

Schumacher, Viscaal win in MRF Challenge

David Schumacher and Bent Viscaal claimed a win apiece in the week-end's first two races of the MRF Challenge yesterday at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), held in support of the FIA WEC Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain. **P 12**

EU warns of post-Brexit rival Britain

THE DAILY **tribune**



An old soul celebrating 30 years: Gigid Hadid on Taylor Swift's birthday

NZ completes daring volcano mission to retrieve bodies

Boris returns to power

London

Boris Johnson will return to Downing Street with a big majority after the Conservatives swept aside Labour in its traditional heartlands.

With just a handful of seats left to declare in the general election, the BBC forecasts a Tory majority of 78.

The prime minister said it would give him a mandate to "get Brexit done" and take the UK out of the EU next month.

Jeremy Corbyn said Labour had a "very disappointing night" and he would not fight a future election.



Boris Johnson

The BBC forecast suggests the Tories will get 364 MPs, Labour 203, the SNP 48, the Lib Dems 12, Plaid Cymru four, the Greens one, and the Brexit Party none.

That means the Conservatives will have their biggest majority at Westminster since Margaret Thatcher's 1987 election victory.

Labour, which has lost seats across the North, Midlands and Wales in places which backed Brexit in 2016, is facing its worst defeat since 1935.

Mr Johnson has addressed cheering party workers at Conservative headquarters, telling them there has been a political earthquake, with the Tories winning a "stonking" mandate, from Kensington to Clwyd South.



02 'Brave model mothers' honoured

03 Life in jail for terrorists convicted of attacking cops, plotting attacks

04 Technocrat govt without Hariri backed in Lebanon

210 fils (includes VAT)



Young patriot



A series of entertainment events are being held across the country as the Kingdom is all set to observe its 48th National Day. The off-track entertainment happening at this year's BIC National Day Festival and the FIA have plenty of exquisite international flavour. Among the acts that BIC visitors enjoyed were The Black Angels from Kenya, Mariachi Jalisco Group from Mexico, and Six Harmonies Lion Dance Team plus Spark! LED Drummers from the UK.

Tebboune elected Algerian president

Algiers

Former prime minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune won Algeria's presidential election with 58.15 per cent of the vote, according to preliminary results declared on Friday, amid another day of large protests.

Thursday's vote was fiercely opposed by a nine-month-old protest movement calling for a complete overhaul of the political system. The low turnout of about 40 per cent was in part because protesters called for a boycott of what they said was a sham vote.

On the streets of Algiers, protesters came out in force following the announcement to continue their mostly peaceful campaign for a complete reform of the political system. Some smeared their faces with white powder, in reference to the Mr Tebboune's son, who was arrested

"I'm not happy about the results, but I am happy that people are still protesting and still out here fighting."

A PROTESTER

ed in May last year in connection to large shipment of cocaine discovered in the port of Oran.

Demonstrators said that for them, the winner made no difference as all of the candidates represent the same regime as ousted President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

"I'm not happy about the results, but I am happy that people are still protesting and still out here fighting. We're still out saying no, we don't want this system and these elections will not give us the change we want," protester Amina, 28, told AP.

Mystery attacks alert

With hundreds already killed, protest movement is seeing increased abductions of activists

● A string of mysterious acts of bloodshed by unknown groups has put anti-government protesters on edge and eroded their faith in the ability of state security forces to protect them.

● Protesters largely blame Iran-backed militias for the attacks and see the violence as a campaign to instil fear and weaken their peaceful movement.



An anti-government protestor poses for a picture while holding a national flag in Baghdad.

Baghdad

Iraq's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani yesterday condemned recent killings and kidnappings of protesters, urging the state to assert control over the widespread use

of weapons.

Mr Al Sistani also called on the armed forces to remain professional, loyal to the state and free from foreign influence, in a sermon delivered in the southern city of Karbala by his representative.

Armed forces "must be loyal to the nation, and free from foreign interference", he said.

Iraq has been rocked anti-government protests for more than two months. More than 440 people have been killed since October 1, according to unofficial tallies

25 protesters were killed when gunmen in pickup trucks opened fire in Baghdad's Khilani Square.

based on reports from police and medical sources. The protesters repeatedly criticise Iran's influence in Iraqi politics and the role of Iran-backed Iraqi militias.

A string of mysterious acts of bloodshed by unknown groups has put anti-government protesters on edge and eroded their faith in the ability of state security forces to protect them.

Last Friday, 25 protesters were killed when gunmen in pickup trucks opened fire in Baghdad's Khilani Square. That same week, mysterious knife attacks targeted over a dozen anti-government

protesters in Tahrir Square, the hub of the protest movement.

In recent days, abductions and assassinations of high-profile civil activists have stoked paranoia among demonstrators. Protesters largely blame Iran-backed militias for the attacks and see the violence as a campaign to instil fear and weaken their peaceful movement.

The UN urged Iraqi authorities to hold accountable those responsible for the murders and abductions of activists and protesters.

"Groups referred to as 'militia', 'unknown third parties', 'armed entities', 'outlaws' and 'spoilors' are responsible for the deliberate killings and abductions of demonstrators," said a UN report released on Wednesday.

The report said "credible information" indicated that activists and journalists were being targeted for arrest by Iraqi security forces and "groups described as 'militia'."

At least five high-profile activists have recently gone missing, the report said.

IN TROUBLE

Key committee passes Trump impeachment charges

Washington, DC

The US House Judiciary Committee has approved two impeachment charges against President Donald Trump, moving the process towards a full House vote.

The articles, backed by Democrats and opposed by Republicans, are expected to be voted on by the Democrat-controlled



Mr Trump

House of Representatives next week.

Mr Trump is the fourth US president in history to face impeachment.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, he again dismissed the process as a "sham" and a "hoax".

Friday's hearing lasted just over ten minutes before the two articles of impeachment - abuse

of power and obstructing Congress - were passed by 23 votes to 17.

The vote had been expected on Thursday but was delayed after more than 14 hours of rancorous debate.

Republicans criticised that decision by Democratic Party Chairman Jerry Nadler, accusing him of pushing back the vote to ensure more TV coverage.

HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman attends the Kingdom Match Race Bahrain 2019

TDT | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa has attended the Kingdom Match Race Bahrain 2019, at Bahrain Sailing Club, Al Jazayr Beach, Zallaq. Upon his arrival, His Highness

was received by the President of the Bahrain Maritime Sports Federation, Shaikh Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the Vice-President Numan Al Hassan, and a number of the federation's Board members.

HH Shaikh Mohammed ob-

served the competition, and was briefed on the performance of the Bahraini teams and the other participating countries.

HH Shaikh Mohammed highlighted that Bahrain's hosting of this important tournament is a testimony of the Kingdom's ad-

vancement in maritime sports, adding that the country's ability to organise various sporting events continues to be strengthened. In this regard, HH Shaikh Mohamed noted Bahrain's natural qualities and modern facilities for maritime sports.

Before departing, His Highness received a commemoration gift on behalf of the Bahrain Maritime Sports Federation, who thanked him for his interest and support to Bahrain's sports sector.

The Kingdom Match Race Bahrain 2019 runs from 11 to 15 De-

cember, with the first day seeing the registration and weighting process, the initial practices, the official briefings and the meetings with the arbiters. As much as 28 races could take place every day from 12 December until the finals on the 15th.

'Brave model mothers' honoured

Leadership hailed for promoting status of Bahraini women

Manama

A ceremony honouring award-winning model mothers was held under the patronage of Representative of His Majesty the King for Charity Work and Royal Charity Organisation (RCO) Board of Trustees' Chairman His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

The charity foundation organised the event, which was attended by Health Minister Faeqa Al Saleh, board of trustees' deputy chairman Shaikh Adnan bin Abdullah Al Qattan, secretary-general Dr Mustafa Al Sayyed and other officials.

Dr Al Sayyed addressed the ceremony, commending the directives of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa to take part positively in all initiatives promoting the status of Bahraini women.

He cited particularly the initiative which was launched by Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of His Majesty the King and Supreme Council for Women (SCW) President to recognise brave mothers' success stories and dedication in bringing up their children.



Ms Saleh, Dr Al Sayyed and other officials with Siddiqa Mohammed Ismail Al Mousawi, Afef Mahmoud Adnan Al Mousawi and Bahiya Abdulla Ali Al Khaja.

Ms Al Saleh, board of trustees' deputy chairman Shaikh Adnan bin Abdullah Al Qattan, secretary-general Dr Mustafa Al Sayyed then presented the prizes to model mothers Siddiqa Mohammed Ismail Al Mousawi, Afef Mahmoud Adnan Al Mousawi and Bahiya Abdulla Ali Al Khaja.

Ms Al Saleh and Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC) President Dr Abdulrahman Jawaheri also presented the model mothers with gifts.

A tribute was recently paid to Bahraini women in recognition to their achievements and dedi-

cation in serving the nation and building its bright future.

"I would like to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to every Bahraini woman who spares not efforts to serve her country, community and family," said Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of His Majesty the King and President of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW).

