

Boar: Big tusks, loads of gore, and charming characters

B-movie creature features are two-a-penny these days, what with cheap CGI technology and the ability to make a movie with nothing more than a camera phone and half an idea | P13

THE DAILY **tribune**



SpaceX, NASA tight-lipped on cause of capsule incident



The SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket with the unmanned Crew Dragon capsule

Washington, United States

NASA and SpaceX remained tight-lipped yesterday about what caused a mysterious but apparently serious incident last weekend during engine tests on the Crew Dragon capsule designed to carry US astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) later this year.

SpaceX said that an "anomaly" had occurred during Saturday's ground tests at Cape Canaveral in Florida.

A photo on the Florida Today website showed large amounts of smoke pouring out of the test site, prompting speculation about a possible explosion.

A video posted on Twitter showed an explosion. The video has not been authenticated, nor has SpaceX denied its veracity.

SpaceX has not issued any more details since its statement on Saturday, and NASA has referred any questions back to Elon Musk's company.

NASA's safety advisory panel did however mention the incident during a meeting on Thursday and confirmed it was the result of firing the space vehicle's SuperDraco engines.

Climate protests disrupt London's financial hub

London, United Kingdom

Environmentalists glued themselves to the London Stock Exchange entrance and staged impromptu concerts in the middle of traffic on the final day of a campaign that brought parts of the UK capital to a halt.

Activists from Extinction Rebellion -- a fast-growing movement founded last year by British academics -- have used 11 days of festive but highly disruptive rallies to focus global attention on climate change.

Their ultimate goal is to slash greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2025 and to end biodiversity loss.

But their immediate aim was



Police officers remove climate change activists from their road blockades around the Bank of England in the City of London

to get UK politicians to look past hot-button issues such as Brexit and come up with ways to save the planet from damage that younger generations think will

hurt them most.

Extinction Rebellion members said their campaign drew plenty of public attention but failed to get the government to

budge. "The traffic disruptions have really, really brought the whole climate and environment out from being a niche issue," leading a group of 20 through a Beatles song performance in the middle of a busy street.

"But it hasn't been a complete success. We haven't got to that point where the government says 'yes, please talk to us,'" Onley said as drivers stuck in the heart of London's bustling financial district furiously honked their horns.

An aide to UK Environment Secretary Michael Gove said no meeting had been scheduled with campaigners but that one might possibly happen next week.

The protest outside the London Stock Exchange building that stands in the shadow of St. Paul's Cathedral saw several glue themselves to the pavement in front of one of the glass entrance turnstiles.

One person wearing a gas mask also chained himself to one of the sleek building's stone columns.

"This institution literally trades in the devastation of our planet," the group said in a statement.

Extinction Rebellion estimated that top banks have poured \$1.9 trillion (1.7 billion euros) into "fossil fuel financing" since the Paris Agreement on dealing with greenhouse gases was signed in 2016.

UK rejects Iran offer

London, United Kingdom

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt yesterday dismissed the suggestion of a prisoner swap for a British-Iranian mother being held in Tehran as a "vile" diplomatic ploy, while her husband said the idea was "almost impossible".

In New York, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday suggested a swap between Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, who is in jail in Tehran for alleged sedition, and Negar Ghodskani, an Iranian woman held in Australia on a US extradition warrant.

Hunt said there was a "huge difference" between the two women.

"The woman in jail in Australia is facing due process, a proper legal procedure, and she is alleged to have committed a very serious crime," he told reporters in London.

"Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is innocent -- she has done nothing wrong."

He added: "What is unacceptable about what Iran is doing is

that they are putting innocent people in prison and using it as leverage.

"I'm afraid that is what is happening with this Australian case. They're saying, we'll only release this innocent Brit if you'll do something that suits us diplomatically."

Richard Ratcliffe, Zaghari-Ratcliffe's husband who has been campaigning for her release, said he was "blindsided" by the offer as he followed Zarif's speech on Twitter and does not think it is the "way forward".

"It's clearly a hopeful thing that he was talking about her release explicitly," he said.

"At the same time, linking her in a public way to a big complicated deal that is almost impossible to do because it's been made public could easily be a displacement tactic."

Zaghari-Ratcliffe worked for the Thomson Reuters Foundation and was arrested in 2016 while visiting relatives for the Persian New Year.

Iranian authorities accused her of plotting against the gov-



Britain's Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt

ernment and handed her a five-year jail sentence for sedition.

Britain has taken the unusual step of granting her diplomatic protection in a bid to free her.

Ghodskani, a legal resident of Australia, was arrested in 2017 after US prosecutors said she sought US digital communications technology by presenting herself as an employee of a Malaysian company.

US prosecutors said she in fact was sending the technology to Iranian company Fanamoj, which works in public broadcasting.

Both women have been separated from their young children



Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, holding her daughter Gabriella (Courtesy of Free Nazanin campaign)

while being detained.

Ratcliffe has also been separated from his daughter Gabriella, who was with her mother when she was detained in Iran and has since remained in the country with her grandparents.

Ratcliffe said his wife was "lifted" by the British government's decision to grant her diplomatic protection in March.

But he added: "generally, her spirits are gradually sinking now."

GLOBAL FOREST WATCH

Tropical forest the size of England destroyed in 2018: report

Paris, France

Last year humanity destroyed an expanse of tropical forest nearly the size of England, the third largest decline since global satellite data became available in 2001, researchers reported yesterday.

The pace of the loss is staggering -- the equivalent of 30 football fields disappearing every minute of every day, or 12 million hectares a year.

Almost a third of that area,

some 36,000 square kilometres (14,000 square miles), was pristine primary rainforest, according to the annual assessment from scientists at Global Forest Watch, based at the University of Maryland.

The main drivers are the livestock industry and large-scale commodity agriculture -- palm oil in Asia and Africa, soy beans and biofuel crops in South America.

A quarter of tropical tree cover loss in 2018 occurred in Bra-



Representative picture

zil, with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia each accounting for about 10 per cent.

Malaysia and Madagascar also saw high levels of deforestation last year.

Nearly a third of primary forest destruction took place in Brazil (13,500 km²), with the Democratic Republic of Congo (4,800 km²), Indonesia (3,400 km²), Colombia (1,800 km²) and Bolivia (1,500 km²) rounding out the top five. Madagascar lost 2pc in 2018.



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Bahrain committed to investing in youth

TDI | Manama

The Kingdom remains committed to investing in Bahrain's youth, providing them with skill sets that are conducive to creative thinking, innovation and leadership in line with His Majesty King Hamad's directives, said Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

Speaking as he received the fourth intake of the First Deputy Prime Minister's (FDPM) Fellowship, His Royal Highness highlighted that, since its inception, the FDPM Fellowship has provided an integrated platform for the enhancement of government efficiency.

"The project aims to advance competitiveness and productivity through the wide-ranging initiatives and projects of the



Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa with the fourth intake of the First Deputy Prime Minister's (FDPM) Fellowship

Fellows," said Prince Salman.

The FDPM Fellowship is a vital platform aimed at enhancing the leadership and analytical skills of government employees. Participants spend a year working as full-time research fellows at the Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister, benefiting from advanced training research methods and policy analysis.

The Deputy King praised the fourth intake's diligence and relentless commitment to capitalize on the Fellowship's extensive training programmes and wished them success in applying their newly acquired knowledge at their workplaces.

For their part, the FDPM Fellows expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Deputy King for his continued support and encouragement.



The Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, with the Commander of the United States Central Command, General Kenneth F. McKenzie, at Gudaibiya Palace. The Deputy King reaffirmed the strength of bilateral relations between Bahrain and the United States of America and underlined the importance of expanding cooperation at all levels, including defence cooperation. Prince Salman congratulated General McKenzie on his new appointment as the Commander of the US Central Command and wished him success in his new role. The Chief-of-Staff of the Bahrain Defence Force, Lt-General Dhiyab bin Saqr Al-Nuaimi, attended the meeting



BDF Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa with the Commander of US Central Command (USCENTCOM) General Kenneth F. McKenzie and the accompanying delegation. He praised the Bahrain-US strong and lasting relations in many fields especially the military and defence cooperation. BDF Chief-of-Staff General Dhiyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi and senior officers were also present.

'Dawn of Storms' Naval tactical drill concludes



The concluding ceremony of "Dawn of Storms 23"

TDI | Manama

The Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa yesterday took part in the conclusion of "Dawn of Storms 23" Naval Tactical Drill implemented by the Royal Bahrain Navy Force (RBNF) with the participation of BDF, National Guard and Interior Ministry's Coast Guard units.

The drill, the BDF Commander-in-Chief said, will help bring more efficiency to RBNF adding, "Royal Bahraini Naval Force perform one of most advanced defence duties along with the ground and air support forces."

Earlier upon arrival, the BDF Commander-in-chief was greeted by Chief-of-Staff General Dhiyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi, Royal Bahrain Navy

Force Commander, Naval Major-General Mohammed Yousef Al-Asam, and senior officers.

The RBNF commander expressed utmost gratitude and appreciation to the BDF Commander-in-Chief for patronising the conclusion of the drill.

He stressed the importance of administrative and combat readiness to confront any threats or dangers.

Director of the BDF Command Major-General Hassan Mohammed Saad, Assistant Chief-of-Staff Major-General Shaikh Ali bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Public Security Chief Major-General Tariq Hassan Al Hasan, National Guard Director of Staff Major-General Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Saud Al Khalifa, and senior officers were also present.

National Anti-drug Committee meeting held

TDI | Manama

Interior Minister, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa yesterday chaired a meeting of the National Anti-drug Committee.

The meeting was attended by the Minister of Education, the Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, the Minister of Information, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs, the Capital Governor, the President of Customs and members of the committee of representatives of the government organisations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister highlighted the findings of the investigation committee formed by the Cabinet about the Hamad Town Intermediate Girl School, which denied the existing of drug abuse phenomena or drug dealing network in the school.

The Health Minister highlighted proposed procedures to prescribe medicines and rules to monitor pharmacies. She said that the organisational procedures would be referred to the Supreme Health Council. She also highlighted the misuse of some medicines.

The Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs briefed the



Interior Minister, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa chairing a meeting of the National Anti-drug Committee

committee about coordination with the Maan (Together) programme against violence and addiction to enhance the number of youth beneficiaries at sports clubs and youth centres.

He also discussed the youth drug prevention programme "Takaful". The Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs is preparing a second edition of the programme with the participa-

tion of 70 youth representing 35 youth centres.

The Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments asserted the essential role of societies, NGOs and the private sector in enhancing awareness about the risks of narcotics.

The Education Minister discussed the community service curriculum for around 9000 students to enhance anti-narcotic awareness in cooperation

with the youth centres.

The Capital Governor briefed the attendees of the Maan programme that covers 173 schools and plans to cover 211 schools.

The panel was informed about the media anti-drug plan that would be implemented within a timeframe.

The Interior Minister highlighted the importance of the media in promoting awareness about the risks of narcotics.

BIG STORY

big story

Adieu to homeless life

Relief finally for stranded expatriate, Sulaiman Kuju, who is flying back today to his native with the help of authorities and social service organisations here, after fighting years' long battle with adversities



Sulaiman Kuju was living on the terrace of a building in Manama for the last four months

TDT | Manama

Ending up on the streets of Bahrain, after losing his job and enduring a series of setbacks, Sulaiman Kuju, an Indian national by birth, can finally breathe a sigh of relief.

Thanks to the efforts of media and social service organisations in the Kingdom, Sulaiman will fly back to his homeland today, after landing in Bahrain almost 10 years ago as a construction worker.

Fate, however, had other plans for Sulaiman and finally left him stranded on the terrace of a building here in Manama without a roof to escape the scorching Sun.

Indian National Suleiman's shocking situation garnered public attention only when 4 PM News, a sister concern of *Tribune*, published a story seeking help.

Learning about his situation, the authorities here quickly intervened to clear his travel ban and a fine imposed for staying illegally.

He was also granted immigration clearance.

The Immigration Directorate

has worked with the India Embassy of Bahrain to expedite the process.

The unfortunate happenings in Suleiman's life began with him failing to renew his visa, after losing his job as a construction worker.

The situation worsened further when he also failed to retrieve his passport from his sponsor who passed away, which left him with a CPR as the only identification document.

When contacted, Sulaiman earlier told *Tribune* that it took him almost two years just to settle the debts, which he incurred back home to pay for the visa. The visa cost his BD1,000.

"After two years, I had no money to renew my visa and since then I have been an illegal resident in the Kingdom," he told *Tribune*.

Despite winning his ticket to the homeland, Sulaiman's problems are far from over as he is still in financial distress.

The family of Sulaiman, who hails from the Indian state of Kerala, includes his wife and three children.

He requests help from capable hands. To help, contact Suleiman on +973 36451199 or Badushah on +973 33311919



Sulaiman Kuju with his well-wishers after receiving his immigration clearance

OTP fraudsters strike, this time from Pakistan

TDT Manama
Mohammed Zafran

An expatriate has claimed to have fallen victim to a One Time Password (OTP) theft by fraudsters in Pakistan.

A Manama resident claimed cybercriminals stole his OTP, which was then used to transfer money from his account.

"A total of BD10 was taken from my prepaid Sim card account by fraudsters," said Indian national Reghu.

Money, he said, was transferred from his account to a phone number in Pakistan on multiple occasions.

According to him, the fraudsters initiated the transaction and subsequently stole the OTP to authorise the money transfer.

"This happened a few days ago," he said adding: "At first, they took BD 2 and later another couple of dinars and repeated until it reached BD10."

"This is strange because the money was transferred to an ac-

count in Pakistan, where I have no business."

He said the telecommunication company was informed of the situation. "I contacted the telecommunication company and informed them of the situation. They send me an email yesterday stating that they are investigating the issue. I hope that they will be able to reach the bottom of this very soon."

