

'Serenity' asks a lot from audience: Anne Hathaway
 Actress Anne Hathaway says the complexities of her upcoming film "Serenity" asks a lot from the audience.

P14

Trump is right to seek an end to America's wars

THE DAILY tribune



Kim and Kanye West expecting fourth child

Germany arrests army adviser for 'spying for Iran'



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Militants kill 14 in Nairobi hotel attack
 Nairobi

Gunmen blasted their way into a hotel and office complex in the Kenyan capital on Tuesday, killing at least 14 people and sending workers diving under desks from an attack claimed by Somali extremists Al Shabaab.

Police warned the "terror attack", which echoed a 2013 assault on a Nairobi shopping centre, may be ongoing, with assailants still inside the upscale 14 Riverside Drive complex.

Nairobi is a major expatriate hub, and the compound attacked houses offices of various international companies.

"The main door of the hotel was blown open and there was a human arm in the street severed from the shoulder," said Serge Medic, the Swiss owner of a security company who ran to the scene to help when he heard of the attack from his taxi driver.

Medic, who was armed, entered the building with a policeman and two soldiers, he said, but they came under fire and retreated. An unexploded grenade lay in the lobby, he said.

"One man said he saw two armed men with scarves on their head and bandoliers of bullets," Medic told Reuters, as gunfire echoed in the background. **See Page 7**

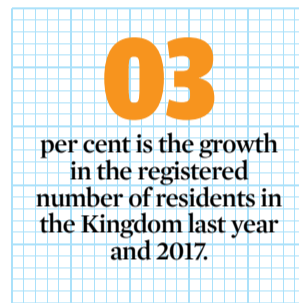
Newspaper report wrong: Residents 'on the rise'

TDI | Manama

● He also revealed that the residence applications had been facing ongoing increase because of the attractive investment and business environment of the Kingdom.

Dismissing a report that appeared on *Akhbar Al Khaleej* and *Gulf Daily News*, the Interior Ministry Undersecretary of Nationality, Passport and Residence Affairs (NPRA) Shaikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa has asserted that NPRA statistics show an annual rise in the number of residents from 2014 to 2018.

The last two years, 2017 and



2018, registered a growth by 3 per cent, Shaikh Rashid said.

He said that this affirms the

attractions Bahrain offers to expatriates, highlighting that the Indian community represents the highest percentage of expats among other communities.

He also revealed that the residence applications had been facing ongoing increase because of the attractive investment and business environment of Bahrain, in addition to its tolerance and cultural and religious pluralism.

He appreciated all efforts that

contribute to the development of the nation, through fulfilling duties within the law and regulations of the Kingdom, in order to protect rights and carry responsibilities.

He mentioned some international reports that ranked Bahrain in leading positions in the Middle East and North Africa as the best destination for migrant workers, hailing the living and other privileges provided by Bahrain.

Brexit ship sinks

May's EU divorce deal crushed by 230 votes in parliament

● The only suspense before the vote was over the scale of May's defeat.

● Labour Party leader and head of the opposition in parliament Jeremy Corbyn immediately tabled a motion of no confidence in May's government.

London

British Prime Minister Theresa May received a crushing defeat in a his-



May sits down in Parliament after the vote on Brexit deal.

toric vote on Tuesday over the Brexit deal she struck with the European Union, leaving the world's fifth biggest economy in limbo.

202 MPs backed the prime minister's deal, while 432 re-

"You are not children in the playground, you are legislators."

ATTORNEY GENERAL COX

jected it, handing May and her government the biggest defeat in the House of Commons for almost a century.

Labour Party leader and head of the opposition in parliament Jeremy Corbyn immediately tabled a motion of no confidence in May's government after the result, a motion which will be debated on Wednesday.

With just over two months to go until the scheduled Brexit date of March 29, Britain is still bitterly divided over how and even whether it should split away from the bloc's other 27 nations.

The only suspense before the vote was over the scale of May's defeat.

The British leader's last-minute appeals to MPs fell on deaf ears and the defeat now raises the question about whether she will try again, is removed from office, delays Brexit -- or if Brexit even happens at all.

"You are not children in the playground, you are legislators," Attorney General Geoffrey Cox, representing the government, told MPs just before the vote.

Cox warned that the current deal would have to return "in much the same form with much the same content" for another vote if this one failed.

Meanwhile, Corbyn told the house that he and his party would vote against the deal.

ERASING DOUBTS

Not all veggies, fruits are VAT free

TDI | Manama

Quite contrary to the general understanding among the public about the Value Added Tax (VAT) in Bahrain, it emerged that not all vegetables and fruits are exempted from the tax.

Speaking to Tribune, a VAT expert said that the word 'exempt' is slightly misleading many customers while gaining

a detailed knowledge on the newly-introduced tax.

"To make it more clear, I must say that no product is exempted from VAT. Some are 5 per cent rated, while others are zero rated.

"While most of the vegetables and fruits are zero rated, there are many for which VAT is applicable," he pointed out.

Tribune reported yesterday about an alleged VAT violation at a leading supermarket in Tubli.

"While most of the vegetables and fruits are zero rated, there are many for which VAT is applicable."

EXPERT

However, the representatives of the supermarket told Tribune that there have been

no VAT violations.

"The VAT-charged vegetables shown in the bill are not zero rated and thus the tax," the representatives pointed out.

In another development, the National Bureau for Taxation (NBT) yesterday introduced a new service that allows consumers to verify vendors' VAT registration status through a search tool accessible on www.nbt.gov.bh.

The new system allows con-

sumers to pull up vendors' official registration records by searching for its VAT Registration Number, Commercial Registration Number and QR code.

This new service builds on the government's efforts to strengthen consumer protection and transparency to further build on the success of the VAT.

The NBT continues to encourage consumers to report violations by calling 80008001 or by emailing www.nbt.gov.bh.

03 Hunted down for fun

04 New laws urged to protect SMEs owned by Bahrainis

05 475 violate traffic rules, drive on hard shoulder



6 084010 110021 >

Showcasing diplomatic strides

‘50 years of diplomacy’ exhibition inaugurated at Bahrain National Museum

Manama

Under the patronage of the Deputy Prime Minister, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, in the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister, Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, and the Shura Council Chairman, Ali bin Salih Al Salih, as well as a number of Excellencies, Ministers, diplomats accredited to the Kingdom of Bahrain, senior officials and invitees, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa inaugurated the “50 Years of Diplomacy” exhibition held at the Bahrain National Museum.

Speaking on the occasion, Shaikh Mohammed said: “I am proud to have been running the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for more than three decades, since the late Shaikh Isa bin Salman



HH Shaikh Mohammed along with Shaikh Khalid and other senior government officials tours the expo.

Al Khalifa, appointed me the Director of the Directorate of Foreign Affairs in 1969.

“This celebration, one that documents the history and journey of the Bahraini diplomacy

for half a century, symbolises achieving our national sovereignty and mirrors the Ministry’s contributions to establish diplomatic relations with brotherly and friendly countries, as

well as addressing the interests of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its citizens in various fields.

“Bahrain’s policy and relations, which have always been characterised by moderation,

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Bahrain’s policy and relations, which have always been characterised by moderation, good-neighbourliness, and its peaceful approach to resolve disputes, have earned the Kingdom appreciation and respect.

SHAIKH MOHAMMED

good-neighbourliness, and its peaceful approach to resolve disputes, have earned the Kingdom appreciation and respect, making it a state present at the regional and international level.”

The Minister of Foreign Affairs also pointed out that this

exhibition will contribute to introducing the history of Bahraini diplomacy and its various stages and how it dealt with the requirements of each stage through documents and pictures that embody the journey of Bahraini diplomacy since the establishment of the Directorate of Foreign Affairs in 1969, and its transformation to a sovereign Ministry; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1971, to represent the Kingdom of Bahrain abroad and contribute to consolidate its position and defend its interests, security and stability.

The exhibition included many collections and pictures that reflect the history of Bahrain’s diplomacy and its development, as well as the archive of bilateral meetings between the Kingdom of Bahrain and its allies across the world, and its most important participations at the regional and international levels.

LIC top official received



Sunil Kumar Thakur, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director of Life Insurance Corporation along with secretary to CEO Pragya Nitin yesterday visited The Daily Tribune office and held discussions with the management. Above, from left, Ms Nitin, Mr Thakur, P Unnikrishnan, Chairman of the management board and Managing Editor of The Daily Tribune, Chief Executive Officer Abdul Jaleel Abdulla and Sales Head Abhitab Kumar.

Council of CBSE schools in Gulf elects Bahrain chapter convenor

TDT | Manama

Dr Mohammad Tayyab, Principal, Ibn Al Hytham Islamic School, Kingdom of Bahrain has been elected the new Chapter Convenor of the Council of CBSE Affiliated Schools in the Gulf, Bahrain Chapter for the Year-2019-20.

The decision was taken in 31st Principals Conference held in Bangalore from 02nd to 05th January, 2019 organised by Qatar Chapter.

Dr Mohammad Tayyab also served the council thrice as convenor in the year 2011, 2012



Dr Mohammad Tayyab

and 2016.

Gulf Council is a body of more than 150 CBSE schools spread over GCC.

Social development projects discussed

Manama

Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan received Member of Parliament (MP) Zainab A Ameer, the parliamentary representative of the Capital’s seventh constituency.

They discussed the cooperation between the Council of Representatives and the ministry to serve social development projects and initiatives as well as various labour and social development issues as part of efforts to boost the Kingdom’s community progress.

The minister praised the Council’s role in legislation related to the ministry’s work, welcoming all the suggestions and initiatives that will promote the labour and social progress in the interest of the community and individuals.

He reviewed the ministry’s efforts in the field of labour and social protection and welfare for all the Bahraini community segments to ensure the citizens decent living as well as to develop the national workforce



Ms Humaidan receives Ms Zainab.

and enhance productivity in the private sector.

The MP commended the ministry’s efforts as part of its mission to invest in the energies of young jobseekers and provide them with suitable job opportunities to develop their professional career and raise wages as well as enhance productivity in industrial establishments.

She praised the ministry’s social services and welfare programmes as part of the government policy aimed to ensure the citizens’ dignified livelihood and the provision of the best quality and easily accessible services.



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Hunted down for fun

Immediate action urged amidst increasing violence against strays

● According to reports, both expatriates and locals have been involved in such activities.

● Tribune recently reported about a dog that was allegedly beaten and stoned to death by a group of schoolboys in Sehla.

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Zafran

Violence against stray dogs in the Kingdom has reached an all time high with various reports coming in highlighting accounts of extreme cruelty.

Sources say the strays are subjected to extreme forms of cruelty while reports highlight the increasing number of attacks on strays in the past few months.

According to animal rights activists, stray dogs are being tortured in various parts of the Island.

Incidents of stoning, beating, and other forms of violence against animals have been reported in the past few weeks.

Founder of Bahrain Strays Fathiya Al Bastaki said that in bid to torture animals a group of men even inserted one dog's hind-leg into another dog's rectum in Askar.

"We were shocked to find out that the dogs were deliberately put into this position.

"Although, we have seen many types of cruelty, this is the first time we are witnessing something of this kind. There is a horrible trend going on, I do not know why."



A dog which survived an attempt by group of psychopaths to cut its tail.



An X-ray showing hip dislocation in a dog that was attacked.



A dog rescued by animal lovers, seen knifed.



The lady and her husband who called me were shy to even say what they've seen. It is really hard for the dogs to be separated and now they are in pain.

MS BASTAKI

"The lady and her husband who called me were shy to even say what they've seen. It is really hard for the dogs to be separated and now they are in pain."

Meanwhile, various accounts have emerged of people cutting dog tails as a sport.

According to reports, both expatriates and locals have been involved in such activities.

Ms Al Bastaki told Tribune that she received many reports of similar incidents where people either cut off the dogs tails or attempted to cut off the tails.

The most recent incident was on Friday in which a man made an unsuccessful attempt to cut a dog's tail.

Ms Al Bastaki said the dog was attacked again on Monday and this time it was knifed.

Tribune recently reported about a dog that was allegedly beaten and stoned to death by a group of schoolboys in Sehla.

The shocking account of animal cruelty emerged as eyewitnesses came forward about how a stray dog in Sehla was beaten and stoned to death.

According to sources, the boys frequently hurt the dogs in the area and in this instance caused a fatal injury.

Input tax deduction 'forms the core aspect of VAT'

TDT | Manama

The concept of input VAT deduction is the core aspect of VAT in Bahrain, an expert has said.

Input VAT deduction is a mechanism by which a VAT registered person can deduct input tax from the output tax for a period and only remit the balance tax payable to the Government, said Tejas Goenka, Executive Director of Tally Solutions.

"While Bahrain VAT law allows the registered businesses to claim input VAT deduction, businesses will not be allowed to claim all purchases or expenses.

"The eligibility to claim input VAT deduction depends upon the nature of



While Bahrain VAT law allows the registered businesses to claim input VAT deduction, businesses will not be allowed to claim all purchases or expenses.

MR GOENKA

use. As such, if a company purchases certain items, of which few are sold to

can recover input VAT only on items that are sold to customers and not the non-business use items.

"For businesses to recover input VAT, the purchases or expenses should be used in making taxable supplies. As such, the purchase or expenses should be directly or indirectly used in supplying the goods or services which are taxable at 5 per cent or zero-rated.

"In case, the purchase or expenses used in supplying goods or services which are exempted from VAT or used for non-business purpose (personal purpose), will not be allowed to recover the input VAT."

