

Bahrain names training roster for Olympics

Senior men's national handball team to begin preparations for Tokyo Games today; squad of 27 of Kingdom's top talents named for initial gathering | P12





مملكة البحرين
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Gatherings increase the risk of COVID-19 infection



Saudi to make COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory for all workers



Reuters

All public and private sector workers wishing to attend a workplace in Saudi Arabia will be required to have taken a COVID-19 vaccination, the human resources ministry said yesterday without specifying when this would be implemented.

"Receiving a coronavirus vaccine will be a mandatory condition for male and female workers to attend workplaces in all sectors (public, private, non-profit)," the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development said on Twitter.

It urged workplaces to start preparations to ensure all employees receive a vaccination.

"The ministry will soon clarify the mechanisms of the decision and its implementation date," it said.

Saudi Arabia announces holding talks with Iran

TDT | agencies

Heralding a possible thaw in regional tensions, a Saudi foreign ministry official yesterday admitted holding talks with Iran.

He, however, added that it was too early to judge the outcome, and Riyadh wanted to see "verifiable deeds".

The comments by Ambassador Rayed Krimly, head of policy planning at the ministry, were the first public confirmation from Riyadh that they were holding direct talks.

"As to current Saudi-Iranian talks, they aim to explore ways to reduce tensions in the region," Krimly said.

"We hope they prove suc-

cessful, but it is too early and premature to reach any definitive conclusions. Our evaluation will be based on verifiable deeds and not proclamations."

Reports claim the discussions were on Yemen and the 2015 nuclear deal between global powers and Iran.

Iraq's president said on Wednesday that Baghdad hosted more than one round of talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Krimly said Saudi policy had been explained "very clearly" by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He said last month that while the kingdom has a problem with Tehran's "negative behaviour", it wanted good relations with Iran.



Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Last update - 9:00 pm
7 May 2021

Individuals vaccinated

(First dose)

780894

(Second dose)

566168

Booster dose coming

Bahrain announces booster shot for two-dose vaccine

● The type of vaccine may be changed in the third dose according to recommendations

● Registration for the third dose will be available via the "BeAware" Bahrain app

TDT | Manama

Bahrain is to take a major leap forward in protecting citizens and residents against the deadly pandemic by providing a third dose or booster vaccine six months after administering the second.

The National Medical Team for combating the Coronavirus pandemic confirmed Bahrain is moving to a new stage in the COVID-19 battle after the successful national vaccination campaign.

Officials said the third dose is to preserve the health and safety

of citizens and residents.

The National Medical team officials said that Bahrainis achieved a high level of collective immunity after the first stage of vaccination.

The percentage of vaccinated people has reached 44% so far, which is half a million people.

Dates for taking the third dose are set based on different categories and ensuring maximum

benefit to each group of people.

High-risk people, including those aged 60 years and above, those who are obese, and those suffering from immunodeficiency diseases, are selected for re-

ceiving the booster dose at first, in addition to front-line medical workers.

For the rest of the citizens and residents, a booster dose is scheduled 12 months after receiving the second dose.

The National Medical Team also said that the type of vaccine may be changed in the third dose or kept the same according to recommendations to be issued later.

Officials also called on all recovered persons who had not received their vaccination to get inoculated three months after recovery.

"This is to ensure that they have necessary immunity to help the body fight the virus."

Registration for the third dose will be available through the "BeAware" Bahrain app at specified times according to the medical protocol established for this matter.

The National Medical Team also called on all to adhere strictly to COVID-19 protocols and get inoculated to help the kingdom tackle the deadly outbreak.



Labour and Social Development Minister, Jameel Humaidan, received MP Dr Hisham Ahmed Al-Ashiri in the presence of the chairmen and officials of several non-governmental organisations. Discussions focused on ways to meet the needs of the charity and voluntary work sector here. The minister underlined the importance of developing voluntary work to make it more professional.



Education Minister and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Higher Education Council, Dr Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi, received the HEC's Secretary-General, Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Daij Al Khalifa, and congratulated her on her appointment to the post as per a Royal Decree. The minister stressed that the council is keen to develop the higher education sector by attracting prestigious universities into Bahrain. The minister wished Dr Shaikha Rana every success in assuming the duties entrusted to her.



Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs, and the Board Chairman of the Education and Training Quality Authority, Ayman bin Tawfeeq Al Moayed, received Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs, and the Board of Trustees Chairman of Bahrain Polytechnic, Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak. Al Moayed congratulated the Electricity and Water Affairs Minister on the royal trust appointing him as Board of Trustees Chairman of Bahrain Polytechnic. Al Mubarak underlined the importance of cooperation to carry out the education development strategy and commended Al Moayed for improving the educational and training outcomes in the kingdom.



Saikh Abdullah bin Rashid Al Khalifa presented a copy of his credentials as Ambassador of Bahrain to the United Mexican States residing in Washington. The Ambassador of the United Mexican States to the USA, Esteban Moctezuma, received them on behalf of the Mexican Foreign Secretary, Marcelo Ebrard. Shaikh Abdullah took great pride in the confidence of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and in representing the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Mexican States.



Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have agreed to form joint working committees in various media sectors to sustain communication and enhance media coordination to achieve their common goals. Information Minister Ali bin Mohammed Al Romaihi and Saudi Acting Minister of Media Dr Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi signed the deal during a meeting in Makkah. Al Qasabi extended an official invitation to Al Romaihi to meet in Makkah and discuss cooperation between the two countries.



Finance and National Economy Minister Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa taking part in a remote session with directors and heads of financial resources departments as part of regular meetings to follow up policies and strategies aimed at optimising spending. The minister stressed the importance of launching new initiatives to optimise government spending and reviewed the system of rotating financial resource managers between government agencies.



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, receiving diplomatic employees at the headquarters of the ministry. Abdullah bin Faisal bin Jabr Al Dossari, the Assistant Foreign Minister, Dr Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Tawfiq Ahmed Al-Mansour, the Undersecretary for Consular and Administrative Affairs, and Dr Shaikha Muneera bint Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Executive Director of the Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies were present. The officials took their oath and affirmed keenness to continue performing their duties with devotion and loyalty to the homeland and wise leadership.



Assistant Foreign Minister, Abdullah bin Faisal bin Jabr Al Dossari, receiving acting Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Activities of Bahrain, Mohammed El-Zarqani, in the presence of Head of the Human Rights Affairs Sector, Ambassador Dr Arwa Hassan Al-Sayed, and Acting Head of the Organisations sector, Ambassador Shaikha Aisha bint Ahmed bin Saqr Al Khalifa. The Assistant Foreign Minister welcomed El-Zarqani and praised his efforts in strengthening the strategic partnership between Bahrain and the United Nations agencies. El Zaqrani stressed the UN's keenness to continue cooperation in various fields, wishing Bahrain continued progress and prosperity.

ICT committee discuss guidelines for government app development

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Strategic projects and purchase requests worth BD1.2 million were up for discussion at the 44th Information and Communication Technology Governance Committee (ICTGC) meeting on Thursday. The meeting, chaired by Information & eGovernment Authority Chief Executive Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, was held remotely. They also discussed a summary of standards and guidelines for government systems and Apps development to reduce operating costs in the public sector and improve security. The project, Al Qaed said, will reduce the dupli-



Officials during the meeting

cation of processes, improve compatibility, and result in greater interconnectivity between government organizations. The committee also discussed a proposal to improve the IT skills of government directors and department heads in line with the national digital transformation strategy. Discussions also focused on the progress in adopting its previous decisions.



The Ramadan Ambassadors' Council Programme organised by the Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies virtually concluded during its seventh session on Thursday. The 7th session kicked off with the participation of Ambassador of Korea, Hae-Kwan Chung, under the moderation of the Academy's Executive Director, Dr Muneera bint Khalifa Al Khalifa. During the session, the Korean ambassador talked about the importance of Korea's public diplomacy based on culture, knowledge, and foreign policy. Dr Shaikha Muneera said the Academy plans to host more ambassadors during the second version of the programme.



Payments for PCR tests can be made on arrival in cash, electronically, or in advance via the 'BeAware' app

BD36

Non-vaccinated passengers arriving in the Kingdom of Bahrain must undergo a series of PCR tests, costing BD36.

