

**Justin Bieber takes couple nickname with Hailey Baldwin to a whole new level**

Singer-songwriter Justin Bieber, who pulled a prank on his fans on April Fools' Day, has taken his couple nickname with his wife Hailey Baldwin to another level. **P14**

**Netanyahu plots Israel's course towards rogue statehood**

# THE DAILY **tribune**



**Bloom, Perry want a 'small, intimate' wedding**

**Palestinian ministers sworn in again after oath foul-up**

**Bahrain clocks 4.6pc growth**

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom has clocked a GDP growth of 4.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of last year, the Information and eGovernment Authority said in its report issued yesterday.

According to the report, the GCC Development Programme has been significantly reflected in Bahrain's economic infrastructure projects, with initial estimates of the economy during the fourth quarter of 2018, recording a real growth of 4.6pc and 6.5pc in current prices compared to the same period of the previous year.

The non-oil sector registered a real growth of 3.2pc when compared to the same quarter of the previous year and the oil sector growing at a rate of 11.3pc in real terms due to increase in the quantities produced.

The report said that the manufacturing industry achieved a growth of 0.2pc in constant prices and decreased by 0.7pc in current prices while government services increased by 12.7pc at constant prices and 16pc at current prices.

See Page 5



# Oil sector milestone

HRH the Crown Prince patronises inauguration of BANAGAS Central Gas Plant Three

● **HRH the Crown Prince noted that the Kingdom continues to ensure the long-term sustainability of its resources.**

● **HRH the Crown Prince congratulated BANAGAS on its 40th anniversary, and on the success of operating the new CGP III project.**

Manama

**H**is Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday patronised the inauguration of the Central Gas Plant Three (CGP III) that coincides with the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Bahrain National Gas Company (BANAGAS), at its headquarters in Sakhir.



HRH the Crown Prince at the inaugural ceremony.

Upon arrival, accompanied by HH Shaikh Mohamed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HRH the Crown Prince was received by the Minister of Oil, Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, and a number of senior officials.

During the ceremony, HRH the Crown Prince highlighted the Kingdom's commitment to ensuring that the oil and gas sector continues to contribute to the Kingdom's comprehensive development, led by His Majesty King Hamad.

HRH the Crown Prince noted that based on Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, and its guiding

principles of sustainability, fairness and competitiveness, the Kingdom continues to ensure the long-term sustainability of its resources.

The Crown Prince highlighted the significant achievements made in the Kingdom's oil and

**1979**  
is the year in which Bahrain National Gas Company was established in the Kingdom.

gas sector, such as the discovery of the largest oil and gas basin, which contributes to the advancement of the sector and the establishment of various strategic projects such as the CGP III.

HRH the Crown Prince congratulated BANAGAS on its 40th anniversary, and on the success of operating the new CGP III project.

HRH the Crown Prince noted that technological innovations is transforming the oil and gas sector, and will play a central role in increasing production efficiency.

The Oil Minister then gave a speech in which he extended his gratitude to His Majesty King

Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, His Royal Highness 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, for supporting the oil and gas sector.

He also expressed his appreciation to HRH the Crown Prince for patronising the inauguration of the CGP III and BANAGAS' 40th anniversary celebration.

In November 2018, the CGP III plant started its operations by a highly skilled Bahraini workforce; where the first naphtha gas shipment was exported, weighing 23,000 metric tonnes, and 25,000 metric tonnes of liquefied gas.

The CGP III plant is designed to accommodate 350 million cubic feet of additional gas available in the Bahrain Oil Field.

The new plant will be able to extract 382,000 metric tonnes per year from LPG liquids, which are propane, butane and naphtha, and re-compressing the injecting gas surplus in the field.

  
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His Majesty being received at the BDF General Command.



His Majesty being briefed by a British officer on joint training co-operation.

# BDF role lauded

His Majesty visits BDF General Command; praises BDF men for performing national duties

**Manama**

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander visited the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF)'s General Command yesterday.

Upon arrival, His Majesty was welcomed by BDF Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Defence Affairs General Abdullah bin Hassan Al Nuaimi, Chief of Staff General Dhiab

bin Saqr Al Nuaimi, and senior BDF officers.

His Majesty was accompanied by Royal Guard Commander His Highness Major-General Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa. His Majesty held a meeting with senior officers during and discussed the BDF's development plans.

His Majesty expressed pride in the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) patriotic servicemen, reaffirming the confidence in the team.

The BDF officers expressed congratulations to His Majes-

ty on the anticipated advent of the blessed month of Ramadan, wishing Bahrain many happy returns in blessing and prosperity under His Majesty's leadership.

His Majesty tasked them to convey his greetings and congratulations to all the brave BDF men on this blessed occasion at their various worksites, wishing many happy returns of this blessed occasion to our beloved Bahrain and the Arab and Islamic nation in prosperity and welfare.

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa also visited the BDF-affiliated Royal Guard where His Majesty was welcomed by His Highness Major-General Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Commander of the Royal Guard, and several Royal Guard officers saluted His Majesty the Supreme Commander.

His Majesty was briefed on the Royal Guard important duties which it performs efficiently as well as its development plans.

His Majesty then headed to

the Firing Range where he saw highly precise live ammunition firing and military exercises implemented by Royal Guard servicewomen, which affirm the Bahraini women's efficiency in all fields.

His Majesty thanked the Royal Guard Commander Major-General HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa and all the Royal Guard affiliates for the efficient performance of their national duties and top morale spirits during the performance

of their duties valiantly and courageously.

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa the Supreme Commander praised the brave Royal Guard affiliates for the continuous performance of their noble duties along with their fellow BDF units participating in the Saudi-led Arab Coalition Forces "Operation Restore Hope" in the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people, hailing military training co-operation with the United Kingdom.



Royal Guard servicewomen showcase firing skills.

## LuLu celebrates British Summer Fest

**TDT | Manama**

LuLu Hypermarket's British Week festivities were inaugurated at its outlet in Saar's Atrium Mall by British Ambassador Simon Martin.

Until April 21, shoppers will be able to make the most of the finest British summer treats, from a range of juices and bottled cordials to a wide selection of British cheeses, organic milk, flavour-some yogurts, chocolates, biscuits, tea brands and specialty breads.

The inaugural event also offered glimpses of quintessential British culture, with music by members of the Royal Marine Band's Corps of Drums and also performances by community members.

The Lulu Hypermarket was decorated in the colours of the



Mr Martin inaugurates 'British Week festivities' in the presence of Mr Rupawala and other dignitaries.



A cake-cutting ceremony was held as part of the event.

Union Jack and with replicas of famous British monuments and the iconic red telephone booth. Shoppers were delighted to see the London double decker bus in the premises and a model of the cheery red bus in one of the aisles, piled with popular British

brands instead of passengers.

In the food section, there will be a special emphasis on fresh British meat, fish, cheeses, bread and fruit and veg, the hypermarket said in a statement issued.

"You can easily whip up a traditional British meal, such as the

fish and chips or Sunday roast, by choosing from the classic British dishes offered in both the hot and cold food sections. The stores also showcased beauty and hygiene brands such as soaps, detergents and home cleaning products."

"At LuLu Hypermarket, we are proud of our long and delicious list of British products. We are delighted to showcase the best of Britain at this festival. Besides special promotions on British products, Lulu Hypermarket turned a tasty spotlight on Brit-

ish food, cheeses and drinks from the UK. Home goods are also showcased," said Director Juzer Rupawala.

"The LuLu Group has its own logistics and warehousing facility in Birmingham to service our entire hypermarket chain."

The Bahrain Odia Samaj celebrated Odisha's Foundation Day - Utkal Divas and Odia New Year - Pana Sankranti on April 12, 2019, at the Isa Bin Salman Cultural Hall, Alumni Club in Adliya. The event was a grand cultural fiesta with dances and music showcasing Odisha's rich cultural heritage, history and glorifying its hidden natural beauty. The Bahrain Odia Samaj's members put together a spectacular show along with the world-renowned Aradhana Foundation. The eastern Indian state's foundation day was graced by eminent Indian diplomat - Ambassador Lalit Mansingh G, the revered King of Puri and first servitor of Lord Jagannatha - Gajapati Maharaj Shri Dibyasingha Deb, Director of Labour and Vocational Safety for the Ministry of Labour and Social Development - Ahmed Al Haiki, Chairman of Dadabhai Group of Companies - Mohammed Dadabhai, prominent entrepreneur - Batool Dadabhai, Ambassadors of India, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal and Sri

Lanka along with excom members of expat social communities, spiritual and cultural organisations and heads of several other Indian communities in the Kingdom.



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# Israeli delegation cancels visit amid opposition by lawmakers

The delegation stated that it pulled out of the event due to security concerns

TDT | Manama  
Mohammed Zafran

An Israeli delegation that was supposed to take part in a business event in the Kingdom has cancelled its trip amidst controversy, it was revealed.

The development comes after Bahraini parliamentarians put up an extensive campaign against Israeli participation at the event.

The delegation stated that it pulled out due to "security concerns".

Thirty Israeli business executives and government officials were scheduled to participate in



While we advised the Israeli delegation they would be welcomed, they decided this morning not to come due to security concerns.

MR ORTMAN

the 11th Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC) 2019 organised by the US-based Global Entrepreneurship Network.

"While we advised the Israeli delegation they would be

welcomed, they decided this morning not to come due to security concerns and a wish not to cause disruption to other 180 nations participating," Jonathan Ortman, GEN president, said in



GLOBAL  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
CONGRESS  
BAHRAIN 2019

a statement.

Bahrain government had previously denied that it invited the delegation, stating that the invitation to the Israeli delegation was a sole initiative of the Global Entrepreneurship Network.

The GEC brings together thousands of delegates from more

than 170 countries to discuss economic and policy challenges around growing entrepreneurial ecosystems.

The annual event is hosted by a new entrepreneurial city each year. Celebrating its 11th year, this year's GEC is being held in the Kingdom from today until Thursday.

30

member delegation from Israel was supposed to attend the business event.

Previous host cities of the event were Kansas City (2009), Dubai (2010), Shanghai (2011), Liverpool (2012), Rio de Janeiro (2013), Moscow (2014), Milan (2015), Medellin (2016), Johannesburg (2017) and Istanbul (2018).

## Man who grew marijuana at home loses plea

TDT | Manama

The High Court of Appeals yesterday upheld the three-year jail sentence issued against a retired air crew member, who was found guilty of planting marijuana at his house and possessing firearm and ammunition.

The court also ordered the man to pay a fine of BD1,500.

Investigations showed that the defendant had been consuming marijuana for a long period.

When the Anti-Narcotics Department within the Interior Ministry raided his house, 28 pots of marijuana plants, four pieces of hashish, a scale and a fire arm were detected and confiscated.

The man was referred to the Public Prosecution on charges of possessing, abusing and peddling drugs, in addition to possessing a firearm without a permit.

During the interrogation, he confessed that he had been consuming drugs for the past 15 years.

He said he purchased marijuana seeds from abroad, as he was travelling frequently outside the country as an air crew member.

The defendant also told the interrogators that he had learnt how to grow them through Internet and with the help of a British friend.

## Boy saved after walnut gets trapped in lung

TDT | Manama  
Mohammed Zafran

A medical team from the Salmaniya Medical Complex saved a four-year-old boy after he consumed a walnut, which got trapped in his lung.

"A surgery was conducted to extract pieces of nuts from the child's lungs. Co-ordination from various departments was required to make the operation a big success," a health ministry official said.

The success was due to the hard-work and coordination of various departments including Ear, Nose and Throat



A surgery was conducted to extract pieces of nuts from the child's lungs. Co-ordination from various departments was required to make the operation a big success.

HEALTH MINISTRY OFFICIAL

(ENT) and the chest unit at SMC, the official added.

Doctors and surgeons involved in the operation included Dr Osa-

ma Abdul Karim, Dr Dina Shabib, Dr Ramzi, Dr Hussein and Dr Hala Radhi.

The doctors advised parents to

exercise care while feeding kids, adding emergency medical care is needed in cases of pulmonary aspiration.

## Bahrain's support to Sudan affirmed

His Majesty the King praised the strong fraternal stances of Sudan and its permanent keenness on joint Arab work.

Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa affirmed Bahrain's solidarity with Sudan and expressed his appreciation to the tremendous efforts exerted by Lt-General Abdulfattah Al Burhan, Chairman of the Military Transitional Council, to boost the security, peace and prosper-

ity of the Sudanese people.

His Majesty the King praised the strong fraternal stances of Sudan and its permanent keenness on joint Arab work and on supporting security and stability in the region.

His Majesty King Hamad, the Supreme Commander, expressed during a visit to the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF)'s General Command, appreciation of the Sudanese Armed Forces and their participation in the Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, wishing Sudan steady progress within the tolerance and fraternity prevailing among the components of its people.

## Bahrain attends Arab Labour Conference

Cairo

The 46th Arab Labour Conference opened yesterday in Cairo under the patronage of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi.

Labour and Social Devel-

opment Minister Jameel Humaidan led Bahrain's delegation to the pan-Arab conference, which will run until April 21.

The delegation included ministry's officials, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) board member Shaikha

Hind bint Salman Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Free Labour Unions Federation (Al Hurr) Executive President Yaqoub Yousef Mohammed and General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions Deputy Secretary-General Abdul Qader Al Shehabi.

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## HRH Premier hails Bahrain's landmark human rights strides

Manama

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa lauded Bahrain's human rights strides yesterday as he received the Human Rights Committee at the Council of Representatives, led by MP Abdulla Al Thawadi.

"We are proud of our human rights situation. We have attained many landmark achievements in the human rights field, and we - government and members of the Council of Representatives - have to preserve and build on our accomplishments in this regard. We share the same desire and exert similar efforts aimed at optimising the gains of our country and people in all fields. The interests of our nation must always bring us together," HRH Premier said.

