

Tokyo organisers eye July 2021 for delayed Olympics

Tokyo Olympics organisers are eyeing next July as a start date for the postponed Games, Japanese media reported Sunday, following the historic decision to delay the event due to the coronavirus. **P12**

OP-ED 6 **Coping with the coronavirus pandemic for people with anxiety disorders**

THE DAILY **tribune**

US could take equity shares in coronavirus-hit airlines: officials **5 BUSINESS**

WORLD 8 **Saudi expands partial lockdown**

LIC (INTERNATIONAL) IN BAHRAIN FOR 30 YEARS AT YOUR SERVICE
 39936618
 bah.lic@licinternational.com
 www.licinternational.com
 Download the LIC app on Google Play & App Store

Interior Minister hails public cooperation in coronavirus fight

TDT | Manama

Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa expressed yesterday his pride and gratitude for the cooperation of citizens and residents for following measures of safety and general order.

He highlighted that their commitment represents their awareness of the importance of those steps to combat coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Interior Minister said this while chairing the weekly meeting of the ministry, which was held online through video-conferencing technology.



General Shaikh Rashid

He was briefed on the work progress of all security sectors and efforts to meet requirements and tackle delays that could affect performance.

He expressed appreciation to the Interior Ministry's directorates in dealing with the current situations and the protection of the security and safety of all.

The Interior Minister called for the continuation to perform duties as part of the national campaign against COVID-19.



02 **HH Shaikh Khalid hails decision to suspend Olympics to 2021**

03 **Striving to improve healthcare**

04 **UAE opens drive-through coronavirus testing site**

210 fils (includes VAT)



Rapid repatriation plan

HRH the Prime Minister orders quick action to fly home Bahraini students abroad

● **Government will not rest until all citizens abroad are evacuated and safely brought back to the Kingdom**

● **Control of prices and increase of stockpiles of foodstuffs and commodities are essential to stabilise market**

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, yesterday issued directives to enumerate Bahraini students who are studying abroad at their expenses or at the expense of the state ahead of their repatriation.

HRH the Prime Minister instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education to coordinate with each other and develop a rapid plan to evacuate Bahraini students stranded abroad as soon as possible



HRH the Premier

and to ensure their safe return home, while avoiding any dangers caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

HRH the Premier stressed that the government will never accept that its citizens face difficult circumstances or dangers, and is keen on the comfort and

- The total number of COVID-19 cases recovered has reached 272 as of last night, according to the Ministry of Health website.
- Another 224 active cases remain in the Kingdom, all but one of which are stable.
- The total number of tested individuals has reached 31,895.

More citizens flown home



The Ministry of Health announced yesterday the arrival of citizens stranded in Doha from Iran. Their return on a chartered plane was part of Bahrain's evacuation plans. Returnees were subjected to vigorous containment protocols upon arrival, in line with existing measures in place for individuals arriving from countries affected by COVID-19. All passengers were required to test for the virus. The results determined whether they require treatment or quarantine, in accordance with recommendations outlined by the World Health Organisation.

safety of the Bahrainis wherever they are. He emphasised that the government will not rest until the evacuation of all citizens abroad and that their safe return home is complete.

On the other hand, HRH the Prime Minister gave instructions to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism to intensify inspection campaigns to control prices, combat monopolistic practices and firmly address attempts to exploit citizens by manipulating prices, especially those of major commodities, and taking advantage of the preventive and precautionary measures adopted by the government to contain the spread of COVID-19.

In the same context, HRH the Premier gave directives to increase strategic stockpiles of food to ensure the sufficiency of foodstuffs and commodities, as well as the stability of the market.

This is also in line with the implementation of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's directives to take all preventive and precautionary measures to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Officials praise Kingdom's efforts to repatriate its people

TDT | Manama

Top officials yesterday lauded the Kingdom's tireless efforts to bring home Bahraini citizens stranded overseas due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

A meeting was held yesterday between a number of ministers and the Representatives Council's Bureau, chaired by Speaker Fawzia bint Abdulla Zainal.

The meeting discussed the national plan to repatriate citizens still abroad.

Also in attendance were Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani and Health Minister Faeqa bint Saeed Al Saleh, among others.

Speaker Zainal lauded the efforts of the government, led by HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, the endeavours of HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, and those of all members of Team Bahrain.

She affirmed the solidarity and cohesion of the Bahraini people with the leadership of HM King Hamad, and stressed the ability of Bahrain to overcome all current challenges and circumstances. She noted that the return of Bahrainis abroad is a national priority for both the legislative and executive branches.

Foreign Minister Dr. Al Zayani said that the executive and legislative branches are working together for the best interests of the nation and its

citizens, especially amid the current extraordinary circumstances the entire world is facing after the outbreak of COVID-19.

