

\$75,000 Royal Golf Club Bahrain Open tees off today

The \$75,000 Royal Golf Club (RGC) Bahrain Open tees off today at RGC. The three-day tournament is the fourth round of the 2020 MENA Tour.

P16

For the Palestinians and Israel, the Trump peace plan is a lose-lose

THE DAILY tribune



Global superstar Khalid ready for Grand Prix concert at BIC

2

NEWS OF BAHRAIN

WORLD

10

India set to welcome Trump

LIC (INTERNATIONAL) IN BAHRAIN FOR 30 YEARS AT YOUR SERVICE

39936618
 bah.lici@licinternational.com
 www.licinternational.com

Download the LIC first mobile application

MyLoan

YOUR HOME RENOVATION, IT'S ON US

Our Consumer Loan now gives you a chance to win **US\$ 50,000**

APR of 6.56% on a loan of BHD 10,000 over 7 years

Call 17 22 1 999 now

ahliunited.com
 @aubahrain

البنك الإسلامي المتحد
 ahli united bank

Lowest poll turnout
Tehran

Iran's interior ministry yesterday said voter turnout in last week's parliamentary elections stood at 42.57 per cent, the lowest ever since the country's 1979 revolution that ushered in a Shiite clerical government to power.

210 fils (includes VAT)



Public health 'top priority'

All suspected corona cases have produced negative results

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Health continues to prioritise the health and safety of citizens and residents in light of the Coronavirus (COVID19) through the regular examination and monitoring of suspected cases, the ministry said in a statement issued yesterday.

The ministry confirmed all cases examined have produced

negative results.

The ministry, in co-ordination with other related entities, continues to enact strict precautionary measures that are in line with international standards set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), to prevent the spread of contagious diseases, including the designation of a number of isolation spaces.

The ministry confirmed that it had referred twenty suspected



cases for isolation, for a duration of 14 days, in line with these procedures.

The ministry has advised citizens and residents to take precautionary measures to ensure their continued safety, including regularly washing their hands, covering their mouths and noses while coughing and sneezing, in addition to avoiding close contact with anyone experiencing symptoms of respiratory disease

or suffering from acute respiratory infections.

It also stressed the importance of avoiding close contact with farm or wild animals.

The Kingdom has urged citizens to avoid travelling to China, Iran, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea due to the outbreak of COVID19.

Strict entry restrictions have been introduced to limit movement from these countries.

To all citizens and residents

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

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

Fever

Cough

Difficulty breathing

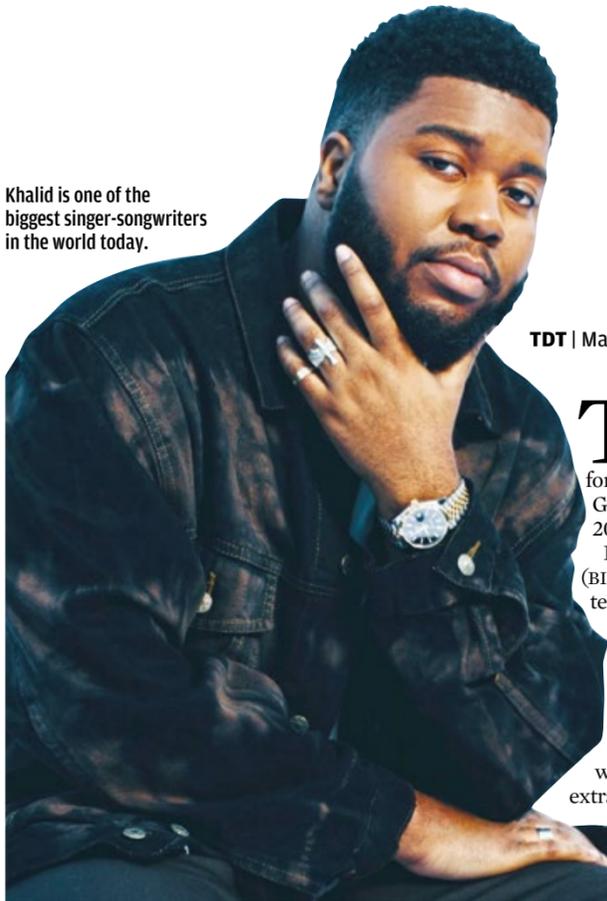
And if you have traveled to one of the countries infected with the disease or have interacted with a person traveling from any of those locations or interacted with an infected patient

Please follow these instructions:

- 1. Quarantine yourself at home, in a separate room**
- 2. Call 444**
- 3. Follow the instructions given by the medical team**
- 4. Avoid close contact with others**



His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa deputised Southern Governor His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa to attend a reception party marking the birthday of the Japanese Emperor. Japanese Ambassador to Bahrain Hideki Ito hosted the ceremony at the Ritz Carlton Bahrain Hotel and Spa, in the presence of senior officials, members of the diplomatic corps and invitees. HH Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa conveyed greetings and congratulations from HRH the Premier to HM the Emperor of Japan, wishing him abundant health and happiness and his friendly people further progress and prosperity.



Khalid is one of the biggest singer-songwriters in the world today.

Global superstar Khalid ready for Grand Prix concert at BIC

Khalid's addition completes the star-studded roster of artists lined up by BIC

TDT | Manama

The wait is finally over for fans eager to learn of the third mega artist performing live at the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2020.

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) made the big reveal yesterday, announcing that multi-platinum selling global superstar Khalid will be taking to the stage on the Saturday of the race weekend.

Khalid will be making his regional debut in Bahrain, which hosts the Formula 1 extravaganza March 19 to 22 in Sakhir.

Khalid's addition completes the star-studded ro-

ster of artists lined up by BIC for this year's racing and entertainment spectacle.

First to put on a show will be Grammy Award-winning producer, songwriter and DJ Afrojack on the Friday night of the weekend, while global Top 10 DJ Don Diablo will be performing as the second act on Saturday evening, following Khalid.

All those with tickets to the Bahrain Grand Prix will be able to attend the concerts at no extra cost.

BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa commented: "We are so proud to be announcing a mega artist such as Khalid to our concert lineup for this year's Bahrain Grand Prix.

"His inclusion makes for one of the most spectacular rosters of performers we have ever had for our Formula 1 event.

"I have no doubt that fans are as

excited as we are to be welcoming Khalid to Bahrain for his regional debut. Saturday night of the race weekend is definitely going to be one to remember."

Khalid is one of the biggest singer-songwriters in the world today. The Texas, USA-native was named one of Time's Most Influential People of 2019.

He has taken the world by storm since his first single, the five-time platinum "Location", released right before his high school graduation, exploded onto the scene leading to a major label deal with Right Hand Music Group/RCA Records, followed by the release of his debut album, the double platinum certified, American Teen.

His sophomore album Free Spirit, released to critical acclaim in 2019, was declared a New York Times "Critics' Pick" and was called "superb" by the Associated Press. The album,

which has been certified platinum by the RIAA, debuted at number one on the Billboard Top 200 and features the Grammy-nominated multi-format number one single "Talk". Free Spirit has garnered over 5.3 billion worldwide streams.

Khalid, who has been called a "pop prodigy" by Rolling Stone, has been streamed over 16 billion times worldwide across all partners, has been nominated for six Grammys and has won numerous awards including multiple American Music Awards, a Billboard Music Award, a Teen Choice Award, an MTV Video Music Award and an MTV Woodie Award.

Those looking to buy their Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2020 tickets can do so online at www.bahraingp.com, over the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000, or at the BIC stand in City Centre Bahrain.

Under the Patronage of
HIS MAJESTY KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL KHALIFA
King of Bahrain

BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL GARDEN SHOW

4th - 7th MARCH 2020
BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION & CONVENTION CENTRE

Media Sponsor **THE DAILY tribune**
NEWS OF BAHRAIN



Students of BIS-BHAVANS along with the teachers displayed their scientific skills and artistic talents in the "Science and Art" Exhibition held at the school campus on Saturday, February 22, 2020. The exhibition was inaugurated by Mr Himanshu Verma, School Director. Children of Grades 1 to 9 participated in the exhibition and Parents were invited to motivate the student's work. The exhibition was held to provide a platform for children to display their knowledge, creativity, investigative skills and talent. The art exhibits comprised craft work, paintings, blow ups and best out of waste works. The exhibition was a huge success in terms of quality and students' participation, the school said in a statement issued to media.

Medical graduates sit for placement tests

Manama

Students who graduated from Chinese medical universities have started sitting their theoretical placement test assessments to evaluate their academic qualifications.

The medical graduates yesterday underwent their practical

exams also at the Arabian Gulf University (AGU), in line with the edict issued by His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Education and Training Development.

The edict stipulated coordination with local and regional

universities to set placement tests for students who graduated from non-accredited universities overseas.

Based on the results of the evaluation, graduates will complete their required academic and clinical content in other recommended universities so that their qualifications could be accredited.

'Water: Regenerating Life' theme of BIGS 2020

Manama

Under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the continued support of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of HM the King, President of the Consultative Council of the National Initiative for Agricultural Development (NIAD), Bahrain International Garden Show (BIGS) will be officially inaugurated on March 3 at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre (BIECC) and will be open to the public on March 4-7.

"The show is a unique event as it combines being a commercial exhibition that contributes to creating important opportunities

for participating organisations to expand their activities locally, regionally and internationally, with the education and knowledge it spreads as it offers chances to exchange experiences and opinions, introduces the latest innovations and provides awareness on the best ways and methods to care for gardens and green areas and to protect the environment," NIAD Secretary General Shaikha Maram bint Isa Al Khalifa said at a media conference.

Throughout the previous editions, the show managed to create an important bridge for communication and to enhance fruitful co-operation between participating regional and international companies, as well as local participants, which paved the



Shaikha Maram speaks at the Press conference yesterday.

way for companies to enter the region's markets and strengthen their positions and shares within them, Shaikha Maram added.

"Every year the exhibition focuses on a different theme that represents a pressing issue facing

the agricultural sector in order to work on improving systems and methods, and find solutions and alternatives that contribute to the sustainability of the agricultural sector in the Kingdom," she said.

"This year the show is held under the theme 'Water: Regenerating Life' and will focus on the importance of water and how to preserve it to guarantee its sustainability as it is the source of life on earth. It is expected that the rate of water consumption will continue to increase by up to 20 to 30 per cent by the year 2050, which will exacerbate the problem if proper solutions are not implemented from now and if the culture of correct practices in using water resources is not spread."

The theme stand will highlight several water-related topics including some statistics on water consumption in Bahrain, the importance of working to achieve water security which is

closely related to food security, and the role individuals play in conserving water in homes and domestic gardens.

This year, more than 200 exhibitors will showcase their designs, products, technologies and innovations over a 7,000 sqm space.

The participants this year come from 27 countries including Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Russia, Netherlands, Greece, USA, Japan, Poland, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Central African Republic, and Kyrgyzstan as well as several agricultural companies from regional and Arabic countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Morocco, Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt.

'No damage' to crops after locusts invasion

No farms destroyed; experts still monitoring the situation

● Many people here have been catching locusts to eat it, considering it a delicacy.

● Locusts are vulnerable when they are just eggs in the ground but they are hard to spot.

TDT | Manama

No damage was done to the crops here after locusts invaded the country last week.

The locusts that has been described as dangerous to crops did not destroy any farms in the Kingdom, said sources.

Strong winds from Saudi Arabia had caused swarms of locusts to invade Bahrain on Thursday.

Citizens and residents were astonished to see scores of locusts descending from the sky. Many videos of the locust swarms had gone viral on social media.

According to Prevention Web, a knowledge base about disaster



Swarms of locusts at Karbabad Beach. There was a fear in the Kingdom over possible destruction to crops.

management, a single desert locust swarm the size of Brussels could consume Belgium's entire food supply in a single day.

However farmers said, al-

though they were fearful, crops were not harmed by the locusts.

Authorities sprung into action with Ministry of Works, Municipalities and Urban Planning

sending teams to deal with the situation before it gets out of hand.

The spread, the ministry source said, can be contained by employing various measures including spraying of insecticides. According to ministry sources, no farms in Bahrain were damaged.

The ministry stated that experts in the field are monitoring the situation and that a continuous communication is ongoing with the Saudi Arabian authorities.

Reportedly, winds have transported locusts from Saudi Arabia to Bahrain, Yemen and Oman. The ministry also stated that there is no need to panic.

Reportedly, many people here have been catching locusts to eat it, considering it a delicacy.

Experts say they are a source of protein, but there are also warnings against eating locusts due to risk of diseases.

Locusts are vulnerable when they are just eggs in the ground but they are hard to spot. When they hatch into masses of what are called hoppers, they can be dealt with easily. The problem

is that such colonies are often in remote areas where there is very little incentive for the host country to deal with them. Soon, they will move on and become someone else's problem.

After hatching, the hopper still cannot fly and remains an essentially solitary creature. It becomes gregarious only after it has fledged, taking to the skies en masse and riding the easterly winds to fresh pastures, just as it has since ancient times.

Swarms can vary in size from 1 square kilometer, consisting of about 40 million locusts, to several hundred square kilometers. With each locust consuming roughly its own weight - 2 grams - in fresh food per day, a modest 1-square-kilometer swarm will eat as much in a single day as about six elephants, 20 camels or 35,000 people.

A swarm can cover up to 130 kilometers in a day and stay in the air for many days at a time, so the Red Sea - which is barely 300km across at its widest point - presents no barrier. In 1988, one swarm took only 10 days to migrate 5,000km across the Atlantic.

Proposed abortion law rejected

TDT | Manama

A proposed law that would have made abortion legal under certain circumstances was rejected yesterday.

