

**Meghan Markle's sari-clad image goes viral**

Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle sported a sari and embraced traditional Indian culture, it has emerged in a never-before-seen footage of a trip she made back in January 2017.

**P14**

Oil prices inch up on signs of tighter global supply

THE DAILY **tribune**



Bieber, Grande, Miley join hands for music video

Trump slams 'fabricated' testimony in Mueller report

**Annual heritage festival set**  
Manama

Under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the 27th edition of the Annual Heritage Festival will kick off on April 24 and continue until May 3.

The event will be organised by Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) near Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort in Riffa.

This year's festival is themed "Arabian Horses" to reflect an inherent part of Bahrain's civilisation and history.

The BACA also pointed out that the festival will also offer the public a rich programme featuring local traditional handicrafts, which are still practised by many Bahrainis.

The event will also present an array of activities that will suit all ages, like workshops highlighting the authenticity and beauty of Arabian horses.

The festival will also present a wide variety of folkloric shows, traditional and modern products as well as a traditional market and cafes.



# Protests erupt again

Algeria protesters demand wholesale democratic change in the country

● **Protesters called for Abdelkader Bensalah, head of the upper house of parliament, to quit as caretaker president.**

● **The army has so far patiently monitored the mostly peaceful protests that at times swelled to hundreds of thousands of people.**



Police use a water cannon to disperse people protesting in Algiers.

**Algiers**

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators returned to Algeria's streets yesterday to press demands for wholesale democratic change well beyond former president Abdelaziz Bouteflika's resignation, chanting "we do what we want," witnesses said.

Parliament named an interim president and a July 4 election date was set in a transition endorsed by Algeria's powerful

military. But Bouteflika's April 2 exit failed to placate many Algerians who want to topple the entire elite that have dominated the country since independence from France in 1962.

Protesters gathered anew in city centres around Algeria demanding root-and-branch reforms — including political pluralism and crackdowns on corruption and cronyism, witnesses said. Numbers later surged after

Friday prayers.

There was no official count but Reuters reporters at the scene estimated the number of demonstrators in the hundreds of thousands as on previous Fridays since the extraordinary mass dissent erupted on Feb 22.

"We will not give up our demands," said Mourad Hamini, standing outside his coffee shop, where thousands of protesters were waving Algerian flags.

The crowd later chanted: "This is our country and we do what we want!"

Protesters also called for Abdelkader Bensalah, head of the upper house of parliament, to quit as caretaker president and for Nouredine Bedoui to stand down as interim prime minister.

"They must go. The B's must go," one banner read, referring to Bensalah, Bedoui and Moad Bouchareb, head of the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) party.

Tayib Belaiz, chairman of Algeria's Constitutional Council and a fourth senior "B" official, resigned earlier this week.

A young man who was injured in protests in the Algerian capital last week died on Friday of injuries to the head, Ennahar TV said on Friday.

Ennahar said there were two accounts regarding the death of the 18-year-old. The first was that he was beaten during last Friday's protests and the second was that he fell from a truck on his way to the protests.

Police are investigating his death, Ennahar added.

On Tuesday, armed forces chief Lt General Ahmed Gaed Salah said the military was considering all options to resolve the national political crisis and warned "time is running out."

It was a hint the military was losing patience with the popular upheaval shaking Algeria, a major oil and natural-gas exporter and a key security partner for the West against extremist militants in north and west Africa.

Salah did not specify what measures the army could take but added: "We have no ambition but to protect our nation."

**1999**

is the year in which Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected the President of Algeria.

  
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# Alternative punishment 'right measure to promote justice'

Manama

Interior Minister, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdul-lah Al Khalifa has hailed the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for the Government to reinforce its capabilities for the useful application of the provisions of the penal code on alternative punishments, in addition of the provision of rehabilitation measures and programmes commensurate with the personal circumstances of those sentenced, to be reintegrated into society.

The minister said that the royal directives reflect the dedication of His Majesty the King to respect the dignity of humans, promote nationalism spirit and rehabilitate convicts to meet the nature of the crime without jeopardising the rights of the victims and those affected.

He said that alternative punishments are a successful measure to promote justice principles, fight crimes and prevent them from reinforcing sustainable security factors for the implementation of penalties through considering inmates



**The royal directives aim to reinforce tolerance, love and sense of responsibility towards the family and society.**

GENERAL SHAIKH RASHID

as part of any society and their needs to be rehabilitated to limit crimes and enhance the sense of

responsibility.

General Shaikh Rashid indicated that the Interior Ministry

works to develop new mechanisms to expand the implementation of the alternative punishments, especially electronic monitoring in co-ordination with concerned authorities to ease the suffering of the families of inmates and the psychological, social and economic burdens of those families.

The minister asserted that the royal directives aim to reinforce tolerance, love and sense of responsibility towards the family and society, and encourage all to assume their responsibilities towards the implementation of

the directives, while citizens become partners in the success of this approach for the best interest of the nation and the community.

The Interior Minister said that diversity of legislation in Bahrain in implementing alternative punishments makes it a leader in enforcing these laws as a turning point in the civilised Bahraini society and the promotion of modern reformation policy for penalties in the Kingdom for the protection of community security under the leadership of His Majesty the King.



Council Representatives Speaker Fawziya Zainal stressed keenness on supporting Bahraini researches to conduct more studies and obtain academic degrees so as to contribute to the development of all sectors in the Kingdom. She underscored the importance of supporting Bahraini youth and encouraging them on conducting researches and promoting innovative ideas which would have a positive impact on national development. This came as she received Shaikha Al Aliwi, a researcher at the Council of Representatives Legal Affairs Directorate, who presented a copy of her book "Legal Mechanisms to Protect Human Rights".



President of the Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA), Shaikh Isa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, received here yesterday Khalid Abdulla Buhindi, board member of the Bin Hind Group, and Leena Ahmed Al Mannai, the CEO of Culinaire and Beyond. Shaikh Isa bin Ali lauded the efforts being exerted by the private sector to support the government in holding events that consolidate the Kingdom's leadership in the field of exhibition and conferences industry. The BBA president expressed pride in the successes achieved by Bahraini youth in organising mega events, which, he said, reflects their outstanding capabilities and competence.

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The Director-General of Bahrain News Agency, Abdulla Khalil Buhejji, took part in the 44th Executive Board Meeting of the Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA). Mr Buhejji affirmed BNA's keenness to participate in such meetings aimed at consolidating regional co-operation among news agencies, as well as enhancing co-ordination among them in a way that would facilitate news exchange. The BNA chief asserted that holding the OANA meetings reflects the distinguished relations among the member states.



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Igor Crnadak, received the Ambassador of the Kingdom, Ahmed Abdulrahman Al Saati, in his office in Sarajevo. Ambassador Al Saati conveyed the greetings of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa to Igor Crnadak and his wishes for the Bosnian people of further prosperity. During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral relations between the Kingdom and Bosnia and Herzegovina and means of enhancing them for the common interest of the two friendly countries and peoples.

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The Sikh community in the Kingdom celebrated Baisakhi festival yesterday at the Kanoo Garden Gurudwara in Umm Al Hassam. A large number of community members attended the celebrations, where 'Guru Ka Langar' was served. Rakesh Sharma, President of the Gurudwara Management Committee and Balbir Kaur, Gurudwara Management Committee member attended.

# Bahrain celebrates 30 years of diplomatic ties with China

Special events mark the diplomatic milestone; Foreign Minister expresses hope to further boost ties

● The Chinese ambassador paid tribute to HRH the Premier for his keenness on supporting and developing joint co-operation.

● The Minister of Foreign Affairs hailed the bilateral relations that are based on strong foundations and mutual trust and respect.



Beijing | Manama

A special event to celebrate the diplomatic milestone was held at the Kingdom's Embassy in Beijing.

Mr An Wa'er with Shaikh Salman, Shaikh Khalid and Shaikh Hisham at the event.

The Embassy of the Kingdom to the People's Republic of China celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The Ambassador of the Kingdom in Beijing, Dr Anwar Yusuf Abdulla Alabdulla delivered a speech during the event in which he affirmed deep-rooted relations between the two countries, which have been constantly developing through the past 30 years.

He also affirmed the Kingdom's keenness to bolster these relations at all levels for the common interest of the two countries and peoples.

The celebration was also attended by a number of officials, businessmen, and diplomats, including the Vice Chairperson of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa deputised his ad-

visor Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa to attend a ceremony marking the diplomatic milestone.

Chinese Ambassador to Bahrain Mr An Wa'er hosted the ceremony at the Diplomat Hotel, in the presence of ministers, senior officials, members of the diplomatic corps and guests.

Shaikh Salman hailed steadily-growing bilateral relations which are based on friendship and mutual respect, stressing Bahrain's keenness on strengthening co-operation with China to serve shared interests and meet the aspirations of the two friendly countries and peoples.

"The celebration of 30 years of diplomatic relations reflects deep-rooted relations binding the two friendly countries and peoples", he said, stressed mutual keenness on enhancing joint co-operation to the highest levels.

The Chinese ambassador paid tribute to HRH the Premier for his keenness on supporting and developing joint co-operation,

thanking HH Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa for gracing the ceremony on behalf of HRH the Premier.

He reiterated his country's keenness on enhancing joint co-operation with the Kingdom of Bahrain, expressing delight at celebrating 30 years of diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries.

Speaking at the event, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, affirmed the deep historical relations of friendship between the Kingdom and the People's Republic of China.

He ascribed the strength of Bahrain-China ties to the special care accorded by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khali-

fa, HRH Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs hailed the bilateral relations that are based on strong foundations and mutual trust and respect and having all factors for more pro-

gress and prosperity.

The minister expressed his pride in the development of the bilateral relations between the two countries, stressing Bahrain's keenness to further boost the bilateral relations and enhance co-operation for the benefit of both countries and peoples.

He pointed out the continuous coordination and communication between the two countries' officials on various issues and in international forums to serve their common interests and achieve further progress and development for their peoples, as well as to reinforce security and peace in the region and across the globe.

The Chinese Ambassador expressed his thanks and appreciation of the Foreign Affairs Minister's participation in the celebration, saying that it embodies pride in the development and progress of bilateral relations in light of the constant mutual interest in boosting these relations at all levels, wishing the Bahrain further progress and prosperity.



Many cultural programmes were held marking the occasion.

## Stranded expat 'leading roofless life'

● Sulaiman's family includes his wife and three children.

TDI | Manama  
Rajeevan Purvankara

A stranded expat in the Kingdom is devoid of basic necessities of life including a roof to sleep under.

Indian national Sulaiman Kunju, has been living on the terrace of a building in Manama for the last four months, battling the last winter.

Speaking to Tribune, Sulaiman said that he came to the Kingdom 10 years ago after paying BD1,000 for the visa.

"Initially, I was employed for a salary of BD140 a month in the construction sector. It took me nearly two years to settle my debts incurred to obtain the visa back home.

"After two years, I had no money to renew my visa and since then I have been an illegal resident in the Kingdom."

As of now, a CPR card is the only form of legal identification he possesses, having lost whereabouts of his passport upon the death



Mr Sulaiman on the terrace of the building in Manama.

After two years, I had no money to renew my visa and since then I have been an illegal resident in the Kingdom.

SULAIMAN

of his sponsor.

"I do some odd jobs to make a living. I want to go home soon."

Sulaiman's family includes his wife and three children. He hails from the Indian state of Kerala.

Those interested to help Sulaiman can give a ring on 36739482.

## Five jailed for sheltering fugitives

TDI | Manama

The Lower Criminal Court has sentenced five defendants to one year behind bars each for sheltering two wanted fugitives, while a sixth suspect was freed due to lack of proof.

The third defendant was the one who planned to provide the two wanted men with shelter after he received a call from one of them, according to prosecutors.

"The defendants were staying in a farm and they were afraid that cops would nab them."

