

**Balestra triumphs in main race at REHC**

Balestra lifted the Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Cup yesterday after winning the day's main race at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) in Riffa.

P12

Amazon wins suspension of \$10 bn 'JEDI' contract to Microsoft

THE DAILY **tribune**

Katy Perry not inviting 'American Idol' co-judges to wedding

10 CELEBS

WORLD

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Mother 'reunites' with dead daughter in VR show

**Defence spending rise**  
 Washington, DC

Global spending on defence rose by four per cent in 2019, the largest growth in 10 years, a study said yesterday.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) released figures from its survey of military capabilities at the Munich Security Conference. The big drivers were the United States and China with both increasing spending by 6.6 per cent.

Beijing's military modernisation programme - which includes developing new hard-to-detect hypersonic missiles - is alarming Washington and helping drive US defence spending, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) said.

**First case of Corona in Egypt**  
 Cairo

Egypt's Health Ministry has confirmed the first case of the new virus in the North African country.

In a statement issued yesterday, Health Ministry spokesman Khaled Mugahed said the person was a "foreigner" who is carrying the virus but not showing any serious symptoms.

Officials were able to confirm the case through a follow-up program the government implemented for travellers arriving from countries where the virus has spread. The ministry statement said the person was hospitalised and in isolation.



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210 fils (includes VAT)



# Marking a milestone

'Glorious historic day, an opportunity to recall patriotic stances of Bahraini citizens'



His Majesty along HRH the Crown Prince offers prayers at Al Sakhir Palace's mosque.



His Majesty, HRH the Crown Prince and other Royal Family members at the event.



His Majesty and HRH the Crown Prince along with Royal Family members and senior government officials arrive for the event marking NAC anniversary.

● **The King underlined the importance of adherence to the essence and principles of the National Action Charter.**

● **His Majesty affirmed that Bahraini citizens will always remain the primary focus of the development march.**

Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday received, in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, senior Royal Family members on the 19th Anniversary of the National Action Charter.

Senior Royal Family members extended to HM the King deepest congratulations on the glorious occasion, expressing utmost pride in the landmark achievements attained by the kingdom in all fields and the distinguished position it has reached at the international level thanks to HM King Hamad's leadership.

They praised the tremendous efforts exerted by HM the King to enhance Bahrain's relations with brotherly and friendly countries, as well as to promote its honourable stances at global gatherings and strengthen its leading role at the Arab and international levels.

They prayed to Allah the Almighty to guide HM the King on the right path, and to bless him with abundant health and happiness to continue leading the progress march witnessed by the kingdom during his prosperous era.

HM the King welcomed senior Royal Family members, and exchanged with them congrat-

“The adoption of the National Action Charter paved the way for embarking on a promising march of building the Kingdom's institutions and constitutional branches.”

HIS MAJESTY

ulations on the dear national occasion, expressing thanks and appreciation to them for their noble patriotic feelings and supplications.

HM King Hamad said that the glorious historic day is an opportunity to recall with pride the patriotic stances of the beloved Bahraini people on the referendum day, noting that the adoption of the National Action Charter paved the way for embarking on a promising march of building the Kingdom's institutions and con-

stitutional branches, in line with the aspirations of the Bahraini citizens whose unprecedented consensus, HM the King said, embodied the all-inclusive Bahraini identity that seeks development and civilisational progress.

HM the King underlined the importance of adherence to the essence and principles of the National Action Charter by preserving what has been achieved so far, and carrying on dedicated efforts to build on hard-won national gains and increase them.

HM the King stressed the importance of continuous and constructive co-operation between the Executive and Legislative branches, expressing appreciation for the members of the two branches for their constant keenness to place the interests of the nation and the citizens at top of their priorities.

In this regard, HM the King lauded the achievements of the bicameral National Assembly, and its success in playing the role

assigned to it to the fullest.

HM King Hamad affirmed that the Bahraini citizens will always remain the focus of the development march and its ultimate goal, expressing pride in the solidarity among all Bahraini citizens, as well as their cohesion and unified stances, citing the tireless efforts of Bahraini competencies to enrich the national march and increase the Kingdom's pioneering achievements at various gatherings.

HM the King affirmed the kingdom's steadfast determination to continue enhancing its progress march to further strengthen its status among developed countries and meet its citizens' aspiration for more progress and prosperity.

HM King Hamad performed Friday Prayers at Al Sakhir Palace's mosque.

HM the King also hosted a lunch banquet in honour of those present marking the glorious national occasion.

TACKLING TERROR

## US Navy intercepts 'Iranian weapons' bound for Houthis

TDI | Manama

The US Navy has intercepted a shipment of Iranian-made and designed weapons bound for the Houthi rebels in Yemen, the US Central Command announced on Thursday.

Centcom said the operation occurred on Sunday.

The USS Normandy, while conducting maritime security operations in the Arabian Sea, "boarded a dhow vessel in accordance with

international law and discovered a large cache of weapons".

It said the weapons seized included "150 Dehlahveh anti-tank guided missiles" and "other weapons components seized aboard the dhow were of Iranian design and manufacture".

They included "Iranian surface-to-air missiles, Iranian thermal imaging weapon scopes, and Iranian components for unmanned aerial and surface vessels, as well as other munitions



An image of the vessel boarded by the US Navy which was discovered to be carrying a large cache of weapons.

and advanced weapons parts".

The Yemeni military and independent observers have noted that the Houthis have been

more sophisticated and deadlier weapons in recent attacks.

A report released by the data firm IHS Markit on Thursday said the rebels were increasingly relying on drones to carry out attacks after a marked improvement in their unmanned aerial vehicle technology.

"No other known non-state armed group across the Mena region and beyond has demonstrated the same level of UAV technological sophistication," the company said in a report.

# Hamad Town service centre's gold classification highlighted

Manama

Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Minister, Essam Khalaf, has expressed the pride of all municipal sectors' affiliates in the honouring of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, of the Northern Municipal Service Centre in Hamad Town.

The centre was among the eight government services centres awarded by HRH the Crown Prince for having received gold classification under the second edition of the "Taqeem" service evaluation programme.



Mr Khalaf and Mr AlQaed hold the Gold Category Shield.

The minister noted that the win will stimulate the centre to develop customer services, in general, and municipal ones, in particular.

Minister Khalaf made the statements during a ceremony to place the Gold Category Shield at the Northern Municipal Service Centre in Hamad Town.

The CEO of the Information and e-Government Authority (iGA), Mohammed AlQaed, Municipal Affairs Undersecretary, Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Director General of the Northern Area Municipality, Lamia AlFadhlah, and the employees of the Northern Municipal Service Centre in Hamad Town were present.

## NATO-Arab ties 'growing' Brussels

The close partnerships between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Arab countries have contributed to an improved regional security, a senior official of the alliance has said.

"As we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Istanbul Co-operation Initiative ICI and the 25th anniversary of the [Mediterranean Dialogue] MD, I noted that NATO's partnerships have allowed us to progressively enhance our political dialogue and practical co-operation," Alejandro Alvargonzalez, NATO Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Security Policy said.

"This has contributed to improve regional security to the benefit of all countries involved," he said at a luncheon hosted by Kuwait's Ambassador to NATO Jassem Al Budaiwi Brussels-based Arab Ambassadors, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reported.

Alvargonzalez highlighted the importance of cooperative security for NATO, which is one of its main three core tasks along with collective defense and crisis management.

NATO launched the Mediterranean Dialogue in December 1994 with countries in North Africa and Eastern Mediterranean. It currently involves seven non-NATO countries.

The Mediterranean Dialogue's overall aim is to contribute towards regional security and stability through stronger practical cooperation, including by enhancing the existing political dialogue, achieving interoperability, developing defence reform and contributing to the fight against terrorism.

It also seeks to achieve better mutual understanding and dispel any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries.

The ICI, launched at the NATO summit in Istanbul in June 2004, aims to contribute to long-term global and regional security by offering Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries practical bilateral security co-operation with NATO.



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the State of Kuwait, Salah Ali Al Malki, extended his utmost congratulations to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prime Minister, Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and to the Bahraini people, on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the National Action Charter. This came during a ceremony held by the Embassy of the Kingdom in co-operation with Lulwa Al Binali, the Cultural Attaché of the embassy, marking the anniversary of the National Action Charter, which falls on February 14 of each year.

## 'NAC opened doors for ties with global organisations'

Manama

Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA) Chief Executive, Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, on behalf of all iGA employees, congratulated His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, and the Bahraini people, on the National Action Charter, celebrated on

14th February each year.

Mr AlQaed said: "The anniversary of the National Action Charter referendum is a celebration of the commitment of the Kingdom's leadership to improving the lives of citizens. It is a memory close to the hearts of all in Bahrain, and was an important stage of transition, allowing the country to move towards an era with greater freedom and development in a range of areas, including the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) field.

"These changes have been felt in the development of eServices



Mr AlQaed

in the Kingdom, and their mechanisms, which are among the gains that have been realised thanks to

the vision and directives of the Kingdom's leadership, and its efforts to implement systems and legislation aimed at benefiting the public, and to provide an environment conducive to attracting foreign investment from companies offering highly advanced technologies."

