



Bahrain fully supports UAE candidature for Non-Permanent UNSC Seat - 2022-2023

UAE's vital role praised, in maintaining security and peace in the region and the world at large

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's permanent representative to the United Nations, confirmed the Kingdom's full support to the sisterly United Arab Emirates' presence at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Bahrain's representative, Ambassador Jamal Faris Al-Ruwaie, stated this yesterday regarding UAE's candidature for the non-permanent membership in the UNSC for the period 2022-2023.

He praised UAE's vital role in maintaining security and peace in the region and the world at large. He also highlighted their balanced policy and interest in supporting global development programmes in many countries to enhance the stability and prosperity of their peoples.

Ambassador Jamal Al-Ruwaie affirmed that the Kingdom of Bahrain, represented by its permanent mission to the United Nations, would spare no effort to support the candidacy of the United Arab Emirates, and use all its capabilities to sustain the UAE Permanent Mission in this regard.

Houthis crossed 'red line'

Saudi-led coalition gives ultimatum to Iranian-backed Houthi leaders

Reports claim 57 coalition air strikes on Yemen

Iran denies arming the rebels

Agencies | Riyadh

The terrorist leaders of the Houthi militia will be held accountable for targeting civilians and civilian facilities, which is a red line to cross, warned Saudi-led military coalition yesterday.

Coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki told reporters in Riyadh that the "leaders of the Houthi militia... will be pursued and held accountable."

He also confirmed launching a major operation against Yemen's Houthis. "The operation came in response to the threat of the Houthi militia after they launched ballistic missiles as well as drones from the occupied capital Sanaa, as well as Saada."

The Iranian-backed Houthi



Smoke billows following a reported airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, on Wednesday

rebels said on their Al-Masirah television that the coalition had launched 57 air strikes on Sanaa and their northern stronghold of Saada.

Residents of Sanaa said they heard loud explosions and saw plumes of smoke Wednesday after at least a dozen air strikes on the international airport, which is close to an air force base.

There were no official reports of casualties, but the rebels said

a woman and a girl were killed in Saada while a number of children were wounded.

The coalition strike effectively ends a unilateral ceasefire it declared in April, announced as part of efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Last month, the coalition said it had intercepted and destroyed drones and ballistic missiles launched into the kingdom by the Houthis, including one fired towards Riyadh.

At the venue of Maliki's press conference, Saudi officials displayed remnants of intercepted missiles and drones they said were supplied by Iran to Yemen's Houthi rebels.

Iran denies arming the rebels. Yemen has been locked in conflict since the Houthis took control of Sanaa in 2014 and went on to seize much of the north.

The crisis escalated when the Saudi-led coalition intervened the following year to support Yemen's internationally recognised government.



HM the King HRH the Prime Minister HRH the Crown Prince

02

HRH Premier, HRH CP backs HM King's vision to progress, prosperity

HRH the Crown Prince chairs committee meeting



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, chaired the 330th Government Executive Committee meeting, held remotely yesterday. The coordination committee discussed the latest developments in dealing with the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Fire at Iran nuke site!

Accident site is inactive, says Iran

Report claims no radioactive pollution

Agencies | Tehran

Iran's nuclear body reported an accident yesterday at an 'inactive' warehouse in a nuclear complex without causing casualties or radioactive pollution. The accident site, Natanz facility is one of Iran's main uranium enrichment plants.

There was "no nuclear material (in the warehouse) and no potential of pollution," Iranian Atomic Energy Organisation (IAEO) spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi told state television.

However, Natanz governor Ramezan-Ali Ferdowsi told the Tasnim news agency that a fire had broken out at the warehouse.

The IAEO spokesperson did not specify the nature of the accident but said it had caused

"some structural damage". "Expert teams are currently on site and investigating the cause of the accident," he added.

Last Friday an explosion occurred east of Tehran near a sensitive military complex which the authorities said was caused by a tank leak in a gas storage facility in a public area.

The warehouse at the Natanz site, Iran claims, was 'inactive' and did not have radioactive material or personnel on site.

Their official statement said that the warehouse was under construction and reported no casualties.

There was "no interruption to the work of the enrichment site itself", which "is working at the pace it used to," Kamalvandi said.

The UN nuclear watchdog reported last month that Tehran was continuing to produce enriched uranium in Natanz using "no more than 5,060 (so called first-generation) centrifuges installed in 30 cascades".

Tehran, however, has always denied any military dimension to its nuclear programme.

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL CASES 27,837

ACTIVE CASES 5,160

DEATHS 94

DISCHARGED 22,583

NEW CASES 423

CRITICAL 51

210 fils (includes VAT)



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CHURCH, MUSEUM OR MOSQUE?

Top Turkey court to rule on the future of Hagia Sophia

AFP | Istanbul

Turkey's top court considered yesterday whether Istanbul's famous landmark and former church, Hagia Sophia can be turned into a mosque, and will announce its verdict within 15 days, state broadcaster TRT reported.

This new ruling could inflame tensions with the West. The UNESCO World Heritage site -- a magnet for tourists worldwide with its stunning architecture -- has been a museum since 1935, open to believers of all faiths.

But calls for it to serve again as a mosque have sparked anger among Christians and tensions between historic foes and uneasy NATO allies Turkey and Greece.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and



Istanbul's famous landmark and former church, Hagia Sophia

Greece have strongly urged Turkey to maintain the building as a museum.

During the hearing yesterday, the prosecutor called for the latest case to be dismissed, arguing the decision to alter the Hagia Sophia's status "is a matter for the Council of Ministers and the Presidency," the official Anadolu news agency said.

Bahrain will defeat all challenges under HM King: HRH the Premier

Will spare no efforts to continue achieving HM the King's vision: HRH CP



HM the King

”
The royal appreciation of the designation of the Bahraini Doctor's Day embodies HM the King's unlimited support for loyal Bahrainis across all sectors
 HRH THE PREMIER



”
Team Bahrain members are proud of serving HM the King and the Kingdom and have made all kinds of sacrifices for the sake of protecting the health and safety of everyone in the Kingdom
 HRH CROWN PRINCE

TDT | Manama

HRH the Premier yesterday expressed strong confidence in Kingdom's ability to defeat all challenges under the HM the King's leadership, thanking HM the King's appreciation of the initiative to mark Bahraini Doctor's Day.

"The Royal appreciation of the designation of the Bahraini Doctor's Day embodies HM the King's unlimited support for loyal Bahrainis across all sectors," the Premier said, noting that Bahrain has become a role model for fighting the pandemic in the health, economic and social fields.

This came in a letter wrote by HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa thanking HM the King for the appreciation of his initiative to honour Bahraini doctors and celebrate their sacrifices.

HM King's keynote speech, the Premier said, was full of sound visions on ways to enhance the comprehensive development

march and lead Kingdom's efforts to combat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and mitigate its impacts.

Thanks to the cohesion of the loyal Bahraini people, Prime Minister said the government is determined to achieve the royal aspirations for more progress and prosperity for the kingdom and its people.

HRH Premier extended deepest thanks and appreciation to HM the King, praying to Allah the Almighty to bless him with abundant health, happiness and long life to continue the progress march for the Kingdom and its loyal people.

CP pledges to spare no efforts

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister also send a similar letter of appreciation to HM the King.

HRH CP expressed deep pride in the royal appreciation of the dedicated efforts he is exerting to assume the sacred duties of

serving HM the King, pledging to spare no efforts to continue achieving HM the King's vision to enhance the kingdom's comprehensive development.

HRH the Crown Prince stressed that the exceptional circumstances currently witnessed by the kingdom and the world have proved to everyone that the loyal citizens from Team Bahrain are cohesive, dedicated and guided by the wise royal directives.

"Team Bahrain members are proud of serving HM the King and the Kingdom and have made all kinds of sacrifices for the sake of protecting the health and safety of everyone in the Kingdom," HRH the Crown Prince said.

HRH the Crown Prince expressed strong determination to continue unifying the national efforts and harnessing all potentials to ensure that Bahrain overcomes the challenge created by the COVID-19 pandemic so that the kingdom always remains a role model for prosperity and progress, under HM the

King's leadership.

Interior minister thanks HM

Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al-Khalifa in a cable pledged to HM the King that all the ministry's affiliates would always stand on the front-line, which represents the battlefield of honour, sacrifice and bravery.

The minister paid tribute to HM the King for praising the ministry and its servicemen, vowing to spare no efforts for the homeland to be more secure and stable.



Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Al Arrayed with the Undersecretary of HRH the Prime Minister's Court, Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Khalifa, and the Personal Secretary to HRH the Prime Minister, Shaikh Abdullah bin Rashid Al Khalifa. Al Arrayed congratulated them on their appointment to their important posts and wished them success.



Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) Secretary-General Dr Mustafa Al-Sayyed receiving a donation from Bahrain Ship Repairing and Engineering Company (BASREC) in support of needy families. Handing over the donation to Dr Al-Sayyed is BASREC Human Resources Department Director, Narges Al-Mousawi.



