

Bahrain finalise qualifiers roster

National team head coach Sam Vincent names 12 players for last two qualifiers for FIBA Asia Cup 2021 | P 12

THE DAILY **tribune**



Demi Lovato reveals 2018 overdose effects 10 CELEBS

BUSINESS 6 Ithmaar continues stable, customer-centric growth

Comply with all COVID-19 measures

Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19)

#Commit4Bahrain

Facebook 'unfriends' Australia

P6



The Deputy King His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa chairs the 369th meeting of the Government Executive Committee, held remotely yesterday. On discussions were a proposal on a digital economy strategy, development initiatives, enhancing government services and measures to combat COVID-19 pandemic.



New York

UN Yemen mediator Martin Griffiths yesterday called for a stop to an offensive by the Houthi movement on the government-held city of Marib, warning that "the quest for territorial gain by force threatens all of the prospects of the peace process."

Remain cautious

COVID-19 measures extended by three more weeks

- Social gatherings in homes to be limited to up to 30
- 70% of employees to work from home



The National Medical Taskforce members for Combatting the Coronavirus pandemic during a press conference

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions introduced earlier this month to contain a sharp rise in cases will continue for three more weeks. Authorities here reintroduced restrictions on seventh of this month following a sharp rise in cases over the past month. The National Medical Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus (COVID-19) yesterday said that Bahraini citizens and residents should practice them for another 21 days. They also called on all to show "a strong and unified commitment to precautionary measures" to keep the community safe and reduce the spread of COVID-19. The decision follows a Taskforce meeting to review the latest increase in active cases and virus mitigation efforts. Indoor gyms, sports halls and swimming pools will remain

closed and social gatherings in homes to be limited to up to 30 people until 14 March. The decision also limits outdoor group exercise to 30 people, while government institutions and entities must allow up to 70% of employees to work from home. Bahrain has also earlier banned indoor dining at res-

taurants and cafes and moved schools to remote learning after detecting a new variant of COVID-19. The Taskforce said they would review the decisions based on the latest COVID-19 developments and statistics to ensure the health and safety of all. Bahrain has also recently authorised Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use, bringing the number of vaccines available in Bahrain for inoculation to four. healthalert.gov.bh China's Sinopharm vaccine, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, India's Covishield are the other three vaccines available. All of the vaccines are provid-

ed free of charge to citizens and residents. Those wishing to take the vaccine can register through healthalert.gov.bh or other authorised platforms. In response to an increasing number of infections, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates had all reimposed restrictions.

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL TESTED 2954061

ACTIVE CASES 7642

DEATHS 414

DISCHARGED 107649

NEW CASES 648

CRITICAL 59

Periodic review of COVID-19 developments and statistics:

The following decisions were made, effective from 21 February 2021 to 14 March 2021

- All government entities and institutions to allow a maximum of 70% of employees to work from home.
- Temporary suspension of in person learning across all nurseries, public and private schools as well as higher education institutes and universities.
- Temporary suspension of in person activities at government rehabilitation centres affiliated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.
- Temporary suspension of in person activities at nurseries and private training institutes licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.
- Temporarily limit dining services to outdoors.
- Temporary closure of in-door gyms, sports halls and swimming pools, including all indoor exercise classes.
- Outdoor exercise as part of gyms and sports halls, including exercise classes, may continue with a maximum of 30 participants.
- Any social event or gathering in a private residence or other private space with more than 30 participants is strictly prohibited.



The Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, receiving Dr Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat), at Riffa Palace. Prince Salman received a copy of the book 'Awal Alru'a Salman', authored by Derasat as a tribute to Bahrain's successful progress and achievements under the support of His Royal Highness. His Royal Highness said the development progress helps ensure Bahrain remains on track towards achieving its ambitious goals. The Minister of Finance and National Economy, Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, was also in attendance.



Adviser of His Majesty the King for Media Affairs Nabeel bin Yaqoub Al Hamer during a discussion with the Indian Ambassador to Bahrain Piyush Srivastava. The advisor praised the historical bilateral ties, stressing the Kingdom's interest in advancing them at various levels, especially in media, wishing the ambassador success in his duties. The ambassador expressed his pride in the strong bilateral relations, noting India's keenness to develop them further.



Essam Khalaf, the Minister of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, with British Ambassador, Rudi Drummond, during a virtual meeting. The minister expressed the Kingdom's desire to benefit from British expertise in sanitation, roads, constructions, agriculture projects, fish farming and household waste management. The British ambassador wished for continued cooperation between the two sides

BDF opens new military facility



The opening ceremony

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Defence Force yesterday opened a modern military training facility.

Assistant Chief of Staff for Human Resources, Major-General Shaikh Ali bin Rashid Al Khalifa, inaugurated the facility. The ceremony was un-

der the patronage of BDF Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa.

The inauguration coincides with the celebrations of the anniversary of BDF establishment.

Following the inauguration, Major-General Shaikh Ali toured the facility.

Fees in private hospitals, clinics not regulated

TDT | Manama

Bahrain does not have any legislation regulating the fee structure of dental services in hospitals and private clinics.

The Minister of Health, Faeqa bint Saeed Al Saleh, said the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) does not have a relevant set up to oversee private health institution with a unified price list for dental service.

"The prices of services are determined by the interaction of supply and demand in the market," the minister added.

The minister was replying to Shura Council member Ahmed Al-Haddad on a question related to dental services.

The ministry also clarified that the Kingdom does not have any binding rules in this regard.

Al-Saleh indicated that as per Health Insurance Law, No. 23 of 2018, Bahraini nationals can access voluntary health insurance packages



Ahmed Al-Haddad, Faeqa bint Saeed Al Saleh

which cover 60% of the costs of private sector hospitals or facilities.

The law establishes the National Health Regulatory Authority and a dedicated health insurance fund in coordination with the Supreme Council of Health.

Citizens may obtain optional packages provided by the fund, subsidised by the state at a rate determined by the Council

of Ministers.

The government will pay for the cost of medical coverage for Bahraini nationals. Individuals who choose to use private health services will pay up to 40% of the costs, and the government will subsidise the rest.

She added that private health institutions would offer competitive prices to participate in the health insurance system, according to market rules and limit harmful practices.

Two in the dock for selling banned tobacco products

● **Police confiscate 6,000 dinars worth of tobacco products**

TDT | Manama

Muharraq police arrested two men aged 49 and 52 years on charges of possessing and selling banned tobacco products valuing around 6,000 dinars in the Kingdom.

The Director-General of Muharraq Governorate Police Department said the suspects are both Asians by nationality.

Police acting on a tip-off made the arrest.

The information claimed that two men were storing and selling banned tobacco products in their cars.



The confiscated tobacco products on display

Police officers kicked-off an investigation based on the information.

The ensuing investigation resulted in the identification of the suspects.

Officers brought in the sus-

pects with large quantities of the banned products in their possession, as well as proceeds from their sale.

Authorities took Legal measures. The case is now with the Public Prosecution.

Enhanced veterinary quarantine at Buri to handle 3,000 sheep

● To construct three pens for 3,000 sheep

● Tender launched on 26 January 2021 to be opened next month

TDT | Manama

Expansion of the veterinary quarantine facility in Buri will raise the holding capacity of livestock to 3,000 sheep.

The Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning said announcing that the project tender is out.

The tender is for establishing three pens capable of holding 3,000 heads of sheep and raise the level of veterinary quarantine standards.



Picture courtesy of Works Affairs

The project also calls for constructing an isolated pen, store, restrooms for the staff, electricity switch and extension room,

and a pump room. External works include drainage works, mechanical works, electrical works, among others.

Closing date of the tender requiring an initial bond of BD4,000 is 17 March 2021.

Bahrain's food security strategy calls for implementing projects and developing a five-year plan to increase food security by at least 30% by boosting the stocks of local produce such as fish, eggs and livestock.

The strategy aims at enhancing national food industrial capabilities, local production and preserve the agricultural profession.

The move will also raise the local production of vegetables by up to 20 per cent and achieve 50pc to 62pc self-sufficiency in fish production.

10 year in jail for embezzling BD27,000

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court awarded a 10-year jail term to a Jafari Endowment official for embezzling around 27 thousand dinars from his employer.

The court also ordered the 49-year-old accused to return the money and pay a fine for the same amount.

Court files say the incidents leading to the case occurred during the period from 2017 to 2019.

The accused, an employee of the Jafari Endowments Directorate, was responsible for one of the department's stores.

Investigators found that the accused siphoned out 26,920 dinars from the funds of the directorate.

Do not block housing service for inheriting a small land: Al-Ansari

TDT | Manama

A proposal has been tabled to grant housing services to those who inherited less than 300 square meters of property.

The Chairman of the Parliament Services Committee, MP Ahmed Al-Ansari, recommends to exempt an applicant from "non-ownership" requirement, given the land he inherited is less than 300 square meters.

Quoting Clause (f) of Article (9) of Bahrain's constitution, Al-Ansari, said, "The State shall endeavour to provide housing for citizens with limited income."

He explained that the state is obliged by law to help Bahraini families with limited incomes



by providing various housing services, considering their economic and social conditions.

He also pointed out that these laws do not exclude citizens from housing services for having a property.

Al-Ansari argued that it is unfair to exclude an applicant from the right to request housing services because he or his family member had inherited a small property.

Statistics say nearly three-fifths of all Bahrainis have benefited from government housing assistance, and the government has expended significant resources in recent decades to develop associated infrastructure.

Driving test: Public service employees get jail for misusing official powers

TDT | Manama

High Criminal Court imprisoned two public service employees for misusing their official positions to pass driving test candidates illegally.

The court also jailed five others for their role in the crime syndicate. The first and the

third suspect received prison terms of seven years each, and the second suspect a jail term of six months.

The Head of the Financial Crimes and Money Laundering Prosecution said, "Two of the suspects are employees of the General Directorate of Traffic."

The court deferred the pun-

ishment of the second suspect by three years.

The High Criminal Court also ordered the deportation of the third suspect after his jail term ends.

The court also jailed another suspect for three years and ordered to deport him after completing jail terms.

Court files say the first defendant misused his official powers to assist the third and second suspects in passing driving test candidates illegally. Investigators found that the third and fourth defendant took cash from the fifth, sixth and seventh defendants to pass candidates' and obtain a license.

