

Directing makes me much better actor: Brie Larson

Oscar winning-actress Brie Larson donned the director's hat for her new project "Unicorn Store". She says her new directing duties have made her a better actor. **P14**

Reparations: A conversation worth having

THE DAILY tribune

Emilia, Sophie share excitement over GoT season finale

3D print of heart with human tissue, vessels unveiled

Nearly '150 killed in battle for Tripoli'

Tripoli

At least 147 people have been killed and 614 wounded in the offensive launched on April 4 by Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar to take the capital Tripoli, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said yesterday.

The clashes have displaced more than 18,000 people, according to the latest figures from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.



At least eight ambulances have been hit during clashes in the southern outskirts of the capital.

WHO

Fighting broke out as Haftar's forces sought to take control of Tripoli from loyalists of the internationally backed Government of National Accord (GNA) which is based in the capital.

The rising number of casualties has prompted the WHO to deploy surgical teams "to support Tripoli-area hospitals as they cope with the influx of trauma cases," the UN agency wrote on Twitter.

Measles cases triple globally

Geneva

The number of measles cases reported worldwide in the first three months of 2019 has tripled compared with the same time last year, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The UN body said provisional data indicated a "clear trend", with all regions of the world seeing outbreaks. Africa had witnessed the most dramatic rise - up 700 per cent. The agency said actual numbers may be far greater, since only one in 10 cases globally are reported.

Literary success hailed



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received Dr Mohammed Taher Ibn Al Shaikh Sulaiman Al Madani and poet Mohammed Hadi Al Halwachi yesterday. HM the King praised their fruitful efforts in religious and literary fields, wishing them success. They greeted His Majesty expressing their deep gratitude and wishing Bahrain constant progress and prosperity under His Majesty's wise leadership.

'No one above law'

Cabinet session warns strict action against those who fuel hatred, harm civil peace

● **The Cabinet welcomed the practical steps taken by the US Administration, under the leadership of President Donald Trump, in the fight against international terrorism.**

● **The session affirmed Bahrain's support for sisterly Sudan, hailing the efforts made by Sudan's Transitional Council.**

Manama

The Cabinet yesterday chaired by His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, yesterday stressed that the freedom of opinion and expression guaranteed by the Constitution does by no means imply



HRH the Premier chairs the Cabinet in the presence of HRH the Crown Prince.

Premier's speech hailed

The Cabinet lauded the initiative taken by HRH the Prime Minister to hold a ceremony at the UN headquarters in Vienna marking the International Day of Conscience, praising HRH Premier's keynote speech during the festivity, in which he said that the global conscience should be more positive, and urged concerted efforts by the International Community to promote security and stability. The initiative reflects His Royal Highness's keenness to support all efforts that promote the universal conscience and the process of international collective action in the service of mankind, humanity, security and peace. The celebration was held within the framework of co-operation and partnership between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Federation of World Peace and Love.

36 projects included in the third edition of the Unified Framework for the Government Programmes with Priority will be implemented soon.

targeting the sovereignty and independence of the State and its constitutional institutions or religions, sects and components of society.

The session pointed out that

there will be zero tolerance towards those who fuel sedition and harm civil peace, affirming that no one is immune when it comes to enforcing the laws of the land.

HRH the Premier gave strict instructions to take stringent legal measures against calls that incite hatred, threaten civic or social peace and abuse the rights and reputation of others, as well as against attempts to defame constitutional and legal institutions and entities.

Among other things, the session approved, based on a recommendation by the Executive Committee, led by HRH the Crown Prince, to implement 36 programmes included in the third edition of the Unified Framework for the Government Programmes with Priority during the period 2019-2022.

The programmes, which are directly related to the main themes of the Government Action Plan (GAP) 2019-2022, meet the requirements of efforts to achieve financial, development and economic sustainability, consolidate the basic fundamentals of the state and society and ensure a supportive environment for sustainable development.

FIRE HORROR

Paris disfigured as blaze engulfs Notre Dame Cathedral

Paris

A fire broke out at Notre Dame Cathedral in Central Paris yesterday afternoon, a spokesman from the fire department said.

Smoke could be seen billowing out from the top of the medieval cathedral, as flames leapt out besides its two bell towers, witnesses said, while black smoke was seen shooting from the base of the spire, which is undergoing renovation.

Fire spread rapidly through a major portion of the magnificent Gothic cathedral at the heart of Paris.

The Paris mayor, Anne Hidalgo, said the fire service was currently "trying to control the flames."



The soaring spire collapsed in flames.

The soaring spire collapsed in flames, and a church spokesman says the entire wooden interior of the 12th century landmark is burning and likely to be destroyed.

The massive fire engulfed the roof of the cathedral in the heart of the French capital as Parisians watched in horror.

Notre Dame spokesman Andre Finot told French media: "Everything is burning, nothing will remain from the frame."

The cathedral is home to incalculable works of art and is one of the world's most famous tourist attractions.

Paris is disfigured. The city will never be like it was before," said Philippe, a communications worker, who had biked over after being alerted of the fire by a friend.



02 Meeting highlights national unity

03 Focus on Malaysia ties

04 Support to SMEs stressed



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Meeting highlights national unity

Manama

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa received His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, at the Gudaibiya Palace yesterday.

HRH the Premier and HRH the Crown Prince stressed that the ongoing developments and challenges require cementing and supporting national unity, warning of some practises aimed at affecting the bases of pluralism and complementarity in the Bahraini society.



HRH the Premier receives HRH the Crown Prince

They pointed out that the government will not hesitate to take all necessary measures that would preserve civic peace, and put an end to any acts aiming to take advantage of the wide scope of freedom to fuel hatred and falsify facts in a way that would have a negative impact on the cohesive social fabric.

HRH the Prime Minister and HRH the Crown Prince reviewed the measures that ministries and the relevant state departments have been directed to take to ensure that all platforms that are available for everyone should not be used in a way that would affect the Bahraini society's values and morals.

HRH Premier's support for Bahraini-US relations lauded

Manama

HRH Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa yesterday delegated Shaikh Khalifa bin Rashid Al Khalifa and Southern Governor Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali Al Khalifa to attend a celebration hosted by US Ambassador to Bahrain, Justin Siberell, to mark America's 243rd Independence Day.

Shaikh Khalifa bin Rashid and Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali conveyed greetings and congratulations of HRH the Prime Minister to Leadership, govern-



Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali, Shaikh Khalifa bin Rashid, Mr Siberell along with other dignitaries at the cake-cutting ceremony marking the occasion.

ment and people of the United States of America, wishing the friendly country and its people durable growth and advancement.

They highlighted the depth of the bilateral relations and cooperation based on mutual respect and keenness to achieve joint interests.

The US Ambassador expressed sincere appreciation of HRH the Prime Minister's support for promoting the bilateral relations and cooperation, stressing to broaden cooperation to meet the aspirations of the two friendly nations.



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Focus on Malaysia ties

HRH the Premier hails growing ties between the Kingdom and Malaysia

● **HRH the Prime Minister praised strong and growing relations between both countries and common keenness to further bolster them.**

● **He affirmed Bahrain's unrelenting efforts to promote the business and investment climate.**

Manama

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa stressed that boosting economic co-operation between countries promotes investment and entrepreneurship.

The Prime Minister affirmed the Kingdom's keenness to bol-

ster relations with Malaysia and enhance bilateral economic partnership, pointing out the promising capabilities of both countries given the location of Bahrain as a gateway to the Gulf region and an important regional financial and investment hub.

He also underlined the need to take advantage of Malaysia's capabilities and distinguished status in the Association of South-east Asian Nations (Asean) group.

HRH the Premier was speaking as he received at Gudaibiya Palace yesterday Malaysian Entrepreneurship Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Yusof and his accompanying delegation.

The Malaysian minister conveyed to HRH the Prime Minister the greetings of his Malaysian counterpart Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad and his best wishes of more progress and prosperity to Bahrain.



HRH the Premier receives Mr Redzuan Yusof.

HRH the Premier asked the Malaysian Minister to convey his greetings to his Malaysian counterpart as well as his best wishes of more growth and prosperity to the Malaysian people.

He praised strong and growing relations between both countries and common keenness to further bolster them for the best interest of both countries and peoples.

He affirmed Bahrain's unrelenting efforts to promote the business and investment climate and boost its competitiveness and attractiveness to foreign capitals.

The Malaysian Minister expressed thanks and respect to HRH the Premier for his efforts to enhance bilateral relations, lauding deep-rooted ties binding both countries.

He also praised the key role played by HRH the Premier in fast-tracking development in Bahrain, lauding the Kingdom's achievements in various fields.

Lawmaker calls to appoint more govt doctors

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Zafran

Only three government employed doctors are available to serve a population of over 10,000 people in the third constituency of the Northern Governorate, it was claimed.

A new health centre and more doctors are needed to meet the health care needs of people in Budaiya and Jasrah, according to MP Abdullah Al Dosari.

The representative for the third constituency of the Northern Governorate said that the people there have been demanding for a health centre for a long time now.

He urged the Ministry of Health to speed up the procedure to build a health centre for the constituency.

"Currently, the public health facilities in areas including Budaiya and Jasrah is not up to the mark. As of now, there is only a clinic where there are just three doctors.



A new health centre and more doctors are needed to meet the health care needs of people in Budaiya and Jasrah.

MR AL DOSARI

"The clinic is a modest one without much facilities and it is not able to cater to the needs of 10,700 people registered there.

"There are 3,600 people for each doctor while according to the established standards there should be at least one doctor for every 2,000 people," he said.

According to the Ministry of Health, efforts to build a health centre in the area is being delayed due to lack of availability of land.

However, the ministry previously had assured that more health centres were being planned for areas including Budaiya and Salman City.

Meanwhile, the ministry as-

ured that a number of measures are being taken to ensure a reduction in waiting time at the accident and emergency section of the Kingdom's largest hospital.

The Minister of Health Dr Faeqa Al Saleh said that the measures to be taken include redirecting some non-emergency cases to the health centres, training the public on CPR, training the public with basic skills to attend certain cases at home and updating the systems for the department.

Man held for circulating false news

Manama

Public Prosecutor Abdullah Al Thawadi said the Public Prosecution Office had received a communication from the Cyber Crime Directorate saying that an individual posted on his social media account rumours that would harm national security, public order and interest.

He said the Public Prosecution's investigations revealed that the individual had published on his social media account information questioning the government policies and its external relations, in addition to circulating false information that would undermine confidence in the coalition forces' capabilities and that their successes are mere false and misleading.

The Public Prosecution questioned the individual and ordered him to be remanded in custody pending further investigation after charging him with circulating false and malicious news and rumours in wartime that would weaken the social cohesion and damage the national security and public order.

Startup Factory to mentor budding entrepreneurs



Shaikh Hisham with other dignitaries at the launching ceremony.

TDT | Manama

The Startup Factory - a new local Bahraini Incubator targeting the youth, was officially launched yesterday.

The event was held under the patronage of Shaikh Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Governor of the Capital.

Founded by Hamed Fakhro and located in Seef (Orchid Building), the Startup Factory is an incubator targeting local start-ups that need guidance and support.

Utilising a vast network of specialist mentors, companies, and government relationships, Mr Fakhro will guide and assist them as a mentor and show how to start

and maintain their companies.

Part of the services offered are: financial planning, cash flow management, product development, marketing training, team building, funding and mentorship.

"The Startup Factory is playing a role identifying and promoting our local talent, and our ultimate goal is to help create and nurture Bahraini companies that can export their goods and services to the rest of the world. I've already seen great potential and can't wait to see how they perform," he said.

According to Mr Fakhro, each start-up will have a custom-made programme tailored to their needs.

"Some need no help, just a finger in the right direction, and other need specialised training and guidance. Our partner companies are available for in-house training, mentorship, and downstream subcontracting.

"That means if your product/service is good enough, we have buyers ready to start ordering. Our selection criteria are tough, and starting a company is not for the faint of heart. So only apply if you are ready for a world of hurt. Welcome to The Startup Factory, the first step to making your dreams (and nightmares) come true."

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Finance Minister highlights technological initiatives at key meeting

TDT | Manama

The Minister of Finance and National Economy, Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, attended a meeting with the Ministers and Governors of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) headquarters in Washington, DC.

Held under the banner of "Technology and its Potential to Transform MENAP Economies," the meeting discussed how tech-

nological advancements are reshaping the global economy, and ways through which the region can capitalise on their benefits.

During the meeting, Shaikh Salman noted that promoting the development and deployment of emerging-technologies is of paramount importance to achieving long-term development goals.

In this regard, Shaikh Salman spoke of Bahrain's extensive digital transformation that continues to enhance public sector efficiency, and provide promising



Shaikh Salman speaks at the ministerial meeting held in Washington, DC.

investment opportunities.

He also spoke of Bahrain's efforts in adapting to technology advances, which include the launch of a regulatory sandbox for Fintech companies, the introduction of a 5G network, and strengthening the digital infrastructure to promote cloud computing.

Shaikh Salman went on to review key strategic technological initiatives, which include the national suggestions and complaints system 'Tawasul', an electronic communication

platform that delivers citizens' suggestions to various government entities; Sijilat, an online commercial registration system that simplifies business registration processes; and Benayat, a new streamlined process for issuing building permits.

Shaikh Salman concluded by highlighting the essential role multilateral agencies play in the proliferation of emerging technologies, and underlined the importance of bridging the digital divide between all countries.

Support to SMEs stressed

Industry Minister highlights the Kingdom's initiatives to promote entrepreneurship

Manama

Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, Zayed Al Zayani, delivered the opening speech at the Ministerial Meeting of Countries of Emerging Institutions, which was held on the sidelines of the World Entrepreneurship Congress yesterday.

The event was organised by the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) and the World Bank Group.

The minister welcomed all 48 delegations attending the World Entrepreneurship Congress.

