

Al Ahli book GCC semis seat

Bahrain champions defeat Al Nasser of Saudi Arabia 94-84 to punch tickets to final four of FIBA Asia Champions Cup Gulf Basketball Association Qualifier in Dubai | P12

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HM King receives Royal Guard's Everest Team
TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa congratulated the Royal Guard Team members following their historic success in reaching the summit of Mount Everest in Nepal last month.

This came as His Majesty received yesterday at Al Safriya Palace the team members.

They were accompanied by National Security Advisor and Royal Guard Commander Major-General His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa and Royal Guard Special Force Commander Lieutenant-Colonel His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

HM the King bestowed the Bahrain Order on the Royal Guard team in recognition of their historic achievement, and directed to issue a special stamp that commemorates the national milestone.

HM the King praised their courage and strong determination in hoisting the Kingdom's flag on the highest mountain summit in the world.

HM the King thanked the team on their world achievements, which add to other landmark national accomplishments across all fields.

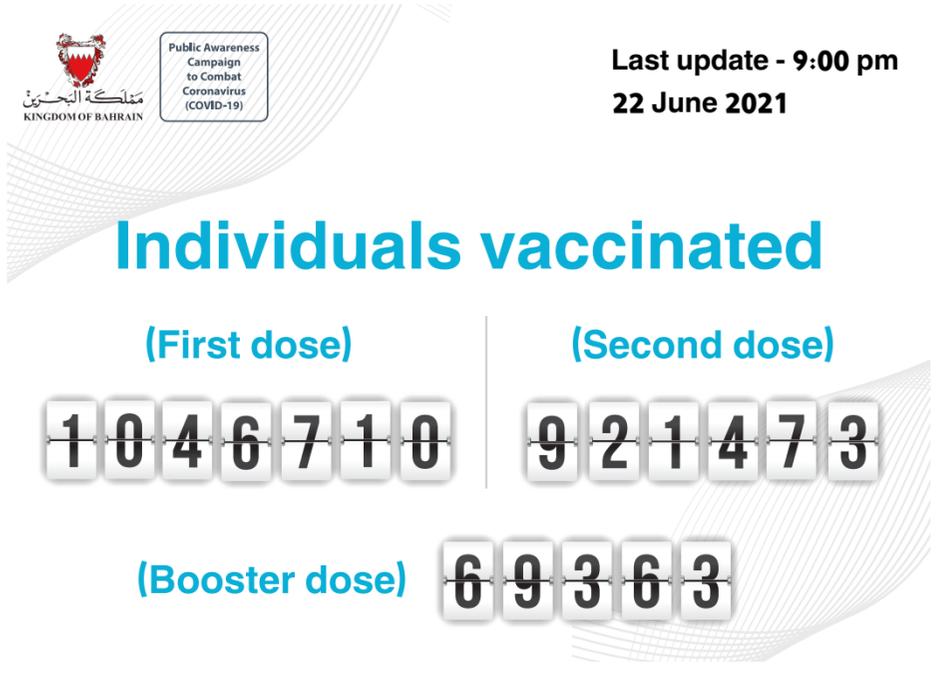
Bahrain congratulates HRH Grand Duke of Luxembourg



HM the King
TDT | Manama

to His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg, on his country's National Day.

HM King Hamad and HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister wished the Grand Duke good health and happiness on this national occasion.



COVID-19 restrictions extended

Bahrain is delaying full reopening of non-essential commercial sectors and activities until July 2

- Shopping malls, restaurants, cafes and other leisure venues will remain closed
- Essential services will continue operating while strictly following health protocols

TDT | Manama

For the second time this month, Bahrain has extended the existing COVID-19 restrictions on non-essential commercial sectors and activities until July 2.

The Health Ministry yesterday announced the decision to again delay the reopening of non-essential businesses for another week, three days before the first extension of the



Non-essential shops will remain closed to prevent the spread of the virus

lockdown-like curbs is due to be lifted on June 25.

Last month, the government announced a two-week closure of shopping malls, restaurants and cafes, among other non-essential sectors, from midnight of May 27 until midnight of June 10 following a sudden spike in the number of coronavirus cases.

It was extended for two more weeks and would have ended on Friday, but that has now been pushed back to July 2.

Following a presentation provided by the National Medical Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus (COVID-19), headed by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, Lieutenant-General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, it was decided to extend the precautionary measures for an additional week to maintain the significant decline in the daily infection numbers.

The almost month-long restrictions have proved effective as average number of new infections reported each day in Bahrain falls by more than 2,200 over the last three weeks after a record high of 3,274 cases on May 30.

The following stringent restrictions will remain in place:

- Restaurants and cafes can only operate home deliveries and take-out services.
- Beauty salons, spas and barbershops will also remain closed

and events and conferences suspended.

Aside from shopping malls, other leisure venues such as cinemas, private gyms, recreational halls, swimming pools and beaches will also be closed.

All social gatherings at homes are barred during this period. Attendance to sporting events is also banned.

Work-from-home policy will cover 70% of government employees, while remote learning will be continued at schools.

Meanwhile, essential services will continue operating while strictly following precautionary measures such as wearing face mask and observing social distancing, among others.

Hypermarkets, super markets, grocery stores, cold stores, fish shops, bakeries, petrol stations, pharmacies, private hospitals, banks and ATMs will remain open.

The Deputy Prime Minister, His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, yesterday chaired a meeting of the Government Executive Committee, in which the latest COVID-19 developments were discussed.

BAHRAIN COVID-19

NEW CASES

394

ACTIVE CASES

6300

DEATHS

1326

DISCHARGED

256063

210 fils (includes VAT)

6 084010 110021 >

It was decided to extend the precautionary measures for an additional week to maintain the significant decline in the daily infection numbers.

HM King keen to consolidate independence of judiciary

TDI | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has expressed Bahrain's pride in its rich history and landmark achievements in the field of judiciary.

HM the King expressed his constant keenness to consolidate the independence of the judiciary and support it with well-qualified experts, given the pivotal role played by the judicial branch in promoting the values of justice and equality, preserving freedoms and protecting the rights of all the citizens and residents.

This came as His Majesty received at Al Safriya Palace yesterday two Court of Cassation judges, who took the official legal oath before HM marking the issuance of a Royal Order appointing them to their posts.



HM the King

HM King Hamad congratulated the two judges, wishing them every success in undertaking the national responsibilities assigned to them.

He expressed appreciation to the members of the judicial branch for their dedicated efforts, noting that the continuous development and organization of the Bahraini judiciary enable it to assume its duties to the fullest.

HM King Hamad praises Gulf Air achievements

TDI | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa praised Gulf Air's important achievements since its establishment, earning it a prestigious reputation among regional and international airlines.

This came as HM the King received at Al Sakhir Palace yesterday Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister Zayed bin Rashid Al Zayani.

HM the King was presented a model aircraft marking the 70th anniversary of Gulf Air by the Minister, who is the Board of Directors Chairman of Gulf Air.

HM King Hamad expressed thanks and appreciation to the minister for the gift, commending the efforts exerted by the chairman and members of Gulf Air's Board of Directors to improve the company's performance and services.

HM the King affirmed the kingdom's unwavering support for Gulf Air, being the national carrier of Bahrain that contributed, throughout its 70-year history, to enhancing air transportation in the region, and consolidating the Arab hospitality values of which Bahrain is famous.

HM King Hamad commended the efforts of Bahraini competencies working in Gulf Air's various sectors, praising their landmark achievements since the establishment of the national carrier.

Bahrain lays out new rules for air travellers

Updated entry procedures via Bahrain International Airport to take effect on June 25

TDI | Manama

The Civil Aviation Affairs has announced that an update of the entry procedures via Bahrain International Airport will take effect on June 25.

The move is in line with the directives of the Executive Committee and the recommendation of the National Taskforce for Combating Coronavirus (COVID-19).

According to the new regulations, all passengers, vaccinated or unvaccinated, arriving in the Kingdom, aged six or above, have to present an approved (PCR) test certificate with a QR code before boarding the plane.

The test has to be undergone 48 hours before departure for passengers authorised to enter the kingdom and who are coming from countries on the red list, namely India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Vietnam.

Passengers coming from countries that are not on the red list have to undergo the PCR test 72 hours before departure.

According to the new update, all passengers from all countries must undergo the PCR test again upon arrival in Bahrain and on the 10th day after arrival.

The cost of the tests can be paid through BeAware Bahrain application in addition to the platforms at the airport which permit to pay in cash or electronically by credit cards.



New regulations await passengers arriving in Bahrain

It has also been decided to limit the issuance of visit visas upon arrival at Bahrain International Airport to those coming from the countries that are allowed to obtain them according to the procedures for visit visas to the Kingdom.

The Civil Aviation Affairs noted that the precautionary quarantine will continue to be applied for 10 days for all travellers coming from the countries listed on the red list and all unvaccinated travellers aged six years and above.

The precautionary quarantine can take place in the passengers' homes or places designated for isolation that are licensed by the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA).

The entry of travellers coming from the countries listed on the red list will continue to be suspended on all flights, including those coming from those countries who will enter

the kingdom temporarily, with the exception of citizens and holders of valid residence visas in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The exception also includes travellers coming from countries that are not listed on the red list.

1. Among the requirements of the precautionary quarantine and PCR test before boarding the plane: Vaccinated passengers having certificates approved by the countries whose vaccination certificates have been approved according to the decision of the Minister of Health, or mutual agreements signed to recognize vaccination certificates.

2. Among the precautionary quarantine requirements: Vaccinated passengers who hold vaccination certificates issued by the US, Britain, the European Union, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and Singapore.

Qatar must heed 'Gulf unity' in foreign policy

TDI | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain hopes that Qatar will take into account in its foreign policy the unity of the Gulf, and the bonds of kinship, common history and mutual interests, and that the two brotherly peoples and countries share a common destiny.

Foreign Minister Dr Abdulatif bin Rashid Al Zayani said that Bahrain sent two official invitations to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of For-

eign Affairs of Qatar, Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, to send a Qatari delegation and hold bilateral talks between the two countries in the Kingdom.

It aims to settle the issues between the two sides, in implementation of what was stipulated in the Al-Ula summit statement, and to move forward in strengthening the process of joint Gulf cooperation.

Dr Al Zayani added that the unity among the member

states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is demand for all its people, which was stipulated in the Al-Ula summit statement, which emphasised commitment of states to their solidarity in not violating the sovereignty of any other member state, threatening their security, or targeting the national cohesion of their peoples and their social fabric in any way, and by standing fully in the face of what prejudices the national and regional security of any of them.

Expats banned from selling outdoors in Capital Governorate



Expats who sell outdoors in the Capital Governorate will now face legal consequences after the Capital Municipal Council yesterday issued new regulations limiting this practice to jobless Bahraini nationals. According to the Council's Instagram post, Bahraini nationals who wish to be peddlers have to obtain a permit. They should neither be employees in the public nor the private sectors or own a commercial registration to become eligible. The applicant must also provide three recent photographs as well as ID card.

