



INDIA
 INDEPENDENCE
 DAY SUPPLEMENT
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Bahrain leaders congratulate Indian President



TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa yesterday sent a cable of congratulations to Indian President Ram Nath Kovind on India's Independence Day.

HM, the King wished President Kovind good health and happiness and the friendly Indian people further progress and prosperity.

HRH Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister also sent congratulatory messages to the President.

Bahrain leaders sent similar congratulatory messages to Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India.

US seizes millions of dollars of Iranian fuel

Reuters | Vienna

The US says it has taken control of four Iranian fuel shipments bound for Venezuela in the largest-ever seizure of its kind. About 1.1 million barrels of fuel were confiscated "with the assistance of foreign partners", according to the Justice Department.

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL CASES
46,052

ACTIVE CASES
3,415

DEATHS
168

DISCHARGED
42,469

NEW CASES
326

CRITICAL
40

210 fils (includes VAT)



Shura council, speaker back UAE's 'historic deal'

TDT | Manama

The "historic deal" reached by the UAE will have a positive impact on consolidating stability and peace in the region, said Bahraini shura and representative council members.

In a statement, the Shura Council congratulated the deal brokered by the United States with Israel as a "historic agreement" which prevents the an-



The historic Emirati achievement supports the Palestinian cause and opens up wider horizons of international cooperation

FAWZIA BINT ABDULLA ZAINAL

nexation of the Palestinian territories. The Council also stressed the need to intensify work to

reach a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to establish an independent state with East Je-

separately, Fawzia bint Abdulla Zainal, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, affirmed that the historic Emirati achievement supports the Palestinian cause and opens up wider horizons of international cooperation. "It also confirms the UAE's pioneering role in strengthening human fraternity among all," she added.

The speaker expressed her confidence that the deal would

stimulate more steps that would increase the chances of peace in the Middle East.

Also yesterday, the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee congratulated UAE for its historic achievement.

The committee pointed out that the Emirati move is in the interest of the Palestinian people and promotes the values of coexistence, tolerance and humanity.

An incentive for peace

GCC, world nations applaud UAE's peace deal



The accord was a rare triumph for Trump ahead of his Nov. 3 re-election bid. - Reuters

● Trump's senior adviser, Jared Kushner, and Middle East envoy, Avi Berkowitz, is in touch with numerous countries in the region

TDT, agencies

The United Arab Emirates's surprise move normalising ties with Israel got more acceptance yesterday with the several countries around the globe as well as the United Nations rallying behind with applause for halting annexation.

Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Jordan, France, Germany and the United Nations voiced their optimism quickly by welcoming the "historic" deal while a seemingly shocked Iran condemned the agreement saying this will only strengthen the Tehran-backed "axis of resistance."

Meanwhile, a senior White House official said President Donald Trump's senior adviser, Jared Kushner, and the Middle East envoy, Avi Berkowitz, had been in touch with numerous countries in the region trying to see if more agreements would materialize.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, however, re-

The secretary-general welcomes this agreement, hoping it will create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage in meaningful negotiations that will realise a two state-solution in line with relevant UN resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements

A SPOKESMAN FOR UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES SAID IN A STATEMENT



jected the accord in a statement through his spokesman.

The "historic event" yesterday also dominated social media platforms with the hashtag "Emirates_Salam_Salam" becoming one of the popular on *Twitter*. Under the accord, which US President Donald Trump helped broker, Israel agreed to suspend its planned annexation of areas of the occupied West Bank. It also firms up opposition to regional power Iran, which the UAE, Israel and the United States view as the main threat to the Middle East.

In a series of tweets yesterday, the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, confirmed that the deal provided more time to realise the two-state solution as it also ended the spectre of the annexation of Palestinian lands.

"While the peace decision remains a Palestinian and Israeli move, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed's bold initiative allowed more time for peace opportunities for the two-state solution and the development of normal relations," he wrote on his *Twitter* handle.

The positive reaction to the tripartite agreement is "encouraging," Dr Gargash further tweeted calling the decision as a "courageous move" and a "badly needed realism".

"Developing normal ties in return for this is a realistic approach forwarded by the Emirates," Gargash said. "The successful decision is to take and give. This has been achieved."

move the region towards a just peace."

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi welcomed the deal on *Twitter* saying, "I followed with interest and appreciation the joint statement between the United States, United Arab Emirates and Israel to halt the Israeli annexation of Palestinian lands and taking steps to bring peace in the Middle East."

The official *Oman News Agency* yesterday quoting unnamed sources said the "Sultanate of Oman supports the deal."

Germany, the United Kingdom and France also welcomed the deal as an important contribution to peace in the region.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, "It was my profound hope that annexation did not go ahead in the West Bank and the agreement to suspend those plans is a welcome step on the road to a more peaceful Middle East."

In a statement, the United States Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden welcom-

Another Arab country to follow UAE's lead, says Jared Kushner

TDT, Agencies

Another Arab country is likely to establish ties with Israel following its normalisation deal with Israel, several media reports yesterday said quoting Jared Kushner.

Kushner, a senior advisor to US President Donald Trump, told reporters after signing the deal that there is a "good chance that another country could make a deal with Israel in the coming days" without elaborating.

Trump also suggested that more diplomatic breakthroughs may emerge between Israel and countries in the region. "Things are happening that I can't talk about," he said. "Everybody said this would



Jared Kushner

be impossible," Trump said. "Now that the ice has been broken, I expect more Arab and Muslim countries will follow the United Arab Emirates' lead," Trump added.

This was already being discussed with other states, he said.

EU welcomes

Reuters | Brussels

The EU's executive yesterday welcomed the agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates to normalise diplomatic ties, saying it would benefit both countries and help promote stability in the Middle East.

"It is important for both (countries) and regional stability," a European Commission spokeswoman told a news briefing.

"Both countries are our partners and of course ... we are committed to a two-state solution and we are of course ready to work on a resumption of the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians."

ing the deal said, "Annexation would be a body blow to the cause of peace, which is why I oppose it now and would oppose it as president."

42,469 recoveries, 3,415 cases

TDT | Manama

Bahrain yesterday reported yet another COVID-19 death, a 56-year-old expatriate man, raising the total number of casualties in the Kingdom's coronavirus battle to 168.

Kingdom's ministry of health announced the death on its Twitter account, without disclosing any further details.

The officials on the Twitter handle also wrote condolences to the family of the deceased.

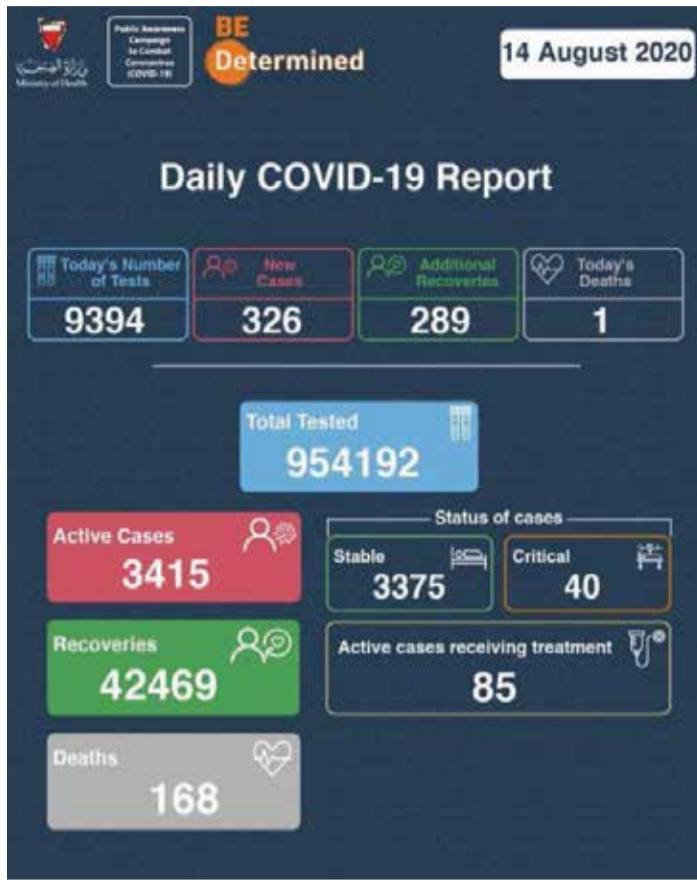
There are currently 85 COVID-19 patients in the Kingdom receiving treatment, out of which 40 patients are in a critical condition, Health Ministry said.

As of yesterday, there are 3,415 active coronavirus patients in the Kingdom, of which 3,375 patients are in a stable health condition.

Health ministry further tweeted that it carried out 9,394 COVID-19 tests yesterday to raise the number of tests conducted in the Kingdom after detecting its first case in February to 954,192.

Some 326 new patients were detected yesterday, the ministry said adding that 143 of them were expatriates workers, 182 were contacts of active cases, and one is travel related.

The ministry also announced 289 new recoveries yesterday increasing the total number of people cured of their infection



in the Kingdom to 42,469.

Through contact tracing, the Ministry of Health confirmed 2,750 COVID-19 cases this week, which includes 1,611 Bahrainis and 1,139 expatriates.

Some 1,068 of the week's cases were close contacts of active Coronavirus cases.

contact tracing

The ministry's contract trac-

ing page further said it found a total of 711 positive cases in tests conducted after developing symptoms.

In one such case, a 39-year-old Bahraini woman, who tested positive after developing symptoms, emerged contracting the virus to 11 others in four households, all of whom were immediate and extended family members.

In a similar case, a 22-year-old Bahraini man produced a cluster of 21 cases, all of whom were expatriates who work together. Twelve of the cases were living in the same accommodation.

In yet another case, a 55-year-old Bahraini woman, tested positive after developing symptoms, was linked to 11 family-related positive cases from 4 different households, of which two people were over 80-years of age.

A total of 9 cases had direct contact with the index case, while two were secondary infections.

Random community screening conducted this week found that an 11-year-old Bahraini girl infected with the virus was linked to 8 additional positive cases from 5 households, all of whom were family members having direct contact with her at a family Eid gathering. The cluster includes the index's grandmother, aunts, uncles, and other relatives.

In another incident, the minister, through contact tracing app, detected 19 cases from 9 households linked to an Eid gathering when a 41-year-old male citizen tested positive after developing symptoms.

Testing conducted last week also detected the infection in a 15-person family household after a 26-year-old expatriate woman linked to the family tested positive. The cases include both immediate and extended family members.

A memorable virtual mushaira



TDT | Manama

sion.

Majlis-E-Fakher-E-Bahrain organised a virtual poetry session or mushaira with the participation over 1200 enthusiasts from all over the world amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The session, which maintained the ambience of classical Mushaira gatherings, was held under the patronage of Shakeel Ahmad Sabrahadi and presided by Dr Nusrat Mahdi, an eminent poet from MP India.

Mushaira is a poetic symposium, where poets gather to perform their works, greatly admired by participants as a platform for free self-expres-

A prominent scholar of Arabic language and literature, Dr Shoeb Nigrani was the chief guest.

Some of the fine Urdu poets, who attended and recited their verses were: Ajmal Siraj, a well-known Urdu poet from Karachi (Pakistan), Shakeel Azmi (India), Aziz Nabil (Qatar), Afzal Khan (Pakistan), Alok Siriwastaw (India), Suhail Saqib, Shiraz Mahdi Zia and Ghazala Kamrani from Saudi Arab, Ahmad Adil, Rukhsar Nazim Abadi, Ahmad Amir Pasha, Saeed Sadi and Sad Iqbal from Bahrain.

This memorable poetical session was moderated by Aziz Nabil and Khurram Abbasi.





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Ashura going virtual this year

National Medical Taskforce outlines precautionary measures to be followed during Ashura season

TDI | Manama

This year's Ashura commemoration rituals will be a virtual ceremony, amid the deadly pandemic, without the usual parades and passion plays re-enacting the martyrdom, it has emerged.

The day of Ashura, which falls on the 10th of Muharram, is a solemn day of mourning the martyrdom of Hussein in 680 AD at Karbala in modern-day Iraq.

The day is usually marked with mourning rituals, and passion plays re-enacting the martyrdom of Hussein, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

However, the deadly pandemic has derailed all those plans this year with the Kingdom facing the risk of a second wave of the outbreak as global nations continue to ease restrictions.

Top Supreme Council of Health and Jaffari Endowments officials thus concluded that "continued commitment" to preventive measures and restriction on gatherings are crucial in fighting the virus effectively.

The SCH chief stressed that the regional and global health conditions are still at stake, citing the World Health Organi-



Officials during a meeting held yesterday to outline the precautionary measure for the upcoming Ashura

sation's warning of the second wave of COVID-19.

The decisions came during a meeting held yesterday to discuss the precautionary measures to be implemented during the Ashura Commemoration season.

