



**Lebanon government resigns**

AP | Beirut

Lebanon's government resigned yesterday amid widespread public fury at the country's ruling elite over last week's devastating explosion in Beirut.

The move risks opening the way to dragged-out negotiations over a new Cabinet amid urgent calls for reform, AP reported.

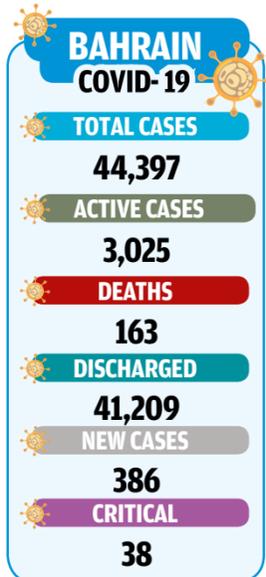
Lebanese prime minister Hassan Diab headed to the presidential palace to submit the Cabinet's group resignation, said Health Minister Dr Hamad Hassan. It follows a weekend of anti-government protests in the wake of last week's explosion in Beirut's port, while there have been mass demonstrations since October demanding the departure of the entire sectarian-based leadership.

The ruling oligarchy has held onto power from the end of the civil war in 1990.

Although Diab's resignation had appeared inevitable after the blast, he seemed unwilling to leave and only a few days ago made a televised speech in which he offered to stay on for two months to allow for various factions to agree on a roadmap for reforms. But the pressure from within his own Cabinet proved to be too much.

Diab's government was formed after his predecessor, Saad Hariri, stepped down in October in response to the demonstrations. It took months of bickering among the leadership factions before they settled on Diab.

Now the process must start again, with Diab's government in a caretaker role, as the same factions debate a new one.



210 fils (includes VAT)



**Virus, oil impact revenues**

HRH the Crown Prince chairs Cabinet meeting, Bahrain's biannual financial report for first half of 2020 reviewed

- Oil revenue drops by 35 per cent and non-oil revenue by 13 per cent YoY
- Economic contraction also driven by COVID-19 and waiving of government service fees
- BD798 million deficit for the first half of 2020 is an increase of 98 per cent compared to last year

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's total revenues collected have decreased by 29 per cent year-on-year (YoY) due to falling oil prices, according to the biannual financial report for 2020 for the period ending June 30.

The report was reviewed yesterday during the weekly Cabinet meeting, chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince,



HRH the Crown Prince chairing the Cabinet meeting

Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, held remotely.

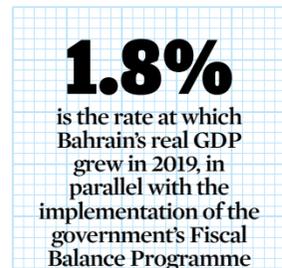
Oil revenue decreased by 35 per cent and non-oil revenue fell by 13 per cent YoY as a result of economic contraction driven by the coronavirus (COVID-19), and the waiving of government service fees.

The results showed discipline in total expenditures according to the budget and a decrease in recurrent expenditures compared to 2019. As a result, the BD798 million deficit indicated in the biannual financial report for the first half of 2020 was an increase of 98 per cent, in

comparison to 2019.

The Cabinet also reviewed Bahrain's final annual accounts report for 2019. Bahrain has recorded a favourable variance of 3.1 per cent, with BD2,902.4 million in revenue collected, exceeding the budget target of BD2,815.7 million, while expenditure amounted to BD3,586.1 million, only 0.82 per cent above the budgeted BD3,556.8 million.

In line with the Fiscal Balance Programme, the Kingdom recorded a budget deficit of BD683.7 million in 2019—BD574 million or 7.7 per cent below the forecasted deficit of BD741.1 million, which



reflects the programme's success. Furthermore, Bahrain's real GDP grew by 1.8 per cent, in parallel with the programme's implementation.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet reviewed a report presented by the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministerial Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs and Financial Balance chairman on the committee's work carried out throughout the first half of 2020.

The Deputy Premier confirmed a total of 22 meetings were held, during which 67 topics were discussed, including the committee's 2019-2022 priorities, Bahrain's BD4.5 billion initial and subsequent economic stimulus packages, reducing ministerial operation expenses by 30 per cent, and the implementation of the Fiscal Bal-

ance Programme.

Also during the meeting, the Cabinet expressed its admiration of the speech given by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for Eid Al Adha, and praised HM the King's support for the government's response to COVID-19, which has successfully minimised the human and economic impact of the pandemic.

The Cabinet also praised the royal directives enacted to provide urgent relief aid to Lebanon, expressing Bahrain's full solidarity and support for the country's people following the explosions in Beirut.

The Cabinet extended its congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and the Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Defence Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud on the success of this year's Hajj and for taking exemplary health measures during these unprecedented times. The Cabinet also congratulated the UAE president, the government and people for the successful operation of the Barakah nuclear power plant.

Continued on page 2

**Vaccine trials in Kingdom begin**

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Phase three clinical trials in Bahrain for a coronavirus (COVID-19) inactivated vaccine has been initiated, the Ministry of Health announced yesterday.

The ministry's public health assistant undersecretary Dr Mariam Al Hajri said that, in collaboration with UAE-based artificial intelligence company G42 Healthcare, the clinical trial will involve an estimated 6,000 citizen and resident volunteers from across the Kingdom.

Dr Al Hajri highlighted that the potential vaccine, enlisted by the World Health Organisation, will be tested on the volunteers who meet the required medical criteria, and that the clinical trials are to be conducted by G42 using a vaccine developed by Sinopharm CNBG, the world's sixth largest producer of vaccines in the world.

Dr Al Hajri further highlighted that the phase three clinical trials, which will be conducted over 12 months, has been approved by the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), and they follow the success of its phase one and phase two clinical trials held across China.

Dr Al Hajri noted that the phase three trials will be open to volunteers above the age of 18, who do not suffer from



The SCH chief is accompanied by other officials during his inspection visit



**Bahrain's phase three clinical trial follows one in the UAE that has seen nearly 10,000 vaccinated volunteers from 100 countries participate since July**

chronic or underlying conditions.

Dr Al Hajri outlined that the clinical trials are divided into three phases: the first ensures

the efficiency of the vaccine; the second will see the study expanded to ensure an immune response is triggered; and the third will see the vaccine administered to individuals with certain characteristics, such as age and physical health, similar to those for whom the new vaccine is being developed.

In preparation for the start of the vaccine trials, Supreme Council of Health chairman and National Taskforce for Combating COVID-19 head Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa made an inspection visit to the clinical trials center at Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre, to check on its general readiness to receive volunteers.

**Beirut blast wounded to be flown to Bahrain for treatment**

TDT | Manama

A number of Lebanese people wounded in the devastating blast that rocked Beirut last week will be flown to Bahrain to receive treatment.

This was revealed yesterday by Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) secretary-general Dr Mustafa Al Sayed, who said that this initiative was welcomed by Lebanese Minister of Public Health Dr Hamad Hassan in his talks with Bahrain's Charge d'Affaires to Syria Ali Al Mahmoud.

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa had assigned the RHF, led by HM the King's Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs representative His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, to dispatch urgent humanitarian relief aid to the

people of Lebanon in the aftermath of the Beirut blast.

The Lebanese minister welcomed this initiative and added that he would send Al Mahmoud a list featuring the names and details of the wounded.

The two sides also discussed a plan to dispatch a Bahraini medical team to Beirut to join in treatment efforts of those who sustained injuries in the blast. Dr Hassan commended Bahrain's initiatives and efforts to support the people of Lebanon, adding that his country's medical teams are capable, for now, of delivering all required treatment.

Dr Hassan suggested that Al Mahmoud takes part in overseeing the distribution of respiratory ventilators to health centres, which are in dire need of these advanced medical equipment.

**COVID-19 takes another life; active cases back over 3,000**

TDT | Manama

The coronavirus (COVID-19) took the life of a 38-year-old Bahraini man yesterday, bringing the Kingdom's virus-related death toll to 163, the Ministry of Health announced.

The ministry also said that out of 10,052 COVID-19 tests conducted yesterday, 386 new cases were detected from 153 expatriate workers and 233 contacts of active cases; with 242 new recoveries.

The total tests conducted in Bahrain increased to 912,111.

## HRH the Premier holds call with Sultan of Oman

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His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa held a telephone call with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman.

The Sultan and HRH the Premier discussed cooperation and ways to enhance them in various fields.

Sultan Haitham expressed his deep pride and appreciation for the relations between Oman and the Kingdom, and wished Bahrain and its people further prosperity under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa



HRH the Premier



Sultan Haitham

Al Khalifa. He also wished HRH the Premier abundant health and happiness. HRH the Prime Minister expressed his appreciation to the Sultan for his keenness

to promote relations between the two countries, wishing him good health and happiness and Oman continued progress and prosperity.

## Kingdom committed to development goals despite economic challenges

TDI | Manama

Bahrain continues its commitment to achieving all comprehensive development goals, despite the challenges presented by the drop of oil prices globally and the coronavirus (COVID-19), Minister of Finance and National Economy Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa said.

The Finance Ministry yesterday completed its biannual financial report 2020 for ministries and government agencies, for the period ending 30 June 2020.

Shaikh Salman noted that the cohesive efforts of Team Bahrain, represented by both the executive and legislative branches, the public and private sectors, citizens and residents, has had a profound impact on the initiatives that continue to place citizens' interests at the core of all development plans.

Shaikh Salman noted that in parallel to achieving the Kingdom's fiscal balance goals, development efforts will continue to ensure growth of the national economy, and the sup-



Shaikh Salman

ply of quality opportunities for citizens.

The biannual financial report of the Kingdom's ministries and government agencies for the period ending June 30 of this year has indicated a total collected revenue of BD910 million, a decrease of 29 per cent, in comparison to the same period last year.

Due to low oil prices, oil revenue decreased by 35 per cent, in comparison to the same period during the fiscal year of 2019.

The report further indicated a fall in non-oil revenue by 13 per cent, in comparison to the

same period in 2019, as a result of a decrease in economic activity globally, regionally, and locally, and due to the waiving of government service fees during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The report reflected a discipline in total expenditure in accordance to the allocated budget, and a reduction in recurrent expenditure by five per cent, in comparison to the same period last year. Total actual expenditure recorded stood at BD1,708 million, achieving a slight increase in the disbursement by two per cent, compared to the results of the semi-annual budget implementation for the fiscal year 2019 of BD1,678 million.

As a result, the actual deficit for the biannual report for the fiscal year 2020 amounted to BD798 million, an increase of 98 per cent, compared to the biannual deficit for the fiscal year 2019.

Shaikh Salman concluded by expressing his confidence that Team Bahrain's united efforts and determination are key to overcoming all challenges presented by the global pandemic.

## Incoming passengers' isolation ward approved



A screenshot of the remote Cabinet meeting taking place

Continued from page 1

The Cabinet approved yesterday a proposal to provide an isolation ward for all incoming passengers who have visited countries with high COVID-19 infection rates, and to conduct the necessary screening alongside the efforts undertaken by the government in this regard.

The Cabinet also approved the imposition of final anti-dumping duties on Bahrain's cardboard imports of origin from Spain and Poland. This is in accordance with the decision of the GCC's Industrial Cooperation Council regarding imposing final anti-dumping duties against the imports of GCC countries from the above-mentioned product for a period of five years.

The Cabinet agreed to take

final preventive measures in the form of a quantitative restriction for a period of three years on GCC countries' imports of chemical plasticisers, in compliance with a decision to combat dumping against the imports of GCC countries of this product.

The Cabinet reviewed a draft law pertaining to external audit services, particularly in keeping abreast with regulatory changes, increasing the number of qualified Bahrainis, and increasing the supply of such services to reduce prices and avoid violation delays.

The Cabinet reviewed a report on legislative oversight achievements and praised the ongoing constructive cooperation between the government and the legislative authority.

The Cabinet approved a mem-

orandum submitted by the Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs on the issuance of a business license to EHYAA Renewable Company to produce and sell electricity for the 100megawatt solar power plant project.

The Cabinet referred to the Representatives Council a draft law with a memorandum on the government's opinion on a proposal to amend some provisions of the Reorganisation and Bankruptcy Law.

The Cabinet recognised an old house in Isa Town as a national historical landmark and noted that Isa Town has one of the oldest housing stocks in the Gulf, and was the first housing project in the Kingdom.

The Cabinet approved a proposal regarding the transition of notary offices to e-notary.

## Legislative, executive cooperation stressed



The Speaker with the Parliament Affairs Minister

TDI | Manama

Council of Representatives Speaker Fawzia bint Abdulla Zainal stressed yesterday that strengthening joint-legislative and executive coordination and cooperation ensures the continuity of national achievements and supports the comprehensive development march, spearheaded by His Majesty King Hamad

bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The Speaker said this as she received Parliament Affairs Minister Ghanim bin Fadhl Al Buainain. She lauded the keenness of the government, led by His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and supported by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme

Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to unify national efforts as the best means to overcome current challenges and attain further development gains that enhance the Kingdom's progress and prosperity.

