



Active COVID-19 cases continue rise as another life taken

TDT | Manama

The coronavirus (COVID-19) took the life of a 57-year-old expatriate man in Bahrain yesterday, the Ministry of Health announced.

His passing brought the total number of virus-related deaths in the Kingdom to 166.

The Health Ministry also reported early this morning that out of 10,420 COVID-19 tests conducted yesterday, 460 new cases were detected. These included 199 expatriate workers, 260 contacts of active cases, and one travel-related case.

There were also 332 additional recoveries from the virus yesterday, bringing the Kingdom's total number of discharged individuals to 41,836.

The total number of current active cases continued its recent rise and is now at 3,262, with 38 in critical condition and 79 receiving treatment.

The total tests conducted in Bahrain increased to 933,762.

Bahrain's World, Asian Cup qualifiers postponed again

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's remaining qualifying matches for the FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 have been postponed yet again.

This follows a joint-decision by FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in many countries.

Originally rescheduled to be played in October and November, the games are now set for 2021, with the new dates and other details to be announced in due course.

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# Diligence call in re-opening

Health officials warn that failure to comply with precautionary measures may halt phased lifting of restrictions



Speaking at yesterday's conference, from left, were Dr Al Salman, Dr Al Manea and Dr Al Qahtani

● Bahrain continues regional, international research collaboration, information exchange to bolster COVID-19 treatment

● All steps followed at the highest global levels in Kingdom's initiation of phase three clinical trials for inactivated vaccine

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The National Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus (COVID-19) warned yesterday that a failure to comply with precautionary measures will accelerate the spread of the virus and therefore require a roll-back in Bahrain's ongoing phased re-opening.

This was said by Ministry of Health undersecretary Dr Waleed Khalifa Al Manea during the national taskforce's Press conference held at the Crown Prince Centre for Training and Medical Research at the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Hospital, where they highlighted measures taken to mitigate COVID-19.

Dr Al Manea was joined by

fellow-national taskforce members BDF Infectious Disease Consultant and Microbiologist Lt. Col. Dr Manaf Al Qahtani and Salmaniya Medical Complex Infectious and Internal Diseases consultant Dr Jameela Al Salman.

Dr Al Manea said that the national taskforce is closely monitoring all COVID-19 cases with the re-opening of certain sectors.

He added that they are paying particular attention to the percentage of positive cases, total active cases, hospital occupancy rate, and the number of cases requiring medical care as they continually assess the situation in the Kingdom amidst the gradual lifting of a number of restrictions.

Dr Al Manea said that regional and international research collaboration and information exchange helps to bolster the progress in COVID-19 treatment.

In this regard, he noted that the Health Ministry has announced the initiation of a phase three clinical trial for a COVID-19 inactivated vaccine, in collaboration with UAE-based artificial intelligence company G42 Healthcare.

With regards to patient outcome, Dr Al Manea explained that the recovery rate is cur-

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The WHO-listed inactivated vaccine does not cause infection but triggers an immune response producing antibodies to fight the virus; the effectiveness of these antibodies will measure the vaccine's success

Procedures set for volunteers in vaccine trials

Volunteers who will be accepted into Bahrain's phase three clinical trials for the coronavirus (COVID-19) inactivated vaccine will be checked on a daily basis for the first two weeks after receiving the World Health Organisation-listed jab.

This was revealed yesterday by BDF Infectious Disease Consultant and Microbiologist and National Taskforce for Combatting COVID-19 member Lt. Col. Dr Manaf Al Qahtani.

Accepted volunteers will have a number of ways of communicating with medical officials during the trial's 12-month period, including a special hotline to call or a ded-

icated e-mail to send any concerns. They will also be asked to maintain a diary during the process.

Dr Al Qahtani noted that the facility hosting the vaccine trials is fully ready and was set up in just a short period of time, adding that all medical requirements and conditions have been met.

He also enthused that there is a great spirit amongst members of the national taskforce and medical professionals regarding the vaccine trials, which have been studied extensively from all aspects by the authorities, to ensure that all medical and moral standards are met.

Dr Al Qahtani added that the clinical trials follow the successful completion of the first two phases in China, which have reported good success rates. The first trial proved the effectiveness of the vaccine while the second tested the immunogenicity of the vaccine on a limited number of volunteers.

Dr Al Qahtani revealed that the trial will enlist up to 6,000 volunteers who have not previously contracted COVID-19, are over the age of 18, and are willing to undergo a health assessment, in accordance with the set health requirements.

He also reassured all interested volunteers that everything has been done and all steps have been followed—at the highest levels—to make sure that the trials are as safe as can be to volunteers.

On her part, Dr Al Salman noted that Bahrain has safeguarded freedom of movement for citizens and resident while restricting gatherings to minimise the

spread of the virus—a process that has set precedents for the re-opening of selected sectors at each stage of the phased plan, whilst avoiding roll-backs.

Dr Al Salman added that the Health Ministry is continuously expanding COVID-19 testing capacity to identify, isolate, and break chains of infection; and random community-based testing sites have helped identify asymptomatic cases.

She went on to recognise the importance of continuing to adhere to preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and allow for the next phases of reopening, as emphasised by the World Health Organisation's recent conference and call to "do it all" when complying with preventative measures.

Dr Al Salman underlined that these preventative measures have now been adopted by the majority of the community since the discovery of the first case in Bahrain five months ago.

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

## Kingdom's human trafficking fight draws US recognition

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Al Absi

Bahrain's battle against human trafficking has drawn recognition in the US, it has been reported by a popular American news channel.

Labour Market Regulatory Au-

thority CEO and National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons chairman Ausamah Al Absi told Fox News: "Human trafficking is exploiting vulnerabilities, and we needed to understand the scope of the problem we are facing. So, we opened our hearts and opened

our doors, and we decided that everyone who will contact us will be helped."

Al Absi has been at the forefront of Bahrain's charge against human trafficking.

The Kingdom is among a select group of countries that has

stepped up its efforts against the crime, which has become one of the world's most rampant human rights violations.

Bahrain has implemented an open-door policy for its citizens and residents to report suspected human trafficking cases.

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## HRH the Premier directs to conduct inspections

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His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa directed the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism to intensify inspections and review licences for workshops, garages and laboratories located near residential areas, to ensure safety and avoid risks or accidents.

HRH the Premier stressed



HRH the Premier

the importance of following security and safety measures in all industrial establishments in order to maintain the safety of workers in these facilities, citizens and residents in the areas close to them.

This came within the framework of HRH the Prime Minister's concern to solve issues related to citizens' needs and problems in order to maintain society's security and stability.

## Deputy Premier receives British Ambassador



The Deputy Premier with the British Ambassador

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Deputy Prime Minister His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa received yesterday British Am-

bassador Roderick Drummond.

The Deputy Premier reviewed historical relations between the two Kingdoms, affirming Bahrain's keenness to strengthen bilateral relations

in all fields. The British Ambassador expressed his appreciation to HH Shaikh Mohammed, and wished Bahrain further progress and prosperity.

# Getting citizens involved

HRH the Crown Prince keen to involve Bahrainis in state's decisions: Information Minister

● HRH the Crown Prince hailed for directives to leave the choice of in-person or remote learning for students to their parents, in the midst of the coronavirus crisis

● Bahrain submits proposal on teaching media education in schools, to prepare a generation that is educated, responsible, and able to use these means

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Information Affairs Minister Ali bin Mohammed Al Romaihi affirmed yesterday that His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, believes in the importance of involving citizens in the decision-making process under various circumstances.

This is reflected in HRH the Crown Prince's directives to leave the choice of in-person or remote learning for students to their parents, in the midst of the exceptional circumstances the world is facing as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, he said.

The minister made the statement while participating in the seventh Arab Media Leaders



A screenshot of the virtual forum taking place

Press and media affiliates have exerted tremendous efforts at the frontlines of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside health and security workers.

INFORMATION AFFAIRS MINISTER ALI BIN MOHAMMED AL ROMAIHI

Forum, organised by the Arab League secretariat-general in cooperation with the Arab Media Forum in Kuwait.

The Arab League secretary-general, along with the Egyptian, Jordanian and Omani information ministers, in addition to a number of Arab officials, took part in the virtual meeting.

Al Romaihi stressed that the mutual trust between state institutions and society contributes to achieving common goals and aspirations, and confirms the readiness of the state to deal with all urgent changes, especially in light of the current circumstances, which have proven the importance of adopting a moderate and transparent me-

dia discourse that reflects reality without intimidation or underestimation.

Al Romaihi pointed out that social media has become accessible to all, which reinforces the need to spread the culture of the proper use and management of these means, in a manner that would achieve desired goals.

The Information Minister said that Bahrain had submitted a proposal to the Arab League's Arab Information Ministers' meeting on teaching media education in schools to prepare a generation that is educated, responsible, and able to use these means.

On the role of the media in confronting COVID-19, the minister stressed that the exceptional circumstances the world is going through have proven the vital role played by the media, in its various platforms, to face all challenges.

The Information Minister extended sincere thanks and appreciation to all the affiliates of the press and media for the tremendous efforts they are exerting during this period, noting that media personnel are at the frontlines of the fight against the pandemic, alongside health and security workers.

## HM the King's Diplomatic Advisor receives British Ambassador



Shaikh Khalid with Ambassador Drummond

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His Majesty the King's Diplomatic Affairs Advisor Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa received British Ambassador Roderick Drummond.

The advisor expressed his pride in the historical friend-

ship between the two Kingdoms, praising the advanced level it has reached in all fields. He also noted Bahrain's keenness, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, to open wider horizons for various aspects of cooperation in a way that en-

hances common interests, and wished the British Ambassador further success in his diplomatic duties.

Ambassador Drummond expressed his appreciation to Shaikh Khalid and wished Bahrain further progress and prosperity in all fields.

## HH Shaikh Nasser reviews King Hamad youth award goals

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His Majesty the King's Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs representative, National Security Advisor and Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Affairs (SCYS) chairman His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa affirmed that the launch of the King Hamad Youth Empowerment Award to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which is on its third edition, aims to continue Bahrain's efforts to support the international

community to celebrate youth around the world.

HH Shaikh Nasser said that continuing the King Hamad Award this year despite the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis reflects Bahrain's commitment to global youth, and reflects the Kingdom's support for the efforts of the UN in order to give youth the full opportunity to implement sustainable development goals.

HH Shaikh Nasser added that the projects that will be presented in this edition from various categories have been

linked between achieving these goals and ways to combat the COVID-19 and overcome its effects as a prerequisite for the award, which gives it flexibility and further broadens the scope of its interests.

HH Shaikh Nasser stressed that the award came to urge the international community, governmental and private bodies, the civil sector and youth sectors, to exert greater efforts and within the framework of competitiveness in order to achieve international goals.

## Al Ajmi honoured with prestigious award

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The Chartered Insurance Institute (CII) in London has awarded Husain Al Ajmi with the Allan Bridgewater Award for Excellence, which is the top honour amongst the CII awards.

Al Ajmi becomes the first winner ever of this prestigious award globally.

The CII has designated the award to celebrate inclusivity within the insurance profession, considering those demonstrating a lasting impact within the profession nationally as well as globally.

For three decades, Al Ajmi has had outstanding relentless contributions to the industry, expanding the profession whilst



Al Ajmi

enhancing its standards nationally and in the MENA region.

"Mr Al Ajmi has been a mentor for many working in the insurance profession in the Mid-

dle East and was instrumental in developing insurance education and training for the region," the CII stated.

Al Ajmi commented: "It is an honour to be the recipient of the prestigious Allan Bridgewater Award for Excellence. It was my mission to contribute towards raising of standards of the insurance industry within the Arab world.

"I am pleased to dedicate this award to the Central Bank of Bahrain for their continued support. I would also like to thank the CII and its awards panel for their trust and recognition of my contributions to the enhancement of the training and development of the insurance and risk-management professions."

Al Ajmi has unique experience in the insurance and risk-management industry. He has translated, authored, and co-authored over 40 course materials and textbooks in the area of insurance and risk management for the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF) and the CII, in addition to other US-based global organisations including AHIP, LOMA and The Institutes.