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 (AUDITED)



CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020 (In thousands of U.S. Dollars)

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
Cash and bank balances	100,500	81,261
Investments	454,603	545,214
Accrued income	8,786	71,358
Insurance receivables	72,732	117,872
Insurance deposits	20,917	22,505
Deferred policy acquisition costs	4,749	17,915
Reinsurers' share of technical provisions	74,368	130,675
Other assets	37,349	30,329
Investment property	4,622	-
Property and equipment	12,006	18,712
TOTAL ASSETS	790,632	1,035,841
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
LIABILITIES		
Technical provisions	408,869	633,769
Insurance payables	80,664	90,726
Borrowings	-	7,000
Other liabilities	38,672	58,021
TOTAL LIABILITIES	528,205	789,516
EQUITY		
Attributable to shareholders of parent company		
Share capital	220,000	220,000
Treasury stock	(14,793)	(14,793)
Reserves	56,296	51,705
Accumulated losses	(16,142)	(28,539)
Non-controlling interests	245,361	228,373
	17,066	17,952
TOTAL EQUITY	262,427	246,325
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	790,632	1,035,841

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 (In thousands of U.S. Dollars)

	2020	2019
Gross premiums written	(17,295)	194,614
Outward reinsurance premiums	3,027	(52,136)
Change in unearned premiums	82,722	31,091
Net earned premiums	68,454	173,569
Claims and related expenses	(31,609)	(107,794)
Policy acquisition costs	(19,225)	(49,849)
Investment income attributable to insurance funds	2,824	17,683
Operating expenses	(7,685)	(11,070)
Underwriting result	12,759	22,539
Investment income attributable to shareholders' funds	2,124	8,612
Operating expenses - non underwriting activities	(5,597)	(5,404)
Borrowing cost	(112)	(253)
Other income	6,283	1,318
Other expenses and provisions	(2,790)	(8,384)
Profit for the year	12,667	18,428
Attributable to:		
Non-controlling interests	(891)	902
Shareholders of parent company	13,558	17,526
	12,667	18,428
Earnings per share attributable to shareholders (basic and diluted):	(US cents)	6.8

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 (In thousands of U.S. Dollars)

	2020	2019
Profit for the year	12,667	18,428
Other comprehensive income		
Items that will be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Changes on fair value of available for sale investments	4,632	16,630
Transfers for recognition of gains on disposal of available for sale investments	(3,462)	(3,421)
Transfers for impairment loss recognised on available for sale investments	1,681	1,314
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:		
Revaluation of property	646	-
Other comprehensive income for the year	3,497	14,523
Total comprehensive income for the year	16,164	32,951
Attributable to:		
Non-controlling interests	(824)	948
Shareholders of parent company	16,988	32,003
	16,164	32,951

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 (In thousands of U.S. Dollars)

	2020	2019
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Premiums received	97,323	192,493
Reinsurance premiums paid	(17,477)	(35,484)
Claims and acquisition costs paid	(226,798)	(238,096)
Reinsurance receipts in respect of claims	98,801	63,440
Investment income	4,710	9,478
Interest received	2,286	3,271
Dividends received	56	1,044
Operating expenses paid	(12,761)	(21,505)
Other (expenses) income, net	(5,967)	4,091
Insurance deposits received (paid), net	1,455	4,354
Purchase of trading investments	(667)	(5,363)
Sale of trading investments	20,529	15,698
Net cash used in operating activities	(38,510)	(6,579)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Maturity/sale of investments	154,855	102,163
Purchase of investments	(90,950)	(143,022)
Term deposits with bank	(22,698)	(8,339)
Interest received	9,428	9,062
Investment income	2,255	1,662
Collateralised cash deposits	(8,457)	13,986
Purchase of property and equipment	(30)	(2)
Purchase of intangible assets	-	(82)
Sale of subsidiary	318	-
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	44,721	(24,572)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Borrowings	(7,000)	-
Borrowing cost	(187)	(279)
Dividends paid	(2,418)	(51)
Subsidiary's capital reduction - minority interests	-	(11,500)
Net cash used in financing activities	(9,605)	(11,830)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(3,394)	(42,981)
Effect of exchange rates on cash and cash equivalents	(65)	(32)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	66,895	109,908
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	63,436	66,895
Term deposits with bank	37,064	14,366
Cash and bank balances, end of year	100,500	81,261

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 (In thousands of U.S. Dollars)

	Share capital	Treasury stock	Reserves	Accumulated losses	Non-controlling interests	Total equity
Balances at 31 December 2019	220,000	(14,793)	51,705	(28,539)	17,952	246,325
Net profit for the year	-	-	-	13,558	(891)	12,667
Changes on fair value of available for sale investments	-	-	4,518	-	114	4,632
Transfers for recognition of gains on disposal of available for sale investments	-	-	(3,374)	-	(88)	(3,462)
Transfers for impairment loss recognised on available for sale investments	-	-	1,640	-	41	1,681
Revaluation of property	-	-	646	-	-	646
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	3,430	13,558	(824)	16,164
Transfer of net depreciation on revalued property	-	-	(195)	195	-	-
Transfer to (from) non-distributable reserves	-	-	1,356	(1,356)	-	-
Sale of subsidiary - minority interests	-	-	-	-	(62)	(62)
Balances at 31 December 2020	220,000	(14,793)	56,296	(16,142)	17,066	262,427
Parent company balances at 31 December 2020	220,000	(14,793)	56,090	(15,936)	-	245,361
Balances at 31 December 2018	220,000	(14,793)	35,670	(44,507)	28,504	224,874
Net profit for the year	-	-	-	17,526	902	18,428
Changes on fair value of available for sale investments	-	-	16,525	-	105	16,630
Transfers for recognition of gains on disposal of available for sale investments	-	-	(3,269)	-	(152)	(3,421)
Transfers for impairment loss recognised on available for sale investments	-	-	1,221	-	93	1,314
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	14,477	17,526	948	32,951
Transfer of net depreciation on revalued property	-	-	(195)	195	-	-
Transfer to (from) non-distributable reserves	-	-	1,753	(1,753)	-	-
Subsidiary's capital reduction	-	-	-	-	(11,500)	(11,500)
Balances at 31 December 2019	220,000	(14,793)	51,705	(28,539)	17,952	246,325
Parent company balances at 31 December 2019	220,000	(14,793)	51,575	(28,409)	-	228,373

These consolidated financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 18 February 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

Saeed Mohammed AlBahhar
Chairman

Ahmed Saeed AlMahri
Director

Samuel Verghese
Acting Chief Executive Officer

The above consolidated financial statements have been extracted from the consolidated financial statements audited by KPMG Fakhro, who have expressed an unqualified opinion. The audited consolidated financial statements are available on Arig's website www.arig.net

FINANCIAL RESULTS

31 December 2020

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

At 31 December 2020

	2020 BD 000	2019 BD 000
ASSETS		
Cash and balances with banks and Central Bank of Bahrain	61,277	99,535
Due from banks	123,590	115,216
Financing contracts	1,005,228	913,907
Investments	6,861	6,156
Investment in sukuk	324,739	270,277
Investment in associate	6,889	8,461
Receivables and other assets	223,377	247,328
Premises and equipment	3,703	9,553
TOTAL ASSETS	1,755,664	1,670,433
LIABILITIES, EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS AND OWNERS' EQUITY		
LIABILITIES		
Customers' current accounts	133,114	128,258
Due to banks	108,798	101,783
Due to non-banks	364,048	222,965
Other liabilities	16,298	15,399
TOTAL LIABILITIES	622,258	468,405
EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS		
Banks	182,948	159,699
Non-banks and individuals	783,229	848,670
TOTAL EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS	966,177	1,008,369
OWNERS' EQUITY		
Equity attributable to shareholders of the Parent		
Share capital	132,519	132,519
Statutory reserve	25,640	24,115
Fair value through equity reserve	1,018	324
Proposed dividend	-	22,517
Retained earnings	311	3,587
	159,488	183,062
Non-controlling shareholders	7,741	10,597
	167,229	193,659
TOTAL LIABILITIES, EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS AND OWNERS' EQUITY	1,755,664	1,670,433
OFF-BALANCE SHEET		
EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS	136,710	135,145
CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND COMMITMENTS	75,649	108,796

Consolidated Statement of Income

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020 BD 000	2019 BD 000
Income from financing contracts	59,521	63,365
Income from investments	2,065	1,720
Income from sukuk	14,855	20,200
Share of loss from associate	(463)	(164)
OPERATING INCOME	75,978	85,121
Return on equity of investment account holders (wakala)	(18,045)	(22,017)
Return on equity of investment account holders (mudaraba) before Group's share as mudarib	(12,381)	(9,828)
Group's share as mudarib	10,346	7,945
Return on equity of investment account holders (mudaraba) after Group's share as mudarib	(2,035)	(1,883)
Profit on due to banks and non-banks	(15,038)	(12,490)
NET OPERATING INCOME	40,860	48,731
Staff costs	11,933	13,235
Depreciation	1,493	1,292
Provisions - net	1,633	(695)
Other expenses	10,564	9,889
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	25,623	23,721
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	15,237	25,010
Attributable to:		
Shareholders of the Parent	15,246	25,019
Non-controlling shareholders	(9)	(9)
	15,237	25,010

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020 BD 000	2019 BD 000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net income for the year	15,237	25,010
Adjustments for:		
Share of loss from associate	463	164
Net gain on sale of investments	(359)	-
Net unrealised gain on investments	-	(198)
Net gain on sale of premises and equipment	-	(5)
Foreign exchange gain	(413)	(839)
Depreciation	1,493	1,292
Provisions - net	6,166	(631)
Operating income before changes in operating assets and liabilities	22,587	24,793
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Mandatory reserve with Central Bank of Bahrain	2,966	(605)
Due from banks	454	4,041
Financing contracts	(137,084)	(38,796)
Receivables and other assets	18,502	(1,613)
Financial support from government	1,460	-
Customers' current accounts	4,856	510
Due to banks	7,015	(13,944)
Due to non-banks	141,083	61,000
Other liabilities	137	1,619
Net cash flows (used in) from financing activity	61,976	37,005
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Disposal of investments - net	3,452	-
Purchase of sukuk - net	(54,452)	(226,066)
Sale proceeds from disposal of sukuk	-	178,384
Purchase of premises and equipment - net	(463)	(885)
Proceeds from disposal of a subsidiary	4,760	-
Net cash flows used in investing activities	(46,703)	(48,567)
FINANCING ACTIVITY		
Net movement in equity of investment account holders	(42,192)	105,554
Net cash flows (used in) from financing activity	(42,192)	105,554
NET (DECREASE) INCREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(26,919)	93,992
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	182,693	88,701
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT 31 DECEMBER	155,774	182,693