He reviewed Bahrain's government diligent endeavour to support the emerging, small and medium enterprises sector that has witnessed a significant increase in contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

He thanked the initiatives adopted by the government, led by HRH the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and the support of HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to develop this vital sector.

The minister touched on Bah-



Mr Al Zayani delivers the opening speech at the ministerial meeting.

rain's experience in supporting emerging institutions by the formation of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Council, in addition to the adoption of a strategic plan aimed at raising the contribution to GDP, increasing exports and creating new employment opportunities.

He noted Bahrain's eagerness to be a centre of emerging projects through the constant development of legislation and laws on providing a stimulating investment environment.

Separately, Mr Al Zayani met Polish Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Enterprise and Technology Tadeusz Koscinski.

He briefed the Polish official

48
delegations representing various countries and institutions are attending the World Entrepreneurship Congress.

on the sector of entrepreneurship in the Kingdom and the Government's efforts to draw-up strategies aimed to develop entrepreneurship and provide the require facilities.

The minister stressed the im-

portance of expanding co-operation and bolstering co-ordination to develop the sector of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), promote entrepreneurship programmes and exchange expertise.

Mr Al Zayani also held discussions with US Small Business Administrator David Glacum, Malaysian Entrepreneurship Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Yusof, Nigerian Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment Aisha Abubakar, Maldivian Minister of State for Economic Development Mohamed Iyad Hameed and Nepalese Minister of Industry, Trade and Supplies Matrika Prasad Yadav.

Sacked employee reinstated by court order

TDT | Manama

The Court of Cassation yesterday ordered a rights institution to reinstate a Bahraini employee who was arbitrarily fired when the administration of the establishment was changed.

According to the plaintiff's lawyer, Dr Mohammed Abu-Hussain, the man worked as a part-timer at the institution for fifteen months back in the years 2013, 2014.

On August 17, 2014, the Secretary General of the institution appointed the man as a full-time employee due to his excellent performance. The decision was implemented on September 1 of the same year.

Dr AbuHussain explained that his client was given the choice by the officials at the institution to "either return to his part-time job or leave the establishment".

The lawyer said this happened eight months after the man was assigned his new job and shortly after the Secretary General, who hired the man as a full-time employee, had retired.

The administration also informed the Social Insurance Organisation (SIO) that the man was sacked as the head of the institution didn't approve his employment.

The man then filed a lawsuit at the Civil Court demanding the revocation of the administration's decision to fire him

The court ordered to reinstate the man as a full-time employee at the institution and to reject his other demands, including the financial compensation.

DR ABUHUSSAIN

from the institution and to pay him BD100 as temporary civil compensation.

The man lost the case as his employment wasn't approved by the president of the institution.

However, he appealed against the verdict on the pretext that he had worked for eight consecutive months as a full-time employee before the administration decided to sack him.

The court mentioned in its verdict that despite the absence of an approval on the appellant's employment from the institution's president, the latter's decision to sack the employee eight months later revokes his right of cancelling the employment.

The court ordered to reinstate the man as a full-time employee at the institution and to reject his other demands, including the financial compensation.

'Drug addict' acquitted after 'unconstitutional arrest'

TDT | Manama

A defendant was acquitted by the Minor Criminal Court of possessing and abusing narcotics, despite his blood and urine tests showed traces of drugs.

This was revealed yesterday by the defendant's lawyer Omair Salah, who pleaded for the release of his client, claiming that the nature of his arrest was against the Kingdom's Constitution.

The details of the case show that the suspects were stopped by a police patrol vehicle and were asked for their identities.

The officer said both men

The officer arrested my client without obtaining any order from the Public Prosecution, in violation of the Constitution.

MR SALAH

were in an "abnormal" state, and that they were high on a carburettor cleaner spray commonly known as "Stop".

Both men were arrested and the results of their blood and urine tests came out positive for abusing drugs.

On July 6 last year, the Public

Prosecution accused the defendant of possessing and abusing narcotics (Clonazepam and Diazepam), as shown in his blood and urine samples. However, Mr Salah questioned the arrest procedures, stating that they're breaching the Kingdom's constitution.

The lawyer told the judges that the officer arrested his client without obtaining any order from the Public Prosecution, in violation of Article 19/b of the Constitution, which stipulates that "a person cannot be arrested, detained, imprisoned or searched, or his place of residence specified or his freedom

of residence or movement restricted, except under the provision of the law and under judicial supervision".

Mr Salah also referred to the "Stop" spray as a regular substance that is used by automobile garages and mechanics, adding that it's not listed as a narcotic or prohibited substance criminalising its consumption.

The court ordered to acquit the defendant for the invalidation of the arrest and inspection procedures, and also for taking the sample of the defendant's blood and urine without obtaining the permission of the Public Prosecution.

TRA to launch registration for domain names in Arabic

TDT | Manama

In an effort to promote the Arabic electronic content, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), in co-operation with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), has worked to obtain the necessary permissions to manage the Internationalised Domain Name in Arabic equivalent to the existing English domain (.bh).

"The Arabic language is the fastest growing on the Internet in terms of content. Arabic is also the fifth language in the world in terms of the number of speakers which is very important and reflects TRA's keenness to provide a national domain promoting the development of websites with Arabic content," said TRA Acting



Shaikh Nasser bin Mohamed

General Director Shaikh Nasser bin Mohamed Al Khalifa.

"This initiative is the result of Ministerial Resolution No. 11 of 2018 which was published in the Official Gazette on the 18th of October 2018, stating that TRA is the official authority responsible for managing domain name operations in the Kingdom, and also the recently issued Royal Decree No 33 of 2019 stating that TRA is the government authority responsible for registering domain names and levying collectible fees," he added.

Suspects released in court bribe case

TDT | Manama

The Lower Criminal Court yesterday ordered to release two defendants, a court employee and his sister who is a lawyer, on guarantee of their place of residence.

The siblings were arrested

red-handed last February while receiving part of a BD50,000 bribe to release an inmate, according to prosecutors.

As reported by Tribune earlier, the defendants received the bribe to allegedly facilitate a convict's release from jail.

Their arrest came after the Anti-corruption and Economic and Electronic Security Directorate within the Interior Ministry, received a tip-off.

A trap was set to arrest the suspects and sources informed that the amount of the bribe is

believed to be BD50,000.

Sources also confirmed that the employee at the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments had been recently promoted to the post of an acting supervisor at the Civil Court and that he oddly disappeared on the day of his arrest.

WORLD
world**Nuclear fuel removed from crippled Japan plant**

Tokyo, Japan

The operator of Japan's crippled Fukushima power plant on Monday began removing atomic fuel from inside a building housing one of the reactors that melted down in 2011.

The delicate operation represents the first time the Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO) has pulled out fuel from inside a highly contaminated building containing the melted-down reactor, and comes four years behind schedule.

Due to high radiation levels, technicians used remote-controlled equipment to haul fuel from a "storage pool" inside the building.

Operations were briefly suspended early Monday afternoon after a problem with the equipment removing the fuel, but resumed shortly afterwards.

TEPCO estimates it will take two years to remove 566 units of nuclear fuel, most of which are already spent.

Chinese pharmaceutical plant accident kills 10

Beijing, China

Ten people suffocated to death by smoke inhalation at a large Chinese pharmaceutical firm yesterday, state media reported, the latest in a spate of deadly industrial incidents across the country.

Sparks from a pipe being welded at Qilu Tianhe Huishi Pharmaceutical Co. in eastern Shandong province caused a substance to catch fire and give off the smoke, state news agency Xinhua reported.

Twelve rescue workers were hurt but were not in life-threatening condition, it added.

Canada targets Maduro with more sanctions

Ottawa, Canada

Canada announced a fourth round of sanctions against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's regime on Monday in response to what it described as its continued "anti-democratic actions."

The 43 people targeted by the new measures -- which include asset freezes and dealings prohibitions -- are "responsible for the deteriorating situation in Venezuela," Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said in a statement.

Protestors step up pressure in Sudan

AFP | Khartoum, Sudan

Sudan's military rulers faced pressure from demonstrators and Western governments to hand power to a new civilian government yesterday as activists warned of an attempt to disperse a 10-day-old mass protest outside army headquarters.

Thousands remained camped outside the complex in Khartoum overnight after protest leaders issued demands to the military council set up following the ouster of veteran president Omar al-Bashir.

The organisation that spearheaded the months of protests leading to Bashir's fall, the Sudanese Professionals Association, called on their supporters to boost the numbers at the complex.

"There is an attempt to disperse the sit-in from the army headquarters area, they are trying to remove the barricades," the SPA said in a statement, without saying who was responsible.

"We call on our people to come immediately to the sit-in



Sudanese demonstrators surround soldiers as they gather near the military headquarters in the capital Khartoum

area to protect our revolution."

Witnesses said several army vehicles had surrounded the area and that troops were seen removing the barricades which demonstrators had put up as a security measure.

Britain's ambassador to Khartoum, Irfan Siddiq, met the new military council's deputy and stated his "top request was no violence and no attempt to forcibly break the sit-in".

In the meeting with Mohammad Hamdan Daglo, widely known as Himeidti, Siddiq wrote on Twitter that he also backed the SPA's call for a civilian administration.

The talks came a day after the embassies of Britain, the United States and Norway issued a joint statement saying the "legitimate change" the Sudanese people demanded had not taken place.

"It is time for the transitional military council and all other parties to enter into an inclusive dialogue to effect a transition to civilian rule," they said.

The SPA has said a transitional government and the armed forces must bring to justice both Bashir and officials from his feared National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

China using AI to identify Uighurs across China: NYT

Hong Kong, China

Chinese authorities are using a vast system of facial recognition technology to track its Uighur Muslim minority across the country, according to a story in the *New York Times*.

Beijing has already attracted widespread criticism for its treatment of Uighurs in the northwest region of Xinjiang, where up to one million members of mostly Muslim Turkic-speaking minority groups are held in internment camps, according to estimates cited by a UN panel.

But according to a *Times* article on Sunday, facial recognition technology -- integrated into China's huge networks of surveillance cameras -- has been programmed to look exclusively for Uighurs based on their appearance and keep records of their movements across China.

Police are now reportedly using artificial intelligence (AI) technology to target Uighurs outside Xinjiang, including in wealthy cities like Hangzhou and Wenzhou. The newspaper claims one central city scanned whether residents were Uighurs 500,000 times in one month alone.

Beijing announced a plan in 2017 to become the world leader in the AI industry. But



Representative picture (Courtesy of Fortune)

there have been concerns in the international community that new smart technology is being used for heavy police surveillance in recent years after violent inter-ethnic tensions.

The *Times* cites experts who say this is the first known example of a government intentionally using AI for racial profiling, with appetite for the new systems growing in cities across the country.

In the central province of Shaanxi, authorities reportedly "aimed to acquire a smart camera system last year that 'should support facial recognition to identify Uighur/non-Uighur attributes'."

3D print of heart with human tissue, vessels unveiled

Tel Aviv, Israel

Scientists in Israel unveiled a 3D print of a heart with human tissue and vessels yesterday, calling it a first and a "major medical breakthrough" that advances possibilities for transplants.

While it remains a far way off, scientists hope one day to be able to produce hearts suitable for transplant into humans as well as patches to regenerate defective hearts.

The heart produced by researchers at Tel Aviv University is about the size of a rabbit's.

It marked "the first time anyone anywhere has successfully engineered and printed an entire heart replete with cells, blood vessels, ventricles and chambers," said Tal Dvir, who led the project.

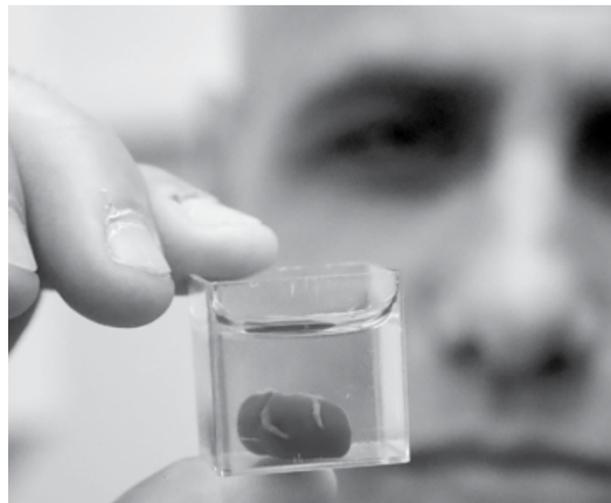
"People have managed to 3D-print the structure of a heart in the past, but not with cells or with blood vessels," he said.

But the scientists said many challenges remain before fully working 3D printed hearts will be available for transplant into patients.

Journalists were shown a 3D print of a heart about the size of a cherry at Tel Aviv University on Monday as the researchers announced their findings, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Advanced Science*.

Researchers must now teach the printed hearts "to behave" like real ones. The cells are currently able to contract, but do not yet have the ability to pump.

Then they plan to transplant



Israeli professor Tal Dvir presents a 3D print of heart with human tissue at the University of Tel Aviv

them into animal models, hopefully in about a year, said Dvir.

"Maybe, in 10 years, there will be organ printers in the finest hospitals around the world, and these procedures will be conducted routinely," he said.

But he said hospitals would likely start with simpler organs than hearts.

Producing 'ink'

In its statement announcing the research, Tel Aviv University called it a "major medical breakthrough."

A biopsy of fatty tissue was taken from patients that was used in the development of the "ink" for the 3D print.

First, patient-specific cardiac patches were created followed by the entire heart, the state-

ment said.