Shura Chairman receives Parliament Minister



Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh received Parliament Affairs Minister Ghanem bin Fadhel Al Buainain to discuss topics related to legislative affairs. Al Saleh affirmed that the legislative branch's achievements during the past sessions, and the legislation and laws it submitted to activate the specific constitutional tools, are considered a distinct product of sincere national work by members of the legislative branch, and constructive cooperation and continuous coordination with the executive branch. Al Buainain praised Shura chairman and all members, for their national interest and responsibility in enacting legislation and amending laws, stressing the continuous endeavor by the esteemed government to open up more prospects for cooperation and joint action.

The Government Executive Committee extend precautionary measures for an additional week to maintain the declining trend of daily cases, starting Friday, 25 June 2021, to Friday, 2 July 2021, as follows:

The following in-person activities remain restricted:

- Shopping malls and commercial shop - with services limited to online sales and delivery
- Restaurants and cafes - services limited to delivery and takeaway
- Gyms and sport halls, swimming pools and recreational centres
- Cinemas
- Events and conferences

Attendance of sporting events

Salons, barber shops and beauty parlours

Social gatherings in homes

Schools and higher educational institutions, kindergartens, rehabilitation centers, nurseries and training centers, with the sole exception of attendance for international examinations

The following policies remain in effect:

- Work-from-home policy to cover 70% of Government employees
- Current travel procedures to the Kingdom of Bahrain

The following operations may resume without restrictions:

- Hypermarkets, supermarkets, grocery stores, and stores that sell meat products and fresh vegetables
- Bakeries
- Fuel and gas filling stations
- Private health clinics, with the exception of some health services for which a circular is being issued by the National Authority for Regulating Health Professions and Services
- Banks and currency exchange services
- Administrative offices of institutions and companies, whose activities are not customer facing

- Import and export distributors
- Automobile repair and spare parts shops
- Businesses operating in the processing, construction or maintenance sectors
- Factories
- Enterprises operating in the telecommunication sector
- Pharmacies

Activities will gradually resume, based on the data, after the prescribed period has passed.

Industry Minister pays inspection visit to new BIECC project



Minister Al Zayani is being briefed on the progress of the project while on tour
TDT | Manama

Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister Zayed bin Rashid Al Zayani paid an inspection visit to the new Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre (BIECC) project in Sakhir.

Also Board Chairman of Bahrain Tourism and Exhibition Authority (BTEA), Al Zayani was accompanied by BTEA Chief Executive Dr Nasser Qaedi and Cebarco Board Chairman Khalid Abdulrahim.

The Minister got updated on progress in implementing the project which is one of the biggest ventures carried out

by BTEA.

The new BIECC project, which is implemented in Sakhir, covers an area of 309,000 square metres and will include 10 state-of-the-art exhibition halls with a total area of 95,000 square metres to host international events and exhibitions.

The project also comprises the main state-of-the-art conference centre with an area of 4,500 square metres and a capacity of approximately 4,000 people.

The new BIECC premises, which is hoped to be delivered by the end of the second quarter of 2022, will also feature a number of meeting rooms and multi-use halls.

Adopt technologies to develop e-government

ICT committee meeting discusses Bahrain initiatives to boost digital economy

TDT | Manama

There is a need to keep pace with international developments and adopt the latest practices and technologies in the field of e-government.

In this context, Deputy Prime Minister His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa called for exerting all efforts to raise the readiness of various government agencies in accordance with the plans and schedules.

The Deputy Prime Minister, who is also chairman of the Supreme Committee for Information and Communication Technology (ICT), yesterday chaired the Committee's 18th meeting, held remotely.

Also participating in the discussion were Deputy Premier, HH Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, and Deputy Premier, Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, and members of the Committee.

The panel reviewed the efforts of the committees and government entities to highlight the kingdom's e-government practices, within the UN e-Government Report.

The committees and government entities focused on the main initiatives being implemented by the kingdom, including the development of the National Strategy for Digital Economy, which is based on using information technology through modern means of communication and high-speed internet.

Indeed, these are the core of digital economy, as many government department and banks are conducting their financial



HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak chairs the online committee meeting



Initiatives based on using information technology are the core of digital economy, as many government department and banks are conducting their financial operations through the automated system or the so-called financial technology (FinTech), which saves a lot of time and effort.

operations through the automated system or the so-called financial technology (FinTech), which saves a lot of time and effort.

The Supreme ICT Committee was also informed that the National Portal, the national Open Data Platform and the websites of government entities are being updated regularly, and that a special website that highlights

Bahrain's efforts to achieve sustainable development goals is being developed.

The committee also reviewed the government's plans to enhance and improve performance in the indices of the UN report, including promoting innovation in the public sector, digital literacy, digital transformation, e-participation, and the use of modern technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, smart cities and fighting corruption.

The panel also reviewed a report prepared by the Information and Communications Technology Governance Committee (ICTGC) on the proposed standards and guidelines for developing government systems and applications prepared.

The report aims to reduce systems' development and operational costs through increasing coordination among government systems, enhancing their linkage, and reducing associated risks.

As to the standards and guidelines, they include all stages of systems and applications development projects, in terms of governance and management.

The committee approved the standards and guidelines documenting them to all government agencies and adopting them within the review procedures of the ICTGC.

The Supreme ICT Committee also reviewed the indicative guide for drafting information technology contracts.

The guide aims to preserve the rights of government agencies in the technical and technical aspects, raise the efficiency and quality of the services provided, reduce the cost of the services provided and reduce risks.

The guide includes instructions and items, including documenting the scope of work, payments, determining service levels, ensuring software ownership, mechanisms for transferring skills and knowledge to the government entity, and ensuring data confidentiality.

The panel also approved the upgraded version of the "Interactive Conferencing System", which began operating in 2013 and was used by more than 12,000 users in more than 5,200 meetings and included more than 93,000 numbered documents.

Ways to boost Bahrain and Morocco parliamentary diplomacy discussed

● Speaker Zainal holds call with Moroccan counterpart

● They discussed ways of cooperation and activation of joint action

TDT | Manama

Speaker Fawzia bint Abdulrahman Zainal yesterday held a phone call with Moroccan House of Representatives' Speaker Habib Al Malki.

They discussed ways of cooperation and activation of joint action, within the efforts of Bahraini-Moroccan parliamentary diplomacy, and building advanced relations between the two kingdoms, in light of the keenness and interest of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco.

Zainal praised the progressing relations, stressing the importance of reflecting this on the level of parliamentary



Speaker Zainal



Speaker Al Malki

a stronger base of cooperation in legislative fields.

She praised Morocco's firm and supportive stances for Bahrain and taking all the steps and measures it takes to maintain its security, stability, and solidarity in all circumstances, which reflects the close relations based on the principle of a common destiny.

The Moroccan Speaker affirmed the deep relations between Bahrain and Morocco and highlighted his country's firm position of supporting the Kingdom in everything that serves its national unity and sovereignty.

The Moroccan Speaker vowed to support the Kingdom in everything that serves its national unity and sovereignty.

approach, in order to enhance communication and establish



HM King's Advisor receives HRH Crown Prince's Court's Chief



Advisor to HM the King His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Salman Al Khalifa received HRH Crown Prince's Court Chief Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed bin Salman Al Khalifa, on the issuance of the royal order appointing him to his position. The Advisor wished Shaikh Salman success in carrying out his mission. Shaikh Salman expressed his great pride in the royal trust he was given, thanking the Advisor for his congratulations and wishes for success.

Bahrain signs deal under "Belt and Road" Initiative

TDT | Manama

Bahrain and China have signed a memorandum of understanding within the framework of the "Belt and Road" Initiative.

The Chief of Arab Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Mohammed Al Tarifi, praised the initiative due to its positive impact on Arab-Chinese relations.

He noted that the Bahraini-Chinese relations wit-



Al Tarifi takes part in the online forum

nessed a remarkable development in all political, economic, cultural and other fields.

Al Tarifi took part in the 17th Senior Officials' Meeting of the

China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF) and the 6th Senior Official Level Strategic Political Dialogue, which was held virtually yesterday.

During the meeting, Al Tarifi delivered a speech in which he stressed the keenness of Bahrain to support the Arab-Chinese Cooperation Forum.

He noted that the Kingdom will continue its endeavours to develop and enhance the forum's role in developing Arab-Chinese relations.

Private sector key to food self-sufficiency

A 'key partner' in implementing His Majesty the King's royal directives to ensure sustainable food security for all

● Al Amin speaks at Derasat forum

TDI | Manama

The private sector is a key partner in implementing the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to achieving self-sufficiency in the field of food security.

This was emphasised by Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) Food Wealth Committee Chairman Khalid Al Amin who praised the initiatives of the government headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince Prime Minister.

The initiatives include working to establish a government company that incubates food security projects, the development of a marine aquaculture centre in Ras Hayyan, allocating 26 sites for soilless farming and fish farming.

In his statement on the eve of the Fourth Annual "Derasat" Center's Forum: "Strategies to Attain Food Security", Al Amin said: "All stakeholders working



Food stocks in Bahrain are sufficient

in the food industry and trade sector in Bahrain are sufficiently ready to contribute efficiently to achieving the government's ambitious goal declared by Deputy Prime Minister HE Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa during the forum, regarding moving Bahrain from the 49th rank in the year 2020 on the Global Food Security Index, to the 25th rank by 2030."

Al Amin expressed the Bahraini private sector's keenness to draw inspiration from all the directives of the government and to include them in its scope

of work, to achieve sustainable food security in Bahrain, and support qualitative initiatives in the field of agriculture and fishing, as well as advance its contribution to the Kingdom's non-oil GDP.

In this context, he pointed out that His Majesty's directives on promoting food security during the pandemic were a national responsibility carried out by the stakeholders in the food trade sector and were implemented to the fullest, as food stocks in Bahrain became sufficient for no less than six months.

Al Amin praised what the Deputy Prime Minister has revealed during the forum regarding the approval of HRH the Crown Prince Prime Minister to establish a national committee for food security to follow up on the implementation of food security strategies.

He expressed his confidence in the ability of this committee to implement the national vision related to food security.

"The forum received a high-level attendance especially by Representatives Council Speaker Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal, Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh and Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, in addition to several ministers and officials," said Al Amin.

"This confirms the seriousness of the Kingdom of Bahrain in achieving food security and heralds a new phase of cooperation between the various stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of food security in Bahrain."

Al Amin affirmed the need to build on the outcomes of this



- KHALID AL AMIN, BAHRAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (BCCI) FOOD WEALTH COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

"The level of food security in Bahrain is reassuring, and the Bahraini markets are linked to a reliable and active regional and global supply chain. There is a great abundance in various food items that are not affected by seasons or other events such as the holy month of Ramadan and the COVID-19 pandemic, which proves Bahrain's readiness to provide food to the population sustainably and at all times and circumstances."

forum to integrate and develop all elements of food security, including agricultural and livestock production, fish farming, and national food supply.

This is in addition to developing national capacities in the field of food industries, boosting the national production rate, employing modern technology, securing food sources, and benefiting from the expertise of brotherly countries to achieving the desired national goals.

"The level of food security in Bahrain is reassuring, and the Bahraini markets are linked to a reliable and active regional and global supply chain. There is a great abundance in various food items that are not affected by seasons or other events such as the holy month of Ramadan and the COVID-19 pandemic, which proves Bahrain's readiness to provide food to the population sustainably and at all times and circumstances" said Al Amin.

