

**Katie, Jamie maintain relationship perfectly**

It turns out that American actor Katie Holmes and her beau actor Jamie Foxx are maintaining their relationship perfectly. | P13

THE DAILY **tribune**



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**China 'Jade Rabbit' wakes from 'nap'**

Beijing, China

China's lunar rover got back to work on the far side of the moon yesterday after waking from a five-day hibernation, its official social media page announced. "Afternoon nap is over, waking up and getting moving," the Yutu-2 (Jade Rabbit-2) posted on the Twitter-like Weibo.

The rover on Saturday went into standby mode to protect itself from temperatures reaching towards 200 degrees Celsius (390 degrees Fahrenheit), the China Lunar Exploration Program under the China National Space Administration (CNSA) said.

The 140-kilogram (308-pound) rover has since resumed activities, which will include taking a picture of the front side of the lander and exploration missions.

The Chang'e-4 mission -- named after a moon goddess -- made the world's first soft landing on the moon's far side on January 3.

The rover, named after the moon goddess's pet rabbit, successfully separated from the lander and drove onto the moon's surface last Thursday.

Asian Cup



Bahrain's goalkeeper Sayed Shubbar Ebrahim Alawi defects the ball during the 2019 AFC Asian Cup group A football match between Bahrain and Thailand at the Maktoum Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Stadium in Dubai. Chanathip fired Thailand to only a second Asian Cup win in their history as they beat Bahrain 1-0 to reignite their campaign (full story on page 16)

**Five soldiers killed in Houthi drone attack**

Agencies

An attack by pro-Iranian Houthi militias targeting a military parade by the Yemeni National Army killed at least five soldiers yesterday.

Chief of staff General Abdullah al-Nakhi, his deputy, Saleh al-Zandani, and Lahij governor Ahmad Abdullah al-Turki were all at the base at the time of the attack, a pro-government source said.

The governor of Lahaj and the head of army intelligence unit were also injured in the attack.

The Houthis used a drone to attack the parade taking place

in Al-Anad military base in Lahaj province, said Al Arabiya.

Al-Anad, which lies some 60 kilometres (40 miles) north of Yemen's second city Aden, was the headquarters for US troops overseeing a long-running drone war against Al-Qaeda until March 2014.

Earlier, on Wednesday, in a failed attempt to fire a ballistic missile in the al-Tayyar district in Saada governorate north of Yemen, targeting Saudi Arabia, as many as 15 members of the militias were killed.

According to Al Arabiya, the missile exploded when Houthis were trying to launch the ballistic missiles.

**Expel Iranians**

Pompeo vows US would work to expel Iran troops from Syria

AFP | Cairo, Egypt

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo vowed yesterday the United States and its allies would work diplomatically to expel all Iranian troops from Syria, urging Middle East nations to forge a common stand against Tehran.

America "will use diplomacy and work with our partners to expel every last Iranian boot" from Syria and bolster efforts "to bring peace and stability to the long-suffering Syrian people," Pompeo at a keynote address in Cairo.

The top US diplomat was in Egypt on the latest leg of a regional tour aimed at shoring up Washington's Middle East policy following President Donald Trump's shock decision to withdraw 2,000 US troops from Syria.

In his speech at the American University in Cairo, Pompeo said the US is creating an anti-Iran front -- the Middle East Strategic Alliance -- bringing together Gulf countries as well as Egypt and Jordan.

Pompeo said the US would ensure Israel has the military capacity to "defend itself against the Iranian regime's aggressive adventurism."

He stressed the troop pullout from Syria would go ahead, despite comments in recent weeks appearing to walk back Trump's decision, but said that the US



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo holds a joint press conference with his Egyptian counterpart following their meeting at the ministry of foreign affairs

**"America will use diplomacy and work with our partners to expel every last Iranian boot"**

MIKE POMPEO

would remain engaged.

The "decision to withdraw our troops has been made. We will do that. We will withdraw our forces, our uniformed forces, from Syria and continue America's crushing campaign," Pompeo told reporters at a joint press conference with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shukry.

He also met earlier with

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, after arriving in Cairo late Wednesday on his longest trip since taking office last year which has already taken him to Jordan, Baghdad and the Iraqi Kurdish regional capital Arbil.

The tour will also take Pompeo to Gulf countries including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

As he arrived in Egypt, the State Department described the country as a "steadfast partner in the anti-terror fight, and a courageous voice in denouncing the radical Islamist ideology that fuels it".

Pompeo's tour is aimed at urging regional allies to continue to confront the "significant threats" posed by Iran and Islamic State group (IS) jihadists.

ILLUSIONS OF TRUTH

**Older people, conservatives more likely to share fake news**

Washington, United States

Facebook users aged 65 plus and conservatives are more likely to share fake news on the platform than younger or more liberal counterparts, according to a new study published Wednesday.

Researchers from Princeton University and New York University analysed the Facebook posts of nearly 1,200 people who agreed to share their data in the aftermath of the 2016 US presidential election.

They then compared links the respondents had shared on Face-

book with several lists -- including one compiled by BuzzFeed -- of websites known to share false information.

The study, published in Science Advances, found less than only 8.5 per cent of respondents shared a link from one of these websites.

However, those that did tended to be older and self-identified as being on the conservative end of the political spectrum.

In fact, users over 65 -- regardless of political affiliations -- shared "nearly seven times as many articles from fake news domains" as 18 to 29-year-olds,



Representative picture

the youngest age group studied. "No other demographic characteristic seems to have a consistent effect on sharing fake news," the authors reported.

The authors also suggested the impact of aging on memory could have an effect.

Although the study found that Republicans shared more fake news than Democrats, and ideologically, conservatives shared the most fake news stories -- this could be due to the fact that most fake news articles produced during the 2016 presidential campaign favored US President Donald Trump.



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# Heritage sports winners hailed

TDT | Manama

**T**op three winners of the Heritage Knight Competition was given a reception at Safriya Palace by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Heritage Knight Competition is a major competition organised under the supervision of the Popular Heritage Sports Committee.

Ahmed Ma'ouf Al Romaihi was crowned as Knight of Popular Heritage, Mansour Ali Al Khaldi came second and Nawaf Hassan Al Ka'bi ranked third after a protracted athletic competition spanning more than 24 hours.

Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Qa'ood, Chairman of the Popu-

lar Heritage Sports Committee a subsidiary of Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC), hailed His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for the Royal patronage of Popular Heritage Sports.

"Bahrain has become the region's leading nation in heritage sports thanks to the Royal patronage of His Majesty the King," Al Qa'ood said.

He added that this Royal support enhances the efforts to develop the popular heritage sports in Bahrain in line with the directives of His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Representative of His Majesty the King for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee.



His Majesty the King during a reception held at Safriya Palace



Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa during an inspection visit to BDF units to get informed about their training plans to achieve combat and administrative readiness. The BDF Commander-in-Chief paid tribute to BDF personnel for their dedication to attain the highest military readiness and remain the bulwark of the nation's security and stability.



Minister of Industry, Commerce & Tourism Zayed R. Alzayani receiving chairman of the Economic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Shura Council Khalid Al Maskati, accompanied by a number of committee members. They reviewed various issues and topics related to the economic developments in the Kingdom. The minister stressed the ministry's readiness to provide all kind of support to the Shura Council.



Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan receiving Dr Fatima Mohammed Al Balushi, Chairperson of Bahrain Trust Foundation. The minister was briefed on the foundation's humanitarian educational, health, and social assistance projects and initiatives both locally and abroad in refugee camps and disaster-affected regions. Humaidan reaffirmed the ministry's support to all non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in their efforts to boost the community partnership.



Education Minister Dr Majid Al Nuaimi holding a discussion with MP Zainab Abdul Amir. The minister briefed the MP on the development programmes implemented by the ministry, as well as discussed various educational services provided.

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Commander of the GCC Unified Military Command Lieutenant General Eid bin Awadh Al Shalawi during a visit to Bahrain Military Museum where he was welcomed by Media and Moral Guidance Director Major Mohammed Ketami Al-Kabisi. The GCC Unified Military Command Commander got informed about the collection of historical collectables, artistic military paintings and models considered as documentation of Bahrain's military history

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Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) Sameer Nass alongside Treasurer Aref Hejris, Deputy Treasurer Waleed Kanoo, and Chief Executive Officer Shaker Al Shater receiving at Bait Al Tijjar the Egyptian Ambassador to Bahrain Suha El Far. The meeting stressed consolidating efforts between the chamber and the embassy for encouraging Bahraini-Egyptian investments and partnerships.

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# big story

# VAT violation: MOICT closes garment store

TDI | Manama

**Mohammed Zafran**

A shop in the Kingdom was put under provisional seizure by the authorities here yesterday for violating VAT rules.

The shop, reportedly in a shopping complex in Seef area, came under provisional seizure following a raid by the concerned authorities.

According to sources, the shop is a popular garment store that has several branches in the Kingdom.

Reports say the shop charged VAT but failed to display VAT registration certificate as required by law.

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism confirmed the legal action against the shop and stated that the store's implementation of VAT violated rules.

"In response to the Public Prosecution Office's orders, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism's (MOICT) 'Companies Control' and 'Consumer Protection' Directorates imposed a provisional seizure on a vendor levying the 5% VAT without displaying a registration certificate following

a complaint raised by a citizen," MOICT said in a statement yesterday.

The statement warned that levying VAT without displaying a registration certificate is a violation to Decree-Law no. (48) of 2018 on VAT and a violation to Article 6 of Law no. (35) of 2012 that aim to enhance transparency and mitigate any unfair practices.

Value Added Tax (VAT) is an indirect tax charged on selected goods and services bought and sold by businesses. The GCC countries agreed to implement VAT at a standard rate of 5 per cent. Accordingly, 5pc VAT was launched in Bahrain as of January 1st, 2019 with a few exceptions.

MOICT said that it has implemented administrative and legal mechanisms aimed at strengthening consumer protection.

The statement added that the authority has intensified its efforts in monitoring the performance of all commercial establishments, and is committed to reviewing the mechanisms of applying VAT during its trial period.

### Display VAT registration

MOICT said that all registered



### Violations

businesses in the Kingdom are required to display their VAT registration prior to levying the 5pc VAT.

The rule also states that all registered businesses are legally required to display the final prices of all goods and services - inclusive of tax.

Tax Invoice should include the full price, followed by the total price to be paid and the amount of tax charged.

VAT, MOICT statement said, is a joint responsibility that requires constructive stra-



### Officials during an inspection

tegic cooperation among three main pillars: the government, businesses, and the community.

Citizens can report all VAT violations to the National Call Center on 80008001.

Public Prosecution Office stated that action had to be taken against the shop as it violated

key VAT rules.

### Do not overcharge

The National Bureau of Taxation (NBT) warned businesses against overcharging VAT and consumers to ensure they do not pay in excess of 5pc for VAT.

"To ensure a smooth implementation of VAT, make sure

that VAT rate does not exceed 5pc on items subject to VAT," the National Bureau of Taxation stated.

The bureau also urged customers to be vigilant. "Make sure VAT is not applied on items not subject to VAT."

To find the list of items not subject to VAT, visit [www.nbt.gov.bh](http://www.nbt.gov.bh)

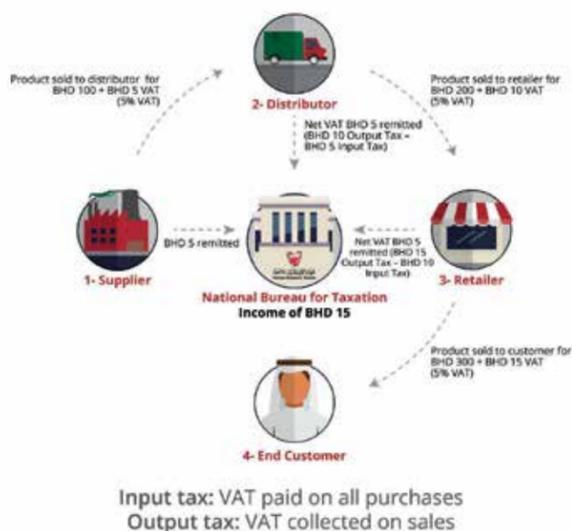


Officials during the inspection

## How does VAT work?

The VAT is imposed at each phase of the supply chain, from the production to the final sale of the good or service. When purchasing selected goods or services, consumers pay the VAT cost. In turn, businesses pay the National Bureau for Taxation (NBT) the tax collected from their customers' purchases and recovers the VAT they paid to their suppliers.

The National Bureau for Taxation (NBT) manages the implementation, administration and enforcement of VAT in Bahrain.



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# Bahrain, Oman affirm growing ties

TDT | Manama

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa yesterday hailed the strong bilateral ties bonding Bahrain and Oman in all fields.

The minister said this while holding a meeting with Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah.

Bin Alawi arrived in Bahrain yesterday with the GCC Secretary-General Dr Abdul Latif bin Rashid Al Zayani.

Shaikh Khalid reaffirming the depth and strength of the brotherly relations between Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman also expressed his keenness to en-



Shaikh Khalid receiving Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah

hance bilateral cooperation and coordination on issues of mutual concern.

The efforts, the minister said, will help meet the aspirations of

the two countries and brotherly peoples in all fields, wishing the Sultanate of Oman every success in presiding the current session of GCC.



