

Bahrain outclass UAE

Bahrain powered to a resounding 29-18 victory over the UAE yesterday to begin their Main Round campaign on a positive note in the 2020 Asian Men's Handball Championship, being held in Kuwait. **P16**

OP-ED 8

Trump's impeachment is far from certain but neither is his acquittal

THE DAILY tribune



Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston's backstage moment at SAG Awards

14 CELEBS

WORLD 6 Malta minister quits over husband's links to murder 'mastermind'

His Majesty begins Morocco visit

Rabat
 His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday began his visit to Morocco. His Royal Highness Prince Moulay El Hassan, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Morocco, received His Majesty upon arrival in Rabat.

Four killed in Baghdad as protests surge

Baghdad
 At least four protesters were killed and dozens injured on Monday as Iraqi security forces clashed with anti-government demonstrators, with the United Nations urging for calm amid heightened tensions.

In the last 24 hours, two protesters were killed in Baghdad, one in Karbala and another in Basra while 14 security forces were injured, an official from the Independent High Commission for Human Rights said.

For three months, Iraqis have been calling for an overhaul of the political system they see as corrupt. On January 13, protesters gave the government a week to meet their demands for sweeping political reforms, or the demonstrations will escalate.

In Baghdad, dozens of protesters were wounded after security forces used tear gas and live ammunition, prompting road closures.



02 Bahrain welcomes Libya deal reached at Berlin Conference

03 Number of pending cases before judiciary 'dropped 56pc' last year

04 Major drug ring busted

210 fils (includes VAT)



Last Royal Appointment!



Prince Harry talks to Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson during the UK-Africa Investment Summit in London. Prince Harry yesterday flew to Canada to reunite with Meghan Markle and son Archie Harrison after the 'last royal engagement'. See Page 6

Man dies minutes after being turned away from private hospital

TDT | Manama

An Asian expatriate, who suffered a cardiac arrest, died after being reportedly turned away from a private hospital in Sanad, on Sunday.

The man, in his early forties, died on way to Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC), according to friends and relatives.

"We rushed him to the private hospital immediately after he suffered severe chest pain. But the hospital did not admit him, directing us to take the patient to SMC or BDF Hospital," a close relative of the deceased, said.

"The doctors at SMC could not do much as he died on way to SMC."

Many discussed the matter on social media, demanding

Hospitals are meant to serve human beings. Here is a hospital, which does inhuman service.

FRIEND OF THE DECEASED

strict action against the private hospital, which refused to admit a patient in critical stage.

"Hospitals are meant to serve human beings. Here is a hospital, which does inhuman service," a friend of the deceased, opined.

The man, who hailed from the Indian state of Kerala, was working with a private firm in the Kingdom. His body was flown home yesterday.

Economy 'on track'

Mega projects, economic initiatives helping to boost growth, generate employment

● **The Cabinet reviewed the projects and programmes being implemented by the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) to achieve the priorities included in the Government Action Plan.**

Manama

The Cabinet chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, commended the 'positive' efforts exerted to implement initiatives and launch mega projects and economic programmes that have

succeeded in reducing the deficit, maintaining positive economic growth and creating new job opportunities.

While reviewing the work and achievements of the Ministerial Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs and Fiscal Balance in 2019, Deputy Premier, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak praised the tremendous efforts exerted by the panel to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations and resolutions referred to it by the Cabinet.

In this context, Deputy Premier and Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs and Fiscal Balance, Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, highlighted topics discussed by the panel during its meetings, as well as the priorities it had set



HH Shaikh Mohammed

for 2019-2020.

The priorities, based on the initiatives of the Government Action Plan and Fiscal Balance Programme, cover seven themes under which 27 programmes are implemented, the Deputy Premier said, adding that the Fiscal Balance Programme, the General State Budget, infrastructure, economic reports and enhancing

Bahrain's competitiveness, in addition to the relevant local and international economic issues topped the agenda of the ministerial committee's meetings during the same period.

Among other things, the Cabinet reviewed the projects and programmes being implemented by the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) to achieve the priorities included in the Government Action Plan and initiatives to consolidate financial sustainability and economic development, secure a supportive environment for sustainable development, enhance the efficiency of resources and energy use, in addition to implementing the Fiscal Balance Programme and achieving partnership with the private sector.

According to the Minister of

Electricity and Water Affairs, EWA's programmes and projects include providing strategic housing projects with electricity and water services, developing the electrical transmission networks of 220, 400 and 66 kV, establishing a control and monitoring centre for electricity and water networks, developing the water transmission networks, developing the water transmission network associated with the second stage of the Al Dur power and water production plant, collecting the dues of EWA from subscribers in the private sector and SMEs, checking energy in buildings and facilities, improving lighting efficiency and replacing traditional lighting lamps with energy-saving ones and the development of electronic electricity and water services.

WEEKEND VIOLENCE

Lebanon president to chair crisis talks

Beirut

Lebanon's under-fire president is set to meet Monday with top security officials to discuss rare violence over the weekend that left hundreds wounded in the protest-hit country.

Michel Aoun will be joined by the care-taker ministers of the interior and defence as well as the chiefs of the military and security agencies in the early afternoon,

his office said in a statement.

The meeting will touch on "security developments" in a country rocked since October 17 by unprecedented protests against a political class deemed incompetent, corrupt and responsible for an ever-deepening economic crisis.

It will also address "measures that need to be taken to preserve peace and stability," the state-run National News agency (NNA) reported.



Michel Aoun

Demonstrators at the weekend lobbed stones, firecrackers and street signs at riot police, who fired tear gas and rubber bullets to clear a flashpoint road near parliament.

Over the most violent weekend in three months of street protests, some 530 were wounded on both sides, according to a toll compiled by AFP from figures provided by the Red Cross and Civil Defence.

Lawyers and rights groups

have condemned the "excessive" and "brutal" use of force by security forces.

Human Rights Watch accused riot police of "launching tear gas canisters at protesters' heads, firing rubber bullets in their eyes and attacking people at hospitals and a mosque."

Internal Security Forces, for their part, have urged demonstrators to abstain from assaulting riot police and damaging public or private property.



BDF Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, received Assistant to Commander Combined Maritime Forces for Regional Integration Naval Captain Shaikh Mubarak Ali Al Sabah, Assistant to the Commander of the Joint Maritime Forces. Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Dhiyab bin Saqer Al Nuaimi, was present. The commander-in-chief reviewed with Captain Al Sabah the tasks of the joint force and its role in securing maritime navigation in the region.



Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa yesterday received members of the Representatives Council Ammar Al Abbas and Khalid Bu Unq and citizens. He praised the role of the Representatives Council in developing the judicial system, lauding cooperation between the Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments Ministry and the Representatives Council. Discussions also focused on issues pertaining to the judicial services Affairs. The meeting was attended by Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments Ministry Undersecretary Chancellor Wael Rashid Bualley.



Shura Council Chairman Ali Al Saleh yesterday received outgoing Indian Ambassador to Bahrain Alok Kumar Sinha. They discussed deep-rooted historical relations between both countries and growing co-operation in various fields. The Shura Council Chairman praised the role of the Indian ambassador in boosting bilateral relations, wishing him every success in his diplomatic work. The Indian ambassador praised co-existence, peace, pluralism and tolerance characterising the Bahraini community, expressing appreciation of the Kingdom's development.

- The agreement is the political framework that is accepted by the international community and all parties in Libya.
- It preserves the safety and territorial integrity of Libya and leads to the elimination of violence, extremism and terrorism in all its forms.

Manama

Bahrain has welcomed the final communique of Berlin Conference on Libya, held in Germany. The participants during the conference agreed on a comprehensive plan to settle the crisis in Libya, pledged not to interfere in Libyan internal affairs and work towards the disarmament of armed groups, among other binding results and commitments that represent an important step toward the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement. The Kingdom praised Germany's role and the keenness of the

Bahrain welcomes Libya deal reached at Berlin Conference

Kingdom expresses its aspiration for greater efforts and work in accordance with the Skhirat Agreement

participating countries in restoring security and stability to Libya. Bahrain expressed its aspiration for greater efforts and work in accordance with the Skhirat Agreement that was concluded in 2015 in Morocco. The agreement is the political framework that is accepted by the international community and all parties in Libya, making it a solid basis for resolving the crisis in a way that fulfils the aspirations of the Libyan people in security and stability. It preserves the safety and territorial integrity of Libya and leads to the elimination of violence, extremism and terrorism in all its forms. World leaders were ready to pledge an end to all foreign in-



World leaders interact at the conference held in Berlin.

volvement in the conflict in Libya after a UN-sponsored peace summit in Berlin. The UN wants foreign powers who wield influence in the region to stop supplying weapons, troops

or finance — either to the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli or the rival Libya National Army (LNA) led by eastern military strongman Khalifa Haftar. All sides will be asked to sign up to a plan to refrain from interference, and commit to a truce that leads to a lasting end to hostilities. A draft communique from the summit also urges all parties to re-commit to a widely ignored UN arms embargo and raises the prospect of Libyan political talks in Geneva at the end of the month. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has sent military trainers and advisers to help the beleaguered forces of GNA leader Fayeze Al Sarraj, and has

also redeployed up to 2,000 Turkish-backed mercenary fighters from the conflict in Syria. French President Emmanuel Macron said he had "acute concerns over the arrival of Syrian and foreign fighters in the city of Tripoli," and added: "That must end." Clashes since April have killed more than 280 civilians and 2,000 fighters and displaced tens of thousands, until a fragile ceasefire backed by Russia and Turkey was put in place on Jan. 12. Nevertheless, GNA forces accused Haftar's militia of opening fire on them in southern Tripoli on Sunday, and Al Sarraj asked for international "protection troops" if Haftar kept up his offensive.

Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa's Mosque opened

Manama

Deputised by His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Southern Governor, His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, yesterday patronised the opening of the expanded late HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa's Mosque in Budaiya. President of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), Dr Shaikh Rashid bin Mohammed Al Hajeri, and a number of dignitaries and citizens from Budaiya were present. HH Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali extended sincere thanks and appreciation to HRH the Prime Minister for deputising him to open the mosque's expansion project. He also conveyed to them



Shaikh Khalifa opens the mosque.

greetings from HRH Premier, as well as his congratulations to them on the inauguration of the project, implemented as part of the Prime Minister's keenness to take care of houses of worship so that they could carry out their noble mission of spreading the values of Islam and cementing

national cohesion. The governor asserted that the expansion of the mosque reflects HRH Premier's unwavering interest in developing and expanding mosques across the kingdom, commensurate with the citizens' needs. He affirmed that taking care of



Shaikh Khalifa being presented with a gift upon arrival at the mosque.

mosques and their development are basic in the Government Action Plan, extending congratulations to the Budaiya inhabitants on the opening of the iconic mosque. Those present extended deepest thanks and gratitude to HRH the Prime Minister for his orders

to expand the mosque, thus reflecting his constant keenness on meeting the needs of the citizens, as well as his constant interest in developing houses of worship so as to be able to carry out their role to the fullest. They prayed to Allah the Almighty to bless HRH the Prime

Minister with abundant good health. They lauded HH Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali's interest in the project and constant follow-up on its progress, noting that he spares no effort to implement all projects and initiatives aimed at meeting their needs in various fields.

Number of pending cases before judiciary 'dropped 56pc' last year

60pc of total cases were settled by the judiciary in three months time

● The number of appealed judgments reached 14,655, which is 25 per cent of the total judgments issued by lower courts.

● One of the major developments in the judicial system last year was the introduction of alternate penalties to convicts.

Manama

The number of cases pending before courts in the Kingdom has dropped by 56 per cent last year, according to judicial indicators.

In the beginning of 2019, there were over 26,000 pending cases before courts, which has now come down to 15,000.

"These statistics speak volume of achievements in terms of disposal of cases quickly and in record time," said Abdullah bin Hassan Al Buainain, President of the Court of Cassation and Vice-President of the Adviser to Supreme Judicial Council, on the sidelines of the Press conference held at the Council's premises.

"The automation of systems and restricting the maximum case duration to six months have helped in achieving the targets set by the courts. The average age of cases has seen significant progress in courts of all levels.

"The average age of a case stood at six months, while 60 per



A file picture showing one of the training programmes for judges.

cent of the total cases were settled in less than three months."

The General Statistics for the Performance of Courts in 2019 revealed that civil, criminal, and Shari'a courts of all levels considered 101,167 cases, while the number of settled cases reached a total of 85,717 cases.

The number of appealed judgments reached 14,655, which is 25 per cent of the total judgments issued for the first degree.

"With regard to the performance indicators of the enforcement courts, the statistical data showed that the number of applications submitted in the year 2019 amounted to 496,160 and the enforcement courts took 519,000 decisions, which include the requests received for the year 2018.

"The statistical figures also showed that the current applica-

tions at the beginning of the current year amount to 4,686, which marks a significant decrease in the number of applications in progress from the previous year by 80pc and an increase in the completion rate in the enforcement courts," he said.

"The Supreme Judicial Council will continue, in co-operation with the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, to develop new initiatives aimed at ensuring the continued development of the court performance and the supporting entities through expansion of electronic services, and the use of the private sector.

"We are meeting with all stakeholders in the judicial process with the aim of developing new initiatives that continues to develop the judicial system in a way that is responsive to

101,167
cases were filed across
all courts in the Kingdom
last year.

ments, through constant monitoring and inspection as well as ensuring the attendance of the judges to specialised training programmes.

"In the year 2019, the number of reports prepared by the Judicial Inspection Department reached 101 in various court departments. In 2019, supervising judges dealt with 537 complaints received by litigants and lawyers. Around 48 training programmes were implemented in the last year through the Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies, with a total of 3,600 training hours, in which various judges of all civil, criminal and Shari'a courts participated," Mr Al Mualla said.

Judge Ali Ahmed Al Kaabi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Judicial Council, said that in continuing to develop

the judicial system, many laws were passed, most notably the alternative to imprisonment law aimed at promoting the application of alternative penalties to imprisonment within the society, rehabilitating the person who committed the crime and creating an effective member of society by assigning him to one of the community services, instead of imprisoning him.

"There was also amendment to some provisions of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Code, which stipulated a fundamental and important change. The judgment in civil cases will be final if the value of the claim does not exceed BD1,000." "The issuance of the law of reorganisation and bankruptcy established a new system that aims to reorganise debts and avoid liquidation of the assets of the debtor whenever possible, and to allow the possibility of continuing to operate while adjusting certain practices and thus preserving the interests of all creditors," he pointed out.

"This included the issuance of a decree on mediation for settlement of disputes, which adopted the mediation system in civil, criminal, and Shari'a cases prior to and during court proceedings, thereby enhancing the application of alternative means of dispute resolution.

"A decision was also issued to specify the types of small claims that are managed by electronic means, which includes all of the telecommunications companies' claims, the Social Insurance Authority, the Electricity and Water Authority and the Labour Market Regulatory Authority, health care fees, credit cards, and bank loans," the judge said.

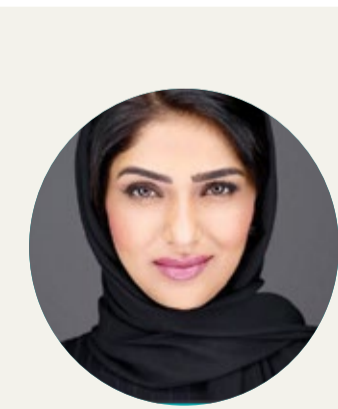
Key academic role for Bahraini woman at UK university

TDT | Manama

The prestigious British University of Leeds has announced the selection of human resources consultant, Bahraini Abeer Al Matooq, as a member of the Executive Education Programmes of the University's Business School, to be the first Bahraini to hold membership of this programme.