She made the statement on the eve of the annual Bahraini Women's Day, which falls on the 1st of December. The 2019 edition is being held under the theme

"Bahraini women in the fields of higher education and future sciences".

She stressed the importance of this national occasion, which was launched by His Majesty the King 11 years ago, thus becoming an official celebration among other national days.

The annual anniversary is being celebrated in tribute to Bahraini women in all walks of life - as mothers, educators, partners in national development and achievers in all productive sectors, dedicated more than ever to serving the nation and contribut-

ing to its progress and prosperity.

She commended all state institutions for activating programmes in the field of higher education and future sciences, praising women's academic achievements, which entitled them to hold leading positions, obtain high degrees and gain membership in international centres.

She lauded Bahraini women's growing interest in the fields of future sciences and contribution to support Bahrain's digital transformation and knowledge-based economy.

Twelve ideas qualify to the final stage of Fikra second edition

TDT | Manama

As part of the second edition of the Government Innovation Competition (Fikra), launched by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, 12 ideas have qualified for the final stage of the competition.

These finalists will now have to present their ideas to an evaluation committee, made out of Government Ministers, which will carefully evaluate all the proposals and select those projects that will end up being implemented.

In order to qualify to the final 12, each of the 40 initially selected ideas had to be presented to an evaluation committee in a three-minute pitch.

The selected ideas were: Government Procurement Platform Submitted by Ali Bukhammas and Abdulaziz Al-Buainain from the Civil Service Bureau, Ahmed Al-Kuwari from the National Bureau for Revenues, and Mohammed BuAli from the Ministry of Finance and National Economy.

The second one was Courts Application: Submitted by Ahmed Alaraifi from the Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister

Virtual Employment Center, the third one, was submitted by Iman Al Sammak and Ibtihal Al Shihabi from the Labour Market Regulatory Authority while AlHafeez, an application for productive families, was submitted by Maryam Hassan from the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

The National Technical Skills Development Programme was submitted by Ahmed Al Saffar from the Bahrain Training Institute.

The sixth one, National Strategy for Electric Vehicles, was submitted by Mona Al Alawi from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism.

EParkBH, which deals with the replacement of parking meters with an application, was submitted by Alia Al Qahatani from the Ministry of Interior, and Nouf Al Qahatani from the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

E-Sick Leave System was submitted by Ahmed Buhaza and Noora Muhanna from the Ministry of Finance and National Economy while 'Citizen's Digital Document Wallet' on Blockchain was submitted by Ali Al Aradi from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Government Vehicles Allocation App was submitted by Abdulrahman Essam from the National Audit Office and Energies (Taqat) was submitted by Elyas AbdulGhaffar from the Social Insurance Organisation.

ICRF Faber Castelle Spectra 2019 'a big success'

TDT | Manama

Over 4,000 children participated in 'Spectra 2019' organised by the Indian Community Relief Fund (ICRF).

The event was filled with so many entertainments from various states, depicting the extreme variety of Indian tradition, culture and folklore.

The results were announced and prizes were given away by the chief guest Indian Ambassador Alok Kumar Sinha, P K Chowdhary Second Secretary Embassy of India and ICRF officials.

The chief guest also honoured Sanjay Bhan of Faber Castelle, the title sponsor and Mr Salim of Viva, the presenter of the event.

The response from the schools of Bahrain during the last ten years has been overwhelming, the organisers said. The first carnival was held in the year 2009 with around 700 participants and last year during the 10th edition of the carnival, more than 4,500 students participated.

All participants were provided with drawing paper and materials at the venue. Top 50 winners in each age group received medals and certificates.

Around 30 schools including The Indian School, The



Organisers said around 4,000 students took part in the event and top 50 winners in each age group received medals and certificates.

Asian School, The New Indian School, Sacred Heart School, New Millennium School, New Horizon School, Al Noor Inter-

national School, Ibn Al Haytham School, AMA International School, Quality Education School, New Generation In-

ternational School, Philippine School, Al Naseem International School, Arabian Pearl Gulf School, Bahrain Indian School,

Hawar International School, Al Mahd Day Boarding School, Alrawabi School New Zing Kindergarten attended.

Life in jail for terrorists convicted of attacking cops, plotting attacks

Defendants were running a terror racket; plotted attacks across the Kingdom.

TDT | Manama

Thirty-one defendants accused in a terror case have been hit with tough jail terms with eight of them receiving life in prison each along with fines of BD100,000 each.

Meanwhile, the remaining defendants received sentences between 15 years and three years behind bars each.

According to court files, the defendants formed three terrorist cells and plotted to carry out attacks targeting vital areas in an effort to destabilise the country.

The first, second and third defendants were the masterminds of the cell and they recruited the other defendants.

It's said that the defendants assaulted police officers in a bid

to murder them using tools they bought, thanks to funds extended to them by the second and third suspects.

Prosecutors say that the defendants were also implicated in making videos inciting terrorism and vandalism.

Several defendants were held guilty in absentia as they are living in Iran.

A few days ago, Chief of Terror Crime Prosecution, Advocate-General Chancellor Dr Ahmed Al Hammadi announced that the first High Criminal Court yesterday issued verdicts against six terror suspects.

The suspects were found guilty of joining a terrorist group contrary to the provisions of the law and attempted explosion for terrorist purposes.

”
The defendants were also implicated in making videos inciting terrorism and vandalism.

PROSECUTORS

They were also charged with possessing and acquiring explosives and materials needed in their manufacture without a license from the competent authority, as well as of training on making and using explosives.

The court sentenced five suspects to life in prison, and was handed down a five-year jail term against another.

The six suspects were fined

BD500 each, and the seized items were confiscated.

According to the case documents, the Public Prosecution was notified by the General Directorate of Criminal Investigations and Forensic Evidence that the fugitive defendants abroad had instructed the suspects in Bahrain to receive money and explosives and use them to target vital economic facilities in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The suspects received the funds and the explosives, as well as the explosives and the materials needed for their manufacture.

The documents also revealed that the suspects had made explosives and monitored a number of banks' ATMs.

Moreover, two of them went

to the ATM of the Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait at Shaikh Isa Avenue in Manama, and planted an explosive device inside it.

The device, which did not explode, was spotted and seized.

While carrying out their acts, the suspects received guidance from and coordinated with fugitive terrorist elements outside Bahrain, the documents also showed.

The Public Prosecution relied in substantiating the accusations on verbal and technical evidences, including the witnesses' testimonies and the suspects' confession.

The Public Prosecution referred all of them, including three suspects in custody, to the first High Criminal Court, and ordered the arrest of the fugitive defendants.

Nearly 2,000 people registered for camping

TDT | Manama

Close to 2,000 people have registered for the upcoming camping season so far, it was revealed.

The Southern Governorate revealed that 1,967 have registered for the upcoming 2019-2020 camping season.

The Governorate made the announcement through its official social media channels.

The Governorate stated that it received close to 3,350 inquiries and suggestions through its mobile application for camping called Khayyem.

Meanwhile, 200 people visited the Governorates' help desk for help. The camping area now has 67 shops and five entertainment stores.

The Governorate stated that it organises awareness campaigns on safety precautions while camping in co-operation with the General Directorate of Civil Defence.

The Supreme Camping Season Committee has asked the campers to camp in the allocated areas, stressing that camps that are not registered or against the rules will be removed.

The committee has also directed that the campers must be above 21 years old to follow the security and safety requirements, stressing the need to register and receive the camping label before setting up the camp.

The campers are asked to place the label in a clear and prominent place.

Engagement in any political, charitable, cultural or competitive activity or gathering must have the approval of the Supreme Camping Season Committee, in co-ordination with the specialised authorities.

The committee emphasised the inadmissibility of the establishment of mosques and praying rooms in the permitted camping areas without its authorisation in co-ordination with the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowment so as to preserve the sanctity and cleanliness of places of worship.

The committee urged campers to maintain their safety by providing safety equipment in tents like a fire extinguisher and a first aid kit, not to use open fires or stoves inside tents and provide an independent venue for the kitchen.

Narrow escape for Bahraini youngster in road accident

● Traffic police arrived on the scene immediately and took the necessary procedures.

TDT | Manama

A Bahraini youngster had a great escape after his bike slammed into a pavement, splitting into two parts.

According to sources, the biker lost control of his bike, which skid on the road, leading to the accident.

The incident occurred in Zallaq. Sources said that the accident victim suffered minor injuries.

“The man was lucky to escape with minor injuries while the bike was totally damaged.”

Traffic police arrived on the scene immediately and took the necessary procedures.

The man was rushed to the hospital and the bike was removed from the road. Investigation has been launched into the accident.

The Kingdom has been experiencing light showers in the past few days and the Gener-



The mangled remains of the two-wheeler at the accident scene.

al Directorate of Traffic has warned motorists to be careful due to increased risk of acci-

dents.

The General Directorate of Traffic has urged drivers to be

cautious of the rain and follow the safety rules, including staying on proper lanes, not

exceeding the speed limits and keeping the safety distance between vehicles.

Asian jailed in assault case

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has sentenced an Asian man to one year behind bars while another was fined BD100 for attacking a fellow Asian man and causing him disability.

