

Dumplin' is an American coming-of-age comedy film directed by Anne Fletcher and written by Kristin Hahn. | **P13**

# THE DAILY tribune



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### Earthquake with 7.5 magnitude hits Ecuador

Quito, Ecuador

An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.5 hit Ecuador Friday but there were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage.

The quake struck before dawn in Ecuador's eastern Amazon region 17 kilometers (10 miles) from the town of Montalvo near the border with Peru, the US Geological Survey said.

It hit at a depth of 132 kilometers. Most major earthquakes in South America are at shallow depths of 70 kilometers or less, the USGS said.

### Apps send intimate user data to Facebook

San Francisco, United States

News report yesterday said many smartphone apps were sending highly personal information such as menstrual cycles and body weight to Facebook, without notifying users.

The Wall Street Journal report based on its own in-house tests showed that intimate data could be shared with Facebook using a tool designed to help target ads, even if app users were not members of the leading social network.

## France says kills top Al-Qaeda commander in Sahel

Paris, France

French forces have killed a top jihadist leader, Yahya Abou El Hamame, in an operation in Mali, Defence Minister Florence Parly said yesterday.

The Algerian, a commander in Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), was reputedly

responsible for kidnapping a number of Westerners in North and West Africa.

A ministry statement issued in Paris said he was "the mastermind and financier of several attacks".

El Hamame was killed Thursday when French land and air forces ambushed a column of

vehicles he was travelling with north of Timbuktu, Parly said.

He reportedly served as AQIM's "governor" in Timbuktu when the city was held by Islamist rebels from April 2012 to January 2013.

A number of other "terrorists" were "neutralised", Parly added. El Hamame was believed to

be second in command of the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM), also known as Nusrat al-Islam, led by Iyad Ag Ghali.

The group was formed by the merger of Ansar Dine, the Macina Liberation Front, Al-Mourabitoun and El Hamame's Saharan branch of AQIM.

The operation was announced as Parly, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe and Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian were due to visit Mali, where some 4,500 French troops have been deployed since 2014 to reconquer the north of the country after it fell to jihadist fighters.

## Saudi bags \$10bn oil deal

AFP | Beijing, China

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud met China's President Xi Jinping yesterday and bagged a \$10-billion oil deal.

Prince Mohammed arrived in Beijing on Thursday following visits to Pakistan and India.

"China is a good friend and partner to Saudi Arabia," Xi told Prince Mohammed in a meeting in the Great Hall of the People.

"Saudi Arabia's relations with China can be traced back a very long time in the past," the crown prince said.

"Over such a long period of exchanges with China, we have never experienced any problems with China."

He met with Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng earlier on Friday.

China is looking to strengthen its economic ties with the kingdom, as Beijing pursues its ambitious Belt and Road trade infrastructure initiative, while Riyadh rolls out "Saudi Vision 2030".

Prince Mohammed told the Chinese President they could join the two projects "to realise more progress and jointly confront challenges".



Saudi Crown Prince with China's President Xi Jinping (Courtesy of Al Arabia)

Vice Premier Han suggested during his meeting with the crown prince that the two countries deepen partnerships in energy, infrastructure construction, finance, and high-tech.

China is a good friend and partner to Saudi Arabia

XI JINPING

agreement -- worth more than \$10 billion -- to develop a refining and petrochemical complex in northeastern Liaoning province.

The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority also announced the signing of 35 non-binding memorandums of understanding, including deals related to energy, mining, transportation and e-commerce.

The two countries should boost partnerships in counterterrorism and law enforcement, and exchange experience on combating extremism, Han said in his meeting with Mohammed.

The Saudis said they "firmly supported" Beijing's efforts to keep the country secure, and opposed "interference by external forces in China's internal affairs", Xinhua added.

### BIRTH PANGS

## UK backlash at Meghan's lavish US baby shower

London, United Kingdom

Meghan Markle drew fresh scorn from British media this week after celebrating the imminent arrival of her first baby with what they described as an "extravagant" trip to New York in a private jet.

The Duchess of Sussex, due to give birth in the spring, returned to Britain Thursday after enjoying a party with celebrity friends at what British papers referred to as "the most expensive hotel suite in the US".

The party, hosted at Manhattan's Mark Hotel by Serena Williams and attended by other high-profile figures including

Amal Clooney, saw guests serenaded by a harpist and given expensive gifts, they reported.

Although neither Markle nor British taxpayers footed the bill, The Times led the critically-toned coverage, headlining its article on Friday: "Meghan's extravagant New York baby shower provokes flood of indignation."

It said the visit had "prompted a debate about extravagance, style and the environmental impact of crossing the Atlantic in a private jet", including criticism from environmental lobby Friends of the Earth.

The paper also trawled comments posted on the parenting

website Mumsnet, quoting one person who was "quite disgusted by the way she is burning through money".

The Times added: "To some British minds the mere concept of a baby shower -- an American import -- seems inappropriate."

In the right-wing Daily Mail, columnist Jan Moir asked what could Queen Elizabeth II make of the duchess's "lavish trip".

She added: "can you be a self-identifying international humanitarian and have a £300,000-plus baby shower held for your already fabulously privileged unborn child?"

Meanwhile the Daily Telegraph -- said to be the Queen's

favoured newspaper each morning -- reported the "glamour" of the American gathering may have "surpassed" Markle's wedding last year to Prince Harry.



Markle, 37, has been dubbed "the difficult duchess" following several royal staff departures



Meghan Duchess of Sussex



03 All eyes on Sharm el-Sheikh

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# Lending a helping hand

Proceeds from the strongest Bahraini Championship will go towards supporting Cancer patients

TDT | Manama

The supporting activities of the second edition of the Strongest Bahraini Championship were held yesterday at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) under the patronage of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

The move was part of humanitarian and sports initiatives by the First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, President of Bahrain Athletic Association and Honorary President of Bahrain Sports Federation for Disabilities.

The 2nd Strongest Bahraini Championship will conclude today with the main activities of the event are organised at



HH Shaikh Khalid

the BIC.

On this occasion, HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa stressed that the Championship aims to instil sports principles among youth in Bahrain in a bid to create a society that is more active.

“Our initiatives have been introduced to support youth and encourage them to practice different types of sports as we intend to inject more talents into our national teams.

“This event carries an important message towards growing and building as well as developing our sports environment as we aim to introduce more sports events that embrace young people,” added Shaikh Khalid.



In pictures, highlights of yesterday's event

It's worth noting that the 2nd Strongest Bahraini Championship began on Thursday.

The event's proceeds will be donated in support of cancer.



First Hala Febrayer Festival organised in Bahrain under the patronage of Shaikh Hisham Bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, the Governor of the Capital Governorate yesterday at 7:00 pm in Water Garden City project located in Seef area opposite to City Centre. Above, scenes from the event

“Our initiatives have been introduced to support youth and encourage them to practice different types of sports as we intend to inject more talents into our national teams

SHAIKH KHALID

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## Bahrain pledges full support to combat terrorism

TDT | Washington

Top Bahraini official yesterday pledged Kingdom's full support to combat terrorism in all forms and dry out its sources of financing for better freedom of navigation and maritime security.

“Bahrain is an active partner in the fight against terrorism, as it has suffered from terrorism directed from abroad,” said Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for International Affairs, Dr Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa.

Speaking during the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) on political and security frameworks, Dr Shaikh Abdullah said Bahrain adamantly supports the comprehensive fight against extremism and terrorism in terms of thought, behaviour, support, funding and shelter.

The meeting comes in the context of ongoing efforts to establish a strategic alliance in the Middle East region to promote prosperity, stability and



Bahraini delegates at MESA meeting

regional security.

He told MESA participants that Bahrain is looking forward to establishing a comprehensive strategic institutional framework and effective partnerships that will reinforce security and development and contribute to the shaping a more prosperous future for the peoples of the countries of the region and is fully aware of the importance of alliances to maintain regional security.

“Our constants are in accordance with our vision - there is no security without development, and development cannot continue, flourish or bear fruit without real and lasting security.”

Dr Shaikh Abdullah stressed that achieving stable security and sustainable development for the countries of the region is a collective responsibility that requires coordination and cooperation among the responsible

states.

The meeting kick-started with welcoming words by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Gulf Affairs Tim Lenderking, US Deputy Secretary of Defence for Middle East Affairs, Mike Melroy and Deputy, Director Politico-Military Affairs, Middle East Brigadier General Scott Benedict.

Bahrain's delegation is made up of representatives of the Bahrain Defence Force and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Dr Shaikh Abdullah stressed in a statement at the meeting the importance of the strategic alliance for the Middle East to ensure security and stability and affirmed the commitment of Bahrain to actively participating in the alliance, hailing the efforts made by the US government in making security and stability prevail in the region.

He commended the growing Bahraini-US partnership and the strong ties between the two friendly countries.



Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) ground task force left for Saudi Arabia yesterday to participate in the joint Peninsula Shield 10 drill after completing all combat and administrative preparations. The combat group will take part in the joint exercise alongside forces from the GCC countries. The Peninsula Shield 10 drill aims to boost military cooperation between the GCC countries and achieve common goals.

# big story

# All eyes on Sharm el-Sheikh

His Majesty King Hamad heads to Egypt for first Arab-EU summit

- More than 40 heads of state and government
- 25 European heads of state and government will attend
- Summit will discuss the growing threats of cross-border terrorism
- The summit seen as a chance by EU diplomats to boost cooperation

TDI | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa will lead Bahrain's delegation to the first Arab-EU Summit, which kick-offs tomorrow in the presence of European and Arab leaders at Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

The Royal Court, in a statement, said that Bahrain's attendance at the two-day summit follows an invitation by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

The summit, seen as a chance by EU diplomats to boost cooperation across the Mediterranean region, will discuss topics like security, trade, development and migration.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi will open the summit which also has on its agenda wars and conflicts in places such as Syria and Libya.

### Cross-border terrorism

The meeting will be co-chaired by Egyptian President and European Council President, Donald Tusk, who will represent the EU alongside European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker.

The summit will discuss the growing threats of cross-border terrorism and the efforts of the global coalition to counter the terrorist organisation ISIS.

On February 18, Sisi announced that the upcoming Arab-European summit will be a good platform to hold more discussions on the illegal migration file.

European leaders first mentioned the summit in Austria in September amid efforts to agree on ways to curb the illegal migration that has sharply divided the 28-nation bloc.

But checking migration is just part of Europe's broader strategy to forge a new alliance with its southern neighbours.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini insists that the gathering in Egypt of more than 40 heads of state and government is about much more than migration.

"We will have frank, open discussions, not only on migration, definitely not," Mogherini told



Sharm el Sheikh city hosts the first Arab-EU Summit



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa



Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission



Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi



British Prime Minister Theresa May



EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini



Donald Tusk, president of the European Council

journalists in Brussels on Monday.

"We will have first of all discussions on our economic cooperation, on our common region," she said.

"That is a troubled region but also full of opportunities."

Attending will be Donald Tusk, president of the European Council of EU member countries, and Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, the EU's executive arm.

### 25 European heads

EU officials said 25 European heads of state and government will attend.

These include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister Theresa May, Czech Republic Prime Minister Andrej Babiš and Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, who could also discuss the stalemate over Brexit on the sidelines.

Not attending are French President Emmanuel Macron and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, along with the leaders of Lithuania and Latvia, EU sources added.

Apart from Sisi, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri will attend from the 22-member Arab League, which is based in Cairo. It is not yet clear who else will be present.

A UN official warned that Europe's failure to bridge divisions on migration "risks blocking all the other discussions" at the summit.

"How do you discuss an issue if you can't even mention it!" the official said on condition of anonymity.

The EU has struck aid-for-cooperation agreements with Turkey and Libya's UN-backed government in Tripoli, which has sharply cut the flow of migrants since a 2015 peak.

Britain's Philip Hammond

said May would have an "opportunity" in Egypt to discuss Brexit with her EU counterparts who have balked at her requests for concessions to sell the divorce to her parliament.

But officials in Brussels and London have played down the prospect of a Brexit "deal in the desert" to try to ensure an orderly departure.

A senior British government official insisted May would not attempt to talk Brexit with fellow European leaders, more than 20 of whom are expected to attend.

"There are important shared challenges to discuss with the League of Arab States like security cooperation," the official told reporters.

Mogherini said Monday: "It has always looked strange to me that the European Union had summits with Latin America, with Africa, with Asia, and not with the Arab world that is our

first neighbour."

The most recent ministerial meeting, which brought to-

gether 10 EU and 15 Arab League foreign ministers, took place in Brussels on 4 February 2019.

