virus was detected in a former passenger who got off the ship last month in Hong Kong.

In China, the eastern city of Wuxi said anyone trying to enter from provinces with high numbers of cases would be "persuaded to go back", while Suzhou, near the financial hub of Shanghai, suspended all passenger transport to surrounding counties. "I just checked and it would take 18 hours for me to go to work by bicycle," wrote one frustrated commuter on China's Twitter-like social media site Weibo.

Travel authorities said there had been 11 million journeys by train, road or plane Saturday - 84 percent down on the same day last year. About 800 vehicles from "hard-hit areas" have been denied entry into Shanghai over the last month, according to state news agency Xinhua. Beyond China, the tourism industry remains in the doldrums, with several countries banning arrivals from the mainland and major airlines suspending flights. Online rental site Airbnb has suspended all bookings in Beijing until Feb 29. — AFP

## Court told Kashmir leader held for being 'Daddy's girl'

**SRINAGAR:** The family of a former Kashmir chief minister went to India's Supreme Court yesterday in a bid to overturn his detention under a law allowing incarceration for up to two years without charge. The case was launched as it was revealed that the police case against Omar Abdullah was mainly that he has used "dirty politics" while another former state leader held under the law was a "daddy's girl".

Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti were among hundreds of politicians and activists detained after the Indian government stripped Kashmir's autonomy in August last year. It imposed a tough security clampdown with internet and phones cut for months. Last week authorities ordered the two held under the Public Safety Act, condemned by rights groups because those accused can be held for up to two years without appearing in court.

Abdullah's sister, Sarah Abdullah Pilot, moved a Supreme Court petition against his detention which listed the reasons Abdullah was held. He was accused of "resorting to his dirty politics" and "instigating and

provoking general masses" against the Indian government. The police dossier also said Abdullah's influence was a threat because he was "able to convince the electorate to come out and vote in huge numbers even during peak militancy and poll boycotts."

AFP saw the dossier issued justifying Mufti's extended detention. It calls her a "Daddy's girl", referring to her late father Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, who was also a chief minister. Mufti was "a hard headed and scheming person" whose action ranged from "speeches glorifying militants to creating fears among (the) majority population based on cheap politics."

Mufti, who had ruled the state in alliance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was also accused of working with separatists. The government faced new criticism following the release of the dossier. "Since when has being a 'Daddy's girl' and encouraging people to vote become a crime against the nation?" wrote Priyanka Gandhi, a leader of the opposition Congress party, on Twitter.

Abdullah and Mufti are among scores of Kashmiris still held under the PSA, which had previously been mostly used against militant separatists opposed to Indian rule of the Himalayan region divided between India and Pakistan. Abdullah's father, Farooq Abdullah, a member of the Indian parliament and former state chief minister, is also held along with politicians, business leaders, lawyers and separatist activists. — AFP



Mehbooba Mufti



Sports

# Johnny Sexton demands repeat performance against England

‘We need to up our game from those levels of performances’

**DUBLIN:** Ireland will have to produce the same display against England in a fortnight that they did against Wales to keep alive their hopes of a second Six Nations Grand Slam in three years, says Johnny Sexton.

The 34-year-old Ireland captain takes his side to Twickenham on February 23 where they secured the Grand Slam two years ago.

However, Sexton says they have too often come up short at England and will require the level of performance they produced in the 24-14 victory over last year's Grand Slam champions Wales.

The last two meetings between Ireland and Eddie Jones's side have gone England's way — a 32-20 win in Dublin last February which is Ireland's only home defeat in their last 18 Six Nations Tests and a 57-15 walloping in a World Cup warm-up match last August.

“Yeah, we're going to have to be up there like we were today but it's away from home and it's against a team who were World Cup finalists,” said Sexton after the Wales game.

“But they're a top quality side and the last two times we've played England they've given us a right old spanking. “So we need to up our game from those levels of performances.

“Yeah, it's a tough place to go Twickenham — we haven't had too many victories over the years and it'll be no different now coming into this game.”

If anyone can engineer a victory over England, though, head coach Andy Farrell says Sexton can.

“I'm asking quite a bit of him and he's coming to the table with his own ideas,” said Farrell.

“That's exactly what we want.”

Farrell also dismissed concerns that Sexton will not play until the next World Cup in 2023.

However, his class shone through when, in his first game back after a two-month absence, he scored all 19 points in the win over the Scots.

“We'll see (if he makes it),” said Farrell.

“You know what? That far ahead doesn't really matter, because it's guaranteed he will make people better all around him. “Whatever happens in the future will be good for us.”

**‘X-FACTOR IS SPECIAL’**

Farrell, whose son Owen will captain England at Twickenham, said claiming two straight wins since he replaced Joe Schmidt after the World Cup was satisfying. “It is important but I suppose at this stage for us it just about learning the lessons and getting better and understanding what we are trying to achieve,” he said.

“I just said to the lads in the changing room that it is a great place to be, you have got two from two and there is still plenty to fix.”

Farrell was especially happy with the improvement that full-back Jordan Larmour showed against Wales.

The 22-year-old scored a try and also produced some superb clearing kicks.

Farrell could see similarities between Larmour and England's 2003 World Cup winner Jason Robinson, who like the Ireland coach starred in both league and union.

“He's learning the whole time, Jordan,” said Farrell.

“I thought his ability to read the game was way better this week, I'm very keen to keep developing his



**DUBLIN:** File photo shows Ireland's Ross Byrne (C) is tackled during the Six Nations international rugby union match between Ireland and Wales at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin, on February 8, 2020. —AFP

decision-making as far as the back-play is concerned but at the same time making sure I don't dampen anything he's about because his X-Factor is special.

“Jason and Jordan have got similar type of feet, the way that Jordan broke those tackles for the try he has similar type of strength as well.” — AFP

## NBK enables customers to win dream trip to UEFA Champions League 2020 finals

**KUWAIT:** As part of its commitment to provide customers with exclusive experiences all-year-round, the National Bank of Kuwait launched its annual UEFA Champions League campaign in collaboration with Mastercard to enable customers to enter a draw and win a fully-covered trip to the semi-final and final matches of the UEFA Champions League 2020 in Istanbul, Turkey.