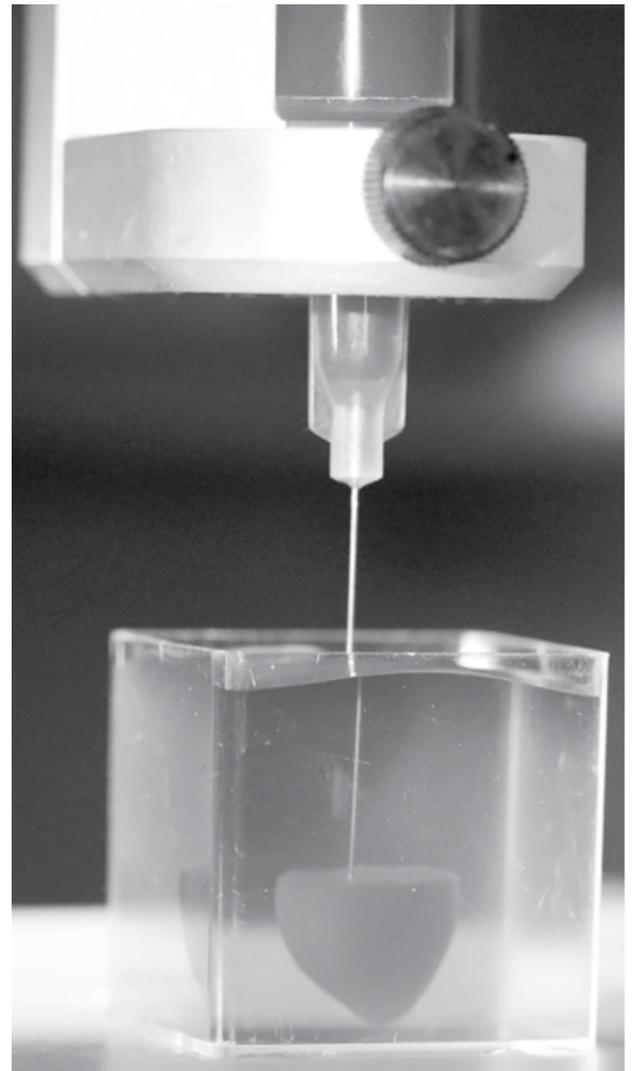
Using the patient's own tissue is important to eliminate the risk of an implant provoking an immune response and being rejected, Dvir said.

Challenges that remain include how to expand the cells to have enough tissue to recreate a human-sized heart, he said.

Current 3D printers are also limited by the size of their resolution and another challenge will be figuring out how to print all small blood vessels.

3D printing has opened up possibilities in numerous fields, provoking both promise and controversy.

The technology has developed to include 3D prints of everything from homes to guns.



This photo taken at the University of Tel Aviv shows a 3D print of heart with human tissue.

Nurse kidnapped by IS 5 yrs ago may be alive, Red Cross

● Louisa Akavi was snatched along with Syrian drivers Alaa Rajab and Nabil Bakdounes

● New Zealand said it disagreed with making the abduction public

● The New York Times has reported the Red Cross has reason to believe she is alive

Geneva, Switzerland

A New Zealand nurse believed abducted with two drivers by Islamic State militants in Syria in 2013 may still be alive, the International Committee of the Red Cross has revealed for the first time in an appeal for news of her whereabouts.

Louisa Akavi was snatched along with Syrian drivers Alaa Rajab and Nabil Bakdounes while travelling in a Red Cross convoy delivering supplies to Idlib, in the northwest of the country.

Armed men stopped their convoy on October 13, 2013, and abducted seven people, four of whom were released the following day.

The ICRC said it believed they were abducted by the Islamic State group (IS).

"Our latest credible information indicates that Louisa was alive in late 2018," the group said Sunday in a statement from Geneva.

"The ICRC has never been able to learn more details about Alaa and Nabil, and their fate is not known."

New Zealand said it disagreed with making the abduction public but did confirm it had dispatched a special forces unit to Syria to search for Akavi.



(L/R): Syria's Alaa Rajab, New Zealand's Louisa Akavi and Syria's Nabil Bakdounes were kidnapped more than five years ago. (Courtesy of Australian)



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern fends off questions from the media about New Zealand Red Cross nurse Louisa Akavi named by the New York Times during a post cabinet press conference at Parliament in Wellington

"This has involved members of the NZDF (New Zealand defence force) drawn from the Special Operations Force, and personnel have visited Syria

from time to time as required," New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters said Monday.

"This non-combat team was specifically focused on locating Louisa and identifying opportunities to recover her.

"The efforts to locate and recover Louisa are ongoing, and there are a number of operational or intelligence matters the government won't be commenting on," he said.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern expressed disappointment at the information released by the ICRC and refused to answer questions at her weekly press conference on Monday.

"It absolutely remains the government's view that it would be preferable if this case was not in the public domain," she said.

'Compassionate humanitarian'

Peters said information about the kidnapping had not been previously released for fear that any publicity would place the hostages at greater risk, and New Zealand media outlets which knew Akavi had been taken hostage agreed not to publish

and we thank them for their principled approach."

ICRC operations director Dominik Stillhart said it was an "extremely difficult time" for the families of the three.

"Louisa is a true and compassionate humanitarian. Alaa and Nabil were committed colleagues and an integral part of our aid deliveries.

"We call on anyone with information to please come forward. If our colleagues are still being held, we call for their immediate and unconditional release."

Akavi had carried out 17 field missions with the ICRC and the New Zealand Red Cross, the statement said. Rajab and Bakdounes were "dedicated husbands and caring fathers", it added.

A spokesman for Akavi's family, Tuaine Robati, said she knew the dangers she faced.

"She's been through tough times in her job before but she's stuck at it because she loves it," he said.

"Louisa is an incredibly experienced nurse and aid worker who knew the risks of her job. Our family misses her very much and is concerned for her safety."

The Kurdish-led SDF, backed by a US-led coalition, captured the last IS bastion in eastern Syria on March 23, and had detained thousands of suspected IS fighters.

But this could make it more difficult to find Akavi.

The New York Times has reported the Red Cross has reason to believe she is alive, because at least two people described seeing her in December at a clinic in Sousa, one of the final villages to be held by IS jihadists.

"We are speaking out today to publicly honour and acknowledge Louisa's, Alaa's, and Nabil's hardship and suffering," the ICRC statement said.

The organisation has 98 foreign workers and 580 Syrians working in the country.



The war in Syria, which began in 2011, has claimed more than 370,000 lives and forced millions of people to flee their homes.

the story.

"In these situations the priority must be the safety of the hostage and we received clear advice that any publicity would place Louisa at even greater risk," Peters said.

"The government is very grateful for the cooperation of media outlets over many years in respecting this advice and undertaking not to publish ...

Finnish election winner Rinne, ex-trade union tough guy



Chairman of the Finnish Social Democratic Party Antti Rinne

Helsinki, Finland

Finland's Antti Rinne, the Social Democrat leader who will now try to form a government after a slim election victory, is a former trade union boss once known as the "labour market gangster" for his fiery negotiating skills.

Aged 56, the silver-haired and serious-looking Rinne is no stranger to the top of government, having become finance minister in 2014 when he deposed the then leader of his party, Jutta Urpilainen, in a bitterly fought leadership contest.

Rinne had strongly opposed Urpilainen's decision to support the spending cuts put forward by the then government coalition's largest partner, the centre-right National Coalition Party.

After scraping victory in the 2019 election by the narrowest of margins, Rinne now faces the prospect of having to share a platform with the National Coalition once again, although this time as the senior partner.

Ideological clashes over the need for more austerity -- to which Rinne is vehemently opposed -- may well surface again. Having won the leadership of his party in 2014, Rinne continued to block any government attempts at austerity, although he led the Social Democrats to a disappointing defeat in the 2015 general elections when the party was relegated to fourth place behind the populist, then-euro-sceptic Finns Party.

White House denies Trump inciting violence against lawmaker

Washington, United States

The top Democrat in the US Congress ordered a safety review for a Muslim lawmaker and her family Sunday after accusing President Donald Trump of putting her in danger by tweeting a video of her spliced with footage of the 9/11 attacks.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi took time out from an official trip to issue a strong statement urging Trump to remove the clip featuring Minnesota congresswoman Ilhan Omar.

"Following the president's tweet, I spoke with the sergeant-at-arms to ensure that Capitol Police are conducting a security assessment to safeguard Congresswoman Omar, her family and her staff," she said.

"The president's words weigh a ton, and his hateful and inflammatory rhetoric creates real danger. President Trump must take down his disrespectful and dangerous video."

Trump's spokeswoman Sarah

Sanders, meanwhile, defended the president Sunday against accusations that he was inciting violence toward Omar.

Omar has been at the center of an escalating row after a clip emerged of her characterizing the deadliest attack on US soil as "some people did something."

On Friday, Trump tweeted a video that juxtaposed the snippet -- which Omar's fellow Democrats say was taken out of context -- with images of the hijacked planes used in the attacks crashing into the World Trade Center's twin towers that once dominated New York's skyline. Menacing music accompanies Omar's words.

The clip, which had been viewed more than 9.4 million times as of Sunday afternoon, ends with the words: "SEPTEMBER 11 2001 WE REMEMBER."

Omar said in a statement posted on Twitter Sunday that many of the increased threats she had received were "directly refer-



Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) walks from the House Chamber after a House vote on a resolution to condemn anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred and bigotry, at the US Capitol in Washington, DC

encing or replying to the President's video."

"Violent crimes and other acts of hate by right-wing extremists and white nationalists are on the rise in this country and around the world," she said. "We can no longer ignore that they are being encouraged by the occupant of the highest office in the land."

"We are all Americans. This is

endangering lives. It has to stop."

Prominent Democrats including Beto O'Rourke, Kamala Harris and Omar's fellow first-time Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez were quick to rush to Omar's defense, accusing the president and other Republicans of deliberately de-contextualizing her remarks and endangering her life.

Sanders, however, defended Trump, telling ABC television's "This Week" that "the president is wishing no ill will and certainly not violence towards anyone."

But, she added: "It's absolutely abhorrent the comments she continues to make and has made and (Democrats) look the other way. "I find her comments to be absolutely disgraceful and unbecoming of a member of Congress and I think that it's a good thing that the president is calling her out for those comments, and the big question is why aren't Democrats doing it as well?"

'Unwavering love for America'

The controversy arose after Omar delivered a 20-minute address to the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) shortly after the New Zealand mosque attacks in March.

"For far too long, we have lived with the discomfort of being a second-class citizen and, frankly, I'm tired of it, and every single

Muslim in this country should be tired of it," she said.

"CAIR was founded after 9/11," she added, "because they recognized that some people did something and that all of us were starting to lose access to our civil liberties."

The civil rights group was in fact founded in 1994 but grew significantly after 2001.

The speech did not initially receive significant attention until the snippet in question was highlighted weeks later by controversial Australian personality Mohammad Tawhidi who refers to himself as the "Imam of Peace."

Omar mounted a trenchant fightback, tweeting Saturday: "No one person -- no matter how corrupt, inept, or vicious -- can threaten my unwavering love for America."

"I stand undeterred to continue fighting for equal opportunity in our pursuit of happiness for all Americans."



The ghost ships of Lagos

AFP | Lagos, Nigeria

The two men in the motorised wooden canoe look around warily as they leave a towering shipwreck in the Lagos lagoon, with the barrels of oil on board barely concealed under rags.

The rusting hulk of iron and peeling paint has been battered by the elements and is half submerged in the water. Sprouts of green shoots on deck indicate how long it has been abandoned.

But on closer inspection, the wreck is a working storage facility for stolen or “bunkered” oil, as it is known in Nigeria.

“Oladele”, a 30-year-old who did not want to publicise his real name, has plied the waters on his boat since he was 15.

He says it’s not the only wreck that stores illegally imported oil brought into the port by the huge tankers delivering petrol and gas, then sold on in neighbouring Benin and Togo.

“Every ship does it. They will declare 10 tonnes but bring in 12,” he said.

“We will store them in the tanks, deep inside the wrecks, then at night usually, it will be picked up.”

Middle men could typically make at least \$80 to \$200 (70 to 180 euros) a trip for several years. “It’s big business,” he said.

Marine cemetery

Scores of shipwrecks in Lagos’ waterways, coastal waters and on the shores of its beaches have turned parts of its shoreline into a marine cemetery.

In Kiri-Kiri, the lagoon corridor, scores of wrecks and discarded ship scrap provide useful cover to hide illicit goods and barrels of oil and gas.

From there, the waters offer an easy route up the Lagos coast to Benin and beyond.

Expensive scrap metal culled from unmanned wrecks can be sold for thousands of dollars.

Nigeria is Africa’s largest oil producer, churning out about two million barrels a

day.

But a lack of fully functioning refineries means crude is exported, processed and then imported for use.

Much of it is shipped through the narrow marine corridor into Lagos. Hundreds of ships wait for days on the horizon of the Gulf of Guinea to get into the port and discharge their goods.

On the way in and out they pass the skeletons of scuttled and abandoned ships, some of which have capsized because of the effects on the tides of the wrecks.

Yet there are also suspicions that amidst lax marine regulation, companies treat Lagos’ waters as a ship refuse site, avoiding incurring the expense of disposing of old vessels.

Experts say the wrecks act as groynes, halting the flow of sand downshore and accelerating erosion.

Lack of regulation on the waters has also helped illicit activity thrive, turning the ghost ships into hideouts for sea criminals.

Small groups of former crew lounge on several of the wrecks, lodging in dim, disused cabins, keeping watch for anyone seeking to strip the ships of valuable scrap.

One crew member, who asked not to be identified, said he and three others had worked shifts to stay in the cabin all day and night for 15 months since the ship capsized.

Copper and bronze and the brass from the ship’s propeller could be sold for as much as 20,000,000 naira (\$55,000), he said.

“People will come and steal valuables that are still here,” he added.

Policing the waters

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, which polices the country’s waterways, says it is proactive in removing the likely hundreds of wrecks but concede that removing them is expensive.