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## Holistic approach to reduce stress

● Indian embassy launches yoga initiative to help labour community

TDT/Manama

Harpreet Kaur

Indian Embassy in Bahrain yesterday launched a new yoga initiative aimed at bringing wellness into workplaces to help workers deal with day-to-day stress.

The new initiative, a yoga-based approach is organised by the Indian embassy in association with the Art of Living and ICRF.

Explaining, Alok Kumar Sinha, the Indian Ambassador told *Tribune*, "The new project comes as a continuation of our efforts to enhance outreach with Indian Community members here as well as with the different sections of individuals and groups in the Kingdom."

"Apart from having a 24x7 helpline, we have started a new programme for the labourers to come to the embassy every Friday which also coincides with our open house."

The move, the Ambassador said, will help not only address their concerns but also allows us to spend time with them. "In the coming months, we will be developing our interactive session to assist them more effectively."

"Initially, we hope to start with 200 to 300 workers every month and as we move forward we would try to engage more and more workers."

"Moreover, the Art of Living and ICRF have agreed to work with us, as they have been actively working with the Indian workforce where we will jointly help them deal with their difficulties," Alok Sinha said.

According to Mehru Vesuvala, the General Secretary of ICRF, most of the workers and the labourers in the Kingdom are facing a lot of financial troubles which lead to problems like stress and depression. "We have also observed that the increasing number of suicides are due to the financial problems."

"Thus to tackle the increasing number of suicide and the problems among workers, we are taking a much more holistic approach to further help them before they take a hard and fast decision."



Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Dr Abdulhussain Mirza receiving Acting Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq Mohammad Adnan Mahmoud and praised the strong ties between the two countries in various fields. The minister gave a presentation on the achievements in the electricity, water and renewable energy sectors in Bahrain and the significant percentage achieved in achieving the national goals approved by the government. He also spoke of activating the use of sustainable energy and green environment programmes

## Sophia the Robot is here

TDT/Manama

Harpreet Kaur

Sophia, the world's most famous robot visited Bahrain yesterday where she interacted with many individuals, organisations and school students.

Attending the third Middle East and Africa FinTech Forum, Sophia spoke about the future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it will affect financial services where she was joined by her creator David Hanson, founder of Hanson Robotics.

David Hanson, founder of Hanson Robotics told *Tribune*, "It has been a wonderful experience visiting Bahrain along with Sophia, people in the Kingdom are extremely intelligent and hospitable and very thoughtful on where the world might go and how individuals are working together to shape the future."

"Sophia also seems to have experienced a warm reception and managed to develop a personal connection with people



Sophia the Robot in Bahrain."

"A country like Bahrain can make a big difference when the right insights applied as we do not necessarily need a huge number of people or a large nation to make a difference, a small nation can make a huge difference with the right ideas," David added.

Since her activation in 2016, Sophia has become an international celebrity. She has travelled the world and engaged in conversations about AI, robotics, and the future of the relationship between humanity and robots. In the last year, she has received her first pair of working legs and learned to sing and play the piano.

This is the first time that Sophia visited Bahrain, which is the latest in a series of firsts for Sophia.

# Bahrain, Thailand to boost jewellery sector

Bahraini delegation participates in Bangkok Gems and Jewellery Fair

TDT | Manama

Top businessmen from Bahrain are participating in the Bangkok Gems and Jewellery Fair that got off to a royal start with Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana opening the 63rd edition of the Fair.

Held by the Department of International Trade Promotion, Ministry of Commerce, the current edition kickstarted on Wednesday.

Bahraini delegation to fair comprises of Yathreb Nabeel AlAameri, House of H, Ahmed Abdulwahid Alkooheji, Kooheji Jewellers, Asif Mohammad Inoli and Mohammed Sarfraz of Dream Gold Jewellery, and Himalay Sanjay Rathod, Rama Jewellery.

Commenting on the expo, Thanis Na Song khla, Thailand ambassador to the Kingdom, said, "I do hope that the trade



Thanis Na Song khla

mission from Bahrain will accelerate Thai Jewellery export and help promote other related industries. I wish this event successful, particularly further strengthen the existing strong relationship between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Kingdom of Bahrain and its people."

Bangkok Gems & Jewellery Fair is in the top five of the world Jewellery Fair. Jewellery export of Thailand is the third



Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana at the event (Professional Jeweller)

largest of all Thai export production, bringing to Thailand about 23,000 million Bahts a year.

Organised on a biannual basis by Thailand's Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP), the Bangkok Gems & Jewellery Fair is regarded as a

significant trading arena where all key players in the global gems and jewellery business can achieve their purposes of sourcing, trading, networking.

Speaking during the opening ceremony, Chutima Boonyaprapatsorn, Deputy Commerce Minister said, "In 2018, export of gems and jewellery products including unwrought gold was worth 4.74pc of the country's total exports. The gems and jewellery industry is an industry that is highly successful in creating additional value to the country."

The Fair is also showcasing live demonstrations of gems and jewellery making from the Thai Goldsmiths Association ranging from wax carving, gems and jewellery engraving, enamel, fancy polishing, and jewellery finishing.



Bahraini delegates at the Bangkok Gems and Jewellery Fair

## BIGS attracts 20,000 visitors in two days

TDT | Manama

Around 20,000 people visited the Bahrain International Garden Show (BIGS) 2019 in its first two days.

The annual show is held under the auspices of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and with the support of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of HM the King and President of the Consultative Council for the National Initiative for Agricultural Development.

The show also attracted a large number of local and foreign exhibitors.

The College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman presented an overview of the university and its research activities at the show.

Khalasi Garden organised by a number of activities aimed at promoting agricultural awareness and education.

Agricultural workshops, educational and recreational activities such as making a garden



A stall at the show

scarecrow and mini-protected houses and drawing three-di-

mensional roses and fruits were held. It also displayed methods of extracting the natural colours of fruits and vegetables.

The Bahraini farmers' market attracted a large number of visitors who were briefed on their successful experiences.

This year's show is marked by the participation of a number of flower arrangement experts from Kuwait, the United Kingdom and Russia. A Japanese flower arrangement was presented in coordination with the Japanese embassy in Bahrain.

## Sangamam pays tribute to CRPF Martyrs

TDT | Manama

Sangamam Irinjalakuda held the inauguration of its 2019 executive committee at Bang Saeng Thai restaurant on Thursday evening. Chief Guest was SPAC Chairman P Unnikrishnan.

The meeting paid tribute to the martyrs of the Pulwama attack by lighting lamps.

The meeting also honoured Nissar Ashraf for his contribution to social causes by presenting him with a golden shawl. P Unnikrishnan was presented with a memento.

The newly inducted members are President - Venugopal PK, General Secretary - Unnikrishnan P, Treasurer Ashokan



The newly elected committee members with guests and officials during a group photo opportunity

Achangadan, Vice President Dileep Padmanabhan, Joint Secretary Sasikumar N, Entertainment Secretary Vijayan, Asst. Entertainment Secretary Vibin Chandran, Membership Secretary Joshi Ainikal, Asst. Treasurer Rudran T, Asst. Mem-

bership Secretary Sinto Jose, Service Secretary Hariprakash V.P. A 10 member ladies wing were elected. Ladies wing members are Convener Rajalekshmy Vijay, Rajitha Manoj - Joint Convener, Deepthi Satheesh, Krishnapriya Anand, Nimmy

Vikas, Simija Joshi, Jini Sinto, Swati Sujith, Liji Saajan and Lija Shaji.

Nissar Ashraf, TV Suresh, Sreedharan Thaivalappil and Jamal EA were elected as patrons of the executive committee.

# Hidden 'bomb' found in Dhaka fire

AFP | Dacca, Bangladesh

Mass funerals were held yesterday for victims of a devastating fire in Dhaka -- fuelled by illegally stored chemicals -- that killed nearly 70 people, as investigators revealed that an even bigger disaster was narrowly avoided.

Hundreds of chemical drums were found in the basement of one of five blocks engulfed by the inferno in the Bangladesh capital's historic Chawkbazar district.

"A huge bomb" would have gone off had the fire spread to the basement, according to Mehedi Hasan Ansary, a professor at an elite engineering university who is a member of an official probe committee.

"The impact would have been devastating," he said.

City authorities said 46 bodies from a disaster that saw victims burned alive by fireballs in the street have been identified and handed over to families for burial.

Many were from Noakhali district in southwest Bangladesh, where funerals were quickly organised in line with Muslim tradition.

Special prayers were also said at Friday prayers in mosques across the country.

Police forensic experts were brought in to carry out DNA tests on at least 21 other bodies burned beyond recognition.

The discovery of the huge



Bangladeshi firefighters inspect a burnt building after a fire tore through apartment blocks in Bangladesh's Dhaka

consignment of drums raised new fears about the extent of the deadly danger in storerooms across the labyrinthine Chawkbazar district.

"We were just lucky," said national fire chief Ali Ahmed.

"The whole neighbourhood would have been engulfed if the fire had reached the chemicals in the basement. It would have been like a bomb and the building would have collapsed," Ahmed told AFP.

## Hidden danger

The fire is believed to have

been started late Wednesday by a gas cylinder explosion which quickly spread to at least five buildings.

Victims were burned alive by exploding canisters that sent fireballs into the streets, smothering people in flames as they walked, rode in rickshaws or ate in local restaurants. Dozens were injured, including nine listed in critical condition.

The disaster was a repeat of a June 2010 fire in the nearby neighbourhood of Nimtoli in which 123 people were killed. Again a blaze ripped through

residential buildings that doubled as chemical warehouses.

While a criminal inquiry has been launched, authorities faced difficult questions over why action promised after the Nimtoli disaster was not carried out.

Dhaka Mayor Sayeed Khokon vowed to launch a new crackdown and move chemical warehouses from residential buildings to an industrial area outside the capital.

"We will sit with law enforcement agencies, do our homework and then launch the drive," he said.



Relatives of victims mourn after a fire tore through apartment blocks in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka



Rescue personnel carry the body of a victim

## Kim, Trump lookalikes commit to 'peace'

Hanoi, Vietnam

Heavily bronzed and freshly doppelganger says he has come to Hanoi to meet with a Kim Jong Un lookalike to end North Korea's nuclear ambitions, and maybe play a bit of golf.

"We're working toward peace. Through negotiations, with dialogue, we want to help North Korea of course," said Trump impersonator Russel White, in a sharp suit and blue tie.

White and Kim impersonator Howard X are in Hanoi days before a meeting between the real leaders of the United States and North Korea, who will hold a second summit in the Vietnamese capital on February 27-28.

Though the agenda for the planned summit has not been released, Howard X says he has a few aims for his pow-wow with the fake Trump.

"Hopefully he can overlook all my nuclear missiles and lift the sanctions," said the full-time impersonator, who also visited Singapore ahead of the leaders' meeting last year.

The men have a few non-official agenda items this week too -- maybe a massage parlour, a round of golf and hopefully a chance to try some of Hanoi's culinary delights.

Out of character, the pair say they can make good money as impersonators -- as long as Kim and Trump are in the news.



US President Donald Trump impersonator Russel White (L) and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un impersonator Howard X (R) pose together for photographs outside the Opera House in Hanoi

"The good thing for Kim is he's always doing something interesting, also Trump," said Howard X, who charges a minimum of \$3,500 for an appearance and says he once walked away with \$15,000 for a gig.

But the work can be burden-

some.

Howard X says it takes him three hours to perfect the Kim look: carefully manicured hair, thick black glasses and suits from a top tailor in Hong Kong where he is based.

Though he's mastered the

get-up, he's not entirely happy about it.

"Mr Kim please get a proper haircut, this s\*\*\*s," he said, standing on the steps of Hanoi's colonial-era Opera House with black-clad bodyguards and a swarm of media.

As for White, it only takes him 20 minutes to bronze his face -- excluding his under eyes -- and gel his blonde hair to look like the man he says is doing a great job.

"You're doing a difficult job, keep up the good work, we're going to make America great again," the full-time, Canadian-born impersonator said.



The pair say they are looking for a few more impersonators to complete their band of "tyrants", calling for any lookalikes of Russian leader Vladimir Putin, China's Xi Jinping or Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to come forward.

## Israel's first Moon mission blasts off

Washington, United States

An unmanned rocket took off from Cape Canaveral in Florida on Thursday night carrying Israel's Beresheet spacecraft, aiming to make history twice: as the first private-sector landing on the Moon, and the first from the Jewish state.

The 585-kilogram (1,290-pound) Beresheet, which means "Genesis" in Hebrew, lifted off at 8:45 pm (0145 GMT Friday) atop a

Falcon 9 rocket from the private US-based SpaceX company of entrepreneur Elon Musk.