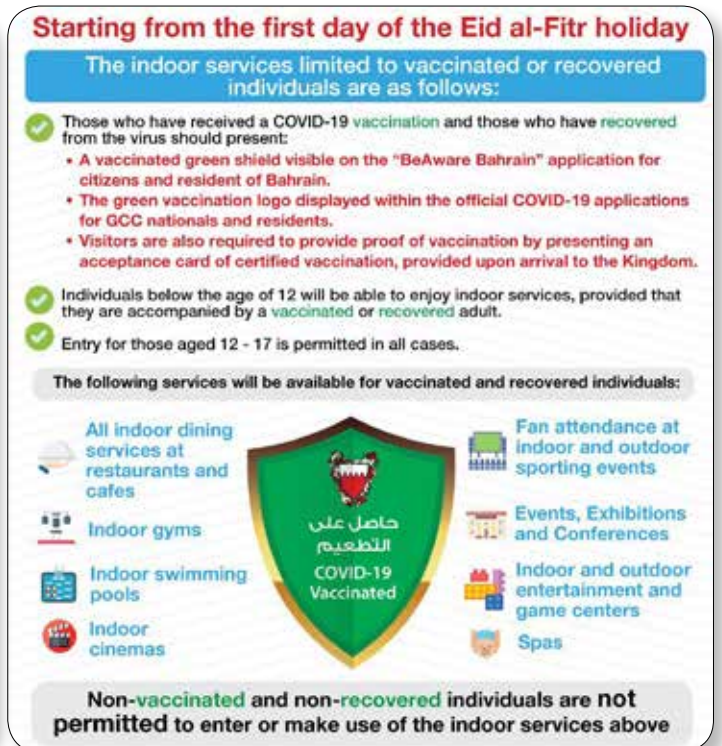
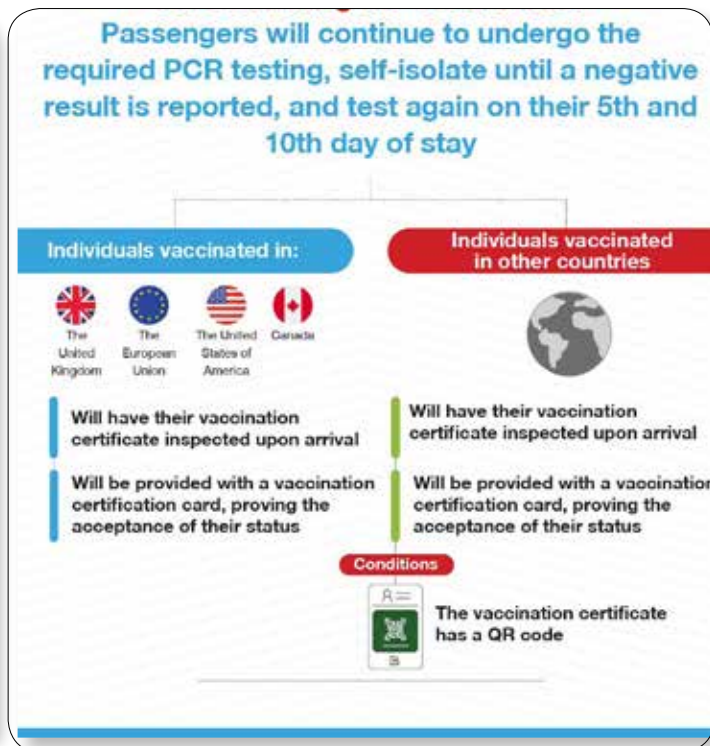
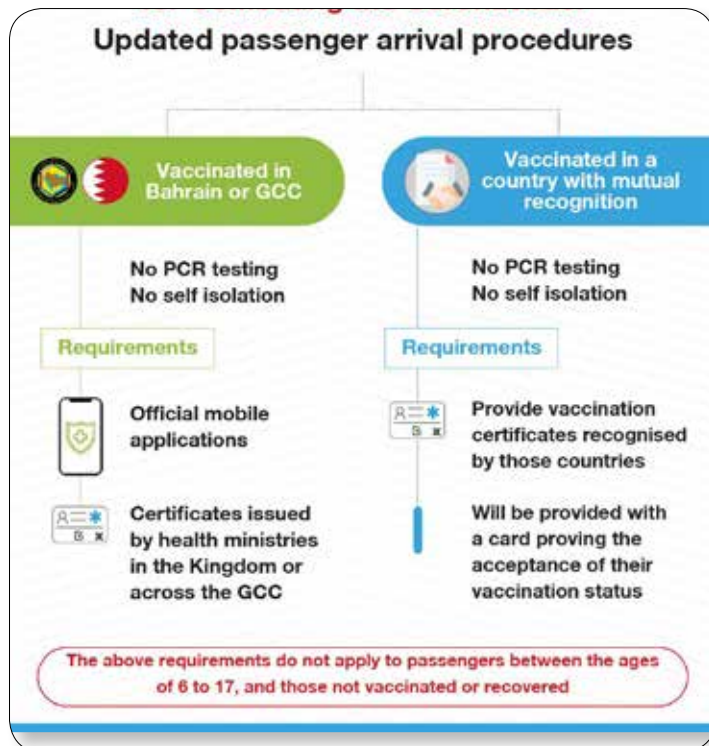
The first test will take place on arrival, and the second five days later. The third and final test on the 10th day of stay in Bahrain.

All arriving passengers must activate the 'BeAware' app and sign a self-isolation agreement for quarantine at the place of residence until arrival test results are available.



Citizens travelling abroad must comply with entry procedures and requirements at their destinations. They must also sign a declaration form before departure, agreeing to bear any medical costs while abroad.

Travel corridor extended to GCC travellers



● **No PCR tests, self-quarantine for vaccinated, recovered passengers from GCC nations starting Eid**

● **An exemption is also for vaccinated and recovered Bahraini citizens and residents**

● **Travellers from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal should come with a negative PCR test certificate**

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Bahrain has extended its travel corridor arrangement to include fully vaccinated or recovered passengers

arriving from the Gulf Cooperation Council nations.

Meaning, such passengers are no longer required to undergo a PCR test upon arrival or self-isolate in the Kingdom.

Bahraini citizens and residents, who hold a green shield of vaccination or recovery on the 'BeAware' app, are also covered by the scheme.

The arrangement, which comes into force from the first day of Eid al-Fitr, is approved by the Coordinating Committee and recommended by the National Medical Team for Responding to Coronavirus (Covid-19).

The move comes soon after lifting restrictions on indoor dining and other services to all who are vaccinated or recovered from the infection. Entry to indoor services is open to vaccinated or recovered citizens, residents and visitors, who show proof of vaccination in the BeAware Bahrain app or other official application approved by



The arrangement, which comes into force from the first day of Eid al-Fitr, is approved by the Coordinating Committee and recommended by the National Medical Team for Responding to Coronavirus (Covid-19).

the Gulf Cooperation Council nations.

The arrangement comes into play upon a passenger shows evidence of vaccination or recovery through vaccine certificates or official applications approved by the health ministries in the

GCC nations.

The decision is not applicable for those in the age group 6 to 17, non-vaccinated and non-recovered individuals, said Lieutenant General Doctor Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the Chairman of the Supreme

Council of Health and Head of the National Medical Team for Coronavirus Response.

Sheikh Muhammad said the decision to waive the PCR test is also valid for those countries, who are part of the travel corridor arrangement, including Hungary, Greece and Israel.

Travellers arriving from these countries will also receive an acceptance card after validating their vaccine certificates and exempted from quarantine measures. However, those falling into the age group 6 to 17 are to follow usual requirements.

The US, UK, EU and Canada

Travellers holding vaccine certificates from the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United States of America and Canada will also be issued an acceptance card. However, they should take a PCR test upon entry and remain in self-isolation until a negative result is available. It is also mandatory to

repeat PCR tests on the fifth and tenth day of stay in the Kingdom.

Other countries

Bahrain will also accept travellers coming from other countries with valid vaccination certificates carrying a QR code. However, it is mandatory to take PCR tests upon arrival and on the fifth and tenth day of stay in the Kingdom. Self-isolation is also a must until the result of the test taken at arrival is released.

India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Sheikh Muhammad further said the same mandates are applicable for passengers transiting or arriving from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. All passengers aged six years and above should present a negative PCR certificate with a QR code taken 48 hours before departure. Besides, passengers should take PCR tests upon arrival and on the fifth and tenth day of arrival and remain in self-quarantine.

Benayat gets new updated unified directory: Works Ministry

TDT | Manama

Works Ministry announced launching a new updated unified buildings system directory on its building permit portal Benayat.

The portal is a one-stop platform for issuing building permits for all building projects, whether Investment, Residential, Industrial, Commercial, etc.

The system dubbed 'version 1.2' is up on the portal www.benayat.bh, said Sheikh Muhammad bin Ahmed Al Khalifa.

The Undersecretary for Municipal Affairs at the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning said the updated system includes guides for calculating the land areas of real estate units among other facilities.

Accordingly, for planned



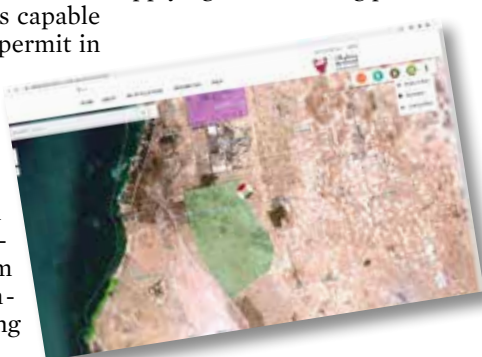
Sheikh Muhammad bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, The Undersecretary for Municipal Affairs at the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning,

lands, the authority is capable of issuing a building permit in five days.

Benayat enables engineering offices licensed in Bahrain to apply for building permits, enquire on application status, obtain consultation from concerned government entities regarding

building permits, pay building permit related fees, and apply for other building-related services.

By utilising an interactive map that provides information for land parcels and centralising all the concerned regulations and requirements under one system, Benayat allows applicants to obtain information necessary for preparing drawings and documents for applying for a building permit.



Focus on home-based women-run enterprises

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A new programme to support home-based female enterprises are on the anvil at the Supreme Council for Woman, it has emerged.

The programme aims at providing a permanent platform to learn from the experiences of successful women entrepreneurs and businesswoman in the Kingdom.