Mr AlQaed pointed out that the benefits of the National Action Charter include the opening of dialogue with global ICT organisations. Working with these organisations has given the Kingdom the opportunity to improve its capabilities through the exchange

of technical information. It has also motivated the Kingdom to launch innovative solutions and speed up the pace of the digital transformation of government services.

He added that on this anniversary, the iGA and all its stakeholders renew their pledge of loyalty to the directives of the leadership in its march towards digital transformation. Mr AlQaed expressed his pride in all that has been accomplished under the guidance of the kingdom's leaders, and wished further development and prosperity to all.



Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan received Nuwaidrat Charity Society Chairman Abdulnabi Jassim and discussed co-operation to promote social solidarity to benefit citizens in the Kingdom. The meeting which was attended by board members focused on developing services provided by the ministry for services. The two sides also discussed the services and programmes being provided by the association for all social categories. The minister commended the contribution of social society institutions in serving development projects, reiterating the ministry's support to all initiatives in compliance with the law on NGOs in Bahrain.



The Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Brussels celebrated the anniversary of the National Action Charter (NAC). On the occasion, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Kingdom of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Kingdom of Denmark, and representative to the European Union and NATO, Dr Bahia Al Jishi, extended her utmost congratulations to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister. She noted that this occasion reflects the rich history of the Kingdom, highlighting an era full of achievements at various levels. The ambassador emphasised that the National Action Charter is considered a tangible expression of cohesion between the people and their leadership.

## Team to evaluate medical qualifications

Manama

Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training, His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, has issued Edict 1/2020, forming a work team on evaluating medical qualifications obtained from Chinese universities.

Under the edict, the Chinese Universities' Medical Qualifications Evaluation Team will be chaired by Dr Ahmed Mohammed Al Ansari (Supreme Council for Health), and comprise the Chairman of the National Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Qualifications at the Ministry of Education, Dr Fawzi Abdulrahman Al Jowdar, Chief of the Health Professions Regulation Office at the Nation-



HH Shaikh Mohammed

Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) and Dr Leena Mohammed Al Qassim, as members.

Members also include the Chief of Medical Services at the Salmaniya Medical Complex, Dr Nabeel Ahmed Al Asheeri, Dr Khalid Abdulghaffar (BDF Hospital), Dr Dalal Hassan Al Hassan (King Hamad University Hospital), Dr W Kingham (RCSI Medical University of Bahrain) and Dr Abdulhaleem

Dhaifallah (Arabian Gulf University).

The team shall evaluate the non-accredited 77 qualifications obtained by Bahraini students from Chinese universities, separately, to determine their level and decide the requirements, if any, to complete the accreditation process in Bahrain or abroad.

It shall also submit recommendations on the 77 qualifica-

tions within two weeks.

The team shall also co-ordinate with local and regional universities and devise a unified placement exam for the graduates of non recommended universities so as to enable them to complete the required academic and clinical content at other recommended universities, which will pave the way for them to accredit their current qualifications.

# Kingdom 'supporting China' to solve face mask shortage

Bahrain's support for China reflects 'depth of friendship between both nations'

Chinese officials expressed their thanks to the Kingdom for its great and continuous efforts to enhance relations between the two countries.

Each province is responsible for formulating differentiated epidemic prevention and control strategies based on their own conditions.

Beijing

Bahraini Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Dr Anwar Alabdulla, delivered a batch of protective face masks provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China due to the outbreak of the new Coronavirus in a number of Chinese cities, which led to a high number of infections and deaths and an increase in the needs of individuals for protective masks and other requirements for protection and personal hygiene.

Officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Red Cross expressed their great gratitude and sincere thanks to the Kingdom of Bahrain for its support to China as confronting this virus and the whole nation is combatting in all available ways and means with the assistance of all friendly countries in the world, Dr Anwar said. They also appreciated the King-



The demand for face masks is huge in China, say media reports.

dom of Bahrain's support for the People's Republic of China in its current severe predicament, stressing that this reflects the depth of friendship and co-operation between the two friendly countries.

They expressed their thanks to the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Beijing for its great and continuous efforts to enhance relations between the two countries and raise them to wider levels in various fields.

Face masks were out of stock at many pharma stores across the Kingdom as people began buying them in large numbers over coronavirus fear.

The shortage is attributed to declining supply and increasing demand in the Kingdom.

Speaking to Tribune, a pharmacist manager, who doesn't want to be named, said: "We have a huge shortage of face masks as

**China is confronting this virus and the whole nation is combatting in all available ways and means with the assistance of all friendly countries in the world.**

DR ANWAR

we sold out our stocks in the last two days.

"Though no cases are reported in the Kingdom, people here are taking special caution and a good number of them are wearing face masks, which is one of the ways to prevent being infected."

He said masks were being imported from China and the supplies have declined owing to huge demand in that country.

"If you see, the Chinese author-

ities have asked everyone at risk to wear face masks. The demand is vast as China is the largest populated country in the world," he added.

However, on the contrary, there were also many reports on media, which states there are not enough evidences to suggest that wearing a face mask has any benefit for the general public.

Meanwhile, Chinese authorities have stressed differentiated measures for different regions to fight the novel coronavirus outbreak at a high-level meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang.

The leading group of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee on the prevention and control of the novel coronavirus outbreak also demanded efforts to improve patient treatment and expedite research on drugs.

Epidemic prevention and con-

trol in Hubei Province, particularly in the capital city of Wuhan, remain the top priority, said the leading group headed by Li, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

While ordering Wuhan to speed up hospital admission and suspected case quarantine, the leading group instructed hard-hit cities in Hubei such as Xiaogan and Huanggang to carry out equally strict measures as in Wuhan in surveillance, quarantine and treatment.

The demand for more medics in Hubei and Wuhan should be fulfilled, and the departure channels of the city and the province need further control, according to the meeting.

Multiple steps such as spacing out return trips have prevented large-scale flows of people after the Spring Festival, said the meeting.

Each province is responsible for formulating differentiated epidemic prevention and control strategies based on their own conditions, according to the meeting.

No one-size-fits-all approach should be taken and unfair and extreme practices must be corrected without delay, said the meeting.

Effective drugs and treatment are the key to contain the epidemic, the meeting noted, stressing more studies on the nearly 6,000 cured cases to improve treating plans.

The meeting also highlighted the importance of speeding up the clinical trial of drugs.

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and deputy head of the leading group, attended the meeting.

## Bilateral political talks held Berlin

The fifth round of political consultations between the UAE and Germany began on Thursday.

The Emirati delegation was led by Dr Anwar bin Mohammed Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, while the German side was led by Andreas Michaelis, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, UAE News Agency (WAM) reported.

During the meeting, both sides discussed ways to strengthen joint co-operation and addressed regional and international developments.

Dr Gargash emphasised the importance of the consultations in strengthening bilateral cooperation and exchanging views on issues of common priority.

He pointed out that the UAE's approach is characterised by its credibility and realistic outlook. He also stressed the importance of continuing political interaction, saying that the two countries' views on regional and global issues are aligned.

Michaelis commended his country's strong ties with the UAE and the close co-operation on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The Emirate of Sharjah has been collaborating with the European business community across several sectors including trade, culture and tourism over several years.

As of November 2019, the number of European companies registered in Sharjah include 423 from France; 396 from Germany; 148 from Belgium; 96 from Spain; 86 from Portugal; 92 from Switzerland; and 18 from The Netherlands.

These numbers continue to grow due to the Sharjah government's pro-investor policies and strategic budget allocations.

For instance, out of the approved 2019 budget of \$9 billion for Sharjah, 23 per cent has been dedicated to the development and improvement of its infrastructure, and 41 per cent has been committed towards the economic development sector.

## Public employee jailed for demanding bribe

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has sentenced a public employee to five years behind bars for accepting BD2,000 in bribe from a construction company.

According to court files, the employee, who was serving in the Ministry of Works, was offered bribe by the construction company to get away with a violation.

It's claimed that the construction company fixed lights in a project for the ministry not in accordance with an agreement signed between the two parties.

Changing them would cost the company a whopping BD18,000 and the employee of the ministry jumped to seize this opportunity and demanded to be paid to pass the violation.

The defendant was arrested red-handed while taking the

money from the company.

"He called me and offered me his help to get the violation approved. He requested BD2,000," the manager of the construction company said.

"I directly informed his superiors and I was requested to give him the money in an effort to have evidence against him," she added.

The defendant was also fined BD2,000 for his crime.

## Royal support to charity work praised

Manama

Representative of His Majesty the King for Charity Work and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and Board of Trustees Chairman of the Royal Charity Organisation (RCO) His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa lauded the royal support to charity and humanitarian work in Bahrain and abroad.

He also praised support of the government under the leadership of 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.

HH Shaikh Nasser was speaking during a celebration held by RCO on the occasion

of its winning the award of Best Arab Charity Organisation which is granted by the International Federation of Arab Achievers.

He stressed that the accomplishment reflects the care accorded by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to charity and humanitarian work, particularly supporting the widows and orphans in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

# Bahraini food firms to showcase their latest products at Gulfood

Over 5,000 international food companies are expected to attend the show

● Bahraini food companies are also working to improve their business and increase their contribution in supporting food security in the Kingdom.

● The exhibition also provides Bahraini participants with a favourable opportunity to learn about the most important trends in the food industry.