He assigned the other defendants to help him in the operation, tasking the second defendant to prepare a place to accommodate them, while the first defendant was asked to provide a temporary haven for them in his family house.

The sixth defendant's duty was to monitor the area and inform them whenever police officers arrive while they were transporting the fugitives from the farm to their new shelter.

The operation was a success

The defendants were staying in a farm and they were afraid that cops would nab them.

PROSECUTORS

and they remained in the first defendant's house for three days before police officers received a tip-off.

"We transferred them at around 1:30 am in the night to their new home. They stayed there for three days. On the fourth day, I discovered that my friends were arrested. I returned to our house immediately and asked the fugitives to leave.

"However, I would as well fall into the police net soon," the first defendant told prosecutors.

On the acquittal of the sixth defendant, the court ruling said that he wasn't aware of the reason behind the task entrusted on him.

"He committed the act because he was told to do it without being offered any further explanation."

# Medic set to testify before court in baby torture case

15 months old baby girl was allegedly tortured by her mother

TDI | Manama

● The baby girl was admitted to hospital with second-degree burns.

● The woman said that the infant's hand got hurt after she fell down while trying to walk.

The doctor, who examined a baby girl allegedly tortured by her mother, will testify before the court on April 29, 2019.

The Supreme Criminal Court had earlier adjourned the case of an Arab woman accused of beating her own child, to seek a medical report.

The investigation documents revealed that the Arab woman

“He had previously filed a case against his wife after their infant's hand got broken.”

HUSBAND'S LAWYER

had tortured her own 15-month-old baby girl.

The baby girl was admitted to hospital with second-degree

burns in her private parts, behind her thighs, legs as well as a fractured humerus and a subdural haematoma.

And it was the 27-year-old woman's husband who lodged the case against his wife, accusing her of beating and causing harm to their infant.

“My client is married to the defendant and they have a seven-year-old boy and a girl aged one year and three months,” the

husband's lawyer said.

“He had previously filed a case against his wife after their infant's hand got broken. But his family intervened and the case got cancelled.”

The woman said that the infant's hand got hurt after she fell down while trying to walk, but her narration of events were not “believed” by her husband, who reported the incident to police.

Woman in plea to reduce her age

TDI | Manama

A Bahraini woman filed a case at the High Administrative Court to reduce her age from 37 to 26 years, but judges rejected her request.

The plaintiff told judges that the competent authorities had mistakenly noted in her birth certificate that she was born in 1982, although her real year of birth is 1993, according to her claims before prosecutors.

The court referred her case to the commission responsible for correcting names and surnames to determine her age, but she didn't appear before it's members to make her case.

“The law stipulates that no authorities aren't allowed to revise the age mentioned in any citizen's passport unless based on a birth certificate or a document issued by the Ministry of Health.

“The documents submitted by the plaintiff lack any proof that the defendant was born in 1993 as they clearly show that she was born on May 12, 1982.

“She also failed to appear before the commission, therefore her case was rejected,” the court ruling explained.

## Bahrain to mark Arab Deaf Week

Manama

Bahrain will mark the 44th Arab Deaf Week during this month's last week.

The pan-Arab Deaf Week was first launched in 1974 following the recommendations of the Arab Federation for the Deaf to enhance social awareness on the basic rights of this category of people

Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan

“The Kingdom has been successfully supporting and promoting individuals with physical disabilities.”

MR HUMAIDAN

said the 2019 edition will be held this year under the theme “Recruiting the Deaf is a Community

Responsibility”.

He underlined the strides achieved in the Kingdom to care for people with physical disabilities, to support them and promote their rehabilitation, empowerment, training and employment.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Development has established the “You Are Not” Centre in 2007 to communicate with businessmen to find jobs for the people with physical disabilities

1,873

people suffering from hearing impairment receive allowances from the Labour Ministry.

in the private sector.

The ministry has so far found jobs for 263 people with hearing-impairment ever since the centre was established.

A group of people with hearing impairment have also joined the productive families projects.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Development provides allowances to a total of 1,873 people suffering from hearing impairment.

## GCC pledge for Yemen wins UN praise



Yemen faces severe humanitarian crisis.

● Council members voiced their concern that agreements between the Yemeni government and Houthis in Stockholm four months ago were yet to be implemented and called for their immediate implementation.

United Nations

The UN Security Council has commended Saudi Arabia and the UAE after the two countries pledged \$200 million in humanitarian relief assistance for Yemenis for Ramadan.

Council members voiced their concern

that agreements between the Yemeni government and Houthis in Stockholm four months ago were yet to be implemented and called for their immediate implementation.

In a press statement, the council affirmed its support for the Stockholm agreement, and its backing for the special envoy of the secretary-general to Yemen and the chairman of the Coordinating Committee for Redeployment.

The relief assistance has been allocated to UN partners: \$140 million to the World Food Programme, \$40 million to UNICEF to address sanitation issues and malnutrition among children and mothers, and \$20 million to the World Health Organisation to tackle cholera and provide intravenous feeding fluids.

“Transgressions by Houthi militia will not stop us from supporting Yemen, especially with the holy month of Ramadan upon us,” said Dr Abdullah Al Rabeeah, supervisor general of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KS-Relief).

“We must recognise that the Saudi-led coalition forces (supporting Yemen's internationally recognised government) ensure the assistance reaches ports or land.

“However, when the aid reaches militia-controlled regions, there are obstacles preventing beneficiaries from gaining proper access to humanitarian aid. That starvation method is a political tool that the Houthis use to control Yemen,” he said.

Those responsible for these abuses must be held accountable, Al Rabeeah added.

## French passenger rescued from Red Sea cruise ship

● The Costa Luminosa, which was traveling from Salalah in Oman towards Aqaba in Jordan, continued on its voyage.

Jeddah

Saudi border guards rescued a French female tourist yesterday after she broke her leg on board a cruise ship in the Red Sea.

The 85-year-old was aboard the Costa Luminosa off the coast of south-west Saudi Arabia when the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Jeddah received an emergency call from

the King Abdulaziz International Airport's search and rescue centre, saying the women needed emergency medical attention.

The details of the message was passed to the Saudi Arabia Border Guards.

The border guard's vessel Al Lith was sent to meet the cruise ship near Al Qahma, in the Kingdom's south-western Asir region.

Lt Col Misfer Bin Ghanam Al Qarni, border guards spokesman, said the patient was transferred to Jazan, where she was then taken to Prince Mohammed Bin Nasser Hospital by ambulance.

The Costa Luminosa, which was traveling from Salalah in Oman towards Aqaba in Jordan, continued on its voyage.



Saudi border guards rush the patient to Prince Mohammed Bin Nasser Hospital.

WORLD  
world

# Trump slams 'fabricated' testimony in Mueller report

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday dismissed unfavorable testimony in the Mueller report on Russian election interference as "fabricated" and labelled the document "crazy."

"Statements are made about me by certain people in the Crazy Mueller Report, in itself written by 18 Angry Democrat Trump Haters, which are fabricated & totally untrue," the president tweeted.

A 400-page document outlining the findings of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's 22-month investigation, made public on Thursday, cleared Trump of criminal conspiracy but left open whether he had obstructed justice.

Mueller's report recounts 10 episodes involving the president and potential obstruction of the investigation.

After reviewing the document, Attorney General Bill Barr and his deputy Rod Rosenstein concluded there was insufficient evidence to charge the president with obstruction.

Mueller, however, noted that while he was following Justice Department policy in not charging Trump, the evidence he gathered "does not exonerate" the Republican president.

“Because I never agreed to testify, it was not necessary for me to respond to statements made in the ‘Report’ about me, some of which are total bullshit & only given to make the other person look good (or me to look bad)”

DONALD TRUMP

Trump initially celebrated the publication of the report -- which landed as the United States dives into the ferment of a bitter presidential campaign -- saying at the White House that he was "having a good day."

But he was in a more defensive mood yesterday, as he prepared for a long Easter weekend at his Florida golf resort, insisting that he had done nothing wrong.

**Public 'misled'**

"Because I never agreed to testify, it was not necessary for me to respond to statements made in the 'Report' about me, some of which are total bullshit & only given to make the other



US President Donald Trump waves upon arrival at Palm Beach International airport, Florida

person look good (or me to look bad)," Trump added, repeating his description of the investigation as an "Illegally Started Hoax."

Mueller said in his report that Trump's "efforts to influence the investigation were mostly unsuccessful, but that is largely because the persons who surrounded the president declined

to carry out orders or accede to his requests."

The episodes of potential wrongdoing, which will now be examined by the Democrat-led House of Representatives, include the firing of FBI chief James Comey, Trump's efforts to remove Mueller and his attempts to prevent disclosure of emails about the infamous 2016

Trump Tower meeting between Russians and senior campaign officials.

Democrats meanwhile have demanded action against Barr, arguing that Mueller's report undercut some of the attorney general's key claims about the obstruction issue and the White House's cooperation with the investigation.

## 11 sleeping civilians killed in Cameroon Boko Haram attack

AFP | Yaounde, Cameroon

Boko Haram fighters torched a village in Cameroon's troubled Far North Region overnight and killed 11 civilians in their sleep, security sources said yesterday.

"Boko Haram made an incursion at night in the Tchakamari area. The toll is 11," a source close to security services in the area said, confirming a report from a member of a local self-defence militia.

It was the deadliest Boko Haram raid in recent months in Cameroon. The bodies were "charred", the source close to security services said, adding that the attackers had burnt the village.

The dead included both children and the aged and began at around 10 pm and lasted until about 1 am yesterday.

The Boko Haram conflict began in 2009 in neighbouring Nigeria and has killed more than 27,000 people and left 1.8 million homeless in the country's northeast.

## Stadium debate ahead of Ukraine presidential runoff

AFP | Kiev, Ukraine

A comedian tipped to take over Ukraine's presidency and his incumbent rival go head-to-head in an extraordinary stadium debate yesterday, as campaigning reaches its grand finale before weekend vote.

Polls show Volodymyr Zelensky, a 41-year-old standup comic with no political experience, handily defeating President Petro Poroshenko in a second-round of voting on Sunday.

The television star's bid started as a long shot but he leapfrogged establishment candidates amid frustration over corruption, economic trouble and a conflict with Moscow-backed insurgents in the country's east.

Some 60,000 spectators are expected to attend the first and only policy head-to-head of the campaign, set to take place in Kiev's Olympic Stadium amid beefed-up security.

## Bangladesh girl burned to death on teacher's order: police

AFP | Dhaka

A schoolgirl was burned to death in Bangladesh on the orders of her head teacher after she reported him for sexually harassing her, police said yesterday.

The death of 19-year-old Nusrat Jahan Rafi last week sparked protests across the South Asian nation, with the prime minister promising to prosecute all those involved.

Rafi was lured to the rooftop of the Islamic seminary she attended where her attackers asked her to withdraw the sexual harassment complaint she had filed with police.

When she refused, she was



Bangladeshi women hold banners and photographs of schoolgirl Nusrat Jahan Rafi at a protest in Dhaka

doused in kerosene and set on fire.

Police said yesterday that one of the 17 people arrested in connection with her death had accused the school's principal of ordering the attack.

The teacher "told them to put pressure on Rafi to withdraw the case or kill her if she refused", senior police superintendent Mohammad Iqbal, who is leading the investigation, said.

## Expansive New Kingdom tomb unveiled in Egypt's Luxor

Reuters | Luxor, Egypt

Archaeologists on Thursday unveiled an unusually large tomb on Luxor's west bank dated to ancient Egypt's 18th dynasty.

The 3,500-year-old, 450-square-metre (540-square-yard) tomb contains 18 entrance gates and is believed to have belonged to a nobleman named Shedsu-Djehuty.

The nobleman was the royal master of seals for ancient Egyptian kings of Upper and Lower Egypt, said Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities.

Egyptian workers started

renovating the tomb upon its discovery in 2018, finding a huge yard, colourful floor tiles and wall paintings documenting activities including boat making and hunting.