"This will help improve their products, accelerate growth, raise competitiveness, and contributions to the national economy," said SCW adding that it would enhance the levels of family and community stability in the Kingdom.

The project part of the SCW's "Bahrain Bkhair Thanks to You" Programme pays more attention to home-based enterprises in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

The SCW also held a remote consultative meeting on implementing the project.



"The council is keen to cooperate with the Industry, Commerce and Tourism Ministry, Labour and Social Development Ministry and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), to activate the potentials of all Bahrainis and integrate them in the sustainable development paths," Assistant Secretary-General

of SCW, Shaikha Deena bint Rashid Al Khalifa, said

"Networking between businesswomen and owners of female home-based businesses will ensure that the latter receive appropriate guidance in operation, pricing, marketing, packaging, and distribution, among others," she added.

New academic blocks, patrol boat for Bapco, aviation fuel for Gulf Air in Tel Aviv and more

Several tenders by ministries and government agencies are live on the tender board website seeking bidders

● Budaiya school has a total of 825 students and 125 staff

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Plans are on the anvil to construct new academic blocks for girls schools at Budaiya and East Riffa.

The Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning said the additional academic blocks are for Girls Primary and Intermediate school at Budaiya and Girls Primary school at East Riffa.

For Budaiya, the ministry intends to demolish the existing admin block and construct a new block to shift 300 students from the existing ten portable cabin classrooms to the new building.

The new block will have ten classrooms, a room for special needs students, an audiovisual room, an admin room for 25 staff and other facilities.

Budaiya school has a total strength of 952, which includes 825 students and 125 staff.

Works Ministry tender for the project calls for finishing the works in 18 months.

Those having a valid Pre-qual-



Tender board's bid opening committee members

ification License registered with the Ministry of Works are eligible to bid for the tender, which required an initial bond for BD5,000.

The tender closes on Sunday.

New 19 classrooms

For East Riffa school, the ministry said the new block should have 19 classrooms, various laboratories, teachers rooms and other services.

A tender issued for the project calls for finishing the works in 18

months. Bidders should provide an initial bond of BD5,000. The tender closes on 23rd June 2021.

Advertising spots in Muharraq

Muharraq Municipality said it is renting advertising spots on 49 lighting poles on Khalifa Al Kabir Street, Al Hidd Street and Diyar Al Muharraq Street and 46 lighting poles on Airport Road.

The contracts are for a year, where investors should pay the cost of advertising and releasing them to institutions and com-

panies.

Tenders have a closing date on 24th and 25th May, respectively.

Bapco needs a patrol boat

A tender by Bahrain Petroleum Company said it is looking to buy a security patrol boat with a trailer for its Sitra wharf.

Contractors with a minimum of 10 years of experience are eligible to participate in the tender published on Thursday.

Interested parties have until 2nd June 2021 to make a deci-

sion. The tender calls for an initial bond of BD500 to participate.

Opens 96 bids

The Tender Board, an independent regulatory body, also announced opening 96 bids received for 22 tenders by nine administrative bodies.

Works Ministry had two tenders opened on the day. The first was for doing comprehensive maintenance of the Arad Primary Schools for Boys and Arad Elementary Schools for Girls and received nine bids. The second for pre and post quantity surveying consultancy services for National Assembly found two bidders. HAJ Quantity Surveyors' BHD 112,325,000 was the lowest bid.

The Ministry of Education said it is looking to hire a contractor for holding Academic qualifications and practical experience auditing services for which received two bids. The tender board said Quadrabay verification services was the lowest bidder. They quoted BHD 181,650 for the job.

SMS service

The Information and eGovernment Authority tender for providing Bulk & Transactional SMS Services received three bids each from Zain, Bahrain Tele-

communications Company and Etisalatcom Bahrain Company. Zain made the lowest quote.

The ministry also had opened another tender for developing e-Service and Development Resource for which received three bids. Vam Systems FZC Foreign Branch emerged as the lowest bidder.

Aviation fuel at Tel Aviv

In the aviation sector, the board opened five tenders for Gulf Air. The first for the supply of aviation fuel at Tel Aviv Airport (TLV) found a single bidder. The second for the management of the Unit Loader (ULD) also received a single bid, while the third for hiring a general sales agent in France (online) and Belgium / Luxembourg (offline) received three quotes. The fourth tender for fare filling through ATPCO Airline Tariff publishing company attracted five bids. The fifth for purchasing latex gloves attracted 14 bids ranging between BHD 47,522.365 and BHD 111,709.605. Syscon Trading & Mechanical Services made the lowest quote.

A tender by Bahrain Airport Company for the support and maintenance of Perimeter Intrusion Detection System attracted two bids. White Hawk Security Co was the lowest bidder.

Gulf Air begins IATA travel pass trial on London, Athens and Singapore flights

● The trial began yesterday on Gulf Air flights from Bahrain to London, Athens and Singapore

● Passengers holding a biometric passport and flying to these destinations will be able to trial the app

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The International Air Transport Association is partnering with Bahrain and Gulf Air, the national carrier of Bahrain, for the trial of the IATA Travel Pass, which helps passengers "easily and securely" manage their travel in line with any government requirements for COVID-19 testing or vaccine information.

The trial began yesterday on Gulf Air flights from Bahrain to London, Athens and Singapore.

Passengers holding a biometric passport and flying to these destinations will be able to trial the app.

The system allows Gulf Air passengers to create a 'digital passport' to match their travel itineraries with the COVID-19 health requirements of their destination country and validate compliance.

Bahrain is one of the first governments to participate in the



Gulf Air is proud to partner with IATA as one of the first airlines in the world to commence the trials, and we look forward to initiating it on three routes starting from today

CAPTAIN WALEED ALALAWI, THE ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



The deal is an important step in enabling international travel during the pandemic, giving people the confidence that they are meeting all COVID-19 entry requirements

NICK CAREEN, IATA SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR AIRPORT, PASSENGER, CARGO AND SECURITY

trial to help re-establish global connectivity while managing the risks of COVID-19.

IATA has authorised American Mission Hospital, Bahrain Specialist Hospital, Royal Bahrain Hospital and Royal Hospital for Woman and Children to send the test results to passengers via the app.

The IATA Travel Pass app will have an integrated registry of travel requirements to enable passengers to find accurate information on travel and entry requirements for all destinations regardless of their itinerary. Eventually, it will also include a registry of labs — making it more convenient for passengers to find testing centres and labs at their departure location which meet the standards for testing

and vaccination requirements of their destination.

Captain Waleed AlAlawi, the Acting Chief Executive Officer, said: "Gulf Air is proud to partner with IATA as one of the first airlines in the world to commence the trials, and we look forward to initiating it on three routes starting from today."

Nick Careen, IATA Senior Vice President for Airport, Passenger, Cargo and Security, said: "Managing multiple pieces of paper for COVID-19 health requirements for travel is inconvenient for passengers, unmanageable for airlines and airports and overwhelming for border authorities. The deal is an important step in enabling international travel during the pandemic, giving people the confidence that they are meeting all COVID-19 entry requirements."

Passengers flying directly from Bahrain to London, Athens and Singapore will receive instructions on how to sign up to be part of the trial.

Economy class passengers will receive access to the Gulf Air Falcon Gold check-in area and Falcon Gold Lounge at Bahrain International Airport. Passengers in the Falcon Gold cabin will receive free WiFi on board as a token of appreciation for their participation.

Gulf Air, one of the few airlines that never stopped flying in 2020, said it is closely working with authorities across its network to resume operations as demand for travel grows.

Prominent Bahraini businessman dies



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KAbdul Salam (67), a well-known businessman in Bahrain, had passed away after a long battle with kidney-related ailment.

He was undergoing treatment in his native place in Karunagappally in the south India state of Kerala.

Salam, who reached Bahrain in 1976, runs an array of business establishments, including Al Khadi travels, Al Pessu restaurant, Arad Dental clinic, Al Hamad Dental clinic, and Al Pessu garage.

He is survived by his wife and son Hiram Abdul Salam, mother Zubaida and daughter-in-law Rubiaya. Late PV Koyakutti is his father.

Role of press hailed

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Bahrain's press freedom strides in the prosperous era of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa were hailed. In a statement, the Shura Council's Services Committee hailed the margin of openness and freedom of expression and opinion enjoyed by the fourth estate in the Kingdom.

King Fahd causeway reopening to give Bahrain a \$2.9 bn boost

Saudi Arabia to reopen land, sea and air border crossings on May 17

- Bahrain received around 75 thousand tourists per day through the King Fahd Causeway in 2019.
- The 25 km (16 miles) causeway opened in 1986 had average daily traffic of 45,000 passengers

TDT | Manama

The reopening of the King Fahd causeway, the only terrestrial link connecting Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, after months-long closure owing to the deadly pandemic, is predicted to give the economy of Bahrain a 2.9 billion dollar boost from an expected spending surge.

Bahrain is bracing for a large influx of travellers after reopening, said Khalid Najibi, the first vice-chairman of the Bahrain Chamber, board member of King Fahd Causeway Authority, citing spending habits from 2019.

He said that Bahrain received around 75 thousand tourists per day through the King Fahd Causeway in 2019.

“The arrivals will revitalise



The arrivals will revitalise many sectors of the national economy, key among which is tourism and hospitality, recreation, and retail.

FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE BAHRAIN CHAMBER, BOARD MEMBER OF KING FAHAD CAUSEWAY AUTHORITY

many sectors of the national economy, key among which is tourism and hospitality, recreation, and retail.”

Saudi Arabia has said it will reopen land, sea and air border crossings on May 17.

The 25 km (16 miles) causeway opened in 1986 had average daily traffic of 45,000 passengers, which increases to about

60,000 vehicles during week-ends before closure.

Bahrain, reportedly, attracted nearly 11 million visitors in 2019, of which 9 million were tourists. The majority of the visitors, 88% of them, were Saudis.

Najibi called all tourism, recreation, and commercial facilities to strictly adhere to preventative protocols and procedures, as

directed by the National Task-force, to curb the spread of the Coronavirus and support the efforts to combat it.

Ali Al-Mudaifa, executive director at the Bahrain Economic Development Board, had said that the Bahrain Economic Development Board is looking forward to welcoming Saudi visitors.

Bahrain, he said, provides a multidimensional tourist marketplace including properties and other investment opportunities that can leverage the Kingdom's proximity to Saudi Arabia.

He added that the market of Bahrain caters not only to Saudi Arabia but the wider GCC.

Bahrain has also made significant investments to improve the traffic on the King Fahd causeway. The most prominent of it being a pilot scheme to process truck traffic 12-times faster by reducing waiting time to just 20 minutes, from up to four hours.

Plans are also progressing to build a new road and rail causeway between the two countries to ease congestion on the existing link.

Dubbed King Hamad Causeway, the project, reportedly, is expected to cost \$4 billion to \$5 billion.

Experts say the new causeway is the answer to the expected doubling of traffic on the existing causeway by 2030.

Besides a new four-lane road causeway running parallel to the existing one, there will be a 70 km railway connecting a passenger terminal in Salmabad and freight facilities at Khalifa bin Salman port in Bahrain to the Saudi railway system.

Eight million passengers per

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year are forecast to use the rail link by 2050. “Some 600,000 containers and 13 million tonnes of bulk freight are also expected to be transported by the railway, aimed to be developed under a design, build transfer, or design, build, maintain and transfer basis,” according to Reuters.

The project, reportedly, will be owned by the private sector through a new company with a 25-30-year PPP arrangement.

US hiring takes big step back

Reuters

US job growth unexpectedly slowed in April, likely restrained by shortages of workers and raw materials as an economic recovery bolstered by rapidly improving public health and massive government aid fueled a boom in demand.

The Labour Department's closely watched employment report yesterday, which showed a plunge in temporary help jobs - a harbinger for future hiring - as well as decreases in manufacturing, retail and courier services employment, could heat up the debate on generous unemployment benefits.

The enhanced jobless benefits, including a government-funded \$300 weekly supplement, pay more than most minimum wage jobs. The unemployment benefits were extended as part of a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 pandemic relief package approved in March. Montana and South Carolina are ending government-funded pandemic unemployment benefits for residents next month.

Nonfarm payrolls increased by only 266,000 jobs last month. Data for March was revised down to show 770,000 jobs added instead of 916,000 as previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls would advance by 978,000 jobs. That left employment 8.2 million

jobs below its peak in February 2020.

Twelve months ago, the economy purged a record 20.679 million jobs as it reeled from mandatory closures of nonessential businesses to slow the first wave of COVID-19 infections. That plunge could have thrown off the model that the government uses to adjust the data for seasonal fluctuations, resulting in the April payrolls number being below forecasts.

Unadjusted payrolls increased by 1.089 million jobs after rising by 1.176 million in March.

Leisure and hospitality gained 331,000 jobs in April, with hiring at restaurants and bars accounting for more than half of the increase. Government employment picked up as school districts hired more teachers following the resumption of in-person learning in many states.

But temporary help services employment dropped by 111,400 jobs. Manufacturing employment fell by 18,000 jobs, with payrolls at motor vehicle manufacturers dropping 27,000. A global semiconductor chip shortage has forced production cuts.

In the transportation and warehousing industry, employment for couriers and messengers fell by 77,000. Retail employment dropped by 15,300 jobs.

General assembly of Reef Island association: RERA, LuLu Tourism company finalise procedures

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The Central Owners' Association of Reef Island announced plans to hold its general assembly on the fifth of next month.

“All real estate owners of Reef Island are to take part in the general assembly, for which they will receive invitations today,” Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the CEO of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority, said.

Savills, the administrative manager of the Association, is working on the invitation as per Resolution No. 1 of 2020 regulating the management of the Joint Properties.

RERA, in cooperation with the LuLu Tourism Company - the chief developer of Reef Island - has completed the procedures for the General Assembly.

Terming the formation of the Reef Island Central Owners' Association as a “milestone”, Sheikh Mohammed thanked LuLu Tourism Company “for the great cooperation and speed of response in meeting all requirements, which contributed to facilitating the work of the administrative manager Savills to form this Owners' Association.”

RERA had been actively encouraging owners of real estate



We would like to thank the main developer of the project (Lulu Tourism Company) on the great cooperation and speed of response in meeting all requirements, which contributed to facilitating the work of the administrative manager Savills to form this Owners' Association

SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN KHALIFA AL KHALIFA, THE CEO OF THE REAL ESTATE REGULATORY AUTHORITY

units in projects with common area to establish associations, which RERA said, “will assist in protecting their investment.”

Members, RERA said, should create Owners' Associations by electing a board of directors. “The board should determine service fees and take care of

how the properties are managed and preserved.”

The Reef Island project, one of the most prominent waterfront projects in Bahrain, contains a group of luxury residential buildings, resorts, and restaurants, in addition to several multi-use buildings.

Oil prices set for weekly gain despite India virus surge

Reuters

Oil prices eased yesterday but were set for a weekly gain against the backdrop of optimism over a global economic recovery, though the COVID-19 crisis in India weighed.

Brent crude futures were down 12 cents, or 0.2%, at \$67.97 a barrel by 1343 GMT and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude fell by 10 cents, or 0.2%, to \$64.61.

Both Brent and WTI are on track for second consecutive weekly gains as easing restrictions on movement in the United States and Europe, recovering factory operations and coronavirus vaccinations pave the way for a revival in fuel demand.

In China, data showed export growth accelerated unexpectedly in April while a private survey pointed to strong expansion in service sector activity.

However, crude imports by the world's biggest buyer fell 0.2% in April from a year earlier to 40.36 million tonnes, or 9.82 million barrels per day (bpd), the lowest since December.

The recovery in oil demand, however, has been uneven as surging COVID-19 cases in India reduce fuel consumption in the world's third-largest oil importer.

News in brief

Firefighters tackle blaze at 19-storey London tower block

◆ Firefighters in London were tackling a blaze at a 19-storey block of flats in the east of the city, with smoke emerging from parts of the 8th, 9th and 10th floors and ambulances treating people in the area. A witness said by 1000 GMT the fire appeared to be out. Around 100 firefighters had been working on the building while paramedics and police also attended the scene. The London Ambulance Service said it had dispatched ambulance crews, clinical team managers and support vehicles to the area.

◆ **US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said the process of removing all contractors from Afghanistan working with the United States was under way as part of President Joe Biden's withdrawal of forces from the country.** The remarks are the clearest indication yet that Biden's April order to withdraw all US forces from Afghanistan by Sept. 11 extended to US-funded contractors. As of April, there were nearly 17,000 Pentagon contractors, including about 6,150 Americans, 4,300 Afghans and 6,400 from other countries.

UK PM Johnson's party win election for parliament seat

◆ Boris Johnson's Conservative Party won an election for a new member of parliament in the northern English town of Hartlepool, breaking Labour's decades-long hold and tightening the prime minister's grip on traditional opposition-supporting areas. Conservative candidate Jill Mortimer beat the Labour candidate by 15,529 votes to 8,589, securing what less than a decade ago would have been seen as impossible feat of dislodging the main opposition Labour Party from one of its heartland seats in northern England.

◆ **Australia will lift a ban on its citizens returning from COVID-ravaged India next week, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said, as state officials reported that an outbreak in Sydney appeared to be contained.** Morrison stood by his decision to impose a biosecurity order last month barring all travel to and from India, a policy that drew heavy criticism from lawmakers, expatriates and the Indian diaspora.

◆ **Britain withdrew its Royal Navy vessels from the waters off Jersey but said it would remain on standby to support the Channel island after a dispute with France over post-Brexit fishing rights escalated rapidly.** France and Britain both deployed maritime patrol vessels to the area after a flotilla of French trawlers sailed in protest to Jersey's main harbour and a French minister suggested earlier in the week that Paris might cut electricity to the island.