Takeoff was followed live back in Israel, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu watching alongside engineers at the control center of Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

So far, only Russia, the United States and China have made the 384,000-kilometer (239,000-mile) journey and landed spacecraft on the Moon.

## 25 Indian tea workers killed by bootleg alcohol

Guwahati, India

Twenty-five members of a tribe of Indian tea-pickers, including 15 women, died within hours of drinking poisoned alcohol, police said yesterday.

The deaths in the northeastern state of Assam came less than two weeks after tainted liquor killed about 100 people in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand states.

All of the latest victims worked at the Salmora tea estate in Assam's Golaghat district. On top of the dead, dozens were being treated in two local hospitals.

Most of the patients com-

plained of severe vomiting and stomach pain.

"We tried our best but failed to save them," said Ganesh Bora, a senior doctor at the Jorhat Medical College hospital. They died within hours of consuming the bootleg alcohol.

"They bought the country liquor from a seller and consumed it on Thursday night, falling ill almost straight away," Dhiraj Das, a senior Golaghat district official, said.

Fifty-five people were taken to hospital after the alcohol was consumed, and many were already dead by the time they arrived.

## US charges two of El Chapo's sons with drug trafficking



Mexican drug baron Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman (File)

### New York, United States

Two sons of Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman -- both on the run in Mexico -- have been charged with drug trafficking by US authorities, the Department of Justice said Thursday.

Joaquin Guzman Lopez, 34, and 28-year-old Ovidio Guzman Lopez, were accused last year of conspiring to distribute cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine from Mexico and other countries into the US between 2008 and 2018.

The indictment was revealed Thursday, having only been unsealed last week to protect the investigation and witnesses.

If convicted, the pair face a minimum sentence of 20 years and up to life in prison.

"El Chapo" was earlier this month found guilty of trafficking over 130 tons of drugs into the US by a New York jury. Facing a mandatory sentence of life behind bars, which will be announced on June 25.

Another of his sons, Jesus Alfredo Guzman Salazar, was charged with several drug trafficking offenses in 2014 and remains on the DEA's 10 most wanted list.

Another son, Ivan Archivaldo Guzman Salazar, was also implicated in drug trafficking by Mexican authorities.

"El Chapo" has several children with different women. The youngest, seven-year-old twin girls, attended several of their father's court hearings and one day of his trial at a Brooklyn federal court alongside their mother, former beauty queen Emma Coronel.

# Family of IS teen to fight UK decision

### London, United Kingdom

The family of a London teenager who joined the Islamic State group in Syria said yesterday it would challenge the British government's decision to revoke her citizenship.

Shamima Begum travelled to Syria in 2015 aged just 15 but has now fled the crumbling "caliphate" and says she wants to come home, after giving birth in a refugee camp last weekend.

A letter to interior minister Sajid Javid written by Begum's sister Renu on behalf of her family also called on the government to help bring her newborn son to Britain.

The fate of the 19-year-old has triggered fierce debate in Britain, with the government telling her family this week that it was revoking her citizenship.

"We hope you understand our position in this respect and why we must, therefore, assist Shamima in challenging your decision to take away the one thing that is her only hope at rehabilitation, her British citizenship," the family's letter said.

Renu Begum's letter also asked Javid to help "in bringing my nephew home to us".

It said Shamima Begum's status would now be a matter for British courts to decide.

International law prevents a government from rendering a person stateless, but Britain reportedly believes that Begum also has Bangladeshi citizenship due to her parents, although she was born in Britain.

The Bangladeshi government said there was "no question" of her being allowed to enter, and there is legal argument about whether simply having Bangladeshi parents bestows citizenship.



Shamima Begum passing through security barriers at Gatwick Airport, south of London

Begum's baby was born before she was told of the decision to revoke her citizenship, and is therefore British and has a right to return.

The teenager said she was "shocked" by Britain's decision, saying "if you take that away from me, I don't have anything. I don't think they are allowed to do that."

She has mentioned the possibility of applying for citizenship in the Netherlands because her husband, an IS fighter believed to be held by Kurdish forces in Syria, is a Dutch national.

## China against forcefully sending aid to Venezuela

### Beijing, China

China said yesterday it was against forcefully sending "so-called humanitarian assistance" to Venezuela, warning it could spark conflict in the crisis-torn country.

China has loaned billions to Venezuela and has remained committed to President Nicolas Maduro even as the country has fallen deeper into economic crisis.

Foreign aid mostly from the US has piled up on Venezuela's borders as the Maduro government refuses to let it into the country.

"If the so-called humanitarian assistance were forcefully sent to Venezuela it might trigger conflict and lead to serious consequences," said China's foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang.

"China is against a military intervention in Venezuela and against any behaviour that might cause escalation or turmoil," he told reporters.

Opposition leader and self-declared interim president Juan Guaido has vowed to bring aid in from various points Saturday "one way or another" despite military efforts to block it.

## Michael Jackson estate sues HBO over documentary



US pop megastar Michael Jackson performing during his "Dangerous" tour.

### Los Angeles, United States

Michael Jackson's estate filed a \$100 million lawsuit against HBO on Thursday over plans to air a documentary that alleges the singer sexually abused two young boys.

The 53-page suit, filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, claims HBO was violating a "non-disparagement" agreement by airing "Leaving Neverland," which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival this year.

"Michael Jackson is innocent. Period," the suit says. "In 2005, Michael Jackson was subjected to a trial -- where rules of evidence and law were applied before a neutral judge and jury and where both sides were heard -- and he was exonerated by a sophisticated jury.

"Ten years after his passing, there are still those out to profit from his enormous worldwide success and take advantage of his eccentricities," it adds.

The four-hour, two-part documentary that is set to air

next month includes the testimonies of two men, Wade Robson and James Safechuck, who say the King of Pop sexually abused them when they were seven and 10.

In a statement, HBO said it planned to broadcast the documentary as scheduled.

"Despite the desperate lengths taken to undermine the film, our plans remain unchanged," the statement sent to AFP reads. "HBO will move forward with the airing of 'Leaving Neverland,' the two-part documentary on March 3rd and 4th.

The lawsuit contends that HBO in 1992 aired a concert in Bucharest from Jackson's "Dangerous" world tour and at the time signed non-disparagement provisions that prevent the streaming service from harming Jackson's reputation.

Jackson, who died on June 25, 2009 after being given an overdose of the anesthetic propofol, faced multiple allegations of child sex abuse during his lifetime.

## US military conducts observation flight over Russia

### Washington, United States

The US military is conducting a surveillance flight over Russia as part of an international agreement, the Pentagon said Thursday.

The flight falls under the Open Skies Treaty, an international accord aimed at promoting military transparency through reciprocal, unarmed observation flights over each

of the 34 signatory countries' terrains.

Due to tensions with Russia, this is the first Open Skies flight there since November 2017, Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jamie Davis said.

"Russia is aware of the flight," he said.

"Six Russian Federation observers are on board the US aircraft to monitor all phases of the flight."

## Russian rocket launches Egyptian telecom satellite

### Moscow, Russia

Russia successfully launched an Egyptian telecommunications satellite on Thursday, the Russian space agency Roskosmos announced.

A Soyuz rocket took off with the Egyptsat-A satellite at 1647 GMT from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan,

The satellite will take high-definition images of the

Earth's surface, Roskosmos said in a statement.

"The satellite has been placed in orbit, all is working well," space agency spokesman Vladimir Ostimenko said, according to the Russian RIA Novosti news agency.

In October a Soyuz rocket carrying a Russian and US astronaut failed just minutes after blast-off, forcing the pair to make an emergency landing.

## Google moves to fix YouTube glitch for child porn

### Washington, United States

Google-owned YouTube said Thursday it was taking action to close a loophole that enabled users to share comments and links on child pornography over the video-sharing service.

The response came after a YouTube creator this week revealed what he called a "wormhole" that allowed comments and connections on child porn alongside innocuous videos.

"Any content -- including comments -- that endangers minors is abhorrent and we have clear policies prohibiting this on YouTube," a spokesman said in an email.

"We took immediate action by deleting accounts and channels, reporting illegal activity to authorities and disabling comments on tens of millions of videos that include minors. There's more to be done, and we continue to work to improve and catch abuse more quickly."

The move came after Matt Watson, a YouTube creator with some 26,000 subscribers, re-



Representative picture (Courtesy of Verge)

vealed the workings of what he termed a "wormhole" into a pedophile ring that allowed users to trade social media contacts and links to child porn in YouTube comments.

Watson, who uses the name MattsWhatItIs, added that YouTube's recommendation algorithm "due to some kind of glitch is actually facilitating this."

Because ads automatically

appear with many YouTube videos, Watson said the actions of the company amounted to "monetizing" the exploitation.

The post by Watson sparked a series of news reports, and according to some media, boycotts of YouTube ads from major firms including Nestle and Disney.

AT&T, which owns the WarnerMedia entertainment unit, confirmed it was pulling

its ads from the service.

"Until Google can protect our brand from offensive content of any kind, we are removing all advertising from YouTube," AT&T said in a statement to AFP.

Epic Games, known for its popular online game Fortnite, said it was suspending ads on YouTube following the news.

"We have paused all pre-roll advertising" on YouTube, a company spokesman said.

"Through our advertising agency, we have reached out to Google/YouTube to determine actions they'll take to eliminate this type of content from their service."

The glitch appeared to allow some users to circumvent bans on child porn by Google and other internet platforms.

The incident raised fears of a fresh "brand safety" crisis for YouTube, which lost advertisers last year following revelations that messages appeared on channels promoting conspiracy theories, white nationalism and other objectionable content.

## Hayabusa2 lands on asteroid



Researchers and employees pose for a picture in a control room of the Hayabusa2 mission in Sagami-hara, after the touchdown of the probe on an asteroid

Tokyo, Japan

A Japanese probe sent to collect samples from an asteroid 300 million kilometres away for clues about the origin of life and the solar system landed successfully yesterday, scientists said.

Hayabusa2 touched down briefly on the Ryugu asteroid, fired a bullet into the surface to puff up dust for collection and blasted back to its holding position, said officials from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

A live webcast of the control room showed dozens of JAXA staff members nervously monitoring data ahead of the touchdown before exploding into applause after receiving a signal from Hayabusa2 that it had landed.

"We made a successful touchdown, including firing a bullet" into the Ryugu asteroid, Yuichi Tsuda, Hayabusa2 project manager, told reporters.

"We made the ideal touchdown in the best conditions," he said.

The complicated procedure took less time than expected and appeared to go without a hitch, said Hayabusa2 mission manager Makoto Yoshikawa.

"I'm really relieved now. It felt very long until the moment the touchdown happened," he said.

He said the firing of the bullet -- the first of three planned in this mission -- "will lead to a leap, or new discoveries, in planetary science."

The asteroid is thought to contain relatively large amounts of organic matter and water from some 4.6 billion years ago when the solar system was born.

During a later mission, Hayabusa2 will eventually fire an "impactor" to blast out material from underneath Ryugu's surface, allowing the collection of "fresh" materials unexposed to millennia of wind and radiation.

# Syria evacuates women, children from IS holdout

Omar oil field, Syria

US-backed fighters trucked out civilians from the last speck of the Islamic State group's dying "caliphate" in Syria yesterday, eager to press on with the dragging battle to crush the jihadists.

More than four years after IS overran large parts of Syria and neighbouring Iraq, and declared a "caliphate", they have lost all of it but a tiny patch in the village of Baghouz near the Iraqi border.

Almost 30 trucks carrying men, women and children left the enclave on Friday, AFP correspondents at a position of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces outside the village reported.

Most were women and children, their clothes caked in dust, but the passengers also

included men with their faces wrapped in chequered scarves.

Women clung to the railings of the trucks, while the hair of younger girls flew in the wind, as they left the enclave in the second such large-scale evacuation in three days.

Earlier on Friday, SDF spokesman Mustafa Bali said he hoped civilian evacuations could be completed by Saturday.

Fellow SDF spokesman Adnan Afrin said once the evacuations had ended, his forces would expel the last jihadists from the less than half a square kilometre (a fifth of a square mile) they still hold.

"When the civilians leave, we will see how many civilians and IS fighters remain inside and what they want to do," he said.

"They will be faced with a choice:

war or surrender."

The SDF evacuated 3,000 people from the IS pocket on Wednesday -- mostly women and children -- but trucks left near empty on Thursday.

Bali said that screening had determined that most of those evacuated on Wednesday were foreigners.

"The majority are Iraqi and from countries of the former Soviet Union, but there are also Europeans among them," he said.

David Eubank, the leader of the Free Burma Rangers volunteer aid group, said the women and children trucked out were "very hungry and dirty".