Consolidated Statement of Changes in Owners' Equity

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Equity attributable to shareholders of the Parent							Non-controlling shareholders BD 000	Total owners' equity BD 000
	Share capital BD 000	Statutory reserve BD 000	Fair value through equity reserve BD 000	Retained earnings BD 000	Proposed dividend BD 000	Total BD 000			
Balance at 1 January 2020	132,519	24,115	324	3,587	22,517	183,062	10,597	193,659	
Net income for the year	-	-	-	15,246	-	15,246	(9)	15,237	
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-	694	-	-	694	-	694	
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	694	15,246	-	15,940	(9)	15,931	
Dividend payout	-	-	-	-	(22,517)	(22,517)	-	(22,517)	
Transfer to statutory reserve	-	1,525	-	(1,525)	-	-	-	-	
Recognition of modification loss net of government grant	-	-	-	(16,997)	-	(16,997)	-	(16,997)	
Net movement in share of non-controlling shareholders	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,847)	(2,847)	
Balance at 31 December 2020	132,519	25,640	1,018	311	-	159,488	7,741	167,229	
Balance at 1 January 2019	132,519	21,613	170	3,587	16,608	174,497	7,766	182,263	
Net income for the year	-	-	-	25,019	-	25,019	(9)	25,010	
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-	154	-	-	154	-	154	
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	154	25,019	-	25,173	(9)	25,164	
Dividend payout	-	-	-	-	(16,608)	(16,608)	-	(16,608)	
Transfer to statutory reserve	-	2,502	-	(2,502)	-	-	-	-	
Proposed dividend	-	-	-	(22,517)	22,517	-	-	-	
Net movement in share of non-controlling shareholders	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,840	2,840	
Balance at 31 December 2019	132,519	24,115	324	3,587	22,517	183,062	10,597	193,659	

These statements have been extracted from the consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020, audited by EY who have expressed an unqualified opinion. These consolidated financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 11 February 2021. Kuwait Finance House (Bahrain) B.S.C. (c) is licensed by CBB as an Islamic retail bank.

Hamad Abdulmohsen AlMarzouq
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Abdulhakeem Yaqoub Alkhatyat
Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer

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Licensed as an Islamic Retail Bank by the Central Bank of Bahrain



CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars unless otherwise stated)

	At 31 December 2020 (Audited)	At 31 December 2019 (Audited)
ASSETS		
Cash and balances with banks and central banks	239,332	253,124
Commodity and other placements with banks, financial and other institutions	85,612	127,602
Murabaha and other financings	1,347,337	1,497,391
Musharaka financing	350,420	239,452
Sukuk and investment securities	755,225	523,702
Assets acquired for leasing	145,346	148,084
Other assets	47,953	55,544
Investment in real estate	2,316	2,398
Development Properties	73,359	75,838
Fixed assets	22,274	22,235
Intangible assets	25,603	33,576
Total assets	3,094,777	2,978,946
LIABILITIES, EQUITY OF UNRESTRICTED INVESTMENT ACCOUNTHOLDERS, MINORITY INTERESTS AND OWNERS' EQUITY		
Customers' current accounts	661,739	572,466
Due to banks, financial and other institutions	435,764	501,616
Due to investors	514,234	589,550
Other liabilities	102,998	104,908
Total liabilities	1,714,735	1,768,540
Equity of unrestricted investment accountholders	1,275,162	1,063,928
Minority interests	55,049	67,307
Total liabilities, equity of unrestricted investment accountholders and minority interests	3,044,946	2,899,775
Share capital	100,000	100,000
Reserves	(34,033)	7,590
Accumulated losses	(16,136)	(28,419)
Total owners' equity	49,831	79,171
Total liabilities, equity of unrestricted investment accountholders, minority interests and owners' equity	3,094,777	2,978,946

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN OWNERS' EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020 (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars unless otherwise stated)

	Share capital	Reserves						Accumulated losses	Total owners' equity	
		Statutory reserve	Investments fair value reserve	Hedging reserve	Investment in real estate fair value reserve	Foreign currency translation	Share premium			Total reserves
At 1 January 2020 (Audited)	100,000	299	5,193	(1,453)	744	(37,473)	40,280	7,590	(28,419)	79,171
Adjustments resulting from reclassification of investments on adoption of FAS 33	-	-	4,019	-	-	-	-	4,019	-	4,019
At 1 January 2020 (Audited)	100,000	299	9,212	(1,453)	744	(37,473)	40,280	11,609	(28,419)	83,190
Set off of accumulated losses	-	-	-	-	-	-	(40,280)	(40,280)	40,280	-
Net loss for the year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(15,294)	(15,294)
Modification loss net of Government assistance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(14,836)	(14,836)
Increase in shareholding of subsidiary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,133	2,133
Movement in fair value of sukuk and investment securities	-	-	(1,895)	-	-	-	-	(1,895)	-	(1,895)
Movement in hedging reserve	-	-	-	(1,307)	-	-	-	(1,307)	-	(1,307)
Foreign currency translation adjustments	-	-	(8)	-	(23)	(2,129)	-	(2,160)	-	(2,160)
At 31 December 2020 (Audited)	100,000	299	7,309	(2,760)	721	(39,602)	-	(34,033)	(16,136)	49,831

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN OWNERS' EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019 (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars unless otherwise stated)

	Share capital	Reserves						Accumulated losses	Total owners' equity	
		Statutory reserve	Investments fair value reserve	Hedging reserve	Investment in real estate fair value reserve	Foreign currency translation	Share premium			Total reserves
At 1 January 2019 (Audited)	100,000	299	3,446	-	808	(30,655)	40,280	14,178	(28,793)	85,385
Net loss for the year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,352)	(1,352)
Increase in shareholding of subsidiary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,726	1,726
Movement in fair value of sukuk and investment securities	-	-	1,734	-	-	-	-	1,734	-	1,734
Movement in hedging reserve	-	-	-	(1,453)	-	-	-	(1,453)	-	(1,453)
Foreign currency translation adjustments	-	-	13	-	(64)	(6,818)	-	(6,869)	-	(6,869)
At 31 December 2019 (Audited)	100,000	299	5,193	(1,453)	744	(37,473)	40,280	7,590	(28,419)	79,171

The above Consolidated Statement of Financial Position, Consolidated Income Statement, Consolidated Statement of Changes in Owners' Equity and Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows have been extracted from the Consolidated Financial Statements of Ithmaar Bank B.S.C.(C) for the year ended 31 December 2020, which were approved for issue by the Board of Directors on 18 February 2021 and audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers ME Limited, Kingdom of Bahrain, who expressed an unqualified opinion.

HRH Prince Amr Mohamed Al Faisal
Chairman

Elham Hasan
Director

Ahmed Abdul Rahim
CEO

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Licensed as an Islamic retail bank by the Central Bank of Bahrain

CONSOLIDATED INCOME STATEMENT (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars unless otherwise stated)

	Year ended	
	31 December 2020 (Audited)	31 December 2019 (Audited)
INCOME		
Income from assets financed by unrestricted investment account holders	91,603	82,551
Less: return to unrestricted investment accounts and impairment provisions	(55,655)	(54,359)
Group's share of income from unrestricted investment accounts as a Mudarib	35,948	28,192
Income from murabaha and other financings	52,139	77,958
Income from other investments	53,410	41,854
Other income	20,700	23,212
Total income	162,197	171,216
Less: profit paid to banks, financial and other institutions	(75,173)	(87,630)
Operating income	87,024	83,586
EXPENSES		
Administrative and general expenses	(63,507)	(59,250)
Depreciation and amortization	(9,032)	(8,669)
Total expenses	(72,539)	(67,919)
Net income before provision for impairment and overseas taxation	14,485	15,667
Provision for impairment (net)	(15,587)	(2,779)
Net (loss)/income before overseas taxation	(1,102)	12,888
Overseas taxation	(9,867)	(10,408)
NET (LOSS)/PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	(10,969)	2,480
Attributable to:		
Equity holders of the Bank	(15,294)	(1,352)
Minority interests	4,325	3,832
	(10,969)	2,480
Basic and diluted (losses)/earnings per share	Fils (15.29)	Fils (1.35)

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars unless otherwise stated)

	Year ended	
	31 December 2020 (Audited)	31 December 2019 (Audited)
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net income/(loss) before overseas taxation	(1,102)	12,888
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation and amortization	9,032	8,669
Provision for impairment (net)	15,587	2,779
Income from other investments	(53,410)	(41,854)
Loss on sale of fixed assets	50	287
Operating loss before changes in operating assets and liabilities	(29,843)	(17,231)
(Increase)/decrease in balances with banks maturing after ninety days and including with central banks relating to minimum reserve requirement	(9,070)	(19)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Murabaha and other financings	121,776	128,063
Musharaka financing	(118,395)	(73,730)
Other assets	6,508	17,335
Customers' current accounts	101,647	48,317
Due to banks, financial and other institutions	(60,020)	(53,453)
Due to investors	(54,691)	13,236
Other liabilities	(1,963)	(83,260)
(Decrease)/Increase in equity of unrestricted investment accountholders	216,010	81,535
Taxes paid	(7,009)	(10,628)
Net cash provided by operating activities	164,950	50,165
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Net (increase)/decrease:		
Assets acquired for leasing	2,748	6,774
Sukuk and investment securities	(193,949)	39,083
Purchase of fixed assets	(3,760)	(9,303)
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities	(194,961)	36,554
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Minority interest	-	(201)
Net cash used in financing activities	-	(201)
Foreign currency translation adjustments	(4,269)	(7,976)
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents	(34,280)	78,542
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	312,560	234,018
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	278,280	312,560

Ithmaar continues stable, customer-centric growth

● Net loss attributable to equity holders for the three months ended 31 December 2020 was BD11.11 million

● Operating income increased by 4%

● Income from unrestricted investment accounts increased by 11%

TDT | Manama

Ithmaar Bank, a Bahrain-based Islamic retail bank, said it continues to focus on customer-centric growth and on becoming the Islamic retail bank of choice as it announced its financial results for the year ended 31 December 2020.

