

Al Pacino Set to Join
'The Hunt' at Amazon

Actor Al Pacino is close to closing a deal to star in the upcoming drama series "The Hunt". If the deal is sealed, it would mark Pacino's first regular tel- evision role in his long and sto- ried career. Am- azon declined to comment, reports variety.com P13

Cadillac will introduce EV in fight against Tesla

THE DAILY tribune



Kate Hudson is not done having kids

China's rover prepares for rough ride on moon



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America starts
Syria withdrawal
Washington, DC

The US military said Fri- day that it has begun withdrawing troops from Syria, initiating a drawdown that has blindsided allies and sparked a scramble for control of the areas that American troops will leave.

US forces have "begun the process of our deliberate withdrawal from Syr- ia," read a statement from the US-led coalition. "Out of concern for operational security, we will not discuss specific timelines, locations or troop movements." De- fence Department officials said that initial withdrawals would be limited to equip- ment, and that no troops had yet departed.

US shutdown bites

New York

Hundreds of thousands of public sector work- ers have missed their first payday of the year as the partial shutdown of the US government bites deeper.

Many workers, such as prison guards and airport staff, have been working without any guarantee of pay since the shutdown be- gan on 22 December.



03 Private sector boom, one of main action plan objectives

04 Owner under remand as inquiry into unlicensed bakery steps up

05 Asian jailed for murder



His Majesty receives Pompeo

● His Majesty expressed the Kingdom's keenness to consolidate its relations with the US in order to serve the common aspirations and interests of the two friendly peoples.

Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa affirmed Bahrain's deep pride in its close relations and strong partnership with the United States of America, which extends over 120 years of co-ordination and co-operation to achieve shared interests at all levels.

HM the King made the statement as

he received yesterday in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who is on a visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

His Majesty welcomed the visit of the US Secretary of State to the Kingdom of Bahrain and stressed the importance of exchanging such visits to develop co- operation at all levels, especially in the political, economic and defence areas.

His Majesty expressed the Kingdom's keenness to consolidate its relations with the US in order to serve the common as- pirations and interests of the two friendly peoples, noting the active role of the US community and its contribution to the Kingdom's comprehensive progress.

He stressed that the US community

Partners in peace process

US Secretary of State Pompeo on a visit to the Kingdom

” Bahrain is keen to build on accomplishments and achieve further progress and prosperity in the region.

HIS MAJESTY

is always hailed and appreciated by the people of Bahrain.

The talks covered developments in the region in addition to the most important regional and international issues.

HM King Hamad praised the historic US global role and its contribution to the consolidation of security, stability and international peace and its keenness to cooperate with Bahrain and friends in the region in order to build on accom- plishments and achieve further progress

and prosperity.

Pompeo expressed his appreciation to His Majesty the King for his gracious hospitality and congratulated him on the successful parliamentary and municipal elections held recently in the Kingdom.

The senior US official stressed that Bah- rain is steadily moving forward on the right path to maintain its stability and the continuity of development and progress. He also praised the strong ties between the two friendly countries, which continue to grow in all fields in the light of joint dedicated efforts.

HM the King hosted a lunch banquet in honour of the Secretary of State and his accompanying delegation.

Pompeo and the US delegation were welcomed at the airport by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa.

IN A FIRST

Oscars to go 'host-less' after Kevin Hart controversy

● Oscar nominations will be released on Jan 22, a month ahead of one of the biggest nights in the film industry.

Dubai

F or the first time since 1989, the much-anticipated Oscars will have no host this year, after Kevin Hart pulled out of the gig three days after being announced the American actor-comedian would be emcee at the awards night.

After weeks of speculation from critics and fans, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will go ahead with the ceremony on February 24 without a



Kevin Hart starred in blockbuster sequel of the adventure film "Jumanji."

replacement for Hart, insiders told entertainment mag- azine Variety.

Hart dropped out as awards host after the Academy asked him to apologise for his past homophobic remarks that resurfaced online.

The "Jumanji" star, who was seen to help boost the Oscars' viewership by hosting the event, refused to apologise, saying "there's no more conversation about it ... I'm over that, I'm over the moment," in an interview with American TV network ABC.

According to reports, producers of the awards show will delegate the role of emcee to a selected group of celebrity A-listers who will introduce various segments.

Cast members of the Marvel superhero movie "Avengers" are among the celebrities the producers are eyeing for, according to US-based entertainment website The Hollywood Reporter.

Oscar nominations will be released on Jan 22, a month ahead of one of the biggest nights in the film industry.

His Majesty receives Pompeo



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Lahaj attack condemned

Six people were killed when the Houthis exploded a drone above a military parade

Jeddah

A Houthi communications centre controlling drones has been destroyed, the Arab coalition supporting the legitimate government in Yemen said yesterday.

The location of the drone control centre was formerly occupied by a Yemeni communications company but was then taken over by Houthi militia who turned it into an operations centre.

On Thursday, six people were killed when the Houthis exploded a drone above a military parade in Lahaj province.

The United States on Friday “strongly condemned” the at-

tack at Al Anad Air Base, which jeopardises a ceasefire for the port of Hodeidah agreed at talks in Sweden last month.

“This attack contravenes the spirit of the Hodeidah ceasefire and the progress made last month at the UN-led talks in Sweden,” the State Department said.

“We urge all sides to honour the commitments they made in Sweden to their fellow Yemenis by refraining from violence and provocative acts.”

The escalation came after the UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths this week warned “substantial progress” was needed on the ground before full-blown negotiations could be launched



Soldiers carry out probe at the site of attack.



This attack contravenes the spirit of the Hodeidah ceasefire and the progress made last month at the UN-led talks in Sweden.

STATE DEPARTMENT

fire and allow humanitarian aid to reach millions.

The council is expected to vote on the measure next week, diplomats said.

The mission would provide for the deployment of up to 75 monitors in the rebel-held city of Hodeida and its port along with the ports of Saleef and Ras Issa for an initial period of six months, AFP reported.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to “expeditiously” deploy the full mission, led by retired Dutch General Patrick Cammaert.

Meanwhile, a large explosion took place at an oil refinery in Aden on Friday evening, Al Arabiya reported. The cause of the blast was unclear.

on ending the civil war. a UN Security Council draft resolution that would expand the international observer mission monitoring the Hodeidah cease-

Egypt, GCC views on pan-Arab security stressed

Cairo

The relationship between Egypt and the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries illustrates the convergent views of their leaders on maintaining Arab national security, Egypt’s foreign minister has said.

In remarks to local television carried by MENA, Sameh Shukry said Cairo rejects plans to expand into the Arab region adopted by Gulf neighbours, Iran in particular.

Egypt sees the need for relations to be built on the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of one another, he added.

He reiterated Cairo’s resolve

that a political solution is the only way forward in regards to the region’s crises in Yemen, Syria and Libya.

On Libya, he said Egypt plays a vital role in ending the conflict through attempts to unify the country’s military institution - the only side capable of putting an end to terrorism and enabling pre-election stability in the country.

In regards to Syria, Shukry described the situation as “extremely complicated,” explaining that the international community has not yet been able to come up with a solution to the challenges and terrorist elements at large amidst the over seven-year conflict.

It is for this reason Cairo

hopes warring sides, including the government and opposition, reach consensus over a peaceful solution, he said.

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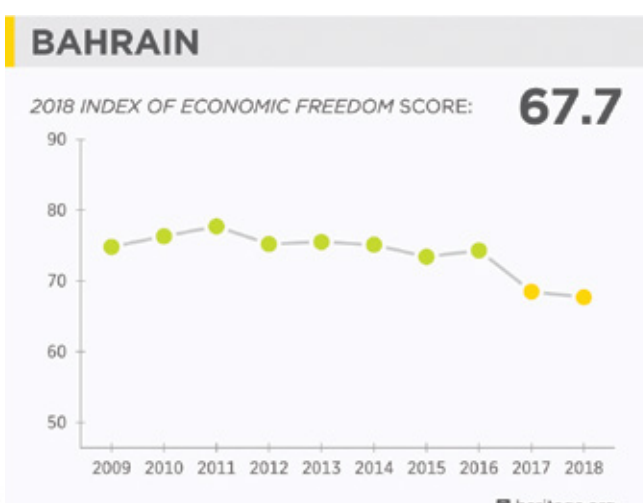
Private sector boom, one of main action plan objectives

Govt aims to ensure better infra facilities and stable economic factors

In terms of the health sector, a new insurance programme will be implemented while government hospitals and health centres will soon be granted autonomy, the action plan states.



Tamkeen has been at the forefront of supporting the private sector firms.



Bahrain is among the countries, which enjoy high economic freedom.

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Zafran

Enhancing the role of the private sector as the main driver of economic growth is one of the top priorities of the Government Action Plan (GAP).

It is learnt that the plan aims to increase the contribution of the private sector towards Bahraini economy, while creating more opportunities, in terms of jobs and investments.

The action plan for 2019 to 2022 also outlines how Bahrain's economy can grow and achieve fiscal balance.

According to the National Communication Centre, Government Action Plan 2019-2022 aims to achieve the vision and aspirations of His Majesty King Hamad.

"Policies of the Government Action Plan aim to enhance and sustain government services for the benefit of all citizens.

"The government's main priority in this programme is to strengthen the role of private sector as the main driver of development, in parallel with re-



Salmaniya Medical Complex will be granted autonomy as part of the Government Action Plan.

defining the role of the public sector to an efficient regulator. "The programme reflects the

government's visions to achieve fiscal balance, promoting both economic growth and sustain-

able development," the centre reported on the plan.

Objectives of the Government Action Plan include partnering with private sector to provide infrastructure, achieving fiscal balance and economic stability, sustainability in development and government services, strengthening security and stability, supporting the democratic system and strengthening of foreign ties, continuation of the empowerment of Bahrainis and enhancing their contribution to development and enhancing government performance.

Among other things, Social Housing Scheme is also one of the top components of the Government Action Plan.

The Government Action Plan outlines the advancement of Bahrain as a meetings, incentives, conferencing, exhibitions hub.

A key development for MICE

The government's main priority in this programme is to strengthen the role of private sector as the main driver of development, in parallel with redefining the role of the public sector to an efficient regulator.

REPORT

would be the new Expo City project which will be built soon.

The groundbreaking for the Expo City project is expected to be done by Q1 2019 or early Q2 2019, with a view to finish construction in two year's time.

The project is expected to be 10 times bigger than the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre.

The exhibition space for the project is 120,000 sqm while

the project is allotted 150,000 sqm in total.

Tribune has learnt that the project is divided into two phases with the first phase consisting of a 100,000 square meter area and the second phase comprising of 50,000 square meter area.

When completed, expo city will be a huge boost to Bahrain in the exhibitions and conference space.

Attracting foreign investment, enhancing cultural programs, improving Bahrain's connectivity with regional and international markets, enhancing food security, tackling unemployment, implement an enhanced pension system are some of the important points mentioned in the action plan.

In terms of the health sector, a new insurance programme will be implemented while government hospitals and health centres will soon be granted autonomy, the action plan states.

As part of granting autonomy to government hospitals and health centres two trustees will be formed soon as all other steps have been complete.



Public housing sector is among the top GAP priorities.

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Owner under remand as inquiry into unlicensed bakery steps up

Bakery was allegedly being run in a highly unhygienic condition

TDI | Manama
Mohammed Zafran

An unlicensed bakery, which was shut down two days ago for flouting rules continues to be under investigation with its owner now remanded in custody, it is learnt.

The bakery which was being run in an unhygienic environment came under controversy after a video of its unhygienic environment went viral on social media.

The bakery in the Southern Governorate was closed down as it did not possess the required licences to be operational. It reportedly, was also in bad shape.

The owner of the shop has been charged with running a business without the required

paperwork and dealing with food without a permit.

He was also charged with selling eatables that could be harmful to health. Samples of the food will be examined by the concerned authorities, according to the Public prosecution.

It is not known how long the bakery has been operational. No complaints of food poisoning are known to have been filed against the bakery.

According to sources, the building the bakery was situated in also housed a large number of workers.

“Following what was published on social media about the bakery, an investigation was done. The Public Health Department at the Ministry of Health sent a team to visit the bakery.



A notice pasted on the bakery by Health Ministry officials.

”

In co-operation with the Southern Governorate and the Public Prosecution, steps have been taken to shut down the bakery.

HEALTH MINISTRY

“In co-operation with the Southern Governorate and the Public Prosecution, steps have been taken to shut down the bakery.”

“During the visit, the shop was found to be unlicensed and being run illegally. The building was also used to house workers.

“The ministry extend its gratitude to the videographer who spread awareness about the bakery with concern about consumer safety,” the Ministry stated.

A similar controversy had taken place in August last year when a citizen videotaped a slaughterhouse in Demistan accusing the business for having poor hygiene standards.

The video was followed by allegations that dogs were being slaughtered at the shop.

