



Drug-trafficking gang arrested

Manama

The Director-General of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science yesterday announced the arrest of five members (Bahrainis and GCC nationals) of a drug trafficking gang.

Narcotics worth BD72,000 were confiscated, he said, noting that follow up operations led to the gang that is specialised in drug trafficking and dealing.

The gangsters were identified and arrested and Hashish and Shabu were seized from them.

Legal proceedings are being taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution, he added.

Winning start for Bahrain

TDT | Manama

Hesham Sarhan buried a go-ahead three-pointer with 1.2 seconds remaining to lift Bahrain to a dramatic, come-from-behind 68-67 victory over India last night.

The result gave the Bahrainis a winning start to their qualifying campaign for the 2021 Fiba Asia Cup.

Sarhan fired in the winning basket from the left corner off an assist from court general Mohammed Hussain.

Bahrain's next qualifier is against Lebanon on Monday in Beirut. Full report Page 12



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04 Another 'impressive' drug seizure by HMS Montrose

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Kabul

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that a new truce with the Taliban is "an important step" as an agreed reduction in violence throughout the country took effect at midnight on Friday.

Spokesman for the Afghan National Security Council, Jawed Faisal, announced the truce would begin as planned, and said the council hoped the Taliban would "reduce violence as per the commitments".

The US and the Taliban have agreed to a seven-day reduction in violence ahead of signing a peace deal, which will pave the way to end America's longest



This is an important step on a long road to peace and I call on all Afghans to seize this opportunity.

MR POMPEO

war in history - and almost two decades of US forces in Afghanistan.

"After decades of conflict, we have come to an understanding with the Taliban on a significant reduction in violence across Af-

ghanistan. This is an important step on a long road to peace and I call on all Afghans to seize this opportunity," Mr Pompeo said in a post on social media.

While a vague term, the agreement means that the Taliban

will not launch attacks in cities, on highways or against US bases, as well as the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. The US will monitor developments throughout the next seven days.

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg on Friday said a historic US-Taliban agreement had opened a route to sustainable peace in Afghanistan. "This could pave the way for negotiations among Afghans, sustainable peace, and ensuring the country is never again a safe haven for terrorists," Stoltenberg said in a statement.

Afghanistan's capital Kabul remained quiet after today's announcement.

If successful, the signing of

the peace deal will see the beginning of US troop withdrawal. It will also trigger direct talks between the Taliban and the US-backed Afghan government in an effort to secure lasting peace.

"Upon a successful implementation of this understanding, signing of the US-Taliban agreement is expected to move forward. We are preparing for the signing to take place on February 29. Intra-Afghan negotiations will start soon thereafter, and will build on this fundamental step to deliver a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire and the future political roadmap for Afghanistan," the US State Department said.

The 'inhuman act'

UK envoy slams Russian 'lack of humanity' in Syria

The envoy accused Assad of using the blocking of vital medical supplies to those in need.

She called on Vladimir Putin and Assad to "end indiscriminate and inhumane attacks".

London

Russia has been accused of a "lack of humanity" in the Syrian conflict by the UK's Ambassador to the UN Karen Pierce after it was revealed that more than half of displaced people in Idlib province are children.

Pierce said the UN had recently been given a "sobering and frightening" briefing about the humanitarian crisis in Syria, where nearly one million people have been forced to flee Idlib since Dec 1 amid attacks by regime forces supported by Russia.

She added that the report had revealed that more than 900,000



Thousands of people have fled Idlib province fearing a fully-fledged war.

people were in "grave danger" as they escaped from the attacks in freezing winter conditions. Around 60 per cent of that number are children.

Pierce, the UK's ambassador-designate to the US, has been consistently critical of Russia's involvement in the conflict, and accused Moscow of abusing the UN veto system to protect and

help Syrian President Bashar Assad, who she said was "attacking his own people."

She called on Russian President Vladimir Putin and Assad to "end indiscriminate and inhumane attacks" in the northwest of the country, which have led to innocent civilian casualties.

Pierce told Sky News: "I think it's cynical of the Russians. I

think it shows the lack of humanity. They would've seen the same footage and the scenes you've just shown your viewers, and yet they don't want to do anything to try to protect civilians."

She said the UN was ready and willing to back a cease-fire, but it could not happen until Moscow agreed to back it too.

"The UN wants to act and 13

900,000 people were in grave danger as they escaped from the attacks in freezing winter conditions, the envoy says.

members of the Security Council want to act, but we're stopped from acting because of Russia, supported by China," Pierce added.

"That's the main thing — to get the Russians to restrain the Syrians and stop aiding them in the bombings that they're doing, including the bombing of hospitals, which is against the Geneva Convention. Russia and the Syria regime don't really care what price has to be paid by civilians."

She also accused Assad of using the blocking of vital medical supplies to those in need as leverage in an attempt to regain control of rebel-held areas of the country.

PROBE ON

Qatar's BeIN chairman, two others indicted in bribery case

Geneva

Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser Al Khelaifi was charged yesterday by Swiss federal prosecutors in connection with a wider bribery investigation linked to World Cup television rights.

The office of Switzerland's attorney general filed an indictment charging Al Khelaifi with inciting former FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke

"to commit aggravated criminal mismanagement."

The Qatari football and television executive, however, no longer faces an accusation of bribery.

Following a three-year investigation, FIFA reached an "amicable agreement" with Al Khelaifi last month, prosecutors said, to drop its criminal complaint relating to the awarding of 2026 and 2030 World Cup rights to Qatari broadcaster



Mr Al Khelaifi is the head of Doha-based BeIN Sports.

BeIN Sports.

Mr Al Khelaifi is the head of Doha-based BeIN Sports and also a member of the UEFA executive committee.

Mr Al Khelaifi was indicted for his alleged part in providing Mr Valcke — who had influence over the awarding of World Cup rights until being removed from office in 2015 — with use of a luxury villa in Sardinia without paying rent valued at up to €1.8 million (\$1.94 million).

Mr Valcke was charged with accepting bribes, "several counts of aggravated criminal mismanagement ... and falsification of documents."

For the first time in the five-year investigation of FIFA business, Swiss prosecutors revealed that they believe Valcke received kickbacks totalling €1.25 million to steer World Cup rights toward favoured broadcasters in Italy and Greece.

## Call to promote balanced reading

TDT | Manama  
P Unnikrishnan

The urgent need to promote balanced reading among literary enthusiasts was emphasised by Dr M K Muneer, the Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Indian State of Kerala, yesterday.

This came during a brief interaction with The Daily Tribune. "Promoting balanced reading is one of the vital strategies to develop a harmonious society. Balanced reading and understanding can only lead to healthy debates and dialogues in any society," Dr Muneer said.

Warning against the eroding culture of healthy debates, Dr Muneer said majority of debates on all issues are leading to provocations and violence, which is a dangerous tendency.

"We should be able to promote opposing views. And this is only possible with balanced reading."

Dr Muneer is on a visit to the Kingdom to inaugurate the fifth edition of Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS) Book Fest.

He praised the Indian expatriates in the Kingdom for their contributions towards literature and arts.

Dr Muneer, who is also an author and poet, slammed the efforts from the part of some writers to create unnecessary controversies as a marketing technique to boost their books' saleability.

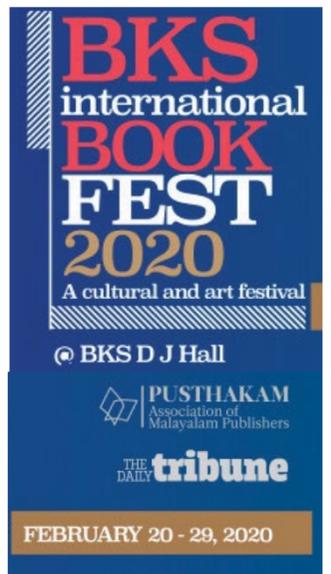
"Such tendencies should be



Dr Muneer inaugurates the book festival in the presence of Ms Meera, Mr Poithumkadavu and Mr Pillai.



Scores of visitors flocked to the festival venue yesterday.



The book festival logo

### BKS events today

- **Dignitaries:** Dr M K Muneer, K R Meera, Shihabuddin Poythumkadavu
- **7:30 pm:** Book release by Shihabuddin Poythumkadavu
- **7:30 pm:** Poem writing competition for students
- **8:30 pm:** 'Cracking Cryptics' crossword puzzles/ cultural programmes

condemned. The publishers should take up the responsibility here. They should thwart efforts to create unnecessary controversies while upholding the freedom of expression."

On Friday, BKS International Book and Cultural Festival was officially inaugurated by Dr Muneer in the presence of renowned writers K R Meera and Shihabuddin Poithumkadavu. P V Radhakrishna Pillai, Pres-

ident of Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam presided over the function and Varghese Karakkal, the General-Secretary of BKS welcomed the gathering.

Literary Wing Secretary Firoz Thiruvathra, Bookfest convenor Harikrishnan and Literary wing convenor Shabni were also present on the dais.

Hundreds of people were present and visited the book stalls.

# Hanau shooting condemned

Bahrain affirms solidarity with Germany; rejects violence and extremism

Frankfurt

Bahrain has condemned the two terrorist shooting incidents that occurred in Hanau in Germany, which resulted in the death and injury of several people.

