

**Speed Weekend wraps up at BIC**

JB Simmenauer and Dylan Pereira were both victorious yesterday to wrap up the fourth and penultimate round of the 2019/2020 Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East, held as part of Speed Weekend at Bah- rain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir. **P16**

OP-ED 8

Don't conflate Europe's racial terror with the rise of hard-right parties

# THE DAILY tribune



George and Amal Clooney's mansion flooded after heavy storm **14** CELEBS

WORLD **10** Pilot in Kobe Bryant helicopter crash counselled by FAA after 2015 incident

**Assad forces killing Idlib civilians?**

**London**  
Syrian regime forces deliberately killed elderly women in northwest Syria, leaked recordings obtained by the UK's Daily Telegraph have shown.

The audio recordings from Feb 11 also suggest that forces loyal to Bashar Assad attacked Turkish military posts in violation of a cease-fire deal.

The recordings captured a conversation between soldiers from the infamous elite Tiger Forces tracking a vehicle driving into the village of Mizanaz, to the west of Aleppo.

Local media reports from the time and date of the audio recording support the assertion that the women were killed in the attack.

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## Bahrain 'free of corona'

All steps in place to ensure health and safety of citizens and residents

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Health has announced that there are no registered cases of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the Kingdom, and all precautionary measures are being taken to ensure the continued health and safety of Bahrain's citizens and residents.

The ministry confirmed in a

statement that, within the past 24 hours, it has conducted tests on 19 travellers arriving from countries where COVID-19 is prevalent. All test results returned negative.

The total number of tests conducted for suspected cases of the disease now stands at 74, all of which have returned negative.

The ministry highlighted that it is co-ordinating with all necessary authorities to follow up on

**74**

suspected cases have all turned negative upon carrying out required tests for coronavirus in the Kingdom.

all potential cases that have been flagged at the Kingdom's entry points.

The ministry further highlighted that it is following health guidelines outlined by the World Health Organisation, international health measures followed by international airports, and the unified precautionary measures followed by the GCC, when dealing with travellers arriving from countries

were COVID-19 is prevalent.

It noted that all travellers entering Bahrain International Airport from countries that are experiencing active cases of COVID-19 are undergoing testing to ensure they are not infected.

Travellers from these countries are also quarantined for a period of 14 days as a preventive measure in order to monitor their health.

See Pages 3&4

210 fils (includes VAT)



**Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

**To all citizens and residents**

**If you experience the following symptoms related to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19):**

Fever

Cough

Difficulty breathing

And If you have traveled to one of the countries infected with the disease and have interacted with a person traveling from any of those locations

**Please stay in your residence, call 444, and follow the instructions that will be given to you by a specialised medical team**

# Foreign Ministry raps Amnesty allegations

Manama

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed regret over the incorrect information and falsehoods contained in the report issued by Amnesty International, which lack the required professionalism and objectivity in human rights reports by obtaining information and news coming from

unfair sources and paid media channels, known for extremism, prejudice and incredibility.

Whilst the Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirms that it will study the allegations contained in this report and respond to it, it looks forward to this organisation to come up with fairer reports and not to rely on sources that express single-sided opinion, a statement issued by the minis-

**The Kingdom will live up to its commitment to international agreements and is willing to co-operate and communicate with all international organisations.**

FOREIGN MINISTRY

try said.

It has advised Amnesty International to obtain its infor-

mation from all the concerned authorities and institutions that have not been approached prior

to the issuance of this biased report for more positive positions and objective, neutral, non-selective and unbiased reports.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that the Kingdom will remain adamantly committed to the respect and promotion of human rights and public freedoms in accordance with the applicable laws and in consonance with its constitution.

It also affirmed that the Kingdom will live up to its commitment to international agreements and its willingness to co-operate and communicate with all international organisations, based on its civilisational and cultural heritage and its deep-rooted religious values that guarantee human rights and the values of tolerance, justice and equality among all.

Manama

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdullatif Al Zayani, accompanied by Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al Dossari, visited the Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies.

The Executive Director of the Academy, Dr Shaikha Munira bint Khalifa Al Khalifa, briefed the minister on the most important programmes and initiatives implemented by the academy and the efforts being made to advance the diplomatic work and spread its culture.

She also reviewed the most important future programmes that the academy has to develop to qualify new generations and national competencies of Bahraini diplomats according to the best international standards for the development of work in the diplomatic field.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed his admiration for this important diplomatic edifice, and

# Key programmes implemented to groom young diplomats reviewed

Foreign Minister vows support to the academy; emphasises highest level training for diplomats



Dr Al Zayani and Mr Al Dossari tour the academy along with Dr Shaikha Munira.

the advanced administrative approach it adopts to achieve the sought-after goals, praising the great and tangible role played by the academy in developing policies and plans to develop the diplomatic and consular sector.

He also commended the programmes being implemented and the courses and workshops held to qualify and prepare the diplomatic and consular staff to be the best representatives of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its diplomacy at various regional and international gatherings.

Dr Zayani vowed to support all the efforts aimed at upgrading and expanding training programmes outside the Kingdom to benefit more from the distinguished experiences in this field, wishing the academy and those in charge of its affairs every progress and success.

The academy is principally responsible for the recruitment and training of diplomats in the Kingdom. It also seeks to raise awareness of international relations within the diplomatic sphere and with the general public locally, as well as strengthen our institutional

ties globally.

The establishment of the academy is the culmination of a decades-long endeavour in the development of modern Bahraini diplomacy.

The establishment of the Diplomatic Institute in 2016 and the Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies in 2019 is a further step in the institutionalisation of diplomatic training, which strives to achieve sustainable and effective outcomes for the national interests and global standing of the Kingdom.

## Japan embassy to mark 60th birthday of Emperor Naruhito



P Unnikrishnan, Chairman of the Management Board of The Daily Tribune, Pradeep Puravankara, Executive Editor of the newspaper and Public Relations Head Goutham Krishna with Ambassador Hideki Ito.

TDT | Manama

Hideki Ito, Japanese Ambassador to the Kingdom, will host a special reception at Ritz Carlton Hotel on Sunday at 7:00 pm, marking the 60th birthday of Emperor Naruhito.

The event will begin with the recital of Japanese National Anthem followed by a speech that

will be delivered by Mr Hideki Ito. Traditional Japanese Koto Performance and a cake-cutting ceremony will also be held as part of the event.

In his first birthday address since ascending the chrysanthemum throne, Emperor Naruhito pledged to stand by the people of Japan in responding to intensifying environmental and social challenges ranging from climate

change to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

"In this rapidly changing society, I am contemplating measures in our official duties that would be complementary with such societal changes," said the emperor.

"I believe the imperial family bears a share of the responsibility" to address such challenges, he told reporters at his residence near the Imperial Palace.

## Club receives dignitary



Sadiq Sanjrani, Chairman, Senate of Pakistan along with his delegation of Senators visited Pakistan Club Bahrain, where a warm welcome was accorded by Mr Shukat Ali Chairman Apoworld Bahrain, board members and members of the Pakistani community. The senate delegation included Senator Abida Azeem, Senator Manzoor Ahmed, Senator Fida Muhammad, Senator Keshoo Bai, Senator Mirza Afridi, Senator Hafiz Abdul Karim, Senator Sajjad Hussain Tori, Senator Mohammed Balushi and Syed Abid Hassan, Advisor to the Chairman Senate. The Pakistan Senate Delegation was welcomed at the Club by Mr Afzaal Mahmood, Ambassador of Pakistan and Apoo World Bahrain followed by speech by the Ambassador of Pakistan. Mr Sadiq Sanjrani spoke on the occasion and appreciated the efforts of Pakistani community in Bahrain who are working shoulder to shoulder with their Bahraini brothers and sisters. He advised to put all their energies and efforts in strengthening the bilateral relations between the two Muslim countries. Later all the senators were recognised and mementos were given to the dignitaries.



The Indian School Riffa Campus celebrated its annual day themed 'Euphonic Ocular Delight 2020' on Thursday. It was a musical extravaganza to felicitate the co-curricular achievements at the end of the academic year 2019-20. Chief Guest Indian Embassy Second Secretary Renu Yadav, ISB Chairman Prince S Natarajan, Secretary Saji Antony, Vice-Chairman Jayafar Maidanee, EC members Mohammad Khurshed Alam, Premalatha N S, Adv Binu Mannil Varughese, Ajaykrishnan V, Saji George, Deepak Gopalakrishnan, Principal V R Palaniswamy, Riffa Campus Principal Pamela Xavier, ISB @ 70 General Convener Mohammad Hussain Malim, Vice-Principals, staff, parents and students attended the ceremony.

**More than 4,500 take part in Holy Quran Grand Prix**  
Manama

Under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the final qualifications of the 25th edition of the Bahrain Holy Quran Grand Prix, held by the Holy Quran Affairs Directorate at the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, concluded yesterday.

The major competition is co-organised by the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA).

Male winners will be honoured during the closing ceremony to be held during the holy month of Ramadan, while female ones will be honoured in April, under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of HM the King and President of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW).

Assistant Undersecretary for Islamic Affairs at the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, Dr Mohammed Tahar Al Qattan, said that the number of participants had surged during the current edition, reaching a total of 4,611, including 2,083 males and 2,528 females.

He also said that the qualifications for other competitors, including school students, people with special needs, inmates of the General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation, the public and non-Arabic speakers, had also concluded.

The assistant undersecretary pointed out that the prestigious competition is held in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior, represented by the General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation, and Labour and Social Development Ministry, which, he said, embodies the concept of community partnership and complementarity among public and private institutions.

Dr Al Qattan asserted that HM the King's patronage of the award over the past 25 years confirms the royal interest in supporting the Holy Quran memorisation, promoting its values in the society, and printing it.

# Coronavirus awareness campaign 'in full swing'

Stringent steps in place to tackle virus threat in the Kingdom

● **Visitors from five countries, Iran, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea have been banned from entering the Kingdom in light of coronavirus threat.**

● **The ministry has advised citizens and residents to follow WHO guidelines and avoid all but essential travel to areas, where coronavirus (COVID-19) has been detected.**

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Health has stepped up efforts to spread awareness about coronavirus as they urge residents and citizens to adopt 'hygiene measures'.

The ministry has urged citizens and residents to take various measures to protect themselves from coronavirus.

The ministry sources said that educational campaigns are in full swing to create awareness in the public about the novel coronavirus.

The modes used to create awareness include traditional media, social media and even SMS campaign, which was recently done.

"Kindly be reminded to take the following precautions to reduce the risk of contracting the coronavirus (Covid-19): Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly using soap and water. Use alcohol-based sanitisers," the statement said.

"Clean and disinfect frequently used objects and surfaces such as door handles. Cover your mouth when coughing or



Educational campaigns are in full swing to create awareness in the public about the novel coronavirus.

sneezing, and dispose of used wipes properly.

"Avoid contact with people experiencing a fever or suffering from a cough," the ministry stated in a mass SMS campaign, which was sent out to Bahrainis and expatriates across the Kingdom.

Meanwhile, foreign visitors from five countries have been banned from entering the Kingdom as Bahrain takes up strict measures to prevent coronavirus outbreak in the country.

The authorities in Bahrain have decided to put in place three stringent steps to ensure that coronavirus is not spread in Bahrain.

The steps include banning entry to all foreigners who have visited five countries including Iran, Thailand, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Malaysia and the Republic of South Korea.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Health

and the Ministry of Interior, has activated several procedures related to arrivals to the Kingdom in light of the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement added.

The steps include banning entry to all foreign visitors who have visited the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Malaysia and the Republic of South Korea



**Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly using soap and water. Use alcohol-based sanitisers.**

MINISTRY STATEMENT

within 14 days of their date of arrival in the Kingdom.

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

The ministry has advised citizens and residents to follow WHO guidelines and avoid all but essential travel to areas, where coronavirus (COVID-19) has been detected.

## MPs plan law to exempt SMEs from paying contributions to chamber

TDT | Manama

Parliamentarians are considering a law to exempt SMEs from paying annual contributions to the BCCI.

The proposal was submitted by MP Hamad Al Kooheji and supported by MP Zainab Amir and MP Ibrahim Al Nafei.

The proposal aims to help SMEs, which are struggling financially by reducing fees wherever possible.

He said the proposed law is a practical step to reduce the burdens faced by SMEs.

Mr Al Kooheji said that the main goal is to help SMEs grow. "It is important to strengthen the private sector and SMEs are at the heart of the private sector.

"We need to reduce their burdens and help them grow while ensuring their stability."

Meanwhile, the Council of

It is important to strengthen the private sector and SMEs are at the heart of the private sector.

MR AL KOOHEJI

Representatives Speaker Fawziya Zainal stressed the crucial importance of small and medium enterprises in developing the national economy, revitalising trade, spurring growth and generating jobs.

This came as she received a delegation from the Bahrain Small and Medium Enterprises Society, led by Chairman Dr Abdulhassan Al Diri.

She said that the legislative branch of government to implement the directives of His

Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, stressing the council's keenness on enhancing the standing of businessmen and supporting their contribution to Bahrain's comprehensive development, in compliance with 2030 Bahrain Economic Vision and the goals of the Fiscal Balance in the Government Action Plan.

The speaker commended the edict, which was issued by the Cabinet recently on supporting the small and medium enterprises, reiterating the council's keenness on consolidating SMEs businesses.

Dr Al Diri expressed thanks to the Speaker, commending the efforts she exerts along with lawmakers to provide all necessary facilities to spur economic growth and encourage productive families and small and medium enterprises.