Board of Directors of the Jaffari Endowments Council, led by Yussef bin Saleh Al-Saleh, and President of the Supreme Council of Health (SCH) and Chairman of the National Medical Taskforce to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19), Lieutenant-General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, took part in the meeting.

The meeting viewed that Bahrain is at the risk of a second wave of COVID-19, which could be avoided only through "aware-

ness" and "continued commitment" to preventive measures as suggested by the National Medical Taskforce.

On this note, the SCH chief stressed that the Ashura commemoration should be "restricted to remote broadcasting and that only the mourning staff should be present at the Ma'atam (Community Centre)."

Mourning staff, SCH Chief said, should adhere strictly to all coronavirus preventive measures including wearing masks and practising social distancing norms. Community centres are also required to record the names of the participating staff and ensure their safety by conducting pre-emptive checkups in coordination with the Minis-

try of Health.

20 minute broadcast

The National Medical Taskforce officials said that live broadcast sessions should not exceed 20 minutes to protect the safety of those present at the community centres.

The meeting also called on placing Ashura images and manifestations only at the permissible space and within the vicinity of the community centres.

The Jaffari Endowments Council stressed the need for banning gatherings outside community centres and on public roads, and the closure of women community centres and home Majlises while suggesting to commemorate Ashura at home with family members or through social media platforms.

Among other guidelines, the organisers of the community centres are urged to operate loudspeakers only during the live transmission of Ashura rituals, which should not exceed 20 minutes.

Based on studies showing gatherings as one of the causes of the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting also suggested "home delivery of food" as an alternative to community banquets.



Key points

- ◆ Ashura commemoration will be a virtual ceremony, this year.
- ◆ Bans gatherings outside community centres and on public roads
- ◆ Bans women community centres, home Majlises
- ◆ Live transmission of rituals should not exceed 20 minutes
- ◆ Only mourning staff are allowed at the Ma'atam
- ◆ Staff should wear face masks, practise social distancing, and conduct virus tests
- ◆ Bans processions, banquets
- ◆ Encourages home delivery of food

The National Medical Taskforce said it's betting on the "awareness" and "commitment" of the Bahraini people in preventing the spread of the virus in the Kingdom.

Yussef bin Saleh Al-Saleh pointed out that the current circumstances require more cohesion and solidarity, praying to Allah the Almighty to lift the pandemic and to protect the Kingdom of Bahrain from all evil.



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ALL INDIANS
A HAPPY
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Changing the way we walk

Modern walkways with mist cooling system, sports equipment and other facilities on the way

● Works ministry completed over 20 walkway projects in various governorates

● Plans progressing for rubberised walkways

TDT | Manama

The Works Ministry is paying special attention for the comprehensive development of walkways and associated facilities in the Kingdom, said Works Minister.

Minister Essam Khalaf said the projects are being implemented in line with the Kingdom's vision 2030 launched by His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa in October 2008.

Works Ministry has undertaken projects in seafronts, central parks and in all governorates of the Kingdom, Khalaf said adding that the ministry is also introducing solar energy in many of the projects.

The ministry, he said, is developing "walkways" by integrating modern cooling systems as well as other facilities to convert it into sporting facilities providing citizens with a safe environment to practice various activities.

As of now, the ministry has completed over 20 walkway projects in various governorates of the Kingdom, some of which being seafront projects and large



A walkway project

parks with walking tracks.

"Work is also progressing to developing rubberised walkways and enhance the green area by planting shade trees and environment-friendly trees," an ALAyam report quoting the minister as saying.

"Initiatives are also on way to add more sports equipment, children games and public facilities along the walkways," the minister said.

Introduction of cooling and mist spraying equipment and wireless internet services on walkways are also part of the plan.

The ministry, Khalaf said, is also mulling joining hands with the private sector in

the development of these projects.

Solar cooling and lighting systems

On the walkway projects in the Muharraq area, the minister said the Busaiteen coast walkway is a first of its kind in the development of waterfronts. "The project works on clean renewable energy, includes about 80 devices for exercise and physical activities, as well as other entertainment

facilities."

The Busaiteen coast walkway, which has a length of over 2 km, includes a public square, green spaces, family restrooms, recreational facilities, restaurants, other services, and parking for more than 400 cars. Its opening will coincide with the construction of a 3 km road in the Al Sayah area to reach the walkway with one lane in each direction. The project, minister said, will enhance domestic tourism and provide a new space for Bahraini families.

"The ministry is working on a cooling system that works by spraying mist," Khalaf said.

"This cooling system has been implemented in the walkway of Arad fort, which has an area of 50 thousand square meters located near the Seef complex in Muharraq. Muharraq

is also distinguished by the large Khalifa Walkway project, the Busaiteen Housing Walkway which is 600 meters long, and the Doha Arad Walkway.

"A diving walkway has also been established and has a length of 600 meters and is located between Sheikh Issa Bridge and Sheikh Hamad Bridge. The Monastery and Samaheej walkway has also been established and is located on Muharraq Ring Road and have sports and games area, palm trees, and umbrellas. On Walkways adjacent to the village of Galali, opposite the island of Dilmunia, sports equipment and lights that operate on solar energy have been installed."

Sea fronts projects

The capital has several walk-

ways projects, the minister said, which includes the Tubli Walkway that directly overlooks the Tubli Bay. "The project extends over an area of 4,657 square meters, with a length of about 400 meters in its first phase."

The Sitra Bridge walkway is one of the other projects that overlooks the sea directly. "It is located along the Sitra Bridge overlooking the sea with a length of 2000 meters and includes green areas, palms and various trees in addition to two areas for children's games and sports for adults."

Saud Al-Faisal Walkway is one of the modern projects in the capital and is located in the north of the Juffair area. Ma'ameer Walkway, which is 720 square meters in length, includes green surfaces, palms and various trees in addition to a children's play area and public facilities.

”
The ministry is working on a cooling system that works by spraying mist

ESSAM KHALAF



Pictures courtesy of ALAyam

When Venus, Moon break social distancing norms!

TDT | Manama

Experts say we are having a great season for planet-spotting, with most of the planets in the solar system putting up rare shows before naked eyes.

Our region today morning provided planet hunters one such rare instance of the Venus and Moon getting together, or as we say, "breaking social distancing norms" that too before naked eyes! How dare, isn't it? Yet, that happened!

Astronomers call these events conjunctions. In astronomy, a conjunction occurs when any



Picture courtesy of Forbes

two astronomical objects (such as asteroids, moons, planets, and stars) appear to be close together in the sky, as observed from Earth.

Although the moon and Venus appear close together on the sky's dome, they are not truly close together in space. At the time that the moon swings by Venus, the moon will be very close to its average distance from Earth (238,855 miles or 384,400 km). The close encounter of the

dynamic duo but was visible to naked eyes, thanks to Venus, also known as the "evening star, for being the third brightest object in the sky after the sun and moon.

Experts say Sharp-eyed people could pick up Venus in a daytime sky, as the moon is there to assist them. The trick is to find the moon first and then Venus.

According to Majed Abu Zahra, Chairman of the Saudi Astronomical Society, the phenom-

enon in which Venus reigned as the brilliant "morning star" was observable from most Arab countries.

"The moon and Venus are the second and third brightest objects in the sky after the sun, so they are seen even after the sky becomes bright," an ALAyam report quoted Abu Zahra as saying in an interview with Al Arabiya.

He explained: "Using binoculars, we can see the arched line separating the illuminated and

dark side of the moon and the three-dimensional view of the moon's topography."

"When you observe Venus through a telescope, it's possible to see its disk illuminated 50.1 per cent thanks to the sunlight at this time of the year.

"However, due to the movement of the planet in its smaller orbit around the sun, during the coming months, the disk of the Venus will get smaller as its distance from the Earth increase. This will be accompanied by a gradual increase in the Sunlight illuminating the disk until it reaches its full moon phase and returns to the evening sky in late March of 2021," he added.

Explaining further, he said, "Venus is often known to people as the evening star" when it is seen at the evening sky, and as the "morning star in the morning sky."

Ancient people, he said, believed for a long time that the morning star and the evening star were two different bodies, so they called them "Phospho-

BETTER YOU KNOW

whenever you see the moon and Venus together in the morning sky, the moon is always waning while Venus is always waxing. The converse is also true: whenever you see the moon with Venus in the evening sky, the moon is always waxing while Venus is always waning. That's because the moon orbits Earth whereas Venus orbits the sun.

rous" and "Hesperus", but Pythagoras realised 500 years before that the two are the same. And Venus is likely to be the first planet known in this way because of its brightness and relatively rapid movement."

European stocks hit as UK reimposes quarantine

● Equities retreated over fading hopes of a US stimulus deal

● Democrats have called on Republicans and the White House to double their \$1-trillion offer

TDT | Manama

European stocks slumped yesterday at the end of a largely positive week for global equities

dragged down by fears of a second wave in coronavirus cases and the stalemate in Washington over a new stimulus package for the US economy.

London's benchmark FTSE 100 index finished the day down 1.6 per cent after the UK government reimposed a quarantine for travellers from France and the Netherlands, prompting Paris to promise a "reciprocal measure".

The Paris CAC 40 index also retreated 1.6 pc and Frankfurt's DAX 30 shed 0.7 pc.

On Wall Street, the Dow was up marginally in late morning trading.

Both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite spent most of the morning in negative territory, but remained within striking distance of record highs, however.



Many Britons were rushing back from France and the Netherlands before the quarantine restrictions go into force on Saturday

Asian markets ended mixed.

In addition to Britain's quarantine, Germany put all of Spain except on its quarantine list except for the Canary Islands.

Spain, for its part, closed night clubs, and banned smoking and drinking in the streets to try to stem a rise in infections.

"If European governments were hoping to salvage something tangible from the 2020 summer holiday season these recent setbacks are unlikely to help," said Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

Shares in British Airways parent IAG tumbled 4.8 pc.

The updated quarantine "is sadly yet another blow for British holidaymakers and cannot fail to have an impact on an already troubled aviation industry", IAG said in a statement.

The UK government said the change would kick in Saturday at 0300 GMT, sparking an exodus among the estimated 160,000 British holidaymakers in France after a rise in coronavirus cases there.

US stimulus

Equities were also retreating

Friday over fading hopes of a US stimulus deal being struck -- and ahead of key weekend trade talks between the United States and China.

Hopes that Democrats and Republicans would cast aside their mutual animosity to stump up much-needed cash for struggling Americans have been key to supporting equities for weeks.

But they were dealt a blow Thursday when senators broke up for a summer recess, saying they would not return until early next month, while both sides continued to trade accusations over who was to blame for the

Key figures around 1530 GMT

London - FTSE 100:	▼ 1.6 pc at 6,090.04 points (close)
Frankfurt - DAX 30:	▼ 0.7 pc at 12,901.34 (close)
Paris - CAC 40:	▼ 1.6 pc at 4,962.93 (close)
EURO STOXX 50:	▼ 1.0 pc at 3,309.29
New York - Dow:	▲ 0.1 pc at 27,928.80
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 0.2 pc at 23,289.36 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng:	▼ 0.2 pc at 25,183.01 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 1.2 pc at 3,360.10 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.1832 from \$1.1820 at 2050 GMT
Dollar/yen:	▼ at 106.47 yen from 106.91 yen
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.3104 from \$1.3066
Euro/pound:	▼ at 90.29 pence from 90.41 pence
West Texas Intermediate:	▼ 0.5 pc at \$42.01 per barrel
Brent North Sea crude:	▼ 0.6 pc at \$44.71 per barrel

impasse.

Democrats have called on Republicans and the White House to double their \$1-trillion offer, having reduced their own proposal to \$2 trillion from an initial \$3.5 trillion.

The expectation remains that an agreement will at some point be found, particularly with the US election nearing and millions of Americans in financial crisis.

In a sign of the battle governments could have in rebooting their economies, data out of China Friday showed consumers were still reluctant to go out spending, with retail sales falling last month despite forecasts of a small increase.

While the drop was shallower than in June, Innes said it showed that it was "going to take

more than stimulus and deep discounts on luxury products to get people shopping again".

At the same time, industrial production continued to grow, suggesting the economy's recovery is being supported by the manufacturing sector.

A 1.2 pc increase in US retail sales in July compared to June, more modest than economists had been expecting, also dented sentiment about the strength of the economic recovery there.

Investors will be keeping a close eye on talks at the weekend between China and the US that will review the trade pact signed in January, though expectations are for the deal to be kept in place despite increasing tensions between Washington and Beijing.