Former LMRA Chief Executive receives top Philippine award

● In appreciation of Al Absi's role in protecting human rights and combating trafficking in persons

TDI | Manama

Osama bin Abdullah Al Absi, former CEO of the Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) and the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons, has been honoured with the highest recognition of diplomatic merit by the Philippines.

President Rodrigo Duterte issued a decree conferring Al Absi with the Order of Sikatuna, the highest decoration granted to non-citizens of the Philippines.

He became only the second Bahraini to receive the top accolade after the late Prime Minister His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa was bestowed with the same award in 2001.

This high medal at the international level comes in appreciation of the distinguished partnership between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Philippines in protecting human rights and combating trafficking in persons.

The Order of Sikatuna has four categories and Al Absi has received the second class, Silver Grand Cross, with the rank of Datu.

Al Absi implemented several initiatives in cooperation with the Filipino officials, especially coordinating in cases of cross-border human trafficking and the protection of victims, as well as attending international forums on migration issues,



Al Absi, second from right, with, from left, Philippine Ambassador to Bahrain Alfonso Ver Borje and Philippines Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs Sarah Arriola



The Order of Sikatuna medal

in particular the International Covenant on Migrants at the United Nations.

Al Absi received the medal from President Duterte's Special Envoy and Presidential Assistant on Foreign Affairs Robert Borje in a special ceremony held on Monday at the Riyadh Marriott Hotel in Saudi Arabia.

Al Absi was honoured by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, who granted him the Efficiency Medal, for his efforts in strengthening the Kingdom's



President Rodrigo Duterte issued a decree conferring Al Absi with the Order of Sikatuna, the highest decoration granted to non-citizens of the Philippines.

leading position in the region and the world, especially related to labour market reforms and combating trafficking in persons.

He was also honoured by the US State Department in 2018 being among 10 international figures who made outstanding efforts in combating trafficking in persons. With this honour, Al Absi is considered the first official Gulf figure to have such an international status in this field.

Justice Minister receives Capital Governor



Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, received yesterday Capital Governor, Shaikh Hesham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa. They discussed cooperation between the Ministry and the Capital Governorate to improve services for citizens. Shaikh Khalid bin Ali praised the efforts of the Capital Governorate to develop services and promote community partnership.

Financial support for 12 sectors

TDI | Manama

Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan issued an edict announcing COVID-19 affected sectors which will benefit from the Government's payment of insured Bahrainis' salaries through the Insurance Against Unemployment Fund for a three-month period running from June to August 2021.

The sectors affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- Travel and aviation
- Hospitality and restaurants
- Personal services (salons,

- gymns, games and entertainment)

- Industrial sector
- Health sector
- Transport
- Rehabilitation and training
- Retail sector (food products not included)

- Administrative services (public relations, media and events management)

- Real estate, engineering, technical and contracting bureaus
- Local newspapers and magazines
- Any other affected sectors, except big companies, insur-

ance sector

The Minister said that the Government's support package would benefit 10, 880 companies and establishments operating in the private sector and 58, 298 citizens, costing up to BD60 million-BD30 million for June and BD15 million each for July and August.

Humaidan also hailed the directives issued by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to extend a number of initiatives as part of the financial and economic stimulus package aimed to mitigate the COVID-19 fallout.

Ex-Minister jailed for issuing dud cheque

TDI | Manama

The High Appeals Court has confirmed the six-months' imprisonment issued against a former minister who was held guilty of issuing a dud cheque with bad faith.

The defendant is said to have issued a cheque worth BD18,300 for a commercial company in return for offering a service.

However, when the owners of the company wanted to encash the cheque, it was discovered that his account balance was nil. The company reportedly demanded him to pay the amount, but he kept stalling.

"We thought he was trustworthy, therefore we accepted a cheque from him. We delivered the service to him, and to

our surprised his account was empty. We requested him to pay the money and he kept ignoring us," the owners of the company told prosecutors.

The defendant was earlier sentenced to six months in absentia. He was arrested and appealed the sentence. He, however, lost his appeal and now will have to serve six months behind bars.

Manama now more affordable for foreign workers: Mercer report

● On top of the list is the notoriously expensive Ashgabat of Turkmenistan, and closely following is Hong Kong

● Beirut is the costliest city in the Middle East

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's capital city Manama has become much more affordable for international employees to live in despite the economic repercussions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, says the latest Mercer Cost of Living City report.

In 2020, Manama was 52nd compared to the cost of living of 206 cities around the globe.

Come 2021, and things had changed a lot.

The city is now ranked 71st on the same index, or 19 points below the previous ranking.

"Cost of living has always been a factor for international mobility planning, but the pandemic has added a whole new layer of complexity, as well as long-term implications related to health and safety of employees, remote working and flexibility policies, among other considerations," said Ilya Bonic, Career President and Head of Mercer Strategy. "As organisations rethink their talent and mobility strategies, accurate and transparent data is essential to compensate employees fairly for all types of assignments."

On top of the list is the no-

Mercer 2021 Cost of Living City Ranking

Rank 2020	Rank 2021	City	Location	Rank change
31	29	Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	2
23	42	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	-19
39	56	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates	-17
52	71	Manama	Bahrain	-19
104	94	Jeddah	Saudi Arabia	10
96	108	Muscat	Oman	-12
113	115	Kuwait City	Kuwait	-2



toriously expensive Ashgabat of Turkmenistan, and closely following is Hong Kong at the number 2 spot. At the lowest end of the ranking is Bishkek of Kyrgyzstan.

Riyadh expensive, Jeddah cheaper

The list also covers several cities in the Gulf Cooperation Council nations.

Riyadh, which lies 471 kilometres away from Bahrain, is ranked more expensive than Manama by Mercer.

Riyadh had climbed two spots from the previous rank of 31 to reach the 29th spot this year. While Jeddah, which is at a distance of 1,414.2 km from Manama, is cheaper to live in than Manama. Jeddah, on the Mercer report, is now ranked 94th.

However, in the prior year, the city was further affordable at 104th rank.

Dubai, Abu Dhabi

Mercer also has two UAE cities, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, on its cost of living index.

Obviously, both the cities are expensive when compared to Manama. However, both of them had become much more affordable than a year ago. Mercer attributes this to UAE's continued economic diversification policies, pushing its GDP away from the oil industry.

With this ongoing process, there has been negative price movement in both cities. Dubai is at 42nd rank, Abu Dhabi also making it above Manama at 56th rank.

Kuwait city

The ranking has only one city from Kuwait on it, which is Kuwait City, the capital. And it is rated less expensive to live than Manama at the 115th slot. The prior year, Kuwait City held the 113th rank.

Other cities on the Mercer Cost of Living City are Muscat of Oman at 108th rank (previously 96), Doha of Qatar at 130 (109).

Beirut costliest city in the Middle East?

Mercer says Beirut is the costliest city in the Middle East for international employees, jumping 42 positions to third in the ranking.

N'Djamena (13), Lagos (19) and Libreville (20) are the first, second and third costliest cities

in Africa for international employees.

Lusaka ranked 208 as the least expensive city in Africa.

Ashgabat is super expensive!

The ranking found Ashgabat the most expensive city for international employees, pushing Hong Kong to second place.

Beirut ranked third, climbing 42 positions up, owing to a severe and extensive economic depression, COVID-19 and the Port of Beirut explosion in 2020. Tokyo and Zurich each dropped one spot from third and fourth respectively to fourth and fifth positions, and Shanghai ranked sixth, up a place from last year. Singapore moved from fifth place to seventh.

Other cities appearing in the top 10 cities for international employees are Geneva (8), Beijing (9), and Bern (10). The least expensive cities for international employees are Tbilisi (207), Lusaka (208), and Bishkek.

US cities drop

US cities fell in this year's ranking mostly because of currency fluctuations, and despite rising inflation, according to Mercer.

New York dropped eight spots but was the most expensive in the country at number 14.

Two other Chinese cities are among the most expensive in the world for expatriates: Shanghai climbed one spot to number six while Beijing rose to ninth.

From India, Mumbai is at 78th rank (down 18 points from 60 a year ago), New Delhi at 117 (101), Chennai at 158 (143), Bengaluru at 170 (171) and Kolkata at 181st rank (earlier 185).

Alba wins RoSPA Gold Medal award



Alba's CEO, Ali Al Baqali

● The accolade marks Alba's outstanding safety and health performance from 01 January 2020 to 31 December 2020

TDI | Manama

Aluminium Bahrain, the world's largest aluminium smelter ex-China and a leader in Employee's Safety, is the winner of the 2021 Gold Medal Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for the eighth consecutive year.

The accolade marks Alba's outstanding safety and health performance from 01 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Commenting, Alba's Chief Executive Officer Ali Al Baqali said: "Winning this award for 8-years in a row is a true reflection of our continuous journey in our pursuit of Safety Excellence. This year, the RoSPA Award is all the more remarkable as it commended the intensive efforts by our employees and contractors' personnel for maintaining safety a priority despite the Pandemic challenges. I thank everyone for never giving safety a day-off."

RoSPA is a UK-based organisation that has been recognising Health and Safety success for companies around the world for more than 50 years. Alba will be awarded at the 2021 RoSPA Health and Safety Award ceremony held virtually on 09 September 2021.

TAMCON elects Al Hammadi as board chairman

TDI | Manama

Tamcon, a leading Bahrain-based grade AA civil and building construction company, announced naming Mohammed Al Hammadi as the Chairman of its Board of Directors.

Al Hammadi joins Tamcon with a diversified and distinguished background and track record of success.

Al Hammadi has over 35 years of experience across several financial institutions, national



Abdulla Al Alabbasi

organizations and fast-growing companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He currently serves as a Board member on Investment Dar Bank BSC(C) as well as a senior advisor to Sinoma



Mohammed Al Hammadi

CDI-Engineering. "By aligning hard work, diligence, and perseverance, with systematically set goals and coordinated effort across the

Group, we will see our collective work resulting in the highest of achievements; bringing Tamcon onto greater platforms of success," said Commenting, Al Hammadi.

CEO of Tamcon, Abdulla Al Alabbasi, said, "On behalf of the executive team, we look forward to working closely with our newly elected Board of Directors to usher in a new era for Tamcon."

Tamcon is a subsidiary of Al Khaleej Development Co. (Tameer) Group.

OPEC+ discusses further cuts

Dubai

OPEC+ is discussing a further easing of oil output cuts from August as oil prices rise on demand recovery, but no decision had been taken yet on the exact volume to bring back to the market, two OPEC+ sources said yesterday.

The Organisation is returning 2.1 million barrels per day (bpd) to the market from May through July as part of a plan.

Gaza Pepsi factory shuts down, owners blame Israeli restrictions

Reuters | Gaza

Gaza's Pepsi bottling company was forced to halt operations this week due to Israeli import restrictions that were tightened during an 11-day conflict between Israel and Palestinian militants last month, the company's owners say.

With a truce between Israel and Gaza's Hamas largely holding, Israel on Monday allowed a limited resumption of exports from the enclave.