"The representatives of the people represent our democracy of which we are proud. Our doors



HRH the Premier receives the Parliament's human rights committee members.

are always open for MPs, out of our belief that our common responsibility requires us to cooperate to achieve more for our nation and people," HRH Premier added.

"In the government, we have endeavoured to harness all potentials to ensure that the Bahraini citizens enjoy the best quality

services. We are keen to follow up on that personally through field visits, to measure the citizens' satisfaction with them. We do not rely on reports only. We believe that the provision of the needs and sufficient quality services that ensure decent living for the citizens is essential to

human rights protection, within our comprehensive vision of the human rights concept," HRH Premier added.

HRH Premier welcomed the parliamentary committee, and lauded the role played by its members in the human rights field, citing their keenness to pro-

ject the honourable image of the human rights situation in Bahrain at international gatherings.

HRH the Prime hailed the role played by the Representatives Council's Human Rights Committee in consolidating human rights respect, democracy and the values related them, being the

pillars of the democratic process.

Chairman of the Representatives Council's Human Rights Committee affirmed that HRH the Prime Minister embodies, through his approach, the highest levels of respect for human rights and dignity.

Members of the committee expressed honour in meeting HRH Premier, lauding his approach in consolidating human rights respect through the democratic process, the Executive-Legislature partnership and complementarity, and unwavering keenness to ensure that the citizens enjoy the best quality services within an atmosphere of security and stability.

They praised HRH Premier's positive response to the issues raised by the citizens, directly or through their representatives, which, they said, embodies the highest levels of human rights respect.

## Bahrain Embassy in Washington hosts ministers

Manama

Washington-based Bahraini embassy held a reception in honour of the Minister of Interior, Lt General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, on the occasion of his visit to the United States of America, along with the Minister of Finance and National Economy, Shaikh

Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, and delegation members accompanying the Minister of Interior.

The reception was attended by a number of US administration officials, committee heads, members of the Senate and House of Representatives, and officials of think tank institutions and decision-making centres of the United States.

## Career Day at UCB

TDT | Manama

The University College of Bahrain (UCB) hosted its 13th Annual Career Day on Sunday with some of the most prominent companies participating in the event.

Career Day is a platform provided by the UCB to its stu-

dents, giving them exposure to the job market and the opportunity to meet prospective employers.

The companies that participated included: Zain, Khalid Almoayed and Sons, National Bank of Bahrain, Bahrain Islamic Bank, 4Spots, Obai and Hill, Gulf Marcom, Gulf Connexions and Jobs4Bahrainis.

# Over 1,000 art works on display at 'Art City'

Capital Governor Shaikh Hisham inaugurates the art festival

TDT | Manama  
Harpreet Kaur

Capital Governor Shaikh Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa yesterday inaugurated the art festival under the title "Art City", which will be held at the City Centre Complex throughout April.

The art festival, which aims to endorse local talents, is being organised by the CAD World Art and Bahrain Art Gallery.

Over 1,000 remarkable work of art produced by talented Bahraini as well as international artists will be showcased at the festival, which covers an area of 650 square metres.

Speaking to Tribune, Shaikh Hisham said: "The Capital Governorate is keen to promote art exhibitions that contribute to the field of artistic investment and the exchange of experiences, skills and innovations, in addition to encouraging partnership with international expertise houses to



Shaikh Hisham tours the expo.

develop the experience of Bahrain in the field of art and creativity.

"Such exhibitions help to discover the talents while promoting the Capital through hosting unique initiatives."

"The pop-up gallery 'Art City', is a must-visit attraction in the Kingdom, where you can meet artists, art lovers, curators and galleries," the governor said.

The exhibition features works by the renowned multiple award-winning Bahraini artist, Abbas Al Mousawi.

**Such exhibitions help to discover the talents while promoting the Capital through hosting unique initiatives.**

SHAIKH HISHAM

Mr Al Mousawi has been a professional artist for more than 40 years and is also the founder of The Bahrain Art Project.

The festival, which is an effort

to support and promote local talent, also features new works by numerous Bahrain-based artists.

Duaij Al Rumaihi, Senior Mall Manager, City Centre Bahrain, said: "The event is line with our vision to create great moments for everyone, every day and with the aim of promoting the development of Bahraini artists."

"The diversity of works on display underscores the creativity of our national artists and is set to inspire a new generation of cultural enthusiasts."



### Notice in Respect of Amending the License of Ace American Insurance Company – Bahrain Branch

Pursuant to Article (49) of the Central Bank of Bahrain and Financial Institutions Law No. (64) of 2006 as amended, and based on the decision taken by members of the Board of Directors of Ace American Insurance Company on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 to place the business operations of Ace American Insurance Company - Bahrain Branch in run-off, the Central Bank of Bahrain hereby gives notice that Ace American Insurance Company - Bahrain Branch license has been amended to be restricted to servicing the existing business and not permitted to undertake any new business.

The Central Bank of Bahrain decision was published in the Official Gazette on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019, issue number 3409. Further details related to the Company's decision can be obtained from:

Ms. Mojgan Khoshabi  
Tel: +973- 17208402  
Fax: +973- 17210621

P.O. Box 2725 Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

## 'Tolerance, peaceful coexistence essence of HM King's reforms'

Manama

Information Affairs Minister Ali Al Rumaihi has praised the Members of Parliament (MPs) for their responsible patriotic stance emanating from their legislative and monitoring duties regarding the enactment and enforcement of legislative and executive measures to maintain civic and societal peace.

He pointed out the Information Ministry's commitment to boosting the partnership with national institutions in order to consolidate the responsible freedom of expression and opinion across the various media and social media platforms on the basis of responsibility, honesty and credibility.

Mr Al Rumaihi affirmed the importance of spreading legal awareness, inculcating the val-



ues of citizenship and national belonging, the culture of peace and moderation in all radio and television programmes.

The minister and board of trustees chairman of the Bahrain Institute for Political Development (BIPD) said that tolerance

**The directives of His Majesty will always remain the guidelines to be emulated by the State institutions, the civic society and the entire world in order to consolidate tolerance and peaceful co-existence among all cultures.**

MR AL RUMAIHI

and peaceful co-existence are the essence of His Majesty's reforms approach and the BIPD supports the National Plan to Promote the Values of Citizenship launched by Interior Minister in March as an integrated workable approach for the

public and private entities, NGOs and the media in order to bolster the safeguarding of the national identity and internal cohesion.

The minister hailed the initiatives and directives of His Majesty the King which will always remain as the guidelines to be emulated by the State institutions, the civic society and the entire world in order to consolidate tolerance and peaceful co-existence among all the civilisations, cultures and religions.

The minister expressed his pride in His Majesty's launching the Kingdom of Bahrain's Universal Document for Tolerance, creating the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Co-existence, the King Hamad Chair for Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Co-existence in Sapienza University, Italy, and other leading humanitarian initiatives.

# Economy surging ahead

Kingdom records 4.6 per cent growth in fourth quarter of last year

● **The non-oil GDP grew by 3.2pc in real terms and had a comparable growth rate of 4pc, at current prices.**

● **Electricity and water activities grew by 5.2pc at constant prices and 5.8pc at current prices.**

TDT | Manama

The Information and eGovernment Authority (IGA) yesterday issued a report of the national accounts provisional results for the fourth quarter of 2018, which indicated that the economy records a real growth of 4.6 per cent and 6.5pc in current prices compared to the same period of the previous year.

According to the report, the GCC Development Programme has been significantly reflected in Bahrain's economic infrastructure projects, with initial estimates of the economy during the fourth quarter of 2018, recording a real growth of 4.6 per cent and 6.5pc in current prices compared to the same period of

the previous year.

It contributed to the expansion of the construction sector, the increasing performance of which has not only strengthened itself but has also given a motivation to other non-oil activities such as real-estates, financial and trade sectors, the report said.

The non-oil sector registered a real growth of 3.2pc when compared to the same quarter of the previous year and the oil sector growing at a rate of 11.3pc in real terms due to increase in the quantities produced.

The report demonstrated that the growing results - compared to the fourth quarter of 2017 rates in the oil sector have increased by nearly 24.7pc at current prices and 11.3pc at constant prices.

The non-oil GDP grew by 3.2pc in real terms and had a comparable growth rate of 4pc, at current prices. Meanwhile, the financial corporations witnessed an increase of nearly 2.7pc in constant prices and 2.1pc in current prices.

The report also indicated that the manufacturing industry has grown by 1pc at constant prices and 1pc in current prices. Construction sector grew by 4pc at constant prices and 8.5pc at current prices.

Real-estate and business ac-

tivities grew by 1.5pc at constant prices and by 2.8pc at current prices. While the transportation and communications sector increased by 0.3pc at constant prices and by 2.2pc at current prices.

The report indicated that social and personal services decreased by 0.7pc at constant prices and had grown by 0.2pc at current prices.

Electricity and water activities grew by 5.2pc at constant prices and 5.8pc at current prices.

The report indicates that pri-

تطور الأداء الفصلي للنتائج المحلي الإجمالي (2010-2018)  
GDP Quarterly Performance (2010-2018)



**4**  
per cent was the growth of the construction sector during the fourth quarter of last year.

private educational services rose by 4pc at constant prices and 5pc at

current prices, while health private services increased by 2.5pc at constant prices and 4.8pc at current prices.

When comparing the 4th quarter with the 3rd of 2018, the economic growth seems to be slightly grown which resulted from the relative decline in the oil produced quantities accompanied by reduction in crude oil prices that has resulted in also reducing the oil GDP by 3.4pc and 11.3pc at constant and current prices, respectively.

The real non-oil GDP recorded a positive growth by 2.3pc while achieving a growth of 2.5pc in current prices.

The report also indicated that the financial corporations witnessed a slight increase of nearly 0.7pc in constant prices and 0.4pc in current prices.

The construction sector grew by 0.8pc at constant prices and 2.5pc at current prices; real-estate and business service sectors demonstrated that these sectors had improved by 0.4pc at constant prices and decreased by 0.02pc at current prices.

Results display transportations and communications sectors to have slightly increased by 0.2pc growth in constant prices and 0.1pc in current prices.

According to the report, manufacturing industry achieved growth of 0.2pc in constant prices and decreased by 0.7pc in current prices.

Government services increased by 12.7pc at constant prices and 16pc at current prices while other social and personal services increased by 0.3pc at constant prices and 0.6pc at current prices.

Additionally, electricity and water activities witnessed a decrease of 5.4pc in constant prices and 5.3pc in current prices, the report said.

## Lawyer, client get six months jail for forgery

● **The forgery was exposed by the Labour Court that previously reviewed the case.**

TDT | Manama

A lawyer and his client were sentenced to six months of imprisonment as they were found guilty of presenting fake documents before the court.

This comes after both defendants were acquitted in October last year.

The details of the case indicat-

ed that the first defendant, the client, approached the second defendant, the lawyer, to file a lawsuit against his employer, an American non-profit hospital, for not paying his children's school fees, claiming that it breaches the work contract signed between them.

The first defendant forged a document issued by a UK-based school and presented it to the court as if it was issued by one of the private schools here.

The document, an invoice, was forged by the first defendant when he translated it to Arabic through a translation office he owned.

The forgery was exposed by

the Labour Court that previously reviewed the case, but both defendants were acquitted as no direct proof was available.

The Public Prosecution appealed against the previous verdict, demanding to reconsider the defendants claims of being unaware of the faked translated document, as the first defendant owned the translation office.

The Prosecution requested that Articles 271 and 276 of the Kingdom's Penal Code be charged on the defendants.

Subsequently, the court sentenced them to six months in jail for forging documents.

## Asian sentenced for using 'free call device'

TDT | Manama

An Asian caused BD65,000 in losses to a telecommunication company in the Kingdom in a space of seven hours after he used a special device to make free calls.

This was unveiled in the court yesterday, as the case was reviewed by the Eighth Minor Criminal Court.

The defendant was earlier accused by the Public Prosecution of using fraudulent means, with the assistance of another unknown accomplice, to avoid paying the commissions paid by other telecommunications companies to the service provider here (the plaintiff), as part of international telecommunication protocol agreements.

According to court files, the

**50,000**  
Bahraini dinars in fine was imposed by the Eighth Minor Criminal Court on the convict.

defendant used a "Boxing SIM" device and seven postpaid SIM cards of the company to divert incoming and outgoing international calls made through the company's network in seven hours.

The defendant's accomplice assisted him in the purchasing the seven SIM cards, according to Prosecutors.

The court reviewed an ex-

pert's report that included an estimation of the company's losses caused by the man's unlawful action.

The report mentioned that the company lost around BD65,000 in seven hours because of the man's fraudulent operation.

The Eighth Minor Criminal Court found the man guilty of the charges he was accused of and sentenced him in absentia to pay a BD50,000 fine.

The Telecommunications Law in the Kingdom imposes a fine of no more than BD100,000 on "any person who obtains a service provided by a licensed operator using fraudulent means in order to avoid payment of any prescribed tariff for such service, and any person who has anything that can be used to obtain or avoid payment of the service".

Kingdom of Bahrain  
Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA)  
Directorate of Finance & Administration



The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority invites Proposal for the following tender:

Tender Title	Tender No.	Initial Bond	Tender Fees	Closing Date		
				Day	Date	Time
Appointing a PR Agency to Plan, Develop and Execute a Marketing Campaign for Domain NameLaunch	TRA/INTERNAL/RFP/2019/002	BD 500/- or 1% of the contract value whichever is lower	BD 15	Monday	29th April 2019	13:30 local time

- Those who are Capable and want to participate in the above tender/ has to call the Directorate of Finance at the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority during the working hours from 9 A.M. till 12 P.M. on 17520000 and Collect the appropriate tender documents after paying non-refundable fees, specified above starting on Monday, 15th of April 2019 and to Enclose with his offer the Initial Bond for the amount specified above, provided that no initial bonds value shall be less than BD 100/-.