COVID-19: Countries worst affected

	Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1	USA	33,378,060	594,162	
2	India	21,880,583	238,129	157,301,031
3	Brazil	15,009,023	417,176	Deaths
4	France	5,728,090	105,850	3,277,737
5	Turkey	4,998,089	42,187	Recovered:
6	Russia	4,863,514	112,246	134,615,145
7	UK	4,431,043	127,583	New cases
8	Italy	4,092,747	122,263	
9	Spain	3,567,408	78,726	
10	Germany	3,497,527	84,970	+686,603
11	Argentina	3,095,582	66,263	New deaths
12	Colombia	2,951,101	76,414	
13	Poland	2,824,425	69,445	+8,370
14	Iran	2,627,094	74,241	

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	234,015		13,714		175,117	45,184
Saudi Arabia	424,445	+1,039	7,045	+13	407,650	9,750
UAE	532,710	+1,766	1,607	+3	513,068	18,035
Kuwait	281,772		1,621		265,530	14,621
Oman	199,344		2,083		181,696	15,565
Qatar	210,070	+600	496	+3	199,444	10,130

Figures as of closing

Girl shoots three at US school

Girl in 6th grade detained after Idaho school shooting

● The girl was disarmed by a teacher at Rigby Middle School

Reuters | Washington

A sixth-grade girl pulled a handgun from a backpack at her eastern Idaho school on Thursday and opened fire, hitting two fellow students and a member of school staff and inflicting non-life-threatening injuries on them, officials said.

The girl was disarmed by a teacher at Rigby Middle School in Rigby, Idaho, a remote community about 270 miles (435 km) east of Boise, and held until law enforcement arrived, Jefferson County Sheriff Steve Anderson said. Her name and exact age weren't immediately released.

"She fired multiple rounds inside of the school and out," Anderson said at a news conference. "We don't have a lot of details of why. That is being investigated."

Students were sent home with their parents immediately after the shootings and classes will be cancelled yesterday, Jefferson School District Superintendent Chad Martin said.

"This is the worst nightmare any school district could ever face," said Martin. "We prepare for it and we're never truly



Police tape marks a line outside Rigby Middle School following a shooting

Jefferson County Sheriff Steve Anderson said. "She fired multiple rounds inside of the school and out. We don't have a lot of details of why. That is being investigated."

ready for it."

Several law enforcement agencies are involved in the investigation of the shooting, which happened shortly after 9 a.m. local time, Jefferson County Sheriff Anderson said. Local media had previously reported that a male student was taken into custody after the shooting.

Depending on the outcome of the investigation, Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Taylor said charges against the girl could include three counts of attempted murder.

None of the gunshot wounds were life-threatening, Michael Lemon, trauma director at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center said.

"They could be so much worse," Lemon said. "We feel absolutely blessed."

The school staff member was treated and released for his injury, while the two students were being kept overnight for observation, he said.

Idaho Governor Brad Little issued a brief statement shortly after the incident.

"Thank you to our law enforcement agencies and school leaders for their efforts in responding to the incident," Little said on Twitter. "I am staying updated on the situation."

China says 'extremely low' risk of damage from rocket debris

Reuters | Beijing

Most debris from a large Chinese rocket expected to plunge back through the atmosphere this weekend will be burned up on reentry and is highly unlikely to cause any harm, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said yesterday.

The US military said on Wednesday what it called an uncontrolled re-entry was being tracked by US Space Command.

The Long March 5B rocket blasted off from China's Hainan island on April 29, carrying the unmanned Tianhe module, which contains what will become living quarters on a permanent Chinese space station.

The location of the rocket's descent into Earth's atmosphere as it falls back from space "cannot be pinpointed until within hours of its reentry", which is projected to occur around May 8, US Space Command said.

Harvard-based astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell told Reuters this week there was a chance that pieces of the rocket could come down over land such as in May 2020, when pieces from another Chinese Long March 5B rocket rained down on the Ivory Coast, damaging several buildings.

He said potentially dangerous debris would likely escape



A Long March 5B rocket carrying China's Tianhe space station core module lifts off from the Wenchang Space Launch Center (file photo)

YOU KNOW WHAT

The Long March 5B rocket blasted off from China's Hainan island on April 29, carrying the unmanned Tianhe module, which contains what will become living quarters on a permanent Chinese space station

incineration after streaking through the atmosphere at hypersonic speed but in all likelihood would fall into the sea,

given that 70% of the world is covered by ocean.

Speaking in Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said China was closely following the rocket's reentry into the atmosphere, and that most of its components would be burned up upon re-entry.

"The probability of this process causing harm on the ground is extremely low," he said.

Debris from the Long March 5B is likely to fall in international waters, China's Global Times reported on Wednesday.

Based on its current orbit, the debris trail is likely to fall somewhere as far north as New York, Madrid or Beijing and as far south as southern Chile and Wellington, New Zealand, or anywhere in between, McDowell said.

Maldives after assassination attempt

Hospital says Mohamed Nasheed underwent 16 hours of life-saving operations

● Nasheed has undergone 16 hours of life-saving operations

AFP | Male

Former Maldives president Mohamed Nasheed was in a "critical" condition yesterday following an assassination attempt, doctors said.

Nasheed, 53, the Maldives' first democratically elected president and still an important figure in the island nation's murky politics, was rushed to hospital after an explosion late Thursday.

Since then he has undergone 16 hours of life-saving operations in the capital Male for injuries to his head, chest, abdomen and limbs.

The private ADK hospital said yesterday evening that Nasheed was "in a critical condition in intensive care".

In a televised address to the nation, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih announced that a team from the Australian Federal Police (AFP) would arrive Saturday to help with the investigation into the blast.

Solih described the attack as an assault on the fledgling democracy, promising the perpetrators "would face the full force of the law".

Police said officials from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime have also been asked to assist in the investigation.

Maldivian police said they were treating Thursday's bomb attack

Amnesty International 'conscience' status to Russia

Reuters | Moscow

Amnesty International will next week announce it is reversing a decision to strip jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny of its "prisoner of conscience" status, a top aide said.

The human rights group announced on Feb. 24 that it would stop referring to Navalny as a prisoner of conscience on the grounds that in the past he had made comments that qualified as advocacy of hatred.

Navalny's chief of staff Leonid Volkov, speaking in English to Canadian legislators, accused Russia of carrying out a series of dirty tricks to blacken the politician's

YOU KNOW WHAT

They (Amnesty) told me just yesterday that they will issue a press release on May 12 after they have examined how the Russian disinformation campaign managed to influence them

NAVALNY'S CHIEF OF STAFF LEONID VOLKOV

1660

English parliament declares
Charles Stuart to be King Charles II
of England

1895

China cedes Taiwan to
Japan under Treaty of Shi-
monoseki

1902

Mount Pelée on the French overseas
island of Martinique erupts, wiping
out the city of Saint-Pierre, killing
30,000 and leaving only two survivors

1980

World Health Organization
announces smallpox has been
eradicated

Ex-president 'critical' after assassination attempt

Mohamed Nasheed in intensive care after 'life-saving surgery' on head, chest, abdomen and limbs



Police secure a site after a suspected bomb blast injured former Maldives president and current parliament speaker Mohamed Nasheed in Male

as a "deliberate act of terror" and urged the public to provide any information that could identify the perpetrators.

Police said a device attached to a motorcycle was detonated as Nasheed got into a car in the capital.

The hospital said earlier that shrapnel had been removed from one of his lungs and from his liver but that another piece was still in the same organ.

"We are hopeful of a full recovery," said a family member who did not want to be named, adding that Nasheed was responsive and spoke with doctors when he was admitted.

One of his bodyguards as well as a British national were also wounded and taken to hospital.

Underwater cabinet

The Indian Ocean nation of

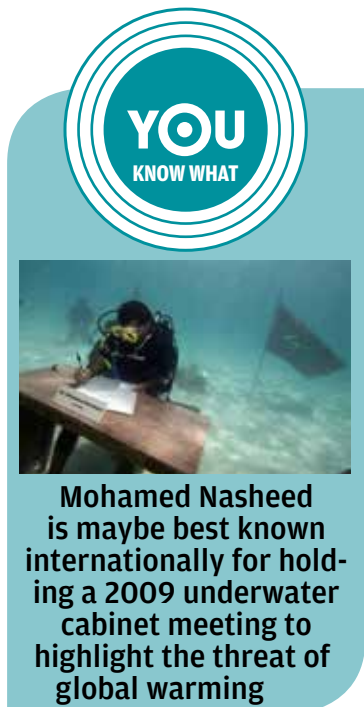
340,000 Sunni Muslims is best known for its luxury holiday resorts popular with honeymooners, but it suffers from regular political turmoil.

There was no claim of responsibility for Thursday's bomb attack, but officials close to Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) said they suspected vested political interests opposed to his anti-corruption drive.

Nasheed had vowed to investigate a \$90-million theft from the state's tourism promotion authority during the tenure of former president Abdulla Yameen.

"There are some dormant Islamists who could have collaborated with political elements threatened by Nasheed's anti-corruption drive," an MDP source told AFP.

The government has cracked down on extremism and foreign



preachers are banned.

Violent attacks have been rare, though a dozen foreign tourists were wounded by a bomb blast in Male in 2007.

The Islamic State claimed a boat arson attack last year, but there is little evidence the group has a presence in the archipelago.

Nasheed, a liberal, is maybe best known internationally for holding a 2009 underwater cabinet meeting to highlight the threat of global warming, signing documents as officials wore scuba gear against a backdrop of coral reefs.

He was toppled in a military-backed coup in February 2012, convicted on a charge of terrorism and jailed for 13 years.

Anti-Olympics campaign gains traction online in Japan



A man wearing a face mask walks past Olympic Rings at the Japan Olympic Museum in Tokyo

Reuters | Tokyo

An online petition calling for the Tokyo Olympics to be cancelled has garnered almost 200,000 signatures in the past few days, as public concerns mount over holding the Games in a pandemic.

