

Chris, Katherine are living together

Actor Chris Pratt and girlfriend Katherine Schwarzenegger, daughter of veteran actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, are living in together.

P14

India's richest man to battle Amazon, Walmart in e-com

THE DAILY tribune



Diljit goes gaga over Kylie's photoshopped egg image

France will stay 'militarily engaged' in Mideast: Macron



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Protracted shutdown



Long lines are seen at a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security checkpoint at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport amid the partial federal government shutdown, in Atlanta, Georgia, yesterday. Nearly 90 per cent of Americans who oppose an expansion of the border wall say Congress should not pass a bill including Mr Trump's request for wall funding if it is the only way to end the shutdown. Of those who back the wall, nearly three-quarters find it equally unacceptable for a deal to exclude wall funding.

Palestine, Syria dominate Arab ministers' meeting

Beirut

The concerns of the people of Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Yemen were the main topic of the opening session of a meeting of Arab ministers held in preparation for the Arab development summit on Sunday in Beirut, Arab News reported last night.

The meeting in the Lebanese capital's Phoenicia Hotel saw unprecedented security measures covering a large area, including the summit's venues and the accommodation of guests and journalists.

Only three presidents have so far confirmed their attendance at the summit — those of Lebanon,

“We're waiting for states that requested amendments to the initiative.”

RAFIC CHLALA

Somalia and Mauritania.

However, the Arab League's Assistant Secretary-General Hossam Zaki called for “separating between the attendance and the summit itself, and the importance of its topics and the resolutions it will produce.”

During a media briefing, Zaki said: “The attendance of Arab leaders will undoubtedly increase the importance of the

summit, but their absence, which has spurred media commentary, does not diminish the importance of the topics addressed by the summit — and many summits are not attended by presidents.”

The summit's media spokesman Rafic Chlala told Arab News: “The presidents who decided not to attend the summit have sent their delegates, which means the summit hasn't failed, as some are trying to portray it.”

He said Lebanese President Michel Aoun will propose at the summit “a funding project for the reconstruction of all Arab countries devastated by war.”

Chlala added: “We're waiting for states that requested amendments to the initiative.”

Trump giving 'new life' to Daesh

Washington

President Donald Trump's decision to pull US troops from Syria was made without deliberation, left allies “bewildered” and has rejuvenated Daesh, the official formerly in charge of fighting the militants said Friday.

Brett McGurk warned a US withdrawal would shore up President Bashar Assad and lessen America's leverage with Russia and Iran.



03 Muharraq Bridge Project 'on track'

04 World-renowned light artist to enchant fans

05 Ex-flight attendant jailed for growing marijuana at home

Second summit

Trump to meet Kim for a second summit by Feb end, says White House

● **Speculation is mounting that it could be held in Vietnam.**

● **President Trump said he was looking forward to the talks.**

New York

US President Donald Trump is to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for a second summit by the end of February, the White House says.

The announcement came after Mr Trump met top North Korean negotiator Kim Yong-chol at the White House.

He had been expected to deliver a letter from Kim Jong-un to Mr Trump.

Little progress has been made on denuclearisation since their historic summit in Singapore last June.

No venue has been announced for the new summit.

Speculation is mounting that it could be held in Vietnam.

Kim Yong-chol's visit to Washington is the first sign of movement in nuclear diplomacy with North Korea for months, BBC state department correspondent Barbara Plett Usher reported.

It is not clear what the reported letter from Kim Jong-un contained. But it was expected to lay the groundwork for another summit, our correspondent adds.

President Trump said he was looking forward to the talks.

His press secretary Sarah Sanders said after the White House meeting that progress in the talks on denuclearisation continued, but added: “The United States is going to continue to keep pressure and sanctions on North Korea.”

Nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang have stalled, no detailed account of North Korea's nuclear facilities has been provided and sanctions are still firmly in place.

Mr Kim however, has been busy boosting his global image. He's improved relations with



Trump with Kim at the Singapore Summit.

“The United States is going to continue to keep pressure and sanctions on North Korea.”

SARAH SANDERS

neighbouring South Korea, and both countries have destroyed guard posts along the heavily guarded demilitarised zone - and paid trips to each other's countries.

Ties between North Korea and China also appear to have improved, with Mr Kim making

multiple trips to Beijing to meet President Xi.

The summit was historic for the fact that it happened at all - but on paper, all it really achieved was a vaguely-phrased agreement in which both countries agreed to work towards denuclearisation.

It was never really made clear what denuclearisation would entail - the agreement did not include any timeline, details or mechanisms to verify this process.

If there is a second summit, many will be expecting something more concrete to come out of it. Both North Korea and the US are unlikely to get away with calling another vague agreement a success.

North Korea hasn't conducted a missile test since the summit. It's also dismantled a nuclear testing site and a key missile engine facility.

It did however test out a new “high-tech” tactical weapon last November - its first official report of a weapons test in a year. This however, was not taken to represent a huge threat.



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Morocco ties lauded

Shura delegation meets Morocco's House of Councillors' president

Rabat

The Shura Council's delegation, led by the Second Deputy Chairperson, Hala Ramzi Fayezi, met here yesterday the President of Morocco's House of Councillors and Chairman of the Association of Senates, Shura and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), Abdelhakim Benchamach.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the International Seminar on the Experiences of National Reconciliation, organised here by ASSECAA.

Morocco's House of Councillors' president expressed deep pride in the steady progress of the brotherly Bahraini-Moroccan relations of co-operation and coordination in various fields, especially the legislative one.

He stressed the role of the Shura Council in Bahrain and the House of Councillors in Morocco in unifying efforts and stances towards various issues of common interest at inter-



Mr Benchamach receives the Shura Council delegation.

national parliamentary gatherings.

He lauded the effective role played by the Shura Council and its delegations to ASSECAA meetings, praising their keenness to participate effectively in such gatherings and support efforts to enhance sustainable development across Africa and

the Arab world.

Hala Ramzi Fayezi conveyed greetings from the Shura Council Chairman, Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh, to the Moroccan House of Councillors' president, and his wishes of further progress and prosperity to Morocco, under its leadership.

She hailed the tremendous

efforts exerted by Morocco's House of Councillors to organise key international conferences and seminars that tackle vital issues, expressing the Shura Council's support for the resolutions and recommendations issued by ASSECAA and aimed at achieving the top interests of countries and peoples.

Minister receives writer



Education Minister Dr Majid Al Nuaimi received Chancellor Ahmed Jaber Al Dosary, who presented a copy of his book "Penal Protection for state archives and data". Dr Al Nuaimi commended the author's efforts, stressing the importance of the book which focuses on the law on protecting state archives and data.

BTI to organise 12th Career Expo in March

Manama

Preparations are in full swing at the Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) to hold the 12th Career Expo, with the participation of public and private sector companies and institutions.

The annual expo is a platform to strengthen cooperation

with the labour market's public and private sectors' institutions, and to meet the needs of the various sectors of the local labour market.

It also provides a platform for jobseekers and secondary school students to get an idea about training and work opportunities at companies.

Annual Day celebrations



The CBSE Section of Al Noor International School celebrated its Annual Day on 16th and 17th of January 2019 for the Primary and Secondary Sections. Renu Yadav, the Second Secretary of the Embassy of India, was the Chief Guest for the day. The School Chairman Ali Hasan, School Director Dr Muhammad Mashood, Principal Mr Amin Mohammad Hulaiwah, Head Teachers of all sections, officials from the Ministry of Education, officials from the Indian Embassy and parents were present on the occasion. A wide variety of colourful programmes were staged showcasing the unique talents of the students of all age groups which included one act plays and theme dances.

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Kuwait's contribution to WHO programmes hailed

Geneva

The World Health Organisation (WHO) hailed Kuwait's contribution to the organisation's programmes in countries affected by conflicts and crises.

The Kuwaiti contribution plays a big role in the execution of WHO's projects and programmes in Yemen, Syria and other countries in need, WHO's Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) after his meeting with Kuwait's permanent representa-

tive to the UN Ambassador Jamal Al Ghunaim on Wednesday.

He hoped that his upcoming visit to Kuwait will create further cooperation between the two sides in aiding people in need.

The ambassador said that Kuwait continuously supports WHO in providing health care to Syrians especially refugees in neighbouring countries in such extremely cold weather.

The meeting discussed providing medicine and medical equipment, as well as vaccinating children as part of Kuwait's contribution, he noted.

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Muharraq Bridge Project 'on track'

The fourth bridge will address the traffic problems north of Muharraq

TDT | Manama
Tamer Taifoor

The work on Muharraq Bridge, which will connect Busaiteen with north of Manama, is on right track, said Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Minister Essam Khalaf.

"The cost of this strategic project is BD94 million and it is being financed by the Saudi Development Fund and includes dams, four-lane bridge and roads."

The work contract has been awarded to Boskalis Westminster Al Rushaid Company Limited and Boskalis Westminster Contracting Limited.

The minister pointed out that the bridge will connect the economic, tourist and development facilities on Muharraq Island in the capital Manama to the north.

It will also provide access to the new Busaiteen, Al Saya area, Diyar Al Muharraq, Amwaj Islands, Al Deir, Samahij and Qalali, he added.

He said that the project is an extension of Al Muharraq Ring Road (extension of the Dry Dock Road to the north), starting from the intersection of Al Muharraq



The project includes four-lane bridge and roads.



A graphically created image of the bridge.



It will also provide access to the new Busaiteen, Al Saya area, Diyar Al Muharraq, Amwaj Islands, Al Deir, Samahij and Qalali.

MR KHALAF

Ring Road in Smahij / Diyar Al Muharraq, passing through Al Deer, Al Busaitin and Al Sawaya area.

"The second phase of the North Manama Bridge, which starts from this intersection to the waterfront area in the Seef area to Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Street at the intersection of Farouk.

Mr Khalaf said that the fourth bridge will make a quantum leap

94 million Bahraini dinars is the cost of the project, according to Works Ministry.

in addressing the traffic problems north of Muharraq.

"It will carry a high traffic density on the eastern side of the island, from Al Had, through the villages of Qalali, Samahij, Deir and Muharraq."

The minister revealed that the fourth bridge will be a modern landmark of the features of Bahrain and that was selected and approved by the Prime Minister.

Governorate to host 'Japanese Village'

TDT | Manama
Tamer Taifoor

The Southern Governorate will host the first Japanese Expo from February 7 to 9 at the Bahrain International Circuit, under the name "Japanese Village".

The head of Bahrain-based Business and Friendship Association Nasser Al Arayed said trade exchange between Bahrain and Japan exceeded \$ 1.2 billion annually, according to the latest statistics published in 2015.

Mr Al Arayed said that the diplomatic relations between Japan and the Kingdom of Bahrain dates back to 1934, when Bahrain's first shipment of oil was sent to Japan following the discovery of oil in Bahrain in 1932, and the number of Japanese citizens living in Bahrain now stands at around 250.

Mr Al Arayed explained that Japanese companies have completed many projects in Bahrain, including the petrochemical, aluminium, gas and telecommunications industries.

Recently, projects have been held, such as the steel plant project, which will be based in Haddad.

According to the head of the Bahraini-Japanese Business and Friendship Association, the number of Japanese companies having offices in Bahrain is 16; five companies operate in the financial sector, three in the commercial sector and eight in the industrial sector.

Fatima Al Ghatam, director of social and community programmes in the Southern Governorate, said: "The Japanese village will be held under the pa-

The Southern Province has become a centre of global events, a destination for all family events and meetings, and the Japanese village will be a family entertainment activity, and we aim to differentiate and show the extent of friendship between Bahrain and Japan.