The west bank of the River Nile at Luxor is home to the Valley of the Kings, where pharaohs and nobles of the New Kingdom were buried in tombs carved into the rock. The 18th dynasty was the first of the New Kingdom dynasties.

The tomb is the latest in a series unveiled by Egypt's ministry of antiquities, which says more excavation teams have been working as security has improved in Egypt in recent years.

## Endangered Kakapo population boosted by record number of chicks

Reuters | Wellington

A record number of endangered flightless Kakapo birds have hatched during New Zealand's unusually long 2019 breeding season, dramatically boosting the numbers of the rare native parrot.

More than 70 chicks have been born, according to New Zealand's Department of Conservation (DOC). Though not all are expected to make it to adult-

hood, the current 147 adult population is expected to see a dramatic increase.

The birds breed only once every two to four years when native rimu trees produce fruit, and this year's season was expected to be a record length.

"It's been going on for a long time... we had our first mating before Christmas, the first chick hatched on the 30 January, the earliest a chick had ever hatched," Andrew Digby, a sci-

ence advisor on DOC's Kakapo Recovery Programme, told Radio New Zealand's 'Kakapo Files' podcast this week.

Kakapo are the world's heaviest species of parrot, with females weighing around 1.4 kgs (3.1 pounds) and males 2.2 kgs (4.8 pounds).

The birds are vulnerable to predators and were decimated by cats and stoats introduced by European settlers in the 19th century.



Kakapo parrot chicks are seen in this undated social media photo obtained April 18, 2019, in an undisclosed location in New Zealand

By the mid-1990s Kakapo were on the brink of extinction but government-funded breeding programmes have worked to increase bird numbers.

Digby told Radio New Zealand that the young chicks were still quite uncoordinated and conservation staff were training them to get used to exploring so they can eventually climb 30 metres (90 feet) trees on dedicated island sanctuaries.

# Notre-Dame paintings removed amid lead pollution fears

AFP | Paris

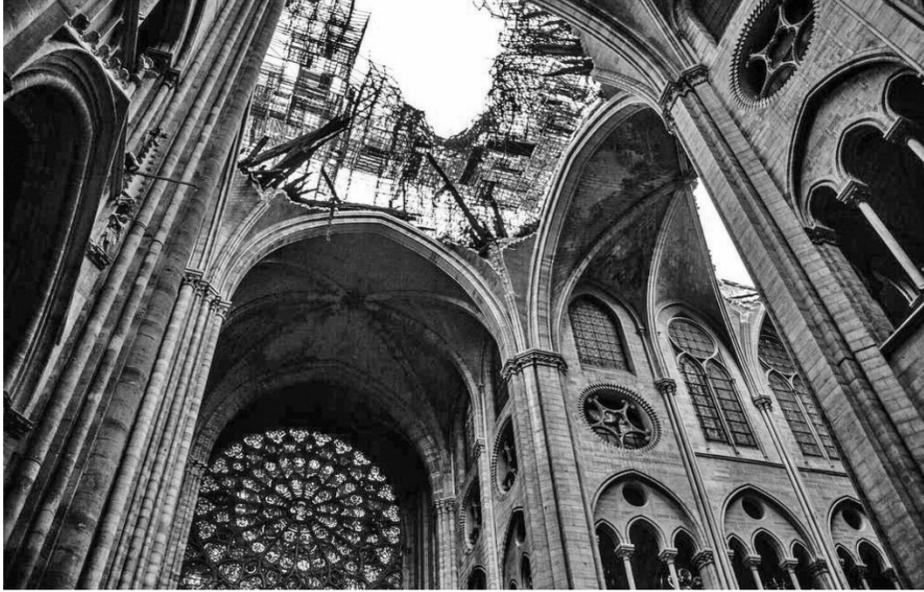
French art experts headed into the stricken Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris to remove all the remaining paintings yesterday despite warnings from an environmental group that the site could be a toxic health threat.

Officials from the culture ministry were allowed into the 850-year-old landmark to begin retrieving the artworks after fire service officials declared the scorched structure safe enough to go inside.

Firefighters and engineering experts have been working on the fragile landmark since a devastating blaze on Monday night, erecting scaffolding and other wooden supports to stop any of the stonework collapsing.

"The paintings inside the cathedral have been saved from the flames and can now be taken down and transported to safe areas," France's Culture Minister Franck Riester told reporters at the scene yesterday.

"All of the paintings will be removed today," Riester added, saying that he was feeling "very positive" given how most of the priceless canvasses, many of them dating from the 17th or 18th century, had been saved.



One of the rose windows below the damaged roof of Notre-Dame-de Paris Cathedral in Paris

As firefighters inspected the top of the fragile southern facade, art experts began carrying out paintings from the cathedral in protective white film and loading them into trucks.

The artworks were taken to the Louvre museum, a centre of restoration, where experts will repair relatively minor damage caused by smoke or water before storing the paintings until they

can be returned.

## Lead pollution?

But as the latest phase of salvage work took place, a French charity warned about the possible health impact from the fire.

The Robin des Bois (Robin Hood) organisation said that around 300 tonnes of lead from the roof and steeple had melted in Monday night's fire, which ac-

cording to officials had reached 800 degrees Celsius (1,470F) at its peak.

"The cathedral has been reduced to the state of toxic waste," the association said in a statement, calling on French authorities to detoxify the tonnes of rubble, ash and waste water produced by firefighters.

"Before launching a competition for the design of a new

steeple, we should launch a competition to decontaminate what at the moment, alas, can be considered an industrial wasteland," it added.

After fears about air-borne lead pollution on Monday night, monitoring service Airparif told AFP it did not monitor lead levels in real-time but it has sent its filters to be analysed in a laboratory.

There was no immediate reaction from French authorities to the claims by Robin des Bois, which are of most concern to people living and working on the Ile de la Cite island where Notre Dame stands.

Lead pollution can cause neurological defects for humans,

especially children, as well as nervous system and kidney problems.

## Art saved

Thanks to a human chain formed by firefighters and church officials on Monday night, the vast majority of the most sacred artifacts and valuable items inside the cathedral were saved.

These include the Holy Crown of Thorns, which Catholics believe was worn by Jesus Christ at his crucifixion, and a tunic thought to have belonged to 13th-century French crusader king, Louis IX, who was made a saint.

Even a copper statue of a rooster containing relics that sat atop the now-destroyed Notre-Dame spire was found among the ashes, dented but intact.

The paintings being brought out yesterday included several of the great "Mays" paintings, which were commissioned between 1630 and 1707 by the Corporation of the Parisian goldsmiths.

The giant canvasses, as big as three metres by four (10 feet by 13), depict events from the life of the Virgin Mary and were offered to the cathedral every May 1 as a sign of devotion.



**Around 300 tonnes of lead from the roof and steeple had melted in Monday night's fire**

## Fraud-tainted Montenegro tycoon challenges president

AFP | Podgorica, Montenegro

Top businessmen in Montenegro accused of fraud has said he was the victim of a racket by politicians and challenged President Milo Djukanovic to a television debate to prove "who is telling the truth."

In mid-January, a video clip from 2016 surfaced in which Dusko Knezevic, chairman of the Atlas Group, appeared to hand the then mayor of Podgorica an envelope containing what Knezevic later said was \$100,000 to fund an election campaign.

## 13 killed as church roof collapses in South Africa

AFP | Johannesburg

The roof of a church collapsed during mass near the eastern South African city of Durban, killing 13 people and injuring at least 16, officials said yesterday.

The accident happened on Thursday evening in the town of Dlangubo, north of Durban, after heavy rains.

"The roof of the building collapsed because of heavy rains last night ... at this point we have a total of 13 fatalities," said a spokesman for the provincial traditional-affairs department.

## Journalist shot dead in Northern Ireland in 'terrorist incident'

AFP | Derry, United Kingdom

A journalist was shot dead during riots in Northern Ireland in what police yesterday were treating as a terrorist incident following the latest upsurge in violence to shake the troubled region.

"Lyra McKee was murdered during orchestrated violence in Creggan last night," Assistant Chief Constable Mark Hamilton said in a statement.

McKee, 29, had earlier posted an image that appeared to be from the riots in the Creggan housing estate in the city of Londonderry, also known as Derry, accompanied by the words "Derry tonight. Absolute madness."

Images of the unrest posted on social media showed a car and van ablaze and hood-



Police secured the area where journalist Kyra McKee was shot during rioting

ed individuals throwing petrol bombs and fireworks at police vehicles.

"A single gunman fired shots in a residential area of the city and as a result wounded Ms McKee," said Hamilton, adding that police believed the gunman was a "violent dissident republican".

"We are treating this as a

terrorist incident and we have launched a murder enquiry," he added.

McKee had written for The Atlantic magazine and BuzzFeed News and was named by Forbes Magazine in 2016 as one of their "30 under 30" outstanding figures in media, according to her literary agent Janklow & Nesbit.

## 'World's smallest baby boy' set to go home in Japan

AFP | Tokyo, Japan

The world's smallest baby boy, who was born in October in Japan weighing as much as an apple, is now ready for the outside world, his doctor said yesterday.

Ryusuke Sekiya was delivered via emergency Caesarean section, after 24 weeks and five days of pregnancy as his mother Toshiko experienced hypertension.

At 258 grams (9.1 ounces) he was even lighter than the previous record holder, another Japanese boy who weighed just 268 grams when he was born last year. That baby was discharged from a Tokyo hospital in February.

When Ryusuke was born on October 1, 2018, he measured 22 centimetres (8.66 inches) tall, and medical staff kept him in neonatal intensive care unit.



Ryusuke Sekiya being treated at a hospital in October

They used tubes to feed him, sometimes taking cotton swabs to apply his mother's milk to his mouth.

Nearly seven months later, the boy has grown 13 times in weight, now weighing over three kilogrammes. He will be released from Nagano Children's Hospital in central Japan over the weekend.

"When he was born, he was so small, and it seemed as if he would break with a touch. I was so worried," his mother said.

## Rome's 'Holy Stairs' bared for first time in 300 years

Reuters | Rome

Rome's "Holy Stairs," which some Catholics believe were climbed by Jesus in Jerusalem, have been uncovered from a protective wooden casing for the first time in nearly three centuries and restored.

The 28 marble steps will remain bare temporarily for devout pilgrims to climb on their knees with direct contact with the stone until they are covered again in June.

According to tradition, the

stairs, known as "Scala Sancta," were part of Pontius Pilate's palace in Jerusalem and brought to Rome by St. Helen, mother of emperor Constantine, after she converted to Christianity.

But some scientists believe the stairs are only part of a legend or a symbolic replica of the stairs of Pilate's palace.

Pilate was the Roman governor of the province of Judea who, according to the Bible, succumbed to demands by Jerusalem's Jewish leaders that Jesus be crucified.



Worshippers pray on the Holy Stairs in Rome, Italy

Pope Innocent XIII ordered the stairs encased in wood in 1723 to protect them from damage from pilgrims.

"We have seen these steps carved out in a totally unusual way. The feet of pilgrims had literally excavated them," said Father Francesco Guerra, rector of the Holy Stairs Sanctuary, which hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit each year.

Under the wood, restorers found coins, photos, rosaries and small hand-written notes with prayers left over the years.

# Valley of the dolls: scarecrows outnumber people in Japan village



Nagoro in Japan has become known as the valley of dolls after local resident Tsukimi Ayano began placing scarecrows on the street to inject some life into her depopulated village

AFP | Nagoro, Japan

In the tiny village of Nagoro, deep in the mountains of western Japan, the wind howls down a deserted street with not a living soul to be seen.

But yet the street appears busy, dotted with life-sized dolls that outnumber humans 10 to one, the product of a one-woman bid to counter the emptiness and loneliness felt in Nagoro, like many Japanese villages decimated by depopulation.