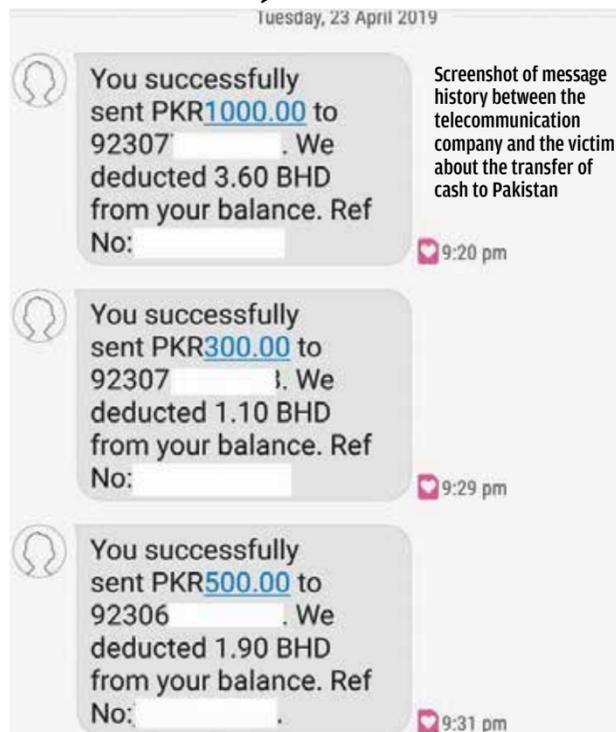
"I am extremely worried at the moment as the phone number is also tied to my bank account here.

"If they use any sort of OTP fraud in my bank account, I will be in huge trouble.

"I will be going to the bank now to alert them about the situation and ask them not to transfer any money without my authorisation.

"I don't know how they are able to access my OTP," Reghu said without hiding his concern.

"My phone, I had never given it to anyone," he said.



Screenshot of message history between the telecommunication company and the victim about the transfer of cash to Pakistan

OTP theft can happen in two ways



Representative picture

According to experts, OTP theft can happen in two ways.

The first method involves fraudsters posing as bank employees and convincing

the victims to give away the OTP.

The second method involves infecting the victim's phone with a malware which is then used to forward the OTP to the perpetrators.

Spotlight on Arabian Horse tradition

TDT | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa yesterday praised the extraordinary efforts being exerted by Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities to organise the 27th Annual Traditional Festival.

The festival, HH Shaikh Khalid, the First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Olympics Committee (BOC), said, "Sheds light on the genuine and authentic Bahraini traditions."

The festival is being held this year under the slogan "The Arabian Horse".

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa was patronising the opening ceremony of the Festival as deputised by HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Organised by Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, the event which began on Wednesday will continue until 3 May 2019, at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort in Riffa.

"The theme of this year's festival emphasises the continuous efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain to look after the genuine



In pictures, highlights of the festival

Arabian horses and to express their high prestige among the rulers of Bahrain over time," said HH Shaikh Khalid adding: "Since ancient times, Bahrain has been associated with horses, which highlights its prominent role in preserving them, making them part of the historical identity established by the ancestors and fathers of the rulers of Bahrain."

"HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has adopted an approach based on his grandparents to preserve Bahrain's horses through the efforts of the Royal Studs."

Following the opening ceremony, Shaikh Khalid toured the main tent of the festival which featured historical photos and museum exhibits, as well as pho-

tos of horses belonging to the Royal Studs, taken by Shaikha Hanan bint Hassan Al Khalifa.

The exhibition also included paintings by Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Khalifa and Shaikha Mariam bint Abdulrahman Al Khalifa. During his tour, HH Shaikh Khalid exchanged friendly talks with the participants in the festival.



MBPAC throws light on biotechnology application

TDT/Manama

Harpreet Kaur

The Millennium Biotechnology Pan Arab Conference and Exhibition (MBPAC) concluded yesterday under the patronage of Dr Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi, the Minister of Education.

The three-day conference held under the theme "How life science and biotechnology will re-shape the third millennium?" was co-organised by the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) and the University of Bahrain (UoB).

The event provided a unique opportunity for biotechnology universities and institutes in the fields of pharmaceutical, agricultural and environmental industries from the Arab world to present their research and achievements, and interact with scientists, international experts and investors in various fields of



Participants during the three-day conference

biotechnology.

Prof. Mohamed Al Dahmani, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies in AGU and President of MBPAC, told Tribune, "The conference shed light on the most important biotechnology applications in the fields of health, agriculture and the environment."

"Additionally, the conference shed light on gene correction,

cell and gene therapy, bioremediation, drug design and genome-specific discoveries where the conference reviewed the scientific progress of these topics alongside new emerging technologies that lead to real paradigm shifts in the health-care system, and make real promises to control and treat human diseases and alleviate the burden of healthcare for the

millennium."

"It is crucial to strengthen these research activities and joint conferences to unite efforts and promote scientific research in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This partnership with local, regional and global institutions, is directly involved in the development plan of UoB for the years 2016-2021, in line with the economic vision of Bahrain 2030."

Fraudster who fled to Bahrain after stealing gets jail in Jersey

Jersey

After fleeing to Bahrain from Jersey more than a decade ago, Russell Stephen King (60) was brought to justice when he was jailed for six years recently, reported Jersey Evening Post.

King, who appeared in court in a wheelchair, laundered a total of £671,000 from the now-defunct Belgravia Financial Services Group, of which he was a shadow director, over a three-month period in 2008. Much of the money was then hidden in Switzerland.

He also sold 'cherished registration plates' on behalf of his former business partner Duncan Hickman, following his sudden death and kept the money for himself.

King pleaded guilty to five counts of fraudulently converting a total of £740,286 of



Russell Stephen King

money belonging to others.

Crown Advocate Matthew Jowitt, prosecuting, said King's motivation was 'pure greed'. The lawyer said the defendant was a man who was known among staff to enjoy first-class flights around the world, five-star stays at the Ritz-Carlton in Bahrain and at the Dorchester in London, as well as trips to the Island and dinner for his parents at Longueville Manor - all on the financially crippled company's expenses.

Bapco holds Green School award ceremony



First place winner Al Estiqlal Secondary School for Girls



Al-Noor Secondary School for Girls won the second place



Third place went to Al Jabriya Secondary Technical School for Boys

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco) yesterday held a Green School Award Ceremony to honour the winners of the academic year 2018/2019.

Al Estiqlal Secondary School

for Girls won the first place for its project "Recycling Aluminium Slag", while Al-Noor Secondary School for Girls won the second place for its project "The Production Silage from Palm Residue".

Third place went to Al Jabriya Secondary Technical School for

Boys for the project "Manufacturing a 3D Printer".

The Bapco Green School Award is a nation-wide competition organised by Bapco since 2005, where Bahrain's public secondary schools are rewarded for environmental projects aimed at improving air quality,

water supply, waste management and devising modern and effective methods to promote awareness on environment-related issues.

This year's Green School Award witnessed the participation of 21 government secondary schools.

Held in Bapco Club yesterday, the event was attended by Dr Mohammed Mubarak Juma, Undersecretary for Resources and Services at the Ministry of Education, in addition to senior officials from the National Oil and Gas Authority (Noga) and the Supreme Council for the

Environment (SCE) as well as members of Bapco's Board and Management.

The event was held under the patronage of the Minister of Oil, Chairman of Bapco's Board of Directors Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa.

WORLD
world

For sale: a giant, ornery bird that killed its last owner



A cassowary bird that is native to Australia and New Guinea rainforests is seen in its enclosure at the Beijing zoo.

AFP | Washington, United States

The creature called a cassowary -- boasting long, dagger-like claws, standing as tall as a tallish person and sporting a truly foul disposition -- will be auctioned Saturday, two weeks after slashing to death 75-year-old exotic animal lover and breeder Marvin Hajos.

Hajos was raising the flightless bird, which has a blue face and a ridge atop its head, and other exotic animals on his property in Alachua county in the north central part of Florida.

He died April 12 when he fell near the cassowary pen and was attacked by the bird.

A total of around 90 animals that Hajos owned will be auctioned off, said Scotty Wilson, the auctioneer at Gulf Coast Livestock Auction in Madison, Florida.

They include brightly colored macaws and critters called marmosets, or pocket monkeys, primates which are only five to six inches (13 to 15 cm) long, said Wilson, who knew Hajos for years.

"Marvin was a very beloved figure and the exotic animal community around here is small but close knit. So I imagine we will have a strong turnout for the auction," he told AFP.

There is no starting price set for the cassowary and Wilson declined to say how much it might fetch.



With powerful legs, they can jump seven feet straight up in the air. Only ostriches are heavier in the world of birds. Cassowaries can run up to 31 miles per hour. The birds are native to Australia and New Guinea.

In the event no one wants it, several conservation groups have already told the auction house they will take care of the cassowary.

Proceeds will go to Hajos' widow and other family, said Wilson.

"Marvin left instructions to the effect that if anything ever happened to him, the animals were to be sold immediately because she did not have the means to take care of them," Wilson said.

Cassowaries are the world's most dangerous bird, according to the San Diego Zoo website.

They are similar to emus, can grow to nearly six feet tall (1.8 m) and weigh up to 170 pounds (75 kilos) in the case of females and somewhat less for males, according to the website.

Thousands protest China-backed mega-dam in Myanmar

Yangon, Myanmar

Thousands of people in northern Myanmar took to the streets on Monday to protest against the proposed reinstatement of a Chinese-backed mega-dam they say will cause huge environmental damage and bring little benefit to the country.

The protest came just days ahead of a trip by civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to Beijing for a summit on China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Myanmar's former military junta signed a 2009 deal with Beijing to construct the Myit-sone dam in Kachin state.

But public anger rose to the



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (R) shakes hands with Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi

surface as the country started to transition towards democracy and the \$3.6 billion project was mothballed two years later. If the 6,000 megawatt dam were built on the country's famed Ayeyarwaddy River, it would flood an area the size of Singapore, displacing tens of thousands.

Huge crowd floods Khartoum

AFP | Khartoum, Sudan

Tens of thousands of protesters converged from all directions on Sudan's army headquarters yesterday after calls for a "million-strong" demonstration to demand the ruling military council cede power.

The day after three council members resigned following talks with protest organisers, demonstrators flocked towards the central Khartoum site yesterday evening, beating drums and singing revolutionary songs, said a journalist at the scene.

"We want the military council out. We want a civilian government," said protester Adam Ahmed, a medical student.

The rally came after Sudan's new military rulers and protest leaders agreed to set up a joint committee, to chart the way forward two weeks after the ouster of veteran president Omar al-Bashir.



Sudanese protesters chant slogans as they gather for a "million-strong" march outside the army headquarters in the capital Khartoum

The Alliance for Freedom and Change, an umbrella group leading the protests, had called for a million-strong march to "continue to protect our revolution and to ensure that all our demands are achieved".

Many of those rallying chanted "Blood for blood! We will not accept compensation!", demanding punishment for officials responsible for killings

during Bashir's iron-fisted, three-decade rule.

"All those responsible for the conflicts in Sudan should be tried and brought to justice," said protester Ismail Jadallah.

Also at the protest were dozens of judges, dressed in their robes, who had marched from the constitutional court, an AFP photographer said.

"We are here to give a mes-

sage that the judiciary should be independent without any political intervention," a judge told journalists.

A photographer in downtown Khartoum said crowds of protesters had gathered earlier outside Egypt's embassy and consulate.

Several people held banners calling on Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi not to "interfere in our affairs", after Cairo hosted a summit of African leaders who said more time was needed for a transition to civilian rule in Sudan.

Across the city, demonstrators arrived at the army headquarters from the states of Jazeera, White Nile and also from Bashir's hometown Shendi, boosting the ranks of those already camped at the site, many of them for the past several weeks. The giant rally followed a late-night meeting between the military council and leaders of the protest movement.

Twitter adds way to report voter-tricking tweets

San Francisco, United States

Twitter on Wednesday began making it easier to report tweets aimed at interfering with people voting, starting first in Europe and India.

An option to report Twitter messages as being misleading about voting was being added to the one-to-many messaging service's app in India and Europe, with a promise it would be expanded globally through the year.

"Any attempts to undermine the process of registering to vote or engaging in the electoral process is contrary to our company's core values," the Twitter safety team said in an online post.

"We are further expanding our enforcement capabilities in this area by creating a dedicated reporting feature within the product to allow users to more easily report this content to us."

Twitter teams entrusted to review reported content have been trained as part of an enhanced appeals process in the event tweet removal decisions are challenged, according to the San Francisco-based company.

"You may not use Twitter's services for the purpose of manipulating or interfering in elections," the safety team said.

Examples of misleading information fired off in tweets included falsely asserting people could vote by email, phone, text messages or even using Twitter messages.

Mexico ready to apologize to US over border incident



Trucks carrying construction material ride on the US side of the US-Mexico border fence as seen from Tijuana, in Baja California state, Mexico

Mexico City, Mexico

Mexico's president said Thursday he was willing to offer an apology to the United States, if necessary, to cool an escalating war of words over a border confrontation between US and Mexican troops.

"If necessary, the secretary of foreign affairs will send a note explaining how the facts occurred and, if there was an infraction, he will offer the apologies that are required," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said in his daily news conference.

The leftist president was keen to emphasize that Mexico wanted to avoid "any kind of friction, confrontation," with the United States, its main trading partner.

"We do not intend to violate, to affect, the sovereignty of the United States of America," he said.

On Wednesday, US Presi-



President Andres Manuel Lopez

dent Donald Trump escalated his war of words with Mexico over immigration when he announced he would send armed soldiers to the border after Mexican soldiers had "pulled guns" on US troops.

Trump was apparently referring to an April 13 incident in which Mexican troops reportedly questioned and pointed their weapons at two US troops conducting surveillance on the border.

"Mexico's Soldiers recently pulled guns on our National

Guard Soldiers, probably as a diversionary tactic for drug smugglers on the Border. Better not happen again!" he tweeted.

"We are now sending ARMED SOLDIERS to the Border. Mexico is not doing nearly enough in apprehending & returning!"

Mexico's Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard late Wednesday downplayed the incident, saying the Americans were in an unmarked car south of the border fence but north of the border itself in a spot that is not clearly marked either as Mexico or the United States.

He said such incidents happened on a score of occasions over the past four years, without either government "giving it any great importance."

The Mexican foreign ministry said that the incident happened on April 13, south of the border fence near Ciudad Juarez "in an area where the boundaries of the border are not clear because of its geography."

