

Fakhreddine to face Cortese in Romania

Mohammad Fakhreddine returns against Enrico Cortese, headlines BRAVE CF 35 in Bucharest | P 08

Priyanka appointed ambassador of Toronto International Film Festival

BUSINESS 5 LuLu Dana just got bigger, better



مملكة البحرين
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

BE Determined

Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19)

No COVID-19 deaths for successive days

TDT | Manama

There were zero deaths from the coronavirus (COVID-19) reported by the Ministry of Health yesterday for the second day in a row.

This follows more than a month of multiple virus-related casualties daily since the beginning of June. 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 9,391 COVID-19 tests conducted yesterday, 610 new cases were detected -- 339 expatriate workers, 265 contacts of active cases, and six travel-related cases.

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL CASES
30,931

ACTIVE CASES
4,760

DEATHS
98

DISCHARGED
26,073

NEW CASES
610

CRITICAL
56

210 fils (includes VAT)



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Determination call in virus fight

National Taskforce for Combatting COVID-19 highlights newest developments in fight against disease

● **Current recovery rate in the Kingdom stands at 83.85 per cent of cases, with a 0.32 per cent death rate**

TDT | Manama

The National Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus (COVID-19) called for continued determination yesterday as the Kingdom steps up its fight against the deadly respiratory disease.

The message was delivered during a press conference held at the Crown Prince Centre for Training and Medical Research at the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Hospital, to highlight measures taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

In attendance were National Taskforce members including Ministry of Health undersecretary Dr Waleed Khalifa Al Manea, BDF Hospital Infectious Disease Consultant and Microbiologist Lt Col Dr Manaf Al Qahtani and Salmaniya Medical Complex Infectious and Internal Diseases Consultant Dr. Jameela Al Salman,



Speaking at the conference, from left, were Dr Al Salman, Dr Al Qahtani, Dr Al Manea and Dr Al Ansari

along with Supreme Council of Health Public Hospital Autonomy project manager Lt Col Dr Ahmed Mohammed Al Ansari.

Dr Al Manea said that with the support of the Kingdom's citizens and residents, Bahrain's comprehensive approach towards battling the spread of COVID-19 has gained wide international recognition, most recently from World Health Organisation director-general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

He explained that the current recovery rate in the Kingdom is at 83.85 per cent, with a 0.32 per cent death rate.

He noted that isolation centre capacity was at 34 per cent, with 2,839 out of 8,357 beds occupied at the time of the conference; and

1,814 asymptomatic cases were under optional home self-isolation having met the set criteria.

Meanwhile, Dr Al Qahtani recognised the importance of adhering to all COVID-19 safety measures and highlighted the latest action Bahrain has taken against the spread of the virus.

Among them is the visit of an Italian medical delegation to strengthen the bridge of cooperation and exchange knowledge on COVID-19 treatment protocols.

Another is that the BDF Hospital has installed portable chambers to isolate suspected COVID-19 cases, with 3mx3m chambers equipped with all the technology available at standard isolation rooms while undergoing 48 air changes per hour, allowing for the

18

days since doubling of cases has occurred in Bahrain

safe transfer of suspected cases.

For his part, Dr Al Ansari reviewed COVID-19 indicators. He noted that the doubling time—the time that it takes for cases infected with the virus to double—for total cases stood at 21 days until June 19, with no doubling occurring during the past 18 days to

date.

The doubling time between Bahrainis stood at 12 days on June 13 with no doubling occurring during the past 24 days. The doubling time between expatriate workers stood at 21 days on June 4, with no doubling occurring during the past 33 days.

Dr Al Ansari explained that the percentage of new active cases compared to recovered cases ranged between 0.6 per cent and 1.4 per cent new cases for every new recovery, an average of 1.2 per cent, compared to 0.7 per cent to 1.9 per cent during the first two weeks of June.

Dr Al Ansari then further noted that the average percentage of positive tests in the past two weeks ranged between 4.3 per cent to 10 per cent, with an average of 6.5 per cent, compared to 4.7 per cent to 9 per cent for the period of June 1 to 14.

In terms of the basic reproductive ratio for the past two weeks, Dr Al Ansari added that it ranged between 1.1 and 1.4, a significant decrease compared to the period between June 1 to 14.

A ratio of 1 is necessary in order for Bahrain to successfully overcome all COVID-19 challenges, he highlighted.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT A TOP PRIORITY

Saudi Arabia will provide jobs for a million Saudi women by 2030

Al Arabiya | Dubai

Saudi Arabia aims to provide jobs for around one million Saudi Arabian women by 2030 as part of its Vision 2030 reform plan, said an official at the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations in Geneva, Mishaal al-Balawi on Tuesday.

“The Saudi Vision 2030 and the National Transformation



Women hold their daughters as they visit the Four Seasons Skyline Tower, in Riyadh. Courtesy AP

Program 2020 have put women empowerment among their most important priorities,” Al-Balawi said.

Vision 2030, a reform plan presented by Saudi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, aims to diversify the country's economy and increase women's participation in the labour force.

“The Kingdom has banned

discrimination against women in jobs and ensured equalization of women with men in their wages, and enhanced awareness about the importance of women's participation in the employment market.”

In recent years, the Kingdom has encouraged Saudi Arabian women to enter dozens of male-dominated fields, according to al-Balawi.

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Condolences sent to Saudi leadership



HM the King



HRH the Prime Minister



HRH the Crown Prince

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa sent a cable of condolences to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud over the demise of Prince Khalid bin Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

HM the King prayed to Allah Almighty to bless the deceased with mercy, rest his soul in vast paradise and provide the Saudi royal family with patience and consolation. 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 also sent cables of condolences to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. HRH the Prime Minister and HRH the Crown Prince sent similar cables of condolences to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

HISTORIC SPORTING ACHIEVEMENT



Our very own, home-grown Bahraini international football star Abdulla Yousuf recently celebrated a landmark achievement to be marked in history. He managed to clinch the Czech First League title with his team Slavia Prague. This historic achievement marked the first time ever that a footballer from the Kingdom of Bahrain won a major European domestic league championship. It was the second successive league title for the team, Slavia Prague, and their sixth since the Czech championship was founded back in the year 1993. The winning team had also qualified for the UEFA Champions League for the second year in a row, with this achievement. Left, Yousuf flaunts the Bahrain national flag with pride as he celebrates the landmark win with the champions' trophy. Picture courtesy Al Ayam.

Bahrain Radio, the nation's voice

The Information Minister calls Bahrain Radio a partner in national achievements; great leap into digital broadcasting: Information officials



The Information Minister during his visit to the studio

● Development project falls under the Government Action Plan and Bahrain Economic Vision 2030

● Live audio-visual broadcasting on the Internet and TV

● Upgrading monitoring and control rooms and sound equipment

TDT | Manama

Information Affairs Minister, Ali bin Mohammed Al-Romaihi, yesterday inaugurated the first phase of the technical development project of Bahrain Radio studios.

The project is part of the Information Ministry's efforts to enhance media work and cope with the latest developments in the media, communication and information technology sector, in accordance with the Government Action Plan and the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030.

While inspecting the workflow at radio studios, along with the Information Ministry Undersecretary, Dr Abdulrahman Mohammed Bahar, and senior officials, the minister highly valued Bahrain Radio's achievements over the past eight decades.

Al-Romaihi was briefed by Bahrain Radio Director, Younes Salman, about the main aspects of the technical development project in its first phase, as well



INFORMATION MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY, DR ABDULRAHMAN MOHAMMED BAHAR

“There is now a harmonious mix of promising youth, great talents and outstanding efforts to promote the leadership of Bahrain Radio”

as the modernisation of the digital equipment in broadcasting, work management and archiving in seven radio studios.

Salman also informed him about the inauguration of live audio-visual broadcasting on the Internet and TV, upgrading of the monitoring and control rooms, sound equipment and the production of HD programmes.

The minister stressed that Bahrain Radio has, throughout its long history, embodied the real spirit of effective and national media, being the voice of the nation and its message of development, peace and progress.

He praised their dedication in carrying out their duties in

cooperation with Team Bahrain to confront the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, citing their contributions to raising public awareness on COVID-19.

He also asserted that the ministry will continue its training programmes to prepare highly-qualified and trained national media and technical competencies in order to support its efforts to deliver a credible, trustworthy, influential and sustainable media message through various news and digital platforms, including social media. He lauded the Bahraini media sector's strides towards credibility, honesty, professionalism, efficiency and high quality.

“The digital transformation and the introduction of new technologies in various aspects of radio work aims to make a qualitative shift to enhance competition with other media and to reach audiences through various modern communication devices. It also enhances its active presence in the service of the country, the citizens and the residents, and keeps abreast of the progress of the Kingdom's comprehensive development and civilizational achievements during the prosperous era of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa,” said Dr Bahar.

The Ministry Undersecretary added that “there is now a harmonious mix of promising youth, great talents and outstanding efforts to promote the leadership of Bahrain Radio.”

The Assistant Undersecretary for radio and television, Abdullah Khalid Al Dossari, pointed out that today's media is facing great challenges to keep pace with the speed of broadcasting news and information.

The new technical equipment of the studios is a remarkable milestone in developing Bahrain Radio further, he added.



Facilities at the studio

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COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RECEIVES SCH PRESIDENT



Bahrain Defence Force commander-in-chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa received Supreme Council of Health (SCH)'s president Dr Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa yesterday for a meeting. The commander-in-chief praised SCH's constant efforts for all citizens and residents in Bahrain through developing health services and improving quality in various medical specialties. Above, the BDF commander-in-chief (right) with the SCH president.

HM THE KING'S DIPLOMATIC AFFAIRS
ADVISOR RECEIVES GERMAN AMBASSADOR



Advisor to His Majesty the King for diplomatic affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa received German Ambassador to Bahrain Kai Boeckmann yesterday. Shaikh Khalid lauded Bahraini-German relations and he said that cooperation and coordination between the two countries are moving forward steadily. He wished the German diplomat success in his mission. The ambassador expressed Germany's pride in their strong relations with Bahrain and its keenness on broadening cooperation in all areas. Above, Shaikh Al Khalifa (right) with Boeckmann.



HH Shaikh Nasser addresses the students in a video. Pictures courtesy Al Ayam

Shaikha Hessa Girls' School
holds graduation ceremony

TDT | Manama

Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, wife of His Majesty the King, Shaikha Hessa Girls' School held a graduation ceremony for its class of 2020.

A total of 32 pupils were a part of the school's 13th batch of secondary school graduates.

His Majesty the King's Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs representative, National Security Advisor, Supreme Defence Council (SDC) secretary-general and Supreme Council for Youth and Sport



One of the graduates receives her diploma

chairman, Major-General His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, addressed the graduates in a video.

The annual ceremony was held in the vicinity of Bahrain National Museum, following all health and safety measures issued by authorities in light of

the current conditions related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In attendance were the students and their family members, special guests, members of the school's board of directors, as well as administrative staff and teachers.

Bilateral relations upheld

- Farewell ceremony held for US Ambassador to Bahrain
- Letter of thanks received from Danish counterpart
- Phone call received from OIC Secretary-General

TDT | Manama

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, yesterday held a farewell ceremony at the Ministry's General Court for the outgoing US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Justin Hicks Siberell.

The Foreign Minister presented the Ambassador with a commemorative gift marking the occasion, wishing him further success.

Dr Al Zayani lauded the strong relations and ongoing strategic partnerships between the two countries, which is witnessing



Dr Al Zayani presenting Ambassador Siberell with a gift during his farewell

development and growth at all levels.

He highlighted the Ambassador's efforts in promoting Bahraini-American relations between the two friendly countries.

Siberell extended his thanks

and appreciation to the Foreign Minister and all officials in the Kingdom for helping him carry out his duties. The ceremony ended with the Ambassador wishing further development, prosperity and growth in bilateral relations to Bahrain.

Also present at the ceremony were, the Assistant Foreign Minister, Abdulla bin Faisal bin Jabur Al Doseri, Bahrain Diplomatic Corps dean and Omani Ambassador, Abdulla bin Rashid bin Ali Al-Medelwi, MOFA international affairs undersecretary,



Kofod

Shaikh Dr Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, MOFA regional and GCC affairs undersecretary, Waheed Mubarak Sayyar, the Foreign Ministry's Undersecretary, Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Daij Al Khalifa, and the U.S. Embassy Deputy Chargé d'Affaires, Jerry Tavares.

Bahrain's hospitality and protection thanked

Dr Al Zayani received a special letter of thanks yesterday from the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeppe Kofod.

Kofod expressed his thanks and appreciation to Bahrain for the care and hospitality it offered to Danish citizens who

were on the Bruxelles tanker, getting them to safety and ensuring their safe return home in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

He also hailed the course of the friendly relations between Bahrain and Denmark in all areas based on fondness and appreciation, wishing the Kingdom further development.

Phone call from OIC Secretary-General

The Foreign Affairs Minister received another phone call yesterday from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) secretary-general, Dr Yousef Al-Othaimeen.

Dr Al-Othaimeen lauded the great efforts exerted by the Kingdom of Bahrain in combating the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and maintaining the safety of citizens and residents, wishing the Kingdom of Bahrain further development.

Dr Al Zayani in turn, lauded OIC's prominent work towards the cooperation and joint coordination among member states. A number of topics and issues of common concern were also discussed during the call.

DEFENCE MINISTER RECEIVES SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE



Defence Affairs Minister, Lieutenant-General Abdulla bin Hassan Al Nuaimi, received Military Attache at the Saudi embassy to Bahrain, Brigadier General Fahad bin Ibrahim Al-Thunayan yesterday. The minister hailed Bahraini-Saudi relations and they discussed aspects of joint military cooperation and coordination during the meeting.