Nagoro, around 550 kilometres (400 miles) southwest of Tokyo, has become known as the valley of dolls after local resident Tsukimi Ayano began placing scarecrows on the street to inject some life into her depopulated village.

"Only 27 people live in this village but the number of scarecrows is tenfold, like 270," the 69-year-old doll maker told AFP in an interview at her home.

It all started 16 years ago when the dexterous Ayano created a scarecrow dressed in her father's clothes to prevent birds eating the seeds she had planted in her garden.

"A worker who saw it in the garden thought it really was my father... he said hello but it was a scarecrow. It was funny," recalled Ayano.

Since then, Ayano has not stopped creating the life-size dolls, made with wooden sticks, newspapers to fill the body, elastic fabrics for skin and knitting wool for hair.

The skillful craftswoman needs only three days to make an adult-sized doll that are now scattered all around the village.

The secret to breathing life into the dolls? Applying pink colour to the lips and cheeks with a make-up brush, revealed Ayano.

At the local school, she has placed 12 colourful child-sized dolls at desks, positioned as if part of a lively class poring over their books.

The school closed seven years ago as there was no one left to teach, she recalled sadly.

"Now there are no children. The youngest person here is 55 years old."

Down the street, a "family" of scarecrows lounges in front of an abandoned grocery shop while



According to experts, around 40 per cent of Japan's 1,700 municipalities are defined as depopulated

a doll dressed as an old farmer window-shops next door.

Near the bus stop, a group of scarecrows gathers as another "father" doll pulls a cart full of "children."

**'It's lonely now'**

While never humming with people, Ayano remembers as a child that Nagoro was once a well-to-do place with some 300 residents and labourers supported by the forestry industry and dam construction work.

"People gradually left... It's lonely now," she said. "I made more dolls as I remembered the time when the village was lively." Nagoro's plight is replicated all around Japan, as the world's third-largest economy battles a declining population, low birth rate and high life expectancy.

The country is on the verge of becoming the first "ultra-aged" country in the world, meaning that 28 percent of people are aged 65 or above.

The latest government report shows that 27.7 percent of a population of 127 million -- one in four people -- are aged 65 or older and the figure is expected to jump to 37.7 percent in 2050.

According to experts, around 40 percent of Japan's 1,700 municipalities are defined as "depopulated."

**'Extremely difficult'**

After World War II, when forestry and agriculture were the main economic drivers, many Japanese lived in rural villages like Nagoro. But young people started to leave for Tokyo in the 1960s, said Takumi Fujinami, economist at the Japan Research Institute.

"The economy was booming in Tokyo and industrial areas at that time. They were the only places people could earn money, so a lot of young people moved there," he said.



Life-size dolls depicting schoolchildren at an elementary school

**27**

people live in Nagoro, Japan but there are some 270 scarecrows

from leaving their hometowns to work in Tokyo, Fujinami said.

"In order to combat depopulation, we need people moving in to depopulated areas. But recovering the population is extremely difficult," he said.

"Instead, it's important to increase income or improve working conditions for young people in rural areas."

For example, companies in rural areas tend to have fewer holidays than those in Tokyo, he said.

"We need to create communities where young people can make a long-term living," Fu-

jinami said, adding that subsidising them to move in is not enough.

While there is little evidence of citizens returning to Nagoro, Ayano's dolls have attracted flesh-and-blood people from as far afield as the US and France.

"Before I started making scarecrows, nobody stopped by. Now many people visit here," she said.

"I hope Nagoro will become lively again and many people come here for sightseeing."

"I don't know what Nagoro will look like in 10 or 20 years... but I'll keep on making dolls."



Tsukimi Ayano checking on a life-size doll displayed at an elementary school



Tsukimi Ayano making the head of a life-size doll at her house



Local resident Tsukimi Ayano walking in front of an abandoned grocery shop decorated with life-size dolls in the tiny village of Nagoro in western Japan

# SOCIETY



Under the patronage of the Chief of Public Security, the second Coast Guard Football Tournament 2019 concluded at the Customs Affairs playground. Various departments of the Coast Guard took part in the tournament. Coast Guard Commander Major-Gen...



The students, staff and parents of the British Primary Department (Grades 1 and 2) of Al Noor International School celebrated the school's 26th Annual Day with tremendous enthusiasm. The function was graced by the presence of the School Chairman Ali Has... in the Talent Competition, which was held earlier this year. The rest of the evening showcased a riotous display of talent by the 6 - 8 years old students.



Indian Ladies Association Executive Committee for 2019-20 has held a meeting. Kalpana Patil ( President), Deepa Mishra (Secretary Activity), Nilofar Baig ( Secretary Operation) Sushma Misra ( Secretary PR), Kaihekushan Omar Kazi ( Secretary Entertainment), Jayashree Shome (Secretary, Membership), Sushma A Gupta ( Treasurer ), Meenakshi Sharma ( General Secretary) and Sangeeta Agarwal ( Vice-President) attended.

Society



Ala'a Siyadi watched the final match and gave prizes to the players and organisers.



Bahrain Red Crescent Society Agriculture team paid a visit to Farmers Market in Budaiya, where volunteers took part in a workshop organised by Abusaiba Plants and Flowers. The workshop tackled topics about plant breeding, plants trimming and planting seasons. Head of "Agriculture Team" in BRCS, Dr Nilofer Jahromi explained that this event comes in the line with Society's keenness to develop volunteers' agriculture skills, which will provide sustainable livelihoods for needy families.



Head of the General Surgery and Urology Department in the College of Medicine and Medical Science in the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) Prof Rami Yagan delivered a lecture on breast herniation, which is considered as one of the rare diseases. In the lecture, Prof Yagan presented the results of a research he conducted, with the aim of reaching a scientific classification of breast herniation.



Director Dr Muhammad Mashood and Principal Amin Mohammed Ahmed Hulaiwah and the Head Teachers of the different sections of the school, parents and other invited guests. A total of 46 students received trophies for their outstanding performance



The Arabian Gulf University (AGU) recently hosted a workshop on the methods of professionally writing scientific researches in English. The workshop, which was attended by professors and students of the College of Medicine and Medical Science and the College of Graduate Studies, was presented by English Teacher at the College of Graduate Studies Luma Fayiz Al Salah. Ms Al Salah underlined the importance of conducting scientific research in a manner that is accredited according to the academic standards followed by the largest and most important international universities.

## business

**Carlos Ghosn to be indicted on additional charge as early as Monday: NHK**

Reuters | Tokyo

Tokyo prosecutors are likely to indict former Nissan Motor Co Ltd Chairman Carlos Ghosn on an additional charge of aggravated breach of trust as early as Monday when his current detention period expires, public broadcaster NHK reported yesterday.

Ghosn was arrested for the fourth time this month on suspicion he tried to enrich himself at Nissan's expense, to the tune of \$5 million. He is also awaiting trial on other charges of financial misconduct and aggravated breach of trust.

Ghosn, who had been released on \$9 million bail in early March after spending 108 days in jail, has denied all allegations against him. His defense team has launched a public battle against the prosecutors, calling the latest arrest "illegal" in documents seen by Reuters.

**Hyundai hires former Ghosn ally Munoz as global COO, Americas head**

Reuters | Seoul

Hyundai Motor Co has appointed Jose Munoz as global chief operating officer and Americas chief, tapping a man formerly considered an ally and potential successor of Nissan Motor Co Ltd's ousted Chairman Carlos Ghosn.

Munoz is the latest foreign executive to be brought in to a South Korean automaker dominated by lifelong loyalists, as heir-apparent Euisun Chung strengthens control of the conglomerate chaired by his aging father.

**Nissan slams output cut report as incorrect**

Reuters | Tokyo

Nissan Motor Co Ltd said yesterday a report by the Nikkei that it would slash production this year was "completely incorrect" and that it had lodged a complaint with the business daily, in an unusually strong denial of a media report in Japan.

The comment came after the Nikkei, revered in Japan for its business news and known for its market-moving scoops and previews, said Nissan would cut its global production by about 15 per cent for the current fiscal year ending March 2020.

**Japan, China shares climb in thin holiday trade**

The dollar stood at 111.91 yen in Asian trade, slightly slipping from 112.00 yen in New York overnight

AFP | Tokyo

Tokyo and Shanghai stocks closed higher yesterday but trade lacked direction with several major markets closed for Easter holidays.

In Japan, the benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.50 per cent, or 110.44 points, to 22,200.56, while the broader Topix index climbed 0.12pc, or 1.96 points, to 1,616.93.

The market's main gainer was Nintendo, which jumped more than 14pc on reports its games and popular Switch console will soon be available in China.

Meanwhile, Chinese stocks managed to claw higher despite some early wobbles over concerns that China's slowing economy could hit soon-to-be-released corporate earnings.

The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index gained 0.63pc, or 20.62 points, to close at 3,270.80.

The Shenzhen Composite Index, which tracks stocks on China's second exchange, added

0.94pc, or 16.51 points, to end the day at 1,778.81.

The Japanese market stayed comfortably in positive territory throughout the day, initially lifted by strong gains in overseas markets.

But a lack of fresh clues and the closure of several major international markets for Easter prompted position adjustment and profit-taking in the afternoon session, said Okasan Online Securities in a commentary.

"After an initial round of buying subsided, (the Nikkei index) became trapped inside a narrow range around 21,200," Okasan said.

"Only few investors were chasing the higher end of the market since major foreign markets are entering a break through Monday," it said.

Wall Street shares finished modestly higher Thursday following a batch of mostly solid corporate earnings and a successful market debut of technology company Pinterest.

The dollar stood at 111.91 yen



Traders work after the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE)

in Asian trade, slightly slipping from 112.00 yen in New York overnight.

Tokyo investors are gradually preparing themselves for a special 10-day holiday from the end of the month for an upcoming imperial succession.

The Tokyo Stock Exchange will be closed from Saturday April 27 through Monday, May 6. Trading will resume from

Tuesday, May 7.

Among major gainers yesterday, Nintendo jumped 14.12pc to 39,200 yen following media reports that its popular Switch game console and game titles will become available in China via tech giant Tencent.

Sony rose 0.60pc to 5,331 yen while Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing added 2.09pc to 64,590. Among individual shares in

China, China Life Insurance climbed 4.29pc to 31.38 yuan and Ping An Insurance rose 3.20pc to 87.00 yuan.

China Merchants Securities closed 3.12pc higher at 18.52 yuan and First Capital Securities gained 1.45pc to 7.72 yuan.

Telecommunications operator China Unicom put on 4.08pc to close at 7.15 yuan and ZTE jumped 7.04pc to 36.49 yuan

**Facebook says it stored 'millions' of unencrypted Instagram passwords**

AFP | San Francisco

"Millions" of Instagram users had their passwords stored in unencrypted form on internal servers, Facebook said Thursday, raising its original estimate of tens of thousands.

"We discovered additional logs of Instagram passwords being stored in a readable format. We now estimate that this issue impacted millions of Instagram users," Facebook said in a blog post.

"We will be notifying these users as we did the others. Our investigation has determined that these stored passwords were not internally abused or improperly accessed," the social network said.

Facebook, Instagram's parent company, revealed last month that the unencrypted passwords of hundreds of millions of users had been stored, putting the number of Instagram users affected in the tens of thousands.

The social network's handling of user data has been a flashpoint for controversy since it admitted last year that Cambridge Analytica, a political consultancy, used an app that may have hijacked the private details of 87 million users.

Facebook has announced a series of moves to tighten handling of data, including eliminating most of its data-sharing partnerships with outside companies.

**Uber's self-driving unit valued at \$7.25 billion in new investment**

Reuters | San Francisco

Uber's autonomous vehicle unit has raised \$1 billion from a consortium of investors including SoftBank Group Corp, giving the company a much-needed funding boost for its pricey self-driving ambitions on the eve of its public stock offering.