Taibat Lawanson, a professor of urban planning at the University of Lagos (UNILAG),

said the price of removal was prohibitive.

“Because removing them is so costly, neither the state government nor the federal government takes enough responsibility for their removal,” he said.

Small groups of naval officials, some with uniformed t-shirts, others topless in the sun, bask on the upper decks of confiscated ships.

Tunji Adejumo, a landscape architect and ecologist at UNILAG, says the navy has become the main monitoring agency on the coastline.

“Yet even still, many of these shipping companies are able to avoid culpability for leaving their wrecks in the water,” he said.

“These shipwrecks hurt the aesthetics of the coastline. They degrade over time, dumped there but rarely dealt with. And they have serious environmental effects.”

Night-time curfew

In Lighthouse Beach, a mostly quiet get-away lined by large beach houses, a wreck at the very end of the shore has been a landmark for visitors for years.

In parts of the waterways, scuba-diving and spearfishing capitalise on the wrecks aesthetics and the aquatic life it attracts.

Yet many of the wrecks, below sea level and invisible above it, present numerous dangers.

A 6:00 pm curfew exists for commercial boats, which is imposed in part to prevent accidents.

White flags are hoisted on few of the below-the-water wrecks to warn approaching craft but most have no visible warning signs, meaning riders have to remember where they are.

“It can be dangerous riding the boats at night,” said Oladele.

“But the curfew also protects all these crazy activities that you would see if you travelled here after dark.”



Abandoned shipwrecks lay in Lagos’ waterways, Nigeria

Reparations: A conversation worth having

The debate on when it is relevant to apologise and pay reparations for misdeeds and human rights violations tells us that the past is never dead



JORGE G CASTANEDA

Three weeks ago and 500 years after the arrival of Hernán Cortés in Veracruz, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico sent a letter to the king of Spain. In it, he demanded an apology for the abuses inflicted on the indigenous peoples of Mexico by Spain, in view of what the Spaniards now consider "human rights violations."

And last week the prime minister of Belgium apologised in Parliament for the kidnapping, deportation and forced adoption of thousands of children born to mixed-race couples in its former African colonies.

National apologies for misdeeds, crimes and odious behaviour are not new. The West German government of Konrad Adenauer paid billions in reparations to the state of Israel and Jewish people for Nazi crimes. Former President Jacques Chirac of France apologised for deporting thousands of Jews to Nazi death camps.

The reparations debate in the United States continues. A bill known as H.R. 40 was introduced

in the House of Representatives by Rep. John Conyers every year from 1989 until his resignation in 2017. It called for a formal study of the impact of slavery on African-Americans living today and the development of a proposal for reparations, among other things. The bill was reintroduced this year by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee. Most recently, several contenders for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, most notably Elizabeth Warren, have expressed some level of support for reparations for the descendants of enslaved men and women.

What all of this tells us is that the past is never dead and that no matter how anachronistic some demands may seem, historical grievances abound.

The past five centuries of world history have featured conquests, plunder, torture, genocide, slavery, occupation and worse. The trend towards asking forgiveness and making reparations is overall a good thing. It acknowledges history while pointing a way forward, whether it be consolidating a national identity in Mexico, apologising for atrocious colonial misdeeds in Africa or addressing inequality between blacks and whites in America.

The debate over the Spanish and Portuguese conquests of what is now called Latin America took on a new meaning after 1992,

when the former colonial powers and former colonies met to revisit and discuss Columbus's arrival in the New World.

The Mexican case is especially complicated. Several polls showed Mexicans disagreed on López Obrador's call for an apology as well as the issue's relevance. Historians also made several points against his stance.

First, the historians stated that Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital, was captured thanks as much to Cortés' allies among the other indigenous peoples of the time as to the Spaniards themselves. Then they recalled that the Aztecs were no choir children: They resorted to cannibalism, human sacrifice, local wars to subjugate other peoples and violent repression of their enemies. Finally, and most important, they noted that Mexicans have always held an ambivalent position on their own national identity.

During the past decades, children's textbooks have implied that today's inhabitants of Mexico are descended from indigenous people and not from the Spanish. The official narrative for more than a century now in Mexico is that it is the mestizo country par excellence. As the nameplate at the National Anthropology Museum and Tlatelolco Square, where the final defeat of the Aztecs occurred, proclaims, "Neither a victory nor a



Supporters of American slavery reparations

Brexit heads for that riveting black



ROGER COHEN

The British cannot actually go through with something that will lower their incomes, make them poorer, lose them jobs and drain investment

A friend sent me a BBC Scotland video of Jay Lafferty, a Scottish comedian, summing up the Brexit situation almost three years after Britain voted to leave the European Union:

"So the way I understand it is that Parliament have said no to Theresa's deal," she says, referring to Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain. "And they've said no to no deal, but some of them said yes to no deal but no to Theresa's deal, but not as many that said no to no deal and no to Theresa's deal, but they don't actually have a deal of their own, which is a big deal because without a deal then no deal is more likely to be the deal that's dealt, and the people who want the deal can't be dealing with that."

Or, as Tom Baldwin, director of communications for the People's Vote campaign for a second referendum, put it to me: "The problem with Brexit is not Theresa May. The problem with Brexit is Brexit."

Here we are. Brexit is not doable because it makes no sense, whatever the prime minister's scattershot efforts or offers to resign. You can hoodwink people — but not if you give them three years to reflect on how they were hoodwinked before doing the deed the hoodwinking was about.

The British cannot actually go through with something that will lower their incomes, make them



The Union Flag gives an anti-Brexit campaigner little shelter from the rain outside Parliament in London.

poorer, lose them jobs, drain investment, expose their market to trade deals over which they would have no say, and — just an afterthought — lead to the breakup of Britain.

They cannot even if President Donald Trump calls the European Union "brutal" as he enfolds gentle Kim Jong Un of North Korea in a love embrace. To live is also to think again. That is what

Britain is doing, confronted by its most important decision in decades.

The European Union's extension of the exit deadline, originally set for March 29, until the end of October looks to me like the beginning of the end of Brexit. It may still happen, but for the first time the odds on it happening are not better than even.

The momentum is with the

"Remain" camp. More than six million people have signed a petition in favour of staying in the union. A million people recently marched. Brexiteers are defecting. Nick Ferrari, an influential radio broadcaster, announced this month that he'd changed his mind. "Just bloody stay and we'll move on to other things," he said. "Enough is enough."

The extension averted the

over-the-cliff Brexit favoured by Tory hard-liners whose absolutist demands have ensured May's proposed "deal" (in reality a kick-the-can fudge) never had a chance. It opened up a six-month period of reflection during which all sorts of things could happen. Most are likely to be inimical to Brexit.

The cost of this madness is sinking in. As Martin Fletche

Dušan the Mighty is proclaimed Emperor, with the Serbian Empire occupying much of the Balkans.



The Revolt of the Comuneros begins in Spain against the rule of **Charles V**.

Spanish conquistador **Hernando de Lerma** founds the settlement of Salta, Argentina.

Franz Friedrich Wilhelm von Fürstenberg founds the University of Münster.



ions in Washington in 2002.

The past five centuries of world history have featured conquests, plunder, torture, genocide, slavery, occupation and worse. The trend towards asking forgiveness and making reparations is overall a good thing.

López Obrador said in his letter to King Philip VI that he was not requesting reparations; the conquest cannot be repaired. The apology he demanded was immediately rejected by the government in Madrid, and in all likelihood, the entire affair will fade away. The Mexican president's ploy was almost certainly demagogic in intent and motivation, invoking an anti-Spanish sentiment that he believes exists in Mexico, though polls suggest otherwise.

Mexico does not need an apology, because it has no conflict with Spain today. But beyond the Mexican populist gesture, and the debates in the United States, Europe and Canada, however, lies a conversation waiting to be held. There are challenges for other peoples and groups that require atonement or forgiveness in order to be addressed. In some cases, it can make an enormous difference, as with African-Americans, race and slavery in the United States. In others, it can disentangle complicated questions of national identity and victimisation, as in Mexico. Reparations may be ultimately relevant only in some cases. But history is always relevant.

(Jorge G Castañeda, Mexico's foreign minister from 2000 to 2003, is a professor at New York University and the author of "Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War.")

defeat, here took place the painful birth of the mestizo people that today is Mexico."

There can be no "mestizaje" without both civilisations – the Spanish and the original peoples – taking part in it. However violent their encounter may have been, and acknowledging the brutal nature of the conquest, Mexicans seem to prefer to let sleeping dogs lie. While racism against indigenous minorities in Mexico is undeniable, and the country's European-origin tiny minority frequently resorts to racist attitudes toward mestizos, an overwhelming majority of the people of Mexico are mestizos today. There are myriad things to fix in Mexico, but discrimination by mestizos against mestizos is not one of them.

ck hole

The momentum is with the "Remain" camp. More than six million people have signed a petition in favour of staying in the union.

signing on to all EU trade deals while no longer having any say over them.

The talks will probably founder. The Tories may try to throw out May in favour of a hard-liner like Boris Johnson. They may force a general election. Either way, they are looking wounded and weakened.

Peter Osborne, former chief political commentator at The Daily Telegraph, has also changed his mind. In a much-noted piece, he recently wrote, "It has become clear to me, though I've been a strong Tory Brexiteer, that Britain's departure from the EU will be as great a disaster for our country as the over-mighty unions were in the 1960s and 1970s."

After a devastating analysis of the crippling economic effects of Brexit, Osborne turned to the breakup of Britain. "I failed to understand," he wrote, "how the EU is part of the glue which holds us together in the United Kingdom."

Scotland wants to remain in the union. Northern Ireland does not want a hard border with the Republic of Ireland, a member of the European Union. An open intra-Irish border was a cornerstone of the 21-year-old Good Friday peace agreement. Put bluntly, absent the EU's benign offsetting influence, internal tensions in the disunited kingdom would soon reach a breaking point.

This, too, has become clear. That round and riveting black hole, a place where everything vanishes like a dream, would be a good final resting place for Brexit.

(Roger Cohen is a columnist with The New York Times.)

(In collaboration with New York Times)

CIVILIAN'S TRIBUNE

A welcome move

After the wasted years of Obama - when the US believed that it could stop Tehran from destroying the region by talking to it nicely - the Trump Administration has finally recognised reality and designated the Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist group. To us in Bahrain, this fact has been obvious for around four decades.

The Revolutionary Guard was only just getting started with its overseas meddling activities at the beginning of the 1980s when Iraqi extremist Abdulhadi Al Mudarrisi was given the role of head of the "Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain" (IFLB). When Bahrain's leaders threw him out of the country, he fled to Tehran, where Mudarrisi was put in charge of a radio station pumping out anti-Arab propaganda.

When the Gulf Cooperation Council was founded in 1981 - partly to help Arab Gulf states unite against Iranian threats - Tehran decided to retaliate by attempting to stage a coup in Bahrain. Iran chose to use Mudarrisi and the IFLB to lead this coup. However, the entity lacked meaningful support inside Bahrain, so Tehran provided Shia commandoes of various nationalities - many of whom had received IRGC training in the battlefield in the war with Iraq.

The coup was foiled in December 1981 after these mercenaries were intercepted at Dubai Airport (staff became suspicious of these heavily-built men all wearing the same boots!), and IFLB elements inside Bahrain were quickly rounded up.

However, this attempt to de-

stroy Bahrain's governing system and replace it with an Islamic Republic marked the beginning of forty years of efforts by the IRGC to destabilise Bahrain and other GCC states. Indeed, there was another coup attempt in the mid-1990s, by radical elements sometimes known as Hezbollah-Bahrain.

Also in Saudi Arabia, Iran sought to radicalise and arm local communities, resulting in bombing campaigns, including against the holy sites of Mecca and Medina. Pro-Khomeini riots during the Mecca pilgrimage on occasions resulted in stampedes and dozens of deaths. In 1996 (the same year as the second Bahrain coup attempt) an entity known as Hizbollah Al Hijaz staged an attack in eastern Saudi Arabia killing 19 US servicemen. Subsequent investigations closely linked this activity to the IRGC.

After 2003 it was Iraq's turn to be plagued by Shia militia forces, created, armed and trained by the IRGC, which killed hundreds of coalition forces and tens of thousands of Iraqis. The toxic sectarian climate created by these IRGC-backed militias by 2013 had created the conditions which gave rise to the rapid expansion of Daesh. After 2011, IRGC Quds Force's Qassim Soleimani arrived in Syria in order to micromanage the carnage, using paramilitary forces under his control.

In part, the IRGC's terrorist activities were funded by narcotics smuggling and organised crime, but also through the exploitation of financial institutions to circumvent sanctions. Future Bank in Bahrain had

been set up at a time of thawing Iran-Bahrain relations; yet it was exploited for money-laundering purposes to funnel billions of dollars through to IRGC-linked entities until the Bahrain authorities shut it down in 2015.

When protests occurred in Manama in February 2011 calling for constitutional reforms, the IRGC once again seized its opportunity, to send weapons to radical elements, which embarked on a terrorist insurgency campaign. Vast quantities of arms and explosives of Iranian origin were seized at the Bahrain coastline, along with the discovery of weapons caches and bomb factories. Bahraini emigres based in Qom, like Murtada Al Sanadi, were given IRGC support to coordinate this terrorist campaign which led to the deaths of more than 20 policemen. These Bahraini militants received training either at the hands of the IRGC, or by paramilitary groups in Iraq and Lebanon - often through the simple gambit of travelling abroad on pilgrimage. On 1 January 2017, these militants even staged a brazen attack against Jaw Prison in order to free their comrades. Many were rearrested as they sought to make their way back to Iran.

So, yes, the designation of the IRGC is a welcome and necessary move. But we wish America was listening when we advised for this step to be taken many years ago; as the IRGC has been responsible for the killing of hundreds of US troops in Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

Citizens for Bahrain



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



A heavy iron hook fell on my head when a temple Thulabharam scale gave way. Lots of blood but no apparent other damage. Thank God it didn't hurt anyone around me - could have caused a very serious injury.