FINANCE MINISTER RECEIVES US AMBASSADOR



Minister of Finance and National Economy Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa received yesterday the outgoing US Ambassador to Bahrain, Justin Siberell. He hailed Bahraini-American relations and growing bilateral cooperation mainly in the financial and economic field. He also emphasised the need to further boost bilateral relations, while wishing the US Ambassador every success in his future duties. The US ambassador expressed thanks and respect to the Finance Minister, wishing Bahrain and its people further growth and prosperity. Above, the Minister (right) with the outgoing ambassador.

BD36 million in total fines issued in major money laundering operation

● **Five officials sentenced to five years in jail each and given \$1 million fines apiece; while the four banks involved were also fined \$1 million each**

TDT | Manama

A total of BD36 million in fines was issued yesterday by the High Criminal Court against four banks and five officials in-

volved in a massive money laundering operation.

Chief Prosecutor Mohamed Jamal Sultan said yesterday that the verdicts were issued in five new cases involving five officials from Bahrain-based Future Bank, as well as three Iranian banks, reported our sister paper Al Ayam.

Fund transfers made by the banks amounting to around \$1 million was also ordered to be confiscated.

The court ruled in each case to convict all of the accused, and to punish the officials of Future

Bank with a prison sentence of five years apiece while fining them the amount of \$1 million each.

In addition to this, each of the banks involved have also been fined \$1 million.

Previously in this case, investigations had uncovered a plan that permitted Iranian entities, including those implicated in funding terrorism or which are under international sanctions, to carry out international transactions while avoiding organisational auditing.

It had been found that Future

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Thousands of international financial transactions were conducted, while providing covers for the Iranian entities there through deliberate concealment or removal of basic information, as they remitted money via the SWIFT network

Bank, which is operating in Bahrain under the supervision of Bank Melli Iran and the Export Development Bank of Iran, had

carried out thousands of international financial transactions, while providing covers for the Iranian entities there through

deliberate concealment or removal of basic information while remitting money via the SWIFT network.

The Public Prosecution here investigated the matter and referred the Future Bank officials and the other implicated banks to the court for trial, as per the anti-money laundering and combatting funding terrorism law.

Sultan added yesterday that the Public Prosecution is still continuing with its investigations with other related issues operation.

Northern Governorate projects discussed



The Northern Governor chairs the meeting

TDT | Manama

Northern Governor Ali bin Al Shaikh Al Asfour chaired a remote meeting in which projects related to the governorate were discussed.

In attendance were Deputy Governor Brig Khalid bin Rabia Sinan Al Dossary, members of the Council of Representatives, personnel from government agencies, and a number of governorate officials.

The Northern Governor praised the efforts made by Team Bahrain, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to address the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

He praised the constructive cooperation between the governorate and government agencies in implementing the

directives of the Interior Minister, which includes setting up a mechanism to reduce the density of expatriate labourers in their accommodations.

He briefed the council on these measures and discussed ways to support the ongoing efforts, such as providing information related to real estate owners before taking administrative and legal measures that guarantee social distancing in overcrowded housing.

The council also discussed steps taken by the governorate in preparation for its accreditation in the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities programme.

The infrastructure was reviewed in A'ali and the Ramli village project, especially with regard to sanitation, where it was noted that the percentage of sewage connection in A'ali exceeds 85 per cent.

The Northern Governor pointed to the projects that are being pursued in A'ali, through communicating with the people, forming committees in partnership with civil society, and analysing the health and social situation, in addition to continuous evaluation of ways to preserve the pottery industry and develop furnaces for burning pottery work.

An initiative was also discussed to provide sterilisation equipment to families in A'ali, within the promotion of precautionary and preventive measures and spreading health awareness.

The issue of infrastructure availability was also reviewed for the Salmabad industrial area.

Man submits fake certification gets three years' jail

TDT | Manama

A man who presented fake certificates to the Education Ministry for attestation was sentenced to three years in jail yesterday by the High Criminal Court.

This was confirmed in a press statement by the Public Prosecution's Southern Governorate chief prosecutor Shaikh Abdullah bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa.

Shaikh Abdullah said the Public Prosecution had received a notification from the Education Ministry, reporting that the defendant had submitted forged academic certificates for attestation.

The chief prosecutor explained that one of the certificates was claimed to be issued from a university in an Arab country, while the second certificate, a secondary education certificate, was claimed to be issued by another country.

"The Public Prosecution launched a probe into the case and heard the testimony of the employees at the Ministry's foreign certificates' attestation department; the investigation

”
The investigation revealed that the Ministry's claims are correct and that the defendant had forged both certificates with the assistance of an Arab accomplice

PUBLIC PROSECUTION'S SOUTHERN GOVERNORATE CHIEF PROSECUTOR SHAIKH ABDULLAH BIN ABDULRAHMAN AL KHALIFA

revealed that the Ministry's claims are correct and that the defendant had forged both certificates with the assistance of an Arab accomplice," Shaikh Abdullah mentioned in the statement.

He also said that the defendant was interrogated and he confessed to counterfeiting the certificates and knowingly submitting it to the Education Ministry for attestation.

Shaikh Abdullah added: "The man was referred to the High Criminal Court for trial and the court issued the above-mentioned verdict in the case."

Shrimping ban violators arrested

TDT | Manama

Three men have been arrested for violating the shrimping ban, the Ministry of Interior announced last night.

This follows the report of the Coast Guard Commander, who said that land back-up patrols have detained the individuals in separate cases.

Different quantities of shrimps were seized from them, said the Ministry.

Legal proceedings have been taken to refer the cases to the Public Prosecution.

The officials indicated that the municipality formed a working group that tours the fish markets in the governorate on a daily basis to ensure the implementation of the decision as well as to control the violators and transfer them to the competent authorities to take legal measures towards them.

Officials noted that the aim of the inspection campaigns was to make sure all fish-sellers adhere to the official decision that has been issued to ban fishing and selling of shrimps caught in the territorial waters of the Kingdom of Bahrain for the season.

● **Bahraini drug dealer receives five-year sentence and BD3,000 fine; Thai women spared from jail time for cooperation with police, but ordered to be permanently deported**

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court on Tuesday announced its final verdict in a case involving a Bahraini man and two Thai sisters, who together formed a gang to smuggle drugs into the Kingdom and sell them here.

The Bahraini man was sentenced to five years of imprisonment and was fined BD3,000. The court spared the Thai women from spending time in jail, considering their cooperation with the police, resulting in the

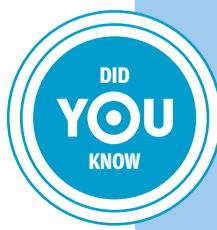


Representational image courtesy Reuters

arrest of the drug dealer. However, the sisters were ordered to be permanently deported.

The case was revealed in March this year, when one of the

sisters was caught with quantities of narcotic substance in her possession while entering Bahrain coming from Thailand through Bahrain International



Methamphetamine and amphetamine are central nervous system stimulants that are both highly addictive. Methamphetamine, also known as meth or speed, among other names, is mainly used as a recreational drug; while amphetamine, which is a medication for certain conditions, can be used as an athletic performance enhancer and cognitive enhancer, and recreationally as an aphrodisiac and euphoriant

Airport. Court files showed that customs officers at the airport suspected the woman and sent her for an intensified inspection. There, X-rays showed that several bags of narcotics were hidden in electronic devices, such as massage machines, hairdryers and headsets.

The woman confessed to the crime on the spot and agreed to cooperate with the police and lead them to her accomplices, who were her sister and the Bahraini defendant.

A team of policewomen accompanied the woman to arrest her sister, who arrived at the

airport to pick her up.

After confronting her with the crime and collected evidence, the sister also confessed and agreed to cooperate with the police.

The sisters told them police that their Bahraini co-defendant would contact certain individuals in Thailand to buy methamphetamine and amphetamine from them. One of the Thai women's missions was to collect the drugs and traffic it into Bahrain.

The other Thai woman would receive the electronic devices from her sister and deliver it to the Bahraini man, who takes the substance out of the devices, and then cuts, weighs, distributes and sells them to customers here. The sisters led the police to their Bahraini accomplice and they all stood trial before the High Criminal Court for the charges of trafficking narcotics into the Kingdom, as well as illegal possession and peddling drugs.

Saudi nominates candidate to head WTO: document



Saudi Arabia submitted royal court advisor Mohammed Al-Tuwaijri

Reuters | Geneva

Saudi Arabia nominated a former economy and planning minister to head the World Trade Organisation yesterday, a WTO document showed, amid a last-minute flurry of submissions to succeed the incumbent Roberto Azevedo who is stepping down in August.

“The following communication, nominating Mr Mohammad Maziad Al-Tuwaijri for the position of Director-General, has been received from the Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 8 July 2020,” a WTO document showed.

Muhammad Al-Tuwaijri became an adviser to the royal court in March, Saudi Arabia’s state news agency said, retain-

ing the rank of minister. UK nominates Fox

Meanwhile, an other report said Britain will nominate former trade secretary Liam Fox as its candidate to be the next director general of the World Trade Organisation.

“Dr Fox is a passionate advocate of multilateralism, who brings detailed knowledge of the global trading system from his years as a UK Cabinet Minister and Secretary of State for International Trade,” Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in a statement.

“He has first-hand experience of the political and technical challenges of negotiating trade agreements, and the reforms that are needed to ensure the global trading system truly delivers for all WTO members.”

Tesla China sold 14,954 Model 3 vehicles in June, up 35pc on the month



Tesla China-made Model 3 vehicles are seen during a delivery event at its factory in Shanghai, China

Reuters | Beijing

US electric vehicle maker Tesla Inc sold 14,954 Shanghai-made Model 3 vehicles in China in June, up 35% month-on-month, according to the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA).

Tesla sold 11,095 vehicles in May, up from around 3,635 units in April, CPCA data showed. CPCA uses a different counting method than Tesla’s deliveries.

Tesla did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

SBI to invest \$331 million in Yes Bank

Reuters | Bengaluru

State bank of India, country’s largest lender’s executive committee has approved a further investment of upto 17.60 billion rupees (\$331 million) in public offering of Yes Bank, according to a regulatory filing.

In March this year, SBI board had approved an investment of 72.50 billion rupees into the troubled lender Yes Bank.

Earlier this year the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had taken control of Yes Bank, after the bad-debt laden lender had failed to raise the capital it needed to stay above mandat-



Earlier this year the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had taken control of Yes Bank

ed regulatory requirements.

Since then SBI had stepped in to acquire a stake in the private lender and to keep it afloat. However, SBI’s total investment is not likely to exceed 100 billion rupees, according to the bank’s chairman.



LuLu Dana just got bigger, better

Dana Mall store is now 40pc larger with many new food trends



In pictures, the revamped LuLu Hypermarket which is now 40 per cent larger

TDT | Manama

LuLu Hypermarket’s Dana Mall flagship store has expanded to serve up whole new shopping experience for eager Bahrain shoppers.

Now 40 per cent larger, the store has embraced many new food trends, emphasizing healthy eating and variety as well as convenience and the trademark LuLu quality and price benefits.

“The LuLu journey in the Kingdom of Bahrain began at Dana Mall in 2007 and we are humbled at the warmth with which the Bahrain customer has welcomed us and facilitated our growth to eight hypermarkets across the country,” said

Director of LuLu Group International, Juzer Rupawala. “As part of the economic promise of our Chairman and Managing Director Yusuffali MA, we have transformed this first hypermarket into a place where customers can find variety, quality and a reflection of the latest retail trends.”

In this first phase of the expansion, the hypermarket level boasts of many new and attractive features. Fastidious shoppers can have the benefit of choosing their own grain and getting it milled into flour while they shop in the new flour mill section. There will be a wide range of organic grains as well as lesser-known millets to choose from and customers can

even choose the fineness of the milling to suit special recipes.

The popular LuLu Hot Foods section has been extended and a variety of culinary live stations added to it: you can choose from Oriental dim sum to Japanese sushi or opt for India tawa and tandoor preparations ranging from bread to dosa, all prepared once you order.

The LuLu Bakery with its speciality breads, cakes and treats has been expanded as well and shoppers can expect a new range of goodies baked to golden perfection by LuLu’s talented bakers.

Those wanting ready-to-go healthy options can choose from a colourful salad bar with vegetables, fruit, fish and meat

as well as a ‘Soup of the Day’ special. The frozen foods section has also been expanded and there will be many new varieties of foods and ingredients from all over the world.

If all the shopping makes you feel peckish, stop by at the in-store café for a refreshing cuppa, and a range of freshly prepared goodies.

To accommodate the influx of more shoppers, the hypermarket management has thoughtfully provided more checkout counters – there will be a total of 27 counters for customers’ convenience.

A spokesperson for the group said that the second phase will see a much larger department store on the second level.

Major Gulf bourses retreat; Egypt resumes gains

Reuters

Major Gulf stock markets ended lower yesterday, with financials and property shares weighing on indexes in the United Arab Emirates, while the Egyptian bourse advanced on the back of its top lender.

Dubai’s main share index declined 0.7 per cent, with blue-chip developer Emaar Properties shedding 1.8pc and sharia-compliant lender Dubai Islamic Bank losing 1pc.

Elsewhere, Amlak Finance tumbled 4.1pc, a day after it saw its biggest intraday gain Since December 2019.

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▼ 0.1pc to 7,394 pts
ABU DHABI	▼ 0.7pc to 4,312 pts
DUBAI	▼ 0.7pc to 2,083 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.2pc to 9,225 pts
EGYPT	▲ 0.7pc to 11,128 pts
BAHRAIN	▼ 0.2pc to 1,283 pts
OMAN	▼ 0.3pc to 3,494 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 0.4pc at 5,617 pts

On Monday, Amlak signed an agreement with Dubai Land Department, allowing customers to invest in properties listed by the firm.

In Abu Dhabi, the index lost

0.7pc, hurt by a 1.6pc fall in the country’s largest lender First Abu Dhabi Bank and a 2.8pc slide in Dana Gas.

The energy firm has asked owners of its bonds to provide information on their holdings, three sources said and a document reviewed by Reuters showed, a move that some investors fear may be a step towards another debt restructuring.