According to court files, the defendants got involved in a brawl with the victim following an altercation.

It's said that the first defendant, who was handed down a prison term, grabbed a plank and hit the victim on his hand.

Consequently, the victim reportedly suffered a four per cent disability in his hand as a

result of the attack.

The first defendant claimed that he assaulted the victim because he was negatively speaking about him.

“I asked him why he was negatively speaking about me, after which a quarrel occurred. It later converted into a physical fight,” the first defendant said.

“I punched his face and then I grabbed a plank and I wanted to beat his head by it. But he used his hand for protection,” he added.

The victim suffered injuries to his hand and eye, according to a medical report presented during the trial.

TDT | Manama

The Southern Municipal Council is planning to build a maternity hospital and has already submitted a proposal in this regard.

This move was announced by the Chairman of the Southern Municipal Council, Bader Al Tamimi.

Subsequently, the Ministry of Works, Municipal Affairs, Municipalities Affairs, and Urban Planning referred it to the Ministry of Health to provide its views. Southern Municipal Council member Talal Al Bashir opined that the hospital should be close to Zallaq.

Meanwhile, a youth centre could be established in the Southern Governorate after a

Southern Municipal Council plans maternity hospital

plot of land was allotted to it.

The proposal has been referred to the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning and the Ministry of Housing.

The proposal stated that the governorate required a youth centre because there was a lack of it.

“There is a lack of facility for the youth to practise their sports and hobbies,” the proposal stated.

Southern Municipal Coun-

cil Chairman Bader Al Tamimi stressed that youth are an important segment of society and the council hopes to support them in every-way.

A prominent proposal put forward by the Southern Governorate recently came to fruition as a park in the southern region. It has been equipped with special facilities catering to special needs.

A number of council members expressed their delight for the success. Khalid Janahi, a mun-

icipal council member from the Southern Municipal Council said that the initiative is an amazing example of becoming an inclusive society.

He praised the efforts of the municipality in taking such steps.

“The move comes with our belief that people with special needs are an important part of Bahraini society and the too have recreational needs that they want to experience,” the municipal council said in a statement.

Technocrat govt without Hariri backed in Lebanon

Change of stance on protesters' demand puts his FPM party odds with its ally Hizbollah

Beirut

Lebanon's Free Patriotic Movement will back a new government made up entirely of technocrats, but not with caretaker Prime Minister Saad Hariri at its head, its leader said, adding a further twist to a political crisis triggered by two months of anti-government protests.

Caretaker Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, who heads the Christian party founded by his father-in-law, President Michel Aoun, outlined its position at a press conference on Thursday night.

"Should Hariri insist on the 'nobody but me' approach, and should Hizbollah and Amal Movement hold on to a technopolitical government led by Hariri, we have no interest in partaking in such a Cabinet as it is doomed to failure," Mr Bassil was quoted as saying by Lebanon's National News Agency.

"The solution is clear, which is the formation of an effective rescue government, a government of experts whose members and head are specialists capable of restoring people's confidence, and who are backed by political forces and parliamentary blocs," he said.

Mr Bassil's statement reverses



Lebanese army soldiers clash with anti-government protesters as they attempt to block a highway during a protest at the Jal El Dib area north of Beirut.

his party's earlier opposition to the protest movement's call for established political leaders to make way for a government of technocrats. The protesters have also said they will not accept Mr Hariri as returning prime minister.

Mr Hariri resigned as prime minister on October 29 in re-

sponse to the protesters' demands.

The protesters accuse the country's politicians of corruption, failing deliver basic services and mismanaging the economy. Lebanon has been unable to access a US\$11 billion assistance fund pledged last year because the government has been un-

able to implement the reforms demanded by donor countries.

Mr Hariri has supported the call for a government of technocrats but remains the most likely candidate to head one. The country's top Sunni religious leader called Mr Hariri the preferred candidate, rejecting another proposed name.

Turkey summons US envoy over Armenian genocide vote



People demonstrate outside the US embassy, on December 13, 2019 in Ankara, one day after US congress formally recognised the 1915-1917 murder of up to 1.5 million Armenians as genocide.

Istanbul

Turkey summoned the US ambassador on Friday after the US Senate voted to recognise the 1915 killings of Armenians as genocide.

Deputy foreign minister Sedat Onal delivered the government's reaction to envoy David Satterfield, said the foreign ministry, after Turkish officials warned that the vote endangered relations.

American senators followed the House of Representatives in voting to recognise the killings of Armenians during the First World War as genocide, for which the Ottoman Empire – the forerunner of modern-day Turkey – bore responsibility.

Armenia claims 1.5 million died in the killings. Turkey says the number of deaths was

far lower and Turks also died, blaming the killings on the First World War.

The US is now in line with 30 other countries in recognising Armenia's claim of genocide.

A US embassy spokesman in Ankara however told AFP that the Senate vote had not changed the administration's position, pointing out that US President Donald Trump had stopped short of calling the killings genocide earlier this year.

The Congress resolution had been blocked several times by allies of Trump, who has sought a close relationship with NATO ally Turkey and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

During a meeting in Washington last month, Trump said he was a "big fan" of Erdogan despite opposition from many in the Congress to the red-carpet welcome.

Libya's Haftar announces 'decisive battle' for Tripoli

Tripoli

Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar announced a "decisive battle" for the capital Tripoli on Thursday, eight months after he launched an offensive to wrest it from the unity government.

"Zero hour has come for the broad and total assault expected by every free and honest Libyan," he said in a speech aired by the pro-Haftar Al-Hadath channel.

Dressed in military uniform, he announced "the decisive battle and the advance on the heart of Tripoli."

"Now move forward, each to his own goal," he ordered his

troops.

Since the fall and killing of longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi in 2011 in a NATO-backed uprising, Libya has been torn apart by violence between multiple armed groups, many of them backed by foreign powers.

Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army, which controls much of the country's east, launched an assault on April 4 to seize Tripoli from the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA).

Haftar, who is backed by the United Arab Emirates, says the GNA is backed by "terrorist" groups.

The GNA said Thursday that the situation was "under con-



The fighting in Libya has displaced some 146,000 people.

trol" and that its troops were holding their positions in the capital's south.

"We are ready to push back any more mad attempt by the Haftar putsch leader," said GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha on Libya Al-Ahrar television.

Haftar had foreseen a quick victory, but despite vowing in July that success was "imminent," his forces have remained bogged down on the outskirts of the capital.

At least 200 civilians and more than 2,000 fighters have been killed since the start of Haftar's assault on Tripoli, according to the United Nations.

The fighting has also displaced some 146,000 people.

Human rights chief stresses Saudi Arabia's openness at EU meet

Jeddah

Awwad Al Awwad, president of the Saudi Human Rights Commission (HRC), told EU members that the Kingdom has been an international leader in human rights obligations.

He met with 17 members of the EU's Political and Security Committee in the presence of the head of the Saudi mission to the EU, Ambassador Saad bin Mohammed Al Arifi on Thursday in Brussels.

"The Kingdom sought to protect and promote human rights and fulfilled its international obligations by submitting all

its international reports. This made it one of the 36 countries to do so out of 197 state parties. This was due to the support provided by King Salman to human rights," Al Awwad said.

"Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has made a qualitative leap and has led a reform, development, change and modernisation movement in all of the state's facilities and human rights in particular. The three past years have seen the taking of around 60 human rights-related decisions, with 22 of those aimed at empowering women.

"The Kingdom's Vision 2030 is at the forefront of these re-



Awwad Al Awwad, president of the Saudi Human Rights Commission (HRC), told EU members that the Kingdom has been an international leader in human rights obligations.

forms intended to focus on humans, the central element of development," he added, noting that "the vision included objectives related to human rights."

The HRC president said that Saudi Arabia "is open to the world and still looks forward to achieve more under its wise leadership. It seeks to achieve the principles and values of human rights and hopes they will become universal, which would promote the achievement of sustainable development and the protection and promotion of human rights."

Al Awwad stressed the Kingdom's interest in fighting terrorism.

world

Two dead as Russian carrier fire extinguished



The carrier's latest accident, a fire below decks, occurred during a scheduled refit in Murmansk

Moscow

Emergency workers and sailors have extinguished a blaze on the Russian navy's only aircraft carrier that has killed two people, the navy said yesterday.

The fire on board the flagship Admiral Kuznetsov started on Thursday.

One serviceman was found dead Thursday evening and the body of an officer was discovered Friday, Russia's Northern Fleet said in a statement to Russian agencies.

The second body was discovered in the location of welding works that are believed to have caused the accident. The navy said search operations were complete and the fire was out.

Officials have not specified the extent of damage on the vessel, which has suffered a string of accidents in recent years, amid rumours it might be beyond repair.

The Zvezdochka shipyard in Murmansk, where the carrier was undergoing a refit when the accident occurred, told TASS agency that a special navy commission would determine damages and responsibility.

Ten people were hospitalised Thursday due to smoke inhalation, officials said.

The fire broke out during work that was begun in April 2018 by Russia's United Shipbuilding Corporation. In October 2018 the ship suffered another accident when a crane collapsed onto its deck, killing one worker.

