

**Bahrain, Saudi tie for top spot**

Bahrain and Saudi Arabia moved into a tie for first place yesterday on the men's teams' standings following the second round of the 2019 GCC Golf Championships, being played at Ghala Golf Club in Muscat. **P16**

OP-ED **8** What Syria, Bosnia and Chechnya have in common?

THE DAILY **tribune**

Padma Lakshmi mistaken for Priyanka Chopra **14** CELEBS

WORLD **5** Five wounded in stabbing in New York

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**New Year holiday circular**  
 Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday issued a circular regarding the public holiday on the first day of the New Year, 2020.

Under the circular, the Kingdom's ministries, state departments and public institutions will be closed on Wednesday, January 1, 2020.

**Trump calls for unity**  
 New York

US President Donald Trump has urged unity to fight against anti-Semitism, a day after a stabbing attack on a rabbi's house in New York state.

"We must all come together to fight, confront, and eradicate the evil scourge of anti-Semitism," he said.

At least five people were injured in the attack in Monsey, north of New York City on Saturday.



**03** Gym management walks free in swimming pool death trial

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210 fils (includes VAT)



**Oil projects reviewed**



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday chaired the meeting of the Higher Committee for Natural Resources and Economic Security, at Riffa Palace. During the meeting, HRH the Crown Prince emphasised the importance of continuing to prioritise oil and gas exploration projects which contribute to the Kingdom's comprehensive development, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. HRH the Crown Prince highlighted the efforts made by the Ministry of Oil and all relevant authorities to implement exploration projects as well as other wide-ranging strategic initiatives. HRH the Crown Prince noted these efforts aim to secure long term access to resources, stimulate the Kingdom's investment environment and competitiveness, support the Kingdom's sustainable development goals, and fulfil the aspirations of Bahraini citizens. Additionally, the Committee reviewed the latest developments regarding the Bahrain LNG Import Terminal and the Bahrain basin.

**Major terror plot**

**Terrorists shot dead in Dammam had planned car bomb attack**

● **The security operation resulted in the arrest of a third terrorist, whose identity is being withheld while investigations continue.**

● **The spokesman said security forces also seized a machine gun, two pistols, live ammunition and cash.**

**Jeddah**

Two wanted fugitive terrorists killed in a shoot-out in Dammam this week had been planning an attack with a

car bomb, Saudi state security chiefs revealed yesterday.

Ahmed Abdullah Saeed Suwaid and Abdullah Hussein Saeed Al Nimr, both Saudis, were shot dead after they opened fire on security forces who surrounded them in the city's upmarket residential neighbourhood of Al Anoud.

The security forces had cordoned off the area in the north-east of the city for three days before the shootout on Dec 25.

A spokesman for the Presidency of State Security said on Sunday: "As a result of tracing terrorist activities, the relevant authority in the presidency found indications that there were arrangements to carry out an imminent terrorist operation, in which the terrorists in charge used a



Saudi security force has stepped up measures to tackle terror threats.

vehicle they were preparing with explosives.

"The vehicle tracked down was a Ford car driven by terrorists on King Saud Street in Dammam on Wednesday.

"When the terrorists were

asked to surrender, they started shooting at the security men and barricaded themselves behind a building.

"This prompted the security forces to deal with them as the situation entailed neutralising

their danger, which resulted in their killing."

The security operation resulted in the arrest of a third terrorist, whose identity is being withheld while investigations continue.

Security forces found 5kg of paste in the terrorists' car. The results of preliminary tests showed that it was RDX, an explosive similar to Semtex developed in the UK in the 1930s.

RDX has been used in several terrorist attacks, including the 2006 Mumbai train bombings, the 2010 Moscow Metro bombings and the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri in Beirut in 2005.

The spokesman said security forces also seized a machine gun, two pistols, live ammunition and cash.

**TERROR TARGET**

**US strikes Kataib Hizbollah in Iraq**

**Washington**

The United States has bombed the headquarters of the Iran-backed Iraqi Hizbollah militant group in Iraq and Syria, the Pentagon said Sunday, following a rocket attack in Iraq that killed a US civilian contractor.

"In response to repeated Kataib Hizbollah (KH) attacks on Iraqi bases that host Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) coalition forces, US forces have

conducted precision defensive strikes against five KH facilities in Iraq and Syria that will degrade KH's ability to conduct future attacks against OIR coalition forces," a Pentagon spokesman said in a statement.

An official from the Tehran-backed Hashed Al Shaabi paramilitary told AFP that fifteen fighters, including commanders, were killed and several fighters were also wounded in the strikes.

The targets — three in Iraq

**US forces have conducted precision defensive strikes against five KH facilities in Iraq and Syria that will degrade KH's ability to conduct future attacks.**

PENTAGON SPOKESMAN

and two in Syria — included weapons storage facilities and command locations used to plan and execute attacks, the statement added.

On Friday a barrage of 30 rockets was fired at an Iraqi military base in Kirkuk, an oil-rich region north of Baghdad, a US official told AFP.

A US civilian contractor died in the attack.

A direct hit on an ammunition depot caused secondary explosions, and four more rockets

were found in their tubes in a truck at the launch point.

Washington had recently promised "a decisive US response" to a growing number of unclaimed attacks on its interests in Iraq, which it blames on pro-Iran factions.

Meanwhile, four rockets exploded on Sunday night near a base housing US troops close to Iraq's capital, a security official said, shortly after Washington carried out the deadly air strikes against the pro-Iran faction.



Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa yesterday received Southern Governor Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa who presented him with a report on the Southern Governorate's achievements from 2017 to 2019. Both sides also discussed issues related to the Southern Governorate as well as programmes and projects being implemented to serve citizens. The Interior Minister thanked the Southern Governor for the efforts made to reach out to all social components and cater to their needs. The Southern Governor expressed thanks and respect to the Interior Minister for his directives to improve the governorates' performance in assuming the duties assigned with them.



Adviser to His Majesty the King for Youth and Sports Affairs, Saleh Al Mannai, yesterday received Egyptian Ambassador to Bahrain Yasser Shaaban. Mr Al Mannai highlighted the agreements that are still ongoing between the two countries in the field of youth, sports and joint qualitative programs, praising the great achievements made by Bahrain and Egypt through co-operation, wishing the ambassador success in his diplomatic mission. The ambassador noted the historical Bahraini-Egyptian relations, stressing to work to consolidate cooperation in the youth and sports fields.



Shura Chairman Ali Al Saleh visited the Royal Charity Organisation (RCO)'s pavilion at the 26th Al Ayam Book Fair. Mr Al Saleh praised the royal care of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for RCO, noting HM's continuous support for charitable and humanitarian work. Shura chairman hailed RCO's efforts led by HM King's Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, and its Chairman of the Board of Trustees His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, highlighting the prominent role that the organisation plays in supporting charitable work.



Residents and expatriates gathered to celebrate an evening of poetry held as part of Bahrain National Day festivities and to pay tribute to renowned Urdu poet Hari Chand Akhtar with Urdu's quintessential spirit, inclusive ethos, creative richness and linguistic heritage. The poetical session was organised by MAJLIS-E-FAKHER-E-BAHRAIN under the patronage of Shakeel Ahmad Sabrahadi and presided by Ajmal Siraj, a well-known Urdu poet from Karachi (Pakistan). A prominent scholar of Arabic language and literature, Dr Shoeb Nigrani was the chief guest at the event. In his welcome address Mr Shakeel Ahmad Sabrahadi expressed his feelings of thanks to Bahrain and its remarkable development in all spheres of life. He also admired His Majesty King Hamad for his visionary leadership and fatherly role for the unprecedented peace and tranquility in the Kingdom. The poets in the symposium were namely; Mr Ajmal Siraj, Mr Ahmad Adil, Mr Rukhsar Nazim Abadi, Mr Ahmad Amir Pasha, Mr Tahir Azeem, Mr Riaz Shahid, Mr Anwar Kamal, Mr Saeed Sadi, Mr Asad Iqbal and Mr Kapil Batra. The memorable poetical session was moderated by Khurram Abbasi.



The Information and e-Government authority participated in the celebrations of Gulf Statistics Day. The celebration of the Gulf Statistics Day for this year was held under the slogan 'Statistics, the Partner of Innovation'.



Lions Club of Bahrain (LCOB) under its Sight First project conducted eye camp for all the needy members of the society at Salmabad Sikh Temple complex. More than 170 needy persons got their eyes checked by optometrist from Yateem Opticians. The workers who can't afford the spectacles would be given powered specs free of cost. About 150 workers will get benefit from this initiative. Seen in the picture are the members of Lions Club of Bahrain and Salmabad Sikh temple management staff.



The New Millennium School, DPS Bahrain, organised the Second Farhan Memorial Basketball Tournament. The tournament was initiated last year in memory of their ex-student Mohammed Farhan, who died in a car accident in Bangalore. The match was played between the students of Grades X and XI. The RED team emerged as 'Winners' with a sterling performance. The Guest of Honour was Mrs Nikhath Jabeen, Farhan's Mother, who showered her blessings to the young players and expressed her gratitude to the school for conducting such a memoir. Principal, Mr Arun Kuumar Sharma, while addressing the students, revived the fond memories of Farhan as an obedient and enthusiastic student of the school and also reminded the students that they are the torch bearers of all the values that the school stands for and urged them to take up the responsibility with commitment and integrity.

# Winners of 2019 Government Innovation Competition named



The competition winners were named yesterday.



Many ministers and senior government officials attended the event.

**Manama**

The Government Innovation Competition 'Fikra' yesterday announced the winners of the 2019 competition.

Launched by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister

during the Government Forum, Fikra offers public sector employees the opportunity to put forward their suggestions on innovation and development of government services via a digital platform.

The Ministerial Committee selected two ideas: Virtual Employment Centre by Eman Al Sammak and Ebtihal Al Shihabi from the Labour Market Regulatory Authority

and "Mahakim Platform" Submitted by Ahmed Alaraifi from the Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister.

Members of the public selected "EParkBH - Replacement of parking meters with an application" by Alia Al Qahtani from the Ministry of Interior and Nouf Al Qahtani from the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The Ministerial Committee was deeply encouraged by the

extraordinary range of talents represented in the application pool, noting that applicants' aptitude for innovation will help achieve greater operational efficiency in the public sector.

Winners will be given an opportunity to present their innovations to the Government Executive Committee, chaired by HRH the Crown Prince, to ensure successful project implementation.

Fikra accelerates development through a citizen-centred approach that is participatory and sustainable in addition to fostering a culture of innovation in which government employees put forward breakthrough solutions, in line with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and the Government Programme 2019-2022.

The Ministerial Committee consisted of Mohammed

Al Mutawa, Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Jameel Humaidan, Minister of Labour and Social Development, Kamal Ahmed, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, Basim Al Hamer, Minister of Housing, and Faeqa Al Saleh, Minister Health, Ayman Al Moayyad, Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs, and Wael Al Mubarak, Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs.

# Gym management walks free in swimming pool death trial

High Appeals Court accepts plea; quashes BD40,000 compensation ruling

TDT | Manama

With regard to the appointment of a lifeguard, the lawyer said the swimming pool only had a depth of 1.3 metres.

Lawyer Islam Ghunaim, who appeared for the gym management, at the appeals court, argued that the allegations were baseless.

The High Appeals Court has cancelled the ruling issued by a lower court asking a gym management to compensate for the death of an individual who died within the facility.

The lower court had asked the gym management to pay BD40,000 in compensation to the family of the deceased.

The man is said to have died while swimming in the pool attached to the gym facility and the family alleged that the death happened because

safety measures were not followed at the facility.

The family also argued that a lifeguard should have been appointed at the facility to



The deceased was a longtime customer at the gym and he knew the working timings of the staff there.

MR GHUNAIM

handle such cases.

Lawyer Islam Ghunaim, who appeared for the gym management, at the appeals court, argued that the allegations were baseless.

"The victim used the facility during Ramadan and that too Iftar time. It would have been known to him that there was none to help him in case of any emergency.

"He himself should be held responsible for the consequences," the lawyer argued.

"The deceased was a longtime customer at the gym and he knew the working

timings of the staff there. It means he was well aware that there wasn't anyone there to help him if anything bad happened."

With regard to the appointment of a lifeguard, the lawyer said the swimming pool only had a depth of 1.3 metres. "No lifeguard was needed for such a small pool."

The court accepted the lawyer's argument. It stated that the video footage showed that lights were switched off at the facility, which meant he was using it when there were no staff in attendance.

## 'Terrorists planned to bomb ATMs'

TDT | Manama

Eleven men are accused of joining a terrorist cell, which targeted bombing ATM machines, the High Criminal Court heard.

According to court files, the defendants are said to have joined the terrorist cell and were eyeing to murder police officers and destroy gas pipes as well as the ATMs after receiving funds from wanted fugitives in terror cases.

The defendants' plot was dismantled after police received confidential information revealing their plans. It was discovered that the first defendant recruited the third defendant and he ordered him to examine banks located in Sanad area as the cell aimed to bomb the ATMs there.

"He also requested me to observe the gas pipes, telling me that they were part of the plot to bomb them," the third defendant told Prosecutors.

It's said that the cell bombed a gas pipe but the explosive failed to cause any damage.

## CBB issues five silver commemorative medals set

TDT | Manama

The Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) has issued five silver commemorative medals set to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Financial Services, Educational Services, Security Services, Health Services and Municipality Services in the Kingdom of Bahrain.



of Manama Municipality.

Five medals, each includes a picture of: Building of the Central Bank of Bahrain, Building of Al Hedaya Al Khalifya School, Building of the Police Fort, Building of Salmaniya Medical Complex and Building

The silver medals set can be purchased from the Currency Issue Directorate at the Central Bank of Bahrain in Diplomatic Area. Starting from the 30th of December 2019 for BD 120.

## Writers' role hailed



Information Affairs Ministry Undersecretary Dr Abdulrahman Mohammed Bahar yesterday received members of Bahrain Writers Association headed by poet Ibrahim Bu Hindi. Dr Bahar congratulated the association on celebrating their Golden Jubilee, stressing its leading role to enrich creativity, intellectual and literary productions with the support of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) under the patronage of Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa. He praised the growth of the media, culture and art, as well as the intellectual and literary knowledge in light of the civilised era of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The Undersecretary stressed the ministry's keenness, under the directions of the Information Affairs Minister Ali Al Romaihi, to consolidate the partnership with official and private cultural institutes to spread knowledge, art, culture, and to motivate writers, thinkers, artists. The delegation hailed the Undersecretary's continuous support for the association's programmes and its work to raise cultural and societal awareness, and to promote the movement of writing and literary creativity.