The supply of goods or services which are exempted from the VAT are

supply of financial services, supply of bare land and buildings, some imported goods including -selected military goods, used household items brought by citizens residing overseas or foreigners entering the Kingdom for the first time to reside, returned goods, personal items and gifts in travellers personal luggage and special needs equipment as specified in the VAT regulation.

"Considering the introduction of VAT brings forth a requirement for businesses to maintain their business records in an organised manner, it is recommended that they seek professional assistance to manage invoicing, reporting, adjustments, VAT returns, payments and refunds," he added.

Tamil Day observed



The Indian School Bahrain (ISB) celebrated Tamil Day at its campus in Isa Town on Monday. The programme was organised by the Department of Tamil marking Thai Pongal, a four-day festival usually celebrated from January 14 to January 17. The programme was inaugurated by Guests of Honour ISB Mega Fair General Convener S Inayadullah (Managing Director of Crown Electro-Mechanical Services) and S Sridhar (General Manager of Trafco) in the presence of ISB Asst Secretary Premalatha N S, E C Member-Academics Mohammad Khurshed Alam, ISB Mega Fair Patron Mohammed Hussain Malim, Principal V R Palaniswamy, vice-principals, head teachers, staff and students.

New laws urged to protect SMEs owned by Bahrainis

'Govt should enact laws to end unfair competition'

TDT | Manama
Tamer Taifoor

Call has gone out to create special rules and regulations to protect Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) owned by Bahrainis.

The head of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Samir Nass, said in the absence of rules and regulations SMEs owned by Bahrainis would head towards a crisis.

"Nearly 85 per cent of the SMEs in the Kingdom are owned by for-

eigners and now they are highly benefitting from the flexible visa system. There has to be a level playing field benefitting all entrepreneurs.

"We are seeking new laws to protect Bahraini entrepreneurs who own SMEs," he said.

"The Chamber is currently working on a comprehensive study on the effects of Flexible Visa and Free Visa on the local market and that the Chamber has formed a joint committee with the LMRA in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor.



Informal employment in addition to flexible and free visa holders pose a danger to the national economy.

MR NASS

"The committee will be responsible for examining all aspects of this matter and its impact on the market and submitting its

results to the Board of Directors for submission to the responsible authorities."

He added: "Informal employment in addition to flexible and free visa holders pose a danger to the national economy."

He explained that the Chamber, in its last meeting with the President of Tamkeen Dr Ibrahim Janahi, called to address the inequality between Bahraini and foreign entrepreneurs.

"SMEs play a pivotal role in Bahrain's economic activity. Statistics show that more than 93

per cent of the industries in the Kingdom come under this sector."

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Zayed Al Zayani, had said in a statement that the SME sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain is a vital sector and the main engine of economic growth.

He had added: "Human capital is a crucial point in achieving commercial success when we talk about the supportive environment for Bahrain's entrepreneurs and start-ups."

'Smile' organises acrylic painting workshop for cancer-stricken kids



Children showcase their painting skills.



Children with organisers at the event.

TDT | Manama

Smile initiative, an initiative of Bahrain Future Society for Youth which provides psycho social support to children with cancer and

their parents in the Kingdom of Bahrain, held an "Acrylic Painting Workshop" for cancer-stricken children with cured peers that took place at the headquarters of the Society at Adlyia.

Acrylic painting workshop was held in cooperation with Abdulrahman Kanoo International School under the Abjad educational programme launched by Smile Initiative.

The Workshop was attended

by volunteer teachers of Abjad Programme and Mohamed Al Sankari, member of Future Society and head of Abjad programme committee.

He asserted that this workshop is meant to further sup-

port cancer-stricken children and help them with their studies during their healing journey until they go back to school again.

Moreover, he pointed that choosing this theme for the

workshop is to develop kids' skills on this type of paints were it is easy-used and waterproof colours that will make it easy for kids to learn drawing and painting techniques like blending and shading.

BTEA honours 185 tour guides



Shaikh Khaled with BTEA officials and tour guides who were honoured at the event.

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) honoured 85 tour guides during a ceremony held at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention (BIECC). The event was held in the presence of the Chief Executive Officer of BTEA, Shaikh Khaled bin Humood Al Khalifa.

Certificates were distributed to the second batch of tour guides following

the successful completion of the comprehensive training program organized by the BTEA in collaboration with Tamkeen, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Federation of Tourist Guides Associations (WTFGA).

"Through launching this initiative in collaboration with the UNWTO and WTFGA, the BTEA has increased the number of certified tour guides in the Kingdom to 185 in order to meet market needs. By having well-qualified tour



guides, we aim to promote the Kingdom as the ideal tourist destination and further attract tourists from all around the world," Shaikh Khaled bin Humood Al Khalifa.

"In addition, training tour guides in the Kingdom comes in line with BTEA's overall strategy aimed at developing and strengthening the tourism sector under the slogan of 'Ours. Yours.', which contributes towards the Kingdoms economy and the 2030 Economic Vision," he added.

Involving both theoretical and hands-

on training of the candidates, the final week of the programme was dedicated to selecting the best candidates to be trained as trainers, in order to prepare the trainers for mentorship, providing the required leadership abilities and knowledge to train new applicants and recruits at the BTEA.

A total of 93 participants took part in the training course, with 85 tour guides successfully completing the programme, and a total of 14 which were trained to be trainers.

Court cancels marriage over lying about religion

TDT | Manama

The First High Civil Court has cancelled the marriage between an American man and a Canadian woman of Arab origin over the fact that the Kingdom doesn't approve non-Muslim man marrying Muslim woman.

According to court details, the woman lied about her religion to her husband, who is from Christian faith.

In the divorce complaint filed by the man, he said that he married the woman thinking she was a Christian and it was later proved that she is a Muslim and was lying about

her religion.

"This marriage has no validity as Sharia laws prohibit marriages between non-Muslim men and Muslim women," the court observed, while issuing its judgement.



This marriage has no validity as Sharia laws prohibit marriages between non-Muslim men and Muslim women.

COURT

475 violate traffic rules, drive on hard shoulder

Interior Ministry urges citizens, residents to strictly follow traffic rules

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Zafran

Four hundred and seventy five traffic violations related to driving on the emergency lane have already been recorded since the beginning of the current year, authorities announced.

Hundreds of motorists have been fined for illegally driving on the emergency lane, the Ministry of Interior revealed yesterday.

"The offence was driving through the emergency lane on all roads, mostly Shaikh Jaber Al Sabah Highway, Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman highway, Sitra Bridge and Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Bridge during the rush hours in the morning and evening," the Ministry of Interior stated.

The ministry urged citizens and residents to be careful on the road and avoid such practices. "The General Directorate considers such violation as an uncivilised practise that could cause traffic accidents and jams. It could also hinder the movement of ambulance and rescue vehicles."

It asserted the continuation to monitor and take actions against all types of violations.

Meanwhile, owing to other violations, the director-general of traffic, Brigadier Shaikh Ab-



Traffic inspections have been stepped up to contain violations.

dulrahman bin Abdulwahab Al Khalifa confirmed the suspensions of driving licences of 56 truck drivers in the first week of January for violating various traffic rules.

They will be banned from driving any vehicle for 30 days, their licences were withdrawn for periods ranging from a month to six months in case of repeating the offences.

The General Directorate of Traffic launched a campaign to



Such violations could hinder the movement of ambulance and rescue vehicles.

GENERAL DIRECTORATE

sticking to the right lanes and overtaking in a way that risk the safety of others.

The campaign also includes carrying technical inspection of trucks on various roads.

He said that some drivers continue to violate traffic rules without considering the threats of such behaviour on their lives and the safety of others.

He noted that illegal traffic practices cause accidents and hinder traffic.

Respite for police attack accused

TDT | Manama

An appeals court has lowered the penalty handed down to the 13th accused in Nabih Saleh Police Outpost attack case.

The accused was among a group of 50 members who attacked the police station, according to court details.

They attacked the outpost with Molotov cocktails and firebombs, said Public Prosecution.

The convicts were handed



They attacked the outpost with Molotov cocktails and firebombs.

PUBLIC PROSECUTION

down sentences between seven and five years by the Lower Criminal Court.

However, the 13th accused received a respite as his five-year sentence was reduced to three years.

John Hopkins University delegation visits House

The delegation described the achievement as a positive index testifying to the advanced status attained by Bahraini women.

Manama

A delegation from the John Hopkins University, in the US, visited yesterday the Representatives Council where they met Head of the Financial and Economic

Affairs Committee Ali Eshaqi, the Deputy Head of the committee Ahmed Al Amer and member of the Representatives Council Kalthoum Al Haiki.

Discussions focused on the democratic experience in Bahrain and its achievements under the royal reform march.

Assistant Secretary General for Committee Affairs, Sessions and Parliamentary Support and Head of the Equal Opportunities Committee at the Representatives Council Secretariat General Dr Yasser bin Saqr Al Shirawi said the delegation which visited the coun-

cil, in co-ordination with the Supreme Council for Women, comprised four researchers.

They were informed closely about the parliamentary experience and legislative work mechanisms.

Dr Al Shirawi pointed out that the delegation expressed appreciation of the Bahraini women's success to reach the presidency of the Representatives Council through a free democratic practice.

They also hailed success of six women to win parliamentary seats through ballot casting in a transparent electoral

competition.

The delegation described the

achievement as a positive index testifying to the advanced

status attained by Bahraini women.

Meeting stresses threats from Iran

Manama

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, received yesterday the US Special Representative for Iran and Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary of State, Brian Hook.


The minister welcomed Mr Hook, affirming the deep-rooted historical strategic relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the

United States and the Kingdom's pride in the steady progress of bilateral relations across various political, economic and security levels, in light of the common keenness to enhance all aspects of bilateral cooperation for the benefit of the two countries and their friendly peoples.

He also stressed the Kingdom's full support and solidarity with all the efforts exerted by the United States in confronting the policies of the


regime in Iran that undermine peace and security, countering Iran's interference in the internal affairs of the region's countries, as well as Iran's support for terrorism and its practices to escalate tension and violence across the region and the world.

Mr Hook expressed his pride in the deep-rooted relations between the two friendly countries, wishing the Kingdom of Bahrain further progress and prosperity.




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WORLD
world

Taliban claim Kabul attack, warn more

● **Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told journalists on WhatsApp that four attackers blew up an explosives-packed truck before entering Green Village**

Kabul, Afghanistan

The Taliban yesterday claimed responsibility for a powerful truck bomb in Kabul that ripped through surrounding neighbourhoods, killing at least four people including an Indian national, and wounding more than 100 in the latest assault on the Afghan capital.

In a grim message, the militants also vowed to carry out more attacks in the city in direct response to the recent appointment of former spymaster and



An Afghan woman holds a wounded child after receiving treatment at Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital after a powerful truck bomb attack in Kabul

anti-Taliban veteran Amrullah Saleh as interior minister.

Monday evening's explosion near the heavily fortified Green Village foreign compound shook Kabul and comes as diplomats ramp up efforts to end the 17-year war in Afghanistan, which by some estimates was the world's deadliest conflict in 2018.

The force of the blast was felt across the sprawling city, initially causing confusion about the exact location of the attack. It shattered the windows of surrounding houses and shops.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told journalists on WhatsApp that four attackers blew up an explosives-packed truck before entering Green Village and "killing many" foreigners.

Four people, including three guards and one civilian, have been confirmed dead and 113 wounded, the health minis-

try said. An Indian national was among those killed, India's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Kabul police spokesman Basir Mujahid said that most of the victims were Afghan civilians.

"Seven or eight people have been injured in every house around here including myself," said resident Mohammad Aref. "When I came out, the street was full of bodies of the dead and injured."

Until recently some UN staff had lived and worked at Green Village, which is heavily protected by cement blast walls.

But interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish said earlier the compound was now largely empty and "only a number of guards" were left.

A much bigger UN compound along with Afghanistan's customs office and headquarters for the Independent Election Commission are also nearby.

Germany arrests army adviser for 'spying for Iran'

Berlin, Germany

Germany yesterday detained a German-Afghan man on suspicion he was spying for Iran while working for the German army as a linguistic and cultural adviser.

The 50-year-old identified as Abdul Hamid S. was arrested in western Germany, federal prosecutors said in a statement.

"The accused was a language evaluator and cultural issues adviser of the German armed forces. In this capacity, he is believed to have passed on information to an Iranian intelligence service," they added.

According to *Spiegel Online*, he is suspected of working for Iranian secret services for several years.

While working for the German army, he had access to highly sensitive information in-



According to Spiegel Online, he is suspected of working for Iranian secret services for several years.

cluding on troop deployment in Afghanistan, the report added.

Previous cases of infiltration by a foreign agency have sparked outrage and shock in Germany. In 2016, Markus Reichel, himself a former intelligence agent for Germany, was convicted for spying for both the CIA and the Russian secret

service.

He admitted handing over "scores of documents and internal information" to the CIA, including papers detailing Germany's counter-espionage strategies. Reichel also delivered three classified documents to the Russians.

In 2011, Germany jailed a married couple for spying for the Russian secret services for more than 20 years.

The pair, identified only by the code names Andreas and Heidrun Anschlag, were planted in the former West Germany from 1988 by the Soviet Union's KGB and later worked for its successor the SVR.

The couple had obtained NATO and EU political and military secrets, focussed especially on the relationship of NATO and the EU with eastern European and central Asian countries.

Singapore vows to cane Briton despite protest

Singapore, Singapore

Singapore insisted yesterday it would still cane a British man convicted of drug smuggling despite a plea from London not to proceed with the punishment. Yuen Ye Ming was sentenced by a Singapore court last year to 20 years in jail and 24 strokes of the cane after he was convicted of drug-related offences, including trafficking, consumption and possession.