Egypt’s blue-chip index gained 0.7pc, driven by a 0.9pc increase in Commercial International Bank.

Egypt’s net foreign reserves recovered some ground lost during the coronavirus out-

break, rising to \$38.2 billion in June from \$36 billion in May, the central bank said on Tuesday.

The benchmark index in Saudi Arabia, which has the highest number of cases in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, edged down 0.1pc. Yanbu National Petrochemicals fell 3pc, while Saudi Arabia Fertilizers retreated 2.4pc.

However, the losses were limited by gains at insurers including Company For Cooperative Insurance, which leapt 7.6pc.

Qatar’s index slipped 0.2pc, with market heavyweight Industries Qatar losing 1.1pc.

With social media in tumult, Parler draws conservatives

● **Parler has grown -- now claiming more than two million users**

AFP | San Francisco

Amid rising turmoil in social media, recently formed social network Parler is gaining with prominent political conservatives who claim their voices are being silenced by Silicon Valley giants. Parler, founded in Nevada in 2018, bills itself as an alternative to “ideological suppression” at other social networks.

Parler has grown -- now claiming more than two million users -- as Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and Google fight demonstrably false information and content that could trigger violence.

The list of accounts recommended to follow at Parler is packed with conservative Republican politicians and commentators, along with the campaign to re-elect President Donald Trump.

Republican Senator Ted Cruz of Texas said he was a proud new user of Parler because the social network “gets what free speech is all about.”

“Parler was founded on the principle that every individual has the right to speak and be heard,” said an open statement from chief executive John Matze, who co-founded Parler with fellow University of Denver graduate Jared Thomson.

“We reject censors and censorship.”

Parler is not the first social platform created over concerns of political bias. It follows the limited success of networks including Gab and Voat which aimed at conservatives feeling



Senator Ted Cruz is one of several prominent conservative Republicans using the social platform Parler, claiming that it “gets” the notion of free speech



“Parler was founded on the principle that every individual has the right to speak and be heard,” said an open statement from chief executive John Matze, who co-founded Parler with fellow University of Denver graduate Jared Thomson.

out of place on the mainstream platforms.

But the path to financial success is likely to be challenging for Parler, which is dwarfed by the far larger networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

Silicon Valley firms take in billions in ad revenue each year, despite a growing boycott which mainly targets Facebook over toxic content and “hate” speech.

Matze, who started Parler with funds from friends, told Forbes of a plan to make money by matching advertisers with influential conservatives popular at Parler.

“Venue for bigotry?”

The platform has become home to Republican lawmakers including Senator Rand Paul, and right-wing activists kicked off other social media. Trump’s son Eric is also a member.

But Matze told CNBC he wants to broaden the platform to all political voices and offered a \$20,000 “bounty” for an openly liberal pundit with 50,000 followers on Twitter or Facebook. “Any platform that tries to bill

itself as only for conservatives or only for liberals is not going to be successful because conservatives want to talk to liberals, if not antagonize them, and vice versa,” said Shannon McGregor, a professor and social media researcher at the University of North Carolina.

Parler at the moment is “just a blip” on the social media radar, according to McGregor and University of Hartford professor Adam Chiara.

Chiara suggested that Parler is a product of a free market system providing a venue for bigotry, hate and misinformation not welcomed on mainstream social networking platforms.

“If Parler decides that’s what they want on their platform, questionable things like bigoted views, that is the decision the company makes,” Chiara said.

Searches on an array of racist or anti-semitic terms at Parler turned up troves of accounts and comments.

A “lynchmob561” profile described the user as “proud white female Trump supporter.”

An array of accounts played off “Boogaloo,” a movement promoting a civil war, which was recently banned by Facebook.

Parler’s policies appear to be “daring someone to post something so offensive they will have to pull it down, and they will be in the unenviable position Facebook has been in since 2016,” McGregor said.

No sex, no feces

Parler did not respond to a request for an interview but Matze has outlined the platform’s mission.

“We reject technofascism and those who think they are the sole arbiters of truth,” Matze said in a post aimed at Parler rivals.

“We reject their biased editorial panels, we reject their ‘fact

checkers’ and we reject censorship.”

Parler’s terms of service, however, state the startup can remove content for “any reason or no reason.” The platform bars pictures of fecal matter, profanity, pornography, obscene user names, male genitalia and female nipples.

“You cannot threaten to kill anyone in the comment section,” Matze said.

Parler also said it bans spam, “terrorist organisations” and “any direct and very personal insult with the intention to stir and upset the recipient” including comments “that would lead to violence.”

“Parler doesn’t seem to necessarily be quite as free as they make themselves out to be,” McGregor said.

“They do have guidelines that are as vague as those at Facebook and Twitter in terms of allowing the platform maximum interpretive flexibility.”



Parler is a United States-based social networking service launched in August 2018, regarded as an alternative to Twitter. It is marketed as an unbiased, free-speech social media platform focused on protecting users’ rights.



John Matze, 27, the founder of Parler, a new social media app

At the start, the app got a number of lucky boosts. During a networking lunch in 2018, Matze struck up a conversation with Candace Owens, the conservative activist, who promptly began encouraging people to join Parler.

Parler functions like a barebones Twitter with users (such as the Trumps and Giuliani) to follow and a feed to see their posts.

Export gloom sours Pakistan’s prized mango season

● **Pakistan produced more than 1.5 million tonnes of mangoes in 2019**

● **Exported a record 115,000 tonnes worth \$80 m in 2019**

● **Known in South Asia as the “king of fruits”**

Multan | Pakistan

Dwindling harvests, drooping demand and export supply chains hit by the coronavirus are biting into Pakistan’s mango industry, with producers of the prized fruit battling to weather a disastrous season.

Across Pakistan’s “mango belt” in Punjab and Sindh provinces, farmers say a long winter and changing rain patterns have slashed production by up to half this year -- just as virus shut-downs sparked border restrictions and spiralling export costs. “There are multiple problems that mango farmers are facing,” said Rana Muhammad Azim, whose family has been producing the fruit in Punjab for generations.

“The situation is extremely worrisome for us. The mangoes



Pakistan was the sixth-largest exporter of mangoes in the world last year

are ready, but no exporter is willing to take the risk and place orders,” he said, adding that he was already suffering from a 40 per cent decline in the harvest.

Pakistan produced more than 1.5 million tonnes of mangoes in 2019 -- and exported a record 115,000 tonnes worth \$80 million -- making it the sixth-largest exporter of the fruit in the world.

But Waheed Ahmed, head of a produce association in Pakistan, said exports have dropped around 40 per cent compared to the same period last year, with just a few months left of the season. Known in South Asia as the “king of fruits”, the mango originated in the Indian subcontinent with two dozen varieties grown in Pakistan.

The country’s most treasured

variety is the greenish-yellow Chaunsa, known for its rich, unique flavour and juicy pulp.

The fruit also helps sweeten diplomatic relations, with Pakistan sending crates of its best produce to India’s prime minister every year, regardless of the political climate between the hostile neighbours.

It has also earned a place in recent literary history, with re-

nowned Pakistan author Mohammed Hanif longlisted for the prestigious Man Booker Prize for “A Case of Exploding Mangoes”, a comic novel based on an unexplained 1988 plane crash that killed former president Muhammad Zia ul-Haq.

Rotting fruits

With much of the world’s air traffic grounded by the corona-

virus, exports of the best prime, ripe fruit by plane to the US and Europe have been particularly hard hit, but ground transport has also been badly affected.

Dozens of trucks piled high with the yellow fruit were stranded at the border with Iran last month, their precious cargo rotting in the searing 40-degree heat. Even where trading has continued via sea to the key Middle East market -- which accounts for 70 per cent of exports -- demand has plunged.

Since the virus took hold shoppers are making fewer outings to supermarkets and are wary of spending on luxury items, while Pakistani migrant workers who relish the fruit have returned home.

The domestic market brings far less revenue.

In one bright spot, harvests were at least spared the ravages of the worst locust plague in 25 years, which wiped out entire vegetable and cotton harvests.

As flights resume and border restrictions are eased, growers hope to increase exports in the second half of the season to avoid a complete lost season.

“The situation has forced us to think of new solutions,” said producer Muhammad Ali Gardezi, who for the first time has taken his business online, delivering door-to-door in the age of social distancing.

PM Modi to deliver inaugural address at India Global Week 2020



Narendra Modi
PTI | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver today the inaugural address at the India Global Week 2020, a virtual conference being organised in the UK, which will also feature a “never-seen-before” performance on the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat campaign, the Prime Minister’s Office said.

Themed ‘Be The Revival: India and a Better New World’, the event will have 5,000 global participants from 30 nations and it will be addressed by 250 global speakers in 75 sessions.

Those participating in the event include External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Commerce and Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor G C Murmu, Isha Foundation founder Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, and spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the PMO statement said. The event will also feature a “never-seen-before performance” on ‘Aatma Nirbhar Bharat’ by Madhu Nataraj and a special 100th birth anniversary concert in tribute to sitar maestro Ravi Shankar by three of his most eminent students.

The three-day summit is being held on a virtual platform given restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Brain problems linked to even mild COVID-19

AFP | Paris

Potentially fatal COVID-19 complications in the brain including delirium, nerve damage and stroke may be more common than initially thought, a team of British-based doctors warned yesterday.

Severe COVID-19 infections are known to put patients at risk of neurological complications, but research led by University College London suggests serious problems can occur even in individuals with mild cases of the virus.

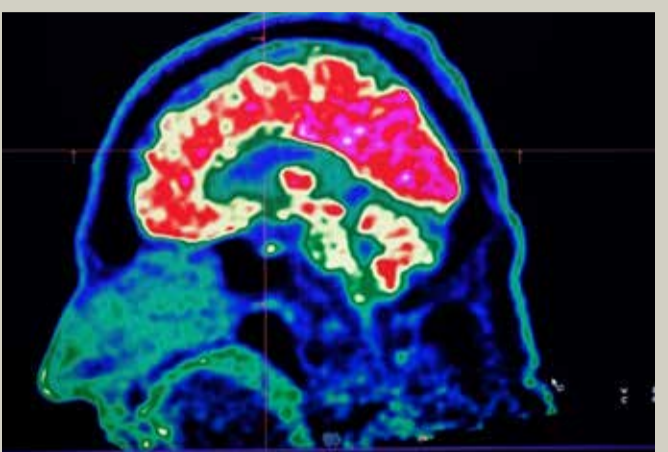
The team looked at the neurological symptoms of 43 patients hospitalised with either confirmed or suspected COVID-19. They found 10 cases of temporary brain dysfunction, 12 cases of brain inflammation, eight strokes and eight cases of nerve damage.

Most of those patients with inflammation were diagnosed with acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM) -- a rare condition typically seen in children after viral infections.

“We identified a higher than expected number of people with neurological conditions such as brain inflammation, which did not always correlate with the severity of respiratory symptoms,” said Michael Zandi, of UCL’s Queen Square Institute of Neurology and University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The research, published in the journal Brain, showed that none of patients diagnosed with neurological problems had COVID-19 in their cerebrospinal fluid, suggesting that the virus did not directly attack their brains.

Perhaps crucially, the team



Severe COVID-19 infections are known to put patients at risk of neurological complications



The research, published in the journal Brain, showed that none of patients diagnosed with neurological problems had COVID-19 in their cerebrospinal fluid, suggesting that the virus did not directly attack their brains.

“The scrutiny that the pandemic attracts means it would be very unlikely that there is a large parallel pandemic of unusual brain damage linked to COVID-19

ANTHONY DAVID
DIRECTOR OF UCL’S INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

found that ADEM diagnoses “not related to the severity of the respiratory COVID-19 disease”.

“Given that the disease has

only been around for a matter of months, we might not yet know what long-term damage COVID-19 can cause,” said Ross Paterson from UCL’s Queen Square Institute of Neurology.

“Doctors need to be aware of possible neurological effects, as early diagnosis can improve patient outcomes.”

With more than 11 million confirmed infections worldwide, COVID-19 is known to cause a variety of health complications in addition to lung infection.

While the results of the study suggest that brain complications could be more common among virus patients than first thought, experts said it didn’t mean that brain damage cases were widespread.

News in brief

China opens new Hong Kong security agency headquarters



◆ China yesterday opened a new office for its security agents to operate openly in Hong Kong for the first time under a tough new law, transforming a hotel into the force’s headquarters. “The Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People’s Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was inaugurated here on Wednesday morning,” China’s official Xinhua news agency said. The new base is the Metropark Hotel, a skyscraper overlooking Hong Kong’s Victoria Park.

US President Donald Trump lashed out at Harvard University on Tuesday, calling its decision to move all its courses online in the fall due to the coronavirus pandemic “ridiculous.”

“I think it’s ridiculous. I think it’s an easy way out. And I think they ought to be ashamed of themselves,” Trump said at a White House roundtable discussion, during which he called for schools and universities to reopen for the next semester.

Trump says Harvard move to online courses due to virus ‘ridiculous’



◆ Russia and China on Tuesday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution that would have extended authorization for cross-border humanitarian aid in Syria for a year. Germany and Belgium, two of the council’s non-permanent members, had

drafted the resolution, which would have allowed aid to continue to pass through two points on the Turkish border without interference from Damascus. Beyond Russia and China, the other 13 members of the council voted to approve the draft, the diplomats said.

The United States and China imposed visa restrictions on each other in tit-for-tat moves over their disagreement on Tibet.

China announced yesterday its curbs on people from the US who “behave badly” on Tibet-related issues, in retaliation for American curbs unveiled a day before. Pompeo restricted visas to Chinese officials determined to be “substantially involved” in the exclusion of foreigners from Tibetan areas.



◆ War-torn Yemen is once again on the brink of famine as donor funds that averted catastrophe just 18 months ago have dried up, the country’s UN humanitarian coordinator said. With much of the country

dependent on aid, a coronavirus pandemic raging unchecked, and countless children already facing starvation, Lise Grande said that millions of vulnerable families could quickly move from “being able to hold on to being in free fall.”

