India rebuffs Trump ‘Afghan library’ swipe

New Delhi, India

India rejected on President Donald Trump’s comments mocking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for funding a library in Afghanistan, saying yesterday that New Delhi has provided $3 billion in development assistance to the war-torn country.

The US president on Wednesday took a swipe at what he claimed were Modi’s frequent comments building the library – “You know what that is like, five hours of what we spend.”

As the “largest donor in the region”, New Delhi has helped with infrastructure projects, humanitarian assistance and economic development, the statement said.

Highlights include a 218-kilometre (135-mile) road, a dam providing irrigation to farmers and training programmes for more than 1,500 Afghan families.

New Delhi has also provided 41,000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan as well as a 40-bed children’s hospital built in 1972 and renovated after the fall of the Taliban in 2002.

Cabinet gives nod to govt action plan

New Delhi, India

An extraordinary session of the Cabinet yesterday approved the Government Action Plan (GAP) for the Fifth Legislative Term, 2019-2022, that seeks to achieve the visions and aspirations of the comprehensive development progress, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The approval came after a thorough examination of all aspects related to themes and policies.

The session was chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

The action plan, which reflects the government’s ambitions and aspirations to achieve fiscal balance, continue enhancing economic growth, sustainability of the development progress and projects, improve services to citizens, has been referred to the Council of Representatives.

In a post-session statement, the Cabinet Secretary-General, Dr Yasir bin Isa Al-Nasser, said GAP 2019-2022 reflects the determination of the government, led by His Highness the Prime Minister, to achieve comprehensive development that is built upon the principles of the Bahrain Economic Vision 2020.

GAP’s policies and goals, Dr Al Nasser said, seek to maintain a positive economic growth within the framework of fiscal balance and optimal use of resources to ensure their sustainability for future generations.

During the session, the Cabinet discussed the categories of the GAP as well as the policies and goals that would ensure the consolidation, development and sustainability of the services delivered by the government to the citizens.

Greater role for private sector

Envisioning the role of the private sector in the priorities of the new government, which according to the Cabinet session will act as a key driver to the Kingdom’s economic development.

GAP aims to re-define the role of the public sector, improve the business environment, the investment atmosphere, and administrative governance.

Saudi opens trial in Khashoggi killing

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

The names of the 11 defendants have not been officially released.

It was earlier announced that five top officials in Saudi Arabia were sacked over the Khashoggi murder inside its Istanbul consulate on October 2 in a “rogue operation”.

A statement said prosecutors have requested twice formally to the Turkish authorities seeking evidence related to the killing of Khashoggi “but have not received any response so far.”

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir has also called on Turkey to come forward with all its evidence about the slaying and stop leaking out information.

“We have made that very clear. We have investigations ongoing and we will punish the individuals who are responsible for this,” he said.

Following yesterday’s trial, the defence team in the case requested a copy of the legal document and a timeframe within which to review the charges.

Prosecutors in a statement said they are continuing their investigation against a number of accused in the killing.

According to an earlier statement by public prosecutor’s office, a total of 21 individuals were in custody in connection with the killing.

Following the move, The United States and France have welcomed the first indictments in the Saudi probe into the murder of Jamal Khashoggi as a “good first step.”
FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 2019

Try out our Indian platter—Super delicious and great value for money

Commander-in-Chief of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa during a visit to a number of BDF units to get informed about their combat and administrative readiness. He listened to a briefing on the modernisation process of the units as well as their administrative and technical readiness to boost performance.

Bahrain-Egypt for greater ties

Manama

Speaker Fouzia bint Abdullah Zainal yesterday reiterated Bahrain’s perpetual solidarity alongside Egypt in boosting bilateral ties. Speaking while receiving Ambassador of Egypt to Bahrain, Suha Mohammed Ibrahim, the speaker emphasised that the upcoming period will see more parliamentary cooperation with the Egyptian Parliament chaired by Ali Abdel Aal.

Citing the longstanding strong ties between the two countries fostered by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and President Abdel fattah El Sisi, Fouzia bint Abdullah Zainal commended Egypt’s strong supportive stance with Bahrain in all the political, economic and security arenas.

The ambassador praised Bahrain’s democratic progress, expressing her admiration of the polls results achieved by the Bahraini women, wishing the Bahraini parliament further successes.

Health programmes: Minister urges to hold more field trips

Health Minister

TF | Manama

Health Minister Faeqa bint Saeed Al Saleh yesterday urged holding more field trips to assess public feedback on programmes implemented throughout the year.

Chairing the National Committee to Combat Non-Communicable Diseases, the minister praised the initiatives and efforts exerted in combating non-communicable diseases across the community throughout 2018.

The minister stressed the committee’s keenness to implement various initiatives and reiterated her full support to all the initiatives during the preparation of the Ministry of Health (MoH)’s comprehensive plan 2019.

Various topics including pediatric healthcare and involvement of specialists in setting up health-related initiatives were discussed.

The meeting also reviewed the main functions and initiatives planned for Bahrain Sports Day.

NIHR inspects reform, rehabilitation facility

Manama

Inmates appearing for their academic tests at the Reformatory and Rehabilitation Centre at Jau were visited by school officials.

The delegation of National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR)’s commissioners led by Maria Khoury reviewed the procedures to ensure compliance with global standards and that the inmates are given all their rights in equal opportunity.

Khoury praised the Ministry of Interior (MoI)’s efforts spearheaded by the General Directorate for Reformation and Rehabilitation to provide advanced educational programmes to provide vocational skills to help inmates reintegrate into the society.

The commissioners’ visit comes as part of the NIHR’s 2019 itinerary of field trips.

The delegation of National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR)’s commissioners was led by Maria Khoury.
Blockchain can help VAT

Mohammed Zafran

Blockchain, the revolutionary technology which has been steadily gaining popularity in recent years can greatly help in the implementation and management of VAT, according to an expert.

While VAT is expected to boost revenue for the government, it comes with challenges related to tax collection as well as issues related to companies that may try to evade taxes.

Both issues can be addressed with the use of VAT, says a leading IT expert.

Yaqoob AlAwadhi, NGN International CEO, says blockchain can help facilitate tax collection without added costs of intermediaries.

He said that blockchain can cut VAT administration costs by eliminating the need for third-party intermediaries: agents, escrow, trusted banks, and many others that according to him “slows down the entire transaction process.”

“Blockchain is a safe and effective tool for the management of value-added tax. This technology would contribute to reducing the need for third-party intermediaries: agents, escrow, trusted banks, and many others that according to him ‘slow down the entire transaction process’,” he said.

AlAwadhi said, has seen a rapid rise in popularity from being used in the cryptocurrency space. “Now this technology has evolved dramatically and is now used in multiple areas, such as network administration, copyright and ownership, digital identity, energy, voting, and private and public sector management.”

“We believe blockchain to be a great aid for the taxation system,” he stressed.

According to AlAwadhi, the key strength of Blockchain is its secure and transparent nature. “Anyone interested can see a chain of blocks with transaction details but changing, adding, or removing of any block is not possible.”

“Unlike electronic tax invoices, which are entered into a database and can be exposed to third-party interference, blockchain is free from such vulnerabilities. The system can track VAT-related financial flows and monitor the fulfilment of taxpayers’ obligations in real time, with no chance for fraudsters to conceal any transaction or get an illegal VAT refund or offset,” he said.

The blockchain is being adopted for VAT collection in Kazakhstan where the government decided to move the taxation system to blockchain by 2020 in order to combat various tax evasion schemes.
Voluntary Retirement Scheme’s programme, Abdulaziz Al-Alawi, has confirmed that all government employees have accepted the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) offered, have met the eligibility criteria, and will retire on 31 January 2019.

The scheme, CSB said, “provides an opportunity for civil servants at government entities that are affiliates of CSB to employ their expertise in the private sector and entrepreneurship to contribute to the Kingdom’s economic growth.”

For accepting the offer, the scheme provides a number of incentives including, granting 5 years of service to the actual number of years served, a one-off direct cash compensation equal to the cost of purchasing five additional virtual service years, end of service promotion and end of service benefit. In addition to other benefits in accordance to laws and regulations.

