

# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019



Russian Muslims pray in the Sobornaya mosque, Moscow Cathedral Mosque in the Russian capital, as Muslims worldwide take part in the month of Ramadan, where they fast between dawn and dusk. — AFP

## DISNEY'S LIVE-ACTION 'ALADDIN' CASTS A BOX-OFFICE SPELL



“Aladdin” apparently still has the old magic, as the new Disney film took in an estimated \$86.1 million in the Friday-to-Sunday period in North America to lead all box-office offerings, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported. The film, released on the US’s four-day Memorial Day weekend, is expected to earn \$105 million when yesterday’s ticket sales are included, well beyond earlier estimates of around \$80 million, according to the Hollywood Reporter. The live-action

actor Scott Weinger as Aladdin). Last week’s box-office leader, Lionsgate’s “John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum,” slipped to second, taking in \$24.4 million for three days (\$30.5 million for four). Keanu Reeves again stars as retired hitman John Wick, this time being chased by an army of killers after a contract is put on his head. Also starring are Halle Berry, Laurence Fishburne, Ian McShane and Anjelica Huston.

In third was Disney blockbuster “Avengers: Endgame,” taking in an estimated \$16.8 million for three days (\$21.9 million for four). “Avengers,” with an all-star cast including Robert Downey Jr., Mark Ruffalo, Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth, Bradley Cooper, Scarlett Johansson and Josh Brolin, has broken domestic records but, with a worldwide take of \$2.68 billion, is still shy of the \$2.79 billion earned by all-time leader “Avatar” in 2009. Fourth place went to Warner Bros.’ “Pokemon: Detective Pikachu,” at \$13.3 million (\$17 million). Its animated title character (voiced by Ryan Reynolds) teams up with a young boy (Justice Smith, in a live-action role) to seek the boy’s missing father.

And in fifth was new Sony horror thriller “Brightburn,” at \$7.5 million (\$9 million). Elizabeth Banks, David Denman and Jackson A. Dunn star in the story of an alien tot who arrives on Earth and realizes, as he grows up on a Kansas farm, that he has superpowers. Rounding out the week-end’s top 10 were:

- “Booksmart” (\$6.5 million for three days; \$8.0 million for four)
- “A Dog’s Journey” (\$4.1 million; \$5.8 million)
- “The Hustle” (\$3.8 million; \$4.8 million)
- “The Intruder” (\$2.3 million; \$2.9 million)
- “Long Shot” (\$1.6 million; \$2 million)—AFP



movie, directed by Guy Ritchie, stars Will Smith as the genie and the Egyptian-born Canadian actor Mena Massoud as the wily charmer who pretends to be a prince to catch the attention of the lovely Jasmine (Naomi Scott).

The new version is an adaptation of Disney’s 1992 “Aladdin,” which featured the unforgettable voice of Robin Williams as the fast-talking genie (and the less well-known

## 12<sup>th</sup>-century Afghan minaret saved, for now, after floods

The minaret of Jam, a revered Afghan historical treasure, has been saved from imminent danger after hundreds of workers diverted surging floodwaters that were gnawing at the 12th-century tower, officials said yesterday. Torrential rains last week sent churning water roaring down the narrow valley that is home to the minaret, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in a remote part of the western province of Ghor. Dramatic video footage showed brown torrents crashing up against the base of the brick minaret, which was built in about 1190 and is the pinnacle of a surrounding archaeological site. The Afghan government hired a local crew who worked for three days to channel water away from the minaret.

“Now the flow of water has been diverted but the flood has destroyed some 15 meters (50 feet) of protection wall around the minaret,” Abdul Hai Khatebi, a spokesman for the governor of Ghor, told AFP. Fakhruddin Ariapur—the Ghor province director of information and culture—said a team of experts is urgently needed to clean the base of the minaret and construct proper defensive walls. “There is no danger to it now, but if it rains and floods again, the minaret has become too exposed and vulnerable,” he told AFP.

The Jam minaret, located in an area largely under Taliban control, is the world’s second tallest made of bricks, reaching a height of 65 meters (213 feet). It is situated on the frontier of Ghor and Herat provinces, at the heart of the former Ghoriid empire which dominated Afghanistan and parts of India in the 12th-13th centuries. In 2002, the minaret and its archaeological remains became the first site in Afghanistan to be added to UNESCO’s World Heritage List. UNESCO said it had not yet been able to access the minaret.

“As soon as the conditions on site allow, a mission will be organized... in order for experts to properly assess the



This handout photo released by the Information and Culture Department of Ghor province shows Afghan men working at a site near the Minaret of Jam following floodwaters in the Shahrak District of Ghor Province. — AFP photos

situation and the condition of the minaret,” UNESCO said in a statement. Built on an octagonal base, the minaret has a double staircase on the inside and is elaborately decorated. Afghanistan’s rich cultural heritage has faced decades of catastrophic neglect, mismanagement and looting, as well as deliberate destruction at the hands of the Taliban. Afghanistan chief executive Abdullah Abdullah said in a cabinet meeting that the government needs “to take more serious measures to prevent future threats to the minaret”. — AFP



Afghan men working at a site near the Minaret of Jam following floodwaters in the Shahrak District of Ghor Province.