Under this selection, Ms Al Matooq will work side by side with a group of her colleagues from various countries around the world to spread the best global human resources practices to institutions, companies and organisations around the globe, including the Kingdom. Her selection in this programme membership is based on her experience, which extends for about twenty years in the field of human resources, individuals development and employee empowerment.

Ms Al Matooq expressed her pride in this choice, which



"I will do my best to transfer advanced academic knowledge and practical professional experiences at the British University of Leeds in the Kingdom of Bahrain."

MS AL MATOOQ

comes to confirm once again that the Bahraini national cadres are indeed worthy of the attention of the prestigious international institutions, corporates and organisations, after those cadres have proven themselves and their capabilities in various local, regional and international forums, and this represents a natural result of the national efforts working to empower the Kingdom's hu-

man wealth. Ms Al Matooq said that she will do her utmost to transfer advanced academic knowledge and practical professional experiences at the British University of Leeds in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and make it available to extend various students, employees, pioneers, business owners and others, and in different professional and scientific fields.

Expatriate Protection Centre 'dealt with over 25,000 cases since inception'

TDT | Manama

The Expatriate Protection Centre and Shelter of the LMRA has dealt with over 25,000 cases since its inception, according to officials.

The LMRA has been vital in the regulation of the workforce. Its important role has seen it help thousands of expatriates over the years since its inception in 2006.

In 2015, it launched Expatriate Protection Centre and Shelter which was designed to help expats in need.

Bahrain's dedication to the preservation and protection of the rights of all who work and live in the country led to the establishment of the Expatriate Protection Centre.

In line with its 2030 Vision to curb the crime of trafficking in persons, a cross-border crime, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) has spearheaded the administration of the protective services offered to migrants in Bahrain based on the fact that all declared victims of trafficking have been migrant

"Most cases were filed by Asian nationalities, this is understandable due to the large number of Asians living in the Kingdom who are part of the workforce."

OFFICIAL

workers.

According to officials, a large number of the 25,000 cases was out of labour issues. Officials said that most cases involved workers from Asian nationalities.

"Most cases were filed by Asian nationalities, this is understandable due to the large number of Asians living in the Kingdom who are part of the workforce."

However, cases involving African nationalities have proven tricky due to some of the African countries not having embassies in the Kingdom, the

officials added.

The Expatriate Protection Centre (EPC) was set up to identify, support, and follow up the cases of victims of trafficking in the Kingdom.

It is a collaborative framework through which stakeholders fulfil their obligations to protect, recover, and promote the human rights of the trafficked -or vulnerable- person in a timely manner co-ordinating all the efforts in a strategic national partnership.

The centre provides complete services to victims or potential victims from the instance they approach it. It also offers medical services, mental health services (in co-operation with social researchers), legal counselling (providing legal advice to the resident, introducing him to his rights and methods of obtaining them, assisting him in reaching a settlement, or initiating legal proceedings in courts).

In 2017, the "NIHR" opened an official branch at the "Expatriate Protection Centre and Shelter".

TDT | Manama

The Public Prosecution yesterday announced the arrest of a drug ring in Muharraq Governorate involving a doctor, pharmacists and military personnel.

According to Muharraq Governorate Chief Prosecutor Ahmed Abdullah Al Ramadhan, the gang is headed by a doctor who misused his authority to issue fake prescriptions so that his accomplices would have access to prescription pills and sell it in the black market to addicts.

Mr Al Ramadan explained that the ring was busted when the Military Police of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) informed the Anti-Narcotics Department in Interior Ministry that it arrested a military staff and two civilians while selling narcotics.

Large quantities of narcotics and amounts of money collected from selling them were found in the arrestees' possession.

The Chief Prosecutor said the prosecution launched its investigation into the incident, interrogated the arrestees, heard witnesses' testimonies and reviewed a report prepared by the technical committee, which inspected the computers in a number of public and private hospitals, and ana-

Major drug ring busted

Gang headed by doctor; large quantities of narcotics seized

lysed the entered data in them.

Explaining further in a press statement that was circulated yesterday, Mr Al Ramadhan said it was proven that the doctor issued fake prescriptions and reports stating that the individuals mentioned in them had undergone the necessary medical examination.

He was able to do this after his companions provided him with copies of identity cards so he could prepare the reports and write the prescriptions.

The other suspects would buy

“The gang is headed by a doctor who misused his authority to issue fake prescriptions so that his accomplices would have access to prescription pills and sell it in the black market to addicts.”

MR AL RAMADHAN

the narcotics from certain pharmacies, where the pharmacists are also involved in their plot, and later sell the pills to drug addicts for higher prices.

Mr Al Ramadhan confirmed that the Public Prosecution yesterday ordered to detain the suspects pending further investigation, while it referred the military staff member to the Military Judiciary and issued an arrest warrant against other suspects who're abroad, in order to refer the case to the concerned criminal court.

Man loses appeal in cold store robbery case; sentence upheld

TDT | Manama

The Court of Cassation recently upheld a five-year imprisonment sentence previously issued against a man who was convicted of robbing a cold store in Sanad area back in 2014.

The man was initially sentenced, among other defendants, by the High Criminal Court to 10 years imprisonment.

He appealed against the verdict twice before it was reduced to five years.

However, he appealed for the third time to the Court of Cassation, claiming innocence, but the court decided to uphold the last sentence issued against him.

According to court files, the crime took place on May 17, 2014, when the convicts robbed the cold store after threatening the worker there using a gun.

Police reports showed that four masked individuals, including the appellant, riding a black vehicle, committed the crime at 3:30 pm.

“The men held the worker at gunpoint and threatened to kill him if he resisted the robbery.”

PROSECUTORS

The men held the worker at gunpoint and threatened to kill him if he resisted the robbery, according to Prosecutors.

The victim told the prosecutors that one of the defendants held the gun to his forehead, while another one held a knife to his back.

He also mentioned in his statements that he fell on the floor while the men stole BD60 from the cash register and escaped, adding that the robbery lasted for around three minutes.

Police inspected the crime scene and further investigation led to the arrest of two of the defendants who were prosecuted and sentenced by the High Criminal Court.

Jidhafs Maternity Hospital project 'on track'



Ms Al Saleh being briefed on project progress.

TDT | Manama

Health Minister Faeqa Al Saleh yesterday made an inspection visit to Jidhafs Maternity Hospital, where she was briefed on the progress of work.

The project expenditure is estimated to be about BD222,200 and it aims to provide best health services to patients.

The maintenance work began

in October 2018, and included the expansion of the patient admission area, the separation of the emergency door from the patient admission unit, the renovation of the operating room, the renovation of labour rooms consisting of seven beds, and the renewal of nursing and observation rooms for newborns.

In addition to that, the storage and waste rooms are being renovated, the bathrooms are

renewed, and all engineering and technical services, including air conditioning, electrical and mechanical services, communications and lighting, are being replaced.

The revamped hospital is expected to take a little burden off Salamaniya Medical Complex.

The Health Minister thanked the workers and contractors for their efforts to complete the project on time.

Municipal development projects inspected

Manama

Council of Representatives Speaker Fawzia Zainal and Minister of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Essam Khalaf visited the fifth constituency in the Southern Governorate and inspected progress on revamping the Mohammed bin Faris Public Garden, located in bloc 927.

The visit is in line with the directives issued by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier.

The Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Essam Khalaf has started implementing of development projects, which aim to enhance services for citizens as part of municipal schemes that contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals, in the prosperous era of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The Speaker hailed HRH the Prince's directives in support of legislative-executive coop-



Mr Khalaf, Ms Zainal along with other officials review the project.

eration, which would benefit Bahrain and citizens and bolster the development process, led by HM the King.

She hailed the string of development projects being carried out nationwide, commending the Southern Governorate, Southern Municipality and Southern Municipal Council for their efforts to serve Bahrain and citizens.

The minister shed light on the project which consists in building a playground, a walkway, in addition a café, kiosks, arcade games, a service build-

ing and other facilities.

He announced that bids would be invited soon for the project which covers 10,240 square metres. Other development projects were also inspected.

Present were Undersecretary for Works Affairs Ahmed Al Khayyat, Undersecretary for Municipal Affairs Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, Assistant Undersecretary for Joint Municipal Services Rawya Al Mannai, Assistant Undersecretary for Roads Huda Fakhro and other officials.

Saudi military opens first women's section

Jeddah

Saudi military chief of staff, Gen Fayyad Al Ruwaili, launched the first military section for women in the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces on Sunday.

The director general of admission and enlistment, Maj Gen Imad Al Aidan, explained the regulations of acceptance, and allocated locations where the female staff will be stationed.

Under the initiative to incor-

porate more women into the field, previously announced in October 2019, women can now join the military as lance c-

orporals, corporals, sergeants, and staff sergeants in the Royal Saudi Land Forces, Air Force, Saudi Arabian Navy, Air Defence Forces, Strategic Missile Forces and Armed Forces Medical Services.

The initiative is the first to allow women to climb the ladder towards senior ranks.

Former Shura Council member Haya Al Muni'i previously told Asharq Al Awsat that these

new laws support women's rights and capabilities in the Kingdom's military.

"Naturally, they will enter a new sphere of work. It's a reflection of a national belief in the equality between women and men," she said.

The initiative is part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 Programme, pushing for the empowerment of women and giving them more leadership positions, and highlighting the significance of their involvement across different fields.



The initiative is the first to allow women to climb the ladder towards senior ranks.

WORLD

One of five malnourished lions dies in Sudan park

Khartoum

One of five sick and malnourished lions held at a park in the Sudanese capital died yesterday, an official said, amid a growing online campaign to save the animals.

The lioness received intravenous fluids for several days but died early on Monday, Brigadier Essameldine Hajjar, a manager of Al-Qureshi Park in Khartoum said.

"One of the two sick lionesses died today... Yesterday the doctor gave the two some medicines after which they were given food," Hajjar said.

"One recovered but the other died. We are now diagnosing the cause of death."

Park officials said the conditions of the five creatures had deteriorated in recent weeks,



The lioness received intravenous fluids for several days but died early yesterday

with some losing almost two-thirds of their body weight.

The five lions suffered from a shortage of food and medicine for weeks, the officials said.

Hajjar said on Sunday that park officials often paid for food for the lions with their own money.

Guide saw wall of snow carry away Korean trekking team in Nepal

Pokhara | Nepal

Rescuers intensified an increasingly desperate hunt yesterday for four South Korean trekkers and three Nepalis swept away by an avalanche in the Himalayas as a guide told how he saw people carried off by the snow.

Krishna Hari Subedi was helping a Chinese trekker on the trail near the Annapurna base camp when the wall of snow hit on Friday.

"We were descending when an avalanche came rumbling down. Three people were swept down by it in front of my eyes," Subedi said.

"I ducked down and my guest followed, we were safe. If we



View from a helicopter of the avalanche site

had moved forward, there was a cliff edge, we would have been swept down."

Subedi said he saw three people carried away but did not know how many others had been hit in the line of trekkers on the route.

"When we began heading down again, we heard a cry for help," he added.

"One of them survived and was walking up. It was nearly 300 metres down. When he saw us, he fainted... he was taken to a hospital."

The fate of the other two remains uncertain.

Families' anxious wait
Soldiers have joined a team using drones and helicopters and digging in deep snow at 3,230 metres (10,600 feet) where the avalanche struck.

Small helicopters were being used to drop rescuers at the site, Shanta Bir Lama, president of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, said.

"The narrowness of the area

makes the search difficult," explained Lama.

"There is also a lot of snow. But teams today will try to remove the snow and search. Devices are also being used," he added.

A nine-member army team has joined the operation while the South Korean embassy also sent an official to assist.

"The snow from the avalanche is piled four to five metres (13 to 16 feet) deep at the site. No signs of the missing have been reported as of Monday," an official of the South's foreign ministry said.

Experts say there is a very low chance of survival for those buried in an avalanche for more than two hours.

Climate change pushing Australia's platypus towards extinction: researchers



The platypus is one of the world's strangest animals

Sydney

Prolonged drought and other effects of climate change are pushing Australia's unique platypus population towards extinction, scientists warned in a study published yesterday.

The river-dwelling animal has already disappeared from up to 40 percent of its historical range on Australia's east coast due to the drought, land clearing, pollution and building of dams, which fragment their habitat, the researchers said.

They predicted that if the current threats persist, platypus numbers will fall another 47-66 percent over the next 50 years.

If projections about worsening climate change are taken into account, the numbers of the duck-billed, egg-laying mammal could plummet up to 73 percent by 2070, they wrote.

The platypus is listed as "near threatened" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

But the scientists from the University of New South Wales' Centre for Ecosystem Science said damage to river systems caused by years of little rainfall and high tempera-

tures had worsened prospects for the animal.

"These dangers further expose the platypus to even worse local extinctions, with no capacity to repopulate areas," said Gilad Bino, lead author of the study.

The scientists said there is an "urgent need" for a national risk assessment to determine if the platypus should be downgraded to "vulnerable" status and to lay out conservation steps "to minimise any risk of extinction".

The study is the first across all platypus habitat zones to establish a so-called "metapopulation" model while also projecting the impacts of climate change on the species going forward.

The survey estimated the total platypus population had fallen by 50 percent since European settlement of the continent two centuries ago.

An earlier study published in November 2018 estimated the population had fallen by 30 percent over that period, to around 200,000.

"Under predicted climate change, the losses forecast were far greater because of increases in extreme drought frequencies and duration, such as the current dry spell," Bino said of the latest report.

INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 30 September 2019 (Reviewed)



INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 September 2019 (Reviewed) USD 000's

	Reviewed 30 September 2019 USD '000	Audited 30 June 2019 USD '000
ASSETS		
Balances and placements with banks	5,030	10,175
Investments	111,135	110,982
Investments in associates and a joint venture accounted under the equity method	22,686	22,701
Murabaha financing to investee companies	29,200	30,406
Wakala contract receivable	10,672	10,672
Receivables	2,381	1,976
Funding to project companies	5,293	5,693
Other assets	25,353	26,678
Property and equipment	7,398	7,480
TOTAL ASSETS	219,148	226,763
LIABILITIES		
Islamic financing payables	110,748	109,692
Employee accruals	962	1,440
Other liabilities	5,982	13,145
TOTAL LIABILITIES	117,692	124,277
EQUITY		
Share capital	190,000	190,000
Statutory reserve	5,859	5,859
Foreign currency translation reserve	(71)	(71)
Accumulated losses	(94,332)	(93,302)
Total equity	101,456	102,486
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	219,148	226,763

OFF-BALANCE SHEET ITEMS

Equity of investment account holders	1,867	1,887
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Extracted from the interim financial statements reviewed by Ernst & Young and approved for issue by the Board on 13 January 2020

AbdulFatah Marouf Chairman
Abdulatif M. Janahi Board Member and Chief Executive Officer

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF INCOME

Three month period ended 30 September 2019 (Reviewed) USD 000's

	30 September 2019	30 September 2018
REVENUE		
Income from investment banking services - net	1,045	-
Gain on sale of investment	701	201
Finance income	526	1,720
Dividend income	-	79
Rental and other income	285	677
TOTAL REVENUE	2,555	2,677
OTHER GAINS		
Fair value gain on investments carried at fair value through profit or loss - net	87	194
TOTAL OTHER GAINS	2,642	2,871
EXPENSES		
Staff costs	854	1,388
Travel and business development expenses	69	93
Legal and professional fees	78	247
Finance expense	1,230	1,442
Depreciation	82	89
Other expenses	1,012	1,033
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,325	4,292
LOSS BEFORE IMPAIRMENT PROVISIONS AND SHARE OF LOSS OF ASSOCIATES AND JOINT VENTURE		
	(685)	(1,421)
PROVISIONS AND SHARE OF LOSS OF ASSOCIATES AND JOINT VENTURE		
Provisions for credit losses - net	(332)	-
Share of losses of associates and joint venture - net	(15)	(35)
NET LOSS FOR THE PERIOD	(1,030)	(1,456)

INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

Three month period ended 30 September 2019 (Reviewed) USD 000's

	2019 USD '000	2018 USD '000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net loss for the period	(1,030)	(1,456)
Adjustments for:		
Share of loss of associates and a joint venture accounted under the equity method	15	35
Provisions for credit losses - net	332	-
Fair value gains on investments carried at fair value through profit or loss	(87)	(194)
Gain on sale of investment	(701)	(201)
Depreciation	82	89
Dividend income	-	(79)
Operating losses before changes in operating assets and liabilities	(1,389)	(1,806)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Investments	(1,309)	6,186
Investments in associates and a joint venture accounted under the equity method	-	(53)
Receivables	(711)	26,986
Funding to project companies	572	(1,041)
Other assets	1,325	(19,362)
Employee accruals	(478)	-
Other liabilities	(7,163)	11,358
Net cash (used in) from operating activities	(9,155)	22,268
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Dividends received	-	727
Proceeds from sale of investment	1,734	201
Property and equipment - net	-	(46)
Net cash from investing activities	1,734	882
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Murabaha financing to investee company	1,206	267
Islamic financing payables	1,056	(6,681)
Net cash from (used in) financing activities	2,262	(6,414)
NET (DECREASE) INCREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
	(5,157)	16,736
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the period	10,175	7,326
ECL reversed (charged) on balances and placements with banks	12	(14)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF THE PERIOD	5,030	24,048
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS PER THE CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
Balances with banks	2,169	2,953
Placements with financial institutions	2,861	21,095
	5,030	24,048

INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

Three month period ended 30 September 2019 (Reviewed) USD 000's

	Share capital USD '000	Statutory reserve USD '000	Foreign currency translation reserve USD '000	Accumulated losses USD '000	Total USD '000
Balance at 1 July 2019	190,000	5,859	(71)	(93,302)	102,486
Net loss for the period	-	-	-	(1,030)	(1,030)
Balance at 30 September 2019	190,000	5,859	(71)	(94,332)	101,456
Balance at 1 July 2018	190,000	5,859	(71)	(30,330)	165,458
Transition adjustment on adoption of FAS 30 as of 1 July 2018	-	-	-	(4,791)	(4,791)
Restated balance as of 1 July 2018	190,000	5,859	(71)	(35,121)	160,667
Net loss for the period	-	-	-	(1,456)	(1,456)
Balance at 30 September 2018	190,000	5,859	(71)	(36,577)	159,211

Harry expresses 'great sadness' at royal split

● The "Megxit" crisis began on January 8 when the couple's plans to seek a "progressive new role"

● The couple lost their right to be called "his and her royal highness" (HRH)

● They further agreed to repay \$3.1 million of taxpayer's money spent on renovating their Frogmore Cottage

● Harry has undisclosed millions of pounds in savings and Meghan has enjoyed a lucrative acting career

London

Britain's Prince Harry expressed "great sadness" on Sunday as he and his wife Meghan being stripped of their royal titles as part of a historic separation settlement with the Queen.

But he said he saw no other way out but to give up his royal role in search of "a more peaceful life" with his American former actress wife and baby son Archie.

"It brings me great sadness that it has come to this," Harry told supporters of his Africa-based charity in London. His emotional first remarks since the separation were aimed at calming a crisis that has shaken the very foundations of Britain's ancient monarchy.

Harry also confessed to some trepidation at taking the momentous step of resigning from daily duties and charting a new life abroad.

He said he had a plan.

He said he had a plan.

He said he had a plan.



been ready lose the public money that supported his lavish lifestyle but admitted it pained him to have to give up the military titles and patronages he was awarded after serving two tours in Afghanistan with the British Army.

He read from prepared remarks and appeared tense as he sought understanding from a nation that has had a soft spot for him since his childhood -- and which now now appeared confused by his decision to leave his royal life behind.

"We are taking a leap of faith -- thank you for giving me the courage to take this next step," he said.



It brings me great sadness that it has come to this

PRINCE HARRY

The "Megxit" crisis began on January 8 when the couple's plans to seek a "progressive new role" in North America were announced without Queen Elizabeth II's royal assent.

"I know I haven't always gotten it right, but as far as this goes, there really was no other option," Harry said.

'Absolutely unprecedented'

The couple lost their right to be called "his and her royal highness" (HRH) -- much as Harry's late mother Princess Diana did when she divorced Prince Charles in another family drama that upset the Queen in 1996.

They further agreed to repay \$3.1 million of taxpayer's money spent on renovating their Frogmore Cottage home near Windsor Castle.

"No royal has ever paid back money," former royal press secretary Dickie Arbiter wrote in The Sun on Sunday.

"It is absolutely unprecedented."

But Arbiter said it was the loss of the HRH "royal highness" abbreviation that really made Palace history.

"Even when Edward VIII abdicated (in 1936) he dropped from being His Majesty The King to HRH the Duke of Windsor," he said.

'Lost souls'

Few know what Meghan -- a global star with a huge social media following and A-list celebrity friends such as Oprah Winfrey and the Obamas -- thinks of the British brouhaha about ancient acronyms.

The 38-year-old frankly ad-



mitted on UK television in October that she "really tried to adopt this British sensibility of a stiff upper lip."

But she admitted sadly: "That's not the point of life."

Harry has also talked about still being haunted by his mother's death in a 1997 car crash involving a chasing pack of paparazzi.

He and Meghan filed a series of lawsuits against UK media outlets in October -- a step that outraged the tabloids and renewed debates about the royals' role in public life.

One of these involved a UK paper that published fragments of a private letter Meghan had sent her estranged father Thomas Markle after her Windsor wedding to Harry in May 2018.

Thomas told Britain's Channel 5 over the weekend that he

found Meghan's decision to quit the royals "embarrassing".

"I think both of them are turning into lost souls," her father said.

'The Queen isn't sure'

The expensive lawsuits and the possibility that they might have to start paying for their top-notch security detail raise the immediate question of how they will make ends meet.

The Daily Telegraph reported on Monday that Prince Charles would probably continue paying his son some money from his private income for the next year.

Harry has undisclosed millions of pounds in savings and Meghan has enjoyed a lucrative acting career. She is now also thinking of starting her own line of health and "wellness" products.

The Sunday

Times asked a royal aide if Harry and Meghan will be able to cash in on the "Sussex Royal" brand they trademarked in December.

"That is still one of the areas being worked through," the royal aide told the paper.

"That translates as: 'The Queen isn't at all sure,'" The Sunday Times wrote.

Harry also confessed to some trepidation at taking the momentous step of resigning from front-line royal duties and charting a new life abroad.

The British royal line of succession

The couple have lost their right to be called 'his and her royal highness' (HRH) - much as Harry's late mother Princess Diana did when she divorced Prince Charles

Malta minister quits over husband's links to murder 'mastermind'

Valletta

Maltese minister Justyne Caruana resigned Monday after her husband, a former investigator into the murder of a prominent journalist, was revealed to have holidayed with the alleged mastermind behind the killing.

Caruana -- who was appointed to the government's brand-new cabinet just last week -- said in her resignation letter that she was quitting despite being "totally extraneous" to the affair, the prime minister's office said in a statement.

Her exit came after the Times of Malta said Sunday her husband, Silvio Valletta, travelled to a football match in Britain with



Maltese tycoon Yorgen Fenech (C) has been charged as an accomplice in the murder

tycoon Yorgen Fenech, who has been charged with complicity in the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia.

Caruana had sworn in on

Wednesday as minister for the island of Gozo under Malta's new leader Robert Abela.

She had held the same post under his predecessor, Joseph

Muscat, who resigned over allegations he hampered the murder probe.

Valletta was deputy police commissioner at the time of blogger Caruana Galizia's 2017 car bomb murder. She had exposed high level corruption in the island state.

He suspended himself from the case in June 2018 after a court upheld a claim by the slain reporter's family that there was a conflict of interest, because of the investigator's ties to a minister in a government Caruana Galizia had frequented targeted.

That ruling was appealed by the attorney general, but upheld by the country's highest court in October 2018.



Three men are on trial for allegedly detonating the bomb that killed the 53-year-old mother of three

Valletta travelled to watch a football match at Chelsea FC's Stamford Bridge Stadium in September 2018, after suspending himself from the case but before the constitutional court's

decision.

A video showing him in Fenech's Rolls Royce was found on the businessman's phone.

Fenech was charged as an accomplice in the murder after being detained trying to leave the country on his yacht.

His arrest in November sparked the resignation of Muscat's chief of staff and the tourism minister, before claiming Muscat's scalp as well.

Three men are on trial for allegedly detonating the bomb that killed the 53-year-old mother of three.

Valletta on Sunday admitted the holiday with Fenech, but said it only came once he had stepped aside from the case.

Nine killed, one missing in Indonesia bridge collapse



People search for the missing after a footbridge collapsed killing nine on Indonesia's Sumatra island

Bengkulu | Indonesia

Nine people drowned and another was missing after a bridge collapsed on Indonesia's Sumatra island, the disaster agency said yesterday.

Some 30 people, mostly students, were on the bridge Sunday afternoon in the town of Kaur when the newly built crossing suddenly collapsed, hurtling some teens into the water below while others clung to the railing.

The water level in the river below the bridge was higher than usual with strong currents after torrential downpours pounded the Bengkulu region at the southern end of Sumatra.

"Some managed to save themselves but 10 others could not fight against the current

and drowned, they were swept away" Ujang Syafiri, head of the disaster mitigation agency, told AFP, adding that the bridge may have collapsed due to excessive weight.

A search and rescue team scoured a 20-kilometre radius to find a teenager who is still missing, he said.

Another victim was rescued after falling into the river but is seriously injured and has been taken to hospital.

Parts of the Southeast Asian archipelago have received torrential downpours as the rainy season kicks into high gear.

In and around the capital Jakarta, some 67 people were killed this month as record rains triggered flooding and landslides.

Lax construction standards have raised widespread concerns about building and construction safety in Indonesia.

France agrees to take back 43 illegal waste containers from Malaysia

Reuters | Paris

Malaysia has shipped 43 illegal plastic waste containers back to France as part of a crackdown on illegal trafficking of waste, the two governments said in a joint statement yesterday.

The southeast Asian nation last year became the world's

main destination for plastic waste after a Chinese ban on imports of plastic waste disrupted the flow of more than 7 million tonnes of trash annually. The company responsible for shipping the containers has been identified and fined 192,000 euros (\$212,793.60), the statement added.

SARS-like virus spreads in China

● Total number of people diagnosed with the virus rose to 218

● Shanghai confirmed its first case yesterday

● South Korea also reported its first case

● Scientists warned that the number of cases in Wuhan was likely to be closer to 1,700

AFP | Beijing

A SARS-like virus has killed a third person, spread around China and reached another Asian country, authorities said yesterday, fueling fears of a major outbreak as millions begin travelling for the Lunar New Year in humanity's biggest migration.

The new coronavirus strain, first discovered in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, has caused alarm because of its connection to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

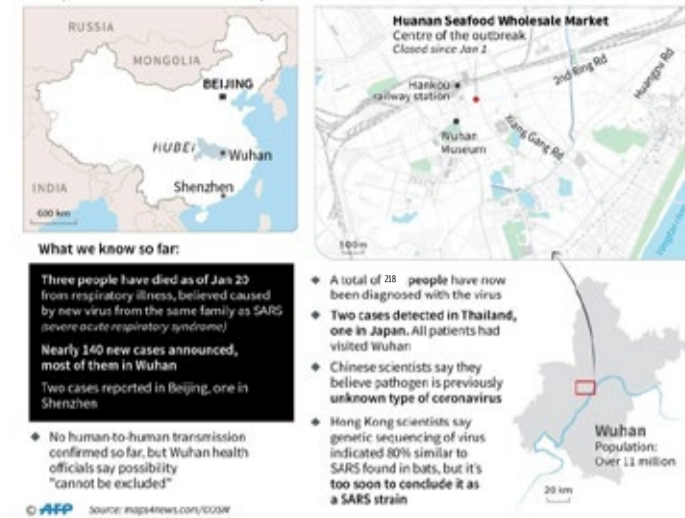
Wuhan has 11 million inhabitants and serves as a major transport hub, including during the annual Lunar New Year holiday which begins later this week and sees hundreds of millions of Chinese people travel across the country to visit family.

Weighing in on the matter for the first time, Chinese President Xi Jinping said yesterday that safeguarding people's lives should be given "top priority" and that the spread of the epidemic "should be resolutely contained", according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Xi said it was necessary to "release information on the ep-

China's pneumonia-stricken Wuhan

Third person confirmed dead as nearly 140 new cases announced on Jan 20



No human-to-human transmission has been confirmed so far, but authorities have previously said the possibility 'cannot be excluded'

idemic in a timely manner and deepen international cooperation," and ensure people have a "stable and peaceful Spring Festival", the broadcaster said.

The total number of people diagnosed with the virus rose to 218, as Shanghai confirmed its first case yesterday and 136 new cases were found over the weekend in Wuhan, 15 in southern Guangdong province and five in Beijing, according to CCTV.

A third person died in Wuhan, the local health commission said.

According to Shanghai's health commission, its first case -- a 56-year-old woman who was hospitalised last Wednesday -- also came from Wuhan.

The patient's vital signs are stable and two of her close contacts are under medical observation, it said through its official Twitter-like Weibo account.

South Korea yesterday also reported its first case -- a 35-year-old woman who flew in from Wuhan. Thailand and Japan have previously confirmed a total of three cases -- all of whom had visited the Chinese city.



A seafood market is believed to be the centre of the outbreak in the city, but health officials have reported that some patients had no history of contact with the facility

No human-to-human transmission has been confirmed so far, but authorities have not ruled out the possibility.

There are also six suspected cases in Shanghai and four provinces and regions in the east, south and southwest of the country.

"Experts believe that the current epidemic situation can still be controlled," the National Health Commission said Sunday.

Detection measures

A seafood market is believed to be the centre of the outbreak in Wuhan, but health officials



have reported that some patients had no history of contact with the facility.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Twitter Monday that "an animal source seems the most likely primary source" with "some limited human-to-human transmission occurring between close contacts".

Scientists with the MRC Centre for Global Infectious Disease Analysis at Imperial College in London warned in a paper published Friday that the number of cases in Wuhan was likely to be closer to 1,700, much higher than the official figure.

Indian 'Rapunzel' remains a cut above with longest teen hair

Ahmedabad | India

A 17-year-old Indian girl has retained her crown as the teen with the world's longest hair more than a decade after she stopping getting her tresses cut following a bad experience at a salon.

Nilanshi Patel, from the small town of Modasa in Gujarat state, remains a cut above the rest according to the Guinness World Records having bettered her record of 170.5 centimetres (5.59 feet) set in December 2018 with a new length of 190 centimetres.

