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Development projects press on despite global economic downturn: Economic quarterly report

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Zero deaths; COVID-19 cases surpass 30,000

TDT | Manama

Zero deaths from the coronavirus (COVID-19) were reported yesterday by the Ministry of Health.

It marked the first day since the beginning of June that no virus-related casualties were announced. There were only 19 deaths at that time, but nearly 80 since, in just over a month. The overall number of lives taken by COVID-19 in the Kingdom remained at 98.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry announced early this morning that out of 9,266 COVID-19 tests conducted yesterday, 500 new cases were detected. These included 303

expatriate workers, 191 contacts of active cases, and six travel-related cases.

Their detection brought the overall number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Bahrain to 30,321 ever since the first case was reported.

There were also 392 additional recoveries from the virus yesterday, bringing the Kingdom's total number of discharged individuals to 25,570. The total number of current active cases rose marginally to 4,653. Sixty are in critical condition while 58 are receiving treatment. The remaining 4,593 cases are stable.

The total tests conducted increased to 621,362.

HRH the Crown Prince chairs committee meeting



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, chaired the 331st Government Executive Committee meeting, held remotely yesterday. The committee discussed the latest developments in dealing with the coronavirus (COVID-19).



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Modern Art Studio

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Bahrain's support towards Palestine affirmed

HM the King's diplomatic affairs advisor, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, met with the Palestinian Ambassador to Bahrain, Taha Mohammed Abdulqader yesterday. Shaikh Khalid confirmed Bahrain's firm backing towards Palestine. He expressed Bahrain's steady support towards Palestinian people getting their legitimate rights and an independent established state. He stressed that a just solution to the Palestinian issue would serve the interests of the entire region's security and stability. He commended Abdulqader's efforts. The Ambassador conveyed Palestine's pride and appreciation of Bahrain's fraternal stance towards their issue at all international gatherings, wishing Bahrain ever-lasting progress and prosperity. Above, HM the King's Advisor (right) with the Palestinian Ambassador.

Deputy Premier receives SEA President

The Deputy Prime Minister, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, received yesterday the Sustainable Energy Authority (SEA) president, Dr Abdulhussain bin Ali Mirza, who presented him with a copy of his book entitled "Development in the Electricity and Sustainable Energy Sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain". Above, the Deputy PM accepting the SEA president's book.

Development projects press on

Airport expansion among major ventures ongoing in Bahrain despite global economic downturn: Economic quarterly report

TDT | Manama

Development projects in the Kingdom have continued to progress despite the global economic downturn.

This is according to the Bahrain Economic Quarterly report for the first quarter of 2020, which was published on Monday by the Ministry of Finance and National Economy on its website mofne.gov.bh.

The report covers the Kingdom's economic data across various sectors, as well as an assessment of global and regional economic developments.

Among the development projects mentioned is the expansion of Bahrain International Airport (BIA), supervised by the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications in cooperation with Bahrain Airport Company.

This remains on schedule to be completed this year, making it one of the largest infrastructure development projects in the history of Bahrain at a total cost of \$1.1 billion.

Meanwhile, the report indicated that the global impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) affected Bahrain's overall economic performance in Q1, causing a decline in real GDP growth (at constant prices) at a rate of 1.1 per cent year-over-year, while the rate of decline reached 4.9 per cent at current prices.

The oil sector recorded growth at an annual rate of 1.8 per cent at constant prices, driven by an increase in



The expansion of Bahrain International Airport (BIA), supervised by the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications in cooperation with Bahrain Airport Company, is one of the largest infrastructure development projects in the history of Bahrain at a total cost of \$1.1 billion

42.5

is the percentage of the increase in production volumes by Aluminum Bahrain Company (Alba), which has contributed to the real growth achieved in the manufacturing sector

oil and gas production by 0.5 per cent and 12.5 per cent, respectively; although growth declined in current prices by 11.5 per cent. On the other hand, the non-oil sector GDP registered a decrease of 1.7 per cent at constant prices and 4 per cent at current prices.

Indicators within the report reflected continued growth in a number of non-oil sectors despite the challenges; the manufacturing sector achieved real growth of 4.8 per cent, supported by the increase in the production volumes by Aluminum Bahrain Company (Alba) by 42.5 per cent; the social and personal services sector grew by 1.3 per cent, while the construction sector witnessed growth of

0.3 per cent.

Due to global restrictions on travel and other preventative measures to counter the spread of COVID-19, the hotels and restaurants sector real GDP declined by 36 per cent, while the transportation and communications sector declined by 6.3 per cent. The decline is evidenced in the decrease in the number of visitors through the King Fahd Causeway and through BIA by 24.2 per cent and 25.1 per cent, respectively.

Other sectors also witnessed declines in their real GDP including government services by 2.9 per cent, financial corporations by 1.6 per cent, real estate and business activities by 0.4 per cent, and trade by 0.1 per cent.

As for the contribution of the non-oil sectors to GDP, the financial corporations sector continues to have contributed the most at 16.7 per cent, followed by the manufacturing sector at 14.9 per cent, and the government services sector at 12.5 per cent, and the oil sector at 17.2 per cent.

Driver arrested after hit-and-run

TDT | Manama

A driver involved in a hit-and-run on Sunday has been arrested, the Ministry of Interior reported yesterday.

Traffic police were able to de-

tain the driver, aged 28, immediately after the incident took place at around dawn along Shaikh Hamad road in Muharraq, the Ministry said on social networking service Twitter.

A video of the hit-and-run

has been circulating online. It shows that the pedestrian involved in the incident, aged 47, was able to quickly attend to the victim and refer him to the hospital. No other details of the case were available.

Four hour long complex surgery successful

The surgical team at King Hamad University Hospital managed to eradicate a tumour in the lower oesophagus of a 50-year-old patient yesterday. The advanced and complex operation, was the first of its kind in the hospital's history. Using the latest advanced technology, the surgery took four hours under total anaesthesia to successfully remove the malignant tumour. The patient will soon begin the second stage of the treatment through radiotherapy at the Bahrain Cancer Centre. Above, the skilled medical team that performed the surgery.



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Interior Minister, US Ambassador sign counter-terrorism training agreement

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Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa and outgoing US Ambassador Justin Siberell signed yesterday an agreement letter between the two countries, to promote bilateral ties in the detection of explosives and other related materials, as part of counter-terrorism training and cooperation between the concerned authorities of both sides.

The signing came in a meeting between the two high-ranking officials, which was attended by Public Security Chief Lt-General Tariq Al Hassan.

The Interior Minister welcomed the US Ambassador and expressed appreciation for his efforts and roles in supporting bilateral ties between the two friendly countries, especially in security, and wished him all the best.

The meeting also reviewed relations and topics of common interest.

The US Ambassador expressed



The Interior Minister and the US Ambassador signing the agreement letter

thanks and appreciation to the Interior Minister, hailing the cooperation and coordination of the Interior Ministry to promote bilateral relations between the two countries.

He wished Bahrain and its citizens development and prosperity.

Also at the meeting, the Interior Minister presented the US Ambassador a memorial gift out of appreciation to his efforts in promoting cooperation between Bahrain and the US.

Bahrain keen to expand IAEA technical cooperation



Dr Shaikha Rana during the virtual meeting

TDT | Manama

Bahrain is keen to expand cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at various levels in order to meet common aspirations, it has been stressed.

This came during a virtual meeting between Ministry of Foreign Affairs undersecretary and National Committee on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction chairperson, Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Daij Al Khalifa, and IAEA Technical Cooperation Department for Asia and the Pacific director Jane Abaya.

Dr Shaikha Rana hailed the results of the previous session of the technical cooperation programme with the IAEA for 2018-2020, which had a positive impact on developing the performance of many vital sectors in the Kingdom, especially

in the health, environmental and scientific fields.

Abaya commended Bahrain's efforts in developing these programmes, noting the remarkable progress achieved in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and wishing the Kingdom further progress and prosperity.

The two sides exchanged views on the technical cooperation framework for Bahrain for 2022-2023 in the fields of health, food, agricultural, and nuclear security, in addition to approving strategic work programmes in the fields of health, environment and customs affairs.

Representatives from the Supreme Council for the Environment, the University of Bahrain, the Customs Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health, and other relevant authorities also participated in the meeting.

Events management companies make urgent appeal

● Call goes out to support this vital sector through the economic stimulus package as it is one of the worst-hit in the Kingdom amidst the coronavirus crisis

TDT | Manama

Registered Bahraini events management companies have made an urgent appeal to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, to support the events management sector through the economic stimulus package and consider it as one of the worst-hit in the Kingdom amidst the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

The appeal was an outcome of a virtual meeting held recently by a group of representatives from Bahraini events management companies to discuss how the current situation has affected the sector.

The company representatives noted that many of their enterprises are facing major challenges and might not be able to survive, due to the cancellation



A screenshot of the virtual meeting

of all events since March of this year.

They stressed that some events management companies already have 100 per cent losses and have been forced to close, while also suffering from financial commitments, non-payment risks, and unpaid wages.

It must also be taken into consideration that most of these companies totally depend on their business, they said.

The representatives further pointed out the economic significance of their sector and its tremendous contributions to the national economy in helping to foster growth in the Kingdom.

Moreover, the government is always keen to improve this sector, taking into account the

new international exhibition and convention centre, which will be the biggest in the Kingdom, with 308,700 square meters in Sakhir, next to Bahrain International Circuit.

The virtual meeting's attendees called on the government, mainly the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, to issue a special guide for the events management sector, following the example of restaurants and salons, in addition to offering a significant aid to this sector for a 12-month period.

Also among the meeting's outcomes, representatives asked for the reactivation of Tamkeen's events support

programme, having full legal and logistic backup. They also suggested launching a fund by Tamkeen, the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority to promote domestic tourism and support all types of local events.

The attendees expressed their optimism towards meeting their urgent needs in order to save their businesses from total collapse and bankruptcy during this pandemic.

They also highly praised the commitment of the Kingdom's leadership to overcoming the current exceptional circumstances with an unprecedented policy response and economic stimulus packages.

Humanitarian aid vital to tackle COVID-19

TDT | Manama

In today's unprecedented times, there should be no restrictions on global humanitarian aid and "protected areas and facilities must be expanded to include medical factories, masks factories and quarantine areas," said Bahrain's Justice Minister yesterday.

He called for global cooperation in directing humanitarian aid efforts considering the current situation triggered by the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, and National Committee for International Humanitarian Law (NCIHL) chairman, Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, was speaking at a global symposium, titled "International Humanitarian Law in the Era of COVID-19", organised by the Judicial and Legal Studies Institution



A screenshot from the symposium in session

(JLSI) in cooperation with the NCIHL and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS) participated in the symposium, which focused on the humanitarian situation in the world, especially in conflict areas during the coronavirus

pandemic. It explored the roles of the Red Cross international movement, armed forces in assisting national authorities during efforts to tackle COVID-19, and Bahrain's legislative system in light of the new emblem law.

BRCS director general and acting general secretary, Mubarak

Al Hadi, said that the repercussions of the global pandemic might fuel further conflicts and wars in the world. Therefore, he believed that humanitarian and relief organisations have an important role in reducing its negative effects by providing effective responses to the repercussions.

He highlighted the impact of the pandemic on people living in conflict areas, who were burdened by years of war and destruction and the deterioration of essential services and displacement.

"International humanitarian law provides critical guarantees for those affected by armed conflict, even in light of the pandemic outbreak," Al Hadi added.

"Rather than declaring a state of emergency and closing borders, collective international action by activating the principles of international humanitarian law is necessary," Al Hadi said.

Bahrain, Turkmenistan discuss joint cooperation

TDT | Manama

The Foreign Affairs Minister affirmed Bahrain's keenness to enhance bilateral cooperation with Turkmenistan for the benefit of the two friendly countries and people in a high-level bilateral consultation session held yesterday.

The meeting was chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani.

The Turkmen side was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ra it Meredow, with participation from top foreign ministry officials from both sides.

Dr Al-Zayani said that this meeting will contribute to strengthening the trade, investment, energy, tourism,

culture and public health relations between the two countries. The two sides also exchanged viewpoints on regional and international developments and discussed the efforts to contain the repercussions of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

They also stressed the importance of preserving the security and stability of the region, joining efforts to stop the ongoing wars, confront terrorist organizations, and achieving peace and stability.

The virtual session focused on ways to activate agreements signed between the Bahrain and Turkmenistan, highlighting the importance of continuing efforts, coordination and exchange of visits between the two countries at various levels.