Requirements for beneficiaries include being an employee at government entities subject to civil service regulations, having actual years of service not less than 10 years, not being a senior employee and not returning to government service after retiring joining the voluntary retirement scheme.

The theoretical phase of the exercises included understanding and education of the skills training conducted by Hino Motors Middle East FZE. Based on the knowledge, understanding and education they attained, they were able to compete and showcase their expertise.

VRS candidates are eligible to receive the Periodic Annual Allowance, in accordance to the Kingdom’s 2019 Salaries and Benefits regulation - including the candidates that will retire on 31 January 2019 and the retiring candidates after them.

Ahmed bin Zayed Al Zayed also affirmed that all VRS candidates are eligible to receive the Periodic Annual Allowance, in accordance to the Kingdom's 2019 Salaries and Benefits regulation - including the candidates that will retire on 31 January 2019 and the retiring candidates after them.

The CSB earlier said it has assigned a team to ensure that all successful candidates receive their end of service promotion, in accordance with the CSB directive 4 of 2013.

As of November 10, according to the Civil Service Bureau’s President, Ahmed bin Zayed Al-Zayed, 9,000 public sector employees have applied for the voluntary retirement scheme through the Civil Service Bureau’s official website.

Further, Bucheebi stressed that the voluntary retirement scheme takes into account that it shall not affect the work process and services provided by the Civil Service Bureau.

First batch of VRS optees to be relieved by January end

Motorcity named champion at Hino skills contest

Motorcity, the sole distributor of Hino trucks in the Kingdom of Bahrain, was named Distributor Champion in the 2018 Hino Regional 3S Skills Contest held at Hino Motors’ Middle East office and training centre in Sharjah, UAE.

The annual competition showcases the proficiency of sales, service, and parts experts in the Hino distributor network in the Middle East region. Finalists in the Sales & Parts category demonstrated their expertise through a series of role play scenarios, while the service technicians were tested on their diagnostic, analytical and technical skills in a series of hypothecated exercises. The theoretical phase of the challenge covered sales, product knowledge and a compilation of the skills training conducted by Hino Motors Middle East FZE. Based on the knowledge, understanding and education they attained, they were able to compete and showcase their expertise.

Y. Koyama, Managing Director-Hino Motors Middle East FZE, said, “The contest aims at recognising the abilities of all our finalists in 3S categories and to encourage continuous improvement in all our 3S (Sales, Service & Spare Parts) activities which is key to exceptional customer service.”

Representing Motorcity at the competition, Baguswathy Nagarajan (Hino Sr. Sales Executive) was crowned Sales Champion, while Jibin James (Sr. Technician) was awarded the Service Championship.

Batcelo flies fans to Asian Cup opening match

Batcelo said it is chartering a flight to take over 210 fans to the opening match of the Asian Cup, taking place in Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

The initiative follows a meeting between Batcelo and Bahrain Football Association and is in line with the Association’s efforts to support the National Football Team.

Keen on championing the national team and supporting sporting initiatives, Batcelo said its initiative comes in line with the company’s eagerness to strengthen its community partnership.

The Asian Cup, which is one of the most important tournaments in Asia, takes place every four years since 1956, with teams competing for the title of AFC Asian Cup Champions.

Caption: Batelco’s Manager Digital Marketing Hamad Bussaoud and Bahrain Football Association General Secretary Ebrahim Saad Al Buainain.
Man attacks motorist with iron rod in Riffa

The incident dates back to 2 April 2015. The men, according to court files, closed the roads and threw Molotov cocktails and iron spits and stones at police officers.

Two police officers were injured in the attack. One of the officers got his hand burnt, while the second officer got injured in his head.

The investigators also found that the two men joined forces to commit the crime.

The suspect confessed his role during interrogating admitting that he acted after receiving a phone message to attack the police officers.

The man, reportedly in his thirties, died after an accident in Mina Salman area. The victim is reportedly a 58-year-old Bahraini.

The man in his thirties died in a traffic accident on Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah Street towards Manama in the Mina Salman Area. The concerned authorities are on the scene.

The man was riding a bicycle and died after an accident in Mina Salman area. The victim is reportedly a 58-year-old Bahraini.

The minister confirmed the incident yesterday morning stating: “A bicycle rider died following a traffic accident on Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah Street towards Manama in the Mina Salman Area. The concerned authorities are on the scene.”

Separately, the Ministry on Tuesday confirmed that an accident on Al Fetal Highway near Marina beach led to the death of a 22-year-old man, reportedly an Arab national.

In a similar incident, reported last week, a biker died after he was run over by a minibus.

The man in his thirties died in an accident at Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Highway last Thursday.

The mishap occurred when the biker crashed against a parked car and ended up on the road where he was run over by a vehicle.

The victim was reportedly a Bahraini.

Attacking policemen: Court affirms verdict

There will be no retrial for two men convicted in a case involving burning of an armoured police vehicle in the east of Alkaker area.

The court of the first instance gave a 20-year jail term withholding for the first accused and a 3-year term for the second accused.

Following an appeal, the 10-year sentence for the first accused was reduced to 7 years, with the court affirming the 3-year jail term awarded to the second accused.

The suspects then tried to challenge the verdict in the court of cassation, which, however, was rejected.

The incident involves a 10-year-old schoolgirl who was watching a traffic accident when she was attacked by a motorcyclist.

The investigators also found that the men joined forces to commit the crime.

The suspect confessed his role during interrogating admitting that he acted after receiving a phone message to attack the police officers.

The suspects declined to appear in court when called.

Trial postponed for woman held in child torturing case

A 26-year-old woman accused of torturing her one-year-old child was granted bail for health reasons.

The child, according to the public prosecutor, suffered a 10 per cent permanent disability.

The suspect is married to a Bahraini national. They also have another child, who is aged 3 years.

The incident involves a 10-year-old schoolgirl who was watching a traffic accident when she was attacked by a motorcyclist.

The investigators also found that the men joined forces to commit the crime.

The suspect confessed his role during interrogating admitting that he acted after receiving a phone message to attack the police officers.

The suspects declined to appear in court when called.

Fake bomb: Man gets three years in prison

The incident occurs when a man was seen in front of a driving school in Aali.

The fake bomb was planted in front of the driving school in Aali.

In a similar incident, reported last week, a man was arrested after he was run over by a minibus.

The man in his thirties died in a traffic accident at Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Highway last Thursday.

The mishap occurred when the biker crashed against a parked car and ended up on the road where he was run over by a vehicle.

The victim was reportedly a Bahraini.

Identity theft: Bahraini Man gets 3 years in jail

The higher first Criminal Court has awarded a 3-year jail term to a Bahraini man for using his brother’s identity card to enter Bahrain.

According to court files, the man used his brother’s identity card to enter Saudi Arabia from Bahrain and from there to Emirates.

The accused was arrested following a combined operation by Bahraini authority and its counterpart in Dubai.

In issuing the verdict, the suspect, Court said, used identity card of another person to escape from Bahrain wrongfully.

Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Dr Abdulla Al Sayegh announced the project to be implemented in a press conference held at the ministry.

The project was worth BHD 25 million and includes the construction of a new reservoir to be located near the town of Riffa.
People are brought out of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School after a former student opened fire and killed 17 at the school in Parkland, Florida, United States.

An Indian priest closes doors at the Ayyappa shrine at the Sabarimala temple in southern Kerala state after performing “purification” rituals following the entry of two women.

An Indian police stand guard at the Ayyappa shrine at the Sabarimala temple in Kerala.

One dead, 15 injured after women enter flashpoint India temple

Thiruvananthapuram, India

One person was killed and at least 15 injured in violence across southern India’s Kerala state which broke out after two women defied traditionalists to enter one of Hinduism’s holiest temples, police said yesterday.

Clashes were reported across the state after the two women activists, escorted by police, entered the Sabarimala temple in a surprise pre-dawn operation on Wednesday.

The Supreme Court in September overturned a decades-old ban on women of menstruating age – deemed as those between 10 and 50 – setting foot inside the gold-plated Sabarimala temple.