The Department of Consumer Protection within the Industry, Commerce and Tourism Ministry carried out an inspection following this, the inspections found the dog meat allegations were baseless. However, the slaughterhouse was found to be unlicensed and unhygienic.

King Faisal Prize winners named

Riyadh

In the presence of Prince Khalid Al Faisal, Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Governor of Makkah Region and Chairman of the King Faisal International Prize Commission, the General Secretariat of the Prize has announced the winners of its 41st session.

King Faisal Prize for the Service of Islam was given to International University of Africa in Sudan.

King Faisal Prize for Arabic Language and Literature was given to Dr Abdelali Mohamed Oudrhiri (Morocco) and Dr Mahmoud Fahmy Hegazi (Egypt).

King Faisal Prize for Medicine was given to Professor Steven L Teitelbaum (US) and Professor Bjorn Reino Olsen (US) and King Faisal Science Prize was given to Professor Allen Joseph Bard (US) and Professor Jean M J

Frechet (US).

The King Faisal Prize for Islamic Studies was withheld because the candidate works did not fulfil the criteria, the commission said.

Launched by the King Faisal Foundation (KFF) and granted for the first time in 1979, the King Faisal Prize (KFP) recognises the outstanding works of individuals and institutions in five major categories: Service to Islam, Islamic Studies, Arabic Language and Literature, Medicine, and Science.

Its aim is to benefit Muslims in their present and future, inspire them to participate in all aspects of civilisation, as well as enrich human knowledge and develop mankind.

KFP winners are evaluated only based on merit and their works are meticulously examined by specialised selection committees.

TDI | Manama

The Director-General of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security announced yesterday the arrest of an Asian with forged credit cards.

The man was arrested after the police launched a probe into the case following a complaint by an international bank, which has a branch in the Kingdom.

The suspect was identified and arrested within 24 hours of the reporting of the case.

The cards, money and devices, computers and smartphones suspected to be used in the forging were confiscated.

He said that legal proceedings are taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecutor.



The suspect along with gadgets and currency notes seized from him.

Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's National Festival of Heritage and Culture, Janadria, has come to a close.

The festival, in its 33rd Edition, was opened under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, on December 20.

The festival, held by the Ministry of National Guard under the theme ‘Faithfulness and Loyalty’ has been a great success for the past 21 days, organisers said.

Janadriya featured an integrated system of cultural, heritage, artistic, sporting and entertainment activities in addition to the pavilions of ministries, agencies and institutions, Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries and Indonesia, the guest of honour.

It also featured participations



Thousands flocked to the festival, making it a big hit.

by Saudi emirates, regions, governorates as well as heritage pavilions.

The festival presented a model of the diverse social and cultural components of the Kingdom

Curtain falls on Janadria Festival

150

government institutions and sectors took part in the festival.

and reflected the national unity of the citizens who met in Al Janadria and gained significant insights into the civilisation of the Kingdom.

The event highlighted the Kingdom's history, its status, its achievements, its diverse cultures, the legacy of its people and its place, opening a window on its promising and prosperous future, under the guidance

and support of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

More than 150 government institutions and sectors took part in the festival.

Visitors to Janadria also learnt about tourist attractions and archaeological areas throughout the Kingdom through the pavilion of the National Authority for Tourism and National Heritage through displaying screens, brochures and publications.

For the first time this year, the General Authority for Entertainment participated with a pavilion in which it presented a definition of its role in organising the entertainment sector.

Asian jailed for murder

The victim was stabbed to death following a dispute

TDT | Manama

● According to medical report, the victim died of a severe injury caused to his lungs in the attack.

● A witnesses, who was living in the same accommodation facility, which housed the accused and the victim, testified before the court.

The High Criminal Court has sentenced a 38-year-old Asian to 10 years in jail for murdering a fellow Asian.

According to court details, the victim was stabbed to death following a dispute with the accused.

The accused had not pleaded guilty in the court.

Public Prosecutors said that both the accused and the victim were in an inebriated state when the crime happened.

“Both were having a drinking session

In a fit of rage, the accused took a knife and stabbed the victim, leading to serious injuries.

PROSECUTORS

and suddenly there was a dispute.

“The victim slapped the accused in his face, infuriating him.

“In a fit of rage, the accused took a knife and stabbed the victim, leading to

serious injuries,” the Prosecutors added.

Both the accused and the victim were construction labourers.

The police arrested the accused next day morning.

A witnesses, who was living in the same accommodation facility, which housed the accused and the victim, testified before the court.

He said he woke up after hearing a loud cry and saw the victim lying in a pool of his blood.

According to medical report, the victim died of a severe injury caused to his lungs in the attack.

Sentence upheld in murder case

TDT | Manama

The First High Appellate Court has upheld the verdict issued against a youth for attacking a 31-year-old Asian over a traffic dispute in Khamis.

A Lower Court had earlier handed down 22 years imprisonment to the youth in the case. The victim suffered permanent disabilities in the attack, according to prosecutors. The accused was charged with attacking the Asian apart from illegally possessing weapon.

A medical report confirmed the disabilities suffered by the victim in the attack after receiving blows at the hands of the accused.

Minister hails charity initiatives

● Al Naim Charity Society chairman hailed the minister's drive to support charity and voluntary work, stressing the association's keenness on launched charity initiatives.

Manama

Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan yesterday received board members of the Al Naim Charity Society, led by chairman Hameed Youssef Rahma, who outlined plans to increase assistance to needy families and launch youth-centred educational and training activities.

The meeting focused on challenges facing the Al

Naim Charity Society and the need to facilitate measures so as it could perform its social and charity role and collect donations to help needy families.

The minister commended the contribution of the charity association to providing services and promoting social, humanitarian and charity work, hailing the role of non-governmental institutions in supporting development.

He reiterated the ministry's keenness on supporting NGO-led efforts and alleviating impediments facing them within the framework of law.

He also hailed efforts to consolidate the principles of community partnership between state-run institutions and NGOs in Bahrain.

Al Naim Charity Society chairman hailed the minister's drive to support charity and voluntary work, stressing the association's keenness on launched charity initiatives.

Chief of Public Security visits Saudi traffic operation rooms



Maj Gen Al Hassan having talks with Saudi officials.

Riyadh

Chief of Public Security, Major-General Tariq Al Hassan has visited the Operations Room of the General Directorate of Traffic of the Saudi Interior Ministry.

The visit was on the side-line

of the joint security committee meeting between Bahraini and Saudi interior ministries.

Maj Gen Al Hassan was briefed on techniques to control the traffic signals and methods to deal with traffic jams, along with traffic monitoring that included the use of smart cameras across the greater Riyadh to detect violations and

track violators.

He also visited the Unified Security Operation Centres (911) of the ministry that is equipped with state-of-art devices.

The centre is dedicated to providing security services and issuing security reports and statistics for the ministry's various departments, and to following up on

emergency cases.

The Chief hailed the efforts of Saudi police to uphold security, public order and law enforcement through providing the best services.

The Interior Ministry delegation that accompanied Al Hassan included the President of Customs and senior officials.

Entrepreneurs aim to boost quality of life

Riyadh

Seventeen startup businesses, the development of which was supported by Saudi investment company Wadi Makkah's Nomo incubator, were introduced to the public this week during a showcase titled Rabi' Al-Wadi (The Valley's Spring).

Each startup organized various activities during the event, which took place on Jan. 9 and 10, reflecting the services they offer, many of which are aimed at families and improving social responsibility. These included workshops, competitions, consultations, lectures and bazaars.

One of the workshops, titled “Be Your Own Beauty Consultant,” offered women between the ages of 18 and 50 advice on choosing the right outfit to achieve the perfect look and introduced them to techniques for successful shopping



The event gave the startups a chance to introduce themselves and the services they offer to potential customers before they launch.

and closet arrangement. “The Little Robot” workshop, meanwhile, introduced children between the ages of 5 and 14

to robotics. They were shown how to assemble a robot and then given the chance to compete in a robot building

contest.

Other activities included support and advice sessions for mothers about raising children, and an introduction to the mechanisms and benefits of the “Economy of Communion,” an international initiative that aims to tackle social problems by creating businesses designed to become integral parts of their communities.

Dr. Talal Al-Maghribi, the acting CEO of Wadi Makkah, said that the event is designed to help startups incubated by Nomo begin to make a lasting contribution to society and, through the workshops and activities presented by qualified professionals, educate people about ways in which they can improve their lifestyles.

“Seventeen of the startups of Wadi Makkah's incubator have not yet entered the market and will stay in the incubator for 10 more days,” said

Al-Maghribi. “The work of some of these startups is focused on community leadership, while others provide Hajj and Umrah services, in addition to consulting firms for workshops, and auto parts.”

He added that the event gave the startups a chance to introduce themselves and the services they offer to potential customers before they launch.

Wadi Makkah begins an incubator program every six months to develop new businesses, Al-Maghribi said, not all of which make it to the market. Of those that do, some have enjoyed remarkable growth, he added.

The successfully launched businesses include one that provides social media analysis services to ministries, and another that analyzes congestion at Saudi airports. Some have also attracted investment from international companies.

world

Myanmar Reuters journalists lose appeal against 7-year sentence

AFP | Yangon, Myanmar

Two Reuters journalists jailed for seven years while investigating atrocities committed against the Rohingya in Myanmar had their appeal dismissed yesterday, dismayed colleagues and tearful family members who had held slim hopes they would walk free. Reporters Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, were arrested in Yangon in December 2017 and later jailed for violating the state secrets act, a charge Reuters said was trumped up to muzzle their reporting.

Chinese children given expired polio vaccines

AFP | Shanghai

At least 145 children were administered expired polio vaccines in eastern China, state media reported, despite the government promising to prevent such lapses in the industry following a major scandal last year.

Three county-level health officials in Jiangsu province have been dismissed since the case came to light earlier this week -- the latest to raise public health concerns -- according to an announcement by the Jinhu county government.

The local government has since found 145 children received the vaccines between December 11 and January 7, CCTV said.



Nun Marie-Theo Manaupose runs in front of St Peter's basilica at the Vatican

China's rover prepares for rough ride on moon

The Chang'e-4 probe made the world's first soft landing on the moon's 'dark side' on January 3, a major step in China's ambitions to become a space superpower

AFP | Beijing

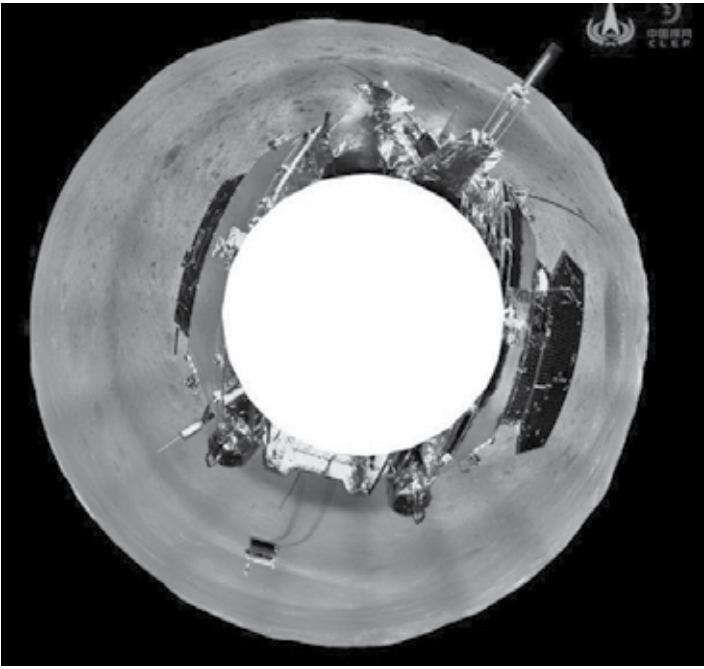
China yesterday hailed its historic mission to the far side of the moon as a "complete success" so far but said new challenges await its rover as it explores rugged terrain.

The Chang'e-4 probe -- named after a moon goddess -- made the world's first soft landing on the moon's "dark side" on January 3, a major step in China's ambitions to become a space superpower.

A rover dubbed Yutu-2 -- or Jade Rabbit, the name of the moon goddess's pet -- successfully separated from the lander and drove onto the moon's surface about eight hours after landing.

The mission sent the first panoramic image of its landing site yesterday, showing the grey moonscape it is exploring and the track marks left by the rover in the lunar soil.

"From the panorama, we can see the probe is surrounded by



360 degree panoramic image made by China's Chang'e-4 lunar probe on the far side of the moon

lots of small craters," said Li Chunlai, commander-in-chief of the ground application system for the Chang'e-4 mission, according to the official Xinhua

news agency.

Chang'e-4 landed in the Von Karman Crater within the South Pole-Aitken Basin. The basin is the largest and deepest impact



The deepest region on the moon, with a depth of 9,100 meters (5.7 miles), is about 700 kilometres (435 miles) to the south of the probe

crater in the solar system.