The proposal, which aimed to permit abortion in case the foetus was found to have severe physical or mental deformities was rejected by the Shura Council yesterday.

The proposal had also aimed to permit abortion in case that continued pregnancy puts mothers health at risk.

The rejection came at the Shura council after comments from the Minister of Health.

The proposal was aimed to modify the proposed amendment to Article 19 of the 1989 Human Medicine and Dentistry Law.

Shura's services committee had backed the proposal but after today's discussions and intervention of the Health Minister, the idea was dropped.

The proposed law would have allowed abortions in these circumstances only if pregnancy was under three months and had consent of both parents.

Meanwhile, a Sharia ruling from the Supreme Islamic Council had previously banned abortions except in the case of life threatening risk to the mother.

Nurse attacker charged with 'attempted robbery'

TDT | Manama

An Asian man, who was arrested for brutally attacking a nurse in Salmaniya area in the Capital, confessed that he was attempting to rob her, as mentioned in his statement during the probe launched by the Public Prosecution.

The 29-year-old is now facing the charges of attempted robbery, while investigation in the case continue, a statement issued on Saturday by Capital Governorate Prosecution Chief Mohammed Salah confirmed.

"After receiving a report from the General Directorate of Crimi-

nal Investigation and Forensic Science about an Asian man who assaulted a nurse on the public road and attempted to rob her, the Public Prosecution began investigating the report.

"The accused was arrested, interrogated and confronted with the findings of the investigations and the footage circulating on social media sites," Mr Salah said.

According to the Chief Prosecutor, the suspect confessed to the accusations raised against him and he informed the interrogators that he was trying to steal the 33-year-old victim's bag, adding that his attempt went in vain after she resisted



CCTV footage showing the accused a second before he began attacking the nurse.

and cried out to passersby for help.

As reported on Tribune last week, the incident took place on Tuesday night while the victim, an Asian nurse working at Salmaniya Medical Complex, was walking home after finishing her shift at the hospital.

Footage of a security camera installed in a shop located near the crime scene showed how the suspect stalked the woman as she walked, then suddenly attacking from the back and bringing her to the floor, where he continued punching her before running away from the spot.

The footage went viral on social media networks, raising na-

tionwide condemnation of the "cowardly" act and demands to bring the man to justice.

A statement issued by the Interior Ministry on Thursday mentioned that co-operation between the Capital Police Directorate and the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science in the Ministry resulted in the identification and arrest of the suspect.

Mr Salah added in his statement on Saturday that the Public Prosecution is continuing its procedures in order to refer the case to the concerned criminal court.

No further information was available.

Gulf national gets three-year jail for 'illegal entry' to the Kingdom

Accused was earlier convicted of consuming and possessing drugs

TDT | Manama

A Gulf national, who succeeded in entering the Kingdom using a stolen identity card, was caught on King Fahad Causeway on his way out of the Kingdom.

This was revealed when the man, who is in his thirties, stood trial before the First High Criminal Court, which sentenced him to three years and blacklisted him from entering the Kingdom.

The details of the case show that the man was wanted to serve

an imprisonment sentence issued against him here in absentia after he was convicted in a drugs consumption and possession case.

In his statement, he told the interrogators that he stole someone's wallet in his country and used the identity card of the person to enter Bahrain through the causeway without being questioned.

The man apparently succeeded to cheat the Customs Officer and entered the country in a taxi after using the card that he claimed was his, according to

The man succeeded to cheat the Customs Officer and entered the country in a taxi after using the card that he claimed was his.

PROSECUTORS

Prosecutors.

After he finished his trip here, he attempted to exit Bahrain using the same method, they added.

However, this time, the Customs Officer on the Bahraini side of the Causeway suspected whether the card originally belonged to the defendant.

According to court files, the defendant was asked by the officers more than once if the card belonged to him, to which he insisted to claim that it was his.

The unconvinced officers then decided to escort him to the Saudi Customs, where his fingerprint could be checked.

According to the officers' testimonies, the defendant confessed

that he stole the card so he could use it to enter Bahrain because he was wanted to serve an imprisonment sentence issued against him here.

The defendant was then handed over to the Anti-Narcotics Department in Interior Ministry, which later referred the Public Prosecution.

On October 31, 2019, the prosecution charged him of providing wrong data to a government body, using someone else's identity as if it was his own and illegally entering Bahrain.

Asian sentenced for selling drugs

TDT | Manama

An Asian man was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment and fined BD10,000 after the Fourth High Criminal Court found him guilty of selling marijuana in the Kingdom.

Court files showed that the Anti-narcotics Directorate within the Interior Ministry received a tip-off on the man's illegal activities and an undercover officer was tasked to buy BD150 worth of marijuana from the defendant in order to arrest him.

Another person, along with an undercover cop, met the defendant at a previously agreed to spot, handed him the money and received the drugs, according to Prosecutors.

The undercover cop then arrested the defendant redhanded and found the amount in his possession, as well as a rolled joint of marijuana.

He was referred to the Public Prosecution, which interrogated him, heard witnesses testimonies and examined the seized evidence, before referring him to the court, which ordered to imprison and fine the defendant for his crime.

Man who shot teargas canister at crowd to learn fate next month

TDT | Manama

The First High Criminal Court has adjourned the case of a Bahraini man, who's charged with possessing a firearm without permission, to March 15, 2020, to announce its final verdict.

The 25-year-old was arrested back in 2018 after he allegedly shot a teargas canister at a crowd in Eker village in the Capital Governorate.

The man wasn't immediately arrested, but police investigation and the results of laboratory tests on the canister showed traces of his DNA, leading to his identification and arrest.

The High Criminal Court began hearing the case of a 24-year-old man accused of throwing a tear gas canister at a group of people. The statements of an eyewitness mentioned: "We are a group of friends who always gather in one place, but we were stunned when a man passed by us with his car and pelted the canister at us without any reason.

"We couldn't note down his car's registration plate number due the heavy smokes emitting from the canister."

On June 23, 2018, the Public Prosecution announced that it charged the defendant of possessing the firearm and the canister without obtaining the necessary permit from Interior Ministry.

'India should invest more in education, public health'



Mr Sardesai speaks at the BKS Book Fest 2020.

TDT | Manama

Pradeep Puravankara

India should invest more in the field of education and public health to meet the aspirations of its people, said prominent Indian journalist Rajdeep Sardesai yesterday.

Mr Sardesai, a news anchor, author and consulting editor at the India Today Group, said India is only investing, as of now, three per cent of its budget on

education, which is totally insufficient.

He was speaking at the fifth edition of Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS) Book Fest 2020 yesterday in the presence of BKS President P V Radhakrishna Pillai.

He cited the example of Kerala, which could be emulated on a national level. "Look at Kerala, it has done a remarkable job in education and public health. The educational suc-

cess rate is high in the state and so are its public health indicators."

Mr Sardesai praised the Kerala Health Ministry for successfully tackling the corona threat, emphasising on the need to bridge north-south divide when it comes to implementing policies related to public health and education.

"In the north, Delhi government is doing a great job to

boost the education sector. The government there is spending nearly 35 per cent of the budget on education and the results are now evident."

The leading journalist said this is the right time for India to focus on its young population. "We need to work on this factor. After 2035, India will become an ageing society. Use the moment or seize the moment to build a better India or lose the opportunity," he said.

Shura raps Amnesty report

Manama

The Shura Council has deplored the fallacies and incorrect information in Amnesty International's report that targets the progress of democracy and human rights in Bahrain.

In a statement, the Shura said international organisations have the duty of taking information from reliable sources and of communicating with the relevant institutions and concerned authorities on human rights instead of drafting reports that lack objectivity and integrity.

The Shura said it was well aware of the report issued by Amnesty International and the false information and incorrect data it contained, stressing that it was not based on facts and that it did not reflect the reality in Bahrain nor its efforts to guarantee human rights and freedoms.

Gulf Air becomes official carrier of Bahrain Film Festival

TDT | Manama

Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom, has announced its collaboration with and sponsorship of the upcoming Bahrain Film Festival as the official carrier of the first edition of the festival due to be held from 4 to 8 of March, organised by the Bahrain Cinema Club.

The sponsorship is part of the airline's strategy to support various activities that are aimed at enhancing the cultural, artistic and tourism scene in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

During the signing ceremony which took place at the airline's headquarters, Gulf Air's Deputy Chief Executive Officer Captain Waleed Al Alawi said: "Gulf Air has a track record in support-



Mr Al Alawi, Mr Al Maskati sign the co-operation agreement.

We will transport festival guests to participate in this promising festival, which is part of the esteemed Spring of Culture calendar of events.

MR AL ALAWI

ing such events over the years.

"We will transport festival guests to participate in this promising festival, which is part of the esteemed Spring of Culture calendar of events. Bahrain is well known for its efforts to enrich the cultural movement and enhance its position as a cultural hub in the region."

For his part, the President of the

Bahrain Cinema Club Mr Nader Al Maskati appreciated the support provided by Gulf Air, stressing the importance of this partnership to achieve the desired goals of the first Bahrain Film Festival.

He said: "We praise Gulf Air's efforts as the national carrier in supporting local events aimed at promoting art and culture as well as positioning Bahrain on the global map of art and culture."

The Bahrain Film Festival aims to present a cultural cinematic event that will add to the cultural movement in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The festival will support young talents in Bahrain and the Arab region by discovering and encouraging content creators and film enthusiasts.

business

ABG reports Q4, FY19 profit

TDI | Manama

Al Baraka Banking Group (ABG) posted a fourth-quarter net income attributable to equity holders of the parent of US\$ 21.9million compared to US\$ 30.9m for the same period of 2018 with a decline of 29 per cent.

Quarterly results were affected by monetary and geopolitical developments in countries where the Group's units operate, in addition to providing more prudential provisions for its banking unit in Turkey, to enhance the integrity of its financial conditions and enable it to continue growing in the Turkish market, which is one of the main markets of the Group.

The board also recommended distributing cash dividends of US\$ 0.02 for each outstanding share, subject to regulatory and AGM approvals.

Total net income for the quarter of 2019 was US\$ 48.4m compared to US\$ 53.5m for the same period of 2018 with a 9pc decline.

Earnings per share was US Cents 0.73 compared to US Cents 1.65 for the same period of 2018.

For the full year of 2019, the Group achieved net income attributable to equity holders of the parent of US\$ 105.7m compared with 129.1m for the year 2018, showing a decline of 18pc.

Total net income for the year 2019 reached US\$ 180.2m com-

”
Due to our full commitment to providing real participatory banking model in the 17 communities where our Group's units operate, we fully realize the nature of exposures we face and consider them as part of our business model in servicing these communities. Based on this, we consider the results achieved in 2019 as very good results, especially that all our units contributed to achieving them, given their well-established presence in the markets and sound and growing financial performance

SHEIKH SALEH ABDULLAH KAMEL
 CHAIRMAN OF AL BARAKA BANKING GROUP

”
The results achieved by the Group and its units in 2019 confirm that they stand for sound fundamentals in terms of the healthy financial conditions, technical and human resources and long experience in its local markets. This can achieve sustainable growth in business and revenues, but are sometimes affected by geopolitical and financial developments surrounding these markets

ABDULLA AMMAR AL SAUDI
 VICE CHAIRMAN OF ABG

”
The year 2019 saw the continuation of unfavourable international economic developments such as the trade war and unstable oil prices, in addition to the financial and geopolitical developments in some countries where our units operate. All these factors created many challenges for us, but thanks to the Almighty, we were able to achieve strong improvement in our income during the fourth quarter of 2019

ADNAN AHMED YOUSIF
 PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF AL BARAKA BANKING GROUP

pared to US\$ 216.7m for the year 2018, showing a decline of 17pc. Earnings per share for the year was US Cents 6.01 compared to US Cents 7.91 for the year 2018. Total assets showed a growth

of 10pc by the end of 2019 to reach US\$ 26.26 billion compared to US\$ 23.83 billion by the end of 2018.

Customer accounts including due to banks and financial in-

stitutions as at the end of 2019 reached US\$ 22.46 billion, an increase of 14pc compared to US\$ 19.63bn level at the end of 2018, and represents 86pc of total assets.



Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) Sameer Nass at Bait Al Tijjar yesterday with the ambassador of Egypt to Bahrain Yasser Shaban. The meeting mulled the preparations for holding a business forum that focuses on the investment eco-system of Egypt and highlights opportunities. The forum will also include business to business meetings between Egyptian and Bahraini business owners and investors to foster liaison and encourage partnerships. It is scheduled to take place on 3rd March 2020 at the chamber's headquarters in Sanabis. Present at the meeting were also vice-treasurer Waleed Kanoo, member of the executive bureau Basim Al Saie, and Chief Executive Officer Shaker Al Shater.

India clarifies size of gold discovery in Uttar Pradesh

Reuters | Lucknow, India

India has clarified the nature of a gold discovery in Uttar Pradesh, after a government official said on Saturday that fields with reserves of more than 3,000 tonnes of gold ore had been found, prompting a flurry of activity on social media.

Central and state departments have discovered traces of gold in northern Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district after surveying the area for more than 10 years, Roshan Jacob, the head of the mining department in the state had said.

Jacob said that about 3,000 tonnes of gold ore had been found in two areas in the region, adding that concentration level of gold in the area was about 3 grams per tonne of ore.

But India's Geological Survey of India (GSI) said on Sat-

India, the world's second-biggest gold consumer, 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.



urday the total gold that could be extracted from the region might only be about 160 kilograms.

"GSI has not estimated such kind of vast resource of gold deposit," it said in a statement.

BAC, Al Baik sign food, beverage agreement for new terminal



BAC Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalal and Al Baik Chief Executive Officer, Adil Al Baqr signed the five-year concession agreement in the presence of BAC Chief Commercial Officer, Ayman Zainal and other members of the commercial team.