Several women activists have made unsuccessful attempts to reach the temple since the order but faced stiff resistance from thousands of devotees including men and women, who see it as an attack on tradition.

“The person who died was part of a BTP (Bharatiya Jana Party) demonstration yesterday and got injured when some stones were hurled (at those demonstrators),” Kerala police spokesman Pramod Kumar said.

“His injuries were serious and he died late Wednesday night. At least 15 others were injured in incidents across the state,” Kumar added.

Local media reports said the demonstrators from BTP were hit by stones from a local office of the state’s ruling Communist party.

Kerala remained tense yesterday and got injured when some stones were hurled (at those demonstrators),” Kumar police spokesman Pramod Kumar said.

“His injuries were serious and he died late Wednesday night. At least 15 others were injured in incidents across the state,” Kumar added.

Local media reports said the demonstrators from BTP were hit by stones from a local office of the state’s ruling Communist party.

The attack and response minute by minute, did not single out one major point of failure or person to blame for the massacre, which sparked calls to harden the security at schools across the country and even arm teachers.

But it said students would have been better protected if simple measures were taken, including allocating areas in rooms, so-called hard corners, that cannot be seen by an attacker peering in through windows.

The report noted that some rooms in the school building that Cruz attacked did have hard corners, but were ineffective in hiding students because they were obstructed by equipment.

Cruz, who killed 14 students and three staff members, while wounding another 17, “only shot people within his line of sight, and he never entered any classroom,” the report noted.

“Some students were shot and killed in classrooms with obstructed and inaccessible hard corners as they remained in Cruz’s line of sight!”

The report nevertheless suggested that classroom doors be lockable from the inside. It also noted that teachers and staff at the high school were poorly trained in emergency procedures, leading to a failure to quickly declare a “Code Red” alerting the attack.

Death toll rises to 37 in Russian apartment blast

Moscow, Russia

The number of confirmed deaths from a New Year’s Eve gas explosion that caused a Russian apartment block to partially collapse has risen to 37, officials said Thursday, with four people still missing.

Six children were among the dead, the emergency situations ministry said in a statement, while six people had been rescued from the rubble of the building in the Ural mountains city of Magnitogorsk.

The explosion tore through the 10-storey building in the industrial city near 1,700 kilometres (1,050 miles) east of Moscow in the early hours of Monday.

Officials had given a toll of 28 dead as of late Wednesday. Rescuers have been bearing freezing temperatures to search through man- gled concrete and metal but no survi- vors have been found since Thursday, when a baby boy was pulled from the rubble.

The Soviet-era apartment block was home to about 1,300 people and the explosion left dozens homeless over the New Year – the biggest holiday of the year in Russia.

China’s ‘Jack the Ripper’

Beijing, China

Aerial killer dubbed China’s “Jack the Ripper” for the way he mutilated several of his 11 female victims was executed Thursday morning, three decades after the first murder, the court which sen- tenced him said.

“The court in the northwest- ern city of Bayin, Gansu province, which handed him the death sentence in March last year announced on the Twitter-like Weibo that it had been carried out.

China’s supreme court had approved the execution, it said.

Gao Chengyong, 54, robbed, raped and murdered 11 women and girls between 1998 and 2002 in Gansu and the neigh- bouring Inner Mongolia re- gion.

In March 2018 he was found guilty by the Bayin City Inter- mediate People’s Court and handed death sentences for both robbery and intentional homicides, and lesser sentences for rape and dishonouring corpses.

Gao targeted young women wearing red and followed them home, often cutting their throats and mutilating their bodies, according to state me- dia reports. The youngest vic- tim was eight years old.
The number of confirmed dead from a New Year’s Eve gas explosion in a Russian apartment block jumped to 39 yesterday as rescuers recovered more bodies from the rubble of the partially collapsed building.

Six children were among the dead, the emergency services ministry said in a statement, and four people were still unaccounted for.

Rescuers have been braving temperatures as low as minus 27 degrees Celsius (minus 16 degrees Fahrenheit) to search through mangled concrete and metal at the site in the Ural mountains city of Magnitogorsk.

Six people including two children have been rescued at the site, but no survivors have been found since Tuesday, when a 16-month-old boy was found in what officials described as a “New Year’s miracle.”

The explosion tore through the 10-storey building in the industrial city nearly 1,700 kilometres (1,050 miles) east of Moscow in the early hours of Monday.

The bodies of the victims were in a stable condition, said the office of Cheychnab regional governor Boris Dubrovsky, who visited several of them in hospital on Thursday.

Dubrovsky’s office said he had also approved new financial assistance to the victims, including payments of one million rubles ($14,500, 12,700 euros) to the families of those killed and 400,000 rubles for those injured.

Families who lost their apartment would receive payments of up to 500,000 rubles, as well as being provided with new homes.

Chinese rover lands on ‘dark side’ of moon

A Chinese lunar rover landed on the dark, far side of the moon yesterday, in a global first that boosts Beijing’s ambitions to become a space superpower.

The Chang’e-4 probe touched down and sent a photo of the so-called “dark side” of the moon to the Queqiao satellite, which will relay communications to the lander, following the Yutu (Jade Rabbit) rover mission in 2013, and of eventually sending humans to the moon.

To do so, China had to solve a major challenge for such a mission – namely surveyed the moon’s surface for three months. Its success provided a major boost to China’s space programme.

Beijing is planning to send another lunar lander, Chang’e-5, next year to collect samples and bring them back to Earth. It is among a slew of ambitious Chinese targets, which include a reusable rocket capable of carrying loads heavier than those NASA and private rocket firms SpaceX can handle, a moon base, a permanent manned space station, and a Mars rover.

Chinese rover lands on ‘dark side’ of moon

Shanahan takes Pentagon helm as Trump blasts Mattis

T enes of thousands of tourists have fled the Thai resort islands of Koh Phangan and Koh Tao in a mass exodus ahead of Tropical Storm Pabuk which is set to bring heavy rains, wind and seven-metre (22-foot) waves, officials said yesterday.

The islands, hugely popular with holiday-makers especially during the peak Christmas and New Year season, have emptied out since Wednesday as tourists packed off ferries bound for the southern Thai mainland, with swimming banned and boats set to suspend services.

Pabuk, Thailand’s first tropical storm in the area outside of the monsoon season for around 30 years, is poised to batter Koh Phangan and Koh Tao as well as Koh Samui and Koh Phayam island, before cutting into the mainland.

No official evacuation or order has been given but tourists are leaving in droves.

Tourists flee Thai islands as Tropical Storm Pabuk looms

Bangkok, Thailand

Shanahan takes Pentagon helm as Trump blasts Mattis

Washington, United States

A ppointed Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan’s first full day at the Pentagon’s helm was overshadowed Wednesday when President Donald Trump attacked his predecessor Jim Mattis.

Shanahan, who took the Pentagons top spot January 1 after serving as deputy defense secretary, was thrust onto the world stage when Mattis quit last month amid long-running disagreements with President Donald Trump.

During televised remarks ahead of his first cabinet meeting of 2019, Trump claimed he had “essentially fired” Mattis, even though the former Pentagons chief had pointedly quit over multiple disagreements. “I’m not happy with what Mattis has done in Afghanistan and I shouldn’t be happy,” Trump said, as Shanahan sat by his side. “I wish him well. I hope he does well. But I know, you President Obama fired him and essentially so did I. I want results.”

Trump takes Pentagon helm as Mattis fallout persists

Washington, United States

A n agreement by the United States to sell Taiwan arms could trigger a new flurry of Washington’s efforts to mend Beijing’s anger at the sale, a China expert said.

A Long March III rocket carrying the Chang’e-4 lunar rover, lifting off from the Xichang launch centre in Xichang in Chinas southwestern Sichuan province (file)

A Long March III rocket transporting the Chang’e-4 lunar rover, lifting off from the Xichang launch centre in Xichang in China’s southwestern Sichuan province (file)

A Long March III rocket transporting the Chang’e-4 lunar rover, lifting off from the Xichang launch centre in Xichang in China’s southwestern Sichuan province (file)

A Long March III rocket transporting the Chang’e-4 lunar rover, lifting off from the Xichang launch centre in Xichang in China’s southwestern Sichuan province (file)

A Long March III rocket transporting the Chang’e-4 lunar rover, lifting off from the Xichang launch centre in Xichang in China’s southwestern Sichuan province (file)
Iraq's Mohamed Al-Daradji battles inner demons through film

Iraqi filmmaker Mohamed Al-Dharadji will represent his country for the third time at the Oscars with “The Journey.”

