

THE DAILY tribune

Beyonce all set to release audio of 'Lemonade'

14 CELEBS

WORLD 6 Gunmen kill 14 bus passengers in Pakistan

Bahrain condemns terrorist attack in Pakistan

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday condemned the terrorist attack in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The attack on a bus in the Baluchistan province of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan resulted in the death and injury of a number of people, including two officers.

The ministry said that Bahrain stands by Pakistan in its "efforts to combat terrorism, affirming Kingdom's unflinching position in the rejection of terrorism of all forms, irrespective of the motives or justifications".

Saudi, UAE send relief aid to Iran

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have sent 95 tons of humanitarian aid to Iran as it reels from deadly floods, officials said yesterday.

"The Saudi Red Crescent, as part of a joint Saudi-UAE initiative to alleviate the suffering of Iranian citizens, has dispatched a relief plane to Tehran with 95 tons of humanitarian aid to support those affected by floods," the official Saudi Press Agency said.

The aid, which includes food and shelter material, was authorised by Saudi Arabia's king and crown prince, it added.

The Emirates Red Crescent was also involved in the relief operation, the UAE's official WAM news agency said.

At least 76 people have died in Iran after torrential rainfall, which has also caused billions of dollars worth of damage since March 19.

US 'encouraged' in Sudan, urges greater transition

● The military last week ousted leader Omar al-Bashir

Washington, United States

The United States yesterday praised orders by Sudan's new military leader to free political prisoners and end a night curfew but urged more action to transition to democracy.

State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said that the United States will "cal-



A Sudanese protestor holds a placard during a protest outside the army complex in the capital Khartoum

ibrate our policies based on our assessment of events" but added that talks on delisting Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism remained suspended.

"We are encouraged by the decision to release political prisoners and cancel the curfew in Khartoum," Ortagus said in a statement.

She said that the United States wanted the military council and other armed units to "show restraint, avoid conflict and remain committed to the protection of the Sudanese people."

"The will of the Sudanese people is clear: it is time to move toward a transitional government

that is inclusive and respectful of human rights and the rule of law," she said.

The military last week ousted leader Omar al-Bashir, whose three-decade tenure included welcoming Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden to Sudan and leading a crackdown in Darfur described by Washington as genocide.

General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the second leader to take charge after the coup, ordered the release of prisoners jailed by special emergency courts and lifted a night-time curfew.

The military rulers say they will stay in charge for two years.

Mammoth election



An Indian gypsy woman with her infant stands on a queue to cast her vote at a polling station in Chennai, during the second phase of the mammoth Indian elections. More than 157 million of the 900 million electorate are eligible to cast ballots on the second of seven days of voting in the world's biggest election. (Full story on page 7)

SPACE WAR

China to launch asteroid probe, calls for partners



Representative picture

Beijing, China

China plans to launch an ambitious asteroid exploration mission and has invited collaborators to put their experiments on the probes, space agency officials said yesterday.

The 10-year mission will involve a probe sent to a near-Earth asteroid to collect samples, said Liu Jizhong, head of China's Exploration and Space Engineering Centre.

After the sample collection from the 2016 HO3 asteroid, the probe will return to Earth orbit where it will split into two.

A capsule carrying the samples will return to Earth's sur-

face, while a separate module will approach and orbit the comet I33P.

No timeline has been set for the mission.

A similar call was made for the lunar probe Chang'e-6, whose launch date will depend on the success of its predecessor, Chang'e-5, which will launch by the end of this year.

France's National Centre for Space Studies said last month that Chang'e-6 would carry French experiments.

Originally scheduled to collect moon samples in the second half of 2017, it was delayed after its planned carrier, the powerful Long March 5 Y2 rocket, failed during a separate launch in July 2017.

'Game over'

Trump declares victory on Mueller report D-Day

AFP | Washington, United States

President Donald Trump, backed by his attorney general, declared himself fully vindicated yesterday in the investigation into Russian election meddling and alleged collusion with his campaign -- before the long-awaited full probe report was made public.

"Game Over," Trump tweeted, using a "Game of Thrones" style montage that pictured him standing in dramatic fog.

Just about an hour later, the Justice Department released the full -- though redacted -- report from Special Counsel Robert Mueller, which nevertheless raised questions about Trump's actions, saying investigators were "unable" to clear him of obstruction.

Weeks ago, Attorney General Bill Barr said in a summary of the report that there was no collusion between Trump and Russians seeking to influence the 2016 presidential election in his favour.

In a nationally broadcast news conference held right before the report's release, Barr repeatedly drove that point home.

"We now know that the Russian operatives who perpetrated these schemes did not have the cooperation of President Trump or the Trump campaign," Barr told reporters, in a statement that effectively sought to spin the report before it was released.

"The special counsel found no collusion by any Americans," Barr said.

"That is the bottom line."

The extreme secrecy surrounding Mueller's nearly two-year investigation ended abruptly at about 11:00 am (1500 GMT) when the 400-odd pages of the report were made public to Congress, the media



An illustration shows a Game of Thrones-styled montage from US President Donald Trump's Twitter page in Washington, DC



US Attorney General William Barr

“

We now know that the Russian operatives who perpetrated these schemes did not have the cooperation of President Trump or the Trump campaign

BARR TOLD REPORTERS

directing senior aides to testify freely, and asserting no privilege claims," he said.

"And at the same time, the president took no act that in fact deprived the special counsel of the documents and witnesses necessary to complete his investigation."

But the report said: "If we had confidence after a thorough investigation of the facts that the president clearly did not commit obstruction of justice, we would so state."

"Based on the facts and the applicable legal standards, however, we are unable to reach that judgment."



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NKorea wants Pompeo's removal



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Preserving folk heritage

HM the King hails efforts by UoB students and IOV to document Bahraini folk tales

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday affirmed his support and encouragement for efforts and initiatives aimed at preserving Bahrain's folk heritage.

His Majesty asserted that Bahrain boasts a deep-rooted civilisation and heritage based on commitment to the values of tolerance and openness to various civilisations.

His Majesty was speaking as he received at the Al-Sakhir Palace the President of the International Organisation of Folk Art (iov World), Ali Abdulla Khalifa, University of Bahrain (UoB) President, Dr Riyad Yussef Hamzah and Assistant Professor of Literary Criticism and Narratives, Dr Dhiya Abdulla Al-Kaabi.

They presented HM King Hamad with a field survey which includes folk tales from the Arab world, collected from Bahrain's towns and villages.

The field survey was conducted with the support of 100 UoB students, and financed by IOV



His Majesty being presented with a field survey which includes folk tales in the Arab world

based in Bahrain.

HM, the King expressed thanks and appreciation to IOV and UoB for the efforts exerted to preserve Bahrain's heritage.

His Majesty asserted that the encyclopaedia is a valuable ad-

dition and an important reference for researchers.

HM, the King also paid tribute to UoB for the distinguished efforts exerted by Dr Dhiya Abdulla, the supervisor of the project.

Ali Abdulla Khalifa said that

the initiative, the first of its kind in the Arab world, documented 1100 folk tales, adding that they were printed in five volumes.

The project in its next phase aims to promote Bahraini folk tales internationally.



HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training chairing a meeting on the key performance indicators of the education and training development project. The meeting highlighted the achievements of Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) and adopted a plan for the next academic year



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa in his office at the Ministry's General Court with the Minister of Education, Dr Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi. Discussions focused on enhancing cooperation between the ministries in all forums as well as regional and international organisations concerned with education

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The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) chief commissioner Maria Khoury with a US Congressional Staff delegation. She briefed the guests about the National Institution's role in protecting and boosting human rights



Faculty members and students of the College of Medicine and Medical Science and the College of Graduate Studies during a workshop hosted by The Arabian Gulf University (AGU) on the methods of writing scientific researches in English. The workshop was presented by a teacher at the College of Graduate Studies in AGU Luma Fayiz Al Salah

Artificial Intelligence Academy



His Highness Shaikh Khalid during the opening ceremony

TDT | Manama

The Labour Fund (Tameen), in cooperation with Bahrain Polytechnic and Microsoft Corporation, inaugurated an Artificial Intelligence Academy at Bahrain Polytechnic.

This came on the sidelines of the Global Entrepreneurship Congress hosted by Bahrain from April 15 to 18 with the participation of around 170 countries.

The launch of the academy

is in line with the directives of First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee His Highness Shaikh Khalifa

especially after the outstanding performance of the youth in Khalid bin Hamad Innovation in Artificial Intelligence Competition.

The academy is expected to groom 60 student trainees from schools and universities and their teachers.

Spotlight on Sustainable Energy



Officials during a photocall

TDT | Manama

Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Dr Abdulhussain Mirza yesterday inaugurated the first sustainable international energy conference held under the theme "Promoting Sustainable Energy in the Kingdom of Bahrain".

Organised by the Centre for Sustainable Energy in cooperation with the Bahrain Society of Engineers and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), more than 500 participants from Bahrain and abroad are attending the conference along with ambassadors and heads of industrial companies and government

institutions.

In his inaugural address, Dr Mirza praised the directives of the leadership and the government to encourage the use of clean and renewable energy for all.

On the sidelines, a joint exhibition in which more than 25 companies and institutions presented the latest technologies in the field of renewable energy is also being held.

Among the speakers at the forum are Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme in Bahrain Amin Al Sharqawi. The UNDP official expressed his confidence that 6 per cent of energy use in Bahrain by 2025 will be renewable energy.

Alternative sentencing

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa yesterday directed the government to reinforce its capabilities for the effective application of the provisions of the penal code on

alternative sentencing.

The directive also instructs to ensure the provision of rehabilitation measures and programmes commensurate with the personal circumstances of those sentenced to be reintegrated into society.



Adeeb Ahamed, MD, Twenty14 Holdings with Lord Marland of Odstock, Chairman of Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC) in London. Adeeb Ahamed was recently nominated to the prestigious CWEIC Global Advisory Council

big story



Bahrain shops on Instagram

Bahrainis and others in the Middle East are revolutionising the idea of shopping by setting their shops on Instagram, while the platform itself is yet to make that move in the Middle East or in many other countries around the globe

TDT | Manama

If in Bahrain, you will remain as an anonymous entity, if you don't have an Instagram account

This is not the opinion of *Tribune*, but of those who visit Bahrain or doing business in the Kingdom.

But, if you feel what's so special about that, we would say, "It's special."

Because what's happening right here in Bahrain and in the greater Middle East is not something the creators of the platform have probably imagined.

Yes, people in Bahrain and its neighbouring countries are utilising Instagram as a digital store-front.

Which means, the Middle East has given the platform an additional capability, which the app is yet to officially allow here, even though they have done it for select businesses in some other parts of the world.

Something Bahrainis have been doing for a long time!

Yes, it's quite amazing to find out how Bahrainis, and of course much of the Middle East, have changed the platform to give it a different incarnation.

As Neal Schaffer, a consultant, trainer for SMEs on social media marketing strategy, said, "While there are many success stories of e-commerce companies that have targeted young and often female demographics that have found success on Instagram in some parts of the world, they pale in comparison to the seemingly widespread success of physical or virtual local stores from many industries on Instagram in the Middle East."

"The Instagram account, where people prefer the simple engagement and direct message capabilities, goes hand in hand with the widespread popularity of WhatsApp here for mass messaging and communication."

So, now the question is:

How Instagram is being used as storefront here?

To know, all you need is an Instagram account.

In case you don't, create one. It won't take much time.

Electronics to edible goods

After logging in just type Bahrain shops. You will be amazed in finding the number of results that pop up offering anything and everything from electronics to edible.

Now, click on a product you like. It will take to a pop-up image which features all information including a WhatsApp number to contact.

Yes, it's as simple as that. Bahrainis have managed to found a workaround, instead of complaining about the lack of Instagram's ability to gain from impulsive purchases.

As of now, if one has to make a purchase on Instagram, the user should leave the platform, which, according to experts, only results in "losing many users in the process."

In Bahrain, Instagram performs as a catalogue where business owners list their products and ordering information, which also makes it easy for a user to find a product.

Once a decision is made, the user can place the order by using a WhatsApp number - often given in the photo. Wait for the product to arrive and make the payment.

According to inc., "There's even a company working on a cryptocurrency to make the financial end of the transaction even more simple."

Now, you know how people here in the Middle East have managed to change Instagram to Instagram-commerce.

'mom and pop'

The method also opened tremendous opportunities especially for small business owners in the Kingdom, which according to Neal Schaffer are "mainly local 'mom and pop' type businesses, some with a storefront and others being run from people's homes."

As discussed above, the idea is simple. Log on, find out what you need, - even if it is a cake or something second hand- and use the WhatsApp number to order.

Latest news, however, is that Instagram, which has the

highest level of engagement (time spent on the app) is working on shoppable images for all to feature products in posts and stories.