But it has kept in place tightened measures on raw material imports, including carbon dioxide gas and syrup that the bot-

tling company's factory needs to produce Pepsi, 7UP and Mirinda soda, said Pepsi Gaza's Hamam al-Yazeji.

"Yesterday, we completely ran out of raw materials, and unfortunately we had to shut down the factory, sending home 250 workers," Yazeji said. Before the May fighting, he said, Pepsi Gaza was generally allowed to import needed materials.

Asked for comment, COGAT, a branch of Israel's defence ministry, said: "Due to the security situation, the import of industrial raw materials from the State of Israel into the Gaza Strip is

not possible." COGAT said Israel was allowing other imports into Gaza, including fuel, food, medicine and medical equipment. Israel and neighbouring Egypt

keep tight control over Gaza's borders, and say the restrictions are necessary to stop weapons reaching Hamas and prevent them from being produced locally.



Shutdowns could also occur in other Gaza factories if Israeli restrictions are kept up, analysts say. Manufacturing makes up around 10 percent of Gaza's service sector-dominated economy, according to UN data.

Pepsi Gaza's factory has operated continuously since 1961, when the Gaza-based Yazeji Soft Drinks Company acquired rights to produce 7UP and other types of soda in the enclave.

Worth about \$15 million, the owners say, the factory's products are distributed locally. A separate branch operates in

the occupied West Bank, worth about \$30 million, which serves the territory as well as East Jerusalem.

Company officials had made plans to celebrate 60 years of operations before the shutdown on Sunday.

Yazeji had tears in his eyes as he walked through his empty factory on Monday. The shutdown was "catastrophic", he said. "This year should have been exceptional, celebrating 60 years since we began production."

"We are deprived of marking this anniversary."

News in brief

◆ **The United States views the process that made Ebrahim Raisi Iran's president-elect as "pretty manufactured,"** US State Department spokesman Ned Price said on Monday, repeating the US view that Iran's recent election was neither free nor fair. "Our Iran policy is designed to advance US interests and that is regardless of who is chosen as Iran's president in a ... process that we consider to be pretty manufactured. This was not a free and fair election process," Price told reporters in a telephone briefing.



US views election of Iran's Raisi as 'pretty manufactured'

◆ **Saudi Arabia's foreign minister discussed with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief** "the importance of imposing the necessary mechanisms for a rapid and comprehensive inspection of all Iranian nuclear sites," the foreign ministry wrote in a tweet on Monday. Prince



Saudi minister discussed Iran's nuclear programme with IAEA chief

Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, who is on an official visit to Vienna, also discussed with IAEA's Rafael Grossi "stopping Iranian policies and violations of international laws and norms that destabilize the security and stability of the region and the world," the ministry added.

◆ **Israel's Defence Ministry and defence contractor Elbit Systems Ltd are developing** an airborne laser weapon to shoot down

Israel says it is developing airborne laser to down drones



drones and other flying targets, officials said on Monday, predicting a prototype would be ready by 2025. They said the as-yet unnamed laser weapon could be incorporated in Israel's multi-tier air defences, which include the Iron Dome system for downing short-range rockets and the David's Sling and Arrow systems against ballistic missiles.

◆ **China's longest-serving ambassador to Washington, Cui Tiankai,** said yesterday he will be leaving his post after eight years, amid strained relations between the world's two largest economies. Cui,



Qin Gang set to be named China's new ambassador to US

known for his more congenial, diplomatic manner, is expected to be replaced by Qin Gang, a trusted aide of President Xi Jinping known for his sharp retorts to criticism of China. China's foreign ministry declined to comment on Tuesday on who would succeed Cui, but sources with knowledge of the matter have told Reuters that Qin is expected to take over. Qin, 55, a foreign ministry vice minister, had served Xi as his chief protocol officer between 2014 to 2018. During two stints as foreign ministry spokesman from 2006-2010 and 2011-2014, Qin was known for striking an assertive posture, often making sharp comments in defence of China.

Row erupts as Kuwait parliament approves budget in tense session

- Parliamentary guards entered the hall to restore order
- Opposition lawmakers occupied seats reserved for ministers
- Ministers stood at an entrance to the hall after MPs took their seats



Picture courtesy of newspaper24

Reuters | Kuwait

Kuwait's parliament approved the 2021-22 state budget in a tense session that managed to temporarily break a deadlock with the government that has blocked reforms in the Gulf state.

But chaos broke out after the vote, supported by 32 out of 63 lawmakers in attendance including 50 elected members and government ministers. Parliamentary guards entered the hall to restore order as opposition and pro-government MPs quarrelled.

The session had gone ahead despite opposition lawmakers

once again occupying seats reserved for ministers, a tactic they have used in recent weeks to try to highlight their demand to question the prime minister.

Speaker Marzouq al-Ghanim called for a special session to discuss the budget at a time when the OPEC nation is trying to boost state finances and support an economy that shrank 9.9% in 2020 due to low oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic.

The budget, proposed by the government in January, had projected 23.05 billion dinars (\$76.65 billion) in expenditure for the fiscal year that started

on April 1, and a deficit of 12.1 billion dinars.

"We have the right to request a special session because all regular sessions have been disrupted," Ghanim said.

Ministers stood at an entrance to the hall after MPs took their seats and some lawmakers had rapped on tables to try to disrupt the discussions.

Lawmakers want to question Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Khalid al-Sabah over the constitutionality of a motion passed in March delaying any questioning of the premier until the end of 2022 along with other issues such as corruption.

Free COVID-19 for tourists in



A man receives a dose of a vaccine against COVID-19 at Paul's Church in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Reuters | Dubai

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, is offering tourists free COVID-19 vaccinations that were previously restricted to UAE citizens and residency visa holders.

There is no indication that the change applies to Dubai, the most populous emirate, or the other five emirates that make up the UAE.

Visitors with visas issued by Abu Dhabi and passport holders eligible for tourist visas when they arrive in the UAE through Abu Dhabi can book free vaccines, according to information provided by the Abu Dhabi Health Services Company (SEHA), which operates the emirate's public health infrastructure.

HOLDERS of expired residency or entry visas are also eligible for free vaccinations, Abu Dhabi Media Office said on June 11.

Job losses and travel restrictions during the pandemic mean some people's residency visas have expired or have been cancelled when

Covid-19 death after liver disease may reveal difference in care: study

AFP | Paris

A survey of people hospitalised for Covid-19 found those with chronic liver disease and a history of alcohol abuse were 80 percent more likely to die from the virus and less likely to receive life-saving intubation.

In research to be presented this week at the International Liver Congress, researchers based in France analysed the national database of 259,000 Covid patients admitted to hospitals in 2020.

Some 16,300 of those had been previously diagnosed with chronic liver disease.

The average rate of death among all patients hospitalised with the virus was 15 percent. Among those with chronic liver disease, however, the rate jumped to nearly a quarter.

But while previous studies had looked at liver failure as a factor in the severity of Covid, this study found that mortality could be linked to which patients were placed on ventilation.

According to the study, patients who suffered alcoholism, advanced cirrhosis or liver cancer and showed higher Covid-19 morbidity and were less likely to have been intubated.

Patients with milder liver problems -- from chronic liver disease unrelated to alcohol abuse, organ transplants and



Previous research has shown that people with chronic liver disease are less likely to be intubated in intensive care

viral hepatitis for example -- were not at heightened risk for Covid-19 mortality but received ventilation at a greater rate.

"Our results suggest that a limitation of the therapeutic effort may have contributed to the excess mortality of patients with a liver-related complication and of patients with alcohol use disorders," the study said.

Thomas Berg, incoming president of the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL), told AFP the findings reflected a trend in care for liver patients that pre-dates the pandemic.

'Important study'

A 2013 US survey of 300 people with mild and advanced liver diseases found the majority of respondents perceived a

stigma against their diagnosis.

"Most patients are willing to talk about if they have a cardiac disease or cancer," Berg said, "but when it comes to liver disease there is always the perception it is self-inflicted, related to drugs or alcohol."

The national survey is the largest that has looked at the question of how likely chronic liver disease patients are to survive a coronavirus infection.

France's universal access to hospital care means a wide range of Covid patients were represented, and analysts could look back at 10 years of records from the national discharge database to determine comorbidities.

"It's an important study because the data is coming from a natural registry and the data is quite robust," said Berg.

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	34,420,001	617,483	179,678,535
2 India	30,002,691	389,661	
3 Brazil	17,969,806	502,817	Deaths
4 France	5,757,798	110,778	
5 Turkey	5,375,593	49,236	3,891,089
6 Russia	5,350,919	130,347	
7 UK	4,651,988	128,008	Recovered:
8 Argentina	4,277,395	89,490	
9 Italy	4,254,294	127,322	164,369,239
10 Colombia	3,968,405	100,582	
11 Spain	3,764,651	80,689	New cases
12 Germany	3,730,774	91,025	
13 Iran	3,117,336	83,217	+137,834
14 Poland	2,879,030	74,858	

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	277,797		15,898		206,053	55,846
Saudi Arabia	475,403		7,691		457,128	10,584
UAE	613,993		1,763		592,984	19,246
Kuwait	340,967		1,877		321,293	17,797
Oman	252,609	+2,037	2,782	+41	221,250	28,577
Qatar	221,119	+189	584	+1	218,584	1,951

Elephant in

Thai family gets repeat

AFP | Bangkok

Some families living in a jungle may be fearful of things going bump at night, but for one household in Thailand, the sight of an elephant rummaging through their kitchen was not a total shock.

"It came to cook again," wrote Kittichai Boodchan sarcastically in a caption to a Facebook video he shot over the weekend of his elephant nosing its way into his kitchen.

Likely driven by the midnight munchies, the massive animal pokes its head into Kittichai's kitchen in the early hours of Sunday, using its trunk to find food.

At one point, it picks up a plastic bag of liquid, considers it briefly, and then sticks it in its mouth -- before the video cuts out.

Kittichai and his wife live near a national park in western Thailand, by a lake where wild elephants often bathe while roaming in the jungle.

He was unperturbed by the mammoth mammal, recognising it as a frequent visitor as it often wanders into homes in his village where it eats, leaves and shoots off back into the jungle.

The elephant had actually destroyed their kitchen wall in May, he said, creating an open-air kitchen.

World's oldest parliament, the Icelandic Parliament, the Alþingi (anglicised as Althing or Althingi), established

Christopher Latham Sholes patents the Sholes and Glidden typewriter, the first commercially successful of its kind

1st extraterrestrial message sent from Earth into space



Brexit referendum: United Kingdom votes to leave the European Union

19 vaccines in Abu Dhabi



The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at St. Mirates

they were made redundant.

UAE Health authorities said this month nearly 85% of the eligible population had received at least one vaccine dose, but did not say how many had had two doses.

Infections have risen in the UAE in the past month, and Abu Dhabi still has restrictions on entry, including home quarantine and PCR testing at intervals after arrival. People driving from other emirates are tested to show they are not infected.

Travellers from 27 countries including China, Germany and the United States can enter without quarantine on arrival.

SEHA offers COVID-19 vaccines by China's state-owned drugmaker Sinopharm and by Pfizer/BioNTech in Abu Dhabi.

Dubai Media Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether eligibility criteria was to change. Dubai Health Authority information says vaccines are given only to citizens and holders of valid Dubai residency visas.