The bank reported a net loss attributable to equity holders for the three months ended 31 December 2020 of BD11.11 million compared to the net loss of BD4.02 m in the same quarter a year ago.

Total net loss was BD10.26 m compared to the BD2.80 m net loss reported for 2019. The results are mainly due to prudent impairment provisions, recognised largely as a consequence of the ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic.

Net loss attributable to equity holders for the year ended 31 December 2020 of BD15.29 m compared to the net loss of BD1.35 m reported for 2019. Total net loss for the year ended 31 December 2020 was BD10.97 m compared to the net profit of BD2.48 m re-

”
On behalf of the Ithmaar Bank Board of Directors, I am pleased to report that, despite the unprecedented challenges of 2020, the Bank continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience and remains resolutely focused on becoming the Islamic retail bank of choice in the Kingdom of Bahrain

PRINCE AMR AL FAISAL, ITHMAAR BANK CHAIRMAN



”
Our shared vision, of the becoming the Islamic retail bank of choice, was put to test by the trials of 2020 - and I am pleased to report that, not only did we manage to continue our customer-centric growth, but we emerged stronger than before

ABDUL RAHIM, ITHMAAR BANK CEO



ported for 2019.

“On behalf of the Ithmaar Bank Board of Directors, I am pleased to report that, despite the unprecedented challenges of 2020, the Bank continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience and remains resolutely focused on becoming the Islamic retail bank of choice in the Kingdom of Bahrain,” said HRH Prince Amr.

“Perhaps the clearest testimony to the Bank’s resilience and continued growth is the fact that it is reporting increased operating income for 2020, one of

the most challenging years in decades,” said HRH Prince Amr. Operating income increased by 4%, growing to BD87.02 m for the year ended 31 December 2020, compared to the BD83.59m reported for 2019.

Income from unrestricted investment accounts also increased by 11%, growing to BD91.60 m for the year ended 31 December 2020, compared to BD82.55 m for 2019. “This growth demonstrates continued customer confidence in the Bank, despite the extraordinary market conditions of 2020,” said

HRH Prince Amr.

“Ithmaar Bank’s results include significant impairment provisions, which increased by BD12.81 m in 2020 compared to their 2019 levels due to the ongoing global pandemic,” said HRH Prince Amr. “Despite these prudent provisions, the Bank reported a net loss, before overseas taxation, of BD1.10 m for the year ended 31 December 2020 compared to net income of BD12.89 m reported for 2019,” he added.

Deal with BBK

In September 2020, Ithmaar

Holding, Ithmaar Bank’s parent company, and the Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the potential acquisition by BBK of Ithmaar Bank’s Bahrain operations as well as specific assets of IB Capital, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ithmaar Holding.

The plans, which are subject to due diligence by both parties, will require shareholder and regulatory approvals.

When implemented, the plans will lead to bolstering the already well established Ithmaar

Bank brand and position it to better capitalize on growth opportunities. The plans are in line with Ithmaar Holding’s strategy of creating value for its shareholders.

“Our shared vision, of the becoming the Islamic retail bank of choice, was put to test by the trials of 2020 - and I am pleased to report that, not only did we manage to continue our customer-centric growth, but we emerged stronger than before,” said Abdul Rahim.

“This, in turn, helps highlight the fact that Ithmaar Bank is a growing, resilient bank, as reflected in the increased operating income, that continues to invest in the future and plays a key role in the community,” he said.

“A good reflection of customer confidence in Ithmaar Bank is the steady growth in the equity of unrestricted investment account holders by 20% to reach to BD1.28 billion at 31 December 2020 from BD1.06 billion in the year 2019, as well as the increase in customers’ current accounts by 16% to reach to BD661.7 m at 31 December 2020, compared to BD572.5 m in the year 2019,” said Abdul Rahim.

Ithmaar Holding reports 2020 financial results

TDT | Manama

Ithmaar Holding (ITHMR), a Bahrain-based holding company, reported a net loss attributable to equity holders for the three months ended 31 December 2020 of US\$38.43 million compared to the net loss of US\$11.38 m reported for the same period in 2019.

Earnings Per Share (EPS) for the three months ended 31 December 2020 were negative US Cents 1.32, compared to negative US Cents 0.39 for the same period in

2019. Total net loss for the three months ended 31 December 2020 was US\$30.26 m compared to the net loss of US\$6.69 m reported for 2019 mainly due to impairment provisions during the period.

Total owners’ equity stood at US\$14.76 m as of 31 December 2020, an 85 % decrease compared to US\$95.55 m as of 31 December 2019. The reduction is mainly attributable to the dramatic economic slowdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Accumulated losses, as of 31 December 2020, stood at US\$833.80 m and amount to

110 % of the share capital.

Total net loss attributable to equity holders for the year ended 31 December 2020 was US\$41.72 m, compared to the net profit of US\$0.67 m reported for 2019. The decrease is mainly due to the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. EPS for the year ended 31 December 2020 was negative US Cents 1.43, compared to positive US Cents 0.02 for 2019. Total net loss for the year ended 31 December 2020 was US\$21.48 m compared to the net profit of US\$12.20 m reported for 2019.

Facebook ‘unfriends’ Australia

Global uproar as news pages go dark, Facebook said it blocked pages because the law did not clearly define news content

● Shares of Facebook Inc were down around 1 percent on Thursday, in line with moves in other major tech shares

● The move was in response to a planned Australian law that would require internet companies like Facebook and Google to reach commercial deals with news outlets

Reuters | Sydney

Facebook faced a worldwide backlash from publishers and politicians yesterday after blocking news feeds in Australia in a surprise escalation of a dispute with the government over a law to require it to share revenue from news.

Facebook wiped out pages from Australian state governments and charities as well as from domestic and international



A 3D printed Facebook logo is seen in front of displayed Australia's flag

news organisations, three days before the launch of a nationwide COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Though the measure was limited to Australia, denunciations came from far afield, with politicians elsewhere describing it as an attempt to put pressure on governments that are considering similar measures around the world.

“Facebook’s actions to unfriend Australia today, cutting off essential information serv-

ices on health and emergency services, were as arrogant as they were disappointing,” Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison wrote on his own Facebook page.

“These actions will only confirm the concerns that an increasing number of countries are expressing about the behaviour of Big Tech companies who think they are bigger than governments and that the rules should not apply to them.”

The dispute centres on a planned Australian law that

would require Facebook and Alphabet Inc’s Google to reach commercial deals to pay news outlets whose links drive traffic to their platforms, or agree a price through arbitration.

Facebook said it had blocked a wide swathe of pages because the draft law did not clearly define news content. It said its commitment to combat misinformation had not changed, and it would restore pages that were taken down by mistake.

“The actions we’re taking are focused on restricting publishers and people in Australia from sharing or viewing Australian and international news content,” a company spokesman said. “As the law does not provide clear guidance on the definition of news content, we have taken a broad definition in order to respect the law as drafted.”

The head of the British parliamentary committee overseeing the media industry, Julian Knight, was among politicians abroad who thought the message was aimed far beyond Australia.

“This action - this bully boy action - that they’ve undertaken in Australia will I think ignite

a desire to go further amongst legislators around the world,” Knight told Reuters.

“I think they’re almost using Australia as a test of strength for global democracies as to whether or not they wish to impose restrictions on the way in which they do business,” he said. “So, we’re all behind Australia in my view.”

News publishers saw Facebook’s tactics as evidence that the company, which also owns Instagram and WhatsApp, cannot be trusted as the gatekeeper for their industry.

Henry Faure Walker, chairman of Britain’s News Media Association industry group, said banning news during a global pandemic was “a classic example of a monopoly power being the schoolyard bully, trying to protect its dominant position with scant regard for the citizens and customers it supposedly serves.”

The head of Germany’s BDZV news publishers’ association, Dietmar Wolff, said: “It is high time that governments all over the world limit the market power of the gatekeeper platforms.”

Facebook shares traded down 1.5% on Thursday.

Facebook ‘bully’ move shows need for regulation, UK media trade body says

Reuters | London

Facebook’s move to block all media content in Australia shows why countries around the world need robust regulation to stop tech giants behaving like a “school yard bully”, the head of the UK’s news media trade group said.

News Media Association chairman Henry Faure Walker said Facebook’s ban during a global pandemic was “a classic example of a monopoly power being the school yard bully, trying to protect its dominant position with scant regard for the citizens and customers it supposedly serves.”

“Facebook’s actions in Australia demonstrate precisely why we need jurisdictions across the globe, including the UK, to coordinate to deliver robust regulation to create a truly level playing between the tech giants and news publishers.”

News in brief

One-third of US military refusing Covid vaccine: Pentagon ♦ Pentagon officials said that about one-third of the US military are declining to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, despite significant coronavirus infection levels in the forces. Major General Jeff Taliaferro revealed the high refusal rate in Congressional hearing, as the US Defense Department continues to classify covid vaccines as optional because they have yet to receive full approval from the Federal Drug Administration.

Former Malaysia first lady's graft trial to proceed ♦ The corruption trial of Malaysia's scandal-plagued former first lady will proceed after a judge ruled that prosecutors had presented sufficient evidence to make a case, boosting efforts to bring her to justice. Rosmah Mansor will now present her defence in the next stage of the case, and told the Kuala Lumpur High Court she will take the stand to testify.

Driver arrested for allegedly killing Nicki Minaj's father in hit-and-run ♦ A driver accused of striking and killing US rapper Nicki Minaj's father in a hit-and-run has been arrested, police said. Charles Polevich, 70, was charged with "Leaving the Scene of an Accident with a Fatality and Tampering with Evidence," New York state's Nassau County Police said on Twitter. Polevich, who pleaded not guilty, was released on a \$250,000 bond, his lawyer Michael Scotto said.

