

Albert Finney  
steals the show

Albert Finney clinched the seventh and main race of the day yesterday at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) in Riffa, lifting the Al Salam Bank Bahrain Cup and taking home the lion's share of the BD4,000 total prize. **P12**

BAC, NBB ink airport banking services deal



Reese Witherspoon gets another surprise delivery from Beyonce

Greta joins thousands at protest before Davos

Alarm over  
virus threat  
Beijing

The number of people already infected by the mystery virus emerging in China is far greater than official figures suggest, scientists have told the BBC.

There have been 41 laboratory-confirmed cases of the new virus, but UK experts estimate the figure is closer to 1,700.

Two people are known to have died from the virus, which appeared in Wuhan city in December.

"I am substantially more concerned than I was a week ago," disease outbreak scientist, Prof Neil Ferguson, said.

The work was conducted by the MRC Centre for Global Infectious Disease Analysis at Imperial College London, which advises bodies including the UK government and the World Health Organisation.

Iran's leader  
defends military

Tehran

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has defended the country's armed forces after it admitted shooting down a passenger plane by mistake.

He said the Revolutionary Guard - the elite unit responsible for the disaster - "maintained the security" of Iran.

Widespread protests and criticism from abroad have put growing pressure on Iran over its handling of the incident.

But the ayatollah tried to rally support as he led Friday prayers in Tehran for the first time since 2012.



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210 fils (includes VAT)



Bahrain JCW X-Raid Team's Sainz wins Dakar Rally title



HH Shaikh Mohammed at the closing award ceremony of the Dakar 2020 Rally.



Sainz, front row fourth from left, celebrates with teammates, officials and supporters after completing the 12th and final stage yesterday to seal his victory.

● Sainz won despite finishing sixth in the 12th and final stage yesterday, while Peterhansel was fifth.

● The rally began in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah and concluded in the capital, Riyadh, covering 13 days.

Riyadh

Bahrain JCW X-Raid Team's Carlos Sainz claimed a superb victory yesterday in the 2020 Dakar Rally, which came to a close in Saudi Arabia after 12 stages and 13 gruelling days of competition.

A total of 550 drivers and riders from 62 nations faced a total of 7,500 km in the world's most fearsome off-road race, with Sainz and co-driver Lucas Cruz completing the event in an overall time of 42 hours, 59 minutes and 17 seconds.

The Bahrain-sponsored victors also included Stephane Peterhansel and co-driver Paulo Fiuza,

who finished the rally in third position around 10 minutes behind Sainz and Cruz on the general ranking for cars.

Sainz won despite finishing sixth in the 12th and final stage yesterday, while Peterhansel was fifth.

"I feel very happy," said Sainz. "There's a lot of effort behind this. A lot of training, practice, physically, with the team. We started winning this Dakar on day one and we have gone flat out from the beginning."

Sainz landed his third triumph in the Dakar Rally in his long racing career. Each of his wins has come in a different car, including a Volkswagen in 2010, a Peugeot in 2018 and a Mini in 2020.

Bahrain has a long history of supporting the motorsport industry, having hosted the region's first ever Grand Prix in 2004. The 2020 edition of the rally marks another motorsport milestone for the Middle East, with Saudi Arabia becoming the first country in the region to play host to the challenge, gaining the right to hold it for the next five years.

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His Majesty's support has had a profound impact on the Kingdom advancing towards its desired goals under its comprehensive development programme.

HH SHAIKH MOHAMMED

days. The route passed through some of the most historical and culturally significant locations in Saudi, including the UNESCO World Heritage site of Al Ula.

The Bahrain-sponsored X-raid team won in their first-ever self-developed and constructed Mini John Cooper Works and Mini John Cooper Works Buggy.

The new partnership with Team X-Raid builds on Bahrain's investment in McLaren Group, which includes the Formula 1 Team, McLaren Automotive and the recently launched McLaren pro cycling team, to showcase the progressive opportunities the Kingdom is placing on further establishing itself as a hub for strategic sporting development.

Indeed, this home-grown enthusiasm for the sport has at-

tracted global investments, such as US manufacturer OMP Bell Racing Helmets, which recently launched its regional headquarters in Bahrain, to supply equipment for the GCC market.

Of Sainz's victory, Bahrain Motor Federation president Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa commented: "This year's Dakar Rally victory is a great source of pride for Bahrain as we watched our talented drivers Carlos Sainz and Stephane Peterhansel rack up repeated stage wins to claim the overall victory."

"As the X-Raid Team sponsor, we congratulate Carlos and Stephane on their monumental victory and wish them every success in their endeavours for the rest of 2020.

"And from one Kingdom to another, we must also thank our neighbours Saudi Arabia for their successful hosting of this year's rally across 7,500km of truly unforgettable landscapes."

The Dakar Rally, an annual event which was first launched in Paris 1979, ran from Europe to the Senegalese city it is named after for decades, then moved to South America in 2009, where it remained until this year's event.

His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa yesterday attended the closing award ceremony of the Dakar 2020 Rally.

During the ceremony, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman highlighted that the victory for the Bahraini team in the first edition of the Dakar 2020 Rally held in the Middle East, is testament to the efforts of Team Bahrain which continue to have a remarkable impact on the advancement of the Kingdom's sporting sector and overall development.

HH Shaikh Mohammed further highlighted that this accomplishment will be a further addition to the Kingdom's many achievements in motorsport.

HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman emphasised that the Kingdom's sporting sector continues to advance in line with the vision and aspirations of HM the King, and continues to receive the support of HRH the Crown Prince through the many initiatives and programmes adopted. "This support has had a profound impact on the Kingdom advancing towards its desired goals under its comprehensive development programme."

ASSETS FREEZE

UK adds entire Hizbollah group to terror blacklist

Beirut

The UK yesterday said it had added the whole Hizbollah movement to its terrorism blacklist and frozen all its assets.

HM Treasury previously targeted the movement's military wing, but the new sanctions classify all Hizbollah organisations and institutions under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing Act 2020 and freeze all its assets.

Hizbollah had "publicly denied a distinction between its military and political wings," the treasury said on its website. "The group in its entirety is assessed to be concerned in terrorism and was proscribed as a terrorist organisation in the UK in March 2019. This listing includes the Military Wing, the Jihad Council and all units reporting to it, including the External Security Organisation."

The sanctions come amid



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HM TREASURY

continued wrangling in Lebanon over the formation of a new government comprising 18 ministers from one political camp: Hizbollah and its allies.

Three main political parties — the Future Movement, the Progressive Socialist Party and the Lebanese Forces — are boycotting the new government.

Former Prime Minister Najib Mikati said: "They claim that they are about to form a government of technocrats and

specialists, at a time when they are openly disputing over shares and ministries, as if we are living in a normal situation with no crisis in the country, nor protesters in the streets."

The country has been roiled by demonstrations, political instability and an economic crisis. Former Prime Minister Saad Hariri's government resigned on Oct 29, two weeks after the start of peaceful protests against tax increases and corruption.