

THE DAILY tribune



Taylor Swift spends Thanksgiving with beau Joe Alwyn in London

14 CELEBS

WORLD 5 Evacuations, airport closure as Typhoon nears Philippines

BAE winners to be named today

TDT | Manama

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, Bahrain's Labour Fund (Tamkeen) will announce the winners of the fourth edition of the Bahrain Award for Entrepreneurship (BAE), in an award ceremony at the Isa Cultural Centre today.

A jury will announce the winners for each of the eight categories from a total of 21 promising nominated start-ups and SMEs. All decisions are made through an exhaustive review process that is based on well-defined assessment methods. See Page 10

'Iran death toll above 200'

London

At least 208 people are believed to have been killed during a crackdown on protests in Iran last month, Amnesty International said yesterday.

The steep increase in the number of dead came as the US said the clerical regime in Tehran was the uniting factor behind protests in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran itself.

"The number of people believed to have been killed during demonstrations in Iran that broke out on 15 November has risen to at least 208, based on credible reports received by the organisation," Amnesty said, adding that the actual death toll was likely to be higher.



Media sector urged to adopt 'latest technologies' to win survival battle

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Revenue from realty registrations decreases by 42 per cent in 2019

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Two foreign women face trial for public nudity, prostitution

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210 fils (includes VAT)



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BIC begins WEC countdown
 Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) begins its final 10-day for the highly anticipated return of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), which will be taking place for the first time ever together with the BIC National Day Festival. P15

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Fiscal boost plans

'Fiscal sustainability key to implement citizen welfare programmes'

● HRH the Crown Prince praised the success of the employment fair organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

● The Cabinet approved a memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, on the Ministry's plan to implement the 2019-2022 Government Programme.

Manama

The Cabinet chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday stressed the importance of continuing to support initiatives aimed at maintaining positive economic growth, while continuing to further enhance the Kingdom's fiscal sustainability in order to benefit citizens and meet the aspirations of HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

HRH the Crown Prince praised the support and patronage provided by HM King Hamad across the Kingdom's sectors, which



HRH the Crown Prince chairs the Cabinet.

contributes to Bahrain's economic development, as illustrated by His Majesty's inauguration of the Alba Line 6 Expansion Project.

HRH the Crown Prince noted that this important milestone constituted a major leap in the Kingdom's industrial capacities, and will do much to support the Kingdom's continued development.

HRH the Crown Prince went on to highlight the importance of continuing to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation, both of which are key contributors of development, and congratulated the winners of the second edition of the GGC Pitch@Palace initiative, which took place last Wednesday under HRH the Crown Prince's patronage.

The Cabinet congratulated all Bahraini women on the occasion of Bahraini Women's Day, cele-

615

million Bahraini dinars have been earmarked to implement the second phase of Al Dur Power and Water Plant.

brated on December 1st under the theme: "Bahraini women in the fields of higher education and future sciences."

In this regard, the Cabinet highlighted the efforts of the Supreme Council for Women, chaired by HRH Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, the wife of HM the King and President of the Supreme Council for Women.

The Cabinet noted the support provided by HRH Princess Sabeeka to the women of Bah-

rain as they continue to make advancements across various fields. The Cabinet remarked that Bahraini women remain an essential component to the Kingdom's development, noting their leading role throughout the economy.

On the occasion of the centenary of the establishment of Bahrain Police, HRH the Crown Prince praised its key role in preserving the security of Bahrain and its people. His Royal Highness went on to thank every police officer for their sacrifices for the benefit and security of the Kingdom.

HRH the Crown Prince also praised the success of the employment fair organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, inaugurated by the Deputy Prime Minister, Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

In this regard, the Minister

of Labour and Social Development made a presentation to the Cabinet highlighting the wide participation of the private sector at the event as well as the impressive array of job opportunities offered during the fair, which reflect the strength of the national economy and its capacity to generate suitable opportunities for all citizens.

The Cabinet approved projects to expand the electricity and water network, as part of the second phase of the Al Dur Power and Water Plant, at a cost of BD 615 million.

The Cabinet approved a memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, on the Ministry's plan to implement the 2019-2022 Government Programme.

The plan included details on the preparation of the national state budget in cooperation with the Kingdom's ministries and authorities, bilateral agreements with various countries, as well as updates on the implementation of 36 initiatives of the third edition of the Government Priorities Framework.

In order to preserve the Kingdom's ecosystem, wildlife and biodiversity, HRH the Crown Prince issued directives recognising Dive Bahrain as a marine protected area. The directives regulate oyster collection, fishing, recreational activities, scientific research and industrial activities such as the extraction of oil and gas.

Team Bahrain into semis



Bahrain defied the odds and squeezed into the semi-finals of the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup last night following a drama-filled 4-2 victory over Kuwait in their final Group B game of the tournament's preliminary round. Naturalised striker Thiago Augusto came on as a second-half substitute and provided the magic that the Bahrainis needed to pull off the hard-earned triumph. Augusto scored twice within the span of just 10 minutes to help lift the nationals to the winning margin they required in order to make it through to the next stage. The Bahrainis now face off with unbeaten Group A winners Iraq in the semi-finals, while Saudi take on hosts Qatar. Both games in the last four will be played on Thursday. Full report Page 16



Minister of Finance and National Economy Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa yesterday met with Russian Ambassador to Bahrain Igor Kremnev. He welcomed him lauding strong relations between the two friendly countries and their perpetual growth in various fields. The Minister of Finance and National Economy stressed continuous economic and investment cooperation between Bahrain and Russia, praising advanced relations between both countries. He also reviewed with the ambassador the latest international economic developments.

Glimpses from the past



The first fleet of the Firefighting Directorate was introduced in the 1930s. It was then affiliated to Manama Municipality. The firefighting vehicle had bells, which rang loudly, while moving to attend to emergency cases. These bells were later replaced by sirens.

Media sector urged to adopt 'latest technologies' to win survival battle

'Media should rediscover to preserve its vital role as channels of communication'

Riyadh

The Saudi Media Forum opened yesterday in Riyadh under the theme "Media Industry: Opportunities and Challenges".

Addressing the two-day event, His Majesty the King's Advisor for Media Affairs Nabeel Al Hamer, warned against the de-

clining confidence in writers, journalists, press and media institutions, which would impact their financial revenues.

"The success of media institutions stems directly from trust, credibility and professionalism and the level of institutional organisation and professionalism of those in charge," he said.

He highlighted the current

difficulties and challenges facing the media industry and the press, citing particularly the emergence of new technologies, artificial intelligence and financial and human resources to sustain the media and press industry.

He stressed the need for the media and press to keep abreast of modern technological shifts to

survive and preserve their vital role as channels of communication in fast-changing world.

The current regional and global economic volatile situation, he said, took a heavy toll on the media and press sectors amid declining financial resources, which pushed press and media institutions to make drastic cuts.

He underlined current threats

confronting countries in the region, citing mainly the scourges of terrorism, sectarianism, tribalism, political Islam and external flagrant interference, in addition to rampant corruption and financial challenges, amid looming global economic recession.

He stressed the necessity for the Gulf Cooperation Council



Mr Al Hamer speaking at the Saudi Media Forum.

(GCC) member states to step up co-operation and deepen the Arabian Gulf citizenship.

He saluted the media and the press which are striving to withstand challenges and risks and pursue their mission despite lack of resources and dented capabilities.

GFH sets aside \$200m to tap into private education sector



GFH top executives with EDB, UNDP and other government and Education Ministry officials.

Manama

GFH Financial Group (GFH), has announced the launch of Britus Education, a K-12 education platform designed to take advantage of value opportunities in the fragmented trillion-dollar global private education industry.

In line with the launch of Britus Education, GFH has already secured seed K-12 schools in the Middle East for the platform, developed a robust deal pipeline and plans to conclude various acquisitions in the coming months with an initial target asset of \$200 million.

In line with the strategy Britus Education will employ, the forum will look at a number of key themes and opportunities including education for the many not the few; government in partnership with the private sector; and delivering returns to all.

A roundtable held in this regard was attended by senior representatives from the Bahrain

Economic Development Board, UNDP, Ministry of Education of Bahrain, Ministry of Education of Oman, Education Quality Authority of Bahrain, among others.

"I am pleased to unveil our Britus Education platform in line with GFH's strategy to deliver further value for our investors and shareholders and create a positive impact on the quality of education in the Middle East and globally," Hisham Alrayes, CEO of GFH Financial Group, said.

"The strength and significance of the experts and partners that will join us for our forum underscores the importance of investment in the education space and GFH's position as one of the most active private equity players in the regional education sector with a track-record of consolidating valuable partnerships and creating value for schools and investors alike. Developed and emerging markets have both seen a surge in private education during the last decade, where population growth and macro-

economic gains have supported the upward trend."

The establishment of Britus Education, with an industry leading team of experts will allow to capitalise on these factors and help investors benefit from the industry's growth via structured investments that take advantage of attractive opportunities we have and will continue to identify, he added.

Britus Education will focus on investing in performing schools that can be further improved through maximising student capacity, enhancing student academic outcomes, and optimising fee structures to be affordable for the rapidly-expanding mid-market.

Britus Education will create for GFH and its investors a pipeline of strong, income-generating opportunities in a defensive sector. It also provides exposure to a sector with high growth prospects and the resilience to deliver steady results regardless of volatility in the investment cycle.

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Car number plate sold for BD76,000

TDT | Manama

The organisers stated that the auction was a great success.

The registration (655555) was the highest earning number, which was sold for BD76,000. It was sold after an intense competition from participants.

Participants from various GCC countries were part of the auction. The number 644444 came second with a value of BD67,000, followed by the number 650000, which went for BD65,000.

On this occasion, Talal Al Araf - Chief Executive Officer of Mazad, congratulated all the winners of the special numbers.

He praised the efforts of Arabian Auctions and for their close co-operation for the success of the event.

The auction that aims to cater to a variety of collectors' tastes, comprised 25 numbers from a new set of unique vehicle licence plates starting from 640000 and 650000.

Revenue from realty registrations decreases by 42 per cent in 2019

Registration exemption for Bahrainis 'not a feasible option now'

● It is not possible to make any concession to anyone regarding real estate registration fees, says Almaskati.

● A parliamentary proposal for exempting Bahrainis from paying registration fees was sent earlier to the Shura Council.

TDI | Manama

Revenue from the registration of real estate projects has come down by 42 per cent, according to the latest government figures.

In 2019, there has been a drop in revenue from 38 million Bahraini dinars last year same time to BD22m this year, which is a 42pc plummet.

Khalid Almaskati, the Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs at the Shura Council, confirmed the drop in revenue, stating that it is not possible to make any concession to anyone regarding real estate registration fees. This comes after calls were made to exempt the registration fees on real estate projects for Bahrainis.

Mr Almaskati said the drop in revenue means that the government cannot afford further



Revenues from real estate registration has been on the decline.

reduction in revenue from real estate registrations.

A parliamentary proposal for exempting Bahrainis from paying registration fees was sent earlier to the Shura Council. However, this proposal was rejected.

Meanwhile, procedures for real estate registrations have sped up recently.

It has been announced that real estate transactions related



to ownership would not take more than a single working day.

Chairman of the Board of the Real Estate Regulation Authority (RERA) and President of the Survey and Land Registration Bureau (SLRB), Shaikh Salman bin Abdulla Al Khalifa had said that more mechanisms are being implemented to further reduce waiting time.

There were 6,762 transactions in the first quarter of this

year while there were 5,920 transactions last year same time.

Real estate projects in the Seef District and Al Fateh (North Juffair) topped the list of most expensive properties in the Kingdom, according to a recent report.

It also showed that properties in the Capital Governorate are also among the most expensive. This also includes areas like Zinj and Mahooz, especially lands in residential area, as the demand for them is very high.

As for the cheapest lands offered for sale this year, villages of the Western Areas such as Sadad and Demistan topped the list.

Bahrain Real Estate Society President Nasser Al Ahli said that the prices of lands in residential areas had been noticeably soaring last year.

Mr Al Ahli commented that the social housing projects have contributed to the stability of residential lands, pointing out that more investors and developers are interested in investing in such projects.

He had observed this stability has made real estate transactions more stable and profitable.

The expert, however, added the local real estate market is now quiet and that the prices of most of lands in residential areas haven't changed except some of the areas in Muharra and the Capital Governorate.

Trio accused of forcing maid into prostitution

TDI | Manama

In a dramatic turn of events, a housemaid who escaped her sponsor's house and was forced to practise prostitution by a gang of human traffickers, was rescued from the suspects by the same sponsor she escaped from.

This was recently revealed at the High Criminal Court during the trial of the culprits, an Asian trio consisting of one woman and two men, who are now facing several charges that include human trafficking, restraining the freedom of the victim, forcing the victim to practise prostitution, operating a brothel and more.

The court adjourned the case to December 11, 2019, to announce its final verdict.

The court files said the victim contacted the female defendant after seeing a post on social media network that promised a job with a high salary for expat females.

According to the victim's statement, the female defendant persuaded her to escape her sponsor's house, where she worked as a full-time housemaid for BD100 a month, and promised her a better job with higher pay.

The victim believed the female defendant and agreed to her proposal. The victim told prosecutors that she escaped her sponsor's house and met the female defendant, who took her to an apartment in Salmabad area, where she met the two other defendants.

The two men informed the victim that she will be working as a prostitute in return of certain amounts of money. The victim said she was held in captivity when she rejected the defendants' demands.

She also said she was forced to have sexual intercourse with men in return of money that the defendants received.

The victim added that, after a certain period, she was given a mobile phone by one of the male defendants and she immediately called her sponsor and informed him of what has happened to her.

The sponsor notified the security authorities and a special team was immediately formed. The team raided the apartment, arrested the trio and rescued the victim.

Over 250kg of illegally caught shrimp seized

TDI | Manama

More than 250 kg of illegally caught shrimp were seized by the security authorities, it has been announced.

Interior Ministry confirmed in a statement issued on Saturday that the shrimp was caught by trawling, which is a prohibited fishing method in Bahrain for its humongous harm on the marine environment.

The statement read: "The Commander of the Coast Guard announced on Saturday that Coast Guard patrols seized more than a quarter-tonne of shrimps for being caught through trawling, which constitute a prohibited mode of fishing in Bahrain.

"The shrimps were confiscated, and legal action is being taken."

No further information was available.



The seized shrimp.

Drunken driver jailed for accident death

TDI | Manama

The Minor Criminal Court yesterday sentenced a man to three years imprisonment for driving under the influence of drugs and causing the death of a person.

This was confirmed in a statement posted on the official Instagram page of the Public Prosecution by Traffic Prosecution Chief Prosecutor Shaikh Nayef bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, who confirmed that the

court also fined the defendant BD100 for the crime.