Letter bomb injures three at Lidl's German headquarters ♦ Three people were hurt when a letter bomb exploded at the German headquarters of discount supermarket Lidl, police said. The blast occurred in an administrative building at the company's head offices in Neckarsulm, western Germany. The three injured people were taken to hospital and around 100 employees were evacuated from the premises.

New Zealand to issue free sanitary products in schools ♦ New Zealand will distribute free sanitary products in schools to combat "period poverty" among the disadvantaged, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said. Ardern said research showed about one in 12 students skipped school because they did not have access to period products. "Young people should not miss out on their education because of something that is a normal part of life for half the population," Ardern said.

Spanish police clashed with protesters in Madrid and Barcelona, as fresh rallies broke out across the country over the jailing of a rapper for tweets insulting police and the monarchy. Hundreds of demonstrators gathered under a heavy police presence in the capital city's central Puerta del Sol square, calling for the 32-year-old rapper Pablo Hasel to be released and wielding banners reading "enough censorship"

UK, Canada impose sanctions on Myanmar generals

Nations calls for return of democracy in Myanmar as UK, Canada sanction army generals after coup

Japan, India, US, Australia agree on need to restore democracy; protesters back on the streets in Yangon

Reuters | London

Britain and Canada imposed sanctions on Myanmar's ruling generals yesterday for toppling the civilian-led government while Japan said it had agreed with the United States, India and Australia that democracy must be restored there quickly.

Western countries have condemned the Feb. 1 overthrow and detention of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, which has also brought daily mass demonstrations to the streets of the Southeast Asian country.

Following sanctions from the United States announced last week, both Britain and Canada announced measures.

Britain said it would impose asset freezes and travel bans on three generals while Canada



A demonstrator on a motorbike holds a placard as they ride past police officers during a protest

said it would take action against nine military officials.

"We, alongside our international allies, will hold the Myanmar military to account for their violations of human rights and pursue justice for the Myanmar people," British foreign minister Dominic Raab said.

Britain already had sanctions in place on junta leader Min Aung Hlaing, accusing him of human rights abuses against Muslim Rohingya and other ethnic minority groups.

Myanmar's government made no immediate reaction to the new sanctions. On Tuesday, an army spokesman told a news conference that sanctions had been expected.

The coup halted a tentative transition to democracy that began in 2011 after nearly half a century of army rule, raising fears of a return to an old era of isolation despite the generals' promise to hold fair elections.

Also yesterday, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu

“We, alongside our international allies, will hold the Myanmar military to account for their violations of human rights and pursue justice for the Myanmar people

BRITISH FOREIGN MINISTER DOMINIC RAAB

Motegi said he had agreed with his U.S., Indian and Australian counterparts in the so-called Quad grouping that democracy must be restored quickly in Myanmar.

But the army has closer ties to neighbouring China and to Russia, which have taken a softer approach.

There is little history of Myanmar's generals giving in to foreign pressure.

But they also face a challenge in the country of 53 million from protests that have drawn hundreds of thousands of people and strikes that have paralysed much government business.

After political pushback, Lebanese court removes lead Beirut blast investigator

Reuters | Beirut

A Lebanese court yesterday removed the judge leading the investigation into the Beirut port explosion, a move likely to further delay a probe that has faced fierce political pushback.



Beirut port after the blast

More than six months since the largest non-nuclear blast in history, Lebanese still have no answers into why and how tonnes of ammonium nitrate, stored unsafely at the port for years, detonated in the heart of Beirut.

The explosion killed 200 peo-

ple, injured thousands and destroyed entire districts.

Judge Fadi Sawan in December charged three ex-ministers and the outgoing prime minister with negligence over the August explosion, which compounded Lebanon's economic meltdown.

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths
1 USA	28,462,331	502,790
2 India	10,962,086	156,121
3 Brazil	9,979,276	242,178
4 Russia	4,125,598	81,926
5 UK	4,083,242	118,195
6 France	3,536,648	82,812
7 Spain	3,121,687	65,979
8 Italy	2,765,412	94,540
9 Turkey	2,616,600	27,821
10 Germany	2,367,811	67,292
11 Colombia	2,202,598	57,949
12 Argentina	2,039,124	50,432
13 Mexico	2,004,575	177,061
14 Poland	1,614,446	41,582

Global tally

110,665,363

Deaths

2,445,951

Recovered:

85,571,354

New cases

+241,613

New deaths

+6,044

Figures as of closing

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	175,677		10,150		136,081	29,446
Saudi Arabia	374,029	+327	6,450	+5	365,017	2,562
UAE	361,877	+3,294	1,073	+18	347,366	13,438
Kuwait	181,484	+979	1,027	+8	169,406	11,051
Oman	138,494	+288	1,549		130,084	6,861
Qatar	159,053	+462	256		149,031	9,766

French ex-minister jailed for rape



Georges Tron

AFP | Paris

A former French government minister yesterday began serving three years in prison after a court found him guilty of raping an employee during "foot massages" in his office and at the home of his co-defendant.

The conviction of Georges Tron, 63, comes as France is confronting a wave of sexual assault allegations that has pushed the government to promise tougher laws to protect victims and punish assailants.

The verdict ended a decade-long legal saga that had initially seen Tron acquitted in a verdict given when his defence lawyer was the legal star Eric Dupond-Moretti, who is now justice minister.

India issues new guidelines for international arrivals

PTI | New Delhi

Indian government issued new guidelines for international arrivals amid the spread of mutant variants of coronavirus in many countries.

The new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will come into effect from 23.59 hours on February 22 till further orders. In the context of the spread of mutant variant of SARS-CoV-2 in many countries, the civil aviation ministry in consultation with the health and family welfare ministry has issued new guidelines for international arrivals, according to an official release.

There are fresh guidelines for all international travellers coming/transiting through flights originating from the United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East.

The government has suspended international scheduled flights till February 28. Overseas flights to and from India are currently operated as per air bubble agreements with various countries.

As part of the new set of guidelines, all international travellers except the ones coming through flights originating from the UK, Europe and Middle East will have to submit self-declaration form on



Health workers keep vigil as passengers exit Mumbai airport

Air Suvidha portal before their scheduled travel.

They will also have to upload a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR report with exception of those traveling to India in the exigency of death in the family. For seeking exemption, the travelling entity will have to apply to the online portal www.newdelhiairport.in at least 72 hours before boarding.

The test should have been conducted within 72 hours prior to the journey and each passenger will also have to submit a declaration with respect to the authenticity of the report, as per the guidelines.

At the time of boarding the flight, only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to board after thermal screening.



As part of the new set of guidelines, all international travellers except the ones coming through flights originating from the UK, Europe and Middle East will have to submit self-declaration form on Air Suvidha portal before their scheduled travel

US charges N.Korean hackers in \$1.3 bn theft scheme



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attending a meeting (file photo)

● The US Justice Department accused the government of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un of a campaign of cyber theft to raise millions for the country

AFP | Seoul

The US Justice Department charged three North Korean military intelligence officials in a campaign of cyberattacks to steal \$1.3 billion in crypto and traditional currencies from banks and other targets.

The first action against Pyongyang by President Joe Biden's administration took aim at what the department called "a global campaign of criminality" being waged by North Korea.

The department accused the three of a wide-ranging hacking and malware operation to obtain funds for their government while avoiding punishing UN sanctions that have cinched off its sources of income.

Over at least seven years, the officials created malicious cryptocurrency applications that opened back doors into targets' computers; hacked into companies marketing and trading digital currencies like bitcoin; and developed a blockchain platform to evade sanctions and secretly raise funds, the department said.

The case filed in federal

North Korea's operatives, using keyboards rather than guns, stealing digital wallets of cryptocurrency instead of sacks of cash, are the world's leading bank robbers

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL JOHN DEMERS

court in Los Angeles builds on 2018 charges against one of the three, identified as Park Jin Hyok.

He was charged with the 2014 hack of Sony pictures, the creation of the notorious WannaCry ransomware, and the 2016 theft of \$81 million from the central bank of Bangladesh.

The new charges added two defendants, Jon Chang Hyok and Kim Il.

The allegations said the three worked together in the North Korean military intelligence's hacking-focused Reconnaissance General Bureau, better known within the cybersecurity community as the Lazarus Group, or APT 38.

In addition to the earlier charges, the three allegedly operated out of North Korea, Russia and China to hack computers using spearfishing techniques, and to promote cryptocurrency applications loaded with malicious software that allowed them to empty victims' crypto wallets.

Nigeria hunts kidnappers as families call for help

Kidnappers abducted 42 people, including 27 students, three teachers and relatives of school staff.

● Heavily-armed men in military uniforms raided the Government Science College in Kagara on Wednesday

AFP | Washington

Nigerian security forces on Thursday said they were tracking the armed gang that kidnapped more than 40 people from a school a day earlier, as families and a survivor described how students fled gunfire during the early morning attack.

The kidnapping in Kagara in central Niger state was the latest mass abduction in Nigeria, where criminal gangs known as "bandits" have stepped up violent attacks on communities.

Gunmen in military uniforms raided the Government Science College in Kagara early Wednesday, killing one student and spiriting others into a nearby forest.

Kidnappers snatched 42 people, including 27 students, three teachers and other relatives of school staff, according to Niger state officials.

"We are doing whatever we can to free the students and the teachers," Niger state information commissioner Muhammad Sani Idris told AFP.

"They are being pressed. We have security agents on their heels. We are hoping we will rescue the students in a very short time."

President Muhammadu Buhari, 78, ordered security forces to coordinate the rescue, his office said.

On Thursday, Nigerian army



Empty classroom of the Government Science College where gunmen kidnapped dozens of students and staff, in Kagara

and police with a surveillance helicopter were conducting a massive operation, Police Inspector General Mohammed Abubakar Adamu said in a statement.

In Kagara, families appealed for the government to help free the victims and described students fleeing gunfire after armed men arrived at the school, where hundreds of pupils were staying in dormitories.

"I heard kidnappers come to our hostel and they started shooting guns," student Caleb Samaila told AFP, his knee gashed from the escape.

"Students that were inside started running anywhere... They told us if you don't stop I will shoot you."

Ayuba Bawa, uncle of one of the survivors, said the gunmen pretended to be army, but students quickly ran when they realised it was a criminal gang.

"When they started running, one of them among the children went to jump a wall and he wounded himself. Another one was about to jump and they

shot him. He's dead," Bawa said.

