

Anti-COVID-19 measures
 Manama

Following the decision issued by the Government Executive Committee chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, regarding precautionary measures taken in light of the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), Shaikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs at the Ministry of Interior has announced that the ministry, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Health, has activated several procedures related to arrivals to the Kingdom.

He said that all foreign visitors who have visited the People's Republic of China 14 days prior to their date of arrival in Bahrain would be banned from entering the Kingdom. He added that Bahraini citizens, citizens of GCC countries, and Bahraini residents who have visited the People's Republic of China within 14 days of arriving in Bahrain would be required to undergo medical examinations recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The Ministry of the Interior has advised citizens and residents to follow WHO guidelines and avoid all but essential travel to areas where Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been detected.

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New Foreign Minister sworn in



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received, in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr Abdullatif Al Zayani at Al Safriya Palace. Dr Al Zayani took the official oath before HM the King following the issuance of a Royal Decree, appointing him to his post. HM King Hamad congratulated the Foreign Affairs Minister, wishing him every success in assuming his patriotic responsibilities of serving Bahrain and its people. HM the King lauded Dr Al Zayani's competence and experience that entitle him to perform his duties to the fullest. HM King Hamad wished Adviser to HM the King for Diplomatic Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, every success in carrying out his new duties.

'Offer best services'

HRH the Crown Prince awards best govt service centres

HRH the Crown Prince highlighted the Kingdom's continued commitment to enhancing the performance of public services.

Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander, and First Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday awarded eight government service centres that have received gold classification under the second edition of the "Taqyeem" service evaluation programme, at Riffa Palace.

HRH the Crown Prince highlighted the Kingdom's continued commitment to enhancing the performance of public services, in line with Bahrain's comprehensive development led by HM the King.

In this regard, HRH the Crown Prince emphasised the impor-



HRH the Crown Prince with officials heading award-winning public service centres.

tance of innovation within government work streams to ensure optimal performance and service delivery excellence, in the interest of citizens.

The government service centres, which received the award included Information and E-Government Authority Centre for ID Card Services located in Muharraq, Northern Municipal Service Centre located in Hamad Town, affiliated with the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, Bahrain Investors Centre, affiliated with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce

"Innovation is important within government work streams to ensure optimal performance and service delivery excellence in the interest of citizens."

HRH THE CROWN PRINCE

and Tourism, Precious Metals and Gemstone Testing Directorate, affiliated with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism,

Customer Service Centre located in Mazaya Plaza, affiliated with the Electricity and Water Authority, the main reception centre, affiliated with the Social Insurance Organisation, the reception centre located in Seef Mall Muharraq, affiliated with the Social Insurance Organisation and the Customer Service Centre located in Seef Mall, affiliated with the labour fund, Tamkeen.

HRH the Crown Prince commended the Government Service Centres Evaluation Committee's efforts for their thorough assessment of the services provided by

the public centres, noting that the second edition of Taqyeem has set high standards and accelerated competition, supporting the government's aim of delivering quality services for all.

For their part, the senior government officials in attendance expressed gratitude for HRH the Crown Prince's continued support for enhanced public sector services, noting that positive service outcomes benefit citizens and help to ensure Kingdom's overall development.

A number of senior government officials attended the ceremony.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING SUCCESS

Bahrain Police bust vice trade racket, rescue victims

TDT | Manama

More than 20 "young girls" from Kazakhstan who were detained with an intention to engage them in forced prostitution, were rescued in a joint operation done by Kazakh diplomats and Bahrain Police,

according to Russian media.

This was reported on Tuesday by a couple of Russian news agencies, which stated that "the Kazakh Foreign Ministry announced that its diplomats, in co-operation with the Bahraini police, have succeeded in liberating 21 Kazakh girls who have been victims of forced

"The young girls were forced into performing prostitution by the vice trade gang."

RUSSIAN MEDIA

prostitution".

Quoting the ministry, RT (Russia Today), reported: "The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with the assistance of the Bahrain Police, contributed to the liberation of 21 female citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan from detention."



03 eServices reduced govt cost by '88pc; processing time by 75pc'

04 Medical negligence probed

05 GFH posts fourth quarter, FY19 results

210 fils (includes VAT)





Under the patronage of the National Security Adviser and Royal Guard Commander, Major-General HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the graduation ceremony of a training session for new recruits was held yesterday at the Royal Guard, in the presence of Royal Guard Special Force Commander, Lieutenant-General HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa. The Royal Guard Commander's anthem was played and some Holy Quran verses were recited. HH Shaikh Nasser inspected a military lineup, and then a practical military parade was displayed by the graduates. After that, a briefing on the session, including its theoretical and practical programmes, in addition to the military training and field skills, was presented. The National Security Adviser lauded the graduates' high morale and the distinguished military skills they have acquired, stressing that thanks to the support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander, the march of the Royal Guard will continue.



Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities President Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa yesterday received VKL Holdings and Al Namal Group of Companies Chairman Dr Varghese Kurian and company director Jeeben Varghese Kurian.

70 tests for just BD7 at Al Hilal Hospital

TDT | Manama

Al Hilal Hospital aims to provide high-quality healthcare, which should be available and accessible to everyone at affordable prices.

Al Hilal is privileged to serve the Kingdom of Bahrain with the support of their dedicated team of doctors, nurses and staff members, who work together to provide high quality healthcare services, the hospital said in a statement issued yesterday.

Al Hilal hospital and medical centers over the past 15 years, has been a great leader in delivering quality healthcare in the region, and has expanded and adapted to the rapidly changing and challenging healthcare needs of the people they serve. Al Hilal is committed to delivering patient-centered care, at par with the best hospitals around gulf regions.

Al Hilal offers affordable medical packages that help the people of Kingdom of Bahrain to periodically check their health parameters and ensuring better quality of life. These packages include regular blood tests, health checkups, free consultations and investigations, which helps people to keep a regular check on their lifestyle.

The CEO of Al Hilal Dr Sharath Chandran said: "We wish to expand our services to all the provinces of Bahrain in the near future. So that we are well prepared for the future where in all residents of the Kingdom

will be managed by the Sehati Insurance plan. Al Hilal wants to be the leader in providing quality healthcare service across the region. Today we provide specialty consultation in neurology, cardiology, gastroenterology, urology at the most cost effective prices in the Kingdom. It is our vision to ensure that price should not be a barrier for accessing quality health services."

This time Al Hilal Hospital is offering a full body check-up, which includes 70 tests for just BD 7. The package includes liver profile, lipid profile, kidney profile, uric acid and gout profile, thyroid profile, diabetic profile and complete Hemogram along with Doctor consultation. This offer is valid till 29th Feb 2020 at Al Hilal Manama, Riffa and Salmabad branch. The team of our Internal Medicine doctors at Al Hilal is available from 7 am to 11 pm on all days in all the branches.



Al Hilal wants to be the leader in providing quality healthcare service across the region.

DR SHARATH CHANDRAN



780 scholars from 20 different schools in Bahrain and UAE participated in the regional round of the World Scholar's Cup on 7th and 8th February 2020 at St Christopher's School. From New Millennium School DPS Bahrain 150 scholars in 50 different teams participated in the competition. NMS was crowned with the glory of being the Champion team (First Position) in the Junior category. The students performed exceedingly well, winning 333 gold and 369 silver medals and nine trophies in different categories.

Certificates awarded



Students were handed over excellence certificates following second term examinations at the Pakistan School. Chief Guest Mr Husnain Yousef (HOC, Pakistan Embassy), Guest of Honour Rana Abdul Rashid, Pakistan School chairman and members of the Board of Management attended.

Valentine's Day celebrations

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The Indian Club will be organising Valentine's Day celebrations today 13th February 2020 and on Friday 14th February 2020 at its premises in Gudaibiya from 8:00pm onwards.

For more information, call 33331308.

eServices reduced govt cost by '88pc; processing time by 75pc'

iGA initiated more than 400 active eServices since the launch of the eGovernment programme

● Mr AlQaed said that iGA continuously works with the public and private sectors to further improve its eServices, and will form a new strategy in 2020.

● Mr AlKhajah delivered a presentation that showed an 82 per cent increase in the speed of processing transportation and traffic transactions in 2019.

TDI | Manama
Pradeep Puravankara

The Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA) has unveiled major achievements in implementing its 2019 eGovernment Strategy, most notably the reengineering of 40 eServices, which allowed for an 88 per cent reduction in the costs of providing the government services, and a 74 per cent reduction in processing times.

Across all channels, iGA eServices generated BD156 million through more than 1.6m transactions during the year. iGA Chief Executive Mohammed Ali AlQaed announced the results at a press conference yesterday detailing the achievements of the 2019 eGovernment Strategy.

Mr AlQaed said that iGA initiated more than 400 active eServices since the launch of the eGovernment programme, adding that these achievements reflect iGA's commitment to the directives of the Kingdom's senior leadership aimed at achieving the objectives of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030.

They also implement the decisions of the Supreme Committee

for Information and Communication Technology (SCICT), chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, and the directives of the Minister of Interior, Gen Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

The achievements also reflect iGA's commitment to its strategy of digital transformation. Mr AlQaed noted that the objectives of the strategy have been met in a range of 12 government sectors, including transportation, traffic, water and electricity, housing and real estate, education, health, employment, banking, etc.

Mr AlQaed said that iGA continuously works with the public and private sectors to further improve its eServices, and will form a new strategy in 2020 aimed at further enhancing its digital transformation efforts and application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.

Mr AlQaed said that iGA is committed to serving the public and regularly measures customer satisfaction levels across all eServices via its official social media accounts and surveys.

It performs an annual customer satisfaction study and takes into consideration the findings of the Government Service Centre Evaluation Committee, Taqyeem.

Mr AlQaed announced that iGA, in partnership with relevant entities, is close to launching the Sehat app, which will provide a unified platform for health

156 million Bahraini dinars in revenues were generated by iGA during last year.



Mr AlQaed speaks at the Press conference.

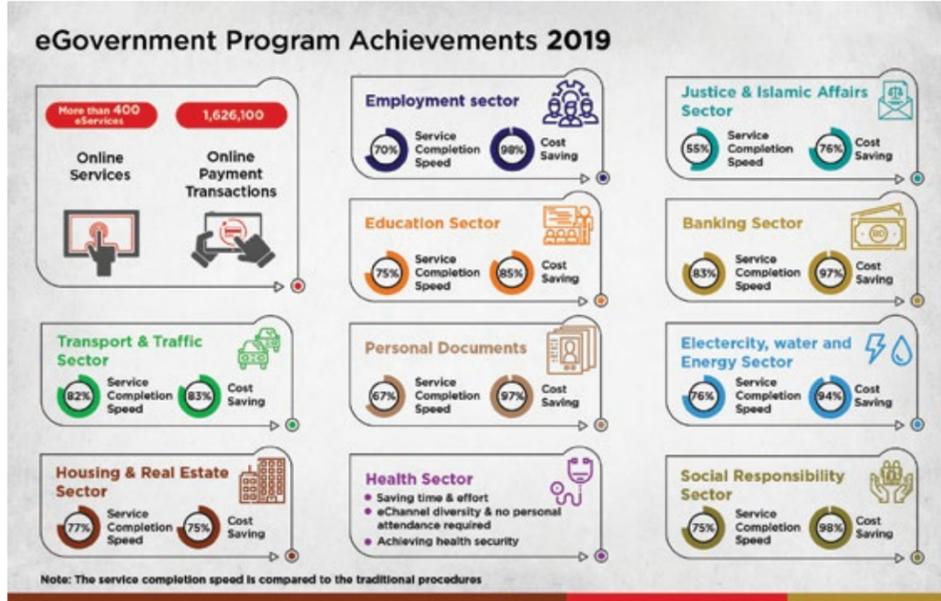
services and will be of great importance to citizens, residents and visitors. The Sehat app was downloaded 42,414 times last year, while the usage reached 301,404 time.

iGA Deputy Chief Executive, eTransformation, Dr Zakareya Ahmed AlKhajah said that iGA implemented a number of innovations, such as improving its ePayment mechanisms, and launching 40 comprehensive eServices in co-operation with 14 government entities.