AFP | Los Angeles

The Iraq War may have ended in 2011, but for filmmaker Mohamed Al-Dharadji, the conflict that tore his country apart remains very much part of his everyday life.

“You could say that my movies are a way of coping with the (aftermath) of the war,” the 40-year-old told AFP in Los Angeles this week as he discussed his latest drama, “The Journey.”

“To me, the people of Iraq have not grieved, they have not come to terms with what happened... and I felt that maybe this is how my film can help and allow people to see themselves on the big screen.”

The film transports viewers to 2006 — five minutes before Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein died by hanging at dawn, Daradji says — and introduces a female suicide bomber planning an attack during the reopening of the Baghdad train station.

Within the confines of the station, where the drama unfolds, Daradji relays Iraq's pain and suffering through various narratives — from the distraught child bride in a wedding dress to street children surviving by selling flowers and polishing shoes and a musician returning to normal life after 22 years in a POW camp.

Added to the mix are the American sol...
Ahmad Angawi and Idris Khan were selected on their ability to assimilate their heritage in a contemporary way — a blend that is ideal for the new gallery space, which reframes the museum’s Islamic art collection, presenting a fusion of cultures in the Islamic world through ancient, medieval and modern times.

The Albukhary Foundation Gallery

Ahmad Angawi’s five screens are made from walnut wood, using traditional Hijazi craft with modern manufacturing techniques. Samples for the windows were created by craftsmen in Jeddah and finished by craftsmen in London. Two of the five screens are placed on facing windows. “If you feel that they almost have a dialogue with one another, so the idea of the heart and mind in dialogue came to my mind,” Angawi explained. “When you do traditional craft you connect your body, mind and soul into an object. I wanted (in converse) the way that when you look at those screens, you also look with your mind and you see the techniques with your heart and you see the passion and connection they represent.

“I really wanted to work with craftsmen here in London,” he continued. “I don’t like the idea of cutting something from my culture and pasting it in London. I wanted to make an integration of cultures between London and Makkah.”

For Porter, this integration of tradition and modernity was crucial.

“Right from the beginning, we were very clear about wanting to bring the contemporary into it,” she said. “I feel really strongly that when you look at this region — you need to be looking at it as a continuum. When you look at it all as material culture, it’s actually very easy to incorporate contemporary in with the ‘old’. We’ve done it throughout the gallery.”

She was first able to articulate this philosophy during the museum’s “Hajj Journey to the Heart of Islam” exhibition in 2012, which drew an unprecedented number of Muslim visitors to the museum.

“The exhibition ended with Khan’s ‘You and Only You,’ in which the artist used words to represent the footsteps of a pilgrim, in an attempt to capture the energy of a mass of people circling the Kaaba. Porter — and her patrons, who support acquisitions of material at the museum — were keen to involve Khani in the new site-specific gallery work. “We talked about a number of artists and the one we decided upon immediately was Idris, because of that past relationship, because the work that he does is so interesting, and because of the way that he thinks about his Muslim heritage,” Porter said.

The resulting commission is Khan’s “21 Stones,” — a collection of 21 stamp paintings.

“Throughout, or passages of writing, into rubber stamps and they become wood blocks basically. Then I paint with them with oil, usually on either an aluminum surface or a paper surface,” Khan explained.

He began his stamp paintings in 2010, a turning point in his work. He had trained as a photographer, but felt that his photographs always looked like paintings.

“2010 was it a tricky year for my wife and myself,” he said. “My mother died — and she was young, 59 — and I lost the baby very late in pregnancy and it was really sort of a rough year in terms of grief.

“It was at that point that I decided to create drawings with words and stamping. In the studio, I’d get a piece of paper set up and I’d come in, write these sentences, make them into rubber stamps and then start stamping the paper. It was ridding myself of the grief that I was going through at the time in a very cathartic way,” he continued.

With “21 Stones,” Khan tried to convey the moment of release for a Hajj pilgrim performing the stoning of the Jamarat at Mina (when pilgrims throw 21 stones at the wall).

“The idea itself is a very beautiful thing,” he said. “One takes a stone, stands in front of a wall representing the devil and wishes away any bad feelings or thoughts or future or past — whatever the pilgrim wants to think about — and that emotional release of a stone hitting the wall and becoming words was such a beautiful thing in my mind. So I wanted to try and see if I could make an artwork that had that kind of impact.”

Unusually, his and Khan’s work will be on display in the gallery for the next year. “Normally we’d have to change it every six months, but we’re so excited by this that we can’t bear the thought of it only being up for six months,” Porter said.

Ahmad Angawi

Ahmad Angawi and Idris Khan were selected on their ability to assimilate their heritage in a contemporary way — a blend that is ideal for the new gallery space, which reframes the museum’s Islamic art collection, presenting a fusion of cultures in the Islamic world through ancient, medieval and modern times.

Ahmad Angawi’s five screens are made from walnut wood, using traditional Hijazi craft with modern manufacturing techniques. Samples for the windows were created by craftsmen in Jeddah and finished by craftsmen in London. Two of the five screens are placed on facing windows. “If you feel that they almost have a dialogue with one another, so the idea of the heart and mind in dialogue came to my mind,” Angawi explained. “When you do traditional craft you connect your body, mind and soul into an object. I wanted (in converse) the way that when you look at those screens, you also look with your mind and you see the techniques with your heart and you see the passion and connection they represent.

“I really wanted to work with craftsmen here in London,” he continued. “I don’t like the idea of cutting something from my culture and pasting it in London. I wanted to make an integration of cultures between London and Makkah.”

For Porter, this integration of tradition and modernity was crucial.

“Right from the beginning, we were very clear about wanting to bring the contemporary into it,” she said. “I feel really strongly that when you look at this region — you need to be looking at it as a continuum. When you look at it all as material culture, it’s actually very easy to incorporate contemporary in with the ‘old’. We’ve done it throughout the gallery.”

She was first able to articulate this philosophy during the museum’s “Hajj Journey to the Heart of Islam” exhibition in 2012, which drew an unprecedented number of Muslim visitors to the museum.

“The exhibition ended with Khan’s ‘You and Only You,’ in which the artist used words to represent the footsteps of a pilgrim, in an attempt to capture the energy of a mass of people circling the Kaaba. Porter — and her patrons, who support acquisitions of material at the museum — were keen to involve Khani in the new site-specific gallery work. “We talked about a number of artists and the one we decided upon immediately was Idris, because of that past relationship, because the work that he does is so interesting, and because of the way that he thinks about his Muslim heritage,” Porter said.

The resulting commission is Khan’s “21 Stones,” — a collection of 21 stamp paintings.

“Throughout, or passages of writing, into rubber stamps and they become wood blocks basically. Then I paint with them with oil, usually on either an aluminum surface or a paper surface,” Khan explained.

He began his stamp paintings in 2010, a turning point in his work. He had trained as a photographer, but felt that his photographs always looked like paintings.

“2010 was it a tricky year for my wife and myself,” he said. “My mother died — and she was young, 59 — and I lost the baby very late in pregnancy and it was really sort of a rough year in terms of grief.

“It was at that point that I decided to create drawings with words and stamping. In the studio, I’d get a piece of paper set up and I’d come in, write these sentences, make them into rubber stamps and then start stamping the paper. It was ridding myself of the grief that I was going through at the time in a very cathartic way,” he continued.

With “21 Stones,” Khan tried to convey the moment of release for a Hajj pilgrim performing the stoning of the Jamarat at Mina (when pilgrims throw 21 stones at the wall).