Al Ajmi is currently the Foundation for Insurance and Finance Education CEO, and before that was the BIBF Insurance Learning Centre assistant director and head. He is a visiting lecturer in several universities, including the University of Memphis in the US.

## Mosque prayers, religious gatherings remain suspended

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Prayers at mosques, collective worship, and religious assemblies will remain suspended, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs has said.

The suspension will be maintained until the rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) infections decreases to the desired levels set by the authorities, the council said.

The decision was taken following consultations between the council and the National Taskforce for Combatting COVID-19, the Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs

and Endowments, and the heads of the Sunni and Jaafari endowments, the council said in a statement.

It added that gatherings and direct contact are keeping the spread of COVID-19 high, "therefore, and based on its religious responsibility, on the Sharia enjoinders to protect lives and not to expose them to danger or to pandemics, and on the recommendations of the competent medical authorities, the council announces that prayers in mosques, collective worship and religious gatherings will remain suspended."

## BCCI appoints committee chairpersons



Officials during a meeting

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) has announced the appointments of the chairpersons for its various committees, who will serve for the remainder of its 29th session.

This follows the approval of the BCCI board of directors.

The appointments include Dr Waheeb Ahmad Al Khaja as Education Committee chairman, Dr Ibtisam Al Dalal as Health Committee chairman, Youssef Salah El Din as Commercial Markets Committee chairman, Khaled Ali Al Amin as Food Wealth Committee chairman, Osama Taqi Al Ba-

harna as Technology Committee chairman, Farid Badr as Industry and Energy Committee chairman, Khaled Ali Turk as Transport and Logistics Committee chairman, Sawsan Abu Al Hassan Muhammad as Finance, Insurance and Tax Committee chairwoman, Jihad Ibrahim Amin as Hospitality and Tourism Committee chairman, and Raed Ahmed Omar as Real Estate and Construction Committee chairman.

The BCCI board of directors also appointed Abdul Hakim Ibrahim Al Shammari, Dr Abdul Majeed Ali Al Awadi, Hamid Rashid Al Zayani and Ahmed Al Naima as advisors in the coordination group.

## BDF chief receives Indian, Jordanian military attachés

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa received the newly appointed military attachés of India and Jordan in separate meetings.

Indian Military Attaché Colonel Naushad Ali Khan and Jordanian Military Attaché Brigadier General Pilot Mohammad Ali Al Samadi both met with Shaikh Khalifa, in the presence of Defence Affairs Minister Lieutenant-General Abdullah bin Hassan Al Nuaimi and Chief-of-Staff Lt Gen Dheyab bin Saqer Al Nuaimi.

The BDF Commander-in-Chief praised the strong relations between Bahrain and both India and Jordan.

He wished both military attachés success in their new posts, while also discussing topics of common interest.



The BDF Commander-in-Chief receives the Indian Military Attaché



Shaikh Khalifa with the Jordanian Military Attaché

# Teenage police attacker gets jail term slashed

Punishment of a 17-year-old girl convicted of assault, damaging property halved by Supreme Court of Appeal

TDT | Manama

The Supreme Court of Appeal recently reduced the punishment of a 17-year-old girl convicted of assault from one year to six months in jail.

The girl was imprisoned last November after being convicted in a case in which she physically and verbally assaulted a policewoman, spat on the officer and damaged computers at the police station while resisting arrest.

The court reduced her punishment as per the provisions of Article 72 in the Kingdom's Penal Code, which mentions: "If an offence is committed under extenuating circumstances and the judge feels the need for clemency, the penalty shall be reduced."

"If the prescribed penalty



Appellant insulted, kicked, and spat on a policewoman while also vandalising the computers at the police station before being handcuffed and controlled by several officers

is a death sentence, it may be reduced to life or term imprisonment. Further, if the penalty is life imprisonment, it may be reduced to term imprisonment or a jail sentence for a period of less than six months.

"Where the penalty is a term imprisonment, the judge shall not inflict the maximum penalty but may reduce it to impris-

onment for no less than three months."

The details of the case show that the girl was first brought to Northern Hamad Town Police Station, along with her female cousin, as they were reportedly involved in a different case. There, their testimonies were taken and only the other girl was released, while the appellant was not because the system

showed that she was wanted in another case.

According to the policewoman's statements, the appellant broke down and started crying before her behaviour quickly changed and she became violent.

The policewoman said the girl insulted her, kicked her, spat on her and vandalised the computers in the office.

The girl was finally handcuffed after she was pepper-sprayed and controlled by several policewomen.

On November 27 last year, the girl was charged by the Public Prosecution with assault of an on-duty public employee and for damaging the property of the Interior Ministry. She was sentenced by a first degree court to one year in jail and fined BD42 in compensation of the damaged devices.

## Sitra Bridge lane to be closed for road works



An image released by the ministry of the closed lanes

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, in coordination with the General Directorate of Traffic at the Ministry of Interior, has announced that maintenance work on the Sitra Bridge requires

the closure of the right lane of traffic heading south.

The ministry said that the work will start at 11pm tonight and will continue until Sunday at 5am.

The Works Ministry called on citizens and residents to abide by traffic rules for the safety of all.

## Abandoned vehicles removed, warnings issued

TDT | Manama

The Northern Area Municipality announced yesterday that it had removed a total of 113 abandoned vehicles from different locations during the first half of 2020.

The Municipality explained in a press statement that the move comes in accordance with Law 10 of 2019 with respect to public cleanliness, adding that it had sent warning letters to the owners of 1,000 abandoned vehicles.

The removals came as a result of conducting 17 scheduled inspection campaigns, which included different areas within the Northern Governorate.

The municipality underlined that "the responsibility to protect the environment and traffic flow is a shared responsibility", adding: "Abandoning cars on the roads causes a lot of environ-



An abandoned car being towed away

mental damage, as well as confusion and disturbance to the traffic movement.

"Some of these parked cars also disturb the security situation and generally harm the civilised view of the area."

Stressing its keenness to combat this phenomenon, the municipality confirmed that it is intensifying its inspec-

**113** vehicles were removed from their locations in the Northern Area Municipality over six months

**The responsibility to protect the environment and traffic flow is a shared responsibility. Abandoning cars on the roads causes a lot of environmental damage, as well as confusion and disturbance to the traffic movement.**

NORTHERN AREA MUNICIPALITY STATEMENT

tion campaigns and will continue notifying the owners of abandoned vehicles so they can remove them and avoid confiscation, especially in residential and industrial areas.

## Southern Governorate keeps up accommodations checks

TDT | Manama

The Southern Governorate continued its inspection of shared labour accommodations, as part of efforts to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease.

This is in follow-up to the directives of Southern Governor His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa.

A team headed by the governorate's Engineering Services and Investment Department director Eng Khalid Abdullatif Haji conducted field visits in Isa Town, in cooperation with the Southern Governorate Police Directorate, the Southern Area Municipality and the Electricity and Water Authority, to check on the conditions of a number shared accommodations.

Haji stated that they had inspected 16 units and took legal



Team members check on the safety of electricity connections at one of the shared accommodations

measures against any violators, especially in crowded housing.

He stressed on the importance of following all guidelines required for such shared accommodations, for the safety of all.

The joint team praised the efforts of the Southern Governorate in achieving the highest levels of awareness and precautions in its COVID-19 fight, in cooperation and coordination with the relevant agencies.

# Regional peace initiatives hailed

Bahrain affirms support for all efforts aimed at achieving peace, security and sustainable development

TDT | Manama

Bahrain, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, supports all efforts aimed at achieving peace, development and joint international action, Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani affirmed yesterday.

The Foreign Minister was speaking as he held a virtual meeting with Manama-based International Peace Institute for the Middle East and North Africa (IPI-MENA) director Ne-jib Friji.

The two sides reviewed the activities of the IPI at the international and regional levels in the field of research, study, and multilateral cooperation to confront the challenges facing the achievement of peace, security and sustainable development.

The Foreign Minister praised the initiatives and projects of the IPI in dealing with the challenges of the coronavirus (COVID-19), and hailed the ef-



The Foreign Minister, right, during his virtual meeting with Friji

orts of the Kingdom, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, in combatting the pandemic.

For his part, the IPI-MENA director lauded the model set by Bahrain in dealing with COVID-19 and valued the Kingdom's pivotal role regionally and internationally in support of peace efforts.

The IPI-MENA office aims to promote policy research on global peace and security within the region. This office focuses on MENA issues that contribute to the international community's efforts to strengthen the collective capability regarding conflict

prevention, multilateral diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

It also addresses critical challenges within the region, such as armed conflict, state fragility, transnational organized crime, terrorism, and energy security; and seeks regional partnerships, in support of peace, security, and development.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Minister also met virtually yesterday with his Kosovo counterpart Meliza Haradinaj.

Dr Al Zayani highlighted the friendly relations of cooperation between Bahrain and Kosovo, affirming the keenness of the Kingdom to further develop these relations at all levels, for the benefit of both countries and peoples.



**The IPI is an independent, international not-for-profit think tank dedicated to managing risk and building resilience to promote peace, security, and sustainable development, with offices in New York, Vienna and Manama**

The Kosovo minister hailed the development of relations between the two countries in all fields, and wished Bahrain continued progress.

The two ministers further discussed a number of regional and international issues of mutual concern.

# Youth Minister participates in Arab conference



A screenshot of the Youth Minister, right, taking part in the conference

TDT | Manama

Youth and Sports Affairs Minister Ayman bin Tawfiq Al Moayed participated in the first Arab Youth Priorities Conference, which was organized by the Arab Youth Center (AYC) in the UAE under the auspices of the Arab League and with the participation of the UN.

The conference witnessed the announcement of the results of the Arab Youth Priorities Survey, which was achieved by the AYC and included 7,000 young men and women from 21 Arab countries, who chose stability, education and health at the top of their priorities.

The minister explained that His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa directed the

Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), headed by His Highness Shaikh Nass-er bin Hamad Al Khalifa, to study the needs of young people based on scientific foundations. Thus, the process of developing the sector began effectively, so the SCYS began to collect information through scientific surveys and found that youth's personal interpretation of the reality of the situation differs in some cases significantly from the reality in which we live.

He pointed out that the Kingdom always seeks to support Arab integration among youth by launching initiatives and hosting events and programmes that establish a generation capable of advancing their homeland in various fields.

# BCICAI commemorates Kargil Vijay Diwas

TDT | Manama

Colonel Vembu Shankar (retired) was the keynote speaker on the occasion of the 21st Kargil Vijay Diwas Anniversary virtual event, hosted recently by the Bahrain Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (BCICAI).

Colonel Shankar is a Shau-

rya Chakra awardee and a veteran of the Indian Army, having served for 21 years including several missions tasked to eliminate anti-national elements.

Colonel Shankar addressed the members on the topic of "Leading in Uncertain Times", and gave them advice on how to best achieve this.

# Bahrain Polytechnic inspects virtual entry test process

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Polytechnic Resources Band Information Affairs deputy CEO Shaikh Ali bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, accompanied by Academic Affairs deputy CEO Dr Reem Ahmed Albuainain, visited Bahrain Polytechnic's on-campus entry test site to monitor the progress of the examination process for the academic year 2020/2021, which is being conducted virtu-



Officials conducting their inspection visit

Shaikh Ali directed Bahrain Polytechnic's Registry Directo-

rate to provide all necessary facilities that would provide a suitable

environment for students to enable them to submit their exams comfortably, and to cooperate in responding to all students' inquiries and find solutions to any obstacles.

Dr Albuainain indicated that about 2,000 out of 4,000 applicants have conducted the entry tests in mathematics and English virtually, which are the required to enter Bahrain Polytechnic for the next academic year.