Bahrain's Ambassador to Russia Ahmed Abdulrahman Al Saati with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and responsible for relations with the Middle East and Africa, Mikhail Bogdanov during a meeting. The meeting reviewed the relations between Bahrain and Russia and ways of developing them in various fields

Rashid Equestrian explores green energy



Dr Mirza during the meeting with REHRC CEO

TDT | Manama

management and Sustainable Energy Authority experts.

A proposal was made yesterday to form a task force to expedite the integration of renewable energy into the facilities of Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club.

The task force will work on developing a strategic and comprehensive plan for the integration of energy efficiency solutions into the club's facilities and other aspects.

Dr Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza, President of the Sustainable Energy Authority (SEA), was holding a virtual meeting with Sheikh Salman bin Rashid Al Khalifa - CEO of REHRC in the presence of members of Club executive

The meeting was in response to an interest expressed by Sh. Salman to explore collaboration with SEA.

Dr Mirza presented an overview of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP), existing projects, and tenders for installing Solar PV Systems on rooftops.

Since awarding the first public tender to install Solar PV Systems on rooftops, SEA recorded interests from over 20 ministries and government agencies. During the meeting, Sheikh Salman affirmed REHRC's interest to explore cooperation with the SEA.



His Majesty the King's Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Affairs Chairman His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa with the outgoing US Ambassador to Bahrain Justin Hicks Siberell. HH Shaikh Nasser lauded the close relations between Bahrain and the US in various fields, expressing his appreciation of the ambassador's efforts that contributed to strengthening them. The ambassador expressed his gratitude to HH Shaikh Nasser for his interest in enhancing the Bahraini-American relations and cooperation in various fields.

Finalise school reopening plans: Deputy PM

TDT | Manama

Deputy Prime Minister yesterday called on authorities here to finalise the proposals for next year's school reopening, stressing government's keenness to ensure the safety of staff and students.

Upon finalising, the proposals will go to the Executive Committee for review and to the Cabinet for approval.

This came as Education Minister Majed Al Nuaimi briefed the reopening plans to His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa.

Tribune earlier reported that Bahrain will reopen government schools here on September 16, and private schools starting from mid-August until the start of September. Working days of the administrative staff will begin on 6 September 2020.

The suspension of all educational facilities in Bahrain first came into effect on February 25.

Presenting the reopening plans for public and private educational institutions and universities along with Dr Al Nuaimi was Education Ministry Undersecretary for Resources and Services Mohammed Mubarak Juma. The presentation included proposals made by the task force, criteria, procedures and requirements to ensure the safety of students, educational and administrative staff.

These recommendations were developed by specialists from various government agencies based on international best practices. HH Shaikh Mohammed thanked the task team and stressed the government's keenness on resuming education in a way that guarantees the safety of the students and staff.

YOU KNOW WHAT

Bahrain will reopen government schools here on September 16, and private schools starting from mid-August until the start of September. Working days of the administrative staff will begin on 6 September 2020.

Pandemic must not spark 'digital divide': iGA CE

TDT | Manama

The crisis sparked by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has "clearly demonstrated" the need for fast and resilient digital service, said iGA Chief Executive.

He, however, also stressed that this must not lead to a widening of the global "digital divide".

Mohammed Ali Al Qaed was representing Bahrain at a virtual Ministerial Conference on the Digital Response to COVID-19 organised by Estonia and Sin-



iGA CE Mohammed Ali Al Qaed

gapore.

Highlighting the need to fight

the pandemic safeguarding the health and safety of all without discriminating on race, religion and nationality, the Chief Executive said Bahrain's success in fighting the pandemic rest on this strategy put forward by the leaders of the Kingdom.

On the digital front, our COVID-19 response efforts leveraged the Kingdom's eGovernment strategic framework, which is supported by a strong ICT infrastructure, digital transformation readiness, and compliance with international ICT standards and

best practices.

Al Qaed also explained that Bahrain's contact tracing app BeAware, downloaded 800,000 times was a success in educating, alerting as well as protecting the privacy of users.

He said Bahrain was the first country in the region to implement a 'Cloud First Policy' for our re-engineering of public services. "At the same time, we invested in developing government employees' ICT skills, fully optimising our public service delivery channels."

Coronavirus awareness goes digital

TDT | Manama

Muharraq Police deployed electronic platforms, which harnesses direct communication technology, at public places to raise awareness on the Coronavirus outbreak.

The service, the Director-General of the Muharraq Governorate Police Directorate said, will answer the questions of citizens and residents on the pandemic and provide important security and legal instructions.

Answering the questions of the public will be employees at the directorate's operations room. The effort is in cooperation with the General Administration of Information and Security Culture and the Communications Department of the Ministry of Interior.

The directorate is also distributing educational brochures in multiple languages to citizens and residents on COVID-19 precautionary measures. The digital units are currently installed in LuLu Hyper Market in Al Hidd, Art Rotana Hotel, Doha Arad, and Dragon City.



COVID-19 takes two more lives

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The Ministry of Health announced yesterday that the coronavirus (COVID-19) has claimed two more lives in Bahrain.

The deceased were two Bahraini men, aged 90 and 63.

Their passing brought the overall number of coronavirus-related deaths in the Kingdom to 94.

The Health Ministry expressed its heartfelt condolences to the victims' families.

Out of 9740 COVID-19 tests carried out on 2 July 2020, 423 new cases have been detected among 252 expatriate workers, 167 new cases are contacts of active cases, and 4 are travel related. There were 635 recoveries from #COVID19, increasing total recoveries to 22583



Meanwhile, it was announced early this morning that out of 9,740 COVID-19 tests conducted yesterday, 423 new cases were detected. From these, 252 were expatriate workers, 167 were contacts of active cases, and four were travel-related.

There were also 635 additional recoveries from the virus

yesterday, the Health Ministry said. After confirming that the patients were free of COVID-19, they were released from their respective isolation and treatment centres, bringing the total number of discharged in Bahrain to 22,583

The total number of currently active cases reached 5,160 of which 82 are receiving treatment, with 51 in critical condition. The remaining 5,109 cases are stable. The total tested increased to 574,105.

GCC round up

Saudi Arabia reported 3,383 cases and 54 deaths yesterday. This brings the total number of coronavirus infections in the country to 197,608. The total number of recoveries in the kingdom is at 137,669. There are 2,287 cases in intensive care out

of 58,187 currently active cases. Qatar reported 894 new coronavirus cases and three new deaths in the last 24 hours, raising the total number of cases to 97,897. The total number of recovered cases so far in Qatar have risen to 86,597.

Meanwhile, UAE has reported a total of 49,069 coronavirus cases in the country so far and 316 deaths totally.

Kuwait reported 919 new cases, increasing the country's infection tally to 47,859. One more death was reported in a day, bringing the total such fatalities in the country to 359.

With an increase of 1,361 cases in a day, Oman has recorded 42,555 cases of COVID-19 so far. Within only one month, 27,000 new infections were recorded, said Omani health minister Dr Ahmed bin Mohammad Al Saidi.

Harbouring and abetting a fugitive: Appeal court rejects man's appeal

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The First Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal rejected the appeal of a Bahraini man sentenced to three years in jail on charges of harbouring and aiding a wanted fugitive.

The High Criminal Court also slapped the same penalty on the second defendant, his accomplice in the crime, earlier this year.

Public prosecution accused both the suspects of the aiding and assisting the fugitive convict and then concealing him in



Picture courtesy of Al Ayam

their house, with full knowledge of the conviction against him.

Incidents leading the case occurred on 19 January 2020, with law enforcement officers arresting the fugitive convict from the second suspect's home where he was hiding with the help of the first suspect.

The General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science in Interior Ministry was acting on a tip-off received about the hide-out of the fugitive convict.

The fugitive man, wanted in two criminal cases, was sentenced to serve 13 years in jail.

The second suspect, police say, harboured the wanted person in his house and helped him with food supplies and free movement.

The first and second suspects confessed to their crime to investigators of the Public Prosecution during interrogation.

They told investigators that they concealed the person in the house with the knowledge that he is wanted by the law.

Both the men were arrested and referred to public prosecution.

Seven in the dock for breaking quarantine

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Seven people suspected of violating Bahrain's Coronavirus (COVID-19) quarantine rules were removed to an isolating centre, pending further actions.

Legal measures are being taken to refer them a court, said the Public Prosecution in a statement yesterday.

Public Prosecution Chief Adnan A Wadai said the seven people, who had tested positive to the deadly virus, refused to stay in a centre and left for their homes violating health guidelines.

Some of the infected people had an underlying chronic

condition, while two of them were over 60 years of age.

The situation warranted authority to launch an investigation and confine them in an isolation centre for urgent medical treatment, Al Wadai said. The Chief Prosecutor stressed the need for all to follow the instructions and adhere to the health measures strictly to mitigate the deadly virus.

"Stern actions will be taken against whoever violates the health measures," Adnan A Wadai warned.

Violators of the preventive measures will face up to three years in prison and a fine of BD10,000.

Muharraq police arrest one in illegal massage parlour raid

TDT | Manama

Muharraq Police raided an illegal massage parlour in the directorate and arrested a 29-year-old man on charges of providing unlicensed services and flouting Health Ministry's guidelines to prevent the pandemic.

Muharraq Governorate Police Directorate, in cooperation with the Public Health Department of the Ministry of Health, jointly conducted the raid based on a tip-off received.