Flogging with a rattan cane, a legacy of British colonial rule, is a common punishment in Singapore and the city-state rarely backs down in applying the law.

Yuen was first arrested in August 2016 for drug-related offences and was convicted last year but released on bail pending sentencing, Singapore's interior ministry said. While out on bail, he was arrested again for similar narcotics offences, the ministry said.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt had asked his Singaporean counterpart during a visit to the city-state this month that Yuen be spared caning, a spokesman for Britain's foreign ministry said.

Holy dip



Indian sadhus (Hindu holy men) take a dip into the water of the holy Sangam -- the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers -- during the auspicious bathing day of Makar Sankranti at the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad. State authorities in Uttar Pradesh are expecting 12 million visitors to descend on Allahabad for the centuries-old festival, which officially begins on January 15 and continues until early March

Indian temple trailblazer attacked by her mother-in-law

Thiruvananthapuram, India

One of the two women who infuriated Hindu traditionalists by entering a revered shrine in India was attacked by her mother-in-law yesterday as soon as she returned home after days on the run, police said.

Kanakadurga, 39, had been in

hiding since she made history by setting foot in the Sabarimala temple on January 2 along with Bindu Ammini, sparking days of unrest in the southern state of Kerala.

Sabarimala, set on top of a hill in a tiger reserve, is dedicated to the celibate deity Ayyappa, and followers believe letting in

women of menstruating age goes against his wishes.

A September ruling by India's Supreme Court that all women could enter the temple angered devotees, including supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi -- who was in Kerala on Tuesday -- and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP).

After moving to more than 10 different safe houses, Kanakadurga, who uses only one name, returned home on Tuesday morning, only to be attacked by the enraged relative -- reportedly with a stick.

"A case was registered by Kanakadurga against her moth-

er-in-law who, she said, attacked her when she arrived home this morning at 7.15 am," a police official in Perunthalmanna town told AFP on condition of anonymity.

A complaint had been registered against the mother-in-law for "voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means"

and "wrongful restraint", reports said.

Kanakadurga, a government employee, was admitted to a hospital in the nearby city of Malappuram where protesters had begun gathering and chanting slogans.

It was not known immediately how serious her injuries were.

Turkey to set up Syria security zone: Erdogan

Istanbul, Turkey

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday that Ankara would set up a "security zone" in northern Syria suggested by US President Donald Trump.

Erdogan's comments came a day after he held a telephone call with Trump in a bid to ease tensions after the US leader threatened to "devastate" the Turkish economy if Ankara attacks Kurdish forces.

Turkey has welcomed Washington's planned withdrawal of some 2,000 US troops from Syria but the future of US-backed Kurdish militia forces labelled



Recep Tayyip Erdogan

terrorists by Ankara has poisoned ties between the NATO allies.

Erdogan said he held a "quite positive" telephone conversation with Trump late on Mon-

day where he reaffirmed that "a 20-mile (30 kilometre) security zone along the Syrian border... will be set up by us."

Trump on Sunday tweeted the United States would "devastate Turkey economically if they hit Kurds", a threat that drew angry retorts from Ankara.

The Turkish army has launched two major operations in Syria dubbed "Euphrates Shield" in 2016 and "Olive Branch" in 2018 to combat against Syrian Kurdish fighters as well as Islamic State jihadists.

But the last offensive sought to roll back gains by Syrian Kurdish fighters who have governed parts of northern Syria

since 2012.

The deployment of Turkish troops and their proxy forces in areas of northwest Syria has drawn accusations by some critics of a Turkish military occupation.

Erdogan dismissed the label and said: "Comparing Turkey's presence in Syria with that of any other state or power is an insult to both history and our civilisation.

"If we did not have a presence there, if we turned our back on what is going on over there, closed our borders and our hearts to people coming from there, then we would have betrayed ourselves, indeed."

Serena made sure baby's first doll 'Qai Qai' was black



Serena Williams with her family. (Source: Serena Instagram)

Melbourne, Australia

Serena Williams says she made sure the first doll her daughter Alexis Olympia received was black, and her second one will be white as she teaches a message of "love for each other".

The tennis great, in Melbourne in her bid to win a 24th Grand Slam title, is married to Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian with their first child born in late 2017.

Williams, 37, said she rarely came across black dolls when she was growing up and wanted to make sure her baby had one.

"Qai Qai is a doll I got for her. I wanted her to have a black doll," she said after easing into the tournament second round Tuesday.

"Growing up, I didn't have that many opportunities to have black dolls. And I was just thinking, like, I want her first doll to be black.

"And her heritage, obviously she's mixed, she's Caucasian and black, but I feel like that was her first doll and I said her second doll would be Caucasian.

"I definitely want to always teach her love and teach her just that humans should always have love for each other, no matter what colour they are," she added.

Qai Qai is described on the social media platform as "daughter and best friend of @olympiaohanian and



Bizarrely, the doll has its own Instagram page with more than 87,000 followers, and growing.

granddaughter of @serenawilliams".

Williams said the name Qai Qai came from her nephew.

"We were all sitting in our living room, and we were running around names, and he said, 'call her Qai Qai'. He actually is the magic behind the name," said the American.

Williams last played the Australian Open in 2017, when she won the tournament while eight weeks pregnant. She assured reporters she wasn't expecting again as she reflected on life on the road with a child.

"It's definitely different to travel with a toddler as opposed to a baby, an infant," she said.

"Infants I think are easier, and everyone said it's easier. I didn't quite understand.

"Olympia takes a lot more attention now, which is why I'm trying to get out of here (press conference room). It's cool. It's really cool to be a mom and to be her mom, in particular. I feel really special."

Explosion, gunfire at Nairobi hotel, office complex

Nairobi, Kenya

A gunfight was underway following a blast at a hotel and office complex in a leafy Nairobi neighbourhood yesterday.

A blast at the DusitD2 compound, which includes a hotel and several office buildings housing international companies, was heard from AFP's offices some five kilometres (three miles) away.

Simon Crump, who works at

one of the offices, said workers had barricaded themselves inside their offices after "several" explosions.

"We have no idea what is happening. Gunshots are coming from multiple directions," he told AFP, adding that the people were terrified.

Police sirens echoed through the city and a helicopter buzzed overhead.

A reporter sent to the scene said the gunmen and security forces were exchanging gunfire.



Two men stand next to burning cars at the scene of an explosion at a hotel complex in Nairobi

Bird sparks a flap on 12 hr Singapore to London flight



The bird appeared calm in the video CREDIT: FACEBOOK

Singapore, Singapore

A bird caused a flap on a Singapore to London flight after it suddenly appeared in the plane's business class section 12 hours into the journey, an airline said yesterday.

A video circulating on social media showed the bird perched on top of a headrest, about two hours before the flight was due to arrive in the British capital.

An initial attempt by a member of cabin crew on the Singapore Airlines flight to catch the creature failed -- prompting some of the passengers to join the hunt.

"It was subsequently caught by cabin crew with the assistance of some of the passengers on board and handed over to authorities in charge of animal quarantine upon the aircraft's arrival in London," the airline said in a statement.

The statement did not say how the stowaway was able to sneak on to Flight SQ322 on January 7.

But the animal -- reported to be a myna, a dark brown bird native to southern Asia -- made the journey without paying the hefty price tag.

According to Singapore Airlines' website, a return flight to London from the city-state in business class costs around Sg\$6,000 (\$4,400).

Seoul drops 'enemy' reference to North Korea

Seoul, South Korea

Seoul crossed out a reference to nuclear-armed North Korea as its enemy in a defence white paper published Tuesday, amid rapidly warming ties despite stalled nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington.

The 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice

rather than a peace treaty, placing a heavily fortified border across the peninsula and leaving it still technically at war.

For years South Korea and the United States have carried out large-scale military drills against potential attacks from the North, while Pyongyang has repeatedly threatened to turn Seoul into a sea of fire.

Scientist see mounting ice loss in Antarctica

Tampa, United States

Global warming is melting ice in Antarctica faster than ever before -- about six times more per year now than 40 years ago -- leading to increasingly high sea levels worldwide, scientists warned on Monday.

Already, Antarctic melting has raised global sea levels more than half an inch (1.4 centimeters) between 1979 and 2017, said the report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), a peer-reviewed US journal.

And the pace of melting is expected to lead to disastrous sea level rise in the years to come, according to lead author Eric Rignot, chair of Earth system science at the University of California, Irvine.

"As the Antarctic ice sheet continues to melt away, we expect multi-meter sea level rise from Antarctica in the coming



Representative picture

centuries," Rignot said.

A rise of 1.8 meters (six feet) by 2100, as some scientists forecast in worst-case scenarios would flood many coastal cities that are home to millions of people around the world, previous research has shown.

For the current study, researchers embarked on the longest-ever assessment of ice mass in the Antarctic, across 18

geographic regions.

Data came from high-resolution aerial photographs taken by NASA planes, along with satellite radar from multiple space agencies. Researchers discovered that from 1979 to 1990, Antarctica shed an average of 40 billion tons of ice mass annually.

By the years 2009 to 2017, the ice loss had increased more than sixfold, to 252 billion tons per

year.

Even more worrying, researchers found that areas that were once considered "stable and immune to change" in East Antarctica, are shedding quite a lot of ice, too, said the study.

"The Wilkes Land sector of East Antarctica has, overall, always been an important participant in the mass loss, even as far back as the 1980s, as our research has shown," Rignot said.

"This region is probably more sensitive to climate than has traditionally been assumed, and that's important to know, because it holds even more ice than West Antarctica and the Antarctic Peninsula together."

Warming ocean water will only speed up ice loss in the future, Rignot said.

Recent research has shown that oceans are heating up faster than previously thought, setting new heat records in the last few years.

Trump is right to seek an end to

The president's desire to disentangle the country from costly overseas conflicts



JON FINER

There is no shortage of policies and decisions made by President Donald Trump worth criticising, but since the earliest days of his presidential campaign, he has expressed at least one belief that deserves to be encouraged, not denigrated: the desire to disentangle the United States from costly overseas conflicts.

Trump's noninterventionist impulse has always fit uncomfortably with the team he assembled, particularly the latest, more hawkish iteration in his ever-shifting foreign policy cast. For a time, the president grudgingly deferred, allowing conflicts to escalate in virtually every theatre he inherited.

Recently, the president's preferences seemed to prevail, at least momentarily, as he tweeted his decision to withdraw 2,000 American troops from Syria and suggested he would do the same with as many as 7,000 from Afghanistan.

Since then, a bewildering public tug of war between the president and his national security team has left a trail of confusion. It remains unclear whether the

United States is withdrawing from Syria right away or gradually; whether it wait until the Islamic State is wholly defeated or it believes that is already the case; whether the United States will protect its Syrian Kurdish allies, somehow; and whether it remains committed to its goal of ending Iran's presence in Syria.

The absence of anything akin to a decision-making process in the administration is not surprising. The surprise is that among the most vocal critics of Trump's withdrawal announcement have been not just Republican hawks but also a chorus of voices on the left.

Progressive opponents of Trumpism should resist the urge to do so over the wrong transgressions. We may not know what the policy actually is until Trump implements it, but on Syria and Afghanistan, his initial instinct — to do less, with less — was correct. It is his execution, timing and inability to leverage his decisions for the best possible terms that were damaging.

In Syria, whatever one's view of the tragic and long-debated trajectory of the conflict or past policy decisions, the United States has few remaining, achievable interests at stake: preventing the Islamic State from regaining territorial control, protecting the predominantly Kurdish forces on whom Washington relied to do most of the counterterrorist



US soldiers outside the American base in Kabul.

fighting and supporting our allies in their efforts to defend against threats emanating from Syrian territory. The success of none of those goals will be determined by a relatively small, long-term military presence.

Trump misled the country by claiming that the Islamic State has been defeated. But the argument that American boots on the ground are needed to address its

remaining strongholds is a recipe for a perpetual presence, since the terrorist group represents a generational threat that can be countered and contained but not soon wholly vanquished.

In truth, many on the right who denounced Trump's announcement did so principally because they see Syria as a venue for confronting Iran. But that is chasing an illusory and dangerous goal: It

is hard to see how a few thousand American troops could counter tens of thousands of Iranian and Iranian-backed forces, aligned both with Moscow and President Bashar Assad's regime that has largely won the civil war.

A chorus of criticism inevitably greeted Trump's recent statement that Iranian forces "can do what they want" in Syria. Yet read as a statement of fact rather

than the extension of a green light, he stumbled upon a self-evident truth: Notwithstanding Israel's successful efforts to limit Iran's importation of advanced weaponry into Syria, Tehran's position in the country is essentially secure.

Trump is correct that the better course is to extricate ourselves from Syria, but his fatal error has been in its implementation

Workers on corporate boards? Germany



SUSAN R HOLMBERG

In the late 1970s, the United Automobile Workers union had a brazen idea. During negotiations for a new contract, members asked Chrysler to give workers representation on its board, a practice called "co-determination" that had been germinating all over Europe.

The proposal was far outside the bounds of management-labor relations in America at the time, and Chrysler was initially immovable. But the union had helped secure a federal loan for the company, which shielded it from bankruptcy, and management eventually relented. In 1980, Chrysler's chief executive, Lee Iacocca, nominated the UAW leader Douglas Fraser to the board as a reward.

But the presence of a single labor representative on a 17-member board did not translate into meaningful results for workers. At one point, Fraser did vote against a plush executive pay package, but he was the only nay. He stepped down in 1984,

and Chrysler eliminated the union seat altogether in 1991. Only a handful of other companies tried worker representation, the unions didn't fight for it, and the American experiment in co-determination was over before it began.

