

Michael B Jordan to star in 'The Silver Bear'

Actor Michael B Jordan will star in and produce Lionsgates film adaptation of assassin story "The Silver Bear". | P13

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Russians 'will go to heaven' in event of nuclear war: Putin

Sochi, Russia

Russians will "go to heaven" as martyrs in the event of nuclear war because Moscow will only ever use nuclear weapons in retaliation, President Vladimir Putin said Thursday.

"We have no concept of a preemptive strike," Putin told a forum of international experts in the southern city of Sochi in response to a question from the audience.

Former Sudanese president dies



Al-Dahab

Former Sudanese president, Field Marshal Abdulrahman Siwar Al-Dahab has died in Riyadh Military Hospital in Saudi Arabia. He was 83 years-old.

Al-Dahab, a former Chief of Staff, was born in Sudan's city Al-Ubayyid in 1935, served as president of Sudan from 1985 to 1986.

Playing the 'Trump' card

US merges Jerusalem consulate into new embassy

AFP | Washington, United States

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced yesterday that the US office in Jerusalem dealing with Palestinians is being merged into the controversial new US embassy in the city.

Pompeo said the US Consulate General, a separate office which formerly handled dealings with Palestinians, would be replaced by a new Palestinian Affairs Unit inside the embassy.

The move, which was quickly condemned by the Palestine Liberation Organisation, could effectively leave the US as the only major power without a specific representative office to the Palestinians.

Pompeo denied the decision represented a shift in relations between Washington and the Palestinians, but it came after a series of moves, including shut-



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (File photo)

tering the Palestinian mission in Washington, that have angered them.

"This decision is driven by our global efforts to improve

the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations. It does not signal a change of US policy on Jerusalem, the West Bank, or the Gaza Strip," Pompeo said

in a statement. He said that the United States "continues to take no position" on how any peace deal between the Israelis and Palestinians would take shape.

"The administration is strongly committed to achieving a lasting and comprehensive peace that offers a brighter future to Israel and the Palestinians," he said.

The move was the latest in a series of steps Washington has taken that have effectively downgraded its relationship with the Palestinians, who have for decades sought a separate state alongside Israel.

The embassy was officially transferred on May 14. Analysts say the US moves aim to pressure the Palestinians into peace talks with Israel. President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner has been in talks with the Israelis on a still-secret peace plan he has reportedly devised.

Court issues verdict in defamation case against journalist



Yousif Al Binkhalil

TDT | Manama

A Bahraini court has ordered to detain the Editor in Chief of *Al Watan* Newspaper Yousif Al Binkhalil in connection with a defamation case.

The Court in its verdict said that Al Binkhalil remains free on a BD100 bail or by accepting a manual community work to replace the punishment.

The Bahrain Journalist Association, in a statement, expressed its shock at the case filed against Al Binkhalil by a member of the House of Representatives, while affirming its obedience and respect to the Bahraini law and judicial system.



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Facebook's 'war room' to combat manipulation

Menlo Park, United States

In Facebook's "War Room," a nondescript space adorned with American and Brazilian flags, a team of 20 people monitors computer screens for signs of suspicious activity.

The freshly launched unit at Facebook's Menlo Park headquarters in California is the nerve center for the fight against misinformation and manipulation of the largest social network by foreign actors trying to influence elections in the United States and elsewhere.

Inside, the walls have clocks showing the time in various regions of the US and Brazil, maps and TV screens showing

CNN, Fox News and Twitter, and other monitors showing graphs of Facebook activity in real time.

Facebook, which has been blamed for doing too little to prevent misinformation efforts by Russia and others in the 2016 US election, now wants the world to know it is taking aggressive steps with initiatives like the war room.

"Our job is to detect ... anyone trying to manipulate the public debate," said Nathaniel Gleicher, a former White House cybersecurity policy director for the National Security Council who is now heading Facebook's cybersecurity policy.

"We work to find and remove



Employees work in Facebook's "War Room"

these actors."

Facebook has been racing to

get measures in place and began operating this nerve center

-- with a hastily taped "WAR ROOM" sign on the glass door -- for the first round of the presidential vote in Brazil on October 7.

It didn't take long to find false information and rumors being spread which could have had an impact on voters in Brazil.

"On election day, we saw a spike in voter suppression (messages) saying the election was delayed due to protests. That was not a true story," said Samidh Chakrabarti, Facebook's head of civic engagement.

Chakrabarti said Facebook was able to remove these posts in a couple of hours before they went viral.