Acting on the tip-off, police forced a team of officers to investigate and identify the suspect.

The suspect was caught red-handed during the opera-



Representative picture (Courtesy of Al Ayam)

tion from centre running from an apartment in the area.

Interior ministry, in a twitter statement, confirmed the arrest



Services such as facials, threading, microblading, massages, semi-permanent eyelashes, and returnable hair extensions are not allowed in salons and barbershops



and said the suspect was offering his services, which is banned by law, in exchange for money.

The Director-General of the Muharraq Governorate Police Directorate said the centre was operating in violation of the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health preventing services like massage amid the outbreak. The top cop confirmed that

necessary legal procedures are being taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution.

Barbershops and Salons in the Kingdom are allowed to reopen starting 27 May 2020, after a long hiatus, by following restrictions for staff and customers.

Some of the measures include maintaining a distance of two metres between customers,

limiting the number of staffs inside, and sterilising and disinfecting surfaces after each customer.

Authorities also direct to close waiting areas, prevents sharing of magazines or newspaper and other objects, and do not permit services like facials, threading, microblading, massages and semi-permanent eyelashes.

Mentoring in Higher Education during COVID-19 Pandemic



DR MERVAT ALBUFALASA

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has instigated challenges in Higher Education institutes that required immediate responses to the sudden closures of colleges and universities, out casting faculty members as well as students.

The spread of the coronavirus has caused drastic disruption to face-to-face instruction, forcing universities across the world to transform the teaching/learning process into 100% online-instruction. With big applause, universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain among others worldwide have managed in no time to move all faculty members and students to the online frontier, utilizing varied electronic platforms. Universities, being aware of the situation, have planned carefully the transformation phase and provided massive workshops to assist faculty members to effectively use online-classes for instruction and implement a variety of assessment types, techniques and tools.

As much as it can be said about universities' success moving to online-instruction and maintaining quality standards of educational instruction, additional concerns should arise about the effect of such transformation on faculty as well as students' performance and mental health. Many studies were conducted to measure the impact of the online-instruction from the instructors and students' perspectives regarding fact-finding outcomes related to the types of platforms used, the number of on-line instruction, types of assessments, percentages and so on; however, none has been done on instructors and students' mental health.

As the coronavirus spreads, thousands of faculty and students have found themselves in a real struggle to cope with the unprecedented changes that have taken place in an accelerated manner. Some have definitely coped with such changes and have stepped up to ensure that learning continues, while others have been crumpled, struggling deeply not only academically but also mentally. Those mental struggles have sprung out from the fear of not being able to deal with the rapid technological advances, phobic of sitting behind rigid screens, fear of lack of real human communication, fear of failure in courses; leaving all at risk.

Strenuous efforts have been exerted to support students; however, they remain considerable on a small scale, where the majority have found themselves lost in a vacuum. Much has been done regarding registration of courses, solving internet connectivity, grading systems, tips and resources; yet, little has been done to cater for individuals' concerns about distress, adapting to the unprecedented changes, feelings of isolation, distant communication means, moments of insecurity; all of which resulted in ending up with muted voices behind the screens.

Mentoring during crisis should be enforced and practised to create a healthier environment where faculty mentor students. Under these disruptive circumstances, mentoring can be implemented remotely helping one another work through major adjustments in their lives. Numerous studies have proved the vitality of enforcing mentorship programmes in higher education setting in western universities. Reading about the positive outcomes from such programmes should encourage Higher Education institutions to start immediate action-plans and launch mentoring programmes in our beloved country.

To optimize mentoring in Higher Education, universities should establish mentoring programme units with clear schemes that aim at providing training sessions, workshops, seminars, consultations and guidelines for faculty to be qualified to start supporting students as well as other faculty during uncertain times where psychological distress heightens. The reassuring and supportive language that reflects the understanding of the human's needs on a regular basis should be employed.

With the right training, setting up frameworks that include goals and expectations should also be established to assist both faculty and students to define their priorities and gear them towards accomplishing these goals. In like manner, faculty should be encouraged to take up the roles of mentors to support students especially those who feel disconnected. It is wise to start small and gradual as one of the reasons that faced faculty with their students is poor communication due to setting up high expectations and demands. This might trigger negative emotional reactions in both faculty and students. Therefore, faculty should take the roles of a mentor in terms of offering understanding, gradual expectations, regular communication, collaboration, listening attentively, and sharing.

Virtual interactions, regular meetings and follow-ups should also be enhanced to share experiences with students on how to achieve their goals using reassuring language to ease their concerns and support them mentally and academically to wipe away distressful moments. It is healthy to express mutual feelings and worries and on the top of that is important to have constructive talks using empathetic language.

Using different platforms, e.g., Zoom, Teams, Blackboard, Email, WhatsApp, etc., faculty should plan carefully a schedule of individual or group mentoring sessions with students, on regular basis, to brief them on their progress and discuss solutions for obstacles that might hinder their academic performance. This would reassure students' confidence and self-efficacy. Further to this, sessions can be directed towards student-to-student mentoring so they can stay connected and form sub-groups to support one another.

Mentorship can be an invaluable investment in faculty and student success in Higher Education that help educators achieve greatness. Therefore, mentoring programmes should be established in universities as a cultivated culture to nurture the Bahraini Higher Education environment.

The author is Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, College of Arts, University of Bahrain

To optimize mentoring in Higher Education, universities should establish mentoring programme units with clear schemes that aim at providing training sessions, workshops, seminars, consultations and guidelines for faculty to be qualified to start supporting students as well as other faculty during uncertain times

Another celestial dance

But in Bahrain, it will not be visible

When? This Sunday

The season of lunar and solar eclipses has ended for Bahrain, says Astronomer researcher Ali Majeed Al-Hajri

TDT | Manama

The universe, soon after mesmerising skywatchers across the world with two spectacular shows, is giving us yet another chance to witness the celestial dance.

According to experts, a "penumbral eclipse" will briefly appear in some parts across the world this Sunday.

The spectacle, however, will not be visible in Bahrain, this time, says Astronomer researcher Ali Majeed Al-Hajri.

According to him, Bahrain will not witness a full phenomenon before 7 September 2025 when the world will experience a 'total lunar eclipse.'

Sunday's event, the third such this year, would be visible only in parts of North and South America and Europe and in the Western parts of Africa.

Ali Al Hajri told AlAayam that the penumbral lunar eclipse will start at around 06:07 am and will go on till 08:52 am. The maximum eclipse will be at 07:29 am.

It will last for approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes and will not appear much different from the regular moon to the naked eye.

However, it will not be visible from Bahrain as it is taking place during the day time.

Timeanddate says the next eclipse, a penumbral Lunar eclipse, visible in Manama will happen on 16 May 2022. This will be followed by a partial solar eclipse on 25 October 2022 and a Penumbral Lunar Eclipse on 8 November 2022.



Astronomer researcher Ali Majeed Al-Hajri. (Courtesy of AlAayam)

Bahrainis will have to wait until October 2023 to witness a Partial lunar eclipse from Manama, and then a year more to witness it again on 18 September 2024.

In total, until the total lunar eclipse of 20 December 2029, Bahrain will witness about 15 celestial events in the form of total and

partial events.

However, if you aren't out there in person to witness any one of these events, you can take in the spectacular show online.

This Sunday's event is an annular one, in which the moon does not completely cover the sun as it passes between the star and Earth.



How many lunar eclipses will there be in 2020?

4 lunar eclipses

Year 2020 has 6 eclipses, 2 solar eclipses and 4 lunar eclipses.

Four type of Solar Eclipse

There are four types of solar eclipses: total, partial, annular and hybrid. Total solar eclipses happen when the sun is completely blocked by the moon. Total solar eclipses are only visible from a specific part of the Earth.



Hybrid Solar Eclipses

A hybrid solar eclipse is a rare form of solar eclipse, which changes from an annular to a total solar eclipse, and vice versa, along its path.



The last Penumbral lunar eclipse of this year will take place on 29-30 November.

India clears purchase of Russian combat jets worth \$2.4 billion

Reuters | New Delhi

India's government yesterday approved the purchase of 33 Russian fighter jets and upgrades to another 59 planes, acting to beef up its air force at a time when the military is locked in a border stand-off with China.

The approval for 21 MiG-29 planes and a dozen Su-30 jets will together cost 181.48 billion rupees (\$2.43 billion), the defence ministry said. The purchase, along with the upgrade of 59 other MiG-29s, was an attempt to address the "long felt need of the Air Force to increase its fighter squadrons."

The green light for the Russian planes followed a visit to Moscow last month by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh where he urged his hosts to speed up deliveries, officials said.

More than half of India's military hardware is still of



Mig 29 are parked on runway during the air show, dubbed Sloboda 2017 (Freedom 2017) at Batajnica military airfield in Belgrade, Serbia

Russian origin even though over the last decade India has turned to the United States and Israel for high-tech arms transfers.

The Defence Ministry also approved the purchase of air-to-air missiles developed indigenously that it said will add to the strike capability of the air force.