- The initial bond should be in the form of a Certified Cheque, Bank Guarantee, cash or Insurance Policy valid for the duration specified in the tender documents. It shall have a value of BD500/- or 1% of the contract value whichever is lower.

- Offers should be deposited in the tender box provided at Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Reception, Building 852, 5th floor, Road 3618, Block 436 Seef District, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, at Seef Area

- This tender/Auction should comply to the provisions of the General Tenders Regulations, no. (36) for the year 2002, and it's executive Regulations No. (37) for the year 2002.

- In addition these conditions has to be considered:

- Enclose copy of the Commercial Registration Bill, for the current year, and has to be included/matched with the tender subjects.
- Authority Form is to be filled completely, mentioning the Total Tender Value and Unit Price (accordingly).
- Enclose a certificate of compliance with the employment percentages for Bahraini manpower issued by the Ministry of Labour.
- All tender documents (Original / Copy) which has been submitted with the offers should be stamped with the company's Stamp.

- This advertisement is considered to be a supplementary to the tender Documents.

# Palestinian ministers sworn in again after oath foul-up

Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

Palestinian government ministers were sworn in for a second time yesterday after a lawyer noticed that the oath they took the day before had been missing a phrase.

Lawyer Nael Al-Hawah spotted the omission after Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Shtayyeh's new government was sworn in before president Mahmud Abbas on Saturday.

The oath had dropped a clause where ministers swear to be loyal "to the people and its national heritage", he said.

"I noticed the error and I posted a status update on Facebook," he said.

Shtayyeh called Al-Hawah to acknowledge the error and inform him that the oath would be repeated in its entirety on Sunday, he said.

Official Palestinian news



The new ministers following a swearing-in ceremony (Courtesy of the Palestine Chronicle)

agency Wafa said the oath was indeed repeated, adding that the mistake had been caused by a "typing error."

Al-Hawah said he was familiar with the vow having closely followed Palestinian governments and because it was part of his teaching for law trainees.

He said the error could have

placed the government's legality in doubt.

According to Wafa, the full oath reads: "I swear by Almighty God to be loyal to the homeland and its sanctities, to the people and its national heritage, to respect the constitutional order and the law, and to take full care of the interests of the Palestinian

people."

The new ministers took office following a change of government that several analysts said was made to further isolate Hamas, at odds with the Fatah party of Abbas for more than a decade.

Abbas, 84, is seen as retaining the real decision-making

authority.

While his term was meant to expire in 2009, Abbas has remained in office in the absence of elections since the Fatah-Hamas split.

The Palestinian Authority government is based in the occupied West Bank, while Hamas rules the Gaza Strip.

## Israel arrests Palestinian governor of Jerusalem



Adnan Gheith

### Jerusalem, Undefined

Israeli police arrested the Palestinian governor of Jerusalem yesterday after he allegedly violated an order previously given to him by authorities, police and his lawyer said.

The governor, Adnan Gheith, has been arrested several times in recent months in connection with an investigation related to a land sale.

His lawyer Mohammed Mahmud said he had been given a six-month order not to visit the occupied West Bank or contact certain people there, and police accused him of violating the order.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld confirmed Gheith had been arrested and was being questioned, but could not provide further details. Official Palestinian news agency Wafa said he was released later yesterday and given a 1,000-shekel fine (\$280, 250 euros).

Police had previously investigated Gheith over suspicions he was involved in the Palestinian Authority's arrest in October of American-Palestinian Issam Akel, who was accused of involvement in selling an east Jerusalem building to Jewish buyers.

Palestinian officials have condemned his arrests and claimed it was intended to pressure the Palestinian leadership over Akel's case.

Akel was sentenced to life by a Palestinian court, but he was reportedly later allowed to leave to the US.

## Three killed in aircraft runway accident near Everest

Kathmandu, Nepal

A small plane veered off the runway and hit two helicopters while taking off near Mount Everest on Sunday, killing three people and injuring three, officials said.

The accident happened at Lukla airport which is the main gateway to the Everest region and is reputed to be one of the most difficult in the world for landings and take-offs.

A co-pilot of the turbo-prop Let-410 plane run by Summit Air bound for Kathmandu and a police officer on the ground were

killed on the spot, Lukla airport official Ema Nath Adhikari told AFP.

Another policeman died in hospital in Kathmandu, a police spokesman confirmed.

"The plane slipped towards the helipad during take-off and collided with two helicopters. The injured have been sent to Kathmandu for treatment," Adhikari said.

"We are not sure about the cause of the accident."

Pictures from the scene showed mangled and scorched wreckage of the plane and helicopters.



A Summit Air Let L-410 Turbolet aircraft bound for Kathmandu is seen after it hit two helicopters during take off

## Egypt unveils colourful Fifth Dynasty tomb

Cairo, Egypt

In a major archaeological discovery, Egypt on Saturday unveiled the tomb of a Fifth Dynasty official adorned with colourful reliefs and well preserved inscriptions.

The tomb, near Saqqara, a vast necropolis south of Cairo, belongs to a senior official named Khuwy who is believed to have been a nobleman during the Fifth Dynasty, which ruled over Egypt about 4300 years ago.

"The L-shaped Khuwy tomb starts with a small corridor heading downwards into an antechamber and from there a larger chamber with painted reliefs depicting the tomb owner seated at an offerings table," said Mohamed Megahed, the excavation team's head, in an antiquities ministry statement.



Journalists filming inside the newly-discovered tomb of the ancient Egyptian nobleman "Khuwy" dating back to the 5th dynasty (2494-2345 BC), at the Saqqara necropolis, about 35 kilometres south of the capital Cairo.

Flanked by dozens of ambassadors, Antiquities Minister

Khaled al-Enani said the tomb was discovered last month.

It is mostly made of white limestone bricks.



The L-shaped Khuwy tomb starts with a small corridor heading downwards into an antechamber and from there a larger chamber with painted reliefs depicting the tomb owner seated at an offerings table,"

MOHAMED MEGAHED  
THE EXCAVATION TEAM'S HEAD

Ornate paintings boast a special green resin throughout and oils used in the burial process, the ministry said.

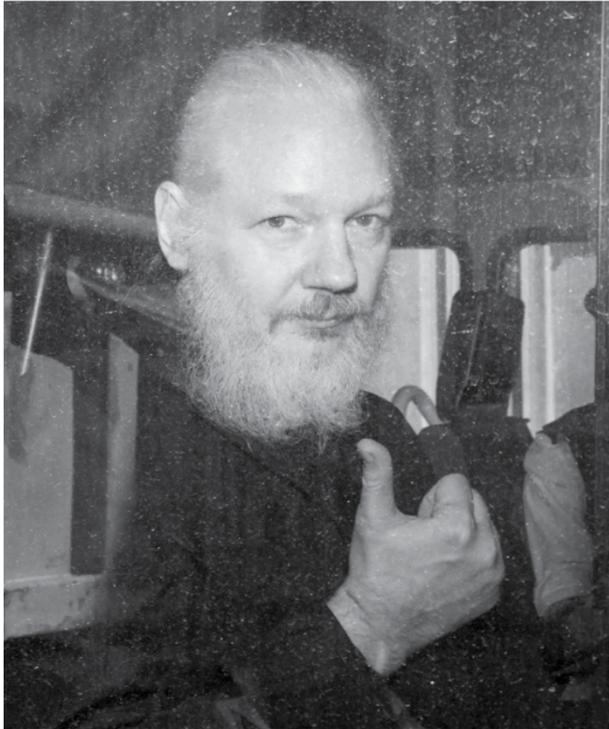
The tomb's north wall indicates that its design was inspired by the architectural blueprint of the dynasty's royal pyramids, the statement added.

The excavation team has unearthed several tombs related to the Fifth Dynasty.

Archaeologists recently found an inscription on a granite column dedicated to Queen Setibhor, who is believed to have been the wife of King Djedkare Isesi, the eighth and penultimate king of the dynasty.

Egypt has in recent years sought to promote archaeological discoveries across the country in a bid to revive tourism that took a hit from the turmoil that followed its 2011 uprising.

# Assange will cooperate with Sweden, but fight US warrant



Wikileaks founder Julian Assange arrives at Westminster Magistrates Court in a police escort. (Courtesy of Rolling Stone)

## London, United Kingdom

Julian Assange would cooperate with Swedish authorities if they reopen a rape case against him but will continue to resist any bid to extradite him to the United States,

his lawyer said yesterday.

"We are absolutely happy to answer those queries if and when they come up," Jennifer Robinson told Sky News television about the rape claims.

"The key issue at the moment is US extradition, which we have

warned about for many years," she added.

The WikiLeaks founder is in custody in London awaiting sentencing for breaching his British bail conditions in 2012 by seeking refuge in Ecuador's London embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden.

He was arrested at the embassy on Thursday after Ecuador gave him up, and is now also fighting a US extradition warrant relating to the release by WikiLeaks of a huge cache of official documents.

The Australian has always denied the claims of sexual assault and rape in Sweden. The first expired in 2015 and the other was dropped in 2017, but the alleged rape victim has now asked for the case to be reopened.

If Stockholm makes a formal extradition request, the British government will have to decide whether to consider it before or after that of the United States.

Robinson said Assange would seek assurances from Sweden that he would not be sent on to America, saying: "That is the same assurance we were seeking in 2010 and the refusal to give that is why he sought asylum."

## 'Not above the law'

She added: "He's not above the law. Julian has never been concerned about facing British justice or indeed Swedish justice. This case is and has always

been about his concern about being sent to face American injustice."

The US indictment charges Assange with "conspiracy" for working with former US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to crack a password stored on Department of Defence computers in March 2010.

He faces up to five years in jail. Manning passed hundreds of thousands of classified documents to WikiLeaks, exposing US military wrongdoing in the Iraq war and diplomatic secrets about scores of countries around the world.

The conspiracy charge against Assange seems intended to sidestep limits on prosecution potentially arising from the US Constitution's First Amendment guarantee of press freedom.

But Robinson insisted: "This indictment clearly engages newsgathering activities and the kinds of communications that journalists have with sources all the time."

The lawyer condemned as "outrageous" claims made by Ecuador about Assange's behaviour in the embassy, including that he smeared his faeces on the wall, saying: "That's not true." Quito also accused him of failing to care for his cat. WikiLeaks said Assange had asked his lawyers to "rescue him (the cat) from embassy threats" in October, adding: "They will be reunited in freedom."

# More than 120 killed in battle for Tripoli



Egyptian president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi (R) meeting Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar (L) at the Ittihadia presidential Palace in the capital Cairo

## Tripoli, Libya

Fighting near Tripoli has killed 121 people since strongman Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive earlier this month to take the Libyan capital, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

In clashes between Haftar's forces and those of the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), both sides have proclaimed "advances" but neither appears to have taken a substantial lead on the ground in recent days.

With more than 560 people wounded since the fighting started on April 4, WHO said it was sending more medical supplies and staff to Tripoli.

The UN organisation denounced "repeated attacks on health care workers" and vehicles during the fighting, in messages on its Libya Twitter feed.

"Three medical personnel have been killed and five ambulances have been incapacitated by shrapnel," the UN's office for humanitarian affairs (OCHA) said in a Saturday statement.

The mounting violence has sparked global alarm about the oil-rich country that has been in turmoil since NATO-backed forces overthrew former dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011. Haftar, who leads the self-

styled Libyan National Army (LNA), has pushed from his power base in the country's east toward the Libyan capital in the west, the seat of the UN-backed unity government led by Fayez al-Sarraj.

On Sunday he met with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Cairo, where the duo were "discussing the latest developments in Libya" according to state media.

## 'Great advances'

One air strike which the GNA blames on Haftar's forces hit a school in Ain Zara, south of Tripoli, which has been the scene of violent clashes for days.

On Sunday, the UN mission in Libya warned that international humanitarian law "prohibits the bombing of schools, hospitals, ambulances and civilian areas".

The mission warned that it would document all breaches in order to inform the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Court.

The LNA meanwhile accused the Tripoli-based forces of an air raid "targeting civilians" in the Gasr Ben Ghachir region, 30 kilometres (19 miles) south of Tripoli. GNA spokesman Mohamed Gnounou said his forces had carries out 21 air strikes targeting LNA positions and supply lines between Friday and Saturday.

# Assange's father calls on Australia to bring him home

## Sydney, Australia

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's father yesterday called on Australia to bring his son home, saying he was shocked to see his son's condition after his arrest in London last week.

John Shipton -- who was secretary of the Wikileaks Party when his son tried to run for a senate seat in 2013 national elections -- reportedly visited Assange every Christmas at the Ecuador embassy in London after he sought refuge there in 2012. "DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs) and the prime minister should in a nuanced way do something," Shipton told Melbourne's *Sunday Herald Sun*. "It can be resolved simply to the satisfaction of all. There

has been some talk in a meeting between a senator and a senior DFAT official to extradite Julian to Australia."

Shipton said he was shocked to see the state of his son when he was arrested at the embassy on Thursday on allegations of skipping bail, and on a US extradition warrant related to a huge leak of official documents.

"I saw him, the way they dragged him down the steps, the coppers (police), he didn't look good. I'm 74 and I look better than him and he's 47. It's such a shock," he said.

"For months and months he has been living like a high-security prisoner, he can't even go to the toilet. There have been cameras watching his every move."

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Friday that



John Shipton (Courtesy of PerthNow)

Assange would receive "no special treatment" from Canberra.