TDI | Manama

Many Bahraini firms are expected to be part of the Bahraini National Pavilion at Gulfood Exhibition 2020.

The exhibition will be held from February 16 to 20 at Dubai World Trade Centre, Shaikh Rashid Hall.

Bahraini companies will showcase the most prominent products and services of the food industry and trade sector in the Kingdom.

The Bahraini companies participating in Gulfood include



The Kingdom's pavilion at the food expo last year.

Awal Dairy Factory, the first dairy company in Bahrain and one of the first dairies in the Arabian Gulf region, Bakemate, the company that specialises in marketing full portfolio of bakery and pastry ingredients in the whole region of middle east market, Deeko Bahrain, the manufacturer well known for manufacturing DANA® brand of disposable food packaging products, Foosco, the company engaged in manufacturing and distribution of natural potato chips, extruded and pellet snacks in local market of Bahrain and all over GCC countries, and Trafco Group, which is one among the



**Gulfood is the largest food industry expo in the whole world.**

largest and biggest fast moving consumer goods conglomerate in the Kingdom.

These companies are recog-

nised as household name synonymous with finest food products in the region.

These Bahraini companies participate along with more than five thousand regional and international companies in this trade show, which is considered the largest of its kind in the world. Bahraini participants in Gulfood 2020 seek to market their food products in the regional markets and enter into fruitful partnerships with counterparts from food manufacturers and traders around the world.

The Gulfood exhibition also provides Bahraini participants with a favourable opportunity to

learn about the most important trends in the food industry in the world, and modern methods of food production, especially with a greater increase in the volume of demand for safe and reliable food to meet the needs of the growing population, as consumer search for affordable products which are environment-friendly and superior in quality.

Through its participation in Gulfood 2020, Bahraini food companies are also working to improve their business and increase their contribution in supporting food security in the Kingdom.

## DERASAT organises round-table meeting

Manama

Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (DERASAT) yesterday organised a round-table meeting, which hosted Foreign Ministry Commissioned Minister and former Spokesperson of the Global Coalition Against Daesh Prof Nancy Jamal.

Prof Jamal reviewed before members of the Shura and Representatives Councils, officials, diplomats, researchers and media persons the establishment and development of the alliance and its efforts to eradicate Daesh and restore stability in the freed regions.

Prof Jamal cast light on the coalition's work which focused on military development, restoring stability, fighting the terrorist propaganda and ideology, stopping movement of foreign fighters and combatant funding the organisation and destroying the economic structure.

Those efforts, she pointed out, culminated in liberating 110,000 sqkm of the Iraqi and Syrian lands and bringing 7.7 million immigrants back home.

Prof Jamal was appointed as the Official Coalition Representative (OCR) in November 2018. Her mandate focuses on the coalition's non-military lines of effort and the wider work of all 79 partners.

The OCR promotes the Coalition's stabilisation efforts in areas liberated from Daesh and works with governments, agencies, civil society, military and academics to ensure a high level of engagement across all coalition activities is maintained.

Ms Jamal previously headed the advisory board responsible to the Counter Daesh Global Coalition Communications Cell, where she led on building regional partnerships and played a vital role in coalition messaging. She holds the diplomatic rank of Minister Plenipotentiary at the Kingdom of Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was previously Director of Information, Studies and Research, mandated to implement a comprehensive communications strategy in line with the Kingdom of Bahrain's Foreign Policy.

## Family App QiDZ now available in the Kingdom

Dubai

UAE homegrown QiDZ, the go-to mobile app for family activities, has added the Kingdom and Saudi Arabia to its growing network.

The first-of-its-kind mobile application to enter these thriving markets, QiDZ helps parents plan enjoyable activities and create quality, fun memories with their families.

Parents can find inspiration through the thousands of activities on QiDZ from family weekend bonding, birthday parties and get-togethers, to activities for babies, toddlers and even teens! Some of the activities include soft play, arts and crafts, carnivals, workshops and camps, restaurants and more.

Parents can easily search by

location and check for activities close to them, filter by the kids' ages and interests, book and buy online instantly, and post reviews of experiences too! QiDZ is the partner of choice to many vendors across the Middle East and is always on top of the latest trends to ensure families can easily book and buy tickets to experience the newest activities and hottest trends in town.

The transformational growth led by the Kingdom's Vision 2030 has affected the non-oil sectors and attracted both local and international investors. Simona Agolini, QiDZ CEO and Co-founder, said: "No one can deny the fact that Saudi market is booming. We were a part of MISK Growth Accelerator Programme powered by Vision Ventures and Seedstars; the support that we



**Through the app, parents in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia can find fun activities that suits their schedule and book them right away.**

MS AGOLINI

have received shows how much the nation would like to support and hone regional talents that will contribute to the economy.

"Our objective complements Saudi Arabia's goal to promote culture and improve the quality of life - by helping families create fun memories."

E-commerce in Saudi is thriving. In the last year Saudi has seen tremendous growth in online spending, with 64 per cent of Saudis now saying they purchase a product or service online on a monthly basis. This behaviour is heavily weighted towards mobile, with 51 per cent

of people making a purchase on a phone, compared to just 24pc on a laptop/desktop computer.

Bahrain, as well, is becoming a productive and globally competitive economy, with a young, tech-savvy population. Bahrain is one of the top countries in the world for consumer adoption of technology, with 100pc smartphone penetration and more than 70pc social media adoption - higher than the United States. In 2019, there are 164pc mobile connections compared to the total population of 1.6 million.

"We saw an opportunity to serve the two markets - QiDZ offers convenience that create lasting memories. Through the app, parents in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia can find fun activities that suits their schedule and book them right away," added Agolini.

## Saudi, Pakistani forces conduct major military exercise

The "Samsam 7" military exercise between the Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) and Pakistan Army special forces kicked off in Hafr Al Batin in the presence of Maj Gen Saleh Al Zahrani, commander of the Northern region, and a number of top-ranking officers in the Saudi and Pakistani armies.

Maj Gen Mansour Al Qarni, commander of the training, said: "The exercise come as a part of the preparations to develop and raise the level of competence of military forces."

Brig Gen Munawer bin Mohammed Al Harbi, representa-



Officers of Saudi and Pakistani forces.

tive of the department of training and military doctrines at the

RSLF, stressed that this exercise comes in line with reinforcing

military co-operation between the two countries.

He added that the RSLF is keen to ensure these exercises con-

tinue in order to raise combat readiness for ground forces.

A Pakistani officer participating in the exercise said that his country's participation comes as an expression of friendly relations that bound the Kingdom to Pakistan.

He expressed his gratitude to the Saudis for providing the equipment necessary for the success of the exercise.

Mr Al Zahrani gave the signal to start the exercise and raise the flags of the participating countries.

He said that this was the seventh version of the exercise with the Pakistani Army.

# business

## Amazon wins suspension of \$10 bn 'JEDI' contract to Microsoft

● Amazon has alleged it was shut out of the deal because of President Donald Trump's vendetta against the company

● Amazon was considered the lead contender to provide technology for JEDI

● Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post, is a frequent target of the US president



Amazon says the tech giant lost a major Pentagon cloud computing contract because of President Donald Trump's animosity for its CEO Jeff Bezos

AFP | San Francisco

A federal judge yesterday temporarily blocked the US military from awarding a multibillion-dollar cloud computing contract to Microsoft, after Amazon claimed the process was tainted by politics.

A preliminary injunction requested by Amazon was issued by Judge Patricia Campbell-Smith, barring the Department of Defense from starting work on the contract known as JEDI, according to a summary of the ruling available online.

Details of the ruling were sealed for unspecified reasons.

Amazon has alleged it was shut out of the deal because of President Donald Trump's vendetta against the company and

**“We have confidence in the Department of Defense, and we believe the facts will show they ran a detailed, thorough and fair process in determining the needs of the warfighter were best met by Microsoft”**

MICROSOFT VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS FRANK SHAW

is seeking testimony from the president and other top officials on the reasons for awarding the

\$10 billion US military cloud computing contract.

The 10-year contract for the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure (JEDI) programme will ultimately see all military branches sharing information in a cloud-based system boosted by artificial intelligence.

An earlier court filing by Amazon detailed alleged errors that ended with Microsoft being chosen over its Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud computing division, part of the technology group led by Jeff Bezos -- a frequent target of the president.

**Microsoft confident**

Microsoft said it hoped to prevail after the merits of the case are heard in court.

“We have confidence in the

Department of Defense, and we believe the facts will show they ran a detailed, thorough and fair process in determining the needs of the warfighter were best met by Microsoft,” Microsoft vice president of communications Frank Shaw said.

Amazon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Amazon was considered the lead contender to provide technology for JEDI, with AWS dominating the cloud computing arena and the company already providing classified servers for other government agencies including the CIA.

The Pentagon's mistakes in the contract were “hard to understand and impossible to assess” when separated from Trump's “repeatedly expressed determination to, in the words of the president himself, ‘screw Amazon,’” court documents filed by Amazon argued.

Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post, is a frequent target of the US president, who claims the newspaper is biased against him.

The bid protest filed in US Court of Federal Claims urges that the rival JEDI bids be re-evaluated and a new decision reached.