They included "many French women", as well as others from Australia, Austria, Germany and Russia, and one woman from Britain,

he told AFP.

Human Rights Watch urged the SDF and the US-led coalition supporting it to make protecting civilians a priority.

"Civilians leaving Baghouz is a relief but it should not obscure the fact that this battle appears to have been waged without sufficient consideration to their wellbeing," the New York-based watchdog's counterterrorism director, Nadim Houry said.

"Just because they may be families of ISIS members or sympathised with them does not take away their protected status," he said, using an alternative acronym for IS.

Beyond Baghouz, IS retains a presence in the vast, virtually unpopulated Syrian Desert and sleeper cells elsewhere, and continues to claim deadly attacks inside SDF-held territory.



11-year-old Syrian girl Rawan poses on a destroyed tank with her stuffed bear near the village of Yazi Bagh, about six kilometres from the Bab al-Salamah border crossing between Syria and Turkey in the north of Aleppo province,

## Giant tortoise thought extinct is found on Galapagos



A specimen of the giant Galapagos tortoise *Chelonoidis phantasticus*, thought to have gone extinct about a century ago, is seen at the Galapagos National Park on Santa Cruz Island in the Galapagos Archipelago, in the Pacific Ocean 1000 km off the coast of Ecuador

Quito, Ecuador

Conservationists in the Galapagos Islands have found a giant tortoise from a species thought to have become extinct more than a century ago.

The adult female tortoise was found on the island of Fernandina in the west of the Pacific archipelago, and is believed to be a Fernandina Giant Tortoise, also known as *Chelonoidis phantasticus*, a species last sighted in 1906.

The tortoise is believed to be about 100 years old. It was taken by boat to the main Galapagos conservation center on Santa Cruz island.

The animal "exceeds 100 years" in age and is "a very old tortoise," said Washington Tapia of Galapagos Conservancy, a US non-profit dedicated to conserving the Galapagos.

The islands are best known for their unique flora and fauna, which inspired naturalist Charles Darwin to write his landmark 1859 study on evolution, *The Origin of Species*.

Ecuador's Environment Minister Marcelo Mata announced on Twitter the discovery of a specimen "of the tortoise species *Chelonoidis phantasticus*, which was believed to have gone extinct more than 100 years ago."

A ministry statement said conservationists were hopeful other members of the species were on the island, judging by tracks and spores they found.

Genetic tests will be carried out to confirm the tortoise was indeed a member of the long-lost species, it said.

The *Chelonoidis phantasticus*



One of 15 known species of giant tortoises in the Galapagos, at least two of which have already vanished

species is native to Fernandina, which is uninhabited, topped by an active volcano, and one of the youngest islands in the chain.

It is one of 15 known species of giant tortoises in the Galapagos, at least two of which have already vanished.

Any remaining Fernandina tortoises may be separated from each other by recent lava flows, researchers said.

In 2015, the Galapagos authorities announced the discovery

of a new species of tortoise that they called *Chelonoidis donfaustoi*, named after Fausto Llerena, the park ranger who for 40 years looked after Lonesome George, the iconic last tortoise of his Pinta species, who died in 2012.

George became an icon of the islands, 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) off the coast of South America.

Scientists tried to save George's species by breeding him with females from a related species, but their eggs failed to hatch. After his death, his body was stuffed and is currently displayed at the Charles Darwin Research Center in the Galapagos.

Giant tortoises are believed to have arrived on the remote volcanic island chain about three to four million years ago, borne by ocean currents. With no natural predators, they spread across the islands and split into different species.

Their numbers were decimated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by sailors who took advantage of their ability to endure long periods without food or water to use them as easily stored fresh meat on Pacific voyages.

Their numbers were also hit by invasive species such as rats, pigs and dogs, which eat their eggs, while other introduced domestic animals like goats destroyed their habitat.

In captivity, the giant tortoises can easily live to more than 100 years. Scientists have discovered that the tortoises have genetic variants linked to DNA repair, with healing power that extends their longevity.

# SOCIETY



All four Rotary clubs in Bahrain jointly organised the 114th year Anniversary of Rotary International at the Le Med restaurant in the Ritz Carlton Hotel on Wednesday. The clubs involved in organising the event were Rotary club of Manama, Rotary club of Sulaymaniyah, Rotary club of Doha and Rotary club of Bahrain which includes Rotary members and their guests.



The budding writers of the primary wing of the New Millennium School, DPS Bahrain, launched their second book titled, 'A collection of stories and poems'. The book is a compilation of 162 short stories and poems in English and Hindi, penned down by the little authors of Kindergarten to Grade V. Chairman, Dr. Ravi Pillai and Managing Director, Geetha Pillai congratulated Principal Arun Kumar Sharma, students, teachers and parents for their hard work and beautiful creation.



The New Horizon School celebrated their Annual Sports Day at its Jannusan premises where over 1900 children participated to uphold the theme of 'Participation is Winning in Itself'. Principal Jose highlighted health as more valuable than all the other points. Saturn House was adjudged the First Place holder for the March Past and for the Drill Display Grade 3 won the first place. In the Kindergarten section, JKG Jannusan Branch won the first place. Dr. Mariya Marinowa, Director, Programs & Services Consultant, Head of Employment Riffa Centre, Employment Director, MOL and Geethalakshmy were the Guests of Honour.



On the eve of their 3rd anniversary Bahrain Tamils (BTUS) conducted blood donation camp under the patronage of King Hamad University Hospital on 22nd February 2019 at The Indian club. 150 donors participated.

# Society



Adliya, Rotary club of Adliya and Rotaract club of Bahrain. The social evening was a long night of an open buffet dinner, international mix of music, dancing, raffle draw with prizes and concluded with a cake cutting. Over one hundred and ten people attended



Indian Fraternity Forum, Bahrain organised a workshop on Artificial Intelligence titled "An intelligence fusion : man, machine, profession and values" at Al Eslah Auditorium, Muharraq. Ameen Al Tajer, MD of Infinetware and a well known AI specialist was the resource speaker. Professionals and entrepreneurs of various streams from Indian expatriate community were attended. Key note address was given by the president, Jamal Mohiyudheen.



Sessions in life. The overall Championship Trophy was won by Jupiter House with 233. Sultanah QA of White Palm and Reem Al Dhaen were the Chief Guests . Muna AbdIqader,



Princess Al Jawhara Al Ibrahim Centre For Molecular Medicine, Genetics and Inherited Disorders (ACMID) in the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) launched the activities of the National Rare Diseases Campaign, which is organised for the seventh consecutive year, in line with the international campaign to raise awareness on rare diseases, annually held in the month of February.



# business

## Sri Lanka economic growth slowest in 17 yrs - central bank

Colombo, Sri Lanka

A political crisis in Sri Lanka last year led to the slowest economic expansion in 17 years, the central bank said yesterday.

Growth for 2018 was cut from a forecast above 5.0 per cent to about 3.0pc because of damage to the economy from a conflict between the president and prime minister, Central Bank of Sri Lanka governor Indrajith Coomaraswamy said.

President Maithripala Sirisena sacked Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in October and dissolved parliament even though he did not have a majority to back the move. The showdown was only ended by the Supreme Court in December when it held that Sirisena's actions were unconstitutional and illegal.

The bank governor said he expected better growth in 2019 as the outflow of foreign capital had reversed.

"All in all, we are in a better place this year," he said, warning however that there could be fiscal slippage because the government was likely to offer sweeteners to the people during a presidential election this year.

Coomaraswamy noted that Sri Lanka's Supreme Court had demonstrated its independence underscoring that key institutions functioned despite the crisis.



Central Bank of Sri Lanka governor Indrajith Coomaraswamy

"Our systems stood up very well in the last few months," Coomaraswamy told reporters. "But businessmen have concerns about political stability."

During the crisis, three international credit rating agencies downgraded the country's debt, making it more expensive to borrow abroad.

Sri Lanka had to abandon plans to raise loans abroad. An International Monetary Fund programme was also suspended, though the government has opened talks to revive the three-year \$1.5 billion bail-out which began in 2016.

The 2018 growth compares with 3.1pc in 2017 when the country faced the twin effects of a major drought followed by floods that killed more than 210 people.

## Baidu profit falls but revenue beats expectations

Shanghai, China

Leading Chinese internet search provider Baidu has announced a 50 per cent plunge in net profit for the fourth quarter but revenue beat expectations on growth in its core search business and a push into artificial intelligence (AI).

The Beijing-based, Nasdaq-listed company said late Thursday its fourth-quarter profit came in at 2.08 billion yuan (\$303 million) in the October-December period.

Earnings were hit by loss-

es stemming from non-controlling interests in Baidu's video unit iQiyi, which was spun off last year, and continued investments into new fields. But total revenues for the quarter were a better-than-expected 27.2 billion yuan, beating analyst estimates and Baidu's own projections.

"The diversification of Baidu's business from mobile internet into the smart home, smart transportation, cloud and autonomous driving markets will require heavy investments," Chief Financial Officer Herman Yu said.

## Mexico says fuel theft down 72 pc

Mexico City, Mexico

Mexico said on Thursday that theft of state fuel has been reduced by 72 percent since it launched a strategy to combat the crime at the end of last year.

"If we continue like this we could save around 50 billion pesos (\$2.6 billion)," said President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. Octavio Romero, the director of state oil company Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex), said 7.8bn pesos had been saved between Dec 21 and February 19.

## France sees no health reason for Nutella output stop

Paris, France

French authorities said yesterday that there appeared to be no health risks behind the decision to halt production of Nutella at a plant in Normandy, the world's largest factory making the prized chocolate-and-hazelnut spread.

Nutella's Italian owner Ferrero, whose products also include Ferrero Rocher chocolates, on Wednesday said it had suspended production at the site as a precautionary measure.

"As far as I am aware at the moment, there is no health problem," French Agriculture Minister Didier Guillaume told

CNews. "From what I know, this is an economic problem."

The Villers-Ecalles site in Normandy produces around 600,000 jars a day, or about a quarter of all the Nutella made worldwide.

Ferrero's France affiliate said it had discovered a quality defect in one of the ingredients used for making Nutella as well as Kinder Bueno candy bars.

The manufacturer said the defect was not related to its standards of quality. "For now, we can say no products currently on the market are impacted by the situation and that the supply to our customers continues without interruption," the company said.

# The Coal Confusion

Australia, China deny ban on coal imports amid tensions

● Industry experts have noted recently that China appeared to be delaying customs clearances for Australian coking coal

● Canberra and Beijing have sparred diplomatically in recent months over the 5G ban

Sydney, Australia

China and Australia yesterday denied reports Australian coal was being blocked from entering the Asian country, with Canberra seeking to quell fears that worsening diplomatic tensions are damaging the nations' crucial trading relationship.

Industry experts have noted recently that China appeared to be delaying customs clearances for Australian coking coal used in steel-making, but a report late Thursday that ports in the northern city of Dalian had banned the shipments sent the Aussie dollar plunging.

China is Australia's biggest trading partner and coal is the resource-rich country's most valuable export.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said reports of a ban in Dalian were "false".

"Chinese ports are receiving coal import declarations from all countries including Australia," Geng said at a regular briefing.

The spokesman said Chinese customs have stepped up efforts to analyse and monitor the quality and safety of imported coal in recent years because the product sometimes fails to meet environmental standards.

"The purpose is to better safeguard Chinese importers' rights and interests and better protect the environment," Geng said.

Australian Trade Minister Simon Birmingham said there was "no basis to believe that there is a ban" on Australian imports.



Chinese workers taking samples of imported coal at a port in Rizhao. (Courtesy of The Sydney Morning Herald)



Reports of a ban in Dalian were "false"/ Chinese ports are receiving coal import declarations from all countries including Australia

GENG SHUANG  
CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

"We believe and understand that these are simple import quotas, consistent with what China has applied before and continues to apply and apply equally to all countries," Birmingham told reporters.

"This is not the first occasion where Australian coal exports to China have slowed in terms of the pace at which they are processed or assessed and let into the country... It is unlikely and unhelpful to try to conflate other unrelated issues."

He added that officials were seeking reassurances from Beijing that Australia was not the only country being targeted.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said earlier that regulatory rather than political issues were at play and stressed there was "no evidence" any hold-up of imports was related to other issues between the two nations.

There has been speculation about whether the delays have been about addressing domestic pressures, or retribution over Canberra's decision to ban Chinese communications giant Huawei's 5G equipment over security risks.

Canberra and Beijing have sparred diplomatically in recent months over the 5G ban, China's growing drive to increase

its influence in the Pacific and the expulsion of a Chinese billionaire who donated to local political parties.