Bin Alawi expressed pride in visiting the Kingdom affirming that the brotherly relations between the two countries and the two brotherly peoples are strong

on all levels.

The two sides also discussed a number of issues related to joint GCC action and developments on the regional and international

arenas.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani was also present.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Daij Al Khalifa during a meeting with a delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya. The delegation was led by Kuwait-based Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Ali Abbas and accompanied by Ambassador Michael O. Oyugi, Director, Diaspora and Consular Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya, and their accompanying delegation. During the meeting, Dr Shaikha Rana reviewed bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of Kenya and ways of propelling them to broader levels.



The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism Zayed R. Alzayani meeting with a German Business delegation headed by Roland Meissner. They reviewed a number of issues, focusing on the joint economic relations between Bahrain and Germany and ways to enhance them and activate joint agreements between the private sector in both countries. The Minister also highlighted the important role played by the private sector in consolidating mutual relations and increasing trade volume.

## MOFA signs deal with Representatives Council

TDT | Manama

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed yesterday between the Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Center for Parliamentary Studies and Training at the Representatives Council.

The deal aims at organising joint courses as well as enhancing training and exchange of information with the Representatives Council.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Daij Al Khalifa, and Secretary General of the Representatives Council, Advisor Rashid Mohammed Bounejema, signed the deal at a ceremony held at the Representatives Council.

The MoU, Bounejema said, comes in line with the aspirations and directives of the



Officials during the deal signing

Council's Speaker, Fawzia Bint Abdullah Zainal, towards more consolidation and deepening of partnership between the Parliament and various specialized bodies in the field of training and rehabilitation.

The MoU reflects the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' keenness to enhance fruitful cooperation with all state institutions under the reform approach of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

## Rajab posted false, malicious tweets

TDT | Manama

The General Directorate of Anti-corruption and Economic and Electronic Crimes yesterday clarified in a statement said that the "false and malicious tweets" made by Nabeel Rajab do not fall within the freedom of expression guaranteed by Bahrain's constitution.

The statement was made in response to a call made by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on January 4 regarding the "immediate and unconditional release" of Nabeel Rajab.

Rajab is currently serving a five-year sentence on charges of "releasing false news during wartime and publicly insulting brotherly states and the Ministry of Interior."

The directorate pointed out that in March 2015, Rajab posted false news and rumours to his followers harming the operations of the Bahraini armed

**Rajab, the General Directorate said, posted on 31 March 2015 images of bodies again claiming that they were the consequences of the war in Yemen, while they were images of incidents in Gaza Palestine.**

forces and the forces of brotherly countries during a time of war.

"For example, on 26 March, he posted images of bodies claiming they were the consequence of the war in Yemen, while in reality, they were images of incidents in Idlib in Syria that were published on 23 September 2014," the statement on Bahrain News Agency said.

Rajab, the General Directo-

rate said, posted on 31 March 2015 images of bodies again claiming that they were the consequences of the war in Yemen, while they were images of incidents in Gaza Palestine.

He re-tweeted tweets and attached with them images of wounded people, claiming that hundreds of inmates in the Jaw prison had suffered fractures and hundreds were bleeding from their heads because of physical attacks and torture.

Rajab also insulted the Ministry of Interior and the General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation through his tweets.

An investigation proved his hand in the tweets which resulted in taking the required legal steps by the Public Prosecutor, the statement said.

He was arrested and the electronic devices that he was using to post the tweets on his account were seized.



A gathering was organised at Sakhr on Tuesday in honour of the visiting SSG officials from Pakistan Army. The chief guest was SSG GOC Major General Tahir Masood Bhutta. Lt.Col. Sikandar Hayat of BNG & Lt.Col. Umair Bangash graced as the Guest of Honors. BNG and SSG officials and leading community members were in attendance. The programme was organised by Ahmed Nawaz, Majid Khan, Sajid Butt, Awais Akram, Falak Sher & Jamil Khan.

# Mindless Cruelty

Horrendous attack by schoolboys in Sehla makes a stray dog breathe his last



The dog was hiding in fear while dying of injuries. Finally, the dog was found and brought to the clinic to be treated. It was only then that we realised the extent of the wounds and that they were extremely severe

FATHIYA AL BASKATHI  
FOUNDER OF BAHRAIN STRAYS

TDT | Manama  
Mohammed Zafran

Cruelty against animals continues to remain as a concern in the Kingdom, with the latest incident being the story of a brutal assault on a stray dog in Sehla.

More shocking was the fact that the culprit here allegedly was a group of schoolboys.

The shocking account of the animal cruelty emerged as eyewitnesses came forward describing how a stray dog in Sehla was beaten and stoned to death.

According to sources, the boys frequently hurt the dogs in the area and in this instance caused a fatal injury.

A woman, who witnessed the attack reported the incident to an NGO, who in turn tried to save the dog's life.

Fathiya Al Baskathi, the founder of Bahrain Strays, told *Tribune* that the woman reported the incident earlier this week.

"Two days ago a young woman called me and told me that a dog was in a bad state after being beaten up and stoned.

"She said that the dog was left to die and that she wanted someone to help save its life.

"When we went there, the dog was not there and we searched for two days.

"The dog was hiding in fear while dying of injuries. Finally, the dog was found and brought to the clinic to be treated," she



The dog injured in the attack, when it was found



told *Tribune*.

"It was only then that we realised the extent of the wounds and that they were extremely severe.

"The dog succumbed to its injuries last night and the lady who helped us with this dog didn't take the news too well and was crying inconsolably.

"The doctor told us that the dogs suffered numerous injuries," she told *Tribune*.

Al Baskathi said that there are unconfirmed reports that the

dog was also run over by a car driven by a teacher. "I was later told by a student of the school that one of the teachers there ran over the dog which probably also contributed to the injuries. The child said he does not know if this was an intentional act."

Al Baskathi told *Tribune* that she plans to meet the headmaster of the school soon. "Sadly the school is closed until 21st. We found that there are two other weak dogs near that school and want to save them from being

tortured as well."

According to her, this is not an isolated incident. "There are many stories like this, the amount of torture that happens is shocking."

She said that after speaking to some of the people in the area, "I learned that those particular group of kids have a habit of torturing dogs for fun."

"These cases are not isolated to this area, I have many stories from various villages where kids are seen hurting dogs," she said.

## Workshop on Artificial Intelligence award held

TDT | Manama

A workshop was held at Bahrain Polytechnic to introduce the second edition of Khalid bin Hamad Award for Innovation in Artificial Intelligence award.

The move follows the directive of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Athletics Association.

The award ceremony will be organised in March by Bahrain Polytechnic in cooperation with Microsoft and Al Moayed Computers.

The workshop, titled "Let's

Innovate the Future", was attended by committee members, information technology professors, artificial intelligence enthusiasts and representatives from Microsoft and Al Moayed Computers.

The attendees were briefed about the second edition of the competition and the registration criteria.

Students' projects in the previous edition of the competition were also displayed in the workshop.

The competition was launched by HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa last May as part of His Highness's initiatives to develop the youth in the fields of science.

## 'Sustainability Week'

TDT | Manama

Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Dr Abdulhussain Mirza will participate in the 2019 Sustainability Week, being held under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces in Abu Dhabi.

The event is the largest gathering of sustainability in the Middle East and aims at exploring the most prominent social trends in sustainable development. It is being held

along with the Future Energy and Water Summit and the Zayed Award for Future Energy event. Representatives from 175 countries around the world, including more than 300 speakers and 180 ministers, will attend.

Dr Mirza said Bahrain's preparation for the event comes from the government's keen interest in its role to promote sustainable development efforts around the world. Dr Mirza will also participate in the ninth meeting of the General Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

## Suspects are prosecuted based on their crimes: Ministry

Manama

Referring to the reports of the arrest of terrorists with links to a fugitive, the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science yesterday made clear that they were convicted after taking legal actions.

Suspects, the Ministry said, are prosecuted based on their crime and not on the basis of their family's personal relations.

The three convicts whose names were mentioned in the media based on their links to

fugitive convict Ahmed Al-Wadai are Hajer Mansoor Ali, 51. She is serving a three-year jail term for planting a fake bomb to create terror among citizens and residents and for disturbing security and general order. Mahmood Marzooq Hassan Ali, 32. He is also serving a three-year jail term for planting a fake bomb to create terror among citizens and residents and for disturbing security and general order. Nazar Naama Baqer Al-Wadai, 21. He is serving a 10-year jail term for a case of arson and the making and possession of bombs.

## Pakistan School celebrates 50 successful years of excellence

TDT | Manama

Pakistan school celebrated completing 50 successful years by holding an elaborate ceremony at its school grounds in Isa Town on 28 December 2018.

Afzaal Mahmood, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was the chief guest of the event which kicked off at 3.30pm.

Bahraini parliamentarians Dr Sawsan M. Kamal, Basem Abdullah Almujaadami, Khalid Saleh Ahmed buanaq, Muhammad Alseesi Al by Ainain and Isa Al Qazi were the guests of honour.

Parliamentarians Mohd Al Sisi al Bu Ainain, Khalid Saleh bu Anq, Dr. Susan Kamal and Isa Al Qadhi, Mal Allah Shaheen, Member municipal council Isa Town and Mohammad Bassem

al Majdami were also present.

Afzaal Mahmood, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, congratulated the school administration, teachers and students for their role in the great heights scaled by the school.

Medals were awarded to the position holders of Board Exams and students of Junior and middle sections who excelled in final exams.

Certificates of appreciation were distributed among all the faculty and admin staff of Isa Town and Manama schools in recognition of their services. Selected staff members were awarded shields and appreciation certificates for their exemplary performances.

Various cultural programmes were held during the event.



In pictures, highlights of the event



# WORLD

**Founder of South Korean 'spycam' porn site jailed**  
Seoul, South Korea



The female co-founder of South Korea's largest porn site has been jailed following months of mounting public fury over the spread of secretly filmed spycam pornography.

Tens of thousands of women have rallied in recent months against the growing phenomenon of spycam videos, known in Korean as "molka", which mostly involve men filming women without their consent in toilets, changing rooms and in public.

Soranet -- which had more than a million users until it was shut down in 2016 amid widespread outrage -- carried thousands of such clips among reams of other X-rated content.

The site's female owner, surnamed Song, was sentenced to four years in prison and fined 1.4 billion won (US\$1.25 million) on Wednesday for aiding and abetting the distribution of obscene material, including sex videos featuring minors.

## Xi hopes US, NKorea will 'meet halfway'

Seoul, South Korea

Chinese President Xi Jinping offered North Korean leader Kim Jong Un firm backing in deadlocked nuclear talks with the United States, insisting the two sides should meet "halfway", state media said yesterday.

Kim visited Beijing by train this week for two days of talks that reasserted China's role in the process, and were seen as a strategy session ahead of a second summit between the North Korean leader and US President Donald Trump.

At their first meeting in Singapore in June, Kim and Trump signed a vaguely worded document with Kim pledging to work towards the "denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula".

But progress has since stalled with Pyongyang and Washington -- which stations 28,500 troops in South Korea -- disagreeing over what that means.

North Korea wants relief from the multiple sets of sanctions imposed on it over its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

Xi said he "hopes that the DPRK and the United States will meet each other halfway" ac-



North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un (2nd L) and his wife Ri Sol Ju (L) posing with China's President Xi Jinping (2nd R) and his wife Peng Liyuan (R) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

ording to China's state news agency Xinhua, using the initials of the North's official name.

Xi "spoke highly of the positive measures taken by the DPRK side", it added.

Kim "raised concern" about the impasse in talks with the US, according to Pyongyang's offi-

cial KCNA news agency, which said the Chinese leader had issued a ringing endorsement of the North's position.

"Xi Jinping said that the legitimate issues raised by the DPRK are rightful demands and that he fully agrees that the DPRK's reasonable interests should be justly resolved," it said.

## Suitcase full of cash stolen from Mugabe, court hears

Harare, Zimbabwe

A suitcase containing \$150,000 in cash was stolen from ousted Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, a court in Harare has heard.

The three accused -- which include Constanca Mugabe, 50, a relative of the president -- appeared before Chinhoyi magistrates court on Wednesday, state media reported.

Constancia Mugabe had keys to Mugabe's rural house in Zvimba, outside Harare, allowing the others, who

were employed as cleaners, to gain full access to the property when the theft occurred sometime after December 1 last year.

"Johanne Mapurisa bought a Toyota Camry... and a house for \$20,000 after the incident," state prosecutor Teveraishe Zinyemba said. "Saymore Nhetekwa also bought a Honda... and livestock which included pigs and cattle for an undisclosed amount."

The three accused were bailed and are due back in court on January 24.

## Ghosn suffers fever

Tokyo, Japan

Ex-Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn has been suffering from a high fever and was unable to meet investigators for questioning yesterday, local media said, citing his lawyers.

The 64-year-old auto tycoon, who emerged in public on Tuesday for the first time since his November arrest, has been ill since Wednesday night and needed some time to rest, according to several local news outlets.

His lawyer was not available for immediate comment. According to the Nikkei

daily, a doctor who examined him said Ghosn "required rest and was unfit for interviews (by prosecutors) and meetings (with his lawyers and consular visitors)".



