

Bahrain hold Australia

A fighting Bahrain held Australia to a 1-1 draw last night but it was not enough to prevent their elimination from the 2020 AFC U23 Championship in Thailand.

P16

Why the Tehran regime's warmongering is hastening its own demise?

THE DAILY **tribune**



J.Lo would love to live in somewhere other than the US 14 CELEBS

WORLD 6 Canada yet to decide if it will pay Harry, Meghan security costs

Heavy security presence in Khartoum

Heavy gunfire broke out in Sudan's capital yesterday as several agents of the National Intelligence and Security Service (Niss) rebelled against a restructuring plan for the body, prompting a closure of the international airport.

A teenager was wounded when shots were fired at some bases of the agency, now rebranded the Directorate of General Intelligence Service. The Niss was a security arm loyal to longtime president Omar Al Bashir who was removed from office by the military amid protests in April.

The violence was the biggest confrontation so far between the old guard and supporters of the new administration, which helped topple Al Bashir in April after 30 years in power.

Niss agents also shut two small oilfields in Darfur in protest about their severance packages, a government source told Reuters. They had an output of around 5,000 barrels per day.

Iraqi militias meet in Iran

Iraqi militia chiefs met in Iran this week to resolve a power struggle and differences on how to counter Washington after the US killed a senior operative who oversaw Iranian activities in Iraq.

The January 3 killing of Qassem Suleimani brought into the open disputes among Tehran's allies in Baghdad. Suleimani was Iran's top external enforcer and oversaw pro-Iranian militia across the region.

Dust haze



A thick haze caused by Shamal winds (northwesterly winds) shrouded the Kingdom's skyline yesterday, impacting horizontal visibility as winds kicked up dust. Asthmatic and skin-allergy patients have been advised to stay indoors by health experts. The Meteorological Directorate has forecast cool weather with chances of temperature further dropping for today.

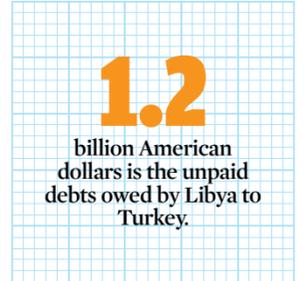
Erdogan's \$2.7bn Tripoli cash grab

Istanbul

Recep Tayyip Erdogan has struck a deal with the UN-backed Libyan government for Tripoli to pay \$2.7bn in compensation for debts owed to Turkey before Libya's nine-year civil war began.

Turkish companies were heavily involved in lucrative infrastructure and construction projects in Libya from the 1970s, but they collapsed when dictator Muammar Qaddafi was removed in 2011 and the country descended into chaos.

Now, as peace talks in Moscow edge toward an agreement between warring factions in Libya, the Turkish president is maneuvering to restore business links between the two countries. In addition to compensation for Turkey's losses,



the new deal paves the way for new contracts in the energy, housing and construction sectors.

The agreement is expected to be signed in February. The exact amounts have still to be negotiated, but they are thought to include a \$1bn letter of guarantee, \$500m in compensation for looted or damaged machinery and other equipment, and unpaid debts of \$1.2bn.

Protests surge again

Anger returns to streets of Lebanon as lira plunges in value against dollar

● **Angry protesters returned to the streets on Tuesday to complain about unemployment and financial meltdown.**

● **President Michel Aoun said obstacles remained to the creation of a new administration.**

Beirut

Protesters in Lebanon burned tires, blocked roads and brought traffic in Beirut to a standstill yesterday in renewed demonstrations against economic hardship and government corruption.

In Tripoli, protesters clashed with army and internal security forces. An officer was hit in the head by a stone, and a protester was hit by a rubber bullet.



Anti-government protesters smash a bank window, during ongoing protests against the Lebanese central bank's governor and against the deepening financial crisis, at Hamra Trade Street, in Beirut.

The demonstrations, which began in October and led swiftly to the resignation of Saad Hari-ri as prime minister, had been scaled back in recent weeks amid negotiations to form a new government.

But angry protesters returned to the streets on Tuesday to complain about unemployment and financial meltdown, as the Lebanese lira plunged in value to 2,500 against the US dollar, compared with the official ex-

“We gave them a month to form a new government, so they thought we were weak and they went back to their corruption.”

PROTESTER

change rate of 1,515.

“We gave them a month to form a new government, so they thought we were weak and they went back to their corruption,” said one woman standing on the Ring Bridge with protesters waving Lebanese flags.

“They proved that they do not care about the people or the economic collapse that the country is experiencing, so we decided to return to the streets.”

Another activist said: “We want a government that will save the country from the abyss

it has fallen into.” One woman from Tripoli complained: “I do not work, my children are unemployed, politicians do not care.”

Protesters from Beirut's southern suburbs joined a demonstration outside the Central Bank, chanting against the governor and his policies of restricting dollar transactions and deposit withdrawals.

Others gathered outside the Beirut home of the newly designated Prime Minister, Hassan Diab, calling for his resignation less than a month after he was appointed.

President Michel Aoun said obstacles remained to the creation of a new administration.

“Although we do not have the luxury of delay, the formation of this government requires the selection of qualified candidates, worthy of the confidence of both the people and the Parliament, which in turn requires time,” he said.

GHOSN ESCAPE

Yamaha warns musicians not to climb in instrument cases

Tokyo

Yamaha Corporation, has warned people not to try and squeeze inside musical instrument cases after reports former Nissan Motor boss Carlos Ghosn fled Japan concealed inside in one.

“We won't mention the reason, but there have been many tweets about climbing inside large musical instrument cases. A

warning after any unfortunate accident would be too late, so we ask everyone not to try it,” the Japanese company said in a post on its Twitter account on Jan 11.

Ghosn, who is accused of hiding earnings, transferring investment losses to Nissan and misappropriating company funds, escaped from Japan at the end of December for Lebanon. Japanese authorities have vowed to pursue him and have

“We won't mention the reason, but there have been many tweets about climbing inside large musical instrument cases.”

COMPANY STATEMENT

issued an international wanted notice for him and his wife Carole.

The former auto executive and fugitive has declined to reveal how he slipped past Japanese airport security, or confirm media reports accomplices smuggled him through a private jet lounge in Kansai Airport in western Japan hidden in large speaker box that was too large to fit through the facility's X-ray scanner.



02 Diplomatic Day marked

03 Stranded Bahrainis 'struggling' to return home from Iraqi cities

04 Many cafeterias 'continue to violate' rules for food outlets

210 fils (includes VAT)



Diplomatic Day marked

His Majesty highlights Kingdom's diplomatic strides



His Majesty addresses the audience.



His Majesty receives senior government officials and diplomats.



His Majesty receives Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Dr Shaikh Abdulla.



Shaikh Khalid addresses the audience.

● **HM the King lauded success of Bahrain's balanced diplomacy and flexible and decisive policies which helped confront challenges and solve many crises.**

Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received at Sakhr Palace yesterday Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa who introduced to him members of the diplomatic corps accredited to Bahrain, senior officials and Foreign Ministry

employees marking the Diplomatic Day which is observed on January 14, 2020.

Addressing the audience, HM the King praised the role of Bahrain's diplomacy in boosting the kingdom's relations with other countries and promoting foreign policy on the basis of mutual trust, good neighbourliness and respect of common interests to foster global stability and peace.

The King stressed that the Kingdom's foreign policy has set a "special model" by relying on principles and values stemming from the human culture and the Bahraini personality that is known for its civilised communication with the world with its varied cultures and civilisations.

HM the King lauded success of Bahrain's balanced diplo-

macy and flexible and decisive policies which helped confront challenges and solve many crises to assert full commitment and unwavering respect to international laws and conventions.

His Majesty hailed the tireless efforts of the Bahraini diplomatic competencies to maintain the Kingdom's active and interactive role in dealing with Arab and Islamic issues, strengthening its international relations and preserving Bahrain's status as a civilisational beacon of peace, rapprochement and tolerance.

The Foreign Minister extended heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the meeting to mark the golden jubilee of institutional diplomatic work in Bahrain.

He took pride in the Diplomatic Day allocated by HM the

Kingdom's foreign policy has set a special model by relying on principles and values stemming from the human culture.

HIS MAJESTY

King to celebrate the diplomatic community in recognition of its remarkable national role in carrying out the royal directives to protect national achievements and interests.

He commended the unwavering royal support to Bahrain's diplomacy which enabled the Kingdom's foreign policy to adopt a unique model based on balance and moderation. He

also lauded the royal reform approach which turned Bahrain into a modern and prosperous country advocating peace and coexistence.

The Foreign Minister underlined the kingdom's well-defined and active foreign policy to boost relations with brotherly countries and allies and work out solutions to may crises.

He underscored the principles of mutual respect, dialogue, constructive coexistence and fruitful openness on which Bahrain's foreign policy have always been based.

He also expressed thanks and respect to HM the King for the trust given to him over the past fifteen years as a Foreign Minister.

He also extended thanks and

respect to His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier for their tremendous support and valuable directives. He pointed out the inspirational role of Deputy Premier Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, the pioneer of Bahrain's diplomacy.

The Foreign Minister congratulated Dr Abdullatif Al Zayani on being chosen to continue spearheading Bahrain's diplomacy to safeguard the Kingdom's interests and sovereignty.

The Foreign Minister presented HM the King with a commemorative gift on the occasion.

HH Shaikh Khalid approves prizes for the 'GCC Strongest Man Championship'

TDI | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee, has recently approved the awards of the GCC Strongest Man "Heavyweight" Championship, which is scheduled to be held next April at Bahrain International Circuit.

HH Shaikh Khalid has specified the awards to be USD130,000 in total; USD100,000 for the first place winner, USD20,000 for the second place winner and USD10,000 for the third place winner.

Commenting on the occasion,

HH Shaikh Khalid stated: "The GCC Strongest Man Championship comes as a continuation of the successes achieved in the previous editions of the championship. The championship was the focus of attention of the media and enthusiasts of strength and endurance sports. This success came after we adopted the integration of traditional games in the championship, with the aim of continuing efforts to preserve the heritage of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the countries of the region."

His Highness called upon the youth in the GCC region to register and participate in the championship. At the same time HH Shaikh Khalid said he is looking forward for achieving



HH Shaikh Khalid

the goals the championship was launched for and are set by His Highness, such as harnessing sport in support of relationships and strengthening the bonds of love, brotherhood and cooperation between the people of the GCC States.

For its part, the organising committee of the champion-

ship, represented by the Media Office of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, announced that it will pay visits to the brotherly GCC countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman, to meet the youth who are interested in taking part in the championship.

The Media Office of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa also announced that a website has been allocated for the registration for the championship on www.gccstrongestman.com, in addition to launching an official page for the championship on Instagram (@gccstrongestman), in which inquiries will be received through direct messages.

Co-operation discussed



BDF Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, received Finance and National Economy Minister Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. The Commander-in-Chief discussed a number of issues related to areas of co-operation and co-ordination between the BDF and Finance Ministry.



Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa has praised the outstanding partnership between the public and private sectors to promote the culture of reading and produce a conscious, tolerant and open community. The Deputy Premier was speaking as he received yesterday Board Chairman of Al Ayam Press and Publishing Najeeb Yaqoob Al Hamar, members and the Editor-in-Chief who expressed thanks and respect to him for patronising the opening of the 26th session of Al Ayam Cultural Book Festival which was organised by the institution recently. The Deputy Prime Minister praised commitment of Al Ayam Press and Publishing to organising the festival for more than 25 years, lauding the massive turnout of visitors from Bahrain and abroad. He wished the organisers every success in organising the festival in the future and boosting the cultural scene in Bahrain.

Stranded Bahrainis 'struggling' to return home from Iraqi cities

MPs urge govt intervention to bring all Bahrainis home from Iraq

● The MPs stated that they have been contacted by families who said that their relatives are in Iraq, struggling to come back.

● Bahrain Embassy in Iraq said that it has been receiving calls from citizens, who wanted to return to the Kingdom.

TDT | Manama

Bahraini citizens stranded in Iraq are struggling to come back, according to parliamentarians.

The lawmakers said that there were many Bahrainis caught in unsafe places in Iraq and are unable to return to the Kingdom.

They urged the government to speed up efforts to send all Bahrainis home as Iraq is moving to more instability.

The MPs who submitted the proposal include Ahmed Al Damistani, Zainab Amir, Fadhel Al Sawad, Ahmed Al Saloom and Hamad Al Kooheji.

