

Bahrain set to face Australia

Bahrain's Olympic football team head into a do-or-die clash with Australia this afternoon in the 2020 AFC U23 Championship in Thailand.

P16

Weinstein's trial: The idea of justice and the trouble with being too 'woke'

THE DAILY tribune

Shakira reveals new collaboration with rapper Anuel AA

Philippines on alert as volcano spews ash, lava

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Govt step down call in Tehran
 Tehran

Iran faced a third day of protests on Monday as pressure mounted on the country's leaders to resign, after the government admitted it shot down a Ukrainian plane on Wednesday.

After days of denial, the Iranian military admitted on Saturday it accidentally shot down the Ukraine International Airlines plane near Tehran, killing all 176 people on board.

Queen's nod for Harry's Canada plan
 London

Queen Elizabeth II said on Monday that she has agreed to grant Prince Harry and Meghan their wish for a more independent life that will see them split their time between Canada and the UK.

The statement came after an urgent meeting at the Queen's Sandringham estate attended by high-ranking members of the British royal family.

The crisis talks were intended to resolve a rift in the royal family triggered by the shocking announcement that the Duke and Duchess of Sussex wanted to step back from royal duties.

'BDF' personnel a great source of pride'

Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander, yesterday paid a visit to the General Command of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF).

Upon arrival, HM the King was welcomed by the BDF Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, and Minister of Defence Affairs, Lieutenant-General Abdulla bin Hassan Al Nuaimi.

HM King Hamad was accompanied by National Security Advisor and Royal Guard Commander, Major-General HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

While receiving a briefing about the BDF's development plans, HM the King expressed



His Majesty being received at the BDF General Command.

pride in the BDF and its brave personnel, stressing that BDF affiliates enjoy his great appreciation, and are always a source of pride for Bahrain and its people.

HM King Hamad extended thanks to all BDF personnel for their patriotic efforts of safeguarding the gains and achievements of Bahrain and its people, as well as for their constant vigilance and readiness to carry out their duties, in light of the rapidly unfolding developments in the region.

HM the King affirmed that Bahrain always hopes that security and peace prevail in the region and the entire world.

HM the King, the Supreme Commander, wished all BDF servicemen continuous success in carrying out their noble duties.

Periodic check-ups for restaurant staff

Directive follows recommendation by Govt Executive Committee

● The move aims to preserve the health of citizens and residents, as well as protect society from communicable diseases.

● The session welcomed the foundation stone laying for the new International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Sakhir.

Manama

The Cabinet chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, yesterday, approved four draft resolutions stipulating that workers in the food and sectors

related to public health should undergo compulsory medical check-ups every two years, starting from August 2020.

The move follows a recommendation by the Government Executive Committee, chaired by HRH the Crown Prince.

The move aims to preserve the health of citizens and residents, as well as protect society from communicable diseases.

Among other things, the session endorsed, based on a recommendation submitted by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs, a draft resolution authorising the owners of industrial projects to establish residential buildings to accommodate the workers of their facilities in the lands designated for the projects, in accordance with the conditions and criteria set in the amended executive regulation of the Law on the Establishment and Organisation of Industrial Estates.

Two bills regulating refrigera-



HH Shaikh Mohammed

149,000
 square metre main building of the new International Exhibition and Convention Centre will include ten exhibition areas.

tion, air conditioning units were endorsed by the session.

The session approved, based on a recommendation by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs, two draft resolutions.

The first one is related to the management of coolants, as well as refrigeration and air conditioning units. It regulates the scope of their use, in addition to the requirements and standards for importing, exporting or trading them.

The second determines the categories of fees for licenses related to the cooling media, refrigeration and air conditioning units.

The Cabinet lauded the recent visit of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa at his residence in Germany, where he was reassured about his health.

The session welcomed the

foundation stone laying for the new International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Sakhir, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

It noted that the new exhibition centre will enhance Bahrain's ability to attract exhibitions, conventions and events, and contribute to boosting the exhibitions industry and the kingdom's status as a tourism and investment destination.

The Cabinet, marking the Bahrain Diplomatic Day, which is observed every January 14 as per an order by HM King Hamad, hailed the successful march of the Bahraini diplomacy for more than five decades, stressing that the landmark achievements of Bahraini diplomats have served the Kingdom and improved its status at the regional and global levels.



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday received at the General Command headquarters Air Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, the Chief of the Air Staff of Pakistan Air Force, who conveyed to him the greetings of Pakistani President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan as well as their best wishes of more growth and prosperity to Bahrain and its people. HM the King asked him to convey his greetings to the Pakistani President and Premier as well as his best wishes of more development and prosperity to Pakistan and its people. He stressed Bahrain's appreciation of strong and growing relations of friendship and co-operation between both countries, mainly in the defence and military field.



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received, at the General Command of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) yesterday, the Pakistani Ambassador to Bahrain, Afzaal Mahmood, who conveyed to him a message from the Prime Minister of brotherly Pakistan, Imran Khan. In his message, Prime Minister Imran Khan extended an invitation to HM the King to visit Pakistan, and praised the distinguished deep-rooted bilateral relations, as well as ways to bolster joint co-operation. HM King Hamad lauded the steady growth of co-operation between the two countries in all fields, stressing that the solid strategic Bahraini-Pakistani relations are based on solid foundations of common interests, as well as mutual respect and understanding.



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister yesterday arrived in the Sultanate of Oman to extend his condolences to the Sultan of Oman, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, at Al Alam Palace, following the passing of His Majesty the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said. HRH the Crown Prince also extended condolences to senior members of the Sultanate's royal family, noting that his thoughts and prayers are with them at this time. HRH the Crown Prince went on to wish Oman further growth and prosperity under the leadership of HM Sultan Haitham. Later, HRH the Crown Prince recalled HM the late Sultan's key role in bolstering Arab and Islamic co-operation internationally, and highlighted HM the late Sultan's active support for Oman's comprehensive development.



Bahrain Tourism and Exhibition Authority (BTEA) Chief Executive Officer Nader Almoayyed received newly-appointed Egyptian Ambassador Yaser Mohammed Shaaban and discussed bilateral relations and aspects of joint co-operation in all fields to support both countries' economy. He underlined BTEA achievements, highlighting especially the laying of the foundation stone of the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Sakhir. He stressed the importance of the milestone which would contribute to creating a favourable environment to attract businessmen, create business opportunities and boosting trade co-operation with Arab and foreign countries. He congratulated Shaaban on his appointment as Ambassador to Bahrain, wishing him success in his diplomatic duties.



Information Minister Ali bin Mohammed Al Romaihi yesterday received Representatives Council member Mohammed Khalifa Buhumood. They discussed issues of common interest mainly in the media field. The Information Minister praised co-operation between the executive and legislative branches to promote the development and democratic march and serve the nation and citizens in the prosperous era of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. MP Buhumood thanked the Information Minister for his keenness to develop the media and telecommunication sector and groom national competencies.



The Indian School Mega Fair 2019 raffle ticket prizes were distributed to the winners at a thanksgiving ceremony held in the school auditorium on Friday. A Mitsubishi ASX car sponsored by Zayani Motors was distributed to the first prize winner Niya Ganesh, a class VIII student of the Indian School. Zayani Motors Executive Secretary Nisha Serin Koshy presented the key to the first prize winner. The Mega Fair sponsors were honoured during the ceremony. ISB Chairman Prince S Natarajan, Secretary Saji Antony, Vice-Chairman Jayafar Maidanee, Assistant Secretary Premalatha N S, EC members Rajesh M N, Ajaykrishnan V, Saji George, Deepak Gopalakrishnan, Mohammad Nayaz Ullah, Principal V R Palaniswamy, Riffa Campus Principal Pamela Xavier, Staff Representative Johnson K Devassy, Fair Organising Committee General Convener R Ramesh, Mega Fair advisory committee members Mohamad Hussain Malim, Vipin P M, S Inayadullah and Joint General Convener V K Pavithran were present at the ceremony. Principal V R Palaniswamy welcomed the gathering. Secretary Saji Antony gave vote of thanks.

Kingdom's diplomatic strides, peace efforts stressed at major conference

Peace and co-existence pillars of Kingdom's foreign policy

● **The Day of Diplomacy included discussion sessions that addressed the objectives and strategies of the government action.**

● **The ceremony featured the screening of a documentary about Bahrain's policies in the past and present and the presentation of the Diplomatic Excellence Awards.**

Manama

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, noted that the Day of Diplomacy, which was allocated by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, has become a unique annual event that highlights the role of Bahraini diplomacy in supporting Bahrain's achievements at various levels, based on a solid foundation of support by HM the King and the reform approach, which developed the political, economic and social fields in the Kingdom.

The minister was speaking as he participated in opening the Diplomatic Forum in the presence of the Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cabinet Member Adel Ahmed Al Jubeir, Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Dr Abdullatif Al Zayani, senior officials and diplomats.

Shaikh Khalid expressed deep thanks and appreciation for the keenness of the participants to share their expertise and successful practices, adding that the experience will strengthen

the role of diplomatic missions abroad to continue Bahrain's proactive policy.

Bahrain's foreign policy is committed to asserting the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Kingdom, as well as protecting its security, defending its interests, enhancing its global position and reputation, in addition to strengthening its relations with brotherly and friendly countries and developing co-operation with regional and international organisations, he said.

The Kingdom is also keen to defend Arab and Islamic issues and promote the values of peace, coexistence and dialogue among various cultures, and combatting extremism and terrorism, Shaikh Khalid added.

Mr Al Jubeir stressed the depth of relations between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia which extend to centuries, not years or decades, noting their steady consensus in facing challenges, thanks to the wisdom of their leaders and to the good balance, rationality and foresight of their policies.

He stressed the ability of the two countries to continue to accomplish achievements and face various challenges in light of their close co-operation and co-ordination.

The Day of Diplomacy included discussion sessions that addressed the objectives and strategies of the government action, culture as a stepping stone to Bahrain's international standing, and Bahrain's economy in its global context.

The ceremony featured the screening of a documentary about Bahrain's policies in the past and present and the presentation of the Diplomatic Excellence Awards to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs laureates in recognition of their distinguished merits.

Separately, Shaikh Khalid re-



HH Shaikh Nasser held a special meeting with Kingdom's ambassadors abroad.



Shaikh Khalid speaks at the conference.



Shaikh Khalid receives Mr Al Jubeir.



Bahrain's foreign policy is committed to asserting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Kingdom.

SHAIKH KHALID

ceived Mr Al Jubeir, in the presence of Dr Al Zayani.

The two sides reviewed the historic solid relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, hailing their development in all fields. They also affirmed their keenness to continue co-ordination and co-operation regarding various issues in all international forums.

They exchanged viewpoints on ways to strengthen the GCC process and discussed the latest developments in the region as well as supporting all efforts to enhance regional and interna-

tional peace and security.

National Security Advisor, Royal Guard Commander Major General His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa received at his majlis yesterday Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid, Dr Al Zayani and Bahraini ambassadors abroad.

Major-General HH Shaikh Nasser thanked the ambassadors taking part in the forum for their efforts to serve Bahrain and promote its international status.

He said Bahrain, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the support of His Royal Highness Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, represents a pioneering model in foreign policy that is based on the principles of respect, positive cooperation, no interference in other countries' internal affairs, emphasising the kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity, protecting its security and defending its interests.

Verdict date set in 'stabbing neighbour' case

TDI | Manama

The First High Criminal Court will pronounce its judgement in the case involving a Bahraini man who's accused of attempting to kill his neighbour in Muharraq Governorate, on January 28.

As reported earlier, the defendant is accused of stabbing the victim several times over a dispute about a parking spot in the neighbourhood.

According to court files, the incident took place on February 12, 2019, in Galali, a town that is located few hundred metres to the east of Bahrain International Airport.

The suspect was reportedly arrested on the same day.

Chief Prosecutor Adnan Fakhro announced back then that the Public Prosecution had completed its investigation into the case.

The results of the investigation revealed that the suspect stabbed the victim several times using a kitchen knife.

Mr Fakhro earlier explained that the Prosecution was initially notified by Samahej Police Station, which arrested the stabber

“The Prosecution interrogated the suspect and heard his statements, before ordering his detention until the date of the trial.”

MR FAKHRO

and facilitated shifting the victim to the hospital, where he recovered from his wounds.

In a statement issued one day following the incident, the Chief Prosecutor revealed: “The Prosecution has moved to the crime scene and inspected it.

“Testimonies of the victim and eyewitnesses were heard, and a coroner was assigned to examine the victim and the knife used to commit the crime and the fingerprints on it.

“The Prosecution interrogated the suspect and heard his statements, before ordering his detention until the date of the trial.”

According to Mr Fakhro, the investigations revealed that the accused had the intention to kill

the victim, as he prepared a knife for this purpose and monitored the victim while the latter was walking on the public road.

“He stabbed him several times, which led to his falling on the ground. The accused then continued to stab the victim with the intention of killing him.

“He later fled the scene and the victim was rushed to the hospital where he received treatment,” Mr Fakhro added.

The suspect denied the accusations, claiming that he was attacked by the victim, who the suspect alleged was threatening him (the suspect) using a knife and a fist fight broke out before every walked to separate destination.

However, an eyewitness informed the prosecutors that he saw the suspect stabbing the victim while the latter was on the floor.

The witness also informed that the suspect fled the scene and left the victim bleeding on the floor.

On July 9, the court ordered to conduct a mental evaluation of the suspect to determine if he was responsible for his actions.

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Tributes pour in for 'great artist'

Manama

His Majesty's Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and Royal Charity Organisation (RCO) board of trustees' Chairman His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa directed to take care of the orphaned children of Bahraini actor Ali Al Gharir who passed away.

RCO Secretary-General Dr Mustapha Al Sayyed conveyed heartfelt condolences of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa to the actor's family, friends and fans.

"Based on the directives of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the organisation took all required measures to take care of the actor's children," said Dr Sayyed.

He said the directives of HH Shaikh Nasser came as a homage to the actor who featured



Large number of people attended the funeral of Ali Al Gharir.

in many art productions and brought joy to viewers and listeners of all age categories and served Bahraini society through his roles.

He prayed to Allah the Almighty to bless the deceased with mercy and give his bereaved family, friends and fans solace and fortitude.

Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf have lost an outstanding and prolific artist whose fine morals, distinctive performances, and brilliant work have marked Bah-

rain Radio and Television, the information minister has said over the demise of Ali Al Gharir. "Through his numerous comic, dramatic, theatrical and cin-



Ali Al Gharir

ematic works, he put for years and across countries smiles on the faces of his fans and brought joy to many people," Ali bin Mohammed Al Romaihi said as he mourned Al Gharir who passed away following a heart attack.

"His life was a wealth of creative work, generous efforts and deep love for Bahrain. We pray Allah the almighty to rest his soul in eternal peace and to grant his family and fans fortitude and solace."

Drug case verdict set

Defendant accused of possessing, selling hashish

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court will announce its verdict today against a sexagenarian man, who is accused of peddling hashish and narcotics.

The defendant was accused by the Public Prosecution on July 30, 2019, of possessing hashish and narcotics for the purpose of selling.

The details of the case showed that the defendant was

arrested after the Anti-Narcotics Department within the Interior Ministry received a tip-off.

When arrested at his residence, more than one kilogram of hashish was found in the man's possession, in addition to BD10,000 in cash that was hidden inside a safe.

The police also found more than one kilogram of methamphetamine (Shabu) packed

The defendant eventually confessed during the interrogations after he was cornered with evidences.



PROSECUTORS

in six glass bottles, a delicate scale used to measure drugs

and rolling papers.

When the police discovered drugs, money and instruments used to consume drugs at the defendant's house, the latter lost his conscious and was rushed to the hospital, where he received the necessary medical treatment.

However, when he woke up, the defendant denied having any relation to the seized drugs. Additionally, he denied being

present during the time the police searched his house and confiscated the drugs and the money.

He also claimed that the foreign currency found at home was supposed to be used while travelling abroad.

The defendant eventually confessed during the interrogations after he was cornered with evidences, according to Prosecutors.

BD23,000 in compensation for accident victim's family

TDT | Manama

The High Civil Court has ordered a driver and an insurance company to jointly pay BD23,000 to the family of a man killed in a road accident.

The deceased died following a road accident involving the driver, whose car was insured by the company and his wife and children filed a complaint against the driver and the insurance company.

The family of the victim demanded BD30,000 as well as 10 per cent interest on top of the amount.

The Civil Court ruled in their favour after the Lower Criminal Court convicted the driver of causing the death of the man.

Teaching innovation using LEGO modelling stressed at workshop

● Problems were analysed in terms of inputs, processes and outputs within a conceptual framework for problem analysis.

Manama

The use of LEGO to teach innovation through problems solving and operations analysis has been highlighted in a workshop organised by the Innovation and Technology Management Department in the Arabian Gulf University (AGU).

Scientific issues in the university were reviewed, such as operations related to registration procedures, financials, information systems, services, human resources and the educational process, were addressed in the workshop for PhD students.

Problems were analysed in terms of inputs, processes and outputs within a conceptual framework for problem analysis.

Dr Utz Dornberger from the University of Leipzig, Germany, presented the theoretical framework and concepts for



Dr Utz Dornberger led the workshop.

formulating the problem and its related processes, as well as the results and recommendations resulting from the analysis of operations.

AGU's Innovation and Technology Management Department Head Dr Odeh Al Jayyousi explained that the Department is keen on developing the methods of learning through case studies and problem solving.

He clarified that in the process, the problem is identified, then a mini-model is developed to solve it. A product is developed to be patented and small and sophisticated companies are established to support the development process.

The participants, divided into work groups, built a model for the problem using LEGO toys,

as the inputs, processes and outputs were determined after identifying the problem and its interrelations with the different parties.

The participants expressed appreciation for this method of learning because it helps to portray the problem in practice, strive to simplify processes, understand obstacles, and develop innovative solutions to problems through dialogue, brainstorming and active learning.

This method of learning is followed in several fields, including simulation, process engineering, logistics operations management, project management, problem solving and team building, creative thinking and operations analysis.

King Fahd Causeway records highest number of travellers

Damman

The King Fahd Causeway has recorded the highest number of travellers since its opening, with 131,000 people crossing in one day, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Sunday.

The previous highest number was 129,437 passengers. The spokesman for the Eastern Province Passports Department, Col Mualla Marzouq Al Otaibi, said movement was achieved smoothly in co-operation with related sectors.

He added that the increased flow of travellers has not affected security aspects or the speed of processing paperwork at the crossing.

During the mid-year school leave, Bahrain becomes the top destination for people in Saudi Arabia, especially the Eastern Province.

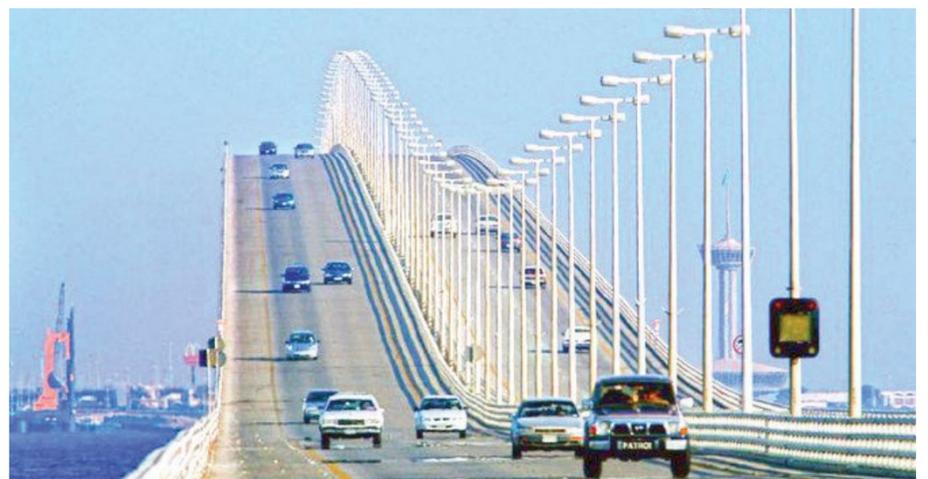
This is due to several factors, including Bahrain's proximity, and the many events and shopping offers targeting visitors from Saudi Arabia.

The causeway connecting the two countries was opened in

November 1986, and has contributed to expanding their commercial exchanges.

The bridge cost \$564 million and took more than four years to build.

Last year, the National Programme to Support the Management of Projects in Public Entities and the King Fahd Causeway Authority signed a memorandum of understanding to raise the efficiency of the KFCA's facility and asset management, as well as its overall operation and maintenance practices.



The Causeway connecting Saudi Arabia and Bahrain was opened in November 1986.

WORLD

Exiled Morales says will create Bolivia militias if he returns



Ex-president Evo Morales, exiled in Argentina, was the first indigenous leader of Bolivia

La Paz



The first indigenous leader of Bolivia, Morales resigned in November under pressure from opposition demonstrators who deemed his re-election to be fraudulent

Exiled former Bolivia president Evo Morales says he will call for the introduction of popular local militias similar to those in Venezuela if he returns home.

In a recording played Sunday on a Bolivia's Radio Kawaschum Coca (RKC) -- owned by the coca planters union to which he belongs -- Morales repeated his belief that he had been the victim of "a coup".

He first took refuge in Mexico, but is now in Argentina.

Morales said it had been a "colossal mistake" for his government not to have "plan B" in the face of the right-wing opposition that led to him fleeing.

He said he intends to return to Bolivia when campaigning for May 3 elections starts, but he risks arrest as prosecutors have issued several warrants against him.

"Before long, if I return to Bolivia, we will have to organize popular armed militias, as Venezuela has done," Morales told RKC.

He confirmed to Reuters that the recording was genuine, but added that he did not want people to arm themselves

with guns.

Morales later tweeted that indigenous peasant movements had defended themselves in the past.

"In some regions it was called a communal guard; In other times: militias. Now, union police or union security. All within the framework of our uses and customs, and respecting the Constitution," he tweeted.

In Venezuela, about 3.2 million civilians belong to a Militia created by former president Hugo Chavez, an ally of Morales and mentor of the country's current socialist President Nicolas Maduro.

Philippines on alert as volcano spews ash, lava

Talisay City | Philippines

Lava and broad columns of ash illuminated by lightning spewed from a volcano south of the Philippine capital yesterday, grounding hundreds of flights as authorities warned of a possible "explosive eruption".

Fine grit weighed down trees and turned roads into muddy messes across the region surrounding the Taal volcano, which burst to life Sunday and has forced over 20,000 people to seek refuge in evacuation centres, a provincial governor said.

Geologists said the volcano remained active, spurting red-hot lava some 500 metres (1,600 feet) into the air from new cracks that have opened in its northern flank, as accompanying earthquakes rattled the area.

"We are really scared of what might happen to us... that our house might collapse in a strong earthquake and that we'll all be killed by falling debris," said Bienvenido Musa, aged 56.

"Who wouldn't be scared? That's why I decided to send my family to an evacuation centre."

Taal is a tourist attraction that sits in a picturesque lake, yet is also one of the most active volcanoes in a nation where earthquakes and eruptions are a frightening and destructive part of life.

The Philippines sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide deep below the Earth's surface.

Schools in the region around Taal, some government offices in Manila and the Philippine Stock Exchange were closed as authorities issued warnings against breathing the ash.

Stores quickly sold out of dust



A volcanic lighting caused by eruption is seen over Tagaytay City, Cavite province, Philippines

masks, which health officials said could help protect against potentially harmful effects of the powder-like soot.

"I'll just stay at home and tie a handkerchief around my face. I think that's OK," Manila resident Menchie Claveria said, after attempting to buy a mask.

Limited flight operations resumed mid-Monday at Manila's main international airport, nearly a day after authorities halted them due to the safety risk volcanic ash poses to planes.

However, travellers booked on over 240 cancelled flights still faced delays at Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"I'm disappointed because this (delay) means additional expense for me and it's tiring to wait," said stranded traveller Joan Diocaras, a 28-year-old Filipino who works in Taiwan.

"But there's nothing we can do."

The eruption began with an explosion of superheated steam and rock, but by early Monday



Scenes from the City

"fountains" of lava had been spotted on Taal, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

Stunning lightning shows have periodically played out above the volcano in a little-understood phenomenon that has been attributed to static electricity.

Authorities raised the volcano alert level to its second-highest on Sunday, saying an "explosive eruption" could happen in "hours to days".

Musicians 'play Ghosn' by squeezing into instrument cases in web craze

Tokyo

Yamaha has warned musicians in Japan against stuffing themselves into their instrument cases to mimic the escape technique allegedly used by fugitive ex-tycoon Carlos Ghosn.

Ghosn, who faces financial misconduct charges in Japan, managed to slip past authorities at the end of December reportedly by smuggling himself on board a plane inside an audio equipment box.

The 65-year-old has refused to shed light on how he ghosted out of Japan to Lebanon, but that has not stopped a string of internet users "playing Ghosn" by posing in cases usually meant to protect big instruments.

In one picture posted to Twitter, a young woman curled up inside a padded green harp case, while another post appeared to show somebody standing in a double bass gig bag.

The stunts have not chimed with Japanese instrument man-



A baby was placed into a guitar case as the 'playing Ghosn' craze swept Japan

ufacturer Yamaha, however, who sounded a note of caution warning people against the trend.

"There have been a large number of tweets showing people climbing into large instrument cases," tweeted Yamaha Wind



WSJ has obtained a photo of the audio-equipment case used by Carlos Ghosn to sneak out of Japan. The case has holes drilled in the bottom so Ghosn could breathe.

Stream, the company's account for information on wind instruments.

"To avoid the possibility of a tragic accident, please do not do this... Musical instrument and audio equipment cases are designed to hold musical instruments and audio equipment. Please use them correctly."

Ghosn, arrested on financial misconduct charges in 2018, jumped bail and fled in mysterious circumstances to Lebanon, where he gave a rambling press conference last week.

The Wall Street Journal reported that he was snuck on to a private jet in Osaka in a large case for audio equipment, which was later found at the back of the cabin.

The newspaper cited unnamed sources

close to the investigation in Turkey as saying that holes had been drilled into the container to ensure the businessman could breathe.

The report was accompanied by a picture of a large black case which The Wall Street Journal claimed was the one used by Ghosn.



False alarm sets off nuclear scare in Canada

AFP | Montreal

An alert signaling an incident at a major nuclear power plant near Toronto in Canada was sent in error to millions of residents Sunday, causing a scare and prompting calls for an investigation.

The emergency alert went out shortly before 7:30 am (1230 GMT). Though intended for residents living within a 10-kilometer (six-mile) radius of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, it went to all residents

in Ontario province.

About an hour later, the Ontario Power Generation company that manages the nuclear plant announced on Twitter that the alert was issued by mistake.

"There is NO active nuclear situation taking place at the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station," it said.

"The previous alert was issued in error. There is no danger to the public or environment."

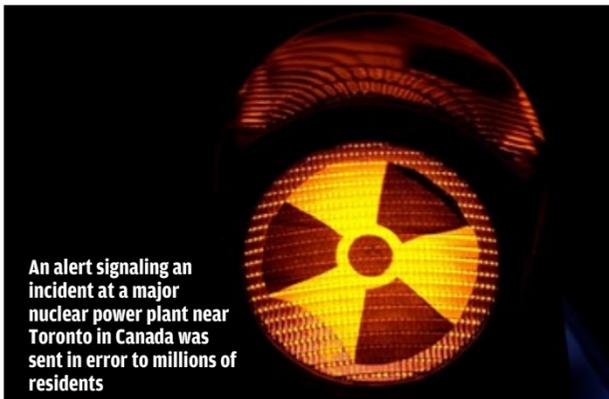
The Ontario provincial government apologized, saying the alert was issued during a routine

training exercise.

"The Government of Ontario sincerely apologizes for raising public concern and has begun a full investigation to determine how this error happened," Solicitor General Sylvia Jones said.

One of the world's largest nuclear power plants, the Pickering facility is located about 50 kilometers east of Toronto, Canada's most populous city, with three million inhabitants.

Several local officials, including Pickering mayor Dave Ryan, immediately demanded an ex-



An alert signaling an incident at a major nuclear power plant near Toronto in Canada was sent in error to millions of residents

planation of the incident.

"Like many of you, I was very troubled to have received that emergency alert this morning," Ryan said on Twitter.

"While I am relieved that there was no actual emergency, I am upset that an error such as this occurred. I have spoken to the province and am demanding that a full investigation take place," he said.

