

**Bahraini team make strong start at 2020 Dakar Rally**

Bahraini JCW X-Raid Team made a strong start yesterday to the 2020 Dakar Rally, which is being held for the first time in Saudi Arabia. **P16**

THE DAILY **tribune**

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**Pompeo hails Bahrain stances**



Pompeo

TDT | Manama

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has hailed Bahrain stances in light of recent regional developments.

"Bahraini Crown Prince and I underscored the importance of countering Iran's malign influence and threats to the region. I thanked him for his partnership in protecting American personnel and facilities in Bahrain," he tweeted yesterday.

Appearing on CNN's State of the Union, the secretary was immediately pressed by host Jake Tapper on Trump's Saturday night tweet warning Iran that America is prepared to hit non-military cultural targets if Iran were to retaliate.

"We will defend America, and the strikes that we took over this past week, including killing the terrorist Soleimani and we will continue to take if we need to. If we need to defend the American interest, we will do so," Pompeo insisted. "What President Trump said last night is consistent with what we have said all along."



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**Bahrain's unwavering support to OIC stressed**

Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa commended the pivotal role of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in advocating the issues that concern the Islamic nation, strengthening solidarity between member countries, coordinating their stances, unifying their efforts and defending the true image of Islam, based on tolerance and moderation.

He made the statement as he received yesterday, at Al Safriya Palace, OIC Secretary-General Dr Yousef bin Ahmad Al Oth-



His Majesty receives Dr Al Othaimeen.

aimeen, marking his visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

HM the King welcomed Dr Al Othaimeen and congratulated

him on the OIC 50th anniversary, lauding the pan-Islamic organisation's important achievements.

He also commended Dr Al

Othaimeen's dedicated efforts to enhance the OIC work procedures and performance and strengthen co-operation between Islamic countries in the economic, cultural, scientific and religious fields.

HM the King reiterated Bahrain's unwavering support to the organisation and commitment to its noble principles to continue its role in consolidating joint Islamic work towards achieving the goals and serving the interests of its member countries and peoples.

The meeting focused also on reviewing aspects of cooperation

between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in addition to other key Islamic and regional issues.

Dr Al Othaimeen expressed deepest thanks to HM the King for the warm welcome and good hospitality, hailing Bahrain's pivotal role, led by HM the King, as well as its contributions to Islamic issues and the OIC activities on all levels.

He lauded Bahrain's initiatives to nurture the values of tolerance and moderation and build bridges between the followers of different religions and cultures.

**'No nuke limits now'**

● Iran has previously violated the terms of the 2015 deal enacted to limit its nuclear capacity.

Tehran

Iran said on Sunday that it plans further roll back its commitments to a 2015 nuclear deal signed with global powers but would continue to cooperate with the UN nuclear watchdog, the IAEA.

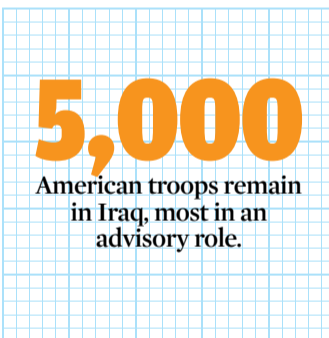
The country's state television cited a government statement as saying Iran would not respect any limits set down in the pact on the number of uranium enrichment centrifuges it could use.

This means that there would be no limits on Iran's enrichment capacity, the level to which uranium could be enriched, or its nuclear research and development. These would from now on be based on Iran's technical needs.

However, the report said Tehran's rolling back of its nuclear commitments could be reversible if the US lifts its sanctions.

Iran has previously violated

Iran retreats further from 2015 nuclear deal amid increased US tensions



the terms of the 2015 deal enacted to limit its nuclear capacity. It says it is a response to renewed US sanctions on the country.

The move comes after Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary

Guard Corps' foreign operations branch, the Quds Force, was killed in a US rocket strike at Baghdad International Airport on Friday.

The head of the Tehran-backed militia Kataib Hizbollah, Abu Mahdi Al Muhandis, was also killed in the strike - ordered by US President Donald Trump.

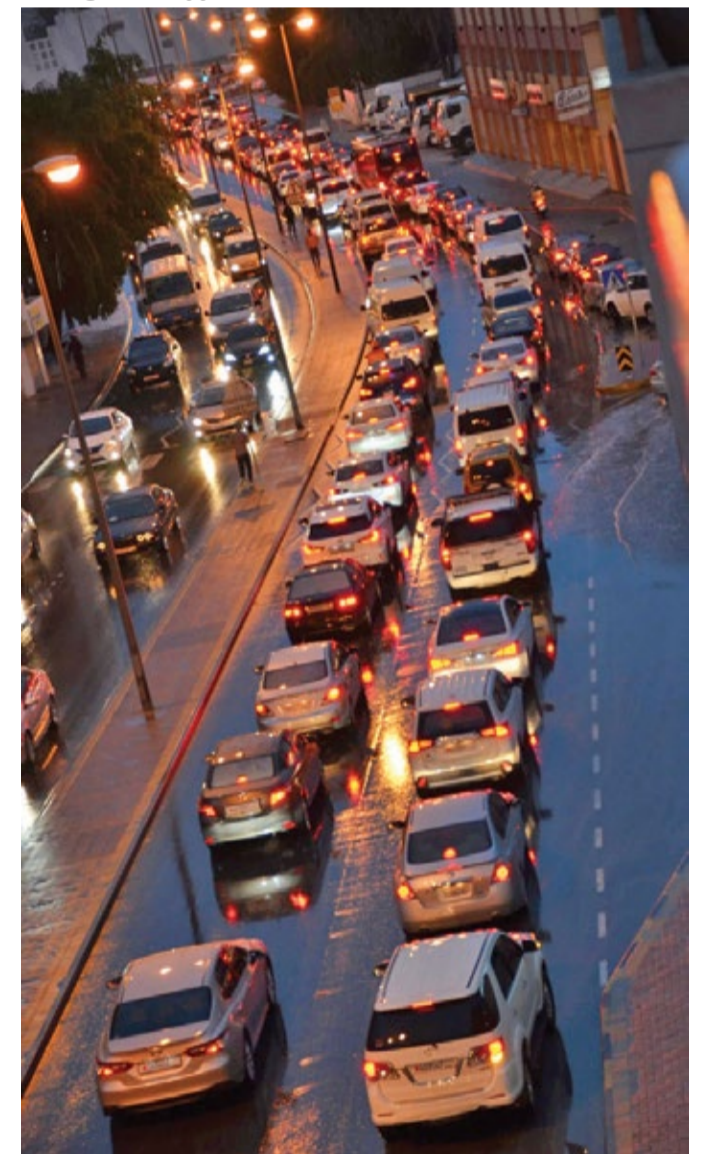
Separately, The Associated Press reported that there were several air strikes that targeted Iraqi militias north of Baghdad on Friday.

The US has, however, denied responsibility for those attacks.

The deaths of the two generals have brought tensions between Tehran and Washington to new heights. Iran has said it will respond to the US air strikes with "harsh revenge". Already, several rockets launched in Baghdad late on Saturday fell inside or near the Green Zones, which houses government offices and foreign offices, including the US embassy.

Some 5,000 US troops remain in Iraq, most in an advisory role. But earlier on Sunday, Iraq's parliament voted in favour of the expulsion of foreign troops from the country.

**Huge traffic snarl**



PIC BY SATHYAN PERAMBRA

Heavy rain brought traffic in Manama and neighbouring areas to its knees yesterday. Hundreds of motorists were stuck in the tailback. They had to wait for hours to get the line cleared. Among the most affected were citizens and residents returning from workplaces. Showers are expected to continue today as well. The General Directorate of Traffic has urged drivers to be cautious of the rain and follow the safety rules, including staying in the correct lane, not exceeding the speed limits and keeping the safety distance between vehicles. See Page 2

**DRONE STRIKE**

**Saudi 'not consulted'**

Riyadh

Saudi Arabia was not consulted by Washington over the US drone strike that killed Qassem Soleimani, an official from the Kingdom told AFP Sunday.

"The kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not consulted regarding the

US strike," the official said, requesting anonymity.

"In light of the rapid developments, the kingdom stresses the importance of exercising restraint to guard against all acts that may lead to escalation, with severe consequences."

Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry made a similar call for restraint



The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not consulted regarding the US strike.

SAUDI OFFICIAL

at the weekend and King Salman emphasised the need for measures to defuse tensions in a phone call on Saturday with Iraqi President Barham Saleh.

In a separate phone call with Iraq's Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman stressed "the need to make efforts to calm

the situation and de-escalate tensions," the official Saudi Press Agency reported.

The crown prince has instructed Prince Khalid bin Salman, the deputy defence minister, to travel to Washington and London in the next few days to urge restraint, the Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper reported.



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday received the Ambassador of the Italian Republic, Domenico Bellato, at Riffa Palace, to mark the end of the Ambassador's service in the Kingdom. HRH the Crown Prince highlighted the strength of ties between Bahrain and Italy across various sectors, which have facilitated a wide-range of investment opportunities benefiting both countries. HRH the Crown Prince recognised the Ambassador's efforts in further enhancing bilateral relations, and wished him success in his future endeavours. A number of regional and international issues of common interest were also discussed during the meeting. For his part, Mr Bellato expressed gratitude for the opportunity to meet HRH the Crown Prince, and noted HRH's continued support to bolstering Bahrain-Italy relations. The Minister of Finance and National Economy, Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, also attended the meeting.

## HRH Crown Prince edict to follow up on renewable energy efficiency plans

Manama

**H**is Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander, First Deputy Prime Minister, issued Edict 1/2020 to establish National Implementation Follow up Committee for the National Action Plans on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

The committee will comprise: The President of Sustainable Energy Authority (SEA), president of the committee, The CEO of the National Oil and Gas Authority (NOGA), representing NOGA, The CEO of the Supreme Council for the Environment (SCE), representing SCE, The Deputy CEO of Planning and

Projects, representing Electricity and Water Authority (EWA), The Assistant Undersecretary for Domestic and Foreign Trade, representing the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, The Assistant Undersecretary for Industrial Development, representing the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, The Assistant Undersecretary for Air Transport and Aviation Safety and Security, representing the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunication, The Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Services, representing the Ministry of Works, Municipal Affairs and Urban Planning, The Assistant Undersecretary for Joint Municipal Services, representing the Works Ministry,

The Assistant Undersecretary for Housing Projects, representing the Housing Ministry, The Director of Privatisation and Outsourcing, representing the Ministry of Finance and a representative from the Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister (OFDPM). The membership in the committee will be for a term of three years renewable.

The Committee meets periodically once every three months at the invitation of its president. The meetings are not valid unless the majority of its members are present, provided that the president is among them.

The Committee will take its decisions and recommendations by the majority of the votes of the members present. In case votes are equal, the side of the

Head of the Committee will prevail.

The Committee presents its recommendations to the Higher Committee for Natural Resources and Economic Security for approval or decision.

A representative of the United Nations Development Program is invited to the meetings. Edict 1/2017 to form a Committee to follow up the implementation of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan and the National Renewable Energy Action Plan and their initiatives is repealed.

The edict stated that the ministers, each in his respective capacity, will implement this edict that will come into effect on the day following the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

## 'BDF steadily moving towards highest military levels'



Marshal Shaikh Khalifa chairs the meeting.

Manama

**B**ahrain Defence Force (BDF) is steadily moving forward towards the highest standards of military advancement and administrative development thanks to the support and directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander, and to the dedication of its staff, BDF Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa has said.

The BDF is fully committed to the implementation of the HM the King to boost the level of

readiness and ensure the necessary preparations by all units in accordance with the highest levels of modern and advanced armament and careful training.

This empowers them to carry out all the duties assigned to them with competence and aptitude, the Commander-in-Chief added as he received senior officers at the BDF General Command.

Present at the meeting were Defence Minister Lieutenant-General Abdullah bin Hassan A Nuaimi, Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant-General Theyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi, Defence

Ministry's Undersecretary Major-General Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa and Naval Captain HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed was briefed on the various military and administrative development, preparation and training plans and programs that contribute to raising the level of combat and administrative readiness within all BDF units.

The Commander-in-Chief wished the officers, each in their respective capacity, success in the service of the Kingdom.

## Strong Egypt ties stressed

'Bahrain-Egypt ties a model in bilateral relations to be emulated'

Manama

**S**peaker of the Council of Representatives, Fawzia Zainal, has affirmed that the deep-rooted Bahraini-Egyptian ties are a distinguished role model for relations between countries.

In an interview with the Egyptian "Al Akhbar" newspaper, the speaker stressed that Bahraini women are lucky because the kingdom's leadership believes in the importance of their role and influence in society, and therefore paved the way for them to assume their responsibilities in building the nation.

They are also lucky because the Bahraini citizens have a long history of civilisational and cultural awareness, which helped women to participate in public life with confidence and competence, she added.

She indicated that Bahraini women had joined public education as early as the 1920s, and then obtained the right to political participation, stressing that after His Majesty King Hamad



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Bahrain has become a leader in ensuring women their full rights thanks to the National Action Charter which guaranteed their effective participation in public life.

MS ZAINAL

bin Isa Al Khalifa's Accession to the Throne in 1999, HM the King's Reform Project was launched, and provided Bahraini women with all the legislative and legal tools that have consolidated their role, and contributed to their success in attaining multiple national achievements.

The speaker asserted that the Bahraini Women's Day is celebrated every December 1 to highlight the Bahraini women's achievements across various fields, noting that Bahraini women have become basic partners in the kingdom's sus-

tainable development march, alongside men.

She affirmed that Bahrain has become a leader in ensuring women their full rights thanks to the National Action Charter which guaranteed their effective participation in public life, which enabled them to prove their distinguished abilities, citing the election of the first woman at the helm of the Council of Representatives, the success of six women to win six seats at the elected Representatives Council, and the appointment of nine women as members of the Shura Council.

## Rain affects normal life across the Kingdom

TDT | Manama

**H**eavy down-pour affected normal life across the Kingdom yesterday.

Many areas were flooded and Works Ministry teams instantly got into action to drain water from roads.

Huge traffic jams were reported throughout the country with many waiting for hours to get the lines cleared.

In a statement issued, the Ministry of Interior asked motorists to exercise care while adhering to traffic rules and regulations.

The Meteorological Directorate has forecast a cloudy weather today with scattered rain showers that may become thundery.



Children play in puddle after heavy showers yesterday.

PIC BY FABI



A co-worker holds an umbrella for a mechanic who is repairing a car at a workshop near Zinj.