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# Nine suspects accused of human trafficking face trial

Vice ring suspects forced foreign women to engage in prostitution

● **Investigations revealed that a criminal group, which exploited the women and forced them to engage in prostitution.**

● **Travel procedures were facilitated for the victims who returned to their country; further probe is still ongoing.**

Manama

Chief Prosecutor, Nawaf Al Awadhi, said that the Public Prosecution has completed its investigations into the case of trafficking in foreign girls and illegally de-

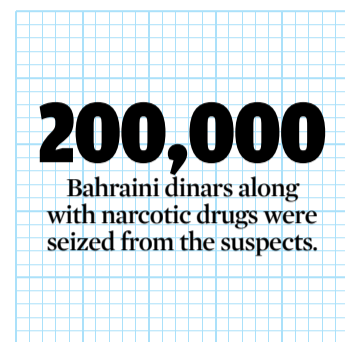
priving them of their liberty, adding that nine suspects will stand trial on March 3 at the High Criminal Court.

The Kazakh Consulate reported that one of its female nationals had been tortured in order to force her into prostitution, and accordingly the anti-human trafficking police launched investigations, which led to identifying the victim, as well as 20 other ones who were also exploited and forced into prostitution.

Investigations revealed that a criminal group, headed by a Bahraini suspect and comprising four Kazakh women, exploited the girls and forced them to engage in prostitution, while another foreign defendant would receive the girls upon their arrival in the country, and transfer them to the clients.

## 200,000

Bahraini dinars along with narcotic drugs were seized from the suspects.



All suspects were arrested, and the proceeds of the crime resulting from trafficking in victims, including a sum of approximately BD200,000 and narcotic drugs, were seized.

The Public Prosecution listened to the statements of the victims and ordered them to be placed in the shelter centre to receive the necessary medical and psychological care, Mr Al

Awadhi said, adding that the victims underwent medical tests and the Forensic Lab examined the seized items.

The Public Prosecution also questioned the defendants, confronted them with seized items, and ordered that they be remanded in custody, ahead of their referral to the criminal trial to receive the most severe punishment inflicted on trafficking in persons criminals, including prison terms and fines.

As per the law, the suspects will be obliged to pay all expenses, including the expenses of returning the victim to their home countries.

On the other hand, travel procedures have been facilitated for the victims who returned to their country based on their will and at the expense of the state.

# Credit rating downgrade chance over virus threat

TDT | Manama

Gulf countries such as Bahrain and Oman could be at risk of a credit rating downgrade by the coronavirus crisis continue to drag, according to a major credit rating agency S and P.

If the coronavirus epidemic continue to deepen, countries such as Bahrain and Oman could take a hit, according to S and P.

"If you exclude the investment proceeds from the sovereign wealth funds, every single Gulf economy is running pretty substantial underlying fiscal deficits," he added.

"You have pretty high break even oil prices," he said, singling out Oman and Bahrain. "They do stand out."

According to the IMF, Bahrain's fiscal break even oil price is projected to be 91\$ per barrel while Oman's is \$87.60 a barrel.

"Bahrain is working very hard to diversify and find non-oil revenues," he said.

"But they are where they are in terms of regional exposures, and the key export of this part of the world is clearly crude oil," he added.

The coronavirus epidemic has already disrupted economic growth in China and a further spread to other countries



**Bahrain is working very hard to diversify and find non-oil revenues.**

MS GEORGIEVA

could derail a "highly fragile" projected recovery in the global economy in 2020, the International Monetary Fund has warned.

In a note for G20 finance ministers and central bankers, the global lender mapped out many risks facing the global economy, including the disease and a renewed spike in US-China trade tensions, as well as climate-related disasters.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the outbreak was a stark reminder of how unforeseen events could threaten a fragile recovery, and urged G20 policymakers to work to reduce other uncertainties linked to trade, climate change and inequality.

"Uncertainty is becoming the new normal," Georgieva wrote in a blog posted on the IMF website. "While some uncertainties — like disease — are out of our control, we should not create new uncertainties where we can avoid it."

## Role of volunteers in tackling corona threat stressed



Dr Amin led the open meeting with BRCS volunteers.

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS) has held an open meeting with its volunteering members, during which their role in spreading awareness on how to prevent coronavirus was emphasised.

The Bahrain Red Crescent board member Dr Fawzi Amin started the meeting by praising the government efforts to prevent the virus.

He noted the preparations made by the Kingdom to face any emergency cases through training the medical and health personnel, and equipping the quarantine areas in a number of hospitals and centers, and dealing with cases, which has been suspected so far with a high professionalism, expressing reassur-

ance about the official statements confirming that Bahrain is free of Coronavirus so far.

"We in (BRCS) are ready to provide aid and assistance if requested, and to complete the governmental efforts exerted, especially as we have a great knowledge of how to deal with disasters, pandemics and disease outbreaks in different regions around the world," said Dr Amin during the meeting.

Dr Amin explained that the aim of the meeting with the volunteers is to make sure that they are ready to provide the necessary medical and health assistance upon request, and provide them with the information and skills necessary to deal with emergency cases.

"When qualified and trained medical and health teams are concerned with dealing with

Coronavirus patients, trained volunteers can cover the shortage in this field by providing ambulatory and health services to patients and reviewers in hospitals and health centres," Dr Amin added.

During the meeting, Dr Amin presented a list of reliable sources of information about the spread of Coronavirus and how to deal with it in a way that helps to combat the rumors that usually accompany such major global events.

He explained that the International Federation of the Red Crescent and Red Cross put three scenarios to deal with this virus, one of them at the level of China, and the other in the event that the virus spreads very quickly in the neighbouring countries of China, and the last scenario in the event that the virus turns into a

global pandemic.

Dr Amin stressed that the focus of the union is to support poor African countries in the event of an invasion by the virus, and ways to provide support to the health sector in these countries, which is already suffering from weakness and declining services, adding that the federation provided 32 million Swiss francs for this purpose.

The meeting, which was attended by the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health at the Ministry of Health and a member of (BRCS) Board Dr Mariam Al Hajeri, stressed the role of volunteers in the application and dissemination of the instructions circulated by the Ministry of Health regarding the prevention of Coronavirus, and its symptoms and how to deal with suspected cases of infection.

## Rare honour



Bahraini Dentist and Owner of Aesthetica Dental Centre Dr Reem Al Shaiba received a Master's of Aesthetics and Restorative Dentistry from the University of Manchester, becoming the first Bahraini dentist to receive such a specialised certification in this field from this renowned University. On this occasion, Dr Reem was received by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Kingdom Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa at the Kingdom's Embassy in London, where HE the Ambassador congratulated her on the unparalleled scientific achievement, wishing her all the best in utilising it to serve the health sector in Bahrain.

## Concerns rise over fake gold in Saudi Arabia

Jeddah

A video posted on Twitter by a member of the Precious Metals Committee explaining the ways some gold manufacturers manipulate weight of gold and diamonds has attracted significant attention in Saudi Arabia, raising the question of the authenticity of gold in the Kingdom.

In the video, Mohammed Azooz said cover-ups have made many

Saudi gold sellers lose power over the market, and that industry was being controlled by non-Saudis.

In the video, he explained how some people circumvented customs and sneak gold into the country, especially during the Hajj season to target pilgrims.

The Arabic translation of #cheating\_in\_jewelry has been trending in Twitter for a few days, and several people posted about the issue, blaming those who were selling fake gold to pilgrims as



Local gold markets have seen stagnation in recent times, because of the increasing price of gold on international stock markets.

pure gold.

This is not the first time the fake gold issue has been raised. The World Gold Council previously suspended its activities in the Kingdom following claims that some jewelry manufacturers mixed glass with gold. Former Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Zainal rejected the accusations at the time, described them as "grave and dangerous."

Local gold markets have seen stagnation in recent times, because

of the increasing price of gold on international stock markets.

The price of one kilogram of 24 karat (k) gold in the Kingdom can reach SR185,000 (\$46,700).

Gold and economic experts say that the movement in gold prices depends on numerous factors such as political and economic events around the world, the price of the US dollar in banks, black markets, as well as the supply and demand trends in global stock markets.

# business

## BAC, Zain Bahrain in concession agreement for new terminal

● Zain Bahrain will offer a range of products and services at the new facility

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Airport Company (BAC) and Zain Bahrain signed a five-year concession agreement for the operation of a retail outlet at Bahrain International Airport's (BIA) new Passenger Terminal Building.

BAC Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalah and Zain Bahrain Managing Director, Mohammed Abdulla Zainalabedin signed the deal.

As per the deal, Zain Bahrain will offer a range of products and services at the new facility, ensuring international travellers stay connected while visiting the Kingdom.

In attendance at the signing ceremony were Minister of Transportation & Telecommunications and BAC Chairman, Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed and Zain Bahrain Chairman of the Board of Directors, Shaikh Ahmed bin Ali Al Khalifa, Zain Bahrain Chief Executive Officer,



BAC Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalah and Zain Bahrain Managing Director, Mohammed Abdulla Zainalabedin signed the deal in the presence of top officials

Duncan Howard, Zain Bahrain Director of Communications & Investor Relations, Abdulla Khalid Al Khalifa and Zain Bahrain Director of Consumer Marketing & Sales Reporting, Ammar Al Ketbi, and members of the media team.

Al Binfalah said: "BAC has carefully chosen each of the new terminal's service providers to ensure passengers benefit from the best Bahrain has to offer. We are confident that

visitors will appreciate the wide selection available and the highest levels of service."

Zainalabedin commented: "The new terminal is the gateway to the Kingdom, and it is Zain Bahrain's mandate to provide our guests and customers with the highest quality services."

Upon landing, the first thing many passengers do is turn on their mobile phones, which can result in costly roaming charges.

Passengers can avoid such fees by purchasing a local pre-paid SIM card at the Arrivals Area, enabling them to enjoy swift and seamless coverage from the moment they arrive in the Kingdom.

Alongside Zain Bahrain, stc Bahrain and Batelco will operate retail outlets and offer their services at the new terminal, ensuring broader and faster mobile coverage for travellers and tenants.

## TRA opens registration for Cyber Safety Award

TDT | Manama

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced opening registration for the Cyber Safety Award to encourage members of society and educational institutions in Bahrain, to create awareness content in the field of Cyber Safety.

Registration is open to students from public and private secondary schools, as well as educational institutions, schools and universities, to nominate distinguished students for participation.

Applications should be submitted in the form of a short film, of no more than 120 seconds in length, covering the impact of overutilization of social media on young people's social relations and psychological wellbeing.

"Through SafeSurf's initiatives, the TRA seeks to enable youths in the Kingdom of Bahrain by opening the innovative fields to promising talents to spread awareness among the community as well as encouraging students to achieve cyber safety focusing on the effects of it on their day-to-day life," said Sh. Abdulla bin Humood Al Khalifa, TRA's Director of Consumer Affairs and Media.

Online training sessions are available to participants to help improve the skills required for the production of short films. The training will be presented by photography director Hamad Abdulla, win-



Sh. Abdulla bin Humood Al Khalifa, TRA's Director of Consumer Affairs and Media

ner of several international television series and programmes awards. The sessions will illustrate techniques of photography, montage and filmmaking, to acquire special skills needed to enhance the quality of the application.

TRA has also opened registration to join the judging panel. Applicants need to be experts and leaders in the following professions: film producers, film directors, narrators, scenario writers, film critics, social media experts, internet security experts, educationalists, and other related professions. Judges for the Cyber Safety Award will be selected based on their experience and level of expertise.

Terms and conditions and method of registration are available on [www.safesurf.bh/award](http://www.safesurf.bh/award).

## Saudi GDP growth projected to see an uptick this year, backed by non-oil sector: central bank



Ahmed al-Kholife

Reuters | Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's economic growth is projected to see an uptick this year, backed by the non-oil economy, the country's central bank governor said yesterday.

Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) Governor Ahmed al-Kholife, also told an economic conference in Riyadh that it was too early to get the full picture of the economic damage caused by the new coronavirus, which has emerged in China and spread globally.

The International Monetary Fund in January said it expects Saudi Arabia's economy will expand at 1.9 per cent this year, up from an estimated 0.4% in 2019, however the forecast for the kingdom's 2020 forecast was cut from 2.2pc due to lower oil output.

## Coronavirus to shave 0.1 percentage points from global growth: IMF

Reuters | Riyadh

The fast-spreading coronavirus outbreak will likely lower China's economic growth this year to 5.6 per cent, down 0.4 percentage points from its January outlook, and shave 0.1 percentage points from global growth, the IMF said on Saturday.

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva presented the outlook to central bankers and finance ministers from the world's 20 largest economies gathered in Riyadh, but said the IMF continued to look at more dire scenarios.

China reported a sharp fall in new deaths and cases of the coronavirus on Saturday but world health officials warned it was too early to make predictions about the outbreak as new infections continued to rise in other countries.

"In our current baseline scenario, announced policies are implemented and China's economy would return to normal in the second quarter. As a result, the impact on the world economy would be relatively minor and short-lived," Georgieva said.

"But we are also looking at more dire scenarios where the spread of the virus continues for longer and more globally, and the growth consequences are more protracted."



IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva speaks during a news conference in Rabat, Morocco

**"**  
In our current baseline scenario, announced policies are implemented and China's economy would return to normal in the second quarter. As a result, the impact on the world economy would be relatively minor and short-lived

GEORGIEVA

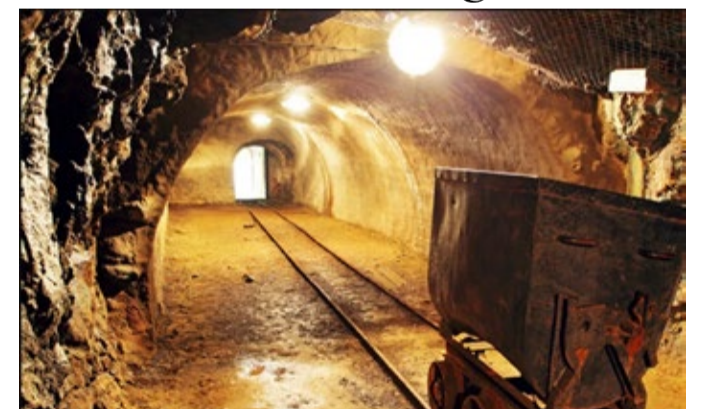
The latest draft communique from the G20 meeting gives less

prominence to the outbreak of the coronavirus as a growth risk, saying only that the G20 would "... enhance global risk monitoring, including the recent outbreak of COVID-19," the medical acronym for the coronavirus.

The coronavirus outbreak may curb demand for oil in China, which has reported more than 2,000 deaths, and other Asian countries, further depressing oil prices, industry body the Institute of International Finance (IIF) said on Friday.

Georgieva said the IMF was ready to provide grants for debt relief to its poorest and most vulnerable members.

## India says discovers fields with over 3,000 tonnes of gold ore



Representative picture

Lucknow, India

India, the world's second-biggest gold consumer, has discovered gold fields with reserves of over 3,000 tonnes in Uttar Pradesh, a government official said yesterday.

India mines between 2 to 3 tonnes of gold annually, relying on expensive imports to fulfil nearly all of its demand, which averaged 843 tonnes per year over the past 10 years.

Its hunger for gold - used extensively in jewellery, as offerings to Gods and in lavish weddings - cost India more than \$31 billion on imports last year, making the metal its second-biggest import item after crude oil.

Central and state departments have discovered traces of gold in Uttar Pradesh's Son-

bhadra district after surveying the area for more than 10 years, said Roshan Jacob, the head of the mining department in Uttar Pradesh.

"In Son Pahadi we have found 2,940 tonne... in the Hardi Pahadi area 646 kilogram of ore has been traced," Jacob said, referring to the two areas where gold ore had been discovered.

The state is now seeking forest and environment clearances after which it will open up the reserves for bidding, Jacob said.

The concentration level of gold in the area is about 3 grams per tonne of ore and the state is working with the Geological Survey of India to determine how much gold can be extracted from the fields, she added.

# EU budget summit ends with no deal

Brussels

An EU summit called to set the bloc's next seven-year budget ended in impasse late Friday, riven by competing groups among the 27 member states and pressure to fill a funding gap left by Brexit.

Differences were "still too great to reach an agreement," German Chancellor Angela Merkel told reporters at the end of the two days of talks in Brussels.

No date had yet been set for another summit to try again, but Merkel added that "we are going to have to return to the subject."

The trillion-euro-plus budget, the multiannual financial framework, is meant to be operational from next year and run to the end of 2027.

But the summit revealed stubborn differences between a handful of wealthy "frugal" states and a larger group wanting more money to meet both big European ambitions and to fill the 75-billion-euro shortfall left by Britain's exit from the EU last month.

"Unfortunately we have observed it was not possible to reach an agreement, we observed we need more time," said European Council President Charles Michel, who had called the extraordinary summit and stewarded the talks.

He said, however, he was right to make the effort: "As my grandmother said, to succeed you first have to try."

## 'Goup vs group'

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who is counting on a big enough budget to meet her executive's "geopolitical" ambitions, said the EU discord was sign of "democracy".

Despite Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron teaming up to back Michel in his search for an acceptable compromise, two groups of countries dug in their heels.

One was the so-called "frugal four" made up of Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, which wanted the budget reined in to reflect the UK's absence and to avoid them having to shoulder a bigger budgetary burden.

The other was the "friends of cohesion", 16 member states including Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Poland and Hungary that want to ringfence EU spending on things like infrastructure as well as farm subsidies.



European Union leaders gather around the table to try to bridge the divide over the next long-term EU budget. But they did not succeed

## Macron to farmers: France stood firm on EU farm budget

Reuters | Paris

President Emmanuel Macron yesterday told farmers that France stood its ground in opposing cuts to agricultural subsidies and would continue to do so, a day after an EU summit on the bloc's next budget ended in deadlock.

Like his predecessors, Macron has called on Europe to maintain a large budget for its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), of which France is the main beneficiary.

Inaugurating the annual Paris farm show on Saturday, Macron said France would resist efforts to cut the CAP envelope.

"On the CAP we defend an ambitious budget. CAP cannot be the adjustment variable of Brexit. We need to support our farmers," Macron said.

"If we do not have a deal, we keep the current system. We are protected by the fact that without a deal, we keep the system as it is. We did not yield to those who wanted to reduce the (CAP) budget," he added.

"We ended up in a situation of group versus group. That's why it failed," a source close to the



French President Emmanuel Macron attends the 57th International Agriculture Fair at the Prote De Versailles exhibition centre in Paris, France

Macron has had an uneasy relationship with farmers, a powerful lobby in the EU's biggest agricultural producer.

He initially won plaudits for legislation aimed at sharing profits more fairly along the food chain. But the effects have yet to be felt widely at farm level, while Macron's deter-

mination to phase out weedkiller glyphosate has fueled farmers' resentment at being cast as polluters.

In the aisles of the agricultural show, Macron tried to reassure farmers that glyphosate would not be scrapped in cases where there were no alternatives, while rules on safe distances for pesticide spraying

would be adopted progressively.

"We are behind our farmers and peasants. They feed us everyday. We must be proud of French agriculture. I know I can count on our farm world to successfully transform, keeping a strong agriculture while managing to reduce pesticide use," he said.

their own interests to defend. Merkel is determined to retain a budget rebate her country

has received ever since Britain wrangled one for itself while a member. Macron, who is against

the rebates, is resolute that the farm subsidies -- from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) -- not be cut.

"The CAP cannot go to pay for Brexit," Macron said as the summit broke up. The French president was to visit a national farm show in Paris on Saturday.

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

## A battle over percentages

Much of the summit's haggling focused on how much of a percentage of GDP the member states would have to cough up.

The "frugals" were entrenched at paying no more than 1.0 percent.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said that position was "reasonable", addressing inflation and economic growth.

But, he said, the hole left by Brexit "is now a fact has to be reflected in the budget".

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said his rival group was working on "counter-proposition" with a vision of a "more ambitious" European Union that would require a higher GDP target.

Macron expressed frustration with the situation, saying "I don't think it's a good method, to try to break away in groups and to block things, to get together and form types of blocking coalitions".

Michel's revised proposal made Friday was for 1.07 percent, which would have resulted in a seven-year budget of 1.09 trillion euros.

That would be just a bit above the previous one of 1.08 trillion euros while covering the Brexit hole. But it found no takers.

Far above the figures thrown around at the summit is the one proposed by the European Parliament, pressing for 1.3 percent of GDP.

That would be to cover Brexit, fund all current programmes and go to ambitious new ones such as fighting climate change, increasing EU investment in space and technology, and boosting the bloc's external borders.

Almost all leaders at the summit view the MEPs' ask as way too much. But they are also aware that the parliament has to give its assent to a budget deal among member states, whenever that might be worked out.

## 'Dieselgate' recall of more Mercedes vehicles 'likely'

Frankfurt am Main

German authorities will "likely" discover software rigging the level of diesel emissions in Mercedes-Benz cars other than those already sanctioned, the Daimler group warned on Friday.

Daimler stands accused of hiding the fact that it was using illegal software in diesel cars to cheat emissions tests.

"It is likely that in the course of the ongoing and/or further investigations KBA (Federal Motor Transport Authority) will issue additional administrative orders holding that other Mercedes-Benz diesel vehicles

are also equipped with impermissible defeat devices," the manufacturer wrote in its annual report.

KBA has already ordered the recall of nearly a million Mercedes cars.

The manufacturer disputes the illegality of the "engine management functions" under the spotlight but at the end of September agreed to pay a fine of 870 million euros (\$944 million) for selling non-compliant vehicles.

Faced with the threat of new recalls, the manufacturer has suspended the sale of certain models "as a precaution".



Daimler chairman Ola Kallenius

Total charges of 5.5 billion euros from dieselgate, which began with Volkswagen in 2015, and a mass recall of vehicles fitted with faulty airbags from supplier Takata contributed to net earnings slumping by 64 percent to 2.7 billion euros (\$2.9 billion) last year.

According to its annual report, the group more than doubled its provisions for "governmental and legal proceedings and measures" with 4.9 billion euros (\$5.32 billion) entered on the balance sheet for 2019 against 2.1 billion at the end of 2018.

It also increased its provision for possible related costs at 8.7

billion euros, as opposed to 7 billion at the end of 2018.

"The increase relates to ongoing governmental and legal proceedings and measures taken with regard to Mercedes-Benz diesel vehicles in several regions and markets, as well as an updated risk assessment for an extended recall of Takata airbags," wrote Daimler.

Like the entire sector, Daimler is engaged in a race to reduce the level of CO2 emissions from its cars and comply with strict standards in force this year in the EU, under penalty of heavy sanctions.

"The ambitious statutory re-

quirements will be difficult to fulfil in some countries," it admitted.

Daimler chairman Ola Kallenius has, on several occasions, said that the new standards were a great challenge for the manufacturer. While he is hopeful of meeting standards "in the next few years", that is "not guaranteed" for 2020 and 2021, he said last week.

Daimler also said that the coronavirus epidemic, centred on China, may have a negative effect on sales and lead to "major disruptions in production, purchasing markets and the supply chain".

## Rising stocks fuel record profit for Buffett's Berkshire



Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett walks through the exhibit hall as shareholders gather to hear from the billionaire investor at Berkshire Hathaway Inc's annual shareholder meeting in Omaha, Nebraska

Reuters

Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc on Saturday posted a 23 per cent decrease in quarterly operating profit, while soaring prices in stock holdings such as Apple Inc enabled the conglomerate to smash its old record for full-year earnings.

In his annual letter to Berkshire shareholders, Buffett defended Berkshire's foray into stocks, which comes amid a four-year drought since its last major acquisition that has left Berkshire sitting on \$128 billion of cash.

Berkshire did step up repurchases of its own stock, buying back roughly \$2.2 billion after repurchasing \$2.8bn in the prior nine months.

"I am delighted with the increased commitment to share repurchases," said Thomas Russo, a partner at Gardner, Russo & Gardner, which invests 13pc of the \$13bn of assets it oversees in Berkshire. "It may be a very large arrow in Berkshire's quiver to increase intrinsic value on a per-share basis."

Fourth-quarter operating profit fell to \$4.42bn, or approximately \$2,720 per Class A share, from \$5.72bn, or about \$3,484 per share, a year earlier,

hurt by underwriting losses in its reinsurance operations.

Berkshire also posted quarterly net income of \$29.16bn, compared with a net loss of \$25.39bn a year earlier, reflecting gains in its common stock holdings.

For all of 2019, net income totaled \$81.42bn, topping the record \$44.94bn for 2017, when Berkshire benefited from that year's reduction in the U.S. corporate tax rate.

Such huge swings stem from an accounting rule requiring Berkshire to report paper gains and losses from its stock holdings with net income even if it sells nothing.

Buffett wrote that the companies whose stocks Berkshire owns are generating returns that are "remarkable under any circumstances," and "truly mind-blowing" compared to low single-digit returns available on bonds.

"Over time, Charlie and I expect our equity holdings—as a group—to deliver major gains, albeit in an unpredictable and highly irregular manner," Buffett wrote, referring to Berkshire Vice Chairman Charlie Munger.

Apple soared 86pc in 2019 and 31pc in the fourth quarter alone, leaving Berkshire with a \$73.67 billion year-end stake.

## G20 generally agrees on need to coordinate over coronavirus



Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso

Reuters | Riyadh

Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso said yesterday that Group of 20 nations generally agreed on the need to coordinate in responding to the new coronavirus that emerged in China and has spread globally.

Aso said he did not believe that risks to Japan's economy have heightened dramatically

but declined comment on recent weakness in the yen.

He said almost all the G20 finance leaders gathered in Saudi Arabia on Saturday had mentioned risk from the new coronavirus, which has led to massive business disruptions in China that are starting to spill over into the global economy.

China's ambassador to Saudi Arabia represented Beijing at the meeting, Aso said.

# Saudi Arabia hosts G20 leaders

Riyadh

Finance ministers and central bank governors from G20 nations met in the Saudi capital yesterday for a two-day gathering to discuss the global economy and the risks from the coronavirus epidemic.

Aside from an action plan to shield the world economy from the impact of the outbreak, financial leaders from the world's top 20 economies are also expected to discuss ways to achieve a fairer global taxation system for the digital era.

"Finance ministers and central bank governors will discuss global economic outlook and possible policy responses to support growth and safeguard against downside risks," G20 organisers said in a statement.

"In addition, they will discuss the priorities of the Saudi G20 Presidency under the theme 'realising opportunities of the 21st century for all'... including the tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy."

The meeting in Saudi Arabia, the first Arab nation to hold the G20 presidency, will be chaired by the kingdom's finance minister Mohammed al-Jadaan and central bank governor Ahmed al-Kholifey.