"I can't even sleep ever since the occurrence of the incident," one father Mustapha Dauda said. "Please rescue my son."

No ransom payment

The latest mass abduction came just two months after 300 students were kidnapped from a school in Kankara in nearby Katsina, Buhari's home state, while the president was visiting the region.

The boys were later released after negotiations with government officials, but the incident triggered outrage and memories of the kidnappings of Nigerian schoolgirls by jihadists in Dapchi and Chibok that shocked the world.

Kidnappers have made no ransom request for the Kagara abductees and authorities would not pay any, Niger state official Idris said.

Armed men attacked Gurmana, another town in Niger state, on Wednesday night, killing two people and abducting several others, Ibrahim Audu Hussein,



The latest mass abduction came just two months after 300 students were kidnapped from a school in Kankara in nearby Katsina, Buhari's home state, while the president was visiting the region

Niger emergency management agency spokesman, told AFP.

Kidnappings are just one security challenge facing Africa's most populous country, where militants are waging a jihadist insurgency in the northeast and ethnic tensions are simmering in some southern regions.

Northwest and central Nigeria have increasingly become a hub for large criminal gangs who raid villages, killing and abducting residents after looting and torching homes.

Bandits operate out of camps in Rugu forest, which straddles Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger states. Nigerian forces have deployed there but attacks and mass kidnappings persist.

The gangs are largely driven by financial motives and have no known ideological leanings.

But there are concerns they are being infiltrated by jihadists who are fighting out a decade-old conflict that has killed more than 30,000 people and spread into neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

Six killed in fire at gold mine in eastern China

Reuters | Beijing

Six people were killed in a fire at a gold mine in eastern China's Shandong province, state media reported on Wednesday, with the local government announcing a new campaign to shut down unsafe facilities following recent accidents.

The fire occurred at around 6 a.m. local time (2200 GMT on Tuesday) during maintenance at the Caojiawa gold mine in the city of Zhaoyuan, the official Xinhua news agency reported, citing local authorities.

Ten miners were trapped by the fire, Xinhua said, with four who were rescued sent to hospital for medical treatment.

The fire was the second major incident at a Shandong gold mine in little over a month.

World's oldest DNA sequenced from million-year-old mammoths

● Scientists sequenced DNA from the teeth of mammoths discovered in Siberia in the 1970s

AFP | Moscow

Teeth from mammoths buried in the Siberian permafrost for more than a million years have yielded the world's oldest DNA ever sequenced, according to a study published yesterday, shining the genetic searchlight into the deep past.

Researchers said the three specimens, one roughly 800,000 years old and two over a million years old, provide important insights into the giant Ice Age mammals, including the ancient heritage of the woolly mammoth.

The genomes far exceed the oldest previously sequenced DNA -- a horse dating between 780,000 to 560,000 years ago.

"This DNA is incredibly old. The samples are a thousand times older than Viking remains,



Palaeontologists Love Dalen and Patricia Pecnerova with a mammoth tusk on Wrangel Island, Arctic Ocean

and even pre-date the existence of humans and Neanderthals," said Love Dalen, a professor of evolutionary genetics at the Centre for Palaeogenetics in Stockholm, senior author of the study published in Nature.

The mammoths were originally discovered in the 1970s in Siberia and held at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow.

Researchers first dated the specimens geologically, with comparisons to other species, like small rodents, known to be unique to particular time peri-

ods and found in the same sedimentary layers.

This suggested that two of the mammals were ancient steppe mammoths more than a million years old.

The youngest of the trio is one of the earliest woolly mammoths yet found.

DNA jigsaw

They also extracted genetic data from tiny samples of powder from each mammoth tooth, "essentially like a pinch of salt you would put on your dinner

This DNA is incredibly old. The samples are a thousand times older than Viking remains, and even pre-date the existence of humans and Neanderthals

LOVE DALEN

plate," Dalen told a press briefing.

While it had degraded into very small fragments, scientists were able to sequence tens of millions of chemical base pairs, which make up the strands of DNA, and conduct age estimates from genetic information.

This suggested that the oldest mammoth, named Krestovka, is even older at approximately 1.65 million years old, while the second, Adycha, is around 1.34 million years old, and the youngest Chukochya is 870,000 years old.

Dalen said the discrepancy for the oldest mammoth could be an underestimation in the

DNA dating process, meaning the creature was likely around 1.2 million years old, as suggested by the geological evidence.

But he said it was possible the specimen was indeed older and had thawed out of the permafrost at one point and then become wedged in a younger layer of sediment.

The DNA fragments were like a puzzle with millions of tiny pieces, "way, way, way smaller than you would get from modern high quality DNA", said lead author Tom van der Valk, of the Science for Life Laboratory, Uppsala University.

Using a genome from an African elephant, a modern relative of the mammoth, as a blueprint for their algorithm, researchers were able to reconstruct parts of the mammoth genomes.

The study found that the older Krestovka mammoth represents a previously unrecognised genetic lineage, which researchers estimated diverged from other mammoths around two million years ago and was ancestral to those that colonised North America.

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CELEBS

Demi Lovato reveals 2018 overdose effects

● **Demi Lovato reveals she had a heart attack, 3 strokes after near-fatal overdose**

Fox | Los Angeles

Demi Lovato is getting candid about her near-fatal 2018 overdose.

In the trailer for her upcoming four-part documentary on YouTube, “Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil,” the “Anyone” singer revealed that she suffered a heart attack and three strokes after her overdose.

“My doctors said that I have five to 10 minutes,” she says in the trailer. “... I’ve had a lot of lives, like my cat. I’m on my ninth life.”

The health crises came after several struggles with sobriety for the now-28-year-old pop star, who was found unconscious in

her Hollywood Hills home in the summer of 2018, TMZ reported at the time.

Law enforcement told the outlet that she was treated with Narcan, an emergency medication that is often used to revive people in instances of narcotic overdoses.

The multihyphenate opened up further about her overdose and its lasting effects during YouTube’s TCA panel on Wednesday and revealed that she was also left with brain damage.

“I was left with brain damage and I still deal with the effects of that today,” Lovato shared. “I don’t drive a car because I have blind spots in my vision.”

Lovato said that she also had a hard time reading because her vision was so blurred. It took about two months, she said, for her to “read out of a book.”

“I dealt with a lot of the repercussions and I feel like they kind of are still there to remind me if I ever get into a dark place

YOU KNOW WHAT

Demi Lovato said she suffers from brain damage and cannot drive a car due to blind spots

again,” Lovato said. “I’m grateful for those reminders, but I’m also ... so grateful I was someone that didn’t have to do a lot of rehabbing.”

She said that her rehabilitation came “in the emotional side and the therapeutic side.”

The overdose and Lovato’s life afterward will be chronicled in the docuseries beginning on March 23. The singer says it was

an opportunity for her to lay all of her cards on the table and be open for the sake of others.

“Over the past couple of years, I’ve heard a lot of stories about my life and what people think has happened,” shared the star. “I wanted to set the record straight and I wanted to reveal it all for my fans and say, ‘Hey, this is who I am and this is where I’m at today and this is the journey that got me here, and if it helps you, then I hope that it can’ because that was ultimately my purpose in putting this



Demi Lovato

out, was to be able to help people that have been on the same path as I have.”

After complet-

ing her work on the documentary, Lovato said she learned that “it’s so much more than just mental health” and she said she turned toward religion to help with her recovery.

“At different times, it’s been different things,” Lovato said of what helped her through recovery. “In the beginning, some of it was religion. I grew up Christian and as I’ve grown as a person, I’ve learned different aspects of different spiritual practices that work really well for me.”

While she said spirituality “definitely” helped her on her path “more so than religion,” she also turned to music in her times of need.

What Lovato said inspired her to share her story was a guest-hosting stint on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show,” calling it the “catalyst for my need and desire to express myself and my story to the fullest extent.”

Eva Mendes offers help to fellow mothers

IANIS | Los Angeles

Actress Eva Mendes has confessed handling kids during lockdown has been challenging to say the least. Eva, who has two daughters with actor Ryan Gosling, also shared parenting tips with fellow mothers.

“Full on Mom mode. I’ve graduated from my man’s sweats to a robe. All day. File under: stopped caring for now. (And anyone else out there go horse-like on selfie mode?),” she



Eva Mendes

wrote, with a picture in grey robe that she posted on Instagram.

“These days my kids are getting my full attention. It’s challenging for sure but they need me now more than ever. If you find yourself in a similar situation, here’s a list of parenting pages that are getting me through so thought I’d share,” she added.

NOTICE

I, Mr. ASHLIM BINAGASH JOHN S/o Mr. JOHN holder of Indian passport No.L9288048 issued at 09/05/2014 on MADURAI permanent residence at INDIA and temporary resident of BAHRAIN and Ms. **PAVITHRA PRIYANKA GOPAKUMAR** holder of Indian passport No.U4802113 issued at 09/10/2020 on MADURAI permanent residence at INDIA and temporary resident of BAHRAIN intend to solemnize our civil marriage during MARCH 2021 at the Embassy of India, Building 1090, Al Seef, P.O.Box 26106, Kingdom of Bahrain under the Foreign Marriage Act 1969 of India.

Objection (s), if any, may be forwarded to the Embassy of India, Kingdom of Bahrain within a period of 30 days from the date of publication of this notice

Drew Barrymore shares she’s never had plastic surgery

Fox | Los Angeles

Drew Barrymore is giving her take on plastic surgery. Speaking to Ross Mathews on “The Drew Barrymore Show,” the actress, 45, opened up about why she hasn’t opted to get cosmetic surgery done to her face — though she doesn’t necessarily rule out the possibility in the future.

“I’ve never done anything to my face and I would like to try not to,” the “Never Been Kissed” actress said. “Never say never.”

“The thing that I do care about and I do feel is still relevant to my life is the face. I know

myself. I’m a highly addictive person. I do one injection, I’m going to look like Jocelyn Wildenstein by Friday,” Barrymore said in reference to the socialite known as “Catwoman.” Wildenstein has previously denied having any plastic surgery, citing her Swiss heritage for her looks.