They discussed the latest developments of mutual concern, as well as the ongoing preparations for the beginning of the third session of the fifth legislative term.

## Sustainable energy chief inaugurates society facility

TDI | Manama

Sustainable Energy Authority (SEA) president Dr Abdullhussain bin Ali Mirza inaugurated the Bahrain Corporate Social Responsibility Society (BCSRS) facility in Al Eker, which aims to virtually train

unemployed citizens in the area.

Dr Mirza praised the efforts of the (CSR) in supporting Bahraini youth in various areas and providing them with opportunities and training them for any vacancies in their work fields. He confirmed that the

inauguration of the society is only the beginning to many future initiatives supporting various fields in the Kingdom. BCSRS founder Khalid Al Qoud noted that there will be four new headquarters in different areas of the society this year.



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## Brothers who rob dead drug dealer lose final appeal

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Two brothers, who were convicted of robbing a drug dealer after he died due to an overdose of drugs last year, lost their final appeal against the 15-year imprisonment issued against them.

Both men were earlier acquitted by the court of the charge of manslaughter.

According to court files, the case unfolded when the 58-year-old drug dealer's body was found inside an abandoned home in Gudaibiya in the capital last year. A used injection

was found near the body and an examination showed head injuries on the man.

Further investigations were launched into a possible murder case and it turned out that the brothers abused heroin along with the victim. When he lost consciousness, they beat him in an effort to rob him of his belongings. However, it was later proven that the man was already dead when the brothers assaulted him.

The duo was eventually identified and arrested, and they were referred to the Public Prosecution to be interrogated.

One of the brothers told interrogators: "When we realised he was under the influence of drugs, we decided to rob him. We then hit him with a stone on his head and stole his wallet, mobile, and his heroin stash."

The brothers admitted to robbing the victim but denied the manslaughter charges, and they were later acquitted. However, they were each sentenced to 15 years behind bars for robbery and drugs abuse.

They appealed against the verdict twice and they lost their final appeal before the Court of Cassation yesterday.

## Two arrested for dealing shabu worth BD120,000

TD | Manama

Anti-drug police have arrested two Asians for promoting the narcotic substance shabu, with its value estimated at about BD120,000, the Ministry of Interior reported.

The ministry said that the General Directorate of Crime Detection and Forensic Evidence director-general announced the detention of the individuals, who are aged 20 and 28 years old.

The director-general explained that, within the framework of the Anti-Narcotics Directorate police's role in implementing the law and combating the abuse of drugs and their promoters, the two Asians were identified and were arrested while committing the crime.



A picture released by the ministry showing the two Asians with the shabu and money they were caught with

In addition, the money collected from the illegal sale of the drugs was confiscated.

The director-general indi-

cated that legal measures have been taken and the case has been referred to the Public Prosecution.

# Death penalty upheld

Court of Cassation upholds capital punishment issued against three Asian men convicted of manslaughter

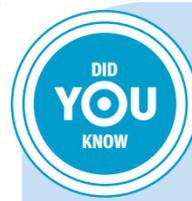
● The trio were sentenced to death earlier this year by the First High Criminal Court after finding them guilty of beating to death a fellow-Asian, the victim, using hammers and cement blocks, following an argument that went out of control over an amount of BD1,000 the three men claimed they were owed

TD | Manama

The Court of Cassation yesterday upheld the death penalty previously issued against three Asian men who were convicted of manslaughter.

The trio were sentenced to death earlier this year by the First High Criminal Court, which found them guilty of killing the victim, who is a fellow Asian national, using hammers. The incident took place in the Capital Governorate last year.

Investigations showed that the motive behind the murder was a dispute over an amount of BD1,000, which the victim owed



The Court of Cassation was established in 1989 to serve as the final court of appeal for all civil, commercial, and criminal matters. The judges for the court are appointed by royal decree

to the three men. They apparently killed him after luring him to an abandoned property in Al Daih village.

The results of the investigation also indicated that the three men had beaten the victim to death using hammers and cement blocks, after an argument over the amount he owed them had apparently gone out of control.

The case was first reported when the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science was notified about a severely injured man found in a farm in Al Daih, a couple of kilometres to the west of the capital.

The victim was rushed to Salmaniya Medical Complex after informing the police that he was attacked and robbed by three individuals. The man soon succumbed to his wounds and passed away in the hospital.

The authorities launched a manhunt to nab the three sus-

pects, who were eventually arrested after investigators acknowledged that they are actually relatives of the victim.

The trio told interrogators that they had requested the victim to meet them after he apparently cheated them by selling them a work permit (employment visa) for BD1,000, promising that it is valid for two years, while it was actually only valid for one year.

On May 14, 2019, the Public Prosecution charged the three men of premeditated murder and robbing the victim.

The prosecution ordered to detain them and referred the case to the First High Criminal Court, which deliberated the case and announced its verdict.

They appealed once before the Supreme Court of Appeals and got their plea rejected. They pleaded again before the Court of Cassation, which also rejected their request.

## Fire safety campaign launched in local markets

TD | Manama

The General Directorate of Civil Defence's Protection and Safety Department has launched an awareness campaign on the requirements for fire prevention in commercial markets.

This comes within the framework of awareness and educational programmes being implemented by the directorate, as part of its efforts to prevent accidents and fires.

Teams of civil defence personnel conducted campaign visits in local markets, where they emphasised safety re-

quirements and gave information on how to deal with fires, and the importance of the availability of fire extinguishers, fire detectors and identifying fire exits and safe areas.

The visits were made at the popular markets in Isa Town, Hamad Town and Muharraq, where posters in several languages were posted with information on how to use fire extinguishers and providing smoke detectors.

The posters also shed light on how to evacuate the market and how to properly act in the event of a fire.



Unsafe electricity connections are inspected by civil defence officers

## US joins global efforts to assist Lebanese people

TD | Manama

The US is joining global efforts, including that of Bahrain's, to assist the people of Lebanon following the devastating blast that hit its capital Beirut last week.

This was confirmed in a statement yesterday by US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Margaret Nardi.

"Our hearts go out to the Lebanese people as they deal with the aftermath of last Tuesday's tragedy," the statement read.

"We salute the Kingdom of Bahrain for its generous assistance. The US is joining with the global community in sending humanitarian assistance to help the Lebanese people."

## Saudi relations discussed

TD | Manama

Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani held a phone call with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud.

They reviewed solid brotherly bilateral relations binding

the two Kingdoms, stressing growing ties at all levels.

They also discussed aspects of cooperation and joint coordination regarding different regional issues related to the process of Gulf action, as well as topics of common concern.

## BAC honours retiring employees



BAC officials during the farewell ceremony

TD | Manama

Bahrain Airport Company (BAC), the operator and managing body of Bahrain International Airport, held a farewell ceremony for two employees who are retiring after years of service.

Nader Redha from Develop-

ment and Technical and Khalil Yacoub from Airport Operations were honoured in the event.

BAC CEO Mohamed Yousif Al Binfalah and other senior company officials attended the ceremony, in which—and in line with government regulations—all attendees wore

facemasks and followed social distancing measures.

"Our employees are the backbone of our organisation and they continue to play a key role in our growth and success," Al Binfalah said.

"A committed workforce is vital to the success of any organisation and in our case, it

has been a key success factor to BAC's role in the Airport Modernisation Programme.

"Everyone who has worked on this important national project can take pride in being part of aviation history in Bahrain and contributing to a more connected future for the Kingdom."

## Seventeen detained for indecency incitement, illegally selling alcohol

● Arrested individuals include Asian and African nationals, 10 of whom were women

TD | Manama

Seventeen Asian and African individuals, including 10 women, have been arrested for indecency incitement and illegally selling alcohol.

This was reported by the Ministry of Interior last night.

The ministry said that the Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science director-general revealed that an investigation into received information led to identifying the suspects, which resulted in their detention.

The items related to their crimes were confiscated.

Legal proceedings are being taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution, the ministry said.

# ABG reports H1 2020 net income of US\$47 million

- **H1 provisions increased by 345pc to reach US\$ 127 million**
- **Total operating income increased by 25pc during the first half of 2020 to US\$ 553 m**
- **Total assets decreased 1pc to reach US\$ 26.13 billion**

TDT | Manama

Al Baraka Banking Group BSC (ABG), announced achieving a net income attributable to equity holders of the parent of US\$ 47 million in the first half of 2020 compared to US\$ 56 m for the same period of 2019 with a decline of 16pc.

While the total Group's net income recorded during the first half of 2020 was US\$ 90 m compared to US\$ 95 m for the same period of 2019 with a 5pc decline. The basic and diluted earnings per share for the first half of 2020 was US Cents 2.54 compared to US Cents 3.27 for the same period of 2019.

This decrease came as a result of the Group's allocating of a significant increase in precautionary provisions to offset the expected damages resulting from the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the businesses of the Group and its unites. These provisions increased by 345pc to reach US\$ 127 m during the first half of 2020 compared to with US\$ 28 m in the first half of 2019.

The Group's total operating income increased by 25pc during the first half of 2020 to US\$ 553 m, compared to US\$ 442 m during the first half of 2019. As a positive result of the Group's ability to control expenses, net operating income increased by 62pc to US\$ 275 m during the first half of the year 2020 compared to US\$ 170 m for the same period last year.

With regards to the statement of financial positions' items, the equity attributable to the parent's shareholders and Sukuk holders amounted to US\$ 1.38 billion by end of June 2020 compared to US\$ 1.47 bn by the end of December 2019, reflecting a decline of 6pc due to foreign currency translation reserve, payment of cash dividends and payment of Tier 1 profits during the year. Total equity reached to US\$ 2.16 bn by end of June 2020 compared to US\$ 2.32 bn by end of December 2019, showing a decrease of 7pc, due to the same reason.

Total assets of the Group showed a decrease of 1pc by end of June 2020 to reach US\$ 26.13 bn compared to US\$ 26.26 bn by the end of December 2019. The Group focus during the first half of 2020 on maintaining a large portion of these assets in the form of liquid assets in order to face any emergency requirements of the units because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operating assets (financing and investments) amounted to US\$ 20.43 bn as at the end of June 2020, compared to US\$ 19.75 bn at the end of December 2019, increasing by 3pc. Customer accounts including due to banks and financial institu-

**During the second half of the year, we will continue to maintain our balance and capabilities in dealing with the ongoing repercussions of the Corona pandemic by continuing to reinforce and develop the initiatives and strategies that we launched since the beginning of the year, hoping that we will conclude the year with good results that are consistent with our expectations and aspirations**

ADNAN AHMED YOUSIF, MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF AL BARAKA BANKING GROUP

Baraka Banking Group, Abdullah Saleh Kamel, said, "Because of our commitment to present the model of true participatory banking through our units deployed in 17 countries, we have been able, thanks to God, to face the widespread repercussions of the Corona pandemic that has swept the world since the beginning of this year, and has resulted in severe human, social and economic damage. We have worked closely and together with our customers, individuals, companies and governments in these countries to alleviate these repercussions by taking a number of precautionary operational and financial initiatives, which, thanks to God, resulted in the good results achieved during the first half of this year."

Adnan Ahmed Yousif, member of the Board of Directors and President & Chief Executive of Al Baraka Banking Group, said: "We witnessed during the first half of this year unprecedented challenges that the world has not witnessed for a long time, which was represented by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in all countries of the world, resulted in wide damages and negative results across the various sectors, professions, institutions and societies, including banks and financial institutions."

"Environmental protection aspects also had a large part of our efforts during the first half of the year, especially those related to fighting the Corona virus, and directing our operations and funding towards supporting environmental projects and green banking in the societies in which we operate."

# CBB T-Bills oversubscribed

TDT | Manama

This week's BD 70 million issue of Government Treasury Bills has been oversubscribed by 161 per cent.

The bills, carrying a maturity of 91 days, are issued by the CBB, on behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The issue date of the bills is 12 August 2020 and the maturity date is 11 November 2020.

The weighted average rate of interest is 2.25pc compared to 2.24pc for the previous issue on 5 August 2020.

The approximate average



price for the issue was 99.435pc with the lowest accepted price being 99.423pc.

This is issue No. 1821 (ISIN BH000G305683) of Government Treasury Bills. With this, the total outstanding value of Government Treasury Bills is BD 2.110 billion.

# McDonald's sues ousted CEO

Reuters

McDonald's Corp said yesterday it sued former Chief Executive Steve Easterbrook to recoup tens of millions of dollars in severance and benefits, claiming he covered up and lied about sexual relationships with at least three employees.

The lawsuit came nine months after McDonald's ousted Easterbrook without cause, after determining he had engaged in a non-physical, consensual relationship with an employee that violated the fast food chain's policy.

McDonald's said it reopened the matter last month after receiving an anonymous tip, and discovered Easterbrook engaged in the sexual relationships with employees in the year before his departure.