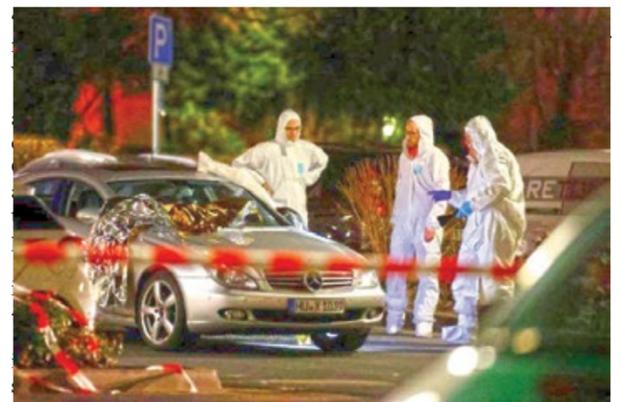
The Foreign Ministry expressed its sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

It affirmed Bahrain's solidarity with Germany, and renewed its unequivocal rejection of violence, extremism and terrorism, urging the international community to step up efforts to eliminate this scourge that threatens international peace and security.

A shooter with suspected far-right beliefs killed nine people at a shisha bar and a cafe in the German city of Hanau, police said Thursday, before apparently killing himself and his mother.

Federal counter-terror prosecutors announced they were investigating the case, which showed "signs of a xenophobic motive," a spokesman told AFP.

Among the dead were "several victims of Kurdish origin," the Kon-Med association of Kurds in Germany said in a statement, adding that it was



Forensic experts work around a damaged car after a shooting in Hanau near Frankfurt, Germany.

**International community should step up efforts to eliminate this scourge that threatens international peace and security.**

FOREIGN MINISTRY

tivated by "a hostile attitude to foreigners," said Peter Beuth, the interior minister of the state of Hesse.

The rampage started at around 10:00 pm on Wednesday at a shisha bar in the Heu-

toll from the bar attacks to nine. "The victims are people we have known for years," the Arena cafe manager's son told German news agency DPA. "It is a shock for everyone."

The bloodshed sparked an hours-long manhunt, with armed officers fanning out across the city and police helicopters roaming the night sky.

Hesse interior minister Beuth said witness reports helped track the suspect's vehicle back to his home.

Special forces then stormed the suspect's apartment, where they found him dead. They also found the body of his 72-year-old mother.







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● Investigation revealed that some of the prescriptions were issued in 2019 to individuals who had left the Kingdom in 2018.

● Tribune has reported earlier that the Government have been tightening its grip on dispensing medicines, such as Lyrica, to curb its misuse.

TDI | Manama

New details have recently unfolded in the case of the drug ring that was exposed last month in Muharraq Governorate involving a “renowned” doctor, several pharmacists and a military personnel.

The case is being deliberated by the First High Criminal Court, which decided to adjourn the trial of the suspects to February 23, 2019, to hear the testimonies of prosecution witnesses, while one suspect was referred to the military judiciary.

The suspects are facing the charges of dispensing large quantities of addictive prescription pills known as “Lyrica”, using fake prescriptions issued by the prime suspect, the doctor, and illegally selling it to addicts for higher prices that are sometimes more than four doubles of their original cost.

The ring was exposed when the Public Prosecution announced last month that the Military Police of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) in co-oper-

ation with the Anti-Narcotics Department in Interior Ministry arrested a military staff and two civilians while illegally selling the pills.

During the interrogation, one of the suspects told interrogators that he has been familiar with consuming the medicine claiming that it was prescribed to him after he was involved in a traffic accident back in 2010.

Explaining further, he stated that he had met some individuals who asked him to illegally sell them the medicine prescribed to him for prices ranging between BD10 to BD20.

The suspect confessed that he continued doing so; taking advantage of the prescriptions issued in his name and illegally selling it for years.

He also said that throughout this process of selling Lyrica to addicts, he had met the prime suspect, the doctor, few months ago.

The suspect said the doctor would prescribe large quantities to him in one go, as he, the doctor, worked in several hospitals and was cooperating with several pharmacies around the Kingdom to dispense the medicines to the suspect.

In his statements, the suspect mentioned that the relation had developed with the doctor, as the latter requested him to provide him with copies of identity cards so more prescriptions

# New details on Lyrica peddling ring ‘come to the fore’ as trial progresses

Doctor, pharmacists and a military man suspected to be part of the ring



Lyrica is not dispensed without a precise prescription by a specialised consultant and an official stamp.

“Large quantities of narcotics and amounts of money collected from selling drugs were found in the arrestees’ possession.”

MR AL RAMADHAN

could be issued to sell larger quantities of Lyrica to addicts.

The suspect confessed that he once sold a box of Lyrica packets for BD3,000, using the same method.

Investigation revealed that some of the prescriptions were issued in 2019 to individuals who had left Bahrain in 2018.

The suspect also informed the interrogators that he would averagely collect 60 packets from the pharmacies advised by the doctor every two days, adding that he would sell one packet for prices ranging between BD50 and BD100, and that sometimes when the demand is high he would collect more than 100 packets at one go.

On January 20 this year, Muharraq Governorate Chief Prosecutor Ahmed Abdullah Al Ramadhan, was quoted in a press statement released by the Public Prosecution confirming the arrest of the suspects.

The Chief Prosecutor said that large quantities of narcotics and amounts of money collected from selling them were found in

the arrestees’ possession.

Back then, Mr Al Ramadhan stated that 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 analysed the entered data in them.

The Chief Prosecutor explained further in the statement saying that it was proven that the accused doctor issued fake prescriptions and reports that stated that the individuals mentioned on the prescriptions had undergone the necessary medical examination and are worthy of collecting the narcotics.

Mr Al Ramadhan also confirmed that other suspects, who were involved in the case, would purchase the narcotics from certain pharmacies, where the pharmacists are also complicated in their plot, and later sell the pills to drug addicts for higher prices. He added that the prosecution issued arrest warrants against other suspects who’re abroad.

Tribune has reported earlier that the Government have been tightening its grip on dispensing medicines, such as Lyrica, to curb its misuse.

This came after reports and footage were widely circulat-

ed online claiming that Lyrica is being peddled and misused among school students of both genders in Bahrain.

On August 1, 2019, the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) announced that it had closed a pharmacy and suspended its manager for a year, after it was proven that the pharmacy sold Lyrica without prescription and for higher prices.

Additionally, a statement issued following the regular weekly Cabinet meeting last September mentioned that the Cabinet had approved a draft edict on the procedures for regulating the dispensing of medicines containing substances listed under the pharmaceutical group gabapentinoid to which drugs such as Lyrica belong.

The statement mentioned that the move comes out of the Cabinet’s keenness to place more procedures to control the dispensing of medicines and reduce their misuse.

Tribune yesterday contacted a number of the leading pharmacies in Bahrain to ask about the conditions of selling Lyrica to patients. The majority of the contacted pharmacies confirmed the unavailability of stocks of the medicine.

However, they all confirmed that it is sold for prices ranging from BD15 for a 75MG packet to BD28 for a 150MG packet.

## Visitors from five countries face Bahrain entry ban

TDI | Manama

Visitors from five countries have been banned from entering the Kingdom as the government takes up strict measures to prevent coronavirus outbreak in the country.

The authorities in Bahrain have decided to put in place three stringent steps to ensure that coronavirus is not spreading in the Kingdom, in case anyone gets diagnosed.

The steps include banning entry to all foreigners who have visited five countries including

Iran, Thailand, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Malaysia and the Republic of South Korea.

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior, has activated several procedures related to arrivals to the Kingdom of Bahrain in light of the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19),” the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement yesterday.

“The procedures include: Banning entry to all foreign visitors who have visited the Islamic Republic of Iran, the

Kingdom of Thailand, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Malaysia and the Republic of South Korea within 14 days of their date of arrival in the Kingdom.

“Bahraini citizens, GCC citizens and Bahraini residents who have visited Iran, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia or South Korea within 14 days of arriving in Bahrain will be subject to quarantine and enhanced testing procedures, recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).”

“The ministry advises cit-

izens and residents to follow WHO guidelines and avoid all but essential travel to areas where Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been detected,” the ministry stated.

The Ministry of Health stated that it is taking various measures to prevent an outbreak of the deadly coronavirus outbreak in Bahrain.

A number of measures have already been taken by the Ministry, the ministry said in a statement.

“The ministry is taking all precautionary measures for this purpose. The situation is being monitored closely. Co-ordination is ongoing with relevant authorities and the Bahrain In-

ternational Airport.”

The ministry urged the public to take precautionary measures after travel. It said that it is communicating directly with the World Health Organisation.

Bahrainis were assisted by the Bahraini Embassy in China to return to the Kingdom to escape the country amid the coronavirus scare.

In co-operation with the Ministry of Health, the Bahrain International Airport is conducting thorough checks to make sure patients infected with coronavirus does not enter Bahrain outside the airport.

## Club receives dignitary



Sadiq Sanjrani, Chairman, Senate of Pakistan along with his delegation of Senators visited Pakistan Club Bahrain, where Rehan Ahmed, Chairman Pakistan Club, board members and members of the Pakistani community accorded a warm welcome. The Senate delegation included Senator Abida Azeem, Senator Manzoor Ahmed, Senator Fida Muhammad, Senator Keshoo Bai, Senator Mirza Afridi, Senator Hafiz Abdul Karim, Senator Sajjad Hussain Tori, Senator Mohammed Balushi and Syed Abid Hassan, Advisor to the Chairman Senate. Afzaal Mahmood, Ambassador of Pakistan and Pakistan Club Board members welcomed the Pakistan Senate Delegation at the Club.