Assailant of two women at hotel parking lot loses appeal

● **Man sentenced in absentia for attack in Capital Governorate two years ago has his prison sentence upheld**

TDT | Manama

A man convicted of assaulting two women in the Capital Governorate two years ago had his imprisonment upheld by the Minor Criminal Court on Monday.

The man was sentenced in absentia to three months of imprisonment and fined BD200 to suspend the execution of the verdict. The court also ordered him to pay BD450 in compensation to the plaintiff (one of the victims).

According to the victim's attorney Ebtissam Al Sabbagh, the incident occurred at 2.30am on April 17, 2018, near a hotel in Seef District.

Al Sabbagh explained that her client and a female friend were



“The defendant attacked both women by pulling them out of the car, shoving them, and kicking them in different parts of the body, mainly the head. Both victims suffered several fractures and bleeding in the face.”

ATTORNEY EBTISSAM AL SABBAGH

in the former's car at the parking lot of the hotel after they finished having dinner at one of the restaurants inside.

“The defendant, along with a male friend, suddenly parked his car near my client's car,” the lawyer said. “He then asked both women to get in the car with him and his friend. An argument erupted after the women rejected the defendant's request.”

She explained further saying: “The defendant then got off the car and proceeded to attack both women by pulling them out of the car, shoving them, and kick-

ing them in different parts of the body, mainly the head. Both victims suffered several fractures and bleeding in the face.”

Medical reports showed that Al Sabbagh's client suffered from bruises, broken bones in the face, bleeding in the sinuses, head pain, and bleeding in the right eye pocket, which required a surgical procedure.

The victim reported the matter to the police the next day and an investigation soon led to the identification and arrest of the attacker.

At the police station, the de-

fendant confessed to the crime after he was confronted with the evidence and footage captured by surveillance cameras at the hotel, showing the entire incident.

Despite his confession at the police station and in the interrogation of the Public Prosecution, the defendant pleaded not guilty and denied all charges before the court. However, the court issued the aforementioned sentence against the defendant, who appealed against the conviction and got his plea rejected on Monday.

Jail term reduced for armed robbery convict

TDT | Manama

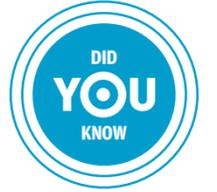
The Supreme Court of Appeal recently reduced an imprisonment sentence issued against a man convicted of armed robbery, from five years to three years in jail.

The court's announcement came after the Court of Cassation ordered the retrial of the Bahraini man, who robbed two Asian men at knifepoint in Sitra in 2017 along with a male accomplice.

According to one of the victim's statements, the culprits stopped them and claimed to be military personnel. The victim told interrogators that one of the men asked for their identity cards.

“He suddenly took out a knife from his pocket and snatched both of our mobile phones,” the victim testified.

Police investigations led to the defendants and indicated that one of them was actually a military officer, who was later referred to military judiciary, while the appellant was tried before the High Criminal Court, which sentenced him to five years of imprisonment.



Police investigations led to the defendants—one of whom was a military officer who was later referred to military judiciary; while the other was tried before the High Criminal Court, which originally sentenced him to five years of imprisonment

The man earlier appealed against the verdict before the Supreme Court of Appeal, which upheld his punishment. He pleaded not guilty again before the Court of Cassation and it ordered his retrial, in which he got his sentence slashed by two years.

Police attacker loses appeal



Representational image via AlAyam

TDT | Manama

The Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal upheld the maximum punishment previously issued against a Bahraini man who was convicted of verbally and physically assaulting several policemen while resisting arrest in Muharraq last year.

The man, who is in his 20s, was earlier sentenced by a first degree court to five years of imprisonment and was fined BD200. He was convicted of the charges of assaulting on-duty public servants as a result of performing their duties and causing multiple injuries to them, as well as insulting them.

The case unfolded when Muharraq Police Station received a notification reporting a fight between a man and a lady in Muharraq Souq. Officers were immediately deployed to the scene where the defendant was seen being held by two civilians, who were attempting to calm him down.

Court files showed that the defendant yelled at the police when they approached him. He also shoved a policeman

The defendant reportedly used his head to attack a policeman inside the police patrol vehicle while on the way to the police station

by hitting him in the chest while attempting to escape from them.

Backup police officers arrived at the scene and the defendant was eventually cuffed after a lengthy blood-stained scuffle with the police.

He reportedly used his head to attack a policeman inside the police patrol vehicle while on the way to the police station. The man also kicked the policemen in the car, causing several injuries to them.

The court decided to issue the maximum punishment against the defendant, citing that the charges are deliberate and connected in one criminal act. He appealed against the verdict, but the court of appeals rejected his plea considering the provided evidence.

Court upholds mugger's punishment

TDT | Manama

The Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal recently upheld the punishment of an Arab national who was earlier convicted of mugging an Asian man in Juffair in January of this year and stealing more than BD2,400 from him.

The appellant was sentenced by the First High Criminal Court last April to one year in jail. The court also suspended the execution of the sentence for three years.

He was charged by the Public Prosecution on January 11

of assault and robbery, after he apparently beat the victim, an Indian national, and stole more than BD2,400 from him.

Police investigations mentioned that the man attacked the victim by splashing a liquid material on his face, before stealing the amount from him and fleeing the scene.

According to the victim's testimony, the unknown liquid material temporarily impaired his vision, making it easy for the mugger to steal the money and escape the spot. He added that the assailant also hit him



the bank after he cashed a cheque of BD2,419 for the private health centre he worked for.

Police reached the scene shortly, rushed the victim to the hospital and launched a probe, which eventually led to the identification and arrest of the accused.

An eyewitness stated that she saw the defendant running away from the victim, who was struggling to catch up to him. The witness also said she tried to assist the victim, who had sore eyes and was exhausted.

on the head with the container of the liquid, causing him multiple injuries.

The victim told investigators that the incident occurred in Juffair while returning from

Initiative launched to monitor summer work ban

TDT | Manama

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) has launched an initiative to report abuse of workers obliged to work in open spaces between noon and 4pm in July and August.

The initiative follows the Labor Ministry's decision to ban outdoor work under the summer scorching sun.

The NIHR also called on em-



All workers are expected to wear facemasks despite the summer heat, in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect themselves

ployers in the private sector to provide facemasks and ask all workers to use them in the workplace in order to reduce the spread of the coronavirus

(COVID-19) among workers.

It also stressed the importance of taking the temperature of all workers entering and leaving the work sites and upon leaving

their accommodations. Workers with high temperatures should be isolated immediately and the relevant procedures should be activated.

The NIHR called on employers to limit mixing workers in workplaces and to reduce their numbers, particularly in rest rooms, waiting rooms, and changing rooms, as well as in vehicles that transport the workers within the workplace and to and from work sites.

SEA President patronises an AI virtual conference

TDT | Manama

Expert speakers in the field of modern technologies will participate in the conference to help in providing effective solutions that may push the development wheel again.



Dr Mirza

A virtual conference titled “Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, an imperative after Coronavirus” is set to be launched under the patronage of the Sustainable Energy Authority (SEA) president, Dr Abdulhussain bin Ali Mirza.

The conference will discuss the investment of artificial intelligence (AI) and solutions it can provide to help in obstacles facing most companies, govern-

ments and individuals in light of the pandemic. It aims to address the major economic recession in many fields, including education, health, judiciary, security and personnel services sectors.

Expert speakers in the field of modern technologies will participate in the conference to help in providing effective solutions that may push the development wheel again.

The GEC Media Group will host the launch, at which a book of the same title will be launched too.

Zain joins 'The Valuable 500' for people with disabilities

First from the GCC to join the initiative

TDT | Kuwait City

Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in the Middle East and Africa, announced its inclusion in The Valuable 500, an international initiative striving to put disability on the leadership agenda within corporates.

The inclusion, Zain said, will amplify its proactive diversity and inclusion programme, WE ABLE, aimed at integrating people with disabilities within the company as well as improving their business social

and economic prospects.

Entrepreneur Caroline Casey launched The Valuable 500 at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos in January 2019, creating a global movement focused on disability leadership in business and celebrating those who commit to inclusion.

Zain is the first corporation from the GCC to join the initiative along with 285 other leading global corporates such as Coca Cola European Partners, Citi Group, Microsoft, Omnicom Group, Virgin, Shell and SKY, to name a few, with the list being added to all the time.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, commented, "The one billion people with disabilities worldwide also hold a disposable income of \$8 trillion a year, equating to an opportunity that businesses cannot afford to ignore, and that's why we have signed up to The Valuable 500. Now is the time."

Caroline Casey, Founder of The Valuable 500 said, "The global telecoms industry has proven vital during the last few months in ensuring everyone is able to stay connected during the lockdown caused by the pandemic. It is essential these services are accessible to everyone, throughout the whole supply chain."



The one billion people with disabilities worldwide also hold a disposable income of \$8 trillion a year, equating to an opportunity that businesses cannot afford to ignore, and that's why we have signed up to The Valuable 500. Now is the time.

BADER AL-KHARAFI, ZAIN VICE-CHAIRMAN AND GROUP CEO

LIC Q1 premium income at US\$40.82 million

● **Incurring claims of USD 51.91 m in Q1**

● **Total investment income was USD 21.97 m**

● **COVID-19 hurts single premium new business income**

TDT | Manama

LIC International BSC announced financial results for the first quarter of 2020 reporting a Premium In-

come of the company of USD 40.82 million.

LIC said it incurred claims to customers of USD 51.91 m during Q1 against USD 118.91 m incurred during the same quarter a year ago.

The total investment income of the company was USD 21.97 m as compared to USD 22.56 m in the year-ago quarter.

The results were announced during a board meeting of the Board of Directors of LIC (International) BSC held yesterday in Bahrain. MR Kumar, Chairman of LIC of India and other Directors of the Board were present for the meeting through video conference.

LIC International BSC is a joint venture company of India's gigantic life insurance Company LIC of India and Bahrain's prestigious business house International Agencies Company Ltd. (Intercol). The company has been providing life insurance services to its customers since the year 1989.

For the first quarter of 2020, five consultants were qualified as Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT)s as compared to one consultant for the last year.

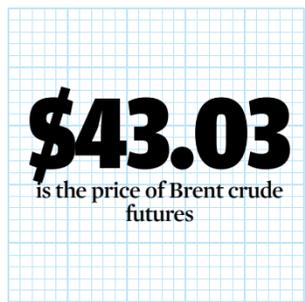
The board also said it took note of the subdued Single Premium new business income of the company due to COVID-19.

Oil slips as US virus spike stokes demand worries

Reuters | London

Oil prices edged lower yesterday amid concerns that a surge in new coronavirus cases, especially in the United States, will hamper any recovery in fuel demand.

Brent crude futures declined by 7 cents, or 0.16 per cent, to \$43.03, by 1404 GMT, after hitting a session low of \$42.46. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI)



crude futures fell 12 cents, or 0.30pc, to \$40.51 a barrel, having fallen to \$39.90 earlier in the day.

"Oil prices are lower today on concerns that the surge in coronavirus cases in the US will limit a recovery in fuel demand," bank RBC said.

Saudi Arabia raised its August crude official selling prices on Monday.

BHB holds virtual roadshow

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Bourse (BHB) in collaboration with HSBC held a virtual roadshow yesterday with the participation of several regional and international financial institutions and investment banks.

The roadshow provided Bahrain Bourse with the opportunity to showcase its key developments and plans to international clients.

Topics discussed included the enhancement of the (Delivery vs Payment (DVP) Model 2 and enhanced Corporate Actions, ESG Guidelines being developed in Bahrain, and the establishment of the Amanat Investor Protection Fund.

Narjes Jamal, Chief Operating Officer, Abdulla Abdin, Senior Director of Operations at Bahrain Clear, Shaikha Al Zayani, Director of Listing &



Whilst Covid-19 restrictions have posed logistical challenges to many events, it has also enabled organizations to creatively come up with alternative virtual formats for corporate access days and roadshows

NARJES JAMAL
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Disclosure at Bahrain Bourse, and Marwa Almaskati, Director of Marketing & Business Development took part.

Commenting, Narjes Jamal, Chief Operating Officer of Bahrain Bourse said: "Last year, Bahrain Bourse embarked on an ambitious regional and international roadshow to attract international fund managers. This virtual roadshow seeks to build on this initiative by engaging with regional and international financial institutions and investment banks and showcasing Bahrain Bourse's recent market developments and plans in the pipeline."