TDI | Manama

One of Saudi Arabia's leading quick-service chains, Al Baik, will open its outlet at Bahrain International Airport's (BIA) new Passenger Terminal Building, BIA's operator and managing body, Bahrain Airport Company (BAC), said.

BAC Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalal

and Al Baik Chief Executive Officer, Adil Al Baqr signed the five-year concession agreement in the presence of BAC Chief Commercial Officer, Ayman Zainal and other members of the commercial team.

Commenting Al Binfalal: "The Al Baik outlet at the airport is the company's second branch outside of Saudi and is located in the Arrivals Area,

making it accessible to both the passengers and the public."

Al Baqr said: "We're delighted to enter the Bahrain market and to be part of one of the most important national projects in the Kingdom's history."

To meet the demand for more variety, food and beverage units, a total area of 899 sqm are located in the Arrivals and Departures areas of the new terminal.

In addition to housing some well-known quick-service favourites and local brands, the new terminal will offer several regional debuts, including the first TGI Fridays in an airport in the Gulf, the region's first EAT restaurant, and the Middle East's first Jamie's Deli and Pizzeria - a combined concept from celebrity chef, Jamie Oliver.

Britain considers looser fiscal rules for March 11 budget: Sunday Times

Reuters | London

Britain is considering relaxing rules on public spending at an upcoming budget on March 11, the Sunday Times reported citing unnamed sources.

Finance minister Rishi Sunak, appointed earlier this month after his predecessor Sajid Javid resigned unexpectedly, will deliver his first budget on March 11.

The Sunday Times said Sunak was considering giving himself an extra two years to balance day-to-day spending, extending the current three year target to reach a balanced budget to five years, allowing himself higher spending in the near term.

The newspaper also said that Sunak's predecessor had been asked to change the rules to allow 1% leeway on balancing the budget.



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak

The Treasury did not immediately comment on the report.

If implemented next month, both measures would allow higher spending - something markets have expected since Sunak's appointment.

The 39-year old took the position when Javid resigned because he was not prepared to sack his advisers and cede some power of financial policy to Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office.

For the Palestinians and Israel, the Trump peace plan is a disaster

History shows that radical overreach on the part of the 'strong' has grim implications.

HUSSEIN IBISH

The 21st century is starting to look a lot like the 19th century. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have formed a joint American-Israeli committee to carve up the occupied West Bank with zero Palestinian input. It recalls the starkest days of predatory colonialism such as the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, which regulated European colonisation and trade in Africa. It also echoes ancient tragedies.

Mr Trump's proposal, roundly rejected by the Palestinians and the Arab League, encourages Israel to annex vast tracts of occupied Palestinian land in stark contradiction to the United Nations charter and numerous other international prohibitions against the acquisition of territory by war, including all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

It shreds the 1993 Declaration of Principles which Israel and the US signed along with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Russia. Article V specifies "final status" issues to be decided only through direct negotiations, including borders and settlements.

So much for that. Like an imperial power, Mr Trump is claiming the right to authorise Israel to disregard international law and its own treaty commitments. Further, he believes that the areas Israel may annex remain to be nego-

tiated between Israel and the US, rather than with the Palestinians.

So, the US and Israel have formed a joint "mapping committee" to determine, based on Israel's territorial ambitions and Mr Trump's political interests, exactly which areas Israel will annex and what will be left for a phony Palestinian state that would strongly resemble an apartheid-era South African Bantustan.

The brazenness and brutality of the plan was eloquently expressed by Mr Netanyahu during a February 16 speech in Jerusalem to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations.

He flatly stated that such annexations are "not conditional in any way on Palestinian acceptance of the Trump plan. Whether they accept it or not, it's going to happen".

"The weak don't survive," he declared. "Only the strong survive."

Students of history will immediately recognise in this speech, and the broader plan, the attitude that the 5th century BCE historian Thucydides attributed to the Athenians in the Melian Dialogue: "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."

Mr Trump and his adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner defend their annexation initiative by claiming it "recognises reality", meaning that Israel is simply unwilling to compromise and



Yasser Arafat, right, shakes hands with Yitzhak Rabin in Bill Clinton's presence after signing their peace accord in Washington.

allow a meaningful Palestinian state because it does not have to. "You, by giving in, would save yourselves from disaster; we, by not destroying you, would

be able to profit from you," the Athenians warned the Melians. That is also the clear message of Mr Kushner's document and Mr Netanyahu's comments.

When the US-Israeli-Palestinian summit at Camp David failed in 2000, it was clear that the most likely outcome was that Israel would eventually try

to impose by force the kind of partial, highly circumscribed "statehood", combined with annexation, formula that the Palestinians rejected at the ne-

We must put an end to bullying in schools

The case of a child in Australia and a TV presenter in the UK have started conversations

JUSTIN THOMAS

A mother's love for her child is one of the most potent forces in nature. Last week, Yarraka Bayles posted a video of her nine-year-old son, Quaden, distraught after yet another "freaking" day of being bullied at school. The footage shows the bullied schoolboy crying his heart out while voicing ideas about harming himself. Posting this video was a mother's sincere and desperate cry for help.

The clip has been viewed more than 16 million times and offers of support for Quaden have flooded in from around the world.

A similar case was recently reported in the UAE too. A video of a young girl being bullied at her school in Dubai was posted on the internet. After viewing the clip, a concerned schoolgirl, Jawaher Wejdan, bravely sent the footage on to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority, declaring that she always wants to "speak up for the voiceless". The bullies were later identified and removed from the school.

These, however, are just two instances where concerned citizens

and the power of social media helped bring about potentially useful outcomes. But more often than not, bullying goes unreported and unresolved.

How many children like Quaden cry themselves to sleep harbouring ideas of self-injurious behaviour? A study by Unicef, including more than 100,000 participants across 18 nations, reported that two-thirds of schoolchildren had been victims of some form of bullying.

We are in the midst of a global mental health crisis, and being bullied during childhood is a key contributor to this sorry state. Childhood victimisation experiences such as bullying have a direct relationship with the development of severe mental health problems.

A study published in Schizophrenia Bulletin, suggests that the strength of this association is in the same ballpark as the link between smoking and lung cancer.

Unfortunately, bullying doesn't stop in the schoolyard. Earlier this month, Caroline Flack, presenter on the popular TV show, Love Island, took her own life.

The British tabloid press has been

heavily criticised in this case, over its relentless negative and, at times, cruel coverage of Ms Flack's personal life.

In many ways, this is similar to the hounding that the late Princess Diana experienced, and the more recent harassment of the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle.

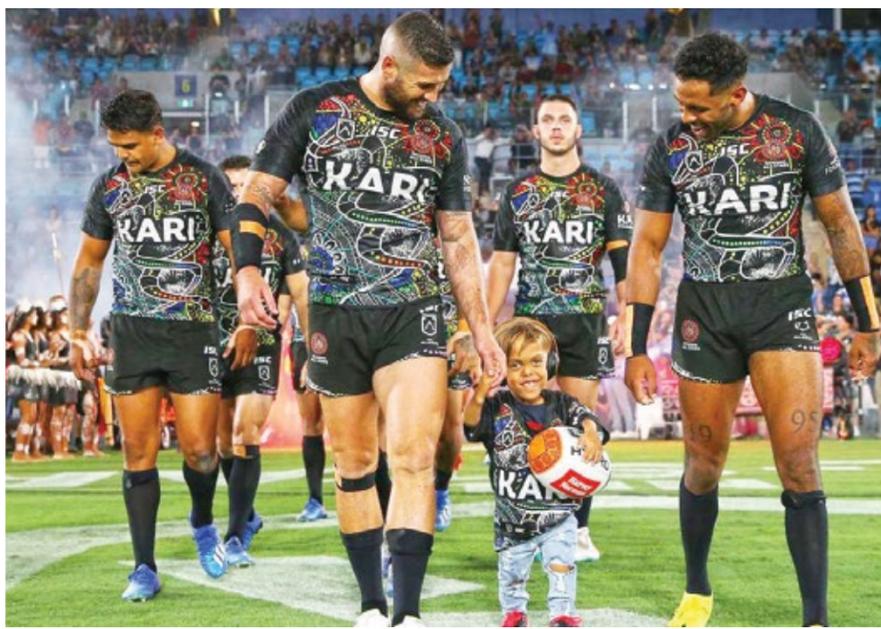
Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, described his wife's treatment by sections of the British media as "bullying". He went on to say: "We won't and can't believe in a world where there is no accountability for this."

After Flack's death, the British Government have called for social media to help prevent bullying.

Members of the business community have asked businesses to rethink advertising in certain British tabloids. Flack's suicide has also prompted several hair salons across the UK to launch a systematic boycott of "toxic" celebrity-gossip magazines.

In the world of sport too, cases are on the rise of players being bullied, racially taunted and abused by supporters.

Last week, the Porto striker, Mousa Marega, left the pitch after a large section of the opposing team's (Vito-



Quaden Bayles runs onto the field before the NRL match between the Indigenous All-Stars and the New Zealand Maori All Stars at Cbus Super Stadium.

ria de Guimaraes) fans began chanting racist abuse.

Despite the support of his team-

mates, it was just too much for the French-born Malian striker who eventually left the pitch, in his own

words, hurt and humiliated across Europe and similar harassment

1944

Merrill's Marauders: The Marauders begin their 1,000-mile journey through Japanese occupied Burma.

1945

Egyptian **Premier Ahmad Mahir Pasha** is killed in Parliament after reading a decree.

1946

Colonel Juan Perón, founder of the political movement that became known as Peronism, is elected to his first term as President of Argentina.



1949

The Armistice Agreements are signed, to formally end the hostilities of the 1948 **Arab-Israeli** War.

Peace plan is a lose-lose

for the 'weak', and for itself

Many friends of Israel are seriously questioning how anything resembling a "democratic" or even meaningfully "Jewish" state can be sustained if the Trump plan is realised. Palestinians clearly stand to lose everything in the short run.

2009, settlement construction did not, in fact, slow, let alone stop. There were enough exceptions, grandfathering clauses and other provisions to prevent that. Had it been extended any longer, it would have started to slow the entrenchment of the occupation, but Israel refused to consider that despite extremely generous US inducements.

Yet Israel was prevented from formally annexing settlements or the Jordan Valley because the US was a signatory to the 1993 Declaration of Principles, and remained committed to a two-state solution. With Mr Trump, all of that has changed. Now Israel is dealing with an administration in Washington that does not feel constrained by international law, signed treaty obligations or human rights.

Mr Trump's administration enthusiastically embraces the logic of power that would enable Israel to conduct large-scale annexations precisely because it can.

But even if Israel seizes the settlements and the Jordan Valley, it will not have resolved the Palestinian issue. The logic of "the strong do what they can" therefore sets up an even more chilling future scenario. The Israelis will be more committed than ever to keeping hold of these territories but will be completely unable to politically incorporate the Palestinians.

For "the strong", there is an obvious solution that could well become irresistible. Mass dis-

placement leaving a small remnant of Palestinians, at most, in the areas that Israel intends to permanently control would provide the elusive solution. This could be done in the name of self-defence or military necessity, particularly if, or rather when, another major Palestinian uprising against occupation erupts.

Can anyone still believe that the US, let alone the world, would do anything serious about it?

Yet it is worth considering how Thucydides implicitly interpreted the Athenian cruelty he depicted towards the Melians, who were completely massacred or enslaved. In his immortal account of the Peloponnesian Wars, this exercise of strength in the form of brutal cruelty certainly seems to have sown the seeds for a hubristic Athens' eventual defeat at the hands of Sparta.

The great Athenian historian illustrated not only the logic of unbridled power but also the grim implications that holds for the "strong" as well as the "weak".

Many friends of Israel are seriously questioning how anything resembling a "democratic" or even meaningfully "Jewish" state can be sustained if the Trump plan is realised.

Palestinians clearly stand to lose everything in the short run. But by embracing brute force and radical overreach simply because they can, Israelis may too in the long run.

Schools, workplaces

to tackle all forms of bullying



The incidents were already high back in 2008, with 75 per cent of employees affected. However, by 2019, ninety-four per cent of the 2,081 employees surveyed reported having been bullied in the workplace. The most frequent source of bullying in 2008 and 2019 were managers, with bullying most commonly taking the form of aggressive emails, being shouted at, and harmful gossip.

Beyond sporting stars and celebrities, though, the regular world of work also has its share of bullying. Workplace bullying is a rising issue and it undermines the significant efforts made towards promoting workplace well-being.

We can have an office space to rival Google's, with a gym, games room and beanbags galore, but if we are bullied at work, all those perks are worthless.

Research in the US suggests that workplace bullying is on the rise. A survey by Monster.com run in 2008,

and again 2019 reported an increase of 19 per cent in the rate at which employees were affected as either the target or witness of workplace bullying.

The incidents were already high back in 2008, with 75 per cent of employees affected. However, by 2019, ninety-four per cent of the 2081 employees surveyed reported having been bullied in the workplace.

The most frequent source of bullying in 2008 and 2019 were managers, with bullying most commonly taking the form of aggressive emails, being shouted at, and harmful gossip. The UK's Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, a body that regularly receives calls about bullying and harassment in the workplace, reports similar data.

We need more kindness in schools, media, sports fields and workplaces. Beyond zero tolerance for bullying, we also need to promote compassion and concern for the well-being of others. If we can't be kind, we might at least be curious as to why not? And if we can't be positive towards others, we might do well to follow the Arabic adage: "Say something good, or remain silent".



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Looks like Crazy Bernie is doing well in the Great State of Nevada. Biden & the rest look weak, & no way Mini Mike can restart his campaign after the worst debate performance in the history of Presidential Debates. Congratulations Bernie, & don't let them take it away from you!