# Another 'impressive' drug seizure by HMS Montrose

HMS MONTROSE's total seizure of hashish stood at 1045kg

TDT | Manama

Starting on Valentine's Day, ships working in direct support of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) had a busy weekend, the result of which was a major drug bust by Her Majesty's Ship (HMS) MONTROSE, a United Kingdom Royal Navy (RN) frigate.

In the late afternoon of 15 February, MONTROSE's 'WILDCAT' shipborne helicopter spotted a suspicious dhow in an area of the Gulf of Oman known to be popular with drug smugglers.

As the sun rose over the Arabian Sea on the morning of 16 February, several packages could be seen floating in the water near the dhow. The packages were recovered and determined to be hashish.

Royal Marine Commandos then boarded the dhow, securing it for search by a Royal Navy boarding team. The master of the dhow admitted that the packages in the water came from his vessel, and after a thorough search of the dhow, the team found another cache of hashish.

Add that to the drugs recovered from the water, and MONTROSE's total seizure of hashish was 1045kg worth an estimated regional wholesale value of \$538,860 US dollars.

This is the first seizure for HMS



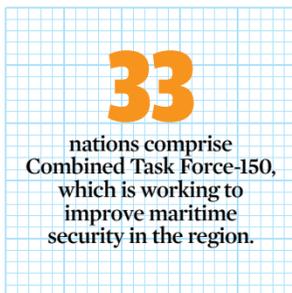
CTF 150 team members with seized drugs.

MONTROSE while working in direct support of the Australian lead CTF 150.

The Royal Australian Navy, with support staff from the Royal Canadian, and Royal New Zealand navies assumed command of CTF 150 in early December 2019.

"Fantastic work by the crew of HMS MONTROSE in tracking this smuggler, stopping them from ditching their cargo, and keeping these drugs from reaching their destination," said Commodore Ray Leggatt, Royal Australian Navy, Commander of CTF 150.

"With the support of ships like COURBET and MONTROSE, CTF



150 continues to apply pressure and disrupt the operations of terrorist and criminal organisations in the region that seek to use the maritime domain for their illegitimate trade."

Denying the use of the maritime domain to illegitimate traffic in the region is CTF 150's mission.

The co-operation and support of CMF participating nations like France and the United Kingdom are the key mission enablers that CTF 150 relies on to carry out the mission.

The 33 nations of CMF, working together, improves maritime security, helps strengthen regional nations' maritime capabilities, and upholds international norms and today's bust is just the latest example of that co-operation in action.

## Bahrain's housing success praised

Manama

A US Congress delegation, currently on a visit to the Kingdom, has paid a visit to the East Hidd Town housing project.

The Ministry of Housing informed the delegation about its experience in building new towns in Bahrain to implement His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's order to build 40,000 housing units, as well as the government's social housing plans stemming from the royal order.

The US delegation was also informed about the facilities of the East Hidd Town, which is an example of the modern towns being constructed by the Ministry of Housing.

During the visit, the delegation was updated about the Kingdom's experience in providing housing services to low-income citizens, including the establishment of three towns, namely Isa Town, Hamad Town and Zayed Town, in 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, in addition to the establishment of the Housing Ministry, the Eskan Bank, the new towns and the partnership initiatives with the private sector.

The Ministry of Housing stressed the government's keenness to strengthen its relations with international and regional organisations to benefit from their expertise in various fields.

It also highlighted the efforts of the government, through its action plan, to achieve Sustainable Development Goals

**The government is keen to strengthen its relations with international and regional organisations to benefit from their expertise in various fields.**

HOUSING MINISTRY

(SDGs), especially SDG 11 aimed at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The ministry said that its efforts are currently focused on building five new towns at the same time, chosen according to the density of housing demands, in addition to implementing other residential projects to ensure that the housing services cover the Kingdom's governorates and regions.

The visit featured a presentation about the Housing Ministry's new towns projects, as well as its strategy to provide housing units for the citizens through partnership initiatives with the private sector.

It also featured a documentary on the government's efforts to provide housing services to the citizens.

Members of the delegation expressed their admiration for the kingdom's experience in delivering affordable social housing services to the citizens, as well as for the Housing Ministry's plans to provide social housing for low-income citizens.

## Kingdom's efforts to promote child rights hailed

Manama

The Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al Doseri, met the Assistant Undersecretary of Community Development at the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and Deputy Chairman of the National Commission for Childhood, Khalid Abdulrahman Eshaq, and a number of the commission's members to discuss preparing reports of the Kingdom to the United Nations to accede the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Assistant Foreign Minister hailed efforts of the Labour and Social Development Minister and Chairman of the Commission, Jameel Humaidan, and the members of the commission, in monitoring all aspects of child affairs, including holding and encouraging all activities and programs related to raising awareness and childhood development.

He cited the celebration of the 30th anniversary of Bahrain's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, within its celebrations of the International Day of the Child.

He praised the National Commission for Childhood was praised for its great efforts by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, during the successful participation of the Kingdom in the meetings of the (80th) session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Ge-

**Bahrain attaches great importance to human rights and made its principles a key element in development plans and strategies.**

MR AL DOSERI

neva, in which the Kingdom discussed its combined fourth to sixth periodic reports, and reviewed its efforts in the areas of implementation of this convention, including its implementation of the National Childhood Strategy 2013-2017, which was extended for another five years.

Mr Al Doseri discussed with the members of the National Commission the draft reports on children's rights, the first regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the second regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Bahrain attaches great importance to human rights and made its principles a key element in development plans and strategies, and strengthened its progress and success by approving multiple human rights laws.

## Committee set up to study unaccredited medical degrees

Manama

The Supreme Council for Education and Training (SCET) has set up a committee to study the situation of 77 degrees whose holders had graduated from unaccredited Chinese universities.

Deputy Prime Minister and SCET President His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa said that the graduates would sit for a unified exam to assess the level of their degrees and determine the requirements for accrediting their academic qualifications.

The Deputy Premier said that the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) would set a placement test as well as a programme to ensure the graduates would complete the requirements from their original degrees to be accredited.

The move is based on the rec-

ommendations of the Executive Committee, chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to find solutions for students who have received un-attested degrees from various un-approved universities.

The Cabinet decided to accredit 10 medical degrees issued from Chinese universities which were approved before 2015, stressing the need for clinical training for the students in question to complete their internship requirements and sit their licensure exams.

The Ministry of Education has been tasked to communicate with medical students enrolled at unaccredited Chinese university and urged them to enrol at other accredited academic institutions.

The Foreign Ministry has also

**The graduates would sit for a unified exam to assess the level of their degrees and determine the requirements for accrediting their academic qualifications.**

HH SHAIKH MOHAMMED

been instructed to coordinate with relevant authorities within China to ensure a visa mechanism is put in place to issue study visas for Bahraini students who wish to continue their studies in China with recommended and approved universities only.

The Deputy Premier said that Minister of Finance and National Economy to co-ordinate with the National Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Qual-

ifications in updating the list of recommended degrees from various universities in China, and approved a recommendation submitted by the Council of Representatives in this regard.

He pointed out that the Cabinet had directed the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy to provide the necessary budget needed to complete the requirements to attest medical degrees from universities in China.

The council has provided a thorough study to address the situation of Bahraini students in Chinese universities, and determine their causes, as the total number of students currently studying in Chinese universities is at least 153 students, which requires finding urgent solutions for them to ensure the accreditation of their qualifications after graduation.

## Support vow to Sickle Cell Society



Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan received Bahrain Sickle Cell Society Chairman Zakariya Al Kadhem and other board members. The discussed the role of the association in supporting and caring for this social segment and reviewed the programmes it implements in cooperation with relevant authorities. The minister commended the achievements and contributions of the association as well as its positive participation in partnership with government's establishments to enhance services provided to sickle cell patients.

# business

## Hopes dim for EU budget deal

AFP | Brussels

Feuding EU leaders kicked off a second day of haggling over the bloc's trillion-euro budget on Friday, with hopes of a deal fading as "frugals" and big-spenders refused to give ground.

After a night of tough talks, leaders and diplomats poured doubt on the chances of reaching an agreement at this summit for the EU's seven-year post-Brexit budget.

The tussle over money is a Brussels ritual, made more intense this time by the departure of Britain from the bloc, which has left a 75-billion-euro (\$81-billion) "Brexit gap" over the 2021-27 period.

"Are you asking if we're going to resolve the whole budget discussion this weekend? No, I don't think so," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said as she arrived.

Denmark is one of the self-styled frugal four nations -- along with the Netherlands, Sweden and Austria -- who have set themselves against a proposal by summit host Charles Michel, the EU Council president.

They insist Michel's 1.09-trillion-euro budget plan is excessive and must be trimmed, while also calling for the budget to be modernised.

### Budget 'made in 1980s'

Leaders are at odds over how much to increase the long-term budget -- called the multi-annual financial framework (MFF).

They also disagree over how spending should be shifted between priorities and how much each member should pay as a percentage of its gross domestic product (GDP).

The last MFF came in at 1.08 trillion euros (in 2018 prices).

"My prime minister has been very clear from the start -- we will not pick up the tab," said a diplomatic source from one of the "frugal" countries.

"We are fighting 21st-century challenges with a budget made in the 1980s."