"We continue to work closely with the Bahrain Bourse to create opportunities to connect with international fund managers and investors across our global network," said Malti Javeri, Head of Securities Services at HSBC in Bahrain.

US 'looking at' banning TikTok and other Chinese apps: Pompeo

Washington

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said the US is "looking at" banning Chinese social media apps, including TikTok, over allegations Beijing is using them to spy on users.

India has already barred the wildly popular TikTok app over national security and privacy concerns while other countries are reportedly mulling similar measures.

Asked on Monday by Fox News's Laura Ingraham if the US should consider blocking the apps -- "especially Tik Tok" -- the country's top diplomat said the Trump administration was "taking this very seriously; we are certainly looking at it."

Pompeo said the US had been working for a "long time" on the "problems" of Chinese technology in infrastructure and was "making real pro-



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

gress." "With respect to Chinese apps on people's cell phones, I can assure you the United States will get this one right too," he said.

"I don't want to get out in front of the president, but it's something we are looking at."

Pompeo earlier lashed out at what he called China's "Orwellian" moves to censor activists, schools and libraries in Hong Kong under a sweeping new security law.

US hiring races to record high in May, layoffs abate

Reuters | Washington

US hiring surged to a record high in May and layoffs declined as businesses reopened, but the signs of improvement in the labour market have been overshadowed by a resurgence in COVID-19 cases that has forced some enterprises to shut down again.

The Labour Department said yesterday in its monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, or JOLTS, hiring accelerated by 2.4 million jobs to 6.5 million, the highest level since the government started tracking the series in 2000. The hiring rate jumped to an all-time high of 4.9 per cent from 3.1pc in April.

The report followed on the heels of news last Friday that the economy created a record 4.8 million jobs in June. Nonfarm payrolls have rebounded after a historic plunge of 20.787 million in April as the labor market reeled from the closure of businesses in mid-March to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Deutsche Bank to pay \$150 million fine

Reuters | New York

Deutsche Bank AG admitted it made a "critical mistake" taking on the registered sex offender Jeffrey Epstein as a client, and agreed to pay a \$150 million fine to settle New York charges over its dealings with the late financier and two other banks.

Tuesday's settlement with the New York State Department of Financial Services is the first regulatory enforcement action against a bank related to Epstein, who committed suicide last August in a Manhattan jail, a month after his arrest for allegedly sexually exploiting dozens of girls and women.

Largest US airlines move towards federal loans

Reuters | Chicago

The largest US air carriers have all signed letters of intent on federal loans to help them weather the novel coronavirus, with United Airlines warning employees that a surge in outbreaks was hitting bookings, threatening a travel rebound.

United was among five carriers - along with Alaska Airlines, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue Airways, and Southwest Airlines - that the U.S. Treasury Department said on Tuesday had signed letters of intent regarding the terms under which they could receive U.S. funds under coronavirus relief law known as the CARES Act.

EU sees deeper recession

Reuters | Brussels

The euro zone economy will drop deeper into recession this year and rebound less steeply in 2021 than previously thought, the European Commission forecast yesterday, with France, Italy and Spain struggling the most due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The downbeat assessment of Europe's economy comes amid concern the US recovery may also be faltering as a surge of new coronavirus infections prompts states to delay and in some cases reverse plans to let stores reopen and activities resume.



BDB CEO honours Abdullah Isa Qudrat, Manager

The CEO of Bahrain Development Bank Group (BDB), Sanjeev Paul, honoured Abdullah Isa Qudrat, Manager - Administration Department, for volunteering in the Kingdom's Public Awareness Campaign to Combat the Coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as for ensuring that precautionary health and social distancing guidelines are followed in the BDB Group. Paul expressed his gratitude for having a member of the BDB family as part of this national initiative and said, "Qudrat's efforts portray a clear reflection of the groups' social responsibility objectives." Qudrat has been engaged with the national team since March 2020, after receiving training from the civil defence to sterilise public and private facilities and departments.

Celebrating young entrepreneurs

INJAZ Bahrain concludes Young Entrepreneurs Competition virtually, names six winners

● **The virtual competition witnessed 21 student companies from 13 high schools and 8 universities in Bahrain**

TDI | Manama

This year's INJAZ Bahrain's annual Young Young Entrepreneurs competition concluded virtually yesterday by naming six winners who impressed the judging panel with their creative ideas and ambition.

The virtual competition witnessed 21 student companies from 13 high schools and 8 universities in Bahrain. The virtual award ceremony was live-streamed on INJAZ Bahrain's YouTube channel.

"Sahim" from "Ibn Khuldun National School" won the "High School Company of the Year 2020", and "Al Malga" from "Kingdom University" won "University Company of the Year 2020".

"Wain Adriss" from "Al Iman Private School - Boys Section" won the "High School Product of the Year 2020", and "Shield" from "British University of Bah-



Special awards this year include two signature awards - "Excellence in Technology Award" sponsored by Amazon Web Services Bahrain, and "Excellence in Marketing Award" sponsored by the National Bank of Bahrain.

More than 240,000 students from across the Kingdom have benefitted from INJAZ programs over the past 15 years.

rain" was presented with "University Product of the Year 2020 award".

"Fe Al Darb" from "Sitra Secondary Girls School" won the "High School Best Social Im-

product Award", and "Khosh Solutions" from "Royal University for Women" was presented with "University Best Social Impact Award".

"Truck Me!" from "Hamad Town Secondary Boys School" won the "Excellence in Technology Award" sponsored by AWS.

"Shield" from "British University of Bahrain" won the "Excellence in Marketing Award" sponsored by NBB.

Judges for this year featured

Adnan Al Mahmood from GPIC, Nadera Abuali from Citi Bahrain, Yasser Al Qashar from BANAGAS, Khalid Al Sada from STC, Stefano Pettinato from the UNDP, Eman Janahi from Tamkeen, Nidal Al Basha from Amazon Web Services Bahrain, and Hisham Abu Alfateh from National Bank of Bahrain. INJAZ Bahrain's National Company Competition sponsors are Tamkeen, Banagas, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and National Bank of Bahrain (NBB).

Sh. Hessa Bint Khalifa Al Khalifa, INJAZ Bahrain Chairperson, praised INJAZ Bahrain as one of the leading initiatives to support our youth to start their entrepreneurial journeys: "Our vision at INJAZ Bahrain is to create a platform where young people are supported and motivated to channel their innovation and creativity into building a knowledge-based economy through our programmes and partnerships. We believe in the

Our vision at INJAZ Bahrain is to create a platform where young people are supported and motivated to channel their innovation and creativity into building a knowledge-based economy through our programmes and partnerships.

SH. HESSA BINT KHALIFA AL KHALIFA, INJAZ BAHRAIN CHAIRPERSON

potential of our youth and aim to inspire and prepare them to succeed in the global economy. We are very proud of this year's student for their commitment and dedication to keep learning."

Commenting on the successful virtual competition, Hana Sarwani, Executive Director of INJAZ Bahrain stated: "The competition proves the readiness and agility of our youth and their ability to utilise their skills and creativity to adapt to the global challenges that the world faces."

Dubai reopens doors to tourists after long shutdown

Dubai

With a "welcome" passport sticker and coronavirus tests on arrival, Dubai reopened its doors to international visitors yesterday in the hope of reviving its tourism industry after a nearly four-month closure.

But businesses are mainly betting on those already living in the gleaming desert city to energise its ailing economy and serve as a test run before wary foreign holidaymakers return.

"A warm welcome to your second home," said the sticker applied to passports at Dubai



A man sunbathes along the Marina beach near the Ain Dubai Ferris wheel in the Gulf emirate of Dubai

airport, where employees wore hazmat suits and vending machines offered personal protective equipment.

Italian tourist Francesca Conte said on arrival she was worried up until the last minute that her flight would be cancelled.

"When I saw passengers queuing at the gate, I thought today we are not leaving, since the trip to Dubai had already been skipped three times," Conte said.

She said she felt sad "seeing empty spaces" on the plane and stewards and hostesses "dressed like nurses and doctors", in their lab coats.

The reopening yesterday came as the number of COVID-19

cases in the United Arab Emirates climbed to 52,600 included 326 deaths, with millions of foreign workers living in cramped accommodation particularly hard hit.

Incoming tourists are required to present a negative test result taken within four days of the flight. If not, they can take the test on arrival, but must self-isolate until they receive the all-clear.

Tourism has long been the lifeline of the glitzy Gulf emirate, one of the seven sheikhdoms that make up the UAE.

Samsung Electronics forecasts profits jump

Seoul

Samsung Electronics forecast a 23-per cent rise in second-quarter operating profit Tuesday, with strong demand for memory chips and displays overcoming the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on smartphone sales.

The company said in an earnings estimate that it expected operating profit to be 8.1 trillion won (\$6.8 billion) for April-June, up from 6.6 trillion won in the same period last year.

Elon Musk mocks Tesla short-sellers by selling short shorts

AFP | San Francisco

Tesla founder Elon Musk is ruthlessly mocking the carmaker's doubters who sell the company short by selling short shorts with the company logo.

Musk on Sunday followed through on a threat made last week by offering red satin shorts for sale on the company website -- which promptly crashed from the volume of orders, or perhaps mere curiosity.

"This item is out of stock," the Tesla site says, above the description of the athletic wear priced at \$69,420.

The irascible Musk, a frequent Twitter user, has regularly battled



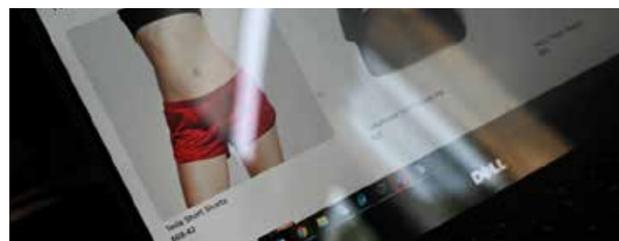
with skeptical investors who believe the company is overpriced and short Tesla stock, placing bets that the shares will fall.

Instead, last week Tesla raced ahead of Toyota to become the world's biggest carmaker by market capitalization, prompting Musk to announce plans for the new

product, featuring the company logo in gold on the front, and "S3XY" across the back -- a play on words as well as a reference to Tesla models S, 3, X and Y.

"Dang, we broke the website," Musk tweeted Sunday afternoon about the shorts, which he promised to gift to market regulators at the Securities and Exchange Commission, a regular target of his jabs after repeated clashes over his tweets.

"Will send some to the Short-seller Enrichment Commission to comfort them through these difficult times," he said last week.



Tesla's red satin with gold trim short shorts sell for \$69,420 -- and provide founder Elon Musk a way to mock his doubters

Shares in the electric carmaker jumped another 13.5 per cent by the close of trading Monday, revved up by last week's news Tesla produced more than

82,000 vehicles and delivered approximately 90,650 in the recently ended quarter despite production being disrupted due to the coronavirus epidemic.

The California firm's market capitalization has now reached more than \$246 billion.

"Celebrate summer with Tesla Short Shorts. Run like the wind or entertain like Liberace with our red satin and gold trim design," the website says in the description of the new product.

"Enjoy exceptional comfort from the closing bell."

The company still sells only a fraction of the vehicles sold by traditional automakers, yet it has captivated investors' imaginations as a bet on the future.

Musk, who turned 49 years old last month, is seen as a visionary and inventive boss who has challenged conventional wisdom while trying to shift the industry towards electric cars.



But he also is considered highly unpredictable, and fraud charges stemming from a Musk tweet once cost him and the company \$20 million, and included a requirement that his social media use be supervised by Tesla.



Mysterious damage to Iran nuclear site: what we know

The fire at Iran's main nuclear fuel enrichment site caused significant damage, setting back the country's nuclear program by months, the government acknowledged on Sunday, after initially saying the destruction was minor

Israel and the United States accuse their arch foe Iran of trying to build an atomic bomb -- a charge the Islamic Republic has always denied

Accident or Israeli sabotage? A mysterious incident in the early hours of Thursday, July 2, badly damaged a building at Iran's Natanz nuclear complex and sparked speculation over the cause.

The incident came at the end of a week marked by two explosions in Tehran, including one near a military site. Officials said the blasts were accidents, but many Iranians suspected covert Israeli operations were responsible.

Israel and the United States accuse their arch foe Iran of trying to build an atomic bomb -- a charge the Islamic Republic has always denied.