The 47-year-old Australian had sought refuge in the embassy while on bail awaiting extradition to Sweden to face charges of sexual assault and rape, which he always denied.

British lawmakers on Saturday urged their government to prioritise any extradition bid Sweden might make for him over the allegations.

Swedish prosecutors dropped a preliminary investigation into the rape allegation in 2017.

# World's largest plane makes first test flight

## Washington, United States

The world's largest airplane -- a Stratolaunch behemoth with two fuselages and six Boeing 747 engines -- made its first test flight on Saturday in California.

The mega jet carried out its maiden voyage over the Mojave desert.

It is designed to carry into space, and drop, a rocket that would in turn ignite to deploy satellites.

It is supposed to provide a more flexible way to deploy satellites than vertical takeoff rockets because this way all you need is a long runway for takeoff.



The world's largest airplane -- a Stratolaunch behemoth with two fuselages and six Boeing 747 engines -- made its first test flight in California.

It was built by an engineering company called Scaled Composites.

The aircraft is so big its wing span is longer than a football field, or about 1.5 times that of an Airbus A380.

Specifically, the wing span is 117 meters; that of an Airbus A380 is just under 80.

The plane flew Saturday for about two and a half hours, Stratolaunch said. Until now, it had just carried out tests on the ground.

It hit a top speed of 304 kilometers per hour (189 mph) and reached an altitude of 17,000 feet, or 5,182 meters.

# Netanyahu plots Israel's course towards rogue statehood

*It may seem impossible to believe that Israel's leadership could move any further right — but let's wait and see*



**BARIA ALAMUDDIN**

Benjamin Netanyahu's election-eve pledge to annex all settlements and outposts could ultimately encompass most of the rural West Bank, leaving Palestinians confined to a few overcrowded cantons. Yet even this isn't the worst-case scenario, because Netanyahu is cobbling together a coalition of extreme-right forces explicitly committed to eradicating Palestinians altogether. These factions were compared by leading Israeli and Jewish moderates to the Ku Klux Klan. One of them, Jewish Power, is an offshoot of the violent anti-Muslim movement Kach, designated terrorists by the US.

These modern-day fascists have been empowered by the ballot box to hold Israel to ransom for the next four years. In their hands they have Netanyahu's "get out of jail free" card: Facing criminal charges in three corruption cases, he would require the support of entities such as Jewish Power to force through measures granting himself immunity. But their quid pro quo — the implementation of their "greater Israel" ethnic-cleansing agenda — could be ruinously expensive.

Even without this extreme-right millstone, Netanyahu's apartheid policies have been distinguished by accelerated construction of thousands of illegal settler homes, forcibly

evicting Arab families from East Jerusalem, and reducing the rights of non-Jewish citizens. His allies furthermore want to extend Israeli jurisdiction to Palestinian areas — or the concentration camp-like cantons that remain after Netanyahu has done his worst. One opposition supporter warned that Netanyahu's promised annexations could trigger "perpetual war." Similar concerns partly account for why so many US Jews loathe Netanyahu.

Is global democracy in crisis? Netanyahu is only one of many leaders with horrifying policy proposals enjoying recent electoral successes. In these polarised times people will seemingly vote for the devil if he makes bold enough promises. This global cabal of far-right leaders — including Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, Hungary's Viktor Orban, Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump — captured and retained power, deploying divisive racist narratives that appeal to voters' baser instincts. They denounce the media and demonise opponents, making bipartisan consensual politics impossible. Accepting Netanyahu's annexation of the Golan Heights just days before the election represents extraordinary interference by Trump in Israel's democracy, perhaps matched only by the substantial efforts Putin deployed in 2016 to win the vote for Trump.

Nevertheless, the removal of the presidents of Sudan and Algeria is a reminder of the potential of popular action to depose hated and corrupt regimes, even though the military powers behind these regimes have tried to cling on by tossing figure-



Netanyahu is cobbling together a coalition of extreme-right forces.

head leaders overboard. Omar Al Bashir was initially replaced by his defence minister, Awad Ibn Auf, himself under sanctions for his role in atrocities in Darfur. Just a day later, continuing protests forced Auf to step aside in favour of a less problematic figure, Gen Abdel Fattah Burhan. Similarly, Abdelaziz Bouteflika (rarely seen since being incapacitated by a stroke six years ago) was ousted by his top general, Ahmed Gaid Salah. Nevertheless, having braved so much, citizens are unlikely to be satisfied with minor cosmetic alterations within the same regime.

In the same way that Iran cannot claim to be a democracy just because it holds rigged elections,

**If Netanyahu and his deranged associates implement only a fraction of their apartheid electoral pledges, they will put Israel far beyond the mainstream of internationally acceptable behaviour.**

Israel is increasingly at odds with democratic values: There are detentions without trial, police

brutality, imprisoning children, forced deportations of African migrants, and the accumulated injustices of occupation. Among his tactics for Arab vote suppression was Netanyahu's distribution of 1,200 cameras to election observers at polling stations in Arab areas, contributing to a climate in which citizens were unwilling to show up. The criminal indictments against a sitting prime minister are likely to push Israel's political system further toward breaking point.

Netanyahu and the far right have spent two decades taking a sledgehammer to Israel's traditional political center ground with their fearmongering claims that compromise and peace initiatives open the door for "terrorism." This inexorable lurch toward the extreme right has brought into the Knesset figures who in the 1990s were regarded as lunatic-fringe extremists. It may seem impossible to believe that Israel's leadership could move any further right — but let's wait and see.

With Trump's actions (or lack of them) on Jerusalem and the Golan, and Netanyahu's threats against the West Bank, Arab voices have been muted. The received wisdom is that there is political space for only one enemy — Iran. Yet a tough position on Palestine reinforces the Arab negotiating position elsewhere. There is no viable peace deal coming from Jared Kushner, whose terms of reference are dictated by Israeli hardliners. When Palestinians criticised the US administration, Trump contemptuously defunded vital refugee programs. If the Arab position is to be decisive

on the world stage, such humiliations must be uncrossable red lines, just as King Faisal's 1974 oil boycott stopped the world in its tracks and permanently strengthened the Arab global posture.

If Netanyahu and his deranged associates implement only a fraction of their apartheid electoral pledges, they will put Israel far beyond the mainstream of internationally acceptable behaviour. Already, we have seen unprecedentedly strong criticism of Netanyahu by US Democrat 2020 presidential candidates. What one president can mindlessly declare with a tweet can be easily revoked by his successor. In a post-Trump era, Netanyahu may find himself at the helm of a rogue state, with few international friends to provide shelter from UN action and legal measures. Every arbitrary measure by Netanyahu against Arab identity, every act of theft throughout Jerusalem and Palestine, only reinforces collective memories of Arab ownership.

As we saw in Sudan and Algeria, decades of injustice merely strengthen the thirst for justice when people are steadfast and determined. The racism, the oppression, the corruption and the dispossessions in Palestine and elsewhere in the world will only make the taste of accumulated justice all the sweeter when we — or perhaps our grandchildren — finally get to enjoy it.

*(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.)*

CIVILIAN'S TRIBUNE

## Brexit delay means our own farce will continue

It must surely be a great relief for Fianna Fáil that the Brexit debacle will carry on until at least October.

The relief I refer to has nothing to do with the Border or any economic damage it may do to the country, but more to do with members' own political careers.

With the current homeless, housing and health crises and Fianna Fáil being the tail that is wagging the dog in the Dáil, the last thing it wants is to go to the people until there is an improvement in those social issues.

Until that happens, Fianna Fáil can continue this farcical Confidence and



Supply Agreement with Fine Gael and claim it is in the best interests of the country.

For the same reason, this will also suit Fine Gael, which will be quite worried about the same social issues affecting their re-election prospects and the relative closeness to Fianna Fáil in the polls.

Those poll statistics combined with the social issues mentioned, would suggest Confidence and Supply Agreements will continue between these two parties with either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael as the lead party for several years to come.

**Anthony McGeough**

1942

The George Cross is awarded "to the island fortress of Malta: Its people and defenders" by King George VI.

1945

Bergen-Belsen concentration camp is liberated.

1947

Jackie Robinson debuts for the Brooklyn Dodgers, breaking baseball's color line.



1955

McDonald's restaurant dates its founding to the opening of a franchised restaurant by Ray Kroc, in Des Plaines, Illinois.

# Cuba has hijacked Venezuela

Venezuelans are not victims of a single dictatorship, but of two



A mural of Fidel Castro in Caracas, Venezuela.



JULIO BORGES

I was a member of the opposition coalition that participated in the talks with Nicolás Maduro's government between 2017 and 2018. For more than a year we tried to work out a deal that would put an end to the chaos deepening in Venezuela. But no solution is viable as long as the country remains tethered to Cuba.

The communications minister and government representative in the talks, Jorge Rodríguez, reiterated Venezuela's desire that it receive the same treatment as Cuba. This declaration laid bare the pretension of the regime: a dictatorship that is accepted and ultimately gets its way, like the one Raúl Castro inherited from his brother and passed on to Miguel Díaz-Canel.

But Cuba is more than an inspiration and a role model for the Chavismo government. The island nation has hijacked Venezuela and is effectively holding it hostage. Important government decisions are being made in Havana, not in Caracas. The Castro regime's tentacles extend to several Venezuelan governmental institutions, including the armed forces and the offices of immigration and health services.

In a speech at the United Nations in October, the secretary general of the Organisation of American States, Luis Almagro, said that at least 22,000 Cubans have infiltrated Venezuela's government and its institutions.

They have done so, he explained, holding important positions in government agencies and in the national security and intelligence services.

In the past few years Maduro's regime has moved to consolidate power and dismantle democratic institutions. In the 2015 parliamentary elections, opposition parties won a majority of the seats in the National Assembly, but Maduro stripped it of its powers. The next year, the regime illegally postponed regional elections and suspended the process of calling for a presidential referendum. In 2017, we took to the streets to protest the illegitimate sentences imposed by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice against the National Assembly, and we chose to not participate in the rigged regional elections.

Civilian demonstrations against Maduro's dictatorship that year left at least 120 people dead, thousands wounded and hundreds imprisoned. According to Foro Penal, a prominent Venezuelan human rights organisation, 911 political prisoners are being held in Venezuela. In the past year, seven attempts by the military to re-establish the Constitution and our sovereignty, today partially controlled by Cuban leadership, have been aborted. More than 100 military officers have been imprisoned.

In the mediated talks with the Maduro regime, conducted in the Dominican Republic, we sought to agree on conditions for presidential elections with democratic guarantees, but the regime refused an electoral process that reflected the will of the Venezuelan people. We declined to sign the agreement, and the talks dissolved on January 2018. For years the opposi-

**It is a mistake to ask those seeking democracy in Venezuela to distance themselves from their United States and Latin American allies at this juncture.**

tion has tried to negotiate with the regime to find a democratic solution to this mess.

Instead, Maduro pushed on with a sham presidential election on May 20, 2018, which was not recognised by Venezuelans and many of the world's democracies. Maduro's approach echoes the Cuban model, where a single party rules and elections aren't competitive.

The inextricable relationship between the Castro dictatorship and the Chavista regime began 25 years ago, when Hugo Chávez visited Havana just after being released from prison. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and set in motion the collapse of the Soviet Union, Fidel Castro's Cuba lost its great economic benefactor. Chávez's rise to power in Venezuela a decade later allowed Castro to find a replacement. The relationship between the two countries was cemented between 2004 and 2014, when Venezuela experienced an oil windfall.

The relationship has proved lucrative for the Cuban government. Between 40,000 and 50,000 barrels of Venezuelan

oil are sent to Cuba daily, despite the fact that Venezuelan oil production has declined more than 60 percent in recent years. Venezuela's economic subsidy reached its peak at about 12 percent of Cuba's gross domestic product.

During the boom years, around 90,000 barrels of crude oil daily, representing \$9 billion annually, were sent to Cuba. Some estimate that over approximately 15 years, Venezuela has subsidised \$35 billion in oil to Cuba.

The country was brought further into debt when Maduro bought \$440 million in foreign crude and sent it to Cuba between 2017 and 2018. The problem, therefore, is not a potential invasion of Venezuela by a foreign power; for over a decade, Cuba has been a parasite, stripping us of our resources.

But unlike Cuba, we are not an island. We have land borders, and our tragedy has spread throughout the region, adding pressure to neighbouring countries. To stabilise the region and restore democracy, we must cut off the authoritarian germ rooted in Cuba and Venezuela. Democracy cannot be restored until the two regimes are decoupled.

Maduro has shown that he will not leave power of his own volition. Those of us who oppose his rule are not armed, nor do we seek to oust his regime violently. We have offered amnesty but it has been rejected. However, we will never accept the normalisation of this de facto dictatorship. As long as Maduro remains in power there will be more deaths, prisoners, persecution and compatriots forced to migrate. The international community has

exhausted its diplomatic arsenal because there is no precedent in Latin America for a situation similar to that of Venezuela's. When it comes, Maduro's exit will be equivalent to the fall of the Berlin Wall for the region.

It is a mistake to ask those seeking democracy in Venezuela to distance themselves from their United States and Latin American allies at this juncture. They represent the only opportunity to counterbalance a regime with unlimited power and no institutional oversight, that is armed and willing to exercise violence. Democratic countries must direct pressure toward Havana as well to bring about change in Venezuela.

The call of the National Assembly and the country's acting president, Juan Guaidó, for Venezuela to stop sending oil to Cuba is a first step. Companies trading with Venezuelan oil must comply if they want to avoid secondary sanctions derived from those already imposed against our state-owned oil and gas company, PDVSA, by the United States. For its part, the Lima Group must ensure that previously agreed-upon investigations into corruption and human rights violations are carried out, which could involve citizens of its countries, as well as Venezuelans and Cubans.