## US woman in coma gives birth at care facility



Los Angeles, United States

Arizona police said Wednesday they have opened a sex assault investigation after a woman who has been in a coma for more than a decade gave birth to a baby boy at a nursing facility in Phoenix.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe, the Native American tribe to which the woman belongs, said in a statement that she "has been in a persistent vegetative state and coma for over a decade" and gave birth "while still in a coma."

To find the possible assailant, police in the southwestern US state are comparing DNA samples from the baby with male employees at the Hacienda Del Sol care center, where the 29-year-old woman was a patient.

The mother and baby are "recovering" after being taken to a local hospital soon after the December 29 birth, ac-

ording to police.

"When you have a loved one committed to palliative care, when they are most vulnerable and dependent upon others, you trust their caretakers," the chairman of the woman's Apache tribe Terry Rambler said. "Sadly, one of her caretakers was not to be trusted and took advantage of her."

"I am deeply shocked and horrified at the treatment of one of our members," he said.

The CEO of the nursing facility resigned this week following the scandal, according to a statement sent to media.

A lawyer for the woman's family said the infant "has been born into a loving family and will be well cared for," according to the New York Times.

"The family obviously is outraged, traumatized and in shock by the abuse and neglect of their daughter at Hacienda Healthcare."

## Iran confirms arrests of US military veteran



US Navy veteran Michael White

Tehran, Iran

Iran on Wednesday confirmed a US media report that an American military veteran had been arrested last year, but denied he had been badly treated.

"A US citizen called Michael White was arrested some time ago in Mashhad and the US government was informed of this in the first days of the arrest through the US interest section in Tehran," said foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi on his Telegram channel.

White, 46, from Imperial Beach, California, was arrested in July after visiting his girlfriend in Iran's second city Mashhad, his mother told The New York Times this week.

The US State Department said Tuesday it was "aware of reports" of his detention

but declined to release details, citing privacy considerations.

Ghasemi said reports in the US media that White was being held in poor conditions were "false and are strongly denied".

"The case of this person is being handled by the relevant authorities and at the conclusion of this process they will issue the necessary information," Ghasemi said.

US interests are handled by the Swiss embassy in Tehran, as the two countries have not had diplomatic relations since 1980. White joins at least three other US citizens, two of them of Iranian descent, in being detained in Iran.

Relations between Iran and the US deteriorated sharply last year when President Donald Trump withdrew from an international accord on Iran's nuclear program and re-imposed sweeping sanctions.

## Seal invasion

Ottawa, Canada

A Canadian Atlantic coast town asked for help from the federal fisheries department on Wednesday to help prevent rid of some 40 stranded seals wreaking havoc, and blocking roads and doors to homes and businesses.

The animals became stuck in the town of Roddickton-Bide Arm, Newfoundland after nearby waters suddenly froze over nearly a week ago, preventing their return to the ocean. Because it is illegal to interfere with marine mammals under Canadian law it has led to some awkward face offs with the unyielding seals.

Two have been accidentally struck by cars at

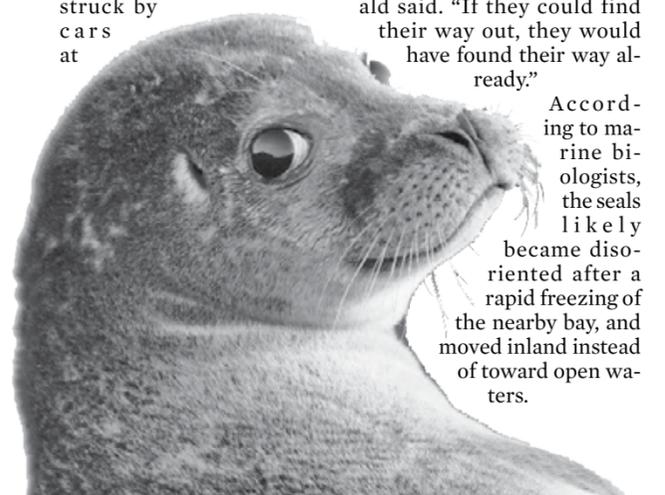
night, and several townsfolk have expressed concerns to local media that the chubby, big-eyed beasts may soon starve without access to food.

"We're seeing them more lethargic, they're not moving as fast," Roddickton-Bide Arm mayor Sheila Fitzgerald told The Northern Pen newspaper. "It's really disheartening for people to watch these animals suffer."

The Roddickton-Bide Arm town council raised the issue at a regular municipal meeting Tuesday night, and resolved to ask the Department of Fisheries and Ocean to intervene.

"They've been saying let nature take its course, but it's been almost a week," Fitzgerald said. "If they could find their way out, they would have found their way already."

According to marine biologists, the seals likely became disoriented after a rapid freezing of the nearby bay, and moved inland instead of toward open waters.



Representative picture (Courtesy of Azer news)

# “Umm Mustafa and sons” shop

An Iraqi woman's effort to feed her sons, who are six and four, in the ruined metropolis of Mosul. At just 27 she is already a widow -- her husband was executed by the Islamic State group during its brutal three-year occupation of the city.



At first some gave me evil looks, but I have no pension and I had no choice but to open my shop

UMM MUSTAFA



Umm Mustapha, a 27-year-old widow, rests with her sons in her grocery shop in Iraq's northern city of Mosul

AFP | Mosul, Iraq

Under the thumb of jihadist rule they were deemed minors -- unable to do anything without permission from a father or husband -- but today women are establishing businesses in Iraq's Mosul.

In red letters “Umm Mustafa and sons” looms large over a modest grocery, standing out in a sea of shop facades daubed with male proprietors' names.

“At first some gave me evil looks, but I have no pension and I had no choice but to open my shop”, Umm Mustafa, dressed in

black, said.

At just 27 she is already a widow -- her husband was executed by the Islamic State group during its brutal three-year occupation of the city.

The jihadists seized control of Mosul in 2014, and the ruined metropolis was only wrested back by Iraq's internationally-backed military a year and a half ago -- after months of some of the most brutal urban combat seen anywhere since World War II.

Located in the working class district of Al-Faruq, Umm Mustafa needs the shop's income to feed her sons, who are

six and four.

And despite locals' initial astonishment -- borne out of a conservative culture that long predated the jihadist interlude -- Umm Mustafa's entrepreneurship has won over a loyal clientele.

IS' self-proclaimed caliphate had relegated Umm Mustafa and her female peers to the shadows -- forbidden from even leaving home in the Nineveh province capital, never mind speaking in public places.

Storefront signage such as Umm Mustafa's could never have been erected as they have today.

## Head of the family

Nearly two thirds of young people in Iraq say they support the right of women to work, compared to only 42 per cent of older people, according to a UN survey.

The same survey found only 14pc of women work or actively seek employment, compared to 73pc of men, while in the private sector, only two percent of employees are female.

And unemployment, while officially at 10.8pc nationally, is higher in Nineveh and other provinces that were until recent-

ly plagued by fighting or under the control of IS.

The bloody conflicts that have ravaged the country for nearly four decades -- beginning with the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war -- have killed and disabled hundreds of thousands of people, and also triggered numerous divorces.

As a result, one in ten Iraqi households is headed by a woman nowadays, according to the UN.

“Umm Mustafa's self-reliance should be an example,” said Adel Zaki, a neighbour who comes to her shop regularly to buy chocolates or a bottle of fruit juice.

Fellow Mosul native Dania Salem did not have a pressing need to earn money.

But after fleeing home with her family to escape the advancing jihadists, she discovered her passion in Arbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The 23-year-old economics graduate worked at a florist there, where she learned to arrange fresh bouquets and create wreaths of synthetic flowers.

After returning home to Mosul, in August 2018 she opened a flower stall that is now in full bloom.

“For me, it was something of a challenge -- a way to improve women's place in society, which has been changing a lot,” she said.

## ‘A first step’

Since the jihadists were defeated in Mosul -- long a Middle East trade hub -- the city has undergone a cultural boom.

More and more women are feeling their way into the public sphere, whether by finding work alongside male counterparts or by setting up their own firms.

“This shop is a first step and I have other plans for later,” Salem said, before returning to arranging her flowers. For women's rights activist Rim Mohammed, it is crucial that the state supports other women setting up their own businesses.

“Their social rights must be assured, employment created and their place in cultural and political life guaranteed,” she told AFP.

Khalaf al-Hadidi, who runs Nineveh province's planning department, said he takes this message on board.

He said micro credits of between five and 10 million dinars (\$4,200 to \$8,400, 3,700 to 7,300 euros) will be granted to women, boys and girls as a priority.

# Chapo's secret messages to his wife and lover revealed

New York, United States

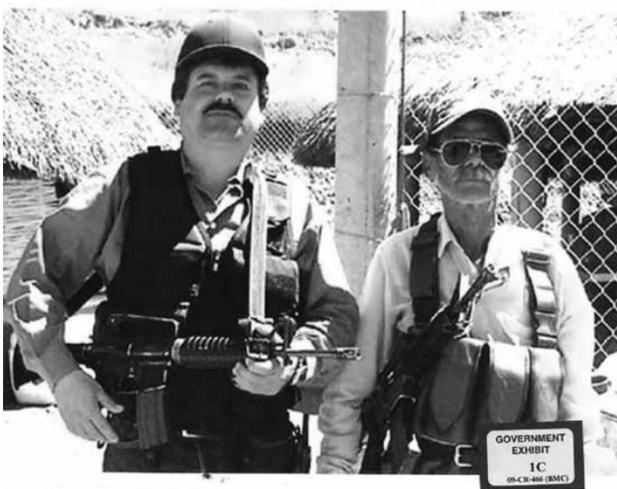
Prosecutors trying Joaquin “Chapo” Guzman opened an extraordinary window Wednesday into the intimate life of the Mexican drug lord as he plotted crime deals with his wife and a lover while doting on his twin daughters.

Jealous and paranoid, Guzman spied on both his beauty queen wife, Emma Coronel, and the lover, Agustina Cabanillas Acosta, using a surveillance system installed in the encrypted BlackBerries he gave them.

The FBI, it turns out, also had access to his communications, after recruiting the computer expert who installed the FlexiSpy surveillance system.

Read out in court, text messages between Guzman and the two women recorded them discussing major cocaine shipments but also more mundane things, like the kids.

“Our Kiki is fearless,” Chapo jokes to his wife in one message in January 2012, referring to one of their twin daughters, Maria Joaquina, now seven. “I'm going to give her an AK-47 so she can



This evidence undated photo released by the US Department of Justice shows Mexican drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman (L), according to the department.

hang with me.”

The 29-year-old Coronel, who married Guzman while still an adolescent, was in court as the messages were read out.

She listened with a serious expression, avoiding eye contact with anyone but her 61-year-old husband, who waved to her several times.

## Little queens and the Wild Beas

Chapo's nickname for his wife was “Reinita Coronel,” or “RC” and the girls were “reinitas,” or little queens in Spanish.

The couple discuss the children, a \$12,000 watch he gave her that she wanted to return,



The wife of Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, Emma Coronel Aispuro, arrives at the US Federal Courthouse in Brooklyn

and a drug shipment across the border that Coronel's father is involved in. She also asks him for money for plastic surgery.

Guzman, whose trial began two months ago, faces life in prison if convicted of smuggling 155 tonnes of drugs into the United States as the head of the Sinaloa cartel. He was extradited

to the United States nearly two years ago after twice escaping from prison in Mexico.

While on the run, he was nearly captured in Los Cabos, a Mexican resort town, on February 22, 2012, escaping minutes ahead of the police.

The same day he sent a text to Emma, asking her to quickly

send him two pair of black shoes, jeans, shampoo -- and “black ink for the moustache.”

Although Guzman escaped, three others were captured, including Cabanillas, his lover and partner in crime who was known as “Fiera,” Spanish for Wild Beast. The text messages read out in court suggest she was particularly close to him.

They discuss the formation of two companies -- a chemical fertilizer business in German and citrus firm in Ecuador -- with the aim of exporting drugs to “Europe, Canada, Australia and also the United States.” In another exchange they talk about buying between 630 and 700 tonnes of cocaine in Belize.

They address each other as “Love” in the texts. The evidence shows she had liposuction performed at his expense.

“I adore you,” Guzman tells her. “You are the most important person to me.”

But in a text to a friend, Cabanillas dismisses Guzman as an “idiot.” “I don't trust these BlackBerries, the ones he gives me over here, because the bastard can locate me.”

ANCIENT POEM FOR MODERN TIMES

## 'Joud' release showcases Saudi film prowess



*Joud's journey across Saudi Arabia showcases the diverse heritage of the country*

Aerial cinematography is central to JOD's storytelling

BE BEA

## Women cancer patients learn ma

The Workshop, launched in November in seven hospitals in Egypt, is part of a p



Faten Fawzi, a breast cancer patient, receives makeup tips at Cairo's Marriott Hotel in Zamalek district, Egypt

Arab News | Cairo

**W**hen cancer patient Merhan Khalil had a bone marrow transplant and chemotherapy in 2012, her hair started to fall out in the shower. On Saturday she joined a Cairo workshop that teaches female cancer patients how to conceal signs of cancer treatment.

"It helps a lot mentally ... to feel beautiful and to feel that the medicine didn't change us," said Khalil, 46, who suffers from multiple myeloma, a blood plasma cancer.