Novartis pays over \$700m to settle US kickbacks case

Geneva

Swiss pharmaceutical giant Novartis will pay some \$729 million to settle a lawsuit brought by Washington accusing it of paying kickbacks to doctors, among other allegations.

The company's chief executive Vas Narasimhan described the settlements as "an important milestone on our journey

to build trust with society". "Today's settlements are consistent with Novartis commitment to resolve and learn from legacy compliance matters," he said in a statement.

Novartis is accused of having hosted tens of thousands of speaker programmes and events which the Department of Justice said were used to bribe physicians.

US economy 'roaring back'

● Employers brought 4.8 million people back to work last month

● Leisure and hospitality added 2.1 million positions and retail grew by 740,000 jobs

● Layoffs have averaged 1.5 million a week over the past four weeks,

AFP | Washington

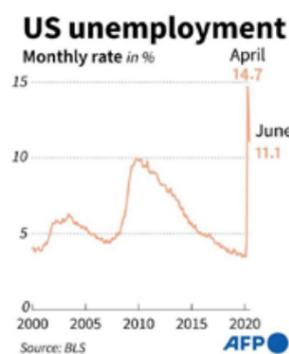
President Donald Trump yesterday hailed new data showing huge jobs gains in June, but continued to downplay surging COVID-19 cases that could reverse the tentative recovery.

Employers brought 4.8 million people back to work last month, two million in the hard-

The new data together with the 2.7 million jobs won back in May means the economy has regained 7.5 million of the more than 22 million jobs lost since mid-March amid the coronavirus pandemic



US President Donald Trump



hit leisure and hospitality sector, the Labour Department reported, which dropped the jobless rate by two points to 11.1 per cent.

The new data together with the 2.7 million jobs won back in May means the economy has regained 7.5 million of the more than 22 million jobs lost since mid-March amid the coronavirus pandemic as businesses

were closed nationwide to prevent the spread of infections.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Trump, who needs a strong economy to help his re-election bid in November, went through the report line-by-line, saying some of the job gains were records -- without mentioning the massive losses suffered since March due to the pandemic.

"Today's announcement proves that our economy is roaring back," Trump said.

"The crisis is being handled," he continued. "This not just luck, what is happening. This is a lot of talent."

He also cheered the soaring US stock market, but left without taking questions from reporters on the surge in cases of coronavirus, or the scandal over reports that US intelligence believed a Russian unit paid bounties for Taliban-linked militants to kill US troops.

The welcome news on jobs adds to positive signs in other reports showing the world's largest economy is on the mend backed by massive government support for workers and businesses, which also helped firms rehire some employees.

But as the United States faces the world's worst coronavirus outbreak with more than 127,000 deaths and a record 50,000 new cases a day, economists fear a renewed malaise as local authorities roll back efforts to return to pre-pandemic normal and businesses are

forced to shut down again.

Leisure and hospitality added 2.1 million positions and retail grew by 740,000 jobs, while manufacturing and construction also rehired in large numbers.

But a separate Labour Department report showed job losses continued, as 1.43 million people filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week, only slightly less than the prior week.

Layoffs have averaged 1.5 million a week over the past four weeks, according to the weekly claims data.



US infectious diseases expert Anthony Fauci said the United States was heading in the "wrong direction" and warned it could soon see 100,000 cases a day.

Several US states imposed 14-day quarantines on travellers from other states ahead of the annual July 4 festivities on Saturday while California suspended indoor dining at restaurants in Los Angeles.

India opens vast railway network to private players



Mumbai

India has opened up its vast railway sector to private companies, allowing firms to operate trains on certain routes, in a bid to boost its stuttering, virus-hit economy.

In an announcement late Wednesday, the railway ministry said it would now permit businesses to run trains along 109 routes, inviting bids from firms weeks after New Delhi opened up coal mining to the private sector.

"This is the first initiative of private investment for running passenger trains over Indian Railways network," the ministry said in a statement.

"The objective of this initiative is to introduce modern technology rolling stock with reduced maintenance, reduced transit time, boost job creation, provide enhanced safety, provide world class travel experience to passengers," it added.

The project will require an investment of \$4 billion and private players will have to pay the government fixed haul charges and a percentage of profits determined during the bidding process.

t'azur Company b.s.c. (c)

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

In United States Dollars ("USD")	31 Dec 2019 (audited)	31 Dec 2018 (audited)
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	9,949,749	4,864,943
Statutory deposits	5,976,578	7,945,851
Deposits more than 3 months	9,602,642	9,318,965
Investments	13,401,551	12,831,105
Contributions receivable	20,358,792	20,124,145
Receivable from takaful and retakaful companies	3,972,436	2,752,499
Deferred acquisition cost	5,046,814	4,215,014
Deferred retakaful share of contribution	5,599,471	7,667,100
Retakaful share of outstanding claims	25,829,100	13,175,079
Property and equipment	728,485	575,911
Other assets	6,164,646	6,748,656
Total assets	106,630,264	90,219,268
LIABILITIES, PARTICIPANTS' FUND AND SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Technical reserves	71,476,470	58,337,122
Payable to takaful and retakaful companies	3,763,900	4,561,516
Other liabilities	14,603,285	11,515,160
Total liabilities	89,843,655	74,413,798
Participants' fund		
Accumulated deficit	(41,351,931)	(42,173,072)
Foreign currency translation reserve	327,866	375,696
Total of participants' fund	(41,024,065)	(41,797,376)
Equity		
Share capital	58,000,000	58,000,000
Statutory reserve	1,356,312	1,324,137
Investment fair value reserve	796,250	934,484
Foreign currency translation reserve	(790,772)	(844,795)
Accumulated losses	(8,954,930)	(9,209,323)
	50,406,860	50,204,503
Non-controlling interest	7,403,814	7,398,343
Total shareholder' equity	57,810,674	57,602,846
TOTAL LIABILITIES, PARTICIPANTS' FUND AND SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY	106,630,264	90,219,268

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS' INCOME

In United States Dollars ("USD")	Year ended 31 December	
	2019 (audited)	2018 (audited)
Income		
Wakala fee	9,936,255	9,504,160
Investment profit income	393,391	322,175
Mudarib share	80,072	53,475
Other income	287,559	219,813
Total income	10,697,277	10,099,623
Expenses		
General and administration expenses	(9,726,800)	(10,005,135)
Qard Hassan written-off	(500,000)	-
Impairment on investment in Associate	(142,547)	-
Total expenses	(10,369,347)	(10,005,135)
Profit for the year before contribution to KFAS	327,930	94,488
Contribution to KFAS	(1,463)	(1,496)
Zakat	(1,624)	(1,340)
NET PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	(324,843)	91,652
Profit attributable to:		
Owners of the parent	286,570	56,687
Non-controlling interests	38,273	34,965
NET PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	324,843	91,652

*The Board of directors have approved the consolidated financial statements.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' REVENUE AND EXPENSES

In United States Dollars ("USD")	Year ended 31 December	
	2019 (audited)	2018 (audited)
Contributions		
Gross contributions	73,993,157	67,073,658
Retakaful share of gross contributions	(12,413,698)	(12,586,281)
Retained contributions	61,579,459	54,487,377
Unearned contributions adjustment	(1,725,154)	(4,653,554)
Net earned contributions	59,854,305	49,833,823
Policy issuance fee	334,045	344,114
Policy acquisition costs	(5,634,938)	(4,513,524)
Re-takaful discount	2,678,517	2,606,310
Net acquisition costs/ discount income	(2,622,376)	(1,563,100)
Unearned acquisition costs / discount income adjustment- net	648,965	421,164
Net earned acquisition costs / discount income	(1,973,411)	(1,141,936)
Net earned revenue	57,880,894	48,691,887
Claims		
Gross claims paid	50,321,671	44,951,339
Retakaful share of claims paid	(4,685,039)	(3,843,381)
Change in Outstanding claims - gross	11,658,233	(5,851,864)
Change in Outstanding claims - retakaful share	(12,600,371)	2,655,407
Net claims	44,694,494	37,911,501
Net earned revenue over net claims incurred	13,186,400	10,780,386
Wakala fee	(9,936,253)	(9,504,160)
General and administrative expenses under mudarib model	(3,285,607)	(2,756,013)
Deficit from takaful operations	(35,460)	(1,479,787)
Profit income	601,177	848,714
Mudarib share	(80,072)	(53,475)
Other expense	(165,368)	(163,436)
Qard Hassan written back	500,000	-
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	820,277	(847,984)

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY

In United States Dollars ("USD")	Share capital	Statutory reserve	Foreign currency translation reserve	Accumulated losses	Investment fair value reserve	Total	Non-controlling interest	Total equity
2019								
Balance at 1 January	58,000,000	1,324,137	(844,795)	(9,209,323)	934,484	50,204,503	7,398,343	57,602,846
Foreign currency translation reserve	-	-	54,023	(2)	-	54,021	23,522	77,543
Investment fair value reserve	-	-	-	-	(138,234)	(138,234)	(56,324)	(194,558)
Statutory reserve	-	32,175	-	(32,175)	-	-	-	-
Net profit for the year	-	-	-	286,570	-	286,570	38,273	324,843
Balance at 31 December	58,000,000	1,356,312	(790,772)	(8,954,930)	796,250	50,406,860	7,403,814	57,810,674
2018								
Balance at 1 January	58,000,000	1,314,688	(748,181)	(9,256,561)	1,883,085	51,193,031	7,816,245	59,009,276
Foreign currency translation reserve	-	-	(96,614)	-	-	(96,614)	(46,323)	(142,937)
Investment fair value reserve	-	-	-	-	(948,601)	(948,601)	(406,545)	(1,355,146)
Statutory reserve	-	9,449	-	(9,449)	-	-	-	-
Net profit for the year	-	-	-	56,687	-	56,687	34,966	91,653
Balance at 31 December	58,000,000	1,324,137	(844,795)	(9,209,323)	934,484	50,204,503	7,398,343	57,602,846

