

Fifth COVID-19 death in Bahrain

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Health announced last night the death of a 70-year-old Bahraini national, who was a registered active case of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The deceased male was suffering from underlying and chronic health problems, the Health Ministry said. He was placed in isolation and received extensive 24-hour treatment from a specialised medical team.

His passing marked the fifth death related to the coronavirus in Bahrain.

The Health Ministry expressed its heartfelt condolences to the individual's family at this difficult time.

The Ministry highlighted that, excluding three cases, all other 341 active COVID-19 cases remain stable, and all patients continue to receive treatment following guidelines provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The total tested in the Kingdom has reached 50,320.

Legal steps to be taken against rumour-monger

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Interior announced yesterday that it is taking legal steps against a Bahraini woman for circulating false information about home delivery workers being infected with the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Ministry stressed to seek information only from official sources and ignore rumours.

Strict penalties have been announced for anybody spreading false reports amidst the current crisis involving COVID-19.



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210 fils (includes VAT)



An enduring fight!

Drive-through testing, requiring face masks in public, extension on previous measures among new steps to combat COVID-19

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The National Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus (COVID-19) announced yesterday several new measures to mitigate the spread of the disease in Bahrain.

Among them are the introduction of drive-through testing at Bahrain International Convention and Exhibition Centre, the requirement of all citizens and residents to wear face masks when in public, and a two-week extension of certain measures that have already been in place since last month.

These were revealed at a press conference last night at the Crown Prince Centre for Training and Medical Research.

In attendance were Minister of Health Faeqa bint Saeed Al Saleh; Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism Zayed R. Al Zayani; Infectious Diseases Consultant and Microbiologist at Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Hospital and National Taskforce for Combating COVID-19 member Lt. Col. Dr. Manaf Al Qahtani; and Infectious and Internal Diseases consultant at Salmaniya Medical Complex Dr. Jameela Al Salman.

The announcements followed a remote meeting held earlier yesterday of the Government Executive Committee, chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

Health Minister Al Saleh noted that Bahrain will continue to overcome all challenges presented by the virus with the continued support of His Majesty King Hamad Al Khalifa, who directed free COVID-19 treatment for all citizens and residents.

Al Saleh noted that the Kingdom will continue to increase



The decisions of the Government Executive Committee chaired by HRH the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister



"With an observant and united society, the Kingdom of Bahrain will overcome the challenges of COVID-19"

His Royal Highness
Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

The following decisions were taken, effective from 19h00, Thursday 9 April, to Thursday 23 April:

- 1 Movie theatres are to remain closed
- 2 All commercial sports gyms, fitness studios, swimming pools and recreational activities are to remain closed
- 3 The activities of restaurants, tourist facilities and places for serving food and beverages are to remain limited to external orders & delivery services
- 4 Shisha cafes are to remain closed, and services offered are to remain limited to takeout & delivery of food and beverages only
- 5 Salons are to remain closed
- 6 All non-essential medical services provided by private health clinics are to remain suspended
- 7 The first hour of grocery store openings is to remain dedicated for the elderly and pregnant women
- 8 Public gatherings are to remain limited to 5 individuals or fewer. Individuals are encouraged to stay at home, only going out for necessities
- 9 All citizens and residents are required to wear face masks whilst in public
- 10 Commercial and industrial businesses providing goods or services directly to customers, are to open and resume work provided the following conditions are met:
 - Employees and visitors are required to wear a face mask
 - The number of employees should be reduced and overcrowding in stores should be prevented to ensure social distancing measures are maintained
 - Stores must ensure continuous sterilization, including external premises, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health
 - Queueing line-ups outside stores must be arranged in accordance to the social distancing measures issued by the Ministry of Health
- 11 Private Sector enterprises are encouraged to follow the below guidelines:
 - Remote working is to be maintained, if and when possible
 - The number of employees to be limited at any certain location or office and employees should adhere to social distancing measures
 - Number of employees using corporate transportation methods, such as buses, to be reduced



At the Press conference yesterday, from left, were Dr. Al Salman, Minister Al Zayani, Minister Al Saleh and Dr. Al Qahtani

access to COVID-19 testing, and announced the introduction of drive-through testing at Bahrain International Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Industry Minister Al Zayani detailed additional precautionary measures introduced by the Government Executive Committee, which includes obliging citizens and residents to wear face masks when in public.

Al Zayani said that face masks will be made available in pharmacies and shops, and highlight-

GCC Interior Ministers hold remote meeting

TDT | Manama

The Interior Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council member countries held their 37th meeting last night through video conferencing, chaired by UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The meeting was organised to highlight the keenness of GCC leaders to strengthen the Gulf security system, as well as develop its existing institutions, protect the security and stability of the Arabian

Gulf region, and maintain the safety of all GCC citizens and residents.

During the meeting, its participants highlighted the importance of enhancing the cooperation and coordination in police and security work of GCC member countries, to serve their common interests.

The meeting also discussed several issues and topics on its agenda related to joint security, as well as how to enhance the security and police work of GCC states, combat crime and achieve regional security.

Consulate General in Jeddah facilitates citizens' return



The Consulate General of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Jeddah, in cooperation with the relevant authorities, facilitated yesterday the return of Bahraini citizens in Mecca, Medina, Jeddah and Taif in Saudi Arabia through King Fahad Causeway. This was done after taking the necessary health measures prior to their return. Consul General to Jeddah Ebrahim M. Al Meslimani, noted the constant keenness of the Consulate General on taking all the necessary measures and facilities to ensure the safe return of Bahraini citizens in the Western Province of Saudi Arabia. He extended his sincere thanks and gratitude to the relevant authorities in Bahrain and Saudi for their cooperation. Left, a citizen's temperature is checked as part of health measures conducted prior to their return.

● HRH the Prime Minister issues directives to study suitable mechanisms to reward those in medical field for their dedication and commitment

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa paid tribute yesterday to medical and nursing professionals, as well as volunteers in the Kingdom, for their keenness to answer the call of duty and be in the frontline of preserving Bahrain's health security.

HRH the Premier was speaking as he received, at his palace in Riffa, Supreme Council for Health (SCH) president and National Taskforce for Combating Coronavirus (COVID-19) chairman Lieutenant-General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

HRH the Premier said that Bahrain boasts distinguished national medical professionals who are a source of pride for everyone, and they deserve thanks and appreciation.

He noted that Bahrain is reaping the fruits of its efforts to develop its human resources in the educational and health fields, so as to be effective elements in building, developing and protecting the nation.

HRH the Prime Minister issued directives to study a suitable mechanism to appreciate and reward them for their dedication and commitment to the noble human values of medicine and medical professions.

HRH the Premier also directed to follow up on and provide all the needs of the medical and nursing professionals so as to be able to carry out their duties

'A source of pride'

HRH the Premier pays tribute to medical, nursing professionals as they preserve Bahrain's health security



HRH the Prime Minister during his meeting

HRH the Prime Minister orders Health Ministry to intensify field visits

His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa ordered yesterday to continue and intensify the nation-wide field visits conducted by the Ministry of Health, especially those for expatriate workers' accommodation, in order to ensure the health and safety of the citizens and residents.

HRH the Premier issued the

directive during his meeting with Supreme Council for Health (SCH) president and National Taskforce for Combating Coronavirus (COVID-19) chairman Lieutenant-General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

HRH the Prime Minister said to conduct the field visits in a way that provides all aspects of health support to expatriate

workers, in appreciation of their services to the development process in the Kingdom.

The Prime Minister was updated about the latest developments regarding the public campaign to combat the coronavirus and its efforts to carry out the field visits and conduct laboratory tests in many regions, for the sake of preserving public health.

"This would not have been possible hadn't the government been keen on strengthening the health infrastructure, as well as upgrading and developing the health sector in accordance with an ambitious strategy aimed at improving public health and enhancing the quality of services."

HRH the Prime Minister

HRH the Premier stressed that the health system in Bahrain has proven its merit and its ability to deal with the requirements of the current crisis, which, he said, is the fruitful outcome of the foundations on which the medical and other sectors had been built. This has enhanced Bahrain's reputation as a country that respects humans' right for a decent life and health security.

"Dr. Shaikh Mohammed lauded HRH the Premier's unwavering interest in the health sector, as well as his constant keenness to follow up closely the efforts of the national campaign to combat COVID-19, and get assured about the health situation in the Kingdom to ensure that the best services are delivered to Bahrain's citizens and residents."

tended congratulations to all the affiliates of the health sector on World Health Day, stressing that the world recalls with pride the great efforts and roles of the medical and nursing staff for the sake of ensuring the health and safety of everyone.

HRH the Premier expressed pride in the high sense of patriotism showcased by all Bahrainis, who rallied together to volunteer and serve the nation in order to overcome the challenge created by the spread of COVID-19, and deal with it with awareness and responsibility, commensurate with the requirements of the current phase.

The SCH president expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the government, led by HRH the Prime Minister, and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, for their sound directives that have contributed to the Kingdom's success in overcoming the challenges the world is going through.

Dr. Shaikh Mohammed lauded HRH the Premier's unwavering interest in the health sector, as well as his constant keenness to follow up closely the efforts of the national campaign to combat COVID-19, and get assured about the health situation in the Kingdom to ensure that the best services are delivered to Bahrain's citizens and residents.

HRH the Premier issues directives in education and municipal services

● Ministry of Education instructed to work with private schools on appropriate solutions to not overburden parents amidst current circumstances, while not jeopardising learning

● Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning directed to stop collecting rent from tenants of municipal properties for three months

TDT | Manama



HRH the Premier with officials during their meeting

agree on the appropriate solutions that do not overburden parents amid the current circumstances.

HRH the Premier added that, at the same time, the private schools' efforts to continue learning should not be affected.

HRH the Premier also urged the Education Ministry to find an appropriate mechanism that ensures that the conditions of some categories, such as workers in kindergartens and nurseries, will not be affected.

HRH the Premier instructed the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning to stop collecting rent from tenants of municipal properties for

a period of three months from April to June. This is taking into account the current conditions, especially for low-income and self-employed citizens who have been affected, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

HRH the Prime Minister made the statements, while receiving at his palace in Riffa yesterday, Education Minister Dr. Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi and Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Minister Essam bin Abdulla Khalaf.

He reviewed with them the on-going efforts to ensure the continuous delivery of various educational and municipal services.

The Prime Minister also di-

rected the Ministry of Education to put in place all facilities that enhance the efficiency of communication with students, as well as provide the necessary technical support to follow up on the students' academic achievements.

On his part, Dr. Al Nuaimi highlighted the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to serve Bahraini students abroad and ensure their safe return home.

Meanwhile, Khalaf updated HRH the Premier about the work progress in various sectors of his ministry, as well as their achievements within the Government Action Plan.

HM the King holds call with Sultan of Oman

TDT | Manama

HM the King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday held a telephone call with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman.