Russian daily Kommersant reported that the fire began when hot metal fell down a shaft onto garbage on a lower deck that included a piece of oily cloth.

The ship's fire suppression system had been dismantled during the refit, which was why the fire was able to spread, the newspaper said, without quoting its sources.

A probe was launched Thursday into possible construction safety violations.

Kommersant said that damage was mostly confined to cables that were scheduled to be replaced anyway.

The refit, reported to cost about \$1 billion, was scheduled following the carrier's deployment as head of a naval strike group off the Syrian coast.

The Admiral Kuznetsov was to be the first of a new fleet of Soviet aircraft carriers, but the Russian navy has been hit by a huge drop in funding since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

NZ completes daring volcano mission to retrieve bodies

● A total of 47 people were on the island during the eruption, hailing from Australia, the United States, Britain, China, Germany, Malaysia and New Zealand.

Whakatane | New Zealand

Elite soldiers retrieved six bodies from New Zealand's volatile White Island volcano on Friday, winning praise for a "courageous" mission carried out under the threat of another eruption.

At first light, two military helicopters set off from Whakatane airport for the offshore volcano, where an eruption Monday killed at least 16 people and severely injured dozens more.

The goal of the team from the bomb disposal squad was to recover the remains of eight people still on New Zealand's most active volcano, which sits semi-submerged 50 kilometres (30 miles) out to sea.

After a tense four-hour wait, while volcanologists monitored live seismic feeds for signs of another explosion, police said the majority of the bodies had been safely airlifted to a naval frigate anchored off the coast.

"Those staff showed absolute courage in order to ensure those six people were returned to their loved ones," police commissioner Mike Bush told reporters, saying they were operating in an "unpredictable and challenging" environment.

Bush said efforts to locate the two remaining bodies were



The elite team spent four hours on the still-active volcano, wearing heavy hazmat suits and breathing gear that restricted movement

ongoing, with divers searching nearby waters after a corpse was seen floating in choppy seas on Tuesday. Helicopters were also searching over the Bay of Plenty and Bush did not rule out a return to the island when conditions were safer.

Drone flights helped locate the six bodies on the caldera before the operation began and the six-strong team laboured to reach them in heavy hazmat suits and breathing gear that restricted movement.

Special forces commander Rian McKinstry said he was "incredibly proud" of the team, who had to deal with heat stress as they prepared the bodies to be airlifted out.

"It was a unique operation, but unique operations are what organisations like the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron gets involved in," he said.

'Absolute desperation'

On the eve of the operation,

GeoNet volcanologist Nico Fournier said the dangers facing recovery teams if an eruption occurred included magma, superheated steam, ash and cannonball-like rocks thrown from the caldera at supersonic speed.

As the military began their grim task, police took grieving families out near the volcano on a boat to perform a Maori blessing and locals chanted karakia, or prayers, on the shore as the island smouldered in the distance.

Despite the risk of an eruption inside 24 hours being put at 50-60 percent, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said those involved wanted to help grieving families.

"Today was all about reuniting them with their loved ones," she said, revealing she was on tenterhook for the four hours the military team was on the volcano.

"I felt the same anxiety that I imagine everyone did at that

point," she told reporters.

Many tourists who died on the island were Australians and Canberra's Foreign Minister Marise Payne said they had been affected by a catastrophic event.

"This is a time of absolute desperation and distress, and to every single one of those families and their friends and their loved ones, our hearts go out at this extraordinarily difficult time," she said.

The bodies on the island are thought to include New Zealand tour guide Hayden Marshall-Inman.

His brother Mark Inman had epitomised relatives' frustrations with stalled recovery efforts, criticising "red tape, bureaucracy" but on Friday he praised the daring recovery attempt.

"It's going to allow us to grieve and send our loved ones off in the manner they deserve," he told the New Zealand Herald.

Tropical Indonesia's tiny glaciers to melt away in a decade: study

Jakarta

Indonesia's little-known glaciers are melting so fast they could disappear in a decade, a new study says, underscoring the imminent threat posed by climate change to ice sheets in tropical countries.

As the COP 25 summit wraps up in Madrid, nations are struggling to finalise rules for the 2015 landmark Paris climate accord, which aims to limit global temperature rises.

Thousands of kilometres away, glaciers on a mountain range in Indonesia's Papua region -- and a handful of others in Africa and the Peruvian Andes -- are an early warning of what could be in store if they fail.

"Because of the relatively low elevation of the (Papua) glaciers... these will be the first to go," said Lonnie Thompson, one of the authors of the study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences this week.

"They are the 'canaries in the



While they're usually associated with colder-weather countries, the glaciers in Indonesia's Papua region are a key marker of the impact of rising global temperatures, researchers said

coal mine".

This summer, Iceland mourned the passing of Okjokull, its first glacier lost to climate change, amid warnings that some 400 others on the sub-arctic island risk the same fate.

Meanwhile, a team of researchers in Switzerland warned

that unchecked greenhouse gas emissions could see more than 90-percent of glaciers in the Alps disappear by the end of the century.

Accelerating melt-off from glaciers and especially ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica are driving sea level rises, threaten-

ing coastal megacities and small island nations. Glaciers are also a key water source for tens of millions of people.

Tropical glaciers?

While they're usually associated with colder-weather countries, the glaciers in Papua, an

Indonesian region on the western half of New Guinea island, are a key marker of the impact of rising global temperatures, researchers said.

"Tropical glaciers are mostly smaller and so their response time to variations in climate change is faster compared to larger glaciers and ice sheets," said Indonesia-based glaciologist Donald Permana, also an author on the study.

Earlier estimates suggested that Papua's glaciers have shrunk by some 85 percent in the past few decades.

This week's study said glaciers that once covered some 20 square kilometres have shrunk to less than half of one square kilometre. There has also been a more than five-fold increase in the rate of ice thinning over the past few years.

"The situation has reached worrying levels because ice formation is no longer happening -- only glacier recession," Permana said.

"The glaciers are in danger of disappearing within a decade or less," he added.

The melting has been exacerbated by the El Nino phenomenon, which causes warmer temperatures and reduced rainfall.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and planting more trees can probably slow down the ice recession in Papua," Permana said.

"However, we believe it'll be extremely difficult to keep them" from melting.

Aside from any environmental impact, their disappearance would also be a cultural loss for some indigenous Papuans who consider them sacred.

"The mountains and valleys are the arms and legs of their god and the glaciers are the head," said Thompson, a professor at Ohio State University.

"The head of their god will soon disappear."

SOCIETY



The British Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Roderick Drummond, visited the campus of Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - Medical University of Bahrain (RCSI Bahrain) in Busaiteen to meet with senior officials, including RCSI Bahrain President - Professor Sameer Otoom, Chief Operating Officer - Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, and Professor Alf Nicholson - Vice President for Academic Affairs/Head of School of Medicine.



BDF held a graduation ceremony at one of its units. Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant General Dhiyab bin Saqer Al Nuaimi, was briefed about the programme. He presented the graduates with certificates, and honoured top-achievers, and inaugurated a lecture hall in the same unit.



Al Noor International School celebrated the National Day of the Kingdom of Bahrain on Thursday, 12th December 2019 with programmes ranging from various cultural dances, national songs and a variety of competitions, aimed at the enhancement of the students' knowledge and skills. Mr. Mashood, Principal Mr. Amin Mohammad Ahmed Hulaiwah, the Head Teachers of the different sections of the school, coordinators, teachers and students.



The New Indian School W.L.L, Bahrain celebrated its 29th Annual Day with pomp and splendour. The event was held at the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam .Ms. Amal Al Kaabi, Director, Directorate of Private Education, Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain graced the occasion with their valuable presence. The School Principal, Mr. Gopinath Menon welcomed the gathering.



The Indian School Bahrain (ISB) celebrated Bahrain National Day with a colourful procession and patriotic fervour on Thursday at the Jashanmal Auditorium of the Isa Town Campus. It was a grand show of patriotic feelings put up by the Arabic Department of the school. Rukaiya A Rahim gave vote of thanks. Classrooms were decorated and students marched in traditional Bahrain attire in the procession waving Bahrain flags. The programme commenced with the recitation from the Holy Quran and the National Anthem of Bahrain.

ety



...ut the session's theoretical and practical unit.



Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo Group (YBA Kanoo) celebrated the occasion of the 48th National Day of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the 20th Accession Day of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa at Kanoo Tower in the Diplomatic Area. The celebration was attended by Khalid Mohamed Kanoo, Group Chairman, Fawzi Kanoo, Deputy Chairman, Kanoo Family members, and the Group's employees in Bahrain. The event included folk music played by a traditional band, the distribution of giveaways, as well as honouring long serving employees and employees of the year.