@ShashiTharoor

02



Kathua's mood is clear - BJP is seen as the only party that can bring development and ensure security. People in Jammu are disgusted with Congress' attempts to weaken the armed forces. Nobody here accepts the JKNC demand of India having two Prime Ministers.

@narendramodi

03



In Kerala Cong is in a bitter war with CPM. Next door TN they are together. That's politics. AAP shouldn't try to maximise Delhi coalition to get advantage elsewhere, if they think BJP is the biggest enemy. Go for it!

@NSMlive

04



49% of all new income goes to the top 1%. Meanwhile millions of Americans are forced to work 2 or 3 jobs just to survive. And over half of our people live paycheck to paycheck. That is not justice.

@BernieSanders

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

business

NBB launches personal loan campaign



● The campaign, which runs from April until the end of December 2019

TDI | Manama

National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) yesterday launched personal loan promotional offers, which, according to the bank, gives customers' greater financial flexibility and resources.

The campaign, which runs from April until the end of December 2019, provides several benefits and incentives for new loan customers or those wishing to increase their borrowings with the Bank.

As per the offers: Three lucky customers will win back their loan amount subject to a maximum of BD15,000, all customers will have the option to defer the first installment for up to four months and all customers will enjoy a 25 per cent discount on processing charges

Commenting, Mahmood Al Aali, Acting Chief Executive – Retail, Commercial, and SMEs at NBB, said, "We're pleased to announce this year's promotion for our personal loan customers, rewarding them for continuing to select NBB as their bank of choice."

China-backed railway revived to avoid \$5bn penalty: Malaysia PM

● Malaysia and China's agreement to restart the project at a reduced cost of 44 billion ringgit (\$10.7 billion)

● The 640-kilometre (400-mile) east coast rail link will run from northern Malaysia, near the Thai border, to a port outside Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad

Malaysia would have faced a \$5-billion penalty if a China-backed rail project was axed, the prime minister said yesterday, after a deal was reached to revive the controversial scheme.

Last week Malaysia and China agreed to push ahead with the railway at a 30-per cent lower cost, lifting a suspension slapped

on the project when a corruption-plagued regime lost power in Malaysia last year.

It was among several Beijing-financed infrastructure initiatives put on hold after the change of government, as new leaders sought to reduce a mammoth national debt and amid concerns of corrupt dealings under the administration of

ex-leader Najib Razak.

Malaysia and China's agreement to restart the project at a reduced cost of 44 billion ringgit (\$10.7 billion) -- inked in Beijing on Friday -- could help improve ties which had been strained since Najib, a close Beijing ally, was ejected from power.

The 640-kilometre (400-mile) east coast rail link will run from

northern Malaysia, near the Thai border, to a port outside Kuala Lumpur, and is seen as a key project in China's Belt and Road infrastructure drive.

Announcing further details Monday, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said that the government "was faced with the choice to either renegotiate or pay termination costs of about 21.78 billion ringgit (\$5.3 billion), with nothing to show for it.

"As such, we chose to go back to the negotiating table and call for a more equitable deal, whereby the needs of the Malaysian people would be prioritised."

He also announced that the main Chinese company in the scheme, China Communications Construction Company, would form a joint venture with a Malaysian firm to help operate and maintain the line, which would ease the burden on Malaysia.

The Chinese firm had agreed to refund one billion ringgit

from a 3.1 billion ringgit advance payment previously paid by Malaysia towards the project, he said. The route of the line has been altered so it would pass through five states, instead of four, to allow more parts of the country to benefit from the railway, Mahathir said.

The completion date had been pushed back to 2026, from 2024 under the original agreement. Malaysia will still need to take a loan from a Chinese state-owned bank to fund the line but it will be less than under the original deal.

Mahathir, 93, returned for a second stint as premier in May last year after he led a reformist alliance to a surprise victory at the polls, toppling Najib's coalition which had been in power for over six decades.

Najib has since been slapped with dozens of charges over his alleged role in looting state fund IMDB, and went on trial over the scandal this month.

Cigna Life Insurance company receives CBB licence

TDI | Manama

The Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) has granted a licence to Cigna Life Insurance Company of Europe (Cigna) to open a branch of an Insurance Firm in Bahrain.

The licence allows the entity to expand its insurance products in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The proposed branch is expected to contribute to the medical insurance sector.

The company will engage with local brokers to offer its medical coverage products to Multinational companies with exposure in Bahrain. Local private enterprises with operations

abroad requiring international coverage and Government sponsored entities requiring local and international Health cover.

Cigna group is a global health service company with a track-back of more than 200 years as a result of the combination between the "Insurance Company of North America" that was formed in 1792 with the "Connecticut General Corporation" in 1982.

Cigna is represented in 30 countries and jurisdictions and has more than 95 million customer relationships throughout the world and more than 40,000 employees serving its customers.



“We welcome Cigna’s decision to choose Bahrain as an arm of its group for reaching out to the local customers and the GCC Market, to provide its worldwide Health coverages, emphasizing that its presence in the region will contribute positively in the medical insurance services given their track record in the health service industry

AHMED AL-BASSAM, DIRECTOR OF LICENSING, CENTRAL BANK OF BAHRAIN

India's Jet extends cancellations

Mumbai, India

India's stricken Jet Airways appeared to be edging closer to collapse Monday after lenders failed to take a decision on whether to release crucial funds to keep the carrier flying. Jet CEO Vinay Dube said in an email to staff yesterday that the cancellation of all international flights was being extended to Thursday.

"As you are aware, we have been working with the lenders to secure interim funding for our operations. The interim funding has not been forthcoming thus far..." he wrote.

Dubai Expo 2020 to give \$33 bn boost to UAE economy: study

● Expo 2020 runs from October 20 next year to April 20, 2021

● Expects to create 50,000 jobs yearly

● Dubai's government has already spent over \$40 billion on major infrastructure projects related to Expo

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Visitors look at the Expo 2020 Dubai Project during the WFES summit in Abu Dhabi. (file)

Dubai's Expo 2020 global trade fair is expected to give the United Arab Emirates an economic boost of over \$33 billion, consultants Ernst and

Young said in a study released yesterday.

Next year's mega-event would add 1.5 percent to UAE's gross do-

mestic product per year over the period that started in 2013 and runs until 2031, said EY partner Matthew Benson.

Major new construction projects and other impacts of the six-months extravaganza would create some 50,000 jobs yearly

over the same period, he told a press conference.

The city-state of Dubai, one of the UAE's seven sheikhdoms, has long become a favourite tourist attraction, valued for its safety and known for its luxury resorts and opulent shopping malls, one of which boasts an indoor ski slope.

Dubai assumes that Expo 2020 -- which runs from October 20 next year to April 20, 2021 -- will attract some 25 million visits, Benson said.

The economic impact includes "direct, indirect and induced effects" of the first Expo to be organised in the Middle East and Africa, he said.

The Expo 2010 in Shanghai drew 93 million visitors, and Expo 2015 in Milan attracted over 22 million.

Dubai's government has already spent over \$40 billion on major infrastructure projects related to Expo including a \$2.9 billion new Metro line and an \$8 billion expansion of Al Maktoum International Airport, next to the Expo site.

The Metro line links the \$13.4 billion Dubai South Villages and Dubai Exhibition Centre, projects currently underway.

Al Maktoum Airport, when complete, will have the capacity to handle 160 million travellers per year.

The 4.4 square kilometre (1.7 square mile) Expo site south of Dubai is due to be redeveloped into a full-fledged city after the Expo, the so-called District 2020, home to a mega exhibition centre and scores of companies, organisers said.

EU adopts controversial copyright reforms

● Italy, Finland, Sweden, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Poland voted against the controversial legislation. Belgium, Estonia and Slovenia abstained



Valer Daniel Breaz, Romanian Minister

Brussels, Belgium

European Union countries yesterday adopted copyright reforms championed by news publishers and the media business, but opposed by US tech giants and internet freedom activists who worry it could chill the sharing of information.

The overhaul had triggered unprecedented lobbying from supporters, and opponents like Google which makes huge profits from the advertising generated alongside the content it hosts.

Romania, which currently holds the rotating EU presidency, said the "balanced text" adopted by ministers meeting in Luxembourg was a "milestone" toward building the bloc's digital single market.

EU sources said Italy, Finland, Sweden, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Poland voted against the controversial legislation. Belgium, Estonia and Slovenia abstained.

But the opposition was not enough to block the overhaul. "I am very glad that we have achieved a balanced text," said Valer Daniel Breaz, Romanian Minister for Culture and National Identity.



The new rules ensure adequate protection for authors and artists, while opening up new possibilities for accessing and sharing copyright-protected content online throughout the European Union

EU STATEMENT

He said the text creates "multiple opportunities for Europe's creative sectors, which will thrive and better reflect our cultural diversity and other European common values."

Breaz added it also offers the same "for the users, whose freedom of expression on internet will be consolidated."

"This is a milestone for the development of a robust and well-functioning digital single market. An EU statement said "the new rules ensure adequate protection for authors and artists, while opening up new possibilities for accessing and sharing copyright-protected content online throughout the European Union."

The culmination of a process that began in 2016, the revamp to European copyright legislation was seen urgent as it the rules had not been updated since 2001, before the birth of YouTube or Facebook.

The reform was strongly backed by artists and media companies, including Agence France-Presse, who want to secure revenue from web platforms that allow users to distribute their content.

But it was strongly opposed by internet freedom activists and by Silicon Valley, especially Google which makes huge profits from the advertising generated alongside the content it hosts.

Proponents of the law said they expected a backlash.

"The entertainment lobby will not stop here, over the next two years, they will push for national implementations that ignore users' fundamental rights," tweeted Julia Reda, a German member of the European Parliament.

"It will be more important than ever for civil society to keep up the pressure in the Member States! #SaveYourInternet," she wrote.

Trump says Boeing should overhaul 737 Max planes

Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump lambasted the Boeing 737 Max plane on Monday, saying it should be improved with unspecified new features and given a new name.

The model has suffered two deadly crashes in a matter of months, the first last October in Indonesia with the death of all 189 people on board and then in Ethiopia on March 10, killing all 157 aboard.

Both accidents took place shortly after takeoff. Investigators are focusing on a system that is supposed to help the Boeing workhorse aircraft avoid stalling in flight.

"What do I know about branding, maybe nothing (but I did become President!), but if I were Boeing, I would FIX the Boeing 737 MAX, add some additional great features, & RE-BRAND the plane with a new name," Trump wrote in an early morning tweet.

"No product has suffered like this one. But again, what the hell do I know?," he added.

It is not the first time Trump has weighed in on the Ethiopian



US President Donald Trump

crash.

Two days after the plane went down, he tweeted that these days jetliners are "becoming far too complex to fly".

He added: "Pilots are no longer needed, but rather computer scientists from MIT. I see it all the time in many products. Always seeking to go one unnecessary step further, when often old and simpler is far better."

The global fleet of 737 MAX planes has been barred from flying since mid-March.

American Airlines to cancel 115 flights daily over 737 MAX

Washington, United States

American Airlines announced Sunday it would scrap some 115 flights per day in the coming months because its fleet of Boeing 737 MAX planes is being grounded until August 19. America's leading airline had previously only planned to keep the planes out of commission until June 5, with Boeing facing intense scrutiny after 157 people died in an Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX crash on March

10 -- the second deadly crash involving the aircraft in five months.

"These 115 flights represent approximately 1.5 per cent of American's total flying each day this summer," American Airlines chairman and CEO Doug Parker said in a statement.

But he stressed his confidence in the aircraft overall.

"Based upon our ongoing work with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Boeing, we are highly confident

that the MAX will be recertified prior to this time (August 19)," he said.

"By extending our cancellations through the summer, we can plan more reliably for the peak travel season and provide confidence to our customers and team members when it comes to their travel plans.

"Once the MAX is recertified, we anticipate bringing our MAX aircraft back on line as spares to supplement our operation as needed during the summer."



Mazda Motor Corporation and International Motor trading Agency discussed the next three-year business plan for Mazda in Bahrain in light of the all-new 7th generation Mazda range starting with Mazda3 to be introduced in the month of November across GCC. The meeting was held in MC HQ at Hiroshima between senior management of Mazda and IMTA. The picture shows Adel Salman Kano, Managing Director, IMTA (4th from left); KN Singh, Vice President, IMTA (3rd from left).

AAOIFI honours KFH for backing Islamic Financial Industry

TDT | Manama

AAOIFI honoured Kuwait Finance House Group (KFH) in recognition of its sponsorship of the AAOIFI 17th Annual Shari'ah Boards Conference held for two days in Bahrain.

The conference brought together several Shari'ah scholars and senior representatives from central banks, regulatory authorities, supreme Islamic Financial Institutions (IFIs), accounting and auditing firms, legal firms, universities, higher learning institutions, as well as media representatives.

On behalf of Kuwait Finance House Group, Abdulhakeem Al Khayyat, Managing Director and CEO of KFH-Bahrain expressed received the honorary shield. He said: "We are pleased to continue to collaborate with the AAOIFI Conference, which sets Shari'ah



Abdulhakeem Al Khayyat during the honouring ceremony

Standards for Islamic Financial Institutions."

The conference shed light on vital topics related to the fu-

ture of the Islamic financial industry including: 'Importance

of Regulatory Requirement of Mandatory Adoption of Shari'ah

Standards by Islamic Financial Institutions', 'Regulatory Imposition of Obligatory Reduction of the Amount of Debt Due to Prepayment', 'Validation of Defective Contracts and its Impact on Stability of Transactions and its Modern Applications', 'Coordination Amongst Central Shari'ah Boards', 'Sukuk Listing in Global Financial Markets and Compatibility with Shari'ah Structures', 'Methods of Safeguarding Against Risks Associated with Ownership in Ijarah Muntahia Bittamleek Financing Mode'.