“I think because I’m so rebellious that I saw all of



that pressure and I saw all of those women torturing themselves to look a certain way and I thought, ‘You miserable people,’” said Barrymore. “I just never wanted to be afraid of what life would do to me. I probably went to too many opposite extremes. Now I’m boring and safe and healthy.”

The “50 First Dates” actress not-

“The thing that I do care about and I do feel is still relevant to my life is the face. I know myself. I’m a highly addictive person. I do one injection, I’m going to look like Jocelyn Wildenstein by Friday”

DREW BARRYMORE

ed the inevitability of aging as a reason for avoiding plastic surgery and urges others to realize the same.

Paltrow shares her experience of being diagnosed with Covid-19

ANI | Washington

American actor Gwyneth Paltrow opened about her personal experience of being diagnosed with COVID-19 and how she healed from the deadly virus.

According to People magazine, the 48-year-old actor took to her Goop

website and revealed that she had COVID-19 early on, and it left her with some long-tail fatigue and brain fog.

She wrote, “In January, I had some tests were done that showed really high levels of inflammation in my body. So I turned to one of the smartest experts I know in this space, the functional medicine practitioner Dr. Will Cole. After he saw all my labs, he explained that

this was a case where the road to healing was going to be longer than usual.”

The star also disclosed that she had been focusing on what she places into her body since recuperating from the infection, clinging to an adaptable keto and plant-based eating regimen, and shunning sugar and liquor.

While explaining that she had been using lots of coconut aminos in her recipes,

Paltrow wrote, “So I’ve been cooking a lot, and some of it is really delicious: I made scallops with crispy capers and sage the other day, asparagus with bacon vinaigrette, and some little artichokes with stuffed herbs and garlic.”

People magazine reported that the ‘Iron Man’ actor also shared that she has been taking supplements in order to improve her gut health.



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

CROSSWORD

Across
1- Aristotile's A; 6- Sprechen ... Deutsch?; 9- Delight; 14- Rest atop; 15- Bambi's aunt; 16- Taboos; 17- Statute; 19- Attempts; 20- Feline; 21- Mil. addresses; 22- Back in; 23- Weaponry; 25- Pertaining to the moon; 26- Two-piece bathing suit; 29- Wall St. debuts; 31- Lazy; 32- Ecstasy; 36- Son of Adam and Eve; 37- Musical gift; 38- Delhi wrap; 40- Plain; 43- Monetary unit of Tonga; 45- Sat on the back of a horse; 46- District; 47- Rocky debris; 50- An apple or a planet will have this at the centre; 51- Siouan speakers; 52- No ...; 54- Month after april; 57- Nostrils; 58- Recalls; 61- Rub out or remove from memory; 62- One ... million; 63- Devoured; 64- Tennis's Monica; 65- Parisian possessive; 66- This is only ...

Down
1- A Baldwin brother; 2- Director Wertmuller; 3- Heating fuel; 4- Ad follower; 5- Hill insect; 6- Oozes; 7- ... uncertain terms; 8- Chow; 9- Confide; 10- Sophia of the screen; 11- Writer Loos; 12- Start of a saying on forgiveness; 13- Canadian gas brand; 18- Jackie's predecessor; 23- Garlic sauce; 24- Hosp. staffers; 25- Cut (off); 26- Feather scarf; 27- Let ...; 28- Capital of the Ukraine; 29- Steamed; 30- Average; 33- Grammarian's concern; 34- Wife of a rajah; 35- As a result; 37- Football lineman; 39- Singer Janis; 41- Dons clothes; 42- Fair-hiring abbr.; 43- Investigation; 44- ... Lingus; 47- Blank look; 48- Reef material; 49- Actress Witherspoon; 50- Unconscious states; 51- Change for a five; 52- Prissy; 53- Actress Russo; 54- Allot; 55- Son of Zeus in Greek mythology; 56- ... She Lovely?; 59- Give ... break; 60- Hit;

Yesterday's solution

A	M	A	S	S	I	N	E	R	T	A	H	A	
P	A	M	P	A	S	A	U	T	E	G	A	B	
R	E	P	A	I	A	I	R	E	D	A	V	A	
O	C	E	A	N	I	C	O	N	U	A	N	C	
F	R	I	N	G	E	W	O	R	M	Y			
T	A	D	A	R	A	I	S	A	B	V	D	S	
E	V	E	L	C	C	L	R	I	O	T			
N	E	R	O	P	E	K	O	E	E	L	L	A	
A	S	S	I	G	N	J	A	C	K	A	S	S	
D	E	C	C	A	W	R	A	T	H				
E	W	E	N	A	R	E	S	O	M	I	T	S	
L	E	N	D	R	A	N	O	F	E	A	M	E	S
A	D	E	A	S	P	E	N	S	T	A	R	E	

Williams exits in tears as Osaka, Djokovic reach finals



Naomi Osaka and Serena Williams embrace after the semi-final match

AFP | Melbourne

Japan's Naomi Osaka brutally halted Serena Williams' latest bid for a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title yesterday, as Novak Djokovic wrote the final chapter of qualifier Aslan Karatsev's fairy-tale run.

Fans returned after a five-day coronavirus lockdown in time to see an emotional exit from Williams, Jennifer Brady's win over Karolina Muchova and top-ranked Djokovic preserving his perfect semi-final record at Karatsev's expense.

Triple major-winner Osaka, 23, again proved Williams' nemesis with a one-sided 6-3, 6-4 win which heightened questions about whether the American, 39, will ever match Margaret Court's all-time record for Slam singles titles.

Williams put her hand on her heart as she acknowledged a standing ovation on Rod Laver Arena, and later walked out of her post-match press conference in tears, saying: "I'm done."

The American has lost four Grand Slam finals since win-

“The difference today was errors. I made so many errors. Honestly, it was opportunities where I could have won. I could have been up 5-0. It was a big error day for me

SERENA WILLIAMS

ning her 23rd in Melbourne in 2017, and victory over Osaka would have given her a golden opportunity against Brady, who is into her first major decider.

But after going 0-2 down in the first set, Osaka reeled off five straight games to take charge against a despairing Williams and canter into the final.

The soft-spoken Osaka has never lost a Grand Slam match after reaching the quarter-finals, and Brady can expect the match of her life on Saturday.

"For me, I have this mentality that people don't remember the runners-up. You might, but the winner's name is the one that's engraved," Osaka said.

Team Bahrain Victorious all set for UAE Tour ride

Seven riders named for season-opening UCI WorldTour event, to be led by Wout Poels and Jack Haig

● Seven-stage race to feature biggest stars in cycling, such as 2020 Tour de France winner Tadej Pogacar and four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome

● Team Bahrain Victorious to be one of the 19 UCI WorldTeams competing in event, starting on Sunday

TDT | Manama

Team Bahrain Victorious, founded by His Majesty the King's Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs representative and Supreme Council for Youth and Sports chairman His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, announced yesterday their seven-member squad that will be competing in next week's UAE Tour.

The seven-stage race is the season-opening event of the 2021 UCI WorldTour. It will be held from Sunday to Saturday next week.

This year's UAE Tour is its third edition, and it will see all 19 UCI WorldTeams competing.

Team Bahrain Victorious' line-up includes Phil Bauhaus, Damiano Caruso, Jack Haig,



Team Bahrain Victorious during a training ride earlier this year (File photo)

Gino Mader, Jonathan Milan, Wout Poels and Fred Wright.

The Bahrain Victorious line-up will be led by Poels and Haig, off the back of strong performances at Tour de la Provence. They will compete against some of the biggest stars in cycling, such as 2020 Tour de France winner Tadej Pogacar, four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome, and last year's winner of the UAE Tour Adam Yates.

The race will feature four flat stages for the sprinters, two climbing stages and a 13km individual time trial, which will be critical at deciding the general classification.

Action will start in the town of Al Ruwais through Abu Dhabi and move through four more of the seven independent city-states of the UAE before finishing back in Abu Dhabi.

Alongside Poels and Haig, the team is strong, with Caruso starting his first race after a top 10 finish at last year's Tour de France in support of the team's general classification contenders.

Bauhaus will battle it out for the sprint stages after his impressive win on the final stage of the Tour de la Provence last week. It will also be Milan's first WorldTour race and an exciting test for the 20-year-old Italian eyeing the individual time trial on stage two.

Team Bahrain Victorious sports director Franco Pellizotti commented on the importance of the race. He said: "We have a strong team for the first WorldTour race of the season. It's an important one for Bahrain, being in the Middle East. However, It's an important race

“We have a strong team for the first WorldTour race of the season. It's an important one for Bahrain, being in the Middle East. However, It's an important race for all the teams being the first WorldTour race, which shows with the team line-ups

TEAM BAHRAIN VICTORIOUS SPORTS DIRECTOR FRANCO PELLIZOTTI

for all the teams being the first WorldTour race, which shows with the team line-ups."

Regarding the team strategy, Pellizotti said: "We've structured the team for all types of stages. Bauhaus is showing good form after his win at Tour de la Provence, and there are four stages for him to fight for with the support of Fred Wright and Jonathan Milan.

"We then have an ITT on Stage 2, an important stage for the GC and a good test for Milan. For our leaders, Wout is in good shape after his fourth place overall at Tour de la Provence and Jack is a great climber who is capable of a good result. We also have Caruso, who is a good climber and time trialist and has had two good training camps at Altea and Teide, and so we can expect a good race from him."

Undefeated young stars Kadimagomaev, Kyun Kim to clash at BRAVE CF 47

TDT | Manama

Kombat Kingdom will host an exciting match between two undefeated young top fighters as Switzerland's Hussein Kadimagomaev will take on South Korea's own Tae Kyun Kim in an explosive Featherweight bout that will serve as the co-main event of BRAVE CF 47: Asian Domination.

With a professional record of 7 wins and no losses, Kadimagomaev boasts a combined record of 18-0, including 11 amateur wins. The Swiss star never saw the judges scorecards, as all his wins came by way of knockout or submission. "Lamen Borz" is seen as one of the biggest rising stars in Europe.

Kadimagomaev hopes to live up to the high expectations left by his first BRAVE CF appearance, back in August, 2020, when he knocked out Sven Fortenbacher in the second



round.

His opponent, Tae Kyun Kim, also boasts a record of 7 pro wins and no losses to his name. Kim has a 71% finish-ratio, with 3 submissions and two knockouts. The South Korean powerhouse beat Erick da Silva and Arturo Chavez in his two BRAVE CF bouts so far.