HM King Hamad reviewed with HM Sultan Haitham the existing cooperation relations between the two brotherly countries, and the efforts

being exerted at all levels to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) and mitigate its effects on humans.

HM the King prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect the entire humanity from epidemics and diseases.

HM King Hamad wished HM Sultan Haitham abundant health and happiness, and more progress and prosperity to the Omani people.

HH Shaikh Nasser receives call from British Defence Advisor

TDT | Manama

HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa received yesterday a telephone call from British Senior Defence Advisor to the Middle East Lt-General Sir John Lorimer.

HH Shaikh Nasser reviewed with Sir Lorimer the historical bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation

tying Bahrain and the UK and ways of bolstering them. They also stressed the importance of maintaining international efforts in combatting the coronavirus.

From his side, Sir Lorimer lauded Bahrain's efforts in battling the virus and the country's contributions towards the combined international efforts against the pandemic.

Meanwhile, HH Shaikh Nasser praised the deep-rooted distinguished ties binding both countries, wishing the UK and its people more successes and further prosperity.

COVID-19 economic fallout report released

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energies Studies (DERASAT) issued yesterday a report highlighting the economic fallout of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Titled "COVID-19 Implications: Economic Perspective", the report is co-authored by

Dr. Omar Al Obaidly and Ghada Abdulla, who highlighted the stimulus packages launched by governments to mitigate the crisis' fallout.

The report sheds light on business repercussions and focuses on the impact of economic and financial developments and monetary policies.

The authors expect the global economy to

be badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of the rate of growth and the standards of living, in addition to the sustainable effects impacting the global trading system.

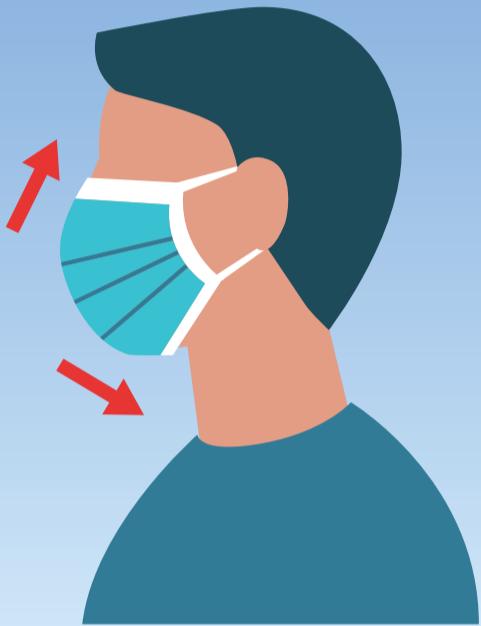
The report analyses stimulus packages launched by governments to support national economies, mitigate the negative economic pitfalls, and stress the need for special measures in times of major crises.



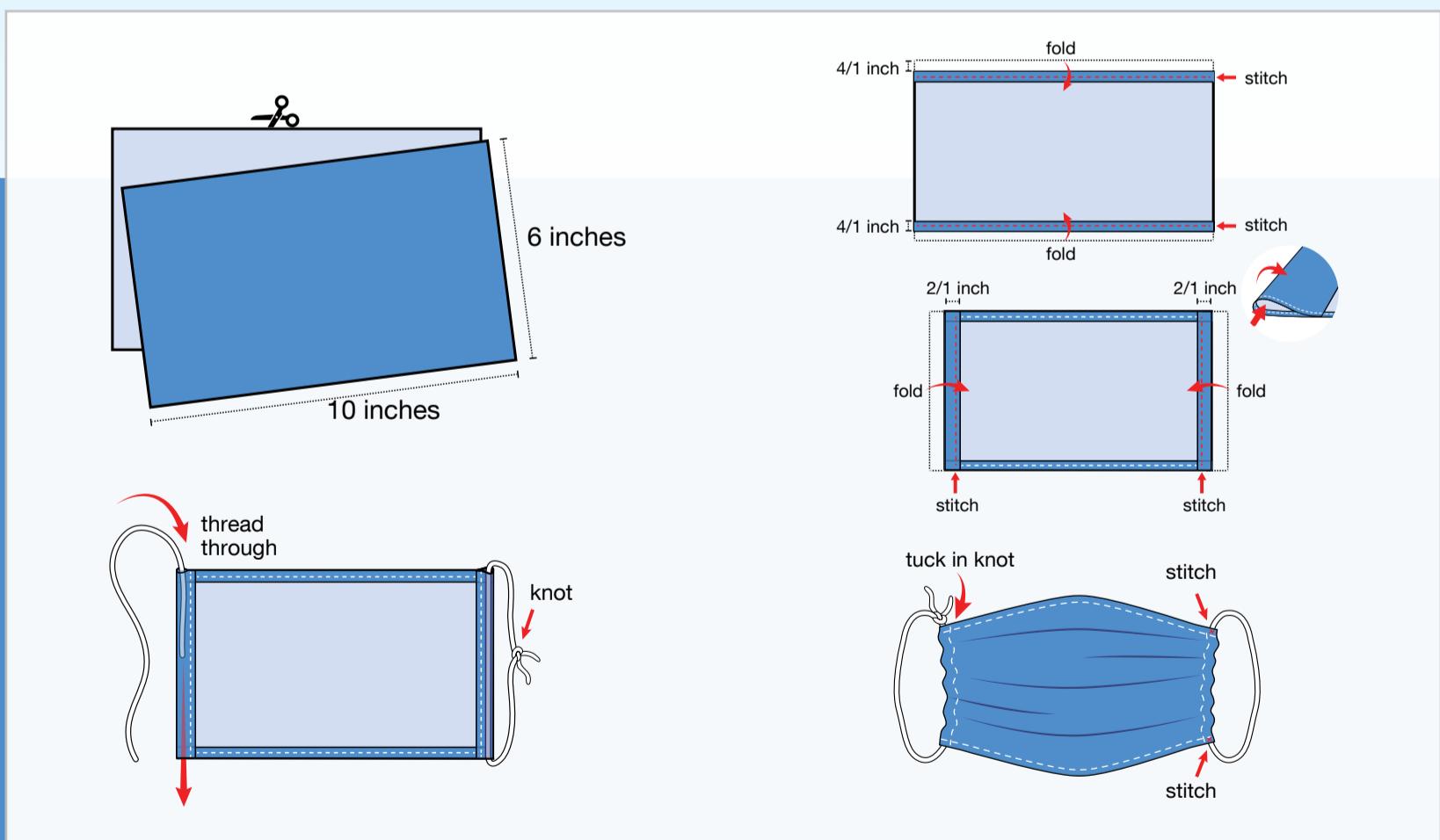
**Public Awareness
Campaign
to Combat
Coronavirus
(COVID-19)**

**To all citizens and residents
who wear face masks in public are
protecting themselves and the
community as a whole**

**All citizens and
residents are
obliged to wear face
masks in public**



**Face masks are available for purchase at
pharmacies and supermarkets; you can also
produce your own mask at home**



**Instructions on producing your own face
masks are outlined at:
www.moh.gov.bh**



Interior Minister hails efforts of contact-tracing team

TDT | Manama

Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa hailed yesterday the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to increase the national precautionary measures against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

General Shaikh Rashid praised the follow-up of His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, in this regard.

In line with the directives of HRH the Crown Prince to support and develop the contact-tracing team, the Interior Minister visited the team at the operations room of the National Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus, located at the Crown Prince Centre for Training and Medical Research.



The Interior Minister with other officials in their visit to the contact-tracing team

The Interior Minister was accompanied by Public Security Chief Major General Tariq Al Hassan and was welcomed upon arrival by the Royal Medical Services Commander.

During the visit, General Shaikh Rashid was briefed on the team's procedures and measures

to ensure the health and safety of citizens and residents.

He highly valued the dedication of HRH the Crown Prince to ensure coordination and performance integration amongst all concerned authorities within the framework of the national team.

The Interior Minister was

also informed about procedures and measures. He expressed his thanks and appreciation to the members of the contact-tracing team for their distinguished round-the-clock efforts to contribute to limiting the spread of the coronavirus and overcoming the crisis.

He also hailed the efforts of the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science to set up the team, in cooperation with concerned authorities.

The Interior Minister wished everyone success in carrying out their duties.

Gulf national gets 15 years for smuggling hashish

TDT | Manama

A Gulf national was sentenced to 15 years in prison and fined BD5,000 by the First High Criminal Court for attempting to smuggle more than 46kg of hashish into Bahrain through King Fahad Causeway.

The man was also blacklisted by the court from re-entering the Kingdom after completing his sentence.

Court files showed that the man was caught while entering Bahrain through the Causeway on August 26 last year. It was also shown that the investiga-

tions of the Anti-Narcotics Department in the Interior Ministry indicated that the defendant was attempting to smuggle a large quantity of drugs on the aforementioned date.

The man was stopped for intensive inspection by the officers of the Customs Affairs on the Causeway, after they were alerted by the Anti-Narcotics Department. In the inspection, the officers detected five pieces of hashish that weighed 46.6kg.

According to the officers' testimonies, the pieces were professionally stashed in coffee packets and covered with hot sauce to deceive police dogs.

Additionally, the officers stated that the pieces were hidden in the box allocated for the air filter of the engine under the vehicle's hood.

The defendant was immediately arrested and referred to the Anti-Narcotics police.

Furthermore, a blood and urine test showed traces of methamphetamine.

After completing his legal procedures, the man was referred by the Department to the Public Prosecution, which interrogated him and charged him of smuggling drugs with the intent of selling, as well as drug abuse.

Woman convicted in flesh trade loses final appeal

TDT | Manama

A woman, who is serving a three-year prison sentence for her involvement in vice, recently got her final appeal rejected by the Court of Cassation.

This comes after the woman previously got her punishment reduced from five years to three years by the High Criminal Court.

The case surfaced when the defendant's neighbour lodged a complaint against her to the Northern Governorate Police Directorate, claiming that he caught her on the roof of their building in an inappropriate position with an Asian delivery man.

The neighbour told the police that the delivery man, when asked, said he paid the woman an amount in return of having sexual intercourse with her on the rooftop of the building, alleging that he had handed the money to her 10-year-old son.

According to the neighbour's testimony, the woman frequently received strangers at her apartment, offering them sex in return for money. He additionally testified that majority of the men were of Asian nationality and a number of them confirmed to him that they paid the woman for sexual intercourse.

On February 1 of last year, the woman was referred to the Public Prosecution, which interrogated her and referred to the Minor Criminal Court for trial. The woman confessed in the interrogation that she completely relied on vice to make a living.

She was initially sentenced by the court to five years' imprisonment. However, she appealed against the verdict and the High Criminal Court reduced the jail term to three years. The woman appealed once again before the Court of Cassation, which rejected her plea and upheld the imprisonment sentence.

Coronavirus claims among Jaw inmates denied

TDT | Manama

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) denied yesterday allegations that there are inmates infected with the coronavirus (COVID-19) at the Correction and Rehabilitation Centre at Jaw Prison.