It has also worked with the financial sector on FinTech projects, launching an eWallet, the first of its kind in the Middle East; linking the financial sector to a Know Your Customer (eKYC) eSystem, activating an ID card updating self-service; and carrying out 37 comprehensive studies on government initiatives and services.

Mr AlKhajah delivered a presentation that showed an 82 per cent increase in the speed of processing transportation and traffic transactions in 2019, resulting in an 83pc reduction in the cost of providing the services, as well as improvements to traffic safety.

He highlighted the main services that iGA developed for the sector, including online public transport vehicle registration renewals, and the issuing of international driving licenses.



INFORMATION & eGOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

providing the services. For education, transaction times improved by 75pc with cost of providing the services reducing by 85pc.

Employment recorded processing time improvements of 70pc with cost of providing the services reductions of 98pc, also indicating improvements in communications with the public through the Government Notification System (NotifyMe) and the National Suggestion and Complaint system, Tawasul.

He added that that iGA developed financial services in association with the private sector that achieved transaction time improvements of 83pc, reducing the cost of providing the services by 97pc, while the speed of processing of personal documents improved by 67pc, with reducing the cost of providing the services by 97pc.

The presentation highlighted the speed of delivering electricity and water eServices to 67pc, reducing the cost of providing the services by 94pc, while the processing of justice and Islamic affairs transactions sped up by 55pc, reducing the cost of providing the services by 76pc.

The complete of service delivery of community assistance program transactions improved by 75pc, reducing the cost of providing the services by 98pc, while housing and real estate transaction service delivery improved by 77pc, allowing for a 75pc reduction in the cost of

12-member terrorist group lose final plea

TDI | Manama

Members of a terrorist group lost their last chance to evade the previously issued sentences against them as the Court of Cassation rejected their final plea against the verdicts.

The sentences included life in prison, and an imprisonment of 10 and 15 years.

The group was earlier convicted of forming a terrorist cell in violation of the provisions of the law, joining it, torturing, arresting and detaining a person, using

force with him, kidnapping, theft and promoting a terrorist crime in implementation of terrorist purposes.

Two of the members were sentenced to life in prison, while eight got 15 years in jail and the remaining two got 10 years imprisonment.

According to court files, the 12 Bahraini men formed a terrorist group called the "Secret Intelligence Service of Bahrain Revolution" with the aim of arresting persons suspected of co-operating with the police, and kidnapping and detaining them to extract

their confessions through torture in order to spread terror among citizens and residents, and to prevent them from communicating and co-operating with the security authorities in implementation of terrorist purposes.

Police investigations showed that the group was responsible of kidnapping four individuals suspected of cooperating with the security authorities on different dates. They group detained the kidnapped persons, tortured them, assaulted them, robbed them and filmed them while making false confessions and shared online.



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Medical negligence probed

Baby girl, 4, allegedly suffers burn injuries after medical procedure at SMC

TDI | Manama

An investigation is underway after a four-month-old baby allegedly suffered "burn injuries" following a medical procedure at Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC).

The baby's mother had filed a complaint against the medical staff at SMC, according to sources.

The child's mother Zahraa has urged the authorities to hold people responsible following the incident.

She said that medical negligence by the healthcare professional resulted in the issue. She claimed that the staff concealed the error.

The Ministry of Health has stated that the incident will be investigated.

The ministry issued the statement after a report was published on February 10 in our sister paper Al Ayam.

Medical negligence cases



The baby allegedly suffered 'burn injuries' following a medical procedure at SMC.

have been taken very seriously in the Kingdom.

Tribune recently reported that the High Administrative

Court upheld the decision of the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) to suspend a dentist for six months after he

allegedly failed to provide necessary treatment to a woman.

The latter suffered severe complications and she needed

surgical intervention to prevent her teeth from falling, according to Prosecutors.

The doctor filed a case against NHRA's disciplinary decision to suspend him for six months following his alleged blunder, which caused his patient to undergo treatment for a longer period.

He pointed out that the patient didn't follow the treatment plan and resorted to another doctor to remove the braces.

The court stated in its ruling that the doctor flopped in his endeavour to handle the woman's case and he failed to deal with the complications that arose during the treatment.

It pointed out to the NHRA's decision, which was taken unanimously by the probe panel.

The Department of Healthcare Professional Regulation manages the registration and licensing, and renewal of licence for all practising health professionals in the Kingdom.

Charity society planned in Salman City

TDI | Manama

A charity society could soon be established in Salman City, according to recent developments.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Development along with MP Fatima Abbas Qasim are working on the project, it is learnt.

Minister of Labour and Social Development, Jameel Humaidan praised the initiative stating that this will contribute positively towards the development of society.

Bahrain has taken many steps to promote the spirit of charity on a national as well as international scale.

Recently, Bahrain Disabled Federation held a charity race, which was a huge success.

Under the patronage of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee, Bahrain Disabled Sports Federation held the third Khalid bin Hamad Charity Race in collaboration with Bahrain Athletics Association on at Bahrain National Stadium.

The race was supported by Bahrain Paralympic Committee. The event was organised as part of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa's initiatives that aim to enable disabled people to integrate with different segments of the society and to spread sports among people who have disabilities.

The race covered various distances as per the category of the participants. It featured a 3-km race for people suffering from fit, a 3-km cycling race for disabled competitors and many others.

Duo arrested for vice trade

TDI | Manama

Two men have been recently arrested for their participation in a human trafficking and prostitution case that involves a female housemaid.

One of the men apparently convinced the victim, who's a female domestic worker, to escape her employer's house, after he offered her a better job, which eventually turned out to be flesh trade.

The first suspect then "sold" her to the second suspect, who detained her, forced to have sexual intercourse with male clients, and collected the money.

These details were mentioned in a press statement announced

yesterday by the Public Prosecution. In the statement, Capital Governorate Chief Prosecutor Nawaf Al Awadhy explained that the woman was initially detained in an apartment in Manama and later sold by the first suspect to the second.

The victim managed to eventually escape and seek help from the police, who arrested both suspects and referred the case to the Public Prosecution.

Mr Al Awadhy added that the prosecution heard the victim's testimony and ordered to admit her in the Expats Protection Centre in Sehla.

The Prosecution also interrogated the suspects, remanded them and referred the case to the concerned court.

Announcement

BAHRAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY (BATELCO) B.S.C.



Bahrain Telecommunications Company (BATELCO) B.S.C. would like to announce the opening of receiving the nomination for the candidacy of 4 Board of Directors membership for a three year term (2020-2023) in accordance with Article (27) of the Company's Articles of Association, where the elections will take place in the Annual General Assembly Meeting due to be held on 25 March 2020.

All Candidates must adhere to the Conditions for Membership of the Board outlined in Article (28) of the Company's Articles of Association, and Article (173) of the Commercial Companies Law issued by Decree (21) for the year 2001 and its amendments.

For those interested in nominating themselves shall apply through our website <http://batelco.com/investor-relations/> to fill in the Nomination form and follow the required steps to complete the application not later than 27 February 2020; which is the last date to receive applications.

Candidates' names and profiles will be published on Bahrain Bourse and Batelco's website at least 5 days prior to the Annual General Assembly Meeting. For any enquiries please contact: (17884485), Email: GBS@btc.com.bh

BKS International Book and Cultural Fest 2020 set



Mr Pillai and Mr Karakkal with other BKS officials at the press conference.

TDI | Manama

The Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam will host the fifth international Book festival commencing on February 19, 2020 until February 29, 2020, said BKS President P V Radhakrishna Pillai and General-Secretary Varghese Karakkal at a press conference held yesterday.

BKS International Literary and Cultural Fest is one of the acclaimed international book fairs in the GCC, with the participation of over 30 publishers from India and abroad. Prominent national and international personalities grace the 10-day long Book Fair and Cultural Fest.

A consortium of all major publishers in India is participating in this year books festival; thus, provides the opportunities to the book lovers for selecting books of their choice.

The consortium will exhibit books from 50 publishers including the ones from Penguin and most of the prestigious literary publishing houses in India.

Prominent personalities to attend the event this year are Sitaram Yachury, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India Marxist, Jairam Ramesh, Member of Parliament, former minister and writer, C K Padmanabhan, former BJP President, Kerala, Rajdeep Sardesai,

Indian news anchor and editor at the India Today Group, K G Sankara Pillai, Indian Poet, Subhas Chandran, famous writer, Shihab Poythum Kadavu, renowned short story writer, Dr M K Muneer, author, poet and former Minister of Kerala, M A Baby, writer and former Minister of Kerala, Mr Munavar Ali Shihab Thangal, President of Youth league, Mrs K R Meera, Indian Author and Journalist and Mr V R Sudheesh, short-story writer will be attending the 10-day long festival. Omani writer Ms Joka Al Harthi, who is a recipient of Booker Prize, will also attend the Book Fest along with other noted writers of Arab Literature.

business

GFH posts fourth quarter, FY19 results

Announces 2019 net profit attributed to shareholders of US\$ 80.1 million

- Records Q4 profit of US\$6.5 m

- Recommends 5.57pc dividends

- Revenue increases by 17.3pc

- Higher provisions impact overall performance

TDT | Manama

GFH Financial Group (GFH) yesterday posted a fourth-quarter net profit attributable to shareholders of US\$6.5 million, a decrease of 38.7 per cent from US\$10.6 m in the last quarter of 2018.

GFH attributed the decrease to higher provisions from the Group's commercial banking subsidiary.

Earnings per share were US cents 0.19 compared to US cents 0.30 in the last quarter of 2018.

Q4 income rose slightly to US\$81.66 m from US\$80.87 m in the same quarter a year ago.

Full-year results

Net profit attributable to

shareholders for the year was US\$80.1 m compared with US\$114.1 m for the prior year, a decrease of 29.8pc

The decline, GFH said, resulted primarily from higher provisions in the commercial banking subsidiary of the Group.

Earnings per share were US cents 2.37 compared with US cents 3.22 in the corresponding prior year.

Total equity attributable to shareholders was US\$1.0 billion at 31 December 2019 compared to US\$1.06 bn at 31 December 2018, a decrease of 5.7pc due to additional acquisition of an infrastructure project and treasury share buyback programmes.

Total assets of the Group were US\$5.9 bn at 31 December 2019 compared with US\$5.0 bn at the previous year-end, an increase of 18.2pc. Total Assets plus fund under management increased from US\$ 8.5bn in 2018 to US\$ 10.0 bn in 2019.

Revenue for the year was US\$335.69 m versus US\$286.17 m for 2018 an increase of 17.3pc. GFH said this reflects continued growth and progress in the Group's core investment banking business, increased contributions from real estate activities and strong performance in the Group's growing treasury

“During the year, we were pleased to launch our Britus Education platform through which we will continue to grow our position as a leading regional and international investor in this promising defensive sector in addition to other sectors where we have been active during the year and see continued opportunities. Furthermore, during 2020, we will begin our operations in the Saudi Arabian market where we have established a presence and are poised to accelerate the growth of our investments and activities

HISHAM ALRAYES, CEO OF GFH



“While results were impacted by higher provisions in our commercial banking operations, we were pleased to announce another dividend as well as good overall performance and profits reflecting the continued successful implementation of our strategy, further diversification of our business lines and sound financial position. During the fourth quarter, we approached the debt capital markets in a landmark transaction for the Group

JASSIM ALSEDDIQI,
CHAIRMAN OF GFH

business.

Dividend

The board recommended a cash dividend of 5.57 pc (US\$50 m) for 2019 to share-

holders, subject to approval by the General Assembly and regulators.

Looking ahead Hisham Alrayes, CEO of GFH said GFH is excited about its next phase of

growth and have “entered the year in a strong operating and financial position and with the full confidence of the market following the successful placement of our 5-year sukuk.”

OPEC chops global oil demand growth forecast
Paris

The OPEC oil cartel yesterday lowered its forecast for growth in global oil demand this year by nearly a fifth due to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak in China.

In its monthly report on the world's oil market, OPEC said it now expects growth in global oil demand of 0.99 million barrels per day (mbd) this year, down from the 1.22 mbd forecast last month.

“The outbreak of the coronavirus in China during the first half of 2020 is the major factor behind this downward revision,” OPEC said.

The impact on demand for transportation fuels was exacerbated by the outbreak coinciding with the Lunar New Year holidays, when many Chinese return home to celebrate with family.

