

DT NEWS

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Tweet of the Day



America owes its gratitude to the students of Stoneman Douglas and their peers across the country who have joined their cause. We also owe them our support. Join #MarchForOurLives tomorrow to stop mass school shootings and give our kids their futures back.

@BillClinton

Today's Weather

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11th Hour

Investment opportunities showcased

Manama

Bahrain's embassy in the United Kingdom has hosted a reception to review investment opportunities in Bahrain. The reception, in cooperation with the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB), also focused on what Bahrain provides in the growing financial services sector to enhance its position as a regional hub.

BDF announces live ammunition exercise on Sunday

Manama

The General Command of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) announced that it will carry out a live ammunition firing exercise on Sunday.

The exercise will be undertaken by the Royal Bahrain Naval Force (RBNF) at Hair Shtaya area, north of Bahrain, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m (noon).

All are advised to avoid the designated firing zone for safety reasons.



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At least 13 dead, 37 injured in explosion in Afghanistan



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Terror attack in Southern France

Gunman named as 26-year-old Redouane Lakdim. Had pledged allegiance to so-called Islamic State

1. Gunman hijacks car in Carcassonne, killing one passenger and injuring driver. He then shoots and wounds a police officer who was jogging with colleagues

2. Suspect drives to Trèbes where he takes hostages in Super U supermarket, screaming "Allahu Akbar". Kills two. After four-hour standoff, elite police storm store and kill attacker

Sources: Reuters, AP, BBC, Le Figaro
Picture: Google Earth
© GRAPHIC NEWS

Trebes

Three people were killed in southwestern France yesterday when a gunman held up a car, opened fire on police and then took hostages in a supermarket.

Police later stormed the supermarket in the small town of Trebes and the attacker was killed, Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told reporters on site.

The attacker was known to authorities for petty crimes but was not considered

a threat, Collomb said, adding that he was believed to have acted alone.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for Friday's attack but offered no details. "He was known for petty crimes. We had monitored him and thought there was no radicalization," Collomb said, before adding: "He was known for possession of drugs, we couldn't have said that he was a radical that would carry out an attack." (Continued on page 3)

Bahrain condemns attack

Manama

Bahrain condemned in strongest terms yesterday the attack targeting French police and the hostage-taking situation in the southern city of Trebes.

Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, in a statement, expressed its sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wished the injured speedy recovery.

Affirming solidarity with the French Republic, the Ministry said that it

"reiterates Bahrain's firm stance that rejects terrorism in all its forms."

The Ministry also urged the international community to "strengthen coordination and efforts to eliminate terrorism and dry up its sources of funding."

Four dead including gunman, hostages released

Bahraini students excel in PIRLS



Education Minister, Dr Al Nuaimi, during the honouring ceremony held at the Education Ministry's hall in Isa Town

Manama
Bahraini students have come out with flying colours in the International Reading Literacy Study, known as (PIRLS). The students showcased their skills in science and mathematics as well as in many other areas to bag top honours in the assessment which saw the participation of over 340,000 students worldwide. "The achievements in

TIMSS 2015, especially in science and mathematics, reflect the educational strides in Bahrain," the Minister said while addressing a ceremony held to honour the students, schools, teachers and ministry's

educational specialists at the ministry's hall in Isa Town. A total of 48 Bahraini schools ranked above the global average set for PIRLS 2016, which was conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of

Educational Achievement (IEA). Students taking part in PIRLS 2016 topped all other Arab countries which took part in the international study which assesses the reading achievement of fourth graders.

Education Minister Dr Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi congratulated the students, teachers and parents who contributed to Bahrain's outstanding achievements in PIRLS 2016.

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At least 13 dead, 37 injured in explosion in Afghanistan

Kabul
A car packed with explosives blew up outside a sports stadium in Afghanistan's restive south yesterday, killing at least 13 people and wounding dozens more, officials said, capping a bloody week in the war-torn country. The suicide attack happened in Lashkar Gah, the capital of opium poppy-rich Helmand province, as spectators were leaving a wrestling match at the stadium, provincial governor spokesperson Omar Zwak said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which Zwak said killed at least 13 people and wounded 45 others, including children. Helmand police spokesperson Salam Afghan had earlier given a lower toll of 10 dead and 35 wounded.

Lashkar Gah, was among the spectators leaving the stadium when the blast happened. "Four of my family members were martyred and three others were wounded," a sobbing Mohammad told AFP at the hospital run by the Italian NGO Emergency. Photos posted on Twitter purportedly of the explosion showed a huge fire and a thick plume of black smoke rising into the sky. "We heard a loud explosion from our surgical centre in the city, Emergency tweeted. "35 wounded already taken to our hospital, another 4 were dead on arrival." President Ashraf Ghani, whose government has been lambasted for its inability to protect ordinary Afghans,

condemned the attack against "innocent people", according to a statement. Helmand is largely controlled by the Taliban, which is under growing pressure to take up Ghani's offer of peace talks to end the 16-year war. So far the Taliban, Afghanistan's largest militant group, has given only a muted response. The attack caps a bloody few days in Afghanistan as Taliban and Islamic State militants ramp up attacks even before the official start of the spring fighting season. In Kabul on Wednesday a suicide bomber blew himself up among a crowd of people celebrating Nawrooz, killing dozens of people, many of them teenagers. (AFP)

Afghan officials often give conflicting figures in the wake of attacks. "The suicide bomber detonated his car bomb as spectators were leaving the stadium," Zwak said. "The bomber wanted to go inside the stadium but he was identified by the police and he detonated himself." Local officials were at the match, which witnesses said had been held as part of celebrations for Nawrooz, the Persian new year holiday that some fundamentalist Muslims consider un-Islamic. Agha Mohammad, a 25-year-old shopkeeper from



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Qatar's terror list proves Quartet's claims: Gargash



DT News Network
Manama

The new terrorism list issued by Qatar confirms the quartet's stance that the current crisis is the product of Qatar's support for "extremism and terrorism", said a top UAE Minister.

The terror blacklist published by Doha on

the official website of its National Counter-Terrorism Committee on Thursday terms 11 Qataris, four Egyptians, two Saudis and two Jordanians as terrorists. The list also adds six entities from Qatar, Daesh Sinai branch and Al Ihsan Charitable Society from Yemen to its blacklist.

"Ten of them have already

been blacklisted by the four boycotting countries," Dr Anwar Gargash, the United Arab Emirates Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, wrote on his *Twitter* handle.

"Apart from its obstinacy, Qatar is confirming the evidence against it and that its support for extremism and terrorism is at the heart of its crisis," wrote Dr Gargash.

The quartet, including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, has boycotted Qatar since June 5 for supporting extremists and funding terrorism and maintains a terror list of 72 people and organisations having links to Doha.

According to a report by *Gulf News*, Abdul Rahman Al

Nuaimi who was designated as terrorist by the US government in December 2013 and the UN in September 2014 for providing financial support to terrorist organisations is on the list.

He formerly served as the head of the Qatar Football Association, was a founder and board member of Eid Charity in Qatar (also placed on the

terror list), and served as a top advisor to the government of Qatar on charitable donations, the report points out.

While the Arab Quartet welcomed the issuance of the list, it pointed out that Qatar has procrastinated in submitting it, which has been a demand of the Quartet since the crisis broke out. (*With input from agencies*)

IS claims terror attack in France

(Continued from page 1)

Collomb said three people were wounded. He said that before the attacker seized hostages he killed one person while stealing a car with a bullet in the head in the nearby historic town of Carcassonne. He then shot at police officers before taking hostages at the supermarket.

President Emmanuel Macron said the incident appeared to be a terrorist attack and security forces were securing the area.

BFM TV reported that he claimed allegiance to Islamic State. Collomb said the man had demanded the release of Salah Abdeslam - the prime surviving suspect in the Islamic State attacks that killed 130 people in Paris in 2015.

Abdeslam, a French citizen born and raised in Brussels, went on trial in Belgium last month. He is accused of "attempted murder in a terrorist context" over a Brussels shootout in March 2016, four months after he fled Paris on the night of the carnage during which his brother was among the suicide bombers.

A 45-year-old lieutenant-colonel swapped himself in exchange for one of the hostages, Collomb said.

France is part of a U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State in Syria and Iraq and has thousands of soldiers in West Africa fighting al Qaeda-linked militants. (Reuters)

Alert issued

Manama

The Embassy of Bahrain in France yesterday called upon Bahraini citizens there to follow the instructions of French security authorities.

The embassy, on its official Twitter page, wrote: "In light of the current events in the south of France, all citizens are urged to be cautious and abide by the instructions of the French security authorities."

All Bahraini citizens, currently in the southern parts of France, especially Trebes City, should contact the embassy on 0033147234868, 0033755170131, 0033640420878 or the follow-up office in Foreign Affairs Ministry on +97317227555 in case of emergencies.

Arson suspects arrested over police patrol attack



The charred remains of the attacked patrol vehicle near Deraz

DT News Network
Manama

Seven suspects wanted over an arson attack at a police patrol in the Northern Governorate on Wednesday were arrested, said an Interior Ministry statement.

The attack, according to the Director-General of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science Colonel Abdullaziz Al Rumaihi, occurred at the entrance of Deraz on March 21 causing a minor injury to a policeman.

Al Rumaihi said the investigators seized footages of the attack from the suspects showing various phases of the attack along with other vital pieces of evidence.

An investigation team, involving crime scene specialists and other security teams, lead to identifying and arresting the suspects, said the Director-General. He said that legal proceedings are being taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution.

Wednesday's attack is also the first since an on-duty policeman, Abdulsamad Haji, 31, was killed in a similar attack near one of the entrances of Deraz. Two other policemen were also critically injured in the attack which targeted a police patrol vehicle.

Investigations later led to arresting the attackers and identifying the mastermind, who is also a wanted terrorist, currently seeking refuge in Iran.

Parliamentary committee calls for tighter visa supervision

DT News Network
news@dt.bh

A parliamentary committee yesterday called upon the authorities here to tighten the visa allocation procedures to protect the society from criminal and immoral activities.

The move follows a proposal, approved by the Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee in the House of Representatives, asking the government to reconsider granting entry to people from those countries who were found frequently involved in "immoral" activities in the Kingdom.

The proposal was tabled by Second Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives MP Abdhaleem Murad in February 2017.

Explaining the move, he told the Parliament that the proposal would help boost efforts to combat vice and immoral activities in the country.

"The authorities should reassess the entry procedures to protect the Bahraini society," Murad stressed.

Citing reports, he pointed out that people from mainly "European and Asian" countries are misusing procedures to secure easy entry into the country "to run

prostitution rackets and engage in other illegal activities.

Bahrain offers entry to nationals of over 100 countries, with less requirements.

The proposal was reviewed by several authorities, including Interior Ministry, which is in charge of the General Directorate of Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs.

After reviewing the proposal, the General Directorate told the committee that the "crimes and immoral activities committed by certain nationalities are individual cases and don't represent the nationalities they're holding".

"This is not a phenomenon that requires the reconsideration of entry for visitors to the Kingdom

"Such a measure, if adopted, would affect the interests of the Kingdom and its diplomatic relations with friendly and brotherly states and the possible application of the principle of reciprocity by these states," the directorate added.

The committee members, however, passed the proposal, which will be reviewed, along with a report issued by the committee, before the 40-member council on Tuesday.



Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club High Committee Chairman HH Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa and Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club High Committee Deputy Chairman HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa attended the 21st horse race of the season at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club in Raffa, Sakhir. The participants competed on the cups of the Personal Representative of HM the King HH Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HH Shaikh Sultan bin Hamad Al Khalifa and the silver cup presented by Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club. The race was also attended by HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid bin Isa Al Khlaifa, HH Shaikh Hamad bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, HH Shaikh Sultanuddeen bin Mohammed bin Salman Al Khalifa, HH Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Isa Al Khalifa, HH Shaikh Salman bin Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa, HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, HH Shaikh Nooh bin Mohammed bin Salman Al Khalifa and a number of equestrian sports fans and enthusiasts

By Invitation

Marjan Modara



The Paradigm Shift

We go through life trying to find out why and what is the purpose of us being here.

But we never ask ourselves what it is that we can do with our time that will be of importance and give meaning and happiness to not only ourselves but also to the people around us.

The moment we are born, the environment we are in comprising of culture, family and friends take over and we are told that who we are is governed by how people think of us.

Ego starts creeping in and shaping us in respect to what we

have, the positions we hold and our status in society and we forget that we are these perfect beings created by god who have come into this world to do good to our fellow human beings.

We become attached to all our belongings starting from our unique toys, to being top in our classes, to the prestigious positions we occupy at work, and all the properties we begin to collect and own.

People start evaluating us based on our successes and accomplishments in life and not on how good natural qualities we have as a human being.

The shift in our lives arise when we start realizing that god must have brought us to this world for a much more higher and better reason than just positions and materialistic belongings. We start wanting to give meaning to what we do and begin to develop our minds for internal self-purpose instead of external satisfactions.

The shift happens when we want to be in an ego less place where our focus changes its path to wanting something more for others rather than ourselves. Where we shift from a sense of entitlement to a sense of humility. From a sense of “what I want

to achieve next to what I can offer and serve”.