Lawyers for Easterbrook did not immediately respond to requests for comment. When he left McDonald's, Easterbrook called his consensual affair



McDonald's CEO Steve Easterbrook

with an employee a "mistake," and that it was "time for me to move on."

Easterbrook's severance package was worth \$41.8 million when he left the Chicago-based company, executive pay firm Equilar has estimated.

But McDonald's said Easterbrook no longer deserved that payout because of his "silence and lies," and that had its board known the full picture it would have fired him "for cause."

INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 30 JUNE 2020 (REVIEWED)	
INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS	Six-month period ended 30 June
For the period ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)	2020 2019
	BD BD
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	
Profit of the Group for the period	1,553,864 1,394,797
Adjustments for:	
Investment income - net	(558,795) (583,510)
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	505,473 472,629
Depreciation of right-of-use assets	220,089 189,658
Finance costs	78,828 86,845
Finance costs on lease liabilities	62,376 68,190
Provision for employees' end of service benefits	116,407 114,297
Share of results of an associate	25,733 (8,665)
Provision for slow moving and obsolete inventories	23,172 38,754
Allowance for expected credit losses	71,732 22,885
Loss (gain) on disposals of property, plant and equipment	270 (4,889)
Operating profit before changes in working capital	2,099,149 1,790,991
Working capital changes:	
Inventories	(391,932) (676,287)
Trade and other receivables	(590,127) (545,332)
Trade and other payables	(319,128) 45,945
Contract and refund liabilities	127,975 73,134
Cash generated from operations	925,937 688,451
Finance costs paid	(65,517) (78,605)
Directors' remuneration paid	(116,076) (148,001)
Employees' end of service benefits paid	(42,716) (101,492)
Net cash flows from operating activities	701,628 369,353
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>	
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(364,089) (1,185,400)
Proceeds from disposals of property, plant and equipment	905 22,887
Proceeds from disposals of non-trading investments	16,421 231,133
Purchase of non-trading investments	(342,400) (242,332)
Dividends and interest received	558,795 583,510
Short-term deposits with original maturities of more than three months	(1,078,788) (250,000)
Net cash flows used in investing activities	(1,209,156) (838,202)
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>	
Dividends paid	(989,776) (1,169,427)
Net movements in import loans	941,520 1,415,254
Net movements in term loans	176,171 (1,776)
Payment of principal portion of lease liabilities	(199,417) (161,538)
Finance costs paid on lease liabilities	(62,376) (68,190)
Net movement in retentions payable	(36,794) 47,075
Purchase of treasury shares	(777,999) -
Net cash flows used in financing activities	(1,702,722) (1,760,601)
<b>NET DECREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>(678,200) (1,194,450)</b>
Net foreign exchange translation differences	(2,421) (320)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	1,317,279 1,801,109
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT 30 JUNE (a)</b>	<b>616,658 606,339</b>
(a) Cash and cash equivalents comprise of following amounts:	
Cash, bank balances and short-term deposits	2,053,124 2,219,427
Less: Bank overdrafts	(357,678) (1,363,088)
Less: Short-term deposits with original maturities of more than three months	(1,078,788) (250,000)
	616,658 606,339

INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS ACCOUNT AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		Six-month period ended 30 June	
For the period ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)		2020	2019
		BD	BD
Revenue from contracts with customers		19,118,994	19,321,808
Costs of revenue		(15,060,410)	(15,223,474)
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>		<b>4,058,584</b>	<b>4,098,334</b>
Other operating income		106,898	72,922
Personnel costs		(1,969,712)	(1,871,284)
General and administration expenses		(577,768)	(631,172)
Selling and distribution expenses		(503,920)	(387,343)
Depreciation on property, plant and equipment		(206,601)	(137,608)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets		(175,844)	(183,968)
<b>PROFIT FROM OPERATIONS</b>		<b>731,637</b>	<b>959,881</b>
Investment income		558,795	583,510
Other income		422,813	-
Share of results of an associate		(25,733)	8,665
Finance costs		(78,828)	(86,845)
Finance costs on lease liabilities		(62,376)	(68,190)
Foreign exchange gain (loss), net		7,556	(2,224)
<b>PROFIT OF THE GROUP FOR THE PERIOD</b>		<b>1,553,864</b>	<b>1,394,797</b>
of which attributable to non-controlling interests		(457,427)	(336,585)
<b>PROFIT FOR THE PERIOD ATTRIBUTABLE TO SHAREHOLDERS OF TRAFCO</b>		<b>1,096,437</b>	<b>1,058,212</b>
<b>BASIC AND DILUTED EARNINGS PER SHARE (FILS)</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (LOSS)</b>			
Items not to be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:			
- Gain on disposals of non-trading investments		23,656	108,406
- Net changes in fair value of non-trading investments		(720,509)	911,778
- Share of associate's other comprehensive (loss)		(31,031)	(15,225)
		(727,884)	1,004,959
Items to be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:			
- Foreign exchange differences on translation of foreign operations		(22,421)	(320)
<b>Other comprehensive (loss) income for the period</b>		<b>(750,305)</b>	<b>1,004,639</b>
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME OF THE GROUP FOR THE PERIOD</b>		<b>803,559</b>	<b>2,399,436</b>
of which attributable to non-controlling interests		(427,162)	(348,460)
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ATTRIBUTABLE TO SHAREHOLDERS OF TRAFCO</b>		<b>376,397</b>	<b>2,050,976</b>

INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY	Attributable to shareholders of Trafco													
	Share capital	Treasury shares	Share premium	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Fair value reserve	Foreign currency reserve	Retained earnings - non distributable	Retained earnings - distributable	Proposed appropriations	Total reserves	Total Trafco's shareholders	Non-controlling interests	Total equity
For the period ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD	BD
<b>2020</b>														
Balance at 1 January 2020	8,067,505	(1,644,095)	3,386,502	3,923,300	1,415,000	6,353,401	(36,610)	427,232	3,086,316	1,166,366	16,335,005	26,144,917	3,621,327	29,766,244
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(708,605)	(11,435)	-	1,096,437	(720,040)	1,096,437	457,427	1,553,864	1,553,864
Other comprehensive loss for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(708,605)	(11,435)	-	1,096,437	-	376,397	376,397	427,162	803,559
Total comprehensive (loss) income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(708,605)	(11,435)	-	1,096,437	-	376,397	376,397	427,162	803,559
Dividends	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,116,366)	(1,116,366)	(1,116,366)	-	(1,116,366)
Transfer to general reserve	-	-	-	-	50,000	-	-	-	-	(50,000)	-	-	-	-
Gain on disposals of non-trading investments	-	-	-	-	-	(23,656)	-	-	23,656	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2020</b>	<b>8,067,505</b>	<b>(1,644,095)</b>	<b>3,386,502</b>	<b>3,923,300</b>	<b>1,465,000</b>	<b>5,621,140</b>	<b>(48,045)</b>	<b>427,232</b>	<b>4,206,409</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,595,036</b>	<b>25,404,948</b>	<b>4,048,489</b>	<b>29,453,437</b>
<b>2019</b>														
Balance at 1 January 2019	8,067,505	(866,096)	3,386,502	3,786,542	1,365,000	5,266,927	(34,527)	353,474	2,881,774	1,434,829	15,054,019	25,641,930	3,106,227	28,748,157
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	992,927	(163)	-	1,058,212	-	1,058,212	1,058,212	336,585	1,394,797
Other comprehensive income (loss) for the period	-	-	-	-	-	992,927	(163)	-	1,058,212	-	992,764	992,764	11,875	1,004,639
Total comprehensive income (loss) for the period	-	-	-	-	-	992,927	(163)	-	1,058,212	-	2,050,976	2,050,976	348,460	2,399,436
Treasury shares purchased during the period	-	(777,999)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(777,999)	(777,999)	-	(777,999)
Dividends	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,367,729)	(1,367,729)	(1,367,729)	-	(1,367,729)
Dividends relating to treasury shares	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17,100	(17,100)	-	-	-
Transfer to general reserve	-	-	-	-	50,000	-	-	-	-	(50,000)	-	-	-	-
Gain on disposals of non-trading investments	-	-	-	-	-	(108,406)	-	-	108,406	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2019</b>	<b>8,067,505</b>	<b>(1,644,095)</b>	<b>3,386,502</b>	<b>3,786,542</b>	<b>1,415,000</b>	<b>6,151,448</b>	<b>(34,690)</b>	<b>353,474</b>	<b>4,065,492</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,737,266</b>	<b>25,547,178</b>	<b>3,454,687</b>	<b>29,001,865</b>

INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		(Reviewed)		(Audited)	
At 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)		30 June 2020	31 December 2019	30 June 2020	31 December 2019
		BD	BD	BD	BD
<b>ASSETS</b>					
<b>Non-current assets</b>					
Property, plant and equipment		9,774,048	9,916,607	9,774,048	9,916,607
Right-of-use assets		2,021,815	2,241,007	2,021,815	2,241,007
Investment in an associate		1,516,505	1,573,269	1,516,505	1,573,269
Non-trading investments		11,904,549	12,275,423	11,904,549	12,275,423
		25,216,917	26,006,306	25,216,917	26,006,306
<b>Current assets</b>					
Inventories		8,783,583	8,414,823	8,783,583	8,414,823
Trade and other receivables		9,147,307	8,628,912	9,147,307	8,628,912
Cash, bank balances and short-term deposits		2,053,124	2,327,365	2,053,124	2,327,365
		19,984,014	19,371,100	19,984,014	19,371,100
		45,200,931	45,377,406	45,200,931	45,377,406
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>					
<b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>					
<b>Equity</b>					
Share capital		8,067,505	8,067,505	8,067,505	8,067,505
Treasury shares		(1,644,095)	(1,644,095)	(1,644,095)	(1,644,095)
Share premium		3,386,502	3,386,502	3,386,502	3,386,502
Statutory reserve		3,923,300	3,923,300	3,923,300	3,923,300
General reserve		1,465,000			

# KFH – Bahrain launches WhatsApp Business service

Al-Maarafi: Phase 1 focused on Mazaya Social-Housing Scheme related queries

● **The service is available throughout the day**

TDT | Manama

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) – Bahrain announced launching its official WhatsApp Business service to facilitate communication with clients and receive queries and

applications.

The service, available throughout the day, is currently limited to real estate financing transactions of Mazaya Social Housing Finance Scheme, extended in partnership with the Ministry of Housing. KFH – Bahrain further said it would provide additional new and diverse banking services soon.

Commenting, Khalid Al-Maarafi, KFH – Bahrain Executive Manager and Head of Retail & Private Banking, said:

**Our launch of this service, which targets all clients, comes as part of the Bank's initiatives to boost digital interaction with all KFH-Bahrain**

KHALID AL-MAARAFI, KFH – BAHRAIN EXECUTIVE MANAGER AND HEAD OF RETAIL & PRIVATE BANKING



“Our launch of this service, which targets all clients, comes as part of the Bank's initiatives to boost digital interaction with all KFH-Bahrain. This application, which is the best and fastest user-friendly secure chat application, also helps the Bank bolster its performance by better communicating with its clients and allowing them at the same time to ask questions about the Bank's Mazaya and real estate financing service offerings”.