@realDonaldTrump

02



I am tearing up just thinking about what it would mean to Americans everywhere--and to the world--to have @BernieSanders as President, fighting for US. I am so ready for that.

@PramilaJayapal

03



India is spending Rs. 100 crore but President Trump has said that no trade deal. So it's a pay-back for Howdy Modi? Essentially Trump's election rally in India?

@RuchiraC

04



On the feast of the #ChairOfSaintPeter, we give thanks to God for the mission entrusted to the apostle Peter and his successors: to gather His people from among the nations and guide them in charity and truth along the path of salvation.

@Pontifex

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

At 52, going stronger and stronger



VENUS 5

Last week, the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) celebrated its 52th anniversary with a renewed commitment to defend Bahrain from outside threats. Over the last five decades, the BDF has served as a bulwark force, a well-organised establishment and armed with modern technology and staffed with qualified personnel in all its sections – land, air and naval forces.

The Gulf region is a politically and military sensitive area, and where the influence of outside forces is remarkably manifested in geopolitical competition for hegemonic or economic interests. These motivations and competitions create atmospheres of instability in the regional countries and perhaps that is the reason why the region continues to face instability and pop-up unexpected confrontations at different times.

Amid such a disturbing environment, building a strong national defence force has become a matter of life and death – to maintain territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations.

Bahrain has succeeded in building a strong defence force, the BDF, a force to be reckoned with, stood over the years against forces that intend to invade or attack Bahrain directly or indirectly through proxy forces. BDF has confronted them with firm commitment of bravery and patriotism.

One way of supplying the BDF with a continuous flow of fresh recruits every year is for the government to approve a national service programme, where youths of a certain age allowed to serving in the military for a period of a year or so and then backing to civilian life. During emergency, they can be called to serve in the military.

These days, BDF has not only become a strong national force we are proud of but also an international force, deployed in conflict areas ranging from Syria to Yemen and contributed its part in achieving peace and stability in the respective countries.

During the peak of the conflict in Syria, Bahrain has participated in the US-led coalition forces against the so-called Islamic State terrorist (IS or Daesh) and contributed in destroying the cult death group. BDF is actively participating in the Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen, whose mission is to bring the legitimate government back to power, and abort Iranian influence and dream of hegemony.

BDF is also aggressively engaging in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), a multinational naval force, based in Bahrain. CMF aims to promote stability, security and prosperity in the Arabian Gulf, the Northern Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, which are the main shipping lanes where most of the world oil is exported. Apart from its mission, the CMF has successfully curbed trafficking and smuggling of illegal weapons and drugs.

Thus, the BDF has transformed from a defender of a nation to a peace-force deployed in other nations and regions and is contributing in regional stability and maintain international order. This transformation is something few countries in the region have ever achieved.

The achievement of the BDF would have been incomplete without the royal assistance. His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's undivided attention to the business of upgrading the weapons, familiarizing and training of staff with the updated military hardware has made the BDF one of the strong forces in the region.

Thus, when the BDF is celebrating its 52th anniversary its entire national, regional and international achievements need to be highlighted. Recently, Bahrain has agreed to buy advanced military wares from the United States, which will contribute to its strength, and advancement that can match to one of the strongest national forces of the region.

Finally yet importantly, the BDF needs a reserve force, a sort of a support group composed of retired military personnel and civilians who volunteer to work with the BDF in case of unexpected developments and threats the region may face. Last month's Parliament recommendation on this issue deserved attention.

From the author's experience, one way of supplying the BDF with a continuous flow of fresh recruits every year is for the government to approve a national service programme, where youths of a certain age allowed to serving in the military for a period of a year or so and then backing to civilian life. During emergency, they can be called to serve in the military. The United Arab Emirates has such a programme worth appreciating. Hope, we will implement it one of the days.

Oman's new ruler aims to reduce country's debt

● **Oman's debt to GDP ratio spiked to nearly 60 per cent last year**

● **Could reach 70pc by 2022**

Reuters | Dubai

Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said said yesterday the government would work to reduce public debt and restructure public institutions and companies to bolster the economy.

Haitham, in his second public speech since assuming power in January, said the government would create a national framework to tackle unemployment while addressing strained public finances.

"We will direct our financial resources in the best way that will guarantee reducing debt and increasing revenues," he said in the televised speech.

"We will also direct all gov-



Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq at al-Alam palace in Muscat, Oman

ernment departments to adopt efficient governance that leads to a balanced, diversified and sustainable economy."

Rated junk by all three major credit rating agencies, Oman's debt to GDP ratio spiked to nearly 60 per cent last year from

around 15pc in 2015, and could reach 70pc by 2022, according to S&P Global Ratings.

The oil producing country has

“We will direct our financial resources in the best way that will guarantee reducing debt and increasing revenues. We will also direct all government departments to adopt efficient governance that leads to a balanced, diversified and sustainable economy”

OMAN'S SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIQ AL-SAID

relied heavily on debt to offset a widening deficit caused by lower crude prices. Also, the late Sultan Qaboos, who ruled Oman for nearly 50 years, held back on austerity measures that could cause unrest.

The country has delayed introducing a 5pc value added tax

from 2019 to 2021, and economic diversification has been slow, with oil and gas accounting for over 70pc of government revenues.

Last week, rating agency Fitch said Oman was budgeting for a higher deficit of 8.7pc for 2020 despite its expectation of further asset-sale proceeds and some spending cuts.

"We are willing to take the necessary measures to restructure the state's administrative system and its legislation," Haitham said in his first speech since the mourning period for Qaboos ended, without elaborating.

He said there would be a full review of government companies to improve their business performance and competence.

Oman observers have said that if Haitham moves to decentralise power it would signal willingness to improve decision making. Like Qaboos, he holds the positions of finance minister and central bank chairman as well as premier, defence and foreign minister.

UAE economy grew at 2.9pc in 2019, says central bank

Reuters | Dubai

The United Arab Emirates' economy grew at 2.9pc year-on-year in 2019, up from 1.7pc in 2018, a UAE central bank report said.

The country's hydrocarbon sector grew at 7.6pc in 2019, while the non-hydrocarbon sector expanded by 1.1pc, the bank report said.

The central bank said the UAE economy grew 1.3pc in the fourth quarter from a year earlier, slowing from a pace of 2.9pc in the third quarter.

The International Monetary Fund expects the UAE economy to expand at 2.5pc in 2020 as oil producers will be hit by output cuts following the decision by



General view of the ADNOC headquarters (L) and Emirates Towers (R) are seen in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

OPEC and non-OPEC producers cuts. The UAE central bank report

also said property prices in Dubai fell by 7.0pc in the fourth quarter from a year earlier, compared with an 8.2pc drop in the previous quarter.

"The Dubai market continues to exhibit decline in rent due mainly to excess supply," it said.

Property group Knight Frank said in a report earlier this month that a total of 62,500 residential units are scheduled to be completed this year in Dubai, the biggest number of new units since 2008.

For Abu Dhabi, the central bank said residential property prices fell 7.5pc in the fourth quarter from a year earlier, moderating from a drop of 8.2pc in the third quarter.

Banks weigh on Saudi, Dubai



Traders on the floor of Saudi Stock market (Courtesy of Amazons)

● **All Saudi banks decline**

● **Aramco closes up at 34.05 riyals**

● **Emirates NBD weighs on Dubai**

● **Mesaieed Petrochemical slips on profit decline**

Reuters

Most major Gulf stock markets fell yesterday, with Saudi Arabia hurt by losses in banking shares that outweighed gains in Saudi Aramco and Emirates NBD dragging the Dubai index lower.

Saudi Arabia's benchmark index closed down 0.3 per cent as Saudi Telecom dropped 2pc and the country's largest lender National Commercial Bank fell 1.3pc.

But the index was supported by Saudi Aramco, which rose 1.2pc in its straight fifth session of gains.

The oil group received regulatory approval to develop Saudi Arabia's Jafurah non-associated gas field, which would produce some 550,000 barrels per day of gas liquids and condensates.

Separately, it was reported on Friday through sources that Aramco is set to gain unconditional EU antitrust approval for its \$69 billion buy of a 70pc stake in Saudi Basic Industries Corp (SABIC). SABIC was up 0.6pc.

The Dubai index was down 0.7pc, with its biggest lender Emirates NBD declining 2.3pc.

Air Arabia lost 3.2pc.

The board of Emirates NBD approved a 0.40 per share dividend for 2019, similar to a year earlier, though its net profit last year surged 44pc to 14.5 bn dirhams (\$3.95 bn).

The Qatari index closed down 0.4pc after three days of gains.

Qatar International Islamic Bank fell 2.2pc, while Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding shed 2.1pc after its full-year net profit declined more than a 14pc to 1.2 bn riyals (\$329.6 million).

Ooredoo lost 1.3pc. The telecom firm said it had begun an investigation into allegations surrounding an expulsion order issued by Algerian authorities against Ooredoo Algeria's chief executive.

In Abu Dhabi, the index edged up 0.2pc as market heavyweight First Abu Dhabi Bank added 1pc.

In Egypt, the blue-chip index ticked down 0.2pc on the first day of trading after the central bank on Thursday kept key interest rates unchanged, holding its deposit rate at 13.25pc and its lending rate at 12.25pc.

Tobacco firm Eastern Company lost 1.3pc and Elswedy Electric was down 1.9pc.

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▼ 0.3pc to 7,983 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 0.2pc to 5,042 pts
DUBAI	▼ 0.7pc to 2,718 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.4pc to 9,898 pts
EGYPT	▼ 0.2pc to 13,688 pts
BAHRAIN	■ at 1,669 pts
OMAN	▲ 0.1pc to 4,197 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 0.3pc to 6,849 pts

No global digital tax by end-2020 would mean digital tax chaos - France

Reuters | Riyadh

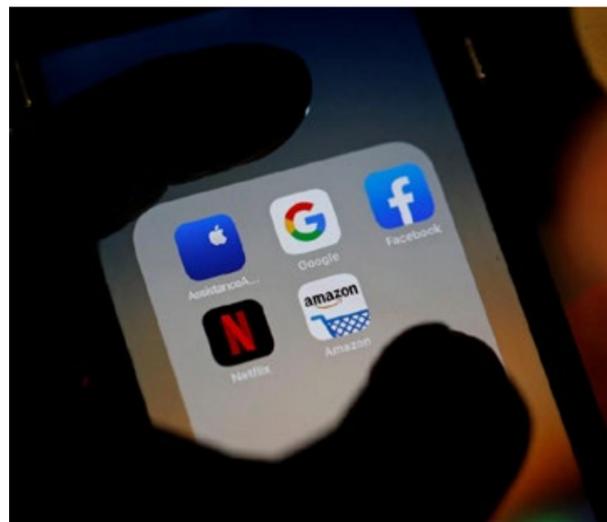
Failure to reach a global deal on where and how much to tax digital giants like Google, Amazon or Facebook would result in many digital tax regimes emerging all over the world, France's Finance Minister said yesterday.

Speaking to Reuters on the sidelines of a meeting of world financial leaders, Bruno Le Maire said the gathering had been very useful in establishing consensus on such global tax rules.

Finance ministers and central bank governors from the world's 20 biggest economies, the G20, met in Riyadh for talks on global economic issues, with digital taxation topping their two-day agenda.

"For the first time there is wide consensus among the G20 members on the necessity of having a new international taxation system," Le Maire said.

"We have to address the issue of digital companies making profits in many countries without any physical presence,



The logos of mobile apps, Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple and Netflix, are displayed on a screen in this illustration picture

which means without paying the due level of taxes," he said.

"And we also have to address the key question of minimum taxation and the risk of having a race to the bottom on taxation," he said.

France has already adopted its

own digital tax, but suspended it until the end of the year to give the G20 time to work out a global deal to which all countries would subscribe.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the G20's think tank,

wants to agree on technical details of such a tax by July and a full agreement among the G20 is expected by the end of the year.

"There is a consensus to build a solution by the end of 2020," Le Maire said, noting the alternative — no agreement — would create a proliferation of different tax systems making life more difficult for companies.

"Let's be clear — either we have at the end of 2020 an international solution... clearly in the interest of all countries and digital companies, or there is no solution and ... then it will be up the national taxes to enter into force," Le Maire said.

"Instead of having one single, simple solution, we would have many different digital taxes, all over the world," he said.

The United States, home to most of the digital giants, has been wary of committing to a solution on taxing them before U.S. presidential elections later this year, and has threatened to slap tariffs on French goods if Paris did not suspend the implementation of the tax.

G20 ready to adopt policies to limit economic impact of corona: Saudi

Reuters | Riyadh

Finance officials from the Group of 20 major economies agreed yesterday to continue monitoring the risk from the coronavirus outbreak and to adopt appropriate policies to limit the global economic impact, Saudi Arabia's finance minister said.

The two-day gathering in Riyadh was dominated by growing concern over the widening fallout from the coronavirus outbreak, with the International Monetary Fund predicting it would shave 0.1 percentage point off global growth.

As the delegates wrapped up their meeting, Chinese President Xi Jinping was quoted as saying that Beijing will step up policy adjustments to help cushion the blow on the economy from the outbreak.

"The outbreak of novel coronavirus pneumonia will inevitably have a relatively big impact on the economy and society," Xi said, adding the impact would be short-term and controllable.

China was represented at the G20 meeting by its ambassador to Saudi Arabia, as senior officials stayed away due to the growing crisis over the virus.

The epidemic, which origi-



Saudi Minister of Finance Mohammed al-Jadaan speaks during a media conference with Saudi Arabia's central bank governor Ahmed al-Kholifey, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

nated in China has since spread to nearly 30 countries and territories.