## Investment Dar Bank B.S.C. (c)

Condensed Consolidated Interim Financial Information For The Quarter and Six Months Ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)	Reviewed 30-Jun-20	Audited 31-Dec-19
<b>Assets</b>	<b>US \$</b>	<b>US \$</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	2,699,150	2,557,652
Prepayments and other assets	191,312	96,138
Short-term investments	9,000,000	10,000,000
Investment Securities	27,084,047	8,908,208
Investment in real estate held-for-use	45,747,333	45,871,083
Property and equipment	17,185,844	17,193,841
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>101,907,686</b>	<b>84,626,922</b>
<b>Liabilities and Equity</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accruals and other Payables	541,513	2,601,404
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>541,513</b>	<b>2,601,404</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Share capital	200,000,000	200,000,000
Statutory reserve	1,686,626	1,686,626
Property Fair value reserve	1,239,929	1,239,929
Investment Fair value reserve	(1,623,791)	(3,221,930)
Unrealised foreign currency translation losses on net investment in foreign operations	(738,937)	(589,832)
Foreign currency translation reserve	(594,456)	(337,525)
Accumulated losses	(101,099,346)	(119,247,898)
<b>Non-controlling interest</b>	<b>98,870,025</b>	<b>79,529,370</b>
	2,496,148	2,496,148
	101,366,173	82,025,518
<b>Total liabilities and equity</b>	<b>101,907,686</b>	<b>84,626,922</b>
<b>Off-statement of financial position items:</b>		
Restricted investment accounts		
- Others	477,307,508	477,307,508
- Financial Institutions	-	-

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED INTERIM STATEMENT OF INCOME for the quarter and six months period ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)	Reviewed Six months ended 30-Jun-20	Reviewed Six months ended 30-Jun-19	Reviewed Quarter ended 30-Jun-20	Reviewed Quarter ended 30-Jun-19
<b>Income</b>	<b>US \$</b>	<b>US \$</b>	<b>US \$</b>	<b>US \$</b>
Other income	19,324,017	1,479,280	246,595	1,331,620
<b>Total income</b>	<b>19,324,017</b>	<b>1,479,280</b>	<b>246,595</b>	<b>1,331,620</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Staff costs	(754,014)	(765,979)	(343,872)	(304,711)
Other operating expenses	(421,451)	(457,613)	(169,263)	(232,656)
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>(1,175,465)</b>	<b>(1,223,592)</b>	<b>(513,135)</b>	<b>(537,367)</b>
<b>NET PROFIT / (LOSS) FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>18,148,552</b>	<b>255,688</b>	<b>(266,540)</b>	<b>794,253</b>
<b>Profit / (Loss) per share (US cents)</b>	<b>9.07</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>(0.13)</b>	<b>0.40</b>
Basic and diluted profit / (loss)				

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED INTERIM STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the six months period ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)	Reviewed six months period ended 30-Jun-20	Reviewed six months period ended 30-Jun-19
<b>Operating activities</b>	<b>US \$</b>	<b>US \$</b>
Net profit for the period	18,148,552	255,688
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	10,952	11,077
Foreign exchange movement	(19,123)	2,289
Income on Murabaha settlement	-	(1,129,043)
Reversal of provision for Wakala fees receivable	-	(16,193)
Income on Wakala settlement	(16,830,889)	-
Reversal of liabilities no longer required to be payable	(2,125,772)	-
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Prepayments and other assets	(105,010)	22,303
Accruals and other liabilities	65,743	(189,850)
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	<b>(855,547)</b>	<b>(1,043,729)</b>
<b>Investing activities</b>		
Purchase of equipment	(2,955)	(1,716)
Proceeds on settlement of Murabaha	-	1,129,043
Wakala fees received	-	16,193
Movement in short-term deposits	1,000,000	-
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>	<b>997,045</b>	<b>1,143,520</b>
<b>Net Increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>141,498</b>	<b>99,791</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	2,557,652	3,388,914
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	<b>2,699,150</b>	<b>3,488,705</b>

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED INTERIM STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN OWNERS' EQUITY for the six months ended 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)	Share capital	Statutory reserve	Property fair value reserve	Investment fair value reserve	Unrealised foreign currency translation losses	Foreign currency translation reserve	Accumulated losses	Total	Non-controlling interest	Total
At 31 December 2018 (Audited)	200,000,000	1,686,626	1,487,699	910,413	(588,352)	(339,816)	(118,612,470)	84,544,100	2,496,148	87,040,248
Net profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	255,688	255,688	-	255,688
Unrealised foreign currency translation losses on net investment in foreign operations	-	-	-	-	(11,982)	-	(11,982)	(11,982)	-	(11,982)
Foreign currency translation loss on investment securities - net	-	-	-	-	-	(1,869)	(1,869)	(1,869)	-	(1,869)
Unrealised fair value losses on investment securities	-	-	-	(1,444,151)	-	-	(1,444,151)	(1,444,151)	-	(1,444,151)
At 30 June 2019 (Reviewed)	200,000,000	1,686,626	1,487,699	(533,738)	(600,334)	(341,685)	(118,356,782)	83,341,786	2,496,148	85,837,934
At 31 December 2019 (Audited)	200,000,000	1,686,626	1,239,929	(3,221,930)	(589,832)	(337,525)	(119,247,898)	79,529,370	2,496,148	82,025,518
Net profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	18,148,552	18,148,552	-	18,148,552
Unrealised foreign currency translation losses on net investment in foreign operations	-	-	-	-	(149,105)	-	(149,105)	(149,105)	-	(149,105)
Foreign currency translation losses on investment securities - net	-	-	-	-	-	(256,931)	(256,931)	(256,931)	-	(256,931)
Unrealised fair value gain on investment securities	-	-	-	1,598,139	-	-	1,598,139	1,598,139	-	1,598,139
At 30 June 2020 (Reviewed)	200,000,000	1,686,626	1,239,929	(1,623,791)	(738,937)	(594,456)	(101,099,346)	98,870,025	2,496,148	101,366,173

The above consolidated financial position and results are extracted from the condensed consolidated interim financial information for the quarter & six months ended 30 June 2020 which was reviewed by BDO. The auditors have expressed an unqualified conclusion on those condensed consolidated interim financial information. Investment Dar Bank is licensed by the Central Bank of Bahrain as a wholesale bank "Islamic" website: [www.inv-darbank.com](http://www.inv-darbank.com). This information was approved by the Board of Directors and signed on their behalf on 12th August 2020, by:

# Britain's economy shrinks by fifth

● Britain's recession is its first since 2009

● Britain's recession -- its first since 2009

● BoE expects UK economy to contract by 9.5 pc for 2020

AFP News

Britain's economy shrank by a fifth in the second quarter, higher than any European neighbour, as the coronavirus pandemic slammed businesses and plunged the country into a record recession. "It is clear that the UK is in the largest recession on record," the Office for National Statistics said after gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 20.4 per cent in April-June.

Britain's recession -- its first since 2009 amid the global fi-



While shoppers have since returned to shops, lockdowns sent Britain's economic output crashing by just over a fifth in the April through June period

ncial crisis -- was confirmed after two quarterly contractions in a row.

GDP shrank 2.2 per cent in the first three months of this year.

The statistics office said that the contraction for the first six months of 2020 "was slightly below the 22.7 pc seen in Spain but was more than double the 10.6 pc fall in United States GDP over this period".

But Britain's second-quarter contraction beat Spain's GDP of

minus 18.5 pct.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said Britain's dire second quarter was driven by a 20-pc drop in output in April, "the biggest monthly fall on record reflecting widespread... declines in output across the services, production, and construction industries".

## 'Hard times'

Finance minister Rishi Sunak said the data "confirm

that hard times are here". He added: "Hundreds of thousands of people have already lost their jobs, and sadly in the coming months many more will."

Chancellor of the Exchequer Sunak plans to end in October the government's furlough scheme that is paying up to 80 pc of wages for nearly ten million workers.

## Rebound begins

While officially in recession, the UK economy is beginning to rebound as the government eases strict restrictions.

GDP output growth was 8.7 pct in June as the economy slowly emerged from its lockdown implemented in late March, the ONS said.

That helped the pound to steady on Wednesday, while London's stock market was up 0.9 pc in mid-morning deals.

## Rising unemployment

To help the economy recover, the Bank of England (BoE) is

# 7.5pc

The BoE expects the unemployment rate to shoot to around 7.5 pc by the end of the year from 3.9 pc currently.

pumping out hundreds of billions of pounds in cash stimulus and has slashed its main interest rate to a record-low 0.1 pc.

ONS data released Monday showed that around 730,000 workers have been removed from the payrolls of British companies since March.

The BoE expects the unemployment rate to shoot to around 7.5 pc by the end of the year from 3.9 pc currently.

And it forecasts that the UK economy will have contracted by 9.5 pc for the whole of 2020.

The BoE estimates that UK gross domestic product will rebound in 2021 by nine pc.

## OPEC trims 2020 oil demand

Reuters | London

OPEC yesterday said world oil demand will fall more steeply in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and said next year's recovery faces large uncertainties pointing to growing headwinds for the group.

World oil demand will fall by 9.06 million barrels per day (bpd) this year, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said in a monthly report, more than the 8.95 m bpd decline expected a month ago.

"Crude and product price developments in the second half of 2020 will continue to be impacted by concerns over a second wave of infections and higher global stocks," OPEC said in the report.

OPEC stuck to its forecast that in 2021 oil demand would rebound by 7 m bpd but said the view was subject to large uncertainties that may result in "a negative impact on petroleum consumption".



## United Gulf Investment Corporation BSC

### Condensed interim consolidated statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020 (Unaudited) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

	30 June 2020 (Unaudited)	31 December 2019 (Audited)
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	34,050,319	35,293,094
Investment in an associate	994,690	929,983
Right-of-use asset	394,018	422,406
	<u>35,439,027</u>	<u>36,645,483</u>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	256,000	256,000
Inventories	23,142,462	18,653,121
Trade and other receivables	7,240,745	6,745,497
Mudaraba deposits	1,945,819	1,903,323
Cash and bank balances	6,206,533	4,429,240
	<u>38,791,559</u>	<u>31,987,181</u>
<b>Total assets</b>	<u>74,230,586</u>	<u>68,632,664</u>
<b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Capital and reserves</b>		
Share capital	20,000,000	20,000,000
Statutory reserve	2,853,603	2,853,603
Share premium	116,328	116,328
Other reserves	2,147,681	2,113,464
Equity attributable to shareholders of the parent company	25,117,612	25,083,395
Non-controlling interest	5,898,455	5,894,950
	<u>31,016,067</u>	<u>30,978,345</u>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Non-current portion of term loans	22,708,727	24,622,745
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	390,165	447,638
Employees' terminal benefits	666,372	655,624
	<u>23,765,264</u>	<u>25,726,007</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Current portion of term loans	12,674,181	7,127,183
Current portion of lease liabilities	321,738	236,675
Trade and other payables	6,453,336	4,564,454
	<u>19,449,255</u>	<u>11,928,312</u>
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>	<u>74,230,586</u>	<u>68,632,664</u>

### Condensed interim consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the six months ended 30 June 2020 (Unaudited) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