Sri Lanka churches halt public services

The president has asked the police chief and top defence ministry bureaucrat to step down

● FBI team is now in Sri Lanka

● In all, nine people are believed to have blown themselves up

● Sri Lanka's top defence official Hemasiri Fernando resigned

● Authorities also announced a ban on drone flights

AFP | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's Catholic churches suspended all public services over security fears yesterday, as thousands of troops joined the hunt for suspects in deadly Easter bombings that killed nearly 360 people.

Security forces also made fresh arrests overnight over the attacks, as the government faced pressure over its failure to act on intelligence warnings about possible bombings.

Recriminations have flown since suicide bombers blew themselves up in luxury hotels and churches packed with Easter worshippers on Sunday.

Overnight, security forces using newly granted powers under the country's state of emergency arrested 16 more suspects in connection with the attacks.

Police have so far arrested 75 people but tensions remain high with several suspects unaccounted for.

A senior Catholic priest said that all public services were being suspended and all churches closed "on the advice of security forces". Private services for burials will still be carried out, but no public masses are scheduled.

Brigadier Sumith Atapattu said the army had increased its deployment by 1,300 to 6,300 overnight, with the navy and airforce also deploying 2,000 more personnel. Authorities also announced a ban on drone flights and suspended licences issued to commercial operators with immediate effect.

Defence official resigns

Sri Lanka's government has come under increasing pressure over the revelation it failed to act on intelligence about planned attacks, which claimed nearly 360 lives, and Hemasiri Fernando had been widely expected to step down.

A defence ministry official said Fernando had submitted a letter of resignation to head-of-state Maithripala Sirisena.

"He told the president that he was accepting responsibility and resigning so that the president can make a new appointment," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Indian intelligence shared several specific warnings about attacks with Sri Lankan authorities, an Indian source said, but the information was not given to ministers, in what the government has called a "major" lapse.

Authorities are now in a desperate hunt for suspects linked to the attacks, and police yesterday released the names and photos of three men and three women they want to question.

"Most of them are well-educated and come from middle, upper-middle class families, so they are financially quite independent and their families are quite stable financially, that is a worrying factor in this," the minister added.

Security forces using state of emergency powers arrested 16 more suspects overnight, bringing the total in custody to 74.

Sirisena met with political party leaders on Thursday and announced he would revive a military-police body last used during the country's fight against Tamil insurgents to coordinate operations after the bombings.

Key suspect

An FBI team is now in Sri Lanka, Wijewardene said, and Britain, Australia and the United Arab Emirates have also offered intelligence help.

Experts say the bombings bear many of the hallmarks of IS attacks, and the government has suggested local militants could not have acted alone.

But it has not yet official-



Buddhist devotees pray for the bomb blast victims at Kelaiya temple in Colombo



Relatives carry the coffin of a bomb blast victim for a burial ceremony at a cemetery in Negombo on April 24, 2019, three days after a series of suicide attacks targeting churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka.

ly confirmed any IS role in the blasts.

A key suspect in the attacks also remains unaccounted for: NTJ leader Zahran Hashim.

He appears to be among eight people seen in a video released Tuesday by IS after it claimed the attacks, seen leading a pledge of allegiance to IS chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Officials said it was still unclear whether Hashim was among the suicide attackers or had escaped after the blasts.

Authorities have said they cannot rule out further attacks while suspects remain at large.

In all, nine people are believed to have blown themselves up on Sunday, either during attacks or



Anusha Kumari 43, wife of a St Sebastian's Church suicide blast victim Dulip Appuhami, 46, reacts as she cries in her house in Negombo



Investigators are still piecing information together about the attack and those involved, with Wijewardene revealing Wednesday that one attacker had studied in Britain and did post-graduate studies in Australia before returning to Sri Lanka

when police attempted to arrest them.

Sri Lankan police sources have

said that two Muslim brothers, sons of a wealthy Colombo spice trader, blew themselves up at the Shangri-La and the Cinnamon Grand hotels.

Their father is now in custody.

The Kingsbury hotel in the capital was the last one hit. A fourth planned attack on a hotel failed, authorities said. The would-be attacker was followed back to a Colombo lodge, where he blew himself up, killing two people.

Sources close to the investigation said two more people -- a man and a woman -- blew themselves up at another location as security forces launched a raid. Those blasts killed three police.

Dozens of foreigners were among the victims of the blasts, including three children of a Danish billionaire, eight Britons, 10 Indians and four Americans.

The United Nations said at least 45 children, Sri Lankans and foreigners, were among the dead.

Professional gambler raking in the cash on 'Jeopardy!'

New York, United States

A professional gambler with nerves of steel and an encyclopedic mind has just surpassed the \$1 million mark in earnings on the popular US television quiz show "Jeopardy!" -- in lightning quick fashion.

James Holzhauer, 34, is only the second contestant in the show's decades-long history to pass that mark in regular season play, after the legendary Ken Jennings. Well, legendary for the show's avid fans.

While it took Jennings, a computer scientist from Utah, 74 episodes to amass his fortune, Holzhauer has earned \$1.06 million in just 14 appearances.

The gambler with the wide grin is now aiming to best the \$2.52 million in prize money set by Jennings during his long string of victories in 2004.

"This is absolutely insane,"

Jennings said on Twitter of the success of Holzhauer, who has repeatedly broken his own record for the most money won on a single night -- it currently stands at \$131,127.

ESPN is covering Holzhauer's episodes on its Chalk betting section. Rock bands are tweeting at him when he answers questions about them.

"Dream job: pro sports bettor and Jeopardy contestant," Holzhauer tweeted.

How does he do it?

"Jeopardy!" is one of the oldest television quiz shows in the United States, dating back initially to 1964, and to 1984 in its current format with host Alex Trebek.

It is a testament to the show's beloved nature that when Trebek recently announced he was battling cancer, the news trend-



'Jeopardy!' winner James Holzhauer

ed on Twitter.

Every night, three contestants

are presented with trivia questions in various categories and

asked to come up with the answer -- in the form of a question.

A recent example: "Rulers of this Empire included Darius I and his son Xerxes I."

Holzhauer's correct answer: "What is Persia?"

A monetary value is attached to each question, and the first contestant to press a buzzer gets to answer.

Holzhauer has proved to be super fast on the buzzer.

But more importantly, in racking up the wins, he has also employed a novel -- but risky -- strategy befitting his day job in Vegas.

He frequently zeroes in on the high-value questions first to quickly amass money, and then unhesitatingly bets big -- really big -- on his ability to offer the correct answer when he lands on a special Daily Double question.

Explaining his success to ESPN, Holzhauer said: "There's not a lot of professional gamblers out there.

"Even if people wanted to be, I don't think a lot have the mindset that 'Oh, I can just put in \$10,000 and if I lose, OK, I move on with my game and keep playing the rest of the game with a level head.'"

Holzhauer's remarkable run has earned him legions of admirers -- including Jennings, the man whose record he is threatening to break.

"I've always wanted to see someone try Jeopardy! wagering this way who had the skills to back it up," Jennings said.

"I don't feel I get enough credit for making small, sensible Jeopardy wagers, which helped the show with its prize budget," he quipped in another tweet.

Kim, Putin vow closer ties

● **The meeting was Kim's first one-on-one talks after Hanoi summit with Trump**

● **Focus will be on the fate of 10,000 North Korean labourers working in Russia**

AFP | Vladivostok, Russia

Russia's Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un met face-to-face for the first time yesterday, vowing to seek closer ties as they look to counter US influence.

The summit in Russia's Far Eastern city of Vladivostok came with Kim locked in a nuclear stand-off with Washington and Putin keen to put Moscow forward as a player in another global flashpoint.

The two leaders shook hands and shared smiles before heading into one-on-one talks that lasted nearly two hours, longer than expected, on an island off the Pacific coast city.

In brief statements before their meeting, both men said they were looking to strengthen ties that date back to the Soviet Union's support for the founder of North Korea, Kim's grandfather Kim Il Sung.

Kim said he hoped to turn the modern relationship with Moscow into a "more stable and sound one" while Putin said the visit would give a boost to diplomatic and economic ties.

As the talks expanded to include other officials, Kim thanked Putin for "a very good" meeting.

"We have just had a very meaningful exchange of views on issues of mutual interest," he said.

Putin said the talks had been "rather detailed" but neither leader said much about their substance.

The meeting was Kim's first one-on-one talks with another head of state since returning from his Hanoi summit with US President Donald Trump, which broke down without a deal on North Korea's nuclear arsenal in February.



We have just had a very meaningful exchange of views on issues of mutual interest

KIM JONG UN

key exports and sources of cash. Pyongyang has reportedly asked Russia to continue to employ its workers after the deadline.

Kim, whose government has told the United Nations it is facing food shortfalls this year, will also be keen to see Moscow continue or boost its aid.

Russia has provided some \$25 million in food aid to North Korea in recent years, according to the Kremlin. One delivery in March saw more than 2,000 tonnes of wheat supplied to the port of Chongjin, news agency TASS reported.

For Putin, the summit is a chance to push Russia's agenda of opposing US international influence.

In an interview with China's official People's Daily published on Thursday, Putin lashed out at "countries claiming sole global leadership".

"They carelessly trample on the norms and principles of international law, resort to blackmail, sanctions and pressure, and try to force their values and dubious ideals on entire countries and populations," said Putin, who is heading to China after the talks for another summit.

The Vladivostok meeting follows repeated invitations from



Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un greet members of the delegations prior to their talks at the Far Eastern Federal University campus on Russky island in the far-eastern Russian port of Vladivostok

North Korean labourers

Among the issues likely to be on the table was the fate of some 10,000 North Korean labourers working in Russia and due to leave by the end of this year under sanctions.

Labour is one of North Korea's

Putin after Kim embarked on a series of diplomatic overtures last year.

Since March 2018, the formerly reclusive North Korean leader has held four meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, three with South Korea's Moon Jae-in,

Soviet-era allies

Russia has already called for the sanctions to be eased, while the US has accused it of trying to help Pyongyang evade some of the measures -- accusations Russia denies.

Moscow was a crucial backer of Pyongyang for decades and their ties go back to the founding of North Korea, when the Soviet Union installed Kim Il Sung as leader.

The USSR reduced funding to the North as it began to seek reconciliation with Seoul in the 1980s, but Pyongyang was hit hard by its demise in 1991.

Soon after his first election as Russian president, Putin sought to normalise relations and met Kim Jong Il -- the current leader's father and predecessor -- three times, including a 2002 meeting also held in Vladivostok.

China has since cemented its role as the isolated North's most important ally, its largest trading partner and crucial fuel supplier, and analysts say Kim could be looking to balance Beijing's influence.

While ties between Moscow and Pyongyang have remained cordial, the last meeting between their leaders came in 2011, when Kim Jong Il told then-president Dmitry Medvedev that he was prepared to renounce nuclear testing.

His son has since overseen by far the country's most powerful blast to date, and launch of missiles which Pyongyang says are capable of reaching the entire US mainland.

two with Trump and one with Vietnam's president.

At the meeting with Trump in Hanoi, the cash-strapped North demanded immediate relief from sanctions, but the talks broke up in disagreement over what Pyongyang

was prepared to give up in return.

North Korea last week launched a blistering attack on US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, insisting he be removed from the negotiations just hours after announcing it had carried

out a new weapons test.

Pompeo said on Wednesday he expected "bumpy" talks ahead with Pyongyang but that he still hoped to reach a potentially landmark denuclearisation deal.

Three-year-old boy 'abandoned' at US-Mexico border

Washington, United States

US border patrol agents found a crying three-year-old boy in a Texas cornfield on Tuesday with his name and a phone number written on his shoes, the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency said Wednesday.

The boy was "abandoned" by a group of suspected illegal immigrants who had crossed into the United States from Mexico near Brownsville, Texas, the CBP said. "As agents attempted to intercept the group, the suspected illegal aliens scattered in the overgrown field," the CBP said in a statement.

The boy, who was "alone and crying," was discovered during a search of the field and taken to a local hospital, where he was



A Guatemalan boy plays soccer next to portable toilets at the Casa del Refugiado, or The House of Refugee, a new centre opened by the Annunciation House to help the large flow of migrants being released by the United States Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement in El Paso, Texas

found to be in good condition, it said. Efforts to locate his family have so far been unsuccessful.

He is being taken care of at a centralized processing center and will be turned over to the

custody of the Department of Health and Human Services, the CBP said.

According to the CBP, border patrol agents apprehended 92,607 people along the southwest border in March, up from 66,884 in February.

Among those apprehended in March were 8,975 unaccompanied children.

President Donald Trump said Wednesday that the United States would send armed soldiers to the southern border after Mexican soldiers recently "pulled guns" on US troops, escalating his war of words with Mexico on immigration.

Trump also said on Twitter that "a very big Caravan of over 20,000 people" is making its way through Mexico toward the United States.

Instagram account reactivated, says Syria presidency

Damascus, Syria

The Syrian presidency said Wednesday it had regained access to its official Instagram account a day after it was apparently blocked.

In a statement posted on social networks including Instagram, the presidency said the account was "reactivated", but complained that "other national accounts" were still suspended without specifying the dates they were closed.

The presidency said Tuesday the move came without "prior warning or a logical justification".

YouTube had previously blocked the presidency's chan-

nel several times, it said.

The "deliberate" decision to close-down official government channels and accounts on social media networks is part of a "growing siege" imposed on Syria since the start of the country's war in 2011, the presidency said.

It said it believed further measures may follow as part of a so-called "soft war" being waged on the country, now that "the military conflict is receding".

Instagram did not immediately respond to requests for comment, but a spokesman said last week that compliance with US sanctions prompted the application to block the accounts of several Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

OUT FOR A STRIKE

Cricket is the only sport most of the Taliban fighters enjoy and it attracts hundreds of spectators from nearby villages



Afghan men play cricket on a field covered in snow on the outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan

Swapping Afghan cr

Reuters | Jalalabad, Afghanistan

During a lull in Afghanistan's never-ending war, before the fighting season resumes once again in the spring, Taliban fighters recall laying down their Kalashnikovs and, for a brief moment, enjoying a game of cricket.