There comes this deep sense of feeling in us that desires to be fulfilled with respect to having made a difference with our presence here and that when it is our time to leave this lifetime that someone’s existence was profoundly touched because of our presence.

Discover what you are passionate about in life by a trial-and-error process. None of us knows exactly how we feel about an interest until we actually do it and experience it. We have to act to find our passion and then use it to improve and self-develop. We have to forget the thought that the only reason we do things is to get rewarded. We have to do it without waiting for outcomes.

Pablo Picasso once said that “The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away”. So, live your life trying to find your gift and once you have acquired it, give it away to see the joy it gives to others as it gave to you.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)

Gunther sets blistering pace



DT News Network Manama

Maximilian Gunther of BWT Arden set the overall pace today on the third and final day of official Formula 2 pre-season testing at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

Gunther set the day's best at 1min 42.756secs. He registered his mark midway during the morning session on the 12th of a total 28 laps. It was the fastest time of all three days of running around

BIC's 5.412-kilometre Grand Prix track.

In the afternoon, he had a time of 1min 44.145secs.

Louis Deletraz of Charouz Racing System had the second-fastest time of the day.

George Russell and Jack Aitken, both of ART Grand Prix, were third and fourth, respectively.

Tadasuke Makino of Russian Time rounded out the top six on the day's overall best times, all of which were set in the morning.

In the afternoon, Gunther's BWT Arden teammate Nirei Fukuzumi had the quickest time of the session of 1min 43.430secs.

A total of 20 cars from all 10 Formula 2 teams took part in the Bahrain testing. They were the second of the pre-season for Formula 2, following the first held in Le Castellet, France at Circuit Paul Ricard earlier this month.

Testing was done in the brand new Formula 2 2018

chassis. The new Formula 2 season will be flagging off in the kingdom, in support of the Formula 1 2018 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix from April 6 to 8.

The FIA Formula 2 Championship is one of two support series to Formula 1 at this year's Bahrain Grand Prix. The other is the Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Middle East.

For further information, visit bahraingp.com or call the BIC Hotline on +973-17-450000.

F1 Championship set for an epic new season



Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix flags off at 6.10pm on Sunday, April 8

DT News Network Manama

The 2018 FIA Formula 1 World Championship is set to be an epic season.

The new campaign is set to feature 21 Grands Prix held all across the globe in five continents.

Action flags off this weekend in Melbourne with the Australian Grand Prix.

The championship then comes to the Kingdom of Bahrain for the region's biggest and most highly anticipated weekend, the Formula 1 2018 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix, from April 6 to 8.

The season ends seven months later in November in the UAE, with the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

There are plenty of exciting milestones to look forward to in 2018.

Reigning champion Lewis

Hamilton of Mercedes and chief rival Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari are both vying for a fifth drivers' World title. Should either of them win, they would join only Michael Schumacher and Juan Manuel Fangio as drivers who have achieved that feat.

Mercedes could also become the only team, other than Ferrari, to win at least five straight constructors' World titles. Mercedes are currently among four teams who have won four in a row, and they now have a chance to continue their magnificent run and try to catch Ferrari's record of six straight.

Also in 2018, three drivers are on course for 100 podiums. To date, only Schumacher, Hamilton and Alain Prost have done it. Vettel could soon join that exclusive club as he already has 99 podiums to his name.

Fernando Alonso of McLaren needs just three more podiums to hit the century mark, while Vettel's Ferrari teammate Kimi Raikkonen needs nine more.

Formula 1 has implemented several changes for the new season. The Bahrain Grand Prix now flags off at 6.10pm on Sunday, April 8, 10 minutes later than its regular start time.

There are also chances for fans to get an even closer experience to all the racing.

The introduction of 'Grid Kids' will see up-and-coming local drivers playing a major role in the pre-race build up, whilst the new Formula 1 Pirelli Hot Laps programme will be launched at the Bahrain Grand Prix. This will offer a few lucky fans the chance to be driven round the track by an F1 driver. In addition, fans will also have the opportunity to join the 'Truck Tour'

experience, parading around the circuit in open top buses during the race weekend.

All these changes are in the context for the new season of F1, which inevitably brings changes to the teams and their set-ups.

McLaren has a new engine partner in Renault and there are several driver changes, including Charles Leclerc, the reigning Formula 2 champion, now driving for Sauber and fellow-rookie Brendon Hartley driving for Toro Rosso.

Amongst the new technical regulations, the use of a halo cockpit protection device will be the most obvious modification to the car, providing an additional safety feature for the drivers in case of an incident.

For further information, visit bahraingp.com or call the BIC Hotline on +973-17-450000.

By Invitation

Reem Benschams



Who are you Today, and Who is To Thank for your Success?

We are the product of sleepless nights, constant exhaustion and a never-ending cycle of worry and pain.

We have grown on shoulders of giants, not needing to start from scratch.

We are who we are today because of one leading factor.

Who are you today, and who is to thank for your success?

Stephen King, a world-famous author who sold more than 350 million copies of 54 published novels;

Michael Jordan, a professional basketball player, Olympic athlete, businessperson and actor;

Richard Branson, a billionaire business magnate, investor and philanthropist who reins more than 400 companies.

Who do they owe their successes to?

"My mother was a reader, and she read to us. She read us Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde when I was six and my brother was eight; I never forgot it." - Stephen King

"My mother is my root, my foundation. She planted the seed that I base my life on, and that is the belief that the ability to achieve starts in your mind." - Michael Jordan

"[My mother always taught me to] never look back in regret, but to immediately move on to the next thing." - Richard Branson

There is a certain beauty to the way these successful people describe their mothers, there are lessons they learnt since they were little yet still carry with them throughout their successes. Mothers have a way to be with us every step, somehow aiding our successes before we know the extent of our future achievements. We became and will continue to become because of them.

Who are you today, and who is to thank for your success?

I am Reem Benschams, a Bahraini youth, who may have not achieved as much as Stephen King, Michael Jordan or Richard Branson, but has grown and with that growth is closer to achieve all she aspires.

From my first talent show as a 6 year old, where I was too afraid to perform in front of a large audience but was motivated by my mother. My first public speaking competition, where I stuttered over my words but was encouraged by my mother. My first of creative writing competition, where my mother cheered in every award ceremony and bought books when she realized my interest. My first sports day, where she reminded me to never give up and to keep moving. Horse riding; Taekwondo; swimming classes; art classes; Quran recitation. All of which are minor events but large stepping stones in my life.

These events have given me the confidence to do more and to never be afraid to try new things. Support at every step of the way, and continuous encouragement to explore, this influence has made those minor events lead to major achievements, all of which will be the leading factor to the success in achieving all my aspirations.

A teacher and instructor, and now a mentor and guide, a school I hope to never graduate from.

Thank you, for the sleepless nights, constant exhaustion and a never-ending cycle of worry and pain.

Thank you for letting us grow on your shoulders, and not start from scratch or begin again.

Thank you for making us who we are today.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)

Thinking green

Rehan Ahmed



END OF CAMPING SEASON

Bahrain's camping season which started last year will soon be coming to an end. The government institutions organized this season meticulously and planned activities to make it convenient to all visitors who came to the Sakhir and other adjoining areas located some 30 kilometers south of the capital Manama for recreation and relaxation.

Camping is considered as one of the most entertaining activity enjoyed by citizens and residents in cooler weather across the Kingdom. As the temperature dropped and the educational institutions were closed for the holidays, families in Bahrain flocked to the Sakhir area for the annual camping season. During the five month camping period, the area became home to thousands of families who escaped the busy urban and routine life and took refuge in outdoor camps for relaxation and fun.

It is estimated that around 100,000 people visited Sakhir campsites every weekend. There are around 1,500 registered campsites, which increase with time and day of the week. Around 20,000 cars entered the camping zone each day during weekends. More inspection and site visits by officials were performed during this season, which witnessed less violations as compared to the last year due to better monitoring, awareness and information.

The organizers have taken several measures alongside public and private companies to ensure that all campers have a great time and enjoy a deep-rooted tradition. Several companies put up tents or rent tents to promote greater interactivity among their staff. The desert camping is an opportunity to remain connected with our traditions and customs. The desert camping area's atmosphere is very quiet, serene and mostly away from the urban noise which is in our daily lives living and working in the congested urban areas. Moving away from the usual residential surrounding and confined high-rise buildings gives a wonderful feeling of freedom and calm.

The Supreme Camping Season Committee is always urging all campers to follow the security and safety requirements set by the committee for camping. As per the camping rules implemented, Campers have to remove tents, accessories and rubbish before the camping season finish otherwise it will be removed by the competent authorities, and their owners will then have to pay all expenses incurred on camps decommissioning and cleaning. A special committee consisting of many organizations oversees compliance with rules and regulations to ensure the camping area is kept free of trash.

While extra ordinary care, monitoring and awareness campaigns have been initiated and campers were told to follow the environmental, safety and security norms, but in spite of that many campers still pollute and leave the area without clearing their mess. Last year huge quantities of garbage were removed from camping areas by the cleaners and cleaning companies. The items removed included carpets, TVs, broken sofas, torn and old tents, old tires, bricks, discarded utensils and cots.

Last year people were caught setting fire to couches, carpets and even whole tents at the end of the season rather than disposing them at Bahrain's landfill site in Askar. This year, Campers who will burn any unwanted equipment and furniture in the camping area were being threatened with legal action to avoid any form of pollution.

The authorities have urged the public to maintain cleanliness during and after the end of the camping season and also organized awareness campaigns to combat littering as well as imposing fines on violators.

While you will be planning to decommission your camp or moving out, it is important that you look around and clear any mess which should not affect the pristine Sakhir environment. Let us follow some basic rules for our safety, health and environmental conservation.

- Remove any camp entrance barrier which you may have created at the entrance and in camp periphery.
- Remove stoves, iron, combustible materials, fire extinguisher and first aid facilities.
- Remove all illumination, electronic gadgets and water containers.
- Remove all garbage, litter and bins from the camping site. Do not leave behind any waste which may decompose, ignite or generate odours.
- Don't throw any food or decomposable food in open. It will attract vermin, birds, insects and rodents.
- Don't throw away used/unused plastic bags.
- Keep all recyclable and disposable waste in separate bags.
- Do not burn any garbage irrespective of its composition and weight.

Remember the principle of green camping: "If you brought it in....you need to take it out and leave the area just as you found it."

Head of Waste Disposal Unit, Supreme Council for Environment, Bahrain. (rahmed@sce.gov.bh)

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)

Freed Filipino priest says airstrikes routed IS extremists

Roman Catholic priest Teresito Soganub

Manila

A Filipino Roman Catholic priest taken hostage last year by Islamic State group-linked militants recounted Friday how military airstrikes helped crush an extremist siege, but said a Muslim autonomy deal is crucial in preventing new bloodshed.

The Rev. Teresito Soganub recalled his 116-day captivity in a rare appearance at a Manila news conference, where he described how he and other hostages constantly feared for their survival amid the airstrikes and gunbattles in southern Marawi city.

The 57-year-old priest said he and other hostages were forced by their captors to collect explosive powder from firecrackers and unexploded military ordnance, which the militants used to make improvised bombs.

Gunfire and explosions repeatedly shook the ground and shattered buildings and mosques, where the militants ordered them to lie low during intense fighting, said

Soganub, who couldn't recall how many near-death moments he experienced.

"Every moment, day and night, we were facing death," he said. "We didn't know if we'll still be alive in the next hour or next minute."

Troops rescued Soganub in September before crushing the Marawi siege, which left more than 1,100 combatants and civilians dead and forced hundreds of thousands of residents to abandon the mosque-studded city and outlying towns and flee to emergency shelters.

About 600 militants waving Islamic State-style black flags seized commercial buildings, mosque and houses in Marawi's central business district on May 23 after an army-led assault failed to locate a top Asian terror suspect, Isnilon Hapilon, and other militant leaders in a safe house in the lakeside city.

About 120 armed militants barged into a church compound, where Soganub said he was seized with five church workers and others. Later, in the mosques and buildings where

they were hidden, Soganub counted about 120 hostages with him at one time.

During the intense urban fighting, the militants took cover in concrete buildings and houses, which they used as combat bases and sniper posts for months. But military strikes and artillery fire gradually caused that combat advantage to crumble and allowed troops to advance, Soganub said.

"The airstrikes were terrible, you could fill each crater they dug with two cars, and we could get killed if they hit our building dead center or on the sides," he said, adding that two of the kidnapped church staffers were killed in airstrikes and artillery bombardments.

Soganub said Malaysian and Indonesian gunmen were involved in the fighting but that local militants, including Hapilon, led the uprising. Hapilon, who was killed in the final battles in Marawi, visited their hideout occasionally to lead a prayer and check on the hostages, he said. (AP)

UN see a lonelier planet with fewer plants, animals

Washington

Earth is losing plants, animals and clean water at a dramatic rate, according to four new United Nations scientific reports on biodiversity.

Scientists meeting in Colombia issued four regional reports Friday on how well animal and plants are doing in the Americas; Europe and Central Asia; Africa; and the Asia-Pacific area.