	Six months ended 30 June 2020 (Unaudited)	Six months ended 30 June 2019 (Unaudited)	Three months ended 30 June 2020 (Unaudited)	Three months ended 30 June 2019 (Unaudited)
Sales	13,929,874	16,587,439	7,630,154	8,726,168
Cost of sales	(12,876,777)	(17,603,212)	(6,763,715)	(9,274,730)
<b>Gross profit/(loss)</b>	<u>1,053,097</u>	<u>(1,015,773)</u>	<u>866,439</u>	<u>(548,562)</u>
Other income	25,232	129,946	2,011	89,112
	<u>1,078,329</u>	<u>(885,827)</u>	<u>868,450</u>	<u>(459,450)</u>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Indirect expenses	(718,147)	(792,975)	(336,722)	(318,496)
Finance costs	(165,485)	(166,855)	(84,676)	(99,245)
	<u>(883,632)</u>	<u>(959,830)</u>	<u>(421,398)</u>	<u>(417,741)</u>
<b>Net profit/(loss) for the period before tax and share of profit from investment in an associate</b>	<u>194,697</u>	<u>(1,845,657)</u>	<u>447,052</u>	<u>(877,191)</u>
Share of profit from investment in associate	64,707	54,085	12,929	25,384
<b>Net profit/(loss) for the period before tax</b>	<u>259,404</u>	<u>(1,791,572)</u>	<u>459,981</u>	<u>(851,807)</u>
Provision for Zakat	(221,682)	(123,943)	(115,632)	(42,925)
<b>Net profit/(loss) and other comprehensive income/(loss) for the period</b>	<u>37,722</u>	<u>(1,915,515)</u>	<u>344,349</u>	<u>(894,732)</u>
<b>Net profit/(loss) attributable to:</b>				
Shareholders of the Company	34,217	(1,471,765)	265,010	(685,214)
Non-controlling interest	3,505	(443,750)	79,339	(209,518)
	<u>37,722</u>	<u>(1,915,515)</u>	<u>344,349</u>	<u>(894,732)</u>
<b>Basic and diluted earnings per share</b>	<u>0.17 fils</u>	<u>(7.36 fils)</u>	<u>1.33 fils</u>	<u>(3.43 fils)</u>
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to:</b>				
Shareholders of the Company	34,217	(1,471,765)	265,010	(685,214)
Non-controlling interest	3,505	(443,750)	79,339	(209,518)
	<u>37,722</u>	<u>(1,915,515)</u>	<u>344,349</u>	<u>(894,732)</u>

### Condensed interim consolidated statement of cash flows for the six months ended 30 June 2020 (Unaudited) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

	Six months ended 30 June 2020 (Unaudited)	Six months ended 30 June 2019 (Unaudited)
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Net profit/(loss) for the period	37,722	(1,915,515)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	1,244,610	1,077,126
Amortisation of right-of-use asset	28,388	28,387
Share of profit from investment in an associate	(64,707)	(54,085)
Bank interest income	(25,156)	(40,834)
Finance costs	165,485	166,855
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Inventories	(4,489,341)	(4,665,600)
Trade and other receivables	(495,248)	(1,382,180)
Trade and other payables	1,888,882	1,034,581
Employees' terminal benefits, net	10,748	33,576
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	<u>(1,698,617)</u>	<u>(5,717,689)</u>
<b>Investing activities</b>		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(1,835)	(14,443)
Net movement in Mudaraba deposits	(42,496)	1,884,626
Bank interest income received	25,156	40,834
<b>Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities</b>	<u>(19,175)</u>	<u>1,911,017</u>
<b>Financing activities</b>		
Finance costs paid	(137,895)	(136,819)
Proceeds from term loans	4,504,593	3,802,800
Repayment of term loans	(871,613)	(3,269,098)
<b>Net cash provided by financing activities</b>	<u>3,495,085</u>	<u>396,883</u>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<u>1,777,293</u>	<u>(3,409,789)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the period	4,429,240	10,418,816
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, end of the period</b>	<u>6,206,533</u>	<u>7,009,027</u>

### Condensed interim consolidated statement of changes in shareholders' equity for the six months ended 30 June 2020 (Unaudited) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

	Equity attributable to shareholders of the Parent Company					Non-controlling interest	Total
	Share capital	Statutory reserve	Share premium	Revaluation reserve	Other reserves Retained earnings/(accumulated) losses		
At 1 January 2019 (Audited)	20,000,000	2,853,603	116,328	4,329,043	2,122,311	7,238,898	36,660,183
Total comprehensive loss for the period	-	-	-	-	(1,471,765)	(443,750)	(1,915,515)
At 30 June 2019 (Unaudited)	20,000,000	2,853,603	116,328	4,329,043	650,546	6,795,148	34,744,668
At 31 December 2019 (Audited)	20,000,000	2,853,603	116,328	4,329,043	(2,215,579)	5,894,950	30,978,345
Total comprehensive profit for the period	-	-	-	-	34,217	3,505	37,722
At 30 June 2020 (Unaudited)	20,000,000	2,853,603	116,328	4,329,043	(2,181,362)	5,898,455	31,016,067

The consolidated financial statements were approved, authorised for issue by the Board of Directors and signed on their behalf by:

Rashed Abdulla Al Suwaiket Hajri  
Chairman

Abdulla Fahad Al-Subaie  
Vice - Chairman

# Dubai leads most major Gulf markets higher

● **Air Arabia** rebounds a day after it posted Q2 loss

● **Aldar Properties** retreats ahead of Q2 earnings

Reuters

Most major Gulf bourses ended higher yesterday, with the Dubai's index buoyed by gains in Emirates NBD Bank after its digital banking services were restored.

Saudi Arabia's benchmark index added 0.3 per cent, led by a 1pc gain in Al Rajhi Bank and a 3.1pc leap in Banque Saudi Fransi.

Dubai's main share index gained 0.9pc, boosted by a 2.6pc jump in Emirates NBD Bank.



Traders watching stock movements (Courtesy of Gulf Business)

Abdulla Qassem, Emirates NBD's group chief operating officer, said the issues had been resolved and digital banking services have been restored across all channels.

## Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.3pc to 7,646 pts
ABU DHABI	▼ 0.2pc to 4,360 pts
DUBAI	▲ 0.9pc to 2,115 pts
QATAR	▲ 0.3pc to 9,553 pts
EGYPT	flat 10,922 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ 0.5pc to 1,315 pts
OMAN	▼ 0.2pc to 3,567 pts
KUWAIT	▲ 1.3pc to 5,683 pts

Air Arabia added 1.8pc. On Tuesday, the United Arab Emirates' only listed airline retreated 1.8pc after it swung to a second-quarter loss of 239 million dirhams (\$65.07 million) following a collapse in passenger traffic because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Abu Dhabi, the index slipped 0.2pc, weighed down

by a 0.7pc fall in the country's largest lender First Abu Dhabi Bank and a 1.7pc retreat in Aldar Properties ahead of its earnings announcement.

The Qatari index was up 0.3pc, extending gains for a third straight session, with Qatar National Bank rising 0.8pc.

Outside the Gulf, Egypt's blue-chip index traded flat, as the stocks on the index moved sideways. Commercial International Bank was up 0.5pc.

Egypt's Central Bank is likely to keep its main interest rates unchanged this week, even though inflation dropped to an eight-month low in July, a Reuters poll showed.

Of 11 analysts polled, nine forecast that the central bank would leave rates unchanged at its regular monetary policy committee meeting on Thursday. Two analysts forecast a 50 basis pts cut.

# Volatile gold rebounds above \$1,900

Reuters

Gold rose above the \$1,900 barrier yesterday as dire UK economic data renewed fears over a coronavirus-led slowdown and prompted a rebound in the metal after its steepest sell-off in over seven years in the previous session.

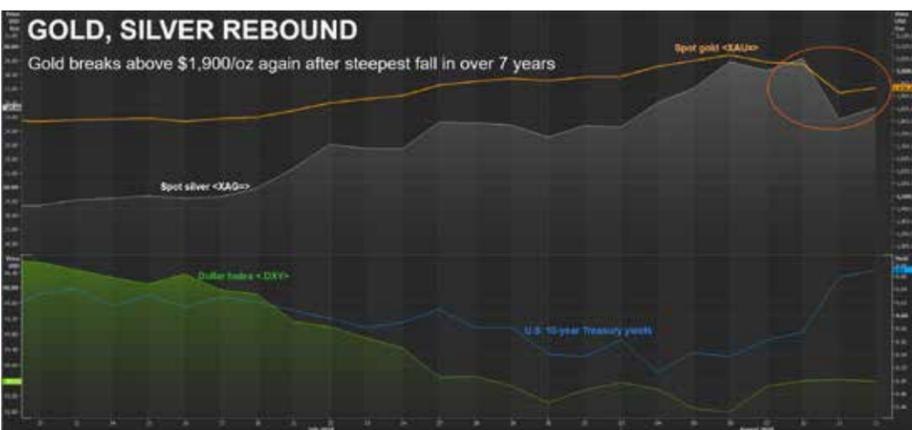
Spot gold, which fell as much as 6.2 per cent on Tuesday, rose about 1pc to \$1,929.63 per ounce by 1218 GMT, paring sharp losses from earlier in the Asian session.

US gold futures slipped 0.3pc to \$1,939.90 per ounce, while silver gained 0.9pc to \$25.02 per ounce, after slumping 15pc on Tuesday.

"It's a little bit like a heavy rain after a good spell of hot weather," said independent analyst Ross Norman.

"Gold is bouncing back very strongly. Sentiment has not been damaged and by extension, you could argue that it's created an opportunity for those who may have missed the boat on the rally to get in again."

Underscoring the economic damage caused by the pandemic,



**6.2pc**  
Spot gold, which fell as much as 6.2 per cent on Tuesday, rose about 1pc to \$1,929.63 per ounce by 1218 GMT

Britain's economy shrank by a record 20.4pc in the second quarter, the most severe contraction reported by any major economy so far.

Gains in spot gold, which is seen as a safe haven during times of economic turmoil, were also helped by a weaker dollar, whose recent uptick was halted by deadlock in Washington over a stimulus package.

"There could be some consolidation in the near term, but the fundamental drivers pushing the metal higher remain intact," said FXTM analyst Lukman Otunuga.

"Given US (10-year) real

yields have pulled back above minus 1pc for the first time this month, this is dulling some of gold's allure and encouraging (some) investors to offload bullion."

Bullion has gained 27.5pc this year, with central banks flooding the economy with money to ease the damage from the global coronavirus crisis, fuelling fears of inflation and currency debasement.

Platinum fell 0.5pc to \$925.81 per ounce, while palladium rose 0.8pc to \$2,106.47 per ounce.

# For the art collector with everything, the \$1.5 million COVID mask



Parts of a diamond encrusted gold coronavirus disease (COVID-19) face mask

Reuters | Motza, Israel

Art rather than ostentation is the rationale behind the world's most expensive coronavirus mask, say the Israeli jewellers who are crafting the \$1.5 million object for an unnamed US-based client.

Made out of 18 carat gold and studded with 3,600 black and white diamonds, the mask will be fitted with an N99 filter to offer a high level of protection, said Isaac Levy, owner of the Yvel jewellery brand.

"I don't think (the customer is) going to use it going to the

supermarket but he is going to use it here and there, I'm sure," said Levy. He described the client as a Chinese art collector living in the United States.

"He is a young-old customer of ours, very charming, very outgoing, very wealthy and he likes to stand out," Levy said. The jeweller plans to deliver the mask personally when it is completed, in October.

"For us, it's a way to protect the positions of the people in the factory in order for them to be able to support their families."

# Next Lebanon government to face \$30 billion reform test

● **Lebanon had begun International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout talks in May**

● **Number of Lebanese living in poverty nears half its population**

● **Foreign donors have made it clear that no money would be given without reforms**

Reuters | London/Beirut



A view shows damaged buildings near the site of the blast at the Beirut's port area, Lebanon

will not be forthcoming without reform.

Such change could be stalled by the resignation of Lebanon's government, while a financial rescue plan drawn up in April is likely to have to be reviewed and possibly even ditched by a new administration, two financial

sources close to the plan said.

Forecasts for financial metrics such as debt to GDP and the parallel exchange rate contained in the rescue plan, which had already struggled for support before last week's deadly explosion, now look unrealistic, one of the sources added.

That is likely to push back creditor talks to restructure Lebanon's international sovereign debt.

Lebanon had begun International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout talks in May after defaulting on its foreign currency debt. But these were put on hold due to lack of progress on reforms and differences over the size of financial losses.

Lebanon's already diminishing foreign reserves are set to be eroded faster to pay for the rebuilding of Beirut's port and other infrastructure.

"The best gauge of the government's sovereignty will be the economic plan they draft," Carlos Abadi, an adviser to the Association of Banks in Lebanon, said.

In the wake of the blast, Lebanon's external financing needs for the next four years had swelled to more than \$30 billion

from \$24 billion, Garbis Iradian at the Institute of International Finance (IIF) estimated.

"In order to overcome the U.S. veto at the IMF, the next government will have to produce a plan which is premised on the positioning of the economy for future growth, without the possibility of billions being diverted for nefarious purposes," Abadi said.