The meeting comes amid growing alarm over the new coronavirus as Chinese authorities lock down millions of people to prevent the spread of the disease, with major knock-on



Saudi Arabia took over the presidency of the G20 group from Japan at a foreign ministers' meeting in Nagoya in November

Finance ministers and central bank governors will discuss global economic outlook and possible policy responses to support growth and safeguard against downside risks

G20 ORGANISERS

effects for the global economy.



Journalists sit in the media center during the meeting of G20 finance ministers and central bank governors in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia,

The impact of the epidemic may be short-lived but it comes as the global economy remains "fragile", IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva told a gathering in Riyadh on Friday.

Georgieva said the economic impact could see a "V-shaped" trajectory, with a sharp decline in China's GDP followed by a sharp recovery.

She warned the situation could have more dire consequences for other countries as the impacts spill over.

The virus has now claimed 2,345 lives in China, cutting off transportation and forcing businesses to close their doors.

China has said it will not be sending any leaders from Beijing to the Riyadh gathering but the Chinese ambassador in the kingdom will instead lead a small delegation.

"We have been closely watching the developments of the virus and assessing its potential effects on economic growth," a senior US Treasury official told reporters.

"We expect ministers and governors will discuss the global economic outlook, particularly as it relates to the coronavirus outbreak."

The G20 organisers will also

## US blocking G20 mention of climate change in draft communique

Reuters | Riyadh

The United States is against mentioning climate change in the communique of the world's financial leaders, G20 diplomats said, after a new draft of the joint statement showed the G20 are considering including it as a risk factor to growth.

The G20 expects a modest pick-up in global growth this year and next, but noted downside risks to this outlook stemming from "... geopolitical and remaining trade tensions and policy uncertainty and macroeconomic risk related to environmental sustainability".

The latest draft communique gives less prominence to the outbreak of the coronavirus as a growth risk, saying only the G20 would "... enhance global risk monitoring, including the recent outbreak of COVID-19," the medical acronym for the coronavirus.

host a ministerial-level symposium on international taxation, focused on the challenges arising from the digitalisation of the global economy.

The symposium will be attended by US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin along with a host of other financial leaders.

The Saudi presidency will see it host world leaders for a summit in Riyadh from November 21 to 22.

It will hold more than 100 events and conferences in the run-up to the summit, including ministerial meetings, organisers say.

Human rights groups have urged G20 member states to exert pressure on the kingdom over its intensifying crackdown on dissent, which has seen women activists, journalists and political dissidents jailed.

## Let's come together to tax tech giants, say G20 officials eyeing \$100 billion boost

Reuters | Riyadh

Leading world economies must show unity in dealing with aggressive "tax optimisation" by global digital giants like Google, Amazon and Facebook, G20 officials said yesterday.

Global rules are being developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to make digital companies pay tax where they do business, rather than where they register subsidiaries. The OECD says this could boost national tax revenues by a total of \$100 billion (77 billion pounds) a year.

The call for unity appeared mainly directed at the United States, home to the biggest tech companies, in an attempt to head off any stalling on the rules until after the U.S. presidential election in November.

"There is no time to wait for elections," German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz told a tax



The Facebook logo is displayed on a mobile phone in this picture illustration

seminar on the sidelines of a meeting of G20 finance ministers and central bankers.

"This needs leadership in certain countries," Scholz said, looking directly at U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, sitting next to him at the seminar.

The taxing of digital firms and the effect of the coronavirus outbreak on the global economy are among the hot topics being debated by G20 financial

leaders, from the world's 20 largest economies, during their talks in Riyadh this weekend.

The OECD wants to set a minimum effective level at which such companies would be taxed and seeks agreement by the start of July, with an endorsement by the G20 by the end of the year.

"A coordinated answer is not the better way forward, but, given the alternatives,

the only way forward," OECD head Angel Gurría told the seminar.

But the OECD efforts were stalled late last year by last-minute changes demanded by Washington, which many G20 officials view as reluctant to deal with a potentially politically tricky matter before the presidential election.

Mnuchin said OECD countries were close to an agreement on the minimum tax level, which he said would also go a long way to resolving the issue of where tax is paid.

"I think we all want to get this done by the end of the year, and that's the objective," Mnuchin told the seminar.

Mnuchin sought to reassure G20 delegates that a U.S. proposal to add a "safe harbour" regime to the tax reform effort — which has drawn criticism from France and other countries — would not let companies simply opt out of paying taxes.

# Don't conflate Europe's racial terror with the rise of hard-right parties

*Fears that far-right extremism is linked entirely to the continent's rapidly growing fringe political movements with nativist agendas are misplaced*

DAMIEN MCELROY

The right-wing extremist who carried out a killing spree targeting shisha cafes in southern Germany last week was driven by a desire to "cleanse" his homeland. By the standards of the 24-page manifesto that Tobias Rathjen, 43, left behind, the death of a 35-year-old pregnant woman would mark a grim double victory. The woman was among eight victims in the town of Hanau, near Frankfurt, who died when Rathjen started his attack.

From the headlines of the past few days, there is evidence to suggest that ideologically driven acts of terror are gaining pace around Europe. So much so that there are many questioning just how isolated the extremists are. Is there a groundswell of wider social and political support for "manifestos" from the killers? Is there a hinterland among the new hard-right parties on the rise in European parliaments with a symbiotic relationship with neo-fascists?

These questions are pressing most obviously in Germany, where the Hanau attack has been condemned by state leaders and ordinary citizens alike.

Politics in Europe's largest country has been upended in recent months by events originating in the town of Erfurt on the border of the old East and West Germany, where local resident Bjorn Hocke is the regional leader of the AFD, a resurgent hard-right party capturing up to 20 per cent in nationwide polls.

It has posted billboards that



There is evidence to suggest that ideologically-driven acts of terror are gaining pace around Europe, most recently in the Ger...

make plain its programmatic prejudice. One version states simply: "Stop Islamisation." In Germany, the idea of preserving Germans from other identities is something sacred in the public square – and the AFD revels in its post-Nazi taboo bursting.

Even in the digital-era, giant posters serve a proxy purpose. One group of activists erected a full-scale display outside Mr Hocke's

farmhouse home of Berlin's Holocaust memorial. A tonsorially-challenged opponent also funded his own banner sending up the idea that skinheads – a synonym for neo-Nazis – could be electorally viable. Adverts for a shaven-headed salon owner running for Germany's Liberal Party said he had excelled in history class, unlike all other skinheads.

Mr Hocke emerged as a pow-

er-broker on the national when his party topped the last year's state election and backed a Liberal candidate for provincial leadership. The was far-reaching.

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the woman who had taken leadership of the centre-right Christian Democratic Party was thus the heir apparent to Chancellor Angela Merke...

# In Syria, Russia is weighing its opti...

RAGHIDA DERGHAM

The military establishment in Russia is determined to contain Turkish ambitions in Syria and put an end to what it sees as excesses being committed by Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the war-torn country. However, members of Moscow's diplomatic corps are still hoping that the Turkish president would change course and avoid a potentially dangerous confrontation between the two regional powers in Syria's north. Russia's President Vladimir Putin, it is reliably learnt, is hoping to personally influence Mr Erdogan but finds himself in a position where there is pressure to make a decision quickly.

Either way, what is clear is that Russia will not abandon the Syrian regime of Bashar Al Assad. After all, Mr Al Assad's government is a key component in furthering Moscow's strategic interests in the Middle East.

I was in the Russian capital earlier in the week to attend the Valdai Club conference, the theme of which was "Middle East in a Time of Change: Towards New Stability Architecture". There, I met figures apprised of the thinking of the Russian civilian and military leadership groups – especially vis-a-vis Turkey and Iran – and got the sense that a military confrontation with Turkey in Syria is inevitable. For what they are worth, the Astana and Sochi agreements delineating the two sides' interests in the country are now in a state of

clinical death.

The military brass in Moscow believes that Mr Erdogan's efforts to undermine Russian involvement in Syria would have damaging consequences for its strategic interests, as well as prestige, and concludes that the time has come to counter his actions. Russian forces have momentum on the ground – and therefore control over timing – for them to swing into action. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to push for a political solution.

Russia defines its intervention in Syria "a war on terror" but it could well turn into a war for Syria. Which would be an important development because, while Russian public opinion might not warm up to the idea at the beginning, that will change when the conflict is framed in the context of a nation preserving its strategic interests and preventing Turkey from undermining its prestige.

Because of this deterioration in these ties, Iran – the third party to those agreements – could acquire greater importance for Russia. The catch, however, is that Moscow's attempt to strengthen its relations with Tehran in Syria and beyond would invite US measures against Russia – in the form of economic sanctions or even an undermining of its interests in other parts of the world. In other words, Moscow's two allies in Syria have become burdens – one economic and the other military.

There is certainly anxiety in Moscow regarding Iran's domestic



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the TurkStream inauguration in January. Relatio...

*Even as Moscow continues to rely on diplomacy, the military establishment is preparing for a confrontation*



1941

Plutonium is first produced and isolated by **Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg**.



1942

World War II: Japanese submarines fire artillery shells at the coastline near Santa Barbara, California.

1943

A fire breaks out at **Saint Joseph's Orphanage**, County Cavan, Ireland, killing 35 children and one adult.

1943

**Greek Resistance:** The United Panhellenic Organization of Youth is founded in Greece.



Man town of Hanau.

signed. Mrs Merkel herself issued warnings about the march of right-wing politics. Now following the Hanau tragedy, the interior minister Horst Seehofer warned that far-right extremism was the biggest terror threat facing the country. Germany has a particular history but there are other European countries going through similar traumas. The threat seen in Hanau has been seen from Finland to

Politics in Europe's largest country has been upended in recent months by events originating in the town of Erfurt on the border of the old East and West Germany, where local resident Bjorn Hocke is the regional leader of the AfD.

Christchurch, New Zealand, where almost a year ago at least 50 people were gunned down while offering Friday prayers in two mosques. In the nexus between the political arena and the violent fringe, what happens in Germany will determine how this threat is contained or marginalised; not just in one country but around northern Europe and further afield.

The immediate headlines following the Hanau attack used shisha cafes as shorthand for Muslims. In fact the five-month pregnant victim, Mercedes Kierpacz, was of mixed Roma, Polish and German background. The Rathjen "manifesto" concentrated on racial purity, not religious issues.

Thousands of people rallied in city squares in the area and around Germany at the end of last week, with many carrying banners crying "Nazis out" and "never again". The AfD carried much of the blame – but therein lies a problem. It is fair

to resist the rise of hard-right parties with nativist agendas – their policies are obviously discriminatory – but there is a danger in losing the focus on the extremists themselves.

Politics is changing in the West. Political parties are confronted by demands to address the base demands of voters who are aggrieved and seeking a new departures. In Germany, a party that has unpalatable policies has fed off the failure of the political centre-ground to adapt. By contrast in Britain, the Conservative Party has changed its political stripes and, so far, smothered a challenge from the right. In France, the very traditional right-wing National Front was kept at bay by a maverick centrist president.

Keeping the purist killers marginalised and ineffective is a whole different challenge – one that is more suited to the realms of counter-extremism and criminal justice. It might be tempting to fuse the trends; after all, allegations that the new right acts as a seedbed have the ring of truth but they spur wider divisions. It is more useful to remain discriminating between the threats.

Assailants and killers occupy a dedicated fringe, and thwarting attacks remains a primary task for the security forces. But just as important is the need for political leaders to do a better job at resisting the onslaught that is crushing the political centre.

At the end of the day, the fight against extremism is interlinked but it is not one and the same.

## ons against Turkey



ns between Moscow and Ankara are strained over Idlib.

Moscow has described them as illegal and threatened to respond but Russia is nonetheless set to incur financial losses. There is also anxiety that new US laws could impose restrictions on foreign investments in Russia.

situation, especially in light of the recent anti-regime protests across the country.

Hardliners in Tehran, led by the supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – the regime's influential militia arm – see the weekend's legislative elections as an opportunity to squeeze out the so-called liberals from within the establishment. Having already disqualified most liberals from running in polls, the regime has sought a national mandate for harsher policies vis-a-vis the West.

However, while Tehran is keen to assure Moscow that it has things under control at home, the worry is that its attempted purges would reduce any influence President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif might have in the country's dealings with the rest of the world. This would

preclude any negotiations with the US and possibly lead to further escalations in the region.

Given its problems with Turkey, Russia might have little choice but to accept Iran's assurances and its boastful claim of having helped Hezbollah, Tehran's ally in Lebanon, to consolidate its power in that country. But it does not encourage the current developments in Tehran.

There is also the threat of economic pressure on Moscow. Last week, Washington imposed sanctions on the commercial arm of the Russian energy giant Rosneft for helping Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro – another ally – to evade US sanctions. Moscow has described them as illegal and threatened to respond but Russia is nonetheless set to incur financial losses. There is also anxiety that new US laws could impose restrictions on foreign investments in Russia.

Moscow is aware that Washington is determined to get it to end its support of the regime in Tehran, even if that means slapping more sanctions. What it does anticipate fully is an official warning from the US next month, when a key meeting regarding US foreign policy on Iran and its supporters is scheduled to be convened.

In a nutshell, recent events have left Moscow concerned even as it reviews its tactics and partnerships – both existing and potential – as it looks to preserve the gains it has made over the years in the Middle East and elsewhere.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



I would like to compliment the Supreme Court of India for organising an international conference to discuss the important subject of 'Judiciary and the Changing World.' In my remarks highlighted the greatness of India's Constitution and the respect our Courts have among people.