The MPs stated that they have been contacted by families who



The lawmakers claimed that many Bahrainis were unable to return to the Kingdom.

said that their relatives are in Iraq, struggling to come back.

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

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

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

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

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

the ministry stated.

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

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All Bahraini citizens in Iraq will receive required attention and support.

BAHRAIN EMBASSY

whole world," it added.

Iraq's parliament has already urged the government to remove thousands of American troops from the country, stepping up pressure over the US killing of a top Iranian general in Baghdad.

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

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

Al Muhandis.

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

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

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

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

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

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

House rejects plan to stop sale of energy drinks to under 18

TDT | Manama

Plan to restrict sale of energy drinks to youngsters under 18 years old has been rejected by the Parliament. The rejected proposal called for imposing a fine as high as BD2,000 on shops that sell energy drinks to youngsters under 18 years.

The proposal, which was intended to improve the health of the youth of the country came under intense debate in the parliament yesterday.

However, the Parliamentary Services Committee recommended that the council reject the proposal as there are regulations already in place.

"There is no need for a law; there is the Gulf technical regulations that we follow and a

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We follow Gulf technical regulations and a special law is not required in this case.

SERVICES COMMITTEE

special law is not required in this case."

The proposal was earlier approved by the Shura Council.

The council approved fines ranging from BD100 to BD2,000 for non-compliance with the proposed law.

It also instructed sellers of energy drinks to put up a clear sign that those under 18 cannot buy energy drinks.

The proposal also included article that prohibited manufac-

ture, import or trade energy drinks products that are not compatible with the regulations.

The council stated that due to the unhealthy nature of energy drinks, it aims to reduce its consumption in the country.

The move comes in light of research that excessive consumption of energy drinks can lead to severe health problems in children.

Anxiety, insomnia, gastrointestinal upset, headaches, and hyperactivity are some of the side effects of high level of consumption of energy drinks.

More serious long-term effects such as diabetes and heart disease have also been associated with energy drink consumption, according to experts.

Tamkeen, society sign agreement

Manama

Labour Fund (Tamkeen) and Good Word Society have signed an agreement to hone the skills of Bahraini job-seekers and facilitating their entry into the entrepreneurship sector after their graduation.

Tamkeen Chief Executive Officer Dr Ibrahim Mohammed Janahi signed the agreement with Good Word Society Chairman Hassan Mohammed Bouhazza.

A series of workshops will be held for the participants benefiting from the programme, who will also pay field visits to execu-

tive and consultancy authorities to be updated about successful entrepreneurs and hone their practical skills.

Under the agreement, a batch of twenty young participants will be trained on the entrepreneurship, targeting particularly job-seekers who are registered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development Ministry.

Mr Humaidan recently held a meeting with Transportation and Telecommunications Minister Kamal Ahmed and discussed ways of benefiting from the opportunities in this sector to provide jobs for citizens.

The meeting followed the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister to support the business environment in all productive sectors and integrate jobseekers in the private sector.

Mr Humaidan stressed the importance of stepping all efforts to support different economic and development sectors and removing all obstacles hindering them so as to attract investments and woo more companies that generate jobs for citizens.



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Many cafeterias 'continue to violate' rules for food outlets

Action sought against cafeterias flouting legal norms

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

● Cafeterias selling Indian and Arabian sweets have become a common sight.

TDT | Manama
Pradeep Puravankara

Many tea shops and cafeterias across the Kingdom continue to flout rules by selling food items that they are not permitted to prepare. Tribune has many a time reported against this rule violations.

Food safety is another concern as many safety norms are flouted by these cafeterias.

The Cabinet chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, on Monday, 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.

According to sources, inad-



A tea shop in Manama, where breakfasts are served.



Many sweets kept for sale, flouting rules, at a cafeteria in Manama.

quate spaces without required permits are being used to prepare food and in many cases the conditions are unhygienic as well.

"Many of the shops here are not operating as per law. Some of the cafeterias are preparing sweet items such as zalabia even though it is not allowed.

"In case of tea shops, they are selling breakfasts and other meals which they are not allowed to do," the sources added.

This has drawn the ire of restaurant owners in the area, who say their business have been adversely affected because of such

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Many cafeterias and tea shops are selling breakfasts and other meals, which they are not allowed to do.

SOURCES

cafeterias and business.

A restaurateur had told Tribune: "We have a restaurant that has been operating since many decades. We have always followed the rules and are earning a halal income.

"A tea shop launched near our shop four months back is greatly

affecting our revenues as they have started selling food items for breakfast and other meals.

"They are paying a small rent so they are able to sell food items cheaper. Moreover, they are unhygienic and take little care in food preparation.

"In our case, we are paying a high rent to be able to get the permits to be a restaurant, but these shops are operating out of a small space, which is not a good thing."

Another restaurateur earlier told Tribune that he has complained to the authorities about one of the shops operating illegally.

"I have notified the authorities about one of the shops that have been operating illegally.

"It is important that action is taken against these shops because it is harming people's health."

Hussain, a resident in the area, said that cafeterias selling Indian and Arabian sweets have become a common sight.

"Many cafeterias are selling sweets. I don't advise to buy food items from these shops because they do not look hygienic.

"I hope authorities take strict action against these tea shops and cafeterias that are operating illegally."

46th Bahrain Annual Fine Arts Expo begins today

Manama

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the 46th Bahrain Annual Fine Arts Exhibition, will kick off here today and run until February 15.

Sixty-eight artists will participate in the event, organised by the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) at the Bahrain National Museum and the Bahrain National Theatre.

The expo is part of BACA's programme for 2020, themed "Dilmun Density Citadel".

Bahraini and resident artists will showcase their works belonging to different artistic schools and trends and varying between sculpture, photography, graphic arts and drawing using different materials and shapes, in addition to video works.

Pioneers of the Bahraini art movement and the Al-Riwaq Art Space, as well as those from the Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) from Kuwait will also participate in the exhibition.

During the opening ceremony, BACA will announce the three winners of its "Al-Dana Award", supervised by a high-profile jury comprising founder and director of the Al Riwaq Art Space, Bayan Kanoo, in addition to art professor Dr. Effat Abudlla Fadag, from Saudi Arabia, and artist Mohammed Al-Merbaty, from Morocco.

Held under the auspices of HRH the Prime Minister since 1972, the event evolved into a yearly artistic gathering that brings together artists belonging to various artistic schools.

GCC duo held for stealing gold

TDT | Manama

Police announced yesterday that it successfully apprehended two GCC nationals who were involved in a series of gold shop robberies in different parts of the Capital.

This came as the Director-General of Capital Governorate Police announced that both men, aged 33 and 35, were arrested on Monday.

The official said the men were suspected of stealing jewellery, mobile phones and damaging houses and cars in Juffair area.

He added that an investigation into received cases led to the identification and arrest of the suspects within a few hours.

The Director-General also confirmed that stolen items worth BD12,000 were confiscated upon the arrest of the duo, adding that all legal proceedings are being taken to refer the suspects to the Public Prosecution.

realme launches three premium products



realme, the fastest growing smartphone brand, has announced its official entry into the UAE with three premium products: realme X2 Pro - 64MP Quad Camera Full-Speed Flagship, realme 5 Pro - 48MP Quad Camera SpeedMaster, and realme C2 - Entry-Level King with mega display and mega battery. With realme X2 Pro and 5 Pro, the brand will bring Leap-to-Quad-Camera experience. Inspired by Dare-to-Leap spirit, realme has made it to the top seven in 18 months and has already achieved 25 million users since its founding in May 2018. Josef Wang, President of realme Middle East and Africa, along with other top executives attended.

Association to host Pongal celebrations

TDT | Manama

Bharathi Association will organise Pongal festival celebrations on January 17 on the premises of Indian Club.

Nearly 3,000 people are expected to take part, according to the organisers.

The celebration starts at 10 am with Kolam decorations, Pongal rituals, Tamil cultural dances, sports event such as "Uri Adithal", tug of war, sports and games for all ages.

Traditional cultural events will be presented by the members



Raja King

Faridha

Guru Ayyadurai

choreographed by renowned dance teacher Hansul Gani.

Pongal feast will be arranged for the members and guests with a variety of Tamil cuisine vegetarian dishes served in traditional banana leaf, the organisers said in a statement issued.

The musical extravaganza

will start at 6.30 pm. Director and playback singer Raja King, playback singer Faridha and folk songs celebrity Guru Ayyadurai will be entertaining the audience. The entrance is free of charge. For more details contact: 33447111, 39239654, 39403909 or 34154655.

Man gets three years jail in assault case

TDT | Manama

The First High Criminal Court yesterday sentenced a man to three years imprisonment for punching another man in the face and breaking his teeth in Riffa last year.

The defendant was previously charged by the Public Prosecution with assault after investigations showed that he, the defendant, had punched the victim on the back of his head and his mouth, breaking his front teeth as shown in the medical reports,

which also mentioned that the assault caused a two per cent permanent disability to the victim.

Court files showed that the case was first reported to East Riffa Police Station on September 18, 2019, by the victim's brother, who informed that his brother, the victim, was attacked by a group of people in East Riffa area.

The brother told the cops that the incident took place near the police station and that his brother lost his consciousness and was rushed to the Military Hospital.

The brother told the cops that the victim remained unconscious for some time.

"My brother told me that three individuals, travelling in a white vehicle, stopped and suddenly attacked him on his head using a sharp object before he could realise what was going on.

"He said he fell on the floor and they repeatedly punched him and kicked until he fainted," the victim's brother told the cops.

No further details on the other two suspects were available.

world

Protect 30pc of planet by 2030: UN Nature rescue plan

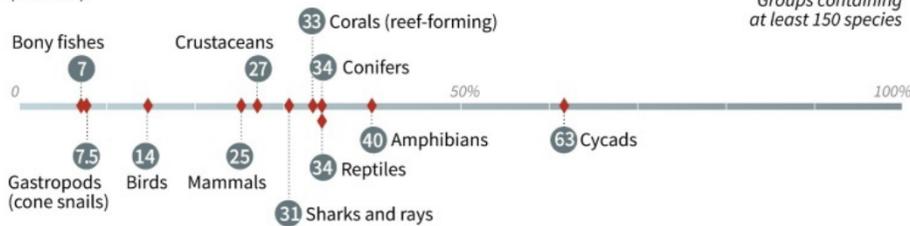
● The proposal will be vetted by nearly 200 countries gathering in October

● Last year, the first UN "state of Nature" report in two decades found that one million species of plants and animals face extinction



Global extinction risk: selected species group

Percentage threatened*, based on a report published in May (estimate)



*Groups containing at least 150 species

Source: UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services/IUCN

© AFP



Over the last century, our species has crowded, eaten, poached and poisoned many species to the brink of extinction, and pushed some over the edge

Paris

Thirty percent of Earth's surface across land and sea should become protected areas by 2030 to ensure the viability of ecosystems essential to human wellbeing, according to a UN plan released yesterday.

The draft proposal to halt the degradation of Nature and the gathering pace of species loss will be vetted by nearly 200 countries gathering in October for a make-or-break biodiversity summit, the 15th since 1994.

Up to now, UN targets to safeguard or restore ecosystems have failed for lack of political backing, implementation and

enforcement.

But the need for action has never been so urgent: last year the first UN "state of Nature" report in two decades found that one million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction.

Across the board, humanity has been the culprit. Even in recent decades, Homo sapiens have crowded, eaten, poached and poisoned many species to the brink of oblivion, and pushed others over the edge.

Last week, for example, scientists declared the freshwater Chinese paddlefish -- which thrived for 200 million years -- extinct.

Global warming has also begun to take a toll, with far worse impacts on the not-so-distant horizon, experts say.

"This is an incredibly important year to address the crisis facing Nature and climate," said Costa Rica's energy and environment minister, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez.

"They are two sides of the same coin and we must address both crises aggressively."

The so-called "zero draft" report calls for carving out at least 30 per cent of land and sea areas, with at least 10pc under strict protection, to conserve biodiversity hot spots.

The proposed figures are to be

negotiated at the UN-led talks, a process similar to the one that yielded the Paris climate treaty.

'Paris moment' for biodiversity

Indeed, conservationists hope the October meeting in Kunming, China, will be a "Paris moment" for biodiversity which has received far less attention -- and money -- than global warming.

Experts and environmentalists welcomed the plan's cornerstone target, but remained sceptical as to whether the political will exists to make sure it is met.