MS GHATAM

tronage of His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Governor of the Southern Province."

"The Southern Province has become a centre of global events, a destination for all family events and meetings, and the Japanese village will be a family entertainment activity, and we aim to differentiate and show the extent of friendship between Bahrain and Japan."

The Director of the Department of Social Programmes and Community Affairs in the Southern Province Fatima Al Ghatam, said: "There will be a textile and clothing corner, a ceremony corner, a corner of the tools used by the people during the era of Japanese Empire, a Japanese tea corner, and how to drink it.

"There will also be Japanese bands to attend the

celebration as well as Japanese competitions and games."

"The Japanese village is accompanied by a Japanese her-



Governorate officials at the Press conference.

itage and cultural centre, daily and daily special programmes Japanese cooking, and other accompaniment programmes such as Japanese calligraphy, family activities," she added.

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World-renowned light artist to enchant fans

Karim Jabbari to present his art concept 'Once The Dust Settles'

TDI | Manama

World-renowned light and street artist Karim Jabbari will be performing in the Kingdom of Bahrain, announced Bahrain Al Aali Mall in collaboration with Shop Bahrain.

"Once The Dust Settles" is an art concept that includes an installation, a portrait booth and a live show that will take place in Al Aali Mall on the weekends of 18th, 19th, 25th and 26th of January.

Brad Curcillo, Mall Manager of Al Aali Mall expressed his excitement at announcing the upcoming event: "We are genuinely pleased to host Karim at Al Aali Mall during the Shop Bahrain festival, as this gives the public an opportunity to see one of the most unique talents in the art scene display a one-of-a-kind show that has never been done before."

"The mall is eager to experience the whole art concept of "Once the Dust Settles". We would also like to thank Karim for choosing Bahrain as the location to launch his concept, and Shop Bahrain for supporting us and giving us the platform to host what we consider to be groundbreaking in the art scene."

Karim Jabbari stated, "I am very excited to introduce "Once the Dust Settles" in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and I am thankful to Al Aali Mall for allowing me to demonstrate a concept that is so dear to me."

"Once the Dust Settles" is an anthem to staying strong in all conditions, es-



A poster of the event.



I will be delivering this concept in three stages through 20-minute live shows and an installation.

MR KARIM

pecially when facing a continuous flow of distractions, challenges, and obstacles," Mr Jabbari continued.

"I will be delivering this concept in three stages through 20-minute live shows and an installation. I would also like to offer a personal experience to visitors as well, so I will have a booth available at the mall where they can take their pictures surrounded by my light calligraphy."

Karim began his artistic journey at the age of 12. A difficult childhood was made easier through the power of calligraphy and later in life it became a reminder of where he came from and what he left behind.

His love for the Arabic language intensified as he began to delve deeper into its beautiful letters, words and syllables. He has been featured in TED Talks x Casablanca, CNN, MBC, Government of Dubai, Vice, Yale to name a few.

More details regarding "Once the Dust Settles" will be released on Al Aali Mall and Shop Bahrain's social media channels. For more information on Karim Jabbari and his work, visit his Instagram page @Karim_jab or visit www.madefromwords.com.

Israeli practices near Al Aqsa Mosque slammed

Amman

Jordan yesterday condemned the Israeli occupation authorities' decision to install and erect wooden poles and metal structures near the Western Wall (The Buraq Wall), which is part and parcel of the Al Aqsa Mosque/ Al Haram Al-Sharif, Jordanian news agency (Petra) reported.

"The Awqaf Administration (religious affairs department) is, under international law, the national authority that has the mandate of running all affairs of the Al Aqsa Mosque," said Jordan's Foreign Ministry spokesman Sufian Qudah, calling Israel, as an occupying power" to fully comply with its obligations in that regard.

Qudah, further, urged the international community to live up to its responsibilities in pressuring Israel to maintain the historical and legal status quo of Al Aqsa Mosque.

Also, he held Israel fully responsible for the safety of the mosque and the worshippers, while calling for an immediate cessation of Israel unilateral measures.

The Buraq Wall is one of the most famous historical landmarks of the occupied city of Jerusalem.

It is the wall that borders the Al Aqsa Mosque from the west, and extends to Al Maghareba Gate to the south.

Foreign Ministry officials attend preparatory meeting

Manama

The Undersecretary for Regional and GCC Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Waheed Mubarak Sayyar, and the Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Sami Humaid, participated in the joint preparatory meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers concerned with the Economic and Social Council of the fourth Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, in Lebanon.

The meeting discussed the draft resolutions submitted by the Permanent Delegates to the League of Arab States, which aims to enhance cooperation in various developmental fields and supports joint Arab economic and development work for the benefit of Arab countries and peoples.

The agenda of this summit includes several important topics, such as follow-up and development of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, the establishment of the Arab Customs Union, the Arab strategy for sustainable energy, the development of the SME sector, and the establishment of a common vision in the field of digital economy, including the social impact on the Arab family and its integration into sustainable development, child protection, women's health, education and poverty eradication.

Works Ministry honours creative tree trimmer



A few of creative work done by Mr Sayyed.

Manama

Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Municipal Services Wael Al Mubarak honoured Bahraini citizen Sayyed Hussein Mohammed Ali, who trimmed street trees creatively.

He stressed the importance of supporting Bahrainis' initiatives that best serve the nation and citizens. Urban development director Rawya Al Mannai attended.

The Assistant Undersecretary underlined the directives issued by Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Minister Essam Khalaf to invest in Bahrainis' initiatives.

He thanked Sayyed Hussein Mohammed Ali for his creative initiative, which reflects the importance of strengthening community partnership and protect the beauty of municipal zones and avenues.



Mr Al Mubarak honouring citizen Mr Sayyed in the presence of Ms Rawya.

Ex-flight attendant jailed for growing marijuana at home

The 56 years old Bahraini was acquitted of selling marijuana

TDT | Manama

The Fourth High Criminal Court has sentenced an ex-flight attendant to three years in jail for growing marijuana at his home along with possessing illegal weapon and bullets. The convict was also fined

BD1,000.

The 56-year-old Bahraini was arrested following a raid carried out at his home by a special team from the anti-narcotic wing of the Police Department after receiving a tip-off.

The Public Prosecution charged him with growing mari-

”

I was growing marijuana for my own purpose and not for selling. And I learnt the process through Internet.

ACCUSED

juana for the purpose of personal use and selling along with possessing illegal weapon and bullet.

However, the court acquitted the Bahraini of selling drugs as there was no enough to prove the crime. According to court details, the man admitted to using drugs. “I was growing marijuana for

my own purpose and not for selling. And I learnt the process through Internet,” the accused told court.

The court handed down one year jail for using drugs, one year for possessing illegal weapon and one year for growing marijuana at home.

Money laundering trial adjourned

● The case was adjourned for the prosecutors to present more evidence.

TDT | Manama

The First High Criminal Court has adjourned the case of an Arab national accused of money laundering.

The next hearing will be held on January 28, according to court sources. An Asian woman is also accused in the case.

The 46-year-old man was working as a manager with an exhibitions company and

ERC launches educational projects in Yemen

● One hundred food parcels were distributed to students in illiteracy eradication programmes in the Hijr district of Hadramaut, while another 1,000 food parcel were distributed to underprivileged families in Dawa'an.

Yemen

The Emirates Red Crescent (ERC), initiated seven education development projects in Yemen's Red Sea Coast.

2,730
food parcels benefiting some 13,650 individuals were distributed in Hadramaut by the ERC volunteers.

This came as part of UAE's Tolerance Year. The move is part of the authority's humanitarian, development and economic projects in villages, cities and districts in the Taiz and Hodeidah governorates, Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported. The new projects include

the restoration and refurbishment of schools in many areas of Yemen.

The ERC also dispatched food and relief convoys to remote areas, as well as medical centres across the Shabwa Governorate.

Sources from ERC said 1,272 food parcels were distributed, benefitting 7,709 people.

One hundred food parcels were distributed to students in illiteracy eradication programmes in the Hijr district of Hadramaut, while another 1,000 food parcel were distributed to underprivileged families in Dawa'an.

So far in the Tolerance Year, the ERC has distributed 2,730 food parcels benefiting some 13,650 individuals in Hadramaut.

Saudi raps Houthi attack on Yemen UN monitors

● The UN Security Council this week agreed to expand the force to 75 monitors.

Jeddah

Saudi Arabia has strongly condemned the targeting of “UN personnel by the Iran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen” after cease-fire monitors came under fire.

The attack took place on Thursday in Hodeidah, where a truce agreed in talks in Sweden came into force last month.

The Houthi militia “have violated their signed commitments in Stockholm and continue to flout international law and escalate their aggression against the Yemeni people,” Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United States Prince Khalid bin Salman tweeted on Friday.

The UN said one round of small arms fire struck a UN-marked armored vehicle that was part of convoy carrying chief monitor Patrick Cammaert.

The UN monitors arrived in Hodeida — the entry point for the bulk of Yemen's imports — on Dec 23.

”

Both used their official positions to launder money. The Arab national also used the laundered money to buy properties in his home country.

PROSECUTORS

the Asian woman was employed as an accountant with the same firm, according to court details.

“Both used their official positions to launder money. The Arab national also used the laundered money to buy properties in his home country,” the Prosecutors said.

The Public Prosecution also accused the first accused of forging documents to launder money to the tune of BD163,736.

The case was adjourned for the prosecutors to present more evidence.

Bahrain condemns terrorist attack in Bogota



A woman embraces a police officer close to the scene where a car bomb exploded, according to authorities, in Bogota



Forensic workers gather at the scene of a deadly car bombing at a police academy in Bogotá.

Manama

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned the terrorist attack on a police academy in the city of Bogota, the Republic of Colombia, which resulted in the death and injury of a number of people.

In a statement, the Minis-

try of Foreign Affairs also expressed “deep condolences to the families of the victims, wishing those injured a speedy recovery”.

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirms the solid position of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which rejects all forms of violence, extremism and terrorism, and calls for intensifying international

efforts to eradicate this dangerous scourge, which is aimed at destabilising peace and security,” the statement added.

At least 20 people have been killed in a car bomb attack in the Colombian capital of Bogotá, police say.

Dozens more were injured in the blast which happened at

20

people have been killed in the car bomb attack in the Colombian capital of Bogotá.

09:30 on Thursday in the south of the city.

The car's driver, who was also killed, has been identified as a 57-year-old man. No group has said it was behind the explosion.

President Ivan Duque described it as a “crazy terrorist act” and declared three days of national mourning.

The grey Nissan Patrol entered the compound of the General Santander police academy where a promotion ceremony for cadets was being held.

When the car was stopped by guards at a checkpoint, the driver accelerated and hit a wall, at which point the car exploded.

WORLD
world**21 dead in car bomb attack on Colombian police academy**

People wait for news outside the site of an explosion on a police cadet training school in Bogota

Bogota, Colombia

Colombia's government declared three days of mourning after at least 21 people died in a car bomb at a Bogota police cadet training academy, and 68 were wounded -- the worst such incident in the city in 16 years.

The defense ministry said the "terrorist act" was carried out using a vehicle packed with 80 kilograms (around 175 pounds) of explosives.

"Unfortunately, the preliminary toll is 21 people dead, including the person responsible for the incident, and 68 wounded," Colombian police said in a statement, adding 58 of those injured had been discharged from hospital.

No group has claimed responsibility, but public prosecutor Nestor Humberto Martinez named suspect Jose Aldemar Rojas Rodriguez as the "material author of this abominable crime."

Martinez said Rojas Rodriguez entered the school compound at 9:30 am (1430 GMT) driving a grey 1993 Nissan Patrol truck, but gave no details about the explosion.

Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno said one of the dead was an Ecuadoran cadet, while a second suffered light injuries.

France will stay 'militarily engaged' in Mideast: Macron

French President Emmanuel Macron delivers his 2019 New Year's wishes to the military forces during his visit of paratroopers of the 11th Parachute Brigade of the Infantry at the air force base 101 Toulouse-Franczal, near Toulouse, southern France,

AFP | Toulouse, France

France will remain "militarily engaged" in the Middle East through 2019 despite the announced US withdrawal from the coalition fighting Islamic State jihadists in Syria, President Emmanuel Macron said Thursday.

"The retreat from Syria announced by our American friend cannot make us deviate from our strategic objective: eradicating Daesh," the president said in a speech at an army base near Toulouse, southern France, using the Arabic acronym for the IS group.

The French military has deployed 1,200 soldiers as part of the anti-IS efforts, via air operations, artillery, special forces in Syria and training for the Iraqi army.

"The fight is not over," Macron said, adding that in the coming months "we shall re-

visit our global military deployment" but "we shall remain committed to participating in stabilisation" in the Middle East region.

"Any rush to withdraw would be a mistake," he added.

Macron also expressed his condolences for "our four American friends killed on Syrian soil" on Wednesday in a bombing claimed by the Islamic State group.

Trump claimed IS had been eliminated in Syria to justify the US troop pullout, but the jihadists still hold small pockets of land in the Euphrates River Valley, and thousands of fighters are thought to remain in Syria.

Analysts also say the US troop pullout will leave thousands of Kurdish fighters in northern Syria -- who the Pentagon spent years training and arming against IS -- vulnerable to attack by Turkey, which consid-

ers Kurdish groups a terrorist threat.

Macron had already criticised US President Donald Trump for saying in late December that he would soon start to withdraw the 2,000 US soldiers deployed in Syria.

A few days after Trump's announcement Macron said "I deeply regret the decision," saying that "an ally must be reliable."

Macron has persisted in trying to develop a "special relationship" with the billionaire tycoon despite widely differing political beliefs and styles, and the two had seemed to share a camaraderie in the early days of their respective presidencies.

But differences over policy -- in particular the Paris climate accords which Trump opposed -- have become increasingly hard to paper over and tensions in their relationship have become more apparent.

Russia detains model claiming Trump secrets

Moscow, Russia

Russia on Thursday detained a Belarusian model who claimed she had evidence of Russian efforts to help Donald Trump win office, witnesses told AFP.

Anastasia Vashukevich, known by her pen-name Nastya Rybka, was held for questioning at a Moscow airport on Thursday evening after she was deported from Thailand as part of a group convicted of participating in a "sex training course," other passengers on the flight said.

Russian authorities detained her and several others including Alex Kirillov, a self-styled Russian seduction guru, witnesses said.



Detained Belarusian model Anastasia Vashukevich

Plain-clothes officials led away four of the group including Vashukevich and Kirillov, a woman who gave her name as Kristina said after emerging at Sheremetyevo airport arrivals.

UK's Prince Philip 'shocked and shaken' after car crash

Prince Philip's car was overturned on the side of the road (The Mega Agency)

London, United Kingdom

Queen Elizabeth II's 97-year-old husband Prince Philip was "very shocked and shaken" after being involved in a car accident that left his Land Rover flipped on its side, a witness reportedly said.

The duke emerged unharmed but two people in another car were injured in the crash that occurred Thursday when the duke was driving near the Sandringham Estate, according to police and Buckingham Palace.

Norfolk Police said two women -- the driver and passenger of a Kia -- required

hospital treatment but were later discharged. It would not confirm reports that a baby was also in the car.

The BBC reported that Prince Philip's vehicle turned on its side after pulling out of a Sandringham driveway onto a main road and colliding with the Kia.

Witness Roy Warne, 75, told The Sun newspaper that the Prince was pulled from the wreckage "conscious" but "very shocked and shaken".

"I saw the car flip," he said, adding that he rushed to help free the driver before he "suddenly realised it was Prince Philip".

More asteroids strike Earth since age of dinosaurs: study

Tampa, United States

Between two and three times as many asteroids have struck the Earth and the Moon since the age of the dinosaurs, when one massive space rock collision wiped them out forever, researchers said Thursday.

The mounting pace began around 290 million years ago, and likely coincides with some kind of large cosmic smashup in the main asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, researchers reported in the US journal Science.

The result was space debris, some of which made its way to the Earth and the Moon, leading to a rate of asteroid impacts 2.6

times higher than it was prior to 290 million years ago.

"These impacts send a shower of space rocks to the Earth, which will likely reach a peak and then decay with time," co-author Tom Gernon, associate professor in Earth science at the University of Southampton, told AFP.

The study did not draw any direct lines between the ramp up in asteroid strikes and major life-changing events in Earth's ancient past.

These include the Permian extinction some 252 million years ago, when up to 90 percent of life on Earth was wiped out for mysterious reasons.

A massive asteroid is largely blamed for the demise of the dinosaurs, which came into existence about 245 million years ago and disappeared 65 million years ago.

"The question is whether the predicted change in asteroid impacts can be directly linked to events that occurred long ago on Earth," said co-author Rebecca Ghent, an associate professor at the University of Toronto's Department of Earth Sciences.

"Though the forces driving these events are complicated and may include other geologic causes, such as large volcanic

eruptions, combined with biological factors, asteroid impacts have surely played a role in this ongoing saga."

Cause for concern?

More research is also needed to figure out how the pace of asteroid impacts has changed over the past 290 million years or so.

So should people be concerned?

"Not at all," Gernon said, noting that asteroid impacts are random events.





The Lausanne Cathedral

Marco Carrara, a replacement watchman, poses for a picture on the Lausanne Cathedral bell tower

Making history come alive!

After 600 years, night watchman still keeps vigil over Lausanne

Every evening, the night watchman clambers to the top of the Lausanne cathedral bell tower and gets to work: he shouts out the time each hour, keeping a six-century-old tradition alive. The night watchman, one of the last in Europe, no longer alerts this Swiss city to fires, but he does help the residents to keep track of the time.

AFP | Lausanne, Switzerland

Every evening, the night watchman clambers to the top of the Lausanne cathedral bell tower and gets to work: he shouts out the time each hour, keeping a six-century-old tradition alive.

The night watchman, one of the last in Europe, no longer alerts this Swiss city to fires, but he does help residents to keep track of the time.

"This is the watchman! The bell has tolled 10. The bell has tolled 10."

On a cold night in December, Marco Carrara, who takes on the job on the permanent watchman's days off, repeats the message hourly, only changing the number of chimes that have rung.

Cupping his hands around his mouth, he allows his voice to carry across the rooftops, just as his predecessors have done every evening since 1405.

All year round, from 10:00 pm to 2:00 am, the night watchman, wearing a big black hat and carry-

ing a lantern, steps out to the bell tower railing to serve as a living clock for the people of this picturesque city on the shores of Lake Geneva.

Changing times

The night watchman used to play a far more vital role.

Back when fire constituted a permanent threat to medieval towns and cities built in wood, he was an essential part of a network of watchmen, most of whom patrolled the streets.

From his perch, the cathedral watchman was tasked with sounding the alarm at the first whiff of smoke.

Across Europe, there were "thousands, if not tens of thousands" of watchmen protecting urban spaces from fire, said Renato Haeusler, who holds the permanent watchman position in Lausanne.

But as technology advanced, the once ubiquitous position became largely obsolete and the watchmen all but disappeared across the continent.

Today, Lausanne is one of just seven European towns or cities to have

maintained the tradition of a year-round watchman, alongside Annaberg, Celle and Norderlingen in Germany, Ripon in Britain, Krakow in Poland and Ystad in Sweden.

In Lausanne, the watchman used to be entrusted with manually ringing the bell on the hour, but in 1950, the task fell to automation.

No longer a practical purpose

Haeusler acknowledged that his position no longer served a true practical purpose.

But "the city is very attached to maintaining this tradition," stressed the 60-year-old, who served as replacement watchman for 14 years before taking on the permanent position in 2002.

David Payot, a member of Lausanne's municipal council, agreed.

"This is a way of making history come alive," he said.

In the early 1960s, an announcement that the night watchman's hours would

be reduced -- he used to call out the time from 9:00 pm until dawn -- was interpreted by many

as a precursor to scrapping the post altogether.

The city was flooded with letters demanding that it maintain the job, Payot said.

Haeusler meanwhile says he likes the "out-of-sync" nature of his work -- a profession serving little purpose at a time when today's reality demands that everything be "profitable and efficient."

'Nobility'

Haeusler climbs the 153 worn stone steps to the top of the bell tower to announce the time about four evenings a week, for a salary he says is "well below" the going rate for nighttime work.

But he has a second job too, lighting events and soirees in the region using wax candles. He sometimes spends his hours as a watchman dipping a wick into hot wax to make the candles.

On the evenings that he doesn't work, a replacement steps in.

"The evenings can be quiet and quite lonely," Carrara told AFP during one of his shifts last month.

Although sometimes they can be more animated, he

said, such as when "Lausanne residents, people from the region, and even tourists have the possibility to visit the watchman."

"We are both at the heart of the city and outside of it," he said, adding that he had been drawn to the "nobility of this task", which runs "counter to utilitarianism".

Between 600 and 700 people visit the tower during the evening watch each year, according to Haeusler.

'Our roots'

From his viewpoint more than 40 metres (131 feet) above the city, the watchman can observe it change with the seasons.

"In the summer, it is magnificent. Swifts nest in the upper walkway. They are there in the evening, flying around," Haeusler said.

He said he felt privileged to be "the last link in a chain of men (doing this job) dating back to the 15th century."

The watchman's permanent presence provides a kind of landmark for the residents of the city, he said.

"In a completely chaotic world, I think that it is reassuring to have activities continue for a very long time, becoming traditions, and allowing us to rediscover a few of our roots."

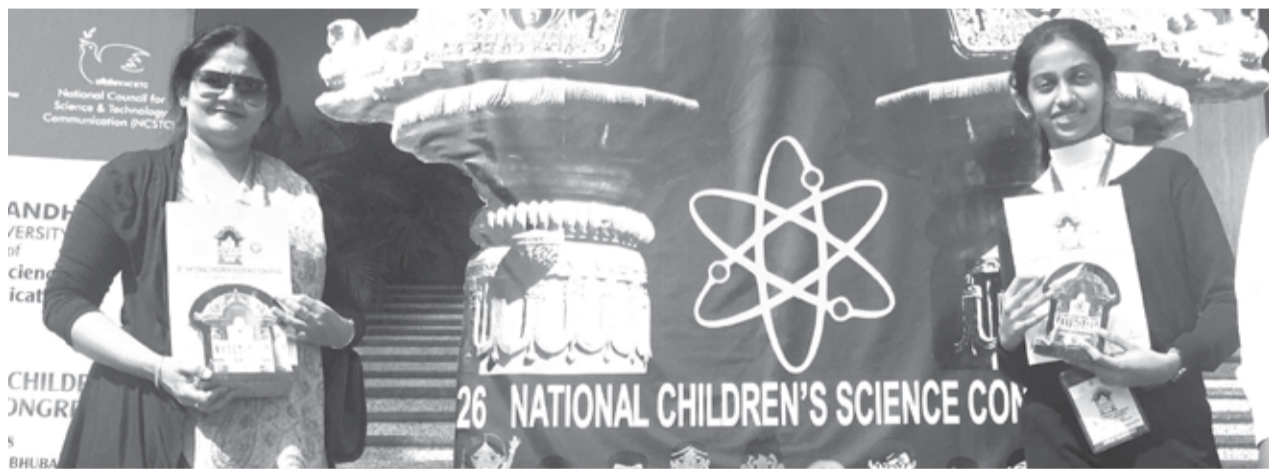


Marco Carrara, a replacement watchman, holds a lantern as he looks out from the Lausanne Cathedral bell tower

SOCI



Rotary Club of Sulmaniya held a regular lunch meeting at the Golden Tulip Hotel. Guest speaker was Central Bank of Bahrain Governor Rasheed Al Maraj who opened the floor to a Q & A discussion.