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN PARTICIPANTS' EQUITY

In United States Dollars ("USD")	Accumulated deficit	Foreign currency translation reserve	Total
2019			
Balance at 1 January	(42,173,072)	375,696	(41,797,376)
Deficit for the year	864,277	-	820,277
Foreign currency translation reserve	-	864	(46,966)
Balance at 31 December	(41,351,931)	327,866	(41,024,065)
2018			
Balance at 1 January	(41,325,085)	281,679	(41,043,406)
Deficit for the year	(847,984)	-	(847,984)
Foreign currency translation reserve	-	94,014	94,014
Balance at 31 December	(42,173,069)	375,693	(41,797,376)

Vietnam opens world's first 'gold-plated hotel'



The 25-storey hotel is located on the bank of the Giang Vo Lake in the downtown Ba Dinh district of Hanoi.



The inside of the hotel is also decked out with golden amenities.



The property is said to be covered with 5,000 square meters of gilded ceramic tiles.



There's five-star bling on offer at Vietnam's Dolce Hanoi Golden Lake hotel, which claims to be the world's first gold-plated hotel. Everything from the bathtub to the coffee cups is plated in 24-carat gold at the new establishment, which also features a gold-plated infinity pool on the roof.

US lifts Venezuela-related sanctions imposed on shipping firms, tankers

Reuters | Washington

The United States yesterday lifted sanctions on Marshall Islands-based Delos Voyager Shipping Ltd and Greece-based Romina Maritime Co Inc that had been imposed last month over accusations the companies operated in the Venezuelan oil sector.

The US Treasury Department's action lifted Venezuela-related sanctions on four companies, including Marshall-Islands based Adamant Maritime Ltd and Sanibel Shiptrade Ltd, as well as on four vessels.

Yesterday's move, which follows the delisting last month of other Greece- and Mar-

shall Islands-based shipping firms, removed the remaining Greece-based companies blacklisted in June for transporting Venezuelan oil from the US Office of Foreign Assets Control Specially Designated Nationals list.

US officials met representatives of Greece-based shipping companies earlier this week to discuss Venezuela-related sanctions, which have ramped up since early June, according to two sources familiar with the talks.

Stocks rise on US jobs recovery

AFP | London

Stock markets pushed higher Thursday as investors cheered a solid rebound in US employment and encouraging news about progress towards a coronavirus vaccine.

The US economy regained 4.8 million jobs in June as businesses began to reopen nationwide, while the unemployment rate fell more than two points to 11.1 pc, the Labor Department reported. The job creation amid the coronavirus pandemic was far higher than economists were expecting, and showed the rapid pace of gains as people who were laid off returned to their jobs, especially in hard-hit sectors like leisure and hospitality, which accounted for just under half of the increase.

"The key takeaway from the report as far as the market is concerned is that it reflects an economy that is bouncing back from the depths of the COVID-19 shutdown period," said market analyst Patrick J. O'Hare at Briefing.com.

"There are still far too many people unemployed (17.75 million), yet the June numbers are moving in the right direction,"

Key figures around 1530 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	▲ 1.3 pc at 6,240.36 points (close)
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▲ 2.8 pc at 12,608.46 (close)
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ 2.5 pc at 5,049.38 (close)
EURO STOXX 50:	▲ 2.8 pc at 3,320.07
New York - Dow:	▲ 0.7 pc at 25,917.14
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▲ 2.9 pc at 25,145.96 (close)
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 0.1 pc at 22,145.96 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 2.1 pc at 3,090.57 (close)
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 0.7 pc at \$40.13 per barrel
Brent North Sea crude:	▲ 1.4 pc at \$42.61
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.1243 from \$1.1249 at 2100 GMT
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 107.56 yen from 107.43 yen
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.2477 from \$1.2468
Euro/pound:	▼ at 90.10 pence from 90.19 yen

he said in a note to clients.

Crude oil prices also benefited from the US jobs numbers.

"Oil prices are settling above the \$40 level after a strong US nonfarm payroll report suggests the US economic rebound continues and that crude demand should follow suit," said analyst Edward Moya at currency trading platform Oanda.

'Holy grail'

Wall Street's main indices

shot out of the gate at the opening bell, quickly racking up gains of over one pc, with the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite continuing to push into record territory. They later pared their gains.

Europe's main stock markets finished the day with strong gains, with both Frankfurt and Paris up by more than two pc.

Sentiment had already been largely positive after hopes for a vaccine were given a boost

when Germany's BioNTech and US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer late Wednesday reported positive preliminary results from a joint project.

"Investors largely are shrugging off higher cases... as Pfizer reported positive results from a vaccine trial," said Neil Wilson at Markets.com.

"We have been here before -- it's too early to get too excited -- but a working vaccine is the holy grail as it would allow real normality to return to the economy."

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization warned that with more than 10 million known infections worldwide and more than 500,000 deaths, the pandemic is "not even close to being over".

In Asia, Hong Kong led gains on reopening after a one-day break, despite concerns about a new security law imposed on the city by China that observers said was more draconian than feared and could impact its future as an attractive business hub. While there are worries about the issue causing further friction between Beijing and the West, markets remain positive for now.

EU, UK warn of big differences as Brexit talks head to London

Brussels

A round of intensified Brexit talks ended yesterday with both sides warning of big remaining differences but committing to more negotiations next week in London.

The four days of meetings in Brussels were the first held face-to-face since the coronavirus shutdown, with hopes high that progress would be made, but they broke up one day early.

"Our goal was to get negotiations successfully and quickly on a trajectory to reach an agreement," EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier said in a statement.

"However, after four days of discussions, serious divergences remain," he added.

More hopefully, the former French minister added: "We



British Brexit negotiator David Frost

continue to believe that an agreement is possible and in everyone's interest."

Britain's chief negotiator David Frost mirrored Barnier's statement, warning that "significant differences" remain with the European Union.

But Frost added: "We remain committed to working hard to find an early understanding on the principles underlying an agreement."

Holding in-person talks "has given extra depth and flexibility

to our discussions," he said.

The talks this month are being held in a more limited format than earlier sessions, in hopes that a more personal encounter can deliver a breakthrough.

However, a final one-on-one session between Frost and Barnier set for Friday was cancelled, though a source said the schedule was never ironclad.

The "expected dynamic did not occur," a European source told AFP.

"At the same time, we are digging into the hard stuff and no longer just summarising our divergences."

The talks will resume on Monday in London in the same restricted format, with a full session, involving hundreds of negotiators, planned for July 20 in the UK capital.

US seizes Chinese products made from human hair

● They were part of an \$800,000, 13-ton shipment from Lop County Meixin Hair Product Co.

AFP | Washington

US customs officials said Wednesday they had seized a shipment of products made from human hair believed to be made by Muslims in labor camps in China's western Xinjiang region.

They were part of an \$800,000, 13-ton shipment from Lop County Meixin Hair Product Co. US Customs and Border Protection ordered on June 17 that the company's goods be held on grounds it uses prison and forced labor, including from children.

"The production of these



A US Customs and Border Protection officer at the Port of New York/Newark inspects a shipment of hair pieces and accessories from China suspected to have been made with forced or prison labour

goods constitutes a very serious human rights violation," said Brenda Smith, executive assistant commissioner for trade at CBP.

"The detention order is intended to send a clear and direct message to all entities seeking to do business with the United

States that illicit and inhumane practices will not be tolerated in US supply chains."

Lop County Meixin was the third Xinjiang exporter of human hair -- typically used in weaves and extensions -- to be blacklisted in recent months for using forced labor.

The announcement came as the US State, Commerce, Treasury and Homeland Security departments warned US businesses to beware importing goods through supply chains that involve forced or prison labor in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China.

And they also warned companies against supplying surveillance tools to be used by authorities in Xinjiang, or aiding in the construction of facilities used in the mass detention of Muslims and minorities in the province.

The Chinese government "continues to carry out a campaign of repression in Xinjiang, targeting Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and members of other Muslim minority groups," the State Department said.

Businesses that expose themselves to this "should be aware of the reputational, economic, and legal risks," they said.

Myanmar jade mine landslide kills 160

The disaster struck after heavy rainfall pounded the open-cast mines in Myanmar

AFP | Yangon

The battered bodies of more than 160 jade miners were pulled from a sea of mud after a landslide in northern Myanmar yesterday, after one of the worst-ever accidents to hit the treacherous industry.