Her proud father said his only child's locks had turned her from a local celebrity into an international one.

Nicknamed "Rapunzel" by her friends and schoolmates after the long, flowing hair of the princess in the Brothers Grimm fairytale, Patel said she has not visited a hairdresser for 11 years after a hair-raising ordeal.

"At six, I had a very bad experience at a local salon," she said.

"Since then I have been apprehensive about cutting my hair. My parents accepted my wishes and now my locks have become my lucky charm."

Patel has to wear high-heeled shoes if she does not want her hair to touch the ground.

Apart from that, Patel said she cares for her hair like every other teenager -- but with help from her mother. "I do what every teenager does. Wash the hair every week and oil it once or twice a week," the aspiring engineer said, adding that she dries it by sitting in the sun or with a hairdryer.

"Mostly I keep a braid, but while playing or for some occasions, I tie the hair into a bun. The only time I have trouble is while swimming."



Nearly 80 'highly dangerous' inmates escape Paraguay prison

Asuncion

Nearly 100 prisoners, many of them members of a big Brazilian drug and arms-trafficking gang and described as "highly dangerous," escaped Sunday from a Paraguayan prison near the border with Brazil, police said.

The inmates, both Brazilians and Paraguayans, made their getaway through a tunnel they had built from the prison in the border city of Pedro Juan Caballero, police spokeswoman Elena Andrada said.

"Our best men have gone to the border to attempt to recapture the prisoners," she said. The number of escapees totalled 76, including 40 Brazilians and 36 Paraguayans, officials said.

Justice Minister Cecilia Perez issued a sharp condemnation, telling reporters that it must have taken prisoners "several weeks" to build the tunnel, and adding, "It is evident that the staff knew nothing and did nothing."

Trump's impeachment is far from certain but neither is his acquittal

Mr Trump has asked the Senate to quickly dismiss charges

HUSSEIN IBISH

On the eve of his impeachment trial which will begin in the Senate next week, time is clearly not on the president's side, even if the rushed schedule, which suits both Republicans and Democrats, might be.

US President Donald Trump finally secured a Ukrainian criminal investigation announcement, although certainly not the one he was hoping for. He wanted Ukraine to investigate his rivals, but the Kiev government has announced a criminal probe into his allies instead.

Unsettling information continues to accumulate about the activities of the president's close associates, particularly Mr Trump's private attorney Rudy Giuliani and the latter's operatives. Leaked text messages recently revealed, for instance, that this gang may have had the movements of former US ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, under surveillance during 2019.

The people involved claim to have been joking, under the influence of alcohol, or "playing." But these and other astonishing revelations leave little doubt that there is much more about the Ukraine scandal that remains to be discovered.

The obvious need for additional information, and the well-known sources from which it could be obtained, will be at the heart of what is only the third presidential impeachment trial in US history.

Democrats are insisting that there is no such thing as a trial that does not involve testimony by witnesses and the subpoenaing of relevant documents. The impeachment inquiry in the House of Representatives was akin to a grand jury investigation or the preparation for an in-

dictment, which the House adopted in the two articles of impeachment adopted on December 18.

Indeed, there has never been an American impeachment trial without witness testimony or new documents, including both previous presidential impeachments. Yet such an unprecedented scenario is exactly what Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and his Republican colleagues are hoping to engineer.

Mr McConnell and most of his GOP colleagues have made it clear that they intend to acquit Mr Trump no matter what, and that they are not interested in any evidence whatsoever. Indeed, he derisively says that House Democrats did a "rushed and incomplete job" and are asking the Senate to "do their homework for them."

This elides the obvious point that the House's motivation for handing the Senate a remarkably incomplete file to support the "high crimes and misdemeanours" (for which presidents may be impeached) is that the White House has flatly refused to share any documents with the impeachment inquiry. Furthermore, it has attempted to block all executive-branch officials from testifying. Some relatively junior or former officials testified anyway, but all the key witnesses who dealt directly with Mr Trump have not been heard from, and a raft of crucial documents remains unexamined.

Mr Trump has asked the Senate to quickly dismiss these charges, and while Mr. McConnell doesn't appear ready to do that, he is clearly determined to prevent any more information coming to light. Given the revelations in the past few weeks, and the obvious fact that Republican senators have no idea what else



US President Donald Trump speaks during a "Keep America Great" campaign event.

may be discovered, their anxiety is understandable.

During the House hearings, a parade of witnesses managed to paint a remarkably intricate picture of a president determined to hijack US military aid to Ukraine to secure the announcement of a baseless criminal investigation into the son of his political rival, Joe Biden. But because the White House successfully blocked all the senior-most potential witnesses, the president's own role was not described in great and direct detail.

Obviously, if Mr Trump and Mr McConnell were confident he had done nothing wrong, they would welcome a closer examination of the facts.

The problem is particularly acute for Mr McConnell. His damning recent revelations demonstrate, and the facts are liable to demonstrate, that he is in an impossible situation given that he simply does not care what the president may have done or determined to do, no matter what.

The problem is particularly acute for Mr McConnell. As

To tackle climate change, developing countries

MAJID JAFAR

With temperatures and sea levels rising, frequent bushfires and flooding around the world, the urgency to tackle climate change is clear. Which is why the failure of the Madrid COP25 summit last month was even more disappointing. Countries could not agree a more robust, international carbon trading system and funding for carbon reduction in the developing world. Another year that the world could not afford to waste was lost.

One of the problems at the summit was that the interests of Western countries seemed misaligned with those of emerging economies. While much of the climate change narrative today is focused on what Western economies are doing to reduce emissions – such as pledging carbon neutrality by 2050 – Asia and Africa are increasing their emissions and consumption of energy.

A new coal-fired power plant comes up every week in Asia where annual CO2 emissions are double those of the US and triple those of Europe, according to the International Energy Agency. China and India now account for 37 per cent of world CO2 emissions, pushing world emissions up again over the past two years, after several years of decline.

But per capita emissions offer a different picture: Chinese emissions per capita amount to half those of the US, while India's per capita

emissions barely reach a tenth of the US. Some African countries are as low as a hundredth. Therein lies the fundamental challenge in reducing global emissions: how do we solve the global problem, while acknowledging the inequality of emissions as well as income?

From the perspective of the developing world, the West's pleas to eschew an energy intensive path to development smacks of hypocrisy, especially when the US and Europe together account for the majority of past emissions across human history. So does advice to use less energy or fly less, when over a billion people in Asia and Africa still live without electricity and 80 per cent of the world is yet to ride on an airplane.

In a world of trade wars and rising economic nationalism, achievements in curbing emissions can be made only when developing countries are treated as partners rather than targets for Western policy.

In particular, their need for affordable and secure supply of energy must be addressed. Some of the West's policies have actually been counterproductive by creating financial incentives for South America and Asia to accelerate deforestation to grow and sell biofuels for western consumption, enabling the West to meet its own targets but increasing net global emissions.

In this regard a global carbon pricing system, whether through a world carbon bank or otherwise, is a



Emissions rise from a coal-fired power station in Mpumalanga, South Africa.

vital policy option to give developing countries the incentives and support to switch to lower carbon-emitting fuels. Holistic global policies are needed that focus on reduction of emissions, without arbitrarily ruling out any fuels, technologies or policy solutions that may help to reach the targets of the Paris Agreement.

Renewable energy from solar and wind has an important part to play but despite hundreds of billions invested annually, solar and wind supply a mere 2 per cent of the world's energy consumption.

Electric cars are excellent at reducing emissions in the city, but if the electricity that powers them still comes from coal, which it does the majority of the time in China and India and still over a third of the time even in Germany, then they will be worse for climate change than cars that run on petrol.

There are those who would like to put all fossil fuels in the same bucket and condemn them equally. But natural gas generates electricity with less than half the CO2 emissions of coal, and without the

harmful particulates that cause an immediate clear air for coal-fired power, and a more palatable of intermittent energy.

This approach of promoting renewables is not the way for the US achieving its low carbon target in a generation, and the best in over a century. The IEA, natural gas for coal-fired electricity, in five years has reduced emissions by 100 times all the electric cars

Emerging economies need to be treated as partners for real progress be made in curbing global emissions

2009

Israel withdraws from the **Gaza Strip**, officially ending a three-week war it had with Hamas. However, intermittent fire by both sides continues in the weeks to follow.

2011

Anti government demonstrations take place in **Tirana, Albania**. Five people lose their lives from gunshots, allegedly fired from armed police protecting the Prime Minister's office.

2017

Over 400 cities across America and 160+ countries worldwide participate in a large-scale women's march, on **Donald Trump's** first full day as President of the United States.

2018

Rocket Lab's Electron becomes the first rocket to reach orbit using an electric pump-fed engine and deploys three CubeSats.



gn rally at Huntington Center in Toledo, Ohio.

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cent revelations demonstrate, additional facts are liable to put him in an impossible situation, given that he simply does not care what the president may have done and is determined to acquit him no matter what.

Worse, Mr Trump knows exactly what he did and didn't do, but Senate Republicans don't. They really have no idea what remains to be discovered and what is already on the record is bad enough to place them in an awkward position. Despite their best efforts, this problem is only likely to get worse.

Like war, a trial is among those social processes in which the outcome and, in retrospect, the underlying realities appear very different

es have to get on board



Vilifying the entire oil and gas sector and trying to starve it of Western capital will lead to higher energy prices and more burning of coal in the developing world, a self-defeating approach if we truly care about reducing global emissions in an unbiased manner.

equivalent to half of all the world's cars converting to clean, electric energy overnight.

Oil consumption is also often misunderstood. Its growth in demand today is not from cars, but firstly, from petrochemicals, upon which we rely for so much of modern life: from smartphones and electric devices, to household items and medications. Thereafter, demand growth is from trucking, air transport and shipping, for which there is no viable renewable option today. Oil demand is expected to peak sometime mid-century, but under any future demand scenario, oil and gas will still be required to be a significant part of the energy mix.

Vilifying the entire oil and gas sector and trying to starve it of Western capital will lead to higher energy prices and more burning of coal

at the end of the process than they did at the beginning. Mr McConnell knows this, and that explains his insistence on a short and essentially meaningless "trial."

Even though he commands a Republican majority in the Senate, he may not get his way, at least not entirely.

Mr Trump's Senate trial will hinge upon the procedural rulings of a Senate majority, with Chief Justice John Roberts serving as a tiebreaker when necessary. In practice, this means that only three or four Republicans need, at any stage, to side with Democrats on a motion to hear certain witnesses – one example being former national security advisor John Bolton, who has said he would testify and that he has significant new information.

As things stand, few if any Senate Republicans appear willing to convict Mr. Trump and remove him from office. However, a small group might be amenable to siding with Democrats, and possibly the Chief Justice, in insisting on additional testimony and documents. Once that process is unleashed, there is no telling where it might lead.

Under the current circumstances, it's very hard to imagine the Senate voting to convict and remove Mr Trump from office, despite an already strong case that he did, indeed, abuse the powers of his office for personal political gain and, as his defiant attitude suggests, would likely do so again.

But one thing is certain on the eve of this momentous Senate trial: anyone who has complete confidence in its outcome and impact is living in a fool's paradise.

What we are about to witness is a process that isn't wholly predictable or under anyone's firm control.

in the developing world, a self-defeating approach if we truly care about reducing global emissions in an unbiased manner.

The challenge to the global community is to create the necessary incentives and assurances to accelerate the developing world's switch away from coal to more gas and renewables in countries like China and India that have few gas resources and where coal is still cheaper, absent a financial incentive.

Ultimately, the only truly clean energy is using less of it. The developing world needs more support to increase energy efficiency and reduce the carbon intensity of economic growth. Preserving and replanting forests must take a more central role. A recent study found that simply by reforesting land in developing countries the world could create a sink for 750 billion CO₂, amounting to 100 years of current global carbon emissions from transportation.

Climate change is a global challenge that requires a concerted global effort. A Western-centric approach or piecemeal efforts at the national level will not suffice. Concrete international mechanisms with clear financial incentives are urgently needed to enable growing economies to reduce energy consumption through efficiency, reduce emissions by switching to less carbon intensive fuels, and reforest the global carbon sinks that are so central to human life.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Congratulations to Sh @JPNadda ji on being elected the BJP president. I am confident the Party will achieve new glory & success under his leadership. Known for his organisational experience Naddaji has always been an asset to the party. Wishing him a successful tenure ahead.

@rajnathsingh

02



Donald Trump's poisonous rhetoric and divisive politics have brought America to an inflection point. In this moment, we have an enormous opportunity to take the next great step forward as a nation. Let's get to work. We can do this, together.

@JoeBiden

03



The Trump administration drafted plans to renew and expand its travel ban list to include immigration restrictions on seven additional countries, according to sources familiar with the process.

@cnni

04



NEW: In three years in the White House, Donald Trump has accomplished something no president before him has done: fusing his private business interests with America's highest public office

@anitakumar01

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

Why Mideast start-ups are choosing the cloud?

VINOD KRISHNAN

Cloud has revolutionised the way businesses operate, especially when it comes to start-ups. It's uncommon now to find a start-up that isn't cloud native; most chose to adopt a cloud infrastructure from the beginning. Businesses across the Middle East, such as Careem, Anghami, Boutiqaat, Mrsool and so many more, have been able to grow and innovate quickly, seamlessly underpinned by their highly secure, agile, and flexible cloud infrastructure. Start-ups approach cloud, and more importantly security, with a different viewpoint when compared to larger established organisations who are still struggling to marry together new capabilities with legacy systems.

With the recent launch of the AWS Middle East Region, start-ups the region now have even greater access to advanced and secure technology infrastructure to bring their ideas to life and scale rapidly, safe in the knowledge that security is not an after-thought, but rather the cornerstone of the entire platform of services and infrastructure.

When starting a business, managing costs is critical, therefore investments that deliver the highest possible value and return on investment (ROI) are a must, so start-ups only pay for the services they use. This approach enables them to avoid the large upfront expense of owned infrastructure, and manage their IT at a lower cost than an on-premises environment.

However, low cost does not mean low functionality. To the contrary, a start-up operating on cloud infrastructure has access to the same services and capabilities as the largest enterprise or government customers. This investment includes entire teams dedicated to security that satisfy the security and compliance needs of the most risk-sensitive organisations. This allows them to compete on an even playing field, innovating quickly and bringing products to market, all with the knowledge that they have world-class security in place to protect against the most prevalent threats.

From an early stage, start-ups must choose a cloud provider whose network architecture is designed to meet the requirements of the most security-sensitive organisations in the world.

Start-ups are ambitious, tenacious and hungry to expand, so choosing to build and scale their business on the cloud is a natural choice. Simply by embracing cloud, start-ups can scale rapidly, giving them the ability to add or remove resources to meet evolving business demands as required. Instead of investing in data centers, servers and service level agreements, cloud technology allows start-ups to react faster and more flexibly, to experiment, innovate and better serve customers.

The cloud provides an opportunity for start-ups to optimise existing IT systems and to increase operational efficiencies, while driving business agility and growth. This is achieved by

allowing companies to significantly decrease the time it takes to provision and de-provision IT infrastructure. While a physical server could take months or weeks to procure and provision, a cloud server takes minutes. Furthermore, cloud technology supports the increasingly rapid pace of product development and the need to swiftly bring products to market.

Start-ups must make security a top priority, regardless of size. A security breach can impact start-ups by hurting their reputation and customer base, and can have repercussions on the larger organisations these businesses do business with. Start-ups need to bake-in security from the ground up to make sure they are not the weak link in a supply chain. An advantage of AWS is that it allows customers to scale and innovate, while maintaining a secure environment.