The craters close to the rover -- including one that was 20 meters wide (65 feet) with a depth of about four meters (13 feet) -- will pose great challenges when planning its route, Li said.

The China National Space Administration (CNSA) said the initial stage of the mission was a "complete success" after the lander and the rover sent back images via the Queqiao relay satellite that beams data back

to Earth.

The mission would now "progress to the scientific exploration stage," the space agency said in a statement.

Older surface

The Chang'e-4 probe is equipped with instruments developed by scientists from Sweden, Germany and China to study the lunar environment, cosmic radiation and the interaction between solar wind and the moon's surface, Zhang Hongbo, chief designer of the ground application system, told state broadcaster CCTV.

Chang'e-4 is the second Chinese probe to land on the moon, following the first Yutu rover mission to its Earth-facing side in 2013.

A video of the latest mission's landing -- produced using more than 4,700 pictures taken by a camera on the probe -- showed a "thicker layer of dust" offering "strong evidence" that its landing area is much older than the site where China's previous rover landed, Li said.

India plans manned space mission by December 2021

Space agency chief Kailasavadivoo Sivan says India will send its first manned mission to space by December 2021

At \$1.4 billion, India's manned space programme would be one of the cheapest in the world

AFP | Bangalore, India

India will send its first manned mission into space by December 2021, the head of the country's space agency said yesterday.

The three-person mission would make the Asian giant the fourth country after Russia, the United States and China to put people in space.

"We are planning to have the first unmanned mission by December 2020, the second by July 2021, and the manned mission by December 2021," Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman Kailasavadivoo Sivan said in Bangalore.

Plans for a manned mission were first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, and his government has since approved around \$1.4 billion to provide technology and infrastructure.

The sum would make it one of the cheapest manned space programmes in the world.



Indian space scientist Kailasavadivoo Sivan, chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), gestures while addressing a press conference

Modi, up for re-election this year, has hailed the national space programme as a prestige project and said that both men and women could be selected for the mission.

India has already invested heavily in its space programme in the past decade.

New Delhi is competing with other international players for a greater share of the satellite

market, and hopes its low-cost space programme will give it an edge.

It sent an orbiter to Mars in 2013 which is still operational and last year launched a record 104 satellites in one blast-off.



We are planning to have the first unmanned mission by December 2020, the second by July 2021, and the manned mission by December 2021

KAILASAVADIVOO SIVAN

Nuns on the run: Vatican Athletics gets Olympic blessing

AFP | Vatican City

The newly-formed Vatican Athletics team, which is aiming to compete in international competitions, including the Olympics, was officially launched on Thursday after reaching a bilateral agreement with the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI).

So far there are 60 members of Vatican Athletics -- the first Sports Association constituted in the Holy See -- which includes nuns, priests, Swiss Guards and

other workers.

Monsignor Melchor José Sánchez de Toca y Alameda, president of Vatican Athletics, said at the launch that the Olympic Games were "the dream but not in the short term".

"The dream that we have often had is to see the Holy See flag among the delegations at the opening of the Olympic Games," he said.

But in the immediate future Vatican Athletics would like to be present at smaller competi-

60

Holy See employees have joined the Vatican's athletics team including nuns, priests, Swiss Guards and other workers

tions such as the Mediterranean Games.

Italian Olympic Commit-

tee (CONI) president Giovanni Malago praised the latest initiative at the Holy See which already has football and cricket teams.

"It will be necessary to affiliate with other federations," he told Vatican News.

"I'm sure this will happen, today we have started a courageous and winning start up."

The CONI agreement allows the team to take part in national and internationally sanctioned events and to have access to Italian national coaching and

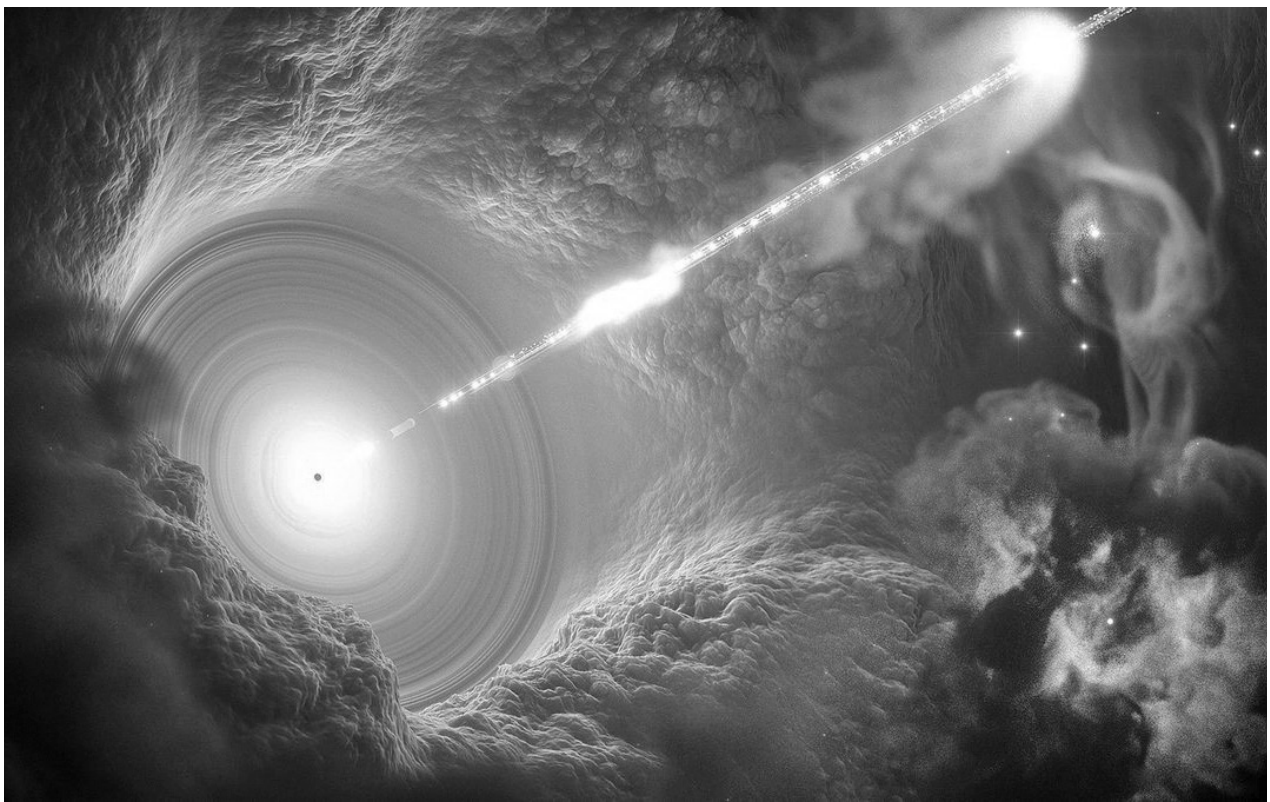
medical facilities.

Team members wearing navy track suits with the Holy See's crossed keys seal were present at the launch.

The youngest athlete is a 19-year-old Swiss guard, and the oldest a 62-year-old professor of the Vatican Apostolic Library.

Two young Muslim asylum-seekers Jallow Buba, a 20-year-old Gambian, and Anszou Cissé, a 19-year-old Senegalese, have also been registered as honorary members.

Scientists close to first sighting of black hole in the Milky Way



Artist's impression of a supermassive black hole sending a narrow high-energy jet of matter into space

International team say ‘spectacular’ data hints at historic breakthrough

The Guardian | London

Researchers said if successful, a picture from the Event Horizon Telescope would be one of the most significant in the past 50 years of astronomy

Astronomers attempting to capture the first images of the black hole at the heart of the Milky Way have given early hints that the ambitious project has been successful.

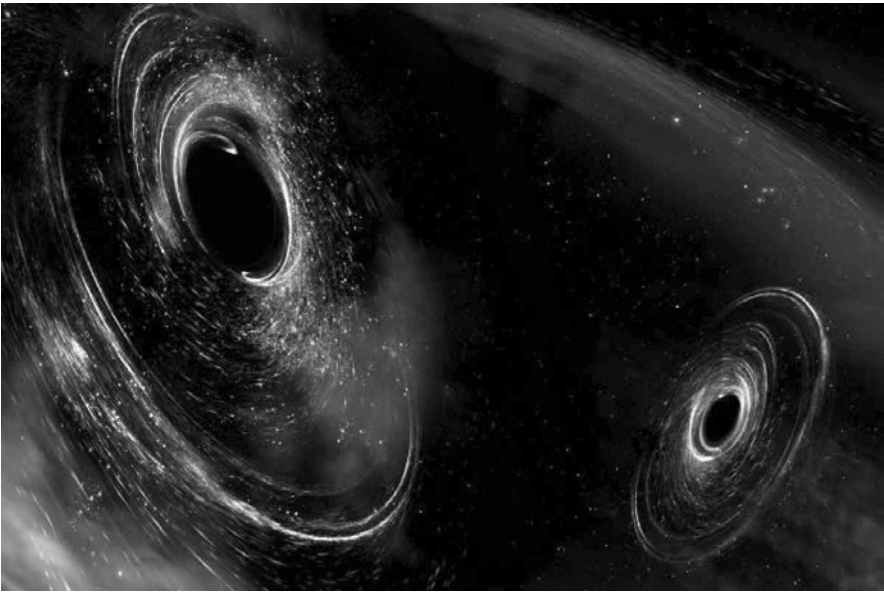
The observations, by the Event Horizon Telescope, are expected to be unveiled in March in one of the most eagerly awaited scientific announcements of 2019. Now, a senior scientist on the project has said “spectacular” data was gathered during observations of two black holes, including Sagittarius A* at the centre of our own galaxy.

“We managed to get very high-quality data at the very high resolutions necessary to observe the [black hole’s] shadow, if it’s really there,” said Sera Markoff, a professor of theoretical astrophysics and astroparticle physics at the University of Amsterdam, who co-leads the EHT’s Multiwavelength Working Group.

The team is in the final phase of reviewing data that was gathered in 2017 and Markoff could not confirm yet whether the observations had produced the first direct image of a black hole’s silhouette.

Prof Peter Galison, who is based at the department of the history of science at Harvard University and is also involved in the project, said that, if successful, the EHT’s first image would become one of the most significant in the past 50 years of astronomy. “If we get an image out of it, it will become one of the iconic images of science,” he said. “It’s an extraordinarily ambitious project.”

There is little doubt about the existence of black holes: the phenomenally dense objects distort the fabric of space-time in their vicinity, causing objects and light to appear to swerve off course. More recently, the gravitational wave



An artist’s impression of two merging black holes similar to those detected by Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (Ligo) in 2017



We see these enormous jets of plasma moving almost at the speed of light. They can be hundreds of millions of times the size of the black hole itself – bigger than the galaxy

SERA MARKOFF

observatory Ligo has detected ripples sent out across space-time when pairs of black holes collide.

Until now, though, a black hole has

never been directly observed. The main barrier is that black holes are so compact that a telescope roughly the size of Earth would be required to see even the nearest one.

The EHT gets around this by linking together 15-20 telescopes spanning the South Pole, Europe, South America, Africa, North America and Australia. Collectively, the array has a resolution equivalent to being able to see a drawing pin in New York from London.

The EHT uses a technique known as interferometry, in which astronomers at observatories on different continents simultaneously observe the same object, then combine the collected data on a supercomputer.

This requires all the telescopes in the array to swivel towards the target black hole and measure every radio wave coming from its direction. Coordinating this was a “huge accomplishment of diplomacy and organisation”, according to Galison.

The EHT has two primary targets: Sagittarius A*, at the centre of the Milky Way, and a supermassive black hole



Black holes are so compact that a telescope roughly the size of Earth would be required to see even the nearest one

called M87 in the Virgo cluster of galaxies. M87 is about 50m-60m light years away, but at more than six billion solar masses (1,000 times larger than our local black hole), astronomers hope it should be visible.

No one is sure what the image will look like but theoretical predictions show a black silhouette, set against a surrounding glow of radiation, something like the depiction in the film Interstellar. “You’d imagine seeing a black shadow or depression,” said Markoff.

Besides telling us what black holes look like, the EHT could also reveal whether they have properties predicted by Einstein’s theory of general relativity and give insights into exotic processes that occur in the extreme environment close to the event horizon.