In the statement, Shaikh Nayef said the man risked people's lives, adding that the Prosecution had immediately launched a probe into the incident, which resulted in the death of a girl, interrogated the defendant, remanded him and referred him to the court for trial.

The Chief Prosecutor also explained that the concerned court heard the case and convicted the defendant.

Bahrain-South Korea trade volume crosses \$750 million

TDI | Manama

The bilateral trade between Bahrain and South Korea has already reached \$755 million.

This came as the Rotary Club of Manama (RCM) hosted the South Korean Ambassador to Bahrain, Koo Hyunmo, as the chief guest at its weekly meeting.

Ambassador Hyunmo gave a significant speech addressing the bilateral relations in the past, present and future.

He shared thought-provoking stories about the long historical relationships between South Korea and the Kingdom, highlighting the diplomatic ties which commenced between both nations since 1976.

The ambassador cited the official

visits between the two countries including the visit of the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa to South Korea in 2012, the visit of the South Korean Prime Minister and the Korean Health Minister to Bahrain in 2013 and 2018 respectively, the visit of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) President Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa to Korea, and the visit of the Korean Parliamentary delegation to Bahrain this year.

"Bahrain was renowned for its culture of openness and tolerance as well as its economic prosperity, as it is widely known by its nickname the 'Pearl of the Gulf' by Koreans," he said.



Mr Hyunmo was the chief guest at the weekly meeting organised by Rotary Club of Manama.

Mr Hyunmo spoke to the attendees about the strong economic relations between both countries in several fields, such as construction, energy, oil, chemical products, automobiles and heavy equipment. He also underlined the latest fields of cooperation such as health, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and the

environment. "All these bilateral economic agreements will serve as a form of 'highway' on which people of the two countries cooperate and facilitate their business."

The ambassador also encouraged the new Korean generations to consider Bahrain as an ideal destination and a perfect starting point to the Middle

East, quoting that Bahrain has been ranked as one of the best places for expatriates and foreign entrepreneurs to live and do business.

"The walls of Arad Fort, the wind turbines of the World Trade Centre (WTC), the turquoise blue waters of the Durrat Al Bahrain, and the flames from oil rigs far offshore of the tranquil desert, all these images come alive in the heart of Bahrain's open-hearted and generous people. Come visit a new world in Bahrain," Mr Hyunmo added.

RCM members have expressed thanks to the ambassador for the interesting information he shared, at the same time, they expressed their honour to have him as the first Korean ambassador to visit RCM.

Two foreign women face trial for public nudity, prostitution

Inappropriate pictures raised nationwide anger

TDT | Manama

Two foreign women, who are accused of practising prostitution in the Kingdom and sharing naked pictures of themselves online to promote their services here, will stand before the judges tomorrow, the Public Prosecution announced yesterday.

This was unfolded on Thursday when pictures of both women, who are reportedly European nationals, were circulated online. The circulated nude footage were screenshots of one of the women's account on Snapchat; a social media application that the women apparently used to attract custom-

ers to have sexual intercourse with them in return for certain amounts of money.

The footage are believed to be taken on one of Muharra's coasts, as Shaikh Isa bin Salman Causeway in Muharra is visible in the background. The inappropriate pictures raised nationwide anger on local social networks, with many netizens demanding deterrent punishment against the women, considering their act as a blatant violation of the Kingdom's laws, norms and conservative nature.

A few hours later on the same day, the Public Morals Protection Unit in Interior Ministry confirmed the arrest of both women, as well as a Bahraini

The Public Prosecution had completed its investigation into the incident after interrogating all three suspects and confronting them with the pictures, which confirmed that they have committed the offence.

MR AL AJMAN

man who's reportedly also involved in the incident.

The news was announced by Interior Ministry on its offi-

cial page on Twitter, stating: "Commenting on pictures that are violating public morals and was circulated on social media networks, the Public Morals Protection confirms the arrest of two foreign women who committed acts that are violating public morals, as well as a Bahraini man, 28, who was involved in the incident by using his car. The necessary legal measures have been taken."

More information on the incident was unveiled yesterday when the Public Prosecution issued a press statement, in which, Capital Governorate Chief Prosecutor Isa Al Ajman confirmed that the women had posted the pictures online to

"persuade her potential customers to practise prostitution".

Mr Al Ajman clarified that the Public Prosecution had completed its investigation into the incident after interrogating all three suspects and confronting them with the pictures, which confirmed that they have committed the offence.

The Chief said in his statement that the suspects are charged of publicly committing an immoral act, practising prostitution and promoting it, and sharing and possessing pornographic materials, adding that they have been remanded and will stand before the Minor Criminal Court on December 4, 2019.

Derasat attends Beijing Mideast Security Forum

Manama

The Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies "Derasat" signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the China Institute for International Studies (CIIS), as part of its recent participation in the Middle East Security Forum in Beijing.

Katadah Zaman, Executive Director of Derasat, signed the MoU on behalf of the Centre, while CIIS Vice President Rong Ying signed it on behalf of the Chinese Institute.

The three-year MoU involved mutual academic and research cooperation, creating a better understanding between scholars, exchanging publications, exchanging information, participation in mutual events, and exchanging researchers under assigned short and long term academic and research tasks.

The MoU also included joint research programs on issues of mutual concern, and co-organising events on topics of mutual interest.

Mr Zaman addressed the Middle East Security Forum on behalf of Derasat. His speech included an overview of the historic value of the Kingdom of Bahrain's location and civilizational value to the ancient Silk Road 2,000 years ago.

The Kingdom's modern status and accomplishments add to its geographic value to help revive the old heritage that awaits Arab-Sino nurturing.

He assured the Forum that The Kingdom, under the wise leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, is an example of resolve that supports unity through diversity, aiming to support the foundations of democratic practices and the people's participation.

BRCS to take part in Geneva constitutional meetings

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS) has announced its participation in the constitutional meetings of International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which will take place from December 2-10 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Constitutional meetings include the General Assembly of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, followed by meetings of the International Conference and the participation of govern-

ment bodies as well as delegations of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

BRCS will also participate in the meeting of the National Red Crescent Societies in the GCC, in order to co-ordinate visions on the main topics of the international meeting, in addition to participating in an exhibition organised by these societies on the sidelines of the meetings.

The Acting Secretary-General of the Bahrain Red Crescent Society-Director General of the Society, Mubarak Al Mubarak, heads the delegation of the So-



Mr Al Hadi

ciety to these meetings, with the participation of the Board

Member of the Society, Dr Fawzi Amin.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr Mubarak Al Hadi stressed the importance of the periodic and effective Bahraini participation in these international meetings that discuss developments of relief and humanitarian work in the world, and aim to unify international visions towards the development of the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Mr Al Hadi explained that BRCS delegation is participat-

ing in these meetings in order to highlight the humanitarian role of the Kingdom of Bahrain inside and outside Bahrain, and the relief support provided by the Kingdom of Bahrain in places of disasters, conflicts, displacement and asylum.

Dr Amin need to form a unified Arab vision on what will be discussed on the agenda of constitutional meetings.

He also stressed the need to form a unified Arab vision on topics that will be discussed on the agenda of constitutional meetings.

Al Noor students excel in Cambridge AS and A level Exams

TDT | Manama

The Al Noor International School has once again fulfilled its promise to parents and extended its astonishing contribution to the academic excellence in the Kingdom of Bahrain by providing quality education in line with achieving the vision and mission of the School, and the Economic Vision 2030 of the Kingdom of Bahrain that aims at achieving the highest level of education for the citizens and residents of Bahrain.

In the Cambridge AS level Examinations 2019, the students of Al Noor International School demonstrated exceptional performance, with 126A and 76B grades. In A level, the performance of students is very high with 22A*, 49A and 85B grades. In a significant number of AS and



Naomi Barretto, Alesa Jobi Thaliath, Hasan Redha Mohammed Hasan Abdulaziz Aladraj, Jannat Akram Tanveer Mohammed Ekram, and Kottagodage Oshini Aishwarya Vidyamani Perera.

In AS Level 22 students topped achieving straight A grades in all the three subjects. They were Abdul Rafay Irfan, Farooq Mohamed Ameen, Muhammad Ra-

fae Gill, Riad Shadi Barakat, Saurav Hazra, Javeria Sohail Ahmed Khan, Maryam Abdulrahman Alshaikh, Mostafa Hany Eltahawy, Puteri Arisya Diana Binti Aznir, Ali Emad Mohammed Ghuloom, Muneera Basem Almahmeed, Nazmeen Fatima, Zainab Sayed Husain Mohamed, Maher Ali Farooq Alqattan, Abd Elrahman Mohamad Fathy Sharaf, Hannah

Ruth Gunasinghe, Hussain Talib Buhusayyen, Nancy Sayed Abdulmoniem Tantawy, Onosha Fatima, Wijeratne Mohandiramge Ushan Imasha Fernando, Youssef Mohamed Osman Ezzat and Maxine Zabat Salian

The School Chairman, Mr Ali Hasan, congratulated the students on their accomplishments and wished them success in their

future endeavours. He thanked the Head Teachers, Coordinators and teachers of the school for the time and energy they devoted to the education of the students.

Dr Muhammad Mashood the school Director congratulated the students for their hard work and achievement. These results demonstrate the positive impact that our focus on academic man-

agement and students' performance has had. We have a clear trend of improvement and look forward to seeing this continue in the future. The Principal, Mr Amin Mohammed Hulaiwah, praised the outstanding results obtained by the AS and A Level students and mentioned the school's achievements during the course of the past academic year.

world

Japan to buy \$146 million island for US military drills



The US provides security for Japan

Tokyo

Japan said yesterday it had agreed to buy an uninhabited island off its southwest coast for \$146 million, eyeing it for US military drills.

Tokyo and Washington agreed in 2011 to relocate a training site for US fighter jets to Mageshima island, around 30 kilometres off the southwestern Japanese coast.

Japan's chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga said an agreement to purchase Mageshima was reached on Friday "after discussions between the defence ministry and the developer who owns the majority of the island".

American flight training operations are currently conducted at Iwo Jima, some 1,200 kilometres (750 miles) south of Tokyo.

Washington had requested

a move, saying Iwo Jima -- a key World War II battlefield -- was too far away from an American military base in the western Japanese city of Iwakuni, where their fighters are stationed.

Suga said a facility would be built on the island for landing practice "at an early date", adding that he could not reveal further details as the acquisition was not complete.

Japan's military has long been restricted to self-defence and the country relies heavily on the US under a bilateral security alliance.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly insisted that Japan and other US allies should contribute more to the costs of their own defence.

Some residents who live on islands close to Mageshima have said they are concerned about the noise of a potential flight training base.

Choose hope or climate surrender, says UN chief



Guterres worked through a long list of climate data to reinforce his message

Madrid

Confronted with a climate crisis threatening civilisation itself, humanity must choose between hope and surrender, UN chief Antonio Guterres told the opening plenary of the UN COP25 climate conference Tuesday.

"One is the path of surrender, where we have sleepwalked past the point of no return, jeopardising the health and safety of everyone on this planet," Guterres said.

"Do we really want to be remembered as the generation that buried its head in the sand, that fiddled while the planet burned?"

In an impassioned appeal, the UN chief worked through a long list of worrying signs, including new figures released Tuesday by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

The last five years have been

the hottest ever recorded, the WMO said, and the concentration of planet warming CO2 in the atmosphere has reached levels not seen in three to five million years.

"The last time there was a comparable concentration," Guterres said, "the temperature was two to three degrees Celsius warmer, and sea levels were 10 to 20 metres higher than today."

The 2015 Paris Agreement calls for capping global warming at "well under" 2C, and 1.5C if possible.

A major UN science report reset the threshold for a climate-safe world from 2C to 1.5C.

"Permafrost in the Arctic is thawing 70 years ahead of projections," Guterres continued. "Antarctica is melting three times as fast as a decade ago. Ocean levels are rising quicker than expected."

"More than two-thirds of the world's megacities are located by the sea."

More than 150 million people will find themselves in coastal flood zones by 2050, according to recent research.

To prevent temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees, the global economy must be carbon neutral by mid-century, a landmark UN report said last year.

Evacuations, airport closure as Typhoon Kammuri nears Philippines

AFP | Manila

Typhoon Kammuri barreled towards the Philippines yesterday, pushing tens of thousands of people into evacuation centres and prompting authorities to order a temporary closure of Manila's international airport as a safety precaution.

Kammuri was expected to make landfall late Monday or early Tuesday and then pass to the south of the capital, which is home to some 13 million people and is hosting thousands of athletes for the regional Southeast Asian Games.

Airport officials said they made the call based on the potency of the storm, which was forecast to come ashore with intense rains and sustained winds of up to 165 kilometres (100 miles) per hour as well as gusts of up to 230 kilometres per hour, forecasters said.

"Based on our estimate, it will be closed from 11 am (0300 GMT) to 11 pm tomorrow, December 3," said Ed Monreal, general manager of Manila's airport authority.

Nearly 70,000 people had already fled their homes in the Bicol region, disaster officials said, which is where the typhoon is expected to strike first.

However, some residents opted to stay put even as the storm's power began to hit.

"The wind is howling. Roofs



The storm is on track to then pass close to Manila, which is home to some 13 million people and the site for many of the SEA Games events

Typhoon Kammuri



are being torn off and I saw one roof flying," local Gladys Castillo Vidal told AFP.

"We decided to stay because our house is a two-storey made of concrete... Hopefully it can withstand the storm."

The weather bureau also warned of rain-induced landslides and possible storm surges of up to three metres (10 feet) which could hit coastal areas in the nation's east.

The Philippines is hit by an average of 20 storms and typhoons each year, killing hundreds and putting people in disaster-prone areas in a state of constant poverty.

The country's deadliest cyclone on record was Super Typhoon Haiyan, which left more than 7,300 people dead or missing in 2013.

Games plagued by build-up woes

Kammuri already snarled some plans for the SEA Games, which opened Saturday for thousands of athletes from the region and is set to run through

to December 11 in and around Manila.

Windsurfing was halted as a precaution and triathlon events were held earlier than scheduled.

Ramon Suzara, the chief operating officer of the organising committee, said contingency plans were in place for bad weather, but the duration of the Games would not be extended.

"Everything is set," Suzara told reporters. "For contingency, all venues, all competition managers, technical delegates are ready."

The storm is the latest trouble for the Games, which saw a series of transport hiccups and a rush of last-minute construction ahead of the opening.

This year's Games in Clark, Manila and Subic are already particularly complex, with a record 56 sports across dozens of venues that are in some cases hours apart by car.

Around 8,750 athletes and team officials are expected at this year's 30th edition -- the biggest ever -- along with another 12,000 volunteers. Organisers hope more than 500 million viewers will tune in on TV by the end of the competition on December 11.