Gold set for worst week since March, pressured by high yields



Gold bars at the Austrian Gold and Silver Separating Plant 'Oegussa' in Vienna, Austria

Reuters

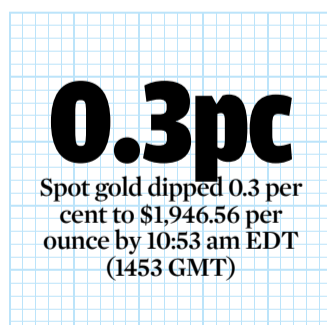
Gold fell yesterday, on track to post its worst week since March, as an uptick in US Treasury yields and a logjam over a US stimulus bill to help the coronavirus-hit economy dented the metal's allure.

Spot gold dipped 0.3 per cent to \$1,946.56 per ounce by 10:53 am EDT (1453 GMT) and US gold futures fell 0.8pc to \$1,953.80.

After hitting a record peak of \$2,072.50 on Aug. 7 and rising over the previous nine weeks, bullion declined 4.3pc this week.

"The gold market had been in a parabolic state, so when you throw a little pickup in yields along with the impasse on the stimulus bill, it was going to see a bit of a retracement," said David Meger, director of metals trading at High Ridge Futures.

"We might have gone a little too far, too fast, and we believe the market is in need of a pause, a consolidation. And that's exactly what we are see-



ing." Poor economic data from far and wide, including disappointing US retail sales, also did not help safe-haven gold.

The benchmark US 10-year Treasury yield hovered near seven-week highs, while hopes for a fresh round of US coronavirus relief faded as Congress went into recess.

Higher yields increase the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding assets such as bullion, which has climbed over 28pc so far this year.

Among other metals, silver shed 2.6pc to \$26.83 per ounce, set to snap a 9-week winning streak, down 5.2pc so far.

Platinum fell 0.2pc to \$955.32 and palladium eased 0.2pc at \$2,162.39.

'Reality and Challenges' of Pension fund

Iman Mustafa Al-Mirbati, the CEO of the Public Authority for Social Insurance, reviews objectives of the General Organisation of Social Insurance

● The event, which aims to enhance communication among senior government officials and the media community

By Adel Abdulla Al Refaei

The future of pension funds "Reality and Challenges" was the topic of the talks organised by the National Contact Centre as part of "meeting with a government official" initiative. The event, which aims to enhance communication among senior government officials and the media community, this week welcomed the CEO of the Public Authority for Social Insurance, Iman Mustafa Al-Mirbati.

The meeting also falls in line



Fatima Al Serafi

The authority is fully committed to, in the event of an insured suffering a work injury or occupational disease, pay allowances and compensation

IMAN MUSTAFA AL-MIRBATI
THE CEO OF THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY FOR SOCIAL INSURANCE



with a series of meetings the National Contact Center is organising in coordination with various government agencies to shed light on various topics of public interest.

During the recent talks, Al-Mirbati reviewed the objectives of the General Organisation of Social Insurance, which seeks to maintain the sustainability of two basic elements to

achieve social security - securing a retirement pension for the insured and beneficiaries.

Al-Mirbati told the participants that the "Authority is fully committed to, in the event of an insured suffering a work injury or occupational disease, pay allowances and compensation.

Besides, the authority is also committed to "maintaining the funds' solvency to ensure their ability to pay their future obligations towards all of the beneficiaries."

Al-Mirbati explained that achieving a balance between revenues from contributions and retirement expenditures is reflected in the sustainability of pension funds.

During the meeting, statistical reports were presented showing the acceleration of retirement and insurance expenditures against contributions during the past ten years.

The CEO of the Public Authority for Social Insurance also clarified the objectives of the

actuarial study conducted for the financial position of pension funds in the short and long term.

Al-Mirbati said it for ensuring the fund's ability to fulfil their future obligations towards those subject to pension systems, and to propose solutions that extend the life of the pension funds.

Al-Mirbati also reviewed the results of the actuarial review of the retirement and insurance funds, the recommendations of the actuary, the reforms proposed by the Authority's Board of Directors, and the reforms of Decree-Law No. (21) of 2020 represented in stopping the annual increase in pensions, taking into account those with limited income and the permissibility of the increase when there is a surplus.

In addition to the prohibition of combining between pensions excluding disability, work injury, kinship wages, merging the public and private sector funds, prohibiting the combination of pension and salary or wage.

Rosneft back in profit in second quarter

Reuters | Moscow

Russia's largest oil producer Rosneft made a second-quarter profit of 43 billion roubles after reporting a loss in the previous three months thanks to a rise in oil prices, it said yesterday.

Rosneft, headed by Igor Sechin, a long-standing ally of President Vladimir Putin, is the first big Russian oil company to report financial results for the second quarter, when oil prices started to rebound after hitting a 21-year low in April.

The oil market, under pressure from overproduction and the fallout from the coronavirus crisis, has been on a recovery path thanks to a global deal between OPEC and other leading oil producers, including Russia, to cut oil production.

The company, which accounts for more than 40pc of Russia's total oil output, said it produced 4.04 million barrels of oil per day (bpd) in the second quarter, down 13pc from the previous quarter, due to the global output reduction deal.

Didier Casimiro, Rosneft's first vice president, told investors on a call that the company had increased daily oil production in early August by around 6pc from July, in line with the easing of output curbs by the OPEC+ group.

Rosneft expects the company's, and Russia's overall, oil production to remain stable in August-December.

A company official also said Rosneft's capital expenditure may increase to 1 trillion roubles in 2021 from a downward-



Rosneft is headed by Igor Sechin, a long-standing ally of President Vladimir Putin

ly revised 750 billion roubles in 2020.

Back to profit

Rosneft gave a dollar figure of \$700 million for its April-June earnings, saying the conversion was calculated using average monthly Central Bank of Russia exchange rates for the reporting period.

The company, in which BP owns a 19.75pc stake, sustained a loss of 156 billion roubles (\$2.13 billion) in the first quarter, when the oil price fell by two-thirds.

"As prices for crude oil and refined products had improved, our financial metrics demonstrated a positive dynamic in the course of 2Q 2020. This provides us confidence that the company's financial results will stage a recovery in the upcoming periods," Sechin said in a statement.

In the second quarter of 2019, Rosneft had reported a net profit of 194 billion roubles.

Indonesia prez urges economic 'reboot', boost to health care

- Widodo proposed a 2,747.5 trillion rupiah (\$186.65 billion) 2021 budget

- He said the fiscal deficit should dip to 5.5pc of GDP

- Indonesia has recorded the highest death toll due to coronavirus in Southeast Asia

Reuters | Jakarta

Indonesia must use the coronavirus pandemic to reboot Southeast Asia's biggest economy, President Joko Widodo said yesterday, as he proposed a \$187 billion 2021 budget that includes spending more on healthcare, including vaccines, and infrastructure.

Widodo made the remarks in his annual state of the union and budget speeches to parliament. Due to coronavirus precautions, less than half of the lawmakers were present for his address, with the rest watching online.

Likening the current economic situation to "a computer crash", he said Indonesia, along with other countries, must "shutdown, restart and reboot".

"We must capitalize on the crisis as a momentum to make a big leap," he said.

Widodo proposed a 2,747.5 trillion rupiah (\$186.65 billion) 2021 budget, up 0.3 per cent from this year. He said the fiscal



Indonesian President Joko Widodo wearing a protective mask waves to journalists as he arrives at the parliament building in Jakarta

deficit should dip to 5.5pc of GDP, from 6.34pc in 2020, the highest in more than a decade as the government sought to shield the economy from the pandemic. Indonesia has recorded the highest death toll due to coronavirus in Southeast Asia, though authorities have been pushing

to reopen the economy.

Economic growth should rebound to 4.5pc-5.5pc next year, Widodo said, compared with government projections of stalled growth this year and a 5pc rise in 2019.

The budget showed "the government is pretty optimistic

\$1.7bn

Widodo, who allocated \$1.7 billion for COVID-19 vaccines and research, said accelerating reform of the health sector was a top priority

about its expectation for economic recovery even as we see globally that the recovery in developed economies has been pretty slow," said Josua Pardede, an economist with Bank Permata.

Widodo, who allocated \$1.7 billion for COVID-19 vaccines and research, said accelerating reform of the health sector was a top priority, along with strengthening food supply chains, including with a newly planned food estate on Borneo island.

He also highlighted plans to slash oil imports by using fuel made from palm oil, including by expanding the green diesel state oil firm Pertamina successfully made from 100pc palm oil.

The so-called D100 would absorb a minimum of 1 million tonnes of farmer-produced palm for 20,000 barrels of production capacity per day, Widodo said, without giving a timeframe.

Cash and food assistance, tax breaks and programmes to support small firms would continue next year, though would fall to \$24 billion, compared with \$47 billion this year. To aid economic recovery, \$28 billion of infrastructure spending was proposed.

Retailers launch coalition to fight counterfeits on Amazon

Reuters | Washington

The Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA), whose members include companies such as Walmart Inc and Target Corp, said yesterday it has joined over a dozen trade groups to form a coalition to fight counterfeit goods on online platforms such as Amazon.com Inc.

The coalition, called The Buy Safe America Coalition, will back legislation that would require digital marketplaces to verify information about third-party merchants on their platform, RILA said.

The lobbying push comes at a time when Amazon has been under scrutiny from lawmakers and the White House over the sale of counterfeit items.

Porsche plans new plant for car bodies

Reuters | Prague

Volkswagen's Porsche plans building a new plant to make car bodies in Slovakia, where it may create up to 1,200 jobs, Slovak newspaper Dennik N reported yesterday.



The sport cars maker already has one plant in the country and it has been constructing a development centre.

Slovakia is the world's biggest per capita car producer, with 1.1 million vehicles in 2019.

India grants five month extension to renewable project completion

Reuters | New Delhi

India has granted five month extension to Aug. 24 to all renewable energy projects that were under implementation on the March 25, when the country went under nearly a seven week complete lock-

down, a government statement said yesterday.

"This blanket extension, if invoked by the RE (renewable energy) developers, will be given without case to case examination and no documents/evidence will be asked for such extension," said the statement.

US-China trade deal review postponed -sources

- China is well behind the pace of purchases of US exports needed to meet first-year targets

- US signaled that they are satisfied with the pace of purchases

Reuters | Washington

A review of the US-China trade deal initially slated for Saturday will be delayed due to scheduling issues and no new date has been agreed, according to sources familiar with the plans.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin



US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer points at markers on the floor as he leads Chinese Vice Premier Liu He and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to their position for a family photo at the Xijiao Conference Center in Shanghai, China

and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He had been expected to meet via videoconference today, the six-month anniversary of agreement's taking effect.

One source familiar with the talks said the delay stemmed from continued meetings of senior Communist Party leaders at the seaside town of Beidaihe on China's northeast coast.

Specific dates for the secretive party conference, normally held in August, are never published.

The delay did not reflect any substantive problem with the trade deal, the source said, adding: "The new date has not been finalized yet."

The US Trade Representative's office did not respond to a Reuters query about plans for the review.

China is well behind the pace of purchases of US exports need-

ed to meet first-year targets for major increases in its purchase commitments. It was slated to buy \$77 billion more than in 2017 this year, and \$123 billion over the 2017 level in 2021.

Trump administration officials have signaled that they are satisfied with the pace of purchases in recent weeks and have no plans to abandon the trade deal, which also includes some increased access for US financial services firms in China, strengthened intellectual property protections and removal of some agricultural trade barriers.

The trade deal has emerged as a lone source of stability amid significant strain in the US-China relationship over the coronavirus pandemic, human rights crack-downs and US sanctions on Chinese companies and phone apps.

INDIA
INDEPENDENCE
DAY 15 AUGUST



Celebrating Independence Day

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the nation in celebrating the 74th Independence Day at the majestic Red Fort in New Delhi today. He will unfurl the National Flag and deliver the customary Address to the Nation from the ramparts of the iconic monument. On his arrival at 0718 hours in front of Lahore Gate of Red Fort, Narendra Modi will be received by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar. The Guard of Honour contingent for the Prime Minister will consist of one officer and 24 men each from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Delhi Police. The Guard of Honour will be positioned directly in front of the National Flag across the moat below the ramparts. This year, Army being the coordinating Service, the Guard of Honour will be commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Gaurav S Yewalkar. Army Contingent in the Prime Minister's Guard will be commanded by Major Palvinder Grewal, the Navy contingent by Lieutenant Commander K V R Reddy, while Squadron Leader Vikas Kumar will lead the Air Force contingent and the Delhi Police contingent by Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Shri Jitender Meena.

After unfurling the National Flag, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation. After the speech of the Prime Minister is over, the National Cadet Corps cadets will sing the National Anthem. On this festival of national fervour, 500 NCC cadets (Army, Navy and Air Force) from different schools will be taking part.

he will unfurl the National Flag. On unfurling the National Flag, the National Guard will give 'Rashtriya Salute' to the National Flag. The Army Grenadiers Regimental Centre Military Band will play the National Anthem during unfurling of the National Flag and the 'Rashriya Salute'.