The IMF reaffirmed its support for Lebanon on Sunday, before the government's resignation, but also the need for reforms, a point stressed by French President Emmanuel Macron last week.

With the number of Lebanese living in poverty nearing half its population, these reforms range from setting up social safety nets to protecting the most vulnerable to ensuring Lebanon's wealthy elite share the burden of financial losses from bank recapital-

isations. Macron also called for an audit of the banking system, a comment that has triggered wariness among some bankers fearful the government may use the data to spare "family and friends".

French MP Loïc Kervran, chair of the France-Lebanon committee, says such an audit would aim to uncover "unorthodox" practices which could have led to losses.

Foreign donors have made it clear that outside humanitarian aid, no money would be given to Lebanon without reforms.

Lebanon's central bank has told local banks to extend zero-interest US dollar loans to those impacted by the blast for repairs, which analysts say will come from official reserves.

These could fall by \$6 to \$7 bn by the end of 2020 from around \$18 bn, said Nafez Zouk at Oxford Economics.

# Biden, Kamala Harris to make campaign debut

Kamala Harris is the first Black woman and the first person of Indian descent to be nominated for national office by a major party

● The two are scheduled to deliver remarks just days before Biden formally accepts the Democratic nomination

● Biden 77-year-old would be the oldest president ever if he wins

Reuters

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his new running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, will make their first appearance as a ticket in Wilmington, Delaware, as the campaign for the White House enters a more frenetic phase.

The two are scheduled to deliver remarks just days before Biden formally accepts the Democratic nomination during the party's national convention, which will take place largely as a virtual event next week due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Republican convention, where President Donald Trump will be nominated for a second four-year term, follows a week later and kicks off a 10-week sprint to the Nov. 3 election.

Harris, 55, the first Black woman and the first Asian American to appear on a major-party presidential ticket, was announced as Biden's choice on Tuesday after a selection process that drew extra scrutiny thanks to Biden's age.

The 77-year-old would be the oldest president ever if he wins, raising spec-

ulation that he would not seek re-election in 2024.

Wednesday's event in Biden's hometown will take place on the third anniversary of the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, where violent clashes erupted as white supremacists and neo-Nazis descended on the town.

Biden has said Trump's comment after the clashes that there were "very fine people on both sides", which drew widespread criticism, convinced him to run for president.

In choosing Harris, Biden selected a former rival for the nomination whose most memorable campaign moment was when she criticized his past position on using busing to integrate schools during a televised debate.

But Harris was regarded as a relatively safe choice. She is a more dynamic campaigner than Biden and will be relied upon to help energize Black voters, who represent a crucial constituency for Biden in key swing states.

Within minutes of Biden's announcement, Trump had called Harris "nasty," "horrible" and "disrespectful," while his campaign painted her as an extremist who would yank the moderate Biden to the left.



Kamala Devi Harris was born on October 20, 1964, in Oakland, California. Her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, was a breast-cancer scientist who had emigrated from Tamil Nadu, India in 1960 to pursue a doctorate in endocrinology at UC Berkeley.

Her father, Donald Harris, is a Stanford University emeritus professor of economics, who emigrated from British Jamaica in 1961 for graduate study in economics at UC Berkeley.



Former Vice President Biden talks with Senator Harris after the conclusion of the 2020 Democratic US presidential debate in Houston

## Most oil on damaged ship off Mauritius removed, owner says

Reuters | Tokyo

Most of the fuel left on a Japanese bulk carrier that has leaked an estimated 1,000 tonnes of oil off the Mauritius coast has been pumped off, ship owner Nagashiki Shipping said yesterday.

Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth said on Tuesday that the MV Wakashio was still holding 2,000 tonnes of oil and was expected to break up, raising concern of a major ecological disaster.

"I heard the collection is almost over, but it is hard to tell if there is absolutely no oil left on the ship," Yoshinori Fukush-

ima, a spokesman for Nagashiki, said.

The ship was being operated by Mitsui OSK Lines Ltd when it struck a reef and went aground off the southeast Mauritius coast on July 25. Jugnauth declared a state of emergency last Friday.

Oil from the stricken vessel has reached some of the Indian Ocean island's most pristine beaches, threatening corals, other local wildlife and the country's tourism industry.

Former colonial ruler France has said it will assist Mauritius with the clean up and Japan said it will send experts to help. The International Maritime Or-

ganization is providing technical advice.

Japan P&I Club, the only organisation in Japan that underwrites protection and indemnity (P&I) insurance for ocean-going vessels and coastal ships, said it had yet to estimate the cost of the clean up.

"We are trying to make internal estimates under different scenarios ...including the worst and the best, but we don't have any figures yet that we can disclose," spokesman Koichi Miyahiro said.

A general view shows the bulk carrier ship MV Wakashio



## China extends Hong Kong LegCo terms

Xinhua | Beijing

Chinese lawmakers on Tuesday voted to adopt a decision for the sixth Legislative Council (LegCo) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to continue performing duties.

The decision was passed at the 21st session of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress, China's top legislature.

After Sept. 30, 2020, the sixth LegCo will continue performing duties for no less than a year until the term of the seventh LegCo starts. The term of the seventh LegCo will still be four years when it is formed in accordance with the law, according to the decision.

Lawmakers agreed that as the local legislature of the HKSAR and an important component of the political structure of the HKSAR, the LegCo exercises important powers and functions in accordance with the law, including enacting, amending and repealing laws, examining and approving budgets, and approving taxation and public expenditure.

The HKSAR Chief Executive in Council has decided to postpone the election of the seventh LegCo, which was originally scheduled for Sept. 6, 2020, for one year, in response to the severe COVID-19 epidemic situation in Hong Kong.

### News in brief

◆ Germany recorded the biggest daily increase in new coronavirus cases in more than three months, data showed yesterday, with the health minister warning of outbreaks in nearly all parts of the country due



to holiday returnees and party-goers. The number of confirmed coronavirus cases rose by 1,226 to 218,519, data from the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) showed. That was the biggest daily increase since May 9. The number of coronavirus deaths remained relatively low, edging up by six to a total of 9,207.

◆ Wearing a face mask became compulsory yesterday in all public places in Brussels as the number of COVID-19 infections rose to a government alert level that puts the city among the worst affected in Europe. The Belgian capital, which hosts the headquarters of the European Union and NATO, recorded on average 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants daily over the last week.



◆ Brussels makes face masks compulsory



◆ Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern weighed delaying New Zealand's upcoming election yesterday, as experts investigated whether the coronavirus could have re-entered the country through freight shipments. Health authorities rushed to implement a rapid lockdown in the country's largest city Auckland, where four more probable infections have been uncovered bringing the outbreak's total to eight. With 1.5 million people under stay-at-home orders, and millions more at risk of a wider outbreak, Ardern said she was seeking

advice on delaying the September 19 election.

◆ A Hong Kong man wanted by police over the killing of a suspected triad member in 2011 was arrested in a routine stop and search on a North Point street after nearly nine years in hiding, according to the force. The man, now 30, had been sought in connection with the murder of an 18-year-old male victim that took place in Tuen Mun in December of 2011. The killing was believed to have been sparked by a dispute between two triad gangs.

◆ Russia said on Wednesday the first batch of its Covid-19 vaccine would be ready for some medics within two weeks and rejected as "groundless" safety concerns aired by some experts over Moscow's rapid approval of the drug. President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday that Russia had become the first country to grant regulatory approval to a COVID-19 vaccine, after less than two months of human testing. The vaccine has not yet completed its final trials. Only about 10% of clinical trials are successful and some scientists fear Moscow may be putting national prestige before safety.

◆ Russia says medics to get anti-COVID shots in two weeks



Global		Countries worst affected			
Covid-19 Cases:		Country	Total cases	New deaths	Total Deaths
20,638,907	Deaths	1 USA	5,322,595	+512	168,261
748,453	Recovered:	2 Brazil	3,123,109	+322	103,421
13,526,647	New cases	3 India	2,376,700	+591	46,779
+90,573	New deaths	4 Russia	902,701	+129	15,260
+3,538	Middle East	5 South Africa	566,109		10,751
		6 Mexico	492,522	+926	53,929
		7 Peru	489,680		21,501
		8 Colombia	410,453		13,475
		9 Chile	378,168	+27	10,205
		10 Spain	373,692		28,581
		11 Iran	333,699	+188	18,988
		12 UK	313,798	+77	46,706
		13 Saudi Arabia	293,037	+36	3,269
		14 Pakistan	285,921	+17	6,129

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Egypt	95,834		5,059		54,888	35,887	41	935
Saudi Arabia	293,037	+1,569	3,269	+36	257,269	32,499	1,826	8,403
UAE	63,212	+246	358		57,193	5,661	6,383	36
Kuwait	73,785	+717	489	+3	65,451	7,845	117	17,249
Oman	82,299	+249	539	+6	77,072	4,688	165	16,073
Qatar	113,938	+292	190	+2	110,627	3,121	75	40,579

# Pre-orders of COVID-19 vaccine top five billion

AFP News

Although none of the coronavirus vaccines under development has proved its efficacy yet in clinical trials, at least 5.7 billion doses have been pre-ordered around the world.

First shipments of a COVID-19 vaccine created by Western laboratories have often been snapped up by the United States. Five vaccines -- three Western and two Chinese -- are in Phase 3 efficacy trials involving thousands of people.

In a surprise announcement, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed Tuesday that a vaccine dubbed "Sputnik V" -- after the Soviet satellite -- conferred "sustainable immunity" against the novel coronavirus.

As research laboratories around the world race to develop a vaccine, manufacturers have received financing to help them prepare to have millions of doses ready to administer in 2021 or even before the end of the year.

Oxford University, working with the Swedish-British pharmaceutical group AstraZeneca, hopes to have results by September while the US biotech company Moderna, partnering with the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), is aiming for the end of the year, possibly November.

## Bus stop newest front in South Korea's coronavirus battle



Inside the shelters, a panel displays estimated arrival times while a screen live-streams the traffic outside

AFP

South Korea has opened a high-tech new front in the battle against coronavirus, fortifying bus shelters with temperature-checking doors and ultraviolet disinfection lamps.

Ten advanced facilities have been installed in a northeastern district of Seoul, offering protection from monsoon rains, summer heat, and the novel coronavirus.

To enter, passengers must stand in front of an automated thermal-imaging camera, and the door will only slide open if their temperature is below 37.5 degrees Celsius (99.5 Fahrenheit).

A separate camera is installed lower down to test children. Inside the glass-walled booths -- which cost about 100 million won (\$84,000) each -- the air-conditioning systems have ultraviolet lamps installed to kill viruses at the same time as cooling the air.

A dispenser provides hand sanitiser, and users are advised to wear face masks at all times, while keeping at least one metre apart from others.

"We have installed all the available anti-coronavirus measures we can think of into this booth," Kim Hwang-yun, a district official in charge of the Smart Shelter project, told AFP. Free Wi-Fi is also included.

Since they were installed last week each booth has been used by about 300 to 400 people a day, Kim said.

To ensure passengers do not miss their bus, a panel displays estimated arrival times while a screen live-streams the traffic outside.

South Korea endured one of the worst early coronavirus outbreaks outside China but brought it broadly under control with an extensive "trace, test and treat" programme while never imposing a compulsory lockdown.

Kim Ju-li, a 49-year-old housewife using the new bus stop for the first time, said: "I feel really safe in here because I know others around me had their temperatures checked as well as me."



A man checks his temperature before entering the bus shelter

## Duterte says will be Russia vaccine 'guinea pig' as talks begin

AFP

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte will be a guinea pig for a controversial Russian coronavirus vaccine, his spokesman said on Wednesday, as the Southeast Asian nation emerged as a frontrunner for overseas clinical trials.

Manila has accepted Russia's offer to participate in clinical trials, vaccine supply and production of the drug, and Philippine health authorities said they are meeting the Russian drug developer Gamaleya on Wednesday.