“The idea itself is a very beautiful thing,” he said. “One takes a stone, stands in front of a wall representing the devil and wishes away any bad feelings or thoughts or future or past — whatever the pilgrim wants to think about — and that emotional release of a stone hitting the wall and becoming words was such a beautiful thing in my mind. So I wanted to try and see if I could make an artwork that had that kind of impact.”

Unusually, his and Khan’s work will be on display in the gallery for the next year. “Normally we’d have to change it every six months, but we’re so excited by this that we can’t bear the thought of it only being up for six months,” Porter said.

Ahmad Angawi

Ahmad Angawi and Idris Khan were selected on their ability to assimilate their heritage in a contemporary way — a blend that is ideal for the new gallery space, which reframes the museum’s Islamic art collection, presenting a fusion of cultures in the Islamic world through ancient, medieval and modern times.

Ahmad Angawi’s five screens are made from walnut wood, using traditional Hijazi craft with modern manufacturing techniques. Samples for the windows were created by craftsmen in Jeddah and finished by craftsmen in London. Two of the five screens are placed on facing windows. “If you feel that they almost have a dialogue with one another, so the idea of the heart and mind in dialogue came to my mind,” Angawi explained. “When you do traditional craft you connect your body, mind and soul into an object. I wanted (in converse) the way that when you look at those screens, you also look with your mind and you see the techniques with your heart and you see the passion and connection they represent.

“I really wanted to work with craftsmen here in London,” he continued. “I don’t like the idea of cutting something from my culture and pasting it in London. I wanted to make an integration of cultures between London and Makkah.”

For Porter, this integration of tradition and modernity was crucial.

“Right from the beginning, we were very clear about wanting to bring the contemporary into it,” she said. “I feel really strongly that when you look at this region — you need to be looking at it as a continuum. When you look at it all as material culture, it’s actually very easy to incorporate contemporary in with the ‘old’. We’ve done it throughout the gallery.”

She was first able to articulate this philosophy during the museum’s “Hajj Journey to the Heart of Islam” exhibition in 2012, which drew an unprecedented number of Muslim visitors to the museum.

“The exhibition ended with Khan’s ‘You and Only You,’ in which the artist used words to represent the footsteps of a pilgrim, in an attempt to capture the energy of a mass of people circling the Kaaba. Porter — and her patrons, who support acquisitions of material at the museum — were keen to involve Khani in the new site-specific gallery work. “We talked about a number of artists and the one we decided upon immediately was Idris, because of that past relationship, because the work that he does is so interesting, and because of the way that he thinks about his Muslim heritage,” Porter said.

The resulting commission is Khan’s “21 Stones,” — a collection of 21 stamp paintings.

“Throughout, or passages of writing, into rubber stamps and they become wood blocks basically. Then I paint with them with oil, usually on either an aluminum surface or a paper surface,” Khan explained.

He began his stamp paintings in 2010, a turning point in his work. He had trained as a photographer, but felt that his photographs always looked like paintings.

“2010 was it a tricky year for my wife and myself,” he said. “My mother died — and she was young, 59 — and I lost the baby very late in pregnancy and it was really sort of a rough year in terms of grief.

“It was at that point that I decided to create drawings with words and stamping. In the studio, I’d get a piece of paper set up and I’d come in, write these sentences, make them into rubber stamps and then start stamping the paper. It was ridding myself of the grief that I was going through at the time in a very cathartic way,” he continued.

With “21 Stones,” Khan tried to convey the moment of release for a Hajj pilgrim performing the stoning of the Jamarat at Mina (when pilgrims throw 21 stones at the wall).

“The idea itself is a very beautiful thing,” he said. “One takes a stone, stands in front of a wall representing the devil and wishes away any bad feelings or thoughts or future or past — whatever the pilgrim wants to think about — and that emotional release of a stone hitting the wall and becoming words was such a beautiful thing in my mind. So I wanted to try and see if I could make an artwork that had that kind of impact.”

Unusually, his and Khan’s work will be on display in the gallery for the next year. “Normally we’d have to change it every six months, but we’re so excited by this that we can’t bear the thought of it only being up for six months,” Porter said.
Shutdown could last a ‘long time’

US President Donald Trump chairs a Cabinet meeting at the White House in Washington, DC

President Donald Trump met top Democratic lawmakers on Wednesday, but they failed to hammer out an agreement that would end a partial government shutdown over their demands for billions of dollars to build a border wall with Mexico.

One day before Democrats take over the House of Representatives, Trump showed no signs of backing away from his insistence that Congress cough up $5 billion for his “beautiful” southern wall.

Trump met behind closed doors at the White House with Nancy Pelosi, the Democrat who will take over as speaker of the House, and Chuck Schumer, the Senate minority leader, but there were no indications any progress had been made in resolving the impasse.

“We asked the president to support the bills that we support that will open up government,” Schumer said. “I asked him directly, I said Mr. President give me one good reason why you should continue your shutdown.”

“He could not give a good answer,” Schumer said.

Republican Kevin McCarthy, who will be minority leader in the next House, said Democratic and Republican leaders of Congress would return to the White House on Friday for more talks.

“This doesn’t need to go on very much longer,” McCarthy said.

But Trump said he was prepared to hold out “as long as it takes” to secure the money he is seeking for the border wall.

“This is national security we’re talking about,” he said at a cabinet meeting ahead of the meeting with Pelosi, Schumher and top Republicans. “It’s no important subject to walk away from.

“I think the people of this country think I am right,” Trump said, adding that it “could be a long time” before the government reopens.

Trump’s meeting with Pelosi and Schumher was his first since an acrimonious Oval Office meeting with the pair on December 11.

Democrats say the border wall, one of Trump’s key campaign promises, is a distraction from more complicated immigration problems and a tool for Trump to whip up support among his conservative base.

The standoff resulted in hundreds of thousands of federal employees being furloughed over the Christmas and New Year holidays -- and for the foreseeable future until a deal is reached.

Romney hits out at Trump

Amid the stalemate over the wall, Trump shielded his annual Christmas vacation in Florida, choosing to remain in Washington and fire off a stream of angry -- and often misleading -- tweets.

“Much of the Wall has already been renovated or built,” he asserted, along with the dubious claim that Mexico would pay for the wall through the new trade deal.

White House spokeswoman Sanders accused Democrats of refusing to compromise.

Pellino is proposing a plan that would fund most government agencies through September 30 with the exception of the Department of Homeland Security, which would lose border security and would only receive

“President Trump made a serious, good faith offer to Democrats to open the government, address the crisis at our border and protect all Americans,” Sanders said.

Pellino is proposing a plan that would fund most government agencies through September 30 with the exception of the Department of Homeland Security, which would lose border security and would only receive funding through February 8.

Sanders described that approach as “a non-starter because it does not fund our homeland security or keep American families safe from human trafficking, drugs and crime.”

Republicans lost 40 seats and their majority in the House in the November midterm elections but they retained control of the Senate by a slim margin.

Sixty votes, however, are needed to advance legislation in the Senate, requiring Demo- cratic support.

Democratic Senator Chris Coons of Delaware welcomed the face-to-face meeting between Trump and Democratic leaders and told CNN he hoped it would lead to a “major breakthrough”.

Republican Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, has said he will only schedule a vote on a deal that has the support of both the House and Trump.

Adding to the uncertainty in Washington, an incoming senator, former Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, has indicated he will break with his party and vote against a border wall.

Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Wednesday that he will vote to support the temporary government funding bill.

Romney, who was elected to the Senate from his home state of Utah.

“Do not intend to comment on every tweet or fault,” Rom- ney said. “But I will speak out against significant actions that are divisive, racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, dishon- est or destructive to democratic institutions.”

Trump expressed surprise over the comments said he would “look into” the possibility of and would only receive funding through February 8.

In an interview with CNN, Romney said he would vote to end the shutdown because funding for a border wall.

372,000 drivers join legal action against Volkswagen

Some 372,000 German owners of Volkswagen cars fitted with motors that cheated under test conditions than in real driving.

November saw a law providing for new form of collective action enter into force, voted through by MPs after the so-called “dieselgate” scandal came to light.

In the first major consumer case against VW related to its sprawling history of diesel cheating, claimants want to es-

establish that the firm deliberately harmed customers by installing the cheating software in their vehicles -- and that it owes them compensation.