## Al Baraka Banking Group (B.S.C.) CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



### INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION At 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)

	Reviewed 30 June 2020 US\$ '000	Audited 31 December 2019 US\$ '000
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and balances with banks	4,504,770	5,386,926
Receivables	11,217,471	10,894,937
Mudaraba and Musharaka financing	2,161,409	3,228,615
Ijarah Muntahia Bittamleek	1,692,916	1,756,756
Investments	5,361,594	3,872,538
Property and equipment	442,206	455,031
Other assets	746,682	663,728
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>26,127,048</b>	<b>26,258,531</b>
<b>LIABILITIES, EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNTHOLDERS AND OWNERS' EQUITY</b>		
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Customer current and other accounts	6,264,017	6,195,073
Due to banks	1,050,184	1,106,923
Long term financing	434,860	379,269
Other liabilities	1,299,251	1,098,200
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>9,048,312</b>	<b>8,779,465</b>
<b>EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNTHOLDERS</b>		
Financial institutions	530,152	542,078
Non-financial institutions and individuals	14,385,601	14,613,798
<b>Total equity of investment accountholders</b>	<b>14,915,753</b>	<b>15,155,876</b>
<b>OWNERS' EQUITY</b>		
Share capital	1,242,879	1,242,879
Treasury shares	(8,371)	(8,308)
Share premium	18,158	18,138
Perpetual tier 1 capital	400,000	400,000
Reserves	176,118	177,254
Cumulative changes in fair values	27,611	29,370
Foreign currency translations	(834,318)	(752,068)
Retained earnings	362,665	335,089
Proposed appropriations	-	24,858
Equity attributable to parent's shareholders and Sukuk holders	1,384,742	1,467,212
Non-controlling interest	778,241	855,978
<b>Total owners' equity</b>	<b>2,162,983</b>	<b>2,323,190</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES, EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS AND OWNERS' EQUITY</b>	<b>26,127,048</b>	<b>26,258,531</b>

### INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF INCOME For the six months ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)

	Six months ended	
	30 June 2020 US\$ '000	30 June 2019 US\$ '000
<b>INCOME</b>		
Net income from jointly financed contracts and investments	668,361	684,866
Return on equity of investment accountholders before Group's share as a Mudarib	(572,936)	(600,730)
Group's share as a Mudarib	205,493	169,081
Return on equity of investment accountholders	(367,443)	(431,649)
Group's share of income from equity of investment accountholders (as a Mudarib and Rabalmaal)	300,918	253,217
Mudarib share for managing off-balance sheet equity of investment accountholders	7,903	6,872
Net income from self financed contracts and investments	124,986	83,682
Fees and commission income	64,694	82,508
Other operating income	72,300	48,060
Profit paid on long term financing	570,801	474,339
<b>TOTAL OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>552,711</b>	<b>442,344</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
Staff expenses	159,667	160,983
Depreciation and amortisation	19,717	20,252
Other operating expenses	98,738	91,399
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>278,122</b>	<b>272,634</b>
<b>NET INCOME FOR THE PERIOD BEFORE NET ALLOWANCE FOR CREDIT LOSSES / IMPAIRMENT AND TAXATION</b>	<b>274,589</b>	<b>169,710</b>
Net allowance for credit losses/impairment	(126,670)	(28,465)
<b>NET INCOME FOR THE PERIOD BEFORE TAXATION</b>	<b>147,919</b>	<b>141,245</b>
Taxation	(57,544)	(45,873)
<b>NET INCOME FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>90,375</b>	<b>95,372</b>
Attributable to:		
Equity holders of the parent	47,087	56,162
Non-controlling interest	43,288	39,210
	90,375	95,372
Basic and diluted earnings per share - US cents		
	2.54	3.27

### CONDENSED INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS For the six months ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)

	Six months ended	
	30 June 2020 US\$ '000	30 June 2019 US\$ '000
Net cash from operating activities	1,348,220	373,063
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,455,086)	(266,517)
Net cash used in financing activities	(448)	(745,703)
Foreign currency translation adjustments	(182,332)	(95,619)
<b>NET CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>(289,646)</b>	<b>(734,776)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	2,926,185	2,917,794
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT 30 JUNE</b>	<b>2,636,539</b>	<b>2,183,018</b>

### CONDENSED INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN OWNERS' EQUITY For the six months ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)

	Equity attributable to parent's shareholders and Sukuk holders US\$ '000	Non-controlling interest US\$ '000	Total owners' equity US\$ '000
At 1 January 2020	1,467,212	855,978	2,323,190
Dividends	(24,858)	-	(24,858)
Net movement in treasury shares	359	-	359
Net movement in other reserves	(1,136)	(1,080)	(2,216)
Net movement in cumulative changes in fair values	(1,759)	(201)	(1,960)
Foreign currency translations	(82,250)	(100,092)	(182,342)
Net income for the period	47,087	43,288	90,375
Dividends of subsidiaries	-	(15,618)	(15,618)
Allocation of Zakah	(1,656)	-	(1,656)
Profit distribution on perpetual tier 1 capital	(15,750)	-	(15,750)
Movement related to subsidiaries' tier 1 capital	3,626	(6,353)	(2,727)
Modification loss net of government assistance	(6,370)	(552)	(6,922)
Effect of change in ownership	237	(237)	-
Net movement in non-controlling interest	-	3,108	3,108
<b>At 30 June 2020</b>	<b>1,384,742</b>	<b>778,241</b>	<b>2,162,983</b>
At 1 January 2019	1,545,545	710,442	2,255,987
Dividends	(37,286)	-	(37,286)
Net movement in treasury shares	128	-	128
Net movement in other reserves	570	725	1,295
Net movement in cumulative changes in fair values	(104)	56	(48)
Foreign currency translations	(73,201)	(22,418)	(95,619)
Net income for the period	56,162	39,210	95,372
Dividends of subsidiaries	-	(26,400)	(26,400)
Allocation of Zakah	(2,235)	-	(2,235)
Profit distribution on perpetual tier 1 capital	(15,750)	-	(15,750)
Movement related to subsidiaries' tier 1 capital	1,880	(4,444)	(2,564)
Effect of change in ownership	(3,408)	3,408	-
Net movement in non-controlling interest	-	389	389
<b>At 30 June 2019</b>	<b>1,472,301</b>	<b>700,968</b>	<b>2,173,269</b>

Abdullah Saleh Kamel  
Chairman

Adnan Ahmed Yousif  
Member of the Board and President and Chief Executive

The above Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements, have been extracted from the Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements reviewed by Ernst & Young-Bahrain. These statements are available in full detail on the web site indicated below.

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Mauritius and its 1.3 million inhabitants depend crucially on the sea for food and ecotourism, having fostered a reputation as a conservation success story and a world-class destination for nature lovers.

More than 1,000 tonnes has already oozed from the stranded ship, causing untold damage to protected marine parks and fishing grounds that are the backbone of Mauritius' economy

# Mauritius races to clean up oil

● **The bulk carrier MV Wakashio ran aground on July 25 with 4,000 tonnes of fuel aboard**

AFP New

Salvage crews raced against time Monday to prevent a second disastrous oil spill off the picture-perfect coastline of Mauritius, with a damaged tanker carrying thousands of tonnes of fuel at risk of splitting apart.

The bulk carrier MV Wakashio ran aground on July 25 with 4,000 tonnes of fuel aboard and began seeping oil last week, staining coral reefs, mangrove forests and tranquil lagoons in an unprecedented environmental catastrophe for the archipelago nation. More than 1,000

tonnes has already oozed from the ship, its Japanese operator says, causing untold ecological damage to protected marine parks and fishing grounds that form the backbone of Mauritius' economy.

Fuel was being airlifted Monday by helicopter to the shore, but efforts to pump more from the hold were being thwarted by rough seas and strong winds.

The weather, which is also fanning the oil slick further up the coast, is not forecast to improve until evening.

Some fuel has been removed but 2,500 tonnes still remains aboard, said Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, who warned cracks in the hull were worsening, and there was a very real chance the boat could split.

"We are in an advanced fracturing process. The bulk carrier does not have much time ahead of it," said one scientist working



Thousands of volunteers, many smeared head-to-toe in black sludge, have marshalled along the coastline in a desperate attempt to hold back the oily tide

on the emergency effort, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Divers have reported fresh cracks in the hull, while creaking sounds from the vessel could be heard from the southeast shore, where a major clean-up operation is underway to remove treacherous sludge coating miles of Mauritius' unspoiled coastline. Japan on Monday dispatched a six-member team, including members of its coast guard, to assist. A French naval vessel with technical advisers aboard arrived Sunday from nearby Reunion, a French Indian Ocean island.

The bulk carrier struck a reef at Pointe d'Esny, an ecological jewel fringed by idyllic beaches, colourful reefs, sanctuaries for rare and endemic wildlife, and protected wetlands.

Aerial images show the enormity of the disaster, with huge stretches of crystal-clear seas around the marooned cargo ship stained a deep inky black.

Thousands of volunteers, many smeared head-to-toe in black sludge, have marshalled along the coastline since Friday, stringing together miles of improvised floating barriers made of straw in a desperate attempt to hold back the oily tide.

Police are expected to take statements from the captain and crew of the Wakashio after launching an investigation. Detectives boarded the ship on Sunday and seized the log book and black box.

## News in brief

◆ **Six weeks after China imposed sweeping national security laws on Hong Kong, police moved in on media tycoon Jimmy Lai, one of the most outspoken critics of Beijing in the city.** Lai, 71, was whisked away from his home early on Monday morning by national security police, part of a citywide operation that also saw eight other men arrested, including several of his senior executives.



## More migrants cross Channel to Britain

British border agents brought ashore migrants in the port of Dover on Monday after picking them up from an inflatable boat as they crossed the Channel, the latest in a surge of crossings that is causing political tensions with France. Taking advantage of hot weather and calm sea conditions, more than 500 migrants have reached England since Thursday, many in overloaded rubber dinghies. The Home Office, or interior ministry, has said it would return as many migrants as possible to France. Immigration minister Chris Philp is due to meet his French counterpart in Paris this week.



◆ **British border agents brought ashore migrants in the port of Dover on Monday after**



## Indonesia volcano spews huge ash cloud

◆ **An Indonesian volcano spewed a giant ash cloud 5 km (3.1 miles) into the sky on Monday in its second eruption in three days, emitting a thunderous noise and turning the sky dark, authorities and witnesses said.** The eruption of Mount Sinabung on the island of Sumatra comes after more than a year of inactivity and was the second since Saturday, as authorities warned residents and tourists about possible lava flows. Dramatic footage of the morning eruption captured by residents showed a giant cloud of thick ash rising from the peak of the 2,460-metre (8,071-ft) mountain in Karo, North Sumatra.

◆ **China yesterday sanctioned 11 Americans, including senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, in retaliation for similar US moves prompted by Beijing's crackdown in Hong Kong. Washington last week accused 11 officials of suppressing "freedom and democratic processes" in Hong Kong, including city leader Carrie Lam, and announced plans to freeze their US assets.** "China has decided to impose sanctions on some people that behaved badly on Hong Kong-related issues," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Monday, with Human Rights Watch director Kenneth Roth and National Endowment for Democracy president Carl Gershman also on the list.

## China sanctions 11 Americans in retaliation for US move

## Huge shortfall in funds to fight coronavirus, WHO says

◆ **There is a huge gap between funds needed to fight the coronavirus and funds committed worldwide, World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said yesterday. But he said he saw "green shoots of hope".** "It is never too late to turn the pandemic around," Tedros told a news briefing. The message is to "suppress, suppress, suppress".

# Cows on a wet tin roof: S Korea floods leave animals stranded



Cows are stranded on a rooftop after seeking refuge there during heavy flooding in South Korea. Inset, a cow is hoisted off by rescue services

AFP News

Dozens of cows were stranded on rooftops by floods in South Korea, leaving rescue crews facing a problem the size of several bovines.

The cattle floated upwards as floodwaters mounted at the weekend in Gurye, a farming town in the country's south, and scrambled to safety on the roofs of several houses and other buildings. When the deluge

receded, the animals found themselves stranded high and somewhat damp, and on the horns of a dilemma with no way to get down.

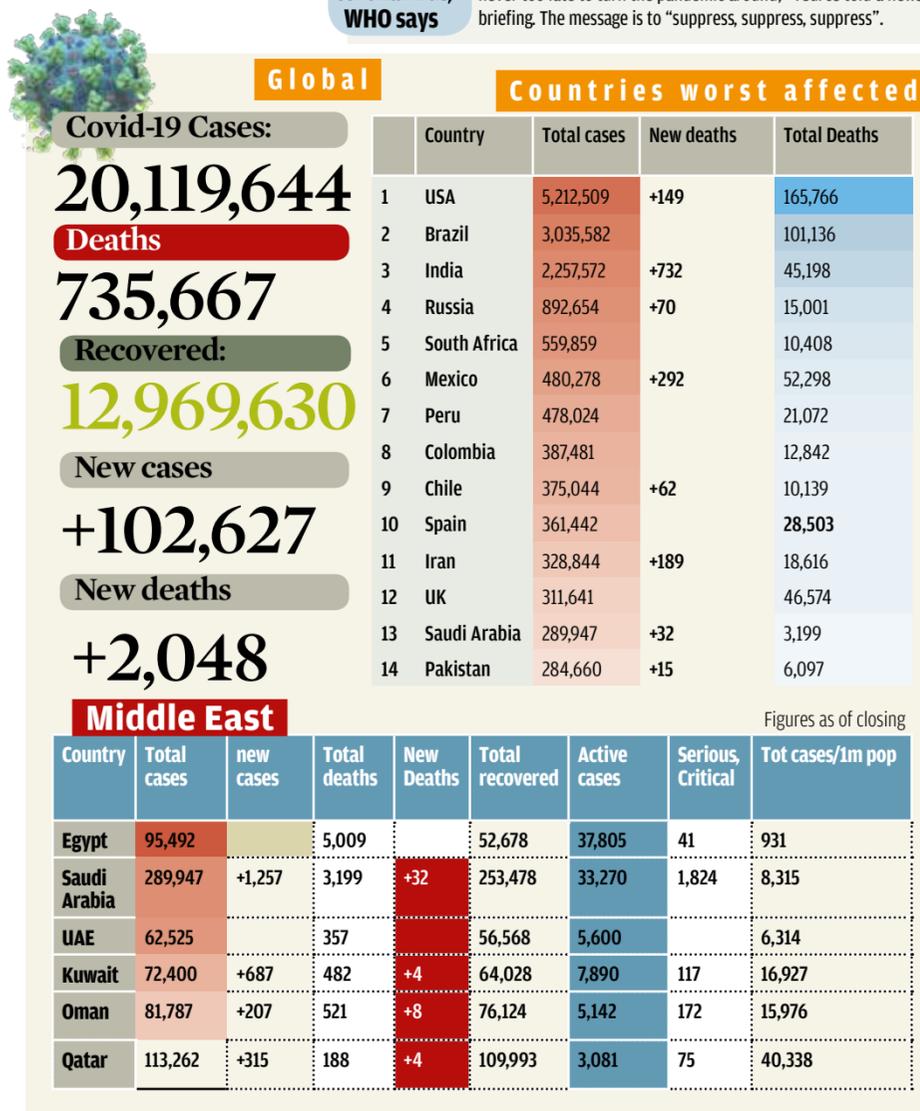
Pictures showed as many as nine of them standing on one battered rooftop, looking mildly non-plussed.