Established in 1991 and based in Bahrain, AAOIFI is a leading international not-for-profit organization primarily responsible for the development and issuance of standards for the global Islamic finance industry.

Ithmaar Bank backs Crown Prince Center for Training and Medical Research

TDT | Manama

Ithmaar Bank, a Bahrain-based Islamic retail Bank, extended its support to the Crown Prince's Center for Training and Medical Research.

The support, the bank said, will help further enhance the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) Royal Medical Services at the Military Hospital and will contribute to the development of medical services in the

Kingdom. Ithmaar Bank Chief Executive Officer, Ahmed Abdul Rahim presented the Bank's support to the Commander of the Royal Medical Services, Major-General Professor Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, in the presence of Ithmaar Bank Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Banking Group, Abdulkhaleem Al Mutawa and the Head of Business Banking Group, Abdulla Taleb.

"The Center will provide an impor-



Officials during a ceremony extending Ithmaar Bank's support to the Crown Prince's Center for Training and Medical Research

tant platform to train medical staff and students from different specialisations in Bahrain and the region. This, in turn, will bolster the development of the medical sector in Bahrain," said Abdul Rahim.

The opening ceremony of the Crown Prince's Center for Training and Medical Research was held in February this year under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

It is the first simulation centre in the Kingdom of Bahrain and will serve as a Middle East hub to attract collaboration from elite healthcare and educational institutions around the world. The Center provides the highest quality of Simulation-Based Medical Education by bringing the latest technology and best practised educational approaches.

German prosecutors charge ex-VW boss with fraud

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Former Volkswagen chief Martin Winterkorn yesterday became the target of German charges over the group's "dieselgate" emissions cheating scandal, bringing the affair back into headlines as VW battles to turn eyes to its future.

Prosecutors in Brunswick, near VW's Wolfsburg HQ in northern Germany, said they had charged Winterkorn and four other managers.

Among the accusations against the former chief executive were "a particularly serious case of fraud", "infraction of the law against unfair competition" and "breach of trust".

Winterkorn was CEO during a period when VW fitted 11 million diesel-powered vehicles worldwide with so-called "defeat devices" -- software that made them appear less polluting in the lab than in real driving conditions.

Abu Dhabi hits near 5-year high

● Saudi's Bank Albilad gains on higher Q1 profit

● Egypt blue-chip index falls for 3rd session

Reuters

Abu Dhabi's stock market rose to a near five-year high yesterday, lifted by First Abu Dhabi Bank, while petrochemical stocks led gains on Saudi Arabia's main index.

The Abu Dhabi index was up 0.9 per cent after hitting its highest since May 2014.

First Abu Dhabi Bank, the United Arab Emirates' largest lender, climbed 2.4pc to 16 dirhams, touching an all-time high. Last week, the bank obtained regulatory approval to increase its foreign ownership limit to 40pc from a previous limit of 25pc.

The Saudi index was up 0.4pc with its top petrochemical maker Saudi Basic Industries gaining 1.1pc and Riyadh Bank advancing 2.1pc.

Bank Albilad rose 1.5pc after



Traders on the floor of Saudi Stock exchange

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.4pc	» 9,088 pts
ABU DHABI	▼ 0.9pc	» 5,222 pts
DUBAI	▲ 0.6pc	» 2,805 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.1pc	» 10,222 pts
EGYPT	▼ 0.1pc	» 15,055 pts
BAHRAIN	▼ 0.3pc	» 1,441 pts
OMAN	▲ 0.5pc	» 4,012 pts
KUWAIT	▲ 0.2pc	» 6,136 pts

its first-quarter net profit grew more than 23pc.

The bourse has gained 16pc

so far this year as foreign buyers rushed in ahead of and after its entry into the FTSE Russell's emerging market index on March 18.

Foreign investors have been net buyers of Saudi stocks every week this year and bought 1.21 billion riyals (\$322.64 million) of shares on a net basis in the last week, according to stock exchange data released late on Sunday.

In Dubai, the index rose 0.6pc, supported by a 5.3pc gain in Dubai Investments and a 1.4pc rise in Dubai Islamic Bank. The

lender said that it regularly looks at expansion opportunities, including buying other financial institutions.

The United Arab Emirates' largest sharia-compliant bank is in talks with shareholders of unlisted Noor Bank over a possible acquisition of the Dubai-based lender, three sources familiar with the matter told Reuters last week.

"We see the likelihood of a deal going through as high, driving the consolidation theme in UAE," Arqam Capital said in a note. It said Noor was now the only unlisted bank in the UAE, following the merger of Abu Dhabi counterparts Al Hilal and Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank.

Qatar's index edged 0.1pc lower, as Qatar Electricity And Water shed 2.4pc after its first-quarter net profit fell nearly 22pc.

The company further said it aims to generate 40pc of its profit from foreign investment arm Nebras Power over the next 10 years.

Egypt's blue-chip index inched down 0.1pc, slipping for the third straight session, with investment firm Egypt Kuwait Holding falling 1pc.

Pakistan reaches 'agreement in principle' with IMF over bailout

Reuters | Islamabad

Pakistan has reached an "agreement in principle" with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over a bailout programme and expects to formally secure a rescue package later this month, a Pakistani minister said yesterday.

The long-delayed rescue package would be Pakistan's 13th IMF bailout programme since the late 1980s and comes at a time of worsening economic outlook for the South Asian nation of 208 million people.

Earlier this month, Finance Minister Asad Umar visited Washington for meetings with the IMF, which on Monday called the talks "constructive discussions".

Muhammad Azhar, state minister for revenue, tweeted that an "agreement in principle has been reached on all outstanding issues with IMF" during Umar's trip. The bailout has been delayed since last year.

Eurozone stocks edge higher as Easter break saps volumes

● Investors remained upbeat in Asian markets

● Lacklustre earnings from Goldman Sachs acted as a drag

● British employment data is due today

London, United Kingdom

The eurozone's main stock markets found higher ground yesterday in subdued deals, with many investors away for the Easter holiday break.

The European single currency meanwhile bobbed back above \$1.31, while the pound edged higher -- in turn holding back London's share market.

"European equity markets are subdued ... on the back of a strong finish on Friday," said

analyst David Madden at CMC Markets UK.

"It seems like investors are taking a breather, and the lack of volatility in Asia overnight prompted some dealers to sit on their hands."

'Feel good factor'

Sentiment was partly supported by comments from US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who said he was "hopeful we're getting close to the final round of concluding issues" in trade talks with China.

The remarks were picked up as another positive sign that the trade war between the world's top two economies, which helped hammer global markets last year, could be nearing an end.

"Steven Mnuchin issued a positive statement about US-China trade talks over the weekend, and he claimed the negotiations are 'close to the final round' -- and that is adding to global feel

Key figures around 1330 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	■ at 7,435.28 points
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▲ 0.2 pc at 12,023.88
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ 0.1 pc at 5,509.75
EURO STOXX 50:	▲ 0.1pc at 3,399.54
New York - Dow:	▼ 0.1 pc at 26,402.09
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.3109 from \$1.3074 on Friday
Euro/pound:	▼ at 86.23 pence from 86.40 pence
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.1312 from \$1.1299
Dollar/yen:	▼ at 112.01 yen from 112.02 yen
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 1.4 pc at 22,169.11 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▼ 0.3 pc at 29,810.72 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▼ 0.3 pc at 3,177.79 (close)
Oil - Brent Crude:	▼ 47 cents at \$71.08 per barrel
Oil - West Texas Inter:	▼ 44 cents at \$63.45

good factor," Madden added.

Investors set aside last week's concerns about a possible new trade war between the US and the European Union after President Donald Trump threatened to hit the bloc with tariffs over

subsidies to aviation giant Airbus.

They were given a boost on Monday when the EU member countries gave the final green light to begin new trade talks with the US.

Wall Street was a touch lower shortly after the New York opening bell.

Stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic had pushed higher on Friday after major US banks JP Morgan and Wells Fargo reported earnings ahead of analysts' expectations.

On Monday, however, lacklustre earnings from Goldman Sachs reminded investors that surprises can also be on the downside.

"US stocks are diverging in early action, with the markets scrutinising earnings results from Dow member Goldman Sachs and Citigroup as earnings season continues to heat up," said Charles Schwab analysts.

Asia traded mixed yesterday, though investors remain upbeat thanks to a healthy start to the US earnings season and hopes for China-US trade talks.

Brexit-free week

Dealers noted that, for once,

Brexit was not hogging the headlines this week due to Britain's parliament being shut for the Easter holiday until April 23.

Britain's Conservative government will resume talks with the main opposition Labour party next week on how to resolve the deadlock over Brexit, a senior minister said Sunday.

Prime Minister Theresa May's effective deputy, David Lidington, said they wanted to be able to "take stock" of any progress when parliament returns.

"With House of Commons in recess for the Easter break, the coming week is unlikely to be dominated by Brexit, thankfully, to the same extent as weeks gone by -- with the focus for the UK markets shifting to a series of economic releases," said XTB analyst David Cheetham.

British employment data is due Tuesday, followed by inflation numbers on Wednesday and retail sales figures on Thursday.

SHOW

OASIS JUFFAIR

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

DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM
DAILY AT (VIP): 3.00 + 8.15 PM

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

MEL GIBSON, JENNIFER CARPENTER, VINCE VAUGHN
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 6.15 + 11.30 PM

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

REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN
DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.30 + 11.30 PM

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

JOSEPHINE LANGFORD, HERO FIENNES TIFFIN, KHADIJHA RED THUNDER
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 4.00 + 9.15 PM

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

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

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

* MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
FROM FRIDAY 12TH
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 2.15 + 5.15 + 8.15 + 11.15 PM

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

ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM
DAILY AT (3D): 12.00 + 5.00 + 10.00 PM
DAILY AT (VIP): 12.15 + 5.30 + 10.45 PM

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

COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
DAILY AT (3D): 2.45 + 7.45 PM
DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 1.45 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM

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

AKSHAY KUMAR, PARINEETI CHOPRA, BHAGYASHREE
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 3.45 + 8.45 PM

10-LUCIFER (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

MOHANLAL, MANJU WARRIER, VIVEK OBEROI, TOVINO THOMAS
DAILY AT: 1.15 + 4.30 + 7.45 + 11.00 PM

CITYCENTRE

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

DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE
DAILY AT (IMAX 2D): 12.00 + 5.15 + 10.30 PM
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 PM + 12.00 MN + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)
DAILY AT (VIP I): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM

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

MEL GIBSON, JENNIFER CARPENTER, VINCE VAUGHN
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 PM + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

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

REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 PM + 12.00 MN

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

JOSEPHINE LANGFORD, HERO FIENNES TIFFIN, KHADIJHA RED THUNDER
DAILY AT: 2.30 + 7.00 + 11.30 PM

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



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

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

JOHN GOODMAN, ASHTON SANDERS, JONATHAN MAJORS
DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 PM

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

MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
FROM FRIDAY 12TH
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 5.45 + 8.45 + 11.45 PM

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ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 2.30 + 7.45 PM + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN
DAILY AT (ATMOS): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN
DAILY AT (VIP II): 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM

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

* COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM
DAILY AT (3D): 12.15 + 4.30 + 8.45 PM

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

JASON CLARKE, AMY SEIMETZ, JETE LAURENCE
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM

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

BRIE LARSON, GEMMA CHAN, SAMUEL L. JACKSON
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

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

LUPITA NYONG'O, ELISABETH MOSS, ANNA DIOP
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM

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

TAYLOR RUSSELL, LOGAN MILLER, DEBORAH ANN WOLL
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.00 + 4.00 + 6.00 + 8.00 + 10.00 PM + 12.00 MN

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

BRIANNA DENSKI, JENNIFER GARNER, KEN HUDSON CAMPBELL
DAILY AT: 1.30 + 5.30 + 9.30 PM
DAILY AT (ARABIC DUBBED): 2.30 + 6.45 + 11.00 PM

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

KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 3.45 + 8.30 PM

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

LIAM NEESON, EMMY ROSSUM, LAURA DERN
DAILY AT: 1.45 + 6.45 + 11.45 PM

17-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER)

JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON
DAILY AT: 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM

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

* KARIM ABDULAZIZ, GHADA ADEL, MAJDE ALKIDDAWI
DAILY AT: 12.15 + 4.45 + 9.15 PM

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

* ROWAN ATKINSON, OLGA KURYLENKO, EMMA THOMPSON
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 3.30 + 7.30 + 11.30 PM

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

MEL GIBSON, SEAN PENN, NATALIE DORMER
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 4.15 + 9.15 PM

SEEF (II)

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

DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE
DAILY AT: (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

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

MEL GIBSON, JENNIFER CARPENTER, VINCE VAUGHN
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6-CAPTIVE STATE (PG-15) (THRILLER/SCI-FICTION) NEW

JOHN GOODMAN, ASHTON SANDERS, JONATHAN MAJORS
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 + 6.15 + 8.30 + 10.45 PM

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

CAITLIN GERARD, JULIA GOLDANI TELLES, MILES ANDERSON
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 + 6.30 + 8.30 + 10.30 PM

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

MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
FROM FRIDAY 12TH
DAILY AT: (12.30 MN FRI)

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

* ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)

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

COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO

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

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

JASON CLARKE, AMY SEIMETZ, JETE LAURENCE
DAILY AT: 8.45 + 11.00 PM

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

BRIE LARSON, GEMMA CHAN, SAMUEL L. JACKSON
DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 PM

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

LUPITA NYONG'O, ELISABETH MOSS, ANNA DIOP
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 2.45 + 7.00 + 11.15 PM

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

BRIANNA DENSKI, JENNIFER GARNER, KEN HUDSON CAMPBELL
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 5.00 + 9.15 PM

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

* KARIM ABDULAZIZ, GHADA ADEL, MAJDE ALKIDDAWI
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 4.00 + 8.45 PM

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

AMITABH BACHCHAN, TAPSEE PANNU, TONY LUKE
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 4.30 + 9.15 PM

SEEF (I)

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

DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM

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

NASEERUDDIN SHAH, MITHUN CHAKRABORTY, PANKAJ TRIPATHI
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 5.45 + 11.45 PM

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

GIPPY GREWAL, KARAMJIT ANMOL, BHAVKHANDAN
DAILY AT: 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

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

MIKAAL ZULFIQAR, ARMEENA RANA KHAN, BELAL SHAHID
DAILY AT: 2.45 + 8.45 PM

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

NIKOLAY DROZDOV, STANISLAV DUZHNIKOV, ARMEN DZHIGARKHANYAN
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 PM

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

MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
FROM FRIDAY 12TH
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 PM + 12.00 MN

7-LUCIFER (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

MOHANLAL, MANJU WARRIER, VIVEK OBEROI, TOVINO THOMAS
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM



MOVIE REVIEW

'Captive State' is a rich but challenging alien invasion movie

Captive State is a 2019 American science fiction thriller film directed by Rupert Wyatt and co-written by Wyatt and Erica Beoney.