The sport is the only one most of the fighters enjoy, commanders say, with matches attracting hundreds of spectators from Taliban-controlled villages when there is no fighting. They are also fans of the increasingly successful national team.

"I love cricket," said Mullah Badruddin, a Taliban commander in Khogyani district of Nangarhar, on the border with Pakistan, where a tournament organized by the militants at the start of last winter drew large crowds.

"When Afghanistan play against another team, we listen to the radio with great interest and we also check for scores in social media and follow those in Facebook who give live updates," he told Reuters by telephone.

First played in Afghanistan by British troops in the 19th Century, the game was adopted by Afghans in the refugee camps of cricket-loving Pakistan, where more than 3 million fled a Soviet invasion and civil war in the 1980s and 1990s, and has since made huge strides in the country, particularly among ethnic Pashtuns in the eastern border provinces.

Taj Malook Khan, who helped set up the Afghan Cricket Club in Kacha Gari refugee camp outside the Pakistani city of Peshawar in the 1980s, and a small group of players used to cross into Afghanistan during the 1990s Taliban era to play and promote cricket.

The Taliban had banned games such as cricket and football in the early years of their austere rule because they believed they kept



Afghan men play cricket on

First played in Afghanistan by British troops in the 19th Century, the game was adopted by Afghans in the refugee camps of cricket-loving Pakistan, where more than 3 million fled a Soviet invasion and civil war in the 1980s and 1990s, and has since made huge strides in the country, particularly among ethnic Pashtuns in the eastern border provinces.

Christina Atik began creating poignant illustrations after her mother made a comment about her sister's nose

Lebanese illustrator challenges views on



"This nose isn't nice for a girl" by Christina Atik

Reuters | Beirut

Lebanese artist Christina Atik has produced a series of digital pictures to illustrate sentences to criticize women with the aim of empowering women.

The project tackles issues of female freedom, beauty and sexuality in the traditional societies.

Atik, 27, said she conceived the project last year after her younger sister Maria faced criticism from their mother.

"She has a big nose and my mum always made fun of her saying 'when are you going to do an operation for your nose?', 'your nose is not nice for a girl,'" the graphic designer said.

"I decided to do a drawing for my sister to show her that her nose is beautiful and she doesn't have to listen to mum. And this worked, she did not do an operation for her nose."

The picture won praise from local art supporters and quickly turned into a series so far comprising seven illustrations.

Other illustrations read: "It's not nice for a

My sister has a big nose and my mum always made fun of her saying 'when are you going to do an operation for your nose?', 'your nose is not nice for a girl.' I decided to do a drawing for my sister to show her that her nose is beautiful and she doesn't have to listen to mum. And this worked, she did not do an operation for her nose."

CHRISTINA ATIK

girl to have (body) hair", "It's not nice for a girl to like another girl" or "It's not nice for a girl to live alone". They each became a sketch, digitally drawn by Atik in response to a comment.

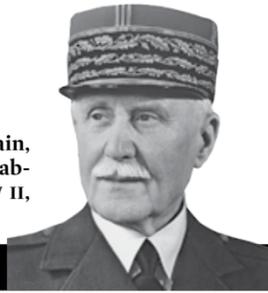
"I think it's very important

1478

Pazzi conspirators attack Lorenzo de' Medici and kill Giuliano de' Medici in Florence

1945

Marshal Henri Philippe Petain, leader of France's Vichy collaborationist regime during WW II, arrested for treason



1956

First modern container ship, the Ideal X, leaves Port Newark, New Jersey for Houston, Texas

1986

World's worst nuclear disaster: 4th reactor at Chernobyl nuclear power station in USSR explodes, 31 die, radioactive contamination reaches much of Western Europe

Kalashnikovs for bat and pads: Cricket, the Taliban and peace



Outskirts of Kabul

Afghanistan by British century, the game was in the refugee camps in Pakistan, where more Soviet invasion and 1990s, and has sides in the country, ethnic Pashtuns in the other provinces

men away from prayers, according to former national cricketer Hasti Gul, but later became more tolerant of cricket.

From there, despite at least two attacks in the past couple of years on cricket matches claimed by the ultra radical Islamic State group, the game now rivals football for popularity in a country that has long been cut off from international sport.

Star names

Admitted as a full member of the International Cricket Council in 2017, Afghanistan won its first five-day Test match against Ireland last month after making steady progress in the lower levels of the international game.

However it is in the dynamic, shorter form of the sport that Afghans have had most impact. Players such as spin bowler Rashid Khan or big hitting batsman Mohammad Nabi



When Afghanistan play against another team, we listen to the radio with great interest and we also check for scores in social media and follow those in Facebook who give live updates

MULLAH BADRUDDIN

Esakhil have become undisputed stars of the Indian Premier League (IPL), the razzle-dazzle showcase of so-called T20 cricket, the 12th season of which has just got under way.

Despite the Taliban's former suspicion of organized sports and their opposition to much of the transformation in Afghanistan since their hardline Islamic regime was toppled in 2001, many of the mainly Pashtun movement's fighters are fans.

Unlike football, which offends the sensibilities of some very conservative Muslims because it is normally played in shorts, cricket is played in long sleeves and trousers, in line with traditional dress codes. It also bears some resemblance to traditional Afghan children's games involving throwing and using sticks to hit smaller sticks or balls.

Karim Sadiq, a former batsman in the national team and an early pioneer of the sport who visited some Taliban-controlled areas in eastern Afghanistan this year, said he was mobbed by fighters asking about the game and their favorite players.

A video clip he shot on his mobile phone shows dozens of Taliban, many with Kalashnikov automatic rifles slung across their shoulders, dissecting the quality of the team. "I like all the players but my favorite is

Rashid Khan Arman," says one fighter, referring to the young spin bowler who stars for the Afghan national side and IPL's Sunrisers Hyderabad. "His bowling is amazing."

World cup dream

With the approach of the cricket World Cup in England and Wales from May to July, Afghanistan's hopes of making a dent in the tournament are higher than they have ever been, even if few give them a chance against giants of the game such as India, Australia or England. "We have a very strong team and my dream is Afghanistan bring the World Cup home," said Hazrat Gul, a young cricketer in the eastern city of Jalalabad, as he prepared to play a friendly match against a team from neighboring Kunar province.

As peace talks between the U.S. government and Taliban officials continue and Afghanistan looks for a way out of 40 years of conflict, excitement is building and officials and government ministers lavish praise on the players, whom President Ashraf Ghani has called national heroes.

From the other side of the war, the feeling is similar. Sadiq who has just returned to practice after a long injury, aiming to take part in the upcoming World Cup, said the Taliban usually send them congratulatory messages through social media and on his cellphone when Afghanistan win.

Such broad appeal has seen the sport widely hailed as a unifying force in Afghanistan, a patchwork of different languages and cultures, sometimes at peace with each other but increasingly in recent years in conflict.

Ethnic divides

Not everyone is on board the cricket bandwagon, however.

Look deeper, and the state of the game has

much to say about a country where sport has repeatedly attracted violence, including suicide attacks on cricket and wrestling matches, and where politics is increasingly divided along ethnic lines that shade into all aspects of life.

For many Persian-speaking Tajiks and Hazaras, cricket is a sport for Pashtuns, the dominant ethnic group from the south and east of the country that has provided almost all kings and presidents throughout Afghan history.

"I have no interest and don't know anything about cricket," said Ahmad Jawad, a shopkeeper in Parwan, a mainly Tajik province north of Kabul. "It's a Pashtun game with Pashtun players, so let them enjoy their game."

After the Taliban fell following the U.S.-led campaign of 2001, Sadiq and Gul - brothers who, like many teammates, learned their cricket in Pakistan - and other players struggled to convince Tajik commanders from the victorious Northern Alliance that swept into Kabul to allow them to continue playing the game.

"Palace officials told us to join Afghan guard units and forget about cricket," said Gul, who recalled having to cancel a provincial tournament in Kabul in 2005 after losing a fistfight with soccer players who wanted to use the pitch.

Now, with the IPL beamed into homes all over the country and the looming World Cup, he feels change is coming and the sport can give Afghanistan a platform no other can equal, one that offers hope for a more normal future after so many years of war.

"We literally had no support from the government for so many years before they have realized we could bring glory to our country," he said. "Now everyone loves cricket and we are so proud to raise our national flag on the world stage."

of women through art

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about such subjects, so maybe we can break them or stop them or have the courage to say 'no, I won't do my nose operation' or 'no, I want to leave the house' or else," Atik said.

The illustrations, shared across the internet, have gathered lots of reactions and shares. They have also increased Atik's followers on one social media platform to 6,000.

International Women's Day

"I hadn't at all expected people to share them that much, and women have started to send me things they hear from their families and societies around them. Women from many countries... were touched by the illustrations I did, so that was something really nice," she said.

Atik said she celebrates International Women's Day on March 8 every year by partying with friends.

"I think we have a long way to go in Lebanon and in the whole world (on women's rights) but I think we're getting there, little by little," she said.

Atik, who lives in Beirut, created several illustrations as a way to "let out suppressed feelings" around what is expected of women in a traditional society. The result was an emotive comment on the way society can dictate how women should or shouldn't behave, which has resounded with audiences around the world



Lebanese artist Christina Atik works on her illustration, at her apartment in Beirut, Lebanon

business

Bank of Japan cuts inflation, economic growth forecasts

Tokyo, Japan

Japan will fail to hit its two percent inflation target even by 2022, the central bank predicted yesterday as it also revised down its estimate for growth in the world's third-largest economy.

In its closely watched quarterly report, the Bank of Japan forecast inflation of 1.6 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2022, meaning its years-long battle to reignite prices is far from won.

The BoJ lowered its inflation forecast for the year to March 2021 to 1.3 percent from 1.4 percent.

Japanese inflation currently stands below one percent, less than halfway to target, despite six years of aggressive monetary stimulus under BoJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda.

Russia firm to take over Syria port for 49 years: Damascus

Damascus, Syria

A Russian firm is to take over Syria's largest port for 49 years and invest \$500 million in expanding it, the transport minister in Damascus said yesterday.

A deal would be signed for the "management, expansion and operation" of Tartous port with Russian company Stroytransgaz, Transport Minister Ali Hammoud was quoted as telling pro-government newspaper Al-Watan.

"The length of the contract -- 49 years -- was decided after a feasibility study" so both sides could reap benefits, it said.

Russia has been a key ally of President Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria's eight-year civil war, providing it with crucial military backing.

The minister on Tuesday told Syrian state television that the port, which started operating in the 1960s, was not deep enough to allow heavy ships to dock.

"Tartous is an old port whose docks range between four and 13 metres (13 and 43 feet) deep," he said.

The current facilities are not suitable for ships heavier than 30-35 tonnes and "we needed to try to ensure very deep docks to accommodate cargoes of up to 100 tonnes."

The expansion works are expected to increase the eastern Mediterranean port's capacity from 4 million to 38 million tonnes a year, Hammoud said.

Oil nears six-month highs

Brent North Sea crude for delivery in June jumped to \$75.60 per barrel

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Oil prices closed in on six-month highs yesterday amid supply concerns stoked by the United States tightening the screws on sanctions-hit Iran.

Stock markets meanwhile mostly dropped, with European traders digesting news of the collapse of two mega-mergers in the supermarket and banking industries.

Wall Street meanwhile opened mixed amid a raft of US corporate giants releasing earnings reports, including positive news from Microsoft and Facebook.

"Brent crude oil has rallied above \$75 a barrel for the first time this year on the back of tighter sanctions on Iran, while gains in West Texas Intermediate (WTI) have been curtailed by a surge in US supply," noted Dean Popplewell, markets analyst at Oanda trading group.

Brent North Sea crude for delivery in June jumped to \$75.60 per barrel, the highest level since the end of October, before falling back slightly.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) prices reached \$66.28 per barrel -- just 0.03 cents away from its own six-month high -- before it dropped.

The US removal this week of waivers that allowed countries to buy oil from sanctions-hit Iran is expected to hit supplies,



Traders work after the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange

Key figures around 1340 GMT

Oil - Brent Crude:	▲ 35 cents at \$74.92 per barrel
Oil - West Texas Inter:	▼ 14 cents at \$65.74 per barrel
London - FTSE 100:	▼ 0.8pc at 7,413.79 points
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▼ 0.4pc at 12,265.62
Paris - CAC 40:	▼ 0.5pc at 5,546.29
EURO STOXX 50:	▼ 0.6pc at 3,482.60
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 0.5pc at 22,307.58 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▼ 0.9pc at 29,549.80 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▼ 2.4pc at 3,123.83 (close)
New York - Dow:	▼ 0.8pc at 26,378.16
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.1141 from \$1.1156 at 2200 GMT
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.2893 from \$1.2902
Dollar/yen:	▼ at 111.70 yen from 112.13 yen

though analysts are keeping watch on the region and whether OPEC responds by opening up the taps.

Oil prices had already enjoyed a strong recovery this year, with output capped by Russia and the OPEC cartel as well as unrest in Venezuela and Libya.

Oil kingpin Saudi Arabia on Wednesday said it had no immediate plans to raise oil output to offset the move by Washington.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called the end of oil sanction waivers by the US a "hostile measure" that "won't be left without a response".

Mergers collapse

In the stock markets, Asian equities stuttered after New York indices retreated Wednesday from record highs, with weak economic data around the world offsetting a forecast-beating earnings season.

While the mood on trading floors remains broadly positive after a blockbuster start to the year, there are lingering concerns that growth in most parts of the world is well off the pace of the United States.

There was further negativity in Asia, with South Korea on Thursday reporting its biggest quarterly contraction since late 2008. The 0.3pc drop was also its first fall since the last three months of 2017.

The data comes after investors have been on a buying spree for much of the year, fuelled by optimism that China and the US will hammer out a deal to end their trade war, as well as central bank dovishness.

Shanghai was the main loser Thursday, ending down 2.4pc on concerns the Chinese government could ease up on a recent run of mini stimulus measures that have supported the economy and equities.

