

Sophie Turner used to think about suicide a lot

Game of Thrones" star Sophie Turner has said she used to think about suicide a lot after being branded fat and a bad actress. **P14**

THE DAILY tribune

**Referendum set
 Cairo**

Egypt yesterday set a referendum for April 20-22 on sweeping constitutional changes including amendments that could extend President Abdel Fattah El Sisi's rule until 2030.

"The referendum process ... will take place inside Egypt... from April 20-22," Lashin Ibrahim, head of the National Election Authority said at a press conference.

The announcement came after Egypt's parliament on Tuesday overwhelmingly passed the changes, despite complaints from critics that they are "unconstitutional" and designed to "consolidate authoritarianism".

The amendments extend presidential terms from four to six years, but maintain a limit of two terms.

Under the changes, El Sisi's current term will be prolonged to 2024 and he would then be allowed to run for another six-year term.

His Majesty receives prestigious Japanese honour

Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received, at Al Sakhir Palace yesterday, the Japanese Ambassador to Bahrain, Hideki Ito, along with a delegation from the Stone for Peace Association of Hiroshima, led by its Board of Directors' Chairman, Michio Umemoto.

The delegation presented HM King Hamad with the "Stone for Peace" in recognition of HM's efforts in promoting the values of peace, love and co-existence.

HM the King welcomed the Japanese Ambassador and members of the Stone for Peace Association of Hiroshima, lauding their endeavours to spread the values of peace and tolerance among the peoples of the world.

HM King Hamad expressed pride in the solid Bahraini-Japanese relations, and in the steady growth of the deep-rooted bilateral cooperation and joint action in many fields, in light of the



His Majesty receives 'Stone of Peace' honour from the Japanese delegation.

two countries' shared keenness to achieve the best for their two friendly peoples.

HM the King asserted that the Kingdom is proud of its long-standing distinguished civilisational status and leading historical role in disseminating

the values of moderation and toleration and consolidating rapprochement among various civilisations, cultures and religions.

HM King Hamad highlighted Bahrain's keenness to support all international efforts aimed

at promoting peace, security and stability, being basic fundamentals that allow the entire humanity to make steadfast strides towards more progress and prosperity.

HM the King lauded Japan's successful experience in various

economic, industrial and development fields, praising Japan's major contributions to efforts to strengthen the pillars of security and peace worldwide, as well as its rich heritage and the various civilisations that existed in it throughout history.

HM King Hamad extended thanks and appreciation to the Japanese delegation for offering him the "Stone for Peace", which is a symbol of love and peace. Members of the delegation gave an explanation about the "Stone for Peace", which, they said, is granted to heads of states, who emphasise love, peace and stability and spread the principles of tolerance.

They also presented HM the King with a certificate carrying a pledge of peace from Hiroshima. The chairman and members of the delegation of the Stone for Peace Association of Hiroshima expressed thanks and appreciation to HM King Hamad for the gracious welcome and hospitality accorded to them.

**Houthis killed
 Dubai**

The Yemeni army killed 70 Houthi militants, including senior officers, on Tuesday in Al Dhale province south of Yemen, Saudi state agency SPA reported.

The clashes in the Hamak front, which also left 20 Houthis injured, broke out when the militia tried to block a main road in Al Nadira district and a secondary road in Hamak, but Yemeni troops forced them to retract. Meanwhile, the Yemeni parliament held talks in Seiyun to classify the Houthi militia as a terrorist group.

A welcome veto

Trump vetoes congressional resolution to end US involvement in Yemen war

● The veto was only the second of Trump's presidency, after he overrode a congressional resolution that aimed to reverse the border emergency.

● The President said the resolution would also "harm the foreign policy of the United States" and "harm our bilateral relationships".



“This resolution is an unnecessary, dangerous attempt to weaken my constitutional authorities, endangering the lives of American citizens.”

TRUMP

"This resolution is an unnecessary, dangerous attempt to weaken my constitutional authorities, endangering the lives of American citizens and brave service members, both today and in the future," Trump said in the veto message.

UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash said the move "is a positive signal of US resolve towards Ameri-

ca's allies" in a Tweet early on Wednesday.

The resolution passed the House of Representatives in April and the Senate in March, marking the first time both chambers of Congress had supported a War Powers resolution, which limits the president's ability to send troops into action.

Neither the 247-175 tally in the Democratic-majority House

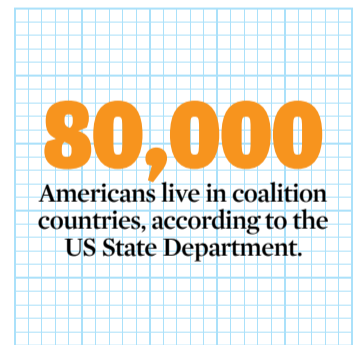
nor the 54-46 vote in the Republican-led Senate would be enough to override the veto, which would require two-thirds majorities in both chambers.

The veto was only the second of Trump's presidency, after he overrode a congressional resolution that aimed to reverse the border emergency he declared in order to secure more funding for his wall between the United States and Mexico in March.

The resolution by Congress was a harsh bipartisan rebuke to Trump that took the historic step of curtailing a president's war-making powers - a step he condemned in a statement announcing his veto.

Democrats argued that US involvement in the Yemen conflict - through intelligence-sharing, logistical support and now-discontinued aerial refuelling - is unconstitutional without congressional authority.

Trump argued that US sup-



port for the devastating war between the Saudi-backed Yemeni government and Houthi rebels, who control the capital Sanaa, was necessary for a variety of reasons, "first and foremost" to "protect the safety of the more than 80,000 Americans who reside in certain coalition countries."

The President said the resolution would also "harm the foreign policy of the United States" and "harm our bilateral relationships".

RARE HONOUR

Mohamed Salah in Time's 2019 influential people list

London

Liverpool and Egypt striker Mohamed Salah has been named in Time magazine's 100 most influential people of 2019.

The star footballer was listed within the "Titans" section of the

list - which includes a record 48 women - and was championed by British comedian and US TV host John Oliver.

Oliver said of the Egyptian: "Mohamed Salah is a better human being than he is a football player. And he's one of the best football players in the world.

"Mo is an iconic figure for Egyptians, Scousers and Muslims the world over, and yet he always comes across as a humble, thoughtful, funny man who isn't taking any of this too seriously."

Also in the "Titans" section were fellow sport stars LeBron

James and Tiger Woods. The darling of women's tennis Naomi Osaka was also in the list.

Salah is joined by fellow Arab and Muslim celebrities such as Rami Malek and Mahershala Ali, as well as Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.



Salah joins various world leaders in the list.



03 110 warnings issued to education institutes for flouting rules

04 Insights and views galore as mega entrepreneurship event concludes

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received at Sakhir Palace yesterday the Very Reverend Christopher Butt, Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral, and the UK Ambassador to Bahrain Simon Martin, marking the end of the Very Rev Chris Butt's tenure in Bahrain. HM the King welcomed Bishop Christopher Butt, lauding his efforts and contribution to humanitarian fields and praising the role of St Christopher's Cathedral and other churches in Bahrain in promoting religious tolerance and coexistence. He also praised strong historical relations between Bahrain and the United Kingdom and their perpetual growth at all levels.



His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa received at his palace in Riffa yesterday a commercial delegation from Thailand comprising representatives of major specialised companies in many trade activities. He stressed Bahrain's keenness to boost co-operation with Thailand by maximising ways of benefiting from the investment opportunities in both countries. He added that strong and deep-rooted historic relations between both countries are based on mutual understanding and a desire to bolster co-operation to serve common interests.



HRH the Premier yesterday received, at the Gudaibiya Palace, the UAE Ambassador to Bahrain, Shaikh Sultan bin Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, with whom he discussed the distinguished co-operation relations between the two brotherly countries, and ways to bolster them in various fields. The Prime Minister affirmed the Kingdom's constant keenness to strengthen its co-operation with the UAE through creating new fields that would enhance it so that it would serve common interests better. HRH the Premier lauded the UAE's supportive stances towards the Kingdom, noting that they reflect its full belief in the two countries' common goals and destiny.

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On behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa yesterday attended the reception marking the 93rd birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. During the event, HH Shaikh Mohammed delivered a speech in which he extended his best wishes to HM the Queen on the occasion of HM's 93rd birthday, noting that HM the Queen remains a symbol of stability in a time of change. HH Shaikh Mohammed went on to highlight the virtues that HM King Hamad and HM the Queen share, particularly the virtue of respect for different points of views and a joint commitment to seeking common ground.



His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa deputised Shaikh Khalifa bin Rashid Al Khalifa and Southern Governor His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali Al Khalifa to attend a reception hosted by British Ambassador Simon Martin marking the 93rd birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II. The event, which was held at the British Embassy's headquarters was also attended by senior officials, members of Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Kingdom of Bahrain and invitees. British Ambassador Simon Martin expressed deepest thanks to HRH the Premier for his support and keen interest in developing the longstanding partnership between the United Kingdom and Bahrain.



Ramesh, Managing Director of Techmaaxx Projects and Services WLL, which is a pioneering firm in solar projects, yesterday held discussions with Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Dr Abdulhussain Mirza on the sidelines of First Annual International Sustainable Energy Event at the Gulf Convention Centre. In the picture, Mr Ramesh, extreme right, and his Malaysian counterparts with Dr Mirza.

110 warnings issued to education institutes for flouting rules

Education Ministry plans strict steps including cancellation of licences if violations are not rectified

● Among other developments, the ministry has begun stepping up efforts to ensure the safety of students at public schools.

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Zafran

The Ministry of Education has issued 110 warnings to private schools and educational institutions after discovering violations while

carrying out inspection visits, sources said.

Unsafe electrical connections, employees residing on school campus and changing buildings without permission were among the violations found at the educational institutes, the sources added.

“One hundred and ten warnings were sent out to private schools and institutions in the country after the authorities made nearly 850 follow-up visits.

“Out of the inspection visits, 811 were made to private schools while 41 visits targeted educational institutions under the Ministry of Education itself.

”
Strict action will be taken against those who commit violations. They could even lose their licences.

MINISTRY OFFICIALS

The visits were made during the period from January 2018 to February 2019.

According to the Ministry of Education officials, a number of violations were noted and the concerned schools and institu-

tions were warned.

The ministry is taking every required measure to end all violations across all educational institutions of the Kingdom, they said.

“The inspection teams could spot many violations including unsafe electrical connections, employees residing on school campus as well as some schools changing buildings without permission.

“The violations noted also included lack of proper emergency exits, poor storage facilities, and the construction of facilities without proper permits,” a ministry representative said.

“The Ministry of Education will continuously implement measures to ensure high performance of private educational institutions in the Kingdom.

“Strict action will be taken against those who commit violations. They could even lose their licences,” the ministry officials said.

Among other developments, the ministry has begun stepping up efforts to ensure the safety of students at public schools.

It recently warned that firm action will be taken against anyone who attempts to harm the safety of students at schools

811
inspection visits were carried out by the Education Ministry teams to private schools.

across the country.

Two students were reportedly suspended from a public school in Hamad Town after it emerged that they sold drugs to their classmates.

Quack jailed for six months

TDT | Manama

An Asian man who illegally ran a clinic at a residential apartment in the Capital Governorate, has been sentenced to six months in jail along with a fine of BD1,000 by the Eighth Minor Criminal Court yesterday.

Ministries and Public Bodies Prosecution Chief Prosecutor Adnan Al Weda'ee announced this yesterday, adding that the court also ordered to close the apartment that was used as a clinic and to confiscate all the medicines and equipment used by the defendant.

The man was caught red-handed in February this year while offering medical services at an apartment that was set up as a clinic, without obtaining the necessary permits and authorisation.

At the time of his arrest, eight individuals (patients) were at the illegal clinic, awaiting their turn to be treated by the defendant, according to the prosecutor.

The police force that raided the apartment and confiscated medical equipment and tools, and medicines from the apartment.

It was also proven that the



Many medicines, injection syringes and other medical equipment were confiscated from the illegal clinic.

defendant had issued prescriptions to patients.

On February 17, 2019, the Public Prosecution interrogated the man and ordered to detain him for seven days pending further investigations.

He was accused by the Prosecution of managing an unlicensed clinic, practising med-

”
At the time of his arrest, eight patients were at the illegal clinic, awaiting their turn to be treated by the defendant.

MR AL WEDA'EE

icine without a licence, pretending to be doctor, importing drugs and medications without a licence, practising pharmaceutical activities without a licence and conducting a business without a licence.

The court found him guilty of all the above-mentioned charges.

Businessman acquitted in tax evasion case

TDT | Manama

A businessman has been acquitted by the Second Minor Court of evading tax, more than three years after the Bahrain Customs accused him of not paying BD86.1 in customs fees.

This was confirmed by the defendant's lawyer Mohamed Bumtai'e, who explained that his client had imported 500,000 electric switches from China in 2014, and the invoices proved that he paid USD83,888.8 to purchase the items and that he also paid the customs fees.

The lawyer said that more than three years later, precisely on December 21, 2017, Bahrain Customs found an invoice, during its auditing processes, showing that the defendant has paid more for the imported items than what was shown in the documents he provided by around BD5,000.

The Customs filed a complaint against the defendant to the Public Prosecution, which accused the latter of violating the Customs Law by providing false documents and bills with the intention of evading taxes (customs fees).

In the trial, the lawyer told the judges that the previously presented documents by his client only included the price of the imported goods, exclud-

”
It is unreasonable for an honest businessman, who's known for importing goods worth thousands of dinars or dollars, to commit a criminal offence to evade paying a tax of only BD86.1.

MR BUMTAI'E

ing the one per cent marine insurance fees and CNY20,000 as a return insurance for the logo template that is stamped on the manufacturer's products.

Mr Bumtai'e said the document the Customs has discovered includes the total amounts paid to the manufacturer.