'Knee-jerk headlines' Australian central bank governor Philip Lowe said Friday it would be "concerning" if the diplomatic spats were spilling into the trading arena, but added that it would be prudent to "wait and see" what the motivations were behind the Chinese actions.

Lowe, echoing analysts, said it was also important to note that the current amount of coal reportedly blocked by Dalian was small.

Coal shipped from Australia to Dalian accounts for about 10 percent of Australia's exports of the commodity to China, and only two percent of overall exports.

Westpac senior currency strategist Sean Callow told AFP that while the Australian dollar dropped one percent to 70.90 US cents following the initial reports Thursday, the market was calmer early Friday.

"Those knee-jerk headlines of 'Australia's number-one export destination has a ban on Australia's number-one export' were enough to knock the Aussie lower," Callow said.



Sweets move down the line at Ferrero's hometown plant in Alba, Italy. (Courtesy of Forbes)



The Ferrero group, with 30,000 employees and 22 production sites around the globe, also makes Kinder surprise eggs and chocolate bars as well as Tic Tac mints

# In tiny Moldova, voters choose between Russia and Europe



A civil activist from "Occupy Guguta" NGO argues with supporters of Moldova's parliamentary candidate Ilan Shor, businessman, leader of his self-named party and the mayor of the town of Orhei, as he distributes electoral leaflets in Orhei



Moldova's parliamentary candidate Ilan Shor, businessman, leader of his self-named party and the mayor of the town of Orhei, is welcomed by girls wearing traditional outfits



Volunteers of Action and Solidarity Party (PAS) Party distribute electoral leaflets in Chisinau

AFP | Chisinau, Moldova

*Wedged between Ukraine and Romania, Moldova has struggled to find its place since gaining independence with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union*

Voters in Moldova head to the polls tomorrow for a parliamentary election reflecting the tiny ex-Soviet republic's long-standing division between pro-Russians and pro-Europeans.

Wedged between Ukraine and Romania, Moldova has struggled to find its place since gaining independence with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

While many in the country of 3.5 million want to maintain close ties with Moscow, others want to follow the example of Romania -- with which Moldova shares a language and long history -- and look west to the European Union.

Sunday's vote is shaping up as a three-way race between the pro-Russian Socialist party of President Igor Dodon, the ruling Democratic party and a pro-Eu-

ropean alliance.

It will be held under a new electoral system that divides the 101-seat parliament into seats elected by party lists and by individual constituencies.

Dodon's pro-Moscow party is leading in the polls, advocating for Moldova to join Russia's Eurasian Economic Union over the EU.

The alliance of pro-European parties, which favours joining the EU and NATO, comes second. In third place is the centre-left Democratic Party led by powerful oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc, which holds a majority in the current parliament and leads the government. It has pursued a balanced approach between Moscow and Brussels.

Campaign posters in Russian and Romanian hang over a flea market in the capital Chisinau, where volunteers from all parties were handing out leaflets to

passersby this week.

At a stand of the pro-EU ACUM alliance of parties, campaigner Ruslan Verbitchi told AFP that Moldova has two major problems: "Endemic corruption and the violation of human rights."

Voters, however, showed little enthusiasm for the polls. With corruption widespread and the country among the poorest in Europe, few have much trust in Moldova's politicians.

**'All liars and thieves'**

"They are all liars and thieves," said Tatiana, a 60-year-old former factory worker, complaining of a pension of less than 50 euros per month.

"How can you live on that?" Macar Nakhirnaec, a 23-year-old NGO worker, said it has hardly surprising that voters had little faith.

"Moldova's democracy is getting worse. People who were

convicted by a court will get to parliament," said Nakhirnaec.

Many cited the example of businessman Ilan Shor, who was convicted in a billion-dollar fraud case dubbed Moldova's "crime of the century" and is likely to make it into parliament.

Shor remains free pending an appeal, but critics say the fact that he is allowed to stand despite his conviction is a damning indictment of Moldova's political system.

Analysts fear a new period of instability for the country after the vote, with no party likely to gain the majority needed to form a government.

"With political apathy and distrust of politicians, there is a risk of weak participation," said Igor Botan, the director of the ADEPT think tank.

Moldova signed an association agreement with the EU in 2014, but last year Brussels reduced its financial aid to the country

citing a "deterioration of the rule of law".

Russia has meanwhile rallied Dodon, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin.

"Of course, Russia is not indifferent to the formation of the Moldovan parliament," Putin said after a meeting with Dodon in Moscow last month.

As well as seeking to keep Moldova in its sphere of influence, Moscow has long backed separatists in the country's Russian-speaking breakaway region of Transnistria.

Russian Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev has warned that the West could be seeking to stoke divisions in Moldova, pointing to the pro-EU revolution in Ukraine that ousted a Moscow-backed leader.

The West, he said, could "push Moldovan society towards division and conflict... We have already seen this in Ukraine in 2014."

## BMW, Daimler to invest 1 bn euros in joint carsharing scheme

Berlin, Germany

German auto giants BMW and Daimler said yesterday they would invest one billion euros (\$1.1 billion) in combining and extending their carsharing schemes DriveNow and Car2Go, in future offering a slew of "mobility services", including for electric cars.

"We are pooling the strength and expertise of 14 successful brands and investing more than one billion euros to establish a new player in the fast-growing market for urban mobility," Dieter Zetsche, chief executive of Mercedes-Benz maker Daimler said in a statement.

The two high-end manufacturers will organise their "mobility" businesses around five joint ventures.

Customers will be able to book



**BMW and Daimler's carsharing and other services like Park Now or MyTaxi today boast a combined 60 million customers**



(From Left) The CEO of Park now Joerg Reimann, CEO of Free Now Marc Berg, CEO of German carmaker BMW Harald Krueger, CEO of German auto giant Daimler AG Dieter Zetsche, CEO of Reach Now Daniela Gerd and CEO of Share Now Oliver Reppert pose on stage with the thumbs up after BMW and Daimler AG presented the merger of their car sharing activities

shared cars, hail rides from taxis and chauffeur services, find and pay for parking spots and elec-

tric car charging points and plan "multimodal" journeys -- pulling in alternatives like public trans-

port and bike rentals.

All five strands will follow BMW's naming scheme with ti-

tles like Park Now and Charge Now.

"These five services will merge ever more closely to form a single mobility service portfolio," BMW CEO Harald Krueger said.

Still further in the future, the two firms will offer "an all-electric, self-driving fleet of vehicles that charge and park autonomously and interconnect with other modes of transport," he added.

BMW and Daimler's carsharing and other services like Park Now or MyTaxi today boast a combined 60 million customers, the companies said.

The new joint venture will be based in German capital and tech industry hub Berlin, and create "up to 1,000" jobs worldwide, they added.

# Global equities mostly climb



Colombia's President Ivan Duque Marquez talks ahead of the closing bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE)

## London, United Kingdom

European stock markets advanced yesterday, as investors cautiously awaited news from US-China trade talks in Washington, dealers said.

Nearing the half-way point, London's benchmark FTSE 100 shares index rose by half a percent, while the Frankfurt DAX 30 and the Paris CAC 40 gained 0.6 percent and 0.3 percent respectively.

Asian indices mostly increased, despite losses on Wall Street, as US economic concerns were eclipsed by hopes that high-level talks between the United States and China would seal a trade war truce.

However, many investors held fire for the moment, though some reports suggest the two are heading towards an eventual deal.

"Global equities saw some modest gains... as investors await results from the Sino-US trade talks," noted Oanda analyst

Dean Popplewell.

"Will we get some concrete news or perhaps an announcement of an extension of the March 1 deadline for implementing further US tariffs?"

And with the March deadline approaching, US President Donald Trump will meet with China's top negotiator and Xi Jinping's top economics envoy, Liu He, on Friday.

## No 'meaningful' deal?

The Economist Intelligence

## Key figures around 1200 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	▲ 0.5 pc at 7,202.34 points
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▲ 0.6 pc at 11,486.88
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ 0.3 pc at 5,211.31
EURO STOXX 50:	▲ 0.3 pc at 3,273.04
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▼ 0.2 pc at 21,425.51 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▲ 0.7 pc at 28,816.30 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 1.9 pc at 2,804.23 (close)
New York - Dow:	▼ 0.4 pc at 25,850.63 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.1339 from \$1.1336 at 2200 GMT
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.3018 from \$1.3043
Euro/pound:	▲ at 87.11 pence from 86.92 pence
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 110.87 yen from 110.70 yen
Oil - Brent Crude:	▲ 42 cents at \$67.49 per barrel
Oil - West Texas Inter:	▲ 30 cents at \$57.26

Unit (EIU) meanwhile forecast that the two sides will make "some progress" -- but will unlikely clinch a "meaningful" deal.

"The likelihood that the US and China will make some progress in the ongoing trade talks has increased as a result of mounting domestic pressure in both economies," noted EIU global economist Cailin Birch in a report.

"Nonetheless, we do not expect a meaningful agreement, as the US and China enter into a strategic competition for economic -- and particularly technological -- dominance."

The EIU added that, in its view, any deal would there-

fore only provide "temporary relief" from trade tensions.

The lack of information on the crunch talks led dealers in New York to take their cue from figures showing home sales at a three-year low, while sales of durable goods missed expectations.

All three main indices on Wall Street finished in the red on Thursday.

On currency markets, the dollar held gains against most other currencies as the soft US data sparked a shift by investors towards the safer option, while the pound remains under pressure from ongoing Brexit uncertainty.

## FAO warns food supply threatened by declining biodiversity

Rome, Italy

The UN food agency yesterday warned about the threat to the future of the world's food production from a lack of biodiversity in the environment.

In a report, the first of its kind by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), it said there was "mounting evidence that the biodiversity that underpins our food systems, at all levels, is declining around the world."

That is putting food production and the environment "under severe threat," the FAO warned.

"Once lost, plant, animal and micro-organisms species that are critical to our food systems, cannot be recovered."

Biodiversity enables agriculture systems to be more resilient to shocks such as disease and pest outbreaks, as well as coping with climate change.

The report cited as examples the dramatic fall in food production from infestations such as the potato blight in Ireland in the 1840s and the losses of the tropical taro plant in Samoa in the 1990s.

The FAO says the drivers for biodiversity loss include changes in land and water use and management, pollution and overharvesting.

Protecting the world's food supply is critical as an estimated 821 million people already suffer from chronic hunger, and by 2050 the plant's population is expected to rise from 7.7 billion to close to 10 billion, according to UN data.

## US farmers receive \$7.7 billion in trade aid to date: USDA

Reuters | Washington

US Department of Agriculture has paid out \$7.7 billion so far to farmers, William Northey, Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation, said.

President Donald Trump has pledged up to \$12 billion in aid to help offset losses for crops hit by retaliatory Chinese tariffs imposed in response to Washington's tariffs on Chinese goods.

## EU raises crisis aid ceiling for farmers

Brussels, Belgium

The European Commission said it would lift the ceiling on aid EU member states can pay out to their farmers without special authorisation.

The limit on the sum governments will be able to pay out per farmer in times of crisis will rise to 25,000 euros (\$28,400) over three years, up from the current 15,000 euros, said EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan.

"We have had many examples over the last number of years where we felt that the state aid

rules were not generous enough in helping member states deal with crisis in their country from time to time," he said.

The new ceiling comes into force in March, he said.

However, limits on the total amount member states can pay out to their agriculture sector will remain in place.

Hogan said the new measure "struck a balance" between the need for more capacity to help farmers in need, and any danger of distorting competition with excessive subsidies.



Representative picture

## Ford probing possible problems with fuel economy, emissions tests

Reuters | Detroit

Ford Motor Co said on Thursday it has hired outside experts to investigate its vehicle fuel economy and testing procedures after employees raised concerns, and did not know whether it would have to correct data provided to regulators or consumers.

The issues involving Ford's testing processes do not involve the use of so-called defeat devices - hardware and software designed deliberately to deceive government emissions tests, Kimberly Pittel, Ford's group vice president for sustainability, environment and safety engineering, told Reuters.

The automaker since last fall has been investigating concerns raised by employees that incorrect calculations were used to translate test results into the mileage and emissions data submitted to regulators, Pittel said.

## Pinterest files confidentially for stock listing: report

San Francisco, United States

Pinterest, the online "visual discovery" service which claims some 250 million users, has filed confidentially for a stock market listing, *The Wall Street Journal* reported Thursday.

The report said San Francisco-based Pinterest would seek a valuation of at least \$12 billion, joining the ranks of richly valued venture-backed tech firms hitting the public markets.

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

It allows users to share such images, although it does not call itself a social network. It also enables users to link to online shopping and other ser-

vices to find items they have "pinned."