In the room

at mammoth visitor



The elephant poked its head into a Thai kitchen

en concept reminiscent of a drive-through window.

This weekend, its sole task was to find food.

Kittichai said a general rule of thumb in dealing with unwelcome visitors crashing is not to feed them.

"When it doesn't get food, it just leaves on its own," he said.

"I am already used to it coming, so I was not so worried."

Wild elephants are a common sight in Thailand's national parks and its surrounding areas, with farmers sometimes reporting incidents of their fruits and corn crops being eaten by a hungry herd.

N.Korea warns US misinterpreting signals risks disappointment



Noh Kyu-duk (R), South Korea's Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs, talks with Sung Kim (L), US Special Representative for North Korea, during their bilateral meeting at a hotel in Seoul, South Korea

Reuters | Seoul

A top North Korean official warned the United States yesterday not to misinterpret comments by her leader, saying doing so would end in disappointment, as a US envoy aiming to get talks with the North back on track met South Korea's president.

Kim Yo Jong, a senior official in North Korea's ruling party and sister of leader Kim Jong Un, released a statement in state media saying the United States appeared to be interpreting signals from North Korea in the "wrong way".

She was responding to US National Security adviser Jake Sullivan, who on Sunday said he saw as an "interesting signal" in a recent speech by Kim Jong Un on preparing for both confrontation and diplomacy with the United States.

"It seems that the US may interpret the situation in such a way as to seek a comfort for itself," she said in the statement, carried by the North's KCNA state news agency.

"The expectation, which they chose to harbour the wrong way, would plunge them into a greater disappointment."

North Korea's nuclear weapons programme has been a

seemingly intractable problem for the United States for years.

President Joe Biden's administration has conducted a review of North Korea policy that concluded the United States would seek to find "calibrated and practical" ways of inducing it to give up its nuclear weapons.

Kim's warning to the United States came as the recently appointed US special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, was visiting South Korea to meet senior officials, including President Moon Jae-in.

Moon told the US envoy he would do his best to get inter-Korean and US-North Korea relations back on track during the remainder of his term in office and expressed hopes for progress toward denuclearisation and peace on the Korean peninsula, presidential spokeswoman Park Kyung-mee said.

Sung Kim reaffirmed Biden's support for meaningful inter-Korean dialogue and engagement and said he would "do his best for resumption of US-North Korea talks", Park said.

On Monday, Sung Kim said he was willing to meet the North Koreans "anywhere, anytime without preconditions" and that he looks forward to a "positive response soon".

Suu Kyi back in junta court

AFP | Naypyidaw, Myanmar

Deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi appeared in a junta court again Tuesday on trial for sedition and for flouting Covid restrictions during an election her ousted party won in a landslide.

A mass uprising in Myanmar against a February military putsch has been met with a brutal crackdown that has killed more than 870 civilians, according to a local monitoring group.

Under house arrest and invisible bar a handful of court appearances, Suu Kyi has been hit with an eclectic raft of charges, including accepting illegal payments of gold and violating a colonial-era secrecy law.



On Tuesday, the court heard testimony she violated Covid-19 restrictions during elections last year that her National League for Democracy (NLD) party won in a landslide, her lawyer The Maung Maung told reporters.

The special court in Naypyidaw also heard testimony on separate sedition charges.

Spiders leave Australian region covered in webs



Some spiders release webs to create a makeshift parachute

AFP News

An arachnid invasion left swathes of Australia's Gippsland region covered in webs as the spiders sought higher ground to escape flooding.

A sea of silk engulfed an area in Australia's southeast hit by flooding earlier in June, caused by sheet web spiders that normally live on the ground looking for shelter according to ecologist Dieter Hochuli.

"When we get these types of very heavy rains and flooding, these animals who spend their lives cryptically on the ground can't live there anymore, and do exactly what we try to do -- they move to the higher ground," Hochuli, from the University of Sydney, told local broadcaster Channel 7.

Spiders are known to release webs to create makeshift parachutes and ride the wind to change location, a phenomenon known as ballooning.

At least two people died when the storms hit Victoria earlier this month, with authorities finding both bodies in separate partially submerged vehicles.

Thousands of people in the hardest-hit areas were also left without power for weeks, with some homes yet to be reconnected to electricity.

Australians living in regional and rural areas have struck by a series of disasters in recent years.

A prolonged drought was followed by months of devastating bushfires in late 2019 to early 2020 before welcome rains brought damaging floods in several regions.

Australia to challenge UNESCO downgrade of Great Barrier Reef



The Great Barrier Reef was worth an estimated \$4 billion a year in tourism revenue for the Australian economy before the coronavirus pandemic

AFP News

Australia said yesterday it will strongly oppose a UNESCO plan to list the Great Barrier Reef as "in danger" over deterioration caused by climate change.

The UN body released a draft report on Monday recommending the reef's World Heritage status be downgraded because of its dramatic coral decline, after years of public threats to do so.

Environmental campaigners said the decision highlighted Australia's lack of action to curb the carbon emissions which contribute to global warming.

Environment Minister Susan Ley said Australia would challenge the move, accusing UN officials of backflipping on their assurances ahead of the World Heritage Committee's 44th session in China next month, where the recommendation will be formally considered.

"Politics have subverted a proper process and for the World Heritage Committee to not even foreshadow this listing is, I think, appalling," she told reporters in Canberra.

The UN body did not consider the billions of dollars spent attempting to protect the world's largest coral reef, she added.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Today's record-breaking vaccination numbers are gladdening. The vaccine remains our strongest weapon to fight COVID-19. Congratulations to those who got vaccinated and kudos to all the front-line warriors working hard to ensure so many citizens got the vaccine. Well done India!

@narendramodi

02



More than 19,300 children affected by war last year were victims of grave violations such as killing, maiming or rape. Girls and boys have a right to life and health, free from violence and despair. We must protect them at all costs.

@antonioguterres

03



The Child Tax Credit means help directly in the bank accounts of the families who need it. Nearly all working families will automatically get monthly payments starting July 15th - no action needed. Head to <http://childtaxcredit.gov> for more information.

@JoeBiden

04



All over the world environmental defenders are being threatened, arrested and even killed. We who are privileged must raise our voices to speak up against these human rights violations. This is outrageous.

@GretaThunberg

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

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THE DAILY **tribune**

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'World's happiest country' seeks migrants



AFP | Helsinki

Repeatedly dubbed the happiest nation on the planet with world-beating living standards, Finland should be deluged by people wanting to relocate, but in fact it faces an acute workforce shortage.

"It's now widely acknowledged that we need a spectacular number of people to come to the country," recruiter Saku Tihverainen from agency Talent Solutions told AFP.

Workers are needed "to help cover the cost of the greying generation", the recruiter explained.

While many Western countries are battling weak population growth, few are feeling the effects as sharply as Finland.

With 39.2 over-65s per 100 working-age people, it is second only to Japan in the extent of its ageing population, according to the UN, which forecasts that by 2030 the "old age dependency ratio" will rise to 47.5.

The government has warned that the nation of 5.5 million needs to practically double immigration levels to 20,000-30,000 a year to maintain public services and plug a looming pensions deficit.

Finland might seem like an attractive destination on paper, scoring high in international comparisons for quality of life, freedom and gender equality, with little corruption, crime and pollution.

But anti-immigrant sentiment and a reluctance to employ outsiders are also widespread in Western Europe's most homogenous society, and the opposition far-right Finns Party regularly draws substantial support during elections.

Tipping point

After years of inertia, businesses and government "are now at the tipping point and are recognising the problem" posed by a greying population, said Charles Mathies, a research fellow at the Academy of Finland.

Mathies is one of the experts consulted by the government's "Talent Boost" programme, now in its fourth year, which aims to make the country more attractive internationally, in part through local recruitment schemes.

Those targeted include health workers from Spain, metalworkers from Slovakia, and IT and maritime experts from Russia, India and South-east Asia.

Singaporean woman jailed 30 years for torturing, killing maid

● The domestic worker died in July 2016, after her employer, Gaiyathiri Murugayan, repeatedly assaulted her over several hours.

● The maid was employed by Gaiyathiri and her husband, a police officer, in 2015 to help take care of their four-year-old daughter and one-year-old son.

AFP News

A Singaporean woman who starved, assaulted and ultimately killed her domestic worker was sentenced to 30 years in prison yesterday, with the judge describing the case as "among the worst types of culpable homicide".

The abuse inflicted on Myanmar national Piang Ngaih Don, 24, was particularly awful and captured on CCTV installed in the family's home. The domestic worker was stamped on, strangled, choked, battered

with brooms and burnt with an iron, according to court documents.

The domestic worker died in July 2016, after her employer, Gaiyathiri Murugayan, repeatedly assaulted her over several hours.

Gaiyathiri, 41, pleaded guilty in February to 28 charges including culpable homicide. Another 87 charges were taken into account in sentencing.

She appeared in court on Tuesday wearing glasses and a black mask, and sat silently with her eyes closed and head bowed as the judge read his decision.

After hearing an additional plea of mitigation submitted by Gaiyathiri in a bid to avoid the life sentence sought by the prosecution, Justice See Kee Oon sentenced her to 30 years in prison starting from the date of her arrest in 2016.

See cited the "abject cruelty of the accused's appalling conduct" in his sentencing, which he added must signal "societal outrage and abhorrence" at the crime.

But taking into account the defendant's obsessive compulsive disorder and the depression she developed around the time she

250k

The affluent city-state is home to about 250,000 domestic workers who mostly come from poorer Asian countries, and stories of mistreatment are common.

gave birth, See said he did not think that life imprisonment was "fair and appropriate".

The prosecution had sought a reduced charge of culpable homicide rather than murder -- punishable with the death penalty in Singapore -- after taking into account her mental health.

The abuse inflicted on Myanmar national Piang Ngaih Don, 24, was particularly awful and captured on CCTV installed in the family's home. The domestic worker was stamped on, strangled, choked, battered with brooms and burnt with an iron, according to court documents.

The maid was employed by Gaiyathiri and her husband, a police officer, in 2015 to help take care of their four-year-old daughter and one-year-old son.

But Gaiyathiri physically assaulted the victim almost daily, often several times a day, with her 61-year-old mother sometimes joining in, according to court documents.

The domestic worker, who had been employed by the family for over a year at the time of her death, was only allowed to sleep for five hours a night, and was forced to shower and relieve herself with the door open.

Provided very little food, she lost about 38 percent of her body weight during her employment, and only weighed 24 kilograms (53 pounds) at the time of her death.

Gaiyathiri's lawyer Joseph Chen had asked for a sentence of eight to nine years, arguing that a "combination of stresses" had turned the struggling mother into an abuser.

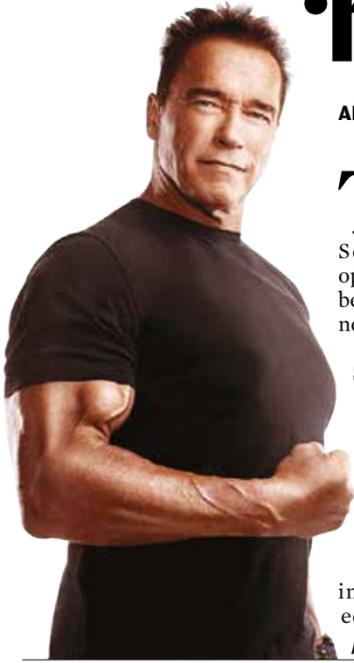
He argued that a harsh sentence would deter mothers in a similar situation from asking for help -- an argument that the prosecution called "dis- i n - genuous".