Uber Technologies Inc said on Thursday that the investment values its Advanced Technologies Group, which works to develop autonomous driving technology, at \$7.25 billion. SoftBank will invest \$333 million from its \$100 billion Vision Fund, while Toyota Motor Corp and automotive parts supplier Denso Corp will invest a combined \$667 million.

Toyota will also contribute up to an additional \$300 million



Uber's logo is displayed on a mobile phone in London

over the next three years to help cover the costs of building commercial self-driving vehicles, Uber said.

Reuters had reported in March talks of the investment in ATG.

Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said that the funding "will help maintain Uber's position at

the forefront of" a transforming transportation industry.

The funding allows Uber to transfer some of the substantial cost of developing self-driving cars onto outside investors. That is likely to appease some of Wall Street's concerns over Uber's spending on the autonomous unit, which has topped \$1.07 billion since the program started in 2016.

In its filing for an initial public offering this month, Uber cautioned that development of self-driving technology "is expensive and time-consuming and may not be successful" and the company lagged certain competitors.

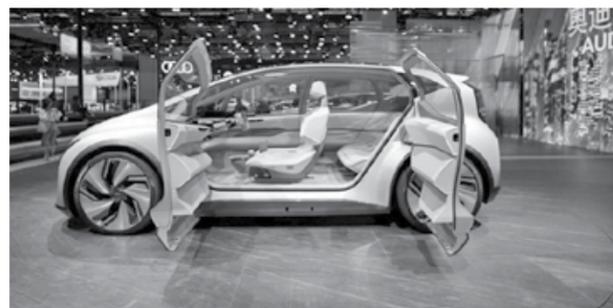
The self-driving business unit brings in no meaningful revenue for Uber, which last year lost \$3.03 billion.

**Return of the bench seat: Concept EVs show space big enough for sofas**

Reuters | Shanghai

Electric vehicle (EV) concepts shown in Shanghai this week, such as the Audi AI:me and Infiniti QX Inspiration, point to a future of living-room-like comfort in cars with flat floors and ample space for sofa-like bench seats.

In the design studies, automakers have taken advantage of the space freed up by the electric motor, which takes less room than the bulky internal combustion



The interior of the Audi's new concept AI-ME with automated driving system is seen during the media day for Shanghai auto show in Shanghai

engine, cooling apparatus and complex transmission gears needed for gasoline cars.

As most batteries in an EV are laid out flat under the floor, the EVs shown in the Shanghai auto show, which started on Tuesday, also have more height and, in fact, many are sport-utility vehicles (SUVs).

Both the AI:me urban car and Infiniti's QX Inspiration SUV have flat floors, interiors large enough to accommodate what looks like a sofa in the back and

more leg room and storage.

Because there is no tunnel, which often houses drive shaft and exhaust in a gasoline car, running through length of EV cabin, the centre of rear seat "can become just as valuable" as space on its sides, design chief for Nissan's premium brand Infiniti, Karim Habib, said.

That in turn points to the possibility of "a return of the bench seat" in the front and the rear - a throwback to American cars of a bygone era, Habib told Reuters.

# Coming soon to China: the car of the future

Manufacturers are competing not only to sell conventional and electric vehicles in China, but also to develop new technologies designed for the on-demand world

AFP | Shanghai, China

Global automakers are positioning for a brave new world of on-demand transport that will require a car of the future -- hyper-connected, autonomous, and shared -- and China may become the concept's laboratory.

With ride-hailing services booming and car-sharing not far behind, the need for vehicles tailored to these and other evolving mobility solutions is one of the hottest topics among global automakers gathered for this week's Shanghai Auto Show. Nearly all agree that there is no better proving ground than China: its gigantic cities are desperate for answers to gridlock and its population is noted for its ready embrace of high-tech new services.

To take advantage of this,

manufacturers are competing not only to sell conventional and electric vehicles in the world's biggest auto market, but also to develop new technologies and even specific interiors designed for the on-demand world.

"We cannot just develop electric cars. They will have to be smart, interconnected and of course shared," Zhao Guoqing, vice president of Chinese auto giant Great Wall Motors, said on the auto show's sidelines.

Discussion of China and ride-hailing inevitably involves Didi Chuxing, the country's omnipresent answer to Uber.

The eagerness of Chinese travellers to hail rides with a smartphone click has unleashed a colossal market: on-demand transport reached \$28 billion in turnover in China last year, or about half of global volume, and is expected to double by 2022,

according to data firm Statista. Didi accounts for about 70 percent of the Chinese market.

## 'Enormous potential'

The on-demand potential is bringing automakers and service providers together.

Last year, Didi unveiled an alliance of Chinese and foreign manufacturers including Renault, Toyota and Volkswagen, dedicated to exploring ways forward.

And in February, Chinese technology giants Alibaba and Tencent joined hands with several manufacturers to develop a future platform for on-demand transport.

"We can no longer be a conventional manufacturer, we must offer mobility solutions, connectivity," Stephan Wollenstein, director of Volkswagen China, told reporters.

Although a relative newcomer to China's automotive market, French brand Renault is plunging ahead: its local joint venture with Chinese manufacturer Brilliance Auto delivered 600 personal minivans to Didi in February.

"Didi wants to develop such vehicles with many carmakers, which are more adapted to (Didi's) business, redesigned around the passenger," said Michael Dong, vice president of Renault-Brilliance-Jinbei.

For one thing, most passenger cars today are designed to squeeze in a family, and thus feature limited space in the back because that's where the kids



Visitors look at the BYD E-SEED GT electric concept car at the Shanghai Auto Show



Self-driving vehicles could be the way of the future, and driverless concept cars were drawing attention at the Shanghai Auto Show



A woman gets out of a BMW i8 Roadster

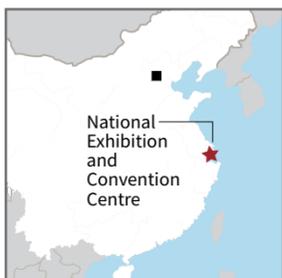


A worker adjusts a Citroen AMI One concept car on the opening day of the Shanghai Auto Show

## Shanghai gears up for 2019 auto show

International motor show in the world's biggest vehicle market

Shanghai show  
April 18-25, 2019



- ★ Covers 360,000 sq. meters
- ★ Over 1,000 exhibitors
- ★ 1 million visitors expected
- ★ 10,000 journalists from over 2,000 media organisations

### Highlights

"New-energy" technology including electric vehicles

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and autonomous technologies

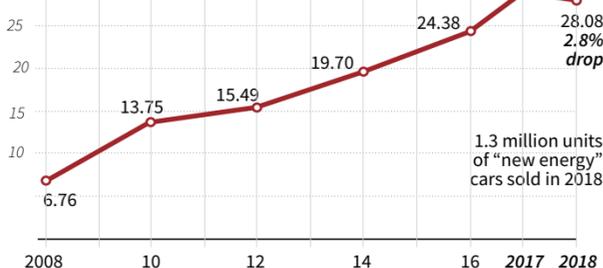
Interconnected ride-hailing and car-sharing concepts

### China market

Sales dropped for the first time last year since the 1990s

Total passenger vehicles,

millions



### At the show

Lotus Evora GT4 Concept racing car



- ★ Lotus is owned by China's Geely Holding Group
- ★ To be demonstrated later in the year in Britain by Chinese drivers Cui Yue and Gaoxiang Fan

normally sit, said Lawrence Petizon, an analyst with AlixPartners.

But for ride-hailing or car-sharing, more space is needed in the back to accommodate grown-up passengers.

"The family car is not the right answer," he said.

Didi drivers typically supply their own vehicles, but Chinese authorities are encouraging service firms to build their own fleets, partly to spur the industry and push forward the futuristic transport concept.

Some manufacturers are even dipping their toes into ride-hailing, with Germany's BMW offering a high-end service in the southwestern Chinese city of Chengdu, and Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz doing so in Shanghai.

"Admittedly, the volumes ordered are still insufficient for mass production but the potential is enormous," says Dong.

## Robot-taxis

The idea is not confined to China.

Daimler and BMW announced in February they would jointly invest "more than one billion euros" to deepen cooperation between their Car2Go and DriveNow services in Europe, in which cars are available for short-term point-to-point use.

One thing that seems to certain to eventually change is how cars are bought and sold.

"Car manufacturers will no longer provide customers with cars via a one-time sale, but rather with a brand that connects them to the users on a daily basis through the mobility services they offer," said a recent report by Eurogroup Consulting.

This automotive evolution is expected to accelerate development of autonomous vehicles, which are already viewed as the future of overall car transport,

but seem especially suited for urban car-sharing services.

Valeo, the French manufacturer of ultrasonic sensors, cameras, and navigational technology, said it received orders totalling one billion euros last year related to the development of "robot-taxis".

Francois Marion, president of Valeo China, said the global advent of driverless cars is just around the bend.

"They will hit the road in carefully charted urban environments, with dedicated lanes on the streets, connected infrastructures guiding them, and programmed itineraries," he said of the futuristic vision.

"And the companies operating them will always be able to intervene if anything happens to one of the vehicles."

Valeo also is working with Meituan, China's leader in meal deliveries, to develop a robotic vehicle.



A visitor takes photos of a Toyota Rhombus electric concept car at the Shanghai Auto Show

## US wins WTO ruling against China grain import quotas

Reuters | Geneva

The United States won a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling on Thursday against China's use of tariff-rate quotas for rice, wheat and corn, which it successfully argued limited market access for US grain exports.

The case, lodged by the Obama administration in late 2016, marked the second US victory in as many months. It came amid US-China trade talks and on the heels of Washington clinching a WTO ruling on China's price support for grains in March.

A WTO dispute panel ruled on Thursday that under the terms of its 2001 WTO accession, China's administration of the tariff rate quotas (TRQs) as a whole violated its obligation to administer them on a "transparent, predictable and fair basis".

TRQs are two-level tariffs, with a limited volume of imports allowed at the lower 'in-quota' tariff and subsequent imports charged an "out-of-quota" tariff, which is usually much higher.

The administration of state trading enterprises and non-state enterprises' portions of TRQs are inconsistent with WTO rules, the panel said.

Australia, Brazil, India, and the European Union were among those reserving their rights in the dispute brought by the world's largest grain exporter.

In a statement, US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue welcomed the decision, saying China's system "ultimately inhibits TRQs from filling, denying US farmers access to China's market for grain".



A World Trade Organization (WTO) logo is pictured on their headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland

If China's TRQs had been fully used, \$3.5 billion worth of corn, wheat and rice would have been imported in 2015 alone, it said, citing US Department of Agriculture estimates.

The two WTO rulings would help American farmers "compete on a more level playing field", the USTR statement said, adding: "The (Trump) Administration will continue to press China to promptly come into compliance with its WTO obligations."

The latest WTO panel said that the United States had not proven all of its case, failing to show that China had violated its public notice obligation under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in respect to TRQs.

China's Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on Friday it "regrets" the panel's decision and that it would "earnestly evaluate" the panel's report.

China would "handle the matter appropriately in accordance with WTO dispute resolution procedures, actively safeguard the stability of the multilateral trading system and continue to administer the relevant agricultural import tariff quotas in compliance with WTO rules", it said.

Either side can appeal the ruling within 60 days.

## US refiners planning major plant overhauls in Q2



The British Petroleum oil refinery is seen in Whiting, Indiana

Reuters | Houston

US oil refiners are planning a heavy slate of plant overhauls in the second quarter, with total production this month off 8.5 per cent compared with the start of the year, according to data from the US Energy Information Administration.

Early spring and winter traditionally are heavy periods for US refinery maintenance. But refiners are planning more upgrades than usual in the first half of 2019 to avoid fall and winter shutdowns as they prepare to meet coming low-sulfur standards.

This year's maintenance schedule and higher crude prices helped push US gasoline

prices to a national average of \$2.83 a gallon last week, up 26pc since the start of the year, according to data from the American Automobile Association. US crude futures rose 32pc in the first quarter.