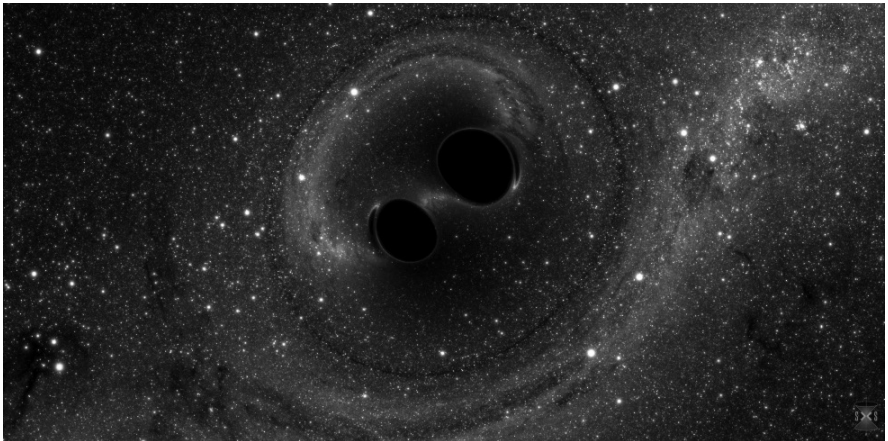
Detailed observations will also be made of dramatic jets of material that are thrown out from some black holes, including M87. It is not clear whether Sagittarius A*, a relatively small black hole, has jets – it is possible that they are too feeble to have been spotted previously – and the EHT could resolve this question.

“We see these enormous jets of plasma moving almost at the speed of light,” said Markoff. “They can be hundreds of millions of times the size of the black hole itself – bigger than the galaxy.”

Black hole jets are believed to play a major role in cosmology, contributing to the formation of the cosmic web, in which galaxies are strung in clusters across the universe.



The Milky Way in the night sky near Nelson, New Zealand



A computer simulation of the collision of two black holes detected by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory, or Ligo, in Washington

SOCI

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Rotary Club of Sulmaniya held a regular lunch meeting at the Golden Tulip Hotel on Wednesday. Guest speaker was Ambassador of Sri Lanka Dr A Saj Mendis who spoke about the “New Economic Order of 21st Century”. Raffle tickets were drawn and the meeting



Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Dr Abdulhussain Mirza took part in the opening of the ninth session of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) General Assembly, in Abu Dhabi. The meeting, which comes within the activities of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, was attended by ministers and decision-makers in the field of renewable energy along with more than 2,000 participants from more than 175 member states from across the world. Bahrain is its permanent member since its inception in 2009. In his comments, Dr Mirza spoke of Bahrain's strategy on energy sustainability and about the availability of solar and wind energy. He said the Bahrain government acknowledges the importance of renewable energy and is keen to keep up with the latest available technology in the transition to an era of clean energy.



PAACT celebrated “New Year Damakka” in all its glitz and glamour at Baan Saang Thai



The Bahrain British Business Forum's Special Interest Group for ICT in collaboration with the Labour Fund “Tamkeen” recently hosted a meeting at the Capital Club to discuss the latest trends in ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) Systems, to enable organisational efficiencies. The event brought experts from leading ERP companies including Oracle and Microsoft to explore how the organisations in the Kingdom of Bahrain can benefit. BBBF's joint head of ICT Special Interest Group Ravi Jayasundera welcomed the guest speakers Gary Brocklehurst (Oracle), Moutaz Al Nairab (Microsoft) and Maan Hussain (Tamkeen) to the meeting.



BDO, a leading professional services firm, conducted a workshop for updating their staff on the new International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), BDO audit methodology and Anti Money Laundering. The annual training session was held at the Capital Club and was attended by a large number of staff members.

Society



g ended with a group photo session.



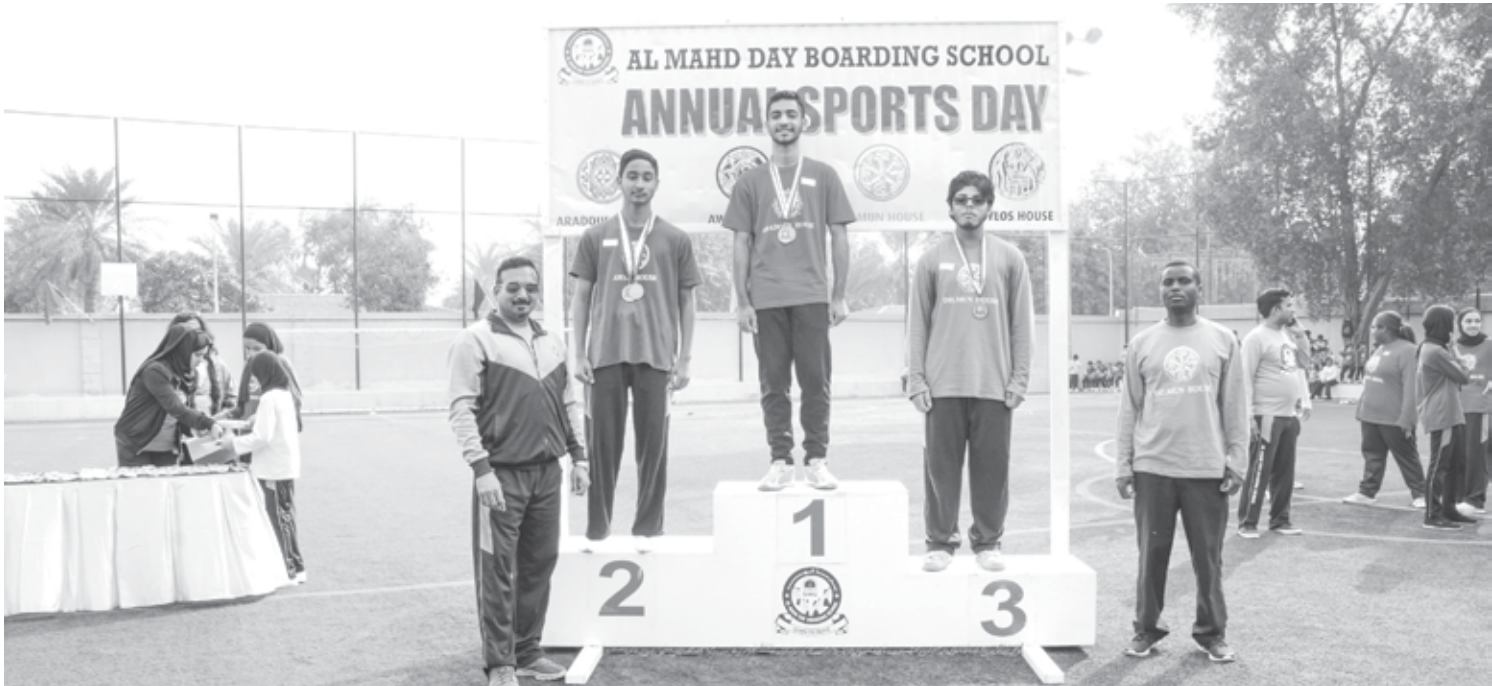
The Innovation and Technology Department in the Graduate Studies College in the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) hosted a seminar delivered by Mahfoudha Al Zayani, one of the pioneering entrepreneurs in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Arab World. In the seminar, Al Zayani spoke about the effective role of voluntary and social work in the development of nations, and reviewed her rich personal experiments in this field. She reviewed the vision of the Late Shaikha Lulwa bint Mohammed Al Khalifa in drawing the guidelines of founding the Mother and Child Welfare Society.



Hotel, Adliya. The entertaining programs along with DJ were conceived, directed and executed by PAACT 's members. Programs were fused completely with technologically supported visuals.



f, amongst other matters, on International Financial Reporting Standards
s focused on key changes in IFRS standards and financial statements



Al Mahd Day Boarding School organised the 20th Annual Sports Day at school premises. School Managing Director H.G. Sharma declared the meet open and advised the pupils to maintain the highest level of sportsmanship. Overall Championship Trophy went to AWAL HOUSE. General Manager Rajiv Gautam distributed trophies & prizes and appreciated the joint efforts of staff on-duty which led to the grand success of the event.

business

Carlos Ghosn set for continued detention

● Carlos Ghosn indicted on fresh financial misconduct charges in Japan

AFP | Tokyo

Tokyo prosecutors yesterday filed two fresh charges of financial misconduct against former Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn, meaning the auto tycoon is unlikely to be leaving his Japanese jail cell soon.

Lawyers for the former jet-setting executive filed a bail application hours later, but have acknowledged he will probably be detained until a trial that could take months to organise.

However, in one piece of rare positive news for the once-revered tycoon, the Tokyo District Court turned down a prosecutors' bid to prevent family visits, meaning he should be allowed contact with his loved ones.

Ghosn denies any wrongdoing and argued Tuesday in a dramatic first court appearance that he had been "wrongly accused and unfairly detained."

Prosecutors yesterday slapped the 64-year-old with a formal charge of under-de-



Carlos Ghosn attends the Tomorrow In Motion event on the eve of press day at the Paris Auto Show, in Paris (file photo)

claring his income by around four billion yen (\$37 million) over three years from 2015.

They also pressed charges of "aggravated breach of trust" over a complex alleged scheme in which Ghosn is said to have tried to transfer losses on foreign exchange contracts to Nissan's books.

As part of the scheme, he is also accused of using company funds to repay a Saudi acquaintance who put up collateral for the contracts.

He was already facing a first charge for allegedly under-reporting his compensation over five years to the tune of five billion yen in official documents to shareholders.

Prosecutors also filed charges yesterday against Nissan and Ghosn aide Greg Kelly over the additional three years of under-reporting pay.

Cadillac will introduce EV in fight against Tesla

Cadillac will become the leading electric car brand at General Motors

Reuters | Washington

Cadillac is expected to become General Motors Co's lead electric vehicle brand as the largest U.S. automaker gears up to introduce a new model under that luxury marquee to challenge Tesla Inc, two people briefed on the matter said Thursday.

GM is set to announce as part of an investor update that a Cadillac will be the first vehicle based on its forthcoming "BEV3" platform, the people said. The vehicle platform is the basis for vehicle underpinnings, including the battery system and other structural and mechanical parts.

GM is not expected to disclose additional details, including precisely when the Cadillac EV will be built, whether it will be a crossover or sedan, or where it will be assembled, the sources said.

A GM spokesman declined to comment.

GM had previously focused on making electric vehicles under its mass market Chev-



The Cadillac booth displays the company logo at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan

rolet brand, including its plug-in Chevrolet Volt and battery electric Bolt. GM announced last year it was ending production of the plug-in Volt as well as a low-selling plug-in Cadillac CT6, even as it moved to boost EV spending.

GM said in November as part of its restructuring efforts it was doubling resources for electric and autonomous vehicle pro-

grams over the next two years.

Last month, two Ohio senators asked GM to commit to building all future electric vehicles for U.S. buyers within the country.

GM said in 2017 it planned by 2021 to introduce a new dedicated flexible electric vehicle architecture and an advanced battery system to support the development of at least 20 new

models in the United States and China.

GM said in 2017 that a new electric vehicle platform in 2021 will serve as a base for at least nine derivatives, ranging from a compact crossover to a large seven-passenger luxury sports utility vehicle and a large commercial van.

Johan de Nysschen, who was then Cadillac's president, told Reuters at the Detroit auto show in January 2018 the luxury brand will play a "central role" in GM's electrification strategy, including China. He added that Cadillac would be "at the forefront" of rolling out new electric vehicles in the United States and China. He left GM in April.

This week, GM said Cadillac sales in China rose 17.2 percent in 2018, surpassing 200,000 units for the first time. GM Chief Executive Mary Barra has said that GM aims to sell 1 million electric vehicles a year by 2026, many of them in China, which has set strict production quotas on such vehicles.

China retailers slash iPhone prices after Apple sales warning

Reuters | Shanghai

Several Chinese electronics retailers including Alibaba-backed Suning and JD.com have slashed iPhone prices this week, after Apple recently blamed poor sales of the smartphone in the country for a rare revenue warning.

The discounting, as steep as \$118 (92.50 pounds) for the recently launched 64GB iPhone XR, is the latest sign that Apple's weak holiday sales in China may have extended to the current quarter.

The price cuts on iPhones by Chinese retailers began in the middle of this week, with at least six offering promotions this weekend, according to checks done by Reuters.

Apple did not respond to requests for comment. Prices for iPhones sold through its Chinese website remained unchanged.

Such widespread price cuts



A new iPhone X is sold at an Apple Store in Beijing, China

are not uncommon around shopping festivals like Single's Day in November, but these cuts stand out as they affect Apple's latest XS and XR models that were released only months ago, said Mo Jia, a Canals analyst who tracks China's smartphone industry.

Jia believes Apple itself could have lowered prices of the phones it ships to distributors, or that distributors may have slashed rates in order to move more units.

"It's possible Apple wants to test the market's feedback if it brings down the channel prices. Or, Apple might be under pressure to clean out its stock of iPhones," he said.

Apple has been trailing local competitors such as Huawei Technologies Co Ltd [HWT.UL] that offer cheaper options

in China, home to the world's biggest smartphone market in terms of shipment volume.

Last week, Apple issued its first revenue warning in nearly 12 years, citing poor Chinese demand, sending its shares down 10 percent, their biggest intra-day fall in six years.