Here is stock of what we know so far about the Natanz incident.

What kind of building?

Iran's atomic energy agency first reported that an "accident" had damaged warehouses under construction at the Natanz site, some 250 kilometres (150 miles) south of Tehran, in a confusing statement on the morning after the incident.

There were no casualties, "no nuclear material (on site) and no potential of pollution," the agency's spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi told state television.

The organisation released a photo of a damaged building: a long, one-storey brick structure with few openings, part of an exterior wall blackened by fire, a collapsed section of roof and doors that appeared to have been blown outwards.

State TV showed several images of the building's exterior, but none of the inside.

On Sunday evening, Kamalvandi acknowledged to the IRNA state news agency that the incident had caused "significant financial damage", without elaborating.

But he said the damaged building had been designed to produce "advanced centrifuges", hinting that their assembly had begun prior to the "accident".

What is the Natanz nuclear complex?

The complex is central to Iran's nuclear programme and is kept under very tight security.

Under the terms of its 2015 nuclear



A warehouse after it was damaged at the Natanz facility, one of Iran's main uranium enrichment plants, south of the capital Tehran

accord with world powers, Tehran had agreed to cap its enrichment of uranium -- measured by the presence of fissile isotope Uranium-235 -- to 3.67 percent.

It also limited the number of so called first-generation enrichment centrifuges to 5,060.

But a year after Washington unilaterally abandoned the pact and reimposed crushing sanctions, Iran began progressively stepping away from its commitments.

Since mid-2019 it has enriched uranium to 4.5 percent -- reactor-grade but still far from the 90 percent required for military use.

Iran has also announced that it is working on developing more efficient centrifuges, without limits.

Accident or sabotage?

On Friday, Iran's Supreme National

Security Council announced that the "cause of the accident" at Natanz had been "accurately determined".

But it declined to release details, citing security reasons.

On the evening of July 2, IRNA published an editorial warning Iran's arch-foes against hostile actions, saying unnamed Israeli social media accounts had claimed the Jewish state was behind the incident.

The editorial warned Israel and the US against any attack on Iran's "security" and "interests".

A Twitter account linked to an Israeli analyst had claimed in Arabic on July 1 that Israel had attacked an Iranian uranium enrichment plant.

The BBC's Persian service, which Iranian authorities consider hostile, said it received a statement "hours before"

the incident from a group called the "Homeland Cheetahs" who claimed responsibility.

They claimed to be "dissidents present in Iran's security apparatus" and said the location was targeted as it was not "underground" and that therefore the alleged attack could not be denied.

Iran's civil defence chief, Brigadier General Gholam Reza Jalali, told state TV on Thursday night that any proven cyberattack against Iran would elicit "a response".

Israel's Defence Minister and Alternate Prime Minister Benny Gantz stayed ambiguous on the events.

"Iran is aiming for nuclear [weapons], we can't let it get there," he said Sunday.

He however added that "not every event taking place in Iran is necessarily connected to us".



The atomic enrichment facilities Natanz nuclear power plant



A truck carrying UF6 fuel leaving the Natanz nuclear power plant (file photo)

First Crusade: 15,000 starving Christian soldiers march in religious procession around Jerusalem as its Muslim defenders look on

Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama departs on his first voyage, becoming the 1st European to reach India by sea

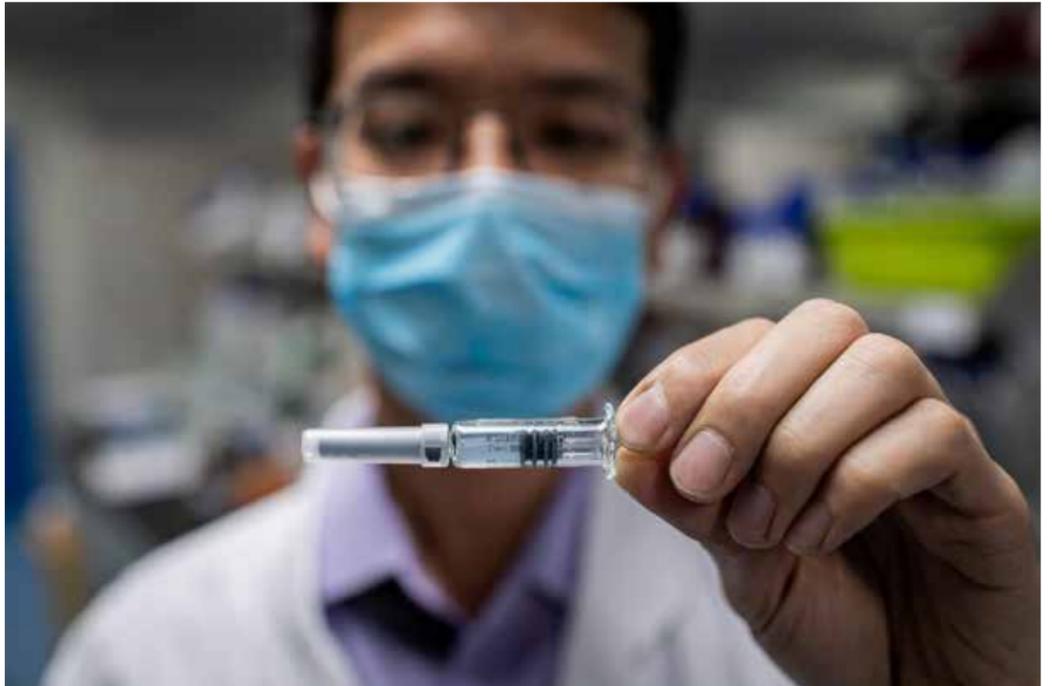


Dr Benjamin Waterhouse gives 1st cowpox vaccination in the US to his son to prevent smallpox

500th anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated in Moscow

Brazil to become testing ground for coronavirus vaccine

The leaders for two of the most advanced coronavirus vaccine projects -- Oxford University, in partnership with AstraZeneca labs, and China's Sinovac -- will carry out clinical testing in Brazil



An engineer shows an experimental vaccine for the COVID-19 coronavirus that was tested at the Quality Control Laboratory at the Sinovac Biotech facilities in Beijing

TOP 4 TWEETS

01



“COVID-19 (China Virus) Death Rate PLUNGES From Peak In U.S.” A Tenfold Decrease In Mortality. The Washington Times @WashTimes Valerie Richardson. We have the lowest Mortality Rate in the World. The Fake News should be reporting these most important of facts, but they don't!
@realDonaldTrump

02



To beat COVID-19, we need a coordinated national response from the federal government – but Donald Trump refuses to do his job. I've laid out exactly what I would do, and I encourage this president to adopt the plan in its entirety
@JoeBiden

03



Over the weekend I welcomed staff from St Thomas' hospital who looked after me whilst I had coronavirus at Downing Street. It was wonderful to celebrate the NHS's 72nd birthday with some of those who have done so much in the fight against the virus.
@BorisJohnson

04



What is the purpose of a \$22 trillion economy if you can't take care of your people during a pandemic? We need #EmergencyMoneyForThePeople now. 74% of Americans agree including a majority of both parties. Congress do your job. Support H.R. 6496 NOW.
@AndrewYang

AFP | Rio de Janeiro

Brazil may be struggling in its battle against the coronavirus, but it is on the cutting edge of vaccine development with large-scale trials and the production of millions of doses on the horizon.

COVID-19 is spreading rapidly across the Latin American nation -- a situation underlined when President Jair Bolsonaro tested positive on Tuesday -- creating the necessary conditions for testing a vaccine's efficiency.

Brazil, which is the primary global producer for yellow fever vaccines, is renowned for its expertise in vaccines, which it produces on a large scale in public institutes.

The leaders for two of the most advanced vaccine projects -- one from Oxford University, in partnership with AstraZeneca labs, and one from China's Sinovac -- will carry out Phase Three tests, the last one before the drug is approved, on thousands of Brazilian volunteers.

Only three vaccine projects in the world have reached Phase Three.

And Brazil won't be short-changed either: both projects have technology transfer agreements that will enable the country to produce the vaccines themselves, should the tests prove conclusive.

With lockdown measures applied unevenly nationwide, Brazil -- a country of continental proportions with 212 million inhabitants -- has not managed to contain the pandemic, which has killed 65,000 people in the country.

It is the second worst-hit nation after the United States.

100 million doses

“Brazil is a good testing ground because the virus is still very present there, and there is a wide variety of epidemiological characteristics” throughout the country, Margareth Dalcomo, a researcher at FIOCRUZ, the research organization that will help produce the Oxford vaccine, told AFP.

“The more volunteers are exposed to the virus, the greater chance to quickly prove the vaccine's efficiency,” said Sue



A lab technician holds a PCR plate to perform COVID-19 PCR tests at a lab in Brazil

Ann Costa Clemens, a researcher at the Federal University of Sao Paulo (UNIFESP), which is in charge of carrying out tests for Oxford's project on 5,000 Brazilian volunteers.

“If we manage to recruit these volunteers while the curve is still rising, we hope to get results quickly, as early as November,” added Clemens, who is also the head of the Institute for Global Health at the University of Sienna, in Italy.

Phase Three tests for the vaccine began in June in Brazil, as well as in the UK and South Africa

“If the tests are conclusive, the vaccine could be registered in the United Kingdom by the end of the year and in other countries, including Brazil, in early 2021,” Clemens added, noting that registration in Brazil should be easier and faster due to on-site testing.

As part of the agreement with Oxford and AstraZeneca, the Brazilian government will invest \$127 million to enable FIOCRUZ to acquire the technology and equipment to produce an initial quantity of 30.4 million doses during the experimentation phase.

If the vaccine passes the clinical trials, Brazil will be entitled to produce 70 million additional doses at an estimated cost of \$2.30 each.

Political rivalries

Meanwhile, the government of Sao Paulo state will start on July 20 testing for the vaccine by the Chinese biopharmaceutical company Sinovac on 9,000 volunteers.

The partnership also provides for technology transfer for “large-scale production” in the event of successful

testing.

“This is technology that we have mastered perfectly, we have already produced other vaccines in a similar way,” said Dimas Covas, the director of the Butantan Institute, which is in charge of producing the doses.

“We will have the autonomy necessary to meet the demand from Brazil, but also other Latin American countries,” he said.

With the two large-scale trials, “Brazil is the repository for the hopes of a large part of the world,” Covas added.

But the announcement three weeks ago of the partnership with Sinovac has drawn criticism, as well as dubious conspiracy theories.

It came against the backdrop of a political rivalry between Sao Paulo Governor Joao Doria and Bolsonaro, a noted coronavirus skeptic who announced he was feeling “perfectly well” and had only mild symptoms after testing positive for COVID-19.

“A Chinese laboratory making a vaccine against a Chinese virus and research funded by a governor who is a major partner of China. I don't want this vaccine, do you?” tweeted Roberto Jefferson, a former congressman who recently joined Bolsonaro's camp.



A lab technician inserts reagents into a plate with a patient's samples to perform COVID-19 PCR tests

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

Keep an eye on 'anywhere and everywhere' COVID-19

“If it's anywhere, it's everywhere and people travelling have to understand that. This virus is widespread and people have to take that very, very seriously”
MARGARET HARRIS
 WHO SPOKESWOMAN



Passengers wearing protective face masks sit in a plane at Sharm el-Sheikh International Airport in Egypt

Reuters | Geneva

The World Health Organisation yesterday urged travellers to wear masks on planes and keep themselves informed as COVID-19 cases surge again in some countries, prompting new restrictions in places like Australia.

Spokeswoman Margaret Harris urged people not to be caught off-guard by resurgent local epidemics and quarantine measures, saying: "If it's anywhere, it's everywhere and people travelling have to understand that."

"This virus is widespread and people have to take that very, very seriously."

The WHO said last month that it would update its travel guidelines ahead of the northern hemisphere summer holidays but they have not yet been released.

In the meantime, travellers should "remember things will change, or may well change", Harris said at a Geneva briefing. "We're seeing a lot of upticks,

a lot of changes in different countries, countries that had successfully shut down their first transmission are seeing second upticks," she added, mentioning Australia and Hong Kong.

Lockdown measures were reimposed in Australia's second biggest city on Tuesday, confining Melbourne residents to their homes unless undertaking essential business, as officials scramble to contain a coronavirus outbreak.

The WHO's previous guid-

ance for travellers has included common-sense advice applicable to other settings such as social distancing, washing your hands and avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Harris also proposed on Tuesday wearing a mask on planes, a measure which is already a requirement of many airlines.