PIC BY PRADEEP PURAVANKARA

## Turkish decision to send troops to Libya rapped

Manama

**T**he Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain has condemned the decision of the Republic of Turkey to send military forces to the state of Libya, stressing that this decision is a rejected interference in the internal affairs of Libya and a violation of international legitimacy and relevant Security Council resolutions.

It added that the decision contradicts with the Arab stance adopted by the Arab League on December 31, 2019, and impedes efforts to restore peace and stability throughout Libya.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs urges the international community to fulfil its responsibilities in addressing this development, which constitutes a threat to Arab national security and to the entire region.

It stresses the need to back all efforts to eliminate terrorism and deter all terrorist organisations in Libya and support international efforts seeking a

comprehensive settlement and the restoration of the national state and its institutions, in order for it to play its role in achieving development and prosperity for the brotherly Libyan people.

Libya's eastern-based Parliament yesterday rejected an agreement that would allow Ankara to send troops to Libya.

The Libyan House of Representatives (HoR) in Tobruk voted against a deployment requested by the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA).

The Western-based GNA had asked for military help from Turkey, and the parliament in Ankara on Thursday voted in favour of the deployment of troops.

As well as voting against the deployment and cooperation with Turkey, the HoR also voted unanimously to refer GNA Prime Minister Fayeze Serraj to be prosecuted for "high treason" because of the deals signed with Ankara under his watch. The Libyan deputies also voted to cut relations with Turkey.

# Bahrain Embassy 'assisting citizens leave Iraq' amid escalating tensions

All Bahraini citizens in Iraq will receive required attention and support, says Kingdom's embassy

● There had been fears of a volley of rocket attacks following a warning from a hard-line Hashed faction for Iraqis to move away from US forces by Sunday afternoon.

● Iraq's foreign ministry said it had summoned US ambassador Matthew Tueller to condemn American strikes on Iraq.

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Embassy in Iraq has been receiving calls from citizens, who wanted to return to the Kingdom following escalation of clashes in the country.

The embassy stated that it is working with airlines to ensure their safe return to the Kingdom as soon as possible.

"All Bahraini citizens in Iraq will receive required attention and support," the embassy stated.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has warned citizens against travelling to Iraq amidst the recent developments.

"The Kingdom of Bahrain is following the development of events in the brotherly Republic of Iraq that came as a result of the condemned terrorist acts which the Kingdom previously denounced, stressing the need to de-escalate in order to overcome this period, and to address all forms of violence, extremism and terrorism," the ministry stated.

"The Kingdom also stresses the importance of immediate action to be taken by the international community, affirming the need to take all necessary measures to ensure security and stability in the region because of its vital and strategic importance for the whole world," it added.

Meanwhile, Iraq's parliament yesterday urged the government to remove thousands of Amer-

ican troops from the country, stepping up pressure over the US killing of a top Iranian general in Baghdad.

US installations were also facing new military stresses, with missiles slamming into the Baghdad enclave where the US embassy is located and an air base north of the capital housing American troops.

Ties have deteriorated after an American precision drone strike on the Baghdad international airport on Friday that killed Iran's Major General Qassem Soleimani and top Iraqi military figure Abu Mahdi Al Muhandis.

Iraq's foreign ministry summoned the US ambassador, while caretaker premier Adel Abdel Mahdi attended an extraordinary parliamentary session to slam the strike as a "political assassination."

He joined 168 lawmakers — just enough for quorum in Iraq's 329-seat parliament — to discuss the removal of US troops.

Some 5,200 US soldiers are stationed across Iraqi bases to support local troops preventing a resurgence of Daesh.

They are deployed as part of the broader international coalition, invited by the Iraqi government in 2014 to help fight Daesh.

"The parliament has voted to commit the Iraqi government to cancel its request to the international coalition for help to fight IS," speaker Mohammed Halbusi announced, using another acronym for Daesh.

The cabinet would have to approve any decision but the premier had earlier indicated support for a removal.

"We face two main choices,"



Iraqi lawmakers convened to vote on US troop presence in Iraq yesterday.

he told MPs: either immediately voting for foreign troops to leave or revisiting their mandate through a parliamentary process.

Hard-line parliamentarians with ties to the Hashed Al Shaabi military force, which is close to Iran, had demanded a tougher decision calling for the immediate expulsion of all foreign troops.

No Kurdish and most Sunni MPs boycotted the session as they were more supportive of a US troop presence, seen as a counterweight to Iran.

They had been threatened by Hashed-linked MPs, who said they would be seen as having "betrayed" Iraq if they boycotted.

Tom Warrick, a former US official and current fellow at the Atlantic Council, said Soleimani and pro-Iran factions within the Hashed had

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The Kingdom also stresses the importance of immediate action to be taken by the international community to ensure security and stability in the region.

FOREIGN MINISTRY

long sought the US's exit.

"If US forces do end up withdrawing, it could grant Soleimani a post-humous victory," Warrick told AFP.

As the session got under way, the US-led coalition announced it was suspending its Iraq operations due to deadly rocket attacks on their bases.

"This has limited our ca-

capacity to conduct training with partners and to support their operations against Daesh and we have therefore paused these activities, subject to continuous review," it said.

There had been fears of a volley of rocket attacks following a warning from a hard-line Hashed faction for Iraqis to move away from US forces by Sunday afternoon.

Already, increased tensions prompted NATO to suspend its training activities in Iraq and a US defence official told AFP American-led coalition forces would "limit" operations.

Iraq's foreign ministry said it had summoned US ambassador Matthew Tueller to condemn American strikes on Iraq.

"They were a blatant violation of Iraqi sovereignty," the ministry said in a statement, and "contradict the agreed-upon missions of the international coalition."

The ministry also said it submitted complaints to the United Nations Security Council over the strikes, asking it to condemn Soleimani's death as an "assassination."

## Gulf Air to evacuate citizens from Iraq

Manama

Bahrain's national carrier Gulf Air, announced that it would provide flights to evacuate its passengers from Iraq. In a statement issued

yesterday, Gulf Air said that work is underway with the Iraqi relevant agencies, in co-ordination with the Foreign Ministry, represented by Bahrain's Embassy in Baghdad.

## Proposal to reduce Ramadan working hours rejected

TDI | Manama

A parliamentary proposal to reduce the number of working hours to four and a half hours in government offices during Ramadan has been rejected by the Government.

Parliamentarians wanted to reduce the number of working hours in government offices from six hours to four and a half hours.

However, the proposal was rejected by the government. A

government committee that examined the proposal stated that such a change would negatively impact the quality of services provided to citizens during the month of Ramadan.

The committee stated that the reduction is too much and could not be approved. "The reduction is too high and not needed at the time."

"Such a change could have repercussions for citizens as well. The change would put pressure on the private sector to reduce the working hours

as well." Currently, the working hours at government bodies such as ministries, public authorities and institutions is from 8 am to 2pm.

The Daily Tribune reported previously that MPs were lobbying to reduce the number of working hours in Ramadan.

According to the MPs, the working hours needed to be reduced as the employees at government institutions would be observing fast in Ramadan and needed more rest time.



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# Asian bought 3,000 narcotic pills 'only to cure headache'

Defendant was arrested at Bahrain International Airport upon his arrival from home country

● The pills were hidden along with several other items in his luggage.

● Further investigations uncovered that he was aiming to sell the pills in the Kingdom.

TDT | Manama

An Asian man justified having 3,000 narcotic pills in his possession as he needed them to cure his headache, the High Criminal Court heard.

"I only bought the pills to relieve my pain," the defendant told Prosecutors.

The Asian man was arrested at Bahrain International Airport by customs officials.

He was referred to the Public

“I thought the pills would cure my headache and I bought them for BD500.”

DEFENDANT

Prosecution and he was charged with attempting to smuggle the pills into Bahrain with the intention to sell them.

The customs official who initially doubted him told Prosecutors that the defendant's behaviour was suspicious and thus they decided to extensively search him as well as his luggage.

"We asked him if he was carrying any banned substances. And he said no," the officer told Prosecutors.

The pills were hidden along with several items in his luggage.

gation.

"I thought the pills would cure my headache. This is why I bought them for BD500," the Asian man revealed.

Further investigations uncovered that he was aiming to sell the pills inside Bahrain.

The defendant is being tried before the High Criminal Court which adjourned the case until January 17, 2020, to issue its verdict.

**Duo jailed for blocking public road**

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has sentenced two Bahraini men to three years each for setting tyres on fire to block a public road.

Ironically, the duo reportedly told Prosecutors that they had committed their crime in support of Palestine.

According to court files, the pair set the tyres alight on May 30 last year after a riot broke out in the area.

It's said that other unknown men took part in the event, but their identity remains undiscovered as police investigations identified only the convicted pair.

"We wanted to support Palestine, this is why we decided to block the roads so people give attention to their case," the first defendant said.

**Mental health test for robbery suspects**

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has ordered for a man and his uncle to be mentally evaluated after they were arrested for committing robberies.

The duo were nabbed after an Asian man reported to police that he was robbed by two men, who posed as police officers in plain clothes before stealing his valuables and fleeing the scene.

The uncle is in his thirties while the other defendant is only 18 years of age.

During investigations, the pair blamed each other for the robberies they committed with the 18-year-old boy telling Prosecutors that he wouldn't have done them without being asked by his uncle.

"My uncle came to me and told me that we would go and rob Asian men. I told him that I didn't want to join him. But he convinced me to accompany him. Therefore, I went with him," the 18-year-old boy told Prosecutors.

"He stopped an Asian man and attempted to rob him. He involved me in the robbery and then he gave me BD50," he added.

However, the uncle blamed his nephew, stating that the latter was the one who incited him to rob the Asian man.

## State-of-the-art expo, convention centre 'to be completed in 2022'

Manama

Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Minister, Essam Khalaf, and Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister, Zayed Al Zayani, has signed a contract to build the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Sakhir.

In a statement to the Bahrain News Agency (BNA), Industry Minister said that the project had been awarded by the Tender Board to Cebarco Bahrain S.P.C, noting that the facility will be completed by mid 2022.

Located next to the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir, the new 308,000-sq-m international exhibition and convention centre will be built on a 1.3-million-square metre land lot, and will be five times as big as the current exhibition centre in Sanabis, the minister said, adding that the project will be the largest of its kind in the region, and will consolidate the kingdom's status as a leading tourism and commercial destination in the near future.



Mr Khalaf, Mr Al Zayani and other senior government officials at the meeting.

Works Minister affirmed that the project will serve the exhibitions sector, and develop the national economy, as it will create more jobs and attract more investments to the kingdom.

He said that the new centre will include 10 exhibition halls with a total area of 95,000 square

metres along with all the necessary services, in addition to areas dedicated for retail and events.

The facility will also include a 4,500-sq-m conference hall which will be divided into three separate hi-tech rooms, in addition to 27 small and medium conference and meeting rooms with

a total area of about 1,700 sq m, as well as two Majlises for VIPs.

The centre will also include an external gate, rooms for guards and control, and parking lots that can accommodate up to 16,000 vehicles. The parking lots of the sports city will also be used as additional parking facilities.

The new exhibition and convention centre, with a 149,000-square-metre built area, was designed and supervised by the German consultant Co KG and Tilke GmbH, who also designed and oversaw the implementation of the Bahrain International Circuit.

## Saudi, Bahraini Customs sign deal to enhance trade

Riyadh

Saudi and Bahraini Customs have signed in Riyadh an agreement of mutual recognition of the Authorised Economic Operator Programme (AEO).

The agreement aims to enhance the security of the supply chain and the advantages of trade facilitation offered by the AEO.

The agreement was signed on the Saudi side by Governor of the General Customs Authority Ahmed bin Abdul Aziz Al Haqbani and on the Bahraini side by Shaikh Ahmed bin Hamad Al Khalifa, president of Bahrain Customs.

Mr Al Haqbani said that the sign-



The agreement aims to enhance the security of the supply chain and the advantages of trade facilitation offered by the AEO.

ing of the agreement reinforced the historical relationship between the two countries, which was witnessing a remarkable development in all areas of customs.

Mr Al Haqbani said that one of the most important goals achieved by the mutual recognition agreement is to enhance intra-trade and overcome obstacles that limit the flexibility of trade exchange, in addition to strengthening and consolidating the principle of partnership between customs and the private sector.

He said that the agreement would contribute to the growth of the volume of trade exchange and support the economy of the two countries.

## Saudi to participate in anti-corruption conference in Rabat

Riyadh

The Kingdom is taking part in an anti-corruption conference in Morocco, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

The president of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, Mazen bin

Ibrahim Al-Khamous, will head Saudi Arabia's delegation at the two-day Conference of the States Parties to the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention in Rabat from Jan. 7.

The conference will discuss a number of important topics, including the implementation of the Arab Anti-Cor-

ruption Convention, follow-ups to the previous meeting, reports and recommendations.

A set of resolutions proposed by member states will be presented to the conference for approval.

The conference will elect the president of the third session and, also on

the agenda, is the Kingdom's invitation to hold the next session in Riyadh in 2022.

The Kingdom joined the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention in 2012. It contains provisions concerning preventive measures to prevent corruption, to determine the criminal acts

as stipulated therein and to recover assets.

It also seeks to activate measures aimed at preventing, combating, and exposing corruption in all its forms, as well as all related crimes, prosecuting perpetrators and enhancing Arab cooperation.

## world

## Japanese woman turns 117 years old, extends record as world's oldest person



116-year-old Japanese woman Kane Tanaka celebrates during a ceremony to recognise her as the world's oldest person living and world's oldest woman living by the Guinness World Records in Fukuoka

Reuters | Tokyo

Kane Tanaka has extended her record as the world's oldest person by celebrating her 117th birthday at a nursing home in Fukuoka in southern Japan.

Tanaka marked her birthday with a party yesterday along with staff and friends at the nursing home, television footage from local broadcaster TVQ Kyushu Broadcasting Co showed.

Tanaka, whose birthday was on Jan. 2, took a bite from a slice of her big birthday cake. "Tasty," she said with a smile. "I want some more."

Tanaka was last year confirmed as the oldest living person, aged 116 years 66 days old as of March 9, according to Guinness World Records.

Tanaka's record age is symbolic of Japan's fast-ageing population, which coupled with its falling birthrate is raising concerns about labor shortages and

prospects for future economic growth.

The number of babies born in Japan fell an estimated 5.9% last year to fewer than 900,000 for the first time since the government started compiling data in 1899, according to Japan's welfare ministry.