Major Shweta Pandey will assist the Prime Minister in unfurling the National Flag. The unfurling of the tri-colour will synchronise with the 21 Gun Salute fired by the valiant gunners of the elite 2233 Field Battery (Ceremonial).

After unfurling the National Flag, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation. After the speech of the Prime Minister is over, the National Cadet Corps cadets will sing the National Anthem. On this festival of national fervour, 500 NCC cadets (Army, Navy and Air Force) from different schools will be taking part.

Independence Day is celebrated annually on 15 August as a national holiday in India commemorating the nation's independence from the United Kingdom on 15 August 1947, the day when the provisions of the Indian Independence Act 1947, which transferred legislative sovereignty to the Indian Constituent Assembly, came into effect.

CELEBRATION IN BAHRAIN

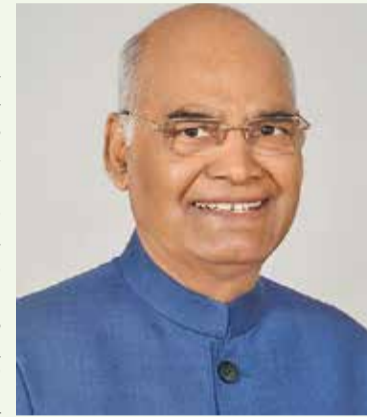
On the occasion of the 74th Independence Day of India a flag hoisting ceremony will be organised in the embassy complex today at 7.30am, followed by reading of the message of President of India by the Ambassador Piyush Srivastava. Due to social distancing norms and restrictions on large gatherings amid Covid-19, physical participation of the members of the Indian community and friends of India in the Kingdom of Bahrain in the flag hoisting ceremony would not be possible this year, the embassy stated. The embassy would be telecasting live the flag hoisting programme on its Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts.

All Corona Warriors deserve high praise

On the eve of the 74th Independence Day, Indian President Ram Nath Kovind addressed the nation last evening. In his speech, President Kovind mentioned the steps taken by the government to tackle the coronavirus pandemic that has wreaked havoc around the world. "This year's Independence Day celebrations will be restrained as deadly virus has disrupted all activities, and taken huge toll," he said, and added, "It was a superhuman effort on part of the govt to respond effectively in meeting the challenges due to COVID pandemic." Here's the excerpt of the speech.

"The ethos of our freedom struggle forms the foundation of modern India. Our visionary leaders brought together a diversity of world views to forge a common national spirit. We are fortunate that Mahatma Gandhi became the guiding light of our freedom movement. As much a saint as a political leader, he was a phenomenon that could have happened only in India.

The celebrations of Independence Day this year will be rather restrained. The reason is obvious. The whole world confronts a deadly virus which has disrupted all activities and taken a huge toll. The nation is indebted to doctors, nurses and other health workers who have been continuously on the forefront of our fight against this virus. Unfortunately, many of them have lost their lives battling the pandemic. They are our national heroes. All Corona Warriors deserve high praise. Committed to taking care of our people stranded anywhere in the world, the Government has brought back more than 10 lakh Indians under the 'Vande Bharat Mission'.



Indian President Ram Nath Kovind

Confident of our strengths, we reached out to help other countries in their fight against COVID-19. In responding to calls from countries for supply of medicines, India has once again shown that it stands by the global community in times of distress. We have been at the forefront in evolving regional and global strategies for an effective response to the pandemic. The overwhelming support India got

at the elections for the non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council is a testimony to the goodwill we enjoy internationally.

We have learnt some tough lessons in the year 2020. The invisible virus has demolished the illusion that human being is the master of nature. I believe, it is still not too late for humanity to correct its course and live in harmony with nature. The pandemic, like climate change, has awakened the global community to our shared destiny. In my view, 'human-centric collaboration' is more important than 'economy-centric inclusion', in the present context. The greater this change, the better it will be for the humanity. The twenty-first century should be remembered as the century when humanity put aside differences and collaborated to save the planet.

With a view to providing futuristic education to our children and youth, the Central Government has decided to implement the National Education Policy. I am confident that with the implementation of this policy, a new quality education system will be developed and this will transform the future challenges into opportunities, paving the way for a New India. Our youth will be able to freely choose their subjects according to their interests and talents. They would have an opportunity to realise their potential. Our future generations will not only be able to get employment on the strength of such abilities but will also create employment opportunities for others.

The patience and wisdom being demonstrated by all of you in coping with the pandemic has been appreciated all over the world. I am confident that you will continue to maintain caution and act responsibly. We have a lot to offer to the global community, especially for intellectual and spiritual enrichment and promotion of world-peace. With this spirit, I offer a prayer for the well-being of one and all. Thank you.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi



India

INDEPENDENCE DAY
August 15

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic visit to Bahrain last year was a milestone that would help to further cement the excellent ties between India and the Kingdom of Bahrain. Prime Minister Modi was honoured with "The King Hamad Order of the Renaissance" as he held talks with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on various bilateral and regional issues. Narendra Modi also met His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, and discussed ways to strengthen the friendship between India and Bahrain, with a focus on business relations and cultural exchange.

New vistas of cooperation

The Indian Ambassador Piyush Srivastava extended his warm greetings and congratulations to the members of Indian community in the Kingdom of Bahrain on the occasion of the Independence Day of India. 'Today, the world is facing unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic. The global community has come together to fight this huge crisis. India and Bahrain have also cooperated and coordinated their efforts in this regard. I take this opportunity to thank the Leadership of the Kingdom of Bahrain for ensuring the welfare of the large Indian community in Bahrain during Covid-19 pandemic and for extending full cooperation to the Vande Bharat Mission of the Government of India for repatriation of Indian nationals,' Piyush Srivastava said.

The Ambassador continued: 'While

India continues to battle the Covid-19 crisis, persistent efforts are being made on the economic front to stabilize and speed up growth. The Government of India has undertaken several transformative reforms to respond to the economic adversities posed by the COVID 19 pandemic, as well as to fulfil the vision of making India a US \$5 trillion economy. These policy initiatives have placed the poor and vulnerable sections of the society at core of the growth agenda thus underlining equal importance of 'Ease of Living' and 'Ease of Business'.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in May 2020 announced the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', which focusses on making India self-reliant and contributing towards a more prosperous and resilient world. Agriculture is a key pillar of this Mission and the

Government of India has set up an INR 1 lakh crore (about USD 13.3 billion) 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund' to provide impetus for development of post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets, besides promoting and encouraging agriculture entrepreneurs and start-ups. India continued to be a favored destination for foreign investment. Even during COVID 19 crisis, the country attracted more than USD 20 billion FDI (during April-July 2020). The Government has further liberalized FDI policy including in the crucial energy and defence sectors.

India is thus cementing its place as a land of opportunities. These policy initiatives and reforms have also opened up possibilities for greater economic engagement with Bahrain.

The historical and civilizational ties



Ambassador Piyush Srivastava

between India and Bahrain, characterized by trade and people-to-people contact, have been further strengthened in recent times with regular high-level political interaction and opening up of new vistas of cooperation in areas of maritime security, infrastructure and investment, high-tech areas, health, renewable energy and space technology.

The dynamic and vibrant Indian Community in Bahrain remains a significant anchor in our bilateral ties. Their contribution to the growth and development of both India and Bahrain

has been publicly acknowledged by the Leadership of the two countries.

As Ambassador of India to Bahrain, it would be my endeavor to further strengthen and diversify the age-old bonds of friendship and cooperation between our two countries, and to ensure the welfare of the large Indian Community in Bahrain.

I conclude by wishing growth, development and prosperity to the Kingdom of Bahrain and its friendly people.

Long live India-Bahrain friendship!

LuLu International Exchange
لولو العالمية للمصارفة

On the occasion of the 74th Independence Day, LuLu International Exchange wishes India and its people, peace, prosperity and happiness.



CELEBRATING THE **STRENGTH**
& **SPIRIT OF A GREAT NATION**

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India's 74th Independence Day comes at an opportune time, as the country stands on the threshold of a major state of transition. The emergence of an entirely new generation of digital natives along with the world's rapid adoption of technology, will both be a boost as well as a test of India's resilience. Throughout its history, the country has shown that its people are its biggest strength, and the same holds true today.

NRIs have been a vital backbone of the country's growth story, bringing in investments and knowledge that have built upon the strengths of the existing local ecosystem. Bahrain has traditionally been a major source of remittances to India. This has naturally paved the way for financial services companies in the country to

introduce innovative and dependable solutions to serve the region's NRI community.

LuLu International Exchange, an ISO 9001:2015 certified organization, is today among the leading financial services outlet for expats in Bahrain, operating 13 branches in the country.

The company is a part of LuLu Financial Holdings, an ISO 9001:2015 certified global financial services enterprise headquartered in Abu Dhabi. The group operates more than 200 branches across several GCC countries such as Oman, UAE, Kuwait, and Bahrain, as well as in India, Bangladesh, Seychelles, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and the Philippines. In Bahrain, the company provides remittances and bank notes services to a cross-section of society, powered by a robust

network, reputed partners, and high standards of customer care.

The company's digital offering LuLu Money has been of great support to the expat community, who have been using it in recent weeks to conduct instant online transactions, as well as payment tracking in real time, rate alert setting and payment history, among others.

The organization also offers its customers the Gold Card, which allows them to obtain a host of benefits at LuLu Exchange bureaus, and discounts at various other partner outlets across Bahrain.

On the occasion of the 74th Independence Day of India, LuLu Exchange would like to salute and congratulate the great nation of India and its people.

On a mission

By P. Unnikrishnan

Indian Ambassador Piyush Srivastava expressed India's pride in its strong friendly relations with the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the two countries' mutual respect and coordination. In an exclusive interview with The Daily Tribune's Managing Editor P. Unnikrishnan, the Ambassador said he was thankful to the Kingdom of Bahrain for the care and attention accorded by the government to the Indian community. Here are the excerpts from the interview.

Q: Your Excellency, today is a great day in the history of India and Indian democracy. As we celebrate the 74th Independence Day of India, can you tell about major developments taking place in India?

A: First of all, let me convey my greetings and best wishes to the members of Indian community and friends of India in the Kingdom of Bahrain on the occasion of 74th Independence Day of India. It is a proud day for every Indian.

Today, India is entering into a new era of economic transformation. Indian economy has become one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Skilled human resources, improvement in 'ease of doing business' and a huge market are some of the factors empowering India into a most preferred manufacturing destination. While I can go on and on speaking about giant strides made by India in almost all sectors including key sectors of space, ICT, hi-tech and digital sectors, energy, health, education, infrastructure, civil aviation etc. I would like to focus here on our response to the most difficult challenge of our times - COVID 19 pandemic.

India has dealt with the pandemic relatively well. Even though the absolute number of COVID 19 infections may appear large, our recovery rates are among the highest and mortality rate are among the lowest in the world. While India continues to battle the Covid-19 crisis, the government has made persistent efforts for reinvigorating the economy. The challenges have been turned into opportunities with the Government undertaking several transformative reforms. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in May 2020 announced the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', which focusses on making India self-reliant and contributing towards a more prosperous and resilient world. India's role as a "pharmacy of the world" has come into focus during this crisis. We have a world-class pharmaceutical industry that is the producer of choice for critical medications with brand recognition in all geographies and markets. India continued to be a favored destination for foreign investment. Even during COVID 19 crisis, the country attracted more than USD 20 billion FDI (during April-July 2020). The Government has further liberalized FDI policy including in the crucial energy and defence sectors.

India has been in forefront of global and regional cooperation in fighting this pandemic. India and Bahrain have also cooperated and coordinated their efforts in this regard.

I am sure that various policy initiatives and reforms undertaken by India will lead to greater economic engagement with friendly countries like Bahrain.

Q: Being the head of a diplomatic mission is a very challenging job. I understand that you had worked and stayed in various foreign countries including Nepal, Bhutan, Ghana and Germany before coming to Bahrain. What was your most memorable experience and why?

A: I have been fortunate to serve as Indian diplomat in countries in different regions of the world. In addition, at headquarters also I served in Divisions dealing with diverse countries. Each place has its unique positives as well as challenges, thus providing varying experiences. My all assignments have been memorable and great learning experience and made me better understand global issues. The experience gained thus far, I am sure, will help me tremendously as I begin my tenure as Ambassador of India to Kingdom of Bahrain.

Q: With your rich experience in Indian foreign ties and economic diplomacy, what do you think is an opportunity that India should explore in the Middle East?

A: India has close civilizational and friendly relations with the countries in the Middle Eastern region. Traditionally, our relations have been characterized by the presence of large Indian diaspora in the Gulf countries and energy security.