"If you are flying, there is no way you can social distance in a plane, so you will need to take other precautions including using a face covering," she said.

WHO acknowledges airborne spread of COVID-19



The World Health Organisation yesterday acknowledged "emerging evidence" of the airborne spread of the novel coronavirus, after a group of scientists urged the global body to update its guidance on how the respiratory disease is spread.



WHO expert Benedetta Allegranzi said the organisation believed it had "been open to the evidence on modes of transmission" of the new virus.

Bolsonaro tests positive for coronavirus



Reuters | Sao Paulo

Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, he said in a television interview yesterday.

World Health Organisation's regional director Carissa Etienne during a meeting with Pan American Health Organization directors wished Bolsonaro a speedy recovery from his positive test result for COVID-19.

"The message is that this virus in unpredictable and does not respect race, class or people in power, despite security around any president," said PAHO director for communicable diseases Marcos Espinal.

For Brazil, the infection of its president should reinforce the need to strengthen implementations of social distancing recommendations and the use of masks to mitigate the spread of coronavirus, he said.

Etienne said Latin America and the Caribbean now account for 50 per cent of the COVID-19 cases in the Americas.

Some of Latin America's most persistent problems have contributed to the scale of the pandemic in the region, Etienne said: inequality, political division and health systems that have been weakened by years of under-investment.

News in brief

◆ The US government has awarded Novavax Inc \$1.6 billion to cover testing and manufacturing of a potential vaccine for the novel coronavirus in the United States, with the aim of delivering 100 million



doses by January.
US awards Novavax \$1.6 billion for coronavirus vaccine

The award announced by the US Department of Health and Human Services is the biggest yet from "Operation Warp Speed," the White House initiative aimed at accelerating access to vaccines and treatments to fight COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

◆ India's Sovereign Pharma said it has dispatched the first batch of generic remdesivir for drugmaker Cipla Ltd, as the country recorded more than 22,000 new coronavirus cases yesterday. At current capacity, Sovereign can supply 50,000 to 95,000 vials per month of the injectable, the company said in an emailed statement on Tuesday. It did not disclose how many vials are there in the batch for Cipla.

India's dispatches first batch of remdesivir to Cipla

◆ British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was accused yesterday of trying to rewrite history for appearing to blame the deadly spread of coronavirus

in care homes on the institutions themselves.

The government initially said it did not believe care homes were at particular risk, and has been slow to roll out testing of both staff and patients. In an interview on Monday, Johnson said: "We discovered too many care homes didn't really follow the procedures in the way that they could have."

Outrage at UK PM comments on virus-hit care homes

◆ Beijing yesterday reported zero new coronavirus cases for the first time since the emergence of a cluster in the Chinese capital in June that prompted fears of a domestic second wave. A total of 335 people have been infected since a cluster emerged at the city's massive Xinfadi wholesale market in early June.

◆ Australia warned its citizens yesterday they could face "arbitrary detention" if they travel to China. "Authorities have detained foreigners because they're 'endangering national security'. Australians may also be at risk of arbitrary detention," the latest warning said.

◆ A Vietnamese man accused of "defaming" the country's leaders for broadcasting his pro-democracy views on Facebook was jailed for eight years on Tuesday after a lightning-quick trial denounced by rights groups. Nguyen Quoc Duc Vuong's arrest follows the detention of a number of high-profile journalists and activists in recent months ahead of the regime's five-yearly party congress, slated for next January.

◆ Nearly 11 million stressed-out Chinese students began taking the country's gruelling annual college entrance exam on Tuesday following a month-long coronavirus delay, with inspectors this year checking both for cheaters and fevers. The two-day test -- known in Chinese as the "gaokao" -- is an annual moment of great anxiety for students and parents who dream of sending their children to university, but the coronavirus added another layer of pressure by closing schools for months.

US makes it official

Begins withdrawal from World Health Organisation

USA Today | Washington

The United States has officially begun its withdrawal from the World Health Organisation, amid a continuing spike in the COVID-19 cases in many states across the US.

The US Congress received formal notification of the decision yesterday, more than a month after President Donald Trump announced his intention to end the US relationship with the WHO and blasted the multilateral institution as a tool of China.

The White House said the withdrawal would take effect on July 6, 2021.

Democrats said the decision was irresponsible and ill-considered, noting it comes as the pandemic is raging and international cooperation is vital to confront the crisis.

"This won't protect American lives or interests - it leaves Americans sick & America alone," Sen. Bob Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Affairs Commit-



The US Congress received formal notification of the decision yesterday from President Donald Trump

tee, tweeted after receiving the White House's notification. "To call Trump's response to COVID chaotic & incoherent doesn't do it justice."

Tarik Jasarevic, a spokesman for the WHO, said the organisation had received reports of the United States' formal notification. "We have no further information on this at this stage," he said.

The formal withdrawal comes as the United States nears 3 million reported coronavirus cases and more than 130,000 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University data. Globally, there have been 11.6 million cases and almost 540,000 deaths.

Trump and his advisers have blasted the WHO for failing to

press China to be more transparent about the scope and severity of the COVID-19 outbreak, which began in Wuhan, China.

Trump has said that China "has total control" over the WHO, even though it contributes far less than the US to the health organisation's budget. The US has contributed approximately \$450 million dollars a year.

Menendez and other Senate Democrats have introduced legislation to reverse the decision and restore US funding to the WHO. It's unclear how far that could get in the GOP-controlled chamber, although some Republicans have also expressed concern with Trump's decision.

Global		Countries worst affected			
Country	Total cases	New deaths	Total Deaths		
1 USA	3,061,033	+770	133,749		
2 Brazil	1,643,539	+537	66,093		
3 India	742,016	+479	20,653		
4 Russia	694,230	+198	10,494		
5 Peru	305,703	+180	10,952		
6 Chile	301,019	+50	6,434		
7 Spain	298,869	+4	28,392		
8 UK	286,349	+155	44,391		
9 Mexico	261,750	+480	31,119		
10 Iran	245,688	+200	11,931		
11 Italy	241,956	+30	34,899		
12 Pakistan	234,509	+77	4,839		
13 Saudi Arabia	217,108	+49	2,017		
14 Turkey	207,897	+19	5,260		

Middle East								
Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Egypt	76,222		3,422		21,238	51,562	41	745
Saudi Arabia	217,108	+3,392	2,017	+49	154,839	60,252	2,268	6,235
UAE	52,600	+532	326	+2	41,714	10,560	1	5,317
Kuwait	51,245	+601	377	+4	41,515	9,353	159	11,997
Oman	48,997	+1,262	224	+6	31,000	17,773	127	9,593
Qatar	100,945	+600	134	+1	94,903	5,908	154	35,952

Figures as of closing

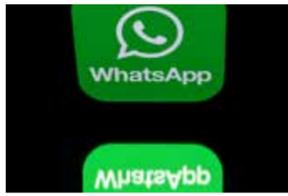
Facebook, Google, Twitter pause user info requests from HK govt

San Francisco

Facebook, Google and Twitter said Monday they have put a hold on requests by Hong Kong's government or police force for information on users, following China's imposition of a sweeping new security law.

The pause at leading online social network Facebook and its popular messaging service WhatsApp would remain in place "pending further assessment" of the new national security law, and would include "formal human rights due diligence and consultations with human rights experts," a Facebook spokesman said in a statement.

"We believe freedom of expression is a fundamental human right and support the right of people to express themselves without fear for their safety or other repercus-



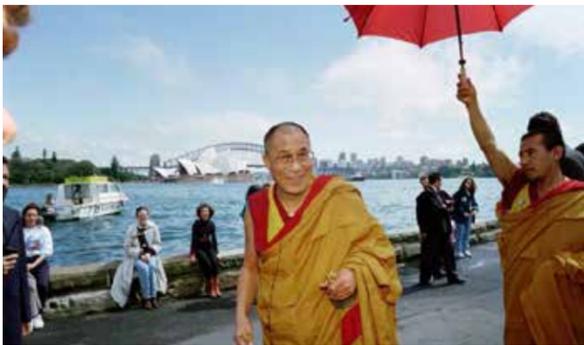
sions," the spokesman said.

Twitter and Google told AFP that they too would not comply with information requests by Hong Kong authorities in the immediate future.

"Like many public interest organizations, civil society leaders and entities, and industry peers, we have grave concerns regarding both the developing process and the full intention of this law," Twitter said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"Twitter cares and is committed to protecting the people using our service and their freedom of expression."

Dalai Lama channels 'Inner World' in album to mark 85th birthday



The Dalai Lama, shown here in 1996, has put out a music album to mark his 85th birthday

New Delhi

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama launched an assault on the music charts on Monday by releasing his first album to mark his 85th birthday.

"Inner World", in which the Dalai Lama chants meditations and Buddhist sayings, was inspired by New Zealand follower Junelle Kunin who spent five years working on the project after persuading him to take part.

The Dalai Lama went to her home in Auckland three times and she recorded some ses-

sions at his residence in Dharamsala in India, where the Tibetan government in exile is based.

"He had a clear vision with this work and has been very committed to it," Kunin, who produced the music with her husband Abraham, told the Radio New Zealand programme Nine to Noon.

"It's not a religious project although they are mantras. It's really just a work to try and benefit people. So I thought about what we need day-to-day -- courage and healing and wisdom and so forth so that's the path we went down."

Murder of US Army soldier puts spotlight on sexual harassment

● Vanessa Guillen, a 20-year-old US Army specialist found killed recently

● Family say she was sexually harassed at the military base.

● The main suspect in the case is a fellow US Army specialist named Aaron Robinson

AFP | Houston



Vanessa Guillen



Cecily Anne Aguilar and Aaron David Robinson



The murder of a female US Army soldier and the subsequent suicide of the chief suspect has put a spotlight on sexual harassment in the US military.

Vanessa Guillen, a 20-year-old US Army specialist at Fort Hood in Texas, went missing more than two months ago.

After a weeks-long search, a lawyer for the Guillen family confirmed that human remains found on June 30 near her former base were those of the missing soldier.

The main suspect in the case, a fellow US Army specialist named Aaron Robinson who was also based at Fort Hood, committed suicide last Wednesday as police closed in on him.

Another suspect, Cecily Aguilar, Robinson's girlfriend, was charged last Thursday with "conspiracy to tamper with evidence."

Since Guillen's disappearance on April 22, her loved ones have said repeatedly that she was sexually harassed at the military base.

"She was afraid to report it," her sister Lupe told ABC News. "She reported it to her friends. She reported it to her family. She even reported to other soldiers on base," she said.

"But she didn't want to do a formal report because she was afraid of retaliation and being blackballed, and she, like most victims, just tried to deal with it herself."



Guillen's case has been taken up by several prominent public figures, including the presumptive Democratic nominee for president, Joe Biden.

Guillen's case has been taken up by several prominent public figures, including the presumptive Democratic nominee for president, Joe Biden.

"We owe it to those who put on the uniform, and to their families, to put an end to sexual harassment and assault in the military, and hold perpetrators accountable," Biden said.

'Dignity and respect'

According to the Justice Department, Robinson told Aguilar he had killed Guillen with a hammer blow to the head, and the pair took her body to a re-

mote site to dispose of it.

According to Guillen family attorney Natalie Khawam, Guillen had planned to file a sexual harassment complaint against Robinson.

"We believe he murdered her because she was going to report the sexual harassment," Khawam said.

Guillen said Robinson had followed her into the shower and watched her, her attorney said.

Khawam said sexual harassment was "epidemic" in the military and called for Congress to investigate.

"You can't turn a blind eye



Guillen had been missing since April 22 until dismembered pieces of her remains were found buried along the Leon River on June 30

Upon hearing the news, Robinson fled Fort Hood and fatally shot himself shortly after midnight when law enforcement found and approached him in Killeen, Texas

anymore," she said.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, a Democrat from New York, called for the Pentagon inspector general to conduct an investigation.

Guillen's case "raises serious and alarming questions about the Army's ability to prevent sexual harassment and assault, respond to criminal acts and provide justice for victims and their families," Gillibrand said in a statement.

"There must be a full and thorough investigation into Guillen's disappearance, both to deliver justice and to initiate change in the Army's approach to sexual assault in the military and the culture that enables it."

Damon Phelps, the official in charge of the Army-led investigation, told a news conference last week that for the time being, there was no "credible information" to support the harassment allegation.