OPEC said it had also revised lower its forecast for China's economic growth this year by 0.5 percentage points to 5.4 per cent.

“The impact of the coronavirus outbreak on China's economy has added to the uncertainties surrounding global economic growth in 2020, and by extension global oil demand growth in 2020,” it said.



Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2019

Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2019

	31 December 2019 Reviewed	31 December 2018 Audited
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	3,093,332	2,630,176
Investment in an associate Company	1,573,155	1,635,076
Right-of-use assets	578,724	-
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	3,172,944	2,971,304
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	689,871	668,095
Investments at amortised cost	500,000	750,000
	9,608,026	8,654,651
Current assets		
Inventories	3,002,137	2,886,343
Trade and other receivables	2,043,887	2,414,299
Cash and bank balances	501,223	331,779
	5,547,247	5,632,421
TOTAL ASSETS	15,155,273	14,287,072
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Shareholders' equity		
Share capital	3,120,928	3,120,928
Statutory reserve	1,560,464	1,560,464
General reserve	3,993,000	3,993,000
Development and raw material reserve	1,000,000	1,000,000
Investment fair value reserve	2,139,170	1,865,423
Retained earnings	1,507,754	1,454,210
Treasury shares	(122,398)	(118,033)
Total shareholders' equity	13,198,918	12,875,932
Non-current liabilities		
Non-current Portion of lease liability	561,757	-
Non-current portion of deferred income	207,504	53,560
Employees' terminal benefits	30,496	23,685
	799,757	77,245
Current liabilities		
Current portion of lease liability	38,814	-
Trade and other payables	1,103,978	1,045,635
Bank overdraft	-	281,325
Current portion of deferred income	13,806	6,935
	1,156,598	1,333,895
Total liabilities	1,956,355	1,411,140
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	15,155,273	14,287,072

Statement of profit or loss for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Year ended 31 December 2019 Audited	Year ended 31 December 2018 Audited
Sales	15,348,364	15,883,902
Cost of sales	(15,032,684)	(14,944,121)
Gross profit for the year	315,680	939,781
Other income	64,947	63,892
Other operating expenses	(690,282)	(725,386)
(loss)/Profit from operations	(309,655)	278,287
Investment income	221,618	255,040
Unrealised fair value gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	21,776	30,275
Share of loss in an associate Company	(52,555)	(168,414)
Finance costs	(23,613)	(3,811)
Net (loss)/profit for the year	(142,429)	391,377
Basic and diluted (loss)/ earning per share	Fils (5)	Fils 13

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Year ended 31 December 2019 Audited	Year ended 31 December 2018 Audited
Net (loss)/profit for the year	(142,429)	391,377
Other comprehensive income		
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Valuation gains on financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	632,151	76,144
Items that will or may be reclassified into profit or loss:		
Company's share in an associate Company's net change in investments' fair value	(9,366)	862
Other comprehensive income for the year	622,785	77,006
Total comprehensive income for the year	480,356	468,383

Statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Year ended 31 December 2019 Audited	Year ended 31 December 2018 Audited
Operating activities		
Net (Loss)/profit for the year	(142,429)	391,377
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	431,450	386,464
Amortisation of right-of-use asset	26,760	0
Finance costs	23,613	3,811
Loss on sale of property, plant and equipment	-	24
Unrealised fair value gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(21,776)	(30,275)
Share of loss in an associate Company	(63,079)	(86,411)
Interest income	(158,539)	(168,629)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Inventories	(115,794)	(1,002,665)
Trade and other receivables	370,832	(846,291)
Trade and other payables	82,993	(16,174)
Employees' terminal benefits, net	6,811	323
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	493,397	(1,200,032)
Investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(894,606)	(442,228)
Proceed from matured investments at amortised cost	250,000	500,000
Proceeds from disposal of financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	430,508	286,104
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	-	40
Interest income received	63,079	86,411
Dividends income received	158,539	168,629
Net cash provided by investing activities	7,520	598,956
Financing activities		
Purchase of treasury shares	(4,305)	-
Principal paid on lease liability	(4,910)	-
Net movement in deferred income	160,815	60,495
Net movement in short-term borrowing	-	70,580
Finance cost	(23,613)	(3,811)
Dividends paid	(178,135)	(163,201)
Net cash used in financing activities	(50,148)	(177,097)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	450,769	(778,173)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	50,454	828,627
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	501,223	50,454
Comprising: Cash and Bank balances	501,223	331,779
Bank overdraft	-	(281,325)
	501,223	50,454

* These financial statements, were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 12 February 2020. Full set of Financial Statements can be seen on Company website: www.dawajen.bh

Financial Statements Audited by
BDO

Abdul Rahman Mohamed Jamsheer
Chairman

Abdulhussain Khalil Dewani
Vice Chairman

Abdulhadi Mirza Jaffar
General Manager

	Share capital	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Development and raw material reserve	Investment fair value reserve	Retained earnings	Treasury shares	Total
As at 31 December 2017	3,120,928	1,560,464	3,993,000	1,000,000	1,784,847	1,315,749	(118,093)	12,656,895
Effect of adoption of IFRS 9	-	-	-	-	(3,292)	(92,988)	-	(96,280)
Adjusted balance at 1 January 2018	3,120,928	1,560,464	3,993,000	1,000,000	1,781,555	1,222,761	(118,093)	12,560,615
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	-	-	77,006	391,377	-	468,383
Movement in investment fair value reserve on disposal of financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	6,862	(6,862)	-	-
Dividend distributed for 2017	-	-	-	-	-	-	(153,066)	(153,066)
At 31 December 2018	3,120,928	1,560,464	3,993,000	1,000,000	1,865,423	1,454,210	(118,093)	12,875,932
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	-	-	622,785	(142,429)	-	480,356
Treasury shares Purchase	-	-	-	-	-	-	(4,305)	(4,305)
Movement in investment fair value reserve on disposal of financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	(349,038)	349,038	-	-
Dividend distributed for 2018	-	-	-	-	-	(153,065)	-	(153,065)
At 31 December 2019	3,120,928	1,560,464	3,993,000	1,000,000	2,139,170	1,507,754	(122,398)	13,198,918

Investcorp acquires Fortune Fish & Gourmet



Fortune International, a leading super-regional speciality distributor of seafood and gourmet food products.

TDT | Manama

Investcorp, a leading global provider and manager of alternative investment products, yesterday announced acquiring Fortune International, a leading super-regional speciality distributor of seafood and gourmet food products. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Fortune was founded in 2001 by CEO Sean O'Scannlain, who will continue to lead the Company and maintain a significant ownership stake.

Fortune distributes fresh seafood, frozen seafood and gourmet foods, offering more than 12,000 SKUs to fine-dining restaurants, grocery stores, hotels and other customers, primarily across the Midwestern U.S.

To maintain operational flexibility, Investcorp and O'Scannlain have capitalized the Company with a conservative capital structure to fund a deliberate acquisition strategy and further accelerate Fortune's geographic expansion.

"Specialty foodservice distribution in the United States is a highly fragmented, resilient and growing \$40 billion market," said Hazem Ben-Gacem, Co-Chief Executive



Hazem Ben-Gacem, Co-Chief Executive Officer at Investcorp

Officer at Investcorp.

Fortune operates a state-of-the-art facility in Bensenville, Illinois, located close to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, which enables timely delivery of products across key Midwestern MSAs. In addition to its Bensenville facility, Fortune operates facilities in Minneapolis, Minnesota; St. Louis, Missouri; Kansas City, Missouri; Bayou La Batre, Alabama; Birmingham, Alabama and Picayune, Mississippi.

Houlihan Lokey acted as financial advisor to Fortune on this transaction.

CEO of BTEA hails success of 'Sports Village'

● The event was held under the theme "#Get Set.. Go"

TDT | Manama

The Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA), Nader Al Moayyed, yesterday praised the success of the Bahrain Olympic Committee's "Sports Village" held in Isa Town to coincide with Bahrain Sports Day.

Held under the theme "#Get Set.. Go", the event successfully witnessed the attendance of an incredibly large audience.

Chief Executive Officer of BTEA, Nader Al Moayyed, said, "At BTEA, we consider it vital to support these types of events; since they encourage local youth to engage in sports activities as well as highlight the importance of adopting a healthy and balanced lifestyle."

"The Kingdom of Bahrain



Chief Executive Officer of BTEA, Nader Al Moayyed

has a number of unique features that make it a leading destination in hosting international sporting and recreational events, including the Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix, which will be held in March 2020, bringing together athletes, F1 spectators and racing enthusiasts from across the region and the world and further increasing the tourism sector's contribution to the national economy in line with the Economic Vision 2030."

Dubai's property giant Emaar reports slight profit increase

AFP | Dubai

Dubai-based construction giant Emaar Properties reported yesterday a slight increase in its 2019 net profits, despite falling real estate prices.

The one percent increase, although minimal, comes amid falling prices in Dubai's key real estate market, where companies -- including leading private developer Damac Properties -- have been struggling to make a profit.

Emaar posted a net profit of \$1.69 billion for 2019, up one percent on the previous year, it said in a statement.

However, the company recorded a revenue of \$6.69 billion last year, about a four percent decrease from 2018.

Emaar, which developed the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa, and is the largest listed firm on the Dubai Financial Market, is also involved in the entertainment, hotel and mall businesses.

"Emaar's performance in 2019 was resilient, maintaining growth within a challenging market," Emaar chairman Mohamed Alabbar said in the



Dubai has the most diverse economy in the Gulf but its property sector has been sliding for several years

statement.

Dubai is known for its beachfront skyscrapers and man-made islands, but it has been stuck in a five-year property downturn, with analysts saying there will be no relief in the near term.

Damac Properties announced yesterday its first annual loss in a decade.

The company reported a loss of \$10 million for 2019 compared with a net profit of \$313 million in the previous year, as revenues dropped by 28.2 percent to \$1.2 billion, a statement said.

The government in 2018 introduced a raft of rescue measures, including easy visa terms for expatriate buyers and

permanent residency permits for big investors. In September, a top-level committee was established to rebalance the market.

Real estate prices in Dubai have been on the decline since 2014 due to oversupply by builders, who are anticipating a pick up in sales ahead of the international trade fair Expo 2020.

WhatsApp user base crosses 2 billion mark

Reuters

Messaging app WhatsApp said yesterday it now has over 2 billion users worldwide, making it the largest social media platform after Facebook Inc, its parent company.

Facebook had about 2.50 billion monthly active users as of Dec. 31, the company said.

Trump says he would sign Indian trade pact if it was right

Reuters | Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump said yesterday he would sign a trade deal with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi if it was the right one.

Trump is scheduled to make his first visit as president to the world's largest democracy later this month.

The two countries have been trying to reach a limited trade pact with lower tariffs, but talks have run into problems over



U.S. President Donald Trump holds a bilateral meeting with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York City, New York, U.S

issues with data privacy and e-commerce controls.

BP aiming for net zero carbon emissions by 2050

London

British energy giant BP, under the leadership of new chief executive Bernard Looney, declared Wednesday its aim to achieve "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050, although it was vague on how it planned to hit the target.

"BP's new ambition to be a net zero company by 2050 or sooner covers the greenhouse gas emissions from its operations worldwide... and the carbon in the oil and gas that it produces," said a statement ahead of a speech by Looney on plans to "fundamentally transform its whole organisation".

Environmentalists immediately challenged the company's statement, saying it lacked detail and specific commitments.

The energy major will seek to ensure that the production of oil and gas does not emit carbon, while it will also start measuring methane emissions at all its gas processing facilities by 2023.



BP aims to have its operations and energy be carbon neutral in 30 years

And it vowed to "increase the proportion of investment into non-oil and gas business over time" as part of the pledge.

'Rapid transition'

Looney said in the statement: "The world's carbon budget is finite and running out fast. We need a rapid transition to net

zero.

"We all want energy that is reliable and affordable, but that is no longer enough. It must also be cleaner."

He added: "To deliver that, trillions of dollars will need to be invested in replumbing and rewiring the world's energy system.

"It will require nothing short of re-imagining energy as we know it."

Irish national Looney last week succeeded American Bob Dudley, whose ten-year stint as chief executive included the fallout from the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill disaster -- the biggest environmental catastrophe in US history.