The workshop is part of a programme already in operation in Lebanon and the UAE called "Be Beautiful" that was launched in November in seven hospitals in Egypt. It will offer women cancer patients makeup tips as well as mental health support and advice about nutrition.



The workshop offers women cancer patients makeup tips as well as mental health support and advice about nutrition. When the cancer patient feels that she is beautiful and when she gets proper nutrition that will have a positive effect on her mental state and that strengthens her immune system

HANADI EL-IMAM



Merhan Khalil (R), receives makeup tips with other cancer patients at Cairo's Marriott Hotel in Zamalek district, Egypt

**TODAY IN HISTORY**

1599

Jacob van Neck's fleet leaves Bantam, Java in modern day Indonesia with 1 million pounds of pepper and cloves



1838

First public demonstration of telegraph message sent by Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail

1922

Insulin first used on humans to treat diabetes, on Leonard Thompson, 14, of Canada

1964

1st government report warning by US Surgeon General Luther Terry that smoking may be hazardous

**Al Arabiya | Riyadh**

**J**oud, a film produced by the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra), is a unique, dialogue-free motion picture that takes audiences on an immersive journey to tell stories of the cycle of life through the power of visuals, sound and cinematography.

Its title aptly translates to 'scarcity in the face of generosity', evoking a traditional trait held and cherished in many Arab cultures, Arabian Peninsula Bedouin cultures in particular, while the structure of the film is based on the Qasida, or the pre-Islamic poem, a powerful method of storytelling and highly influential medium in past times, leading the film's creators to dub Joud as an "ancient poem for modern times."

Shot in 15 different regions and terrains in Saudi Arabia by a diverse cast and crew of Saudis and several nationalities, the film journeys across diverse walks of life in the Kingdom. Relying heavily on a soundtrack that blends traditional and contemporary sounds, Joud seeks to utilize the power of sight and sound and to showcase everyday experiences and using it to juxtapose old and modern aspects of life and tradition.

With the opening of movie theatres in



As Joud is free of dialogue, it aims to tell the story of the cycle of life by using gripping footage

the country, a burgeoning Saudi movie industry aims to make its entryway into the global movie scene. Additionally, the Kingdom seeks to utilize its diverse terrains to become a movie-making hub for regional and international films, much like the country of Jordan where films such as Indiana Jones and The Martian brought global tourist attention and traffic to areas such as Petra and Wadi Rum, respectively.

Joud, being filmed all across the

country, brings many archeological and cultural aspects of Saudi Arabia to the big screen.

**Why Make a Dialogue-Free Movie?**

The film is directed by Andrew Lancaster and co-directed by Osama al-Khuragi. Lancaster is an award-winning Australian director and composer known for his strong visual storytelling, making a name for himself by creating movies with no sound. al-Khuragi is a Saudi director and film-maker whose portfolio includes national and international award-winning films, documentaries and a sitcom.



We sought to use a full range of sound, traditional and contemporary to represent the diversity and depth of life to have universalities that could go across culture

TODD NIMS



Bneya Ataway, actor in Joud

"It wasn't easy," al-Khuragi chuckled as he recalled the challenges of directing a movie with no words. "The Arab culture is generally very dependent on oral communication, so it was a challenge to find interesting visual subjects to tell a story, but I am proud we created strong storytelling in the movie even with the boundaries we gave ourselves."

The role of a powerful & effective soundtrack to convey what words do not

"Its almost liked a meditation," said producer Todd Nims, who along with co-producer Abdullah Ayyaf came up with the general concept of the film. "We sought to use a full range of sound, traditional and contemporary to represent the diversity and depth of life to have universalities that could go across culture," Nims added about the general feeling of the film.

The soundtrack for Joud was composed by film composers Jerry Lane and Diyaa Azzony. Lane also composed the Oscar-nominated score on Jordanian film Theeb, while Azzony has worked on over 18 films and documentaries over the last three years. The two collaborated to bring on a fusion of local and international sounds to create the soundtrack.

A central component of the soundtrack is live recording of local and international musicians. Several live

**Joud is an experimental film that journeys into the heart of Saudi Arabia. Immersing the viewer into Arabian culture, the movie conveys how the kingdom has gone through a dramatic transformation, driven by oil revenues, over the years where modern cities have risen from, what was once, a desert**

recordings were conducted in Jeddah with local musicians and another live recording was done in London with the London Contemporary Orchestra. According to the filmmakers, there are plans to release the official soundtrack of the film as its own record.

"We think it's very universal and that's the point," Nims said about the film score.

Joud was previewed first in Saudi theatres as part of Saudi National Day celebrations, and then shown internationally in cities such as Paris, Washington, New York, and others.



Fahad Nawaf Meteib al-Fereidey, an actor in the movie

**UTIFUL**

# Makeup tips in new Egypt workshop

programme already in operation in Lebanon and the UAE called "Be Beautiful"

"When the cancer patient feels that she is beautiful and when she gets proper nutrition that will have a positive effect on her mental state and that strengthens her immune system," said Hanadi el-Imam, founder of the Hoda el-Imam Foundation, which is organizing the workshops.

She said the aim is to offer the workshops in five Egyptian governorates within a year.

Faten Fawzi, a breast cancer patient who was among a group of five patients learning how to paint their eyebrows and apply conditioner on dry skin at Cairo Marriott Hotel, said she felt like her hair was burned after chemo.

"I went to my hairdresser and he shaved it off completely and I was devastated and started crying," Fawzi, 46, said.

"But after that I put on a chic wig that looked like my hair and



Faten Fawzi (2nd R), receives makeup tips with other cancer patients at Cairo's Marriott Hotel in Zamalek district, Egypt

you couldn't tell at all that I had cancer."

While she recently got rid of the wig, Fawzi said she still paints her eyebrows and cares about her makeup routine because it makes her feel better.

Ghada Salah who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2013, said she started to experiment with different wigs and colourful hats after she lost her hair to chemotherapy.

"I didn't want to look sick," she said. "I didn't want people to think 'poor her, she has cancer.'"

The organizers hope to serve 5,000 Egyptian women in the first year, said Dina Omar, a cardiologist and one of the founders of Be Beautiful.

Globally, cancer is responsible for one in six deaths, according to the World Health Organization.

Approximately 70 per cent of deaths from cancer happen in low and middle-income countries, WHO said.



Wigs are seen during a workshop for cancer patients to receive makeup tips at Cairo's Marriott Hotel in Zamalek district, Egypt

# business

## China offers Elon Musk permanent residency

Beijing, China

Tesla boss Elon Musk has been offered a "green card", China said yesterday, a privilege enjoyed by an elite group of foreigners, including several Nobel laureates and a former NBA star.

Musk was in China for the ground-breaking of Tesla's first overseas factory, which will allow it to sell vehicles directly in the world's largest market for electric vehicles.

The high-profile entrepreneur met with Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday in Beijing, where they discussed Tesla's China ambitions, said the State Council -- the country's cabinet.

"I hope to build Tesla's Shanghai factory into a global example," Musk told Li, according to a readout. "I really love China, I'm willing to visit here more often."

Li replied: "If this is what you truly have in mind, we can give you a 'Chinese green card'."



Elon Musk (file)

Tesla declined to comment on the offer.

The number of foreigners with Chinese permanent residency crossed 10,000 in 2016, according to state-run China Daily.

Members of this club, according to the paper, include Dutch scientist Bernard Feringa, who won the 2016 Nobel Prize in chemistry, former NBA all-star Stephon Marbury, and Nobel-winning economist Robert Mundell.

Getting a Chinese "green card" has been described as "one of the most difficult tasks in the world".

## New York mayor proposes requiring paid leave

New York, United States

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio on Wednesday unveiled a proposal to require companies to give employees 10 days of paid time off, in what would be a first for the United States.

Currently, no US city or state, or the federal government, requires firms to offer paid leave -- making the US unique among developed countries. Only publicly traded companies are obligated to do so in certain cases.

But De Blasio will present a draft decree for consideration to the city council that would apply to all companies in the city with at least five employees.

In New York, more than 500,000 workers lack paid leave benefits, he said in a statement, including 200,000 who work in the restaurant and hospitality industries.

"It's 2019," the mayor said.

"It's time to treat people decently. It's time to value people. Not just see them as cogs in a machine but people who deserve to live life fully."

The city council is expected to pass the proposal, with several representatives indicating their support on Wednesday.

De Blasio has picked up the pace on progressive policy proposals in recent months, which some see as a sign of presidential ambitions.

On Tuesday, he rolled out a new health system that would guarantee access to care for all New Yorkers, including undocumented immigrants.



## US talks laid the foundation, China

Beijing, China

China said yesterday that trade talks in Beijing with a US negotiating team had "laid the foundation" to resolve concerns held by both sides in a bruising trade war.

US officials visited Beijing from Monday to Wednesday for the first sit-down talks since President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed on December 1 to a three-month truce in the escalating spat.

China and the US "conducted extensive, in-depth and meticulous exchanges... which enhanced mutual understanding and laid the foundation for resolving issues of mutual concern," the Chinese commerce ministry said in a statement.

"Both parties agreed to continue to maintain close contact." When asked about progress in those areas on Thursday, China's commerce ministry spokesman Gao Feng said that structural issues were a focus of the talks.



US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping (file)

"Negotiations between the two sides in this area made progress," he said.

The US Trade Representative office said Wednesday that the talks focused on "ways to achieve fairness, reciprocity, and balance in trade relations", as well as the need for "ongoing verification and effective enforcement" of any agreement.

"The Chinese side also believes that the implementation mechanism of any agreement is very important and both parties have an obligation

to carry it out," Gao told reporters during a regular press conference.

"For the next step, both sides will continue to work hard together, and advance the negotiation work according to the original plan."

"The talks also focused on China's pledge to purchase a substantial amount of agricultural, energy, manufactured goods, and other products and services from the United States," USTR said in a statement.

## German airports strike slashes 600 flights

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Almost 640 flights were cancelled in Germany Thursday as security staff went on strike at three airports, meaning disruption for around 100,000 passengers.

The number of flights blocked was more than half the 1,050 planned for Duesseldorf, Cologne-Bonn and Stuttgart.

Duesseldorf -- the country's third-largest airport -- said in a statement that 370 of Thursday's 580 planned departures had to be cancelled.

News agency DPA reported that the walkout, slated to last from 3:00 am (0200 GMT) to midnight (1100 GMT), was expected to affect around 100,000 travellers.

At Cologne-Bonn, where 131 of almost 200 flights were cancelled, union Verdi told DPA the security strike was also slowing freight handling.

Representing 23,000 airport security staff across Germany, Verdi is demanding a pay increase to 20 euros (\$23.08) per hour from the present rate of 17 euros, or almost 18 percent.

## Indonesia airline brings live music to the skies

Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesian national flag carrier Garuda is bringing music to the skies with a series of live acoustic concerts on domestic flights, the airline said.

Passengers will be serenaded at 35,000 feet in a scheme aimed at wooing millennials "who want a different flight experience", airline spokesman M. Ikhsan Rosan said.

The carrier held its first in-flight concert on Wednesday, when two musicians performed for a captive audience aboard a flight between the capital, Jakarta, and the holiday island of Bali.

Garuda said sets would last 10 to 15 minutes on select flights,



Musicians performing on a flight from Jakarta to Bali.

and there would be a focus on promoting upcoming talent.

While it may prove an unforgettable flying experience for

some, it may not be everyone's idea of a good time.

In 2017, US airline Southwest introduced live shows on some

flights to a mixed reaction from passengers.

Some travellers said they preferred minimum human interaction while flying and said music would distract them from sleeping or reading.

Indonesia is one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets, but it has come under fresh scrutiny since a fatal Lion Air crash in October last year that killed all 189 people on board.

Garuda said it had embarked on extensive consultation to ensure the concerts posed no threat to safety or security.

"If there is the potential of turbulence, the singer will be directed back to sit in his chair," Rosan said.

## Manila ex-banker gets jail, \$109 mln fine over B'desh cyberheist

Manila, Philippines

A Philippine ex-banker was handed a lengthy jail term and \$109 million fine yesterday in the first conviction over one of the biggest ever cyberheists which saw \$81 million stolen from Bangladesh's central bank.

Shadowy hackers transferred the cash in 2016 from Bangladesh's US accounts to Philippine bank Rizal Commercial Banking Corp (RCBC), where it was swiftly withdrawn.

The theft exposed the Philippines as a haven for dirty money, where some of the world's strictest bank secrecy laws protect

account holders from scrutiny.

A Manila court found Maia Deguito, who was an RCBC branch manager where the money landed, guilty on eight counts of money laundering which carry a minimum of four years each behind bars.

The court also ordered her to pay \$109 million in fines. Deguito plans to appeal and can remain free on bail until the conviction is finalised.

Authorities charged that Deguito helped coordinate the transfer of the money, which was taken from Bangladesh's reserves account at the Federal Reserve bank in the United States.



Maia Deguito. (Courtesy of Asian Review)

Deguito is the only person who has been convicted in the case -- which has drawn international

concern -- her lawyer Demetrio Custodio told AFP, adding that his client had been turned into

a scapegoat. "She could not have done this on her own. A bank the size of RCBC could not have allowed a lowly bank officer to have planned this, so there are others involved in this," Custodio said.

RCBC said in a statement that it was a "victim" and that Deguito was a "rogue" employee.

The Philippine justice department said the case was not closed, but could not immediately provide details on other cases.