# SCH discusses roadmap to implement National Health Insurance programme

Several proposals pertaining to NHRA discussed at council meeting

Manama

The Supreme Council for Health (SCH) held its regular meeting at its headquarters at the Financial Harbour, under the chairmanship of its President, Lieutenant-General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

Health Minister, Faeqa Al Saleh, heads of health entities and SCH's members attended the meeting.

The SCH extended deepest congratulations to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, on the Kingdom's celebrations of the glorious National Day and the anniversary of HM the King's Accession to the Throne.

The council was informed about the latest developments



Lt-General Dr Shaikh Mohammed chaired the meeting.

of the National Health Insurance Programme (Sehati), including the main themes, namely: autonomy, primary health care and insurance for expatriates.

In this regard, SCH's Secretary-General, Ibrahim Ali Al Nawakhdha, presented a roadmap for the National Health Insurance Programme, including its main themes and time frames.

He also presented the panel

with a report on the achievements of the consulting firms with which contracts had been signed as part of the Sehati scheme.

The session also discussed the latest developments of the Health Information and Knowledge Management Agency (HIKMA).

In this context, chairman of the governance project and

the HIKMA, Shaikh Khalid bin Mohammed Al Khalifa highlighted the upcoming steps to establish HIKMA which aims to monitor and direct the healthcare industry in collaboration with the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) and the Social Health Insurance Fund Authority (SHIFA), along with the private health insurance companies.



**The role of the NHRA is to regulate the provision of healthcare in Bahrain. It is an independent regulator.**

The meeting also reviewed other topics on its agenda, and discussed a number of proposals pertaining to the NHRA. In this regard, NHRH's CEO, Mariam Adhbi Al Jalahma, submitted a memorandum on the issues that fall within the terms of reference of the NHRA, namely the approval of disciplinary committees' decisions and regulating the import of medical equipment.

The panel also discussed a resolution on the issuance of the regulations of the requirements and procedures for licensing and controlling government health institutions, and an edict regarding the investigation of medical errors and reporting of accidental and serious accidents in health institutions.

It also discussed a resolution to issue the regulations for registering medicines and pharmaceutical products and monitoring drug pricing, in addition to a proposal for the guidelines and requirements for simple plastic surgery.

The Supreme Council for Health also discussed the issuance of a resolution on the working rules of the boards of trustees of government health institutions and their tasks in supervising the self-management system of government institutions subject to the National Health Insurance Programme.

## Tracing history



Bahrain Police tour Manama roads during a police show in the late 1920s. The Ministry of Interior is celebrating the centenary of the formation of Bahrain Police that reflects sacrifices, the performance of duties and allegiance to His Majesty the King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The police forces have been working to reinforce allegiance and sacrifice values to protect the security of the nation in a journey of loyalty and nationalism.

## Banks' co-operation with IT companies essential to boost 'digital banking'

TDT | Manama

Bahraini businessman Yacoub Al Awadhi has stressed the importance of the efforts made by Bahraini banks to accelerate the process of digital transformation and create the technological infrastructure to implement it.

He pointed out that the United Nations adoption of the Bahraini initiative to mark the fourth of December of every year an International Banks Day represents a favourable opportunity to shed light globally on the progress made in this field.

"We see increasing interest by the banking sector leaders to expand the establishment

**The effective co-operation between banks and technology companies is important in building a sophisticated digital banking industry, and strengthening the reputation of the Bahraini banking sector.**

MR AL AWADHI

of digital banks that have become a global trend. The effective co-operation between banks and technology companies is important in building a

sophisticated digital banking industry, and strengthening the reputation of the Bahraini banking sector," said CEO of NBN, Mr Al Awadhi.

"We are witnessing in the neighbouring countries the entry of global virtual banks that compete strongly with the traditional banks of the country due to its low operating costs, headquarters, branches and equipment, and the number of employees. It also provides quick services such as opening a new bank account, money transfer, etc. From this standpoint, I appeal to all Bahraini banks to quickly adopt the various paths of digital transformation entirely," added Al Awadhi.

## Northern Governorate concludes festivities

Riyadh

The Northern Governorate has concluded its festivities related to the anniversary of the establishment of the modern state of Bahrain as an Arab and Muslim country in 1783 by its founder Ahmed Al Fateh, the anniversary of its accession to the UN as a full member and the anniversary of HM the King's Accession to the Throne.

Held under the theme "Leader and People...Nation's Joy", the celebration included a traditional rowing race, which was held at Budaiya jetty, reflecting Bahrain's long-standing traditional heritage legacy. It was held under the patronage of Northern Governor Ali bin Al Sheikh Abdulhussein Al Asfor.

The Governorate paid tribute to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, hailing royal keenness on promoting Bahrain's rich legacy of traditional and heritage sports.

It also commended the fol-



Many competitions were held as part of the celebrations.

low-up of HM the King's Representative for Charity Work and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and Chairman of the Su-

preme Council of Youth and Sports (SCYS) His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa and HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khal-

ifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee.

## Animal Welfare Act violators fined

Riyadh

The Saudi Environment Ministry has imposed fines of SR1.7 million (\$453,333) on 29 violators of the Animal Welfare Act, the Saudi Press Agency reported yesterday.

The ministry said the violations include selling animal products unsafe for human consumption, transporting animals from one region to another without the required health certificate, to license-related violations, health violations inside facilities, and the mistreatment of animals by not providing an appropriate environment for them.

The majority of violations, 16, were registered in Makkah, seven were recorded in Riyadh, two in Tabuk and one each in Jazan, Assir, Madinah and Hail.

The ministry praised veterinary observers at its branches and offices, and all those who contributed to reporting the violations especially those related to animal abuse.

The ministry urged owners and supervisors of facilities to cooperate with the observers and abide by the law.

WORLD  
world

# Five wounded in stabbing in New York

● The suspect was identified by police as a local man from Greenwood Lake, New York

● The attack comes as US police battle a rash of attacks against Jewish targets

AFP | New York

An intruder stabbed and wounded five people at a rabbi's house in New York during a party to celebrate the Jewish festival of Hanukkah late Saturday, officials said.

The victims, all Hasidic members of the Jewish faith, were transported to local hospitals -- two in critical condition -- the Orthodox Jewish Public Affairs Council (OJPAC) tweeted after receiving a call at 9:50 pm.

A suspect has been taken into custody and a vehicle safeguarded, a spokesman for the NYPD said.

Governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, said in a statement that he was "horrified" by the "despicable and cowardly act", and had directed the State Police hate crimes task force to investigate.

"We have a zero tolerance for anti-Semitism in NY and we will hold the attacker accountable to the fullest extent of the law," he tweeted.

CBS New York reported that a man brandishing a machete went into the rabbi's property in Monsey, New York State, an area



Jewish people walk in front of the house where 5 people were stabbed at a Hasidic rabbi's home in Monsey, New York

## Suspect appears in court

Monsey | United States

A 37-year-old suspect appeared in a New York court yesterday charged with five counts of attempted murder over a stabbing spree at a rabbi's suburban house -- the latest in a spate of attacks on Jewish targets.

Grafton Thomas allegedly entered the property in Monsey, Rockland County, during celebrations on Saturday evening for the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, knifing several people with a machete before fleeing.

He was held in custody after appearing in Ramapo Town Court, where he denied the charges. The frenzied attack was quickly condemned as a "domestic terrorism" incident that underscored growing anti-Semitic violence in the United States.

Former vice president and current Democratic presidential challenger Joe Biden tweeted



Suspect in Hanukkah celebration stabbings Grafton Thomas, 37, leaves court in New York state

that "the horrifying rise of antisemitism is tearing apart the fabric of our communities and the soul of this nation. We've got to stand together as a country and fight these flames of hatred."

No official details were re-

leased about the victims, who were rushed to nearby hospitals. Local media said one person was seriously injured. Thomas was reportedly arrested in his own car about 30 miles (50 kilometers) away two hours after the attack.

## It was domestic terrorism, New York governor says

Reuters | New York

New York's governor said a knife attack by an assailant who burst into a party at a Hasidic rabbi's home and stabbed five people late on Saturday was an act of domestic terrorism.

Visiting the scene in Rockland County, about 30 miles (48 km) north of New York City, Governor Andrew Cuomo met on Sunday with victims who had been attending the Hanukkah celebration at the home of rabbi Chaim Rottenberg.

"This is terrorism, it is domestic terrorism," Cuomo told reporters. "These are people who intend to create mass harm, mass violence, generate fear based on race, color, creed."

The suspect was identified by police as a local man from Greenwood Lake, New York. Authorities said he was arrested in New York City's Manhattan borough after fleeing the site of the attack in the small town of Monsey by car.

Ramapo Police Chief Brad Weidel said at a news conference that the suspect will be arraigned later on Sunday on five counts of attempted murder and one count of burglary.

According to Yossi Gestetner, co-founder of the Orthodox Jewish Public Affairs Council, the attacker had his face partially covered with a scarf when he stabbed five people, two of whom were in critical condition.

"One of the rabbi's children were also stabbed," Gestetner told reporters.



Andrew Cuomo

with a large Jewish population, and knifed at least three people before fleeing.

"I was praying for my life," witness Aron Kohn, 65, told the New York Times, describing the knife used by the attacker as "the size of a broomstick".

Yossi Gestetner, a co-founder of the OJPAC for the Hudson Valley region, told the New York Times one of the victims was a son of the rabbi.

"The house had many dozens of people in there," Gestetner said. "It was a Hanukkah celebration."

## 'I threw a coffee table' -- witness fought house attacker

Monsey | United States

When a machete-wielding intruder stormed into a rabbi's house in a New York suburb during a Jewish festival late Saturday, Joseph Gluck fought back.

"He was a big, husky, guy," said 30-year-old Gluck on Sunday, recalling that the attacker wore a scarf covering his face.

"I could only see his forehead and his eyes. He came in wielding a big knife, sword-like machete."

Gluck was one of several people at the rabbi's property in Monsey, Rockland County, during celebrations for Hanukkah.

"He started hitting people right and left," continued Gluck, adding that the attacker did not say anything as he slashed victims.

"He came into the dinner room; he hit somebody there. He hit somebody in the kitchen and then he came back into the dining room," Gluck added.

The witness added that the weapon had a big handle and the attacker just "swung it back and forth."

"Everyone was screaming and panicking and shouting 'out out



Members of the Jewish community leave a synagogue next to the home of rabbi, Chaim Rottenberg, in Monsey, New York after a machete attack that took place the previous day

out.' It was chaos," Gluck said.

Gluck said he shouted at the attacker to try to get him to stop knifing others.

"He didn't, so I threw a coffee table at the guy. Then he started to come after me," Gluck told reporters.

The attacker followed him out

of the house.

"He started to scream 'Hey you, I'll get you.' I screamed for everybody to move away, so that all the people wouldn't get hurt."

Gluck said he then saw the attacker try to enter a synagogue next door to the rabbi's house

but he found the door locked.

"I didn't know how many people were in the synagogue. I just wanted to make sure that God

forbid he shouldn't go into the synagogue."

Quick-thinking Gluck said he noted down the license plate of the car and handed it to police. Police later arrested a suspect.

Victims were rushed to nearby hospitals. There were no official details on their injuries.

### 'Angry and scared'

The attack happened at about 10:00 pm on Saturday, the seventh night of Hanukkah.

It was the latest in a spate of

Monsey, a leafy, well-to-do town, on Sunday morning as worshippers attended synagogues to pray for the victims.

"We never thought anything like this could happen here," Joel Spitzer, who lives opposite the rabbi, said.

He says he now lives in fear of future attacks.

"It's always in the back of your mind. What's preventing it from happening again?" he said.

Rockland has the largest Jewish population per capita of any US county, with 31.4 percent, or 90,000 Jewish residents.

Spitzer added that he wanted to buy a gun to protect himself and said it was a worrying time for the community.

Earlier this month a shooting at a kosher deli in Jersey City killed six people including two suspects.

"One is more than enough but this is too many," he said.

Another resident, who asked not to be named, said members of the Jewish community felt "angry and scared."

"It's a very nice community here. It's always felt secure. This attack is completely shocking," he added.

attacks on the Jewish community in the New York area in recent weeks.

There was a solemn mood in

# Turkish military plane evacuates Somalia bomb victims

● The aircraft also brought doctors to help treat the some 125 people injured

● No group has claimed the bloody attack

● At least 16 of those killed were students from the capital's private Banadir University

AFP | Mogadishu

A Turkish military plane yesterday evacuated 16 gravely wounded victims of a devastating bombing that killed 79 people and overwhelmed local health services, in the latest attack on a city dogged by insecurity.

The aircraft also brought doctors to help treat the some 125 people injured in Saturday's blast, which happened when a vehicle packed with explosives detonated at a busy security checkpoint.

"The rescue mission continues since yesterday when the blast occurred and after long and diligent efforts, we have managed to evacuate 16 of the wounded people to Turkey for further medical treatment," Mogadishu mayor Omar Mohamed Mohamud told reporters at the airport.

No group has claimed the bloody attack, however President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo has blamed Islamist group Al-Shabaab, which regularly carries out car bombings and other attacks on the capital, in their decade-long bid to topple the internationally-backed government.

Saturday's bombing was the



Health services have been overwhelmed by the number of injured people



Scores of people were injured in the bombing



deadliest since truck exploded in 2017 near a fuel tanker, creating a fireball that killed over 500 people.

Farmaajo pinned the attack on the "terrorist organisation Al-Shabaab" in a televised message and slammed it as an attempt to "intimidate and terrorise the Somali public and to massacre them at every opportunity available".

At least 16 of those killed were students from the capital's pri-

private Banadir University, who had been travelling on a bus when the car bomb detonated at a busy intersection southwest of the Somali capital.

The director of the private Aamin Ambulance service, Abdulkadir Abdirahman Haji, said around 125 people were injured, a number which has overwhelmed health services in the capital.

Somali police chief Abdi Hassan Mohamed said Saturday that 79 had died, but the toll could increase.

"There are still rescue operations going on to assist those who have been massacred by the terrorists while going about their business," Somalia's Information Minister Mohamed Abdi Heyr told journalists.