European stock markets were solidly down, with shares in Deutsche Bank flattened and Commerzbank dropping 2.7pc after Germany's two biggest lenders ended merger talks.

British supermarket Sainsbury's meanwhile slid 4.4pc after the UK's competition watchdog blocked its proposed merger with Walmart-owned Asda.

In foreign exchange news, the euro dropped to \$1.1118, its lowest level since June 2017, before rebounding slightly.

"The euro is cheap, dragged down by weak growth, political uncertainty and two-year bond yields that are even lower than Japan's," said Kit Juckes, macro strategist at French bank Societe Generale.

Gulf Air unveils plans for Indian market



Gulf air officials and guests during a gala dinner held in New Delhi

TDT | Manama

Gulf Air, the national carrier of Bahrain, earlier this month conducted a visit to India unveiling a series of commercial dynamic plans for the Indian markets.

A gala dinner was held in New Delhi and attended by some of

India's top travel agency owners and directors as well as Abdulrahman Mohamed Al Gaoud, Bahrain's Ambassador to India and members of Bahrain's diplomatic mission in New Delhi as well as Indian government officials, media representatives and Gulf Air commercial teams from Bahrain and India stations.

Commenting, Gulf Air Chief Commercial Officer Vincent Coste said, "Gulf Air's relationship with India is longstanding -- dating back to our first flight to Mumbai in 1960. India remains a strategic and a key market for the airline."

"We are here to showcase our

5-year plan and new strategy and also to deepen the airline's partnerships with our stakeholders".

Gulf Air currently operating 75 weekly flights to eight destinations in India: Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin, Hyderabad, Calicut and Bangalore.

Biden asked Obama 'not to endorse' him for president

Washington, United States

Former US vice president Joe Biden, who launched his White House bid yesterday, said he asked old boss Barack Obama not to endorse him because Democrats should try to win the nomination on their own merits.

Shortly after Biden's announcement, a source familiar with Obama's thinking said he was "unlikely" to endorse this early, noting that the 44th president believed the robust primary debate in the run-up to 2008 had shaped him into a better candidate.

"I asked president Obama not to endorse," Biden told reporters in Wilmington, Delaware, adding: "Whoever wins this nomination should win it on its own merits."

Biden is the latest of 20 candidates seeking the Democratic nomination.

Tesla hit with big loss as car deliveries sputter

New York, United States

Electric carmaker Tesla on Wednesday announced a heavy loss in the first quarter as car deliveries sputtered overseas and a US tax credit that made its prices more attractive was reduced.

The California-based company reported a loss of \$702 million in the first three months of this year after two consecutive quarters of profit. Tesla produced about 63,000

Model 3 vehicles in the period, an increase of three percent from the same quarter a year earlier but fewer than had been anticipated.

The company attributed its disappointing financial results to Model 3 shipping delays, particularly in Europe and China.

Overall company revenue in the period rose 33 percent to \$4.5 billion in a year-over-year comparison, but fell far short of Wall Street forecasts.

Boeing says suffering \$1 bn hit from 737 crisis

New York, United States

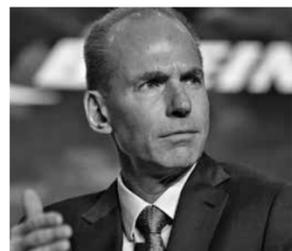
Aviation giant Boeing has suffered a \$1 billion hit to its bottom line amid the crisis over its 737 MAX aircraft, grounded worldwide after two deadly crashes, the company said Wednesday.

In its first quarterly earnings report since entering crisis mode, Boeing also withdrew its 2019 profit forecast due to continued uncertainty about when the grounded jets will return to the skies.

Boeing has been under scrutiny since the March 10 crash of an Ethiopian Airlines jet, which along with an October Lion Air crash, claimed 346 lives.

Regulators grounded the plane worldwide following the second crash, a move that also forced the company to halt new deliveries of its most-ordered plane, denting revenues.

Asked pointedly during a conference call with analysts for an explanation of what happened, the executives defended Boeing's design and



Chief Executive Dennis Muilenburg

engineering practices despite negative news exposes criticizing the company's operations and commitment to safety.

"I can tell you with confidence that we understand our airplane, we understand how the design was accomplished, how the certification was accomplished and we remain fully confident in the product that we put in the field," Chief Executive Dennis Muilenburg said in a conference call with analysts.

"There was no surprise, or gap or unknown here, or something that somehow slipped through a certification process."

Microsoft surges toward trillion-dollar value as profits rise



Satya Nadella

Washington, United States

Microsoft said profits climbed in the past quarter on its cloud and business services as the US technology giant saw its market value close in on the trillion-dollar mark.

Profits in the quarter to March 31 rose 19 per cent to \$8.8 billion on revenues of \$30.8 billion, an increase of 14 percent from the same period a year earlier.

In third quarter, Microsoft showed its reliance on cloud computing and other business services which now drive its earnings, in contrast to when it focused on consumer PC software.

"Leading organizations of every size in every industry trust the Microsoft cloud," chief executive Satya Nadella said in a statement.

Commercial cloud revenue rose 41pc from a year ago to \$9.6 billion, which now makes up nearly a third of sales, Microsoft said.

Some \$10.2bn in revenue came from the "productivity and business services" unit which includes its Office software suite for both consumers and enterprises, and the LinkedIn professional social network.

The "more personal computing" unit which includes its Windows software, Surface devices and gaming operations generated \$10.6 billion in the quarter.

Maruti Suzuki India to phase out diesel cars

Reuters | New Delhi/Bengaluru

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd said yesterday it would stop making all diesel cars beginning April next year and forecast a weak rate of growth for the current fiscal year, blaming uncertain fuel prices and the onset of stricter emission norms.

Carmakers will need to invest in upgrading their technology, including for diesel cars, to meet India's stricter emission norms that come into effect next year.

"From April 1, we will have no diesel car on sale. Depending on how customers react... if we find there is a market for diesel cars (after the new emission norms kick in) we will develop it in a reasonable amount of time," Chairman R. C. Bhargava told reporters at a press conference in New Delhi.

From April 1, we will have no diesel car on sale. Depending on how customers react... if we find there is a market for diesel cars (after the new emission norms kick in) we will develop it in a reasonable amount of time

CHAIRMAN R. C. BHARGAVA

The country's biggest automaker, majority owned by Japan's Suzuki Motor Corp, said it expected production and sales to grow between 4 percent and 8 percent for the financial year started in April.

Last year, the company targeted a 10 per cent rate of growth for sales but actual sales grew by just 6.1pc, the company said in a statement.

While Maruti Suzuki's growth forecast is in sync with the broader industry outlook, high levels of discounting by Maruti had resulted in "disappointing" quarterly margins, said analyst Ashutosh Tiwari of Equirus Securities in Mumbai.

"It looks like the (margin) trend will continue this year," Tiwari said.

Maruti Suzuki saw fourth-quarter EBITDA margins falling to 10.8pc from about 12.5pc in the same quarter last year. EBITDA margins for the year fell to 14pc from 15.9pc year ago.

The carmaker said it sold 458,479 vehicles in the three months ended March 31, down 0.7pc.



Batelco, a leading digital solutions provider in Bahrain, hosted a lunch gathering for members of the media recently at Batelco Headquarters, Hamala. The lunch was hosted by Batelco to extend their appreciation to the media for the vital role they play in all sectors in the Kingdom

Japan court grants Carlos Ghosn \$4.5 million bail

● Ghosn has already been granted bail once, posting \$9 million and vowing not to leave Japan

● Last time he left the detention centre in northern Tokyo, he was dressed in a cap, face mask and workman's uniform

Tokyo, Japan

A Japanese court granted Carlos Ghosn bail Thursday, meaning the former Nissan boss could soon walk out of his Tokyo detention centre to prepare his defence against multiple charges of financial misconduct.

The Tokyo District Court set bail at 500 million yen (\$4.5 million) as the 65-year-old auto sector titan faces four charges ranging from concealing part of his salary from shareholders to syphoning off Nissan funds for his personal use.

Prosecutors quickly appealed the court's decision, delaying his immediate release but public broadcaster NHK said he could walk out of his detention centre "as early as Thursday".



Former Nissan Chairman Carlos Ghosn (2nd L) and his wife Carole (2nd R) leave the office of his lawyer Junichiro Hironaka in Tokyo

The court temporarily suspended the bail process as it considered the appeal.

According to conditions set by the court, Ghosn cannot leave Japan and is subject to other restrictions to prevent him from attempting to flee or destroy evidence relating to the case.

Ghosn denies all the charges, with a spokesperson for the

executive saying on Monday he would "vigorously defend himself against these baseless accusations and fully expects to be vindicated".

The spokesperson said Ghosn was being detained "under cruel and unjust conditions, in violation of his human rights, in an effort by prosecutors to coerce a confession from him".

On Monday, he was hit with what experts have described as the most serious charges yet as prosecutors accused him of syphoning off \$5 million of Nissan cash transferred from the company to a dealership in Oman.

He also faces two charges of deferring some \$80 million of his salary and hiding this in official documents to shareholders,

and seeking to shift personal investment losses to the firm during the 2008 financial crisis.

A Nissan spokesman said in a statement that the company's "internal investigation has uncovered substantial evidence of blatantly unethical conduct".

"Further discoveries related to Ghosn's misconduct continue to emerge," he added.

Ghosn has already been granted bail once, posting \$9 million and vowing not to leave Japan and to live in a small court-appointed apartment in central Tokyo -- a far cry from his former luxury suite.

Last time he left the detention centre in northern Tokyo, he was dressed in a cap, face mask and workman's uniform in an apparent attempt to evade dozens of journalists from around the world hoping to snap a picture of the fallen tycoon.

The bizarre stunt was cooked up by one of his lawyers, Takashi Takano, who later apologised for "tainting" the reputation of his client who usually appears in public in sharp suits.

'Tell the truth'

Ghosn was preparing to hold a much-anticipated news conference to "tell the truth" about his case but he was re-arrested shortly beforehand to face questioning about the alleged \$5

million embezzlement.

Clearly aware he was about to return to custody, Ghosn pre-recorded a video in which he attacked "backstabbing" Nissan executives of a "plot" against him, as they feared closer ties with French partner Renault.

Japanese media reported on Tuesday that the French firm had offered a "management integration proposal" to Nissan, which was poised to reject it as they believe it does not provide equality to the Japanese company.

Unless re-arrested over further allegations, Ghosn will be free to organise his defence ahead of a possible trial that is likely to take months to prepare.

Ghosn's lead lawyer Junichiro Hironaka has told reporters that a trial as early as the autumn was "not possible for various reasons".

His lawyers have demanded he be tried separately from Nissan, which also faces charges for submitting the suspect financial documents, and have voiced fears he will not receive a fair trial.

The dramatic case has thrown the international spotlight on the Japanese justice system, derided by critics as "hostage justice" as it allows prolonged detention and relies heavily on suspects' confessions.

5G competition, delays drop Nokia into deeper losses

Helsinki, Finland

Intensifying competition and delays in rolling out 5G equipment for the next generation of mobile phone networks pushed Nokia deeper into the red in the first quarter, the company said yesterday.

Net losses more than doubled from the same period last year to hit 446 million euros (\$497 million), and compared to a 193 million euros profit in the final three months of last year.

Chief executive Rajeev Suri acknowledged that the quarter was weak for the Finnish firm, which is widely seen as trailing China's Huawei and Sweden's Ericsson in the race to supply operators with the equipment needed to build next-generation 5G networks.

"We expected that it would be, and the outcome has not changed our perspective on the full year," added Suri.

"5G revenues are expected to grow sharply, particularly in the second half of the year,



Chief executive Rajeev Suri

driven by our 36 commercial wins to date," he added.

Nokia said it delayed booking 200 million euros in revenues it had expected in the first quarter.

Nevertheless sales edged up two percent to 5.0 billion euros in the three months period.

Analyst Mikael Rautanen at Inderes, a Nordic investor research firm, said the results "were below expectations, especially if you compare them to Ericsson and Huawei, which made a solid start to the year."

He also noted that increased competition was pushing down operating margins.

Nintendo says full-year profit up nearly 40pc on game sales

Tokyo, Japan

Nintendo said yesterday its full-year net profit jumped nearly 40 per cent, lifted by strong sales of blockbuster game titles for its popular Switch console.

The Kyoto-based games giant said "Pokemon" and "Super Smash Bros" gave an extra boost for the year as its shares surged on expectations of its launch of Switch games in China.

Nintendo's net profit for the fiscal year to March rose 39.0 percent from a year earlier to 194 billion yen (\$1.7 billion), on sales of 1.2 trillion yen, up 13.7pc.

"The results for this fiscal year showed strong software



sales for Nintendo Switch, which contributed to the expansion of hardware sales," the firm said in a statement.

In particular, "Super Smash Bros. Ultimate" recorded sales of nearly 14 million units, while "Pokemon Let's Go, Pikachu!" and "Pokemon Let's Go, Eevee!" sold more than 10 million units, it said.

For the current fiscal year to March next year, Nintendo forecasts its bottom-line profit would decline by 7.2 per cent but set a higher sales target.

Banks lift Saudi market

● Dubai Investments slumps after trading ex-dividend

● Takaful Emarat slides on acquisition withdrawal

● Riyadh Bank continues to gain on strong Q1 results

Reuters

Dubai's stock market fell yesterday, pressured by Dubai Investments trading ex-dividend, while banks lifted the Saudi index.

Dubai's index dropped 0.5 per cent, with Dubai Investments plunging 9.8pc to its biggest one-day loss since August 2015, as the stock went ex-dividend.

Takaful Emarat Insurance was down 1.3pc after it said it will no longer proceed with the proposed acquisition of Al Hilal Takaful.