If judges rule in favour of the plaintiffs in a test case, the floodgates could be opened for the rest to claim compensation.

So far “dieselgate” has cost VW more than 28 billion euros ($32 billion) in fines, recalls and compensation.

But most of the financial pain has come in the United States, where VW has not only bought back half a million cars from customers but paid up to $10,000 per vehicle in compensa-

tion.

Meanwhile in Germany, the company has paid two fines totalling just 1.8 billion euros.

Volkswagen’s Wolfsburg HQ -- and often misleading -- tweets.

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

S

ome 372,000 German owners of Volkswagen cars fitted with motors that cheated under test conditions than in real driving.

November saw a law providing for a new form of collective legal action enter into force, voted through by MPs after the so-called “dieselgate” scandal came to light.

In the first major consumer case against VW related to its sprawling history of diesel cheating, claimants want to es-

establish that the firm deliberately harmed customers by installing the cheating software in their vehicles -- and that it owes them compensation.

If judges rule in favour of the plaintiffs in a test case, the floodgates could be opened for the rest to claim compensation.

So far “dieselgate” has cost VW more than 28 billion euros ($32 billion) in fines, recalls and compensation.

But most of the financial pain has come in the United States, where VW has not only bought back half a million cars from customers but paid up to $10,000 per vehicle in compensa-

tion.

Meanwhile in Germany, the company has paid two fines totalling just 1.8 billion euros.

Volkswagen’s Wolfsburg HQ -- and often misleading -- tweets.

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

S

ome 372,000 German owners of Volkswagen cars fitted with motors that cheated under test conditions than in real driving.

November saw a law providing for a new form of collective legal action enter into force, voted through by MPs after the so-called “dieselgate” scandal came to light.

In the first major consumer case against VW related to its sprawling history of diesel cheating, claimants want to es-

establish that the firm deliberately harmed customers by installing the cheating software in their vehicles -- and that it owes them compensation.

If judges rule in favour of the plaintiffs in a test case, the floodgates could be opened for the rest to claim compensation.

So far “dieselgate” has cost VW more than 28 billion euros ($32 billion) in fines, recalls and compensation.

But most of the financial pain has come in the United States, where VW has not only bought back half a million cars from customers but paid up to $10,000 per vehicle in compensa-

tion.

Meanwhile in Germany, the company has paid two fines totalling just 1.8 billion euros.

Volkswagen’s Wolfsburg HQ -- and often misleading -- tweets.

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

S

ome 372,000 German owners of Volkswagen cars fitted with motors that cheated under test conditions than in real driving.

November saw a law providing for a new form of collective legal action enter into force, voted through by MPs after the so-called “dieselgate” scandal came to light.

In the first major consumer case against VW related to its sprawling history of diesel cheating, claimants want to es-

establish that the firm deliberately harmed customers by installing the cheating software in their vehicles -- and that it owes them compensation.

If judges rule in favour of the plaintiffs in a test case, the floodgates could be opened for the rest to claim compensation.

So far “dieselgate” has cost VW more than 28 billion euros ($32 billion) in fines, recalls and compensation.

But most of the financial pain has come in the United States, where VW has not only bought back half a million cars from customers but paid up to $10,000 per vehicle in compensa-

tion.

Meanwhile in Germany, the company has paid two fines totalling just 1.8 billion euros.

Volkswagen’s Wolfsburg HQ -- and often misleading -- tweets.

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

S

ome 372,000 German owners of Volkswagen cars fitted with motors that cheated under test conditions than in real driving.

November saw a law providing for a new form of collective legal action enter into force, voted through by MPs after the so-called “dieselgate” scandal came to light.

In the first major consumer case against VW related to its sprawling history of diesel cheating, claimants want to es-

establish that the firm deliberately harmed customers by installing the cheating software in their vehicles -- and that it owes them compensation.

If judges rule in favour of the plaintiffs in a test case, the floodgates could be opened for the rest to claim compensation.

So far “dieselgate” has cost VW more than 28 billion euros ($32 billion) in fines, recalls and compensation.

But most of the financial pain has come in the United States, where VW has not only bought back half a million cars from customers but paid up to $10,000 per vehicle in compensa-

}
FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 2019

“Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” are the latest “Star Wars” film.

Hong Kong, China

The company slashed its revenue guidance for the first fiscal quarter to $29 billion to $31 billion. Apple said it lost $7 billion in global revenue in the last quarter, which represented a staggering 17% in terms of year-on-year growth.

As a result, Apple decided to offer a discount. A first class round trip usually costs $4,600, but with the discount, people can snap up five first class round trips from Vietnam to New York and one to Canada for as low as $840 each and a business class flight for $699. After that, the airline started selling tickets for $600 million in the United States.

In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its worldwide domestic gross of $670 million, a new record, according to the box office data.

No-deal Brexit ‘far more likely’ if May’s deal rejected, says Minister

Barclay, whose primary responsibility is to ensure that the government is prepared for such an outcome.

On Tuesday we will start a new phase in our public information campaign, using radio, and social media to further raise awareness about the need to prepare," he wrote.

“While macroeconomic challenges in some markets were a surprise ‘special’ on New Year’s Day, along with “Star Wars: The Last Jedi,” “Black Panther,” “Avengers: Infinity War” and “Incredibles 2,” – now all among the top 10 highest-grossing films of all time. Each one earned more than $150 million in the United States and Canada.

Cumulatively, those three films alone made $4.6 billion worldwide.

Other successes on the Disney slate include Marvel superhero flick “Avengers,” “Zootopia,” “Finding Dory,” “Guardians of the Galaxy,” “Moana,” “The Lion King” and “Dumbo.”


Disney reported its second best year at the box office ever, raking in $7.225 billion worldwide for everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney's second best year at the box office ever, raking in $7.225 billion worldwide for everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.

Disney owns the only studio to ever post more than $7 billion in annual box office receipts. In 2016, it recorded its best year at the box office with its $7.225 billion worldwide gross from everything from “Black Panther” and “Avengers: Infinity War” to hit animated sequels “Incredibles 2” and the latest “Star Wars” film.
Gulf markets recover

- Saudi’s Gulf Union, Al-Alia on acquisition progress
- 9 of 12 Saudi banks gain
- Tabuk rises on MoU for cement export to Yemen

In a recent development, the pace of year-on-year growth in household borrowing accelerated to 3.3 percent while the rate for firms reached 4.0pc, ECB data showed yesterday. 

MoU for cement export to Yemen

The government launched an MoU for cement export to Yemen. That figure eased to 21.62pc in November and the level in December was below half that figure and it was 25.24pc higher than in the same month a year earlier, the highest level since September. According to the government, an “all-out fight against inflation” as the lira fell by more than 28 percent against the dollar.

Drugmaker Bristol-Myers Squibb says to buy Celgene in $74bn deal

New York-based pharmaceutical giant Bristol-Myers Squibb announced yesterday it will buy US biotech firm Celgene in a massive $74bn cash and stock deal to create a specialized biopharma company.

Bausch & Lomb Inc advanced 2.1pc.

Apparel firms in the country by appealing to tech-savy youth who prefer to order coffee using their smartphones and have it delivered.

Coffee startup Luckin set to overtake Starbucks in China

Beijing, China

A fleet of coffee bars -- rows of small kiosks with pink or yellow signs advertising the name "Luckin" -- are already dotting the streets of Beijing and the rest of China as the company makes a play to overtake the country's biggest coffee giant, which has over 3,600 stores across the country.

China is Starbucks' second biggest market after the United States. 

Luckin has challenged the US coffee chain's dominance in China by appealing to tech-savy youth who prefer to order coffee using their smartphones and have it delivered.

Luckin plans to have more than 4,500 stores opened in China by the end of 2019, taking it past the 3,600 store giant, which has over 3,600 stores.
Kardashian and Kanye West are expecting a fourth child - again using a surrogate, according to multiple media reports on Wednesday. Kardashian and West’s third child, Chicago, was born via a surrogate in January 2018. The couple has two other children, North, 5, and Saint, 3.