The New Millennium School, DPS Bahrain, made a mark at the recently concluded National Children's Science Congress (NCSC) held in Bhubaneswar, India, with two student scientists, Anushka G. Bharaswadkar and K L Meghana, walking away with top honours. The project, "Plastic to Paper" represented by team leader Anushka G Bharaswadkar, bagged first position in Bahrain Science Innovation Congress (BSIC) and represented Bahrain Chapter at the National level contest held in Shiksha Anusandhan (Deemed University, Orissa). School Chairman Dr Ravi Pillai, Managing Director Geetha Pillai and Principal Arun Kumar Sharma congratulated the winners.

The Arabian Gulf University (AGU) recently hosted selected academics such as Fadhil Ghufuran Jassim and Dr Reem Al Dossary from...



Air Passengers Rights Protection Council representatives met Air India Country Manager Saket Saran and Sales Manager Narayana Menon at Air India Head office in Manama. The possibility of reinstating Air India Express service to Trivandrum was discussed. Country Manager said Air India Express flight to Kannur airport will be approved soon. Council Advisor K T Salim, general convener Aji Bhasi, treasurer Sunil Thomas Ranny and coordinator Badrudeen Poover attended the meeting with Air India officials.



The Indian School Bahrain (ISB) celebrated... Mohammed Nayaz Ullah, Principal V R Palani...



The Ground Breaking Ceremony for the Ibn Khuldoon National School (IKNS) project took place at its Isa Town Campus. The expansion involves construction of IKNS's new kindergarten and elementary school blocks with associated facilities. School Chairman Farouk Almoayyed, Project Consultant MSCEB Chairman Mohamed Salahuddin, Managing Director Thamer Salahuddin and Contractor, Poullaides Construction Co Chairman and Managing Director Christos Poullaides attended.



launched the first Scientific Saloon; a forum organised by the College of Graduate Studies in cooperation with the Community Service, Consultations, Training and Continuous Education Centre of the university. Titled "Digital Medicine...Future Doctor", the Family and Community Medicine Department Head in AGU Prof. Afif Salah, Medical Sciences College Head in the University of Bahrain Dr. Sayed-Mahmood Al Qallaf, Assistant Professor in Family Medicine in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland-Bahrain Dr. in the Graduate Studies and Scientific Research College in Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University.



Wishwa Hindi Divas 2019 at the school's Jashanmal Auditorium. The programme held under the Hindi Department was inaugurated by Chief Guest Lions Club of Riffa President Sanjay Gupta in the presence of ISB EC members Mohammad Khursheed Alam, Biswamy, Staff Representative Johnson K Devassy and Vice Principals. Hindi Department HoD Baboo Khan welcomed the gathering.

business

Canada ended 2018 with 2 pct inflation: official data

Ottawa, Canada

Canadians paid 2.0 per cent more for goods and services in December than a year earlier, the government statistical agency said yesterday.

The figure closing out 2018 was slightly higher than economists had forecast, after a 1.7pc average price hike the previous month.

Statistics Canada noted higher prices in December for airfares during the holiday season, travel tours, telephone services, restaurant meals, fresh vegetables, and passenger vehicle insurance.

Mortgage interest costs also rose in the month.

These bigger outlays, however, were partially offset by crude oil prices that continued to fall amid a global supply glut, pushing down gasoline prices.

Natural gas prices also dropped, as did the cost of furniture and digital computing equipment.

Ghosh received 8m euro in 'improper' payments: Nissan

Tokyo, Japan

Former Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn received nearly eight million euros in "improper payments" from a Netherlands-based joint venture, the Japanese car giant alleged yesterday, threatening to sue to recover the funds. Nissan said Ghosn entered into a personal employment contract with Nissan-Mitsubishi B.V. (NMBV), a company formed "with the mission of exploring and promoting synergies within the Nissan-Mitsubishi Motors partnership." "Under that contract, he received a total of 7,822,206.12 euros (including tax) in compensation and other payments of NMBV funds," Nissan said, citing an ongoing investigation into alleged wrongdoing by Ghosn.

India's richest man to battle Amazon, Walmart in e-com



Jio and Reliance Retail will launch a unique new commerce platform to empower and enrich our 12 lakh (1.2 million) small retailers and shopkeepers in Gujarat

AMBANI TOLD A SUMMIT ATTENDED BY PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

● The venture in the western state of Gujarat

● India's e-commerce sales are expected to triple between now and 2022

AFP | Mumbai, India

Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani announced details of a new online shopping platform yesterday that will see his oil-to-telecoms conglomerate take on Amazon and Walmart in India's burgeoning e-commerce market.

Ambani, the chairman of Reliance Industries, said the company's telecoms and consumer businesses planned to roll out the venture in the western state of Gujarat before expanding across India.

Ambani, 61, has been drip-feeding his e-commerce plans for India over the past few months in announcements that are no doubt being keenly watched by US giants Amazon and Walmart.

Reliance shook up India's telecoms market in September 2016 when it launched its 4G Jio network with free voice calls for life and vastly cheaper data.

The launch sent the profits of other mobile players spiralling downwards and sparked consolidation across the industry as rivals scrambled to match Reliance's deep pockets.

Amazon and leading Indian e-tailer Flipkart, which was bought by Walmart for \$16 billion last year, have been expanding aggressively to gain a bigger slice of India's growing online customers.

They have incurred huge losses along the way, however, and analysts say that Reliance's entry into the e-commerce sphere will make their jobs even harder.

India's e-commerce sales are expected to triple between now and 2022, when they are likely to pass the \$100 billion mark, according to recent research by industry body NASSCOM and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The rise is being fuelled by greater smartphone penetration, in part thanks to Jio, and a rising middle class with more disposable income.

US officials consider lifting China tariffs

Washington, United States

US officials have considered lifting tariffs on Chinese imports to calm volatile stock markets and encourage Beijing to make concessions in current trade talks, *The Wall Street Journal* reported Thursday.

American and Chinese trade officials have until March 1 to resolve their trade war, to prevent a sharp increase in punitive US duties on \$200 billion in Chinese goods.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin raised the idea of revoking tariffs on some or all of the \$250 billion in Chinese goods impacted, during discussions on the strategy for the current talks but the question has not yet reached the White House, according to *The Journal*.

The US stock market reacted favorably to the report, with equities prices closing higher after being flat for most of the day.

The talks with Beijing are being led by US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who has taken a more hard line position on trade than Mnuchin.

The Treasury Department



US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin (file)

told AFP on that the trade talks with China were "nowhere near completion."

"Neither Secretary Mnuchin nor Ambassador Lighthizer have made any recommendations to anyone with respect to tariffs or other parts of the negotiation with China," a spokesperson working with the trade team said by email.

CNBC quoted a senior White House official involved in the trade talks saying that Trump had no incentive to offer concessions, and officials instead were focused on preparations

for talks with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He set for January 30-31 in Washington.

US President Donald Trump tweeted January 8 that the talks with Beijing were "going very well!"

But the trade war has rattled stock markets in the months since, putting pressure on the White House to reach a resolution.

Trump launched the trade war last year and the two sides have since exchanged tit-for-tat tariffs on more than \$360 billion in two-way trade.

China, Germany to boost financial sector cooperation

Beijing, China

China and Germany yesterday signed a series of agreements to strengthen cooperation in banking and financial sector supervision, as Beijing moves to open up the country's financial markets.

The agreements were signed at the end of a two day visit by German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz to Beijing for talks with Vice Premier Liu He, China's top economic official.

"German insurers and banks will now have easier access

to the Chinese market," said Scholz at the conclusion of the talks. "This is an important step that we have been waiting for a long time."

But Scholz also urged equal treatment for foreign companies operating in China -- a long-running complaint from the European Union and a central issue in Beijing's trade war with the United States.

"We need rules of the game that work well, and reciprocity is the key to achieving this, and that means that Chinese companies in Germany and German

companies in China are treated the same," he said.

The talks at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing also focused on allowing German financial institutions to underwrite "Panda bonds" -- yuan denominated bonds issued by non-Chinese issuers.

"China welcomes more qualified German institutions to join the yuan cross-border payment system and more qualified German banks to participate in the opening and innovation of China's financial markets," Liu said.



Gulf Hotel Bahrain celebrated its 50th Anniversary on Wednesday in the presence of Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism Zayed R. Alzayani, Gulf Hotels Group Chairman Farouk Yousuf Almoayyed and other board members. Above, highlights of the event

Will they or won't they?

Deutsche and Commerzbank: a marriage of (in)convenience?

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

If Germany is to become home to a global banking giant, as Berlin wants, then troubled Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank may be headed down the aisle -- but observers say it is hardly a match made in heaven.

The share prices of Germany's two largest banks briefly soared Wednesday on media reports that the finance ministry was scrutinising a possible tie-up.

The lenders, both grappling with painful restructurings after years of falling profits, have long been the subject of merger rumours.

In August, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, who has repeatedly called for a German banking champion, said it was "a problem" that the country's big banks had fallen behind their rivals on the global stage.

Speculation about their future intensified again after the finance ministry revealed it held 23 meetings or telephone talks with Deutsche Bank officials between May and December last year to discuss "strategic options".

The German government -- which still holds a 15-per cent stake in Commerzbank after bailing it out during the financial crisis -- "is open to economically sensible options," the ministry wrote in a letter responding to a parliamentary question from the Greens party.

A Frankfurt banking source with close ties to the public sector, said that Berlin clearly wanted to avoid the banks, whose low valuations have made them takeover targets, "falling into the hands of a foreign player".

'On crutches'

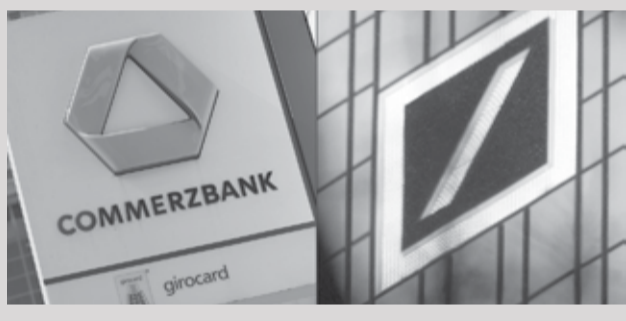
Once mighty Deutsche Bank, weighed down by costly legal woes and an underperforming investment bank, has seen its stock plummet over the years, recently hitting lows of less than seven euros per share.

Commerzbank, in the throes of a digitalisation drive and a costly bid to win new retail banking clients, tumbled out of Germany's prestigious DAX 30 index in September. Its share price has at times fallen below



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Finance Minister and Vice-Chancellor Olaf Scholz (L) take their seats prior the start of the weekly cabinet meeting at the Chancellery in Berlin

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six euros.

If the pair did tie the knot, it would create a banking behemoth with some 2.0 trillion euros in assets, on a par with France's largest bank BNP Paribas.

Their joint customer base could in theory allow the combined group to become a significant retail banking player in Germany while giving it a springboard internationally, building on Deutsche's corporate and asset management units.