Dubai Entertainment inched up 0.4pc after shareholders voted to discontinue its Six Flags theme park project and approved a plan for business

Market indices	
	Value
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES	15,591.79
PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	5,269.68
CEMENT	4,310.57
UTILITIES	9,946.87
TEXTILES & APPAREL	7,174.47
AGRICULTURE & FOOD INDUSTRIES	8,284.55
TELECOMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	1,603.16
REAL ESTATE	1,298.90
CONSUMER SERVICES	2,739.29
INVESTMENT	6,153.02
CONSTRUCTION	1,980.79

A trader watching stock movement on the floor of Saudi Stock Exchange

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.4pc to 9,276 pts
ABU DHABI	▼ 0.1pc to 5,392 pts
DUBAI	▼ 0.5pc to 2,787 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.1pc to 10,451 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.3pc to 1,442 pts
OMAN	▼ 0.3pc to 3,940 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 0.5pc to 6,137 pts

continuity.

The Saudi index rose 0.4pc, with Riyadh Bank climbing 4.5pc to its highest level since May 2006. On Monday, the lender

posted a 22pc rise in first-quarter profit driven by higher special commission income and fees.

Alawwal Bank gained 2pc. The lender called for a shareholder meeting on May 15 to approve a merger offer from Saudi British Bank. Saudi British Bank was up 1.3pc.

Qatar's blue-chip index edged down 0.1pc as market heavyweight Industries Qatar closed 0.8pc lower for the third straight session. On Monday, the company posted first-quarter net profit that almost halved, pressured by weak demand for

its products and constraints on pricing.

United Development Company lost 1.6pc after reporting a lower first-quarter net profit.

The Abu Dhabi index dipped 0.1pc, as energy company Dana Gas fell 6.6pc after the stock went ex-dividend.

The Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange said Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB) will start trading on May 1 after its merger with Union National Bank (UNB), while UNB will cease trading post April 30. ADCB was up 0.8pc and UNB added 1.6pc.

Britain's deficit hits 17-year low

London, United Kingdom

Britain's deficit improved last year to reach its lowest level for 17 years on bumper tax revenues and lingering state austerity, official data showed Wednesday.

Public sector net borrowing stood at £24.7 billion (\$32 billion, 28.6 billion euros) in the year to March, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

That contrasted with £41.8 billion in the previous financial year.

The deficit -- the UK government's net borrowing over 12 months through to the end of March -- was meanwhile only 1.2 per cent of the country's annual gross domestic product, or everything that it produced.

This was down from a huge 9.9pc at the height of the global financial crisis almost a decade earlier after which the UK econ-

omy suffered from years of state austerity.

Analysts said the low deficit gave the Treasury led by Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond breathing space in the event of either a smooth or hard Brexit.

"Another fall in the budget deficit to just 1.2pc of GDP in 2018/19 puts the public finances on a sustainable footing and gives the chancellor room to provide a 'deal dividend' if there is a Brexit deal or to support the

economy if the UK leaves the EU without a deal," noted the Capital Economics research group.

Britain will have a £26.6-billion war chest to battle the potential damage of its exit from the European Union, a government oversight body announced in March.

Or the money could be used to help improve current sluggish British economic growth should the UK depart with a deal struck between London and Brussels.

Rich nations must help workers adapt to automation: OECD

Berlin, Germany

Robots and computers threaten 14 per cent of existing jobs over the next 20 years, so countries must retrain workers for a transformed labour market, the OECD warned yesterday.

In a report published in Berlin, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates that in addition to the destruction of jobs and entire trades, an additional 32 per cent of current jobs are likely to be "deeply transformed" by automation in the work place.

According to OECD General Secretary Angel Gurría, the lack of preparation for the looming digital age is a time bomb on social and political levels.

"It is important that people feel that they will be supported if they lose out, and helped in their search for new and better opportunities," he said in a foreword to the report.

Already, "people and communities have been left behind by globalisation and a digital divide persists," Gurría added, pointing to "inequalities along age, gender, and socio-economic lines".

Many of those who have lost out "are stuck in precarious

It is important that people feel that they will be supported if they lose out, and helped in their search for new and better opportunities

ANGEL GURRIA
OECD GENERAL SECRETARY



working arrangements with little pay and limited or no access to social protection, lifelong learning and collective bargaining," he noted.

The OECD's researchers found 56 per cent of adults in the 36 OECD member countries -- among them economic giants like the United States, Japan or

Germany -- have only "basic" or non-existent information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

As a priority, the OECD recommends that member countries, also including Canada, Chile or Britain, offer "more flexible" retraining compatible with employees' working hours to make

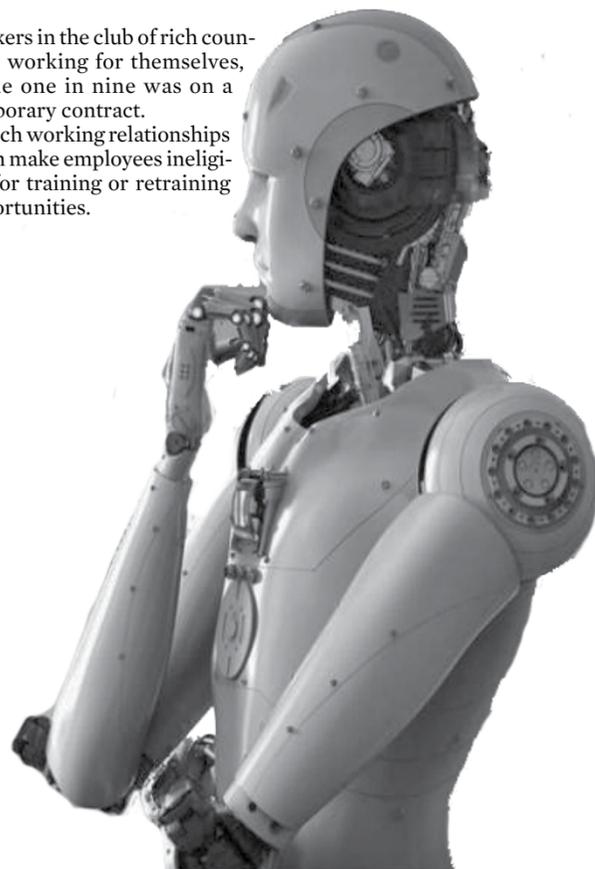
it more attractive.

While some governments such as that in France offer financial support for lifelong learning, firms especially in the US are often reluctant to invest in their staff's skills.

The OECD also highlighted a growing trend towards self-employment, with one in seven

workers in the club of rich countries working for themselves, while one in nine was on a temporary contract.

Such working relationships often make employees ineligible for training or retraining opportunities.



SHOW

OASIS JUFFAIR

- 1-AVENGERS: ENDGAME (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW**
 Ⓞ BRIE LARSON, ROBERT DOWNEY JR., KAREN GILLAN
 DAILY AT (ATMOS): (9.15 AM WED/THURS/FRI/SAT) + 12.45 + 4.15 + 7.45 + 11.15 PM
 DAILY AT (3D): 11.45 AM + 3.15 + 6.45 + 10.15 PM
 DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 12.45 + 2.45 + 4.15 + 6.15 + 7.45 + 9.45 + 11.15 PM + (1.15 AM WED/THURS/FRI)
 DAILY AT (VIP): 12.15 + 3.45 + 7.15 + 10.45 PM
- 2-ATHIRAN (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ FAHADH FAZIL, SAI PALLAVI, ATUL KULKARNI
 FROM WEDNESDAY 24TH 7.30 PM ONWARDS
 DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM
- 3-ORU YAMANDAN PREMA KATHA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ DULQUER SALMAN, SOUBIN SAHIR, SAMYUKTHA MENON
 FROM THURSDAY 25TH ONWARDS
 DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 2.00 + 5.15 + 8.30 + 11.45 PM
- 4-KALANK (PG-15) (HINDI/ROMANTIC/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT
 DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.30 + 4.45 + 8.00 + 11.15 PM
- 5-DUMBO (PG) (ADVENTURE/DRAMA/FAMILY)**
 Ⓞ COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
 DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 10.30 AM + 4.45 + 9.00 PM
- 6-MISSING LINK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**
 Ⓞ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS
 DAILY AT (KIDS CINEMA): 12.45 + 2.45 + 7.00 + 11.15 PM
- 7-MERA NAAM SHAJI (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)**
 Ⓞ ASIF ALI, BIJU MENON, BAIJU
 DAILY AT: 12.00 + 5.30 + 11.00 PM
- 8-JERSEY (PG-15) (TELUGU)**
 Ⓞ NANI, SHARDAH, SREENATH, SATHYARAJ
 DAILY AT: 2.30 + 8.00 PM

CITYCENTRE

(CITYCENTRE CINEMA SHALL REMAIN OPEN 24 HOURS ON WED/THURS/FRI.)

- 1-AVENGERS: ENDGAME (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW**
 Ⓞ BRIE LARSON, ROBERT DOWNEY JR., KAREN GILLAN
 DAILY AT (ATMOS): 10.00 AM + 1.30 + 5.00 + 8.30 PM + 12.00 MN
 DAILY AT (IMAX 3D): 12.30 + 4.00 + 7.30 + 11.00 PM
 DAILY AT (VIP I): 1.15 + 4.45 + 8.15 + 11.45 PM
 DAILY AT (VIP II): 12.15 + 3.45 + 7.15 + 10.45 PM
 DAILY AT: 10.00 AM + 10.30 + 12.00 + 1.30 + 2.00 + 3.30 + 5.00 + 5.30 + 7.00 + 8.30 + 9.00 + 10.30 PM + 12.00 MN + (12.30 MN WED/THURS/FRI)
- 2-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)**
 Ⓞ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
 DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM + (12.30 MN WED/THURS/FRI)
- 3-KALANK (PG-15) (HINDI/ROMANTIC/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT
 DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM
- 4-THE CURSE OF LA LLORONA (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**
 Ⓞ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ
 DAILY AT: 12.00 + 2.00 + 4.00 + 6.00 + 8.00 + 10.00 PM + 12.00 MN
- 5-DUMBO (PG) (ADVENTURE/DRAMA/FAMILY)**
 Ⓞ COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
 DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM



- 6-MISSING LINK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**
 Ⓞ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS
 DAILY AT: 12.15 + 4.45 + 9.15 PM
- 7-CAPTAIN MARVEL (PG-13) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)**
 Ⓞ BRIE LARSON, GEMMA CHAN, SAMUEL L. JACKSON
 DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 PM + 12.00 MN
- 8-LITTLE (PG-15) (COMEDY)**
 Ⓞ REGINA HALL, ISSA RAE, MARSAI MARTIN
 DAILY AT: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM
- 9-HELLBOY (18+) (ACTION/ADVENTURE/FANTASY)**
 Ⓞ DAVID HARBOUR, MILLA JOVOVICH, AND IAN MCSHANE
 DAILY AT: 2.00 + 6.45 + 11.30 PM
- 10-STOCKHOLM (PG-15) (COMEDY/CRIME/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ ETHAN HAWKE, NOOMI RAPACE, MARK STRONG
 DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 3.30 + 7.45 PM + 12.00 MN
- 11-WONDER PARK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**
 Ⓞ BRIANNA DENSKI, JENNIFER GARNER, KEN HUDSON CAMPBELL
 DAILY AT: 11.00 AM + 3.00 + 7.00 PM
 DAILY AT (ARABIC DUBBED): 1.00 + 5.00 PM
- 12-ESCAPE ROOM (PG-15) (THRILLER)**
 Ⓞ TAYLOR RUSSELL, LOGAN MILLER, DEBORAH ANN WOLL
 DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 1.30 + 3.30 + 5.30 + 7.30 + 9.30 + 11.30 PM
- 13-NADI ELREGAL EL SERI (PG-15) (ARABIC/COMEDY)**
 Ⓞ KARIM ABDULAZIZ, GHADA ADEL, MAJDE ALKIDDAWI
 DAILY AT: 1.15 + 5.30 + 9.45 + 11.30 PM
- 14-THE UPSIDE (PG-15) (COMEDY/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ KEVIN HART, BRYAN CRANSTON, NICOLE KIDMAN
 DAILY AT: 2.15 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM
- 15-COLD PURSUIT (15+) (ACTION/CRIME/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ LIAM NEESON, EMMY ROSSUM, LAURA DERN
 DAILY AT: 1.45 + 6.45 + 11.45 PM
- 16-US (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**
 Ⓞ LUPITA NYONG'O, ELISABETH MOSS, ANNA DIOP

- DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 4.30 + 9.15 PM
- 17-GLASS (PG-15) (THRILLER)**
 Ⓞ JAMES MCAVOY, BRUCE WILLIS, SAMUEL L. JACKSON
 DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 4.15 + 9.15 PM

SEEF (II)

- 1-AVENGERS: ENDGAME (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW**
 Ⓞ BRIE LARSON, ROBERT DOWNEY JR., KAREN GILLAN
 DAILY AT: 12.00 + 1.00 + 3.30 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 8.00 + 10.30 + 11.30 PM
 DAILY AT (3D): 10.45 AM + 2.15 + 5.45 + 9.15 + (12.45 MN WED/THURS/FRI)
- 2-STRIKE (PG) (MUNGO) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY) NEW**
 Ⓞ KEN STOTT, LIZZIE WATERWORTH, ALEX KELLY
 DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.15 + 3.15 + 5.15 PM
- 3-LAYL KHARIJI () (ARABIC/DRAMA) NEW**
 Ⓞ KARIM QASSIM, SHARIF DOUSOUKI, MONA HALA
 DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 3.00 + 7.15 + 11.30 PM
- 4-BOAR (18+) (HORROR) NEW**
 Ⓞ NATHAN JONES, BILL MOSELEY, JOHN JARRATT
 FROM WEDNESDAY 24TH 8.00 PM ONWARDS
 DAILY AT: 7.15 + 9.15 + 11.15 PM
- 5-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)**
 Ⓞ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
 DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 PM + 12.00 MN
- 6-KALANK (PG-15) (HINDI/ROMANTIC/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT
 DAILY AT: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM
- 7-THE CURSE OF LA LLORONA (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**
 Ⓞ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ
 DAILY AT: 5.30 + 7.30 + 9.30 + 11.30 PM
- 8-DUMBO (PG) (ADVENTURE/DRAMA/FAMILY)**
 Ⓞ COLIN FARRELL, MICHAEL KEATON, DANNY DEVITO
 DAILY AT: 11.45 AM + 2.00 + 4.15 + 6.30 + 8.45 + 11.00 PM