NBK customers automatically enter the prize draw when using their eligible NBK Mastercard Credit Cards. For every KWD 1 spent locally, customers receive one entry into the draw, while every KWD 1 spent at restaurants, cafes and food delivery platforms gives them two entries and every KWD 1 spent internationally gives them three entries. In addition to these entries, this year's campaign enables customers to maximize their chances of winning a trip by receiving 100 bonus chances for correctly predicting the winning team in the UEFA Champions League matches through the dedicated page on nbk.com.



Hesham Al Nusif

NBK Mastercard Credit Cardholders will have the chance to win one of the four trip prizes, two of them to the semi-final matches and another two to the final match.

All four winners will be announced during the draw held on April 7th, 2020. Each winner will receive an all-expense paid trip for two people. Each trip package will include business class roundtrip air tickets, semi-final or final match tickets, 5-star hotel accommodation, free transportation, in addition to a cash prize of KWD 1,000 that will be deposited in the winner's credit card account.

Speaking of the campaign, Hesham Al Nusif, Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait said, “We are always committed to rewarding our customers with exceptional and exclusive prizes throughout the year, while providing them with an array of unique products and services. Our aim is to consistently enable them to enjoy a rich and advanced banking experience.”

“NBK offers its customers the most

exclusive rewards in Kuwait. We provide them with diversified promotions that are in line with their needs and our position as a provider of outstanding rewards campaigns,” Al Nusif added.

“NBK and Mastercard continue to partner in unique campaigns that have received positive responses from customers, and launch once again this campaign to ensure our winning customers enjoy an exceptional trip, luxurious accommodation and an overall unique experience in the globally awaited UEFA Champions League,” Al Nusif concluded.

Somu Roy, General Manager, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq, Mastercard said, “We are proud to partner with our longstanding partner, National Bank of Kuwait, to offer cardholders in Kuwait a truly priceless experience that will bring their love for the beautiful game to life. Mastercard has been closely associated with UEFA for more than 25 years, and we are delighted to share our passion for football with NBK's most ardent fans.”

The eligible NBK Mastercard Credit Cards for the UEFA Champions League campaign are: NBK World Elite Mastercard, World Mastercard, Miles World Mastercard, Platinum Mastercard, Laki Titanium Mastercard and Titanium Mastercard Credit Cards. NBK Mastercard Credit Cards offer a number of privileges including the NBK Rewards Program covering more than 850 participating outlets, free access to airport lounges around the globe, free travel insurance, NBK Secure Shopping, free valet parking, local concierge service, and many other exclusive offers.

## Kuwait wins 2 medals at Europe kickboxing championship



**VIENNA:** Kuwaiti kickboxers Hamayel Al-Yaqout (right) and Abdulaziz Murad. — KUNA

**VIENNA:** Kuwaiti kickboxers picked up a silver medal and a bronze in the ongoing Croatia-hosted 10th European Cup “Karlovac Open” yesterday. Kuwait's Hamayel Al-Yaqout clinched the silver in the women's division while her compatriot Abdulaziz Murad claimed the bronze medal in his category.

Speaking to KUNA via telephone, Murad attributed the team's impres-

sive performance to the overwhelming support the athletes have received at home.

In remarks of her own, Al-Yaqout said her accomplishment proves that Kuwait women's successfully foray into sports have put them on equal footing with their masculine counterparts. Some 700 kickboxers from 39 nations are vying for gold in one of the sports' perennial events. — KUNA

## KSC honor heads of Gulf volleyball delegations



By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of Kuwait Sports Club, Chairman (KSC) of the Higher Organizing Committee (HOC) of the 37th Gulf Champion Clubs Volleyball Championship lauded the Gulf “brothers” in Kuwait, the land of friendship and peace, and the fantastic competition among them.

Khalid Al-Ghanim and Deputy Chairman of the HOC Mohammad Al-Nisif honored heads of the six participating delegations, head and members of the Gulf volleyball organizing committee during a dinner held at Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center Sunday night.

The ceremony was attended by Head of the Gulf Volleyball Organizing Committee Sheikh Ali bin Mohammad Al-Khalifa, Secretary General of Kuwait Olympic Committee Hussein Al-Musallam, Deputy Chairman of International and Asian Federations Essa Hamza and other officials.

Al-Ghanim welcomed the guests and delegations in Kuwait saying “this great gathering is the goal of Gulf championships and we con-



gratulate the winning team in advance, and promise that Kuwait team will compete for the title in the coming championships. Meanwhile Essa Hamza commended the technical level of the tournament as matches played reflected that. He said “the Gulf teams proved their strength and ability to present high levels that can compete with the Asian teams.”

He said the Asian Volleyball Federation will always be a strong supporter of the Gulf

Organization Committee both materially and logistically, so that the Gulf championships become among the strong ones.

Deputy Chairman of HOC Mohammad Al-Nisif said “Khaleeji 37” of volleyball is about the gathering of one family that is competing in fair play. He said what we saw from all participating delegations reflect and confirms that people of the Gulf are one family. Al-Nisif thanked all media for covering the event.

## Jones warns against Six Nations expansion

**EDINBURGH:** England coach Eddie Jones has said experience of southern hemisphere rugby makes him wary of expanding the Six Nations Championship to include South Africa.

Tournament organisers have played down reports the world champions could join an expanded Six Nations in 2024. “It (the Six Nations) is called the greatest rugby tournament in the world and I think it is,” said Jones. “So why would you want to add other teams that are going to decrease the level of competition. “I can only talk from experience. Super Rugby was the golden egg of rugby — brilliant, 12 teams, competitive. As soon as it had gone to 14 and 15, it had lost its allure.”

“You want the best teams playing against each other. There's something about the Six Nations — because of the history of the relationships between the nations, it makes it more outstanding.” England, beaten by South Africa in last year's World Cup final, revived their Six Nations title hopes with a 13-6 win over Scotland at a storm-tossed Murrayfield on

Saturday. “Someone was giving me a history lesson on Scotland and the number of different things that have happened in the rivalry with England,” added Jones. “So there's a lot of meaning to a lot of people for a game like this.”

“The competition is much harder contested than the World Cup. It's become a lot more physical and it's only going to get more so. “You don't want this type of game every week, but southern hemisphere coaches certainly admire the Six Nations. “From the first Six Nations I did to now, I think we've seen a general rise in the quality of the teams. “Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England — they are all operating at a high level now. The gap between the teams is so small.”