The lawyer also said the complaint was filed three years after the incident took place, which drops the plaintiff's right to complain, in accordance with Article 1/18 of the Kingdom's Code of Criminal Procedure.

“It is unreasonable for an honest businessman, who's known for importing goods worth thousands of dinars or dollars, to commit a criminal offence to evade paying a tax of only BD86.1,” Mr Bumtai'e added.

LCD screens installed at courts

TDT | Manama

LCD screens have been installed at all court halls in the Kingdom in a bid to facilitate reviewing and documenting trial records, it was announced yesterday.

Supreme Judicial Council Secretary General Judge Ali Ahmed Al Kaabi confirmed in a statement that the screens have been fixed at all civil and criminal court rooms, adding that the recorded sessions could be reviewed directly.

Judge Al Kaabi explained that



An LCD screen installed at a courtroom.

the screens allow lawyers and the parties involved in the case to review everything in detail, including pleadings, arguments and verbal statements made at the session.

“This comes within the framework of supporting the technical structure for electronic transformation, which enhances the efficiency of performance, and contributes to the dedication of the principle of public hearings and guarantees of litigation,” Judge Al Kaabi added.

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Insights and views galore as mega entrepreneurship event concludes

Remarkable international participation makes 'The Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2019' a big success

● In its first time since the inception, the GEC witnessed the highest participation of over 50 countries at the "Startup Nations Ministerial Sessions".

● A session on "Building a Digital Nation" presented by former Estonian President Toomas Ilves, highlighted the progress made by his country in smart digital government services.

Manama

The Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2019, hosted for the first time in the Kingdom, organised by the Global Entrepreneurship Network and Tamkeen, concluded with more than 110 sessions delivered by over 240 speakers from all over the world.

Tamkeen Chairman Shaikh Mohammed Bin Issa Al Khalifa, expressed pride in partnering with GEN to host the Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2019 for the first time in Bahrain.

He pointed out that according to the reports of GEN, the international participation during the event reached up to 51 per cent, which has been recorded as the highest in the history of the congress for over the past 10 years.

He shed light on the importance of this remarkable benchmark achieved by the Kingdom in positioning itself as a thriving business hub and a leader in

building sustainable economic environments and fostering innovation.

He also highlighted Bahrain's extensive support for the start-up sector and their key role as an economic driver.

Tamkeen Chief Executive, Dr Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi, commented saying: "Bahrain's unique business environment is distinguished for its supportive regulatory laws and processes, which contribute to enhancing the Kingdom's position as an economically sustainable entrepreneurial hub.

In its first time since the inception of the GEC, witnessed the highest participation of over 50 countries at the "Startup Nations Ministerial Sessions".

In addition, the GEC witnessed a wide participation from around 170 countries including the United States, India, France, Turkey, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Cambodia and more.

The GEC continued with its parallel sessions on its third day yesterday, which covered approximately 50 topics that addressed entrepreneurship in digital platforms, creative industries, innovation policies, startup business acceleration, women in global entrepreneurship, mapping and measuring entrepreneur ecosystem, digital economies and more.

Among the highlights of the third day included a session on "Building a Digital Nation" presented by former Estonian President Toomas Ilves, who remarked the progress made by Estonia in smart digital government services, especially in implementing Blockchain Technology.

Mr Ilves shared the benefits



Dr Janahi honours a delegate at the Congress.

New "Trade Map" online platform

Export Bahrain, in partnership with the International Trade Centre, has announced the launch of its new interactive online platform "Trade Map" at the Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2019. The platform is accessible via Export Bahrain's website export.bh and will provide Bahraini exporters with trade and market intelligence of over 220 countries and territories and 5,300 products in a relevant and efficient manner. The purpose of this is to allow Bahraini exporters to identify and capture international trade opportunities based on indicators on export performance, international demand, alternative markets and the role of competitors from both a product and country perspective.



Former Estonian President Toomas Ilves talks about his country's success in implementing digital government services.



A panel discussion in progress at the Congress.

3,000

people from 170 countries, in addition to thousands of entrepreneurs and investors took part in the event.

of building a digital nation noting: "the fundamental core of digitalisation is having a strong and secure identity, as well as a decisive embrace of change. Today we save 2 per cent of our GDP every single year with the changes we have implemented. What makes a government resist change is the lack of will and the lack of dialogue between people who are in charge of policy-making and the people who understand digital technology."

In the "Women Entrepreneurs: Local Advancement, Global Trends moderated by Zahra Taher, crucial economic developments as well as challenges and solutions facing female entrepreneurs were dis-

ussed.

Shaikha Dina bint Rashid Al Khalifa, Director General for Policies and Development at the Supreme Council for Women, highlighted the importance of women in the entrepreneurship sector and urged them to work across all economic sectors in the Kingdom.

One of the third day's sessions included Tamkeen's "Enabling a Digital Economy: Cloud Impact on Startups" which shed light on supporting organisations as they increase the quality and effectiveness of their services, including improvement of security utilising the latest digital solutions.

The GEC also included several announcements related to development initiatives wherein various entities and organisations in the Kingdom will partner with private sector companies to support national efforts aiming to develop supportive environments for startup enterprises. This year's edition of the GEC was attended by over 3,000 people from 170 countries, in addition to thousands of entrepreneurs and investors.

National FinTech Talent Programme kicks off

● The semi-annual programme is delivered in a combination of live and online modules and is certified by Georgetown University.

TDT | Manama

Bahrain FinTech Bay's National FinTech Talent Programme (FTP) has officially kicked off with its first batch of 25 Bahraini candidates.

The first cohort will be part of a specialised roadmap, that will offer unique opportunities to develop their professional skills and gain insightful experience in the latest FinTech trends and technologies on a global scale.

The programme started accepting applications in early January, and a successful batch of 50 high-calibre candidates progressed to an exclusive career fair exposing them to over



The first batch has 25 Bahraini candidates.

15 employers, including speed networking as well as breakout sessions at the event.

Following the candidate's performance at the FinTech and Innovation Career Fair, 25 candidates have been placed within FinTech and innovation related internship roles for a period of six months.

Accepted candidates will start their journey by being part of a six-month internship in

innovation/digitalisation and FinTech roles, receiving mentorship from global partners of Bahrain FinTech Bay, and will complete training on FinTech verticals focusing on blockchain and artificial intelligence run by SettleMint, Blockchain Academy Global and TAIGER AI Academy.

In parallel to their internships, candidates are enrolled in a three-month a professional

development course in FinTech delivered by Georgetown University McDonough School of Business.

The semi-annual programme is delivered in a combination of live and online modules and is certified by Georgetown University.

The certification comprises seven modules and four case-studies led by Professor Jim Angel, a prominent figure

within the FinTech landscape, and co-inventor of 12 FinTech patents.

Additionally, the course will be hosting local and international guest speakers, the entrepreneurial community, and thought leaders from the financial services industry.

Khalid Saad, CEO, Bahrain FinTech Bay commented on the kick off, "As the FinTech ecosystem in Bahrain and the region transforms further, the development of talent to continue and sustain such transformation is key.

"Initiating the region's first National FinTech Talent Program with Tamkeen is a key step in the development of such talent.

"Through training and job placement opportunities within our partner network, we aim to develop a generation of leaders that will be able to take the industry forward and support Bahrain's transition into a knowledge and innovation driven economy."

Joint efforts to combat terror funding discussed

Manama

The Minister of Finance and National Economy, Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa stressed Bahrain's ongoing efforts to back the international efforts to combat economic crimes, including mainly illegal trading of money.

The Minister of Finance and National Economy was speaking as he received yesterday the US Treasury's Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Marshall Billingslea and his accompanying delegation.

He stressed the need to fight them through the government's institutions and according to international laws.

He also pointed out the importance of boosting coordination at all levels to carry out effective procedures to confront the quality development in innovated funding methods used by the terrorist organisations in order to maintain international peace and stability.

They discussed boosting bilateral co-operation in combating terrorism funding.



Condensed interim financial information for the three months ended 31 March 2019

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 31 March 2019			
	Bahraini Dinar Millions		
	31 March 2019 (reviewed)	31 December 2018 (audited)	31 March 2018 (reviewed)
Assets			
Cash and balances at central banks	108.0	107.3	92.9
Treasury bills	379.5	387.1	441.4
Placements with banks and other financial institutions	236.1	259.7	71.2
Loans and advances	1,148.0	1,190.1	1,270.2
Investment securities	1,221.0	1,132.2	1,040.1
Investment in associates	52.6	51.6	48.8
Interest receivable and other assets	44.7	50.9	31.9
Property and equipment	23.0	16.6	13.5
Total assets	3,212.9	3,195.5	3,009.0
Liabilities			
Due to banks and other financial institutions	349.8	361.4	438.8
Borrowings under repurchase agreements	135.4	103.9	11.5
Customer deposits	2,212.4	2,190.6	2,102.4
Interest payable and other liabilities	47.5	43.8	34.2
Total liabilities	2,744.8	2,719.7	2,590.0
Equity			
Share capital	154.3	140.3	140.3
Shares unallocated under share incentive scheme	(1.4)	(1.5)	(1.5)
Share premium	6.3	6.0	6.0
Statutory reserve	77.1	70.1	70.1
General reserve	32.4	32.4	32.4
Other reserves and retained earnings	198.4	229.5	172.7
Total equity	468.1	476.8	419.0
Total liabilities and equity	3,212.9	3,195.5	3,009.0

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS for the three months ended 31 March 2019		
	Bahraini Dinar Millions	
	Three months ended	
	31 March 2019 (reviewed)	31 March 2018 (reviewed)
Interest income	36.7	27.9
Interest expense	(12.9)	(8.3)
Net interest income	23.8	19.6
Other income	10.4	10.5
Total operating income	34.2	30.1
Staff expenses	8.8	8.7
Office expenses	3.8	3.3
Total operating expenses	12.6	12.0
Profit before provisions	21.6	18.1
Net impairment provision	(3.2)	(0.4)
Profit for the period	18.4	17.7
Basic and diluted earnings per share	13 fils	13 fils

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME for the three months ended 31 March 2019		
	Bahraini Dinar Millions	
	Three months ended	
	31 March 2019 (reviewed)	31 March 2018 (reviewed)
Profit for the period	20.4	19.7
Other comprehensive income:		
Items that are or may be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Fair value through other comprehensive income (debt instruments):		
- Not change in fair value	4.9	(10.6)
- Not amount transferred to profit or loss	(1.4)	-
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Fair value through other comprehensive income (equity instruments):	1.8	1.0
Total other comprehensive income for the period	5.3	(9.6)
Total comprehensive income for the period	25.7	10.2

Farouk Yousuf Khalil Alnoosyed
Chairman

Dr. Essam Abdulla Fakhro
Deputy Chairman

Jean-Christophe Durand
Chief Executive Officer

1. Significant Accounting Policies and Financial Risk Management: There have been no changes in the Bank's Significant Accounting Policies and Risk Management Framework except for the effects of adoption of IFRS 16 as described in Note 3 to this condensed interim financial information.
2. Statement of Compliance: This condensed interim financial information has been prepared in compliance with international Accounting Standard 34 "Interim Financial Reporting".
3. Dividend Income: For three months ended 31 March 2019, other income includes BHD 2.6 (31 March 2018: BHD 2.8 million) of dividends received from the Bank's investments equity securities. This income is of a seasonal nature.
4. Appropriations: At the annual ordinary general meeting and the extraordinary general meeting for the year 2018, which were held on 6 March 2019, certain appropriations and amendments were approved and collected during the period. These appropriations include BHD 35.1 million (BHD 31.7 million excluding dividends on unallocated shares under the employee share incentive scheme) for cash dividend at 25%, BHD 3.5 million for donations and contributions, a transfer of BHD 7.0 million from retained earnings to the statutory reserve and an increase in paid up capital due to a one-for-one bonus issue through the utilisation of BHD 14.0 million from the retained earnings. The authorised share capital was also increased to BHD 200.0 million from BHD 150.0 million.