But on Monday, Fort Hood Senior Commander Major General Scott Eflandt pledged to "complete the ongoing investigation in sexual harassment and take actions against those findings."

"Every person who raises their right hand to serve their family and their country in uniform deserves to be safe and treated with dignity and respect," Eflandt said.

"To the victims of sexual harassment and assault. We hear you."

Fossil of giant 70m year-old fish found in Argentina

Buenos Aires

A giant 70 million year old fossil of a fish that lived amongst dinosaurs has been discovered in Argentine Patagonia, a team of researchers said on Monday.

Argentine paleontologists "found the remains of a predator fish that was more than six meters long," the researchers said in a statement.

The discovery was published in the scientific journal *Alcheringa: An Australasian Journal of Palaeontology*.

The fish "swam in the Patagonian seas at the end of the Cretaceous Period, when the temperature there was much more temperate than now," the statement said.

"The fossils of this carnivorous animal with sharp teeth and scary appearance were found close to the Collhue Hua-



The fossilized remains of this Xiphactinus - similar to the one found in Argentina - was discovered in the US state of Kansas and sold at auction in 2010

pial lake" around 1,400 kilometers south of the capital Buenos Aires.

This fossil belonged to the Xiphactinus genus, "amongst the largest predatory fish that existed in the history of Earth."

"Its body was notably slim and ended in a huge head with big jaws and teeth as sharp as needles, several centimeters long."

Examples of this species have been found in other parts of the world, "some of which even have preserved stomach contents," said Julieta de Pasqua, one of the study authors.

Previously, the Xiphactinus had only been found in the northern hemisphere, although one example was recently found in Venezuela.

Patagonia is one of the most important reservoirs of fossils of dinosaurs and prehistoric species.

Fauci warns US is 'knee-deep' in first wave of coronavirus

Washington

The United States is still "knee-deep" in its first wave of coronavirus infections and must act immediately to tackle the recent surge, the country's top infectious diseases expert said Monday.

Anthony Fauci said the number of cases had never reached a satisfactory baseline before the current resurgence, which officials have warned risks overwhelming hospitals in the country's south and west.

"It's a serious situation that we have to address immediately," Fauci said in a web interview with National Institutes of Health director Francis Collins.



US may oust 1.2 million students!

If they are enrolled in universities offering online-only classes amid the outbreak

● **Students taking classes fully online course load will not be issued a visa or allowed entry**

TDT, Agencies

Leave the country or face deportation! The Trump administration has told nearly a million foreign students who are pursuing various degree programmes there.

Reason: Their universities had either switched to online-only classes or planning to do so this fall amid the deadly coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which runs a major portion of the US student visa programme, has set the new rule.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank based in Washington, DC, about 1.2 million students who fall under the affected visas were enrolled and registered at more than 8,700 schools nationwide as of March 2018, according to a CNN report.

The question of ICE officials is why staying in the US for online classes when it can be done from their respective home countries.

So ICE officials say students taking classes fully online course load will not be issued a visa or allowed entry, referring to the September to December semester.

The agency suggests students shift to hybrid schools offering a mix of online and in-person classes to continue their stay.

However, that too will require a United States SEVP certification.

International students enrolled in academic programmes at US universities and colleges study on an F-1 visa and those enrolled in technical programmes at vocational or other recognised nonacademic institutions, other than a language training programme come to the US on an M-1 visa.

Surprised and alarmed by the decision, experts said the latest decision will have “long-term repercussions”.

This is going to create “more confusion and more uncertainty,” vice president of the American Council on Education told CNN.



India sent the largest number of students (251,290 to the US after China (478,732) in 2017 and 2018, according to the United States Student and Exchange Visitor Programme (SEVP)



He asks, “what would happen if the public health situation deteriorates in the fall and universities that had been offering in-person classes feel they have to shift all courses online to stay safe?”

Universities in dilemma

Trump administration’s decision is thus also derailing the plans of universities starting to roll out online plans to reopen in the fall as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

CNN points out that at Har-

vard, for example, all course instruction will be delivered online, including for students living on campus. For international students, that opens the door to them having to leave the US.

Harvard University President Larry Bacow told CNN in a statement Monday evening that “we are deeply concerned that the guidance issued today by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement imposes a blunt, one-size-fits-all approach to a complex problem giving international students, particularly those in online programs, few options beyond leaving the country or transferring schools.”

Students, who come from countries where internet connection might be very spotty or where classes might fall in the middle of the night local, already expressed their frustration seeing an uncertain future.

Some are concerned that they may not be able to attend classes in their home countries for lack of availability of specific online-only resources required by schools.

Travel restrictions a concern

The bigger issue, however, is the travel restrictions.

Current regulations blocking travel from the United States right now for being a COVID-19 hotspot may not allow students to go home, even if they want.

In fact, the US administration has made a litany of changes to the US immigration system amid the pandemic.

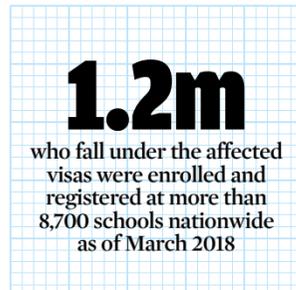
Last month, the White House issued an immigration proclamation dramatically curtailing

legal immigration to the US sending hundreds of people and businesses into a scramble to understand whether their future plans are derailed, CNN points out.

In the proclamation, the administration argued that the “extraordinary circumstances” posed by the coronavirus called for the suspension of employment-based visas. But immigrant advocates, industries and experts say the administration is taking advantage of the pandemic to make sweeping immigration changes and advance its agenda to slash legal immigration.

Monday’s announcement, like the changes that preceded it, could similarly result in many foreign students who often pay high tuition to have to return to their home country.

The US Department of Homeland Security will be publishing the procedures and responsibilities in the Federal Register as a Temporary Final Rule.



What the new law say?

● **Nonimmigrant F-1 and M-1 students attending schools operating entirely online may not take a full online course load and remain in the United States.**

● **The U.S. Department of State will not issue visas to students enrolled in schools and/or programmes that are fully online for the fall semester nor will US Customs and Border Protection permit these students to enter the United States.**

● **Active students currently in the United States enrolled in such programs must depart the country or take other measures, such as transferring to a school with in-person instruction to remain in lawful status. If not, they may face immigration consequences including, but not limited to, the initiation of removal proceedings.**

500 Bahrainis study in the US every year

Manama

Some 500 Bahraini students are enrolled in over the 4,700 accredited institutions of higher learning in the United States each year.

This is according to Justin Siberell, US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, who said, “American colleges and universities welcome you, as do the American people and communities throughout our country,” in an earlier statement.

“US colleges and universities take pride in providing safe, welcoming environments for all their students, and I want to stress how welcome you are in the United States,” according to his statement on the US embassy website.

India to raise the issue

New Delhi

An Indian official reportedly called the decision as “unacceptable” which he said will also adversely impact even the US’ image of a credible destination for higher studies.

The issue will be raised at the India-US foreign office consultations with David Hale, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. The consultations will be held between the Ministry of External Affairs and the US Department of State.



David Hale

Tie for warmest June globally, Siberia sizzles: EU

● An Arctic hourly temperature record for the month -- 37 degrees Celsius -- was set on June 21 near Verkhoyansk in northeastern Russia

AFP | Paris

Temperatures soared 10 degrees Celsius above average in June across much of permafrost-laden Siberia, with last month in a dead heat for the warmest June on record globally, the European Union's climate monitoring network said yesterday.

An Arctic hourly temperature record for the month -- 37 degrees Celsius -- was set on June 21 near Verkhoyansk in northeastern Russia, where a weather station logged a blistering 38C on the same day, the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) reported.

The hourly record -- averaged across 60 minutes -- was one to two degrees above previously registered Arctic highs in 1969 and 1973.

Freakishly warm weather across large swathes of Siberia since January, combined with low soil moisture, have contrib-



Siberia and the Arctic Circle are prone to large year-on-year temperature fluctuations, but the persistence of this year's warm spell is very unusual

uted to a resurgence of wildfires that devastated the region last summer, C3S reported.

Both the number and intensity of fires in Siberia and parts of Alaska have increased since mid-June, resulting in the highest carbon emissions for the month -- 59 million tonnes of CO2 -- since records began in 2003.

"Last year was already by far an unusual, and record, summer for fires in the Arctic Circle," said Mark Parrington, senior scientist at the EU's Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS), warning of "intense activity" in the coming weeks.

Copernicus has said that "zombie" blazes that smoul-

dered through the winter may have reignited.

Globally, June 2020 was more than half a degree Celsius warmer than the 1981-2010 average for the same month, and on a par with June 2019 as the warmest ever registered.

Siberia and the Arctic Circle are prone to large year-on-year

Globally, June 2020 was more than half a degree Celsius warmer than the 1981-2010 average for the same month, and on a par with June 2019 as the warmest ever registered

temperature fluctuations, but the persistence of this year's warm spell is very unusual, said C3S director Carlo Buontempo.

Permafrost 'carbon bomb'

"What is worrisome is that the Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the world," he said in a statement.

Across the Arctic region, average temperatures have risen by more than two degrees Celsius since the mid-19th century, twice the global average.

Despite lower-than-average

temperatures in its western reaches, the whole of Siberia -- larger than the United States and Mexico combined -- was more than 5C above normal for June, according to C3S satellite data.

The softening of once solid permafrost -- stretching across Siberia, Alaska and northern Canada -- has upended indigenous communities and threatens industrial infrastructure, especially in Russia.

A massive diesel spill into rivers near the city of Norilsk, Russia resulted when a tank at a power plant built on melting permafrost collapsed in late May.

"Widespread permafrost thaw is projected for this century," the UN's climate science panel, the IPCC, said in a landmark report last year on the world's cryosphere, or frozen zones.

"The majority of Arctic infrastructure is located in regions where permafrost thaw is projected to intensify by mid-century."

Soils in the permafrost region across Russia, Alaska and Canada hold twice as much carbon -- mostly in the form of methane and CO2 -- as the atmosphere, more than 1.4 trillion tonnes.

One tonne of carbon is equivalent to 3.65 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

What are Hong Kong police's new powers?

AFP | Hong Kong

Hong Kong's government has expanded police surveillance and enforcement powers using Beijing's sweeping new national security law.

The changes were spelled out in 116-pages of guidelines released late Monday that form part of a new law targeting subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion.

Below are some of the key powers granted authorities when conducting national security investigations.

Warrantless searches

Police can now raid premises without a court-granted warrant in "exceptional circumstances", the government said.

The guidelines specifically stated this would apply if it "would not be practicable to obtain" a warrant. The rules also apply to searches of vehicles or electronic devices.



Covert surveillance

The city's chief executive -- a pro-Beijing appointee -- will have final approval on all applications for interception of communications and covert surveillance operations to do with national security cases.

Less intrusive surveillance can be approved by senior police officers.

"The authorising authority," the government said in its statement, "has to ensure that the covert operation concerned satisfies the proportionality and necessity tests before granting the authorisation."



Asset seizures and travel restrictions

Once someone is suspected of endangering national security, police can apply to a magistrate for a warrant ordering them to surrender their passport.

The city's security chief can also freeze any assets deemed to be related to an offence against national security, and the justice chief can apply to the courts to order the property's confiscation.

Foreign political organisations

The city's police chief can -- with the security minister's approval -- compel political groups or agents from abroad, including Taiwan, to hand over certain information.

That includes their activities, personal details, and details on their finances and sources of income.

Any agent or group that fails to hand over the information is liable on conviction to a fine of HK\$100,000 and six months in prison -- or two years in prison if they give information which proves false.

Internet censorship

Police now have the power to remove online content -- a move that embeds unprecedented control over the internet in a city outside of China's "Great Firewall".

If police decide an internet user's online post is likely to constitute or cause "an offence endangering national security", they can order the user to delete the post, order the platform on which it was posted to remove it, or order the platform's web host to pull the message.

This applies whether the message was posted in Hong Kong or elsewhere.

If users or providers do not follow the police order, officers can apply to a magistrate for a warrant to seize relevant electronic devices and take action to remove the message.

They can also apply for a warrant ordering people and businesses to hand over a message's identification record or help decrypt messages.

Individuals who do not obey the order are liable to be fined up to HK\$100,000 (\$12,900) or jailed for up to a year. Jail terms for service providers are capped at six months.