Their conclusion after three years of study: Nowhere is doing well.

The work was about more than just critters, said study team chairman Robert Watson. It is about keeping Earth livable for humans, because we rely on biodiversity for food, clean water and public health, the prominent British and U.S. scientist said.

"This is undermining well-being across the planet, threatening us long-term on food and water," Watson said in an interview.

The reports project that, if current

trends continue:

— By the year 2050 the Americas will have 15 percent fewer plants and animals than now.

— In Asia, there will be no fish stocks for commercial fishing by 2048.

— More than a quarter of the species that live only in Europe are threatened now.

— Africa could lose half of some bird and mammal species by 2100.

Russia names Putin's new 'super weapons'



Moscow

Russia has unveiled the names for a new generation of nuclear-powered missiles touted by President Vladimir Putin as invincible after more than seven million people took part in a public vote organised by the Russian military.

The names chosen include 'Peresvet,' after a medieval warrior monk, for a laser and 'Burevestnik,' after a seabird, for a cruise missile.

The arms systems, which Putin revealed in a state-of-the-nation speech this month, include a nuclear-powered cruise missile, an underwater nuclear-powered drone, and a laser weapon.

The culmination of the "name that weapon" vote comes amid fears in both Russia and the West about a new arms race, something Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump have said they don't want, and after

Putin won a landslide re-election victory.

Russia's Ministry of Defence asked the public to name the weapons systems in an online vote, something it has never done before, and unveiled the results late on Thursday on state TV.

After the results were announced, Deputy Defence Minister Yuri Borisov explained on state TV, to ripples of applause, what the new weapons were capable of.

Warrior Monk, Greek God, Seabird

The defence ministry said Russians had voted to name the new military laser 'Peresvet' after a medieval warrior monk, Alexander Peresvet, who took part in a 14th century battle against the Mongols. Peresvet is revered by some clerics in the Russian Orthodox Church, whose influence has grown under Putin.

The winning name for the underwater nuclear drone was more conventional - 'Poseidon' after the Greek god of the sea, drawing criticism from some Russians who complained the name was too foreign.

The new nuclear-powered cruise missile, which Putin has said could hit almost any point in the world and evade a U.S.-built missile shield, will be called 'Burevestnik,' Russian for the Storm Petrel bird, the defence ministry said.

The Storm Petrel is a seabird whose presence mariners believe foretells bad weather.

Among the suggested names for the weapons systems that did not make the final cut: 'Stalin,' after the Soviet dictator, and 'Palmyra,' after the Syrian city which Russian forces helped Syrian President Bashar al-Assad take back from Islamic State. (Reuters)

Egypt opens Gaza border for two days

Gaza City

Egypt opened its largely sealed border with the Gaza Strip on Friday for two days, Palestinian authorities said.

In just the third such opening this year, the crossing between the Palestinian enclave and Egypt's

Sinai region will be open Friday and Saturday for humanitarian cases, the Palestinian embassy in Cairo said.

Both of the two previous border openings this year were cut short due to the security situation in Sinai.

Greek authorities seize 11 kg of heroin at airport

Athens

Greek authorities have seized 11 kg of heroin hidden in the luggage of a British citizen at Athens International Airport, police said on Friday.

Police said the 38-year-old man, who flew to Athens from the Pakistani city of Lahore via Doha, is part of a broader heroin ring trafficking drugs from Asian countries to Greece. He was arrested on Wednesday.

Authorities also confiscated



A photo provided by the Greek police shows 11 kilos of heroin hidden in the suitcase of a British citizen

300 euros, 84,000 Pakistani rupees (\$730) and two cellphones.

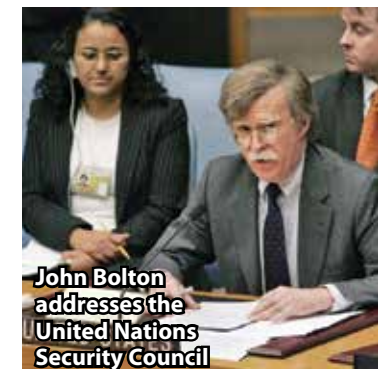
Palestinians slam Trump security advisor Bolton

Ramallah

A senior Palestinian official on Friday slammed US President Donald Trump's choice of hardliner John Bolton as his new national security advisor.

Trump on Thursday announced that Bolton, an arch-hawk and former United Nations ambassador, would replace army general HR McMaster.

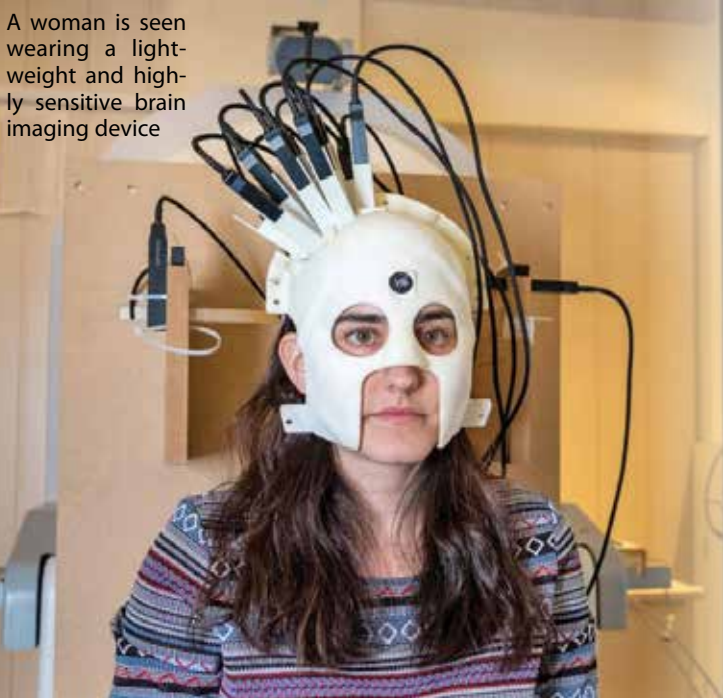
"This man has a long history of hostility to Palestinians, dating to when he was at the United Nations, where he was protecting Israeli immunity," senior Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi



John Bolton addresses the United Nations Security Council said, referring to US vetoes of UN resolutions targeting Israel. (AFP)

Scientists develop brain scanner in a helmet

A woman is seen wearing a lightweight and highly sensitive brain imaging device



British scientists have developed a lightweight and highly sensitive brain imaging device that can be worn as a helmet, allowing the patient to move about naturally

Flexible

The new scanner showed that patients were able to stretch, nod and even drink tea or play table tennis while their brain activity was being recorded.

Better than Fixed scanners

The new scanner would improve research and treatment for patients who can't use traditional fixed MEG scanners, such as children with epilepsy, babies, or patients with disorders like Parkinson's disease.



Brain imaging device are seen in this undated handout photograph

Pros

Current magnetoencephalography (MEG) scanners weigh as much as half a tonne, partly because the sensors need to be kept very cold - at minus 269 degrees Celsius.

The helmet scanners are lightweight, work at room temperature and can be placed directly onto scalp.

"This has the potential to revolutionize the brain imaging field, and transform the scientific and clinical questions that can be addressed with human brain imaging," said Gareth Barnes, a professor at the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Neuroimaging at University College London, who co-led the work.

How Facebook was weaponised

The surveillance scandal of Cambridge Analytica use of Facebook data to help the Donald Trump campaign win in the 2016 election began three years earlier with a scientific paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The study by Michal Kosinski of Stanford, David Stillwell of the University of Cambridge and colleagues involved 58,466 adult American users of Facebook. Subjects provided information about themselves and took a standard test to classify their personalities in five broad categories: degree of openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism or OCEAN.

The researchers then correlated the "big five" personality traits with each person's Facebook "likes," an average of 227 per subject. This data led to a computer model which could predict a person's race with 95% accuracy, gender with 93% and political orientation — Democrat or Republican for instance — with 85% accuracy.

In 2014 assistant psychology professor Aleksandr Kogan who runs London-based Global Science Research (GSR) approaches Kosinski and Stillwell. Kogan wants access to the OCEAN data set on behalf of Strategic Communication Laboratories (SCL). The deal fails to go ahead.

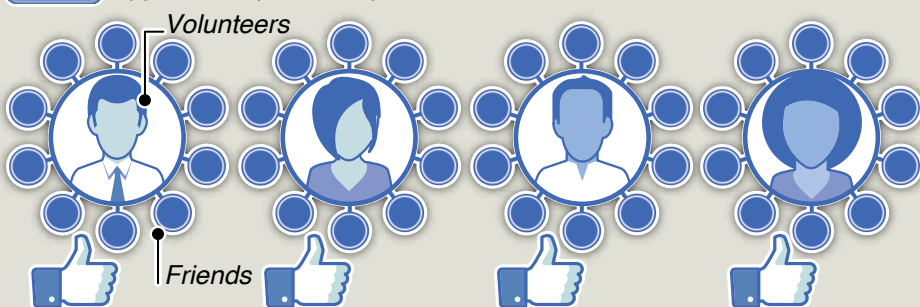
GSR develops its version of the data set using Amazon's crowdsourcing marketplace Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Kogan's subjects are paid by SCL to take the Facebook survey.

Crucially, for every individual recruited on MTurk, Kogan also captures the same data for each subject's unwitting Facebook friends — an average of around 340 friends per individual. GSR suddenly owns a massive data pool of profiles of 50 million individuals across the United States.

GSR's data set is used by Cambridge Analytica in the Republican Party presidential Iowa caucuses in support of Ted Cruz. Cruz wins. "The impressive bit," says Cambridge Analytica's chief executive, Alexander Nix, is to expand the findings from those who took the personality tests to the entire American electorate of 230 million. Nix says Cambridge Analytica also has "4,000–5,000 data points" — pieces of information — on every single adult U.S. citizen. In June 2016 the Trump campaign hires Cambridge Analytica. The campaign develops "dark posts" on Facebook to target wavering left-wingers, African-Americans, and young women to "suppress" their vote. Dark posts target users with specific profiles in specific locations. For example, news aimed at African-Americans in which Hillary Clinton refers to black men as predators or in the Miami district of Little Haiti highlighting the failure of the Clinton Foundation following the earthquake in Haiti.

Facebook became weaponised, and Donald Trump became President of the United States of America.

2013, Cambridge University: Psychology researchers publish study of more than 58,000 volunteer U.S. adults, in which online survey app reveals personality traits based on Facebook "likes"



App collects data on Facebook users' friends — average of 340 friends/user
Study can identify Democrat and Republican voters in 85% of cases



Strategic Communication Laboratories

Dec 2013: SCL launches **Cambridge Analytica (CA)**, backed by \$10 million from Republican donor **Robert Mercer** (left).

2014-16: Donald Trump's strategist, **Steve Bannon** (right) is CA's vice president



Global Science Research

May 2014: Cambridge psychologist **Aleksandr Kogan** (right) founds **Global Science Research**, which works with SCL and CA. **GSR harvests so-called psychometric profiles of 50 million U.S. Facebook accounts**



Cambridge Analytica

Feb 2016: CA chief executive **Alexander Nix** (above) works with **Ted Cruz's** campaign in Republican Party presidential primaries.

Kogan's psychometric profiles are used to create highly-personalised Facebook ads.

Cruz wins Iowa caucuses

Trump campaign

Jun-Nov 2016: Trump campaign hires CA. Team uses **dark posts** — ads which target undecided Democrats' Facebook accounts to suppress their votes. **For example, ads aimed at African-Americans misquote Hillary Clinton referring to black men as predators**

EU withdraws Russian envoy



French President Emmanuel Macron and Belgian PM Charles Michel welcome UK PM Theresa May during a EU leaders summit in Brussels, Belgium

To take new steps soon

Brussels

European Union member states agreed at a summit in Brussels to take further punitive steps against Russia in the coming days for the nerve agent attack in Salisbury, as Moscow accused the bloc of joining a London-driven hate campaign against it.

Late on Thursday, in a boost for British Prime Minister Theresa May, the 28-member EU collectively condemned the attack on a former Russian spy and said it was "highly likely" Moscow was responsible. They also recalled the EU ambassador to Russia.

"Additional steps are expected as early as Monday at the national level," summit chair Donald Tusk told reporters.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Paris and Berlin would be among countries taking further rapid and coordinated measures which other leaders

said would include the expulsion of Russian officials and possible other retaliatory actions.

Standing beside Macron and echoing his view that Russia had breached the sovereignty and security of the Union, German Chancellor Angela Merkel told a joint news conference that EU countries would debate what measures to take "and then act".

One senior official familiar with discussions said the extent of measures in the coming weeks could be "surprising" and not confined to expulsions. There is no talk of more economic sanctions, whose enforcement has divided the EU in the past.

Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis said he was likely to announce the expulsion of several people on Monday, after returning to Prague and consulting with his foreign minister.

Lithuanian President Dalia

Grybauskaitė said she was ready to expel Russian spies, whose activities she said were deeply harmful. "It is certain that a coordinated action will be taken next week, maybe at the start of it," she said. "It's absolutely obvious that the network exists and that it acts aggressively."