Reviewed by KPMG

17 April 2019

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY for the three months ended 31 March 2019										
	Bahraini Dinar Millions									
2019 (reviewed)	Share capital	Unallocated shares	Share premium	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Other reserves and retained earnings			Total equity	
						Fair value reserve	Donations & charity reserve	Retained earnings		
Balance at 31 December 2018	140.3	(1.5)	6.0	70.1	32.4	10.0	17.5	202.0		475.8
2019 appropriations:										
- Cash dividend at 25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(34.7)	(34.7)
- Bonus shares issued (10%)	14.0	(0.2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(13.8)	-
- Transfer to donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.5	-	(3.5)	-
- Transfer to statutory reserve	-	-	-	7.0	-	-	-	-	(7.0)	-
Balance after 2019 appropriations	154.3	(1.7)	6.0	77.1	32.4	10.0	21.0	143.0		441.1
Shares allocated during the period	-	0.3	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.6
Comprehensive income for the period:										
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.4	20.4
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	5.3	-	-	-	5.3
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	5.3	-	-	20.4	25.7
Utilisation of donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.3)	-	-	(0.3)
Balance at 31 March 2019	154.3	(1.4)	6.3	77.1	32.4	15.3	20.7	163.4		468.1

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY for the three months ended 31 March 2018										
	Bahraini Dinar Millions									
2018 (reviewed)	Share capital	Unallocated shares	Share premium	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Other reserves and retained earnings			Total equity	
						Fair value reserve	Donations & charity reserve	Retained earnings		
Balance at 31 December 2017	127.5	(1.7)	4.0	63.8	32.4	26.1	16.0	179.8		447.9
Impact of adopting IFRS 9 as at 1 January 2018										
Impact on adopting IFRS 9 by associates	-	-	-	-	-	(14.2)	-	-	9.9	(4.3)
Restated Balances at 1 January 2018	127.5	(1.7)	4.0	63.8	32.4	11.9	16.0	186.6		439.6
2018 appropriations:										
- Cash dividend at 25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(31.5)	(31.5)
- Bonus shares issued (10%)	12.8	(0.1)	-	-	(12.8)	-	-	-	0.1	-
- Transfer to donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.1	-	(3.1)	-
- Transfer to general reserve	-	-	-	-	19.1	-	-	-	(19.1)	-
- Transfer to statutory reserve	-	-	-	6.3	(6.3)	-	-	-	-	-
Balance after 2018 appropriations	140.3	(1.8)	4.0	70.1	32.4	11.9	19.1	132.0		408.0
Shares allocated during the period	-	0.3	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.3
Comprehensive income for the period:										
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19.7	19.7
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	(9.5)	-	-	-	(9.5)
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(9.5)	-	-	19.7	10.2
Utilisation of donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.5)	-	-	(0.5)
Balance at 31 March 2018	140.3	(1.5)	6.0	70.1	32.4	2.4	18.6	151.7		419.0

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the three months ended 31 March 2019			
	Bahraini Dinar Millions		
	Three months ended		
	31 March 2019 (reviewed)	31 March 2018 (reviewed)	
Cash flow from operating activities			
Profit for the period	20.4	19.7	
Adjustments to reconcile profit for the period to net cash from/(used in) operating activities:			
Depreciation	1.0	0.5	
Net impairment provision	2.9	0.4	
Share of profit of associates	(1.6)	(2.2)	
Profit for the period after adjustments	22.7	18.4	
Change in operating assets and liabilities:			
Balances with central banks (mandatory cash reserve)	(5.6)	6.5	
Treasury bills	46.2	(11.4)	
Placements with banks and other financial institutions	-	(1.2)	
Loans and advances	39.2	(41.3)	
Investment securities	(83.1)	0.2	
Interest receivable and other assets	(2.5)	20.9	
Due to banks and other financial institutions	(31.9)	54.9	
Borrowings under repurchase agreements	31.5	(55.4)	
Customer deposits	21.8	(62.9)	
Interest payable and other liabilities	6.8	(2.4)	
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	44.1	(74.3)	
Cash flow from investing activities			
Dividend received from associates	0.6	0.8	
Purchase of property & equipment, net	(1.8)	(1.2)	
Net cash used in investing activities	(1.2)	(0.2)	
Cash flow from financing activities			
Dividends paid	(31.8)	(26.8)	
Donations and charities paid	(0.3)	(0.5)	
Payment of lease liabilities	(0.8)	-	
Net cash used in financing activities	(32.9)	(27.4)	
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents during the period	10.0	(101.9)	
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	310.9	195.2	
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March	320.9	93.3	

Closer to you

world

Sudan's Bashir transferred to prison: family source

Khartoum, Sudan

Ousted Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir has been transferred to a Khartoum prison following his toppling by the army last week, a source from his family said yesterday.

"Last night, Bashir was transferred to Kober prison in Khartoum," the source said without revealing his name for security reasons.

Witnesses said there was a heavy deployment of soldiers and members of the paramilitary Rapid Support Force outside the prison in north Khartoum.

"There are troops in vehicles mounted with machine-guns near the prison," a witness said.

Kober prison was built by the British during colonial rule and is located on the east bank of



Omar al-Bashir (file)

the Blue Nile in a northern district of the capital where Bashir grew up.

The area was previously known as Kober, taking its name from the prison, but Bashir later changed the name to Omar al-

YOU KNOW WHAT

Bashir was ousted by the army last Thursday after four months of protests against his three decades of iron-fisted rule. The country's new military rulers had said he was being held "in a secure place".

Mukhtar after a hero of Libya's struggle against Italian colonial rule.

The brick-built prison, which is surrounded by a high concrete wall, holds hundreds of inmates at any one time, many of them crammed in tiny cells.

It has a special wing for political prisoners where several opposition leaders and activists were held during the four months of protests which led up to Bashir's overthrow.

The wing is run by the feared National Intelligence and Security Service rather than the police.

"In those small cells, they keep six to seven people, mostly smugglers, black marketeers, human traffickers and petty criminals," said a correspondent who was detained in the prison during previous protests against Bashir's rule in January 2018.

"There is a bathroom in each cell but no beds -- only mattresses and mosquitoes."

Saudi king hosts Abu Dhabi crown prince



King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman discussed regional developments with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed. (Courtesy of Al Arabia/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's King Salman yesterday hosted Abu Dhabi's crown prince for talks, state media said, after the Gulf allies threw their support behind Sudan's military rulers who ousted veteran leader Omar al-Bashir.

Abu Dhabi's Prince Mohammed bin Zayed discussed "regional developments" with the king and his son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the official *Saudi Press Agency* said in a brief report.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE on Sunday released a brief reaction to Bashir's toppling following months of street pro-

tests, calling for "stability" and a "peaceful transition".

Saudi Arabia and the UAE both voiced backing for Sudan's Transitional Military Council, with Riyadh promising an aid package to Sudanese people.

A senior Sudanese military official on Monday said troops from his country will remain in Yemen until the Arab alliance achieves its goals.

The Gulf powerhouses are also following events in Libya, where forces loyal to warlord Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive on Tripoli, now controlled by a UN-recognised government and an array of militias.

China seizes nearly 2,750 elephant tusks

Beijing, China

Chinese authorities have seized 7.5 tonnes of ivory -- 2,748 elephant tusks -- in one of the biggest busts in recent years as the country cracks down on the sale of illegal wildlife products.

The country banned ivory sales at the end of 2017 in an attempt to rein in what used to be the product's largest market in the world. Imports were banned in 2015.

The smuggled tusks were confiscated last month in an operation by customs officers and police across six provinces, according to the General Administration of Customs.

300 arrested at climate protests in London

London, United Kingdom

Nearly 300 people have been arrested in ongoing climate change protests in London that brought parts of the British capital to a standstill, police said Tuesday.

Demonstrators began blocking off a bridge and major central road junctions on Monday at the start of a civil disobedience campaign that also saw action in other parts of Europe.

The protests were organised by the campaign group Extinction Rebellion, which was established last year in Britain by academics and has become one of the world's fastest-growing environmental movements.

London's Metropolitan Police said that by Tuesday evening, 290 arrests had been made.

"We expect demonstrations to continue throughout the coming weeks," the police statement said.

The arrest figure includes three men and two women who were detained at the UK offices of energy giant Royal Dutch Shell on suspicion of criminal damage.

Campaigners daubed graffiti and smashed a window at the Shell Centre building.

The majority arrested were seized for breaching public order laws and obstructing a highway.

The protest saw more than a thousand people block off central London's Waterloo Bridge and lay trees in pots along its length. Later, people set up camps in Hyde Park in preparation for further demonstrations throughout the week.

Police restrictions

The police have ordered the protesters to confine themselves to a zone within Marble Arch, a space at the junction of Hyde Park, the Oxford Street main shopping thoroughfare and the Park Lane street of



Police remove a climate change protestor from the roof of a DLR train at Canary wharf station on the third day of an environmental protest by the Extinction Rebellion group, in London



Climate change protesters practice yoga on Waterloo Bridge on the third day of an environmental protest by the Extinction Rebellion group, in London

plush hotels.

"We so far have 55 bus routes closed and 500,000 people affected as a result," the police said.

London mayor Sadiq Khan said he was "extremely concerned" about protesters' plans to disrupt the underground on Wednesday.

"Targeting public transport in this way would only damage the cause of all of us who want to tackle climate change," he said in a statement.

Campaigners want governments to declare a climate and ecological emergency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2025, halt biodiversity

loss and be led by new "citizens' assemblies on climate and ecological justice".

Extinction Rebellion spokesman James Fox said the group had attempted to maintain a blockade overnight at four sites in central London before the police came to impose the new restriction.

Protesters attached themselves to vehicles and to each other using bicycle locks, said the spokesman.

"We have no intention of leaving until the government listens to us," he said.

"Many of us are willing to sacrifice our liberty for the cause."

Pet deer kills man, leaves woman fighting for life in Australia



Paul and Mandi McDonald were attacked by their pet deer at their property

Sydney, Australia

A pet deer killed a man and left a woman critically injured at a rural property in Australia yesterday, police said.

Emergency services were called to the outback home in Victoria state early in the morning and found the badly gored couple, both aged 46.

"The man died at the scene," police said in a statement.

"The woman has been airlifted to a hospital in Melbourne with life-threatening injuries and remains in a critical condition."

National broadcaster ABC said the man was attacked when he went to feed the animal and his wife was injured when she came to his rescue.

A teenage son saved his mother by hitting the deer

with a lump of wood, it said.

The animal was then killed "due to concerns for the paramedic's safety on scene", police said.

The ABC reported the stag had been kept at the property for six years.

The Australian Deer Association said it was rare for deer to attack people.

"It is unusual, but not unheard of, for captive deer to attack humans, particularly during the Autumn mating season," the association said in a statement.

Deer were introduced into Australia in the 19th century, largely for hunting purposes.

But feral populations have since expanded across the country with increasing calls for greater controls in many areas where they are considered a pest.

Italy arrests two men planning IS attacks



Representative picture

Rome, Italy

Italy police yesterday arrested two men planning attacks in the name of the Islamic State (IS) group.

The 24-year old Italian and 18-year old Moroccan were nabbed in northern Italy after posting IS images and videos on social networks, police said.

The pair were "ready to attack", according to media reports citing prosecutors, which said they had been plotting an attack on Italian soil after their plans to travel to Syria to fight were thwarted by the defeat of IS.

The suspects had downloaded video instructions on how to carry out bombings and suicide attacks, police said.

World's biggest single-day election



Indonesian President Joko Widodo (centre L) greets supporters after the country's general election in Jakarta

AFP | Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesia kicked off one of the world's biggest one-day elections yesterday, pitting president Joko Widodo against ex-general Prabowo Subianto in a race to lead the Muslim-majority nation.

More than 190 million Indonesians are set to cast a ballot as polls opened shortly after 7:00 am local time (2200 GMT Tuesday) in restive Papua. The vote is slated to end at 1:00 pm (0600 GMT) in Sumatra at the other end of the volcano-dotted archipelago.

Some voters went to their

local mosque before casting ballots, as the daily call to prayer sounded across a nation that is nearly 90 per cent Muslim.

A record 245,000 candidates are running for public office, from the presidency and parliamentary seats to local positions -- the first time all are being held on the same day.

Opinion polls show Widodo, 57, is a clear favourite -- but he faces a tough challenge from Subianto, 67, who has leaned on a fiery nationalist ticket and warned he will challenge the results over voter-list irregularities if he loses.

Subianto narrowly lost to

Voters lured with superheros, tons of fun

Surabaya, Indonesia

Dressed like Count Dracula, Yasim Adnan doesn't look much like an election official, but neither do his staff who are decked out as mummies and spooky nuns with blood pouring from their eyes.

The 37-year-old Indonesian presided over one of the creepiest ballot stations in the Muslim majority country Wednesday as it held a giant election that featured some 190 million voters and 245,000 candidates vying for public office, including a new president.

To bolster turnout at some 800,000 polling booths nationwide, election officials pulled out all the stops, from



Indonesian election workers dressed in superhero costumes register voters at a polling station in Surabaya

dressing like ghouls and superheroes to enlisting the help of elephants in Sumatra.

In Lebak Bulus, in the south of the capital Jakarta, voters cast their ballots at Adnan's horror-themed polling station which was outfitted with cardboard coffins and blood-stained rags

that hung from the ceiling.

Staff were allowed any costume they chose, as long as it didn't appear to favour either president Joko Widodo or his re-election rival Prabowo Subianto.

"We're trying to attract people so there will be less golput," Adnan told

AFP, using the Indonesian term for citizens who don't vote.

It seemed to work for some locals.

"This is amazing -- the theme is so different from other stations," said 42-year-old Komariah Usia.

There was also a photo booth on hand for successful ballot casters -- whose fingers were dipped in indelible ink to prevent double voting -- keen to snap a picture of themselves as proof of their civic duty.

Some restaurants and other retailers were offering free food and drink to those held up their ink-stained finger as proof they voted.

In Surabaya, Indonesia's second-biggest city,

an Avengers-themed polling station also proved a hit.

Election officials there dressed as the cartoon superheroes as well as the Amazing Spiderman, helping disabled voters cast a ballot and pressing fingers into the Muslim-approved halal ink jars.

"We made it look this way to motivate millennials, especially first-time voters," said polling station chief Andilio, who goes by one name.

But he also hoped that staff would take the Avengers costumes to heart by serving "voters just like how these characters would".

"Safeguard democracy and the election so it will be smooth, safe, and peaceful," he added.

Widodo in 2014 elections, and unsuccessfully challenged those results.

Voters will flock to more than 800,000 polling stations where they'll punch holes in ballots -- to make clear their candidate choice -- and then dip

a finger in Muslim-approved halal ink, a measure to prevent double-voting in a graft-riddled country where ballot-buying is rife.

The polls present a huge logistical challenge in a country stretching 4,800 kilometres

across more than 17,000 islands with a population of more than 260 million, including hundreds of ethnic groups and languages.

Officials were moving cardboard ballot boxes by motorbikes, boats and planes -- as well as elephants and horses -- to

reach mountaintop villages and communities deep in the jungle.

A series of so-called "quick counts" are expected to give a reliable indication of the presidential winner later Wednesday. Official results are not expected until May.



BAHRAIN FAMILY LEISURE COMPANY B.S.C.