"We have received this morning doctors and medicine sent by the Turkish government and we are working to separate people

“We have received this morning doctors and medicine sent by the Turkish government and we are working to separate people seriously wounded from others in order to send them outside the country and the rest will be treated by the doctors.”

SOMALIA'S INFORMATION MINISTER  
MOHAMED ABDI HEYR

The minister said about 24

doctors specialising in trauma had arrived from Turkey -- a key ally of Somalia.

Somalia's Security Minister Mohamed Abukar Islow who held a press conference alongside the mayor at the airport said some of the doctors from Turkey would stay to treat people in the country.

"There are doctors from Turkey some of them went back with the plane but others will remain here preferably to treat people here, our Qatari brothers will also send another plane which will evacuate some more people who are seriously wounded as well," he said.

'Life-threatening injuries'

Dozens of ambulances carried wounded people from various hospitals in the city to the Turkish-run Recep Tayyip Erdogan Hospital from where they were taken to the airport.

Abdulkadir Moalim, a Mogadishu resident, said his family was feeling desperate because his cousin had sustained serious head wounds in the blast.

"The problem with the blast is that even if you escape death, you can sustain life-threatening injuries like my cousin, who has injuries in the head and medical doctors here could not treat him inside the country," he said.

"Thank God, he will be taken to Turkey now and we are expecting that with time he gets well."

Two Turkish citizens were killed in the blast and according to medical sources, another two who were wounded will be among those airlifted home.

Since 2015, there have been 13 attacks in Somalia with death tolls above 20. Eleven of these have been in Mogadishu, according to a tally of figures. All of them involved car bombs.

# French government, unions exchange barbs in strike deadlock

Paris

The French government and a key trade union on Sunday exchanged bitter accusations over who was to blame for France's over three-week transport strike against pension reforms, as the stalemate showed little sign of relenting.

Deputy Transport Minister Jean-Baptiste Djebbari accused the hardline CGT union of a "systematic opposition to any reform" while the union's chief Philippe Martinez charged the government with strewing "chaos" in the conflict.

The strike -- now longer than the notorious 22-day strike of winter 1995 -- has lasted 25 days and is on course to surpass the longest transport strike in France which lasted for 28 days in 1986 and early 1987.

Aside from two driverless lines, the Paris metro was again almost complete-



The strike against government pensions reform is on course to surpass the longest transport stoppage in France which lasted for 28 days in 1986 and early 1987



One hardline union chief has accused President Macron of seeking to imitate former British leader Margaret Thatcher with his reform pledges



French activist Jean-Baptiste Redde holds up a banner at a Paris protest blaming President Macron and Prime Minister Edouard Philippe for the ongoing standoff

ly shut down on Sunday while only a fraction of high-speed TGV trains were running. The government and unions are only due to hold their next talks on January 7, two days ahead of a new day of mass demonstrations against the reform which is championed by President Emmanuel Macron.

In an interview with the Journal de Dimanche newspaper, Djebbari angrily accused the CGT of "attitudes of intimidation, harassment and even aggression" against railway workers who had opted not to down tools.

He accused the CGT of showing a "systematic opposition to any reform, of

blocking and sometimes intimidation". "The CGT wants to make its mark through media stunts. But the French are not going to be duped by the extreme-left politicisation of this movement," he added.

But in an interview with the same newspaper, Martinez accused the gov-

ernment of trying to ensure the conflict deteriorated further.

"Emmanuel Macron presents himself as a man of a new world but he is imitating Margaret Thatcher," he said, referring to the late British prime minister who sought to break the power of the unions in 1980s standoffs.

"There is real anger. Of course, not being paid for 24 days is tough. But the conflict is the result of two-and-a-half years of suffering," Martinez added.

He said he was awaiting concessions from Macron in a New Year's address Tuesday evening as well as recognition that "most people are not happy and that he (the president) was wrong".

The French president, elected in 2017 on pledges to reform France, has remained virtually silent on the standoff, save for a call for a Christmas truce that went unheeded and a vow not to take a presidential pension.

# Newly face-lifted Big Ben will ring in London New Year

Reuters | London

Britain's Big Ben bell in parliament's landmark clock tower will ring at midnight on New Year's Eve, marking the start of a year for the first time since its new face was revealed from under scaffolding halfway through restoration work.

The 96-metre-tall Elizabeth Tower, one of the most photo-



A Union Jack flag flutters in front of Big Ben as workers inspect one of its clocks

graphed buildings in Britain, has been enveloped in scaffolding for the last two years as the four clock dials are reglazed, ironwork repainted and intricately carved stonework cleaned and repaired.

In March, part of the scaffolding was removed, showing that the clock's once black numerals and hands have been repainted blue, in line with what

scientists say was its original colour.

Since restoration work began in 2017, Big Ben has been largely silenced, sounding only for important events. It last tolled on Remembrance Day on Nov. 11.

The bell will be tested several times in the run-up to New Year's Eve, parliament said in a statement.

The restoration of the entire Elizabeth Tower, worth an estimated 61 million pounds (\$79.78 million), will see it repaired and redecorated, including bringing colours back to the original design.

The work is due to be completed in 2021 and will be followed by a 4-billion-pound restoration programme of the entire parliament building.

## Fifty dead as cold wave sweeps through Bangladesh

Reuters | Dhaka

At least 50 people have died in Bangladesh as cold weather continues to sweep across the country, officials said.

The country's lowest temperature this year was recorded at 4.5 degrees Celsius (40.1° Fahrenheit) early on Sunday in Tetulia, a border town in Bangladesh's north, the weather office said.

At least 17 people died of acute respiratory infection and 33 from diarrhoea caused by rotavirus and other diseases across Bangladesh from Nov. 1 to Dec. 28, said Ayesha Akhter, a senior official of the government's health directorate.

Hospitals have been crowded with people suffering from cold-related illnesses, such as influenza, dehydration and pneumonia, she said.

Those on low incomes, par-

ticularly labourers, are the worst affected by the cold weather because they lack clothes while many others, especially children and the elderly people, are prone to diseases such as pneumonia, Akhter said.

The weather office said the cold snap, accompanied by chilly winds and dense fog, was likely to continue for few more days.

Thick fog forced authorities to divert several flights and delay others, aviation officials said.

"I have no choice. I have to work regardless of the harsh weather to feed my family," said Abdur Rahim, a rickshaw puller in the capital, Dhaka.

"The number of passengers has reduced sharply as people are avoiding going out. It is also getting difficult to pull the rickshaw as I feel like my body is frozen."

## Put away phones at mealtimes and talk to each other: pope

Reuters | Vatican City

Pope Francis yesterday urged people to talk to each other at mealtimes instead of using their mobile phones, citing Jesus, Mary and Joseph as an example for families to follow.

They "prayed, worked and communicated with each other", the pope told the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square during his weekly Angelus address.

"I ask myself if you, in your family, know how to communicate or are you like those kids at mealtimes where everyone is chatting on their mobile phone ... where there is silence like at a Mass but they don't communicate," the pope said. "We have to get back to com-



Pope Francis reacts as he arrives to deliver the "Urbi et Orbi" Christmas Day message from the main balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican

municating in our families," Francis said in his unscripted remarks. "Fathers, parents, children, grandparents, brothers and sisters, this is a task to undertake today, on the day of the Holy Family."

## Ukraine rivals exchange 200 prisoners in controversial swap



Ukrainian authorities and pro-Russian separatists in the war-torn east of the country swap dozens of prisoners in a frontline operation that stirred controversy in Kiev.

Reuters | Dar Es Salaam

A rhino believed to be the world's oldest has died at the age of 57 in a Tanzanian conservation area, authorities said.

Fausta, a female black rhino, died of natural causes in captivity on Friday in the Ngorongoro Crater, the state conservation body said.

"Records show that Fausta



The rhino named Fausta is seen in Ngorongoro, Tanzania

# White House warns N. Korea over 'Christmas gift' threat

● Experts have interpreted the message delivered earlier this month by Pyongyang as a warning that a long-range missile test was imminent

Washington

The White House said yesterday it would consider "other tools" beyond personal diplomacy if North Korea went ahead with a threatened "Christmas gift" that could reignite global tensions over its nuclear program.

Experts have interpreted the message delivered earlier this month by Pyongyang as a warning that a long-range missile test was imminent if the US did not give ground by the end of the year in negotiations to denuclearize the Korean peninsula.

Asked by ABC about possible consequences of such a test, White House national security advisor Robert O'Brien said he did not want to speculate.

"But we have a lot of tools in our toolkit, and additional pressure can be brought to bear on the North Koreans," he said. O'Brien said North Korea's



US National Security advisor Robert O'Brien said Trump's strategy of face-to-face diplomacy may have forced North Korean leader Kim Jong Un into a rethink

nuclear program was the "most difficult challenge in the world" when President Donald Trump took office in January 2017.

The aide suggested that Trump's strategy of face-to-face diplomacy may have forced North Korean leader Kim Jong Un into a rethink.

"So perhaps he's reconsidered that. But we'll have to wait and see," O'Brien said. "We're going to monitor it closely. It's a situation that concerns us, of course."

Talks on denuclearization have been largely deadlocked since a second summit between Trump and Kim in Hanoi collapsed at the start of this year.

Pyongyang has issued a series of increasingly assertive



North Korea has demanded concessions from the United States in deadlocked nuclear talks, setting a year-end deadline

comments as its time limit approaches.

It has carried out a series of static tests at its Sohae rocket facility this month, after a number of weapons launches in recent weeks.

"We'll find out what the surprise is and we'll deal with it very successfully," Trump told reporters at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida on Tuesday.

"Everybody's got surprises for me, but let's see what happens. I handle them as they come along."

"Maybe it's a nice present, maybe it's a present where he sends me a beautiful vase as opposed to a missile test," the president joked.

## Sydney fireworks to go ahead despite massive protest petition

Sydney

A petition to cancel Sydney's famous New Year's Eve fireworks and use the money to fight bushfires ringing the city has topped 260,000 signatures, but officials say the show will go on.

Sydney is spending Aus\$6.5 million (\$4.5 million) on this year's fireworks display -- funds that the Change.org petition argues would be better spent on supporting volunteer firefighters and farmers suffering through a brutal drought.

The massive fireworks display on Sydney Harbour "may traumatise some people", the petition says, "as there is enough smoke in the air".

Toxic smoke haze from bushfires raging across Australia has blanketed Sydney and other major cities for weeks.

Entire towns have been left in ruins by devastating blazes in worst-hit New South Wales (NSW) state, where eight people have died and an area the size of Belgium burnt to cinders.

"2019 has been a catastrophic



Sydney's spectacular New Year fireworks display, watched by an estimated one billion people globally, is worth US\$91 million annually to the New South Wales economy

year in Australia for Floods and Fires," the petition states. "All states should say NO to FIREWORKS."

A City of Sydney spokesman said while they "appreciate the concerns" of the people opposed to holding the fireworks during a bushfire crisis, cancelling the celebration would have "little practical benefit for affected communities".

"We began preparations and planning for the NYE celebra-

tions 15 months ago. This means most of the budget, largely used for crowd safety and cleaning measures, has already been spent," the spokesman said in a statement.

"Cancelling the event would seriously hurt Sydney businesses. It would also ruin plans for tens of thousands of people from across the country and overseas who have booked flights, hotels and restaurants for New Year's Eve."

Sydney's council added that it has donated Aus\$620,000 to support the bushfire and drought response and would also promote a Red Cross disaster relief fund during the televised fireworks broadcast.

A heatwave is due to sweep across parts of NSW in the coming days, with deteriorating bushfire conditions expected to hit Tuesday.

NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said he did not expect any impact on the fireworks, but he was prepared to cancel them last-minute if he deemed it to be too risky.

"The pyrotechnics organisations and local authorities are used to working with us around exemptions in the summer period, whether it is Christmas, New Year or some other event," he said.

"They know the arrangements, the procedures, and we will work through to make sure that risk is appropriately addressed and, where necessary, we won't allow them to go ahead."

## World's oldest rhino' dies in Tanzania at 57

Reuters | Dar Es Salaam

A rhino believed to be the world's oldest has died at the age of 57 in a Tanzanian conservation area, authorities said.

Fausta, a female black rhino, died of natural causes in captivity on Friday in the Ngorongoro Crater, the state conservation body said.

"Records show that Fausta



The rhino named Fausta is seen in Ngorongoro, Tanzania

lived (longer) than any rhino in the world and survived in the Ngorongoro, free-ranging, for more than 54 years before it was kept in a sanctuary for the last three years of its life in 2016," the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority said in a statement.

Fausta was first located in 1965 at between three and four

years' old by a scientist. Her health deteriorated from 2016 after hyena attacks, when she was taken into refuge.

"Fausta survived 57 years without bearing calves," the statement added.

Rhinos' life expectancy is around 40 years in the wild but they can live an extra decade in captivity, ac-

ording to the Ngorongoro authority.

Decimated by poaching, black rhinos now number around 5,500, according to charity Save The Rhino. The smaller of the two African species, they are found around south and east Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

# What Syria, Bosnia and Chechnya have in common?

*All wars are characterised by crimes of unimaginable horror but despite templates that overlap, no two conflicts are the same*

Janine di Giovanni

On New Year's Eve 1999, as most people were planning millennial festivities and protecting their data against Y2K, I was hunkered down with old-fashioned paper maps, planning how I could smuggle myself inside a closed, snow bound country.

The breakaway republic of Chechnya was fighting a war against powerful Russian forces, and independent journalists were banned from entering the country. Closed countries were a red flag. They meant something bad was happening and it always compelled me to reach there fast. I was planning to enter Chechnya by foot, either through the snowy Georgian mountains or with smugglers through neighbouring Ingushetia.

That is what the 1990s were: a series of brutal, backyard wars, commencing with Bosnia, a war that shaped my life as a journalist and a human rights activist, to Africa – the genocide in Rwanda, the horrible wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, and conflicts in Zimbabwe and the Congo. I ended that decade reporting the Nato wars in Kosovo and the violent turmoil in East Timor.

I did make it to Chechnya, in time to witness the fall of Grozny to Russian forces at the end of January 2000. My two colleagues and I were virtually the only foreigners and thus independent witnesses inside the country and our documentation of the terrors at that time is indelible.

On the day Grozny fell, holed up with Chechen soldiers in bloodied winter-white uniforms, driven nearly insane by the aerial bombing, I remember putting my satellite phone down as I filed the last word of my report. It was a graphic chronicle of the bombing, destruction, fear, starvation and misery.