"Energy markets are changing, driven by climate change, technology and societal expectations, and the board supports Bernard and his new leadership team's ambition for BP," the company's chairman Helge Lund said Wednesday.

"Aiming for net zero is not only the right thing for BP, it is the right thing for our shareholders and for society more broadly.

"As we embark on this ambitious agenda, we will maintain a strong focus on safe, reliable and efficient operations and on delivering the promises we have made to our investors," Lund added.

Al Salam Bank-Bahrain reports strong growth

● **FY19 net profit attributable to shareholders rises 14 per cent to BD21.1 million**

● **Fourth quarter net profit was BD 4 m**

● **Board announces 4pc cash dividends (4 fils per share) alongside 4pc bonus shares**

TDT | Manama

Al Salam Bank-Bahrain (ASBB) yesterday reported a net profit attributable to shareholders of BD 4 million in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared to BD 5 m in the fourth quarter of 2018, a variance of 20 per cent.

Quarterly earnings per share was 1.8 fils compared to 2.3 fils per share in the same quarter of 2018.

For full-year 2019, the bank reported a strong performance posting a 14 per cent increase in net profit attributable to shareholders to BD 21.1 m, from BD

”
We are delighted with the Bank's solid performance which was achieved against a backdrop of restrained global growth, geopolitical uncertainties, and increased competition within the sector. We look forward to continuing the Bank's growth trajectory as we accelerate the implementation and execution of the strategy approved by the Board of Directors at the end of 2018

KHALEEFA BUTTI OMAIR AL MUHAIRI
 AL SALAM BANK-BAHRAIN'S CHAIRMAN



”
Effective implementation of our three-year road map has generated a 30% increase in our financing portfolio, a steady acceleration in customer acquisition, a 28% growth in total deposits, further diversification of funding sources via the expansion of our banking network in frontier emerging markets and, in aggregate, a balance sheet that exceeded two billion Bahraini Dinars for the first time in the Bank's history.

RAFIK NAYED
 GROUP CEO OF AL SALAM BANK-BAHRAIN



18.5 m a year ago.

Earnings per share rose to 9.8 fils for 2019 from 8.7 fils per share in the prior year.

The board recommended a dividend of 8 per cent of the Bank's issued and paid-up share capital (8 fils per share) aggregating to BD17.7 m, comprising of 4pc cash dividends (4 fils per share) alongside 4pc bonus shares.

For the quarter, total rec-

ognized income and expense attributable to shareholders slightly reduced to BD 3.7 m, compared with BD 4.3 m for the same period of 2018, a variance of 12pc.

Total recognised income and expense attributable to shareholders for the year recorded strong growth of 18pc, surging to BD 20.9 m, from BD 17.7 m in 2018.

Total assets recorded strong

growth in 2019 increasing by 19pc to BD 2.0 billion, compared to BD 1.7bn on 31 December 2018.

The growth was coupled with a solid improvement in asset quality during 2019 with non-performing facilities decreasing significantly to 5.6pc of the total portfolio as a result of effective recovery initiatives and quality asset booking.

Despite the significant growth

in the balance sheet, the Bank maintained its solid capital adequacy ratio at 20.9pc in 2019, as compared to 20.6pc in 2018.

The continued strong performance of Al Salam Bank-Bahrain in 2019, and the significant growth in its key banking activities, reflect the successful execution of its new transformation strategy and continued efforts to streamline operations and

enhance the customer experience. 2019 was the maiden year for the implementation of the 3-year strategy.

As a result of the bank's continued efforts to enhance its operating model and execute its strategic initiatives including its digital transformation projects, total operating expenses increased by 6.7pc in 2019 to BD 29.8 m compared to BD 27.9 m in 2018.

Stock markets climb on easing concerns

AFP | London

Global stock markets climbed yesterday on easing investor concerns over the economic impact of COVID-19.

While the death toll from China's coronavirus epidemic climbed past 1,100 yesterday, the number of new cases fell for a second straight day, raising hope the outbreak could peak later this month.

Market sentiment has been positive since US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said on Tuesday that its assessment of the economic fallout was not as gloomy as many had expected.

There are meanwhile expecta-

Key figures at 1430 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	▲ 0.5 pc at 7,539.45 points
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▲ 0.9 pc at 13,743.62
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ 0.8 pc at 6,100.06
EURO STOXX 50:	▲ 0.7 pc at 3,851.82
New York - DOW:	▲ 0.6 pc at 29,440.02
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 0.7 pc at 23,861.21 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▲ 0.9 pc at 27,823.66 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 0.9 pc at 2,926.90 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.0908 from \$1.0916
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.2966 from \$1.2952
Euro/pound:	▼ at 84.13 pence from 84.28 pence
Dollar/yen:	▼ at 109.08 from 109.79
Brent Crude:	▲ 3.7 pc at \$56.00 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	UP 3.3 pc at \$51.59 per barrel

tions that Beijing will introduce major stimulus policies to offset economic hits. "It's now hoped that, as far as

the economy is concerned, we're just facing a bad quarter that could wipe around 1.0 per cent of full-year Chinese growth," noted Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at OANDA Europe.

COVID-19 emerged in central China late last year and has spooked equity and oil markets for weeks as it spread to more than two dozen countries.

But with economic concerns easing, Brent crude oil rallied by two pc on Wednesday while safe-haven investment gold retreated.

"Gold is slowly losing its appeal as traders declare the end of COVID-19 in sight," said Erlam.

"This may be premature but stock markets are at record highs and central banks appear



Investor fears about the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak appeared to ease after Fed chair Jerome Powell's comments to Congress members

relatively relaxed about the whole situation."

US planemaker Boeing however issued a stark warning about the impact of the deadly coronavirus outbreak, saying there was

"no question" it would hammer the aviation industry and the broader economy.

Major airlines have halted flights in and out of China, where a lockdown has been imposed in the worst-affected areas, while several countries have banned arrivals from China.

"You have several global airlines that have limited their traffic in and out of China, that's revenue," said Ihssane Mounir, the US plane maker's senior vice president of commercial global sales and marketing.

Meanwhile, the OPEC oil cartel lowered its forecast for growth in global oil demand this year by nearly a fifth due to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak in China.

Samsung joins the fold with Galaxy Z Flip smartphone

San Francisco

Samsung yesterday unveiled its second folding smartphone, a "Z Flip" handset with a lofty price tag aimed at "trendsetters."

The smartphone flips open, like a pocket cosmetics case, opening into a 6.7-inch screen.

Ultrathin glass used for the screen can be folded and unfolded more than 200,000 times and resists scratches, according to Samsung.

The Galaxy Z Flip will be available beginning Friday at a starting price of \$1,380, head of Samsung product marketing in Rebecca Hirst said at a San Francisco unveiling.

"It changes everything -- space, size, and the very way we use it," Hirst said as she held a Z Flip in the palm of a hand.

"The Z Flip is a statement smartphone; it is for trendsetters and trailblazers."

When closed, the Z Flip dis-



Attendees take photographs of the new Samsung Galaxy Z Flip foldable smartphone during Samsung Galaxy Unpacked 2020 in San Francisco, California

plays notifications such as time and phone calls, and can still be used to take photos.

The new device comes amid growing interest in folding handsets, and a similar "flip" Razr device recently introduced

by Motorola.

Samsung launched its first foldable handset, the Galaxy Fold, in September after faulty screens forced an embarrassing delay of the release of the \$2,000 device.

Folding smartphones have been introduced by Chinese makers Huawei and Royole.

New 5G handset

Samsung also introduced a new Galaxy S 20 Ultra flag-

ship model for its lineup of smartphones synched to new 5G telecommunication networks.

"5G will completely change how we communicate, how we game, and how we engage with the world around us," Samsung head of US mobile product management Drew Blackard said during the presentation.

"This is the year of Galaxy 5G, and it begins right here with the Galaxy S 20."

Galaxy S 20 models boast high definition 8K quality camera capabilities, and the Ultra model zoom magnifies views up to 100 times, according to demonstrations.

Galaxy S 20 5G models have a starting price of \$999 and will be released on March 6, according to the South Korean electronics giant, which has been at or near the top of the smartphone market in recent years.

Samsung also announced new

collaborations with streaming television titan Netflix and Xbox video game console maker Microsoft.

"We believe this is a significant partnership that will provide millions of Samsung users around the globe the best entertainment experience," said Netflix chief marketing officer Jackie Lee-Joe.

"Great stories come from anywhere and should be loved everywhere."

Netflix will be providing Samsung S 20 phones to creators of some of its original shows to make content for the global streaming platform.

An Xbox car racing game, "Forza Street," has been tailored for play on S 20 phones, according to Samsung.

"This is just the beginning of our gaming partnership with Xbox," said head of US mobile channel marketing David Park.

In Syria, where even the dead are

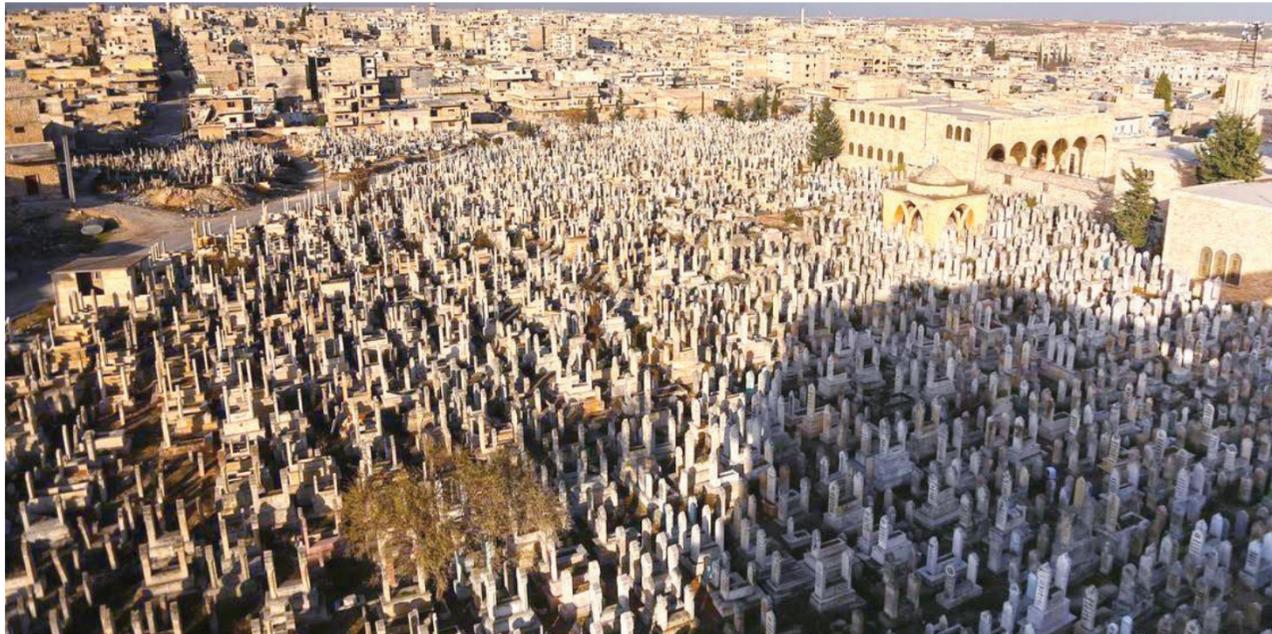
KAREEM SHAHEEN

The horror of the footage and the sheer depths of the sacrilege are difficult to fathom. The scenes are so repugnant that words that could possibly describe them are dispersed. It is as though the mind is hoping that if they are lost, it will eventually forget whatever it was that it saw.

These videos appear to have been shot by soldiers loyal to Syria's President Bashar Al Assad, who appear to have filmed themselves raiding local graveyards in towns and villages in Idlib province that they reclaimed in recent days. The soldiers, out of spite and a twisted desire for vengeance, are digging up corpses of the dead, and in at least one case have filmed themselves posing with skeletal remains.

The images are revolting, but hardly surprising. This kind of inhumanity is the new normal in war, thanks to nine years of impunity in Syria.