◆ Beijing said yesterday that US demands for it to join nuclear disarmament talks with Russia are a ruse to sink the negotiations, but it could take part if Washington lowers its arsenals to China’s level. US and Russian officials held talks in Vienna last month to discuss a replacement for the New START treaty, which limits each side to 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads but is due to run out in February.

Trump shaped by bullying father, niece says in memoir

New York

Donald Trump’s niece describes the US president as a lying narcissist who was shaped by his domineering father, according to excerpts of her memoir published Tuesday.

The White House immediately hit back, describing Mary Trump’s “Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World’s Most Dangerous Man” as “a book of falsehoods.”

The memoir is due out on July 14 amid a legal battle to stop its publication and is already a best-seller on Amazon.

Mary, a clinical psychologist, writes that Trump saw “cheating as a way of life,” according to The New York Times.

She accuses Trump of “hubris and willful ignorance” stretching back to his younger days.

She alleges that the future US leader paid someone else to take the SAT pre-collegiate exam, helping him get into the University of Pennsylvania’s prestigious Wharton business school.

The Times doesn’t explain how she knew.

“The absurd SAT allegation is completely false,” said deputy White House press secretary



President Trump, Mary Trump and her new book

Sarah Matthews.

The 240-page book says Trump is a product of his “sociopath” father Fred Trump who created an abusive and traumatic home life, The Washington Post reported.

“(The president) said his father was loving and not at all hard on him as a child,” Matthews said in response.

The memoir is billed as the first unflattering portrayal of Trump by a family insider.

The president’s younger brother Robert Trump tried to block publication, arguing that Mary was violating a non-disclosure agreement signed in 2001 after the settlement of her grandfather’s estate.

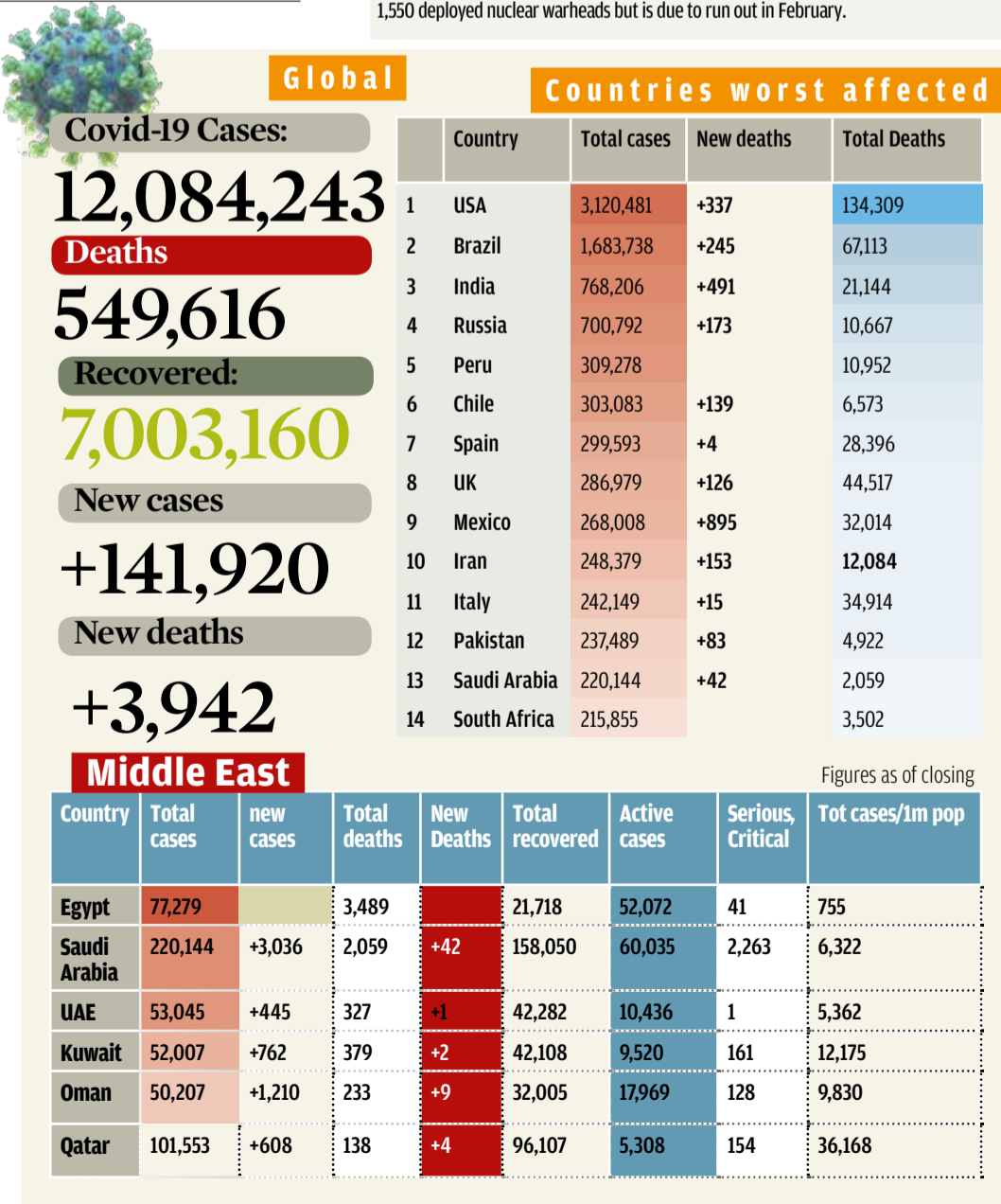
Last week, a New York appeals judge ruled that Simon & Schuster is allowed to release the memoir, saying it was “not a party to the agreement.”

Mary is the daughter of Fred Trump Jr, Trump’s older brother, who died in 1981 from complications related to alcoholism.

She writes that her uncle meets all the clinical criteria for being a narcissist, according to The New York Times.

“Mary Trump and her book’s publisher may claim to be acting in the public interest, but this book is clearly in the author’s own financial self-interest,” Matthews said.

Trump has described that book as “fiction.”



First court appearance set for Maxwell in Epstein case

New York

British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell, who faces sex trafficking charges related to disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein, will appear in court remotely for an arraignment and bail hearing on July 14, the judge handling the case wrote Tuesday.

Maxwell -- who was arrested on July 2 after months of living in seclusion, and moved to a federal jail in New York -- faces six counts related to crimes allegedly committed by Epstein, her former boyfriend and a convicted sex offender who killed himself in prison while awaiting trial last summer.

They include perjury and conspiracy to entice minors as young as 14 years old to travel in order to engage in illegal sex acts. Maxwell is also accused of



Ghislaine Maxwell, pictured in 2003, could face life in prison if found guilty on charges linked to Jeffrey Epstein's sex crimes

taking part in some of the sexual abuse.

"An arraignment, initial conference, and bail hearing in this

matter is hereby scheduled to occur as a remote video/teleconference," due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on July 14 at 1 pm, wrote Federal Judge Alison Nathan in an order registered with the court on Tuesday.

At the hearing, prosecutors will argue for Maxwell to remain behind bars without bail.

Maxwell, 58, is the daughter of late newspaper baron Robert Maxwell.

Prosecutors say she is an "extreme" flight risk, pointing out that she has passports from the United States, Britain and France.

The attorneys also say they have identified 15 bank accounts associated with her in the last four years. The total balance of these accounts has ranged from hundreds of thousands of dollars to more than \$20 million.

Pompeo says China took incredibly aggressive action in recent clash with India

Reuters | Washington

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo yesterday accused China of taking "incredibly aggressive action" in a recent confrontation with India over a disputed section of the nuclear-armed neighbours' border.

"The Chinese took incredibly aggressive action," he told a State Department news conference, referring to the clash last month in the Galwan Valley. "The Indians have done



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo their best to respond to that."

Russia will impose counter-sanctions on UK: Kremlin



Britain's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab signing a letter to fellow MPs, in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in central London

Moscow

Moscow will apply counter-sanctions against Britain, the Kremlin said Tuesday, after London blacklisted Russian officials for their alleged involvement in the death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky.

"We can only regret such unfriendly measures," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"Obviously the principle of reciprocity will be applied," he added, without elaborating.

The 25 Russians included on the sanctions list drawn up by Britain's Foreign Office were included for their alleged involvement in the death of Magnitsky.

Magnitsky, a tax consultant for British financier William Browder, died in prison of untreated illness in 2009 after accusing Russian officials of tax fraud of \$230 million.

Russian officials to be targeted by the sanctions include Alexander Bastrykin, the head of the powerful Investigative

Committee that reports directly to President Vladimir Putin.

The Russian Embassy in London on Monday denounced the sanctions, saying the country's legal system was "independent" of the executive authorities and "guided by law alone".

A spokesman for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Tuesday that the sanctions were targeting individuals involved in "some of the most notorious human rights violations of recent years".

Britain also sanctioned a number of individuals from Saudi Arabia and North Korea.

London has accused Russia of "destabilising" activities including the 2018 chemical attack that almost killed former spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter.

Russia has rejected accusations that officers from its GRU military intelligence agency used a powerful nerve agent to poison Skripal in retribution for his work with British and other Western spy services.

US tops 3 million virus cases

AFP | Washington

The United States yesterday passed another grim coronavirus milestone with three million confirmed cases, as President Donald Trump downplayed the risks posed by the pandemic and aggressively pushed for schools to reopen.

The coronavirus is surging in several southern hotspots including Texas, Florida, Louisiana and Arizona, while it has almost entirely receded from its former epicenter in New York and the north-east.

Johns Hopkins University put the total at 3,009,611, in its real-time tally of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

"At this point, we have tested more than 39 million Americans," US Vice President Mike Pence told reporters.

"Among those, more than three million Americans have tested positive and more than 1.3 million Americans have recovered."

Trump embarked on a morning tweetstorm ahead of a public



Florida governor says state to send 100 health workers to Miami hospital

meeting of his coronavirus task force, in which he called for students to return to their schools in fall and lashed out at his own top health agency.

"In Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and many other countries, SCHOOLS ARE OPEN WITH NO PROBLEMS," he said.

"The Dems think it would be bad for them politically if U.S. schools open before the November Election, but is important for the children & families. May cut off funding if not open!"

He added that he disagreed with guidance for reopening schools set out by the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention and would be "meeting with them!!!"

Sending children back to school is vital if parents are to return to manufacturing and other jobs that require their physical presence.

All of the countries mentioned by Trump have far smaller epidemics than the United States, while Sweden is viewed by many public health experts as a cautionary tale after shunning lockdowns and experiencing a high death rate.

America is by far the hardest-hit country in the world,

with more than 130,000 deaths -- even as the fatality rate has fallen from highs seen during the late spring peak.

Younger population

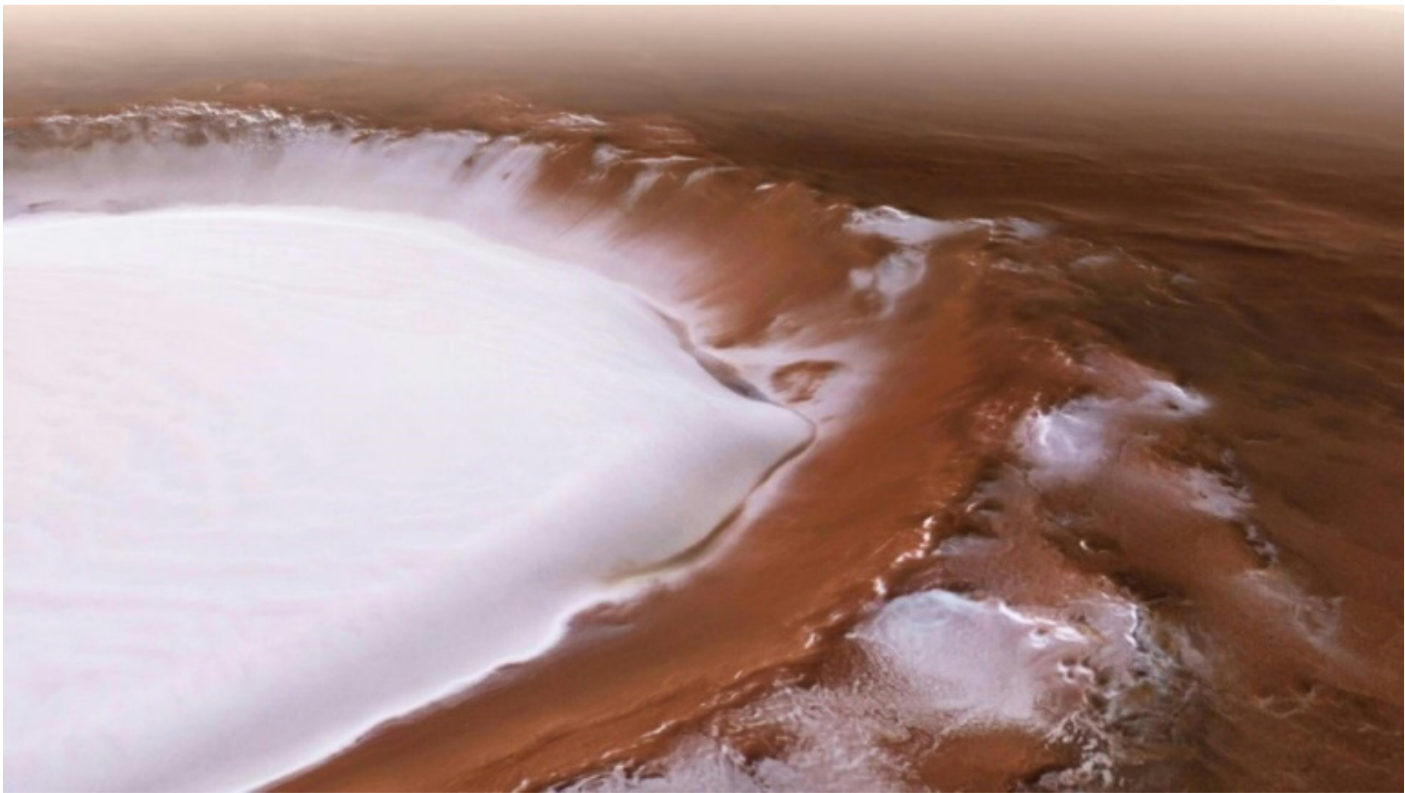
In April and May, as many as 3,000 people were dying each day, while for the past few days it has been around 600.