They are now allowing users in the US to buy products from more than 20 brands without ever leaving the app. In fact, the Facebook-owned platform has given brands the option to include "product tags" on their posts since 2017, which, however, was not enough as Bahrain example has proved.

The experience is also rolled out to users in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK. Interesting!

Here's how it works: When users tap on a product to look at the details, they'll see the option to "Checkout on Instagram." From there, they can enter their billing and shipping information, which is stored for future purchases, and track their order.

22 brands now

As of now, the feature is available only for some 22 brands including Prada, Balmain, Oscar de la Renta — and fast-fashion companies like H&M and Zara. Seven of the 22 sell only makeup, including Kylie Cosmetics and Anastasia Beverly Hills.

Reports also say that the app, which has more than 25 million business accounts, is working on a new standalone app dedi-

cated to shopping.

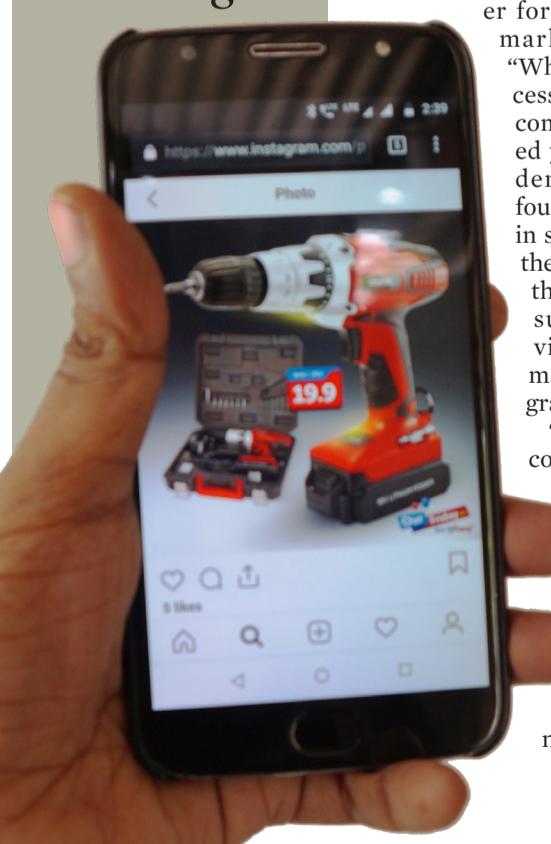
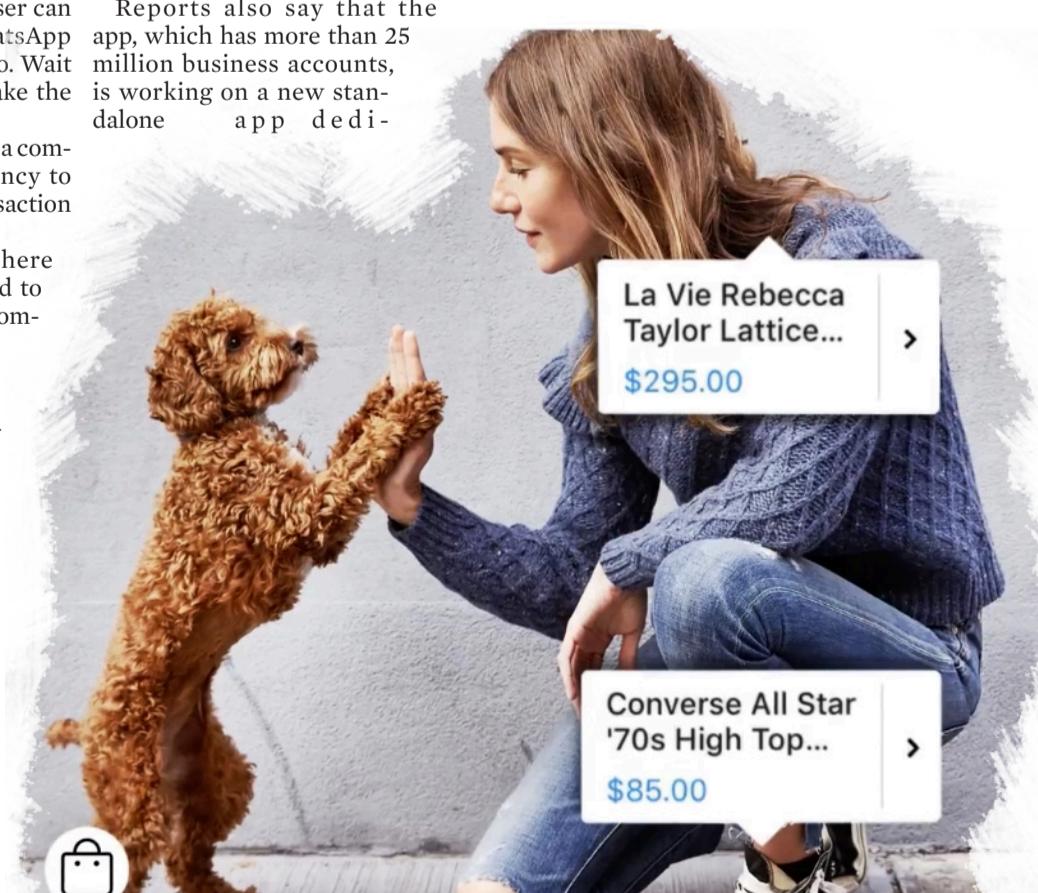
Verge said, in September last year, it may be called IG shopping, which lets users browse collections of goods from merchants that they follow and purchase them directly within the app. However, it is not clear if the project is still alive.

Instagram, most probably, will be interested, as shown by the Bahrainis, in letting users check out directly from its platform, rather than asking them to step out.

As Instagram's product management director, Vishal Shah, has said, "Shopping on the platform is a serendipitous shopping experience where people can stumble upon a product — it's like seeing something in the store window in the real world: You really didn't set out to shop."

In the meantime, as Instagram scrambles to go from inspiration to information and purchase, people and shops here in Bahrain will continue to enjoy their Insta selling and buying experience, which is also an important model for local businesses in other parts of the world to emulate.

Happy Insta shopping!



Why the country struggles with severe water-logging?

Parliamentarian questions authorities on preventive measures and infrastructural improvements required to reduce rain-related damage



A waterlogged tunnel



MOI personnel at a road affected by waterlogging

“The areas likely to suffer most from water-logging are well known. All we need is proactive measures to help prevent such issues”

MP MOHAMMED BUHAMOOD



**TDT | Manama
Mohammed Zafran**

Urgent efforts are needed to make key infrastructures in the Kingdom more resilient against natural disasters, particularly in areas where serious rain-related damage is feared, warned a Parliamentarian.

The current practice of providing tankers to drain water from the flooded areas are not enough,” MP Mohammed Buhamood reminded urging the authorities to deal with the “root causes.”

“Improvement in infrastructure is a pressing need,” he said while urging to study “why the country struggles with severe water-logging issues.”

“The areas likely to suffer most from water-logging is well known,” he said adding: “All we need is proactive measures to help prevent such issues.”

“The water drainage network must be expanded and must always be an important aspect during urban expansion.”

He further pointed out that neglecting the maintenance of

roads and facilities also contributes to increasing the number of points of gathering rainwater, and worsening the impact of water-logging.”

Citing the long-term benefit of investments at the right time, he said, “An investment in water drainage must be made for all governorates.”

He also rejected the idea of draining water using tankers during flooding saying, “It is not the right solution.”

“It reflects a lack of readiness to deal with the issue,” Buhamood, who chaired the Northern Governorate Municipal Council between 2014- 2018, said

Compensation inadequate

Speaking on the compensation mechanism, the parliamentarian said that they are grossly inadequate.

Citizens, he said, suffer tremendous losses during such incidents. “Everything including valuable furniture and home appliances get damaged,” he said adding that compensation provided is mostly unfair.

“Because they calculate as-

sets in accordance with current market value, not based on their original price.”

The Council of Representatives recently submitted an urgent proposal recently to “fairly” compensate citizens affected by the torrential rains before the advent of the Holy Month of Ramadan (first week of May).

A warning

The torrential rain that hit Bahrain on Saturday highlighted the risks that extreme weather condition associated with global warming which will become more frequent and results in conditions including flooding and severe damages.

On Saturday, several popular events were cancelled as heavy rain caused water-logging in many areas on the Island, which also disrupted normal life.

The only way out is informing people living in such areas about the risks involved and taking necessary preventive measures.

Popular opinion also is that prompt effort are needed from the part of authorities to prevent such incidents in the future.

Kingdom's first digital payroll solution launched

**TDT/Manama
Harpreet Kaur**

Al Salam Bank-Bahrain (ASBB), a pioneering Shari'a-compliant bank in the Kingdom, and Arab Financial Services (AFS), the region's leading FinTech enabler and payment services provider, officially launched the Kingdom's first digital payroll solution 'Al Rateb' Payment Protection Scheme enabling employers to pay wages to unbanked workers digitally.

The Payment Protection Scheme which comes in line with the recent Shura Council endorsement on the proposed law that mandates companies to pay workers through secure wage protection solutions.

Attended by prominent government officials, dignitaries and the media, the reception was an opportunity for decision-makers to have a hands-on experience of the Al Rateb wage



ASBB and AFS launch ceremony

protection solution.

Guests witnessed the unveiling of the exclusive first Al Rateb mobile ATM van, which will be moving between various locations across the Kingdom of Bahrain to service employees and facilitate access to an ATM machine.

Rafik Nayed, Group CEO of Al Salam Bank-Bahrain told Tribune, “It is an honour to

launch the first of its kind solution that serves the blue-collar workers with cashless payment service 'Al Rateb' the wage protection solution system.”

“Today through Al Rateb, we embarked on a significant milestone bringing both the corporate companies and their respective employees who do not have bank accounts in the King-



The unveiling of Al Rateb Mobile ATM

dom via an innovative payroll solution that provides tailored banking services with secured access to their wages, and cash withdrawals and remittance solutions to meet and exceed all their requirements.”

“The service allows employers to securely upload wages and benefits onto payroll cards through an online portal that is configured with their own pay-

roll system.

“Cardholders can withdraw funds at any ATM, transfer of funds that is the remittance solutions and can use Point of Sale (POS) terminals locally or abroad.

“Cardholders can also access financial services including statements, interactive dashboards, 24/7 customer care and multi-lingual customer support.”

“In addition employers will save significant time and money as Al Rateb helps to improve employers' internal efficiencies and operations via innovative technology integrations that further streamline payroll calculation, administration and disbursement processes, making it easier, faster and more accurate,” he said.

Cardholders can use their cards in all ASBB ATMs for free and use their cards for cash withdrawal through the dedicated Al Rateb mobile ATM van. Al Rateb cards also offer a remittance solution at competitive FOREX rates to many destinations including but not limited to India, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Bangladesh, Egypt and Sri Lanka.

B Chandrasekhar, CEO of AFS, further added, “More innovative FinTech solutions will be offered to Al Rateb employees in the next few months.”

WORLD

world

Facing arrest, former Peru president Garcia kills himself

Lima, Peru

Peru's former president Alan Garcia died in hospital on Wednesday after shooting himself in the head at his home as police were about to arrest him in a sprawling corruption case. He was 69.

The health ministry said Garcia died at 10:05 am (1505 GMT) of "a massive cerebral hemorrhage from a gunshot wound and cardiorespiratory arrest."

Garcia was resuscitated three times after suffering heart attacks while undergoing emergency surgery, before finally succumbing, Peru's Health Minister Zulema To-mas said.

The Casimiro Ulloa Emergency Hospital in Lima earlier confirmed he had suf-



Alan Garcia (file)

fered "a bullet wound to his head."

The attempted arrest unfolded at 6:30 am (1130 GMT) at Garcia's home in Lima's up-market Miraflores neighborhood. Police were acting on an arrest warrant for money laundering that would have allowed Garcia to be held for 10 days, giving authorities time to gather evidence and prevent him from fleeing, the prosecutor's office said.

Ivanka Trump unveils \$2 million boost for ICoast women



Senior Advisor to the U.S. President Ivanka Trump (4L) visits the cocoa cooperative farmers near Adzope

Abidjan, Ivory Coast

their communities, and the whole country prospers," Trump said.

The aid was meant to "catalyse private sector investment" in the sector, according to a statement released by the US embassy in Abidjan.

Trump visited a cocoa plantation in Adzope, north of Abidjan, before taking part in the first West African summit on female entrepreneurship in the country's economic capital.

Ivory Coast is the world's leading producer of cocoa.

"When you empower women, they uplift their families,

Trump said.

She was welcomed by women cocoa farmers, and joined briefly in dancing with them.

Scientists unearth 220m-year-old dinosaur fossils

● The find was discovered in September last year in San Juan province

Buenos Aires, Argentina

A site containing the 220-million-year-old fossilised remains of nearly a dozen dinosaurs has been discovered in western Argentina, researchers said Wednesday.