They turned to surrogacy after doctors warned Kardashian of serious health risks if she were to have another pregnancy.}

**MISSING PETS**

**TEDDY** - Male, 1 yr, white and grey, tip-of-tail is missing, mottled, afraid of strangers, not wearing collar or ID tag, allowed to roam and did not return, Sar (Al Manama compound), BD100 REWARD for safe return, 4/10/18.

**HILARY DUFF says two-month-old daughter has colic**

The 20-year-old shared a snap of herself and her beau sharing an intimate moment during a party. The star, who is online trolls, fired back at those who chastise her for drinking underage! Very proud of her daughter Banks. She has had a busy year so far, with her family’s new baby and her own personal challenges.

Hilary Duff says two-month-old daughter has colic

Reuters | Los Angeles

**Kim and Kanye expect fourth child**

Kim Kardashian and Kanye West are expecting a fourth child - again using a surrogate, according to multiple media reports on Wednesday. Celebrity magazines Us Weekly and People quoted sources close to the couple as saying the surrogate was pregnant and expected to give birth in May.

Representatives of the reality TV star and her rapper husband did not respond to a request for comment.

Kardashian and West’s third child, Chicago, was born via a surrogate in January 2018. The couple has two other children, North, 5, and Saint, 3.

They turned to surrogacy after doctors warned Kardashian of serious health risks if she were to have another pregnancy.

Ariel Winter hits back at trolls for body shaming her

The Modern Family star stepped back at trolls who body-shamed her after she uploaded a photo of herself and her New Year’s Eve outfit. The 18-year-old, who is known for her curves and confident personality, was targeted by online trolls, who fired back at one person, who took the opportunity to chantage her for drinking under age. She wrote, “Drinking Underage? Very Bad Look!"

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I. CHEKARKASHMITH

Rahakrishnan Sumanth

Lasalangham, holding Indian Passport No. 5556072

After spending some time at Rambha’s house, they have been shifted to the house of Jamati member, Muthu Poojari. The couple will be moving into the house of Mr. Sumanth’s brother, Sumanth Krishna, shortly.

**HARISHESH KUMAR CHEERAMBATH** – SAEED AL KHALIFA

KUMAR (surname) CHEERAMBATH, 1136, BLOCK 311, AL SALMANIYA, P.O Box 26106, Al Seef, any may be forwarded to Embassy of India, P.O Box 26106, Al Seef, Kingdom of Bahrain.

**Ariel Winter**

Ariel Winter has had a busy year so far, with her family’s new baby and her own personal challenges.

**Kim and Kanye expect fourth child**

Kim Kardashian and Kanye West are expecting a fourth child - again using a surrogate, according to multiple media reports on Wednesday. Celebrity magazines Us Weekly and People quoted sources close to the couple as saying the surrogate was pregnant and expected to give birth in May.

Representatives of the reality TV star and her rapper husband did not respond to a request for comment.

Kardashian and West’s third child, Chicago, was born via a surrogate in January 2018. The couple has two other children, North, 5, and Saint, 3.

They turned to surrogacy after doctors warned Kardashian of serious health risks if she were to have another pregnancy.
Osaka is US Open win has given her belief

AFP | Brisbane

Japan star Naomi Osaka said her US Open victory in September had given her the self-belief to be able to come from behind and win tight matches.

Osaka was speaking after recovering from losing the first set of her Brisbane International quarter-final to Latvia’s Anastasija Sevastova yesterday.

The world number five over-hauled Sevastova to win 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 and reach the semi-finals of the season-opening tournament.

“I feel like right now I’m really confident in myself, and I feel like the off-season training that I’ve been doing is really paying off,” she said.

“And I’m not sure if I would have had the same feeling six months ago. Six months ago I hadn’t won the US Open.”

Osaka’s stunning victory over Serena Williams at New York’s Flushing Meadows in September sent her profile into the stratosphere, although her breakthrough win was partially overshadowed by Williams’ furious tirade against the umpire.

Osaka dropped her opening service game in Brisbane yesterday, and that was enough to surrender the first set to Sevastova.

But Osaka came storming back to win the second with the loss of just five points.

Osaka then broke Sevastova’s serve to start the deciding set and was able to hold the advantage, sealing victory with her 11th ace of the match.

The 21-year-old has enormous power but said she was tested by Sevastova, who favoured analysis and deception over brute force, and who defeated her twice last year.

D

Umme Olivier led another fast bowling assault on Pakistan’s batsmen as South Africa took control on the first day of the second Test at Newlands yesterday.

Olivier took four for 56 as Pakistan were bowled out for 177 after being sent in on a hard, green-tinged pitch.

Aiden Markram struck an assured 78 as South Africa reached 223 for two at the close.

Olivier followed up a match-winning performance in the first Test in Centurion, where Dale Steyn took three for 49. But Nishikori turned the match as a favourite follow-up spell in which he conceded only eight runs in five overs but Markram and Hashim Amla steadily built a second wicket stand of 67 off 106 balls.

Markram, who had not reached 20 in his previous six Test innings, struck the ball firmly in reaching a half-century off 64 balls with 11 fours. He added another three fours and a straight six off top-spinner Yasir Shah before being surprised by Masood at the end of the day after a 96-ball innings.

South Africa has won nine of its last 11 matches against Pakistan after coming in with his team in danger of a total collapse at 54 for five. Looking to counter-attack at every opportunity, Sarfraz put on 60 for the sixth wicket with Shan Masood (44) and 42 for the seventh wicket with Mohammad Amir (22 not out).

Sarfraz hit nine fours in an innings of 66. Masood faced 73 deliveries and hit five fours and a hooked six off Kagiso Rabada.

Nishikori back to best in win over Dimitrov

AFP | Brisbane

Kei Nishikori showed he was back to his best form as he downed Bulgaria’s Grigor Dimitrov 7-6 (7-4), 7-6 (7-4) to reach the semi-finals of the Brisbane International yesterday.

Nishikori proved too consistent for the Bulgarian in a high-quality match, securing crucial breaks at 5-5 in both sets.

Afterwards, the 29-year-old said his goal was to get back into the top five after seeing his ranking plummet to 39 in April last year due to persistent injuries.

“I’m trying to go top five, that’s my next goal,” Nishikori said.

“The last couple of months of last year I was playing great tennis and I think I’m doing that now, this week.”

Grigor Dimitrov has a return against Bulgaria’s Grigor Dimitrov

The match was a replay of the 2017 final, won by Dimitrov in three sets.

But Nishikori turned the tables this year by returning the Bulgarian’s serve superbly throughout, putting Dimitrov under pressure at key moments and showing fight to come back from 4-5 down in the second set.

“I was expecting to go to a third set – he started playing better and I was down 5-1,” Nishikori said.

“But I think the last couple of games I played very solid and I’m very happy.

“I was very composed on the court today and played very well.”

Nishikori said his serve was down in his match against Nick Kyrgios on Wednesday and he was forced to battle over two hours before beating Uchiyama 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7-4).
Indian wall Chesteshwar Pujara scores 3rd ton to give India the advantage

**Pujara ton puts India in control**

**Indian wall Chesteshwar Pujara scores 3rd ton to give India the advantage**

**Pujara 130+, Agarwal 77 as India take the day**

**Mayank Agarwal made 77 with Josh Hazlewood the best of the bowlers with 2-31**

**India lead the series 2-1 after winning the opening clash in Adelaide and the third one in Melbourne**

**Chesteshwar Pujara stroked his third century of the series to put India in a commanding position**

**But that only brought the stoic Pujara to the crease and like he has done all series, the 66 Test veteran dag in and blunted the new ball. He survived a review decision for caught behind on 12, but otherwise gave a masterclass. In another innings of patience and concentration, he slowly picked off runs to bring up his 10th Test century from 199 balls, with 12 boundaries.**

**The methodological 30-year-old has been for the best batsman from either side across the series and his ton followed a man from either side across the series to put India in a commanding position**

**Pujara was confident they could get early breakthroughs today and “hopefully get them out for under 100”**

**Kohli again won the toss and India got an early break-through through Hazlewood tempting Raahul into a defensive shot that took a outside edge and carried to Shaw Marsh at slip, and he was gone for nine**

**Agarwal shines**

**Playing in only his second Test, the Bangalore-born Agarwal was also impressive. He was targeted with bouncers and struck on the helmet but held firm, reinforcing his team’s resolve.**

Ferrari issued an emotional message yesterday to mark the 50th birthday of Michael Schumacher, who has not been seen in public since he suffered head injuries in a skiing accident five years ago.