"The cows were swimming as the water level surged and made their way up onto the roof and stayed there even after the floodwaters subsided," one resident told television channel

JTBC. Rescuers brought in a crane and lowered the cattle one by one from the rooftops, hoisting them onto a sling.

But while the cows eventually did come home, many were showing symptoms of pneumonia, according to a veterinarian volunteering with the relief efforts.

South Korea has been inundated by weeks of heavy rain that have caused widespread flooding, recording 31 deaths since the start of the month.



# Greece calls Turkey's seismic survey in Mediterranean illegal



Turkish seismic research vessel Oruc Reis sails through Mediterranean after leaving a port in Antalya, Turkey

● **The two countries are at odds due to overlapping claims for hydrocarbon resources in the region**

● **Egypt and Greece signed an accord last Thursday designating an exclusive economic zone between the two nations**

Reuters | Istanbul/Athens

Turkey dispatched a vessel to conduct a seismic survey in a disputed area in the eastern Mediterranean, a move which Greece said was illegal and is likely to heighten tensions between the two NATO allies. The advisory issued by the Turkish navy said the Oruc Reis vessel would operate in the

area over the next two weeks.

The two countries are at odds due to overlapping claims for hydrocarbon resources in the region. A similar advisory, or Navtex, last month prompted a dispute that was calmed after the intervention of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, leading Turkey to agree a pause in operations.

But President Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday Turkey had resumed energy exploration work in the region as Greece had not kept its promises on the issue.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis chaired a meeting of the government council for defence issues on Monday which examined "ways of reaction to the Turkish provocation", the conservative premier's office said.

After the meeting, Greece's foreign affairs ministry issued a statement urging Turkey to "immediately cease its illegal activi-



**Seismic surveys are part of preparatory work for potential hydrocarbon exploration. Turkey and Greece are also at odds over issues such as overflights in the Aegean Sea and ethnically divided Cyprus.**

ties which undermine peace and security in the region".

Earlier, Minister of State George Gerapetritis told Greek state TV Athens was in full "political and operational readiness". He reiterated that Greece stood ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with Turkey on their differences.

The NAVTEX, issued by the Turkish navy's office of navigation, covered an area of sea south of Turkey's Antalya and west of Cyprus. It will be in effect between Aug. 10-23.

The Oruc Reis vessel has already reached the location where it will operate after

leaving the area where it was anchored off Antalya, Turkish Energy Minister Fatih Donmez said on Twitter.

Erdogan's announcement of the new exploration work came after Egypt and Greece signed an accord last Thursday designating an exclusive economic zone between the two nations in the east Mediterranean.

Diplomats in Greece said that agreement nullified an accord reached last year between Turkey and the internationally recognised government of Libya, but Erdogan said Turkey would maintain its agreement with Libya "decisively".

# Yemen's UNESCO-listed Old Sanaa houses collapse in heavy rains

Reuters | Sanaa

Houses in Yemen's UNESCO-listed Old City of Sanaa are collapsing under heavy rains, as months of floods and storms assail a country already reeling from war, food shortages and disease.

The distinctive brown and white mud brick houses of Sanaa's historic neighbourhoods, which date from before the 11th century, have long been under threat from conflict and neglect.

Muhammad Ali al-Talhi's house partially collapsed on Friday as heavy rain battered Sanaa, leaving the six women and six children of his family homeless.

"Everything we had is buried," he said surrounded by ancient debris and mud, appealing for help to find shelter.

Aqeel Saleh Nassar, deputy head of the Historic Cities Preservation Authority, said citizens today do not maintain these old buildings as in the past, leading to cracks and weakness.

Around 5,000 of the towering buildings in the old city have leaky roofs and 107 have partially collapsed roofs, he said. The authority has been working with UNESCO and other funds to preserve some.

This year's exceptionally



Workers demolish a building damaged by rain in the UNESCO World Heritage site of the old city of Sanaa, Yemen

heavy rains, which began mid-April and last into early September, have added to what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Five years of war have killed more than 100,000 people, and left 80% of the population reliant on aid and millions on the brink of famine.

On top of the new corona-

virus, which is believed to be spreading largely undetected, heavy rains spread diseases like cholera, dengue fever and malaria.

The Iran-aligned Houthi authorities who have controlled Sanaa since ousting the internationally recognised Saudi-backed Yemeni government in late 2014, appealed this week to UNESCO to save the city's her-

itage. They said around 111 houses had partly or completely collapsed in recent weeks.

Sanaa resident Adel San'ani on Saturday told Reuters he saw five houses severely damaged this weekend.

"The families have no shelter. A local bank launched a campaign to distribute plastic sheeting to act as roofs," he said.

# China sends fighter jets as US health chief visits Taiwan



US Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar walks off the plane as he arrives at Taipei Songshan Airport, Taiwan

Reuters | Taipei

Chinese air force jets briefly crossed the mid-line of the Taiwan Strait yesterday and were tracked by Taiwanese missiles, Taiwan's government said, as US health chief Alex Azar visited the island to offer President Donald Trump's support.

Azar arrived in Taiwan on Sunday, the highest-level US official to visit in four decades.

China, which claims the island as its own, condemned the visit which comes after a period of sharply deteriorating relations between China and the United States.

China, which had promised unspecified retaliation to the trip, flew J-11 and J-10 fighter aircraft briefly onto Taiwan's side of the sensitive and narrow strait that separates it from its giant neighbour, at around 9 am (0100 GMT), shortly before Azar met Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan's air force said.

The aircraft were tracked by land-based Taiwanese anti-aircraft missiles and were "driven out" by patrolling Taiwanese aircraft, the air force said in a statement released by the defence ministry.

China's defence ministry did not immediately comment.

A senior Taiwan official familiar with the government's security planning told Reuters that China was obviously "targeting" Azar's visit with a "very risky" move given the Chinese jets were in range of Taiwan's missiles.

The incursion was only the third time since 2016 that Taiwan has said Chinese jets had crossed the strait's median line.

The Trump administration has made strengthening its support for the democratic island a priority, amid deteriorating relations between Washington and Beijing, and has boosted arms sales.

"It's a true honour to be here to convey a message of strong support and friendship from President Trump to Taiwan," Azar told Tsai in the Presidential Office, standing in front of two Taiwanese flags.

Washington broke off official ties with Taipei in 1979 in favour of Beijing.

# Tirumala temple reports huge coronavirus outbreak as cases surge



A health worker checks the temperature of a man at a school in Mumbai, India

Reuters | Mumbai/New Delhi

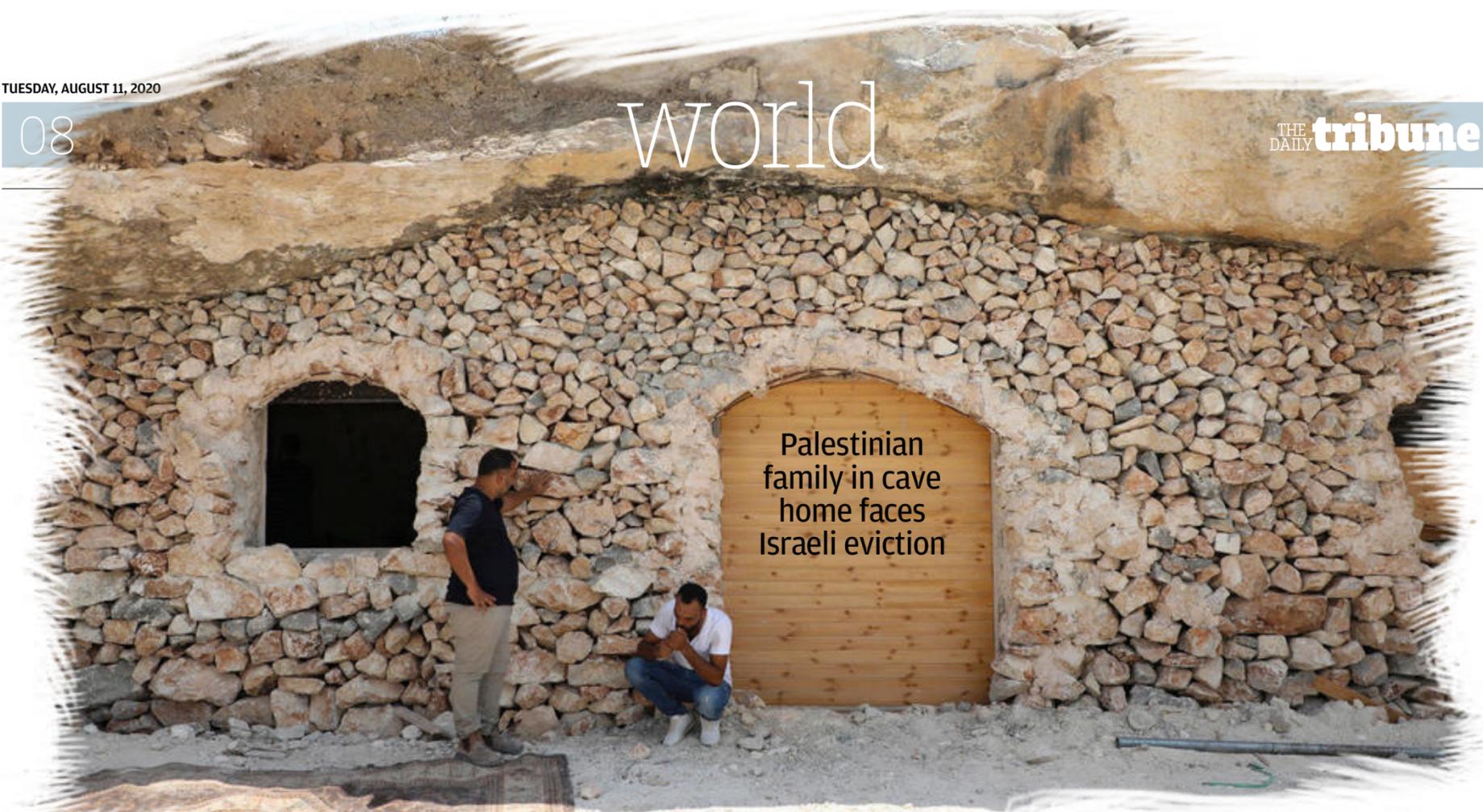
Hindu shrines in the world, said two of its staff and one former employee had died of COVID-19 since June 11, when it reopened to the public after a government lockdown.

In all, 743 temple employees had been infected by the virus, it said.

"We are providing the best medication to those infected. We are taking utmost precaution, social distancing norms are followed, devotees and others are wearing masks," said the chairman of the temple's trust organisation, Y. V. Subba Reddy.

The Lord Venkateswara temple in the town of Tirumala in south India, one of the biggest and most wealthy

The trust employs about 22,500 workers including 300 priests and controls 10 temples.



Palestinian family in cave home faces Israeli eviction

# Forbidden caves

**AFP** | Farasin, Palestinian Territories

Ahmed Amarneh's home, with a wooden door opening onto cushion-lined rooms, is not the first Palestinian residence in the occupied West Bank to receive a demolition notice from Israel.

But it may be the first built inside a cave which the Jewish state has threatened to destroy.

Amarneh, a 30-year-old civil engineer, lives with his family in the northern West Bank village of Farasin, where Israel insists it must approve any new residential construction and can tear down homes built without permits.

"I tried twice to build (a house), but the occupation authorities told me it was forbidden to build in the area," Amarneh said, using a term for Israel used by some Palestinians.

The Oslo peace accords of the

1990s gave the Palestinians self-rule in parts of the West Bank.

However, some 60 per cent of the territory dubbed Area C, where Farasin is located, remains under full Israeli civil and military control.

The United Nations considers Area C as occupied Palestinian Territory.

But Israel has increasingly allocated land there for construction of Jewish settlements -- communities considered illegal under international law.

Convinced he would never get Israeli approval to build a home in his village, Amarneh set his sights on a cave in the foothills overlooking Farasin.

Amarneh said he figured that as an ancient, natural formation, Israel could not possibly argue that the cave was illegally built, while the Palestinian Authority (PA) agreed to register the land in his name.

## 'I didn't make the cave'

Amarneh, whose handyman skills are considerable, sealed the entrance to the cave with a stone wall and installed a wooden door at its centre.