Pinterest brings in money from its role in online shopping and from advertising, but has shared few details regarding how well those efforts have been paying off.

According to the *Journal*, the company is seeking a late June listing that would be underwritten by Goldman Sachs and JP-Morgan Chase.

Pinterest declined to comment on the report.

A 2012 law allows some firms to file confidentially, a change aimed at allowing startups to begin the process of raising capital before releasing detailed financial information.

Other venture-backed tech firms worth more than \$1 billion, sometimes called "unicorns," that are expected to launch initial public offerings (IPOs) this year include ridesharing firms

Uber and Lyft, and the workplace messaging startup Slack.

CEO Ben Silbermann worked at Google before founding Pinterest.

According to research firm eMarketer, Pinterest will take in less than one percent of US online ad spending but reaches nearly 40 per cent of US social network users.

"Pinterest's IPO is definitely one to watch in the coming months," said eMarketer analyst Andrew Lipsman.

"As the first major digital media platform to hit the markets since Snap, the industry will be watching closely to see if it can withstand scrutiny as a public company."

Lipsman added that Pinterest "has a strong argument to make as an advertising platform because of its visual nature and the aspirational way in which users engage."



Ben Silbermann

## SHOW

## OASIS JUFFAIR

**1-FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY (15+) (DRAMA/COMEDY/BIOGRAPHY) NEW**

⊕ DWAYNE JOHNSON, FLORENCE PUGH, JACK LOWDEN  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 5.00 + 9.30 PM

DAILY AT (VIP): 10.45 AM + 3.30 + 8.15 PM

**2-TOTAL DHAMAAL (PG-13) (HINDI/COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW**

⊕ AJAY DEVGN, MADHURI DIXIT, ANIL KAPOOR  
FROM THURSDAY 21ST 7.00 PM ONWARDS  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN

**3-THE KNIGHT OF SHADOWS: BETWEEN YIN AND YANG (PG-13) (ACTION/COMEDY/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ JACKIE CHAN, ELANE ZHONG, ETHAN JUAN  
DAILY AT: 2.45 + 7.15 + 11.45 PM

**4-KIKORIKI. DEJAVU (G) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY) NEW**

⊕ DENIS CHERNOV, JEFFREY HYLTON  
DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 10.45 AM + 2.45 PM

**5-JUNE (PG-13) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ JOJU GEORGE, RAJISHA VIJAYAN, SARJANO KHALID, ARJUN ASOKAN  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM

**6-KODATHI SMAKSHAM BALAN VAKEEL (PG-13) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ DILEEP, MAMTA MOHANDAS, PRIYA ANAND  
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 2.15 + 5.15 + 8.15 + 11.15 PM

**7-ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/ROMANTIC)**

⊕ ROSA SALAZAR, CHRISTOPH WALTZ, JENNIFER CONNELLY  
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

DAILY AT (VIP): 1.00 + 5.45 + 10.30 PM

**8-GULLY BOY (PG-15) (HINDI/DRAMA/MUSICAL)**

⊕ ALIA BHAT, RANVEER SINGH, SIDDHANT CHATURVEDI  
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

**9-THE LEGO MOVIE 2 (G) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**

⊕ CHRIS PRATT, ELIZABETH BANKS, WILL ARNETT  
DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 12.30 + 4.30 + 9.00 PM

**10-SPIDER MAN INTO THE SPIDER VERSE (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ HAILEE STEINFELD, NICOLAS CAGE, MAHERSHALA ALI  
DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 6.45 + 11.15 PM

**11-URI: THE SURGICAL STRIKE (15+) (HINDI/ACTION/DRAMA)**

⊕ VICKY KAUSHAL, KIRTI KULHARI, PARESH RAWAL  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 3.45 + 9.00 PM

**12-KUMBALANGI NIGHT (PG-13) (MALAYALAM)**

⊕ FAHADH FAASIL, SHANE NIGAM, SOUBIN SHAHIR  
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 5.45 + 8.45 + 11.45 PM

**13-9 (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)**

⊕ PRITHVIRAJ SUKUMARAN, PRAKASH RAJ, MAMTA MOHANDAS  
DAILY AT: 2.00 + 8.00 PM

**14-PERANBU (PG-15) (TAMIL)**

⊕ MAMMOOTTY, SADHANA, ANJALI  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 5.00 + 11.00 PM

## CITYCENTRE

**1-FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY (15+) (DRAMA/COMEDY/BIOGRAPHY) NEW**

⊕ DWAYNE JOHNSON, FLORENCE PUGH, JACK LOWDEN  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 PM + 12.00 MN + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)

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

**2-TOTAL DHAMAAL (PG-13) (HINDI/COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW**

⊕ AJAY DEVGN, MADHURI DIXIT, ANIL KAPOOR  
FROM THURSDAY 21ST 7.00 PM ONWARDS  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN

**3-DUMPLIN (15+) (COMEDY/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ DANIELLE MACDONALD, JENNIFER ANISTON, LUKE BENWARD  
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM

**4-UPGRADE (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW**

⊕ LOGAN MARSHALL-GREEN, RICHARD ANASTASIOS, ROSCO CAMPBELL  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 + 5.00 + 7.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM

**5-THE KNIGHT OF SHADOWS: BETWEEN YIN AND YANG (PG-13) (ACTION/COMEDY/FANTASY) NEW**

\* JACKIE CHAN, ELANE ZHONG, ETHAN JUAN  
DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

**6-ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/ROMANTIC)**

⊕ ROSA SALAZAR, CHRISTOPH WALTZ, JENNIFER CONNELLY  
DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 2.15 + 7.00 + 11.45 PM  
DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.45 + 5.15 + 7.45 + 10.15 PM + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)

**7-GULLY BOY (PG-15) (HINDI/DRAMA/MUSICAL)**

⊕ ALIA BHAT, RANVEER SINGH, SIDDHANT CHATURVEDI  
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

**8-COLD PURSUIT (15+) (ACTION/CRIME/DRAMA)**

⊕ LIAM NEESON, EMMY ROSSUM, LAURA DERN  
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 PM + 12.00 MN + (12.45 MN THURS/FRI)

DAILY AT (VIP I): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM

**9-HAPPY DEATH DAY 2U (PG-15) (THRILLER/COMEDY/CRIME)**

⊕ JESSICA ROTHE, RUBY MODINE, PHI VU  
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 12.45 + 2.45 + 4.45 + 6.45 + 8.45 + 10.45 PM

**10-THE UPSIDE (PG-15) (COMEDY/DRAMA)**

⊕ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM

**11-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER)**

⊕ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

**12-THE LEGO MOVIE 2 (G) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**

⊕ CHRIS PRATT, ELIZABETH BANKS, WILL ARNETT  
DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 PM

DAILY AT (IMAX 2D): 12.00 + 4.45 + 9.30 PM

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

⊕ KARIM ABDULAZIZ, GHADA ADEL, MAJDE ALKIDDAWI  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM

**14-AQUAMAN (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ JASON MOMOA, AMBER HEARD, NICOLE KIDMAN  
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM

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

⊕ ROWAN ATKINSON, OLGA KURYLENKO, EMMA THOMPSON  
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 3.00 + 7.15 + 11.30 PM

**16-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER  
DAILY AT: 2.15 + 6.30 + 10.45 PM

**17-RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**

⊕ JOHN C. REILLY, SARAH SILVERMAN, GAL GADOT  
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 5.00 + 9.15 PM

**18-THE PRODIGY (18+) (THRILLER/HORROR)**

⊕ TAYLOR SCHILLING, JACKSON ROBERT SCOTT, PETER MOONEY  
DAILY AT: 9.45 + 11.45 PM

**19-SPIDER MAN INTO THE SPIDER VERSE (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ HAILEE STEINFELD, NICOLAS CAGE, MAHERSHALA ALI  
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 4.15 + 8.30 PM

## SEEF (II)

**1 FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY (15+) (DRAMA/COMEDY/BIOGRAPHY) NEW**

⊕ DWAYNE JOHNSON, FLORENCE PUGH, JACK LOWDEN  
DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM

**2-TOTAL DHAMAAL (PG-13) (HINDI/COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW**

⊕ AJAY DEVGN, MADHURI DIXIT, ANIL KAPOOR  
FROM THURSDAY 21ST 7.00 PM ONWARDS  
DAILY AT: (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)

**3-DUMPLIN (15+) (COMEDY/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ DANIELLE MACDONALD, JENNIFER ANISTON, LUKE BENWARD  
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.15 + 9.30 PM

**4-UPGRADE (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW**

⊕ LOGAN MARSHALL-GREEN, RICHARD ANASTASIOS, ROSCO CAMPBELL  
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.00 + 4.00 + 6.00 + 8.00 + 10.00 PM + 12.00 MN

**5-THE KNIGHT OF SHADOWS: BETWEEN YIN AND YANG (PG-13) (ACTION/COMEDY/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ JACKIE CHAN, ELANE ZHONG, ETHAN JUAN  
DAILY AT: (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)

**6-WHAT THEY HAD (PG-15) (DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ HILARY SWANK, MICHAEL SHANNEN, ROBERT FORSTER  
DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.00 + 9.00 PM

**7-THEN CAME YOU (PG-15) (COMEDY/ROMANTIC/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ NINA DOBREV, MAISIE WILLIAMS, ASA BUTTERFIELD  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 3.15 + 7.30 + 11.45 PM

**8-KIKORIKI. DEJAVU (G) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY) NEW**

⊕ DENIS CHERNOV, JEFFREY HYLTON  
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.00 + 2.45 + 4.30 PM

**9-TIME OUT (PG-15) (ARABIC/COMEDY/ROMANTIC) NEW**

⊕ MAGUY BOU GHOSN, YORGO CHALHOUB, WISSAM SABBAGH  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 3.00 + 7.00 + 11.00 PM

**10-ALONE / TOGETHER (PG-15) (FILIPINO/ROMANTIC/DRAMA) NEW**

⊕ LIZA SOBERANO, ENRIQUE GIL, JASMINE CURTIS  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

**11-ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/ROMANTIC)**

⊕ ROSA SALAZAR, CHRISTOPH WALTZ, JENNIFER CONNELLY  
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 PM + 12.00 MN

**12-GULLY BOY (PG-15) (HINDI/DRAMA/MUSICAL)**

⊕ ALIA BHAT, RANVEER SINGH, SIDDHANT CHATURVEDI  
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 PM + 12.00 MN

**13-COLD PURSUIT (15+) (ACTION/CRIME/DRAMA)**

⊕ LIAM NEESON, EMMY ROSSUM, LAURA DERN  
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM

**14-THE UPSIDE (PG-15) (COMEDY/DRAMA)**

⊕ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN  
DAILY AT: 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM

**15-THE LEGO MOVIE 2 (G) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**

⊕ CHRIS PRATT, ELIZABETH BANKS, WILL ARNETT  
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 4.00 + 8.15 PM

**16-HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE)**

⊕ CATE BLANCHETT, JONAH HILL, GERARD BUTLER  
DAILY AT: 2.00 + 6.15 + 10.30 PM

## SEEF (I)

**1-TOTAL DHAMAAL (PG-13) (HINDI/COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW**

⊕ AJAY DEVGN, MADHURI DIXIT, ANIL KAPOOR  
FROM THURSDAY 21ST 7.00 PM ONWARDS  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM

**2-THE KNIGHT OF SHADOWS: BETWEEN YIN AND YANG (PG-13) (ACTION/COMEDY/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ JACKIE CHAN, ELANE ZHONG, ETHAN JUAN  
DAILY AT: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM

**3-KODATHI SMAKSHAM BALAN VAKEEL (PG-13) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ DILEEP, MAMTA MOHANDAS, PRIYA ANAND  
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.45 + 5.45 + 8.45 + 11.45 PM

**4-JUNE (PG-13) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ JOJU GEORGE, RAJISHA VIJAYAN, SARJANO KHALID, ARJUN ASOKAN  
DAILY AT: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM

**5-KANNE KALAIMAANE (PG-13) (TAMIL) NEW**

⊕ UDHAYANIDHI STALIN, TAMANNAH  
FROM FRIDAY 22ND  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 4.00 + 9.00 PM

**6-L.K.G (PG-13) (TAMIL) NEW**

⊕ RJ BALAJI, PRIYA ANAND  
FROM FRIDAY 22ND  
DAILY AT: 1.30 + 6.30 + 11.30 PM

**7-KUMBALANGI NIGHT (PG-13) (MALAYALAM)**

⊕ FAHADH FAASIL, SHANE NIGAM, SOUBIN SHAHIR  
DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM

## SAAR

**1-FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY (15+) (DRAMA/COMEDY/BIOGRAPHY) NEW**

⊕ DWAYNE JOHNSON, FLORENCE PUGH, JACK LOWDEN  
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + (11.15 PM THURS/FRI)