The film stars John Goodman, Ashton Sanders, Jonathan Majors, Machine Gun Kelly, and Vera Farmiga, and follows a young man who participates in a conspiracy to rebel against an alien race that has invaded Earth, and enforced strict martial law on all humans. It was released in the United States on March 15, 2019 by Focus Features. It received mixed reviews from critics and has grossed over \$7 million world wide.

On Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 46% based on 67 reviews, with an average rating of 5.42/10. The website's critical consensus reads, "This sci-fi thriller may not necessarily leave viewers in a Captive State, but it offers reasonably diverting alien invasion action with ambitious political undertones." On



A scene from 'Captive State'

Metacritic, the film has an average score of 54 out of 100, based on 19

critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews". Audiences polled by Cin-

emaScore gave the film an average grade of "C—" on an A+ to F scale, and filmgoers at PostTrak gave it 2 out of 5 stars.

In a middling review for The A.V. Club, A.A. Dowd wrote "It's not unreasonable to expect something like excitement out of a story about freedom fighters plotting to take back the planet. Captive State does not clear that fairly low bar."

Captive State is a rich but challenging alien invasion movie

Frank Scheck of The Hollywood Reporter gave the film a negative review, describing it as "visually murky, choppy edited and lacking both narrative clarity and well-defined characterizations," while The Los Angeles Times's Gary Goldstein was also critical of the film, writing: "In Captive State aliens have taken over the world (as they will), but it's the viewers stuck watching this messy, lugubrious sci-fi thriller who may feel like the ones being held captive."

SAAR

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

DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + (11.00 PM THURS/FRI)

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

MEL GIBSON, JENNIFER CARPENTER, VINCE VAUGHN
DAILY AT: 5.00 + 8.00 + (11.00 PM THURS/FRI)

3-MADHURA RAJA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW

MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
FROM FRIDAY 12TH
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + (11.00 PM FRI)

4-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)

ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + (11.30 PM THURS/FRI)

5-DUMBO (PG) (ADVENTURE/DRAMA/FAMILY)

COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.45 PM

AL HAMRA

1-MADHURA RAJA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW

MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
FROM FRIDAY 12TH
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 PM + (12.00 MN FRI)

2-LUCIFER (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

MOHANLAL, MANJU WARRIER, VIVEK OBEROI, TOVINO THOMAS
ONLY ON THURSDAY 11TH
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.45 + 9.00 PM + (12.15 MN THURS)

WADI AL SAIL

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

DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

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

MEL GIBSON, JENNIFER CARPENTER, VINCE VAUGHN
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 2.15 + 5.15 + 8.15 + 11.15 PM

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

REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN
DAILY AT: 2.15 + 6.45 + 11.15 PM

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

JOSEPHINE LANGFORD, HERO FIENNES TIFFIN, KHADIJHA RED THUNDER
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 4.30 + 9.00 PM

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

JOHN GOODMAN, ASHTON SANDERS, JONATHAN MAJORS
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 3.00 + 7.30 PM + 12.00 MN

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

MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
FROM FRIDAY 12TH
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

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

ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
DAILY AT: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM

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

COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 5.15 + 9.45 PM

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAJESH KAYARATT S/O ALANGHAT RAGHAVAN NAIR HARIDAS holding Indian Passport **NO. M30**



Elisabeth Moss

Elisabeth Moss to star in 'The Invisible Man' reboot

Los Angeles

Elisabeth Moss is officially on board "The Invisible Man" reboot, based on the classic 1937 sci-fi novel by HG Wells. "The Handmaid's Tale" star was in early talks for the Universal-Blumhouse production, Deadline reported. This would be Moss' second collaboration with Blumhouse after Jordan Peele's recent critically-acclaimed hit, "Us". Leigh Whannell wrote and is directing the film. He will co-produce alongside Blumhouse. The novel has been adapted for both the big screen and television over the years. Its most notable adaptation is the 1933 black-and-white film, featuring Claude Rains in the title role.



Sophie Turner

Emilia Clarke

Emilia, Sophie share excitement over GoT season finale

Los Angeles The final season of 'Game of Thrones' premiered on April 14. While excitement level among fans is at an all-time high to find out who will ultimately win the Iron Throne, the latest posts of actors Emilia Clarke and Sophie Turner on social media is proof that even the cast of the series is ecstatic about the final season's premiere. Sophie, who plays the role of Sansa Stark in the series, shared a picture on Instagram where she can be seen sleeping

on the sets of the show. "In honour of the final season of Thrones premiering tonight... Here's a picture of me asleep on set," she wrote alongside the photograph. Meanwhile, Emilia, who plays Daenerys Targaryen in the show, posted an adorable photo on Instagram and wrote: "Me and my baby (dragon) just very excited for you all to see season 8 game of thrones which if I'm not mistaken begins...now. gulp enjoy for the throne for the last time buckle up kids."

The final season will run for six episodes and each episode could run as long as 90 minutes, The Hollywood Reporter had confirmed last month. The April premiere date will also make GoT eligible for the 2019 Emmys. Although GoT is set to culminate with the eighth season, HBO had, last month, revealed that fans would get to see 'Game of Thrones: The Last Watch', a two-hour feature documentary that chronicles the making of the final season.

When Harington broke down in front of a GoT fan



Kit Harington Los Angeles

Actor Kit Harington says he broke down and cried in front of a "Game of Thrones" fan after filming the show's final season. Harington is about to say goodbye to the character he has inhabited for the past eight years. And letting go of Jon Snow proved to be difficult for Harington. In an episode of "The Graham Norton Show", the 32-year-old star admitted that he got emotional in front of a fan on the street after filming wrapped, reports dailymail.co.uk. "She backed off pretty quickly," he said of the fan in question. The actor added: "I was determined to be cool about the end and decided that when people came up to me and said, 'Are you Jon Snow?' that I would say very calmly, 'I used to be.'"

Russo Brothers take on 'heavier' film after 'Avengers'

Los Angeles

"Avengers: Endgame" directors Joe and Anthony Russo, collectively known as the Russo Brothers, are set to join forces with actor Tom Holland again. This time for a smaller film that has a "bit heavier material". "We are going to do our next movie with Tom Holland, who plays Spider-Man," Joe said here on Monday. The directors and Holland have worked together in Marvel films "Captain America: Civil War", "Avengers: Infinity War" and "Avengers: Endgame". Talking about their next film, Joe said: "It is a smaller film about a war veteran who comes home with PTSD and develops a heroin addiction." "So, it's a bit heavier material... We thought it was an important issue to tackle," he added. The directors are here to promote "Avengers: Endgame", the 22nd film of the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

'Blue Bloods' renewed for season 10

Los Angeles The show "Blue Bloods" has been renewed for a 10th season, with series lead Tom Selleck inking a new deal to return in his role. The police drama is about a multi-generational family of New York City police officers. Selleck plays Police Commis-

sioner Frank Reagan, who heads both the police force and his family, reports variety.com. Reagan's brood includes seasoned detective Danny (Donnie Wahlberg), Assistant District Attorney Erin (Bridget Moynahan), and Jamie (Will Estes), who left a future career in law to follow in the family footsteps.

Not interested in getting more famous: Maisie Williams

Los Angeles

"Game of Thrones" star Maisie Williams says the epic fantasy series has given her a lot of fame but she is not interested in working towards increasing her popularity.

The 22-year-old actor tasted success with her stint as Arya Stark in the HBO series, which is in its final season.

The first of episode of season eight premiered in the US on April 14.

"I still see ignorant comments feel like I personally have to remove myself, because I had a taste of that sort of fame with this show and I made a vow to myself: I do not want that."

"My agents say things to me like, 'We'll raise your profile', and I don't really understand what that means because to me it sounds like getting a whole lot more famous, which is something I'm not interested in. If this show is the greatest thing I ever do, I did OK. I didn't do too bad," Williams told The Observer.



Maisie Williams

John Travolta, Kelly Preston pay homage to son

Los Angeles

Actors John Travolta and Kelly Preston honoured their son Jett on what would have been his 27th birthday.

The "American Crime Story" actor and his wife took to Instagram on April 13 to pay tribute to their eldest child who died in 2009, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Jett, who had autism and suffered other serious health issues, died at the age of 16, after hitting his head on a bathtub when he suffered a seizure during a family trip to the Bahamas.

Travolta shared some fan art of his son, and wrote alongside the portrait: "A painting a fan made of my son Jett! Happy birthday my son I love you!"

Directing makes me much better actor: Brie Larson

Los Angeles

Oscar winning-actress Brie Larson donned the director's hat for her new project "Unicorn Store". She says her new directing duties have made her a better actor.

Larson, who has become the first to lead a female superhero in the Marvel Cinematic Universe with "Captain Marvel", feels that having the knowledge of directing films has improved her as an actor. "Directing makes me a much better actor because you see the entire process. Actors don't get to be part of pre-production as much...they are not seeing what everybody does on the team," Larson told media during the promotion of her forthcoming film "Avengers: Endgame" here on Monday.



Brie Larson

Madonna announces new album 'Madame X'

Los Angeles

After months of hinting that new music was on the way, singer Madonna has finally revealed the name of an upcoming project.

She has given her fans a sense of what her new tunes may sound like via

some tantalising social media posts, reports forbes.com.

The singer uploaded a video to both Instagram and Twitter on April 14, in which she shared that she has decided to name her new album "Madame X", though she



Madonna

doesn't state when it may arrive.

The name seems to refer to a character, or perhaps an alter ego that Madonna has created, who she describes as "a secret agent / travelling around the world / changing identities / fighting for freedom / bringing light to dark places".

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PSG title party delayed again

Paris Saint-Germain have to put their title party on hold after being thumped 5-1 at Lille

AFP | Paris

Paris Saint-Germain missed the chance to seal their sixth Ligue 1 title in seven years for the second week running on Sunday after a 5-1 hammering at Lille, their biggest league defeat in 10 years.

Thomas Tuchel's side could have been crowned champions in record-equalling time last weekend but failed to beat Strasbourg, and they fell short again on Sunday despite needing just a point in a match that saw them have to play with 10 men for 54 minutes and lose both captain Thiago Silva and Thomas Meunier to injury.

The loss was PSG's worst domestic defeat since going down 4-0 at Bordeaux in 2009, and the first time they had conceded five goals in the league since another 5-1 defeat at Sedan way back in 2000.

However they are still 17 points clear of second-placed Lille and if they win at Nantes on Wednesday they will still win the league with six matches to spare.

"We are going to be champions, but you have to lose in the right way," said Kylian Mbappe, who had two goals ruled out for offside.

"We can't lack personality like that, and concede three, four, five goals. Losing happens, but that is not normal."

World Cup winner Mbappe had already had one goal chalked off by the officials when a comical Meunier own goal set Lille



Paris St Germain's Kylian Mbappe in action with Lille's Zeki Celik

on their way after six minutes.

But PSG looked set to seal the title when Juan Bernat levelled soon after and Mbappe roofed what looked like his 28th league goal of the season in the 13th minute, only to see that one also rightly disallowed.

Silva left the field with a knee injury soon after and after Meunier was pulled off, Bernat was then handed a debatable straight red card in the 36th minute for

a tug on Nicolas Pepe despite a VAR check.

Attacker Pepe slotted home Lille's second five minutes after the break when he latched onto a superb Jonathan Ikone through ball and after that the floodgates opened.

Jonathan Bamba smashed home the third 14 minutes later from another Ikone assist and two fine headers from Gabriel and Jose Fonte in the final 20

minutes completed the rout and put Lille eight points ahead of third-placed Lyon.

"Putting five past PSG doesn't happen to everyone, even if they did only have 10 men, but we played well tonight," Pepe told Canal+.

"We've still got six matches left and we need to win at least three or four to be assured of the Champions League next season."



The loss was PSG's worst domestic defeat since going down 4-0 at Bordeaux in 2009

Earlier on Sunday, Saint-Etienne closed in on Champions League football after Mathieu Debuchy scored twice in a 3-0 win over Bordeaux that moves them to within three points of Lyon.

Wahbi Khazri opened the scoring from the spot 10 minutes after the break following a VAR check of Sergi Palencia's handball before Debuchy headed home the second from a corner to seal the points 17 minutes before the end.

Debuchy then completed the win with a deflected close-range strike in the final minute to put Jean-Louis Gasset's side back ahead of Marseille, who started the day fourth and in the Europa League spot after surviving late VAR penalty drama on Saturday to scrape to a 2-1 win over Nimes.