Time is precious for start-ups and, at AWS, automating security tasks enables start-ups to be more secure by reducing human configuration errors and giving teams more time to work on other tasks critical to the business. Automation can also offer a smarter approach to detecting potential threats through its ability to monitor patterns of behaviour. Being able to identify changes in behaviour means potential attacks can be identified and dealt with immediately. Applying machine learning and mathematical logic to security also allows the cloud to proactively manage tasks including security assessments, threat detection, and policy management. Using automated reasoning technology, the application of mathematical logic to help answer critical questions about infrastructure, AWS is able to detect entire classes of misconfigurations that could potentially expose vulnerable data.

From an early stage, start-ups must choose a cloud provider whose network architecture is designed to meet the requirements of the most security-sensitive organisations in the world. At AWS, we believe start-ups are a huge driving force for innovation. However, this wouldn't be possible without a cloud provider that can support and evolve with them as they grow and that enables them to keep their data safe and protect against malicious attacks. By having a cloud-native approach and putting security at the centre, start-ups can focus on innovating and disrupting their industry, knowing that their cloud infrastructure is as agile, highly secure, and dynamic as they are.

(Vinod Krishnan is the Head of MENA, Amazon Web Services (AWS))

business

Digitisation to take centre stage in 2020 in Bahrain

TDT | Manama

Digitisation will play a greater role this year amidst the continued emergence of disruptive and innovative digital technologies.

Innovation, automation, and the adoption of smart technologies will remain prevalent in 2020 and the business community in Bahrain should be able to continue to keep up with the latest technology-driven trends and developments.

The SME sector's compliance will be a critical aspect this year and the business community should take all necessary steps to make sure they comply accurately to the VAT system.

Bahrain is the third country in the GCC to implement a value-added tax (VAT). In 2020, tax authorities will conduct extensive inspections to check if companies were able to register on time, failing which will result in paying predefined fines. To be able to comply properly, businesses will have to make necessary changes in their processes, particularly in terms of record-keeping and accounting, in line with the provisions of VAT law.

"In 2020, we aim to continue our focus on raising awareness and educating small and medium enterprises (SMEs) about VAT including the return filling system and the importance of being compliant. We have been relentlessly working towards empowering Bahrain's SME sector by introducing advanced solutions to simplify their account-



Vikas Panchal

ing, inventory and compliance needs and will continue even in this year," said Vikas Panchal, Business Head-Middle East, Tally Solutions.

In an era of rapid digital innovations, SMEs need to ensure that they keep up with the rapidly changing business landscape. One way to do this is by investing in powerful business management software. These solutions can streamline and organise key business functions such as invoicing, accounting, inventory etc. They also generate insightful business reports like cash flow projection, outstanding management, sock summary, stock query, payment performance of debtors amongst others that can help a business owner take key business decisions more confidently. Going the automation route can give them the upper hand in terms of achieving more efficient business operations and sustaining their competitive edge.

Kanoo Shipping launches Antarctica operations



The Seatrade Middle East & Africa Ship Agent of the year in 2018 & 2019, provides a range of services to support national bases in Antarctica

TDT | Manama

Kanoo Shipping, a fully owned business division of Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo, YBA Kanoo, has launched its Antarctic operations through its office in South Africa by handling the private jet, Dassault Falcon 7X.

The Seatrade Middle East & Africa Ship Agent of the year in 2018 & 2019, provides a range

of services to support national bases in Antarctica, including logistics support for numerous flights and ship agency services for cargo vessels that sail to the ice shelf each year.

"It is not often that a shipping agent can possibly claim to be the first on a continent; but Kanoo Shipping has put in a claim following the handling of the first of this year's flights supporting various Antarctic

research bases," Jonathan Bygrave, Divisional CEO of Kanoo Shipping said.

He added: "We have developed a great relationship with many of the Polar Research Organizations worldwide to support both their flights, personnel and equipment as well as their vessels through our Kanoo Shipping Africa operation based in Cape Town. The world is no longer big enough."

Trump rejects impeachment charges



US President Donald Trump

Reuters | Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday rejected the Democratic-led House of Representatives' impeachment charges, describing the allegations that he had abused his power and obstructed Congress as affronts to the US Constitution that must be rejected.

"The Senate should speedily reject these deficient articles of impeachment and acquit the president," an executive summary of the Republican president's pre-trial brief said in Trump's first comprehensive defense before the start of his Senate trial.

The executive summary asserted that the "House Democrats theory of 'abuse of power' is not an impeachable offense." It rejected the obstruction of Congress charge as frivolous and dangerous, saying the president exercised his legal rights by resisting congressional demands for information.

It accused the House Democrats of conducting a rigged process.

While the Republican-controlled Senate is highly unlikely to remove Trump from office, it is important for the Republican president to diminish the Democratic accusations as a partisan witch-hunt. He needs to limit the political damage to his re-election bid as he seeks a second term in November.

Trump's legal team says he was well within his constitutional authority to press Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy last year to investigate Biden and his son Hunter as part of what Trump says was an anti-corruption drive.

Bahrain polytechnic introduces Korean language course

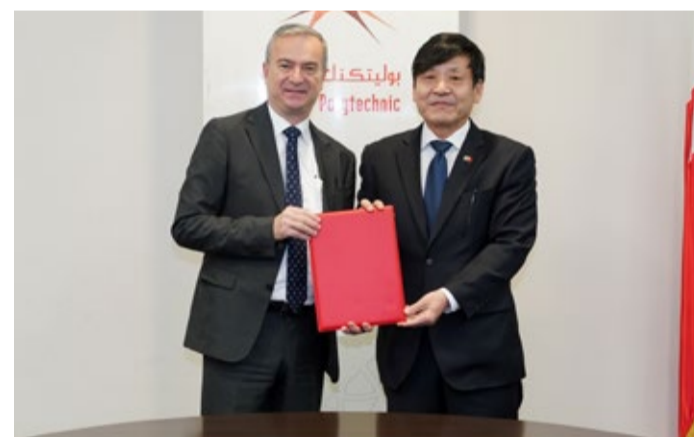
TDT | Manama

Bahrain Polytechnic announced signing a deal to introduce the Korean language course in its curriculum on Thursday.

Hyunmo Koo, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and Dr Jeff Zabudsky, the CEO of Bahrain Polytechnic signed the deal at a ceremony held at the Polytechnic.

The MoU follows a cooperation agreement signed in July 2019 on the operation of a community course "Discover Korea" in Bahrain Polytechnic for the Korean language. The move led to placing the Korean language course as an elective course in the curriculum.

William Hann, Head of Foundation School at Bahrain Polytechnic, commented: "We



Hyunmo Koo, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and Dr Jeff Zabudsky, the CEO of Bahrain Polytechnic signed the deal

believe this collaboration is a great opportunity for our students to discover and learn the Korean language, which is important in today's interconnected world."

In 2017, an MoU on the opera-

tion of the King Sejong Institute was signed with University of Bahrain, teaching the Korean language as an elective course, and since 2016, a community language course has been running in Ahlia University.

BLF ends 2019 with a boost to liquidity, performance: SICO

TDT | Manama

SICO, a regional asset manager, broker, market maker and investment bank, announced yesterday that the Bahrain Liquidity Fund (BLF), now in its fourth year, has continued to make a major impact on the average daily traded volume (ADTV) of the Bahrain Bourse.

The Bahrain Bourse ADTV has reached BD 1.121 million in 2019 increasing by four folds since inception in 2016

BLF transactions in 2019 represented 31.25 per cent of the total ADTV on the Bourse compared to the 22pc recorded in 2018.

Commenting, Fadhel Makhloq, SICO's Chief Capital Markets Officer, said, "The Fund had a positive impact on the BHB despite its reduced size, resulting from paying back in cash 10pc of the Fund's size to its shareholders, in addition to paying out all dividends received during 2019. The increase in the participation rate over last year is a clear manifestation of the Fund's role as a liquidity provider."

In terms of returns, the BLF



Fadhel Makhloq, SICO's Chief Capital Markets Officer

has generated an annual return on capital of 8.19pc representing a net asset value (NAV) of BD 39.5 million. This return includes cash dividends distributed to Fund unitholders.

"The 20.4pc performance of Bahrain All Share Index during 2019 was the second-best in the GCC region and a clear indication of investors' confidence in the Bahraini market. Looking ahead, we believe the market will enjoy a positive year during 2020 supported by fundamentals and generous yields," added Makhloq.

Celebrate Chinese New Year with Gulf Hotel

TDT | Manama

The Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa announced celebrating the Chinese New Year with a special guest Chef Chih-Yuan Lin from Taiwan.

Chef Lin will be preparing his special set menu at China Garden from January 21 - 25. He is an icon of his homeland's culinary culture and has been featured on several TV shows in Thailand and the United States.



Chef Chih-Yuan Lin

Chef Chih-Yuan Lin is a young and talented chef specialised in traditional Chinese / Taiwanese cuisine.

Lin is known for his modern plating techniques and is currently the Executive Chef of Sanhoyan, one of most popular Taiwanese cuisine restaurant chains in Taiwan. He has also built up other pop-up brands in China & Taiwan including Beef Lab (Beef noodles) and Long Juan (rice box).

The special Chinese New Year

Events are Set Menu designed by Chef Lin available at China Garden from January 21-25 and a Master cooking class on January 25 at 10:30 am by Chef Lin. Seats are limited, advanced booking is required. Price: BD 39 net.

To register log on to <https://pay.gulfotherbahrain.com/cookingclass/>

For reservations, call +973 1771 3000. Follow China Garden on social media, @china-garden_bh.

World's 22 richest men have more wealth than all women in Africa: Oxfam

The world's richest 2,153 people controlled more money than the poorest 4.6 billion combined in 2019

● **Unpaid care work by women added at least \$10.8 trillion a year in value to the world economy - three times more than the tech industry**

Davos | Switzerland

The number of billionaires has doubled in the past decade and the world's 22 richest men now have more wealth than all the women in Africa, Oxfam said Monday in an appeal to the Davos elite to get serious about inequality.

"Our broken economies are lining the pockets of billionaires and big business at the expense of ordinary men and women. No wonder people are starting to question whether billionaires should even exist," Oxfam's India head Amitabh Behar said.

"Women and girls are among those who benefit least from today's economic system," Behar said ahead of the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, where he will represent Oxfam.

There will be at least 119 billionaires worth about \$500 billion attending Davos this year, Bloomberg reported, with the highest contingents coming from the United States, India and Russia.

"The very top of the economic pyramid sees trillions of dollars



The 22 richest men in the world have more wealth than all the women in Africa, Oxfam says



Our broken economies are lining the pockets of billionaires and big business at the expense of ordinary men and women. No wonder people are starting to question whether billionaires should even exist

OXFAM'S INDIA HEAD AMITABH BEHAR

of wealth in the hands of a very small group of people, predominantly men," the Oxfam report said.

"Their wealth is already ex-

treme, and our broken economy concentrates more and more wealth into these few hands," it said.

The report said women and

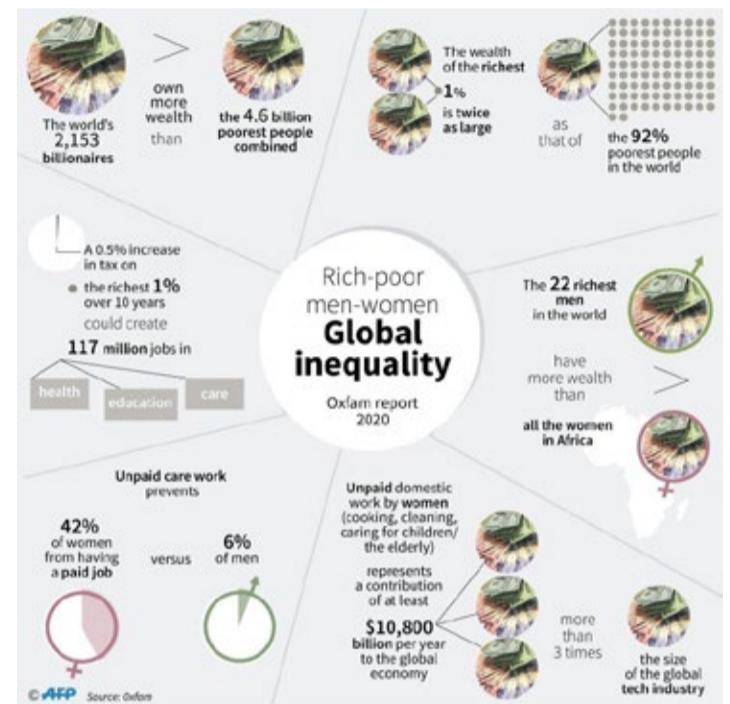
girls put in 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work each and every day, estimated to be worth at least \$10.8 trillion a year.

Oxfam's annual report on global inequality is traditionally released just before the forum opens on Tuesday in the Swiss Alpine resort.

- Startling stats -

It had some astonishing statistics.

If the world's richest one percent paid just 0.5 percent extra tax on their wealth for 10 years, it would equal the investment



needed to create 117 million new jobs in elderly and child care, education and health, Oxfam said.

Oxfam's figures are based on data from Forbes magazine and Swiss bank Credit Suisse, but they are disputed by some economists.

The numbers show that 2,153 billionaires now have more wealth than the 4.6 billion poorest people on the planet.

Women and girls are burdened in particular because they are most often care givers that keep "the wheels of our economies, businesses and societies moving," Behar said.

They "often have little time to get an education, earn a decent living or have a say in how our societies are run," and "are therefore trapped at the bottom of the economy," he added.

"Across the globe, 42 percent of women cannot get jobs because they are responsible for all the caregiving, compared to just six percent of men," Oxfam figures showed.

The report called on world governments to "build a human economy that is feminist and values what truly matters to society, rather than fuelling an endless pursuit of profit and wealth".

Saudi stocks gain as Aramco rebounds

● **Saudi Aramco closes up at 34.6 riyals**

● **National Medical Care gains on contract**

● **28 of 30 Egyptian blue-chips slide**

● **First Abu Dhabi Bank lifts Abu Dhabi**

Reuters



Traders on the floor of Saudi Stock market (file)

Saudi stocks edged up yesterday, supported by gains in financial shares and a rebound by Saudi Aramco after three sessions of losses, while other Middle Eastern markets were little changed.

Saudi Arabia's index gained 0.2 per cent as Saudi Aramco reversed course to close up 0.7pc at 34.6 riyals (\$9.22), offsetting earlier losses.

On Sunday, Al Rajhi Capital Research rated Aramco "neutral", in line with most other brokerages, and set a target price of 37.5 riyals per share.

J.P. Morgan was the first major brokerage to initiate coverage of Saudi Aramco, rating it "overweight" and setting a price target of 37 riyals per share. It said it sees scope for an increase in the company's proposed \$75 billion base dividend.

Banque Saudi Fransi rose 1.8pc and the chemicals company Saudi Basic Industries gained 0.8pc. National Medical Care gained 1.7pc after the government awarded a medical services contract worth 278.5 million riyals (\$74.24 million).

The Abu Dhabi index was up

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.2pc to 8,470 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 0.8pc to 5,213 pts
DUBAI	▼ 0.4pc to 2,851 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.2pc to 10,690 pts
EGYPT	▼ 1pc to 13,774 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.1pc to 1,643 pts
OMAN	▲ 0.1pc to 4,076 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 0.2pc to 7,124 pts

0.8pc as First Abu Dhabi Bank rose 1.2pc. Aquaculture firm International Holding jumped 9.9pc. In Egypt, the blue-chip index declined 1pc as 28 of 30 stocks fell, including Commercial International Bank Egypt, which declined 1.8pc, Talaat Mostafa Group Holding, which closed down 3.2pc.