Romanian President Klaus Iohannis stressed that national governments wanted to retain control of the details in an area where they guard their sovereignty from Brussels. But most of those present would go home and prepare suitable steps.

Russia has denied responsibility for the March 4 attack on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, the first known offensive use of a nerve toxin in Europe since World War Two. A British judge said on Thursday that both victims may have suffered brain damage from the attack.

(Reuters)

US warship sails near disputed islands in S China Sea: officials

Washington/Beijing

A U.S. Navy destroyer carried out a "freedom of navigation" operation on Friday, coming within 12 nautical miles of an artificial island built by China in the South China Sea, U.S. officials told Reuters.

The operation, which infuriated Beijing, was the latest attempt to counter what Washington sees as China's efforts to limit freedom of navigation in the strategic waters.

The officials, speaking on

condition of anonymity, said the USS Mustin travelled close to Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands and carried out manoeuvring operations. China has territorial disputes with its neighbours over the area.

End to Boeing trade case good news

Montreal

Boeing Co's decision to end its trade case over the sale of Bombardier CSeries jets to U.S. carriers is good news for the aerospace industry and the public, the Canadian plane and train maker said on Friday. Boeing said late on Thursday it will not appeal a U.S. trade commission ruling that allows Bombardier to sell its CSeries in the United States without hefty duties.



2 million users suppressing ads: Spotify

Washington

Music streaming service Spotify Technology SA said on Friday about 2 million of its non-paying users were suppressing advertisements, highlighting a potential revenue risk for the soon-to-be public company. Spotify had 157 million active users as of Dec. 31, of which about 71 million were paid subscribers who access ad-free versions of the service.



“We will talk about anything as a principal with a friendly country that respects the rules of the World Trade Organization. We won't talk at all with a country if it is with a gun to our heads,”

-Emmanuel Macron,

French leader on EU trade deals with the US



Looming U.S.-China trade war

U.S. President Trump is imposing 25 percent tariffs on up to \$60 billion worth of Chinese goods while China unveiled taxes on \$3 billion of U.S. imports in response to steel and aluminium duties announced earlier on March 8.

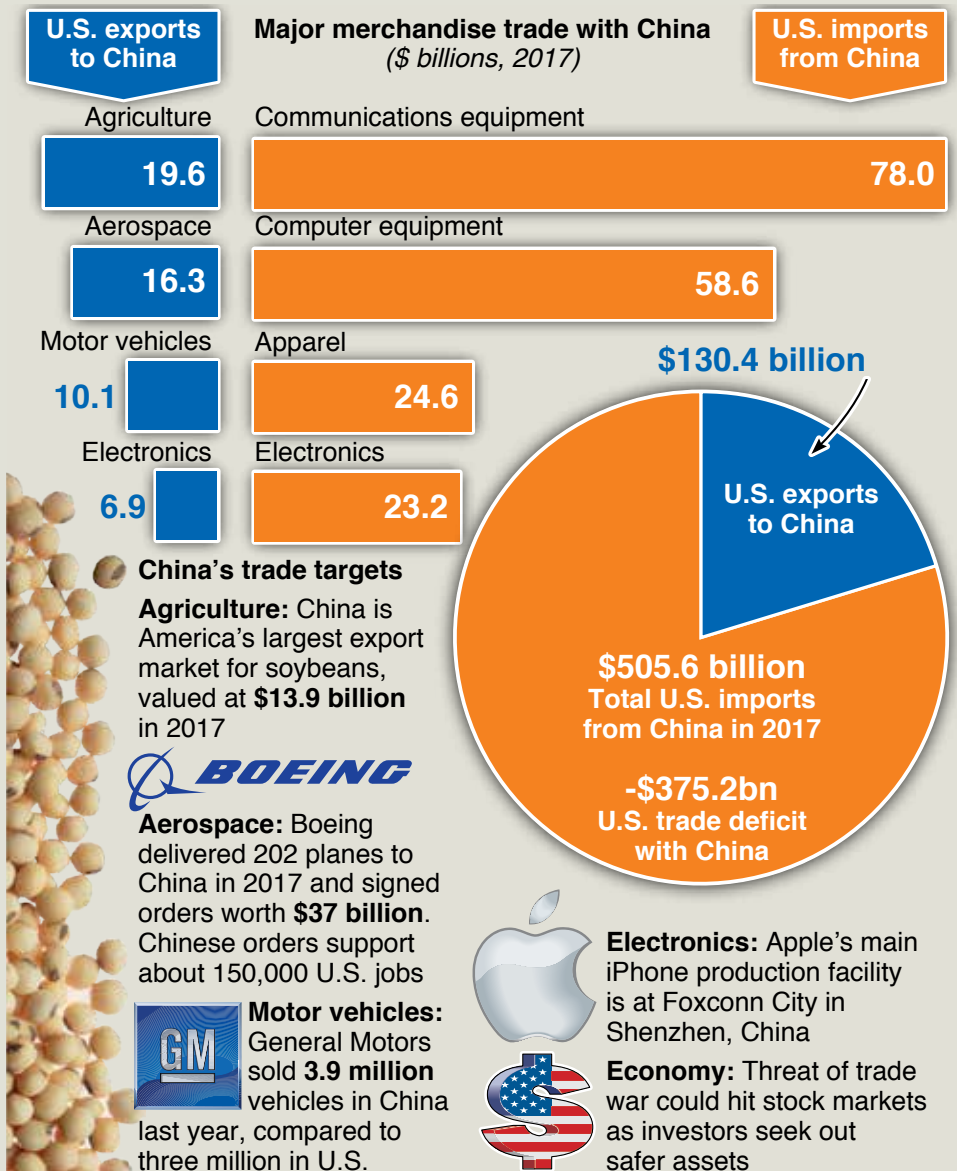
The United States shipped \$138.5 billion worth of agricultural products around the world in 2017, including \$19.6 billion (14 percent) to China.

Now, one of America's most prominent farming industries fears it could find itself a target of Chinese retaliation. Exports of soybeans totalled \$13.9 billion in 2017, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The idea of targeting soybeans would be to inflict economic pain in states where Trump's base lies, according to Randal Phillips of the Mintz Group, a firm that helps companies identify risk. Eight of the most prominent exporting states voted for Trump in 2016. A ninth, Minnesota, voted narrowly for Hillary Clinton.

China and Hong Kong combined is also the second-biggest market for U.S. pork, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation. On Friday, China's Ministry of Commerce announced plans for a 25 percent tax on U.S. pork imports.

Other businesses with significant sales in China that Beijing could target include Apple, Boeing and General Motors.



Myanmar, India mull oil pipeline



Representative picture

Kuala Lumpur

India has proposed to build a pipeline from the country's east coast to deliver oil products, mainly diesel, to Myanmar, a Myanmar government official said yesterday.

“We have already connected (oil and gas) pipelines to China and Thailand, and we considered connecting (oil) pipelines to India as well as Bangladesh. This is under consideration to share petroleum products,”

Zaw Aung, director general of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy's oil and gas planning department, said at the OTC Asia conference.

A working group has been formed by Myanmar and India to look at issues such as security, land and oil storage, and how to price the fuel and the oil's specification, he told Reuters.

Myanmar currently imports about 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) of diesel and gasoline mainly from

Singapore, Zaw Aung said, and produces only 12,000 bpd of oil locally.

The country has invited investors to build refineries but high land cost is one of the main issues to overcome, he said.

The country has also held its first round of talks with China and Bangladesh to discuss building an electricity transmission grid across borders to ease power shortages, Zaw Aung said. (Reuters)

Niki Lauda's new airline to cooperate with Lufthansa

Vienna

Austria's Laudamotion will provide up to eight crewed aircraft to Lufthansa's low-cost carrier Eurowings until the end of May, Niki Lauda's repurchased and rebranded carrier said on Friday.

Lufthansa had planned to grow Eurowings by buying failed Air Berlin's Niki unit itself but scrapped the purchase after the European

Laudamotion will provide up to eight crewed aircraft to Lufthansa

Commission indicated it would veto the deal.

Niki was instead bought by its founder Lauda, who

beat rival offers from British Airways-owner IAG and Irish low-cost giant Ryanair.

The three-times Formula One world champion then sold 75 percent of the carrier to Ryanair before the first planes took off again.

The basic agreement between Lauda and Lufthansa covers a little more than two months, not the whole summer season that runs to October.

Did You Know?



WWOOF is an international program that allows you to travel the world, with food/accommodations covered, in exchange for volunteer work.



BFC CURRENCIES EXCHANGE RATE

COUNTRY/CURRENCIES	BUY	SELL
AUSTRALIA	0.2967	0.2943
BANGLADESH	0.00472	0.00452
CANADA	0.2961	0.2929
DENMARK	0.0652	
EGYPT	0.0237	0.0219
EURO	0.4698	0.4673
HONGKONG	0.04968	0.04928
INDIA	0.00592	0.00583
INDONESIA	0.00002979	0.00002805
IRAN TUMAN	0.00010959	
IRAQI DINAR	0.000317	
JAPAN	0.00370	0.003630
JORDAN	0.5359	0.5351
KOREA	0.00040215	
KUWAIT	1.263	1.264
MALAYSIA	0.0983	0.0983
NEW ZEALAND	0.2744	0.2745
NORWAY	0.0509	
NEPAL	0.00395	0.00362
OMAN	0.98168	0.98301
PAKISTAN	0.00345	0.00333
PHILIPPINES	0.00747	0.00725
QATAR	0.10381	0.10404
SAUDI ARABIA	0.1006	0.10067
SINGAPORE	0.2904	0.2884
SOUTH AFRICA	0.03290	0.03280
SRI LANKA	0.00273	0.00242
SWEDISH	0.0490	
SWITZERLAND	0.4033	0.4003
SYRIA	0.001740	0.0017
TAIWAN	0.013600	
THAILAND	0.012270	0.012260
TURKEY	0.1014	
UNITED KINGDOM	0.5383	0.5354
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	0.102850	0.102870
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	0.37790	0.37800
YUAN	0.056800	0.056800

Rates are for indication purpose only. For firm rates or for currencies not listed above please call Bahrain Financing Company. Telephone: 17228888, Website: www.bfc.com.bh

GULF INTERBANK RATES

COUNTRY	1 US DLR	1 UK STG	1 SFR	100 YEN
BAHRAIN	0.3770	0.5738	0.3953	0.3560
KUWAIT	0.2855	30.2373	0.2994	0.2696
OMAN	0.3849	0.3670	0.4036	0.3634
QATAR	3.6420	3.4730	3.8192	3.4388
UAE	3.6730	3.5026	3.8517	3.4680
SAUDI	3.7500	3.5760	3.9325	3.5407

Oil rises on Saudi talk of output cuts into 2019

Representative picture

London

Oil prices rose yesterday after the Saudi energy minister said OPEC would need to keep coordinating supply cuts with non-member countries including Russia into 2019.

Oil's rise defied a slump in global stock markets, which fell in response to worries about a trade stand-off between the United States and China. Gold, seen as a safe haven, hit a two-week high.

Brent crude futures LCOc1 were at \$69.67 a barrel at 1340 GMT, up 76 cents but off a session high of \$70. For the week, Brent was up about 5.3 percent, its strongest since July.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures CLc1 were at \$64.94 a barrel, up 64 cents but below a session high of \$65.42. On the week, WTI was up about 4.4 percent.

Since January 2017, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries as well as a group of non-OPEC countries led by Russia, have curbed output by 1.8 million barrels per day to counteract surging U.S. output.

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said OPEC members would need to continue coordinating with Russia and other non-OPEC oil producers on supply curbs in 2019 to reduce global oil

inventories.

OPEC officials have also said producers could look at a longer period than five years for developed-country oil stocks averages as a reference point.

Although analysts said the stand-off between the United States and China could hit oil markets, for now most said demand looked healthy.

"Geopolitical tensions are coming to the front. But global balances are relatively tight at the moment. That's enough to amplify relatively small factors," said Andrew Wilson, head of energy research at BRS Brokers.

Morgan Stanley also cited an expected pick-up

in seasonal demand in the coming months.

"We are only three-four weeks away from peak refinery maintenance, after which crude and product demand should accelerate ... Global inventories are already at the bottom end of the five-year range," the U.S. bank said.

"There are sufficient reasons to expect oil prices to strengthen further from here, and we stick with our (Brent) \$75 per barrel call for Q3," Morgan Stanley said.

Goldman Sachs said in a note this week that demand and OPEC cuts pushed its Brent spot price expectations to \$82.50 a barrel by mid-year. (Reuters)

Trump threatens to veto bill, raising gov't shutdown risk

Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump made a surprising threat to veto Congress' newly passed \$1.3 trillion (919.57 billion pounds) spending bill, a move that raised the spectre of a possible government shutdown ahead of a midnight Friday deadline to keep federal agencies open.

In a tweet on Friday morning Trump said he was displeased about immigration issues in the bill, even though the White House had given assurances on Thursday that he would sign it. Lawmakers in both the Senate and House of Representatives had left Washington after passing the



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, accompanied by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, speaks at a news conference about the omnibus spending bill

measure.