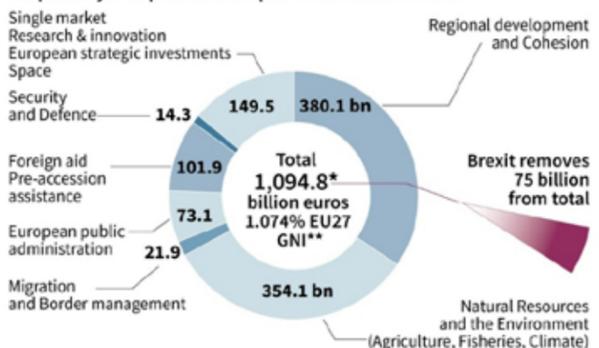
Against the frugals are France, which wants farm payments protected and more money for European defence projects, and



After a night of tough talks, leaders and diplomats poured doubt on the chances of reaching an agreement at this summit for the EU's seven-year post-Brexit budget

### EU budget 2021-2027

Proposal by European Council president Charles Michel



Angela Merkel, Emmanuel Macron and Charles Michel arrive for second day of budget summit

the so-called friends of cohesion -- a group of eastern and southern countries wanting to ringfence the money they get from the budget.

Michel met the leaders of the "frugals" along with President Emmanuel Macron of France and German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Friday morning in a bid to find a way out of the deadlock.

Leaders from friends of cohesion huddled in the mean-

time, but given the differences between the 27, it is not certain Michel will present a revised budget proposal on Friday, a diplomat told AFP.

Instead, the summit could break up without agreement, forcing leaders to reconvene for another meeting, most likely in April.

A frustrated Czech Prime Minister Anrej Babis questioned the value of a second day at the summit, saying if the rich coun-

tries were not prepared to move, "then we have nothing to discuss".

### Farm fight

The inconclusive late-night tussle on Thursday revealed leaders' red lines and potential grounds for compromise to Michel, who is tasked with finding consensus for a deal.

Macron, who visits the national farm show in Paris in two days, said he would "battle" to protect the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

"The overall budget total was brutally attacked by the countries of the north, in particular the CAP," a French diplomatic source said.

In a sign of French sensitivity on the subject, Macron's agriculture minister suggested in a TV interview that he had secured a victory in protecting the CAP, which was worth 383 billion euros in the current long-term budget.

The claim was swiftly shot down by French diplomats who pointed out that nothing had yet been agreed.

Macron has sought to push the EU to be more united and more ambitious and insisted Thursday that Britain's departure should not clip the bloc's wings.

But his calls for post-Brexit largesse were met with scepticism by the "frugals" and even Finland, whose prime minister said it was time for the EU to be "realistic" with its spending.

Finland, like Germany, is sympathetic to some of the calls for moderation made by the "frugals", but is not fully aligned with them.

Adding yet more discord is the European Parliament, which wants the MFF hiked to 1.32 trillion euros to pay for costly goals such as turning the European Union into a carbon-neutral economy within three decades.

Parliament President David Sassoli slammed Michel's proposal as "a series of cuts".

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, which is aiming for greater geopolitical heft under new President Ursula von der Leyen, is trying for a target of 1.13 trillion euros.

## Ghosn postpones suit seeking retirement pay from Renault

Paris

Lawyers for Carlos Ghosn on Friday delayed a lawsuit seeking a hefty retirement payout from his former employer Renault, saying the French carmaker had not given them enough time to prepare arguments.

The court in Boulogne-Billancourt, near Renault's headquarters outside Paris, granted the request for more time, setting a new hearing date for April 17.

"We received Renault's arguments only on Monday, and having just four days to respond to 20 pages of arguments is clearly not enough," Ghosn's lawyer Laetitia Ternisien told reporters after the hearing.

Ghosn is seeking a 250,000 (\$270,000) retirement payout, which Renault refuses to pay because it says the former CEO was forced to quit after his shock November 2018 arrest in Japan on charges of financial misconduct.

The former industry titan claims he retired in due form on his own accord.

He also seeks a much bigger prize -- a supplementary pension of 774,774 euros per year for the rest of his life, as well as 380,000 shares granted for reaching performance targets.

At current prices, that stock grant would be worth over 12 million euros.

Meanwhile, Ghosn also fac-



Carlos Ghosn has launched a legal battle to force Renault to pay millions of euros in retirement payouts

es a French inquiry over two parties he threw at the Palace of Versailles, including his opulent 2016 wedding, allegedly financed in part by Renault funds.

He is also being investigated by France's tax fraud office over suspicious financial transactions between Renault and its distributor in the Gulf state of Oman, and over contracts signed by Renault and Nissan's Dutch subsidiary RNBV.

In Japan, he still faces multiple charges claiming he under-reported millions of dollars in salary as chairman of Renault's alliance partner Nissan.

He has denied all the charges, but fled to his native Lebanon late last year before he could face trial.

## Renfe inks \$6 bn deal to build high-speed train in US

Madrid

Spanish train operator Renfe on Thursday said it had signed a \$6-billion deal with US rail developer Texas Central to design, build and run a high-speed rail line in the United States.

In a statement, Spain's transport ministry said the 5.5-billion-euro (\$5.9 billion) agreement would see Renfe work alongside its US partner to develop and operate a line



between Houston and Dallas that is to become operational in 2026.

The two firms have signed a preliminary agreement but it is still in draft phase, said Renfe, Spain's national rail operator.

## BAC holds employee excellence awards ceremony

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Airport Company (BAC), the operator and managing body of Bahrain International Airport (BIA), honoured 10 team members with the Employee Excellence Award in recognition of their important contributions to the company's overall success. In attendance at the award ceremony were BAC senior management, including BAC Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalah, who presented the awards.

Commenting on the award, Al Binfalah said: "It is their efforts which have helped us succeed as a company, particularly as we take on our most ambitious



The winners are Salem Ali AlMutawa and Noora Wael Sayar from Terminal Operations; Abdulla Isa Asheer from Airside Operations; Mohamed Saleh Shehab from Finance; Santrupta Padhi from Commercial & Marketing; Khalil Ebrahim Mahmood from Human Resources; Ahmed Mokhtar Soliman and Salem Ali Sulaibeekh from Development; Ali Husain Yusuf from Airside and Landside Maintenance and Sameer Khalifa Buallay from Infrastructure and Building Maintenance.

project to date, the Airport Modernisation Program."

He added: "One of our objectives is the development of the

national workforce, particularly in the aviation sector. Our train-

ing and development programs equip our team with the skills

they need to succeed, as evidenced by the increasing number of team members receiving these Employee Excellence Awards on a regular basis."

The winners are Salem Ali AlMutawa and Noora Wael Sayar from Terminal Operations; Abdulla Isa Asheer from Airside Operations; Mohamed Saleh Shehab from Finance; Santrupta Padhi from Commercial & Marketing; Khalil Ebrahim Mahmood from Human Resources; Ahmed Mokhtar Soliman and Salem Ali Sulaibeekh from Development; Ali Husain Yusuf from Airside and Landside Maintenance and Sameer Khalifa Buallay from Infrastructure and Building Maintenance.

# SOCIETY



The Talented and Gifted Students Programme of the College of Medicine and Medical Studies (CMMS) in the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) has recently concluded a three-day workshop on genetics and human genome. The workshop was held under the supervision of Assistant Professor in the Molecular Medicine and Genetic Disorders Department in AGU and Princess Al Jawhara Al Ibrahim Centre for Molecular Medicine, Genetics and Inherited Disorders (ACMID) Dr Ghada Al Khafaji, and Assistant Professor in the same Department Dr Christina Scribnek.



The Innovation and Technology Management a Creative Team". The event saw Informa



The New Millennium School, DPS Bahrain, team comprising Ansh Katyayan, Thanvi Jeyashankar (IX D) and Hetvi Shah (VIII D) bagged the runner's up title in the 'The Constitution Quiz' held at the Indian Embassy. The team was felicitated with trophies for their achievement. Chairman, Dr Ravi Pillai, Managing Director Geetha Pillai and Principal Arun Kumar Sharma congratulated the winners.



Bahrain Indian School (BHAVANS) students won first prize in the 'The Constitution Quiz' held at the Indian Embassy. BIS Team consisting of Manoj Subramaniam Sathyanarayanan, Steve Chalil Biju and Vaibhav Rajesh bagged the first prize. Directors Himanshu Verma, Ritu Verma and Principal Saji Jacob congratulated the winners for their excellent performance. In the photo students with Renu Yadav -Second Secretary (Political, Info, Culture and Education), Norbu Negi - Second Secretary (Charge d' affaires) and Ginitha Satish ( BIS Teacher).



Palakkad Arts and Cultural Theater (PAACT) organised Tennisball 7A side Cricket Tournament at the Indian club. This event was held with an intent to develop team spirit in all activities of PAACT. It became a runaway success due to the high level participation.



The New Millennium School- DPS held its Annual Sports Week with the aim to inculcate the spirit of sportsmanship. The sports meet was declared open by Principal Arun Kumar Sharma who in his inaugural speech, highlighted the vital role of sports in life.



Society



ent Programme in the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) recently hosted a lecture titled "The Role of Inspiring Leaders in Stimulating tion and eGovernment Authority (IGA) Vice-CEO Dr Zakareya Ahmed Al Khaja speaking to the attendees on innovative leadership.



The three Rotary Clubs of Bahrain (Rotary Club of Manama, Rotary Club of Salmaniya and Rotary Club of Adliya) and the Rotaract Club of Bahrain organised a joint social evening to celebrate the 115th year anniversary of Rotary International. The event was organised as a seated dinner with a four course meal at the Merchant House Hotel in Manama Bahrain. The night concluded with a cake cutting ceremony by all members.