Mumbai opens new hospitals as India virus deaths top 20,000



A makeshift field hospital to treat coronavirus patients has opened at Mumbai's Mahalaxmi Racecourse

● Mumbai accounts for about a quarter of India's 20,100 deaths

● India's caseload is predicted to pass one million this month

AFP | Mumbai

India's financial capital Mumbai opened four new coronavirus field hospitals yesterday -- including one at a horseracing track -- as the nationwide death toll jumped past 20,000.

Hospitals in densely populated cities such as Mumbai and Delhi are struggling to cope with the epidemic, and the country now has around 720,000 infections -- the world's third-highest.

The Mumbai region, which accounts for about a quarter of India's 20,100 deaths, has suffered a new surge in infections, forcing authorities to build makeshift hospitals and quarantine facilities.

Schools, hotels, a planetarium and a stadium used to host US NBA games last year have all been repurposed, and on Tuesday four new field hospitals -- including 700 beds inside the Mahalaxmi horseracing venue -- were opened.

The new facilities will together provide an extra 3,500 beds in the city of 20 million, where hospitals have been overwhelmed with hundreds of patients each day.

Health workers have complained about severe staff shortages, with some senior doctors and nurses avoiding frontlines because of their vulnerability to the virus due to age or conditions such as diabetes. "Required medical help will be available at these four new treatment centres," said a spokesman for the government of Maharashtra state, of which Mumbai is the capital.

As the death toll climbs, critics say the country is not testing enough -- leaving many infections undiagnosed.

India's caseload is predicted to pass one million this month and not peak for several weeks.

CELEBS

Chris Hemsworth teases Hulk Hogan transformation

Fox | Los Angeles

Chris Hemsworth is preparing himself for one of his most distinctive transformations yet.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe cornerstone is set to shave his beard into a the iconic handlebar moustache to encompass famous WWE wrestler Hulk Hogan in a biopic on the performer and reality star's life, which was first announced by The Hollywood Reporter (THR) in February 2019.



Chris Hemsworth

Now, Hemsworth, 36, is providing a bit of insight into the project, which is already underway on the brainstorming side, in a recent interview with Games Radar for its "Total Film" series, where the actor touched on the roadmap he will need to follow in order to become the now 66-year-old Hogan.

"This movie is going to be a really fun project," Hemsworth said (via Comic Book). "As you can imagine, the preparation for the role will be insanely physical. I will have to put on more size than I ever have before, even more than I put on for Thor. There is the accent as well as the physicality and the

attitude."

The "Thor" star said he was particularly eager to take a "deep dive" into the inner world of wrestling and described the research as something he was "really looking forward to" adding that he'll be pulling out all the stops in order to ensure his portrayal of Hogan is spot on - including dyeing his hair blonde and switching up the look of his facial hair.

In an interview promoting his recent Netflix film release "Extinction," Hemsworth told ScreenRant in April that while he didn't have much knowledge of the progress of the announced Hulk Hogan project, he knows that "it's being written now and worked on," and added "I know very little about that. It's sort of in the process now."

Halle Berry withdraws from transgender role

IANIS | Los Angeles

After facing backlash online, actress Halle Berry has pulled out of a transgender role she was supposed to play in an upcoming film.

Over the weekend, the Oscar-winning actress revealed she would "probably" play a transgender man in her next film.

"(The film is about) a character where the woman is a transgender character, so she's a woman that transitioned into a man. She's a character in a project I love that I might be doing," Berry said during an Instagram Live interview.

The news was met with a wave of criticism on social media, some slammed Berry for repeatedly using the wrong gender while talking about the character in the interview.

On Monday, Berry apologized and tweeted that she was no longer considering the role, re-

ports hollywoodreporter.com.

"Over the weekend I had the opportunity to discuss my consideration of an upcoming role as a transgender man, and I'd like to apologise for those remarks. As a cisgender woman, I now understand that I should not have considered this role, and that the transgender community should undeniably have the opportunity to tell their own stories," she wrote on Twitter.

"I am grateful for the guidance and critical conversation over the past few days and will continue to listen, educate and learn from this mistake. I vow to be an ally in using my voice to promote better representation on-screen, both in

front of and behind the camera," she added.

Berry's decision to pull out was met with praise from GLAAD, with the organization tweeting: "We are pleased that @halleberry listened to the concerns of transgender people and learned from them. Other powerful people should do the same. A good place to start is by watching @Disclosure_Doc to learn about trans representation in media."

Many Hollywood stars have faced similar backlash because of not giving opportunities to transgenders. In 2018, Scarlett Johansson dropped out of "Rub & Tug", the movie that would have seen her play a transgender man.



Halle Berry

Shia LaBeouf accused of 'brownface' in latest movie role, director David Ayer responds

Fox | Los Angeles

Actor Shia LaBeouf was accused of appearing in "brownface" to play a gangster character in the upcoming movie "The Tax Collector," prompting director David Ayer to respond.

The movie sees LaBeouf playing a hardened organized crime boss responsible for collecting "taxes" from gangs throughout

Los Angeles. Shortly after the trailer was released, many critics took to Twitter to debate if LaBeouf, who is the only white actor on the main cast, is doing a form of brownface by appearing as a His-



panic gangster.

"It's so sad we don't have enough Chicano actors who were in the gang life for roles like this. Thank God for that little white boy stepping in and saving the day," one user wrote.

Whoops! We couldn't access this Tweet.

"Oh hey, another movie w/ Latinos and Blacks in glorified gang culture on steroids that reinforces stereotypes & fears for white folks & promotes the cop mentality that 'it's a battlefield out there.' Sigh.... Hollywood, come on. We don't need this right now," someone else noted.

"Oh hey, another movie w/ Lat-

nos and Blacks in glorified gang culture on steroids that reinforces stereotypes & fears for white folks & promotes the cop mentality that "it's a battlefield out there." Sigh.... Hollywood, come on. We don't need this right now," a third user wrote.

"Shia Labouf in a new movie and I'm really hoping he's not playing brownface," someone else wrote.

The controversy caused Ayer to step in and defend his movie's star. The director explained that LaBeouf's character is not intended to be Latin, merely someone who grew up in "hood" culture.

McConaughey urges fans to wear masks

ANI | Washington

Posting a short video message on Instagram, American actor Mathew McConaughey urged people to use a mask to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

"I think we gotta look each other in the eye ... look ourselves in the eye, we gotta look in the mirror and ask ourselves, 'How can I be better? How can I expect more of myself and others? How can I be more responsible?'" he said.

"How can I have more compassion? How can I have more courage? How can I be fairer? How do I make sure that I wear the d--n mask?" Fox News further quoted him as saying.

Chris Evans, Lily James spotted together in London

ANI | Washington

Hollywood stars Chris Evans and Lily James were spotted enjoying each other's company together in London.

According to photos published by The Daily Mail and subsequent People Magazine's report, the two visited Mark's Club in Mayfair and shared a taxi together.

The 31-year-old English star was seen wearing a red dress with brown heels under a navy trench coat for the evening while Ev-



ans wore an all-black suit with grey boots.

While the "Wrath Of The Titans" star lives in North London, Evans had been isolating stateside before heading to London, where several film and television projects have resumed production.

Representatives for both actors could not immediately be reached for comment.

James was last linked to "The Crown" actor Matt Smith, who she reportedly split from in December. They first started dating in 2014.

Chris Evans

'Do your part': WWII film 'Greyhound' teaches virus lesson, says Hanks

AFP | Los Angeles

Tom Hanks is "heartbroken" that his World War II thriller must skip the big screen due to the pandemic -- but hopes it can still teach audiences at home a thing or two about acting decently in a global crisis.

"Greyhound," out on Apple TV+ Friday, was written by and stars Hanks as a rookie captain escorting a convoy of Allied ships as they cross the freezing North Atlantic, hounded by Nazi U-boats.

The movie follows a destroyer's terrified young crew crossing the treacherous ocean beyond the range of

air cover, bound together in life-and-death responsibility for protecting the fleet and each other.

"Those guys on the ship... all they can do is what's expected of them, and hope for some combination of providence and serendipity to see them through," said Hanks.

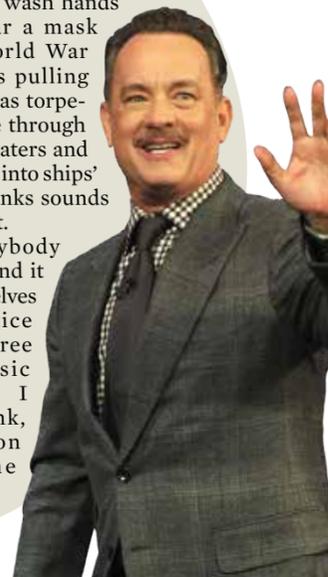
"COVID-19, no one knows how long it's going to go on, no one knows who's going to die because of it... you don't have to go very far to see the correlations and the similarities to the war years," he told a virtual news conference.

Hanks should know. The "Saving Private Ryan" star and "Band of Brothers" producer in March became the first Hollywood A-lister to contract the deadly virus, which has killed around 130,000 in the United States as a fresh surge brings 50,000 new cases a day.

Contrasting today's sim-

ple instructions to socially distance, wash hands and wear a mask with World War II sailors pulling together as torpedoes tore through the icy waters and slammed into ships' hulls, Hanks sounds indignant.

"If anybody cannot find it in themselves to practice those three very basic things, I just think, shame on you," he said.



Tom Hanks

SUDOKU

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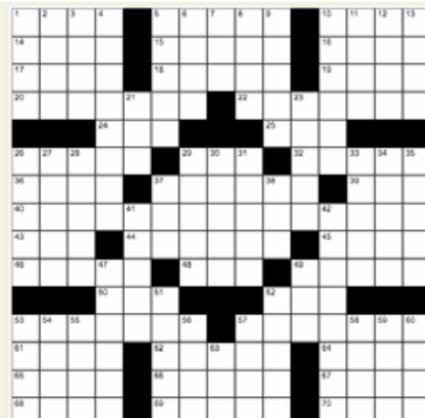
Yesterday's solution

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

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.

CROSSWORD



Across

1- Camaro model; 5- Madame de ...; 10- Radio switch; 14- Unit of currency in Iran and Yemen; 15- Cleave in two; 16- Han ... was a "Star Wars" character; 17- What's more; 18- Girder; 19- Bad time in the Senate; 20- Lounges; 22- Kernel of a filbert, e.g.; 24- "Alibi"; Selleck film; 25- 17th letter of the Greek alphabet; 26- Satan; 29- Female bovine; 32- Skirt; 36- Netman Nastase; 37- Most cunning; 39- Limb of a felled tree; 40- Make urban; 43- Bambi's aunt; 44- Capital of Lesotho; 45- Nights before; 46- Chip dip; 48- Hall or Byrnes; 49- Hound's trail; 50- How'er; 52- Tibetan beast; 53- Shining; 57- Ululant; 61- Shake ... (hurry); 62- Measured with a watch; 64- Sunburn soother; 65- Skelton's Kadiddlehopper; 66- Idolize; 67- Support for a broken limb; 68- I could ... horse; 69- Flower segment; 70- Organs used for sight;

Down

1- Some nest eggs; 2- Stir up; 3- Kiln for drying hops; 4- Suit and dress retailer; 5- Less outgoing; 6- Bar bills; 7- Pub choice; 8- Author Hunter; 9- Ring-tailed primate; 10- "L. Robot" author; 11- Method; 12- Type of market; 13- The majority of; 21- Grown elver; 23- Iota preceder; 26- Small change; 27- Actress Verdugo; 28- Key; 29- Shut; 30- Greased; 31- Off-the-wall; 33- In play; 34- Group of 12; 35- Discharge; 37- Hot tub; 38- Poker legend Ungar; 41- City on the Missouri; 42- Love beads' locale; 47- Stain; 49- Tool with teeth; 51- Scheduled; 52- Warble; 53- Speed contest; 54- ... breve; 55- Insect-repelling chemical; 56- It may turn; 57- Mother of Ares; 58- Now ... me down...; 59- Centrepiece of the human face; 60- Comprehends; 63- Bon ...;

Yesterday's solution

I	S	N	T	I	M	A	G	E	T	O	R	T
L	O	C	H	T	A	P	E	R	I	T	A	R
L	U	A	U	A	R	E	N	A	N	O	T	E
S	P	A	R	K	L	E	R	E	S	S	A	I
S	E	E	D	Y	S	A	Y	S	M	E	R	E
C	A	C	A	O	A	W	A	R	E	D	I	M
U	G	L	Y	O	V	I	N	E	D	E	M	I
F	R	A	S	L	A	N	T	R	E	L	E	T
F	E	T	C	H	I	N	G	T	R	E	S	S
R	O	O	T	O	N	E	I					
A	S	C	A	P	P	R	E	S	S	U	R	E
R	U	E	D	S	A	I	D	A	I	R	O	N
G	I	R	L	I	N	T	E	R	O	G	L	E
O	T	O	E	R	E	A	R	S	N	E	E	R

All-rounders Stokes and Holder to lead from the front

AFP | London

Two of the world's best all-rounders in Ben Stokes and Jason Holder will be captaining their respective sides when England face the West Indies in the first Test at Southampton starting today.