"This is an ambitious proposal," said Aleksandar Rankovic, coordinator for post-2020 in-

ternational biodiversity governance at IDDRI, and Paris-based environmental policy think tank.

But two previous attempts to set 10-year goals came to naught, he pointed out.

"The zero draft represents a solid step towards a master plan for halting global biodiversity loss in this new decade," said Li Shuo of Greenpeace East Asia.

But the proposal is "thin on the relevant enabling conditions, such as an implementation mechanisms and resource mobilisation."

"Only outlining 'where we need to be' is not enough. We have to equip the vision with 'how do we actually get there?'"

he added.

Brian O'Donnell, head of Campaign for Nature, approved of the 30pc target but wondered what was to become of the rest if only 10pc falls "under strict management."

The plan also calls for Nature-based solutions to climate change such reforestation, protecting wetlands and soil restoration, suggesting they could account for "at least 30pc of efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement targets" over the next 30 years.

The spread of invasive species, and pollution from pesticides and plastic, should be reduced by 50 percent by 2030, the proposal suggests.

Lebanon regains UN voting rights after paying arrears

United Nations | United States

Lebanon regained its voting rights at the United Nations after paying outstanding dues it owed the international body.

"Lebanon has just made a payment. With this payment Lebanon's voting rights have been fully restored," said Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

According to a diplomatic source, Lebanon paid \$1.3 million. "Lebanon paid its dues that were delayed (a) few days

because of the current situation in Lebanon," Amal Mudalali, the country's ambassador to the UN, wrote on Twitter Monday.

"Lebanon is not under article 19 anymore," she added, referring to a UN provision that allows the body to strip a member state of voting privileges if they have fallen behind on financial contributions.

The UN on Friday said that crisis-hit Lebanon was among seven countries that would lose the right to vote in the General Assembly because of a failure to pay dues.

Oceans were hottest on record in 2019

Paris

The world's oceans were the hottest in recorded history in 2019, scientists said yesterday, as manmade emissions warmed seas at an ever-increasing rate with potentially disastrous impacts on Earth's climate.

Oceans absorb more than 90 percent of excess heat created by greenhouse gas emissions and quantifying how much they have warmed up in recent years gives scientists an accurate read on the rate of global warming.

A team of experts from around the world looked at data compiled by China's Institute



of Atmospheric Physics (IAP) to gain a clear picture of ocean

warmth to a depth of 2,000 metres over several decades.

They found that oceans last year were by far the hottest ever recorded and said that the effects of ocean warming were already being felt in the form of more extreme weather, rising sea levels and damage to marine life.

The study, published in the journal *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*, said that last year the ocean was 0.075 Celsius hotter than the historical average between 1981-2010.

That means the world's oceans have absorbed 228 Zetta Joules (228 billion trillion Joules) of energy in recent decades.

Seven billion years: Scientists say oldest solid material found

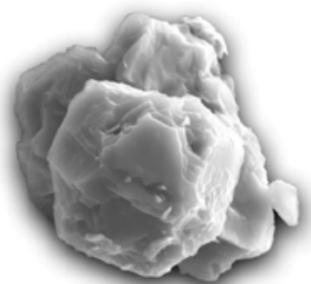
Washington

Researchers said yesterday that new techniques have allowed them to identify the oldest solid material ever found on earth.

The stardust, formed five to seven billion years ago, came from a meteorite that fell to Earth 50 years ago in Australia, they said in a paper published in the journal *PNAS*.

It came down in 1969 in Murchison, Victoria state, and scientists from Chicago's Field Museum have possessed a piece of it for five decades.

Philipp Heck, curator of meteorites at the museum, examined pre-solar grains, which are bits of stardust that become trapped in meteorites, making them time capsules of the period before the sun was born.



A scanning electron micrograph of a presolar silicon carbide grain

"They're solid samples of stars, real stardust," Heck said in a statement.

When the first stars died after two billion years of life they left behind the stardust, which formed into the block which

fell to earth as the meteorite in Australia.

Although researchers first identified the grains in 1987 their age could not be determined.

But Heck and other colleagues recently used a new method to

date these grains, which are microscopic in size. They are from silicon carbide, the first mineral formed when a star cools.

To separate the ancient grains from the relatively younger ones, scientists crushed fragments of the meteorite into a powder. Then they dissolved it in acid, which left only the pre-solar particles.

"It's like burning down the haystack to find the needle," says Heck.

When dust is in space it is exposed to cosmic rays which slowly change its composition. This allows researchers to date it.

A decade ago, only 20 grains from the meteorite were dated by a different method. Now, researchers have been able to determine the age of 40 grains, most of which are between 4.6

“
We basically came to the conclusion that there must have been a time in our galaxy when more stars formed than normal, and at the end of their lives they become dust producing

PHILIPP HECK, CURATOR OF METEORITES

billion and 4.9 billion years old. These ages correspond to the moment when the first stars began to break up, and since that type of star lived for two to 2.5 billion years, the stardust can

be as old as seven billion years. "These are the oldest solid materials ever found, and they tell us about how stars formed in our galaxy," Heck said.

The new dating by this team confirms an astronomical theory which predicted a baby boom of stars before the formation of our sun, instead of a constant rhythm of star formation.

"We basically came to the conclusion that there must have been a time in our galaxy when more stars formed than normal, and at the end of their lives they become dust producing," Heck said.

The task now is to apply the same method on other meteorites.

But according to Heck, there are fewer than five known to be in collections and big enough to give up such secrets.

Huge sinkhole swallows bus, kills six in China



A bus and several passersby fell into the huge sinkhole as it spread



Chinese rescuers watch as a bus is lifted out after a collapsed road in Xining in China's north-western Qinghai province

AFP | Beijing

An enormous sinkhole swallowed a bus and pedestrians in northwest China, sparking an explosion, killing six people and leaving four more missing, state media said yesterday.

Footage showed people at a bus stop running from the collapsing road as the vehicle -- jutting into the air -- sank into

the ground.

Several people disappeared into the sinkhole as it spread, including what appeared to be a child. The incident also triggered an explosion inside the hole, video showed.

Sinkholes are not unknown in China, where they are often blamed on construction works and the country's rapid pace of development.

The incident occurred at

around 5:30 pm (0930 GMT) on Monday in Xining, the capital of Qinghai province, the state-run broadcaster CCTV said.

A search and rescue operation involving more than 1,000 people and 30 vehicles was underway, according to the official Xinhua news agency. An investi-



The sinkhole opened up at a bus stop in Xining, north west China

gation into the cause has been opened.

Video footage published by state broadcaster CGTN showed a person

being pulled from the hole by rescue workers.

The collapse left an 80-square-metre (860-square-foot) pit in the street outside a

hospital.

The 16 injured were taken to hospital and are in a stable condition, Xinhua added, citing a local emergency management official.

An earlier report indicated that 10 people were missing but Xinhua said four were unaccounted for.

In 2016, at least three people fell into a huge sinkhole in

central Henan province, which swallowed a section of road and passersby.

An initial investigation showed the collapse might have been caused by water pipes buried under the road breaking up due to the rain.

In 2013, five people died when a 10-metre (33-foot) wide sinkhole opened up at the gates of an industrial estate in Shenzhen.

How the world discovered the Nazi death camps

Paris

Images of what the Allies found when they liberated the first Nazi death camps towards the end of World War II brought the horror of the Holocaust to world attention.

Many of the ghastly pictures were at first held back from the broader public, partly out of concern for those with missing relatives.

The concentration and extermination camps were liberated one by one as the Allied armies advanced on Berlin in the final days of the 1939-1945 war.

The first was Majdanek in eastern Poland, which was freed on July 24, 1944 by the advancing Soviet Red Army.

But it was only the following year that media coverage was encouraged by the provisional government led by General Charles De Gaulle set up after the liberation of France.

'Death Marches'

In June 1944, as it became



Although the first arrivals at Nazi death camps like Auschwitz documented the horrors they found there, some of the more disturbing images were initially kept back from publication

clear that Germany was losing the war, Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler ordered that camps be evacuated before they were reached by Allied troops, and that their prisoners be transferred to other camps.

This mainly concerned camps

in the Baltic States that were most exposed to advancing Soviet troops. Officers of the SS paramilitary in charge were ordered to cover up all traces of crimes before fleeing.

The sprawling Auschwitz-Birkenau complex

in southern Poland, liberated by the Red Army on January 27, 1945, was gradually dismantled from mid-1944 and its more than 60,000 prisoners evacuated.

When the Soviets arrived, only 7,000 prisoners remained, unable to walk and to follow

their comrades on what became known as "Death Marches" to other camps.

Images not widely shared

The discovery of the first camps had little impact on the public at large because the images were not widely shared.

Russian and Polish investigators photographed the camps at Majdanek and Auschwitz, and US army photographers made a documentary on Struthof, the only Nazi concentration camp based in what is now France.

But France in particular did not want them broadcast to avoid alarming people with relatives who were missing after being deported, captured or conscripted.

A turning point came on April 6, 1945 with the discovery of Ohrdruf, an annex of the Buchenwald camp in Germany.

'Indescribable horror'

When American forces --

accompanied by US war correspondent Meyer Levin and photographer Eric Schwab -- entered Ohrdruf, they came across a still-blazing inferno and skeletal prisoners executed with a bullet to the head.

The Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, Dwight Eisenhower, visited the camp on April 12, describing afterwards "conditions of indescribable horror".

The Allied leadership decided immediately that all censorship should be lifted so the world could see evidence of the Nazi atrocities.

That evening France's communist daily Ce Soir published on its front page a picture of a mass grave.

Days later Eisenhower said journalists should visit camps "where the evidence of bestiality and cruelty is so overpowering as to leave no doubt in their minds about the normal practices of the Germans".

Canada yet to decide if it will pay Harry, Meghan security costs

Montreal

The Canadian government has yet to decide whether it will assume the security costs associated with Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's decision to split their time between Canada and Britain, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said yesterday.

"I think that is part of the reflection that... needs to be had, and there are discussions going on," Trudeau said in an interview with Canadian television channel Global.

"We're not entirely sure what the final decisions will be, where the dispositions are and those are decisions for them," he said.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said there are 'discussions going on' as to whether his country will cover security costs for Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle (pictured November 2017) as they split their time between Canada and Britain

Harry and Meghan caught the world off guard last week when they announced their intention to step back from frontline royal duties.

According to Trudeau, Canadians are "very supportive" of having the royal couple live in Canada, but there are still "lots of discussions to have."

"We haven't spent any time thinking about this issue," said Canadian finance minister Bill Morneau, who was interviewed earlier Monday about British press reports that Trudeau had assured Queen Elizabeth II that Canada would cover security costs for Harry and Meghan.

"We obviously are always looking to make sure, as a member of the Commonwealth, we play a role," Morneau said.

British press had reported Canada would contribute \$650,000 (500,000 pounds) per year.

Canadian media have estimated that protecting the couple and their baby son Archie would cost about \$1.3 million (Can\$1.7 million) per year.

Canadian taxpayers have traditionally contributed towards security costs when members of the Royal Family visit the country.

Prince Harry and Meghan, formally known as the Duke and

Duchess of Sussex, have said their official plan is to continue to "fully support" the queen and honour their duties to the Commonwealth and their patronages.

But they want to make 2020 a transition year to carve out their new role and launch their new Sussex Royal charitable entity and seek to raise their own sources of income.

On Monday, Queen Elizabeth II allowed her grandson Harry and Meghan to split their time between Canada and Britain.

But she frankly admitted that the couple's decision was not welcome news.

Australian survives three weeks lost in crocodile-infested forest



Police initially feared the man had been eaten by a crocodile, but after days of searching were unable to find any of the reptiles big enough to have taken him

Sydney

An Australian man was found alive and well after being lost for three weeks in a crocodile-infested rain forest in the far north of the country, police said.

Milan Lemic disappeared after his vehicle became bogged down on December 22 while travelling through the Daintree forest in the northeastern state of Queensland.

Police initially feared Lemic, 29, had been eaten by a crocodile, which are numerous in the region, but after days of searching were unable to locate any of the reptiles big enough to have taken him.

He was finally found by police on Monday several kilometres (miles) from his abandoned vehicle.

"He was in good physical condition considering he had been in the rain forest for three weeks," police said in a statement.

Lemic survived on wild fruit and berries, they said.

Florida man catches oldest grouper fish, 50, in records

Miami

You never know what you'll get when you go fishing in Florida. You might accidentally catch an alligator, a snake -- or, for one man, the oldest grouper on record.