The Indian School students Bala Srivatsav Yerramilli (XV), Nanditha Dileep (XS) and Karthika Suresh (X G) has won laurels in the Bahrain round of the World Scholar's Cup, held at St Christopher's school recently. The team secured 9th place overall in the senior division, with 3 trophies, 24 gold and 7 silver medals. They have thus, qualified for the global round of the World Scholar's Cup to be held in summer.



on of more than 10 teams and a huge number of audience including ladies and kids. In the final Chittur kongans won over Alathur Chenghotta team and PAACT Queens Team won over PAACT Angels Team. The winners and runner up were awarded Trophies.



Dr Ravi Pillai and Managing Director Geetha Pillai praised the endeavours of teachers and parents in encouraging the students.

WORLD  
world

# India set to dazzle Trump

Reuters | New Delhi/Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump will be accorded the biggest public reception given to any foreign leader in years during his visit to India beginning on Monday, officials say, one that could help paper over the two countries' growing friction over trade.

Close political and security partners, India and the United States have hit each other with retaliatory tariffs. Over the past month they have engaged in intense negotiations to produce a mini trade deal, but officials say it remains elusive.

The two sides have been arguing over US demands for access to India's huge poultry and dairy markets, Indian price controls on medical devices such as stents and stringent local data storage rules that US companies say will raise the costs of doing business.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has sought restoration of trade concessions that Trump withdrew in 2019 and greater access to US markets for its pharmaceutical and farm products. Above all, it says that Trump should not treat India on par with China, whose economy is five times larger.

At an event in Las Vegas overnight Trump gave mixed messages about prospects for a trade deal with Modi.

"We're going to India and we may make a tremendous deal there. Maybe we'll slow it down, we'll do it after the election," he said.

Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to gather in Modi's political hometown of Ahmedabad to greet Trump for a road show leading to a rally in a cricket stadium with a capacity of over 100,000.

On stage, both leaders will address a bigger version of the "Howdy Modi" rally that they jointly appeared at in Houston to a jubilant crowd of 50,000 Indian Americans last year, where Trump likened Modi to Elvis Presley for his crowd-pulling power.

"From the moment of their arrival at the airport a little be-



People ride their motorbikes past a hoarding with the images of India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump installed next to decorated trees alongside a road ahead of Trump's visit, in Ahmedabad, India



Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel stand guard outside Sardar Patel Gujarat Stadium, where US President Donald Trump is scheduled to address a "Namaste Trump" event with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit in Ahmedabad, India

fore noon on 24th February, the delegates will be treated to a display of famed Indian hospitality and India's Unity in Diversity," said Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla.

He said there will be tens of thousands of ordinary citizens as well as artistes showcasing the performing arts from different states of the country as part of

the India Road Show.

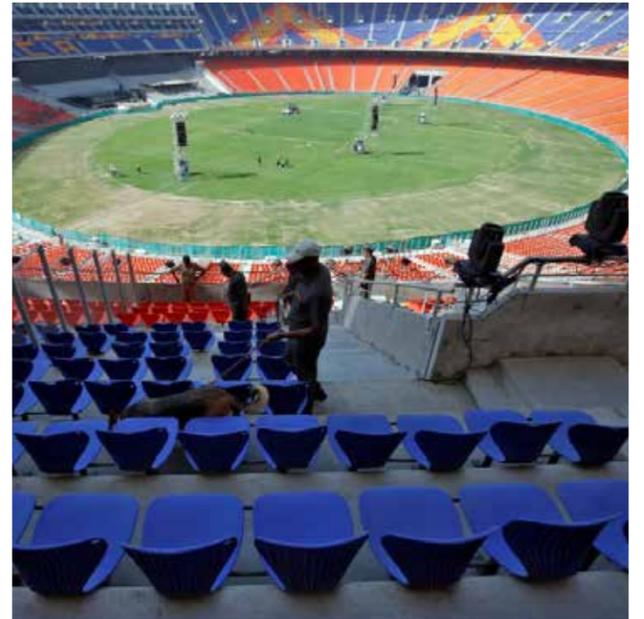
Trump, who will be accompanied by his wife, Melania, on the two-day trip, has been fascinated with the idea of going to India since his visit to Houston, aides said.

Trump prides himself in having large crowds at his campaign rallies, ranging generally from 10,000 to 20,000 people, and has

expressed admiration privately at the size of the crowd awaiting him in India, they said.

## Modest Trade Deal

It was possible the two sides could still announce some specific trade measures absent a broader deal, Richard M. Rossow, an India expert at the Center for Strategic and Inter-



A member of a bomb disposal squad from Gujarat Police uses a sniffer dog to scan the stands at Sardar Patel Gujarat Stadium



**We're going to India and we may make a tremendous deal there. Maybe we'll slow it down, we'll do it after the election**

DONALD TRUMP

hurt the government's domestic base so dramatically."

These could include a further reduction in import tariffs on Harley-Davidson motorcycles that Trump has often spoken about, he said.

The two countries are also expected to announce India's purchase of 24 SeaHawk naval helicopters from Lockheed Martin in a deal estimated to be \$2.6 billion as well as a follow-on order for six Apache attack helicopters.

The United States has become one of India's top arms suppliers, with \$18 billion worth of sales over the last 15 years, edging out traditional supplier Russia.

Trump and Modi are expected to discuss a wide range of issues including trade, 5G telecoms, counter-terrorism, energy security, religious freedom, the rule of law and the importance of the Indo-Pacific region, a senior Trump administration official said.

US energy firm Westinghouse is also expected to sign a new agreement with state-run Nuclear Power Corporation of India for the supply of six nuclear reactors, kickstarting a long-running project.

national Studies, told reporters.

"There's a modest package of things that India could put on the table that I don't think would

## Viral video prompts outpouring for bullied Australian boy

Support for the boy built as the video spread online

Sydney

An Australian boy with dwarfism who was bullied to the point he wanted to "die right now" has received a deluge of celebrity messages and donations for a trip to Disneyland.

A video of nine-year-old Quaden Bayles uploaded to Facebook by his mother showed him crying and repeatedly say-



Australian actor Hugh Jackman was among the hundreds of thousands posting support for a bullied Australian boy

The clip had been watched more than 16 million times by Friday and the boy's mother, Yarraka Bayles, said she was sharing it to raise awareness of the impact bullying was having on her child.

ing he wanted to die after being bullied at school.

The clip had been watched more than 16 million times by Friday and the boy's mother, Yarraka Bayles, said she was sharing it to raise awareness of

the impact bullying was having on her child.

"I've got a son that is suicidal almost every single day," she says in the footage.

Support for the boy built as the video spread online, and a GoFundMe page started by US comedian Brad Williams had raised over \$150,000 to give Bayles a trip to Disneyland in California by Friday.

"This isn't just for Quaden, this is for anyone who has been bullied in their lives and told they weren't good enough," Williams, who was also born with achondroplasia -- the most common type of dwarfism -- wrote

on the fundraiser page.

Williams said extra funds would be given to anti-bullying charities.

Australian actor Hugh Jackman and NBA player Enes Kanter were among the hundreds of thousands posting support for Bayles.

"Quaden you are stronger than you know, mate. And no matter what, you have a friend in me," Jackman said in a video posted to his Twitter account.

Bayles will also lead the Indigenious All-Stars out onto the field in their rugby league clash with the Maori All Stars in Queensland on Saturday.

*“Here, falcons are not considered birds, they are considered children of the Bedouins because, historically, falcons were used to hunt meat, allowing the Bedouin’s family to survive in this very harsh desert life”*

AFP | Abu Dhabi

Ed al-Qobeissy’s two birds perch majestically in the waiting room of Abu Dhabi’s falcon hospital, awaiting a routine check-up ahead of their hunting trip to Azerbaijan.

Like other well-travelled residents of the United Arab Emirates, the falcons will make the journey with their devoted owner on a well-worn route from a country where the creature is both a national symbol and treasured tradition.

“This has been a hobby of mine since 2007,” said the 26-year-old, gently stroking one of the prized birds of prey, which wear leather hoods to keep them calm and quiet.

After waiting in the pristine white-marbled reception area of the animal hospital, the falcons will undergo blood tests in order to complete paperwork for the trip.

They are among about 11,000

falcons the hospital treats annually, a number that has more than doubled in the past 10 years.

“Falcons have a very special place in the heart of the Emirates,” said the hospital’s director Margit Muller.

“Here, falcons are not considered birds, they are considered children of the Bedouins because, historically, falcons were used to hunt meat, allowing the Bedouin’s family to survive in this very harsh desert life.”

In 2010, UNESCO added falconry to its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

#### Talons and training

The Abu Dhabi facility is the world’s largest falcon hospital, frequented by falconers from across the Gulf

region.

As well as check-ups and routine trimming of talons, it also conducts complicated surgery and offers a training programme for veterinary students from more than 40 countries to learn about avian medicine.

“The very complicated procedures are either broken legs or broken wings, or when a falcon has a really messy accident that results in big injuries,” Muller said.

“Very long surgeries... can take up to three or four hours. That is the longest we can keep a falcon under anaesthesia.”

Opportunities to take a falcon hunting are limited in the

UAE, where it is only permitted in designated reserves.

That means that for many birds, the hospital is an essential stop-off before heading to popular overseas hunting destinations including Morocco, Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

Emirati falconers are only legally allowed to own captive-bred birds, which must have their own passports that comply with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) for transport.

Animals other than guide dogs are not usually allowed in the cabins of the UAE’s main carriers, but for falcons exceptions are made.

Abu Dhabi’s Etihad permits falcons in the cabin or

checked baggage, and Dubai’s Emirates allows birds to travel alongside their owner to certain destinations in Pakistan.