The Philippines have made a strong start to the Games, rising to the top of the medal table with over 70 in total, ahead of Vietnam in second place and Malaysia in third.



Tender Invitation

Seq.	Tender Title	Tender No.	Initial Bond (Refundable)	Tender Document Fee	Last date of accepting bids		
					Day	Date	Time
1	Purchasing of Infant Kit	19-10-2052-BTB	BD 2500	BD 100	Wednesday	25/12/2019	13:30

NOTE: Tender documents can be purchased online using e-Tendering system starting on 3rd December 2019

- Tenderers who are eligible to supply/provide the goods/ services/ works specified above are kindly requested to purchase the tender document online through the e-Tendering portal <http://www.tenderboard.gov.bh> (for assistance please contact the Tender Board help desk on Tel: +973 17566617).
- An Initial Bond should be enclosed for the amount specified above or at a rate of 1% of the quotation value whichever of the amount is lesser, provided that no initial bond's value shall be less than BD 100/- . Ensure that the Initial bond is in a form of Certified Cheque, Cash, Bank Guarantee or Insurance Policy, valid for the duration specified in the tender documents.
- Quotation should be deposited in the tender box provided at the Tender Submission Office, Tender Board Arcapita Building 551, Ground Floor Road 4612, Block 346 Bahrain Bay Manama, Bahrain, before 1:30 After Noon on the tender closing date.
- All tenders/Auction are in compliance with the government tendering & purchasing regulations issued in Decrees Nos. 36 & 37 of 2002 and its executive regulations.
- The following conditions should be complied with:
 - Enclose a copy of the Commercial Registration Certificate valid for the current year, and related to the subject tender.
 - Submit the quotations on Form No. TB O2 - tender submission.
 - Enclose a copy of Certificate of Compliance with the Employment Percentage for Bahraini Manpower issued by Ministry of Labour.
 - Ensure to stamp with the official seal on all the original documents and copies there-of, which form part of the offer.
- This announcement is to be read as part of the Tender Documents.
- All public tenders related to Gulf Air Company are published on the Tender Board website: <http://www.tenderboard.gov.bh>
- For any enquiry on the Tender Documents, please contact procurement and logistics department on Telephone: +973 17338101/+973 17338790/+973 17338545, Fax : +973 17327999

Important Note: All participants are invited to attend the opening of the tender at at the Tender Submission Office, Ground Floor, Tender Board Office at Al Arcapita Building on the next day of the closing date.

Aegean volunteers battle to turn plastic waste tide

Zakynthos | Greece

Dressed in her protective wetsuit and scuba gear, Antigone Kouteri jumps into the murky waters of Zakynthos harbour in search of plastics -- and promptly snags her arm on a submerged object.

"It was a tyre," offers her patrol mate Efthymis, coming up with a discarded beer bottle. "My treat!" he jibes.

The Ionian island of Zakynthos is one of Greece's most pristine travel destinations, renowned for its azure waters and fabulous beaches, an environment clean enough to be a major Mediterranean nesting ground sought out by loggerhead sea turtles.

But even here, plastic pollution poses a grave threat to wildlife.

Kouteri is one of nearly a dozen volunteers from Aegean Rebreath, a Greek organisation formed in 2017 to protect Aegean biodiversity from waste.

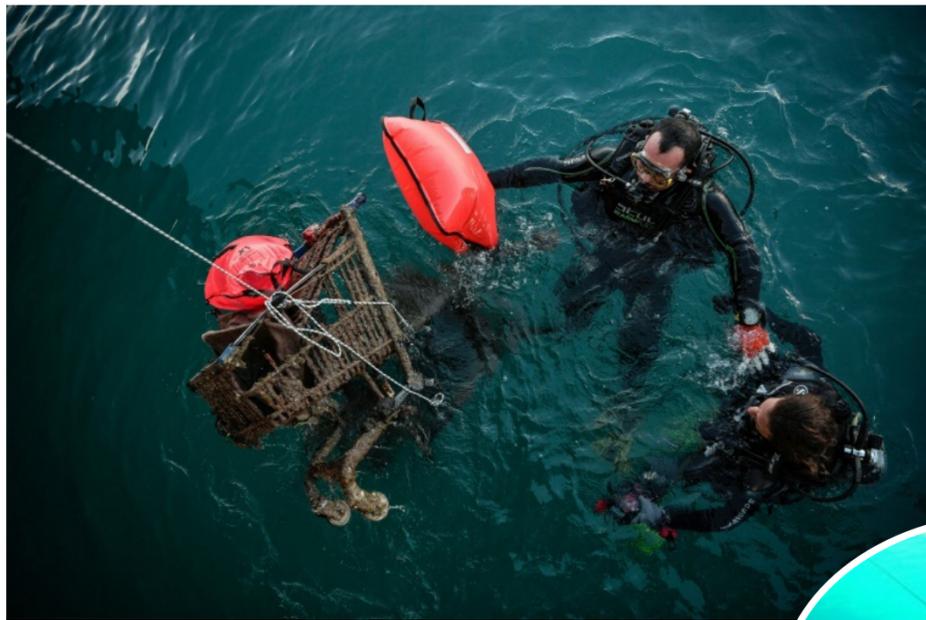
Within three hours, the team has collected four tyres, two shopping carts, a street lamp, metal boxes, plastic bags, dozens of plastic bottles and several kilometres of fishing line.

"Marine litter is a global issue, so it is (present) in Greece. More than 70 percent of marine litter is plastic in Greece," says Katerina Tsagari, a biologist at the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research near Athens.

Tsagari says her team has found litter, most of it plastic, in about 75 percent of loggerhead sea turtles tested.

Overall, they have found plastic ingestion in between 20 and 45 percent of the species tested, which include fish and mussels.

With a coastline of some 14,000 kilometres (8,500 miles), one of the longest in the south-eastern Mediterranean, Greece



Aegean Rebreath, a Greek organisation formed in 2017 to protect Aegean biodiversity from waste

attracts tens of millions of tourists every year.

It's a regional problem. The Mediterranean, a partly closed sea, accumulates 570,000 tonnes of plastic annually from surrounding countries, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

WWF has reported that Greece produces 700,000 tonnes of plastic per year, or 68 kilos per capita. Out of that, 11,500 tonnes end up in the sea, it said.

'Junkyard' beneath the waves

"There is a junkyard beneath the blue waters," says Violetta Walczyk, a Greek-Polish lawyer active with Aegean Rebreath.

On the Cycladic island of Andros, mounds of waste from a 2011 hilltop landfill collapse are still to be found in the sea below.

In its two years of operation, Aegean Rebreath has amassed 9,000 plastic water bottles, 3,6 tonnes of fishing net and 289

tyres.

The government readily admits that nearly 40 tonnes of plastic waste end up in Greek seas every day.

It recently started a campaign to phase out single-use plastics such as cups and straws -- no small feat in a country with a huge coffee-to-go market.

Speaking last month, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that marine protection was a "key priority" for a country so dependent on tourism.

Greece continues to pay millions of euros in fines to the European Commission concerning the operation of illegal landfills.

But recycling efforts are still basic. Greece last year eliminated free supermarket bags, long after other European countries.

"Recycling in Greece is a joke," snorts George Sarelakos, the co-founder of Aegean Rebreath. "Every municipality has its

own policy, there is no central strategy," he told AFP.

George Triantafyllou, the HCMR's head of research, says the institute is coordinating a European project, Claim, across 13 EU countries in addition to Tunisia and Lebanon to eliminate microplastics.

The project includes developing photocatalytic technology to accelerate the degradation of microplastics in seas and rivers, he notes.

The HCMR has also helped develop a floating litter-collection barrier that is currently deployed at the mouth of Kifissos river in Athens.

"I believe everybody should change habits. We don't have to use plastics in our everyday life," says George Triantaphyllidis.



WWF has reported that Greece produces 700,000 tonnes of plastic per year, of which 11,500 tonnes end up in the sea



A newlywed couple looks at the rubbish collected from the sea by volunteers from Aegean Rebreath

China slaps sanctions on US over Hong Kong unrest

AFP | Beijing

China suspended US warship visits and sanctioned American NGOs yesterday in retaliation for the passage of a bill backing pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong.

The financial hub has been rocked by nearly six months of increasingly violent unrest demanding greater autonomy, which Beijing has frequently blamed on foreign influence.

Last week US President Donald Trump signed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which requires the president to annually review the city's favourable trade status and threatens to revoke it if the semi-autonomous territory's freedoms are quashed.

The move came as the world's two biggest economies have been striving to finalise a "phase one" deal in their protracted trade war.

"In response to the unreasonable behaviour of the US side, the Chinese government has decided to suspend reviewing the applications for US warships to go to Hong Kong for (rest and) recuperation as of today," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a regular press briefing.

China had already denied requests for two US Navy ships to dock in Hong Kong in August,



Hong Kong has been rocked by nearly six months of increasingly violent unrest demanding greater autonomy, which Beijing has frequently blamed on foreign influence



Protesters in Hong Kong are pushing for greater democratic freedoms and police accountability, but the city's pro-Beijing leadership has refused any major political concessions

without specifying a reason why.

"Operationally, from a military point of view, it doesn't really make a difference for the US, as they can use many naval bases in the region," Michael Raska, a security researcher at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, said.

However, it "sends a signal that US-China tensions will continue to deepen," Raska said.

The last US navy ship to visit Hong Kong was the USS Blue Ridge in April.

J. Michael Cole, a Taipei-based senior fellow with the Global Taiwan Institute, said the move was "mostly symbolic" but yet another sign of the "tit-for-tat escalation which is poisoning the bilateral relationship."

An editorial from government mouthpiece *Global Times* said Beijing could take further measures if the US "continues to escalate the provocation in Hong Kong." "The measures announced on Monday are only the lightest," it said.

Behaving 'badly'

Hua said they would also apply sanctions to a number of US-based NGOs, although failed to give any specifics over the form the measures would take.

Sanctions will apply to NGOs that had acted "badly" over the recent unrest in Hong Kong, she said, including the Nation-

al Endowment for Democracy, Human Rights Watch and Freedom House. There was "already a large amount of facts and evidence that make it clear that these non-governmental organisations support anti-China" forces and "incite separatist activities for Hong Kong independence", Hua said.

She accused them of having "great responsibility for the chaotic situation in Hong Kong".

Human Rights Watch said it had received "no communications from the Chinese government" about what the sanctions mean.

"Rather than target an organisation that seeks to defend the rights of the people of Hong Kong, the Chinese government should respect those rights," said Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, in a statement.

Protesters in Hong Kong are pushing for greater democratic freedoms and police accountability, but the city's pro-Beijing leadership has refused any major political concessions.

The increasingly violent rallies have hammered the retail and tourism sectors, with mainland Chinese visitors abandoning the city in droves.

The city's finance chief warned Monday that Hong Kong is set to record its first budget deficit in 15 years.

German rescue ship asks Italy to take in migrants



The rescue ship Alan Kurdi is named after the Syrian child whose drowning in the Mediterranean in 2015 brought global attention

Berlin

A German charity yesterday said its rescue ship was heading to Italian shores with 69 migrants on board, hoping they will be allowed to disembark.

The ship, the Alan Kurdi, is named after the Syrian child whose drowning in the Mediterranean in 2015 brought global attention to the migrant crisis.

The Sea-Eye charity said the ship had been unable to contact the Maltese coast guard for help and was therefore now directed towards Italy.

"We are horrified at the irresponsible behaviour of European sea rescue services," Sea-Eye spokesman Julian Pahlke said, saying they had fallen short of their "duty to co-ordinate search and rescue".

France honours soldiers killed in Mali disaster

● The soldiers died when two helicopters collided last Monday

● It was the biggest single-day loss for the French military in nearly four decades

AFP | Paris

Hundreds of people lined avenues in Paris yesterday to honour 13 soldiers killed while battling jihadist insurgents in Mali, ahead of a national ceremony to mourn a disaster that has prompted soul-searching over the costs of the over five-year campaign in West Africa.

Sporadic applause punctuated sombre silence as a motorcade bearing the coffins crossed the Alexandre III bridge toward the Invalides military hospital and museum.

The soldiers died when two helicopters collided last Monday while pursuing jihadists in northern Mali where militant violence has soared in recent months.

It was the biggest single-day loss for the French military in nearly four decades and raised fresh questions about the effectiveness of France's 4,500-member Barkhane operation in Mali



Soldiers saluted as the funeral convoy carrying 13 French soldiers killed in Mali crossed the Alexandre III bridge in Paris on Monday, ahead of a commemoration at the Invalides military hospital

and four other countries in the Sahel.

Margot Louvet, 23, came from Gap in southwest France to watch the procession, wearing a T-shirt with the official portrait of one of the soldiers killed, her friend Antoine Serre, 22.

"He was a pearl, the kindest and most generous," she said. "Being here is a way to mourn him, and realise that he won't be coming back."

President Emmanuel Macron

will lead the commemoration, which begins at 3:00 pm (1400 GMT) and bestow the Legion d'Honneur on the fallen soldiers.

Some 2,500 people are expected to attend, and the ceremony will also be broadcast on a giant screen set up outside the Invalides.

The French forces in Mali are tasked with training local security forces to take on the jihadists, but so far these remain woefully unprepared despite years

of pledges of more international funding and equipment.

Forty-one French soldiers have now died in the Sahel over the past six years.

Cartoon controversy

France's intervention began in 2013, when insurgents swept into Mali's north and rapidly advanced before being pushed back. But despite France's

presence the jihadists have regrouped to carry out deadly attacks and violence has spread to neighbouring countries.

Macron said the government would begin a thorough review of Barkhane in the wake of the helicopter accident, vowing that "all options are on the table".

He also reiterated his call for EU allies to step up their participation in the West Africa operation after years of failing to secure significant support.

Only Britain has contributed helicopters and security personnel, while the US

lished Monday, showed that 58 percent of respondents approve the Sahel operation, a level hardly changed from a previous poll in March 2013.

But controversy flared over the weekend after the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo published a series of cartoons online associating the 13 soldiers' deaths with the army's recent recruitment campaign.

In one drawing, Macron stands before a coffin in front of the slogan: "I joined the ranks to stand out from the crowd."

The French army's chief of staff, General Thierry Burkhard, expressed his "indignation" at the cartoons.

In an open letter to Charlie Hebdo's editor, Laurent "Riss" Sourisseau, he accused the magazine of having sullied the period of mourning for the bereaved families.

Sourisseau defended on Sunday the magazine's "satirical spirit", while acknowledging the importance of the work of the French army and the soldiers' sacrifice.