He fashioned a kitchen, a living room and sleeping areas for himself, his pregnant wife and their young daughter. There is even lodging for guests.

He said he had been living there for a year and half, but received a demolition notice from the Israeli authorities in July, along with 20 other Palestinian families in Farasin.

The Israeli military branch responsible for civilian affairs in the West Bank, COGAT, said demolition notices were served to some Farasin residences because of "structures that were illegally built, without the necessary permits and approvals".

Amarneh said he was "surprised" to learn that he had built anything illegally.

Ahmed Amarneh's home, with a wooden door opening onto cushion-lined rooms, is not the first Palestinian residence in the occupied West Bank to receive a demolition notice from Israel

"I didn't make the cave. It has existed since antiquity," he said, holding his young daughter in his arms. "I don't understand how they can prevent me from living in a cave. Animals live in caves and are not thrown out. So, let them treat me like an animal and let me live in the cave."

## 'Ancestors buried here'

Arab residents established the village of Farasin in 1920, said local council head Mahmud Ahmad Nasser.

It was abandoned during the

1967 Six-Day War, the year Israeli occupation of the West Bank began.

But from the 1980s, former residents began to return to the area. Nasser put its current population at around 200.

Farasin looks less like a village than a small collection of houses spaced widely apart.

The PA officially recognised the community of Farasin in March, but the coronavirus crisis has prevented it from providing electricity to the area, the local council said.

COGAT had indicated in April that it might suspend some scheduled demolitions due to the pandemic.

But, according to the Israeli anti-settlement campaign group B'Tselem, Israel in June demolished 63 Palestinian structures.

Roughly 450,000 Jewish settlers live in the West Bank, alongside some 2.7 million Palestinians.

Farasin residents, aside from fearing the possibly imminent arrival of bulldozers, said they have spotted a caravan belonging to a Jewish settler in the area, who appeared to be setting up a home.

"The settler arrived here some time ago with his sheep," said Nasser, the local council head, asking why a settler would arrive at the moment they have been asked to leave.

"Our people lived here for generations. Our ancestors are buried here."

## Captive beluga whales released into Iceland sea sanctuary

● Little White and Little Grey, two 13-year-old females, left behind their previous lives entertaining visitors at the Changfeng Ocean World in June 2019

**Phys.org**

Two beluga whales from a Shanghai aquarium have returned to the sea in an Icelandic sanctuary, conservationists said Monday, expressing hopes of creating a model for rehoming some 300 belugas currently in captivity.

Little White and Little Grey, two 13-year-old females, left behind their previous lives entertaining visitors at the Changfeng Ocean World in June 2019 when they were flown to Iceland's Klettsvik Bay in the Westman Islands, in specially tailored containers.

On Friday, they were moved from their landbased facility to care pools in the sea at Klettsvik



The whales each weigh 900 kilogrammes (2,000 pounds) and measure four metres (13 feet).

Bay—the first time the two belugas have been in the sea since they were taken from a Russian whale research centre in 2011, the conservation charity Sea

Life Trust said in a statement on Monday.

They will stay in the care pools "for a few weeks" before they are released into the bigger

sanctuary, a 32,000-square-metre (344,445-square-foot) sea pen that will become their home, organisers said.

Little Grey and Little White

"will need a short period of time to acclimatise to their new natural environment and all the outdoor elements before they are released into the wider sanctuary in Klettsvik Bay," the statement said. After having been cared for by humans for so many years, it is unlikely the belugas would survive in the wild.

The pen is thus sealed off by nets that still allow sea life, such as fish, to swim through.

## 'Ambassadors'

Andy Bool, the head of Sea Life Trust, said the belugas' release "was as smooth as we had hoped and planned for."

"We are carefully monitoring Little Grey and Little White with our expert care team and veterinarians," he said.

Bool said the whales were "ambassadors for the 300 other belugas that are in human care across the world."

"We hope to show that Little White and Little Grey thrive in this bay, and we're conducting a research study ... that will hopefully show that there's a welfare benefit to being in a natural en-

vironment like this.

"We hope that can then persuade others that maybe their beluga whales might be better off in a different environment," Bool said.

Ahead of their sea transfer, the whales were trained to hold their breath longer, become physically stronger to cope with tides and currents, and put on blubber to help them cope with colder water temperatures.

The whales each weigh 900 kilogrammes (2,000 pounds) and measure four metres (13 feet).

Originally from Russian Arctic waters, it is thought they were two or three years old when captured. Belugas typically live for 40 to 60 years.

According to Sea Life Trust, Klettsvik Bay is the world's first open water beluga sanctuary.

Klettsvik is also where Keiko, the killer whale in the 1993 film "Free Willy", was flown in 1998. The orca was fully released in 2002 but did not manage to adapt to life in the wild and died 18 months later in a Norwegian fjord.

## US's Azar says any US vaccine would be shared once US needs met



US Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar is seen on a screen as he speaks during a news conference in Taipei, Taiwan

Reuters | Taipei

US Health Secretary Alex Azar said on Monday that any US vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 would be shared fairly with the rest of the world, once the US need has been satisfied.

There are more than 200 COVID-19 vaccine candidates in development around the world, including more than 20 in human clinical trials. US President Donald Trump has vowed to have a shot ready before year's end, though they typically take several years to develop and test for safety and effectiveness.

"Our first priority of course is to develop and produce enough quantity of safe and effective FDA-approved vaccines and therapeutics for use in the United States," Azar told reporters while on a visit to Taiwan.

"But we anticipate having capacity that, once those needs are satisfied, those products would be available in the world community according to fair and equitable distributions that we would consult in the international community on." He did not elaborate.

Azar also said that the United States' decision to leave the World Health Organization (WHO) did not mean less international involvement for his country in global public health.

"The United States has always been and will remain the largest funder of global public health in the world," he added.

"After our departure from the WHO, we will work with others in the world community to find the appropriate vehicles for continuing to support, on a multilateral and bilateral basis, global public health on the order that the United States has done in the past."

## Johnson fears loss of UK's power and magic if Scotland breaks away



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson gestures as he visits St Joseph's Catholic School, as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak continues, in Uxminster, London

Reuters | London

Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned yesterday that Britain would be weaker if the union that binds its four nations were broken - his latest rejection of a growing push for Scottish independence.

Disagreements between Britain's constituent nations - Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England - over the handling of the coronavirus pandemic have damaged relations already badly strained by Brexit.

That is particularly the case in Scotland, which voted against leaving the European Union and where opinion polls show support for independence narrowly outweighs support for its 300-year union with England. "The union of

the United Kingdom is, for me, it's the greatest political partnership the world has ever seen," Johnson told broadcasters, when asked what the union meant to him.

"It would be such a shame to lose the power, the magic of that union."

Scotland voted 55 percent to 45 percent against independence in a 2014 referendum, but the Scottish National Party which runs the semi-autonomous nation wants another vote. Although voters there backed staying in the EU, Britain as a whole voted to leave.

Johnson's Conservative Party, which governs all of Britain and decides policy in areas that have not been devolved to Scotland, is a strong supporter of the union and dismisses any call for another vote.

# Afghan peace talks in days as prisoner release approved

AFP News

Afghan peace talks are expected to begin within days after authorities announced Monday they would soon start releasing hundreds of Taliban prisoners accused of brutal attacks including on foreigners.

The fate of some 400 Taliban prisoners has been a crucial hurdle in launching much-delayed talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government, who had committed to completing a prisoner exchange before negotiations could start.

Thousands of prominent Afghans on Sunday approved their release at the end of a three-day "loya jirga" -- a traditional Afghan gathering of tribal elders and other stakeholders sometimes held to decide on controversial issues.

"Our stance is clear, if the prisoner release is completed, then we are ready for the intra-Afghan talks within a week," Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen told AFP.

Shaheen said the first round of talks would be held in Doha,



The Afghan government has already released almost 5,000 Taliban inmates

## 400

The fate of some 400 Taliban prisoners has been a crucial hurdle in launching much-delayed talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government

Qatar. "The Afghan government will start releasing the 400 Taliban prisoners within two days," National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal told AFP on Monday.

The prisoner exchange was a key part of a deal signed by the Taliban and the United States in February, which saw Washington agree to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in return for

a pledge from the insurgents to hold peace talks with the Kabul government.

The Taliban were ousted from power in 2001 by a US-led invasion which has been followed by nearly two decades of fighting that has killed tens of thousands of people. US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad tweeted that "a historic opportunity for peace is now possible".

### Brutal attacks

The Afghan government has released almost 5,000 Taliban inmates already, but authorities had balked at freeing the final 400 prisoners demanded by the militants.

The prisoners are accused of serious offences including killing scores of Afghans and foreigners, with 44 insurgents of particular concern in the United States and other countries for their role in "high-profile" attacks.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he had

lobbed for a former Afghan army soldier, who went rogue and killed three Australian colleagues, to stay in jail.

The accused, who is among the 400 to be freed, has been in prison for seven years.

"Our position is that he should never be released. We do not believe that his release adds to peace in this region," Morrison said Monday.

The family of French aid worker Bettina Goislar, who was murdered in Afghanistan in 2003, said they would not accept the release of her kill-

ers, who are on the list.

"Such a decision to free (them) made on the basis of horse-trading would be, to us, her family, inconceivable," her family told AFP.

In its final resolution, the jirga said it had approved releasing the militants "to remove the hurdles for the start of peace talks, stopping bloodshed, and for the good of the public".

The jirga urged the government to monitor the freed prisoners to ensure they did not return to the battlefield and

demanding an immediate and lasting ceasefire in the country.

But the Taliban said the ceasefire should form part of the agenda during the negotiations with the Afghan government.

Not all those who attended the jirga favoured the release of militants.

Lawmaker Belquis Roshan, a prominent women's rights activist, had protested against their release on the first day of the jirga, unfurling a banner that read: "Redeeming Taliban is national treason."

## Gas explosion destroys Baltimore homes

● One woman was killed, four people were hospitalized in serious condition

Reuters

A gas explosion tore through a Baltimore neighborhood yesterday, killing at least one person, injuring four and trapping children as the blast destroyed at least three homes, firefighters and media said.

The Baltimore Sun reported it was a natural gas explosion, citing fire officials, but said the exact cause remained unknown.

The blast destroyed three brick row homes and ripped open the wall of another, spreading debris throughout the neighborhood as rescuers picked through a pile of rubble, searching for victims, news pictures showed.

One woman was killed, four people were hospitalized in serious condition, and firefighters were trying to rescue a sixth person, the Baltimore City Fire Department said on Twitter.

At one point at least five peo-



Police officers help a woman at the scene of an explosion in a residential area of Baltimore, Maryland

ple were trapped, some of them children, the Baltimore Firefighters IAFF Local 734 said on Twitter.

Neighbours responding to the blast dug through rubble and called out for victims, one man told WBAL television.

"It was just chaos," Dean Jones told the NBC affiliate, saying he ran barefoot to the scene where he found destroyed homes and broken-out win-

dows, and smelled gas.

"We were just worried about just trying to get people out. Once they said a kid was in there, I lost it. I said I had to get in there now," he said. "I am not a hero, I'm a human."

One neighbor who happens to be a building inspector told the Baltimore Sun he could hear shouts from trapped children. "Come get us! We're stuck!" came the cries, Kevin Matthews,

a US Occupational Safety and Health Administration building inspector who lives on the block, told the Sun.

Matthews found one person buried from the neck down and another sheltering in a closet, the Sun said.

People felt the blast miles away and neighbors said their windows were blown out and doors blasted off the hinges, the Sun reported.

# Diab, the fallen 'technocrat' PM

AFP Nes

Lebanon's prime minister Hassan Diab, who resigned yesterday, six days after the massive Beirut blast, owed his appointment late last year to public anger with the ruling elite, but in the end fell victim to it.

Heading what was billed as a government of "technocrats" -- experts supposedly above Lebanon's complex and murky political fray -- he was tasked with rescuing the country from its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war.

Promising a new style of governance, the American University of Beirut (AUB) engineering professor and former education minister described himself as "one of the rare technocrat ministers since Lebanon's independence" in the 1940s.

But anger quickly grew as the coronavirus pandemic only worsened the country's economic collapse and Diab's government, having defaulted on Lebanon's debt, also failed in its negotiations for an IMF bailout.

Then came Lebanon's worst peacetime disaster, the blast sparked by a pile of ammonium nitrate that had languished in a harbourside warehouse for years, which only confirmed the dismal view many Lebanese hold of their leaders, including Diab.

On Monday, after days of angry street protests, the 61-year-old premier caved in to angry calls for his government's resignation, after several ministers had already bolted his cabinet.

"Today we are heeding the people and their demands to hold accountable those responsible for a disaster," he said in a televised address.

"This is why today I announce the resignation of the government."

## Professor to premier

Diab, a father of three, obtained a doctorate in computer engineering from Britain's University of Bath in 1985. He joined AUB as an assistant professor at

age 26 and rose to vice president of the prestigious university.