NIHR chairperson Maria Khoury commented: "The visits that NIHR regularly makes to correction and rehabilitation centers and to detention centers are not new, but this time our visit to Jaw was to review the human rights and medical care provided to inmates within the precautionary measures taken by the centre's management to limit the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Bahrain."

"Following our assessment of the measures taken towards inmates and security men, I can say that the center's management is dealing with the situation in accordance with the international standards recommended by the World Health Organisation to prevent the spread of the virus among inmates."

A medical staff is available to provide medical care and neces-



There is no coronavirus case among the inmates and that everything rumored in this regard has no basis whatsoever on the ground.

NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CHAIRPERSON MARIA KHOURY

sary services, she added.

"I confirm that there is no coronavirus case among the inmates and that everything rumored in this regard has no basis whatsoever on the ground," she said.

Khoury added that she appreciated the measures taken by the

center's administration to comply with the standards to prevent the spread of the virus among inmates.

"It is being done in a way that does not harm their rights and protects the health and safety of everyone," she explained. "I stress the need to avoid spreading baseless allegations, unsupported rumors and groundless news, especially during such critical times."

NIHR deputy chairperson Khalid Al Shaer said the precautionary measures followed by the center's management were ideal and followed internationally recognised standards.

"The appropriate medical examinations are conducted for the inmates," he said. "Inmates can also make video calls in compensation for the regular visits that had been suspended as a precautionary measure to protect the health of all."

Those who seek information about the situation, need assistance or wish to report complaints, can avail of the hotline provided by the institution, he added.

Traffic e-services reinforce social distancing

TDT | Manama

Eighty per cent of applications at the Legal Affairs Division of the General Directorate of Traffic were processed electronically in the second half of March.

This was revealed yesterday by Legal Affairs Division acting head Captain Khalid

Abu Qees.

Captain Abu Qees asserted that the department is continuing to work on promoting social distancing, especially through e-services.

He said that the electronic processing can be attributed to community awareness, in light of measures being taken to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Blacklisted European woman who re-entered Bahrain using friend's passport loses appeal

TDT | Manama

The First Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal upheld the imprisonment of a European woman who re-entered Bahrain using her friend's passport, after she was blacklisted by a court order for her involvement in a prostitution case.

The woman was sentenced by the High Criminal Court last January to three years behind bars and deportation, and was blacklisted from re-entering the Kingdom.

The details of the case showed that the woman was deported on December 5, 2018, after she was convicted of depending on vice for a living. According to her statements in the interrogation, she stayed with a friend in a neighbouring GCC country for less than a month.

The woman also said that she stole her friend's passport and entered Bahrain with it, justifying her action by telling investigators that she wanted to stay with her GCC boyfriend here.

The appellant succeeded in passing the passports and customs checks at Bahrain International Airport. However, she was arrested at a local hotel after police received a tip about the matter.

In a similar scenario to the first case, in which she was convicted, the woman was caught and charged with prostitution.

"I wanted to stay with my boyfriend at the hotel. This is why I came back in Bahrain," she told prosecutors, denying the prostitution charges. She also claimed: "I was in another GCC country and I just wanted to come and be with him for a while."

Indian man commits suicide



Koshy during happier times

TDT | Manama

An Indian father-of-two was found hanging from a ceiling fan at his apartment in Um Al Hassam yesterday morning.

Chacko Koshy, aged 40, was employed at a private printing company.

He hails from Kollam district in Kerala, India. He is survived by his wife and children.

Koshy's funeral will be conducted in Bahrain. The family decided this as his sister's family is also in the Kingdom.

The date and further details are to be determined.

BUSINESS

business

Big OPEC+ oil output cuts depend on US, others joining

Reuters | London/Moscow

Saudi Arabia, Russia and allied oil producers will only agree to deep cuts to their crude output at talks this week if the United States and several others join in with curbs to help prop up prices that have been hammered by the coronavirus crisis.

OPEC+ is due to hold a video conference on Thursday at 1400 GMT, after US President Donald Trump said last week he had brokered a deal between Riyadh and Moscow on cuts amounting to an unprecedented 10 million to 15 million bpd, or about 10 per cent to 15pc of global supplies. Nothing has yet been formalised.

An OPEC source said on Tuesday the size of any OPEC+ curbs depended on volumes other producers such as the United States, Canada and Brazil were willing to cut.

The United States has yet to commit to any cut, while Trump has said US oil production had already fallen.

Bahrain's money supply jumps 7pc: CBB

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's (M3) money supply recorded a significant 7 per cent increase as at end of February 2020, a Central of Bahrain (CBB) statement said which indicated an overall improvement in monetary and banking indicators compared to the same period-end of last year.

The money supply (M3), CBB said, increased significantly, reaching BD13.8 billion as at end of February 2020, compared to BD12.9 bn as at the same period-end last year.

Bahrain's total outstanding balance of public debt instruments which includes Development Bonds, Treasury Bills, Islamic Leasing securities and Al Salam Islamic securities increased at the end of February 2020 to BD12.0 bn, compared to BD11.5 bn in February 2019.

The CBB released also



indicated an increase in the total balance sheet of the banking system from USD 198.4 bn at the end of February 2019 to USD 208.2 bn at the end of February 2020, a significant increase of BD9.8 bn, or 4.9pc, in the 12 months.

The balance sheet of retail banks increased by BD2.3bn, or 6.9pc, reaching a total of BD35.6 bn at the end of February 2020 compared to BD33.3 bn as at end of February 2019. The data also shows an increase in local non-bank deposits which amounted

M3 is a measure of the money supply that includes M2 as well as large time deposits, institutional money market funds, short-term repurchase agreements and larger liquid assets. The M3 measurement includes assets that are less liquid than other components of the money supply and are referred to as "near, near money." M2 is a measure of the money supply that includes cash, checking deposits, and easily convertible near money. M1 includes cash and checking deposits, while near money refers to savings deposits, money market securities, mutual funds, and other time deposits.

to BD 13.2 bn at the end of February 2020 compared to BD12.4 bn at the end of February 2019, an increase of 6.5pc.

The total value of outstanding

loans and credit facilities provided by retail banks amounted to BD9.8 bn at end of February 2020 compared to BD 9.6 bn at the end of February 2019, an

increase of 2.1pc. This amount includes loans and facilities provided to the personal sector amounting to BD4.4 bn at the end of February 2020 compared to BD4.2 bn at the end of the same period last year.

The data indicates that credit card and debit card transactions across Point of Sales (POS) terminals amounted to BD205.7 million in February 2020 compared to BD168.8 m in February 2019 marking a significant increase of BD36.9 m or 21.8pc.

China knocks US from top spot in global patent race

Reuters | Geneva

China was the biggest source of applications for international patents in the world last year, pushing the United States out of the top spot it has held since the global system was set up more than 40 years ago, the UN patent agency said yesterday.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation said 58,990 applications were filed from China last year, beating out the United States which filed 57,840.

China's figure was a 200-fold increase in just 20 years, it said. The United States had filed the most applications in the world every year since the Patent Cooperation Treaty system was set up in 1978.

More than half of patent applications - 52.4 per cent - now come from Asia, with Japan ranking third, followed by Germany and South Korea.

Ownership of patents is widely seen as an important sign of a country's economic strength and industrial know-how.

Six Mumtalakat directors join Alba board

TDT | Manama

Six directors of Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Co. have joined Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) board on Sunday, said an Alba statement.

The re-appointed directors are Shaikh Daij bin Salman bin Daij Al Khalifa, board chairman, Yousif Abdulla Taqi and Suha Saeed Karzoon. Newly appointed directors are Shaikh Isa bin Khalid Al Khalifa, Tim Murray and Rasha Mohamed Sabkar.

Chairman of Alba's Board of



Chairman of Alba's Board of Directors, Shaikh Daij Bin Salman Bin Daij Al Khalifa

Directors, Shaikh Daij Bin Salman Bin Daij Al Khalifa, welcomed the elected directors and said the company is looking forward to "work alongside the Executive Management Team to strengthen Alba corporate governance practices and implement the Company's strategy."

In addition to the Chairman, Shaikh Daij Bin Salman Bin Daij Al Khalifa, the Alba Board comprises of six directors appointed by Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding (Mumtalakat) - Shaikh Isa

bin Khalid Al Khalifa, Yousif Abdulla Taqi, Suha Saeed Karzoon, Tim Murray and Rasha Mohamed Sabkar.

The two Directors appointed by Sabic Industrial Investments are Ahmed Al-Duriaan and Eyad bin AbdulRahman Al Qaraawi.

Omar bin Abdulla Al Amoudi is the elected Director representing Sabic Industrial Investments Co. (SIIC) and Mutlaq Hamad Al Morished is the elected Director representing the 10 per cent public listed shares.

Airline shutdown to cost Middle East 0.9 million jobs, says IATA Report

Not just airlines, also 25 million jobs at risk throughout economies

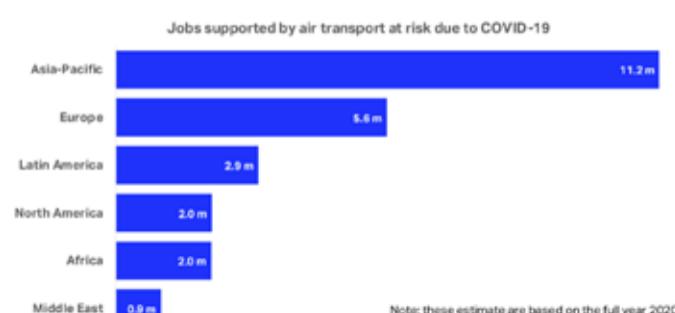
TDT | Geneva

The plummeting demand for air travel amid the COVID-19 crisis will cost the Middle East 0.9 million jobs, a new IATA research says, while the loss of jobs on a global scale will be 25 million.

The report which describes the impact of COVID-19 on the industry as 'devastating' says, "A lifeline to the airlines now is critical."

Specifically, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) calls for Direct financial support, loans, loan guarantees and support for the corporate bond market and tax relief.

"Alongside vital financial relief, the industry will also need careful planning and coordination to ensure that airlines are ready when the pandemic is



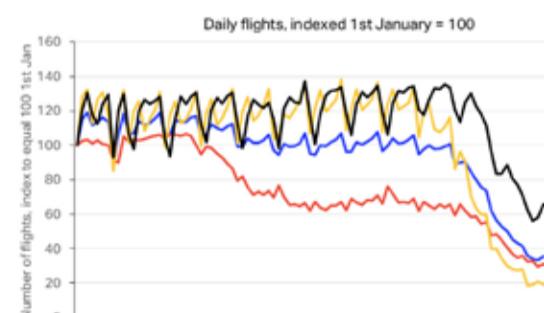
contained," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's Director General and CEO.

The analysis released yesterday says, "globally, the livelihoods of some 65.5 million people are dependent on the aviation industry, including sectors such as travel and tourism."