"I am considering a VETO of the Omnibus Spending Bill based on the fact that the 800,000 plus DACA recipients have been totally abandoned by the Democrats

(not even mentioned in Bill) and the BORDER WALL, which is desperately needed for our National Defense, is not fully funded," Trump wrote.

There was no immediate

comment from the White House or Republican leaders in Congress on Friday. Trump is scheduled to leave later in the day for a weekend at his private resort in Palm Beach, Florida. (Reuters)

Mini cars drive away children's fears of surgery



Two-year-old Souhail goes to the operating room

Valenciennes, France

Wearing a big grin, Maramé clammers into the small electric sports car and drives off -- to the operating theatre.

The five-year-old girl is a patient at the public hospital in the northern French city of Valenciennes, which has begun using toys rather than drugs to alleviate children's fears of surgery.

The new scheme for youngsters aged 18 months to eight years is based on similar programmes in the United States and Australia.

The playful approach, implemented in December, has wiped out the need for anti-anxiety medication often administered before an operation, according to the hospital.

"It allows (children) to arrive in the operating theatre in a fun manner and avoids the stress associated with the context," anaesthetist Fanny Defrancq told AFP.

Sat on a hospital bed, Maramé looks worried ahead of her surgery to remove a metal pin inserted into her arm after she broke her elbow.

But then a nurse comes in and leads her to three small vehicles parked in the corridor.

"Which one do you prefer?" the nurse asks Maramé, dressed in a blue hospital gown and with a white cap covering her hair.

After carefully inspecting the models and testing out their horns, the little girl gets behind the wheel of a black racing car and cruises off under the envious

glances of other young patients.

A remote control in hand, a medical staff member steers Maramé down hallways and around corners all the way to the operating theatre.

"She doesn't even take any notice of me," says her bemused mother, Hassiba Mazouzi, after giving her a last hug.

"Last time (she went into surgery) I cried," Mazouzi says. "But now... she went without crying, without any problem. So frankly, I'm happy too."

'You're the hero'

Doctor Nabil El Beki, who heads the emergency unit in Valenciennes, insists the programme is not a "game".

A study is under way to "scientifically assess" the benefits of the project, he told AFP.

"We know that anxiolytic drugs reduce anxiety but they also intensify the anaesthetic and delay the waking-up process. Avoiding them is better for the recovery," he said.

Julie Dupuis, whose 18-month-old son, Issa, needed testicle surgery, also hailed the hospital's novel scheme.

"He's like at home, he's playing and it's nice to see him like that," she told AFP.

"It's reassuring for me too. I feel less stressed about his going into the surgery."

Other clinics in France are also experimenting with ways of avoiding pre-surgery medication for children.

A hospital in the western city of Rennes has

developed an app called "You're the hero" for children aged three to 10.

The young patients search for hidden objects in a virtual room, while they are being brought to the operating theatre on a stretcher.

The distraction method has seen a major drop in children's anxiety and led to an 80-percent decrease in the use of medication, the Rennes hospital said.

"Children's self-evaluation with emoticons showed that anxiety curves were very low and stable," anaesthetist Severine Delahaye told AFP.

(AFP)

Clinics in France are experimenting with ways of avoiding anti-anxiety medication for children before an operation.



A two-year-old happily drives his way to the operating room at a hospital in Valenciennes in northern France



National Guard Commander Lieutenant-General HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa attended the ceremony held by the Pakistani army on Pakistan's National Day in Pakistan. Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain, government officials, and guests from brotherly and friendly countries, also attended the event. The National Guard commander lauded the solid relations between Bahrain and Pakistan, and hailed friendly relations between the two countries.



HH Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al-Khalifa received a delegation from the Prince Mohammed bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz Foundation for Human Development, led by secretary-general Dr. Isa bin Hassan Al-Ansari, and discussed promoting voluntary work to serve humanity. They discussed joint cooperation with the foundation to serve human development through voluntary work.



The Southern Governorate held a meeting with a number of citizens and residents from the governorate. The meeting follows the directives of Prime Minister HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa to implement a string of development and service projects across the Southern Governorate.



Students from the University of Bahrain (UoB) visited the construction site of the Bahrain International Airport Company (BAC), the airport's operator and managing body. BAC is implementing the Airport Modernisation Programme (AMP), including the New Passenger Terminal.



noon Hussain, senior military commanders, senior Pakistani Pakistan's role in supporting regional security and stability.



The Joint Bahraini-French Committee held its third meeting at the Ministry of foreign Affairs' General Court, under the chairmanship of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for International Affairs Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, and the Director of North Africa and Middle East Department at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Jerome Bonnafont. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa welcomed the French participants, affirming that Bahrain is particularly keen on strengthening the existing strategic partnership with France.



ssed ways of



Staff Director of the National Guard Major-General Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Saud Al Khalifa received the General Director of Southern Region Municipality Assem Abdullatif Abdullah in the framework of National Guard's role to strengthen community relations with various government agencies. They discussed the services provided by the municipality in order to meet citizens' needs.



A delegation from the Royal Bahrain Air Force (RBAF) met with the Director of the Russian Federal Space Agency and discussed dispatching pilots from RBAF to join the Cosmonauts Programme. The delegation also attended the launch of Soyuz-FG rocket into space from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.



of the Bahrain International Airport's (BIA) New Passenger Terminal as part of a public outreach programme by Bahrain Chief Development and Technical Officer, Abdulla Janahi delivered a presentation showcasing the details of the \$1.1 billion Terminal Building.



Bahraini Salman Mohammed Al-Sindi won the Arab Youth Award, after ranking first in the Arab region. He was presented with the award during a glittering ceremony at the Arab league to honour outstanding Arab youth, in recognition of their dedicated efforts and achievements.



Demi Lovato @ddlovato
 Tbh I'd rather live in 2004 right now. Partially because all I want to wear are juicy couture track suits and platformed flip flops.



DAVID GUETTA, SIA REUNITE FOR 'FLAMES'

Los Angeles

After the success of tracks like "Titanium", "She wolf (Falling to pieces)", "Bang My Head" and "Helium Remix", popular DJ-record producer David Guetta and singer Sia have joined forces again for a new track titled "Flames".

They describe the song, which released on Thursday, as a "motivational anthem," reports *rollingstone.com*.

The three-minute track features Sia showcasing her powerful vocals over pulsating rhythm and percussive guitars.

Guetta is scheduled to perform the song for the first time at Miami's three-day Ultra Music Festival ending on Sunday.

In an interview with *New York Post*, the 50-year-old described the new song as a "funky" dance track with a "big pop melody." (IANS)

I'm not a singer or dancer



Los Angeles

Actress **Drew Barrymore**, who is a part of the musical "Come As You Are", says she is neither a singer nor a dancer, but has learnt that "when you're comfortable in your own shoes, you can do anything".

Returning as global brand ambassadors of footwear brand Crocs and starring alongside Barrymore in an all-cast version of the musical are South Korean musician and actress Yoona, and Henry Lau, a Canadian singer, songwriter, musician and composer. (IANS)

Evans may retire as Captain America

Los Angeles

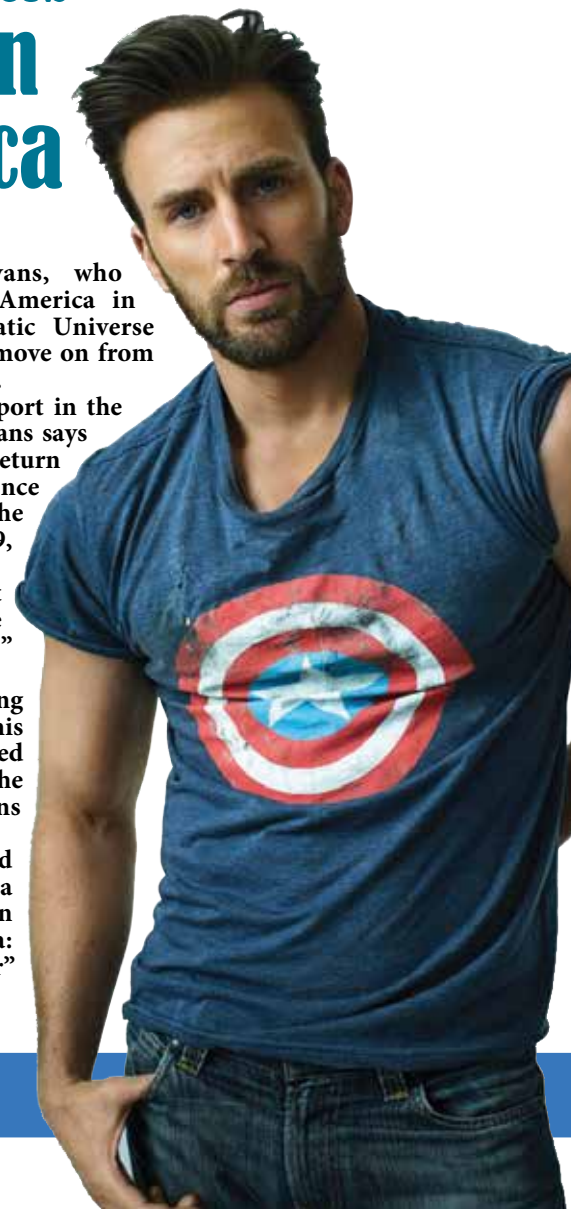
Actor **Chris Evans**, who plays Captain America in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), is ready to move on from his superhero avatar.

According to a report in the *New York Times*, Evans says he has no plans to return to the franchise once "Avengers 4" hits the theatres in May 2019, reports *variety.com*.

"You want to get off the train before they push you off," Evans said.

He will be returning for re-shoots later this year, but it is expected that they will mark the end the road for Evans in the MCU.

Evans has played Captain America since 2011 when "Captain America: The First Avenger" was released. (IANS)



MIDDLE EAST MOVIE BUZZ

Divine Intervention



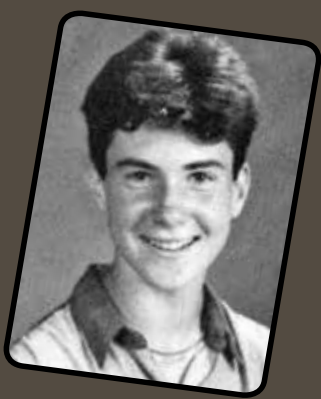
One of the most bizarre aspects of Elia Suleiman's surreal comedy *Divine Intervention* is that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is said to have rejected it as a competitor for the best foreign picture Oscar because Palestine is not 'a legitimate nation'. Another is that he shows us life going on in a middle-class district of his native Nazareth as if the people had little more to do than bicker with their neighbours the way they do all over the world.

The film is a string of sketches and running gags set in Nazareth and at an Israeli army checkpoint between Jerusalem and Ramallah and the apparent influences are Buñuel (especially *The Phantom of Liberty*), Jacques Tati, Buster Keaton and Roy Andersson's *Songs From The Second Floor*. The connecting thread, such as there is, concerns the deadpan Suleiman driving around with a beautiful girl while his father dies in hospital. While it all seems good-tempered and

even generous, acrimony is always there and violence lurks beneath the surface.

The movie begins with a gang of boys chasing Santa Claus around the countryside until all his presents have been dropped and we are shown the knife in his chest. Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint are more disturbed by a large red balloon bearing Arafat's image than by Palestinian motorists. Suleiman casually throws a plum stone from the car and blows up an Israeli tank. (*theguardian*)

Now & Then



Adam Levine

Adam Levine is an American singer, songwriter, actor, and record producer. He is the lead singer for the pop rock band Maroon 5. Born and raised in Los Angeles, California, Levine began his musical career in 1994, when he co-founded the alternative rock band Kara's Flowers, of which he was the lead vocalist and guitarist. The band split up after their only album, *The Fourth World*, which did not gain popularity. In 2001, the group was reformed - with guitarist James Valentine joining the line-up - and began a new musical chapter, changing their name to Maroon 5.

Christina Hendricks' love for trauma



Los Angeles

"The Strangers: Prey At Night" director Johannes Roberts says actress Christina Hendricks wanted to do all the trauma scenes in the horror film.

The movie revolves around a family's road trip which takes a dangerous turn when they reach a secluded mobile home park to stay with some relatives. They are attacked by three masked psychopaths, and is about how the family tries to survive the episode.

The sequel to "The Strangers", which released in 2008, is being brought to India by PVR Pictures.

"The cast of 'Strangers...' is phenomenal and I feel lucky, Christina was the first one to sign on and she was just the massive fan of the first one," Roberts said in a statement. (IANS)



PATRICK CLAIMED HIS ROLE IN MIDNIGHT SUN

Director Scott Speer said casting actor Arnold Schwarzenegger's son Patrick Schwarzenegger in 'Midnight Sun' was a "wonderful surprise".

Speer's film is based on the Japanese namesake and essays the story of how a girl's dream comes true despite fighting with a life-threatening disorder. Patrick is seen as Charlie Reed in the film.

"Patrick was such an interesting story, and such a wonderful surprise. We were casting for Charlie and didn't really know, exactly, where our Charlie would come from," Speer said in a statement. (IANS)



STARRY Birthday
Jessica Chastain

March 24, 1977

Actress who earned Academy Award nominations for her roles in *Zero Dark Thirty* and *The Help*. She also had starring roles in the films *Interstellar*, *Miss Sloane* and *A Most Violent Year*.