Steep discounts

Suning announced yesterday that it would start selling the 64GB iPhone XR for 5,699 yuan, 800 yuan (\$118.46) less than the device's sticker price in China. It is also selling the 64GB version of the iPhone 8 for 3,899 yuan, a 1,200 yuan discount.

JD.com, a major online seller of consumer electronics, is offering promotions on models going back to the 8 series. Dangdang, one of its rivals, has launched a similar campaign.

Alphabet board sued for allegedly covering up sexual misconduct allegations

Reuters | San Francisco

Two shareholder lawsuits filed this week accused the board of Google parent Alphabet Inc of playing a direct role in covering up sexual misconduct claims against two former executives over the last five years.

The company declined to comment.

Both of the lawsuits seek to force Google to change its governance and oversight to stop future workplace conduct issues. They also call for Alphabet directors to pay damages to Alphabet for allegedly breaching their fiduciary duties and engaging in corporate waste.



Google Chief Executive Sundar Pichai apologized last year to employees for the companies' past handling of sexual misconduct cases and vowed to improve practices



Google signage is seen at the Google headquarters in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York

The allegations stem primarily from large severance payments to Andy Rubin, who led Google's Android mobile operating division until 2014, and Amit Singhal, head of Google's search unit until 2016. Company investigations into both men had found accusations of sexual harassment against them to be credible, according to the lawsuits.

Rubin and Singhal have denied the allegations. Google Chief Executive Sundar Pichai apologized last year to employees for the companies' past handling of sexual misconduct cases and vowed to improve

practices.

One of the two lawsuits in San Mateo County Superior Court in California cites minutes from Alphabet board and board committee meetings where the executives' situations were discussed.

Plaintiff James Martin obtained the documents through a "shareholder inspection demand," according to the lawsuit. Google provided them on condition they not be published, according to his attorneys, and details from the minutes are redacted across at least eight pages in the 82-page lawsuit filed on Thursday.

It's possible Apple wants to test the market's feedback if it brings down the channel prices. Or, Apple might be under pressure to clean out its stock of iPhones

MO JIA

New app gives throat cancer patients their voice back

● The app was developed for patients set to lose their voice due to a laryngectomy, or removal of the larynx

● The technology uses recordings of a patient's voice to create synthetic speech that can be played on their mobile phones, tablets or laptops via the app

AFP | Prague, Czech Republic

Vlastimil Gular's life took an unwelcome turn a year ago: minor surgery on his vocal cords revealed throat cancer, which led to the loss of his larynx and with it, his voice.

But the 51-year-old father of four is still chatting away using his own voice rather than the tinny timbre of a robot, thanks to an innovative app developed by two Czech universities.

"I find this very useful," Gular told AFP, using the app to type in what he wanted to say, in his own voice, via a mobile phone.

"I'm not very good at using the voice prosthesis," he added, pointing at the hole the size of a large coin in his throat.

This small silicon device implanted in the throat allows people to speak by pressing the hole with their fingers to regulate airflow through the prosthesis and so create sound.



Throat cancer patients often suffer from some form of dysphonia (hoarseness) before the surgery, so in combination with a limited speech sample it makes the voice sound unnatural

BARBORA REPOVA

But Gular prefers the new hi-tech voice app.

It was developed for patients set to lose their voice due to a laryngectomy, or removal of the larynx, a typical procedure for advanced stages of throat cancer.

The joint project of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Prague's Charles University and two private companies -- CertiCon and SpeechTech -- kicked off nearly two years ago.

The technology uses recordings of a patient's voice to create synthetic speech that can be played on their mobile phones, tablets or laptops via the app.

Ideally, patients need to record more than 10,000 sentences to provide scientists with enough material to produce their synthetic voice.

"We edit together individual sounds of speech so we need a lot of sentences," said Jindrich Matousek, an expert on text-to-speech synthesis, speech modelling and acoustics who heads the project at the Pilsen university.

'A matter of weeks'

But there are drawbacks: patients facing laryngectomies usually have little time or energy to do the recordings in the wake of a diagnosis that requires swift treatment.

"It's usually a matter of weeks," said Barbora Repova, a doctor at the Motol University Hospital, working on the project for Charles University.

"The patients also have to tackle issues like their economic situation, their lives are turned upside down, and the last thing they want to do is to make the recording," she told AFP.

To address these difficulties, scientists came up with a more streamlined method for the app, which is supported by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic.

Working with fewer sentences -- ideally 3,500 but as few as 300 -- this method uses advanced statistical models such as artificial neural networks.

"You use speech models with certain parameters to generate synthesised speech," said Ma-



Jindrich Matousek, an expert on text-to-speech synthesis, heads the project at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen

tousek.

"Having more data is still better, but you can achieve decent quality with less data of a given voice."

The sentences are carefully selected and individual sounds have to be recorded several times as they are pronounced differently next to different sounds or at the beginning and end of a word or sentence, he added.

So far, the Pilsen university has recorded 10 to 15 patients, according to Matousek.

Besides Czech, the Pilsen scientists have also created synthesised speech samples in English, Russian and Slovak.

'Baby dinosaurs'

Gular -- an upholsterer who lost his job due to his handicap -- managed to record 477 sentences over the three weeks between his diagnosis and the operation.

But he was stressed and less than satisfied with the quality of his voice.

"Throat cancer patients often suffer from some form of dysphonia (hoarseness) before the surgery, so in combination with a limited speech sample it makes the voice sound unnatural," said Repova.

In a studio at the Pilsen university meanwhile, entrepreneur Jana Huttova is recording outlandish phrases.

The 34-year-old mother of three faces the risk of losing her voice to minor throat surgery -- an operation on her parathyroid gland.



Working on the project to develop an app to help give throat cancer patients their voice back is doctor Barbora Repova, who represents Charles University



Patients need to record more than 10,000 sentences to provide scientists with enough material to produce their synthetic voice.

"The Chechens have always preferred a dagger-like Kalashnikov," she says, reading from the text before her.

"I have small kids and I want them to hear my own voice, not a robot," Huttova said.

Then she moved on to her next sentence: "We were attacked by a tyrannosaur's baby dinosaurs."

Connected to the brain

Matousek believes that in the future, patients will be able to use the app to record their voice at home using a specialised website to guide them through the process.

And he hopes that one day it will go even further.

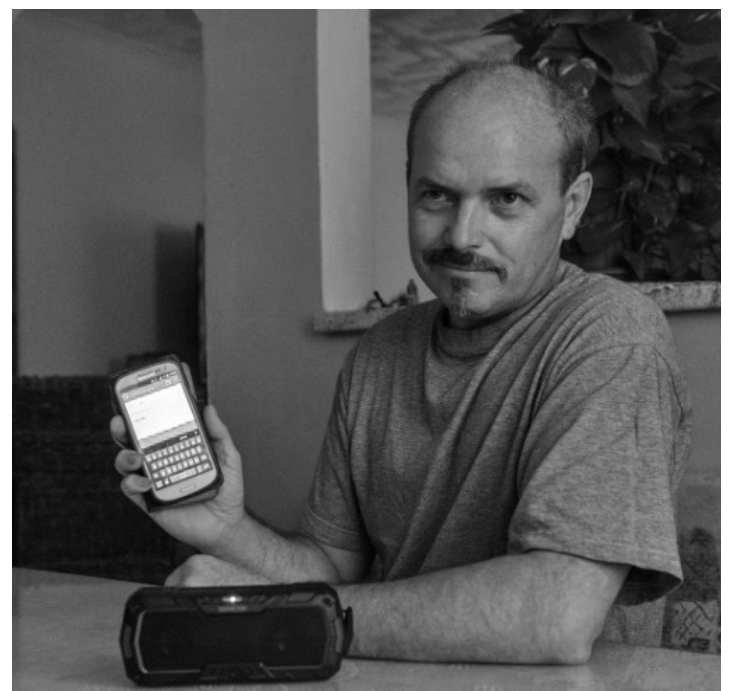
"The ultimate vision is a miniature device connected to the brain, to the nerves linked to speech -- then patients could control the device with their thoughts," he said.

This kind of advanced solution is a very long way off, said Repova.

"But look at cochlear implants -- 40 years ago when they started, we had no idea how it would develop, how widely they would end up being used," she said, referring to the inner-ear implants used to tackle severe deafness.

"A happy end would be a device implanted in the throat that could talk with the patient's own voice," she told AFP.

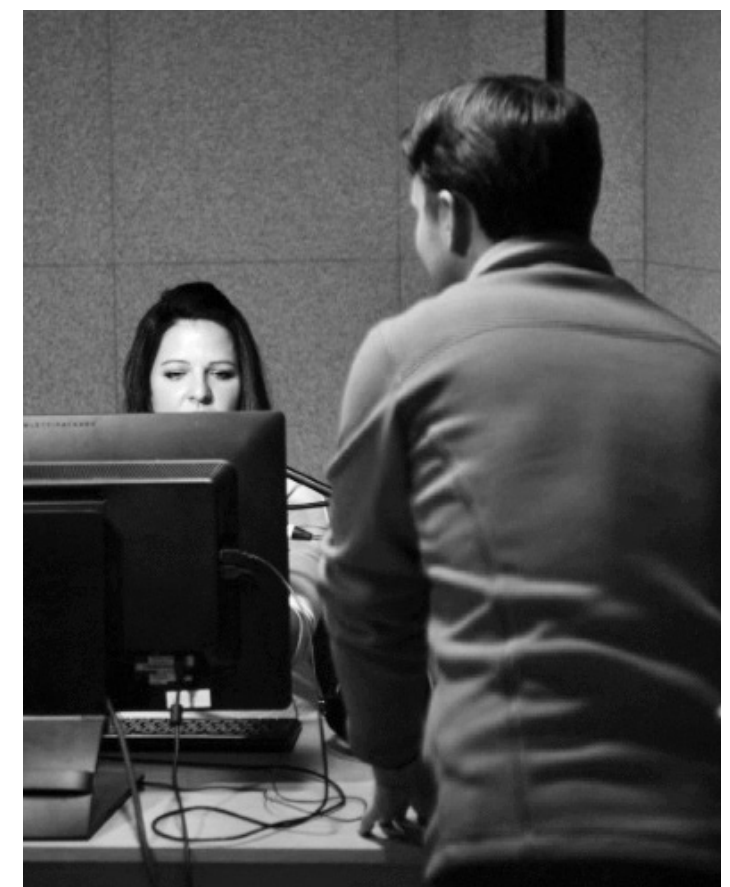
"It's realistic: it may not come in a year or even in 10 years, but it's realistic and we're on the way."



Vlastimil Gular, who lost his larynx and his voice, speaks in his own voice via a mobile phone using the special app to type in what he wants to say



Jana Huttova, 34, a mother of three, says she is recording phrases for the app because she would want her children to hear her voice, not a robot



Entrepreneur Jana Huttova records sentences to be able to use the app if she loses her voice to minor throat surgery

Goldman Sachs on course to launch cash management

● The investment bank evolves to match rival universal banks' range of businesses

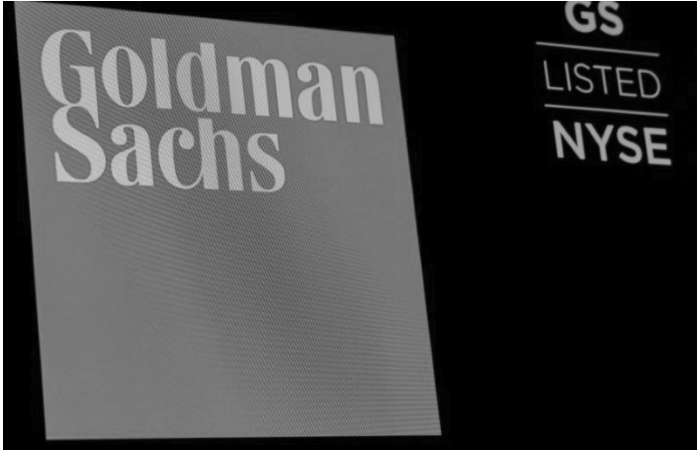
● Goldman Sachs aims to start the service in the first half of 2020

Reuters | New York

Goldman Sachs Group Inc is considering paying big multinational corporations more for their deposits than other banks as it paves the way for its entry into a mundane but prized business: managing cash.

The global investment banking powerhouse and fifth-largest U.S. bank, which is six months into building the required technology, aims to start the service in the first half of 2020, according to two people familiar with the plan. They agreed to discuss internal strategy on the condition they not be named.

The bank, which will earn fees and gain a captive client base for its foreign exchange business, could offer existing corporate clients more on deposits if they sign up for Goldman's cash management service,



The ticker symbol and logo for Goldman Sachs is displayed on a screen on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York

es, a person familiar with the plan told Reuters.