Finally, the international left wing must understand that Venezuelans are not victims of a single dictatorship, but of two: Maduro's and Cuba's. They must withdraw their solidarity and support for Nicolás Maduro.

(Julio Borges was president of the National Assembly of Venezuela and is Juan Guaidó's ambassador to the Lima Group.)



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



On Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's jayanti, let us re-dedicate ourselves to the 4 universal values of JUSTICE, LIBERTY, EQUALITY & FRATERNITY enshrined in our Constitution. Those who pay him tributes on this day, while insidiously weakening these values, do his memory disservice.

@RahulGandhi

02



I wish all communities celebrating Vaisakhi a happy and peaceful time as you reflect on the values of truth, tolerance, compassion, hope and renewal.

@theresa\_may

03



Just out: The USA has the absolute legal right to have apprehended illegal immigrants transferred to Sanctuary Cities. We hereby demand that they be taken care of at the highest level, especially by the State of California, which is well known for its poor management & high taxes!

@realDonaldTrump

04



No law that kicks 180 million Americans off their plans is acceptable. While Democrats abandon Obamacare for more socialism, President Trump is working on real solutions to provide Americans with the options, affordability, and quality care they deserve.

@WhiteHouse

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

# business

## Batelco, Gulf Air renew partnership

TDT | Manama

Batelco, a leading digital solutions provider in the Kingdom, and Gulf Air, the Kingdom's national carrier, have renewed their partnership agreement for a further 3-year to provide Batelco's Al Dana Club members and high valued customers with superior benefits.

The agreement was signed by Batelco General Manager Consumer Division Maha Abdulrahman and Gulf Air Chief Commercial Officer, Vincent Coste in the presence of a number of attendees from both com-



Batelco General Manager Consumer Division Maha Abdulrahman and Gulf Air Chief Commercial Officer, Vincent Coste sign the agreement

panies at Batelco headquarters' recently.

In addition, Batelco also announced the launch of the Gulf Air Bundle, extending Falconflyer miles, to high-value customers who subscribe to the Gulf Air Bundle for BD5/monthly.

"We are very pleased to renew our partnership with Gulf Air in order to continue to deliver superior Gulf Air privileges for our Al Dana members," said Abdulrahman.

Commenting on the agreement, Coste said: "We are delighted to partner with Batelco yet again for the renewal of this agreement."

## iGA increases parking spaces at Isa Town branch

TDT | Manama

The Information & eGovernment Authority's (iGA) said it has arranged more parking lots at the Identity Card Center at Isa Town branch. The move followed requests made by customers through Taqeeem programme.

The project was realised in collaboration with the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, an iGA statement said.

Chief Executive Mohamed Ali AlQaed, iGA expressed his gratitude to the Works Affairs for their prompt response in addressing the request at record time in collaboration with the General Directorate of Traffic (GDT).

It is worth mentioning that the Authority has added 25 parking lots to the currently available facility at a near distance from the centre's building.

## Minister hails BAC CEO's election to ACI board



Kamal Ahmed, Minister of Transportation



Yousif Al Binfalah, BAC CEO

TDT | Manama

Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications Kamal Ahmed yesterday hailed Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalah's appointment as a director on the Airport Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific Regional board.

"This result is a point of pride, which reflects the ability and talent of Bahraini nationals to hold senior international positions in general," said the Minister adding: "It also demonstrates international confidence in the Bahraini professionals working in the aviation sector."

The Minister said that having such prominent BAC team members in these important roles also shines an international spotlight on Bahrain and showcases the Kingdom's reputation as an important aviation hub in the region.

"BAC and its partners have made important contributions to the Airport Modernisation Programme that will help to ensure the successful and timely completion of this huge national development project," the minister stressed.

Binfalah, also the Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Airport Company (BAC), is the first Bahraini to hold this prestigious international position and will serve for a period of three years.

The announcement was made by the board at its regular meeting in Hong Kong on the sidelines of the ACI Asia-Pacific/World General Assembly, Conference & Exhibition 2019.

The ACI Asia-Pacific Regional Board represents the interests of more than 600 airports in 49 countries and territories, which account for over 90 per cent of commercial air traffic in the Asia-Pacific region.

## Bahrain set to host BDFEX 2019

TDT | Manama

Bahrain will host "Business Development Forum & Expo (BDFEX-2019) for the Downstream Oil & Gas and Petrochemicals Industry" from 24 to 25 April 2019 at the Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel, Manama.

BDFEX the first-of-its-kind event aims to attract international and regional corporations, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), investors and entrepreneurs in oil and gas and petrochemicals industries.

The forum is organised by PROACT International Consultancy, Bahrain and United Gulf Industrial Consortia for Investment Management and Consultation, Jubail, Saudi Arabia,

In his comments, Dr Khaled Jasim Bomtaia, CEO of PROACT International Consultancy, one of BDFEX's organisers, pointed out that BDFEX 2019 is in line with the major developments of oil and gas industry in Bahrain, such as the new biggest oil and gas field discovered in Bahrain, the biggest ongoing modernisation programme of



Dr Mohammed Al Khaldi, CEO of the Gulf Investment and Consulting Department of United Gulf Industrial Consortia Al-jubail Industrial City, Saudi Arabia



Dr Khaled Jasim Bomtaia, CEO of PROACT International Consultancy

the Bapco refinery and other projects which contributes to the development of the oil and gas industry infrastructure.

"The potential benefit of BDFEX is also aligned on national plans to fostering institutional collaborations, maximizing the utilization of the resources to attracting investments into the sector and reflects the linked oil and gas sector of both Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. BDFEX will present approaches that link standards with the SDG 9

to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation," Dr Bomtaia added.

For his part, Dr Mohammed Al Khaldi, CEO of the Gulf Investment and Consulting Department of United Gulf Industrial Consortia Al Jubail Industrial City, Saudi Arabia, noted that the forum would result in increasing local content of manufacturing and services in the hydrocarbon downstream industry and attracting investments.

## BCCI to hold two-day conference at Gulf Hotel

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) announced holding a two-day conference that will include sector-specific roundtable discussions on 21st and 22nd April 2019 from 4 to 7 pm

in the Gulf Hotel.

"The conference will shed light on the challenges facing each sector of the national economy, and the efforts exerted by the chamber's 10 committees to overcome those challenges," said BCCI board member and head of the committees' coordi-

nation team Sonia Janahi.

On day one, health committee, industry and energy, finance insurance and taxation, real-estate and constructions, and technology committee committees will present their work papers.

The education committee,

commercial markets, hospitality and tourism, food wealth, and the transport and logistics committees will present their work papers on the second day of the event.

All members of the business community are invited to take part in the conference.

## Global business leaders to converge on Bahrain for GEC

● The conference will begin with an introductory session held by Network members

TDT | Manama

Curtains will rise tomorrow on the 11th Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC) 2019,

which will be held for the first time in the Kingdom, at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Organised by the Global Entrepreneurship Network in collaboration with the Labour Fund 'Tamkeen', the event, which would bring together thousands of entrepreneurs, investors, researchers and economic policymakers from more than 170 countries, will continue until Thursday.

The conference will be inaugurated on Tuesday with an introductory session by members of the Global Entrepreneurship Network on sustainable development through entrepreneurship and strategic growth partnerships.

Over the years, GEC has been considered as one of the largest entrepreneurial conferences in the world, hosted in many countries including the United States, United Kingdom, China, Italy,

A delegation of international experts and economists will attend the event, alongside Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) representatives from more than 170 countries, including Bahrain.

Brazil, Russia and the UAE.

"This year's decision to choose Bahrain as the host stems from

the Kingdom's strong economic position as well as its role as a global hub for entrepreneurs," a GEC statement said.

The conference will provide an opportunity to address the latest developments and insights in the entrepreneurial sector and support companies to scale and start new ventures using international best practices.

GEC will also explore various opportunities to utilize the po-

tential of young entrepreneurs by creating channels of communication between entrepreneurs and investors.

Commenting on the event, Tamkeen's Chief Executive, said: "The main objective of hosting GEC 2019 is not only to discuss the most important challenges of this growing sector but to explore what the sector can offer to young entrepreneurs in terms of creativity, growth and development."

# Car makers face bumpy road as China hosts auto show

## Daimler faces probe over 'new cheating software'

● According to the Bild report, around 60,000 vehicles of the Mercedes-Benz GLK 220 CDI models produced between 2012 and 2015 were affected

Berlin, Germany

Daimler confirmed Sunday it was facing a regulatory probe after a report said German authorities have uncovered a previously unknown type of pollution trickery software allegedly installed by the car giant in some of its vehicles.

The Federal Motor Transport Authority (KBA) has initiated a formal hearing procedure, Bild am Sonntag newspaper reported.

The Stuttgart-based carmaker confirmed the hearing procedure.

"We fully cooperate with the Federal Motor Transport Authority and are reviewing the facts," said Daimler in a statement.

"In the course of the hearing proceedings, we will present our view to KBA."

According to the Bild report, around 60,000 vehicles of the Mercedes-Benz GLK 220 CDI models produced between 2012 and 2015 were affected.

The software allegedly reduced emissions of nitrogen oxide during test conditions. On the road however, the affected vehicles were spewing out amounts of the harmful gas that were above regulatory limits.

The KBA last year had already ordered Daimler to recall 700,000 vehicles worldwide, including 280,000 in Germany, over illegal software -- a ruling the carmaker is appealing.

Daimler is also potentially facing a big fine over the diesel scam as German prosecutors said in February they had opened a "fine procedure" against it.

Diesel investigations have been running in Germany since 2015.



Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel driving on the straight during a practice session for the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai. Formula One will stage its 1,000th world championship race at the Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai

AFP | Shanghai, China

Global car makers flock to the Shanghai Auto Show this week with the world's largest vehicle market facing an unfamiliar sales slump just as China veers toward an ultra-competitive electric future.

Fueled by rising incomes and government sales incentives, China has been the golden goose upon which the global automotive industry has staked its future.

But after years of strong growth, car sales fell last year for the first time since the 1990s, hit by a slowing economy, US trade tension, and a Chinese crackdown on shady credit practices that has crimped car-financing channels.

Sales dipped 2.8 per cent in 2018 to 28.1 million units, according to that China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM), a pace that has accelerated in recent months.

"This is the first time since the takeoff of the Chinese market that there has been such a long and sharp decline in sales," said Laurent Petizon, an auto analyst at Alix Partners.

"We are starting to worry a lit-

tle bit. It's a new phenomenon."

The decline is magnified by a prior buying rush as consumers moved to beat the government's recent removal of tax rebates for small car purchases.

### Cut-throat

Major carmakers still see solid potential, particularly in bright spots such as SUVs and electric vehicles, which will account for many of the new models on display in Shanghai.

But cut-throat competition is expected to intensify even in EVs with Beijing moving to phase out policies that encourage the purchase of "green" vehicles.

This mixed picture -- optimism combined with worrying new realities -- is reflected in the plans of carmakers like Ford.

The US manufacturer this month announced plans to launch 30 new models in China within three years, a dozen electric.

But it also unveiled a strategy to cater more directly to the evolving needs of Chinese car buyers.

This includes incorporating the artificial intelligence technology of China's Baidu into Ford vehicles, giving Ford's Chinese joint ventures more freedom on design choices, and other steps.

Although China is

the world's largest "new energy" vehicle market and sales soared 62pc last year, they remain a drop in the China bucket with 1.3 million units sold, thanks in part to purchasing incentives.

But they represent the future for China, especially with the government planning to impose quotes requiring carmakers maintain a certain percentage of new energy vehicles in their Chinese production.

This has given rise to a number of Chinese EV start-ups seeking to stake out territory that will have to face off against the likes of Tesla.

### Tesla ups ante

The California automaker, widely seen

as the EV standard-setter, is putting more eggs in China's basket.

Tesla chief Elon Musk broke ground in January on a factory in Shanghai -- the company's biggest overseas move yet.

The new plant will eventually have an annual production capacity of 500,000 vehicles, dramatically increasing Tesla's output.

Foreshadowing further competition, Beijing has vowed to open its market, removing a requirement that foreign manufacturers form manufacturing joint ventures with Chinese partners.

Tesla's planned factory is believed to be the first to take advantage of this.

Regardless of short-term jockeying for position, China will remain a crucial market, particularly in electrics, said Ferdinand Dudenhoeffer, director of the Germany-based Center of Automotive Research.

"The situation will slowly improve. Next year, the market will recover little by little and in three to four years, will have resumed its earlier growth," he said.



Tesla Model 3

# Disney throws down gauntlet in war on Netflix

Washington, United States

The battle is on. Walt Disney Co. is bringing its biggest weapons to a new streaming service, including "Star Wars" and Marvel superheroes, in what is expected to be bruising war with Netflix and others for television dominance.

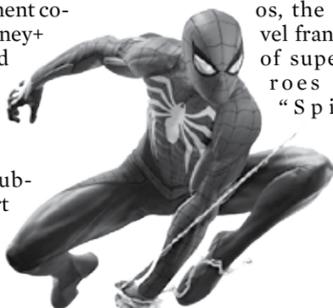
The media-entertainment colossus announced its Disney+ streaming service would launch in November in the United States and gradually expand internationally.

The new service's subscriptions are due to start

at \$6.99 per month -- less than streaming leader Netflix's most basic \$8.99 plan.

Disney+ will be packed with blockbuster movies and TV shows from the Disney library, including its recently acquired assets from 21st Century Fox.

That includes shows and films from Pixar animation studios, the Marvel franchise of superheroes like "Spider



Man" and "Captain America," National Geographic documentaries and of course the "Star Wars" series.

