

CAPTAINS CORNER

Mental health needs to be talked about



CAPT. MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

In early June, the high-octane world of international tennis tournaments was shaken by the decision of reigning No. 2 woman's tennis player, Naomi Osaka to withdraw from the French Open after the first round. The superstar cited depression and social anxiety as mental health reasons for her action, saying the mandatory post-match media conferences were making her nervous.

Some years back, Indian Bollywood star Deepika Padukone openly talked about her battle with life-threatening depression and even set up a trust fund for supporting victims. Once the initial cynicism of the whole thing being a publicity stunt had died down, she was taken seriously and more young people started discarding the stigma attached to mental health issues and seeking professional help.

In both cases, fans may have been taken aback that their idols so young and successful might nonetheless battle with mental health issues. But nothing is a guarantee against the trauma and loneliness of a mental breakdown – not wealth, nor fame, glamour, good looks or even physical good health. Mental health problems can affect anyone – in Bahrain, we do see many cases of mental breakdown and sadly, even cases of suicide.

The number of private clinics offering psychiatric support, have luckily increased and for expatriates who have language issues, there are trained volunteer helplines and groups to reach out. What we need is to break down the mental barriers towards seeking this available help so that the sufferers can be once again nurtured back to full potential.

There are indeed many days in the global health calendar dedicated to different mental health conditions: autism awareness in April (and another in June), Mental Health Awareness in October and national campaigns for eating disorders, depression, bipolar, ADHD and many other conditions. They help to focus attention on what can be done to diagnose and support sufferers and enable them to get treatment. We should also look at proper legislation to help people with mental issues to lead productive lives and find jobs that will tap their talent without stigmatising them. That is something Bahrain lawmakers must work on.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

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COVID-19, new restrictions dent freehold investments

Nasser Al Ahli, the Head of the Real Estate and Construction Committee at the Bahrain Businessmen Association, says freehold investment had dropped 40% in the H1, 2021

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Freehold investment in the Kingdom had dropped by a whopping 40%, claimed a top realty expert, who also blamed the COVID-19 situation, new government restrictions, and months' long approval processes for the plunge.

The difficulty in getting the approval of the Ministry of Justice is adding up the woes," said Nasser Al Ahli, the Head of the Real Estate and Construction Committee at the Bahrain Businessmen Association, said

These factors have eased investments in the realty sector, which is now at BD385 million in the first half of 2021. It was BD400m in 2019 and BD500m in 2018.

The concerning scenario, he told Daily Tribune, is mainly due to factors affecting the industrial and commercial

land segments.

The case, however, is not the same with residential plots, where the demand is rife. Powering up this sector is "steady demand from citizens," said Al Ahli.

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NASSER AL AHLI

"However, the current situation and legal bottlenecks are not inspiring foreigners living in Bahrain to purchase freehold units," he pointed out.

"I know some people who went on to buy plots in our neighbouring countries for them finding the months' long wait here for approvals as challenging," he said.

"Investors are looking for returns from their

investments, and they will put their money in sectors they have confidence.

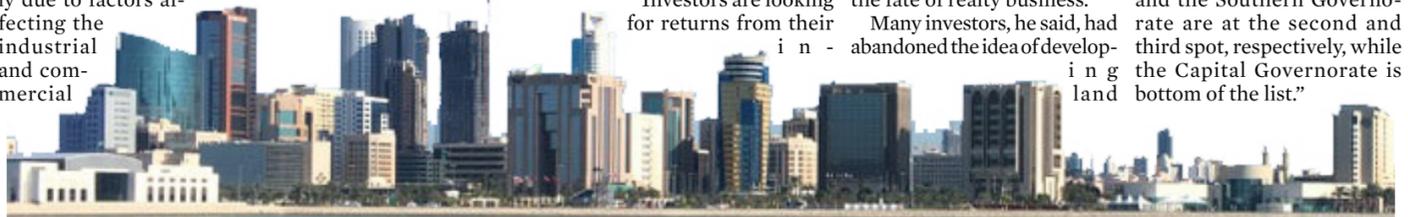
The uncertainty caused by Coronavirus is draining the confidence of investors in industrial and commercial lands. Investors had trained their eyes at housing units and apartment projects, moved by the steady demand in the sector, which is also pronouncing the fate of realty business.

Many investors, he said, had abandoned the idea of develop-

ing land plots whose size exceeds 200 square meters citing the purchasing power of the Bahraini nationals.

When asked about the governorates attracting the majority of real estate investments, he said: "The Northern Governorate is on top of the list for the number of projects there at the moment."

"Muharraq Governorate and the Southern Governorate are at the second and third spot, respectively, while the Capital Governorate is bottom of the list."



Adhere strictly to COVID-19 measures: Police tell citizens, residents

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Police directorates and Security departments in the Kingdom are continuing their efforts to ensure strict adherence of citizens and residents to COVID-19 measures to help battle the outbreak effectively.

In a statement, the directorates urged people to continue wearing face masks, restrict gathering to members of the same family, follow COVID-19 protocols at mosques and funerals, ensure social distancing in public places to protect society.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the directorates said they booked 88,440 people for not wearing face masks, pressed 10,360 charges against people not maintaining social distancing measures and carried out 12,056 awareness campaigns.

During the same period, the National Ambulance centre responded to 16,927 calls related to COVID-19 cases through qualified teams



of health and medical workers. The centre transported 103,009 patients since the start of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, Civil Defence officials carried out 330,510 disinfection and sterilisation operations and supervised several with the participation

of volunteers.

They also supervised 2,355 disinfection and sterilisation operations with the participation of volunteers.

The officials are also continuing to hold training courses on the correct methods of disinfection operations.

The courses organised by the Civil defence had 2,238 people from the private and government agencies. The number of volunteers since March of last year had reached 6,134.

Civil Defence officers also carried out 107 disinfection

and sterilisation operations with cleaning companies.

Police directors are also currently deploying field patrols in the markets and commercial complexes throughout the Kingdom to ensure COVID-19 protocols.

BCICAI conducts virtual yoga fest for children

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The Bahrain Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India held a Yoga Fest for Children as part of their month-long celebration commemorating the 7th International Day of Yoga.

Nearly 450 children from various schools in Bahrain took part in

the event. Vikram Singh, Director, Ministry of AYUSH, India, Ravi Kumar Jain, Second Secretary of Embassy of India in Bahrain, and Ajay Kumar Chettuvetty, Chairperson of BCICAI, were present.

Activities included a "Yoga for Concentration" session by CA Riya Bhansali, a certified yoga trainer and a Quiz on Yoga by Gayathri

Viswanath.

The winners of the Yoga Quiz are First-Sai Srivatsa Alapati (Asian School), Second-Sony Gancy D'Silva (Asian School), Third-Samhitha Jagadish (New Millennium School), Fourth-Amrutavarshinee Murugan (Bahrain Indian School) and Fifth-Lasya Saja (Asian School)