Condensed interim statement of financial position as at 31 March 2019 (Unaudited) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

	31 March 2019 (Unaudited)	31 December 2018 (Audited)
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	478,422	512,969
Intangible assets	22,131	23,068
Right-of-use assets	972,776	-
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	5,587,255	5,730,662
	<u>7,060,584</u>	<u>6,266,699</u>
Current assets		
Inventories	44,376	61,908
Trade and other receivables	411,713	122,732
Cash and cash equivalents	111,785	172,372
	<u>567,874</u>	<u>357,012</u>
Total assets	<u>7,628,458</u>	<u>6,623,711</u>
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Capital and reserves		
Share capital	4,000,000	4,000,000
Statutory reserve	794,927	794,927
Capital reserve	68,245	68,245
Retained earnings	1,660,773	1,534,030
Treasury shares	(400,000)	(400,000)
	<u>6,123,945</u>	<u>5,997,202</u>
Non-current liabilities		
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	705,179	-
Employees' terminal benefits	83,415	85,869
	<u>788,594</u>	<u>85,869</u>
Current liabilities		
Current portion of lease liabilities	235,600	-
Trade and other payables	480,319	540,640
	<u>715,919</u>	<u>540,640</u>
Total liabilities	<u>1,504,513</u>	<u>626,509</u>
Total equity and liabilities	<u>7,628,458</u>	<u>6,623,711</u>

Condensed interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the three months period ended 31 March 2019 (Unaudited) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

	Three months period ended 31 March 2019 (Unaudited)	Three months period ended 31 March 2018 (Unaudited)
Operating income	408,565	390,917
Operating costs	(358,772)	(348,587)
Operating profit for the period	<u>49,793</u>	<u>42,330</u>
Non-operating expenses		
Staff costs	(19,234)	(21,206)
General and administrative expenses	(11,741)	(43,803)
Selling and advertising expenses	(16,702)	(32,402)
Finance cost on lease liabilities	(9,574)	-
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	(737)	(1,240)
Amortisation of intangible assets	(937)	(824)
Directors' fees	(7,650)	(64,358)
Total non-operating expenses	<u>(66,575)</u>	<u>(163,833)</u>
Loss before investment and other income/losses	<u>(16,782)</u>	<u>(121,503)</u>
Investment and other income/(losses)	143,525	(22,486)
Net profit/(loss) and other comprehensive income/(loss) for the period	<u>126,743</u>	<u>(143,989)</u>
Basic and diluted earnings/(loss) per share	<u>Fils 3.52</u>	<u>Fils (4.00)</u>

Condensed interim statement of cash flows for the three months period ended 31 March 2019 (Unaudited) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

	Three months period ended 31 March 2019 (Unaudited)	Three months period ended 31 March 2018 (Unaudited)
Operating activities		
Net profit/(loss) for the period	126,743	(143,989)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on property plant and equipment	39,502	40,127
Amortisation of right-of-use assets	66,121	-
Amortisation of intangible assets	937	824
Unrealised fair value loss on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	143,407	343,361
Dividend income	(286,508)	(286,320)
Interest income	(89)	(216)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Inventories	17,532	6,334
Trade and other receivables	(288,981)	(358,237)
Trade and other payables	(60,321)	(8,242)
Employees' terminal benefits, net	(2,454)	4,603
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(244,111)</u>	<u>(401,755)</u>
Investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(4,955)	(835)
Purchase of intangible assets	-	(1,751)
Additions in right-of-use assets	(1,038,897)	-
Dividend received	286,508	286,320
Interest received	89	216
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities	<u>(757,255)</u>	<u>283,950</u>
Financing activities		
Net movement in lease liabilities	940,779	-
Net cash provided by financing activities	<u>940,779</u>	<u>-</u>
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	<u>(60,587)</u>	<u>(117,805)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the period	172,372	502,235
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the period	<u>111,785</u>	<u>384,430</u>

Condensed interim statement of changes in shareholders' equity for the three months period ended 31 March 2019 (Unaudited) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

	Share capital	Statutory reserve	Capital reserve	Retained earnings	Treasury shares	Total
At 31 December 2017 (Audited)	4,000,000	794,927	68,245	2,932,511	(400,000)	7,395,683
Net loss and other comprehensive loss for the period	-	-	-	(143,989)	-	(143,989)
Dividends paid for the year 2017	-	-	-	(360,000)	-	(360,000)
At 31 March 2018 (Unaudited)	<u>4,000,000</u>	<u>794,927</u>	<u>68,245</u>	<u>2,428,522</u>	<u>(400,000)</u>	<u>6,891,694</u>
At 31 December 2018 (Audited)	4,000,000	794,927	68,245	1,534,030	(400,000)	5,997,202
Net profit and other comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	126,743	-	126,743
At 31 March 2019 (Unaudited)	<u>4,000,000</u>	<u>794,927</u>	<u>68,245</u>	<u>1,660,773</u>	<u>(400,000)</u>	<u>6,123,945</u>

The unaudited condensed financial information, set out on pages 4 to 17, were approved for issue by the Board of Directors on 17 April 2019 and signed on their behalf by:

Abdul Latif Khalid Al Aujan
Chairman

Garfield Jones
Vice Chairman and
Managing Director

Trump can't blame Mexico



IOAN GRILLO

This tactic dates back to Nixon and it has always involved a lot of hypocrisy

After years of covering the drug war in Mexico, after looking down from a helicopter to see burning marijuana fields that soldiers had set aflame and after riding along with federal police as they looked for heroin and cocaine traffickers, I got a very different perspective when I visited Baltimore. On a reporting trip there last year, I accompanied a former drug dealer to one of the so-called open air markets, where marijuana and heroin were hawked in plain view on a busy street. It was a striking paradox. South of the border, I'd watched soldiers torch drugs to destroy them. Here, 40 miles from the White House, I was watching people sell them openly.

That image came to mind early this month, when President Donald J Trump gave Mexico an ultimatum to stop the northward flow of narcotics. "We're

going to give them a one-year warning, and if the drugs don't stop, or largely stop, we're going to put tariffs," he told reporters at the White House. "And if that doesn't stop the drugs, we close the border."

Blaming Mexico for the American drug problem and then coercing it to act is a tactic that dates back to President Richard Nixon. It's pure hypocrisy. While drugs do flow through Mexico, they also flow throughout the United States, feeding one of the biggest drug markets on the planet. If the US government fails to halt the river of narcotics inside its own territory, how can it expect Mexico to succeed?

Of course, there are more factors in the equation. While Mexico's security forces burn opium poppies and shoot traffickers, there are also countless cases of its soldiers, police and politicians working with the criminals. And while you can find open air drug markets in several American cities, the United States arrests millions on drug charges.

But the bottom line is that both nations have utterly failed to stop the trade in the decades

since Nixon declared war on drugs. The Mexican government has spent over a decade waging a military-led crackdown, detaining or killing kingpins in all the major cartels. But this has not reduced trafficking. Over the last five years, seizures of heroin and cocaine on the southern border have fluctuated up and down; seizures of crystal meth have risen, perhaps due to more demand; while seizures of marijuana have plummeted, probably due to the production of legal cannabis in the United States.

The cartel violence, meanwhile, has ravaged Mexico, with over 200,000 murders in the country in the last decade. And despite endless drug cases in its courts, the United States set a tragic record in 2017: 70,000 overdose deaths.

Back in 1969, Nixon launched Operation Intercept to pressure the Mexican government to crack down on the marijuana smugglers of the era. Over a period of several days, almost every vehicle or pedestrian entering over the southern border was searched.

It didn't yield many seizures, as the smugglers waited out



Athens in pieces: An offering

A common place modern ritual gave me a deeper



SIMON CRITCHLEY

It is about time I told you what I have really been doing here the past few months. It hasn't all been visits to archaeological sites and meditations on the contemporary relevance of antiquity. Today I'd like to put ancient history on hold for a moment and move from the past right into the present.

It might be objected that what I have been writing is a series of postcards, perhaps with lots of local colour and historical background, but nonetheless a kind of high-end philosophical tourism from famous Athenian locations. Perhaps this can't be avoided. I am, after all, a foreigner and a temporary resident. And this city's monuments, with their beauty and historical grandeur, exert a pull like virtually no others. But is there perhaps a better way of connecting with ordinary Athenians, with their habits and routines? Maybe I could get closer to their lives in the vast modern Agora of this metropolis through a common passion. A passion for soccer. And what site could be more ordinary than a pub?

I am a lifelong fan of Liverpool Football Club and spend much more time than I care to confess watching games, reading about soccer, listening to podcasts and

watching endless YouTube clips of highlights, news conferences and often rather tedious match analysis. I will talk to any poor soul I can find about my team and about theirs, although I prefer mine. Yet — much to my constant amazement — there exist people in the world who do not care for the beautiful game.

Liverpool were playing the day after I arrived in Athens in early January. I urgently needed to find out where to watch live games because the TV in my apartment was pretty basic. On the morning of match day, I dipped into the internet and discovered a promising-looking Facebook page for "The Pan-Hellenic Liverpool Friends Club." I sent a message, more in hope than expectation.

Three minutes later, I got a reply: "Good morning m8. You can meet us in the Wee Dram pub. It is a Scottish pub. Ask for John."

I got there early and asked for John. It was like meeting a long-lost friend. John Skotidas founded the official Liverpool supporters club in 1995 and has been running it ever since with a good deal of organisational skill. It has 1,100 members, and Liverpool are the most popular English team in Greece. I've gotten to know John quite well in the time I have been here. He was an aircraft engineer with the Greek air force for 27 years, before retiring at age 46 to pursue his other passion, watching and talking about soccer. John even has his own YouTube channel. He became a Liverpool fan after seeing the Beatles on TV when

he was a kid in the late 1960s. He just liked the name "Liverpool." It sounded good. When he was 10 years old, he watched them play for the first time against Newcastle United in the FA Cup final in 1974 and decided to support them. He has been a fan ever since.

I also met a number of other people in the bar on that first day: Scotty, Kris, Spiros (who promotes Bollywood movies in Greece, which are apparently pretty popular) and a bunch of other Greek fans.

I watched my first game with them on Jan 12, Liverpool versus Brighton. It was an edgy match, but with a confident defensive display from us, we won 1-0 ("one-nil").

Since then, I've watched an awful lot of games at the Wee Dram, and it has developed into a ritual of sorts. I have talked a fair bit about the nature of ritual in this series, whether the processional pomp of the City of Dionysia, the Divine Liturgy of Mount Athos or the Greater Mysteries of Eleusis. Watching soccer is an undoubtedly lesser mystery, with a more humble and humdrum set of ritual actions, but they also have meaning. And every fan has their rituals and superstitions.

Before leaving the apartment, I carefully select my Liverpool shirt, track suit or scarf (depending on the weather, but I always look a teensy bit ridiculous) and walk to Syntagma or Constitution Square. I descend into the underworld of the subway system, take the four stops to Panormou station, buy a



The Wee Dram is owned by Ross, who incidentally used to play for the Scottish national basketball team.

piece of spanakopita or sumptuous spinach pie from the bakery, walk slowly uphill eating it, get to the Wee Dram, push open the door, scan the room for seats and look for John. He's always sitting in the same spot (it's a superstition, he told me), just next to the big TV, head down, looking at his phone. Although I always try to get there early, the place is usually packed. John seems to have a secret supply of stools that he will whip out if a regular comes in late and the place is too crammed with fans.

John gives the nod, says a few words, and a seat opens up. I shake hands with everyone, ask them how they are doing, head to the bar, buy a pint of Murphy's (they don't sell Guinness), sit down and check the WhatsApp connection with my son Edward in London. We exchange a couple of short messages like "I'm in position. You?" and then discuss the team lineup and usually wonder why our German coach Juergen Klopp has included or left out a player we particularly like. The Wi-Fi tends to keep dropping, which occasions

much dashing out into the street. The Wee Dram is owned by Ross, who incidentally used to play for the Scottish national basketball team (I didn't know they had one) and supports Hearts of Midlothian. To each their own. The pub has two main areas, a glass-walled central room where you can buy drinks, which is where the younger lads tend to gather, standing together in small groups, often wearing Liverpool shirts, and a larger outside area with older fans, sitting or standing. I prefer to sit, at least until some

1506

The cornerstone of the current **St. Peter's Basilica** is laid.

1518

Bona Sforza is crowned as queen consort of Poland.

1521

Trial of **Martin Luther** begins its second day during the assembly of the Diet of Worms. He refuses to recant his teachings despite the risk of excommunication.



1618

Bostonians rise up in rebellion against Sir Edmund Andros.

Mexico for our drug problem



the crackdown, but it did lead to frustration on the part of US businesses whose goods and labourers were being held up.

Half a century on, Trump has held back so far from such action, despite his threats. With over \$600 billion in cross-border trade last year, it would be far more costly today than it was in the 1960s.

His main priority is really to stop the flow of migrants and asylum-seekers, and it was the rise in their numbers that triggered the latest round of rhetoric. But from his 2016 presidential campaign until now, he has also railed against the flow of drugs from Mexico and used it to bolster his arguments to "build a wall" and beef up security.

"Our southern border is a pipeline for vast quantities of illegal drugs, including meth, heroin, cocaine and fentanyl," he said in a January speech, pushing for wall funding.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico has avoided answering Trump's ultimatum on drugs, at least publicly. When asked about it on April 5, he said he had no problems with the White House.

The problem is that even when Mexico has made major seizures in recent years, the northward flow of narcotics to Americans hasn't stopped.

hasn't stopped. But then, regardless of Washington, Mexico does face the herculean problem of organised crime ravaging its society.

A better way forward would be for the two nations to work together on real policies that reduce the damage unleashed by drugs and cartels.

US and Mexican agencies should team up to target the most violent gangsters, to lower the number of homicides in Mexico and to lower the number of people fleeing over the border as refugees.

Mexico could do far more to weed out the narco corruption, which is destroying its political system. And the United States could provide considerably more rehabilitation services to reduce addiction and overdoses, many of which are actually from prescription drugs.

There are real problems, from the corners of Baltimore to the mountains of Mexico. But they need integral long-term solutions, not simplistic ultimatums and threats.

(Ioan Grillo is a contributing opinion writer.)