With less than three months to go before the start of the summer Olympics, already postponed for a year due to the coronavirus, questions still remain over how Tokyo can hold the global event and keep volunteers, athletes, officials and the Japanese public safe from COVID-19.

In two days since its launch, an online campaign called "Stop Tokyo Olympics" has gathered more than 187,000 signatures, nearing its 200,000 goal and underscoring public concerns over holding the massive sporting event in Japan's capital.

Battling a fourth wave of the pandemic and struggling with a sluggish vaccination campaign, the Japanese government is seeking to extend states of emergency in Tokyo and three other areas until the end of May, the economy minister said yesterday.

Opinion polls in Japan have found a majority of the pub-

We strongly call for the prevention of spread of coronavirus and protection of lives and livelihood by using available resources to stop the Olympics

KENJI UTSUNOMIYA, THE ONLINE PETITION ORGANIZER

lic is opposed to the Games, which are due to open on July 23.

"We strongly call for the prevention of spread of coronavirus and protection of lives and livelihood by using available resources to stop the Olympics," Kenji Utsunomiya, the online petition organizer, wrote on his website. Utsunomiya is a lawyer who has run several times for Tokyo governor.

But, organizers have repeatedly said the Games will go ahead, unveiling detailed Covid-19 protocols for athletes and officials.

Pfizer Inc and its German partner BionTech SE said on Thursday they had agreed to donate their vaccine to help inoculate those participating in the Games.

To restore 'prisoner of Russia's Navalny -aide



Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny attends a hearing

reputation.

"They (Amnesty) told me just yesterday that they will issue a press release on May 12 after they have examined how the Russian disinformation campaign managed to influence them," he told the House of Commons foreign affairs committee.

"They will not only reinstate his status but they will also issue a post-mortem," he said.

A spokeswoman at Amnesty's main media center in London said she had no immediate comment.

The 44-year-old Russian opposition politician was arrested in January and sentenced to jail for parole violations he called trumped up.

25 killed in Rio de Janeiro's deadliest police raid

AFP | Rio de Janeiro

A massive police operation against drug traffickers in a Brazilian favela Thursday left 25 people dead, turning the impoverished Rio de Janeiro neighbourhood into a battlefield and drawing condemnation from rights groups.

A policeman was among those killed in the early morning raid on Jacarezinho, on Rio's north side, where residents awoke to explosions, heavy gunfire and helicopters overhead.

Police confirmed the toll -- and investigators said it was the deadliest police operation in the history of Rio de Janeiro state.

Police identified the other 24 dead as "suspects" and said all protocols had been followed before officers opened fire, but rights groups and academics cried foul.

"Who are the dead? Young black men. That's why the police talk about '24 suspects.' Being a young, black favela resident automatically makes you a suspect to the police. They just keep piling up bodies and saying, 'They're all criminals,'" said Silvia Ramos, head of the



Rio de Janeiro police led an operation against drug traffickers

Security Observatory at Candido Mendes University.

"Is this the public security policy we want? Shootouts, killings and police massacres?" she told AFP.

Large groups of heavily armed police could be seen streaming into the favela as frightened residents tentatively went about their business once the gunfire died down, AFP journalists said.

Residents reported seeing corpses lying on the pavement in pools of blood, and numerous bodies being taken out in an armoured police vehicle, a

local community leader told AFP, asking that his name not be published for safety reasons.

At least two people were wounded when the subway car they were riding in was apparently caught in the crossfire during the operation, news site G1 reported.

TV network GloboNews showed aerial images of armed suspects fleeing from one residence to another in the densely packed neighbourhood during the raid, passing what looked like high-powered rifles from hand to hand.



"Unfortunately, there were many clashes in the area. There is nothing to celebrate with this toll," one police official told a press conference, adding that the officer killed was shot in the head.

Rights groups and residents later inspected the houses targeted -- some had blood stains and damage from the shootout.

Police said the operation targeted a gang suspected of recruiting children and teenagers for drug trafficking, robberies, assaults and murders.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Two-thirds of adults have now had their first COVID vaccine dose. Thank you to everyone who has made this UK-wide rollout such a success. Please book your jab when offered and get your second dose to give you maximum protection.

@BorisJohnson

02



Spoke with my friend @ScottMorrisonMP to thank him for Australia's solidarity and support for India's fight against the pandemic. We agreed on the importance of ensuring affordable and equitable access to vaccines and medicines, and discussed possible initiatives in this regard.

@narendramodi

03



The consumption of processed food is a rapidly increasing source of sodium. @WHO Global Sodium Benchmarks provide countries & the food industry guidance on how to reduce salt intake and help people make the right food choices. Together we can #BeatNCDs!

@DrTedros

04



With the active support of @IndembAbuDhabi, @indembkwt, @IndEmbDoha, IndiaInBahrain, @IndianEmbRiyadh & @IndembMuscat, we are in the process of securing commercial supplies of LMO into the country through logistics management by @IndianOilcl and @gailindia in coming weeks.

@dpradhanbjp

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

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Opposition forces leave Somali capital after deadly clashes



Somali military force supporting anti-government opposition leaders are stationed on a street in Mogadishu

AFP | Mogadishu

Opposition fighters withdrew from the Somali capital on Friday, ending a tense standoff with pro-government troops after a dispute over delayed elections triggered the country's worst political violence in years.

Hundreds of heavily-armed gunmen pulled out of strongholds in Mogadishu they had occupied since late April, when a long-running political crisis turned deadly with clashes erupting between rival factions of the security forces.

Under a deal reached by the warring sides this week, opposition troops began leaving their positions in the capital, and key roads sealed off with sandbags and machine guns were opened once more.

"We are sending our forces back to the frontline position to defend the country and

its people," said Mahad Salad, an opposition lawmaker, at a camp outside Mogadishu where troops assembled after pulling out of the city.

Mogadishu had been on edge since February, when President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed's term ended before elections were held, and protesters took to the streets against his rule.

But a resolution in April to extend his mandate by two years split the country's fragile security forces along all-important clan lines.

Soldiers loyal to influential opposition leaders began pouring into the capital, where clashes broke out with pro-government troops, killing three.

The fighting drove tens of thousands of civilians from their homes and divided the city, with government forces losing some key neighbourhoods to opposition units.

Russia slams US proposal for 'summit for democracy'



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

AFP | Moscow

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Friday attacked a US proposal to hold a "Summit for Democracy," saying such a gathering would only deepen fissures on the international stage.

Speaking in a UN ministerial session organized by his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, the veteran Russian diplomat said that developing multilateralism should "be done on a collegial basis."

But he said that "in recent times, we have witnessed attempts to establish an international order... to impose upon everyone new rules that have been drawn up in non-inclusive bodies and circles."

"It is in this context that the US administration wishes to organize a 'Summit for Democracy,'" he said, referring to a proposal made by US President Joe Biden, which Washington says would aim to rally international support to fight corruption, combat authoritarianism and promote human rights

US VP, Mexican leader pledge to cooperate on border crisis

AFP | Washington

US Vice President Kamala Harris and Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador pledged Friday to cooperate on resolving the roots of the long-running and politically sensitive issue of illegal migration into the United States.

Harris, speaking with Lopez Obrador in a virtual meeting, said they should work together on helping El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras improve conditions and persuade many migrants to stay home.

"It is in our countries' mutual interest to provide immediate relief to the Northern Triangle and to address the root causes of migration," Harris said.

"Most people don't want to

"It is in our countries' mutual interest to provide immediate relief to the Northern Triangle and to address the root causes of migration. Most people don't want to leave home and when they do it is often because they are fleeing some harm or they are forced to leave because there are no opportunity

KAMALA HARRIS



US Vice President Kamala Harris during a video call with with Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador

leave home and when they do it is often because they are fleeing some harm or they are forced to leave because there are no opportunity."

Harris said that it was in the "mutual interest" of the United States and Mexico to address the "root causes" of mass emigration from the three Northern Triangle nations.

"Our approach is to work with international institutions, to work with nations worldwide, the private sector and community organizations... and build a sense of hope for the people of the Northern Triangle," she said.

Lopez Obrador referred to the history of US-Mexican tensions over migration and said "we need to understand one another and avoid fighting."

"We are in agreement when it comes to the policies that you are undertaking when it comes to migration and we will help. That is what I can say as of now. You can count on us."

President Joe Biden tapped Harris in March to coordinate an overall response to the surge in undocumented migrants and asylum seekers at overwhelmed US border facilities.

She is due to travel to Mexico and Guatemala in June for her first foreign trip as vice president.



‘We are all the same’ - Barcelona church opens doors to Ramadan dinners

Every evening between 50 and 60 Muslims, many of them homeless, stream into the centuries-old stone passages of the Santa Anna church, where volunteers offer a hearty meal of home-cooked food

Reuters | Barcelona

With COVID-19 restrictions preventing Barcelona’s Islamic population from celebrating Ramadan at the usual indoor venues, a Catholic church has offered up its open-air cloisters for Muslims to eat and pray together.

Every evening between 50 and 60 Muslims, many of them homeless, stream into the centuries-old stone passages of the Santa Anna church, where volunteers offer a hearty meal of home-cooked food.

“We are all the same... If you are Catholic or of another religion and I am Muslim, that’s fine,” said Hafid Oubrahim, a 27-year old Moroccan of Berber descent who attends the dinners.