@narendramodi

02



Johnny McEntee called in White House liaisons from cabinet agencies for an introductory meeting Thursday, in which he asked them to identify political appointees across the US government who are believed to be anti-Trump, per 3 sources familiar w meeting.

@jonathanvswan

03



Donald Trump in his India visit - scheduled for Feb 24 - is bringing The Beast with him. The limousine worth \$1.56 mn was presented to the US Prez in 2018, replacing the previous Cadillac One, used by Barack Obama.

@bsindia

04



From 610kms during 2013-14 to 5,276kms in 2018-19, @narendramodi government has accelerated the electrification of railways at a massive record pace. This will enable a safer, faster and eco friendly travel by rail.

@kishanreddybjp

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

## Going loco over locusts



CAPT. MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

Many squeamish people in Bahrain have been talking with dread about the locust invasion that affected Bahrain, reaching across the desert area and well into the Tubli residential zones. You see, the appearance of the locusts is a natural phenomena in neighbouring desert stretches but Bahrain is not a common destination for the swarms. Meanwhile, the Daily Tribune reported a small and interesting detail: in Kuwait, many of the older generation consider these grasshopper-like insects as edible and a rich source of protein.

That is not surprising at all. Grub gastronomy, as the cuisine involving insects and bugs is called, is considered very trendy in many parts of the world and is a time-honoured snack in others, especially South-East Asia.

They form the core of many tribal diets around the world and are now finding their way into restaurants across Australia, London, Europe and America. Isn't it funny how one's perspective changes when you see these bugs as food?

**Grub gastronomy, as the cuisine involving insects and bugs is called, is considered very trendy in many parts of the world and is a time-honoured snack in others, especially South-East Asia.**



Would we be complaining as much if hundreds of locusts crawled into our home, if all we had to do was catch them and batter-fry them?

Jokes apart, proponents of grub gastronomy say that insects will be the 21st century's eco-friendly protein source as the world increasingly eschews red meat which costs us so much green cover and water to raise. Indeed, even white meat is under the scanner because of the pollution of our oceans – fish ingest so much micro-plastics that we may as well be eating chopped-up plastic bags and farm-bred chicken are pumped full of growth hormones and antibiotics.

Of course, it's not a question of just catching the insects, bugs and grubs in fields and cooking them.

The industry has developed its own insect farming methods, where edible insects are bred in tray farms in carefully-monitored environments and prepared with all the care we give today to a cordon bleu meal.

So the next time you say, "Let's catch some grub," it could have a very different meaning. And for those of us who feel delicate about eating creepy-crawlies, well, there is always the option of going vegetarian!

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

## WORLD

## Homeless man charged in London mosque stabbing



Muazzin Rafat was stabbed whilst leading prayers at a London mosque

## London

A British court on Saturday charged a 29-year-old homeless man with causing grievous bodily harm and possessing an illegal knife he used to stab a mosque leader during prayers.

Suspect Daniel Horton stabbed London Central Mosque's muazzin Raafat Maglad during daily prayers on Thursday.

London police quickly ruled out a terror motive.

Maglad was treated at a London hospital and returned to the mosque for Friday's

evening service with his arm wrapped in a sling.

"I forgive him. I feel very sorry for him," Maglad told reporters on Friday.

"To me, as a Muslim, I don't need to put any hatred in my heart."

Prosecutor Tanya Dogra said Maglad had suffered a wound to his neck.

She also told the court that the two men knew each other because Horton had come to the Regent's Park area mosque in northwest London several times over the years.

Horton was remanded in custody ahead of another court hearing on March 20.

## Egypt court acquits Mubarak's sons over stock exchange case



Ousted Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and his two sons Alaa and Gamal faced a number of legal proceedings following the 2011 uprising that ended his three-decade rule

## Cairo

An Egyptian court yesterday acquitted two sons of former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and six others in a case known in the Egyptian media as stock exchange manipulation.

A judicial official said that the Cairo criminal court decided to acquit Alaa and Gamal Mubarak and the other defendants of any wrongdoing in the case.

Mubarak's sons were arrested in September 2018 for alleged stock market manipulation were released on bail days later.

Among those acquitted with them was prominent businessman Hassan Heikal, son of the late writer Mohammed Hassanein Heikal.

Since the 2011 ouster of Hosni Mubarak, a number of legal proceedings have been launched against the three-decade ruler and his relatives.

The "stock exchange manipulation" case as it is known in Egypt dates back to 2012, when Egypt's state prosecutor referred the six suspects to court "for illegally obtaining more than two billion Egyptian pounds (\$128.5 million)".

Mubarak's sons were accused of "profiting and obtaining illegal financial gains" from the sale of a bank.

The verdict puts an end to the judicial proceedings against Mubarak and his sons.

## Taliban, Afghan forces clash on first day of violence reduction period

● Taliban fighters attacked Afghan forces in Balkh province

● The two sides have fought for control over parts of Balkh province for years

Reuters | Kabul

Taliban fighters and Afghan security forces clashed in parts of Afghanistan on Saturday, a day after a week-long "reduction in violence" was announced, but the incidents did not spark immediate alarm on either side.

If the violence reduction period is observed successfully, the United States and the Taliban will sign an agreement on Feb. 29 that could lead to a pullout of thousands of U.S. troops after nearly two decades in the country.

Taliban fighters attacked Afghan forces in Balkh province in the early hours of Saturday, according to the spokesman for the provincial police and head of the provincial council.

The attack was confirmed by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid in an audio message to Reuters. He said an Afghan forces convoy tried to enter territory controlled by the group.

The two sides have fought for control over parts of Balkh province for years.

The Taliban spokesman also



An Afghan security force member stands guard at a security tower where two U.S. soldiers were killed a day before in Shirzad district of Nangarhar province, Afghanistan



Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani delivers remarks to US military personnel beside US President Donald Trump during a surprise visit at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan

confirmed similar clashes in other parts of the country, adding that the violence reduction understanding covered specific actions and areas and all incidents of firing should not be

considered a violation of the understanding, which, he stressed, was "not a ceasefire".

There were no immediate details on the casualties in the clashes.

Meanwhile, speaking to journalists on Saturday morning, General Scott Miller, who commands U.S. forces and the NATO-led non-combat Resolution Support (RS) mission in Afghanistan, addressed the issue of what would constitute a breach of the understanding.

"It is about observable trends showing a reduction in violence and I am confident we will be able to understand that on a daily basis and as more days go on we'll have better understanding of what the trends are," he said standing alongside the Afghan defense and interior ministers.

Previous attempts at negotiating peace agreements have been scuttled by Taliban attacks on international forces, most recently in December last year when an attack on a U.S. military base put talks on hold.

## Pilot in Kobe Bryant helicopter crash counselled by FAA after 2015 incident

Reuters

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) faulted the pilot of the helicopter that crashed in January killing basketball great Kobe Bryant and eight others for violating flight rules in a 2015 incident.

The FAA said Ara Zobayan was piloting an AS350 helicopter in May 2015 when he violated rules governing the airspace around Los Angeles International Airport.

Zobayan was expecting clearance through the airspace but air traffic control declined to approve the request because of reduced visibility due to weather, according to enforcement records released by the FAA under the Freedom of Information Act late Friday.

The FAA report said while the communication with controllers was taking place, the helicopter improperly violated flight rules by entering restricted airspace without authorization.

The report added that if Zobayan "properly planned and reviewed current weather at



Debris is seen as the site of the helicopter crash that killed Kobe Bryant and eight others in a screen grab taken in Calabasas, California, U.S. January 27, 2020 and released by the National Transportation Safety Board

LAX, he would have been able to anticipate the required action to transit" the airspace.

"Proper coordination should have included an earlier initiation of communication to allow time for receiving a clearance," the FAA report added.

The Los Angeles Times reported on the 2015 incident earlier on Friday.

The FAA report said Zobayan was counseled and added he "admitted his error, took responsibility for his action, and was willing to take any other necessary steps toward compliance." The FAA report added he "was cooperative and receptive to the counseling."

Zobayan was killed in the January crash along with Bry-

ant, 41, his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, and the other six onboard.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said earlier this month the two engines of the helicopter that crashed in hazy, cloudy weather on a California hillside last month showed no evidence of a "catastrophic internal failure."

The interim report said examination of both rotor assemblies found damage "consistent with powered rotation at the time of impact."

The findings, while preliminary, pointed to no obvious signs of mechanical problems that may have contributed to the fiery crash.

NTSB board member Jennifer Homendy said in January that clouds, fog and limited visibility reported in the vicinity of the crash would be a key focus of the investigation.

Zobayan, an experienced aviator certified as an instructor, was navigating by visual orientation, not by instrument guidance, during the entirety of the ill-fated flight, the NTSB said.

# Tiny Seychelles island coaxes bird back from brink

AFF | Cousin Island, Seychelles

**G**iant tortoises amble across Cousin Island as rare birds flit above.

The scene attests to a stunning success for BirdLife International, a conservation group that bought the tiny Seychelles isle in 1968 to save a songbird from extinction.

Thick vegetation smothers ruins that are the only reminder of the coconut and cinnamon plantations that covered the island when the group stepped in to protect the Seychelles Warbler.

Now teeming with flora and fauna and boasting white beaches, Cousin Island is firmly on the tourist map, with managers scrambling to contain visitor numbers and soften their negative environmental impact.

More than 16,000 people visited the island in 2018, compared with 12,000 a decade earlier.

"Tourism is important for Cousin. That's what allows us to finance the conservation projects we run here."

conservation projects we run here.

"But 16,000 tourists... that was too much," said Nirmal Shah, director of Nature Seychelles, which is charged with running the special reserve.

Before the island was in private hands, the population of Seychelles Warblers was thought to have shrunk to just 26, barely hanging on in a mangrove swamp after much of their native habitat had been destroyed.

Now, they number more than 3,000 and the greenish-brown bird has been reintroduced to four other islands in the archipelago. The former plantations have transformed into native forests, teeming with lizards, hermit crabs and seabirds, and the island is the most important nesting site for hawksbill turtles in the western Indian Ocean.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) waxes lyrical about the "unique biodiversity and conservation achievements" of Cousin, "the first island purchased for species conservation", a model since replicated around the world.

**Nature first**

Tourists have been allowed onto the island since 1972, but the message is clear: nature comes first.

In a well-oiled routine, every morning a handful of luxury sailboats and small motorboats anchor off the island, where their occupants wait for Nature Seychelles to skipper them ashore on their boats.

"Tourist boats cannot land directly on the island, the biohazard risk is too big," Shah said.

"Non-indigenous animals who may accidentally be on board could come to the island and threaten its (ecological) balance." Too many tourists can also upset this balance.

Nature Seychelles in July increased the price of visits from 33 to 40 euros (\$36 to \$44) and removed a free pass for children under 15, resulting in a welcome 10-percent reduction in visitor numbers.

"Something had to be done, there was too much pressure on the envi-

ronment," said Dai-lus Lawrence, the chief warden of the island.

"When there are too many tourists it can bother nesting birds and turtles who want to come and lay their eggs on the island."

One guide said that some tourists, bothered by the island's ubiquitous mosquitos, would "leave the paths, move away from the group and walk where they are not supposed to", putting fragile habitats at risk.

Shah said that if they wanted to increase the number of tourists, it would require hiring more wardens and guides who live on the island, which would also have a negative impact on nature. "Our absolute priority is nature, and it comes before tourists. If we have to take more steps to protect it and reduce the number of tourists, we will," he said.

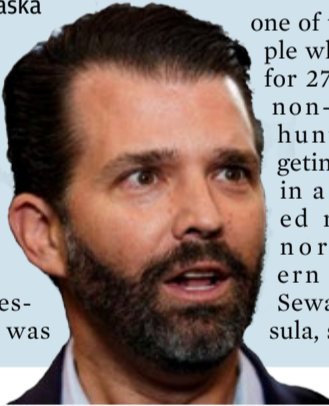
Before the island was in private hands, the population of Seychelles Warblers was thought to have shrunk to just 26. Now, they number more than 3,000

# Trump's son gets permit allowing him to hunt Alaska grizzly bear

Reuters | Anchorage, Alaska

**D**onald Trump Jr. has been granted the right to hunt a grizzly bear in northwestern Alaska near the Bering Sea town of Nome, a state official said on Friday.

The son of U.S. President Donald Trump was



one of three people who applied for 27 spots for non-resident hunters targeting grizzlies in a designated region of northwestern Alaska's Seward Peninsula, said Eddie

Grasser, the wildlife conservation director for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The state conducts periodic drawings for permits to hunt bears, caribou, moose and other animals in various regions. Winners are chosen by a lottery, and there are typically many more applications than hunting tags awarded.

"We get thousands of appli-

cations," Grasser said. Whether anyone wins, he said, comes down to "pure chance, luck of the draw."

But in the case of the bear-hunt permit that the president's son won, there was little competition. Twenty-four tags for hunting bears in that region went unclaimed, Grasser said.

Winners of the state's latest hunting-permit drawings were

announced on Friday.

To follow through with the Nome-area bear hunt, Trump must pay a \$1,000 non-resident tag fee and buy a \$160 non-resident hunting license, Grasser said.

The president's eldest son is an avid hunter and has made several trips to hunt in Alaska and Canada.

He is scheduled to come to

Alaska later this year to hunt deer and ducks.