But Sourisseau, who was wounded when jihadist attackers massacred 12 people in an attack at the magazine's offices in January 2015, declined Burkhard's invitation to attend the Invalides ceremony.

"We know that their mission is difficult and that they are dealing with merciless enemies," he wrote in a response to Burkhard.



provides intelligence on jihadist movements across an area the size of Western Europe.

So far, only the far-left France Unbowed party has openly called for the Barkhane troops to be brought home.

An Ifop poll for the Lettre de l'Expansion newsletter, pub-

US House panel to meet on Trump impeachment charges

AFP | Washington

A Congressional panel will begin drawing up charges against President Donald Trump on Wednesday as the likelihood grows of his becoming only the third US leader ever impeached.

However, Trump's attorney signaled on Sunday night that the White House won't send anyone to the hearings, at least not right away.

"We cannot fairly be expected to participate in a hearing while the witnesses are yet to be named and while it remains unclear whether the Judiciary Committee will afford the President a fair process through additional hearings," White House counsel Pat Cipollone wrote in a letter to Jerry Nadler, the Democratic chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

But Cipollone also did not rule out White House participation in the hearings entirely, instead requesting further details from Nadler on how the inquiry will be conducted and saying he will give him an answer by next Friday.

Trump has been unable to quash allegations in the House of Representatives investigation that he illegally sought help from Ukraine to obtain dirt on his domestic political rivals, including possible 2020 challenger Joe Biden.

Nadler's committee meets on Wednesday to begin determining whether the evidence compiled in the investigative phase of the process meets the constitutional impeachment standard of "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors."

The committee is expected to consider at least four counts, or articles of impeachment, including abuse of power, bribery, contempt of Congress and ob-



US President Donald Trump steps off Air Force One upon arrival in West Palm Beach, Florida, in November 2019



We cannot fairly be expected to participate in a hearing while the witnesses are yet to be named and while it remains unclear whether the Judiciary Committee will afford the President a fair process through additional hearings," White House counsel Pat Cipollone

IMRAN KHAN,
PRIME MINISTER

struction of justice.

"The president has accepted or enlisted foreign nations to interfere in our upcoming elections," said House impeachment leader Adam Schiff, a Democrat, in a November 25 statement.

"This is an urgent matter that cannot wait if we are to protect the nation's security and the integrity of our elections."

Trump and Republicans continue to brand the accusations and process as a political "witch hunt."

"This is a complete American waste of time," said Doug Collins, who as the leading Republican on the Judiciary Committee will lead that party's counterattack. He appeared on "Fox News Sunday."

Impeachment vote by year-end

The inquiry could go fast -- Democrats reportedly want to have the entire House vote on impeachment before the end of the year.

They are confident that they have strong evidence that Trump committed impeachable offenses, despite the White House blocking the testimony of top presidential aides and refusing to hand over subpoenaed documents.

That refusal has angered Democrats.

"We're not going to play games with them," Val Demings, a Democratic member of the Judiciary Committee, told ABC on Sunday. "They need to respond to the request for documents and obey those lawful subpoenas."

Trump is alleged to have withheld military aid for Ukraine -- desperately sought by Kiev amid the ongoing border conflict against pro-Russian separatists -- as well as a desired high-profile summit with President Volodymyr Zelensky.

In exchange, Trump wanted Kiev to open investigations into Biden and a widely discredited theory that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 US elections on Democrats' behalf.

If the articles of impeachment are passed by the Democratic-controlled House as expected, Trump would go on trial in January in the Senate for removal from office.

Given Republican control of that chamber and the high hurdle of a two-thirds majority needed to convict, the president would very likely be cleared.

Still, Democrats see the process as important in reinforcing the rule of law and pushing back against a powerful president seen as showing little respect for Congress's powers.

Trump won't take part

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler had last week invited Trump and his attorneys to take part in the first hearing on Wednesday, an invitation which Cipollone declined.

"It is too late to cure the profound procedural deficiencies that have tainted this entire inquiry," Cipollone wrote in reply.

"Nevertheless, if you are serious about conducting a fair process going forward, and in order to protect the rights and privileges of the President, we may consider participating in future Judiciary Committee proceedings if you afford the Administration the ability to do so meaningfully," he added.

But Nadler has said that Trump's ability to participate could depend on whether he continues to refuse to make witnesses and documents available.

One Republican on the committee, Tom McClintock, told Fox that he believed top Trump aides "absolutely" should testify.

Democrats want to hear from former national security adviser John Bolton, acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. All three should have direct knowledge of Trump's actions toward Ukraine.

So far they have refused to testify, claiming "absolute immunity" as confidants of the president.

Collins tried to turn the tables on Democrats, saying Republicans want Schiff, the House impeachment manager, to tes-



House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler, a longtime political nemesis of President Donald Trump, will lead the process to draw up articles of impeachment against him

tify. "If he chooses not to," he added, "then I really question his veracity."

Led by Nadler, Trump's longtime nemesis, the televised hearings -- set to open at 10:00 am (1500 GMT) Wednesday -- are expected to be fiery.

With national elections less than one year away, Democrats need to convince Americans that impeaching Trump is justified and necessary.

Presidential candidate Amy Klobuchar, appearing Sunday on NBC, described the Ukraine affair in dramatic terms as "a global Watergate" -- going beyond the scope of the scandal that brought down President Richard Nixon.

Republicans, for their part, aim to show the exercise as a political attack on Trump.

"He did nothing improper," Collins said. "There is nothing here that the president did wrong."

Iran's proxies in Iraq, Lebanon signing own death warrants

Khamenei is desperate for rapid and decisive solutions because prolonged instability in Lebanon and Iraq weakens his ability to hold sway



BARIA ALAMUDDIN

With 400 already dead, the killings in Iraq escalated horrifically at the weekend following the torching of Iran's consulate in the holy city of Najaf. About 70 protesters were gunned down in just 48 hours, largely at the hands of unaccountable Tehran-backed paramilitaries. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's representative incited Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi militants to "pursue" and "uproot" those responsible for the consulate fire.

Tehran's crackdown strategies in Lebanon, Iraq and upon its own streets increasingly reek of desperation. Playing for time and making cosmetic political changes have failed. Attempts to terrorize and crush the demonstrations have simply brought out thousands more furious and defiant protesters. When Hezbollah personnel taunted protesters with their yellow flags and sectarian slogans, citizens defiantly chanted back: "This is Lebanon, not Iran," and "Hezbollah is a terrorist." Accusations of being "Zionist stooges" or failing to support the "axis of resistance" used to intimidate Hezbollah's critics into silence. Now such rhetoric is incessantly ridiculed in the protest camps.

At recent international conferences, regime-connected Iranian academics have floated proposals for converting Hezbollah into a

purely political entity. Hezbollah is Tehran's crown jewel in terms of its overseas sedition. The fact this is even being mooted suggests a degree of panic within the regime due to the existential threat that current developments pose.

Having used an iron fist against Iranian protesters, Khamenei believes that proxies in Iraq and Lebanon haven't been sufficiently aggressive. On Nov 21, Khamenei summoned to Tehran Iraqi officials, including paramilitary leaders Falih Al-Fayyadh and Hadi Al-Amiri, and reportedly demanded "extreme levels of violence" to crush protests, even if the death toll extended into the thousands. "Iran will not give up Iraq and will not allow its influence to be reduced," Khamenei was quoted as saying.

The Quds Force's Qassem Soleimani micromanaged the crackdown. Most deaths in Iraq are attributable to his paramilitary allies. According to eyewitness accounts, Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq personnel in Shiite-majority towns like Nasiriyah and Amarah opened fire on protesters from the roofs of their own offices, as well as driving around shooting indiscriminately at citizens. There have been intensifying campaigns of abductions by paramilitaries, with instances of torture reported.

In the wake of the Najaf consulate incident, proxy leaders Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis (Kata'ib Hezbollah) and Qais Al-Khazali (Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq) called for deploying their forces in the holy cities, claiming — improbably — that protesters were plotting to attack their outspoken defender



Medical crew carry a wounded man during ongoing anti-government protests in Najaf.

Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani. Indeed it was Al-Sistani's call for Iraq's leaders to "reconsider their choices" that is credited with forcing Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi's resignation. Tehran has pursued various pretexts for beefing up its presence in Iraq's holy cities, having recently seen its proposal to send 20,000 Iranian security personnel to "protect pilgrims" rebuffed.

Abdul Mahdi's resignation was jubilantly celebrated by demonstrators, but it changes nothing. The prime minister has been threatening to resign for weeks and was only prevented

by the interventions of Soleimani, Al-Amiri and Al-Muhandis. Just as in Lebanon, constituting a new government could take months and will simply promote a new combination of the same corrupt, discredited faces. Protesters' goals can only be achieved when the entire Tehran-sponsored sectarian system is razed to the ground.

Khamenei is desperate for rapid and decisive solutions because prolonged instability in Lebanon and Iraq weakens his ability to hold sway, while risking further contagion of unrest to Iranian cities. As well as harming

Two nations separated by a common

GAVIN ESLER

The playwright George Bernard Shaw once noted that Britain and the US are "two nations separated by a common language". It is certainly true that despite the affection most Britons feel for the US — an affection that, after nearly a decade living in Washington, I certainly shared — there are some things about America we just do not understand. Take US President Donald Trump, for example. Mr Trump provides Britain with something our citizens do enjoy — a bit of entertainment, plus the pleasure of feeling superior to our American cousins. This patronising tendency has long roots. In the 1950s, then British prime minister Harold MacMillan, a man with an American mother, repeatedly suggested that "these Americans represent the new Roman empire and we Britons, like the Greeks of old, must teach them how to make it go". The idea that British brains guide American decisions might be comforting to sections of the British public but it is largely nonsense.

During the presidency of Ronald Reagan, Britain's then prime minister Margaret Thatcher did become a trusted friend and adviser. But British newspapers, including those considered pro-American,

bought into another patronising idea that Reagan was "just an actor", a "cowboy", playing out the role of president of the US. The truth was much more complicated.

When I prepared Reagan's obituary for the BBC and reported on his funeral, I was astonished at how far — even among bitter opponents — he was seen as essentially a decent man whose words touched the hearts of the American people. For Mrs Thatcher, he was a kindred spirit offering a clear, if simple, political vision. Big government was bad. Communism was wicked. And that led to clear but simple policies. Taxes should be low, government spending limited and defence spending high.

It is worth recalling this complex historical background as Britain welcomes — if that is the correct word — Reagan's successor to the White House, Mr Trump. He is in London for the Nato summit and a state banquet with Queen Elizabeth II. But in Britain, Mr Trump appears to be the most unpopular US president ever.

Facing impeachment at home, he arrives in Britain in the middle of an extremely bitter general election campaign, having already controversially interfered in domestic British politics. He called the Conservative prime minister Boris Johnson a good man and



US President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson at the UN headquarters in New York.

Britain's Trump, as if he sees Mr Johnson as a kind of mini-me. He also urged Mr Johnson to work with the Brexit party of Nigel Farage to ensure Britain leaves the European Union. Mr John-

son's party has been ahead in the opinion polls for weeks, suggesting he could win a comfortable parliamentary majority. So what could go wrong? Advisers fear their American guest enthusias-

tically endorsing Mr Johnson and suggesting a future US-UK trade deal could involve Britain opening up its National Health Service to US companies, or holding its supermarkets to American food

US President Donald Trump's visit to the UK is a reminder of the two nations' complex historical ties

1910

Modern neon lighting is first demonstrated by Georges Claude at the **Paris Motor Show**.

1919

After nearly 20 years of planning and construction, including two collapses causing 89 deaths, the **Quebec Bridge** opens to traffic.

1920

Following more than a month of **Turkish-Armenian War**, the Turkish dictated Treaty of Alexandropol is concluded.



1929

President Herbert Hoover delivers his first State of the Union message to Congress. It was presented in the form of a written message rather than a speech.



Khamenei is desperate for rapid and decisive solutions because prolonged instability in Lebanon and Iraq weakens his ability to hold sway, while risking further contagion of unrest to Iranian cities.

Hassan Nasrallah fears that killing protesters will further unite Lebanon against Hezbollah. Nevertheless, just as Khamenei arm-twisted Nasrallah into wading into the Syrian conflict, if Hezbollah's paymasters demand blood, then the streets of Beirut will obediently run red.

The fatigued response from Western leaders has encouraged Iran's allies that they can repress citizens with impunity. If we are to avoid an exponentially higher death toll, then diplomats must forcefully stipulate that there will be meaningful consequences (UN measures, sanctions, war crimes investigations, diplomatic action, etc.) if the aspirations of demonstrators are ignored and the authorities continue down the path of repression.

Although Khamenei is trying to peddle the model of brutal crackdowns as a magic solution to domestic unrest, protests inside Iran persist and may become further inflamed. Iranian protesters have been brutally crushed over and over again in recent years, yet

still they courageously come out against their oppressors.

In the late 1970s, the shah of Iran desperately oscillated between confused attempts to appease Iranian demonstrators and botched crackdowns, which only succeeded in uniting the entirety of Iran against him. The result was the 1979 revolution, in which Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came out on top and ruthlessly crushed all other segments of the opposition.

The protests in Iraq and Lebanon today are likewise on the brink of passing the point of no return. Through their escalating reliance on brutal and excessive force, Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi and Hezbollah are tantalizingly close to signing their own death warrants, as they continue to undermine any remaining popular legitimacy among their grassroots supporters.

If this is indeed the beginning of the end for Iranian hegemony in Iraq and Lebanon, then we still have a long and bloody road ahead of us. Khamenei, Nasrallah and Al-Amiri are far from admitting defeat. Tehran has invested billions in its regional dominance strategy and won't simply walk away. Their knee-jerk response to recent setbacks may be to ramp up the killing. This will reap a horrific toll, yet such atrocities will ultimately only serve to reinforce the popular determination to eliminate all manifestations of Iranian influence — permanently.

(Baria Alamuddin is an award-winning journalist and broadcaster in the Middle East and the UK. She is editor of the Media Services Syndicate and has interviewed numerous heads of state.)

ordinary Lebanese, the imminent collapse of the banking system would also impact Iran and Hezbollah, which have systematically laundered and hoarded funds via these channels. Tehran furthermore fears that, just as happened in 1982, Israel would exploit Lebanese civil conflict to try and eradicate the "resistance" once and for all.

Hezbollah can only hold sway in Lebanon via the collaboration of Christian leaders like President Michel Aoun and Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, whose support within their communities is rapidly draining away.

Common language



The US trade representative body that will negotiate any future US-UK trade deal has held open hearings, in which US lobby groups, including pharmaceuticals, meat production, health care and others, have stated how they would like to claim a big slice of the British market.

calcs, meat production, health care and others, have stated how they would like to claim a big slice of the British market. The opposition Labour party claims secret discussions show the health service is "up for sale" while Mr Johnson responds it is not. But the prime minister's record of telling the truth is very patchy.