Storm Ciara effectively ruined Saturday's match in Edinburgh as a contest, with no roof at Murrayfield to protect the ground from the elements as is the case at Cardiff's Principality Stadium. But Jones, who saw replacement prop Ellis Genge driven over for the decisive try in the 70th minute, was delighted by the way England responded to their tournament-opening 24-17 defeat by France in Paris.

“I loved it. Rugby is a winter sport. Until we make it a summer sport we should be playing in winter conditions,” he said. “The players have got to adapt to the conditions and find a way to win. “To come up here and do that after we got a bit of a kick in the guts against France is one of the most satisfying wins we've had.” — AFP

## Sports

# Pakistan crush Bangladesh by innings in first Test

## Pakistan mopped up last four wickets in 90 minutes

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the first Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh on the fourth day at Rawalpindi Stadium yesterday:

**Bangladesh 1st innings 233** (Mohammad Mithun 63, Najmul Hossain Shanto 44; Shaheen Shah Afridi 4-53)  
**Pakistan 1st innings 445** (Babar Azam 143, Shan Masood 100, Haris Sohail 75; Abu Jayed 3-86, Rubel Hossain 3-113)

#### Bangladesh 2nd innings

Tamim Iqbal lbw Yasir	34
Saif Hassan b Naseem	16
Najmul Hossain Shanto lbw Naseem	38
Mominul Haque lbw Shaheen	41
Tajjul Islam lbw Naseem	0
Mahmudullah c Sohail b Naseem	0
Mohammad Mithun b Yasir	0
Liton Das lbw Yasir	29
Rubel Hossain lbw Abbas	5
Abu Jayed c Shafiq b Yasir	3
Ebadat Hossain not out	0
Extras: (w2)	2
<b>Total:</b> (all out; 62.2 overs)	168

**Fall of wickets:** 1-39 (Saif Hassan, 8.6 ov), 2-53 (Tamim Iqbal), 3-124 (Shanto), 4-124 (Islam), 5-124 (Mahmudullah), 6-126 (Mithun), 7-130 (Haque), 8-156 (Rubel), 9-165 (Das), 10-168 (Abu Jayed)  
**Bowling:** Shaheen 16-6-39-1 (w1), Abbas 17.4-6-33-1 (w1), Naseem 8.2-2-26-4, Yasir 17.2-3-58-4, Shafiq 3-0-12-0

**Result:** Pakistan won by an innings and 44 runs.

**RAWALPINDI:** Pakistan completed a crushing innings-and-44-run victory over Bangladesh on the fourth morning yesterday, taking a 1-0 lead in the two-Test series. Bangladesh were bowled out for 168 in their second innings after resuming the day on 126-6 as Pakistan's pace and spin attack was too hot to handle despite a flat Rawalpindi stadium pitch. Fast bowler Naseem Shah, who at 16 years and 359 days became the youngest bowler to take a Test hat-trick on Sunday, finished with 4-26 and was declared man of the match.

Despite Naseem being unavailable to bowl yesterday with rib pain, Pakistan mopped up the last four wickets in 90 minutes, inflicting their 10th defeat on Bangladesh in 11 matches with one draw.

Pakistan skipper Azhar Ali said home wins — only possible in recent months, after the resumption of Test cricket in Pakistan following a decade's isolation over security concerns — were important to boost confidence. "It's an important win and home wins always increase confidence within the team," said Azhar. "We have to play important away series including one in England (July-August this year) so we will carry this confidence." Naseem and other bowlers bowled superbly and it was an outstanding batting display, so all in all it was a complete team effort.

Bangladesh skipper Mominul Haque started the day by square-driving paceman Shaheen Shah Afridi for his fifth boundary in the first over, but then fell leg-before in the same over for 41. Liton Das (29) and tail-ender Rubel Hossain kept Pakistan at bay for 11.5 overs before Mohammad Abbas trapped Rubel leg-before for five.

Leg-spinner Yasir Shah dismissed Das lbw and had Abu Jayed for three to finish with 4-58 and complete the win. Haque rued Bangladesh's low first-innings total. "Disappointing batting on a flat wicket (in the first innings) and no team can come back from such situations," said Haque, who has now lost all three Tests as skipper by an innings. "Pakistan bowled superbly and exploited our weaknesses and that hat-trick changed



**RAWALPINDI:** Pakistan's cricketers celebrate after the dismissal of Bangladesh's cricketer Liton Das during the fourth day of the first cricket Test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi yesterday. — AFP

the game completely to open Pakistan's victory path."

With the victory, Pakistan gained 60 points in the World Test Championship, taking their tally to 140 points. India lead the nine-team championship table with 360 points followed by Australia (246) and England 146. Top two teams on the championship table will play the final at Lord's in June 2021.

Pakistan's victory was on the cards after they bowled Bangladesh out for 233 in the first innings and then piled up 445 in reply, with Babar Azam smashing

143 and Shan Masood 100. This becomes Bangladesh's sixth defeat in 14 months, including their fifth by an innings. They have yet to score a championship point in three Tests. The second Test starts in Karachi — after a two-month break — from April 5-9.

Bangladesh, who played a three-match Twenty20 series with Pakistan last month, insisted on splitting their tour into three phases over security concerns.

They will also play a one-day international in Karachi (April 3) before the second Test. — AFP

## Kadri injured in Avalanche win over Minnesota

**MINNESOTA:** Nathan MacKinnon and Gabriel Landeskog had goals, Pavel Francouz stopped 34 shots, and the visiting Colorado Avalanche beat the Minnesota Wild 3-2 on Sunday night. Pierre-Edouard Bellmare also scored for Colorado, which won the final four games of its five-game road trip. Nazem Kadri had an assist for the Avalanche before leaving the game late in the second period because of an injury. He returned in the third period before going back to the locker room. Avalanche coach Jared Bednar told ESPN that Kadri suffered a lower-body injury and will be re-evaluated when the team returns to Denver today. Kevin Fiala and Jared Spurgeon had a goal and an assist each and Devan Dubnyk had 30 saves for Minnesota. The Wild had their three-game winning streak snapped.