Egyptians and Arab investors were net seller of stocks, according to exchange data.

Dubai shares snapped a seven-session winning streak, closing down 0.4pc. Emirates NBD fell 1.1pc and Dubai Islamic Bank 0.5pc.

The Qatari index slipped 0.2pc, also after seven sessions of gains, as Industries Qatar fell 0.9pc and the Gulf's largest bank, Qatar National Bank, lost 0.5pc.

Kosovo and Serbia agree to resume flights after two-decade gap

Reuters | Pristina

Kosovo and Serbia agreed yesterday to launch direct commercial flights after a two-decade interval in a deal mediated by the United States in an attempt to push the two former foes closer to normalizing relations.

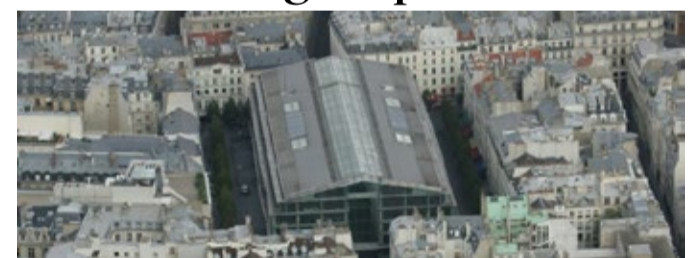
Direct flights were halted in 1998 when war broke out in Kosovo between Albanian insurgents and Serbian security forces. Serbia lost control of Kosovo after NATO bombing in 1999 to drive out Serb forces, ending a counter-insurgency in which more than 13,000 people, mainly local Albanians, were killed.

Monday's deal was signed at the US embassy in Berlin.

"This event marks another step in our efforts to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia," Kosovo President Hashim Thaci said in a statement.

Thaci said the deal was reached with the "contribution" of the US President Donald Trump's national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, and US ambassador to Berlin, Richard Grenell.

JPMorgan Chase buys new Paris building for post-Brexit



An aerial view of the Place du Marche Saint-Honore in 2005

New York

US bank JPMorgan Chase on Sunday said it had purchased a new building in the heart of Paris capable of holding 450 people, the latest step in its plans to move out of London following Brexit.

The newcomers will join the 260 employees already working in the French capital, the bank said in a statement.

"After multiple government reforms and given the intrinsic nature of Parisian infrastructure, this is the ideal time to invest here and for more of our staff to settle here," said Kyril Courboin, the bank's managing director in France.

The move "will give the bank the opportunity to pursue growth in France, in line with its strategy to continue to serve its European clients seamlessly from the continent's major cities, including Frankfurt, Luxembourg and Dublin," the statement added.

CEO Jamie Dimon said at the beginning of 2019 that JPMorgan planned to shift "several

hundred" jobs from London to the continent due to Brexit. The bank already moved a handful of employees at the end of 2018.

Britain's exit from the European Union should take effect at the end of this month, paving the way for a transition period until the end of 2020.

But the French capital should have already benefited from the relocation of 4,000 employees, Paris Europlace -- an organisation that promotes Paris's financial sector -- said at the beginning of January.

Bank of America opened a new French subsidiary in February 2019 that employs 400 people, most of whom were previously based in London.

The building JPMorgan chose in Paris is on Place du Marche Saint-Honore. It is connected to its headquarters on Place Vendome and could eventually accommodate trading room activities after the completion of renovation work at the end of 2020.

IMF reduces global growth forecasts

Reductions reflect reassessment of economic prospects for major emerging markets

● Global growth would reach 3.3 per cent in 2020

● Growth will improve slightly to 3.4pc in 2021

● Upgraded China's 2020 growth forecast to 6.0pc

● US growth would be 0.1 percentage point lower than forecast

● India saw a sharp, 1.2 percentage point cut

Reuters | Washington

The International Monetary Fund yesterday trimmed back its 2020 global growth forecasts due to sharper-than-expected slowdowns in emerging markets but said a US-China trade deal was another sign that trade and manufacturing activity may soon bottom out.

The IMF said global growth would reach 3.3 per cent in 2020, compared to 2.9pc in 2019, which was the slowest pace since the financial crisis a decade ago. Estimates for both years were cut by 0.1 percentage point from forecasts made in October.

Growth will improve slightly to 3.4pc in 2021, but that esti-



IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva speaks at a news conference ahead of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland

mate, too, was cut by 0.2 percentage point from October, the Washington-based international crisis lender said.

The reductions reflect the IMF's reassessment of economic prospects for a number of major emerging markets.

The IMF also said it marked

down growth forecasts for Chile due to social unrest and for Mexico, due to a continued weakness in investment.

The Fund said that an easing of tensions between the United States and China, which had stunted GDP growth in 2019, had boosted market sentiment, amid

"tentative" signs that trade and manufacturing were bottoming out.

"These early signs of stabilisation could persist and eventually reinforce the link between still-resilient consumer spending and improved business spending," the IMF said. The fund has cited uncertainty over tariffs and its negative effects on business investment as the biggest factor in limiting growth.

"However, few signs of turning points are yet visible in global macroeconomic data," the Fund added.

Boost for China, US

The Fund's cautious outlook assumes that there are no additional flare-ups in US-China trade tensions, and that Britain executes an orderly exit from the European Union at the end of January.

The IMF upgraded China's 2020 growth forecast by 0.2 percentage point to 6.0pc because the US trade deal included a partial tariff reduction and canceled tariffs on Chinese consumer goods that had been scheduled for December. These tariffs had been built into the IMF's previous forecasts.

But the Fund did not give a boost to its US growth forecast for China's pledges to increase purchases of US goods and services by \$200 billion over two years. Instead, the IMF said 2020 US growth would be 0.1 percentage point lower than forecast

in October, at 2.0pc because of the fading stimulus effects from 2017 tax cuts and the Federal Reserve's monetary easing.

Eurozone growth also was marked down 0.1 percentage point from October, to 1.3pc for 2020, largely due to a manufacturing contraction in Germany and decelerating domestic demand in Spain.

India saw a sharp, 1.2 percentage point cut to its 2020 growth forecast to 5.8pc, the IMF's biggest markdown for any emerging market, because of the domestic credit crunch. Monetary and fiscal stimulus is expected to lift India's growth rate back to 6.5pc in 2021, although this is still 0.9 percentage point lower than forecast in October.

Other emerging markets saw forecast downgrades, the IMF said, including Chile, which

has been hit by social unrest. Mexico will grow just 1.0pc in 2020, down from 1.3pc forecast in October.

Although downside risks had diminished in the wake of the US-China trade deal, the IMF said they were still considerable.

"Rising geopolitical tensions, notably between the United States and Iran, could disrupt global oil supply, hurt sentiment and weaken already tentative business investment," the IMF said.

"Moreover, intensifying social unrest across many countries - reflecting in some cases, the erosion of trust in established institutions and lack of representation in governance structures - could disrupt activity, complicate reform efforts and weaken sentiment, dragging growth lower than projected."



Workers erect scaffolding at a construction site of a metro rail station in Kolkata, India

Global tourism growth slowed in 2019: UN

● Middle East was the one bright spot as tourist arrivals in the region jumped by 8.0 pc in 2019

● UNWTO expects France, Spain and the United States to once again be the three most visited countries in the world

Madrid

Global tourism slowed in 2019 due to a cooling world economy, especially in Europe and Asia where uncertainties linked to Brexit and protests in Hong Kong also weighed, the United Nations' tourism agency said yesterday.

The number of international tourist arrivals rose by 4.0 per cent last year to 1.5 billion, its slowest rate since 2016, the Madrid-based World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) said in a statement.

"This is a growth that we can consider strong because it is within the historical average, but we see a slight slowdown compared to the last two years. But it should be noted that the last two years have been really exceptional with a growth that was not normal," the body's intelligence chief, Sandra Carvao, told a news conference.

Tourist numbers grew by 6.0 pc in 2018 and by 7.0 pc in 2017 as holidaymakers returned to sunshine destinations in the



The number of international tourist arrivals rose by 4.0 per cent last year

eastern Mediterranean such as Turkey and Egypt after several years of tourists staying away due to security concerns. Tourism numbers rose by 4.0 pc in 2016.

The UNWTO predicted global tourism will grow by 3.0-4.0 pc this year, buoyed by major sporting and cultural events such as the Tokyo Olympics in Japan.

An economic slowdown in many key issuing markets such as Germany and the collapse of Thomas Cook, the world's oldest travel firm, had contributed to the slowdown in the sector last year, Carvao said.

Britain's looming departure from the European Union had generated "strong uncertainty" and "has impacted its economy, which has impacted the value of its currency" leading to fewer British nationals going abroad on holidays, she added.

Tourist arrivals in Europe rose by 4.0 pc in 2019, down from 6.0 pc in the previous year.

It remained the most visited region in the world, account-

The Americas showed a mixed picture as many island destinations in the Caribbean consolidated their recovery after the 2017 hurricanes while arrivals fell in South America due partly to ongoing social and political turmoil

UN STATEMENT

ing for 51 pc of all international tourist arrivals last year, or 743 million people.

Arrivals in the Asia-Pacific region rose by 5.0 pc compared to 7.0 pc in 2018 as Hong Kong was rocked by sometimes violent political protests which caused hotel occupancy rates to slump in the Chinese-ruled city.

Middle East jump

Africa posted a 4.0-pc rise in

tourist arrivals, down from 9.0 pc in 2018.

"The Americas showed a mixed picture as many island destinations in the Caribbean consolidated their recovery after the 2017 hurricanes while arrivals fell in South America due partly to ongoing social and political turmoil," the UN body's statement said.

The Middle East was the one bright spot as tourist arrivals in the region jumped by 8.0 pc in 2019, up from 3.0 pc in the previous year, due mainly to Saudi Arabia's ambitious plan to draw foreign visitors and the recovery of the Egyptian market.

UNWTO expects France, Spain and the United States to once again be the three most visited countries in the world last year once it has final figures.

"We don't really expect changes in the rankings," said Carvao.

In 2018, France remained the world's most visited nation with 89 million arrivals followed by Spain and the United States.

Despite the slowdown in the rise in international arrivals, tourism spending continued to grow in 2019, especially among the world's top ten spenders.

France reported the strongest increase in international tourism spending, jumping 11 pc, while spending by international visitors from the United States rose by 6.0 pc due to the strong dollar.

But many emerging markets such as Brazil, China -- the world's top source market -- and Saudi Arabia reported declines in tourism spending.

Trump hails China trade deal as 'much better' than expected



US President Donald Trump, shown taking the stage at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention, has repeatedly touted the trade pact with China as a win for American farmers, who were hit hard by the tariff war

Austin

President Donald Trump on Sunday hailed the trade deal signed last week with China for dramatically improving relations with Beijing, saying it was "much better" than he expected.

The "phase one" deal marks a truce in the two countries' trade war after nearly two years of tensions. But with tariffs still in place on two-thirds of more than \$500 billion worth of imports from China, US consumers and businesses will be left to foot the bill.

"This is an incredible success for our entire country," Trump said Sunday evening at a rally in Austin, Texas. He was speaking to a convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

"I think China's gonna go all out to prove that the agreement that was signed is a good agreement. It's much bigger and much better than I ever thought we'd get," he said.

Trump also praised a new chapter in relations with Beijing, calling it "the best relationship that we've ever had with China in many, many years."

"China respects us now," Trump said. "They didn't respect us. They couldn't believe they were getting away with what they were getting away with."

The US and China signed "phase one" of their trade deal on Wednesday, bringing relief to stock markets after prolonged trade friction.

The deal is also a boon for Trump as he faces an impeachment trial in the Senate this week, followed by a tough re-election fight.

The agreement includes pledges from China to beef up purchases of US agricultural goods and other exports for two years, provides some protections for US technology, and new enforcement mechanisms that allow Washington to quickly impose penalties that Beijing cannot respond to.

SHOW



BAD BOYS FOR LIFE (PG-15)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 PM
 CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D): 12.45 + 5.45 + 10.45 PM
 CITY CENTRE: 11.15 AM + 2.00 + 4.45 + 7.30 + 10.15 PM + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)
 CITY CENTRE (ATMOS): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN
 CITY CENTRE (VIP I): 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM
 SEEF (I): 10.45 AM + 12.30 + 1.30 + 3.15 + 4.15 + 6.00 + 7.00 + 8.45 + 9.45 + 11.30 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)
 WADI AL SAIL: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM
WILL SMITH, MARTIN LAWRENCE, VANESSA HUDGENS

DOLLITTLE (PG)(ADVENTURE/COMEDY/FAMILY)
 OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 11.30 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 11.15 AM + 4.00 + 8.45 PM
 CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D): 10.30 AM + 3.30 + 8.30 PM
 CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 12.30 + 1.15 + 2.45 + 3.30 + 5.00 + 5.45 + 7.15 + 8.00 + 9.30 + 10.15 + 11.45 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)
 CITY CENTRE (VIP II): 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM
 SEEF (II): 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)
 WADI AL SAIL: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM
ROBERT DOWNEY JR., ANTONIO BANDERAS, MICHAEL SHEEN

JAI MUMMY DI (15+)(HINDI/COMEDY/ROMANTIC)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 11.15 AM + 4.15 + 9.15 PM
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 3.00 + 7.30 + 12.00 MN
SUNNY SINGH NIJJAR, SONNALLI SEYGALL, SUPRIYA PATHAK

YOM WLEILA (15+)(ARABIC/DRAMA)
 CITY CENTRE: 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM
 SEEF (II): 2.00 + 6.45 + 11.30 PM
YIHYA FAKHRI, KHALID AL-NABAWI, AHMAD AL-FESHAWI

PARASITE (15+)(KOREAN)
 SEEF (II): 11.30 AM + 4.15 + 9.00 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 1.30 + 6.30 + 11.30 PM
 SONG KANG HO, LEE SUN KYUN, CHO YEO JEONG
 A HIDDEN LIFE (PG-13)(DRAMA)
 SEEF (II): 7.30 PM + 10.45 PM
AUGUST DIEHL, VALERIE PACHNER, MARIA SIMON

FOODIVERSE (G)(ANIMATION)
 SEEF (II): 11.30 AM + 1.30 + 3.30 + 5.30 PM
 SITONG LIU, BO SUN, XU WU
 JUMANJI THE NEXT LEVEL (PG-15)
 CITY CENTRE: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)
 SEEF (II): 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 12.45 + 6.00 + 11.15 PM
DWAYNE JOHNSON, JACK BLACK, KEVIN HART

1917 (PG-15)(WAR/ACTION/DRAMA)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 3.00 + 8.45 PM
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)
 SEEF (I): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM
GEORGE MACKAY, DEAN-CHARLES CHAPMAN, MARK STRONG

AL FELOUS (THE MONEY) (PG-15)(ARABIC/COMEDY/CRIME)
 CITY CENTRE: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)
 SEEF (II): 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 10.30 AM + 3.30 + 8.45 PM
TAMER HOSNY, ZEINA, KHALID EL-SAWI



UNDERWATER (PG-15)(THRILLER/HORROR/DRAMA/)
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 + 12.00 MN
 SEEF (II): 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM
KRISTEN STEWART, T.J. MILLER, JESSICA HENWICK

SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG)(ANIMATION/ACTION/)
 CITY CENTRE: 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 + 8.15 + 10.30 PM
 SEEF (II): 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM
WILL SMITH, TOM HOLLAND, KAREN GILLAN



FROZEN 2 (PG)(ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 + 6.15 + 8.30 + 10.45 PM
 SEEF (II): 12.45 + 5.15 + 9.45 PM
KRISTEN BELL, IDINA MENZEL, JOSH GAD

21 BRIDGES (PG-15)(CRIME/ACTION/THRILLER) 21
 CITY CENTRE: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM
CHADWICK BOSEMAN, SIENNA MILLER, STEPHAN JAMES

MASAMEER: THE MOVIE (PG)(ANIMATION/COMEDY)
 CITY CENTRE: 12.15 + 2.45 + 5.15 + 7.45 + 10.15 PM
ABDULAZIZ AL-MUZAINI, ABDULAZIZ AL-SHEHRI, MAZROA AL-MAZROA

TANHAJI: THE UNSUNG WARRIOR (PG-15)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 1.30 + 6.30 + 11.30 PM
AJAY DEVGN, SAIF ALI KHAN, KAJOL

CHHAPAAK (PG-15)(HINDI/DRAMA)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 3.15 + 8.45 PM
 SEEF (I): 12.15 + 5.45 + 11.15 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.00 AM + 4.00 + 9.00 PM
DEEPIKA PADUKONE, VIKRANT MASSEY, MADHURJEET SARGHI

THE GRUDGE (15+)(HORROR/THRILLER/DRAMA)
 CITY CENTRE: 1.45 + 6.45 + 11.45 PM
ANDREA RISEBOROUGH, DEMIAN BICHR, JOHN CHO

MALEFICENT 2: MISTRESS OF EVIL (PG)
 CITY CENTRE: 12.30 + 5.00 + 9.30 PM
ANGELINA JOLIE, TERESA MAHONEY, MICHELLE PFEIFFER

LIKE A BOSS (18+)(COMEDY)
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 3.00 + 7.30 + 12.00 MN
TIFFANY HADDISH, ROSE BYRNE, SALMA HAYEK

JOKER (15+)(THRILLER/CRIME/DRAMA)
 CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 4.00 + 9.00 PM
JOAQUIN PHOENIX, ZAZIE BEETZ, ROBERT DE NIRO

DARBAR (PG-15)(ACTION)
 OASIS JUFFAIR:(TAMIL): 12.15 + 5.45 + 11.15 PM
 SEEF (I):(TAMIL): 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM
RAJINIKANTH, SUNIL SHETTY, NAYANTHARA

SARILERU NEEKEVVARU (PG-15)(TELUGU)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 11.45 AM + 5.30 + 11.15 PM
MAHESH BABU, VIJAYASHANTI, RASHMIKA MANDANA, PRAKASH RAJ

BIG BROTHER (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM
 SEEF (II): 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 5.45 + 8.45 + 11.45 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.00 AM + 5.00 + 11.00 PM
 AL HAMRA: 12.00 + 9.00 PM
MOHANLAL, ARBAAZ KHAN, ANOOP MENON, SARJANO KHALID, HONEY ROSE, SIDDIQUE



ENTHA MANCHIVADA (PG-15)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 10.45 AM + 4.45 PM
 SEEF (I): 2.45 + 8.15 PM
KALYAN RAM, MEHREEN PIRZADA, SUHASINI

ALA VAIKUNTHAPURRAMLLO (PG-15)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 1.45 + 7.45 + 10.45 PM
 SEEF (II): 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM
 AL HAMRA: 3.00 PM
ALLU ARAVIND.S, RADHA KRISHNA, ALLU ARJUN, POOJA HEGDE, TABU, NIVETHA PETHURAJ

PATTAS (PG-13)(TAMIL)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM
 SEEF (I): 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM
 WADI AL SAIL: 2.00 + 8.00 PM
 AL HAMRA: 6.00 + (12.00 MN THURS/FRI)
DHANUSH, SNEHA, MEHREEN PIRZADA

MOVIE REVIEW

“Weathering With You” is an animated ray of sunshine

Makoto Shinkai’s followup to ‘Your Name’ is another charming coming-of-age tale with a supernatural twist

● **Animated love story is set against a backdrop of climate change**

Getting caught in the rain stinks. One of the best sequences in Bong Joon-ho’s Parasite involves the protagonists returning home on a rainy night to find their semi-basement apartment washed away in an apocalyptic flood. Makoto Shinkai’s Weathering With You extends this drizzly predicament across its two-hour runtime: we arrive at a Tokyo suffering from endless rain, and a total lack of sunshine.

That’s just one of the problems facing Hodaka Moishima (Kotaro Daigo), a teenage runaway who’s relocated to the city in hopes of finding a fix for his isolated home life. On the boat to Tokyo, Hodaka encounters Keisuke (Shun Oguri), a semi-sketchy figure who eventually offers the teenager a position as a writer at his urban legend-investigation publication (in return for room and board at his



Will Smith, left, and Martin Lawrence in ‘Bad Boys for Life’

own semi-basement apartment, which is honestly a deal this struggling writer would take in a heartbeat). Hodaka also meets Hina, a young woman who seems to have the ability to momentarily make the weather clear up and the sun come out. She’s literally a bright spot in Hodaka’s turbulent adolescence. Shinkai’s follow-up to his 2016

breakout hit Your Name is another coming-of-age story with a supernatural twist, another tale of two young people fighting to connect with each other in an indifferent, cloudy world. The adults of Weathering With You are largely absent from the frame – and when they do appear, they seem just as lost as the teens.

And what gorgeous frames they are. From the rain-soaked streets to the breathtaking clouds that sit above, Shinkai’s team of animators provide an array of stunning visuals. Rare rays of sunshine cut across the screen, a neat contrast to the pervasive, moody atmosphere. Against this backdrop, the characters’ expressions and move-



Makoto Shinkai’s follow-up to his anime hit Your Name lives up to his reputation

ments really pop – it’s tough to imagine this story told in any other medium.

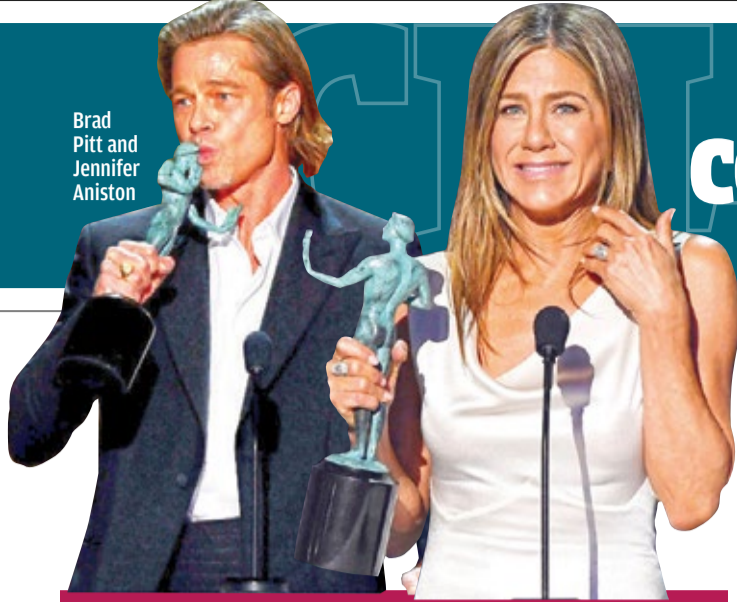
But where Weathering With You struggles is in its pacing and structure. The first act moves at breakneck speed, as Hodaka is thrown into a whole new world and forced to adjust, rapidly. It mostly works: the way Hodaka’s amateur-writing gig connects to Hina’s mythological importance is particularly satisfying. The film’s back half is a bit more scattered – a subplot involving Keisuke’s kid gets lost. But the bigger problem is that the relationship between Hodaka and Hina isn’t ever developed to the

point where it’s completely believable. Hina’s perspective is never quite accessible, so it’s hard to tell whether she feels the same way about Hodaka – in contrast to the film’s assertion that the bond between these characters is airtight.

Finally, the climate change-adjacent subtext gets a little muddled – it’s clear Shinkai is trying to comment on our uncertain ecological future, but exactly what he’s attempting to say gets lost. There’s something genuinely moving – tragic, even – about watching young people fall in love in the face of such terrifying conditions, but Shinkai never clarifies his point-of-view on this melancholy reality, nor does he really comment on what we should do in the face of total environmental collapse. Then again, that might be a little too First Reformed for this kids’ movie.

At the end of the day, Weathering With You is content with the conclusion that getting caught in the rain may stink, but it’s not so bad if you’ve got someone to share an umbrella with.

celebs



Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston

Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert De Niro in Martin Scorsese's next

Los Angeles

Hollywood stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro will star in filmmaker Hollywood maestro Martin Scorsese's upcoming film, "Killers Of The Flower Moon".

The two stars have teamed up with Scorsese several times individually, and appeared in Scorsese's 2015 short film "The Audition", playing fictionalised versions of themselves. This will be the first time that the actors co-star in feature film directed by Scorsese.

DiCaprio was on stage at the 2020 SAG Awards to present the Life Achievement Award to De Niro. At the event, DiCaprio announced that he would be working with De Niro in Scorsese's next film, reports ew.com.



Leonardo DiCaprio

Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston's backstage moment at SAG Awards

Los Angeles

Hollywood star Brad Pitt and his former wife Jennifer Aniston were spotted reuniting backstage to celebrate his win at the Screen Actors Guild Awards (SAG).

The two were photographed sharing a moment backstage after their respective wins at the SAG Awards 2020 on Sunday night.

Another image showed Aniston touching Pitt's chest as he held her arm, reports pagesix.com.

Pitt took home the award for Outstanding Performance

by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role for Quentin Tarantino "Once Upon A Time In Hollywood". He poked fun at his dull love life during his speech.

Aniston bagged the Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series for "The Morning Show".

Both Pitt and Aniston have been out and about in this year's award show circuit, in support of their projects.

Over the years, the former flames have remained friends. Pitt attended Aniston's annual holiday party, as well as her 50th birthday bash in February 2019.

Gigi, Bella Hadid wear coordinated haute couture at Paris Fashion Week

Los Angeles

Supermodel sisters Gigi Hadid and Bella Hadid raised the glamour quotient with their well-coordinated haute couture at the Paris Fashion Week on late Saturday.

While Gigi, 24, wore a long flowing dress having a high leg slit, Bella 23, was seen wearing a fitted dress with white stockings and multi-coloured earrings.

Gigi accessorised her ensemble with tan coloured sandals and golden coloured large hoop wearing.

This comes a couple of days after Gigi grabbed the headlines after being dismissed as a prospective juror in Harvey Weinstein's rape and sex abuse trial.



Gigi Hadid and Bella Hadid

Paul Walker's car collection auctioned for \$2.3 million

Los Angeles

Late actor Paul Walker's personal car collection has been sold for over \$2.3 million at an auction.

A part of a Barrett-Jackson bidding event in Arizona, a total of 21 vehicles owned by Walker was sold for that amount, reports aceshowbiz.com.

The biggest collections came from an Alpine White 1995 BMW M3 Lightweight, which collected \$385,000.

It was one of five white BMW M3 Editions being sold, with the others bringing in between \$220,000 to \$258,500.



Paul Walker

Meghan Trainor has overcome anxiety

Los Angeles

Singer Meghan Trainor has "crushed" her anxiety and feels that she is finally in a place where she will never experience those negative feelings again.

"I tackled it. I crushed it. I'm finally in a place where I don't think that will ever happen again. I know that if I'm overtired, that can be a trigger, but I can tell my brain, it's OK instead of being like, should I go to the emergency room? I got there with help and it's the best feeling because in the middle of it you feel that this will never end and I will die like this. I'm so glad I found the light at the end of the tunnel," the "Dear Future Husband" hitmaker said.



Meghan Trainor

Amy Schumer wants a daughter next

Los Angeles

Actress Amy Schumer, who has recently opened up about her IVF journey as she wants to have another baby, says she would love to have a daughter next and has urged anyone who has the "resources" to have a baby to do just that.

"I really have had a beautiful experience having a baby. You know, it's different for everybody. But I really have to recommend if you've got the resources to have a baby, have a baby. It's been so life-changing for me. And I really like the guy. I picture us all on the beach together. And teaching maybe a little girl how to play volleyball," Schumer said.



Amy Schumer

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Nicole Kidman contemplated retirement when she got pregnant

Los Angeles

Nicole Kidman planned to retire from acting when she got pregnant.

The 'Big Little Lies' star - who has adopted kids Isabella, 27, and Connor, 24, with ex-husband Tom Cruise and daughters Sunday, 11 and Faith, nine, with spouse Keith Urban - was ready to "give everything up" and focus on her family over a decade ago, but she's thankful she listened to her mother's advice not to make any rash decisions.



Halsey

Halsey thanks fans for 'accepting' her vulnerabilities

Los Angeles

American singer Halsey has thanked her fans for being so "accepting" of her vulnerabilities.

"When I made 'Manic', I dove into those parts of me that weren't healed yet and I said, 'No, I'm not gonna wait 'til later. I'm gonna write about them right now'.

It was the most rewarding thing that I have ever done because you guys have been so unconditionally accepting of that, so thank you for being accepting of me," Halsey told Billboard, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Meanwhile, Halsey had said she's learned it's "not good" to date other musicians.

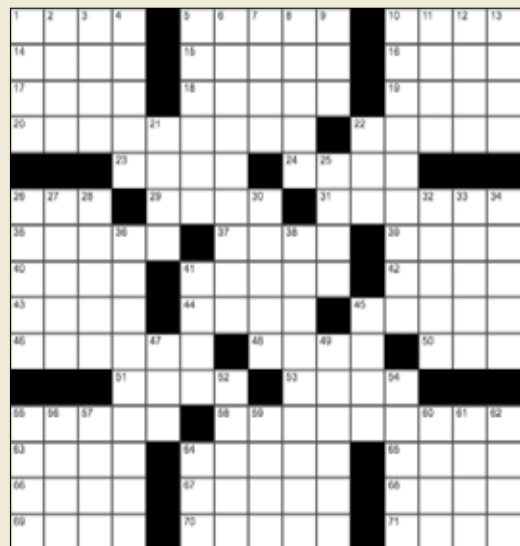
The singer said she actually finds having a different profession to her partner to be beneficial.

She said: "A friend of mine - another female artist who has been criticised for dating a lot of people - said, 'Ashley, you need to live your life and ignore what people say about you'."

"And so now I keep everything to myself in terms of my romantic relationships. I will say that it's good to not date another musician as then your work follows you everywhere.

Now it's my personal life so I get to go home to somebody that I love and spend time with them, and it not be about work."