Idlib is one of the last remaining areas in the country outside of Mr Al Assad's control. Syria's ruler, has reclaimed most of the country in scorched earth campaigns of great cruelty. But Idlib's reckoning is catastrophic beyond measure. Three quarters of a million civilians fleeing the great bombardment to



A view of a sprawling cemetery in Maarat Al Numan, some 31km south of Idlib in Syria's north.

the Turkish border. Hundreds dead, hundreds of thousands freezing in sub-zero temperatures under flimsy tents. More than a million children in the crossfire. Dozens of hospitals bombed. Desecrated graves. Ghost towns left in the wake. Not even the pretense of international action, no justice on the horizon. The apocalyptic humanitarian

situation in Idlib has finally managed to garner the attention of international media in recent days. But the latest crisis belies a deeper truth – that atrocities have been normalised over nine years of warfare. Man's inhumanity to man is the new normal.

Let us consider what has become normal because of the Syrian war.

Mr Al Assad repeatedly used chemical weapons throughout the course of the war. More than a thousand civilians have been killed or injured due to the repeated use of sarin and chlorine. The regime did not face any serious consequences despite violating a clear, red line. Even a programme to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons

arsenal failed to complete them.

Since 2011, at least 589 attacks against healthcare workers were documented by Physicians for Human Rights, the vast majority by Mr Al Assad and his forces. Attacks against medical personnel are illegal under international law. But the regime has

The vandalising of graveyards and digging up of bodies by the Assad regime demonstrate once again that man's inhumanity to man is the new normal

Why a small American state can have a big i

RASHMEE ROSHAN LALL

The battle for the US presidency gets properly under way with Tuesday's election in New Hampshire, a small north-eastern state, where the Democratic Party picks its preferred choice for presidential nominee. Meanwhile, two seemingly contradictory narratives are emerging. The first is that the Democratic Party is simply incapable of winning against incumbent president Donald Trump and his Republican Party. The second is that there is just no way the Democrats can lose.

Both narratives are based on the same belief: that the success of the eventual Democratic nominee on November 3 – the day of the presidential election – will have nothing to do with his or her domestic and foreign policy agendas.

The doom-and-gloom forecast for the Democrats is based on the chaos after the Iowa caucus, when the party was unable to adequately explain technological failures that held up the tabulation of final results. The ensuing confusion left the Democratic Party looking shell-shocked and promoted the impression of incompetence and unpreparedness.

A more upbeat line comes from political scientist Rachel Bitecofer, a professor at Christopher Newport University and a senior fellow at the Washington think tank Niskanen Centre. In 2018, Ms Bitecofer became famous for accurately predicting the nature and size of the Democrats' win in the November mid-term elections. What's more, she made her prediction months ahead of the polls and stuck to it. So the findings of her 2020 election model, released ahead



Voters cast their ballots in a voting booth setup in a community centre in Manchester, New Hampshire.

of the New Hampshire primary, have attracted considerable attention. They are startling.

Ms Bitecofer reckons that the Democrats will almost certainly win back the White House, gain congressional seats and may even have a chance at retaking the Senate. She has said her analysis is about "flipping giant paradigms of electoral theory upside down" because the election depends on turnout rather than the candidate or their policy

positions. This would be a controversial, deeply contested view for any election almost anywhere in the world, but especially for that of the US presidency, with its long, hard-fought campaign.

In a funny sort of way, Dr Bitecofer's theory that the Democrats will win 2020 irrespective of their choice of candidate, chimes with the more despairing narrative mentioned earlier: that Democrats cannot win against Mr Trump no matter

who the party picks as its nominee.

Both assumptions are just that – assumptions. The domestic and foreign policy positions taken by the Democratic presidential hopefuls are certainly not inconsequential in the primaries. If anything, Mr Trump's shock 2016 election win showed that even an unlikely presidential candidate can upend a tough and crowded primary contest on account of their personal style and world-view.

Now, those who seek to rebrand Trump are trying to do this by offering contrasting views on America's role in the world and in the Middle East.

This was apparent in the Democratic candidates' televised debate. Most of the candidates on the debate called time on Mr Trump's aggressively pursued America First policies by advocating instead diplomatic initiatives, the

At New Hampshire's primaries, future US policies take shape

Australian Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** makes a historic apology to the Indigenous Australians and the Stolen Generations.



A bomb explodes in the city of Pune, **Maharashtra**, India, killing 17 and injuring 60 more.

The European Space Agency (ESA) conducted the first launch of the European Vega rocket from Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.

Kim Jong-nam, brother of North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Un, is assassinated at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

not left in peace



Mr Al Assad repeatedly used chemical weapons throughout the course of the war. More than a thousand civilians have been killed or injured due to the repeated use of sarin and chlorine.

that are so inaccurate that their use may be a de facto war crime. They were so inaccurate that the regime's helicopters often tossed them far behind enemy lines, lest their own soldiers get caught in the bombardment. Thus, the bombing of civilian infrastructure became routine.

Tens of thousands of civilians remain arbitrarily detained in government custody, and most of them have been tortured. There is no recourse for their families, and hardly anyone even talks about them.

Half of Syria's population has been displaced, millions abroad and millions at home. Their flight was met with rising walls and populist politicians demanding they go home. Refugees are not welcome. Conventions governing how they ought to be treated and enshrining the principles of asylum in the face of tyranny have been flouted and tossed in service of nativism and xenophobia.

Syria's indelible legacy is the fact that nothing is sacrosanct. The norms of war have to be enforced for them to exist. Customary international law is only that for as long as it is a custom that is observed, rather than challenged, by the community of nations.

After nine years of international silence and inaction, it is the savagery of bombing hospitals and schools that has become customary.

consequences for it, and continued to bomb hospitals under the pretext of a law it passed in 2012 declaring all medical facilities in opposition areas as de facto military targets.

The regime repeatedly used starvation sieges as a weapon of war to force the surrender of rebel-held towns and districts, in tight blockades that forced civilians to eat grass to survive and led to the deaths of children from malnutrition. Rather than pay any consequence, these tactics were repeatedly used and helped the regime to reclaim territory it had lost and win the war.

More than a half a million people have died. Thousands of them were killed by barrel bombs, containers filled with TNT and shrapnel

Impact on the world?



At this point in the presidential campaign, it is clear that foreign policy will continue to feature in the Democratic primaries and that it will subtly influence the selection of Mr Trump's eventual opponent.

because there is no evidence yet of imminent threat ... Look what happened, Mr Trump's America First policies made America alone".

And Mr Sanders declared: "You cannot go around saying, 'You're a bad guy, we're going to assassinate you'...if that happens, you're opening the door to international anarchy ... every government in the world will then be subjected to attacks and assassination."

The candidates expressed scepticism about continuing US military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, and how America could lay down the role of world policeman. Mr Biden suggested it was by having "allies who will join us in dealing with failed states and terrorism".

In sharp contradiction to recent US policy in Syria, many of the candidates emphasised the need for America to keep its word rather than renege on its commitments to the Kurds. Making a jibe at what he called Mr Trump's "17th-century approach" to national security strategy, Mr Buttigieg said it was no more than a "big wall and a moat full of alligators" at a time that America and the world is "facing fundamentally different challenges from asymmetric warfare to cyber security threats".

At this point in the presidential campaign, it is clear that foreign policy will continue to feature in the Democratic primaries and that it will subtly influence the selection of Mr Trump's eventual opponent. And while voter turnout may determine the results of the general election, were any Democrat to win, it would mean a substantial shift in US foreign policy.

of alliances and a rethink when it comes to the overseas deployment of US military personnel, as well as a nuanced approach to their withdrawal.

Three of the leading candidates - Pete Buttigieg, former mayor of South Bend, Indiana; former vice-president Joe Biden and senator Bernie Sanders - argued against the fatal US strike in December on Qassem Suleimani of Iran's elite Quds Force.

Mr Buttigieg, who emerged from the Iowa caucuses as joint winner along with Mr Sanders, said he believed Suleimani's actions had led to the killing of hundreds of Americans but he would have wanted to see more evidence of an imminent threat before ordering such an attack. "If we learned nothing else about the Iraq war, taking out a bad guy is not a good idea if you don't know what you're doing," said the 38-year-old Afghan war veteran.

Mr Biden agreed that as president he "wouldn't have ordered the strike



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



No child should ever be forced to bear arms. On this International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers, we recommit to building a future where children are not used as weapons of war. #ChildrenNotSoldiers

@JustinTrudeau

02



The real political danger seems to be the media and people with huge social media influence frantically screaming the world is on fire and only their loyal followers can stop it. The left seems far more influenced by panic propaganda and willing to act violently in real life.

@chadfelix

03



If this is true that's India's potential rate of growth is below 7%, there are major structural impediments to achieving higher growth, and loose fiscal and monetary policy will not suffice. Need more structural reforms else India is doomed to underachieve.

@rupasubramanya

04



Retweet this good Rnews! The number of confirmed cases reported daily in provinces other than Hubei dropped consecutively for 8 days from 890 on Feb 3 to 377 on Feb 11, a drop of 57%, indicating that our prevention & control measures are working. The turning point will come soon!

@zlj517

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

Bahrain must guard against climate driven pandemics



KOTA SRIRAJ

Virulent viruses of modern times are hard to suppress, difficult to diagnose and take a long time to get an antidote for. These difficulties mean that these viruses have a very robust incubation period and thanks to this have free initial run which claims huge number of lives, this condition is made even worse with the human beings travelling far and wide and becoming unwitting carriers of the viruses. The ongoing corona virus for instance is an apt example where a geographic location-based virus has transcended borders and became a global pandemic and created enormous psychosis in its path.

The corona virus has so far led to death of 1000 people with an unfortunate record of 108 peoples succumbing to the disease in a single day on 10th February alone. Additionally, the virus, according to the National Health Commission is also known to have infected 42,638 people since its outbreak. The correlation between climate change and resultant temperature spikes are increasingly providing an ideal environment for the pathogens to multiply and leap across host environments and wreak havoc. The fact of the matter is that climate change itself has got very little to do with the birth of the virus but has a lot to do with how the virus or the epidemic expands and spreads in a very short period of time.

The traditionally high temperature zones on the planet, which includes Bahrain have the advantage of providing inhospitable high intensity temperature environment for various disease-causing viruses. But off late these epidemics are surprisingly able to survive even the high temperature zones which means that the natural temperature barrier available with Bahrain may not be a good enough defense system anymore. The main problem is the creation of an enabling environment through sustained high temperatures which make it possible for hitherto unknown strains of viruses to jump from the animal species to human race. This gives very little time to the scientific research and medical community to come up with an effective antidote before the casualties start reaching double digits.

China unfortunately is not new to these kinds of viruses. Be it the SARS virus in 2002 that started in China and spread throughout the world within months or the present strain of corona virus, the indications and characteristics are the same. Given the reoccurrence it is puzzling how China keeps becoming the epicenter of these devastating diseases, clearly some very important lessons are being missed here. As far back as 1992, the National Academy of Sciences in its report predicted that climate change will impact humans in many ways and viruses will be one of them. This was echoed many

years later in the Journal of the American Medical Association which sounded the alarm that the rampant climate change will herald the spread of virulent viruses and irrepressible diseases. This is happening now.

Given these conditions it is critical for Bahrain to have an action agenda pertaining to climate change triggered epidemics. As a part of this a multi-agency effort must be undertaken to prepare a comprehensive protocol that is able to fix the parameters on the basis of which virus vulnerability is assessed and its precipitators are identified. One of the critical aspects here is that the viral load from human's especially those visiting from outside must be clearly be defined. Apart from this Bahrain must also check the status of the ambient temperatures and define at what level the possibilities are the highest for the spread of those viruses that thrive on certain temperatures.

There is also an urgent need to closely inspect the various strains of viruses that are active in the animal species especially those which are consumed such as chicken, other fowl and livestock. These viruses stand the highest chance of moving on to human body through diet. As a part of its climate change epidemic prevention initiative Bahrain can also sensitize its citizens and make awareness a tool for prevention of virus spread. This awareness campaign can assume a multi-pronged approach wherein the people are educated on the demerits of rising temperatures and are also inculcated with the necessary knowledge to choose the best possible diet that does not carry the virus.

The epidemics such as corona virus are as real and life threatening as climate change and nations and people must have a mitigation strategy for both. Bahrain must insulate itself against these climate change driven pandemics so that these diseases are halted in their tracks.