In today's Gilded Age — when chief executives are making well over 300 times what the typical worker brings home in pay — the idea is getting new life. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who recently announced her bid for president, introduced a bill last year to give workers the right to vote for two-fifths of all corporate board seats, with a companion bill in the House by Representatives introduced by Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico. A similar bill by Sen. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin would entitle workers to elect one-third of the seats.

These proposals are part of a fundamental rethinking of whom corporations should serve, but they are not new. American companies were once run with the interests of people other than just shareholders — workers, customers, the public — in mind. (In 1965, corporate managers earned only 20 times what the typical worker did.)

There is already a thriving

example of how co-determination can work. Germany has the strongest system of co-determination in Europe, and it is a defining feature of its economy, the biggest in Europe. German laws dictate that workers at large companies elect up to half the members of supervisory boards, which make high-level strategic decisions, including how to invest profits and whom to hire for senior management positions. Workers also elect representatives to works councils, the "shop-floor" organisations that deal with day-to-day issues such as overtime pay, major layoffs and monitoring and evaluation.

Is co-determination good for business? The results from Germany are mixed. Some research shows that co-determination has a positive effect, especially through work councils, and some shows no effect. Co-determination doesn't guarantee corporate growth and profits, but it certainly doesn't undermine them.

German workers have fared well under co-determination. Along with strong trade unions, co-determination helped German workers minimise job losses from a financial crisis in the 1990s. Workers traded raises for job security, but that investment



has paid off. Workers' wages in Germany have begun to rise recently after decades of stagnation.

This history means that generations of Germans have grown

up believing that having workers involved in decision making is the right way to do business.

While co-determination has plenty of critics inside Germany, it is accepted by almost every

Elizabeth Warren's plan to give workers a voice on corporate boards isn't radical. 'Co-determination' has a long history, and America should embrace it

1992

El Salvador officials and rebel leaders sign the Chapultepec Peace Accords in Mexico City, Mexico ending the 12-year Salvadoran Civil War that claimed at least 75,000 lives.

2001

Congolese President Laurent-Désiré Kabila is **assassinated** by one of his own bodyguards.



2001

US President **Bill Clinton** awards former President Theodore Roosevelt a posthumous Medal of Honor for his service in the Spanish-American War.

2002

The UN Security Council unanimously establishes an arms embargo and the freezing of assets of **Osama bin Laden**, Al Qaeda, and the remaining members of the Taliban.

America's wars

acts must be encouraged

Most egregiously, his snap decision during a telephone call with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey betrayed our Kurdish partners who led the fight against the Islamic State and risked being exposed to assault by Turkey and the Syrian regime.

A more responsible course would have been to use the prospect of an eventual American withdrawal to help avert a subsequent conflict between the Kurds and their adversaries. If, as he is now suggesting, the president withdraws the troops more gradually rather than right away, that opportunity might still exist.

It requires Trump to use that time wisely. He should start by abandoning the dangerous notion of Turkey seizing areas controlled by Kurdish forces and instead allow the Kurds — in the absence of long-term American protection — to negotiate an understanding with the Syrian regime. This might entail returning some aspects of the Syrian state to northeast Syria, Kurdish forces retaining their military capacity but lowering its profile and a degree of self-governance for the region.

In Afghanistan too, Trump's bottom line was correct. After more than 17 years of combat and a virtual stalemate, at best, for more than a decade, there is little rationale for continuing to expend American blood and treasure on a conflict trending

Trump is correct that the better course is to extricate ourselves from Syria, but his fatal error has been in its implementation.

badly, with unclear objectives.

But here too, the self-proclaimed "great negotiator" erred in folding America's limited cards for nothing in return, rather than using his willingness to withdraw as an incentive for the Taliban — currently locked innegotiations with Trump's own diplomats — to make peace.

So much is objectionable about the Trump era that it is hard for critics to know which targets to strike. But principled opposition requires that progressive opponents of Trump not distort their beliefs for quick rhetorical wins. Whatever administration eventually follows will have many messes to clean up and will need to distinguish those that truly matter.

Inevitably, the United States will face threats that will require

the use of military force. But we ought to continually question our enduring involvement in faraway conflicts, particularly when they come at a terrible cost to the United States and local populations as in Afghanistan and Iraq; make us complicit in abuses as in Yemen; entangle us with unsavoury partners as occurred with some elements of the Syrian opposition; or exacerbate anti-American sentiment as our broader counterterrorism campaign often did.

Troop withdrawals can be messy and costly even in the best of circumstances. But that is not a reason to drift into forever wars while searching for the perfect exit. It is a reason to be disciplined about objectives and judicious about intervening in the first place.

Trump's Syria and Afghanistan decisions, assuming he sticks to them, may well lead to disastrous outcomes because of how they were executed, their timing, the complete lack of consultation with allies and experts and his utter failure to leverage them. All of that justifies a verdict of malpractice. But one can render that judgment while acknowledging that done differently, withdrawing is the right thing to do.

(Jon Finer, an adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, was the chief of staff and director of policy planning at the State Department.)

Germany's had them for decades

German laws dictate that workers at large companies elect up to half the members of supervisory boards, which make high-level strategic decisions.

But co-determination was never simply about wages and profits. It is about giving workers more power. "Co-determination is just like democracy," the political scientist Stephen J Silvia told me. It isn't justified on economic terms. "We have a democracy so that people have a voice in public affairs. Co-determination extends that principle so that people have a voice in the workplace as well."

American workers are in a crisis that stems, in part, from having no voice in their economic lives. For decades, American corporations have been run exclusively for the benefit of shareholders, and that model has enabled rising inequality, stagnant wages, runaway executive compensation and underinvestment in research and innovation.

Would all this be different if workers had seats in the boardroom? Not overnight. But renewing America's experiment with co-determination would help workers feel valued, and that is a necessary starting point for change.

(Susan R Holmberg is a political economist and a fellow at the Roosevelt Institute, where she researches inequality, corporate governance and climate change.)

could have a decisive effect on matters like whether to use a tax windfall to buy back stock, or whether to approve bonuses for company leadership. (In 2015, the typical German chief executive made \$5.6 million while his American counterpart took home \$14.9 million.)

Worker representatives would not win all of these votes, but their presence would disrupt the power dynamics of corporate boards, and workers at all levels of the company would be more aware of what's happening in the boardroom. This could help to revitalise labour organising, which could lead to better pay, benefits and job security.

German political party. What would co-determination look like in the United States? If workers elect up to two-fifths of the members of a corporate board, their representatives



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



A big new Caravan is heading up to our Southern Border from Honduras. Tell Nancy and Chuck that a drone flying around will not stop them. Only a Wall will work. Only a Wall, or Steel Barrier, will keep our Country safe! Stop playing political games and end the Shutdown!

@realDonaldTrump

02



Today, India is growing rapidly. This is powered by the hard-work & talent of the people of our nation. From economy to ease of doing business & from start-ups to satellites, we are achieving great progress in each sector.

@narendramodi

03



The irony — or tragedy — is that Trump's annoyance at NATO "ripping the US off" is based on a complete misunderstanding of how the alliance is financed. He keeps saying the same wrong thing he said in the campaign.

@GlennKesslerWP

04



President Trump's attorneys rebuffed Special Counsel Robert Mueller's request in recent weeks for an in person session with Trump to ask follow up questions. The request was made after Trump's team submitted answers to a limited number of questions from Mueller's team.

@ShimonPro

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

Wide Angle

Websites for verifying truth: A growing need



JOEL INDRUPATI

"Let them eat cake". Did Queen Marie Antoinette really say these words?

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world". Did Mahatma Gandhi really say this?

"Elementary, my dear Watson. Elementary". Did Sherlock Holmes say this, in any one those many books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle?

The answer to all the above three questions is a big 'No'. There is no credible evidence for any of the above. These words have neither been said nor written by any of those above mentioned people, anywhere.

But, for years, people have been quoting them — actually, misquoting them — and contributing towards the spread of misinformation.

Long before the advent of Internet, my high school teacher had once given us all an assignment — to go to the library, and to collect quotations on a given list of topics. We had to submit not only the relevant sayings but also the names of the persons who said it, and where.

As a school student, that was the first time I had seen "Bartlett's Book of Familiar Quotations". And also the 'Oxford Dictionary of Quotations', and 'Webster's Book of Quotations'.

We were amazed at the orderly fashion in which hundreds of quotes were arranged in those books, in a topical index, with various keywords and cross references — leading us to extra information on each quote and its origin.

Most importantly, in small print at the end of the book, we saw lists of published sources, including dates of publication and names of publishing companies with cities they were head-quartered in.

Thanks to my teacher's creative assignment, we had understood the value of references, of citations, and of attributions of facts to verifiable sources.

We had learnt that reliable quotation books, dictionaries and encyclopaedias cite sources such as other books, magazines and journals, which we can always check for veracity.

Today, Internet is giving us ginormous amounts of information. But it is becoming harder and harder for us to wade through it all, and to recognize truth from falsehoods.

Anybody, with a little knowledge of graphic design, and website building tools, today, can wreak havoc by spreading untruths.

Many mobile phones apps are available today, with which — without special skills — pictures can be manipulated, quotes can be mis-attributed,

and even videos can be morphed, by changing people's faces in video frames.

We are drifting into a dangerous world of tangled information, from which extricating ourselves, without help, seems difficult. We can find the truth ourselves, by effective online searching and researching. But, it takes time.

Thankfully, we are seeing the rise of some web-based companies which are getting to the bottom of the truth.

A few days ago someone sent me a bizarre video-clip, saying it's from a US television series of the 1950s. In that black and white video, I saw a con-man, named Trump, saying he will build a wall, and save the people of Texas!

I thought it was a silly joke. But I was shocked to discover — on Snopes.com — that what I received was true. And that there really was a CBS TV episode called "The End of The World", premiered on May 9, 1958, in which, a con man named Walter Trump, played by one Lawrence Dobkin, attempts to scam an entire town, saying he will build a wall with their money.

Websites like snopes.com, factcheck.org, politifact.com, hoax-slayer.com, and altnews.in are among those helping us debunk internet rumours by verifying the truth.

While websites like 'quote investigator' check for misattributed quotes, others like quetext, turnitin, and grammarly are effectively checking plagiarism.

In this post-truth era — with fake news, doctored tapes, and alternative facts — we need these truth-verifying websites more than ever.

business

Facebook to invest \$300 million in local journalism

New York, United States

Facebook announced yesterday that it will invest \$300 million over three years in various projects related to journalism, especially to promote local news, which has been hit hard in the digital age.

The move comes with online platforms under pressure for dominating the internet advertising ecosystem, making it harder for news organizations to make a transition to digital.

"People want more local news, and local newsrooms are looking for more support," Campbell Brown, Facebook's vice president in charge of global news partnerships, said in a blog post.

"That's why today we're announcing an expanded effort around local news in the years ahead." The initiative includes a \$5 million endowment to the Pulitzer Center to launch "Bringing Stories Home," which will foster coverage on topics that affect local communities -- funding at least 12 local in-



The initiative includes a \$5 million endowment to the Pulitzer Center to launch "Bringing Stories Home," which will foster coverage on topics that affect local communities -- funding at least 12 local in-depth, multimedia reporting projects each year.

multimedia reporting projects each year.

Facebook also said it giving \$6 million to the British-based Community News Project, which partners with regional news organizations including Reach, Newsquest, JPI, Archant, Midland News Association and the National Council for the Training of Journalists to recruit trainee community journalists.

The huge social network said it was expanding its Accelerator pilot, which launched in the United States in 2018 to help local newsrooms with subscription and membership models.

Facebook said it would invest over \$20 million to continue the initiative in the US and to expand globally, including in Europe.



Mark Zuckerberg, chief executive officer and founder of Facebook

Not spying for China

Huawei founder in a rare interview denies accusations that his firm is engaged in spying for Chinese government

AFP | Beijing, China

Huawei's reclusive founder Ren Zhengfei stepped out of the shadows yesterday to give a rare media interview, forcefully denying accusations that his firm engaged in espionage on behalf of the Chinese government.

The company he founded more than 20 years ago has been under fire in recent months with the arrest of Ren's daughter and Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou in Canada, the arrest of an employee on spying charges in Poland, and a worldwide campaign by Washington to blacklist it.

A former Chinese army engineer, Ren denied that Huawei passed information along to the Chinese government.

"I love my country, I support the Communist Party. But I will not do anything to harm the world," Ren told a group of foreign reporters, according to Bloomberg News.

"I don't see a close connection between my personal political beliefs and the businesses of Huawei," he said.

Huawei faces unprecedented challenges to its business amid a global campaign by Washington to push nations to reconsider using the telecom giant's equipment in their cellular networks over security concerns.

Australia and New Zealand banned its gear last year and a top British operator moved to remove its existing equipment, while concerns grow in Canada, Japan, France, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and other countries.

Last month Canada arrested Ren's daughter Meng on a US

extradition request related to Iran sanctions violations.

Ren said he missed his daughter very much and denied any regular contact with the Chinese government, according to the Financial Times.

Some analysts say Beijing's ferocious response to her arrest points to the high-level connections that Washington alleges.

Chinese authorities detained two Canadian citizens -- a former diplomat and a business consultant -- on suspicion of endangering national security soon after Meng's arrest in a move widely seen as retaliation.

Then authorities revisited the little-known case of Canadian Robert Lloyd Schellenberg, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison in November for drug offences.

On Monday he was sentenced to death in a hastily arranged retrial -- China has denied any of the cases are connected to Meng's situation.