#### RED WINGS 3, BRUINS 1

Andreas Athanasiou scored two third-period goals as host Detroit ended Boston's six-game winning streak. Athanasiou hadn't scored since a two-goal game on Nov. 16. Brendan Perlini scored his first goal of the season for Detroit, which had gone 1-9-1 in its previous 11 games. Jonathan Bernier made 39 saves for the Wings, who have the league's worst record but have two victories over Boston this season. Torey Krug scored his eighth goal of the season for the Atlantic Division-leading Bruins. Tuukka Rask made 17 saves for Boston, which was playing the second end of a back-to-back after defeating Arizona on Saturday afternoon.

#### DUCKS 3, SABRES 2

Jakob Silfverberg, captain Ryan Getzlaf and Nick Ritchie scored in the first 12 minutes as visiting Anaheim held on for the win against Buffalo. Ryan Miller made 31 saves for the Ducks, who finished with a 3-0-2 record on their five-game road trip. Johan Larsson and defenseman Rasmus Dahlin each scored, and Jonas Johansson made 25 saves in his second career start for the Sabres. Johansson was starting in place of Carter Hutton, who missed the game because of an illness in his family.

#### RANGERS 4, KINGS 1

Rookie Igor Shesterkin made 42 saves as host New York scored three times in the third period in the victory over Los Angeles, which is 1-9-1 in its past 11 games and hasn't scored more than three goals in any game during the skid. Shesterkin, who improved to 5-1 since making his NHL debut on Jan. 7, made 30 saves in the final 40 minutes before the Rangers put the game away. Los Angeles goaltender Jonathan Quick made 37 saves and took his eighth straight loss as the Kings also completed a winless (0-4-0) four-game road trip.

#### JETS 5, BLACKHAWKS 2

Andrew Copp tallied a goal and an assist — including the game-winning goal at 13:27 of the third period — to back a 24-save effort from goaltender Connor Hellebuyck and lead host Winnipeg past Chicago. The Jets have won three in a row and four of five (4-0-1), while Chicago lost its third straight game (0-1-2) in the opener of a five-game road trip through western Canada. Blackhawks captain Jonathan Toews, a Winnipeg native, earned an assist for his 800th career NHL point. Toews had been held in check entering play Sunday, going pointless in four games on the heels of a six-game stretch in which he tallied four goals and nine assists. — Reuters

## Bangladesh erupts in joy after biggest cricket triumph

**DHAKA:** Thousands of fans flooded the streets of Bangladesh's capital Dhaka and the prime minister yesterday promised a public celebration after the under-19 team won the World Cup in the nation's biggest cricket triumph. Bangladesh stunned four-time winners India in the final of the Under-19 World Cup late Sunday in South Africa to record a three-wicket victory over the

favourites. The elated supporters, some wearing the team jersey and painted from head to toe as a tiger — the national team's nickname — held spontaneous victory parades and shouted "Bangladesh, Bangladesh".

National newspapers hailed the teen cricketers, with one publication likening Bangladesh captain Akbar Ali to Mughal emperor Akbar the Great. "Young Tigers Rule the World", roared the front-page headline of the largest-circulating English newspaper, The Daily Star.

"The Young Tigers created arguably the most seminal moment in its cricketing history at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom yesterday, ending their wait for a major global trophy," the Star wrote.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said a "mass reception" would be held for the team once they return to Dhaka. "They beat four-time champions India.

"These boys are very brave," she told a weekly cabinet meeting. "This is the best gift in Mujib Borsho (year)," Hasina said, referring to the year-long celebration of what would have been the 100th birthday of Bangladesh's founding President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who is her father. The Bangladesh Cricket Board is expected to announce financial rewards for the players. "We cannot express this achievement in words. A World Cup is World Cup... we were close many times in the past but it did not happen," the governing body's spokesman Jalal Yunus said.

The under-19 team played 30 youth one-day internationals in two years before the tournament, winning 18 matches. Their best showing at the World Cup ahead of the tournament was a third-place finish as hosts in 2016. — AFP



**NEW JERSEY:** Congoese basketball player Jonathan Kuminga (C) is seen during practice at Patrick School, in Hillside New Jersey on December 24, 2019. — AFP

## Congoese teen awaits his chance at NBA stardom

**NEW YORK:** He will not finish high school until 2021, but Congoese teen Jonathan Kuminga is already considered by some to be the young player who most interests the NBA. At 17, Kuminga waits for his moment in a small establishment in Hillside, New Jersey, 30km southwest of New York. He might be a millionaire in a matter of years, but for now, the 6-foot-6 (2.03m) playmaker spends most of his time in a modest red brick building, studying and training.

Chris Chavannes, who coaches Kuminga at noted prep program Patrick School, pointed out some of the obstacles facing the highly touted prospect in the number 1 jersey during a workout. "He comes from a place where there was not as much talent and where it was not as intense, so he must integrate our demands, physical and mental," Chavannes said.

"But he loves basketball, so the transition will not be so difficult for him." Kuminga has the frame, according to Al Harrington, who is among the few players to make the leap directly from high school to the NBA.

"Physically, he already has the body to play in university or in the NBA," Harrington said. "It's very rare to see such a combination, a guy of his size able to dribble quickly and post himself" Chavannes added.

At ease with the ball and patient as plays develop, the young Congoese student can become fearsome in transition, although he is still working to perfect his

shooting touch. Since arriving in the United States from the Democratic Republic of Congo at age 13, Kuminga has had a chaotic journey, attending four high schools in as many years.

Several members of his family live nearby, but Kuminga has not seen his parents since departing his homeland. "I am still a kid, so I miss them," said Kuminga, whose older brother, Joel Ntambwe, played US college basketball at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. The cost of a trip back to Africa and a visa issue prevent a reunion with his parents or joining his homeland's national team, whose jersey he has never worn. Nevertheless, with the 2021 AfroBasket tournament on the horizon he is on the radar of Congoese federation manager Joe Nkoi. "We are following him closely," Nkoi said. "We give ourselves time."

Since last year, "Jon" has been considered a possible top pick in the 2022 NBA Draft, becoming eligible for the selection process one year after his high school class graduates.

"With his talent, he could be number one in the NBA draft," said his cousin, Utah Jazz star Emmanuel Mudiay, who is also from DR Congo. While the NBA has discussed changing the rules to allow direct moves from the high school ranks to the NBA — something unseen in 15 years — any change is unlikely to come in time to prevent Kuminga from having to spend a year in college basketball.