Indian ambassador HE Piyush Srivastava with P. Unnikrishnan chairman and MD, The Daily Tribune

With almost 8 million Indian expatriates in this region, ensuring the well-being of Indian citizens remains a priority area for the Government of India. In recent years, with focus on India's extended neighbourhood policy, our relations with the Gulf and West Asian countries have become an increasingly important pillar of our foreign policy. These have been further strengthened and diversified to include new areas of cooperation in maritime security, trade, investments, space technology, capacity building etc.

Q: What are India's plans for boosting foreign relations with Bahrain, especially in terms of economy and trade?

A: Our age-old and deep bonds of friendship and cooperation have been nurtured by the leadership of both countries in recent years with frequent high-level political exchanges and opening up of new vistas of cooperation in the fields of health, renewable energy, space technology and hydrocarbon sector. Bahrain, the gateway to the GCC market, has also embarked on the journey of diversification of its economy with liberalization of FDI regime in a number of promising sectors such as financial services, ICT, logistics, manufacturing and tourism. As I mentioned earlier, several transformative economic reform measures taken recently by the Government of India, have opened up several new opportunities for trade and investment in India. The Government has further liberalized FDI policy including in the crucial energy and defence sectors. Thus, the developments in India and Bahrain have created a new, dynamic synergy between the two countries and have led to the opening up new avenues for enhanced trade and investment.

Q: We have many Indian expatriates who wish to leave for good or are planning to take a short break from Bahrain because of virus concerns. What are your plans for the repatriation of these Indian expatriates?

A: During the initial period of COVID-19 pandemic, there was a sense of panic and urgency amongst many members of Indian community in Bahrain to return back to their near and dear ones because of the uncertainty of the pandemic and its adverse impact on the economy. The same was the case with people across the globe, which is understandable, given its unprecedented scale. Government of India launched its largest ever repatriation programme, Vande Bharat Mission for bringing home the stranded Indians abroad. Under Vande Bharat Mission, with more than 52 special Air India flights, almost 9100 Indians have returned from Bahrain to India. In addition, about 60 chartered flights organized by Indian community repatriated approx. 10000 Indian nationals back home. I would like to thank the Leadership of Kingdom of Bahrain for extending their full cooperation and support for Vande Bharat Mission as well as for ensuring the welfare and well-being of the large Indian community in Bahrain during these difficult times.

As we are now learning to live with this pandemic and the situation is somewhat stabilized, many Indians are now willing to come back to Bahrain for work. We have been receiving many requests in this regard since last few weeks. Both governments are working towards establishing an Air Bubble Arrangement between India and Bahrain so as to facilitate return of Indian expatriates, of course with a valid visa, who are willing to come back

to Bahrain.

Q: There are more than 350,000 Indians living in Bahrain, making Indians the largest expatriate community in the Kingdom. Could you please tell me what are your plans to enhance the existing system to improve the standard of life for the Indian Expatriates?

A: Indian community constitutes almost 30 percent of the population of Bahrain and thus plays a big role in the development of Bahrain which has been publicly acknowledged by the Leadership of Bahrain on several occasions. Our

vibrant community in Bahrain plays an important role in promoting our bilateral ties and further strengthening the existing goodwill between our two countries. It is one of my key responsibilities to ensure the welfare and well-being of members of Indian community in Bahrain. These are my early days here. Going forward, it will be my endeavor to further strengthen and diversify trade and economic cooperation between India and Bahrain, in which our Indian expatriate community plays an important part and I look forward to working with them in this regard.

QUALITY PRODUCT of INDIA

Happy 15th of August Independence Day

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SHAKEEL
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Exceptional taste.

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وجسائري
Extra long grains
Exceptional flavor

Aged Rice

أرز
RIZ
RIS
RUST ARROZ
RISO
PRODUCE OF INDIA
إنتاج الهند
Net Wt.
5 kg
الوزن الصافي
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SANAD 17625293 | SITRA 17730547 | TUBLI 17789504

Bahrain Pride
بحرين برايد
تسوق مع pride

India 2020: The Emerging Global Superpower ?

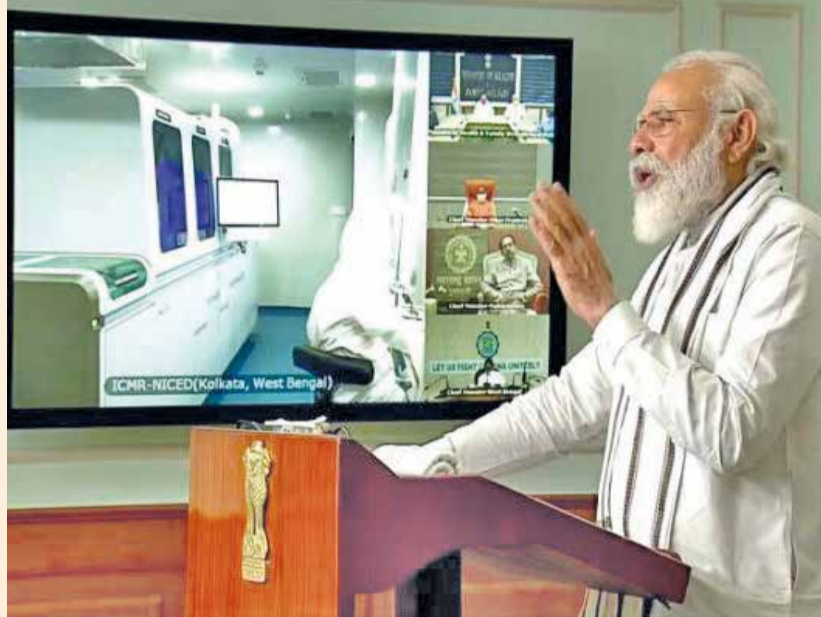


By Srijan Pal Singh
CEO Dr. Kalam Centre and Former
Advisor to Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

Fast forward 7 decades. India never saw a major famine as an independent nation. Even in the COVID-19 times, when some 80 million Indian migrant workers were forced into economically harsh conditions - the government and the civil society rose together to cater to their basic needs. You may have witnessed the pictures of families walking back to their villages often on foot, but what is perhaps less shown is that millions of Indians mobilized billions to do their best to take care of their distressed countrymen. We at Kalam Centre too, managed to feed 500,000 meals - and the nation had many more and bigger initiatives.

This year India completes 73 years as an independent nation. A nation which arose as an assembly of disjointed princely states and oppressions of the exploitative British Raj, has come a long way. In the middle of the second world war and despite theoretically being theoretically on the "winning side", it was India which saw the greatest and silent tragedy of the times when in a single year of 1943, during the Bengal Famine, India lost 3 million humans to abject hunger which was entirely due to the negligence of the ruling British Empire. In comparison the holocaust killed 6 million jews in 6 years, but I would not be surprised if you never heard of the Bengal famine. Indian were, after all, considered expendables.

In March 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19, India was reeling in its medical system. Hospitals had no PPEs, markets had no sanitizers or masks. India was then importing nearly 100% of its PPEs. It was thought to be the basket case which would collapse under the pressure of the pandemic. But not only did India endured through one of the longest lockdowns across the world it silently revamped its entire medical supply industry. By June India was making 200,000 kits a day and by the end of July 2020, India opened up to export PPE and other protective supplies to the rest of the world. I came across a group of tailors in Manipur who had switched over from stitching uniforms and started making reusable masks and cottage industries in Uttar Pradesh who had started making organic sanitizers



Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched three high throughput COVID-19 testing facilities via video conferencing. These facilities are located at the National Institutes of Indian Council of Medical Research, at Kolkata, Mumbai and Noida.

in their homes. Almost half a dozen major India pharma companies are manufacturing generic Remdesivir and Fabpiravir, the two drugs which are front runners in the fight against coronavirus. Their price is as less as one-tenth compared to the USA. Similarly, Pune based Serum India is planning to produce 100 million doses of COVID vaccine as soon as the clinical trials are positive.

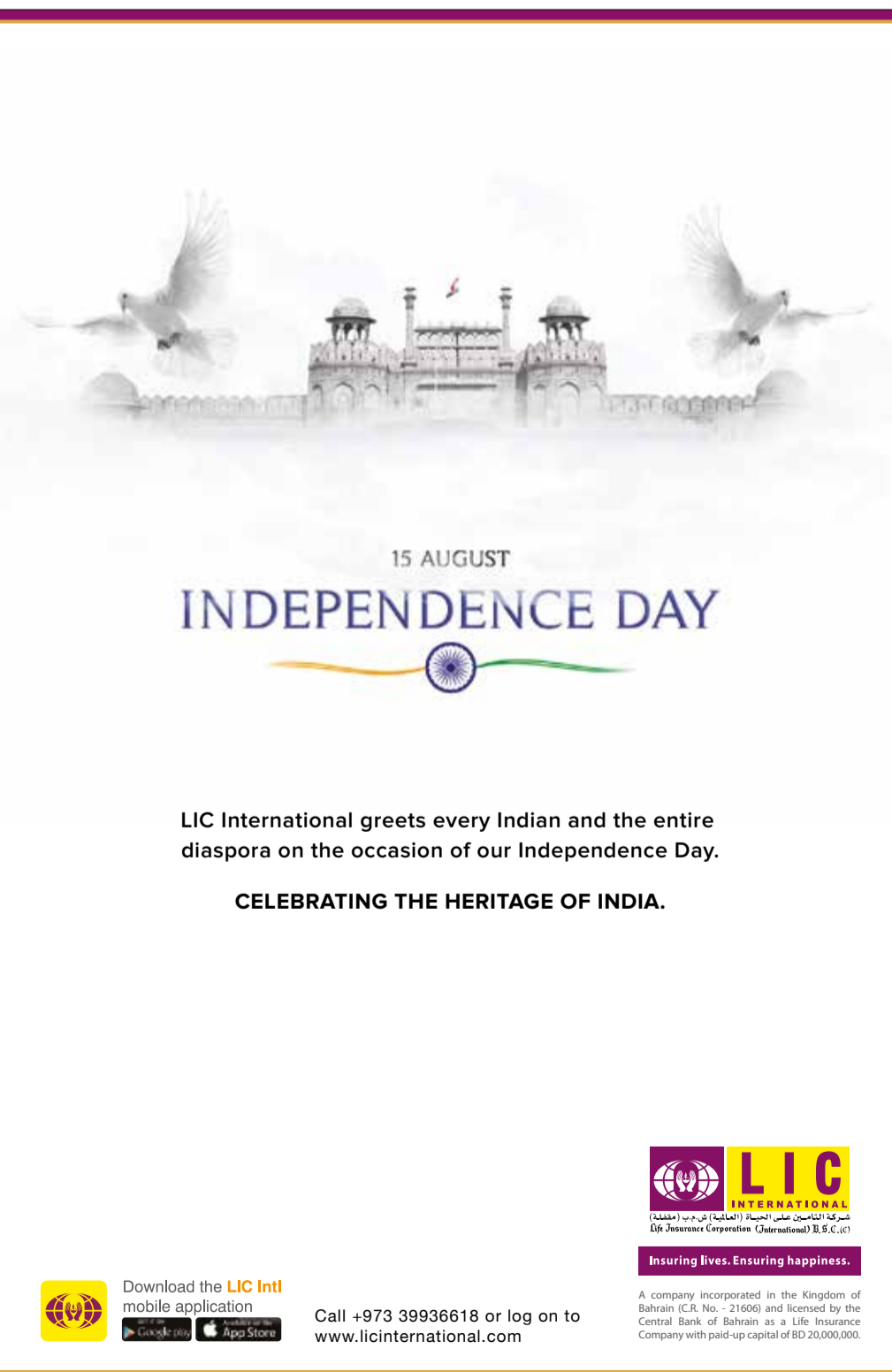
COVID has also opened a long term opportunity for India to be the next

manufacturing hub of the world. India finds an opportunity in the global manufacturing sector to strengthen its standing in the global trade scenario by strengthening ties with the United States and EU as a trusted trade partner. The fierce US-China trade war has diverted the investment flow towards India particularly under the high tariff categories. Manufacturing units around the world are looking for stable and resilient countries to shift production units out of China post the

worldwide hostility towards China over COVID-19 and disruption in the supply chain owing to over-dependency on China. Approximately 1,000 companies have applied to shift manufacturing bases from China to India. India, with its abundant workforce and a growth hungry government, is gradually emphasizing on policy amendments and infrastructure development to strengthen its economy in the post COVID era. Thus, luring in prospective manufacturing giants.

India celebrates its independence in the middle of global pandemic but also amidst hopes and opportunities. Two days, we declared provisions to enable fearlessness in honest taxpayers. Last week we declared a new education policy after a gap of more than three decades. We are contemplating the data privacy bill with provisions no less than the standards of the European union. A month ago, when China tried to intimidate India with brutal aggression, we did not cower to the economic giant of the world. We publicly denounced the expansionist desires, economically hit them back and upgraded our arsenal with the modern jets. India@73 does not panic, it finds its roar.