In December President Don-



Huawei is not a public company, we don't need a beautiful earnings report. If they don't want Huawei to be in some markets, we can scale down a bit. As long as we can survive and feed our employees, there's a future for us

REN ZHENGFEI

HUAWEI FOUNDER

ald Trump said he could intervene in the US case against Meng if it helped seal a trade deal with China -- a statement that displeased Canada, which has denied politics played a role in Meng's arrest.

'Trump a great president'

"Trump is a great president. He dares to massively cut taxes, which will benefit business," Ren said at the roundtable with reporters.

"Huawei is only a sesame seed in the trade conflict between China and the US," he said, according to Bloomberg.

Ren told reporters Huawei

would deny any request from Beijing to share sensitive information from its clients.

Huawei has long rejected such Western accusations, saying there was "no evidence" it poses a threat to the national security of any country.

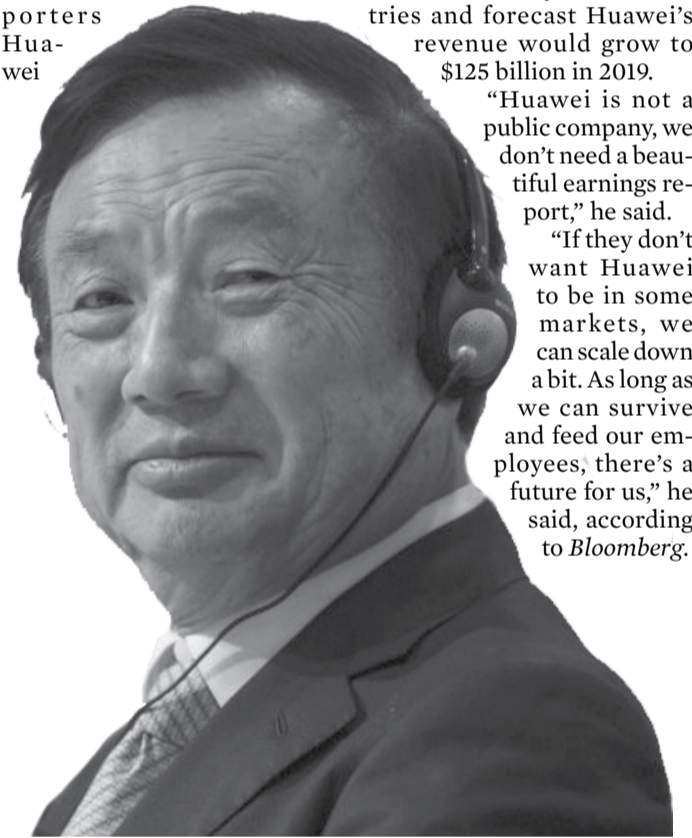
But this month Poland arrested a Huawei employee suspected of spying for China.

The firm swiftly sacked the employee Wang Weijing, who led Huawei's sales team in Poland, and said "his alleged actions have no relation to the company".

Ren said he was not worried about the bans by some countries and forecast Huawei's revenue would grow to \$125 billion in 2019.

"Huawei is not a public company, we don't need a beautiful earnings report," he said.

"If they don't want Huawei to be in some markets, we can scale down a bit. As long as we can survive and feed our employees, there's a future for us," he said, according to Bloomberg.



Saudi urges 'fair' energy transition

AFP | Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia called yesterday for a "fair" and gradual global energy transition as it unveiled an ambitious domestic renewable energy programme.

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih told a clean energy conference in Abu Dhabi that the transition must take place gradually in order to avoid "chaos".

"Balancing greenhouse gas emissions will take decades," he said at Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week.

"It's not going to be done overnight. In the interim, ample and reliable energy sources like oil and gas will need to be made available or (the world will) risk chaos."

Unveiling Saudi Arabia's clean energy programme, he said the kingdom plans to create "a glob-

We urgently need consensus around an energy transition strategy that is realistic, fair and pragmatic, driven by economics and technology, not a blind ideology

KHALID AL-FALIH

al hub of renewable energy capability" over the coming decades, producing upward of 200 gigawatts.

Falih proposed a strategy of gradually improving the quality of fossil fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the same time as increasing renewable energy consumption.

"We urgently need consensus around an energy transition

strategy that is realistic, fair and pragmatic, driven by economics and technology, not a blind ideology," he said.

Experts say energy output from renewables, especially solar and wind, is growing faster than anticipated, threatening to displace oil, gas and coal as the world's main sources of power.

'Oil demand will grow'

A report released last week by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) said the rapid growth of renewable energy sources was causing major shifts in international politics.

It said the rapid rise of renewables is being driven by new technologies and falling costs, making them ever more competitive against fossil fuels.

Falih insisted that global demand for oil "will continue to grow for the foreseeable future."

Saudi Arabia plans to generate some 59 gigawatts of electricity

from solar and wind sources by 2030, he said.

The kingdom, which has been exporting close to 8.0 million barrels of oil daily, currently produces virtually no energy from renewable sources.

But last week it signed a deal to establish a 400-megawatt wind farm, which follows a deal last year to build a 300-megawatt solar plant.

Falih said Riyadh would tender dozens of renewable energy projects every year, with at least 12 such deals slated for 2019.

It will also begin to introduce nuclear power, building two reactors in the next decade with a combined production of between two and three gigawatts, he said.

This strategy will help the kingdom save up to two million barrels of oil daily by 2030, he added, without providing details on the expected costs of the programme.



Khalid al-Falih, Saudi Energy Minister (Courtesy of the Independent)

VW, Ford form alliance to build commercial vans, pickups in 2022

Detroit, United States

Volkswagen and Ford announced a new alliance yesterday to jointly develop commercial vans and pickups starting in 2022, in a bid to reduce costs in the increasingly competitive auto market.

The announcement came after more than six months of talks between the automakers which also included discussions about cooperation on autonomous and electrification technologies for cars of the future.

The American and German giants will join forces to develop commercial vans and medium-sized pickups as early as 2022. But the deal does not involve cross-ownership, according to a joint statement.

The companies also will "investigate collaboration on autonomous vehicles, mobility services and electric vehicles and have started to explore those opportunities."

VW CEO Herbert Diess said the alliance "will be a cornerstone for our drive to improve competitiveness."

Under the alliance, to be governed by a joint committee headed by the chief executives of the two companies, Ford will engineer and build medium-sized commercial pickups for both firms. Ford also will build large commercial vans for European customers and VW will develop a city van.

The city van would be designed for the European market, while the medium-sized pickup truck would be specific to South America, Africa and Europe, Ford said.



A Mustang Convertible is seen on its side at the Ford booth

Ivanka to help US choose candidate for World Bank

Washington, United States

President Donald Trump's daughter and advisor Ivanka will help the United States choose its candidate to lead the World Bank but she will not be the one, the White House said on Monday.

Jim Yong Kim abruptly announced last week that he would cut short his tenure as president of the Washington-based global development lender more than three years before his second term was to end.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney "have asked Ivanka Trump to help manage the US nomination process as she's worked closely with the World Bank's leadership for the past two years," said Jessica Ditto, the White House Deputy Director of Communications.

However, Ditto said reports that Ivanka Trump "is under consideration are false."

London's The Financial Times reported on Friday that both Ivanka Trump and Washington's former United Nations ambassador Nikki

Haley were among possible US candidates to replace Kim.

Other names being floated include Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs David Malpass and Mark Green, head of the US Agency for International Development, the newspaper reported.

Through an unwritten postwar agreement with Europe, the World Bank has always been led by an American while a European has always been in charge of the IMF.

The World Bank Board said on Thursday it would start accepting nominations for a new leader early next month and name a replacement for Kim by mid-April.



Where are the sedans?

US car buyers swerve away from compact cars, sedans

Detroit, United States

A persistent question shadowed all of the shiny new vehicles and highly-produced, glitzy debuts at the Detroit auto show this week: Where are the sedans?

Volkswagen was among the few to trumpet a new sedan -- those compact and mid-sized cars that shuttled generations of American children to school in the morning and soccer practice in the afternoon.

But despite its ubiquity in the suburban driveways and garages of the past, the vehicle segment's future is anything but certain.

The middle-class sedan -- as opposed to luxury brands and high-performance sports cars -- is hard to find this week on the Detroit auto show's floor, eclipsed by row upon row of giant trucks and SUVs.

"Car companies are acknowledging that the crossover, sport utility vehicle boom is continuing," said analyst Michelle Krebs of AutoTrader.

Detroit's Big Three automakers -- Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler -- have gradually abandoned production of sedans for lack of profitability and lack of interest from consumers.

Sales of traditional cars are expected to plummet to 21.5 per cent of the US auto market by 2025, according to LMC Automotive. Last year, sedans and small cars accounted for 31.2pc of new-vehicle sales -- down from half only six years ago.

The abrupt tumble coincided with the revival of the US auto industry, a drop in gas prices and a decade of economic recovery in the United States.

Consumers flocked to larger SUVs and trucks, which became more and more luxurious and comfortable and increasingly gas efficient.

'Badly produced'

SUV sales rose 87pc since 2013. The "sports" utility vehicle -- now more likely to be used as the family car -- is expected to account for about 40pc of the North American vehicle market by 2025, according to LMC Automotive.

Meanwhile, once popular sedans such as the Toyota Camry, Honda Accord, Ford Fusion and Nissan Altima saw their sales dip in 2018 by double digits. And analysts predict the worst is yet to come.

To reduce overcapacity in the production of small cars and sedans, America's Big Three automakers downsized.

Fiat Chrysler's late CEO Sergio Marchionne in 2016 was the first to give up on the vehicle segment -- ending production of the Dodge Dart and Chrysler 200 to focus on Jeeps and RAM pickups. The company's stock price more than doubled in three years.

GM in November said it would end production of six models: the Cadillac CT6 and XTS, as well as the Chevrolet Impala, Cruze, Volt, and the Buick LaCrosse. Ford joined the fray. By 2020, it will no longer sell the Fusion, Taurus, or Focus in the United States. Aside from the Mustang sports car, it will only offer pickup trucks and SUVs.

"Ford loses an estimated



The GAC new concept car called the Entranze is viewed during day one of the 2019 North American International Auto Show



F1 driver Fernando Alonso unveils the Toyota Supra Super GT race car



The 2020 Ford Mustang Shelby GT500



The Volkswagen 2020 Passat booth

\$800 million a year selling cars in North America," said Bob Shanks, the group's CFO.

For consumers, one of the main draws of small cars and sedans used to be efficiency and cost. But that has changed.

Take the Chevrolet Malibu. The sedan averages 29 miles per gallon in the city -- practically identical to the larger Chevy Equinox SUV's 28 miles per gallon. The SUV also costs just \$2,000 more.

"Frankly, it's about usable space," said Ford Chairman

Bill Ford. "It's very clear that our customers are saying to us: we want more usable space, we want, in many cases, three-row seating and those kinds of things."

He argues, however, that if there is renewed love for compact cars, "we can adapt very quickly."

Asian automakers, like Toyota and Honda, believe that smaller cars and sedans still have their place in American factories and remain confident about their future here.

"It's still 5.2 million vehicles sold in the sedan market. That's still a great market globally. US sedan sales are still much larger than any markets around the world, and it's one we're committed to stay in," said Robert Carter, chief of North American sales for Toyota.

So why then the disappearance of so many sedans? "It's not that sedans are dead," said industry research firm MotorTrend.

"Sedans that are poorly executed are dead."

Banks buoy Saudi Arabian market

● **DAMAC Properties plunges on BofA downgrade**

● **Saudi highest since July 2018**

● **All Saudi banks rise**

Reuters

Saudi Arabia's stock market rose yesterday, as rebounding oil prices lifted all its banks, while the Dubai index was pulled down by a plunge in shares of DAMAC Properties.

Saudi Arabia's index gained 0.9 per cent to trade at a near six-month high, with Al Rajhi Bank adding 1.3pc and the biggest lender National Commercial Bank climbing 1.4pc.

Riyadh Bank rose 1.6pc. The lender has picked Goldman Sachs to advise on its merger talks with National Commercial Bank, Reuters reported, citing sources familiar with the matter.



An investor watching trade movements at a stock market (file)

Saudi International Petrochemical (Sipchem) fell 1.4pc. It announced a scheduled maintenance turnaround for its International Diol Plant and said the financial impact of the shutdown will be reflected in its first-quarter results.

In Dubai, the index lost 1.5pc, weighed down by a 9.8pc slide in developer DAMAC Properties after BofA Merrill Lynch downgraded the stock to 'underperform' from 'neutral'.

Dubai financial markets continue to face downward pres-

sure, largely coming from real estate companies along with normalization of some of the stocks that benefited from window dressing during the last week of 2018, Sanat Sachar, equity analyst for asset management at Dubai's Al Mal Capital said.

Closing Bell

| | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|
| SAUDI | ▲ 0.9pc | » 8,347pts |
| DUBAI | ▼ 1.5pc | » 2,491pts |
| EGYPT | ▲ 0.8pc | » 13,447pts |
| QATAR | ▲ 0.9pc | » 10,673pts |
| ABU DHABI | ▼ 0.3pc | » 4,983pts |
| KUWAIT | ■ | » 5,474pts |
| BAHRAIN | ▼ 0.3pc | » 1,340pts |
| OMAN | ▼ 0.7pc | » 4,280pts |

DAMAC's stock on Tuesday experienced its heaviest trading volume since March 2018, with 8.6 million shares changing hands, 5.4 times their 30-day average.

The downgrade resulted in huge selling by foreigners, Sachar said.