As a condition of the injunction, Amazon was directed to provide \$42 million that would be used to cover any costs or damages incurred if it is determined that the injunction was issued wrongly.

## Renault reports first net losses in decade for 2019



Renault said 2020 would likely also be a difficult year as it emerges from the Ghosn controversy in a challenging global market

Paris

French carmaker Renault said yesterday it went into the red last year for the first time in a decade on lower sales and a falling contribution from its Japanese partner Nissan.

Renault said in a statement it suffered net losses of 141 million euros (\$152 million).

It added the outlook for 2020 was bleak with a fresh fall in operational profitability expected and did not rule out possible plant closures.

Last year saw group operating margin drop from 6.3 per cent to 4.8 pc, though Renault stated that it “achieved its targets, revised in October,” despite “a troubled context.”

The auto giant in 2019 marked its first full year without former emblematic CEO Carlos Ghosn, arrested in Japan in November 2018 over allegations of financial misconduct, including under reporting salary and misuse of company assets at Renault partner Nissan.

Brazilian-born Ghosn, who also has French and Lebanese nationality, is now in Lebanon, where he fled in December after jumping bail in Japan.

In a struggling global auto market Renault saw group revenues slide 3.3 pc to 55.5 billion euros while confirming sales dropped 3.4 pc at 3.75 million vehicles.

Unveiling operating income down almost a third to 2.11 billion euros, the group said it expected 2020 to bring a further profitability hit, with revenues of a similar order to 2019.

“Visibility for 2020 remains limited by expected market volatility ... and the possible impacts of the coronavirus,” said acting CEO Clotilde Delbos.

**Ghosn fallout**

Renault also took a hit from a decline in the financial contribution of a likewise struggling Nissan, in which it has a 43-pc stake, coming in at 242 million euros, down from 1.51 billion in 2018.

Thursday, Nissan said its net profit plunged more than 87 pc for the nine months to December as it struggles with weak demand and fallout from the Ghosn case.

Nissan also revised downwards its full-year sales and profit forecasts, but warned that the impact from the spreading coronavirus crisis was not yet included in their figures.

Friday's results marked the first time Renault -- which said it would slash its dividend by more than two thirds to 1.10 euros a share -- had plunged into the red since 2009 in the throes of the financial crisis when it made a 3.1 billion euro loss.

## Court rules Apple must pay workers during bag checks

● Apple employees are required to clock out before submitting to an exit search

● A lower court had previously sided with Apple

● The Apple case is the third the state high court has considered in recent years



On the busiest days, employees say the wait time can be as long as 45 minutes

Los Angeles

The California Supreme Court ruled on Thursday that Apple must pay employees for time spent waiting for their bags and personal electronic devices to be searched when they leave work.

The decision means that the tech giant will have to pay millions of dollars to more than 12,000 hourly workers at California retail stores who fall under the mandatory bag-search policy.

According to court documents, Apple employees are required to clock out before submitting to an exit search which

can take from five to 20 minutes. On the busiest days, employees say the wait time can be as long as 45 minutes. Those who refuse to have their belongings searched are subject to discipline, including termination.

A lower court had previously sided with Apple, ruling that time spent by employees waiting for the exit searches cannot be considered “hours worked” under California law.

The plaintiffs escalated the case to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals which asked the Supreme Court to address the state law issue.

The state's high court in its decision issued on Thursday re-

jected Apple's argument that its employees could easily avoid a search by choosing not to bring a bag or iPhone to work.

Quoting from a US Supreme Court decision, it noted that cell phones are “now such a pervasive and insistent part of daily life that the proverbial visitor from Mars might conclude they were an important feature of human anatomy.”

“The irony and inconsistency of Apple's argument must be noted,” the court added.

“Its characterization of the iPhone as unnecessary for its own employees is directly at odds with its description of the iPhone as an ‘integrated and in-

**“Its characterization of the iPhone as unnecessary for its own employees is directly at odds with its description of the iPhone as an ‘integrated and integral’ part of the lives of everyone else.”**

HIGH COURT

tegral’ part of the lives of everyone else.”

Apple representatives could not immediately be reached for comment on the ruling.

The Apple case is the third the state high court has considered in recent years as related to minimum wage and time during which workers are under employers' control.

In 2018, the court ruled that Starbucks has to pay for off-the-clock work -- such as going through the checklist for closing the store -- that can last a few seconds or minutes past someone's shift.

## Facebook's Zuckerberg wants 'new framework' for digital tax



Paris

Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg yesterday backed moves by the OECD group of free-market economies to reform the way online giants are taxed worldwide, even if that means companies like his own paying more to national governments.

“We also want tax reform and I'm glad the OECD is look-

ing at this,” Zuckerberg says in published extracts of a speech he will make in Germany on Saturday.

“We want the OECD process to succeed so that we have a stable and reliable system going forward,” he added.

The digital tax has emerged as a key bone of contention between the US and France in particular, after Paris imposed its own tax on US digital giants such as Facebook, Google, Amazon and Apple last year.

Washington has slammed the move as discriminatory, but both sides agreed last month to pursue a global framework under the aegis of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with Paris suspending its collection of the tax until December 2020.

SOCIETY



Management and staff members of the Khaleeji Commercial Bank (KHCB), one of the leading Islamic banks in the Kingdom, joined the nation in celebrating Bahrain Sports Day 2020 yesterday by organising a bowling tournament in an atmosphere of excitement and joy. The occasion that promotes several noble goals and messages that do not only benefit individuals, but the entire society, as it contributes to the consolidation of social bonds, emotions and national values to the homeland through practicing sports. Mr Algoasibi also stressed the "service for all" concept adopted by the annual event and its significant role in building a society capable of continuous development, consequently cementing the leading position the Kingdom holds in all fields and levels. KHCB is a leading Islamic bank that strives to achieve excellence in all its endeavours.



As part of KCA Golden Jubilee celebrations, KCA Charity Wing handed over 25 wheelchairs to Adel Sultan Al Mutawa, Chairman of Bahrain Mobility International. KCA President Sevi Mathunny, KCA Vice-President Nithyan Thomas, KCA Treasurer Raju P Joseph, KCA Charity Wing Head Francis Kaitharath and KCA Golden Jubilee Chairman Abraham John were present during the function.



The Southern Governorate Police Directorate has hosted the "Protect Your Heart" event organised by the Public Health Directorate of the Southern Governorate. At the end of the event, the Director-General of Southern Governorate Police, Col Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Public Health Directorate in raising awareness about heart diseases.



The Rotary Club of Salmanya held its regular lunch meeting at the Golden Tulip Hotel. Guest speaker was Nepalese Ambassador Padam Sundas, who was the Past President of the Rotary Club of Dharan.



The Indian Ladies Association (ILA) Executive Committee 2019-20 were felicitated on successful completion of their tenure by Indian Embassy Attache Vimla Chauhan on Thursday at ILA.



The New Millennium School, DPS Bahrain organised the theme based EVS Exhibition for the year 2019-20. The exhibition was put in by the children, parents and teachers.

# Society



and competition among employees, which reflected the bank's commitment to the participation in all national events and activities. On this occasion, KHCB CEO Sattam Sulaiman Algozaibi lauded the Bahrain Sports Day initiative, which he said is a national expressed pleasure of KHCB's participation in the national activity, stressing that it is derived from the Bank's commitment towards joining the Bahraini society in observing all occasions. At the same time, the CEO underlined the importance of the "sports achieve clients' aspirations through an Islamic banking model that offers a comprehensive range of high quality Shari'a-complaint banking services and investment opportunities to individuals and companies.



the Health Ministry. The event aims to promote precautionary health by informing the public on how to protect themselves from used thanks and appreciation to the organisers.



Special Olympics Bahrain received a donation from the South Korean community in the Kingdom in support of humanitarian efforts provided by the Bahraini Special Olympics.



Pakistan School students have made history in the World Scholar's Cup Bahrain Round 2020 and broke all the previous records of success and achievements of the school history. Eighteen teams from the school participated in the event, after one week of relentless training and practice under the guidelines and supervision of teachers. The students won an overwhelming 313 medals in total, in different categories of the events. They also won two trophies in team debates and scholar's challenge. Moreover 12 teams qualified for the Global Round as well, which will be held in Dunedin, Dubai, Prague and Vancouver. Chairman Board of Management Sami Ur Rahman and the Principal Ateeq Ur Rahman congratulated the students and teachers.



students of Grades KGI to V, in the school campus. The exhibition was inaugurated by Principal Arun Kumar Sharma, who bestowed his blessings upon the children. The Chairman, Dr Ravi Pillai, Managing Director, Ms Geetha Pillai appreciated the efforts

WORLD  
world

**Aussie croc wrangler joins  
Indonesia bid to save tyre-tied  
reptile**



An Australian television personality has thrown his hat in the ring to help capture a giant Indonesian crocodile and remove a motorcycle tyre stuck around its neck. Matt Wright, host of National Geographic's "Monster Croc Wrangler" show, was on the island of Sulawesi Thursday with a team using traps baited with duck, a drone and even a harpoon in a bid to reel in the reptile.