Toronto mayor John Tory also called for a probe, saying area residents had been "unnecessarily alarmed by this event."

Two WWII bombs made safe in Germany



Experts made safe two WWII bombs in Dortmund after the evacuation of around 14,000 people

● **Two unexploded bombs weighing 250 kilogrammes (550 pounds) each, one British and the other American, were found and made safe**

Berlin

Two World War II-era bombs were made safe in the western German city of Dortmund after around 14,000 people were evacuated, the city said Sunday.

Officials there warning on Saturday that unexploded bombs dropped by Allied forces during the war might be buried in four sites in a heavily populated part of the city centre.

Workers had detected

anomalies during construction work, they announced on the city's official Twitter.

Two unexploded bombs weighing 250 kilogrammes (550 pounds) each, one British and the other American, were found and made safe. Searches for another two suspected bombs turned up nothing.

The precautions included the evacuation of two hospitals and the interruption of rail traffic.

The discovery of World War II bombs is not uncommon in Germany.

Last September a 250-kilo bomb was made safe in Hannover, with 15,000 people evacuated.

And in Frankfurt, in 2017, some 65,000 people were evacuated when a 1.4 tonne bomb was found, the largest such operation since the end of the war in Europe in 1945.

Ex-pope rejects opening up priesthood to married men

Rome

Former pope Benedict XVI has publicly urged his successor Pope Francis not to open the Catholic priesthood up to married men, in a plea that Sunday stunned Vatican experts.

The ex-pontiff, who retired in 2013, issued the defence of clerical celibacy in a book written with arch-conservative Cardinal Robert Sarah, extracts of which were published in exclusive by France's *Le Figaro*.

"I cannot keep silent!" Benedict wrote in the book, which follows an extraordinary meeting of bishops from the Amazonian at the Vatican last year that recommended the ordination of married men in certain circumstances.

The pope emeritus, 92, and Sarah from Guinea weighed in on the controversial question of whether or not to allow "viri probati" -- married "men of proven virtue" -- to join the priesthood.

Francis is currently considering allowing it in remote locations, such as the Amazon, where communities seldom have Mass due to a lack of priests, and is expected to publish his decision in the coming weeks.

The pair asked the whole Church not to be "swayed" by "bad pleas, theatrics, diabolical



Former Pope Benedict, (R) has weighed in on the controversial question of whether or not to allow married "men of proven virtue" to join the priesthood

lies, fashionable errors that want to devalue priestly celibacy".

"It is urgent, necessary, that everyone, bishops, priests and laity, let themselves be guided once more by faith as they look upon the Church and on priestly celibacy that protects her mystery," they wrote.

They warned of priests "confused by the incessant questioning of their consecrated celibacy".

"The conjugal state concerns man in his totality, and since the service of the Lord also requires the total gift of man, it does not seem possible to realise the two vocations simultaneously," Benedict wrote.

Sarah insisted that while celibacy can be "a trial" it is also "a liberation".

'Serious breach'

Benedict, who was the first pontiff to resign in almost 600 years, at first withdrew to a life of quiet contemplation in the Vatican, but has increasingly begun to speak out on key Catholic issues.

He and Sarah insisted their plea was not a "political manoeuvre" or "power game".

But Vatican experts expressed astonishment that the retired pope would speak out on such a sensitive topic.

"Benedict XVI is really not breaking his silence because he (and his entourage) never felt bound to that promise. But this is a serious breach," Massimo Faggioli, who writes for *La Croix*, said on Twitter.

Plea for New Zealand to house fire-threatened koalas



Koalas and their habitats have been hit hard by Australia's devastating bushfires Wellington

Thousands of people have signed a petition for koalas to be introduced to New Zealand to escape Australia's devastating bush fires, but the proposal has been given the thumbs down by officials.

A group calling itself the Koala Relocation Society said koalas were "functionally extinct in Australia" but could thrive in New Zealand which has nearly 30,000 hectares planted in eucalypts.

There have been estimates of up to a billion koalas and other animals affected by the fires raging across Australia and there are concerns about how the survivors will cope given the loss of vegetation.

As of midday Monday, the online petition had 7,500 signatures, but a spokesman for Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told Television New Zealand that the government's focus was on helping to get the fires under control so koalas "can stay in their natural habitat".

Historic German island is nursery for North Sea seals

Helgoland | Germany

The birthplace of Germany's national anthem and a practice bombing range for British airmen after World War II, Helgoland island in the North Sea turns cuddly at the turn of the year as grey seals arrive to give birth.

The Jordsand society, dedicated to preserving North Sea coastal life, has counted more than 520 births since November.

Dozens of tourists come each day to see the white-furred seal pups hop around the beach during the whelping season that lasts into January.

"They're so close and so live-

ly. I often watch them on TV, but it's much more exciting to come here," said Karin, who had made a long trip to the island, also spelled Heligoland in English, from Essen in western Germany.

But two local rangers and Jordsand volunteers must keep the excited fans at a distance of at least 30 metres (100 feet).

Adult seals can grow as large as 300 kilogrammes (660 pounds) and won't hesitate to bite if they feel threatened.

"Sometimes, the tourists forget the restrictions and get too close.

If the seals get

Adult seals can grow as large as 300 kilogrammes (660 pounds) and won't hesitate to bite if they feel threatened.

too used to people, that has negative consequences in summer," said ranger Ute Pausch.

"They'll want to play in the water and they can injure swimmers."

Wooden boardwalks have been set up to corral the tourists during whelping season.

The challenge has become all the greater as seal numbers have

grown in response to rising water temperatures.

Researchers say climate change is behind waters growing 1.6 degrees Celsius (2.9 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer in the past 45 years.

Now, "the seals are more and more numerous, I think it's because there's more food around," said Elmar Ballstaedt, who works for the Jordsand society.

But potential negative effects of global warming could one day outweigh the bonanza for the sea-dwell-

ing mammals, he warned.

"We're at sea level here. If the water rises, we'll certainly have new challenges to overcome," Ballstaedt said.

In the nearer term, the seal year is just getting started on Helgoland.

After three weeks nursing with their mothers, the pups are left to fend for themselves in the North Sea.

But they return to the island in the spring to moult -- and to take another turn in front of crowds of tourists and photographers.



Grey seals come to Helgoland island in the North Sea to give birth

Pakistan court annuls Musharraf's death sentence

● The prosecution now has the option to file a new case against Musharraf

Lahore | Pakistan

A Pakistan court yesterday annulled the death sentence handed to former military ruler Pervez Musharraf, ruling that the special court which had found him guilty of treason last year was unconstitutional, a government prosecutor told AFP.

The original ruling had marked the first time a former leader of the armed forces had faced such a sentence for treason in Pakistan, where the military



A High Court in Lahore ruled Pervez Musharraf's death sentence 'illegal'

maintains strong influence and senior officers are often considered immune from prosecution.

It caused a wave of controversy, with Musharraf -- exiled in

Dubai -- slamming it as a "vendetta" and the military expressing its disappointment.

A High Court in the eastern city of Lahore ruled it "illegal"

on Monday.

"The filing of the complaint, the constitution of the court, the selection of the prosecution team are illegal, declared to be illegal... And at the end of the day the full judgment has been set aside," the prosecutor representing the government, Ishtiaq A. Khan, told AFP.

"Yes, he is a free man. Right now there is no judgment against him any longer," Khan added.

Musharraf's lawyer, Azhar Siddique, also told media outside the court in Lahore that it has "nullified everything".

The prosecution now has the option to file a new case against Musharraf with the approval of the federal Cabinet.

The treason trial -- which began in 2013 and is just one of several involving Musharraf -- centred on his decision to

suspend the constitution and impose emergency rule in 2007. Musharraf first took power after ousting prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup in 1999.

A cigar-smoking, whiskey-drinking moderate, the general became a key US ally in the "war on terror" after the September 11 attacks and escaped at least three Al-Qaeda assassination attempts during his nine years in office.

His rule faced no serious challenges until he tried to sack the Supreme Court chief justice in March 2007, sparking nationwide protests and months of turmoil that led to the imposition of emergency rule.

After the December 2007 assassination of former prime

minister Benazir Bhutto, the national mood plunged further and Musharraf was left increasingly isolated by the crushing losses suffered by his allies in February 2008 elections.

He finally resigned in August 2008 in the face of impeachment proceedings by the new governing coalition and went into exile.

Musharraf returned to Pakistan in 2013 in an attempt to contest elections, but was barred from taking part in the polls and from leaving the country as a barrage of legal cases mounted.

The travel ban against him was finally lifted in 2016, and he travelled to Dubai for medical treatment, where he has been ever since.

The treason case against him was first launched by his old foe Sharif in 2013.

Thai royal motorcades will no longer shut down Bangkok

AFP | Bangkok

Royal motorcades will no longer completely shut down Bangkok's roads, a rare concession by the unsailable Thai king to public opinion.

King Maha Vajiralongkorn, 67, sits at the apex of Thai power and -- alongside senior royals -- is protected by a draconian defamation law, which makes public scrutiny of the family near impossible inside the kingdom.

Police routinely close down major roads when the royal family passes, adding serious delay on the congested streets of Bangkok and heaping frustration onto commuters.

Thais in recent months have taken to Twitter and Facebook to air their irritation over road closures believed to be linked to



Police routinely closed down major roads in Bangkok when the royal family passed, adding serious delay on the congested streets

the royal family's travels.

The hashtag #Royalmotorcade trended last year on Thai Twitter, drawing tens of thousands of mentions.

Late Sunday government spokeswoman Narumon Pinyosinwat said on Facebook that the king "has acknowledged

the traffic problem and is concerned for the people".

Roads will no longer be completely shut down, according to a police video she posted detailing the changes, with officers ordered to use orange cones instead to designate a pathway for travelling royals.

The other side of the road can also be used by motorists and pedestrians.

"Long live the King," she added in her Facebook post.

Police did not respond to requests for comment.

The new guidelines are "a good sign" of a monarch responding to public concerns, said political analyst Titipol Phakdeewanich.

"It could make people feel more connected to the institution of the monarchy and show that the monarchy is not ignoring them," he added.

Vajiralongkorn inherited one of the world's richest monarchies when he ascended the throne in 2016 following the death of his father.

He was officially crowned last May in an elaborate three-day coronation ceremony.

'French Spider-Man' scales Total tower in support of pension strikes

Reuters | Paris

Alain Robert, the free climber dubbed the "French Spider-Man", yesterday scaled the Tour Total, a 48-storey skyscraper in Paris, to demonstrate support for workers striking against the government's pension reform plans.

Robert, 57, stood with both arms aloft after reaching the summit of the 187-metre (613-foot) high tower, which stands in the French capital's business district, La Defense.

He has climbed more than 100 structures, including the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and the world's tallest building, the Burj al Khalifa in Dubai. This is the ninth time he has climbed the Total tower. Robert often climbs without



Alain Robert

permission and has been arrested on numerous occasions. He climbs without a harness, using only his bare hands, a pair of climbing shoes, and a bag of powdered chalk to wipe off the sweat.

For more than a month, France has been mired in strikes and protests over President Emmanuel Macron's push to streamline the pension system.

Jessica Mulroney, Meghan Markle's right-hand woman



Jessica Mulroney (pictured May 2018) has been best friends with Meghan Markle since 2011

New York

Babysitter, stylist, confidante -- Jessica Mulroney is Meghan Markle's right-hand woman, but she's managed to fly relatively under the radar.

According to British media, the 39-year-old Canadian has been watching baby Archie, Meghan and Prince Harry's son, while the couple went back to England to make their bombshell announcement that they were quitting their frontline royal duties.

The two women met in 2011, while Meghan was living in Toronto to film the series "Suits." Nearly the same age (Meghan

is 38), they soon discovered numerous shared interests, including yoga, fashion and travel.

Rather than straining the friendship, Meghan Markle's entrance into the royal family appears to have brought the two women even closer.

Mulroney, a professional stylist who has worked with singer Shania Twain and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's wife Sophie, played a key role in planning the royal wedding, according to the magazine Vanity Fair, citing anonymous sources.

Her involvement went well beyond just clothing, though -- Meghan relied on her friend for a range of details, and Mul-



Jessica Mulroney (front) and Kate Middleton arrive at the wedding ceremony of Meghan Markle and Prince Harry, in May 2018

rone's two sons and daughter were pageboys and a flower girl in the May 2018 ceremony.

Always sharply attired, her sapphire blue dress caused a sensation at the royal wedding in St. George's chapel, where Mulroney was one of the best-situated guests, directly in the cameras' field of view.

Typically, the McGill University alum favors bright colors, tailored silhouettes and pantsuits.

Born Jessica Brownstein, Mulroney married television host Ben Mulroney, who is also the son of a former Canadian prime

minister.

Mulroney and her sisters-in-law co-founded the non-profit The Shoebox Project in 2011, the same year she met Meghan. The charity organizes donations of feminine health and beauty goods to low-income and homeless women in Canada.

'A bit of privacy'

Since the wedding, the mother of three has been in high demand. She regularly appears on the US television show "Good Morning America" on ABC.

She has also been hired as a stylist by US actress, screenwriter and producer Mindy Kaling (known for "The Office" and "Late Night").

In the clearest sign of her growing popularity, Mulroney has also nearly quadrupled her Instagram audience. Her account currently has more than 360,000 followers.

No reference is made to her friendship with Meghan Markle on ABC, nor on the Canadian talk show "Cityline", where Mulroney has been a fashion correspondent for years.

Mulroney appears to take visible precautions not to give the impression that she benefits from her relationship with Meghan.

Before Harry and Meghan made their relationship official, Jessica Mulroney shared

many photos of herself with the now-Duchess of Sussex on her Instagram.

But since the couple's marriage, Mulroney has been much more assiduous. She only posted one message after the wedding: "Proud friend, proud mom," she wrote.

"Every person has to have a bit of privacy in their life," Mulroney told Harper's Bazaar in March 2019, the only interview she has given since the wedding.

"There are things I'll never talk about for sure," she said, referring to her friendship with Meghan.

Mulroney has instead taken a more oblique approach. In August, following backlash that Meghan and Harry took a private jet to visit the singer Elton John on the French Riviera, she slammed so-called "critics" who attacked her friend.

"Shame on you, you racist bullies," she wrote on Instagram, without going into further detail.

