

**Cloud Drift lifts Tylos Plastic Industries Cup**

Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club hosts action-packed, eight-race card with eight trophies won | P 12

**WORLD 6** Gunmen kidnap over 300 girls in Nigeria school raid

**THE DAILY tribune**



**10 CELEBS** Ben Affleck reflects on playing an alcoholic in 'The Way Back'

**BUSINESS 5** India's economy exits recession, recovery seen gathering pace

Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19)

# Limit social interactions

#Commit4Bahrain

## Coalition stops second Houthi attack on Saudi

TDI | agencies

A second attempt by Iran-backed Houthi militia to attack Saudi Arabia, hours after a failed attempt, was thwarted by Arab Coalition yesterday.

The coalition intercepted and destroyed a drone launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia towards Khamis Mushait, the coalition's spokesperson, General Turki al-Maliki, said yesterday.

"These acts of aggression to deliberately and systematically target civilians and civilian objects by the terrorist, Iran-



Pictures courtesy of AlArabia

backed Houthi militia amount to war crimes."

The Arab Coalition said it would continue to take the

necessary measures to protect civilians in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere per international humanitarian law.



Last update - 9:00 pm  
26 February 2021

## Individuals vaccinated (First dose)



# US strikes Iran-backed militias

- The attacks targeted militia sites on the Syrian side of the Iraqi-Syrian border

- Local sources and one medical source in eastern Syria said at least 17 people had been killed

- The strikes destroyed multiple facilities at a border control point used by a number of Iranian-backed militant groups, including Kataib Hezbollah and Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada.

TDI | agencies

Iran-backed militias in eastern Syria came under US air strikes yesterday killing one fighter and wounding several others.

"The attack was a calibrated response to rocket attacks against American personnel in Iraq," said a US official.

The attacks, which took place early on Friday Middle Eastern time, were deliberately limited



This picture taken in 2019 shows smoke rising in Syria's Deir Ezzor. (Courtesy of AlArabia/AFP)

**President Biden will act to protect American and Coalition personnel. At the same time, we have acted in a deliberate manner that aims to de-escalate the overall situation in both eastern Syria and Iraq**

PENTAGON SPOKESMAN JOHN KIRBY

in scope and designed to show that President Joe Biden's administration will act tough but wants to avoid a major regional escalation, US officials added.

The strikes targeted militia sites on the Syrian side of the Iraqi-Syrian border, where groups backed by Iran control an important crossing for weap-

## UK backs US action

TDI | Agencies

The United Kingdom yesterday voiced its support to the United States' response against Iranian-backed groups, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said.

"The UK supports the US targeted response against militia groups which attack coalition bases in an effort to destabilize the region. We recognise the threat posed by the militia and share the US aim to work together with partners to de-escalate the situation," Raab tweeted yesterday.

ons, personnel and goods.

An Iraqi militia official close to Iran said Friday's strikes killed at least one fighter and wounded four more, hitting positions of the powerful Kataib Hezbollah paramilitary group along the border.

Local sources and one medical source in eastern Syria said at least 17 people had been killed, but gave no further details. That toll could not be confirmed.

The US strikes followed an uptick in anti-US attacks in Iraq. Several attacks, including the one on Erbil airport, have been claimed by little-known groups



late the situation," Raab tweeted yesterday.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday said that the US gave Russia several minutes of advance warning before it carried out a strike in Syria, the RIA news agency reported.

which some Iraqi and Western officials say are a front for the established Iran-backed groups like Kataib Hezbollah.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said in a statement that US forces had conducted air strikes authorised by Biden "against infrastructure utilised by Iranian-backed militant groups in eastern Syria."

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the decision was meant to send a signal that, while the United States wanted to punish the militias, it did not want the situation to spiral into a bigger conflict.

### Bahrain extends dosing interval of Covishield



P4

#### BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL TESTED

3064160

ACTIVE CASES

6886

DEATHS

442

DISCHARGED

113799

NEW CASES

632

CRITICAL

71

210 fils (includes VAT)



6 084010 110021 >

# Deputy PM: Flexi work visa regulations getting ready

Committee mulls including more professions, 20 professions already identified

● The Cabinet chaired by HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, approved the new regulation last year

● The new regulations were approved based on feedbacks from the Shura and Representatives Councils and the Bahrain Chamber



”  
The committee is also looking at the possibility of including other professions, the committee deems relevant to include in the regulatory framework.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HIS HIGHNESS SHAIKH MOHAMMED BIN MUBARAK AL KHALIFA

TDT | Manama

Works progressing fast to frame the regulatory standards to practice 20 professions aimed at optimising the work permit system in the Kingdom.

Deputy Prime Minister His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa said the committee, as directed by the cabinet, is continuing to develop standards for 20 identified professions.

The committee, Sheikh Mohammed said, is also looking at the possibility of including other professions, which the committee deems relevant to include in the regulatory framework.

Shaikh Mohammed was replying to a parliamentary question by MP Muhammad Issa.

The Cabinet chaired by HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, had approved a new regulation last year in August for issuing the Flexible Work Permit. The permit, a cabinet statement said, aims at optimising the work permit system in the Kingdom to create more job opportunities for Bahrainis, make citizens the first choice of employment and preserve the right of workers.

The new regulations were approved based on feedbacks from the Shura and Representatives Councils and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

New procedures called for intensifying inspection to ensure that permit holders are not engaging in activities other than permitted and take necessary legal action against violations. The cabinet statement also said those failing to comply are not allowed to apply for the Flexible Work Permit. Measures also include barring Flexible Work Permit holders from registering industrial motor vehicles.

At that time, the cabinet also said that a new committee consisting of members from various ministries would propose regulatory standards for 20 identified professions and share them with the Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training within two months.

Shaikh Mohammed said the committee held several meetings with the representatives of the Bahrain Chamber. “They expressed their views on the regulations and desire to add another profession.”

He, however, said that the committee is yet to present its proposals to the Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training, as the committee chairman, the Minister of

Labor and Social Development, requested more time to complete the tasks assigned to it.

The committee consists of members from the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the Ministry of

Industry, Commerce and Tourism, the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, the Ministry of Electricity and Water Affairs, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority, BCCI, and the Education and Training Quality Authority.

## What is the Flexi Permit?

A permit allowing you to live freely in the Kingdom of Bahrain and work in any non-specialized occupation without a sponsor for a renewable period of one or two years.

## What are the Flexi Permit types?

**Flexi Permit** - This permit enables the holder to work in any non-specialized jobs and is not allowed to work in Restaurants, Salons and Hotels.

**Flexi Hospitality Permit** - This permit enables the holder to work in any non-specialized jobs and is allowed to work in Restaurants, Salons and Hotels (Requires a special medical test).

## Who is eligible for Flexi Permit?

Expatriate employees with cancelled (terminated) work permits.  
Expatriate employees with expired work permits\*.  
Expatriate employees who have not received their salaries and who have a case in the labor court.

## How do I know whether I am eligible for a Flexi Permit?

Visit the Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) website [www.lmra.bh](http://www.lmra.bh) and use «Express Services» to check.  
Contact the Call Centre number on 17 103 103  
Send a text message containing only your ID (CPR) number to 33 150 150

## What are the current Rules and Regulations of the Flexi Permit?

You should pay your monthly fees to avoid your permit being cancelled.  
We advise you to have your Blue Card at all times.  
You should not violate the Laws and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bahrain.  
Do not work in (Restaurants, Hotels, and Salons) unless you are Hospitality Flexi Permit holder.  
No dependants are allowed under a Flexi Permit holder.

## What are the Flexi Permit fees?

\* The fees are according to the below schedule:

	Flexi Permit Fees (BD)	Health Care (BD)	Residence Extension for One Time* (BD)	Travel Ticket Insurance** (BD)	One-time Administrative fee	Total Fees(BD)
Issue for one year	250	72	15	90	5	432
Issue for two years	500	144	15	90	5	754
Renewal for one year	250	72	-	-	5	327
Renewal for two years	500	144	-	-	5	649

Courtesy of LMRA

# Follow COVID-19 protocols, get vaccinated: Indian ambassador tells community members

TDT | Manama

Indian Ambassador Piyush Srivastava yesterday called on the Indian community members to follow Bahrain's COVID-19 protocols and get vaccinated to support the Kingdom's battle against the deadly pandemic.

The call came as Piyush Srivastava interacted with the Indian community members during the Embassy's Open House held yesterday.

The virtual Open house dealt with urgent and non-routine consular and labour issues of the community members.

The ambassador briefed the participants about India's global contribution to the fight against the pandemic. “So far, India has supplied approximately 25 million ‘Made in India’ COVID vaccines to over 25 countries. Many



Indian Ambassador Piyush Srivastava during the Open House held yesterday

more are on the way. Bahrain was among the first countries to receive vaccines,” Srivastava told the open house.

Srivastava further said the country is entering into its 2nd phase of vaccination on 1 March 2021 by vaccinating all above 60

years and 45 years with comorbidities.