**Tractors snarl Valencia as farmers  
demand fair prices**



Thousands of Spanish farmers were out protesting on Friday, their tractors gridlocking the streets of Spain's third-largest city as they demanded "fair prices" for their products. Since the end of January, thousands of farmers and livestock breeders have joined a growing wave of protest over low prices and rising production costs which unions say have eroded profitability across the sector.

## Morocco oasis risks becoming mirage

Skoura | Morocco

Dead palm trees lie on dry, yellowish earth near an abandoned adobe house in Morocco's arid southeast, as drought threatens ancient oases. "I grew up in this oasis and I have seen it shrink," says 53-year-old Mohamed El Houkari, who lives in Skoura, a rural oasis area of around 40 square kilometres (15 square miles).

For centuries, Morocco's oases have been home to human settlements, agriculture, and important architectural and cultural heritage, thanks also to trans-Saharan trade caravan routes.

Long a buffer against desertification, they have gone through cycles of drought in recent decades and are now "threatened with extinction", Greenpeace has warned, due to the impact of high temperatures.

In most of the Skoura oasis, the ground is dry and cracked. Until the 1980s, "pomegranate and apple trees flourished here", says Houkari, who is also part of a local development NGO.

Now, only hardy olive trees grow in the shadow of the palms.

### Over-exploitation

The Skoura region used to attract farmers. These days, most young people work elsewhere, though some stay for the developing tourism sector.

"I am ready to sell my land, but there is nobody to buy it. Everyone has left," says Ahmed, a farmer.



Long a buffer against desertification, Morocco's oases have gone through cycles of drought in recent decades and according to Greenpeace are now threatened with extinction

The man in his 50s settled in Skoura with his family 25 years ago, "when the area was green and there was plenty of water. But the drought has destroyed everything".

Electrician Abdeljalil spends most of his time between the cities of Marrakesh and Agadir. "Our life isn't here anymore," the 37-year-old says.

He observes that the use of electric pumps and has contributed to the overexploitation of the groundwater.

Residents say they now need to dig down over 40 metres (130 feet) to find water, compared to seven to 10 metres (23-33 feet) in the 1980s.

Houkari laments the abandonment of traditional methods -- like the "khatarat" canal irrigation system -- that allowed water

to be distributed "economically and rationally".

Using the pumps is also costly, Ahmed, the farmer complains.

Morocco's high level of water stress doesn't just affect life in the oases.

In 2017, protests were held in the semi-desert southern town of Zagora against repeated water cuts.

This year, the kingdom launched an almost \$12 billion national program for the supply of potable and irrigation water through to 2027.

Under a separate initiative, "we set ourselves the goal of mobilising one billion cubic meters (35 billion cubic feet) of water by the end of 2020," says Brahim Hafidi, director-general of the national agency for the development of oasis zones

(ANDZOA), referring to efforts to build dams and rehabilitate irrigation canals.

### 'Very real' danger

According to Greenpeace, droughts have increased in frequency in Tunisia, Morocco, Syria and Algeria over the past decades, rising from once every five years to once every two years in Morocco.

"Oases rely on subterranean waters, which generally come from snow", notes Lahcen El Maimouni, a local academic, who says global warming has hurt the oases.

The Atlas mountains, visible on the horizon from Skoura, are capped in white.

But the snow is not enough to sustain the dry beds of the wadis that cross the oasis, and the effects of drought are visible along the rugged road that leads to Skoura.

To rehabilitate oasis areas, ANDZOA has planted three million trees, the agency's director-general says.

Morocco has lost two-thirds of its 14 million palms over the last century, according to official figures.

But for Skoura resident Houkari, saving the oases also requires raising awareness of the risk of desertification.

Palm trees have even been removed and sold to villa owners, he adds with regret.

"The danger of the oases disappearing is very real", he says, in front of a dry irrigation canal.

## Russian soldier rolls out tanks for romantic manoeuvre



The tanks used for the romantic manoeuvre also take part in the annual Victory Parade on Red Square

Moscow

A Russian soldier has pulled out all the stops to propose to his girlfriend, with his fellow officers manoeuvring 16 tanks to surround the couple in a heart shape.

The high-octane romantic stunt was filmed in a video published by the defence ministry on Friday, Valentine's Day.

As snow fell, the T-72B3 tanks rolled into position on the Alabino training ground outside Moscow.

Lieutenant Denis Kazantsev led his long-term partner Alexandra Kopytova into the centre as she held her hands over her eyes, the defence ministry's TV channel Zvezda reported.

Kazantsev, a platoon commander, went down on bended knee, holding a bunch of red roses.

"We've been together a very long time. We've stood the test of time and distance. Marry me!" he said as his girlfriend nodded silently. He then put a ring on her finger.

"I still don't understand what's going on," Kopytova told a television reporter at the scene. "It's very unexpected."

The tanks used for the romantic manoeuvre also take part in the annual Victory Parade on Red Square, Zvezda reported.

"No one has ever seen such a large-scale proposal," its reporter said.

## Antarctica registers temperature of over 20 C

Sao Paulo

Scientists in Antarctica have recorded a new record temperature of 20.75 degrees Celsius (69.35 Fahrenheit), breaking the barrier of 20 degrees for the first time on the continent, a researcher said Thursday.

"We'd never seen a temperature this high in Antarctica," Brazilian scientist Carlos Schaefer told AFP.

He cautioned that the reading, taken at a monitoring station on an island off the continent's northern tip on February 9, "has no meaning in terms of a climate-change trend," because it is a one-off temperature and not part of a long-term data set.

But news that the icy continent is now recording temperatures in the relatively balmy 20s is likely to further fuel fears about the warming of the planet.

The reading was taken at Seymour Island, part of a chain off

### Record heat in Antarctica



the peninsula that curves out from the northern tip of Antarctica.

The island is home to Argentina's Marambaia base.

Antarctic temperatures since 1961.

bio research base.

Schaefer, a soil scientist, said the reading was taken as part of a 20-year-old research project on the impact of climate change on the region's permafrost.

The previous high was in the 19s, he said.

"We can't use this to anticipate climatic changes in the future. It's a data point," he said.

"It's simply a signal that something different is happening in that area."

Still, he added, a temperature that high had never been registered in Antarctica.

Accelerating melt-off from glaciers and especially ice sheets in Antarctica is helping drive sea level rises, threatening coastal megacities and small island nations.

The news came a week after Argentina's National Meteorological Service recorded the hottest day on record for Argentine Antarctica: 18.3 degrees Celsius at midday at the Esperanza base, located near the tip of the Antarctic peninsula.

The previous record stood at 17.5 degrees on March 24, 2015, it said. It has been recording Antarctic temperatures since 1961.



## Man sentenced for placing knives on Japan prince's desk



Prince Hisahito is second in line to the throne, after his father, the brother of Emperor Naruhito

### Tokyo

A Japanese man who left two kitchen knives on the school desk of Japan's Prince Hisahito, who is second in line to the throne, was given a suspended sentence on Friday.

The man was handed an 18-month sentence, suspended for four years, a Tokyo district court spokesman told AFP.

Kaoru Hasegawa was arrested in April on suspicion of illegally entering the premises of the junior high school that the prince attends.

He was also accused of violating Japan's firearms law.

The prince was not at school when the knives were apparently placed on his desk. They were later found by school officials.

Hisahito, 13, is the son of Emperor Naruhito's younger brother Akishino, who is first in line to the throne.

The presiding judge said Friday that Hasegawa "carried out the crime because of selfish thoughts that he wanted to get attention," according to public broadcaster NHK.

"There's no room for leniency," the judge said.

The incident came as authorities were beefing up security ahead of the abdication of the popular former emperor Akihito after a 30-year reign.

Threats to the imperial family are relatively rare. In 1975, Akihito was almost hit by a Molotov cocktail in Okinawa, a major World War II battlefield where there was strong anti-emperor sentiment.

Japan's Chrysanthemum Throne can only be inherited by a male heir, according to the Imperial Household Law, in place since 1947. That has raised the prospect of a succession crisis if Hisahito does not have a son.

## Erupting Indonesian volcano spews ash, lava



Indonesia's Mount Merapi, one of the world's most active volcanoes, erupted Thursday as fiery red molten lava streamed down from the crater and it belched clouds of grey ash 2,000 metres (6,500 feet) into the sky.

# Mother 'reunites' with dead daughter in VR show

### Seoul

A tearful reunion between a mother and her dead daughter via advanced virtual reality for a South Korean television has become an online hit, triggering fierce debate about voyeurism and exploitation.

The footage began with the girl -- who died of leukaemia in 2016 -- emerging from behind a pile of wood in a park, as if playing hide-and-seek.



But in the real world, Jang was standing in front of a studio green screen, wearing a virtual reality headset and touch-sensitive gloves

"Mum, where have you been?" she asks. "I've missed you a lot. Have you missed me?"

Tears streaming down her face, Jang Ji-sung reached out towards her, wracked with emotion.

"I have missed you Na-yeon," she told the computer-generated six-year-old, her hands moving to stroke her hair.

But in the real world, Jang was standing in front of a studio green screen, wearing a virtual reality headset and touch-sensitive gloves, her daughter's ashes in a locket around her neck.

At times the camera cut to Jang's watching husband and their three surviving children, wiping away tears of their own.