A North Korean hacker is also wanted by the United States on charges he and a state-sponsored hacking crew masterminded the

Bangladesh heist.

Only \$15 million of the money was recovered after it landed in the Philippines and was quickly dispersed.

Tens of millions of the loot disappeared into Manila's casinos, which were at the time exempt from rules aimed at preventing money laundering.

The Philippine central bank imposed a record \$21 million fine on RCBC after the discovery of the heist as it investigated the lender's alleged role in the theft.

The US reserve bank, which manages the Bangladesh Bank account, has denied its own systems were breached.



A woman plays ASTRO BOT Rescue Mission at a Playstation VR display at the Sony Exhibit at the Las Vegas Convention Center during CES 2019 in Las Vegas

# Facial recognition: Coming near you

Las Vegas, United States |

Imagine walking into a store where a robot greets you by name, lets you know that your online order is ready, and then suggests other products you might want pick up.

Facial recognition is making that possible as the technology gains traction in a range of consumer products, automobiles, and retail and hotel services, in addition to its longstanding but controversial use in law enforcement and security.

At the 2019 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this week, exhibitors pointed to how facial recognition may be used to “personalize” experiences and

enhance personal security.

While facial recognition has been on smartphones for some time, some newer uses include in care and entry systems for homes and offices, along with retail applications.

SoftBank Robotics chief strategy officer Steve Carlin, who showed CES attendees how the company’s Pepper robot could offer retail customers personalized attention, said the technology could also be used in hotels where an automated system could deliver a customized experience to a regular client.

“They should be able to say ‘Welcome back, you don’t need to stand in line, we’ve already checked you in and we’ve sent

the key to your phone,” Carlin said.

Carmakers at CES were showing how facial recognition could improve and personalize the travel experience through music, entertainment and other preferences.

Abe Chen of the Chinese-based auto startup Byton said its vehicle, set to launch later this year, would be able to make useful recommendations based on facial recognition.

“It knows who is in the car, how long you’ve been on the road and what you like to eat, so it could make a restaurant recommendation,” Chen told a CES presentation.

## Custom signs

Richard Carriere of the Taiwan-based tech firm Cyberlink said the firm’s new facial recognition being shown at CES is “very precise” and is being offered for retail, home and law enforcement applications.

Carriere said retailers can customize ads on digital signs by using this technology -- so a teenage girl might not see the same message as an elderly man.

“If someone walks into a store, based on gender or facial expression or age group we can customize what shows up in the signage,” he said.

Other startups were integrating facial recognition into home doorbells or security systems, enabling family members and friends to gain entry while alerting homeowners about potentially suspicious people.

“This is one more element of autonomy in your intelligent home,” said Bill Hensley of the security firm Nortek, who showed how its new Elan system can easily let people in and then customize the home environment.

Chinese startup Tuya introduced its AI video doorbell using real-time facial recognition to identify family members, friends, couriers, property managers and even pets, and to create a “whitelist” of accepted people.

“You will be able to give people a one-time pass, and you can talk with them over a video connection,” said Tuya sales chief Sandy Scott of the device, which is to go on sale later this year.



**Carmakers at CES were showing how facial recognition could improve and personalize the travel experience through music, entertainment and other preferences.**

Scott said the device could be used in assisted living homes to limit entries of unknown people, and also recognize if someone with dementia is wandering off. It stores data on the device to reduce risks of data leakage.

Other CES exhibitors including Procter & Gamble were demonstrating the use of facial recognition to enable customers to personalize skin care treatments.

## Ready for the masses?

Even as the uses for facial recognition grow, the technology remains controversial, especially regarding law enforcement building up databases.

Some critics worry about the accuracy of the technology and whether it means more kinds of surveillance and tracking. Retailers and other firms “may already have every data point about me except my face,” Brenda Leong of the Future of Privacy Forum in Washington said.

“So you wonder, what is the value added?”

Equating the technology to online tracking, she said facial recognition means “your face as a cookie,” the tracking files used by online data collectors.

A Brookings Institution survey earlier this year found 50 percent of respondents opposed facial recognition software in retail stores to prevent theft, and 44 percent said using this software in airports to establish identity was unfavorable.

A different survey released



The Mercedes-Benz EQ Silver Arrow, an electric powered homage to the record-breaking W 125 car from 1937, is displayed at the Las Vegas Convention Center



The Mercedes-Benz Vision Urbanetic autonomous vehicle



People look at the Waymo car, formerly the Google self-driving car project



People look at the Audi Aicon concept autonomous car during CES 2019



The Travis Touch pocket translator is displayed at CES 2019. The Travis Touch can translate speech from 100 languages and speak the translation back to the user. The smart translator is available for USD \$199.



A Lamborghini massage chair is displayed at CES 2019 consumer electronics show. The Bodyfriend LBF-750 Lamborghini massage chair features a 4D massage system, healing massage, brain massage, mood lighting and multi-channel surround sound speakers

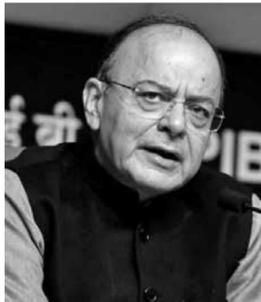


Companion robot Kiki the cat is displayed at CES 2019. Kiki, designed as a children’s “pet” learns human behavior over time and can identify its surroundings, remember people and track an individual by moving its head.

this week by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation offered different results, finding just 26 percent want the government to strictly limit facial recognition, and 20 percent support limits on facial recognition if it would mean air-

ports cannot use it to speed up security lines. “People are often suspicious of new technologies, but in this case, they seem to have warmed up to facial recognition technology quite quickly,” said Daniel Castro of ITIF.

## India doubles tax exemption limit for small businesses



Arun Jaitley

Reuters | New Delhi

India will exempt small businesses with annual sales of up to 4 million rupees (\$56,701) from paying taxes under a national sales tax, finance minister Arun Jaitley said yesterday, a move aimed at wooing a key voting group ahead of a national election.

Currently, firms with an annual turnover of up to 2 million rupees are exempted from registration under a unified national goods and service tax launched in 2017.

Arun Jaitley said the small companies would have the option to opt out of the GST tax net.

## N26 scores record 'fintech' funding

Frankfurt am Main

German online bank N26 said it had raised \$300 million to fund its launch in the United States, which gives the firm a valuation of \$2.7 billion. The fundraising round was the biggest ever for a German "fintech" or financial tech firm.

# Gulf markets rise

## Saudi's Al Khodari gains after plan to cut accumulated

Reuters

Financial stocks boosted most major Gulf bourses ahead of corporate earnings announcements next week.

Saudi's main index gained 0.8 per cent, aided by a 1.6pc rise in Al Rajhi Bank and a 1.2pc increase in Saudi Basic Industries.

Contractor Al Khodari rose 1.7pc after its board proposed to use its statutory reserve of 71 million riyals (\$19 million) to reduce a part of its losses. The proposal seeks to cut accumulated losses to 202 million riyals from 273 million.

Egypt's blue-chip index was flat, with El Sewedy Electric

## Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.8pt	» 8,210 pts
DUBAI	▲ 0.2pt	» 2,546 pts
QATAR	▲ 1.2pt	» 10,658 points
ABU DHABI	▲ 0.2pt	» 4,962 pts
EGYPT	■	» 13,367 pts
KUWAIT	▲ 1.2pt	» 5,453 pts
OMAN	■	» 4,311 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.3pt	» 1,342 pts

adding 2pc and Commercial International Bank inching up 0.1pc. Egypt's biggest listed lender said its board had approved a capital increase to 50 billion Egyptian pounds (\$2.8 billion) from 20 billion pounds.

Egypt's annual urban consumer price inflation decreased to 12.0pc in December from 15.7 pct in November, the official statistics agency CAPMAS said.

Qatar's index rose 1.2pc to hit

its highest since March 2017, with 14 of its twenty stocks gaining.

The index was boosted by financial shares, with Industries Qatar adding 2.9pc and Qatar Islamic Bank increasing 1.3pc.

The Abu Dhabi index inched up 0.2pc, also boosted by financials. First Abu Dhabi Bank, the largest bank in the United Arab Emirates, added 0.3pc and Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank was up 0.6pc.

Dubai's index also gained 0.2pc with Emirates NBD rising 0.6pc and Ajman Bank increasing 2.6pc. Growth in the UAE's non-oil private sector fell in December to its slowest rate since October 2016, a survey showed.

The seasonally adjusted Emirates NBD UAE Purchasing Managers' Index, which covers manufacturing and services, dropped to 54.0 in December from 55.8 in November.

## McLaren to unveil its fifth model

TDT Manama

McLaren Automotive will next week open another new chapter in the story of its Longtail (LT) family, with the unveiling of the fifth car to carry the legendary name.

Developed to meet the exacting McLaren LT philosophy of increased power, reduced weight, optimised aerodynamics, track-focused dynamics and limited availability, the new model will further broaden the level of choice for McLaren customers – although with a production run of just 12 months.

Further information and im-



ages of the new LT, which is the third new car confirmed under the BHD 576.2 million McLaren Automotive Track25 business plan that was announced last

year, will be revealed online on Wednesday at 13:00 GMT. A short film is available now at <https://cars.mclaren.com/the-edge-amplified>

## EU advisor sides with Google on 'right to be forgotten'

Luxembourg, Luxembourg

An EU rule forcing search engines to comply with requests to remove links should be limited to Europe, the senior legal advisor to the bloc's top court said yesterday in a boost for web giant Google.

The legal clash pits Google against France over the "right to be forgotten" rule, which the US firm would like to see limited to European domains of its website -- such as Google.fr or Google.de -- and not Google.com or domains outside the European Union.

In his non-binding opinion, Advocate General Maciej Szpunar told the European Court of Justice that EU law "should limit the scope of the de-referencing that search engine operators are required to carry out, to the EU," a statement said.



Advocate General Maciej Szpunar

Szpunar is "not in favour of giving the provisions of EU law such a broad interpretation that they would have effects beyond the borders of the 28 member states," the statement added. Judges at the ECJ usually, but not always, follow the legal opinions of the court's advocate general.

The two sides are battling over a shock 2014 decision at the same court which granted the right for individuals, under certain conditions, to have references to them removed from search engine results.

## Ford, VW planning auto partnership

New York, United States

Ford and Volkswagen are preparing to announce a strategic partnership, including in areas such as self-driving and electric autos, a person with knowledge of the matter told AFP on Wednesday.

The announcement could come Tuesday during this year's Detroit auto show, the person said.

The organizers of the auto showcase have set aside a time slot on the main stage that day between 8:30 and 9:30 am local time (1330 to 1430 GMT) for an industry announcement but have given no further details.

## Fiat Chrysler to pay \$650 mn over software misuse: report

New York, United States

Fiat Chrysler has agreed to pay nearly \$650 million to resolve litigation over its use of illegal engine-control software on diesel vehicles that produced false results in emissions tests, *The New York Times* reported Wednesday.

The automaker will pay \$305 million in penalties to the federal government and California, which also brought suit, the NYT said, citing two unidentified sources who were briefed on the issue.



The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) in cooperation with the German-Saudi Arabian Liaison Office for Economic Affairs (GESALO) hosted yesterday at Gulf Hotel a business delegation from Germany spearheaded by the Managing Director of the German Calcium and Silicate Producers Association Roland Meissner. The event witnessed wide participation from local business owners and investors interested in mulling business and partnership opportunities with the members of the delegation.

## 550 million barrels of oil discovered off Ghana coast

Accra, Ghana

Norway's Aker Energy yesterday said it had discovered oil in commercial quantities off Ghana, which the government welcomed as a potential boost to the economy.

The oil and gas operator said exploratory drilling indicated an "estimated 450-550 million barrels of oil equivalent (mmboe)" in the Pecan field, 166 kilometres (100 miles) off Takaradi.

Further exploration could increase total volumes to 600-1,000 mmboe, the company said in a statement.

Ghana's government said the announcement was "good news" that could bring "a new outlook to the economy" and alternative funding for social projects in the future.

Aker Energy began operating the Pecan field last year. It holds a 50 percent stake. Others include Russian energy firm Lukoil and the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation.

Ghana first discovered oil in 2007 and became a producer in 2010, helping to speed up the rate of economic growth. It is believed to have five to seven billion barrels in reserves.

## Rolls-Royce Cars celebrates successful 2018 in MEA

Manama, UAE

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Middle East and Africa (MEA) said it enjoyed an exceptional 2018 with impressive growth of 32 per cent on the previous year. The Middle East also remains the strongest market for Bespoke Rolls-Royce models around the world.

Rolls-Royce Phantom remains the most popular model with customers in the MEA region. The recently launched Cullinan luxury SUV also proved to be exceptionally popular, with significant customer interest and advance orders. Cullinan scored notable success when it was named "Prestigious Luxury SUV of the Year" at the ArabWheels Car of the Year Awards ceremo-

ny held in Dubai in November.

Black Badge models were well received, especially among younger customers who are newly discovering the brand.

The outlook for sales in 2019 is positive due in part to the number of existing and expected orders for Cullinan and Phantom models. Collection and Bespoke Rolls-Royce models are also expected to remain in high demand.