The Safari Club this month raffled off a \$150,000 seven-day "dream hunt" expedition with Trump Jr. The raffle winner got the right to accompany the president's son on a yacht traveling in November along coastal areas of the Tongass National Forest.

# Tourists brave sub-zero temperatures at Sweden's ice hotel

Jukkasjaervi | Sweden

**H**igh above the Arctic Circle and nestled in the snow-dusted forests of northern Sweden, gaggles of tourists gathered on a February morning for a glimpse of hallways, bedrooms and a wedding chapel sculpted from ice, part of the 30th incarnation of Sweden's ice hotel.

Stopping in blue-white hallways to take snaps of a chandelier and ornately decorated bedrooms entirely carved from ice, the tourists are among the 50,000 day visitors to the hotel every year, founded in 1989 by a hotelier looking to attract visitors to the remote town of Jukkasjarvi, 200 kilometres (125 miles) north of the Arctic Circle.

Built every October from the frozen waters of the nearby river Torne, the winter hotel has 35 bedrooms.

Temperatures reach -5 degrees Celsius (23 Fahrenheit) in the rooms, which start at around three times the average price of a night in a three-star establishment in Stockholm.

Individual suites cost more, and feature sculptures and designs by artists from around the



Built every October from the frozen waters of the nearby river Torne, the winter hotel has 35 bedrooms

world.

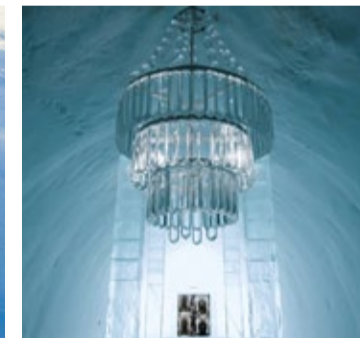
One room inspired by the aurora borealis -- the northern lights that can be seen in the skies nearby -- features light-

ing that changes colour, as well as a giant snow sculpture of a reindeer's head, all set to a soundtrack of ambient music and, occasionally, reindeer

grunts.

Around 20,000 guests spend a night in the hotel every year.

But 25-year-old guide Julia Hansers said guests usually re-



An ice chandelier hanging in the main hall of the ice hotel



Around 20,000 guests spend a night in the hotel every year

and noise around you, and inside the ice hotel it's completely quiet," said Hansers, peering out from under a thick woolly hat.

Bo Bjerggaard, a gallerist from Copenhagen, spent a night wrapped in a sleeping bag and a reindeer-skin throw.

"During the night I had to get up and then it was of course cold," Bjerggaard said, standing outside in the hotel's dazzling white courtyard made from snow.

"Then (it's) great again when you come back into the sleeping bag -- you sleep so well because of the temperature," he said with a smile.

Guests can also enjoy a drink in the ice bar, where all beverages are served in glasses made from ice.

Since 2016 the hotel has also used solar panels to generate electricity to cool a nearby building to below zero to allow them to keep 20 rooms frozen all year round.

When spring arrives, the winter hotel's rooms are closed and it melts back into the river until October, when construction begins again.

act less to the cold than to the tranquility.

"A lot of people coming here live in the city, and there you always have some sort of sounds

# Brazil's carnival queens

## Reigning over wild parties is hard work

AFP | Rio de Janeiro

Brazil's carnival celebrations are among the wildest parties in the world, but someone has to reign over them -- and being "queen" can be a year-round job.

We interviewed two "carnival queens" who devote a substantial part of their lives year-round to the personas they bring to life every February: the super-buff, silicone-pumped queen of the Portela samba school, and a business executive turned drag queen who has fused his love of carnival with his job as an airline sales manager.

Hard work being queen

With a glowing smile, rippling muscles and a body glowing with sweat, Bianca Monteiro dances the samba so fast it is hard to keep track of her feet.

Monteiro, 31, is the "queen of the drum section" at the Portela samba school, the winningest group in the history of Rio de Janeiro's annual carnival competition.

On Sunday

night she will don a costume as sumptuous as it is revealing and dance her way through Rio's "Sambodrome" at the head of Portela's 300-strong percussion section, dazzling tens of thousands of spectators and a TV audience of millions.

But being dazzling is no easy job. Monteiro spends hours each day working out and rehearsing, backed by a team -- a dance instructor, a make-up artist, a dentist -- that helps get her ready not only for carnival but for myriad public appearances.

"As queen, I have to watch what I eat, although I do indulge occasionally," she says, before devouring a hamburger in the middle of a photo session.

With her sculpted, athletic body, Monteiro looks more like an Olympic athlete than a model.

Her curves have gotten some extra help from her plastic surgeon. "I just put another 300

milliliters of silicone in my breasts last year -- I'm up to 485 milliliters in each breast," she says with a grin.

Samba schools often pick famous actresses or models for the part, but Monteiro is a neighborhood local who worked her way up through the ranks of Portela dancers to become queen in 2017.

"My dad used to bring me to Portela rehearsals when I was a baby," she says.

"I grew up watching actresses become samba school queens, so I never imagined a neighborhood girl could do it, too."

Mild-mannered exec, in drag

By day, Fernando Magrin is a mild-mannered business executive at American Airlines' offices in Sao Paulo, with black-rimmed glasses and white-collar shirt.

By night, he is carnival queen Mama, a flamboyant

character in false eyelashes, pink wig and a frothy tulle dress who leads the frenetic festivities of a roving street party known as "MinhoQueens."

The party -- one of thousands of "blocos," or street parties, around Brazil this time of year -- drew 200,000 revelers last year during Sao Paulo's carnival.

Magrin, 55, invented Mama for MinhoQueens in 2016. The character was so popular she was soon being celebrated as an LGBTQ+ icon.

That led to people learning about her at Magrin's day job. That could have been a problem in some countries. But in Brazil, it led to him becoming a brand ambassador and the head of American Airlines Brazil's newly launched diversity committee.

"I've been invited to speak at all kinds of events in the name of

American Airlines," he says.

Despite the avowed homophobia of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who arrived in power last year, corporations in Brazil are keen to show their tolerance, says Magrin.

"Something is changing" in the corporate world, he says.

"It may be for PR reasons, but the re-

sult is still positive. People are starting to accept and respect us."

Fernando Magrin, an American Airlines executive in Sao Paulo, created the drag-queen character of Mama for the city's big annual street party and is now celebrated in

Brazil as an LGBTQ+ icon



Bianca Monteiro spends much of the year preparing for her role as queen of Portela, a traditional Brazilian carnival school

## Filipino-Americans 'fired up' as Tagalog added to Nevada ballot

Las Vegas

Manny Pacquiao, roast pig dinners and prayer services: Activists are using every tool possible to get the booming Filipino-American community in Las Vegas to the polls for Saturday's Democratic nomination vote.

Overlooked in the past, Filipinos have rapidly become the western desert state's largest Asian-American community -- almost 200,000 by some estimates, in a state of three million people -- forcing candidates to take notice.

For the first time, the Tagalog language will be used on voting cards along with English and Spanish at the Democratic caucuses.

"We're proud that they are recognizing us," said Margie Gonzales, a Filipina community leader. "It means a lot -- it means recognition."

Gonzales, who chairs the county's Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) commission, has also begun training politicians to speak a few Tagalog words.

"When you start knocking on doors, it helps if you greet a Filipino family opening the door in



Elizabeth Warren campaign volunteer Ninna Diaz, pictured in Las Vegas on February 21, shows the materials she plans to distribute while knocking on doors of registered Democrats and Independents

Tagalog," she said. "That's a way to make that person smile -- you feel welcome."

Feeling welcome is key for a minority community in which immigration and xenophobia are major concerns. Like Latinos, Filipino-Americans tend to vote Democrat.

"When Trump talks about not bringing in relatives and things like that, that same thing applies to Asians," said Tick Se-

gerblom, a commissioner for Clark County, where Las Vegas is located. "So Trump has really been a boon as far as organizing Asians."

But traditionally Filipino-Americans have not voted in large numbers.

To counter that, Gonzales and her fellow activists introduced a tradition commonly found during election campaigns back in the Philippines -- the

mingle at long tables covered in banana leaves, with a whole roast pig on the menu.

'Squeak of a mouse'

The feasts hosted in Las Vegas by Gonzales so far have not endorsed specific candidates. A grand Kamayan is planned once the Democratic Party settles on a nominee -- but that has not stopped those in the race from reaching out.

Democratic candidate Tulsi Gabbard, who is Hawaiian, has made inroads, as have Pete Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren.

"This is an overlooked and often ignored community and I feel like Elizabeth Warren celebrates our existence and doesn't use us as props," said Filipina campaign volunteer Ninna Diaz, 27.

The community is "definitely taking notice," she added.

More recently, Gonzales has conducted Tagalog-language caucus training for campaigns including that of Bernie Sanders.

"The mere fact that a lot of politicians are calling me and other Filipino-American leaders, it shows you that we are becoming important," she said.

"They are paying attention to us, because they know now that we vote."

She added: "Our voice used to be like the squeak of a mouse... But we are getting fired up now."

In a sign of the group's growing visibility, Segerblom and others are leading a campaign to rename a stretch of eastern Las Vegas, which is home to many community restaurants and stores, Little Filipinotown.

But Gonzales turned to one of the most visible icons of all -- global boxing superstar and Philippines Senator Manny Pacquiao, who was in Las Vegas for a fight in 2014.

"We were able to get to his suite -- he posed with us, holding our banner," said Gonzales, who now uses the image to boost voter registration drives.

"It gets the Filipinos excited -- in fact, even non-Filipinos!"



For the first time, the Tagalog language will be used on voting cards along with English and Spanish at the Democratic caucuses in Nevada

Kamayan, a large communal feast.

These typically see politicians

# SHOW



**BRAHMS: THE BOY II (15+)(HORROR/THRILLER)**  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 11.45 AM + 1.45 + 3.45 + 5.45 + 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM  
 OASIS JUFAIR (VIP): 2.15 + 6.30 + 10.45 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 12.00 + 2.00 + 4.00 + 6.00 + 8.00 + 10.00 + 12.00 MN + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI.)  
 CITY CENTRE (VIP II): 10.30 AM + 2.45 + 7.00 + 11.15 PM  
 SEEF (I): 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 + 5.00 + 7.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM + (1.00 AM THURS/FRI.)  
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.45 AM + 1.45 + 3.45 + 5.45 + 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM  
 KATIE HOLMES, RALPH INESON, OWAIN YEOMAN

**THE CALL OF THE WILD (PG)**  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 12.30 + 5.00 + 9.30 PM  
 OASIS JUFAIR (VIP): 12.00 + 4.15 + 8.30 PM  
 OASIS JUFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 2.45 + 7.15 + 11.45 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 + 12.00 MN  
 CITY CENTRE (VIP II): 12.30 + 4.45 + 9.00 PM  
 SEEF (II): 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM  
 HARRISON FORD, DAN STEVENS, OMAR SY

**BHOOT: PART ONE -THE HAUNTED SHIP**  
 FROM THURSDAY 20th 3.00 PM ONWARDS  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (I): 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 + 12.00 MN + (12.45MN THURS/FRI.)  
 WADI AL SAIL: 12.30 + 5.45 + 11.00 PM  
 VICKY KAUSHAL, BHUMI PEDNEKAR, ASHUTOSH RANA

**COLOR OUT OF SPACE (15+)(THRILLER/HORROR)**  
 SEEF (II): 7.30 + 9.45 + 12.00 MN  
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.15 AM + 4.00 + 8.45 PM  
 NICOLAS CAGE, JOELY RICHARDSON, MADELEINE ARTHUR

**EMMA (PG-13)(DRAMA/COMEDY/ROMANTIC)**  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 1.30 + 6.15 + 11.00 PM  
 ANYA TAYLOR-JOY, JOHNNY FLYNN, BILL NIGHY

**ELCANO & MAGALLAN: FIRST TRIP AROUND THE WORLD**  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.30 + 4.30 PM  
 SEEF (II): 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 3.00 PM  
 HERNAN 'RIO' CHAVARRO, CHRIS JAHN, BETSY DURKIN

**VIC THE VIKING AND THE MAGIC SWORD (PG)**  
 SEEF (II): 11.00 AM + 12.45 + 2.30 + 4.15 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 10.45 AM + 12.30 + 2.15 + 6.45 PM  
 ROLAND BEARNE, TIM BENTINCK, KONRAD BÖSHERZ

**AFTER MIDNIGHT (15+)(DRAMA/HORROR)**  
 SEEF (I): 10.45 AM + 2.45 + 6.45 + 10.45 PM  
 JEREMY GARDNER, BREA GRANT, JUSTIN BENSON

**SANDOQ AL DUNYA (15+)(ARABIC/DRAMA)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 12.15 + 5.00 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 5.00 + 7.00 + 9.00 + 11.00 PM  
 EMAD AL BAHAT, KHALID AL SAWEE, RANAYOUSIF

**AZMA MALIYAH (PG)(ARABIC/COMEDY)**  
 SEEF (I): 12.45 + 4.45 + 8.45 PM  
 KHALID AL-KHALDI, EID AL-DHAHERI, MAITHA MUHAMMAD

**BAD BOYS FOR LIFE (PG-15)(ACTION/COMEDY/CRIME)**  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: (1.00 AM THURS/FRI.)  
 CITY CENTRE (ATMOS): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN  
 CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D): 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE (VIP I): 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (I): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN  
 WADI AL SAIL: 4.00 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM  
 WILL SMITH, MARTIN LAWRENCE, VANESSA HUDGENS