“The most popular destination for falconers travelling with their falcons in the passenger cabin is Pakistan,” an Emirates spokeswoman said.

#### Girl power

While the hospital has its own programme and facilities to breed falcons that can be purchased, most of the birds are imported to the UAE from breeders in the Americas and Europe.

“They stay with the falconer for as long as they live,” Muller said. “They will not be released because they are captive-bred falcons.”

Muller added that the most sought-after and expensive falcons are females, which can carry up to five times their own body weight. They are also considered the

most beautiful.

“The female is usually one third bigger than the male, and more powerful,” she said, adding that captive-bred female falcons can cost upwards of 100,000 euros (\$108,000).

For falconer Salem al-Mansouri from Abu Dhabi, the tradition is much more than an expensive pastime -- it is a symbol of Emirati culture.

“Falcons were used to hunt, and you can say that it was the only method for hunting for survival, especially when travelling long distances hundreds of years ago,” the 30-year-old said.

“We inherited it from our grandfathers and fathers, who taught us, and now we teach the next generation.”

## UAE falcon hospital a window into Emirati tradition



Falconry is a treasured tradition in the United Arab Emirates

## Washroom-on-wheels: India firm turns buses into women’s toilets

Pune | India



Finding a clean and safe toilet in parts of India is a challenge



Attendants sell sanitary napkins and diapers

Like many Indian women, college student Suvarna Dongare dreads getting caught short when she is out and about, with hygienic public toilets in short supply across the country.

So she was pleasantly surprised to find a pink women-only “washroom-on-wheels” in a public park in western India -- one of several facilities dotting the city of Pune, where a pair of entrepreneurs have transformed run-down buses into hop-on toilets.

“I came to the park and wanted to visit the bathroom urgently. These toilets are very comfortable and felt safe,” 18-year-old Dongare said.

For a relatively affordable five-rupee-fee (seven US cents), any woman can board the toilet to use the facilities, breastfeed babies or purchase sanitary napkins and diapers.

Launched in 2016 by entrepreneurs Ulka Sadalkar and Rajeev Kher, the “Ti Toilet” project -- “ti” means “her” in the local Marathi language -- has 12 mobile washrooms, on average used by more 200 women daily. The buses are powered by solar panels mounted on top of the vehicle.

Sadalkar said the pair, who run a portable sanitation business, came up with the idea as part of a series of projects focused on improving hygiene in the city.

“We believe women deserve access to clean and safe washrooms and it is their basic right,” she said, adding that the duo wanted to open 1,000 toilets across India in the next five years.

“We focused a lot on aesthetics in refurbishing these buses and provided clean toilets,

television sets, temperature monitors with an attendant in tow.”

Manisha Adhav, 40, who operates one of the toilets, said she felt “proud working here as we are doing something for women.”

“Women bless me ... as they come here from far away areas as well because there aren’t enough public washrooms around.”

Even as India went on a building spree constructing millions of toilets as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s flagship “Clean India” programme, experts said the lack of water or electricity meant many remain unused.

State governments have struggled to maintain public toilets, which are often poorly lit, unmanned, and reek of urine and faeces.

too are mostly used by men, with women -- fearing for their safety -- going long hours without using such facilities.

Modi in October declared India free of open defecation and said 600 million people had been provided with access to toilets.

But experts questioned the claims and said sanitation and safety remain intertwined for millions of Indian women.

Finding “clean and safe washrooms in public spaces is not easy during emergencies. We are trying to change that,” Adhav said.

Pink buses provide a safe and clean toilet for some Indian women



celebs

Katy Perry



**Trump slams S.Korean film "Parasite", Brad Pitt at rally**



Los Angeles

President Donald Trump on Thursday scorned the best picture Oscar for South Korean film "Parasite," asking how a foreign movie could get the honour.

"How bad were the Academy Awards this year?" Trump asked the crowd at a packed reelection campaign rally in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

"We got enough problems with South Korea, with trade. On top of it, they give them the best movie of the year?" Trump asked in disbelief.

"Parasite", a dark comedy exploring class divides, made history by becoming the first non-English-language film to win Hollywood's biggest annual prize.

Saying "was it good? I don't know," Trump seemed to indicate he had not watched the film.

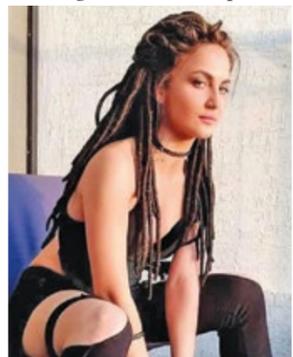
Neon, the U.S. distributor for the subtitled film, shot back with a tweet saying, "Understandable. He can't read."

Trump, whose presidency has been built on a nationalist "America first" slogan, said it was time to bring back classics from Hollywood's golden age.

**Elli AvRam channels Jolie's Tomb Raider look**

Mumbai

Actress Elli AvRam's look from "Malang" has garnered wide praise,



Elli AvRam

and pictures from her look test reminds one of Angelina Jolie's Lara Croft from Hollywood film "Tomb Raider". Elli can be seen in different poses, as she looks at the camera with intensity. She is wearing a black vest, pants and shoes - giving major "Tomb Raider" vibes. On the professional front, Elli is enjoying the success of filmmaker Mohit Suri's "Malang", which has collected over Rs 50 crore at the box-office since its release.

**Katy Perry collapses after gas leak on 'American Idol' set**

Los Angeles

American singer Katy Perry fell on the ground after a gas leak on the sets of 'American Idol' show after which the auditions were put on hold.

According to People magazine, in an exclusive clip of Sunday's episode, judges Katy Perry, Luke Bryan, and Lionel Richie was forced to pause the auditions due to a propane leak that could potentially be dangerous.

In the clip, the singer mentioned a strong propane smell as she said, "Do you guys smell gas? It's pretty intense."

"I have a slight headache from it. Oh it's bad, it's really bad," Katy said as she stood up to leave the studio.

As chaos flared up amongst the crew and the contestants, sirens were heard in the background and a handful of firefighters showed up to check on the situation.

The 'Firework' singer complained about not feeling good as she fell to the ground.



Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner

**Affleck publicly praises ex-wife Garner for being considerate**

Los Angeles

Hollywood star Ben Affleck has issued a public note of thanks to his former wife and actress Jennifer Garner for supporting him through his struggle with sobriety.

Affleck has been detailing his efforts to kick his booze addiction and how his heavy drinking contributed to the breakdown of his marriage to Garner, in recent press interviews while promoting his new movie "The Way Back". After a candid chat with 'Good Morning America's' Diane Sawyer, he wanted to give a special shout-out to the mother of his three children, reports aceshowbiz.com.

After the first part of the pre-recorded sit-down aired in the US, a newswoman read

out a note Affleck had written for Garner.

It stated: "What I want to say publicly and privately is - 'Thank you. Thank you for being thoughtful, considerate, responsible, and a great mum and person'."

The tribute came after the 47-year-old actor told the newswoman he never expected his alcohol issues to lead to the then couple's separation in 2015 and eventual divorce, which he recently branded his "biggest regret."

"I didn't want to get divorced, I didn't want to be a divorced person, I really didn't want to be a split family with my children. It upset me because it meant I wasn't who I thought I was and that was so painful and so disappointing in myself," he said.

**Al Pacino: 1970s a dark period of my life**

Los Angeles

Hollywood veteran Al Pacino doesn't like to remember the 1970s because it was "a dark period" of his life.

Pacino forayed into the digital space with "Hunters", a series about vigilantes seeking to bring justice to Nazis hiding in 1970s in the US.

Asked if doing the show took him back to the era, Pacino said: "Nothing takes me back to the '70s, no."

I just can't go back there. No, I'm, I'm in the '70s right now as I speak to you, and there's no '70s costumes going on. It's a dark period of my life. It was very fruitful for - you know, I was in very good movies at the time, and lots happened to me. But there's something dark about where I was at, at that time. I was a little bit more, I think getting, you know, taking drugs and drinking and all that in the 1970s. It was a bit, a little over the top," he added.



Al Pacino

**Jacqueline Fernandez creates 'magic' with hula hoop**

Mumbai

Actress Jacqueline Fernandez just needed a hula hoop and a filter to create "magic" on TikTok.

Actresses like Shilpa Shetty and Nora Fatehi have been changing looks and remembering old songs with TikTok's latest filter #vfxindia.

Jacqueline's unique looks and style became a quick trend on the platform and received close to a billion views in less than 24 hours. In the video, the "Kick" actress is seen dancing with a hula hoop and changing her bottom from a mermaid to a robot to an alien and even a beauty queen.

"Hulahoop magic!! #vfxindia," she captioned the video. Celebrities such as Deepika Padukone, Varun Dhawan, Anupam Kher, Kajol, Madhuri Dixit Nene, Riteish Deshmukh and Sidharth Malhotra are also on TikTok to engage and connect with their fans. TikTok is a destination for creating and sharing short-form mobile videos.



Jacqueline Fernandez

**Bhumi Pednekar: Growing responsibility as actor a happy problem**

Mumbai

Bhumi Pednekar

Actress Bhumi Pednekar is busier than ever, and she says that an increase in professional responsibility and fan frenzy is a happy problem for any actor.

"When you want to become an actor, you dream that your responsibility increases, that your fan-following and their love for you increases. You want to keep them happy and satisfied with your films, so it's a happy problem to have," said Bhumi.