“We are all like brothers and we must help each other too.”

During the month of Ramadan, observant Muslims do not eat between sunrise and sundown, breaking their fast only after nightfall with a meal known as Iftar.



People carry food trays during a charity Ramadan dinner in the cloister at Santa Anna church in Barcelona

Faouzia Chati, president of the Catalan Association of Moroccan Women, used to organise Iftar gatherings in the city, but limits on indoor dining forced her to seek an alternative space

with good ventilation and room for distancing.

She found a receptive ear in Father Peio Sanchez, Santa Anna’s rector, who sees the meeting of different faiths as emblematic of

civic coexistence.

“People are very happy that Muslims can do Iftar in a Catholic church, because religions serve to unite us, not to separate us,” said Chati.

Sanchez looked on as a man intoned the Muslim evening call to prayer beneath the orange trees of the church’s central courtyard, illuminated by the flames of gas heaters.

“Even with different cultures, different languages, different religions, we are more capable of sitting down and talking than some politicians,” said the rector.

“We are all the same... If you are Catholic or of another religion and I am Muslim, that’s fine. We are all like brothers and we must help each other too

HAFID OUBRAHIM



Priest Peio Sanchez speaks with people during a charity Ramadan dinner



Priest Peio Sanchez speaks with people during a charity Ramadan dinner in the cloister at Santa Anna church in Barcelona



Volunteers prepare a charity Ramadan dinner in the cloister at Santa Anna church in Barcelona



People eat during a charity Ramadan dinner in the cloister at Santa Anna church in Barcelona

Ramadan cooking

Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 tsp vanilla essence
- 2 cups white flour
- 3 tbsp powdered milk
- pinch of salt
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp yeast
- 3 tbsp oil
- warm water, as needed
- 140g soft white cheese (preferably the Laughing Cow triangle cheese wedges)
- 1 egg yolk, for egg wash
- black seeds (nigella seeds)

Khaliat Nahel (Beehives)

Method

To make syrup:

Mix the water and sugar in a saucepan over medium heat, and stir in the vanilla essence. Cook, stirring, till all the sugar has melted. Remove from heat and set aside.

To make beehives:

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, milk, salt, sugar and yeast. Add in the oil and warm water. Mix well and knead till you get a soft dough. Cover the mixing bowl with a damp cloth and set aside for 30 minutes.

2. Grease a lined baking tray.

3. Divide the dough into small balls (about the size of a ping pong ball). Press a small piece of the cheese into the middle of each ball, and enclose in the dough. Place the dough balls into the baking tray, allowing them to touch.

4. When you have filled the baking tray with dough balls, brush the surface with egg wash. Sprinkle with the black seeds and bake in an oven pre-heated to 250°C for 20 minutes.

5. Remove from oven and pour the syrup over. Serve warm.



Man Utd to face Villarreal in Europa League final

Edinson Cavani sends Manchester United into final despite Roma scare

● **Emery gets revenge on 'devastated' Arsenal as Villarreal reach Europa League final**

TDT | Manama

Manchester United had little difficulty in completing the job started with their semi-final first leg thrashing of Roma last week with a 3-2 defeat in Italy securing easy progress to the Europa League final on Thursday.

But it will not be Premier League rivals Arsenal they meet in Poland's Gdansk on May 26, rather Spaniards Villarreal, who are in a first major final after a goalless second leg in London.

The Yellow Submarine, as Villarreal are known, gained revenge for their 2006 Champions League semi-final loss to Arsenal with a 2-1 aggregate triumph while United dominated Roma 8-5.

United's entry to the final means Manchester could claim both of the major European titles this year as neighbours City face Chelsea in the Champions League final three days later.

Only Milan, when AC won the Champions League in 1994 and Inter the then UEFA Cup, has previously managed that feat.

United survived an early



Edinson Cavani scores Manchester United's first goal

scare when their former player Henrikh Mkhitaryan headed wide but Edinson Cavani, with his third chance of the game, smashed in the 39th minute opener to settle their nerves.

He had previously lobbed onto the bar and had a shot saved by keeper Antonio Mirante.

And it was Cavani's simple header from Bruno Fernandes' cross midway through the second half which ultimately put the tie beyond doubt.

"It's a great achievement," United captain Harry Maguire told BT Sport. "Obviously we didn't win the game tonight, which is disappointing, but we did the hard work in the first leg."

Roma, who will be coached by former United boss Jose Mour-

inho next season, deservedly levelled when Edin Dzeko headed in from close range and soon after Bryan Cristante fired in on the hour.

United keeper David de Gea, recalled for Europa League fixtures, made some impressive saves from Pedro and Mkhitaryan when a third goal could have sparked a comeback.

Teenager Nicola Zalewski did grab the winner on the night but his deflected debut goal offered only late consolation.

"We had some great European nights this season, with some big wins," Cristante told UEFA.com. "It's a pity for that second half in Manchester."

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer had lost his previous four semi-finals as United manager but could



United's entry to the final means Manchester could claim both of the major European titles this year as neighbours City face Chelsea in the Champions League final three days later. Only Milan, when AC won the Champions League in 1994 and Inter the then UEFA Cup, has previously managed that feat

finally taste victory.

Villarreal also ended a last-four hoodoo as they had lost all five of their previous semi-finals in various competitions.

Coach Unai Emery, a former Arsenal manager, won three Europa Leagues with Sevilla and is on the brink of glory once more.

They almost repeated their early goal from the first leg but keeper Bernd Leno saved well from Samuel Chukwueze, who was later carried off injured.

Olympic slot in the bag for Pagdanganan

TDT | Manila

Filipino pro golfer Bianca Pagdanganan is tantalizingly close to earning an automatic slot in the Tokyo Olympics.

With still a month to go before qualification ends, the 23-year-old Pagdanganan only needs to keep on playing and continue earning points to make it to the prestigious Summer Games.

"Because the qualification is until June 22, she only has to keep on playing, and continue to earn points. But with her current rankings now, I think she is assured of slot," said National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) Secretary-General Bones Flor.

Pagdanganan is at No. 43 in the Olympic Golf Rankings of the International Golf Federation (IGF). The top 60 players in the world – two per country – in men's and women's will qualify in the Tokyo Olympics.

"Bianca has a super good chance to make it to the Olympics," said Flor.

The qualification deadline is set June 22, or a month before the July 23 to August 8 Olympics in Japan.

Playing for the Philippines in the rescheduled Olympics is something Pagdanganan is keenly eyeing.

"For me, playing for my country is always one of the greatest things that golf has given me or the opportunity that comes to my life," said Pagdanganan.

"It is always been a goal of



Pagdanganan ... excited and motivated

It is always been a goal of mine to play in the Olympics. It's just different when you are playing for something bigger than yourself

BIANCA PAGDANGANAN

mine to play in the Olympics. It's just different when you are playing for something bigger than yourself."

Up for grabs in the Games are gold medals in the men's and women's individual competition.

Pagdanganan competes in the US LPGA, and in last year's Women's PGA Championship in Pennsylvania, she finished tied for ninth to 12th places overall.

Along with another top Filipino-Japanese golfer, Yuka

Saso – who is almost assured also of earning a spot in the Tokyo Olympics – Pagdanganan teamed up for the national team with Lois Kaye Go to win the gold medal in the women's team competition at the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia. Saso took the gold medal and Pagdanganan earned a bronze medal in the individual category.

Golf has been re-included in the 2016 Rio Olympics – the first time since the 1904 meet in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. Miguel Tabuena competed in the men's golf in the Rio Olympics.

Pagdanganan is coming off an impressive run in her rookie season on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour in 2020.

She finished in the top 10 in two tournaments she competed in and earned a spot in the US Women's Open in December. She has career earnings of \$203,775 to date.

Angry Solskjaer plans to rotate heavily to cope with fixture pile-up



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

Reuters | London

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is planning sweeping changes during Manchester United's run of four matches in eight days, saying the knock-on effects in the Premier League top-four race is "everyone else's problem".

Last Sunday's clash with Liverpool was called off after fans got onto the pitch at Old Trafford during a protest against American owners the Glazers following the collapse of the European Super League.

The postponed fixture was moved to next Thursday. Before that United, on course to finish second in the Premier League, face Aston Villa on Sunday and then Leicester on Tuesday.

United's three top-flight fixtures in five days come after Thursday's intense Europa League semi-final second leg at Roma, where they lost 3-2 but triumphed 8-5 on aggregate to reach the final against Villarreal.

Donaire looks to end pandemic 'jinx'



Donaire is shooting for his ninth world title

TDT | Manila

Summer last year, Future Hall of Famer Nonito "The Filipino Flash" Donaire Jr. was supposed to fight reigning World Boxing Council (WBC) bantamweight champion Nordine Oubaali of France, but was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 38-year-old Filipino-American fighter was also all set to take on Puerto Rican Emmanuel Rodriguez for the vacant WBC interim bantamweight belt last December 19 but submitted a "false positive" virus test.

For Donaire, those misfortunes belong to the past.

On May 29 at the Dignity Health Sports Park in Carson, California, he will finally box off with Oubaali with a chance to win his ninth world title.

"It has been a very long time from the pandemic to canceling my last fight, and now all that, it's finally happening so I have to be careful so nothing goes bad," said Donaire (40-6 win-loss record with 26 knockouts).