Tanaka was born prematurely in 1903 and married Hideo Tanaka in 1922, Guinness World Records said. The couple had four children and adopted a fifth.

## Britain's navy to escort ships through Hormuz



Reuters | London

Britain's navy will accompany UK-flagged ships through the Strait of Hormuz to provide protection after the US killing of Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani inflamed tensions in the region.

Britain's defence minister, Ben Wallace, ordered the HMS Montrose and HMS Defender to prepare to return to escort duties in the major oil shipping route as Prime Minister Boris Johnson came in for criticism for his silence over the killing.

Media reports have said Johnson is on holiday in the Caribbean.

"The government will take all necessary steps to protect our ships and citizens at this time," Wallace said in a statement.

Britain was forced to defend its ships through the world's most important shipping route last year after Iranian commandos seized a British-flagged tanker in the Strait.

British forces had previously captured an Iranian oil tanker near Gibraltar that was accused of violating sanctions on Syria. The killing of Soleimani has raised fears that tankers could be targeted again.

Wallace said he had spoken to his U.S. counterpart, Defence Secretary Jeremy Corbyn, the outgoing leader of the opposition Labour



Britain's defence minister, Ben Wallace

Party, said he had written to the British prime minister to ask what was being done to protect UK nationals and others in the region.

"Boris Johnson should have immediately cut short his holiday to deal with an issue that could have grave consequences for the UK and the world," he said in a statement.

## Japan 'Tuna King' buys new year catch for \$1.8 million



Kiyoshi Kimura paid 193 million yen (\$1.8 million) to purchase a 276-kilogramme (608-pound) bluefin tuna

Tokyo

A celebrated Japanese sushi businessman, nicknamed "Tuna King", paid \$1.8 million for a giant tuna at New Year's auction at Tokyo's main fish market yesterday.

Kiyoshi Kimura, who runs a successful sushi restaurant chain, paid 193 million yen (\$1.8 million) to purchase a 276-kilogramme (608-pound) bluefin

tuna, caught off the Aomori region in northern Japan.

"This is the best," Kimura told reporters after the pre-dawn auction.

"Yes, this is expensive, isn't it? I want our customers to eat very tasty ones this year too," he said.

Media-savvy Kimura regularly pays top price at the first auction of the year at the Japanese capital's main fish market, making himself and his busi-

ness a fixture in national news during this season.

In last year's new year auction, Kimura paid a record \$3.1 million to win a 278-kilogramme (612-pound) tuna.

The traditional auction is now being held in a new market in an area called Toyosu.

The world-famous Tsukiji market, which had long served as a popular tourist attraction in an area packed with restaurants and shops, closed in 2018.

## Al-Shabaab jihadists attack US-Kenya military base

● Militants attack Camp Simba in Manda Bay

● The US military command for Africa, AFRICOM, confirmed the attack

Nairobi

Jihadists from Somalia's Al-Shabaab group yesterday attacked a military base used by US and Kenyan forces in Kenya's coastal Lamu region, the army spokesman said.

The strike on the base known as Camp Simba in Manda Bay near the picturesque tourist drawcard of Lamu Island is the latest by the group in Kenya since Nairobi sent troops across the border in 2011.

Kenya's army spokesman Colonel Paul Njuguna said in a statement that at 5:30am "an attempt was made to breach security at Manda Air Strip."

"The attempted breach was successfully repulsed. Four terrorists bodies have so far been found. The airstrip is safe. Arising from the unsuccessful breach a fire broke out affecting some of the fuel tanks located at the airstrip."



Al-Shabaab last month detonated a car-bomb in Mogadishu, killing 81 people

He said the fire had been brought under control "and standard security procedures are now on-going."

The US military command for Africa, AFRICOM, confirmed there had been an attack in a brief statement.

"US Africa Command acknowledges there was an attack at Manda Bay Airfield, Kenya and is monitoring the situation. Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the incident. As facts and details emerge, we will provide an update."

Lamu County Commissioner Irungu Macharia said the assailants "have been repulsed."

Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement, saying it had "successfully stormed the heavily fortified military base and have now taken effective control of part of the base."

The group said there had been both Kenyan and American casualties, but this could not be immediately verified.

Al-Shabaab said the attack was part of its "Al-Quds (Jerusalem) shall never be Judaized" campaign -- a term it first used during an attack on the upscale Dusit hotel complex in Nairobi in January last year that left 21 people dead.

# At least 30 dead in raid on Tripoli military school: ministry

● The military school is in al-Hadba al-Khadra

● The southern part of Tripoli has seen fierce fighting since last April

● More than 280 civilians and more than 2,000 fighters have been killed since the start of Haftar's assault on Tripoli

AFP | Tripoli

At least 30 people were killed and dozens injured on Saturday in an air strike on a military school in the Libyan capital Tripoli, a ministry spokesman said.

"An air raid on the military school of Tripoli killed 28 cadets and injured dozens more," Amin al-Hashemi, spokesman for the health ministry of the Government of National Accord (GNA) said.

At the time of the strike the cadets were gathered on a parade ground before going to their dormitories, he added.

The military school is in al-Hadba al-Khadra, a residential sector of the Libyan capital.



Emergency personnel pull a gurney with a victim on it from an air strike on a military school in the capital Tripoli

The GNA health ministry called for blood donors to go to hospitals and blood banks to help those injured.

The southern part of Tripoli has seen fierce fighting since last April, when military strongman Khalifa Haftar began an offensive against the GNA.

Libya was plunged into chaos with the toppling and killing of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi in a 2011 NATO-backed uprising. It has since become

divided between the GNA and rival authorities based in the country's east.

GNA forces accused those loyal to Haftar of the strike, posting photos of the victims and the wounded on Facebook.

However, pro-Haftar forces have not claimed responsibility for the attack.

More than 280 civilians and more than 2,000 fighters have been killed since the start of Haftar's assault on

Tripoli, according to the United Nations. The fighting has also displaced some 146,000 people.

The UN Security Council last month renewed its calls for a ceasefire in Libya, and urged foreign actors to honour an arms embargo on the country -- which Jordan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates have regularly violated, according to a confidential UN report seen said.

# Cambodia building collapse toll hits 29 as search enters 3rd day



Rescuers are looking for the dead and injured in the rubble of a collapsed under-construction hotel in Cambodia

● Officials had initially estimated that 30 workers remained trapped

● Five children were among the dead

● Worker advocacy groups point to low safety standards that raise the risk of accidents at construction sites

Keo | Cambodia

The death toll from a building collapse in southern Cambodia rose to 29 yesterday morning, as a frantic search for the dead and injured entered a third day.

Hundreds of soldiers and rescuers worked through the night using excavators, drills and power saws to clear concrete after an under-construction seven-storey hotel in seaside Kep province crumbled to the ground on Friday.

Officials had initially estimated that 30 workers remained trapped under the flattened structure.

But provincial spokesman Ros Udong told AFP the number of injured and dead was higher than anticipated, as more bodies were recovered in the early hours of Sunday.

Apart from the 29 dead, Udong said, 23 survivors were pulled out.

Five children were among the dead, according to rescuers.

Cambodia is undergoing a construction boom, with hotels, high-rises and casinos springing up under little regulatory oversight.

The tough -- and often dangerous -- work is undertaken by an estimated 200,000 construction workers, mostly unskilled, reliant on day wages and not protected by union rules, according to the International Labour Organisation.

Worker advocacy groups point to low safety standards that raise the risk of accidents at construction sites -- which often serve as the temporary homes for the labourers and their families.

Worker Ei Kosal said on Saturday that he, his wife and two other women were having a meal on site when the building collapsed.

Their two companions were crushed and immediately killed.

"I did not expect to survive... it's like I have just been reborn," Kosal said while recuperating at the hospital.

In June, 28 people died after the collapse of a building under construction in Sihanoukville, a beach town flush with Chinese investment as Cambodia seeks to make it the "New Macau".

# Austria's ministry says facing 'serious cyber attack'

Vienna

Austria's foreign ministry is facing a "serious cyber attack", it said late Saturday, warning another country could be responsible.

"Due to the gravity and nature of the attack, it cannot be excluded that it is a targeted attack by a state actor," it said in a statement with the interior ministry shortly before 11.00 pm (2200 GMT), adding that the attack was ongoing.

"In the past, other European countries have been the target



"Due to the gravity and nature of the attack, it cannot be excluded that it is a targeted attack by a state actor," the Austrian foreign ministry said

of similar attacks," it continued.

Immediate measures had

been taken and a "coordination committee" set up, it said, with-

out elaborating.

The attack came as Austria's Greens on Saturday gave the go-ahead to a coalition with the country's conservatives at a party congress in Salzburg, removing the last obstacle to the unprecedented alliance.

The German government's IT network in 2018 was hit by a cyberattack.

Last year the EU adopted powers to punish those outside the bloc who launch cyberattacks that cripple hospitals and banks, sway elections and steal company secrets or funds.

# This story has legs: Cambodia 'bug cafe' serves up insect tapas



Bugs Cafe in Cambodia is mixing cocktail culture with creepy crawler fare



Insects are eaten by two billion people worldwide, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization



The offerings at Bugs Cafe include crickets, grasshoppers, tarantulas and scorpions



Bugs Cafe is located in the tourist town of Siem Reap

Siem Reap | Cambodia

Ant spring rolls, silkworm taro croquettes and a "bug mac" -- Cambodia's first insect tapas restaurant is mixing cocktail culture with creepy crawler fare.

At the busy "Bugs Cafe" in the tourist town of Siem Reap, chef Seiha Soeun stands over a sizzling wok in the kitchen tossing

in crickets, grasshoppers, tarantulas and scorpions.

Sold at street vendors or in Instagram-friendly tourist spots, insects aren't new to Cambodian palates.

But they are usually served one way: fried, with dipping sauce, and maybe a cold beer.

"We have a different kind of menu," Seiha said, adding that he practiced making the

"bug mac" -- a patty of pureed ant, bee, silkworm and cricket topped with a slice of cheese and pickle -- many times to get it just right.

On a recent evening at the restaurant, French co-founder Davy Blouzard greeted curious diners and explained the menu.

"We want to show that it's possible to make quality food with insects," he said.

There is sweet potato cream with bee larvae, silkworm and mango flambe, and even a cricket cheesecake dessert.

Insects are eaten by two billion people worldwide, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

Besides being a cheap source of protein, insect cuisine is also a possible answer to ris-

ing concern over the environmental impact of livestock farming.

As dinner orders picked up, tourists from as far afield as Britain, Poland and Malaysia all happily -- if a little squeamishly -- crunched away.

Servers worked the room wearing shirts emblazoned with the words "I HATE INSECTS",

with the "H" crossed out.

British backpacker Joshua Bean, 23, said he knew he had to visit the cafe after seeing an ad for the unusual eatery at his hostel.

He didn't flinch at the "juicy" silkworms and an assortment of other insects piled up on his plate.

"It's not the kind of thing you get back home," he said.

# Aus counts cost after day of fury

● Tens of thousands of volunteer firefighters have been hailed in Australia and across the world

● Celebrities have pledged or raised millions of dollars to support firefighters and fire-affected communities

● US singer Pink who tweeted Saturday that she was donating US\$500,000

● Australian actress Nicole Kidman matched that pledge

● Sunday brought milder conditions including cooler air and some rainfall in New South Wales and neighbouring Victoria state

● Queen Elizabeth II yesterday sent a message of condolence of the governor-general Australia's capital

AFP | Batemans Bay, Australia

Australians yesterday counted the cost from a day of catastrophic bushfires that caused "extensive damage" across swathes of the country and took the death toll from the long-running crisis to 24.

Hundreds of properties were destroyed and one man died trying to save a friend's home in the severe conditions -- among the worst in Australia's months-long bushfire crisis.

In the country's southeast the skies turned black and ash rained on isolated communities.

"We're in uncharted territory," New South Wales state Premier Gladys Berejiklian said.

"We can't pretend that this is something that we have experienced before. It's not," she said. "Several townships who never ever experienced a threat of bushfire were at threat of being completely wiped out."

The severity of the crisis -- which has seen an area roughly double the size of Belgium burnt -- saw Prime Minister Scott Morrison announce the largest military call-up in living memory, mobilising up to 3,000



The the crisis has seen an area roughly double the size of Belgium burnt

reservists to assist exhausted volunteer firefighters.

But in rare public criticism, the New South Wales rural fire service chief said he only found out about the deployment from media reports -- the latest criticism of the prime minister's response to the disaster.

"I was disappointed and frustrated in the middle of one of our worst days with massive displacement and movement of people," Shane Fitzsimmons said.

"We spent a fair amount of the day yesterday trying to seek clarity."

Fitzsimmons -- whose own



Tens of thousands of volunteer firefighters have been hailed in Australia and across the world for their unrelenting battle against the blazes

father was killed firefighting -- has been the face of the crisis in Australia's most populous state, tearfully informing the public about the death of volunteer

firefighters and pinning a medal on one of their toddlers in a haunting image.

Tens of thousands of volunteer firefighters have been hailed in Australia and across the world for their unrelenting battle against the blazes.

Queen Elizabeth II on Sunday sent a message of condolence of the governor-general, her representative in Australia, saying she was "deeply saddened" by the fires, and thanked the emer-

gency services "who put their own lives in danger" to help communities.

Celebrities have pledged or raised millions of dollars to support firefighters and fire-affected communities, including US singer Pink who tweeted Saturday that she was donating US\$500,000.

Australian actress Nicole Kidman matched that pledge.

"Our family's support, thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected by the fires all over Australia," she posted on Instagram. "We are donating \$500,000 to the Rural Fire Services who are all doing and giving so much right now."

## Easing conditions

Yesterday brought milder conditions including cooler air and some rainfall in New South Wales and neighbouring Victoria state -- where firefighters also battled huge infernos spurred on by winds and lightning strikes.

That will give authorities opportunity to get fires under control and take stock of the damage.

But some communities were still under threat from out-of-control blazes, particularly in and around the town of Eden in New South Wales near the Victorian border.

"Visibility was down to about 50 metres, if that, and we had lots of debris falling out of the sky and a lot of white ash," John Steele, 73, who was evacuated with his wife from their rural property north of Eden late Saturday, said.

## Australia's bushfires turn New Zealand's skies bright orange



A view of orange skies in Auckland, New Zealand

Reuters | Melbourne

Smoke from raging bushfires in Australia blanketed parts of neighbouring New Zealand yesterday, turning the sky over Auckland a bright orange.