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HOW TO REACH US

"Out & About", a ready reckoner for the events taking place on the island. To be included, please send the matter to the following email ID : news@dt.bh

OUT & ABOUT

UNVEILING BEAUTY: EXHIBITING ISLAMIC ART IN THE WEST BY DR SABIHA AL KHEMIR

Date: 28 March 2018, 6:30pm
Venue: Bahrain National Museum Lecture Hall

Dr. Sabiha Al Khemir has had an unusual journey with Islamic art, across time and place. She will speak about her various exhibition projects and the nature of sharing Islamic art in Western contexts. Dr. Al Khemir is a renowned expert in Islamic art, a novelist, and artist whose work is concerned with cultural bridging and spurring international dialogue. She is the Senior Advisor for Islamic Art at the Dallas Museum of Art and professor of Islamic art at the O'Donnell Institute, University of Texas. Lecture will be conducted in English.

FRIDAY BRUNCH AT CUT WITH CHEF WOLFGANG PUCK

Date: Friday, April 6 from 12:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Venue: Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay

Celebrity Chef Wolfgang Puck is back in town! Join him for an Asian fusion BBQ and a cutting-edge Friday Brunch. Spend the perfect Friday afternoon in the heart of Bahrain and indulge in a wide variety of delicious homemade comfort food with Wolfgang Puck. Reservations: +973 17115044

BEST OF WOLFGANG PRE F1 PARTY - SATURDAY BBQ WITH CELEBRITY CHEF WOLFGANG PUCK

Date: Saturday, April 7 from 8:00 pm - 2:00 am

Venue: Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay

Join us for an Asian fusion BBQ party with the celebrity chef himself. Savor an array of special Asian BBQ and street food, while you enjoy the twinkling lights of the Manama skyline and a live DJ in the background.

EASTER BRUNCH AT BAHRAIN BAY KITCHEN

Date: March 30 and April 1 from 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Venue: Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay

We are celebrating Easter with a grand brunch - you just hop on over! Celebrate the timeless tradition of Easter with friends and family at Bahrain Bay Kitchen. Savor an exquisitely paired menu of mouthwatering favorites like roasted lamb rack, hot cross buns and chocolate treats. The little ones have something to cheer about too with a fun egg hunt and other engaging escapades. Free access to Kids For All Seasons Easter activities.

FRIDAY SPRING FAIR BRUNCH

Date: Every Friday from April 6 until May 11 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Venue: Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay

Spring fairs bring forth many exciting memories to mind. Expect fun, excitement, vivacious colours, floral fragrances and comfortable weather. Every Friday, Bahrain Bay Kitchen's garden will be transformed into a welcoming hive of activity. Lounge in the open air while indulging in new seasonally influenced dishes. Children's hearts will be filled with a sense of delight as they enjoy plentiful fair-style games and activities. Discover pony rides, Ping-Pong, darts and train rides. Throughout these Friday afternoons of indulgence, sip on a refreshing iced tea, chilled milkshake or your desired beverage. The Spring Fair Brunch is a nod to everything that inspires weekend bliss.

RE/IMAGINE YOUR SATURDAYS

Date: Every Saturday from 12:30 pm until 3:30 pm

Venue: re Asian Cuisine by Wolfgang Puck Asian

Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay invites you to discover the perfect Saturday Brunch at re/Asian Cuisine by Wolfgang Puck. Soak in the immersive views from the 50th floor and feast on mouthwatering Asian selections like Korean Fried Chicken Bao Buns, Wok Fried Shrimp Dumplings and Brisket Wontons for BD 19+.

FOR U MAMA ...!

Date: 22 March 2018, 5:00pm

Venue: Bahrain National Museum

Mothers Day..! we honour the mother of the family, as well as motherhood, mother bonds, and the influence of mothers in society. It is celebrated in different days in many parts of the world, most commonly in the months of March. This workshop will celebrate Mothers Day by letting children make a greeting card for their mothers and also decorating cupcakes. Later they will gift it to them.

HAPPY THURSDAY! MULAN FILM

Date: 29 March 2018, 6:00pm
Venue: Bahrain National Museum

Happy Thursday! Is where we all meet once a month on Thursday.. This time we are going to watch together Mulan..

Mulan is a girl, and the only child in her family. When the Huns invaded China, they called on each family to take up arms. Mulan's father, who's injured and cannot walk properly, decides to fight for his country and the honor of his family even though it is clear that he will not survive in this battle. Mulan, who has just been rejected by the matchmaker, decided to prove that she deserves something, she wore same as the Chinese army men.

Lots of incidents happens with Mulan as she risks everything in order to save her country China.

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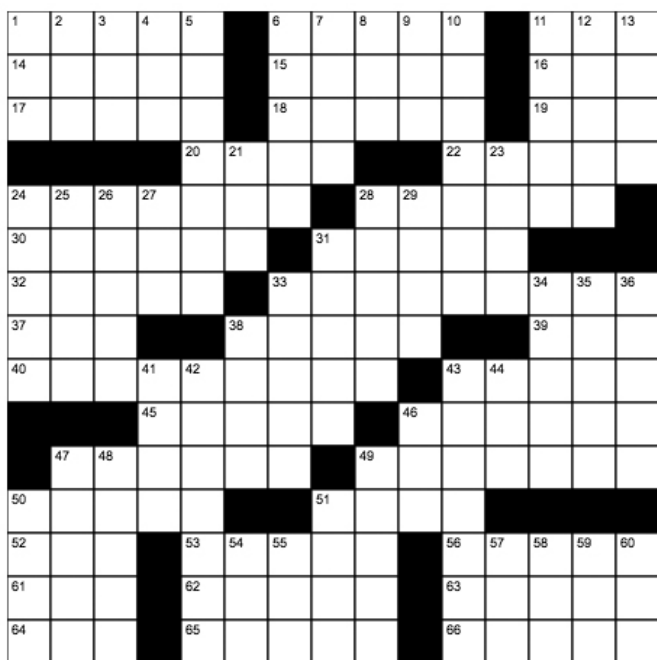
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S	U	N	K	O	S	T	E	T	Y	R	O	S		

Across

1- Aromatic wood; 6- Keep an ___ the ground; 11- Scot's topper; 14- Martini garnish; 15- Crazed; 16- Son-gun link; 17- Measured with a watch; 18- Praying figure; 19- Long, long time; 20- Make reference to; 22- Cookwear; 24- Inspiring awe; 28- "Casablanca" star; 30- Accident; 31- Brother of Moses; 32- Atlas feature; 33- Silver sulfide; 37- Appomattox figure; 38- Alloy of iron and carbon; 39- Snitch; 40- Indispensable; 43- "All My Children" vixen; 45- Staggers; 46- Fix beforehand; 47- Oppressor; 49- Elevations; 50- Perch; 51- Mariners can sail on seven of these; 52- ___ be an honor; 53- ___ Gay; 56- Browned sliced bread; 61- ___ kwon do; 62- Polite turndown; 63- Ran in neutral; 64- Wholly; 65- Slumbered; 66- Play groups;

Down

1- Portable bed; 2- Lilly of pharmaceuticals; 3- Not too bright; 4- St. crosser; 5- British soldier; 6- Act badly; 7- Bern's river; 8- Genetic material; 9- Can metal; 10- Polygon having eight sides; 11- It's human; 12- Under way; 13- Jazz flutist Herbie; 21- Little devil; 23- Breathe hard; 24- Miss by ___; 25- Fermented grape juices; 26- Curved letters; 27- Cow or doe; 28- Breakfast roll; 29- Baseball's Hershiser; 31- Bailiwicks; 33- Leaning; 34- Whiskey type; 35- Be silent, musically; 36- Les ___-Unis; 38- Type of gun; 41- Slips; 42- Tidies up; 43- Controversial; 44- Rule, for short; 46- Pod occupant; 47- Bottom line; 48- Alpine song; 49- Soul mate; 50- Moreno of "West Side Story"; 51- Fall prey to a banana peel, say; 54- Cambodia's Lon ___; 55- Sugar suffix; 57- Room within a harem; 58- Gore and more; 59- Part of a tennis match; 60- NFL 6-pointers;

BEETLE BAILEY



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		3			6	8		
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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

How to play:

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

Your star today

(Mar 21st - Apr 20th)



A fascinating article you read in the newspaper could inspire you to try to create a mystery story of your own. Today your mind is perfectly suited to devising plot twists and interesting but complex characters. You could tell the story to children, or you might even decide to turn it into a novel. Jot down your ideas and look at them again tomorrow.

(Apr 21st - May 21st)



An important lost object, perhaps a paper of some kind, could command the attention of your entire household. This could prove frustrating at first, because you will know that it has to be somewhere in the house, but you can't find it anywhere! The item may reappear just as you've given up on it, in a place you never would have imagined! Tip: it's probably hidden among other objects.

(May 22nd - Jun 21st)



Someone or something has disappeared. Gossip could spread like wildfire as everyone imagines the worst. Listening to rumours probably doesn't appeal to your sense of fairness; nonetheless, you're wondering, too. Your comrades will probably experience a mixture of relief and disappointment when this person/thing turns up.

(June 22nd - July 23rd)



You could have some paperwork to do today, which could make a big difference to your financial future. This could be a contract, settlement, or agreement of some kind. Whatever it is, you may need to seek some assistance before you execute it. The language might be difficult to understand, and some of the clauses might not feel right to you.

(July 24th - Aug 23rd)



The study of psychology might be especially appealing today. Some new discoveries that you may have heard about in the media could have piqued your interest and might propel you to the library to find books on the subject. This is a good time to pursue this. Your mind is in the right space to understand it.

(Aug 24th - Sep 23rd)



Occult sciences, such as alchemy, phrenology, and astrology, could be singing their siren song to you. You like to think of yourself as down to Earth and realistic, but today you could find so-called unrealistic fields of knowledge irresistible. You'll also have a special gift for them right now. Read up on the subject and give it a try. You might be surprised at what you discover.

(Sep 24th - Oct 23rd)



A group activity could lead to discussions of famous unsolved mysteries. Jack the Ripper, the Black Dahlia, the truth about O.J. Simpson, and other intriguing problems might capture the interest of everyone present, and might lead to some animated debates over possible solutions. You might want to make mental notes of the ideas everyone comes up with.

(Oct 24th - Nov 22nd)



A young colleague could leave your place of employment under strange circumstances, and this could come as a shock to you. You may have been quite fond of this person, and find yourself wondering about the truth behind the departure. Gossip may buzz, but don't pay any attention to it. Chances are it's a health problem.

(Nov 23rd - Dec 21st)



A young colleague could leave your place of employment under strange circumstances, and this could come as a shock to you. You may have been quite fond of this person, and find yourself wondering about the truth behind the departure. Gossip may buzz, but don't pay any attention to it. Chances are it's a health problem, but no one, including your colleague, feels comfortable discussing it.

(Dec 22nd - Jan 20th)



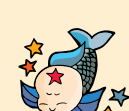
Do you like detective stories? If so, you may find them useful today as you play the role of Sherlock Holmes. A missing object, intellectual problem, or mystery of some kind could have you curious enough to search for the truth. This is a good way to train your powers of observation, although intuition will probably play a strong role in your success. Go to it, and have fun!

(Jan 21st - Feb 19th)



A business or romantic partner may seem a bit preoccupied with some very serious matters today, and not be likely to share them with you. Asking to talk about it won't work, so you'll probably end up depending on your intuition. Your friend is probably concerned with the health of a family member who may need surgery. Don't feel excluded.

(Feb 20th - Mar 20th)



Some rather extensive and annoying paperwork might need to be dealt with. It will probably require all your attention, take care of it first thing in the morning when you're still fresh. This might be a contract or it could be an insurance policy or something else full of unintelligible jargon. Don't be afraid to ask someone familiar with it to explain the language to you.

Over 130 whales die on Aus beach

Stranded whales on the beach at Hamelin Bay

Perth
One hundred and thirty-five whales have died after being washed ashore in Western Australia. A rescue operation began yesterday morning in Hamelin Bay, on the state's south-western tip, to save the remaining 15, with volunteers and vets trying to keep the surviving short-finned pilot whales alive before deciding when to herd them out to sea. One witness described trying to steer one of the animals out to sea, only to

watch it beach itself again. Jeremy Chick, who is controlling the rescue attempt near the town of Augusta, said the main priorities were to ensure the welfare of the remaining live whales and the safety of everyone involved in the operation before any rescue attempt was made to send the whales back out to sea. "The strength of the animals and the windy and possibly wet weather conditions will affect when and where we attempt to

move them out to sea," he said. People were asked to avoid the area because rescuers had enough staff there. Authorities warned the public to take care near the water because the dead and dying animals could bring sharks closer to shore. A three-metre shark was seen in the bay within a few hours. Hamelin beach is closed from Hamelin Caravan Park to North Point including Grace Road and Reserve Road, and a shark alert has been issued for the area.