A Syrian woman who fled from government forces' advance on Maaret al Numan in the south of the Idlib province.

Just as I dictated my last word out to a copy taker in London (this was long before modern technology) the battery died. I remember the tremendous sense of relief that, at the very least, the story had gotten out to the world. That was the power of the press.

This decade will close leaving bitter memories of the war in Syria. Even though I teach my students that no two conflicts are the same, there are always rudimentary templates. And the similarities I saw between Syria, Bosnia, and Chechnya were the relentless, cruel attacks on civilians. Syria, however, took on

a dimension that was absent in the earlier wars – that of a proxy war which involved numerous countries, all unaffected by the plight of the Syrian people.

All wars are characterised by crimes of unimaginable horror. In Bosnia, there was ethnic cleansing, Muslim villages burnt to obliterate the gene pool. There were camps where women were raped dozens of times a day. There were 'concentration camps' in Omarksa and Sanski Most, and the desperate siege of Sarajevo.

In Syria, the cruelty of the war crimes was different. In the begin-

In Bosnia, there were planes obliterating and civilian enclaves. Hospitals in Sarajevo hit by mortars and lacked medical supplies and electricity. But there were no cruel, deliberate attacks on health facilities, which is one of the hallmarks of the regime's war crimes.

# Death of Ahmed Gaid Salah leaves Algeria

ABDELKAR CHEREF

Just 11 days after Abdelmadjid Tebboune was elected president of a deeply polarised Algeria, the country's powerful military chief Lt Gen Ahmed Gaid Salah died of a heart attack.

This unexpected development has prompted questions about the future of Algeria's political system; it is obviously too soon to tell if Gaid Salah's death will bring further instability to the country, or whether – as some would hope – this will change the forces at work within the system.

Before addressing these questions, however, it is important to talk about the life of Gaid Salah, 79, and the system that he helped entrench in the north African country.

Ever since Algeria gained independence from France in 1962, its army has been the power behind the seat occupied by its leaders. Gaid Salah was himself a central figure within the power structure since 2004, when he was appointed chief of staff by then president Abdelaziz Bouteflika. He got the job because his predecessor, Mohamed Lamari, was dismissed for vehemently opposing Mr Bouteflika's quest for a second term in office.

Born in 1940, Gaid Salah joined the Algerian Liberation Army at the age of 17 to partake in its

struggle against colonial rule. After independence, he fought in the six-day, Arab-Israeli war of 1967, as well as the Ramadan War in 1973. He trained at a Soviet military academy thereafter and upon his return, rose to become the army's chief of ground forces.

For the past two decades, Gaid Salah firmly supported Mr Bouteflika – the architect of the chaos Algeria currently finds itself in. He notably helped dismantle the DRS intelligence service, sending its powerful head Mohamed "Toufik" Mediene into retirement in 2015.

Gaid Salah also backed Mr Bouteflika's unpopular bid for a fifth term in office earlier this year, an announcement that triggered unparalleled pro-democracy protests in February as demonstrators demanded sweeping changes to the way the country is run – including the army's withdrawal from politics. Such was the influence of Gaid Salah, though, that in April he forced Mr Bouteflika to step down after 20 years in power – leaving the former in charge of the country.

Yet even as the Hirak (protest) movement's call for Mr Bouteflika's removal was met, Gaid Salah and the demonstrators traversed parallel roads. Gaid Salah's perception of governance was always outdated and thus antagonistic to the Hirak's specific demands.

He may have played an impor-



Lt Gen Ahmed Gaid Salah was one of the most powerful people in Algeria and whose death marks an important chapter in the country's history.

tant role in modernising the army, and was also responsible for an anti-corruption campaign that led to the arrest and conviction of Mr Bouteflika's powerful brother Said and his circle of oligarchs. However, protesters who at first praised Gaid Salah for his involvement began to feel contempt for him. Far from meeting the Hirak's demands, he ordered the arrest of scores of activists, with many still detained

on vague charges such as "harming national unity" and "undermining the morale of the army".

When he announced the presidential election earlier this month, declaring that the ballot would help restore stability in the country, thousands of Algerians took to the streets. They denounced the five presidential candidates who were essentially former apparatchiks of Mr Bouteflika's government. How-

ever, Gaid Salah described opposing the election to "a criminal gang" who of bitterness and visceral Algeria". He also ordered forces to "stop any plans of bances of the poll".

Mr Tebboune's victory reinforced public confidence in the election, with many mockingly labelling the prime minister as the "cl-

*Following the powerful military chief's demise, the question is whether the newly-elected president can reform the army-backed political system*

1927

**The Ginza Line**, the first subway line in Asia, opens in Tokyo, Japan.

1935

**The Italian Air Force** bombs a Swedish Red Cross hospital during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War.

1936

**The United Auto Workers** union stages its first sitdown strike.



1943

**Subhas Chandra Bose** raises the flag of Indian independence at Port Blair.



obliterating cities and civilian enclaves. Hospitals in Sarajevo were hit by mortars and often lacked medical supplies and electricity. But there were no cruel, deliberate attacks on healthcare facilities, which is one of the hallmarks of the Syrian regime's war crimes. Doctors were not killed in Bosnia simply because they were doctors. But in Syria, this was a chosen tactic.

Three years ago on December 16, 2016, when Aleppo fell to Syrian regime forces, the UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon declared: "Aleppo is a synonym for hell."

In Bosnia, my colleagues and I felt we had really made a difference. A group of us who felt committed to the plight of civilians in Sarajevo refused to abandon the city and continued to write about it for years.

But nothing, not even Bosnia could prepare me for the level of horror when the Syrian War started in 2011, not even, perhaps, my memories of the Rwandan genocide. And journalism did not have the same impact. Once ISIS entered the game in 2012, and began kidnapping and murdering my colleagues, journalists were not immune.

Working in war zones was always about documentation: to prove that this happened and that those who did it would be held accountable. Access in Syria was so restricted that it made reporting much tougher and riskier for us, though not impossible.

As we move into another decade, it is too idealistic and perhaps silly to hope that wars will stop, that governments and regimes will grow to respect and honour international law and the Geneva Convention. Three decades of war reporting and conflict analysis have taught me – quoting the much disputed quote – that only the dead know the end of war.

ning of that war, when I was able to work in regime-controlled areas, I began documenting rape used as a tool of war to silence and create fear in communities.

But in a post-9/11 world, wars had changed. What a difference 20 years makes in not just combat techniques and brutality, but also in terms of technology. In Syria, I could report using WhatsApp and my cell phone.

In comparison to the proxy war of Syria, Bosnia seems simplistic, even though the political twists and turns at the time confounded those of us living there.

In Bosnia, there were no planes

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## Algeria at a crossroads

**Mr Tebboune must know that he was elected with the lowest-ever turnout and will need the support of Gen Chengriha in what is a crucial moment in the country's history.**



on social media given his proximity to the chief of staff.

During the past 10 months since the Hirak movement swung into action, Gaid Salah underlined one reality about Algerian politics – the omnipotent power of the army over other institutions and most of all, on political life in the country. His passing, while no doubt being a major event in Algeria's post-independence history, is unlikely to change that fact. As French historian Benjamin Stora recently put it, "the death of Gaid Salah is not going to lead to a reconfiguration of the political forces".

He is right. Within hours of his demise, the regime moved quickly to appoint Gen Said Chengriha as his successor; just five years

younger, Gen Chengriha is from the same generation of generals as Gaid Salah. And yet two questions arise: first, will the new chief of staff adopt a different approach vis-a-vis the Hirak? And second, will he go on to dismantle the military-dominated regime? The answer of course is: highly unlikely.

The army's dominant role was once again highlighted last week when one of the first steps Mr Tebboune took after being elected was to present Gaid Salah with the order of merit during his swearing-in ceremony. Which means that his sudden death will have come as a setback for the new president, having lost an important ally even as he attempts to tackle the protests.

Mr Tebboune must know that he was elected with the lowest-ever turnout and will need the support of Gen Chengriha in what is a crucial moment in the country's history. Even as his first initiative has been to set up an unconditional dialogue with the Hirak, the new president is facing a Cornelian dilemma: opt for thorough democratisation of the country or maintain status quo.

For so many Algerians, Mr Tebboune appears to be the reincarnation of the previous leadership. And yet there is hope among many others that he might still turn out to be a reformer.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



Too many of our leaders put personal/partisan interests above the interests of the people. If Dems are for something, Republicans are automatically against it & vice versa. As president my personal commitment to you is to always base decisions on what's best for the American ppl.

@TulsiGabbard

02



We will be out of the EU on 31st January. We will invest billions more in our NHS. We will level up and unite our country. #Peoples-Government

@BorisJohnson

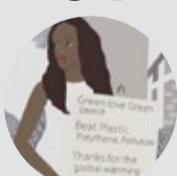
03



President Kovind presented Dadasaheb Phalke Award to Shri Amitabh Bachchan for his outstanding and invaluable contribution to cinema spanning over five decades. An actor par excellence, his work has entertained and inspired generations in India and across the world. @Sr-Bachchan

@rashtrapatibhvn

04



This is me! I have been striking for #Congo-rainforest for 66 days now from Uganda. I have not been able to get it to be talked about in the news sadly. So exhausted. Any help is welcome. Please share this on your TL.Thank you Africa fires need to be stopped @GretaThunberg

@vanessa\_vash

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

## Past challenges and the year ahead



YENUS 5

In 2019, the Arab world has witnessed persistent violence, frequent displacements and widespread protests. Lebanon, Iraq and Iran, which were relatively quiet, when it comes to street protests and demonstrations by their respective citizens, observed an upward increase in violence. The warfare in Yemen, Libya and Syria continues unabated, not to mention the political stagnation in Palestine, which the world community seems to have ignored.

The rift between the quartet (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt) and Qatar has seen no improvement despite a series of GCC initiated diplomatic rapprochements. Once again, The Emir of Qatar has boycotted the GCC summit, which took place in Riyadh recently.

Qatar's belligerent political posturing seems to continue indicating that the country will remain isolated for some time to come. The GCC summit was the right platform to address regional concerns and unfortunately, Qatar has failed to exploit the opportunity. It was a golden chance lost.

Customarily, issues of concern that go beyond the GCC is handled by the Jeddah based Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), an inter-governmental organization established in 1969. Cases of complaints, conflict or mutual concerns that affect Islamic countries ranging from solving conflicts to affording financial assistance to member states are dealt with by the OIC.

Recently, some mostly non-Arab Islamic countries, attempted to establish an alternative to OIC, with suspicious agenda that has the potential to divide the 57 Islamic countries subscribing to the OIC. A dangerous path that can weaken, sow division, encourage strife and hinder development projects among OIC members.

One such attempt was the four-day conference that took place from Dec 18- 21, 2019 held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Notorious individuals and countries suspected of supporting terrorism including Iran were involved. The Emir of Qatar, Sheik Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who boycotted the recent GCC summit, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani attended the summit known as the Perdana Dialogue.

The Kuala Lumpur gathering and the make-up of the attendees speaks volumes as to the intention of the meeting. Several countries belonging to the OIC have boycotted it, describing it as a 'summit of conspiracy' against the main establishment. These seemingly unholy meeting came at a time where big social and political changes are taking place in Saudi Arabia in particular and the GCC in general.

The Arab world has several socio-economic challenges to deal ranging from economic downturn to the growing unemployment among the young population. However, to confront all these social malaises, they need to solve the political issues that faced them in unison.

Despite the political turmoil the region is witnessing, Bahrain remains the oasis of peace, a beacon of tolerance and coexistence and shows remarkable economic improvements. It has ensured political stability, attained high marks in major social parameters. In short, Bahrain stands out as an inspiration of development and prosperity to other countries.

The number of tourists flocking to the Kingdom soared, and Manama has been named 'Capital of Arab Tourism' for the second time in just seven years. The designation is a reflection of its excellent tourism services, extensive investment in family entertainment outlets and availability of on arrival visa entrance programmes for citizens of several countries.

The endeavours to improve the tourism business is expected to increase in the coming year, which can greatly contribute to the non-oil revenue the kingdom intends to generate.

The construction of the new airport terminal expected to be functional in the first quarter of the New Year, will have more advanced facilities to satisfy the growing number of tourists.

Bahrain being the hubs of dozens of business activities has celebrated 100 years of providing public services including education, banking and public security. These services are expected to develop in line with digital economy the world is witnessing. We hope that better times are coming.

Finally, I would like to extend my New Year best wishes to the leadership and people living in this beautiful Island of ours.

**Bahrain being the hubs of dozens of business activities has celebrated 100 years of providing public services including education, banking and public security. These services are expected to develop in line with digital economy the world is witnessing.**

# business

## Lulu Dream Drive party at Ramli Mall on Tuesday

16 Nissan Patrol SUVs will be given as raffle prizes along with 1000 other consolation prizes

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's biggest-ever car raffle draw, the LuLu Dream Drive, is all set for a grand prize draw tomorrow at the Ramli Mall.

Sixteen lucky LuLu customers will drive into 2020 as proud owners of 16 Nissan Patrol top-of-the-line SUVs while 1000 more winners will win valuable consolation prizes.

The fun-filled evening begins at 5:30 pm and since it is also New Year's Eve, LuLu Hypermarket will be putting on a grand show of entertainment, music and dance for all visitors to enjoy.

"This will be a grand occasion and a great way to enter 2020. It is LuLu Hypermarket's fun way of thanking all our customers who have supported us," said Director Juzer Rupawala. "The LuLu Dream Drive promotion saw hundreds of customers who spent a minimum of BD5 entering the raffle to win our 16 Nissan Patrol SUVs and also 1000 valuable consolation prizes."

LuLu invites all to the Dream Drive party at the Ramli Mall.

## Egypt approves Uber acquisition of Careem

Reuters | Cairo

The Egyptian Competition Authority (ECA) said yesterday it had approved ride-hailing group Uber's acquisition of former regional rival Careem after the regulator agreed to a set of commitments proposed by the US-based service.



Careem employees walk past the company's headquarters in Dubai, UAE

Uber bought Careem for \$3.1 billion in March in a deal expected to close in January. Careem will become a wholly

owned subsidiary of Uber but will continue to operate as an independent brand with independent management.

## Ghana says it is determined to join new West African currency

Reuters | Abidjan

Ghana is determined to "do whatever we can" to join a new West African currency called the Eco, which will replace the France-backed CFA franc as soon as next year in eight regional countries, Ghana's presidency said.