Among these are 2.7 m airlines jobs - 11.2 m jobs in Asia-Pacific, 5.6 m jobs in Europe, 2.9 m jobs

in Latin America, 2.0 m jobs in North America, 2.0 m jobs in Africa and 0.9 m jobs in the Middle East.

In the same scenario, airlines are expected to see full-year passenger revenues fall by \$252 billion (-44%) in 2020 compared to 2019. The second quarter is the most critical with demand falling 70 per cent at its worst point, and airlines burning through \$61



bn in cash.

Re-booting the Industry

IATA said it is scoping a comprehensive approach to re-booting the industry when governments and public health authorities allow.

"We have never shuttered the industry on this scale before. Consequently, we have no experience in starting it up. It will

be complicated. At the practical level, we will need contingencies for licenses and certifications that have expired. We will have to adapt operations and processes to avoid reinfections via imported cases. And we must find a predictable and efficient

approach to managing travel restrictions which need to be lifted before we can get back to work. These are just some of the



We don't want to repeat the mistakes made after 9.11 when many new processes were imposed in an uncoordinated way. We ended up with a mess of measures that we are still sorting out today. The 25 million people whose jobs are at risk by this crisis will depend on an efficient restart of the industry

ALEXANDRE DE JUNIAC, IATA'S DIRECTOR GENERAL AND CEO

major tasks that are ahead of us. And to be successful, industry and government must be aligned and working together," said de Juniac.

Why Cuban doctors are on the coronavirus frontlines

YOSSI MEKELBERG

It is a rarity these days for Cuba to receive much attention in the news. The days of the island being at the heart, even a symbol, of revolutionary fervor and superpower rivalry have long gone. However, every time there is a health crisis, this small Caribbean island distinguishes itself with selfless readiness to heed the call to arms, and sends its brigades of doctors and nurses to help those most in need, while the wealthiest countries can barely look after the health of their own people.

For those of us who regularly visit Cuba and have become familiar with the legacy of the revolution, the Cuban government's decision to send hundreds of doctors to combat coronavirus not only to its neighbors, but to a total of 14 countries, including Italy and Andorra in Europe, came as no surprise. Neither did the country's decision to allow a British cruise ship with five confirmed cases of coronavirus on board to dock near Havana after it had been turned away from multiple ports in the Caribbean and the US. Since the early 1960s, when Cuba sent its first medical mission to Algeria to replace French doctors who had left the North African country after it gained independence from France, medical help and humanitarian aid for the less fortunate have become part of Cuba's DNA.

From the very early days of the

"Barbudos" (the bearded) seizing power in 1959, Cuba's two main paths to achieving social justice have been through investing in its education and health care systems. This comes from a deep conviction that a successful society requires universal education and health services, instead of these benefits being available only to those privileged enough to be able to pay for them. And, through the years, the expansion of medical internationalism has evolved from a universalist humanitarian ideology to also being a source of influential soft power – what became known as "doctor diplomacy" – and a major source of income for the country; bigger even than tourism or agriculture.

In its drive to improve the human condition, Cuba followed the thinking of one of the leaders of its revolution, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, an Argentinian physician who declared in the early days of the revolution that, "we must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force." In a speech to Cuban militiamen in 1960, Guevara reminisced about his travels throughout Latin America after his graduation (immortalized in "The Motorcycle Diaries"), when, as a young middle-class doctor, he became acquainted with "poverty, hunger and disease; with the inability to treat a child because of lack of money; with the stupe-



A contingent of Cuban doctors arrive at Milan's Malpensa airport to assist in the battle against COVID-19, March 22, 2020.

faction provoked by the continual hunger and punishment, to the point that a father can accept

the loss of a son as an unimportant accident, as occurs often in

American homeland." This led him to leave the medical profession and become a revolutionary

and, on reaching a position of power, to advance the cause of medical internationalism together

How China can take the lead on protecting nature

AKANKSHA KHATRI, CHUNQUAN ZHU

- In China's recovery to COVID-19, it can take the lead in environmental action.
- The country can take concrete measures to balance environmental and commercial interests.
- Humanity has an unprecedented opportunity to transition to a carbon-neutral and nature-positive global economy.

The unfolding COVID-19 pandemic is having undeniable human and economic impacts. China has been hit hard by the virus but, as one of the first countries to see a decline in the rate of infections, also has a leadership opportunity in the post-COVID-19 future. A focus on nature could provide opportunities to recover from this pandemic, as well as prevent future such crises.

While no conclusive link has been made with COVID-19, some evidence shows that loss of habitat and the illegal wildlife trade could lead to an increase in animal-borne, so-called zoonotic, diseases. This raises important questions about the interlinkage of biodiversity loss and the resilience of interconnected supply

chains in the global economy.

Healthy ecosystems can support economic growth, societal wellbeing and climate stabilization. As such, while encroachment and the misuse of nature is increasingly being thought of as a source of future pandemics, nature also offers solutions that we desperately need to recover from this crisis and to build our resilience to face others.

Last week, more than 500 top business leaders, government representatives, and scholars met at the World Economic Forum's China Business Roundtable (CBR) to discuss how to deal with this rapidly-changing reality and ensure a stable post-COVID recovery. China's philosophy of an Ecological Civilization, enshrined in the 2018 Chinese constitution and also the theme of the UN CBD COP15 puts forward an ambitious vision that could provide a broad framework within which to assess and calibrate humanity's current relationship with nature and a vision of a harmonization between environmental and commercial interests.

China was not always seen as an environmental leader. However, in the early 2010s after a year of severe smog in 2011/12 dubbed "airpocalypse," the Government



of China initiated a large national action plan to combat air pollution and other environmental challenges. It is around this time that the government also began

tion Red Line (ECRL) initiative to protect more than one-quarter of the Chinese mainland – an area almost the size of France, Spain, Turkey, Germany and Italy combined, totalling more than 2.4

million square kilometres.

The unfolding COVID-19 pandemic is causing business and government leaders to make difficult decisions. We are at a turning point where we cannot go back to business-as-usual and instead must use this opportunity to transition to a carbon-neutral and nature-positive global economy.

While initial investments and

1911

Dutch physicist **Heike Kamerlingh Onnes** discovers superconductivity.



1913

The **17th Amendment** to the United States Constitution, requiring direct election of Senators, becomes law.

1916

In Corona, California, race car driver **Bob Burman** crashes, killing three (including himself), and badly injuring five spectators.

1918

World War I: Actors Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin sell war bonds on the streets of New York City's financial district.

US front line globally

If the late Fidel Castro were able to witness the US criticism of Cuba's medical internationalism, he would probably repeat what he said to the judges in his 1953 trial before being sentenced to 15 years' jail: "History will absolve me."

to ease years of pressure by consecutive US administrations that have attempted to destroy Cuba's revolution. There has always been an element of defiance of the US in Cuba's medical diplomacy, while its domestic health care system stands diametrically opposed to the American model that neglects those who can't afford to pay for medical insurance.

Cuba's drive to improve the health of the world's underprivileged is complemented by its provision of free training for medical students — including their accommodation and subsistence. Students come from more than 100 countries, chiefly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as from disadvantaged neighborhoods in the US. Two years ago, during a visit to a hospital in Santa Clara, I met, among others, two Palestinian medical students, one from Ramallah in the West Bank and one from the Gaza Strip. They had arrived in Cuba with no Spanish but soon became fluent, and were by then preparing to return to the Occupied Territories to serve their people.

Part of the current US campaign to reverse the rapprochement between Washington and Havana that took place during the Obama administration involves vehemently criticizing what the Trump White House calls the "exploitation" of Cuban medical workers by their government. The State Department tweeted

last month that the Cuban government "keeps most of the salary its doctors and nurses earn while serving in its international medical missions while exposing them to egregious labor conditions." It is legitimate to question how much of what the Cuban government receives from its medical missions finds its way into the pockets of the doctors and nurses themselves, but the US tweet reflects both the hypocrisy and the ignorance of an administration that is making a complete shambles of containing the coronavirus in its own country, while doing nothing to help others.

In Cuba, unlike the US, there are no tuition fees for locals at any level of education, and virtually no homelessness, even if living conditions are very modest. And, as for the working conditions, Cuban health workers are certainly prepared to work in the most remote and difficult conditions because that is exactly what Cuba's revolution has taught them. Hence, it was Cuban medical teams that led the relief mission in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, and were later in West Africa dealing with the 2014 Ebola crisis.

If the late Fidel Castro were able to witness the US criticism of Cuba's medical internationalism, he would probably repeat what he said to the judges in his 1953 trial before being sentenced to 15 years' jail: "History will absolve me."

er with Fidel and Raul Castro and his other comrades.

Cuba currently has about 50,000 doctors operating in 67 countries — many in Latin America and Africa. This is a staggering number and means there are more Cuban doctors working abroad than from all G7 nations combined, even though the country's population is only 11.4 million. This comes with a financial reward, which, according to some estimates, is about \$6 billion a year. For a country on the receiving end of harsh punitive sanctions from the US, such an income stream, especially of hard currency, is a lifeline. But it is far from the sole reason for Cuba maintaining its international brigades in white. Moreover, from a diplomatic perspective, providing medical help to the developing world has helped

the receiving end of harsh punitive sanctions from the US, such an income stream, especially of hard currency, is a lifeline. But it is far from the sole reason for Cuba maintaining its international brigades in white. Moreover, from a diplomatic perspective, providing medical help to the developing world has helped

Nature after COVID-19

Businesses are more dependent on nature than previously thought, with over half of the world's GDP moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services. China has the highest absolute amount of GDP in nature-dependent sectors in the world at \$2.7 trillion. China's GDP is 20% highly dependent on nature, 38% medium dependent on nature and 41% low dependent on nature.

go back to old business models with an unsustainable relation with the environment as a mere externality.

Initiatives such as China's Grain for Green Programme, Natural Forest Protection Programme, National Park System and Ecological Function Zoning provide significant learnings as the world looks to adopting clear policies for forest protection, restoration and sustainable management.

An equally important measure undertaken by China is to establish a national accounting system of natural capital and ecosystem services. Such continued investment in nature could shift our understanding of nature-related

risks and opportunities and could serve to prevent future economic, health and environmental crises.

Intact nature can provide business opportunities and cost-effective nature-based solutions to many of society's problems. For example, the Food and Land-use Coalition's recent report found that transitions in the food and land-use sector could provide \$4.5 trillion a year in new business opportunities by 2030 while preventing trillions of dollars' worth of social and environmental harms.

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In this context, it is heartening to see President Xi stress that "the environment itself means the economy. If you protect the environment, you will receive rewards from the environment."

stimulus packages should rightly be focused on human health, livelihoods, resilience and the most vulnerable, we must find a way to invest in new opportunities that are nature-positive and not

TOP 4 TWEETS

01

President @realDonaldTrump just hosted a call w/ CEOs of pharmaceutical & bio-tech companies to discuss developments in therapeutics to fight the #Coronavirus. We are working hard to tear down barriers, cut red tape, & encourage co-operation across private industries & government.