"He has his feet on the ground so much that it makes everything very easy for him. He does not get distracted," Chavannes said. And helping him stay on track, Patrick alumni like Harrington and Brooklyn Nets star Kyrie Irving sometimes drop by workouts and pass along advice. "We foreigners who come from far away come with a goal," Mudiay said. "His is to go to the NBA." — AFP

## Coronavirus chaos ravages Asia's sporting calendar

**HONG KONG:** The chaos in China's sporting programme caused by the deadly coronavirus outbreak, which has already forced China to cancel or reschedule a host of events, is spreading into Asia's sporting calendar. Yesterday, golf's LPGA Tour cancelled the HSBC Women's World Champions and the LPGA Thailand.

Here is the latest rundown of Asian sporting spectacles affected by the outbreak:

#### GOLF

This month's HSBC Women's World Championship in Singapore and the LPGA Thailand were cancelled yesterday, meaning the US LPGA Tour has been forced to scrap all three of its lucrative early-season events in Asia after China's Blue Bay tournament was canned 10 days ago. The women's Asia Pacific Amateur Championship in Thailand next week has also fallen while the PGA Tour's third-tier China series has been forced to move qualifying events to Indonesia and Thailand. No decision has been made yet by the men's European Tour as to whether its flagship China Open in April will go ahead in the city of Shenzhen. The Hong Kong Women's Open, originally scheduled for next month, has been shifted to May.

#### FOOTBALL

China has suspended all domestic football and postponed indefinitely the top-flight Chinese Super League season which was due to kick off on February 22. The virus has had a big impact on Asia's continental competitions, with four Chinese clubs' home group matches in the AFC Champions League, which begins this week, being postponed until at least April and May.

No decision has been made yet on Asia's World Cup qualifying matches next month. China are due to host the Maldives on March 26 and play in Guam five days later. Fixtures involving Hong Kong and Taiwan could also be in doubt. A women's Olympic qualifying event between China, Taiwan, Thailand and Australia scheduled for last week in Wuhan, the disease epicentre, was moved initially to Nanjing then to Sydney.

The China women's football team were quarantined in a Brisbane hotel on Wednesday after arriving in Australia for the tournament but have been given the all-clear to play, and the delayed tournament will wrap up this week.

#### ATHLETICS

The World Indoor Championships, scheduled for Nanjing from March 13-15, were postponed for a year. The Hong Kong Marathon, due to take place on Sunday, was cancelled. — AFP

## Sports

# Inter win thrilling Milan derby to move top of Serie A

## Napoli's struggle continues with a 3-2 defeat at home to Lecce

**MILAN:** Inter Milan moved top of Serie A on Sunday after storming back from two goals down to snatch a 4-2 win over AC Milan in a pulsating derby at the San Siro. Inter pull level on 54 points with Juventus, who lost 2-1 at Hellas Verona on Saturday, but are ahead of the champions on goal difference thanks to a thrilling second half turnaround after Ante Rebic and Zlatan Ibrahimovic had put Milan 2-0 up at the break.

Lazio are just a point behind in third after Felipe Caicedo scored the only goal in a hard-fought win at Parma earlier on Sunday. "It's a special night because in the first half we were in great difficulty like we hadn't been this season. There was the risk of taking a hammering," said Inter boss Antonio Conte.

"Credit to these lads because they were able to resist the blows which means that we were ready for something good. "It's absolutely too early to talk about things that we can still dream of today."

Milan had dominated the first half with Inter struggling to deal with Ibrahimovic, who soared above Diego Godin before knocking down for Rebic to tap the opener past Daniele Padelli.

Stefan De Vrij blocked another cross to deny Rebic a second tap in but Franck Kessie flicked on for a waiting Ibrahimovic to turn in the second. The comeback began five minutes after the break when Brozovic lashed home a stunning volley and two minutes later Mattias Vecino finished off an Alexis Sanchez pass to level the scores.

De Vrij put Inter deservedly ahead with a superb diving header with 20 minutes to go, and after Ibrahimovic hit the post for Milan Romelu Lukaku then headed home substitute Victor Moses' cross three minutes into injury time to maintain Inter's charge for a first Serie A title in a decade.

Milan's collapse means they missed the chance to move into the Europa League places and sit 10th. "It's difficult to explain. The first half was almost perfect, the second half the opposite," said Ibrahimovic.

"We conceded the first goal and the squad lost faith, then conceded a second and everything fell apart. "Inter in the first half didn't look like a team who were second but then demonstrated why they were after the break." Caicedo kept Lazio's own dream of a first 'Scudetto' in 20 years alive as a 1-0 win over Parma moved the Romans second in Serie A. Simone Inzaghi's side are right in the title discussion after extending their unbeaten run to 18 league games.

Their last Serie A defeat was in September to Inter Milan, who they host next weekend at the Stadio Olimpico. "We are trying to stay in there, fighting against the battleships. With this spirit, we can advance very well," said Inzaghi.

"Sunday will be a great game against a great team." Caicedo broke through just before the interval as the Ecuadorian volleyed home after Parma failed to clear a ball into the box.

Napoli's struggles continued as they collapsed to a 3-2 defeat at home to Lecce. Last season's runners-up had rekindled hopes of European football next season after league wins over Juventus and Sampdoria, and by eliminating Lazio from the Italian Cup. Gianluca Lapadula netted a double, opening the scoring after half an hour, with Marco Mancosu sealing victory with a superb free-kick eight minutes from time.

Arkadiusz Milik had levelled for Napoli just after the break with Jose Callejon reducing the deficit late on. The hosts were furious at being denied a penalty for a challenge on Milik, with the Pole booked for diving.



**MILAN:** Inter Milan's forward Romelu Lukaku from Belgium scores a goal during the Italian Serie A football match Inter Milan vs AC Milan at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

"I don't understand why they don't go to VAR when it's a debatable one," said Gattuso. "It would have taken a minute to see if Milik had been fouled." Napoli are 11th, four points off the Europa League places, with Lecce three points above the relegation zone.