CROSSWORD



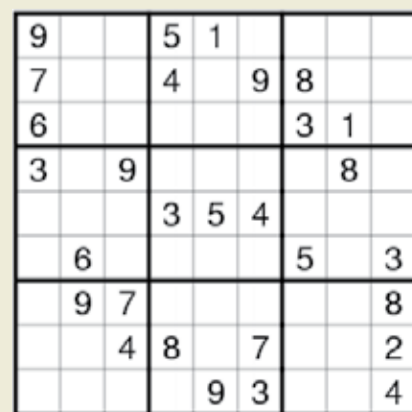
Yesterday's solution



Across
 1- "Hard ..." (sailor's yell); 5- African language group; 10- Diving duck; 14- Rise sharply, as a bird would; 15- Astrologer Sydney; 16- Broad; 17- Cheerful; 18- Actor Quinn; 19- Swenson of "Benson"; 20- Capital of the Netherlands; 22- Many times; 23- Auto pioneer; 24- Hey, over here; 26- Human limb, section of a journey; 29- Pale; 31- Sine; 35- Of Nordic stock; 37- Emilia's husband; 39- Architect Saarinen; 40- Clothes; 41- Sleep issue; 42- Window part; 43- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 44- Silly question...; 45- Horse race venue in England; 46- Condiment; 48- Ladies of Sp.; 50- Hydrocarbon ending; 51- Missing; 53- Habeas corpus, for one; 55- Not hesitant; 58- Practice session; 63- Sewing case; 64- Up; 65- Drug-yielding plant; 66- Emerged; 67- Befuddled; 68- They're charged; 69- Glitch; 70- Backs of feet; 71- Driving aids;

Down
 1- Nick and Nora's pooch; 2- Rich soil; 3- Breaks bread; 4- Sister of Thalia; 5- Planks; 6- Halfway between the bow and the stern; 7- Zip; 8- Chaplin persona; 9- Samovar; 10- Rapidity; 11- Aromatic herb; 12- Advantage; 13- Disengage from a habit; 21- Dash; 22- Sugar suffix; 25- Portico; 26- Pilsner; 27- Clear the boards; 28- Rotating; 30- Jerks; 32- Thaw before takeoff; 33- Synthetic fiber; 34- Nick of "Cape Fear"; 36- In the process of being built; 38- Part of a car transmission; 41- Contented sighs; 45- Bhutan's continent; 47- Non-dairy milk; 49- Places of contest; 52- Hackneyed; 54- Characteristic; 55- C.S.A. soldiers; 56- Harrow rival; 57- Mystique; 59- "... quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 60- Blackthorn fruit; 61- Super; 62- Not as much; 64- Go, team!

SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution



How to play
 Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

sports

Bapco teams claim fantastic treble

Bapco's success comes in tightly contested 12-hour endurance race at BIKC

TDT | Manama

Bapco claimed a fantastic treble over the weekend in the 12-hour third round of the Bahrain Karting Enduro Championship (BKEC) at Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC) in Sakhir.

Bapco Engineering claimed both the overall victory and first place in the Nations category, while Bapco Motorsport triumphed in the Corporate class.

Go Bahrain were the winners in the Pro class, which was the third division in the ultra-competitive race.

All the action took place along BIKC's 1.414-kilometre Commission Internationale de Karting Track. The endurance challenge featured a unique format, starting at 11pm at night under floodlights and then finishing at 11am in the morning in the daylight.

The 12 participating teams were competing in identical 390cc RT8 karts.

Winners Bapco Engineering were composed of Faisal Alshafei, Abdulla Al Thawadi and Yousif Khamiri. They managed to snatch away a fine overall victory despite starting from fifth place on the grid.

They completed the race with a total of 557 laps – a total that was matched by overall runners-up and pole-sitters Racing BH Junior as well as third-placers Go Bahrain. But Bapco Engineering enjoyed a comfortable 8.915-second gap ahead of Racing BH Junior (Khaled Al Wazzan, Khaled Al Zayed and Rashed Almuammari) and were also one minute 07.393 seconds ahead of Go Bahrain (Abdulla Buhindi, Abbas Sarhan and Ali Baslar).

In fourth through sixth place, respectively, were Bapco Sadeem (Osama Albuflasa, Ali Abdulla and Khalifa Al Zayani), Racing BH (Mohammed Mattar, Shaikh Salman bin Rashid Al



Winners on the podium



Bapco Engineering completed the race with a total of 557 laps

also the top two teams in the Nations class. They were joined on that podium by Manama Karting Drift (Erich Grawunder, Franklin Call, Michael Spencer and Colby Narine), who completed 539 laps in third place.

In the Corporate category, Bapco Motorsport (Essa Mahmoud, Aziz Bufalah and Abdulrahman Alawadhi) were the victors, having also finished in eighth overall. They posted 553 laps.

BAS had their B and C teams take second and third place, respectively. The B squad (Mahmoud Saati, Yusuf Yaqoob and Ziyad Khalifa) completed 543 laps, while the C team (Saud Alshater, Philip Morais, Don Vinura, Ammar Alghawas, Mohammed Fadhel and Hussain Habib) had 537 laps.

In the Pro class, Go Bahrain were joined on the podium by Bapco Sadeem and Racing BH. Bapco Sadeem were just one



Participants in action during the race

lap behind the race's overall top three, while Racing BH were just two laps back.

Meanwhile, a special trophy was awarded to the race's all-ladies team, BAS F. They comprised Maryam Al Qassim, Alanoud Alaiwi, Fatima Mohammed, Sujusha Bakaal, Alya Adel and Christina Anieliesha, and they completed 515 laps in the race.

Following all the action, the winners were presented their respective trophies in a podium ceremony.

The BKEC now heads towards the fourth and final round of its 2019/2020 season, which will be a 24-hour race. This championship-finale and the ultimate challenge of the year is scheduled for February 14 and 15 at BIKC.

ISB to host major Badminton Tournament

TDT | Manama

The Indian School Bahrain (ISB) in association with Bahrain Badminton and Squash Federation (BBSF) will be conducting a major ranking tournament this year with an aim to develop the sport in the Kingdom.

BBSF ISB Brain Craft International Bahrain Junior Ranking Circuit 2020 will be hosted by the Indian School from January 23 to 27, 2020. The ranking will be given separately to boys and girls in the under 9,11,13,15,17 and 19 singles and doubles events. This is the first Badminton tournament to be held in the recently refurbished ISB badminton courts. There are four well-lit badminton courts housed in the high ceiling Jashanmal auditorium with impact resistant flooring.

The Junior Ranking Circuit will follow the law of Badminton strictly. The BWF General Competition Regulations (GCR) shall apply to the Championship to the extent of national tournament requirements, except for clothing and advertising. The BWF Badminton Regulations and Codes of Conduct are applicable for this tournament.

This tournament will be followed by other ranking events hosted by Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS), Indian Club, Philippines Club (PBG), Ebrahim Badminton Academy (EBA) and BBSF.

The top ranked players will be announced at the end of the year and they will be awarded during the Junior International Series 2020 in December 2020.

For more details please contact Indian School Badminton coach Junith CM on 66359777.

Kanoo Motors Rolling Drag set to light up the strip on Thursday at BIC

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) keeps the action going on its world-class NHRA drag strip on Thursday with the Kanoo Motors Rolling Drag Nights.

Similar to BIC's Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and Drift Nights, Rolling Drag gives a chance for participants to power their very own cars or motorbikes down the circuit's quarter-mile strip, which is a member of the US-based National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Worldwide Network.

The major difference in Rolling Drag is that those who take part do not start from a standstill, but from a rolling speed of 80kph.

Rolling Drag is therefore the perfect activity to invite a friend or more and then challenge them for a series of head-to-



A car on track at BIC (file photo)

head battles within a safe and controlled environment.

Thursday's Kanoo Motors Rolling Drag Nights is scheduled to take place between 7pm and midnight. Registration will be held at BIC's car park no. two, and it will be open from 5pm until 9pm.

The cost to participate is BD20 for each driver or rider. There is an additional fee of

BD5 for a service car and BD7 for an accompanying passenger. Spectators can watch all the action for a nominal entry fee of BD2. Tickets are sold at Car Parks 4 and 2.

Just as in every BIC activity, safety standards of the highest level are followed at all times during the evening's events for both drivers and spectators alike.



Star XI players with the CAB Carrefour T-20 league cup after defeating Lankan Blues by 26 runs

Rashford vows to return 'fitter than ever'

AFP | London

Marcus Rashford has vowed to return for Manchester United "fitter than ever" as he recovers from a stress fracture of the back.

The 22-year-old striker faces at least six weeks on the sidelines, with United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer confirming the full extent of the injury after

Sunday's 2-0 Premier League defeat at Liverpool.

Rashford, who has scored 22 goals for club and country this season, tweeted: "Blink and I'll be back, fitter than ever. See you soon."

The England international also said he would remain heavily involved in all aspects of club life at Old Trafford during his rehabilitation.

"On the pitch or not, @ManUtd fans don't get much bigger than me," he added.

"You best believe I'll be involved in team meetings, team huddles and team sessions throughout this recovery."

Rashford sustained the injury after being introduced as a second-half substitute in last week's FA Cup third-round replay win over Wolves.

Ronaldo creates one problem but solves 100, says Sarri

Reuters | Milan

Cristiano Ronaldo sometimes appears to create more problems than he solves but, after another match-winning performance on Sunday, Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri was convinced the latter is true, even if the talisman is not always easy to accommodate.

The 34-year-old has shaken off the knee problems which have bugged him early in the season and on Sunday hit the target for a remarkable seventh Serie A game running as he scored both goals in Juve's 2-1 win over Parma.

His tally now stands at 16 league goals for the season including 11 in the last seven games and he has helped take Juventus four points clear at the top of Serie A as they chase a ninth successive title.

It was enough for Sarri to quell the doubt that has often been raised about the five-times World Player of the Year: is he worth the trouble of organising the team around

him?

"Sometimes, Ronaldo creates a small problem because you know you have a champion in the team and it has to be set up around him but at the same time it solves 100 of them," said the chain-smoking coach.

"You just have to be clear that everything revolves around him."

There have been murmurs that Juventus have looked better this season on the few occasions that the Portuguese forward has been absent and the partnership between

Argentina pair Gonzalo Higuain and Paulo Dybala has flourished without him.

The two were certainly on form when, without Ronaldo, Juventus thrashed Udinese 4-0 in the Coppa Italia in midweek, combining superbly with three successive one-tos to set up the opening goal for Higuain.

For all his titles and incomparable statistics, Ronaldo sometimes appears to have an overbearing presence on a team, displaying a body language that often suggests impatience with less gifted and less experienced team mates.



Cristiano Ronaldo

Bahrain outclass UAE

Nationals victorious in Main Round of Asian handball

TDT | Manama

Bahrain powered to a resounding 29-18 victory over the UAE yesterday to begin their Main Round campaign on a positive note in the 2020 Asian Men's Handball Championship, being held in Kuwait.

The Bahrainis are in Group One of this eight-team stage in the tournament alongside the Emiratis, Japan and Saudi Arabia.

They must finish in the top two after a single round-robin to book a berth in the semi-finals and secure their qualification to the 2021 World Men's Handball Championship.

Bahrain took one step forward to achieving both targets with their convincing victory yesterday at Shaikh Saad Al Abdullah Sports Hall Complex in Kuwait City.

The nationals were in control virtually the entire contest and led 15-9 at the half. They maintained their form and controlled the pace of the game the rest of the way, en route to sealing the big win.

Ali Eid and Ali Mirza finished as Bahrain's leading goal-scorers with four apiece. Team captain Hussain Al Sayyad and Ahmed Fadhul added three goals each, while finishing with two were Bilal Askani, Ahmed Almaqabi, Jassim Alsalamatna, Mahdi Saad and Mahmood Mohammed.

Abdulla Ali, Mohammed Abdulredha, Mohammed Mirza, Hassan Al Fardan and Mohammed Habib fired in one goal apiece.

At the end of the contest, Al Sayyad was named the Player of the Match and he was presented with a trophy by an official from the tournament committee.



Ali Sayyad jumps in the air as he tries to score a goal against the UAE



Ali Sayyad receives his Player of the Match award from a tournament official

The Bahrainis are scheduled to return to action today when they take on Japan at 2pm, Bahrain time. The UAE and Saudi face-off in the day's other Group

One fixture at 4pm.

In yesterday's other Group One game, Japan also made a winning start after beating Saudi Arabia 30-22. The Japanese

led at the half 16-10.

Bahrain are gunning for their first-ever title in the Asian championship. They have finished as silver-medallists four times in the past, including the last three editions of the tournament.

Group Two in the Main Round consists of defending champions Qatar, Iran, South Korea and hosts Kuwait.

Following the Main Round, the top two teams from each group march on to the final four, which is scheduled for Saturday. The final will then be held on Monday along with the bronze medal game.

The Asian championship also acts as the continental qualifying tournament for next year's world championship in Egypt. The four semi-finalists will all earn berths in the competition.

Barty roars back to make winning start in Melbourne



Ashleigh Barty hits a return

AFP | Melbourne

World number one and home hope Ashleigh Barty suffered a scare before she "tightened the screws" to power into the second round of the Australian Open.

The 23-year-old recovered from an error-strewn start to see off Ukraine's Lesia Tsurenko 5-7, 6-1, 6-1 under the roof at a partisan and wet Melbourne.

Barty, under huge pressure to deliver a home women's champion for the first time since Chris O'Neil in 1978, plays Polona Hercog of Slovenia or Sweden's Rebecca Peterson next.

Poster girl Barty, who joked on the eve of her opener that she was sick of seeing her picture everywhere, is the face

of the first Grand Slam of the year.

A nation expects, and Barty said after dismissing the 120th-ranked Ukrainian that she had always felt in control, despite the indifferent start.

"Look, I think I was pressing a little bit early, made a few too many errors," said Barty, fresh from winning her first title on home soil, in Adelaide, on Saturday.

"Was able to tighten the screws in the second set and run away with it.

"Yes, it was disappointing to not start as well as I would have liked.

"Being able to kind of rectify that and fix that so quickly at the start of the second set was really important," the Australian added.

Djokovic survives scare in tough Slam opener

AFP | Melbourne

Defending champion Novak Djokovic dropped his first set in the opening round of the Australian Open since 2006 yesterday before grinding down Jan-Lennard Struff to keep his quest for a record eighth title on track.

The 16-time Major winner finally got the job done 7-6 (7/5), 6-2, 2-6, 6-1 on Rod Laver Arena for his 900th career win to make the second round at Melbourne Park for a 14th consecutive year.

"Credit to him for fighting, he's a very powerful player," said Djokovic, who is seeking to become only the third man to win eight or more titles at the same Grand Slam after Rafael Nadal (12 at Roland Garros) and Roger Federer (eight at Wimbledon).

"I started well, there was a close tiebreak and in the second set I played well, but he turned it around.

"Obviously when you are on the court, especially in my position I am expected to win most of my matches.

"There is a lot of pressure and a lot of different emotions involved. I definitely try to remind myself to stay present and really enjoy."

The last time he dropped a set at the first hurdle in Melbourne was 2006 before going on a streak of 41 straight sets during round one matches until Struff crashed the party.

The second seed came into the tournament after leading Serbia to the ATP Cup title in Sydney, winning all six of his singles matches.

But he didn't have it all his own way against the world number 37.

He ground through a series of long rallies before breaking his opponent in the fifth game

of the opening set and seemed to be cruising.

But the German saved a set point in the eighth and then broke Djokovic in the ninth to trail 4-5, with the match back on serve and the crowd on their feet.

The comeback restored gallant Struff's confidence and the set went to a tie-break, where the Serb dug deep when it mattered most to come out on top.

He broke Struff in his opening game of the second set and then put his foot on the gas, with the

gulf in class widening as normal order was restored.

But it didn't last long with the plucky German refusing to give up and the Serbian making uncharacteristic errors in a horror third set.

Djokovic was broken to love to go 2-0 down and while he broke back for 2-3, Struff broke twice more with a Djokovic double fault sending the match into a fourth set.

The world number two didn't make any more mistakes, keeping his focus to get over the finish line.



Novak Djokovic hits a return