And on Thursday, just after Harry and Meghan's announcement, Mulroney took to Instagram once more to share a quote from the black singer Gina Carey in an allusion to recent developments and a show of support for her friend.

"A strong woman looks a challenge in the eye and gives it a wink," she posted.



Weinstein's trial: The idea of justice and the trouble with being too 'woke'

The global reckoning on the abuse of power is extraordinary but without proof, allegations can have damaging consequences

JANINE DI GIOVANNI .

The American public cannot get enough of the chronicles of Harvey Weinstein. The once powerful film producer with over 80 Oscars to his name is currently facing accusations of sexual misconduct by more than 80 women and has been charged with rape and sexual assault. A fallen man though he might be, having gone from Hollywood royalty to pariah since accusations began coming to light in 2017, there was only one story that grabbed as much attention this week as the killing of Iranian commander Qassem Suleimani in Baghdad by a US drone strike, and that was Weinstein's trial.

Just as America was waking up to the news of Suleimani, Weinstein was hit with new sexual assault charges in Los Angeles from two women. One woman claimed he raped her, another said he forced his way into her hotel room and dragged her by the hair to the bathroom.

In the intervening days, news of the Iranian ballistic missiles that rained down on US military facilities in response to Suleimani's killing vied for space with the #MeToo protests staged outside a New York city courtroom that Weinstein limped into, bent forward on a walker for support, to face sexual assault charges.

There is no doubt that Weinstein's reckoning has opened up a new era - that of the #MeToo campaign - and this will ensure that powerful men cannot get away by using their position to prey on the vulnerable. Even as prosecutors are trying to establish patterns in his behaviour that suggest he might be a predatory male, Weinstein is claiming that he was simply having consensual sex with every one of those women. Yet not one actor has stood up



Film producer Harvey Weinstein arrives at New York Criminal Court for his sexual assault trial in New York City.

to vouch for his character. Over time, he has been painted as an odious and terrifying bully who deserves to go down. And what seems very likely at this point is that he will pay for allegedly destroying the lives of many while he was virtually running Hollywood. But while Weinstein and his ilk might deserve what is coming to them, it is also important to remember that there is a darker side to the #MeToo campaign, one that is not popular to point

out: sexual harassment allegations can be as subjective as they are serious. It is, of course, important that women who felt powerless are having their say but it has opened the door for some women - and also men - who have an axe to grind to accuse others of misconduct without any proof. False accusations can be career-ending. Recently, with Weinstein again in the news, other stories have come on the back of the producer's trial.

One young male editor in a premier New York publishing house told me his tale about dating a female colleague whom he later rejected, not wanting a serious relationship. Spurned, she went to the company's human resources department and filed a sexual misconduct case against him. The male editor was dismissed despite his protests and assertions of innocence while the woman got promoted. Another story was that of a

South Africa's leaders are facing imp

STEPHEN RAKOWSKI

South Africa is on the brink of collapse. After years of corruption, mismanagement and poor investment, the fruits of the once-promising country have turned rancid. As the country's leaders grapple with the impending disaster on their hands, tensions are boiling over. On January 10, Tito Mboweni, the finance minister, launched a series of tweets underscoring the gravity of the situation: "If you cannot effect deep structural economic reforms, then game over! Stay as you are and you are downgraded to Junck [sic] Status!! The consequences are dire. Your choice."

While his direct audience was unclear, the message was clear. More than a decade of worsening economic indicators has wreaked havoc on the African giant. From eye-popping unemployment of over 29 per cent to stupefying levels of violent crime, South Africa is sinking ever further into the muck.

To complicate matters, the country's once-reliable and cheap electricity has become the single biggest threat to the economy. Eskom, the state power utility, has struggled to keep the lights

on for many months, as one plant breakdown after another have made the electrical grid woefully expensive and unstable.

Eskom authorities have turned to enacting forced blackouts to prevent total system collapse, hitting the economy as businesses and households alike have scrambled for more expensive backup options like diesel generators - or risk staying in the dark. In December, Eskom was forced to shed so much power from the grid that even vital mining operations in the country were temporarily halted, impacting the country's most critical sector.

Amid the blackouts, Pretoria has thrown billions of dollars at the problem, but to little avail. This is because constructing new plants and improving the existing decrepit infrastructure will take several years, meaning that South Africa's fight to keep the lights on will continue to harm the economy for the foreseeable future. The consequences will be felt well beyond the electrical sector as Moody's Financial Services, the last of the big three credit agencies to not downgrade South Africa to junk status, will review its position in November. It is likely that Moody's will downgrade.



Tito Mboweni, South Africa's finance minister, left, is troubled by the economic situation his country is in.

This will force fund managers with investment-grade mandates to dump their South African assets and make others rethink their own positions in the country, worsening already high investment outflows from the country.

Eskom's electricity woes have sucked up several billions of dollars and significant government

attention. Much of this money has been financed by debt, which will increase the burden on the country's taxpayers in the years ahead as the true costs of debt repayment come due. Indeed, significant resources that could have helped address the myriad systemic problems afflicting the country have gone to the putting out of the massive fire that

is Eskom. Yet South Africa's infrastructure is eroding across the board from roads and bridges to rail and the water system. In fact, historic level droughts in 2019 have been exacerbated by the crumbling water infrastructure, meaning that deadly future water crises will be ever more likely. But as Rome burns, South Africa

Over a decade of worsening economic indicators has wreaked havoc on the African giant - and politics seems to be the root cause

1761

The Third Battle of **Panipat** is fought in India between the Afghans under Ahmad Shah Durrani and the Marathas.

1784

American Revolutionary War: Ratification Day, United States - Congress ratifies the Treaty of Paris with Great Britain.

1814

Treaty of Kiel: Frederick VI of Denmark cedes the Kingdom of Norway to Charles XIII of Sweden in return for Pomerania.



1822

Greek War of Independence: Acrocorinth is captured by **Theodoros Kolokotronis** and **Demetrios Ypsilantis**.



It was a heady time that changed mores and values across the country, shaped a new generation of feminists and altered forever the balance between men and women. The trial of Weinstein will echo that era and re-balance the equation between men and women, not just in Hollywood but in every small town in America.

are more aware, yes. But we are also muffled with fear of being inappropriate.

The global reckoning on the abuse of power is extraordinary – and it is empowering. Women will no longer put up with being victims. But my worry is that this can be abused. My other concern is that so many men have now been rendered pariah. Can, and should, figures like actor-director Woody Allen – alleged to have molested his adopted daughter – be forgiven? I am not sure I can ever watch a Kevin Spacey film again. But should we bring people like him back into society?

Here in America, we are going through a massive societal change akin to what happened to this country in the 1960s, at the height of the anti-Vietnam war movement, the sexual revolution and the birth of civil rights.

It was a heady time that changed mores and values across the country, shaped a new generation of feminists and altered forever the balance between men and women. The trial of Weinstein will echo that era and re-balance the equation between men and women, not just in Hollywood but in every small town in America.

journalist bent on going after powerful men in an international government organisation by trying to find a ring of predatory abusers. She found no substantial proof. Yet she specifically targeted those men she considered to be “womanisers” without making the important distinction between rapists and men who woo women. Neither is appetising of course, but while one is illegal, the other is not. The journalist nonetheless succeeded in black-

ening the name of several powerful officials before eventually giving up her campaign for lack of evidence.

This question of how to interpret an inappropriate remark has come into sharp focus here in the US, where political correctness and “woke-ism” – which refers to a perceived awareness of issues concerning social and racial justice – have made it imperative to censor one’s speech before saying anything. Is this good or bad? We

pending disaster

The ANC’s bruising internal battles have stymied critical reforms to jumpstart the economy, prompting outbursts of frustration from officials like the finance minister Mr Mboweni.

having spent much of the past decade looting instead of leading. Nevertheless, they have retained key positions in the current government and devote much of their time toward undermining economic reform and finding ways to unseat Mr Ramaphosa.

The ANC’s bruising internal battles have stymied critical reforms to jumpstart the economy, prompting outbursts of frustration from officials like the finance minister Mr Mboweni. Yet while the short-term consequences are readily obvious to many, the long-term reckoning that South Africa will face is less clear. First and foremost, the country’s lacklustre economy, wracked by recession in recent quarters, is set for only tepid growth for the foreseeable future.

This will make it ever harder for Pretoria to rid itself of a potential debt trap it has gotten itself into, as ever more money will need to service ballooning debt instead of new roads, the health or education sectors, law enforcement, etc. To make matters worse, the terrible and stubborn unemployment situation will underscore for millions of impoverished South Africans operating in the dangerous black-market economy that the country is one

of “haves” and “have nots”. Violent crime will only worsen as millions more are obligated to eke out a bleak existence despite seeing wealth around them.

Consequently, the ever-worsening crime, weak economic growth and collapsing infrastructure will drive up the costs of living and doing business in South Africa. For the country’s high-net worth and skilled individuals, this will prove intolerable. In fact, signs already suggest that emigration of the country’s most productive members has jumped in recent years and data suggests most will never return. This will rob South Africa of its best and brightest, likely disproportionately hurting key sectors of the future like high tech, science and medicine. It will also mean ever-greater budgetary shortfalls as the richest and most mobile of South African society departs for sunnier – and safer – shores.

For a country that started with such promise following the end of the apartheid in 1994, South Africa finds itself in a sorry mess. But as political infighting and Eskom’s woes continue, the chances of South Africa halting its rot will become ever more difficult in the years ahead.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Ten years after an earthquake devastated Haiti, the country has faced one setback after another in its recovery. I’m glad @DHSgov extended TPS for Haitian refugees, & I’ll keep fighting to protect Haitian families in MA & across the country.

@SenWarren

02



Not to break the ‘unity’ or anything, it’s difficult to believe that, if Congress were to come to power they would reverse Modi govt’s 370 move and do away with NPR. Just as they continue to defend Aadhaar and GST. Half-baked ‘solidarity’ can be a method to police the oppressed.

@Shehla_Rashid

03



Many believe that by the Senate giving credence to a trial based on the no evidence, no crime, read the transcripts, “no pressure” Impeachment Hoax, rather than an outright dismissal, it gives the partisan Democrat Witch Hunt credibility that it otherwise does not have. I agree!

@realDonaldTrump

04



After this weekend’s 6.0 earthquake, we continue to pray for our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico. Trump Admin must quickly approve Governor’s request for a Major Disaster Declaration and stop withholding Congressionally appropriated funds to recover from 2017 hurricanes.

@SpeakerPelosi

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

Battle ground...



YENUS S

Last week’s assassination of General Qasim Suleimani, the head of the Iranian Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)’s Quds force, at Bagdad airport by the US drones, has proved beyond that Iraq remained a battleground for the two countries to settle their scores.

It all starts when Iran backed Iraqi militia, the Kataib Hizbollah, launched a missile attack against US military base in the city of Kirkuk, in late December killing an American contractor. The US responded by bombing camps belonging to the militia killing scores. Then came attack on US embassy in Baghdad. The US killed Suleimani for allegedly planning further attacks on US targets.

These chain of events forced Iraqis to request their government end the presence of foreign troops in Iraq, namely the US and Iran. Since the US and Iran, both with antagonistic agenda set foot in Iraq, the confrontation of the two was inevitable, say political pundits.

It is known that the US and Iran forces operate in Iraq either directly or through proxy militias, using Iraqi soil and airspace against the so called Islamic State (IS) terrorist organisation. IS is almost eliminated but still Iraq served as battleground for both in their attempt to dominate the political, military and economy of the country.

The Iraqi public’s demand to expel foreign troops may be successful to some extent when it comes to the US forces. Donald Trump, the US president, has spoken on several occasions of ending troop presence in foreign countries including the Middle East. He declared that during his tenure, he wants to ensure that all soldiers return home. However, his rhetoric does not seem to hold water.

Greg Myer, NPR National security correspondent believes that the presence of US military in Iraq is to prevent resurgence of IS, stabilize Iraq politically and limit Iranian influence. (<https://www.npr.org>, Dec 31, 2019).

Iranian existence in Iraq is manifested by its proxy militias, which it has recruited and most of whom are Iraqis. Most of the Iraqi government establishments appear to be infiltrated by Iranian intelligence personnel and Iraqis loyal to Iran.



These aims have not been successfully attained implying that the evacuation of US soldiers from Iraq appears to take some time, if ever, it happens.

The US has several national interests to take care of in the region including ensuring the smooth flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz where most of world oil supply passes through. The culprit that can hinder this smooth flow of oil seems to be no other country than Iran and its proxies. The US needs to build a strong military against the threats posed by these forces.

When it comes to the expulsion of Iranian soldiers from Iraq, the government will find itself between a hard rock and a stone. There is likely to be a big challenge. Above all, there may not be Iranian foot soldiers in Iraq, or few officers, who are tasked with directing Iraq’s intelligence and security apparatus. Iranian existence in Iraq is manifested by its proxy militias, which it has recruited and most of whom are Iraqis. Most of the Iraqi government establishments appear to be infiltrated by Iranian intelligence personnel and Iraqis loyal to Iran.

These Iraqi militias subscribe to Iran, ready to sacrifice their lives for Iranian cause rather than their motherland and work to keep Iraq under Iranian influence.

During the last few years when the fight against the so-called Islamic State terrorist group (Daesh) was at its climax, Iran sent troops and recruited proxies not only with the intention of defeating the terrorist group but also with the intention of expanding its sectarian agenda and ensure its hegemonic ambitions.

Though the Iraqi government appears to push more on the expulsion of the US from its soil than the Iranian forces, the public needs both ‘interventionists’ what they call them as occupiers to leave Iraq as soon as possible. This issue is likely to trigger conflict between the government and the public.

Unless the US and Iran leave Iraq, it is unlikely to be a stable country and will remain a theatre of war, endangering its security and sovereignty.

business

Focus on cashless economy

CBB presents plan for digital transformation to financial institutions

● The objective of the workshop was to outline and clarify the CBB's proposed digital transformation initiatives

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's digital transformation initiatives got a big boost yesterday with the Kingdom's top bank outlining a strategic plan to gradually shift to a digital system and reduce the use of cash in financial transactions.

The move, in line with the directives of HM King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa to undertake the development of a comprehensive national plan to meet the needs of the digital economy and Artificial Intelligence (AI), was discussed during an awareness workshop on CBB's digital transformation strategy.