Ghana's entry into the currency union would make it the bloc's largest economy, narrowly ahead of neighbor Ivory

Coast. Ghana is not part of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and has its own currency, the Cedi.

Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara and French President Emmanuel Macron announced earlier this month that West Africa's monetary union had agreed to cut some financial links with Paris that have underpinned the region's common currency since its creation after World War Two.

## Almoayed Chambers announces listing of Sprinkle Holding on BIM

**"We would like to congratulate Sprinkle Holding and Bahrain Bourse for this monumental listing. We are confident that this will pave the way for future listings and also create awareness of this unique platform introduced by Bahrain Bourse to facilitate economic growth in the SME sector"**

MARIA LIASIDES

ALMOAYED CHAMBERS CHAIRWOMAN



In pictures, officials during the listing of Sprinkle Holding BSC (c) on the Bahrain Investment Market (BIM).

TDT | Manama

Almoayed Chambers is pleased to be the first authorised sponsor to successfully list a company, Sprinkle Holding BSC (c) on the Bahrain Investment Market (BIM).

The listing ceremony was held at Bahrain Bourse of the 12th of December 2019.

Sprinkle Holding BSC (c) is a specialised Fintech company with global affiliates in the US, Europe and China.

Bahrain Investment Market is an equity market introduced by Bahrain Bourse in March 2017 to facilitate companies seeking to raise growth capital.

Almoayed Chambers is very optimistic that this maiden listing will pave way for the SME sector to utilize the opportunities and benefits of this emerging platform, BIM. Sprinkle Holding's listing will create awareness amongst the issuers and help them realize the benefits that this alternative listing venue has to offer. Given the ease of listing and the relaxed regulatory environment, potential issuers should consider this platform as a cost-effective way to raise growth capital. It has been structured to provide suitable financing options for entrepreneurial ventures in dif-



ferent stages of their life cycles, especially in their growth phase.

Apart from access to capital, ease of listing and the relaxed regulatory ecosystem, there are many other benefits that BIM offers such as brand enhancement, transparency, ease of transactions (purchase and sale of shares) and an added layer of comfort for various stakeholders. This additional layer of comfort resulting from the regulatory environment can prove vital when approaching investors or financial institutions, in the instance, the company wants to consider conventional debt instruments to raise funds. Alternatively, the platform can be used as an effective substitute to debt financing, paying out dividends rather than making interest plus principal

payments to banks can be less burdensome on cash flows of the company, especially in their growth cycles. The possibilities are immense.

From an investors perspective, BIM will offer fresher companies from various sectors and regions to invest in, it gives investors access to deal flow which otherwise would not have been available to them. Based on their risk propensity and return expectations, an informed investor can take positions accordingly with the comfort of an exit mechanism to divest at any time at prevailing market rates.

Ever since the appointment of Almoayed Chambers as one of the sponsors in BIM, it has strongly advocated bringing awareness to companies of the

value of being listed on this unique venue. The firm also believes this initiative by Bahrain Bourse will allow the Bahraini economy to further stand out in the region.

According to Almoayed Chambers chairwoman Ms Maria Liasides: "We would like to congratulate Sprinkle Holding and Bahrain Bourse for this monumental listing. We are confident that this will pave the way for future listings and also create awareness of this unique platform introduced by Bahrain Bourse to facilitate economic growth in the SME sector."

For inquiries or further information about BIM Listing, call Mr Murtaza Dada or Ms Evangeline Canilang at +973-1710000.

## Ithmaar Bank announces key promotions

TDT | Manama

Ithmaar Bank, a Bahrain-based Islamic retail Bank, announced yesterday the promotion of key executives.

Ithmaar Group Chief Executive Officer, Ahmed Abdul Rahim, announced promoting Saqib Mustafa to Assistant General Manager, Chief Financial Officer; Enas Mohammed Rahimi to Executive Senior Manager, Head of Human Resources; Mohammed Ali Safar to Executive Senior Manager, Head of Private Banking; and Ahmed Fareed Buqais to Executive Senior Manager, Head of Information Technology.



Ahmed Fareed Buqais



Enas Mohammed Rahimi



Mohammed Ali Safar



Saqib Mustafa

Abdul Rahim congratulated the executives on their promo-

tions and wished them continued success in their careers.

"Ithmaar Bank is committed

to becoming the retail bank of choice in Bahrain," said Abdul

Rahim. "It is a commitment we take very seriously and we recognise that to realize such an ambitious goal, we must continuously improve our products and services while listening closely to our customers and working to grow closer them," he said. Earlier this year, Ithmaar Bank named Mohamed Hassan Janahi as General Manager, Head of Retail Banking Group; Abdulla Abdulaziz Talib as General Manager, Head of Business Banking Group, and Yusuf Abdulla Alkhan as General Manager, Head of Information Technology (IT), Banking Operations and Administration.

# Batelco opens its newest branch in Saar Mall

TDI | Manama

Batelco's latest retail branch, located in Saar Mall, was launched during an opening ceremony held in the presence of Northern Governor HE Ali bin Al Shaikh Abdul Hussain Al Asfor.

Batelco General Manager Corporate Communications and CSR, Shaikh Bader bin Rashid Al Khalifa, and Batelco General Manager Consumer Division Maha Abdulrahman were present.

In his inaugural address, Northern Governor commended the efforts of Batelco for its contributions towards strengthening the digital journey.

Bahrain said the customer service booth previously located in the mall is now replaced with the new standalone store.

The branch offers the full range of Batelco products and services, in addition to the latest packages and smart devices. The branch opens from 9 am to 10 pm seven days a week.



Northern Governor Ali bin Al Shaikh Abdul Hussain Al Asfor and Batelco General Manager Consumer Division Maha Abdulrahman with other top officials and guests during the inauguration



A special event was held last night at the Niche Garden in The Avenues Mall to announce the launch of a new perfume. The fragrance, Oriental Leather by Memo Paris was launched at the event organised by Al Hawaj. It also featured a meet-and-greet with the company's co-founder John Malloy. Also present were Al Hawaj managing director Jawad Al Hawaj, deputy general manager Abdulwahab Al Hawaj, senior company officials and guests.

## Musk sees Las Vegas tunnel opening in 2020

San Francisco

A nearly mile-long tunnel in Las Vegas meant to showcase a "traffic busting" alternative for overcrowded cities should be completed next year, innovative entrepreneur Elon Musk said on Twitter.

The people-moving tunnel is being built by The Boring Company, one of several future-oriented enterprises founded by Musk, along with the Tesla electric-car company and SpaceX, which develops launch vehicles.

The 48-year-old billionaire tweeted late Friday that "Boring Co is completing its first commercial tunnel in Vegas, going from Convention Center to Strip."

In a second tweet he said it would be "hopefully fully oper-



Entrepreneur Elon Musk, here in a modified Tesla electric vehicle at his Boring Company's California test site in December 2018, expects the first commercial version of the people-moving tunnel to open in 2020 in Las Vegas

ational in 2020."

The Las Vegas convention center is a sprawling complex being further enlarged -- the 0.8-mile (1.3 kilometer) tunnel

would facilitate travel within the center and to the city's famous Strip, where many of its major hotels and casinos are located. Musk's company last

year showed reporters a new test tunnel in California, but Las Vegas is Boring's first paying customer.

The cost of the tunnel, originally estimated to be as low as \$35 million, has since risen to \$52.5 million, according to the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

He says the idea came to him as he sat in growing frustration in his car, stuck in a traffic jam between his pricey villa in Bel Air, California and the SpaceX offices in Hawthorne, south of Los Angeles.

He envisions thousands of autonomous electric vehicles eventually moving millions of people underground at speeds up to 155 miles per hour (250 kph) -- far higher than the moderate 35 mph speeds planned for the short Las Vegas link.

## Financials lift most Gulf bourses higher



An investor watching stock movements at the Saudi Stock Market (AFP)

● **Aramco inches up another 0.1pc**

● **21 of 30 Egyptian stocks slide**

Reuters

Most major Gulf markets rose yesterday as financial shares climbed, with Saudi leading the gains, though Egypt was pressured by a sell-off in blue chip stocks.

Saudi's benchmark index ended up 0.7pc, with Al Rajhi Bank rising 1.2pc and Saudi Basic Industries gaining 0.9pc.

State-owned Saudi Aramco inched up 0.1pc. On Tuesday Aramco said Goldman Sachs may make additional purchases of the oil giant's shares to support the price of the stock. Stabilisation period will end on Jan. 9.

### Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.7pc to 8,412 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 0.4pc to 5,073 pts
DUBAI	▲ 0.4pc to 2,777 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.1pc to 10,419 pts
EGYPT	▼ 0.5pc to 13,813 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.2pc to 1,607 pts
OMAN	▲ 0.6pc to 3,891 pts
KUWAIT	▲ 0.1pc at 6,932 pts

But Arab National Bank lost 1.3pc. Post trading hours, the lender's board proposed a lower second-half dividend.

Outside of the Gulf, Egypt's blue-chip index declined 0.5pc with 21 of its 30 stocks in the red, including Commercial International Bank, which was 1.3pc lower, and EFG Hermes, down 2.1pc.

Exchange data on Sunday showed foreign investors were net sellers of Egyptian stocks. Dubai's index added 0.4pc, with the United Arab Emirates' largest sharia-compliant lender Dubai Islamic Bank and Emirates NBD Bank increasing 1.1pc and 0.8pc respectively.

In Abu Dhabi the index climbed 0.4pc, driven by a 0.4pc rise in First Abu Dhabi Bank and a 0.6pc gain in telecoms firm Etisalat.

The Dubai government will spend a record 66.4 billion dirhams (\$18.08 billion) in 2020 as part of its budget, hiking outlays to stimulate the economy and support the Expo 2020 world fair, Reuters reported, citing state news agency WAM. State spending will increase by 17pc, compared with the original budget plan of 56.8 billion dirhams for 2019.

The Qatari index also closed down 0.1pc, with Qatar National Bank, the Gulf's largest lender, dropping 1pc and Commercial Bank shedding 1.1pc.

# Dubai budget sets record spending

● State spending will increase by 17 per cent

● Salary and wage allowances in the 2020 budget accounted for 30pc of total expenditure while grants and support accounted for 24pc

● Dubai previously projected its economy will grow 3.2pc in 2020

● State revenues are projected to increase 25pc to 64 billion dirhams

Reuters | Dubai

Dubai expects to substantially increase state spending next year to stimulate the emirate's economy and support the Expo 2020 world fair, according to the 2020 budget released yesterday.

State spending will increase by 17 per cent to a record 66.4



People look at a model of Expo 2020

billion dirhams (\$18.1 billion), compared with 56.8 billion seen in the budget plan for 2019, a Dubai government statement said.

The increase is despite infrastructure spending being set to drop for a second consecutive year, to 8 billion dirhams, as the emirate nears the start of Expo 2020.

Dubai, with a diversified trade and tourism economy but which

Labourers work at the construction site of Expo 2020 project in Dubai



does not have vast oil wealth and which has faced a real estate

market downturn since prices peaked in 2014, is banking on Expo 2020 to boost economic activity.

It has spent heavily in prepara-

tion for the six months long fair, which starts in October, although it has tapered its investment as associated projects were completed.

It did not say what accounted for the planned additional spending, but did say salary and wage allowances in the 2020 budget accounted for 30pc of total expenditure while grants and support accounted for 24pc.

The government also announced a special reserve of 3pc of total expected expenditures as part of preparation for the Expo 2020.

A woman walks past the logo of Expo 2020



Dubai previously project-

ed its economy will grow 3.2pc in 2020, faster than the 2.1pc growth in 2019. It grew

by 1.94pc in 2018, its slowest pace since a contraction in 2009 when the economy was hobbled by a debt crisis.

Excluding investment spending and non-recurring revenue it could achieve an operating surplus of 1.96 billion dirhams in 2020, the government said. It had projected an operating surplus of 850 million dirhams in 2019.

The overall deficit was projected at 2.4 billion dirhams in 2020, narrowing from a budgeted 5.8 billion dirhams in 2019.

State revenues are projected to increase 25pc to 64 billion dirhams, despite previous decisions to cut and freeze some fees for businesses. Revenues had been projected to grow by just 1.2pc in the 2019 budget.

Non-tax revenue will account for 60pc of total expected revenue, while tax revenue should account for 29pc. Revenue from government investment represent 5pc and oil revenue will account for 6pc.

Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum also adopted a three-year budget cycle from 2020 to 2022 with total expenditure of 196 billion dirhams.

## Sixty years on, Africa still seeks right model for growth

AFP | Paris

As 1960 dawned, sub-Saharan Africa braced for historic change: that year, 17 of its countries were destined to gain independence from European colonial powers.

But six decades on, the continent is mired in many problems. It is struggling to build an economic model that encourages enduring growth, addresses poverty and provides a future for its youth.

Here are some of the key issues:

### Youth 'explosion'

Africa's population grew from 227 million in 1960 to more than one billion in 2018. More than 60 per cent are aged under 25, according to the Brookings Institution, a US think tank.

"The most striking change for me is the increasing reality of disaffected youth... a younger population that is ready to explode at any moment," Cameroonian sociologist Francis Nyamnjoh said.

"They are hungry for political freedoms, they are hungry for economic opportunities and they are hungry for social fulfilment."

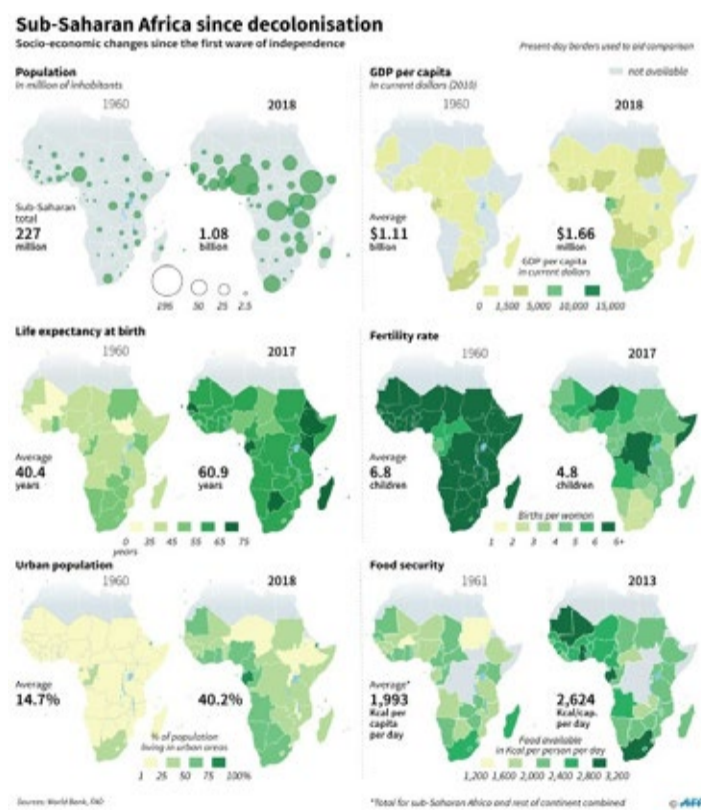
Joblessness is a major peril. Unemployed youths are an easy prey for armed groups, particularly jihadist movements in the Sahel, or may be tempted to risk clandestine emigration, often at the cost of their lives.