BofA said in a research note it was also lowering its 2018 to 2020 earnings per share forecast on DAMAC by an average of 47pc, citing expectations of weaker booked sales and gross margin.

The company is likely to be pressured by a weak real estate market along with upcoming

debt and land payments, BofA added.

It also expects DAMAC to cut its dividend to 0.05 dirham per share from 0.15 dirham per share currently.

Dubai's largest lender Emirates NBD declined 2.1pc and the emirate's biggest developer Emaar Properties dropped 1.5pc.

The Egypt blue-chip index was up 0.8pc with Commercial International Bank gaining 2.2pc and Egyptian Resorts jumping 10pc.

Qatar's index rose 0.9pc to touch its highest since March 2017 with 17 of its 20 stocks climbing.

In Abu Dhabi, where the index fell 0.3pc snapping a four-day winning streak, Aldar Properties was down 2pc while United Arab Emirates' largest lender

First Abu Dhabi Bank shed 0.7pc.

But Abu Dhabi National Energy jumped 9.8pc. The firm said by the end of 2018 its total investments had reached \$30 billion held across 11 countries.



The Minister of Industry, Commerce & Tourism Zayed R. Alzayani receiving in his office Russian Ambassador to Bahrain Igor Kremnev. Both sides reviewed the bilateral relations between Bahrain Russian, stressing the importance of mutual visits and joint economic activities in enhancing bilateral relations.

EU wants end veto on tax

Strasbourg, France

The European Commission yesterday proposed to end the veto power member states have over EU tax matters, an idea rejected by several smaller countries including low-tax hub Ireland.

A more harmonised tax policy across Europe has long been a dream of pro-EU forces in Brussels and recent scandals have regenerated Brussels' desire for an easier way to pass legislation across the bloc.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, said it will launch a debate with member states on allowing new EU tax laws to be approved by qualified majority rather than unanimously.

"Times have changed! Holding tight to unanimity to protect national tax regimes ... is based on myth, not reality," Economic Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici told reporters at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Taxation and foreign affairs are the last bastions of EU law-making that still require a unanimous vote by member states. Weighing on the Com-



President of the EU Commission Jean-Claude Juncker (C) talks with EU Commissioner of Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs Pierre Moscovici (R) before a college meeting

mission is the quest for ambitious tax measures, such as an EU-wide tax on US tech giants, which have failed to become European law given the slightest opposition.

The EU digital tax, backed by France and Germany, has fallen foul on the opposition of Ireland, Sweden and Denmark.

Another proposal to tax financial transactions across the EU has languished since 2011, with even a tighter group of member states unable to agree their own more limited version. Moscovici, a former French

finance minister, acknowledged the need to defy knee-jerk opposition by member states.

"We do not want to trigger 'Pavlovian' negative reactions... This debate should allow the Commission to make the case for a reasonable, cautious and, hopefully, unanimous way forward," he said.

His comments were echoed by German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, who urged member countries not to "reflexively" dismiss the discussion.

But Ireland swiftly rejected the idea.

Singapore imposes \$740,000 fines over major cyber attack

Singapore, Singapore

Singapore's privacy watchdog yesterday imposed fines of Sg\$1 million (\$740,000) on a healthcare provider and an IT agency over a cyber-attack that saw health records of about quarter of the population stolen. In the city-state's biggest ever data breach, hackers last year gained access to a government database and made off with the records of 1.5 million people, with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong among those targeted.

The official Personal Data Protection Commission announced it was fining Integrated Health Information Systems, which runs the IT systems for Singapore's public healthcare sector, Sg\$750,000. SingHealth, a healthcare provider which groups some public hospitals and clinics, was hit with a Sg\$250,000 fine.

The stolen information was "highly sensitive and confidential personal data," it said.

US charges 8 in securities hacking scheme

New York, United States

US authorities yesterday charged eight people in a scheme to trade on and profit from stolen corporate information hacked from a government database, court papers showed.

The alleged scheme, which involved suspects in Ukraine, Russia and the United States, pulled in more than \$4.1 million ill-gotten gains from trading on securities filings before they became public, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Authorities said the plot was carried out between 2016 and 2017, and was the second phase of a long-running effort that originally targeted news agencies which publish corporate news releases.

By trading on and selling early access to sensitive information from annual and quar-

terly reports, and other filings, before they were released to the public, the defendants were able to beat the market and make a profit, court papers said.

A federal grand jury in New Jersey filed 16 criminal charges against Ukrainian national Oleksandr Ieremenko and Ukrainian resident Artem Radchenko, and aims to seize all ill-gotten property tied to the alleged conspiracy.

The SEC also took legal action against Ieremenko, who also was charged in the 2015 scheme, along with six other individuals and two corporate entities.

The SEC's Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval system, known as EDGAR, is a repository of corporate disclosures meant for investors and includes servers physically located in New Jersey.

German growth slows

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Growth in the German economy fell to 1.5 per cent in 2018, official data showed yesterday, representing a marked slowdown from the previous year's figure.

Officials from federal statistics authority Destatis told a Berlin press conference that last year was the ninth consecutive year of growth for Germany, although the expansion was weaker than the 2.2pc recorded in both 2016 and 2017.

Observers had been anxiously awaiting new hard data on growth in Europe's powerhouse economy, as fears mounted that it could have suffered a technical recession -- or two successive quarters of retraction -- at year's end.

While Destatis will not release an official fourth-quarter growth number until next



Representative picture

month, there were "signs of a slight recovery" towards the end of the year, Destatis expert Albert Braakmann said.

In absolute terms, Germany's 2018 GDP was around 3.4 trillion euros (\$3.9 trillion) or 40,900 euros per person, Braakmann added.

show

OASIS JUFFAIR

1-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW
CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 4.15 + 6.30 + 8.45 PM
DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA) (3D): 2.00 PM
DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA) (ARABIC DUBBED): 11.45 AM + 11.00 PM

2-THE MULE (PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER) NEW
CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM
DAILY AT (VIP): 12.15 + 2.45 + 5.15 + 7.45 + 10.15 PM

3-HOLMES & WATSON (15+) (COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW
WILL FERRELL, JOHN C. REILLY, REBECCA HALL

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.15 + 3.15 + 5.15 + 7.15 + 9.15 + 11.15 PM

4-PETTA (PG-15) (TAMIL/ACTION/THRILLER) NEW
RAJINIKANTH,VIJAY SETHUPATHI,SIMRAN,TRISHA

DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.45 + 7.00 + 10.15 PM

5-NTR: KATHANAYAKUDU (PG-13) (TELUGU) NEW
NANDARUMI BALAKRISHNA, RAKUL PREET SINGH, VIDYA BALAN

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 3.30 + 6.45 + 10.00 PM

6-VISWASAM (PG-15) (TAMIL) NEW
AJITH KUMAR, NAYANTHARA

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.45 + 4.45 + 7.45 + 10.45 PM

7-VINAYA VIDHEYA RAMA () (TELUGU) NEW
KIARA ADVANI, RAM CHARAN AND VIVEK OBEROI

FROM FRIDAY 11TH: 10.30 AM + 1.30 + 4.30 + 7.30 + 10.30 PM

8-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)
JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 5.30 + 11.15 PM

9-SIMMBA (PG-15) (HINDI/ACTION/COMEDY/DRAMA/ROMANTIC)
RANVEER SINGH, AJAY DEVGN, SARA ALI KHAN

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM

10-JOSEPH (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)
JOJU GEORGE, MALAVIKA MENON, JAMES ELIYA

DAILY AT: 2.45 + 8.30 PM

CITYCENTRE

1-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW
CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 PM + 12.00 MN
DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 9.00 PM
DAILY AT (ARABIC DUBBED): 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM

2-THE MULE (PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER) NEW
CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 PM + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)
DAILY AT (VIP I): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM

3-HOLMES & WATSON (15+) (COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW
WILL FERRELL, JOHN C. REILLY, REBECCA HALL

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

4-URI: THE SURGICAL STRIKE (15+) (HINDI/ACTION/DRAMA) NEW
VICKY KAUSHAL, KIRTI KULHARI, PARESH RAWAL

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

5-122 (15+) (ARABIC/THRILLER/CRIME) NEW
TAREK LOTFY, AMINA KHALIL, AHMED DAWOOD

DAILY AT: 2.15 + 6.45 + 11.15 PM

6-PETTA (PG-15) (TAMIL/ACTION/THRILLER) NEW
RAJINIKANTH,VIJAY SETHUPATHI,SIMRAN,TRISHA

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



7-VISWASAM (PG-15) (TAMIL) NEW
AJITH KUMAR, NAYANTHARA

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

8-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)
JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT (ATMOS): 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 5.45 + 8.45 + 11.45 PM
DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 6.00 + 11.15 PM
DAILY AT: (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

DAILY AT (VIP II): 10.45 AM + 1.45 + 4.45 + 7.45 + 10.45 PM

9-BACKTRACE (PG-15) (CRIME/ACTION/THRILLER)
SYLVESTER STALLONE, RYAN GUZMAN, MATTHEW MODINE

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 1.30 + 3.30 + 5.30 + 7.30 + 9.30 + 11.30 PM

10-JOHNNY ENGLISH STRIKES AGAIN (PG)
(COMEDY/ACTION/ADVENTURE)
ROWAN ATKINSON, OLGA KURYLENKO, EMMA THOMPSON

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 1.45 + 3.45 + 5.45 + 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM

11-SIMMBA (PG-15) (HINDI/ACTION/COMEDY/DRAMA/ROMANTIC)
RANVEER SINGH, AJAY DEVGN, SARA ALI KHAN

DAILY AT: 3.15 + 8.45 PM

12-MARY POPPINS RETURNS (G) (ADVENTURE/MUSICAL/FAMILY)
EMILY BLUNT, LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, BEN WHISHAW

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

13-RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)
JOHN C. REILLY, SARAH SILVARMAN, GAL GADOT

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

14-SPIDER MAN INTO THE SPIDER VERSE (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)
HAILEE STEINFELD, NICOLAS CAGE, MAHERSHALA ALI

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 4.15 + 8.45 PM

15-BUMBLEBEE (PG-13) (ACTION /ADVENTURE/SCI-FICTION)
HAILEE STEINFELD, JOHN CENA, JORGE LENDEBOG JR.

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 4.30 + 8.45 PM

16- EL BADLAH (PG-13) (ARABIC/COMEDY)
TAMER HOSNY, AKRAM HOSNI, MAJED EL MASRY, AMINA KHALIL

DAILY AT: 2.30 + 6.45 + 11.00 PM

17-HUNTER KILLER (PG-15) (ACTION/THRILLER)
GERARD BUTLER, GARY OLDMAN, COMMON

DAILY AT: 12.45 + 6.15 + 11.45 PM

18-ROBIN HOOD (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)
TARON EGERTON, EVE HEWSON, JAMIE FOXX

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 4.30 + 9.15 PM

19-CREED II (PG-13) (DRAMA/ACTION/SPORT)
TESSA THOMPSON, MICHAEL B. JORDAN, SYLVESTER STALLONE

DAILY AT: 2.00 + 6.45 + 11.30 PM

SEEF (II)

1-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW
CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM
DAILY AT (DUBBED IN ARABIC): 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 + 8.15 + 10.30 PM

2-THE MULE (PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER) NEW
CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)

3-HOLMES & WATSON (15+) (COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW
WILL FERRELL, JOHN C. REILLY, REBECCA HALL

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 1.45 + 3.45 + 5.45 + 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM

4-THE SUPER (18+) (HORROR/THRILLER) NEW
PATRICK JOHN FLUEGER, VAL KILMER, LOUISA KRAUSE

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 3.00 + 7.15 + 11.30 PM

5-THE ACCIDENTAL PRIME MINISTER (PG)
(HINDI/DRAMA/BIOGRAPHY) NEW
ANUPAM KHER, AAHANA KUMRA, ABDUL QUADIR AMIN

DAILY AT: 12.45 + 5.00 + 9.15 PM

6-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)
JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

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

7-BACKTRACE (PG-15) (CRIME/ACTION/THRILLER)
SYLVESTER STALLONE, RYAN GUZMAN, MATTHEW MODINE

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

8-JOHNNY ENGLISH STRIKES AGAIN (PG)
(COMEDY/ACTION/ADVENTURE)
ROWAN ATKINSON, OLGA KURYLENKO, EMMA THOMPSON

DAILY AT: 2.00 + 7.00 PM + 12.00 MN

9-SIMMBA (PG-15) (HINDI/ACTION/COMEDY/DRAMA/ROMANTIC)
RANVEER SINGH, AJAY DEVGN, SARA ALI KHAN

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 4.00 + 9.00 PM

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DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 4.00 + 9.00 PM

11-RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET (PG)
(ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)
JOHN C. REILLY, SARAH SILVARMAN, GAL GADOT

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 4.00 + 8.45 PM

12-SPIDER MAN INTO THE SPIDER VERSE (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)
HAILEE STEINFELD, NICOLAS CAGE, MAHERSHALA ALI

DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 PM

13-BUMBLEBEE (PG-13) (ACTION /ADVENTURE/SCI-FICTION)
HAILEE STEINFELD, JOHN CENA, JORGE LENDEBOG JR.