"There are almost ten different individuals, it's a mass of bones, there's practically no sed-

iment," said Argentinian paleontologist Ricardo Martinez.

"It's very impressive."

According to Martinez, of the University of San Juan, the fossils are approximately 220 million years old, belonging to "an era of which we know little".

"This discovery is doubly important because there are at least seven or eight individuals of dicynodonts, the ancestors of mammals, the size of an ox," he said.

He said there were also remains of archosaurs, reptiles that could be the ancestors of great crocodiles "that we do not know about yet".

The find was discovered in September last year in San Juan province, about 1,100 kilometres (680 miles) west of Buenos Aires.

The site is between one and two metres (yards) in diameter and about the same depth, leading scientists to speculate it was a former drinking hole at a time of great drought, and the creatures died of weakness at the spot.

Argentina has been a rich source of fossils from the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous eras over the years -- most, of creatures not found in the northern hemisphere.



The Institute and Museum of Natural Sciences (IMCN) of the San Juan University, of Argentine researcher Ricardo Martinez sitting next to a 220-million-year-old fossil at the Ischigualasto National Park in San Juan province, Argentina

North wants Pompeo's removal from N-talks



North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un (L) greeting US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (R) at the Paekhwawon State Guesthouse in Pyongyang

Seoul, South Korea

North Korea yesterday demanded the removal of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from talks over its banned nuclear programme, hours after the isolated state claimed to have tested a new kind of weapon.

Describing Pompeo as "reckless" and immature, the foreign ministry said it wanted him replaced by another interlocutor, a demand that significantly ups the ante in a sensitive diplomatic standoff.

Pyeongyang and Washington have been at loggerheads since the collapse of a summit between Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump earlier this year.

"I am afraid that, if Pompeo engages in the talks again, the table will be lousy once again and the talks will become entangled," Kwon Jong Gun, director general of the ministry's Department of American Affairs said, according to the official KCNA news agency.

"Therefore, even in the case of possible resumption of the dialogue with the US, I wish our dialogue counterpart would be not Pompeo but... (another)

person who is more careful and mature in communicating with us."

It is not the first time North Korea has singled out Pompeo for special criticism.

When the secretary of state met with North Korean officials in Pyongyang in July last year, he was condemned for his "gangster-like" insistence that the North move towards unilateral disarmament.

Kwon, whom KCNA said was responding to a question from one of its journalists, said leader Kim had made clear that the US attitude has to change.

He said Pompeo was standing in the way of a resumption of talks.

"We cannot be aware of Pompeo's ulterior motive behind his self-indulgence in reckless remarks; whether he is indeed unable to understand words properly or just pretending on purpose."

"The US cannot move us one iota by its current way of thinking. In his previous visits to Pyongyang, Pompeo was granted audiences with our Chairman of the State Affairs Commission for several times and pleaded for the denuclearization.

"However, after sitting the other way round, he spouted reckless remarks hurting the dignity of our supreme leadership at Congress hearings last week to unveil his mean character by himself, thus stunning the reasonable people."

Analysts said the North may have been reacting to Pompeo's assessment -- during a recent Senate hearing -- that Kim could be described as a "tyrant".

"By agreeing that Kim is a tyrant, Pompeo basically insulted the North's 'highest majesty,'" said Koh Yu-hwan, professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University in Seoul.

"Those in Pyongyang are taught not to stay silent when their supreme leader has been personally attacked," Koh added.

'Powerful warhead'

Thursday's extraordinary attack on Pompeo came hours after KCNA announced Kim had supervised the test-firing of a new tactical weapon with a "powerful warhead".

It also comes after satellite imagery suggested heightened activity at a nuclear test site.

Strong 6.1-magnitude quake hits Taiwan

Taipei, Taiwan

A 6.1-magnitude earthquake jolted Taiwan yesterday, the US Geological Survey said, shaking buildings and disrupting traffic.

In the capital Taipei, highrises swayed while some panicked schoolchildren fled their classrooms in eastern Yilan county, according to reports.

The quake was felt across the island and a highway connecting Yilan and Hualien was shut down due to falling rocks, authorities said.

An official at the Hualien county fire department told AFP that two people, including a male Malaysian tourist, were injured by falling rocks and that the department was planning to send in medics by helicopter.

Taipei's metro system was temporarily closed for safety checks following the quake, officials said.

28 killed in Portuguese tourist bus accident: Madeira officials

Lisbon, Portugal

At least 28 people were killed when a tourist bus crashed on the Portuguese island of Madeira on Wednesday, local officials said.

German tourists were among those who died, the country's embassy said, without giving figures.

The regional protection service did not confirm the death toll given to the media by Filipe Sousa, mayor of Santa Cruz, where the accident happened.

Televised images showed the bus had spun off the road, apparently having flipped several times, before crashing into a house at the bottom of a slope.

Two students fined 27 million euro for Italy forest fire

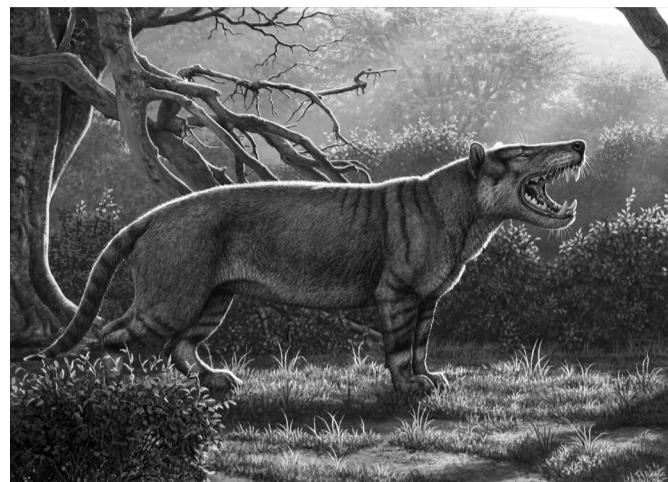
Rome, Italy

Two Italian students have been told to pay a joint fine of 27 million euros (\$30 million), Italian media reported Wednesday, after being accused of letting a barbecue start a forest fire.

Prosecutors say the two 22-year-olds, who dispute the case, lit a barbecue with a group of friends near Lake Como in the north of Italy on December 30 to celebrate New Year.

The wildfire was started by the embers of the barbecue, eventually ravaging 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) of forest, according to the findings of an investigation.

Researchers discover ancient giant 'lion'



A handout reconstruction image by Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, shows a Simbakubwa kutokaafrika, a gigantic mammalian carnivore that lived 22 million years ago in Africa and was larger than a polar bear.

Paris, France

A giant lion with enormous fangs that roamed the Kenyan savannah more than 20 million years ago was one of the largest ever meat-eating mammals, researchers said yesterday.

A team unearthed the lower jaw, teeth and other bones of a new species, Simbakubwa kutokaafrika -- Swahili for "big African lion".

They calculated it would have weighed up to 1,500 kilogrammes and could have preyed upon the elephant-like creatures that lived there at the time.

"Based on its massive teeth, Simbakubwa was a specialised hyper-carnivore that was significantly larger than the modern lion and possibly larger than a polar bear," said Matthew Borths, from Duke University, who co-led the research with Ohio University.

An artist's impression of the creature shows a giant big-cat-like hunter with stripey fur



The discovery could shed light on how supersized predators and prey evolved over millions of years around the end of the Paleogene epoch -- the period where mammals grew from tiny rodents into many diverse species.

and enormous fangs.

The team behind the study, published in the Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology, said Simbakubwa lived in what is modern-day Kenya around 23 million years ago, a key period in the evolution of carnivorous mammals.

- The gunmen identified non-Baloch passengers by their identity cards and shot them

- The attack was claimed by a Baloch separatist group

- Balochistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, is Pakistan's poorest province

AFP | Quetta, Pakistan

Gunmen killed at least 14 people after forcing them to disembark from buses in Pakistan's Balochistan, officials said yesterday, in the latest attack claimed by separatists in the restive southwestern province.

The attackers, who numbered around two dozen, were wearing uniforms of the paramilitary Frontier Corps, provincial home secretary Haider Ali said.

They "stopped buses on the Makran Coastal Highway and gunned down 14 people", he said, adding that the four vehicles were travelling to the port megacity of Karachi from the coastal town of Ormara.

The gunmen identified non-Baloch passengers by their identity cards and shot them, he said. All the victims are believed to be Pakistani, with a naval official and a coast guard member among the dead.

The attack was claimed by a



Pakistani soldiers walk from a site after an operation against suspected militants in Peshawar

Baloch separatist group. A militant spokesman denied that any civilian passengers had been killed and said the group had only targeted coast guard and navy service members.

Balochistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, is Pakistan's poorest province and the largest by landmass, with Islamist as well as ethnic Baloch separatists active there.

Pakistani security forces have been targeting insurgents in the province since 2004, and have also been repeatedly accused by international rights groups of abuses there. The military denies the allegations.

Provincial home minister Mir Zia Langov told AFP a full-scale investigation had been launched into the attack, and authorities

are trying to track down the gunmen, who he said had fled the scene.

"Such incidents are intolerable and we will not spare the terrorists who carried out this dastardly attack," he said.

Prime Minister Imran Khan also condemned the killings in a statement from his office.

Poorest province

The attack came less than a week after a suicide blast claimed by the Islamic State group in provincial capital Quetta killed 20 people.

Balochistan is also host to a number of major projects under the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The massive infrastructure

project seeks to connect the western Chinese province of Xinjiang with the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar in Balochistan.

But it has also drawn its share of attacks, particularly by separatists who have long complained that residents do not receive a fair share of profits from the province's resources.

Violence in Pakistan has dropped significantly since the country's deadliest-ever militant attack, an assault on a school in the northwestern city of Peshawar in 2014 that killed more than 150 people -- most of them children.

But militants still retain the ability to carry out attacks, and analysts have long warned that Pakistan is yet to tackle the root causes of extremism.

Indonesia warns against protests as Widodo rival rejects results

Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesian authorities warned yesterday against mass protests as a firebrand ex-general rejected unofficial election results that appeared to hand President Joko Widodo a second term as leader of the world's third-biggest democracy.

National Police Chief Tito Karnavian said Wednesday's "smooth and safe" polls would not be disrupted by demonstrations, and warned of arrests.

"If there are any illegal or unconstitutional actions that threaten public stability and security, (authorities) will take firm action," he said.

"We won't tolerate it."

"I urge everyone against mass demonstrations, whether it's to celebrate or to express dissatisfaction" at the results, Karnavian added.

The streets of the capital Jakarta were quiet Thursday after as many as 190 million voters in the Muslim-majority country cast their ballots in the one day poll, which featured a record 245,000 candidates, to elect a new president, parliamentarians and local legislators.

While official results are not due until next month, a series of so-called "quick counts" by pollsters showed Widodo between 9-11 percentage points ahead on Thursday.



Indonesian President Joko Widodo (C) greets supporters after the country's general election



Indonesian presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto gestures after a press conference



Indonesian mahouts ride elephants transporting election materials to a polling station during the presidential election in Trumon, Southern Aceh province

Quick counts have been reliable indicators in past elec-

tions, but Widodo held off declaring victory -- while his rival Prabowo Subianto insisted he was the Southeast Asian archipelago's next leader.

The former general -- who has close ties to the Suharto dictatorship, which collapsed in 1998 -- earlier warned he would challenge the results in court if he lost and stage street protest over allegations of voter fraud.

"We will not use illegal tactics because we have won," Subianto said Wednesday.

"For those who defended (my rivals), I'm still going to defend you. I'm the president of all Indonesians."

The 67-year-old, who has long had his eye on the country's top job, lost to Widodo in 2014 and then mounted an unsuccessful legal challenge to that election.

Online, the retired military man was pilloried by netizens who poked fun at his repudiation of the unofficial results and for kissing the ground as he declared himself president.

National newspapers called for reconciliation, with top-selling Kompas saying "Let's Unite" while Tempo declared it "One More Time" for Widodo.

Financial markets cheered the preliminary results, with the Jakarta composite stock index and rupiah currency both higher in the morning.

India's vote enters second round

More than 157 million of India's 900 million voters are eligible to cast ballots

Tens of thousands of troops, paramilitaries and police have been deployed to Kashmir for the vote

The last vote is on May 19 and final results will be released on May 23

AFP | New Delhi, India

Millions of voters across India cast ballots in the second round of the world's biggest election yesterday.

With more than a month to go before the marathon ends, Prime Minister Narendra Modi kept up a punishing schedule of rallies as he seeks a second term, while opposition leader Rahul Gandhi maintained attacks on the right wing Hindu nationalist government.