The continent's population is expected to double by 2050, led by Nigeria, Ethiopia and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

### Poverty and inequality

The proportion of Africa's population living below the poverty line -- less than \$1.90 (1.7 euros) per day -- fell from 54.7 pc in 1990 to 41.4 pc in 2015, according to the World Bank.

But this average masks enormous differences from one



A lack of opportunity for Africa's swelling ranks of youths could spell trouble

country to another, exemplified by Gabon (3.4 pc of the population in 2017) and Madagascar (77.6 pc in 2012).

"The inequalities between countries are as extreme as in Asia and the inequalities within countries as as high as in Latin



Sub-Saharan Africa has half of the countries deemed to be the world's most corrupt by Transparency International



Attempts by African countries to get around fiscal constraints didn't always end well, such as this Zimbabwean man who decorated his hat with worthless currency



Nearly all of Africa's cotton is exported without having been processed



Even if poverty rates have fallen across much of Africa, the continent is still beset by enormous inequality

expansion of megacities like Lagos and Kinshasa, typically ringed by shantytowns where people live in extreme poverty, although many medium-sized cities have also grown.

More than 40 pc of Africans now live in urban areas, compared with 14.6 pc in 1960, ac-

ording to the World Bank.

In 1960, Cairo and Johannesburg were the only African cities with more than a million residents. Consultants McKinsey and Company estimate that by 2030, about 100 cities will have a million inhabitants, twice as many as in Latin America.

But this urban growth is not necessarily the outcome of a rural exodus, said Cottet.

"The population is rising across Africa as a whole, rather faster in towns than in rural areas," said Cottet.

"There is also the problem of unemployment in towns -- (rural) people have little interest in migrating there."

### Lost decades of growth

Growth in Africa slammed to a halt in the early 1980s, braked by a debt crisis and structural adjustment policies. It took two decades to recover.

Per-capita GDP, as measured in constant US dollars, shows the up-and-downs, although these figures are official and do not cover Africa's large informal economy: \$1,112 in 1960, \$1,531 in 1974, \$1,166 in 1994 and \$1,657 in 2018.

"If you do an assessment over 60 years, something serious happened in Africa, with the loss of 20 years. But there is no denying that what is happening now is more positive," Cottet said.

The IMF's and World Bank's structural adjustment programmes "broke the motors of growth," said Nubukpo, whose book, "L'Urgence Africaine," (The African Emergency) makes the case for a revamped growth model.

The belt-tightening programmes "emphasised the short term, to the detriment of investments in education, health and training."

### New thinking needed

Africa has a low rate of industrialisation, is heavily dependent

on agriculture and its service sector has only recently started to emerge.

"We have not escaped the colonial model. Basically, Africa remains a producer and exporter of raw materials," said Nubukpo.

He gave the example of cotton: 97 pc of Africa's cotton fibre is exported without processing -- the phase which adds value to raw materials and provides jobs.

For Jean-Joseph Boillot, a researcher attached to the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs, "Africa is still seeking an economic model of development."

"There is very little development of local industries," he said.

"This can only be achieved through a very strong approach, of continental industrial protection -- but this is undermined by the great powers in order to pursue free trade.

"The Chinese, the Indians and Westerners want to be able to go on distributing their products."

### Governance problem

Lack of democracy, transparency and efficient judicial systems are major brakes on African growth, and wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, said the experts.

Of the 40 states deemed last year to be the most world's most corrupt countries, 20 are in sub-Saharan Africa, according to Transparency International.

"Africa is not developing because it is caught in the trap of private wealth and the top wealth holders are African leaders," said Nubukpo.

"We must promote democracy, free and transparent elections to have legitimate leaders who have the public interest at heart, which we absolutely do not have."

Nyamnjoh also pointed to marginalised groups -- "There should be more room for inclusivity of voices, including voices of the young, voices of women."

# SHOW

## AL FELOUS (THE MONEY) (PG-15)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM  
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 12.00 + 5.30 + 11.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 11.30 AM + 1.00 + 2.00 + 3.30 + 4.30 + 6.00 + 7.00 + 8.30 + 9.30 + 11.00 PM + 12.00 MN + (12.30 MN + 1.00 AM THURS/FRI)  
 CITY CENTRE (VIP I) : 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (I): 11.00 AM + 12.00 + 1.30 + 2.30 + 4.00 + 5.00 + 6.30 + 7.30 + 9.00 + 10.00 + 11.30 PM + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)  
 SEEF (II): (1.00 AM THURS/FRI)  
 WADI AL SAIL: 10.30 AM + 11.00 AM + 1.00 + 1.30 + 3.30 + 4.00 + 6.00 + 6.30 + 8.30 + 9.00 + 11.00 + 11.30 PM

TAMER HOSNY, ZEINA, KHALID EL-SAWI



## SPIES IN DISGUISE (PG)

OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): 1.00 + 3.15 + 5.30 + 7.45 PM  
 OASIS JUFFAIR (KIDS CINEMA): (3D) 10.45 AM + 10.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 + 6.15 + 8.30 + 10.45 PM  
 CITY CENTRE-DUBBED IN ARABIC: 12.00 + 2.15 + 4.30 + 6.45 + 9.00 + 11.15 PM  
 CITY CENTRE (3D): 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM  
 SEEF (I): 11.30 AM + 1.45 + 4.00 + 6.15 + 8.30 + 10.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): DUBBED IN ARABIC: 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.15 AM + 1.30 + 3.45 + 6.00 + 8.15 + 10.30 PM

WILL SMITH, TOM HOLLAND, KAREN GILLAN

## GOOD NEWWZ (15+)(HINDI/COMEDY/DRAMA)

From Friday 27th  
 OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (I): 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM  
 WADI AL SAIL: 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM

AKSHAY KUMAR, KAREENA KAPOOR, DILJIT DOSANJH

## THE COURIER (15+)(ACTION/THRILLER)

CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 12.45 + 3.00 + 5.15 + 7.30 + 9.45 PM + 12.00 MN

OLGA KURYLENKO, GARY OLDMAN, AMIT SHAH

## TRAUMA CENTRE (PG-15)(THRILLER)

CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 3.00 + 7.30 + 12.00 MN  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 12.30 + 2.45 + 5.00 + 7.15 + 9.30 + 11.45 PM

BRUCE WILLIS, NICKY WHELAN, STEVE GUTTENBERG

## IP MAN 4 (PG-15)(ACTION/DRAMA/BIOGRAPHY)

CITY CENTRE: 12.45 + 5.15 + 9.45 PM  
 SEEF (II): 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM

DONNIE YEN, SCOTT ADKINS, KWOK-KWAN CHAN

## MIRACLE IN CELL NO.7 (PG-15)(FILIPINO/DRAMA)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 3.15 + 9.00 PM  
 SEEF (II): 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM

AGA MUHLACH, JOEL TORRE, JC SANTOS

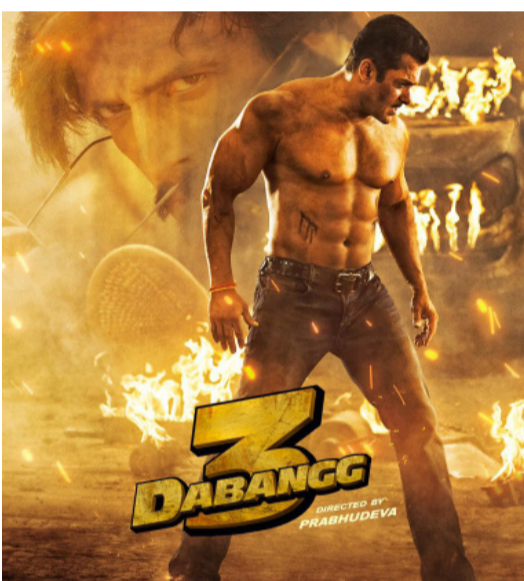
## JUMANJI THE NEXT LEVEL (PG-15)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 2.45 + 8.30 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN + (12.30 MN THURS/FRI)

CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D) : 11.30 AM + 5.15 + 11.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE (VIP II) : 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM  
 SEEF (II): 12.30 + 3.15 + 6.00 + 8.45 + 11.30 PM

WADI AL SAIL: 12.45 + 3.30 + 6.15 + 9.00 + 11.45 PM

DWAYNE JOHNSON, JACK BLACK, KEVIN HART



## DABANGG 3 (PG-15)(HINDI/ACTION/COMEDY)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM  
 CITY CENTRE: 10.30 AM + 1.30 + 4.45 + 8.00 + 11.15 PM  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM

WADI AL SAIL: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM

SALMAN KHAN, SONAKSHI SINHA, WARINA HUSSAIN



## STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER (PG-13)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 11.45 AM + 5.30 + 11.15 PM  
 OASIS JUFFAIR (VIP): 2.30 + 8.00 PM

CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 2.30 + 5.30 + 8.30 + 11.30 PM  
 CITY CENTRE (IMAX 2D) : 2.15 + 8.00 PM  
 SEEF (II) : 12.45 + 6.00 + 11.15 PM

DAISY RIDLEY, MARK HAMILL, ADAM DRIVER

## FROZEN 2 (PG)(ANIMATION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY)

CITY CENTRE: 11.00 AM + 1.15 + 3.30 + 5.45 + 8.00 + 10.15 PM  
 SEEF (II): 10.30 AM + 3.45 + 9.00 PM

KRISTEN BELL, IDINA MENZEL, JOSH GAD

## 21 BRIDGES (PG-15)(CRIME/ACTION/THRILLER) 21

CITY CENTRE: 12.15 + 2.30 + 4.45 + 7.00 + 9.15 + 11.30 PM

CHADWICK BOSEMAN, SIENNA MILLER, STEPHAN JAMES

## KNIVES OUT (PG-15)(CRIME/COMEDY/THRILLER)

CITY CENTRE: 3.15 + 8.45 PM

DANIEL CRAIG, CHRIS EVANS, ANA DE ARMAS

## JOKER (15+)(THRILLER/CRIME/DRAMA)

CITY CENTRE: 12.30 + 6.00 + 11.30 PM

JOAQUIN PHOENIX, ZAZIE BEETZ, ROBERT DE NIRO

## LE MANS '66 (PG-13)(DRAMA/SPORT/BIOGRAPHY)

CITY CENTRE: 2.30 + 8.00 PM

MATT DAMON, CHRISTIAN BALE, JON BERNTHAL

## MALEFICENT 2: MISTRESS OF EVIL (PG)

CITY CENTRE: 12.00 + 5.30 + 11.00 PM

ANGELINA JOLIE, TERESA MAHONEY, MICHELLE PFEIFFER

## THAMBI (PG-13)(TAMIL)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 12.00 + 5.30 + 11.00 PM

SEEF (I): 2.00 + 11.15 PM

AL HAMRA: 6.00 PM

KARTHI, JYOTHIKA, SATHYARAJ

## HERO (PG-15)(TAMIL)

SEEF (I): 8.00 PM

SIVAKARTHIKEYAN, ARJUN, ABHAY DEOL, KALYANI PRIYADARSHAN

## KETVOLANU ENTE MALAKHA (PG-15)(MALAYALAM)

OASIS JUFFAIR : 2.45 + 8.15 PM

ASIF ALI, VEENA NANDAKUMAR

## PRATI ROJU PANDAAGE (PG) (TELUGU)

SEEF (I): 11.00 AM + 5.00 PM

RAASHI KHANNA, SATHYARAJ, SAI DHARAM TEJ

## DRIVING LICENCE (PG-15)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 12.15 + 3.00 + 5.45 + 8.30 + 11.15 PM

SEEF (I): 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.45 + 6.30 + 9.15 + 12.00 MN

AL HAMRA: 3.00 + 6.00 + 9.00 PM

PRITHVIRAJ SUKUMARAN, SURAJ VENJARANMOODU

## MY SANTA (PG-13)(MALAYALAM)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 11.00 AM + 2.00 + 5.00 + 8.00 + 11.00 PM

SEEF (I): 2.00 + 8.15 PM

AL HAMRA: 6.00 PM

DILEEP, SIDDIQUE, SUNNY WAYNE

## VALIYAPERUNNAL (MALAYALAM)

OASIS JUFFAIR: 12.00 + 5.45 + 11.30 PM

SEEF (I): 10.45 AM + 5.00 + 11.15 PM

AL HAMRA: 11.45 AM + (12.00 MN THURS/FRI)

SHANE NIGAM, HIMIKA BOSE, JOJU GEORGE



## MOVIE REVIEW

# Good Newwz: Akshay Kumar film is preachy but bearable

● Akshay, shedding his patriotic change agent garb for once, makes the most of the bearable lightness of the plot

Good Newwz, starring Akshay Kumar and Kareena Kapoor, is not the most flattering endorsement of the medical profession. The film rests on the horrifying possibility that a reputed fertility clinic would mix up the sperm samples of two men, while each is undergoing IVF with his respective wife.

It's an improbable but original premise, and with Akshay Kumar attached as star and producer it plays out as a farcical comedy of errors. If you think about it, currently it would appear that there are only two kinds of Akshay Kumar films – the nationalistic/patriotic film, and the lowbrow comedy. Good Newwz has fart jokes, short people jokes, old people jokes, masturbation jokes, sex jokes, and jokes on every low hanging fruit in plain sight. And yet this is no Housefull 5. The truth is that a lot of



Akshay Kumar and Kareena Kapoor in 'Good Newwz'

is genuinely funny.