But the long-mooted union does not have everyone's blessing.

German banking regulator Bafin, while not seeing any fun-

damental hurdles to a merger, is understood to favour either maintaining the status quo or a tie-up with a non-German bank.

The watchdog believes that Deutsche and Commerzbank's current weaknesses, in terms of performance and capital buffers, would prevent them from reaping the full benefits of a merger, sources said.

"Putting two guys on crutches together doesn't make a sprinter," quipped Markus Kienle of SdK, an association representing small retail shareholders.

European solution

The European Central Bank meanwhile has signalled it

would prefer a European solution to the German banks' woes.

More cross-border consolidation would "help get the banking sector back in shape", the ECB's then-top banking supervisor Daniele Nouy said last year.

"It would also put European banks in a better position to serve large European companies and to compete successfully with other global financial actors," she added.

Deutsche and Commerzbank executives themselves have so far rubbished suggestions that wedding bells are in the air.

A merger is "neither necessary nor relevant" right now, even if things "could change in a year or two", said a source representing a large Deutsche Bank shareholder.

Any potential tie-up would have to overcome a slew of hurdles. From the headache of marrying the two firms' IT systems to dealing with unions and cultural differences between the lenders, and the potential market challenges of recapitalising a giant with feet of clay.

Combining the banks would be a Herculean task that would take time -- "which these banks don't have in a sector in the throes of transformation", said Independent Research analyst Markus Riesselmann.



Singapore picks US F-35 fighter jet over Europe, China rivals

Singapore, Singapore

Singapore has chosen the F-35 warplane to replace its ageing fighter jets, opting for the US aircraft over European and Chinese models, the defence ministry said yesterday.

The affluent city-state, which has one of Asia's best equipped militaries, had earlier said it was evaluating Lockheed Martin's F-35 along with Europe's Eurofighter Typhoon and Chinese-made stealth warplanes.

"The F-16s will have to retire soon after 2030 and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter has been identified as the most suitable replacement to maintain the RSAF's (Republic of Singapore Air Force) capabilities," the ministry of defence said in a statement.

The ministry said the air force should first buy "a small number" of F-35s "for a full evaluation of their capabilities and suitability before deciding on a full fleet".

Australia, Japan and South

Korea are among countries in Asia-Pacific that have already acquired F-35s.

It took Singapore more than five years to make a decision on which planes to buy as they had to look carefully at specifications and what was needed, said Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen in a Facebook post.

"Our agencies will now have to speak to their US counterparts to move the process forward," Ng said, adding it could be up to a year before any planes are purchased.

The F-16s are due to be taken out of service in around 10 years' time, meaning it was time to acquire their replacement and begin training pilots, he said.

The F-35 is a supersonic plane whose advanced stealth characteristic allow pilots to avoid detection by radars, according to Lockheed Martin.

Its advanced electronic warfare capabilities enable F-35 pilots to locate and track enemy forces, jam radars and disrupt attacks.

Malaysia says Goldman apology not enough, wants \$7.5 billion

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Malaysia's finance minister said yesterday an apology from Goldman Sachs for its role in the 1MDB scandal was not enough, and demanded the Wall Street giant pay \$7.5 billion compensation.

Huge sums were purportedly looted from Malaysian government fund 1MDB and used to buy everything from yachts to real estate, in a fraud that allegedly involved former leader Najib Razak and contributed to his defeat at May elections.

Goldman's role has come under scrutiny as it helped arrange \$6.5 billion in bonds for the investment vehicle, and Malaysia has accused the bank and its former employees of stealing large amounts.

Goldman's chief executive David Solomon earlier this week apologised for the role of a former partner at the bank, Tim Leissner, who has pleaded guilty in the US to bribery and money-laundering charges linked to the scandal.

But Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng said "an apology is not enough".

"Apologise with \$7.5 billion," he was cited as saying by official news agency Bernama, reiterating a demand he first made last month that Goldman pay the sum to make amends for its role in the controversy.

"Goldman should understand the trauma suffered by the Malaysian people resulting from the 1MDB scandal," he added.

Renault posts record sales as Ghosn successor sought

Paris, France

French carmaker Renault, which is seeking a replacement for CEO Carlos Ghosn who is in custody in Japan, on Friday announced record sales of 3.9 million vehicles in 2018.

Renault, which is expected to soon call a board meeting to choose a successor to former auto titan Ghosn, sold 3,884,295 vehicles last year, a 3.2 per cent increase over 2017, putting it ahead of French rival PSA Peugeot Citroen.

Sales were driven higher by demand for its low-cost models, including two light utility vehicles manufactured in a joint venture with China's Brilliance, which offset the effect of its pullout from Iran and a slump in the Turkish market.

The company, said it was aim-



A Renault Alpine (R) is displayed on the Place de la Concorde in Paris

ing for "slight" growth in sales in 2019, "with an acceleration in the second half of the year" thanks to the launch of new models, including a new version of its flagship runaround, the Clio.

Sales of electric vehicles, where Renault is leader in Europe, were up 36.6pc over the year to over 49,600 units while sales of light commercial vehicles rose 33.7pc.

The Renault group includes

the low-cost models Dacia and Lada as well as Samsung Motors, Alpine and the Chinese brands Jinbei and Huasong.

Last year marked a sixth straight year of increasing sales for the group, which is part of a powerful alliance with Japan's Nissan and Mitsubishi that Ghosn headed before his arrest in Tokyo in November on charges of financial misconduct.

Within days of being taken into custody he was fired as chairman of Nissan and Mitsubishi but Renault kept him on at chief executive while waiting to see how the case would unfold.

The carmaker said it's now "actively working to find the best solution for the future governance", a day after the French govt, which owns 15pc of its shares called for a board meeting to pick Ghosn's successor.

UK retail sales drop in December

London, United Kingdom

British retail sales fell in December as consumers held onto their cash after snapping up discounted Christmas gifts the previous month, official data showed yesterday.

Total sales slid 0.9 per cent compared to November, the Office for National Statistics calculated, with all sectors except food and fuel in decline.

That was slightly worse than analysts' consensus forecast for a 0.8pc drop. Sales had rebounded 1.3pc in November as shoppers brought forward Christmas spending to bag



Representative picture

Black Friday bargains.

Recent data from the GfK institute showed that consumer confidence in Britain fell to its lowest level in five years in December, as the purchasing power of wages was eroded by Brexit-fuelled inflation.

EU sets out plans for 'limited' US trade deal

Brussels, Belgium

The EU yesterday published its negotiating plans for a free trade deal with the United States, part of an effort to avert a trade war with US President Donald Trump.

Negotiating a trade deal was included in a transatlantic truce secured last year after the US slapped tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from the EU, alarming the world.

The effort is also part of an effort to stop Trump from slapping tariffs on European car imports, a danger that has especially unnerved export powerhouse Germany.

The 17-page mandate submitted by the US also included other demands and charges that are unacceptable for the EU, including that Europe stop manipulating foreign exchange rates.

Tesla to cut 7pc of workforce

New York, United States

Elon Musk's electric car manufacturer Tesla announced Friday it is cutting its workforce by about seven percent in a push to keep its Model 3 affordable for middle-income consumers. Shares fell sharply following the announcement, which also signaled a tough profit road ahead for Tesla.

The round of job cuts -- which follow an earlier downsizing announced in June -- comes as the envelope-pushing company faces pressure in its home market on prices from the phasing-out of a tax credit for electric car purchases.

Markets surge on China-US trade breakthrough hopes

London, United Kingdom

Stock markets across the globe powered higher Friday, buoyed by hopes of a breakthrough in the US-China trade war.

European and Asian indices bounced back strongly after the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported that the US was considering lifting tariffs on China as officials look to hammer out a trade deal.

At the opening bell in New York the Dow Jones was also up, having already gained on Thursday on the report which helped the market recover from a wobble triggered by news that the US was carrying out a criminal probe into Chinese tech giant Huawei.

"Global markets are enjoying an overwhelmingly bullish end to the week, with hopes of a potential breakthrough in US-China trade talks helping drive optimism throughout both Asia and now Europe," said Joshua Mahony, senior market analyst at traders IG.

The WSJ reported that US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had raised the idea with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer of removing some or all levies on Beijing in return for structural reforms.

It said the move was part of a bid to reassure markets and bolster the odds of a bigger trade deal, ending a months-long saga that is beginning to impact economies around the world, particularly China.

'Glass half full'

However, the Treasury Department said that no formal recommendation had been made by either Mnuchin or Lighthizer in the talks, which were "nowhere near completion".

"The US government has said



Traders work on the floor at the closing bell of the Dow Industrial Average at the New York Stock Exchange

Key figures around 1440 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	▲ 1.9pc at 6,967.34 points
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▲ 2.2pc at 11,159.57
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ 1.7pc at 4,876.14
EURO STOXX 50:	▲ 1.9pc at 3,128.38
New York - DOW:	▲ 0.7pc at 24,536.09
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 1.3pc at 20,666.07 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▲ 1.3pc at 27,090.81 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 1.4pc at 2,596.01 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.1384 from \$1.1391 at 2130 GMT
Euro/pound:	▲ at 88.17 pence from 87.70 pence
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.2912 from \$1.2937
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 109.50 yen from 109.19
Oil - Brent Crude:	▲ 70 cents at \$61.88 per barrel

that there have been no formal talks to scale back tariffs, but the market saw the half glass full as the reports signal that concessions are in the works," said Alfonso Esparza, senior market analyst at OANDA.

However, there was scepticism among some analysts,

with the two sides still far apart on a number of issues, particularly regarding intellectual property.

On currency markets the pound edged lower, giving up earlier gains seen as dealers bet that Britain would not leave the European Union without a deal.

After her grand Brexit plan was soundly rebuffed by MPs this week, British Prime Minister Theresa May has called cross-party talks to put together a "Plan B" by Monday.

If that does not work, there is a growing expectation that the March 29 exit deadline will be pushed back to give May more time to reach another deal or possibly call another referendum.

Oil prices meanwhile rose on the China-US tariffs report and after OPEC said it had cut output in December before a new agreement to limit supply took effect.

Both main contracts are up around a fifth since the end of December, thanks to an agreement to cut output by OPEC and other key producers including Russia.

That followed almost three months of losses that wiped around 40 per cent off prices amid concerns supply was running ahead of demand.

Saudis cut, Russians hiked output ahead of pact: IEA

Paris, France

Saudi Arabia demonstrated its resolve to lift oil prices by slashing output ahead of the entry into force of new pact limiting production while Russia boosted output to a record level, the International Energy Agency said yesterday.

In its latest monthly report, the Paris-based International Energy Agency said the Saudis took the lead by cutting output in December as prices tumbled by more than a third in just two months.

"Recently, leading producers have restated their commitment to cut output and data show that words were transformed into actions," said the IEA.

The IEA said data show that Russia increased crude oil production in December "to a new record near 11.5 mbd (million barrels per day) and it is unclear when it will cut and by how much."

The IEA said the United States increased output by 2.1 mbd last year, the "highest ever" annual growth ever recorded.

The IEA left its estimate for global oil growth in 2019 unchanged at an increase of 1.4 mbd, saying "the impact of higher oil prices in 2018 is fading, which will help offset lower economic growth."



Representative picture

Trump grounds speaker, scraps Davos trip amid shutdown

Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump forced the cancellation Thursday of a trip to Afghanistan by his Democratic opponent Nancy Pelosi, and scrapped administration officials' travel to the Davos forum as a government shutdown plunged Washington deeper into deadlock.