**2-TOTAL DHAMAAL (PG-13) (HINDI/COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW**

⊕ AJAY DEVGN, MADHURI DIXIT, ANIL KAPOOR  
FROM THURSDAY 21ST 7.00 PM ONWARDS

DAILY AT: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + (11.15 PM THURS/FRI)

**3-THE KNIGHT OF SHADOWS: BETWEEN YIN AND YANG (PG-13) (ACTION/COMEDY/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ JACKIE CHAN, ELANE ZHONG, ETHAN JUAN  
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.00 + 6.15 + (11.30 PM THURS/FRI)

**4-ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/ROMANTIC)**

⊕ ROSA SALAZAR, CHRISTOPH WALTZ, JENNIFER CONNELLY  
DAILY AT: 6.00 + 8.30 + (11.00 PM THURS/FRI)

**5-GULLY BOY (PG-15) (HINDI/DRAMA/MUSICAL)**

⊕ ALIA BHAT, RANVEER SINGH, SIDDHANT CHATURVEDI  
DAILY AT: 3.15 + 8.30 PM

**6-THE LEGO MOVIE 2 (G) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**

⊕ CHRIS PRATT, ELIZABETH BANKS, WILL ARNETT  
DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 PM

## AL HAMRA

**1-KODATHI SMAKSHAM BALAN VAKEEL (PG-13) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ DILEEP, MAMTA MOHANDAS, PRIYA ANAND  
DAILY AT: 3.00 + 9.00 PM + (12.00 MN THURS/FRI)

**2-JUNE (PG-13) (MALAYALAM) NEW**

⊕ JOJU GEORGE, RAJISHA VIJAYAN, SARJANO KHALID, ARJUN ASOKAN  
DAILY AT: 12.00 + 6.00 PM

## WADI AL SAIL

**1-FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY (15+) (DRAMA/COMEDY/BIOGRAPHY) NEW**

⊕ DWAYNE JOHNSON, FLORENCE PUGH, JACK LOWDEN  
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.00 + 4.15 + 6.30 + 8.45 + 11.00 PM

**2-TOTAL DHAMAAL (PG-13) (HINDI/COMEDY/ADVENTURE) NEW**

⊕ AJAY DEVGN, MADHURI DIXIT, ANIL KAPOOR  
FROM THURSDAY 21ST 7.00 PM ONWARDS  
DAILY AT: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM

**3-UPGRADE (15+) (ACTION/THRILLER) NEW**

⊕ LOGAN MARSHALL-GREEN, RICHARD ANASTASIOS, ROSCO CAMPBELL  
DAILY AT: 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM

**4-THE KNIGHT OF SHADOWS: BETWEEN YIN AND YANG (PG-13) (ACTION/COMEDY/FANTASY) NEW**

⊕ JACKIE CHAN, ELANE ZHONG, ETHAN JUAN  
DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.00 + 4.15 + 6.30 + 8.45 + 11.00 PM

**5-KIKORIKI. DEJAVU (G) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY) NEW**

⊕ DENIS CHERNOV, JEFFREY HYLTON  
DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 1.15 PM

**6-ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/ROMANTIC)**

⊕ ROSA SALAZAR, CHRISTOPH WALTZ, JENNIFER CONNELLY  
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM

**7-GULLY BOY (PG-15) (HINDI/DRAMA/MUSICAL) NEW**

⊕ ALIA BHAT, RANVEER SINGH, SIDDHANT CHATURVEDI  
DAILY AT: 3.00 + 8.30 PM

**8-COLD PURSUIT (15+) (ACTION/CRIME/DRAMA)**

⊕ LIAM NEESON, EMMY ROSSUM, LAURA DERN  
DAILY AT: 6.00 + 11.30 PM

**9-THE LEGO MOVIE 2 (G) (ANIMATION/ACTION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**

⊕ CHRIS PRATT, ELIZABETH BANKS, WILL ARNETT  
DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 1.00 + 3.15 + 5.30 PM

## Movie Review

**Dumplin': Danielle Macdonald shines in Netflix's beauty pageant dramedy**

Dumplin' is an American coming-of-age comedy film directed by Anne Fletcher and written by Kristin Hahn. It is based on the young adult novel of the same name by Julie Murphy.

The film stars Danielle Macdonald as Willowdean "Dumplin'" Dickson, Jennifer Aniston as her mother, Rosie Dickson, and Odeya Rush as her best friend, Ellen Dryver.

On review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, Dumplin' holds an approval rating of 85% based on 59 reviews, with an average rating of 6.5/10. The website's critical consensus reads, "Elevated by a solid soundtrack and a terrific cast



Priyanka Chopra and Sophie Turner

Mandy Moore

**Can't wait to see Sophie Turner as bride: Priyanka Chopra**  
Los Angeles

Actress-producer Priyanka Chopra on Sophie Turner's 23rd birthday, said that she cannot wait to see the "Game of Thrones" star as a bride. Priyanka, who is married to pop singer Nick Jonas, on Friday posted a black and white photograph of Turner along with her singer-beau Joe Jonas. The "Isn't It Romantic" actress described Turner as the "most beautiful" and a "fun" person as she captioned the image: "Happy birthday Sophie you are loved! I can't wait to see you as a bride. You will be stunning! Have a brilliant year love. 'J sisters forever'. Joe Jonas you are the most thoughtful! Last night was epic."



**Milo calls Mandy inspiring**  
Los Angeles

Actor Milo Ventimiglia is proud of his "This Is Us" co-star Mandy Moore for opening up about the emotional abuse she endured during her marriage to former husband Ryan Adams. In an interview with Access, the actor praised Moore, reports people.com.



Milo Ventimiglia

"There are things that people live through, so to be able to have a forum to discuss it and speak about it honestly, I'm incredibly proud of Mandy for just being who Mandy is, which is a very giving, inspiring woman," Ventimiglia said.

"And if anyone else can take away from that situation of being inspired to let someone know that they're not alone in a feeling, I think that's a great thing to do," he added. Ventimiglia is seen with Moore in "This Is Us", aired in India on Star World.



**SNIPPETS**

**Actor Smollett's character cut from 'Empire' episodes after arrest**  
Los Angeles

Actor Jussie Smollett's character is being removed from the final two episodes of the Fox hip-hop drama "Empire" after he was arrested and charged with staging a hoax hate crime attack on himself, show officials said on Friday. "We are ... aware of the effects of this process on the cast and crew members who work on our show and to avoid further disruption on set, we have decided to remove the role of 'Jamal' from the final two episodes of the season," 20th Century Fox Television said in a statement.



Jussie Smollett

**Amy Winehouse hologram tour put on hold**  
Los Angeles

Amy Winehouse hologram tour, that was slated to launch later this year, has been put "on hold" by the show's producer. BASE Hologram took to Twitter to announce that they have "encountered some unique challenges and sensitivities" that have made them reassess the tour. "In developing the type of highly ambitious, state-of-the-art hologram/augmented reality theatrical event that would truly capture (Winehouse's) genius and incredible artistic and social contributions, we have encountered some unique challenges and sensitivities," the tweet read. The Winehouse show will be "on hold until we determine the best path to a creatively spectacular production that would properly honour Amy's legacy at its highest caliber," the company said. The tour was scheduled to kick off in 2019 and run for several years. The production was supposed to feature Winehouse's hologram backed by a live band, singers and theatrical stagecraft.



Amy Winehouse

**Cardi B stands by Khloe Kardashian amidst trolls**  
Los Angeles

Rapper Cardi B has come out in support of reality TV star Khloe Kardashian, who is being trolled by social media users after getting allegedly



Cardi B

cheated by her beau Tristan Thompson. There are speculations that Khloe's NBA basketball boyfriend cheated on Khloe with her sister Kylie Jenner's best friend Jordyn Woods, reports people.com. Following the buzz, people on social media started making fun of Khloe. So, Cardi on Thursday took to an Instagram live and urged people to stop trolling Khloe. "Obviously this whole Khloe Kardashian thing... everybody is just like celebrating that that happened to her and it's like why?" the Grammy-winning rapper Cardi said.

Jordyn Woods has finally broken her silence after being caught making out with Khloe Kardashian's now ex-boyfriend, Tristan Thompson, at a party on Sunday. The 21-year-old gave a short speech while promoting a her Eylure Jordyn Woods Summer Heir lashes in Los Angeles on Thursday, after a period of silence. Wearing a grey satin tracksuit, Jordyn appeared to a little apprehensive as she spoke to the room, taking to the mic as a couple of people cheered her. She said: "Through everything that's been going on, you know it's been real, and Eylure has been super real." This has been a project that we've been working on for over nine months, almost a year, so I hope you guys enjoy your lashes as much as I do. The videos were placed online by Jade Simone and Candice Nikeia, who both attended the beauty event. Jordyn herself, is yet to post anything on her social media accounts following the event as she is no doubt trying to keep a low profile to an extent.

**Jordyn Woods just spoke about the Tristan Thompson**  
Los Angeles



Jordyn Woods

**Alexandre Desplat will not attend Oscars ceremony**  
Los Angeles

Oscar-nominated composer Alexandre Desplat will be unable to attend the Academy Award ceremony because of recent throat surgery. The French music composer, who is already a two-time Oscar winner for 2014's "Grand Budapest Hotel" and 2017's "The Shape of Water", is nominated this year for his Japanese-flavored score for Wes Anderson's "Isle of Dogs".



Alexandre Desplat

**Ciao Karl: Fendi says goodbye to Lagerfeld**  
Milan

Fendi said farewell to Karl Lagerfeld on Thursday, presenting the last line the veteran fashion designer created for the Italian luxury label before his death. With a replica of his "Love KL" signature displayed behind them, models strutted down the catwalk in a neutral palette of beige, brown, terracotta and dark gray outfits with dabs of green, orange and yellow popping out in the Autumn/Winter 2019 line.



Karl Lagerfeld

**Michael B. Jordan to be directed by Denzel Washington**  
Los Angeles

Actor Michael B. Jordan is in negotiations to feature in "Journal for Jordan", to be directed by Denzel Washington. The movie, penned by Oscar-nominated screenwriter Virgil Williams, is based on the true story of Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Dana Canedy's love affair with First Sergeant Charles Monroe King, reported variety.com.

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SPORTS  
sports

# Arsenal, Chelsea cruise into last 16

● Callum Hudson-Odoi seals comfortable win for Chelsea over Malmo in Europa League

● Shkodran Mustafi header helps Arsenal to progress at expense of BATE Borisov

AFP | Paris

Arsenal and Chelsea reached the last 16 of the Europa League on Thursday after the Gunners comfortably saw off BATE Borisov 3-0 and Maurizio Sarri's troubled side relieved some of the pressure on him with the same scoreline against mediocre Malmo.

After falling 1-0 in Belarus, Arsenal were level on aggregate after just three minutes when Zakhar Volkov sliced Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's low cross past Denis Scherbitski in his own goal.

Unai Emery's side deservedly went through thanks to two thumping headers from Shkodran Mustafi and Sokratis either side of the break which put them into yesterday's draw.

"We wanted this result but also we wanted to play for our supporters here. We did our best to come back (in the tie) and the team worked very well," Emery told BT Sport.

Ahead 2-1 from the first leg in Sweden, Chelsea had to wait until 10 minutes after the break for the first sign of excitement,



Chelsea's Callum Hudson-Odoi fires in their third goal

Olivier Giroud tapping in the decisive goal of a humdrum encounter at Stamford Bridge.

Ross Barkley made sure of the win with a super free-kick in the 74th minute, just after Malmo's Rasmus Bengtsson was sent off for his second bookable offence, before 18-year-old Callum Hudson-Odoi made the most of a rare start by crashing home the third.

"The boys really played well today. We worked hard throughout the game," said highly-rated Hudson Odoi, a Bayern Munich target in January.

Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli breezed to a 2-0 win over FC Zurich that saw them win 5-1 on aggregate, while Inter Milan went through 5-0 after sweeping four goals past Rapid Vienna without reply at the San Siro.

## Rennes make history

French side Rennes are into

the last 16 of a major European tournament for the first time after winning possibly the most entertaining tie of the round 6-4 on aggregate following a barnstorming 3-1 win at Real Betis.

Goals from Remy Bensebaini and Adrien Hunou fired Rennes into a two-goal lead within the opening half-hour but the tie was put back in the balance when Giovanni Lo Celso pulled one back four minutes before half-time.