South Korea raised its infectious disease alert to its highest level on Sunday, while a third passenger from a virus-infected cruise ship in Japan died.

"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," IMF Managing

Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Saturday. "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," she added.

In a draft G20 communique, the finance leaders clung to their upbeat projection of a modest pick-up in global growth despite the outbreak.

The latest version gives less prominence than an earlier version to the outbreak as a growth

risk, saying only that the G20 would "... enhance global risk monitoring, including the recent outbreak of COVID-19", the medical name for the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

Reports earlier said the meeting reached agreement on the wording of a final communique that includes for the first time a reference to climate change, G20 diplomatic sources said.

Compromise language hammered out to overcome US objections retained a reference to the Financial Stability Board's work examining the implications of climate change for financial stability, although it dropped climate change from its list of downside risks to global economic growth.

One of the sources said it was the first time a reference to climate change had been included in a G20 finance communique, even though it was removed from the top of the joint statement.

Concerns about the economic impact of climate change have escalated in recent years and pressure is mounting on business to accelerate the shift to a low-carbon economy ahead of United Nations climate talks in November.

If Lebanon needs financial aid, France will be there, finance minister says



French Finance and Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire speaks during the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Reuters | Riyadh

France is ready to support Lebanon financially — bilaterally or multilaterally — its finance minister said on Sunday, warning against mixing economic recovery in the small Mediterranean state with US-led efforts to counter Iran in the region. "France always stands ready to help Lebanon. It has always been the case in the past and it will be the case in the future..." Bruno Le Maire said at the end of a meeting of finance officials from the Group of 20 (G20) major economies.

"We know that there are ties between the two issues but we don't want to mix the issue of economic recovery in Lebanon, which is today the clear emergency, and the question of Iran," he added.

As Lebanon's economic crisis deepens, Western and Sunni-led Gulf Arab states that helped in the past have made clear that any support hinges on Beirut implementing long-delayed reforms to address root causes such as state corruption and bad governance.

Le Maire said decisions by Lebanon's government were urgently needed to improve the situation on the ground.

Pressured by US sanctions, Cuba struggles to pay its debts

In mid-January 2020 Cuba said it will restrict the consumption of liquefied petroleum gas, widely used for domestic use, after an upsurge in US trade sanctions

AFP | Havana

Foreign companies going unpaid, creditor countries told to be patient: as Cuba struggles under the weight of US sanctions it has also been struggling to pay its debts, raising serious concern among its partners.

Having negotiated a restructuring of its debt with 14 countries through the Paris Club of creditors in 2015, Cuba last year failed to make timely payments to six of them - Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Japan and Spain.

The Caribbean nation was supposed to pay those countries "\$32 to \$33 million" of the total \$82 million due in 2019, one diplomatic source said. Its failure to do so leaves it facing stiff interest payments of 9 percent.

Facing this difficult problem, Cuba's deputy prime minister Ricardo Cabrisas has sought to offer reassurance. In a letter to Paris Club president Odile Renaud-Basso and seen by AFP, he promised that Cuba would make



President Miguel Diaz-Canel (R), here with his predecessor Raul Castro, is trying to re-negotiate Cuba's foreign debt as it struggles under US sanctions



Foreign tourism in Cuba declined by 9.3 percent last year from 2018 -- its first drop in 10 years

its overdue payments by the end of May.

"They have to propose a precise calendar," one ambassador said, expressing the general sense of impatience, even while admitting that the Cuban government "is going through a bad pass; they have no liquidity."

Several diplomats interviewed expressed concern over what they said was the "precedent" of the overdue payments.

As one European diplomat put it: "They said they were going to pay their debts. There is no plan; there is a lack of credibility."

Another diplomat noted that "we met Cabrisas at the beginning of the year" and he had a "defeatist tone."

"But he told us that his country really did not want to default," as it did in 1986, when it suspended its debt payments.

'Vicious circle'

The Communist island was largely cut off from international markets from then until the 2010s, when several countries canceled the majority of Cuba's debt: China in 2011 forgave \$6 billion in debt, Mexico in 2013 canceled \$400 million, and Russia in 2014 forgave \$35 billion.

The Paris Club accord helped put the Cuban economy back on track, as 14 countries agreed to wipe out \$8.5 billion of the \$11.1 billion due, with the remainder converted into investment projects or rescheduled to fall due through 2033.

Most of those countries are European, and the European Union has become Cuba's leading investor and principal trading partner.

EU-Cuban commercial transactions exceeded \$3.47 billion in 2018, even as political dialogue between the two sides sharply escalated.

"The incomplete payment to the Paris Club creditors demonstrates the complexity of Cuba's economic and financial situation," said Pavel Vidal, a Cuban economist at the Javeriana University in Cali, Colombia.

"For at least three years, Cuba has shown all the symptoms of an economy in recession and with a balance-of-payments crisis," Vidal said.

"Breaking out of that vicious circle is complicated without the aid of an international lender of last resort like the IMF, especially in the face of escalating American sanctions and the effects of the Venezuelan crisis."

Cuba has faced a hardening of the 58-year-old US embargo since Donald Trump arrived in the White House, with laws penalizing foreign companies, pressuring banks and limiting

visits by Americans.

It has also suffered from the effects of the economic and political crisis in Venezuela, its most important ally and leading petroleum supplier, while its own major revenue sources have waned.

The influx of tourists declined by 9.3 percent last year from 2018 -- its first drop in 10 years -- while its income-producing deployment of physicians abroad suffered as 9,000 of them returned home amid diplomatic spats, notably with Brazil, with which Cuba fell into default in mid-2018.

Cuba's external debt surged by 53 percent between 2013 and 2016, to \$18.2 billion, according to the latest official data.

Companies going unpaid

"What worries me most is the other debt, that created by the credits extended by suppliers," who often have to wait two years to be paid, said Cuban economist Omar Everlenny Perez.

Spanish companies, the most numerous among the suppliers, are owed an accumulated 300 million euros (\$325,000), ac-

ording to an estimate from the Spanish government.

"Of course the American sanctions affect" Cuba's ability to reimburse its creditors, Perez said.

But because the agreement with the Paris Club is "politically important," he believes Havana "is going to pay."

"But that is not going to solve the long-term problem," he added. Perez criticized the Cuban government's failure to pass economic reforms to stimulate the private sector and spark growth.

Meantime, the London Club -- a group of private creditors that is something of a counterpart to the Paris Club's public creditors -- holds several hundred million dollars of the island's commercial debt and has been trying in vain since 2013 to negotiate an accord with Cuba.

One member of the club, investment fund CRF I Ltd, has filed a formal claim with Britain's High Court.

"We are losing patience," said its president, David Charters. If Cuba "wants to access international financial markets again, they need to clear this up."



In mid-January 2020 Cuba said it will restrict the consumption of liquefied petroleum gas, widely used for domestic use, after an upsurge in US trade sanctions

WORLD

India set to welcome Trump

● Trump, accompanied by his wife Melania, and a high-level delegation, will land at the Ahmedabad airport in Gujarat

● The two leaders will head today night to New Delhi ahead of talks the following day focusing on strategic partnership and trade

Reuters | Ahmedabad, India

When President Trump arrives on his first official visit to India today, his first stop will be Ahmedabad, the largest city in the western state of Gujarat. It's the place where Indian freedom leader Mahatma Gandhi built his ashram, a place for prayer and communal living, on a riverbank lined with Indian lilac trees.

In Ahmedabad, a wall at least six feet high in places will block a slum from Trump's view.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made grand visits to his home state of Gujarat a signature of his time in power, with the leaders of Japan and China both taking similar trips to Ahmedabad, the state's largest city.

But the arrival of Trump, residents and officials say, is unprecedented in scale.

On Sunday, more than 10,000 police - some mounted on camels - fanned out across the city. At the Sabarmati Ashram, the former home of Mahatma Gandhi, labourers watered lawns and painted walls.

"A general facelift is being done," said Kartikeya Sarabhai, a trustee of the organisation. "(But) the beauty of the Ashram is in its simplicity."

The modest complex is a possible 15-minute stop today for



Trump has proclaimed 7 to 10 million people will come to watch him as he arrives for his first visit to India on Monday and speaks from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's hometown Ahmedabad.



Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel patrol at the historic Taj Mahal



Border security force soldiers ride their camels as they take part in a rehearsal for a road show



A worker mops the floor inside Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad, India

Trump, whose New York penthouse is decorated in gold in the style of French king Louis XIV.

Sarabhai said that should Trump visit, he is likely to be given a charkha, a traditional spinning wheel used by Gandhi, as well as a copy of his autobiography.

"We are also considering gifting a set of (Gandhi's) Three Monkeys, which stress on not seeing, hearing, or speaking evil," Sarabhai added.

Preparations have not been

without problems.

A 30-foot arch by the VIP entrance to the stadium expected to be used by Trump collapsed on Sunday morning due to high winds, police said, though it was quickly repaired.

Knives Out

There is enthusiasm among many in India for Trump's arrival, but others have been angered at the cost - nearly \$12 million for a three-hour visit, according to officials.

The two leaders will head Monday night to New Delhi ahead of talks the following day focusing on strategic partnership and trade. India and the U.S. have boosted the number of military exercises they conduct jointly in recent years and Washington increasingly looks toward the world's largest democracy as a buffer against China's growing power in the Indo-Pacific region.

Monday, Feb 24

11.40am Arrive in Ahmedabad at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport

12.15pm: Visit to Sabarmati Ashram

1.05pm: Namaste Trump Event at Motera Stadium

3.30pm: Leave for Agra

5.15pm: Visit to Taj Mahal

5.45pm: Leave for Delhi

7.30pm: Arrive in Delhi at Palam Air Force Station

Tuesday, Feb 25

10.00am Ceremonial reception at Rashtrapati Bhawan

10.30am Wreath laying at the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi at Raighat

11.00am Meeting with PM Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House

12.40pm Exchange of agreements and press statement at Hyderabad House

7.30pm Meeting with President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhawan

10.00pm Leave for the US



Trump Tweets Video of Himself as 'Bahubali'



Screengrabs taken from a video retweeted by Trump ahead of his visit to India

The wire | Washington

US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he was looking forward to being with his "great friends" in India as he retweeted a short video in which his face was superimposed on the hit movie-character Bahubali, showing the president as a great saviour bringing peace to his kingdom.

Trump will be accompanied by a high-level delegation including First Lady Melania Trump, the President's daughter Ivanka Trump, son-in-law

Jared Kushner and a galaxy of top American officials.

"Look so forward to being with my great friends INDIA!" Trump said in a tweet on Saturday.

Along with the tweet, Trump retweeted an 81-second video by a Twitter account identified as "Sol" with the handle Solmemes1.

"To celebrate Trump's visit to India I wanted to make a video to show how in my warped mind it will go... USA and India united!" the handle Solmemes1 tweeted in the original post with the video.

The main issues of contention between the two countries

Tariffs

Duties on US imports, including on \$600 million worth of Californian almonds as well as apples, steel and chemicals

Tariffs on items such as shoes, children's tricycles and furniture

India's plans to force foreign firms to store Indian consumers' data locally, e-commerce regulations hitting firms like Amazon and Walmart.

Modi's "Make in India" drive mirroring Trump's "America First" mantra.

Steel

However, many of India's recent moves have been in response to actions by the Trump administration, starting with its 2018 decision to impose tariffs on steel and aluminium from India and other countries.

India's exports of steel products have tumbled 46 percent according to the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Exporters of mechanical and electrical machinery and auto parts have also suffered.

Last year, Trump added to the pain by suspending India's privileges under the decades-old US Generalized System of Preferences programme that had allowed it to ship \$6 billion in goods duty-free.

The US wants to sell more medical devices like stents to India while US dairy farmers -- a key voter base for Trump ahead of his re-election push in November -- want greater access for their products.

India says it is worried American cows have been fed bovine extracts -- a no-no in a country where most Hindus believe the animals are sacred.

Easy rider?

The main "deliverable" that both strongmen want is a big trade deal, and in its absence they might instead strike a smaller agreement, according to press reports.

This could include India lowering duties on large-engine Harley-Davidson motorcycles -- long a bugbear of Trump -- and farm products like alfalfa hay and pecans, according to Bloomberg News.

"We would not like to rush into a deal, as the issues involved are complicated and there are many decisions which actually could affect or impact the lives of millions of people on the ground," cautioned an Indian government spokesman.

Japan emperor Naruhito says ill empress has 'ups and downs'

AFP | Tokyo

Japan's Emperor Naruhito has said his wife Empress Masako "still has ups and downs" as she battles to recover from a longstanding stress-induced illness related to her royal duties.

The health of Masako, who was fit enough to attend all of Naruhito's ceremonies when he was sworn in as emperor last year, is a major talking point in Japan.

Hopes were raised that she had recovered from her illness as she was present at a series of public events last year but Naruhito warned the empress was "still on the path to recovery".

"Her condition has its ups and downs and her fatigue tends to be prolonged after a big event or when events take place one after another," he told reporters at a news conference to mark his 60th birthday.



The health of the Empress is a major talking point in Japan

"I want her never to extend herself too much but continue to work on what she can do," he said, describing her as "a good consultant on both private and official matters".

The Harvard- and Oxford-educated Masako left behind a promising diplomatic career to marry into the royal family in 1993.

In 2004, the palace disclosed she had been undergoing treatment for stress-induced adjustment disorder, which has forced her to skip some royal engagements.

The couple's only child Aiko, 18, will study Japanese literature from April at Gakushuin University, of which Naruhito is an alumnus.

She cannot succeed her father as only a male heir can ascend the Chrysanthemum Throne.