Scores die each year while working in the country's lucrative but poorly regulated jade trade, which uses low-paid migrant workers to scrape out a gem highly coveted in China.

The disaster struck after heavy rainfall pounded the open-cast mines, close to the Chinese border in Kachin state, where billions of dollars of jade is believed to be scoured each year from bare hillsides.

A slice of mountain collapsed, sending a churning torrent of mud into an aquamarine-coloured lake of mine waste water as workers scampered uphill.

"There are so many people floating in the water," said a bystander.

Dozens "were smothered by a wave of mud", the Myanmar Fire Services Department said in a Facebook post.

Rescue workers, including the fire department and local police, worked throughout the day to



Rescue workers carry a dead body following a landslide at the mining site

pull bodies out of a mud lake under a continuous deluge of heavy monsoon rain.

"By 7:15 pm, 162 bodies were found," said the department, adding that 54 people were injured and sent to nearby hospitals.

Mud-slaked and bloodied bodies of miners were laid out in grim rows under tarpaulins, some missing shoes as a result of the force of the wall of mud which hit them.

A woman grieved over the

recovered victims, as rescue workers held her up.

Working through a torrent of heavy rain was a challenge, police superintendent Than Win Aung said, as it could spark another mine collapse on the unstable terrain.

"We can't dig and find the bodies buried underwater... so we are just picking up the dead bodies that float," he told AFP, adding that rescue efforts will be further hampered as night falls.

The workers were scavenging for gemstones on the sharp mountainous terrain in Hpakant township, where furrows from earlier excavations had already loosened the earth.

The victims had apparently defied a warning not to work

the mines during the monsoon rains, local police told AFP.

The United Nations in Myanmar said it was "deeply saddened by the terrible loss of life".

Chinese demand

Myanmar is one of the world's biggest sources of jadeite and the industry is largely driven by insatiable demand for the translucent green gem from neighbouring China.

The mines are mired in secrecy, although environmental watchdog Global Witness alleges operators are linked to former junta figures, the military elite, and their cronies.

It said the landslide should serve as a "wake-up call" for Myanmar's government led by Aung San Suu Kyi -- whose party vowed to reform and stamp out corruption.

The watchdog estimated that the industry was worth some \$31 billion in 2014, although very little reaches state coffers.

The mine where yesterday's accident happened belongs to the Yadanar Kyay company, according to the military's official news site.

Police said the death toll could have been even higher if authorities had not warned people to stay away from the mining pits the day before.

Landslides in the area are common, especially during Myanmar's notoriously severe monsoon season, and a major slip in November 2015 left more than 100 dead.

News in brief

Gun attack leaves 24 dead in central Mexico



Gunmen attacked a drug rehabilitation centre in central Mexico, killing at least 24 people and leaving seven wounded, local authorities said. According to preliminary information, the attackers "entered the scene, forced (the victims) onto the ground and shot them," said Pedro Cortes, secretary of public security in Irapuato, located northwest of Mexico City in Guanajuato state.



Hollywood star Geoffrey Rush won a record multimillion-dollar payout after an appeal by a Rupert Murdoch-owned newspaper against a defamation ruling was thrown out by an Australian court.

The Oscar-winner will receive US\$2 million for lost earnings and compensation after a court rejected an appeal seeking reduced costs and a retrial of the case.

Amazon forest fires in Brazil increased by 19.5 percent in June compared to the same month last year, making it the worst June in 13 years, authorities revealed.



June marks the start of the dry period and there were 2,248 recorded fires, leaving analysts expecting a worse year for the rainforest than the devastating 2019, which provoked anger throughout the world.

Almost 3,500 teachers and students at more than a dozen public schools in Japan's Yashio city have become sick with diarrhoea and stomach pains in a mass food poisoning outbreak.

Saitama prefecture said that 3,453 people in 15 elementary and middle schools in Yashio, a city of 92,000 just north of Tokyo, had been affected after eating a lunch supplied by the TQC cooperative on June 26.

Iran's nuclear body said an accident had taken place at a warehouse in a nuclear complex without causing casualties or radioactive pollution.

There was "no nuclear material (in the warehouse) and no potential of pollution," Iranian Atomic Energy Organisation spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi told state television.



Eight migrants who disembarked in Sicily this week after being rescued in the Mediterranean by a charity boat are in quarantine after testing positive

for coronavirus, the group Mediterranea said. The eight migrants were part of a group of 43 people aboard the humanitarian vessel Mare Jonio who disembarked at the Sicilian port of Augusta.



About 100 people were killed in a 2015 collapse which strengthened calls to regulate the industry. Another 50 died in 2019

Indian policemen arrested over custody deaths of father and son

Reuters | Chennai

India has arrested five policemen over the deaths of a father and son in custody, a senior investigating official said, following outrage that drew comparisons to the death of George Floyd in the United States.

Last week the men, J Jayaraj, 59, and Bennicks Immanuel, 31, were allegedly subjected to a brutal thrashing that resulted in rectal bleeding and eventual death, according to a letter to government officials written by Jayaraj's wife J Selvarani.

"All important police personnel involved in the incident have been arrested," K Shankar, Inspector General of Police, Crime Branch Central Investigation Department in the southern state of Tamil Nadu said.

"The investigation continues," Shankar said, adding that a murder case has been filed on the arrested policemen, who include two sub-inspectors, two constables and station's inspector.

Meghan felt 'unprotected' by royal family while pregnant

Reuters | London

Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, felt "unprotected" by the British royal family while she was pregnant with her son Archie, according to London High Court documents filed as part of her legal action against a tabloid newspaper.

Meghan, wife of Queen Elizabeth's grandson Prince Harry, is suing publisher Associated Newspapers over articles its Mail on Sunday newspaper printed last year which included parts of a handwritten letter she had sent to her estranged father, Thomas Markle, in August 2018.

Markle and his daughter have not spoken since he pulled out of appearing at her wedding to Harry in May 2018 after undergoing heart surgery and following news he had staged photos with a paparazzi photographer.

The Mail justified publishing the letter by saying five unnamed friends of Meghan, who gave birth to Archie in May 2019, had put her version of events in interviews with the U.S. magazine People.

Her legal team say it was untrue she had authorised or arranged for her friends to tell People about the letter.

"The Claimant had become the subject of a large number of false and

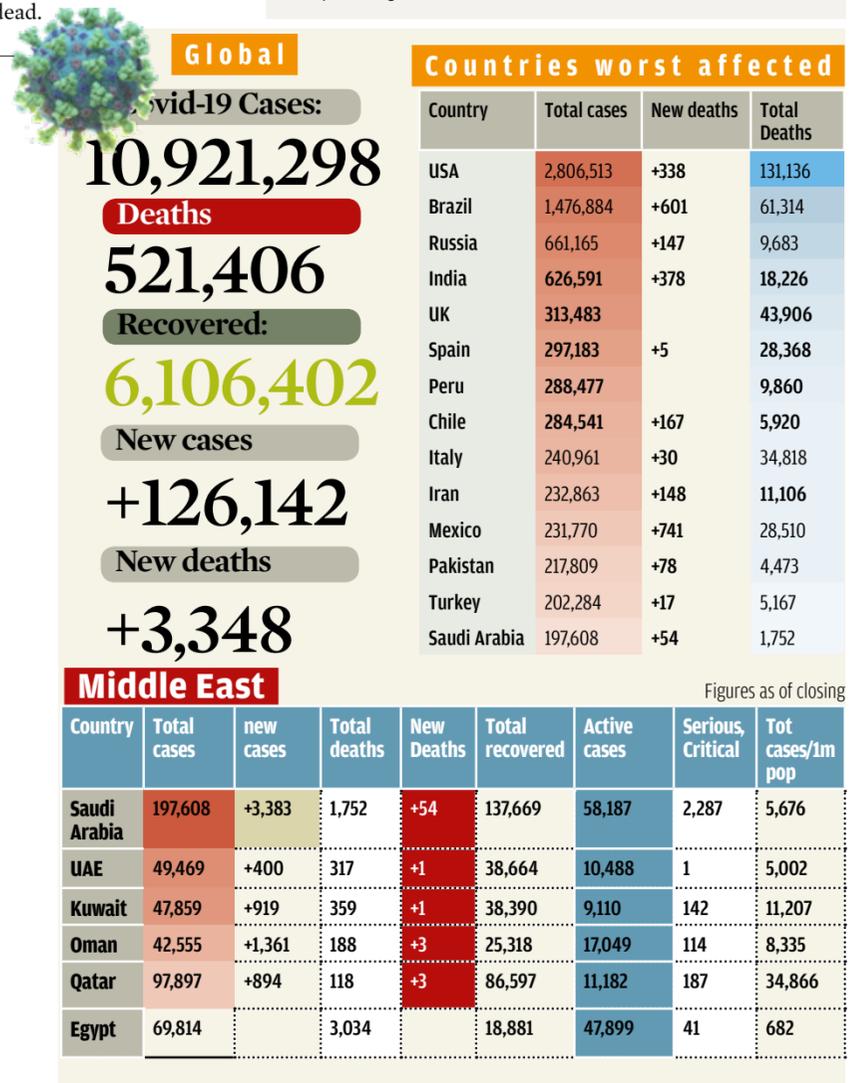


Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, leave after the annual Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey in London

damaging articles by the UK tabloid media, specifically by the Defendant, which caused tremendous emotional distress and damage to her mental health," her lawyers said in a submission to the High Court.