CELEBS

celebs

Arnold Schwarzenegger reveals his children 'hated' his move from film to politics



ANI | Washington

The Former Governor of California and Hollywood legend Arnold Schwarzenegger recently opened up about his family life behind the scenes of his governorship from 2003 to 2011. According to Fox News, on Saturday, the 73-year-old actor spoke about his family's sentiments with his eldest daughter Katherine, for her 32nd episode - a "grand finale of Father's Day week.", on her Instagram show: 'Before, During and After Baby'. Within the near 34-minute interview, Arnold acknowledged his four children wer-

en't happy with his transition from action movie star to the 38th governor of California. The Schwarzenegger family moved from Hollywood to Sacramento, where Arnold served for two terms. "First of all, I think it is very important to let everyone know how much you kids hated my job. It was one of those kind of odd things where I just thought that: 'Oh, my kids will be so proud of me being governor now. And all this stuff, but I don't think that you guys really kind of connected with that. I think you were so used to what we were doing when I was on a movie set," Arnold said. The 'Terminator' star ex-

YOU KNOW WHAT

Arnold Schwarzenegger explained that his children were more accustomed to doing their homework in movie studios and joining him on sets where he could be blowing up a building or filming a fight scene

plained that his children were more accustomed to doing their homework in movie studios and joining him on sets where he could be blowing up a building or filming a fight scene. He further added, "This was your entertainment. So, when you think about after-school programs, you guys had like the perfect after-school program." However, when all that changed as the family planted roots in Sacramento, Arnold noted that his kids would tell him outright that they hated his job as governor. According to the Austrian-born bodybuilder turned American politician, his children didn't like the seriousness of California's capital and would ask why their circumstances had changed. While his kids weren't ecstatic about his time in office, there was a reason behind Arnold's governor. In his own words, he "had this fixation about fixing the state and making the state better. And so that's why I ran from one moment to the other when there was a recall." Arnold also went on to commend his ex-wife Maria Shriver, for her support as a working mother and political confidant. The couple were married from 1986 to 2017, and raised four children together, including Katherine, Patrick, Christopher, and Christina.

David Schwimmer opens up about his 'crappy summer jobs' before he landed 'Friends'

ANI | Washington

Hollywood actor David Schwimmer, who has been in news for the widely loved 'Friends' reunion show, recently revealed about his 'crappy summer jobs', before he landed the role of Ross Geller on the popular sitcom series. According to Fox News, while speaking to a media outlet Schwimmer revealed that before he made it big on "Friends," he worked on wheels for seven long years. He said, "I was a roller-skating waiter in Chicago for seven years. You make your real money by doing stunts. Every-

one gets their burgers and fries, then you say: 'Hey, you want me to jump over your kids for five bucks?' They'd have their kids lie on the ground and I'd just jump over them at 30mph." By then Schwimmer was used to hard work as he'd been hardened by a series of "really crappy summer jobs." He recalled, "I worked at this place called Steve's Ice-Cream where you had to mix in



David Schwimmer

all the candy or cookie crumbs by hand on this big marble slab for three bucks an hour. Speaking about his job at the age of 16, Schwimmer added, "I worked at this copy machine place. I had to pretend to be some guy from Xerox. I'd phone up customers and say: 'I see you have a Xerox 2-2500. Looks like you're running out of toner.' Some innocent secretary would say: 'I don't think we

are?' and I'd say: 'I think you are, let me send you a couple of boxes.' It wasn't exactly legal. I turned up one day and the whole place had been raided." While he made the world fall in love with him on 'Friends', Schwimmer almost didn't become an actor at all. Speaking about it, he said that as a child, "I wanted to be a surgeon. I was fascinated by the human body: I knew everything about the lymphatic, vascular and skeletal systems. I was a big science geek, but I found that I could talk to more girls in acting class than in the science lab. So that kind of derailed my medical career."

Kevin Hart reveals how his daughter reacted to his cheating scandal

ANI | Washington

Actor and comedian Kevin Hart got candid about the tough conversations he has had with his teenage daughter following his cheating scandal. As per E! News, Hart joined Will Smith for a special Father's Day edition of 'Red Table Talk' on Facebook Watch on Sunday where he reflected on the impacts of his cheating scandal and the controversy that led him to step down from being the Oscars host had on his children. In the candid conversation, Hart opened up about his relationship with his father, his first divorce, and how he addressed being at the centre of scandals with his children including teens Heav-

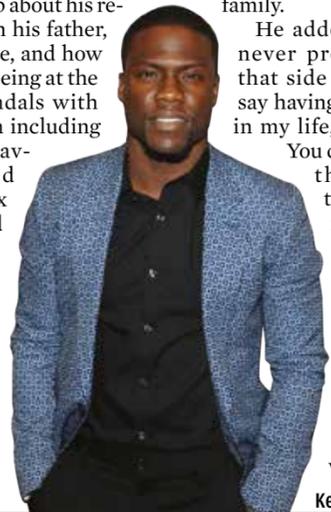
"I stepped in some shit, yeah. You're never prepared for that side of it. I can say having a little girl in my life, it's tough. You don't realize the impact that your mistakes could truly have"

KEVIN HART

yeah," Hart said when Smith asked him how he addresses public scandals with his family. He added, "You're never prepared for that side of it. I can say having a little girl in my life, it's tough. You don't realize the impact that your mistakes could truly have." He went on to say that it's a "different emotion" when kids are involved.



Shailene Woodley



Kevin Hart

Shailene Woodley to star in new comedy 'Robots' from 'Borat' writer Anthony Hines

ANI | Washington

Hollywood star Shailene Woodley is set to star in 'Robots', which is being described as a "fast-paced comedy" by Anthony Hines, one of the writers of 'Borat' and 'Bruno'. It marks a change of pace for Woodley, best known for the dystopian "Divergent" films and the dare-you-not-to-devolve-into-a-puddle-of-tears

romance "The Fault in Our Stars." According to Variety, 'Robots' will be based on a short story by science fiction writer Robert Sheckley. It focuses on a womaniser and a gold digger who are forced to team up and pursue robot doubles of themselves, who have, in turn, fallen in love and absconded together. Hamel developed the project under his Company Films banner.

Hines will co-direct the film with Casper Christensen. Woodley will star alongside Jack Whitehall, who appears in the upcoming Disney film 'Jungle Cruise' and previously starred in the series 'Bad Education'. "At a time when comedies are needed more than ever, I could not be more delighted than to have Shailene and Jack team up to play the leads in this movie," Hines said.

SUDOKU

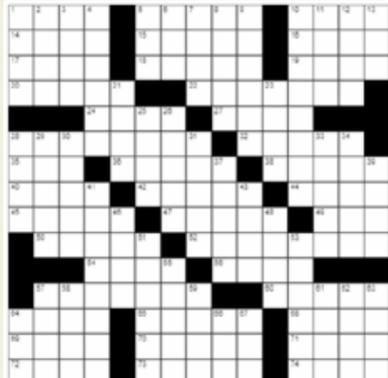
5	7		1	9				
	1			7			9	
9						4		
		5		3		4		
			7		8			
4		2			3			
	2							8
	8		5				3	
			8	7		6	5	

Yesterday's solution

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

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- Complacent; 5- Adjust to zero; 10- Go out with; 14- Table d'...; 15- Blessed sound; 16- Son of Aphrodite; 17- Western writer Wister; 18- Racket; 19- Support for a broken limb; 20- Beginning; 22- Coins; 24- Emptiness; 27- "Peter Pan" dog; 28- Perforated container; 32- Nuisances; 35- Rage; 36- Ancient region of Asia Minor; 38- Lachrymose; 40- Got older; 42- Hungarian composer; 44- Small drink; 45- Paddled; 47- Ditto; 49- Hindu title; 50- Thermoplastic yarn; 52- Caribou; 54- "On the Waterfront" director Kazan; 56- What confused people don't have; 57- Marsh plant; 60- Organization; 64- Baht spender; 65- Raccoon-like carnivore; 68- Aggregate; 69- Syrup brand; 70- Greek epic poem; 71- Former spouses; 72- Amenable; 73- Nest; 74- Gossip;

Down

1- Beat it; 2- Cut down; 3- Western Native Americans; 4- Swiss city; 5- Campaigned; 6- Author Umberto; 7- Type of guard; 8- Reddish dye; 9- Boot part; 10- Dead; 11- Asian sea; 12- Chuck; 13- Cornerstone abbr.; 21- Author Morrison; 23- Understood; 25- Graven image; 26- Fabric of jeans; 28- So long; 29- Church instrument; 30- Guarded; 31- Stair part; 33- Pithy; 34- Extra; 37- Nahuatl speaker; 39- Primordial giant in Norse myth; 41- Something removed; 43- Labor; 46- Blockhead; 48- Responsibility; 51- Nicotinic acid; 53- Judged; 55- Garlic sauce; 57- Fellow; 58- River in central Switzerland; 59- Put down; 61- Cab; 62- Consumer; 63- Attention-getting sound; 64- Ring result; 66- 19th letter of the Greek alphabet; 67- Bartender's requests;

Yesterday's solution

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

Clinical Belgium put Finland on brink of exit

Romelu Lukaku seals Belgium win to leave Finland on the brink of Euro exit

● A Lukas Hradecky own goal and Romelu Lukaku strike gave Belgium a deserved victory

AFP | St Petersburg

Belgium scored two late goals to see off a valiant Finland 2-0 on Monday, pushing their opponents to the brink of a group-stage exit from Euro 2020 and sending Denmark through to the last 16.

Finnish goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky's 74th-minute own goal and Romelu Lukaku's third strike of the tournament ensured Roberto Martinez's Belgium finished top of Group B.

The world's number-one-ranked side will face a third-placed team in the next round on Sunday in Seville.

"We're making good progress and we'll be ready," Belgium midfielder Kevin De Bruyne told RTBF.

Finland finish third in the group, but appear unlikely to be one of the four best third-placed teams.

"We received tremendous support from the Finns," said Finland coach Markku Kanerva.

"They inspired us. We could not achieve our goal of taking at least one point. We are obvi-



Belgium's forward Romelu Lukaku (L) shoots to score their second goal

ously disappointed. I am proud of my team."

The other game saw Denmark thrash Russia 4-1 in Copenhagen to snatch second place and book a ticket to the last 16.

Finland knew they would only need a point to go through if the Danes won, but despite holding off Belgium for more than 70 minutes, they couldn't keep it up in the Saint Petersburg heat.

"There were no spaces, it was a little bit difficult," De Bruyne said.

Strong Belgium

This was arguably the strongest XI Belgium have fielded in the tournament so far, with captain Eden Hazard, De Bruyne

and Axel Witsel all starting after recent struggles with injury.