Elsewhere, Mario Balotelli's Brescia earned a point with a 1-1 draw at home against Udinese in new coach Diego Lopez's first game in charge of the basement club. Jeremie Boga scored late to grab a 2-1 win for Sassuolo at SPAL. — AFP

## Barca beat Betis to keep pace with Real Madrid

**MADRID:** Lionel Messi gave a hat-trick of assists on Sunday as Barcelona ended their turbulent week with a thrilling 3-2 victory over Real Betis to stay in touch with Real Madrid at the top of La Liga.

Madrid's 4-1 win at Osasuna earlier in the day put pressure on Barca to respond, only for Betis to twice lead at the Benito Villamarin through a penalty from Sergio Canales and brilliant solo effort from Nabil Fekir.

Yet both teams Barcelona hit back as Frenkie de Jong and Sergio Busquets pulled them level before Clement Lenglet headed in with 18 minutes left, all three goals teed up by Messi.

Fekir and Lenglet were then sent off in a frantic contest by the end of which, Barca had the victory they so desperately needed following a difficult few days for the club. Messi had put himself at the heart of a political spat this week by publicly taking exception to comments made by

sporting director Eric Abidal, who suggested the players were the cause of the decision to sack Ernesto Valverde last month. Barcelona were then beaten by Athletic Bilbao and knocked out of the Copa del Rey before the semi-finals for the first time in 10 years on Thursday. "In Bilbao we played well but they knocked us out," said Barca coach Quique Setien. "This win will give us motivation and extra energy for the future." To make matters worse, winger Ousmane Dembele suffered another hamstring injury, which is likely to keep him out for the rest of the season, while centre-back Samuel Umtiti appeared in court too, for alleged damages to a rented villa.

It meant defeat against Betis was unthinkable, particularly for Setien, who could ill-afford another setback against the team he managed for two years between 2017 and 2019. Instead, Barca turned the tide, with a chaotic performance that might have been punished by better opponents, but that keeps them three points behind Real Madrid, who had earlier won at a canter in Pamplona.

Gareth Bale returned to the starting line-up after four matches out of the squad and a fortuitous deflection meant he assisted Isco's equaliser after Unai Garcia had given Osasuna a surprise lead.

Sergio Ramos then headed Madrid in front before substitutes Lucas Vazquez and Luka Jovic made the scoreline more emphatic. "I'm pleased with all the players and what they're doing," said Zidane. "It's very good to stay in

front." Barca's exit in the Copa del Rey overshadowed Madrid's own shock defeat at home by Real Sociedad in the quarter-finals, a loss that brought a dramatic end to their 21-match unbeaten run.

But Zidane will be relieved to see his team swiftly back on track with a performance full of the kind of resilience that Real's rivals have so lacked in recent weeks. Bale also keeps coming back under Zidane and the 30-year-old had chances to add a goal to a spirited display before going off to a decent reception from the away support in the second half. This was only his third appearance since the turn of the year. "People want there to be a problem but there isn't one," Zidane said. "He did well, offensively and defensively he gave everything. He was a bit short of fitness at the end, so he came off."

"We know the player he is and that he will give a lot from now until the end of the season. Let's count on Gareth." Eden Hazard is still yet to return after recovering from a foot fracture. Real play Manchester City in the Champions League in less than two weeks. "It wasn't the time today again and I hope we'll see him next week," said Zidane.

Sevilla lost ground in the race for the top four as they conceded two late goals to lose 2-1 at struggling Celta Vigo. After one win in five league games, Sevilla drop to fifth, behind Atletico Madrid on goal difference and three points adrift of third-placed Getafe. — AFP

## Leipzig hold Bundesliga leaders Bayern

**MUNICH:** RB Leipzig held Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich to a goalless draw at the Allianz Arena on Sunday to stay just one point behind the defending champions in the title race. Leipzig worked tirelessly to thwart the hosts, for whom victory would have opened up a four-point gap after third-placed Borussia Dortmund's 4-3 loss at Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday.

Bayern are bidding to win an eighth straight league title. They were awarded a second-half penalty which was then reversed when VAR showed Robert Lewandowski had been offside. Second-placed Leipzig often rode their luck to repeatedly frustrate Bayern, but wasted a series of second-half chances themselves.

"The problem was that both teams could live with a 0-0 draw," admitted Bayern forward Thomas Mueller. "In the end, neither team wanted to take the absolute risks, which meant we didn't play to our strengths."

Bayern coach Hansi Flick expects this season's title race to go to the wire. "The Bundesliga will be tense until the end," he said. "There are a few teams with a chance. "We want to keep our position, but it's going to be a hard path to stay on."

Leipzig coach Julian Nagelsmann said his side showed the bravery required to win in Munich. "In the second-half, we had much clearer chances to win the game," he said. "We were brave, defended high up and had a good grip on the game."

Leipzig striker Timo Werner, who missed a golden opportunity on 63 minutes, rued his team's missed chances, including a skied effort by captain Marcel Sabitzer. "In the beginning, it seemed just a matter of time before we scored," admitted Werner.

"But in the second half we played as our coach (Julian Nagelsmann) wanted and were the better team. We could have won." The top-of-the-table clash, in front of 75,000 spectators, was the only top-tier fixture in Germany on Sunday.

Borussia Muenchengladbach's home game against Cologne was postponed earlier due to severe weather warnings. Despite dominating possession, Bayern could not finish the first-half opportunities which fell to Lewandowski, Leon Goretzka and Thomas Mueller.

It was not until after the break that the visitors really threatened Bayern's goal, as three huge chances went begging. Sabitzer fired an effort over the crossbar, with the goal at his mercy, at the start of the second half.

Then Werner then pinched possession and rounded Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who had come to the edge of the box for a clearance. But Bayern defender David Alaba got back to block his shot and deny the striker a 21st league goal of the season.

With 53 minutes gone, Bayern were awarded a penalty when Lewandowski went down in the area after Leipzig centre-back Dayot Upamecano clipped his boot. The Poland striker was poised to add to his league-leading tally so far of 22 Bundesliga goals this term, but was denied by VAR.

Then just after the hour mark, Werner wasted a golden chance served up to him. He was set up perfectly by Leipzig winger Christopher Nkunku, but he could only watch as his shot flew wide of the Bayern goal. There was good news for the hosts in the second half as defender Lucas Hernandez and winger Kingsley Coman came on for their first appearances after long-term injuries.