Experts see several reasons for this fall.

In terms of treatments, doctors have learned that placing patients with severe breathing problems on their stomachs, known as the "prone" position, can ease the burden on their lungs.

In terms of treatments, doctors have learned that placing patients with severe breathing problems on their stomachs, known as the "prone" position, can ease the burden on their lungs. They are also using blood thinners preventatively to avoid life-threatening clots in the lungs, brain, and limbs; and using steroids like dexamethasone to reduce an abnormal autoimmune response that ravages the organs.

Flight over Mars' ice-filled crater 'Korolev'



An animation based on images taken by the ESA's Mars Express showcases the 82-kilometre-wide Korolev Crater on Mars. Located in the northern lowlands of the Red Planet, south of the large Olympia Undae dune field that partly surrounds Mars' north polar cap, this well-preserved impact crater is filled with water ice all year round. The crater's floor lies two kilometres below its rim, enclosing a 1.8 km thick domed deposit that represents a large reservoir of non-polar ice on Mars.

FBI chief says China 'an all-year, all-the-time threat'



FBI Director Christopher Wray says China is pushing its preferences in the US election as part of broad intelligence operations, whose economic impact he calls unprecedented.

TikTok has been caught up in the escalating disputes between the United States and China, with the Chinese-owned firm accused of acting as a spying tool for Beijing -- an allegation it denies.



Trump wants to ban TikTok

- TikTok is estimated to have close to one billion users worldwide
- The firm has consistently stressed that it does not share user information

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump said he is considering banning the wildly popular video-sharing app TikTok as a way to punish China over the coronavirus pandemic, remarks China described yesterday as “a malicious smear”. TikTok has been caught up in the escalating disputes between the United States and China, with the Chinese-owned firm accused of acting as a spying tool for Beijing -- an allegation it denies.

“It’s something we’re looking at,” Trump said during a TV interview on Tuesday when asked about a possible ban, according to Bloomberg News. “It’s a big business. Look, what happened with China with this virus, what they’ve done to this country and to the entire world is disgraceful.” Trump did not provide any details, and told Gray Television that it was “one of many” options he was considering against China, Bloomberg added. The United States is the country worst-hit by the virus, which the American president has blamed on poor management and a lack of transparency in China -- which has rejected the allegation. “The remarks made by some politicians in the US are totally groundless and a malicious smear,” Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Wednesday when asked about Trump’s comments on TikTok and China’s role in the pandemic. “The Chinese government has always asked Chinese busi-

”
TikTok is led by an American CEO, with hundreds of employees and key leaders across safety, security, product, and public policy here in the US

TIKTOK SPOKESPERSON

nesses to conduct cooperation overseas on the basis of law and compliance,” he told a regular press briefing. Trump’s comments came a day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the US government was looking at banning Chinese apps -- including TikTok -- over espionage concerns. TikTok is estimated to have close to one billion users worldwide, but despite the huge pop-

ularity, it has long battled allegations that it is a spying tool for Beijing, with critics pointing to the fact that it is owned by a Chinese firm -- ByteDance. The firm has consistently stressed that it does not share user information with the Chinese government. “TikTok is led by an American CEO, with hundreds of employees and key leaders across safety, security, product, and public policy here in the US,” a TikTok spokesperson told Bloomberg. “We have never provided user data to the Chinese government, nor would we do so if asked.” TikTok has been caught up in another international spat too -- it was among the dozens of Chinese apps banned by India over national security concerns after a deadly border clash between its soldiers and Chinese troops. And on Monday, TikTok said it was pulling out of Hong Kong after a new national security law imposed by China gave authorities sweeping powers to police the internet.

North Korea’s Kim ordered to pay damages to Seoul POWs



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un speaks at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea in Pyongyang
Seoul

A South Korean court ordered Pyongyang’s leader Kim Jong Un to compensate two former prisoners of war who spent decades as forced labourers in the North, in a move that could set a far-reaching legal precedent on the divided peninsula. The ruling was the first time a South Korean court claimed jurisdiction over Pyongyang or issued a compensation order against its leader, according to a campaign group backing the plaintiffs. The two men -- one surnamed Han, 87, and the other Ro, 90 -- say they were captured during the 1950-53 Korean War, but were never repatriated after the armistice that brought hostilities to a close. Instead, they say they were forced to work at coal mines and other facilities for decades until they escaped the North via China. Ro returned to the South in 2000, and Han a year later. They filed the suit in 2016, saying they had suffered “enormous mental and physical damage” in the North. The Seoul Central District Court on Tuesday ordered the North and leader Kim to pay each of them 21 million won (\$17,500), a court spokeswoman said. Following the ruling, a civic group supporting the two said they would take legal steps to seize North Korean assets under Seoul’s control, such as copyright fees for Pyongyang’s state TV. By the end of the war, there were 170,000 North Korean and Chinese prisoners in the US-led UN forces’ POW camps, while 100,000 South Korean and UN troops were held in the North, according to data by the War Memorial of Korea in Seoul. Pyongyang repatriated only 8,343 South Koreans after the armistice, according to the Seoul government. The South has since raised the issue many times, but the North maintained no former soldiers from the South were being held against their will. Civic groups say some 80 South Korean POWs escaped the North and returned to the South in 2000 and 2001. Lawyers representing the two men welcomed the ruling, saying a South Korean court for the first time “exercised jurisdiction” against “illegal acts committed by Kim Jong Un”. “This is a milestone ruling,” said lawyer Koo Chung-seo, adding it paved the way for further legal action by other individuals against Kim and his regime.

Sri Lanka rangers spot possible rare baby elephant twins

AFP | Colombo

A pair of baby elephants feeding from the same mother have been spotted in a Sri Lankan national park, with officials speculating Wednesday the two could be a rare set of twins. The young tuskers -- who rangers estimate are three to four weeks old -- were spotted in the Minneriya sanctuary about 200 kilometres (125 miles) north-east of Colombo, grazing with a herd of about a dozen elephants. After observing the pair from a distance, officials are confident enough to “say they are twins,” Department of Wildlife Conservation Director-General Tharaka Prasad said. The two were also photographed feeding from the same cow on Monday by renowned conservationist Sumith Pilapitiya, who also said he believed the two were twins. Rangers were carrying out DNA tests on the herd’s dung to confirm, Prasad said. If the results matched, it would mark the first time wildlife officials on the Indian Ocean island had sighted twins alongside their mother, he added.



The young tuskers - who rangers estimate are three to four weeks old - were spotted in the Minneriya sanctuary in Sri Lanka



The two were also photographed feeding from the same cow on Monday by renowned conservationist Sumith Pilapitiya, who also said he believed the two were twins.

The sighting was near the area where seven elephants died from poisoning in September, in an act blamed on local farmers. Nearly 200 elephants are killed every year on the island, many by farmers after the pachyderms stray onto their land. Marauding elephants kill an average of 50 people annually, mostly when they stray into villages near their habitat. The country’s elephant population has declined to just over 7,000 according to the latest census, down from an estimated 12,000 in the early 1900s.

Brazil’s Moro slams Bolsonaro, rules out 2022 bid

Brasília

Former Brazil justice minister Sergio Moro said President Jair Bolsonaro and leftist rival Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva are “two extremes to be avoided,” in an interview during which he appeared to rule out his own presidential bid in 2022.



Former Brazilian Minister of Justice and Public Security, Sergio Moro

Moro, 47, made his name as a judge in leading the high-profile Car Wash corruption investigation that notably saw Lula jailed for accepting a bribe. He later joined Bolsonaro’s government but stormed out in April, accusing the president of interfering with Federal Police investigations. Here are the main excerpts from the interview on Monday by video conference:

After your accusations against Bolsonaro, do you feel partly responsible for the political crisis in Brazil?

“My intention was not to harm the government, it was to clarify why I was resigning. After the beginning of the pandemic, there was a crisis of government credibility and growing tension with the other powers, the Federal Supreme Court and the Congress. My resignation falls within that context but it is only a part of it, I don’t feel responsible (for the crisis).”

- Did the president break his promise to fight corruption? -

“We managed to make progress in fighting violent crime and organized crime, but not much in relation to corruption, and one of the problems -- with all due respect -- was the lack of more support from the (Presidential) Planalto Palace.”

What do you make of the president’s more moderate stance in recent weeks?

“The change in the president’s position, with less hostility and a more moderate discourse, is good for the country... for stability.”

“Unfortunately, some of the president’s pronouncements created unnecessary tension, giving the country a negative image. Brazil was always a reliable democracy and the Brazilian people were always seen as very tolerant, very nice, and that image was being eroded by a hostile discourse. It’s good that this is changing.”

Ten of the 23 ministers in Bolsonaro’s government are military officers. How did you feel about their presence in the cabinet?

“I lived with the military (in the government) and there is no possible perspective of an authoritarian movement, all of a sudden, on the part of the Armed Forces.”

“The presence of the military in the government, of itself, is not negative. What is wrong is to try to use that presence as if they were in a position of strength that could be imposed on other powers.”

“That never came from the Armed Forces but from the mistaken discourse of the Planalto (presidential palace) itself.”

“Do you see similarities between Bolsonaro and Lula?”

“Both have a somewhat populist character in the formulation of public policy. The difference is that President Bolsonaro would be a right-wing populist and President Lula a left-wing populist. In a way, they are two extremes, with all due respect, that should be avoided.”

Is a presidential bid with former health minister Henrique Mandetta as running mate likely in 2022?

“With the coronavirus, the challenges of 2020 are too great for us to think about 2022. It’s an absolutely unpredictable scenario.” “During the pandemic, (Mandetta) grew a lot because he adopted a policy that transmitted a sense of calm to the population, mainly through transparency, he had a way of making people feel comfortable. But I think that neither (of us is) seriously thinking about 2022.”

“I’m going to target the private sector, I have good contacts in the academic area. I was a professor before I became a judge. My task at the moment is to reintegrate in 2020 and not think about 2022.”

Bolsonaro, unmasked

Brazil’s outspoken, far-right leader



Brazil’s Bolsonaro removes face mask after testing positive for virus

Rio de Janeiro

Brazil’s far-right president Jair Bolsonaro is known for his brash style, which in part carried him to power more than a year ago. Removing his face mask after announcing he had coronavirus was perfectly on brand.

The 65-year-old head of state shrugged off his diagnosis Tuesday, insisting that “life goes on” in the face of what he for months has been calling a “little flu” -- otherwise known as the global COVID-19 pandemic that has claimed the lives of 65,000 Brazilians and counting.

The next few days will tell whether he is right.

A veteran lawmaker and former paratrooper, his rise to power in late 2018 almost cost him his life when he was stabbed in the stomach while campaigning.

But his recovery burnished his audacious image among supporters, an image he has leaned on heavily as the novel coronavirus ravages his nation of 210 million, presenting him with perhaps the biggest challenge of his presidency -- even before his diagnosis.

Analysts say that if Bolsonaro suffers just a mild case of COVID-19, he could feel vindicated in dismissing the virus and his repeated flouting of lockdown orders.

“If he overcomes COVID-19 without serious symptoms, it could strengthen his radical supporters for whom he is a messianic superman,” Oliver Stuenkel, a professor at the Getulio Vargas University, tweeted in reference to the president’s middle name, ‘Messias.’

‘Authority, not authoritarianism’

The virus is not the only chal-

lenge Bolsonaro faces.

Eighteen months into his term the president is bedevilled by investigations and possible impeachment, forcing him closer to his military allies.

Bolsonaro is openly nostalgic for the 1964-1985 military dictatorship, and has cultivated a special relationship with the generals -- though he insists he will be a “slave to the constitution” who will govern “with authority but not authoritarianism.”

Ten of his 23 cabinet ministers are military officers. Even his current health minister, tasked with fighting the pandemic, is a general.

Long a divisive figure, Bolsonaro burst onto the international stage in late 2018 when voters in Latin America’s largest and most populous country elected him on his promise to get tough on rising street crime.

He has long set his sharp blue gaze on easing gun laws to allow “good” people to dispense justice themselves, arguing that it “will cut violence in Brazil for sure.”

He has shown little concern by the outrage over his often racist, misogynistic and homophobic remarks.

And he has faced down international anger over his sluggish response to raging fires in the Amazon rainforest aimed at expanding farm land.

When a surge of devastating wildfires sparked global concern, Bolsonaro said it was fueled by jealousy of the region’s mineral wealth.

Under pressure on the world stage, he eventually sent the army to protect the rainforest.

‘Tropical Trump’

A keen social media user with millions of followers, Bolsonaro has much in common with US



Bolsonaro enjoys strong support among Brazil’s evangelical community, and is backed by the powerful agribusiness lobby



A man demonstrates near military police during a “Stop Bolsonaro” protest against political scandals engulfing the president and his family in late June 2020 in Rio de Janeiro



A funeral home worker in Curitiba watches the live news as President Jair Bolsonaro announces his positive COVID-19 test result

President Donald Trump.

Both prefer speaking directly to their base, avoiding pesky journalists’ questions, and both regularly mangle syntax -- yet spout pithy sayings their fans gleefully repeat.

Unlike Trump, Bolsonaro had a long political career before his election, having held a seat in the lower-house Chamber of

Deputies since 1991. Nevertheless, he presents himself as an outsider.

He is backed by powerful lobbies in Congress, notably those representing the interests of agribusiness and evangelicals.

Bolsonaro himself is Catholic, a fact that has earned him some from the pious for having fathered five children from three relationships.