Disney said it would include all 30 seasons of "The Simpsons," family-friendly titles like "The Sound of Music," and "Malcolm in the Middle" and its forthcoming "space opera" series "The Mandalorian."

Analysts says Disney's announcement shows it is giving no quarter as it battles Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu and an upcoming service from Apple.

"The biggest surprise was the price -- \$6.99 per month, which

was much lower than many people were expecting," said Alan Wolk, co-founder of the TVREV consulting firm.

"It's also ad-free, which was unexpected, as the conventional wisdom was that they would go to a hybrid Hulu-style model, with both ad-supported and ad-free options."

Wolk said the programming "is exactly what you'd expect from Disney and will appeal to families with children."

Wolk said the content will mean the new service won't compete head-on with Hulu, which is 60 percent owned by Disney.

The move "allows them to position Hulu as their edgier, adult offering," he said.

Disney has predicted it will sign up 60 million to 90 million users over the next five years.

Some analysts have said they expect Disney's new service to grow quickly and eventually top Netflix's 140 million worldwide subscribers.



Analysts says Disney's announcement shows it is giving no quarter as it battles Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu and an upcoming service from Apple

# Abu Dhabi hits multi-year

● Foreigners will be allowed to own as much as 40pc of FAB stock

● Emaar Properties were down 1.2pc

● Saudi stocks made a lacklustre start to the week

Reuters | Dubai

Abu Dhabi stocks closed up 2.4 per cent yesterday, reaching a four-and-a-half year high as First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) surged after it obtained regulatory approval to increase its foreign ownership limit. Other Gulf markets were weak.

Foreigners will be allowed to own as much as 40pc of FAB stock, up from a previous limit of 25pc, lifting FAB shares by almost 5pc.

FAB shares closed at 15.58 UAE dirhams (\$4.24), their highest since May 2014. The index ended at 5,174 points, its highest since September 2014.

Dubai shares were flat on weakness in Emaar Properties,



Visitors look at stock price information displayed on a digital screen inside the Saudi Stock Exchange

which was down 1.2pc.

Shares of Emirates NBD rose 1.7pc however after the bank said it had sold more shares in the London initial public offering of Network International after exercising a greenshoe option.

Saudi stocks made a lacklustre start to the week as financial shares fell on profit-taking after robust gains in the Gulf region's biggest stock market this year.

The index ended 0.4pc lower, with Al Rajhi Bank down 0.6pc

## Closing Bell

SAUDI	▼ 0.4 pc	9,055 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 2.4 pc	5,174 pts
DUBAI	▲ 0.1 pc	2,788 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.2 pc	10,236 pts
EGYPT	▼ 0.2 pc	15,069 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.5 pc	1,445 pts
OMAN	▲ 0.2 pc	3,991 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 0.1 pc	6,123 pts

and Samba Financial Group down 1.3pc.

It is still up almost 16pc so far this year, fuelled by an increase in foreign fund flows as it entered the FTSE Russell's emerging market index on March 18.

Qatari stocks were down 0.2pc, pressured by a 0.9pc drop in market heavyweight Industries Qatar and a 1.3pc fall in Qatar Insurance Co.

Across the rest of the Gulf, Bahrain stocks were up 0.5pc, while Kuwait's market was flat.

## US seeks \$10 bn trade finance fund for Venezuela: Mnuchin



World Bank President David Malpass (L) shakes hands with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin prior to the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting

Washington, United States

The United States is working with a group of countries to build a \$10 billion fund to help Venezuela rebuild trade once a new government is in place, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Saturday.

The United States has joined dozens of other countries in recognizing Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido as interim president but embattled President Nicolas Maduro remains in power.

Mnuchin said that, during the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, officials had discussed how to aid in the Caribbean country's recovery.

But those institutions must sit on the sidelines until there is clear international recognition of a government in Caracas and a way to put funds into use in the country which

has seen its economy collapse, while people are fleeing because they cannot get basic food and medicines.

"Every single time I've had one of these meetings I can't believe how much worse it gets on the ground for the people of Venezuela. This is a humanitarian crisis," Mnuchin said.

In addition to the potential for financing from the IMF and World Bank, he hosted a meeting on Thursday of the friends of Venezuela, which includes many Latin American and European countries, as well as Japan, where ministers also discussed the need for the oil exporting power to restore trade.

"We're going to be working on trying to put together a consortium of about \$10 billion of trade finance that would be available for the new government to spark trade," Mnuchin said.

# China's economic growth cools

● The world's second largest economy expanded by 6.3 per cent in the January to March period

AFP | Beijing, China

China's economy cooled further in the first quarter, according to an AFP survey of analysts, as Beijing resorted to tried-and-tested measures to combat tepid global demand and a bruising US trade war.

The world's second largest economy expanded by 6.3 per cent in the January to March period, the poll of 13 economists found ahead of the official release of gross domestic product figures on Wednesday.

It would mark the slowest pace of quarterly growth for almost three decades.

The figure remains within the range targeted by the government of 6.0 to 6.5pc for the whole year, down from 6.6pc in 2018.

To combat the slowdown, Beijing has stepped up support for the economy in recent months, announcing massive tax cuts and other fee reductions to help struggling companies.

Last month Premier Li Ke-qiang acknowledged "downward pressure" but vowed not to let the economy "slip out of a reasonable range".

Beijing faces a delicate balancing act as it tries to support private businesses in need of credit, without further inflating its debt balloon.

Policymakers have turned the credit taps back on after several years of crushing deleveraging with credit data Friday from China's central bank showing monetary easing kicking in.

Bank loan growth accelerated



An aerial view of a port in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province.

to its fastest monthly pace since 2016, said Chang Liu of Capital Economics, noting it usually takes six months for credit growth to translate into greater economic activity.

But another economist, Bjorn Giesbergen of RaboResearch, warned that loans have not always reached the private sector and "China's debt-to-GDP levels are already excessive".

The problems are only going to get "exponentially worse" if the new credit again does not flow to the private sector, he told AFP.

Policies enacted this month, like cutting the value-added tax, and a cut in company social insurance contributions coming next month will more directly help China's struggling private sector.

## Job insecurity

Last year China's infrastructure investment fell to 3.8pc on-year growth, down from years of near 20pc expansion.

In recent months, big earth

moving projects that Beijing had put on hold were restarted to pull along the economy.

Growth was largely driven by infrastructure investment, with project approvals front-loaded and huge special bond issuance, said Nathan Hung Lai Chow, an economist at DBS.

"Consumer confidence remained fragile due to job insecurity," Chow said.

China's normally steady unemployment rate rose to 5.3pc in February, from 4.9pc in December, while retail sales growth remained near a 15-year low.

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday raised its forecast for full year growth to 6.3pc from 6.2pc citing China's ramping economic stimulus and clearing trade tensions with the US.

## Trade war

All signs point to the United States and China closing in on a trade deal after nine rounds

of high-level talks between the two economic giants.

Last year Washington and Beijing slapped tariffs on more than \$360 billion in two-way trade, biting into their manufacturing sectors.

Chinese data Friday showed the politically sensitive trade surplus with the US widened to \$20.5 billion last month from \$14.7 billion in February.

One sticking point in the talks had been an insistence by American officials that any final agreement have teeth -- but it appears the negotiators have found a resolution.

But no date has been set to bring together President Donald Trump and his counterpart Xi Jinping for a deal signing.

"We think that growth will find a floor in (the second quarter) in response to the macro policy easing and improved confidence following the easing of tensions with the US," said Tommy Wu of Oxford Economics in a note.

## FB, Instagram and WhatsApp working again after outages

Reuters

Facebook Inc said it restored services yesterday after some users could not access its social networking site, photo-sharing network Instagram and messaging app WhatsApp.

However, Facebook did not specify the cause or scope of the outages.

"Earlier today, some people may have experienced trouble connecting to the family of apps. The issue has since been

resolved; we're sorry for any inconvenience," a Facebook spokesman told Reuters.

The issue comes after Facebook experienced one of its longest outages in March, when some users around the globe could not access Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp for more than 24 hours.

On Sunday, DownteX.com indicated that there were more than 12,000 incidents of people reporting issues with Facebook at its peak.

## Tax man will be all over the British royal baby

New York, United States

Talk about being born with a silver spoon in your mouth: the royal baby of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will have a particularly glittery one.

And US tax authorities will be keen to know how much that utensil is worth.

That's because the baby will have dual nationality: British because of his father and US from his American mother, whose official title is the duchess of Sussex.

"When one of the parents is American and has resided in the US for five years with at least two after the age of 14, the baby is automatically a citizen," said David Treitel, founder of American Tax Returns, a consultancy for US expatriates living in Britain.

"This is the case with Meghan," said Treitel, noting this case is a first in the British royal family.

US nationality comes with a bevy of restrictive conditions: like any American who is born, grows up and dies anywhere in the world, year after year Meghan and Harry's child will have to show the Internal Revenue Service his or her tax status is clean.

From the moment of birth, money deposited in banks by the royal parents -- eager to ensure a bright future for their progeny -- must be duly reported to the tax man.

The same would apply to money that comes in if mom and dad decide, say, to have the child follow in the footsteps of his ex-actress mother to become a star on TV or in movies.

## show

## OASIS JUFFAIR

**1-HELL BOY (18+) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM  
DAILY AT (VIP): 3.00 + 8.15 PM

**2-DRAGGED ACROSS CONCRETE (18+) (CRIME/THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ MEL GIBSON, JENNIFER CARPENTER, VINCE VAUGHN

DAILY AT: 1.00 + 6.15 + 11.30 PM

**3-LITTLE (PG-15) (COMEDY) NEW**

⊕ REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN

DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.30 + 11.30 PM

**4-AFTER (15+) (ROMANTIC/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ JOSEPHINE LANGFORD, HERO FIENNES TIFFIN, KHADIJHA RED THUNDER

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 4.00 + 9.15 PM

**5-MASHA AND THE BEAR THE NEW ADVENTURES (G) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY) NEW**

\* DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 10.30 AM + 12.00 + 4.00 PM

**6-MADHURA RAJA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

\* MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY

FROM FRIDAY 12TH

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 2.15 + 5.15 + 8.15 + 11.15 PM

**7-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL

DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM

DAILY AT (3D): 12.00 + 5.00 + 10.00 PM

DAILY AT (VIP): 12.15 + 5.30 + 10.45 PM

**8-DUMBO (PG) (ADVENTURE/DRAMA/FAMILY)**

⊕ COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO

DAILY AT (3D): 2.45 + 7.45 PM

DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 1.45 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM

**9-KESARI (15+) (HINDI/ACTION/DRAMA)**

⊕ AKSHAY KUMAR, PARINEETI CHOPRA, BHAGYASHREE

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 3.45 + 8.45 PM

**10-LUCIFER (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)**

⊕ MOHANLAL, MANJU WARRIER, VIVEK OBEROI, TOVINO THOMAS

DAILY AT: 1.15 + 4.30 + 7.45 + 11.00 PM

## CITYCENTRE

**1-HELL BOY (18+) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE

DAILY AT (IMAX 2D): 12.00 + 5.15 + 10.30 PM

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 PM + 12.00 MN + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)

DAILY AT (VIP I): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM

**2-DRAGGED ACROSS CONCRETE (18+) (CRIME/THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ MEL GIBSON, JENNIFER CARPENTER, VINCE VAUGHN

DAILY AT: 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 PM + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

**3-LITTLE (PG-15) (COMEDY) NEW**

⊕ REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 PM + 12.00 MN

**4-AFTER (15+) (ROMANTIC/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ JOSEPHINE LANGFORD, HERO FIENNES TIFFIN, KHADIJHA RED THUNDER

DAILY AT: 2.30 + 7.00 + 11.30 PM

**5-MASHA AND THE BEAR THE NEW ADVENTURES (G) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY) NEW**

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.00 + 2.45 + 4.30 PM

**6-CAPTIVE STATE (PG-15) (THRILLER/SCI-FICTION) NEW**

⊕ JOHN GOODMAN, ASHTON SANDERS, JONATHAN MAJORS

DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 PM

**7-MADHURA RAJA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY

FROM FRIDAY 12TH

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 5.45 + 8.45 + 11.45 PM

**8-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL

DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 2.30 + 7.45 PM + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN

DAILY AT (ATMOS): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN

DAILY AT (VIP II): 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM

**9-DUMBO (PG) (ADVENTURE/DRAMA/FAMILY)**

\* COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM

DAILY AT (3D): 12.15 + 4.30 + 8.45 PM

**10-PET SEMATARY (18+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**

\* JASON CLARKE, AMY SEIMETZ, JETE LAURENCE

DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM

**11-CAPTAIN MARVEL (PG-13) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ BRIE LARSON, GEMMA CHAN, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

**12-US (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**

⊕ LUPITA NYONG'O, ELISABETH MOSS, ANNA DIOP

DAILY AT: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM

**13-ESCAPE ROOM (PG-15) (THRILLER)**

⊕ TAYLOR RUSSELL, LOGAN MILLER, DEBORAH ANN WOLL

DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.00 + 4.00 + 6.00 + 8.00 + 10.00 PM + 12.00 MN