Coming to the soccer gods

connection to today's athenians

thing really exciting happens and then I stand and retreat backward to the door of the pub, so I don't block anyone's view. For reasons that completely escape me, I often crouch with my arms at a right angle and fists softly clenched. It's almost an attitude of prayer.

There's a large wooden central rectangular table with benches where the hard-core fans sit, with John in pole position, top left. Most of them are smoking (Athens is a great place to pick up a passive smoking habit. Smoking is banned, of course, but Greeks tend to do what they want), drinking beer or coffee and betting online on their phones. Just behind the central table is another, smaller table with about four or five seats, marked "reserved" (although it turns out that all the tables are "reserved"). This is where I sit, usually with some familiar faces. We talk to one another as much as we can, in broken English and fragmentary Greek, but in great detail about the qualities of particular players, tactics, formation and the strength of the opposition. Although we don't really know one another that well, there is an immense feeling of familiarity, affection and trust.

For the nonfan, it's hard to explain how detailed these discussions are and the extraordinary levels of knowledge that ordinary fans possess. Although this might sound stupid, there is an amazing rational intelligence to soccer talk, bolstered by a common passion for the team that we all love.

The teams emerge, I sit up straight, and there is the usual

fluff of TV commercials and dumb graphics before kickoffs. We all clap when the whistle blows, and then we enter the shared and strangely meditative flow of the game. Things get really quiet. There is always an odd experience of tension in watching a game with a group of fellow fans, waiting for your team to score or at least have a shot or engage in a compelling passage of play. The TV in the Wee Dram has useless speakers, and it is a real strain to catch the Greek commentary. Not really understanding the words, I listen eagerly for the names, which have an almost magical aura: Van Dijk, Robertson, Sadio Mane, Milner, Alexander-Arnold.

Of course, there are a lot of complaints, when there is a misplaced pass or especially when our star forward player, Mohammed Salah, shoots and misses, which has been happening a lot of late. The most frequently heard word in the bar is "malakas." Let's just say this is a word with a wide range of semantic connotations, many of them connected with the sin of onanism. There is a visceral connection between soccer and swearing, and I am at my most disgustingly foul-mouthed when watching Liverpool play. I am not proud of this fact and often try to swallow the vowel after the first consonant of the bad word has spilled from my lips.

When we score, the place explodes. Skintight anxiety suddenly releases into ecstasy. Everyone leaps to their feet, with wild scenes of joy, hugging and loud cries. I

high-five everyone around the table, often inaccurately. I don't know why I do it. It's not my style. But I started the habit at my first match in January and somehow feel obliged to continue because they expect it from me. It's a little awkward.

When the opposing team score, there is absolute silence in the bar. Not a word. And barely any reaction. The mood shifts entirely and no one speaks for at least 10 seconds, then: "Malakas."

My three months in Athens has been a very tense time to be a Liverpool fan. A six-point January lead in the English Premier League has been whittled away by the relentlessness of our main opponents and reigning champions, Manchester City, and the fact that we drew a number of games that we should have won. We've lost some of our flair, flow and attacking rhythm. But we're still in there fighting, match by match, grinding out victories often with last-minute goals. A nerve-shredding experience.

Today, March 31, is an absolutely vital game. I arrive very early at the Wee Dram, about 45 minutes before kickoff, around 5:45 p.m. There is a lot of banter, more beer is being drunk than usual, and servers slide through the crowd setting down pizzas that are always shared. Liverpool are playing Tottenham Hotspur, and my son Edward is at the Anfield Road stadium with his mate Ben watching live. Edward is a large part of the reason the fate of Liverpool Football Club in this season's English

"Relations are good. We have no confrontation with the government of the United States."

Meanwhile, he seems to be placating Washington by stepping up arrests of undocumented migrants heading through Mexico.

Seizures of drugs in Mexico appear to be down in the first quarter, according to early reports, which may have helped prompt Trump's ultimatum.

The problem is that even when Mexico has made major seizures in recent years, the northward flow of narcotics to Americans

It is hard to describe the feeling of sheer unconfined joy when your team wins. Everything is right with the world and the mind is free of any concern, distance or gnawing introspection.

Premier League matters so much to me. I deviously programmed him in his childhood years to support Liverpool, and he is now a better, more knowledgeable fan than I. But he has never seen Liverpool win the league; it is 29 years since it last happened. Liverpool won it 13 times during my first 30 years on planet Earth. But that history feels as ancient as Athens itself.

Spurs are a fine team. Some of my best friends are Spurs fans. They didn't deserve to lose. But, very obligingly, they did, thanks to a goalkeeping blunder from the World Cup-winning French captain Hugo Lloris off a cheeky header from the sinuous Salah that ricocheted into the net off the shin of Toby Alderweireld in the 90th minute of the match. Call it luck, if you like. I choose to call it destiny.

It is hard to describe the feeling of sheer unconfined joy when your team wins. Everything is right with

the world and the mind is free of any concern, distance or gnawing introspection. Here at the Wee Dram, there is a genuine feeling of warmth and solidarity among fans. Despite the linguistic limitations, we understand one another very well because we have a team in common. And there are 300 official Liverpool supporters clubs all around the world and countless other millions watching in whatever way they can. After the Spurs game, Ross played the Liverpool anthem, "You'll Never Walk Alone" by Gerry and the Pacemakers and everyone sang along, bellowing out of tune at the top of their voices. It was really something.

I realise that such rituals are pretty stupid, shallow and far too sentimental, but at such moments I feel a real sense of disinhibited belonging, and other people feel the same.

After the song climaxed and the final chorus faded, I finished my beer and looked for John to say goodbye. But he'd already left.

Will we win the league? Probably not. Manchester City are a better football team. But today we won. I don't so much walk as glide down the hill to the subway station, texting with Edward and reading the early match reports. I pick up a loaf of bread at the bakery and head back into the center of the city. Life is good.

(Simon Critchley is a professor of philosophy at the New School for Social Research and the author of "What We Think About When We Think About Soccer" and the forthcoming "Tragedy, the Greeks, and Us.")



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Effective May 2, under Title III of the LIBERTAD Act, U.S. citizens will be able to bring lawsuits against persons trafficking in property that was confiscated by the Cuban regime. After more than 22 years of delays, Americans will finally have a chance at justice.

@SecPompeo

02



When we talk about "democratic socialism," we're talking about making sure everybody can live with dignity in the richest country on Earth. That means making sure everyone has the basic necessities of life: decent housing, good health care, good education and a good retirement.

@BernieSanders

03



Bernie Sanders and wife should pay the Pre-Trump Taxes on their almost \$600,000 in income. He is always complaining about these big TAX CUTS, except when it benefits him. They made a fortune off of Trump, but so did everyone else - and that's a good thing, not a bad thing!

@realDonaldTrump

04



Fact: Charges have been framed against Sadhvi Pragma in Malegaon 2008 blast case, trial is on and she is yet to be acquitted by the court. And she is the BJP candidate from the great city of Bhopal: what does one say but welcome to a 'new' India. #IndiaElects

@sardesairajdeep

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

business

US trade deficit hits 8-month low



US cargo ship berthing at a port in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province.

AFP | Washington, United States

The US trade deficit in February fell to its lowest level in eight months, thanks in part to rising aircraft and auto exports, according to government data released Wednesday.

The trade deficit -- which fell for the second month in a row after hitting a 10-year high in December -- also was helped by record exports of US services, according to the Commerce Department.

At \$70 billion for the month, US services exports were the highest on record, helped a \$200 million increase in exported transport services.

Meanwhile, crude oil imports fell to their lowest volume in nearly 27 years, according to the report.

The narrowing trade gap could support GDP growth in the first quarter and offers relief from what had been a frustrating data point for President Donald Trump since his aggressive tariff strategy was aimed at reducing the deficit.

Trump views the trade deficit as a job killer and he launched a multi-front trade offensive with all major US trading partners.

The trade gap in the latest month fell 3.4 percent to \$49.4 billion, seasonally adjusted, well below the \$54 billion that economists had been expecting.

The result, which is subject to revision, put the first two months of the year 7.6 percent below the same period of 2018.

In a particularly positive point for Trump, the goods deficit with China fell \$3.1 billion to \$30.1 billion compared to January, helped in part by a recovery for the month in soybean exports.

Total exports of the crop rose \$190 million to \$1.4 billion.

Meanwhile, the deficit in goods alone with Japan, which just opened talks on a new trade agreement with the United States, jumped \$1.3 billion to \$6.7 billion due to a slump in US exports to the Asian economy.

The goods deficit with the EU -- which is planning to open trade talks with Washington -- fell 5.3 percent to \$12.4 billion.

Total exports of US-made goods rose \$2.1 billion to nearly \$140 billion for the month, with the volatile civilian aircraft exports up \$2.2 billion and auto exports up \$600 million.

The February numbers, however, will not reflect difficulties suffered by Boeing, which last month suspended deliveries of its top-selling 737 MAX aircraft following fatal crashes in Ethiopia and Indonesia in recent months.

US imports were largely stable for the month, with a decrease in imports of industrial supplies partly offsetting a \$2.1 billion gain in imports of mobile phones and other household consumer goods.

Minister pledges to back start-ups, new businesses



Industry Minister Zayed Alzayani with Simon Martin, British Ambassador and BBBF Chairman Khalid Al Zayani OBE and BBBF Executive Committee members during a photocall

TDI | Manama

Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, Zayed Alzayani yesterday pledged the government's full support to start-ups and new commercial businesses in the Kingdom.

The minister was speaking during the Bahrain British Business Forum (BBBF) meeting held yesterday at The Gulf Hotel Convention Centre which focused Bahrain's Trade, industry, business and services with

the UK.

More than 120 BBBF members and guests attended the event held in the presence of BBBF Chairman Khalid Al Zayani and Simon Martin, the British Ambassador to Bahrain. The forum aims to promote trade and investment between Bahrain and Britain by offering opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing between the two business communities.

In his address, Zayed Alzayani highlighted the government's efforts to of-

fer major facilities for all businesses, especially for start-ups and new commercial businesses.

For this purpose, the SMEs' Development Board (SDB) was established in 2017 to nurture the entrepreneurial ecosystem and enable the development of SMEs', consisting of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Tourism (MOICT), the Economic Development Board (EDB), Labour Fund - Tamkeen, Bahrain Development Bank (BDB) and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The minister also illustrated the five key strategic goals for the SMEs' Development Board that involve access to finance, access to markets, streamline business environment, foster skills development and foster innovation.

Additionally, the minister provided insight on some implemented entrepreneurship policies such as the "Reorganization and Bankruptcy Law", "Bahrain Investment Market" launched in 2017 as well as "Export Bahrain" launched on November 2018.

Mexican Food & Culture Festival in Gulf Hotel

TDI | Manama

The Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa will once again be launching the Mexican Food & Culture Festival at its Margarita Mexicana restaurant from April 18-26.

The festival will deliver authentic and sizzling flavours of Mexican cuisine and features dancers from the International Folkloric Ballet group "Yoliztli Widen de La Laguna" from Coahuila, Mexico.



Mexican Chef Ruben Herrera Aguilera

The live entertainment will begin at 6 pm on April



18 in the upper foyer of the Al Andalus Lounge.

The festival will continue within the Margarita

Mexicana restaurant with a special menu prepared by resident Mexican Chef Ruben Herrera Aguilera that includes both classic dishes and modern Mexican cuisine, followed by sweet delights.

HOURS:

Sunday to Wednesday from 4pm - 12pm

Thursday & Friday from 4pm- 1:00am Live entertainment from 8pm -11:15pm CLOSED every Saturday

Region's first National FinTech talent programme kicks off

Accepted candidates will start their journey by being part of a 6-month internship

Candidates are also enrolled in a 3-month a professional development course

TDI | Manama

Bahrain FinTech Bay's National FinTech Talent Programme (FTP) kicked off with its first batch of 25 Bahraini candidates.

The first cohort will be part



Candidates attending a session

of a specialized roadmap, that will offer unique opportunities to develop their professional skills and gain insightful ex-

perience in the latest FinTech trends and technologies on a global scale.

The programme started accepting applications in early January, and a successful batch of 50 high-calibre candidates progressed to an exclusive career fair exposing them to over 15 employers, including speed networking as well as breakout sessions at the event.

Following the candidate's performance at the FinTech and Innovation Career Fair, 25 candidates have been placed within FinTech and innovation related internship roles for a period of 6 months.

Accepted candidates will start their journey by being part of a 6-month internship in

innovation/digitalization and FinTech roles, receiving mentorship from global partners of Bahrain FinTech Bay, and will complete training on FinTech verticals focusing on blockchain and artificial intelligence run by SettleMint, Blockchain Academy Global and TAIGER A.I. Academy.

In parallel to their internships, candidates are enrolled in a 3-month a professional development course in FinTech delivered by Georgetown University McDonough School of Business. The semi-annual programme is delivered in a combination of live and online modules and is certified by Georgetown.

The certification comprises of seven modules and four

case-studies led by Professor Jim Angel, a prominent figure within the FinTech landscape, and co-inventor of 12 FinTech patents. Additionally, the course will be hosting local and international guest speakers, the entrepreneurial community, and thought leaders from the financial services industry.

Khalid Saad, CEO, Bahrain FinTech Bay commented on the kickoff, "Through training and job placement opportunities within our partner network, we aim to develop a generation of leaders that will be able to take the industry forward and support Bahrain's transition into a knowledge and innovation-driven economy".

NBB Q1 profit rises 3.6pc

TDT | Manama

National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) yesterday reported a 3.6 per cent increase in its first quarter 2019 net profit helped by higher net interest income and core banking activities.