Akshay and Kareena play Varun and Deepti Batra, a swish Mumbai couple who've been trying to get pregnant for a while. She is desperate to have a baby, and treats it as a sort of mission for the couple to accomplish. He doesn't have much of a paternal instinct, and likens the pressure in the bedroom to launching a surgical strike.

They're referred to a specialist doctor couple, the Joshis (Adil Hussain and Tisca Chopra), who

recommend in vitro fertilization as a potential solution. But they're not the only couple having trouble in the baby-making department. The doctors are also treating another pair of Batras from Chandigarh, Honey (Diljit Dosanjh) and Monika (Kiara Advani). You already know what happens next.

The film asks you to suspend disbelief, and rewards you when you do. The scenes between the two couples are crackling, much of the humor stemming from

how different they are, and from the issue of the oncoming babies' 'ownership' in this kind of situation. I don't know about you, but I'm bored of watching Akshay Kumar play different versions of the honorable patriot or the conscience keeper of the nation in every other film, so it's especially refreshing to see him play this elitist jerk who, like his wife, wants to have nothing to do with the loud, unsophisticated Batras. Playing into that stereotype of the over-the-top Punjabis, Diljit



Kareena Kapoor deserves special mention for rooting her character in believability

and Kiara ham it up sportingly as the fashion challenged couple whose mangling of English words is a source of great amusement to the admittedly shallow Varun.

The film's first hour coasts along breezily, benefiting from sharp dialogue and winning performances. It's admirable that the writers take a grown up approach when it comes to talking about bodily functions and biological needs. But it also reveals a deeply conservative and frankly regressive worldview observed in its complete rejection of adoption. "Apna khoon toh aakhir apna khoon hota hai," I heard uttered at least twice, and cringed as this out-

dated notion of lineage and legacy continue to be perpetuated. Not surprisingly, the conservatism extends also to the issue of abortion, and troublingly in one scene a female doctor no less, makes a point about childbearing being essential to the female experience.

In the second hour as the humor dries up, the film slips into full-blown melodrama and sentimentality. We watch the thawing of Varun, triggered by an impassioned speech by his wife on the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of childbirth and motherhood on a woman. I think the film lets him off too easily.

There is no question that the humor works better than the emotion in Good Newwz, but director Raj Mehta and his writers do make room to raise pertinent questions about whether men can truly understand and empathize what women go through with regards to pregnancy and childbirth. It asks us also to ponder the very meaning of what makes a parent. These are progressive ideas, and they're frequently in conflict with the film's otherwise conservative outlook.

# celebs

## Zac Efron almost dies while filming in Papua New Guinea

Los Angeles

Hollywood actor Zac Efron was reportedly rushed to Australia from Papua New Guinea after suffering an "extraordinary life-or-death medical emergency".

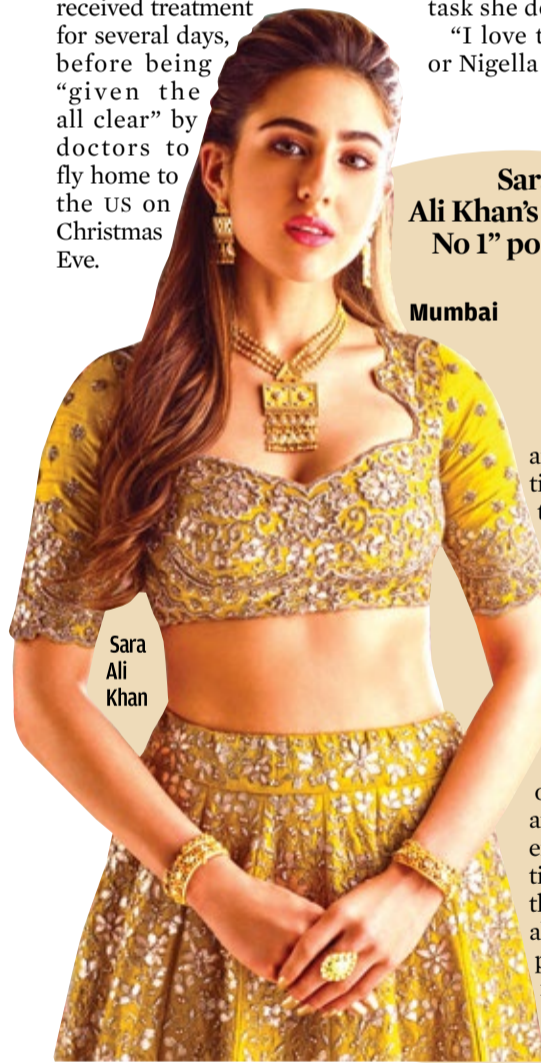
A report by The Sunday Telegraph said the 32-year-old was filming a documentary series called "Killing Zac Efron" when he came down with a "form of typhoid or similar bacterial infection" just before Christmas, reports dailymail.co.uk.



Zac Efron

Efron was flown to Brisbane, Australia from Papua New Guinea on a "life-or-death flight" with the assistance of medical professionals.

After arriving in Brisbane, he was admitted in a private hospital in Spring Hill and is said to be "in a stable condition". At the hospital, he received treatment for several days, before being "given the all clear" by doctors to fly home to the US on Christmas Eve.



Sara Ali Khan

## Sara Ali Khan's "Mommy No 1" post for Amrita Singh

Mumbai

Actress Sara Ali Khan has penned an emotional poem for her mother Amrita Singh, and said that she is her "anchor, inspiration and the magician that takes away all tension".

Sara took to Instagram on Sunday to show her hidden talent, which she dubbed as "Sara ki shayari".

"Mirror mirror -- are you mommy or a reflection? The only difference between us -- is I always want her attention. She on the other hand is full of love, hugs and affection. And undivided time and energy I sometimes forget to mention. My anchor, my inspiration, the magician that takes away all tension," she wrote in the post, referring to her mother as "Mommy No 1".



Amrita Singh

## Cheryl doesn't know how to clean her home

London

Pop star Cheryl says she can't clean her own home as she never learned how to handle housework.

In an interview to Weekend magazine, Cheryl, 36, says joining pop group Girls Aloud when she was a teenager meant she spent her life living in hotels and missing out on learning some key life skills, reports mirror.co.uk.

Even though the group split six years ago and she has become a mother to son Bear, the singer admitted that she still doesn't have a clue how to clean her house.

"I was in a band at 19 so I never learned (how to clean). I can wipe the surfaces down but -- and I know this is ridiculous -- I'm not good at cleaning. My cleaner is a godsend," she said.

The singer added that one household task she does enjoy is cooking.

"I love to cook, with my Jamie Oliver or Nigella books. It's relaxing," she said.



Cheryl

## Mandy Moore has 'major bout of food poisoning'

Los Angeles

Singer-actress Mandy Moore recently had a nasty bout of food poisoning that abruptly ended her Ecuador trip.

She revealed on Instagram that she and her husband Taylor Goldsmith were forced to cancel nearly the entire trip and fly home after falling sick, reports people.com.

"Sometimes things don't go according to plan. For someone slightly type A (like myself), it's challenging not drive myself absolutely crazy when things veer in a different direction," she said.

"I love an end of year lesson (one that I've encountered a million times before and will again, btw). Wasn't meant to be. We'd planned this extraordinary trip to hike Cotopaxi in Ecuador with my favourite friend and guide @melissaar-

not, when T and I both got knocked out simultaneously with a major bout of food poisoning (on Day 2) and couldn't continue on the trip," she continued.

"We just wouldn't be able to catch up on hydration, nutrition and rest to complete any more acclimatization hikes before our summit push."

"In any case we made the tough call to travel home (wow - that wasn't fun lol) and got back yesterday," she added.

"We showered and crawled into bed - shells of ourselves - but quickly had the kitties/dogs by our side and our own Mountain View out the window to enjoy."

Reflecting on the unfortunate experience, Moore managed to find a silver lining.

"I think the Universe must have wanted us to slow down and just savour some time at home. And we shall," she said.

Mandy Moore

## Padma Lakshmi mistaken for Priyanka Chopra

Los Angeles

India-born supermodel Padma Lakshmi was recently mistaken for actress Priyanka Chopra by a New York magazine, and she had a witty yet fitting response to address it.



Padma Lakshmi

Padma got associated with New Yorker's celebrity cartoon takeover issue. The post carrying her portrait on the official Instagram account of the magazine was tagged to Priyanka Chopra.

Padma took a screenshot of the post and shared it on her Instagram handle, writing: "Thank you to the illustrious @nydailynews for the shoutout. I know to some we all look alike, but... #desilife #JustIndianThings."

The picture shows a black-and-white portrait of Padma with Priyanka's Instagram account handle tagged on it. The post on the New Yorker handle appears to have been removed.

Padma's post got several reactions from celebrities.

"Oh no," wrote actress Natalie Portman, while one user said: "This is the equivalent of tagging Christina Aguilera in a photo of Britney Spears."

In an interview in the past, Padma had expressed her happiness about Indians finding a place in the West.



Padma Lakshmi Priyanka Chopra

## GoT star Alfie Allen pays tribute to his stunt double



Alfie Allen London

Actor Alfie Allen says he is "shocked and saddened" after learning about the death of his "Game of Thrones" double Andrew Dunbar.

Dunbar died suddenly at his home in Belfast on Christmas Eve. His death is not being treated as suspicious, reports independent.co.uk.

He had starred as the body double for Theon Greyjoy (played by Allen) in the hit HBO drama, and also had roles in shows such as "Derry Girls" and "Line of Duty".

"Andrew was an actor who was also a stand-in as Theon on GoT. Extremely shocked and saddened to hear of his passing. To lose a loved one so young, I can only imagine what his family are going through. RIP Andrew," Allen wrote on Instagram.

Fellow co-star Andy McClay said: "Everyone always wanted Andrew. There was just something about him that was special. People always felt good around him, happy, excited for the day's work and there was always a lot of fun when he was around."

## Akasa: Lauv is warm and humble



Akasa Singh Mumbai

Singer Akasa Singh says American singer-songwriter Lauv is warm and humble beyond being talented.

Akasa, popular for singing foot-tapping numbers like "Kheech meri photo" and "Thug Ranjha", got a chance to work with Lauv on song "Dil na jaaneya" from film "Good Newwz".

Composed by Rochak Kohli and Lauv, the song is sung by Rochak, Lauv and Akasa. The lyrics are by Gurpreet Saini, Ari Leff and Michael Pollack, and music is produced by Lauv, Johnny Simpson and Rochak.

"Rochak Kohli has always been one of the dream producers that I have wanted to work with, because all his melodies are magical. Gurpreet called me to dub a song for Rochak -- they played me the song and the first thing that came into my head was finally, I get to sing a slow, romantic song," Akasa said.

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SPORTS  
sports

# Muharraq, Ahli power to victories

● Muharraq cruised past Al Najma in BBA Top Six League

● Ahli eked out a narrow win over Al Hala

TDT | Manama

Muharraq and Al Ahli posted contrasting victories last night in the Top Six Division of the Zain Bahrain Basketball League, being played at Zain Arena in Um Al Hassam.

Muharraq cruised past Al Najma 110-86 while Ahli eked out a narrow 93-89 win over Al Hala.

With both results, Muharraq claimed their third win in as many games to stay undefeated while Ahli claimed their second win in three outings.

League action continues tonight with a game each in the Top Six and in the Silver Division. Manama clash with Riffa at 7.30pm in the Top Six fixture following the 5.45pm game between Bahrain Club and Al Ettihad.

In Muharraq's victory, they used a strong second quarter to extend their 19-16 lead at the end of the first to a 52-39 advantage at the half. They continued their fine play in the third before closing out strong with a 34-point final period.



Ahli's Sarhan looks to score against Hala

Muharraq went ahead by as many as 24 points in the contest.

American professional Kevin Murphy scored 34 points, including three three-pointers, and grabbed 15 rebounds. Mohammed Juma'a came off the bench to add 15 while Ali Rabea had 12. Mohammed Buallay

chipped in with 11 in the win while Sayed Kadhem Majed had 10.

Ali Jaffar scored 20 to pace Najma, while Ali Jaber finished with 19 plus Hussain Mohammed had 15.

Najma suffered their third straight loss and remained winless in this stage.



Muharraq's Majed drives to the basket

In Ahli's triumph, former NBA player Dexter Pittman made a go-ahead hook shot with under a minute to play to make it 90-89.

Free-throws from Pittman and Maytham Jameel then helped Ahli seal the victory.

Pittman ended the game with 30 points and 16 rebounds, while

Hesham Sarhan had 28 and sipper Mohammed Qurban added 23. Qurban fired in five triples in the game.

Mansour Kasse of Senegal led Hala in defeat with 31 points and 12 boards. Hussain Salman added 21 and 11 assists.

Hala fell to their third straight loss and were also winless.

## Bahrain set up Malaysia friendly in preparation for joint-qualifiers

TDT | Manama

Bahrain are set to play an international friendly match against Malaysia on March 21 in preparation for their next qualifier for the Fifa World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023.

This was announced last night by the Bahrain Football Association.

Bahrain have three games remaining in Group C of the joint-qualifiers. They resume their campaign on March 26 at home against Cambodia.

The friendly against Malaysia will be played in Bahrain. It is the first tune-up game scheduled so far in preparation for the Cambodia clash.

Following that qualifier, the Bahrainis then play Iran in Tehran on June 4, before closing out this stage against Hong Kong at home on June 9.

Iraq are currently atop Group C with 11 points. They have a two-point lead over Bahrain. Iran are third with six points and have a game in hand, while Hong Kong were fourth on five points and Cambodia fifth with one.

In this phase of the joint-qualifiers, there are eight groups in all, with five nations in each group. Teams play home and away matches. At the end, the eight group winners and the four best runners-up advance to the third round of World Cup qualifying, and also book their berths in the Asian Cup.

The next best 24 teams will compete in a separate competition for the remaining 12 slots in the Asian Cup.

Bahrain head coach Helio Sousa is currently on holiday and is scheduled to fly directly to Thailand next week to observe the under-23 Olympic team compete in the 2020 AFC U-23 Championship.

## 'Gutted' Murray out of ATP Cup and Australian Open

AFP | London

Andy Murray said he was "gutted" to be missing next month's Australian Open after being ruled out of the first Grand Slam of 2020 with a pelvic injury.

The 32-year-old Scot suffered the injury playing for Britain in the Davis Cup last month and will also miss the inaugural ATP Cup team event across three Australian cities in

early January.