He served as education minister from 2011 to 2014, a brief experience in politics in a government dominated by Hezbollah and its allies.

An advocate for education reform, Diab once declared that "the solution to most of the economic, social and financial challenges, as well as those linked to unemployment, lies in education in all its forms".

Still little known to the wider public, Diab was appointed premier in December 2019, two

Diab initially praised the protest movement as "historic", writing on social networks that the Lebanese people had "united to defend their rights to a free and dignified life".

After weeks of negotiations he took the premier's post, reserved for a Sunni in Lebanon's power-sharing system, with the support of Shiite movements Hezbollah and Amal as well as the Free Patriotic Movement of President Michel Aoun, a Christian.

The main Sunni bloc and its Christian allies never gave Diab

Promising a new style of governance, the American University of Beirut (AUB) engineering professor and former education minister described himself as "one of the rare technocrat ministers since Lebanon's independence" in the 1940s.

their backing, complicating the task ahead for a leader who is not a member of any political party or supporter of any particular group.

## Bombastic speeches

Since then the professor with the carefully combed black hair-do has faced cascading crises as well as growing criticism from the now resurgent popular protest movement.

Many Lebanese derided his bombastic speeches, in which he regularly claimed to be the victim of plots, just as they had laughed at a book he had published as education minister in which he had touted his achievements.

By the admission of his supporters, his "obstinate" character did not help him gain popularity with the protest move-

ment.

After his appointment as premier, a conflict flared between him and the AUB's management. He took legal action against the university to claim financial compensation to be paid in dollars abroad.

The move was decried as tone-deaf at a time when Lebanese citizens were denied access to their foreign currency accounts due to the economic crisis.

Over the months, he drew increasing fire from the protest movement he had once hailed as "historic and awe-inspiring".

In recent days, the Lebanese people took to the streets again and judged that Diab's government, like those before it, has failed them.

“Today we are heeding the people and their demands to hold accountable those responsible for a disaster. This is why today I announce the resignation of the government.”

HASSAN DIAB



Diab pictured in June wearing a face mask due to the COVID-19 pandemic ahead of an emergency cabinet session

- Diab, a father of three, obtained a doctorate in computer engineering from Britain's University of Bath in 1985. He joined AUB as an assistant professor at age 26 and rose to vice president of the prestigious university.

- He served as education minister from 2011 to 2014

- Diab was appointed premier in December 2019



## Nearly 100,000 children in US tested COVID-19 +tive in July

Huffpost

More than 97,000 children in the US tested positive for the coronavirus in the last two weeks of July, underscoring the difficulty for schools considering if or how they can reopen in the fall, according to a new report.

The findings, compiled by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association, included data from 49 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam. But the report didn't include complete data from Texas -- which has seen a surge in cases -- or parts of New York, meaning the number of infections could be higher.



Paul Adamus, 7, climbs the stairs of a bus before the first day of school on Monday

Officials have long warned that the true coronavirus toll may be much higher than reported due to insufficient test-

ing and the lack of symptoms in many people who are infected.

The US has seen more than 5 million confirmed cases of the coronavirus. Of those, more than 338,000 were children, according to the new study. The results from the last weeks of July show that one-fourth of all of the confirmed infections in kids happened during that two-week period, even though the pandemic has been raging since March. (Those defined as children in the study usually are younger than 19, although some states included people up to age 24.)

The data adds to growing concern for parents and students as the start of the school year ap-

proaches. Many schools and colleges have said they will operate remotely or with an in-person and online hybrid. But other districts have faced pressure from to reopen as soon as possible, including from President Donald Trump.

Some schools have already resumed in-person classes, to mixed results. A high school in Georgia sparked controversy last week after photos showed dozens of students crowding a hallway between classes, many without masks. The school said it would move temporarily online on Sunday after officials said nine people had tested positive for COVID-19.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's latest Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report said evidence shows children are at lower risk from developing severe cases of COVID-19.

# CELEBS

## celebs

### Madonna out of Interscope deal after nearly a decade

ANI | Washington

American singer-songwriter Madonna confirms to Billboard that she is out of her deal with Interscope after nearly a decade, as per the sources close to the 'Queen of Pop'.

According to Billboard, the

iconic singer first inked a three-album deal with Interscope in 2011 at a base of USD 1 million per LP; with the release of 'Madame X' in 2019, that three-album deal is up, and Madonna is eying a new label to call home.

While The Sun reports that Madonna is considering a re-

turn to Warner Music (which was known as Warner Bros. when she called it home for her series of albums released from 1983-2008), sources tell Billboard that she has not inked a new deal anywhere as of Saturday (local time) and any talks are in early stages. Warner Music declined to

comment for this story.

The 61-year-old singer's three albums for Interscope include the Billboard 200 toppers 'MDNA' (2012) and 'Madame X' (2019), as well as the No. 2-peaking 'Rebel Heart' (2015).

Madonna had declared at Billboard's 2016 Women in

Music event, "I think the most controversial thing I have ever done is to stick around." At the event, she was named the Woman of the Year.

On August 14, Madonna will reteam with American rapper Missy Elliott to hop on a remix of Dua Lipa's 'Levitating'.

Madonna has 12 No. 1 hits

on the Billboard Hot 100 and earlier this year earned her landmark 50th No. 1 hit on the Dance Club Songs chart.



Madonna

### Kanye West, Kim Kardashian had 'good family week in Dominican Republic,' says source

ANI | Washington

American rapper Kanye West and wife Kim Kardashian West have returned to the United States after their family vacation in the Dominican Republic.

According to People Magazine, the 43-year-old rapper West and the reality TV star Kardashian were spotted arriving in Miami with their four children: 7-year-old North, 4-year-old Saint, 2-year-old Chicago and 15-month-old Psalm, on Sunday (local time).

A source told People Magazine, "They had a good family week in the Dominican Republic. They are continuing the family vacation in Colorado. Kim and Kanye are getting along. They both seem much happier."

A separate source told the outlet that West is "really enjoying his family time right now," adding, "Honestly he's in a great place and feeling creatively inspired."

An insider recently told People Magazine that the couple had travelled to the Dominican Republic to "focus is on their marriage."

"They decided to travel together so they can be away in private," the insider said. "Between the kids, work, and dealing with Kanye's bipolar episodes, it's been hard for her to think clearly."

On Friday, the father of four posted a light-hearted video from the trip with their daughter North.

### Geena Davis reveals 'great roles were incredibly scarce' after she turned 40

ANI | Washington

American actor Geena Davis recently revealed that like many of her female contemporaries, she had a hard time finding work after she turned 40.

According to Fox News, the Oscar-winning actor, now 64, who earned a second, honorary award for promoting gender parity in Hollywood, admitted while speaking to The Guardian, "[Once I had] a four in front of my age, I fell off the cliff. I really did."

Davis remembered her days before 40, she wasn't too afraid of where her career was headed because "Meryl Streep, Jessica Lange and Sally Field" were still making

"great female-centric movies."

Additionally, the "great roles, really tippy-top roles" that Davis was playing at the time assuaged any fears she had, making her feel that "things must be getting better for women."

"But suddenly, the great roles were incredibly scarce," she said. "It was a big difference."

The actor then said she was a little surprised that her work, and the work of other female actors,

Geena Davis

hadn't led to the big change she was hoping to see in the movie industry.

"Everyone said: 'Now we're going to have so many movies starring women.' And I was like: 'Hot dog! I'm in something that started the change,'" she recalled.

"And then 'A League of Their Own' comes out and everyone says: 'Now there's going to be so many women's sports movies!' And five years go by ... It was a shock that absolutely nothing happened," Davis said.



### Billie Piper finds social media 'terrifying'

ANS | Los Angeles

British actress Billie Piper feels social media is terrifying.

In an interview with The Sunday Times Culture magazine, Piper spoke about her fame and how she deals with social media, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"Let's put it this way, I wouldn't have wanted to be a famous pop star now. The social media element of it all is terrifying because it's continuous, it's in your bed,

next to your bedside table every night. In my pop career here were moments that were horrible to experience as a teenager, but they came and went. But the thought of having that constantly on your person -- I wear my phone round my neck like

some weird slave - and with one simple click you're able to see what millions of people think about you or other people, or just about anything. I would argue that it's got worse," she said.

Piper, who started career as a teenager, believes it is "slightly depressing" to see people living their lives so "publicly".

"I don't know what that's like (having pictures stolen), but I certainly know what it means to live your life publicly. I've done that since I was 14. What's really interesting and slightly depressing is on some level we all do that now -- everybody has an online profile and everything you do on some level could be seen to be incriminating, even if it's actually quite innocent," she added.



Billie Piper

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### SUDOKU

9			3	8	1			
7		5		8				3
4					7			
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	8			7				4
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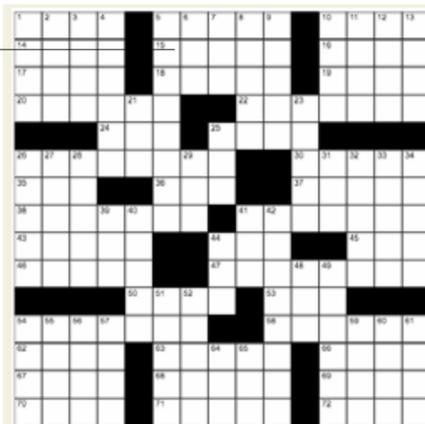
Yesterday's solution

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

How to play

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

### CROSSWORD



Across

1- Sign of healing; 5- Erupts; 10- Voice of America org; 14- Honolulu's island; 15- Occupied; 16- Puppeteer Tony; 17- Cordelia's father; 18- France; 19- Switch back?; 20- Banner; 22- Castrated male horse; 24- Razor-billed bird; 25- Fictional Jane; 26- Actual elapsed period; 30- Prince Valiant's wife; 35- Id's counterpart; 36- Prefix with profit or fiction; 37- Type of pitch; 38- Censure; 41- Civility; 43- Back in; 44- Pitch softball; 45- Female deer; 46- Square one; 47- Deeply respectful; 50- Venomous snakes; 53- Comedian Phillips; 54- Rashly; 58- Muslim teacher; 62- Oscar winner Patricia; 63- Elevate; 66- Old Italian money; 67- Racer Yarborough; 68- Burning desire?; 69- At any time; 70- To \_\_\_ (perfectly); 71- Braid; 72- Enlarge, as a hole;

Down

1- Lone; 2- Normandy city; 3- Cries of discovery; 4- Sepulture; 5- Foul-smelling; 6- Friend; 7- Scratch (out); 8- Like cake slices; 9- Twisted expression?; 10- Not new; 11- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 12- Wrinkle remover; 13- Wide-eyed; 21- Destroy the interior of; 23- Flat contract; 25- Velvet finish?; 26- Brings up; 27- Heron, usually white; 28- Trunk line; 29- Calendar abbr.; 31- PC linkup; 32- Say "y'all," say; 33- Grand National Park; 34- Until now; 39- Part of ETA; 40- Little bits; 41- Bass, e.g.; 42- Motion; 44- Grads-to-be; 48- Australian bird; 49- Wheel; 51- Leash; 52- Bit of wisdom; 54- Member of a great Peruvian people; 55- Tidy, without fault; 56- In fine fettle; 57- Away from the wind; 59- As it happens; 60- Carpenter's measurement; 61- Injure; 64- This \_\_\_stickup?; 65- \_\_\_diant (self-styled);

Yesterday's solution

R	A	T	A	T	S	P	S	M	A	A	M
E	T	H	I	C	R	O	O	T	A	R	D
D	R	A	M	A	R	E	E	A	I	D	O
S	A	W	N	A	M	E	L	A	M	E	N
L	A	M	P	A	W	N	I	N	G		
P	O	L	A	R	I	S	L	A	D		
A	P	E	R	I							
L	I	N	G	T	R	A	C	T	A	I	R
M	E	T	E	O	R	I	C				
T	A	L	E	S	E						
O	R	I	E	N	T	B	A	W	L	S	N
L	U	R	E								
I	N	E	Z	E	E	R	O	R	E	A	D
O	K	R	A								

# Misbah adamant Pakistan can 'come back' in England series

Pakistan coach says Pakistan must move on from Old Trafford defeat and fight back in the second Test

● Misbah paid tribute to the way Buttler and Woakes took the game away from his team

AFP | London

Pakistan coach Misbah-ul-Haq has insisted his side can "fight back" from their agonising defeat by England in time for the second Test starting on Thursday.

The tourists, following six months on the sidelines because of the coronavirus, were on course to go 1-0 up in the three-match series after dominating the majority of the first Test at Old Trafford.

But Pakistan were undone by a stand of 139 between Jos Buttler (75) and player-of-the-match Chris Woakes, who guided the hosts to a three-wicket win with 84 not out on Saturday.

Having played so well in a losing cause, fears have been expressed over Pakistan's morale.

Misbah, however, in a column published on the Pakistan Cricket Board's website, wrote. "It's easy to curse yourself when you've lost.