WORLD
world

Come here Fares, come here Emaar

Dubai's crown prince calls over his camels



Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum posted a video on Instagram of the hilarious moment he called over his camels as he sat in his Mercedes. The obedient animals, named Emaar and Fares, wandered over to the car and put their heads through the window

Daily Mail

Dubai's crown prince is known for being an animal lover and this viral video of his camels kissing him on certainly proves it.

Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum posted a video on Instagram of

the hilarious moment he called over his camels as he sat in his Mercedes.

The obedient animals, named Emaar and Fares, wander over to the car and put their heads through the window.

The Sheikh says, 'Come here Fares, come here Emaar,' and Fares duly walks over and sticks his head through the window.

Al Maktoum then says, 'Fares, get Emaar. Go get Emaar,' and the camel ambles off to retrieve his pal.

They both walk over to the Sheikh who says 'Emaar come here, come here, come here'.

Both camels are rewarded with a treat before the Crown Prince announces that he has no more left.

The animals appear to kiss before leaning through the window to plant a smacker on the Sheikh's lips as well.

According to local media, the Crown Prince of Dubai is an animal lover who regularly posts images of him posing alongside horses, dogs, giraffes, gazelles and others for his army of online followers.

US actor charged in relation to attack hoax



Actor Jussie Smollett leaves Cook County jail after posting bond in February 2019 in Chicago, Illinois

Washington

A US television actor who was accused of fabricating a hate crime was indicted on six counts related to the incident on Tuesday, after all charges against him were dropped last year.

Former "Empire" star Jussie Smollett was indicted by a grand jury in Cook County, which handles crimes in Chicago, on six counts of disorderly conduct related to the alleged false reporting.

The 37-year-old, who had been one of the Fox musical drama's main cast members, was accused of masterminding a hoax attack in Chicago to gain publicity and secure a bigger paycheck.

He reported to police in January 2019 that he was attacked in the middle of the night by two masked men while walking near his home in the large midwestern city.

But Chicago police eventually said he staged the whole thing.

Smollett, who is gay and African American, maintained his innocence in the face of a damning public account from authorities of their case against him.

They accused him of sending himself a threatening letter -- complete with homophobic and racial slurs -- and hiring two acquaintances to stage the attack while invoking Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan.

The curious case got even weirder when Cook County prosecutors eventually dropped the initial 16 felony counts against him last March.

The city did, however, send a letter to Smollett's attorneys, asking the actor to pay the \$130,000 cost of overtime work related to the police investigation.

The episode revived America's long-simmering debate about how just the country's criminal justice system really is, whether the rich get off easy -- and whether prosecutors should have so much discretion.

Four survive 32 days adrift in Pacific by eating coconuts

Wellington

Four people survived a month adrift in the Pacific by eating coconuts and drinking rainwater in an ordeal that claimed the lives of eight of their companions, including a baby, reports said yesterday.

The group, from Papua New Guinea's Bougainville province, are believed to have spent 32 days at sea.

The *Solomon Star News* reported the group set off from Bougainville on December 22, intending to celebrate Christmas in the Carteret Islands, about 100 kilometres (62 miles) away.

But survivor Dominic Stally said their small boat capsized and a number of the group drowned.

The rest managed to right the vessel but there were further fatalities as they floated in the remote waters at the mercy of powerful ocean currents.

"We could do nothing with their dead bodies, we just have to let go of them at sea," he told the newspaper.

"A couple have died and left



Four people - including Dominic Stally (left), a man in his 20s (right), a woman and a 12-year-old girl - survived 32 days adrift in the Pacific after their boat capsized on December 22 (Courtesy of Daily Mail)

behind their baby and I am the one who held onto the baby and later the baby died as well."

Stally said a number of fishing

vessels passed nearby without noticing them until they were finally picked up on January 23 off New Caledonia after drifting

some 2,000 kilometres.

The *Star News* said the survivors comprised two men, a woman and a girl aged about 12.

“We could do nothing with their dead bodies, we just have to let go of them at sea. A couple have died and left behind their baby and I am the one who held onto the baby and later the baby died as well”

SURVIVOR DOMINIC STALLY

They were dropped off in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands, last Saturday and were discharged into the care of Papua New Guinea's High Commis-

sioner John Balavu after receiving treatment for dehydration.

The High Commissioner and medics at the Honiara hospital were not immediately available for comment.

Epic tales of survival are not uncommon in the Pacific, where tiny islands are separated by vast expanses of ocean.

In January 2014, Salvadoran fisherman Jose Alvarenga washed up in the Marshalls, more than 13 months after he set off from Mexico's west coast with a companion, who died during the voyage.

He survived by eating raw fish and bird flesh while keeping hydrated by drinking rainwater, turtle blood and his own urine.

His remarkable feat was initially greeted with scepticism, but he passed a polygraph test and an examination of ocean currents and boating records backed his claim.

An Indonesian teenager survived seven weeks at sea in 2018 after his tiny fishing trap lost its moorings and ended up some 2,500 kilometres away off Guam.

Pakistan jails Hafiz Saeed for terrorism financing

Hafiz Saeed is accused by India and the United States of masterminding the 2008 attacks in Mumbai

● Saeed was charged in Pakistan in December with collecting funds for his banned organisations

● Saeed is the founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), or the Army of the Pure, a group blamed by India and the United States for the four-day Mumbai siege

● His most recent arrest came in July last year

● The court's judgement did not specify which banned terrorist group Saeed belonged to

AFP | Lahore, Pakistan

The alleged mastermind of a deadly attack on India's financial capital over a decade ago has been jailed in Pakistan for nearly six years on separate terror charges, his lawyer said yesterday.

Hafiz Saeed was found guilty of "being part of a banned terror-



Hafiz Saeed speaks with supporters after attending Friday Prayers in Lahore, Pakistan

ist outfit" and for "having illegal property", his lawyer Imran Gill said.

He is wanted in India for allegedly planning the shocking 2008 attack in Mumbai, when 10 militants armed with assault rifles, hand grenades and other weapons killed 166 people and injured hundreds more.

It took the authorities three days to regain full control of the city.

Lawyer Gill gave no details about Saeed's conviction apart from saying he would be kept in prison in the eastern city of Lahore.

The firebrand cleric -- declared a global terrorist by the United States and United Nations, and with a \$10 million bounty on his head -- is the leader of the Jamaat-ud-Dawa Islamist charity.

Its militant wing Lash-

kar-e-Taiba (LeT) is believed by Washington and Delhi to be responsible for the Mumbai attacks.

India has long said there is evidence that "official agencies" in Pakistan were involved in plotting the attack -- a charge Islamabad denies.

Move at will

Saeed has denied involvement, but has spent years in and out of varying forms of detention in Pakistan, sometimes under house arrest, on various charges.

For the most part he has been free to move at will around the country, enraging India which has repeatedly called for his prosecution.

His most recent arrest came

in July last year. At the time, US President Donald Trump tweeted that he had been detained "after a ten-year search", prompting derision from cynical Pakistanis.

The US Foreign Affairs Committee also noted then that Saeed had been arrested and released eight times since 2001.

Saeed's jailing comes as Pakistan faces potential blacklisting by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) -- an anti-money-laundering monitor based in Paris -- for failing to combat terror financing.

"There was nothing to the case really, this was just due to pressure from the FATF," his lawyer Gill said.

The court's judgement did not specify which banned terrorist group Saeed belonged to or clarify what it meant by "illegal property", which can refer to money or other property.

There was also no immediate comment from the JuD group, and coverage of the sentence was muted on Pakistani news channels.

Saeed's sentence came days after a leading member of the Pakistani Taliban, former spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan, escaped custody more than two years after surrendering to authorities.

He has released an audio statement claiming to be in Turkey.



A convoy carrying Hafiz Saeed leaves court after the verdict in Lahore

Pope dismisses proposal to ordain married men as priests in Amazon

Reuters | Vatican City

Pope Francis, in one of the most significant decisions of his papacy, yesterday dismissed a proposal that older married men be ordained in the Amazon region to ease an acute scarcity of priests.

The recommendation, put forward by Latin American bishops last year, had alarmed conservatives in the deeply polarised 1.3 billion-member Roman Catholic Church, who feared that it could lead to a change in the centuries-old



commitment to celibacy among priests.

Francis delivered his response in an Apostolic Exhortation three months after the proposal was made at a contentious assembly of Roman Catholic bishops, or synod, at the Vatican.

Apostolic Exhortations are teaching documents used to encourage the Catholic faithful but do not define Church doctrine.

Pope Francis speaks at a conference hosted by the Vatican on economic solidarity, at the Vatican

Sudan govt agrees Bashir should appear before ICC over Darfur

Reuters | Khartoum/Juba

Sudan's government and rebel groups in Darfur agreed yesterday that all those wanted by the International Criminal Court should appear before the tribunal, a list that includes ousted president Omar al-Bashir.

Bashir, who has been jailed in Khartoum since he was toppled after mass protests last year, is wanted by the ICC for alleged war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

Information Minister Faisal Saleh did not specifically name him when announcing the move, but said the decision applied to all five Sudanese suspects wanted by the ICC over Darfur.

The government and the rebel groups reached an agreement during a meeting in South Sudan's capital Juba that included "the appearance of those who face arrest warrants before the International Criminal Court", said Mohamed al-Hassan al-Taishi, a member of Sudan's sovereign council.

Taishi also said that the two sides agreed to create a Darfur special court to investigate and hear cases including those investigated by the ICC.

That court would try Darfur suspects not indicted by the ICC, said Nimri Mohamed Abd, chief negotiator of the Darfur people in Juba. He said Darfur groups and Sudan's government had agreed to "fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court", and that the timing of the handover would be decided



Sudan's former president Omar Hassan al-Bashir sits inside a cage at the courthouse where he is facing corruption charges, in Khartoum, Sudan

in final negotiations.

Bashir's lawyer said the ex-president refused to have any dealings with the ICC because it was a "political court".

Bashir has said the allegations made by the ICC, the world's first permanent court for prosecuting war crimes, are part of a Western conspiracy.

A spokesman for the ICC declined to comment. The Hague-based court issued its first arrest warrant for Bashir in 2009 - its first for a sitting head of state - and a year later issued a second one.

Sudan's civilian government, which is running the country under a three-year transition with the military, has been seeking to make peace with rebels in Darfur and other neglected regions which had been fighting Bashir's government for years.

Cheesed off?



Photographer captures two mice fighting on a Tube platform to become the Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year. Raging rodents on the London Underground won the annual contest, as Sam Rowley's 'Station Squabble' captured a split-second spat over scraps of food. It came out on top after 48,000 photographs of animals were this year submitted to the competition, with only 25 making the final shortlist of commended images. The panel of judges said: 'Sam discovered the best way (Courtesy of Daily Mail)



Bashir faces five counts of crimes against humanity for murder, forcible transfer, extermination, torture and rape; two counts of war crimes for attacks against civilians; and three counts of genocide for killings and creating conditions meant to bring about the destruction of the targeted group, allegedly committed between 2003 and 2008 in Darfur.

Trump praises Barr for taking over Stone case

● **The Justice Department yesterday reversed course and sought a lighter sentence for Stone**

● **The highly unusual move came hours after Trump complained about the recommended sentence**

Reuters | Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump yesterday praised Attorney General William Barr for “taking charge” of the case against long-time Trump adviser and friend Roger Stone, as Democrats threatened to investigate the Justice Department’s actions.

The Justice Department



U.S. President Donald Trump reacts to a question from a reporter following a signing ceremony for the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act inside the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, U.S.

yesterday reversed course and sought a lighter sentence for Stone after prosecutors a day earlier recommended that the veteran Republican operative face sentencing within federal guidelines of seven to nine years.

The highly unusual move, which came hours after Trump complained about the recommended sentence on Twitter, prompted all four U.S. prosecutors on the case to quit and Democrats to accuse Barr of political interference.

Trump later told reporters that he did not discuss Stone’s case with the department but called the sentencing recommendation “ridiculous.” A senior Justice Department official called the timing of Trump’s initial tweet and the department’s actions a coincidence.