The workshop held yesterday at Capital Club Bahrain was attended by Governor Rasheed Al Maraj, CBB executive man-



Governor Rasheed Al Maraj speaking during a workshop on digital transformation strategy at Capital Club Bahrain

agement and over 100 c-suite level representatives from financial institutions across the Kingdom.

The workshop included details of the strategic plan and the CBB's vision for digital transformation in addition to the projects that the CBB intends to implement to introduce the latest electronic payment and settlement products to gradually shift to digital systems and reduce the use of cash in financial transactions, there-

by facilitating the provision of banking services to individuals and institutions.

The objective of the workshop was to outline and clarify the CBB's proposed digital transformation initiatives to financial institutions and to encourage these institutions to accelerate their transition and stay up to date with technological developments to ultimately benefit the national economy and be in line with international best practices.

As part of its digital transformation strategy, the CBB has previously established a Fintech and Innovation Unit, launched a Regulatory Sandbox for financial technology startups and existing financial institutions, and provided a license for digital banks.

The CBB said it will continue its efforts in this field in coordination with the financial sector and provide all facilities to license these new banking services.

UK economy stalls, as Bank of England eyes rate cut



Pressure is growing on the Bank of England to lend the economy a helping hand

● Gross domestic product contracted 0.3 per cent in November

● Manufacturing meanwhile slumped 1.7pc

London

Britain's economy has stalled, official data showed yesterday, as Brexit and political uncertainty contributed to slashing manufacturing output, heaping pressure on the Bank of England to cut interest rates.

Gross domestic product contracted 0.3 per cent in November, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. It grew only 0.1 percent in the three months to the end of November, the ONS added.

Manufacturing meanwhile slumped 1.7pc in November.

Speaking ahead of the data a Bank of England policymaker, Gertjan Vlieghe, hinted at a potential vote in favour of a January cut to the BoE's main interest rate, weighing on the pound Monday.

It followed comments Friday by fellow policymaker Silvana Tenreyro, who said she could support a rate cut from the current 0.75-percent level, if the economy did not strengthen.

And on Thursday, the bank's outgoing governor, Mark Carney, said the monetary policy committee was looking at the merits of near-term stimulus.

As for the latest GDP data, "a poor performance in November was always on the cards given that the uncertainties facing the economy were at a peak with the general election looming and doubts over what would happen on the Brexit front after it had been delayed again from 31 October", noted Howard Archer, chief economic advisor to financial researchers EY ITEM Club.

"It is clear that businesses were cautious in their behaviour while it also appears that consumers were reluctant to spend."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives convincingly won a general election in December that has broken the deadlock over the UK's departure from the European Union.

Britain's parliament last week finally approved Brexit, ending years of arguments that toppled two UK governments.

"We expect the economy to get a lift in the early months of 2020 from a more settled domestic political environment following the Conservatives substantial win... and an easing of near-term Brexit uncertainties as the UK leaves the EU with Johnson's deal on 31 January," said Archer.

Walmart sacks 56 executives in India as part of restructuring



A man pushes shopping trolleys at a Walmart India's Best Price Modern Wholesale store in Jammu

Reuters | New Delhi

Walmart Inc, the world's largest retailer, has fired 56 of its executives in India as it restructures in the country.

The Bentonville, Arkansas-based company currently operates 28 wholesale stores in the Asian country where it sells goods to small shopkeepers, and not to retail consumers.

Eight of the 56 executives fired were in "senior management" roles and the rest from middle or lower management, Krish Iyer, President and CEO of Walmart India said in a statement.

"We are also looking for ways to operate more efficiently, which requires us to review our corporate structure to ensure that we are organised in the right way," Iyer said, adding the fired executives had been offered enhanced severance benefits.

India orders antitrust probe of Amazon, Walmart's Flipkart

Reuters | New Delhi

India ordered an investigation of Amazon.com Inc and Walmart's Flipkart yesterday over alleged violations of competition law in the latest setback for US e-commerce giants operating in the country.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) said it was ordering a wider probe following a review of allegations that Amazon and Flipkart were promoting some "preferred sellers" and in turn hurting business for other, smaller sellers.

Flipkart is "fully compliant" with all laws and is currently reviewing the CCI order, Senior Vice President Rajneesh Kumar said.

Amazon said: "We welcome the opportunity to address allegations made about Amazon; we are confident in our compliance, and will cooperate fully with the CCI."

Amazon boss Jeff Bezos is expected to visit India for potential meetings with government officials this week.

The complaint against the two companies was filed by Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh, a group representing small- and medium-sized businesses. They alleged that several of Amazon and Flipkart's preferred sellers were affiliated with, or controlled by, the companies themselves, either directly or indirectly.

In its 11-page order, the CCI noted four alleged anti-competitive practices: exclusive launch



People move past a hoarding of Amazon India outside a metro rail station in New Delhi, India

of mobile phones by the e-commerce firms, promoting preferred sellers on their websites, deep discounting practices and prioritising some seller listings over others.

"Exclusive launch (of mobile phones) coupled with preferential treatment to a few sellers and the discounting practices create an ecosystem that may lead to an appreciable adverse effect on competition," the order said.

The CCI said its investigation unit should complete the probe within 60 days, but typically such cases have taken far longer. Walmart in 2018 invested \$16 billion to buy a majority stake in India's Flipkart, its biggest ever deal.

The CCI probe will be the latest setback for the U.S. companies that were last year hit with more stringent foreign

investment rules. Some of the allegations reviewed by the CCI have been long levelled against both companies.

Indian brick-and-mortar traders allege Amazon and Flipkart violate the country's foreign investment rules and burn billions of dollars to offer steep discounts that hurt smaller traders. The two companies say they are in compliance with all rules.

In a recent study, the CCI said India's was the fastest growing e-commerce market with revenue this year expected to reach \$120 billion, triple its size in 2017.

"The e-commerce sector is plagued with several issues, any adverse action by the CCI could scuttle the growth of the sector," said Ram Kumar Poornachandran, competition law lead at law firm TT&A.

JPMorgan puts senior credit trader on leave over WhatsApp use - BBG



Reuters

A senior JPMorgan Chase & Co credit trader, Edward Koo, was placed on leave as the bank reviews whether he broke its policies by using WhatsApp group chats with colleagues, Bloomberg reported yesterday.

The discussions included

market chatter and the probe hasn't indicated any improper activity so far, according to the report, which cited people with knowledge of the matter.

The bank hasn't ruled out taking action against other members of the group, Bloomberg reported.

A spokesman for JPMorgan declined to comment.

Indonesia, UAE ink deals worth \$23bn

● To develop a petrochemical plant in West Java

● ADNOC to supply 528,000 tonnes of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) to Pertamina by the end of 2020

● Deals in education, health, agriculture, ports, renewable energy and counter-terrorism

● Plans to establish a sovereign wealth fund

Reuters | Jakarta

Indonesia signed 11 business deals with the United Arab Emirates worth a combined 314.9 trillion rupiah (\$23 billion) covering investment in energy and other sectors, President



Indonesian President Joko Widodo (L) and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed (pictured in July 2019) oversaw the signing of deals worth nearly \$23 billion

Joko Widodo said yesterday. Widodo witnessed the signing of the deals with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Moham-

med Bin Zayed over the weekend during an official visit to Abu Dhabi, the Indonesian president said in a tweet.

Widodo, who began his second term in office in October, is keen for an increase in foreign investment to help create jobs

and boost growth in Southeast Asia's biggest economy, where economic growth has hovered at around 5 per cent for several years.

In the petrochemical and gas sectors, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) signed deals with Indonesian companies PT Pertamina and PT Chandra Asri Petrochemicals, UAE state news agency WAM reported.

It said they included an agreement for ADNOC to supply 528,000 tonnes of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) to Pertamina by the end of 2020.

Pertamina and ADNOC signed a memorandum of understanding to explore the potential development of a petrochemicals complex in Balongan, West Java, ADNOC said in a statement on Monday.

The agreements with the Indonesian firms "will potentially help ADNOC to secure in-market presence in one of Southeast Asia's fastest-growing economies," Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of State and AD-

NOC Group CEO, said in the statement.

Widodo said five agreements were also signed between the governments. They covered education, health, agriculture and counter-terrorism, according to Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi.

Widodo and the crown prince also discussed a plan to establish a sovereign wealth fund, said Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Maritime and Investment Affairs, Luhut Pandjaitan.

Japan's Softbank and the US International Development Finance Corp (IDFC) were also interested in taking part in the fund, a statement from Pandjaitan said.

The UAE would be able to use the fund to invest in the development of Indonesia's proposed new capital in East Kalimantan province on Borneo island.

It is also interested in investing in a property development in Aceh province on the island of Sumatra, Pandjaitan said.

Boeing employees' emails bemoan culture of arrogance

● The emails were contained in some 100 pages of documents dated between 2013 and 2018 and transmitted to US lawmakers by the Seattle-based aviation giant.

● The emails show that Boeing tried to play down the role of its MCAS flight-control system in order both to avoid the costs

● The emails underscore the task awaiting incoming CEO David Calhoun

AFP | New York

Contempt for regulators, airlines and their own colleagues coupled with a casual approach to safety: a series of emails by Boeing employees paint an unflattering portrait of a company culture of "arrogance" imbued with a fixation on cost-cutting.

The emails underscore the task awaiting incoming CEO David Calhoun when he takes the company's reins on Monday, under intense pressure to restore public confidence -- and that of aviation regulators worldwide -- after two fatal crashes of the 737 MAX aircraft.

The emails were contained in some 100 pages of documents dated between 2013 and 2018 and transmitted to US lawmakers by the Seattle-based aviation giant. The messages were seen by AFP after their release Thursday.

Often cutting, dismissive, mocking or cavalier, the messages show that Boeing's current difficulties reach far beyond the 737 MAX, shining a light on a level of dysfunction that seems almost unimaginable for a company that helped democratize air travel -- and which builds the



Boeing employees working on a 737 MAX airplane at a factory in Renton, Washington; production was halted after two fatal crashes, and some employees blame a company culture of 'arrogance'. Inset, incoming CEO David Calhoun

“Would you put your family on a MAX simulator-trained aircraft? I wouldn't”

A MESSAGE SENT IN FEBRUARY 2018, EIGHT MONTHS BEFORE THE FIRST CRASH.

US president's iconic Air Force One airplane.

The emails show that Boeing tried to play down the role of its MCAS flight-control system in order both to avoid the costs involved in having to train pilots on the system in flight simulators and to speed the federal green-lighting of the MAX plane. Investigators singled out the role of the MCAS (the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System) in the fatal crashes of MAX planes flown by Indonesia's Lion Air (October 29, 2018) and Ethiopian Airlines (March 10, 2019).

Those crashes claimed 346 lives and led to the plane's worldwide grounding last March.

"I want to stress the importance of holding firm that there will not be any type of simulator

training required," one Boeing employee messaged a colleague on March 28, 2017, a few months before the MAX received federal certification.

The message went on: "Boeing will not allow that to happen. We'll go face-to-face with any regulator who tries to make that a requirement."

A few months later, the same employee -- a test pilot -- bragged about having "save(d) this company a sick amount of \$\$\$\$."

The names of most of the employees who sent the messages were blacked out.

'I wouldn't'

In 2018, several employees working on the MAX simulators complained of encountering numerous technical difficulties.

"Would you put your family on a MAX simulator-trained aircraft? I wouldn't," said a message sent in February 2018, eight months before the first crash.

"No," a colleague agreed.

Two other employees said they were concerned about the impact on Boeing's image at a time, they said, when the company's leaders seemed obsessed with the idea of gaining ground on Airbus's narrow-body A320neo.

"All the messages are about meeting schedule, not delivering quality," one employee said.

A colleague replied: "We put ourselves in this position by picking the lowest-cost supplier and signing up to impossible schedules."

"Why did the lowest-ranking and most unproven supplier receive the contract? Solely because of the bottom dollar?"

Robert

lawyer representing victims' families from the Ethiopian Airlines crash, said the Boeing culture led to "unnecessary and preventable deaths."

"Excuses will not be heard," he said in a statement on his law firm's website.

'Ridiculous'

The documents also show Boeing employees questioning the competence of the company's engineers.

"This is a joke," an employee wrote in September 2016, in a reference to the MAX. "This airplane is ridiculous."

"Piss poor design," said another, in April 2017.

And yet for decades Boeing was seen as representing the very best in aerospace engineering and design. It developed the 747, nicknamed the "queen of the skies,"

and contributed to the Apollo program that sent man to the moon.

The aerospace company and its huge network of suppliers are goliaths of the US economy.

In June 2018, one employee messaged his own analysis of the problem: "It's systemic. It's culture. It's the fact that we have a senior leadership team that understands very little about the business and yet are driving us to certain objectives" while not "being accountable."

Michel Merluzeau, an analyst with Air Insight Research, said, "Boeing needs to re-examine an operational culture from another era."

Greg Smith, Boeing's interim chief executive officer, insisted that "these documents do not represent the best of Boeing."

In a message to staff sent Friday, he added, "The tone and language of the messages are inappropriate, particularly when used in discussion of such important matters."

Some emails are dismissive of federal regulators, starting with those from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) who approved the MAX.

"There is no confidence that the FAA is understanding what they are accepting," an employee wrote in February 2016.

Nor were airlines spared.

"Now friggin' Lion Air might need a sim(ulator) to fly the MAX, and maybe because of their own stupidity," an employee wrote in June 2017, more than a year before a 737 MAX crashed near Jakarta. "Idiots!"

Yet another employee, this one more somberly, wrote in February 2018: "Our arrogance is (our) pure demise."



Clifford, a US

Gulf shares rise as focus shifts to earnings

● **Nine of eleven Saudi Arabian banks rise**

● **Saudi Aramco closes at 34.8 riyals**

● **Pioneers Holding sees biggest fall since Sept**

Reuters

Gulf stocks traded higher yesterday, extending their rally to a third day, supported by easing US-Iran tensions and ahead of corporate earnings.

The stock markets across the Gulf had fallen sharply on Jan. 8 after Iran retaliated against the U.S. drone strike that killed an Iranian commander.

Saudi Arabia's index rose 0.8 per cent as Arab National Bank jumped 4.9pc and Banque Saudi Fransi advanced 2.7pc.