Despite his age and having spent the last two decades fighting in the ring, the pride of Talibon, Bohol said he doesn't feel old and weak.

"I am very, very confident and very, very excited," said Donaire, who have already won titles in four different weight divisions.

Against the 34-year-old Oubaali, the veteran slugger will be facing an unbeaten champion and a two-time Olympian who owns an unblemished 17-0 win-loss record with 12 knockouts.

"I am snatching that WBC (World Boxing Council) belt

It has been a very long time from the pandemic to canceling my last fight, and now all that, it's finally happening so I have to be careful so nothing goes bad

NONITO DONAIRE JR.

come May 2021," Donaire had tweeted.

Donaire, who trains at the Givans Taekwondo Academy in Las Vegas with MMA star Tony Diaz, Michael Bassel and wife Rachel in his corner, said he learned a lot from his fight with International Boxing Federation and World Boxing Association (WBA) bantamweight champion Naoya Inoue in November 2019.

"I am always very, very disciplined. I always stay in the gym," he said.

Donaire – who holds a 40-6 record on top of 26 knockouts – said he lost his killer instinct in the latter rounds of their 118-pound showdown and lost via unanimous decision.

"The more you are here in boxing and you get old, you need to develop your killer instinct. That's what I need to develop more. I just came up short but I am okay with my performance so far," Donaire added. "Now I am doing it for myself only and not for anybody else. No pressure on this one is for me."

Oubaali, who also last fought in November 2019 beating Inoue's brother Takuma via unanimous decision, is unscathed in 17 fights with 12 knockouts. He is four years younger than Donaire at 34.

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Bahrain names training roster for Olympics

Senior men's national handball team to begin preparations for Tokyo Games today; squad of 27 of Kingdom's top talents named for initial gathering

● Four of Bahrain's overseas-based professional players named to squad, including skipper Hussain Al Sayyad

● Eight players selected from back-to-back league champions and Khalid bin Hamad Handball Cup winners Al Najma

● National team assistant coach Essam Abdulla to begin supervision of sessions prior to arrival of head coach Aron Kristjansson

TDT | Manama

Bahrain have named a 27-player roster for the senior men's national team that will begin training lo-



Bahrain national team star Jassim Al Salatna in action during international play earlier this year (file photo)

cally today in preparation for this summer's Tokyo Olympic Games.

The squad was announced by the Bahrain Handball Association yesterday, and the first gathering will be supervised by national team assistant coach Essam Abdulla until the arrival of Icelandic tactician Aron Kris-

tjansson, who is expected to join at the end of the month.

The team is set to be spearheaded by Bahrain's overseas-based professional players, including skipper Hussain Al Sayyad and Mohammed Habib from Saudi Arabian club Al Wehda, Ali Mirza from Sharjah in the UAE, and Jassim Al Salatna from

Emirati club Al Maliha.

Back-to-back league champions and Khalid bin Hamad Handball Cup winners Al Najma have eight players on the roster, including Mohammed Abdulhussain, Mahdi Saad, Belal Basham, Hassan Al Fardan, Ali Eid, Mohammed Mirza, Mohammed Habib Nasser and Komail Mahfoodh.

Four players are from Barbar, who were the losing finalists in both the league and cup. They include Qassim Al Shuwaikh, Qassim Qambar, Ahmed Jassim and Ali Abdulkader.

The rest of the team list features Hassan Al Samaheji, Mahmood Hussain, Mohammed Mirza, Hussain Mahfoodh and Hasan Madan from Al Ahli; Ahmed Jalal and Mujtaba Al Zaimoor from Al Shabab; Mohammed Hameed and Ali Mahmood from Al Ettifaq; Hassan Mirza from Tadhamon and Hisham Ahmed Isa from Al Dair.

All players called up are expected to be a part of today's sessions, with exception to the eight from Najma and four from



Barbar. The two teams had just battled it out in the final of the Khalid bin Hamad Handball Cup on Thursday night, and will be granted some time to rest before joining training on Tuesday next week.

Bahrain's national handball team are making an historic debut appearance in Tokyo, as the first-ever athletes from the

Kingdom to have qualified for a team sport at the Olympics.

For the men's tournament's preliminary stage, Bahrain will be playing against Egypt, Portugal, hosts Japan, world championship silver-medallists Sweden, and reigning world and Olympic champions Denmark.

Group A consists of Argentina, Spain, Germany, France, Norway and Brazil.

The men's handball tournament at the Tokyo Olympics is scheduled to take place between July 24 and August 8.

The Bahrainis open their tournament campaign against Sweden on day one. They then take on Portugal on July 26, and then face Denmark two days later. Bahrain then square off with fellow-Asian side Japan on July 30, before completing their preliminaries schedule against Egypt on August 1.

The Bahrainis booked their berth at the Tokyo Games after winning the Men's Asian Qualification Tournament held in Doha in October of 2019, defeating South Korea in the final.

Jadeja set to return to India action in World Test final



Ravindra Jadeja of India bats during a Test match against England (file photo)

AFP | Mumbai

Indian selectors yesterday brought back star allrounder Ravindra Jadeja into the squad for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand next month.

Jadeja and batsman Hanuma Vihari missed India's triumphant series win over England this year due to injury but are back in contention having proved their fitness.

Jadeja is an almost certain starter in the first Test final, to be played in Southampton from June 18, and five Test tour of England starting in August.

The allrounder injured a finger on India's tour of Australia in January and only came back for the Indian Premier League.

He scored 131 runs and took six wickets in seven games for Chennai Super Kings but his three for 13 performance against Virat Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore was a standout in a tournament cut short by the coronavirus.

Batsman K.L. Rahul, who had appendix surgery, and wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha, who tested positive for

131 runs and six wickets were taken by Jadeja in seven games for Chennai Super Kings this IPL season but his three for 13 performance against Royal Challengers Bangalore was a standout

coronavirus during the ill-fated IPL, will go if they can prove their fitness.

Following their 3-1 series win against England, India booked their place in the world final as the top-ranked Test nation.

India squad

Virat Kohli (capt), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wicketkeeper), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umesh Yadav, K.L. Rahul (subject to fitness), Wriddhiman Saha (wicketkeeper - subject to fitness)

Guardiola says Champions League final not on his mind as City host Chelsea

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola says Manchester City's Premier League clash with Chelsea on Saturday comes too early to have any bearing on the Champions League final.

The two sides will meet again in European club football's showpiece in Istanbul on May 29.

City manager Guardiola said: "If we played the final in one week, six days, it could be but after tomorrow there are 21-22 days. Many things can happen. We just have to focus."

Victory for City this weekend would see them secure their third Premier League title in



Pep Guardiola watches his players from the touchline during a match four years.

"Always I have said the Premier League is the most important title," said Guardiola.

“If we played the final in one week, six days, it could be but after tomorrow there are 21-22 days. Many things can happen. We just have to focus”

PEP GUARDIOLA

"Financially for the club, maybe qualifying for the Champions League is the most important but there is no doubt this is the most important.

"The Champions League is so special, it is nice, but this means so many things. We have four

games to get two points, one victory, and we are going to try to get it."

City, who already have the League Cup in their trophy cabinet, reached the Champions League final for the first time in their history with a memorable victory over Paris Saint-Germain on Tuesday.

Guardiola insists, however, that competition has been pushed to the back of his mind for now.

He said: "There is not one thought about the final because we don't have the Premier League in our hands. When we have the Premier League then the focus will be on the Champions League."

Nadal stunned by Zverev in Madrid to cast cloud over Roland Garros bid

AFP | Madrid

Rafael Nadal lost 6-4, 6-4 to Germany's Alexander Zverev in the Madrid Open quarter-finals yesterday, casting doubts over the Spaniard's form ahead of this month's French Open.

Nadal has now fallen early in two clay-court Masters tournaments ahead of the Grand Slam in Paris, after going out in the Monte Carlo quarter-finals last month before winning in Barcelona.

Even in Barcelona, however, Nadal needed to save a championship point to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final.

World number two Nadal is hoping to clinch a 14th Roland Garros title and record-setting 21st major in the French capital.

Zverev's impressive straight-set win at the Caja Magica earns him a meeting with Dominic Thiem in the Madrid semis, in what will be a repeat of last year's US Open final, which was



Alexander Zverev returns the ball to Rafael Nadal

won by Thiem.

After losing to world number eight Andrey Rublev in Monaco, Nadal was convincingly beaten by Zverev and the spotlight will be on the 34-year-old now in Rome next week, his last tournament before heading to Paris.

It started well for Nadal when he broke Zverev to love to lead 4-2 in the first set, Zverev serving a double fault to give away the first advantage.

But the world number five immediately hit back and then pulled away, four straight games clinching him the set.

A whipping forehand down the line put Zverev up another break midway through the second and while Nadal resisted more pressure in the seventh game to hold, Zverev served out an impressive victory after an hour and 44 minutes.

Thiem had earlier come from

a set down to beat John Isner 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 and reach the last four.

The 36-year-old Isner has never been at his most comfortable on clay but he caught Thiem cold by breaking early to claim the opening set.

But Thiem ripped a forehand pass to open up a break opportunity at 3-2 in the second, which the Austrian took when Isner hit the net with a volley.

YOU KNOW WHAT
Nadal is hoping to clinch a 14th Roland Garros title and record-setting 21st major in Paris