The Indian ambassador also encouraged community mem-

bers to follow the website and social media accounts of the Indian Embassy for updates regarding pressing common issues.

To learn about India's travel-related information, use this link (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Guidelinesforinternationalarrivals17022021.pdf>)

The embassy resolved some of the grievances and is striving to resolve others at the earliest.



# Now, its **the turn** of lactating and pregnant **mothers**



Bahrain offers two types of COVID-19 vaccines for lactating and pregnant mothers

● Vaccines developed by China's National Pharmaceutical Group, Sinopharm, and Pfizer and BioNTech are okayed

TDT | Manama

Two types of COVID-19 vaccines are now available for inoculating pregnant and lactating individuals here in the Kingdom.

The move comes amid concerning reports that pregnancy heightens the risk of severe Coronavirus infection and that pregnant women have a greater need for protection.

Dr Maryam Ibrahim Al-Hajri, the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health at the Ministry of Health, said the committee had approved two types of vaccines for inoculating breastfeeding mothers and pregnant women. Dr Al-Hajri is the chair of the Health Ministry's Vaccination

Committee.

Bahrain picked vaccines developed by China's National Pharmaceutical Group, Sinopharm, and Pfizer and BioNTech for the purpose.

Bahrain's approval follows a recommendation by the World Health Organisation and the Centres for Disease Control in the United States of America.

Dr Anthony Fauci, head of infectious diseases at the National Institutes of Health, said in a recent briefing that researchers have seen "no red flags" so far from the 20,000 pregnant women participating in a federal tracking effort.

According to reports, mRNA vaccines are administered during pregnancy as they do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 and, therefore, cannot give someone COVID-19. Additionally, mRNA vaccines do not interact with a person's DNA because the mRNA does not enter a cell nucleus. Cells break down the mRNA quickly.

Dr Al-Hajri also pointed out: "Breastfeeding mothers and pregnant women are among

the groups most vulnerable to complications from the Coronavirus."

"Vaccination will help them prevent the infection or its complications, especially in light of the rapid spread of the new mutated strain."

While vaccination remains a personal choice, people who are pregnant and part of a group recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, such as healthcare personnel, may choose to be vaccinated.

"For, it is highly-necessary to strengthen the immunity of breastfeeding and pregnant mother against the virus," said Dr Al-Hajri.

Lactating mothers and pregnant women can register through the website healthalert.gov.bh or other authorised applications.

The official said that the vaccination is optional, "but a necessity to keep everyone healthy."

CDC says, "There are neither data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in lactating women nor on the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant or milk

production/excretion." "mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. People who are breastfeeding and are part of a group recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, such as healthcare personnel, may choose to be vaccinated."

## Five COVID-19 vaccines

Bahrain on Thursday approved a new single-dose coronavirus vaccine developed by Johnson & Johnson.

The authorisation makes Bahrain the first nation in the world to authorise Janssen Covid-19, the one-shot vaccine for general use.

Bahrain's move comes a day after US regulators concluded the shot offers strong protection against severe COVID-19.

The National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) said it would dole out the vaccine shots "to elderly, people with chronic diseases and other categories determined by the Health Ministry."

The approval for Janssen Covid-19 Vaccine also brings the

number of vaccines available in Bahrain for inoculation to five.

Bahrain already uses the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, one manufactured by Chinese state-backed pharmaceutical giant Sinopharm, India's Covishield (the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine) and Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

Bahrain is providing coronavirus vaccine jab free of cost for citizens and residents.

## COVID-19 measures extended for three more months

Bahrain also extended the mandatory COVID-19 pre-cautionary measures for an additional three months from 28 February 2021. The move also follows the recommendations of the National Medical Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19).



The CDC has designated pregnant people as a group with increased risk of contracting severe COVID-19.

5 times riskier

COVID-19 patients who are pregnant are estimated to be five times more likely to need intensive care or a ventilator than those who aren't.

Pfizer and Moderna's vaccines don't contain the live virus. They use a fragment of genetic material, called messenger RNA, that instructs cells to build the "spike" protein found on the virus surface that the immune system learns to fight off. The vaccines cannot cause infection.



## Man makes narrow escape from near-fatal crash

TDT | Manama

The man driving this vehicle should consider himself extremely lucky.

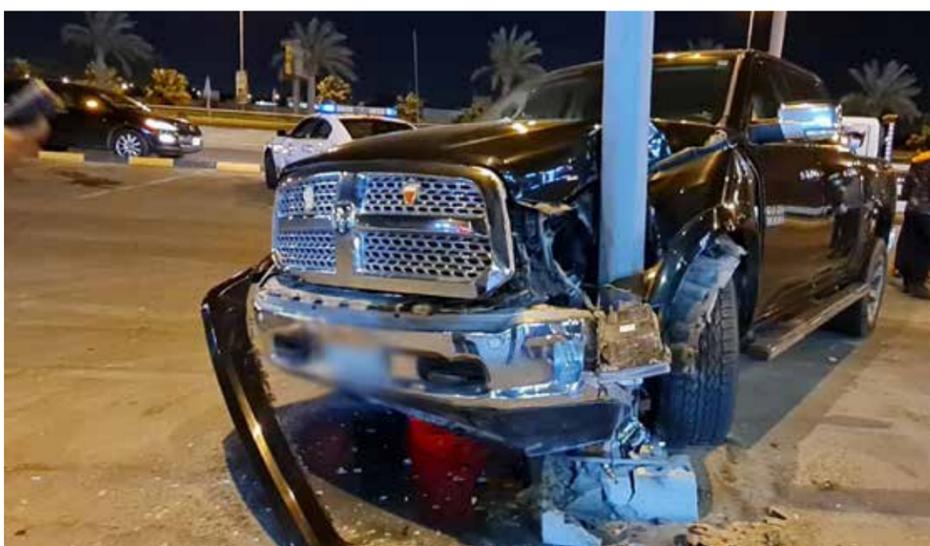
For, anyone who takes even a glance at his mangled car would find it hard to believe that he managed to escape unscathed.

The person - a Bahraini national - was driving through the Gulf of Bahrain Road near the Bahrain International Circuit in Zallaq when the accident occurred.

Police said the car involved in the accident came from the Manama side.

The man blamed the accident on a sudden turn made by a vehicle from its lane ahead of him.

He said, "I lost control of the



According to police, the driver of the vehicle blamed the accident on a sudden turn made by a vehicle from its lane ahead of him

**"I lost control of the vehicle, and in panic, rammed into the lamp post."**  
DRIVER OF THE VEHICLE

vehicle, and in panic, rammed into the lamp post."

Such was the impact that the lamppost, pierced through the left corner of the car, ended up jutting out of the engine bay.

Police said they took necessary measures and had opened an investigation into the circumstances leading to the accident. No other vehicles were involved in the accident.

# Not confessions, evidence matters

Interior Minister highlights the need to look beyond courtroom confessions in determining crimes

● “It is crucial to look beyond ‘confessions in courts’ while determining crimes,” Interior Minister said.

● Shaikh Rashid said the ministry is currently studying the open prisons systems of other countries

TDT | Manama

Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa called on law enforcement authorities to depend on “conclusive material evidence” while pressing charges against an individual.

“It is crucial to look beyond ‘confessions in courts’ while determining crimes,” the minister said.

“For this, the ministry has a Criminal Investigation Directorate, forensic labs, capacity building, and latest technologies.”



“The continuous support of HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister to the ministry enables all the ministry’s personnel to assume their duties with greater resolve and dedication, under the leadership of His Majesty the King

INTERIOR MINISTER

The directives came as the Interior minister reflected on the path-breaking changes outlined by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa during a press meet with the editors-in-chief of local newspapers.

The Crown Prince and Prime Minister had called for a comprehensive review of the justice system in the Kingdom based on the open prison approach,

amongst other measures.

Shaikh Rashid said the directives to develop the reformation and rehabilitation centres, and adopt a programme for open prisons will “strengthen the principle of justice” in the Kingdom.

The approach, Shaikh Rashid said, stems from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa’s reform programme.

On the Open Prison system,

the Interior Minister said, “The approach would widen the scope of the alternative punishment system.”

Bahrain, Shaikh Rashid recalled, was one of the first Arab countries to implement an alternative punishment law to promote the criminal justice system.

“The ministry has been working on to develop the Kingdom’s reformation and rehabilitation system to ensure the highest human rights standards.”

Explaining, the Interior Minister said, “The open prisons system enables the inmate, after serving a certain period of his sentence, to leave the prison for some periods to fulfil his responsibilities to his family and

society.”

The freedom relies on the inmate returning willingly to the reformation and rehabilitation centre after the decided period ends.

“Specific segments of inmates will be part of the open prisons system,” Interior Minister added.

“This will be determined based on the risk level, type of committed crime, the period left for the penalty to end, and the education level of the inmate,” Shaikh Rashid said.

“It also depends on the inmate’s behaviour while serving his sentence,” the minister stressed.