...nts' talents, while simultaneously providing them with an opportunity to exhibit their love, affection, admiration and patriotism towards the Kingdom of Bahrain. Present on the occasion were the school Chairman Mr. Ali Hasan, Director Dr. Muhammad



...graced the occasion as the Chief Guest while Dr. Sheriff Sahadulla, C.E.O., Royal Bahrain Hospital, Kingdom of Bahrain was the Guest of Honour. Mrs. Leela Thomas, wife of the Founder Chairman Late Dr. T. T. Thomas and Ms. Jemi Thomas, the Executive



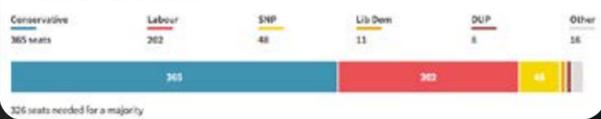
...the school. The National Flag was hoisted by ISB Chairman Prince S Natarajan in the presence of Asst Secretary Premalatha NS, EC Member Mohammad Khurshed Alam, Principal V R Palaniswamy, Vice Principals, staff and students of the school. HoD ...rain. A variety of cultural programmes including Traditional Bahraini Dance were organized.

BUSINESS

Boris bags bombastic win



Results after 650 constituencies declared



“Your hand may have quivered over the ballot paper before you put your cross in the Conservative box, and you may hope to return to Labour next time round, and if that is the case, I am humbled that you have put your trust in me

BORIS JOHNSON SAID IN HIS VICTORY SPEECH



Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn

Boris Johnson and his partner Carrie Symonds following the results

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

“Of course we hope every time that political forces that win elections in any country share the ideology of and aim to build good relations with our country. I don’t know how appropriate such hopes are in the case of the Conservatives,” said Russia’s Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov



GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL

“Congratulations, Boris Johnson, on your resounding victory. I look forward to working with you for the friendship and strong cooperation between our nations.”



US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

“Johnson’s win meant Britain and the United States would be free to strike a “massive” new trade deal after Brexit. This deal has the potential to be far bigger and more lucrative than any deal that could be made with the EU. Celebrate Boris.”



● Conservatives captured 364 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons

● Labour party won just 203 seats, its worst result in 84 years

Reuter | London

Prime Minister Boris Johnson won a resounding election victory on Friday that will allow him to end three years of political paralysis and take Britain out of the European Union by Jan. 31.

Brexit represents the country’s biggest political and economic gamble since World War Two, cutting the world’s fifth largest economy adrift from the vast trading bloc and threatening the integrity of the United Kingdom.

For Johnson, who campaigned on a vow to “Get Brexit Done”, victory was a vindication after anti-Brexit opponents tried one manoeuvre after another to thwart him during his first chaotic months in office.

“We will get Brexit done on time by the 31st of January, no ifs, no buts, no maybes,” a triumphant Johnson told supporters at a rally in London.

“Leaving the European Union as one United Kingdom, taking back control of our laws, borders, money, our trade, immigration system, delivering on the democratic mandate of the people,” he said, reprising the refrains of his successful Brexit referendum campaign of 2016.

Sterling soared, on course for one of its biggest one-day

EU warns of post-Brexit rival Britain

Brussels

European leaders warned yesterday that Britain could become a formidable rival, just hours after a big victory by Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s conservatives all but sealed the UK’s Brexit divorce.

But the EU chiefs, meeting in Brussels, also expressed relief that British voters had sent a clear message, bringing to an end the first phase of a crisis that has dogged Europe for more than three years.

Led by France and Germany, EU member states said they would pursue a swift trade deal with a tight deadline of end 2020, but insisted that any new arrangement must uphold European values and norms.

“There is no question of concluding a deal at any price,”



French President Emmanuel Macron warned of the possibility that London could become an ‘unfair competitor’

EU Council President Charles Michel told a news conference after the talks.

“Negotiations are over when the results are balanced and guarantee respect for the different concerns,” the former Belgian premier said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned that Britain would be an economic “competitor at our door” after it

leaves the EU and French President Emmanuel Macron saw a threat that London would become an “unfair competitor”.

This reflects concern that Britain could become a kind of “Singapore on Thames”, a trading hub where multinationals can gain access to the EU’s huge market without playing by its rules.

Brussels is also worried about the breakneck speed with which Johnson would like to strike a trade deal with Europe, as well as any British effort to undermine the unity among the remaining 27 members.

“The time frame ahead of us is very challenging,” said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who will pilot the talks with her chief negotiator, Michel Barnier.

‘Fed up’

In a text released after the talks, the 27 EU leaders called for “as close as possible a future relationship with the UK” while warning that it “will have to be based on a balance of rights and obligations and ensure a level playing field”.

Barnier will direct trade negotiations, which the leaders will follow closely “and provide further guidance as necessary, fully consistent with the EU’s best interest,” conclusions added.

The deadline currently stands at the end of 2020, but Johnson has until July 1 to ask for a one or two year extension to the post-Brexit transition, although he insisted throughout his campaign that he would never take this an emergency option.

If he refuses to extend the negotiation period, a no-deal Brexit will loom at the end of 2020, with Britain in danger of an abrupt cut in trade ties with Europe, endangering its economy.

With the clear win, leaders hailed the end of three and half years of Brexit chaos, including three delays.

“A lot of remainers voted for Johnson because they were fed up. They wanted clarifications,” said Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel.

And Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez added: “Politically, it is a loss ... but now we must have the best relations possible, and that is what we will do over the next 11 months.”

“We want relations to be as close as possible, but we’ll take care that they respect the rules of the single market,” he warned.

gains in the past two decades

Nearly half a century after Britain joined the EU, Johnson must now strike new international trade deals, preserving London’s position as a top global financial capital and keeping the United Kingdom together.

That last goal looks more challenging, with Scotland voting for a nationalist party that wants an independence referendum, and Irish nationalists performing strongly in Northern Ireland.

“Boris Johnson may have a mandate to take England out of the European Union. He emphatically does not have a mandate to take Scotland out of the European Union,” said Scotland’s first minister, Nicola Sturgeon.

Her Scottish National Party (SNP) won 48 of Scotland’s 59 seats in the national parliament.

No more delays

Johnson, 55, will now be able to lead Britain out of the EU by Jan. 31, 10 months after the original deadline of March 29, which was repeatedly pushed back as a gridlocked parliament failed to take any clear decisions on Brexit.

However, with the complex task of negotiating his country’s future relationship with the bloc still ahead of him, he may struggle to reunite a divided nation. Many voters regard him as a populist charlatan who played fast and loose with the facts and made unrealistic promises.

But his landslide win marks the ultimate failure of the anti-Brexit camp, who tried to thwart the 2016 referendum vote through complex legislative manoeuvres and could not convert huge anti-Brexit street protests into a coherent political strategy. With Labour split and

unclear on Brexit, the strongly anti-Brexit Liberal Democrats had hoped to do well but they won only 11 seats, a crushing result. Party leader Jo Swinson lost her seat in Scotland to the SNP and resigned.

With results in from all but one of the 650 parliamentary seats, the Conservatives had won 364, their biggest election win since Margaret Thatcher’s 1987 triumph.

Labour, led since 2015 by the veteran socialist Corbyn, had won just 203 seats, the party’s worst result since 1935.

Corbyn’s offer of nationalisations and big state spending failed to win over voters, while his equivocal position on Brexit left many angry and confused, especially in Red Wall areas where large majorities had voted for Brexit in 2016.

Corbyn said he would quit as Labour leader after a “process of reflection”. The party now faces a brutal battle between Corbyn’s socialist followers and his centrist critics.

Red wall Crumbles

In England, the Conservatives won large numbers of seats in the opposition Labour Party’s so-called Red Wall, declining industrial heartlands once hostile to Johnson’s party.

In a symbolic win, the Conservatives took Sedgefield, once held by former Prime Minister Tony Blair, Labour’s most successful leader. Educated at Eton, the country’s most elite private school, and known for his bombastic rhetoric, Johnson seemed to critics to be an unlikely candidate to win over working class communities, but Brexit helped him redraw the electoral map.

Stocks surge on Johnson election triumph, US trade deal reports

London

London stocks and the British pound jumped Friday after an election triumph for Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson that analysts said will bring clarity to Brexit proceedings and unlock stronger economic growth.

Other European stock markets -- although lagging buoyant London, which rose over two pc at one point -- also powered ahead, supported by reports that a US-China partial trade deal is imminent.

Wall Street opened with a slightly softer tone.

"Investors might have two early Christmas presents this week: a phase one trade deal between the US and China, and Brexit getting done," said Jasper Lawler, head of research at trading firm London Capital Group.

Johnson, whose governing Conservative Party swept to a decisive win, will now push ahead with Britain's scheduled exit from the European Union on January 31 as he seeks to dispel three years of uncertainty and political deadlock, with a post-Brexit, probably expansionary, budget planned in March.

"The UK general election has provided a clearer path towards a resolution to Brexit and looser fiscal policy, which should boost economic activity and push up sterling, UK equities, and Gilt yields," said Hubert de Barochez, an economist with Capital Economics.

But he also warned that "as long as there remains the possibility of something like a 'no deal', those gains ought to be limited".

European leaders welcomed also what appeared to be an end to Brexit paralysis, but also warned Britain against becoming "unfair competitor".

'Sigh of relief'

The sheer scale of Thursday's victory -- the biggest Conserv-



Traders work after the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Wall Street in New York City.