Stone is scheduled to be sentenced on Feb. 20 after being found guilty in November on

seven counts of lying to Congress, obstruction and witness tampering stemming from the government investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

In a new court filing, the department on Tuesday said the initial recommendation on Monday was “excessive and unwarranted” but did not make a formal sentencing recommendation.

“Congratulations to Attorney General Bill Barr for taking charge of a case that was totally out of control and perhaps should not have even been brought,” Trump tweeted early Wednesday.

House Judiciary Committee Jerrold Nadler has said he would probe the reversal, while Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer has asked the Justice Department’s internal watchdog to investigate.

Venezuela opposition leader Guaido returns home, fighting erupts

AFP | Caracas

Opposition leader Juan Guaido returned to Venezuela on Tuesday after an international support-building tour and called on the people in the crisis-wracked nation to keep pushing back against President Nicolas Maduro.

Guaido -- who had defied a travel ban to visit Colombia, the United States, Canada and several European nations -- was greeted by a throng of cheering supporters at the international airport outside the capital Caracas.

“We’re in Caracas now. I bring back with me the commitment of the free world, ready to help us regain democracy and freedom,” Guaido wrote on Twitter, before tweeting a picture of himself at passport control that was captioned “HOME.”

Shortly before his arrival, fighting broke out between his followers -- including several lawmakers -- and Maduro’s sup-



Venezuelan opposition leader and self-proclaimed acting president Juan Guaido returned to Caracas after a trip aboard to drum up support from foreign governments

porters.

“Guaido, fascist!” shouted employees of the state-run airline Conviasa, which was subjected to US sanctions last week, who had entered the area where the 36-year-old’s backers were waiting for him. Several diplomats were present.

Videos circulating on social

media appear to show Guaido sprayed with soda by an airline worker. The opposition leader seemed to laugh it off.

Security escorts flanked the opposition leader -- wearing a white shirt and a wooden cross around his neck -- as he got into a white vehicle to head to Caracas. After his trip abroad



A supporter of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro (C) confronts a reporter (2nd L) as Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido arrived home in Caracas

-- including a meeting with US President Donald Trump, who threatened to “smash” Maduro’s regime -- Guaido promised new sanctions “against the dictatorship” would be coming soon, and called for renewed protests.

“We came to work and leave the rest, to do what is necessary to accomplish the goal” of

pushing Maduro from office, Guaido later told a rally attended by about 500 people.

His office said late Tuesday that a relative traveling with Guaido had vanished after being held by airport officials.

‘A new moment’

In a veiled reference to Guai-

do’s return, Maduro called on his supporters to focus on “defending Venezuela.”

“Let’s not get distracted by stupidities, by dummies, by traitors to the homeland,” he said at a ceremony broadcast on state television.

Guaido rose to prominence in January 2019 when he declared himself the country’s acting president in a direct challenge to Maduro.

He derived such authority from his position as the speaker of the National Assembly, after the legislature declared Maduro’s 2018 re-election invalid following a poll widely denounced as rigged.

Lawmakers called Maduro a “usurper” while more than 50 countries recognized Guaido as interim president.

However, Maduro retains the support of Venezuela’s powerful military and has resisted Guaido’s challenge, even as the United States ramps up the pressure.

Dubai court rules against superyacht freeze order in divorce battle

Reuters | Dubai

A Dubai appeal court has dismissed a freezing order on a \$436 million superyacht belonging to a Russian billionaire at the center of one of the world’s costliest divorce battles, according to a copy of the final ruling reviewed by Reuters.

But it is still not clear whether superyacht M.V. Luna, impounded in 2018, will be able to depart Dubai after a British court’s freezing order was dismissed on Feb. 5.

Oil and gas tycoon Farkhad Akhmedov was ordered to pay about 40 per cent of his fortune to his former wife Tatiana Akhmedova by London’s High Court in 2016, in one of the largest divorce settlements in legal history.

But he failed to pay the 453 million pound (\$588 million) divorce bill and the London court granted a worldwide freezing order, under which Akhmedov’s yacht was impounded in the Gulf Arab emirate.

A spokesman for Tatiana Akhmedova, who is trying to



Superyacht Luna owned by Russian billionaire Farkhad Akhmedov is docked at Port Rashid in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Inset, Farkhad Akhmedov

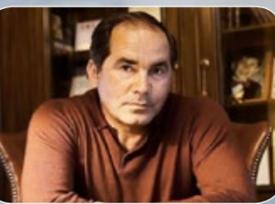
enforce the freezing order, said an injunction from the Marshall Islands prevents the yacht from setting sail.

The vessel was still moored on Wednesday, according to Refinitiv ship tracking data.

Luna, an expedition yacht built for Russian billionaire Ro-

man Abramovich before Akhmedov bought it in 2014, has at least nine decks, space for 50 crew, two helipads, a vast swimming pool and a mini-submarine.

The Dubai court of appeal’s final decision, English and Arabic copies of which were provided to Reuters by Akhmedov’s law-



yers, came after two years of legal battles in the emirate over the freezing order.

Lawyers acting for Akhmedova said on Wednesday they would not comment on possible next steps until they assess the reasons for the court ruling, but said the yacht still could not sail.

“An injunction imposed by the Marshall Islands authority, the flag state of the yacht, prevents it from doing so. That injunction has never been challenged and demonstrates the undoubted rights of [her] position,” said the lawyers’ statement, provided by the spokesman.

Akhmedova began divorce proceedings in Britain in 2012. Akhmedov said he and his wife had already divorced in Russia in 2000, but various Russian and British courts have found no evidence to support this assertion.

Akhmedova is using London-listed litigation funder Burford capital. Burford did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Forbes estimates Akhmedov’s net worth at \$1.4 billion. The US Treasury Department has put him on a list of sanctioned Russian state-owned companies and so-called “oligarchs”, identified as close to President Vladimir Putin.

Tatiana Akhmedova



celebs



Margot Robbie

Margot Robbie set to work with Christian Bale

Los Angeles

Actress Margot Robbie will soon be seen alongside actor Christian Bale in David O. Russells next film.

Russell will direct the film from his own script. Plot details are being kept under wraps. Matthew Budman produces the project, reports variety.com.

Russell had been considering options in the last few months while waiting for the right cast to come together for the project. With Bale and Robbie's schedules opening, the opportunity to direct his first film since 2015's "Joy" is set in the right direction.

In 2019, Robbie was seen in Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon A Time In Hollywood", where she played Sharon Tate, as well as "Bombshell". The role earned her some of the best reviews of her career, as well as her second Oscar nomination. She was most recently seen in "Birds Of Prey" reprising her role of Harley Quinn.



Christian Bale



Rose McGowan

Rose McGowan slams Natalie Portman's 2020 Oscars ensemble

Los Angeles

Natalie Portman's 2020 Oscars ensemble, a cape embroidered with the names of snubbed female directors, is apparently not the favourite of actor Rose McGowan.

McGowan in a Facebook post called the cape "the kind of protest that gets rave reviews from the mainstream media for its bravery," cited The Hollywood Reporter. "Brave? No, not by a long shot. More like an actress acting the part of someone who cares. As so many of them do," she added.

The 46-year-old further challenged Portman to do more for female directors than wear a cape with their names on it.

"I find Portman's type of activism deeply offensive to those of us who actually do the work. I'm not writing this out of bitterness, I am writing out of disgust. I just want her and other actresses to walk the walk," she said.



Natalie Portman

Fashion designer Wendell Rodricks passes away

Panaji

Popular fashion designer Wendell Rodricks has passed away at the age of 59.

"Deeply saddened to hear about the sudden demise of my very good friend and designer, Wendell Rodricks. His excellency in his work & skills are irreplaceable & shall always be cherished. We will truly miss him. My heartfelt condolences to his family & dear ones," Goa's Health Minister Vishwajit Rane tweeted.



Wendell Rodricks

SRK celebrates 10th anniversary of 'My Name is Khan'

Mumbai

Shah Rukh Khan on Wednesday celebrated the 10-year anniversary of 'My Name is Khan' by sharing throwback pictures along with Karan Johar and Kajol.

The 54-year-old actor took the moment to Twitter and shared the pictures along with a caption that reads, "Thank u @karanjohar & @kajol for making arguably the finest film of our careers. The only film I needed to see everyday pics to know if I have the expressions right! Here's some of them..."



Shah Rukh Khan



Jennifer Aniston

Wishes pour in for Jennifer Aniston as she turns 51

Los Angeles

As Jennifer Aniston turned 51 on Tuesday, her 'Friends' made sure she got the best birthday wishes on social media.

Courtney Cox shared a picture of herself and the birthday girl in which the two looked almost identical. Scores of fans left their comments on the post pointing out that two looked like twins in the picture.

Cox was seen sporting a blonde wig trying to match Aniston's hair colour and style. Besides the hair colour, the two were seen wearing similar black coloured tops, very natural make-up and similar eyeglasses.



Nathalie Emmanuel

Kevin Hart's Quibi series adds Nathalie Emmanuel

Los Angeles

"Game of Thrones" alum Nathalie Emmanuel has boarded the cast of Kevin Hart's upcoming comedy action series "Die Hart".

Set at the short-form content provider Quibi, the show is a clever wordplay on the action blockbuster series "Die Hard". To be directed by Eric Appel, the series will also feature Hollywood veteran John Travolta in a pivotal role. Tripper Clancy and Derek Kolstad have penned the script.

The story follows a fictionalised version of Hart on a quest to land the action movie role of a lifetime, reported Variety.

"He gets his wish when a famous director offers him his dream to be a leading man action star but there's a catch: Hart must first train at the world's greatest action star school, run by a lunatic (Travolta)," read the official plotline.

Rodricks was known for creating designs that brought together the traditional with the relaxed Goan vibe.

He was a Padma Shri awardee and a published writer with books such as "Moda Goa - History and Style", his memoir "The Green Room" and "Poskem: Goans in the Shadows".

He was also passionate about setting up Moda Goa Museum, which is dedicated to the history of Goan costumes. Rodricks was overseeing the ongoing work.



Rihanna

Rihanna dines with A\$AP Rocky, sparks off dating rumours

Los Angeles

Singer Rihanna was recently spotted stepping out for dinner with rapper A\$AP Rocky, sparking off dating rumours.

For her night out with her rumoured boyfriend, Rihanna wore a gold coloured dress. She teamed up her outfit with a pair of strappy heels and carried a snakeskin handbag, reports dailymail.co.uk.

Last month, rumours started that Rihanna had rebounded from her long-term relationship with billionaire Hassan Jameel with A\$AP Rocky.

But sources had said that Rihanna was single. "She just got out of a long intense relationship with Hassan. She wants to be single and isn't going to jump into something. She's hanging out with ASAP Rocky, but she is not dating him."

They added: "They have a long history and she's just having fun."

Sayani Gupta turns producer for her film 'Where the Wind Blows'

Mumbai

Actress Sayani Gupta is set to co-produce "Where the Wind Blows", a film which will feature her as the only protagonist.

It's been directed by Karma Takapa, whose films "Ralang Road" and "Mor Mann Ke Bharam" have travelled to various festivals.



Sayani Gupta

According to a source, "the interesting fact about the film is that the entire film is shot in the Himalayas. The cast and crew climbed till the base camp of Mount Everest. The average temperature there was around minus 27 degree Celsius. Sayani along with

the crew of only seven people climbed and completed the shoot in 26 days".

Sharing her experience of working on the film, Sayani said: "This film is very close to my heart. Shooting for it was not lesser than a roller coaster ride. Though the shoot was difficult, the experience was one of the most memorable ones.

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SPORTS

Bahrain lose to Jordan

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's men's national basketball team bowed to hosts Jordan 65-80 in the King Abdullah II Basketball Cup 2020, currently being held in Amman.

Shooting guard Amin Abu Hawwas and backcourt mate Malek Kanaan both scored 12 points to spearhead the Jordanians.

Bahrain court general Mohammed Hussain was their leading scorer with 28 markers.

Jordan led 48-34 at the half but Bahrain tried valiantly to fight back, getting to within 53-59 at the end of the third period. But that was as close as they could get and the Jordanians stayed in control the rest of the way.

The result earned the home side their second successive win after defeating Syria 75-67 in their first game. The Bahrainis, on the other hand, suffered back-to-back losses having previously bowed to Lebanon 64-73.