Researchers estimate that the Warsaw grouper, caught in December, was 50 years old.

The fish is "the oldest sample collected for our ageing programme," the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Research Institute said Friday in a Facebook post.

Biologists in the FWC Age and Growth Lab calculated the grouper's age by examining its otoliths, also known as "earstones," which are hard calcium structures located behind the brain in bony fish.

Otoliths allow scientists to estimate a fish's age.

The FWC accompanied the post with a photograph of Jason Boyll, an amateur fisherman from the southwestern Siesta Key who caught the 350-pound (160 kilograms) grouper.

In the photo, Boyll is stand-



A 350-pound, 50-year-old Warsaw grouper caught in waters off Florida

ing next to his catch, which is taller than he is.

Boyll caught the grouper off the west coast of Florida on December 29, at a depth of 600 feet (182 meters), according to the FWC.

Warsaw groupers can weigh up to 570 pounds.

More than 130 dead as severe weather hits Pakistan, Afghan

● At least 93 people died and 76 were injured across Pakistan

● A further 39 were killed in Afghanistan

AFP | Islamabad

Avalanches, flooding and harsh winter weather has killed more than 130 people across Pakistan and Afghanistan in recent days, officials said yesterday, as authorities struggled to reach people stranded by heavy snowfall.

At least 93 people died and 76 were injured across Pakistan -- with several still missing -- while a further 39 were killed in Afghanistan, according to officials in both countries.

Forecasts suggest more harsh weather is on the way.

Kashmir was the worst-hit area, with 62 people killed and 10 others missing, the State Disaster Management Authority said in a statement.

In the picturesque but conflict-riven Neelum Valley in Kashmir, heavy snowfall triggered several avalanches, including one that killed at least 19 people.

"An avalanche hit their vil-



A man removes snow from his boat on the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar in India

lage, 10 people are still missing," the SDMA said.

Frequent avalanches and landslides occur in Kashmir during the winter, often blocking roads and leaving communities isolated.

Authorities have shuttered schools, while several highways and roads were closed across the country's northern mountainous areas, according to officials.

"The severe snowfalls and landslides in AJK have caused misery & deaths," tweeted Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, referring to the part of Kashmir controlled by Islamabad.

To the southeast, in Balochistan province, at least 31 people had been killed in separate weather-related incidents.

"Most of those who died were women and children," said Mohammad Younus, an official with the provincial disaster management authority, adding that hundreds remained stranded.

Across the border in Afghanistan, more than 300 houses were either destroyed or partially damaged throughout the country, said Ahmad Tamim Azimi a spokesman for the Natural Disaster Management Authority.

"A cold snap, heavy snowfall



A woman walks down a path in Quetta, Pakistan, after heavy snow

and rains that started two weeks ago have caused damage," he said, adding that most casualties were caused after roofs collapsed under thick snow.

Hardest hit were southern Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and western Herat provinces.

In Herat, seven people -- all members of the same family and including children -- died when their roof caved in, Azimi added.

Harsh winters often take a heavy toll in mountainous Afghanistan, and the country remains poor despite billions of dollars in aid from the international community.

Six arrested for damaging Machu Picchu area

● The group was made up of one French, two Brazilians, two Argentines and a Chilean

Lima

Six tourists, including a French woman, have been arrested over accusations that they damaged Peru's cultural heritage by defecating in a sacred temple at the iconic Machu Picchu sanctuary.

"The six tourists are being detained and investigated by the public ministry for the alleged crime against cultural heritage," Cusco regional police chief Wilbert Leyva said on Monday, quoted by the local Andina news agency.

The tourists were arrested on Sunday after park rangers and police found them in a restricted area of the Temple of the Sun, an important site at the Inca citadel.



Machu Picchu is the most iconic site from the Inca empire that ruled much of western South America in the 15th and 16th centuries

Leyva said authorities had come across a "fracture" in a piece of stone that had "broken off a wall and caused a crack in the floor."

Cultural authorities from Cusco, the region where Machu Picchu is located, said feces were found in the Temple of the Sun.

The group was made up of

one French, two Brazilians, two Argentines and a Chilean, according to police.

They face at least four years in prison if found guilty of damaging Peru's heritage.

Several parts of the semicircular Temple of the Sun are off limits to tourists for preservation reasons.

Worshippers at the temple

would make offerings to the sun, which was considered the most important deity in the Inca empire as well as other pre-Inca civilizations in the Andean region.

The Machu Picchu estate -- which includes three distinct areas for agriculture, housing and religious ceremonies -- is the most iconic site from the Inca empire that ruled a large swathe of western South America for 100 years before the Spanish conquest in the 16th century.

Machu Picchu, which means "old mountain" in the Quechua language indigenous to the area, is at the top of a lush mountain and was built during the reign of the Inca emperor Pachacuti (1438-1471).

It lies around 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the Andean city of Cusco, the old Inca capital in southeastern Peru.

The site was rediscovered in 1911 by the American explorer Hiram Bingham. UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site in 1983.

Volcano erupts on ecologically sensitive Galapagos island

AFP | Quito

A volcano erupted on an uninhabited island in the Galapagos, Ecuadorian authorities said, spewing lava on the ecologically sensitive environment.

La Cumbre volcano on Fernandina island, one of the youngest in the archipelago, began erupting Sunday evening, Galapagos National Park (PNG) officials said in a statement.

The 1,467 metre high (4,813 feet) volcano has a crack along



its south-eastern flank and "a lava flow descends to the coast", PNG added.

The island is home to a number of species including iguanas, penguins, flightless cormorants, snakes and an endemic rat, and has "very important" ecological value, PNG said.

Before the eruption, an earthquake with a magni-

tude of 4.7 was felt, according to the local Ecuadorian Geophysical Institute, followed by 29 aftershocks.

The volcano also erupted in June 2018.

The unique fauna of the UNESCO-listed Galapagos Islands -- located 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) east of mainland Ecuador -- helped English naturalist Charles Darwin develop his theory of evolution by natural selection.

Why the Tehran regime's warmongering is hastening its own demise?

Iran's proxies in Baghdad continue to consolidate political and military control



BARIA ALAMUDDIN

Iran's leaders knew immediately that one of their missiles had shot down a plane loaded with citizens and foreign nationals, but they did what came naturally — they lied, stonewalled and covered up. All allegations of regime culpability for the deaths of 176 people on board Ukrainian Airlines Flight 752 were “foreign conspiracies.” Confronted with a mountain of irrefutable evidence, they belatedly, begrudgingly acknowledged their “unforgivable mistake” — before retorting that it was all America's fault for stoking tensions.

I am constantly astonished at much of the Western world's pathological predisposition to swallow Iranian lies. Some officials used to parrot the preposterous line that Iran would never use an atomic bomb because Ayatollah Ali Khamenei — a man with the blood of hundreds of thousands on his hands — had declared such a thing to be un-Islamic. When a swarm of armed drones was launched from Iranian territory last September to attack Saudi oil installations, Tehran instructed its Houthi stooges in Yemen to dissemble that they were responsible; all suggestions to the contrary were devilish “foreign conspiracies.”

The latest round of shadow boxing between the US and this compulsively duplicitous regime changes nothing. It is simply a matter of time until the next bout of skirmishes, and then another. Iran's leaders have set the world on a course that — in the absence of a radical change of direction —

can lead only to war, by any one of several paths.

First, experts are warning that by late 2020 Iran could be no more than three months from having a nuclear bomb. This would make military action inevitable if America and Israel fulfil pledges to prevent Iran becoming a nuclear state.

Second, the accumulation of missiles and paramilitaries on Israel's borders with Lebanon and Syria dictates that Tel Aviv will eventually act to neutralise this threat.

Next, Iran's proxies in Baghdad continue to consolidate political and military control. Threats to evict US forces have halted operations against Daesh. Sunnis, Kurds and minorities are more disenchanted than ever, while Shiite areas boil with mass protests; Iraq's continuing disintegration imperils the entire region.

Meanwhile the Syrian conflict grinds on; while Iranian proxies quietly consolidate under the cover of Erdogan's ethnic cleansing of Syria's Kurds, Assad, Hezbollah and Russia continue crushing the life out of Idlib.

Finally, since Iran's attacks in 2019 on Saudi oil installations and shipping in the Gulf, few tangible steps have been taken to reduce Iran-GCC tensions under the shadow of the continuing Yemen conflict.

An Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander caused consternation last week by holding a news conference in front of the massed banners of Iran-aligned militias, including Hezbollah, Pakistani and Afghan proxies in Syria, the Houthis and Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi. Iran mendaciously claims that it wants to calm tensions, but instead of distancing itself from militants and terrorists, it literally drapes itself in their flags.



Experts analyse the fragments and remains of the Ukraine International Airlines plane in Iranian capital Tehran.

Iraqi and Lebanese protesters against Iranian meddling are not a handful of middle-class arts students; they include hundreds of thousands of working-class Shiites from traditional strongholds of pro-Iranian sentiment, families who lost sons and nephews fighting with Hezbollah in Syria. This cratering of grassroots support has fundamental implications for how Iran wields its regional influence. Before, pro-Tehran factions were able to win sufficient votes, while also relying on client politicians from Christian, Sunni and other demographics, with Qassem Soleimani bribing and threatening political leaders.

Trump's accumulated barrages of sanctions have only encouraged Tehran to further dig in with its transnational paramilitary strategy. Instead, there must be redoubled muscular diplomatic efforts to block Iranian expansionism in Arab states.

If Iran can no longer count on dominating the ballot box and

Impeaching a US president has never led

Gavin Esler

A little more than 20 years ago, I became a world expert on lies. I spent a whole year of my life on one lie. The lie was: “I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky.”

It was told to the American people by Bill Clinton, the then US president.

He also told that lie under oath, and that resulted in his impeachment, the formal process for removing an American head of state.

I was the BBC's chief North America correspondent and member of the White House press corps so I sat through the impeachment process from beginning to end, the most extraordinary political theatre I have ever witnessed.

The only other US president to be impeached was Andrew Johnson in 1868, just after the American civil war.

Impeachment charges are vaguely called “high crimes and misdemeanours”, and it is worth

considering whether lies and even impeachment itself really matter. That is because this week, the third most powerful politician in the US, House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi, is about to begin formal proceedings to impeach Donald Trump, the current incumbent of the White House.

So let me begin with a spoiler alert. Mr Trump may be the second president to be impeached in 25 years and the third in US history but he is very unlikely to be removed from office. Impeaching a US president has never led to removal. Never. So what is the point?

We can predict that this new political theatre will transfix Washington, America and much of the world the way Meghan Markle and Prince Harry have dominated the British media in recent days. The point of an impeachment trial — to be blunt — is not justice or truth. It is politics. What happened to Mr Clinton is instructive because in some ways it is the mirror image of what is happening to Mr Trump. From the moment he was elect-



It is going to be next to impossible to remove US President Donald Trump from office.

ed in 1992, the Republican Party tried to bring Mr Clinton down. The Republicans won a landslide in Congressional elections in 1994 under Ms Pelosi's predecessor Newt Gingrich and they immediately investigated the Clintons. It was clear to me at the time that

many Republicans simply loathed Bill and Hillary. They still do. The investigation at first focused on the couple's supposed business dealings in what became known as the Whitewater affair. It got nowhere. However, it was obvious from

the first time I met Mr Clinton in 1991 that he liked the company of women. In 1992, he survived allegations of an affair and in a sense that helped his political career. An obscure governor of the somewhat obscure state of Arkansas was suddenly famous

Donald Trump will almost certainly escape removal from office, like Bill Clinton did two decades ago

1973

Vietnam War: Citing progress in peace negotiations, President Richard Nixon announces the suspension of offensive action in North Vietnam.

1975

The **Alvor Agreement** is signed, ending the Angolan War of Independence and giving Angola independence from Portugal.

1976

Gerald Ford's would-be assassin, Sara Jane Moore, is sentenced to life in prison.



1981

Pope John Paul II receives a delegation from Solidarity (Polish trade union) at the Vatican led by Lech Wałęsa.



A Boeing 737-800 that crashed outside the White House.

The West must also do everything possible to neutralise a conflict that it scarcely appears to realise is hurtling toward it. Boasting about killing Soleimani has become a central plank of Donald Trump's pre-electoral grandstanding, and many observers justifiably fear that the US president's foreign-policy decision making throughout 2020 will be similarly driven by myopic domestic calculations. This is a dangerous dynamic when we are already so close to wider conflict.