Key figures around 1430 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	▲ 1.8 pc at 7,400.86 points
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▲ 0.5 pc at 13,282.65
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ 0.6 pc at 5,917.94
EURO STOXX 50:	▲ 0.6 pc at 3,729.99
New York - Dow:	▼ 0.1 pc at 28,104.37
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.3327 from \$1.3161 at 2200 GMT
Euro/pound:	▼ at 83.79 pence from 84.57 pence
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.1163 from \$1.1130
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 109.36 yen from 109.31 yen
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 2.6 pc at 24,023.10 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	2.6 pc at 27,687.76 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 1.8 pc at 2,967.68 (close)
Brent North Sea crude:	▲ 1.6 pc at \$65.20 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 1.3 pc at \$59.95

ative majority since Margaret Thatcher's heyday in the 1980s -- sent the pound soaring to an 18-month dollar peak and to highs against the euro not seen since the June 2016 Brexit referendum.

Investors expressed relief that Johnson roundly defeated main opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party -- which had vowed to renationalise formerly state-owned companies.

"The threat to businesses from the Labour policies has

been removed and there has been a collective sigh of relief," said Maurice Pomery, founder of trading group Strategic Alpha.

The pound held at elevated levels on Friday but pulled back somewhat from the multi-month peaks forged overnight.

"Further delays to Brexit look unlikely now, meaning households and businesses can plan accordingly. This is exactly why the markets have reacted in the

way they have," Forex.com analyst Fawad Razaqzada told AFP by email.

Trade deal, finally?

Global investor sentiment was given another shot in the arm by reports that Beijing and Washington have reached a long-awaited trade deal.

US President Donald Trump is nearing a long-awaited pact between the world's economic superpowers that will see the cancellation of fresh US tariffs due at the weekend and the rolling back of previous measures, they said.

After months of high-level talks, negotiators presented the president with a deal that will see China ramp up its purchases of agricultural goods, Bloomberg News reported.

Trade tensions between the world's biggest economies have been a huge drag on global growth, with most countries being sucked into the stand-off, sending some into or close to recession.

"A trade deal, if agreed, could alleviate some of the growth concerns," said Razaqzada, adding that "this is a big deal given how important China is to the global economy".

Microsoft unveils Xbox Series X

● Microsoft showed off the tower-like new console for the first time and also unveiled a new wireless controller.

Los Angeles

Microsoft has unveiled a name and look for its new gaming console, the Xbox Series X, promising a still-more immersive experience as it fends off threats from streaming and rival Sony. The US company in June pointed to the technical abilities of its next-generation console when it announced "Project Scarlett", saying the new machine would be four times more powerful than the current Xbox One X, which launched in 2013.

At a presentation late Thursday at The Game Awards 2019, Microsoft showed off the tower-like new console for the first time and also unveiled a new wireless controller.

It said older titles would remain compatible with the Series X, while promising a new gaming experience "where worlds are even more lifelike,



immersive, responsive and surprising".

Pricing is yet to be announced but the release date was confirmed for the Christmas holiday season next year, when Sony's PlayStation 5 console is also scheduled to come out.

The current PlayStation 4 has outsold Xbox by more than two to one, but Microsoft will be hoping to take the battle back to Sony, which has yet to give any technical details for its own new console.

"The Xbox Series X is shaping up to possibly give Microsoft the crown of most powerful console ever made again, as it did with the Xbox One X,"

Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Matthew Kanterman said.

AI puts final notes on Beethoven's Tenth Symphony

Berlin

A few notes scribbled in his notebook are all that German composer Ludwig van Beethoven left of his Tenth Symphony before his death in 1827.

Now, a team of musicologists and programmers is racing to complete a version of the piece using artificial intelligence, ahead of the 250th anniversary of his birth next year.

"The progress has been impressive, even if the computer still has a lot to learn," said Christine Siegert, head of archives at Beethoven House in

the composer's hometown of Bonn.

Siegert said she was "convinced" that Beethoven would have approved since he too was an innovator at the time, citing his compositions for the panharmonicon -- a type of organ that reproduces the sounds of wind and percussion instruments.

And she insisted the work would not affect his legacy because it would never be regarded as part of his oeuvre.

The final result of the project will be performed by a full orchestra on April 28 next year in Bonn.

Tally Solutions outlines the journey of VAT in Bahrain

Focuses on the role of automated solutions for accurate compliance

TDI | Manama

Tally Solutions, a leading business software provider, hosted an event 'Final Countdown to VAT' in Bahrain to reiterate what businesses need to do to prepare themselves for the new tax regime as well as highlight the importance of automated solutions in value-added tax (VAT) compliance.

The event featured experts and speakers who addressed the important aspects of VAT and the role of automation and technology in easing the compliance process for businesses, especially the small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Thousands of businesses in the country have already registered for VAT, with more yet to register in days to come.

Vikas Panchal, Business Head-Middle East, Tally Solutions, said, "Since Bahrain's implementation of the standard 5 per cent



Vikas Panchal, Business Head- Middle East, Tally Solutions

VAT rate beginning January this year, we at Tally Solutions have been ramping up our efforts to assist SMEs in their transition.

The focus has been to ensure that they properly conform to the new rules and regulations. Our recommendations have

always been for businesses to employ a simple risk management approach to understand the likely operational impact of VAT as well as automate their respective accounting and taxation processes for hassle-free business operations. This event is another opportunity to emphasise the need to adopt the latest automated VAT-compliant solutions to achieve better business operational efficiency under the new taxation system."

The event also delved into the progress of the government's implementation of the law in various stages as well as VAT's impact on the country's overall development. Tally Solutions has tied up with relevant organisations and associations including ICAI to help empower business owners under the VAT regime and ensure that they fully understand the ins and outs of the taxation system. As an organisation, Tally's efforts in

Bahrain and the entire GCC have always been accelerated towards educating the businesses about VAT. Through 'Final countdown to VAT,' the aim was to provide entrepreneurs with an opportunity to talk to experts and clarify any that they may have around VAT.

The new VAT system can be a little confusing for some businesses and empowering them is the key to guaranteeing their smooth transition. As such, Tally has been conducting a series of VAT summits in Bahrain and other parts of the GCC region to assist them as they take the necessary steps towards correct and timely compliance. In collaboration with renowned chartered accountants, the company has already held more than 100 VAT-related events in Bahrain reaching out to over 1500 businesses across the country in last one year. They have also conducted 500 events in other

parts of the GCC. They are also airing a VAT knowledge video series in the country to simplify the complex regulations for better understanding.

In line with the same, 'The Final Countdown to VAT' was an effort to underscore the importance of using automated solutions, which can not only help in compliance but also ensure error-free accounting and seamless inventory management. The aim was to support Bahrain in its initiative to guarantee the successful roll-out of the new law as part of the government's economic diversification plan.

Tally Solutions is a leading business software solutions provider that helps small and medium businesses manage accounting, inventory and achieve tax compliance in a timely and effective manner. It has helped over 2,000 businesses in Bahrain be tax compliant and improve their business efficiency.

celebs

Taylor Swift

Kendall Jenner and Kylie Jenner

John Legend's daughter thinks Ariana Grande is a better singer

Los Angeles

Musician John Legend's daughter Luna says singer Ariana Grande is a better singer than him.

Legend appeared on "A Little Late with Lilly Singh", where he revealed that his and Chrissy Teigen's 3-year-old daughter Luna isn't the biggest fan of his music. Sitting down with host Lilly Singh, he shared that the toddler thinks Grande has got him beat, reports *eonline.com*.

"She told me one day, 'Dad, Ariana Grande is a great singer,'" you're not a great singer," he recalled.

Surprisingly enough, Legend said that it was his version of "Beauty and the Beast," which he sings with Grande, is what turned his daughter into an Arianator. He continued: "Eventually she became such a big fan of Ariana that she's, like, unfavourably comparing me to Ariana Grande."



Ariana Grande

Salman Khan opens up on leaving 'Bigg Boss 13'

Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan has opened up for the first time about reports that he is leaving season 13 of the popular reality show "Bigg Boss".

"A part of mine wants to cut that part and throw it out and the other part wants to keep it. And the latter is haavi (dominating) on the part that wants to throw it out," Salman told "Mumbai Mirror", according to a report in *spotboye.com*.

Salman added that hosting 10 of the 13 seasons of the show so far has been a learning experience. "It gets stressful, but I learn a lot. I get to know where the country is going, what is happening to values, morals, scruples and principles. We see it right there, with celebrities. The beauty is once they are out of the house they are not like that at all. It's not as if they are giving performances, the house makes them like that," he said.

The Bollywood superstar has reportedly not going to host the extended stretch of five weeks in the latest season owing to health reasons and also professional commitments that he had already been made.



Salman Khan

Taylor Swift slams 'toxic male privilege'

Los Angeles

Singer Taylor Swift has slammed "toxic male privilege" during her Billboard Woman of the Decade speech.

She accepted the first-ever Woman of the Decade Award at Billboard's annual Women In Music Event here on Thursday.

Swift, who earned five No. 1 albums along with countless accolades in the decade, acknowledged the evolution of being a woman in the music industry, the good and the bad, reports *usatoday.com*.