A nine-minute clip of the Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) documentary "I met you" has been watched more than 13 million times in a week on Youtube.

Many viewers offered Jang their sympathy and support for the concept.

"My mother unexpectedly



Jang Ji-sung (L) 'met' her dead daughter Na-yeon via virtual reality for a South Korean TV show



Jang Ji-sung (L) 'met' her dead daughter Na-yeon via virtual reality for a South Korean TV show

passed away two years ago and I wish I could meet her through virtual reality," said one.

But media columnist Park Sang-hyun said the documentary amounted to exploitation of personal pain.

"It's understandable a grief-stricken mother would wish to meet her late daughter. I would do the same," he said.

"The problem lies in that the broadcaster has taken advantage of a vulnerable mother who lost a child for sake of the viewer ratings."

"If the mother had been counselled before the filming," he added, "I wonder what kind of a psychiatrist would approve this."

- 'Happy birthday' -

It took eight months of filming and programming to create the virtual Na-yeon, but the makers of the documentary insisted the broadcast was in-

tended to "console the family" rather than promote virtual reality in ultra-wired South Korea.

The technology presented a "new way to keep loved ones in memory", one of the producers told reporters.

Jang herself -- who has her daughter's name and date of birth tattooed on her arm in memory -- hoped the programme could "console" others who had lost loved ones.

"Even though it was a very brief... I was really happy in the moment," she wrote on her blog -- which she has since turned private.

During the broadcast the two sat at a table to celebrate Na-yeon's missing birthdays, singing "happy birthday" together.

Before blowing out the candles, Na-yeon made a birthday wish: "I want my mother to stop crying."

## Biggest jump in world defence spending in 10 years: study



China increased defence spending by 6.6 percent

### Munich Germany

Global spending on defence rose by four percent in 2019, the largest growth in 10 years, led by big increases from the US and China, a study said yesterday.

Beijing's military modernisation programme -- which includes developing new hard-to-detect hypersonic missiles -- is alarming Washington and helping drive US defence spending, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) said.

The IISS's annual "Military Balance" report said the increase alone in US spending from 2018 to 2019 -- \$53.4 billion -- was almost as big as Britain's entire defence budget.

Both China and the US increased spending by 6.6 percent, the report said, while Europe -- driven by ongoing concerns about Russia -- stepped up by 4.2 percent.

But this growth only brought European defence spending back to levels seen in 2008, before the global financial crisis saw budgets slashed.

European NATO members have been seeking to increase spending to placate President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly accused them of freeloading on the US.

Trump has railed at European allies, particularly Germany, for not living up to a 2014 NATO pledge to spend two percent of GDP on defence.

The mercurial president's anger over spending has fuelled concern about his commitment to the transatlantic alliance.

# Robot waitress serves up smiles in war-torn Afghanistan

### Kabul

Afghanistan's first-ever robot waitress glides up to a table of curious diners in central Kabul and presents them with a plate of French fries.

"Thank you very much," the machine says in Dari, one of Afghanistan's two main languages.

Restaurant manager Mohammad Rafi Shirzad says the humanoid robot, imported from Japan and designed to look vaguely like a woman wearing a hijab, has already pulled in new customers since it started working last month.

"It is interesting for many people here to see a robot in real life," he said. "Sometimes kids jump in joy and surprise when they see the robot bring them food."

While robots are becoming increasingly commonplace in Japan and China, they are not unusual in conflict-wracked Af-



They might be fairly common in Japan or China, but a robot waitress is proving a hit in war-wracked Kabul



They might be fairly common in Japan or China, but a robot waitress is proving a hit in war-wracked Kabul

ghanistan.

After decades of war that has left much of the country's infrastructure in ruins, the sight of a battery-powered waitress has provided some light relief in Kabul.

Nine-year-old Ahmad Zaki was desperate to see the ma-

chine.

"I saw the robot on TV, and asked my father to take me to this restaurant," he said.

Named "Timea" and measuring about 150 centimetres (five feet) in height, the robot performs only rudimentary tasks.

It delivers plates to tables, which diners then take from a tray, and can say basic phrases including "Happy Birthday".

It also can stop when it comes across an obstacle, and customers can place orders via a touch panel. But the story is not without controversy.

Some Afghans see Timea as a threat to the country's dire unemployment situation.

"This is ridiculously wrong," Facebook user Kashif Abobaker wrote.

"They employ a robot when there are tens of thousands of young people desperately looking for a job."

# celebs

Billie Eilish



## Billie Eilish's James Bond theme song out now

Los Angeles

Grammy-winning singer Billie Eilish's much-awaited theme song of the upcoming James Bond film, "No Time To Die," is out now. Billie tweeted: "No Time To Die - the theme song for the upcoming @007 film. Out now."

With this, she joins the league of singers such as Adele, Sam Smith, Alicia Keys, Madonna, Shirley Bassey, Nancy Sinatra, and Tina Turner who have lent their voices to some of the most iconic Bond theme songs over the decades.

Billie co-wrote the song "No time to die" with her brother Finneas, reports metro.co.uk.

She recently revealed that the process of writing the new Bond song was a quick one and the lyrics were inspired by the first scene of the script.

"We got a piece of the script - like, the first scene - and then wrote the song immediately, and we wrote it in three days," Billie had said. "We wrote it in Texas and we recorded it in a bunk on the bus, in the basement in the dark."

The new James Bond movie is set to be actor Daniel Craig's last outing as the famous fictional spy.

## Robert Pattinson's 'Batman' look revealed

Los Angeles

The first look of actor Robert Pattinson as Batman is out, and it is getting all the love in the virtual world.

Director Matt Reeves took to Twitter to reveal the first look at Pattinson as Batman in his upcoming "The Batman". He also dropped first look at the official Bat Suit to be worn by the titular hero, reports variety.com.

In the new footage, set to an ominous score by composer Michael Giacchino, Pattinson steps into a dark frame saturated in red light, as his sleek and angular Batman suit slowly comes into focus.

Now, Pattinson has replaced Ben Affleck to be the caped crusader. The casting decision made way for backlash on social media, in fact a petition was filed to reconsider the call.



Robert Pattinson

Claire Danes



## Claire Danes: Don't feel like an authority on politics

Los Angeles

"Homeland" star Claire Danes says she doesn't feel like she is an authority on politics.

Asked if she finds herself in discussion with friends about world news and about what's happening in the Middle East, she said: "I think all that knowledge that we had was through the incredible access which was really funnelled into our storytelling. I don't feel like an authority on politics in general at large."

"I mean, it was relevant insofar as it informed my work on this show. So, I think it didn't really bleed out too much into the parameters beyond that. But, that's one of the things I will miss the most, was getting to have that direct interchange with actual policymakers and intelligence officers and people who are really building the world around us, rather than merely reflecting on it," she added.

## Katy Perry not inviting 'American Idol' co-judges to wedding

Los Angeles

Lionel Richie and Luke Bryan haven't been invited to fellow "American Idol" judge Katy Perry's upcoming wedding.

Perry got engaged to actor Orlando Bloom last year and is now looking forward to the couple's big day, as she told host Jimmy Kimmel on Wednesday, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Asked whether she would be inviting Richie and Bryan, to her wedding, Perry said: "I can't afford them!"

She added: "Umm, no... But you know what, it's so funny, I'm actually not a Bridezilla, I call myself a Bridechilla. I'm kinda chill but I am one of those girls where I got engaged February 14th and then I booked the place February 19th. I took it very seriously!"

Asked whether Luke and Richie would sing on her big day, she said: "Like I said, I can't afford them. I mean, no. Look, they have a lot of work to do, you know while I'm out getting married - again."



Katy Perry

## Al Pacino says director David Weil is a real artist

Los Angeles

Hollywood veteran Al Pacino loved working with director David Weil on his debut web series "Hunters", and says Weil is a very special person and a real artist.

Pacino turns into a Nazi hunter in his debut web series, "Hunters". The highly-anticipated series will see him go on a murderous rampage.

The conspiracy thriller, produced by the award-winning Jordan Peele, follows a group of Nazi hunters in New York. The group is known as the Hunters. Set in the late 1970s, the trailer follows Pacino on a quest to find a team who will help him violently hunt down Nazis living in the city and planning to start the Fourth Reich in the US.

"I love David Weil and, and what he's done. He is a very special person, a real artist. And it's great to be around that. We built our working relationship during rehearsals. I would talk to him, bother him on the set, just come up to him and we would talk," Pacino said.

The series also stars Jerrika Hinton, Josh Radnor, Kate Mulvany, Tiffany Boone, Greg Austin, Louis Ozawa Changchien, Carol Kane, Saul Rubinek, Dylan Baker and Lena Olin.

The series is produced by Amazon Studios, Peele's Monkeypaw Productions and Sonar Entertainment, was created by Weil, who serves as executive producer and co-showrunner alongside executive producer Nikki Toscano.

Alfonso Gomez-Rejon directed the pilot and is an executive producer. The series is executive produced by Win Rosenfeld from Monkeypaw Productions; Nelson McCormick; Tom Lesinski from Sonar Entertainment. The series will go live on Amazon Prime Video on February 21.