"But, we should remember that we were right on top until pretty much the last session of the game.

"We will do our best to come back in this series, which I really



Babar Azam, Azhar Ali, Waqar Younis and Misbah-ul-Haq speak during a Pakistan Nets Session (file photo)

believe this team is capable of doing."

Pakistan opener Shan Masood made a Test-best 156 at Old Trafford, while leg-spinner Yasir Shah took eight wickets in the match.

Yet Pakistan failed to put the game completely beyond England's reach by being dismissed for just 169 in their second innings before, by Misbah's own admission, a degree of "panic" set in during Buttler and Woakes' match-changing partnership.

## 'Disappointment'

"Sure, we need to improve 10 to 15 per cent and deal with pressure situations a little better but we shouldn't be mentally down," said Misbah.

"There is disappointment, of course, but we must not keep that feeling in our minds otherwise it will be difficult to come back but the team believes we can fight back," added the former captain.

Playing the series without spectators because of the coronavirus pandemic means

Pakistan are denied the vocal support they usually enjoy in England.

Misbah paid tribute to the way Buttler and Woakes "took the game away from us," but accepted a Pakistan side led by skipper Azhar Ali might have done more to stop them in their tracks.

"They counter-attacked well and there was a bit of inexperience -- and even panic -- in the team that cost us," he said.

"We still need to improve, of course, but overall we fought really well against a top team in



England sealed an unlikely three-wicket victory on Saturday after slumping to 117-5 at one point in their pursuit of 277, as Chris Woakes and Jos Buttler shared a sixth-wicket partnership of 139 runs to turn the tide

our first international fixture for six months."

Pakistan quicks Mohammad Abbas, Shaheen Afridi and teenage rising star Naseem Shah all bowled well in Manchester.

There are concerns, though, the trio could be out on their feet if they feature throughout a series of three back-to-back Tests, as happened to some West Indies fast bowlers during their 2-1 defeat by England last month.

Misbah, however, said of Pakistan's pacemen: "They bowled a decent amount of overs but not too much so I don't think there are issues of fatigue at the moment.

"But let's see how everybody is feeling just before the match, how the conditions are and we will decide accordingly."

Dortmund's Sancho off to pre-season camp amid transfer speculation



Jadon Sancho

Reuters | Berlin

Borussia Dortmund winger Jadon Sancho left with his team for a pre-season training camp in Switzerland yesterday amid ongoing speculation of a possible transfer to the English Premier League.

The 20-year-old England international, who has a contract with the German club until 2022, had a stellar season with the Bundesliga runners-up and has been reportedly targeted by several top clubs, including Manchester United.

Sancho scored 17 league goals and set up another 16, with Dortmund saying they would only let him go if their price expectations were met fully.

United have been heavily linked with a move for Sancho but media reports say the club may have balked at Dortmund's valuation of around 120 million euros (\$141.24 million).

That would make him the Bundesliga's most expensive transfer ever and would see the German top division lose arguably its most exciting young player.

On yesterday, however, Sancho flew with his team to Switzerland for the start of their pre-season training.

## Ferro is the first champion in five months as WTA Tour returns



France's Fiona Ferro hits a return

Reuters | Palermo

France's Fiona Ferro became the first WTA champion in five months on Sunday as she overpowered Anett Kontaveit 6-2 7-5 to win the Palermo Ladies Open, the first Tour event to be staged since the COVID-19 epidemic shut down the sport.

Ferro went 10 matches unbeaten in regional exhibition events after the Tour was suspended in March, and continued to gather further momentum with five more wins in Palermo this week as major tennis returned in the Sicilian capital.

"I think it was my best match of the week," the 23-year-old Ferro said after landing the second title of her career with a dominant display. "I was feeling relaxed... I don't know why because it was a final! I wasn't

"I was feeling relaxed... I don't know why because it was a final! I wasn't really feeling pressure."

FIONA FERRO

really feeling pressure."

Several exhibition events have taken place globally since the sport was halted in early March due to the pandemic but the women's claycourt tournament in Palermo was the first across both the elite WTA and ATP tours in five months.

There were strict health protocols, including limited number of fans and no handshakes between players after the match.

## Solskjaer buoyed by Martial progress before Europa quarters

Reuters | London

Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has praised Anthony Martial for working on his physique as the French forward enjoys a career-best campaign at Old Trafford.

Martial scored his 23rd goal for United in all competitions this season against LASK Linz in Wednesday's Europa League last-16 victory.

"Anthony has made huge strides this season in many aspects of his game," Solskjaer told an eve-of-match news conference ahead of yesterday's Europa League quarter-final clash with Copenhagen in Cologne.

"Physically, he is at the best level of his career. We know he can do worldies but I like him scoring the simple goals, when he is in between the posts. He's done that a few times.

"He's in the gym a lot working



Manchester United's striker Anthony Martial (L) gestures to manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (R) on the pitch after a match (file photo)

on his fitness and strength. I'm just looking forward to seeing him improve. There's more to come from him."

United arrived earlier on Sunday for the remainder of the Europa League tournament, which will feature one-match knockout ties at different Ger-

man venues, culminating in the final, also in Cologne, on Aug. 21.

Solskjaer, who has already guided United to Champions League qualification with a third-placed finish in the Premier League, said the end-of-season event will aid his side's

"Anthony has made huge strides this season in many aspects of his game. Physically, he is at the best level of his career. We know he can do worldies but I like him scoring the simple goals, when he is in between the posts. He's done that a few times

OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER

development.

"We went into this season knowing that Europa League is a great chance for us to get a trophy, to get far in a tournament," he added.

"But also to groom a few of the youngsters and it was perfect for us.

## England's Stokes to miss rest of Pakistan Test series

AFP | London

England star Ben Stokes will miss the concluding two Tests against Pakistan for family reasons, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced Sunday.

Stokes' father Ged was admitted to hospital in Johannes-



England's Ben Stokes plays a shot

burg two days before Christmas last year with a serious illness while following his son's progress with the England cricket team during their tour of South Africa.

Ged Stokes, a former New Zealand rugby league international, underwent three operations and spent 37 days in hospi-

tal, with his conditions initially described as "critical" before it stabilised.

He has since continued his recovery in New Zealand.

Despite his father's health problems, Stokes was named player of the series in England's 3-1 Test series win over South Africa.

# Hamilton welcomes Verstappen title fight

Hamilton is hoping for a title tussle with Verstappen as Red Bull rise to the challenge

● **Hamilton has a 30-point advantage over Verstappen in drivers' standings**

AFP | London

Lewis Hamilton welcomes the prospect of a Formula One title battle with Max Verstappen following the Dutchman's dramatic victory in Sunday's torrid 70th Anniversary Grand Prix at Silverstone.

Defending champion and current leader Hamilton, who has a 30-point advantage at the top of the drivers' standings, praised Verstappen and his Red Bull team for inflicting a first defeat on Mercedes in five races this year.

"It's great that Max won," said Hamilton, speaking in the aftermath of his record-equalling 155th podium finish, in second place.

"As I've said before I want to have races and a challenge. Obviously, the Red Bull seems to be quite close to us in race conditions, but that's a good thing and it will be interesting to see their progression through the rest of the year.

"I definitely will not overlook them. We will keep a close eye on them. It's not going to be easy by any means."



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton (R) sprays champagne at Red Bull's Max Verstappen on the podium

Hamilton, who shares the podiums record with seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher, is in pursuit of his own seventh drivers' title this year and also has the German's unrivalled haul of 91 GP wins in his sights.

## 'Difficult day' for Mercedes

However in sweltering conditions on Sunday, Red Bull had not only a superior strategy -- by choosing to start Verstappen on hard-compound tyres -- but also a superior level of management of tyre wear, which appears to have become a weakness of Mercedes' otherwise flawless car this year.

Hamilton had only won the

**107**  
points have been earned by Lewis Hamilton to stay at the top of the drivers' standings

British GP at the same track a week earlier after surviving a last-lap puncture as Verstappen closed in.

Mercedes chief Toto Wolff conceded his team had failed to deliver after starting with Valtteri Bottas on pole and Hamil-

ton second in their 67th front row lockout.

Verstappen started fourth and won by 11 seconds, a luxury that afforded him several light-hearted quips on his way to victory and a poor sign for Mercedes heading into the weekend's Spanish GP in Barcelona.

"It was a difficult day in the office," admitted Wolff. "We have a handful of days to find out what exactly caused our issues today, come up with solutions, test them in Barcelona and then hopefully have a better race on Sunday.

"It will be challenging, but we've had these days in the past and came out stronger and I am

## Atletico resume training as rest of squad test negative for Covid-19



Atletico Madrid's Uruguayan defender Jose Gimenez (R) and teammates during a training session (file photo)

AFP | Madrid

Atletico Madrid's fears of further disruption to their trip to the Champions League 'Final Eight' tournament in Lisbon have been eased after the rest of the squad tested negative for COVID-19, following two positives the previous day.

The club's morning training session was postponed due to the positive cases and their plans to travel to Lisbon were put on hold, but the club said in a statement they would have one final session before flying out on Tuesday, a day later than planned.

The statement revealed that the two players to test positive were forward Angel Correa and injured defender Sime Vrsaljko, who will miss the trip and were isolating at home, adding that the pair were both asymptomatic.

Atletico, who are bidding to win the competition for the first time after falling in the 2014 and 2016 finals, face German side RB Leipzig on Thursday in the quarter-finals, hoping to set up a last-four meeting with Paris St Germain or Atalanta.

"The first team squad and coaching staff underwent COV-



**Atletico Madrid are bidding to win the Champions League for the first time after falling in the 2014 and 2016 finals**

COVID-19 tests on Sunday and they all came back negative, after two positive tests were registered following the previous tests on Saturday," said Atletico's statement.

"In keeping with health protocols, those who share a home with the two players who tested positive also received tests, which came back negative.

"The club's medical services have been authorised by the two players to reveal their identity in order to end speculation."

Atletico did not register any positive cases for the virus when La Liga re-started in June after a three-month hiatus due to the pandemic as the top-flight was successfully completed without any major incidents.

## BRAVE CF 39 fighters available for online Media Day via Zoom

TDI | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation will host its third Swedish event in as many weeks, this Saturday, as BRAVE CF 39 takes place once again in Stockholm.

All fighters from the main card will be available on Wednesday, for Zoom Interviews on Media Day. Reporters will be able to speak to the fighters ahead of yet another huge fight card hosted in association with Bulldog Fight Nights.

In the main event, Welterweight contender Tahar Hadbi returns to action against Giannis Bachar, from Greece.

Also set for fight night is the debut of Middleweight Andreas Gustafsson, who takes on Miro Jurkovic in the night's co-feature. Brazilians Rafael Macedo and Felipe Lima are also on deck as they fight Tobias Harila and Farbod Irannejad, respectively.

Finally, Davide Gregorio La Torre will represent Italy against fellow debutant Sahil Siraj, who was supposed to fight at BRAVE CF 36 but was forced to postpone his debut due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.



### BRAVE CF 39 Fight Card

Welterweight: Tahar Hadbi vs Giannis Basar  
Middleweight: Andreas Gustafsson vs Miro Jurkovic  
Lightweight: Rafael Macedo vs Tobias Harila  
Catchweight (64 kg): Felipe Lima vs Farbod Irannejad  
Lightweight: Sahil Siraj vs Davide La Torre

## Jesus says City stronger for past Champions League disappointments

AFP | London

Manchester City striker Gabriel Jesus says he can imagine his hands round the Champions League trophy and he and his team-mates are stronger for previous disappointments in the competition coveted by their Abu Dhabi owners above all others.

The 23-year-old Brazilian had a standout performance in Friday's 2-1 win over 13-time European champions Real Madrid that earned a place in the quarter-finals.

Jesus's starring role eased concerns at the likely absence of injured record goalscorer Sergio Aguero for Saturday's quarter-final in Lisbon.

Guardiola -- who has not lifted the Champions League since his second success with Barcelona in 2011 -- and the squad fly to Portugal later yesterday.

"We have to dream," Jesus told British media. "I'm a dreamer and can picture myself with the trophy on my hands.

"But I know the reality is different, we have to work, to show our dedication. To win is the most important thing."

Jesus -- who scored in both



Manchester City's striker Gabriel Jesus celebrates scoring a goal (file photo)

**"We have to dream. I'm a dreamer and can picture myself with the trophy on my hands. But I know the reality is different, we have to work, to show our dedication. To win is the most important thing"**

GABRIEL JESUS

legs and set up Raheem Sterling for their first goal in Friday's last 16 second leg -- said

the players had turned disappointments in Europe's premier club competition into a positive.

Under Guardiola they have exited in the quarter-finals the past two years to English rivals Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur and prior to that Monaco eliminated them in the last 16.

City's best performance so far was reaching the 2016 semi-finals under Guardiola's predecessor Manuel Pellegrini.

"As a group, we have matured from being knocked out of the previous Champions League editions," said Jesus.

"We've learned to suffer."