"Lately, there has been a new shift that has affected me personally and that I feel is a potentially harmful force in our industry. And as your resident loud person, I feel the need to bring it up," Swift said.

The singer addressed her public spat with music executive Scooter Braun, who owns the masters to her first six albums after buying Big Machine Label Group.



Kendall Jenner imitates sister Kylie in hilarious makeup video

Los Angeles

Model Kendall Jenner proved that she's better suited to walking the runway than putting on makeup and dressing up as younger sister and TV personality Kylie Jenner.

The 24-year-old model was seen in a clip for the upcoming Season 17 finale of 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' wearing a pink ombre wig and a full face of cosmetics from the beauty Kylie's brand, reported *Page Six*.

Kendall was seen laughing while messily applying layers of red liquid lipstick from Kylie Cosmetics all around her lips, face and even on her teeth. While applying the makeup she says, "Oh my god, it feels amazing on my skin, it feels so good."

Kendall also swatched Kylie's lipstick range 'One Wish' and ran it all over her arm and imitated exactly the same as what Kylie does to show off her new products. Later on, the model, Facetimed her sister, and said, "I'm Kylie."

Justin Bieber's new album on 'struggles' aims for early 2020 release

Los Angeles

Singer Justin Bieber has been posting what appears to be an album teaser on social media.

On Wednesday, Bieber took to Instagram Story to post the year "2020", which many fans believe is when he will be dropping new music. It's been four years since he released his last album, "Purpose", and it seems like he is now ready to make new music.

A mid speculation, a source told *eonline.com* that Justin's new album is "pretty much done and it will be out soon".

"They are putting on the finishing touches and aiming for early 2020," the source said.

"Justin is very excited to share new music and to get out on the road again. It's been a long time coming and he's feeling very ready."



Justin Bieber

Sonakshi Sinha introduces 'Munna Badnam Hua' challenge on Instagram

Mumbai

Promoting her upcoming action film 'Dabangg 3' actor Sonakshi Sinha on Friday posted a video of her dancing on the party track 'Munna Badnam Hua' and introduced the 'Munna Badnam' challenge.

The Dabangg actor uploaded the video on Instagram and further nominated actors Jacqueline Fernandez, Kartik Aaryan and Aayush Sharma.

The actor was seen aching the signature step of the track with the waist belt and captioned the post, "Why should Munna have all the fun??? Hum bhi karenge #Munnabadnamchallenge aur nominate karenge doston ko - @jacquelinef143, @kartikaaryan and @aayusharma!!! Aap bhi karo!!"

Coming 9-years after 'Munni Badnaam' featuring Malaika Arora, the remake, 'Munna Badnaam' is a delight as it features Salman Khan as the 'item boy'.

'Dabangg 3' is the third film the Dabangg franchise, which stars Sonakshi Sinha opposite Salman.



Sonakshi Sinha

Joaquin Phoenix shooting for Mike Mills' film in extreme cold

New York

"Joker" fame Joaquin Phoenix was spotted shooting Mike Mills directorial project in New York City's Central Park.

The film is yet to be titled. Several pictures are doing the rounds on the internet in which Phoenix was seen smiling and hanging out on a large rock outside with a young co-star, reports *dailymail.co.uk*.

Phoenix was wearing a dark green coat with black pants and shoes on the Central Park set, as a small amount of snow was seen on the ground.

He was also spotted chatting with the 55 year old director Mills, who last directed "20th Century Women" in 2016.

For his performance in "Joker", Phoenix is nominated For Best Actor At The Golden Globes.



Joaquin Phoenix

Deepika bags award for mental health awareness

Mumbai

Actress Deepika Padukone has been honoured by the 26th Annual Crystal Award for raising mental health awareness. She is the only Indian actress to featured in Davos 2020 winners list.

Honoured to receive the award, Deepika said: "With more than 300 million people suffering with the illness, depression is the leading cause of ill health and disability in the world today and a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease.

"It is therefore increasingly clear that, now more than ever before, we need to aggressively address what is an invisible and overlooked health and social burden. I am humbled and deeply honoured to be chosen for this year's Crystal Award and dedicate the award to the millions around the world who experience stress, anxiety and depression, and other forms of mental illness."



Deepika Padukone

An old soul celebrating 30 years: Gigid Hadid on Taylor Swift's birthday

Los Angeles

As Taylor Swift turned 30 on Friday her friend and fashion model Gigi Hadid took to Instagram to wish the 'Love Story' singer on her birthday.

Hadid posted two pictures with the singer and also posted a video where Hadid was seen cheering for Swift while she performed on stage.

In one picture the two friends were all decked up and were seen posing while in the other one, the beauties were seen chilling by the beach. "My T! An old soul celebrat-

ing 30 years here ... and what a phenomenon you are. It's rare someone can be inimitable yet still make hearts feel at home with innate generosity. I love you and can't wait to celebrate you sister !!!! HAPPY BDAY@taylorswift," the supermodel captioned the picture.

The 'Love Story' singer started singing professionally at the age of 14 and made people fall in love with her voice and 'fearless'-ness.

With over 600 international nominations registered under her name, the singer has won seven grammy awards in her 16 year-long career.



Gigi Hadid

SPORTS

Schumacher, Viscaal win in MRF Challenge

● David Schumacher claimed a thrilling late victory in race two after starting fifth on the grid

● Bent Viscaal won the first race after taking the lead on the very first lap and holding on until the finish

TDT | Manama

David Schumacher and Bent Viscaal claimed a win apiece in the weekend's first two races of the MRF Challenge yesterday at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), held in support of the FIA WEC Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain.

Schumacher won race two after Viscaal beat him earlier in



Race one winners Viscaal (centre), Schumacher (left) and Eriksen on the podium

the day for the race one victory. Schumacher, son of former Formula 1 driver Ralf Schumacher and nephew of Michael Schumacher, claimed a thrilling

late victory. The German started from fifth on the grid and was only able to move into the lead on the final lap to take the chequered flag in dramatic fashion.



David Schumacher crosses the finish line to win the second race of the day in the MRF Challenge

He won the 10-lap sprint in a total race time of 20 minutes 24.266 seconds. He finished 1.702 seconds ahead of Dutch youngster Viscaal while Austral-

ian Dylan Young took the other podium step after going 1.728s off the pace.

Josh Mason of Great Britain was fourth, Reece Ushijima of

Japan fifth and Valdemar Eriksen of Denmark sixth.

Earlier yesterday, Viscaal won the first race after taking the lead on the very first lap and holding on until the finish.

He completed the nine-lap sprint in 23:52.460.

Pole-sitter Schumacher finished as the runner-up. He dropped to third on lap one but was able to move up to second position on lap six.

Eriksen claimed the final podium place 6.548s behind. He started from sixth but did well on the first lap before battling for second with Schumacher.

Rounding out the top six finishers on the final classification were Young, Mason and Ushijima.

Another two MRF races will be held today, with the first starting at 9.05am and the other at 11.10am.

Koehler wins Porsche race two after Hanses takes season opener



Winners of a race with officials on the podium

TDT | Manama

Leon Koehler narrowly missed out on a double yesterday in the weekend's first two races of the Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East, held in support of the FIA WEC Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain at Bahrain International Circuit.

Koehler won race two but was the runner-up of race one after brilliantly battling back from stalling at the start. Fellow-German Julian Hanses thus took

the chequered flag in the opening sprint.

In race two, Koehler won from pole with a comfortable 7.784-second gap from runner-up Saul Hack from South Africa, while Berkay Besler from Turkey was third 8.068s back.

All three were top in both the overall classification and in the Pro class.

The ProAm category was clinched by Jesse Van Kuijk from the Netherlands ahead of



Shaikh Jaber in action en route to winning the Am class

Team Bahrain's Shaikh Ali Al Khalifa, while Team Bahrain's other participant Shaikh Jabar Al Khalifa won the Am class.

Meanwhile, Hanses clinched the narrowest of victories in the first race. He won by just 0.004 seconds, while third-placer Besler was just 0.293s behind.

JB Simmenauer finished fourth while Richard Wagner rounded out the top five, all of whom were in the Pro class.

Taking the ProAm win was

Van Kuijk while first in the Am category was Shaikh Jaber.

A third race will take place at 1.10pm today to wrap up the season-opening round of their 2019/2020 campaign.

The winners were awarded in a podium ceremony attended by BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa and McLaren Racing Chairman Shaikh Mohammed bin Essa Al Khalifa.

Klopp agrees new deal with Liverpool until 2024

AFP | London

Jurgen Klopp has agreed a contract extension with Liverpool until 2024, the runaway Premier League leaders announced on Friday.

Klopp, who moved to Anfield in 2015, guided Liverpool to Champions League glory in June and they are currently eight points clear at the top of the Premier League.

"For me personally this is a statement of intent, one which is built on my knowledge of what we as a partnership have achieved so far and what is still there for us to achieve," the 52-year-old Klopp told Liverpool's official website.

"When I see the development of the club and the collaborative work that continues to take place, I feel my contribution can

only grow."