However, oil giant Saudi Ara-



Traders on the floor of Saudi Stock market (Courtesy of Amazons)

mco slipped 0.1pc to 34.8 riyals (\$9.28). Aramco shares have been volatile amid US-Iran tensions and fell to 34 riyals on Jan. 8, its lowest since trading began on Dec. 11.

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.8pc to 8,441 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 0.6 pc to 5,114 pts
DUBAI	▲ 0.8 pc to 2,776 pts
QATAR	▲ 0.6pc to 10,568 pts
EGYPT	▼ 0.8pc to 13,698 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.1 pc to 1,602 pts

"GCC corporate profits are expected to increase by around 6.5pc this year with profits in Saudi Arabia forecast to be up 7.1pc," said Tarek Fadlallah of Nomura Asset Management Middle East, citing a Marmore Research note.

In Qatar, the main index ended 0.6pc higher as the Gulf's largest lender, Qatar National Bank, increased 1.4pc ahead of its earnings announcement on Tuesday.

Qatar Insurance added 1.7pc following the appointment of Salem Khalaf Al Mannai as its chief executive officer.

Dubai's index gained 0.8pc as Emirates NBD and Dubai Islamic

Bank increased 1.9pc and 1.1pc respectively.

Abu Dhabi's index was up 0.6pc, with First Abu Dhabi Bank gaining 0.7pc and Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank rising 1.3pc.

But, Egypt's blue-chip index slipped 0.8pc after three straight days of gains, with market heavyweight Commercial International Bank Egypt shedding 1.2pc.

Pioneers Holding dropped 7.3pc, its biggest intraday fall since Sept.22. The financial services provider said its board had approved a share-swap ratio set by a financial adviser for increasing stake in five subsidiaries to 90pc.

Egyptian exchange data showed that foreign investors were net sellers.

Stock markets in Kuwait and Oman are closed following the death of Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said and will resume trading on Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively.

We want sustainable oil prices: Saudi

Reuters | Saudi Arabia, Dhahran

Saudi Arabia will work for oil market stability at a time of heightened US-Iranian tension and wants to see sustainable prices and demand growth, the kingdom's energy minister said yesterday.

Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said it was too early to talk about whether the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, a group known as OPEC+, would continue with production curbs set to expire in March.

"As tension remains high in our region, Saudi Arabia will continue to do all it can do to ensure stable oil markets," the minister told an energy conference.

"We would like to have a stable oil market, sustainable growth in terms of demand, sustainable growth in terms of supply," he said, adding that both high and low prices were undesirable. "The worst thing is to have low oil prices that permanently damage the industry."

Oil prices held steady yesterday as the United States and Iran appeared to retreat from the brink of full blown confrontation after a US drone strike



Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud and Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak are seen at the beginning of an OPEC and NON-OPEC meeting in Vienna, Austria

killed an Iranian commander in Baghdad on Jan. 3 and Iran retaliated with missiles launched against US bases in Iraq.

Prince Abdulaziz said the United States was a strategic partner with a big role in international security. "We're leaving it to our friends in the US to conduct themselves in the manner they see fit," he said.

The world's top oil exporter,

Saudi Arabia suffered missile and drone attacks on its oil facilities on Sept. 14 that temporarily halved output.

Washington and Riyadh blamed Iran for the attacks, a charge Tehran denied.

"We have taken every precaution that can be taken," the minister told reporters when asked whether Saudi Arabia had raised security after the recent US and

Iran strikes in Iraq.

He said the kingdom's oil production stands at 9.744 million barrels per day (bpd) in January and would stay at the same level in February.

Iraq's compliance with OPEC cuts improved in December and is looking for full compliance in January, he added.

The OPEC+ group of oil-producing countries last month

"We would like to have a stable oil market, sustainable growth in terms of demand, sustainable growth in terms of supply. The worst thing is to have low oil prices that permanently damage the industry"

PRINCE ABDULAZIZ BIN SALMAN
SAUDI ENERGY MINISTER

China starts 2020 with forecast of a 2pc sales decline



Workers work on an assembly line manufacturing Audi Q3 cars

Reuters | Beijing/Shanghai

The country's top auto body said yesterday that sales will likely shrink for the third consecutive year in 2020.

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM) expects a 2 per cent fall in vehicle sales. That would compare with an 8.2pc drop last year, when sales were pressured by new emission standards in a shrinking economy also contending with tit-for-tat import tariffs with the United States.

CAAM, affirming its forecast announced last month, also said auto sales declined for the 18th consecutive month in December. Annual sales started falling in 2018, by 2.8pc, halting a growth march that had started in the 1990s.

French strikes rumble on as PM vows to 'go to end'

AFP | Paris

Paris commuters battled to reach work again on Monday as a 40-day-old strike dragged on and France's premier vowed "to go to the end" with the pension reforms that sparked the action.

There was still major disruption on the Paris metro and the national railway system, even after Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced a major concession to unions at the weekend.

But the situation was somewhat improved from previous weeks, with all Paris metro lines now open in peak hours and the trains running slightly more reg-



2 television late Sunday.

"Those who incite (workers) to continue the strike are leading them perhaps into a dead end... I think that they need to assume their responsibilities," he said.

"I think you know the phrase -- 'you need to know how to end a strike'. We are not far now,"

he added.

'Not end of the story'

Philippe announced Saturday that he would drop plans to increase the official age for a full pension to 64 from 62, a move welcomed by more moderate trade unions like the CFTD.

President Emmanuel Macron, who has sought to stay above the fray throughout the crisis by relying on Philippe to deal with the unions, called the change "a constructive and responsible compromise."

But the more hardline CGT, FO and Solidaires unions were standing firm, calling for the strike and protests to continue,

including another major demonstration on Thursday.

Demonstrators in the capital on Saturday, some masked and hooded, broke shop windows and set fires along their protest route, and threw projectiles at police in riot gear who responded with tear gas.

The government however is not budging on its overall plan for a universal scheme to rationalise 42 existing pension schemes into a single, points-based system it says will be fairer and more transparent.

"The end of the pivot age does not mean the end of the strike," commented the Le Parisien daily.

Laurent Berger, the head of the moderate CFTD, France's largest union, also struck a cautious note while reaffirming his welcome for the withdrawal of the so-called "pivot age" of 64 as "extremely important."

"We are far from being at the end of this story on the universal system for pensions and we will need to keep up the pressure," he told RTL Radio.

The strike has also been observed by other public-service workers affected by the reforms, including staff at the Paris Opera, which on Saturday cancelled its performance of "The Barber of Seville," its first show of 2020.

SHOW



UNDERWATER (PG-15)(THRILLER/HORROR)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 2:00 + 6:45 + 11:30 PM
OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 11:45 AM + 4:30 + 9:15 PM
CITY CENTRE: 10:30 AM + 12:45 + 3:00 + 5:15 + 7:30 + 9:45 + 12:00 MN + (12:45 MN THURS/FRI)
CITY CENTRE (VIP I): 12:00 + 2:15 + 4:30 + 6:45 + 9:00 + 11:15 PM
SEEF (II): 10:30 AM + 12:30 + 2:45 + 5:00 + 7:15 + 9:30 + 11:45 PM + (12:45 MN THURS/FRI)
WADI AL SAIL: 12:15 + 2:30 + 4:45 + 7:00 + 9:15 + 11:30 PM
KRISTEN STEWART, T.J. MILLER, JESSICA HENWICK

1917 (PG-15)(WAR/ACTION/DRAMA)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 11:30 AM + 4:15 + 9:00 PM
OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 2:00 + 6:45 + 11:30 PM
CITY CENTRE: 11:30 AM + 2:00 + 4:30 + 7:00 + 9:30 + 12:00 MN
CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D): 10:30 AM + 1:00 + 3:30 + 6:00 + 8:30 + 11:00 PM
SEEF (II): 11:00 AM + 1:30 + 4:00 + 6:30 + 9:00 + 11:30 PM + (12:30 MN THURS/FRI)
WADI AL SAIL: 6:45 + 9:15 + 11:45 PM
GEORGE MACKAY, DEAN-CHARLES CHAPMAN, MARK STRONG

LIKE A BOSS (18+)(COMEDY)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 2:15 + 7:00 + 11:45 PM
CITY CENTRE: 11:00 AM + 1:00 + 3:00 + 5:00 + 7:00 + 9:00 + 11:00 PM + (1:00 AM THURS/FRI)
CITY CENTRE (VIP II): 12:00 + 2:00 + 4:00 + 6:00 + 8:00 + 10:00 + 12:00 MN
SEEF (II): 12:00 + 2:00 + 4:00 + 6:00 + 8:00 + 10:00 + 12:00 MN
WADI AL SAIL: 2:15 + 7:00 + 11:45 PM
TIFFANY HADDISH, ROSE BYRNE, SALMA HAYEK

RICHARD JEWELL (PG-15)(DRAMA/THRILLER)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 11:30 AM + 4:15 + 9:00 PM
CITY CENTRE: 2:30 + 8:15 PM
SEEF (II): 11:30 AM + 5:15 + 11:00 PM
WADI AL SAIL: 10:30 AM + 3:30 + 8:45 PM
SAM ROCKWELL, KATHY BATES, JON HAMM

DARBAR (PG-15)(ACTION)

OASIS JUFFAIR: (TAMIL): 11:15 AM + 2:15 + 5:15 + 8:15 + 11:15 PM
OASIS JUFFAIR (HINDI): 11:30 AM + 5:30 + 11:30 PM
OASIS JUFFAIR: (TELUGU): 2:30 + 8:30 PM
CITY CENTRE: (TAMIL): 11:45 AM + 2:45 + 5:45 + 8:45 + 11:45 PM
SEEF (I): (TAMIL): 11:30 AM + 2:30 + 5:30 + 8:30 + 11:30 + (12:30 MN THURS/FRI)
SEEF (I): (HINDI): 12:00 + 3:00 + 6:00 + 9:00 + 12:00 MN
SEEF (I): (TELUGU): 12:30 + 3:30 + 6:30 + 9:30 PM
WADI AL SAIL: (TAMIL): 11:00 AM + 2:00 + 5:00 + 8:00 + 11:00 PM
ALHAMRA: (TAMIL): 12:00 + 3:00 + 6:00 + 9:00 + (12:00 MN THURS/FRI)
RAJINIKANTH, SUNIL SHETTY, NAYANTHARA

TANHAJI: THE UNSUNG WARRIOR (PG-15)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 12:15 + 3:00 + 5:45 + 8:30 + 11:15 PM
CITY CENTRE: 10:30 AM + 3:30 + 8:45 PM
SEEF (I): 12:30 + 3:15 + 6:00 + 8:45 + 11:30 PM
WADI AL SAIL: 11:30 AM + 4:15 + 9:00 PM
AJAY DEVGN, SAIF ALI KHAN, KAJOL

CHHAPAAK (PG-15)(HINDI/DRAMA)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 10:45 AM + 1:15 + 3:45 + 6:15 + 8:45 + 11:15 PM
CITY CENTRE: 1:00 + 6:15 + 11:30 PM
SEEF (II): 11:15 AM + 1:45 + 4:15 + 6:45 + 9:15 + 11:45 PM
WADI AL SAIL: 1:00 + 6:15 + 11:30 PM
DEEPIKA PADUKONE, VIKRANT MASSEY, MADHURJEET SARGHI

RED SHOES AND THE 7 DWARFS (G)

OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 10:30 AM + 2:30 + 4:30 + 8:45 PM
CITY CENTRE: 12:00 + 4:30 PM
CITY CENTRE (3D): 2:15 + 6:45 PM
SEEF (II): 10:30 AM + 12:30 + 2:30 + 4:30 + 6:30 PM
CHLO, GRACE MORETZ, SAM CLAFLIN, GINA GERSHON



MASAMEER: THE MOVIE (PG)(ANIMATION/COMEDY)

CITY CENTRE: 10:30 AM + 1:00 + 3:30 + 6:00 + 8:30 + 11:00 PM
SEEF (II): 10:45 AM + 1:15 + 3:45 + 6:15 PM
ABDULAZIZ AL-MUZAINI, ABDULAZIZ AL-SHEHRI, MAZROA AL-MAZROA

DAUGHTER OF THE WOLF (PG-15)(ACTION/THRILLER)

SEEF (II): 11:30 AM + 3:30 + 7:30 + 11:30 PM
GINA CARANO, RICHARD DREYFUSS, BRENDAN FEHR

BALLOON (PG-13)(DRAMA/THRILLER)

SEEF (II): 8:30 + 11:00 PM
FRIEDRICH MÜCKE, KAROLINE SCHUCH, ALICIA VON RITTBERG

MISSION UNSTAPABOL (PG-13)(FILIPINO/COMEDY)

SEEF (II): 8:45 + 11:00 PM
VIC SOTTO, MAINE MENDOZA, JAKE CUENCA

JUMANJI THE NEXT LEVEL (PG-15)

CITY CENTRE: 10:30 AM + 1:00 + 3:45 + 6:30 + 9:15 + 12:00 MN + (12:30 MN THURS/FRI)
CITY CENTRE (ATMOS): 10:30 AM + 1:00 + 3:45 + 6:30 + 9:15 + 12:00 MN
SEEF (I): 12:45 + 3:30 + 6:15 + 9:00 + 11:45 PM
WADI AL SAIL: 1:00 + 6:15 + 11:30 PM
DWAYNE JOHNSON, JACK BLACK, KEVIN HART

AL FELOUS (THE MONEY) (PG-15)(ARABIC/COMEDY/CRIME)

CITY CENTRE: 11:15 AM + 1:45 + 4:15 + 6:45 + 9:15 + 11:45 PM + (12:45 MN THURS/FRI)
SEEF (I): 10:45 AM + 1:15 + 3:45 + 6:15 + 8:45 + 11:15 PM
WADI AL SAIL: 10:30 AM + 3:45 + 9:00 PM
TAMER HOSNY, ZEINA, KHALID EL-SAWI

THE GRUDGE (15+)(HORROR/THRILLER/DRAMA)

CITY CENTRE: 10:30 AM + 12:30 + 2:45 + 5:00 + 7:15 + 9:30 + 11:45 PM
ANDREA RISEBOROUGH, DEMIAN BICHR, JOHN CHO

SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG)

OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 6:30 + 10:45 PM
CITY CENTRE: 11:00 AM + 1:15 + 3:30 + 5:45 + 8:00 + 10:15 PM
SEEF (II): 11:15 AM + 1:30 + 3:45 + 6:00 + 8:15 + 10:30 PM
WADI AL SAIL: 12:00 + 2:15 + 4:30 PM
WILL SMITH, TOM HOLLAND, KAREN GILLAN

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

CITY CENTRE: 11:15 AM + 1:30 + 3:45 + 6:00 + 8:15 + 10:30 PM
SEEF (II): 11:00 AM + 1:15 + 3:30 + 5:45 + 8:00 + 10:15 PM
KRISTEN BELL, IDINA MENZEL, JOSH GAD

NORM OF THE NORTH 3: KING SIZED ADVENTURE (G)

OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 12:30 NOON
JENNIFER CAMERON, BRIAN DOBSON, MICHAEL DOBSON

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

CITY CENTRE: 12:15 + 2:30 + 4:45 + 7:00 + 9:15 + 11:30 PM
CHADWICK BOSEMAN, SIENNA MILLER, STEPHAN JAMES

STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER (PG-13)

CITY CENTRE: 11:30 AM + 5:15 + 11:00 PM
DAISY RIDLEY, MARK HAMILL, ADAM DRIVER

GOOD NEWWZ (15+)(HINDI/COMEDY/DRAMA)

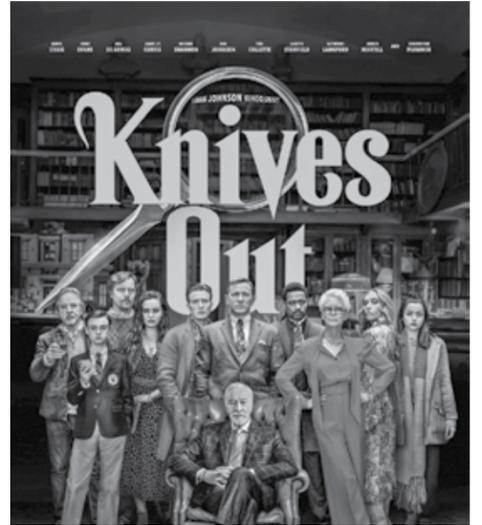
OASIS JUFFAIR: 2:45 + 8:30 PM
SEEF (II): 2:15 + 8:00 PM
AKSHAY KUMAR, KAREENA KAPOOR, DILIJIT DOSANJH

MALEFICENT 2: MISTRESS OF EVIL (PG)

CITY CENTRE: 12:15 + 2:45 + 5:15 + 7:45 + 10:15 PM
ANGELINA JOLIE, TERESA MAHONEY, MICHELLE PFEIFFER

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

CITY CENTRE: 9:00 PM + 11:45 PM
DANIEL CRAIG, CHRIS EVANS, ANA DE ARMAS



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

CITY CENTRE: 12:00 + 5:45 + 11:30 PM
JOAQUIN PHOENIX, ZAZIE BEETZ, ROBERT DE NIRO

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

CITY CENTRE: 2:45 + 8:30 PM
MATT DAMON, CHRISTIAN BALE, JON BERNTHAL

TRAUMA CENTRE (PG-15)(THRILLER)

SEEF (II): 1:30 + 5:30 + 9:30 PM
BRUCE WILLIS, NICKY WHELAN, STEVE GUTTENBERG

DRIVING LICENCE (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 12:00 + 5:45 + 11:30 PM
PRITHVIRAJ SUKUMARAN, SURAJ VENJARANMOODU

SARILERU NEEKVARU (TELUGU)

From Saturday 11th
OASIS JUFFAIR: 10:30 AM + 1:45 + 5:00 + 8:15 + 11:30 PM
MAHESH BABU, VIJAYASHANTI, RASHMIKA MANDANA, PRAKASH RAJ

MOVIE REVIEW

Richard Jewell: a hero is falsely implicated by the media

● **Clint Eastwood's take on the frenzied aftermath of the Olympic Park bombing is flawed and fascinating**

Late in his career, as he has transitioned from the dual role of "actor/director" to primarily remaining behind the camera, Clint Eastwood has become increasingly fascinated with real-life subjects. He has also long been interested in dissecting the concept of heroism, whether in the fictional Western deconstruction Unforgiven or the reality-based American Sniper and Sully. With Richard Jewell, he returns to these themes, examining how the titular character (played by Paul Walter Hauser) experienced the roller coaster ride of transformation from wearing the media's halo to being its designated villain.

For this material, Eastwood and screenwriter Billy Ray have turned back the hands of time to the 1986 Olympics bombing in Atlanta. For those who remember the news coverage, a seem-



Paul Walter Hauser, center, as the title character in Clint Eastwood's latest feature

ingly ordinary security guard named Richard Jewell became the center of media attention, first for saving lives then for fitting an FBI profiler's description of the likely assailant. Although Jewell was never formally charged, he was harassed by law enforcement (represented in the film by Jon Hamm as composite character Agent Tom Shaw) and demonized in the news media after journalist Kathy Scruggs

(Olivia Wilde) obtained insider information about the FBI's suspect list. His low-profile lawyer, Watson Bryant (Sam Rockwell), doggedly pursued his exoneration even though the only court in which he appeared was the one of Public Opinion.

Richard Jewell takes the unusual cinematic position of casting both the media and law enforcement as antagonists. Eastwood illustrates the power wielded by

both agencies. Movies like Spotlight and The Post have shown the importance of investigative journalism in uncovering corruption; Richard Jewell shows the other side of the coin — how an unproven smear, once printed in a newspaper, can ruin a person's life. The film also shows that overzealous government agency investigations, when given too much autonomy, can be persuaded more by personal

biases than facts. Richard Jewell is about the fight of an underdog against these twin powers; it's one of movie-dom's favorite gladiatorial spectacles: David vs. Goliath.

Some will undoubtedly see the movie as political. After all, we live in an era when All the President's Men disparage the "mainstream media" as disseminating "fake news." However, to deny the media's power to harm and present it exclusively as a force for good is to ignore reality.



Though it awesomely stumbles, Clint Eastwood's riveting new movie—about the man wrongly suspected of organizing the Centennial Park bombing at the 1996 Summer Olympics—is a gripping study of power

Although Richard Jewell takes significant liberties with the historical record, the film's core is accurate: this seemingly ordinary man (although admittedly overzealous and not terribly bright) was excoriated based on unproven allegations that should never have been published. (Additionally, two of the movie's producers, Leonardo DiCaprio and Jonah Hill, are unlikely to be attached to a "conservative hatchet job.")

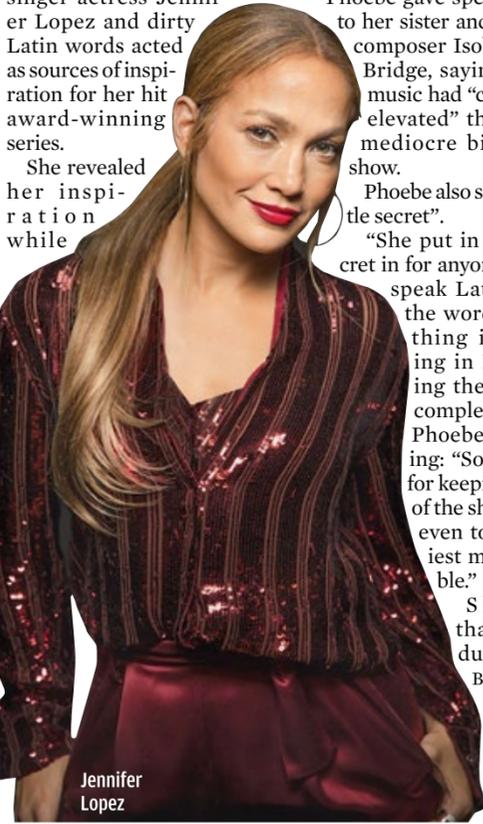
There's a problem with the character of Kathy Scruggs, however, and it goes beyond the screenplay's unflattering and apparently inaccurate portrayal of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reporter. As re-invented by Ray's script, Scruggs is more of a plot device than a human being. She acts in cartoonish ways (propositioning an FBI agent for a lead) and undergoes a half-hearted "transformation" after discovering incontrovertible evidence of Jewell's innocence. Despite a voracious performance by Olivia Wilde, who engages in a little scenery chewing, Scruggs is never believable and the way Richard Jewell treats her remains its most problematic issue.



Liam Hemsworth and Gabriella Brooks

Here's how Jennifer Lopez inspired 'Fleabag'
Los Angeles

"Fleabag" creator and star Phoebe Waller-Bridge says singer-actress Jennifer Lopez and dirty Latin words acted as sources of inspiration for her hit award-winning series. She revealed her inspiration while



Jennifer Lopez

accepting the win for Best Comedy Series at the 25th annual Critics Choice Awards on Sunday, reports hollywoodreporter.com.

Phoebe gave special thanks to her sister and "Fleabag" composer Isobel Waller-Bridge, saying that her music had "covered and elevated" the "slightly mediocre bits" of the show.

Phoebe also shared a "little secret". "She put in a little secret in for anyone who can speak Latin, but all the words that the thing is is singing in Latin during the songs are completely filthy," Phoebe said, adding: "So thank you for keeping the DNA of the show right in even to the classiest music possible."

She also thanked producers — the BBC and Amazon, and wrapped by giving a shout-out to Lopez.

It's official: Liam Hemsworth and Gabriella Brooks are in love

Los Angeles

After his divorce settlement with singer-actress Miley Cyrus, actor Liam Hemsworth has moved on, and confirmed his romance with model Gabriella Brooks.

Liam, 30, was spotted spending time with the Australian model, 23, on the beach in Byron Bay in Australia earlier this month. The photographs of the intimate moment were published by New Idea magazine, reports dailymail.co.uk.

After spending New Year's Eve together, Liam and Gabriella were photographed together.

Liam had also introduced Gabri-

ella to his parents, Craig and Leonie, in Byron Bay over a family lunch in December.

According to a source to US Weekly, Gabriella is popular with Liam's family.

"Liam feels comfortable with Gabriella. His family approves of her and really likes her, which is very important to him," said the source. It is unclear how Liam and Gabriella met, and when did they start dating.

"The Hunger Games" actor filed for divorce in August 2019 after less than a year of marriage. Liam cited "irreconcilable differences" as the reason for the split. They reached divorce settlement in December.

Lindsay Lohan's mother, Dina, arrested for DWI

Los Angeles

Dina Lohan, mother of actress Lindsay Lohan, is getting her year off to a rocky start with a DWI.



Dina Lohan

A representative from the Nassau County Police Department told TODAY that Lohan was arrested at around 6:45 p.m. on Saturday in Merrick, New York, for allegedly driving while intoxicated. As of Sunday morning, she was transported to the First District Court in Hempstead, where she was being held for arraignment. Police said Lohan, 57, was involved

in a fender bender Saturday night in Massapequa and fled the scene. The other driver followed Lohan to Merrick, about 10 minutes away, where she was subsequently arrested.

In New York, drivers can get a DWI for operating a vehicle with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or higher. Penalties include a fine and having your driver's license revoked. Saturday's incident was not Lohan's first run-in with trouble. In 2013, she was arrested for aggravated driving while intoxicated and speeding and lost her license for a year after pleading guilty to the charges.

Oscars 2020: 'Joker' leads with 11 nominations

Los Angeles

Filmmaker Todd Phillips' "Joker", an origin story about superhero Batman's biggest enemy Joker, led the Oscar nominations with 11 nods, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor. Sam Mendes' World War drama "1917", Quentin Tarantino's ode to Los Angeles "Once Upon A Time In Hollywood", and Martin Scorsese's mob epic "The Irishman" followed close behind with 10 nods each.

OSCAR NOMINATIONS 2020



BEST PICTURE

- Ford v Ferrari
- The Irishman
- Jojo Rabbit
- Joker
- Little Women
- Marriage Story
- 1917
- Once Upon a Time ... In Hollywood
- Parasite

ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE

- Antonio Banderas, Pain and Glory
- Leonardo DiCaprio, Once Upon a Time ... In Hollywood
- Adam Driver, Marriage Story
- Joaquin Phoenix, Joker
- Jonathan Pryce, The Two Popes

ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE

- Cynthia Erivo, Harriet
- Scarlett Johansson, Marriage Story
- Saoirse Ronan, Little Women
- Charlize Theron, Bombshell
- Renee Zellweger, Judy

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

- Tom Hanks, A Beautiful Day In the Neighborhood
- Anthony Hopkins, The Two Popes
- Al Pacino, The Irishman
- Joe Pesci, The Irishman
- Brad Pitt, Once Upon a Time ... In Hollywood

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

- Kathy Bates, Richard Jewell
- Laura Dern, Marriage Story
- Scarlett Johansson, Jojo Rabbit
- Florence Pugh, Little Women
- Margot Robbie, Bombshell

DIRECTING

- The Irishman, Martin Scorsese
- Joker, Todd Phillips
- 1917, Sam Mendes
- Once Upon a Time ... In Hollywood, Quentin Tarantino
- Parasite, Bong Joon Ho

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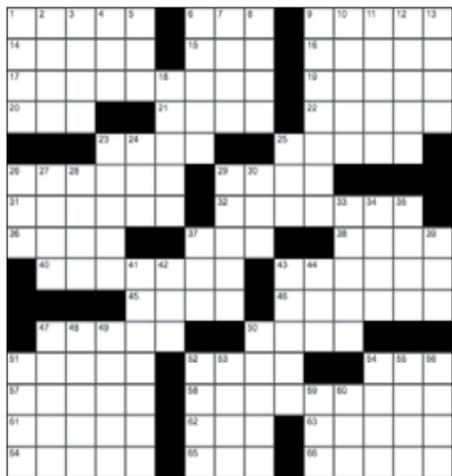
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CROSSWORD



Yesterday's solution



ACROSS
1- Cobb, e.g.; 6- Pop the question; 9- Enticed; 14- Stand-in; 15- Campaigned; 16- Do _ a Waltz?; 17- Suitable; 19- Bonkers; 20- Foot digit; 21- Cast a ballot; 22- Packs tightly; 23- Declare; 25- Cheek cosmetic; 26- One giving a ring; 29- Fleece; 31- Ski lodge; 32- Rare metallic element; 36- Rescue; 37- Used to be; 38- The closest one to us is the sun; 40- Daggerlike weapon; 43- Cream cake; 45- Lepidopterous insect; 46- German composer; 47- Circular water container; 50- Derrick; 51- Draw a bead on; 52- Hurler Hershiser; 54- Frat letter; 57- Issue forth with force; 58- Extremely funny; 61- Therefore; 62- Month after avril; 63- Projecting window; 64- Barely beat; 65- Compass pt.; 66- Compact;

DOWN
1- Petty quarrel, ejected saliva; 2- Golden Fleece ship; 3- Knowledge; 4- Chopper; 5- Recolor; 6- Shady spot; 7- Cure, in a way; 8- Human leg joint; 9- 16th president of the U.S.; 10- Swahili for "freedom"; 11- Put a new price on; 12- Words on a Wonderland cake; 13- Prohibitionists; 18- Turn aside; 23- Narrow street; 24- Flight formation; 25- _ v. Wade; 26- IV units; 27- Gregory Peck role of 1956; 28- Hot rock; 29- Anger; 30- Cries of surprise; 33- Religion of the Muslims; 34- Beehive State; 35- Disfigure; 37- Rainy; 39- Monopoly quartet; Abbr.; 41- Left out; 42- Tours turnaround; 43- Deadly virus; 44- _ Magnon; 47- Two-footer; 48- Encompassed about; 49- Gravy, for one; 50- Give a false impression of; 51- Tennis great Arthur; 52- Electrical units; 53- Narrow inlets; 54- Quarter, e.g.; 55- Colors; 56- Capri, for one; 59- Curtain holder; 60- Strong feeling of anger;

Shakira reveals new collaboration with rapper Anuel AA

Los Angeles

Colombian singer Shakira has officially kicked off 2020 with a new collaboration with rapper Anuel AA titled 'Me Gusta.'