Al Pacino

Los Angeles

Actress Jennifer Connelly says the emergence of streaming services has had an impact on the film industry, so much so there is no room for independent production. "I feel like we're spending more time at home. People go to the movies less; they stream movies at home on big TV screens. This has had an impact on the industry. These days, the films made for theatrical release have to be spectacles. In the 1970s, an Oscar-winning film was also a blockbuster. Today, there is no room for independent production and different points of view," Connelly said.

Asked what feeds her as an actress, she said: "Over the years, I've listened to various albums by Radiohead while working on movies - different albums depending on the project. I often return to the books of Virginia Woolf - I find interesting things there for building my characters. But what feeds me the most are the streets of New York. They're unpredictable."

## Jennifer Connelly: There's no room for independent production

The actress was recently seen in "Alita: Battle Angel", which is set to premiere on February 16 on Star Movies.

Talking about the film, she said: "I took it as a personality challenge since she was not the person she initially presented -- neither bad nor good, she's someone with her own plans. She is in her own stubborn yet diluted world thinking that she can possibly escape from the place which obviously she can't. She looks like a very screen friendly yet delicious villain in the beginning later we get to know the real reason behind her behaviour."



Jennifer Connelly

## SUDOKU

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			4				7	
8			9			5		
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		9				8		
2						7		4
	8			5				1
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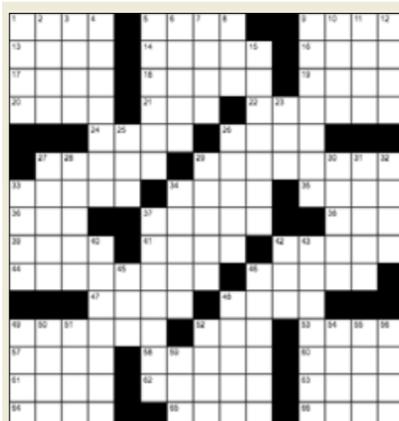
### Yesterday's solution

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

### 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.

## CROSSWORD



- Across  
1- Grad; 5- Mongolian desert; 9- A good one gets you there in a hurry; 13- Pip; 14- Turn over; 16- Appraise, charge per unit; 17- Grace period?; 18- Like a fleabag; 19- River to the Seine; 20- Exceeded the limit; 21- Timecard abbr.; 22- Nerve cell; 24- Neck of the woods; 26- Inner layer of a quilt; 27- Grant portrayer; 29- Ignominy; 33- Flu symptoms; 34- Treehouse used by birds; 35- Specify; 36- Digit of the foot; 42- Ark; 44- Foot soldiers; 46- Unit of magnetic induction; 47- Gets the picture; 48- Big East team; 49- Workshop machinery; 52- Calendar abbr.; 53- Leprechaun land; 57- Jack of "Rio Lobo"; 58- Characteristic; 60- Drop; 61- Bhutan's continent; 62- Have a feeling about; 63- OPEC member; 64- Tyler's successor; 65- Canned; 66- Boxer Oscar; Hoyt;

### Down

- 1- Exclamation to express sorrow; 2- Coal unit; 3- Peter Fonda title role; 4- Banal; 5- Flowing oil well; 6- Musical drama; 7- Apians; 8- Neither Rep. nor Dem.; 9- Sippet; 10- Hideout; 11- Wishing won't make; 12- Hammer end; 15- Family of rulers; 23- Biblical verb ending; 25- Legal thing; 26- North American buffalo; 27- Future oak; 28- Ledge; 29- Denounce; 30- Like Fran Drescher's voice; 31- City on the Missouri; 32- Cincinnati club; 33- Yours, in Tours; 34- Approaches; 37- Hates intensely; 40- Veil worn by Muslim women; 42- After taxes; 43- Bonelike; 45- Born, in France; 46- Colored; 48- Composure; 49- Jump; 50- Likewise; 51- Follow; 52- Tailless cat; 54- Hungary's Nagy; 55- Unit of currency in Iran and Yemen; 56- Sicilian volcano; 59- "Michael Collins" actor;

### Yesterday's solution

S	L	A	M	S	A	A	B	S	C	O	O	T	
A	I	D	A	S	P	R	E	E	O	L	E	S	
S	L	E	N	D	E	R	I	Z	E	S	L	I	P
S	I	N	A	I	A	N	I	M	A	L	S		
G	N	U	A	N	O	D	E						
O	D	I	E	N	E	A	T	I	T	A	L	I	
D	E	L	P	I	T	A	S	O	I	R	E	E	
O	N	E	I	O	T	A	R	A	C	C	O	O	N
R	I	D	L	E	Y	P	I	T	Y	A	N	T	
S	M	E	L	T	S	A	M	E	A	R	E	A	
M	I	R	A	C	L	E		A	G	A	I	N	
A	D	I	T	A	P	O	C	A	L	Y	P	S	E
A	L	E	E	M	E	L	E	E	L	A	I	N	
M	E	L	D	A	D	D	E	R	E	R	S	E	

## SPORTS

# For Sam Patterson, 'The Future' is now

Sam "The Future" Patterson is set to face John Brewin at BRAVE CF 36 in Romania

TDT | Manama

Sam "The Future" Patterson will be a part of his first main event, on April 13th, as BRAVE Combat Federation returns to Romania for BRAVE CF 36. As he takes on John Brewin in the headlining spot, Patterson knows it's the biggest bout of his career so far - a win against his Kiwi counterpart could potentially leave him on the cusp of a title shot.

Sam is coming off the biggest win of his career, with a third-round submission victory over famed striker Cian Cowley, after dominating the stand-up against the Irishman. "The Future", however, feels his second to last fight - a draw against Ahmed Amir, was actually the catalyst for his career surge.

"I learned a lot in that fight. I've always been told to never leave it in the judges' hands. I think I won, but I'm sure Ahmed feels he won too, which is fine. We are all entitled to our own opinions. But that fight taught me so much. I always prided



Sam Patterson arrives prior to a fight

myself on having great cardio, pace for three rounds and felt great. That gave me the confidence I needed to go all out from

”

I learned a lot in the fight against Ahmed Amir. I've always been told to never leave it in the judges' hands. I think I won, but I'm sure Ahmed feels he won too, which is fine

SAM PATTERSON

the start”.

It was that change in mentality that led Patterson to his career-defining win (so far) in Saudi Arabia. The aggressor from the start, Sam led the way against Cowley, scoring with kicks and stinging jabs, and putting his opponent on the backfoot throughout the fight. It is a strategy that served him well, but now he will face a man just like him in his next outing. Can Patterson take out "Trouble" Brewin and move up in the Lightweight division?

## Bahrain lose third straight after falling to Syria



Bahrain's Jameel is challenged by the Syrian defence as he goes for a basket during their game

TDT | Manama

Bahrain suffered their third successive defeat in the King Abdullah II Basketball Cup 2020 in Amman late Thursday night after falling to Syria 64-81.

The Syrians controlled the game from the very start. They led 18-16 at the end of the first quarter, which they stretched to 40-29 following a dominant second period.

The Bahrainis reduced the deficit in the third, but only marginally, as they continued to trail 50-59, but then Syria closed things out strong with a 22-14 fourth quarter.

Syrian big man Abdulwahab Al Hamwi made the most of his size advantage to lead his team with 15 points, 15 rebounds and two blocks. He was named the Player of the Game.

With the result, the Bahrainis remained winless in the competition after losses to Lebanon and Jordan in their previous two games. They have one fixture remaining, which is against Iraq.

The Syrians' win was their first in four contests. Their game against Bahrain was also their last of the competition.

The Bahrainis are competing in the tournament as part of their overseas training camp in Amman where they are preparing for their upcoming



The Bahrainis are competing in the tournament as part of their overseas training camp in Amman where they are preparing for their upcoming qualifiers for the 2021 Fiba Asia Cup.

Five teams in all are participating in the Jordan event, namely Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Bahrain and hosts Jordan.

The Bahrainis are in Group D of Fiba Asia Cup qualification along with India, Lebanon and Iraq. They open their campaign against their Indian counterparts next Friday.

Bahrain, coached by former NBA champion Sam Vincent are in Amman with a team that includes Mohammed Hussain, Ahmed Aldurazi, Ali Shukralah, Mohammed Buallay, Subah Hussain, Mohammed Salman, Mohammed Qurban, Maytham Jameel, Hesham Sarhan, Ahmed Abdulaziz, Mohammed Ameer and Muzamel Ameer.

## Liverpool's Mane and Milner in contention for Norwich game - Klopp

Reuters | London

Liverpool winger Sadio Mane and midfielder James Milner are back in contention for the Premier League leaders after the pair recovered from injuries that had sidelined them in recent games, manager Jurgen Klopp said yesterday.

Mane was forced off with an injury in Liverpool's 2-1 win over Wolverhampton Wanderers on Jan. 23 while Milner has missed the last seven games in all competitions due to a muscle injury.

"Millie (Milner) and Sadio are back. When they are back you start thinking (about starting them) immediately. I hope it stays like this," Klopp told reporters ahead of Saturday's trip to bottom side Norwich City.

"Apart from (Xherdan) Shaqiri, (Nathaniel) Clyne and (Paul) Glatzel, all the players are in training. We have some good options, hopefully it stays like this, it would be great for the decisive part of the season."