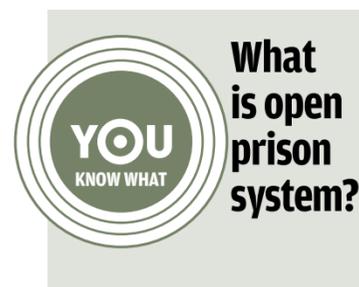
Shaikh Rashid said the min-

istry is currently studying the open prisons systems of other countries.

“Based on which, amendments will be made to the reformation and rehabilitation organizations law, and its executive regulations,” the minister said.

In this regard, the minister highlighted the role of HRH Prince Salman, and HM the King, in implementing the forward-looking goals.

Shaikh Rashid also thanked HRH the Crown Prince for his continuous support to the ministry, which enables “all the ministry’s personnel to assume their duties with greater resolve and dedication, under the leadership of His Majesty the King.”



Open prisons have relatively less stringent rules as compared to the controlled jails. They go by many names like minimum-security prison, open air camps or prison without bars. ... The jail does not confine them completely but requires them to earn their living to support their families, living with them inside the jail.

## Digital revenue collection: Government signed 6 deals



TDT | Manama

Bahrain has so far signed six contracts with various digital payment platforms for revenue collection, the Minister of Finance said.

The Kingdom also subject these contracts to periodic review to determine their service quality and costs by communicating with all service providers.

“The ministry is constantly reviewing the contracts signed with payment platforms for collecting payments for the government,” said Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Minister of Finance and National Economy.

“This is to ensure the best service at the lowest possible cost and to keep pace with the latest

developments in the field,” the minister said adding, the digital payment sector is witnessing continuous and accelerated development.

Replying to a parliamentary question by MP Youssef Zainal, the minister said the government is pursuing a policy of non-monopoly and had opened doors to specialised institutions and companies per the best international practices.

“All contracts for the collection of government revenues are based on the percentage of collection. The collection rates paid by the government to service providers vary according to the type and nature of the service.”

The rates generally oscillate between 0.8% and 1.25%, the minister revealed.

# Bahrain extends dosing interval of Covishield

● A WHO panel had found that the efficacy and immunogenicity of the Oxford and AstraZeneca vaccine increase with a longer interdose interval.

● WHO recommends an interval of 8 to 12 weeks between the doses

● Clinical trials conducted by Oxford and AstraZeneca in the UK showed that the vaccine had only around 54% efficacy as compared to 79% if the gap is 12 weeks.

TDT | Manama

Bahrain has extended the dosing intervals of the Cov-



The decision followed a recommendation made by an expert panel of the World Health Organisation

id-19 vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca to eight weeks instead of four weeks.

The decision followed a recommendation made by an expert panel of the World Health Organisation, said Dr Mariam Al Hajeri, the Undersecretary for Public Health at the Ministry of Health. Al Hajeri is also a member of the Technical Con-

sultative Committee of the Arab Health Ministers Council.

A WHO panel had found that the efficacy and immunogenicity of the Oxford and AstraZeneca vaccine increase with a longer interdose interval.

“In light of the observation that two-dose efficacy and immunogenicity increase with a longer interdose interval, WHO recommends an interval of 8 to

Serum Institute of India is manufacturing the vaccine under the brand Covishield.

12 weeks between the doses. If the second dose is inadvertently administered less than 4 weeks after the first, the dose does not need to be repeated,” the WHO’s Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunisation (SAGE) said on Wednesday.

The group also recommended giving the vaccine at the earlier possible opportunity, if the administration of the second dose is inadvertently delayed beyond 12 weeks.

Serum Institute of India is manufacturing the vaccine under the brand Covishield.

Bahrain approved the Covishield-AstraZeneca vaccine for emergency use on 21 January 2021 to expedite vaccine delivery to vulnerable groups, including the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.

Capital municipality officials taking part in a campaign to enhance green spaces in the villages of Al-Salhiya and Al-Qalaa, as part of the Tree week. The Director-General of the Capital Municipality, Muhammad Saad Al-Sahlhi, said the Capital Municipality is implementing several projects to enhance the green cover as part of sustainable development projects. The head of the Capital Municipality, Saleh Tarrada, said, “The Municipality is providing all necessary materials to prepare the land and seedlings, while people are taking care of them.” “The initiative aims at enhancing the interest of the people in the environment and quality of life in line with the goals of the My Capital City is Most Beautiful campaign,” said the head of the Public Relations and Media Committee at the Capital Secretariat.



# India's economy exits recession, recovery seen gathering pace

● Gross domestic product grew 0.4% in October-December compared with the same period a year earlier

● Economists have raised their forecasts for the current fiscal year and 2021-22

● Investment recorded its first growth since December 2019, growing at 2.6%

Reuters | New Delhi

India's economy returned to growth in the three months to December and the recovery is expected to gather pace as consumers and investors shake off the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, economists said. Fiscal and monetary policy



Commuters wearing protective face masks travel in a suburban train after authorities resumed the train services for all commuters after it was shut down to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Mumbai, India

could boost India's recovery prospects, they said, amid signs

of a pick-up in consumer demand and government spending.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched plans for a

massive vaccination drive, while outlining a slew of tax incentives to boost the manufacturing sector. Gross domestic product grew 0.4% in October-December compared with the same period a year earlier, data released by the National Statistics Office on Friday showed. That compared with revised contractions of 7.3% in July-September and 24.4% in April-June.

Investment recorded its first growth since December 2019, growing at 2.6% compared to a revised 6.8% fall in the previous quarter, while weakness in consumer demand eased.

Consumer spending - the main driver of the economy - dropped 2.4% year-on-year in Oct-December compared to an 11.3% fall in the previous quarter, data showed. The economy has returned to the "pre-pandemic times of positive growth rates", a finance ministry statement said after the release of the GDP data, which it said reflected a continued V-shaped recovery.

"Significant recovery in man-

ufacturing and construction augurs well for the support these sectors are expected to provide to growth in 2021/22," said the statement, which also cautioned that India is not yet beyond "the danger of the pandemic".

Economists have raised their forecasts for the current fiscal year and 2021-22, expecting a pick-up in government spending, consumer demand and a resumption of most economic activities curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annual growth of 3.9% in the farm sector and 1.6% in manufacturing during the three months to December raised hopes of an early recovery as the government rolls out plans to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to India's 1.4 billion people.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which has slashed its repo rate by a total of 115 basis points since March 2020 to cushion the economic shock of the pandemic, has projected growth of 10.5% in the fiscal year that starts in April.

## Dr Mirza keynote speaker at Arab Artificial Intelligence Summit



Dr Jassim Haji, Dr Abdhussain Mirza

TDT | Manama

Dr Abdhussain bin Ali Mirza, the President of Sustainable Energy Authority, will be a keynote speaker at the opening of the session of second Arab Artificial Intelligence Summit 2021.

The summit is organised by Phi Science Institute in Jordan and will be held virtually from 9-10 April 2021. The event offers a platform for A.I. professionals, researchers, startups, decision-makers, and governments to showcase their work, establish programs, and connect for a better A.I. future for

the whole region.

In his address, Dr Mirza will shed light on the opportunities and importance of strategic integration of Artificial Intelligence in the transformation to sustainable energy strategies in the region.

The sessions of the summit will focus on the prospects of A.I. regionally and globally. Participating in the sessions will also be Dr Jassim Haji, an International researcher and expert in Artificial Intelligence, who will be speaking on the topics related to Artificial Intelligence in Cyber Security, Financial Services, Education and Health Services.

## Oil drops on dollar strength and OPEC+ supply expectations

Reuters | New York

Oil prices fell yesterday as the US dollar rose while forecasts called for crude supply to rise in response to prices climbing above pre-pandemic levels.

Brent crude futures for April, which expire on Friday, fell 74 cents, or 1.1%, to \$66.14 a barrel by 12:45 EDT (17:45 GMT). The more actively traded May contract slipped by \$1.08 to \$65.03.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures dropped \$1.42, or 2.2%, to \$62.11. The contract was still on track to be up 4.8% on the week.

The US dollar rose as US government bond yields held near one-year highs, making dollar-priced oil more expensive for holders of other currencies.

"It's a dicey time - it doesn't seem like a time to load up on a risk-asset position," said Bob Yawger, director of Energy Futures at Mizuho in New York, wary of a potential output increase from OPEC and allies at next week's meeting. Also, the US stockpile report this week



showed a surprise build in oil inventories.

Friday's gains also reflect profit-taking after both Brent and WTI headed towards monthly gains of about 20% on supply disruptions in the United States and optimism over demand recovery on the back of COVID-19 vaccination programmes.

Investors are betting that next week's meeting of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies, a group known as OPEC+, will result in more supply re-

turning to the market.

US crude production fell in December, the latest month for which data is available, according to a monthly report from the Energy Information Administration.

Despite talk of tightening fundamentals, the demand side of the market is nowhere near warranting current oil price levels, they added.

US crude prices also face pressure from slower refinery demand after several Gulf Coast facilities were shuttered during the winter storm last week.