They are two points ahead of Rudi Garcia's side and piling pressure on Lyon, who have lost two on the bounce following Friday's shock 2-1 defeat at Nantes.

Garin becomes first Chilean ATP champion in a decade

AFP | Los Angeles

Christian Garin claimed his first ATP title on Sunday, weathering a solid challenge from Casper Ruud to post a three-set win in the final of the US Men's Clay Court Championships.

The 22-year-old Garin, who is part of the ATP's next generation of stars, beat Ruud 7-6 (7/4), 4-6, 6-3 and becomes the first Chilean to win an ATP Tour title since Fernando Gonzalez in 2009.

"Casper is a great player I am sure we will play many more finals against each other," said Garin, who improved his clay court record to 11-3 in 2019. "This is my favourite tournament now and I hope to come back next year."

Pogba auctions World Cup-winning boots for charity

AFP | Paris

The football boots with which Paul Pogba effectively won the World Cup for France last year are to go under the hammer in Paris later this month, Christie's said yesterday.

The auction house estimate they could go for up to 50,000 euros (\$56,500).

The Manchester United midfielder, who scored France's third goal in 4-2 victory over Croatia, has donated them to a French charity which helps students from tough areas.

Pogba, who grew up on a deprived estate in the Paris suburbs, has also given the France shirt he wore during the team's victory over Iceland in the Euro 2016 quarter final, in which he also scored.

France eventually lost to Portugal in extra-time in the final. Two of Pogba's Juventus rigs will also be auctioned at the sale on April 29.

"This organisation does great work for young people in difficulty," the star said. "Coming from where I do, I know how difficult it can be to succeed."

Shafiq Glass edge Riders

TDI | Manama

Shafiq Glass defeated Riders by 53 runs in CBA Division D T-20 Kncok out league. Shafiq Glass won the toss and elected to bat first. Yusuf (45) and Mohammed (38) put a 92 runs partnership for the 5th wicket that helped them to score 165 at the end of 20 overs. Chasing the target Tornado Riders scored only 112 runs. Vijesh (35) became the top scorer for Riders and Abbas and Ail bagged two wickets each for Shafiq Glass.

Brief Score: Shafiq Glass 165/7 in 20 overs (Yusuf 45, Mohammed 38, Reji 2/22) beat Tornado Riders 112/10 (Vijeesh 35, Abbas 3/32) by 53 runs

Fog Printing 126/7 in 20 overs (Javed 28, Jayakumar 24, Rijo 2/26) beat Bulls 105/9 (Sunil 24, Reji 2/15) by 21 runs

CBA Division C T-20 Knock out Tournament

Fateh Curtain 99/3 in 9.4 overs (Zahid 53, Shabeer 2/15) beat Indian Delights 98/6 (Shabeer 34, Waseem 2/13) by 7 wickets

Alyousof Exchange 178/9 in 20 overs (Shyam 55, Anees 35, Faizan 2/17) beat Mumbai Riders 142/10 (Faizan 39, Furqan 36, Anil 3/37) by 36 runs

Pak Eagles 125/3 in 12.3 overs (Shahzab 41, Mehbob 32, Adil 2/17) beat central Caf 124/10 (Adil 22, latif 3/20) by 7 wickets

CBA Division D 25 overs league

Hempel Paints 127/10 (Tayyab 22, Antony 4/27) beat COTS CA 108/10 (Sam 39, Bally 3/10) by 19 runs

NDC Bahrain 187/10 (Balaji 53, Rahul 30, Salman 4/44) beat Suha Travels 169/10 (Tabreez 29, Husnain 28, Alex 2/13) by 18 runs

Karnataka Strikers 172/9 in 25 overs (Shoaib 45, Noor 30, latif 2/20) beat Alpha Fire Bahrain 163/8 (Thilina 62, Amila 32, Riyab 3/20) by 9 runs

Tisca 170/10 (Sameer 29, Sagar 5/23) beat Indian Super Kings 105/10 (Ashwani 26, Omer 2/7) by 65 runs

Spartans 109/5 in 19.3 overs (Shahin 38, Sheraz 23, Prashob 2/30) beat Falcon CC 108/10 (Antony 41, Zeeshan Ali 3/5) by 5 wickets

Modest XI 131/10 (Xavier 40, Jojo 4/19) beat Friends XI 111/10 (Shah Alam 42, Jamshir 3/14) by 20 runs

Matrix CC 124/9 in 25 overs (Jagan 28, Mominul 25, Thousif 3/19) beat Kooheji Contractors 90/10 (Riaz 20, Arun 3/20) by 34 runs

IMMAF president congratulate Shaikh Khalid

TDI | Manama

The international MMA community continues to show its support for HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Vice Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Chairman of West Asian Athletics Association and Chairman of the Bahrain Athletics Federation, on the occasion of his appointment as the president of the Bahrain Olympic Committee.

After fighters and influencers from the sport sent their

congratulations. IMMAF president Kerrith Brown praised HH Shaikh Khalid's appointment and talk about his vision and leadership for the sport.

For the last three years, HH Shaikh Khalid has committed to the development of the sport also at amateur level by helping to bring the world championships to Bahrain and increasing its popularity. Kerrith Brown, president of the International MMA Federation, who has a close relationship with His Highness, congratulated him on his momentous appointment.

Meanwhile, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports second deputy chairman and Bahrain Olympic Committee honorary president Shaikh Isa bin Rashid Al Khalifa also congratulated HH Shaikh Khalid.

Shaikh Isa said that the unanimous decision of national sports federations representatives during the recently-held general assembly reflects HH Shaikh Khalid's vast history of successes and achievements, in addition to significant contributions to the fields of youth and sports in Bahrain.

Smith and Warner back for Australia's World Cup

AFP | Sydney

Ball-tamperers Steve Smith and David Warner were yesterday selected for Australia's World Cup squad, but there was no room for Josh Hazlewood or Peter Handscomb.

It is the first call-up for the former captain and his deputy since the expiry late last month of year-long bans for their part in the "sandpapergate" scandal in Cape Town that rocked cricket.

They were eligible for the fi-



David Warner (R) of Winnipeg Hawks runs down the wicket during a change of ends in a Global T20 Canada match (file photo)

nal two games of Australia's recent limited-overs tour against Pakistan, but selectors preferred that they eased themselves back at the Twenty20 Indian Premier League.

Both grabbed the opportunity and have been in good touch, particularly the bombastic Warner who has made a blistering return.

It left coach Justin Langer with a dilemma on the back of the defending World Cup champions winning eight one-day internationals on the trot, against

India and Pakistan.

All the top order have been firing, and it is Handscomb who is the fall guy despite averaging 43 in 13 games this year. The decision to drop him means the team only has one wicketkeeper in Alex Carey.

"We have been extremely pleased with how the ODI squad has been building over the past six months, including the recent series wins in India and against Pakistan in the UAE," said chief selector Trevor Hohns.

Messi fit for Barca: Valverde

Lionel Messi cut his nose in a challenge with Chris Smalling during the first leg at Old Trafford

AFP | Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde has said Lionel Messi is in "perfect" condition to face Manchester United in the second leg of their Champions League quarter-final on Wednesday.

It is four years since Barca last reached the semis of Europe's premier competition but a 1-0 victory at Old Trafford makes them firm favourites ahead of the return at Camp Nou.

Messi was among 10 players rested for the goalless draw against Huesca on Saturday after a hefty challenge from Chris Smalling last week left him with a swollen nose and cheek.

"He is fine," said Valverde at a press conference on Tuesday. "He has recovered perfectly from the blow he suffered. He was fine after a couple of days."

"It is true that during the match he was a little stunned but he is in perfect condition and does not have any problems ahead of tomorrow's game."

Valverde said Ousmane Dembele could also feature after he played for 67 minutes against Huesca, having recovered from a hamstring injury. "I don't know to what extent because he has been out for four weeks," Valverde said. "But he is ready to play."

Barcelona have lost only one home game in the Champions League in 10 years but United will take hope from their last 16 comeback against Paris Saint-Germain, when they overturned a 2-0 first-leg defeat to go through.

"That memory from PSG will help the players and us as a team, that we know we can turn things around," coach Ole



Manchester United's English midfielder Scott McTominay (L) vies with Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi

Gunnar Solskjaer said.

"Barcelona here at the Nou Camp is a difficult prospect but the memory will live with the players, it's not long ago."

Barca goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen is confident his team can avoid a repeat. "The good thing is we play differently to PSG," he said. "But United are dangerous and the result from the first leg is dangerous, it is a very small

advantage."

Ole Back to Barca

Solskjaer might also draw upon his own experience of the Camp Nou, in 1999, when he scored a 93rd-minute winner as United came from 1-0 down to beat Bayern Munich 2-1 in the Champions League final.

"Of course it's a fantastic memory for

me. It's the only time I've been on the pitch here," Solskjaer said.

"I don't mind if we score in the 93rd minute. If we get to injury-time we are a fit team."

Barcelona's recent history in this competition has been more painful as United look to follow Juventus, Atletico Madrid and Roma in sending them out in the quarter-finals for a fourth year



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer scored a last-minute goal to win the Champions League as a Manchester United player at Barcelona's Camp Nou in 1999

in a row.

"It has been hard," said Ter Stegen. "We are another year older and we want to make sure it doesn't happen again. We have to take those losses into account and use them to move forward."

Valverde urged his players to seize the opportunity. "I think we all take examples of things happening in the past and use them to spur us on," he said. "That's fine but I prefer to take charge of your own destiny. You won't be given something that falls from the sky. We have to earn it."

United's greatest threat in recent weeks has tended to come on the counter-attack but Solskjaer insists they cannot afford to sit back.

"There are freak results against Barcelona when you have 10 or 15 per cent possession and they don't win but normally they do win," Solskjaer said. "We need to stamp our authority on the game."

India go for 'big match' experience in World Cup picks



India's batsman Dinesh Karthik attempts to hit a shot (file photo)

AFP | Mumbai

India yesterday named a tried and tested squad for the World Cup led by Virat Kohli with selectors going for experience in all the slots for the marquee 50-over event.

Dinesh Karthik, 33, was given the second wicketkeeper's slot over rising 21-year-old star Rishabh Pant, ending days of speculation over the role.

Vijay Shankar's inclusion means he will probably be the first choice number four batsman, a position which India has struggled to fill permanently.

Karthik has not been on form in recent games, but selectors said they value his performance under pressure over the years.

"Definitely it's a case where we debated at length. We went ahead with Karthik because of his experience in big matches," chief selector M.S.K. Prasad told a news conference.

"We have seen Karthik fin-

ishing matches under pressure. Pant is full of talent, there's a lot of time for him and it's just unfortunate that he has missed out."

Karthik was part of the Indian squad for the 2007 World Cup but was overlooked for 2011 and 2015.

The selectors however made it clear that former India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, 37, would remain first-choice wicketkeeper.

"In an important game, wicketkeeping is also important. Karthik will only play in case of an injury to Dhoni," Prasad said.

India squad: Virat Kohli (capt), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, K.L. Rahul, Vijay Shankar, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wk), Kedar Jadhav, Dinesh Karthik, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Shami.

Bayern's title hopes hit as Neuer out for two weeks with calf injury

AFP | Berlin

Bayern Munich have suffered a blow to their league title hopes with club captain and Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer out for the next two weeks with a calf injury.

The defending Bundesliga champions confirmed Neuer, 33, will be sidelined for "around 14 days" after going off injured during Sunday's win over Fortuna Duesseldorf.

With five league games left, leaders Bayern are just a point ahead of Borussia Dortmund with the Bavarian giants on

course for a seventh straight league title.

The injury-prone Neuer will miss at least their next two league games as reserve keeper Sven Ulreich steps up.

Neuer picked up the injury early in the first half of Bayern's 4-1 win, pulling up after making an apparently innocuous pass.

Head coach Niko Kovac has confirmed Neuer has the same calf problem which saw the shot-stopper miss two games earlier this month.

He will definitely miss the league match at home to resurgent Werder Bremen on Satur-

day, as well as next Wednesday's away German Cup semi-final, also against Bremen, followed by a league match at Nuremberg.

Neuer has faced an ongoing battle with injury in recent years. Two metatarsal fractures kept him sidelined for most of last season, while injuries to his finger and his calf have seen him miss games this term.

Bayern have said defender Mats Hummels will also take a "short break from training" after also suffering a mild leg knock.



Manuel Neuer

Nadal enters the unknown in Monte Carlo

TDT | Monte Carlo

Rafael Nadal offered a low-key appraisal yesterday of his chances for a record-extending 12th Monte Carlo Masters title as he prepares to return from his latest injury lay-off.

The 32-year-old Spaniard, whose bad knees and constant stoppages from competition have defined his career

as king of clay, was extremely hesitant to even rate his chances as he gets set to face Roberto Bautista Agut in Wednesday's second round start.

"I can't give you any feeling, it's been a rough year and a half for me," Nadal said ahead of his first match since withdrawing with another knee injury prior to an Indian Wells semi-final against Roger Federer last month.

"It's tough for me to get a clear view of how I am. It's all hard for me personally."

Nadal has a vast number of ranking points to defend on clay after lifting titles in a spectacular 2018 run at Monte Carlo, Barcelona, Rome and Roland

Garros.

His only other trophy during a season in which he did not play at all after the US Open came on hard court in Toronto, where he beat young gun Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final.

"It's been hard for me personally," Nadal said of his latest physical setback.

"Now the work of every day is to improve, (make) small improvements in every practice."

"It's important for me to have a good practice before the tournament starts and then try to be competitive for the first round."

"It's gonna be a tough one (match with Bautista Agut), so let's see."



Rafael Nadal

Nadal is seeded second here behind Novak Djokovic, who is hoping to build for the French Open as he attempts to complete a personal sweep by winning his fourth straight Grand Slam title.