Moreover, in the past, Mr Trump and his supporters have been scathing about what they see as Britain's "socialist" health care. It is impossible to overstate how sensitive this is. Few British people would care if American or other foreign owners bought British football clubs. Nor would many care if foreign owners bought

British supermarkets or manufacturers or even chocolate makers such as Cadburys. But any British politician advocating American-style health care is committing political suicide. Healthcare costs are the biggest cause of personal bankruptcy in the US and despite the underfunding of the National Health Service, it retains the affection, respect and trust of British people like no other major British institution. Any blundering intervention by Mr Trump could cause a massive political backlash.

And so it looks as though Mr Johnson will endure various formalities with Mr Trump and avoid anything too friendly. They will agree that other European nations should spend more money on defence and Mr Trump will be briefed by his staff not to run off script and say what he really thinks about Britain and Brexit. But if Mr Johnson finds sticking to the truth sometimes tricky, Mr Trump finds sticking to the script almost impossible. When Macmillan talked of Britain playing Greece to America's Rome, he meant the great Rome of Augustus Caesar. If British people see Mr Trump in Roman terms, it is more like the Rome of Caligula, the eccentric who once promoted his horse to the post of consul. It will be an interesting few days.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Breaking News: The President of Ukraine has just again announced that President Trump has done nothing wrong with respect to Ukraine and our interactions or calls. If the Radical Left Democrats were sane, which they are not, it would be case over!

@realDonaldTrump

02



A source of trouble is that our minds are unruly. We need to effect an inner transformation, to understand that love and affection are a real source of joy. It's important to be warm-hearted rather than selfish. We'll be less sick, live longer and have more friends here and now.

@DalaiLama

03



We're having this election because Parliament could not get anything done. It was paralysed. It's time for us to take decisive action and to get Brexit done, so that we can get Parliament working again on the issues that matter to you.

@BorisJohnson

04



"The most important thing to do if you find yourself in a hole is to stop digging."

Warren Buffett

@tradingproverbs

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

Is the hegemonic dream shattering?



YENUS S

The reasons behind the protests that we are witnessing in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran appear to have a common denominator named as corruption. The peoples' money remains in individual politician's bank account, leaving the state with little or no money to spend on public services.

The corrupt politicians then increase the prices of basic facilities to raise money for state budget, creating further pressure on the public and pushing them into abject poverty. The politicians seem to have included in their portfolio the right to use the public money for private use and with impunity. Now this misappropriation of public money has come to a dead end. That is why people of the three countries find themselves in an open-ended confrontation with the ruling elites.

Out of the three countries, Iran seems to be the most affected by the ongoing violations. Not only the violations will likely shake its internal social fabric but also scrap its dominant stake in Iraq and Lebanon. Iran seems to be behind the wheel steering the political and economic affairs of Iraq and Lebanon by organizing, training and financing proxy forces in the respective countries. If the regimes change in both Iraq and Lebanon, Iran's decades-old dream of hegemony will end.

Last week's resignation of the Iraqi premier is a setback to Iran but a minor concession to the protesters, which at the time of writing has witnessed more than 400 dead and 1700, wounded.

Protesters in Iraq targeted Iranian interests including its diplomatic mission in the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf, which was an unthinkable few months ago. It clearly indicates that Iran is on the verge of losing its interests in Iraq and Lebanon, which it consider them as the backbone of its hegemonic dream.

However, Iran is trying to keep its head above the water and indirectly fighting to maintain its interests by actively involving in anti-demonstration campaigns in those countries and even went as far as deploying its staunch armed supporters and proxy forces.

In Iraq, the killers are suspected to be the Iranian backed militia including members of the notorious Badr organization, Asaib Ahl Al-Haq. They are believed to have controlled Iraq's government establishments and promote Iran's interests in the country.

Reports indicate that following the first day of protest, General Qasim Solemani, the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards flew to Baghdad and that he was personally ordering the killing, said an Iraqi security official to which the Iraqi government seems to have given the green light.

However, the Iraqi President, Barham Saleh confirmed to the public that the Iraqi authorities did not give any orders to use deadly force and added that targeting peaceful demonstrators with live bullets is unacceptable in Iraq. So who is responsible for the ongoing crime being committed against innocent Iraqi youths?

Iran finds itself at crossroads. The ongoing protests in its soil, Iraq and Lebanon on one hand and dealing with the imposed economic sanctions against it on the other. To deal with the latter, Iran is campaigning on diplomatic overtures with the GCC countries, which appears to be too late and too little and came at the wrong time.

However, Iran has done nothing to curb its terrorist activities and sponsoring terrorists. It needs to take tangible steps that can usher confidence building with fellow neighboring countries. Iran has occupied the undisputed position of state sponsor of terrorism for years on a row, according to the US State Department reports, spending about \$1 billion annually.

As the protests continue and number of deaths climb, the once peaceful protesters will arm themselves and confront the security forces, throwing the countries from the frying pan into the fire, say politicians.

The protests that are taking place in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran do not seem to go away soon unless the ruling elites in the respective countries take concrete steps to involve the public in the political discourse. Last week's resignation of the Iraqi premier is a setback to Iran but a minor concession to the protesters, which at the time of writing has witnessed more than 400 dead and 1700, wounded.

business

Tamkeen to announce entrepreneurship award winners today

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Labour Fund (Tamkeen) will announce the winners of the fourth edition of the Bahrain Award for Entrepreneurship (BAE) today.

The award ceremony, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, will be held at the Isa Cultural Centre.

Winners will be announced for eight categories from a total of 21 nominated start-ups and SMEs.

Jury members are CEO of Bahrain Bourse, Shaikh Khalifa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, CEO of Bahrain Islamic Bank, Hassan Amin Jarrar, CEO of SICO Bank, Najla Al Shirawi, Founding President of the American University of Bahrain, Dr Susan Saxton and Chairman of the World Business Angel Investment Forum, Baybars Atlantas.

There were three phases



HRH the Crown Prince

for the award starting with the application submissions in September, interviews conducted by the jury, and finally the evaluation phase.

Since its inception in 2015, the BAE honours Bahraini entrepreneurs and celebrates their achievements, all while promoting a culture of innovation that facilitates the attainment of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030.

Saudi to limit Aramco index weighting with cap

Reuters | Dubai

Saudi Arabia's Tadawul has introduced an equity index cap of 15 per cent which is set to address concerns over the weighting oil giant Saudi Aramco will have when it lists on the exchange.

State-owned oil firm Aramco is expected to list 1.5pc of its shares this month in a deal which could raise more than \$25 billion and top the record initial public offering (IPO) of Chinese retailer Alibaba on the New York Stock Exchange in 2014.

The Aramco IPO is seen as a test for the Saudi exchange, where the largest listing so far



Yasser al-Rumayyan, Saudi Aramco's chairman, and Amin H. Nasser, president and CEO of Aramco, attend a news conference

has been worth \$6 billion.

"Any constituent whose index weight reaches or exceeds the threshold will be capped in accordance with the set limit," Tadawul said in a statement

yesterday.

Aramco is expected to have an initial weight of close to 10pc in the Tadawul all-share index (TASI).

"This is a precautionary measure to assure investors regarding Aramco's impact on the Saudi index in case of any further liquidation in the future or in case the stock price goes up," said Mazen al-Sudairi, head of research at Al Rajhi Capital.

The cap would limit the risk of any security representing a large percentage of the index and becoming a major risk for the market, as well as limiting the index's correlation to the oil price, he added.

The move is part of a broader update of Tadawul's index methodology, including a revision of the free float shares calculation methodology.

The new measures will "ensure more balanced indices, which will accurately represent the movement of the market, enhance disclosures and transparency and minimize securities' dominance," Tadawul's CEO Khalid Al Hussan said in a statement.

Tadawul said it had also applied a new "Fast Entry" rule allowing shares of IPOs to be included in the all-share index at the close of their fifth trading day.



The Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) celebrated Bahraini Women's Day 2019, themed "Bahraini women in the fields of higher education and future sciences", in the presence of Governor Rasheed Al Maraj, Executive Directors, Directors and other CBB staff. Dr Aisha Fuad Bushaqer, Head of Computer Engineering Department at the College of Information Technology at the University of Bahrain, spoke on the role of Bahraini women in higher education. Governor Al Maraj congratulated Bahraini women and praised Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of His Majesty the King and the President of the Supreme Council for Women on the occasion.

Ansar Gallery names mega car raffle winners

TDT | Manama

Ansar Gallery and A&H General Trading Bahrain yesterday announced the winners of a mega car raffle draw.

Nadhira Hijaz, Coupon No.1819734, won a Ford Expedition car and Yousef Abdulla Al Tawadi, Coupon No.1792686, won a Nissan Patrol car during the draws held on November 21.

The event was part of Ansar Gallery's "WIN 10 Nissan Patrol & Ford Expedition SUV Cars Raffle Draw" which runs from 7 May 2019 until 15 April 2020. Five more cars are on the offers following the latest draw.

Next mega car Raffle Draw for a Ford Expedition car and 15 valuable gifts will be held at Ansar Gallery on 26 December



Nadhira Hijaz, Coupon No.1819734, and Yousef Abdulla Al Tawadi, Coupon No.1792686, are the winners

2019 at 11.30 am.

To enter the draw, make a purchase of BD 5 along with the "Bahrain National Day Mega Of-

fers". Offers which began from 25 November continues until 21 December 2019.

Winners list are available

on www.ansargallery.com.bh, www.instagram.com/ansargallerybahrain and www.facebook.com/ansargallerybahrain

Trump says he will restore tariffs on Brazil, Argentina metal imports

Reuters

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that he will immediately restore tariffs on US steel and aluminum imports from Brazil and Argentina.

"Brazil and Argentina have been presiding over a massive devaluation of their currencies, which is not good for our farmers. Therefore, effective immediately, I will restore the Tariffs on all Steel & Aluminum that is shipped into the U.S. from those countries," Trump said in a tweet.

Trump also urged the Federal Reserve to prevent countries from gaining an economic advantage by devaluing their currencies.

"The Federal Reserve should



Donald Trump

likewise act so that countries, of which there are many, no longer take advantage of our strong dollar," Trump tweeted.

"Lower Rates & Loosen - Fed!", he said. Trump has repeatedly urged the Fed to lower rates to below zero, arguing that negative rates in Europe and elsewhere give those countries a competitive advantage.



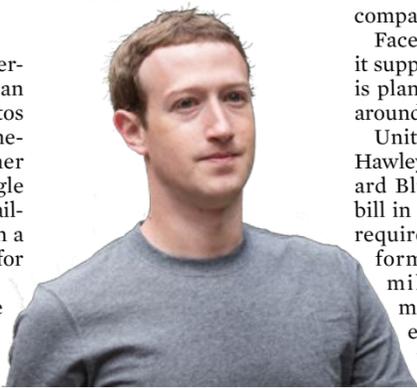
The Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco) celebrated Bahraini Women's Day on Sunday at the Four Seasons Hotel, Bahrain in the presence of Dr Dawood Nassif, Bapco's Chairman, Chief Executive Dr Pete Bartlett and members of the Management as well as Bapco's female employees. Dr Nassif congratulated employees and lauded their remarkable contributions in serving the Kingdom. Nadia Bader Al Hajji, Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Projects and Business Development at Petrochemical Industries Company - Kuwait gave a brief speech on female employees in fostering the progress of industry. Several female employees of Bapco were recognised for their remarkable efforts.

Facebook to allow transfer of photos, videos to Google Photos

Reuters

Facebook Inc said yesterday it has introduced an option to transfer photos and videos from the social media network directly to other services, starting with Google Photos. The option will be available to users in Ireland, with a worldwide roll-out planned for the first half of 2020.

All data transfers will be encrypted and users will be asked for a password before the transfer is initiated, the



company said in a blog post.

Facebook said in September it supports data portability and is planning to build new tools around it.

United States Senators Josh Hawley, Mark Warner and Richard Blumenthal introduced a bill in late October that would require communications platforms with more than 100 million monthly active members to allow its users to easily move, or port, their data to another network.

“Today, we’re releasing a tool that will enable Facebook users to transfer their Facebook photos and videos directly to other services, starting with Google Photos.”

STEVE SATTERFIELD, DIRECTOR OF PRIVACY AND PUBLIC POLICY, FACEBOOK

Cuba takes another swipe at dual currency system

Reuters | Havana

Two Havana department stores began yesterday to give change only in pesos, instead of the local dollar equivalent known as the convertible peso, in another step toward ending Cuba’s dual monetary system.

The Central Bank, in a brief note published by state-run media, termed the measure an experiment that could be extended to other establishments in the future.

“Depending on the results and effectiveness of the experiment, its gradual extension to other commercial establishments in Havana and the rest of the provinces will be eval-

uated,” the Central Bank said.

There are currently two currencies circulating in Cuba, the peso and the convertible peso, which is valued at 24 pesos.

The exchange rate has not changed in more than a decade and the government claims the convertible peso is equal to the dollar, but imported appliances and other goods, when available, often have huge markups as they are purchased in tradable currencies while the peso and convertible peso have no value abroad.

Cubans are largely paid the equivalent of less than 100 dollars per month in pesos, irritating the population, which is often charged convertible pesos at retail outlets.



The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) held yesterday at its premises a workshop on “Maritime Fraud”. BCCI’s Deputy Chief Executive Officer Dr Abdulla Al Sada highlighted Bahrain’s standing as a logistics hub and its ecosystem that encourages the growth and expansion of businesses. The workshop shed light on the types of maritime fraud, precautionary measures to avoid fraud, and the importance of insuring cargo and dealing with well-established agents. Representatives from Bahrain Chamber; Tamkeen, Export Bahrain, Bahrain Shipping Agents Association, Bahrain Polytechnic and the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications delivered presentations exhibiting the services and programs they offer.

Green palm oil push: Kit Kat, Dove makers could face fines

Kuala Lumpur

Companies that make top brands including Kit Kat chocolate and Dove soap may face fines if they fail to buy more green palm oil under new rules aimed at improving the controversial industry’s environmental sustainability.

Green groups cautiously welcomed the move from the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), a watchdog that sets environmentally-friendly standards and brings together a wide range of industry players, but were sceptical the rules would be strictly enforced.

The world’s most widely used vegetable oil is found in everything from biscuits to make-up, but has long drawn the ire of environmentalists who blame it for fuelling widespread deforestation.

Swathes of jungle, particularly in the world’s top producers Indonesia and Malaysia, continue to be cleared as plantations expand aggressively, laying waste to the habitats of a kaleidoscope of rare animals, including endangered orangutans and Borneo pygmy elephants.