DAILY AT: 1.45 + 6.45 + 11.45 PM

14-SPIDER MAN INTO THE SPIDER VERSE (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)
HAILEE STEINFELD, NICOLAS CAGE, MAHERSHALA ALI

DAILY AT: 1.45 + 6.45 + 11.45 PM

SEEF (I)

1-URI: THE SURGICAL STRIKE (15+) (HINDI/ACTION/DRAMA) NEW
VICKY KAUSHAL, KIRTI KULHARI, PARESH RAWAL

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

2-BLACK 47 (15+) (ACTION/DRAMA) NEW
HUGO WEAVING, JAMES FRECHEVILLE, STEPHEN REA

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

3-ZOE (15+) (ROMANTIC/SCI-FICTION) NEW
EWAN MCGREGOR, LEA SEYDOUX, THEO JAMES

DAILY AT: 12.30 + 4.45 + 9.00 PM

4-PETTA (PG-15) (TAMIL/ACTION/THRILLER) NEW
RAJINIKANTH,VIJAY SETHUPATHI,SIMRAN,TRISHA

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 2.00 + 5.15 + 8.30 + 11.45 PM

5-VISWASAM (PG-15) (TAMIL) NEW
AJITH KUMAR, NAYANTHARA

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

6-NTR: KATHANAYAKUDU (PG-15) (TELUGU) NEW
NANDARUMI BALAKRISHNA, RAKUL PREET SINGH, VIDYA BALAN

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

7-VINAYA VIDHEYA RAMA () (TELUGU) NEW
KIARA ADVANI, RAM CHARAN AND VIVEK OBEROI

FROM FRIDAY 11TH: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

SAAR

1-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW
CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 + 6.15 + 8.15 + (10.30 PM THURS/FRI)

2-THE MULE (PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER) NEW
CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

DAILY AT: 12.45 + 3.15 + 5.45 + 8.30 + (11.00 PM THURS/FRI)

3-HOLMES & WATSON (15+) (COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW
WILL FERRELL, JOHN C. REILLY, REBECCA HALL

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 + 5.00 + 7.00 + 9.00 + (11.00 PM THURS/FRI)

4-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)
JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 8.00 + (11.00 PM THURS/FRI)

5-MARY POPPINS RETURNS (G) (ADVENTURE/MUSICAL/FAMILY)
EMILY BLUNT, LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, BEN WHISHAW

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.30 + 5.15 PM

AL HAMRA

1-PETTA (PG-15) (TAMIL/ACTION/THRILLER) NEW
RAJINIKANTH,VIJAY SETHUPATHI,SIMRAN,TRISHA

DAILY AT: 2.30 + 8.45 + (12.00 MN THURS/FRI)

2-VISWASAM (PG-15) (TAMIL) NEW
AJITH KUMAR, NAYANTHARA

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 5.45 PM

WADI AL SAIL

1-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG)
(ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW
CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

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

2-THE MULE (PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER) NEW
CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

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

3-HOLMES & WATSON (15+) (COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW
WILL FERRELL, JOHN C. REILLY, REBECCA HALL

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.15 + 3.15 + 5.15 + 7.15 + 9.15 + 11.15 PM

4-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)
JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

5-SIMMBA (PG-15) (HINDI/ACTION/COMEDY/DRAMA/ROMANTIC)
RANVEER SINGH, AJAY DEVGN, SARA ALI KHAN

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

6-MARY POPPINS RETURNS (G)
(ADVENTURE/MUSICAL/FAMILY)
EMILY BLUNT, LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, BEN WHISHAW

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM

Movie Review

Holmes & Watson wastes its cast in a brain-dead caper

Holmes & Watson, an American mystery buddy comedy film written and directed by Etan Cohen, stars Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly as the eponymous characters Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, with Rebecca Hall, Rob Brydon, Steve Coogan, and Ralph Fiennes in supporting roles. The plot follows the famed detective duo as they set out to find the culprit behind a threat at Buckingham Palace.

On review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 9 per cent based on 66 reviews, with a weighted average of 2.9/10. The website's critical consensus reads, "The lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of the adventures of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson than does Holmes and Watson." On Metacritic, the film has a weighted average score of 24 out of 100, based on 22 critics, indicating "generally unfavorable reviews". Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "D+" on an A+ to F scale, while those at PostTrak



John C. Reilly and Will Ferrell in a scene from Holmes & Watson

gave it one out of five stars and a 30pc "definite recommend".

Frank Scheck of The Hollywood Reporter called the film "a Christmas turkey" and wrote, "The overall shoddiness is typical of this feeble sendup that doesn't even manage to be as funny as the recent Benedict Cumberbatch and Robert Downey Jr.

versions." Ben Kenigsberg of The New York Times found the film dull, writing: "More laughs are all that would have been necessary to prevent the stagnation of Holmes & Watson. As the movie stands, smuggling in booze to dispel the sense of dull routine could only help." Ignatiy Vishnevetsky of The A.V. Club called it "a failure on al-

most every level," further saying, "it's pervaded by an air of extreme laziness. It's cheap and tacky—a bizarrely dated parody of Ritchie's Holmes (complete with a soundalike score) poisoned with rib-elbowing topical references and puerile gags. It's the Sherlock Holmes movie with the red 'Make England Great Again' hat and the lactating Watson."

More laughs are all that would have been necessary to prevent the stagnation of Holmes & Watson. As the movie stands, smuggling in booze to dispel the sense of dull routine could only help

BEN KENIGSBURG

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SUKHWINDER S/O BUTA SINGH, holding Indian Passport No. M4181632, dated 05.01.2015 issued at BAHRAIN having permanent residence at (full address in India) VPO. SAMRAI, PS. NOOR MAHAL TEH. PHILLLAUR DISTT. JALANDHAR, presently residing at (full address in Bahrain) Flat No. 11, Bldg- 147, Road 2004, Block 320, Al Hoor, Manama, Bahrain, will henceforth be known as (Given name) SUKHWINDER (Surname) SINGH. Objection(s) if any, may be forwarded to Embassy of India, P.O Box 26106, Bldg 1090, Road 2819, Block 428, Al Seef, Kingdom of Bahrain.

"I, SHRIRAM s/o BHABHUTI holding Indian Passport No. H 3460815 dated 03.03.2009 issued at LUCKNOW having permanent residence at (full address in India) GAGAHAN, GORAKHPURWA, BANSANGON, GORAKHPUR, UTTAR PRADESH. Presently residing at (full address in Bahrain) Building. 914, Road. 31, Block. 623, Kingdom of Bahrain will henceforth be known as (given name) SHRI (Surname) RAM. Objection(s) if any, may be forwarded to Embassy of India, P.O Box 26106, Bldg 1090, Road 2819, Block 428, Al Seef, Kingdom of Bahrain.

celebs



Katherine and Pratt

Anna Faris congratulates Pratt on engagement

Los Angeles

Chris Pratt's ex wife Anna Faris has congratulated the actor on his engagement to girlfriend Katherine Schwarzenegger.

Faris hit Instagram to comment one day after Pratt shared that he had popped the question to Schwarzenegger following just seven months of dating, reported dailymail.co.uk.

The "Mom" actress, 42, wrote on his post: "I'm so happy for you both!! Congratulations!"

Faris and Pratt, 39, split up in August 2017 after eight years of marriage and have remained friendly exes for the sake of their son Jack, six.

They tied the knot in July 2009 when they eloped to Bali, Indonesia on a whim and they finalised their divorce just three months ago in October 2018.

Jaden Smith to perform in India in February

Los Angeles

American rapper-actor Jaden Smith is set to perform songs from his debut album "Syre" during his maiden gig in India in February.

He will perform here as part of the multi-genre Vh1 Supersonic music festival.

Artistes like American music producer-DJ Marshmello, British musician Bonobo and drum and bass band Rudimental will also be a part of the sixth edition of the fest, which will be held on February 16 and 17 at Mahalaxmi Lawns, Pune.

Kim and Kanye West expecting fourth child

● **Kim and Kanye already have three children - North, Saint and Chicago - who are aged between five and one year. Chicago was also born by surrogate.**

Los Angeles

Kim Kardashian has confirmed she is expecting her fourth child with husband Kanye West during a US TV interview.

Kim revealed the couple were expecting a boy via a surrogate mother.

She was joined by her sisters Kourtney and Khloe Kardashian, who were said to be shocked that Kim was sharing the news.

Kim and Kanye already have

three children - North, Saint and Chicago - who are aged between five and one year. Chicago was also born by surrogate.

Kim confessed she'd already let the cat out of the bag after having too many alcoholic drinks at Christmas.

"Well, it's out there," she told Andy Cohen during an appearance on Watch What Happens Live.

"I got drunk at our Christmas Eve party and told some people. "I can't remember who I told because I never get drunk."

Kim gave no hint of when the baby was due, other than it would be "sometime soon".

Kim had previously said that rising gun crime in the US had made her "hesitant" to have more children, during an episode of Keeping Up With The Kardashians in 2018.



Kim and Kanye

Carlton Gebbia officially divorced

Los Angeles

"Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" alum Carlton Gebbia is officially single as her divorce from businessman husband David Gebbia is now final.

According to documents obtained by tmz.com, the judge signed off on the divorce settlement on Thursday.

David filed for divorce in November 2017 citing irreconcilable differences but they had separated

nearly a year before that. Carlton and David got married back in September 1997 and have three children -- two teenage daughters and a six-year-old son.

Carlton was also sued by her housekeeper who claimed Carlton drunkenly attacked her. However, she denied the attack.



Gebbia

R. Kelly music put on hold by label

Los Angeles

Amidst sexual assault allegations against singer R.Kelly, the label RCA/Sony has decided not to put any more money behind his projects.

The 52-year-old singer-songwriter has two more albums on his contract with the label, but now RCA/Sony has put his songs on hold until the criminal investigations finish, reports dailymail.co.uk.

It is not clear whether Kelly has a morals clause in his contract, which could allow the flagship recording label of Sony Music Group to end their work with him.

The "Same Girl" hitmaker is accused of running an 'abusive cult' in the documentary "Surviving R Kelly", which claims he preyed on dozens of young women.



Kelly

'Serenity' asks a lot from audience: Anne Hathaway

Los Angeles

Actress Anne Hathaway says the complexities of her upcoming film "Serenity" asks a lot from the audience.

The "Devil Wears Prada" star took to Instagram to explain the complexities of the "lushly intelligent" movie and advised that a discussion after watching the movie will be required for film, which she said is made for adults who are "into" things that "don't come standard", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Alongside a photograph of her standing topless with actor Matthew McConaughey behind her, Hathaway captioned the post: "Matthew and I are learning our film 'Serenity' isn't easily broken down into sound bytes. I really like movies like that, but just in case I am in the minority, here are some reasons why I think you should see it: "I find 'Serenity' to be a thrilling, ambitious, violent, spiritual, erotic, charged, dark, damning, contradictory, maddening, lushly intelligent film from the brilliant mind of Steven Knight."



Hathaway

Sam Smith undergoes surgery

Los Angeles

Singer Sam Smith on Tuesday underwent a surgery to remove a sty from his left eye.

Before getting operated, the "Pray" singer took to social media and told his fans that he was "scared" of surgery, reported dailymail.co.uk.

He also posted photographs of his swollen eye and captioned it as "Stye with me".

"So. I'm getting it operated on in 20 minutes. I'm scared and also super hyped that I get to wear the pirate patch," he wrote.

However, he later said he was being "super dramatic".

The multiple Grammy Award winner has dealt with more serious health issues in the past, including mental health and anxiety.



Sam

'Mission: Impossible' 7, 8 to be shot back-to-back

London

Actor Tom Cruise has said "Mission: Impossible" 7 and 8 will be shot back-to-back for summer 2021 and 2022.

The first six films have made more than \$3.5 billion at the box office. So, it was hardly a surprise when Cruise announced on Tuesday that parts seven and eight will soon be on their way, reports dailymail.co.uk.

Both he and director Christopher Mc-



Cruise

Quarrie confirmed the next two instalments of the action films will be filmed back-to-back, scheduled to arrive in two and three years' time.

Cruise has starred in all the six instalments as IMF agent Ethan Hunt.

Besides Cruise, there is no word on casting yet. However, Ving Rhames, the only other person to star in all six so far as Luther Stickell is expected to return.



Late winner as Aussies down Syria to go through

A creditable draw with Jordan and a late Australia goal against Syria kept Palestine in the Asian Cup for the time being

● An injury time long range effort from Tom Rogic was enough to seal Australia's place in the Round of 16 and eliminate Syria

AFP | Al-Ain

Tom Rogic's injury-time thunderbolt settled an Asian Cup thriller yesterday as defending champions Australia beat Syria 3-2 to reach the last 16 and knock out their war-torn rivals.

The result meant the holders finished second in Group B behind Jordan, whose simultaneous 0-0 draw with Palestine gave the Palestinians hope of qualifying as one of the best third-placed teams.

Syria, vocally backed by thousands of their fans in Al Ain, twice fought back from a goal behind before Rogic slammed home the winner in the third minute of injury time.

Injury-hit Australia, with only six outfield players on the bench, needed just a draw to go through as they kicked off at the same time as Jordan against Palestine.

Syria looked an early threat before Australia started to get a grip on the game and Hibernian striker Jamie Maclaren flashed a header just wide.

There was drama on the half-hour when a Syrian free-kick bounced through a packed penalty area and into the net, but the goal was ruled out for a foul



Syria's midfielder Zaher Midani jumps for the ball against Australia's defender Mark Milligan (C-face)

on Mark Milligan.

But Australia were getting close and Awer Mabil, after seeing one raking shot blocked, unleashed a fabulous effort which curled into the top corner four minutes before half-time.

However, the lead lasted just two minutes as Mouaiad Alajjaan's cross picked out Omar Khrbin, who on his 25th birthday saw his header saved by Mat Ryan but then gobbled up the rebound.

On 54 minutes, Chris Ikonomidis's shot was hooked away by Omro Al Midani -- but the ball was judged to have crossed the line by the additional assis-

tant referee, who was surrounded by Syrian players.