Holder tops the ICC's Test all-rounder rankings, with fellow paceman Stokes in second place as international cricket resumes for the first time since March 2 following the coronavirus lockdown.

They both average in the 30s with the bat, with Holder's bowling mark of 26.37 slightly more economical than Stokes' 32.68.

But while Holder, 28, is a seasoned skipper, Wednesday's match will be the first time the 29-year-old Stokes has captained a cricket team since he was a teenager.

England's talisman has been thrust into the role, with regular skipper Joe Root missing the series opener to attend the birth of his second child.

Pace-bowling all-rounders Ian Botham and Andrew Flintoff saw their individual games decline with the cares of the England captaincy.

The concern is that something similar will happen to Stokes, a key figure in England's World Cup triumph last year when his



Ben Stokes of England celebrates hitting the winning runs to win the Ashes Test (file photo)

spectacular century also saw the team to a remarkable win over Australia in an Ashes Test at Headingley.

It appeared any chance of Stokes becoming England captain disappeared when he was charged with affray following an incident outside a Bristol nightclub.

But after being found not

guilty at a 2018 trial, he regained a position of responsibility as Root's vice-captain.

"After that happened it was 'right, what am I going to do from this point forward?'," Stokes said last week. "I'm quite proud to say I'm in this situation (of being England captain) through hard work and determination."

'Get on top of Ben'

Holder was made captain of the West Indies' one-day side aged just 23.

A year later he was put in charge of the Test side against a backdrop of administrative chaos that included bitter rows between senior players and administrators.



Jason Holder of West Indies celebrates after a match against England (file photo)

Hopefully Jason can do what's necessary to get on top of Ben in this first Test. Jason has played enough Test cricket now to know what he's working on and, mentally, he's where he wants to be.

PHIL SIMMONS

Sympathy for his plight has sometimes overshadowed recognition of his cricketing skill.

Holder, however, showed his class with an unbeaten dou-

ble century against England in the first Test at his Barbados home ground during a 381-run win last year that sent the West Indies on the way to a series victory.

"Hopefully Jason can do what's necessary to get on top of Ben in this first Test," said West Indies coach Phil Simmons.

"Jason has played enough Test cricket now to know what he's working on and, mentally, he's where he wants to be.

"I think Ben is one of them who leads from the front. That's to be shown by all his exploits before in cricket and we will have to make sure that we get on to him very early, because he likes to do what is necessary for his team."

'Beautiful' Lloris-Son row a sign Spurs are growing up: Mourinho



Tottenham Hotspur's Hugo Lloris (L), Lucas Moura (C) and Son Heung-Min react after the match

Reuters | London

The sight of Tottenham Hotspur team mates Hugo Lloris and Son Heung-min clashing at halftime during their 1-0 victory over Everton on Monday was "beautiful" and a sign that the team are growing up, manager Jose Mourinho has said.

Goalkeeper Lloris and forward Son had to be held apart by team mates shortly after Everton's Richarlison had gone close to an equaliser, with Lloris clearly angry at Son for not tracking back in the build-up to the chance.

Mourinho said his players were fired up by his criticism of their limp performance in Thursday's 3-1 defeat by Shef-

field United and said the incident showed they were demanding more of each other.

"It's beautiful," the Portuguese added. "If you want to blame somebody for that, it's me, because I was critical of my boys, because they are not critical enough with themselves, with each other.

"It's something very important for the team to grow and for that you need to demand from each other and be strong personalities.

"A team of nice boys, the only thing they can win is the Fair Play Cup, which is something that I never won and I am not interested in."

The victory was Mourinho's 200th in the Premier League and moved Spurs up to eighth.

Want Andy Murray as your private coach? Bid to win

Reuters | London

A dream private coaching session from Andy Murray will become a reality for one tennis fan after top players signed up to an initiative raising funds for professional coaches who are struggling financially during the COVID-19 shutdown.

The coronavirus shutdown of tennis has not only prevented players from earning a living since early March but also the vast majority of those who coach them.

That prompted Venezuelan Daniel Vallverdu, who has worked with Grand Slam winners like Murray, Stan Wawrinka and Juan Martin Del Potro, to reach out to other top coaches with a fundraising plan to help out their lesser-known peers.

The ATP Tour got on board and last month fans were able to bid for private sessions with celebrated tennis coaches on-site during tournaments in 2021.

"Nobody that I had called said no, so that was obviously quite uplifting in a way that everybody wanted to help," Vallverdu told Reuters from Geneva.

"I basically called them and said 'look let's start off with our coaches offering some of our time for next year and then I'll contact the tournaments and ATP to see how we can all work together to try and create some nice experiences as options'."



Andy Murray hits a return during a match (file photo)

Top names like Paul Annacone, Boris Becker, Darren Cahill, Brad Gilbert, Goran Ivanisevic, Ivan Lendl, Ivan Ljubicic and Patrick Mouratoglou got involved and more than \$90,000 was pledged.

The second round of auction, from July 6-27, will feature a private coaching session with Murray at Wimbledon, including two tickets to the 2020 men's singles final and lunch at the member's enclosure.

"It was really nice to see that everybody was pulling in the same direction and was extremely supportive of it," said

Vallverdu, who was signed up to coach women's world number three Karolina Pliskova this season.

"It's not normal in our sport to see everybody working together. So hopefully this would be a good platform so we can all in future have a little bit more connection when it comes down to the coaches at events or with the tour itself."

The second round of auction will also offer sessions with Wawrinka, Grigor Dimitrov and Feliciano Lopez as well as coaches like Carlos Moya and Toni Nadal, the uncle and for-

mer long-time coach of Rafa Nadal.

Fans can also bid for a frame featuring four signed rackets from Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Nadal and Murray with additional details available on ATP's website <http://www.atp-tour.com>.

"I am personally very happy to be involved," said former number one Murray. "So many areas of our sport have been affected throughout the Tour suspension, including coaches. It's important we help each other where we can."

Minister, committee discuss society for sports medicine and sciences

TDT | Manama

Minister of Youth and Sports Ayman Bin Tawfiq Al Moayyad held a virtual meeting with Dr. Jamal Mohammed Saleh, Chairman of the advisory committee to establish the society for sports medicine and sciences and committee members.

The committee is in line with the decisions issued by His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, National Security Adviser and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports at the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports meeting to establish the society as a pioneering initiative in the region.

The initiative is also in line with the decisions of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Vice-President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Chairman of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, and Chairman of the



Ayman Bin Tawfiq Al Moayyad

Coordination, Execution and Follow-up Committee "Estijabah" (Response) of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, aimed at establishing the committee according to sports requirements.

The minister praised the great experiences of the chairman and members of the committee and the high potentials that they would harness to reach the goals for which the committee was formed, wishing them success in laying the ideal foundations for the establishment of the society.

Guardiola urges Man City players to cut out errors

● City have already clinched the League Cup title earlier this season and are hoping to end the season with a treble by lifting the Champions League and FA Cup trophies

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola has urged his Manchester City side to cut out individual errors or risk finishing the season with a whimper.

City lost their Premier League crown to Liverpool last month but can still add the FA Cup and the Champions League to their League Cup win in March.

The dethroned champions, who host Newcastle on Wednesday, have lost nine league matches this season, including a 1-0 defeat to Southampton at the weekend.

That compares with just six Premier League defeats combined in the previous two seasons, as City were twice crowned English champions.

Guardiola's team face Arsenal in the FA Cup semi-final later this month and are well-placed to qualify for the Champions League quarter-finals after win-



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola during training (file photo)

ning the first leg of their last-16 match against Real Madrid 2-1.

"We have still incredible targets to fight, to try and play good and this is the most important thing," Guardiola said at his pre-match press conference yesterday.

"We are in the point where we sometimes make mistakes," he added. "We have to avoid it."

"If it happens like against Southampton, Tottenham and

Norwich away we will be out and Arsenal will be in the (FA Cup) final and (Real) Madrid will go through."

Despite defeats at Chelsea and Southampton since football resumed following the coronavirus shutdown, Guardiola has no doubts about the attitude of his players.

"I was worried how would be our approach but we have been incredible," he said. "The



Guardiola believes his players have struggled for consistency in recent weeks, with a 1-0 Premier League defeat by Southampton on Sunday serving a timely reminder that they cannot afford to be complacent at this stage of the season

performance was there and this makes me confident the team will not be relaxed."

The British government has said selected international sports stars travelling to Britain will be granted exemption from quarantine requirements.

This would allow the delayed second leg of City's Champions League tie against Real Madrid in August to take place at the Etihad Stadium but a final decision is still to be made by European football's governing body UEFA.

Guardiola said: "We want to play in Manchester, that is normal, but we will accept playing where UEFA decide to play."

Alonso set for F1 return with Renault in 2021



Fernando Alonso

Reuters | London

Two-time world champion Fernando Alonso is set to return to Formula One with Renault in 2021, the BBC reported.

Alonso, who left Formula One at the end of 2018 after a final season with McLaren, won his championship titles with Renault in 2005 and 2006.

The Spaniard, 38, has made no secret of his desire to return

to the Formula One grid, with the French manufacturer having a vacancy.

Alonso could join Frenchman Esteban Ocon and replace Australian Daniel Ricciardo, who is moving to McLaren at the end of the 2020 season.

"I don't know if he is going to join or not with us but definitely if he could come back here I'd be very happy," Ocon said last week.

Renault were not immediately available for comment.

Bahrain Jiu-Jitsu Federation holds training course

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Jiu-Jitsu Federation held a training course for referees via video conference.

The course was part of the training programme which was drawn-up by the Bahrain Martial Arts Council, chaired by Shaikh Salman bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa.

The programme aims to develop national competences, hone their skills, which would benefit martial arts sports in Bahrain.

Dustin Ortiz latest top name to sign on for BRAVE CF's Flyweight division

TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation continues to bolster up its Flyweight division, with the addition of several top names. After Sean Santella signed a multi-fight deal with the fastest-growing MMA organization in the world, and Marcel Adur renewed his commitment with the Bahraini brand, Dustin Ortiz is the latest Flyweight fighter to sign with BRAVE CF.

At 31, Ortiz is on the prime of his career and holds a record of 19 wins and eight losses, which includes a KO victory over fellow BRAVE CF fighter Matheus Nicolau, who now fights at Bantamweight, as well as a decision in his favor against BRAVE CF



Dustin Ortiz

Flyweight Zach Makovsky.

Out of his 19 career victories, Dustin has 12 wins by stoppage, an impressive number for a Flyweight. The American Roufusport representative won seven fights by KO/TKO, and four by submission. He holds notable wins over Alexandre Pantoja, Justin Scoggins, and Ray Borg.

Ortiz will come into an impressive roster at 57kg for BRAVE CF, joining the likes of his countryman Jose "Shorty" Torres, the aforementioned Sean Santella, Marcel Adur, and Zach Makovsky, as well as Sambo world champion Veli-murad Alkhasov, and IMMAF world champions Muhammad Mokaev and Abdul Hussein.

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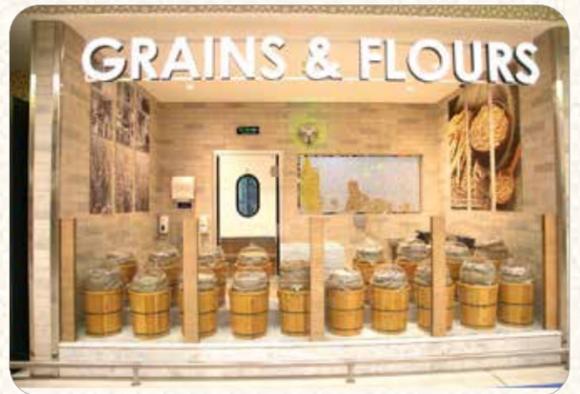
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