The largest mass stranding of whales in WA happened in 1996 when 320 long-finned pilot whales stranded themselves in Dunsborough. Short-finned pilot whales inhabit tropical and subtropical waters and may be seen in the hundreds but groups usually number fewer than 100. Yesterday, the whales were first spotted by a commercial fisherman at 6am yesterday. *(theguardian)*

Pilot whale
One of the largest members of the dolphin family

Weight: up to 2,300 kg
Length: 7.6 m

Named pilot whales because it was thought that each pod followed a "pilot" in the group

Can dive to depths of about 600 m

One of the whale species most often involved in mass strandings

Two types:
Long finned: *Globicephala melas*
Short finned: *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

Differ slightly in size
- tooth count
- flipper length
- skull formation

Large bulbous forehead

Sickle-shaped flippers

Commonly seen in tight, sociable pods
Each pod has between 20-100 whales

Source: CSIRO/MOFA Fisheries, IUCN, NZ Department of Conservation

Tyson the stray hippo captured

Mexico City
A stray hippopotamus that had been roaming around the countryside in Mexico has been captured after a 10-day hunt and relocated to a wildlife refuge, authorities said yesterday. "Tyson," as locals had named the stray hippo, drew a large fan following -- and even inspired his own Facebook page -- after mysteriously showing up several weeks ago in a rural area in Las Choapas, in the eastern state of Veracruz. But with locals flocking to take his picture, feed him and even pet him, Mexican environmental authority Profepa feared a tragedy in the



making. Nile hippopotami are notoriously dangerous, and have been known to maul and even devour people. "Since this is an exotic species of African origin and its presence in the fields of the Las Choapas municipality posed a high risk to people and the ecosystem ... Profepa launched a special operation to relocate him to a secure site," the authority said in a statement. *(AFP)*

#PollToday



US and China are engaging in a trade war. Do you think this could be an opportunity for other countries?
 Yes No Cant Say



"The treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention remains a human rights priority for the UK. We will continue to call upon Israel to improve its practices in line with international law and obligations,"
 -Angela Merkel
 German Chancellor on migration

Rest in sight

Buhari meets with Dapchi girls



Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari received the released Dapchi girls in a meeting clouded by the absence of a Christian student still held by Boko Haram for refusing to convert to Islam.

Suu Kyi ally set for Myanmar presidency

A close ally of Myanmar's de-facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi took a step closer to becoming the country's new president after the lower house overwhelmingly voted for Win Myint as its candidate.

Brazil court suspends Lula's jail sentence

Brazil's Supreme Federal Court granted former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva temporary jail relief until April.

South Africa detects avian flu in seabirds

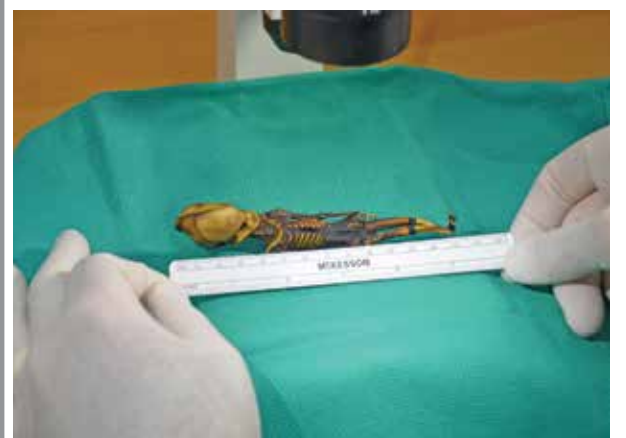
South Africa has detected an outbreak of avian flu in seabirds, citing the highly pathogenic H5N8 strain that infected the country's poultry industry last year.

For more, catch us online at:
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Olive ridley turtles hatch in Mumbai after two decades

Mumbai
Tiny olive ridley turtles have hatched in India's financial capital Mumbai for the first time in two decades after a major cleanup of a beach, officials said yesterday. Dozens of the threatened species cracked out of their egg shells and slowly waddled their way into the Arabian sea off Versova beach on Thursday, delighting wildlife conservationists. "We found around 90-95 olive ridley hatchlings... and the volunteers safely released them to the sea," Prashant Deshmukh, an environmental officer with the Maharashtra state government, told AFP. "The turtles have returned to Mumbai's coastline after nearly 20 years. This is big news and the clean-up drive seems to be yielding results," he added. *(AFP)*

Tiny Atacama skeleton was girl with bone disease: study



A tiny, mummified skeleton discovered in 2003

Miami
The discovery in 2003 sparked international intrigue -- a tiny, mummified skeleton with an alien-like head, tucked into a leather pouch found behind a church in the Atacama desert of Chile. The notion that it was an extra-terrestrial was long ago debunked, but researchers said Thursday they have gleaned new insights from a full genetic analysis of the skeleton, nicknamed "Ata." It belonged to an infant girl with a handful of rare gene mutations linked to dwarfism, deformities and apparent premature aging, said the study in Genome Research. Experts have said previously the bones appeared to belong to someone between the ages of six and eight, but this advanced wear on the bones was likely a consequence of the child's deformities, not a reflection of her actual age. In fact, the study said she likely didn't live long, and may have been born premature. "Given the size of the specimen and the severity of the mutations... it seems likely the specimen was a pre-term birth," said the study. *(AFP)*

Pacific plastic dump far larger than feared: study

Paris
The vast dump of plastic waste swirling in the Pacific ocean is now bigger than France, Germany and Spain combined -- far larger than previously feared -- and is growing rapidly, a study published Thursday warned. Researchers based in the Netherlands used a fleet of boats and aircraft to scan the immense accumulation of bottles, containers, fishing nets and microparticles known as the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" (GPGP) and found an astonishing build-up of plastic waste. "We found about 80,000 tonnes of buoyant plastic currently in the GPGP," Laurent Lebreton, lead author of the study published in the journal Scientific Reports, told AFP. That's around the weight of 500 jumbo jets, and up to sixteen times greater than the plastic mass uncovered there in previous studies. *(AFP)*

Erfoud, Morocco

Battling gusts of sandy wind, riders from across the world struggled to control feisty stallions as they raced in the first Gallops of Morocco, a desert endurance challenge.

In a country with an ancient history of horsemanship, the event in the wilderness of Merzouga was the first of its kind -- a six-day test of stamina, navigation and teamwork.

Competitors spend four to seven hours a day in the saddle, covering up to 30 kilometres (18 miles) of rough terrain a day.

"You need a certain physical resistance," said Deborah Amsellem, 30, who headed from Toulouse, France, with four friends to take part in the race near the oasis town of Erfoud.

"It's not very technical, but you're riding stallions, real

alpha males," she said.

Riders use stopwatches to pace themselves and GPS devices to find their way through the sandy plains, deep dunes, rocky hills and passes.

The unforgiving terrain and fickle weather are not the only challenges: competitors must ride Barb stallions they have never met.

The North African breed, originally a warhorse, is known for its toughness and stamina but also for its hot temper.

Fifteen teams took part in the late February adventure, made up of 80 horse-lovers, enthusiasts of everything from trail riding to polo.

Organisers say the event is designed for "rather hardy riders who should be in good physical condition and have a feel for horses in order to cope with the distances."

'Sense of space'

Saif Ali al-Rawahi, coach of a team from Oman, described the event as "very difficult".

"There are kilometres in the mountains and in the desert," he said. "The horses have to ride on high dunes, the weather is not so good, very

windy. It's difficult for horses and riders."

Oman was the site of the first "Gallops" race in 2014, and Rawahi's group of five soldiers from the Gulf sultanate's cavalry are accustomed to endurance races. Even they had to make do with coming fifth.

"The trek is not just a race for professionals," said Benoit Perrier, a race official.

On the first day alone, several riders fell off their horses and some gave up entirely -- while others said they were exhausted but enjoying the challenge.

"If we wanted to ride the same distance in the Lille region (northern France), there would be highways and barbed wire," said French businessman Gregoire Verhaeghe.

"Here we have a real sense of space."



Riders battle heavy wind during the "Gallops of Morocco" equestrian race

Having taken part in the Paris-Dakar rally four times, he said he loves the desert and made no complaint about the bad weather.

His family's team came first.

Riding unknown horses, Barb stallions specially brought in from across the country for the occasion, is part of the experience.

Omar Benazzou, an official from Morocco's equestrian governing body SOREC, said he had headed to the event "out of curiosity".

The Barb, long associated with North Africa's Berber ethnic group, "is a horse with a big heart, sturdy, docile, resilient and can cover long distances," he

said.

Adventure destination

Morocco is determined to develop equestrian tourism, benefiting from its unique breeds to attract new visitors.

The country largely escaped the chaos unleashed by the Arab Spring uprisings, remaining safe and stable enough to attract an influx of tourists.

The southern desert is a favourite destination for those seeking an outdoors experience.

"You have hiking, car rallies, mountain biking and discovery trips," said Sadoq Abdedaim, owner of the upscale hotel chain Xaluca.

Claire Biyache, a French rider with eight years' experience who took part in the Gallops event, praised the "beautiful" surroundings.

"We've seen lots of very different scenery, sometimes very black, very mineral,

sometimes dunes, sometimes oases," she said.

The adventure came at a price. For Deborah, a student, the \$5,200 (4,200 euro) fee was "a real stretch".

But Dato Beh Chun Chuan, a Malaysian businessman who flew to Morocco specially for the race, said it was "very cheap".

"The most important thing is to have fun and have friends," he said. "Winning is not my main agenda in life."

The 62-year-old millionaire owns a polo club with 54 horses and employs four Argentinian riders to play with him.

His team at the desert race included fellow businessmen and bankers with "money to spend", he said.

His only regret was that his bivouac was not comfortable enough.

He was not able to rent a helicopter to return to the hotel for the night. (AFP)

Organisers say the event is designed for "rather hardy riders who should be in good physical condition and have a feel for horses in order to cope with the distances."



Morocco desert stallion race pushes limits of endurance

A rider competes during the "Gallops of Morocco" equestrian race in the desert of Merzouga in the southern Moroccan Sahara desert.

Williamson hits record ton



Kane Williamson celebrates a record 18th Test century
(Pic courtesy: espnricinfo)

Auckland

Kane Williamson's New Zealand-record 18th Test century brightened an otherwise wet and gloomy day two as the hosts tightened their grip on the first Test against England yesterday.

Williamson's 102 provided a rare moment of cheer on a truncated day when play was restricted to 23.1 overs with only 54 runs scored.

The Black Caps skipper fell after guiding his side to a substantial first innings lead as New Zealand reached 229 for four, 171 runs ahead of England with six wickets in hand.

The milestone century,

reached with a deft single through the gully off James Anderson, took Williamson one clear of the previous record of 17 he shared with Ross Taylor and the late Martin Crowe.

He was still on 100 when the rain swept in for the first time but when play resumed an hour later, after a revised tea break, he added only two more before being trapped in front by Anderson.

Williamson's overnight partner Henry Nicholls progressed to 49 not out with BJ Watling on 17 when rain again sent the players indoors -- midway through the second session of the day-night Test.

It never stopped long

BRIEF SCORE

New Zealand 229 for 4 (Williamson 102, Nicholls 49*) lead **England** 58 by 171 runs

enough for the game to resume and play was called off four hours later.

Williamson had rebuilt the New Zealand innings from one for eight in their reply to England's 58, to 206 for four when he was eventually dismissed.

He faced 220 deliveries and shared in partnerships of 84 with Tom Latham, 31 with Ross Taylor and 83 with Nicholls.

Nicholls, who started

the New Zealand summer needing strong performances to cement his place as the number six batsman, stepped up from his pre-Christmas form when he had innings of 67, 13 and five against the West Indies.

After resuming the day on 24, he batted calmly with Williamson and then assumed the anchor role when the captain departed and he was joined by Watling.

Watling, back in the side after being sidelined by a hip injury for several months, wasted no time settling in as he raced to 17 off 20 deliveries, while Nicholls has faced 143 balls for his 49. (AFP)

Morkel joins 300 club as SA take leading edge



South Africa's Morne Morkel (Pic courtesy: espnricinfo)

Cape Town

Fast bowler Morne Morkel took his 300th Test wicket as South Africa bowled themselves into a strong position on the second day of the third Test against Australia at Newlands yesterday.

Australia were 245 for nine when bad light ended play, 66 runs behind South Africa's first innings total of 311.

But it could have been worse for Australia. They were in deep trouble at 175 for eight before Nathan Lyon hit a Test-best 47 in a ninth wicket partnership of 66 with Tim Paine, who was unbeaten on 33.

Morkel took three of the first four Australian wickets to fall and became the fifth South African to join the 300 club.

Morkel dismissed Usman Khawaja and Steve Smith in his first spell, then came back to break a 78-run fourth wicket stand between Cameron Bancroft and Shaun Marsh when Marsh flashed at a wide ball and was caught behind.

BRIEF SCORE

Australia 245 for 9 (Bancroft 77, Morkel 4-87, Rabada 3-81) trail **South Africa** 311 (Elgar 141*, De Villiers 64, Cummins 4-78) by 66 runs

Bancroft made 77 off 103 balls with 14 fours but was leg before wicket to Vernon Philander in the last over before tea to leave Australia in a precarious position.