International Maritime Organization (IMO) 2020 is a standard for maritime diesel that takes effect on Jan. 1 and is designed to reduce air pollution. Refiners have been revamping their plants to make IMO 2020 compliant fuel.

"They will push (winter) turnarounds later into 2020 to take advantage of that margin bump from the switch to IMO 2020," said Susan Bell, a senior associate at energy consultant IHS Markit.

# Oil prices inch up on signs of tighter global supply

Reuters | New York

Oil futures edged up as a drop in crude exports from OPEC's de facto leader, Saudi Arabia, and a draw in US drilling rigs and oil inventories supported prices.

Brent crude futures settled at \$71.97 a barrel, up 35 cents from their last close and near Wednesday's five-month high of \$72.27. Brent saw a weekly gain of 0.6 per cent, marking the fourth consecutive weekly rise for the international benchmark.

In post-settlement trade, the contract added 4 cents to \$72.01 a barrel.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures settled at \$64.00 a barrel, up 24.00 cents. US futures gained just under 0.2pc for the week, their seventh weekly gain in a row.

Many financial markets were closed on Friday for public holidays.

Saudi Arabia's crude oil exports fell by 277,000 barrels to just under 7 million bpd in February from the month before, according to data from the Joint Organizations Data Initiative



An oil well pump jack is seen at an oil field supply yard near Denver, Colorado

(JODI).

US crude, gasoline and distillate inventories dropped this week, with crude posting an unexpected drawdown, the first in four weeks, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) data showed on Wednesday.

"I think it's pretty clear that tightening supplies and receding fears of demand growth is a boost to the market to these five month highs," said Gene McGillian, vice president of market research at Tradition Energy in Stamford, Connecticut.

US energy companies this

week cut the number of oil drilling rigs for the first time in three weeks as production growth forecasts from shale, the country's largest oil fields, continue to shrink.

The US rig count, an early indicator of future output, fell by eight in the week ending April 18, General Electric Co's Baker Hughes energy services firm said in its weekly report, which was released a day early because of the Good Friday holiday.

Oil has been driven up this year by an agreement reached

by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, including Russia, to limit their oil output by 1.2 million bpd.

Global supply has been tightened further by US sanctions on OPEC members Venezuela and Iran.

Iran's crude exports have fallen in April to their lowest daily level this year, tanker data showed and industry sources said, suggesting a reduction in buyer interest ahead of expected further pressure from Washington.



I think it's pretty clear that tightening supplies and receding fears of demand growth is a boost to the market to these five month highs

GENE MCGILLIAN

VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKET RESEARCH AT TRADITION ENERGY IN STAMFORD

## Oil market likely to be well balanced in 2019, says Saudi energy adviser

Reuters | Paris

Ibrahim al-Muhanna, an adviser to the Saudi energy minister, said on Friday he expected the oil market to be "well balanced" this year.

"This year, we have seen the implementation of the OPEC Plus decision. It is possible to extend the cut until the end of the year depending on market conditions," al-Muhanna told an oil summit in Paris.

The OPEC+ group agreed last year to cut production, partly in response to increased U.S. shale output.

## China to keep supporting economy as 'pressure' lingers

Reuters | Beijing

China will maintain policy support for the economy, which still faces "downward pressure" and difficulties after better-than-expected first quarter growth, a top decision-making body of the Communist Party said.

The statement from the politburo came two days after China reported had steady 6.4 percent annual growth in January-March, defying expectations for a further slowdown, as industrial production jumped sharply and consumer demand showed signs of improvement.

## Tesla's Elon Musk, SEC get another week to work out deal on Twitter use

Reuters | New York

Tesla Inc Chief Executive Elon Musk and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission will get another week to settle a dispute over Musk's use of Twitter, a federal judge ruled Thursday.

U.S. District Judge Alison Nathan in Manhattan extended the deadline by one week to April 25, in response to a Thursday court filing where both sides requested the extension and said "discussions are ongoing."

Nathan had been asked to hold Musk in contempt over a Feb. 19 tweet that the SEC said violated an earlier settlement with the agency.

If Musk and the agency fail to resolve the dispute, the judge said she would rule on the contempt request.

The SEC sued Musk last year after he tweeted on Aug. 7 that he had "funding secured" to take Tesla private at \$420 per share. The agency said the tweet, which sent Tesla's share price up as much as 13.3 percent, violated securities laws. Musk's privatization plan was at best in an early stage and financing was not in place.

Musk settled the lawsuit, agreeing to step down as chairman and have the company's lawyers pre-approve written communications with material information about the company, including tweets.

In February, the SEC accused Musk of violating that settlement by sending a tweet about Tesla's production that had not been vetted by the company's attorneys, and asked U.S. District Judge Alison Nathan in Manhattan to hold him in con-



Tesla CEO Elon Musk arrives at Manhattan federal court for a hearing on his fraud settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in New York City (file photo)



The SEC sued Musk last year after he tweeted on Aug. 7 that he had "funding secured" to take Tesla private at \$420 per share

tempt.

Musk's lawyers have argued that the tweet did not contain new information that was material to investors, and that Musk did not need pre-approval for all tweets about Tesla under the settlement.

At an April 4 hearing, a lawyer for the SEC said that if Musk were found in contempt, the agency would ask the judge to require him to submit regular reports about his Twitter use, and to pay a series of progres-

sively higher fines for any future violations.

Nathan declined to rule on the contempt motion at the hearing, instead ordering Musk and Tesla to meet and try to resolve the dispute on their own.

Musk is worth \$20.7 billion, according to Forbes magazine. He has been chief executive of Tesla since 2008 and has more than 25 million followers on Twitter.

The Palo Alto, California-based company built its reputation on luxury cars, but has faced several production challenges with its Model 3 sedan, which it hopes will reach a mass audience.

The Feb. 19 tweet that prompted the SEC's contempt motion said: "Tesla made 0 cars in 2011, but will make around 500k in 2019," meaning 500,000 vehicles.

Four hours later, Musk corrected himself, saying annualized production would be "probably around" 500,000 by year end, with full-year deliveries totaling about 400,000.

# 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  
⊕ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL  
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-SHAZAM! (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 WARRIER, 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, BAIJU  
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 5.30 + 11.15 PM

### 10-JERSEY ( ) (TELUGU) 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, VEDHIKA, 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 I): 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)

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

⊕ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 + 6.30 + 8.30 + 10.30 PM

### 4-TRIPLE THREAT (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW

⊕ TONY JAA, IKO UWAI, SCOTT ADKINS  
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 3.30 + 7.45 + 12.00 MN

### 5-STOCKHOLM (PG-15) (COMEDY/CRIME/DRAMA) NEW

⊕ ETHAN HAWKE, NOOMI RAPACE, MARK STRONG  
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 12.45 + 5.15 + 9.45 PM + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

### 6-THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT (PG-15) (THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW

⊕ JESSE EISENBERG, ALEXANDER SKARSG RD, SALMA HAYEK  
DAILY AT: 1.15 + 5.30 + 9.45 PM

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

⊕ IWAN RHEON, MILO GIBSON, STEFANIE MARTINI  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 3.15 + 7.30 + 11.45 PM

### 8-KURSK (PG-15) (THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW

⊕ LÉA SEYDOUX, COLIN FIRTH, AUGUST DIEHL  
DAILY AT: 2.45 + 7.15 + 11.45 PM

### 9-TEEN SPIRIT (PG-15) (DRAMA/MUSICAL) NEW

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

### 10-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)

⊕ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)  
DAILY AT (VIP II): 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM  
DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 12.15 + 5.15 + 10.15 PM

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

⊕ COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM

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

⊕ DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE  
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 + 12.00 MN

### 13-LITTLE (PG-15) (COMEDY)

⊕ REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN  
DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM

### 14-DRAGGED ACROSS CONCRETE (18+) (CRIME/THRILLER/DRAMA)

⊕ BRIE LARSON, GEMMA CHAN, SAMUEL L. JACKSON  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 3.45 + 9.00 PM

### 15-CAPTAIN MARVEL (PG-13) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)

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

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

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

### 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)

### ⊕ JASON CLARKE, AMY SEIMETZ, JETE LAURENCE

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 4.45 + 9.15 PM

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

⊕ LIAM NEESON, EMMY ROSSUM, LAURA DERN  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 3.30 + 8.30 PM

### 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

## SEEF (II)

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

⊕ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT  
DAILY AT: (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)

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

⊕ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ  
⊕ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)

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

⊕ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 + 6.30 + 8.30 + 10.30 PM

### 4-TRIPLE THREAT (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW

⊕ TONY JAA, IKO UWAI, SCOTT ADKINS  
DAILY AT: 5.15 + 7.15 + 9.15 + 11.15 PM

### 5-STOCKHOLM (PG-15) (COMEDY/CRIME/DRAMA)

⊕ ETHAN HAWKE, NOOMI RAPACE, MARK STRONG  
DAILY AT: 5.30 + 7.30 + 9.30 + 11.30 PM

### 6-THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT (PG-15) (THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW

⊕ JESSE EISENBERG, ALEXANDER SKARSG RD, SALMA HAYEK  
DAILY AT: 2.30 + 7.15 + 12.00 MN

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

⊕ IWAN RHEON, MILO GIBSON, STEFANIE MARTINI  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 6.00 + 11.30 PM

### 8-KURSK (PG-15) (THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW

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

### 9-TEEN SPIRIT (PG-15) (DRAMA/MUSICAL) NEW

⊕ ELLE FANNING, REBECCA HALL, ZLATKO BURIC  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 5.00 + 9.30 PM

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

⊕ ABDULLAH AL-TARARWAH 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)

### ⊕ DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE

DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 3.45 + 8.30 PM

### 13-LITTLE (PG-15) (COMEDY)

⊕ REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN  
DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 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-WONDER PARK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)

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

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

DAILY AT: 12.00 + 1.45 + 3.30 PM

### 17-BADLA (PG-15) (HINDI/THRILLER/CRIME)

⊕ AMITABH BACHCHAN, TAPSEE PANNU, TONY LUKE  
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 4.45 + 9.30 PM

### 18-LUCIFER (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

⊕ MOHANLAL, MANJU WARRIER, VIVEK OBEROI, TOVINO THOMAS  
DAILY AT: 2.45 + 8.15 PM

## SEEF (I)

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

⊕ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT  
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 2.00 + 5.15 + 8.30 + 11.45 PM

### 2-MERA NAAM SHAJI (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW

⊕ ASIF ALI, BIJU MENON, BAIJU  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN

### 3-JERSEY ( ) (TELUGU) NEW

⊕ NANI, SHARDAH, SREENATH, SATHYARAJ  
FROM FRIDAY 19th  
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 6.15 + 11.45 PM

### 4-VELLAI POOKKAL ( ) (TAMIL) NEW

⊕ VIVEKH, CHARLE, POOJA DEVARIYA  
FROM FRIDAY 19th  
DAILY AT: 3.45 + 9.15 PM

### 5-KANCHANA-3 (15+) NEW

⊕ RAGHAVA, LAWRENCE, VEDHIKA, OVIYA  
FROM FRIDAY 19th (TAMIL)  
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 8.15 PM  
FROM FRIDAY 19th (TELUGU)  
DAILY AT: 2.00 PM

### 6-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)

⊕ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL  
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM

### 7-SHERDIL (PG-15) (URDU/ACTION/DRAMA)

⊕ MIKAAL ZULFIQAR, ARMEENA RANA KHAN, BELAL SHAHID  
DAILY AT: 5.15 + 11.30 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

## SAAR

### 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 THURS/FRI)

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

⊕ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.00 + (11.15 PM THURS/FRI)

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

⊕ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 + 5.00 + 7.00 PM

### 4-STOCKHOLM (PG-15) (COMEDY/CRIME/DRAMA) NEW

⊕ ETHAN HAWKE, NOOMI RAPACE, MARK STRONG  
DAILY AT: 9.30 + (11.30 PM THURS/FRI)

### 5-KURSK (PG-15) (THRILLER/DRAMA) NEW

⊕ LÉA SEYDOUX, COLIN FIRTH, AUGUST DIEHL  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 5.45 + (11.00 PM THURS/FRI)

### 6-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)

⊕ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL  
DAILY AT: 3.00 + 8.15 PM

## AL HAMRA

### 1-LUCIFER (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

⊕ MOHANLAL, MANJU WARRIER, VIVEK OBEROI, TOVINO THOMAS  
DAILY AT: 5.45 + (12.00 MN THURS/FRI)

### 2-MADHURA RAJA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)

⊕ MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY  
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 9.00 PM

## WADI AL SAIL

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

⊕ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.15 + 4.30 + 7.45 + 11.00 PM

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

⊕ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ  
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM

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

⊕ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 + 5.00 + 7.00 PM

### 4-TRIPLE THREAT (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW

⊕ TONY JAA, IKO UWAI, SCOTT ADKINS  
DAILY AT: 6.00 + 8.00 + 10.00 + 12.00 MN

### 5-STOCKHOLM (PG-15) (COMEDY/CRIME/DRAMA) NEW

⊕ ETHAN HAWKE, NOOMI RAPACE, MARK STRONG  
DAILY AT: 11.00 + 3.15 + 7.30 + 11.45 PM

### 6-THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT (PG-15) (THRILLER/



Ariana Grande



Justin Bieber

## Bieber, Grande, Miley join hands for music video

Los Angeles

Rapper Lil Dicky has unveiled a star-studded music video featuring singers Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande and Miley Cyrus. Lil Dicky has dropped his new music video for Earth. It's not only a song but also a short film, a music-led initiative to raise awareness for climate change and an extravagant Earth Day celebration, reports people.com.