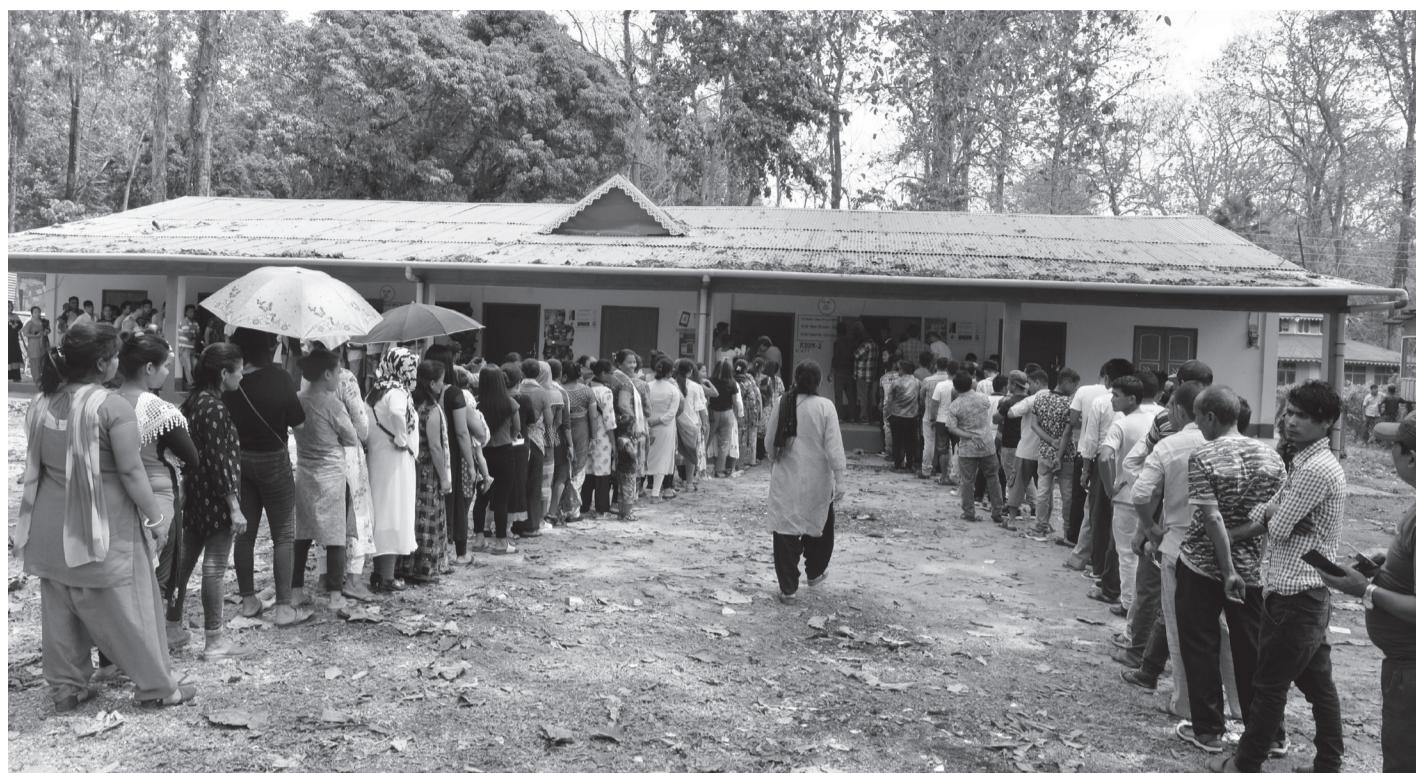
Voting went ahead in 95 of India's 543 constituencies, most of it peacefully, but with noticeable blackspots.

More than 157 million of India's 900 million electorate were eligible to vote on the second of the seven rounds of voting. The last is on May 19 and final results will be released on May 23.

Polls in the southern states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu could prove decisive in choosing the next prime minister and long lines formed outside polling stations.

But voting was cancelled in one Tamil Nadu constituency after about \$1.5 million in cash -- believed to be intended as bribes -- was seized by police.

At some polling stations in tense Kashmir state, security forces outnumbered voters with tens of thousands of troops, par-



Indian voters queue up to cast their vote at a polling station in Rohini village some 27km from Siliguri in West Bengal

amilitaries and police deployed to the region for the vote.

Authorities closed down mobile internet services and set up barricades to block roads to thwart any attack. Groups of youths still hurled stones at them.

Kashmir surged into Modi's campaign after a February suicide bomb attack that killed 40 paramilitaries and brought India and Pakistan -- which each control part of Kashmir -- to the brink of war.

Modi is seen as the favourite but faces an increasingly tough challenge from opposition Congress party leader Gandhi.

He was also caught up in a firestorm Thursday over an election official who was suspended after he insisted on searching Modi's helicopter.

The election commission said the search violated their rules on VIPs, but the Congress party slammed the decision on their official Twitter account.

"What is Modi carrying in his helicopter that he doesn't want India to see?" Congress asked in

a Twitter statement.

In New Delhi, the spokesman for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) narrowly dodged a shoe thrown at him by a protester at a press conference at the party's headquarters.

Modi sought to counter critics of his campaign in a television interview this week when he said: "If farmers die, then it is an election issue, but when soldiers die then it is not an election issue? How can that be?"

Gandhi fired back in an interview with The Hindu daily, published Thursday, saying Modi's party was deliberately ignoring economic problems.

"The fact is that the biggest national security issue is unemployment," he said.

Gandhi, seeking to become the fourth member of his family to take the prime minister's office, has pledged to end abject poverty by 2030 and give cash transfers to 50 million families.

The BJP has promised a \$1.4-trillion infrastructure blitz to create jobs.



An Indian soldier carries an 93-year-old woman to cast her vote at a polling station in the Indian state of Bihar

Mars base for teens opens in desert

Jinchang, China

quarters, a control room, a greenhouse and an airlock.

The teenagers don space-suits and go on treks in the desert, where they can explore caves in the martian-like landscape. The closest town is Jinchang, some 40 kilometres (25 miles) away.

The company behind the project, C-Space, plans to open the base -- currently an educational facility -- to tourists in the next year.

While teenagers pretend to be on Mars, China is planning to send a probe to the real Red Planet next year.

The white-coloured base has a silver dome and nine modules, including living



"Mars Base 1", a C-Space Project, in the Gobi desert, some 40 km from Jinchang in China's northwest Gansu province

India cancels poll in southern area over 'vote buying'

Polls were cancelled in Vellore constituency in coastal Tamil Nadu state

The ruling came after authorities seized more than 110 million rupees from a candidate

No fresh date has been announced for polling

New Delhi, India

Indian election authorities have cancelled voting in a southern region of the country after seizing more than 110 million rupees (\$1.5 million) they believe was meant to influence the outcome, officials said.

It is the first time a ballot has been cancelled in a national election over attempted vote-buying, officials said.

The decision comes as Indi-



Indian election workers carry boxes containing Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) at a distribution point in Chennai ahead of the second phase of India's general election.

ans vote in a mammoth national election being held over several phases, the next of which begins Thursday.

But voters in the Vellore constituency in coastal Tamil Nadu state will not be going to the polls as scheduled after the Election Commission of India ruled there were fears of a "systematic design to influence voters".

Nearly 100 constituencies in 13 states go to the polls Thursday in the second round of the

seven-phase election that began on April 11.

Almost 900 million voters are eligible to cast their votes to elect 543 members to the lower house of the parliament, with results expected on May 23.

Attempts to secure votes in return for cash, liquor, electronic gadgets and even goats have been reported across Tamil Nadu in the run-up to voting.

More than 1.3 billion rupees (\$18.7 million) and one ton of gold worth 3 billion rupees have been seized in the state since the poll dates were announced on March 10.

Elsewhere in the country, polls have been delayed by five days in parts of the northeastern state of Tripura over security fears.

Polls will be held there on April 23 instead of Thursday.

And in the country's east, Bangladeshi star actor Ferdous Ahmed has been forced to leave India after he was discovered campaigning for a candidate from the opposition Congress party, officials at the Bangladesh High Commission in Kolkata said.

Denver schools shut as police hunt woman obsessed by Columbine



18 year-old suspect Sol Pais
Los Angeles, United States

Schools in the US city of Denver closed yesterday amid fears that an armed woman obsessed with the Columbine High School massacre 20 years ago poses a "credible threat."

US authorities have mounted a massive search for Sol Pais, 18, who traveled from Florida to Colorado where she reportedly purchased a pump-action shotgun and ammunition.

"She is armed and considered to be extremely dangerous," the Jefferson County sheriff's office said.

Security fears have soared because Saturday is the 20th anniversary of the massacre, at the time the deadliest school shooting in US history, which unfolded in the Denver suburb of Columbine.

Two heavily armed gunmen killed 12 fellow students and a teacher before taking their own lives on April 20, 1999, setting off an era of mass shootings in US schools and other public venues.

"Metro area school districts will be closed on Wednesday, April 17 due to ongoing safety concerns," the Colorado Department of Education announced on its Twitter account.

That was a step up from Tuesday when it put Denver area schools on lockdown following an alert from the FBI and stepped up security.

Authorities have posted pictures of Pais, her unsmiling visage framed by shoulder-length brown hair.

She was last seen in Colorado on Monday night.

CALLED TO THE BARRE

Saudi studio answers to the dreams of young girls

A Jeddah-based studio is allowing the young to discover the beauty of ballet with all its physical and mental benefits



Ballet instructor Rana practices in her studio in Jeddah



Jan Agha feeds his cranes at a field in Bagram

AN ANCIENT

'A hunter's hope': Sn

Bird hunting is an ancient sport in Afghanistan, where local and migrating species have flocked for thousands of years and where even amid the chaos of the past 40 years of conflict, the tradition persists

Reuters | Bagram, Afghanistan

As the early morning light breaks over the plain north of Kabul, bird hunter Jan Agha checks his snares as he has done for the past 30 years, hoping to catch a crane, using a tethered bird to lure others down to the nets.

Bird hunting is an ancient sport in Afghanistan, where local and migrating species have flocked for thousands of years and where even amid the chaos of the past 40 years of conflict, the tradition persists.

"I have learned different types of hunting from my ancestors because they were hunters too," said 49-year-old Jan Agha, a farmer in Parwan province.

"Some of my sons have learned hunting from me and I hope to see at least two of my sons become hunters so my name is remembered and people know my sons



1770

British explorer Captain James Cook first sights Australia

1775

American Revolution begins in Lexington, Massachusetts. The "Shot Heard Round the World" took place in Concord later that day

1909

Joan of Arc receives beatification by the Roman Catholic Church

2011

Fidel Castro resigns from the Communist Party of Cuba's central committee after 45 years of holding the title

Arab News | Jeddah

Ballet, one of the world's most demanding art forms, is enjoying soaring popularity in Saudi Arabia as a new generation discovers its physical, mental and social benefits, and a Jeddah-based studio is at the forefront of the dance's development in the Kingdom.

Sera McKnass, founder of iBallerina, said that the studio is shaping future ballerinas to be effective members of society.

"The goal is not only to pass on the art of ballet but also to raise up participants into healthy, classy and confident, caring individuals," the 30-year-old Turkish-Lebanese master teacher said.

Ballet's popularity is growing among different age groups.

"Mothers sign up their daughters to be trained as ballerinas, but now young adults have dreams of learning how to pirouette, chasse and jete," McKnass told Arab News. "They come to iBallerina to start the journey and transform their souls and bodies, becoming stronger and more graceful women."

Widad Al-Kibsi, a Saudi ballet instructor at the studio, said that people in Jeddah were now familiar with ballet. "It's now in most of the main gyms, and private or international schools in the city."

The 20-year-old advises aspiring ballerinas to start at a young age. "It's important to start early because improved strength and flexibility are easily acquired at a younger age."



A kid practices ballet in a studio in Jeddah

With the rising popularity of Ballet in Saudi Arabia, the art is now attracting more than young girls. Even though ballerinas have to start at a young age in order to improve their flexibility and strength. Young adults still aspire to twirl as well, seeing that they were denied the opportunity as kids



Farahnaz Forotan, 26, an Afghan journalist poses for a picture in Kabul

with dedication and discipline, ballet strengthens and increases flexibility."

Dana Garii, a 23-year-old Saudi writer, has been practicing ballet at the studio since February.

"I've been wanting to do it since I was young, but I couldn't find the opportunity. When I found they have classes here, I just went for it. People asked me, 'aren't you too old?' But that's a myth.

People think you can't do ballet after a certain age, but you can start any time," she told Arab News.

"Ballet is important to me. It's more than just the physical aspects — it has taught me how to be modest, and that nothing hard ever comes easy."

"It has also taught me patience and how to take on difficult situations because it's not only difficult physically

but also psychologically. It has taught me how to overcome my fears," Garii said.

A 13-year-old student at the studio, Oroub Al-Shareef, said that she began ballet when she was 4 years old.