Klopp also said that they had not made any decision on whether forward Mohamed Salah would compete for Egypt at the Olympics as one of their senior players.

Egypt's Olympic coach Shawky Gharib told Reuters on Wednesday that Salah's participation at the Tokyo Games



Liverpool winger Sadio Mane and midfielder James Milner during a training session

”

Millie (Milner) and Sadio are back. When they are back you start thinking (about starting them) immediately. I hope it stays like this

JUERGEN KLOPP

later this year would depend on the forward and Klopp, but the German boss said he did not have any details to make a decision.

"We cannot discuss it as we

don't know too much yet," Klopp said. "We will speak and we will see. Do I want to lose a player in the pre-season? No, of course not.

"Nobody contacted us so far. It's an Olympic Games. I'm a sports person... We have to see how we can deal with it."

Norwich lost 4-1 at Anfield on the opening day of the season but Liverpool were under pressure in the second half when the visitors threatened to wrest back control of the game as the promoted side created numerous chances.

However, Klopp said that Liverpool were still rusty at the start of the campaign and that it was no longer the case.

## Barcelona still joint La Liga favourites - Setien

Reuters | Barcelona

Quique Setien says Barcelona should still be seen as joint favourites to win La Liga along with Real Madrid, ahead of his team's clash with Getafe on Saturday.

Barcelona, second, face Jose Bordalas's side at Camp Nou and can pull level with Madrid if they win, before their rivals host Celta Vigo on Sunday.

Madrid are in good form and have winger Eden Hazard poised to return from injury, while Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele was recently ruled out for six months with a hamstring tear and striker Luis Suarez is still sidelined.

"Many leagues are decided by small details, that none of the teams fighting for the title can control," Setien told a news conference yesterday.

"I think we are exactly equal favourites with Real Madrid. We have three points less but we have a game against them there."

Barcelona hope to be allowed an emergency signing to replace Dembele, pending ratification from the Spanish FA on the French winger's medical report following his operation this week.

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# Balestra triumphs in main race at REHC



HH Shaikh Isa at yesterday's events

TDT | Manama

**B**alestra lifted the Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Cup yesterday after winning the day's main race at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) in Riffa.

REHC High Committee Deputy Chairman HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa was on hand to watch all of yesterday's action.

Owned by Al Mohamediya Racing, trained by Hesham Al Haddad and ridden by Adrie De Vries, Balestra won the eight-furlong race in one minute 35.706 seconds to claim the lion's share of the BD3,000 total

prize and beat the eight other entered imported horses aged three years and older.

Balestra was one-and-a-half-lengths in front of Coolagh Forest at the finish. The second-placer was competing for Mohammed Khalid Abdulrahim, Paul D'Arcy and John Egan. Tamerlane came third for Al Mohamediya Racing, Ali Al Ansari and Paddy Mathers; while Starboy was fourth for Al Afoo Racing Stable, Mohammed Saeed and Husain Makki.

The sixth race of the day made it back-to-back victories for Hesham Al Haddad and Adrie De Vries. Their horse Jazeel was the winner for owners Victorious. The sprint also carried a



One of the day's hotly contested races

BD3,000 total prize, and it was over 12 furlongs for imported horses aged three and up. Jazeel triumphed in 2:32.429, two-and-a-half-lengths ahead of runner-up Port Douglas, owned by Al Hassanain Syndicate, trained by Mohammed Al Sammak and ridden by Abdulla Faisal. Macaque came third to make it two horses in the prizes for Victorious and Hesham Al Haddad, while being ridden by Paddy Mathers; while Saajid came fourth for Shamtoot Syndicate, Taleb Ali and Hasan Al Saffar.

In the fifth race of the day for one of two Porsche Cups, Yaoud was the winner amongst just four locally bred horses aged three years old and up, who were contesting for their shares of the BD3,000 total prize. Owned by His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa and trained by James Naylor, jockey Andrew Elliott rode Yaoud to the victory in 1:25.561. He won the seven-furlong event by a head's length in

front of Ramani, competing for Al Afoo Racing Stable, Mohammed Saeed and Lee Newman. Harash was third and Sadara fourth to make it three horses in the top four for His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa and James Naylor. Harash was ridden by Paddy Mathers while Sadara was steered by Abdulla Faisal.

The fourth race was also for a Porsche Cup. It was over seven furlongs with a BD3,000 prize for imported horses three years old and up. A huge field of 17 participants were in the fray, with none quicker than race winner Five Angels and jockey Abdulla Faisal. The Victorious-owned, Yousif Taher-trained victor completed the distance in 1:24.750 – one-and-three-quarters length ahead of runner-up Gold Spinner, owned by Al Afoo Racing, trained by Mohammed Saeed and ridden by Lee Newman. Android was third for Al Mallah Syndicate, Abdulajaleel Al Mallah and Andrew Elliott, while

Punk came fourth for Abdulla Fawzi Nass, Hesham Al Haddad and Adrie De Vries.

The third race of the day for the Chevron Cup covered a distance of six furlongs, and it carried a prize purse of BD2,000. The WAHO race was for three-year-olds and older, and Al Saqlaawy 1772 ridden by Marcialis Jaures took first place. Owned by Al Riffa and trained by Yousif Alboainain, the winner completed the race in 1:24.683. Tuwaisaan 1762 owned by Victorious, trained by Yousif Taher and ridden by Abdulla Faisal finished in second place one-and-three-quarters lengths behind, while in third was Al Krush 1751, competing for Al Sakhir, Jaffar Marzooq and Adnan Jaffar. Al Mloesh 1748 rounded out the top four for Victorious, Yousif Taher and Husain Makki.

The first race of the day for a Bahrain Jewellery Centre Cup over 10 furlongs with a BD2,000 featured six locally bred horses three years old and above.



**Balestra won the Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Cup after beating eight other entered imported horses**

Gharaieb won in 2:08.125 for Al Afoo Racing Stable, Mohammed Saeed and Lee Newman. Five lengths behind in second place was Dushanbe, competing for His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, James Naylor and Abdulla Faisal; while in third was Pink Ribbon Girl for M and E Racing, Alan Smith and Rosie Jessop. Valentine finished fourth for Abdulla Fawzi Nass, Hesham Al Haddad and Paddy Mathers.

In the second race of the day, held over six furlongs with a BD2,000 prize, Shajer won amongst the nine competing local breeds aged three and up. Owned by His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, trained by James Naylor and ridden by Abdulla Faisal, Shajer took the win in 1:13.025. Blue Angel finished second for Victorious, Alan Smith and Jacob Butterfield, while completing the top four and the prize winners were Safwa for His Highness Shakh Isa bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, Jamnes Naylor and Andrew Elliott, and Richard Cranium, competing for Victorious, Alan Smith and Hasan Al Mawali.



REHC Executive Director Shaikh Salman bin Rashed Al Khalifa, right, with Irish Thoroughbred Marketing's Jeremy Greene



Winners receiving their trophies

## French Open to be Federer's only claycourt appearance in 2020

Reuters | Mumbai

**R**oger Federer will make his only appearance on clay this season at Roland Garros, his agent has told Reuters.

The Swiss skipped the entire claycourt season in 2017 and 2018 and last year played only two tournaments on the surface before arriving in Paris for the French Open.

There was speculation that Federer would include the Madrid and Rome Masters in his truncated schedule for 2020 but his agent, Tony Godsick,

said that was not the case.

"As his schedule states, he plans on playing just Roland Garros," Godsick told Reuters.

The 38-year-old has been cutting down on the number of tournaments he plays over the last few years in a bid to prolong his career.

Unlike his main rivals, Federer, who won the last of his 20 Grand Slam titles in 2018 at Melbourne Park, opted out of the inaugural ATP Cup in Australia to spend more time with his family before launching his 22nd season on Tour.

## Chelsea's Pulisic to miss Man Utd clash, says Lampard

Reuters | London

**C**helsea forward Christian Pulisic has stepped up his recovery from an adductor injury but Monday's Premier League game against Manchester United comes too soon for the American, manager Frank Lampard said yesterday.

Pulisic has not played since the 1-1 draw at Brighton & Hove Albion on New Year's Day.

Striker Tammy Abraham (ankle) will be assessed before the game while midfielder Ruben Loftus-Cheek (Achilles) is close to returning.

"Christian trained with the under-23s today, so won't be fit. Ruben won't be fit for this game... he's getting closer... it's great to have him nearly back," Lampard told reporters.

"Tammy's still feeling the effects. He trained today... we're hopeful but he's to be assessed over the weekend."

Lampard earlier said

winger Hakim Ziyech will add the spark that has gone missing from their midfield after the club agreed to sign the Morocco international from Ajax Amsterdam.

The 26-year-old will join the Premier League team in the close season after the two clubs agreed an initial deal for 40 million euros (\$43.36 million) on Thursday.

"He's cer-

tainly a player we hope can bring that bit of creativity," Lampard said.

"He scores goals, assists... he's got a great left foot and plays generally off the right side but can play behind the front man. Probably when you look at us this season, there have been game where we may have maybe struggled to unlock the door."

Chelsea, who successfully appealed a one-year transfer ban, did not sign any recruits in January and Lampard was asked if more arrivals were expected at Stamford Bridge.



Christian Pulisic