@PressSec

02

Everyone seems upset that Stephanie Grisham never briefed the press. But everyone also seems upset that Trump is briefing the press every single day. So make up your minds, people.

@benshapiro

03

By this evening, there will be 2,179 medical military personnel in New York City ready to assist. We are here for you and we will continue to work with states so they have the resources they need to combat the Coronavirus.

@Mike_Pence

04

The W.H.O. really blew it. For some reason, funded largely by the United States, yet very China centric. We will be giving that a good look. Fortunately I rejected their advice on keeping our borders open to China early on. Why did they give us such a faulty recommendation?

@realDonaldTrump

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

Wide Angle

The Brunels: A Tribute to the British Engineering Duo



JOEL INDRUPATI

On this day, April 8, exactly 182 years ago, a new service began across the Atlantic, with a new ship.

The 'SS Great Western', was a wooden-hulled paddle-wheel steamship built for the primary purpose of ferrying passengers across the Atlantic Ocean at high-speed.

She was not only the first 'steam ship' of this type - even though she had had four masts for sails - but was also the world's largest passenger ship from 1837 to 1839.

"On its maiden voyage, the Great Western left Bristol, England, on April 8, 1838, and arrived in New York City 15 days later (half the time that sailing ships usually took)", according to Encyclopaedia Britannica.

It was in fact 74 years later that the RMS Titanic began its maiden voyage in the same direction, in 1912. Unfortunately, we know, it had also become her last, after she hit that iceberg.

The engineering marvels of that time must have included, on the top of the list, the skills of 'ship building'.

The field of Shipbuilding then must have been like today's scientific fields of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence. And a man called Isambard Kingdom Brunel then, must have been a technology-icon people looked up to, like how one would look up to Elon Musk today.

It is on this engineer, who designed the 'Great Western', that I wanted to focus on, in this column today.

He and his father are counted among some of the greatest engineers in history. And it is perhaps appropriate to look at their contributions to Britain's progress; and, indirectly, to the world's.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel had also designed another British steamship 'Great Eastern', for the India trade -- which held the distinction of being the world's largest ship afloat, at its launching in 1858.

Earlier to that he was an engineer at Bristol Docks, and a chief engineer in the Great Western Railway.

In fact, this man – the Encyclopaedia Britannica tells me – was responsible for building more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) of railway in the West Country, the Midlands, South Wales, and Ireland. But, that's only in the British Isles.

He had also constructed two railway lines in Italy. And he was an adviser on the construction of the Victorian lines in Australia, and the Eastern Bengal Railway in India.

But then, what else can you expect from a man whose father, Sir Marc Isambard Brunel, was the first engineer who audaciously suggested, in 1820s, to drill a tunnel under London's River Thames.

This senior Brunel had left the French Navy to flee to United States in the aftermath of French Revolution. But he rose to hold the post of chief engineer of New York City. He had built many buildings, improved the defences of the channel between Staten Island and Long Island, and constructed an arsenal and a cannon foundry. In fact, his design for the Washington DC's Capitol building was short-listed, but somehow not accepted due to US government's economic considerations.

I remember going under the River Thames a couple of times, when using the London Underground, but it is only recently that I got to know more about these pioneering engineers who made it possible.

When we consider the advantages that today's civil engineers have, with their draft-board work and lathe-machine cutting aided by high-precision computer modelling, and with their project planning and scheduling aided by the latest Project Management software, we must look, with awe and respect, at what those engineers had achieved back then, almost 200 years ago.

This father-son duo had worked on buildings, bridges, tunnels, docks, railroads, ships and a host of other civil engineering marvels.

And naming a university as Brunel, is just not enough.

(The writer's twitter handle: @joelindrupati)



WORLD

world

UK PM in intensive care, given oxygen support

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the prime minister is still running the government

● Trump said that he had tapped two US drug companies to liaise with Johnson's office about the prime minister's care

● Johnson's pregnant 32-year-old fiancée, Carrie Symonds, also had symptoms

Reuters | London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was stable in intensive care yesterday after receiving oxygen support to help him battle COVID-19, while his foreign minister led the government's response to the accelerating outbreak.

Johnson, 55, was admitted to St Thomas' Hospital across the River Thames from the House of Commons late on Sunday after suffering persistent coronavirus symptoms, including a high temperature and a cough, for more than 10 days.

But his condition rapidly deteriorated over the next 24 hours, and he was moved on Monday to an intensive care unit, where the most serious cases are treated, in case he needed to be put on a ventilator. He was still conscious, his office said.

"He is receiving standard oxygen treatment and breathing without any other assistance," Johnson's spokesman, who traditionally speaks without his name being published, told reporters.

"The prime minister has been stable overnight and remains in good spirits," the spokesman said. "He has not required mechanical ventilation, or non-invasive respiratory support."

While Britain has no formal succession plan should a prime minister become incapacitated, Johnson asked Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, 46, to deputise for him "where necessary", Downing Street said.

Who leads?

Raab yesterday chaired the government's COVID-19 emergency response meeting, though ministers refused to say who had ultimate control over the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons - a role held by the prime minister.

"There are well-developed protocols which are in place," said Gove, who himself went into self-isolation on Tuesday after a family member dis-



Americans are praying for Johnson: Trump

Reuters | Washington

President Donald Trump said that he was saddened to hear that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had been moved to an intensive care unit after his coronavirus symptoms worsened and that Americans were praying for his recovery.

"I also want to send best wishes to a very good friend of mine, a



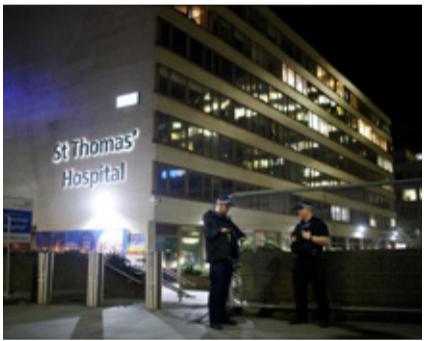
friend to our nation, Prime Minister Boris Johnson. We were very saddened to hear that he was taken into intensive care this afternoon," the president told a White House news conference.

"Americans are all praying for his recovery. He's been a really good friend. He's been really something very special - strong, resolute, doesn't quit, doesn't give up," Trump said.



But when you get brought into intensive care, that gets very, very serious with this particular disease. So, the two companies are there. And with what they are talking about, and it is rather complex, and has had really incredible results. We are working with the FDA and everybody else, but we are working with London with respect to Boris Johnson

DONALD TRUMP



A general view of police officers outside the St Thomas' Hospital after Johnson was moved to intensive care



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab is Johnson's de facto deputy

Carrie Symonds is banned from being at Boris Johnson's side

London

Carrie Symonds, Boris Johnson's heavily pregnant fiancée, is barred from seeing the prime minister as he battles coronavirus in intensive care, said a *Daily Mail* report. The couple have not seen each other for a fortnight after Johnson, 55, first fell ill on March 27 and Symonds, 32, have come down with similar symptoms over the weekend.

On March 27 - the day Boris tested positive for coronavirus - Carrie shared a photograph of herself self-isolating with their dog Dilyn at the Camberwell house she bought with Johnson last year.

Last week she is understood to have moved to stay with her mother Josephine McAffee in East Sheen, south-west London, more than seven miles from her



Carrie Symonds is self isolating with the couple's rescue dog Dilyn
(Courtesy of Daily Mail)

partner's intensive care bed in St Thomas' Hospital.

played coronavirus symptoms.

Before being rushed to intensive care, Johnson had said he was in good spirits and Raab had told a news conference that the prime minister was still running the government, although Raab also said he had not spoken to him directly since Saturday.

Raab, the son of a Czech-born Jewish refugee who fled the Nazis in 1938, takes the helm at a pivotal time. Government scientists see the death toll rising until at least April 12 and Britain must ultimately decide when to lift the lockdown.

"The government's business will continue," said Raab, a staunch Brexit supporter who has served as foreign

minister for less than a year.

Johnson has faced criticism for initially approving a much more modest response to the coronavirus outbreak than other major European leaders, though he then imposed a lockdown as projections showed half a million people could die.

He tested positive for the virus on March 26.

After 10 days of isolation in an apartment at Downing Street, he was admitted to hospital. He was last seen in a video message posted on Twitter on

Friday when he looked weary.

James Gill, a doctor and a clinical lecturer at Warwick Medical School, said the news of Johnson's admission to intensive care was "worrying" but not completely out of line with other people suffering complications.

"Admission to ITU is worrying news, (but) this is not altogether uncommon with this disease, and may be looked at from a positive that the PM is getting the very best care that the NHS (Britain's state-run National Health Service) has to offer."

Global

Covid-19 Cases:

1,410,435

Deaths

81,015

Recovered:

300,740

Active cases

1,028,680

Closed cases

381,755

New cases

+64,431

New deaths

+6,361



Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	New deaths	Total Deaths
USA	386,194	+1,375	12,246
Spain	140,511	+556	13,897
Italy	135,586	+604	17,127
Germany	106,504	+131	1,941
France	109,069	+1,417	10,328
China	81,740		3,331
Iran	62,589	+133	3,872
UK	55,242	+786	6,159
Turkey	34,109	+76	725
Switzerland	22,242	+56	821
Belgium	22,194	+403	2,035
Netherlands	19,580	+234	2,101
Canada	17,046	+22	345
Austria	12,592	+23	243
Portugal	12,442	+34	345
Brazil	12,345	+17	581
S. Korea	10,331	+6	192
Israel	9,006	+3	60
Sweden	7,693	+114	591
Russia	7,497	+11	58
Australia	5,919	+3	48
Norway	5,866	+12	88
Ireland	5,709	+36	210
Chile	5,116	+6	43
Denmark	5,071	+16	203
India	5,172	+14	150
Romania	4,417	+21	197
Pakistan	4,005	+2	55
Malaysia	3,963	+1	63
Japan	3,906		92
Philippines	3,764	+14	177

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Bahrain	811	+55	4		458	349	4	477
Saudi Arabia	2,795	+190	41	+3	615	2,139	41	80
UAE	2,076		11		167	1,898	1	210
Kuwait	743	+78	1		105	637	23	174
Oman	371	+40	2		67	302	3	73
Jordan	349		6		126	217	5	34
Iraq	1,122	+91	65	+1	373	684		28
Egypt	1,322		85		259	978		13

Queen Elizabeth thanks health workers around the world

Reuters | London

Britain's Queen Elizabeth yesterday sent a message of "enduring appreciation and good wishes" to health workers around the world for World Health Day.

"I want to thank all those working in the healthcare profession for your selfless commitment and diligence as you undertake vitally important roles to protect and improve the health and well-being of people," the queen said.

The queen's words were shown on a video released by the royal family's Twitter account, which featured images of the queen and other members of her family visiting hospitals and meeting healthcare workers.