The 31-year-old recruited over 30 artistes to appear in the six-minute animated masterpiece.

The group of A-listers, which includes Bieber, Sia, Grande, Miley, Ed Sheeran and more, lend their voices to anything and everything climate change-related. To name a few: Halsey as a lion cub and Meghan Trainor as India.

He gave fans a preview of the highly anticipated music video during an episode of "The Ellen DeGeneres Show".

The rapper and comedian turned to the live audience and passionately spoke about the "environmental crisis going on right now" before sneaking in a story about how cool actor Leonardo DiCaprio is.

"I went to his house and we played pickle ball," Lil Dicky said. "One thing I can tell you is that guy cares so much about the planet. He gets really worked up talking about it."

Lil Dicky has teamed up with the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (established by the Oscar-winner in 1998 to protect existing ecosystems and restore balance to those already impacted by climate change) to raise cash for a good cause.

Miley Cyrus



## Anne Hathaway reflects upon her no-alcohol rule

Los Angeles

Oscar-winning actress Anne Hathaway says she quit drinking because it was making her "unavailable" for her son.

In an interview to Tatler magazine, the actress opened up about her life as a mother to three-year-old Jonathan Rosebanks -- specifically, how the "just one drink" method doesn't really work for her as a parent, reports people.com.

"The way I do it makes me unavailable for my son," said Hathaway of her previous approach to drinking before she gave it up completely last year. "My last hangover lasted for five days."



Anne Hathaway

## Nick Jonas wraps up 'Jumanji' sequel

Los Angeles

Actor-singer Nick Jonas has wrapped up shooting for the "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" sequel.

"That's a wrap! On another amazing 'Jumanji' adventure. Can't wait for you all to see this movie later this year," Nick tweeted.

The previous part of the film featured Jonas along with actors Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Kevin Hart and Karen Gillan.

"Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" was a sequel to the 1995 hit "Jumanji", starring Robin Williams.

Jonas, who is married to Indian actress Priyanka Chopra, has been concentrating on his acting as well as singing career. He recently launched new songs "Sucker" and "Cool" with his brothers.



## Jason Momoa bids goodbye to signature beard



Jason Momoa Los Angeles

"Aquaman" star Jason Momoa has bid farewell to his signature beard after seven years of not shaving, and it's all for a good cause.

The actor has filmed himself ditching his thick facial hair for the first time since 2012, after growing the beard to play a number of on-screen roles, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Goodbye Drogo, Aquaman, Declan, (and) Baba," he captioned the clip, referencing his respective characters from "Game of Thrones", the DC Comics blockbuster, and TV series "Frontier" and "See".

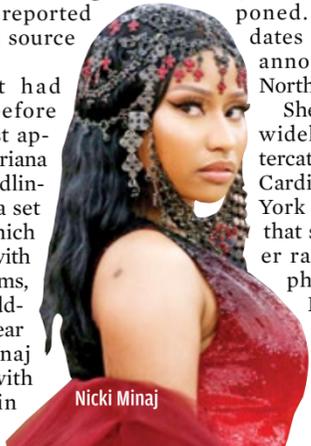
## Nicki Minaj parts ways with long-time managers

Los Angeles

Rapper Nicki Minaj has parted ways with Gee Roberson and Cortez Bryant and Blueprint/Maverick Management. She had worked with the pair for the majority of her career.

The decision was mutual and amicable, and there was no specific reason for the split. The rapper currently does not have a manager, variety.com reported an informed source as saying.

The split had happened before Minaj's guest appearance at Ariana Grande's headlining Coachella set last week, which was plagued with sound problems, the source added. It is unclear whether Minaj will appear with Grande again



Nicki Minaj

this Sunday during Coachella's second weekend.

The veteran rapper is frequently surrounded by drama.

While her "Queen" album, released in August 2018, was a success, a planned co-headlining North American tour with rapper Future was postponed last August due to production issues and was bumped to this year; several dates on the European leg of the tour earlier this year were also postponed. Rescheduled dates have not been announced for the North American tour.

She also got into a widely reported altercation with rapper Cardi B during New York Fashion Week that saw the younger rapper trying to physically attack Minaj, who later called the incident "mortifying and humiliating".

## Daddy Yankee, Katy Perry give Yankee's hit "Con Calma" a new twist

Los Angeles

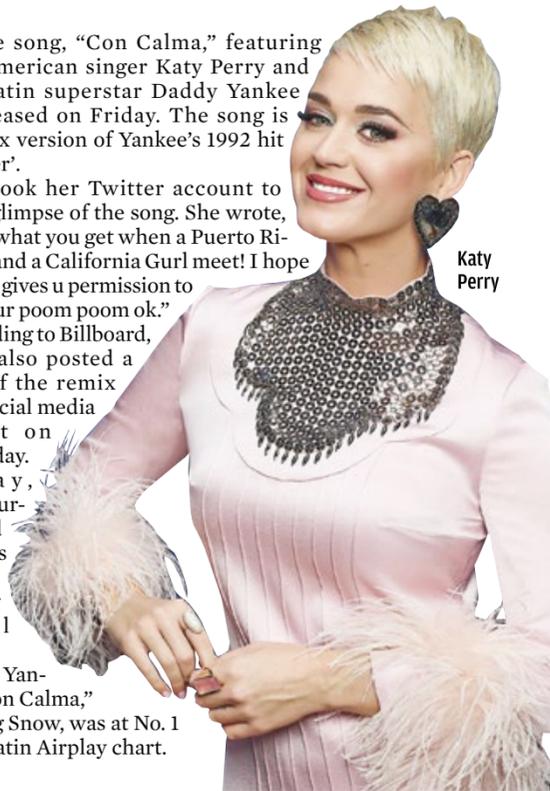
The song, "Con Calma," featuring American singer Katy Perry and Latin superstar Daddy Yankee was released on Friday. The song is the remix version of Yankee's 1992 hit "Informer".

Katy took her Twitter account to share a glimpse of the song. She wrote, "This is what you get when a Puerto Rican boy and a California Gurl meet! I hope this song gives u permission to move your poom poom ok."

According to Billboard, Yankee also posted a teaser of the remix on his social media account on Wednesday.

Today, Yankee surprised his fans by releasing the full song.

Daddy Yankee's "Con Calma," featuring Snow, was at No. 1 on the Latin Airplay chart.



Katy Perry

## Travis Scott to pay nearly USD 400,000 over losing cancelled show lawsuit

Los Angeles

American rapper Travis Scott has been ordered to pay USD 382,932.79 in a lawsuit, regarding a missed Super Bowl gig.

A jury decided that Scott must pay events company, PJAM LLC, USD 382,932.79 after it sued the rapper in March 2018 claiming he declined to perform at a concert in Minneapolis.

In a statement to TMZ, Scott's attorney said, "The jury verdict of USD 383k is disappointing but far less than the seven-figure demands made by the promoters. We believe the verdict will be substantially reduced or overturned in subsequent proceedings."



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## Meghan Markle's sari-clad image goes viral

London

Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle sported a sari and embraced traditional Indian culture, it has emerged in a never-before-seen footage of a trip she made back in January 2017.

The 37-year-old travelled to



Meghan Markle

New Delhi and Mumbai shortly after her romance with Prince Harry went public as part of her work with the charity World Vision, reports dailymail.co.uk.

She was keen to highlight issues of gender equality and girls' limited access to education in the country.

At the time of her trip, news

of her romance with Prince Harry had only just emerged.

During the trip, Markle visited schools and helped to paint a mural and plant a flower in the gardens.

She wore a sari with shades of blue and green and also sported a traditional tilak on her forehead.

SPORTS  
sports

# Chelsea fight off Slavia

## Pedro leads Chelsea into Europa League last four despite Slavia Prague scare

AFP | London

Chelsea were given a fright by Slavia Prague in a 4-3 home win on Thursday that saw them to a 5-3 aggregate victory and a place in the semi-finals of the Europa League.

Already 1-0 up from the first leg, Chelsea were cruising when they scored three more goals in the first 17 minutes at Stamford Bridge courtesy of Pedro, an own-goal by Simon Deli and Olivier Giroud and were 4-1 ahead on the night at half-time.

But having been facing a rout, the Czech visitors restored their pride with two early second-half goals from Petr Sevcik as they threatened a remarkable comeback.

Chelsea, however, held on and the London club will face Eintracht Frankfurt for a place in the final after the German side beat Benfica 2-0 to go through on away goals after the tie ended level at 4-4 after two legs.

Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri made five changes from the team beaten 2-0 by Liver-



Chelsea's Spanish midfielder Pedro (R) scores the team's first goal

pool in the Premier League on Sunday and put Eden Hazard on the wing with Olivier Giroud the Blues' central striker.

The Londoners doubled their

aggregate lead just five minutes into the second leg of this quarter-final tie thanks to Pedro's neat finish after a one-two with Giroud.

Minutes later, Chelsea had another goal.

Pedro produced a contender for miss of the season when presented with a tap-in from

close range that came back off the post only for the ball to fly into the face of Slavia defender Simon Deli and rebound into the net for a bizarre own-goal.

Pedro then turned provider, squaring for Giroud to score his 10th Europa League goal of the season.

Chelsea were cruising at 3-0 ahead on aggregate and it seemed Tomas Soucek had done no more than score a consolation goal when he rose unmarked to head in from a corner.

Chelsea though were soon three goals ahead again when Pedro bundled the ball in.

But Slavia rallied impressively after the interval, with Sevcik's 20-yard shot beating Kopa Arizabalaga at the Chelsea goalkeeper's near post.

And soon afterwards, in the 55th minute, Sevcik produced an even better effort from similar range that flew into the top corner to give Slavia hope of a remarkable recovery.

But that was as good as it got for the visitors, with Sevcik scuffing a shot that might have seen him complete what would

## Barcelona can wait as Klopp eyes Cardiff and Huddersfield

AFP | London

Jürgen Klopp is adamant that their upcoming Premier League matches against Cardiff and Huddersfield are just as important as their mouth-watering Champions League semi-final against Barcelona as they chase down a domestic and European double.

They will be huge favourites to beat both strugglers Cardiff and already relegated Huddersfield, but Klopp is taking nothing for granted in the Reds' quest to win their first domestic title since 1990 as they tussle with champions Manchester City.