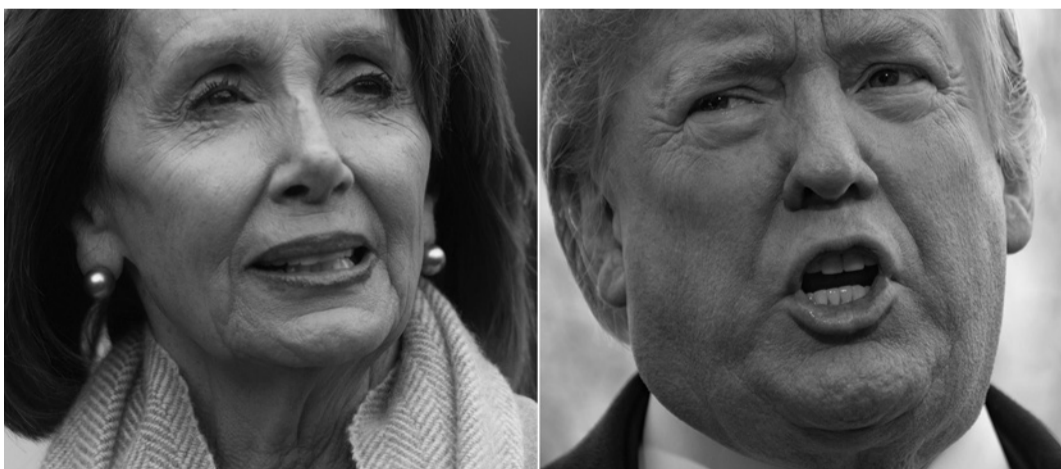
The mess in the US capital already verged on the surreal as Congress feuds with the White House over how to end an impasse now in its fourth week, with thousands of federal workers left unpaid.

But now it is also getting increasingly personal between the two main antagonists.

In a letter laced with sarcasm, Trump told House Speaker Pelosi: "I am sorry to inform you that your trip to Brussels, Egypt, and Afghanistan has been postponed. We will reschedule this seven-day excursion when the Shutdown is over."

"I am sure you would agree that postponing this public relations event is appropriate," he wrote.

And in a move that appeared



US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi following a meeting with US President Donald Trump about the partial government shutdown at the White House in Washington, DC, and US President Donald Trump speaking to the media as he departs the White House in Washington, DC

aimed at heading off Democratic criticism about non-essential administration travel during the shutdown, the White House announced the cancellation of a trip to the World Economic Forum by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and others "out of consideration for the 800,000 great American workers not receiving pay."

Pelosi and her delegation had

planned a non-publicized trip to Afghanistan -- an active war zone -- and were due to travel aboard a US Air Force plane. Her office said Egypt was not on the itinerary.

According to a congressional aide, several lawmakers were already loaded onto buses preparing to leave the US Capitol Thursday when Trump pulled the plug.

Rubbing it in, Trump said that Pelosi could still book her own non-government flights.

"Obviously, if you would like to make your journey by flying commercial, that would certainly be your prerogative," he wrote.

The cancellation followed Pelosi's suggestion that Trump postpone his January 29 State of the Union address to Congress, or do it from the White House

"I am sorry to inform you that your trip to Brussels, Egypt, and Afghanistan has been postponed. We will reschedule this seven-day excursion when the Shutdown is over"

DONALD TRUMP TO NANCY PELOSI

instead.

Although she cited the shutdown's effect on security, she appeared to want to deny the president one of his chief annual moments in the limelight.

The White House denied that the travel blockage was payback, but few bought the argument.

'Sophomoric'

House Democrats who had been slated for the trip were left fuming, including freshman con-

gresswoman Elaine Luria, a 20-year Navy veteran who said the purpose was to express appreciation to Americans in uniform and gain critical intelligence on the ground.

"Oversight is the responsibility of Congress, and it is inappropriate for the President to interfere with our constitutional duties," Luria said in a statement.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, who for weeks has served as a referee of sorts between Trump and Pelosi, accused the latter of "playing politics with the State of the Union."

But he also hit out at Trump, saying "denying Speaker Pelosi military travel to visit our troops in Afghanistan, our allies in Egypt and NATO is also inappropriate."

"One sophomoric response does not deserve another," Graham said. The government shutdown is due to Trump's refusal to sign off on funding for a host of departments, in retaliation for the Democratic-led House's refusal to approve his US-Mexico border wall project.

SHOW

OASIS JUFFAIR

1-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM
DAILY AT (VIP): 2.30 + 7.45 PM

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

Ⓢ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM
DAILY AT (VIP): 12.00 + 5.15 + 10.30 PM

3-MIKHAEL () (MALAYALAM) NEW

Ⓢ NIVIN PAULY, UNNI MUKAUDAN, MANJIMA MOHAN

FROM FRIDAY 18TH: 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM

4-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW

Ⓢ CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 11.30 AM + 4.00 + 8.30 PM

5-SIMMBA (PG-15) (HINDI/ACTION/COMEDY/DRAMA/ROMANTIC)

Ⓢ RANVEER SINGH, AJAY DEVGN, SARA ALI KHAN

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

6-SPIDER MAN INTO THE SPIDER VERSE (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ HAILEE STEINFELD, NICOLAS CAGE, MAHERSHALA ALI

DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 1.45 + 6.15 + 10.45 PM

7-URI: THE SURGICAL STRIKE (15+) (HINDI/ACTION/DRAMA)

Ⓢ VICKY KAUSHAL, KIRTI KULHARI, PARESH RAWAL

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 3.30 + 8.30 PM

8-THE ACCIDENTAL PRIME MINISTER (PG) (HINDI/DRAMA/BIOGRAPHY)

Ⓢ ANUPAM KHER, AAHANA KUMRA, ABDUL QUADIR AMIN

DAILY AT: 1.15 + 6.15 + 11.15 PM

9-PETTA (PG-15) (TAMIL/ACTION/THRILLER)

Ⓢ RAJINIKANTH, VIJAY SETHUPATHI, SIMRAN, TRISHA

DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.45 + 7.00 + 10.15 PM

10-VISWASAM (PG-15) (TAMIL)

Ⓢ AJITH KUMAR, NAYANTHARA

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

11-VINAYA VIDHEYA RAMA (PG-15) (TELUGU)

Ⓢ KIARA ADVANI, RAM CHARAN AND VIVEK OBEROI

DAILY AT: 11.30 + 5.15 + 11.00 PM

12-JOSEPH (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

Ⓢ JOJU GEORGE, MALAVIKA MENON, JAMES ELIYA

DAILY AT: 2.30 + 8.15 PM

CITYCENTRE

1-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

DAILY AT (IMAX 2D): 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM

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

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

Ⓢ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 PM + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

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

3-ALL THE DEVIL'S MEN (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ WILLIAM FICHTNER, SYLVIA HOEKS, ELLIOT COWAN

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

4-SA'AT REDA (PG-15) (ARABIC/COMEDY) NEW

Ⓢ HALA FAKHER, AHMED FATHY, DINA FOUAD

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

5-MAHARAJA (PG-13) (ARABIC/COMEDY) NEW



Ⓢ ZIAD BOURJI, DALIDA KHALIL, JULIA KASSAR

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 4.00 + 9.15 PM

6-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT (ATMOS): 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 PM + 12.00 MN

7-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

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

DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 PM

8-THE MULE (PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER)

Ⓢ CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

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

9-BACKTRACE (PG-15) (CRIME/ACTION/THRILLER)

Ⓢ SYLVESTER STALLONE, RYAN GUZMAN, MATTHEW MODINE

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

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

Ⓢ ROWAN ATKINSON, OLGA KURYLENKO, EMMA THOMPSON

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

11-MARY POPPINS RETURNS (G) (ADVENTURE/MUSICAL/FAMILY)

Ⓢ EMILY BLUNT, LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, BEN WHISHAW

DAILY AT: 1.15 + 6.30 + 11.45 PM

12-RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)

Ⓢ JOHN C. REILLY, SARAH SILVARMAN, GAL GADOT

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

13-SPIDER MAN INTO THE SPIDER VERSE (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ HAILEE STEINFELD, NICOLAS CAGE, MAHERSHALA ALI

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

14-BUMBLEBEE (PG-13) (ACTION /ADVENTURE/SCI-FICTION)

Ⓢ HAILEE STEINFELD, JOHN CENA, JORGE LENDEBERG JR.

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

15- EL BADLAH (PG-13) (ARABIC/COMEDY)

Ⓢ TAMER HOSNY, AKRAM HOSNI, MAJED EL MASRY, AMINA KHALIL

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 + 5.00 + 7.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

16-HUNTER KILLER (PG-15) (ACTION/THRILLER)

Ⓢ GERARD BUTLER, GARY OLDMAN, COMMON

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

17-CREED II (PG-13) (DRAMA/ACTION/SPORT)

Ⓢ TESSA THOMPSON, MICHAEL B. JORDAN, SYLVESTER STALLONE

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM

18-ROBIN HOOD (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ TARON EGERTON, EVE HEWSON, JAMIE FOX

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM

SEEF (II)

1-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

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

Ⓢ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)

3-ALL THE DEVIL'S MEN (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ WILLIAM FICHTNER, SYLVIA HOEKS, ELLIOT COWAN

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM

4-SA'AT REDA (PG-15) (ARABIC/COMEDY) NEW

Ⓢ HALA FAKHER, AHMED FATHY, DINA FOUAD

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

5-THE AMITYVILLE MURDER'S (15+) (HORROR) NEW

Ⓢ JOHN ROBINSON (IX), CHELSEA RICKETTS, DIANE FRANKLIN

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 12.45 + 2.45 + 4.45 + 6.45 + 8.45 + 10.45 PM

6-RIDE (PG-15) (THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ BELLA THORNE, JESSIE T. USHER, WILL BRILL

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 3.15 + 7.15 + 11.15 PM

7-WOMAN WALKS AHEAD (15+) (DRAMA/BIOGRAPHY) NEW

Ⓢ JESSICA CHASTAIN, MICHAEL GREYVEYS, CHASKE SPENCER

DAILY AT: 1.45 + 6.30 + 11.15 PM

8-PRAANA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW

Ⓢ NITHYA MENON

FROM FRIDAY 18TH: 10.45 AM + 4.00 + 9.15 PM

9-F2: FUN & FRSTRATION (PG-15) (TELUGU) NEW

Ⓢ TAMANNAH BHATIA, PRAKASH RAJ, VENKATESH DAGGUBATI, VARUN TEJ

DAILY AT: 1.00 + 6.15 + 11.30 PM

10-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM

11-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

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

12-THE MULE (PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER)

Ⓢ CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 4.00 + 8.45 PM

13-BACKTRACE (PG-15) (CRIME/ACTION/THRILLER)

Ⓢ SYLVESTER STALLONE, RYAN GUZMAN, MATTHEW MODINE

DAILY AT: 1.15 + 5.15 + 9.15 PM

14-VISWASAM (PG-15) (TAMIL)

Ⓢ AJITH KUMAR, NAYANTHARA

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

SEEF (I)

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

Ⓢ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN

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

2-CHEAT INDIA (PG-15) (HINDI/DRAMA/CRIME) NEW

Ⓢ EMRAAN HASHMI, AMMAR TAALWALA, SHREYA DHAWANTHARY

DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM

3-FRAUD SAIYAAN (15+) (HINDI/COMEDY) NEW

Ⓢ ARSHAD WARSII, FLORA SAINI, MIHIKA VERMA

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

4-MARY, MARRY ME (PG-15) (FILIPINO/COMEDY/ROMANTIC/DRAMA) NEW

Ⓢ TONI GONZAGA, ALEX GONAZAGA, SAM MILBY

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 + 5.00 + 7.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