"As her friends had never seen her in this state before, they were rightly concerned for her welfare, specifically as she was pregnant, unprotected by the Institution, and prohibited from defending herself."

The couple are now living in Los Angeles after stepping down from royal duties at the end of March. Harry said he had fallen out with his elder brother, Prince William, and Meghan has spoken of a lack of support when pregnant and as a new mother.



Young Italians pick cows over clubbing in Italy



Vanessa Peduzzi with her cows at her farm called 'Fioco di Neve' (Snowflake)

AFP | Schignano, Italy

While her friends sleep off hangovers, 23-year-old Vanessa Peduzzi is doing a dawn check on her livestock, one of a growing number of Italian youths ditching the fast lane for a farmer's life.

"It's a tiring, demanding job, but I like it," she told AFP as she walked through the wood-lined pastures high above Lake Como in northern Italy to show off the building she is slowly restoring and transforming into a farmhouse.

"I chose this life. This is where I want to be, surrounded by na-

ture and animals," she said.

Peduzzi is a trained chef, but has downed her ladles to become a donkey and cow breeder instead in Alpe Bedolo, some 813 metres (2,600 feet) above sea level, near the border with Switzerland.

"I started last year with two little donkeys. I didn't have any

land or a stable, so I had a friend lend me a meadow," she said.

"The situation has got a bit out of hand," she laughed. She now owns some 20 donkeys -- 15 of which are pregnant -- as well as about 10 cows, five calves and five heifers.

'Not an easy choice'

Jacopo Fontaneto, of Italy's main agricultural union Coldiretti, said after years of mountain life being out of favour among Italians, "we have seen a good return of young people in the last 10 to 20 years".

There has been a 12 percent

There has been a 12 percent rise in the number of people under 35 at the helm of agricultural businesses in the past five years

rise in the number of people under 35 at the helm of agricultural businesses in the past five years, Coldiretti said in a study of data from last year.

It said women make up almost a third of the total of new entries to farming.

The sector was seen as "ripe for innovation" and working the land "is no longer considered the last resort of the uneducated" but something parents would be proud of.

Nonetheless, Fontaneto admits: "It's not an easy choice."

Instead of computer screens or checkout tills, those on remote pastures stare at "the most beautiful countryside you can dream of", but it is also "a life of sacrifice", with little opportunity for wild nights on the town, he said.

Youngsters can also help modernise the profession by bringing in new technologies or investing in online sales.

Though it can be a lonely existence, Peduzzi has made friends on the job: all of her donkeys and cows have names, she said fondly, as she introduced Beatrice, Silvana, Giulia, Tom and Jerry.

"I've had this passion since I was a little girl," she said, stroking a black cow with dramatic white-ringed eyes.

"My grandparents, who had an inn, had dairy cows. They

made butter, cheese. And as a child I used to accompany my father when he took his cows to the mountain pastures," she remembered.

'A goddess'

Peduzzi, wearing a colourful bandanna and striding through the long grass, says her father was not pleased with her new career choice at first because he knows the challenges involved -- but he has since come around.

She rises early. From 6:30 am (0430 GMT) she is with her animals, checking that they are well and giving them water.

"It's not a walk in the park. Sometimes you have to call the vet, help the animals to give birth," she said.

"When people my age are getting ready on a Saturday to go out for drinks, I'm getting ready to go to the barn," she added.

But she's not alone. Her 34-year-old partner is helping restore the farmhouse. And Peduzzi said she would much prefer to spend any day of the year in the fields than to have to face a shopping trip in town filled with noise, traffic and smog.

"Here, I feel like a goddess," she said smiling.

For now, she sells animals and meat, but is hoping to expand soon to milking her cows and donkeys and making cheese.



Peduzzi, at her farm called 'Fioco di Neve' (Snowflake) in Schignano, in Alpe Bedolo, Italy



It's not a walk in the park. Sometimes you have to call the vet, help the animals to give birth. When people my age are getting ready on a Saturday to go out for drinks, I'm getting ready to go to the barn

VANESSA PEDUZZI



Peduzzi's farm is in Alpe Bedolo near the border with Switzerland

Rare Javan Rhino captured on hidden camera in gleeful mudbath

Reuters | Jakarta

A rare Javan rhinoceros has been captured on camera gleefully rolling around in the khaki, tropical waters of a national park, on the westernmost tip of Indonesia's Java island.

The video of the critically endangered Javan rhino, one of only 72 left in the wild, was posted on Twitter by Indonesia's environment minister, Siti Nurbaya Bakar, and offers a rare glimpse into the life of one of the world's largest land

mammals.

The footage, captured by a hidden camera at Ujung Kulon's national park has been shared more than 12,000 times and shows the rhino, a male estimated to be seven years old, rolling around on his back in the muddy waters at the base of a waterfall.

The minister said that a rhino mud bath helps to regulate their body temperature and protect their skin from parasites and insects.

Javan rhinos, which once lived



Still image from video of a seven-year-old male Javan rhinoceros enjoying a mud bath in Ujung Kulon National Park in Banten, Indonesia

throughout northeast India and Southeast Asia, are among the most threatened of the five rhino species.

There are only 72 Javan rhinos left in the wild, including 39 males and 33 females, according to Bakar.

"Let's keep watching and loving the rhino," Bakar wrote in her viral Twitter post, "Looking after and loving them is the same as looking after and loving Indonesia."

Conservationists and researchers from the World

Wildlife Fund and the World Resources Institute in Indonesia told Reuters the government should increase monitoring of Ujung Kulon National park, and reinvigorate efforts to develop a second habitat for the critically endangered species.

The population of the herbivorous mammals has declined mainly due to illegal poaching and excessive demand for rhino horn and medicine, which fetch high prices on the black market.

A new community-based project is paying small-scale fishermen 10 baht (32 cents) per kilogram of discarded nets, or about every one or two, to recycle them into items from push sticks to face shields and disinfectant bottles



A worker prepares old fishing nets before a recycling process to create protective gear

Net gains: Thai project turns fishing nets into virus protection gear

Reuters | Rayong, Thailand

Thai fisherman Anan Jaitang used to pile tattered nylon fishing nets on the beach after hauls of wriggling crabs tore them beyond repair, but most of the nets wound up in the sea, threatening to entangle turtles and choke coral reefs.

Now, Anan and others have an alternative that's not only lucrative and environmentally friendly but will help Thailand battle the coronavirus pandemic.

A new community-based project is paying small-scale fishermen 10 baht (32 cents) per kilogram of discarded nets, or about every one or two, to recycle them into items from push sticks to face shields and disinfectant bottles.

"If no one bought my fishing nets, they would just pile up like a mountain," says Anan, who goes through about 36 nets every quarter, fishing in the east coast province of Rayong.

He is among more than 100 artisanal fishermen from four coastal villages in Thailand's east and south to have joined the project, run by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF).

With 50,000 small fishing vessels and 10,000 commercial ships, Thailand has one of the world's largest fishing industries, and is also one of its top marine plastic polluters.

Hundreds of endangered sea animals wash up on Thailand's shores every year. About 74% of sea turtles and 89% of dugongs stranded on the beaches between 2015 and 2017 had been injured by nets left or lost in oceans, official Thai figures show.



An employee works on new products including protective gear

About 640,000 tonnes of fishing nets end up in the ocean globally every year, becoming "ghost gear," the United Nations says.

Net gains

In addition to tackling Thailand's stubborn pollution problem, the project offers a rare all-domestic solution to a global challenge.

Thai design company Qualy is buying most of the fishing nets being collected by EJF.

Its recycling and manufacturing operations are based in Thailand, unlike similar projects in other countries that ship nets abroad for recycling.

Workers at Qualy's recycling factory in the central city of Ayutthaya wash the nets before feeding them into a shredder that yields blue nylon granules to be mixed with colourants and melted down in product moulds.

During the pandemic, Qualy has



During the pandemic, Qualy has shredded 700 kg (1,500 lbs) of nets to make face shields, alcohol spray bottles and push sticks for elevator buttons and ATM machines to avoid contact

shredded 700 kg (1,500 lbs) of nets to make face shields, alcohol spray bottles and push sticks for elevator buttons and ATM machines to avoid contact.

"We've sold over 100,000 push sticks already during the coronavirus pan-



An employee works on new products including protective gear for COVID-19 made with upcycled material from old fishing nets

dem," said marketing director Thosaphol Suppametheekulwat.

He declined to give financial details but confirmed the net recycling operation was profitable, with sales in Europe, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

"Buying the nets supports the fishermen's livelihoods, and we can make new products out of them," Thosaphol said. "It's even better when it also helps save our environment."

Helping hands

The Thai government has welcomed the initiative.

"Any efforts to remove the nets from the ecosystem is welcome," said Ukkrit Satapoomin, the director of Thailand's Office of Marine and Coastal Resources Conservation.

EJF said the project had collected

more than 1.3 tonnes of used nets since a pilot phase two months ago, and plans to expand it to all seaside provinces by year-end.