Long considered a low-margin, utility-like service, the wholesale payments and cash management business generated about \$250 billion in global revenue in 2017 for big banks, according to management consulting firm Oliver Wyman.

The steady stream of income has grown more attractive to banks that have been shifting away from volatile areas such as trading and investment banking in the aftermath of the financial crisis a decade ago.

Citigroup Inc, JPMorgan Chase & Co, Bank of New York Mellon Corp, HSBC Holdings PLC, Standard Chartered PLC

and Deutsche Bank AG currently dominate the market, handling corporations' payments and receivables across different regions.

As Goldman seeks to grow stable revenue by adding a cash management service for clients whom it already offers hedging and strategic advice, the investment bank further evolves to match rival universal banks' range of businesses.

Goldman Sachs is about half way to a goal management set in 2017 to generate \$5 billion more in annual revenue by next year, largely by boosting reliable, fee-based businesses.

However, rivals privately scoff at the idea Goldman can



Goldman Sachs is about half way to a goal management set in 2017 to generate \$5bn more in annual revenue by next year, largely by boosting reliable, fee-based businesses

gain significant market share in a business where contracts often last five years, clients tend to stick with their banks and a global network of banking licenses greases the wheels.

"The regulatory and operational costs of building a global cash management platform will be very steep and will take many years to achieve the scale that will justify the costs," said a senior commercial banker at a large European bank.

"Large multinational companies are consolidating number of banks they deal with, and they don't tend to switch service providers frequently for functions like facilitating payments and managing payrolls."

China's Geely says it has not sold Daimler shares, denies Bloomberg report



The emblem of the Geely automobile maker logo is seen at the IEEV New Energy Vehicles Exhibition in Beijing

Reuters | Beijing

China's Geely Group said it has not sold any shares in Daimler AG, denying a Bloomberg report that the Chinese firm had slashed its 9.7 percent stake in the German carmaker by more than half.

"As a long-term investor, Zhejiang Geely Holding has not sold any shares. The Daimler shareholding remains unchanged," a Hangzhou-based spokesman for Geely told Reuters yesterday.

Bloomberg reported that Chinese billionaire Li Shufu's Geely had sold a 5.4 percent stake, citing people familiar with the matter, but that the new owners of the shares were not known.

The report comes as Morgan Stanley disclosed in a filing on

Thursday that it had increased its Daimler stake to 5.39 percent from 0.34 percent on Jan. 4. According to Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley is holding the shares on behalf of others.

Daimler and Morgan Stanley declined to comment on the Bloomberg report.

Li had picked up the 9.7 percent stake in Daimler in 2018, asking the maker of Mercedes-Benz cars to strike up an alliance to better counter the threat from upstart mobility companies.

His move rekindled German fears about high-tech know-how falling into Chinese hands and Daimler had initially balked at the prospect of an alliance, partly on fears it might alienate Mercedes' existing Chinese partner BAIC.

Virgin Atlantic buys UK airline Flybe for cut-price £2.2m

● Flybe will receive 20 million pound bridging loan facility to support its working capital requirements

Reuters | Washington

Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic has teamed up with Stobart Group and Cyrus Capital to buy Flybe for £2.2 million, aiming to rebrand the struggling British regional carrier and use it to feed customers to its long-haul flights.

The consortium will provide a 20 million pound bridging loan facility to support Flybe's working capital requirements and up to 80 million pounds of funding would be made available once the deal was completed.

Flybe, which operates routes from about 25 British airports, including domestic connections to London's Heathrow, said its short-term performance had been hit by higher fuel costs, currency fluctuations and un-



A Flybe Bombardier Dash 8 Q400 airplane taxis at City Airport in London

certainities presented by Brexit.

"By combining to form a larger, stronger, group, we will be better placed to withstand these pressures," Flybe Chief Executive Christine Ourmieres-Widener said.

A joint venture company called Connect Airways — 40 per cent owned by Cyrus' unit DLP Holdings and 30pc each owned by Stobart Group's aviation unit and Virgin Atlantic — had won the backing of Flybe's board to buy the airline.

However, Flybe's shareholders will receive one pence in cash for each Flybe share under the terms of the recommended offer, a 94pc discount to Thursday's close of 16.38 pence.

Flybe, Britain's biggest domestic airline, was valued at 215 million pounds when it joined the London Stock Exchange in 2010.

Smaller airlines struggle

Airlines have been looking to consolidate in many markets as a result of rising running costs, higher fuel prices and increased competition from budget car-

riers.

Air Berlin, once Germany's second largest carrier, went into administration in August 2017 when former parent Etihad Airways withdrew funding. Nordic budget airline Primera Air and Cypriot counterpart Cobalt both collapsed last October.

Virgin Atlantic, which is 49 percent owned by Delta Air Lines, said Flybe would provide "excellent connectivity to our extensive long haul network and that of our joint venture partner, Delta Air Lines, at London Heathrow Airport and Manchester Airport".

"In the near future, this will only increase, through our expanded joint venture partnership with Air France-KLM," said Virgin Atlantic chief executive Shai Weiss.

The combined business will include a UK network carrier, with all flying operations except Stobart Air operating under the Virgin Atlantic brand. However, it plans to operate independently of Virgin Atlantic with only support functions having some overlap.

Lessors to India's troubled Jet Airways consider taking back

Reuters | New Delhi

Crisis talks between India's cash-strapped Jet Airways Ltd and aircraft lessors have failed to ease a row over late payments, prompting some lessors to explore taking back aircraft, three people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

In what one of the people described as an ill-tempered showdown between the airline and some of the world's leading leasing firms, Jet's main lender State Bank of India sought to provide reassurance that India's biggest full-service carrier is doing all it can to pay its staff, suppliers and creditors.

"Jet has been delinquent for many months. Nobody wants to get in a situation where the problems worsen and it becomes even more difficult to take out aircraft," one of the people said.

Jet controls over a sixth of a market experiencing an unprecedented boom in air trav-



A Jet Airways plane is parked as another moves to the runway at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International airport in Mumbai

el. Yet high fuel taxes, a weak rupee and price competition have squeezed profitability, leaving Jet with 80.52 billion rupees (893.63 million pounds) in net debt as at the end of September and defaulting on payments.

The airline had previously told some lessors it would clear arrears by Dec. 31, but was una-

ble to do so, the people close to the matter said.

At meetings on Tuesday, held at SBI's headquarters in Mumbai's business district, the bank's Chairman Rajnish Kumar was asked how Jet planned to raise equity or debt, said one of the people - an attendee, who found the responses lacked sufficient detail.

Embraer shares take off after Bolsonaro approves Boeing merger

AFP | Sao Paulo, Brazil

The share price in Brazilian airplane manufacturer Embraer soared yesterday as markets reacted favorably to the country's President Jair Bolsonaro approving a merger with us giant Boeing.

The share price jumped 743 per cent on the Sao Paulo stock exchange, despite Ibovespa fall-

ing 0.28pc.

It came a day after Bolsonaro announced he wouldn't be using his veto powers to block the merger between two of the world's three biggest aviation companies.

Embraer's shares had taken a nose dive last week after Bolsonaro had expressed concerns over the deal.

But now the \$5.2 billion deal,

which will see Boeing take control of Embraer's commercial airplane manufacturing business -- 80pc of its operation -- will go ahead.

Embraer will only retain control of its military division.

On Thursday, Bolsonaro had said he was satisfied that "the final proposal preserves (Brazil's) sovereignty and national interests."



By combining to form a larger, stronger, group, we will be better placed to withstand these pressures

CHRISTINE OURMIERES-WIDENER
FLYBE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SHOW

Al Pacino Set to Join ‘The Hunt’ at Amazon

IAN S | Los Angeles

Actor Al Pacino is close to closing a deal to star in the upcoming drama series “The Hunt”.

If the deal is sealed, it would mark Pacino’s first regular television role in his long and storied career. Amazon declined to comment, reports variety.com.

Pacino has previously starred in the TV mini-series “Angels in America” and “The Godfather Saga”. He is known for his roles in iconic films like “The Godfather” franchise, “Serpico”, “Dog



Al Pacino

Day Afternoon”, and “Scent of a Woman”.

In recent years, he has also starred in a number of HBO films like “You Don’t Know Jack” as Jack Kevorkian, “Phil Spector”, and “Paterno”.

“The Hunt” follows a diverse band of Nazi Hunters living in 1977 New York City. They have discovered that hundreds of high ranking Nazi officials are living among us and conspiring to create a Fourth Reich in the US. Amazon has ordered a 10-episode first season.

Julia Roberts tried playing matchmaker for Connie Britton

ANI | Washington

Taking on the title of “matchmaker,” Julia Roberts tried to set Connie Britton up on some dates.

During a talk show on Wednesday (local time), *Busby Tonight*, 51-year-old Britton revealed that the actress winner has tried to set her up on dates in the past, confirmed *People Magazine*.

“I’ve gotten to be friends with Julia Roberts. She tried to set me up with somebody. It hasn’t worked out yet, but at least mama tried, you know what I’m saying,” she said.

She also gushed about meeting Roberts as she explained that once when she came to meet her, she touched her face and said, “I love you.”

“I was like, ‘I’m never washing my face again.’ Can you tell? It’s not really a functional relationship,” she said. “Like it’s not really, it’s not

really a healthy friendship. It’s more like I idolize her, and she’s



Julia Roberts



Britton and Roberts were both nominated for best actress Golden Globes for their roles in TV series ‘Dirty John’ and ‘Homecoming’ respectively

nice to me.”

Interestingly, Britton and Roberts were both nominated for best actress Golden Globes for their roles in TV series ‘Dirty John’ and ‘Homecoming’ respectively. However, neither of them ended up taking home the award.

Kate Hudson is not done having kids

ANI | Washington

Seems like Kate Hudson isn’t necessarily done expanding her family.

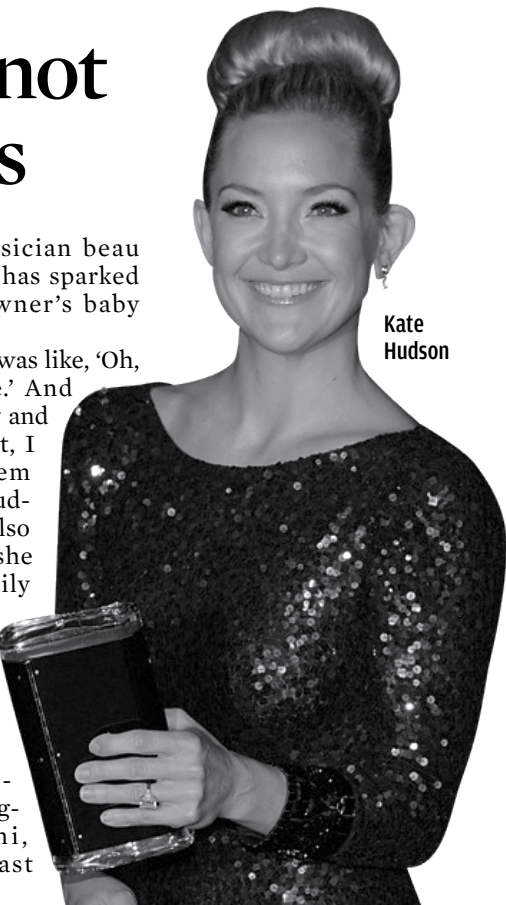
During an *American Talk Show*, the 39-year-old revealed that she is thinking about having more children, confirmed *People Magazine*. She is a mother to three children, Ryder Robinson, Bingham Hawn Bellamy, and Rani Rose Hudson Fujikawa.

“I always thought I’d have four to six kids,” Hudson said. “That was like when I was really little, I thought that. When you come from a big family, you either don’t want kids or you want a lot of kids. So I always thought I’d have more kids.”

Turns out, Hudson’s romance with musician beau Danny Fujikawa has sparked the *Fabletics* owner’s baby fever.

“At one point I was like, ‘Oh, maybe I’m done.’ And then I met Danny and was like, ‘Alright, I got to pump them out for him,’ “ Hudson added. She also mentioned that she doesn’t necessarily have a plan yet but hopes it works out that way as Danny needs a boy of his own.

Hudson welcomed her youngest child, Rani, on October 2 last year.



Kate Hudson

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

SEEF (II) : DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM

DAILY AT (DUBBED IN ARABIC): 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 + 8.15 + 10.30 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

(TELGU) 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: (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

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 SILVERMAN, 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 LENDEBORG 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 HOSNY, 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

Hildebrand in talks to join ‘Playing With Fire’

ANI | Washington

Brianna Hildebrand, who played the fan-favourite Negasonic Teenage Warhead in the ‘Deadpool’ franchise, could next be seen alongside John Cena in ‘Playing With Fire’.

The Paramount Players project is a family comedy which revolves around a group of rugged wildfire fighters who



Brianna Hildebrand

meet their match when they rescue a trio of rambunctious children.