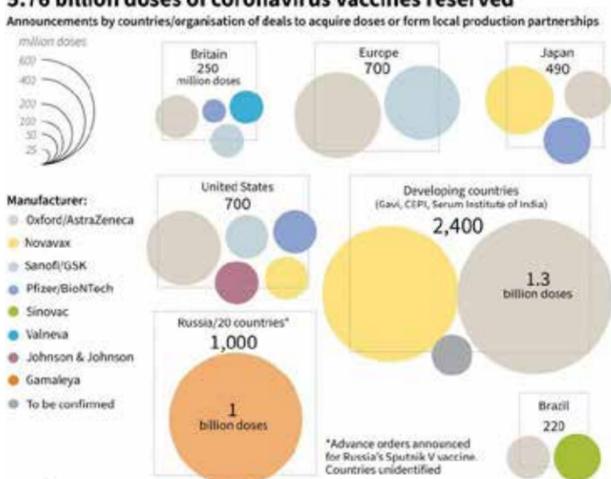
Duterte has also expressed "huge trust" in Russia's efforts to stop the contagion. "I believe the vaccine that you have produced is really good for humanity," Duterte said, praising Putin.

"I will be the first one to be experimented on," he said on Monday.

Duterte's spokesman Harry Roque said that the president -- known for making controversial remarks -- was not joking. "He's old. He can sacrifice his life for the Filipino people," Roque said.



### 5.76 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines reserved



#### US: 700 million doses

President Donald Trump has launched "Operation Warp Speed" in a bid to develop, manufacture and distribute a COVID-19 vaccine to all Americans by January 2021.

Hundreds of millions of dollars have been directed to vaccine developers including nearly \$500 million to Johnson & Johnson at the end of March.

The United States has allocated funding to more companies than other nation in the hope that one of them will come up with the vaccine to counter the highly contagious virus.

So far, Washington has handed out at a total of least 9.4 billion dollars to seven vaccine developers and signed manufacturing contracts with five of them to provide 700 million doses.

The companies involved are: Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, Oxford/AztraZeneca, Novavax, Pfizer/BioNTech, Sanofi/GSK, Merck Sharp and Dohme.

#### Europe: 700 million doses

Two vaccine developers -- Oxford/AztraZeneca and Sanofi/GSK -- have signed or are in advanced negotiations with the European Commission to provide a combined 700 million vaccine doses.



#### Europe: 700 million doses

Two vaccine developers -- Oxford/AztraZeneca and Sanofi/GSK -- have signed or are in advanced negotiations with the European Commission to provide a combined 700 million vaccine doses.

#### Britain, Japan, Brazil

Britain, because of Brexit, is negotiating a separate pre-order of 250 million doses from four developers.

Japan is counting on 490 million doses from three suppliers including 250 million from Novavax of the United States.

Japanese pharmaceutical giant Takeda bought the rights to a Novavax vaccine for Japan, which has funded the research. It would be produced locally.

Brazil chose a similar model, ordering 100 million doses from AstraZeneca, and partnering with China's Sinovac to produce 120 millions of "CoronaVac," which is already undergoing testing with Brazilians.

## Fauci doubts safety of Russia's Coronavirus vaccine

AFP

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, expressed serious doubt about the safety of a Russian-created vaccine for the coronavirus.

"Having a vaccine" and "proving that a vaccine is safe and effective are two different things," the director of the Na-



Dr Anthony Fauci

tional Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases told ABC News' Deborah Roberts in a

preview clip of an interview for National Geographic that was released Tuesday.

Fauci explained in the interview that National Geographic will broadcast in full online Thursday that the U.S. has "half a dozen or more vaccines" in development and could start administering them as soon as "next week" if "we wanted to take the chance of hurting a lot of people, or giving them something that doesn't work."

"But, that's not the way it works," he said.

"So, I hope, but I haven't heard any evidence to make me feel that's the case, I hope that the Russians have actually, definitively proven that the vaccine is safe and effective," Fauci continued. "I seriously doubt that they've done that."

#### China, Russia

Clinical tests of two Chinese vaccine candidates -- Sinovac and Sinopharm -- are well underway but only a few international partnerships have been announced, the one with Brazil and a possible one with Indonesia.

Russia said 20 nations have pre-ordered one billion doses of Sputnik V and that with foreign partners it would be able to produce 500 million doses a year in five countries.

#### Developing countries

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), launched in 2017 by Norway, India, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Wellcome Trust, seeks to ensure that there is "equitable access" to future vaccines.

It has pre-ordered 300 million doses from AstraZeneca for dozens of developing countries in a partnership with The Vaccine Alliance (Gavi).

Billions of doses would be produced for Asia and elsewhere by the giant Serum Institute of India (SII), the largest vaccine producer in the world.

Novavax and AstraZeneca have separately signed agreements with SII to produce a billion doses each for India and low- and middle-income countries on the condition, of course, that they prove their efficacy in clinical trials.



# Greek PM calls for 'sense' from Turkey

● Ankara dispatched the research ship Oruc Reis accompanied by Turkish naval vessels

● Greece also deployed warships to monitor the vessel

AFP News

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis yesterday urged Turkey to show "sense" in a naval showdown in the Eastern Mediterranean over energy exploration which he warned could lead to a military accident.

Tensions were stoked Monday when Ankara dispatched the research ship Oruc Reis accompanied by Turkish naval vessels off the Greek island of Kastellorizo in the eastern Mediterranean.

Greece also deployed warships to monitor the vessel, which is currently sailing west of Cyprus.

"We are vigilantly looking forward to sense prevailing, at last, in our neighbouring country, so that dialogue may be re-initiated in good faith," Mitsotakis said in a statement released by his office first in Greek, then in English with some variations.

"The risk of an accident lurks



Turkey's energy exploration vessel is being escorted by warships

when so many military assets are gathered in such a contained area," he warned.

The Greek PM said Athens would not seek to escalate the situation, but added: "No provocation will though go unanswered."

Athens has demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Oruc Reis from what it regards as its

continental shelf, and has asked for an emergency meeting of EU foreign ministers on the issue.

Greece 'will not suffer blackmail'

"Our country never threatens but will not suffer blackmail either," Mitsotakis said.

"We are not alone in this effort," he said.

Earlier Wednesday, EU diplo-

macy chief Josep Borrell said foreign ministers will hold an extraordinary meeting Friday to discuss the eastern Mediterranean, Lebanon and Belarus.

The incident is the latest spat over energy exploration in the gas-rich eastern Mediterranean, a frequent source of disputes between Turkey and neighbours including Greece, Cyprus and

Israel. Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias will fly to Israel on Thursday for talks, his office said.

Dendias is also to address the issue with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Vienna on Friday.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has said his country would step up energy



Greece, Cyprus and Israel in January signed an agreement for a huge pipeline project to transport gas from the eastern Mediterranean to Europe despite Turkey's hostility to the deal.

exploration in the eastern Mediterranean and would not "compromise" on its rights.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sounded a slightly more conciliatory note after a meeting with his own ministers later Monday.

"Let us all come together as Mediterranean countries and find a formula that protects all of our rights," Erdogan said in a national address.

But Erdogan added: "We cannot allow (nations) to ignore a big country like Turkey and try to imprison us to our shores."

The Turkish foreign ministry has said the Greece-Egypt agreement was "null and void".

## Last year was one of three warmest on record

Reuters | London

Last year was one of the three warmest on record, with glaciers melting, sea levels rising and a spate of wildfires, heatwaves and droughts, research published in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society (BAMS) showed.

The BAMS annual State of the Climate Report, by 528 climate scientists from 61 countries, said only 2015 and 2016 were hotter than 2019, based on records dating to the mid- to late 1800s.

Each decade since 1980 has been successively warmer than the preceding one, with the most recent (2010-2019) being around 0.2 degrees Celsius warmer globally than the previous (2000-09).

For the 32nd consecutive year, 2019 saw the loss of mass from mountain glaciers, while lake temperatures were above the long-term average and permafrost temperatures continued to rise.

In 2019, global mean sea level set a new record for the eighth year running, reaching 87.6 mm above the 1993 average when satellite measurements began, with an annual average increase of 6.1 mm from 2018, the report said.

Greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change and pollution, increased. Carbon dioxide emissions rose by 2.5 parts per million (ppm), nitrous oxide by 1 part per billion (ppb) and methane by 9.2 parts per billion, the report said.

"A number of extreme events, such as wildfires, heatwaves and droughts, have at least part of their root linked to the rise in global temperature," said Robert Dunn from the UK's Met Office, which contributed to the report.

"The rise in global temperature is linked to another climate indicator: the ongoing rise in emissions of greenhouse gases, notably carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane."



A child cools off under a water spray as a heatwave rolls over Paris

## Knife man briefly holds guard hostage in cathedral

AFP

A man armed with a knife momentarily took a guard hostage inside Milan's cathedral yesterday but was quickly arrested, police said.

He entered the famous Gothic Duomo shortly after 1pm local time (1100 GMT) and "advanced towards the private security guard, took out a knife and threatened him," police spokesman Marco Turchetto told AFP.

After the arrival of nearby officers on patrol and a brief mediation, the man dropped the knife and was arrested, he said.

Milan's Deputy Mayor Anna Scavuzzo said in a statement the man had entered the cathedral in order to evade a police check.

Police said they were trying to determine the man's identity.



A man armed with a knife briefly took a guard hostage inside Milan cathedral

## Vaping linked to risk of COVID-19 in teens

Reuters

Vaping may be associated with a five to seven times increased risk of COVID-19 among US teenagers and young adults, a study published on Tuesday suggests.

Researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine analyzed nationally representative survey data collected in May from 4,351 participants aged 13-24 years. The findings were published in the Journal of Adolescent Health.

"Young people may believe their age protects them from contracting the virus or that they will not experience symptoms of COVID-19, but the data show this isn't true among those who vape," study leader Shivani Mathur Gaiha said in a press



A woman exhales after vaping in Times Square

statement.

Participants were asked if they had ever used vaping devices or combustible cigarettes, whether they had vaped or smoked in the past 30 days, and if they had experienced COVID-19 symptoms, been tested for COVID-19 or been diagnosed with the infectious disease.

Participants who had used both cigarettes and e-cigarettes in the previous 30 days were 4.7 times more likely to experience COVID-19 symptoms compared with those who never smoked or vaped.

Among people tested for COVID-19, those who used just e-cigarettes were five times more

likely to get a positive COVID-19 test result. Those who had ever used both e-cigarettes and cigarettes were seven times more likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19, the study found.

The study cannot prove that vaping causes COVID-19. The researchers note, however, that vaping involves the repeated touching of hands to the mouth and face, which is associated with the spread of COVID-19. Further, exposure to nicotine and other chemicals in e-cigarettes and combustible cigarettes causes lung damage.

The researchers hope their findings will prompt the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to effectively regulate e-cigarettes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Kursk: Russia's deep-sea drama

AFP

On August 12, 2000, the Kursk nuclear submarine, pride of Russia's Northern Fleet, sank after a torpedo exploded, and the fate of its 118 crew captivated the nation until the tragic conclusion nine days later. Here is a look back at the events 20 years ago in what remains the Russian navy's worst-ever disaster.



Russia's Kursk submarine, launched in 1994, sank in the Barents Sea

## Submarine sinks

On that Saturday morning, the Kursk, a huge 154-meter-long (508 feet) submarine, takes part in naval exercises in the Barents Sea on the borders between Russia and Norway.

At 11:28 am local time (0728 GMT) Norwegian seismographers register a major explosion followed by a second more powerful one two minutes later.

The Russian navy locates the vessel at dawn on Sunday. All radio contact with the crew is lost. The only recording will be the SOS signal one seaman onboard the submarine makes by banging against the hull of the craft.

Towards the end of the day the navy deploys a first mini-submarine manned by rescuers, but it collides with the wreckage of the Kursk and has to return immediately.

## Rejecting Western aid

"Technical problems" is the terse summary the Russian navy uses on August 14 to announce the accident to the public, after a two-day delay.

Russia's navy chief says the main theory of events "is an explosion in the first torpedo hatch", which would have led to the submarine sinking in neutral waters 150 kilometres (90 miles) from the coastal town of Severomorsk, the Northern Fleet's main base.