- 9-MISSING LINK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**
 Ⓞ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS
 DAILY AT: 1.00 + 5.15 + 9.30 PM
- 10-CAPTAIN MARVEL (PG-13) (ACTION/ADVENTURE)**
 Ⓞ BRIE LARSON, GEMMA CHAN, SAMUEL L. JACKSON
 DAILY AT: 12.00 + 4.30 + 9.00 PM
- 11-STOCKHOLM (PG-15) (COMEDY/CRIME/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ ETHAN HAWKE, NOOMI RAPACE, MARK STRONG
 DAILY AT: 2.30 + 7.00 + 11.30 PM
- 12-MASHA AND THE BEAR THE NEW ADVENTURES (G) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**
 DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.15 + 2.00 + 3.45 PM

SEEF (I)

- 1-AVENGERS: ENDGAME (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW**
 Ⓞ BRIE LARSON, ROBERT DOWNEY JR., KAREN GILLAN
 DAILY AT: 10.00 AM + 12.30 + 1.30 + 4.00 + 5.00 + 7.30 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM + 12.00 MN
- 2-ATHIRAN (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ FAHADH FAZIL, SAI PALLAVI, ATUL KULKARNI
 FROM WEDNESDAY 24TH 7.30 PM ONWARDS
 DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM
- 3-ORU YAMANDAN PREMA KATHA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ DULQUER SALMAN, SOUBIN SAHIR, SAMYUKTHA MENON
 FROM THURSDAY 25TH
 DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM
- 4-MADHURA RAJA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)**
 Ⓞ MAMMOOTTY, JAI, ANUSREE, SALIM KUMAR, RAMESH PISHARODY
 DAILY AT: 12.00 + 5.45 + 11.30 PM
- 5-MERA NAAM SHAJI (PG-15) (MALAYALAM)**



- Ⓞ ASIF ALI, BIJU MENON, BAIJU
 DAILY AT: 3.00 + 8.45 PM

SAAR

- 1-AVENGERS: ENDGAME (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW**
 Ⓞ BRIE LARSON, ROBERT DOWNEY JR., KAREN GILLAN
 DAILY AT: 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 1.45 + 4.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 8.45 + (11.00 PM WED/THURS/FRI)
- 2-ATHIRAN (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ FAHADH FAZIL, SAI PALLAVI, ATUL KULKARNI
 FROM WEDNESDAY 24TH 7.30 PM ONWARDS
 DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 2.00 + 8.00 PM
- 3-ORU YAMANDAN PREMA KATHA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ DULQUER SALMAN, SOUBIN SAHIR, SAMYUKTHA MENON
 FROM THURSDAY 25TH
 DAILY AT: 4.45 + (10.45 PM THURS/FRI)
- 4-KALANK (PG-15) (HINDI/ROMANTIC/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT
 DAILY AT: 2.45 + 8.00 PM
- 5-THE CURSE OF LA LLORONA (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**
 Ⓞ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ
 DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 12.45 + 6.00 + (11.15 PM WED/THURS/FRI)

AL HAMRA

- 1-ATHIRAN (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ FAHADH FAZIL, SAI PALLAVI, ATUL KULKARNI
 FROM WEDNESDAY 24TH 7.30 PM ONWARDS
 DAILY AT: 3.15 + 9.15 PM + (12.00 MN THURS/FRI)
- 2-ORU YAMANDAN PREMA KATHA (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ DULQUER SALMAN, SOUBIN SAHIR, SAMYUKTHA MENON
 FROM THURSDAY 25TH
 DAILY AT: 12.00 + 6.00 PM

WADI AL SAIL

- 1-AVENGERS: ENDGAME (PG-15) (ACTION/ADVENTURE) NEW**
 Ⓞ BRIE LARSON, ROBERT DOWNEY JR., KAREN GILLAN
 DAILY AT: 12.30 + 1.00 + 4.00 + 4.30 + 7.30 + 8.00 + 11.00 + 11.30 PM
 DAILY AT (3D): 12.00 + 3.30 + 7.00 + 10.30 PM
- 2-ATHIRAN (PG-15) (MALAYALAM) NEW**
 Ⓞ FAHADH FAZIL, SAI PALLAVI, ATUL KULKARNI
 FROM WEDNESDAY 24TH 7.30 PM ONWARDS
 DAILY AT: 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM
- 3-SHAZAM! (PG-15) (ACTION/COMEDY/ADVENTURE)**
 Ⓞ ZACHARY LEVI, MARK STRONG (II), ASHER ANGEL
 DAILY AT: 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM
- 4-KALANK (PG-15) (HINDI/ROMANTIC/DRAMA)**
 Ⓞ VARUN DHAWAN, ALIA BHATT, MADHURI DIXIT
 DAILY AT: 3.15 + 8.15 PM
- 5-THE CURSE OF LA LLORONA (15+) (HORROR/THRILLER)**
 Ⓞ LINDA CARDELLINI, RAYMOND CRUZ, PATRICIA VELASQUEZ
 DAILY AT: 11.15 AM + 1.15 + 6.15 + 11.15 PM
- 6-MISSING LINK (PG) (ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)**
 Ⓞ HUGH JACKMAN, ZOE SALDANA, ZACH GALIFIANAKIS
 DAILY AT: 10.45 AM + 12.45 + 2.45 + 4.45 PM

MISSING PETS



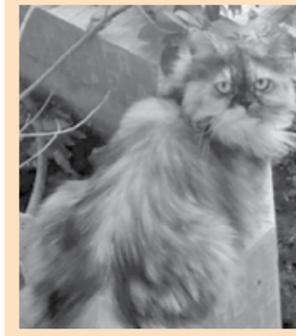
ALY - Male Shin Tzu, 2 yrs, black and white, right hind leg has deformity, not wearing collar or ID tag, garage door left open, Gufool, 12/1/19. Tel: 34065917 or 36750005



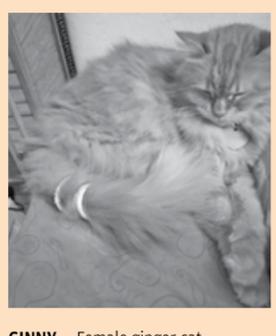
RETCHEY - Male Jack Russell, 17 months, all white, wearing red collar - no ID tag, Juffair, 8/4/19. Tel: 36668287



MISHRI - Male Persian/Turkish mix, 2 yrs, neutered, long hair, all white w light brown eyes, responds to name, trained to come when call "food time", not wearing collar or ID tag, never goes outside, might have fallen out open window, Isa Town (Rd 1331, Block 813), 30/11/18. REWARD for safe return. 39662578



JESSI - Female Persian, 4 yo, spayed, didn't come home, scared, maybe stolen, REWARD. Not wearing collar. 11/4/19 in Wadi Alsail. Tel: 35144752



GINNY - Female ginger cat, extremely friendly, Wearing collar with ID tag "Ginny". Sneaked out 19/4/19 in Hidd Block 111. Reward BD 50 for safe return. Tel: 33113955



TEX - 8 months, neutered male, microchipped, no collar, ran out of the door, ginger/white, 16/04/2019 in Janabiyah next Al Ayam, Tel: 34184147

MOVIE REVIEW

Boar: Big tusks, loads of gore, and charming characters

Boar movie creature features are two-a-penny these days, what with cheap CGI technology and the ability to make a movie with nothing more than a camera phone and half an idea, but somewhere between the too-self-aware-for-its-own-good nonsense of Sharknado and the bigger budget polished studio fare like Kong: Skull Island there dwells the likes of Boar, and you can pretty much guess what this one is about.

In fact, you can pretty much guess how the whole movie plays out as Boar doesn't deviate from your standard monster/slasher movie structure in the slightest, which doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing if you can pepper your story with interesting or fun characters and Boar, despite having a few problems, does at least have that going for it. One



A scene from 'Boar'

quick scan of the main cast reveals a few notable names - Bill Moseley (The Devil's Rejects), Roger Ward (Turkey Shoot) and John Jarrett (Wolf Creek) all have genre cred and their presence is felt throughout film, plus former wrestler Nathan Jones, Simone Buchanan (Patrick) and Ernie Dingo (Crocodile Dundee II) should be familiar faces - and for the most part, despite the fact that the film really plays up Australian stereotype of drunken yobbos with crappy old trucks and dirty fedora hats, these are a likeable and humorous bunch of reprobates to have to spend time with.

JOB VACANCY

Female Nurse needed for home-care on full time 24 hour basis from 27th April onwards. Should be able to speak English and Hindi. Interested candidates call: 3624 0028.

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CELEBS

celebs



Hailey Baldwin

Baldwin opens up about anxiety

ANI | Los Angeles

Justin Bieber's wife and model Hailey Baldwin is opening up about her mental health struggles. The 22-year-old model spoke candidly about her struggle with anxiety in an interview with Glamour as cited by E! News. Hailey shared that it once got to the point where she "couldn't sleep". She also spoke

about the importance of spending time with yourself.

When she does find that time, Hailey said that she likes to take a nap and listen to music.

"Honestly, I understand little kids when I nap. I'm like, Oh, I get it. This is really helpful and it feels good. I also like to take a moment and listen to some music and chill," she said.

"It's so important, in my opinion, to find those moments for yourself. Especially when you're around people all the time. Not only for work, but when you're in a relationship too, and you're with another person all the time. I think

it's important for both parties to be able to be, like, Hey, I

need an hour to myself," she continued.

The model also added that going to a grocery store or drugstore works like a therapy for her.

"For me, I actually enjoy running errands. I like having to go to the grocery store or the drugstore. It's a weird therapeutic thing for me--[it helps me] to feel normal," she said.

In early 2019, Hailey took to her Instagram account to share a post about her insecurities and her journey to finding her confidence.

Reflecting on that post, Hai-

ley in the interview, said, "I'm somebody who is very rooted in Christianity and faith. And for me, the root of confidence comes through that. It comes through God and comes through who I believe I was created by. So, you know, to each their own. I know not everybody believes in what I believe in. But aside from that, I think we need to cheer ourselves on more."

When asked how she manages to cheer herself after a bad day, Hailey said that she looks at the people in her life, including her "amazing" husband.



For me, I actually enjoy running errands. I like having to go to the grocery store or the drugstore. It's a weird therapeutic thing for me--[it helps me] to feel normal

HAILEY BALDWIN

Chris Pratt is 'thrilled' after James Gunn's rehiring by Disney

PTI | Los Angeles

Actor Chris Pratt has said that he is 'thrilled' to see James Gunn back as the director of third 'Guardians of the Galaxy' film. The filmmaker, who helmed the first two installments of the 'Guardians of the Galaxy' franchise, was fired by the film studios' parent company last year after his old, controversial tweets resurfaced on social media.

The studio last month went back on its decision and reinstated Gunn as the director of the third part of the franchise.

On the sidelines of 'Avengers: Endgame' premiere, Pratt told a magazine that Disney made the 'right move' to reinstate Gunn.



James Gunn and Chris Pratt

"I was so thrilled, so excited. I think it's the right move, I really stand behind it. I'm really proud of Disney for hiring James back and ultimately thrilled for not only us, but also for the fans. I think it's going to wrap up the trilogy in the best way," the actor said.

Kathy Griffin to host Shorty Awards

IAN5 | New York

Actress-comedian Kathy Griffin is set to host this year's Shorty Awards, which honour the best of social media by recognising the influencers, brands and organisations on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Musically and more. Griffin is also a finalist this year in the best celebrity category, where

she will compete alongside popular names such as Joe Biden, Jonah Hill, Reese Witherspoon and Russell Brand.

"The Shorty Awards honour all that is unique, cutting-edge, diverse and unpredictable," Griffin said, reports hollywoodreporter.com.

"...I couldn't be more excited that this year I am not only a nominee but also the proud host. The categories, similar to the digital world we all now live in, go from the ridiculously fun to the supremely sublime."

Winners are chosen through a combination of votes from the public and scores given by the Real Time Academy.

Shorty Awards organisers added:

"Over the past year, Kathy has organically grown her online YouTube following and has made a natural shift to include a strong digital presence within her brand.

"Kathy has long proven herself within traditional entertainment and her seamless pivot within the digital space, made her the perfect choice to host this year. We are thrilled to have her host The Shorty Awards and can't wait for her to bring her incredible energy and experience to this year's show."

Past hosts include actor-comedian Tony Hale, actress-singer Keke Palmer, actress Rachel Dratch and comedian Mamrie Hart.



Kathy Griffin

Taylor Swift 'protected' by songwriting

IAN5 | New York

Singer Taylor Swift thinks writing songs helps her to "process" her life and she uses the process as a "protective armour".

"For me, writing, I've always known it was the main pillar holding up my career. I use it as a way to justifying things that happen to me. I've always known it was the main pillar of kind of my sanity as well, like I always looked at writing as sort of like a protective armour," she said at the TIME 100 Gala here, reports femalefirst.co.uk. "Which is weird, because you think of writing about your life, that's usually like a vulnerability, but I think that when you write about your life, it gives you

For me, writing, I've always known it was the main pillar holding up my career. I use it as a way to justifying things that happen to me

TAYLOR SWIFT

the ability to process your life. I use it as a way of justifying things that have happened to me.

"Whether they are good or bad. I like to honour the good times and really process the bad times when I write."



Taylor Swift

Bieber, Grande slam Stewart after Coachella lip-sync controversy

ANI | Los Angeles

Singers Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande recently addressed the Coachella lip-sync controversy and lashed out at TV show host Morgan Stewart.

When the two singers appeared on stage at Coachella music festival last Sunday night, they performed Justin's hit track 'Sorry'. There was a little doubt in everyone's mind whether it was completely live, especially after both mentioned that he had shown up with no intention



Morgan Stewart



Justin Bieber



Ariana Grande

of performing and that there were no rehearsals. However, fans were happy about seeing Bieber on stage for the first time

in two years.

Earlier this week, 'Nightly Pop' host slammed Bieber for his Coachella performance

in which the pop star joined Grande on stage and was caught lip-syncing to his song 'Sorry', reported People.