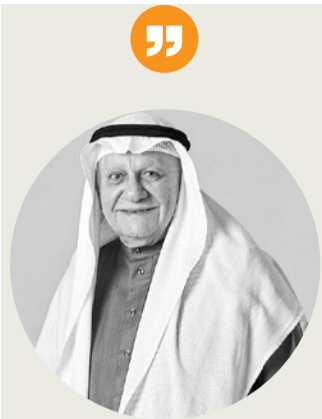
Net profit was BD20.4 million (US\$54.3m) for the first quarter, compared to BD19.7m (US\$52.4m) in the year earlier quarter.

Net interest income increased 21.4pc y-o-y to BD23.8m (US\$63.3m) compared with BD19.6m (US\$52.1m) in the prior-year period. The improvements were attributed to prudent asset liabilities management and the acquisition of new customers from various sectors across the Bank's business lines during the quarter.

Farouk Yousuf Khalil Almoayyed, Chairman of NBB, said, "Operating profit showed a very robust growth of 17.4pc compared with the same quarter last year mainly driven by a great contribution from our core banking activities.

"We look forward to rolling out further positive changes and innovation in line with our strategy and our commitment to creating value for our shareholders and customers and supporting the further development of the local and regional economies through enhanced participation, which remains NBB's primary focus."

Operating profit rose by 17.4pc y-o-y to BD23.6m (US\$62.8m)



During the quarter, manifestations of the progress we are making and the new direction in which are taking the Bank was also seen in the launch of NBB's new brand, which is an important part of the evolution of the Bank and our efforts to sustain our market leadership. The new brand represents the NBB of the future and underscores our dedication to serving our customers and the community with a brand promise to get closer to you

FAROUK YOUSUF KHALIL ALMOAYYED, CHAIRMAN OF NBB



In the first quarter, we continued to expand our support for local businesses and retail customers, maintaining strong levels of loans and financing across individuals, SMEs and corporates as well as through financing for major national projects. Through product innovation and effective promotions, we also reported a very healthy increase in both retail and institutional customer deposits

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE DURAND, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF NBB

compared with BD20.1m (US\$53.5m) in the prior-year period.

Operating income rose by 13.6pc y-o-y to BD34.2m (US\$91.0m) compared with BD30.1m (US\$80.1m) in the prior-year period. Other income stood almost at the same level at BD10.4m (US\$27.7m).

Operating costs were up to BD10.6m (US\$28.2m) compared to BD10.0m (US\$26.6m), an increase of 6.0pc in line with the ongoing investments in human capital and technology to support the Bank's transformation strategy.

Total comprehensive income for the period was BD25.7m (US\$68.4m) compared with BD10.2m (US\$27.1m) in the prior-year period.

Average loans and advances stood almost at the same level of BD1,209.3m (US\$3,216.2m).

Average customer deposits increased by 2.8pc to BD2,157.4m (US\$5,737.8m) compared with BD2,099.4m (US\$5,583.5m) as at 31 March 2018.

Earnings per share during the period stood at the same level of 13 fils (US\$35 cents).

Jean-Christophe Durand, Chief Executive Officer of NBB, added, "Increased profitability and income generation, despite competitive market conditions, is the direct result of our focus on the strengthening of core banking activities, product diversification and the introduction of new business lines last year, which are now showing positive results."

GHG reports Q1 results



CEO Garfield Jones



Farouk Almoayyed

TDT | Manama

Gulf Hotels Group (GHG) yesterday announced financial results for the first quarter of 2019 reporting a net profit of BD2.299 million compared to BD2.892m in the year ago quarter, a decrease of BD593K or 20.51 per cent.

The decrease in the net profit was attributed to increased depreciation (BD400K) from the new Dubai property and major projects executed in 2018, together with pre-opening expenses of the newly opened Gulf Executive Residence Juffair (BD134K) which opened in January 2019 and interest costs (BD243K), which are offset by better revenues which helped to reduce the overall shortfall.

Earnings per shares was 10 fils compared to 13 fils in the year ago quarter.

The group achieved revenues of BD10.082m, compared to BD8.711m in first quarter, achieving an increase of

BD1.371m or 15.74pc.

Gross Operating Profit was BD3.555m, compared to BD3.074m in first quarter 2018, an increase of BD481K or 15.65pc.

The Chairman, Farouk Almoayyed stated that the Group is now focusing on enhancing the hotel operations in Dubai, beverage operations in Sri Lanka and Gulf Executive Residence Juffair in Bahrain in addition to the existing properties.

CEO Garfield Jones stated that the overall Q1 business in the Kingdom was supported by the Formula 1 event, boosting hotel occupancies and directly benefitting the Gulf Hotel who carry out catering activities at Bahrain International Circuit.

He further added that steps are also underway to further expand operations in Saudi Arabia during 2019. This year also represents the 50th anniversary of the Gulf Hotel which will enjoy a year full of celebratory events."

Germany further slashes 2019 growth forecast

Berlin, Germany

Berlin halved its economic growth forecast for 2019 on Wednesday as Europe's largest economy cools off, but ministers are unlikely to bend to foreign demands to boost activity with extra government spending.

"The federal government expects an increase of 0.5 per cent in gross domestic product (GDP) this year and 1.5 per cent" in 2020, economy minister Peter Altmaier told a press conference in Berlin.

"The German economy has not yet overcome the weakening in the economic upturn" that had been visible until mid-2018, he added, although "over the remainder of the year there are prospects of a significant recovery."

It is the second downgrade in a row, after Altmaier's January prediction of 1.0 growth for 2019 was 0.8 points lower than an autumn forecast.

Global factors including slowing trade, Brexit and US President Donald Trump's commercial confrontations with Europe and China have hit the eurozone powerhouse particularly hard.

And a string of local one-off factors including tough new emissions tests on car manufacturers and a drought that lowered water levels in the Rhine inland waterway, put a brake on activity.

But more structural challenges are also present, including an ageing population



German Chancellor Angela Merkel poses with toy wind wheel during the opening of the Arkona wind park in Sassnitz, northern Germany

and a chronic lack of public investment in infrastructure and high-tech innovations.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its April economic outlook, repeated its long-running call for Germany to spend its way out of a downturn.

To avoid the German slowdown contaminating the rest of the eurozone, "the available fiscal space can be used to increase public investment in physical and human capital or reduce the labour tax wedge", the IMF judged.

The Washington-based fund also slashed the country's growth forecast to 0.8 percent, in line with domestic bodies such as Berlin's "Wise Men" council of economic advisers and leading think-tanks.

Ramadan Experience awaits at Four Seasons

Manama

Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay has unveiled details of its delectable dining experiences and seasonal getaway packages to celebrate the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The Hotel's offerings embody the notion of spending precious time together with family and friends while thoughtfully observing the Holy Month.

Iftar or Ghabga Gathering

The Four Seasons Ramadan Tent at Al Bahrain Ballroom has been redesigned and features a fresh colour theme, with Arabian hanging lamps and a carpet and wooden parquet floor setting the scene for a delightful celebration. Entertainment will be provided by a four-piece Arabic band with an opera singer from Cairo. This creates the perfect setting for a delicious Iftar or Ghabga feast crafted by Executive Chef Hyung Gyu



Kim and Executive Pastry Chef Imad Boukli.

Meanwhile, dedicated live cooking stations will be serving up a range of local favourites. To end the meal on a sweet note, an assortment of family favourites can be found at the dessert buffet.

Younger guests will be kept entertained by a range of fun activities at the special kids' tent. Conveniently located in Al Bahrain Ballroom, it will be open daily from sunset until 10:00 pm.

Children's Gergaoun Event

The Hotel invites young guests to embrace the spirit of the Holy Month by joining a traditional Gergaoun celebration on the 15th day of Ramadan. Kids can enjoy an array of festive activities, including spreading candies, singing traditional songs, and taking part in a special kid's talent show to receive the Best Gergaoun Talent Award. Chocolates and balloons will also be provided for all attendees.

Children's Gergaoun event will take place during Iftar on the 15th day of Ramadan until 8:30 pm.

re/Asian Cuisine by Wolfgang Puck

For non-fasting guests, the Hotel's innovative Asian restaurant re/Asian Cuisine by Wolfgang Puck will offer à la carte service from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm. A delicious range of breakfast and lunch items will be available. In the evenings, the restaurant will provide a relaxing alternative to the traditional



Ramadan buffets, with an à la carte dinner menu. Dinner will be served from sunset to 11:00 pm on weekdays, and sunset to 12:00 midnight on Thursdays and Fridays.

Additional Dining Options

The Hotel's Bay View Lounge will be serving an assortment of refreshing beverages, freshly brewed coffee and aromatic teas from sunset to 1:00 am on weekdays and until 2:00 am on weekends throughout Ramadan

Meanwhile, CUT by Wolfgang Puck, CUT Lounge, Blue Moon Lounge, Vento and Bahrain Bay Kitchen will be closed for the duration of the Holy Month, and

will re-open on the first day of Eid Al-Fitr.

Eid Al-Fitr Brunch at Bahrain Bay Kitchen

Guests can celebrate a gracious end to the Holy Month in the inviting ambience of the Hotel's Bahrain Bay Kitchen with a sumptuous brunch during the first three days of Eid Al-Fitr. Diners can choose from an extensive range of buffet offerings.

Beach Getaway this Eid

Guests can enjoy a 20 per cent savings on the Hotel's standard room rate with the Hotel's Bahrain Getaway package for stays of two or more nights.

Ericsson, Swisscom launch Europe's first large scale 5G

Stockholm, Sweden

Telecom equipment manufacturer Ericsson said yesterday it had launched the first European large scale commercial 5G network together with Swiss operator Swisscom, as Ericsson posted a first quarter profit boosted by sales in North America.

The Swedish supplier of network equipment said in a statement that the 5G network, launched in 54 cities in Switzerland, had been switched on just after midnight on April 17, after Swisscom secured a license to operate a 5G network in the country.

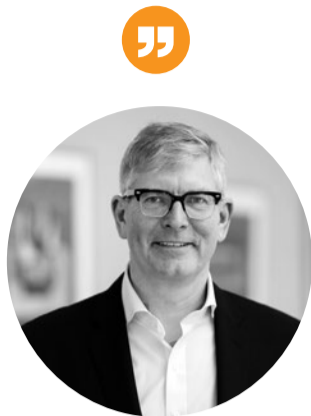
Ericsson made the announcement as it reported a first quarter net profit of 2.4 billion kronor (\$260 million, 230 million euros), compared to a net loss of 725 million kronor in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

Net sales grew to 48.9 billion kronor, up from 43.4 billion in Q1 of 2018.

Chief executive Borje Ekholm said growth had primarily been driven by sales in North America.

"To date we have publicly announced commercial 5G deals with 18 named operator customers, which, at the moment, is more than any other vendor," Ekholm said in a statement.

Ekholm also said that as 5G



To date we have publicly announced commercial 5G deals with 18 named operator customers, which, at the moment, is more than any other vendor

CHIEF EXECUTIVE BORJE EKHOLM

technology was being rolled out, the company would continue to incur costs for field trials and they were expecting large-scale deployments of 5G to begin in parts of Asia by the end of 2019.

"Combined, this will gradually impact short-term margins but strengthen our position in the long term," he said.

India's Jet Airways suspends all operations: statement

Mumbai, India

India's debt-stricken Jet Airways grounded all of its operations yesterday after failing to secure emergency funding from lenders, the carrier said in a statement.

"Jet Airways is compelled to cancel all its international and domestic flights. The last flight will operate today," it said, adding that the decision would take "immediate effect."

Jet had asked a consortium of lenders led by the State Bank of India to urgently provide four billion rupees (\$57.5 million) but said that this had not been forthcoming.

"This has been a very difficult decision but without interim funding, the airline is simply unable to conduct flight operations in a manner that delivers to the very reasonable expectations of its guests, employees, partners and service providers," it added.

The airline was once India's second-biggest by market

share but is on the brink of collapse with debts of more than \$1 billion.

Jet was operating just five planes yesterday after failing to secure emergency funding from lenders, the carrier said in a statement.

The carrier has cancelled hundreds of flights in recent weeks, stranding thousands of passengers.

It has repeatedly defaulted on loans and failed to pay staff in recent months.

The consortium took control of Jet in March, pledging to give \$218 million in "immediate funding support" as part of a debt resolution plan.

But they have failed to release most of the money and the banks also failed to agree after a meeting of several hours on Monday on how to proceed.

The SBI-led consortium is looking for a buyer for Jet and a deadline passed on Friday for prospective bidders to express an interest in acquiring a 75 percent stake in the carrier.

EU threatens \$12 bn in tariffs over US Boeing subsidies

Brussels, Belgium

The EU yesterday unveiled a wide-ranging list of US-made goods, from beeswax to car parts, subject to tariffs in retaliation for subsidies to Boeing as a transatlantic trade war risked re-erupting.

"European companies must be able to compete on fair and equal terms... We must continue to defend a level-playing field for our industry," said EU Trade Commission-

er Cecilia Malmstrom in a statement.

Europe's \$12 billion claim against Boeing comes on the trail of a similar demand by the US for \$11 billion in compensation for EU subsidies towards Airbus.

The ultimate amount to be won by both sides will be determined by the World Trade Organization, with the final sums likely to be far below the tit-for-tat demands by the EU and US.

Oil lifts most of Gulf markets

● Saudi enjoys best day in over two months

● 11 of 12 Saudi banks gain

● Egypt's El Sewedy, Qalaa falls on exposure to Sudan

● Dubai's property shares rise

Reuters

Saudi Arabia's stock market rose yesterday on the back of its banks as rising oil prices lifted most major Gulf markets, while Egypt was partly dragged down by its biggest lender Commercial International Bank.

Brent oil hit a 2019 high above \$72 a barrel yesterday, propelled by steady economic growth in China and a fall in US crude stocks.

Saudi's index rose 1.1 per cent for its biggest one-day gain in two and a half months, with 11 of its 12 banks advancing. Al Rajhi Bank added 2.3pc and the kingdom's largest lender National Commercial Bank gained 2.2pc.