The navy says the vessel has shut down its nuclear engines and is not carrying any nuclear weapons. No radioactive leak is recorded.

According to the navy, the crew -- trapped 108 metres down at the bottom of the Barents Sea -- has enough oxygen to last until August 18.

Despite concerns for the sailors, Russia refuses offers of help from Britain, Norway and the United States. With only old or unsuitable equipment, and battling a violent storm, the Russians pursue their rescue efforts alone, ratcheting up a series of failures.

## Putin on holiday

Meanwhile Russia's President Vladimir Putin continues his holiday in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. He waits until August 16 before making his first statement, appearing in casual dress, describing the situation as "critical".

"Our experts say that we have everything we need," he is quoted by Interfax as saying.

But just hours later he speaks with US counterpart Bill Clinton on the telephone to discuss the rescue mission.

Finally Russia accepts help from Britain and requests assistance from Norway, though Putin does not cut short his holiday and his "deafening" silence draws media fire.

"From the word go, the rescue operation should have been not only the number one concern of the rescue teams but of the whole of the state," says the daily Izvestiya.

The press accuses the military of lies and questions the cost of human life in post-communist Russia.

As the uncertainty drags on, families of the trapped sailors describe their anguish as a living "hell".

"Each television news report is like a stay of execution," says one woman whose commander husband is on board.

On August 18, Putin returns to Moscow. The chances of a successful rescue "are very small, but they exist", he says.

## All dead

On August 21, after 30 hours, Norwegian divers manage to open the submarine's airlock. The interior of the Kursk is completely flooded. All the seamen are dead.

The following day in Vidyayevo, the small coastal navy village and home base for the Kursk, the crew members' families gather and Putin faces the criticisms of tearful widows.

A day of national mourning is declared on August 23, but the bereaved families refuse to take part.

Putin says he bears "a feeling of full responsibility and a feeling of guilt for this tragedy".

**The Russian prosecutor's office concludes its investigation in July 2002 declaring no one can be held responsible.**

**It says the accident resulted from an explosion in one of the submarine's torpedo tubes caused by volatile fuel and the crew could not be saved. They died at the latest eight hours after the blast.**

A scribbled note by one officer, discovered in October 2000 in the man's pocket when rescue workers raised his body from the sub, provides cruel evidence that at least 23 sailors survived several hours after the explosion, having tried to seek safety in the vessel's rear.



A spokesman for the Russian navy at a press conference on August 15, 2000, days after the sinking of the Kursk submarine with 118 crew onboard



Russian President Vladimir Putin on August 16, 2000, the day of his first public comments on the sinking of the Kursk submarine



On August 17, 2000, a woman lights a candle in a church in the city of Murmansk, northwestern Russia, in memory of the Kursk crew

# celebs

## Angelina Jolie asks judge in Brad Pitt divorce proceedings to be removed

Fox | Los Angeles

Angelina Jolie filed official paperwork to ask that the private judge overseeing her divorce proceedings from Brad Pitt be disqualified for failure to fully disclose his business relationship with her ex's attorneys. The duo, who share six children together: Maddox, 19, Pax, 16, Zahara, 15, Shiloh, 14, Knox, 12,

and Vivienne, 12, have been locked in a divorce battle since 2016 when it was officially revealed that they were calling it quits after roughly 10 years together. In a filing in Los Angeles Superior Court, Jolie argues that Judge John W. Ouderkirk should be taken off the divorce case because he was too late and not forthcoming enough about other cases he was hired for involving Pitt attorney Anne C. Kiley.



Angelina Jolie

## Dwayne Johnson tops list of highest paid male actors

Reuters | Los Angeles

Wrestler-turned-movie star Dwayne Johnson clung to the top slot on the list of the world's highest-paid male actors for a second straight year, according to an annual tally released by Forbes magazine on Tuesday. Johnson, also known by his ring name 'The Rock', earned \$87.5



Dwayne Johnson

million from June 1, 2019 to June 1, 2020, Forbes said, including \$23.5 million from Netflix Inc to star in movie thriller "Red Notice." He also benefited from his 'Project Rock' fitness wear line for Under Armour Inc. Reynolds, who co-stars with Johnson in "Red Notice," came in second in the Forbes ranking of male stars. He earned \$20 million for that film, plus another \$20 million for Netflix movie "Six Underground," the magazine said, part of his \$71.5 million total for the one-year period. Actor and producer Mark Wahlberg, star of Netflix action comedy "Spenser Confidential," finished third with \$58 million. Next on the list were

actors Ben Affleck with \$55 million and Vin Diesel with \$54 million. Akshay Kumar, the only Bollywood star in the top 10, landed in sixth place with earnings of \$48.5 million. Most of his income came from product endorsements, Forbes said. Rounding out the list were "Hamilton" creator Lin-Manuel Miranda, actors Will Smith and Adam Sandler, and martial-arts star Jackie Chan.

## Meghan Markle reveals she's voting in 2020 presidential election

Fox | Los Angeles



Meghan Markle

Meghan Markle revealed she's voting in the 2020 US presidential election this November, an unprecedented choice for members of the British royal family. The Duchess of Sussex explained her decision to vote in the upcoming

election in a statement to Marie Claire. Markle, 39, was among 100 women who told the outlet about why they are voting. "I know what it's like to have a voice, and also what it's like to feel voiceless," the Duchess of Sussex told the outlet. "I also know that so many men and women have put their lives on the line for us to be heard. And that opportunity, that fundamental right, is in our ability to exercise our right to vote and to

make all of our voices heard." She added: "One of my favorite quotes, and one that my husband [Prince Harry] and I have referred to often, is from Kate Sheppard, a leader in the suffragist movement in New Zealand, who said, 'Do not think your single vote does not matter much. The rain that refreshes the parched ground is made up of single drops.' That is why I vote." Markle's choice to vote comes months after she and Prince

Harry announcing they were "stepping down" as senior members of the royal family. The couple later moved to Los Angeles, Calif. where the former "Suits" star was born. Traditionally, the British royals don't vote in elections, and "The Queen has to remain strictly neutral with respect to political matters," according to the monarch's website. However, according to People magazine, there is no law forbidding it.

### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

### CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14												
17												
23	24	25										
28												
31												
37												
41												
46	49	50										
53												
56												
62												
65												

**Across**  
1- Bell used to sound an alarm; 7- Actress Farrow; 10- Church recess; 14- Stir up; 15- Richards of Texas; 16- Fly catcher; 17- Capital of Poland; 18- Cpl. for one; 19- When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 20- Juice aroma enhancer; 23- Cold mold; 26- Periodical, briefly; 27- Rough files; 28- The closest one to us is the sun; 29- Triple; 30- Stir-fry pan; 31- Kneecap; 33- Pot used to contain the ashes of a dead person; 34- Bodybuilder's pride; 37- Aliens, for short; 38- Auditory apparatus; 39- English poet Hughes; 40- Join a poker game; 41- Actor Fernando; 42- At all; 43- Small bone; 45- Film director Lee; 46- Fitting; 47- Go ballistic; 48- Recreation; 51- Part of TNT; 52- Scottish musician; 53- Activated by small change; 56- Vogue rival; 57- Just the Way You; 58- Conjoint; 62- Scottish refusals; 63- Lyricist Gershwin; 64- Sickness at the stomach; 65- Slips up; 66- es Salaam, Tanzania; 67- Nutlike kernel;

**Down**  
1- Fancy marble; 2- ... mouse?; 3- anglais (English horn); 4- Sigh; 5- Son of Abraham; 6- Information; 7- Zealot; 8- Disguised, briefly; 9- Presently; 10- Pacific Surfline operator; 11- Sanctimonious; 12- Divest; 13- Les ... Unis; 21- Like wet ink; 22- Palm leaves; 23- According to; 24- Declare; 25- Sucker; 29- Jargon; 30- Take by force; 32- Rough shelter; 33- System of social perfection; 34- Songwriters' org.; 35- Hogwash; 36- Guide; 44- Precious metallic element; 45- "Gunsmoke" star; 46- Debt that remains unpaid; 48- View; 49- Like some bears and icecaps; 50- Fuel transport; 51- ... firma; 52- Pertaining to punishment; 54- Discharged a debt; 55- "Chicken of the sea"; 59- General on Chinese menus; 60- Dusk, to Donne; 61- June honoree;

Yesterday's solution

S	L	A	W	A	B	A	T	E	A	F	R	O
Y	A	R	E	M	A	N	O	R	W	O	O	L
N	C	A	A	O	R	A	T	E	H	A	T	E
C	E	L	L	A	R	E	T	C	H	I	M	E
R	A	C	H	E	L	D	I	S	E	A	S	E
O	B	E	Y	S	S	I	L	O	O	T	S	
A	L	L	H	E	M	E	N	A	E	S		
S	E	L	A	V	A	S	T	O	N	N	E	
T	R	O	U	N	C	E	C	O	C	O	O	N
V	A	I	N	E	M	T						
T	R	O	U	P	E	S	U	N	B	A	T	H
W	I	L	L	N	U	L	L	S	G	R	I	P
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# Sevilla, Shakhtar reach Europa semis

Sevilla set up Europa League semi-final clash against Manchester United, Shakhtar Donetsk to meet Inter Milan

● Lucas Ocampos' late goal against Wolves sends Sevilla to semis

● Four-goal Shakhtar thump Basel

AFP | Berlin

Sevilla qualified for the semi-finals of the Europa League on Tuesday after Lucas Ocampos' late header broke Wolverhampton Wanderers' hearts, while Shakhtar Donetsk thumped Basel 4-1 to join the Spaniards in the last four.

Five-time competition winners Sevilla face Manchester United in Cologne on Sunday thanks to a brilliant header from Argentine Ocampos with less than two minutes left on the clock which gave them a deserved 1-0 win, while Shakhtar take on Inter Milan on Monday in another intriguing tie.

Sevilla dominated their English opponents over the course of the match, as a tired-looking Wolves' dreams of European glory ended with a whimper.

"I am very proud of my players. We needed to have lots of patience against a very good team," said Sevilla coach Julen Lopetegui, whose team are now unbeaten in 19 matches in all competitions, to BT Sport.

"We have ambition we work very hard... but we are going to play against Manchester United... the biggest team in world football."

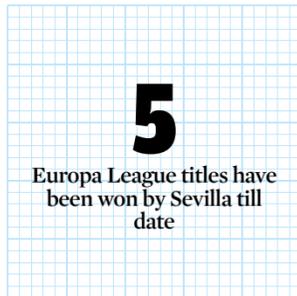


Sevilla's Argentinian midfielder Lucas Ocampos (3rd R) scores the opening goal

Premier League outfit Wolves thought they were set to make the perfect start in the 11th minute when Adam Traore set off on a sensational surge towards goal from his own half and was chopped down in the area by Diego Carlos.

However Raul Jimenez, who had scored all of his previous eight penalties for Wolves, sent a weak spot-kick towards Yassine Bounou, who could hardly believe his luck as he batted the Mexican's tame shot aside.

There were claims that Bounou had left his line while Sevilla players seemed to enter the area before the penalty was taken, but in any case that was to be Wolves' last shot on target



of the match as chances became hard to come by.

Sevilla though began to take a stranglehold on the play and force Wolves back into their own half.

However they struggled to carve out many clear-cut oppor-

tunities, with Wolves' defence managing to snuff out their opponents when they did manage to break free.

## Ocampos snatches victory

The first good chance of the second half came when Jules Kounde met Suso's beautifully flighted cross in the 66th minute, but the Frenchman had to stretch for the ball and sent it looping over the bar.

Eleven minutes later Rui Patricio did well to tip over Ever Banega's dipping free-kick as Wolves began to rock, but the goalkeeper could do nothing to stop Sevilla's winner with two minutes left.

Banega was again at the heart



Alan Patrick of Shakhtar Donetsk scores his sides third goal

## Europa League quarter-finals

Wolverhampton	0	1	Sevilla
Shakhtar Donetsk	4	1	Basel

of the action, whipping in a fizzing cross that Lucas Ocampos did brilliantly to guide into the bottom corner and send his team into the semis.