César Habib, Managing Director, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Middle East and Africa, said: "We look positively to 2019 with strong demand on all our model families, especially Cullinan and Phantom. We are also planning to expand our Bespoke capabilities during the year."



Rolls-Royce Cullinan

# SHOW

## Katie, Jamie maintain relationship perfectly

ANI | Washington

It turns out that American actor Katie Holmes and her beau actor Jamie Foxx are maintaining their relationship perfectly.

The couple made their first appearance together in 2013, and ever since then they have made it more public.

People quoted a source as saying that the couple spends a lot of time together, adding that they even wrapped up 2018 with a December 28 yacht outing in Miami, and rode a pair of Jet Skis the next day as well. "They chilled, swam and enjoyed the sun and beach activities, it was a chance to get away and enjoy each other." People further quoted a source as saying.

They believe that the key to a successful relationship is to balance between their time together with family and work, and so they do.

"Katie and Jamie see each other as frequently as they can, they have known each other for years, and both turned out



Katie Holmes and Jamie Foxx

to be great parents, so they also have that in common. They are dedicated to their careers," the source revealed.

"Plus they give each other space," the source added.

"They are both serious-minded, organised and dedicated to their careers," the source fur-

ther added. Currently, Foxx and Holmes are busy in their numerous projects. Further prior to 'Annie' star, the 40-year-old star has been linked with Canadian actor Joshua Jackson, Chris Klein and Tom Cruise.

## MISSING PETS



**PISHO LEO** - Male Persian/Turkish mix, 1 yr, beige and white, wearing black collar w Turkish blue eyes on it - no ID tag, escaped from third floor balcony (neighbor saw him jump), Janabiya (back of Mercado Mall), 8/1/19, BD20 REWARD for safe return. 38077589



**ROCKY** - Male German Shepherd, 1 yr 6 mos, very friendly and socialised, microchipped, black collar - no ID, gate left open, last seen by neighbors getting hit by car, Arad (might have gone to Muharraq or Hidd), 7/1/19. 6637753



**PASOL** - Male Persian mix, 1.5 years, white and ginger, light brown eyes, neutered, not wearing collar or ID tag, escaped balcony, Isa Town (Khartoum Ave near school), BD20 REWARD for safe return. 2/1/19. Call or WhatsApp 38208721



**ROCKY** - Male German Shepherd, 9-10 yrs, short hair, not wearing collar or ID tag, escaped home - gate left open, Arad (near Jamis and Seef Mall), 1/7/18. 39424500 or 36005424



**LILO** - Female Siamese, 11 yrs, 3 toes on back right paw, spayed/microchipped, disappeared from courtyard, not wearing collar or ID tag, Saar (near Ahlia School/Al Bistaki mosque/Dilmun Club/Sar Cinema), 3/11/18, BD50 REWARD for safe return. 36665130



**MOMMY GANDA** - Female, 2-3 yrs, tan w black/ white around muzzle, spayed/microchipped, wearing red collar - no ID tag, escaped 4 Paws Clinic. Umm Al Hassam, may return to Juffair next to Fontana Towers (old home), BD100 REWARD for safe return, 24/6/18. 36750005

### HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON:

**THE HIDDEN WORLD**  
(PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW

Ⓞ CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 4:15 + 6:30 + 8:45 PM

DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA) (3D): 2:00 PM

DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA) (ARABIC DUBBED): 11:45 AM + 11:00 PM

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 10:30 AM + 12:45 + 3:00 + 5:15 + 7:30 + 9:45 PM + 12:00 MN

DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 11:15 AM + 1:30 + 3:45 + 9:00 PM

DAILY AT (ARABIC DUBBED): 12:15 + 2:30 + 4:45 + 7:00 + 9:15 + 11:30 PM

**SAAR**: DAILY AT: 11:30 AM + 1:45 + 4:00 + 6:15 + 8:15 + (10:30 PM THURS/FRI)

**WADI AL SAIL**: DAILY AT: 12:00 + 2:15 + 4:30 + 6:45 + 9:00 + 11:15 PM

### THE MULE

(PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER) NEW

Ⓞ CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT: 10:45 AM + 1:15 + 3:45 + 6:15 + 8:45 + 11:15 PM

DAILY AT (VIP): 12:15 + 2:45 + 5:15 + 7:45 + 10:15 PM

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 11:30 AM + 2:00 + 4:30 + 7:00 + 9:30 PM + 12:00 MN + (1:00 AM THURS/FRI)

DAILY AT (VIP I): 10:30 AM + 1:00 + 3:30 + 6:00 + 8:30 + 11:00 PM

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 11:15 AM + 1:45 + 4:15 + 6:45 + 9:15 + 11:45 PM + (12:30 MN THURS/FRI)

**SAAR**: DAILY AT: 12:45 + 3:15 + 5:45 + 8:30 + (11:00 PM THURS/FRI)

**WADI AL SAIL**: DAILY AT: 11:00 AM + 1:30 + 4:00 + 6:30 + 9:00 + 11:30 PM

### HOLMES & WATSON

(15+) (COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW

Ⓞ WILL FERRELL, JOHN C. REILLY, REBECCA HALL

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT: 11:15 AM + 1:15 + 3:15 + 5:15 + 7:15 + 9:15 + 11:15 PM

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 12:00 + 2:00 + 4:00 + 6:00 + 8:00 + 10:00 PM + 12:00 MN

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 11:45 AM + 1:45 + 3:45 + 5:45 + 7:45 + 9:45 + 11:45 PM

**SAAR**: DAILY AT: 11:00 AM + 1:00 + 3:00 + 5:00 + 7:00 + 9:00 + (11:00 PM THURS/FRI)

**WADI AL SAIL**: DAILY AT: 11:15 AM + 1:15 + 3:15 + 5:15 + 7:15 + 9:15 + 11:15 PM

### PETTA

(PG-15) (TAMIL/ACTION/THRILLER) NEW

Ⓞ RAJINIKANTH, VIJAY SETHUPATHI, SIMRAN, TRISHA

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT: 12:30 + 3:45 + 7:00 + 10:15 PM

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 10:30 AM + 1:45 + 5:00 + 8:15 + 11:30 PM

**SEEF (I)**: DAILY AT: 10:45 AM + 2:00 + 5:15 + 8:30 + 11:45 PM

**AL HAMRA**: DAILY AT: 2:30 + 8:45 + (12:00 MN THURS/FRI)

### NTR: KATHANAYAKUDU

(PG-13) (TELUGU) NEW

Ⓞ NANDARUMI BALAKRISHNA, RAKUL PREET SINGH, VIDYA BALAN

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT: 12:15 + 3:30 + 6:45 + 10:00 PM

**SEEF (I)**: DAILY AT: 10:30 AM + 1:45 + 5:00 + 8:15 + 11:30 PM

### VISWASAM

(PG-15) (TAMIL) NEW

Ⓞ AJITH KUMAR, NAYANTHARA

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT: 10:45 AM + 1:45 + 4:45 + 7:45 + 10:45 PM

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 12:00 + 3:00 + 6:00 + 9:00 PM + 12:00 MN

**SEEF (I)**: DAILY AT: 11:15 AM + 2:15 + 5:15 + 8:15 + 11:15 PM

**AL HAMRA**: DAILY AT: 11:30 AM + 5:45 PM

### VINAYA VIDHEYA RAMA

(TELUGU) NEW

Ⓞ KIARA ADVANI, RAM CHARAN AND VIVEK OBEROI

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: FROM FRIDAY 11TH: 10:30 AM + 1:30 + 4:30 + 7:30 + 10:30 PM

**SEEF (I)**: FROM FRIDAY 11TH: 11:30 AM + 2:30 + 5:30 + 8:30 + 11:30 PM

### AQUAMAN

(PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓞ JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT: 11:45 AM + 5:30 + 11:15 PM

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT (ATMOS): 11:45 AM + 2:45 + 5:45 + 8:45 + 11:45 PM

DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 6:00 + 11:15 PM

DAILY AT (VIP II): 10:45 AM + 1:45 + 4:45 + 7:45 + 10:45 PM

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 12:00 + 3:00 + 6:00 + 9:00 PM + 12:00 MN + (1:00 AM THURS/FRI)

**SAAR**: DAILY AT: 8:00 + (11:00 PM THURS/FRI)

**WADI AL SAIL**: DAILY AT: 11:30 AM + 2:30 + 5:30 + 8:30 + 11:30 PM

### SIMMBA

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

Ⓞ RANVEER SINGH, AJAY DEVGN, SARA ALI KHAN

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT: 11:00 AM + 2:00 + 5:00 + 8:00 + 11:00 PM

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 3:15 + 8:45 PM

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 11:00 AM + 4:00 + 9:00 PM

**WADI AL SAIL**: DAILY AT: 11:30 AM + 2:30 + 5:30 + 8:30 + 11:30 PM

### JOSEPH

(PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

Ⓞ JOJU GEORGE, MALAVIKA MENON, JAMES ELIYA

**OASIS JUFFAIR**: DAILY AT: 2:45 + 8:30 PM

### URI: THE SURGICAL STRIKE

(15+) (HINDI/ACTION/DRAMA) NEW

Ⓞ VICKY KAUSHAL, KIRTI KULHARI, PARESH RAWAL

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 1:00 + 3:45 + 6:30 + 9:15 PM + 12:00 MN

**SEEF (I)**: DAILY AT: 12:30 + 3:15 + 6:00 + 8:45 + 11:30 PM

### 122

(15+) (ARABIC/THRILLER/CRIME) NEW

Ⓞ TAREK LOTFY, AMINA KHALIL, AHMED DAWOOD

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 2:15 + 6:45 + 11:15 PM

### BACKTRACE

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

Ⓞ SYLVESTER STALLONE, RYAN GUZMAN, MATTHEW MODINE

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 11:30 AM + 1:30 + 3:30 + 5:30 + 7:30 + 9:30 + 11:30 PM

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 10:30 AM + 12:30 + 2:30 + 4:30 + 6:30 + 8:30 + 10:30 PM

### JOHNNY ENGLISH STRIKES AGAIN

(PG) (COMEDY/ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓞ ROWAN ATKINSON, OLGA KURYLENKO, EMMA THOMPSON

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 11:45 AM + 1:45 + 3:45 + 5:45 + 7:45 + 9:45 + 11:45 PM

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 2:00 + 7:00 PM + 12:00 MN

### MARY POPPINS RETURNS

(G) (ADVENTURE/MUSICAL/FAMILY)

Ⓞ EMILY BLUNT, LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, BEN WHISHAW

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 10:30 AM + 1:00 + 3:45 + 6:30 + 9:15 PM + 12:00 MN

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 11:00 AM + 4:00 + 9:00 PM

**SAAR**: DAILY AT: 11:45 AM + 2:30 + 5:15 PM

**WADI AL SAIL**: DAILY AT: 12:15 + 3:00 + 5:45 + 8:30 + 11:15 PM

### RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET

(PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)

Ⓞ JOHN C. REILLY, SARAH SILVARMAN, GAL GADOT

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 11:30 AM + 1:45 + 4:00 + 6:15 + 8:30 + 10:45 PM

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 11:15 AM + 4:00 + 8:45 PM

### SPIDER MAN INTO THE SPIDER VERSE

(PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓞ HAILEE STEINFELD, NICOLAS CAGE, MAHERSHALA ALI

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 11:45 AM + 4:15 + 8:45 PM

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 1:30 + 6:15 + 11:00 PM

### BUMBLEBEE

(PG-13) (ACTION /ADVENTURE/SCI-FICTION)

Ⓞ HAILEE STEINFELD, JOHN CENA, JORGE LENDEBERG JR.

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 12:15 + 4:30 + 8:45 PM

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 1:45 + 6:45 + 11:45 PM

### EL BADLAH

(PG-13) (ARABIC/COMEDY)

Ⓞ TAMER HOSNI, AKRAM HOSNI, MAJED EL MASRY, AMINA KHALIL

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 2:30 + 6:45 + 11:00 PM

### HUNTER KILLER

(PG-15) (ACTION/THRILLER)

Ⓞ GERARD BUTLER, GARY OLDMAN, COMMON

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 12:45 + 6:15 + 11:45 PM

### ROBIN HOOD

(PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓞ TARON EGERTON, EVE HEWSON, JAMIE FOXX

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 11:45 AM + 4:30 + 9:15 PM

### CREED II

(PG-13) (DRAMA/ACTION/SPORT)

Ⓞ TESSA THOMPSON, MICHAEL B. JORDAN, SYLVESTER STALLONE

**CITYCENTRE**: DAILY AT: 2:00 + 6:45 + 11:30 PM

### THE SUPER

(18+) (HORROR/THRILLER) NEW

Ⓞ PATRICK JOHN FLUEGER, VAL KILMER, LOUISA KRAUSE

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 10:45 AM + 3:00 + 7:15 + 11:30 PM

### THE ACCIDENTAL PRIME MINISTER

(PG) (HINDI/DRAMA/BIOGRAPHY) NEW

Ⓞ ANUPAM KHER, AAHANA KUMRA, ABDUL QUADIR AMIN

**SEEF (II)**: DAILY AT: 12:45 + 5:00 + 9:15 PM

### BLACK 47

(15+) (ACTION/DRAMA) NEW

Ⓞ HUGO WEAVING, JAMES FRECHEVILLE, STEPHEN REA

**SEEF (I)**: DAILY AT: 10:30 AM + 2:45 + 7:00 + 11:15 PM

### ZOE

(15+) (ROMANTIC/SCI-FICTION) NEW

Ⓞ EWAN MCGREGOR, LÉA SEYDOUX, THEO JAMES

**SEEF (I)**: DAILY AT: 12:30 + 4:45 + 9:00 PM

## Lopez reflects on her past relationship struggles

ANI | Washington

Unsuccessful relationships contribute to important chapters in life and American singer-actor Jennifer Lopez is not afraid to admit the reasons behind her past failed relationships.