Consumer pressure has increased in the West as activists mount strident campaigns denouncing the destructive industry, leading some companies to cut back on the commodity or stop using it entirely.

Public disgust was underlined last year when millions viewed a Christmas advert from British supermarket chain Iceland, which has stopped using palm oil in its own-brand products, featuring a cartoon orangutan telling a little girl its jungle home had been destroyed.

Iceland’s man-



The world’s most widely used vegetable oil is found in everything from biscuits to make-up

Consumer pressure has increased in the West as activists mount strident campaigns denouncing the destructive industry



aging director had previously criticised the “agonisingly slow” progress in sustainable palm oil production.

The RSPO was established in 2004 to promote green palm oil, and developed criteria for growers who want their product certified as “sustainable”.

These include a ban on logging virgin forests for plantations and reducing use of fires -- which sometimes burn out of control

and spew toxic haze into the air -- to clear land, but activists regularly criticise the body for failing to enforce its rules.

Green credentials

Joining the Kuala Lumpur-headquartered body is voluntary and it has attracted over 4,000 members, including growers, consumer goods giants and traders. Nineteen percent of palm oil globally is now RSPO-certified.

Major companies value membership as it boosts their green credentials and losing it can bring a flood of negative publicity.

When Kit Kat maker Nestle was thrown out last year for breaching the rules, they regained their membership within weeks after scrambling to meet requirements.

Critics however say progress towards making the industry

more environmentally friendly has been hampered as major firms such as Nestle and Unilever, which owns Dove, are not purchasing enough of the more expensive sustainable oil, discouraging farmers from growing it.

In a bid to force them into action, the watchdog will require companies to increase their purchases of sustainable palm oil by 15 percent every year or potentially face fines or suspension from the body.

“The production of RSPO-certified palm oil has for years been well ahead of the

demand for sustainable palm oil,” Carl Bek-Nielsen, chief executive director of Malaysia-based palm oil grower United Plantations, told AFP.

“However, there is now hope for change.”

But environmentalists voiced doubts over whether companies would accurately report how much sustainable oil they were buying and noted that details on fines and enforcement had not yet been made public.

“I am hopeful -- but I am not that positive,” said Annisa Rahmawati, a Greenpeace forests campaigner.

‘Keep to the rules’

The RSPO’s board of governors recently endorsed the measures and is encouraging members to start working towards them next year, but precise details of sanctions are still being worked out.

Nestle, whose products also include Smarties and Quality Street chocolates, said it was committed to having 100 percent of its palm oil certified by the green body by 2023.

Last year Nestle’s sustainable palm oil use reached 56 percent in Europe but in China, where there is less consumer pressure, the figure was zero, according to data the company provided to the RSPO.

Anglo-Dutch giant Unilever, which also makes Ben and Jerry’s ice cream, welcomed the watchdog’s new rules.

“Our ambition is to make sustainable palm oil commonplace,” the company

said.

But some said the watchdog should in the first instance ensure growers were complying with basic standards that ensure palm oil is sustainable.

“There is little point in all these companies buying more certified palm oil, if the companies producing it are not keeping to the rules,” a spokeswoman for the Environmental Investigation Agency, which has produced reports critical of the green body, told AFP.

The RSPO has rebuffed claims in the EIA’s reports, and insists it is still the best system to tackle issues in the industry.

Last year Nestle’s sustainable palm oil use reached 56 percent in Europe but in China, where there is less consumer pressure, the figure was zero



Putin, Xi launch 'historic' Russian gas pipeline

● Moscow is also planning to soon launch two more pipelines

● TurkStream and Nord Stream 2 bypass Ukraine

● Nord Stream-2 to Germany is expected to go online in mid-2020

● TurkStream expected to launch in January will transport Russian gas to Turkey

AFP | Moscow



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Kozak, second right, and Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak, back to camera, attend a joint video conference with Chinese President Xi Jinping, in Sochi, Russia. (Courtesy of the Washington post)



Power of Siberia gas pipeline route (Courtesy of Gazprom)

Russia and China yesterday launched a giant gas pipeline linking the countries for the first time, one of three major projects aimed at cementing Moscow's role as the world's top gas exporter.

Presiding by video link-up over an elaborate televised ceremony, Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping hailed the "Power of Siberia" pipeline as a symbol of cooperation.

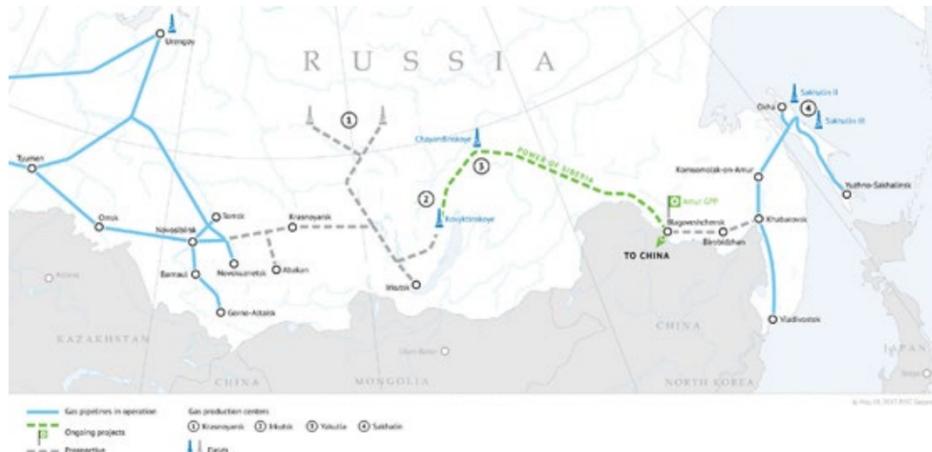
"Today is remarkable, a truly historic event not only for the global energy market, but first of all for us and for you, for Russia and China," Putin said.

Xi said the project served as a model of cooperation.

"China-Russia relations are entering a new era," Xi said. "Everyone worked hard."

The ceremony featured hard-hatted gas workers and videos showing the pipeline's difficult path from remote areas of eastern Siberia to Blagoveshchensk on the Chinese border.

Workers burst into applause and celebratory music played as the CEO of Russian gas giant Gazprom, Alexei Miller, speaking from the Amur region, ordered a valve opened for the gas to flow across the border.



'Hedging its bets'

The 3,000-kilometre (1,850-mile) pipeline -- which Putin has called "the world's biggest construction project" -- will supply China with 38 billion cubic metres (1.3 trillion cubic feet) of gas annually when fully operational in 2025.

Russia and China signed the 30-year, \$400 billion construction deal in 2014 -- Gazprom's biggest ever contract.

The pipeline is part of Russia efforts to develop ties with Asia -- in particular top energy importer China -- amid long-standing tensions with the West.

Gazprom stressed that the pipeline ran through "swampy, mountainous, seismically active, permafrost and rocky areas with extreme environmental conditions".

Temperatures along the route plunge to below minus 60 degrees Celsius in Yakutia and below minus 40 C in the Russian Far East's Amur Region.

Work has also been completed on the first road bridge between Russia and China, further linking the two neighbours.

The bridge, which is to open next year, will connect the city of Blagoveshchensk and the northern Chinese city of Heihe.

Moscow however remains a key gas provider to Europe and is also planning to soon launch two more pipelines that will ramp up supplies to the continent while bypassing Ukraine -- TurkStream and Nord Stream 2.

Analysts said the three projects have long-term economic and political benefits for Russia, which has inserted itself between European markets to the west and the rapidly growing Chinese market to the east.

"Russia is not only creating new income streams, but hedging its bets and bolstering its position strategically," said energy analyst Andrew Hill.

"The ability to play one off against the other will not have been lost on either Gazprom or the Kremlin," Hill, who leads the S&P Global Platts EMEA gas and power analytics team, wrote in a blog.

Questions about profitability

But some analysts have said the project makes little economic sense, given its enormous costs, and should not have been built.

"This is not a commercial project," said Mikhail Krutikhin, estimating the pipeline's cost at some \$100 billion, nearly double the \$55 billion price tag an-

nounced by Gazprom. "It will never pay for itself," Krutikhin said.

The Power of Siberia launch came amid continued wrangling over Nord Stream 2.

Nord Stream-2, which would double gas volumes to Germany, is expected to go online in mid-2020, though it has faced opposition from the United States and countries in central and eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine.

Critics fear it will increase Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies which Moscow could then use to exert political pressure.

TurkStream, which Putin and Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan hope to launch in January, will transport Russian gas to Turkey, also bypassing Ukraine. Running under the Black Sea, the pipeline consists of two lines -- the first intended for Turkish consumers, while the second will send gas to southern and southeastern Europe.

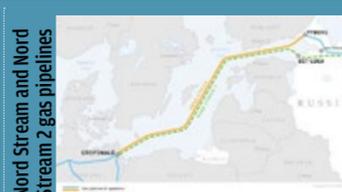


The pipeline providing China with Russian natural gas is scheduled to reach 5 billion cubic meters in 2020



The flow will increase to 38 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually from 2024, under a 30-year contract signed between the China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) and Russian gas giant Gazprom in May 2014.

Pipeline has a 3,000-km section in Russia and a 5,111-km stretch in China.



Carrefour, CrediMax to launch 0% Interest Scheme

The offer available on select electronic purchases until 31 March 2020

TDT | Manama

Carrefour, operated in Bahrain by Majid Al Futtaim, announced joining hands with CrediMax to launch a zero per cent interest scheme on select purchases until 31 March 2020.

The offer applies to Carrefour's customers who are CrediMax cardholders or MaxWallet users and purchase electronic items in stores worth a minimum of BD50 and a maximum of BD1,000.

Commenting on the deal, Jerome Akel, Country Manager of Carrefour in Bahrain at Majid Al Futtaim Retail said the offer allows shoppers to own latest gadgets sooner and with less strain on their



Carrefour and CrediMax officials during the launch of 0% interest scheme

finances.

The promotion, he said, is available for a limited time only. "We encourage them to visit our stores before the end of March to avoid missing out."

Yousif Ali Mirza, Chief Executive of CrediMax commented: "We continuously work to provide new benefits that enhance our customers experience every time they use our cards, therefore CrediMax customers will be able to enjoy 0% interest on select electronic purchases at Carrefour."

Participating Carrefour stores include those located in Bahrain City Centre, Bahrain Mall, Enna Mall, Seef Mall Arad, Manama, Exhibition Road, Budaiya Jawad Dome and Muharraq.

Saudi Arabia wants OPEC+ to deepen oil cuts

Reuters | Dubai/London/Moscow

OPEC and its allies plan to deepen oil cuts and have the deal in place so it runs at least until June 2020 as Saudi Arabia wants to deliver a positive surprise to the market before the listing of Saudi Aramco, two sources familiar with the talks said.

The deal being discussed by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers, known as OPEC+, would be to add at least 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) to existing cuts of 1.2 million bpd or 1.2 per cent of global supply.

The current deal runs to March.

SHOW



LE MANS '66 (PG-13)(DRAMA/SPORT/BIOGRAPHY)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.15 AM + 2.15 + 5.15 + 8.15 + 11.15 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 2.45 + 8.30 PM
 CITY CENTRE: 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 + 12.00 MN + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)
 CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D): 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM
 CITY CENTRE VIP (I): 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM
 SEEF (II): 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 5.45 + 8.45 + 11.45 PM

MATT DAMON, CHRISTIAN BALE, JON BERNTHAL

KNIVES OUT (PG-15)(CRIME/COMEDY/THRILLER)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 12.00 + 5.45 + 11.30 PM
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)
 CITY CENTRE VIP (II): 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM
 SEEF (I): 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM
 SEEF (II): (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)
 WADI AL SAIL: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM

DANIEL CRAIG, CHRIS EVANS, ANA DE ARMAS

COMMANDO 3 (15+)(HINDI/ACTION/THRILLER/DRAMA)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 8.15 + 11.00 PM
 SEEF (I): 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM

VIDYUT JAMWAL, ADAH SHARMA, ANGIRA DHAR

MERCY BLACK (15+)(HORROR/THRILLER)

CITY CENTRE: 11.15 AM + 3.30 + 7.45 + 12.00 MN
 SEEF (II): 1.30 + 5.45 + 10.00 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 8.00 + 10.00 + 12.00 MN

DANIELLA PINEDA, AUSTIN AMELIO, ELLE LAMONT

#JOWABLE (18+)(FILIPINO/COMEDY/DRAMA)

SEEF (II): 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM

KIM MOLINA, CAI CORTEZ, CHAD KINIS

ENTA HABIBI W BAS (PG-15)(ARABIC/COMEDY/MUSIC)

CITY CENTRE: 1.15 + 5.30 + 9.45 PM
 SEEF (II): 11.15 AM + 3.30 + 7.45 + 12.00 MN

AHMAD EL BADRI, MAHMOOD ELLAITTY, BOUSY

MARNIE'S WORLD (SPY CAT) (PG)

SEEF (II): 10.45 AM + 12.45 + 2.45 + 4.45 PM

ERIK BORNER, ALEXANDRA NELDEL, AXEL PRAHL

FROZEN 2 (PG)(ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)

OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 10.45 AM + 1.00 + 3.15 + 5.30 + 7.45 + 10.00 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (ATMOS): 11.45 AM + 2.00 + 4.15 + 6.30 + 8.45 + 11.00 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (3D): 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 PM

CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 12.30 + 1.45 + 2.45 + 4.00 + 5.00 + 6.15 + 7.15 + 8.30 + 9.30 + 10.45 + 11.45 PM

CITY CENTRE (3D): 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM
 SEEF (II): 11.00 AM + 12.00 + 1.15 + 2.15 + 3.30 + 4.30 + 5.45 + 6.45 + 8.00 + 9.00 + 10.15 + 11.15 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.00 AM + 12.00 + 1.15 + 2.15 + 3.30 + 4.30 + 5.45 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM

KRISTEN BELL, IDINA MENZEL, JOSH GAD



21 BRIDGES (PG-15)(CRIME/ACTION/THRILLER)

CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 + 12.00 MN
 SEEF (II): 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 1.45 + 6.45 + 11.45 PM

CHADWICK BOSEMAN, SIENNA MILLER, STEPHAN JAMES

JOKER (15+)(THRILLER/CRIME/DRAMA)

CITY CENTRE: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM
 SEEF (II): 1.45 + 6.30 + 11.15 PM

JOAQUIN PHOENIX, ZAZIE BEETZ, ROBERT DE NIRO

MALEFICENT 2: MISTRESS OF EVIL (PG)

CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM
 SEEF (II): 12.00 + 2.30 + 5.00 + 7.30 + 10.00 PM