"There was a TV show for kids about the mouse that did ballet ('Angelina Ballerina') and it inspired me. I've always wanted to be a ballerina," she said.

"Ballet is very important to me. Dance is one of the ways I express myself and I feel at one with myself when I'm practicing."

"It's a very hard thing to do, but it brings me so much joy."

Saudi graphic designer Sara Al-Sabaan, 22, has also been practicing ballet since she was a young child.

"I started dancing in a ballet school in Guadalajara, in Mexico. Then I continued at the Kinetico dance school in Riyadh," she said.

Al-Sabaan's mother inspired her to take up the art form. "I'm following in her footsteps. She was a ballet dancer herself."

The young dancer has watched ballet's growth in popularity. "Dance classes were available when I was a child, but they have been most popular in the past decade."

Practicing ballet is a form of self-expression, she said.

"I have danced modern, contemporary and classical ballet, and it affects me immensely. Not only is it a great physical activity, it's also an outlet for self-expression through movement."



Kids take part in a ballet practice session

Mother sign up their daughters to be trained as ballerinas, but now young adults have dreams of learning how to pirouette, chasse and jete. They come to iBallerina to start the journey and transform their souls and bodies, becoming stronger and more graceful women

SERA MCKNASS

SPORT

Sharing birds in warring Afghanistan

ter my death."

The war has left much of the environment near Kabul devastated with uncleared mines, pollution, uncontrolled building and general neglect. Only in the last few years has there been an effort to restore areas like the former royal hunting grounds at Kol-e-Hashmat Khan in the city's southwest.

Spring is the season of cranes, which the hunters try to catch alive in snares, using a specially trained tethered bird whose cries attract passing flocks.

"I like this crane because it won't be silent when the other groups of cranes come, and it always forces them to come down. I like it because he is really a hunting bird."

With environmental controls virtually non-existent, there is little check on how many birds are caught or shot and Jan Agha, who started hunting when he was

around 12 or 13, reckons he has taken more than 1,000 cranes and an uncountable number of quails, ducks, hawks and sparrows.

The birds are usually taken to shops near the town of Bagram or to Kabul itself, where there is a popular bird market in the centre of the old city.

For Jan Agha, hunting is a relief, taking him out of the daily round and into the harshly beautiful countryside, where groups of hunters set out in the night, picnicking at night in the desert before testing their skills at dawn.

"The pleasure of hunting is to be in open space. I like the mountain, desert, shotgun and being awake during the night to hunt," he said. "The pleasure of hunting is to be a success in it. A hunter's hope is hunting. Being a success in every job in the world has a special pleasure."



Jan Agha, 49, an Afghan hunter, inspects a crane in a field in Bagram, Parwan province, Afghanistan

With environmental controls virtually non-existent, there is little check on how many birds are caught or shot and Jan Agha, who started hunting when he was around 12 or 13, reckons he has taken more than 1,000 cranes and an uncountable number of quails, ducks, hawks and sparrows

BUSINESS

business

Japan's Suzuki in domestic recall of 2 mln vehicles



Keiichi Ishii

Tokyo, Japan

Japanese small car manufacturer Suzuki announced yesterday it was recalling two million vehicles shipped domestically, citing improper inspections and a series of other faults including false fuel efficiency data.

The recall affects vehicles running for four years or less that have not yet received a routine check-up.

Last week, Suzuki admitted that an internal review had uncovered a host of problems at its factories, including faulty brake checks, falsified fuel-efficiency data, and uncertified staff carrying out final inspections.

The recall is expected to cost the firm around 80 billion yen (\$715 million) and also affects parts made by Suzuki for vehicles produced for Nissan, Mazda and Mitsubishi.

Transport minister Keiichi Ishii has said the company needs some "serious soul-searching" over the scandal.

The problem "raises doubts about the firm's regards for compliance and it is extremely regrettable," Ishii told reporters on Tuesday.

US imposes sanctions on Venezuela's central bank

Miami, United States

The United States on Wednesday announced sanctions against Venezuela's central bank in its latest effort to strangle President Nicolas Maduro's cash flow.

National Security Advisor John Bolton also unveiled measures against a third leftist government in Latin America, Nicaragua, with sanctions against President Daniel Ortega's son.

The United States said it would forbid all Americans' dealings and block any US assets of the Central Bank of Venezuela as well as its director, Iliana Josefa Ruzza Teran.

"Treasury is designating the Central Bank of Venezuela to prevent it from being used as a tool of the illegitimate Maduro regime, which continues to plunder Venezuelan assets and exploit government institutions to enrich corrupt insiders," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said.

TDT | Manama

Ahl United Bank (AUB) yesterday reported a 10.4 per cent increase in its 2019 first quarter net profit attributable to equity shareholders to US\$192.9 million from net profit of US\$ 174.7m in the year earlier quarter.

The Q1 profit also represents a 13.9pc improvement over the Q4/2018 trailing quarter reported profit of US\$ 169.3m.

Operating income grew by 6.6pc to US\$311.9m (Q1/2018: US\$ 292.6m) mainly driven by an increase in net interest income by US\$13.9m (+6.1pc) to US\$243.3m (Q1/2018: US\$229.3m) attributable to growth in loans and investments and to effective interest rate risk management.



Strategic investments across multiple markets, robust risk management, intelligent cost control measures and ongoing focus on the sourcing of cross border business flows has helped achieve its net profit growth for Q1/2019, while maintaining solid asset quality parameters and tight cost discipline

MESHAL AL-OTHMAN
AUB CHAIRMAN

Basic Earnings per Share was US 2.2 cents (+10.0pc), compared to US 2.0 cents in year ago quarter.

Net operating income increased from US\$279.4m in Q1/2018 to US\$298.4m in Q1/2019 (+6.8pc).

Operating results continued to be supported by operational efficiencies resulting in an improved cost to income ratio of 25.6pc (Q1/2018: 25.9pc).

Despite challenging operating conditions, solid asset quality levels were sustained with a non-performing loans ratio of 1.8pc (31 December 2018: 1.9pc) while specific provision coverage ratio increased to 85.6pc (31 December 2018: 85.5pc).

The total provision coverage ratio, excluding the available

significant asset collaterals, improved to 222.7pc as at 31 March 2019 (31 December 2018: 214.7pc).

Meshal Al-Othman, AUB Chairman, commented: "Our continued growth in Q1/2019 demonstrates AUB's resilience and ability to deliver sustainable core earnings on a consistent basis under its diversified well managed business model."

"AUB's strategic investments across multiple markets, robust risk management, intelligent cost control measures and ongoing focus on the sourcing of cross border business flows has helped achieve its net profit growth for Q1/2019, while maintaining solid asset quality parameters and tight cost discipline."

Russia says to limit oil exports to Ukraine

Moscow, Russia

Russia announced yesterday it would ban some oil exports to Ukraine and limit coal exports from June, in an announcement made just days before a runoff vote will determine the next Ukrainian president.

At a government meeting, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said the measure was taken in response of a recent decision by Ukraine to ban imports of several Russian-made products.

"A ban is being brought in on exporting Russian oil and oil products to Ukraine," Medvedev said.

Alhoty announces new branding

TDT | Manama

Alhoty Analytical Services (ALHOTY), an industry-leading analytical testing services provider in the Kingdom of Bahrain, has recently adopted strategic changes in its management and operations.

These measures will, Alhoty said, enable it to serve its clients proactively and protect Bahrain's growing infrastructure through its testing services.

To coincide with this transformation Alhoty has announced the release of its new brand and logo.

On the occasion of launching the company's new identity, Redha Fathalla, Managing Director of Alhoty, commented: "The new identity reflects the



Alhoty has announced the release of its new brand and logo.

growing capabilities, expertise and comprehensive services of the company's conformity as-

essment business. With this move, we aim to further cement our position as the leading in-

Jet Airways shares nosedive after flights grounded

Mumbai, India

Jet Airways shares plunged more than 32 per cent yesterday, hours after the Indian carrier's final flight landed following a decision to ground its entire fleet.

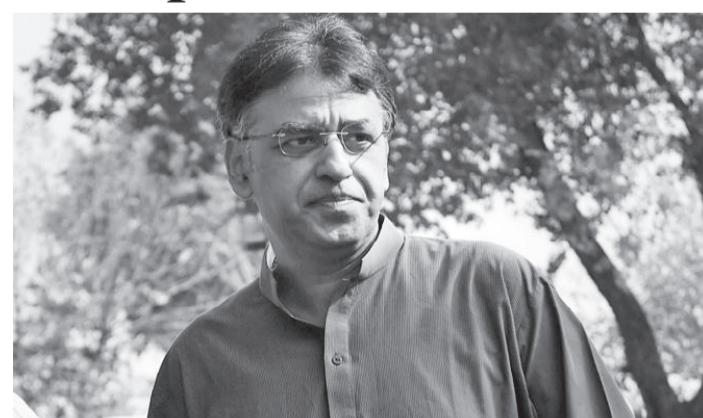
The Mumbai-based carrier is on the edge of bankruptcy and has failed to secure emergency funding from banks, forcing it to suspend all operations late Wednesday.

Jet's stock fell more than 32 percent to 162.15 rupees on the Bombay Stock Exchange Thursday. It was worth more than four times that a year ago.

The lenders that control the airline said Thursday they were focusing on finding a buyer for Jet, which was until recently India's second-biggest carrier by market share.

Pakistan's FM steps down ahead of IMF deal

Islamabad, Pakistan



Asad Umar

pact the deal.

Pakistan has gone to the IMF repeatedly since the late 1980s, and last received an IMF bailout in 2013 to the tune of \$6.6 billion.

Umar, one of cricket-turned-premier Imran Khan's most powerful ministers, had been entrusted with the task of negotiating the long-delayed bailout as Pakistan's cash-strapped economy faces a balance-of-payments crisis.

"As part of a cabinet reshuffle,

PM desired that I take the energy minister portfolio instead of finance," Asad Umar tweeted.

"However, I have obtained his consent to not take any cabinet position. I strongly believe @

ImranKhanPTI is the best hope for Pakistan and inshallah (God willing) will make a naya (new) pakistan," he wrote.

There was no immediate statement from Khan's office or confirmation of who would replace Umar, and it was not clear how Umar's absence would im-

later this month.

Experts have warned that any tough measures imposed by the IMF could impact Khan's grand plans for an Islamic welfare state in Pakistan.

The United Arab Emirates, Pakistan's largest trading partner in the Middle East and a major investment source, recently offered \$3 billion to support Pakistan's battered economy.

Islamabad also secured \$6 billion in funding from Saudi Arabia and struck a 12-month deal for a cash lifeline during Khan's visit to the kingdom in October.



Forecasts by the IMF and World Bank suggest the Pakistani economy is likely to grow between 4.0 and 4.5 per cent for the fiscal year ending June 2019, compared to 5.8 percent growth in the last fiscal year.

Khan's visit to the kingdom in October. It has also received billions of dollars in Chinese loans to finance ambitious infrastructure projects.

Amazon to pull plug on China retail operations

● Amazon will maintain Amazon Web Services (AWS), Kindle e-books and cross-border teams that help ship goods from Chinese merchants to customers abroad

● Amazon has struggled to make headway in China, where a host of nimble rivals led by Alibaba and JD.com have capitalised on domestic supplier networks

Shanghai, China

Amazon plans to close down its online retail operations that cater to consumers in China in an apparent admission of defeat to local e-commerce rivals such as Alibaba and JD.com, a report said yesterday.

The US e-commerce pioneer will maintain other operations in China such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Kindle e-books and cross-border teams that help ship goods from Chinese merchants to customers abroad, Bloomberg News said, citing unidentified people familiar with the plans.

Beginning on July 18, the company's Chinese website, Amazon.cn, will feature only diminished offerings sourced from its global network, the report said.

An Amazon spokesperson did not explicitly confirm plans to throw in the towel on domestic e-commerce, but said the company was looking to focus more on cross-border sales.

"Over the past few years, we have been evolving our China



Representative picture (Courtesy of Fortune)



Founded by Jeff Bezos 25 years ago, Amazon in January became the world's biggest publicly traded company by market value and dominates in the United States and other markets.

online retail business to increasingly emphasise cross-border sales, and in return we've seen a very strong response from Chinese customers," the spokesperson said in a statement emailed.

The company was making "operational adjustments to focus our efforts on cross-border sales in China", the statement said.

E-commerce is just as popular with consumers in China -- if not more -- than it is in the United States, due to cheap delivery costs and a less-developed bricks-and-mortar retail landscape.

But Amazon has struggled to make headway in China, where a host of nimble rivals led by Alibaba and JD.com have capitalised on domestic supplier networks and a deeper understanding of Chinese consumers to gobble up market share before Amazon could gain a foothold.