**SONIC THE HEDGEHOG (PG)**  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 2.45 + 7.15 + 11.45 PM  
 OASIS JUFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 12.30 + 5.00 + 9.30 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 + 12.00 MN  
 WADI AL SAIL: 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM  
 JIM CARRAY, BEN SCHWARTZ, JAMES MARSDEN

**FANTASY ISLAND (15+)(THRILLER/HORROR)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 + 12.00 MN  
 LUCY HALE, MAGGIE Q, PORTIA DOUBLEDAY

**1917 (PG-15)(WAR/ACTION/DRAMA) 1917**  
 Winner of 3 Oscar Awards  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.45 AM + 1.15 + 3.45 + 6.15 + 8.45 + 11.15 PM  
 SEEF (II): 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM  
 GEORGE MACKAY, DEAN-CHARLES CHAPMAN, MARK STRONG

**BIRD OF PREY (15+)(ACTION/ADVENTURE/CRIME)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 8.45 + 11.15 PM  
 MARGOT ROBBIE, MARY ELIZABETH WINSTEAD, EWAN MCGREGOR



**DOLITTLE (PG)(ADVENTURE/COMEDY/FAMILY)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 + 6.15 + 8.30 + 10.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 11.45 AM + 2.00 + 4.15 + 6.30 PM  
 ROBERT DOWNEY JR., ANTONIO BANDERAS, MICHAEL SHEEN

**JUMANJI THE NEXT LEVEL (PG-15)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM  
 DWAYNE JOHNSON, JACK BLACK, KEVIN HART

**THE GENTLEMEN (15+)(CRIME/ACTION)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM  
 MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY, CHARLIE HUNNAM, HENRY GOLDING

**AL FELOUS (THE MONEY) (PG-15)(ARABIC)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM  
 TAMER HOSNY, ZEINA, KHALID EL-SAWI

**THIEF OF BAGHDAD (PG-13)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 2.00 + 6.45 + 11.30 PM  
 MOHAMMED EMAM, YASMINE RAEIS, AMINA KHALIL

**FROZEN 2 (PG)(ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 PM  
 KRISTEN BELL, IDINA MENZEL, JOSH GAD

**MALANG (PG-15)**  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 11.45 AM + 2.30 + 5.15 + 8.00 + 10.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 ADITYA ROY KAPOOR, ANIL KAPOOR, DISHA PATANI

**SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 4.00 + 8.30 PM  
 WILL SMITH, TOM HOLLAND, KAREN GILLAN

**MIRACLE IN CELL NO. 7 (PG-15)(TURKISH/DRAMA)**  
 CITY CENTRE: 2.15 + 7.00 PM  
 ARAS BULLUT, YENELI N SA SOF, YA AKSONGUR, LKER AKSUM

**LITTLE WOMEN (PG)(DRAMA/ROMANTIC)**  
 Winner of 1 Oscar Award  
 CITY CENTRE: 2.30 + 8.15 PM  
 SAOIRSE RONAN, EMMA WATSON, FLORENCE PUGH

**LE MANS '66 (PG-13)(DRAMA/SPORT/BIOGRAPHY)**  
 Winner of 2 Oscar Award  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 4.15 + 11.00 PM  
 MATT DAMON, CHRISTIAN BALE, JON BERNTHAL

**JOKER (15+)(THRILLER/CRIME/DRAMA)**  
 Winner of 2 Oscar Award  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 4.15 + 9.00 PM  
 JOAQUIN PHOENIX, ZAZIE BEETZ, ROBERT DE NIRO

**PARASITE (15+)(KOREAN/COMEDY/DRAMA/THRILLER)**  
 Winner of 4 Oscar Award  
 CITY CENTRE: (DISTRACTION FREE SCREEN): 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM  
 SEEF (II): 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 3.00 + 8.15 PM  
 SONG KANG HO, LEE SUN KYUN, MARIA SIMON

**VARANE AVASHYAMUND (PG-13)(MALAYALAM)**  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 SURESH GOPI, SHOBANA, DULQUER SALMAAN, KALYANI PRIYADARSHAN, URVASHI

**AYYAPPANUM KOSHIYUM (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)**  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 1.00 + 4.15 + 7.30 + 10.45 PM  
 SEEF (I): 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM  
 AL HAMRA: 5.30 + 8.45 + (12.00 MN THURS./FRI.)  
 PRITHVIRAJ, BIJU MENON, RENJITH, SABUMON



**MAFIA (PG-13)(TAMIL)**  
 From Friday 21st Feb.  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 1.30 + 6.30 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (I): 10.45 AM + 3.45 + 8.45 PM  
 AL HAMRA: 3.00 PM  
 ARUN VIJAY, PRASANNA, PRIYA BHAVANI SHANKAR

**AL MALLU (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)**  
 OASIS JUFAIR: 12.45 + 6.00 + 11.15 PM  
 SEEF (I): 10.45 AM + 3.45 + 8.45 PM  
 AL HAMRA: 12.00 NOON.  
 NAMITHA PRAMOD, ANOOP MAJEED, SIDDIQUE

MOVIE REVIEW

## Brahms: The Boy II: wilfully unscary evil doll horror

● **Katie Holmes is as bored as the audience in this lazy retread of the 2016 chiller about a havoc-causing doll**

**B**rahms: The Boy II is a 2020 American supernatural horror film directed by William Brent Bell and written by Stacey Menear. A stand-alone sequel to the 2016 film The Boy, it stars Katie Holmes, Ralph

Ineson, Owain Yeoman, and Christopher Convery. Brahms: The Boy II was released in the United States on February 21, 2020, by STX Entertainment. On Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 9% based on 22 reviews with an average rating of 3.29/10. On Metacritic, the film has a weighted average score of 32 out of 100, based on nine critics, indicating "generally unfavourable reviews." Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "C—" on an A+ to F scale, and PostTrak reported



Katie Holmes in 'Brahms: The Boy II'



**The creepy doll tortures a new family (and new star Katie Holmes), but this time without a sense of humor or even much sense at all**

it received an average 0.5 out of 5 stars, with 24% of people saying they would definitely recommend it.

Benjamin Lee, writing for The Guardian, gave the film one star out of five, describing it as "so punishingly dull to watch, filled with dry, perfunctory dialogue from Stacey Menear's consistently uninventive script and shot without even a glimmer of style, that even at a brisk 86 minutes, it feels like unending torture" with a finale "that buckles under the weight of its own stupidity, as well as some god-awful CGI."

SUDOKU

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

**Yesterday's solution**

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

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

CROSSWORD

**Across**

- Permits; 5- Deadens; 10- Marries; 14- Camaro model; 15- First name in photography; 16- I cannot tell ...; 17- Tower for the guidance of mariners; 19- New Rochelle college; 20- Diarist Nin; 21- Subdivision; 23- A collection of articles; 25- Member of a motorcycle gang; 26- Parliament of Poland; 29- Fit as a fiddle; 31- Stagers; 35- Bee follower; 36- Aromatic herb; 37- Heed; 38- Type of valved brass instrument in the cornet family; 40- Split; 41- Hinder; 42- Headland; 43- Her partner would be a buck; 44- Picture border; 45- "Star Trek" speed; 46- Goida of Israel; 47- Balderdash; 49- "... don't say!"; 51- Break; 54- Make sense; 58- On ... with; 59- Female spotted cat; 63- Prepare to be shot; 64- Staggering; 65- Dreg; 66- Cornerstone abbr.; 67- Thick sweet liquid; 68- Formerly, formerly;

**Down**

- Country singer McCann; 2- The Emerald Isle; 3- Garment of ancient Rome; 4- Disunion; 5- Slangy denial; 6- Colorful card game; 7- East Lansing sch.; 8- Blues great Smith; 9- Streamlined; 10- Woman who brings you the bacon; 11- "The Time Machine" race; 12- Pebbles's pet; 13- Actor Connelly; 18- Lao ...; 22- Cherry red; 24- Bronze medalist's place; 25- Sandwich initials; 26- Sash; 27- Conger catcher; 28- Volkswagen model; 30- Abby's twin; 32- Piece of music written for a solo instrument; 33- Vive ...; 34- Twisted expression?; 36- To a greater extent; 37- Impudent (slang); 39- Hindered; 40- At a great distance; 42- Cornfield sound; 45- Buggy; 46- Jumble; 48- Hawaiian dances; 50- Dinghy thingy; 51- Record with a VCR; 52- Wall St. debuts; 53- Pole; 55- Antlered animal; 56- Employ; 57- Hey, over here!; 60- ... the land of the free...; 61- Little, in Lille; 62- High mountain, as found in central Europe;

**Yesterday's solution**

A	S	O	F	A	D	E	N	A	C	A	T
M	E	M	O	M	A	R	I	A	O	T	H
F	R	A	U	I	D	O	L	S	U	T	E
M	A	N	N	E	D	S	S	O	N	N	E
E	D	E	N	S	L	E	N	T			
C	A	I	R	O	V	A	S	T	Y	S	E
T	I	S	M	R	E	N	T	S	L	A	S
T	E	E	M	R	A	S	A	D	E	L	E
E	S	S	A	Y	I	S	T	T	H	A	T
C	H	A	R	M	S	A	L	L	N	A	N
L	I	L	I	U	N	T	I	E	I	B	A
U	L	E	E	A	R	N	S	N	O	M	E
B	L	E	D	B	A	K	E	G	O	E	S

# celebs

## Melissa Fumero's biggest karmic gift

Los Angeles

Actress Melissa Fumero says she got the biggest karmic gift after wrapping up a season of the show "Brooklyn Nine-Nine".

The new decade has been blissful for Fumero with the success of "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" season seven and the birth of her second child with husband David Fumero.

The couple welcomed a baby boy into the world on Valentine's Day and named him 'Axel'.

In the show, Melissa is seen as Amy Santiago. She was pregnant while shooting for season seven.

"This time we wrapped a few months ago, we wrapped back in November so I've had like the whole end of my pregnancy off which has felt like the biggest karmic gift ever for what I did last time," Melissa said.

"Brooklyn Nine-Nine" season seven airs in India on Comedy Central.

## George and Amal Clooney's mansion flooded after heavy storm



London

Hollywood superstar George Clooney and wife Amal Clooney's mansion in Berkshire, England, suffered severe flood damage after Storm Dennis struck in that region.

Photographs show that nearly all of the land surrounding the \$13 million estate, including the basketball court, has almost

completely been submerged in water, reports pagesix.com.

The actor's representative however assured that "all is fine" despite the flooding.

According to Architectural Digest, George and Amal Clooney purchased the 17th-century mansion shortly after their Venetian wedding in 2014. The home sits on a four-acre island in the middle of the River Thames.

Fox News

reports that Storm Dennis caused severe flooding in parts of England and Wales. The Environmental Agency said England received 121 percent of its average February rainfall and major rivers set new flood records.

George Clooney, 58, was last seen in the 2016 thriller "Money Monster", directed by Jodie Foster and co-starring Julia Roberts, Jack O'Connell, Dominic West, Caitriona Balfe and

Giancarlo Esposito

He will next be seen in the self-directed post-apocalyptic drama, "The Midnight Sky". The film is based on the novel "Good Morning, Midnight" by Lily Brooks-Dalton, and co-stars Felicity Jones, Kyle Chandler, David Oyelowo and Tiffany Boone. Shooting for the Netflix-distributed film began on October 21 2019, and a release date is yet to be confirmed.



George and Amal Clooney

## Selena Gomez drops her new song 'Feel Me'

Los Angeles

Singer Selena Gomez surprised her fans with a new track of hers 'Feel Me' on Friday.

"On the Revival Tour, I introduced a song that you guys haven't stopped talking about since," she captioned her

Instagram post alongside her picture.

"So you asked and I listened. Today, Feel Me is out online and vinyl everywhere," she continued and revealed the news of the music release to her followers.

Clocking in at three-minute and 45-seconds, the audio song begins with the lyrics "No one love you like I love ya."

The 'Feel Me' song of the 27-year-old singer prominently is a mixture of love and

calling of the lost love. The new song arrives as a one-off track just a few weeks after Selena released her third album 'Rare'.

Earlier after the release of her studio album 'Revival' in 2015, Gomez has joined Cardi B, DJ Snake, and also Ozuna on "Taki Taki".

Selena Gomez

## None bothered to ask my dad, Shekhar Kapur: Sonam on 'Mr.India' remake

Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sonam K. Ahuja is not happy with the announcement of the remake of "Mr. India" by filmmaker Ali Abbas Zafar.

She finds it disrespectful since no one bothered to consult her actor-father Anil Kapoor, who featured in the original, and acclaimed director Shekhar Kapur, who helmed the popular

1987 movie. Sonam took to social media to share a post expressing her displeasure at the

news of "Mr India" remake.

"A lot of people have been me asking me about the "Mr India remake". Honestly, my father didn't even know that the film was being remade, we found about it through social media when Ali Abbas Zafar tweeted. It's quite disrespectful and underhanded, if it is true, since no one bothered to consult my father or Shekhar uncle - two people who played a major role in making the film what it was and is," Sonam wrote.

She said that it is important as her father was an important part of the film and the film in turn is a part of his legacy.



Sonam K. Ahuja

## Gwyneth Paltrow hosts makeup-free dinner

Los Angeles

Actress Gwyneth Paltrow recently hosted a makeup-free dinner for her and friends, including fellow Hollywood divas Kate Hudson and Demi Moore.

Paltrow posted photos from the gathering. "No make up, no filter. An amazing gathering of some of the best women on planet earth #goopglow," the actress wrote on Instagram, reports online.com.