ANGELINA JOLIE, TERESA MAHONEY, MICHELLE PFEIFFER

MIRACLE IN CELL NO. 7 (PG-15)(TURKISH/DRAMA)

CITY CENTRE: 1.45 + 6.45 + 11.45 PM

SEEF (II): 1.15 + 6.30 + 11.45 PM

WADI AL SAIL: 11.00 AM + 4.00 + 9.00 PM

ARAS BULUT YNEML, N SA SOF YA AKSONGUR, LKER AKSUM

CHARLIE'S ANGELS (PG-15)(ACTION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)

CITY CENTRE: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM
 SEEF (II): 10.45 AM + 4.00 + 9.15 PM

KRISTEN STEWART, NAOMI SCOTT, ELLA BALINSKA



TERMINATOR: DARK FATE (PG-15)

CITY CENTRE: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM
 SEEF (II): 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN

LINDA HAMILTON, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, MACKENZIE DAVIS

10 MINUTES GONE (PG-15)(ACTION/CRIME) 10

CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 4.30 + 9.30 PM

MICHAEL CHIKLIS, BRUCE WILLIS, MEADOW WILLIAMS

GEMINI MAN (PG-15)(ACTION/THRILLER/DRAMA)

CITY CENTRE: 2.30 + 7.00 + 11.30 PM

WILL SMITH, MARY ELIZABETH WINSTEAD, CLIVE OWEN

THE ADDAMS FAMILY (PG)(ANIMATION/COMEDY)

CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 5.00 + 9.30 PM

SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 PM

OSCAR ISAAC, CHARLIZE THERON, CHLO, GRACE MORETZ

PAGALPANTI (PG-15)(HINDI/COMEDY/ACTION)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.30 AM + 5.15 + 11.00 PM

JOHN ABRAHAM, ANIL KAPOOR, KRITI KHARBANDA

KHAVAL MAATA (PG)(COMEDY/DRAMA)

CITY CENTRE: 10.45 AM + 3.45 + 8.45 PM

AHMAD HELMY, MINNA SHALABI, HASSAN HOSNEY

BALA (PG-15)(HINDI/COMEDY/DRAMA/ROMANTIC)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 2.30 + 8.15 PM

AYUSHMANN KHURRANA, BHUMI PEDNEKAR, YAMI GAUTAM

CANGEL HAS FALLEN (PG-15)(ACTION/THRILLER/DRAMA)

CITY CENTRE : 1.15 + 6.15 + 11.15 PM

GERARD BUTLER, MORGAN FREEMAN, JADA PINKETT SMITH

PLAYING WITH FIRE (PG)(ADVENTURE/COMEDY/FAMILY)

CITY CENTRE: 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 + 8.15 + 10.30 PM

SEEF (II): 11.30 AM + 4.15 + 9.00 PM

JOHN CENA, KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY, JOHN LEGUIZAMO

JACK & DANIEL (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 2.30 + 8.30 PM

DILEEP, ARJUN SARJA, ANJU KURIAN

HELEN (PG-13)(MALAYALAM)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

SEEF (I): 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM

WADI AL SAIL: 3.00 + 8.30 PM

AL HAMRA: 6.00 + (12.00 MN THURS/FRI)

ANNA BEN, LAL, AJU VARGHESE, NOBLE THOMAS



UNDER WORLD (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)

SEEF (I): 11.15 AM + 5.15 + 11.15 PM

ASIF ALI, FARHAAN FAAZIL

HAPPY SARDAR (PG-13)(MALAYALAM)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.30 AM + 5.30 + 11.30 PM

SEEF (I): 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM

AL HAMRA: 12.00 NOON

KALIDAS JAYARAM, SIDDIH MAHAJANKATTI, JAVED JAFFREY

ENAI NOKI PAAYUM THOTA (PG-15)(TAMIL)

From Friday 29th

OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.15 AM + 2.15 + 5.15 + 8.15 + 11.15 PM

SEEF (I): 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 + 12.00 MN

WADI AL SAIL: 12.00 + 5.30 + 11.00 PM

AL HAMRA: 3.00 + 9.00 PM

DHANUSH, MEGHA AKASH, SUNAINA

ARJUN SURAVARAM (PG-15)(TELUGU)

From Friday 29th

SEEF (I): 2.15 + 8.15 PM

NIKHIL SIDDHARTH, LAVANYA TRIPATHI, VENNELA KISHORE

MOVIE REVIEW

'Mercy Black' exploits a real-life horror for cheap scares

Netflix takes another stab at dropping a surprise horror movie, but the end result is the same

Somewhere along the way the movie business decided that marketing was an integral part of the process requiring upwards of half a film's budget in an attempt to get butts into seats. Original content on streaming services don't have that same kind of overhead or seat requirements meaning marketing can be kept to a minimum in advance of a film's release. The ideal, though, that only these services are capable of, is to simply release films onto unsuspecting audiences and then push viewers towards these new arrivals. Ideal in theory anyway, as Netflix has now dropped a second surprise horror movie — after last year's disappointing *The Cloverfield Paradox* — as a treat for viewers, but the result is once again less interesting than the delivery method.

Marina (Daniella Pineda) was just a child when she was sent away to an institution for stabbing a classmate. She committed the violent crime at the "request" of *Mercy Black* — a ghostly figure promising to take



A scene from 'Mercy Black'

away the sadness of those who offer up sacrifices to her — but is now returning home fifteen years later, cured of the delusion and hopeful about getting her life back on track. Marina's creation has lived on in her absence becoming a viral tale shared among new generations,

and her return leads to trouble on two fronts. Locals are only too happy to torment her for those past crimes, and Mercy herself wants to claim another soul. Or does she?

Writer/director Owen Egerton (*Blood Fest*, 2018) leaves behind the overt humor of his

last film to dig into a nightmare with at least one foot in real world tragedy. *Mercy Black*'s DNA stems from internet phenomena like the Slender Man and other "creepypasta" creations designed to terrify youths looking for just that and then take them viral. Some kids take

them too far, though, resulting in violent assaults committed in the name of these fictional monsters, and as Egerton knows that a belief in something like this is every bit as important as its actual existence it's there where the film finds its story.

Egerton wisely keeps *Mercy*'s existence floating in that realm between fact and fiction throughout much of the film, and the story instead focuses on Marina's troubles and increasingly tenuous grasp on reality. Is her imagination getting the best of her, or has *Mercy* actually returned? Or, as some come to fear, has Marina herself taken on the role of *Mercy*? The questions and uncertainty are the film's greatest strength thanks in part to Pineda's performance. She makes Marina's pain and self-doubt tangible leaving viewers torn between feeling for her and fearing her.

She's quite good, but eventually even she gets overshadowed by Egerton's (or Blumhouse's?) desire to cram in generic horror beats at every opportunity from

cheap setups to cheaper stingers. Marina's staying with her sister Alice (Elle LaMont) and nephew Bryce (Miles Emmons), and while the former is given too little to do the latter is used mercilessly for ineffective stabs at scares. Dream sequences, disturbances, and more pile on, but none of them manage to actually unsettle and instead feel more like someone ticking off boxes.

Mercy's physical appearance also becomes an issue. It looks and feels homemade for a reason as she's argued as a creation of Marina and her friends, but while it works early on in a Babadook kind of way later attempts at scares stumble as we glimpse too much of this slapdash "monster." Alice's boyfriend Will (Austin Amelio) is a self-proclaimed true crime buff who takes a particular interest in Marina's story, and between him and Bryce there are some interesting ideas about belief teased towards viewers, but rather than follow those threads the film simply resorts back to cheap jump scares more often than not.



Joe Alwyn and Taylor Swift

celebs



Dakota Johnson

Ariana Grande celebrates one year of 'Thank U, Next' song

Los Angeles



Ariana Grande

Singer Ariana Grande is super nostalgic as her song "Thank U, Next" has completed a year since its launch.

Grande on Saturday took to Instagram and shared throwback images from the shoot for the music video, wondering how quickly time flies, reports dailymail.co.uk.

"A year," she captioned the images.

In the first image, Grande is seen with her trademark long flowing topknot ponytail, chatting on a fluffy pink phone while exercising in front of her orange MacBook a la Elle Woods.

In November of 2018, "Thank U, Next", Next debuted at number one on the Billboard Hot 100, which

meant it was Grande's first number one single of her career.

It was also nominated for Video of the Year at the 2019 MTV Video Music Awards.

In interview, Dakota Johnson says Ellen DeGeneres skipped her birthday party

Los Angeles

Ellen DeGeneres, known for hilarious interviews and on-set pranks on her show, had one of the most awkward conversations with actor Dakota Johnson recently.

The two of them on Wednesday (local time) talked about Johnson's birthday party which went viral on the internet.

According to Variety, the conversation between them commenced with a harmless chat, wherein DeGeneres wished the 'Fifty Shades of Grey' star a happy belated birthday. But she then asked her when specifically it was.

On which Johnson's demeanour seemed to stiffen. "It was October 4," she replied, with a tight smile.

"How was the party? I wasn't invited," DeGeneres said. After which 'The Peanut Butter Falcon' actor paused.

"Actually, no, that's not the truth, Ellen, you were invited," she said.

Responding to her claim, the ace host said, "Well, who wouldn't want to be invited to a party?"

"But I didn't even know you liked me," she said.

Taylor Swift spends Thanksgiving with beau Joe Alwyn in London

Los Angeles

Pop-singer Taylor Swift who was recently honoured as the Artist of the Decade during the American Music Awards, was spotted spending Thanksgiving with her boyfriend Joe Alwyn.

The 29-year-old star and Alwyn have been dating for about three years now but have continued to keep their relationship private and under wraps. An E! News source shared that this Thanksgiving, Swift travelled to London to spend the holiday with the 28-year-old actor.

"She arrived on Thursday from New York and is spending the weekend there," the source added.

Prior to leaving the country to be with her beau, Swift hosted her annual Friendsgiving party with model Gigi Hadid, Martha Hunt and Antoni Porowski.

"It's an annual tradition for

Taylor to get together with close friends and do this," an E! News source shared. "Many have been at her gathering in years past. This year was intimate and casual, but they all had a great time."

Her friend Hunt shared a sweet picture of the two friends hugging it out for the 'gram on Thanksgiving, captioning the photo, "thankful for friends."

Hadid also shared a group picture of the lovely Friendsgiving celebration on her Instagram Story. "Friendsgiving this week :)" wrote the model on her picture. "Love you all sm."

Further, Hunt also reposted the Instagram story and added: "love and miss y'all already."

In October, Swift and Alwyn made a rare public appearance after the 'You Belong With Me' singer performed on Saturday Night Live, reported E! News.

CLASSIFIEDS

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Is Khloe Kardashian thinking of reconciliation with ex-boyfriend Tristan Thompson?

Los Angeles

Model Khloe Kardashian is facing mixed feelings for ex-boyfriend Tristan Thompson after the couple separated ways earlier this year.

On Sunday's episode of 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians,' the 35-year-old star said she is confused after her former beau surprised her with several lavish gifts ahead of her 35th birthday.

Just days before her special day, Khloe admitted that her 28-year-old former boyfriend has expressed his desire to get back together.

"Lately Tristan has been telling me he's sorry and that he loves and appreciates me," she said on the episode.

"But right now, the most I can handle is co-parenting. I really believe that Tristan wants more than that but that's not what I'm about."

But that isn't stopping Thompson from trying to win her back. During a press trip to Connecticut, Khloe discovered a surprise diamond necklace from her ex.



Tristan Thompson and Khloe Kardashian



Dua Lipa

Dua Lipa announces second album with a tattoo

Los Angeles

Dua Lipa has revealed the title of her second album with new arm tattoo that read "Future Nostalgia".

On Sunday, the singer posted a picture of herself with the caption, "Swipe for album title".

The next picture showed a close-up of Lipa's left bicep, tattooed with the title of her upcoming album "Future Nostalgia".

On Saturday, the singer released the lead single "Don't start now" from her new LP.

Lipa released her eponymous debut album in 2017.

Salman: My father told me not to worry about "Dabangg 3"

Mumbai

Actor Salman Khan says that his father and veteran screenwriter Salim Khan, who is usually critical of his work, has advised him not to worry about the outcome of his upcoming cop-action film, "Dabangg 3".

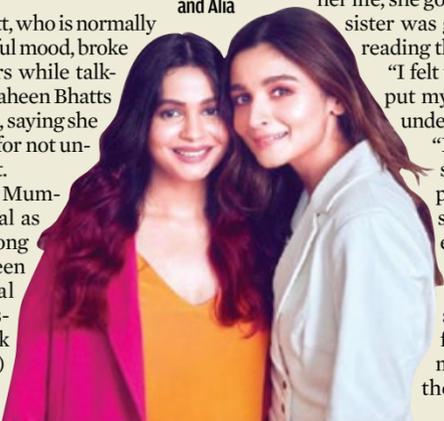
"My father is very critical about our movies. Most of the times, he straight away tells us, this film has gone Beta, forget about it. He used the same words for this film ("Dabangg 3") but in a positive manner, saying, forget about it, don't take stress over this film, don't let the success of this film get to your head, and work hard for the next film," said Salman.

Alia breaks down while talking about sister's depression

Mumbai

Actress Alia Bhatt, who is normally seen in a cheerful mood, broke down into tears while talking about her sister Shaheen Bhatt's battle with depression, saying she felt terrible as a sister for not understanding her plight.

At a recent event in Mumbai, Alia got emotional as she got on the stage along with her sister Shaheen to talk about mental health. They also discussed Shaheen's book "I've Never Been (Un) Happier".



Shaheen and Alia

Alia said that despite living with Shaheen all her life, she got to know about what her sister was going through only after reading the book.

"I felt terrible as a sister. I didn't put myself out there enough to understand her," Alia said.

"I have only believed that she is the most brilliant person in my family. To some extent, she has never believed that about her own self but that always broke my heart. I was sensitive but I feel guilty for not understanding as much as I should have," the actress added.

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SPORTS

Bahrain's Brave CF to make Kyrgyzstan debut in partnership with WEF Global



TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation lands for the first time in Kyrgyzstan on December 14th, featuring a main event for the ages as two of the world's best Welterweights collide with Englishman Carl Booth making his much-anticipated return to the BRAVE CF fold. "The Bomber" will take on newcomer Hayder Hassan in Bishkek's first-ever international MMA event. The Bahraini-born brand will make its debut in a fourth country this year, after taking the Kingdom's name to new territories such as the Philippines, England, and Romania throughout 2019.

Also set for BRAVE CF 32 is the debut of Brazilian stand-out Daniel "Wilycat" Santos. The Chute Boxe Diego Lima product takes on local hero Nizamбек Zhunusov in a Bantamweight feature bout.