The city is more than 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) from southeastern Australia, parts of which have been devastated by bushfires that have raged for months.

Local police have asked residents to stop calling the nation's emergency hotline to report the issue.

Zimena Dormer-Didovich told Reuters that it was unsettling and felt "apocalyptic".

"We're in Auckland, New Zealand. That's why this is so shocking to us - we're so far away yet this smoke is so intense," Dormer-Didovich said, adding how the few hours of exposure to the smoke were being felt.

"My 14-year-old's asthma is playing up, and I'm starting to notice that my breathing is slightly affected too."

The bushfires in Australia have killed 24 people, destroyed more than 1,500 homes and burnt through more than 5.25 million hectares (13 million acres) since September.

# Six Germans killed as car ploughs into pedestrians in Italy



More than 150 emergency workers were mobilised following the tragedy at Lutago in the Italian Alps, and a field hospital was set up by the roadside to provide first aid



A further 11 people were injured following the crash outside a nightclub in Northern Italy

● The accident happened at around 1:15 am (0015 GMT) in the village of Lutago near the Austrian border in the South Tyrol region

● the driver was a 28-year-old man who lived locally

AFP | Rome

Six Germans were killed when a car ploughed into them after they left a nightclub in the Italian Alps on Sunday, emergency services said, adding that 11 others were injured.

Media reports said the driver may have been drunk.

The accident happened at around 1:15 am (0015 GMT) in the picturesque Aurina valley, in the village of Lutago near the Austrian border in the South Tyrol region, which is popular with skiers.

The group of Germans had spent the evening at the nightclub and were near their bus when the car slammed into them at high-speed.

Some of them were propelled dozens of metres by the impact.

Six Germans were killed, a fire service official in Lutago told AFP. Eleven other people were injured, including two from the region.

Two who were in a very serious condition were flown by helicopter to a hospital in Innsbruck in Austria. The nine others were taken to regional hospitals.

According to Rainews24, the driver was a 28-year-old man who lived locally and who "may have had a high level of alcohol in his blood".

He was arrested and put in hospital under a police guard.

More than 150 emergency workers were mobilised following the tragedy, and a field hospital was set up by the roadside to provide first aid.

Lutago, located at an altitude of 970 metres (3,200 feet) in the picturesque Aurina valley, is popular with tourists who use the ski slopes of Klausberg and Speikboden.

The village of about 800 residents is the location for a popular Italian television series "A un passo del ciel" ("One step from heaven").

Last week, three Germans - a woman and two girls, one of them aged seven - were killed in an avalanche in South Tyrol.

# Diver killed in Australia shark attack

● Australia has one of the world's highest incidences of shark attacks

Sydney

A man has been mauled to death by a suspected great white shark at a popular diving spot off Australia's southwestern coast, officials said Sunday.



The man was attacked at Cull Island near the town of Esperance in Western Australia state, the state's primary industries department said in a statement.

"A man received fatal injuries after being bitten by a reported white shark," the department said.

SurfLife Saving Western Australia said he was believed to be a diver.

The fatal attack, the first in Australia this year, is the second in the area in less than three

years.

A 17-year-old girl was mauled by a shark in full view of her parents near Wylie Bay in 2017. She lost her leg and was pulled from the water, but died shortly after.

In 2014, a young surfer lost parts of both arms after being attacked by a great white, also off Esperance.

Australia has one of the world's highest incidences of shark attacks, but fatalities remain rare.

# Dozens arrested after Hong Kong protest

Reuters | Hong Kong

Scuffles erupted between police and protesters in Hong Kong yesterday, with dozens of arrests made, after thousands marched near the border, shouting pro-democracy slogans and venting their anger at mainland Chinese traders.

The demonstrators in Sheung Shui took aim at so-called "parallel traders" from China

who buy vast amounts of duty free goods in Hong Kong and take them back to the mainland to sell at a profit.

Locals say it pushes up prices, overcrowds neighbourhoods and adds to growing tensions between Hong Kong residents and mainland Chinese.

Organisers estimated 10,000 people took part in the march, while police estimated a crowd of 2,500 at its peak.

# Donald Trump's order to kill Qassem Suleimani is on solid constitutional ground

*But whether the US administration is prepared to deal with the consequences of a dramatic escalation with Iran is an entirely different matter*

HUSSEIN IBISH .

People around the world, and certainly in America, were taken aback to learn that US President Donald Trump ordered a drone strike to kill Qassem Suleimani, one of Iran's top commanders, and Abu Mahdi Al Muhandis, head of the pro-Iranian militia in Iraq, Kataib Hezbollah. Opinion in the country is divided about the constitutional legitimacy and wisdom of the move but rather less about whether this administration is prepared to deal with the consequences of a dramatic escalation with Iran.

Suleimani was head of the Quds Force, a unit in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iran's paramilitary militia, and has led his country's efforts to expand its hegemony and spread its influence in the Arab world over the past 20 years. He was probably the most significant military figure in the history of the "Islamic Republic" and, arguably, second in influence only to its supreme leader, Ali Khamenei. Killing him was the most significant blow Mr Trump could have struck against the Tehran regime anywhere outside of Iran itself.

The US government estimates Suleimani was responsible for the deaths of more than 600 US troops, largely in Iraq, since 2003. So, except for some far left and right-wing voices and a newly-emerging neo-isolationist think tank, people who follow the developments in the Middle East largely agree that the Iranian terrorist ringmaster got what he deserved.

However, major foreign policy developments, especially in an election year, are invariably subjects of ideological and partisan contention – and this is no exception. Among major figures in the US Congress, the di-

vision largely falls along party lines. Members of the Republican Party are applauding while those of the Democratic Party are seeking some way of expressing concern without being unpatriotic.

Within the mainstream, which is generally careful to welcome Suleimani's demise, the demurrals are primarily constitutional and procedural. Most Democrats' objections focus on the appropriate relationship between the White House and Congress in strategic decision-making.

Some protest that Mr Trump has exceeded his authority by, in effect, taking the US into a war with Iran without congressional approval. The constitution explicitly states that Congress exclusively has the power to declare war. But since the Second World War, this has been largely a theoretical prerogative, with the president, as commander-in-chief, in effect deciding where and when the US engages in armed conflict. That has been consistent among both Democratic and Republican administrations.

The constitutional argument in this case is particularly weak. The drone strike that killed Suleimani has not taken the US into a war with Iran by any meaningful definition of the term. Nor has it sentenced the country to inevitably slide into one.

Even by the most traditional and strict reading of Congress' war powers, this kind of limited, quick-action and highly focused attack is actually a textbook example of why the framers of the constitution included an executive branch in the first place – and gave the president the powers of commander-in-chief of the military and control of most aspects of foreign policy.

The framers were anti-monarchical republicans rebelling against



Donald Trump

British, European and even classical Roman experiences of monarchy. Yet they concluded from their experiment with the early, decentralised and inadequate "Articles of Confederation" – the first written constitution of the US – that many essential actions of government were necessarily national and unsuited to the complex deliberations of any committee, whether small or large.

To deal with immediate contingencies, emergencies and decisions that perforce must be rapid, flexible and focused, even these anti-monarchists recognised that a powerful, centralised national executive was indispensable. That was particularly true in the case of day-to-day international relations and military matters, as well as unexpected contingencies such as natural disasters.

One must also face a great likelihood that those who were involved in the information that led to the drone attack, they also could have had knowledge of the plans.

There is little doubt that Suleimani and Al Muhandis were involved in further attacks against US personnel and installations. What, after all, was Su-

## What it takes to power the Middle East's renewable energy

DR AWAL AL HOSANY

The Paris climate agreement was a watershed moment for many reasons. It caused a tidal wave of change, sending ripples through governments, policy makers and thought leaders as they have pledged to restrict global warming to below two degrees Celsius after the treaty was adopted in late 2015.

But it is not just words and intentions that have changed. The share of renewable energy in global electricity supply has increased by 27.19 per cent from 2015 to 2018 – representing an average annual growth rate of 6.8 per cent, according to a 2019 report by the International Renewable Energy Agency, or Irena. At the end of last year, the world's total renewable energy generation capacity reached 2,351 gigawatts, which represents a little more than a third of total installed electricity capacity, the same report states.

It is clear to see: there is evidence of a seismic renewable energy shift – one that could yet prove to be the inspiration for the revolution we need. And amid the cast of players that are making this renewables revolution a possibility, the UAE has taken a central role.

The UAE's approach to sustainability and renewable energy has been comprehensive; taking into account the shifts needed not just in renewable energy production and consumption but in multi-stakeholder collaborations, public-private partnerships, green economic thinking and green financing options.

Such forward-thinking has propelled the UAE to the front of the renewables drive and is having a profound impact on the region. Since 2015, the Gulf Co-operation Council's renewable project pipeline has reached almost 7GW of new power generation capacity by 2018, following record-breaking bids in renewable energy auctions here in the UAE and next door in Saudi Arabia that has made solar power a cost-competitive solution.

We are aware that everyone needs to be involved in this movement. To continue the momentum in the region and globally, a campaign was launched by the UAE Mission to Irena, a part of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment. #Act4Impact provides a platform and calls on all renewable energy stakeholders, as well as the general public, to share their



Since 2015, the GCC's renewable project pipeline has reached almost 7 GW of new power generation capacity by 2018.

success stories of a switch to renewables, and their dreams for a clean energy-fuelled future. It is only by including everyone that we can have the impact needed to affect a lasting change.

When addressing inclusivity

in this vital sector, we can look at how the UAE has integrated people, policies and strategies to regulate the energy sector as an example of the holistic thinking that is powering the renewables revolution.

The empowerment of our youth and our women has been vital in promoting the adoption of sustainable practices and clean energy sources. For instance, the Women's Forum for Sustainability, Environ-

ment, established by Her Highness Sheikha Zayed bint Sultan Al Nahyan, is enhancing the role of women in building a sustainable and dynamic

*The UAE's comprehensive approach to hitting ambitious sustainability and renewable energy targets over the next 50 years is a blueprint for other responsible countries*



1978

The Crown of **St. Stephen** (also known as the Holy Crown of Hungary) is returned to Hungary from the United States, where it was held after World War II.

1989

**Satwant Singh** and **Kehar Singh** are sentenced to death for conspiracy in the assassination of Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi**; the two men are executed the same day.



1992

President of Georgia **Zviad Gamsakhurdia** flees the country as a result of the military coup.

1993

Indian Border Security Force units kill 55 in Sopore, Jammu and **Kashmir**, in revenge after militants ambushed a BSF patrol.



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there – and in the company of Al Muhandis?

Their focus was almost certainly planning the next stage in the “maximum resistance” campaign against the US and its allies in the region. It is implausible to think they were discussing anything else. Add to that, the insistence of US officials that there is meaningful intelligence that additional attacks were indeed being planned.

One must also factor in the great likelihood that elements of Iraqi intelligence were involved in gathering the information that led to the drone attack, and that they also could well have had knowledge of such plans.

Article II of the US constitution, which enumerates the powers of the presidency, anticipates precisely this kind of contingency. So even if this

was a huge strategic error, it was well within presidential authority.

Mainstream Democratic Party leaders, including senate minority leader Chuck Schumer, have complained that they did not receive the traditional briefings in advance of the action, as familiar procedure would dictate. Mr Schumer complained that the “gang of eight” – the four senior-most members of the house of representatives and senate – did not receive such a briefing, as is customary.

That is unfortunate. But under the circumstances, including impeachment tensions between the White House and the Democratic majority in the house, it is hardly scandalous.

The real national anxiety is far more widespread and shared among Republicans and Democrats, left and right, and most serious observers: does Mr Trump really understand what he is getting the US into?

Responding to Iran’s escalating provocations was essential to defending American interests in the Middle East. Yet Tehran might remain convinced that Mr Trump does not have the stomach for a full-blown war, including major combat operations, with Iran.

He has called their bluff. But they can call his, too. There are real questions about whether he has a viable strategy, a serious vision for the long term, the political commitment and the personal qualities to lead a showdown with the so-called Islamic Republic.

His performance thus far as president overall is not reassuring – arguably except when it comes to Iran itself. Is Mr Trump capable of competently directing the US in such a considerable, protracted and complex struggle? Skepticism remains widespread.

## Renewables revolution?

**When addressing inclusivity in this vital sector, we can look at how the UAE has integrated people, policies and strategies to regulate the energy sector as an example of the holistic thinking that is powering the renewables revolution.**



Furthermore, as well as implementing mega renewable energy projects, including Masdar’s Solar Photovoltaic Plant, the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park and the waste-to-energy plant in Sharjah in partnership with Bee’ah, the UAE’s vision for having 50 per cent clean energy in the total energy mix by 2050 revolves around sustainable finance and an economy that works for the future of the planet.

Under the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy, a key pillar was the establishment of a Dh100 billion Dubai Green Fund to facilitate easy, low-interest loans for investors in green economy pro-

jects and to actualise the benefits of public-private partnerships.

Meanwhile in Abu Dhabi, Masdar created the region’s first green revolving credit facility last October with four banks to provide sustainable financing options for clean technology and sustainable real estate projects.

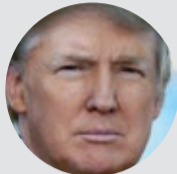
Because wealth and socio-economic development across the GCC remain closely tied to the region’s substantial oil and gas reserves, the need for an all-round plan to kickstart the renewables push in a sustainable manner is paramount, as rising populations and economic diversification have led to greater energy demand. Renewables, although a relatively recent entrant in the GCC energy landscape, hold vast potential to cut energy costs in the long run, reduce carbon emissions, conserve scarce water and create jobs.

In 2020, sustainability and renewable energy will form the backbone of the UAE’s preparations for the 50 years ahead as technologies, projects and concepts come to fruition across the land. Renewable energy will shape the future of the region and the UAE will drive this change towards a brighter, cleaner future.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



The United States just spent Two Trillion Dollars on Military Equipment. We are the biggest and by far the BEST in the World! If Iran attacks an American Base, or any American, we will be sending some of that brand new beautiful equipment their way... and without hesitation!

@realDonaldTrump

02



The Iranian regime telling Iraq’s government what to do puts Iraqi patriots’ lives at risk. The Iraqi people want out from under the Iranian yoke; indeed, they recently burned an Iranian consulate to the ground.

@SecPompeo

03



One of the hardest things to learn is to not worry about what people think or say about you. Until you learn this lesson, you will waste valuable time responding to negativity and criticism. As @paulocoelho said, ‘be a good person, but don’t waste your time trying to prove it.’