After fathering four sons, he said in 2017 he must have “weakened” because his last offspring was a daughter.

His eldest son Flavio, elected to the senate, was arrested in June in a corruption probe.

‘Too ugly’

Bolsonaro was born in 1955 in Campinas, a town close to the megalopolis of Sao Paulo, to a family of Italian descent.

In 2014 he created headlines by verbally attacking a leftwing deputy, Maria do Rosario, who he said was “not worth raping” because she was “too ugly.”

Bolsonaro has also made multiple anti-gay statements. In one instance in 2011, he told Playboy magazine that he would prefer to see a son “killed in an accident” than declare himself homosexual.

His military career was marked by moments of insubordination. In the 1980s he was accused of being involved in a bomb plot designed to bring about a pay rise.

But he was also known in the army, where he rose to the rank of captain, for his sporting prowess, earning him the nickname of “Cavalao,” or “Big Horse.”

It’s that athleticism which lead him to brag in March that if he was infected with COVID-19, he wouldn’t have to worry -- a claim that is now being put to the test.

Iran to bolster Syria air defences, counter US ‘pressure’

- Along with Moscow, Tehran has played a key role supporting Assad in the war
- Iran has always denied sending forces to fight in Syria
- State TV’s website published a video of Bagheri and Syria’s Defence Minister Ali Ayoub signing the latest agreement in Damascus

AFP | Tehran

Iran has said it will strengthen Syria’s air defences as part of a bilateral military deal aiming to “fight terrorism” and counter American pressure. Israel, Iran’s arch-enemy, has launched hundreds of strikes in Syria since the start of a civil war there in 2011, including against Iranian forces. Iran, one of President Bashar al-Assad’s main allies in the conflict, has always denied sending forces to fight in Syria, saying it only has military advisors there. Under the latest deal, “we will strengthen Syria’s air defence systems in order to improve military cooperation between the



Syrian air defences responding to what state media said were Israeli missiles targeting Damascus early last year, one of hundreds of reported such strikes


two countries,” Iranian state TV quoted armed forces chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri as saying. The deal will “further enhance our will... to confront pressures by America,” he added. Along with Moscow, Tehran has played a key role supporting Assad in the war that has ravaged the country and killed more than 380,000 people, displacing millions. Israeli strikes have meanwhile targeted government troops, allied Iranian forces and fighters from the Iran-backed Lebanese

Shiite militant group Hezbollah. Syria was one of the few countries that helped Iran during the 1980-88 war with Iraq, and Tehran and Damascus signed a deal in 2006 sealing their military alliance. State TV’s website on Wednesday published a video of Bagheri and Syria’s Defence Minister Ali Ayoub signing the latest agreement in Damascus. It shows an Iranian military spokesman reading a joint statement saying the “comprehensive military-security agreement”


aims to “confront increasing dangers (and) takfiri terrorism supported by international and regional powers”. Iranian officials use the term “takfiri” to refer to Sunni jihadists, including groups fighting in Syria. ‘Strategic and firm’ Syrian state news agency SANA quoted Ayoub calling Syrian-Iranian ties “strategic and firm”. “Bilateral military and security cooperation is qualitative and ongoing... despite increasing pressure and the mounting severity of threats,” he said. Ayoub vowed to confront “any new challenges with more determination ... with the efforts of all the Syrian people and cooperation with friends and allies determined to confront terrorism in all its forms.” The joint statement Wednesday also demanded “the withdrawal of all foreign armed forces having entered Syria illegally”. Turkey and the US-led coalition against the Islamic State group have both sent troops to

Syria was one of the few countries that helped Iran during the 1980-88 war with Iraq, and Tehran and Damascus signed a deal in 2006 sealing their military alliance

Syria, despite objections from Damascus. The latest deal between Iran and Syria comes after the US in late June urged the UN Security Council to extend a ban on conventional arms sales to Tehran, set to expire in October. The lifting of the embargo, agreed under the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear treaty, would allow the country to obtain battle tanks, combat aircraft, warships and missiles or missile systems.



The Trump administration, which pulled out of the 2015 accord in 2018, has warned it could employ a disputed legal move to restore wide UN sanctions on Iran if the Security Council does not prolong a ban.



Washington’s European allies have voiced support for extending the embargo but also oppose new sanctions, saying the bigger issue is Iran’s nuclear programme.

The nuclear accord has been on life-support since the US withdrew from it and reimposed crippling unilateral sanctions on Iran.

A UN embargo on materials, goods, equipment and technology that Iran could use for its ballistic missile programme is to remain in place until 2023.

Pompeo hints at Iran links in killing of Iraq expert

Washington

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo yesterday demanded justice over the killing of a prominent Iraqi jihadism expert and highlighted threats against him by Iran-linked groups. Hisham al-Hashemi, an internationally known scholar whose vast contacts inside Iraq made him a mediator among rivals, was gunned down outside his Baghdad home late Monday by masked assailants on motorcycles. “In the days leading up to his death he was repeatedly threatened by Iran backed armed groups,” Pompeo told a news conference in Washington, without explicitly blaming Tehran. “The United States joins partner nations in strongly condemning his assassination and call(ing) for the government of Iraq to bring to justice the perpetrators of this terrible



The poster of slain Iraqi expert Hisham al-Hashemi in Baghdad crime... swiftly,” he said. Hashemi was an authoritative voice on Sunni extremist movements including the Islamic State group, which are violently opposed to Iran. But he infuriated Tehran-backed factions in Iraq’s Hashed al-Shaabi military network through his support of popular protests last year against a Baghdad government seen as too close to Iran. Some experts have voiced fear of a new violent phase in Iraq and believe the turning point may have come in January when a US strike in Baghdad killed a top Iranian general, Qasem Soleimani.

Ethiopia violence death toll rises to 239

AFP | Addis Ababa

The death toll from demonstrations and ethnic violence that erupted in Ethiopia last week following the murder of a popular singer from the Oromo ethnic group has risen to 239, according to a tally of police figures. Pop star Hachalu Hundessa, a hero to many Oromo who saw him as the voice of their marginalisation, was shot dead by unknown attackers on Monday of last week, fueling ethnic tensions threatening the country’s democratic transition. Protests broke out in the capital Addis Ababa, as well as the surrounding Oromia region which is the homeland of the country’s largest ethnic group, who have long felt economically and politically sidelined in the diverse nation. Officials have attributed the deaths to a combination of lethal force by security officers and inter-ethnic violence. Police in Addis Ababa had



Protests even broke out in the Oromo community in the US state of Minnesota over the musician’s death

“Due to the unrest that occurred in the region, nine police officers, five militia members and 215 civilians have lost their lives,” acting Oromia police commissioner Mustafa Kedir said on state television on Wednesday. Police in Addis Ababa had

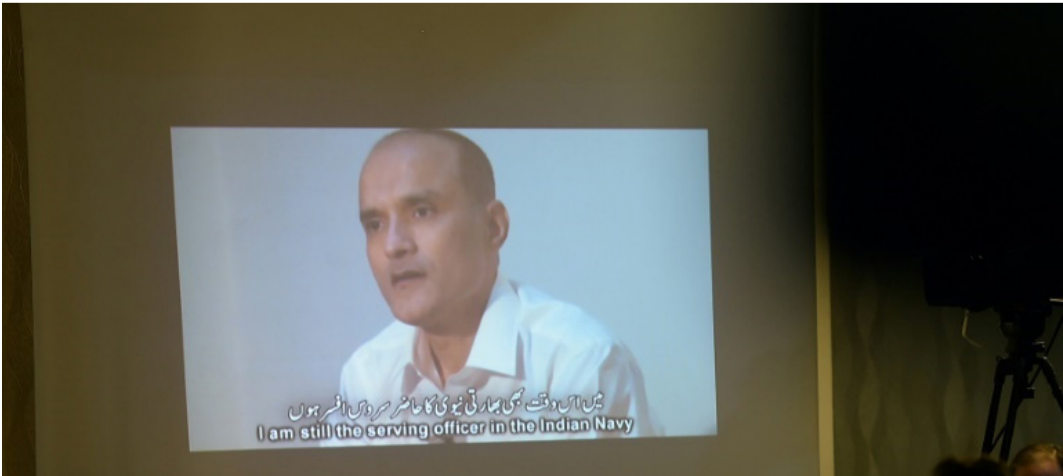
previously reported 10 deaths in the capital. The death toll is an increase from 166 fatalities reported at the weekend. Mustafa also said there had been “extensive damage and looting” of government and private property.

“To control this unrest more than 3,500 suspects have been arrested. They were anti-peace elements who carried out attacks using the artist’s death as a pretext to dismantle the constitutional system by force,” he said. “The Oromo population should be inclusive of other ethnic groups that live among it.” Threat to planned democracy Hachalu’s music was the soundtrack to anti-government protests that swept Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the country’s first Oromo leader, to office in 2018. Yet, as Ethiopia prepares for elections that will test its democratic transition under Abiy, many Oromo nationalists feel betrayed, arguing the prime minister has failed to champion their interests. Free and fair elections planned for August have been postponed due to the coronavirus epidemic.

Former India navy officer refuses to appeal spying death sentence

AFP | Islamabad

Former Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav was arrested in 2016 in Pakistan’s restive southwestern province of Balochistan -- a region where Islamabad has long accused New Delhi of backing separatist rebels. He was sentenced to death by a closed Pakistani military tribunal in 2017, but the Interna-



Former Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav was shown on TV after his arrest in Pakistan on spying charges

Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav was arrested in 2016 in Pakistan’s restive southwestern province of Balochistan -- a region where Islamabad has long accused New Delhi of backing separatist rebels.

tional Court of Justice ordered Islamabad last year to review the sentence, and he was later offered the right to appeal.

“Commander Jadhav refused to file a petition for the review and the reconsideration for his sentence and conviction,” said attorney general official Ahmad Irfan. “He instead preferred to follow up on his pending mercy petition”, Irfan added. He said Pakistan had written to the Indian high commission inviting it to file an appeal on Jadhav’s behalf. New Delhi maintains Jadhav retired from the navy in 2001 and was running a logistics business in Iran, where he was kidnapped and brought to Pakistan and forced to confess.

CELEBS

Depp denies slapping ex-wife

AFP | London

Hollywood actor Johnny Depp denied claims that he slapped his ex-wife Amber Heard, as he faced a second day of questioning in his high-profile libel trial in London.

The “Pirates of the Caribbean” star is suing British tabloid The Sun for a 2018 article which claimed he was a “wife-beater”.

Both Depp, 57, and Heard, 34, were in court as lawyers for The Sun’s publisher, News Group Newspapers (NGN), questioned him about allegations of violence during the couple’s time together.

NGN is disputing the claim for libel, and said there is “overwhelming evidence” that he attacked Heard while under the influence of drink and drugs between 2013 and 2016.

The couple first met on the set of the 2011 film “The Rum Diary”, married in 2015 but divorced two years later.

Lawyer Sasha Wass, representing NGN, put it to Depp that he had slapped Heard three times after she

made fun of a “Wino Forever” tattoo on his arm in March 2013, when he was drinking heavily.

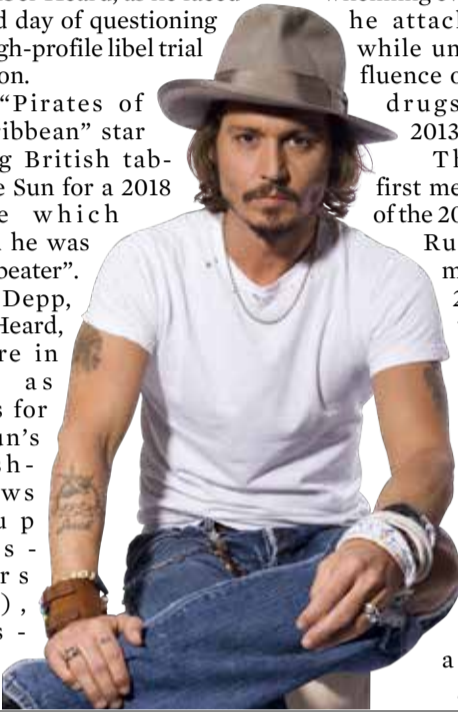
“I’m sorry but that is not true, you are mistaken... I didn’t hit Ms Heard,” the actor replied.

The tattoo originally read “Winona Forever” and referred to the actress Winona Ryder, with whom he had had a previous relationship. He changed it after they broke up.

NGN is relying on 14 separate claims of domestic violence in its defence, all of which Depp denies.

The case opened at the High Court on Monday with Depp insisting in a witness statement that had “never abused Ms Heard, or, indeed any other woman” in his life.

He said Heard, an actress, was calculating, sociopathic, narcissistic and emotionally dishonest, with a diagnosed borderline personality disorder, and was intent on destroying his life.



Johnny Depp

Priyanka Chopra appointed ambassador of Toronto International Film Festival

ANI | Washington

Adding another feather to her cap, actor Priyanka Chopra announced that she has been chosen as the ambassador of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) 2020.

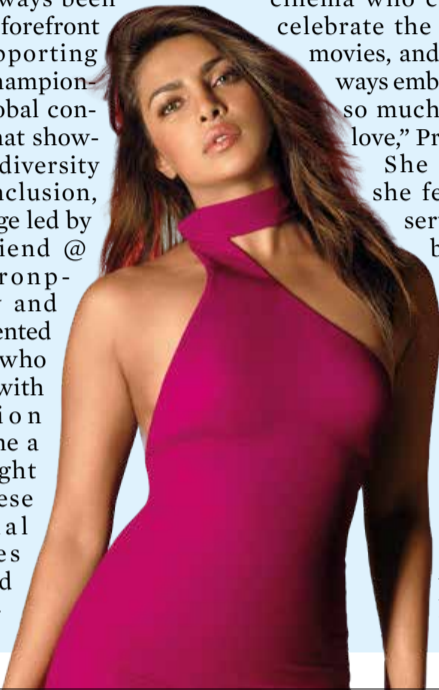
Priyanka has joined the list of 50 celebrated filmmakers and actors who are invited as the ambassadors of the TIFF.