Morkel, 33, playing in his 85th Test, took a fourth wicket when Lyon's adventurous 38-ball innings was ended by a catch by Dean Elgar running back from point.

Earlier, Kagiso Rabada was hit for five boundaries in a row by David Warner but won a duel with the Australian opening batsman when he sent Warner's off stump cartwheeling.

Warner was bowled for 30. He hit three fours off the last three balls of Rabada's second over. (AFP)

Stanikzai propels Afghan to the WC

Harare

Afghanistan qualified for next year's cricket World Cup as captain Asghar Stanikzai played through the pain barrier to produce a heroic innings and lead them to a five-wicket victory over Ireland yesterday.

Stanikzai returned to the team last week for the closing stages of the qualifying tournament.

He batted in obvious pain and with a heavy dressing under his shirt, to score an unbeaten 39 off 29 balls, as he and Najibullah Zadran saw their team home with five balls to spare.

Ireland scored a modest 209 for seven in their 50 overs in the winner-takes-all match to decide who would join the West Indies in securing a place



Asghar Stanikzai drives over the off side
(Pic courtesy: espnricinfo)

at the World Cup from the qualifying tournament.

The West Indies booked their spot in next year's tournament in England earlier in the week. (Reuters)



Victoria Azarenka (file pic)

Miami Open

Azarenka books place in third round

Miami

Victoria Azarenka is through to the third round of the Miami Open after US Open finalist Madison Keys was forced to retire with a leg injury.

Belarusian Azarenka is a three-time winner of the tournament and was up by a set and a break when Keys ended the second-round match.

The first set went into a tiebreak after the world number 186 failed to capitalise on two set points when serving for the match, but she prevailed on a tie-break which featured nine breaks across the 12 points.

Azarenka will play Anastasija Sevastova after the Latvian beat Alize Cornet of France 7-5 6-4.

World number one Simona Halep dropped the first set but went on to beat Oceane Dodin 3-6 6-3 7-5 and she will face Agnieszka Radwanska, who prevailed 6-3 7-6 (7/4) against Alison Van Uytvanck.

Other seeds through to the third round include Garbine Muguruza, whose opponent Amanda Anisimova withdrew, and Karolina Pliskova, who prevailed 7-5 7-5 against Ekaterina Makarova.

Reigning US Open champion Sloane Stephens is also through to the next round, where she will face qualifier Monica Niculescu after she beat Ajla Tomljanovic 6-1 6-3. (PA Sport)

Frances Tiafoe sets up meeting with Edmund



Kyle Edmund (file pic)

Miami

Kyle Edmund will play Delray Beach Open champion Frances Tiafoe in the second round of the Miami Open after the American saw off Nicolas Kicker 6-3 7-6 (7/4).

Tiafoe, ranked 63, broke early in the first set against the Argentinian and served out to take the first set 6-3.

Kicker, 25, broke for 3-1 in the second but was swiftly broken back to love as the set went to a tie-break in which Tiafoe prevailed 7/4.

Thanasi Kokkinakis set up a date with Roger Federer by beating Calvin Hemery 6-1 6-2, while Tomas Berdych will take on Yoshihito Nishioka after the Japanese player overcame Alex de Minaue 6-2 6-4.

Nikoloz Basilashvili will meet Kevin Anderson after rallying for a 1-6 6-2 7-5 triumph over Thomas Fabbiano, and 11th seed Sam Querrey will face Radu Albot after the Moldovan beat qualifier Ricardas Berankis 6-1 4-6 7-6 (7/4). (PA Sport)

Kolar upsets top seed Lemoine

(Continued from page 24)

In the Women's Singles, Kolar, ranked 411th in the world, upset top seed Quirine Lemoine of the Netherlands, ranked 322nd, 6-3, 6-4. After a strong first set, Kolar broke Lemoine twice in the second, including in the crucial ninth game to take a 5-4 lead before holding serve to win the match.

For Mihalikova, she overcame a tough challenge against eighth seed Kanika Vaidya of India 7-5, 7-5 in an exciting two-hour encounter. Ranked 404th in the world, Mihalikova needed to break Viadya, ranked 700th, in both the first and second sets with the scores tied at 5-5 each before closing things out in the ensuing games.

In the Men's Singles, Maiga was first to book his ticket to the Men's final after taking down Kellovsky in a three-set thriller that lasted two hours and 36 minutes. It was a heart-

FULL RESULTS:

Men's Singles

Riccardo Maiga (SUI) beat Dominik Kellovsky (CZE) 4-6, 6-4, 6-4
Jelle Sels (NED)-3 beat Patrik Rikl (CZE)-7 6-7 (9), 7-6 (5), 6-4

Women's Singles

Nastja Kolar (SLO)-3 beat Quirine Lemoine (NED)-1 6-3, 6-4
Tereza Mihalikova (SVK)-4 beat Kanika Vaidya (IND)-8 7-5, 7-5

Men's Doubles

Marek Gengel (CZE)/Dominik Kellovsky (CZE)-2 beat Robert Galloway (USA)/Anderson Reed (USA) 6-3, 3-6, [10-6]

Women's Doubles

Marian Jade Capadocia (PHI)/Fatma Al Nabhani (OMA) beat Valeria Bhunu (ZIM)/Emily Webley-Smith (GBR)-1 7-5, 6-2

breaking loss for Kellovsky, who headed into Friday's action as the only player remaining in the entire competition still with a chance to win both the Singles and Doubles titles. Kellovsky settled for just the Men's Doubles crown.

After splitting the first two sets, Maiga, ranked 1,299th in the world, took a 3-1 lead and later turned it to a slim 5-4 advantage. Kellovsky, ranked 957th, then appeared on his way to tying things at 5-5, taking the game's first three



points and going 40-0 up. But Maiga dug deep and rallied to take the next six points to finally end the match and confirm his ticket to the final.

The other Men's Singles semi-final between Sels and Rikl was one of the most tightly contested affairs of the entire tournament, going on for over three hours. With the first two sets decided on a tie-break, the third was surely to be another hard fight. Both

players exchanged games until a 4-4 tie, but then Sels, ranked 534th in the world, broke Rikl, ranked 701st, and he rode his momentum in the last match-clinching game, which included two huge aces.

This year's Bahrain ITF Futures Tennis Tournament features a total prize fund of a staggering \$30,000 for both the men's and women's competitions. Players from more than 50 nations have

registered to compete.

The Bahrain ITF Futures tournaments provide the entry level of professional tournaments, enabling players to reach higher-level competitions on both the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) World Tour and the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour. For more information, contact BTC on +973-17729561 or e-mail bahrain.tennisclub@gmail.com.

Hamilton fastest in practice



Lewis Hamilton emerges from his Mercedes at the end of the first practice session (Pic courtesy: theguardian)



Lewis Hamilton sets the pace in practice at Albert Park (Pic courtesy: theguardian)

Melbourne

Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton topped the timesheets for Mercedes in both practice sessions at the Australian Grand Prix yesterday but Red Bull's Max Verstappen showed enough pace to give the Silver Arrows pause for thought.

After lapping Albert Park in one minute, 24.026 seconds to dominate the first practice

of the new season, Hamilton improved the mark slightly to 1:23.931 in the second session on a balmy autumn day.

"The car is quicker here than it was last year, so it feels better everywhere," the four-times champion told reporters.

"It closed up a little bit in FP2 in terms of the gap between us all, but that's exciting. It's more challenging

for me to try and eke out a little more from the car."

Red Bull's Dutch wunderkind Verstappen was snapping at his heels, however, finishing only 0.127 seconds adrift of the Briton after the second session.

Raising hopes of a contest for Mercedes, who have swept the driver and constructors' titles for the past four years, there was less than three-

tenths of a second separating the champions from the Red Bull and Ferrari cars.

Verstappen sandwiched himself between the Mercedes drivers, with Hamilton's team mate Valtteri Bottas third quickest despite taking a couple of slides off the track.

"That's what I call a positive start to the season," Verstappen tweeted. "The

car handled well and I'm happy with today."

Fourth in FP2, Kimi Raikkonen showed why Ferrari may also be in the hunt for Sunday's race but he will have to face the stewards after allegedly impeding fellow Finn Bottas, who nearly rammed into his rear and ended up in the gravel.

It was a tougher day for Raikkonen's four-times

champion team mate Sebastian Vettel, who was more than a half-second off the pace in FP2 down in fifth position, a disappointing run he later downplayed.

"We still have quite a lot of performance in hand. I am not too worried because I know if I get everything right we should be in better shape," the German told reporters. (Reuters)

Bolt on target in Dortmund training

Dortmund

Multiple Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt had the chance to show off his football skills yesterday, nutmegging an opponent and scoring with a header as he trained with Borussia Dortmund in front of a cheering crowd.

Some 1,500 people were in the stands of Dortmund's training ground in the

suburb of Brackel for the morning session and dozens of reporters and camera crews were spread along the sideline as Bolt entered the pitch alongside players Mario Goetze and Julian Weigl.

Bolt, who also trained with the team behind closed doors on Thursday afternoon, warmed up with the Dortmund players as fans, some waving Jamaica flags, cheered on a

chilly and overcast Ruhr valley morning.

Bolt, playing alongside World Cup winner Goetze and U.S. international Christian Pulisic, then delighted his supporters as he nutmegged an opponent, knocking the ball through his legs, and scored with a fine header as coach Peter Stoeger gave him a thumbs-up.

"It was good. I had fun with

the guys and they were very welcoming," Bolt, who signed dozens of autographs, told reporters after his one-hour workout.

Dortmund, who are not in action until March 31 due to the international break, share the same sponsor, Puma, as Bolt, and had agreed in January to let the retired athlete train with the team. (Reuters)



Usain Bolt delights fans by scoring in Dortmund training (Pic courtesy: AP)

Ibrahimovic move announced via advert

London

Zlatan Ibrahimovic was described by LA Galaxy as "one of the winningest players of all time" after completing a move to the Major League Soccer club.

Ibrahimovic's signing was announced in an advert in the LA Times, with Galaxy later officially confirming the deal.

The full-page advert in Friday's edition of the newspaper had a message from the Swedish striker, 36, saying: "Dear Los Angeles, you're welcome."

LA Galaxy boss Sigi Schmid said: "He'll have a very positive impact."

He added: "Adding one of the finest goal scorers in this sport's history to our roster will tremendously help our club in

the hunt for a sixth MLS Cup, "As one of the winningest players of all time, we are confident that Zlatan can be one of the most dangerous strikers in our league."

Ibrahimovic arrives on a free transfer following the mutual termination of his contract with Manchester United on Thursday.

His contract at United was due to expire in the summer after 20 months at the club.

In an interview with the LA Times on Thursday, Ibrahimovic was asked if Los Angeles was big enough to handle his personality, to which he replied: "If it's not, I'll make it bigger."

When he arrived at United, he had said: "I'll be the God of Manchester." (BBC)



Zlatan Ibrahimovic

Doubles winners Crowned

Capadocia-Al Nabhani,
Gengel-Kellovsky clinch
ITF doubles title



Mens Doubles Winner

Mens Doubles Winner



**DT News Network
Manama**

The women's pairing of Marian Jade Capadocia and Fatma Al Nabhani, and the men's tandem of Marek Gengel and Dominik Kellovsky, were on Friday evening crowned champions of their respective doubles competitions in the Bahrain ITF Futures Tennis Tournament 2018 at Bahrain Tennis Club (BTC).

Meanwhile, third seed Nastja Kolar of Slovenia set up an exciting title clash with fourth seed Tereza Mihalikova of Slovakia in the Women's Singles. On the men's side, unseeded Riccardo Maiga of Switzerland will take on third seed Jelle Sels of the



Womens Doubles Winner

Womens Doubles Winner Netherlands for the right to claim their Singles crown.

Both finals are scheduled for today at the BTC hardcourts. The women's match is at 3pm, followed by the men's no earlier than 5pm. The awards presentation and closing ceremony follow.

The new doubles champions were handed over their trophies yesterday night in a ceremony attended by BTC President Khamis Al Muqla; BTC Board Members Dr. Faisal Al Mosawi, Hussain Al Mukharraq and Khalid Ghuloom; and Tournament

Director Ali Khonji.

The Bahrain ITF Futures Tennis Tournament 2018 is being held under the patronage of His Majesty the King's Charity Works and Youth Affairs Representative, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Chairman and

Bahrain Olympic Committee President Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa. It is supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs and is sponsored by E K Kanoo and Bahrain Duty Free.

In the Doubles, fan favourites Capadocia from

the Philippines and Al Nabhani of Oman upset the top-seeded pairing of Valeria Bhunu of Zimbabwe and Emily Webley-Smith of Great Britain 7-5, 6-2. They battled back from a 2-4 deficit in a tight first set, and then in the second took a 5-0 lead before securing their championship in another three games.

In the Men's Doubles final, the Czech pair of Gengel and Kellovsky lived up to their billing as second seeds in beating American fourth seeds Robert Galloway and Anderson Reed 6-3, 3-6, [10-6]. They took home their winners' trophy in a match that lasted an hour and 22 minutes. (Continued on page 22)