BRAVE CF 47 will take place on March 11 in the Kingdom of Bahrain, also known as Kombat Kingdom. The event will open a

series of four consecutive cards held by the truly global promotion in its home nation, culminating in a historic BRAVE CF 50, on April 1st.

The event will be headlined by a Lightweight title eliminator between Kyrgyzstan's Abdysalam Kubanychbek and Philippines' own Rolando Dy. The winner of the "Omok" vs "Dy Incredible" match-up will be next in line to take on Amin Ayoub's 155 lbs world title.

Eldarov Gets hero's welcome, sparks KHK MMA year of hunting belts

TDT | Manama

KHK MMA head coach and BRAVE CF Super Lightweight World Champion Eldar Eldarov was welcomed back upon his return to Bahrain after defending his world title at BRAVE CF 46 that took place in Sochi, Russia last January.

In accordance to the current COVID-19 regulations in the country, Bahrain's KHK MMA team held a small socially-distanced welcome back surprise for Eldarov outside of the Bahraini Fighters Gym to commemorate his triumphant return to the kingdom and celebrate his #AndStill moment.

Eldarov took the opportunity to give a motivational speech to his students and inspire them to continue advancing within the correct direction in their training and preparation. Eldarov also shared that this is only the beginning for KHK MMA and 2021 will be a year for hunting for belts and world titles.

The Pride of Bahrain Hamza Kooheji expressed the importance of Eldarov's victory to Bahrain and the KHK MMA team.

"Eldarov's accomplishment is a pride for us as Bahrainis and as the KHK team. This gives us motivation as a team to secure



Eldar Eldarov

“KHK MMA will have more belts by the end of the year

ELDAR ELDAROV

more accomplishment. When a team sees their coach accomplish great things, it makes them want to do the same. It's different than having a coach who only talks and never does. He's a leader by action. Now that he has defended the BRAVE belt, the next step will be for us to start collecting all BRAVE CF belts one at a time." Hamza Kooheji, KHK MMA and BRAVE CF Fighter.

Several other KHK MMA fighters also expressed how they feel about Eldarov's accomplishment and the importance of watching him defend and bring back the belt to Bahrain. Most notably, the 20 year old rising KHK MMA fighter, Muhammad Mokaev.

"We are all proud of Eldar, that he came back with the belt and was able to defend his belt. I believe we will have more KHK champions in BRAVE CF and I believe many guys will be able to defend it. This is for BRAVE and our team is our motivation to get the belts, defend the belts, and bring them to Bahrain." Muhammad Mokaev, KHK MMA and BRAVE CF Fighter.

18-0

is the combined record of Hussein Kadimagomaev who boasts a professional record of 7 wins and no losses along with 11 amateur wins

Bahrain finalise qualifiers roster

National team head coach Sam Vincent names 12 players for last two qualifiers for FIBA Asia Cup 2021

● National team set to wrap up training programme tonight

● Bahrainis to play Group D leaders Lebanon tomorrow and then face Iraq on Monday

TDI | Manama



Head coach Sam Vincent, centre, with assistant coaches Ayoub Haji and Ayman Hamza

National basketball team head coach Sam Vincent named yesterday Bahrain's final 12-man roster that will be taking to the hardwood this weekend in the third and final window of qualifiers for the FIBA Asia Cup 2021.

The Bahrainis have been training the past several weeks with a 16-man line-up, but the last cuts have been made ahead of the hosts' last two qualifying contests. They are set to wrap up their final preparations tonight.

The squad list includes Mohammed Qurban, Hesham Sarhan and Maitham Jameel from



Bahrain have played in the FIBA Asia Cup, originally the Asian Basketball Championship, eight times in the past, in 1977, 1979, 1987, 1991, 1997, 1999, 2011 and 2013. The Bahrainis' best finish was 10th in the 1999 competition hosted by Saudi Arabia

reigning league champions Al Ahli; Mohammed Hussain, Hasan Nowrooz, Mohammed Ameer and Ahmed Salman from Manama; Mohammed Kuwayed, Mohammed Juma'a and Mohammed Buallay from Muharraq; Abdulrahman Ghali from Al Hala and CJ Giles from Al Najma.

The players left off are Ahmed Najaf from Manama and Ali Jaber from Najma, along with Subah Hussain from Ahli and Ali Rabea from Muharraq, both of whom had earlier already discontinued their participation in the national team's preparations. Bahrain are set to play twice in the coming days, first against

Group F Standings

	P	W	L	+/-	Pts
Kazakhstan	3	2	1	+59	5
Jordan	2	2	0	+58	4
Palestine	2	1	1	+39	3
Sri Lanka	3	0	3	-156	3

Kazakhstan rout Sri Lanka

TDI | Manama

Kazakhstan crushed Sri Lanka 111-52 yesterday as the third window of qualifiers being held in Bahrain for the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 got underway at the Khalifa Sports City arena in Isa Town.

The Kazakhs took control of the game early and never looked back. They scored the first eight points and enjoyed leads as big as 60 late on, as they dominated every aspect of the contest.

All 12 of Kazakhstan's players made it onto the score sheet and they each registered at least five markers.

Anthony Clemmons had a team-high 14 points, which included four three-pointers, while also dishing out five assists. Vadim Chsherbak came off the bench to contribute 13, while Anton Bykov had 12. Alexandr Zhigulin, Anton Ponomarev and Askar Maidekin had 10 points apiece as Kazakhstan's other players in double figures.



Action from Kazakhstan's win yesterday over Sri Lanka

Fernando Nimesh paced Sri Lanka in the loss with 13 markers. Clinton Stallone Thevakumar finished with 11, while Don Deenu Mahamuhandiramge chipped in with 10.

The Kazakhs claimed their second win in three contests with the result, and moved atop Group F with five points. Sri Lanka suffered their third successive loss as they stayed winless at the bottom of the group.

Kazakhstan will be looking to continue their winning ways today when they take on Palestine in the Bahrain qualifiers' lone fixture. The contest is scheduled for a 4pm tip-off, and it will be held behind closed doors.

Palestine head into the clash with a 1-1 win-loss record. They will be looking to bounce back against the Kazakhs, who narrowly won their first meeting 79-76 last year in Astana.

Group D leaders Lebanon tomorrow and then against Iraq on Monday.

The Bahrainis are currently

second in Group D with a 3-1 win-loss record, but have already secured their berths in the FIBA Asia Cup 2021, along

with Lebanon who have a 4-0 mark. India have one win in four games while Iraq are bottom of the table with four losses.

Najma battle past Malkiya in football league

TDI | Manama

Al Najma battled past Malkiya 2-1 last night in the 2020/2021 Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League.

Nigerian professional Vincent Emmanuel and Malo August were both on target in the second half to help the victors claim the hard-earned result.

Malkiya tried to mount a comeback and were able to score late on from the penalty spot, but they could not find an equaliser towards the end.

The win was Najma's third in 10 matches as they improved to 12 points on the league table. Malkiya suffered their sixth loss in 10 games and stayed bottom of the standings with six points.

Emmanuel opened the scoring for Najma in the 64th minute with a shot from close range. He was on the receiving end of a cross from the left wing, and was able to find the net with his second effort after his initial volley was blocked by a Malkiya defender.

Najma then doubled their advantage in the 73rd minute with an August rocket from the outer edge of the penalty box. His well-hit effort flew directly to the top-right corner of goal, leaving Malkiya goalkeeper Mohamed Ahmed Marhoon no chance.

Malkiya were able to get a goal back in the 80th minute



Najma's Malo August, centre, looks to dribble past Malkiya players Nawaf Abdulla Mohammed, left, and Hasan Isa Salman

after substitute Victory Omodiagbe, also from Nigeria, was taken down in the area by Najma's Redha Hassan Ali. Isa Abdulwahab Kaadhem stepped up to take the penalty, and he fired the ball right into the left

of the net. League action continues tonight with three matches on the cards. League leaders Riffa face off with Manama, East Riffa take on Muharraq, and Busaiten play Al Ahli.

Standings

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Riffa	9	8	1	0	10	25
East Riffa	8	6	1	1	10	19
Manama	9	5	2	2	6	17
Hidd	8	3	2	3	0	11
Al Najma	10	3	3	4	-2	12
Budaiya	9	2	3	4	-3	9
Muharraq	9	2	3	4	0	9
Al Ahli	9	2	2	5	-9	8
Busaiten	9	1	4	4	-1	7
Malkiya	10	1	3	6	-11	6

Bahrain line up Syria, Jordan friendlies in March

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's national football team will be playing a pair of international friendly matches next month at home.

The Bahrainis will first take on Syria on March 25, and then face off against Jordan on March 30. This was announced yesterday by the Bahrain Football Association.

The friendlies are part of the national team's preparations for their upcoming matches this year.

They will be their first games for 2021. They last took to the pitch in friendlies during an overseas training camp in Dubai in November of last year.

The Bahrainis will be gathering for the first time this year for local training from tomorrow for a week.



Bahrain's Mahdi Humaidan in action in a friendly last year (File photo)

Head coach Helio Sousa and his staff will be supervising the sessions.

Among the key competitions Bahrain are preparing for is their joint-qualifying campaign for the FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023.

Bahrain are in Group C of the joint-qualifiers alongside Iraq, Iran, Hong Kong and Cambodia. They have three games to play against Cambodia, Iran and Hong Kong, all of which are likely to be played in June later this year.

Third Khalid bin Hamad Competition for Innovation in Artificial Intelligence Competition begins

TDI | Manama

Under the patronage of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and Bahrain Olympic Committee President, the 3rd Khalid bin Hamad Competition for Innovation in Artificial Intelligence Competition has kicked-off.

Organised by Bahrain Poly-

technic in coordination with HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa Media Office, the event, which is taking place under the theme "Let's Invent the Future", will feature 100 teams. The event is part of HH Shaikh Khalid's initiatives supporting science.

The inauguration ceremony of the event was held virtually in line with the precautions in place to combat the

spread of the Coronavirus "COVID-19".

Commenting on the event, Shaikh Ali bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Resources and Information Affairs of Bahrain Polytechnic expressed happiness at the launch of the event, stating that the number of the participants got doubled compared to last year's edition.