Included in the video were three of the queen's children: Prince Charles and his wife Camilla, Princess Anne, and Prince Edward. The queen's grandson Prince William and his wife Kate Middleton were

I want to thank all those working in the healthcare profession for your selfless commitment and diligence as you undertake vitally important roles to protect and improve the health and well-being of people

also pictured.

"In testing times, we often observe that the best of the human spirit comes to the fore; the dedication to service of countless nurses, midwives and other health workers, in these most challenging of circumstances, is an example to us all," she said.

"My family and I send our enduring appreciation and good



Queen Elizabeth speaks to Johnson from Windsor Castle for her weekly audience in Windsor on 25 March 2020

wishes," the queen said.

The 93-year-old monarch is staying at her Windsor Castle home with her husband Prince Philip, 98.

On Sunday, in a rare televised address, the queen told the British people that they would overcome the coronavirus outbreak if they stayed resolute in the face of lockdown and self-isolation. She invoked the wartime spirit by saying "we will meet again" - a direct reference to the most famous British song from the war years of the 1940s.

Prince Charles, 71, has recovered after suffering mild symptoms of the virus and opened a new field hospital in London via video link from his home in Scotland on Friday.

World short of six million nurses: WHO

AFP | Geneva

As COVID-19 captures global headlines, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned yesterday that the world needs nearly six million nurses.

The UN's health agency along with partners Nursing Now and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) underscored in a report the crucial role played by nurses, who make up more than half of all health workers worldwide.

"Nurses are the backbone of any health system," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

"Today, many nurses find themselves on the frontline in the battle against COVID-19," he noted, adding that it was vital they "get the support they need to keep the world healthy."

The report said that there are just under 28 million nurses on the planet.

In the five years leading up to 2018, the number grew by 4.7 million.

"But this still leaves a global shortfall of 5.9 million," the WHO said, pointing out that the greatest gaps were in poorer countries in Africa, southeast Asia, the Middle East and parts of South America.

The report urged countries to identify gaps in their nursing workforce and invest in nursing education, jobs and leadership.

Shortages 'exhaust workforce'

ICN chief executive Howard Catton told a virtual briefing that infection rates, medication errors and mortality rates "are all higher where there are too few nurses".

Catton said that 23 nurses had died in Italy and cited figures suggesting that around 100 health workers had died around the world.



The experts said nursing remains female-dominated and needed to recruit more men

Japan declares state of emergency over coronavirus

Tokyo

Japan yesterday declared a state of emergency over a spike in coronavirus cases, ramping up efforts to contain infections but stopping short of the strict lockdowns seen in other parts of the world.

"As I decided that a situation feared to gravely affect people's lives and the economy has occurred... I am declaring a state of emergency," Abe said.

The move allows governors in seven affected regions including Tokyo to ask people to stay indoors and request businesses close.

But many supermarkets and other shops will stay open, transport will continue to run and there are neither enforcement mechanisms nor penalties laid out for those who fail to comply with government requests. "Although a state of



Seven regions are covered by the month-long declaration: Tokyo, neighbouring Chiba, Kanagawa and Saitama, the western hub of Osaka and neighbouring Hyogo, and the southwestern region of Fukuoka.

emergency is declared, it won't mean a city lockdown as seen overseas," Abe said.

"We will prevent the spread of infection while maintaining economic and social services such as public transport as much as possible." The measure will last through to the end of the Golden Week holiday period, when much of the country travels in a rare break.

Kiwi health minister breaks lockdown, keeps job

Wellington

New Zealand's health minister described himself as "an idiot" yesterday for breaking lockdown restrictions, but kept his job coordinating the South Pacific nation's COVID-19 response.

Health Minister David Clark said he offered his resignation to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern after revealing he took a 20-kilometre (12.5-mile) drive to the beach with his family.

Clark admitted the trip was a clear breach of the country's strict lockdown rules, under which families must stay close to home, and his position meant he should have been setting an example.

"At a time when we are asking New Zealanders to make historic sacrifices, I've let the team down," he said in a statement.

"I've been an idiot and I understand why people will be angry with me."

Clark also said he had been on short two-kilometre drives with his family, which he said were within the rules.

Ardern said under normal



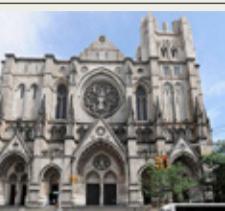
David Clark

circumstances, she would have sacked Clark - but instead, she stripped him of the junior role of associate finance minister and demoted him in the cabinet rankings.

"What he did was wrong, and there are no excuses," she said.

"But right now, my priority is our collective fight against COVID-19. We cannot afford massive disruption in the health sector or to our response. For that reason, and that reason alone, Dr Clark will maintain his role."

Scotland's chief medical officer Catherine Calderwood resigned Sunday for breaking the rules after twice visiting her second home, despite fronting an ad campaign calling for Scots to stay at home.



Latest developments

A vast cathedral in central New York is being converted into a field hospital during the coronavirus pandemic, its dean said Monday, as the US struggles to cope with the mounting crisis.

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in Manhattan will house nine climate-controlled medical tents in its 600-foot-long nave and subterranean crypt, dean Clifton Daniel told the New York Times. The tents will be able to hold a total of at least 200 patients beneath the stained-glass windows of the building which describes itself as the largest Gothic cathedral in the world.

Brazil's Sao Paulo state has said it expects 100,000 COVID-19 deaths in the next six months, and has extended its stay-at-home measures another two weeks.



A forest fire is underway in the restricted zone around Chernobyl, scene of the world's worst nuclear accident, but Ukrainian government agencies have denied an official's claim that the fire caused a spike in radiation levels.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo extended a shutdown in the epicenter of America's deadly coronavirus pandemic until April 29.



An Australian cruise ship off South America faced a growing crisis with more than 80 mostly-elderly passengers and crew battling COVID-19, the cruise company and Uruguayan officials said.



The United States has begun taking blood samples from across the country to determine the true number of people infected with the coronavirus, using a test that works retrospectively, according to reports. The new tests are based on serological surveys, which differ from the nasal swabs used to determine if someone currently has the virus. Instead, they look for whether certain antibodies are present in the blood which shows that the person fought and then recovered from the illness -- even if they never showed symptoms.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has been in self-isolation since his wife Sophie tested positive for coronavirus last month, said he would try to keep working from home "as much as possible."

The United States on Monday branded a Russian far-right group as a foreign terrorist organization, the first time it has targeted white supremacists with tools regularly used against jihadists groups.

Mainland China reported no coronavirus deaths for the first time since the pandemic began, and a drop in new cases, a day before the central city of Wuhan, where the virus emerged late in December, is set to lift its lockdown.

Britain set for 66,000 COVID-19 deaths

Britain could see as many as 66,000 COVID-19 deaths during the first wave of the current pandemic, new research showed Tuesday, making the outbreak there by far the deadliest in Europe. Modelling conducted by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington's School of Medicine showed that approximately 151,680 people were likely to die from the virus across the continent.

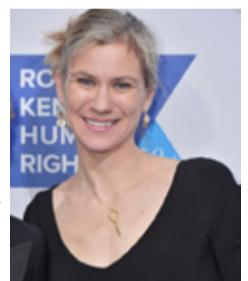


A baby tiger who was born during quarantine has been called "Covid" at the Mexican Africa Bio Zoo in Cordoba (Veracruz). Zoo staff say the name is one of "hope" because the virus, despite being deadly, has forced people to "rethink".

Body of missing Kennedy family member found

Washington

The body of John F. Kennedy's grand-niece who disappeared during a canoe trip with her young son was recovered Monday, US media reported. Maeve Kennedy McLean, 40, and her eight-year-old son Gideon went missing Thursday while canoeing in the vast Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. The search for Gideon continues, the Washington Post reported, citing Maryland Natural Resources Police. The family said Saturday that mother and son were presumed dead.



Maeve Kennedy McLean

Cardinal Pell freed after winning appeal over child sex abuse

Lara | Australia

Cardinal George Pell was released from prison yesterday, hours after Australia's High Court quashed his conviction for child sex abuse, bringing to an abrupt end the most high-profile paedophilia case faced by the Catholic Church. The 78-year-old left Barwon Prison near Melbourne after the court overturned five counts of sexually abusing two 13-year-old choirboys in the 1990s. Pell, who had steadfastly maintained his innocence throughout a lengthy court process, left the jail where he has been held for the last year and issued a statement saying that a "serious injustice" had been remedied by the decision.





Selena Gomez to give part of album sales to COVID-19 relief fund

Los Angeles

Singer Selena Gomez will be releasing a new Deluxe Edition of her new album "Rare" with a portion of the proceeds going to the COVID-19 relief fund.

The 27-year-old singer took to Instagram on Monday to share that the new Deluxe Edition of "Rare" will be available from April 9, featuring new songs "Boyfriend" and "Souvenir", reports dailymail.co.uk.

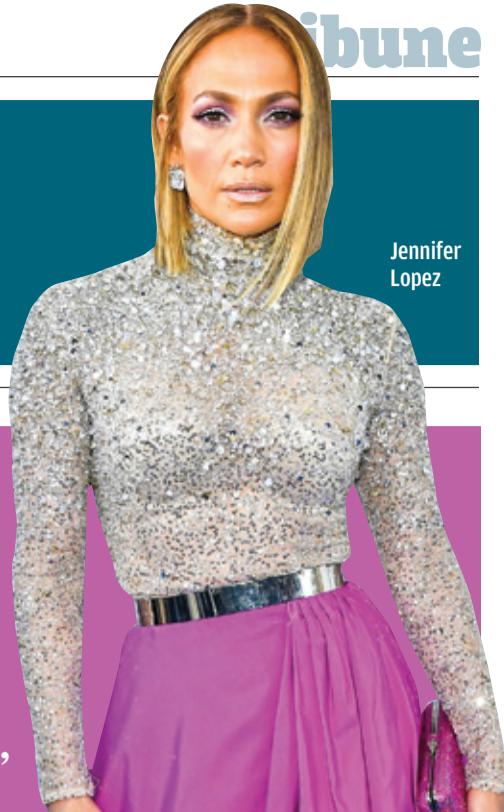
The singer said that she is making a personal donation to the COVID-19 relief fund, and donating \$1 from every order of the Deluxe Edition to the Plus1 COVID-19 Relief Fund.

Gomez shared the cover art for the "Rare" Deluxe Album, featuring a profile shot of the singer with the Rare tattoo on her neck.

"The deluxe version of 'Rare', featuring 'Boyfriend', 'She' and 'Souvenir', is out April 9th," Gomez wrote.

"You can pre-save it now and learn more about how to donate to the PLUS1 COVID-19 Fund in my bio," she said.

celebs



Lockdown diaries: Billie Eilish enjoys being alone

Los Angeles

Grammy award-winning singer Billie Eilish says she is an "introverted loner", and is happily spending a lot of time alone during the lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The pop star said that she is being "introverted and lonerish" in self-isolation, reports mirror.co.uk.