Last year was fabulous for the actress. Her roles in "Saand Ki Aankh", "Bala" and "Pati Patni Aur Woh" were universally applauded, and she has great roles coming up. "2019 was really a special year because my films were appreciated by the audience. I am getting the love and respect at award ceremonies as well," said Bhumi, at NexBrands Brand Vision Summit and Awards 2020.



**Shilpa Shetty, Raj Kundra become parents again**

Mumbai



Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra and her businessman husband Raj Kundra have welcomed their second child -- a daughter through surrogacy, sources said.

They have named her Samisha Shetty Kundra.

A thrilled Shilpa said that Samisha was born on February 15 and tagged her little angel as "Junior SSK".

"Samisha Shetty Kundra... Born :15th February 2020 ... Junior SSK in the house.... "Sa" in Sanskrit is "to have" and "Misha" is Russian stands for "someone like God"...

SUDOKU

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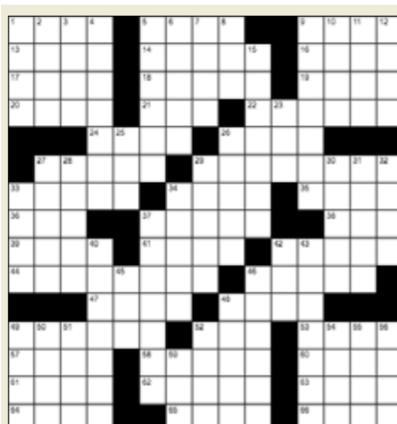
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7	3	5	9	4	2	1	8	6
3	7	4	2	6	1	5	9	8
8	9	2	3	7	5	4	6	1
1	5	6	8	9	4	3	7	2
9	2	3	4	8	6	7	1	5
4	8	7	5	1	3	6	2	9
5	6	1	7	2	9	8	4	3

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.

CROSSWORD



Across

1- Starting from; 5- Mideast gulf; 9- Suffragist Carrie; 13- Exec's note; 14- "West Side Story" song; 16- Will...-wisp; 17- German Mrs; 18- Graven images; 19- Salt Lake City hoopsters; 20- Jazz flutist Herbie; 21- Begley and Wynn; 22- Poem of 14 lines; 24- Just say no; 26- Pre-Easter season; 27- Parades; 29- Early fruit; 33- Africa's most populous city; 34- Immense; 35- North Sea feeder; 36- Doctrine; 37- Leases; 38- Part of UNLV; 39- Abound; 41- Historical chapters; 42- Designer Simpson; 44- Editorial writer; 46- Amore; 47- Red flower; 48- Coal-rich region; 49- Magic spells; 52- 100%; 53- "Peter Pan" dog; 57- Taylor of "Mystic Pizza"; 58- Free; 60- Girder type; 61- Peter Fonda title role; 62- Merits; 63- City on Norton Sound; 64- Ran, as colors; 65- Harden by heat; 66- Departs;

Down

1- Radio switch; 2- Lab fluids; 3- Yemen neighbor; 4- One who establishes; 5- French cathedral city; 6- Father; 7- Archer of myths; 8- Naught; 9- Nation; 10- Env. notation; 11- Of...I sing; 12- Dry run; 15- Maintains; 23- Half and half?; 25- Brian of Roxy Music; 26- Wears well; 27- Relaxes; 28- Small change; 29- Charged; 30- Atoll unit; 31- Rings; 32- Gaelic language of Ireland or Scotland; 33- Quote; 34- Piece of poetry; 37- Publish again; 40- Wed; 42- Just as I thought; 43- Articles to be mended; 45- Kippur; 46- "Honor Thy Father" author; 48- Sneak; 49- Heavy stick; 50- Small mountain; 51- "Hard..." (sailor's yell); 52- Gillette brand; 54- Peek follower; 55- Driver's license datum; 56- Ancient Athens's Temple of...; 59- Arrest;

Yesterday's solution

A	L	S	O	E	A	V	E	A	S	W	E
P	E	C	A	N	X	R	A	Y	T	H	E
S	N	A	K	E	C	I	T	E	B	A	I
E	D	D	U	S	E	D	G	H	A	R	R
S	T	O	P	E	L	A	T	E	D		
C	O	N	T	E	N	T	G	A	T		
A	N	E	A	R	B	A	S	S	D	R	U
K	I	E	V	G	O	O	D	S	E	A	S
E	N	T	E	R	I	N	G	A	C	R	E
A	G	E	T	A	N	K	E	R	S		
A	R	E	N	A	S	E	N	D	S		
R	A	I	S	I	N	W	E	A	R	T	A
E	R	A	T	T	O	R	N	E	S	S	E
N	O	N	E	I	B	I	S	W	H	A	R
E	N	T	S	C	I	T	A	R	O		

## SPORTS

**Rain washes out final session after Jamieson shines with ball**



Kyle Jamieson in action

Reuters | Wellington

The final session of the first day's play in the opening test between New Zealand and India at the Basin Reserve was washed out by heavy rain yesterday, giving the tourists time to regroup after they were reduced to 122-5 at tea.

The rain swept in seconds after the players had left the field for the tea break and, despite the skies clearing, umpires Aleem Dar and Richard Kettleborough ended play at about 5.30 p.m. (0430 GMT) after a pitch inspection.

New Zealand pace bowler Kyle Jamieson enjoyed a dream test debut, tormenting India's batsmen and taking three wickets and a catch in the deep, stealing the headlines from Ross Taylor, who was playing his 100th test.

Ajinkya Rahane will resume on Saturday on 38 while the recalled Rishabh Pant will be with him on 10.

"From a team perspective we are in a pretty strong position," Jamieson told reporters. "The game is quite advanced and we are pretty happy with where it is."

# Pereira, Raffii, Almuyini triumph on first day of Speed Weekend

TDT | Manama

Speed Weekend got off to a roaring start yesterday at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir, with three different winners in the five races held.

Dylan Pereira was in scintillating form as he took the meeting's first race in the Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East, while Raed Raffii and Ahmed Almuyini both had doubles, with Raffii winning both sprints in the BIC 2,000cc Challenge and Almuyini enjoying two wins in the Bahrain Motorcycle Racing (BMR) 600.

All three series were holding the penultimate rounds of their 2019/2020 seasons as part of Speed Weekend's events. Both Porsche and 2,000cc raced along BIC's 5.412-kilometre Grand Prix track while BMR competed on the 2.55km Inner circuit.

Porsche action continues today with another two races on schedule. All the action will be held from 11am to 6pm and all are welcome to attend. Tickets are available at the gate.

In yesterday's Porsche programme, Pereira topped the Practice timesheet with a best lap of two minutes 02.273 sec-

onds before securing pole for Race One with a 2:02.088 lap in Qualifying.

Pereira then made the most of his place in the front of the grid, leading in each of the 12 laps en route to powering to an impressive victory in 28:13.180. He was 3.844s ahead of JB Simmenauer, while Leon Koehler came third 7.684s behind. Each of the overall top three were also the best finishers in the Pro class.

The ProAm category was claimed by Christoffer Bergstrom ahead of Lucas Groeneveld and Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa. Michael Knutzon won the Am class ahead of Jean-Marc Cordier and Shaikh Jaber bin Ali Al Khalifa.

In the BIC 2,000cc Challenge, Tareq Al Tajer in a Ford Focus was nearly two seconds ahead of the pack in Practice, where he had a best lap of 2:27.651. He maintained his strong pace and won pole with a 2:27.754 fastest Qualifying lap.

In the opening eight-lap sprint, Raffii driving a Honda S2000 managed to claim the victory in 19:48.153. Al Tajer had to settle for the runner-up spot 3.446s back, while Shaikh Hamad bin Isa bin Ebrahim Al



BIC 2,000cc Challenge winners on the podium with officials



Winners from the first Porsche race celebrate on the podium with officials

Khalifa in a Honda Civic was third 9.877s behind Raffii. All three were also on the Pro class

podium.

In Race Two, Raffii had another superb win, coming from the middle of the pack at the start. He won over eight laps in 19:29.142. In second place was Ahmed Bin Khanen in a Honda Civic EG4 3.006s behind, while Al Tajer claimed his second podium 5.878s back.

Also in the 2,000cc, Wiebke Buelow was the Novice class winner in both races.

In the BMR 600, Almuyini was the man to beat from the start. He first set the Practice pace with a 1:09.545 lap and then secured pole with a quicker 1:09.467 time in Qualifying.

He absolutely dominated the first 11-lap race, winning in a total time of 12:59.736. He was classified 12.595s ahead of Ali Adiby, while completing the podium winners was Ibrahim Al Sharida 30.830s behind Almuyini.

The ace rider completed his double with a Race Two win in 13:10.441. The same two competitors joined him on the podium, with Adiby finishing with a narrow 0.992s gap and Al Sharida 6.131s adrift.

The winners of the round were presented their respective trophies in a podium ceremony at the end of the day.



Participants in action at the start of the Porsche race

## RCM to organise 6-a-side football tournament

TDT | Manama

One of Bahrain's most anticipated annual charity sports events is coming back on March 20 2020, at Bahrain Rugby Club-Saar, as Rotary Club of Manama (RCM) recently announced the details of its 22nd Fund Raising Annual 6-a-Side Football Tournament.

Annually organised by RCM with the aim of raising funds to support several humanitarian causes and charities in the Kingdom, such as orphanages, cancer societies, disability associations and more, the Tournament will include more than 15 teams and is expected to attract families and raise more than BD 15000/-.