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, if the deal works out, Hildebrand will be playing the eldest of the orphaned siblings, Brynn.

While the script has been penned by Matt Lieberman (*The Christmas Chronicles*), ‘Playing With Fire’ will be directed by Andy Fickman.

sports

Al-Attiyah stretches Dakar lead in pursuit of third title

AFP | Arequipa, Peru

Two-time champion Nasser al-Attiyah extended his lead in the Dakar Rally on Thursday, winning the fourth stage between Arequipa and Tacna.

Qatari driver al-Attiyah, the 2011 and 2015 champion, had already won the first stage of this year's event on Monday behind wheel of his Toyota.

On Thursday, he edged out 13-time champion Stephane Peterhansel, in a Mini, by 1min 52sec and Jakub Przygonski, also in a Mini, by 8min 49sec.

Overall, al-Attiyah leads Peterhansel by 8min 55sec ahead of the fifth stage between Tacna and Arequipa.

"I'm pretty happy. I won the stage and it was very important to stay close to Stephane Peterhansel as there is still a long way to go before the end," said al-Attiyah.

Meanwhile, nine-time world rally champion Sebastien Loeb, who won the second stage on

Tuesday, suffered three punctures and finished 12min 23sec behind al-Attiyah.

The Frenchman, driving a private entry Peugeot, is sixth overall, more than 50 minutes behind the Qatari.

"It was a very complicated stage and it's shame because the rhythm was very good," he said.

In the motorcycling race, America's Ricky Brabec took the stage and top spot in the overall standings on his Honda, finishing 6min 19sec ahead of Austria's Matthias Walkner and 7min 7sec in front of Australia's Toby Price.

Overall, the Californian enjoys a 2min 19sec advantage over previous leader Pablo Quintanilla of Chile while he has a 4min 22sec edge on Price. Thursday's win for Brabec was particularly uplifting as he had got lost on Wednesday's third stage.

"I needed it. Yesterday was tough on me and I lost a lot of time," he said.



Toyota's driver Nasser Al-Attiyah of Qatar (R) and his co-driver Matthieu Baumel of France compete during the Dakar 2019

Mourinho returns to football as BeIN television pundit

AFP | Paris

Jose Mourinho has secured his first job since being sacked as Manchester United coach after joining BeIN Sports as a pundit, the broadcaster announced on Thursday.

"The Special One" will be an analyst for Chelsea's Premier League trip to Arsenal on January 19 as well as Qatar and Saudi Arabia's Asian Cup group-stage tie on January 17 on the Qatari channel's broadcasts in the Middle East and North Africa.

He was sacked by United in December after the club's

worst start to a season since 1990 and won three trophies during his two-and-a-half year tenure at Old Trafford.

"Jose is one of the greatest football managers of all time, and we hope that his expert analysis and charismatic personality will be enjoyed by our millions of viewers," a beIN spokesman said in a statement.

Mourinho had been linked with a return to former club Benfica after the Lisbon giants fired coach Rui Vitoria last week, but the 55-year-old told Correio da Manha earlier on Thursday that he would not take the job.



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Andy Murray to retire

Murray appeared tearful at a press conference saying Open could be his last event

● **Murray was knocked out in the second round on his return at Brisbane last week**

● **Murray pulled out of last year's Australian Open to have hip surgery and only returned in June at Queen's Club in London**

AFP | Melbourne

A tearful Andy Murray yesterday announced he would likely retire this year due to severe pain from a hip injury, saying next week's Australian Open could be the last tournament of a glittering career.

The former world number one and three-time Grand Slam winner broke down at a press conference in Melbourne as he said the pain had become almost unbearable.

"I can play with limitations. But having the limitations and the pain is not allowing me to enjoy competing or training," the emotional Scot said.

Thirty-one-year-old "Sir Andy" said he would like to finish at his home Grand Slam in Wimbledon, but ruefully admitted he might not make it that far.

He will be remembered as the first British man to win Wimbledon in 77 years and as a player who battled his way to the top in a golden era for the game alongside Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal.



Andy Murray of Great Britain breaks down during a press conference in Melbourne

"Wimbledon is where I would like to stop playing, but I am not certain I am able to do that," he said.

"I've been struggling for a long time. I'm not sure I can play through the pain for another four or five months.

"Pretty much done everything that I could to try and get my hip feeling better and it hasn't helped loads."

He pulled out of last year's Australian Open to have hip surgery and only returned in June at Queen's Club in London.

He ended the season at Shenzhen in September after only a handful of appearances to concentrate on working his way

back to full fitness.

But he was knocked out in the second round on his return at Brisbane last week and called it quits Thursday after less than an hour of a practice in Melbourne against Djokovic.

"I think there is a chance the Australian Open is my last tournament," he said.

While he intends to begin his opening-round match against 22nd seed Roberto Bautista Agut next week, how his body withstands potentially gruelling five-set clashes in energy-sapping heat remains to be seen.

'Legend of a bloke'

One of the so-called Big Four, along with Federer, Djokovic and Nadal, who have dominated the game for years, Murray's ranking has slumped to 230.

He hasn't reached a Grand Slam final since winning his second Wimbledon title in 2016, but has nevertheless enjoyed a glittering career since turning professional in 2005, with not only three Grand Slam titles, but two Olympic gold medals and 45



Wimbledon is where I would like to stop playing, but I am not certain I am able to do that

ANDY MURRAY

Sabalenka is title threat: Evert

Reuters | Melbourne

Chris Evert describes trying to pick a women's singles champion at this month's Australian Open as a "crapshoot" but the American says 20-year-old Aryna Sabalenka, one of many names being thrown into the mix, must be taken seriously.

The Belarussian surged up the WTA rankings last year, winning her first two titles and ending it just outside the top 10 and arrived in Melbourne fresh from winning in Shenzhen.

With her powerful groundstrokes and potent serve the quick Melbourne courts are likely to suit her style and American great Evert is looking forward to watching her progress as part of broadcaster ESPN's coverage team.

The last eight Grand Slam titles have been won by different players and the women's game is searching for a player to sustain dominance as Serena Williams has done in the past.

"I have no reason to believe that Sabalenka will not win more than one Grand Slam. Why? I see two things. I see



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus in action against Caroline Garcia of France

hunger and I see boldness," 18-times major singles champion Evert said in a conference call looking ahead to the Australian Open.

"Whether that's fearlessness or what. It's tied up, the boldness, fearlessness, confidence. That's her swagger, I see that. Like this girl wants it. You can see it in her eyes. She's pretty intense."

While Evert thinks Serena is "raring to go" as she looks to equal Margaret Court's all-time

Grand Slam title record of 24, she predicts strong challenges from the players who stopped the American reaching that tally last year - Japan's Naomi Osaka, who beat Williams in the U.S. Open final, and Angelique Kerber who trounced her in the Wimbledon title match.

"I think Osaka is reliable, I think she's gotten some matches in. I think she's going to go in pretty confident at this point," Evert said.



Andy Murray was won three Grand Slam titles, two Olympic gold medals and 45 ATP crowns

ATP crowns.

Notably, in 2013 Murray became the first British man to win Wimbledon for 77 years, ending the nation's obsession with finding a champion to follow in the footsteps of Fred Perry.

World number five Juan Martin del Potro, who has also struggled with injuries and will miss the Australian Open, told Murray to "keep fighting".

"We love you @andy_murray and we want to see you happy and doing well," he added.

Billie Jean King called him "a champion on and off court", referring to Murray's long-time support of women's equality in tennis.

"So sorry you cannot retire on your own terms, but remember to look to the future. Your greatest impact on the world may be yet to come. Your voice for equality will inspire future generations," she said.

Top Australian coach Darren Cahill, who until recently was mentoring world number one Simona Halep, said Murray was an example of the never-say-die attitude that separated the best from the average.

PSG complacent in League Cup loss: Tuchel

Reuters | Paris

Although he hopes Wednesday's defeat by En Avant Guingamp, which came after 44 consecutive wins in domestic cup games, was just an "accident", Paris St Germain coach Thomas Tuchel believes his team were complacent.

The runaway Ligue 1 leaders, well on course for a sixth title in seven seasons, lost 2-1 at home to bottom club Guingamp after the Brittany side converted two late penalties in the League Cup match.

"We lost a game, but most of all an opportunity to win a trophy," said Tuchel.

Having failed to make an impact on the Champions League in recent years, PSG used to compensate with domestic titles, lifting the French Cup every year from 2015-18 and the League Cup from 2014-18.

PSG were in the driving seat after Neymar's header put them ahead in the 63rd minute, only for the visitors to claim a shock victory.

Bracewell, Kuggeleijn set up New Zealand's T20 win

- Sri Lanka finished their tour of New Zealand without a victory after losing the only T20 in Auckland, having been well on top
- Setting a target of 180, New Zealand bowled out Sri Lanka for 144, winning the only T20I by 35 runs

AFP | Auckland

The recalled Doug Bracewell and debutant Scott Kuggeleijn starred with bat and ball for New Zealand to beat Sri Lanka by 35 runs in the one-off Twenty20 match in Auckland yesterday.

It ended a dismal tour for the Sri Lankans with the drawn first Test followed by a succession of losses in the second Test, three one-dayers and the Twenty20.

New Zealand, sent into bat, recovered from 55 for five to finish on 179 for seven with Bracewell (44) and Kuggeleijn (35 not out) the key contributors.

Although the target was not



Scott Kuggeleijn of New Zealand hits a shot

daunting, and Sri Lanka easily kept up with the required run rate to be four for 118 after 12 overs.

But their last six wickets fell for the addition of only 26 more runs and the innings folded for 144 with 19 balls remaining.

Kuggeleijn and Bracewell both took wickets in their opening overs.

Kusal Perera, who raced to 22

off 12 deliveries was removed by Kuggeleijn's third delivery while Niroshan Dickwella, who smacked a four and a six from the first two balls of the innings, went for 18 with the first ball from Bracewell.

Kuggeleijn and Bracewell also took the catches to dismiss Kusal Mendis (17) and Thisara Perera (43).

The first game all tour for

Sadeera Samarawickrama was a short-lived affair when he was bowled first ball by Lockie Ferguson.

Ferguson finished with figures of three for 21 while Ish Sodhi took three for 30.

Sri Lanka did with the toss and put New Zealand into bat with impressive early results.

With a more disciplined bowling attack than was seen in the

ODIs, and with astute field placements, Sri Lanka ripped through the New Zealand top order to have them four for 27 midway through the fourth over.

Ross Taylor, who tormented Sri Lanka in the one-dayers, had to play a more circumspect role.

New Zealand	
M. Guptill c Mendis b Malinga	1
C. Munro c Shanaka b Rajitha	16
T. Seifert c Sandakan b Rajitha	2
H. Nicholls b Malinga	4
R. Taylor c Dickwella b Perera	33
M. Santner c Perera b Sandakan	13
D. Bracewell c de Silva b Rajitha	44
S. Kuggeleijn not out	35
T. Southee not out	13
Extras: (b2, lb2, wd13, nb1)	18
Total: (for 7 wickets, 20 overs)	179
Sri Lanka	
N. Dickwella c Seifert b Bracewell	18
S. Samarawickrama b Ferguson	0
K. Perera c Bracewell b Kuggeleijn	23
B. Mendis c Kuggeleijn b Southee	17
T. Perera c Bracewell b Ferguson	43
D. de Silva b Ferguson	10
D. Shanaka lbw b Sodhi	7
K. Rajitha c Seifert b Sodhi	5
L. Malinga c Guptill b Santner	6
L. Kumara c Kuggeleijn b Sodhi	4
L. Sandakan not out	1
Extras: (wd10)	10
Total: (all out: 16.5 overs)	144

DNA request made in Cristiano Ronaldo rape case

AFP | Los Angeles

Las Vegas police have asked soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo to submit a DNA sample as part of their investigation into rape allegations made against him.

The Juventus forward has vehemently denied the accusations -- with his lawyer, Peter Christiansen, telling AFP the request was standard procedure.

"Mr Ronaldo has always maintained, as he does today, that what occurred in Las Vegas in 2009 was consensual in nature, so it is not surprising that DNA would be present, nor that the police would make this very standard request as part of their investigation," he said in a statement.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department said it had made an official request to Italian authorities, adding it is "taking the same steps in this case as in any other sexual assault to facilitate the collection of DNA evidence."

Former model Kathryn Mayorga, 34, of Las Vegas, accused Ronaldo in a complaint filed last year in the state of Nevada.

She claims after meeting him at a Las Vegas nightclub, he raped her at his hotel suite on June 13, 2009 -- just before he joined Real Madrid from Manchester United.

Sarri blasts Bayern over Hudson-Odoi interest



Chelsea's English midfielder Callum Hudson-Odoi runs with the ball during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

Maurizio Sarri has lashed out at Bayern Munich for their "unprofessional" behaviour after the Bundesliga club publicly expressed their interest in Chelsea starlet Callum Hudson-Odoi.