Both Shakira and Anuel confirmed the collaboration through their social media during the weekend. The two uploaded the cover picture of the song 'Me Gusta' on Instagram.

"Nuevo sencillo!!! New single!!!" Shakira captioned the picture.

The picture featured the two, posing for the camera, in which Shakira was seen in the forefront, gracing a table while dressed in an elaborate, pale pink ensemble. Anuel AA, on the other hand, was behind the singer decked up in a white t-shirt with a blue puffy jacket, accessorized with a dazzling silver necklace.



Shakira

SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution



How to play
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

SPORTS
sports

BIKC hosts red hot Rotax battles

● BKIC witnessed host eventful fourth round of national karting sprints

TDI | Manama

The temperatures were cool but the competition was red hot in an eventful fourth round of the 2019/2020 Bahrain Karting Sprint Championship (BKSC), held over the weekend at Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC) in Sakhir.

Five drivers claimed hard-earned victories in the BKSC's Bahrain Rotax Mojo Max Challenge, including Rashed Almuammari, Osama Azzouka, Lewis Smith, Shanthosh Kumar and Rashid Alkhalifa.

Almuammari won the Senior Max class and Azzouka the Max Masters, while Smith triumphed in the Junior Max category, Kumar in the Mini Max and Alkhalifa in the Micro Max class.

All the racing took place along BIKC's 1.414-kilometre Commission International de Karting track.

Almuammari triumphed amongst the Senior Max participants with a time of 14 min-



Winners with their trophies

utes 02.332 seconds over 15 laps. He started the race in second position alongside pole-sitter Fahad Alkhaleel, but was able to gain the lead on the seventh lap. Alkhaleel dropped all the way to third during the sprint but was able to battle back and pass Mohammed Mattar to regain one place. Alkhaleel eventually finished second 0.144s behind Almuammari, while Mattar was third 3.328s back.

In the Max Masters, Azzouka won despite getting two separate five-second penalties for a

jump start and for causing a collision. He completed his 15-lap sprint in 14:36.180 and enjoyed a 16.753s gap ahead of runner-up Fred Clark.

Smith won the Junior Max class. He was engaged in a tough battle with Fahad Al Muqla through 15 laps, and Al Muqla was originally the first to the finish. But he was given a five-second penalty for his front bumper not being fixed, handing the win to Smith and dropping him all the way to last place.

Smith triumphed with a total

race time of 14:20.159. Abdullah Aldossery was the runner-up 0.729s behind, while Sulaiman Alkandrei came third 1.301s back.

In Mini Max class, Kumar inherited the win from Luca Kane Houghton, who crossed the finish line after eight laps in first from pole but was disqualified after stewards decided that his kart had not conformed to the technical regulations, with his ignition oil not being of legal length. Kumar had a winning race time of 8:14.574. Tye Me-



Cars in action at BIKC

ja was the runner-up a distant 12.040s from first. He had also received a five-second penalty for his front bumper not being fixed. Mohamed Alhassan was third 30.827s back.

In the Micro Max class, Alkhalifa emerged victorious after Gracie Rose Grantham, who had originally finished ahead, was given a five-second penalty for her front bumper not being fixed. That put Alkhalifa in the winner's position with a time of 8:52.192 over eight laps. Khaled Alnajjar was a narrow second just 0.111s behind, while Louis El Nabulsi finished third 0.354s back. Grantham had to settle for fifth place.

Following the fourth round of action, there were no changes at the top of the championship standings in any of the BRM-

MC's competition categories. Alkhaleel continued to lead the standings in the Senior Max championship ahead of Mattar, Azzouka remained in front of Clark in the Max Masters, and Smith led Aldossery in the Junior Max category.

Kumar maintained his position ahead of Houghton in the Mini Max, while Grantham was still the leader in the Micro Max championship.

The 2019/2020 BKSC features seven rounds in all. Saturday's fourth round was the first of the new calendar year. Action in the BKSC is scheduled to resume with Round Five on February 8, while the sixth and penultimate meeting of the season will be held on March 7. The championship-finale then takes place on April 4.

India open to day-night Test in Australia, says Kohli

Reuters | Mumbai

India are "absolutely open" to playing a day-night test in Australia this year and the world's top-ranked team have the confidence to take on any side in the world in any condition, captain Virat Kohli said yesterday.

India declined Australia's offer to play a day-night test in Adelaide in 2018-19, citing lack of experience.

Kohli's men, however, took a little over two days to clinch their first pink-ball test, thrashing Bangladesh by an innings and 46 runs in Kolkata in November.

"We played the day-night test here (in India), we are pretty happy with how it went," Kohli told reporters on the eve of the opening one-day international against Australia.

"It's become a very exciting feature of any test series. We are absolutely open to playing a day-night test.

"We are ready enough for the challenge. Whether it's Gabba, it's Perth, doesn't matter to us. We do have the skillsets as a team now to compete against anyone in the world, anywhere, in any format of the game."

With day-night tests seen as a possible solution to test cricket's dwindling attendances, Australia are hopeful that In-



India's Virat Kohli gestures during nets (file photo)

"We are ready enough for the challenge. Whether it's Gabba, it's Perth, doesn't matter to us. We do have the skillsets as a team now to compete against anyone in the world, anywhere, in any format of the game"

VIRAT KOHLI

dia will agree to play one at the Gabba this year.

India earned their first series triumph on Australian soil

on their last visit although the hosts were without Steve Smith and David Warner, who were suspended after the ball-tampering scandal.

Kohli challenged his bowlers to be ready for a full-strength batting lineup of Australia, who made it five comprehensive wins out of five matches for the home summer against Pakistan and New Zealand.

Australia beat India 3-2 in ODIs on their last visit.

In a year when a Twenty20 World Cup is scheduled, Kohli was asked about the relevance of playing bilateral 50-overs matches and the India captain said his team were "excited" and looking forward to the challenge.

Bahrain claim second friendly win over South Korea



Action from yesterday's friendly

TDI | Manama

Bahrain edged past South Korea 24-23 yesterday in their second international friendly this week held at the Bahrain Handball Association arena in Um Al Hassam.

Both sides are preparing for their campaigns in the upcoming 2020 Asian Men's Handball Championship, which will be held in Kuwait starting Thursday.

The Bahrainis also won their first tune-up game by a single goal. The nationals enjoyed

a 30-29 result in what was a closely contested affair.

Thirteen teams are taking part in the Asian championship in Kuwait City. They have been divided into four groups for the preliminary round. Bahrain have been drawn in Group A along with Iran and New Zealand.

The Bahrainis, who earlier this year made history by qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics, play their first game against the Kiwis on the tournament's first day before playing their Iranian rivals on January 18.

The top two teams from

each group at the end of a single round-robin move on to the next phase.

Group B features Qatar, Japan and China; Group C includes South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Australia; and Group D consists of the UAE, Hong Kong, Iraq and hosts Kuwait.

The Asian championship also acts as the continental qualifying tournament for the 2021 World Men's Handball Championship. Each of the competition's four semi-finalists will book their tickets to the worlds, set to take place in Egypt in January of 2021.

Bahrain set to face Australia

Bahrain Olympic team face do-or-die clash with Australia

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's Olympic football team head into a do-or-die clash with Australia this afternoon in the 2020 AFC U23 Championship in Thailand.

The Bahrainis are currently in last place in Group A of the tournament's preliminary round, and need nothing less than all three points to have any chance of advancing to the next stage. However, not even a win would guarantee that they go through.

Despite the huge hurdle ahead of them, Bahrain's Mohammed Marhoon and Sayed Hashem Isa remained upbeat and vowed to fight until the very end.

"We will fight until the very end, even if we only have one percent chance of qualifying," Marhoon was quoted as saying.

"We will give it all we have and if we manage to reach the quarter-finals, the semi-finals will be our next target."

Isa added: "We will start the third match with the hope to win but we must fix the mistakes that we've made in the previous matches."

Bahrain head coach Samir Ben Chammmam echoed his players' sentiments.



Bahrain players take part in drills during training last night

"We have one more match and all we can try to do is win it so that we get to four points and then we have to hope that we can

qualify," Ben Chammmam said.

"For the game against Iraq we were focused on the mental side and we prepared the players

mentally.

"But for Australia we will have to focus on the fitness side and prepare the players physically



Bahrain's Ben Chammmam instructs players during training last night

and we will try to get our last chance in the group to get the three points so we can qualify for the second round."

The match is scheduled for a 4.15pm kick-off, Bahrain time. It will be played at Thammasat Stadium in the Thai province of Pathum Thani.

Bahrain must finish in the top two in Group A to advance to the quarter-finals. Group B consists of Qatar, Japan, Saudi Arabia

and Syria; Group C features defending champions Uzbekistan, South Korea, China and Iran; and Group D comprises Vietnam, North Korea, Jordan and the UAE.

The last eight will be played on January 18 and 19, followed by the semi-finals on January 22. The match for third place will be held January 25 and then the gold medal game the following night.

Federer ready and in good shape for Australian Open campaign

Reuters | Melbourne

Roger Federer declared himself ready yesterday to kick off the new season at next week's Australian Open despite having played no competitive matches since.

The 20-times Grand Slam winner was scheduled to warm-up for the year's first major at the inaugural ATP Cup in Australia but withdrew to spend more time with his family.

In contrast, his rivals Novak Djokovic and Rafa Nadal were part of some closely-fought matches at the team event, which was played in Brisbane, Perth and Sydney.

Federer, 38, said he was happy with his preparation at home.

"I've trained long and hard in the off-season and I didn't have any setbacks, which is crucial," Federer said at a promotional event in Melbourne.

"Last week I was asking myself 'am I happy to go to Australia, or I should rather just stay here and stopping pack immediately? Because I can.

"I could easily just stay home and I was like, 'no, no, I'm really happy to go to Melbourne and kick off the season there'.

"I have kept myself in good shape, obviously I had an amazing team around me."

A six-time winner at Melbourne Park, Federer won the Australian Open title in 2017 and 2018 but lost to Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas in the fourth round last year.

Djokovic went on to win a record seventh Australian Open



Roger Federer hits a return (file photo)



Roger Federer has won Australian Open title six times

title in 2019 and looks in perfect shape to add another after his ninth consecutive hard-court win over world number one Nadal on Sunday as Serbia were crowned champions at the ATP

Cup.

Nadal has also shown no sign of trouble with his game or his fitness and the contenders at the Australian Open could again be the Big Three, who have shared the last 12 Grand Slam titles.

"I'm aware that at 38 I shouldn't be the favorite, it should be someone probably in their 20s, but the three of us have been able to stay as the favorites which is great for us," Federer said.

"Both guys are already showing great signs. I was watching a little bit of their ATP Cup match and thought that was a great match. Both guys, injury free, are always tough to beat."

Federer also offered Australian Ash Barty some advice as she prepares to play her home Grand Slam as women's world number one.

"What a year she's had; it was a pleasure watching her play," Federer said. "She can have a different mindset.

"It can relax you and you can really explore all of your potential and that's what happened to me when I won my first major, and I broke through as world number one after that.

"I thought, 'well now I'm the guy to beat and I prefer to be in this position rather than being a contender'. I hope that Ash is also going to see it that way."

Barcelona set to sack Valverde - reports

AFP | Barcelona

Barcelona are set to sack their coach Ernesto Valverde, according to reports in the Spanish press.

Valverde took training yesterday morning but his future looks bleak, with the club expected to announce his departure following a board meeting in the afternoon at Camp Nou.

Valverde arrived more than two hours early at the Ciutat Esportiva Joan Gamper and took training as usual, despite Barca's public pursuit of their iconic former midfielder Xavi Hernandez at the weekend.

Xavi, currently the coach of Qatari team Al-Sadd, indicated he is not prepared to take charge immediately but the negotiations left Valverde in limbo.

After training on Monday, Valverde met with club president Josep Maria Bartomeu.

Bartomeu then drove to

Camp Nou, where he held a board meeting with several club officials including chief executive Oscar Grau, technical secretary Javier Bordas, vice president Jordi Cardoner and sporting director Eric Abidal.

According to Catalunya Radio, Valverde was told the club would negotiate the terms of his exit with his agent. ESPN added that Valverde had collected his belongings from the training ground.

Barca could install a temporary replacement like B team coach Francisco Javier Garcia Pimienta, perhaps with a view to appointing Xavi at the end of the season.

Otherwise, they could opt for a more permanent solution immediately. Former Tottenham Hotspur coach Mauricio Pochettino is a viable option, despite his previous claims he would never coach Barcelona due to connections with rivals Espanyol.



Ernesto Valverde reacts during a match (file photo)