Trump's accumulated barrages of sanctions have only encouraged Tehran to further dig in with its transnational paramilitary strategy. Instead, there must be redoubled muscular diplomatic efforts to block Iranian expansionism in Arab states. Even if war is unavoidable, global powers should at least constrain the number of fronts Tehran can fight on.

Although recent escalations may have killed off any immediate prospects for diplomacy, Europe should not pin its hopes on an eventual resuscitation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the effectively defunct 2015 deal to curb Iran's nuclear program in return for easing sanctions. The myriad shortcomings of this agreement (over-reliance on Iran's good nature for implementation, releasing frozen funds without preventing their use for regional aggression) prevented it becoming a viable tool to comprehensively address Tehran's misbehaviour.

Iranian citizens' loathing for their mendacious, dictatorial regime means that an end to this tyranny is only a matter of time. Ordinary Iranians have more at stake than anyone in avoiding a war that would cost tens of thousands of their lives, just like the innocents who died senselessly

on that downed Ukrainian passenger jet. Iran's incompetent attempts to cover up its culpability for the crash have triggered yet more anti-regime protests, with demonstrators shredding images of Soleimani and demanding Khamenei's downfall. This is surely a leadership that has burned its last vestiges of credibility, at home and abroad.

The ayatollahs, and Soleimani's successors, must recognise that their deranged ambitions are unachievable. Iran's dysfunctional, sanctions-shattered economy cannot afford this megalomaniacal vision of region-wide supremacy. Palestinians have been struggling for over a century for their right to a homeland; Arab citizens too will fight for as long as it takes to free their nations from Iranian domination. If there is a war in which America, Israel and Western allies directly confront the Islamic Republic's decrepit military capabilities, there can be only one outcome.

The regime cannot escape this fate through vague messages about not desiring conflict, while redoubling overseas subversion and terrorism. It is not Iran's words that make conflict inevitable, but its actions.

The ayatollahs are thus at a moment of decision: If they retreat from their terrorism and warmongering, perhaps their regime can limp on for a few more years before dying an unlamented death. If, instead, they stubbornly accelerate efforts to build a nuclear bomb, dominate neighbours, and threaten peace-loving nations, they are simply choosing the quickest way to dig their own graves.

(Baria Alamuddin is an award-winning journalist and broadcaster in the Middle East and the UK. She is editor of the Media Services Syndicate and has interviewed numerous heads of state.)

to removal from office

The Republicans won a landslide in Congressional elections in 1994 under Ms Pelosi's predecessor Newt Gingrich and they immediately investigated the Clintons. It was clear to me at the time that many Republicans simply loathed Bill and Hillary.

both of which merely confirmed what we all knew from the start. Those two things were that people sometimes lie about sex, and that Mr Clinton had an eye for the ladies. He was acquitted. After all the sound and fury, he continued in office, re-built his presidency and left the White House in January 2001 more popular than when he had first arrived in January 1993.

So consider Mr Trump and the impeachment proceedings against him. They focus on the alleged lies he has told about his dealings with Ukraine over Joe Biden, the former vice-president. Clearly, there is a case that these allegations amount to impeachable "high crimes and misdemeanours". But so what? Mr Trump is the mirror image of the Clintons. Democrats loathe him. He speaks of a witch-hunt against him in the same way the Clintons claimed a witch-hunt against them. Like the Clintons, Mr Trump has his enemies but again like them he has a solid base of support from 40 per cent or more of the American people. Karl Marx once quipped

that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy the second as farce.

It is not to minimise the charges against Mr Trump - which are clearly serious - to predict that much of what we are about to see will itself appear farcical. At the end of weeks of public hearings what will we learn? That Mr Trump tells lies? That he can be vindictive towards his political enemies? What a surprise. And will the Republican-dominated Senate vote to throw him out of office? Very unlikely.

The key, as with the Clintons, will not be some abstract concept of justice and the constitution but a much harder political battle. Will the revelations about Mr Trump - perhaps over his business dealings - prove politically damaging as he seeks re-election? Was he far less successful in business than his carefully crafted image suggests? Perhaps.

But do not hold your breath. Impeachment is theatre, and experience suggests the final act may be a dramatic disappointment.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Today I have written to Nicola Sturgeon. The Scottish people voted decisively to keep our United Kingdom together, a result which both the Scottish and UK Governments committed to respect. Let's make 2020 a year of growth and opportunity for the whole of the UK.

@BorisJohnson

02



Compassion enhances our self-confidence because a calm mind allows our marvellous human intelligence to bloom. When we're angry, our thinking is distorted and we don't see the different aspects of reality. A calm mind enables us to take a broader, more realistic view.

@DalaiLama

03



Arrest of decorated J&K officer Davinder Singh escorting top Kashmiri terrorists to Delhi ahead of Republic day should have been the top story on all TV channels for days. He was accused by Afzal Guru of torturing him to help terrorists who attacked Parliament. But TV blackout!?

@pbhushan1

04



Ending the scourge of human trafficking is a priority for President @realDonaldTrump and his Administration. Today, @IvankaTrump will visit two facilities in Atlanta, Georgia, that support trafficking survivors as they recover and rebuild.

@WhiteHouse

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

Wide Angle

Passwords and pins: A memory muddle?



JOEL INDRUPATI

How many passwords can one remember? And, what about PIN numbers? Or those security-answers?

To unlock or open software and hardware systems today, it looks like we all need a personal memory that must rival that of the elephant's.

For our email, for our computer, for our mobile device, for our phone-banking service, and for our TV receiver, we are now forced to remember a growing number of passwords and pin numbers.

"All things remaining constant, the number of passwords one must remember is directly proportional to the number of electronic devices one is buying."

This great law (which I just postulated) could have some exceptions. But companies are going the extra mile, to make password-memory fun.

Well, fun for them. But frustrating for us. They are conducting free check-up of our mental-health - perhaps for Alzheimer's or Amnesia - by asking us to participate in mental exercises.

They test our cerebral resilience by telling us that our password must contain at least one capital letter, one small letter, one number, and at least one 'special character'.

One Special character? Shylock, of Shakespeare? The Joker, from Hollywood? Crime-Master Gogo, from Bollywood?

No. They tell us it could be an exclamation mark or an ampersand, a hash or a comma, a double quote or a dollar sign.

After all that you do, if you still don't remember the password when you need it, you are in for trouble.

You will have to answer a few security questions, the answers to which you should also, now, remember.

And if your answers match with theirs, they might help you reset the password.

A few days ago, no matter how many times I tried, I was unable to enter into an online web service. So, after several attempts, with different old passwords, I finally gave up.

Once, I entered my email address after clicking on 'forgot password' section to get the 'reset password' link by

email.

Now, when I tried to make up a password, imagine my annoyance when the system says, 'Sorry. You cannot use any previously used passwords!'

Yes. I had tried to use an old one. But that is because, tell me, how many words can I really, effectively, remember?

And as if that is not enough, some websites are even telling me, "We have noticed that you have not changed your password for a long time. We recommend you change it".

There are OTPs too; One-time passwords which work if you have your phone handy when you are booking or buying online.

So, when you travel to another country and use a different temporary number, you would need another phone. Or a phone with dual Sim Card provision.

Otherwise, you won't get text messages from the banks and other web service providers to help u reset. In one way, I agree, of course, it is good to find our online services becoming more and more secure.

But on the other hand, I feel they should allow us to create and use passwords without too many restrictions. Recently, a telephone banking service told me I cannot even use two consecutive digits in my pin number! Is that not a needless restriction?

Thanks to the new biometrics-enabled devices, which recognise fingerprints and faces, at least some of the problems are now reducing.

But then, my complaints aside, let us remember our past.

If we had remembered scores of telephone numbers in our head before the advent of mobile phone, perhaps, we can remember these passwords and pins too.

(The writer's twitter handle: @joelindrpati)

business

Consider line 7 in future: Alba ACEO tells Annual Majlis

TDT | Manama

A top Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) executive has called on the company to aim for bigger milestones as Line 6 is now fully ramped-up.

Alba, Acting Chief Executive Officer Ali Al Baqali said, should now consider Line 7 as a future expansion project.

This came as Ali Al Baqali kicked-off the 'Annual Majlis' 2020 of Alba, yesterday, the first since his appointment as the Acting Chief Executive Officer in 2019, at the Alba Oasis Hall.

Al Baqali stressed on strengthening Alba's Safety Culture and continue with the same momentum to exceed 16 million working-hours without LTIs achieved to-date. He also highlighted the progress of the Spent Pot Lining Treatment Plant to be operational by Q1 2021, for which Alba has already signed a 25-year lease term.

Al Baqali said Alba will boost its production to 1,540,000 metric tonnes in 2020 all the while



Ali Al Baqali, Acting Chief Executive Officer, kicked-off the 'Annual Majlis' 2020 of Alba, yesterday, at the Alba Oasis Hall

focusing on the sustainability initiatives in line with Bahrain's

Economic Vision 2030. 2020 Annual Majlis will adopt

a two-way communication model to allow participating employ-

ees and the presenter/s to engage in active Q&A sessions to

address various issues as well as the Company's 2020 Objectives.



Nader Al Moayyed, Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, with the newly appointed Ambassador of Egypt to Bahrain, Yasser Mohamed Shaaban. The meeting discussed strengthening bilateral relations and further enhancing areas of cooperation across all fields, especially the tourism sector. Discussions also focused on BTEA's latest achievements, including the foundation stone-laying of the new Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Sakhir

UK to ban use of credit cards for gambling

London

Britain will from April ban the use of credit cards to pay for bets, its gambling regulator announced yesterday, the latest clampdown on the industry.

"The Gambling Commission has announced a ban on gambling businesses allowing consumers in Great Britain to use credit cards to gamble," a statement said.

The ban comes into effect on April 14 and follows a measure introduced last year by the British government to slash the maximum stake on electronic casino-style games aimed at curbing their addictive appeal.

On banning the use of credit cards, Gambling Commission

chief executive Neil McArthur said Tuesday:

"Credit card gambling can lead to significant financial harm. The ban that we have announced today should minimise the risks of harm to consumers from gambling with money they do not have."

McArthur said that 22 percent of Britain's online gamblers using credit cards are "problem gamblers".

"There are examples of consumers who have accumulated tens of thousands of pounds of debt through gambling because of credit card availability," he said.

"There is also evidence that the fees charged by credit cards can exacerbate the situation

because the consumer can try to chase losses to a greater extent."

The Commission noted that 24 million adults in Britain gamble, including 10.5 million online.

"Whilst millions gamble responsibly, I have also met people whose lives have been turned upside down by gambling addiction," Culture Minister Helen Whately said in Tuesday's statement.

"We will not hesitate to take any further action necessary to protect people from gambling harm," she added.

Share prices in British gambling firms slid in early trading on Tuesday in reaction to the latest measure.

Al Hawaj launches fragrances from BDK Parfums collection

Manama

Al Hawaj launched the latest fragrances from the BDK Parfums Paris collection through a special visit by a world-renowned French perfumer and BDK Founder, David Benedek.

The event was held at the new Al Hawaj Seef Mall outlet and was participated by French Ambassador Jerome Cauchard, other guests, members of the press, bloggers, businessmen, businesswomen and Al Hawaj Board members and management. Al Hawaj Managing Director, Jawad Y. Al Hawaj officially opened the event by welcoming the guests and attendees with Abdul Wahab Y. Al Hawaj, the General Manager.

The French Ambassador expressed his thanks and appreciation to Al Hawaj for its efforts to enhance cooperation between Bahrain and France, and for its support to French company BDK Parfums.



In pictures, the inauguration



Middle Eastern stocks gain on financials, Kuwait leads

● **Nine of eleven Saudi Banks rise**

● **Aramco closes up at 34.9 riyals**

● **United Wire jumps on FY profit**

Reuters

Gulf stock markets closed higher yesterday with Kuwait leading the gains, bolstered by banking shares amid rising oil prices, while Egypt was supported by top lender Commercial International Bank.

Oil prices rose snapping four straight days of declines as the United States and China prepared to sign a preliminary trade deal.

Brent crude gained 43 cents, or 0.67 per cent, at \$64.63 per barrel by 1036 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 32 cents or 0.4pc at \$58.40 a barrel.

Saudi Arabia's index was up 0.4pc. Al Rajhi Bank gained 0.8pc, while petrochemical firm Saudi Basic Industries added 0.5pc.

State-owned oil giant Saudi Aramco closed up 0.3pc at 34.9 riyals, offsetting earlier losses during the day.