They did not take long to find their stride, with De Bruyne releasing Lukaku, who fired wide, before seeing a low cross hacked away by a panicking Finland defence.

The first half was largely played at a slow pace, but Belgium always looked dangerous when they moved the ball more quickly, with two such moves ending in Witsel and Hazard blasting over the crossbar.

The Red Devils showed what they are capable of shortly before half-time with a wonderful counter-attack led by Hazard, but Hradecky denied teenag-

er Jeremy Doku with a diving, one-handed save.

Hazard tried to win a penalty by falling near Finland defender Daniel O'Shaughnessy, but his appeals for a spot-kick were waved away.

Finland showed a little more adventure at the start of the second half, which left them more open at the back.

Hradecky pulled off a magnificent save to deny Hazard, but was beaten by Lukaku in the 65th minute.

However, the goal was ruled out by VAR for the tightest of offside decisions.

But Finland did fall behind, in agonising circumstances, as Thomas Vermaelen's header from a corner struck the post and crossbar before being nudged over his own line by Hradecky.



We received tremendous support from the Finns. They inspired us. We could not achieve our goal of taking at least one point. We are obviously disappointed. I am proud of my team

FINLAND COACH MARKKU KANERVA

Wembley to host more than 60,000 fans for Euro 2020 semis and final



General view of Wembley Stadium

AFP | London

● Crowd capacity at Wembley Stadium will be increased to more than 60,000 fans for the semi-finals and final of Euro 2020, the British government said yesterday.

The new levels mean the stadium will be at 75 per cent capacity for the final three games, which conclude with the final on July 11.

All ticket holders will need to have either a negative COVID-19 test or proof of full vaccination - two doses received 14 days before the fixture.

The announcement came after Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi called on Monday for the final to be moved from England due to rising COVID-19 cases in the country.

Wembley's capacity has been set at 22,500 for the three group and the round of 16 match between Italy and Austria on June 26 but will rise to 40,000 for the other round of 16 match on June 29 which could feature England.

"We are thrilled that more fans will now be able to walk through the Wembley turnstiles and enjoy the finals of Euro 2020," said culture sec-



This tournament has been a beacon of hope to reassure people that we are returning to a more normal way of life and this is a further step along that road

UEFA PRESIDENT ALEKSANDER CEFERIN

retary Oliver Dowden.

"As we continue to make progress on our roadmap out of lockdown, keeping the public safe remains our top priority. We have worked extremely closely with UEFA and the FA to ensure rigorous and tight public health measures are in place whilst allowing more fans to see the action live," he said.

UEFA has been negotiating with the UK government about relaxing quarantine restrictions on overseas fans travelling to London for games but there was no mention of any change in the statement.

Currently, COVID-19 regulations require visitors from most European countries to quarantine for 10 days after arriving in the UK.

Shakhtar Donetsk signs Brazilian defender Marlon



Sassuolo's defender Marlon controls the ball during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

Ukrainian runners-up Shakhtar Donetsk have signed Brazilian defender Marlon from Serie A side Sassuolo, the club announced yesterday.

The 25-year-old centre-back followed his former coach Roberto De Zerbi, who left Sassuolo for the Ukrainian club last month.

"I'm very happy. It's a great honour for me to sign a contract with Shakhtar. I feel like the chosen one," said Marlon, who signed a five-year deal.

"The club has the same goals and vision as I do. I moved here to help and be part of the team," he added.

Marlon, who becomes the 12th Brazilian on Shakhtar's roster, made 69 appearances

for Fluminense in his native Brazil.

He was loaned out to Barcelona in 2016 before signing a three-year contract the next year.

But the Brazilian made just two appearances in La Liga and one in the Champions League before moving to Sassuolo in 2018, where he played in 66 games, scoring one goal.

Shakhtar did not disclose the financial terms of the deal, but local media reported that the club paid Sassuolo at least 12 million euros (\$14.3 million).

Marlon is the club's third costly newcomer this off-season after fellow Brazilian midfielder Pedrinho and Burkino Faso forward Lassina Traore, both of whom joined Shakhtar after De Zerbi was appointed.

UEFA refuses to light Munich stadium in rainbow colours for Germany-Hungary match

AFP | Munich

UEFA's decision to block plans by Munich to light the Allianz Arena in rainbow colours for the Germany-Hungary Euro 2020 match was met yesterday with defiance in the Bavarian city which vowed to decorate other landmarks in protest at a law passed by the Hungarian government.

"UEFA is a politically and religiously neutral organisation," said European football's governing body in a statement ahead of Wednesday's match.

"Given the political context of this request -- a message aimed at a decision taken by the Hungarian national parliament -- UEFA must refuse."

Munich's mayor Dieter Reiter slammed UEFA's decision as "shameful" and announced plans to decorate other city landmarks in rainbow colours in defiance.

"I find it shameful that UEFA forbids us to send a sign for cosmopolitanism, tolerance, respect and solidarity with the people of the LGBTIQ community," he said.

He plans to put up rainbow-coloured flags at the Munich town hall and illuminate a huge wind turbine located close to the stadium, as well as the city's 291m-tall Olympic Tower.

Reiter had wanted the Allianz Arena -- owned by Bayern



General view outside Allianz Arena in rainbow colours after the match

Munich, but rented to UEFA for Euro 2020 -- in rainbow colours for the crucial Group F match to "send a visible sign of solidarity" with Hungary's LGBTIQ community.

In a statement yesterday, Bayern president Herbert Hainer said the Bundesliga giants would have been happy if their stadium had "shone in the rainbow colours".

Hungary's right-wing government last week passed a law banning the "promotion" of homosexuality to minors, outlawing any educational programmes or material in which homosexuality is mentioned.

UEFA's stance also drew criticism from Germany's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community.

"We find it very disconcerting how UEFA deals with values

that should generally be accepted in society," Markus Ulrich, a spokesman for Germany's Lesbian and Gay Association (LSVD), told AFP subsidiary SID.

"UEFA has not recognised the signs of the times -- and it is clear to see which side it is taking with its decision."

Clement Beaune, France's openly gay minister for European affairs has also said he regretted UEFA's stance.

'Do it, Munich'

Even former England captain Gary Lineker was in favour of seeing the Allianz Arena in rainbow colours.

"Do it, Munich. Do it. Light it up for the world to see. Ah, just do it anyway," Lineker wrote on Twitter.

While the Allianz Arena will not be lit in rainbow colours on Wednesday, other football sta-



Hungary's government last week passed a law banning the "promotion" of homosexuality to minors, outlawing any educational programmes or material in which homosexuality is mentioned

diums in Germany will.

Berlin's iconic Olympic Stadium, as well as Bundesliga stadiums in Cologne, Frankfurt and Wolfsburg all plan to be colourfully lit.

"Cologne stands for diversity and tolerance. The developments in Hungary are frightening -- it is all the more important to set an example against this," a spokesman told AFP.

However, UEFA's stance was welcomed in Budapest, where Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto hailed the "right decision".

"The leadership of UEFA made the right decision by not assisting in a political provocation against Hungary," Szijjarto said yesterday in a statement sent to AFP.

Germany's Mueller set to miss Hungary showdown after again missing training



Thomas Müller reacts during a match
AFP | Munich

Germany forward Thomas Müller looks set to miss Wednesday's crucial Euro 2020 match against Hungary with a knee injury after again sitting out team training.

The attacking midfielder missed yesterday morning's session with the German squad and trained alone with his knee heavily strapped after taking a knock in Saturday's 4-2 win over Portugal in Group F.

However, Mats Hummels

and İlkay Gündoğan, who also sat out training on Monday alongside Müller, joined the squad session yesterday, having shaken off knee and calf injuries respectively.

If Müller drops out, his Bayern Munich team-mate Leon Goretzka is poised to take his place against the Hungarians.

A draw in Munich would see Germany earn a place in the last 16.

Hungary, who are bottom of the group, need a win to avoid elimination.

Argentina, Chile through to Copa America quarter-final

Lionel Messi equals record as Argentina beat Paraguay 1-0

● Uruguay end drought but can't burst Chile's bubble

AFP | Brasilia

Argentina and Chile on Monday booked their places in the Copa America quarter-finals, ending top of Group A after low-scoring matches that left the other two spots up for grabs.

Argentina logged its second win in three group matches played, beating Paraguay 1-0, with Alejandro "Papu" Gomez scoring the sole goal of a lacklustre match in Brasilia in the ninth minute.

The win placed Lionel Messi's La Albiceleste top of Group A with seven points -- enough to secure its spot in the next phase of the tournament being played in empty stadiums in coronavirus-battered Brazil.

The match marked a personal milestone for Messi, who tied Javier Mascherano's record for the most games played for Argentina -- 147.

But it was not a night of glory for Messi or his team, which in the second half seemed to resign themselves to defending a spirited, but ultimately fruitless, Paraguayan attack.

Chile draws with Uruguay

In the other match Monday, Chile drew 1-1 with Uruguay to end the day with five log points.

Luis Suárez ended a goal scoring drought for Uruguay that



Alejandro Gomez of Argentina kicks the ball over Antony Silva goalkeeper of Paraguay to score

threatened to go a fifth straight game.

The veteran striker's 66th-minute equalizer helped Uruguay to 1-1 draw against Chile at the Copa America on Monday, its first point of the tournament.

The result allows Chile to advance to the knockout stage of the tournament and keeps the Uruguayans in contention in Group A.

Chile's Eduardo Vargas opened the scoring in the 26th with a powerful crossed shot from the right, and Suárez levelled the score from close range.

With four matches left to play in Group A, Paraguay has three points, Uruguay one, and Bolivia zero, meaning they all still stand a theoretical chance to go to the quarter-finals.

Brazil has already qualified

from Group B.

Despite opposition from politicians and citizens, Brazil agreed at the 11th hour to host the world's oldest international tournament after South American football's governing body CONMEBOL took it from co-hosts Argentina, battling a pandemic surge, and Colombia where dozens have died in anti-government protests.

The contest had already been delayed by a year due to the pandemic and many players and coaches spoke out against it going ahead before the tournament began.

The build-up to Monday's Chile-Uruguay game had been overshadowed by controversy in the Chile camp after revelations the team had breached Covid-19 protocols by bringing a local hairdresser into the team hotel.



The match marked a personal milestone for Messi, who tied Javier Mascherano's record for the most games played for Argentina -- 147

CONMEBOL said it would fine those involved \$30,000.

However there was no sign of the controversy affecting their play, with Vargas firing Chile ahead on 26 minutes from a tight angle after latching onto a clever pass from English-born Ben Brereton.

Uruguay grabbed a share of the points in the second-half when Suarez bundled in the ball from close range during a tangle with former Barcelona team-mate Arturo Vidal at the far post following a corner.

Manchester United striker Edinson Cavani almost snatched victory for Uruguay in the 85th minute, but his glancing header flashed just wide of the post.

Vargas's first-half strike saw him draw level with Peru's Paolo Guerrero on 14 goals in the Copa America's all-time goalscoring rankings, three behind the record of 17 held by Brazil's Zinho and Argentina's Norberto Mendez.