"For me, the relationship journey has been very up and down. But it didn't have to do with anybody else but me - it was about me figuring out me,"

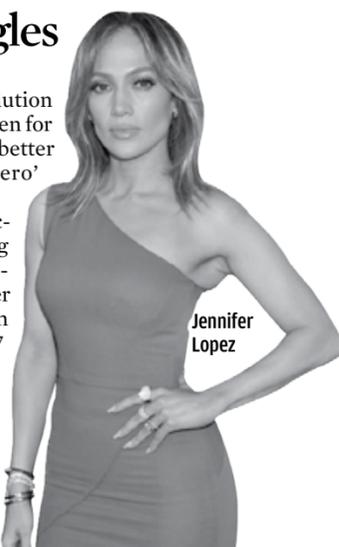
the singer said during an interaction with Harper's Bazaar.

The 49-year-old said that in order to completely fall in love with somebody else, it is very important for people to first love their own selves.

"Until you learn to love yourself, you can't completely love [someone else] in a way that is pure and true. Once you do that, you can have relationships that are based on love and respect, that are supportive and nour-

ishing. There's an evolution there that had to happen for me. I feel like I'm in a better place now," the 'dinero' singer added.

The 'Second Act' actor is currently dating Yankees star, Alex Rodriguez. Lopez made her red carpet debut with Rodriguez in May 2017 at the Met Gala and the two have been inseparable ever since.



Jennifer Lopez

## CHANGE OF NAME

"I, **RANJODH SINGH** s/o **GUR**

# SPORTS

## sports

### BIC set to host sensational Saturday of on-track thrills



Clio Cup cars during a race

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) is set to host a packed programme of exhilarating track activities tomorrow for motorsport fans of all kinds to enjoy at the world-renowned Sakher facility.

"The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East" has lined up its most popular offerings the entire day, starting from early in the morning and continuing until late at night.

These include the Ultimate Track Experience, Open Track Night and Jaguar Experience.

From 8am to 4pm, fans will be able to choose from a series of drives and passenger rides

that fall under the umbrella of the Ultimate Track Experience and enjoy the thrills around BIC's 2.55-kilometre Inner Track.

Then, from 4pm to 11pm, speed lovers will have a chance to drive their very own cars or ride their motorbikes along BIC's 5.412km Grand Prix Track in Open Track Night, during which the hugely exciting Jaguar Experience can also be enjoyed.

The Ultimate Track Experience activities include drives in a Clio Cup sports car and in a Radical SR1 prototype, as well as passenger rides in a Clio Cup and an ultra-quick Radical SR3.

### Serena handed tough draw in quest for record 24th Slam

AFP | Melbourne

Serena Williams has been handed a challenging draw in her quest for a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, starting with Germany's Tatjana Maria in the first round.

The American, seeded 16, is gunning to match Margaret Court's record of singles majors and claim an eighth Australian Open crown.

But Williams is in a tough half of the draw and could meet world number one Simona Halep in round four, and if she gets through that Karolina Pliskova in the last eight.

Before those potential ties, either Chinese wildcard Peng Shuai or Canadian Eugenie Bouchard would await Williams in the second round.

Halep, who enters the tournament having played just one game in four months after a back injury, was handed a chance to avenge Estonia's Kaia Kanepi, who beat her in



Serena Williams of the US plays a forehand shot during a practice session in Melbourne

the first round of the US Open in August.

If she comes through that dangerous opening showdown, she could meet Venus Williams in round three.

Defending champion and third seed Caroline Wozniacki starts against Alison Van Uytvanck of Belgium and could meet 2008 champion Maria Sharapova in round three.

## Kvitova topples Kerber

Petra Kvitova beat defending champion Angelique Kerber to book her semi-final spot against Aliaksandra Sasnovich

● **Veteran Seppi, homegrown star Barty cruise into Sydney semis**

● **Australian teen Alex De Minaur continued his strong start to the season with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 victory over Jordan Thompson**

AFP | Sydney

Petra Kvitova sent defending champion Angelique Kerber packing from the rain-affected Sydney International yesterday to book a semi-final spot and get an edge over her rival heading into the Australian Open next week.

It was always going to be a tight match with the pair tied 6-6 in 12 previous meetings.

Play was suspended early in the first set due to rain. They returned several hours later but the drizzle soon began falling again and it was back to the locker room for the two tournament drawcards.

They eventually resumed at 10:30pm and Czech fifth seed Kvitova, who won the title in 2015, took charge, quickly racing through the first set to put the German world number two on the back foot.

Kvitova kept the pressure on and got a crucial break in game four of the second set and there was no way back for Kerber who meekly surrendered 6-4, 6-1.

"The weather has not been great and it's not easy to wait in the locker room, but I was glad I could come back out and play so well," Kvitova said after reaching the semi-finals in Sydney for a fourth time.

Her reward is a clash with Belarusian qualifier Aliaksandra Sasnovich, who beat Switzerland's Tímea Babcsinszky -- on the comeback trail after a 14-month winless spell -- 6-3, 6-3.

Australia's Ashleigh Barty followed up her giant-killing wins over world number one Simona Halep and former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko by easily accounting for 10th seed

Belgian Elise Mertens 6-3, 6-3.

The 22-year-old is now on a six-match win streak, dating back to her career's biggest title at the WTA Elite Trophy in Zhuhai.

"Nice and solid today, I was pretty happy at the way I was able to come out and play," said Barty, ranked 15 in the world.

She will play seventh seed Kiki Bertens who blasted past Yulia Putintseva 6-2, 6-2 for a place in the final.

● **Seppi derails Tsitsipas**

In the men's draw, veteran Andreas Seppi derailed top seed Stefanos Tsitsipas' title hopes.

Seppi, 14 years older than his 20-year-old Greek opponent, has only won three ATP titles in his career, but called on all his



Petra Kvitova has won the Sydney International title in 2015

play a bit more aggressive and it worked out in the end."

Australia has been a home away from home for the Italian in recent years.

In a trio of round-of-16 appearances at the Australian Open, he pulled off upsets against Marin Cilic in 2013, Roger Federer in 2015 and Nick Kyrgios in 2017.

Defeat was a blow for world No.15 Tsitsipas' preparations for the opening Grand Slam of the year in Melbourne next week.

He was one of the sport's most improved players last year, climbing from 91 after reaching finals in Barcelona and Toronto, losing both to Rafael Nadal, and was angling for the perfect start ahead of the Australian Open.

Seppi will now play third seeded Argentine Diego Schwartzman, who needed to fight hard to beat Japanese qualifier Yoshihito Nishioka 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (7/1)

In other quarter-final action, fifth seeded teenager Alex De Minaur continued his strong start to the season with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 victory over fellow Australian Jordan Thompson.



experience as he battled back for a gutsy 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 win.

"For some reason I always play my best tennis in Australia, so I really enjoy being here," said Seppi, who broke immediately in the second set after losing the first.

"It was very important to start well in the second set. Good to have an early break so I could

## Djokovic faces qualifier, Federer takes on Istomin

● **Second seeded Nadal begins against Australian James Duckworth while fourth seed Alexander Zverev faces Slovenian Aljaz Bedene**

● **Champion Roger Federer, seeded three, is gunning for a seventh Melbourne title at the Australian Open**

AFP | Melbourne

World number one Novak Djokovic will start his bid to win a record seventh Australian Open title next week against a qualifier following yesterday's draw.

The Serb had a magnificent 2018, making an astonishing climb back from outside the world's top 20 in June, winning Wimbledon and the US Open on the way to reclaiming the number one ranking in November.

He will start his drive to make

history against a yet-to-be-decided qualifier and could meet France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in the second round.

Champion Roger Federer, seeded three and also gunning for a seventh Melbourne title, starts his title defence against world number 99 Denis Istomin and could meet Rafael Nadal in the semi-finals.

"He (Djokovic) continues to challenge me. I played him in his prime when he was virtually unbeatable. It was important not to get frustrated by it. I always enjoy my matches against him," 20-time Grand Slam winner Federer said at the draw.

"We are both natural attacking players. We are aggressive.

He is up there with Nadal and Hewitt they make me rethink my game. I like to play attacking tennis, so I've come full circle."

Second seeded Nadal begins against Australian James Duckworth, fourth seed Alexander Zverev faces Slovenian Aljaz Bedene while last year's runner-up Marin Cilic

has a tricky encounter with Australian Bernard Tomic.

A highlight first round clash will see Australia's unseeded Nick Kyrgios up against



# 6

Australian Open titles have been won by both Novak Djokovic and current champion Roger Federer

Canada's big-serving 16th seed Milos Raonic, with the winner facing either Stan Wawrinka or Ernests Gulbis.

Three-time Grand Slam winner Andy Murray has a tough clash with 22nd-seeded Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut as he returns from a hip injury.



# Man City crush Burton

Manchester City hit nine past Burton Albion to cruise towards League Cup final

● Gabriel Jesus scored four of Manchester City's goals

● Manchester City closed in on the League Cup final after showing their League One opponents absolutely no mercy in the first leg

AFP | Manchester

Holders Manchester City can look forward to defending the League Cup in next month's final at Wembley as Gabriel Jesus struck four goals in a 9-0 thrashing of Burton Albion in their semi-final, first leg on Wednesday.

Kevin de Bruyne, Aleksandr Zinchenko, Phil Foden, Kyle Walker and Riyad Mahrez were also on target against Nigel Clough's League One side as City ensured their visit to the Pirelli Stadium on January 23 is a mere formality.

"Of course we are already in the final. We have to play second leg and we will take it seriously. Happy to be in the final again," said City boss Pep Guardiola.

"It's not easy to play this kind of game. We spoke (before the game) to take it seriously, we started well."

After also thrashing Rotherham 7-0 in the FA Cup on Sunday with a much-changed



Gabriel Jesus heads the ball past Burton's goalkeeper for his hat-trick

side, Guardiola was able to again hand a rest to a number of his key players but named a strong side with De Bruyne continuing his comeback from injury.

And the Belgian set the tone for the evening by heading City into a fifth-minute lead as he timed his run into the box perfectly to head home David Silva's cross.

Clough admitted before the game it would take a "miracle" for Burton to blunt the Premier League champions' might over two legs.

"We didn't expect anything less given the gulf in class between the teams, we actually feared it could be more," said

Clough, a two-time League Cup winner as a player under his father Brian Clough at Nottingham Forest.

"We've made history with the club getting to the last four of a Cup competition. Once we saw the three teams (in the semi-finals) it was always going to be trouble."

So it proved, but the visitors missed a glorious chance to get straight back on level terms when Marcus Harness blasted over Lucas Akins's cross when completely unmarked inside the penalty box.

It took City until the half hour mark to double their advantage, but a glut of three goals in seven minutes followed to put the tie

to bed before the break.

Jesus headed home his first from close range after Bradley Collins had denied Leroy Sane before the Brazilian slotted home Silva's cushioned pass via the inside of the post.

"Players like me want to play more, to help the team, and we went out there to win," said Jesus.

City didn't need any luck, but still got some when Zinchenko's intended cross then looped over Collins to make it 4-0.

Other sides may have slacked off in the second period, but with competition for places so fierce among Guardiola's side, the hosts were ruthless to match

“It's not easy to play this kind of game. We spoke (before the game) to take it seriously, we started well

PEP GUARDIOLA

the Catalan's biggest ever win as a coach.

Jesus powered home a header to complete his second hat-trick of the season.

De Bruyne was then replaced by home favourite Foden, who was surprisingly left out of the starting XI, just before the hour mark.

It took just four minutes for the 18-year-old to score his third City goal as he profited from the rebound after Collins did well to parry Jesus's first effort.

Jesus did soon have his fourth with a delicate finish from Sane's cross and City's dominance was summed up when right-back Kyle Walker strode forward to fire home his side's eighth of the evening.

Mahrez made it nine seven minutes from time and those City fans still in the Etihad cried for a historic 10th.

But that was the only thing City fell short of on the night with a final meeting against Tottenham or Chelsea on February 24 guaranteed.

## PSG stunned in League Cup



Guingamp's French forward Marcus Thuram (R) shoots and scores a penalty kick past Paris Saint-Germain's French goalkeeper Alphonse Areola (L)

AFP | Paris

Paris Saint-Germain saw their 43-match winning run in domestic cup competitions come to an end as Thomas Tuchel's men suffered a shock 2-1 home defeat by Ligue 1 bottom club Guingamp in the French League Cup quarter-finals on Wednesday.

The visitors were awarded three penalties at the Parc des Princes in a dramatic second half, as PSG failed in their bid for a sixth straight League Cup title.

It was only a second defeat in all competitions this season for the capital club, after a 3-2 loss to Liverpool at Anfield in the Champions League last September.

Guingamp, who have won just two league games all season, join Monaco, Strasbourg and Bordeaux in the semi-finals.