@ValaAfshar

04



We have the best military and the best intelligence anywhere in the world. If Americans are threatened, we are prepared to respond.

@WhiteHouse

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

## Falling agri-produce a challenge for Bahrain



KOTA SRIRAJ

Food insecurity is becoming a major cause of concern across the world in the wake of soaring population and urbanisation amid falling agricultural productivity owing to diminishing arable land, drought and climate change conditions. According to the United Nations-Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) 2019 report, more than 820 million people across the world are still hungry and devoid of basic nutrition. Added to this is a further concern that about 2 billion people globally are continuously vulnerable to food insecurity conditions. Food insecurity conditions are now becoming widespread necessitating measures before the world experiences a food meltdown driven crises.

Compromised food security arising out of diminishing agricultural produce in the backdrop of growing urbanisation is becoming a disconcerting concern for Bahrain too. The unrelenting desert conditions and arid topography are adding to a growing problem. The current patterns of food imports are bridging the demand and supply gap, but the reliance on imports also mean that the food availability is subject to global food price fluctuations, supply unpredictability besides economic and political instabilities. Bahrain must chart a new plan for year 2020 and beyond to slowly but surely and steadily replace the quantum of imports with indigenous substitutes, which will not only increase self-reliance, boost employment and industry but will also give a much-needed shot in the arm for the agricultural sector.

Bahrain must usher in an agricultural revolution that bypasses the current challenges being faced by the agri sector in the form of water scarcity and investment shortfalls. In this regard a whole new pattern of food varieties in the form of hybrid seeds that require lower water table maintenance, can withstand harsh temperatures and are resistant to the local weeds and pest exposure. In order to ensure this the agricultural crop research will have to undergo radical changes, especially on the research and development front and in order to do the UN-FAO and other related organisations must be convinced to provide finance facilities to fund the R&D efforts. The research must be multi-centric and must draw on the expertise of global agricultural crop experts as well.

**The integration of technical competence must also be the hallmark of the new agri-revolution. The full spectrum of technology must be provided for the farmer so that a never before leverage is provided in the interests of securing food security.**

The integration of technical competence must also be the hallmark of the new agri-revolution. The full spectrum of technology must be provided for the farmer so that a never before leverage is provided in the interests of securing food security. This technological intervention can range from latest satellite imagery being used on regular basis for crop planning to availability of detailed crop data of each registered farmer online. This will also help the farmers interconnect better and learn from each other’s experiences whether it is best practices or avoidable practices. The geographical area wise demarcation of land type on some preset parameters such ground water table level, soil moisture grade, soil quality in the form of heavy metal presence and so on will help farmers choose the best crop that suits the soil type exactly given the strengths and weaknesses of the arable land.

The emergence of a technology driven agriculture will also witness innovation by farmers who can be encouraged to contribute their suggestions on how they think technology can further be utilised in taking agri-produce to the next level of efficiency. In this regard a smartphone app driven initiative that includes the presence of Government agri department, Farmer, Consumer and Investor on a single platform will change the face of agriculture forever and restore the fast ebbing confidence of the investor’s too in agriculture. It is a win-win scenario for all the stakeholders and can provide much needed impetus to food production.

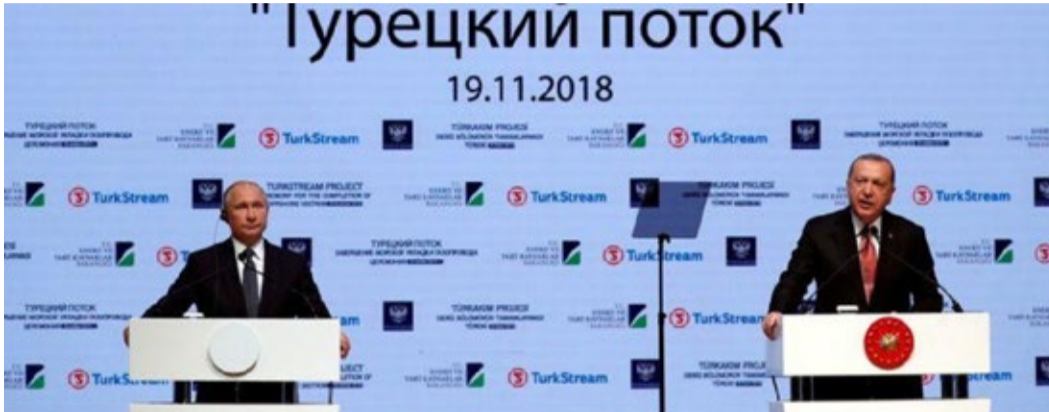
Food security is a real time threat and is evident more so for the GCC given the facts that only 1.8% of the land in GCC is actually used for agriculture which contributes to a meager 1.4% of the total GDP. The GCC food import bill too points towards the concerning situation. The import bill was earlier expected to be about \$ 25.8 bn by 2020 but according to the current Economic Intelligence Unit estimates the bill is expected to hit \$ 53 bn by year 2020. Given these figures it becomes apparent that a worsening issue is now reaching critical stages and needs urgent remedial measures and intervention so that the future generations of Bahrain can be insulated against the food insecurity have sufficient access to quality, standard food at affordable prices that is high on nutrition index too.

# business

## Russia begins TurkStream gas flows

● Russia is building TurkStream and doubling the capacity of NordStream across the Baltic Sea to Germany

● Russian gas producer Gazprom started shipping about 3 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas to Bulgaria via TurkStream



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin attend a ceremony to mark the completion of the sea part of the TurkStream gas pipeline, in Istanbul, Turkey

Reuters | Sofia

Russia has started European gas deliveries through the new TurkStream pipeline to Turkey, Bulgaria's Bulgartransgaz said yesterday, as Moscow looks to reduce shipments via Ukraine.

Russia is building TurkStream and doubling the capacity of NordStream across the Baltic Sea to Germany as part of plans to bypass Ukraine in its gas deliveries to Europe.

"Russian gas deliveries not only for us but also for Greece and North Macedonia are being carried through the new entry

point (at our Turkish border)," Bulgartransgaz CEO Vladimir Malinov told Bulgarian national radio BNR.

Russian gas producer Gazprom started shipping about 3 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas to Bulgaria via TurkStream on January 1, replacing a route that formerly passed through Ukraine and Romania.

Gazprom shipped about 3 bcm to Greece and about 500,000 mcm to North Macedonia via that route last year.

Malinov said that lines - the TransBalkan pipeline - was idle at present, but added that it was

made reversible and could be used for shipments to Romania, Moldova and Ukraine if there was demand.

"We have thus opened the route to access for LNG from the Greece's LNG terminal Revithoussa up to Ukraine," he said.

Russia is building TurkStream in two pipelines, each with an annual capacity of 15.75 bcm.

The first pipeline is aimed at supplying Turkey and the second would run further from Bulgaria to Serbia and Hungary. Bulgaria hopes to be able to make shipments to Serbia by

May and build the whole section by year-end.

While Russia and Ukraine at the end of last year signed a five-year agreement on gas transit to Europe, volumes are set to fall from 65 bcm in 2020 to 40 bcm annually from 2021 to 2024.

Relations between the one-time allies have deteriorated since Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014 and pro-Kremlin separatists seized a swath of eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine halted its own direct imports of Russian gas in November 2015.

## Kuwait leads Gulf losses



Kuwaiti traders follow the stock market at the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) in Kuwait City on October 14

● Saudi Arabian banks slide

● Aramco closes at 34.6 riyals

● Egypt hits its lowest in 3 months

● Kuwait sees biggest fall in over 2 years

Reuters

Gulf bourses saw steep declines yesterday, with Kuwait falling the most following tensions between the United States and Iran, while outside the Gulf Egypt was also hard hit as all its shares ended lower.

Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani was killed on Friday in a US drone strike on his convoy at Baghdad airport, seen by Tehran as an act of war that risks regional conflagration.

"Not surprising, the Gulf markets are reacting negatively given we are in the middle of all the geopolitics action," said Vrajesh Bhandari, senior portfolio manager at Al Mal Capital.

"We fear this can be an overhang over the next few months and not just a one day or week thing."

Saudi Arabia's benchmark index lost 2.4 per cent, weighed down by a 2.1pc drop

in Al Rajhi Bank and a 1.7pc fall in state-owned Aramco to 34.6 riyals, which hit its lowest intraday level since last month's market debut.

Egypt's blue-chip index plunged 4.4pc, touching its lowest since September 2019. The country's largest lender Commercial International Bank closed down 1.9pc and Eastern Company dived 4.9pc.

In Kuwait, the index plunged 4.1pc with all stocks in the red including Kuwait Finance House, down 5.1pc, and National Bank of Kuwait, off 2.8pc.

The Dubai index tumbled 3.1pc, hurt by a 3.1pc slide in its largest lender Emirates NBD and a 3.7pc decline in Emaar Properties.

Abu Dhabi's index lost 1.4pc, with the United Arab Emirates' largest lender First Abu Dhabi Bank retreating 1.2pc, while Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank was down 3.3pc.

The Qatar index eased 2.1pc with all its 20 stocks closing lower. Lender Masraf Al Rayan fell 2.7pc and Qatar National Bank declined 1.4pc.

### Closing bell

SAUDI	▼ 2.4pc to 8,194 pts
ABU DHABI	▼ 1.4pc to 5,028 pts
DUBAI	▼ 3.1pc to 2,684 pts
QATAR	▼ 2.1pc to 10,286 pts
EGYPT	▼ 4.4pc to 13,284 pts
BAHRAIN	▼ 2.3pc to 1,576 pts
OMAN	▼ 0.3pc to 3,993 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 4.1pc to 6,692 pts

## Chinese delegation plans to travel to Washington to sign trade deal: SCMP

Reuters

A Chinese trade delegation is planning to travel to Washington on Jan. 13 for the signing of the U.S.-China Phase 1 trade deal, the South China Morning Post reported yesterday citing a source briefed on the matter.

The Chinese delegation will return on Jan. 16, SCMP said.

The trade delegation, led by Vice Premier Liu He, had originally planned to set off earlier in the month but had to change plans after U.S. President Donald Trump sent a tweet claiming



A worker drives a truck carrying a container at a logistics center near Tianjin port, in Tianjin, China

that he would sign the Phase 1 trade deal with China on Jan. 15.

After a full afternoon's discussion, the Chinese side decided to revise their plan to accommodate Trump, SCMP said.

Washington and Beijing have yet to officially confirm Liu's visit.

Trump had first announced plans for the initial trade pact in October, and U.S. and Chinese negotiators spent weeks finalizing the Phase 1 deal, which comes in lieu of the massive trade agreement that the world's two largest economies had initially sought.

## Moscow unveils plan to adapt economy to climate change

● Russia is warming 2.5 times quicker than the planet on average

● Putin denies it is man-made

● Russia will calculate risks of Russian products failing to meet new climate-related standards

Moscow

The Russian government has published a plan to adapt the economy and population to climate change, aiming to mit-



Snow problem: Russia will also look at "positive" effects of climate change such as decreased energy use in cold regions, expanding agricultural areas and navigational opportunities in Arctic waters

igate damage but also "use the advantages" of warmer temperatures.

The document, published on the government website on Saturday, outlines a plan of action and admits that "consequences of (climate) change have a prominent and increasing effect on socio-economic development, people's lives," health and industry.

Russia is warming 2.5 times quicker than the planet on average, and the two-year "first stage" plan is an indication that the government officially recognises this as a problem, even though President Vladimir Putin denies it is man-made.

The plan is needed in order to "lower the losses and use the advantages".

It says climate change increases risks to public health and permafrost, of infections, turbulent weather and will have consequences for other species.

Possible "positive" effects are decreased energy use in cold regions, expanding agricultural areas and navigational opportunities in the Arctic ocean.

The document lays the groundwork for various agencies and stresses the need for more research on economic vulnerabilities, without detailing financing.

It lists preventive measures such as dam building or switching to more drought-resistant crops, as well as crisis preparations including emergency vaccinations or evacuations in case of a disaster.

Among a list of 30 measures, the government will calculate risks of Russian products becoming uncompetitive and failing to meet new climate-related standards as well as prepare new educational materials to teach climate change in schools.

Russia is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, with vast Arctic regions and infrastructure built over permafrost. Recent floods and wildfires have been among the planet's worst climate-related disasters.

Putin has repeatedly denied scientific consensus that climate change is primarily caused by man-made emissions, blaming it last month on some "processes in the universe".

# Greek PM on W. House trip amid Turkey tension



Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis heads for his first White House visit since seeing President Donald Trump at a NATO summit in December



Turkey wants to make sure it has a share of gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean Sea



Greece is interested in acquiring US-made drones and eventually F-35 combat jets, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis says

*Athens is keen to enlist US investors for the growth spurt envisioned by the Greek conservative government -- but the visit comes as tensions escalate with Turkey over migration, energy exploration and territorial disputes*

AFP | Athens

Six months into his term, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis heads to his first White House visit today amidst tense relations with NATO ally and regional rival Turkey.

Athens is keen to enlist US investors for the growth spurt envisioned by the Greek conservative government -- but the visit comes as tensions escalate with Turkey over migration, energy exploration and territorial disputes.

"Greece and the United States are closer than ever," Mitsotakis said in a December 29 interview with the weekly, *To Vima*.

"Greece is a reliable ally and I expect this to be confirmed with deeds, not just words," he said.

The US has traditionally maintained a difficult balancing act between Greece and Turkey over the past six decades, with the Clinton administration actually stepping in to prevent hostilities over an

uninhabited Aegean islet group in 1996.

But Trump has often struck a dissonant tone in his administration's foreign policy, preferring to forge personal bonds even with the leaders of countries whose policies have on occasion been rebuked by the US State Department or Congress.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is one of them.

"It goes without saying that the political unpredictability of the American president creates a foggy scenery," says Spyridon Litsas, professor of international relations at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki.

"Mitsotakis travels to Washington in order to demonstrate to American political and economic elites that besides Turkish unreliability in the eastern Mediterranean, there is also Greece, a pivotal state for the balance of power in the region, a fundamental actor regarding the re-shaping of the regional energy map, and a fertile ground for investment," Litsas told AFP.

Greek relations with Turkey are at their lowest point in decades.

In November, Erdogan signed a contentious maritime and military deal with the embattled UN-backed Libyan government.

Swiftly condemned by neighbouring states including Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, the move is seen by analysts as part of a Turkish strategy to avoid exclusion from the gas exploration scramble in the region.