Naruhito's younger brother Akishino is first in line to the throne. His son, 13-year-old Hisahito, is second.

Aiko would lose her royal status once she marries a commoner.

That has raised the prospect of a succession crisis if Hisahito does not have a son but the emperor refrained from commenting on the male-only rule.

He said he talks about the issue with Akishino but went no further than that.

A public gathering to celebrate his first birthday as the emperor was cancelled as fears grow over the spread of the new coronavirus in the country.

"I hope the spread of infections will stop as early as possible," he said while praying for the recovery of patients and thanking medical workers.

Trump says Russia leak meant to hurt Sanders, calls for probe

Reuters | Washington

President Donald Trump yesterday called for an investigation into an apparent leak of classified intelligence on Russian interference in the 2020 U.S. presidential campaign, and said it was meant to hurt Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

Speaking to reporters as he left the White House for a trip to India, Trump said he had not been briefed on intelligence that Russia was aiming to boost the campaign of Sanders, a U.S. senator from Vermont, and he took aim at a key Democratic lawmaker and foe for allegedly spreading the information.

A congressional source said on Friday that intelligence officials had told lawmakers Russia appears to be engaging in disinformation and propaganda campaigns to help both Sanders and Trump, who is seeking re-election.

"I read where Russia is helping Bernie Sanders. Nobody said it to me at all. Nobody briefed me about that at all,"



President Donald Trump departs to India

Trump said.

"They leaked it, Adam Schiff and his group, they leaked it to the papers and - as usual - they ought to investigate Adam Schiff for leaking that information," Trump said, without providing any evidence to back up his claims.

Schiff, a Democrat, served as the lead prosecutor in Trump's impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate and the two men have an antagonistic relationship.

Cancer drug shortages leave Mexican kids fighting for life

AFP | Mexico City

Five-year-old Dhana Rivas is fighting for her life on two fronts, fending off the acute lymphoblastic leukemia eating away at her frail body while her family simultaneously battles the shortage of cancer drugs plaguing Mexico.

Recurrent drug shortages during much of her short existence means the frequency of life-saving chemotherapy has slowed.

The shortages are partly a consequence of government policy and President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's efforts to revamp the healthcare system by tackling waste and corruption.

In August, authorities shut down seven Mexican factories producing methotrexate -- a major element of the anti-cancer cocktail.

Breaks occurred in Dhana's chemotherapy in September and October of 2018, and again the following February, for lack of medicines.

This was the case at the government clinic in her native Chiapas, in the south of the country. But following a transfer to Mexico City's Federico Gomez Children's Hospital designed to increase her chances of survival, nothing has changed.

"The new government promised that there would be no more interruption of treatment," Dhana's father Israel Rivas said. "That's not the case".

And the situation is worsening.

"There was not a single chemotherapy possible in January," Rivas says, his voice faltering.

Dhana isn't alone. The parents of other young cancer patients have made contact with Rivas via social media.

Together they raised the alarm over the lack of methotrexate, vincristine and other cancer medicines in hospitals around the country.

"In Federico Gomez, there are 530 children affected, but in Mexico as a whole there are many more," said Rivas.

He says he has received messages from parents living across



In August, authorities shut down seven Mexican factories producing methotrexate, a major element in the anti-cancer cocktail

the country, in Tijuana, Oaxaca in the south, Puebla in the center, Merida in the east, Guadalajara in the west, and Acapulco and Minatitlan in the south.

According to the Health Ministry, some 7,000 minors fall ill with cancer every year.

Catching and treating the cancer early gives them a 57 percent chance of survival, doctors say, but only if the right medicines are available.

The medical team looking after Dhana believe they can maintain her treatment for just another month.

Cancer doesn't wait

For Crisanto Flores, father of three-year-old cancer patient Cristal, the lack of medicines is inconceivable.

Of modest means, he was forced to move to Mexico City so that his daughter could receive treatment.

And in January, the family went through one of the most critical moments of his daughter's illness when the main treatment needed for Cristal's therapy was unavailable.

Flores knows that time is not in his daughter's favor, and his only recourse is to team up with

other parents to try to put pressure on the government.

"If the vincristine isn't available, the illness will gain ground," he said. His little girl has already lost the sight of one eye.

Another anxious parent, Esperanza Soto, is desperately hoping that the shortages don't affect her four-year-old boy, Hermes Soto, who is just two

months away from beating cancer.

"We only have three cycles of chemotherapy to go," she says.

Emmanuel Garcia in Baja-California and Alejandro Barbosa in the western state of Jalisco live nearly 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles) apart.

Both are battling to obtain the same medicines.

"In Jal-

isco, there are three public hospitals affected by the shortage of medicines. We buy them from distributors certified by the government who bring them from abroad, which is very costly," said Barbosa.

The price of vincristine has soared because of the shortages. In less than a year, it has risen by more than \$23 to \$118.

Garcia has also signed up to the parents' pressure group since December. He says there are 81 sick children who, like others in Mexico, have suffered several interruptions to their chemotherapy treatment, despite a short respite when the hospital in Tijuana received a delivery.

"And what about the others in southern Mexico?" he asked.

Shortage without end

In a desperate bid to make themselves heard, the parents staged a demonstration and briefly blocked access to Mexico City's international airport.

The day after, Lopez Obrador was forced to address the subject, but without

proposing a solution.

"We will never run out of medicines," he promised, without further details.

Some demonstrations bringing together a few families have taken place in recent days, but with little response.

In Merida, the capital of the southeastern state of Yucatan, Flor Gonzalez, whose child Remi suffers from cancer, spends her days waiting.

"Doctors are applying incomplete treatments," she said, relating the case of a child who had relapsed due to the use of a replacement drug.

In Mexico, more than 26.4 million children have no access to any type of social security.

A "popular insurance" scheme in place since 2003, but cancelled in 2020, was one of the few programs allowing children to seek treatment.

For Dhana and the other cancer-stricken children, the countdown has started.

The next few days will tell if the sword of Damocles swinging above their heads is lifted.



Mexican toddler Cristal Flores, diagnosed with cancer, rests on a couch between her parents at a relative's house in Cuautitlan, Mexico

Thai party says junta helped 1MDB cover-up

● **The Future Forward Party, the third-largest party in parliament, was dissolved**

Reuters | Bangkok

Abanned Thai opposition party on Sunday accused the former military junta of helping cover up Malaysia's multi-billion-dollar 1MDB scandal, urging Thais to demand the truth ahead of a censure debate against Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha.

The Future Forward Party, the third-largest party in parliament, was dissolved on Friday by Thailand's Constitutional Court over a loan it took from its billionaire founder.

The dissolution was decried by democracy advocates as a means of weakening opposition to the government of Prayuth, who first came to power in a 2014 military coup and led a military junta until after elections last year that his pro-army party won.

Future Forward's spokeswoman, Pannika Wanich, told a news conference on Sunday that the junta had worked with Malaysia's former government to ar-



Protest against court's decision that dissolved Future Forward party at Thammasat University in Bangkok

rest a whistleblower in the 1MDB case in 2015 and had allowed financial criminals to operate in Thailand, risking the country's international ties.

"The junta government yearned for international acceptance after the coup ... and formed a dark alliance with Malaysia," Pannika said.

"The only person who can issue these orders is Prime Min-

ister Prayuth Chan-ocha," Pannika said.

Pannika cited irregularities surrounding Thailand's arrest and the subsequent confession of Xavier Justo, the Swiss national who was arrested in Thailand in 2015 the first whistleblower in the 1MDB affair.

The government also harbored Malaysian financier Low Taek Jho, known as Jho Low,

allowing him to enter the country at least five times between October 2016 and May 2018, despite Low having an Interpol red notice from Singapore, she said.

Low has been charged in Malaysia and the United States over the alleged theft of \$4.5 billion from 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), set up by former Malaysian Prime Minister

Najib Razak with the help of Low, to promote economic development.

At least six countries, including the United States, have launched money laundering, financial mismanagement and criminal probes into 1MDB dealings.

Low has denied any wrongdoing. His whereabouts are unknown.

The government denied involvement.

"These accusations are not true ... and create confusion in society," government spokeswoman Narumon Pinyosinwat said.

"Anything said that was false will be followed with legal action," she added.

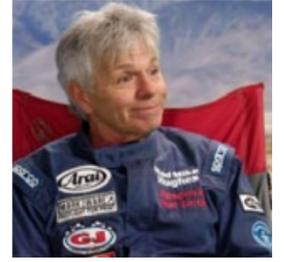
Future Forward Party said it would have opened an investigation on corruption and money laundering related to the 1MDB case if it were in power.

"If we were in government, we would investigate. We want a government that is a responsible neighbour and acts with dignity," Pannika said.

"Since we have been dissolved, we can't, but the Thai public can demand the truth."

A spokesman for the Malaysian prime minister's office did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Self-styled daredevil dies in crash after rocket launch



AP | Barstow, Calif.

A self-styled daredevil died Saturday after a rocket in which he launched himself crashed into the ground, a colleague and a witness said.

"Mad" Mike Hughes died after the homemade rocket crashed on private property near Barstow about 1:52 p.m. near Highway 247, the Daily Press of Victorville reported.

Waldo Stakes, a colleague who was at the rocket launch, said Hughes, 64, was killed.

"It was unsuccessful, and he passed away," Stakes told The Associated Press. He declined further comment.

Justin Chapman, a freelance journalist, told the AP that he and his wife witnessed the crash.

Sanders wins big in Nevada, stretching lead in Democratic race

Las Vegas

Progressive firebrand Bernie Sanders earned a decisive victory Saturday in the Nevada caucuses, solidifying his front-runner status in the race to choose the Democratic nominee who faces President Donald Trump in November's election.

His win is a substantial accomplishment in a state seen as an important bellwether because it is the first diverse electorate to weigh in on the 2020 presidential race.

It also shows that Sanders has been able to broaden a coalition beyond the narrow limits of leftist voters, refuting the argument used by several moderates in the race that he would not be able to bridge the divide between progressives and centrists.

By late Saturday Sanders was comfortably ahead with half of all precincts reporting.

The 78-year-old senator from Vermont was leading with about 46 percent, followed by former vice president Joe Biden at 19 percent.

South Bend, Indiana's former mayor Pete Buttigieg, who scored a shock narrow win in Iowa to start the race nearly three weeks ago, stood in third at 15 percent.

The two female US senators in the running, progressive Elizabeth Warren and pragmatist Amy Klobuchar, were on 10 and four percent respectively.

Sanders was quick to claim victory, saying his "multi-generational, multi-racial coalition" that won Nevada was "going to sweep this country."

His progressive policies, including universal health care, higher taxes on the wealthy and corporations, and raising the minimum wage have struck a chord with millions of Americans.

"The American people are sick and tired of a government which is based on greed, corruption,



Bernie Sanders said his 'multi-generational, multi-racial coalition' that won Nevada was 'going to sweep this country'



Despite her hard campaigning, Senator Amy Klobuchar had a poor showing in the Nevada Democratic caucus



Mayor Pete, a distant third in the Nevada contest, claimed that Sanders 'believes in an inflexible, ideological revolution that leaves out most Democrats, not to mention most Americans'

Paso, Texas, one of the 14 states that votes on "Super Tuesday" on March 3.

Buttigieg congratulated Sanders on his Nevada victory. But the

last week, he is in the driver's seat as the race turns toward South Carolina and then Super Tuesday.

"Looks like Crazy Bernie is doing well in the Great State of Nevada," Trump tweeted, maligning other candidates before adding: "Congratulations Bernie, & don't let them take it away from you!"

With the race soon taking on a national dynamic, several candidates like Klobuchar, Warren or congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard will be under pressure to decide whether they fight on or throw in the towel.

'Coming back'

The centrist Biden, desperate



'We're alive and we're coming back,' said onetime frontrunner Joe Biden, who came in second in the Nevada contest

moderate, 38-year-old military veteran offered a stern warning against picking a self-described democratic socialist who sees "capitalism as the root of all evil" to go up against the populist Trump.

"Senator Sanders believes in an inflexible, ideological revolution that leaves out most Democrats, not to mention most Americans," Buttigieg said.

With Sanders coming in virtually tied for first in Iowa and then winning New Hampshire

to right a listing ship after miserable showings in the first two states, told supporters he feels "really good" about his Nevada finish and shouldn't be counted out.

"We're alive and we're coming back," the onetime frontrunner insisted. "We're going on to South Carolina to win and then we're going to take this back!"

South Carolina has a majority black Democratic electorate, and Biden leads polling there, riding his popularity among African

Americans due in part to his eight years as popular president Barack Obama's deputy.

"Joe to me is like a thoroughbred -- a horse that's gonna come in and that's gonna overtake whoever is the favorite," Air Force retiree Wilbert Wilcox told AFP.

"He has the stamina going for him... I'm looking for him to really surprise some people."

Sanders leads national polls with an average of 28 percent support.

That is 11 points ahead of Biden and 13 points clear of billionaire media tycoon Michael Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York who skipped campaigning in the four early states, including Nevada, in order to focus on Super Tuesday.

Sanders has been largely unchecked by opponents who have focused more on blunting the advance of Bloomberg, who has poured hundreds of millions of dollars of his personal fortune into campaign advertising.

Warren, speaking late Saturday at a large rally in Washington state which votes on March 10, pledged to stay in the fight despite a third straight mediocre showing.

She repeated her attacks on Bloomberg, accusing him of seeking to "buy this election."

In Nevada, caucuses were held in several of Las Vegas's world-famous casinos and hotels, as well as dusty desert towns.

Keen to avoid the drawn-out embarrassment of the Iowa caucus, which relied on flawed technology to relay results, Nevada officials pivoted to a low-tech system that involved phoning in results to hotlines and backing them up with photographs of the tabulations.