Today's games

Euro 2020

Group E: Slovakia vs Spain (19:00, Seville)

Group E: Sweden vs Poland (19:00, St Petersburg)

Group F: Germany vs Hungary (22:00, Munich)

Group F: Portugal v France (22:00, Budapest)

Tomorrow's games

Copa America

Ecuador vs Peru (00:00, Cuiaba)

Brazil vs Colombia (03:00, Brasilia)

Results

*Scores as of closing

EURO 2020

Czech Republic	0	1	England
Croatia	3	1	Scotland

Denmark thump Russia to make last 16 in stunning fashion

AFP | Copenhagen

Denmark made it through to the last 16 of Euro 2020 on Monday after a convincing 4-1 win over Russia which alongside Belgium's victory against Finland meant they finished second in Group B.

Goals from Mikkel Damsgaard, Yussuf Poulsen, Andreas Christensen and Joakim Maehle gave the Danes their first win of the tournament on a joyous evening at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen.

Delirious fans showered each other with beer as Denmark rattled in the goals that allowed them to end the group stage in party mood after the trauma of Christian Eriksen's mid-match collapse in their opening fixture against the Finns.

Kasper Hjulmand's team will face Wales in the last 16 in Amsterdam on Saturday, while the Russians go home after coming off worst in a three-way, head-to-head tie-breaker with Finland and the Danes.

"I've never experienced anything like this. The atmosphere gets better every time we are here at Parken," said Maehle to Danish broadcaster DR.

Hjulmand praised the "amazing" team spirit and friendship after revelling in the on-pitch



Denmark's defender Joakim Maehle shoots and scores his team's fourth goal

celebrations.

"If anyone deserves this it's our players. I can't imagine how they managed to come back from what they went through," he told reporters.

"I think it helps the team and hopefully it gives the whole country some good moments."

The Danes came into the match with no points from their first two matches but knowing a win over Russia by two goals or more and defeat for Finland would guarantee them passage from the group as the second-placed team.

During the match's opening ceremony, a huge Denmark shirt

with "Eriksen 10" written on it was unfurled to deafening cheers from supporters, after which a rousing rendition of "You'll Never Walk Alone" was belted out from the stands.

Once the match got underway, Denmark continued with the same aggression as in their defeats to Finland and Belgium but initially struggled to create chances against a Russia team who were content to keep things tight.

The nominal home team, Russia enraged the Danish fans by taking their time over set-pieces and throw-ins as early as mid-way through the first half.



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However it was the Russians who had the first chance of the game, Aleksandr Golovin driving towards the goal and fashioning a great scoring opportunity only to shoot straight at Kasper Schmeichel from close range.

They were left to rue missing that chance six minutes before the break when Damsgaard showed why he was picked to replace Eriksen as Denmark's playmaker.

The Sampdoria winger, who only turns 21 early next month, looked like he had all the time

in the world when he unleashed a curling strike that whipped passed Matvei Safonov and caused an eruption in the stands.

Their tails up and the crowd now bouncing in unison, Jannik Vestergaard came close to making it two in as many minutes when he headed a corner just wide.

Denmark continued to press after the restart but their second came in almost comical circumstances on the hour mark.

Poulsen could hardly believe his luck when Daler Kuzyaev's miscued back-pass rolled straight to him in front of the Russian goal, leaving him the simple task of stroking into an empty net and giving Denmark the two-goal lead they needed to finish second should Belgium win.

Soon after, the already rowdy fans in the Parken let out possibly the loudest cheer of the night as news of Romelu Lukaku's opener against Finland filtered through, but they were soon dampened by that goal being ruled out and Russia being awarded a penalty which was slotted home by Artem Dzyuba.

They were on their feet again with 15 minutes remaining thanks to Lukas Hradecky's own goal which put Belgium a goal ahead and Denmark in second.

UEFA says no plan to take Euro semis, final away from Wembley



Euro 2020 trophy
Reuters | London

UEFA has no plans to replace Wembley as host stadium of the Euro 2020 semi-finals and final, European soccer's governing body said, after Italian premier Mario Draghi and others called for the final to be moved from Britain due to rising COVID-19 cases there.

The United Kingdom recorded 10,633 new cases of COVID-19 and five deaths on Monday, taking its toll to 4.63 million confirmed cases and 127,976 total deaths, according to a Reuters tally.

Case numbers have been rising due to the spread of the more contagious Delta variant first identified in India.

Norwich sign Rashica from Werder Bremen



Milot Rashica controls the ball during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

Premier League new boys Norwich signed Kosovo winger Milot Rashica from Werder Bremen in a reported £9.4 million (\$13 million) deal on Tuesday.

Rashica agreed a four-year contract to join Norwich after Bremen were relegated from the Bundesliga.

The 24-year-old is Daniel Farke's first signing since the Canaries clinched promotion from the Championship.

"I'm really excited to play in front of the Norwich fans and in the Premier League," Rashica told Norwich's website.

"I know a few things about the club, particularly the style of play under Daniel Farke. I want to continue to learn and develop as a player and person and I think that the style of play here will suit me very well."

Rashica will help Norwich replace Argentine winger Emi Buendia, who recently joined

27
goals were scored by Milot Rashica in 100 appearances for Werder Bremen

Aston Villa for £33 million.

Rashica scored 27 goals in 100 appearances for Bremen after joining from Dutch club Vitesse Arnhem in 2018.

"Many top clubs have been interested in his signature over the last seasons and he was quite often connected with a big money move," Farke said.

"Milot is a player full of potential. He's quick and smart in his movements, technically good and great in finishing and assisting goals.

"He's a player who can do something outstanding in the offence. We also got the feeling from his age, ability, potential and personality that he will fit in quite well to our group."

Al Ahli book GCC semis seat

Bahrain champions defeat Al Nasser of Saudi Arabia 94-84 to punch tickets to final four of FIBA Asia Champions Cup Gulf Basketball Association Qualifier in Dubai

● American Mike Harris and Bahraini Hesham Sarhan combine for 50 points for Ahli, scoring 25 apiece

● Ahli now await semi-final opponents, which will be decided today on final day of first round

TDT | Manama

Bahrain champions Al Ahli booked their tickets to the semi-finals of this year's FIBA Asia Champions Cup Gulf Basketball Association Qualifier in Dubai after defeating Al Nasser of Saudi Arabia 94-84 yesterday.

The game was their last of the competition's opening round, which they finished with a 2-2 win-loss record.

The Bahrainis now await their opponents in the final four, which will be determined today. The other teams taking to the hardwood are Al Shamal of Qatar, Al Kuwait of Kuwait and tournament hosts Shabab Al Ahli of Dubai.

The semis are scheduled to take place tomorrow, with the gold and bronze medals games the following night.

Nasser had the advantage for much of the first half against Ahli and took a narrow 49-43 lead into the locker rooms. But



Al Ahli's Mike Harris tries to post up against his Nasser defender during their game yesterday

in the third period, Ahli began to chip away at the deficit before taking full control of the contest in the final canto.

Ahli's biggest lead was their final winning margin of 10.

American professional Mike Harris and star Bahraini guard Hesham Sarhan combined for 50 points for Ahli, scoring 25 apiece. Harris also took down 17 rebounds, while Sarhan buried five three-pointers in the game, as did teammate Hasan Ali.

Subah Hussain chipped in with 15 points, while Ahmed

Alderazi scored 10.

Ahli were missing the services yesterday of US import Manny Harris, who was among their top scorers from their previous games.

Today is the final day of the championship's opening round-robin; Nasser take in Kuwait while Shabab Al Ahli face Al Shamal.

The FIBA Asia Champions Cup, previously known as the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) Champions Cup until 2002, is the Asian club championship for professional basket-



The FIBA Asia Champions Cup, previously known as the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) Champions Cup until 2002, is the Asian club championship for professional basketball. Last year's competition was postponed due to the pandemic

ball. It is organised by FIBA Asia, and takes place once a year.

Last year's competition was postponed due to the pandemic. In 2019, Muharraq represented Bahrain and were able to make it through to the final four where they lost to Al Riyadi of Beirut. They then bowed to Palayesh Naft Abadan of Iran in the bronze medal game, and had to settle for third place.

Only one Bahraini club has ever medalled in the FIBA Asia Champions Cup. It was Manama in 2000, when they won the bronze medals.

Brandon Austin top scored for Nasser with 32 points while Cleanthony Early had 24.

Ferrari grappling with excessive front tyre wear problem

Reuters | Milan

Ferrari's French Grand Prix problems showed a long-standing weakness with front tyre wear has not gone away and they need to fix it for next season, according to team boss Mattia Binotto.

Sunday's race at Le Castellet was the first time Ferrari had failed to score this year, with Spaniard Carlos Sainz 11th and Monegasque Charles Leclerc 16th.

They had qualified fifth and seventh respectively, with Leclerc on pole at the two previous races in Monaco and Azerbaijan, but Ferrari ended the weekend dropping from third to fourth overall in the constructors' championship.

"We have not been capable of making the tyres work as we should have done and I think our performance was really strictly linked to the tyres, the way we made them work," Binotto told reporters.

Le Castellet did not host a race last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic but Binotto said hot conditions and high speed corners putting a lot of energy into the tyres had been a problem in the past.



Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto looks on during a race (file photo)

"We have not been capable of making the tyres work as we should have done and I think our performance was really strictly linked to the tyres, the way we made them work"

MATTIA BINOTTO

"We should have addressed it and it's not yet the case," said

Binotto. "Looking at the future it's important for us as a lesson learned."

He said it would take more than development of the current car to fix the problem, however.

"To solve it, I think we need to have some hardware change, like for example the rims, which is not possible for regulations," said the Italian.

"I think it's more important for us to try to understand and to address it definitively for next year. In the meanwhile I think that this issue will happen

Morgan says nothing offensive about use of 'sir' in Twitter posts

AFP | London

England's World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan insisted Tuesday his use of the word 'sir' in Twitter posts conveyed "admiration and respect" as he rejected suggestions of causing offence on social media.

Morgan and his deputy Jos Buttler were accused of mocking the way Indian people addressed them in English after Twitter posts from several years ago recently came to light again.

The England and Wales Cricket Board launched a "so-



England's captain Eoin Morgan attends a practice session ahead of a match (file photo)

"I don't really reflect on it a lot. I find if I call somebody 'sir' on social media, or anywhere around the world, it's a sign of admiration and respect. If that's taken out of context there's nothing I can control or do about it, so I haven't actually looked into it"

EOIN MORGAN

cial media review" after Ollie Robinson was suspended from international duty pending an investigation following the re-emergence of historic racist and sexist posts during his Test debut against New Zealand at Lord's earlier this month.

But Morgan, speaking ahead of the start of England's three-match Twenty20 series against Sri Lanka in Cardiff on Wednesday, was unconcerned about the prospect of being drawn into the row.

"I don't really reflect on it a lot," Morgan insisted. "I find if

I call somebody 'sir' on social media, or anywhere around the world, it's a sign of admiration and respect."

The 34-year-old Dublin-born batsman added: "If that's taken out of context there's nothing I can control or do about it, so I haven't actually looked into it."

Meanwhile, Morgan said Alex Hales's England exile could yet come to an end, with the Nottinghamshire batsman having been out in the cold since being dropped on the eve of the 2019 World Cup after a positive recreational drugs test.