Standing on our 74th birthday a long way lies ahead of us and every Indian, those within India and those expats and NRIs who extend our Indian culture outside our political borders are the harbingers, beneficiaries and carriers of the challenges and opportunities which we face.





15 AUGUST
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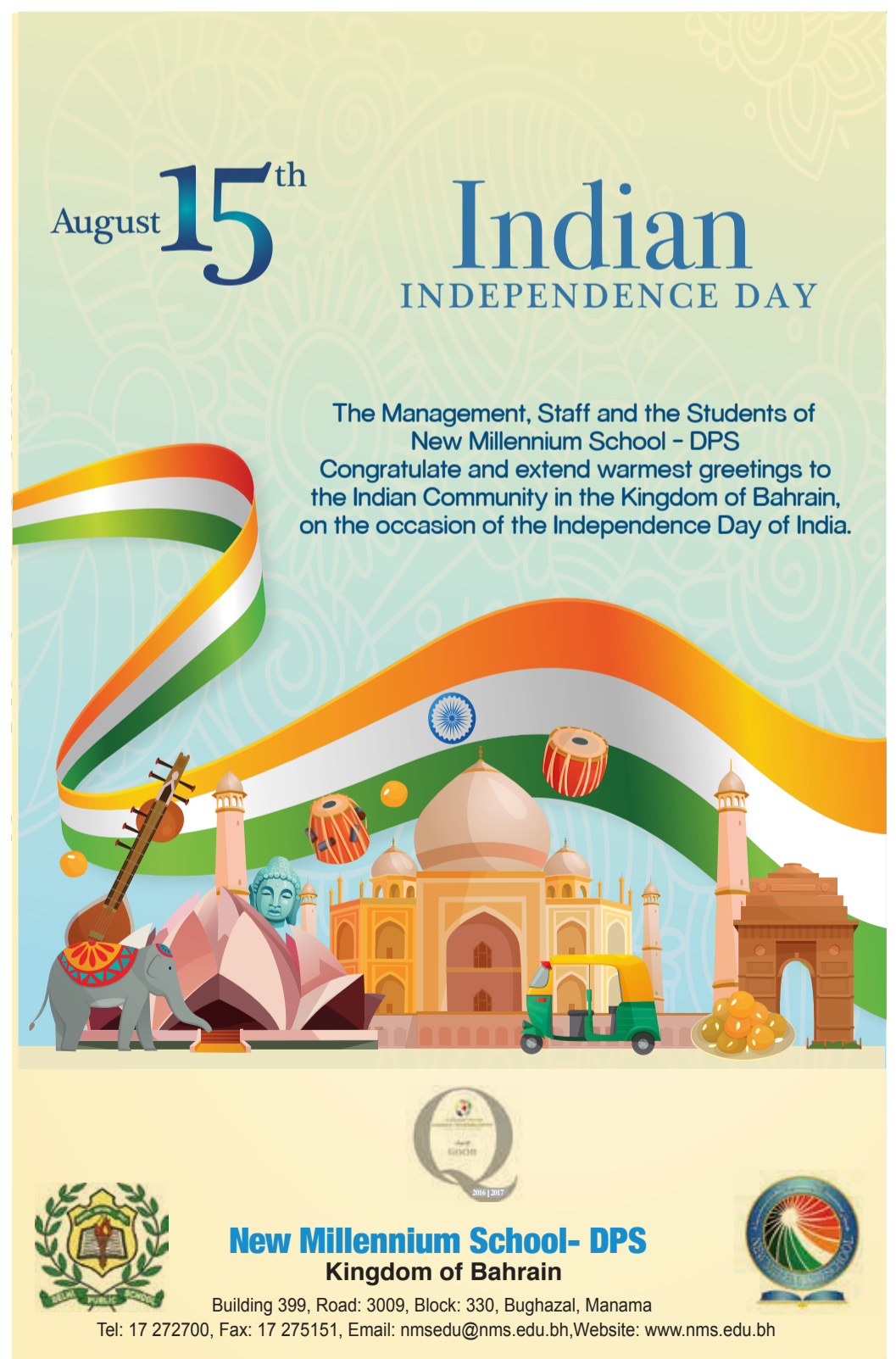

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August **15th**
Indian INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Management, Staff and the Students of
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Congratulate and extend warmest greetings to
the Indian Community in the Kingdom of Bahrain,
on the occasion of the Independence Day of India.



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India



INDEPENDENCE DAY

August 15

India is a constructive, dependable actor globally

Through the pandemic, it has not only met its domestic requirements but taken a range of steps for global good



Hindustan Times

Covid-19 continues to exact a heavy toll worldwide. In India too, positive cases are rising. However, our effective domestic response has led to a significant improvement in our recovery rate, which is now 68.78%. The case fatality rate at 2.01% remains one of the lowest in the world.

High recovery and low-fatality outcomes can be attributed to proactive measures taken to deal with the outbreak from its early stages. We started screening Covid-19 cases a full 13 days before the first case was detected in India. We implemented full lockdown on the 55th day of the outbreak when we had only around 600 cases. Our public health response has been appreciated by the World Health Organization (WHO). The government took rapid steps to augment health infrastructure. As Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi noted, India now has over 11,000 Covid-19 facilities and 1.1 million isolation beds. We have ramped up testing to over half-a-million tests a day, to be scaled up to a million.

India's response has not been confined to meeting our domestic requirements. We have been significantly engaged with the international community in providing the leadership that the global situation demanded. As a responsible stakeholder in global health supply chains, we ensured timely access to essential drugs and medical items for over 150 countries, while meeting our own domestic requirements. We reaffirmed our position as the first responder to humanitarian crises in the region by deploying medical teams to help Maldives, Mauritius, Comoros and Kuwait deal with the pandemic. India also dispatched naval assets to the Maldives, Mauri-



tius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles to deliver assistance. This demonstrated our strong commitment to the PM's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

From being a net importer of Covid-19-related medical items, we have emerged as a net exporter. Today, we are manufacturing over 500,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and over 300,000 N-95 masks every day. Our system has shown the necessary adaptability and agility to significantly ramp up production to go beyond our domestic requirements.

The repatriation of Indian nationals stranded abroad and the evacuation of foreigners from India to their home countries have been among the most successful aspects of our response. In the initial days, the ministry of external affairs had promptly set up a Covid cell and a 24x7 control room to assist Indian

citizens abroad. The PM had also personally directed our heads of missions to extend all possible assistance to our nationals stranded abroad. Subsequently, the Vande Bharat mission, launched to repatriate our nationals stranded overseas, has been the largest exercise of its kind ever undertaken by the government and has demonstrated our capacity to effectively carry out complex humanitarian missions. Over one million Indians have returned under the Vande Bharat mission so far through flights, across land borders and on naval ships. We have been able to bring home Indian nationals from distant locations, and also facilitated the return of Bhutanese and Nepalese nationals stranded in third countries to their homes on Vande Bharat

flights.

Rigorous screening of returnees by our diplomatic missions has ensured that the proportion of positive cases remains extremely small (less than 0.2%). Testing on arrival by the health ministry and state governments has helped detect these cases. The mission just doesn't end with the arrival of our nationals. We are also mapping their skills on arrival to link them with companies for job opportunities.

There has also been no let-up in our diplomatic outreach during the pandemic. We have initiated and been part of several important conversations globally. Our Neighborhood First policy was on full display when the PM hosted a video conference of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc)

leaders early in the crisis — our first such engagement on Covid-19. He announced a series of measures to deal with the pandemic, including the creation of a Covid-19 emergency fund with a commitment of \$10 million from India. We have also called for a better multilateral response to global crises in the future. The PM has, on several occasions, including in the G-20 and Non-aligned Movement virtual summits, proposed the reform of multilateral cooperation by bringing people to the centre of our efforts. Our own initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure are prime examples of this approach. The decision of the G-20 on debt service suspension for developing countries, which India fully supported, reflects this people-centric approach. At the virtual Global Vaccine Summit, the PM highlighted how India's contribution to the global response in terms of sharing

medicines was guided by our philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. The PM also hosted the first virtual bilateral summit with Australia, which was followed by the India-European Union summit. In addition, the PM has spoken to his counterparts from 61 countries during this period. The external affairs minister has spoken to foreign ministers from 77 countries. We have kept open channels of virtual communication to strengthen partnerships and deal with situations that require diplomatic engagement.

We have been constantly adjusting, adapting and innovating to deal with the changed reality, particularly in our engagement with the world. And in the process, we have been successful in elevating India's profile as a constructive and dependable actor on the global stage.

[Harsh Vardhan Shringla is Foreign Secretary, Government of India. [The views expressed are personal]



Trump fans false birther theory about Harris

US President Donald Trump said he "heard" that vice-presidential hopeful Kamala Harris "doesn't meet the requirements" for that office

● The claims echo a baseless theory that Trump long promoted about his predecessor Barack Obama

Reuters | Washington

US President Donald Trump has stoked false claims that Democratic vice-presidential contender Kamala Harris is ineligible to hold that office because her parents were foreign born.

The claims about Harris -- who was born in the United States, making her constitutionally eligible to be both vice president and president -- echo a baseless theory that Trump long promoted about his predecessor Barack Obama.

"I heard it today that she doesn't meet the requirements," Trump said at a White House news conference on Thursday, referring to an August 12 opinion article in Newsweek.



Donald Trump leaves the Brady Briefing Room after speaking to the press

The article by conservative law professor John Eastman says that "before we so cavalierly accept Senator Harris' eligibility for the office of vice president, we should ask her a few questions about the status of her parents at the time of her birth."

Trump said that Eastman, of Chapman University "is a very highly qualified, very talented lawyer. I have no idea if that's right."

Eastman was also an unsuccessful

Republican challenger, losing in the primary, for the 2010 California attorney general's election won by Harris, who served in that post before becoming a US senator.

Harris, 55, was born in Oakland, California to a mother from India and a father from Jamaica.

A historic choice

Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden, 77, on Tuesday named Harris as his running

mate to challenge Trump in the presidential election. She is the first black woman and woman of South Asian heritage to be given the honor.

Eastman's article followed claims shared thousands of times on Facebook that Harris could not become president because her parents hailed from abroad.

Article 2, Section 1 of the US Constitution says that "no person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States" shall be eligible for the presidency. They must also be at least 35 years old.



I have no idea if that's right. I would have assumed that the Democrats would have checked that out before she gets chosen to run for vice-president

DONALD TRUMP

News in brief

N Korea lifts virus lockdown of border city

◆ North Korean leader Kim Jong Un lifted a three week lockdown in the city of



Kaesong and nearby areas, after a man who defected to the South returned to the border town last month showing coronavirus symptoms. Kim made the decision at a politburo meeting convened to discuss the government's efforts to prevent a coronavirus outbreak, as well as the response to heavy rain and flooding, state news agency KCNA reported.



◆ A California wildfire forced the evacuation of hundreds of homes as it raged largely unchecked through densely forested mountains north of Los Angeles that last burned some 50 to 100 years ago.

The blaze has scorched some 10,500 acres (4,249 hectares) since erupting Wednesday afternoon near Lake Hughes in the Angeles National Forest. As of Thursday afternoon, it remained at zero percent containment, despite a light morning rain over the area, US Forest Service spokesman Andrew Mitchell said. Temperatures in the region were expected to rise above 100 degrees Fahrenheit later in the day, he said.

◆ The World Health Organization said it saw no evidence of coronavirus being spread by food or packaging and urged people not to be afraid of the virus entering the food chain.

People should not fear spread of COVID-19 in food, packaging: WHO

Two cities in China said they had found traces of the coronavirus in imported frozen chicken wings from Brazil and on outer packaging of frozen Ecuadorian shrimp, raising fears that contaminated food shipments might cause a new outbreak.

Mali officials obstructing peace efforts: UN

◆ United Nations experts have accused senior army and intelligence officials in Mali of deliberately obstructing a shaky 2015 peace accord, originally designed to reduce violence in the war-torn West African country.

The revelations appear in an expert report delivered to the UN Security Council on August 7 and which come during a festering political crisis in the Sahel state. Mali is currently in the grip of a deep political impasse between President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and a strident opposition movement insisting on his resignation.



◆ About a quarter of South Korea's medical clinics closed yesterday for a one-day strike in protest at government plans to train new doctors, as the country reported the highest number of domestic

South Korean doctors strike over health plans

coronavirus cases since the end of March. The government plans to increase the number of medical students by 4,000 over the next 10 years, which it says is necessary to be better prepared for public health crises like the coronavirus pandemic. But the Korean Medical Association (KMA), which helped organise the protest, says the country already has more than enough physicians.