## US to allow rule targeting Chinese tech companies next month - WSJ

Reuters

The Biden administration plans to impose a Trump-era rule, effective next month targeting Chinese technology firms that pose a threat to the United States, following objections from US businesses, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday, citing people familiar with the matter.

## UK seeks G7 consensus on digital competition

Reuters | London

Britain is seeking to build a consensus among G7 nations on how to stop large technology companies exploiting their dominance, warning that there can be no repeat of Facebook's one-week media blackout in Australia.

## IMF, World Bank pledge to support G20 push against global climate risks

Reuters | Washington

The leaders of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank yesterday vowed to step up efforts to combat climate change by looking more closely at climate-related financial stability risk and using other tools at their disposal.

World Bank President Malpass told finance officials from the Group of 20 economies that the Bank, the biggest provider

of climate finance to the developing world, would make record climate investments for a second consecutive year in 2021.

To get more bang for the buck in mitigation and adaptation, the World Bank is helping countries update their commitments or "nationally determined commitments" under the Paris climate accord, he said during a video-conference.

The Bank is also launching

new reviews to integrate climate into all its country diagnostics and strategies, he said, with an initial focus on developing countries with the largest carbon emissions and the largest climate-vulnerable populations, Malpass said.

He said the Bank would work with the IMF and others on the reviews, and planned to complete up to 25 over the next year. "A key focus will be to help

countries achieve a just transition from coal to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy. We are also developing a framework for fiscal policy and sustainable growth, including carbon taxation and its redistributive impact," he said.

IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva told G20 officials she strongly supported a proposal by Italy, which is leading the G20 this year, on global climate risks and



environmental taxation.

"We will play our part in the areas ... such as integrating cli-

mate in public revenues and spending policies, climate-related financial stability risks and data," she said.

Georgieva told a climate summit last month that climate change posed a fundamental risk to economic and financial stability, but investing in green infrastructure could expand global economic output by an average 0.7% annually over the next 15 years and create millions of jobs.

## Multiple environmental challenges face Bahrain



SRIRAJ KOTA

Ever since oil was discovered in Bahrain in 1932, the country has witnessed rapid economic growth and development mainly due to the processing of crude oil and exporting the refined products across the world. The oil powered economic activity also attracted migrant population to the extent that eventually 48 per cent of the population comprised of migrants. The population growth coupled with migration over the years has put tremendous pressure on the natural resources of Bahrain leaving the Kingdom to face multiple environmental challenges.

The oil led prosperity had a flip side too as the fertile land of the nation and the ground water table quality bore the brunt as their condition deteriorated rapidly. Bahrain's groundwater currently suffers from degradation in quantity and quality from over-extraction, seawater invasion apart from oil spills. This increased the dependence on sea water desalination to supplement the domestic water supply, as a result nearly 60 per cent of the nation's water supply is desalinated. Desalination plants pose a threat to the environment in major manner. The seawater used contains high quantities of boron and bromide. The process used to desalinate removes calcium and other essential minerals. The salt leftover from desalination goes into the ocean increasing the salinity of the water. The increased salinity causes harm to the environment especially to the marine life.

For any nation the state of urban facilities is symbolic of its progress. The presence of excellent sewage and sanitation infrastructure is the bedrock of any modern city.

Bahrain's sanitation infrastructure is one of the most thorough systems as the nation adopted a well-planned sewage system as early as 1970 and ensured that 98 per cent of the population connected to a central sewage network. But this sewage system is now outdated and inadequate in the face of growing population and though Bahrain is combating this inadequacy by adding new treatment plants and expanding existing ones, the shortfall is becoming more apparent by the day. Bahrain is countering the same by setting up multiple deep gravity sewer projects to cover large areas of the country. This will address the growing need for effective sanitation facilities so that the ambient environment is not compromised.

Along with efficient sewage systems, the challenges arising from scarcity of freshwater resources is also creating additional problems. Bahrain contains the lowest endowments of freshwater resources in the world, which affects its freshwater availability. Bahrain's average annual rainfall hovers around 80 mm and its evapotranspiration hovers around 1850 mm. There are no rivers, continuously flowing streams or lakes. The country obtains groundwater from the lateral underflow of the Dammam aquifer. Freshwater share among Bahrain's populace

is in decline. The share went from 525 m3 per year in 1970 to m3 per year in 2001 placing the country's freshwater share less than the 500 m3 per year capita water poverty line. These levels are likely to further decline and even halve due to the country's continual population increase.

Adding to the environmental woes of the nation, Bahrain generates above 1.2 million tonnes of solid waste per year making the country one of the world's leading per capita solid waste generators. Estimates determine that daily garbage production exceeds 4,500 tons. Waste accumulation increases

### As each nation fights its own battle against environmental challenges, Bahrain too is besieged by a multitude of problems and is fighting tooth and nail

As at a rapid pace which eventually impacts the quality of air, soil and groundwater in Bahrain. Bahrain's government launched recycling initiatives, a waste-to-energy (WTE) project and a public awareness campaign in response to combat waste accumulation, this is expected to stem the rising waste problem but unless the WTE initiative keeps pace with the waste generation, the nation may experience irreversible environmental damage.

As each nation fights its own battle against environmental challenges, Bahrain too is besieged by a multitude of problems and is fighting tooth and nail. The efforts of the government have been successful in holding the problems from assuming a severe form, but as conditions keep getting worse the government must ensure dynamic measures that are apace with the problems. Be it afforestation measures or increasing the number of urban water bodies, each proactive step will go a long way in ensuring that the rising temperatures are kept in check and ground water level is sufficiently replenished. The role of the common man is also an essential component in successfully meeting the environmental challenges and addressing them. In order to ensure the same a superior level of public awareness needs to be created which can provide the much needed impetus to the government initiatives to conserve the environment.

Environmental challenges are normal but how Bahrain will respond to them will decide the state and safety of its environment.



TOP 4 TWEETS

01



COVID-19 vaccinations are up and cases and hospitalizations are down, but let me be clear: now is not the time to relax.

@POTUS

02



The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act represents an important step towards ensuring more accountability and transparency in policing. I join @POTUS in encouraging Congress to pass this legislation and get it to the President's desk.

@VP

03



According to a new UN report the national targets (NDC) made so far put us on a path to achieve only a 1% reduction of greenhouse gases by 2030. I'll repeat that; 1%. Our leaders are failing mankind completely. And media is letting them get away with it.

@GretaThunberg

04



We are nowhere near the level of ambition needed to meet the #ParisAgreement goals. Nationally Determined Contributions of major emitters must set more ambitious targets for 2030. Long-term commitments must be matched by immediate actions that people & planet desperately need.

@antonioguterres

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

## Thousands march in Armenia to demand PM's resignation



Opposition demonstrators rally in Republic Square in Yerevan, Armenia  
AFP | Yerevan

Several thousand opposition supporters marched through the capital of Armenia yesterday to demand Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's resignation over his handling of last year's war with Azerbaijan which many see as a national humiliation.

Columns of people angry with the prime minister flooded the streets of central Yerevan, waving Armenian flags and chanting anti-government slogans, hours before a planned meeting with the ex-Soviet country's president.

Former Prime Minister Vazgen Manukyan, who has been put forward by the opposition to replace Pashinyan, called on all Armenians to join the protest.

"The people must take to the street and express their will so that we can avoid bloodshed and turmoil," he said at the rally.

"Either we get rid of them," Manukyan said, referring to Pashinyan and his allies who control parliament, "or we will lose Armenia."

The small South Caucasus nation plunged Thursday into a fresh political crisis as Pashinyan defied calls to resign,

**"The people must take to the street and express their will so that we can avoid bloodshed and turmoil," he said at the rally. Either we get rid of them or we will lose Armenia**

FORMER PRIME MINISTER VAZGEN MANUKYAN

accused the military of an attempted coup and rallied some 20,000 supporters in Yerevan.

But the opposition gathered some 10,000 of its own supporters, who erected barricades and set up tents and stoves outside the parliament building and vowed to hold round-the-clock demonstrations.

The crisis spilled into a second day after Pashinyan's critics spent the night, then blocked streets near the parliament building in preparation for yesterday's rally.

The march led them to the presidency and then to the prime minister's residence, ahead of a meeting with President Armen Sarkisian at 15:40 local time (1140 GMT).

## Gunmen girls in

Police confirm the

Bandits carried out third mass kidnapping of students in three months

AFP | Kano, Nigeria

Gunmen raided a school in northwestern Nigeria overnight, abducting students, local authorities said yesterday, raising fears that the country had been hit by another mass kidnapping.

The suspected armed bandits attacked the Government Girls Secondary School in Jangebe, Zamfara state, kidnapping an unknown number of students from dormitories.

In the initial aftermath, teachers said several hundred girls were unaccounted for.

"It is true, gunmen... kidnapped students," Sulaiman Tunau Anka, the state information commissioner, confirmed. "They went to the school vehicles. They forced some of the girls to trek."

The security forces are tracking the criminals, he added.