Mitsotakis came to power in July after defeating leftist former PM Alexis Tsipras in national elections.

Trump in December signed the EastMed Act, an initiative to facilitate energy cooperation among the US, Israel, Greece and Cyprus.

On Thursday, Greece, Cyprus and Israel launched a major pipeline project -- also called EastMed -- designed to ship gas from the eastern Mediterranean to Europe.

## Greece a 'pillar of stability'

According to US ambassador to Athens Geoffrey Pyatt, Washington sees Greece as "a critical pillar of regional stability."

"The prime minister's engagements in Washington will pro-

vide a critical opportunity to inform investors and policymakers of the opportunities that the new Greece has to offer," Pyatt told a conference in early December.

According to a senior US official, there was a "reframing of the US-Greece relationship" even from the first half of 2017 under Tsipras, with Greece emerging as "one of the United States' most important partners in southern Europe."

Tsipras, who tempered the deep-seated anti-Americanism of his Syriza party with pragmatism, scored points by ending a quarter-century name dispute with neighbouring North Macedonia, and by promoting an energy agenda aligned with US interests at the expense of Russia.

Under Tsipras, Athens also signed on to an F-16 upgrade programme worth \$1.5 billion.

In October, a team headed by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo signed defence and security upgrade agreements.

Athens is also interested in US-made drones and, eventually, F-35 warplanes, Mitsotakis told *To Vima*.

"We've gotten past the era of instinctive or reflexive anti-Americanism," the US official said, referring to scepticism by many Greeks towards Washington for backing the 1967 Greek military junta.

The trip to the White House -- six months to the day after his electoral victory -- will be the first as prime minister for Mitsotakis, who studied at Harvard University. He saw Trump in London during the NATO summit in early December.

"One of the open questions about the Mitsotakis visit is whether he can convince Trump to follow a much more strategic and effective policy to limit the substantial damage Erdogan has caused Greece, the US and the NATO Alliance," says Nicholas Burns, former US Ambassador to Greece, currently diplomacy professor at the Harvard Kennedy School.

"President Trump has been weak and inconsistent in responding to Turkey's purchase of the Russian A-400 air defence system and Turkey's cavalier disregard of American interests in Syria," Burns said.

## Samsung Elec says will unveil 'innovative devices' on Feb. 11

Reuters | Seoul

Samsung Electronics said yesterday that it will introduce new, innovative devices in San Francisco on Feb. 11, with the electronics giant widely expected to unveil its new foldable phone and a new version of its flagship S model.

The move comes as the world's top smartphone maker seeks to maintain its lead in the foldable phone and 5G phone markets, with rivals plotting a catch-up in the nascent, but growing segments.

"Samsung Electronics will unveil new, innovative devices that will shape the next decade of mobile experiences," the South Korean firm said at an invitation letter. It said the event at 11 a.m. Pacific time will be live-streamed.

In a teaser image, Samsung hinted at two phones -- one shaped like a square and another with a rectangular form.

In October, Samsung Elec-



Representative picture

tronics unveiled its new foldable phone concept that folds vertically like an old flip phone. Its first foldable phone, which folds horizontally, was launched in September after delays caused by screen problems.

Samsung Electronics has traditionally unveiled new versions of its flagship Galaxy S phones ahead of the Mobile World Congress which takes places in February.

A Samsung spokeswoman declined to comment on which models it will unveil at the upcoming event.

## Amid tech turmoil, celebration at electronics show

Las Vegas

The Consumer Electronics Show opening Tuesday offers a chance to showcase the newest and shiniest gadgetry, looking past the turmoil engulfing the global technology industry.

The annual Las Vegas gathering with more than 4,500 exhibitors brings out about 175,000 attendees searching for innovations of the future.

For an industry facing unprecedented turbulence, the hope is that what happens in Vegas does not stay in Vegas after it closes on Friday, but filters into the world where consumers can adopt new technologies for health, communication, transportation, the home and lifestyles.

The show opens against the backdrop of mounting concerns on how data gathered from connected devices can be exploited by marketers, governments and hackers. There has also been a wave of attacks from politicians and activists against dominant tech platforms, as well as intense trade frictions between the world's economic and technology powers, the United States and China.

Roger Kay, an analyst with Endpoint Technologies Associates, said consumers are slowly coming to terms with the digital



Robots will be a big part of the 2020 Consumer Electronics Show

world and its privacy tradeoffs, and still appear to be driven toward new gadgetry.

"People always want to see a shiny new object," Kay said.

"I think people are going to adjust to this world and adopt the technology that comes along that suits them."

CES 2020 will feature devices infused with artificial intelligence for cars, homes, smart cities and for personal health, with many gadgets embracing voice assistants from Amazon, Google and others.

"We will see AI and apps being used to make people's lives easier, such as speech recognition and object recognition," said Sarah Brown of the Consumer Technology Association, which organizes the show that includes media previews Sunday

and Monday. "You will see that across the entire CES -- AI embedded in all these technologies."

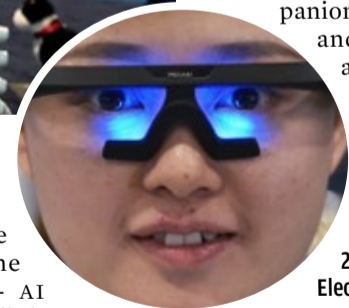
Trade and industry attendees will see wearables offering more precise health monitoring, for both athletes and seniors; cars with better computer vision to avoid accidents; televisions designed as smart home hubs; and robots with features to help understand or express emotion.

A series of panel discussions will also explore questions around consumer privacy, the importance of 5G wireless, technology for travel and tourism, the promise of quantum computing and how lifestyles will change in "smart cities."

## Emotional issues

Some of the new CES gadgets will collect and analyze data such as facial expressions and tone of voice -- creating the opportunity for more personalized services, but with risks as well.

This could mean a robot might be a better personal companion for the elderly, and a vehicle may adapt to signs of



Smart glasses and other wearable technologies are being showcased at the 2020 Consumer Electronics Show

driver fatigue or impairment.

According to a report by the consulting firm Accenture, emotional data "is reaching a tipping point of opportunity" for firms which can decode human emotions for marketing, market research and political polling purposes.

"Emotional data will challenge reading people's emotions is a delicate business," an Accenture report said. "Emotions are highly personal, and users will have concerns about privacy invasion, security breaches, emotional manipulation, and bias."

## Daimler recalls 744,000 US Mercedes-Benz vehicles

● The large recall covers more than two dozen vehicles from C-Class, CLK-Class, CLS-Class and E-Class model lines

Reuters | Washington



Representative picture

German automaker Daimler AG said on Saturday it will recall 744,000 Mercedes-Benz vehicles in the United States from the 2001 through 2011 model years because the sunroof glass panel could detach and pose a hazard.

The large recall covers more than two dozen vehicles from C-Class, CLK-Class, CLS-Class and E-Class model lines. The automaker said the bonding between the glass panel and the sliding roof frame might not meet specifications and could lead to sunroofs detaching.

Owners who paid for repairs for the issue will be able to seek reimbursements from Daimler. A Mercedes-Benz USA spokesman said on Saturday he did not have a worldwide vehicle total for the recall.

Dealers will inspect the glass panel bonding and replace the sliding roof if necessary, the company said.

Last month, Mercedes-Benz USA agreed to a \$20 million civil penalty over its handling of US vehicle recalls after a year-long U.S. government investigation into 1.4 million recalled vehicles.

Under the terms of the settlement, the automaker will pay \$13 million and faces another \$7 million fine if it does not comply with the agreement. The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said the company failed to notify owners in a timely fashion in some recalls, did not submit all reports and did not launch at least two recalls in a timely fashion.

## UK election result 'blew away' argument for 2nd Brexit vote

● Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives won a large majority in last month's election

Reuters | London

Britain's December election "blew away" the argument for a second Brexit referendum and the country must move on from its divide over whether or not to leave the European Union, the frontrunner to lead the opposition Labour Party said yesterday.

Keir Starmer, a former senior public prosecutor and Labour's Brexit spokesman, took a leading role in persuading the party to back a second referendum but said the lack of clarity over how Labour would campaign in such a vote had been damaging.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives won a large



“We are going to leave the EU in the next few weeks and it is important for all of us, including myself, to recognise that the argument about leave and remain goes with it

STARMER



Boris Johnson

majority in last month's election, paving the way for Britain to leave the EU at the end of January.

majority in last month's election, paving the way for Britain to leave the EU at the end of January.

“We are going to leave the EU in the next few weeks and it is important for all of us, including myself, to recognise that the argument about leave and remain goes with it,” Starmer said in an interview with the BBC.

“We will have left the EU and this election blew away the ar-

gument for a second referendum, rightly or wrongly, and we have to adjust to that situation, the argument has to move on.”

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's decision to step down following the election defeat has opened the way for a leadership battle that will determine the direction of the party, which moved to the left during the veteran socialist's tenure.

Starmer is seen as a party cen-

trist who could struggle to win over left-wing members who backed Corbyn, but is the bookmakers' favourite and a YouGov poll carried out at the end of last month gave him a strong lead over other candidates.

Starmer said Labour needed to focus on Britain's future ties with the EU. “The argument now is can we insist on that close relationship with the EU,” he said. “My concern is less about technical membership of the EU now, it is if we shift our focus from the EU, move away from those standards and arrangements.”

## Daimler, Volvo mull combustion engine cooperation

● Geely bought Volvo Cars in 2010 from Ford Motor Co

Reuters | Berlin



Representative picture

Luxury German carmaker Daimler and Volvo Cars, owned by China's Geely, are considering cooperating to cut the costs of developing combustion engines, a magazine reported on Sunday, citing unnamed company sources.

The Automobilwoche weekly cited a Volvo manager as saying there were initial talks with Daimler, but no concrete plans, while a company spokesman said it was too early to talk about firm projects, although it was not excluding anybody.

A Daimler spokesman said the company's cooperation with Geely, which owns a 10% stake in the German carmaker, was

developing in a positive way, but declined to comment further.

Global tariffs, accelerated by a trade war between China and the United States, as well as higher investment requirements for electric and autonomous vehicles, are forcing carmakers to seek new ways to cut and

share costs.

In October, Volvo said it would merge its engine development and manufacturing assets with those of Geely, creating a division to supply in-house brands and also potentially others with next-generation combustion and hybrid engines.

The Automobilwoche said this new division would start operating by the end of March, which could be a possible starting point for cooperation with Daimler, while a further step could be a partnership to develop electric power trains.

Geely and Daimler have said they plan to build the next generation of Smart electric cars in China through a joint venture and the two companies are also cooperating on a premium ride-hailing service in China.

Geely bought Volvo Cars in 2010 from Ford Motor Co, allowing the Swedish brand to operate on an arms-length basis. But in recent years, it has deepened cooperation between the two brands.

Volvo already supplies engines to some Geely-branded vehicles, sharing technology through Geely's Lynk brand. Both companies share and develop common vehicle platforms.

## France to have growth of 1.3pc in 2019 and 2020

● Much of France has been crippled by a national transport strike

Reuters | Paris



French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire

French economic growth should come in at 1.3 per cent for both 2019 and 2020, the country's finance minister, Bruno Le Maire, told Le Journal du Dimanche newspaper in an interview.

Le Maire said France had a “good and solid” economic outlook, in spite of global trade tensions and a possible hit caused by a wave of strikes held in protest against government plans to change France's pension system.

Much of France has been crippled by a national trans-

port strike since the pensions protests began a month ago. Another big nationwide demonstration is due on Jan. 9.

President Emmanuel Macron has said reforms are essential to simplify the convoluted pensions system, but his opponents say they will lead to many French people having to work for longer.

## Japan orders tighter immigration procedures after Ghosn flees

Reuters | Tokyo

Japan yesterday said it would tighten immigration measures after former Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn fled the country while on bail, its first official response to an astonishing escape that has transformed the executive into an international fugitive.

Authorities have remained quiet after Ghosn revealed on Tuesday that he had fled to his childhood home of Lebanon to escape a “rigged” justice system in Japan. All government offices and most businesses in Japan have been shut for the new year holidays.

The former Nissan Motor and Renault chairman was arrested in Tokyo in November 2018 and faced multiple charges of financial wrongdoing, which he denies.

Justice Minister Masako Mori

said Ghosn's “apparently illegal” departure was very regrettable and added there was no record of him leaving the country. She promised a thorough investigation and said authorities had issued an international notice for his arrest.

“I have instructed the Immigration Services Agency to coordinate with related agencies to further tighten departure procedures,” she said, adding that Ghosn's skipping bail was not justified, and that the court had revoked his bail.

Separately, prosecutors issued a statement defending Japan's justice system, saying his departure ignored the legal system and amounted to a crime. It remains

unclear what Japan might do to bring him back. It has extradition treaties only with the United States and South Korea, meaning it

might be difficult to return Ghosn from Lebanon.

Mori was due to brief reporters in Tokyo on Monday morning.

### Arrest warrant

Lebanon this week said it had received an Interpol arrest warrant for Ghosn. It has said he entered the country legally.

A

senior Lebanese security official said it was not yet clear whether Ghosn would be summoned for questioning over the warrant, but added that Lebanon does not extradite its citizens.

The Wall Street Journal has reported that Ghosn slipped out of Japan aboard a private jet hidden in a large black case typically used to carry audio gear. He was accompanied by a pair of men with names matching those of American security contractors, the newspaper said, citing people familiar with an investigation into the escape.

There was no X-ray conducted of the large case, which was loaded onto the private jet that was believed to have carried Ghosn, Japanese broadcaster NHK reported.