In Gelsenkirchen Shakhtar booked their spot in the last four with a commanding win over Basel that will give Inter Milan something to think about ahead of their semi-final clash on Monday.

"I'm feeling amazing because we have worked hard and we trust we can reach the final," said goalscorer Junior Moraes.

"If you want to test yourself, you have to play against teams at this high level."

The Ukrainian side got off to a flyer thanks to Brazil-born Moraes, who headed home Marlos' corner with less than two min-

utes on the clock, and they never looked back from that point on.

Taison put Shakhtar two ahead 20 minutes later when his deflected shot flashed past Basel's bamboozled goalkeeper Dorde Nikolic.

Alan Patrick put the result beyond doubt from the penalty spot with 14 minutes left after Taison's burst into the box was ended by a clumsy challenge from Basel defender Yannick Marchand.

Shakhtar rounded off a fine display in the 88th minute when right-back Dodo combined with Tete before smashing home a superb finish. Ricky van Wolfswinkel's close range strike for Basel a minute into stoppage time made no difference to a thumping defeat for the Swiss.

## 'We don't worry': IPL's Chennai expect Dhoni to play past 40

AFP | Chennai

Indian Premier League favourites Chennai Super Kings expect former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni to keep playing past his 40th birthday until at least 2022, the team's chief executive said.

Dhoni has not played a competitive game since India's World Cup semi-final defeat last year, but is due to return to action when the delayed IPL begins in the United Arab Emirates next month.

While Dhoni is unlikely to play again for India, Chennai Super Kings chief executive Kasi Viswanathan said he was confident the legendary batsman-wicketkeeper would not retiring soon.

"We don't worry about him at all. Yes, we can expect M.S. Dhoni to be part of both (IPL seasons in 2020 and 2021) and probably for even the next year,



Mahendra Singh Dhoni

2022," Viswanathan told India Today television late Tuesday.

Dhoni, who has led Chennai to three IPL titles, will celebrate his 40th birthday in July next year.

He remains an influential figure in Indian cricket with any hint of retirement causing concern among fans.

Viswanathan said he had only seen media reports that Dhoni has been training in indoor nets in his home state of Jharkhand.

"But we don't have to worry about the skipper," he said. "He knows his responsibilities and he will take care of himself and the team."

The CSK players are due to arrive in Chennai this week before leaving next week for Dubai where the IPL will start on September 19 after being moved because of the coronavirus pandemic.



**"We don't worry about him at all. Yes, we can expect MS Dhoni to be part of both (IPL seasons in 2020 and 2021) and probably for even the next year, 2022"**

KASI VISWANATHAN

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## Racing Point F1 row heading to court after rivals appeal

Reuters | London

The row over Racing Point's Formula One car was heading for court after rivals Ferrari and Renault confirmed on Tuesday they would appeal a stewards' decision.

Silverstone-based Racing Point were fined 400,000 euros (\$469,240.00) and docked 15 points in the constructors' championship after stewards upheld a Renault protest and ruled the team had not designed their own brake ducts.

The car is a visual copy of last year's Mercedes, who provide the engines and gearbox, and the argument is about the essence of being a constructor and how much of the car has to be designed in-house.

The team were allowed to continue racing the car, however, with stewards noting the breach was of the sporting regulations rather than non-compliance with the technical rules.

Some rival teams want a tougher punishment imposed on Racing Point, who are already back ahead of Renault despite the points deduction after last weekend's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix at Silverstone.

Ferrari and Renault were among five teams, including Racing Point who say they have done nothing wrong, who notified the governing FIA last Sunday of their intention to go to the International Court of appeal.



Racing Point's Lance Stroll stops in the Pitlane (file photo)

McLaren said in a statement on Tuesday they had dropped out, but noted that the FIA would have to clarify the sporting and technical regulations.

They added that this would "protect Formula One as a sport where teams are clearly defined as Constructors, and removes the potential that the Formula One World Championship includes cars that are, in effect, copies of other competitors.

"McLaren Racing respects the decisions of Ferrari and Renault to pursue their appeals and will follow proceedings with interest," the team said.



**Racing Point are already back ahead of Renault after last weekend's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix at Silverstone despite the points deduction**

Claire Williams told an Australian GP podcast earlier that her team would "always stand by the philosophy that Formula One teams, constructors, should absolutely be designing and manufacturing the performance-related parts on their cars.

"Obviously this is the question, the debate, that's going on around Racing Point at the moment with their rear brake ducts," added the deputy team principal.

"We have submitted our intent to protest with the FIA, and it's up to the FIA."

# Verstappen takes momentum to Spain

Verstappen become the youngest ever winner in Barcelona on his Red Bull debut

● Verstappen has stood on the podium at the last four races and is now the closest challenger to Hamilton

AFP | Paris

Max Verstappen returns to the scene of his first Formula One triumph on Sunday, hoping to pile more pressure on championship leader Lewis Hamilton in Spain after winning at Silverstone last Sunday.

The 22-year-old Red Bull driver has stood on the podium at the last four races and is now the closest challenger to Mercedes' six-times world champion, with 30 points separating them.

It would be a lot less if Verstappen, who has beaten Hamilton's Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas in the last three races, had not suffered the first retirement of the season in Austria last month.

"It's a different track so let's see how competitive we are against Mercedes and how the temperatures have an impact on everyone," the Dutchman said of the Circuit de Catalunya.

Verstappen will always have a soft spot for the Barcelona track after becoming Formula One's youngest ever winner there on his Red Bull debut in 2016 at the age of 18.

This year's race, postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has also led to it going be-



Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen celebrates after winning the race during the F1 70th Anniversary Grand Prix

hind closed doors, is normally held in the cooler month of May rather than August where track temperatures are likely to be above 40 degrees Celsius.

"The track at Barcelona is also quite hard on the tyres so I'm not sure how they will hold out in the heat," said Verstappen.

The tyres were decisive last Sunday, with the Red Bull managing the softer compounds better than the Mercedes which suffered severe blistering, but there will be a return to harder rubber in Spain.

That could help Hamilton, who had won three races in a row before Verstappen's success and has also won the last three outings in Spain.

"Maybe it won't be as bad as today but still going to be a challenge," he said last Sunday when asked about expectations.

“The track at Barcelona is also quite hard on the tyres so I'm not sure how they will hold out in the heat

MAX VERSTAPPEN

Bottas started on pole in Spain last year and needs to pull something out of the bag to rein in a team mate who is driving as well as ever.

Losing out at Silverstone, after also starting on pole but having the strategy go against him, was a serious blow.

The top three will be taking every precaution against the new coronavirus, with a rising

number of new infections being seen in Spain and particularly around Barcelona.

"I stay at the track always, so nothing changes for me," said Hamilton. "I stay in my bubble, I'm only around a couple of people and so I will get to the airport and then go straight to my motorhome and stay at the track for the three/four days."

Verstappen and Bottas said it was the same for them.

"You minimise contact, you stay in your bubble. I don't expect any trouble. It's not only in Barcelona or in Spain there is corona, you know, so you just have to be careful," said the Dutchman.

Racing Point's Mexican Sergio Perez, who missed the two rounds at Silverstone after testing positive for COVID-19, could return for Sunday's race.

## Root backs Anderson to show his class against Pakistan



Joe Root and James Anderson of England talk during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

James Anderson is set to be given an immediate chance to come good against Pakistan with England captain Joe Root saying yesterday it was "likely" the veteran paceman would feature in this week's second Test.

By his own admission the 38-year-old Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker, was not at his best with a match haul of 1-67 during the win in the series opener at his Old Trafford home ground last week.

He has now taken just six wickets in three Tests so far this season at an expensive average of over 41 apiece.

But Anderson, speaking earlier this week, bristled at suggestions he was contemplating retirement and Root had no hesitation in backing him, even if the skipper was coy about who else might be in England's team for the second Test in

590

Test wickets have been taken by James Anderson in his career

Southampton, which starts on Thursday.

"Jimmy is likely to play, yes," Root told reporters.

"Wouldn't you give him the opportunity with nearly 600 wickets?"

"To get that stuff off his chest and talked about has definitely helped him. With Jimmy it won't be long before he's right back at the peak of his powers and I'm very much looking forward to him performing this week," Root added.

"I don't think it will be long before he's got another five-for beside his name."

## Barcelona player tests positive for COVID-19

AFP | Barcelona

A Barcelona player has tested positive for the novel coronavirus after reporting back for pre-season training, the La Liga side said in a statement yesterday.

Barca said the player was isolating in his home and was asymptomatic, adding that he had not been in contact with any of the players who are to travel to Lisbon for the Champions League 'Final Eight' tournament.

## Tahar Hadbi's unusual BRAVE CF career has him ready for the next chapter

● Tahar Hadbi will take on Giannis Bachar in the main event of BRAVE CF 39

TDT | Manama

It's safe to say that most professional Mixed Martial Artists will go through an entire career without having a single "No Contest" on their records. What about having two-in-a-row on your first two fights with a new promotion?

Well, this unusual scenario was exactly the one in which Tahar Hadbi saw himself when he arrived at BRAVE Combat Federation. Even more impressive is that, despite the adverse circumstances, Hadbi was able to place himself among the best Welterweights in the world very quickly. He returns this Saturday after a 17-month layoff to reclaim his place at the top of the Welterweight food chain at BRAVE CF, as he takes on Giannis Bachar



Tahar Hadbi

in the main event of BRAVE CF 39.

Back in 2017, "Fast Hands" debuted as an event headliner in India. His opponent was England's Carl "The Bomber" Booth. At BRAVE CF 5, Hadbi and Booth had an even contest, with high-level striking going back-and-forth, but the bout ended without a result due to time-keeping issues.

Tahar wasn't comfortable with his shaky beginning in his new home and asked for the toughest challenge available. His wish was granted by BRAVE CF officials and the French-Algerian was matched against Lebanon's Mohammed "The Latest" Fakhreddine.

With two strong personalities on opposite sides of the cage, the



Tahar Hadbi debuted at BRAVE CF 5 in 2017 in India with a match against Carl Booth which ended without a result

bout at BRAVE CF 9, the very first edition of BRAVE International Combat Week back in 2017, quickly became the biggest rivalry in the history of Middle Eastern MMA.

Publicly and privately, Hadbi and Fakhreddine engaged in a war of words and promised fireworks when the cage doors finally closed. The two went for it right away and what the fans saw was the clash of power vs precision that they were expecting.

Against all odds, though, Hadbi's second consecutive fight

under BRAVE CF's banner also came to an end with another No Contest. Tahar connected with an accidental low blow and Fakhreddine couldn't recover from the groin shot. The bout was then declared a no contest, given the lack of intention from Tahar's side.

He knew, on the other hand, that there was only one way to break the "curse of No Contests": meeting his bitter rival Mohammed Fakhreddine inside the cage and finishing him. And that's exactly what he did, in devastating fashion.

Roughly four months after their first encounter, Hadbi and Fakhreddine met once more, this time in Jordan. Hadbi was aware of the issues that made the last bout end in a no-contest and this time aimed almost exclusively for the head.

The strategy worked and half-way through the second round, Tahar Hadbi stopped Mohammed Fakhreddine, becoming the winning side of the biggest rivalry in Middle Eastern Mixed Martial Arts.

Recovered from the rocky start, Hadbi was then awarded a title eliminator against Jarrah Al-Selawe. The bout took place in Indonesia, in May of 2018. Tahar put on a very good performance, with his fast combinations causing damage to Al-Selawe, but a broken arm in the first round prevented him from being more aggressive with his attacks, and Jarrah ended up winning and going on to fight for the title - and win.

While on the losing side of the title eliminator, Hadbi proved that he wasn't just skills and fast hands. He was also one of the toughest fighters in the world, something that he's keen to remind the Welterweight division when he meets Bachar at BRAVE CF 39.

Returning after a long hiatus, Hadbi is ready to prove that the unusual experience he gathered in his first four fights inside BRAVE Combat Federation were only shaping the current moment of his career and that he's ready to start another title run.