Heavily-armed criminal gangs known locally as "bandits" in northwest and central Nigeria have stepped up attacks in recent years, kidnapping for ransom, raping and pillaging.

Just last week, 42 people were taken by a gang from a boarding school in nearby Niger state. In December, more than 300

## Multiple deaths in Haiti prison break, including jail director

AP | Croix-Des-Bouquets

A prison director was among at least eight people killed after several inmates tried to escape from a prison in Haiti's capital, a police officer and witnesses said.

The incident occurred in northeast Port-au-Prince at the Croix-des-Bouquets Civil Prison, which was built by Canada in 2012 and is known for a 2014 breakout in which more than 300 inmates escaped.

Residents in the area who declined to be identified out of concern for their safety said that they observed a group of heavily armed men start shooting at prison guards before the inmates began to flee.

Gunshots could still be heard from within the prison several hours after the shooting began.

The police officer who confirmed the killing of the prison director, and declined to be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said authorities were preparing to raid the prison and described the inmates as armed and dangerous.



Students rush past the bodies of inmates outside the Croix-des-Bouquets Civil Prison

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

In 2014, more than 300 inmates successfully escaped the high-security prison, which was built with Canadian funding and opened in 2012

At the time of the 2014 breakout, the prison held 899 inmates, some 130 over its capacity.

During Thursday's incident, one escapee, 37-year-old Jhon Hippolyte, was shot in the back. He said that he was serving a sentence for murder and was in the infirmary when he noticed everybody running and decided to join them.

AP journalists saw the bodies of at least seven men along streets near the prison. They had been shot. Their identities were not immediately available,

1693

1st women's magazine "Ladies' Mercury" published in London, England

1950

General Chiang Kai-shek elected president of Nationalist China



1957

Mao's famous speech to the Supreme State Conference "On Correct Handling of Contradictions Among People" expounding Maoist ideals

2012

Wikileaks begins disclosing 5 million emails from private intelligence company Stratfor

# Men kidnap over 300 in Nigeria school raid

The abduction of at least 317 girls from school in Zamfara state



A police vehicle is seen near a college in Nigeria (file photo)

boys were kidnapped from a school in Kankara, in President Muhammadu Buhari's home state of Katsina, while he was visiting the region.

The boys were later released but the incident triggered outrage and memories of the kidnappings of schoolgirls by jihadists in Dapchi and Chibok that shocked the world.

One teacher told AFP "more than 300 are unaccounted for" after yesterday's attack, while another teacher had a higher estimate.

"Out of the 600 students in the school only around 50 have been accounted for. The rest have been abducted. It is possible some of them managed to escape, but we are not sure," the second teacher said.

A parent said he had received a phone call about the incident.

"I'm on my way to Jangebe. I received a call that the school

was invaded by bandits who took away schoolgirls. I have two daughters in the school," said Sadi Kawaye.

## Angered, horrified

"We are angered and saddened by yet another brutal attack on schoolchildren in Nigeria," UNICEF representative in Nigeria Peter Hawkins said in a statement.

"This is a gross violation of children's rights and a horrific experience for children to go through -- one which could have long-lasting effects on their mental health and well-being."

The UN agency called on those responsible to "release the girls immediately" and on the government "to ensure their safe release and the safety of all other schoolchildren in Nigeria."

The charity Save the Children said it was "horrified" about the news of the abductions.

**"We are angered and saddened by yet another brutal attack on schoolchildren in Nigeria. This is a gross violation of children's rights and a horrific experience for children to go through -- one which could have long-lasting effects on their mental health and well-being"**

UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE IN NIGERIA PETER HAWKINS

"It is unacceptable that attacks on schools and students has become a recurring scenario in Northern Nigeria," said Mercy Gichuhi, Save the Children's Nigeria director.

"These attacks... puts (the children) at risk of never returning to school, as they or their parents think it's too dangerous."

Amnesty International Nigeria said the abductions was "a serious violation of international humanitarian law."

"Nigerian authorities must take all measures to return them to safety, along with all children currently under the custody of armed groups," the rights group said on Twitter.

The federal government has not yet commented on the latest kidnappings.

## "Guernica" tapestry long on view at UN, no longer is



A man walks past the tapestry AFP | Washington

A large tapestry depicting Pablo Picasso's fabled "Guernica" that hung outside the UN Security Council chamber for decades to remind diplomats of the risks of war has returned to its owner, Nelson Rockefeller, Jr., officials said.

Commissioned in 1955 by Nelson Rockefeller and woven by the French workshop Jacqueline de La Baume-Dürbach, the tapestry had been on loan to the world body since 1984.

Presidents, prime ministers, ambassadors and diplomats attending Security Council meetings passed by it on the way to the chamber of the most important UN body responsible for peace in the world.

The United Nations did not explain why the Rockefeller family wanted to take the tapestry back.

The Rockefeller Foundation had no immediate comment.

On Thursday, the wall on which the tapestry hung -- depicting the bombing of the Spanish city of Guernica on April 26, 1937 by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy -- was empty.

## News in brief

### Israeli-owned ship hit by explosion in Gulf



The US defence official said in Washington that the ship was hit by a blast above the water line that ripped holes in both sides of its hull.

An Israeli-owned ship, the MV HELIOS RAY, was hit by an explosion in the Gulf of Oman overnight and a US defence official said the blast left holes in both sides of the vessel's hull. The cause was not immediately clear. The vehicle-carrier ship is owned by a Tel-Aviv based company called Ray Shipping through a company registered in the Isle of Man, according to a UN shipping database.

### A US Navy warship operating in the Middle East has a dozen cases of the novel coronavirus, while another warship in the region is investigating whether some of its members are also infected.

The USS San Diego which has the confirmed cases is at port in Bahrain. It sails with about 600 sailors and Marines aboard. The guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea, which carries some 380 sailors, is expected to pull into port for further testing. The port was not disclosed.

### US Navy warship in the Middle East has COVID-19 cases



### Tiger Woods transferred to Los Angeles hospital for further treatment



a Los Angeles medical facility for further treatment, according to a statement from the hospital where he underwent surgery for serious leg injuries after his car crash. "Mr. Tiger Woods was transferred to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center for continuing orthopedic care and recovery," said Anish Mahajan, CEO of the hospital where Woods was first taken.

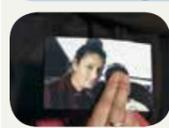
### Golf superstar Tiger Woods has been transferred to

### Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis hit back at accusations that he tried to cover up a sex abuse scandal involving a top theatre director appointed by his government.

Speaking in parliament, Mitsotakis said the opposition and supporting media were dragging public discourse through a "swamp" and spreading "poison". The debate took place as the former artistic director of Greece's national theatre, Dimitris Lignadis, appeared before a magistrate to answer allegations of raping minors, including migrant children.



### UK Supreme Court rejects IS bride's legal bid to return



Britain's highest court rejected a bid by a woman who was stripped of her UK citizenship for joining the Islamic State group to return to challenge the decision. Five judges at the Supreme Court gave a unanimous decision in the case of Shamima Begum, whose legal battles have come to be seen as a test of how Britain treat nationals who joined the jihadists. They found her right to a fair hearing did not override considerations such as public safety, and that the decision to block her return should remain until she can participate "without the safety of the public being compromised"

### Britain's highest court rejected a bid by a woman who was stripped of her UK

## Russian diplomats use hand-pulled trolley to cross N Korea border

AFP | Seoul

Eight Russian diplomats and family members -- the youngest of them a three-year-old girl -- have arrived home from North Korea on a hand-pushed rail trolley due to Pyongyang's coronavirus restrictions.

Video posted on Russia's foreign ministry's verified Telegram account showed the trolley, laden with suitcases and women, being pushed across a border railway bridge by Third Secretary Vladislav Sorokin, the only man in the group.

They waved and cheered as they approached their homeland, the culmination of an expedition that began with a 32-hour train trip from Pyongyang, followed by a two-hour bus ride to the border.

"It took a long and difficult journey to get home," the ministry said in the post late Thursday, speaking of the final stretch.

"To do this, you need to make a trolley in advance, put it on the rails, place things on it, seat the children -- and go," it said.

"Finally, the most important part of the route -- walking on foot to the Russian side."

Sorokin was "the main 'engine' of the non-self-propelled railcar", it said, and had to push



The Russian diplomats push the trolley on the train tracks

it for more than a kilometre.

Once on Russian territory, they were met by foreign ministry colleagues and were taken by bus to Vladivostok airport.

"Don't leave your own behind", the ministry added as a hashtag.

North Korea imposed a strict border shutdown in January last year to try to protect itself from the coronavirus that first emerged in neighbouring China and has gone on to sweep the world.

The shutdown has cancelled all flights in or out of the nuclear-armed, sanctions-hit country,

and cross-border trains.

With staff and supplies unable to enter, the restrictions have severely hampered the activities of diplomats and aid workers, and several Western embassies have pulled out their entire staff.

But Russia has close relations with the North and maintains a significant diplomatic presence.

Yesterday, the Kremlin said the journey out of North Korea demonstrated that diplomatic service is no walk in the park.