Bahrain's next game will be against Syria today in what will be their penultimate game of the



Bahrain's Sarhan protects his dribble against tough defence of Jordan's Kanaan

competition. Their final fixture is against Iraq tomorrow.

The Bahrainis are competing in the tournament as part of their overseas training camp in Amman where they are preparing for their upcoming qualifiers for the 2021 Fiba Asia Cup.

Five teams in all are participating in the Jordan event, namely Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Bahrain and hosts Jordan.

The Bahrainis are in Group D of Fiba Asia Cup qualification

along with India, Lebanon and Iraq. They open their campaign against their Indian counterparts at home in less than 10 days on February 21, and then they travel directly to Beirut to play their Lebanese counterparts just three days later on February 24.

The Bahrain team are coached by former NBA champion Sam Vincent. They began their camp with a 13-man roster that included Hussain, Ahmed Aldura-

zi, Ali Shukrallah, Mohammed Buallay, Subah Hussain, Mohammed Salman, Mohammed Qurban, Maytham Jameel, Hesham Sarhan, Ahmed Abdulaziz, Mohammed Ameer, Muzamel Ameer and CJ Giles.

Giles, however, has been forced to return to Bahrain earlier than expected after suffering a minor injury that prevents him from participating the rest of the camp. He is expected to be available to play, however, in their opening qualifier against India.

Following this month's two qualifiers, there will then be a long break before their next game on November 26 away against Iraq, after which they play away once again against India on November 29. Their final two games will then be held in February of next year, both at home against Lebanon and then Iraq.

The top two teams from each of the six qualification groups will book their tickets to the 2021 Fiba Asia Cup, while the third-placed teams go to another stage of qualification, where another four final spots will be up for grabs.

Royal Indians edge Shahzad Zafar

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Royal Indians defeated Shahzad Zafar by 56 runs in CBA Division C 25 overs League.

Royals won the toss and elected to bat first. Opener Suresh (75) scored a brilliant half century and was well supported by his team mate Anoop (53) who scored another half century to help Royals put a total of 199 at the end of 25 overs. Nabil took five wickets for Shahzad Zafar. Chasing the target, Shahzad Zafar managed to score only 143 runs and lost the match to Royal Indians by 56 runs. Rijo and Arun took three wickets each.

Royal Indians 199/7 (Suresh 75, Anoop 53, Nabil 5/30) beat Shahzad Zafar 143/10 (Shahad 55, Rijo 3/25) by 56 runs

Awali Gents 156/4 in 20.2 overs (Akram 43) beat SNCS TransFast 155/10 (Sreekumar 36, Sanito 4/38) by 6 wickets

Pak CC 238/4 (Shoaib 102, Zubair 44, Noman 42) beat Honda Bahrain 201/9 (Zain 51, Imran 2/17) by 37 runs

Tornado Riders 203/9 (Ashiq 45, Ashish 41, Praveen 3/15) beat bnl Titans 99/10 (Jishad 23, Vijesh 4/17) by 104 runs

Waqas Pak CC 192/10 (Ehtisham 81, Shahbaz 33, Alex 4/24) beat NDC Bahrain 147/10



Chandrabhav - Young Star

(Ajeesh 30, Waqas 3/27) by 45 runs

Pak Eagles 170/10 (Nisar 29, Mazid 42) beat Matrix CC154/10 (Danushke 51, Shabaz 3/18) by 16 runs

Phoenix CC 151/10 (Rishit 30, Suraj 27, Jishnu 3/23) beat Z-XI 93/10 (Qaiser 17, Suraj 2/2) by 58 runs

Patrick York 196/9 in 24.1 overs (Khalid 54, Asif 4/43) beat Sprite CC 193/9 (Shoaib 51, Tayeb 5/20) by 1 wicket

LuLu 226/9 (Vishak 94, Renju 32, Rafeeq 5/44) beat Modest 219/10 (Nabeel 64, Rafeeq 52, Nishad 3/27) by 7 runs

Young Stars 235/6 (Chandrbhan 96, Atif 45, Manjeet 43) beat Union CC 210/10 (Kailash 82, Ramzan 4/42) by 25 runs



Members of the Bahrain Tennis Club and the staff of the Royal Bahrain Hospital during Bahrain Sports Day celebration. BTC President Khamis Al Muqla, Ambassador Jassim Bu Allay, BTC Board of Directors and a large number among the club members and the staff of Royal Bahrain Hospital were present. Khamis Al-Muqla expressed his happiness with the participation of Royal Bahrain Hospital in the events, praising the joint cooperation between the club and the hospital in many fields, including educational and educational courses for children, and also providing medical coverage for the International championships held by the club



Team members of Global Star and Awali Camels gather with their trophies after the CBA T-20 Division C finals. Global Star defeated Awali Camels by 89 runs to win the title. CBA President Saleem Elias and Jamal Al Saleh from Excellence Training Solutions presented the Awards for the winning and Runner up team members. Imran from Global star received the Man of the Match finals award for his all-round performances



Students of Indian School Bahrain take part in sports events organised as part of Bahrain Sports Day celebrations at the Isa Town campus. Friendly matches in taekwondo, football, basketball and cricket were held for students

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Loman honoured in Philippines' House of Representatives

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Stephen Loman continues to receive various honours for his work inside the BRAVE CF Arena, as well as flying the flag of the Philippines around the globe. BRAVE CF's longest-reigning world champion, "The Sniper" has been awarded a special commendation by Congressman Eric Go Yap inside the House of Representatives.

Loman was invited to Quezon City and was praised by Go Yap himself for helping to raise the flag of the Philippines on the international stage and for being the only world champion from the country in the global organization. "The Sniper" was also complimented for his contributions to the District of Benguet, as well as the field of combat sports and mixed martial arts.

Stephen has transformed into one of BRAVE CF's biggest stars, having been with the promotion in almost four years. He made his debut in 2016, and is the only Bantamweight world champion in the history of the organization, and has been recognized as one of the Philippines' finest-ever athletes.

"The Sniper" has represented the Philippines in three different regions with BRAVE CF, defending his Bantamweight crown in Europe, the Middle East, and the Subcontinent.

He won his title back in



Stephen Loman at Philippines' House of Representatives



Stephen Loman has represented the Philippines in three different regions with BRAVE CF, defending his Bantamweight crown in Europe, the Middle East, and the Subcontinent

November of 2017, when he knocked out Gurdarshan Mangat in the first round, and then defended it in 2018, in Northern Ireland, and Bahrain, as well as his own country and India, with the two most recent victories coming in last year.

BIC set to host a packed weekend



A car in action at BIC

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Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) is set to host an action-packed weekend with a pair of events that are sure to get every motorsport enthusiast's adrenaline pumping.

Set to take place today is the Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and Drift Nights, while tomorrow there will be an Open Track Day.

Both activities are amongst the most popular on offer to the public at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East", as each allows participants a chance to bring their very own cars or motorbikes and push them to their limits within a safe and controlled environment.

In the Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and Drift Nights, those who take part can either power their vehicles down BIC's quarter-mile drag strip or test their oversteering and counter-steering skills while drifting around the circuit's Vehicle Dynamics Area. They can even do both!

BIC's drag strip is one of the best in the world. The circuit is a member of the prestigious National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Worldwide Network, and the strip is where some of the best record-breaking,

globally renowned drag racers go head to head.

The Vehicle Dynamics Area is a specially configured venue at BIC's car park and this is the venue for the drifting. It is surrounded by safety barriers and is the largest open tarmac area in Bahrain.

Registration today begins at 5pm and will be open until 9pm, while the action will be held from 6pm to 11pm.

Both the drag and the drifting can be enjoyed for a single fee of BD10,500. Participation in just the drag racing or just the drifting costs BD7,500. Registration can be done on site from 5pm, and the action will be held from 6pm to 11pm. Those who would like to experience the drag or drift as a passenger can get into a participant's car for an additional BD4. Spectators can purchase tickets for BD2 apiece.

Also as part of the evening's drag racing programme, BIC is offering the immensely exhilarating Dragster Experience. This is one of the circuit's most unique and ultimate-adrenaline activities, as it gives participants a taste of pure speed as they are taken from zero to 100kph in just one second while seated in a Top Dragster. The Dragster Experience costs BD42.

BAS karters aiming high in season finale

Bahrain Karting Enduro Championship's 24-hour finale takes place at BIKC this weekend

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Airport Services (BAS) Motor Sport Team will be looking to end the 2019/2020 Bahrain Karting Enduro Championship (BKEC) on a high note this weekend at Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC) in Sakhir.

The endurance karting season's fourth and final round is a 24-hour race, and the team of fearless and mostly BAS staffers are all geared up to face the mammoth challenge head on.

BAS CEO Salman Al Mahmeed commented, "This whole achievement by our BAS staff is fantastic and I am overwhelmed on how well they have done. I hope they can continue with their outstanding performance in the last race."

BAS Motor Sport Team Manager Tony Smith added, "From start to finish the BAS Motor Sport Team members continue to develop and excel in the sport and have achieved so much over this season."

"I am extremely proud of them all and look for their dedication to drive them to the podium on Saturday and finish on a real high and make Bahrain Airport Services shine across the Kingdom."

BAS have entered four squads

in the meeting, which gets underway Friday at 12.30pm and concludes at the same time the next day.

The BAS A team will once again be spearheaded by talented young racer Lewis Smith, who is also the BAS Motor Sport Team Ambassador. He will be sharing duties in their kart with Gavin Halls, Ahmed Abduljalil and Shaikh Salman bin Rashid Al Khalifa.

The B and C teams comprise of Mohamed Faqih, Mohamed Jaafar, Ahmed Kooheji, Mahmood Saati, Mohamed Fadel Abdulla, Ammar Ali Al Ghawas, Ziyad Khalifa, Philip Morais, Mohamed Rabea, Hussain Habib, Don Vinura and Mohammed Alansari.

BAS is also fielding an all-ladies squad for the fourth straight round. The BAS F squad is composed of Jeiel Macaraan, Alya Adel, Fatima Mohamed Zainudeen, Sujusha Bakaal, Marwa Mandeel and Christina Anieliesia.

Heading into the season finale, the BAS B and BAS C teams are still with a shot at claiming the season's title in the BKEC's Corporate class. They are ranked second and third on their category's standings with 98 and 85 points, respectively.

BAS F is currently ranked be-



A group of the BAS Motor Sport Team drivers during a practice session this week

hind the top three in fourth with 75 points.

The BAS A team, meanwhile, is contending for a podium place to end the season in the

BKEC's Pro class. It is currently fourth on the points table with 81 points, just nine behind third-placers Bapco Sadeem who are on 90 points.

BAS Motor Sport Teams have been training hard over the past few weeks for the upcoming event, which is set to pose a unique challenge and test each participant's poise and stamina, apart from their karting skills.

The BAS karters will be taking to the track against their competitors in identical 390cc Honda-powered Sodikart RT8s. All the action will be held along BIKC's 1.414-kilometre Commission Internationale de Karting (CIK) track.



BAS karters get ready to go on track during a practice session this week

BIC takes part in Bahrain Sports Day 2020 activities



BIC officials and staff during Bahrain Sports Day 2020 activities

TDI | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East", organised on Tuesday a number of activities marking Bahrain Sports Day 2020.

Led by BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa, the circuit's management, staff and guests took part in a series of events including cy-

cling, walking and yoga, held at the BIC premises in Sakhir.

Meanwhile, held in cooperation with the Bahrain Motor Federation, there was plenty of excitement with Autocross taking place at BIC's car park, as well as in karting at Bahrain International Karting Circuit.

All those who participated expressed their delight in being a part of Bahrain Sports Day

2020. They were among thousands from all across the Kingdom of Bahrain representing ministries, state departments, private companies, public and private schools, clubs, sports associations, youth centres, and many others to take part in all kinds of sports and physical activities to mark the annual occasion.

This year's Bahrain Sports Day marked its fourth edition. It

was held under the theme "Get Ready...Go!"

Bahrain Sports Day's main objectives are to promote the "sports for all" concept and to raise awareness on the importance of sports for individuals and society.

BIC regularly organises similar worthwhile activities for its staff in an effort to develop camaraderie and promote health and wellness.