"I've been really enjoying being alone. I feel like everybody on the internet has been on FaceTime all day long with their friends. I love my friends, I can't wait to see them, I do miss them a lot, but at the same time... I'm good. I'm good being alone - I like being alone," she added.

Eilish thinks the gratitude at being set free after lockdown won't last long.

"As soon as we can see people again and go out, we're

going to be so happy and grateful. And in about three days, we're all going to take it for granted again.

That's the way people work. It's the way humans are made," she said.



SRK, Priyanka for Lady GaGa's mega COVID-19 fundraiser concert

Los Angeles

Bollywood actors Shah Rukh Khan and Priyanka Chopra Jonas along with names like Billie Eilish and Paul McCartney have united for pop star Lady Gaga's One World: Together At Home, a mega live-streamed and televised benefit concert in support of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Covid-19 soli-



also includes names like Chris Martin of Coldplay, Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, Elton John, John Legend, Lizzo, J Balvin, Stevie Wonder, Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day, Alanis Morissette, Burna Boy, Andrea Bocelli, Kacey Musgraves, Keith Urban and Lang Lang, reports theguardian.com.

SRK and Priyanka are among several celebrities expected at the event, along with David Beckham, Idris and Sabrina Elba, Kerry Washington, and "Sesame Street" cast members.

Popular US talk show hosts Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel and Stephen Colbert will host the event, which broadcasts live across the US television networks ABC, CBS and NBC, as well as being streamed online on April 18.

Charity response fund and in celebration of health workers around the world.

The lineup



JLo pushes Reese to do 'Legally Blonde 3'

Los Angeles

Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez asked her actress friend Reese Witherspoon to make another "Legally Blonde" sequel during an impromptu Instagram Live chat.

Witherspoon called on Lopez to touch base with the singer and actress during the COVID-19 lockdown, and spoke to her about her new show "Thanks a Million".

She was stunned to learn that Lopez and her family had been watching "Legally Blonde", reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Oh, my God, we watched 'Legally Blonde' the other day.



Literally, like, four days ago. Oh, my God, I forgot... I can't believe I didn't tell you. They loved it. Loved it. It was so much fun. You were so amazing in that. It's so great. And then my daughter's like, 'I want to know what happens to her.' And I said, 'There's a 2 and a 3, I believe,' Lopez said.

Witherspoon corrected her by saying: "Well, no, there's a 2 but I'm thinking we might be working on a 3."

Lopez replied: "You should. You should. That character was so amazing and so empowering and inspiring," she gushed. "Yeah, it's great for girls."

COVID-19: Hrithik to facilitate 1.2 lakh cooked meals for the needy

Mumbai

Actor Hrithik Roshan has decided to provide 1.2 lakh nutritious cooked meals for those who are unable to provide for themselves in these times of COVID-19 lockdown.

Hrithik will fulfill the cooking requirements of the needy in association with the NGO Akshaya Patra. On receiving support from Hrithik, the NGO took to Twitter to thank the "Super 30" actor.

"We are happy to share, our Foundation is now empowered by Superstar @ iHrithik. Together, we will facilitate 1.2 lakh nutritious cooked meals to old age homes, daily wage labourers & low income groups across India, until normalcy in work routine."

"We salute the immediate help from Superstar Hrithik Roshan in providing relief and supporting the health & well-being of ALL INDIANS in need of care. We deeply thank you for your gesture," the post read.



Watch: Aishwarya Rai's 23-year-old dance clip from unreleased film goes viral

Mumbai

A video featuring on-set shots of Aishwarya Rai Bachchan in her early Bollywood days, from a film that was never completed, has been doing the rounds of social media all of Tuesday.

Aishwarya had started work on the film titled Radheshyam Sitaram about 23 years ago, and it co-starred Suniel Shetty. However, the film never released.

In the video, Aishwarya wears an ethnic purple lehenga with a matching embellished choli, and is decked up with heavy jewellery and make-up.

In the video, she can be seen filming a nineties-style dance dancing and smiling while shooting.



Bruce Willis, Demi Moore self-isolate together

Los Angeles

Former star couple Bruce Willis and Demi Moore have reunited with two of their three daughters and are staying together through the quarantine phase.

They posed together in a photo shared by their youngest daughter Tallulah Willis on Instagram on Monday, reports people.com.

Moore and Willis wore matching green striped pyjamas while



Demi Moore and Bruce Willis

smiling at the camera.

Their other daughter, Scout, posed in the background with film director Dillon Buss.

"Chaotic neutral," Tallulah

captioned the image.

Moore has also been sharing photos of herself and her family in self-isolation on her Instagram.

There was a time when she shared a photo of herself, her three daughters and Buss sitting on the floor of her home while looking through family photos at the end of March.

"Quarantine crew... working on a family photo project," Moore wrote in the caption.

CROSSWORD

Yesterday's solution

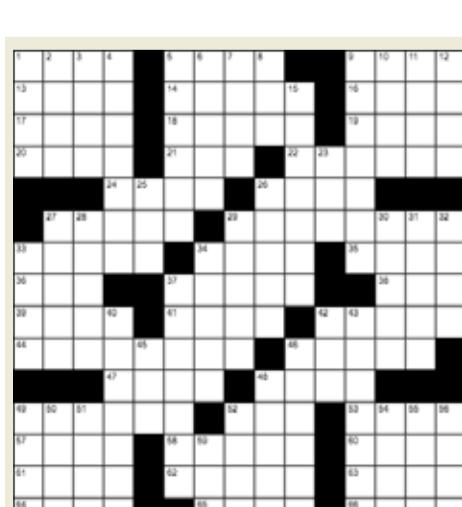


SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

1		4		5							
3		5	1		6						
9			6								
4	8	7			5						
3					9						
2						3	7	6			
						4	1				
7			3	5				8			
9			2		6				7		

How to play
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.



Across

1- Belgrade native; 5- Nile biters; 9- School orgs.; 13- Olive genus; 14- Cursed; 16- Type of tomato; 17- Monetary unit of Cambodia; 18- "Amadeus" director Forman; 19- The Emerald Isle; 20- Baby powder; 21- Mil. address; 22- Exam taker; 24- Shrek, e.g.; 26- "Star Trek" role; 27- Capital city of Yemen; 29- Unable to hear and speak; 33- Antiknock fluid; 34- Wedding cake feature; 35- Slips up; 36- Cleaning agent; 37- Dawdle; 38- Blast; 39- Woeeful word; 41- Fixes illegally; 42- Glove material; 44- Tonic; 46- Swarm; 47- Final, ultimate; 48- Zingy taste; 49- Lying on the back; 52- Male cat; 53- This, in Tijuana; 57- Long poem, such as those attributed to Homer; 58- Reef material; 60- Dweeb; 61- Bell; 62- That group; 63- Manitoba Indigenous People; 64- Impasse; 65- Mongrel dog; 66- Tibetan oxen;

Down

1- Kind; 2- Charles Lamb's nom de plume; 3- Film spool; 4- Gallery in a theater; 5- Capital of Eritrea; 6- Steal; 7- Ralph Lauren brand; 8- Hit sign; 9- Be unwarrantably bold; 10- Legal wrong; 11- French friend; 12- All there; 15- Tidal river; 23- Pixie; 25- Guy's partner; 26- Prophets; 27- Elegance; 28- In the future; 29- Sad song; 30- Exhortation; 31- Commerce; 32- "quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 34- Jack of Rio Lobo"; 34- Spouse; 37- Divide into three parts; 40- Nonmetallic element; 42- Junior; 43- Insistence; 45- Metal container; 46- Small village; 48- Browned sliced bread; 49- Stiff bristle; 50- the crack of dawn; 51- Size of type; 52- Drop (moon); 54- Lab fluids; 55- Arduous journey; 56- Citrus drinks; 59- Bit of resistance;

SPORTS

sports

Players to battle online in virtual Madrid Open

Reuters | Madrid

The world's top tennis players will swap rackets for game controllers this month after organisers of the cancelled Madrid Open said they will stage a virtual competition to raise funds for struggling professionals amid the coronavirus shutdown.

The tennis season was halted in early March due to the pandemic, leaving players in the lower tiers, who solely depend on tournament winnings, without any chance to earn a living.

The men's ATP Tour and the WTA, which runs the women's circuit, suspended all tournaments until at least mid-July after countries started locking down their borders.

The Madrid Open, an ATP Masters 1000 and a WTA Premier Mandatory event in early May featuring total prize money of \$8.3 million, was one of the events called off.

However, the tournament will now take place on the Tennis World Tour videogame and run from April 27-30, "with the world's biggest tennis stars squaring off from their



Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a feather with his racket during a match (file photo)

own homes," the ATP Tour said.

"We have organised a tournament for the professional players that is as true to the conventional Mutua Madrid Open as possible, without them having to leave their homes," Madrid Open director Feliciano Lopez said in a statement.

"And its goal is not just to entertain; we want to do our bit during this period, which is so difficult for everyone."

With sport across the world virtually at a standstill due to the spread of the novel coronavirus, some have gone online to raise funds and provide entertainment for fans.

La Liga organised an online soccer tour-

nament recently while Formula One has also held virtual races.

The online tennis tournament, which has yet to confirm participants, will have 16 men's and women's singles players in each draw and offer a purse of 150,000 euros (\$162,000) for both.

The winners will decide how much they want to donate to their fellow professionals while an additional 50,000 euros will go towards reducing the social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alongside the official competition, more funds will be raised from charity matches that will see some big names from the gambling world face professional tennis players.

Both the WTA and the ATP welcomed the concept and said it would provide some much-needed help to lower-tier professionals.

"We look forward to the virtual game, which can serve as a fun source of entertainment while at the same helping to bridge a gap until live tennis returns, while also providing opportunities to help those players in need during this challenging time," WTA CEO Steve Simon said.

FIFA bribe allegations raise more questions over Qatar World Cup

Reuters | New York

The 2022 World Cup in Qatar, the only major scheduled football event left unchanged after this year's calendar was wrecked by the coronavirus, has become the focus of fresh FIFA corruption allegations after the release of a new U.S. Department of Justice indictment.

Suspicion and rumours have long surrounded the 2010 vote by FIFA's executive to hand the 2018 World Cup to Russia and the 2022 tournament to Qatar. But on Monday, for the first time, prosecutors set direct, formal allegations down in print.

According to the prosecutors, representatives working for Russia and Qatar bribed FIFA executive committee officials to swing votes in the crucial decision of world football's governing body.

FIFA did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Although FIFA have responded to previous media allegations about the Qatar bid process by insisting the tournament will be unaffected, the U.S. allegations will lead to further questions over the hosting of the competition, which is scheduled for November and December of 2022.

The allegations made by the Department of Justice are that then FIFA vice-president Jack Warner was paid \$5 million through various shell companies to vote for Russia to host the 2018 World Cup.

