business

Banking sector responds positively to COVID 19 tackling efforts

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's banking sector responded positively to COV-ID-19 tackling efforts, thanks to the Central Bank of Bahrain's 'open banking services', said a top BAB official.

Dr Waheed Al Qassim, CEO of The Bahrain Associations of Banks (BAB), said the ability of the banks and financial institutions here to activate electronic communication channels quickly, reflects the success of their long investments in building an effective and reliable electronic system.

Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) of those efforts that we manhad been proactive in issuing aged to pass successfully," Dr directives to activate "open banking services" implement- importance of studying best ed so far by a good number of retail banks in Bahrain.

"Today we harvest the fruits rain team in this crisis. of the great efforts made by stakeholders in the govern- strated his best ability to pass ment and e-government sec- this difficult test, and everytors in particular to provide one is an active member of the advanced technical infrastruc- Bahrain team."



Dr Waheed Al Oassim

ture, and the current virus sit-Dr Al Oassim said that the uation represented a real test Al Qassim said, stressing the practices.

On this note, Dr Al Qassim He added: "With the coro- renewed BAB's admiration of navirus ordeal in Bahrain and the royal directives allocating the world, it became clear that 4.3 billion dinars to help citithese services have other great zens and businesses to overbenefits, among them reducing come coronavirus inflicted human interaction as possible difficulties, noting the wise and limiting the circulation of management of His Highness cash that may carry the virus." the Crown Prince to the Bah-

He said: "Everyone demon-

OPEC+ meeting delayed

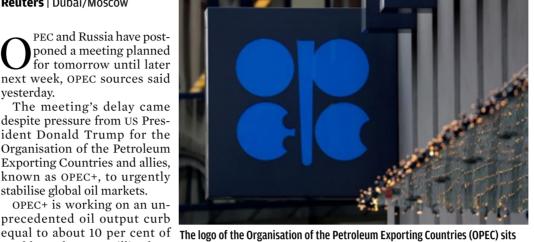
Reuters | Dubai/Moscow

PEC and Russia have postponed a meeting planned for tomorrow until later next week, OPEC sources said yesterday.

The meeting's delay came despite pressure from US President Donald Trump for the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies, known as OPEC+, to urgently stabilise global oil markets.

OPEC+ is working on an unprecedented oil output curb world supply, or 10 million barrels per day, in what member states expect to be a global effort that will include the United

navirus outbreak, and the fail- coronavirus on demand. ure of OPEC and other producers



outside its headquarters ahead of the OPEC and NON-OPEC meeting, Austria

expired on March 31.

"The second reason behind lier deal on output curbs that withdrawal of our partners from the media that all the particial part.'

Saudi Arabia from the OPEC+ conference with government and information, which came Oil prices hit an 18-year low officials and heads of Russian out at the same time, about on March 30 due to sliding de-major oil producers on Friday, the readiness of our partners have to cut from the current mand caused by government said the first reason for the fall to even provide a discount for production level now, not to go lockdowns to contain the coro- in prices was the impact of the oil," Putin said prompting a firm response from Riyadh.

pating countries are absolved of their commitments starting from the first of April, leading to the decision that the countries have taken to raise their production," Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said in a statement carried by state news agency SPA.

Three OPEC sources, who asked not be identified, said the emergency virtual meeting planned for tomorrow would likely be postponed until April 8 or 9 to allow more time for negotiations.

Sources later said the atmosphere was still positive, although there is no draft deal yet or agreement on details such as Putin, speaking during a video deal, their production increase a reference level from which to make the supply cuts.

'The first problem is that we back to the one before the crisis," one of the OPEC sources "The Russian Minister of En-said. "The second issue is the led by Russia to extend an ear- the collapse of prices is the ergy was the first to declare to Americans, they have to play



The United States is not part of OPEC+ and the idea of Washington curbing production has long been seen as impossible, not least because of US antitrust laws. Still, the oil crash has spurred regulators in Texas, the heart of US oil production, to consider regulating output for the first time in nearly 50 years.

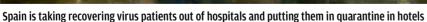


The International Energy Agency warned on Friday that a cut of 10 million bpd would not be enough to counter the huge fall in oil demand. Even with such a cut, inventories would increase by 15 million bpd in the second quarter.

Virus patients in Spain get five-star hotel quarantine

Instead of arriving with a suitcase, the hotel's new clients carry bags containing just a few personal belongings and their medical report





AFP | Barcelona

An ambulance driver wear- into a clinic.

ing a white protective gown "Some pati enters a Barcelona hotel and anthhat they were taken out of hosnounces the arrival of three new pital to be left to die, many peovirus patients discharged from them forget all that," said Aranhospital into luxury quarantine. da, wearing mask and gloves.

"Good morning! How are you? the five-star Melia Sarria hotel, more, it is a hotel." peering into the ambulance.

rooms with marble finishing, medical report.

"customers" -- a trio of corona- ple are frightened. I try to make

"I don't let them out of the My name is Enrique Aranda ambulance until I get a smile out family member while hotel emand I am probably the first non of them. I want them to enter in health care worker you see in another way, that they see that several days," says the director of they aren't in a hospital any-

Instead of arriving with a It took just three days to consuitcase, the hotel's new clients demic, which has so far claimed 29 and currently has 107 guests even working from home, to enception. vert the hotel, which features carry bags containing just a few 10,935 lives in Spain -- the with 50 more expected each day sure no one is left untreated. We contemporary decor and bath- personal belongings and their world's second-highest toll af- until all 307 rooms are full.

They are not welcomed by "Some patients arrive thinking bellhops, but by a team of nurses wearing green or blue gowns, gloves and face masks.

As soon as patients enter, the nurses take their temperature, revise their medical reports and ask if they need to contact any ployees assign them to a room.

'Containment line'

been converted into medical through the hospital and are in middle-aged man who declined care centres to free up beds in the final phase of their recovery to be named. hospitals which have been flooded with COVID-19 cases.

In the Madrid region, the first to adopt the measure, there quarantine in hotels.

In second-city Barcelona, hoteliers have made 2,500 beds needing help for other ailments. The government ordered all available. The Melia Sarria

Hotels across the country have are already OK, who have passed have sent her here now," said a here, in the hotel," said Gemma Fanlo, a nurse at the facility.

hardest-hit area in Spain and the work round the clock to monitor still does not know." COVID-19 patients recovering are now just over 700 patients in in hotels or at home, either in into care facilities has given person or virtually, while at the their staff, who would have been same time still treating people out of work otherwise, a boost.

hotels to shut to fight the pan- opened to patients on March working longer hours, and are of the Melia Sarria hotel's reare working at full stretch," said all this without being able to "They are cases of people who Belen Enfedaque, care director help."

of Barcelona's network of health

Catalonia's regional health minister Alba Verges said these workers were the "containment line" that is preventing admissions to already overloaded hos-

'Very moving'

Inside the hotel, contact between people is kept to a minstaff and one for patients. The hallways are silent.

Patients receive four meals a day, which are left outside their rooms. A staff member knocks on the door and the patient must count to five before opening it.

Relatives of the patients cannot enter the hotel and most leave clothes or magazines, laptops or other devices for their loved ones with staff outside.

"I am bringing this bag for my wife's aunt, who was hospitalised with pneumonia and they

"She is doing OK. Her daughter not so much... she is in the in-Staff at a nearby health clinic tensive care unit but her mother

The conversion of the hotels

"It's very moving, said Marga "Healthcare professionals are Carballo who is now in charge

"At home I felt bad watching