Carlos Ghosn



# SHOW



**THE GRUDGE (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER/DRAMA)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR : 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM  
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 2.00 + 6.30 + 11.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 9.45 + 12.00 MN + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)  
 CITY CENTRE (VIP II) : 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (II): 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)  
 WADI AL SAIL: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM  
 ANDREA RISEBOROUGH, DEMIAN BICHR, JOHN CHO

**CATS (PG) (MUSICAL/DANCE/FANTASY)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 + 12.00 MN  
 SEEF (II): 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.00 AM + 3.45 + 8.30 PM  
 JAMES CORDEN, JUDI DENCH, JASON DERULO

**RICHARD SAYS GOODBYE (18+) (COMEDY/DRAMA)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 11.45 AM + 4.15 + 8.45 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 PM  
 JOHNNY DEPP, ZOYE DEUTCH, RON LIVINGSTON

**NORM OF THE NORTH 3: KING SIZED ADVENTURE (G)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 1.00 + 5.15 + 9.30 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.45 AM + 1.45 + 3.45 + 5.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 2.30 + 6.45 + 11.00 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 12.00 + 2.00 + 4.00 + 6.00 PM  
 JENNIFER CAMERON, BRIAN DOBSON, MICHAEL DOBSON

**DISTURBING THE PEACE (PG-15) (ACTION/DRAMA)**  
 SEEF (II): 11.45 AM + 1.45 + 3.45 + 5.45 + 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM  
 GUY PEARCE, DEVON SAWA, KELLY GREYSON

**REALMS (18+) (CRIME/HORROR)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 11.15 AM + 1.15 + 3.15 + 5.15 + 7.15 + 9.15 + 11.15 PM  
 RYAN KELLEY, MADISON MCKINLEY, PRAYA LUNDBERG

**SAB KUSHAL MANGAL (PG-13)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR : 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (I): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN  
 AKSHAY KHANNA, PRIYAANK SHARMA, RIVA KISHAN

**JUMANJI THE NEXT LEVEL (PG-15)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.45 AM + 1.30 + 4.15 + 7.00 + 9.45 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)  
 CITY CENTRE (ATMOS) : 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN  
 CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D) : 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE (VIP I) : 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (I): 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 DWAYNE JOHNSON, JACK BLACK, KEVIN HART

**AL FELOUS (THE MONEY) (PG-15)(ARABIC/COMEDY/CRIME)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.30 AM + 5.15 + 11.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)  
 SEEF (I): 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 12.45 MN THURS/FRI  
 WADI AL SAIL: 10.45 AM + 1.45 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM  
 TAMER HOSNY, ZEINA, KHALID EL-SAWI



**SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 10.45 AM + 3.00 + 7.15 + 11.30 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: DUBBED IN ARABIC: 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 PM  
 SEEF (II): 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 + 8.15 + 10.30 PM  
 SEEF (II): DUBBED IN ARABIC: 12.15 + 4.30 + 8.45 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.15 AM + 3.45 + 6.00 + 10.30 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: DUBBED IN ARABIC: 1.30 + 8.15 PM  
 WILL SMITH, TOM HOLLAND, KAREN GILLAN

**FROZEN 2 (PG)(ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM  
 SEEF (II): 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM  
 KRISTEN BELL, IDINA MENZEL, JOSH GAD

**DABANGG 3 (PG-15)(HINDI/ACTION/COMEDY)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR : 2.00 + 7.45 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 2.30 + 8.30 PM  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 1.30 + 4.45 + 8.00 + 11.15 PM  
 SALMAN KHAN, SONAKSHI SINHA, WARINA HUSSAIN

**STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER (PG-13)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 2.15 + 8.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM  
 DAISY RIDLEY, MARK HAMILL, ADAM DRIVER



**GOOD NEWWZ (15+)(HINDI/COMEDY/DRAMA)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM  
 SEEF (I): 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM  
 AKSHAY KUMAR, KAREENA KAPOOR, DILIJIT DOSANJH

**21 BRIDGES (PG-15)(CRIME/ACTION/THRILLER) 21**  
 CITY CENTRE: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM  
 CHADWICK BOSEMAN, SIENNA MILLER, STEPHAN JAMES

**TRAUMA CENTRE (PG-15)(THRILLER)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 2.30 + 7.15 + 12.00 MN  
 SEEF (II): 11.45 AM + 2.00 + 4.15 + 6.30 + 8.45 + 11.00 PM  
 BRUCE WILLIS, NICKY WHELAN, STEVE GUTTENBERG

**IP MAN 4 (PG-15)(ACTION/DRAMA/BIOGRAPHY)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 3.45 + 9.00 PM  
 SEEF (I): 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM  
 DONNIE YEN, SCOTT ADKINS, KWOK-KWAN CHAN

**KNIVES OUT (PG-15)(CRIME/COMEDY/THRILLER)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.45 AM + 5.45 + 11.45 PM  
 DANIEL CRAIG, CHRIS EVANS, ANA DE ARMAS

**LE MANS '66 (PG-13)(DRAMA/SPORT/BIOGRAPHY)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 12.45 + 6.00 + 11.15 PM  
 MATT DAMON, CHRISTIAN BALE, JON BERNTHAL

**JOKER (15+)(THRILLER/CRIME/DRAMA)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM  
 JOAQUIN PHOENIX, ZAZIE BEETZ, ROBERT DE NIRO

**MALEFICENT 2: MISTRESS OF EVIL (PG)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 12.00 + 4.45 + 9.30 PM  
 ANGELINA JOLIE, TERESA MAHONEY, MICHELLE PFEIFFER

**DRIVING LICENCE (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (I): 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM  
 AL HAMRA: 6.00 + (12.00 MN THURS/FRI.)



**THAMBI (PG-13)(TAMIL)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.30 AM + 5.15 + 11.00 PM  
 KARTHI, JYOTHIKA, SATHYARAJ

**VALIYAPERUNNAL (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 1.45 + 7.45 PM  
 SHANE NIGAM, HIMIKA BOSE, JOJU GEORGE

**THRISSUR POORAM (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)**  
 OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 8.00 + 11.00 PM  
 AL HAMRA: 12.00 + 9.00 PM  
 JAYASURIYA, SWATHI REDDY, GAYATHRI ARUN

**MUNTHIRI MONCHAN (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)**  
 AL HAMRA: 3.00 PM  
 MANESH KRISHNAN, DEEPIKA ANIL, SALIM KUMAR, ANJALI NAIR, VISHNU NAMBIAR

MOVIE REVIEW

## 'Zombieland: Double Tap' is a genuinely thrilling sequel

● The original cast of **Zombieland** reunites for more undead slaughter in a sequel that feels like a time capsule

The “double tap” in **Zombieland: Double Tap** refers to shooting a zombie twice to see if it’s still alive, and that’s what the filmmakers have done here — shot the zombie comedy a second time to see if there’s still life after the charming original. Lucky for all of us, there is. The film set box office records for the genre upon its release 10 years ago, and it’s clear that the meta humour still works. Still, while seeing the quartet of heroes reflexively poking fun at the walking dead is as clever as it was in 2009, the scattershot tone and obscene imagery aren’t groundbreaking anymore. Instead of trying to push the boundaries again, director Ruben Fleischer settles for more of the same. “You have a lot of choices when it comes to zombie entertainment,” Columbus (Jessie



From left: Zoey Deutch, Emma Stone, Jesse Eisenberg and Woody Harrelson in 'Zombieland: Double Tap'

Eisenberg) declares in the opening voice-over. “So thanks for picking us.” He’s not lying. Ever since Danny Boyle’s 28 Days Later released in 2002, the genre’s popularity spread faster than a world-ending disease. From *Shaun of the Dead* to *World War Z*, the undead have become an enduring and even beloved part of our culture. In a matter of weeks kids are going to be walking from door to door as zombies for Halloween. By the way, in case there’s any question, do not bring the youngsters to see **Zombieland**: Eisenberg) declares in the opening voice-over. “So thanks for picking us.” He’s not lying. Ever since Danny Boyle’s 28 Days Later released in 2002, the genre’s popularity spread faster than a world-ending disease. From *Shaun of the Dead* to *World War Z*, the undead have become an enduring and even beloved part of our culture. In a matter of weeks kids are going to be walking from door to door as zombies for Halloween. By the way, in case there’s any question, do not bring the youngsters to see **Zombieland**:



**'Zombieland: Double Tap' is decidedly meant for fans of the original, and the film makes no bones to hide this fact**

palms and a long list of rules for survival. She’s still a badass who’s tired of Columbus’ President Taft jokes. While that friction is happening, Tallahassee (Woody Harrelson) is trying to connect with Little Rock (Abigail Breslin), the daughter he never had. These contrasting personalities are played to comedic perfection. As before, the fun comes from watching four people who usually wouldn’t talk to each other in a normal world become family during the apocalypse. Now they need each other more than ever. With Darwin’s Theory of Evolution extending to zombies, some of the flesh eating creatures have

developed the capacity to dodge bullets. “The T-800s!” Columbus calls them in honour of The Terminator’s irrevocable invincibility. Others aren’t so lucky in the natural selection scheme of things. The “Homers” are as slow as Homer Simpson, while the “Hawkings” are intelligent yet immobile. Somewhere in between the two is the scene stealing Madison (Zoey Deutch). A dumb blonde dressed from head to toe in pink, Madison made it this far because zombies eat brains, and she doesn’t have any. She’s a welcome presence. Likewise, so are Luke Wilson and Thomas Middleditch playing Columbus and Tallahassee’s doppelgangers. Despite the endearing newcomers the sequel has nothing new to offer audiences. It’s as if Fleischer told his screenwriters to take the same script from the first film and simply change the wording — much like a student rewording an essay they handed in the prior semester. That applies to the road trip premise (one member wanders off; the rest venture off to find them), and it especially applies to similarly themed pit stops that

include Elvis’ Graceland and a hippy commune called Babylon. Not all the retreading is brain dead, however. The “zombie kill of the week” leitmotif is a hoot, as is the moment when an Italian tips over the Leaning Tower of Pisa on a couple stray zombies. Harrelson yelling catchphrases like “Lets kick some dicks!” show returning writers Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick (who also penned the droll deadpan of *Deadpool*) at their best. The writing duo have a sadistic sense of humour, but they seem to be phoning it in when it comes to character development and action sequences. Action/comedies shouldn’t just be one or the other, and this sequel would’ve been better had it striven for more. The tradition of depth embedded into zombie films like *The Night of the Living Dead* — sociopolitical subtexts on race, globalism and capitalism — are vague if nowhere to be found. It would have been nice to see **Zombieland: Double Tap** have something more to say than one-liners, or even add a few original jokes. Instead, it merely brings the old ones back to life.

# celebs



Greta Gerwing and Saoirse Ronan

## Daniel Craig's "very emotional" goodbye to James Bond series



Daniel Craig

Los Angeles

Actor Daniel Craig has reflected on filming his last scene as James Bond in the upcoming part of the spy franchise. He says it was very emotional. "No Time to Die" will be Craig's fifth and final appearance as the British Secret Service agent and the Hollywood actor revealed that it wasn't easy when it came to saying goodbye to the movie's team, reports digitalspy.com. "It was potentially a bit of an anti-climax, because they usually are," Craig told Empire. "Actually, it was very emotional."

"The whole crew came round and gathered outside. Everybody was hugging each other. I tried to make a speech and couldn't get it out," he added.

The actor also spoke about how he came to accept the iconic role.

"I was completely ready to just go, "That's the way I see Bond. You don't like it? Fair enough," Craig said.



Jennifer Lopez

## JLo invited to Washington by Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Washington

Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez has been invited to Washington, D.C. by US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Lopez said she and her fiance Alex Rodriguez, had celebrated their engagement in March 2019 by watching Ginsburg's RBG documentary, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Ginsburg's documentary chronicled her groundbreaking career and her marriage to Martin D. Ginsburg, her husband for over five decades until his death from cancer in 2010.

They were so moved by the documentary, the "Hustlers" star decided to contact the Supreme Court Justice, 86, and offer her VIP seats to the Washington, D.C. stop on her "It's My Party" tour.

"On the day that me and Alex got engaged, we watched her documentary that night, and it was really about her marriage, a lot of it. Yes, it was about her accomplishments and everything she's done on the bench, but it was also about this amazing marriage that she had of support, mutual support and understanding," Lopez told Variety.



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

## Greta Gerwing has been massive motivation for me to give direction a go: Saoirse Ronan

Los Angeles

Actor Saoirse Ronan says she always wanted to pursue direction, and working with filmmakers like Greta Gerwing has inspired her to think seriously about it.

The actor has collaborated with Gerwing on critically-acclaimed movies -- "Lady Bird" and "Little Women" -- and she said she always found the job of a director very fascinating.

"I think I've always wanted to. When I think about when I was younger and I would do press for films, they would always ask me, What was it like to work with all the famous people? I'd be like, It was great. But the director is who I always loved the most, and they were the one that I wanted to, make happy and I wanted to be close to them.

"It's something that I would absolutely love to do and yeah, it's just because I've picked up so many things from other directors that I've worked with. Watching Greta, and seeing what she's done over the last few years, has been a massive motivation for me to give it a go," Ronan told Deadline of becoming a director.

And the actor already has "Little Women" and "Lady Bird" co-star Timothee Chalamet on board for her directorial debut.

"Timmy said he'd be in a film that I'd direct so that's good. If I can get Timothee Chalamet, I'm sorted. There's so many actors that I've worked with that I would absolutely love to direct," Ronan said.

## Salman Khan jokes SRK made a film after his crush Kiran



Salman Khan

Mumbai

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan's obsessive lover role in the 1993 film "Darr" is still remembered by many for his anti-hero act and Kiran (played by Juhi Chawla). His fellow actor and friend Salman Khan joked how SRK used his former crush's name in the movie.

Salman went down memory lane and opened up about his crush, Kiran, during an episode of "Bigg Boss".

Interacting with his show's guests and actors Ajay Devgn and Kajol, Salman joked: "Wahi se shuru hua, fir maine incident Shah Rukh Khan ko bataya aur usne film bana daali (That is where it all began. I told about my crush to Shah Rukh Khan and he made a film about it."

## Deepika spends birthday with acid victims in Lucknow

Lucknow

Bollywood star Deepika Padukone on Sunday celebrated her 34th birthday here at the Sheroes Hangout cafe that is run by acid attack survivors.

Deepika plays an acid attack victim in her upcoming film "Chhapak" that releases on January 10. The film, directed by Meghna Gulzar, is extremely close to

Deepika's heart, according to her own admission.

Two acid attack survivors from Lucknow have played roles in "Chhapak".

Deepika arrived here on Sunday accompanied by husband and actor Ranveer Singh. She had started her birthday celebrations from Mumbai airport, where she spotted cutting a birthday cake. The video, shared by Mumbai-based celebrity photographer Viral Bhayani shared on Instagram, has gone viral.

By the time Deepika reached the Sheroes Hangout cafe here, a huge crowd of fans had gathered there. Many of them came with cakes to celebrate their favourite star's birthday.

The acid attack survivors at the cafe were excited to see Deepika and the actor spoke to them about their stories. A long selfie session with them followed.



Deepika Padukone

## Katrina grooves on "Afghan jalebi" at make-up artist's wedding

Panaji

Bollywood actress Katrina Kaif shook-a-leg at her friend and make-up artist Daniel Bauer's wedding in Goa.