The German, who won a record seven Formula One drivers’ championships and 91 Grand Prix, collected five consecutive titles with the Italian team from 2000 to 2004. Ferrari also won six constructors’ titles while Schumacher was at the helm.

“Chump turns 50 today. We’re all with you Michael #KeepFighting.” Scuderia Ferrari, a Formula One team, tweeted.

The official Formula 1 account tweeted: “We join the whole of the #F1 family in sending our very best wishes on his 50th birthday #KeepFightingMichael #Michael#Schumacher.”

Solskjaer wants to stay as Man United boss

**Solskjaer has established the United interim management five years ago, and his team from 2000 to 2004.**

When Australia bat, they will face a much tougher challenge than they did in the Test series to put India in a commanding position.

“India were very classy. I think it’s very important for everybody to do,” he said.

When asked if he would consider recalling on loan for the team from the other side across the series to put India in a commanding position.

When Australia bat, they will have a new opening pair with Usman Khawaja padding up with Marcus Harris after the underperforming Aaron Finch was axed.

“Everybody who has been around the world will be confident they could get early breakthroughs today and “hopefully get them out for under 100”

Kohli again won the toss and India got an early break-through through Hazlewood tempting Raahul into a defensive shot that took a outside edge and carried to Shaw Marsh at slip, and he was gone for nine.

Sarri says new striker needed as Chelsea held by Saints

**Ferrari also won six constructors’ titles while Schumacher was at the helm.**

“Chump turns 50 today. We’re all with you Michael #KeepFighting.”

The official Formula 1 account tweeted: “We join the whole of the #F1 family in sending our very best wishes on his 50th birthday #KeepFightingMichael #MichaelSchumacher.”

Ferrari, the team that Schumacher raced for in his three decades at the top, tweeted: “The club knows my opinion. I think we need something else for our characteristics,” Sarri said when asked if he would consider recalling on loan forward Michy Batshuayi and Tammy Abraham.

**Sarri says new striker needed as Chelsea held by Saints**

**Ferrari also won six constructors’ titles while Schumacher was at the helm.**

**Title race not over even if Liverpool beat City, says Kompany**

**December. The champions have lost against Hungary, Crystal Palace and Leicester City.**

“Title race not over even if Liverpool beat City, says Kompany**

**Manchester City’s hopes of securing the Premier League title will not be boosted even if they lose to leaders Liverpool yesterday, according to Vincent Kompany.**

“City are currently in third place on 47 points behind table-toppers Liverpool, and a defeat would see the Manchester City club a 10-point advantage in the title race.**

“Title race not over even if Liverpool beat City, says Kompany**

**Son thanks break for performance boost**

**South Korea forward Son Heung-min believes a break from international duty has helped him avoid a mid-season burnout as he remains de- termined to help his country end a 59-year Asian Cup drought.**

“Son was part of the South Korean side which won the Asian Games soccer gold in August but he was sluggish over the Christmas holidays with all deft coming in December. The champions have lost against Hungary, Crystal Palace and Leicester City.**

“Son was part of the South Korean side which won the Asian Games soccer gold in August but he was sluggish over the Christmas holidays with all deft coming in December. The champions have lost against Hungary, Crystal Palace and Leicester City.**

**Son thanks break for performance boost**

**Championships to host 2025 edition**

**Championships to host 2025 edition**

**The World number one Novak Djokovic won an emotional battle in Doha yesterday to continue his unbeaten run in the year and progress to the Qatar Open semi-finals.**

“Championships to host 2025 edition**

**Title race not over even if Liverpool beat City, says Kompany**

**Son thanks break for performance boost**

**South Korea forward Son Heung-min believes a break from international duty has helped him avoid a mid-season burnout as he remains de- termined to help his country end a 59-year Asian Cup drought.**

**Son was part of the South Korean side which won the Asian Games soccer gold in August but he was sluggish over the Christmas holidays with all deft coming in December. The champions have lost against Hungary, Crystal Palace and Leicester City.**

**Son thanks break for performance boost**
Roger Federer guides Swiss into final

Roger Federer beat Stefanos Tsitsipas to give defending champion Switzerland a spot in Hopman Cup final

The winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, Williams was made to work a little harder than expected by young Brit Katie Boulter in the United States’ final group tie, but prevailed in straight sets to make it three victories from as many outings as she prepares for the upcoming Australian Open.

Brits Boulter and Cameron Norrie won the tie 2-1 after chasing the deciding doubles, but dual Hopman winners Williams and Frances Tiafoe had lost their opening two ties and were already out of contention.

Williams’ 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) win over the 97th-ranked Boulter followed wins over Bencic and Sakkar earlier in the week.

Currently ranked 16th, Williams needs just one more Grand Slam singles title to equal Margaret Court’s haul.

Federer beat Stefanos Tsitsipas to give defending champion Switzerland a spot in Hopman Cup final

In the women’s singles, Maria Sakkari earlier in the week.

Sakkari’s 6-4, 6-3 win over the 97th-ranked Boulter followed wins over Bencic and Sakkar earlier in the week.

Williams’ 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) win over the 97th-ranked Boulter followed wins over Bencic and Sakkar earlier in the week.

Currently ranked 16th, Williams needs just one more Grand Slam singles title to equal Margaret Court’s haul.

The winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, Williams was made to work a little harder than expected by young Brit Katie Boulter in the United States’ final group tie, but prevailed in straight sets to make it three victories from as many outings as she prepares for the upcoming Australian Open.

Brits Boulter and Cameron Norrie won the tie 2-1 after chasing the deciding doubles, but dual Hopman winners Williams and Frances Tiafoe had lost their opening two ties and were already out of contention.

Williams’ 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) win over the 97th-ranked Boulter followed wins over Bencic and Sakkar earlier in the week.

Currently ranked 16th, Williams needs just one more Grand Slam singles title to equal Margaret Court’s haul.

The winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, Williams was made to work a little harder than expected by young Brit Katie Boulter in the United States’ final group tie, but prevailed in straight sets to make it three victories from as many outings as she prepares for the upcoming Australian Open.

Brits Boulter and Cameron Norrie won the tie 2-1 after chasing the deciding doubles, but dual Hopman winners Williams and Frances Tiafoe had lost their opening two ties and were already out of contention.

Williams’ 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) win over the 97th-ranked Boulter followed wins over Bencic and Sakkar earlier in the week.

Currently ranked 16th, Williams needs just one more Grand Slam singles title to equal Margaret Court’s haul.

The winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, Williams was made to work a little harder than expected by young Brit Katie Boulter in the United States’ final group tie, but prevailed in straight sets to make it three victories from as many outings as she prepares for the upcoming Australian Open.

Brits Boulter and Cameron Norrie won the tie 2-1 after chasing the deciding doubles, but dual Hopman winners Williams and Frances Tiafoe had lost their opening two ties and were already out of contention.

Williams’ 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) win over the 97th-ranked Boulter followed wins over Bencic and Sakkar earlier in the week.

Currently ranked 16th, Williams needs just one more Grand Slam singles title to equal Margaret Court’s haul.

The winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, Williams was made to work a little harder than expected by young Brit Katie Boulter in the United States’ final group tie, but prevailed in straight sets to make it three victories from as many outings as she prepares for the upcoming Australian Open.

Brits Boulter and Cameron Norrie won the tie 2-1 after chasing the deciding doubles, but dual Hopman winners Williams and Frances Tiafoe had lost their opening two ties and were already out of contention.

Williams’ 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) win over the 97th-ranked Boulter followed wins over Bencic and Sakkar earlier in the week.

Currently ranked 16th, Williams needs just one more Grand Slam singles title to equal Margaret Court’s haul.