Barely a dent

Amazon has tried to make a go of it on China retail, investing in logistics and acquiring Chinese online book seller Joyo in 2004.

But it has barely made a dent.

The firm occupied just 0.6 percent of Chinese business-to-consumer online retail in the fourth quarter of 2018, with Alibaba's Tmall taking 61.5 percent, and JD.com 24.2 percent, according to China-based Internet consultancy Analysys.

Li Chengdong, founder of the Beijing-based internet financial research house Dolphin Think Tank, said Amazon was hurt by not adapting to what works in China.

"Amazon has been unwilling to localise in China, which feels kind of arrogant," Li said.

"They still insist on American-style web pages and do not promote merchandise during

the 'Double 11' shopping season, in which Chinese e-commerce companies Alibaba and JD put a lot of effort."

"Double 11", also called "Singles' Day" refers to an annual shopping extravaganza that takes place each November 11 and in which tens of billions of dollars worth of merchandise is bought, in China's answer to the US "Black Friday" shopping day.

The Amazon statement said that "we will continue to invest and grow in China across Amazon Global Store, Global Selling, AWS, Kindle devices and content".

Bloomberg News called the move the latest sign that Amazon, due to the difficulty competing with Chinese rivals, would focus its overseas attention on India's growing market.

Amazon opened an India website in 2013 and has invested heavily in logistical infrastructure.



Samsung to inspect Galaxy Fold phones after reviewer complaints

● Samsung spent nearly eight years developing the Galaxy Fold

Seoul, South Korea

Samsung announced yesterday it will inspect units of its highly anticipated folding smartphone after some reviewers reported screen damage.

A handful of US-based reporters were given the flagship Galaxy Fold phones, priced at \$1,980, ahead of the model's official release next week, and they reported screen issues within days of using the devices.

"The screen on my Galaxy Fold review unit is completely broken and unusable just two days in," Bloomberg's Mark Gunman tweeted.

And Dieter Bohn of The Verge said: "Something happened to my Galaxy Fold screen and caused a bulge... It's broken." Samsung spent nearly eight years developing the Galaxy Fold, which is part of the South Korean tech giant's strategy to propel growth with groundbreaking gadgets.

"We will thoroughly inspect these units in person to deter-



Courtesy of @markgurman

mine the cause of the matter," Samsung said in a statement after reports of the screen damage emerged.

The firm suggested some reviewers encountered screen failures because a section of the display was removed.

"The main display on the Galaxy Fold features a top protective layer, which is part of the display structure designed to protect the screen from unintended scratches," it said.

"Removing the protective layer or adding adhesives to the main display may cause damage. We will ensure this information is clearly delivered

to our customers."

Some of the reviewers, including Bloomberg's Gunman, had removed this layer.

CNBC's Steve Kovach said he had not, but still faced major problems with the device.

Samsung is the world's biggest smartphone maker, and earlier this month launched the 5G version of its top-end Galaxy S10 device.

But despite the recent announcements about its new high-end devices, Samsung has warned of a more than 60 percent plunge in first-quarter operating profit in the face of weakening markets.

Pinterest prices IPO at \$19

San Francisco, United States

Pinterest on Wednesday announced it would price its initial public offering at \$19 a share to begin trading on Wall Street the following day.

The online bulletin board popular among women is offering 75 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange with 11.25 million extra if required, raising between \$1.4 and \$1.6 billion, and will trade under the symbol "PINS".

At \$19, the introductory price is above the range \$15-\$17 that was predicted and which valued the company at \$11 billion.

It comes in the wake of a



Launched in 2010, Pinterest is a virtual bulletin board platform, with users decorating their boards with pictures showcasing interests including food, fashion, travel and lifestyle.

lackluster market debut for ride-sharing platform Lyft, which began trading in March at \$72 and closed at \$59.51 on Wednesday.

Pinterest, which claims 250 million users, unveiled its plans to enter the stock market last month, one of the many tech startups to go the IPO route this year, after Lyft and before the expected entries of Uber, Airbnb, and Slack.

Pinterest said it had a turnover of \$755.9 million in 2018, just under twice the 2017 fiscal year, and a net loss of almost \$68 million, down to about half the figure for the year before.

Boeing conducts final test flight of 737 MAX with software fix

Washington, United States

Boeing has conducted a final test flight of a 737 MAX model with an updated anti-stall system prior to its certification by aviation authorities, the aerospace manufacturer said Wednesday.

CEO Dennis Muilenberg tweeted a video where he said the test flight was carried out on Tuesday, adding that test pilots have completed 120 flights totaling more than 203 hours

All 737 MAX aircraft have been banned from the world's skies since days after the Ethiopian Airlines crash on March 10

of airtime with the software fix for the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS).

Investigators have zeroed in

Airlines crashes in October and in March respectively, killing nearly 350 people in total.

In both cases, the planes nose-dived shortly after takeoff, signaling a problem in a system that was deployed to correct for an aerodynamic issue that tended to cause the plane's nose to pitch up. "More than 85 percent of the 50-plus MAX operators around the globe also have had the opportunity to see the update in action during simulator sessions," added Muilenberg.

US trade deal not yet settled: China

Beijing, China

China said yesterday there is "still much work to finish" on the text of a trade agreement with the United States.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday held out hope the current trade talks with China will be a success, and said an announcement on the status was due "shortly".

The Wall Street Journal reported that US negotiators would return to Beijing at the end of the month.

Gao Feng, a spokesman for China's commerce ministry, declined to answer when asked about the next round of trade talks at a regular press briefing.

"Recently negotiations on the text of the China-US economic and trade agreement have con-



tinued to make new progress but there is still much work to finish," Gao said.

"Both sides will continue to keep in close contact through various effective channels," he told reporters.

The Journal reported US and Chinese officials are tentatively working toward a signing cere-



Recently negotiations on the text of the China-US economic and trade agreement have continued to make new progress but there is still much work to finish

GAO FENG, A SPOKESMAN FOR CHINA'S COMMERCE MINISTRY

tween projecting optimism and warning that success in their high-stakes talks is not guaranteed. But a key US demand -- a binding enforcement mechanism to prevent Beijing from backsliding on its commitments -- has been virtually agreed, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said this month.

"At present, the China and US economic and trade teams are seriously negotiating the text of the economic and trade agreement, including the implementation mechanism, on the principle of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit," Gao said.

The two sides have exchanged tariffs on more than \$360 billion in two-way trade since last year, weighing on both countries' manufacturing sectors and unnerving global stock markets.

US retail spending rebounds in March



Jeep production line (file)

Washington, United States

American consumers resumed spending in March, snapping up autos ahead of the summer driving season and pushing the US retail sector to its biggest gains in 18 months, government data showed yesterday.

The unexpectedly strong month for the key retail sector helped recover losses after December's worrisome slump, according to the Commerce Department.

The sector's performance pointed to resilience in consumption by ordinary members of the public -- a main driver of the world's largest economy -- and should support GDP growth in the first quarter, which is nevertheless expected to be weaker than the final quarter of 2018.

Total retail sales rose 1.6 per cent to \$514.1 billion, well above the 0.9pc economists had been expecting.

The result put the retail sector 3.6pc above March of last year.

Auto sales zoomed 3.1pc higher, also the strongest showing in a year and a half, after a 0.1pc dip.

Excluding the volatile auto sector, sales rose by a slower 0.9pc, although this was still above expectations.

Abu Dhabi market hits 13-year high

● Abu Dhabi's Aldar gains on foreign property ownership plan

● FAB rises after foreign ownership limit hike

● 10 of 12 Saudi banks slide

Reuters

Abu Dhabi's stock market rose sharply yesterday to reach its highest level in more than 13 years, partly lifted by top lender First Abu Dhabi Bank which has gained this week after regulatory approval to raise foreign ownership limit of its shares.

The Abu Dhabi index rose 1.1 per cent to its highest since December 2005 with First Abu Dhabi Bank increasing 1.5pc. The bank has risen nearly 9pc this week after obtaining regulatory approval last week to increase its foreign ownership limit to 40pc from 25pc.



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

First Abu Dhabi "could see significant \$620 million of inflows if the foreign ownership increase to 40pc is implemented before the last 10 trading days of April," Arqaam Capital said in a note.

Energy firm Dana Gas added 1.9pc after shareholders approved a share buyback programme of up to 10pc of its capital, and a capital increase to 6.99 billion dirhams (\$1.90 billion) from 6.97 billion dirhams.

Aldar Properties rose 3.3pc

after Abu Dhabi said it would now allow all foreigners to own land and property in investment areas on a freehold basis after making changes to its real estate law.

The United Arab Emirates capital previously limited ownership largely to Emiratis and citizens of the neighbouring Gulf Cooperation Council states.

Saudi Arabia's index was down 0.5pc with 10 of its 12 banks sliding. Al Rajhi Bank slipped 0.8pc

while the Middle East's largest petrochemical maker Saudi Basic Industries shed 1.1pc.

Saudi Arabian Mining (Ma'aden) dropped 1pc.

Arqaam Capital initiated coverage on the stock with a "sell" rating with a target price of 44 riyals.

Qatar's index was up 0.4pc with Qatar Islamic Bank increasing 2.3pc and Qatar Commercial Bank rising 2.4pc.

In Dubai, the index traded flat

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▼ 0.5 pc	» 9,197 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 1.1 pc	» 5,292 pts
DUBAI	■ □ 2,814 pts	
QATAR	▲ 0.4 pc	» 10,348 pts
Egypt	▲ 0.1 pc	» 14,876 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.1 pc	» 1,446 pts
OMAN	▲ 0.1 pc	» 3,980 pts
KUWAIT	▲ 1.1 pc	» 6,245 pts

with Commercial Bank Of Dubai gaining 2.6pc after its first-quarter net profit jumped more than 21pc. Logistics

firm Aramex on the other hand declined 1.4pc as the stock traded ex-dividend.

Egypt's blue-chip index edged up 0.1pc with investment firm Egypt Kuwait Holding climbing 3.4pc.

Kuwait's premier index rose 1.1pc with its biggest lender National Bank of Kuwait adding 1.2pc. Earlier this week, it reported a 15.1pc rise in first-quarter profit, helped by higher net interest income and lower provisioning charges, beating analysts' forecasts.

India's Reliance reports 9.8 percent jump in profits

Mumbai, India

Indian conglomerate Reliance Industries yesterday reported a 9.8 per cent rise in consolidated net profit boosted by strong revenues from its telecom venture Jio and retail business.

The Mumbai-based company owned by Asia's richest man, Mukesh Ambani, said consolidated net profit for the three months through March rose to 103.62 billion rupees (\$1.49 billion) from 94.38 billion rupees a year earlier for the same quarter.

"Focus on service and customer satisfaction led to higher numbers of subscribers and footfalls across our consumer businesses, driving robust revenue growth," Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani said.

The company has business investments in refining, retail, telecommunications and petrochemicals.

Revenues for the period were up by 18pc to 1.42 trillion rupees as it reported a spurt in revenues from its retail businesses.

The company also said its telecom venture Jio reported a net profit of 8.40 billion rupees for the quarter due to an increase in its subscriber base to 300 million.

Kajol opens Joyalukkas AS Rao Nagar showroom

TDT | Hyderabad

The world's favourite jeweller, Joyalukkas, with further expansion in India inaugurated their brand-new showroom in A.S. Rao Nagar, Hyderabad.

The showroom was inaugurated on Wednesday by Joyalukkas Brand Ambassador, iconic Bollywood star, Kajol Devgan. Kajol also unveiled the much awaited Akshaya Tritiya Collections during her visit.

"Hyderabad is special for us. Our customers' support and patronage have encouraged us to expand our presence here," said Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group.

Kajol Devgan the Joyalukkas Brand Ambassador said, "I am extremely excited to be a part of Joyalukkas. I am not only honoured to inaugurate the new showroom but also unveiled the auspicious Akshaya Tritiya collections. Other than this, I had the pleasure of meeting thou-



The showroom was inaugurated on Wednesday by Joyalukkas Brand Ambassador, iconic Bollywood star, Kajol Devgan

sands of jewellery lovers who come for the grand opening."

For diamond lovers, the new showroom has a dedicated floor for diamond jewellery, covering the latest in trend, style and design. To celebrate the opening, Joyalukkas has

a 'Free Sure Gifts' offer to reward every customer for their purchase.

Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group said: "The brand-new showroom in A.S. Rao Nagar, Hyderabad is a step further to our vision 2020 of

having 200 showrooms across the world. Our vision is to ornament the world and hence we are spreading our presence to make Joyalukkas accessible to every jewellery lover around the world."

During the inaugural 'Free

Sure Gifts' offer period, customers will also be presented with free home appliances on every purchase. Apart from the above offer, patrons can also enjoy free maintenance and one-year free insurance on all jewellery purchased at Joyalukkas.