"It seems very pleasant and elegant but in reality this is very

**YOU**  
KNOW WHAT

The group of eight, including a child as young as 3, travelled 32 hours by train and two hours by bus from Pyongyang just to reach the Russian border

complex, rigorous and demanding work," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, himself a trained diplomat, told reporters.

"Things like this can happen too," he added.

Stalin's Soviet Union played a key role in the North's foundation after it and the US decided to split the peninsula into two zones either side of the 38th parallel following the World War II surrender of Korea's colonial overlord Japan.

Moscow still has a grand embassy in a prime spot in central Pyongyang, close to the North Korean leadership compound.

## COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	29,072,562	521,343	113,785,596
2 India	11,079,094	156,970	
3 Brazil	10,393,886	251,661	Deaths
4 Russia	4,223,186	85,304	
5 UK	4,163,085	122,415	2,523,840
6 France	3,686,813	85,582	Recovered:
7 Spain	3,188,553	69,142	89,371,349
8 Italy	2,888,923	97,227	New cases
9 Turkey	2,683,971	28,432	
10 Germany	2,431,820	70,277	+246,247
11 Colombia	2,241,225	59,396	New deaths
12 Argentina	2,093,645	51,795	
13 Mexico	2,069,370	183,692	+5,420
14 Poland	1,684,788	43,353	

## Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	180,051		10,495		139,072	30,484
Saudi Arabia	376,723	+346	6,483	+3	367,691	2,549
UAE	385,160	+3,498	1,198	+16	377,537	6,425
Kuwait	189,046	+1,022	1,072	+5	177,133	10,841
Oman	140,588		1,562		131,684	7,342
Qatar	162,737	+469	257		152,807	9,673





# celebs



Ben Affleck

## Ben Affleck reflects on playing an alcoholic in 'The Way Back'

ANI | Washington

American actor Ben Affleck, who is a recovering alcoholic, recently opened up about playing the role of an alcoholic in the 2020 film 'The Way Back'.

The actor played the role of Jack Cunningham, a former high school basketball star who walked away from the sport only to return to the game as coach of his alma

mater's team. Throughout the movie, viewers learn about the pain Jack has experienced from his battle with alcoholism, the end of his marriage, and the loss of his child.

Affleck recently reflected on the film and why it resonates with him. He said in a recent roundtable discussion with The Hollywood Reporter, "I'm a recovering alcoholic and I played an alcoholic in the movie."

The actor added, "It's really about grief and losing a child, which, thank God, I have not experienced, and is probably the worst thing you can experience. But also, a lot of it is about alcoholism."

Affleck has publicly discussed his own battle with alcoholism and his sobriety journey in the past.

**Alcoholism, in and of itself, and compulsive behaviour, are not inherently super interesting, but what is sometimes interesting is what you discover about yourself in the course of recovery and trying to figure out what went wrong, how to fix it, how you want your life to look and what kind of ethics you want to live by**

BEN AFFLECK

"Alcoholism, in and of itself, and compulsive behaviour, are not inherently super interesting, but what is sometimes interesting is what you discover about yourself in the course of recovery and trying to figure out what went wrong, how to fix it, how you want your life to look and what kind of ethics you want to live by," he continued.

Affleck said, "So yes, I'm an alcoholic. Yes, I had a relapse. Yes, I went into recovery again. And then I went and did that movie."

Like his character, Affleck has also gone through a separation. In 2015, he and actor Jennifer Garner announced their decision to divorce. The former couple, who married in 2005 and share children Violet,

Seraphina, and Samuel, officially filed it in 2017 and finalised their split in 2018.

The actor said, "But for me, the movie was much more about the fact that--whether it's having lived enough years, having seen enough ups and downs, having had children and divorce--I'm at a point now in my life where I have sufficient life experience to bring to a role to make it really interesting for me.

He added, "I'm not good enough to just invent it from whole cloth, you know? I didn't have to do research for the alcoholism aspect of the movie--that was covered. It was the Daniel Day-Lewis approach to that."

## Ryan Gosling to headline 'The Actor' movie adaptation

ANI | Washington

Hollywood star Ryan Gosling is set to play the lead role in 'The Actor', an upcoming adaptation of Donald E Westlake's novel 'Memory'.

As per The Hollywood Reporter, Duke Johnson will helm the forthcoming movie and produce it with Abigail Spencer under their Innerlight Films production banner.

Gosling, who will also bankroll the film alongside Ken Kao, will play the lead role of Paul Cole, who must deal with his damaged memory as he struggles to rebuild his life after being left for dead and hospitalised in 1950s Ohio.

Gosling's character Cole will follow a thrilling journey

to find home, love, and ultimately himself. Gosling and Kao's partnership follows their recent project announcements of Phil Lord and Chris Miller's 'Project Hail Mary' at MGM and Leigh Whannell's 'Wolfman' at Universal.

Paul Young is also producing the film through his company Make Good. Apart from helming the film, Johnson co-wrote the screenplay with Stephen Cooney, based on Westlake's novel.



Ryan Gosling

## Charlize Theron: I think back how I made myself smaller in a relationship

IANIS | Los Angeles

Academy Award winning actress Charlize Theron opened up about men and past relationships in a show hosted by Hollywood star Drew Barrymore. Theron says she thinks back how she made herself smaller for a guy or in a relationship.

"I found myself in my twenties and then early thirties and I think back how I made myself smaller for a guy or in a relationship. You think that's ultimately the problem, but you're always feeling insecure and not living to the full potential and you feel that everything will be okay. One

fine day, I suddenly stopped to think and then I thought that it's really ridiculous," Theron said.

Speaking about her early days, Theron talked about her mother and a strong independent upbringing.

"I struggle and always find myself contemplating how is it that someone else could tell me what I can and cannot do. I was so fortunate to be raised by a very strong mom. She's is like an ideal quintessential broad and there was this strength that always came growing up around her and seeing her," she said.

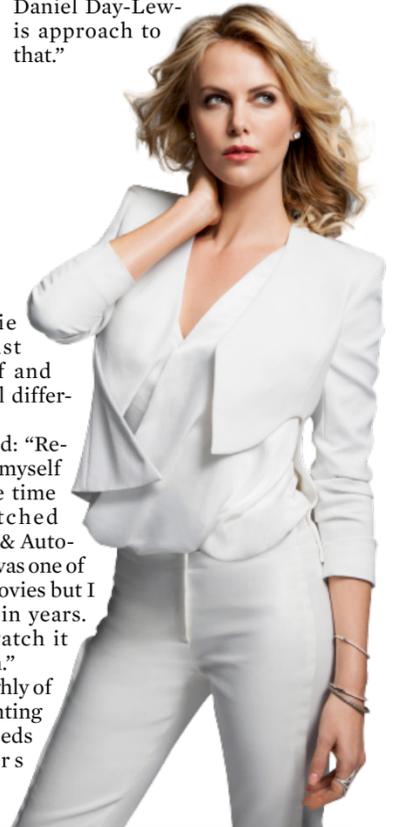
Theron also discussed comedies, romance and indie films on "The Drew Barrymore Show".

Barrymore said: "At times, I completely immerse myself in the script

and the movie sometimes just take a hold of and making me feel different."

Theron added: "Recently, I found myself with some free time and I re-watched 'Planes, Trains & Automobiles'. That was one of my favourite movies but I hadn't seen it in years. I could just watch it again and again."

She spoke highly of Barrymore pointing out the good deeds she showers around her.



Charlize Theron

## Jeremy Renner to star in Taylor Sheridan's 'Mayor Of Kingstown'

ANI | Washington

Two-time Oscar nominee Jeremy Renner has been tapped to star and executive produce Taylor Sheridan's latest series 'Mayor of Kingstown'.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the prison drama 'Mayor of Kingstown' was originally picked up straight to series in January 2020 at Paramount Network and will now move to streamer Paramount+.

Additionally, Antoine Fuqua has also boarded the series taking up

the role of executive producer. This news was announced Wednesday (local time) during the Paramount+ investor day presentation.

Sheridan recently inked a new nine-figure overall deal with ViacomCBS that sources say includes series of additional projects for the streamer.

'Mayor of Kingstown' follows the McLusky family, who are power brokers in Kingstown, Michigan where the business of incarceration is the only thriving industry.

Tackling themes of systemic racism,

corruption and inequality, the series provides a stark look at their attempt to bring order and justice to a town that has neither. Renner will play the head of the McClusky family.

As per The Hollywood Reporter, 'Mayor of Kingstown' is the latest linear series to move to Paramount+ as ViacomCBS bolsters the platform with originals in a bid to draw subscribers to the platform.



Jeremy Renner

## Swift files counter-lawsuit in theme park battle

ANI | Washington

American singer and songwriter Taylor Swift's intellectual property management company has taken action against an immersive fantasy theme park in Pleasant Grove, Utah after it filed a lawsuit against the artist earlier this month.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Evermore Park had sued Swift over the use of the "Evermore" trademark, which was the title of her 9th studio album re-

leased on December 11.