Amongst others, United Wire



Traders on the floor of Bahrain Bourse (file)

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.4pc to 8,475 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 1.1 pc to 5,169 pts
DUBAI	▲ 1pc to 2,803 pts
QATAR	▲ 0.6pc to 10,637 pts
EGYPT	▲ 0.4pc to 13,757pts
KUWAIT	▲ 1.9 to 7,062 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 1.2pc to 1,620 pts

0.7pc up with Qatar Islamic bank climbing 2.9pc and Industries Qatar adding 0.8pc.

Qatar National Bank was up 0.2pc. After the market closed, the Gulf's largest lender reported a 4pc rise in its annual profit to 14.4 billion riyals (\$3.96 billion) beating analysts' forecasts.

Kuwait's index, which traded after two sessions of a break following the death of Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said, closed up 1.9pc.

Lenders National Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Finance House increased 2.2pc and 1.6pc re-

spectively.

In Abu Dhabi, the index rose 1.1pc with First Abu Dhabi Bank advancing 1.4pc and Aldar Properties leaping 3.7pc.

Dubai's index was up 1pc led by a 2.7pc gain in the blue-chip developer Emaar Properties.

Outside the Gulf, Egypt's blue-chip index was up 0.4pc as market heavyweight Commercial International Bank Egypt added 0.6pc, while Orascom Construction gained 0.7pc after saying that it added \$770 million to its backlog during the fourth quarter.

Musk nears \$346 million payday as Tesla market value soars

Reuters | San Francisco

Tesla Inc Chief Executive Elon Musk is coming close to earning the first \$346 million tranche of options in a record-breaking pay package, after the electric vehicle maker's stock more than doubled in the last three months.

Shares of Tesla surged 9 per cent to a record high on Monday. They need to rise another 6pc to put Tesla's stock market value at \$100 billion and then be sustained at that level for both a one-month and six-month average in order to trigger the vesting of the first of 12 tranches of options granted to Musk to buy Tesla stock.

Musk has already hit an operational target that is also necessary for the options to vest.

For Musk's subsequent tranches to vest under the terms of the 2018 package, the company's market cap would have to continue to sustainably rise by \$50 billion increments over the agreement's 10-year period, with the billionaire earning the full package if Tesla's market capitalization reaches \$650 billion and the electric car maker achieves several revenue and profit targets.

A full payoff for Musk, who is also the majority owner and CEO of the SpaceX rocket maker, would surpass anything previously granted to US executives, according Institutional Shareholder Services, a proxy advisor that recommended

investors reject the pay package deal at the time.

Musk receives no salary or cash bonus, only options that vest based on Tesla's market cap and milestones for growth.

"This is the very definition of pay for performance," said Ian Keas, senior director at Longnecker & Associates, an executive compensation consulting firm. "But is he the only individual that could serve in that seat as CEO and deliver that value to shareholders? That's the billion dollar question."

Musk's potential payout compares to the \$638 million received by Snap Inc founder Evan Spiegel in 2017 after the social network company's initial public offering. In 2018, Walt Disney CEO Robert Iger earned stock grants worth as much as \$149.6 million, including awards related to Disney's purchase of film and television assets from Twenty-First Century Fox.



LuLu Hypermarket's Dream Drive winners receive cars

● **The winners are Richard Naces, Shanigaram Ramesh, Abdulla Janahi, Hassan Ali, Abdul Salam, A. Rasool, Azarduddin Aboobacker, Pravin Anand, Faisal Mammu, Hussain, Fatheya Hasan, Vipindas Das, Lulwa Muhammed, Arsalan Bhure, Hasin MK and Ali Ahmed**

TDI | Manama

Winners of the LuLu Hypermarket's Dream Drive car raffle draw received the keys to sixteen Nissan Patrol top-of-the-line SUVs in eight LuLu Hypermarkets across the Kingdom.

The handover took place yesterday in the presence of LuLu Hypermarket top management and other senior dignitaries.

The Dream Drive was one of the most valuable raffle promotions in the Kingdom and ran from September till December 2019. It was electronically managed with customers registering at an electronic counter when their purchases were for BD 5 or more. This made it a state of the art raffle draw on December 31 when all prizes were selected electronically in the presence of an official from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Tourism and LuLu Hypermarket top management.



In pictures, winners during the handover ceremony with LuLu Hypermarket top management and other senior dignitaries

'Bung a bob for a Big Ben bong': Boris floats Brexit bells crowdfunder



Big Ben is still undergoing renovations -- but Boris Johnson said some public fundraising might be in order to ensure a hearty bong to mark Britain's exit from the EU

London

Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday said the government was working on a crowdfunding plan to get the currently silent Big Ben to chime when Britain leaves the European Union.

Some eurosceptic lawmakers have been pushing for a celebratory peal to mark Brexit at 2300 GMT on January 31, despite the tower in which the world-famous bell is housed being closed for repairs.

Former House of Commons speaker John Bercow rejected the request, but hopes were raised when he was replaced just before last month's general election.

But it again appears to be ruled out on cost grounds: the Commons Commission, which runs parliament, has found an exceptional bong could cost around £500,000 (\$650,000, 580,000 euros). Johnson, though, said all was not lost.

"The bong cost £500,000 but we're working a plan so people can bung a bob for a Big Ben bong because there are some people who want to," he told BBC television.

A bob is the equivalent of five pence and a slang expression for money.

"Because Big Ben is being refurbished, they seem to have taken the clapper away, so we need to restore the clapper in order to bong Big Ben on Brexit night," the prime minister said.

"And that's expensive, so we're looking at whether the public can fund it."

Downing Street could not say exactly how this would operate, however, and explained there was no specific government fund.

A spokesman said: "We will make sure that -- whatever happens in regard to Big Ben's

bongs -- January 31 is properly marked. It is a significant moment in our history."

£50,000 a bong'

Conservative MP and arch Brexiteer Mark Francois, of the European Research Group, has been trying to drum up support for a Brexit bong of Big Ben, which attracts tourists from around the world.

"I've already offered to go up Big Ben... to ring the bell myself to save money," he was quoted as telling the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper.

"If all else fails, the BBC must have a recording they could play at 11:00 pm at no cost whatsoever to taxpayers."

But new House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle said the cost could not be justified for a bell that would only be heard by those living near or visiting Westminster.

"You are talking about £50,000 a bong," he said.

Bringing the "bonging" mechanism back, testing it and allowing it to chime, and building and then removing a temporary floor to the belfry, is estimated to cost £120,000.

But a further £100,000 a week could be lost by the delay to ongoing conservation work.

The famous bell, housed in the Elizabeth Tower of the Palace of Westminster in central London, has been silent since August 2017 due to major renovations scheduled to last four years.

An exception is made for Remembrance Sunday and the New Year.

To mark Brexit day, the Leave.EU group wants "patriots to ring the bell of their local church... to celebrate Britain's new-found independence!"

The "Bells for Victory" peal is planned for February 1.

"If the powers that be don't like it? We'll do it anyway!" the group vowed.

Stocks tread water as easing US-China tensions boosts yuan

AFP | London

Stock markets were range-bound yesterday, while the yuan briefly spiked against the dollar on a US decision to no longer consider China a currency manipulator -- a further sign of easing tensions between the economic titans.

The US Treasury announcement late Monday came as the two sides prepare to sign the first part of a wider trade agreement that has helped fan a rally in world equity markets.

Washington's move led also to a temporary sell-off in haven assets with the yen and gold sliding.

Both later recovered however, along with oil prices.

Asia was given a firm lead from Wall Street overnight, whose the Nasdaq and S&P 500 indices struck record highs Monday.

Yesterday, the Dow was little changed in initial trading.

'Purest barometer'

In August, US President Donald Trump had accused Beijing of weakening its yuan currency "to steal our business and factories", re-stating a long-standing grievance.

But soon after trading ended on Monday, the Treasury said in its semi-annual report to Congress that the yuan had strengthened and Beijing was no longer keeping it artificially weak.

The dollar slumped to 6.8670 yuan at one point, the lowest level since July, before rebound-



The yuan has rallied against the dollar after hitting 11-year lows in September, helping ease tensions between China and the United States

Key figures at 1430 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	▲ 0.1 pc at 7,625.88 points
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▲ at 13,450.44
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ at 6,034.89
EURO STOXX 50:	▼ 0.2 pc at 3,773.95
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 0.7 pc at 24,025.17 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▼ 0.2 pc at 28,885.14 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▼ 0.3 pc at 3,106.82 (close)
New York - Dow:	▲ at 28,918.07
Dollar/yuan:	▼ at 6.8849 yuan from 6.8938 yuan
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.2996 from \$1.2989
Euro/pound:	▼ at 85.54 pence from 85.72 pence
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.1115 from \$1.1134
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 110.01 yen from 109.92
Brent Crude:	▲ 1.0 pc at \$64.81 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 0.6 pc at \$58.43

ing to trade around 6.8849 in afternoon European trading.

"The yuan is the purest and best barometer to gauge the

market's view on US-China trade tension," said AxiTrader's Stephen Innes.

"With the yuan strengthening

ahead of the 'phase one' deal signing, it's indicating the potential for further improvement in trade relations."

The US reversal of China's status as a manipulator "is a most precise and definitive de-escalation of trade tension to date and provides a less congested road as we pivot to phase two of the broader trade agreement", Innes added.

'Definitive de-escalation'

Data yesterday showed China's trade surplus with the US narrowed 8.5 per cent in 2019, which will likely play well in the White House, where the huge disparity is a key bone of contention and a major catalyst of the trade war.

Tokyo's main stocks index was among the biggest gainers, rising 0.7 pc as the dollar advanced against the yen owing to a rush out of safety -- giving a boost to Japan's exporters.

However, profit-taking saw Hong Kong drop 0.2 pc and Shanghai slip 0.3 pc following recent advances. European stock markets were mixed in afternoon trading.

Improving confidence also hit gold, which is a popular go-to asset in times of turmoil. The yellow metal last week broke \$1,600 per ounce for the first time in seven years on the Iran crisis but the lowering of expectations for a conflict with the US has seen it tumble.

The improving China-US outlook heaped further pressure on gold, which dropped to \$1,544.00.

Softbank-funded hotel firm Oyo lays off 10pc of India staff

Mumbai

Indian hotel giant Oyo said yesterday it is cutting 1,000 employees, or 10 per cent of its local staff, as it battles multiple allegations including bribery and pressure from Japanese backer SoftBank to cut costs.

An Indian newspaper said 2,400 jobs would go in total and that the firm, which has expanded aggressively in Asia and the Middle East under its 26-year-old founder, had offloaded around a quarter of its unprofitable properties.

SoftBank has backed a slew of start-ups but problems with some of the companies it has invested in including office-sharing firm WeWork



Indian entrepreneur Ritesh Agarwal founded Oyo in 2013 and the company is now valued at \$10 billion

and ride-hailing operator Uber had led to it pressuring others to slash costs.

A source at Oyo said it was "letting go" the 1,000 employees in India, a tenth of its total strength. Bloomberg News reported last month that it has also laid off five percent of its 12,000 staff in China.

New York Times hits 5 million subscribers

New York

The *New York Times* said yesterday it now has more than five million total subscribers after adding one million for its digital offerings in the past year.

The prestigious New York daily, which began its paid digital subscriptions in 2011, has been among the most ambitious in the US media in moving to a paywall model.

According to a statement from chief executive Mark Thompson, the *Times* passed its goal of \$800 million of annual digital revenue a year ahead of schedule, double the amount from 2015.

The newspaper has 3.4 million "core news subscriptions," and 900,000 print subscribers, the statement said.

It also has some 600,000 subscribers to its crossword service and 300,000 for its cooking content.

The company has set a goal of reaching 10 million subscribers by 2025, including two million outside the United States.

The *Times*, which will release its quarterly results on February 6, has moved to a model in which a majority of revenues come from subscribers, shifting from the print model where advertising generated the bulk of income.

Rome bans all diesel cars in battle to curb pollution

Reuters | Rome

Rome banned all diesel vehicles from its roads for the first time on Tuesday to try to combat rising pollution, with numerous other cities in central and northern Italy also imposing curbs to cut harmful emissions.

A prolonged period of sunny weather with no rain and little wind has triggered dozens of smog alerts across the country.

Rome city council banned diesel cars, vans and motorbikes



Skyscrapers are seen amidst dense fog and smog in Milan, Italy

during peak hours on Tuesday, with the worst polluting vehicles barred from the streets from dawn to dusk.