With 10 minutes left, Leipzig goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi came to his side's rescue with a stunning, diving save. The Hungarian did superbly well to deny Goretzka who had broken through the defence, but was left with his head in the hands as Gulacsi pushed the ball around the post.

At the other end, Bayern's Joshua Kimmich intercepted ex-Everton winger Ademola Lookman's cross, meant for Werner, just before the final whistle. — AFP

## McTominay says Man United determined to end season on high

**LONDON:** Scott McTominay says Manchester United are "fully focused" on ending their troubled season on a high note, with silverware still on offer in the FA Cup and Europa League as he nears a return from injury.

United have found it hard to establish any momentum in a challenging campaign that has threatened to spiral into disarray at times. They are six points adrift of the Premier League's top four but could still qualify for the Champions League through another route if they win the Europa League.

United face Club Brugge in the last 32 later this month, while their next FA Cup assignment is a fifth-round tie at second-tier Derby. Despite distracting speculation about Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's future as manager, combined with fan protests against United's owners the Glazer family and the club's executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward, McTominay is adamant there is still a possibility of a happy ending for everyone at Old Trafford.

"It would be nice to come back and have a massive push with the rest of the boys to get into some finals, get some trophies under our belts and really set the bar for next season, set a bar that we don't step underneath," McTominay told United's website.

"All of the boys are fully focused on doing that and hopefully we can do it as well." McTominay's performances have been one of the few bright spots for United this season, but the 23-year-old Scotland midfielder has been sidelined with a knee injury since late December.

He will be out until early March but has stepped up his recovery during United's warm-weather training camp in Spain. "It has been going well," he said. "Obviously, it is never nice watching football matches when you have been playing. You want to be involved and you want to be helping the team as well."

When he finally gets back on the pitch, McTominay will find United's new signing Bruno Fernandes adding his creative talents to the midfield, an ideal foil for the industrious Scot. "In the brief moments that I have seen him in training, he has looked really good," McTominay said of the former Sporting Lisbon playmaker. "He has looked like every type of player that the manager wants as well, so hopefully that can come to us on the pitch and he can show us what he can do. I can't wait to play alongside him." — AFP



**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain's Italian midfielder Marco Verratti (R) is tackled by Lyon's Brazilian midfielder Thiago Mendes during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Lyon (OL) at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. — AFP

## PSG aided by own goal for the ages in win over Lyon

**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain survived the absence of Neymar and a Lyon fightback to win Sunday night's Ligue 1 clash 4-2 at a stormy Parc des Princes, helped by Fernando Marcal's truly stunning second-half own goal.

Runaway leaders and defending champions PSG were cruising at half-time with Angel Di Maria and Kylian Mbappe giving them a two-goal advantage against a Lyon side enduring a disappointing season.

Then Marcal comically blasted the ball into the roof of his own net just after the break, leaving Lyon looking at another heavy defeat in Paris, where they lost 5-0 in this fixture last season. However, Martin Terrier and Moussa Dembele quickly pulled goals back, leaving PSG needing a late strike by substitute Edinson Cavani to secure the points. It was a performance that showcased why they can ill afford to be complacent heading into their Champions League last 16, first leg away to Borussia Dortmund on February 18, although they will hope to have Neymar back by then. The world's most expensive player sat out a second consecutive match here

due to a rib complaint. Without the Brazilian — as well as his injured compatriots, Thiago Silva and Marquinhos, in defence — Thomas Tuchel's side made it eight straight wins and stretched their unbeaten run to 21 games in all competitions.

Lyon, meanwhile, have not won in three outings and this result leaves the seven-time former champions in a lowly ninth place. They are eight points adrift of the Champions League qualifying spots and their upcoming European double-header against Juventus looks certain to be a step too far for them. How Rudi Garcia's side must have wished this match had been postponed due to the swirling wind and rain caused by Storm Ciara — which left ticker-tape from pre-match fan displays strewn all over the pitch — as they struggled to keep up with PSG in the first half.

PSG broke forward to open the scoring midway through the first half as Idrissa Gueye fed Di Maria to cut in from the right and beat Lyon goalkeeper Anthony Lopes with a low strike at his near post. Thomas Meunier then squared for Mbappe to score his 15th league goal of the season in the 38th minute after fine work by Mauro Icardi down the right, and both Icardi and Mbappe also had goals disallowed for offside before the interval.

Then, two minutes after the break, came what looked like the coup de grace. An attempted cutback by Julian Draxler was going nowhere before Thiago Mendes intervened, allowing Draxler to keep the ball in play and return it to the edge of the six-yard box, where the hapless Marcal slammed it into the roof of his own net. — AFP

## 25 Johnny Sexton demands repeat performance against England



## 26 Pakistan crush Bangladesh by innings in first Test



## 27 Inter win thrilling Milan derby to move top of Serie A



# Bogdanovic buzzer beater lifts Jazz

HOUSTON: Bojan Bogdanovic hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer to lift the Utah Jazz to a 114-113 victory over the host Houston Rockets on Sunday. Bogdanovic had just two field goals and eight points for the night, 13 below his season average. But Utah executed the final inbound play to perfection, with Bogdanovic making a 28-footer over James Harden and P.J. Tucker, the final clutch 3 in a sequence of them down the stretch. Harden registered a triple-double (28 points, 10 rebounds, 10 assists) with his pass to Robert Covington, whose 3-pointer with 28 seconds left gave the Rockets a 110-109 advantage. Jordan Clarkson paced the Jazz with 30 points off the bench while Mitchell added 24 and six assists. Rudy Gobert had 12 points and 15 rebounds. Russell Westbrook led the Rockets with 39 points. After a hot start from the perimeter, Houston shot just 10 of 33 from behind the arc over the final three periods.

**BOSTON CELTICS 112 - OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER 111**  
Kemba Walker scored 27 points to help Boston to a road win over Oklahoma City. Walker hit a pair of crucial 3-pointers late to seal the victory for Boston, which won its seventh straight. The Celtics have won 10 of their past 11 games. It was just Oklahoma City's second loss in 11 games.