**14-WONDER PARK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**

⊕ BRIANNA DENSKI, JENNIER GARNER, KEN HUDSON CAMPBELL

DAILY AT: 1.30 + 5.30 + 9.30 PM

DAILY AT (ARABIC DUBBED): 2.30 + 6.45 + 11.00 PM

**15-THE UPSIDE (PG-15) (COMEDY/DRAMA)**

⊕ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 3.45 + 8.30 PM

**16-COLD PURSUIT (15+) (ACTION/CRIME/DRAMA)**

⊕ LIAM NEESON, EMMY ROSSUM, LAURA DERN

DAILY AT: 1.45 + 6.45 + 11.45 PM

**17-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER)**

⊕ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

DAILY AT: 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM

**18-NADI ELREGAL EL SERI (PG-15) (ARABIC/COMEDY)**

\* KARIM ABDULAZIZ, GHADA ADEL, MAJDE ALKIDDAWI

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 4.45 + 9.15 PM

**19-JOHNNY ENGLISH STRIKES AGAIN (PG) (COMEDY/ACTION/ADVENTURE)**

\* ROWAN ATKINSON, OLGA KURYLENKO, EMMA THOMPSON

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 3.30 + 7.30 + 11.30 PM

**20-THE PROFESSOR AND THE MADMAN (PG-15) (DRAMA/BIOGRAPHY)**

⊕ MEL GIBSON, SEAN PENN, NATALIE DORMER

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 4.15 + 9.15 PM

## SEEF (II)

**1-HELL BOY (18+) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE

DAILY AT: (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

**2-DRAGGED ACROSS CONCRETE (18+) (CRIME/THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ MEL GIBSON, JENNIFER CARPENTER, VINCE VAUGHN

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 5.45 + 8.45 + 11.45 PM

**3-LITTLE (PG-15) (COMEDY) NEW**

⊕ REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN

DAILY AT: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM

**4-AFTER (15+) (ROMANTIC/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ JOSEPHINE LANGFORD, HERO FIENNES TIFFIN, KHADIJHA RED THUNDER

DAILY AT: 2.15 + 7.00 + 11.45 PM

**5-MASHA AND THE BEAR THE NEW ADVENTURES (G) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY) NEW**

⊕ JOHN GOODMAN, ASHTON SANDERS, JONATHAN MAJORS

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 + 6.15 + 8.30 + 10.45 PM

**6-CAPTIVE STATE (PG-15) (THRILLER/SCI-FICTION) NEW**

⊕ JOHN GOODMAN, ASHTON SANDERS, JONATHAN MAJORS

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 + 6.15 + 8.30 + 10.45 PM

**7-THE WIND (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER) NEW**

⊕ CAITLIN GERARD, JULIA GOLDANI TELLES, MILES ANDERSON

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 + 6.30 + 8.30 + 10.30 PM

**8-MADHURA RAJA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY

FROM FRIDAY 12TH

DAILY AT: (12.30 MN FRI)

**9-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)**

\* ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL

DAILY AT: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)

**10-DUMBO (PG) (ADVENTURE/DRAMA/FAMILY)**

⊕ COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 + 8.15 + 10.30 PM

**11-PET SEMATARY (18+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**

⊕ JASON CLARKE, AMY SEIMETZ, JETE LAURENCE

DAILY AT: 8.45 + 11.00 PM

**12-CAPTAIN MARVEL (PG-13) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ BRIE LARSON, GEMMA CHAN, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 PM

**13-US (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**

⊕ LUPITA NYONG'O, ELISABETH MOSS, ANNA DIOP

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 2.45 + 7.00 + 11.15 PM

**14-WONDER PARK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**

⊕ BRIANNA DENSKI, JENNIER GARNER, KEN HUDSON CAMPBELL

DAILY AT: 12.45 + 5.00 + 9.15 PM

**15-NADI ELREGAL EL SERI (PG-15) (ARABIC/COMEDY)**

\* KARIM ABDULAZIZ, GHADA ADEL, MAJDE ALKIDDAWI

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 4.00 + 8.45 PM

**16-BADLA (PG-15) (HINDI/THRILLER/CRIME)**

⊕ AMITABH BACHCHAN, TAPSEE PANNU, TONY LUKE

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 4.30 + 9.15 PM

## SEEF (I)

**1-HELL BOY (18+) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM

**2-THE TASHKENT FILES (PG-15) (HINDI/THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ NASEERUDDIN SHAH, MITHUN CHAKRABORTY, PANKAJ TRIPATHI

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 5.45 + 11.45 PM

**3-MANJE BISTRE 2 (PG-13) (PUNJABI/COMEDY/ROMANTIC) NEW**

⊕ GIPPY GREWAL, KARAMJIT ANMOL, BHAVKHANDAN

DAILY AT: 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

**4-SHERDIL (PG-15) (URDU/ACTION/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ MIKAAL ZULFIQAR, ARMEENA RANA KHAN, BELAL SHAHID

DAILY AT: 2.45 + 8.45 PM

**5-THE LAST PRINCE OF ATLANTIS (PG-13) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE) NEW**

⊕ NIKOLAY DROZDOV, STANISLAV DUZHNIKOV, ARMEN DZHIGARKHANYAN

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 PM

**6-MADHURA RAJA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY

FROM FRIDAY 12TH

DAILY AT: 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 PM + 12.00 MN

**7-LUCIFER (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)**

⊕ MOHANLAL, MANJU WARRIER, VIVEK OBEROI, TOVINO THOMAS

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM



## MOVIE REVIEW

**Little: An age-reversal comedy that's saved by its stars**

**L**ittle is a 2019 American fantasy comedy film co-written and directed by Tina Gordon.

It stars Regina Hall, Issa Rae, and Marsai Martin, and follows an overbearing boss who is transformed into the child version of herself. Martin, who serves as an executive producer on the project, was at 14 the youngest person to ever hold the title on a Hollywood production.

On review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 50% based on 96 reviews, with an average rating of 4.95/10. The website's critical consensus reads, "A disappointingly uneven but overall agreeable spin on a familiar formula, Little benefits from a big heart -- and a story that makes good use of its talented, well-matched cast."

On Metacritic, the film has a weighted average score of 49 out of 100, based on 35 critics,



Actor and executive producer Marsai Martin in Little

indicating "mixed or average reviews". Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an

average grade of "B+" on an A+ to F scale, while those at Post-Trak gave it 4 out of 5 stars and

a "definite recommend" of 62%. Peter Debruge of Variety praised Rae and Martin's perfor-



**A scene-stealing Marsai Martin plays a grown-up trapped in her teenage self in a Big update**

mances, and called the film an "amusing yet predictable body-swap comedy". The Guardian's Peter Bradshaw gave the film two out of five stars, saying that "[t]he comedy is fundamentally hobbled by the split in narrative focus between Jordan and April. We are never sure who is the heroine here, who has the comedy underdog status, who we are supposed to be rooting for."

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, **AJISH GRACEVILLA ALEX**, Father of **ABEL AJISH**, holder of Indian Passport No **L3417563** dated 20/02/2014 issued at **BAHRAIN**, having permanent residence at **GRACE VILLA, ATHIRUMKAL P.O, KOODAL, PATHANAMTHITTA DIST, KERALA - 689693**. Presently residing at **FLAT NO.24 D, BUILDING NO.975, ROAD NO.319, BLOCK NO:303, AL NAIM, BAHRAIN** do hereby change my Son's name as (Given Name) **ABEL**, (Surname) **AJISH**, objection if any may be forwarded to Embassy of India, P.O.Box 26106, Bldg No. 1090, Road No. 2819, Block 428, Al Seef, Kingdom of Bahrain.

Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel

celebs

**Jessica Biel posts a heart-touching video for Justin Timberlake**



Los Angeles

Jessica Biel recently posted a video on Instagram, to pay an emotional tribute to her husband Justin Timberlake, as he wrapped up his 'Man of the Woods tour' on Saturday. While expressing her love for Justin in a heart-touching Instagram video, she said, "Hey Tennessee kid. I'm being quiet because you're in the next room. It's your last show; it's the last Man of the Woods show tonight. And I would say that I'm so proud of you but I feel like that's the understatement of the century and that somehow that

I take ownership to what you've done this past year and a half." The 37-year-old actor who shot the video backstage at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Connecticut, went on to say, "I just am in absolute awe of you every night to see you up there in your glory, doing what you've been put on this Earth to do." "You inspire me, you inspire Silas," she added, referencing the couple's 4-year-old son. "You inspire everyone around you -- all of your fans, all of your friends and family -- to work as hard and as with so much passion as you do. You are truly

a sight to behold. I'm so happy that you're going to get some time off. I'm so happy for you and for us." She concluded the video saying, "And I'm also, I'm so sad that I won't be able to see you up there again for a while," she concluded as she teared up. "You make my heart burst with joy and love when I see you doing your thing, baby. I'm your No. 1 fan, I love you." Biel, who held back her tears towards the end of her message, wrapped up her selfie video with a heartfelt congratulations, which have won her hearts all over.

**Bloom, Perry want a 'small, intimate' wedding**

Katy Perry

Los Angeles

Singer Katy Perry, who had an extravagant wedding ceremony in India in 2010 with now ex-husband Russell Brand, is working towards having a "smaller and intimate" wedding with current beau and actor Orlando Bloom. They are excited about planning their nuptials. "They are the happiest couple. Just so excited about being engaged and planning a wedding," a source told People magazine of Bloom, 42, and Perry, 34. "They are secretive about details, but seem to want something smaller and intimate," the source said, adding: "They look forward to starting a family together as well."



Orlando Bloom

**Kyle Richards has an epic response for someone who said she's "too old" for Coachella**

Los Angeles

American actor Kyle Richards clapped back at an online troll telling her that she is "too old" for Coachella. The 50-year-old actor on Saturday attended the music festival with some of her celebrity friends, including Lisa Rinna and Teddi Melencamp. All of them posted the same photo of themselves standing together, posing for a stunning picture. Richards captioned it as, "#chaperones." While there was a slew of positive comments on the picture, one rather negative remark caught the attention of Richards. "To [sic] old for the shit go home grandmas," one Instagram user wrote.



**Scarlett Johansson turns heads with daring pantsuit**

Los Angeles

Trust red carpet events to set new fashion trends. Scarlett Johansson chose to flaunt a black pantsuit with a unique twist for a recent "Avengers: Endgame" gala evening. The actress hit the "Avengers: Endgame" UK Fan Event, here earlier this week, wearing a Tom Ford black ensemble -- a business-chic suit on the right and a daring bustier on the left. Essentially, it was a half-and-half combination of a one-sleeved blazer with a cutout bustier for an asymmetrical take on the 'no shirt' trend on red carpets. Johansson wore black trousers and heels to complete her look, further accentuated by a bold scarlet lip colour and a slicked-back updo. She was later joined by co-stars Paul Rudd and Chris Hemsworth at the event. The team of "Avengers: Endgame" has been aggressively promoting the forthcoming film, the 22nd film of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The superhero film will be released on April 26.



Scarlett Johansson

**Teresa Palmer, Mark Webber welcome third child**

Los Angeles

Actors Teresa Palmer and Mark Webber have become proud parents to their third child. The couple also share sons Bodhi Rain, 5, and Forest Sage, 2. Webber also has 10-year-old Isaac from a previous relationship. The couple are excited about planning their nuptials. "They are the happiest couple. Just so excited about being engaged and planning a wedding," a source told People magazine of Bloom, 42, and Perry, 34. "They are secretive about details, but seem to want something smaller and intimate," the source said, adding: "They look forward to starting a family together as well."



Teresa Palmer and Mark Webber

**Justin Bieber takes couple nickname with Hailey Baldwin to a whole new level**

Los Angeles

Singer-songwriter Justin Bieber, who pulled a prank on his fans on April Fools' Day, has taken his couple nickname with his wife Hailey Baldwin to another level. The couple, who is affectionately called 'Jailey', tied the knot late last year. The usually romantic Justin took 'Jailey' to an all new level with an Instagram post. On Friday, Hailey posted a series of pictures on the photo-sharing application from her new campaign that she shot with Adidas. In the pictures, she is wearing blue track pants and a blue Adidas jacket with red sleeves and white stripes. She has a straight face in the first photo and a goofy one in another. Seems like some big 'Jailey' fan brought together the best of both worlds and photo-shopped Justin's head onto his wife's body where she's wearing the Adidas outfit, reported E! News. The artiste also added in Justin's many tattoos onto Hailey's arm and torso. "The internet gotta chill jailey for real," Justin captioned the post alongside a slew of laughing emojis. While the 25-year-old singer may have found it amusing, Hailey didn't seem to reciprocate the feelings. "Lolol I hate this," Hailey wrote in the comments section. Justin's mom Pattie Mallette wasn't a fan of the post either. "NO please make it stop," she added. Actor Patrick Schwarzenegger chimed in, "Honestly...fire."



Hailey Baldwin and Justin Bieber

**All Marvel characters deserve a back story: Jeremy Renner**

Los Angeles

Actor Jeremy Renner says he knows nothing about a possible series on his character Hawkeye, but says all the characters based on the Marvel Comics are rich enough to get a back story. According to a report, Renner's Hawkeye, an archery ace, is the latest member of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) to have his own series. There is also buzz about a limited series being developed on MCU characters like Falcon and Winter Soldier, as well as Loki, Vision, and Scarlet Witch.



Jeremy Renner

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sports

# Baby games begin

1,029 kids in fray for Second Bahrain Baby Games

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) launched on Saturday the biggest children sports event in the Kingdom as the Second Bahrain Baby Games got underway at Isa Sports City's Bahrain Volleyball Association hall, in Riffa.

Around 1,029 kids, including 563 representing 35 nurseries and 466 from 34 kindergartens are lined up for this event, organized by the committee for the second consecutive year in cooperation with Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

This year's edition features competitions for children aged from 3 to 5 year in four different sports – athletics, basketball, gymnastics and football.

All contests in this four-day event are being held in the morning session at the three sports federations' halls – volleyball, sports for disabilities and table tennis, all located at Isa Sports City premises.

The opening ceremony, attended by BOC secretary general Mohammed Al Nusuf, Human Resources and Services Executive director, representatives of the participating nurseries and kindergartens, Ama Al Mansoori, started with a special acrobatic show by Loyal Jehad of KJ Kids Kindergarten.