A video of Katrina dancing on the number "Afghan jalebi" from the 2015 film "Phantom" has taken over social media.

In the clip, Katrina, who is dressed in a powder blue lehenga choli, is seen grooving with Bauer on the dance floor.

Bauer tied the knot with his partner Tyronne Braganza as per the Hindu traditions with ceremonies like mehendi and haldi.

The "Bharat" actress has shared a string of photographs from the wedding.

Katrina shared pictures of the newlyweds Bauer and Braganza, who wore matching white kurta-pyjamas and paired it with light pink dupattas.



Katrina Kaif

## Kidman, Jackman rally to support Australia as wildfires rage

Los Angeles

A bevy of Hollywood celebrities like Nicole Kidman, Pink, Hugh Jackman have come out in support of Australia as massive wildfires rage across the country.

Celebrities are making donations to organisations that support fire relief and urging their followers on social media to do so as well, reports variety.com.

Singer Pink posted a list of organisations that her followers can donate to and pledged to donate \$500,000 to the local fire services. "My heart goes out to our friends and family in Oz," she wrote.

Australian native Nicole Kidman shared the same list and added her pledge of \$500,000, writing that "our families" support, thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected by the fires all over Australia."



Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman

"Wolver"ne star Hugh Jackman shared a picture of with links to organisations receiving donations and captioned it: "How can you h"lp?"

"Queer Eye" star Jonathan Van Ness wrote that his "heart has been broken these last days watching the situation deteriorate there... Go to the link in my bio & donate to Celeste Barber's Australia fundr"iser & if you're in a position to donate that would be very much appreciated."

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SPORTS  
sports

# Ettihad dominate in overtime to beat Sitra

## Al Ettihad stay undefeated in Silver Division of Basketball League

TDT | Manama

**A**l Ettihad needed overtime to put away Sitra 91-84 last night in the Silver Division of the Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

The game was deadlocked at 75-all at the end of regulation, forcing the extra five-minute session. It was a thrilling finish to the fourth quarter, as Ammar Mohammed Shabaan first gave Ettihad a 75-73 lead with a lay-up and only eight seconds to go. But then Mohammed Abdulla replied for Sitra with his own basket with just two seconds remaining on the clock.

In overtime, it was all Ettihad as they scored the first nine points without an answer from their opponents. Sitra only scored their first point with under a minute-and-a-half remaining, and by then Ettihad had full control of the game.

Shabaan scored 25 points to lead Ettihad in the game. He came off the bench and provided his team a much-needed spark. American professional William Byrd chipped in with 20 points, 20 rebounds and five blocks; Nasser Almosawi added 14 points, seven rebounds and seven assists; and Ali Ghadeer had 13 points 14 rebounds and six assists.

For Sitra, Serbian import Milos Macura had 30 points and



Nuwaidrat's Quantance drives to the basket as he is guarded by Bahrain Club's Hussain Lulu and Tubak

21 rebounds, while Isa Ebrahim added 14 points and 11 rebounds as a substitute. Mohammed Hakem contributed 14 points and Abdulla Ali had 11.

With the result, Ettihad re-

mained undefeated in five games as they continued to top the Silver Division standings. Sitra, on the other hand, suffered only their second loss, also in five outings, as they stayed amongst



Sitra's Ebrahim tries to go for a basket but is defended closely by Ettihad's Hassan Fahad

the top three.

In yesterday's other game, Nuwaidrat made easy work of Bahrain Club in an 81-60 victory.

Nuwaidrat enjoyed a dominant second half after trailing

by one, 34-35, heading into the break. They outscored Bahrain Club by 17, 28-11, in the third quarter to pull away from their opponents, and then cruised in the fourth to the final buzzer.



Sitra suffered only their second loss in five matches, as they stay amongst the top three

American Haminn Quantance was Nuwaidrat's top scorer with 30 points. He also took down 22 rebounds in the win. Hasan Madan added 22 markers, including five of his team's impressive 13 three-pointers. Hassan Abbas added 12 off the bench while Ebrahim Albasri scored 11.

For Bahrain Club, Serbian-Bosnian professional Dragan Tubak had 18 and 23 rebounds in the loss, while Jalal Akbar added 10 as their only other player in double figures.

Nuwaidrat's win was their third in five outings as they tied Sitra on the standings, while Bahrain Club suffered their second defeat to go with two wins.

League action continues on Wednesday with one game in the Top Six, with Al Ahli facing Al Najma at 7.30pm.

## Sibley, Denly build England lead against South Africa



Joe Denly drives beyond the reach of Kagiso Rabada

AFP | Newlands

**D**om Sibley and Joe Denly stretched England's lead on an attritional third afternoon of the second Test against South Africa at Newlands yesterday after James Anderson had polished off the home side's first innings in the morning.

England were 109 for two in their second innings at tea, an overall lead of 155 runs.

Sibley and Denly put on 73 for the second wicket before Denly was out for 31 when he hooked a short-pitched ball from Anrich Nortje and was caught by Dwaine Pretorius at fine leg.

It was slow going, with the partnership taking up 33 overs, but it consolidated England's

advantage on a pitch where batsmen have struggled to bat fluently.

Denly faced 111 balls, while Sibley was unbeaten on 44 off 127 deliveries at tea.

Anderson completed a five-wicket haul and Ben Stokes set an England catching record at the start of the day when South Africa were bowled out for 223, giving England a first innings lead of 46.

Anderson took both South Africa's remaining wickets as the hosts were bowled out for 223, adding only eight runs to their overnight total.

Stokes set an England Test record for a fielder when he held his fifth catch of the innings to dismiss last batsman Nortje off Anderson's bowling.



Bahrain's Olympic football team members with officials of Bahrain's Embassy in Thailand during a reception. The Bahrainis are in Bangkok to compete in the 2020 AFC U-23 Championship, which kicks off on Wednesday. Bahrain are making their debut in the prestigious Asian Football Confederation (AFC) event, which also acts as the Asian qualifiers for next year's Tokyo Olympics. The top three teams will book a seat at the Games. A total of 16 teams are taking part in the competition. The Bahrainis play in Group A of the preliminary round alongside Australia, Iraq and hosts Thailand. They open their tournament campaign against the host Thais on Wednesday



National Guard players pose with their trophies after lifting the CBA 8-A side Tournament Trophy for Division A & B by defeating Hajwari CC. Man of the Match Finals trophy was awarded to Fateh from National Guard. Sameer, Jamal and Atif collected the Best Batsman, Bowler and All-round trophies respectively

# Bahraini team make strong start at 2020 Dakar Rally

Bahrain JCW X-Raid Team drivers ranked second and third after first stage in Saudi Arabia

TDT | Manama

**B**ahrain JCW X-Raid Team made a strong start yesterday to the 2020 Dakar Rally, which is being held for the first time in Saudi Arabia.

The world's most fearsome off-road race launched with hundreds of the planet's best drivers, navigators and riders tackling a gruelling rally-raid route like no other.

After 11 editions in South America, the race has switched to Saudi with 12 stages over 7,500km, including three super-tough stages that are longer than 750km and 75 percent of the rally taking place on sand.

In attendance at yesterday's opening of the event were Bahrain Motor Federation President Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa and Bahrain International Circuit Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Competing in self-developed and constructed Mini John Cooper Works and Mini John Cooper Works Buggy, Bahrain JCW X-Raid Team features world champion drivers Stephane Peterhansel and Carlos Sainz and co-drivers Paulo Fiuza and Lucas Cruz. They ranked second and third amongst the competing cars after the 752km first stage, which started off in Jeddah and ended in Al Wajh yesterday.

Peterhansel and Fiuza in car no. 302 completed the stage in three hours 21 minutes 18 seconds – just two minutes and 14 seconds behind the top-placed Agrorodeo team of Vaidotas Zala and Saulius Jurgelenas.

Sainz and Cruz in the no. 305 car were not far behind their teammates, completing the stage just 36 seconds behind them.



Sainz and Cruz in their no. 305 challenger during yesterday's first stage



The race has switched to Saudi Arabia after 11 editions in South America

"We wandered around a bit and must have lost three to five minutes looking for a hidden waypoint," said Peterhansel. "The directions were hard to understand in English. I must be going soft in the head."

"In 21 editions of the Dakar, I've never had a co-driver talk to me in English, so I need to get used to it. There were dunes,

sandy plateaus and rocky sectors where we had to walk on eggshells."

Sainz commented: "We got lost once and had to backtrack, which cost us some time. We also had a flat tyre. However, it wasn't too bad after all because I was under the impression we'd lost 14 or 15 minutes. You really need to pay attention to navigation."

In today's second stage, the racing continues on from Al Wajh to Neom, with competitors enjoying a shorter day at 401km overall.

Saudi became the first country in the region to play host to the challenge, gaining the right to hold it for the next five years. A total of 550 drivers from 62 nations are exploring the vast and formidable desert terrains of the largest country in the region.

Of the event and of Bahrain's participation, Shaikh Abdulla said: "This is as much a moment of pride for Bahrain, as it is for our region. Our participation shows Bahrain's advances in the motorsports world, inspired no doubt by Bahrain's pioneering move to host Formula One since 2004."

"An event of such global magnitude presented the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with a monumental opportunity to showcase its unique natural landscape, as well as its keenness and enthusiasm to bring global sporting events to the country and the region."

The Dakar Rally, an annual event which was first launched in Paris 1979, ran from Europe to the Senegalese city it is named after for decades, then moved to South America in 2009, where it remained until this year's event.

## Drag and Drift Nights kicks off thrills in the new year

TDT | Manama

**B**ahrain International Circuit (BIC) is all set for the first adrenaline-pumping action of the new calendar year with the Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and Drift Nights taking place today at the world-class motorsport facility in Sakhir.

Drag and Drift Nights give participants the chance to take their very own cars or motorbikes and push them to their limit either down BIC's world-class drag strip or around the circuit's Vehicle Dynamics Area, or both!

It is one of the most popular activities on offer at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East" attracting large numbers of participants each time it is held.

BIC's quarter-mile strip hosts the drag racing action. BIC is a member of the prestigious National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Worldwide Network, and it is where some of the region's best, World record-breaking drag racers go head to head in the national championship.

Meanwhile, the circuit's Vehicle Dynamics Area is a

specially configured venue at BIC's car park that has been surrounded by safety barriers. It is the largest open tarmac area in Bahrain.

Both the drag and the drifting can be enjoyed for a single fee of BD10,500. Participation in just the drag racing or just the drifting costs BD7,500. Registration can be done on site from 5pm, and the action will be held from 6pm to 11pm.

Those who would like to experience the drag or drift as a passenger can get into a participant's car for an additional BD4. Spectators can purchase tickets for BD2 apiece.

Also as part of the evening's drag racing programme, BIC is offering the immensely thrilling Dragster Xperience. This is one of the circuit's most unique and ultimate-adrenaline activities, as it gives participants a taste of pure speed as they are taken from zero to 100kph in just one second while seated in a Top Dragster. The Dragster Experience costs BD42.

Safety standards of the highest level are followed at all times during the evening's events for both drivers and spectators alike.



A car in action during a drag race

## Tsitsipas whips Zverev as top names crash at ATP Cup



Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece hits an innovative return against Alexander Zverev of Germany

AFP | Sydney

**S**tefanos Tsitsipas whipped an error-strewn Alexander Zverev to win the battle of the big guns at the ATP Cup yesterday, inflicting a second successive defeat on the German in his warm-up for the Australian Open.

On day three of the inaugural 24-nation team event in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth, world number 11 David Goffin was another loser, along with Italy's Fabio Fognini, ranked one place below him.

Greek star Tsitsipas, who won the 2019 season-ending ATP Finals in London and is now ranked six, was in a different league to Zverev, who only began hitting balls a week ago

after an off-season curtailed by a lucrative exhibition tour.

The lacklustre German world number seven sent down 10 double faults and made just 45 percent of his first serves, a worrying sign ahead of the opening Grand Slam of the year. He lost to Australia's Alex de Minaur in his opening match on Friday, throwing away a one-set lead.

"I worked very hard for this win, I found solutions, found my rhythm and my pace and knew what I was doing on court," said impressive 21-year-old Tsitsipas after his 6-1, 6-4 walloping in Brisbane.

"I was serving pretty okay and played clever again. I managed to stay calm and positive in my head."

## Aussies take control of New Zealand Test

AFP | Sydney

**A**ustralia took a commanding 243-run lead over plucky New Zealand in the third Test in Sydney yesterday, looking set for a clean sweep of the series.

The Australians dismissed the Black Caps for 251 to lead by 203 runs on the first innings before batting a second time in a bid to build an overwhelming total with two days remaining.

At stumps on day three, the hosts were 40 without loss with David Warner on 23 and Joe Burns not out 16, and were expected to bat on for some time on the fourth day.

Off-spinner Nathan Lyon captured five for 68 to lead the Australian bowling attack, with Kiwi Test debutant Glenn Phillips top-scoring with a charmed knock of 52.

"We're in a very good position here," said Lyon, who has now taken a career 385 Test wickets. "A lot of work to do in the morning and we have to see what lead the batsmen want to get to."

"It is pretty special to play



Tom Blundell of New Zealand is bowled by Nathan Lyon of Australia

here in front of your home crowd, in front of your family and friends. Nice to go up on the honours board."

Phillips, who only flew in on the eve of the Test as cover for a team weakened by a virus outbreak, was dropped twice and given a reprieve when caught off a no-ball.

Lyon put down the two caught-and-bowled chances when Phillips was on two and 17. The Kiwi batsman dodged

another bullet on 28 when he was caught by Travis Head at deep midwicket only to be recalled when James Pattinson was found to have over-stepped for a no-ball.

Phillips hit a cracking pull shot off Pat Cummins to raise his debut half-century before Cummins got him two balls later, ripping through his defences to take off-stump for 52.

Lyon bowled Will Somerville and Neil Wagner for ducks and

# 385

Test wickets have been taken by Nathan Lyon

fast bowler Matt Henry came out to bat despite fracturing his left hand earlier in the match.

Henry ducked out of the way of a couple of Mitchell Starc thunderbolts directed at his body before he was stumped off Lyon's bowling to end the New Zealand innings.

It was the longest innings of a disastrous lost series for the Kiwis, bettering the 71 overs they faced in the second Test in Melbourne.

The Black Caps lost three wickets in the middle session with the experienced Ross Taylor out lbw to Cummins for 22 in the second over after lunch.