With Betis pushing to equal-



The goal that came at the end was definitely a bonus for the way that we played

CALLUM HUDSON-ODOI

ise and go through on away goals, M'Baye Niang finished off an injury time break to see the mid-table Ligue 1 side through.

RB Salzburg, Dinamo Zagreb and Zenit Saint Petersburg all overturned first-leg deficits, with Austrians Salzburg hammering Club Brugge 4-0 to go through 5-2 and Croatian champions Dinamo 4-2 winners on aggregate after a storming 3-0 victory over Viktoria Plzen.

Zenit overcame Fenerbahce 3-1 in Russia, Magomed Ozdov and Sardar Azmoun giving hosts an aggregate lead before Mehmet Topal put the Turks ahead on away goals just before break.

Pablo Fornals snuck Villarreal past Sporting Lisbon with a fine curling strike that gave the La Liga side a 1-1 draw on the night and a 2-1 win overall, while Benfica eased past Galatasaray 2-1 after a goalless draw in Portugal.

## Arsenal face Rennes as Chelsea draw Dynamo Kiev



Arsenal's German defender Shkodran Mustafi (L) heads home their second goal during the UEFA Europa League round of 32

AFP | Paris

Arsenal will face French side Rennes in the last 16 of the Europa League, while Chelsea were paired with Dynamo Kiev in yesterday's draw.

Both Premier League clubs will be at home in the first leg on Thursday, March 7, with the return matches scheduled for March 14.

Arsenal's draw means that their veteran goalkeeper Petr Cech will return to face the club he represented for two seasons before joining Chelsea in 2004.

Rennes finished fifth in Ligue 1 last season and are currently in mid-table, but have impressed since the 38-year-old Julien Stephan was ap-



The final of this season's Europa League will be played in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on May 29

pointed as coach in December.

Arsenal manager Unai Emery -- who won the Europa League three years running as coach of Sevilla -- is familiar with Rennes from his two seasons in charge of Paris Saint-Germain.

London rivals Chelsea, the other Premier League club still in the competition, might also view winning the Europa League as their most likely route into next season's Champions League.

After beating Swedish side Malmo 5-1 on aggregate, they might find the going tougher against Ukrainian giants Dynamo. The clubs met in the group stage of the Champions League in 2015-16, drawing 0-0 in Kiev before Chelsea won 2-1 at Stamford Bridge.

Elsewhere, Sevilla, who have won the trophy five times including twice in its former guise as the UEFA Cup, will face Slavia Prague.

Widely-fancied Napoli will take on the Austrian champions Salzburg, who reached the semi-finals last season.

Former European Cup finalists and UEFA Cup winners Eintracht Frankfurt were drawn against Inter Milan, who won the UEFA Cup three times in the 1990s.

## Chelsea banned from signing new players

AFP | London

Premier League club Chelsea have been banned from signing new players in the next two transfer windows as punishment for breaking rules on registering under-age players, FIFA said.

Ahmed Al Shaikh, President of the club -- who immediately said they would appeal the decision -- will be unable to make signings until the end of January next year.

"The disciplinary committee sanctioned Chelsea with a ban on registering new players at both national and international level for the next two complete and consecutive registration periods," FIFA said in a statement.

In addition, Chelsea were fined 600,000 Swiss francs (\$600,000, 530,000 euros) and given a period of 90 days to regularise the situation of the minor players concerned.

The ban does not prevent players being released by the club and it does not apply to



Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri reacts during a match

Chelsea's women's and futsal teams.

Chelsea have been given three days to appeal against FIFA's decision, which could prove highly damaging, for example preventing the club from signing a replacement for Eden Hazard if the star player leaves the club.

"Chelsea FC categorically refuses the findings of the FIFA disciplinary committee and will therefore be appealing the de-

cision," said a statement on the club's website.

"Initially, Chelsea FC was charged... in relation to 92 players," it added. "We welcome the fact that FIFA has accepted that there was no breach in relation to 63 of these players, but the club is extremely disappointed that FIFA has not accepted the club's submissions in relation to the remaining 29 players."

The move follows a FIFA probe into Chelsea's signing of foreign under-18 players, including the club's former forward Bertrand Traore, a Burkina Faso international who now plays for French Ligue 1 club Lyon.

Traore signed professional forms for Chelsea in 2013 at the age of 18 but was not registered until January the following year.

## Man City not expecting to bulldoze Chelsea again: Silva

Reuters | London

Manchester City must forget their 6-0 drubbing of Chelsea earlier this month and cannot afford to be complacent against the London side when they face off in Sunday's League Cup final, midfielder Bernardo Silva has said.

Chelsea's capitulation at the Etihad Stadium was their worst defeat in Premier League history and the London club have dropped to sixth in the standings.

Silva, however, said the recent result would not have a bearing on their next meeting at Wembley.

Bernardo Silva

meeting at Wembley.

"To be honest we should forget that match because it won't happen again, we are not expecting the same result," Silva told reporters after City's 3-2 victory at Schalke in the first leg of the Champions League last-16.

"We are playing against one of the best sides in the world, even though lately their results are not the best for them.

However, the Brazilian goalkeeper played his side into trouble moments later to put pressure on Matip and when he was dispossessed by Robert Lewandowski, Kingsley Coman fired into the side-netting.

Liverpool were also posing plenty of problems at the other end, although their final ball often lacked precision.

"Against those kinds of players you can never relax, and if you give them time to think, time to play and time to decide they will destroy you."

## Riffa Club triumph in HM the King Cup

TDI | Manama

Riffa Sports and Cultural Club won HM the King Cup following their well-earned 2-1 victory over Al Hidd in final match which took place on Thursday at Bahrain National Stadium.

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa congratulated the club and their fans on the achievement and paid tribute to HM the King's sponsorship and attendance to the final.

The First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Athletics Association said that the Royal patronage of the final match reflects HM the King's firm keenness to support and cheer Bahraini sportspeople in all occasions and venues. He stressed that HM the King's follow up to the final match has laid ground for a great game.

# Kvitova battles into second Dubai final

Petra Kvitova triumphs 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 to reach today's final at the Dubai Championships

● The 2013 champion came from a set down to beat Hsieh Su-Wei

AFP | Dubai

Petra Kvitova booked her third final in two months yesterday, winning a marathon over Hsieh Su-wei 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 at the Dubai Championships.

The double Wimbledon winner from the Czech Republic already owns a title from Sydney last month and lost to Naomi Osaka in the Australian Open title match.

She won here in 2015 and is playing the event for the first time in three years.

Kvitova will play either Switzerland's Belinda Bencic or Elina Svitolina, the Ukrainian winner of the last two editions in Dubai.

"It was a tough one today, she really didn't give me anything for free," Kvitova said. "I'm glad I was able to come back in the second.

"I'm pleased with my mental focus after losing the first set. I was calmer when I came back



Petra Kvitova of Czech Republic returns the ball to Taiwan's Hsieh Su-wei

and played the second.

"She didn't give me any high balls. I really had to be very, very low, bend my knees, whatever I

really needed.

"I'm a bit tired right now, to be honest. I have a final tomorrow, so I don't know how I going to

recover. Hopefully I have a few hours to do something."

Hsieh, who lost to Kvitova in the Sydney second round,



The 2013 Dubai champion lost the first set after being broken twice in the seventh and ninth games

snatched the opening set on a pair of breaks, with the Czech forced into a fightback in the second.

The Czech, with 26 career titles, earned two breaks of her own in the second, with Hsieh saving a set point in the penultimate game before the contest levelled at a set apiece.

The third began with three straight breaks; but Kvitova settled into hold serve and run out the winner after more than two hours.

The victory was her fourth over Hsieh without a defeat and marked her 10th career Dubai win.

## Riifa Club triumph in HM the King Cup

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola has admitted he is surprised by Chelsea's revolving-door policy with managers as he prepares for Sunday's League Cup final, the match that could seal the fate of the London club's current boss Maurizio Sarri.

There has been mounting speculation over the Italian Sarri's future in recent weeks after a spectacular mid-season slump best exemplified by a 6-0 humiliation in their league visit to City's Etihad Stadium earlier this month, but Guardiola believes Chelsea should adopt the same sort of long-term view City took when they employed him in 2016.

Comparisons have been drawn with Guardiola's first season in England, when City struggled to adapt to his demanding style of play, although the Catalan was keen to downplay the similarities.

"The situation is different. In my first year never the club doubted me," he said.

"It was never in the media that I'd be sacked if they lose this game. When (Antonio) Conte won the title, people were saying he'd be sacked when they lost one or two games the next season. But he had won the Premier League two or three months before.

"I said the same after we lost there (to Chelsea in December) and won here, my opinion of him is the same."

## Klopp expects Solskjaer to be named permanent United boss

AFP | London

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp said he believes Ole Gunnar Solskjaer will be the next permanent manager of Manchester United. The clubs meet on Sunday in a showdown of Premier League giants.

Solskjaer has won 11 of his 13 matches since taking interim charge following Jose Mourinho's sacking in December, with the only loss a 2-0 defeat to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League.

Ahead of Liverpool's trip to Old Trafford, Klopp said he had been impressed with the job the Norwegian is doing at Old Trafford.



Manchester United interim manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer applauds the fans at the end of a match

“He (Solskjaer) deserves (the job) 100 percent, he did everything that you have to do to be successful with them

JURGEN KLOPP

"He has the quality and he had the luck in the right moment," said the German. "Now he's in charge and there is no doubt that he will be the manager next year as well, that's clear.

"Can you imagine one situation when they say 'we are bringing in another manager'? Then a new manager will lose one game and that's not possible.

"He deserves (the job) 100 percent, he did everything that you have to do to be successful with them."

Klopp, whose team are level on points with Manchester City at the top of the Premier League, said all managers needed an element of luck.

"When I went from Mainz to (Borussia) Dortmund, people said I have no international experience. It was true but it's not something you can buy. You have to make it.

## Sri Lanka eye history in low-scoring battle

AFP | Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Sri Lanka's cricketers have been told to enjoy themselves as they seek to make history after a dramatic second day of the second Test against South Africa at St George's Park yesterday.

Needing 197 runs to become the first Asian team to win a Test series in South Africa, Sri Lanka were 60 for two at the close, needing 137 more runs to complete a 2-0 series triumph.

"Everybody knows what is expected of them," said bowling coach Ramesh Ratnayake.

South Africa, first innings, 222  
Sri Lanka, first innings (overnight 60-3)  
D. Karunaratne c De Kock b Rabada 17  
L. Thirimanne c and b Olivier 29  
O. Fernando b Olivier 0  
K. Mendis c De Kock b Olivier 16  
K. Rajitha b Rabada 1  
K. Perera c De Kock b Rabada 20  
D. de Silva c De Kock b Mulder 19  
N. Dickwella c Elgar b Rabada 42  
S. Lakmal lbw b Maharaj 7  
V. Fernando not out 0  
L. Embuldeniya absent injured  
Extras (lb1, nb2) 3  
Total (37.4 overs) 154  
Sri Lanka, second innings  
D. Karunaratne c De Kock b Olivier 19  
L. Thirimanne c De Kock b Rabada 10  
O. Fernando not out 17  
K. Mendis not out 10  
Extras (lb4) 4  
Total (2 wks, 16 overs) 60



South Africa's Quinton de Kock lifts a ball into the hands of Sri Lanka's Suranga Lakmal

"The leadership has said, 'just go out and enjoy yourselves'. Everybody is aware of history being made but that should be at the back of the mind. Everybody has the freedom to bat how they want to do at the right time."

Eighteen wickets fell and 282 runs were scored during an extraordinary day's play, leaving both teams with a chance of victory.

South Africa seemed set to take control when Sri Lanka collapsed in a flurry of strokes to be bowled out for 154 before a badly dislocated left thumb,

innings lead of 68 runs.

But Sri Lanka's bowlers hit back, bowling out the hosts for a paltry 128 -- by 40 runs their lowest total in a home Test against the islanders.

Suranga Lakmal, Sri Lanka's most experienced bowler, took four for 39, while part-time off-spinner Dhananjaya de Silva took a Test-best three for 36. With only ten wickets in 24 previous Tests, De Silva had match figures of five for 51.

He was forced into a frontline role when left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya suffered a badly dislocated left thumb,

an injury which required surgery and prevented him from batting or taking the field yesterday.

Lakmal said a key for Sri Lanka's bowlers was that they bowled consistently in the right areas.

"The accuracy and intensity has been good," he said.

"We are quite confident that we are going to win," said Lakmal. But it's not going to be easy. The bowling of South Africa is of a world-class level."

South African batting coach Dale Benkenstein insisted the Test was still on a knife-edge.