This was followed by another show, presented by Wala Al Dossary, and a third demonstration by Fairytopia Kindergarten, while KJ Kids Kindergarten



Kids in action during the event

presented a special show using the five coloured circles of the Olympics.

Among other activities on the inaugural day were a below-12 months crawling contest, and followed by a below-15 months baby walking race, both of which came to the excitement and thrills of hundreds of parents in the stands.

Late on, the parade of the participating nurseries and kindergartens while holding their respective identity banners amidst a big round of applause from the audience.

After the parade, a couple of kids entered the hall while carrying the Olympic torch to

mark the launch of the event, after which Al Nusuf officially declared the Games open.

In his speech, Al Nusuf welcomed the participants and stressed the importance of such an event, which is one of the Bahrain Olympic Committee's major sports initiatives, a first of its kind in the Kingdom and perhaps in the Arab world, which aims at instilling a culture of sport within children and developing their mental and physical abilities.

"The Baby Games has become one of the leading events on our annual agenda, thanks to the tremendous success of last year's inaugural edition which

was attended by a large number of participants and their keen families," said Al Nusuf.

"We are extremely thrilled for bringing the Baby Games for the second consecutive time here and I am personally confident that this year's event will be another great success with all this love and cooperation we felt from different relevant authorities".

The BOC secretary general concluded his statement by expressing his appreciation to all the sponsors for their support to the event, and commended the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

## Torino held, as Sampdoria revive European hopes with derby win



Torino's Simone Zaza, foreground right, celebrates after scoring

TDT | Manama

Simone Zaza scored for Torino before seeing red as the northerners hopes of Champions League football next season diminished yesterday with a 1-1 draw against Cagliari, who themselves had two sent off, as Sampdoria rekindled their Europa League ambitions with a 2-0 derby win over 10-man Genoa.

Three red and nine yellow cards were handed out in Turin, including the sending off of Zaza who had opened the scoring after 52 minutes after connecting with a perfect low cross from Armando Izzo for his third goal this season.

But the Italian forward was dismissed on 74 minutes for arguing with referee Massimiliano Irrati over a free kick awarded against him.

Cagliari pulled level a minute later when Leonardo Pavolletti headed in a Luca Cigarini cross, with the goal confirmed following a long VAR review.

The Sardinian side had two players sent off late with Luca Pellegrini and Nicolo Barella both receiving second yellow cards in the final minutes. Cagliari goalkeeper Alessio

**YOU**  
KNOW WHAT

**Torino stay seventh, five points off AC Milan who occupy the final Champions League spot, with Cagliari in 12th**

Cragno did well to deny Daniele Baselli from snatching a late win for Torino.

Torino stay seventh, five points off AC Milan who occupy the final Champions League spot, with Cagliari in 12th.

In Genoa, veteran striker Fabio Quagliarella provided the cross for Gregoire Defrel's opener after three minutes and then added a second from the penalty spot after 53 minutes to go top of the Serie A scorers chart with 22 goals.

Genoa played most of the second half a man down after Davide Biraschi was sent off for a handling offence which resulted in the penalty.

## BIC set for Drag and Drift Night

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) hosts today another exciting edition of the Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and Drift Night.

This highly popular activity offers motorsport enthusiasts double the thrills as they get a chance to take their very own cars or motorbikes and push them to their limit either down the drag strip or around a drifting course, or both.

BIC's world-class quarter-mile strip is a member of the prestigious National Hot Rod Association Worldwide Network, and it will host the drag runs. The drifting venue is a specially configured facility at BIC's car park.

Also as part of the evening's drag racing programme, BIC is offering the immensely thrilling Dragster Experience. This is one of the circuit's most unique and ultimate-adrenaline activities, as it gives participants a taste of pure speed as they are taken from zero to 100kph in just one second while seated in a Top Dragster.

# Sterling double takes Man City top once more

AFP | London

Manchester City eased back to the top of the Premier League as Raheem Sterling struck twice to beat Crystal Palace 3-1 at Selhurst Park yesterday.

The English champions moved a point ahead of Liverpool, who won against Chelsea later yesterday to regain their lead.

Sterling had already missed a glorious chance before opening the scoring on 15 minutes as City rarely looked troubled despite having failed to beat Palace on their two previous meetings.

Another cool Sterling finish looked to have ended the game as a contest 27 minutes from time.

However, Pep Guardiola's men had to see out a nervous finale to ramp up the pressure on Liverpool when Luka Milivojevic's free-kick gave Palace hope of a dramatic comeback.

Instead, City broke to seal the three points on the counter-attack when the outstanding Kevin de Bruyne teed up Gabriel Jesus to make it 3-1.

The trip to south London kicked off a massive week for City with Tottenham to visit the



Raheem Sterling scores the opening goal

Etihad twice in the next six days for the second leg of their Champions League quarter-final and a vital Premier League clash with implications for both the title and top four race.

City must overturn a 1-0 first leg deficit against Spurs to progress to the Champions League semi-finals on Wednesday. Yet, Guardiola's starting line-up seemed stronger than the one he named in defeat to Mauricio Pochettino's men in midweek.

Captain Vincent Kompany, Benjamin Mendy, De Bruyne

and Leroy Sane returned among four changes and City quickly settled into total control of the game.

Sterling should have opened the scoring on 11 minutes when after a patient build-up, David Silva got to the by-line and picked out the England international who somehow sliced wide with an open goal at his mercy from close range.

After a similar sitter at Burnley last season, Guardiola quickly hooked Sterling in his frustration.

### English Premier League

Crystal Palace	1	-	3	Manchester City
Liverpool	2	-	0	Chelsea

### French Ligue 1

Montpellier	2	-	1	Toulouse
Rennes	0	-	0	Nice
St Etienne	3	-	0	Bordeaux

### German Bundesliga

TSG 1899 Hoffenheim	2	-	0	Hertha BSC
Fortuna Düsseldorf	1	-	4	FC Bayern München
Eintracht Frankfurt	1	-	2	FC Augsburg

### Spanish La Liga

Real Valladolid	2	-	2	Getafe
Athletic Club	3	-	2	Rayo Vallecano
Real Sociedad	1	-	1	Eibar
Girona	0	-	1	Villarreal

### Italian Serie A

Torino	1	-	1	Cagliari
Fiorentina	0	-	0	Bologna
Sampdoria	2	-	0	Genoa
Sassuolo	0	-	0	Parma
Chievo	0	-	2	Napoli

\*Scores as of closing

However, Sterling showed his maturity and why he is a contender for player of the year awards by redeeming himself in emphatic fashion just four minutes later.

# Hamilton wins 1,000th race

Lewis Hamilton beats Valtteri Bottas in Chinese Grand Prix as Mercedes dominate 1,000th Formula One race

● Hamilton overtook team-mate Bottas before the first corner

● Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was ordered to allow Sebastian Vettel past as he completed the podium places

AFP | Shanghai, China

Lewis Hamilton won the 1,000th Formula One grand prix yesterday after grabbing the lead from Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas at the first corner and powering to victory in blustery Shanghai.

Hamilton, who started from second on the grid, took the world championship lead after romping home to win the Chinese Grand Prix by more than 6.5 seconds from Bottas, with Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel third.

Max Verstappen of Red Bull was fourth and Charles Leclerc in the second Ferrari was fifth.

This was world champion Hamilton's sixth victory at the Chinese Grand Prix and second in a row this season.

"To have a one-two (for Mercedes) is really special in the 1,000th grand prix but the start was where it made the difference and the rest is history," said the Briton.

Hamilton was pipped for pole



Lewis Hamilton celebrates winning the race

position by Bottas by just 0.023 seconds in qualifying and had said that he was "struggling with the car".

But the Finn laboured out of the blocks, allowing Hamilton to nip in and grab the lead at the first corner.

"I lost it on the start, honestly, shame about the start, I got some wheel spin on the start line," said

Bottas, who also relinquished his hold on the standings after three races.

Talented 21-year-old Leclerc meanwhile pulled off the same trick at the start at the expense of his team-mate Vettel, darting into third.

There was more early drama when Toro Rosso's Daniil Kvyat tangled with both McLarens of

Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz, earning the Russian a drive-through penalty.

On lap 11, four-time world champion Vettel leapfrogged back in front of Monaco's Leclerc into third following radio orders from Ferrari telling the youngster to let him pass.

"We do our job, stay focused," Leclerc -- agonisingly denied

victory last time out in Bahrain after his Ferrari lost power late on -- was informed on team radio after he briefly protested.

Back at the front, the 34-year-old Hamilton began pulling away, establishing a more than five-second gap on Bottas with a third of the race gone.

With five-time world champion Hamilton -- winner in Bah-



Lewis Hamilton cruised to his 75th career win at the Chinese Grand Prix

rain two weeks ago -- serene up top, the real battles unfolded behind him.

Vettel, under pressure after a number of unforced errors going back to last season, went wheel-to-wheel with Verstappen after both pitted for fresh tyres.

Vettel, Bottas and then Toro Rosso's Alexander Albon, who missed qualifying after a nasty crash in final practice, all exchanged fastest laps.

On lap 38 of the 56 it was Leclerc and Bottas who had a skirmish in the compelling battle for second. Leclerc then pitted and was momentarily held up by a comparatively sluggish change of tyres.

Nico Hulkenberg, who qualified eighth for Renault, saw his race come to an early conclusion after the team retired his faltering car. Norris and Kvyat were also forced out before the end.

The fourth race of the season takes place on the streets of Baku, in Azerbaijan, in a fortnight.

## Coman brace returns Bayern to the top of the Bundesliga



Bayern Munich's French defender Kingsley Coman (L) and Duesseldorf's German midfielder Marcel Sobotta (R) vie for the ball

AFP | Berlin

Kingsley Coman played his way out of the dog house yesterday, as his first-half brace helped fire Bayern Munich back to the top of the Bundesliga with a comfortable 4-1 win at Fortuna Duesseldorf.

French winger Coman was involved in a training ground punch-up with team mate Robert Lewandowski earlier in the week, but he made the headlines for the right reasons yesterday, keeping Bayern on course for a seventh successive league title.

Bayern, needing three points to stay top after rivals Borussia Dortmund edged to a nervy win over Mainz on Saturday, barely broke a sweat as they cruised to victory on the banks of the river Rhine.

Coman's first goal was unintentional, his inswinging cross just evading Thomas Muel-

ler on its way into the bottom corner with just 14 minutes on the clock.

If the opener was briefly and incorrectly credited to Mueller, there was no doubt about Coman's second, a well-placed finish at the end of a delightful 41st minute move.

Serge Gnabry added a third 10 minutes after the break, turning the ball in at the far post after Mueller had flicked it on at a corner.

Dodi Lukebakio gave Duesseldorf a late consolation goal from the penalty spot after a Mats Hummels handball, but Leon Goretzka slotted in Bayern's fourth in injury time to put the cherry on the cake.

The win keeps Bayern a point ahead of Dortmund with five games still to play.

There was some bad news for the league leaders, however, as goalkeeper Manuel Neuer was forced off with an injury early in the second half.

## Djokovic quietly confident for Monte Carlo

AFP | Monte Carlo

Novak Djokovic said yesterday he is working to ensure that last month's sub-par hardcourt performances do not affect his seasonal bow on clay in Monte Carlo.

The world number one kicks off at his home event starting in the second round against either Philipp Kohlschreiber or a qualifier.

Djokovic, winner of the last three Grand Slam titles and dreaming of completing his personal sweep with another trophy at Roland Garros, was stopped in the third round at Indian Wells last month.

He was then unable to hold onto a 6-1 lead in the opening



Novak Djokovic of Serbia waves after his loss during Miami Open (file photo)

set of his fourth-rounder in Miami, going out in three to Robert Bautista Agut.

"I can't wait to step on court, I've been training hard," he said on a rainy opening day of the

"I can't wait to step on court, I've been training hard. I had a great last six months of the season. And I had an amazing start this year

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Masters 1000.

"Some top players have been here for a week practising.

"I had a great last six months of the season, the 31-year-old Serb said. "And I had an amaz-

ing start this year.

"Indian Wells and Miami were so-so - I'll try to pick that up and see how it goes on clay."

Djokovic and 11-time winner Rafael Nadal, along with Roland Garros runner-up Dominic Thiem, stand as favourites on paper for the first major title of the French Open preliminary events.

Roger Federer, who has skipped the clay season completely for the last two years and will return to Roland Garros for the first time since a 2015 quarter-final loss to fellow Swiss Stan Wawrinka, is not playing.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion will appear in his only scheduled pre-Paris clay event in Madrid starting May 5.

## Nishikori tips Federer for clay comeback success

AFP | Monte Carlo

Roger Federer may not be playing at the Monte Carlo Masters but the Swiss legend was still at the forefront of 2018 finalist Key Nishikori's thoughts yesterday.

"Everything is possible (for Federer)," Nishikori predicted.

Federer is due for a return to the dirt after two seasons completely off the surface in three weeks at Madrid, his lone scheduled tune-up prior to the French Open, which he last played in 2015.

"(It (winning Roland Garros)



Roger Federer of Switzerland poses with the winners trophy the Miami Open

might be tougher for him than winning the Australian Open or Wimbledon, but I'm sure he can do anything if he tries 100 per

cent," said Nishikori. "He's a lot different than anyone else on the Tour," added the world number three who

lost the final here a year ago as Rafael Nadal won his 11th title in the principality.

"I'm sure Roger can do very well on clay. He's still my idol, he's the best player in history.

"I'm happy to see him playing more tournaments, I hope I can play him again," said the player who has beaten the 37-year-old Swiss three times and most recently last November at the year-end ATP Finals.

"He came from injury and won the Australian Open (2017). I'm sure he works harder than anyone else off court. I hope he does well," Nishikori said.