**PHILADELPHIA 76ERS 118 - CHICAGO BULLS 111**  
Furkan Korkmaz scored 31 points to carry host Philadelphia past Chicago. Joel Embiid added 28 points, 12 rebounds, five assists and four blocked shots for his 30th double-double this season while Ben Simmons had 19

points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds for his fifth triple-double. Tobias Harris contributed 14 points for the Sixers, who improved to 24-2 at home. Zach LaVine led the Bulls with 32 points while Luke Kornet added a career-high 25. Cristiano Felicio had 13 for the Bulls, who dropped their fifth in a row. Thaddeus Young also had 10 points and 10 rebounds.

**MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES 106 - WASHINGTON WIZARDS 99**  
Ja Morant recorded his first career triple-double with 27 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds as visiting Memphis rallied late to defeat Washington in the nation's capital. Kyle Anderson added 16 for Memphis while Jonas Valanciunas had eight points and 18 rebounds. Jaren Jackson Jr. posted a double-double with 14 points and 11 rebounds, with Tyus Jones adding 13 points off the bench for Memphis. Bradley Beal led Washington with 26 points. Beal has been a force throughout the season but especially in recent games — since being snubbed for the Eastern Conference All-Star Game. Mo Wagner scored 19 off the bench for the Wizards, with Davis Bertans adding 15 and Hachimura 12.

**ATLANTA HAWKS 140 - NEW YORK KNICKS 135**  
Trae Young scored 11 of his 48 points in the second overtime as Atlanta held on to defeat visiting New York. John Collins added 32 points and 16 rebounds for the Hawks. DeAndre Hunter added 19 points, including a crucial 3-pointer in the second overtime. New York saw its four-game winning streak end despite getting 35 points and 18 rebounds from Julius Randle. Reggie Bullock

added 21 points and Mitchell Robinson had 15 points and 11 rebounds.

### LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 133 - CLEVELAND CAVALIERS 92

Lou Williams scored 25 points and Paul George 22 as Los Angeles rebounded from a demoralizing defeat one night earlier for an easy road victory over Cleveland. Marcus Morris Sr. had 10 points in his Clippers debut as Los Angeles distanced itself from a surprising 27-point defeat against Minnesota on Saturday. The Clippers won without Kawhi Leonard, who received a day of rest on the second night of a back-to-back scenario. Andre Drummond scored 19 points and grabbed 14 rebounds in his Cavaliers debut, while Kevin Porter Jr. added 17 points for Cleveland. The Cavaliers saw their losing streak extend to six games while also falling for the 13th time in their

past 14 contests.

### PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS 115 - MIAMI HEAT 109

Damian Lillard recorded 33 points and eight assists to lead Portland past visiting Miami. Gary Trent Jr. contributed 22 points and four steals off the bench, and Trevor Ariza scored 19 of his 21 points in the first half as the Trail Blazers won for the seventh time in the past 10 games. Carmelo Anthony scored 15 points, CJ McCollum added 13 and Hassan Whiteside had 11 points, 17 rebounds and four blocked shots. Goran Dragic had 27 points and seven assists off the bench for the Heat, who lost a season-worst third straight game. Duncan Robinson scored 19 points. Jae Crowder had 18 points and 11 rebounds in his team debut, Bam Adebayo added 13 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists, and Derrick Jones Jr. scored 11 points. — Reuters



HOUSTON: Russell Westbrook #0 of the Houston Rockets shoots the ball against the Utah Jazz at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas. — AFP

## Fat-shedding Duplantis promises more after pole vault world record

PARIS: Swedish athletics star Armand Duplantis says his efforts to shed his "fat college kid" physique paid off as he soared to a new world record in the pole vault, and promptly promised more. Duplantis, known by his nickname "Mondo", sailed over 6.17 metres at an indoor meeting in the Polish city of Torun on Saturday.

The 20-year-old, born in the United States to American father and coach Greg — himself a former pole vaulter who cleared 5.80m — and Swedish heptathlete mother Helena, had almost broken the record at a meeting just days earlier in Duesseldorf. He will have a chance to improve the mark in indoor meetings in Glasgow on Saturday, and then in France at Lievin on February 19 and Clermont-Ferrand four days later — in the pole vault, athletics' governing body no longer makes any distinction between indoor and outdoor records.

Duplantis' performance marks him out as a clear favourite for the Olympic title in Tokyo this year. He claimed silver at October's World Athletics Championships in Doha behind American Sam Hendricks just months after turning professional having attended Louisiana State University on an athletics scholarship. Duplantis credits a new fitness drive with success on the same pole he used in the Qatari capital.

"I couldn't do much with it in Doha because I was just a big fat college kid at the time, I guess," said Duplantis. "I'm a lot more in shape now so I can get a lot more out of the pole."

Duplantis, in an interview with World Athletics, also credited a more professional approach he has adopted this season. "Before I was a high school kid, and I was a college kid. On Friday night, Saturday night, I was a college kid. I don't regret that," he said.

"But I wanted to take this to 100 percent, and be a professional. And I'm having the most fun I've ever had in my life." Duplantis' new record beat by one centimetre the previous best set six years ago by France's Renaud Lavillenie, the 2012 Olympic champion. "Have a good day baby, but not too good," Lavillenie texted Duplantis before his competition in Torun.

Duplantis openly admits that growing up in a track and field-crazy family that even had their own vaulting apparatus in the garden, "Renaud was my absolute idol". "There is no other person I'd want to take (the record) from." The support he's given me through this whole process too, has been phenomenal." Lavillenie's former coach Damien Inocencio said Duplantis' main strength was his natural speed, a real asset over 30-40 metres down the runway towards the plant and a propelled take-off.

"Two years ago he ran a 100m in 10.56 seconds, so that comes naturally. He's also a good size (1.81m/5ft 11in) and a real competitor with a great mental strength," said Inocencio. Jean Galfione, who won Olympic pole vault gold for France in 1996, added: "He vaults in a very specific way."

"When he beat the world record, it looked easy. All vaulting fundamentals are exceptionally mastered. "He arrives fast and importantly doesn't lose his speed because he's efficient on his final moments of his approach. He loads the flexion of the pole and very quickly unleashes it."

Duplantis, who announced his prodigious talent to a wider audience when he won the European outdoor title in Berlin in 2018 with a vault of 6.05m, a world junior record, acknowledged that the world record in Torun had not come as a surprise. —AFP

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