Now a new lawsuit filed by TAS [Taylor Alison Swift] Rights Management is focused on a different matter. The company claims Evermore Park wilfully used Swift's songs without the proper licenses for some time before it filed its lawsuit.

Swift's attorneys claim that more than a year before the park filed its lawsuit, TAS had been tipped off that the singer's songs were being performed and played there without the requisite licenses.

### SUDOKU

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

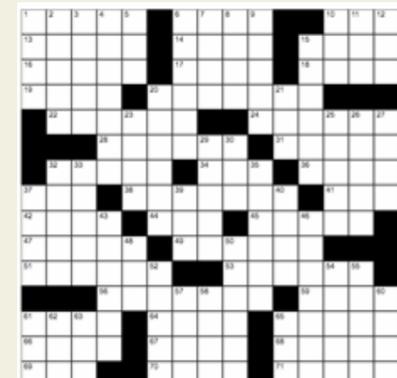
Yesterday's solution

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

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- Rough files; 6- Harrow rival; 10- Half a fly; 13- Root or Yale; 14- Low-lying area; 15- Cried; 16- Ruler of Hyderabad; 17- Cabinet dept.; 18- Woeful word; 19- Baking chamber; 20- Atheistic; 22- Bars legally; 24- Egg yolk; 28- Borrowed; 31- Give up; 32- Type of ray; 34- Check out; 36- Primordial giant in Norse myth; 37- Sheet music abbr.; 38- Confide; 41- Hydrocarbon suffix; 42- Ooze; 44- Agnus; 45- Out; 47- Mexican money; 49- Rather recent; 51- Hoarded; 53- A place for vacationers; 56- Lattice; 59- Calendar row; 61- Aboriginal rite site; 64- Outer garment; 65- 18th letter of the Greek alphabet; 66- Sphere; 67- "Judith" composer; 68- Not appropriate; 69- Grads-to-be; 70- Yarn spinner; 71- Inuit dwelling;

Down

1- City in Western Nevada; 2- Not dead yet; 3- Dimensions; 4- Specter; 5- Total; 6- Nevertheless; 7- Zingy taste; 8- Muffin topper; 9- Dweebish; 10- Aviv; 11- Hot tub; 12- French connections; 15- Ambush; 20- Higher ground; 21- Kareem, once; 23- Treater's words; 25- Some beans; 26- Sheeplike; 27- Used to be; 29- Lofty nest; 30- Big Apple sch.; 32- Welcome; 33- You right; 35- Spots; 37- Egyptian cobras; 39- 1980's movie starring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore; 40- Soviet news service; 43- Door; 46- Exhibition; 48- Sun talk; 50- Dodge or Nash; 52- Sticker; 54- Splendid; 55- Beat; 57- Actress Singer; 58- Actress Turner; 60- The Green Hornet's sidekick; 61- Air-gun ammo; 62- Paddle; 63- Literary monogram; 65- Juris;

Yesterday's solution

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

# BRAVE CF adds Naurdiev to Super Welterweight division

Austrian star Ismail Naurdiev is the newest addition to an already stacked Super Welterweight (175lbs) division

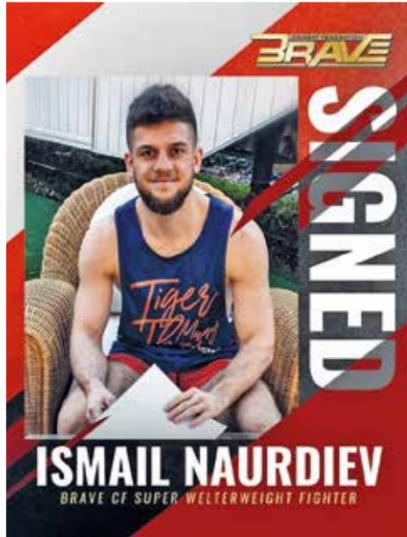
● The division, which is headed by reigning, two-time world champion Jarrah Al-Silawi, have some of the most exciting fighters on the organization's roster

TDT | Manama

**B**RAVE Combat Federation is continuing its pursuit of the best fighters in the world, and has announced the signing of Ismail Naurdiev, who's a huge addition to an already stacked Super Welterweight (175lbs) division, which is headed by reigning, two-time world champion Jarrah Al-Silawi.

Aside from Al-Silawi and Naurdiev, the Super Welterweights have some of the most exciting fighters on the organization's roster, such as Louis Glismann, Abdoul Abdouraguimov, Kevin Ruart, and has recently seen two big additions with Andreas Stahl and Nursulton Ruziboev.

And this is the caliber of fighters that Naurdiev hopes to be facing off against soon as he hailed the new step in his career and the level of competition he will be facing



inside the BRAVE CF Arena.

"Super excited to be joining BRAVE CF's awesome Super Welterweight roster! I'm delighted to be a part of the fastest-growing organization in the world and fight some of the best at 175lbs! I'm coming for them all! Thank you to HH. Shaikh Khaled and president Mohammed Shahid for the trust in me!"

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Super excited to be joining BRAVE CF's awesome Super Welterweight roster! I'm delighted to be a part of the fastest-growing organization in the world and fight some of the best at 175lbs! I'm coming for them all! Thank you to HH. Shaikh Khaled and president Mohammed Shahid for the trust in me! I'm back

ISMAIL NAURDIEV

I'm back!", celebrated an excited Naurdiev. No debut date has been set for "The Austrian Wonderboy" yet but he's raring to kick off his career in his new home with a huge fight.

BRAVE CF is putting together 21 days of mayhem in March, with four events three weeks, culminating to the historic BRAVE CF 50, which will celebrate the milestone of BRAVE CF becoming one of the fastest organizations to reach 50 events, while being the only one to have visited 21 countries in this period.

## Klopp voices fears over Henderson as Liverpool injury crisis deepens

AFP | London

**J**urgen Klopp fears Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson may not play again this season after undergoing groin surgery as he grapples with a deepening injury crisis at Anfield.

The midfielder was forced off half an hour into a 2-0 home defeat to Everton last weekend and further investigation revealed the need for an operation.



Jurgen Klopp and Jordan Henderson

Liverpool's Premier League title defence has been badly undermined by season-ending injuries for centre-backs Virgil van Dijk, Joe Gomez and Joel Matip.

Henderson has been forced to deputise in defence for long stretches of the season and his absence is another major blow to the Reds' hopes of qualifying for the Champions League next season.

After a run of four consecu-

tive league defeats, Klopp's men are sixth in the table, five points adrift of the top four.

"It's not a quick one," said Klopp on the timescale for Henderson's return. "But we all hope there is a possibility for him to play a few games this season."

In a statement earlier yesterday, Liverpool said Henderson will be out until after the March international break at the earliest.

## Manchester United face AC Milan in Europa League last 16

AFP | London

**M**anchester United and AC Milan will face off in the last 16 of the Europa League after being paired together in Friday's draw in Nyon.

United, who beat Real Sociedad 4-0 on aggregate in the previous round, will face the seven-time European champions in a two-legged encounter after they squeezed past Red Star Belgrade on away goals.

The tie will pit Zlatan Ibrahimovic against his former club in United, where he won the 2017 edition of the Europa League.

The Swede has been in fine form this season as Milan bid for a first Italian league title since 2011, scoring 14 Serie A goals in 13 appearances at the age of 39.

United will be considered favourites for the tie however as they sit second in the Premier League having lost just once in the English top flight since the start of November.

Milan meanwhile have surrendered top spot in Serie A to neighbours Inter Milan after a run of three defeats in five league matches which has Ste-



The Uefa Europa League trophy

fano Pioli's side looking over their shoulder at a host of rivals for a place in the Champions League.

Ajax will fancy their chances against Switzerland's Young Boys after the four-time European champions eliminated Ligue 1 leaders Lille on Thursday.

Granada were rewarded for making the last 16 in their first ever European campaign with a tie against Norway's Molde, while Roma coach Paulo Fonseca will be reunited with his old team Shakhtar Donetsk.

United's fellow Premier League teams Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal will face Dinamo Zagreb and Olympiakos respectively. Rangers take on Slavia Prague after dumping out Royal Antwerp 9-5 on aggregate.

## Olsim set for comeback bout against Brazilian foe

TDT | Manila

**I**gorota mixed martial artist and Muay Thai national athlete Jenelyn Olsim is pursuing her dreams of becoming a world champion one day.

On March 19 at the Singapore Indoor Stadium, she will be mounting a comeback in the Circle after more than a year of layoff.

The Team Lakay's women's prized strawweight fighter is set to square off with Brazilian opponent Maira Mazar in ONE: Fists of Fury III.

The development was announced through coach Mark Sangiao's Facebook page accompanied with the official card of the event.

Jenelyn is the sister of Jerry Olsim, both members of national muay thai team.

Olsim, who holds a 3-2 mixed martial record, is the lone Team Lakay fighter in the women's strawweight division. Her teammate Gina Iniong competes in the atomweight.