The process was considerably slower than four years ago, but appeared to be relatively smooth.

SHOW



BRAHMS: THE BOY II (15+)(HORROR/THRILLER)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 11.45 AM + 1.45 + 3.45 + 5.45 + 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.45 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (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 JUFFAIR: 12.30 + 5.00 + 9.30 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 12.00 + 4.15 + 8.30 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (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 (I): 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 JUFFAIR: 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

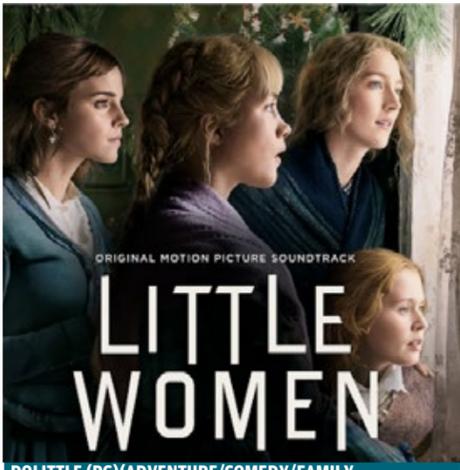
BAD BOYS FOR LIFE (PG-15)(ACTION/COMEDY/CRIME)
 OASIS JUFFAIR: 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM
 CITY CENTRE: (1.00 AM THURS/FRI.)
 CITY CENTRE (ATMOS): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN
 CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D): 12.00 + 2.45 + 5.30 + 8.15 + 11.00 PM
 CITY CENTRE (VIP I): 12.30 + 3.15 + 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 JUFFAIR: 2.45 + 7.15 + 11.45 PM
 OASIS JUFFAIR (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 CARREY, 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 JUFFAIR: 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 BULUT YNEML, N SA SOF YA AKSUNGUR, 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 + 5.15 + 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 JUFFAIR: 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 JUFFAIR: 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 JUFFAIR: 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 JUFFAIR: 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

Nicolas Cage delivers a delightful performance in 'Color Out of Space'

Nicolas Cage and Joely Richardson face an evil shade of lilac in this inventive sci-fi horror film directed by Richard Stanley

Lovecraft. It stars Nicolas Cage, Joely Richardson, Madeleine Arthur, Q'orianka Kilcher and Tommy Chong.

Chris Bumbray from Arrow in the Head rated the film a score of 7/10, praising the film's performances, visual style and effects while noting the film's length. Bumbray summarized his review by writing, "While it's maybe a touch slow and arty for hardcore horror fans, Color Out of Space is still a handy comeback for Richard Stanley, who hasn't lost a beat." Mary Beth Andrews from Daily Grindhouse



A scene from the movie

gave the film a positive review, writing, "His [Richard Stanley] film successfully captures the madness of Lovecraft's work and is a dazzling modern interpretation.

Lovecraft is notoriously hard to adapt, but Stanley walks the fine line between horror and existential dread to create a successful adaptation". Deborah Young from The Hollywood Reporter offered the film similar praise, writing, "Hitting the main plot points with well-designed SFX and some impressive night photography, Stanley's

film manages to be frightening indeed, even with star Nicolas Cage's semi-farical leavening adding some nutty laughs." Jonathan Barkan of Dread Central awarded the film 3.5 out of 5 stars, praising the film's visual style, special effects, and soundtrack, while criticizing the film's first and third act. Nevertheless, Barkan summarized his review by stating, "Gorgeous, vibrant, and terrifying, Color Out of Space is packed with Lovecraftian creatures and cosmic infections galore. It's not perfect but goddamn is it a wild ride."

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

CROSSWORD

Across
 1- Quiet; 5- Garrulous; 10- Jazz singer Laine; 14- This, in Tijuana; 15- Designer Simpson; 16- Trompe l'...; 17- Among; 18- Model; 19- "Peter Pan" dog; 20- For-gives; 22- Darken; 24- Idiot; 25- May...excused?; 26- Holdup; 30- Aged; 34- Hide in the shadows; 35- Dishonest; 37- Boris Godunov, for one; 38- Nabokov novel; 39- Jockey Turcotte; 40- Sprechen...Deutsch?; 41- Short letter; 43- Continue a subscription; 45- Campbell of "Scream"; 46- Lattice; 48- Copies; 50- Failure; 51- Goal, intention; 52- Dakar's land; 56- Occasionally; 60- Fleshy fruit; 61- Long hard seat; 63- Middy; 64- Seed cover; 65- France's longest river; 66- Feminine ending; 67- Member of the Conservative Party; 68- Computer key; 69- Smooth sailing.

Down
 1- Jalopy; 2- West Point inits.; 3- Be up and about; 4- Fish; 5- Profitable; 6- Contributes; 7- Fuzzy buzzer; 8- Spill the beans; 9- Shouting; 10- Vanity; 11- Escaping fluid; 12- Mozart's...kleine Nachtmusik"; 13- Pearl Buck heroine; 21- Durable wood; 23- 1970 Jackson 5 hit; 26- Viewpoint; 27- English royal house; 28- Fuming; 29- Funeral fires; 30- New wing; 31- Antique auto; 32- Born yesterday, so to speak; 33- Forest makeup; 36- Charged particle; 42- On in years; 43- Capable of being ridden; 44- The state of the atmosphere; 45- Candidate; 47- Pull laboriously; 49- Mus. slow up; 52- Squabble; 53- Architect Saarinen; 54- Neet rival; 55- Boxer Spinks; 56- 43,560 square feet; 57-...Lisa; 58- Seemingly forever; 59- Dagger of yore; 62- It may be picked;

Yesterday's solution

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

celebs

Taylor Swift



Taylor Swift celebrates boyfriend Joe Alwyn's birthday

Los Angeles



Joe Alwyn

Taylor Swift celebrated her boyfriend Joe Alwyn's birthday with a dinner at the luxurious London hot spot Bob Bob Ricard on Friday night (local time).

According to an eyewitness to E!News, the famous lovebirds were not alone. English singer Ed Sheeran and his wife Cherry Seaborn and other friends joined them at a table of six for dinner, the source informed.

The eyewitness stated that they had fun drinking champagne at the table by pushing a button that says 'Press for Champagne' and having it immediately dispensed. They were at the place for several hours enjoying the night.

During the gathering, the group also stayed entertained by drawing at the table and playing a game.

According to another eyewitness, the 30-year-old singer's bodyguard carried a stack of books from the dinner table that included Oxford English Dictionary and English novel 'A Month in the Country'.

The 'Lover' singer and the 'Harriet' actor who have been dating for more than two years have kept their romance mainly out of the spotlight, however, Swift briefly hinted on falling for Alwyn in her Netflix documentary.

I am still in touch with ex-fiancee Lopez, says Ben Affleck

Los Angeles

American actor Ben Affleck has disclosed that he and his ex-fiancee Jennifer Lopez are still in touch with each other.

The Oscar-winning actor told that the 50-year old star "should have been nominated" for an Academy Award this year for her performance in the drama-thriller 'Hustlers.' Talking about J-Lo, Affleck said: "She's the real thing, I keep in touch periodically with her and have a lot of respect for her. How awesome is it that she had her biggest hit movie at 50?"

The singer and Affleck started dating back in 2003 while filming for the movie 'Gigli' and got engaged that same year. The duo later called it off in early 2004, shortly before their wedding.

After their split, the 'On The Floor' singer married Marc Anthony in 2004 and became parents to twins. The couple got a divorce in the year 2012 and the singer later got engaged to Alex Rodriguez in March 2019.

Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck



Kardashian siblings remember late dad Robert Kardashian on his 76th birthday



Los Angeles

The Kardashian siblings remembered their beloved father late Robert Kardashian on Saturday on the special occasion of what would have been his 76th birthday.

His firstborn child, Kourtney Kardashian, took to Instagram and shared two childhood pictures featuring her father and sister Kim Kardashian and wrote, "Happy Birthday to my Daddy."

Khloe Kardashian commented to the post with heart emojis.

Beauty mogul Kim Kardashian also remembered her father by sharing a monochromatic picture from her young days that featured the father and daughter together.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR RENT

MAHOZ, FF 1BR Flat BD 275 near Nafees Hospital, inclusive Electricity, call 34234813

TAEKWONDO CLASSES

Ladies, let's taekwondo! I'm a mother, started training at 55, when I'm getting weaker, joints creaking. Now feels revitalized, have higher self-esteem. Fortunately found a very patient, black belt lady coach who has her own dojang (clean and posh gym) in Seef. Classes for children and gentlemen too. BD30/month, 2/week, evenings, weekends. See you, Mar

CONTACT

- FACEBOOK: dlq Taekwondo Jins
- INSTAGRAM: dlqtaekwondojins
- WHATSAPP: 33359476, 39944069

Lindsay Lohan in talks for supernatural thriller 'Cursed'

Los Angeles

Lindsay Lohan



Hollywood actor Lindsay Lohan is set to star opposite Mickey Rourke in supernatural thriller "Cursed".

The 33-year-old actor is in final negotiations to board the cast of the film which will be directed by Steven R Monroe, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Ian Holt has penned the screenplay.

The story follows renowned psychiatrist Dr David Elder (Rourke), who teams up with police detective Mary Branigan (Lohan) in a race to stop an escaped psychiatric patient from killing five people held hostage in a remote house.

The project, which will start production in summer, will be produced by Angel Oak Films and Alt House Productions.

Rihanna gets standing ovation for inspiring speech at NAACP Image Awards

Los Angeles

Rihanna



Singer Rihanna accepted the President's Award at NAACP Image Awards ceremony in Pasadena, California on Saturday night and moved the audience with an inspiring speech. She received a standing ovation from the audience for her powerful words.

The pop star was the recipient of one of the biggest honours at the 51st annual NAACP Image Awards for her extraordinary philanthropic efforts across the globe as she has raised millions of dollars for disaster relief, education abroad and awareness for issues affecting communities all over the world, reported Billboard.

Rihanna in her acceptance speech said: "Tonight is not really about me, because the purpose is bigger than me, right? It's not bigger than us together, but it's bigger than me because my part is a very small part of the work that is being done in this world and the work that is yet to be done."

The singer turned fashion mogul, who started a non-profit organization - the Clara Lionel Foundation in 2012 - in her grandmother's memory, received a standing ovation for her speech, in which she spoke about unity.

CLASSIFIEDS

Priyanka Chopra: Wendell Rodricks was a pioneer, a visionary

Mumbai

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who walked the ramp at the 15th Blenders Pride Fashion Tour paid her tribute to late fashion designer Wendell Rodricks by saying that he was the pioneer and a visionary of Indian fashion and he forever will be missed.

"It's only apt on a night like this, in the presence of so many luminaries from the Indian fashion industry that we remember Wendell Rodricks. He was the pioneer, he was a visionary of Indian fashion and he will always and forever be missed," said Priyanka.

Rodricks was reportedly scheduled to showcase his work at the fashion event.

The hour-long event kickstarted with Priyanka, a brand representative for Blenders Pride, walking the ramp. The models then walked the ramp and showcased the latest in Indian fashion by honouring the event's theme 'The Pride Of India', which aimed to portray blending of Indian cultures.

Sharing her feeling being a part of the event, Priyan-

ka said, "I would like to welcome you at 15 years of a legacy. I am extremely excited to be here tonight. It is 15th edition of the Blenders Pride Fashion Tour. I have been fortunate enough to be with them for 10 years. This is my one decade anniversary as well."

On the work front, Priyanka will next be seen in the Netflix film "The White Tiger" along with Rajkumar Rao.



WHAT TO DO AFTER EXAMS ???
KEY to success is Keep Educating Yourself
FIITJEE Offers BRIDGE COURSE for

Students Moving to Class X	Students Moving to Class XII
Refresh Class IX Concepts	Refresh Class XI Concepts
Intro to Class X Boards	Intro to Class XII Boards
Orientation for Competitive Exams	SAT Subjects
Last Date For Registration	Explore IIT - JEE

29th Classes Begin From FEBRUARY 2020

FIITJEE Please Call / WhatsApp: +973 33784481, 33911860
 E-mail: bahrain.classes@fiitjee.com | Log on: www.fiitjeebahrain.com

SPORTS

Tsitsipas defends Marseille trophy, extends Auger-Aliassime title

AFP | Marseille

Stefanos Tsitsipas successfully defended his Marseille title yesterday with a straightforward victory over Canadian teenager Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Greek star Tsitsipas eased to a 6-3, 6-4 win to leave Auger-Aliassime still waiting for his maiden ATP title after his fifth consecutive final defeat.

Tsitsipas, who had arrived in southern France with a 3-4 losing record this season, enjoyed an emphatic return to form as he clinched his fifth ATP trophy.

Auger-Aliassime would have been confident of finally ending his wait for tournament success after two wins from his three previous meetings with Tsitsipas, but has still failed to even win a set in his five Tour-level finals.

World number six Tsitsipas, the ATP Finals champion, broke in the third game and saved three break points to serve out the opening set.

The second seed got the better of a run of three successive breaks in the second set to move 4-3 in front and only dropped one more point on serve.

BIC to giveaway premium F1 passes

BIC offers fans a chance to win F1 Paddock Club passes worth nearly US\$10,000

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) is offering the unbelievable chance to take home a pair of Formula 1 Paddock Club three day passes worth almost US\$10,000 in an exciting new raffle. This is the first time this prestigious prize has ever been offered for the Bahrain Grand Prix.

All those who purchase a Main Grandstand ticket to the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2020, on or before March 7, will be entered into a draw. Those who have already secured their Main Grandstand seats have also already been entered automatically.