The announcement came during a press conference organised by RCM on Tuesday at Marjan Space in AlAndalus Garden in the Capital Manama. Attending the conference were the President of RCM Khalid Mukhtar, the Incoming President and



From left- RCM's Board member Renuka Ravindran, RCM President Khalid Mukhtar and Chairperson of the Event Committee Marjan Modara

Chairperson of the Event Committee Marjan Modara, members of the press, and a number of sponsors and stakeholders.

In the conference, they reaffirmed the Club's keenness on annually organising the event, through which funds to support local projects are raised, in addition to shedding light

on several crucial matters, as well as highlighting the woes of the less fortunate segments of the Bahraini society, including locals and expats.

Commenting further, the Chairperson of the Event Committee stated: "Organising the 6-a-Side Football Tournament for the 22nd consecutive year

reflects the constant concern of RCM on serving several noble goals and making positive impact on some of the critical issues faced by the society today and in the future. Throughout the past two decades, we were able to raise funds for machines purchased to assist in causes such as care for cancer patients and preventive measures to combat diabetes. Also, funds raised were used in strengthening community partnership to support orphans, widows and the less fortunate, and protecting the environment amongst other causes."

Founded in 1965, RCM consists of 58 members who have been actively participating and organising key community projects for the past five decades, with the aim of contributing towards societal needs. The Club forms part of Rotary International which is the world's first service club organisation and includes over 1.2 million members.

## Liverpool's Henderson out for three weeks

Reuters | London

Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson will be out for three weeks with a hamstring injury sustained in their 1-0 midweek Champions League defeat by Atletico Madrid, manager Juergen Klopp said.

The injury rules the influential midfielder out of Monday's Premier League home game against relegation-threatened West Ham United, a match in which the runaway league leaders will be desperate "to put things right", the German added.

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# De Vries lifts HH Shaikh Nasser Cup

● **Adrie De Vries completes hat-trick at REHC**

TDT | Manama

Dutch jockey Adrie De Vries stole the show yesterday at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC), winning three of the seven races including the main event for the HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Cup.

His Majesty the King's Representative for Charity Work and Youth Affairs and Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Chairman His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa along with REHC High Committee Deputy Chairman His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, were on hand to enjoy the day's action along with many other high-ranking VIPs.

De Vries won the seventh and final race on the card riding New Show, who was one of the pre-race favourites. The event was 11 furlongs in distance for imported horses aged three years and up, and it carried a whopping total prize of BD10,000.

Owned by Victorious and trained by Hesham Al Haddad, New Show claimed the impressive victory in two minutes 17.317 seconds.



HH Shaikh Nasser with one of the competing horses

Finishing half-a-length behind in second place was Macaque while third was Vale de Sol, both also owned by Victorious and trained by Hesham Al Haddad. Al Haddad was another to have a superb day at the track, with many of his horses taking top places.

Macaque was ridden by Abdulla Faisal while Vale de Sol was steered by Husain Makki. Coolagh Forest completed the top four for Mohammed Khalid Abdulrahim, Paul D'Arcy and John Egan.

De Vries also triumphed in the sixth race of the day, which was also for a HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Cup. Riding Pulsar, De Vries completed the 11-furlong event for local breeds aged three and up in 2:20.735. The Abdulla Fawzi Nass-owned and Hesham Al Haddad-trained winner came away with the lion's share of

the BD5,500 prize, finishing two lengths ahead of Al Tariq, who was also owned by Abdulla Fawzi Nass and trained by Hesham Al Haddad, but ridden by Paddy Mathers.

News Breaker was third for Victorious, Alan Smith and Lee Newman while Good News came fourth for M and E Racing, Alan Smith and Rosie Jessop.

De Vries won race five to kick off his eventually successful bid for a hat-trick. The race was over seven furlongs for imported three-year-olds and up, and it had a BD5,500 prize with the winner taking the HH Shaikh Hamad bin Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup.

De Vries was riding Gomati, owned by Abdulla Fawzi Nass and trained by Hesham Al Haddad. They secured first place in 1:24.237, winning with a length-and-a-half's gap in front of Prince Elzaam, who was competing for Al Mohamediya Racing, Jaber Ramadhan and Andrew Elliott.

Chatham House came third



HH Shaikh Nasser presents one of the winners their trophy

for Hasan Mefareh Alajmi, Yousif Taher and Abdulla Faisal, while Sunsprite was fourth for Al Afoo Racing Stable, Mohammed Saeed and Lee Newman.

Earlier in the day, Magsood won race three, which was also for a HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Cup. It was over a straight of five furlongs for locally bred three-year-olds and up, with a BD3,000 prize. Magsood won in 1:03.229 for Zahra Ebrahim Abdulla, Samir Dawood and Hussain Makki.

Shomukh came third for HH Shaikh Hamad bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, James Naylor and Abdulla Faisal, white fourth was Katie Elder for Al Adiyat Racing, Alan Smith and Rosie Jessop.

The fourth race of the day was for the HH Shaikha Sheemah bint Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup. It was over a straight of five furlongs for imported three-year-olds and older, with a BD3,000 prize.

Langavat was triumphant in



HH Shaikh Nasser presents one of the winners their trophy

1:01.417 for Al Mohamediya Racing, Alan Smith and Abdulrahim Jasim. A length-and-a-quarter behind as the runner-up was Pont Vert for Jassim Mohammed Asad, Ramzi Al Baqlawa and Jacob Clark; while third was Boragh Steps for HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, James Naylor and Andrew Elliott. Jedlaan was third for Mohamed Salah Mahdi, Salah Mahdi and Marcialis Juares, finishing four lengths behind. Al Saqlawy 1564 was third for Al Wasmiya, Abdulla Kuwaiti and Adnan Jaffar, while Al Jellaby 1683 was fourth for Al Riffa, Yousif Alboainain and Hasan Al Saffar.

BD2,000 race for three-year-old local breeds in 1:54.864. Al Saida was competing for owners Al Mohamediya Racing, trainer Abbas Al Mawali and jockey Paddy Mathers; while Murjani came second a neck's length behind for HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, James Naylor and Andrew Elliott. Jedlaan was third for Mohamed Salah Mahdi, Salah Mahdi and Marcialis Juares, finishing four lengths behind. Al Saqlawy 1564 was third for Al Wasmiya, Abdulla Kuwaiti and Adnan Jaffar, while Al Jellaby 1683 was fourth for Al Riffa, Yousif Alboainain and Abdulla Faisal.

The day's opening sprint was for the HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup. The WAHO event was over eight furlongs with a BD3,000 total prize.

Victorious owned the top two horses, with both also trained by Yousif Taher. Kuheilan Afas 1708 was the winner, ridden by Abdulla Faisal to the win in 1:53.425. Al Jellaby 1544 was second with jockey Marcialis Jaures, finishing four lengths behind. Al Saqlawy 1564 was third for Al Wasmiya, Abdulla Kuwaiti and Adnan Jaffar, while Al Jellaby 1683 was fourth for Al Riffa, Yousif Alboainain and Hasan Al Saffar.



HH Shaikh Isa at the races with other VIPs



Action at the start of one of the races

## Sarhan triple gives Bahrain win over India in a thriller

TDT | Manama

Hesham Sarhan buried a go-ahead three-pointer with 1.2 seconds to go to lift Bahrain to a dramatic, come-from-behind 68-67 victory over India last night in their opening game of the 2021 Fiba Asia Cup qualifiers.

Sarhan fired in the winning basket from the left corner off an assist from court general Mohammed Hussain, sending the home crowd that packed the Khalifa Sports City arena into a frenzy.

India had a chance to win the game after calling a timeout and advancing the ball into their own half, but a desperation triple by Jagdeep Singh as the buzzer sounded was well off the mark.

Sarhan's heroics helped the Bahrainis open their campaign in Group D of Fiba Asia Cup qualification in style. They now hope to build on their fine start

in their next assignment on Monday when they face regional powerhouses Lebanon in Beirut.

"India played a tough game; they have some big guys especially on the inside, and they were physical and fast," said Bahrain head coach Sam Vinchin in his post-game Press conference.

"Our team does not have a whole lot of international experience, but they showed tonight a lot of fight, a lot of courage, and a lot of determination to come back; and they made a big play at the end of the game.

"I am proud of our guys; they are young, but they will only get better and better."

Sarhan finished with nine points coming off the bench for Bahrain. Hussain led all scorers with 18 points, including six assists. He also had two key free-throws with 11.9 seconds remaining to bring the Bahrainis to with-



Hussain leads a fast-break for Bahrain in their win against India

in one possession and set the stage for Sarhan's end-game basket.

Naturalised big man CJ Giles had a monster effort for the hosts with 15 points and 15 rebounds. He teamed up

well to man the paint with hard-working Ameer brothers Muzamil and Mohammed, who finished with 12 and 11 points, respectively. They both also had six rebounds.

Amritpal Singh was India's top scorer with 17 points and seven rebounds, while Muin Bek Hafeez added 13 points and eight boards. Prasanna Venkatesh Sivakumar had 12 and Vishesh Bhriuvanshi added 11 to round out those in double-figures for the visitors.

Bahrain had a good start to the game and took a 19-14 lead at the end of first quarter, but a sub-par second saw them fall to a 28-38 hole at the half. The Bahrainis did well to battle back to within a point in the third, but two baskets in the last minute helped India go ahead 52-47 heading into the final canto.

Bahrain were able to tie it at 58-all with just over six minutes left in the contest, but turnovers and unlucky misses let India go up 65-60 with just a minute-and-a-half remaining. That set the stage for the thrilling ending and Sarhan's game-winner.

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