The local transport authority said the order would affect around one million vehicles, angering oil companies, who accused the city council of over-reacting.

Italy has a permitted limit for fine particle pollution (PM10) of 50 micrograms per cubic metre. Some areas of Rome have exceeded that level - above which

air quality is considered a potential health hazard - in 10 of the last 12 days.

Pollution levels have also risen sharply in a string of other cities, including Milan, Turin, Florence, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio Emilia and Modena, forcing local authorities there also to restrict drivers.

However, Rome was the only city to outlaw all diesel vehicles, drawing the ire of the Italian association of oil companies.

"This appears to be a totally

unjustified decision from a scientific point of view, which offers no environmental advantage and therefore unnecessarily penalises a wide range of citizens," it said in a statement.

By contrast, environmental group Legambiente accused Rome of dragging its feet.

"This decision was incredibly delayed. The city council is only banning diesel following 10 days of poisoned air," it said in a statement.

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 UNSTAPOL (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, DILIJT 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

1917: unblinking vision of the hell of war

Sam Mendes turns a family story from the Great War into a terrifyingly immersive movie experience

● The film turns a nightmare war into a theme park showcase

● Tense one-take WWI epic a breathless anthem for doomed youth

1917 is a 2019 epic war film directed, co-written and produced by Sam Mendes. The film stars George MacKay, Dean-Charles Chapman, Mark Strong, Andrew Scott, Richard Madden, Claire Duburcq, Colin Firth and Benedict Cumberbatch.

It is based in part on an account told to Mendes by his paternal grandfather, Alfred Mendes, and chronicles the story of two young British soldiers during World War I who were given a mission to deliver a message. This warns of an ambush during a skirmish soon after the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line during Operation Alberich in 1917.

The project was officially



George MacKay, centre, in '1917'

announced in June 2018, with MacKay and Chapman signing on in October and the rest of the cast the following March. Filming took place from April to June 2019 in England and Scotland,

with cinematographer Roger Deakins using long takes to have the entire film appear as one continuous shot.

1917 premiered in the UK on 4 December 2019 and was the-

atrically released in the United States on 25 December by Universal Pictures and in the United Kingdom on 10 January 2020, by eOne.

The film was praised by critics

YOU DON'T MISS IT
 Mendes's first world war drama, filmed to appear as one continuous take, plunges the viewer into the trenches alongside two young British soldiers to breathless effect

for Mendes's direction and for its performances, cinematography, musical score, sound effects and realism. Among its various accolades, the film received 10 nominations at the 92nd Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Original Screenplay. At the 77th Golden Globe Awards the film won for Best Motion Picture – Drama

and Best Director and at the 73rd British Academy Film Awards it received nine nominations.

On review aggregation website Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 90% based on 319 reviews, with an average rating of 8.42/10. The site's critical consensus reads: "Hard-hitting, immersive and an impressive technical achievement, 1917 captures the trench warfare of World War I with raw, startling immediacy." Metacritic assigned the film a weighted average score of 79 out of 100, based on 55 critics, indicating "generally favourable reviews".

Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "A-" on an A+ to F scale and PostTrak reported it received an average 4.5 out of 5, with 69% of people saying they would definitely recommend it.

George MacKay's performance received high praise, with several critics naming it among the best of 2019, including Kate Erbland of IndieWire and Sheri Linden of The Hollywood Reporter.

CELEBS



Ellie Goulding

Ellie Goulding treats husband to a romantic Paris trip

Paris

Singer Ellie Goulding treated her husband Caspar Jopling to a trip to Paris on his 28th birthday. She shared photos from the holiday on Instagram and also revealed he is now studying at Oxford, where he has taken up rowing. The singer shared a photo of herself in a black off the shoulder dress sitting on her hotel bed with gold balloons with a "C" for Caspar decorating the room, reports dailymail.co.uk. Alongside the post, Ellie said how she spends a large amount of her time travelling but said the couple's stay at the hotel in the French capital was special.

She wrote: "This is not an ad, I just needed to say how wonderful and memorable my stay at Hôtel de Crillon (@rosewoodhoteldecrillon) was this weekend. As you can imagine I've spent a huge amount of time in Hotels and Cities on tour but this was something truly special."

J.Lo would love to live in somewhere other than the US

Los Angeles

Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez has admitted that she wants a more "simple and organic" kind of life and that she would love to live in a small town in Italy, or on the other side of the world. In an interview with Vanity Fair, the 50-year-old star said she would love to leave the US and move to Italy or Bali, where she can be at peace and enjoy the simple things, reports dailymail.co.uk.

"I would love to live somewhere other than the United States, in a small town in Italy, or on the other side of the world, in Bali," she said. "Find another life where it's a little bit more simple and organic and where I get to ride a bike, and buy bread, and put it in my basket, and then go home and put jelly on it, and just eat and paint, or sit in a rocking chair where there was a beautiful view of an olive tree or an oak tree and I could just smell."

I have fantasies like that"



Jennifer Lopez

Billie Eilish to record James Bond song for new movie?

Billie Eilish

Los Angeles

Singer Billie Eilish is reportedly set to become the youngest artist to ever record a James Bond theme. Eilish is reportedly penning the title track for the new James Bond movie "No Time to Die", reports showbiz.com.

The news was first reported by the Bond blog MI6-HQ, who wrote: "MI6 understands that American singer-songwriter Billie Eilish will be performing the title song to the 25th James Bond film 'No Time to Die'."

If true, the honour would be the latest addition to 18-year-old Eilish's credit, and she would be following in the footsteps of Sam Smith, Adele, and Shirley Bassey by singing the tune.



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NAME CHANGE

I, ALEX KURIAN, S/O PADINJAREVEETIL CHANDY KURIAKOSE, holding Indian Passport No. **H8409666**, dated 18/02/2010 issued at **BAHRAIN** having permanent residence at (full address in Bahrain) **PADINJAREVEETIL HOUSE, NALUNAKKAL. P. O. KOTTAYAM, KERALA - 686538** presently residing at (full address in Bahrain) Flat 22, Bldg 1399, Road 1234, Block 312, Al Gufool, will henceforth be known as (Given name) **ALEX (Surname) KURIAN**. Objection(s) if any, may be forwarded to Embassy of India, P.O Box 26106, Bldg 1090, Road 2819, Block 428, Al Seef, Kingdom of Bahrain.

Kareena: Happy that Saif's 'Tanhaji' is being appreciated

Mumbai

Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan is excited about the success of "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior", which features her husband Saif Ali Khan in the cast.

"I am really excited. I am happy and thankful that the film is being appreciated by the audience," said Kareena, while interacting with the media at a meet-and-greet session she attended with Saif in Mumbai.

In "Tanhaji", Saif plays Udaybhan Singh Rathore, the Rajput fort keeper in the regime of Jai Singh I who was loyal to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. His performance has been widely appreciated.

The film, starring Ajay Devgn in the title role, opened with Rs 15.10 crore on January 10, went on to make Rs 20.57 crore and Rs 26.08 crore on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. Its first-weekend haul stood at a whopping Rs 61.75 crore. The trade estimates that "Tanhaji": could well reach Rs 100-crore mark in a few days.



Kareena Kapoor Khan

Scarlett's new look in and as 'Black Widow' revealed



Los Angeles

Marvel Studios on Monday (local time) revealed a new look for Black Widow played by Scarlett Johansson.

Monday went well for Scarlett, surely. On one hand, she got two acting nominations for the Academy Awards and on the other, her new look and a new trailer from her upcoming movie 'Black Widow' was released, according to Hollywood Reporter.

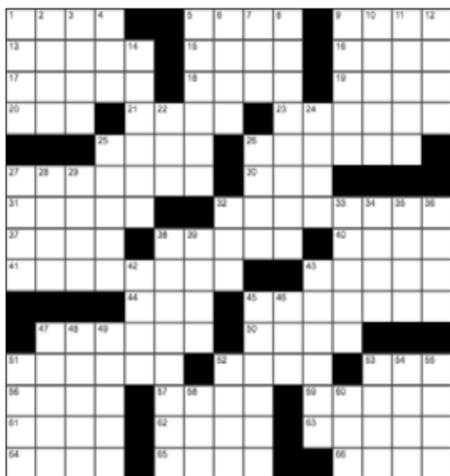
The trailer and the special look aired on ESPN which gave out a bit more details of the character's relationship with her family and past.

Cate Shortland's directorial shows events which happen between the events of 'Captain America: Civil War' and 'Avengers: Infinity War'. The film also stars David Harbour, Florence Pugh, and Rachel Weisz.

"I feel like I'm in control of the destiny of this film, which gives me a lot more peace of mind," Johansson told The Hollywood Reporter in 2019 of executive producing the film.

She went on, "I know her better than anybody. What was her childhood like? What is her relationship to figures of authority? This character is gritty and multidimensional but has a lot of trauma and has led an unexamined life. In order to operate at this elite level, she has probably had to push away a lot of stuff."

CROSSWORD



Yesterday's solution



ACROSS
1- Nick and Nora's pooch; 5- Panama and bowler; 9- Big do; 13- Hanger-on; 15- Switch back?; 16- Prepared to drive; 17- Clueless; 18- Prego competitor; 19- Code word for A; 20- Stockholm flier; 21- Encounter; 23- Depression between hills; 25- Evils; 26- Underground room; 27- Secondary school; 30- Any person; 31- Guide; 32- Friendly; 37- Catchall abbr.; 38- Western; 40- Electronic music pioneer; 41- Aware; 43- Iraqi port; 44- ___-mo; 45- Drunk; 47- Keeper, in football; 50- Hearing organs; 51- Curvature of the legs; 52- Hurler Hershey; 53- Sault ___ Marie; 56- Put a lid ___; 57- Must've been something ___; 59- Computer key; 61- "All The Way To ___", song by REM; 62- High time?; 63- Long; 64- Energy units; 65- Exultation; 66- HOMES part;

DOWN
1- ___ poor Yorick; 2- Bristle; 3- Dick Tracy's love; 4- Point of no return?; 5- Religious dissent; 6- I smell ___; 7- ___ out (dress up); 8- Memento; 9- Whatsoever; 10- Gal's guy; 11- Allude; 12- Jazz singer Anita; 14- Small village; 22- Spreading tree; 24- One of the Baldwins; 25- Graven images; 26- Arrive; 27- Simians; 28- Quote; 29- King of comedy; 32- Supped; 33- Run up; 34- Poppycock; 35- Knowledge; 36- Crikey!; 38- Accommodating; 39- Burn balm; 42- Land in water; 43- Cereal plant; 45- Tranquil; 46- Fannie ___; 47- Dead duck; 48- Unpaid; 49- Choir members; 51- Drill a hole; 52- Oklahoma Native; 53- Celestial body; 54- Polo of "Meet the Parents"; 55- Bald eagle's relative; 58- "You've got mail" co.; 60- Miss-named?;

SUDOKU

9	7				
4			8	9	6
	5		1	8	9
	3	9		5	2
		2	6	3	7
	2	8		3	9
	4	1	6		3
				5	8

Yesterday's solution

8	6	7	2	4	5	9	1	3
4	2	5	9	1	3	6	7	8
3	1	9	6	8	7	2	5	4
2	8	4	5	9	6	7	3	1
1	5	6	3	7	4	8	9	2
9	7	3	1	2	8	4	6	5
6	3	8	7	5	2	1	4	9
5	9	2	4	6	1	3	8	7
7	4	1	8	3	9	5	2	6

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

Drag racers set to bring the heat in round three of Bahrain championship at BIC

TDT | Manama

The region's premier drag racing series is back in action this week at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

The third round of the 2019/2020 Bahrain Drag Racing Championship (BDRC) kicked off Tuesday night and continues until Friday at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East".

The first two days of the meeting sees the participants fine-tuning their cars and motorbikes in a Test and Tune. Qualifying will then be held on Thursday, to be followed by the eliminations at Race Day on Friday.

The series is the region's biggest and most competitive championship and it attracts hard-core drag racers from all over the world, including many legends of the sport. In the previous round held last month, a whopping field of more than 140 entrants battled in the 16 competition categories, and NHRA champions Bahraini Racing stole the show with a new World record set by Khalid Al Balooshi.

More of the same heated action is expected this week as BIC's quarter-mile drag strip hosts the racing. BIC is a member of the prestigious Worldwide Network of the USA-based National Hot Rod Association (NHRA), allowing the Bahrain championship



A car in action at BIC

to run under the prestigious NHRA banner.