SHOW

OASIS JUFFAIR

1-KALANK (PG-15) (HINDI/ROMANTIC/DRAMA) NEW

★ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.30 + 4.45 + 8.00 + 11.15 PM
DAILY AT (VIP): 2.15 + 7.45 PM

2-THE CURSE OF LA LLORONA (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER) NEW

★ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 4.15 + 6.30 + 12.00 MN
DAILY AT (VIP): 12.00 + 5.30 + 11.00 PM

3-MISSING LINK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY) NEW

★ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS
DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 + 6.30 PM
DAILY AT (3D): 12.15 + 5.00 + 9.45 PM

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

★ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 6.00 + 11.15 PM
DAILY AT (3D): 2.15 + 7.00 + 11.45 PM

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

★ COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 8.30 + 10.45 PM

6-HELLBOY (18+) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/FANTASY)

★ DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE
DAILY AT: 3.30 + 8.45 PM

7-LUCIFER (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

★ MOHANLAL, MANJU WARRIOR, VIVEK OBEROI, TOVINO THOMAS
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.15 + 4.30 + 7.45 + 11.00 PM

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

★ MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

9-MERA NAAM SHAJI (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW

★ ASIF ALI, BIJU MENON, BAJU

DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 5.30 + 11.15 PM

10-JERSEY () (TELGU) NEW

★ NANI, SHARDAH, SREENATH, SATHYARAJ

FROM FRIDAY 19th

DAILY AT: 2.30 + 8.15 PM

11-VELLAI POOKKAL () (TAMIL) NEW

★ VIVEKH, CHARLE, POOJA DEVARIYA

FROM FRIDAY 19th

DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.00 + 5.30 PM

12-KANCHANA-3 (15+) NEW

★ RAGHAVA, LAWRENCE, VEDIKA, OVIYA

FROM FRIDAY 19TH (TAMIL)

DAILY AT: 1.00 + 8.45 PM

CITYCENTRE

1-KALANK (PG-15) (HINDI/ROMANTIC/DRAMA) NEW

★ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT

DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)

2-THE CURSE OF LA LLORONA (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER) NEW

★ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 + 12.00 MN + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)

DAILY AT: DAILY AT (VIP): 11.45 AM + 2.00 + 4.15 + 6.30 + 8.45 + 11.00 PM

DAILY AT (IMAX 2D): 3.00 + 8.00 + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

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

★ BRIANNA DENSKI, JENNIFER GARNER, KEN HUDSON CAMPBELL
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 PM

DAILY AT (ARABIC DUBBED): 11.00 AM + 3.00 + 7.00 + 11.00 PM

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

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

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

★ TAYLOR RUSSELL, LOGAN MILLER, DEBORAH ANN WOLL
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 + 5.00 + 7.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

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

★ BRIANNA DENSKI, JENNIFER GARNER, KEN HUDSON CAMPBELL
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 PM

DAILY AT (ARABIC DUBBED): 11.00 AM + 3.00 + 7.00 + 11.00 PM

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

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

10-MISSION IN 7 DAYS (PG) (KUWAITI/COMEDY/THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW

★ ABDULLAH AL-TARAWAH MOHAMED SAFAR
DAILY AT: 6.45 + 11.15 PM

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

★ COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 + 8.15 + 10.30 PM

12-HELLBOY (18+) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/FANTASY)

DAILY AT: DAILY AT (VIP): 11.45 AM + 2.00 + 4.15 + 6.30 + 8.45 + 11.00 PM

DAILY AT (IMAX 2D): 3.00 + 8.00 + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

13-LITTLE (PG-15) (COMEDY)

★ REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN
DAILY AT: 1.30 + 3.30 + 8.30 PM

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

★ BRIE LARSON, GEMMA CHAN, SAMUEL L. JACKSON
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 8.45 PM

15-MISSION OF HONOR (HURRICANE) (PG-15) (ACTION/DRAMA/WAR) NEW

★ IWAN RHEON, MILO GIBSON, STEPHANIE MARTINI
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 6.00 + 11.30 PM

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

★ LUPITA NYONG'O, ELISABETH MOSS, ANNA DIOP
DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.45 + 12.00 MN

17-KURSK (PG-15) (THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW

★ LÉA SEYDOUX, COLIN FIRTH, AUGUST DIEHL
DAILY AT: 2.30 + 7.00 + 11.30 PM

18-TEEN SPIRIT (PG-15) (DRAMA/MUSICAL) NEW

★ ELLE FANNING, REBECCA HALL, ZLATKO BURIC
DAILY AT: 1.15 + 5.30 + 9.45 PM

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

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

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

★ LIAM NEESON, EMMY ROSSUM, LAURA DERN
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 3.30 + 7.45 + 12.00 MN

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

★ KARIM ABDULAZIZ, GHADA ADEL, MAJDE ALKIDDAWI
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 2.45 + 7.00 + 11.15 PM

22-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER)

★ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 6.00 + 11.00 PM

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

★ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN
DAILY AT: 2.15 + 6.45 + 11.15 PM

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

★ ROWAN ATKINSON, OLGA KURYLENKO, EMMA THOMPSON
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 5.00 + 9.15 PM

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

★ BRIANNA DENSKI, JENNIFER GARNER, KEN HUDSON CAMPBELL
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 1.30 + 3.30 PM

26-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

27-THREE FLOOR (PG) (COMEDY)

★ RYAN REYNOLDS, JENNIFER LOPEZ, JORDAN PEPPER
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

28-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

29-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

30-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

31-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

32-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

33-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

34-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

35-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

36-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

37-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

38-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

39-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (15+) (MUSIC)

★ RAMI MALEK, GENE SIMMONS, ROBERT PLANT
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM



Beyoncé all set to release audio of 'Lemonade'

ANI | Los Angeles

American singer-songwriter Beyoncé is on a roll after treating her fans with a concert documentary titled 'Homecoming'.

It will be available across all music streaming services, reported Variety. All the Beyoncé's loyal fans will know that April 23 marks a special significance for the 37-year-old singer as the film released on the same date three years ago on HBO.

The 'Lemonade' film, which coincided with the release of the album of the same name on April 23, 2016, also uses poetry by Somali poet, Warsan Shire, which will be added to the upcoming audio launch as well.

Until now, the film was only available for those with a Tidal account (which is a streaming service she co-owns).

Divided into 11 chapters, 'Intuition', 'Denial', 'Anger', 'Apathy', 'Emptiness', 'Accountability', 'Reformation', 'Forgiveness', 'Resurrection', 'Hope', and 'Redemption', the film went on to earn four primetime Emmys.

'Lemonade', Beyoncé's second visual album, features guest vocals from singers The Weeknd, Jack White, James Blake, and rapper Kendrick Lamar.

It was the best-selling album of 2016, selling 2.5 million copies worldwide. It also received Grammy Awards for the best urban contemporary album and best music video as well as a Peabody Award.

The exciting news comes just hours after the premiere of the much-awaited 'Homecoming: A Film By Beyoncé' on Netflix, which chronicles her iconic 2018 Coachella performance and the behind-the-scenes moments which fans didn't get to see.

Taylor Swift all set to drop something special soon!

ANI | Los Angeles

Mark your calendar, as American singer-songwriter Taylor Swift is all set to drop something special next week, in eight days and six hours, precisely.

Over the weekend, the singer started a countdown on her website and social media channels. The artist has been sharing cryptic posts on her Twitter handle and Instagram account with "4.26" written along with all her posts, dropping a hint that something would be happening or probably releasing on April 26.

Although the 29-year-old singer didn't specify anything, fans of the star are hoping new music is on its way from the artist.

The countdown officially kicked off just a few days ago on April 13. Swift has been teasing new music for a while now. Her eagle-eyed fans have been noticing clues about a seventh album during the singer's 'Reputation' tour and studio album, reported E! News.

Since her countdown, Swift has continued to share multiple photos in pastel colours. The pictures include hearts, rings, ruffles and Swift's cats, Meredith and Olivia.

The singer's website also currently has glitter hearts surrounding the countdown clock.

Swift was recently named as one of the Time's 100 most influential people of this year and also appeared on the publication's cover.

Several celebrities wrote profiles about the honourees. For instance, Shawn Mendes penned a piece about Swift.

"Taylor makes anyone older feel young again and anyone young feels they can do anything. It's so rare and so special. If there is one thing I want to achieve in my career and life, it's that," the 'Stitches' singer wrote.

Swift's last album 'Reputation' released on November 10, 2017, while her last tour 'Taylor Swift's Reputation Stadium Tour ran from May 8, 2018, to November 21, 2018.



Taylor Swift

Hailey Bieber set to launch beauty line

Los Angeles

Hailey Bieber to launch beauty line.

According to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Hailey has trademarked 'Bieber Beauty', reports hollywoodreporter.com.

While details surrounding the collection have not yet been released, fans can expect "beauty and cosmetics products" to eventually roll out, which could include a broad array of items.

Though this moment marks a first for Hailey, she has plenty of experience in the beauty industry through her work with L'Oreal Professionnel as a brand ambassador and ModelCo, where she created a make-up line for the Australian brand.

Last September, she was announced as the new face of BareMinerals, and she starred in their "Full of, Free of" campaign.

A month later, she filed to trademark 'Hailey Bieber' for a huge range of fashion prod-

ucts, including athletic shoes, bathing suits, jeans, dresses, blazers, skirts, shorts, hats, T-shirts, sleepwear, lingerie, lounge wear, footwear, jackets, jogging suits and socks.



Hailey Bieber

Madonna's reveals the release date of album 'Madame X'

Los Angeles

Pop singer Madonna released her latest single 'Medellin' from her new album 'Madame X' on Wednesday, revealing the release date of the album.

The singer shared the song with her fans, through her Instagram handle. "Madame June 14, 2019 listen to Medellin ft. Maluma now," she captioned.

The song has been produced by Mirwais and Mike Dean.

According to Variety, the upcoming album 'Madame X' is the follow-up to 'Rebel Heart', which came out in 2015. 'Madame X' will come out on June 14.

Madonna's latest single from the album "Medellin's" music video will be out on April 24 and will get a premiere release in an MTV special, "MTV Presents Madonna Live & Exclusive: Medellin" Video World Premiere".

The album was recorded over 18 months and incorporates a to-

tal of 15 songs celebrating the pop singer's affection for Latin music and culture. Madonna has sung in English, Portuguese and Spanish.

The album will feature artists like Quavo, who will appear in the single 'Future', Brazilian singer Anitta, Rae Sremmurd's Swae Lee. Album 'Madame X' will have a standard as well as a deluxe version.

The 'La Isla Bonita' singer shared the tracks that would be in the album, Medellin (ft. Maluma), Dark Ballet, God Control, Future (Ft. Quavo), Batuka, Killers Who Are Party, Crave (Ft. Swae Lee), Crazy, Come Alive, Extreme Occident, Faz Gostoso (Ft. Anitta), Bitch I'm Loca (Ft. Maluma), I don't search I find, Looking For Mercy, and I rise.



John Cena eyed for role in 'Suicide Squad' sequel

IANS | Los Angeles

Actor-wrestler John Cena is circling a role in the upcoming "Suicide Squad" sequel.

According to sources, Cena is in talks to join actors Idris Elba and Margot Robbie in the follow-up to 2016's "Suicide Squad", reports variety.com.

Robbie is set to return as Harley Quinn and Jai Courtney is back as Captain Boomerang.

It was first reported that the studio Warner Bros decided to have Elba play a brand-new character instead of taking on Deadshot, a character portrayed by actor Will Smith in the first film.

Rose McGowan lost her sense of smell

Los Angeles

Actress Rose McGowan says she has no sense of smell but "extraordinary" powers of taste.

"I did a series of tests at Harvard because I lost my sense of smell in a freak accident. They were studying me because I could still taste which is normally interrelated. I got hit in the head with a car door in a freak valet accident in Los Angeles," McGowan said on the 'Off Menu' podcast.

The 45-year-old actress said losing her sense of smell has put her in some dangerous situations, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"Not being able to smell, I've

had to get gas monitors for my house and things like that because I accidentally left the gas on one night and didn't know because I couldn't smell it. There are some inherent dangers that come with not smelling. I can only use bath products I have always used," McGowan said.

The actress, who is dating Rain Dove, said her "extraordinary" sense of taste can be overpowering.

She said: "I'm what they call a super taster, I have extraordinary taste buds."

"Afterwards, everything became like a taste explosion and too much. That's why they were studying me at Harvard Medical School. I would go once every couple of months. I was in New York so would just go down to Boston which is a couple of states away."

"They would have strips on my tongue seeing the acid levels and trying to get me to smell things - but I could not."