◆ Indonesia's Mount Sinabung erupted again with a string of blasts that sent plumes of ash two kilometres (1.2 miles) into the sky, triggering a flight warning and fears of lava flows. The activity marked at least the eighth time that the rumbling volcano on Sumatra island has erupted in less than a week, although there were no injuries or major damage reported.

Biden campaign raises \$48m in 48 hours after naming Kamala Harris as VP choice

Reuters | Washington

The campaign of Democratic presidential contender Joe Biden has raised \$48 million in the 48 hours since he named US Senator Kamala Harris the Democratic vice presidential nominee, a campaign

spokesman told Reuters late Thursday.

Biden, a former vice president himself, on Tuesday picked Harris as his choice for VP, making her the first Black woman on a major-party US presidential ticket.

With social unrest over racial

injustice rocking the country for months since the death in custody of an African-American man, George Floyd - after a police officer knelt on his neck for about nine minutes - Biden was under pressure to select a Black woman as his running mate.

Harris, a 55-year-old senator from California who made her own run for the White House, is also the first Asian-American on a major presidential ticket. Her parents were immigrants, her mother from India and her father from Jamaica.

Nepal landslides kill 16, sweep away homes



People during a rescue operation after a landslide in Nepal

Reuters | Kathmandu

Landslides triggered by heavy rain swept away dozens of houses and killed at least 16 people in mountainous villages of Nepal yesterday and many people were missing, a home ministry official said.

Nepal suffers flash floods and landslides during the June-September rainy season, resulting in loss of life and property every year.

A massive landslide swept away dozens of houses, killing at least 10 people, early yesterday in Sindhu-palshowk, near the capital Kathmandu, ministry official Murari Wasti said.

He said 28 people were missing.

Afghan authorities begin release of 'dangerous' Taliban prisoners



Taliban prisoners walk as they are in the process of being released from Pul-e-Charkhi prison on the outskirts of Kabul

AFP | Kabul

Afghan authorities yesterday said they had started to release 400 Taliban prisoners, the final hurdle in long-delayed peace talks between the two warring sides, even as President Ashraf Ghani warned they were a "danger to the world".

The Afghan government and the Taliban are set to meet within days of the prisoner release being completed, in a move that has drawn widespread condemnation after it emerged many of the inmates were involved in attacks that killed scores of Afghans and foreigners.

A group of 80 prisoners was released on Thursday, said National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal, tweeting that it would "speed

The release of the 400 militants was approved at the weekend by a gathering of thousands of prominent Afghans called by Ghani after the authorities initially refused to free the militants

up efforts for direct talks and a lasting, nationwide ceasefire".



Global

COVID-19 Cases:

21,240,915

Deaths: **760,320**

Recovered: **14,042,576**

New cases: **+181,638**

New deaths: **+3,601**

Countries worst affected			
Country	Total cases	New deaths	Total Deaths
USA	5,454,345	+648	171,063
Brazil	3,238,216	+227	105,791
India	2,525,222	+990	49,134
Russia	912,823	+114	15,498
South Africa	572,865		11,270
Peru	507,996		25,648
Mexico	505,751	+627	55,293
Colombia	433,805		14,145
Chile	382,111	+41	10,340
Spain	358,843	+12	28,617
Iran	338,825	+169	19,331
UK	316,367	+11	41,358
Saudi Arabia	295,902	+35	3,338
Pakistan	287,300	+14	6,153

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Saudi Arabia	295,902	+1,383	3,338	+35	262,959	29,605	1,782	8,484
UAE	63,819	+330	359	+1	57,473	5,987		6,444
Kuwait	75,185	+699	494	+5	66,740	7,951	115	17,575
Oman	82,743	+212	557	+6	77,427	4,759	153	16,158
Egypt	96,108		5,107		56,890	34,111	41	937
Qatar	114,532	+251	190		111,258	3,084	71	40,791

Figures as of closing

Irish women saved clinging to lobster pot after 15 hours at sea



Volunteers helped search for the pair near the County Galway coast
Reuters | Dublin

Two cousins who were blown out to sea paddle boarding off Ireland's west coast were found clinging to a buoy on a lobster pot after a 15-hour ordeal, media reports said.

The Irish Coast Guard said the women aged 17 and 23 were rescued on Thursday after being reported missing the previous evening, prompting an overnight air and sea search of Galway Bay.

They survived heavy rain and strong winds without wetsuits, although they were wearing buoyancy aids, Barry Heskin from the RNLI lifeboat service told public broadcaster RTE.

A local fisherman eventually tracked down the pair 27 kilometres (17 miles) from where they were last seen, having set off with his 18-year-old son to find them, RTE reported.

"They were waving their paddles up in the air, they had us spotted, well they were waving anyway and then we came alongside," fisherman Patrick Oliver told the broadcaster.

"They are weak and tired of course but they were sitting up and (we got) a little bit of chat out of them," he said, adding that he and his son had brought the cousins to an island where they were picked up by a helicopter and taken to hospital.

Biden calls for mask mandate

Joe Biden urges mandatory face-mask order for next three months in effort to save lives

● Joe Biden said wearing a mask was "about your responsibilities as an American" as he and Kamala Harris, drew a contrast with President Trump's handling of the coronavirus

AFP | Washington

White House hopeful Joe Biden called for a nationwide mask-wearing mandate for the next three months, drawing a contrast with President Donald Trump as the challenger makes coronavirus pandemic recovery a focal point of his campaign.

Declaring that "every single American should be wearing a mask" while outside their home, Biden called on governors of all 50 states to institute a national mask mandate "starting immediately" as a way to halt the virus's spread and save tens of thousands of lives.

"Look, this is America. Be a patriot," Biden, with his newly named running mate Kamala Harris standing nearby and wearing a face covering, told reporters near his home in Delaware.

"Protect your fellow citizens, step up, do the right thing," Biden added.

Health experts remain adamant about the need for people to wear masks and maintain social distance to defeat a pandemic that has already infected 20 million people and killed 750,000 worldwide.

Even as COVID-19 rages in the



Democratic presidential nominee and former US Vice President Joe Biden (L) and vice presidential running mate, US Senator Kamala Harris, arrive to conduct their first press conference

United States, Trump has steadfastly ignored recommendations that people wear masks. He himself did not wear one in public until July 11.

"Americans must have their freedoms," Trump said at a White House press briefing, as he accused Biden of "playing politics with the virus" with his call for a mandate.

"We will continue to urge Americans to wear masks when they cannot socially distance, but we do not need to bring the full weight of the federal government down on law-abiding Americans to accomplish this."

The remarks, just 82 days before the election, highlight the political fault lines over health policy that have affected the presidential race.

Biden seeks to make a referendum on Trump's handling of the

57
per cent of Americans disapprove of the President Donald Trump's coronavirus response, according to website FiveThirtyEight

pandemic, with polls showing that 57 percent of Americans disapprove of the president's coronavirus response, according to website FiveThirtyEight.

Thirty-four states have mask mandates, mostly requiring facial coverings indoors or outdoors around other people, according to seniors organization AARP.

Some hotspots, like Florida and Georgia, have no mandate

and their Republican governors have resisted pressure to impose one.

Fresh off Wednesday's campaign rollout that featured the Democratic ticket together for the first time, Biden, 77, and Harris, 55, held a coronavirus working group with health experts who participated remotely.

"As (Biden) has been saying since the beginning of this pandemic, it should be the public health professionals that are leading policy in our country to address this lethal pandemic," Harris said.

Biden and Harris also held a session with experts, including former Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen, on the pandemic's impact on the economy. Democrats widely accuse Trump of mishandling the US response to a pandemic that has claimed

some 167,000 lives nationwide.

Critics have blamed him for voicing falsehoods about the virus, including that children are "almost immune" to COVID-19, and ignoring or sidelining some chief scientists and administration health officials.

Top priority

By highlighting coronavirus recovery at the start of their campaign, Biden and Harris are signaling to voters that the crisis is a top priority.

On Monday, the Democratic National Convention begins -- online -- to formally nominate Biden and his running mate.

The party's presidential hopeful introduced Harris at a rollout event Wednesday near his home in Wilmington, at a gymnasium with no public access due to coronavirus concerns.

Harris was announced as Biden's VP pick a day earlier, sparking a grassroots fundraising spree that the campaign said raised an eye-popping \$26 million in the first 24 hours, and \$34.2 million by the end of Wednesday.

At the rollout, Harris said Trump's "mismanagement" of the pandemic has plunged the nation into its deepest health crisis in a century and the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

"There's a reason (the coronavirus) has hit America worse than any other advanced nation. It's because of Trump's failure to take it seriously from the start," she said.

Harris lamented "his refusal to get testing up and running. His flip-flopping on social distancing and wearing masks. His delusional belief that he knows better than the experts."

'Massive poisonous shock': Scientists fear lasting impact from Mauritius oil spills

Reuters | Nairobi

Some corals have lived for centuries at the fringes of Mauritius. Now smothered for days in heavy fuel oil spilled from a wrecked Japanese tanker nearby, parts of those reefs may be in trouble.

The full impact of the toxic spill is still unfolding, scientists say. As the Indian Ocean island's residents scramble to mop up the oil slicks and clumps, they are seeing dead eels and fish floating in the water, as fuel-soaked seabirds limp onto shore.

Satellite images also show the 1,000 tonnes of spilled oil spreading northward along the coastline from the spill site in the turquoise waters of Blue Bay Marine Park.

The damage, scientists say, could impact Mauritius and its tourism-dependent economy for decades.

"This oil spill occurred in one of, if not the most, sensitive areas in Mauritius," oceanographer and environmental engineer Vassen Kauppamuthoo told Reuters by telephone from the island, where he was surveying the disaster. "We are talking of



A section of the bulk carrier ship MV Wakashio that ran aground on a reef

decades to recover from this damage, and some of it may never recover."

The wildlife at risk include the seagrasses blanketing sand in the shallow waters, clownfish darting around coral reefs, mangrove trees corraling the coastline with their tangled root systems, and the critically endangered Pink Pigeon, endemic to the island.

Giant tortoises slow-walk through a nature reserve on the nearby islet, Ile-aux-Aigrettes, where there is also a scientific research station. Altogether, Blue Bay Marine park counts

38 types of coral and 78 species of fish.

The spill brings "a massive poisonous shock to the system," said Adam Moolna, an environmental scientist from Mauritius who lectures at Keele University in Britain. "This oil will have cascading effects across the webs of life."

Still uncontained

The spill came from the Japanese-owned MV Wakashio, which rammed into a reef in the marine park on July 25. It is still unclear why the ship was sailing so closely to the coast.

About a week later, oil began gushing from the cracked vessel.

However, the flow had been stopped, authorities say, after they pumped the remaining oil from the ship.

On Thursday, the ship's owner Nagashiki Shipping said it would face up to its liability and assess compensation for the disaster.

Already, about 15 km of coastline have been affected by the spill, said Mauritius Marine Conservation Society President Jacqueline Sauzier.

Trump's ex-lawyer to reveal president's 'skeletons' in upcoming book

AFP | Washington

Michael Cohen, US President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer and fixer, on Thursday promised to show how Trump cheated in the 2016 election with Russian help in an upcoming book titled "Disloyal, A Memoir."

"Trump had cheated in the election, with Russian connivance, as you will discover in these pages, because doing anything -- and I mean anything -- to 'win' has always been his business model and way of life," Cohen writes in the book's foreword, which was published online on Thursday. The 3,700-word foreword does not reveal anything new about Russia's interference in



Michael Cohen

the 2016 presidential election, and it was not clear if the book would.

Former Special Counsel Robert Mueller last year concluded that Russia waged a major campaign to help Trump to victory in 2016.

Mueller did not find evidence of a criminal conspiracy between Trump's campaign and Russia, but he did detail extensive contacts between the campaign and Russian operatives.

Cohen worked closely with Trump for years before turning against him, most publicly in testimony to Congress last year prior to Trump's impeachment.

Cohen said he knows where Trump's metaphorical "skeletons" are buried because he buried them.

“ Trump had cheated in the election, with Russian connivance, as you will discover in these pages, because doing anything – and I mean anything – to ‘win’ has always been his business model and way of life

MICHAEL COHEN

celebs

Chrissy Teigen, John Legend expecting their third child

Fox | Los Angeles

Chrissy Teigen and John Legend are adding to their family, sources close to the couple confirmed to Fox News on Thursday.

The pair seemingly announced that baby No. 3 is on the way in the 41-year-old musician's music video for the song "Wild," which features a shot of Teigen rubbing a baby bump while cuddled up with her hubby.

Teigen, 34, stars in the video

with Legend as a pair of head-over-heels lovers that take a drive in a convertible car and play on the beach. The duo has two other children, a 4-year-old daughter Luna and a 2-year-old son Miles, both of whom appear in the music video as well, just before the pregnancy reveal.