Saudi Arabia's banks are expected to report 7pc higher earnings for the first quarter, SICO Research said in a note.

The bourse has gained 17.9pc 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.

Riyad REIT gained 0.4pc after it acquired a 40pc stake in the



Traders on the floor of Saudi Stock market (Courtesy of Amazons)

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 1.1pc to 9,238 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 0.5pc at 5,237 pts
DUBAI	▲ 0.8pc to 2,813 pts
QATAR	▲ 0.5pc at 10,308 pts
EGYPT	▼ 0.7pc to 14,864 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.1pc at 1,445 pts
OMAN	▼ 0.2pc to 3,977 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 0.1pc to 6,175 pts

leasehold interest of an office building in the United States. The investment is expected to generate a net yield of more than 8pc for its shareholders, the company said.

Egypt's blue-chip index slipped 0.7pc, weighed down by a 1.1pc drop in Commercial International Bank and a 2.8pc

fall in El Sewedy Electric.

Following recent political upheaval in Sudan, El Sewedy said its business exposure to Sudan amounted to around 1.1pc of its profit as of last year.

Qalaa Holdings also slid 1.1pc after saying that ongoing events in Sudan impacted its cement plant operations for a day.

In Dubai, the index was up 0.8pc as Dubai Islamic Bank gained 1.2pc.

All real estate shares rose with blue-chip developer Emaar Properties gaining 0.8pc and DAMAC Properties climbing 3.1pc.

Dubai's Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for March came in at 57.6, a 10-month high reading, Al Mal Capital said in a note.

The improvement in non-oil business activity was led by the travel and tourism industry and

wholesale and retail. But the construction industry was the weakest in 28 months as new orders subsided, the note said.

Growth in the United Arab Emirates' non-oil sector picked up in March after slowing to a 28-month low last month, a survey showed on Sunday.

The Abu Dhabi index was up 0.5pc with energy firm Dana Gas adding 2.9pc and market heavyweight First Abu Dhabi Bank increasing 0.6pc.

Last week, the bank obtained regulatory approval to increase its foreign ownership limit to 40pc from a previous limit of 25pc.

Qatar's index also gained 0.5pc with petrochemical shares increasing. Industries Qatar was up 1.2pc while Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding traded 4.5pc higher.

European stocks rise on growth outlook

London, United Kingdom

European stock markets mostly rose yesterday as strong data from the world's two top economies sparked fresh hope for the growth outlook.

"Global growth concerns seem to be cooling," analysts at Charles Schwab said.

US numbers released before Wall Street's opening bell showed that the trade deficit in February fell to its lowest level in eight months, thanks in part to rising aircraft and auto exports, according to government data released Wednesday.

"This better than expected trade situation creates a really good platform for 1Q GDP growth," James Knightley, chief international economist at ING, said of the US data.

Earlier, Beijing reported that the Chinese economy expanded 6.4 per cent in January-March, the same as the previous quarter but better than forecast by analysts in an AFP poll.

The news follows a number of readings indicating stability in China, with factory activity, exports, new loans and inflation all improving -- tempering concerns about a slowdown that could have a major impact on the global economy.

Markets nevertheless remain concerned over a broader Chinese economic slowdown -- and Beijing's ongoing trade war with Washington.



Traders work ahead of the closing bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City

Key figures around 1545 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	▲ at 7,471.32 points (close)
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▲ 0.4pc at 12,153.07 (close)
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ 0.6pc at 5,563.09 (close)
EURO STOXX 50:	▲ 0.4pc at 3,477.73
New York - Dow:	▲ at 26,446.99
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.3036 from \$1.3048 on Tuesday
Euro/pound:	▲ at 86.69 pence from 86.45 pence
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.1300 from \$1.1281
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 112.01 yen from 112.00 yen
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 0.3pc at 22,277.97 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▲ at 30,124.68 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 0.3pc at 3,263.12 (close)
Oil - Brent Crude:	▲ 3 cents at \$71.75 per barrel
Oil - West Texas Inter:	▲ 2 cents at \$64.07

'Not as bad as feared'

"The longer term trend is very much against China, but these numbers may at least suggest all is not as bad as feared," noted

Oanda analyst Craig Erlam.

"And if a trade deal is struck in the coming months with the US, as many expect, perhaps things could even improve."

ThinkMarkets analyst Naeem

Aslam added that the data handed a boost to the overall outlook.

"The truth is that the handoff from feeble economic numbers to strong economic numbers is here and this is good news," he said.

"Let's not forget, improving economic conditions over in China means better economic health of the global economy."

Eurozone stock markets were firmly in positive territory at the close, while London lagged its peers as the pound strengthened. Among individual stocks, shares in Italian club Juventus fell more than 17pc in late Milan trading after Cristiano Ronaldo's side were knocked out of the Champions League quarter-finals by Ajax.

Wall Street was slightly softer in the late New York morning as signs of a looming EU-US trade spat cooled investor sentiment after the EU unveiled a wide-ranging list of US-made goods, from beeswax to car parts, subject to tariffs in retaliation for subsidies to Boeing.

Meanwhile, the US corporate earnings season rumbled on providing, on balance, support to stock prices.

Elsewhere, oil prices managed to extend gains after a US industry group reported a surprise drop in stockpiles, while OPEC-led output cuts and US sanctions on Iran and Venezuela kept a supply glut in check.

CELEBS

Milla Jovovich responds to negative reviews of 'Hellboy'



Milla Jovovich
Los Angeles

Milla Jovovich is not taking the negative reviews of her latest film "Hellboy" lying down as the actor slammed the critics for being unfair to her movies.

The 43-year-old actor, who plays the villainous Nimue the Blood Queen in the David Harbour-starrer film, took to Instagram to address the critics.

"It's always stressful on opening weekend and 'Hellboy' is no different. You work super hard to make something fun and entertaining and have to absorb the negative reviews by movie critics, but hey! That's showbiz baby," she wrote in a post.

Jovovich listed some of her films such as "Dazed and Confused", "The Fifth Element" and "Zoolander" that she said were all slammed by the critics but are today considered classics.

Beyonce on thought behind movie 'Homecoming'

Beyonce Knowles



Los Angeles

Grammy Award-winning singer Beyonce Knowles says she pushed herself hard to "go beyond great to legendary" to make "Homecoming: A Film by Beyonce".

Netflix released "Homecoming: A Film by Beyonce", which presents an intimate look at her historic 2018 Coachella performance that paid homage to historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the US, read a statement.

Interspersed with candid footage and interviews detailing the preparation and the intent behind her vision, "Homecoming..." gives a peek into the process and emotional physical sacrifices it took to conceptualise and execute a performance of that magnitude that became a cultural movement. The film is now available globally on Netflix.

In juggling dual roles as both the director of her live performance and the film that captured the process of making it, Beyonce said: "It was one of the hardest jobs I have taken on but I knew that I had to push myself and my team to go beyond great to legendary."

Sophie Turner used to think about suicide a lot

Los Angeles

"Game of Thrones" star Sophie Turner has said she used to think about suicide a lot after being branded fat and a bad actress.

Turner has spoken out on her mental health battle, admitting that criticism over her looks and acting on her hit show led her to have suicidal thoughts, reports dailymail.co.uk.

The 23-year-old actress was making an appearance on Dr. Phil's podcast "Phil in the Blanks" on Tuesday, when she said she had stepped away from showbiz and acting to take care of herself.

Turner, who is in therapy and on medication, also credited her fiancé Joe Jonas with helping her through depression, admitting "when someone tells you they love you every day it makes you love yourself".

She said that she first began having mental health issues when she was 17, explaining that living at her parents' home while she worked and her friends and brothers were away at university, was a triggering factor.

"I've suffered with my depression for five or six years now. The biggest challenge for me is getting out of bed and getting out of the house. Learning to love yourself is the biggest challenge," she said.



Sophie Turner

Nick, Priyanka in no hurry to have kids

Los Angeles

Singer-actor Nick Jonas and his wife and actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas are not looking to expand their family just yet.

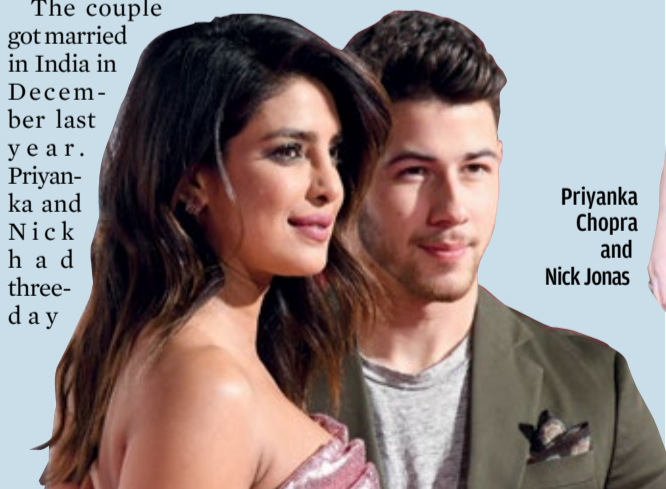
The 26-year-old musician was asked by Extra if he and the 36-year-old actress were going to have a child anytime soon, reports dailymail.co.uk.

Nick gave a simple four-word answer saying: "We're taking our time."

The couple got married in India in December last year. Priyanka and Nick had a three-day

wedding festivities at Jodhpur's royal Umaid Bhawan Palace, where they exchanged wedding vows as per both Christian and Hindu rituals in two separate ceremonies.

Earlier, this week Priyanka was seen stepping out in a stylish look as she flashed her belly ring on an outing in New York. The actress showed off her piercing while sporting a cropped white top with jeans, adding a plaid multi-hued coat on Monday in the city.



Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas

Jennifer Lawrence to end acting break with drama

Los Angeles



Jennifer Lawrence

Actress Jennifer Lawrence is set to return to the silver screen.

According to The Wrap, the actress, 28, will headline a motion picture for IAC FILMS and A24 with Lila Neugebauer at the helm for the project for her first feature, with Elizabeth Sanders writing the script, reports dailymail.co.uk.

The Oscar-winning star is a producer on the project along with Scott Rudin, Eli Bush and Justine Polsky. Principal photography is set to commence on the film in New Orleans in about two months.

Paris Hilton likes Salman Khan's younger avatar

Los Angeles

Superstar Salman Khan has found a new fan in socialite Paris Hilton.

Soon after the "Dabangg" star on Tuesday shared a new poster of his upcoming film "Bharat", in which he features in a younger avatar, Hilton posted a "cool" emoticon on it.

"Jawaani humari jaaneman thi! 'Bharat' ki jawaani," Salman had captioned the look, which reminded his fans of his looks in the 1990s.

Directed by Ali Abbas Zafar, "Bharat" is an official adaptation of a 2014 South Korean film "Ode To My Father". It is produced by Atul Agnihotri's Reel Life Production Pvt Ltd and Bhushan Kumar's T-Series.



Paris Hilton

Falling in love with Ryan Gosling made Eva Mendes want kids

Los Angeles

Eva Medes says falling in love with partner Ryan Gosling changed her perspective towards having kids.

In an interview with Women's Health magazine, Mendes said she had no plans to experience motherhood before the couple started dating.

"Ryan Gosling happened. I mean, falling in love with him. Then it made sense for me to have not kids, but his kids. It was very specific to him," Mendes said.

The duo started dating after working on "The Place Beyond the Pines" in 2011.

They now have two daughters, Esmeralda and Amada, who are four and two years old, respectively.

Mendes said as parents they are just getting out of "survival mode" and lauded her "amazing support group" for helping them out with the kids.

"Ryan's (mother), my (mother), Ryan's and my sisters. It's a village that helped u. My heart goes out to women who do this alone. I basically come from a single-parent household; although I love my dad, my mum mostly raised four of us on her own," she said.

The star said opposed to her career, her biggest drive at the moment are her two daughters

"(I) felt a lack of ambition when I became a mother and now I feel more ambitious in the home right now than I do in the workplace."



Eva Mendes and Ryan Gosling

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SPORTS

sports

Ajax stun Juventus

Ajax produced a second straight famous Champions League victory Ronaldo's Juventus to reach semis

● **Matthijs de Ligt struck the decisive header for Ajax to overcome Juventus**

AFP | Paris

Ajax stunned Juventus to reach the Champions League semi-finals for the first time since 1997 as Matthijs de Ligt's thumping second-half header secured a 2-1 second-leg victory in the last eight in Turin on Tuesday.

Cristiano Ronaldo, bidding for his sixth Champions League title, scored a 28th-minute header to put Juve ahead after a 1-1 first-leg draw, but Donny van de Beek levelled for Ajax before half-time.

Teenage centre-back De Ligt struck midway through the second period, though, to seal a 3-2 aggregate win and set up a last-four clash with either Manchester City or Tottenham.

The young Dutch side had already eliminated three-time defending champions Real Madrid en route to the quarters, overturning a 2-1 home defeat against the Spanish side with a memorable 4-1 victory at the Santiago Bernabeu.

"It's an incredible evening for Ajax and its players and also for Dutch football," said coach Erik ten Hag.

"Once again we eliminated the favourites.

"We said before we were not the favourites but with our philosophy we can go further, we've



Ajax's Matthijs de Ligt rises high for the winning goal against Juventus

again surpassed our limits."

Juventus had been looking to reach the Champions League semi-finals for the third time in the past five seasons.

But Ronaldo, who scored an away goal last week with a diving header in Amsterdam, was Juve's only weapon against the impressive Dutch side.

The 34-year-old was signed for 100 million euros (\$117 million) last summer from Real Madrid in a bid to win the European trophy for the first time since 1996, when they beat Ajax in the final.

"Ajax deserved to qualify," said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"We could have done better, but Ajax aren't coming out of



Ajax are into the Champions League semi-finals for the first time since 1997

nowhere, they were Europa League finalists two years ago and scored five goals against Real.