"I've worked so hard to get myself into a situation where I can play at the top level and I'm gutted I'm not going to be able to play in Australia in January," Murray said Saturday.

"After the AO (Australian Open) this year, when I wasn't sure whether I'd be able to play again, I was excited about coming back to Australia and giving my best, and that makes this even more disappointing for me.

"Unfortunately I've had a setback recently and as a precaution, need to work through that before I get back on court competing."

Murray had hoped to make his return to Grand Slam action in Melbourne following a hip operation in January.

But concerns over the fitness of the five-time losing Australian Open finalist were raised when

he cancelled a scheduled block of training in Miami.

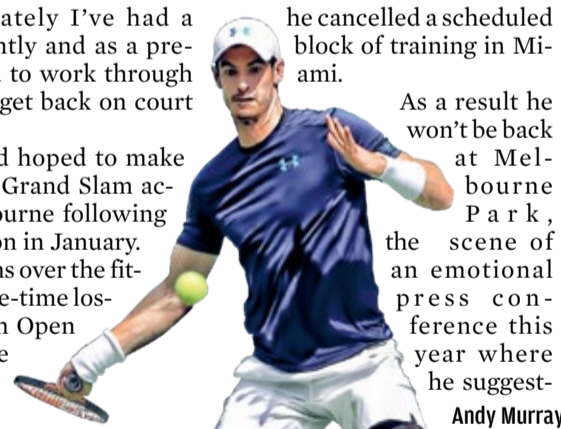
As a result he won't be back at Melbourne Park,

the scene of an emotional press conference this year where he suggest-

ed he might retire as a result of his hip injury.

Despite being less than fully fit Murray played a gruelling five-set loss to Roberto Bautista Agut.

A fortnight later the double Olympic gold medallist, twice a Wimbledon champion and the winner of the 2012 US Open singles, had hip resurfacing surgery and started his return to action at the Queen's Club grass-court event in London in June.



Andy Murray

## Arteta rocked as Chelsea sink Arsenal with late fightback

AFP | London

Chelsea ruined Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta's home debut as Tammy Abraham's late strike sealed a dramatic 2-1 win after Bernd Leno's horrific blunder turned the tide in a thrilling London derby yesterday.

Leading through Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's early goal at the Emirates Stadium, Arteta was just seven minutes away from securing his first victory in his second game in charge.

But Arsenal goalkeeper Leno made a hash of coming to catch a free-kick and Jorginho tapped in to spark a Chelsea fightback that climaxed in Abraham firing home with three minutes left.

After dominating the first half,

it was a shocking but familiar collapse from Arsenal, whose lack of steel was the key element in the downfall of Arteta's predecessor Unai Emery.

In their final game of the decade, Arsenal showed just how much work Arteta has to do to steer Gunners back to respectability in his first managerial role.

After coming from behind to rescue a 1-1 draw at Bournemouth in his first match on Thursday, Arteta would have been encouraged by their bright start -- but not the woeful meltdown that leaves Arsenal with only one win in their last 15 games in all competitions.

Arsenal, 12 points adrift of top four, have lost four consecutive home fixtures in all competitions for the first time in 60 years.



Chelsea's English striker Tammy Abraham (R) scores their second goal

They also suffered three successive top-flight home defeats for the first time since 1977.

While Arteta held his head in despair after Abraham's winner, Frank Lampard's wild celebration showed Chelsea's need for the win after a difficult period of their own.

Fourth placed Chelsea had lost five of their last seven league games, but a second successive away win -- following their recent impressive success at Tottenham -- moves them four points clear of fifth placed Manchester United.

There was no fanfare for Arteta before kick-off, the Spaniard quietly take his place on the bench to applause from Arsenal fans but without any elaborate introduction.

# Bahrain, Saudi tie for top spot

Bahrain men's team, Mubarak move into share of leads in GCC Golf Championships

● **Bahrainis carded a day two score of four-over-par 220, just a single shot behind the 219 of the Saudis**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain and Saudi Arabia moved into a tie for first place yesterday on the men's teams' standings following the second round of the 2019 GCC Golf Championships, being played at Ghala Golf Club in Muscat.

After leading by one stroke at the end of day one, the Bahrainis carded a day two score of four-over-par 220, just a single shot behind the 219 of the Saudis. That brought their two-day totals to 12-over-par 444, earning both teams a share of the lead.

Bahrain's Sultan Mubarak, the solo leader after the first day on the individual players' rankings,

also dropped to a tie at the top of the leaderboard following the second round.

He carded a three-over-par 75 yesterday to add to his opening day score of 72, putting him on a 147 total that is shared by the Saudi pair of Ali Al Sakhi and Saud Abdullah Al Sharif.

The championships continue today with the third and penultimate round of play in the men's events. The final day is tomorrow when this year's GCC champions will be crowned.

In the men's teams, Bahrain's Mubarak, along with teammates Al Mohamed Al Kowari and Mohamed Dian Alnoaimi, all contributed to the day's score. For the Saudis, they relied on their trio of Al Sakhi, Al Sharif and Abdulrahman Almansour.

The top two were followed on the standings by Qatar eight shots behind with a 20-over-par two-day total of 452. The UAE (456, +24) were fourth, Oman (484, +52) fifth and Kuwait (510, +78) sixth.



**Bahrainis brought their two-day totals to 12-over-par 444**

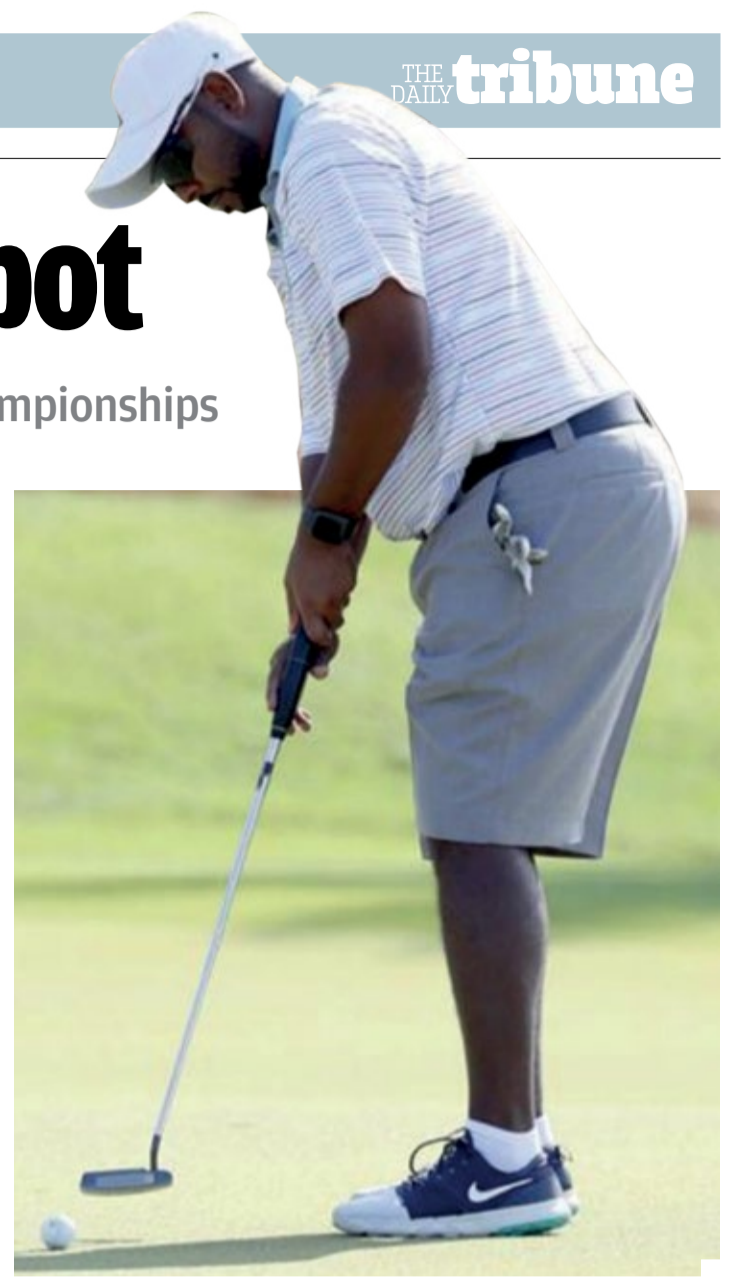
In the men's individual standings, Al Sakhi was one of two players to post an even-par 72 on day two, helping him move into the share of the lead. The other was Bahrain's Alnoaimi, who went to fifth place on the individual classification with a two-day total of 149.

Going fourth was Bahrain's Al Mohamed Al Kowari with a gross score of 148, giving the

Bahrainis three players in the top five, while rounding out the top six individual players was Saudi's Almansour tied with Qatari Jaham Jassim Al Kuwari, both with 150 totals.

Bahrain are competing with four teams in Oman as there are also a ladies' team composed of Habiba Maher Yusuf, Haya Adel Alqawadhi and Maryam Raed Alansari; an under-18 squad of Eid Ael Meftah, Faris Isa Alqetami and Manaf Yusuf Ahmed; and an under-15 team comprising Abdulrahman Ebrahim Saad, Yusuf Ebrahim Habib and Abdulla Rashid Saeed.

The ladies ranked fourth from five teams with a 124-over-par gross score and now head into their final round of play. The under-18s were third from three teams but were just five shots behind leaders Qatar after the first 18 holes, while the under-15s were fourth from five teams, well behind the leaders with just the final round left to play today.



Bahrain's Mubarak in action

## South Africa see off stubborn England



England batsmen Joe Root walks off after being dismissed by Anrich Nortje

● **South Africa win first Test by 107 runs after new ball leads to England collapse**

AFP | Centurion

South Africa broke down stubborn England resistance to win the first Test of their World Test Championship series by 107 runs at SuperSport Park yesterday.

England needed 376 to win but despite some committed batting were bowled out for 268 on the fourth day of the five-day encounter.

An enthralling contest swung South Africa's way when left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj bowled Ben Stokes to halt a brief flurry of strokes as Stokes and captain Joe Root tried to lift the scoring rate before the second new ball was due.

The new ball then had an immediate impact with Kagiso Rabada having Jonny Bairstow caught at gully before Anrich Nortje claimed the crucial wicket of Root, who made a fighting 48 before he was caught behind.

It was the second time in the day Nortje claimed a wicket

with the second ball of a new spell after he made the first breakthrough of the day by dismissing top-scorer Rory Burns for 84.

The remaining wickets fell quickly, with Rabada finishing with four for 103 and fellow fast bowler Anrich Nortje claiming three for 56.

Maharaj, who broke England's first wicket stand of 92 on Saturday when he dismissed Dom Sibley, took two for 37.

South Africa produced a disciplined bowling performance, making scoring difficult on a pitch which always offered something to the bowlers with some sideways movement and uneven bounce.

England added only 50 runs in 25 overs while losing two wickets during the morning.

Rory Burns took his overnight score of 77 to 84 before mistiming a pull against Nortje to be caught at mid-on, while Joe Denly was leg before wicket to Dwaine Pretorius for 31.

Burns and Denly saw off the threat of Vernon Philander and Rabada but found scoring difficult.

Philander conceded only one run in five overs. Rabada gave up 23 in six overs, which included two hooked sixes by Denly.

## Australia thrash New Zealand despite battling Blundell century

AFP | Melbourne

Nathan Lyon took four wickets as Australia thrashed New Zealand by 247 runs to win the second Test at Melbourne and the series yesterday with a battling century from opener Tom Blundell proving futile.

The Black Caps, chasing a massive 488 to win, were in serious trouble after a fiery James Pattinson ripped through the top order to leave them reeling at 38 for three.

But some fighting partnerships spearheaded by Blundell delayed the inevitable until Lyon worked his magic as the pitch deteriorated.

Blundell was last man out for a swashbuckling 121 -- his second Test century and his first for two years -- as New Zealand were dismissed for 240 with Trent Boult not batting after fracturing his hand in the first innings.

It was the second heavy defeat for the Black Caps, who lost by 296 runs in Perth and will be playing for pride only in the final Test at Sydney later this week.

"It's very pleasing. I thought the way we went about this Test from the moment we lost the toss was outstanding," said Australia captain Tim Paine. "I thought our batters applied themselves superbly on day one and made it easy for Travis (Head) and I on the second day to set up a big total."

**'Credit to Australia'**

It was Head's first Test century and Paine's quick-fire 79 that took the Test out of New



Australia's Nathan Lyon celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's BJ Watling

Zealand's reach after captain Kane Williamson's bold decision to bowl after winning the toss.

No team had ever chased down more than 418 in Test history, though the record was set against Australia by the West Indies in Antigua in 2003.

"I felt like there was enough in the surface to bowl first," said Williamson.

"It was obviously very important for us to be on top of our game and the surface did offer some sideways movement and swing. But credit to Australia for getting through that first session and putting 400 on the board.

"They've got a fantastic attack with pace and bounce but their accuracy stood apart and they did seem to get more out of that

surface."

Pattinson, playing for the injured Josh Hazlewood, did the early damage.

New Zealand had reached 32-0 when he snared the key wickets of Tom Latham, batting linchpin Williamson and the experienced Ross Taylor for three just runs.

Latham, scorer of a dogged 50 in New Zealand's 148 first innings, fell for eight when he edged a thunderous delivery to the diving Paine.

Williamson soon followed without scoring, lbw after unsuccessfully reviewing the umpire's original decision.

Taylor didn't fare much better, dragging onto his middle stump to leave Pattinson with figures of 3-5 at lunch off two overs.

Henry Nicholls was the only wicket to fall between lunch and tea, cleverly stumped for 33 by Paine off Lyon just one ball after he smashed the spinner for six.

Blundell, in only his third Test, and BJ Watling put on 72

# 121

runs were scored by Tom Blundell in his second Test century and his first for two years

before Lyon finally broke their dangerous partnership, tempting an outside edge from the New Zealand wicketkeeper that flew to David Warner at slip and he was gone for 22.

Lyon then mopped up Colin de Grandhomme and Mitchell Santner before Tim Southee was run out in a horror mix-up, with Blundell swinging his bat before he was caught by Lyon off Marnus Labuschagne.

Paine earlier declared Australia's second innings on 168 for five after Head was bowled by Neil Wagner for 28. Matthew Wade was unbeaten on 30 with Wagner taking 3-50.