The 37-year-old star put out a post on Instagram and shared a montage featuring snippets of her empowering addresses at the TIFF. Along with the video, Priyanka noted that the TIFF has been a second home for her.

She wrote, “Throughout my career TIFF has been a second home for me, with many of my films, as both an actor and producer, making their world debut at the festival.”

Talking about the film festival that focuses on special stories and storytellers, the ‘Dostana’ star added, “TIFF has always been at the forefront of supporting and championing global content that showcases diversity and inclusion, a charge led by my friend @cameronbailey and his talented team, who work with passion to shine a spotlight on these special stories and storytellers.”

“Even more than that, one of the most exceptional parts of the festival are the fans of cinema who congregate to celebrate the magic of the movies, and who have always embraced me with so much warmth and love,” Priyanka added. She shared that she feels proud to serve as the ambassador to the festival and noted, “I am very proud to serve as an ambassador this year, and I look forward to continuing a relationship that I value tremendously.”



Priyanka Chopra

Thandie Newton says Tom Cruise got ‘frustrated’ with her on ‘Mission: Impossible 2’ set

Fox | Los Angeles

“Westworld” actress Thandie Newton shared a story about a difficult day she had while filming “Mission: Impossible 2” alongside Tom Cruise.

The actress starred in the movie with Cruise in the sequel to the film series that would go on to be one of the most massive action franchises in Hollywood.

However, her character never returned for any of the subsequent movies. Speaking to Vulture in a recent interview, the actress explained that she was never asked to do another movie.

She also noted that she was “so scared of Tom” and recalled a difficult moment they had together on set, when a scene for the movie wasn’t going well.

“He was a very dominant individual. He tries superhard to be

a nice person. But the pressure. He takes on a lot. And I think he has this sense that only he can do everything as best as it can be done,” Newton said.

“There was one time, we were doing this night scene, there were so many extras with pyrotechnics and you name it, and it was a scene with him and me on the balcony,” she added. “And I don’t think it was a very

well-written scene. I get angry with him. We’re frustrated with each other. And we’re looking out over Spain. It wasn’t going well.”

She noted that director John Woo was of no help at the time because he had “made a decision” that he didn’t speak Eng-

lish. Newton explained that she believed the problem for her character had to do with the fact that she didn’t have great lines in the scene. That’s when Cruise had a less-than-helpful suggestion.

“And he gets so frustrated with having to try and explain that he goes, ‘Let me just — let’s just go do it. Let’s just rehearse on-camera,’” she explained. “So we rehearsed and they recorded

it, and then he goes, ‘I’ll be you. You be me.’ So we filmed the entire scene with me being him — because, believe me, I knew the lines by then — and him playing me. And it was the most unhelpful... I can’t think of anything less revealing. It just pushed me further into a place of terror and insecurity. It was a real shame. And bless him. And I really do mean bless him, because he was trying his damndest.”



Thandie Newton

Brad Pitt boards ‘Bullet Train’

IAANS | Los Angeles

Hollywood superstar Brad Pitt will be leading David Leitch’s upcoming assassin action thriller “Bullet Train”.

Based on the popular Japanese book “Maria Beetle” by Kotaro Isaka, “Bullet Train” is about a group of hitmen and assassins with conflicting motives on a train in Tokyo, reports hollywoodreporter.com.

The project is being tonally described as “Speed”, the Keanu Reeves-starrer set on a bus, meets “Non-Stop”, the Liam Nee-

son thriller set on a plane.

According to sources, Pitt will be essaying the role of American hitman named Ladybug.

The script is being written by Zak Olkewicz with Leitch overseeing revisions.

The project is a contained thriller, which means it can be shot on a contained set -- falling in sync with the health restrictions in the Covid era. The studio plans to shoot the movie later this year.

Filmmaker Antoine Fuqua, who originally developed the project, is producing alongside Leitch and Kelly McCormick as well as Kat Samick.

Pitt recently picked up an Oscar as Best Supporting Actor for his role in Quentin Tarantino’s “Once Upon A Time In Hollywood”.

co.uk.

“I can tell you that we are hoping to shoot (the

David Schwimmer: ‘Friends’ reunion tricky to pull off amid pandemic

IAANS | Los Angeles

“Friends” star David Schwimmer says the upcoming reunion special of the popular sitcom is proving “really tricky” to pull off amid the Covid pandemic.

While talking to “Entertainment Tonight”, the actor, popular for the role of Ross Geller in the iconic sitcom, opened up about the reunion special, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

“I can tell you that we are hoping to shoot (the

reunion) in August, in mid-August, but honestly, we will do it when it’s safe. There has always been a hope that a component of that reunion show will have a live audience, which makes the whole thing really tricky,” he said.

“We are obviously not going to risk anyone’s health by doing this,” the actor added.

Schwimmer confessed that he has “no idea” when everyone will be able to get together to shoot the reunion special.

Recently, the show’s co-creator Martha Kauffman shared that the filming could happen in August.

She said: “We are hoping to be able to shoot in August, if all is well and there is no early second wave and the studio is open. If everything is in place and we understand all the protocols and we can still make a good show, we’ll be shooting it some time, mid-to-late August.”

David Schwimmer



Brad Pitt

SUDOKU

4				8		5		
	7	3					2	
	5				7		6	
3			8	1				
		2	5	7	3			
			3	9			8	
9		5					8	
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Yesterday’s solution

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

How to play

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

CROSSWORD

Across

1- Burn slightly; 5- Western Australia’s capital; 10- Meat dish; 14- As it happens; 15- Old French expression meaning “goodbye”; 16- Actress Raines; 17- Hgt.; 18- Archie Bunker’s wife; 19- Nothing in Nice; 20- Exclude; 22- Family tree member; 23- The works; 24- Extra-wide shoe size; 25- Deceive; 29- Comfortably familiar; 33- You ___ right!; 34- Long objects used to row a boat; 36- Legal wrong; 37- Bon ___; 38- Strong string; 39- Inlet; 40- ___ uproar; 42- Take apart; 43- It’s a plus; 45- Tidal river; 47- Plastering tools; 49- First name in horror films; 50- Half and half; 51- Coral island; 54- Tigerstripe precursor; 60- Mongolian desert; 61- Rice; ___ 62- Bit; 63- It’s over your head; 64- Blathered; 65- Ollie’s partner; 66- Confederate; 67- Adhere closely; 68- Can’t stand;

Down

1- Staff leader?; 2- Hawaiian city; 3- Declare; 4- Discloses; 5- Spanish rice dish; 6- Other name for taro; 7- Journalist Jacob; 8- Mal de ___; 9- Whadja say?; 10- Utmost; 11- Writer Wieselt; 12- Novelist Waugh; 13- Alley; 21- Jazz singer Laine; 22- Homer’s TV neighbor; 24- Additional; 25- Jackie’s predecessor; 26- Golf clubs; 27- Assault; 28- Fluffy; 29- Ready ___; 30- Stallion, e.g.; 31- Projecting window; 32- Les ___-Unis; 35- Helping hand; 38- Go sour; 41- Render legally void; 43- Bang-up; 44- Start for fish, meatballs, or massage; 46- “You’ve got mail” co.; 48- Roaming; 51- Pearl Mosque city; 52- Kit item; 53- Ancient Greek coin; 54- Like some history; 55- Burt’s ex; 56- A party to; 57- Roster; 58- Rat- ___; 59- Ruin; 61- Circle segment;

Yesterday’s solution

1	R	O	C	5	S	T	A	8	E	L	A	M	F	M
2	R	I	A	L	H	A	L	V	E	S	I	D	O	
3	A	L	S	O	I	B	E	A	M	I	D	E	S	
4	S	E	T	T	E	S	10	N	U	T	M	E	A	T
6														
7	D	E	V	I	L	C	O	W	E	V	A	D	E	
8	I	L	I	E	S	L	I	E	S	T	L	O	G	
9	M	E	T	R	O	P	O	L	I	T	A	N	I	Z
10	E	N	A	M	A	S	E	R	U	E	V	E	S	
11	S	A	L	S	A	E	D	D	S	C	E	N	T	
12														
13	R	A	D	I	A	N	T	14	H	O	W	L	I	N
15	A	L	E	G	16	T	I	M	E	D	17	A	L	O
18	C	L	E	M	19	A	D	O	R	E	20	C	A	S
21	E	A	T	22	A	P	E	T	A	L	23	E	Y	E

SPORTS

sports

Alonso returns to F1 with Renault ‘family’



Fernando Alonso reacts after a race (file photo)
AFP | London

Two-time world champion Fernando Alonso will return to Formula One with Renault for the 2021 season, the team announced. “Renault DP World F1 Team is pleased to confirm Fernando Alonso alongside Esteban Ocon in its driver line-up for the 2021 season,” Renault said in a statement.

Alonso, who has notched up 32 wins and 97 podiums in 314 Grand Prix starts, will replace Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo, who is McLaren-bound at the end of this season.

Alonso, who won his two world championship titles with Renault in 2005 and 2006, said the French team had given him his “fondest memories” in Formula One.

“Renault is my family,” the 38-year-old Spaniard said.

“It’s a great source of pride and with an immense emotion I’m returning to the team that gave me my chance at the start of my career and which now gives me the opportunity to return to the highest level.”

Alonso left Formula One in 2018 after four fruitless years at McLaren and is due to make a third attempt to win the Indianapolis 500 with McLaren in August.

Alonso said he had bought into Renault’s project for the coming season.



Fernando Alonso won the Formula One title with Renault in 2005 and again in 2006

“Their progress this winter gives credibility to the objectives for the 2022 season and I will share all my racing experience with everyone from the engineers to the mechanics and my team-mates,” he said.

“The team wants and has the means to get back on the podium, as do I.”

Cyril Abiteboul, managing director of Renault Sport Racing said the signing of Alonso was a sign of Renault’s “plan to continue its commitment to F1 and to return to the top of the field”.

“His presence in our team is a formidable asset on the sporting level but also for the brand to which he is very attached,” Abiteboul said.

“The strength of the bond between him, the team and the fans make him a natural choice. In addition to past successes, it is a bold mutual choice as well as a project for the future.”

Rain restricts play as cricket returns

● Test cricket returned at the Ageas Bowl - but so did the English weather, which ensured that only 17.4 overs were possible on a frustrating day

● England and West Indies players took a knee in support of the Black Lives Matter movement

Reuters | London

After a 117-day absence, international cricket returned in familiar fashion as rain and bad light restricted the first test between England and West Indies to 17.4 overs and the hosts closed a frustrating day on 35-1.

After all the anticipation, day one of the first of three tests turned out to be a damp squib. If any fans had been allowed in they would have been jeering and complaining as the players remained in the pavilion for more than 90 minutes because of bad light, despite Southampton’s Ageas Bowl having floodlights.

If that frustration, an issue administrators appear powerless or unwilling to address, was all-too familiar, much else about the occasion felt very different.

The match is being played in a “bio-secure environment” with daily health checks for everyone in the ground. There are home umpires - the first time in Eng-



Players ‘takes a knee’ in support of the Black Lives Matter movement

land since 2002 - and because of that each team have three referrals instead of the usual two per innings.

Players are not allowed to use saliva to polish the ball and umpires will not take jumpers and caps from bowlers.

After a rain-delayed start, players from both teams “took a knee” having observed a minute’s silence to mark the victims of the novel coronavirus and former West Indies batsman Everton Weekes, who died last week.

England won the toss and opted to bat but soon lost Dom Sibley for nought after he left a Shannon Gabriel delivery which cut back to clip his off stump.

It looked a poor decision at any time but all the more so as in the previous over he had seen partner Rory Burns lucky to es-

“It’s been a bit tough, coming off and on. We just have to keep switched on when we come back on. It’s been a tough day but we’ve been doing well so far

SHANNON GABRIEL

cape an lbw review after doing exactly the same thing.

After further rain delays, England eventually settled to their task. Burns was not out 20 and Joe Denly on 14 when bad light brought them off in the 18th over - never to return.

Kemar Roach was the pick of the West Indies bowlers, giving up two runs from his six overs. England’s top order batting

remains something of a work in progress but the strength in depth of their bowling options was illustrated by the decision to leave seamer Stuart Broad out of a home test match for the first time since 2012. Pace duo Jofra Archer and Mark Wood will spearhead their attack.

West Indies bowled steadily, without too many fireworks, but had little to work with on a damp day.

“It’s been a bit tough, coming off and on,” Gabriel said. “We just have to keep switched on when we come back on. It’s been a tough day but we’ve been doing well so far.”

On the ball that claimed the only wicket of the day, he added: “It was a good delivery after coming back from almost a year off in test cricket. It feels good to be back.”

Bitter rivals Zverev, Kyrgios withdraw from Berlin tournament amid virus spat

AFP | London

The eagerly-awaited showdown between under-fire Alexander Zverev and Nick Kyrgios, who blasted the German as “selfish” for partying just days after a coronavirus scare, was cancelled on Wednesday after both men withdrew from an exhibition event in Berlin.

Both men were slated to join world number three Dominic Thiem at the mens and womens tournament from July 13-19 in the German capital.

“I was planning this month to play in Berlin, but I have made the decision to stay put and train with my team and not play any tournaments at the moment,” Zverev, ranked seventh, wrote on social media.

“It’s never nice to miss the



Australian tennis player Nick Kyrgios (R) hugs German tennis player Alexander Zverev after winning the 2019 Mexico ATP Open

chance to play at home, but I will be back soon,” added Zverev who said ex-pro David Ferrer has joined his coaching team on a trial basis.

Kyrgios, ranked 40th in the world, is also out amid travel

concerns from Australia, where the coronavirus pandemic has worsened with Melbourne back in lockdown.

“When we got Nick Kyrgios involved in May, this development wasn’t to be expected,”

said tournament director Edwin Weindorfer.

The Austrian added he is struggling to replace Zverev and Kyrgios, two of the biggest draws to the Berlin tournament.