5-MIKHAEL () (MALAYALAM) NEW

Ⓢ NIVIN PAULY, UNNI MUKAUDAN, MANJIMA MOHAN

FROM FRIDAY 18TH: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

6-PETTA (PG-15) (TAMIL/ACTION/THRILLER)

Ⓢ RAJINIKANTH, VIJAY SETHUPATHI, SIMRAN, TRISHA

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

SAAR

1-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + (11.15 PM THURS/FRI)

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

Ⓢ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + (11.30 PM THURS/FRI)

3-ALL THE DEVIL'S MEN (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ WILLIAM FICHTNER, SYLVIA HOEKS, ELLIOT COWAN

DAILY AT: 9.15 + (11.30 PM THURS/FRI)

4-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 3.00 + 8.15 PM

5-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)

Ⓢ CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 PM

6-THE MULE (PG-15) (CRIME/DRAMA/THRILLER)

Ⓢ CLINT EASTWOOD, BRADLEY COOPER, TAISSA FARMIGA

DAILY AT: 12.30 + 5.45 + (11.00 PM THURS/FRI)

AL HAMRA

1-MIKHAEL () (MALAYALAM) NEW

Ⓢ NIVIN PAULY, UNNI MUKAUDAN, MANJIMA MOHAN

FROM FRIDAY 18TH: 11.30 AM + 5.45 + (12.00 MN FRI)

2-PETTA (PG-15) (TAMIL/ACTION/THRILLER)

Ⓢ RAJINIKANTH, VIJAY SETHUPATHI, SIMRAN, TRISHA

DAILY AT: 2.30 + 8.45 PM

WADI AL SAIL

1-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER) NEW

Ⓢ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

DAILY AT: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM

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

Ⓢ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN

DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 PM + 12.00 MN

3-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)



Kylie

celebs

Diljit goes gaga over Kylie's photoshopped egg image



Diljit
Los Angeles



51,000,000
is the number of likes received by The egg + Kylie Jenner Instagram post

Singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh was bowled over by the viral egg photograph which has reality TV star Kylie Jenner's face superimposed on it.

As a viral photograph of a brown egg had earlier broken Jenner's record of having the most liked photograph on Instagram, talk show host Elen DeGeneres lent her creativity and photoshopped the egg's photograph by superimposing Kylie's face on it a few days ago.

"According to my calculations, this will be the most liked Instagram post ever. The egg + Kylie Jenner 51,000,000 likes minimum," she captioned the

photograph.

And Ellen's prediction was not wrong because it's been three days only since she has posted the photograph and it has already garnered over 4 million likes.

But it was Diljit's comment on the egg's photograph which grabbed the eyeballs of people.

He praised Ellen for the post and said that her "mind runs faster than the Ferrari car".



Chris, Katherine are living together

Los Angeles

Actor Chris Pratt and girlfriend Katherine Schwarzenegger, daughter of veteran actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, are living in together.

"Since they started dating, Katherine has taken Chris to all of her favourite neighbourhood places. And Chris clearly likes her neighbourhood," said a source, reports

people.com.

Pratt, 39, who used to live in Hollywood Hills with ex-wife Anna Faris, joined his 29-year-old fiancée in west Los Angeles.

In his divorce settlement with Faris, 42, the exes agreed to live no further than five miles apart from each other until their 6-year-old son Jack completed the sixth grade. The Mom actress, who's dating cinematog-

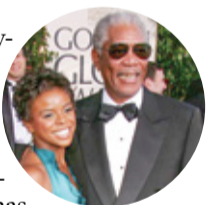
rapher Michael Barrett, also now lives in west Los Angeles. The actor helped Schwarzenegger move out of her home in Santa Monica, California, on Friday. He shared a sweet video of the day on Instagram with the caption, "I love moving!!"

Pratt proposed to Schwarzenegger just under seven months after the two were first spotted together on a Father's Day picnic, here.

Man convicted in the brutal death of Morgan Freeman's granddaughter sentenced

Los Angeles

The boyfriend of Morgan Freeman's late granddaughter has been sentenced to 20 years in state prison for her death.



Lamar and Freeman

Lamar Davenport, 33, was sentenced Thursday for fatally stabbing E'Dena Hines 25 times outside her New York apartment in August 2015, Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. announced in a press release. Prosecutors say Davenport was "under the influence of alcohol (and) drugs" during the crime.

10 year challenge photo: Jessica pokes fun at swollen foot

Los Angeles

Pregnant Jessica Simpson poked fun at her extremely swollen foot in a 10-year challenge photo.

After sharing a photo of her very swollen foot last week, Simpson had some fun with the "10-year challenge", the latest viral craze that has



Jessica

seen dozens of stars taking a walk down memory lane with

comparison shots from 10 years ago and today.

Instead of calling attention to her "glow up", Simpson, 38, took the opportunity to show off the transformation her body has undergone since becoming pregnant with her third child, reports people.com. In the left shot, Simpson's incredibly toned legs are featured in cut-off denim shorts and a pair of wedges. Meanwhile, in the right image, she shared a snap of her swollen foot.

Paris dismisses reports regarding treatment

Los Angeles

Paris Jackson has rubbished the reports of seeking treatment for her health, saying the media is 'exaggerating'. The 20-year-old model, daughter of pop star Michael Jackson, said she is on a hiatus from social media and is in pink of health.



Paris Jackson

"The media is exaggerating per usual. Yes I've taken a break from work and social media and my phone because it can be too much sometimes, and everyone deserves a break, but I am happy and healthy and feeling better than ever!" Jackson wrote on Instagram on Wednesday.

Cowell 'stole the idea' for Britain's Got Talent

Los Angeles

Music mogul Simon Cowell confesses that he 'stole the idea' for "Britain's Got Talent" (BGT) from a rival music show.



Simon

Speaking on The Paul McKenna Positivity Podcast, the 59-year-old said he began to think up the idea for BGT when he said

he would prefer to see a singing dog over someone taking part in another music show, reports dailymail.co.uk.

It comes as the ITV prime time mainstay is set to kick off auditions for its 13th series on Friday, which will also see host Ant McPartlin's first day back at work following his drink-driving arrest in March.

Luxury leader LVMH planning fashion brand with Rihanna

PARIS

Louis Vuitton parent LVMH is developing a luxury brand with singer Rihanna, in a rare move by the acquisitive group towards building a new fashion label from scratch, industry news site WWD reported on Wednesday.

Paris-based LVMH - also the owner of Christian Dior and Givenchy, among a host of other luxury brands also spanning champagne and cosmetics labels - declined to comment.

It already has a partnership with the "Umbrella" singer in make-up. Fenty Beauty, which was developed with Rihanna via LVMH's Kendo "brand incubator", which promotes new

products and labels, has grown rapidly since launching in September 2017.

LVMH said last April it expected Fenty to reach \$500 million in retail sales in 2018 - which includes the revenue reaped by third parties - though it has not given an update since.



Rihanna

• Um al Hassan +973 17728699 • Seef District +973 17364999

Dhoni fires India to clinch series

India thump Australia in third ODI and clinch maiden bilateral series victory on Australian soil

● **Unflappable Mahendra Singh Dhoni hit his third half-century of the three-game series against Australia**

AFP | Melbourne

Master finisher Mahendra Singh Dhoni eased India to a seven-wicket victory to clinch their one-day international series against Australia in Melbourne yesterday.

The unflappable veteran wicketkeeper hit his third half-century of the three-game series to again prove the difference after his match-winning knock in the second game in Adelaide.

The 37-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman kept his usual cool during an unbeaten 87 off 114 balls as India chased down Australia's 230 with four balls to spare at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

It consummated a hugely-successful tour of Australia where Virat Kohli's team also claimed an historic first-ever 2-1 Test series win Down Under.

"It's been an amazing tour for us. We drew the T20 series, won the Test and the ODI series," Kohli said.

"We are feeling confident and balanced as a side with the World Cup in mind."

Dhoni was given tremendous support from Kedar Jadhav with a belligerent unbeaten 61 from 57 balls in a match-winning 121-run stand.

"I am happy to bat at any number," said man-of-the-series Dhoni. "The important thing is where the team needs me. I can't say I can't bat at No.6 after



India's Mahendra Singh Dhoni plays a shot playing 14 years."

India wrapped up the ODI series after losing the opening match in Sydney by 34 runs before levelling with a six-wicket win in Adelaide to set up the decider in Melbourne.

Dhoni, a much-loved sporting hero back home, captained India to a World Cup win in 2011. He quit Tests in 2014, and stepped down as the limited-overs skipper three years later.

Kohli looked set for another big score before he was caught behind off Jhye Richardson for 46 off 62 balls in the 30th over leaving his side at 113 for three.

Dhoni and Jadhav took up where Kohli left off, guiding their team to a convincing victory.

Underwhelming batting

India leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal earlier captured the best figures by any bowler in one-day



This is only the second bilateral ODI series India have played in Australia after losing 1-4 in 2016

cricket in Australia to restrict the home side to just 230.

Chahal, playing in his first match in the series after coming in for Test wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav, mesmerised the Australians with his six for 42.

"I enjoyed bowling for the first time in Australia (internationals). The ball was spinning a little bit, so I planned to bowl

slow and vary my pace," said Chahal, named man-of-the-match.

Chahal shares the record with fellow Indian Ajit Agarkar, who claimed the same figures against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 2004.

Only Peter Handscomb showed any appreciable fight for Australia with his 58 off 63 balls before he became one of Chahal's victims.

It was an underwhelming batting performance by the Australians, who managed just 17 boundaries before they were bowled out with eight balls left.

"We took it down to the wire. When you give some great players a couple of chances, it always hurts," Australia captain Aaron Finch said.

Australia's openers again failed to get a start and Alex Carey was out in the third over when he got a nick off Bhuvne-

Australia		
A. Carey	c Kohli b Kumar	5
A. Finch	lbw b Kumar	14
U. Khawaja	c & b Chahal	34
S. Marsh	st Dhoni b Chahal	39
P. Handscomb	lbw b Chahal	58
M. Stoinis	c Sharma b Chahal	10
G. Maxwell	c Kumar b Shami	26
J. Richardson	c Jadhav b Chahal	16
A. Zampa	c Shankar b Chahal	8
P. Siddle	not out	10
B. Stanlake	b Shami	0
Extras (lb2, w8)		10
Total (all out; 48.4 overs)		230
India		
R. Sharma	c Marsh b Siddle	9
S. Dhawan	c & b Stoinis	23
V. Kohli	c Carey b Richardson	46
M.S. Dhoni	not out	87
K. Jadhav	not out	61
Extras (lb1, w7)		8
Total (3 wickets; 49.2 overs)		234

shwar Kumar and was taken by Kohli at second slip for five.

His partner Finch followed six overs later again to Kumar trapped leg before wicket for 14.

Shaun Marsh and Usman Khawaja steadied the innings before Adelaide centurion Marsh was smartly stumped by Dhoni off a wide down the leg-side from Chahal for 39.

Khawaja followed three balls later when he got a thick leading edge and offered Chahal a return catch for 34.

Marcus Stoinis lasted 20 balls before he became Chahal's third victim, caught at slip by Rohit Sharma for 10, leaving Australia rocking at 123 for five in the 30th over.

Glenn Maxwell hit a breezy 26 off 19 balls before Mohammed Shami enticed him to pull with a short-pitched delivery to Kumar sprinting in from the deep to take a diving catch.

Barca defeat Levante but threat of disqualification looms



Barcelona's French forward Ousmane Dembele scores a goal

AFP | Barcelona

Barcelona overturned a first leg defeat to beat Levante in the Copa del Rey on Thursday but could yet be thrown out of the competition after being accused of fielding an ineligible player.