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SPORTS

City win derby to go top

● **Guardiola's Manchester City raise the bar as United suffer more misery**

● **Leroy Sane fires City past United to tip scales in title race**

● **City return to the top of the league**

AFF | Manchester

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola believes his side have raised the bar in the Premier League after edging one point back ahead of Liverpool in a titanic title race with a 2-0 win at Manchester United on Wednesday.

Bernardo Silva and Leroy Sane struck for the visitors in 12 second-half minutes at Old Trafford to inflict a seventh defeat in nine games on United, who remain three points adrift of the top four.

City cannot match their record 100 points tally in romping to the title last season, but victories over Burnley, Leicester and Brighton will clinch the title on 98 points and ensure Liverpool's 29-year wait to win the league continues despite already posting a club record points tally in the Premier League era.

"We increased the level for the Premier League last season with 100 points. That's the level Liverpool are chasing. What they have done is incredible but it's in our hands," said Guardiola.



Bernardo Silva scores Manchester City's first goal against Manchester United at Old Trafford

diola. "Both teams deserve the title. But it can be just one. The team that is going to lose can't have regrets because they have given everything."

City's trip to Old Trafford was billed as the last big hurdle left for Guardiola's men to clear despite United's terrible run of form.

However, Guardiola warned of the tight turnaround before a very different type of test at Burnley on Sunday.

"Normally with this kind of victory you can enjoy it the most but we have to be calm," added Guardiola.

"Now we go to Burnley and we know how tough it will be. It's important to be calm. We are still not champions with three games left -- it's incredible with the points we have and Liver-



Manchester City are a point ahead of Liverpool with three games to go

pool have. "I told the players don't read tomorrow, don't watch the television, just rest and sleep a lot."

City the standard bearers

United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer slammed his players' attitude after a 4-0 thrashing at Everton on Sunday and was re-

warded with a far more energetic and committed performance, even if City's greater quality eventually shone through.

"They've set the standard in the last couple of seasons. They have been the best team in the country and that's the standard we want to get to," admitted Solskjaer.

Yet, Arsenal's defeat at Wolves means the Red Devils are still very much in the race for Champions League qualification, should they beat fourth-placed Chelsea at home on Sunday.

"I'm concerned about the lack of results," added Solskjaer.

"The strange reality is that we are still in with a shout for the top four. We need more quality on Sunday because we need to win that game and, if we win it, we have two games to get those points and goals we need."

Arsenal's top-four hopes dented by defeat at Wolves

AFF | Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Unai Emery refused to give up on Arsenal's Champions League hopes after seeing his side embarrassed by Wolves in a 3-1 defeat at Molineux on Wednesday.

Ruben Neves, Matt Doherty and the outstanding Diogo Jota scored the goals that condemned Emery's side to a third defeat in four Premier League games, severely denting their hopes of a top-four finish with just three games to go.

The Arsenal manager admitted his team were outplayed by Wolves, who scored three goals in the first half to give the visitors a mountain to climb.

Despite the chastening defeat the Spaniard said his side will keep striving for Champions League football, which they can achieve either through a top-four finish in the

Premier League or by winning the Europa League.

Defeat in the Midlands left Emery's men a point behind fourth-placed Chelsea.

"I usually am very critical with myself and I am angry with myself that we didn't do the gameplan we wanted -- not with the players," said Emery when asked if he was angry with his team.

"First it is with me and after that my style and idea is to look in front and find a solution, not who is the player who is worst."

"First I am thinking about the solution and the solution for me is to take the possibility on Sunday at Leicester and get our best performance and the best possibility to take the three points."

Neves's superb free-kick, Doherty's header and Jota's weaving run and shot did the damage for Wolves before Sokratis pulled a goal back late on for the visitors.



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Diogo Jota scores their third goal

Lagoona Beach B edge Four Seasons B

TDT | Manama

Lagoona Beach B (42/2 in 6 overs) defeated Four Seasons B (33/1 in 6 overs) by 9 runs in the eighth Inter Hotel Charity Cricket Tournament happening at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain. Sandeep won the title of Man of the Match by scoring 22 runs.

In the next game Marriott Executive Apartment (39/6 in 5.3 overs) lost to Diplomat Hotel (40/4 in 5.3 overs) by 2 wickets and Shijil was declared Man of the Match by taking 1 wicket



Imran from The Ritz-Carlton B team receives Man of the Match award

and scoring 18 runs. In third match of the night

Four Seasons A (42/4 in 6 overs) lost to Best Western (45/1 in 4.1 overs) by 5 wickets, Laxman was declared Man of the Match. Following with the fourth game Le Meridien Hotel (36/3 in 6 overs) lost to At Reef Resort Hotel (37/1 in 4.4 overs) by 5 wicket, Adnan was awarded the Man of the Match award for his quick 16 runs. In a last encounter of the night, Ritz-Carlton B (68/4 in 6 overs) defeated Westin Hotel (31 for all out in 5.4 overs) by 36 runs. Imran was declared man of the match for taking 2 wickets.



Bahrain U19 team with coach and officials

Bahrain U19 cricket team prepares for ACC tournament in UAE

TDT | Manama

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) U19 50 Overs 8 nations cricket tournament at UAE is commencing today and promise to be an adrenalin pumping exciting international competition.

Bahrain will be competing as one of the 8 teams in this prestigious international tournament and have been placed in group alongside the hosts i.e. UAE, Iran and Saudi. The other group consists of Kuwait,

Maldives, Qatar and Oman. The top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals.

Under the watchful eyes of the national cricket coach Azeem Ul Haq, the carefully selected national U19 squad has been training hard, honing its skills in rigorous training sessions and weekend practice matches at the Cricket Bahrain Association's facilities and grounds.

Ul Haque believes that the team is extremely talented and

could go far. He said: "The team has been undergoing rigorous training & exercises. In addition, we've focused on skills and scenario practice matches in high pressure situations. The players are very talented and it's a pleasure working with them. We believe that we have all the ingredients required to do very well and continue the excellent performance of the previous U19 tour, where we won the first two international matches back to back"

'Bahrain is now a huge destination for MMA'

TDT | Manama

Brave Combat Federation is still reaping the benefits of Brave 23: Pride and Honour, which featured the biggest fight card of its history, with three title fights and three new world champions crowned. But the country of Jordan has also seen how Brave can positively impact the countries it visits, and the organization's president Mohammed Shahid agrees that the promotion turns the eyes of the world wherever it goes.

In that sense, the biggest beneficiary of the inception of Brave CF, through the vision of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, is Bahrain. The Kingdom has become a huge destination for MMA fans, MMA fighters and everyone involved with the sport in any capacity, and has also increased its profile around the world for its deep connections with the only truly global mixed martial arts promotion in the world.

"It's just further proof of

Brave's accomplishments. We talk about the value of mixed martial arts, the value of a brand. What that brand has been able to add to the Kingdom of Bahrain is unbelievable. We go around the world and eyes turn to the places we go to. We're in Jordan and now everyone knows where Jordan is, what's going on in Jordan. We are giving attention to the places we go, and the biggest example is certainly Bahrain", said Shahid.

Nadal overcomes Ferrer

Rafael Nadal sees off tearful David Ferrer to reach last eight in Barcelona

AFP | Barcelona

Rafael Nadal showed no mercy towards an emotional David Ferrer as he eased into the quarter-finals of the Barcelona Open yesterday with a straight-sets victory.

Ferrer is set to retire after the Madrid Open next month and made a tearful exit on what was his last appearance at this tournament.

But there was no room for sentiment for Nadal, who won 6-3, 6-3 to take one step closer to a record 12th Barcelona title.

Four of those triumphs came after beating Ferrer in the final and, at the end of this latest victory, Nadal's 37-year-old opponent saluted the crowd before placing his pink headband down on the service line.

Ferrer reached a career-high ranking of number three in the world in 2013,

the same year he went closest to winning a Grand Slam too, undone by Nadal again in the French Open final.

Nadal will be gunning for his 12th success at Roland Garros next month and this was more like the sort of form expected of the world number two, who had won 30 consecutive sets in Barcelona before falling one behind to Leonardo Mayer on Wednesday.

Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff or the talented 20-year-old Greek, Stefanos Tsitsipas, now await in the last eight before a potential semi-final meeting with Dominic Thiem, whom Nadal beat in the French Open final last year.

Nadal broke Ferrer for 4-2 in the opening set and was serving for it at 5-3 when rain delayed the match for almost an hour.

The stoppage could not change the momentum, with Nadal quickly wrapping up the frame upon his return be-



Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a return



The central court at Barcelona was renamed as 'Pista Rafa Nadal' in 2017 to honour the great clay court player

fore breaking again early in the second. Ferrer offered some brief resistance, a backhand winner restoring parity at 2-2 but Nadal raced ahead as a forehand pass and half-volley put him 5-3 in front.

He missed three match points but converted the fourth before finally embracing an emotional Ferrer at the net.

Bahrain triumph at Asian athletics meet

TDI | Manama

Bahraini athletes won 22 medals, including 11 gold, seven silver and four bronze medals at the 23rd Asian Athletics Championship that was recently concluded in Doha, Qatar.

Bahrain's Salwa Naser increased her gold medal total to four on the final day of the event.

Naser, the 2017 world 400m silver medallist, ran a spectacular anchor leg in the 4x400m relay, the penultimate event of the Championships in Khalifa Stadium which in five months' time will host the International Association of Athletics Federations' World Championships.

A distant fourth when she took the baton, Naser faced a deficit of some 20 metres as she went into the first bend, the IAAF reported.

But she moved gradually into contention before taking the lead in the home straight in passing India's Vismaya Velluva Koroth in a superb split time of 49.70sec.

That performance came two hours after she had earned gold in the women's 200m to go with the ones she had earned on previous days in the 400m and 4x400m mixed relay, along with her bronze from the 4x100m.

Naser had won her 200m final in 22.74sec after overhauling 100m winner Olga Safronova in the middle of the final straight.

Her time improved by 0.10 the Championship record of 22.84 she had equalled the day before.

To widespread media disappointment, Naser rushed through the mixed zone without stopping to speak.

In the 4x400m relay, Bahrain had clocked 3min 32.10sec, beating India by 0.11 with Japan taking the bronze.

Meanwhile, HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Chairman of Bahrain Olympic Committee, President of the West Asian Athlet-



Salwa Naser with Bahrain flag after winning the race

4

Gold medals were won by Bahrain's Salwa Naser in the event

ics Federation and President of Bahrain Athletics Association congratulated His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, and HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of HM the King

for Charity and Youth Affairs and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports on the occasion of the remarkable achievement of Bahrain National Athletics Team

HH Shaikh Khalid affirmed that the historic achievement came as a result of the continuous support provided by the Wise Leadership and HH Shaikh Nasser to the youth and sports sector in general and to athletics sports in particular, contributing to the efforts supporting the Bahraini sports in taking steady steps forward and achieving more regional and international accomplishments.

His Highness expressed pride in the national team's victory, surpassing strong competitors, such as China and India, and proving the Kingdom of Bahrain's competency of taking leading positions in sports and other fields.

Osaka downs Hsieh in Stuttgart opener

AFP | Stuttgart, Germany

World number one Naomi Osaka defeated Hsieh Su-wei 6-4, 6-3 in her first clay court match of the season in Stuttgart yesterday.

US and Australian Open champion Osaka, who lost to Taiwanese veteran Hsieh in Miami last month, secured a place in the quarter-finals against Croatia's Donna Vekic.

Osaka, 21, broke Hsieh three times in total to beat Hsieh for the second time in three attempts this year, having also defeated her on the way to lifting the title in Melbourne.

"She's a really tricky opponent. You never really know what she's going to do," said Osaka.

Osaka needed 84 minutes to dispatch the unconventional Hsieh, a win that ensures she will hold on to top spot for at least another week.

She is less than 200 points ahead of Simona Halep in the WTA rankings, although the Romanian pulled out of this week's tournament with a hip injury.

Top seed Osaka fought off the only two break points she faced,



Japan's Naomi Osaka returns the ball to Taiwan's Su-Wei Hsieh

in a lengthy service hold for 2-all in the opening set, before breaking Hsieh in the following game.

That was sufficient to wrap up the first set, and a Hsieh double-fault handed Osaka a break to start the second before she closed out victory with another service break in a performance that featured 22 winners and just 16 unforced errors.

The Japanese star arrived in Stuttgart, where she last played

in Stuttgart as a qualifier in 2017, after suffering early exits in her last three tournaments.

"Definitely I've put a lot on pressure on myself and found it hard to deal with in the first few tournaments," said Osaka. "I'm really having fun now though."

Osaka will meet Vekic, a 6-1, 7-5 winner over Daria Kasatkina, for a spot in the last four, while Latvian seventh seed Anastasija Sevastova defeated Germany's Laura Siegemund 6-4, 6-3.

Pogba odd man out in PFA team of the year

AFP | London

Manchester United's Paul Pogba is the only non-Manchester City or Liverpool player to be named in the Professional Footballers' Association's Premier League team of the year yesterday.

The 26-year-old French World Cup-winning midfielder's inclusion is a surprise after an indifferent season, although he hit a purple patch after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer arrived at Old Trafford as interim manager.

City and Liverpool have been locked in an enthralling duel for the title, with Guardiola's City going top again on Wednesday after beating United 2-0 at Old Trafford, with Pogba unable to inspire his side to a much-needed win.

City provide six of the 11 players -- goalkeeper Ederson, centre-half Aymeric Laporte, midfielders Bernardo Silva and Fernandinho and forwards Ser-

gio Aguero and Raheem Sterling.

The remaining four places are filled by Liverpool players -- full-backs Andrew Robertson and

Trent-Alexander Arnold, central defender Virgil van Dijk and forward Sadio Mane.

Van Dijk and Sterling are believed to be in the running for the player of the year award.

There is no place, though, for Liverpool's Egyptian star Mo Salah, who has scored 19 Premier League goals this season, Spurs pair Harry Kane and Son Heung-min or Chelsea playmaker Eden Hazard.

The PFA Team of the Year is voted for by members of the Professional Footballers' Association.

Manchester City had five players in the 2017/18 side but only Argentine star Aguero retains his place from the team of 12 months ago.

Paul Pogba