“Time is extremely short, but we will do everything we can to find possible last-minute options.”

News of the Berlin withdrawals comes after Kyrgios launched a controversial verbal assault on Zverev and Thiem.

Zverev, 23, was filmed partying in a busy bar despite pledging to follow self-isolating guidelines after playing in Novak Djokovic’s coronavirus-hit Adria Tour in the Balkans.

Although Zverev tested negative, Djokovic, Grigor Dimitrov, Viktor Troicki and Borna Coric, who also played, were positive.

Tottenham’s Eric Dier given four-game ban over fan confrontation

AFP | Madrid

Tottenham’s Eric Dier has received a four-match ban and been fined £40,000 (\$50,000 for climbing into the stands to confront a supporter after his side’s FA Cup exit to Norwich.

The England international has been sanctioned by the Football Association on a charge of misconduct for the incident, which happened on March 4.

Dier, whose team had just lost a penalty shootout, saw his brother being abused by a fan and jumped to his aid. There was no physical exchange and the matter was not pursued by the police after a brief investigation.

“Eric Dier has been suspended for four matches with immediate effect, fined £40,000 and warned as to his



Eric Dier

future conduct following a breach of FA Rule E3,” it said in a statement.

“The Tottenham Hotspur FC player admitted that his actions at the conclusion of a fixture against Norwich City FC in The FA Cup on 4 March 2020 were improper but denied that they were also threatening.

“An independent regulatory commission subsequently found Eric Dier’s actions to be threatening.”



Mason Greenwood

‘Freakish’ Greenwood is Man Utd’s new baby-faced assassin

Teenage kicks: 18-year-old Mason Greenwood has scored 15 times for Manchester United this season

AFP | Madrid

Manchester United have spent more than £1 billion (\$1.2 billion) on new players over the past nine years but the Red Devils latest revival owes much to a home-grown superstar in 18-year-old academy graduate Mason Greenwood.

The young forward was the star of the show as United scored five goals in the Premier League at Old Trafford for the first time since 2011 against Bournemouth at the weekend.

Greenwood smashed high into the Bournemouth net, first with his left foot and then with his right as free-flowing United won 5-2 in a style rarely seen since Alex Ferguson’s retirement in 2013.

In his first season with the first team, Greenwood has scored 15 goals despite making just 18 starts in all competitions.

United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who earned the tag “baby-faced assassin” for his finishing prowess as a player at Old Trafford, rates the club’s latest prodigy as “one of the best -- if not the best -- finisher I have worked with and seen”.

Greenwood’s second against



Anthony Martial of Manchester United celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal

Bournemouth was particularly eye-catching as he spun onto his supposedly weaker right foot before crashing the ball with such speed that Aaron Ramsdale could not keep it out despite getting a hand to it.

“It’s freakish,” said former United striker Andy Cole. “He can go either side and you know he’s going to produce that kind of quality.”

‘More like a man’

Revitalised by the January signing of Bruno Fernandes, United were in fine form before football’s three-month coronavirus shutdown.

But far from seeing their momentum slowed, the manner in which Solskjaer’s men have returned has raised hopes they could even mount a title challenge to Liverpool and Manchester City next season.

Greenwood did not let the lockdown period go to waste as he reportedly gained three kilograms of muscle mass.

“Mason is looking more and more like a man,” said Solskjaer prior to the season’s restart.



Greenwood did not let the lockdown period go to waste as he reportedly gained three kilograms of muscle mass

younger,” said Rashford. “If you keep learning, there’s no limit to what you can become.”

United’s immediate future is focused on securing a return to Champions League football, with a trip to relegation-threatened Aston Villa next up on Thursday.

The swagger and speed with which United have played in the past three games has come, significantly, in the only three matches Fernandes and Pogba have started together.

Pogba seemed destined to leave Old Trafford for the second time in his career prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. Now, with finances tighter across European football, it is unlikely interest from Real Madrid will materialise this summer.

For the first time in his second spell at United, Pogba’s role in the midfield suits his skill-set, with Nemanja Matic providing the platform for the French World Cup winner and Fernandes to share the creative burden.

“We know that they (Rashford, Martial and Greenwood) can score goals, we know that they’ve got pace, energy, they’re youthful, they’ll learn, they’ll improve,” added Solskjaer.

“With the players that we have that can provide the passes with Paul and Bruno, the creativity that we’ve got in the team now is exciting.”



Manchester United's Paul Pogba is challenged by Tottenham's Eric Dier (file photo)



Manchester United's Mason Greenwood (left) vies with Sheffield United's Jack Robinson (file photo)

Rodgers hopes late leveller at Arsenal sparks Leicester revival

AFP | London

Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers is hoping Jamie Vardy’s late equaliser to salvage a 1-1 draw at Arsenal on Tuesday will prove a turning point as the Foxes try to cling on to a place in the Premier League top four.

Rodgers’s men have now won only once in six games since the English season restarted last month, but made the most of Eddie Nketiah’s red card 15 minutes from time at the Emirates.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang’s strike gave the Gunners a well-deserved first-half lead, but Kasper Schmeichel in the Leicester goal ensured Arsenal

failed to add to their advantage.

And after Nketiah saw red, Vardy slotted home from Demarai Gray’s cross to open up a four-point lead on fifth-placed Manchester United, who travel to Aston Villa today.

“I think it’s huge for us,” said Rodgers. “The second half we were outstanding. We were much quicker in our play and even 11 v 11 we were the better team.”

“I was really pleased with how we managed 11 v 10. We got a deserved goal and if we had made the final pass we could have gone on and won the game. We take a point and it could be



Leicester's Jamie Vardy shoots to score a goal against Arsenal

a very important point for us.”

Arsenal’s own chances of a top-four finish appear gone as

they remain nine points adrift in seventh.

But after a poor start to the re-

start with back-to-back defeats at Manchester City and Brighton, there were more promising signs from Mikel Arteta’s men as his reign at the Emirates begins to take shape.

“We lost two points today that in my opinion we completely deserved,” said Arteta. “You can see the effort, intensity, and desire the players are putting in. I am extremely proud.”

“You have to learn, when you play against this opposition you have to kill them.”

Bukayo Saka has flourished since Arteta replaced Unai Emery in December and the 18-year-old was again at the heart of an

excellent first 45 minutes from Arsenal. Saka created the opening goal as he latched onto a defence-splitting pass from the outstanding Dani Ceballos and teased Jonny Evans into falling over his own feet before laying Aubameyang’s 20th Premier League goal of the season on a plate.

But for Schmeichel in the Leicester goal, the hosts would have been out of sight before half-time as the Danish number one produced an incredible low save to deny Alexandre Lacazette in between further smart stops from the French striker and Saka.

Fakhreddine to face Cortese in Romania

Mohammad Fakhreddine returns against Enrico Cortese, headlines BRAVE CF 35 in Bucharest

TDI | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation will return to action on July 20th, as BRAVE CF 35 takes place in Bucharest, Romania, in association with RXF. The fight card will be headlined by a Middleweight clash between Mohammad “The Latest” Fakhreddine and Enrico “The Killing Machine” Cortese.

The winner of that fight will be in pole position to challenge reigning Middleweight world champion Daniel “Gaucho” Souza, as both Fakhreddine and Cortese look to make history by becoming the first world champions from Lebanon and Italy.

Lebanon’s Fakhreddine is one of the Middle East’s biggest stars and has fought for BRAVE CF since March of 2017, when he made a victorious debut against Vinicius Cruz in Abu Dhabi, at BRAVE CF 4. “The Latest” then credentialed himself for a title shot at Welterweight with another victory at BRAVE CF 6, but fell ill during the weight cut and didn’t compete for the belt.

He then developed one of BRAVE CF’s fiercest rivalries with Tahir Hadbi, fighting the French-Algerian twice (one No Contest and one loss). Fakhreddine then decided to reinvent himself and move up to Middleweight. He even fought at the first-ever KHK Open Weight world championship, losing in the final match-up to Azamat Murzakanov, and has been gearing up for a comeback.

Meanwhile, Cortese made



BRAVE CF 35 Fight Card

Middleweight: Mohammad Fakhreddine vs Enrico Cortese
Lightweight: Abou Tounkara vs Andrey Barbarosa
Heavyweight: Mamadou Lamine Sene vs Ion Grigore
Women’s Flyweight: Malin Hermansson vs Ana Maria Pal

headlines late last year when he dominated Jorick Montagnac at BRAVE CF 30, in India. The Italian prospect, who’s only 22, improved to 6-2-0, 1 NC, and is now riding a five-fight win streak as he gets ready for the biggest fight of his life on July 20th.

The co-main event of the evening will feature two debutants, as Lightweight Abou Tounkara, from Bulgaria Top Team, takes on Moldova’s own Andrey Barbarosa. Also on deck

for the fight card is a Heavyweight bout between Mamadou Lamine Sene and Ion Grigore.

Rounding out the fight card is a Women’s Flyweight bout as Malin Hermansson makes her BRAVE CF debut against local star Ana Maria Pal.

BRAVE CF 35 will be the first show back following the COVID-19 outbreak. It will have no live audience and will be under strict national and international health guidelines and regulations.

Basketball federation sets dates for return to play

Zain league to begin Golden Square in mid-August, mid-September resumption for Khalifa bin Salman Cup

● Only 20 members per club, including players and team staff, will be allowed to enter the arena for each game

● October 10 start for 2020/2021 campaign, just two weeks after end of current season

TDI | Manama

The Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) announced last night a mid-August return to action in the 2019/2020 Zain Bahrain Basketball League, and a mid-September resumption of the prestigious Khalifa bin Salman Cup.

This comes following the decision of the Government Executive Committee, headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to allow for national leagues to return, without fans in attendance.

The BBA said that league play will see games in the Golden Square semi-final round from August 18 to 24 in a pair of best-of-three series, to be followed by the title-deciding round set for September 4 to 10, also in a best-of-three format.

Meanwhile, the Khalifa bin Salman Cup will hold its quarter-final games on September 13 and 14, with a pair of best-of-three final four match-ups held from September 17 to 23.



BBA president Talal Kanoo



BBA secretary general Ahmed Yousuf



BBA decided to cancel the remaining games of the Silver League, which features the Kingdom’s bottom-ranked clubs from the past season

The one-game final will then be held on September 26, marking the official end of the 2019/2020 season.

The decisions came following a meeting of the BBA’s board of directors yesterday, headed by BBA president Talal Kanoo.

BBA secretary general Ahmed Yousuf said that the board’s decisions were made according to the procedures approved by the Bahrain Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs.

He added that clubs will be allowed to sign foreign professional players for the remaining games.

Furthermore, he noted that all clubs must strictly adhere to all health and safety measures issued by the BOC and Sports Ministry in participating.

Only 20 team members per club, including players, along with technical and administrative staff members, will be allowed to enter the playing arena for each game. Five board directors apiece will also be permitted.

No participants will be allowed to enter the arena if their body temperature is 37.5 degrees Celsius or above.

Also at yesterday’s meeting, the BBA decided to cancel the remaining games of the Silver League, which features the Kingdom’s bottom-ranked clubs from the past season.

It was further announced that the 2020/2021 campaign is scheduled to begin on October 10, just two weeks after Khalifa bin Salman Cup final.

BRAVE CF back to representing Bahrain on the global stage

TDI | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation, a product of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa’s vision, is back to holding events across the world, taking the Kingdom of Bahrain’s name to the highest places in sports.

The announcement was recently made by BRAVE CF president Mohammed Shahid, who reinforced that the fastest-growing MMA organization on the planet will be back at the end of the month, with shows in Romania. It will become one of the first sports properties to return to action with the Covid-19 pandemic, following all of the national and international guidelines to guarantee a safe environment for athletes and staff.

The European invasion will continue after two shows in Bucharest, with Sweden also being home to a BRAVE CF event. In September and October, respectively, Poland and Belgium will also host fight nights.

Largest exposure platform for Bahrain

As a Bahrain-born sports



brand, the biggest-ever in the Kingdom, BRAVE Combat Federation is proud to display its

heritage and will continue to serve as the largest exposure platform for Bahrain in the



BRAVE Combat Federation serves as the biggest sports media property in the Middle East. No other regional-born brand has made a worldwide impact in so little time

world. So far, BRAVE CF has travelled to 19 countries in seven different regions across its 34 events.

In all of those shows, BRAVE Combat Federation makes sure to provide local fans, dignitaries and celebrities with the best action in mixed martial arts, while giving Bahrain the international exposure it deserves, aiding in

the development of international relationships, tourism, and trade. BRAVE CF is the biggest exposure platform for Bahrain across the world, also because of its reach - the organization has TV deals with broadcasting giants in several key markets as well as local deals with some of the biggest networks in the countries the promotion visits.

Biggest sports media property in the Middle East

Under the KHK Sports umbrella, BRAVE Combat Federation also serves as the biggest sports media property in the Middle East. No other regional-born brand has made a worldwide impact in so little time.

Founded in 2016, it took BRAVE CF less than four years to achieve numerous milestones in its reach, giving Africa its first taste of international MMA, while also setting strong footprints on combat sports traditional markets, such as Brazil, England, and Mexico.

BRAVE CF has hosted shows in Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, and South America, as

well as the Middle East.

Fastest-growing MMA promotion in the world

In a little over three years of being in operations, BRAVE Combat Federation has achieved what no other organization in the world of MMA was able to achieve in the same timeframe. With 34 events held in 19 countries (with three new destinations confirmed), BRAVE CF has become the only truly global promotion.

In all of these nations, BRAVE Combat Federation makes it a point of pushing the envelope when it comes to finding new talent, developing the sport on a national scale, as well as empowering local federations and governing bodies to take mixed martial arts and combat sports to a new level.

BRAVE CF’s mission is to develop the sport globally, and that includes going to places where no other promotion has gone, and kickstart a true sports revolution by giving local fighters the global platform to showcase their talents, providing young athletes with a pathway to success.