"It's really important and urgent that we tackle this problem," said campaigner Ingpat Pakchairatchakul.

"Local communities are very environmentally-conscious already, but they just need helping hands from other sectors."

For Anan, the fisherman, the project has not only brought extra income, but put a smile on his face at the thought that his trash contributes to a worthy cause.

"I've seen the products, and I'm proud of my materials," he said, after seeing a push stick made from recycled nets.

"At least it helps the society and saves the environment."

Botswana reports mysterious deaths of hundreds of elephants

Reuters | Gaborone

The number of elephants found dead in Botswana's Okavango Panhandle has risen to 275 from 154 reported two weeks ago, the government said.

Authorities are investigating the unexplained deaths over the past months. Poaching has been ruled out as the carcasses were found intact.

"Three laboratories in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Canada have been identified to process the samples taken from the dead

elephants," the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources, Conservation and Tourism said.

In early May, Elephants without Borders (EWB), a conservation organisation, reported that its own aerial survey showed elephants of all ages appeared to be dying.

"Several live elephants that we observed appeared to be weak, lethargic and emaciated. Some elephants appeared disorientated, had difficulty walking, showed signs of partial paralysis



A dead elephant is seen in this undated handout image in Okavango Delta

or a limp," EWB director Mike Chase said in a report.

"One elephant was observed walking in circles, unable to change direction although being encouraged by other herd members."

In the report, EWB put the death toll at 356 and Chase said urgent action was needed to establish if the deaths were caused by disease or poisoning.

Africa's overall elephant population is declining due to poaching but Botswana, home to

almost a third of the continent's elephants, has seen numbers grow to 130,000 from 80,000 in the late 1990s. However, they are seen as a nuisance by some farmers, whose crops have been destroyed.

President Mokgweetsi Masisi lifted a five-year ban on big game hunting in May last year but the hunting season failed to take off in April as global travel restrictions meant hunters from many coronavirus-hit countries could not enter Botswana.

Hamilton again says his sport must speak out on racism



Lewis Hamilton reacts after a race (file photo)

AFP | Spielberg, Austria

Lewis Hamilton has said “now is not the time to be silent” and explained why he criticised Formula One as he set out to rally the sport against racism.

In a video released by Mercedes’ parent company Daimler on the eve of this weekend’s belated season-opening Austrian Grand Prix, the six-time world champion made clear that his comments were not directed at any rival Formula One drivers.

“People perceived it as if I was targeting drivers,” said Hamilton of his criticism of those who remained silent and did not speak out against racism.

“But I really wasn’t. It was targeted at the whole industry. And it’s been something I’ve been aware of for a long, long time --and I’ve not really seen anyone doing anything about it.

“People being silent is something that I’ve experienced for such a long time -- and now is not the time to be silent.

“This is a time to help spread the message, the time to pull together. We need as many voices as we can to push for change.”

Hamilton and his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas will wear black overalls and race in a black liveried car this season following Mercedes move to back the efforts for greater diversity in motorsport.

Hakimi joins Inter from Real

AFP | Madrid

Inter Milan have signed full-back Achraf Hakimi from Real Madrid, the two clubs announced on Thursday.

Inter will pay Madrid 40 million euros (\$44.9 million) for Hakimi, with a further five million euros due in variables, according to reports in Italy.

The 21-year-old has signed a five-year contract with Antonio Conte’s side.

Hakimi joined Madrid’s

youth set-up in 2006 but struggled to establish himself in the first team and has spent the last two seasons on loan at Borussia Dortmund.

He impressed in Germany but Zinedine Zidane was not convinced Hakimi could dislodge current Madrid right-back Dani Carvajal.

Hakimi, who can also play as a winger, scored nine goals in 45 appearances in all competitions for Dortmund this season.

‘Surprised’ Vettel insists there was no new deal

● Vettel confirms there were no talks on a new Ferrari deal

AFP | Spielberg, Austria

Sebastian Vettel said Thursday that Ferrari had not offered him a contract to stay with them beyond this season, adding that their split, announced in May, was clearly not by mutual consent.

In a controlled official pre-race video news conference ahead of this weekend’s season-opening Austrian Grand Prix, the four-time world champion German driver added that he was keen to join a rival team if he could find “the right package”.

Vettel said he was surprised when Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto called him to say his services were no longer required after 2020.

“It was obviously a surprise to me when I got the call from Mattia and when he told me that there was no further intention for the team to continue,” he said.

“We never got into any discussions. There was never an offer on the table and, therefore, there was no sticking point.”

In a statement, Ferrari had said the parting of the ways was mutual.

Vettel, who has been linked with possible moves to Mercedes, Renault and the new Aston Martin-Racing Point project, added that he is now hoping to find a new team.

“Obviously, I want to make sure I make the right decision for myself and my future,” he



Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc of Ferrari talk at the Ferrari team photo in Abu Dhabi

said.

“I think I have a very competitive nature. I have achieved a lot in the sport. I’m motivated and willing to achieve more.

“To do so, I need the right package and the right people around me so that’s what I’m looking out for at the moment.

“If the right opportunity should arise then it is quite clear. But, if that’s not the case, then I’ll probably have to look out for something else.”

Vettel won all of his four titles with Red Bull as an outstanding young tyro in his early career before joining Ferrari in 2015.

In recent years, he has been regarded as a leader and spokesman for the drivers.

He made clear he is serious also about leaving the sport if he cannot find a new seat.

“It was obviously a surprise to me when I got the call from Mattia and when he told me that there was no further intention for the team to continue. We never got into any discussions. There was never an offer on the table and, therefore, there was no sticking point

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

“I am of the conviction that if you are prepared to say ‘let’s shut the door’ then you should be prepared to shut that door and not shut it and expect it to

open again.”

Vettel found himself under pressure from teammate Charles Leclerc in 2019.

The Monaco driver won two races to Vettel’s one last season and finished a place above him in the championship.

“I think, first of all, you have to obviously say that from the day that I joined, we’ve tried everything together to fight for the championship which I think is what we have done on several occasions. We did not win the championship,” added Vettel.

“In that regard, looking back also, I have failed, we have failed.”

“In the end, it’s quite simple. We were not quick enough, our package was not good enough, and, as a team, we were not as strong as Mercedes.”

Muhammad Mokaev: on the path to becoming a champion

TDT | Manama

It is the oldest tale ever told; when one does whatever they can and sacrifices everything to stay around their true passion, eventually the talent is noticed, and finally success comes.

This is the same story of Muhammad Mokaev.

“I started from nothing”, Mokaev said. “I used to work, hop on a train or bus to a different city just to have some sort of training. I used to clean the mats in exchange of a gym membership, because I couldn’t afford it. For almost four years, that was my life: long trips, reaching home at 11-12 PM, and getting little to no sleep at all”.

Inspired by his country’s most prominent MMA fighter Michael Bisping, Mokaev who started with wrestling and Brazilian jiu-jitsu, decided to make a transition to Mixed Martial Arts. His results inside and outside the gym, the same gyms he used to clean to be able to attend free classes, got him recognition and changed the course of his story.

“I started getting recognized



Muhammad Mokaev

by companies and they started supporting me”, he said. “Suddenly I was able to pay for my rent, food, and cover my training camps expenses. Life is defi-

nately not as hard as it used to be but the hunger is exactly the same. I’m a full-time professional fighter, I train twice or three times a day, I sleep well, I eat

healthy, and I’m able to travel around the world, meet new people, and gather experience”.

Before signing with BRAVE Combat Federation, Mokaev was already making waves in the amateur scene, not only in his home country, but worldwide. Between 2015 and 2020, “The Punisher” built a record of 23

wins and no losses.

The perfect amateur run was crowned with two moments that he described as the highlights of his career so far: becoming a two-time IMMAF World Champion. “The European championships and especially the World Championships in Bahrain are, by far, the most important moments I had so far. But definitely not the last ones”, he guaranteed.

Now a member of the Flyweight division of the promotion founded by His Highness Sheikh Khaled, BRAVE Combat Federation, “The Punisher” has the chance to fulfil his destiny and write yet another brilliant chapter of his saga.

“I do what I do for my family, I don’t want for them to go through the same kind of struggles that I had in my time. Also, I want to set up a charity foundation under my family name, so my legacy will still be around when I’m gone. But before all that I have to earn my spot among the best and to do so, I will become the Flyweight world champion at BRAVE CF”.



Before signing with BRAVE Combat Federation, Mokaev was already making waves in the amateur scene, not only in his home country, but worldwide. Between 2015 and 2020, “The Punisher” built a record of 23 wins and no losses

Djokovic, wife Jelena test negative for COVID-19

Reuters | London

Novak Djokovic and his wife Jelena have tested negative for COVID-19, nine days after returning a positive test, the world number one tennis player’s media team said on Thursday.

Djokovic, along with Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki, tested positive after playing in the Adria Tour, an exhibition tournament organised by the 17-times Grand Slam champion. Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero are among other soccer players to have taken part in Formula One’s virtual series.

“Djokovic and his wife tested negative for COVID-19, as the most recent test they took showed. They felt no symptoms of the virus and took the test after consultations with doctors,” the statement said.