Barca won 3-0 at the Camp Nou, with Lionel Messi setting up two Ousmane Dembele goals and then scoring himself to seal a 4-2 victory on aggregate.

Their place in the quarter-finals, however, is under threat after Levante president Francisco Javier Catalan confirmed shortly before kick-off that the club were to lodge a complaint to the Spanish Football Federation yesterday.

Levante claim Barcelona defender Juan Brandariz 'Chumi' played illegally in the first leg as he should have been serving a suspension.

"Whatever happens on the field of play today, Levante are going to take this situation to the Federation tomorrow," Catalan said earlier on Thursday.

"We feel that there is a solid enough precedent to back up the club's decision to do so."

Chumi was banned after he received a yellow card playing for Barcelona's B team in the Segunda B division.

Barcelona, however, insist a change in the rules in November means the suspension does not carry over into the Copa del Rey.

Solskjaer warns Man United players over complacency

AFP | Manchester

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has warned Manchester United of the dangers of complacency as they prepare to face Brighton after beating Tottenham to extend their perfect record under the interim boss.

Solskjaer has won all six of his matches in charge since taking over from Jose Mourinho on December 19, and will look to keep that sequence going at Old Trafford today.

Arguably the most impressive victory in the sequence came last Sunday, when Tottenham were beaten 1-0 at Wembley thanks to a Marcus Rashford goal and an eye-catching goal-

"We've had six good games but the next one is the most important one. You cannot be too confident. It's complacency you have to be wary of. It's the other side of it"

OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER



David de Gea saves from Harry Kane's free-kick at Wembley

keeping display from David de Gea.

"As I've said before, you go into every single game as a Manchester United coach, as a player or manager, thinking you'll win the next one, that's just the nature of this club," said Solskjaer.

"We've had six good games but the next one is the most important one. You cannot be too confident. It's complacency you have to be wary of. It's the other side of it."

"I want players to be confident but not be complacent and take their foot off the pedal because that's a big difference for me. I want them go into games full of confidence, taking people

on, getting the crowd with them because that's what it's about."

Solskjaer has yet to see the best of forward Alexis Sanchez, who missed last Sunday's win at Tottenham with a minor hamstring problem.

"He's champing at the bit in training," he said. He's attitude has been fantastic in training and I'm looking forward to seeing him."

The interim boss has played down the suggestion that he is responsible for coaxing better performances out of the players since last month's departure of Mourinho, adding that he was confident the former United manager would be back in work soon.

AC Milan coach Gattuso banned for Italian Super Cup ref protest

AFP | Milan

AC Milan coach Gennaro Gattuso was on Thursday handed a one-game touchline ban for angrily confronting the referee after his side's Italian Super Cup final defeat to Juventus in Saudi Arabia midweek.

Gattuso, 41, angrily confronted officials for not awarding a penalty for a foul by Juventus's German midfielder Emre Can on Andrea Conti late in his side's 1-0 defeat in Jeddah.

The Lega Serie A on Thursday banned the former AC Milan and Italian international midfielder and imposed a 15,000 euros (\$17,000) fine.

Gattuso was punished for "shouting at the referee in a threatening manner and challenging his decisions, as well as having subsequently, while waiting for the prize-giving ceremony, addressed further offensive words and insinuations towards the referee".

Dortmund to launch super-sub Alcacer from bench again

AFP | Berlin

Borussia Dortmund head coach Lucien Favre says goal-ace Paco Alcacer will again start on the bench when the Bundesliga leaders resume their season at RB Leipzig today.

Dortmund start the second half of the season in Germany six points clear, but second-placed Bayern Munich could close the gap away to Hoffenheim yesterday.

Dortmund have never won at the Red Bull Arena where they have drawn and lost in two previous visits.

Alcacer has been a sensation since joining from Barcelona last August, scoring 12 goals in as many league games.

But 11 of those have been off the bench including a hat-trick as a replacement in October's thrilling 4-3 win at home to Augsburg.

Cardiff sign Niasse on loan from Everton

AFP | London

Cardiff City have bolstered their striking options in a bid to remain in the Premier League with the signing of Everton striker Oumar Niasse on loan for the rest of the season.

The Senegalese striker could soon be followed by the signing of Nantes forward Emiliano Sala, who was expected to undergo a medical yesterday, for a club record fee.

Niase, 28, has had a bit-part role at Goodison Park since arriving in a £14 million (\$18 million) deal from Lokomotiv Moscow in January 2016, going out on loan to Hull two years ago under current Everton boss Marco Silva.

Nadal, Federer plough on

Maria Sharapova upsets defending champion Wozniacki to sweep into the Australian Open last 16

● **Cilic saves match points to advance in late-night drama**

● **Kvitova starting to click as Open last 16 looms**

AFP | Melbourne

Maria Sharapova stunned defending champion Caroline Wozniacki to sweep into the Australian Open last 16 yesterday and join ice men Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, who clinically disposed of their opponents.

The Russian five-time Grand Slam winner, who has struggled since returning from a drugs ban in 2017, was at full throttle in ending the Dane's dream of a

second major title.

Sharapova won 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 with the roof closed on Rod Laver Arena and will next play in-form local hope Ashleigh Barty, who bounced Greece's Maria Sakkari, for a berth in the quarter-finals.

"I thought the level was quite high. I knew it would be a tough match," said the 2008 champion, who has been in sizzling form at the tournament as she chases her first Slam title since Roland Garros in 2014.

"These types of matches are what I train for and it was really rewarding to win that last point," added the 30th seed.

Second seed Nadal called young Australian Alex de Minaur "one of the best in the world" ahead of their evening clash, then proceeded to hand him a tennis lesson, dismantling the teenager 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

"I hit a good serve and played a solid game," said the 2009 champion who is searching for an 18th Grand Slam title.

He paid tribute to De Minaur, who saved six match points.

"He's a big fighter and super quick. Alex has an amazing future."

Nadal's reward is a meeting with Tomas Berdych, who rallied to beat Argentine 18th seed Diego Schwartzman 5-7, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4.

The Czech veteran reached the semi-finals in 2014 and 2015 but is unseeded this year as he returns from a back injury that almost forced his retirement last year. Swiss great Federer was also on fire in taming big-serving American Taylor Fritz 6-2, 7-5, 6-2 to stay on track for a third successive title at Melbourne Park and a 21st Grand Slam crown.

100

matches have been played by Roger Federer on Rod Laver Arena (centre court in Melbourne)



Russia's Maria Sharapova serves against Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki



Switzerland's Roger Federer hits a return against Taylor Fritz of the US

On a rain-affected day that delayed play on outside courts, the 37-year-old showed no mercy to the 21-year-old in his 100th match on the centre court in Melbourne.

"I had a really good feeling out here today against someone who can be dangerous," said Federer after reaching the Melbourne fourth round for the 17th time -- more than anyone else ever.

"Taylor played really well. He is going to have many more years on tour playing at this level."

The double defending champion is gunning for a record seventh Australian title. If he goes on to win the tournament, he will become the first man ever to claim seven or more crowns at two Slams, having already won eight Wimbledon.

Next up for him is fiery Greek 14th seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, who beat Georgia's 19th seed Nikoloz Basilashvili 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (9/7), 6-4.

The man who lost to Federer in the final last year, Marin Cilic, battled back from two sets down, surviving two match points to beat Spain's Fernando Verdasco in a 4hr 18min epic.

My brand of tennis

Barty beat Greece's Sakkari

7-5, 6-1, with the 15th seed yet to drop a set in her best performance at Melbourne Park.

She has won seven of eight matches this month to back up a title victory in Zhuhai late last year to shape up as a dangerous opponent for Sharapova.

"It's getting to the point now where I'm feeling more and more comfortable on the court and can play my brand of tennis, which when I execute I know it works against the best in the world," said a confident Barty.

No Australian woman has won the season-opening Grand Slam at Melbourne Park since Christine O'Neill in 1978.

Germany's second seed Angelique Kerber, the 2016 title winner, steamrolled Australian youngster Kimberley Birrell 6-1, 6-0 as the Wimbledon champions continued her under-the-radar progress.

Meanwhile, unseeded American Amanda Anisimova continued her dream run, ousting 11th seed Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets. The 17-year-old will play eighth seed Petra Kvitova for a place in the quarter-finals.

Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova also advanced, crushing Aliaksandra Sasnovich for a showdown with fifth seed Sloane Stephens.

Konta slams 'dangerous' Australian Open late start



Spain's Garbine Muguruza (L) shakes hands as she celebrates after victory over Britain's Johanna Konta

AFP | Melbourne

Briton Johanna Konta lashed her late-night Australian Open match against Garbine Muguruza "dangerous" and unhealthy yesterday, saying they should not have had to play in the early hours of the morning.

Konta was eliminated early yesterday after contesting the latest women's match ever held at the Australian Open, starting at 12:30 am and ending two hours and 42 minutes later at 3:12 am.

An exhausted Konta said the situation should never have arisen.

"I don't agree with athletes having to physically exert themselves in the wee hours of the morning," she told the BBC after the 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 7-5 second-round defeat to Spaniard Muguruza.

"I don't think it is healthy -- in fact it is quite dangerous."

"However, Garbine and I were both in the same position and, with the circumstances, we really put on a great match and it's just a shame more people couldn't enjoy it."

The start was delayed when the men's match between Alexander Zverev and Jeremy Chardy on the same court turned into 3hr 46min epic.

Impey makes his move in Tour Down Under

AFP | Adelaide, Australia

South Africa's Daryl Impey surged into contention to defend his Tour Down Under title with a thrilling win ahead of race leader Patrick Bevin in Adelaide yesterday.

The Mitchelton-Scott rider claimed the fourth stage to move to second overall just seven seconds behind New Zealand's Bevin (CCC Team) with two stages left in the UCI season-opening world tour event in South Australia.

Impey gave his hopes of becoming the first rider to go back-to-back in the race's 21-year history a massive boost with his stage victory.

Astana's Leon Luis Sanchez went early but was caught by Impey and Bevin in the last 20 metres to finish third on the



South African rider Daryl Impey (R) from Team Mitchelton-Scott celebrates after crossing finish line

129.2-kilometre (80-mile) stage through the Adelaide Hills from Unley to Campbelltown.

"I'm so stoked to have done something like this, it's so special," Impey said.

"I knew if I lined up Paddy Bevin, I'd have a good shot at winning, so I'm super-happy to win today."

The stage featured the challenging Corkscrew Road ascent as a final test some six kilometres from the finish.

Wout Poels (Team Sky), George Bennett (Team

Jumbo-Visma), Richie Porte (Trek-Segafredo) and Michael Woods (EF-Education First) attacked on the final climb. But they were caught by the chasing bunch, led by Impey and Bevin, on the descent resulting in an exciting 20-rider finish.

Poels, Bennett, Porte and Woods announced themselves as the top climbers ahead of Sunday's challenging final stage at Willunga, where the Tour winner will be anointed.

"It's (points lead) still not a

huge buffer," Bevin said.

"Those four (Porte, Bennett, Woods and Poels) showed themselves as the best pure climbers in this race, but this race fortunately is about being an all-rounder."

"Basically you've got to sprint better than the climbers and climb better than the sprinters."

Australia's Jason Lea (Unisa-Australia) retained the King of the Mountain jersey after stage four from Bennett and Italy's Manuele Boaro (Astana Pro Team).



I knew if I lined up Paddy Bevin, I'd have a good shot at winning, so I'm super-happy to win today

DARYL IMPEY