"It's not our worst elimination. We had big expectations, but the Champions League is a strange competition. You have

to arrive in peak condition.

"In the last month we have been struggling with several injuries. Even tonight we were missing important players."

Allegri had been forced to reshuffle his side because of injuries, with Paulo Dybala returning in place of the injured Mario Mandzukic, while captain Giorgio Chiellini was also sidelined.

Ajax's defence took a hit when Noussair Mazraoui, who had replaced the suspended Nicolas Tagliafico, limped off on 11 minutes with an ankle injury, with Daley Sinkgraven coming on.

Ajax goalkeeper Andre Onana dived to keep out a scorching Dybala half-volley in the 20th minute.

Eldarov says losing at Brave 23 'is not an option'



Eldar Eldarov

AFP | Munich

Super Lightweight title contender Eldar Eldarov will look to become the first Bahraini fighter to win a world championship when he meets Mounir Lazzez, from Tunisia, in the co-main event of Brave 23: Pride and Honour, which takes place in Amman, Jordan, this Friday.

For Eldarov, the chance to make history also by becoming the first-ever world champion in the newly-formed weight division is too good to let it slide. He claims that losing is "not an option" and that someone will tap out "and it's not going to be me".

"This is the biggest fight of my career. I won't fight for myself. I'll fight for my family, for my team, and for my people. Losing is not an option for me. I know someone will tap out and it's not going to be me", guarantees Eldar, who will look to increase even more his fanbase with the win over Lazzez.

"I know that people support Mounir a lot, he has a good fanbase. His fans have come to my social media profiles af-



This is the biggest fight of my career. I won't fight for myself. I'll fight for my family, for my team, and for my people. Losing is not an option for me. I know someone will tap out and it's not going to be me

ELDAR ELDAROV

ter our fight was announced. That's good. Usually, when you beat someone with a big fanbase, they become your fans, so this is my point (laughs)".

Brave 23: Pride and Honour will be broadcast by Abu Dhabi Sports. The historic event will feature three title fights. Aside from Eldarov x Lazzez, Welterweight champion Jarrah Al-Selawe will defend his title against undefeated contender Abdoul Abdouraguimov, while Lightweight titleholder Abdoul-Kareem Al-Selwady will look to maintain his crown against striker Luan Santiago.

BTA to conduct junior tennis camp

TDT | Manama

From Sunday 21st to Tuesday 23rd April, Bahrain Tennis Academy (BTA) will be running a three-day camp for children at the Dilmun Club, Saar.

Children 5-8 years-of-age can join the sessions that will be held from 4:30-6:00pm each day.

The program will include training of strokes and footwork as well as fun games.

Neuer dismisses retirement rumours

AFP | Berlin

Injured Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer yesterday quashed rumours of his imminent retirement and says he wants to return in time to face RB Leipzig on the penultimate day of the Bundesliga season.

"It is difficult to say when I will be back but I think Leipzig is a realistic target," he said.

Lanka Lions edge BOC

TDT | Manama

Lanka Lions beat BOC by 7 wickets in a CBA Division B 25 overs league match.

Toss was won by BOC who elected to bat first. Thuwan took four wickets in his bowling spell that helped Lions to restrict BOC for 110 runs while Haqib (29) became the top scorer for BOC.

Chasing the target, Lion's opener Surange (53) scored an unbeaten half century that helped Lions to reach the target in 18th over and win the match by 7 wickets.

Brief Score: Lanka Lions 111/3 in 17.5 overs (Suranga 53, Aqib 2/6) beat BOC 110/10 (Haqib 29, Thuwan 4/14, Imesh 2/13) by 7 wickets

Public Security Yellow 181/5 in 22.1 overs (Raza 47, Mohsin 43, Aroon 3/22) beat Indian Rising Stars 179/10 (Prashanth 68, Ummer 4/27) by 5 wickets

Shifa Aljazeera 131/4 in 17.4 overs (Suhail 55, Manoj 34) beat RKCT 130/8 (Jayraj 37, Anto 2/20) by 6 wickets
Asgharali 128/3 in 20.2 overs

(Tahmoor 38, Atif 31) beat Public Security Red 123/10 (Kashif 22, Adnan 3/34) by 7 wickets
CBA Division C 25 overs league

Lulu 116/2 in 17 overs (Nishad 52, Sajith 23) beat SNCS Transfat 110/10 (Sreekumar 23, Anoop 3/14) by 8 wickets

Rebel II 134/7 in 22.3 overs (Shanu 35, Muzammil 25, Ahad 3/22) beat Waqas Pak 133/10 (Shahbaz 50, Sajjad 4/28) by 3 wickets

Bassli Tigers 159/9 in 25 overs (Rashid 41, Numair 31, Akhil 3/37) beat Masters 138/10 (Akhil 42) by 21 runs

Pak CC 158/8 in 23 overs (Awais 42, Zaman 34, Asif 3/25) beat lantern Z XI 155/10 (Asif 30, Zaman 5/22) by 2 wickets

Karnataka Royals 162/7 in 25 overs (Puneeth 53, Naven 48, Fawad 3/28) beat Titans 98/10 (Jishad 25, Sagar 2/11) by 64 runs

Euro Bahrain 187/5 in 25 overs (Asim 85, Ishfaq 37) beat Smile Mart 179/10 (Zeeshan 45, Wasim 47, Ashfaq 4/40) by 8 runs

Golden Tulip rally past Le Meridien



Ritz Carlton A Team after winning their match

TDT | Manama

Le Meridien lost to Golden Tulip by four runs in the eighth Inter Hotel Charity Cricket Tournament match held on Tuesday. Ali was declared man of the match.

Scores
Le Meridien (68/3 in 6 overs) lost to Golden Tulip (72 for all

out in 6 overs) by 04 runs.

Match # 2:

Ritz Carlton A (75/3 in 6 overs) won from Sheraton Hotel (18/6 in 3.5 overs) by 57 runs.

Man of the match: Farrukh Faqrooq

Match # 3:

Royal Phoenixia (56/6 in 6 overs) lost to Gulf Hotel (62/2 in 4.4 overs) by 4 wickets.

Man of the Match: Justin Match # 4:

Westin Hotel (50/6 in 6 overs) lost to Wyndham Grand (66/4 in 6 overs) by 16 runs.

Man of the Match: Danial Match #5:

Park Regis (44/4 in 6 overs) lost to Regency Intercontinental (46/2 in 2 overs) by 04 wickets.

Man of the Match: Zeeshan

Nadal steamrolls to opening win

Rafael Nadal wins his second-round match at Monte Carlo in emphatic fashion

● Alexander Zverev eases past Felix Auger-Aliassime

AFP | Monte Carlo

Rafael Nadal charged out of the blocks yesterday to hammer Roberto Bautista Agut 6-1, 6-1 in his opening match at the Monte Carlo Masters.

The 11-time champion showed no sign of the knee problems which forced him to quit ahead of an Indian Wells semi-final against Roger Federer a month ago.

The 32-year-old had expressed pre-tournament caution regarding the health of his knee -- a worry which appeared to be groundless after a 76-minute masterclass.

Nadal collected the opening five games of the afternoon in 17 minutes as he set the tone for another dominant display in the principality.

He was equally in control during the second set, where he saved three break points in the fourth game and two more in the sixth.

"It was a great start, it's good to be back here," the 17-time Grand Slam winner said.

"I've had some great moments



Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a return to Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut

on this court, I really enjoy playing here.

"It's not easy to come back from injury, I had to do a lot of mental work as well to be prepared.

"I tried to play solid, dominate with my forehand when I had the chance."

Bautista Agut has now lost to his Spanish countryman in all three of their meetings, while

Nadal improved his incredible record here to 69-4 as he takes aim at a fourth consecutive title at the event.

Third seed Alexander Zverev rediscovered traces of his best



Bautista Agut has now lost to Rafael Nadal in all three of their meetings

form with a 6-1, 6-4 defeat of Felix Auger-Aliassime.

The German, locally based, reached the third round as he tamed the 18-year-old who broke through for a Miami semi-final last month.

Upbeat Zverev

The 21-year-old Zverev played the semi-finals in Monte Carlo a year ago but has yet to hit his stride this season. That may be starting to change.

"This is the first time this season I've felt really healthy," said Zverev, who lost prematurely at both Indian Wells and Miami, as well as in Marrakech last week.

"I've been training well but haven't been able to take that into matches.

"I live just 500 metres from here, I'm comfortable on this court. I'm starting to feel better about my game.

"I'm really ready for the clay season."

Canadian Auger-Aliassime has made a fast rise in the rankings from 175 a year ago to his current position of 33rd.

Zverev swept the opening set in 30 minutes but had to get through a series of three straight breaks of serve between him and his opponent before finally advancing in 78 minutes.

The third seed broke six times and will next face Italy's Fabio Fognini, who reached the third round when French opponent Gilles Simon was unable to play their match due to back problems.

Greek sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas moved ahead, defeating Mikhail Kukushkin 6-3, 7-5.

"I need to maintain my focus, my concentration, my aggressive mindset when I'm on the court," Tsitsipas said.

"If all these are combined, then I have nothing to fear and I have nothing to be afraid of when I'm on the court.

"This is the first big clay court tournament, not everyone is very well prepared for that. It's been a long hardcourt court season before the clay."

Britain's Cameron Norrie defeated Marton Fucsovics of Hungary 7-6 (7/3), 6-3, while Pierre-Hugues Herbert stunned 2018 finalist and fifth seed Kei Nishikori 7-5, 6-4.

Solskjaer calls for squad rebuild

Reuters | Barcelona

After their slim hopes of another famous Champions League revival were stopped dead by Lionel Messi and a rampant Barcelona, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer admitted his Manchester United side need a huge overhaul in order to return to Europe's elite.

Although United made a bright start to their quarter-final second leg at the Nou Camp with Marcus Rashford hitting the crossbar early on, they were soon outclassed by Barca, who eased to a 3-0 win on Tuesday for a dominant 4-0 aggregate victory.

"We were fighting against a great team and we know there's work to be done but I've said all along this isn't going to change overnight," Solskjaer told a news conference.

"The next few years are going to be massive to get to the level that Barcelona and other teams are at."

Solskjaer has restored United's confidence and overseen a vast improvement in results in his four months in charge since taking the job after Jose Mourinho was sacked in De-

ember, giving the team hope of a top-four finish in the Premier League.

He also led them to an historic comeback after a 2-0 first-leg defeat at home to Paris St Germain in the Champions League last 16, going through on away goals with a 3-1 win in the French capital.

Yet the scale of the long-term surgery his side needs was laid bare at the Nou Camp, where Barca walked all over United.

"We've got good players to work with and at the moment we've done really well to get to the quarters and challenge for top four, but we've got a rebuilding job. It starts with the coaches and players, and with one or two additions," added the Norwegian.

"We're on with the job and have spoken to the players we need to get the best out of each other, create an environment of top class attitude, world class attitude every single day."

Barca scored their third goal when Philippe Coutinho was left with plenty of space and time to curl a shot into the top corner.



Ole Gunnar Solskjær embraces Lionel Messi after the match

Careless United undone by Messi double

AFP | Barcelona

Lionel Messi pounced on two Manchester United mistakes to score twice and end their hopes of another comeback at Camp Nou as Barcelona breezed into the Champions League semi-finals on Tuesday.

After an excellent start, United were undone twice in four minutes by Messi, who first nicked the ball off the careless Ashley Young and then watched as a weak shot from distance squirmed underneath David de Gea.

Philippe Coutinho, in perhaps his best performance of the season, added a third with a curling effort into the top corner and by the end, an outclassed United might have been relieved the score was not more traumatic than 3-0, 4-0 on aggregate.

"We had five uncomfortable minutes because they came out strong," said Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde. "But then there were another 85 minutes where we weren't bad."

A dizzying opening spell, in which Marcus Rashford had hit the crossbar, was long-forgotten, even if it could offer Barca's next opponents some encouragement.

Liverpool, who take a 2-0 lead to Porto, are now the most likely obstacle between them and their first Champions League final since they last won this tournament in 2015. Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane might feel emboldened.

Instead, United's pair of early errors made this another night about Messi and ensured any faint hopes of repeating the comeback against Paris Saint-Germain, or even the fa-



David de Gea drops to his knees after allowing Lionel Messi's tame shot to squirm under his body

"We had five uncomfortable minutes because they came out strong. But then there were another 85 minutes where we weren't bad"
ERNESTO VALVERDE

mous 1999 rescue act against Bayern Munich, on this same pitch, were dashed.

"We said all along this was not going to change overnight," United's coach Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said. "In the next few years it is going to be a massive effort to get to the level of

Barcelona and these sorts of teams."

Messi now has his 109th and 110th Champions League goals and, potentially, three extra matches to reduce the gap on Cristiano Ronaldo's 126, after Juventus were dumped out by Ajax. Barcelona's fans celebrated that too.

Solskjaer had urged his strikers to be more lethal here but it felt ominous that even before kick-off, Rashford, Anthony Martial, Romelu Lukaku and Alexis Sanchez had hit 42 goals this season, while Messi on his own had 43.

Around an hour before kick-off, Alex Ferguson was on the side of the pitch, shaking hands with Ryan Giggs and sharing words with Solskjaer, the scorer of the winning goal

against Munich here 20 years ago.

They could have hardly have asked for a better start. United were brilliant for eight minutes and could have been ahead within 30 seconds as Rashford raced onto a curving Paul Pogba pass and toed away a shot, which Marc-Andre ter Stegen bravely left to graze his own crossbar.

Barca were flustered, so much so the crowd even cheered with relief when Arthur Melo played his team's first convincing pass.

Then, Barcelona had their own eight-minute flurry as United almost conceded a penalty, ruled out after Fred took the ball before bringing down Ivan Rakitic, and then did concede, twice, to Messi.