Chelsea boss Sarri is furious that Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic said this week that they "definitely" want to sign Hudson-Odoi during the January transfer window as he "has the qualities which would fit very well" with the German champions.

Chelsea have reportedly turned down a £35 million (\$45 million) bid from Bayern for the 18-year-old, who has less than 18 months to run on his current contract and has so far refused to sign a new five-year deal, and Sarri is unhappy with Bayern's public approach.

"I think that it's not professional, because they are talking about a player under contract with Chelsea. So they didn't

respect our club, I think," Sarri told reporters yesterday.

Sarri has handed Hudson-Odoi a place in his starting line-up for Chelsea's past two matches -- Tuesday's League Cup semi-final loss to Tottenham Hotspur and the 2-0 FA Cup win over Nottingham Forest last weekend in which the teenager set up both of Alvaro Morata's goals.

But, having helped England win the Under-17 World Cup, Hudson-Odoi could follow the same path taken by his international teammate Jadon Sancho, who has impressed for Borussia Dortmund since leaving Manchester City for Germany.

Regardless of Hudson-Odoi's future, Sarri has recommended Chelsea sign two new players to bolster his squad.

"As you know very well I am not involved in the market. I spoke with the club and the club knows very well my opinion. In my opinion we need two players," he said.

Sterling pens letter to racially abused boy and says 'stand tall'

AFP | London

Manchester City star Raheem Sterling sent a letter to a 13-year-old goalkeeper after hearing he had been racially abused advising him to "stand tall and be proud of who you are".

Sterling himself was the subject of alleged racist abuse from Chelsea fans in a Premier League match in December.

He wrote the letter



on club headed paper when informed by Ethan Ross's grandmother he had been "through a tough time with racial abuse."

Ross, a goalkeeper with the Under-14 team at fourth-tier Newport County, had been racially abused at his school.

"Dear Ethan, I have recently been told from your lov-

ing Nanna Sue about the tough time you are having with racial abuse," wrote Sterling, who also enclosed signed photographs of the Manchester City squad.

"Remember to stand tall and be proud of who you are and don't let them take away your courage. You are strong and very brave, and your Nanna is also very proud of you. Keep being you kid.

"Remember speaking up doesn't always make life easy, but easy never changed anything."

Ross took to Instagram when

he received the letter on Saturday.

"OMG just got this in the post from Raheem Sterling! Signed by all the Man City players. Thank you so much Raheem Sterling for the support," Ross wrote on Instagram.

His grandmother, who did not wish to give her full name, told The Times that Sterling's gesture had done wonders for Ross's morale.

"When I took the package over to him you should have seen the look on his face -- he was overwhelmed," said the 62-year-old.

Pogba returns as Solskjaer eyes United job boost over rival Pochettino

AFP | Manchester

Paul Pogba will be fit to return from injury for Manchester United's Premier League match at Tottenham this weekend, interim manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said on Thursday.

The France midfielder linked up late with his team-mates for a warm weather training camp in Dubai this week after being injured in a challenge by Jonjo Shelvey during the 2-0 victory at Newcastle on January 2.

Pogba missed last Saturday's 2-0 FA Cup victory over Reading as a result of the knock, but trained well in the United Arab Emirates, according to Solskjaer.

"He looked OK towards the end, so he will be fit. He did have some problems but he came through last couple of sessions well, so he should be OK," the Norwegian said.

Solskjaer has made a perfect start as United's coach since replacing the sacked

Jose Mourinho on December 19, winning each of his first five matches in charge.

The former United striker, who is on loan from Norwegian club Molde until the end of the season, has made clear since his return to Old Trafford he would love the manager's job on a permanent basis.

However, his opponent on Sunday, Tottenham head coach Mauricio Pochettino, is believed by many observers to be the likeliest person to get the United job.

Solskjaer praised the Argentinian and justified the reports.

"He has done a very good job. That speculation is there for a reason -- because he has done well -- but it's not my job to rate managers. My focus is on me and my team."

Tottenham test

The interim boss, though, has rejected the idea that this match represents his first serious challenge in charge of United, following wins over Cardiff, Huddersfield, Bournemouth, Newcastle and Reading.

"We've had tests. Newcastle away is a test and the first game was a test as to how everyone reacted. The first home game with the crowd is a test," he said.

"We are not going to get as many chances to attack against these as we had before so when we have the ball we have to be ready to play well with it and we have to use the whole pitch because Wembley is a decent size pitch as well," he added.



China punish Philippines

Two goals for Wu Lei helped the Asian giants through to the knockout round of the Asian Cup in Abu Dhabi

Sven cancels dinner as China beat Philippines

Australia beat Palestine to bounce back from Jordan defeat in Asian Cup

AFP | Abu Dhabi

Our Swede Sven-Goran Eriksson scrapped dinner plans with old foe Marcello Lippi after China thrashed his Philippines side 3-0 yesterday to reach the last 16 of the Asian Cup.

China's star striker Wu Lei fired a brilliant double against the Filipino 'Street Dogs' in Abu Dhabi as Lippi emerged victorious in a heavyweight coaching clash.

As is custom between the two elder statesmen of the game, the loser buys the other dinner, washed down with a vintage bottle of wine.

But Eriksson had little stomach for the old pals' act when the septuagenarians embraced after the match.

"No, no dinner plans," snapped the former England manager. "I was not in a very good mood for a long discussion. I just wished (Lippi) good luck for the future."

"We forgot about Wu Lei

No, no dinner plans. I was not in a very good mood for a long discussion. I just wished (Lippi) good luck for the future. We forgot about Wu Lei -- twice

SVEN-GORAN ERIKSSON



Philippines' goalkeeper Michael Falkesgaard (C) attempts to save a shot

-- twice," grimaced Eriksson, who previously coached the match-winner at Chinese club Shanghai SIPG.

"If you do that he will punish you and he did with two great goals. We paid a heavy price but we are not home yet. We still have hope -- but small hope, probably."

China, runners-up in 1984 and 2004, top Group C with a perfect six points from two games -- ahead of South Korea on goal difference -- after beating Kyrgyzstan 2-1 in their opening game.

But they looked far sharper against the Philippines, like the former Soviet republic also appearing in their first Asian Cup.

"I'm very proud of my players," said Lippi, who led his native Italy to World Cup victory in 2006.

"They were aggressive, focused and showed a lot of quality. If we can continue to play like that we have nothing to fear from any team at this Asian Cup."

Wu magic

Lippi's side should have led after 32 minutes when Wu Xi headed wastefully wide from point-blank range.

But Wu Lei provided the spark five minutes before half-time, turning on the edge of the box and whipping a right-foot shot into the far corner.

His second was even better as he swivelled to slam a Hao Junmin free kick past goalkeeper Michael Falkesgaard on the volley after 66 minutes to effectively finish the tie.

Substitute Yu Dabao added a third 10 minutes from time for China, who are looking to improve on their quarter-final finish in Australia four years ago.

Lippi waxed lyrical about the prolific Wu Lei, China's most

coveted player and Shanghai's record goalscorer, who has been linked with a move to English Premier League side Wolves.

"He looked very sharp and scored two goals of fantastic quality," said the Italian.

"But we are used to seeing that quality from him. It is no wonder teams in Europe are interested in him."

Pulverised 8-1 the last time the teams met in 2017, the Philippines gave China more of a fight this time, having lost 1-0 to South Korea earlier this week.

Kevin Ingreso forced a fingertip save from China goalkeeper Yan Junling in first-half stoppage time, but Eriksson's players faded badly after the break.

South Korea beat Kyrgyzstan 1-0 in a late kickoff in Al Ain to advance to the knockout stage.

Asian Cup

Palestine	0	-	3	Australia
Philippines	0	-	3	China
Kyrgyzstan	0	-	1	South Korea

Red-hot Barty, Seppi storm into Sydney finals

AFP | Sydney

Australia's Ashleigh Barty claimed another top 10 scalp to power into the Sydney International final yesterday, while veteran Andreas Seppi upset third seed Diego Schwartzman to reach the men's decider.

The 22-year-old Barty is on a hot run, stretching her unbeaten streak to seven matches dating back to her career's biggest title at the WTA Elite Trophy in Zhuhai.

She is one of the form players heading into the Australian Open next week, but had to dig deep to scramble past world number nine and seventh seed Kiki Bertens (6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 7-5).

Her reward is a clash with 2015 champion Petra Kvitova who defeated Belarusian qualifier Aliaksandra Sasnovich, in another semi-final yesterday.

"It's amazing. It really has been a phenomenal week of tennis," said the 15th ranked Barty, who also made the final last year.

"I feel like I've played great all week and have had tough opponents every single round and I'm really excited to have another shot at the title."

Barty had already accounted for world number one Simona Halep and former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko before beating 10th



Seppi had made three previous semi-finals in Sydney but he had never gone further

seeded Belgian Elise Mertens in the quarter-finals.

She came into the match with the advantage of having twice beaten Dutch star Bertens previously, including as recently as last August in Montreal.

Seppi edged past Schwartzman 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, a day after derailing the hopes of top seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, proving he still has what it takes at age 34.

The Italian, seeded eight, had made three previous semi-finals in Sydney -- the first way back in 2006. But he had never gone further and was delighted to get a crack at another ATP title to add to three he already owns.

"It was never easy, he is a great fighter and makes you play a lot of balls and you have to run a lot," said Seppi of the Argentinian. "But I played a good match today and was happy to close it out."



Australia's Ashleigh Barty hits a return to Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands

Pakistan bowlers fight back to defy South Africa

AFP | Johannesburg, South Africa

Pakistan's bowlers changed the course of the third and final Test against South Africa when they engineered a dramatic collapse on the first day of the third and final Test yesterday.

From being in control on 226 for three at tea, South Africa were bowled out for 262 at the Wanderers Stadium.

Vernon Philander struck back for South Africa, taking two wickets off successive balls as Pakistan reached 17 for two at the close.

A polished innings of 90 by Aiden Markram, coupled with some wayward bowling by Pakistan, laid the foundation for some attacking batting by South Africa, who collectively hit 37 fours and a six before tea on what looked the best batting pitch of a series already won by the hosts.

But the runs dried up after the interval as South Africa were able to add only 36 for the loss of seven wickets in 19.4 overs, hitting only four more boundaries. Mohammad Amir and Mo-



Dean Elgar walks off as Pakistan celebrate his wicket

hammad Abbas set the tone after tea, taking two and one wickets respectively. Both bowlers gained reverse swing and tightened up their lines to make run-scoring difficult.

Ashraf turns the screw

Amir left the field four balls into his 16th over after falling in his delivery stride and appearing to twist his left ankle but

Hasan Ali and Faheem Ashraf continued to put pressure on the batsmen.

Ashraf finished with three for 57, while Amir, Abbas and Hasan took two wickets each.

Markram hit 16 boundaries off 124 balls in an innings marked by crisply-struck drives and firm clips to leg.

It was the third time in his 15-Test career that he had been dismissed in the nineties.

Markram, who had to pass a fitness test after suffering a badly bruised right thigh while fielding in the second Test in Cape Town, looked set for his fifth Test century until he glanced a ball from the medium-paced Faheem and wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed dived to his left to take a good catch.

Hashim Amla (41) helped Markram put on 126 for the second wicket after stand-in captain Dean Elgar was caught behind off Mohammad Abbas for five in the second over.

Theunis de Bruyn (49) and new cap Zubayr Hamza (41) both batted brightly in a fourth wicket stand which was worth 72 off 92 balls at tea.

But De Bruyn was out in the third over after tea and Hamza, who scored 38 off 46 balls before tea, could add only three more

South Africa, first innings	
A. Markram c S Ahmed b F Ashraf	90
D. Elgar c SAhmed b M Abbas	5
H. Amla c Asad Shafiq b S Khan	41
T. de Bruyn lbw b M Abbas	49
Zubayr Hamza c S Ahmed b M Amir	41
T. Bavuma c S Ahmed b M Amir	8
Q. de Kock c M Abbas b F Ashraf	18
V. Philander lbw b Hasan Ali	1
K. Rabada c S Ahmed b Hasan Ali	0
D. Steyn not out	2
D. Olivier c M Abbas b F Ashraf	0
Extras (lb2, nb4, w1)	7
Total (77.4 overs)	262
Pakistan, first innings	
Imam-ul-Haq not out	10
Shan Masood c De Kock b Philander	2
Azhar Ali c De Kock b Philander	0
Mohammad Abbas not out	0
Extras (lb5)	5
Total (2 wkts, 9 overs)	17

runs off 22 deliveries before he was caught behind off Amir.

Left to negotiate a tricky 40 minutes before the close, Pakistan lost Shan Masood, their top scorer in the series, for two when a successful review by South Africa showed he had got a faint edge to a ball angled across him.