Syria penalty

The incident silenced the massed ranks of Syrian fans but there was uproar around the stadium shortly afterwards when their team vehemently claimed a penalty for a Milligan handball.

Australia looked firmly in control and they could have had a third goal when substitute Apostolos Giannou saw a

low shot cannon off the base of the upright.

But Mexican referee Cesar Ramos threw Syria a lifeline when he gave them a penalty after Omar Al Soma went down in the box -- and the striker stroked them level once more with 10 minutes to go.

It looked like Syria would escape with a vital point before Celtic's Rogic, playing the tournament with a broken hand, belted Australia's third from distance.

English FA Cup

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|--------|
| Palestine | 0 | - | 0 | Jordan |
| Australia | 3 | - | 2 | Syria |

BIC announces last two weeks of discount for F1 tickets



F1 cars during a race at BIC (file photo)

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) announced that the fantastic Early Bird discount currently being offered on tickets to the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2019 will end on January 31. With the most popular tickets already selling fast, fans are urged to book soon to avoid disappointment.

In the current offer, ticket prices are reduced by up to

15 per cent for the highly anticipated Formula 1 weekend, which takes place over four exciting days from March 28 to 31 in Sakhir.

The Bahrain Grand Prix is set to be the second of 21 races on the 2019 FIA Formula 1 World Championship, and it will be the 999th World Championship race in the history of Formula 1.

It is being held as part of the landmark 15th season of BIC, and it will also be the sixth time it is taking place under BIC's state-of-the-art floodlights as a night race, making it one of the most captivating and visually exciting events of the entire Formula 1 season.

These Early Bird discounts give fans the best value for money with so much on offer both with on-the-track action and off-the-track entertainment all weekend long.

999th

World Championship race in the history of Formula 1 is to be held in Bahrain

Man City striker Jesus vows no let-up in Liverpool title chase

AFP | Manchester

Manchester. In the current offer, ticket prices are reduced by up to 15 per cent for the highly anticipated Formula 1 weekend, which takes place over four exciting days from March 28 to 31 in Sakhir.

Manchester City will not let up in their pursuit of Premier

League leaders Liverpool.

The Brazil striker scored another two, taking his tally to seven in three appearances, as City beat Wolves 3-0 on Monday to cut Liverpool's lead back to four points.

The 21-year-old, who has now 14 goals for the season, said: "I am feeling good and my confidence is better for scoring goals."

Indian footballers win hearts despite Asian Cup exit



India's defender Sandesh Jhingani (L) protects India's goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu

AFP | New Delhi

Football fans and pundits were full of praise for India yesterday even as an injury-time penalty cost the Blue Tigers an unlikely spot in the Asian Cup knockout stages and prompted the coach to resign.

Despite its giant population India is a footballing minnow at a lowly 97th in FIFA's world rankings, and its players are used to being overshadowed by the nation's glamorous millionaire cricketers.

They did not even qualify for the last Asian Cup, but dared to dream of glory after stunning Thailand 4-1 in their open-

ing match in the United Arab Emirates.

Having lost to the hosts in their second match, the 0-0 scoreline going into injury time in their final match Monday against Bahrain would have been sufficient to see India through.

But a rash foul by skipper Pronay Halder gave Bahrain a penalty, converted coolly by Jamal Rashed.

The Hindu daily said India had "won hearts aplenty" with their performances, earning plaudits as they "threw their bodies at the ball, and put up a fearless display."

S Korea seek to lift 'curse of the fake gold'

AFP | Seoul

South Korean football officials have presented the children of four dead players with gold medals in what is being seen as an attempt to lift a supposed curse on the team at the Asian Cup.

The Taeguk Warriors are an Asian footballing powerhouse, making nine consecutive appearances at the World Cup since 1986, reaching the semi-finals in 2002, and taking bronze at the 2012 London Olympics.

But they have not lifted the Asian Cup since winning its first two editions in 1956 and 1960.

They have qualified from the group stage at the current tournament in Qatar, and face China on Wednesday to decide who will top Group C, boosted by the arrival of talismanic Tottenham Hotspurs striker Son Heung-min.

Among some superstitious South Koreans, the title drought is blamed on fake gold medals the Korean Football Association handed their players to celebrate the 1960 victory.

The decorations turned out to be gold-plated lead -- many believe a corrupt official pocketed the money earmarked for the precious metal -- and South Korea's hopes of winning the tournament have gone down like a lead balloon ever since.



A day before the current tournament opened, relatives of four more deceased 1960 players were presented with pure gold medals at the KFA headquarters in Seoul

“The gold medals we received were fake,” Park Kyung-hwa, a former footballer with the 1960 national team, told Yonhap news agency.

“They were coated with cheap gold, and the coating peeled off easily,” he added.

The outraged players returned the fake medals and demanded the KFA present them real ones, but have had to wait for more than 50 years to receive them.

In 2014, the KFA finally made pure gold medals for the 1960 team, but could only contact three surviving footballers and family members of three more who had died. The following year the national team reached the Asian Cup final for the first time since 1988, but lost 2-1 to Australia in extra time.

“Giving back six gold medals wasn't apparently powerful enough to fully break the curse,” Yonhap said, adding the KFA was “hoping” for “more power” to lift the spell.

Despite living in one of the

world's most technologically advanced countries, many Koreans remain superstitious and consult shamans for medical reasons, divination or just personal advice.

Widely held beliefs include associating the number four with death and that writing your name in red ink will bring bad luck, while a dream featuring pigs will invoke wealth.

A day before the current tournament opened, relatives of four more deceased 1960 players were presented with pure gold medals at the KFA headquarters in Seoul.

Ominous Serena, Djokovic make Open statements

Alexander Zverev hits 'perfection' as he cruises into Australian Open second round

● Veteran Venus battles back to reach second round

● Osaka beats the bugs to power into second round

● Nishikori survives massive scare after qualifier wilts in heat

AFP | Melbourne

A focused Serena Williams sent an ominous Australian Open warning with a 49-minute first-round demolition yesterday as world number one Novak Djokovic destroyed his opponent as he targets a record seventh title.

The American giant is bidding to match Margaret Court's record of 24 Grand Slam crowns on her first return to Melbourne Park since winning in 2017 while eight weeks pregnant.

Now 37, she kept a low profile in the lead-up to the opening major of the year and came out of the blocks flying against fellow mum Tatjana Maria, pummeling her German opponent 6-0, 6-2.

Sporting a striking jade green jumpsuit and fine mesh stockings on Rod Laver Arena, the 16th seed wasted no time in get-



Serbia's Novak Djokovic hits a return against Mitchell Krueger of the US

ting out of the blistering Melbourne heat and said it was good to be back.

"The last time I was here I was pregnant and playing at the same time which is insane," she said. "It's weird walking back on -- by myself this time -- it feels good. I have so many memories from last time I was here."

Bidding for an eighth Mel-

bourne Park crown, few are betting against Williams despite her lowly seeding and she next faces Canadian Eugenie Bouchard who eased past China's Peng Shuai.

Williams played at the mixed teams Hopman Cup in Perth this month, but her appearance yesterday was her first outing on tour since a meltdown in losing

the US Open final to Naomi Osaka in September.

Japan's Osaka, seeded four, begins her campaign in the night match on Rod Laver Arena against Poland's Magda Linette.

Fourth seed Alexander Zverev, who is looking to win his first Slam title and establish himself as a serious threat to Djokovic, Federer and Rafael Nadal,

cruised past Aljaz Bedene 6-4, 6-1, 6-4.

Escape act

But eighth seed Kei Nishikori, who won in Brisbane last week, had a lucky escape.

The Japanese star looked down and out against little known qualifier Kamil Majchrzak, losing the first two sets before the Pole began badly cramping.

He bravely fought on before calling it a day after winning just two of the next 17 games.

Elsewhere, 2014 champion Stan Wawrinka benefited from an opponent pulling out, with Ernests Gulbis calling it quits after hurting his back in the second set.

Among the women, sixth seed Elina Svitolina easily progressed, as did Williams' sister Venus, who incredibly played her first Grand Slam tournament 22 years ago.

Seventh seed Karolina Pliskova, who has made the quarter-finals in her last two appearances at Melbourne Park, also went through, but 10th seed Darya Kasatkina slumped out to Switzerland's Timea Bacsinszky.

Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech to retire at end of season

AFP | London

Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech announced yesterday that he will retire at the end of the season.

The 36-year-old, who won four Premier League titles with Chelsea, revealed his decision on Twitter.

He wrote: "This is my 20th season as a professional player and it is 20 years since I signed my first professional contract, so it feels like the right time to announce that I will retire at the end of this season."

The Czech, who arrived in the Premier League with Chelsea in 2004 and moved to Arsenal in 2015, added: "Having

played 15 years in the Premier League and won every single trophy possible, I feel like I have achieved everything I set out to achieve.

"I will continue to work hard at Arsenal to hopefully win one more trophy this season, then I am looking forward to seeing what life holds for me off the pitch."

Cech joined Arsenal in 2015 and has made 129 appearances for the Gunners after winning multiple trophies at rivals Chelsea.



Petr Cech

Viviani wins opening Tour Down Under stage in brutal heat



Italian Elia Viviani of Deceuninck - Quick-Step celebrates after winning the first stage of the 'Tour Down Under' cycling race

AFP | Adelaide, Australia

Italy's Elia Viviani won a tight finish to take the opening stage of Australia's Tour Down Under in brutal temperatures in Adelaide yesterday.

Deceuninck-Quick-Step's Viviani, the omnium gold medalist at the 2016 Rio Olympics and one of the world's leading sprinters, powered out of the pack to reel in Germany's Max Walscheid and claim the ochre jersey after the first of six stages.

Walscheid of Team Sunweb finished second across the line ahead of another Italian in the CCC Team, Jakub Mareczko.

It was a reversal of fortunes for Viviani, 29, who crashed on the final lap of Sunday's Down Under Classic criterium leading into the tour.

"When you start the World Tour season with the stage win and the leader's jersey here in Tour Down Under, it's the best way," said Viviani.

"Now we know we've done a good job during the winter -- that's the question we've already answered."

Viviani comes into the Tour Down Under on the back of a successful 2018 season.

The Italian won 18 races, including stage 3 at Tour Down Under, overall classification at Dubai Tour, four stages at Giro d'Italia, Hamburg Classics race and three stages at Vuelta a Espana.

The riders braved temperatures hovering above 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in the opening 129-kilometre (80-mile) stage from North Adelaide to Port Adelaide.

Dhoni, Kohli steer India to win over Australia

● India gain series-leveling win against Australia forcing the series into decider

AFP | Adelaide, Australia

Veteran wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni steered India to a six-wicket victory over Australia in the second one-day international to level the series in Adelaide yesterday.

Former skipper Dhoni, playing in his 334th ODI, coolly guided India across the line with four balls to spare to back up a dazzling century from captain Virat Kohli.

India successfully chased down a target of 299 runs set by Australia who scored 298 for nine with Shaun Marsh scoring 131 off 123 balls.



39
ODI centuries have been scored by Virat Kohli



India's Virat Kohli plays a shot

The three-match series now goes to a decider in Melbourne on Friday after Australia won the opening game in Sydney by 34 runs.

"Tonight was an MS (Dhoni) classic," man-of-the-match Kohli said. "He takes the game till the end, when only he knows what's going on in his mind, and he backs himself to hit those big shots at the end."

"And hats off to Dinesh (Karthik) too, he came in and took the pressure off him."

When Kohli holed out to Glenn Maxwell at deep mid-wicket to end his stellar

knock of 104 off 112 balls, it was 37-year-old Dhoni who took charge to pilot his side home with support from Karthik with an unbeaten 25.

Dhoni was physically struggling in the hot conditions and needed treatment from the team physio to finish his match-winning knock and keep India alive in the series.

India lost four wickets in their chase after Australia's total.

Shikhar Dhawan hit out before he was snapped up by Usman Khawaja at mid-wicket off Jason Behrendorff for 32 from 28 balls in the eighth over.

| Australia | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| A. Carey c Dhawan b Shami | 18 |
| A. Finch b Kumar | 6 |
| U. Khawaja run out (Jadeja) | 21 |
| S. Marsh c Jadeja b Kumar | 131 |
| P. Handscomb st Dhoni b Jadeja | 20 |
| M. Stoinis c Dhoni b Shami | 29 |
| G. Maxwell c Karthik b Kumar | 48 |
| J. Richardson c Dhawan b Shami | 2 |
| N. Lyon not out | 12 |
| P. Siddle c Kohli b Kumar | 0 |
| J. Behrendorff not out | 1 |
| Extras (lb4, w6) | 10 |
| Total (9 wickets; 50 overs) | 298 |
| India | |
| R. Sharma c Handscomb b Stoinis | 43 |
| S. Dhawan c Khawaja b Behrendorff | 32 |
| V. Kohli c Maxwell b Richardson | 104 |
| A. Rayudu c Stoinis b Maxwell | 24 |
| M.S. Dhoni not out | 55 |
| D. Karthik not out | 25 |
| Extras (lb9, w7) | 16 |
| Total (4 wickets; 49.2 overs) | 299 |

India were sailing along before Sydney centurion Rohit Sharma on 43 top-edged Marcus Stoinis to deep forward square where Peter Handscomb, looking into the setting sun, took a safe catch to break up a dangerous 54-run partnership with Kohli.

Ambati Rayudu was the third wicket to fall caught at deep mid-wicket by Stoinis off Maxwell for 24.

Kohli was annoyed to get out with the job unfinished and six overs left but Dhoni used his vast experience to get his team safely home.