"We came here to win and we know it's very difficult here," said Marcus Thuram, the son of 1998 World Cup

winner Lilian Thuram, who scored the winner.

"We know that in the Cup anything can happen... We knew how to hinder PSG."

Neymar broke the deadlock in the 63rd minute after Thuram missed from the spot, but Guingamp rallied, with Thuram's successful injury-time penalty snatching victory with a shootout looming.

Earlier on Wednesday, Monaco goalkeeper Loic Badiashile scored the winning penalty in a marathon shootout against Rennes.

Monaco, runners-up in the past two seasons, salvaged a 1-1 draw after normal time thanks to Rony Lopes' second-half equaliser, before Badiashile's heroics as he also saved three spot-kicks.

Thierry Henry's young team are floundering in Ligue 1, sitting second-bottom and five points from safety, but managed to keep their coach's hopes of a first trophy alive at the Stade Louis II.

## Ramsey set to cash in with Juventus move

AFP | London

Arsenal midfielder Aaron Ramsey is set to seal a money-spinning move to Italian champions Juventus when his contract expires with the Gunners in the summer, according to reports yesterday.

The Welsh international will bring an end to 10 years at Arsenal at the end of the season after talks over a new deal broke down with the Premier League giants in September.

According to The Guardian,

**\$179,000** would be earned by Aaron Ramsey in a week to become Juventus' second-highest earner behind Cristiano Ronaldo

Ramsey will become Juventus' second-highest earner behind Cristiano Ronaldo by signing a five-year deal worth £140,000

(\$179,000) a week (£7.2m a season).

Ramsey, 28, is already free to sign a pre-contract agreement with foreign clubs and had been courted by a number of big names with Bayern Munich, Real Madrid, Paris Saint-Germain and Inter Milan also reportedly interested.

Having joined from his hometown club Cardiff City for £4.8m in 2008, Ramsey has scored 62 goals in 354 appearances for Arsenal and won the FA Cup in 2014, 2015 and 2017.

## Vinicius inspires Madrid to much-needed win over Leganes

AFP | Girona, Spain

Vinicius Junior starred and Real Madrid steadied the ship as a 3-0 win over Leganes on Wednesday put them on the brink of the Copa del Rey quarter-finals.

Vinicius, the 18-year-old Brazilian signed by Madrid last summer, capped an electric display at the Santiago Bernabeu with a stunning volley, his third goal for the club and the team's third of the night.

By then, Sergio Ramos had converted a first-half penalty and Lucas Vazquez doubled the advantage to set Madrid on their way to a much-needed first victory of 2019.



Michael Schumacher at Spa-Francorchamps in 2012

It will take a seismic comeback for Leganes to overturn the deficit in next week's second leg but more important to

coach Santiago Solari was the rhythm regained, following two La Liga games without a victory.

The home crowd, who had whistled and waved white handkerchiefs on Sunday after the loss to Real Sociedad, were also treated to the sight of Brahim Diaz making his debut, the 19-year-old coming off the bench following his move from Manchester City.

Vinicius was the shining light, however. The striker was alive to every ball in the final third and his finish, a sweet shot with his body off balance, was a triumph for technical talent.

## India's Mary Kom becomes world's top woman boxer

AFP | New Delhi

India's Mary Kom rose to the top of the boxing world rankings yesterday, two months after becoming the first female boxer to win six world championships.

The 36-year-old mother-of-three was ranked number one by the International Boxing Association (AIBA) in the Light Fly 45-48 kilogramme category, scoring 1700 points.

Kom capped her 2018 campaign with her sixth world championship title after defeating Ukraine's Hanna Okhota by 5-0 in Delhi.

Okhota is ranked number two in the world, with 1100 points.

That victory took her past Ireland's Katie Taylor, and level with the men's record held by Cuban legend Felix Savon as the most successful pugilist ever at the world championships.

## Cagliari sign Slovenian winger Birska

AFP | Milan

Slovenian international winger Valter Birska has signed for Cagliari from Serie A bottom team Chievo, his new Italian club confirmed on Wednesday.

The 32-year-old, who has spent the last three years in Verona, agreed a deal until June 30, 2021.

Cagliari did not reveal financial details but praised Birska as a player "with great technique and imagination, skilled in set pieces".

Birska played for French clubs Sochaux and Auxerre before moving to Italy where he joined Genoa in 2011.

He also played for Torino and AC Milan until signing for Chievo in 2014, where he scored 18 goals in 163 games.

The first game for the 90-times capped Slovenian, who played in the 2010 World Cup, will be against Atalanta in the Italian Cup on Monday.

## Pellegrini hopes to keep Arnautovic amid Chinese interest

AFP | London

West Ham manager Manuel Pellegrini insists he wants to keep Marko Arnautovic amid reports of a bid from a Chinese Super League team.

Arnautovic was the subject of a reported £35 million (\$44 million) offer from an unnamed Chinese club this week.

It was suggested that Shanghai SIPG are the side interested in the Austrian striker, who was said to have been offered wages of £200,000 per week over a four-year deal.

But Arnautovic is West Ham's joint-top scorer this season with eight goals in all competitions and Pellegrini is keen to hold on to the 29-year-old.

# Hosts UAE stir from slumber

UAE survive early storm to beat India and kickstart 2019 Asian Cup campaign while Bahrain suffer loss

● 'Messi Jay' stunner puts Thailand back on track

● Jordan tame Syria to reach Asian Cup knockouts

AFP | Dubai

Hosts United Arab Emirates threw off the shackles at the Asian Cup yesterday, surviving a hairy start to dispatch India 2-0 and close in on a place in the last 16.

Jordan earlier became the first side to book their place in the knockout stages after winning a bruising derby with Syria by the same scoreline while the "Thai Messi" Chanathip Songkrasin snatched a lifeline for the War Elephants in Dubai.

Khalfan Mubarak and Ali Mabkhout were on target in Abu Dhabi for the Emiratis, who were fortunate to scrape a 1-1 draw in their curtain-raiser against Bahrain after a contro-



United Arab Emirates' forward Ali Mabkhout (2nd-R) heads the ball

versial late penalty last Saturday.

"The Bahrain result was a disappointment and I humbly apologised to the fans," said UAE coach Alberto Zaccheroni, who steered Japan to the Asian Cup title in 2011.

"But the players showed great spirit and willpower tonight and we deserved the victory. It's important to grow into the tournament."

India captain Sunil Chhetri overtook Lionel Messi in international goals as the Blue Tigers stunned Thailand 4-1 in their

opening game to earn comparisons with Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli for his heroics.

The evergreen striker forced a smart save from UAE goalkeeper Khalid Eisa before the home side drew first blood against the run of play.

Mubarak whipped the ball home from an acute angle four minutes before halftime for the Emiratis, who were runners-up the last time the country hosted the Asian Cup in 1996.

Mabkhout sealed the points with a cool finish two minutes



Thailand had sacked Serbian coach Milovan Rajevac after their humiliating loss to India

from the end -- his 47th goal in 75 internationals -- to give the scoreline a somewhat flattering complexion but left UAE top of Group A on four points.

## Car alarm

Until Mubarak's strike -- his first for his country -- the 2015 semi-finalists had been largely restricted to pot shots that threatened little but the fleets of luxury cars in the stadium parking lot.

India, who finished runners-up on their Asian Cup debut in 1964 when it was a four-team competition won by Israel,

## Asian Cup

Bahrain	0	1	Thailand
Jordan	2	0	Syria
India	0	2	UAE

will still fancy their chances of reaching the knockout phase for the first time.

"We created enough chances to deserve at least a draw," said India coach Stephen Constantine.

"But if you don't convert your

chances you pay for it -- and we paid for it. I have 23 bitterly disappointed boys."

Jordan have claimed a perfect six points after first-half goals from Mousa Mohammad Suleiman and Tareq Khattab earned a 2-0 win over Syria in a tempestuous Group B clash.



Bahrain's Komail Hasan Alaswad and Thailand's Chanathip Songkrasin vie for the ball

## Djokovic mauls Murray in Open practice match



Serbia's Novak Djokovic at a practice match against Britain's Andy Murray

Reuters | Melbourne

World number one Novak Djokovic gave Andy Murray a stinging reality check in the lead-up to next week's Australian Open, dominating the Briton 6-1 4-1 in a practice match at Melbourne Park yesterday.

Murray has struggled to regain form since undergoing hip surgery last January, and was quickly dismantled by the six-times Australian Open champion at Margaret Court Arena before the players called time on their match after less than an hour.

Serbian Djokovic heads into the tournament as favourite to win a record seventh title and his third Grand Slam in a row, while five-times runner-up Murray, now ranked 230th,

will have far lower expectations at the event starting on Monday.

The 31-year-old three-times major champion returned to action last June but the former world number one cut short a deflating season in September.

The Scot did enjoy a winning start to his season with a victory over local player James Duckworth at the Brisbane International on Jan. 1 but was well beaten by Russian fourth seed Daniil Medvedev in the next round.

Murray is playing in Australia under his protected ranking of world number two, which is used to help players who have suffered long-term injuries.

But the lack of a seeding has left him exposed to a challenging early draw, and he will have to battle past a tough first-round opponent in Spanish 22nd seed and former world number 13 Roberto Bautista Agut.

Local hope John Millman, who dumped Roger Federer out of the fourth round at last year's U.S. Open, is no slouch either as a potential second round match-up for Murray, with 10th-seeded Russian Karen Khachanov another likely roadblock to the last 16.

Murray, who has scheduled a news conference on Friday at Melbourne Park, admitted to still feeling pain in his hip before Brisbane.

## Cilic cruises at Kooyong ahead of Grand Slam

AFP | Melbourne

Last year's Australian Open finalist Marin Cilic rounded off his preparations for this year's edition in style yesterday, winning his second match in as many days at the Kooyong Classic.

With the first Grand Slam of the season starting on Monday, every opportunity is important for the Croatian, who went down in a battle to Roger Federer in the Melbourne Park decider in 2018.

The world number seven beat Spain's Fernando Verdasco 6-4, 6-4, backing up his three-set victory a day before over world No. 6 Kevin Anderson.

Earlier, American Jack Sock lost to fast-rising Canadian teenager Denis Shapovalov 6-2, 3-6, 10-7 after a final set played as a 10-point tiebreak -- the format which will be used at the Australian Open from Monday.



Roger Federer of Switzerland and Serena Williams of the USA leave the court after playing in the mixed doubles match

Under the rules, the first player to win at least 10 points by a two-point margin takes the match.

Ahead of the Australian Open last year, Sock was at a career-high eighth in the world rankings, but after a horror season he has plunged outside the top 100 and is desperate to turn

it around.

His form slump has been dramatic. He played 31 singles matches in 2018, winning a mere nine.

"I had some pretty low moods last year, it was horrendous," said Sock. "I did a lot of regrouping in the off-season, talking to family, team members,

coaches.

"I'm trying to take a positive outlook. I know the level that I can play the game, where my game should be."

With the Australian Open just days away, he is grateful to be out of the spotlight to focus on himself.

"It's nice to be able to fly under the radar and do my own thing."

Shapovalov, 19, made up for lost time after losing in the first round at Auckland this week and then crossing the Tasman to squeeze into the Kooyong draw as a late entry.

"It's great to be here and get another match, fire a few balls," the world No.27 said. "It's another chance to get the match feel."

"You have some of the pressure, there's a crowd watching. It's a chance to get a little bit more ready for the Slam."

## Kohlschreiber flogs feeble Fognini in Auckland quarters

AFP | Auckland, New Zealand

Evergreen Philipp Kohlschreiber rolled back the years to storm into the Auckland Classic semi-finals yesterday with a straight-sets demolition of second seed Fabio Fognini.

The 35-year-old German tore apart the lacklustre Italian 6-3, 6-1 to remain in the reckoning at a tournament where he claimed the title way in back in 2008.

Currently ranked 34th in the world, Kohlschreiber has not dropped a set on his way to a final four showdown with American Tenny Sandgren, who beat Argentina's Leonardo Mayer 6-3, 7-6 (7/5).

The other semi-final pits Briton Cameron Norrie -- a victor over American Tyler Fritz -- against Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany. Kohlschreiber, un-



Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany serves during his quarter final match against Fabio Fognini of Italy

settled this year, was a class above world number 13 Fognini, who appeared unfocused and more interested in boarding a plane to next week's Australian Open in Melbourne.

Despite his advancing years, the veteran is shaping as a strong contender in a field weakened by withdrawals and

upset results that have sent all the seeds heading for the exits. Kohlschreiber comfortably beat Sandgren in straight sets in their only previous meeting in Monte Carlo last year.

"I'm still improving my game even at 35-years old ... I have to be ready for the young ones and I'll try to continue to play for a

**”**  
I'm still improving my game even at 35-years old ... I have to be ready for the young ones and I'll try to continue to play for a few years yet

PHILIPP KOHLSCHREIBER

few years yet," he said.

Kohlschreiber raced to an early break in the first set then held on as Fognini stretched the German's next service game out for 10 minutes trying to respond.

But the German had all the answers and Fognini's resistance crumbled as the set wore on, with the Italian committing 16 unforced errors and four double faults.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic and Britain's Andy Murray have met four times at the final of the season's opening Grand Slam, with the Serb winning them all