Warner has been accused of a number of crimes in the long-running U.S. probe, and



A general view shows the Education city stadium built for the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup in Doha



The Qatar World Cup organizers have been in suspicion of corruption ever since the tiny Gulf state was awarded the 2022 tournament

he is fighting extradition from his homeland of Trinidad and Tobago. Warner, who was not immediately reachable for comment, has always denied any wrongdoing.

The indictment also states that the three South American members of FIFA's 2010 executive - Brazil's Ricardo Teixeira, the late Nicolás Leoz of Paraguay and an unnamed co-conspirator - took bribes to vote for Qatar to host the 2018 World Cup.

Warner has been accused of a number of crimes in the long-running U.S. probe, and

tournament.

"Ricardo Teixeira, Nicolás Leoz and co-conspirator #1 were offered and received bribe payments in exchange for their votes in favour of Qatar to host the 2022 World Cup."

Qatar and Russia's World Cup bids have always denied paying bribes. Qatari organisers did not provide immediate comment when contacted by media.

Alexei Sorokin, CEO of the local organising committee for Russia's 2018 World Cup, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Asked if the Kremlin was aware of the U.S. indictment, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "We read the media reports. We don't understand what they refer to. Russia received the right to host the World Cup completely legally. It is in no way linked to any bribes. We reject this. And Russia hosted the best soccer World Cup in history, which we are proud of."

Euro 2020 delay could work in Italy's favour: Mancini

Reuters | Rome

Italy coach Roberto Mancini believes that the postponement of Euro 2020 could work in his team's favour although a gap of 10 months between working with his players will create difficulties.

Mancini has revived Italy's fortunes since taking over in 2018 after they had failed to qualify for the World Cup.

Under his leadership, they finished their Euro 2020 qualifying group with a 100% record and are on a run of 11 successive wins.

"If we had played European Championship in June, we would have had a good chance but maybe we would have faced national teams who are better prepared because they started to rejuvenate the squad before us, or have a long-established team like France," he said.

"But with another year, the lads will have the opportunity to improve in every respect, they will gain experience."

He added: "Our national side can compete among the best. I hope to be coach of the (Italy) team that will win the European Championship for the first time since 1968."

Italy's last match was a 9-1 win over Armenia in November. Their two friendlies scheduled for March were postponed because of the coronavirus outbreak and all matches due to be played in June and July have also been called off with Euro 2020 moved back by one year.

Dutchman Van Dijk wants to become 'Liverpool legend'

Reuters | London

Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk wants to become a "Liverpool legend" and says there is nothing stopping the Premier League club achieving "incredible things".

The 28-year-old, who joined Liverpool in January 2018, has helped the club win the Champions League, UEFA Super Cup and Club World Cup. They were also just two wins away from their first English league title in 30 years when the season was halted due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Premier League has been suspended indefinitely due to the pandemic, with 1.27 million people infected globally and over 70,000 dead, according to a Reuters tally.

Asked how he would like to be remembered for his spell at Anfield, Van Dijk told Spanish newspaper Sport: "As a Liverpool legend. I want to achieve in-

credible things here.

"I would like to be one of those players that return to Anfield after retiring. I see club legends at games and I feel part of a really big family," added Van Dijk, who finished runner-up to Lionel Messi in Ballon d'Or voting last year.

"We have a fantastic team, we don't lack anything, we have all the tools necessary to go on winning: A coach we identify with, a versatile squad, a style of play that breeds victories, a stadium and supporters that play their part."

Liverpool, who have lost only once in the league this season, have collected 82 points from 29 games and sit 25 points above holders Manchester City, who have played a game less.

Virgil van Dijk



Mueller extends Bayern stay until 2023

AFP | Berlin

Bayern Munich forward Thomas Mueller has signed a new deal that will keep him at the club until 2023, the Bundesliga champions announced yesterday.

"I'm happy that we've reached agreement with Thomas. Thomas is a special player for us, a figure-head for the club and our fans, a leader who shows

the way on the pitch and has achieved a lot with FC Bayern," Bayern's sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic said in a statement.

Mueller, 30, has played more than 500 times for Bayern since rising through the youth ranks to reach the first team in 2008, winning eight league titles, five German Cups and the 2013 Champions League.

The new deal comes after he worked his way back into the team under coach Hansi Flick after being frozen out by previous coach Niko Kovac.

Flick himself signed a deal last week to become permanent coach until 2023 after guiding the reigning champions back to the top of the Bundesliga.

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MotoGP events in Italy, Catalunya join list of postponed races



Riders take the start of the 2017 Italian Grand Prix (file photo)

Reuters | Madrid

The MotoGP season will not begin until mid-June after the Italian and Catalan races were postponed yesterday due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The decision brings the number of postponed races to seven, while the March 8 first round in Qatar was cancelled.

Italy and Spain, where a majority of the riders and teams come from, are the two European countries worst affected by the virus, with more than 16,000 deaths in Italy and 13,000 in Spain.

"The FIM, IRTA and Dorna Sports regret to announce the postponement of the Gran Premio d'Italia Oakley (May 31) and Gran Premio Monster Energy de Catalunya (June 7)," MotoGP said in a statement.

"The ongoing coronavirus outbreak has obliged the two events to be rescheduled."

Liverpool reverse decision to furlough staff

Reuters | London

Premier League leaders Liverpool have reversed their decision to furlough some of their non-playing staff and club CEO Peter Moore apologised to fans on Monday after the decision drew sharp criticism from the British government and supporters.

The club said over the weekend they had furloughed some of their non-playing staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic and were holding talks about the prospect of salary deductions for players and senior staff.

The decision was made after the Premier League was suspended last month and, with no clear date for when it can resume, the club said they intended to apply to the British government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to reclaim a percentage of the wages.

Bahrain to decide future of sports events on July 1

TDT | Manama

Bahrain will decide whether to resume its national sports competitions or cancel them on July 1.

The decisions will take into considerations the positions of the continental and international federations in each of the sports, a meeting of the Bahraini association, chaired by HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC), said.

The meeting, held virtually in line with the directives of the Executive Committee to reinforce measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, re-



HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa attends the virtual meeting

viewed the visions presented by the presidents of the various associations for the competitions and their plans for their resumption or cancellation.

"We are all confident that the Kingdom of Bahrain would overcome COVID-19 thanks to the solidarity and mutual support of all," HH Shaikh Khalid

Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Aymen bin Tawfiq Al Moayed, Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs, Dr Abdulrahman Sadiq Askar, Assistant Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Mohammed Hassan Al Nusf, Secretary-General of Bahrain Olympic Committee and heads of sports fed-

erations.

HH Shaikh Khalid stated that the directives given by HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty the King's Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports strengthened the implementation of the measures taken to protect the Bahraini sports community, in order to prevent

the spread of the disease and to safeguard sportsmen from the risk of infection.

HH Shaikh Khalid said, "We are confident that the Kingdom of Bahrain will overcome Covid-19 through unity. Everyone is responsible to commit to the measures and procedures to protect the society and strengthen it in its battle with this disease and to prevent it."

Through the meeting, HH Shaikh Khalid reviewed the perceptions presented by the heads of sports federations for their tournaments and competitions this season, and the strategy the federations would follow to resume or suspend the season.

His Highness hailed the positive interaction shown by the sports federations through the measures and steps it implemented, such as suspending its activities in the ongoing season as a precautionary step to combat and prevent the spread of Covid-19, in addition to its participation in spreading social awareness on the importance of adhering to safety and health measures.

Buttler fine with England playing different formats

Reuters | London



England's Jos Buttler reacts during a match (file photo)

whichever one I got selected to play in."

The World Cup-winning player also saw some merit in the idea of playing in stadiums without fans present.

"We haven't watched any sport for a long time, and we know how big an impact TV revenue has on the game and how vital that is."

"I know it would be very strange playing competitive sport without a crowd ... but it would be nice for people who have been in isolation or lockdown for a long time to be able to see their heroes and role models back on the TV."

"It's right that it is being considered."

Asked which format he would pick if different formats were played concurrently, Buttler said, "I don't know,

Halep is pain-free from foot injury

Reuters | Los Angeles

Wimbledon champion Simona Halep is recovering well from a foot injury she suffered in February and is able to run without pain, the former world number one has said.

The Romanian won in Dubai but the injury forced her to pull out of Indian Wells, which was later cancelled as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted countries to lock down borders and restrict travel.

"The foot looks good, I have started to run already and I don't have pain at all," Halep said in a video posted on Twitter.

"I don't play tennis yet but being able to do the training means a lot and gives me a big positive actually."

Tennis, like virtually all other sports, has been severely impacted by the pandemic, with the professional season suspended until at least mid-July.

Halep defeated Serena Williams in last year's Wimbledon final but will not get to defend her title in 2020 as the Grand Slam was cancelled due to the virus, which has infected 1.27



Romanian tennis star Simona Halep reacts during a match (file photo)



The foot looks good, I have started to run already and I don't have pain at all. I don't play tennis yet but being able to do the training means a lot and gives me a big positive actually

SIMONA HALEP

million people globally and left over 70,000 dead, according to a Reuters tally.

"I miss my team, I miss the players, I miss the tournaments, I miss everyone from the Tour," said the 28-year-old, who also won the French Open in 2018.

"I know it's bit tough for everybody, this period."

"But if we stay home, if we stay strong and positive it will help a lot. I can't wait to travel again, I can't wait to play tennis again and I can't wait to see you."

Japan ends Olympic flame display due to virus crisis

AFP | Tokyo

The Olympic flame will be removed from display in Japan, officials said yesterday, as the country braces for a state of emergency due to the coronavirus that also forced the historic postponement of Tokyo 2020.

It had been on public display in the northeastern Fukushima region since last week, but Japanese Olympic organisers decided to shelve it as coronavirus cases climb in the country.

The ill-fated flame, lit in Greece, arrived in Japan on March 20 for a torch relay originally scheduled to start six days later and climax at the Olympics opening ceremony on July 24.

But the raging pandemic prompted the first postponement of the Games in peace-time, with the opening ceremony now slated to take place on July 23, 2021.

To keep the Olympic spirit alive in Japan, local organisers decided to maintain the flame in a lantern and display



The Olympic Flame is displayed at the J-Village National Training Centre in Naraha, Fukushima

it in Fukushima, where the torch relay was going to start.

"Originally we wanted to hold the public display until the end of April. But considering recent developments, we decided to stop," said a Tokyo 2020 organising committee spokesman.

He declined to comment on where the flame will be stored, saying that organisers had no immediate plan to show it to the public and hoped to prevent people from congregating around the storage location.

The flame has had a troubled journey due to the coronavirus since being lit in ancient Olympia without spectators to avoid spreading the disease.

The Greek leg of the torch relay was scrapped when large crowds mobbed Hollywood actor Gerard Butler as he lit a cauldron in the town of Sparta.

The flame arrived to a muted welcome in northern Japan in front of a few dozen officials and guests, after plans to invite 200 schoolchildren were abandoned.