Another Brazilian will also

make his debut as João Paulo Rodrigues, known for being Renan Barão's first conqueror. Rodrigues takes on Abdysalam Kubanychiev in a Super Lightweight fight.

Swedish standout Andreas Stahl is another debutant for BRAVE CF, as he looks to start his career in his new home with a win over Adis Taalaybek and extend his winning streak to three at Welterweight.

Rounding up the BRAVE CF 32 card, two other bouts for four debutants as Akhmed Shervaniev and Arturo Chavez meet at Featherweight while Light Heavyweights Bogdan Guskov and Nurlan Toktobakiev collide in the night's opening fight.

BRAVE CF 32 marks the first event of the partnership between BRAVE Combat Federation and star promotion WEF Global and will take place at the Sport Palace Kozhomkul.

Brave Cf 32 Full Fight Card

Welterweight: Hayder Hassan vs Carl Booth
 Super Lightweight: Joao Paulo Rodrigues vs Abdysalam Kubanychiev
 Bantamweight: Daniel Santos vs Nizamбек Zhunusov
 Featherweight: Akhmed Shervaniev vs Arturo Chavez
 Welterweight: Andreas Stahl vs Adis Taalaybek
 Light Heavyweight: Bogdan Guskov vs Nurlan Toktobakiev

Softball cricket returns to Indian Club

TDT | Manama

The sound of bat on ball will once again be heard at The Indian Club as The Indian Club BMMI Indian Expat 7-A-Side Softball Cricket Tournament 2019 gets underway at The Club's premises in Gudaiybiya from Tuesday 10th December.

Always a popular event at The Indian Club, this year's tournament will no doubt attract a good entry as teams vie not only for the trophies and cash prizes on offer, but also the glory and bragging rights of coming out on top in India's no 1 sport.

Entry is now open; the entry fee is set at BD50 per team; each team will be allowed a

squad of 9 players, with 7 taking the field for each match; entries will close on 07th December. T-shirts for the teams will be provided by the Club. The number of entries will be limited, so best to enter sooner rather than later!

"This is always an exciting and enjoyable event, there are some really good cricketers in Bahrain and it's a great opportunity for these guys to showcase their talent whilst having a bit of fun as well; we are expecting a strong list of entries and look forward to some lively, tense evenings as the teams fight it out to take the winners' trophy," said Vicky Subramanya, The Indian Club's Sports Secretary - Football, Cricket, Hockey.

BIC begins WEC countdown

BIC kicks off 10-day countdown to FIA WEC Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) begins its final 10-day for the highly anticipated return of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), which will be taking place for the first time ever together with the BIC National Day Festival.

The four-day extravaganza is scheduled to take place December 13 to 16 at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East", and it will be the biggest event held at BIC outside of the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix.

The WEC returns with the Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain, extended from the six-hour race held at BIC in the past.

Both WEC and National Day will be open to the public from December 13, with WEC running for two days and the National Day celebrations offering four days of continuous entertainment, concluding on December 16.

Tickets are just BD1 per person per day and can be purchased online at BIC's official website www.bahraingp.com, by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000 or at the BIC stand at City Centre Bahrain.

The Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain marks the fourth round of the 2019/2020 FIA WEC season. The gruelling eight-hour event makes it the second-longest race on the WEC calendar, behind only the legendary 24 Hours of



Cars on track during a race at BIC (file photo)

Le Mans. Just as in previous seasons, there will be competition in four categories, comprising the Le Mans Prototype 1 (LMP1), LMP2, Le Mans Grand Touring Endurance (LMGTE) Pro and the LMGTE Amateur classes.

Among the leading sports prototype car brands to look forward to in the LMP classes are Toyota, Ginetta, Rebellion, Alpine, Oreca and Dallara. The GT cars that are set to take to the track in the LMGTE classes include the Ferrari 488 GTE Evo, the Porsche 911 RSR-19 and the Aston Martin Vintage AMR.

Motor racing fans attending the FIA WEC Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain will be able to enjoy an Open Paddock experience, offering a behind the scenes spectacle of the race experience. All racing will be open to the public



The gruelling eight-hour event makes it the second-longest race on the WEC calendar, behind only the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans

on 13 and 14 December, with the race set to get underway at 3pm on Saturday.

Aside from the WEC, there will also be racing in racing in two highly popular support

series: the MRF Challenge single-seater championship from India and the BIC-based Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East.

Off the race track, the entertainment throughout the four-day festival will be highlighted by nightly concerts featuring some of the region's biggest names in music. They include star singers Balqeas, Mohammed Al Salem, Essa Al Marzouq and Abdulla Al Rowaished.

There will also be the biggest fireworks display in the Kingdom of Bahrain, world-class performing artists from around the globe such as The Black Angels acrobats, Spark! LED Drummers and Stannage International Stunt Team, plus carnival rides for kids, traditional music, food stalls and a shopping bazaar.

Lyon takes five as Australia thrash Pakistan with day to spare

AFP | Sydney



Australia celebrate taking the final wicket

AFP | Sydney

Spin king Nathan Lyon snared five wickets, including dangerous half-century makers Shan Masood and Asad Shafiq, as Australia wore down a stubborn Pakistan to clinch the second Test and wrap up the series 2-0 yesterday.

Pakistan resumed day four of the day-night match on a precarious 39 for three with Masood not out 14 and Shafiq on eight after being bowled out for 302 in their first innings and forced to follow on.

It followed Australia's mammoth 589 for three declared, built around David Warner's exceptional 335 not out -- the 10th highest Test score of all time.

Federer to have Swiss coin minted in his honour

Reuters | Zurich

Tennis great Roger Federer is to become the first living Swiss to have a coin minted in their honour, with a commemorative 20 franc (\$20.06) silver piece bearing his image being issued in January.

The 38-year-old 20-time Grand Slam champion is regarded by many as the greatest tennis player ever and is a national hero in Switzerland. Swissmint confirmed that 55,000 of the coins, featuring Federer delivering a backhand, will be produced and will be available for pre-order from Tuesday until Dec. 19.

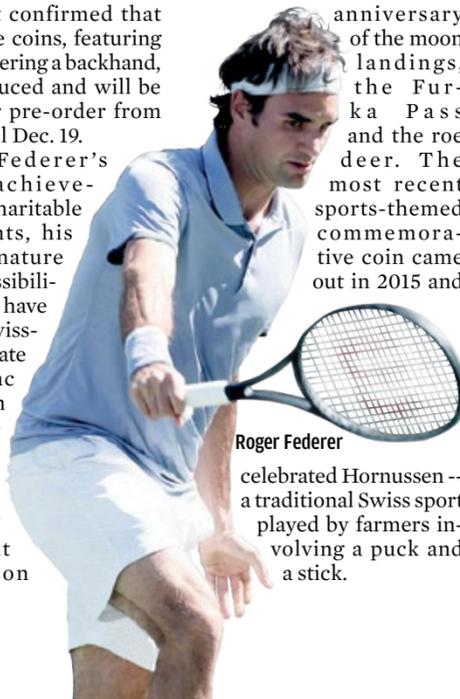
"Roger Federer's sporting achievements, his charitable commitments, his easy-going nature and his accessibility to his fans have prompted Swissmint to dedicate this 20-franc silver coin to him -- the first time it has done so with a living person," a Swissmint spokesperson

told Reuters.

With demand expected to be high, Swissmint said another 40,000 coins could be issued in May while a 50 franc gold coin, featuring a different design would also be produced next year.

"Thank you Switzerland and Swissmint for this incredible honour and privilege," Federer wrote on Twitter.

This year's commemorative Swiss coins included the 50th anniversary of the moon landings, the Furka Pass and the roe deer. The most recent sports-themed commemorative coin came out in 2015 and



Roger Federer

celebrated Hornussen -- a traditional Swiss sport played by farmers involving a puck and a stick.

Root delight as his 226 sets up England final day push

AFP | Auckland



Ollie Pope and Joe Root run between the wickets

AFP | Auckland

Joe Root could not hide his delight after a masterful 226 ended his run drought and gave England a much-needed boost in the second Test against New Zealand yesterday as they ended day four believing they can square the series.

It took a five-wicket haul for the tireless Neil Wagner to bring England's first innings to an end at 476, a lead of 101.

At stumps, New Zealand were 96 for two and needing to bat late into the final day although rain may yet have the last word with further showers forecast for Tuesday.

"It felt good," a beaming Root said as he put a stream of low scores behind him.

Nationals barge through to semis

Magical Bahrain beat Kuwait to advance in Arabian Gulf Cup

TDI | Manama

Bahrain defied the odds and squeezed into the semi-finals of the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup last night following a drama-filled 4-2 victory over Kuwait in their final Group B game of the tournament's preliminary round.

Naturalised striker Thiago Augusto came on as a second-half substitute and provided the magic that the Bahrainis needed to pull off the hard-earned triumph. Augusto scored twice within the span of just 10 minutes to help lift the nationals to the winning margin they required in order to make it through to the next stage.

Augusto's brace added to earlier goals from teammates Ali Madan and Jassim Al Shaikh, who were both also in spectacular form in the contest.

Kuwait's Youssef Nasser and Ahmed Zanki were both on target for their team as they put up a valiant fight in a hugely intense encounter.

Saudi Arabia took down defending cham-



Bahrain's Al Shaikh surveys the pitch as he looks to make a pass against Kuwait

pions Oman 3-1 in the other divisional fixture played simultaneously at a different venue.

Following both results, the Saudis marched on to the final four as Group B winners with six points, while Bahrain advanced with a superior goal difference over Oman after both teams finished with four points on the table. Kuwait ended their campaign with three points in last place.

The Bahrainis now face off with unbeaten Group A winners Iraq in the semi-finals, while Saudi take on hosts Qatar. Both games in the last four will be played on Thursday.

The concluding Group A games were also played yesterday, with Iraq and Yemen battling to a goalless stalemate and the Qataris beating the UAE 4-2.

In Bahrain's win over Kuwait, all but one of yesterday's goals were scored in a pulsating second half that only confirmed the semi-finalists following Augusto's second goal three minutes into second-half stoppage time.

Madan fired in Bahrain's opener with a brilliant solo effort in the opening minute of first-half added time. He dribbled the ball nearly a quarter-way up the pitch while being chased by the Kuwaiti defence and then hit a low shot past goalkeeper Hameed Youssef to give the Bahrainis the lead.

The second half then began with a huge blunder by Al Shaikh when he took down Kuwait's Redha Abujabarah in the box for a

penalty. Nasser stepped up to take the spot kick and he drove the ball home into the bottom-left corner with Bahrain's Sayed Mohammed Jaffar, who had made a few crucial saves earlier in the match, diving the opposite way.

There was then a controversial moment after Nasser scored another goal in the 65th minute to give the Kuwaitis the lead. His effort was cancelled by the match referee, however, after VAR technology showed that Nasser had tugged on the shirt of Bahrain's Sayed Redha Isa, which caused Isa to fall over and allow Nasser to go unmarked as he charged towards the box to receive a pass and score.

With the 1-1 tie restored, Al Shaikh made up for his penalty gaffe with Bahrain's second goal of the night. He had a fine strike from just outside the box in the 69th minute off a pass from Mahdi Humaidan to give Bahrain back the lead and revive their semis hopes.

Augusto was then inserted by Bahrain head coach Helio Sousa and he made his impact instantly. His opening goal in the 83rd minute came from a perfect cross by Al Shaikh, which virtually sealed Bahrain's qualification.

But there was still some drama to be had as Kuwait's Zanki scored just two minutes later to reduce the deficit, until Augusto put any Bahrain nerves to rest with his second goal, sealing both the win and the coveted final four berth.



Bahrain's Madan in action against Kuwait last night

Bahrain players celebrate after their opening goal

Last Night's Scores

Group B			
Kuwait	2	4	Bahrain
Y. Nasser 59' (pen)			A Madan 45+1'
A Zanki 85'			J Al Shaikh 69'
			T Augusto 83', 90+3'
Group A			
Oman	1	3	Saudi Arabia
A Al Alawi 55'			F Al Buraikan 26'
			H Bahebri 42', 57'
Qatar	4	2	UAE
A Afif 20', 28' (pen)			A Mabkhout 33' (pen), 77'
H Al Haydos 53'			
B Khoukhi 90+4'			
Yemen	0	0	Iraq

Final Group B Standings

(*advance to semi-finals)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
*Saudi Arabia	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
*Bahrain	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Oman	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Kuwait	3	1	0	2	6	7	3

Owen, Towndrow take overnight lead in KHT golf

TDI | Manama

Homegrown talent Daniel Owen and fellow-professional Sean Towndrow took a share of the lead yesterday after the opening round of the 12th King Hamad Trophy golf championship, being played at The Royal Golf Club (RGC) at Riffa Views.

Owen and Towndrow both carded scores of six-under-par 66 over the prestigious annual competition's first 18 holes.

They enjoyed a one-shot lead over the pair of Liam O'Neill and Matty Lamb, who were tied third.

Another pair were deadlocked a further one stroke behind. They were

Craig Ross and Monty Scowsill, who both had four-under-par totals of 68 from day one.

Each of the top six golfers are from Great Britain. Both Lamb and Scowsill are amateur players.

A total of 95 players representing 20 countries from around the world teed off yesterday at RGC's 18-hole Colin Montgomerie-designed championship course.

Owen had a brilliant front nine from yesterday's play. He had already birdied five holes by then but had also bogeyed the par-four eighth, before carding another two birdies over the back nine.

Towndrow also had a fine start with an eagle on the par-five third hole. He

birdied another five holes the rest of the day, but also had a bogey on the par-four 17th.

O'Neill had an eagle on day one on the par-five 13th. That helped him make up for back-to-back bogeys on holes four and five to keep him within a stroke of the leaders. Lamb also had a pair of bogeys but managed to card five birdies to match O'Neill.

Scowsill was another to register an eagle for the day, sinking the par-five ninth hole in three shots.

The field behind the top six golfers was tightly knit, with Peter Badawy of Lebanon ranked seventh with a three-under-par score of 69.

There were then another 11 players who were two shots under and tied

for eighth place. They included Jamal Allali and Id Omar Ayoub from Morocco; Mathiam Keyser from South Africa; Gabbe Axell from Sweden; and Phil Kelly, Jake Bolton, Louis Campbell, Callum Farr, Jamie Elson, Zane Scotland and Tom Sloman, all from Great Britain.

Bahrain's best-ranked participant on day one was Mohammed Diab Alnoaimi, who was tied-34th with a two-over-par total of 74.

The second round will be held today with the players hoping to make the cut of 45, who will then be battling it out in the third and final round tomorrow.

The first group of golfers are scheduled to tee off this morning at 7am.



Bahrain's Alnoaimi tees off from the par-five ninth hole during the first round yesterday