The grand prize of two Formula 1 Paddock Club passes will give the winners access to one of the most exclusive locations from where to enjoy this year's Bahrain Grand Prix, which takes place March 19 to 22 at BIC.

There, they will be able to watch all the racing in a luxurious, first-class setting and indulge in a wide variety of premium food and beverages throughout the whole three days of F1. Plus, they will have a chance to rub shoulders with a whole host of VIPs, and without doubt will



F1 cars in action at BIC

get to see Formula 1 star drivers from past and present.

Only Main Grandstand ticket-holders will be entered in the raffle. Winners will be announced within the week following March 7.

Those who have yet to purchase their tickets must do so at the soonest in order to be eligible for the draw. A four-day Main Grandstand seat costs BD150. The Main Grandstand offers a spectacular view of the

race track, including the Grand Prix circuit's start and finish lines, its main straight, the Formula 1 Pit Lane and the podium.

Tickets to this year's Bahrain Grand Prix have been selling fast but are still available. They can be bought online at BIC's official website www.bahraingp.com, through the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000, or at BIC's City Centre Bahrain stand located on the ground floor near gate number three in the West Court.

Aside from the Main Grandstand, tickets can also be purchased for four other grandstands, but they will not be entered into the raffle. A Batelco Grandstand ticket for all four days is BD120, while there are also Batelco Grandstand tickets for only Saturday and Sunday priced at BD100 apiece; and also Friday-only tickets at BD60 each.

Furthermore, a four-day ticket to the Turn One Grandstand costs BD100; whereas University



The grand prize of two Formula 1 Paddock Club passes will give the winners access to one of the most exclusive locations from where to enjoy this year's Bahrain Grand Prix

and Victory Grandstand four-day tickets are BD60 apiece.

It is worth noting that Bahrain Grand Prix tickets are among the most affordable on the Formula 1 season calendar. BIC has also covered the Value Added Tax (VAT) on all event tickets, saving fans from any additional expense.

This year's Bahrain Grand Prix is the second of a record 22 rounds on the 2020 FIA Formula 1 World Championship. It will be the first night race of the season and BIC will be joining Formula 1 and national carrier Gulf Air in commemorating their 70th anniversaries.

BIC all set for E K Kanoo Drag and Drift Nights

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) hosts the Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and Drift Nights today in Sakhir.

The event is one of the most popular on offer for motoring fans at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East". It gives participants the chance to take their very own cars or motorbikes and push them to their limit either down BIC's



A car in action at BIC

can be enjoyed for a single fee of BD10,500. Participation in just the drag racing or just the drifting costs BD7,500. Registration can be done on site from 5pm, and the action will be held from 6pm to 11pm. Those who would like to experience the drag or drift as a passenger can get into a participant's car for an additional BD4. Spectators can purchase tickets for BD2 apiece.

Also as part of the evening's drag racing programme, BIC is offering the immensely thrilling Dragster Xperience. This is one of the circuit's most unique and ultimate-adrenaline activities, as it gives participants a taste of pure speed as they are taken from zero to 100kph in just one second while seated in a Top Dragster. The Dragster Experience costs BD42.

Safety standards of the highest level are followed at all times during the evening's events for both drivers and spectators alike.

world-class drag strip or around the circuit's Vehicle Dynamics Area, or both!

BIC is a member of the prestigious National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Worldwide Network, and its quarter-mile strip is highly regarded as one of the best across the globe.

Meanwhile, the circuit's Vehicle Dynamics Area is a specially configured venue at BIC's car park that has been surrounded by safety barriers. It is the largest open tarmac area in Bahrain. Both the drag and the drifting



A bike in action at BIC

Union CC edge Awali Camels

TDT | Manama

Tabasum's all-round performance helped Union CC to beat Awali Camels in CBA Division C 25 overs League.

Union won the toss and elected to bat first. Tabasum (50) and Sohail's (51) half-centuries helped Union to put a fighting total of 189 at the end of 25 overs. In second innings Tabasum's five wickets and Sohail's three wicket spells helped Union to restrict Camels for 167 runs and win the match by 22 runs.

Union CC 189/4 (Tabasum 50, Sohail 51, Shiva 35) beat Awali Camels 167/9 (Sanjay 61, Tabasum 5/34, Sohail 3/31) by 22 runs

Punjabi Boys 270/4 (Majid 147, Raja Adnan 43) beat Infonas 204/10 (Syed 50, Shead 41) by 66 runs

Riffa Stars 193/8 in 23.5 overs (Abdulmanan 65, Faisal 37, Bilal 3/15) beat Hempel Paints 189/7 (Manish 62, Nadeem 34) by 2 wickets

FOG CC 157/4 (Vijil 55, Shahid 22) beat NDC Bahrain 154/9 (Balaji 35, Jayan 4/23) by 3 runs

Legends CC 200/6 (Nimesh 56, Sumesh 50) beat SNCS TransFast 162/6 (Vishnu 47, Vijesh 3/27) by 38 runs

TISCA Stars 183/10 (Omer 36, Asif 29, Waqas 2/27) beat Waqas CC 93/10 (Faraz 33, Vipin 4/22, Sameer 3/30) by 90 runs

Karnataka Royals 200/10 (Vasanth 32, Gajendra 30, Ganesh 3/43) beat Sachi CC 74/10



Nimesh - Legends



Suresh - Royal Indians

(Arun 34, Ashwin 4/18) by 126 runs

Global Stars 113/4 in 16.3 overs (Waheed 26, Farrukh 24) beat Pak Eagles 112/10 (Majid 20, Sunny 22, Ashfaq 3/11) by 6 wickets

Royal Indians 173/6 in 22.4 overs (Suresh 52, Christy 31, Waheed 2/30) beat Mumbai Riders 172/10 (Wahed 60, Arun 3/24) by 4 wickets

Pak CC 203/6 (Zubair 50, Noman 52, Shoaib 47) beat Lantern Lions 114/7 (Vikki 27, Fareed 2/14) by 89 runs

Boult fired up as New Zealand have India on the ropes

AFP | Wellington

New Zealand quick Trent Boult declared himself "happy to be back" as he bagged three wickets to leave India struggling for survival at stumps on day three of the first Test in Wellington yesterday.

India, faced with a 183-run first-innings deficit, were 144 for four at the close, still 39 in arrears after rollicking innings

by Boult and Kyle Jamieson pushed New Zealand to 348.

Ajinkya Rahane was unbeaten on 25 with Hanuma Vihari on 15, and spinner Ravichandran Ashwin said India were far from raising the white flag, although with only six wickets remaining, he saw a score around 350 as necessary to save the Test.

Boult, back in Test cricket after breaking a hand during the



Trent Boult goes on a celebratory run after bowling Cheteshwar Pujara

Boxing Day Test in a disastrous series for New Zealand in Australia, took a back seat in India's first innings when Jamieson and Tim Southee took four wickets apiece to roll the tourists for 165.

But he came to the fore on day three, first with the bat and then with figures of three for 27 as India, the world's top-ranked side, looked lost in New Zealand conditions.



“I went back home for a couple of weeks, did some work with my coach and practiced as much as I could because the weather is so bad in England right now”

JAMIE RUTHERFORD

US\$75,000 Royal Golf Club Bahrain Open tees off today

TDT | Manama

The US\$75,000 Royal Golf Club (RGC) Bahrain Open tees off today at RGC.

The three-day tournament is the fourth round of the 2020 MENA Tour.

More than 90 players, including close to 80 professional golfers, are confirmed to have entered. They are coming from countries across the globe, including China, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, Scotland, Spain, the USA and Wales, to name a few.

Among those competing is a confident Harry Ellis, who returns to the MENA Tour hoping to turn his consistent display over the past few months into a first career win as a professional at the Royal Golf Club Bahrain Open.

The 24-year-old from Southampton played five events in the 2019 season and was inside the top 12 in all of them, including back-to-back second-place finishes in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.

He missed the first three tournaments of 2020 because he was playing the Challenge Tour events in South Africa, where he finished tied-fourth in the RAM Cape Town Open.

“It’s pretty amazing what happens when you have a bit of confidence in the system,” said Ellis, winner of the

2017 Amateur Championship and the 2012 England Amateur.

“I feel a lot calmer and I feel in pretty sound place mentally. I am able to hit the shots I want to on the golf course. My team and I have put in a lot of hard work and we know it will take some time, but we have built a solid foundation. I am in a good golf-playing mode, which is nice not having to work on too many things. It’s a case of putting the rounds together and the results will come hopefully.”

Ellis played the Royal Golf Club Bahrain Open last year and was tied-seventh. Interestingly, his 73 in the second round was the last time he was over par on the MENA Tour and his last 10 rounds have all been in the 60s.

“It would be lovely to keep the streak going, but it is not something I am thinking too much about,” said Ellis. “Obviously, it is always healthy for your position on the leaderboard, or your psychic, if you keep shooting in the 60s.”

“This week, the course is set up so well that it is possible, but I am just trying to go out and be the best that I can be. We will see what happens, but I’d definitely like to be in contention.”

Ellis will have plenty of competition, with the current Journey to Jordan leader David Langley in great form after



Ellis competing at RGC previous (File Photo)

winning in Jordan and finishing second last week in Ghala in Muscat.

Also returning to the MENA Tour this week is the former European Tour player Jamie Rutherford, who took a

two-week break after his scorching finish at Ayla Golf Club, where he finished runner-up to Langley.

“I went back home for a couple of weeks, did some work with my coach and practiced as much as I could because the weather is so bad in England right now,” said Rutherford.

“It is great to come back to Royal Golf Club where I was fourth last year. I just love the challenge of this golf course. It is fairly generous off the tee, but you have got to really precise with your irons with how slopy the greens are and all the sections they can put the flag in. You’ve got to be in control of your distance and where you put your ball on the green. That, I feel, is a strength of mine.”

England’s Bailey Gill, the champion last week at the Ghala Open, and South Africa’s MG Keyser, the reigning Journey to Jordan Professional champion, will miss the tournament but for very good reasons. Gill got into this week’s Oman Open on the European Tour, courtesy his win at Ghala, while Keyser qualified for next week’s Commercial Bank Qatar Masters, also on the European Tour, by winning the Qualifiers in Doha.

Reigning champion Robin Roussel has graduated to the European Tour and will also miss the event.

Fernandes on the spot as Man Utd climb to fifth



Bruno Fernandes celebrates his first goal

AFP | London

Bruno Fernandes opened his goalscoring account at Manchester United yesterday as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer’s side climbed to fifth place in the Premier League table with a 3-0 win against lowly Watford.

United have struggled for consistency all season but the victory at Old Trafford lifts them to 41 points, just three behind fourth-placed Chelsea.

Midfielder Fernandes, bought by Solskjaer last month to add creativity and drive to United’s midfield, scored from the penalty spot shortly before half-time and Anthony Martial and Mason Greenwood also found the net.

“This is what I want to do and what I need to do,” Fernandes told the BBC.

“Everyone knows we want to get into the Champions League places. I am here to help the team conquer this place and keep winning games.”

Solskjaer said he wanted his side to “kick on” after two consecutive wins and clean sheets.

Torres to face Nicolau in Flyweight tournament

Shorty Torres and Matheus Nicolau to meet at BRAVE CF 35 in Brazil

TDT | Manama

The BRAVE CF Flyweight tournament, that will decide the first-ever world champion up to 57kg in the world’s fastest-growing MMA promotion, is set to be one of the most closely fought, action-packed till date and the first bout announced denotes it. BRAVE CF officials confirmed that Jose “Shorty” Torres will face Matheus Nicolau in the quarter-finals.

The match between Torres and Nicolau, two UFC veterans with tons of international experience, will be held during the BRAVE CF’s next trip to Brazil, thus giving Matheus Nicolau the home-field advantage. BRAVE CF 35 will take place on March 25th, in Balneário Camboriú, state of Santa Catarina.

With 10 professional fights



under his belt, Jose Torres has nine wins and only one loss. In his last appearance, last April,

Torres beat Amir Albazi via unanimous decision in Jordan. The two-time IMMAF Amateur



Matheus Nicolau made his BRAVE debut last August, with a win against his fellow-countryman Felipe Efrain in a Bantamweight bout

World Champion was supposed to fight for the BRAVE title in Bahrain, six months later, but ended up withdrawing less than a week prior to the fight due to personal issues.

A veteran of the reality show

The Ultimate Fighter Brazil season 4, Matheus Nicolau boasts a professional record of 14 wins, two losses, and one draw. The Brazilian made his BRAVE debut last August, with a win against his fellow-countryman Felipe Efrain in a Bantamweight bout. Nicolau now moves down to his original division, up to 57kg, aiming to capture BRAVE’s inaugural world title.

BRAVE CF 35 will take place on March 25th, 2020 and marks the fifth time the fastest-growing MMA organization in the world hosts an event in Brazil. The country will become the number one home of BRAVE Combat Federation alongside the Kingdom of Bahrain. The show is headlined by Cleiton “Predator” making the first defense of his Lightweight title against Guram Kutateladze.

Bahrain Club beat Ettihad to win 3x3 basketball title

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Club were crowned champions of the Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) 3x3 Championship.

They secured their title following a 21-11 victory over Al Ettihad in the tournament final, played at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

After the championship game, the top three teams were awarded their respective medals by BBA vice-president Nasser Al Qaseer and a number of other officials.

Al Hala took the bronze medals after defeating Manama 21-11 in the game for third place.



Bahrain Club team members with officials at the awarding

A total of 20 teams took part in the championship, with 10 of Bahrain’s top basketball clubs fielding two squads apiece

A total of 20 teams took part in the championship, with 10 of Bahrain’s top basketball clubs fielding two squads apiece.

They were divided into four groups for the first round, with the top two in each division moving on to the knockout quarter-finals.