A statement from owners the Fenway Sports Group (FSG) said Liverpool had taken "giant strides in re-establishing themselves as one of world football's powerhouses" under the German.

During Klopp's first campaign at Anfield, Liverpool reached the finals of both the League Cup and Europa League but ended the season empty-handed.

They lost 3-1 to Real Madrid in the 2018 Champions League final but regrouped and became European champions for a sixth time after a 2-0 win against Tottenham in Madrid this year.

Liverpool lost just one match in the Premier League last season, racking up 97 points -- the best in the club's history -- but missed out on the title by a solitary point to Manchester City.

So far this season, Klopp has overseen Liverpool's surge to the top of the Premier League, where they currently sit eight points clear after 15 wins from their opening 16 matches.



Jurgen Klopp

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Saudi Arabia to stage first women's pro golf event

AFP | Paris

Saudi Arabia will host its first professional women's golf tournament in 2020 with a prize fund of \$1 million, the Ladies European Tour (LET) announced.

The Jeddah Royal Greens Golf and Country Club will stage the tournament from March 19 to 22, featuring three-time Tour winner Carly Booth.

Booth and four of her fellow professionals have agreed

to act as ambassadors for the tournament.

"I'm looking forward to being part of history with the other ladies on the tour," said 27-year-old Booth.

"I have visited Saudi Arabia on a number of occasions and been lucky enough to spend some time teaching local women and girls how to play."

The men's European Tour made its first foray into Saudi Arabia earlier this year.

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Rebellion power to pole

Bruno Senna, Gustavo Menezes and Norman Nato steer Rebellion Racing to top the qualifying for Bacpo 8 Hours of Bahrain at BIC

Team LNT takes second grid spot

TDT | Manama

Rebellion Racing stormed to pole position yesterday evening for the FIA WEC Bacpo 8 Hours of Bahrain, taking place today at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

The trio of Bruno Senna, Gustavo Menezes and Norman Nato steered their no. 1 Gibson-powered Rebellion R13 to the top of the Qualifying timesheet with a best average lap time of one minute 42.979 seconds.

In the World Endurance Championship's (WEC) Qualifying format, the average time of each car's two drivers who participated in the session determines their position on the start grid.

Team LNT claimed the other front row place after going just 0.144 seconds behind in their no. 5 AER-powered Ginetta G60-LT-P1, driven by Charles Robertson, Ben Hanley and Jordan King.

Toyota Gazoo Racing's pair of TS050 Hybrids followed in third and fourth. Their no. 8 car of Kazuki Nakijima, Sebastien Buemi and Brendon Hartley were 0.518s off the pace, while their sister team in the no. 7 car featuring Jose Maria Lopez, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi were 0.863s back.

Rounding out the top five was Team LNT's other Ginetta -- the no. 6 car of Guy Smith, Chris Dyson and Michael Simpson, who were 0.908s from the leaders' best average lap.

Each of the top five were competing in the WEC's top-tier LMP1 class.

Taking the leading starting position in the LMP2 category were United Autosports' Philip Hanson, Felipe Albuquerque and Paul Di Resta, who drove their no. 22 Gibson-powered Oreca 07 to a fastest average lap of 1:45.357. Jackie Chan DC Racing's Ho-Pin Tung, Gabriel Aubry and Will Stevens followed in their no. 37 Oreca 07, while G-Drive Racing's Jean-Eric



The Rebellion Racing R13 speeds down the track en route to taking pole for the Bacpo 8 Hours of Bahrain



The Gibson-powered Oreca 07 of JOTA team in action

Vergne, Roman Rusinov and Job Van Uitert were third in their no. 26 Gibson-powered Aurus 01.

The Porsche GT Team of Richard Lietz and Gianmaria Bruni captured pole in the LMGTE Pro class. Driving their no. 91 Porsche 911 RSR-19, the pair clocked a fastest lap of 1:55.485.

Their sister squad of Kevin Estre and Michael Christensen followed in the no. 92 car with a best lap just 0.060 seconds from the leaders. AF Corse's James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi in the no. 51 Ferrari 488 GTE Evo were third.

In the LMGTE Am category, Team Project 1's no. 57 Porsche 911 RSR took their class' leading starting position with an average lap time of 1:57.602. The team features Ben Keating, Larry ten Voorde and Jeroen Bleekemolen.

They were ahead of AF Corse's no. 54 Ferrari 488 GTE Evo driven by Thomas Flohr, Francesco Castellacci and Giancarlo Fisichella and the Dempsey-Proton Racing no. 88 Porsche 911 RSR with Khaled Al Qubaisil, Thomas Preining and Adrien De Leener behind the wheel.

Earlier yesterday, Toyota Gazoo Racing were fastest in what was the first-ever wet session of the WEC at BIC. Buemi, Nakijima and Hartley steered their no. 8 Hybrid to a fastest lap of 1:44.285.

It was the first time Toyota set the pace this weekend in the WEC's three practices held ahead of today's big eight-hour race.

It was the first time Toyota set the pace this weekend in the WEC's three practices held ahead of today's big eight-hour race.

BIC National Day Festival

There continues to be plenty for the whole family to enjoy today at BIC's vending area, located behind the Main Grandstand, in night two of the BIC National Day Festival.

One of the major attractions will be a classic car show in the marquee located near the BIC Welcome Centre.



Toyota Gazoo Racing were fastest in the weekend's third Free Practice in what was the first-ever wet session of the WEC at BIC

Today's Racing Schedule

Time	Series	Session
9.05am	MRF	Race 3
11.10am	MRF	Race 4
12noon	FIA WEC	Pit Walk
12.10pm	FIA WEC	Autograph Session
1.10pm	Porsche	Race 3
3pm	FIA WEC	Bacpo 8 Hours of Bahrain



The Porsche 911 RSR-19 of Porsche GT Team in action at BIC

There will also be kids' entertainment, cultural shows, a BDF fly-pass, a National Guard parachute display, roaming performers, music from the Ministry of Interior Police Band, and the biggest fireworks display in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which will start at 7pm.

The weekend's second of four nightly concerts also takes place tonight, featuring Mohammed Al Salem, which is scheduled for an 8.30pm start.

The BIC National Day Festival is being held with the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

All this plus the Open Paddock experience can be enjoyed at BIC all day today.

Tickets are just BD1 and they can be purchased at the gate.

For further information on the FIA WEC Bacpo 8 Hours of Bahrain and the BIC National Day Festival, visit BIC's official website www.bahraingp.com or call the BIC Hotline on +973-17-450000. Also, follow BIC's official social media accounts on Facebook ([facebook.com/OfficialBahrainInternationalCircuit](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBahrainInternationalCircuit)), Twitter (@BAH_Int_Circuit), Instagram ([instagram.com/bah_int_circuit](https://www.instagram.com/bah_int_circuit)) and YouTube ([youtube.com/bahrainbic](https://www.youtube.com/bahrainbic)) for regular updates.

Champions Toyota confident from row two heading into eight-hour battle

TDT | Manama

Reigning World champions Toyota Gazoo Racing, who triumphed the last time the World Endurance Championship (WEC) raced in Bahrain in 2017, are upbeat ahead of today's Bacpo 8 Hours of Bahrain after sealing the second row on the grid.

Toyota are a record three-time winners at BIC. They won in 2013 and 2014 to go with their 2017 triumph -- all of which were in six-hour events.

They now face an uphill task in their pair of TS050 Hybrids as they start behind front-row sitters Rebellion Racing and Team LNT.

"Third is not a bad position for us and it's better than expected," said Kazuki Nakijima, who shares Toyota's

no. 8 car with Brendon Hartley and Sebastien Buemi.

"It was a good day and for the race we have some confidence now. I know the other cars are quite fast but it is eight hours so we need to be calm and do our best until the end."

Hartley added: "I am really happy with my lap. The car felt very good and we were surprised to be so close to the competition. I have a nice feeling and I think we can fight at the front in the race."

As expected, qualifying was not easy for the two Hybrids as they battled against heavy success handicap, which reduces hybrid and fuel energy allocations per lap. Hartley's fastest lap of the session, one minute 42.986 seconds, was 3.902 seconds slower than



Toyota's no. 8 Hybrid in action at BIC

the pole position time for WEC's last visit in 2017.

Mike Conway and Hartley were at the wheel of the no. 7 and no. 8 respectively for the first flying laps of the session, on new Michelin tyres. They

waited in the pits for a gap in the traffic and took advantage of the clear air on a warm, dry Bahrain evening.

Both car crews fought to get the best possible starting slot but put the priority on race performance, choosing not

to fit new tyres for the second flying laps in order to save a set for tonight's eight-hour contest. Jose Maria Lopez took over the no. 7 and was set for a quick lap until losing time at turn eight, leaving Nakijima to earn third place for the no. 8.

"I am pretty disappointed with qualifying because I had problems at turn one and eight which basically killed the lap," said Conway. "It wasn't great but it's good to see we were pretty close to the non-hybrid cars over one lap."

Lopez commented: "Normally we should have been faster than the sister car considering the handicap but we were behind. The position in qualifying doesn't matter so much; if we feel confident in the car we can challenge."