Moore, 57, also flaunted her make-up free look on Instagram and wrote: "What an incredible night makeup-free with these extraordinary women. I feel so nourished and full of joy. Thank YOU both for sharing your light, love and wisdom! Beauty is more than what you see, it is what you feel. So grateful to be included in such a powerful, memorable and meaningful evening! #goopglow."



Gwyneth Paltrow

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, **BALJINDER SINGH** S/O Jagga Ram, holding Indian Passport No. H9153274 dated 05-05-2010 issued at BAHRAIN having permanent residence at Vill. Sahota, PO. Khanpur, Ps. Bulhowal, Distt. Hoshiarpur - 146114.

presently residing at Flat-1, Bldg-170, Road-7308, Block-473, AbuSayba - BAHRAIN will henceforth be known as (Given Name)

**BALJINDER (Surname) SINGH** Objection(s), if any, may be forwarded to Embassy of India, P.O. Box No. 26106, Bldg. 1090, Road 2819, Block 428, Al-Seef, Bahrain.

## 'Friends' cast set to reunite for a special

Los Angeles

"Friends" stars Actors Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry and David Schwimmer will be coming together for an untitled unscripted special to celebrate the long-running series, which went off air in 2004.

According to sources, the six stars will receive at least \$2.5 million apiece for participating in the special, reports variety.com.

The special, as well as all 236 episodes of "Friends", will be available upon the HBO Max streaming service's debut.

Though the sitcom aired its series finale over 15 years ago, third-party market researchers have said "Friends" was one of Netflix's most-watched shows.

Warner Bros. Home Entertainment had earlier said that sales of physical and digital versions of "Friends" have "roughly tripled" since news broke



that it would be leaving Netflix.

"Guess you could call this the one where they all got back together - we are reuniting with David, Jennifer, Courteney, Matt, Lisa, and Matthew for an HBO Max special that will be programmed alongside the entire 'Friends' library," said Kevin Reilly, chief content officer at HBO Max and president of TBS, TNT, and truTV, in a statement.

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SPORTS  
sports

## Shaikh Khalid vows to continue supporting MMA



Fighters in action during a bout

TDT | Manama

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa has said that the continued sponsorship for MMA comes as part of our efforts to develop this game in an effort to form national teams who are able to compete for top honours.

This came as the First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, and Bahrain Olympic Committee

President was speaking as he attended the Bahrain Open MMA Championship that took place at the Bahrain Table Tennis Association's GYM in Isa Town.

Under the patronage of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the event was organised by BMMAF with the supervision of Bahrain Combat Sports Council (BCSC).

The event witnessed the attendance of HH Shaikh Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Pres-



HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa looks on during the event

ident of BCSC and Aymen bin Tawfiq Al Moayed, Minister of Youth and Sports as well as many other high ranking officials.

HH Shaikh Khalid noted Bahrain's recent accomplishments in this sport in 2019, including

winning the Asian Championship and African Championship titles before finishing second in the European Championship and the World Championship, thanks to which Bahrain has topped the general standing of



Fighters during a bout

the IMMAF-WMMAA. "Such results are historical, but obviously we want to achieve more," he added.

33 fighters have participated in the event representing 10 countries, including Bahrain, Saudi, USA, Spain, Kuwait,

Oman, Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria and Morocco. HH Shaikh Khalid also met Bahraini fighter Husain Ayyad on the sidelines of the event to check on his recovery following a severe injury he sustained during BRAVE 29.



Bahrain's men's national basketball team's officials and players as they left yesterday for Beirut where they will face off with hosts Lebanon tomorrow in their second game of their 2021 Fiba Asia Cup qualifying campaign. The Bahrainis won their opening contest in dramatic fashion on Friday—a 68-67 thriller over India, with a last-second game-winner by guard Hesham Sarhan. Bahrain are in Group D of Asian Cup qualification. Upon their arrival yesterday, the Bahrainis went right to practising for tomorrow's clash, which is scheduled for a 10pm tip-off, Bahrain time. They will continue their preparations today. Left, Officials of Bahrain's national team with head coach Sam Vincent (fourth from right). Right, National team players, Muzamel Ameer (L), Mohammed Ameer (C) and Mohammed Qurban

## Giroud, Alonso back in favour as Chelsea sink Spurs

AFP | London

Olivier Giroud and Marcos Alonso came in from the cold to inspire Chelsea's 2-1 win against Tottenham as the Blues cemented their grip on fourth place in the Premier League yesterday.

Giroud and Alonso had been reduced to fringe figures in Frank Lampard's first season as Chelsea manager.

But Lampard restored both veterans to the team at Stamford Bridge in a gamble that paid rich dividends.

With Tammy Abraham only fit enough to make the bench, Giroud started for the first time since November and the France striker's fine finish opened the scoring in the first half.

The 33-year-old could have joined Tottenham had Chelsea signed a forward in January, but instead he netted his first club goal since August and his first in the Premier League since April. Alonso, 29, maintained the theme of exiles getting back in favour as the left-back struck in the second half of his first league start since Chelsea's win at Tottenham in December.



Chelsea's French striker Olivier Giroud (L) scores his team's first goal

Antonio Rudiger's own goal came too late to ruin Chelsea's first win in five league games, moving them four points clear of fifth placed Tottenham in the race to qualify for the Champions League.

Ending Tottenham's three-game winning streak in the league was the perfect response to Monday's home defeat against Manchester United.

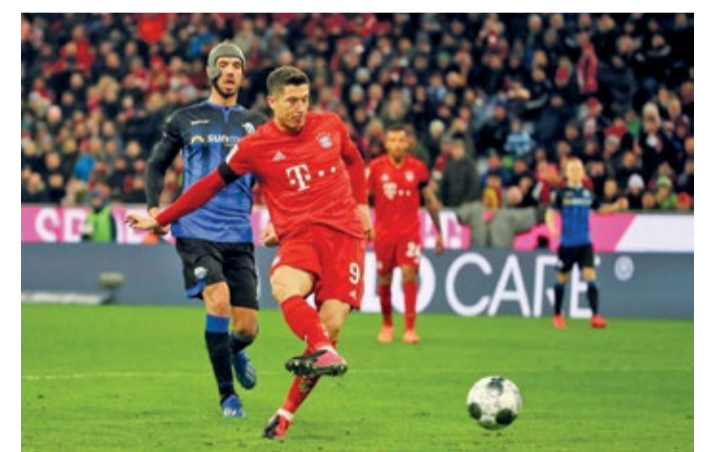
It was no more than they deserved after a vibrant performance that finally answered Lampard's call for a killer instinct in the final third.

Tottenham have now won just once in their last 34 visits to Stamford Bridge, making it a painful return for their former Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, who was beaten by Lampard for the second time this term.

Mourinho had ramped up the mind games on Friday when he claimed to know Lampard was planning to use the same five-man defence that helped the Blues win at Tottenham earlier this season.

Mourinho was spot on, with Lampard making four changes in a return to the system he predicted, but he could not come up with an effective solution.

## Lewandowski double edges Bayern past bottom side



Robert Lewandowski shoots the ball

AFP | Berlin

Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich squeezed past bottom side Paderborn 3-2 on Friday as Robert Lewandowski netted twice to spare goalkeeper Manuel Neuer's blushes in their final game before facing Chelsea in the Champions League.

Lewandowski now has a league-leading tally of 25 goals in the top flight, illustrating his importance to the team ahead of Tuesday's last 16, first-leg tie

in London.

Bayern twice surrendered the lead in Munich before securing the win which leaves them four points clear.

With Bayern leading 1-0 thanks to Serge Gnabry's early goal, Neuer mistimed a clearance outside his area, allowing Paderborn midfielder Dennis Srebeny to fire into an empty net just before half-time.

"I was worried about knocking into him, because that would have been a red card," Neuer explained.

# Speed Weekend wraps up at BIC

● **Simmenauer and Pereira take Porsche wins**

TDT | Manama

**J**B Simmenauer and Dylan Pereira were both victorious yesterday to wrap up the fourth and penultimate round of the 2019/2020 Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East, held as part of Speed Weekend at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

Simmenauer won the meeting's second race while Pereira claimed Race Three for his sec-

ond victory in as many days.

Pereira won the meeting's first race from pole on Friday, and then Simmenauer matched his feat in the second 12-lap sprint around BIC's 5.412-kilometre Grand Prix track.

Simmenauer had clinched pole with a fastest lap of two minutes 02.170 seconds during the second session of Qualifying. He then went on to defend his leading position and take the Race Two chequered flag in a winning time of 24:58.103.

The victor was followed by Leon Koehler who was 1.654 seconds behind, while Pereira came third 2.075s back. Each of the top three overall were competing in the Porsche's Pro class.



Winners on the podium



Cars in action during the race

Jesse van Kuijk was triumphant in the ProAm category ahead of Daan van Kuijk and Christoffer Bergstroem; while the top three finishers in the Am class were Michael Knutzon, Shaikh Jaber bin Ali Al Khalifa and Jean-Marc Cordier.

In the third and final race of the round, Jesse van Kuijk was on pole but Pereira was able to claim the impressive win. He completed the event 4.068s ahead of runner-up Koehler and 10.545s in front of Simmenauer.

Jesse Van Kuijk was once again triumphant in the ProAm



**The 2019/2020 Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East now heads to its final round of the season from March 19 to 22, to be held once again at BIC**

category ahead of Groeneveld and Daan van Kuijk; while in the Am category Shaikh Jaber led Knutzon to the finish with Michael Doppelmayr coming third. The winners were presented their respective awards in podium ceremonies held after each race.

The 2019/2020 Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East now heads to its final round of the season from March 19 to 22, to be held once again at BIC and in support of the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2020.

## Williamson, Taylor ensure Kiwis head India

AFP | Wellington

**K**ane Williamson and Ross Taylor combined to ensure New Zealand held a first innings lead in the first Test against India in Wellington yesterday but the advantage was not overwhelming.

India stayed in the hunt with three wickets in the final session including Williamson for 89 and Taylor for 44 and the wicket was showing early signs of taking spin.

"You always want your best players to be at the crease. They (Williamson and Taylor) put on a great partnership, both looking nice for a long period of time, but if we can carry on and keep chipping away with the guys to come ... then it will set us up," New Zealand pace bowler Tim Southee said.

Williamson and Taylor's 93-run stand for the third wicket was enough to lift the Kiwis from 73-2 to be ahead of India's 165 before the tourists fight back.

When bad light brought an early end to the day, New Zealand were 216 for five, to lead by 51.

Ishant Sharma, coming back



Kane Williamson plays a shot

from injury and struggling with jetlag after arriving in New Zealand four days ago, was the pick of the Indian bowlers with three for 31 off 15 overs.

However, with the initial green cover fading from the wicket there were early signs of spin which could impact on

New Zealand batting last at the Basin Reserve.

"You don't usually see that at the Basin and that's where the first innings becomes important," Southee said.

"If we can build those partnerships and eke out as big a lead as we possibly can that

makes that second innings a little bit easier."

Williamson, called to the middle following the early dismissal of Tom Latham and was rocked by Sharma with the first ball he faced but from there he returned to his patient, confident self.

## Football national team kick off local training sessions



Bahrain players warming up on the pitch at the start of training

TDT | Manama

**B**ahrain's men's national football team have kicked off their local training for their upcoming joint-qualifier next month against Cambodia, for the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023.

They are also preparing for a pair of international friendly matches in March.

The practices are being held at the Bahrain Football Association pitches in Riffa under the supervision of national team head coach Helio Sousa.

The Portuguese tactician has selected a squad of 35 players to take part in the practice ses-

sions, with many being new call-ups.

Bahrain are scheduled to take on their Cambodian counterparts on March 26 in their next qualifier, while their friendly games are against Malaysia on March 21 and against New Zealand on March 30.

Bahrain are currently in second place in qualifying Group C with nine points from five matches. Iraq are currently atop the table with 11 points.

Iran are third with six points but have a game in hand, while Hong Kong are fourth on five points and Cambodia fifth with one.

## Hasaranga stars as Sri Lanka clinch ODI thriller

AFP | Colombo

**A**late cameo by Wanindu Hasaranga helped Sri Lanka pull off a thrilling chase to edge out West Indies by one wicket in the first one-day international yesterday.

Hasaranga, known for his leg-spin bowling, hit an unbeaten 42 after coming in to bat at number eight as Sri Lanka chased down their target of 290 with five balls to spare and lead the

three-match series 1-0.

Hasaranga held his nerve after Sri Lanka slipped to 253 for seven following the departure of Thisara Perera for 32 to register his highest ODI score.

He built crucial partnerships including a 38-run stand with Perera and then put on 27 runs with Lakshan Sandakan for the ninth wicket.

With one to get off the last six balls Sandakan was run out but

Keemo Paul bowled a no ball.

"Of course, winning is the ultimate thing but we made couple of mistakes that we have to learn from," skipper Dimuth Karunaratne, who top-scored with 52, said after the victory.

"Both me and Avishka Fernando could have converted our fifties into bigger scores but we will look to correct that in future."

Karunaratne and Fernando, who made 50, put on 111 runs

for the opening wicket to lay the platform for what turned out to be the highest successful chase at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground.

For the West Indies, Alzarri Joseph claimed three wickets after Shai Hope made 115 in his team's 289 for seven.

In response, Sri Lanka lost their way after their strong start despite wicketkeeper-batsman Kusal Perera hitting 42 coming in at number three.



Wanindu Hasaranga plays a shot