Legend and Teigen met in 2006 while filming a music video before marrying in Italy in 2013. While the singer and model are undoubtedly excited, so are their fans.

"Chrissy teigen is pregnant



Chrissy Teigen and John Legend

again omg," a fan tweeted, adding a handful of crying emojis.

"Just learned that @chrissyteigen is pregnant with baby no. 3 and I overly emotional about it," said another.

"Did I cry when @chrissyteigen announced she was pregnant? Yes," a fan revealed. "Have I cried when some of my friends told me they were pregnant? No. Yes my priorities are right."

"Chrissy Teigen is pregnant again?" added a fourth. "Baby fever is too real."

The pairing seems to be a ben-

eficial one for the crooner, as he recently admitted that before dating Teigen, he had cheated in past relationships.

He spilled the details while chatting with Dax Shepard for his podcast "Armchair Expert."

"I think what happened for me, you go through a lot of your life in your teens and I was younger than everybody in high school and college, and so I just didn't get a lot of girls," Legend said of having girlfriends. "When I started to get that attention, I loved it."

SUDOKU

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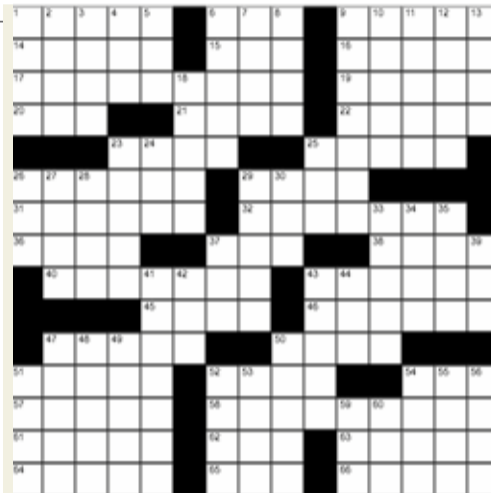
Yesterday's solution

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

How to play

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

CROSSWORD



Across

1- Free to attack; 6- Broadcast; 9- Observes Ramadan; 14- Run away with a lover; 15- Canonized Mile; 16- Bandleader Shaw; 17- Razed; 19- Carries; 20- A Kennedy; 21- Exec's note; 22- Gives a 9.8, say; 23- Prophet; 25- Ascends; 26- Musical ineptitude; 29- Apple product; 31- Insufficient; 32- Soft leather; 36- Klutz's cry; 37- One with a beat; 38- The doctor ; 40- Necessary; 43- Observe; 45- Minerals; 46- Beginning; 47- Butler's love; 50- Member of the Conservative Party; 51- Fuming sulphuric acid; 52- Lyric poems; 54- "Everybody Hurts" band; 57- Hagar's comics wife; 58- Overseer; 61- Connoisseur; 62- Maui memento; 63- Model Campbell; 64- Hagar the Horrible's dog; 65- Time-honored; 66- Transform;

Down

1- Remaining; 2- Paris pronoun; 3- Tailless amphibian; 4- To the point; 5- Hanoi holiday; 6- Grant portrayer; 7- Single, individual unit; 8- Fix up; 9- Cloths; 10- Neighborhoods; 11- Condition; 12- Wearies; 13- Cong. meeting; 18- Abrasive mineral; 23- Have a feeling; 24- Chow down; 25- Actress Charlotte; 26- General on Chinese menus; 27- Image; 28- Back of the neck; 29- Graven images; 30- Swab; 33- Young purre; 34- Egyptian goddess of fertility; 35- Kind; 37- Stimulus; 39- New Jersey cager; 41- Inactive; 42- Monk's title; 43- Snare; 44- Lord's Prayer starter; 47- City on the Allegheny; 48- Ax handle; 49- Boring tool; 50- Halfhearted; 51- Electrical units; 52- 1952 Winter Olympics setting; 53- Shootout; 54- Knee-slapper; 55- Sallinger girl; 56- Gilda of Israel; 59- Messenger ; 60- Actor Kilmer-Formerly, formerly; 59- Greek H; 60- Ed.'s pile;

Yesterday's solution

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Hamilton bounces back

Hamilton heads Bottas in second free practice for Spanish GP

● **Bottas pipped Hamilton in first practice**

AFP | Barcelona



Lewis Hamilton drives his car during practice

Formula One leader Lewis Hamilton went fastest in a searingly hot second practice for the Spanish Grand Prix yesterday with Mercedes again dominant after losing out to Red Bull last weekend.

The six-times world champion, who is 30 points clear of Red Bull's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix winner Max Verstappen after five races, lapped the Circuit de Catalunya outside Barcelona with a best time of one minute 16.883 seconds on soft tyres.

Team mate Valtteri Bottas, who had been faster in the morning session with a lap of 1:16.785 also on softs, was 0.287 off the Briton's pace on an uneventful afternoon where track temperatures exceeded 50 degrees Celsius.

Verstappen was third in both sessions, 0.939 off the Finn's pace in the first and then 0.821 slower in the second, with Renault's Daniel Ricciardo fourth on the timesheets after lunch.

Hamilton has won the last

three Spanish Grands Prix and is going for his fourth win in six races on Sunday in a race rescheduled from May due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's definitely quite tough out there, it's the hottest that it's been," said Hamilton. "I don't think I've been to Spain

when it's this hot.

"It's beautiful weather but it's a killer in the car. And it's obviously very tough on tyres as well."

Mercedes struggled with tyre blistering last Sunday at Silverstone, when Verstappen won, but Hamilton said they were looking OK in that area -- although they had not seen any blistering last Friday either.

"It's been a good day... on the long runs we looked very close to the Red Bull so I think it's going to be a really close race," said Hamilton.

Verstappen said his day had also been positive, even if the Red Bull was still behind Mercedes on single lap pace.

0.287

seconds was the lead Lewis Hamilton had over Valtteri Bottas in second practice

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Swedish talents get big boost with BRAVE CF

BRAVE CF empowers Swedish talents on an international level with European Invasion

● BRAVE CF has identified some of the top talents from Sweden including Bianca Antman, Irman Smaljic, Anton Turkalj

TDI | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation's third straight event in Sweden takes place once again in Stockholm, tomorrow, as Tahar Hadbi looks to make a successful comeback against Greece's Giannis Bachar in the main event. The show will also feature some of the best up-and-coming Swedish stars, a staple of BRAVE CF's European shows - to broadcast and showcase the best local talent wherever it goes.

The partnership with Bulldog Fight Nights has helped BRAVE Combat Federation identify



Andreas Gustafsson looks to maintain Sweden's hot streak at BRAVE CF 39

some of the top talents from Sweden, and since BRAVE CF 37, the first show in Swedish soil, the fastest-growing organization in MMA has been putting the spotlight on the likes of Bianca Antman, Irman Smaljic, Anton Turkalj, amongst others.

All three of the aforementioned names have scored monumental wins in their international debuts.

Antman went viral with her head-kick knockout of the tough Veera Nykanen at BRAVE CF 37. A fellow IMMAF World Champion,

Irman Smaljic had a dominant performance against Fatih Aktas in the co-main event while Anton Turkalj TKO'd Athanasios Chergkeletzis in the first round.

At BRAVE CF 38, the Swedish coming-out party to the MMA world continued in full swing with Elin Oberg scoring the biggest win of her young career against Malin Hermansson, and David Jacobsson, Robert Nystrom, and Jonny Touma also getting huge victories in their BRAVE CF debuts.

As BRAVE CF 39 approaches, the pressure to continue the Sweden Invasion in BRAVE Combat Federation rests at the shoulders of the likes of Andreas Gustafsson, Tobias Harila, and Sahil Siraj. All three men have tall orders in front of them, but they could use this opportunity to showcase once again why Sweden has become a hotbed for mixed martial arts in Europe.

Arsenal sign Brazil winger Willian on three-year contract

Reuters | London

Arsenal have signed Brazil winger Willian on a three-year deal, the Premier League club said.

The 32-year-old joins Arsenal on a free transfer after failing to agree on a new long-term contract with Chelsea.

Willian scored 63 goals in 339 appearances for Chelsea after his arrival from Russian club Anzhi Makhachkala in 2013.

Twice a Premier League winner with the Blues, he will add experience to an Arsenal side full of talented youngsters in Bukayo Saka, Joe Willock, Gabriel Martinelli and Reiss Nelson.

"I believe he's a player that can really make a difference for us," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said in a statement on the club's website.

"We have been monitoring him for the past few months, we had a clear intention to strengthen in the attacking midfielder and the winger positions (and) he is a



We have been monitoring him for the past few months, we had a clear intention to strengthen in the attacking midfielder and the winger positions (and) he is a player that gives us a lot of versatility

MIKEL ARTETA



Willian

player that gives us a lot of versatility."

Willian had confirmed last week that he would leave Chelsea after seven "wonderful" years at Stamford Bridge.

"I have been really impressed with all the talks I have had with him and how much he wanted to come," Arteta added.

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Halep eases through to Prague Open semi-finals



Simona Halep makes a serve
AFP | Prague

Top seed Simona Halep cruised to the WTA Prague Open semi-finals after seeing off Poland's qualifier Magdalena Frech in two sets on another scorching day yesterday.

The reigning Wimbledon champion needed only 59 minutes to beat the 22-year-old Pole 6-2, 6-0 in what was her first convincing win at tournament following two tight three-setters.

"It was a good one and I take it," the 28-year-old world number two told the public Czech Television.

"I hit the ball stronger and I opened the court better" than in the previous two matches, Halep added.

The tournament in Prague is Halep's first trip abroad since February as she spent the lockdown in her native Romania and then pulled out of the first post-lockdown WTA tournament in Palermo last week.

Muharraq go top as Hidd falter

Muharraq beat Ahli in 'El Clasico' as Hidd lose late to Najma

● Defending champions Riffa fire in five goals past Busaiteen

TDT | Manama

Muharraq rose to the top of the table in the Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League last night following a hard-earned 1-0 victory over arch-rivals Al Ahli, as former solo-leaders Hidd were dealt a stunning, late defeat against Al Najma.

Naturalised striker Thiago Augusto Fernandes scored the lone goal for Muharraq in their match, which was played at the Khalifa Sports City stadium in Isa Town.

Games between Muharraq and Ahli are dubbed as the King-



Muharraq players celebrating their goal in their win against Ahli

dom's version of "El Clasico" by local fans, referring to the clubs' long rivalry.

Fernandes found the net in the second minute of the contest to give his team a dream start.

He was on the receiving end of a precision cross off a curling Jamal Rashed free-kick from the right flank, and he made no mistake in firing the ball home right in the face of goal amidst



With the result, Muharraq registered their ninth victory in 13 matches and improved to 30 points on the 10-team league standings

some poor Ahli marking.

Muharraq continued to push and should have added two more goals within the first five minutes. However, Nigerian professional Prince Obus Agreh and Rashed both could not make the most of their sure-fire opportunities.

With the result, Muharraq

registered their ninth victory in 13 matches and improved to 30 points on the 10-team league standings—just a single point ahead of Hidd—with only five matches to play. Ahli remained on 14 points in seventh place.

Hidd could not find the mark in their match against Najma and they gave up a goal in the closing minutes to opposing midfielder Ali Muneer, as they suffered only their second loss of the season. Hidd stayed on 29 points as Najma rose to 21 to move into fourth place overall.

In another match yesterday, defending champions Riffa stayed within striking distance of Muharraq and Hidd after beating Busaiteen 5-1.

Riffa clinched their eighth victory and went to 25 points in third position, while Busaiteen suffered their eighth loss and stayed in ninth place with nine points.

Pol Espargaro tops rain-hit Austrian MotoGP practice

AFP | London

Pol Espargaro on a KTM posted the quickest time in opening practice for this weekend's Austrian MotoGP with yesterday's second session all but wiped out by rain.

KTM are on a roll after Espargaro's South African teammate Brad Binder posted their breakthrough win in the elite

division at the Czech MotoGP last Sunday.

And the Austrian outfit are hoping to capitalise on home advantage for this fourth leg of the coronavirus-curtailed championship.

In overcast but dry conditions Espargaro topped the morning time sheets ahead of last year's winner Andrea Dovizioso (Ducati) and Takaaki Nakagami



KTM duo Espargaro (left) and Binder

(Honda-LCR).

Ducati have won all four Aus-

trian races since the championship returned to Spielberg in 2016.

Binder was down in 16th as he looks to double up after his maiden MotoGP success in only his third race in his rookie season.

Fabio Quartararo, who leads the world championship standings after winning the first two races, came in 10th on his SRT

Yamaha satellite bike.

Defending six-time champion Marc Marquez has yet to score a point this season after crashing in the opening race at Jerez and missing the next two races after surgery on a broken arm.

He will be absent again on Sunday but hopes to return for the fifth leg of the season back at the same Spielberg circuit next week.

greetings



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