"These are all massive games," said Klopp ahead of Sunday's match in Cardiff.

"None of them are won before we start.

"Everybody thinks a lot about Barcelona but before Barcelona it's Cardiff and Huddersfield and it's exactly the same importance to us as the other games."

# Arsenal dump out Ancelotti's Napoli

## Arsenal in Europa League semi-finals after Alexandre Lacazette sinks Napoli

AFP | Naples, Italy

Alexandre Lacazette scored the only goal as Arsenal dispatched Napoli 1-0 on Thursday to advance to the Europa League semi-finals 3-0 on aggregate.

Lacazette's stunning 36th-minute free-kick put the English club through to a final four meeting with Spanish side Valencia.

"I don't know if it's our best performance this season, but it's good, particularly after beating Watford Monday," said Arsenal coach Unai Emery.

"Our objective was to score, we did that, to win, and to be consistent for 90 minutes.

"I'm very proud of the players, very proud of our work. The players showed personality."

The exit of Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli means no Italian clubs are left in European competition this season.



Three-time Champions League winner Ancelotti finished his first season with Napoli without the promised trophy

"We knew it was going to be difficult, and sorry there's no Italian teams left," said Ancelotti, after Juventus crashed out of the Champions League to Ajax on Tuesday.

"I think the key to qualification was the first 20 minutes in the away match, that's when we played really badly.

"The two games were really balanced, there wasn't that much of a difference as the result suggests."

Emery's side were never troubled by the Italians despite the heated atmosphere in the Stadio San Paolo, with just over a thousand English fans among the 40,000 crowd, and after losing midfielder Aaron Ramsey to a hamstring injury after half an hour.

Napoli had turned up the pressure early with a chance to break through after 17 minutes

with Kalidou Koulibaly going on the counter-attack, racing up the pitch to cross to Jose Callejon but Petr Cech closed down the Spaniard's weak effort.

Ramsey limped off after 33 minutes with Henrikh Mkhitaryan coming on for the Welsh international.

The Armenian promptly set up Lacazette who was awarded a free-kick after being brought down by Piotr Zielinski.

Lacazette whipped the ball in from 25 metres past a motionless Alex Meret in the Napoli goal. Napoli could have scored four goals but paid for sloppy finishing, with captain Lorenzo Insigne visibly upset as the team were whistled off the pitch.

### 'Play intelligently'

Emery now faces a reunion with former club Valencia, 5-1 aggregate winners over fellow Spaniards Villarreal, as he targets a fourth Europa League title.

"I think Arsenal is an intelligent team, they are really well organised offensively and defensively," said Ancelotti.

"It's not a team that plays in my opinion fantastic football, but they play intelligently and they deserved victory. I wish them the best in the Europa League."

The final will be in Baku on May 29.

Three-time Champions League winner Ancelotti finished his first season with Napoli without the promised trophy.

Napoli's hopes of a first Serie A title since 1990 are over as they trail second in Serie A -- 17 points behind Juventus who need just one point to wrap up an eighth consecutive Scudetto.

# No hiding place for out-of-form United stars: Solskjaer

AFP | Manchester

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has warned his under-achieving Manchester United players there is no "hiding place" for them and they are playing for their futures at the club.

The United manager, whose side exited the Champions League this week in limp fashion against Barcelona, said he is looking to the likes of Anthony Martial and Paul Pogba to rediscover their best form as they battle to qualify for next season's Champions League.

United face three crucial league games with Everton, Manchester City and Chelsea that will have a huge say on whether they finish in the top four.

But with big name stars such as Martial and Pogba desperately struggling for form in a run that has seen United lose five of their last seven league

and cup games, the United manager has laid out demands to his players.

"I've learnt a lot about them over the months I've been here now and you get to know them," said Solskjaer.

"Most of them have really impressed me in their attitude and, of course, there are some who need to get a reality check of where they're at.

"Every day in training, every game when you're playing



Manchester United's French midfielder Paul Pogba (L) and Manchester United's French striker Anthony Martial attend a training session (file photo)

there's no hiding place and everyone can see what your level's at we're working with fantastic staff to create this culture."

### 'Have to be realistic'

Every day in training, every game when you're playing there's no hiding place and everyone can see what your level's at we're working with fantastic staff to create this culture

OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER

Solskjaer, who has seen his side's fortunes slide since he was handed the job on a permanent basis after a sparkling start as interim manager, said tests such as Barcelona are good indicators of whether players are able to play at such a level.

"It is performances on the pitch that will determine where they're at in their careers, short term and long term, every single day," said Solskjaer.



Alexandre Lacazette of Arsenal hits home a free-kick to ensure his side's progress at the expense of Napoli

# Djokovic knocked out as Nadal battles on in Monte Carlo

● Novak Djokovic was knocked out by Daniil Medvedev in quarters

● Rafael Nadal survives stern Guido Pella test to reach semi-finals

AFP | Monte Carlo

World number one Novak Djokovic was dumped out by Daniil Medvedev while Rafael Nadal survived a struggle to reach the semi-finals of the Monte Carlo Masters for the 14th time yesterday.

Djokovic, twice a champion in the principality, lost serve five times in a 6-3, 4-6, 6-2 defeat by Russia's 10th seed Medvedev.

Nadal, an 11-time winner of the event, rallied from 4-1 down in his opening set before finally overhauling potential Argentine spoiler Guido Pella 7-6 (7/1), 6-3.

For Djokovic, who won a record seventh Melbourne title in January, defeat marked another premature exit after he crashed out in the early rounds at Indian Wells and Miami last month.

The Serb, who has won the last three



Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a return to Argentina's Guido Pella



Serbia's Novak Djokovic gestures as he leaves after losing the quarter final tennis match against Russia's Daniil Medvedev

Grand Slam events and could conclude a personal sweep with another title at Roland Garros in June, feels that all he needs is more court time and some extra polish.

"The French Open is the ultimate goal on clay. It's expected in a way for me to peak right at that tournament, because that's what I'm aiming for," Djokovic said.

"This is only the first tournament

ing when Medvedev drove a backhand into the far corner on match point.

Nadal toiled away for two hours, 20 minutes to win for the 71st time in 75 matches at the tournament.

"Lucky to escape"

"It was a very tough match," Nadal said. "Luckily I was able to come back (from 4-1 down) in the first set. If he had gone 5-1 it may have been almost impossible.

"It was a physically and mentally draining set, especially losing my first three service games.

"I was lucky to escape, I'm happy to be through."

The first set featured eight breaks



Nadal has now won 18 matches in a row at Monte Carlo, 25 sets in a row and extended his win-loss record to 71-4

of serve before Nadal won it in a tie-breaker.

He served for the match leading 5-2 in the second only to drop serve again, but recovered to take the win as Pella double-faulted.

"Reaching the semi-final again means a lot to me, I hope this win will help me."

Nadal will face off in the semis against either Italian Fabio Fognini of Borna Coric, the ninth seed.

Medvedev welcomed his defeat of Djokovic after losing in each of his three previous encounters with the Serb.

"This was the best match of my career, maybe not in the level of tennis but in beating the number one for the first time in my life," he said. "It's just amazing."

Medvedev will meet another Serb, Dusan Lajovic, on Saturday for a place in the final after the latter beat Italian qualifier Lorenzo Sonego 6-4, 7-5.

Medvedev totalled less than half of the 47 unforced errors which came off the Djokovic racquet in a three-set tussle in windy conditions.

"Novak played worse here than the times before," Medvedev said. "But I'm also getting more experience.

"I'm making the top guys realise it's not easy to play me."

## Kohli defends Dhoni, says loyalty matters most

AFP | New Delhi

India's Virat Kohli has gone to bat for his former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, saying it was unfortunate to see so many people going after the veteran player.

Dhoni, 37, led India to World Cup victory at home in 2011 but his patchy form in recent times has led critics to question the wicketkeeper-batsman's place on the side. Last week, selectors picked Dhoni in a 15-member World Cup squad ahead of the 21-year-old Rishabh Pant, triggering fresh debate about his cricketing skills.

But Kohli, who played under Dhoni before taking over the skipper's mantle, said defending him was a matter of loyalty.

"It's unfortunate to see so many people going after him.



Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli talks with teammate Mahendra Singh Dhoni (R) ODI cricket match between India and Australia (file photo)

For me, loyalty matters the most," Kohli told India Today TV channel Thursday.

"When I walked into the team he (Dhoni) had the option of trying someone else after few games, although I grabbed my chances, but for me to get that kind of backing, it was very

crucial for me."

Kohli, the world number one ODI and Test player, also praised Dhoni for giving him the rare opportunity to bat at number three when he was just starting out.

Dhoni earned a reputation as one of the deadliest finishers in 50-over cricket before struggling to make a mark in the crucial middle overs.

Kohli said Dhoni's input and experience were invaluable assets for the team.

"He is the one person who literally knows the game inside out. He understands the game from ball one to ball 300 (50 overs) on the field," said Kohli, 30.

"I won't say it's a luxury to have him, but I am fortunate to have a mind like that behind the stumps."

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## Ronaldo committed to Juve despite Champions League flop: Allegri

AFP | Milan

Cristiano Ronaldo is committed to Juventus next season despite his bitter disappointment at the Italian giants Champions League flop, coach Massimiliano Allegri revealed yesterday.

Allegri's injury-hit side host Fiorentina on Saturday needing just a point to lift their eighth straight Serie A title, days after a shock home 2-1 defeat to the Dutch side that saw them eliminated 3-2 on aggregate.

"Cristiano is the future of Juventus. He has done very well this year and will do so next season, of course he is disappointed like all of us but he's calm about it," said Allegri.

"Cristiano has had an extraordinary season and will play tomorrow."

Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo had been bidding for a sixth Champions League title to add to his four won with Real Madrid and one with Manchester United.

The 34-year-old joined Juventus from Real last summer in a 100 million-euro (\$117 million) deal which runs until 2022, with a reported annual salary of 31 million euros.

He scored six of his teams' 14 Champions League goals this season and has 19 so far in Serie A, four behind leading scorer Fabio Quagliarella.

"Ronaldo's arrival did not give us any certainty of winning the Champions League," continued Allegri.

"Barcelona play a semi-fi-

”  
Cristiano is the future of Juventus. He has done very well this year and will do so next season  
MASSIMILIANO ALLEGRI



tacker Mario Mandzukic could also miss rest of the season.

"(Goalkeeper) Mattia Perin is out until the end of the season, as is Sami Khedira and maybe Mario Mandzukic," he said.

Meanwhile striker Paulo Dybala will be out for three weeks and Douglas Costa and Jose Caceres for 10 days each, while defender Giorgio Chiellini could be back for next week's trip to Inter Milan.

However with a 17-point lead over Napoli Allegri's side are almost certain to lift their 35th league title as they cement their domestic dominance despite continental disappointment.

Injuries have hit Juve hard ahead of the weekend's clash, with Sami Khedira announcing yesterday that he is set to have season-ending knee surgery, while Allegri revealed that at-

## Barty to face Azarenka in Fed Cup semi

AFP | Brisbane, Australia

World number nine Ashleigh Barty will face her doubles partner and two-time major winner Victoria Azarenka in Fed Cup semi-final between Australia and Belarus.

The pair will contest the second singles match on the opening day at Pat Rafter Arena in Brisbane as the home team targets Australia's first final since 1993.

Experienced former US Open champion Samantha Stosur was Australian captain Alicia Molik's surprise pick over Daria Gavrilova to open the tie against Aryna Sabalenka.

They play the reverse singles and a doubles on Sunday.

While Belarus are bidding to reach the final for the second time in three attempts, having been beaten by the United States in 2017, Australia haven't made the decider in 26 years.



Ashleigh Barty of Australia returns a shot to Karolina Pliskova of Czech Republic during the women's final of the Miami Open (file photo)