The 2019 Southeast Asian Games silver medalist last saw action in August 2019, where she suffered a first-round submission loss against Australian fighter Caitlin McEwen in ONE



Olsim is chasing her passion and dreams

Warrior Series 7.

She had a successful debut in October 2018 though, scoring a unanimous decision win in ONE Warrior Series 3 against Claudia Diaz of Spain.

The Olsim siblings and men's strawweight rising star Lito Adiwang jumped shipped to Team Lakay from Tribal Torogi.

Olsim joined Team Lakay last year in August, making her the fourth female warrior in the squad including former atomweight No. 5 contender Iniong, fellow national muay thai member Islay Erika Bomogao, and trainer Zephania Ngaya.

No. 5 strawweight fighter

## Speed king Sam Bennett doubles up on UAE Tour



Sam Bennett reacts after crossing the finish line

AFP | Dubai

**I**reland's Sam Bennett won the penultimate stage six of cycling's UAE Tour yesterday, confirming his early season form to claim his second victory at the Palm Jumeirah Island finish with ease.

After Thursday's possibly decisive 20km uphill finish the overall race leader Tadej Pogacar was able to take it easy on the run around Dubai, leaving the glory to the sprint specialists while he maintained his advantage finishing with the main pack.

Bennett beat Italian ace Elia Viviani into second and the German Bora man Pascal Ackermann came third.

The smiley Irishman, who cried after his first Tour de France stage win last season, can bag a hat-trick of wins Saturday on the seventh and final stage which also looks perfect for his strengths.

The 30-year-old said he would certainly go for it.

"We're pretty much nailing it at the minute," said Bennett. "I really want stage seven and we'll for sure go for it again on Saturday."

The Slovenian Pogacar goes into stage seven with a 45sec lead on last year's champion Adam Yates with Portuguese rookie Joao Almeida in third

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That's another day gone by. It was quite hectic with the wind in the middle of the race but we managed to stay all together. I hope tomorrow is a similar day

TADEJ POGACAR

at 1min 12sec.

"That's another day gone by," the Team UAE leader Pogacar said. "It was quite hectic with the wind in the middle of the race but we managed to stay all together. I hope tomorrow is a similar day."

The 130-strong peloton headed into strong winds yesterday with the temperature at 25 degrees Celsius for the 165km run around Dubai.

Four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome failed to finish with the main pack and crossed the line 2min 27sec down on the day.

"I feel stronger every day," Froome said Thursday of his bid to get up to speed after coming to Dubai straight from rehab in California.

The 35-year-old insists he was not here to win but to start his preparations for the Tour de France in June.

**YOU**  
KNOW WHAT

On March 19 at the Singapore Indoor Stadium, she will be mounting a comeback in the Circle after more than a year of layoff

"My brother Jerry didn't tell me to transfer but I was driven by what I saw in him and Lito Adiwang," said Olsim.

Her brother Jerry, and One Championship rising star Adiwang were also from Tribal Torogi who made a jump to Team Lakay, considered as the country's top mixed martial arts gym.

Aside from Lito and Jerry's achievements, Jenelyn said she was inspired by how they've developed as an athlete and as an individual.

"It's my decision through my passion. I wanted to achieve a long-time goal," said Jenelyn.

Olsim said leaving Tribal Torogi was one of the hardest decisions she has ever made but the SEA Games Muay Thai silver medalist said her transfer is all about "passion and chasing what you really want."

# Cloud Drift lifts Tylos Plastic Industries Cup

Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club hosts action-packed, eight-race card with eight trophies won

● **Jockey Abdulla Faisal claims hat-trick of victories, including both Tylos Plastic Industries Cups**

● **Trainers Allan Smith, Haider Ebrahim and James Naylor each win two races**

TDT | Manama

Cloud Drift headlined the winners yesterday at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC), taking the eighth and final race to lift the Tylos Plastic Industries Cup.

The Gunners Racing four-year-old, trained by Allan Smith and saddled by jockey Abdulla Faisal, won the lion's share of the BD5,000 prize, after completing the eight-furlong event for imported horses in one minute 35.713 seconds.

REHC High Committee chairman His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa was on hand to watch Cloud Drift race to victory along with other high-ranking officials.

Shebil Aljazira was the runner-up two-and-a-quarter lengths behind for Al Mohamediya Racing and Osama Hashim while ridden by Ebrahim Nader, and Al Fajir Mukbile came third for Raed Ahmed Yousif, Yousif Alboainain and Husain Makki.

Joining Cloud Drift as a win-



HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman watches the races from the stands

ner of a Tylos Plastic Industries Cup was Duwaliya, who was competing in the day's fourth race, held over seven furlongs with a BD2,000 prize.

Owned by HH Shaikh Hamad bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa and trained by James Naylor, Duwaliya won in 1:27.103, giving jockey Abdulla Faisal another victory.

Madaar followed as the second horse for HH Shaikh Hamad bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa and James Naylor in the race, while ridden by Andrew Elliott; and Navy Blue was third for Victorious, Allan Smith and Maria Asconiga.

Meanwhile, in the day's seventh event, Litigator won the REHC Cup for MKAR Racing and Haider Ebrahim. Daniel Tudhope rode the 104-rated four-



**Each of the three winning horses ridden by Abdulla Faisal yesterday had different owners and different trainers**

year-old to first place in 2:03.649 over a 10-furlong distance to claim the largest share of the BD2,000 prize.

Al Mohamediya Racing challengers followed in second and third, respectively, with Medal Winner the runner-up, trained



HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman with the winners of the final race, during the trophy presentation

by Hussain Aldailami and saddled by Paddy Mathers, and Caledonian Crusade in third for trainer Jaber Ramadhan while saddled by John Egan.

Elsewhere in the meeting yesterday, each of the five other races offered a Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK) Cup.

In race six, held over a six-furlong straight with a BD2,500 prize, Clareyblue won for Al Afoo Racing Stable, Mohammed Saeed and Andrew Elliot.

Ecosystem triumphed in race five (seven furlongs, BD2,000) for MKAR Racing, Haider Ebrahim and hat-trick winner Abdulla Faisal.

Cutlass was the victor in race three, held over nine furlongs with a BD2,500 prize, for Al Adiyat Racing, Allan Smith and Abdulrahman Jasim; while Kaila-



Action from one of yesterday's races

ra won race two (five furlongs, BD2,000) for HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, James Naylor and Paddy Mathers. The BBK Cup in the first race

(five furlongs, BD2,000) of the day was claimed by Al Suwaity M671 for Al Mohamediya Racing, while trained by Abbas Al Mawali and saddled by Marcialis Jaures.

## Bahrain sets up Ukraine friendly

● **Proposed match venue is the Metalist Oblast Sports Complex stadium in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain is set to play an international friendly match against European giants Ukraine in May, a national team official has confirmed.

The tune-up is scheduled for May 23 and the proposed venue is the Metalist Oblast Sports Complex stadium in the city of Kharkiv.

The game will be part of both teams' preparations for their upcoming matches.

The national team official told TDT that the contest would be a great experience for Bahrain's internationals, given the high quality of the opposition.

It is currently the third friendly scheduled for the Bahrainis in the coming months. They are also set to play Syria on March 25 and then Jordan on March 30, both at home.

Bahrain's national team are currently in a week-long local training gathering, which concluded yesterday.

National team head coach Helio Sousa decided to end the local gathering one day early so



Bahrain national team players during their ongoing training



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

that the players can rejoin their respective clubs, which are gearing up for a crucial period in the national football season.

The training was the first time they had come together in 2021.

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

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

## Manama advance to BBA Cup final

● **Muharrag-Al Najma semi-final postponed after three Najma players test positive for COVID-19**

TDT | Manama

Manama punched their tickets to the final of the 2020/2021 Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) Cup last night following a 83-72 victory over Bahrain Club.

The final four contest was played at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

Manama now face the winner of the other semi-final between Muharrag and Al Najma, which was also supposed to be played yesterday but was postponed by the BBA due to COVID-19 concerns.

The BBA announced that three Najma players had tested positive for the coronavirus—a situation that warrants a postponement according to BBA protocols.

The revised date of the game has yet to be decided. The BBA Cup final, which was originally slated for Monday, will likely also be moved to a new date.

In last night's contest, both teams were evenly matched for much of the first half, with Manama taking a slim 17-16 lead at



Manama's Ali Hussain goes for a lay-up

the end of the first quarter and extending it to a 41-37 advantage at the break.

Bahrain Club were then able to go ahead in the third before Manama closed the period strong. They stayed in front at 62-58 heading into the final canto.

The victors built a double-digit lead in the fourth but Bahrain Club continued to battle until the final buzzer. They got to within five points, but

came no closer, as Manama did well to close things out.

Manama were paced in their win by young stars Ali Hussain, Sadeq Shukrallah, Ahmed Najaf and Ammar Mohammed. They were playing with a professional.

Bahrain Club were led by Bosnian-Serbian import Dragan Tubak, and Bahraini talents Abbas Jawadi, Ebrahim Al Basri, and Khalid Ali, to name a few.