Rose McGowan

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SPORTS

sports

Spurs survive Man City

Tottenham overcame Manchester City in a classic encounter at Etihad Stadium to reach the last four of the Champions League for the first time

● Spurs survive the seven-goal thriller to end Man City's quadruple quest

● Tottenham's Fernando Llorente scored the decisive goal

AFP | Manchester

Manchester City's bid for an unprecedented quadruple of trophies ended in dramatic fashion as Tottenham progressed to the Champions League semi-finals on away goals as a pulsating 4-3 win for City on Wednesday was not enough to overturn their 1-0 first leg deficit.

Four goals were scored in a crazy opening 11 minutes as Raheem Sterling and Bernardo Silva cancelled out two Son Heung-min away goals for Tottenham.

City finally looked set for the last four when further goals from Sterling and Sergio Aguero put them ahead in the tie for the first time.

But there was a further twist when Fernando Llorente's controversial goal 17 minutes from time was allowed to stand despite a VAR check for handball by the Spaniard.

VAR intervened again deep



Tottenham Hotspur's Fernando Llorente scores his side's third goal



Four goals of the the seven-goal thriller were scored in a crazy opening 11 minutes

into stoppage time to save Spurs once more when Sterling thought he had completed his hat-trick only for Aguero to be ruled offside in the build-up. Tottenham's reward is a semi-final clash against Ajax. Pep Guardiola will face more questions over his failure to land the Champions League three seasons into his City's reign, but after a more conservative approach for the first leg was criticised, he set the tone for a thrilling 90 minutes.

Kevin de Bruyne was restored to the starting XI among four changes from the first leg and the Belgian showed why the de-

cision to leave him out last week was so questioned.

De Bruyne drove at the heart of the Spurs defence before feeding Sterling, who cut inside

and curled a wonderful shot into the far corner.

Guardiola had called for the home fans to finally produce an intimidating atmosphere on a European night at the Etihad.

However, they had barely re-taken their seats by the time Tottenham were level.

Aymeric Laporte cut out Dele Alli's forward pass, but only turned the ball into the path of Son, whose shot had too much power for Ederson.

Three minutes later, City's quadruple quest appeared in tatters as Laporte was again caught in possession, this time by Lucas Moura and the Brazilian teed up

Son to curl into the top corner for his 20th goal of the season.

Yet, a kamikaze opening 11 minutes had another twist as Bernardo's effort deflected off Danny Rose and wrong-footed Hugo Lloris at his near post.

By the midway point of the first-half, City were back in front as Bernardo and De Bruyne played creators once more and Sterling finished off a low cross at the back post.

Spurs' hopes of holding on to their advantage on away goal suffered another blow when Moussa Sissoko was forced off with an injury.

Mauricio Pochettino chose attack as the best form of defence by replacing the midfielder with Llorente in what proved to be a decisive change.

City started the second period with the same menace they did the first as Lloris denied Sterling before the French World Cup winner made a brilliant stop to deny De Bruyne the goal his performance deserved.

However, De Bruyne had his hat-trick of assists on the hour mark as he surged through midfield before timing his pass for Aguero to perfection and the Argentine rifled past Lloris.

Finally ahead for the first time in the tie, Guardiola soon sent on Fernandinho to restore some sense of control, but City were pegged back again as an incredible tie swung back in Tottenham's favour.

YK Almoayyed to sponsor tennis tournament

TDT | Manama

YK Almoayyed has announced its sponsorship once again for the Late Yousif Khalil Almoayyed Cup Ramadan Tennis Tournament to be held at Bahrain Tennis Club from 7th May to 1st June as part of Ramadan activities.

Bahrain Tennis Club Club Manager Hamdi A. Jawad received the sponsorship letter from YK Almoayyed and Sons Director Salwa Almoayyed.

Hamdi A. Jawad extended his appreciation Y.K. Almoayyed and Sons for their continuing sponsorship of the tournament.

Barcelona to face Chelsea in Japan

AFP | Tokyo

Barcelona will travel to Japan to play pre-season games against Chelsea and Andres Iniesta's J-League club Vissel Kobe in July, the Spanish giants announced yesterday.

The runaway La Liga leaders take on English side Chelsea in Saitama on July 23 and on July 27 face Kobe, the club Barca legend Iniesta joined last year after helping the Catalans scoop 32 trophies in a glittering career.

Barcelona's main sponsor Rakuten, the Japanese retailer, is organising both games.

PSG lose at Nantes, again fail to clinch title

AFP | Nantes

Paris Saint-Germain failed to seal the Ligue 1 title for the third match running on Wednesday after a second-string line-up without dropped Kylian Mbappe took the champions to their second defeat in a matter of days, 3-2 at Nantes.

A Diego Carlos brace and Majeed Waris' tap-in inflicted a third league loss on Thomas Tuchel's side, who were hammered 5-1 at second-placed Lille on Sunday and drew with Strasbourg the previous week, despite Dani Alves' stunning opener and substitute Metehan Guclu pulling one back late on.

However PSG, who were also missing a host of other first-team players through injuries and suspension, remain 17 points clear with six games left.

The runaway leaders will win their sixth title in seven years on Sunday if Lille fail to win at Toulouse and they then beat struggling Monaco.

Tuchel refused to reveal if he left Mbappe out of the squad for blasting his teammates for "lacking personality" after the Lille loss, saying that there would be "no explanation" of his decision.

"It's very easy to analyse, it



Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian midfielder Leandro Paredes (L) vies for the ball with Nantes' Brazilian defender Diego Carlos

was a very bad performance, we deserved to lose," said Tuchel.

"We controlled the game at Lille but today there was no performance for 90 minutes."

"You can lose and you can make mistakes, and we will always defend the players if we feel that they've played with a great attitude and hunger. But today it is not possible."

Depleted PSG had to thank Gianluigi Buffon 12 minutes in when he managed to push away Kalifa Coulibaly's header from point-blank range, and seven minutes later Alves appeared to have calmed Parisian nerves

with his wonder strike.

There looked to be little on when the Brazilian collected Leandro Paredes' simple pass, but he quickly lashed an unstoppable dipping drive past Maxime Dupe to score his first Ligue 1 goal this season.

However just three minutes after the opener Diego Carlos was allowed too much space to nod home Valentin Ronquer inswinging corner.

PSG continued to struggle despite the odd flash from Moussa Diaby, and the hosts grabbed a deserved second just before the break.

Wyndham Garden cruise past IHE



Ritz Carlton B Team after winning the game

TDT | Manama

by 41 runs.

Match # 2:

Wyndham Garden defeated IHE by 41 runs in the eighth Inter Hotel Charity Cricket Tournament held on Wednesday. Vikram was declared man of the match.

Score: Wyndham Garden

(63/2 in 6 overs) won from Domain Hotel (52/3 in 6 overs) by 02 runs.

Man of the Match: Imran

Match # 4:

Downtown Rotana (90/3 in 6 overs) won from Ramada Amwaj (37/6 in 4.2 overs) by 53 runs.

Man of the match: Deva

Match # 5:

Ritz Carlton B (55/4 in 6 overs) won from Domain Hotel (52/3 in 6 overs) by 02 runs.

Man of the Match: Sajid

Djokovic, Nadal head into quarters

Daniil Medvedev topples Stefanos Tsitsipas to continue Monte Carlo streak

● Novak Djokovic topples Taylor Fritz to reach quarters

● Rafael Nadal sinks Grigor Dimitrov

AFP | Monte Carlo

Top seed Novak Djokovic and 11-time champion Rafael Nadal showed no mercy in dominating wins to power into the Monte Carlo Masters quarter-finals yesterday.

Djokovic extended his winning streak against US players with a 6-3, 6-0 defeat of Taylor Fritz.

The two-time tournament champion has now won nine in a row over Americans since losing at Wimbledon in 2016 to Sam Querrey.

"It was very challenging to play in these (windy) conditions," Djokovic said. "Taylor just flattens the ball."

"We had five, six close games in the first set, I just managed to break his resistance midway through."

"After that, things went on my side and I felt more comfortable."

"This was one of these days where you just have to hang in there and try to put an extra ball back in the court - that was



Serbia's Novak Djokovic hits a return to US Taylor Fritz

enough."

Nadal repeated last year's semi-final win over Grigor Dimitrov, beating the Bulgarian for the 12th time, 6-4, 6-1.

"I'm very, very happy, this is an important victory for me," the second seed said after winning his 23rd consecutive set at the tournament.

"Grigor is a super talent and is

very dangerous. It was a positive match for me."

"I had a good day, I can be happy with what I did on court."

"When you don't play on clay for almost a year, every win is important for the confidence, especially as I'm coming back from injury."

Spain's 17-time Grand Slam champion started his clay season

this week after missing a month with another knee problem and has title-holder points to defend here plus Barcelona, Rome and Roland Garros.

The king of clay is bidding for a 12th trophy in the principality. His record at the event is a staggering 70-4.

Nadal spent almost an hour in securing the first set but picked

When you don't play on clay for almost a year, every win is important for the confidence, especially as I'm coming back from injury

RAFAEL NADAL

Tsitsipas was caught on the back foot facing three match points as he trailed 0-40 on his serve late in the second set.

After saving the first two, the Greek botched the third to seal his exit after an hour and three-quarters.

Medvedev increased his leading total of ATP season match wins to 20 as a result after he beat Tsitsipas for the fourth time in as many attempts.

"This was a great achievement for me," Medvedev said. "Everything was perfect today."

"Some wind came up in the second set and I could not get used to it. But in the third, I just worked to put every ball in the court."

"I was pleased to fight back after going a break down in the third set."

The player who stands a career-high 14th credits his rising form to a renewed dedication to the sport.

"I've been working hard for the past 18 months - since before the start of 2018. I've dedicated my life to tennis, which I did not do before," Medvedev said.

"I had my best season last year - hopefully this year will be better."

The Russian reached his first quarter-final at the Masters 1000 level after winning his second match against a Top 10 opponent.

Bahrain excel in Jiu Jitsu championship

Bahrain bags five gold, one silver and one bronze at South Asian Championship



BOC secretary general Mohammed Al Nusuf and Bahrain Martial Arts Federation president Ahmed Al Khayyat with members of the Bahrain jiu jitsu team

● Ali Monfaradi and Soghra Mubarak captured two gold medals each

● Nijad Algosaibi gave Bahrain its fifth gold medal

TDT | Manama

Bahrain national jiu jitsu team had a remarkable run at the 2019 South Asian Championship held in Chennai, India, where the team bagged 7 medals

in total – 5 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze.

The Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) honoured members of the team after their impressive results at the four-day regional competition in the capital of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Ali Monfaradi (77kg) and Soghra Mubarak (70kg) captured two gold medals each, while Nijad Algosaibi (85kg), gave Bahrain its fifth gold medal. Other medals were won by Ali Ebrahimi (silver, 77kg) and Nijad Algosaibi (bronze, 85kg).

BOC secretary general Mohammed Al Nusuf, along

with Bahrain Martial Arts Federation president Ahmed Al Khayyat, presented the awards to the team at a special reception ceremony held at the committee premises in Seef.

Al Nusuf congratulated members of the Bahrain team on this honorable achievement, which is a continuation to various outstanding results accomplished by jiu jitsu on the regional and international levels.

He attributed the outcome to the significant support of Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Association honorary president HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa to the team has greatly helped the team in making great progress as they battled it out with some of the region's best jiu jitsu athletes.

Liverpool march on in Champions League

AFP | Porto, Portugal

Liverpool set up a mouthwatering Champions League semi-final against Barcelona on Wednesday after their superstar front three all scored in a 4-1 win away at FC Porto that saw them cruise into the last four 6-1 on aggregate.

On a wet night at the Estadio do Dragao, Liverpool had to weather an early storm before scoring from their first attempt just before the half-hour mark, Sadio Mane prodding home for a goal given after a lengthy VAR review.

Already in control of the tie after a 2-0 win at Anfield in the first leg last week, Liverpool had effectively killed off Porto there and then, but Mohamed Salah, substitute Roberto Firmino and Virgil van Dijk added further goals after the break.

Eder Militao scored a consolation for the hosts 21 minutes before the end, but this was another miserable night for them after they lost 5-0 to the same opponents on this ground a

year ago.

Liverpool now march on to a clash with Lionel Messi's Barca, the first meeting of the clubs since a last-16 encounter in 2006/07 that Liverpool won on away goals.

The dream of a Champions League and Premier League double remains alive for Liverpool and their supporters, whose spirits were not dampened by the dreary weather by the banks of the River Douro.

This was their 17th game without defeat and their eighth straight victory, although Barcelona will offer a tougher test than that provided by Porto.

The first leg of that tie is in a fortnight, and in the meantime Liverpool will revert their focus to domestic matters, with games against Cardiff City and Huddersfield Town up next.

With the matches coming thick and fast, Klopp made

three changes to his team here following Sunday's 2-0 win over Chelsea. Firmino and Naby Keita, who both scored in the first leg, dropped out along with Jordan Henderson.



Sadio Mane scores Liverpool's first goal against Porto