The second day of Test and Tune on Wednesday will be held from 6pm to 11pm, while Qualifying will be from 4pm to 11pm on Thursday night. Race Day will begin from 4pm Friday until the completion of all events.

The 16 competition categories include 12 for cars and four for motorbikes. The cars classes consist of Street 4 and 6, Outlaw FWD, Super Street 6-Cyl, Outlaw 6-Cyl, Street V8, Super Street V8, Competition 4.5, Outlaw 10.5, Pro Mod, Index 10.5, Index 9.5 and Index 8.5. For motorcycles, the classes include Street Fight Bikes, Street Bikes, Super Street Bikes and Pro Bikes.

All are welcome to attend the third round of the season. Tickets can be purchased at the gate. For Test and Tune, they are BD2 apiece. For Qualifying and Race Day, tickets are BD5 at the Start Line Grandstand, while tickets are BD3 for the Batelco Grandstand. Children aged from three to 12 years old can attend for half the price.

Peterhansel wins stage nine

Stephane Peterhansel of Bahrain JCW X-Raid Team edges Nasser Al-Attiyah in Dakar Rally stage nine

TDT | Manama

Stephane Peterhansel and co-driver Paulo Fiuza triumphed yesterday for Bahrain JCW X-Raid Team in the ninth stage of the 2020 Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia.

They completed the longest stage of the race of 891 kilometres from Wadi Al Dawasir to Haradh.

They completed the leg in three hours eight minutes and 31 seconds, just 15 seconds ahead of their closest challengers Nasser Al Attiyah and Matthieu Baumel of Toyota Gazoo Racing. Bahrain JCW X-Raid teammates Carlos Sainz and Lucas Cruz had a problematic day as they finished fifth, six minutes and 31 seconds behind the stage winners.

Following the result, Sainz and Cruz stayed in first place on the general ranking for cars but their lead was cut to a mere 24 seconds ahead of Al Attiyah and Baumel.

Sainz and Cruz have a total time of 35:11:54 after nine rounds. Peterhansel and Fiuza are third more than six minutes back.

"Today it was, again, a stage with full attack," said Peterhansel. "We tried to push at full attack from the beginning,



Peterhansel and Fiuza go through rough terrain during yesterday's ninth stage



This morning the tracks were really rough and more twisty, a little bit like in Morocco, and after it started to be really fast

STEPHANE PETERHANSEL

but never opening the gas too much. In the end, it's a little bit the same as since the beginning of the race. This morning the tracks were really rough and more twisty, a little bit like in Morocco, and after it started to be really fast. We made no mistakes at all with the navigation."

Sainz commented: "On the first part we lost a little bit of time when we lost the way - we

lost five minutes or something like that. After, I don't know what happened...the tread came off the tyre and we had to stop. It wasn't like a puncture, it was more the lamination of the tyre. It was not a good day for us."

Today, the field travel from Haradh to Shubaytah along a course that includes 534km of special stages and 608km in total.

Bahrain name squad for handball event



Bahrain's national handball team

● Bahrain announce final 19-player squad for Asian handball championship

TDT | Manama

Bahrain named their final 19-player line-up that will be competing in the 2020 Asian Men's Handball Championship, which will be held in Kuwait starting tomorrow.

The Bahrainis are scheduled to fly to Kuwait City today ahead of the start of the competition.

The national team will be spearheaded by their top overseas-based talents, including

captain Hussain Al Sayyad (Al Wehda, Saudi Arabia), Ali Mirza (Sharjah, UAE), Mohammed Habib Madan (Ahli Shabab Dubai, UAE), Jassim Al Salatna (Al Khaleej, Saudi) and Ali Eid (Al Nasr, UAE).

The players who suit up for Bahraini clubs are Mohammed Abdul Hussein, Hassan Shehab, Mahdi Saad, Mohammed Mirza, Bilal Basham and Mohammed Habib (Al Najma Club); Hassan Al Samaheji, Mohammed Abdulredha and Mahmoud Hussein (Al Ahli); Ahmed Al Maqabai (Barbar Club); Ahmed Jalal and Abdulla Zeimour (Al Shabab); Hussain Mahfoudh (Tubli); and Abdulla Ali (Al Etihad).

The Bahrainis are coached by

Aron Kristjansson from Iceland.

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.

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 Bahrainis, who last year made history by qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics, play their first game tomorrow against the Kiwis. They then face their Iranian rivals on Saturday to complete the first round.

The top two teams from each group at the end of a single round-robin move on to the next phase. This ensuing main round will feature eight teams in all, to be divided into another two groups and another single round-robin. The top two then march on to the semi-finals, scheduled for January 25. The final match will then be held on January 27 along with the bronze medal game.

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.

BTC welcomes ITF seniors manager ahead of championship



Abdul Jawad, left, presents the memento to Byford

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Tennis Club (BTC) welcomed International Tennis Federation (ITF) Seniors Tennis Manager Matt Byford to give a lecture to the technical committee ahead of the first Bahrain ITF Seniors Tennis Championship, which is set to be hosted by BTC from April 1 to 6.

Byford conducted a number of classes where he talked about the tournament regu-

lations and the registration procedure for players in these kinds of competitions.

Byford added that the ITF is following with great interest the activities being held at BTC, and said that they appreciate the BTC's organisation of the seniors' championship for the first time in the Gulf.

BTC Manager Hamdi Abdul Jawad presented a memento to Byford to commemorate his visit.

Bahrain hold Australia

Nationals crash out of AFC U23 championship despite draw

TDT | Manama

A fighting Bahrain held Australia to a 1-1 draw last night but it was not enough to prevent their elimination from the 2020 AFC U23 Championship in Thailand.

The Bahrainis needed nothing less than a victory to have any chance of advancing past the group stage of the continental competition.

They had their opportunities to claim the full three points and battled hard until the final whistle, but they were unlucky not to score and the Aussies did well to preserve the deadlock.

Following the result, Australia went through to the quarter-finals along with hosts Thailand, who drew 1-1 with Iraq in yesterday's other Group A clash.

The Aussies topped the table with five points from three matches, followed by the Thais



Bahrain's Marhoon leaps into the air as he vies for the ball

with four points. Iraq finished with three while Bahrain had just two points as they finished with no wins, two draws and a loss.

Bahrain's elimination also means that they are no longer in play for a spot in the men's football tournament at this year's Tokyo Olympic Games. Only the top three finishers from the field of 16 book their tickets to Japan.

Star midfielder Mohammed Marhoon gave Bahrain a glimmer of hope in their match yesterday after equalising at the stroke of half.

Australia had gone ahead in the 34th minute through Ramy Najjarine, but Marhoon was able to put the Bahrainis back in contention in the third minute of first-half stoppage time.

Marhoon fired in a brilliant free-kick from a few yards outside the penalty area. His fantastic curling effort flew around

the Australian wall and into the bottom-right corner of goal.

Just moments before, teammate Abdulrahman Ahmedi had a chance to open Bahrain's account with a header right in the face of goal off a short cross from Sanad Saleh, but it was punched away by Australia goalkeeper Tom Glover.

Bahrain had several other chances to score, but could not find the finishing touches.

Australia and Thailand must now wait to learn of their opponents in the knockout quarter-finals. The Aussies will be facing the Group B runners-up while the Thais will play the Group B winners. Group B is currently topped by Syria who are followed by Saudi Arabia, both on four points, while Qatar are third with two points and Japan fourth with zero.

Bahrain were the only team making their debut in the AFC U23 Championship.

Foreign fighters praise global reach of Bahrain's BRAVE CF ahead of Slovenia debut

TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation will visit Slovenia for the first time, this Sunday (19), as the fastest-growing MMA promotion in the world and the biggest-ever Bahraini-born brand kicks off 2020 in partnership with leading local organization WFC for BRAVE CF 34/WFC 24. Two of the stars of the show can't wait to visit yet another country representing BRAVE CF and have praised the company's global reach. Russia's Velimurad Alkhasov and American Phil Hawes represent two of the more than sixty nationalities that have been represented under Bahrain's own BRAVE CF.

Flyweight contender Velimurad Alkhasov, who meets Zach Makovsky in the first bout of the main card, has spoken of his admiration for BRAVE CF's strategy as the promotion will make Slovenia the 19th country to host a show in just over three years of operations.

"BRAVE CF holds shows all around the world and signs first-class fighters. That's why the development is so fast and that's why BRAVE CF is the fastest-growing MMA promotion in the world", says Velimurad, who has fought for BRAVE CF in Morocco and Bahrain before



Russia's Velimurad Alkhasov in action during a bout

Slovenia.

Middleweight Phil Hawes has been a long admirer of BRAVE Combat Federation and says he's honored to be traveling the world with the promotion. Hawes will take on Iuri Fraga at BRAVE CF 34, and has fought in India before.

"I think a year or two ago, I looked back at my DMs, and it looks like I actually tried to get into BRAVE CF way before. So it's awesome to be here. I've finally manifested this and now I get to travel the world with BRAVE CF. Slovenia's the 19th country in 34 events which to me is unheard of and that's really awesome. I'm really happy to be a part of this team", says "Megatron".

BRAVE CF 34/WFC 24 will



Phil Hawes during a weigh-in

be headlined by a WFC Heavyweight title fight as Luka Podkrajsek and Viktor Vasic look to take home the vacant belt,

with several stars taking on the Balkans' best fighters in a fight night to never be forgotten for the region.

Huge rewards for strong men

● **HH Shaikh Khalid approves prizes of 'GCC Strongest Man Championship'**

TDT | Manama

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa has recently approved the awards of the GCC Strongest Man "Heavyweight" Championship, which is scheduled to be held next April at Bahrain International Circuit.

First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee has specified the awards to be USD 130,000 in total; USD100,000 for the first place winner, USD20,000 for the second place winner and USD10,000 for the third place winner.

Commenting on the occasion, HH Shaikh Khalid stated, "The GCC Strongest Man Championship comes as a continuation of the successes achieved in the previous editions of the championship. The championship was the focus of attention of the media and enthusiasts of strength and endurance sports. This success came after we adopted the integration of traditional games in the championship, with the aim of continuing

efforts to preserve the heritage of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the countries of the region."

His Highness called upon the youth in the GCC region to register and participate in the championship. At the same time HH Shaikh Khalid said he is looking forward for achieving the goals the championship was launched for and are set by His Highness, such as harnessing sport in support of relationships and strengthening the bonds of love, brotherhood and cooperation between the people of the GCC States.

For its part, the organising committee of the championship, represented by the Media Office of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, announced that it will pay visits to the brotherly GCC countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman, to meet the youth who are interested in taking part in the championship.

The Media Office of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa also announced that a website has been allocated for the registration of the championship on www.gccstrongestman.com, in addition to launching an official page for the championship on Instagram (@gccstrongestman), in which inquiries will be received through direct messages.

Warner, Finch tons help Australia pummel India by 10 wickets

AFP | Mumbai

Openers David Warner and Aaron Finch struck dominant centuries in a record partnership to power Australia to a crushing 10-wicket win over India in the first one-day international Wednesday.

Warner blasted 128 while captain Finch made 110 as Australia chased down their target of 256 in just 37.4

overs in Mumbai to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Paceman Mitchell Starc also played a key part with three wickets that helped bowl out India for 255 in 49.1 overs after the tourists elected to field first in their first 50-over outing since last year's World Cup.

But it was the left-right batting pair of Warner and Finch that put together the highest partnership of 258 for any

wicket in ODIs against India.

Warner raised his 18th ODI hundred in 88 balls with a boundary off Indian quick Jasprit Bumrah as he jumped with joy and kissed his helmet to celebrate the knock.

Finch completed his hundred in 108 balls but it was Warner who remained in total control as he finished off with two of 17 boundaries. He also hit three sixes.

For India, KL Rahul, who made 47 in the Indian innings, kept wickets after regular stumper Rishabh Pant suffered a concussion following a hit on the helmet while batting.

It was the second-wicket 121-run stand between Rahul and Dhawan that put India on course for a big score but they slipped from 134-1 to 164-5 in the space of 35 deliveries.

The left-handed Dhawan smashed

nine fours and one six in his 91-ball knock and was well supported by Rahul who made 47 before falling to Ashton Agar's left-arm spin.

Pat Cummins was brought back from the other end to send Dhawan back to the pavilion after flicking the ball to cover where Agar took the catch.

Skipper Virat Kohli did not stay long, hitting Zampa for a six but was caught and bowled with the next ball for 16.