The Foreign Minister asserted that Bahrain will continue the implementation of its plan to evacuate Bahraini citizens wishing to return home, especially those in Iran, according to scheduled direct flights to the Kingdom. Rules and necessary precautionary measures will be followed to protect the health and safety of travellers, plane crew members and the employees of airports and work teams.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Al Saleh stressed that her ministry and its medical teams are in the frontline of efforts to ensure the safety and health of all citizens and residents, through the implementation of the world-standard precautionary and preventive measures.

She cited the increase of medical competencies and raising the capacity of the treatment and quarantine centres, noting that the ministry has benefited from the efforts of volunteers and experts in various medical fields, which, she said, reflects the awareness and patriotic sense of Bahrainis.

She also affirmed that the Health Ministry has maintained constant contacts with the World Health Organisation on its recommendations on ways to curb the spread of COVID-19.

See Page 2 for related report

TOGETHER AGAINST COVID-19

Disinfection operations, precautionary measures conducted across Kingdom

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Health announced last night that it has started conducting field visits across the Kingdom, including in Manama, Bab Al Bahrain, Durrat Al Bahrain and areas alongside the Budaiya highway, to collect random medical samples using mobile screening units.

This is in line with ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The ministry highlighted that a specialised medical team, along with a group of volunteers participating in the Kingdom's Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus, have organised the drive to obtain random medical samples from the elderly, individuals who are susceptible to COVID-19, owners of hypermarkets, supermarkets, cold stores, bakeries and pharmacies, in order to safeguard the community.



Officials conduct health checks on residents



A team carries out disinfection operations

The Ministry added that additional precautionary measures will be determined for each of the Kingdom's areas, based on data and indicators received.

The Ministry of Health continues to cooperate with the Ministry of Interior, through the General Directorate of Civil Defence, to ensure the disinfection and sterilization of various areas. The Ministry noted that it further continues to cooperate with community police to ensure public social distancing guidelines are maintained.

HH Shaikh Khalid hails decision to suspend Olympics to 2021

TDT | Manama

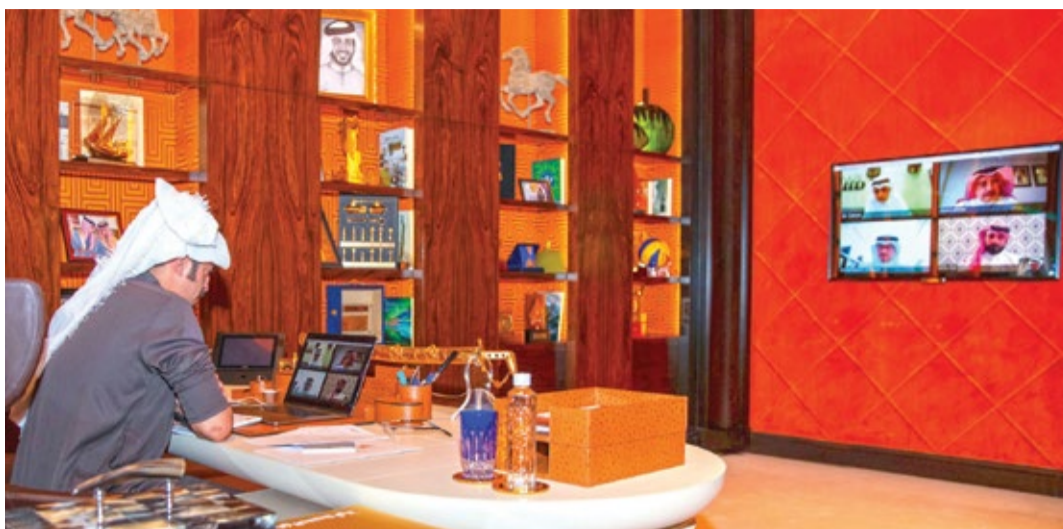
Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS) deputy chairman and Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) president HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa lauded the decision of the International Olympic Committee to adjourn the Olympic Games until the summer of 2021.

HH Shaikh Khalid said this as he chaired a meeting with officials in the sports and youth sector via video call.

HH Shaikh Khalid implemented the directives of His Majesty the King's Representative for Charity Works and

Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and SCYS chairman HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa to apply the precautionary measures for coronavirus (COVID-19) in line with the Coordinating Committee's recommendations.

The meeting was attended by leading figures in youth and sports, including SCYS secretary general Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs Ayman Tawfiq Almoayyed, SCYS assistant secretary-general Dr. Abdulrahman Sadiq Askar, BOC secretary general Mohammed Al Nusuf and SCYS advisor to the



Shaikh Khalid during the video conference

president Mohammed Hamad Al Ajmy.

HH Shaikh Khalid hailed the efforts being exerted by HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier to tackle COVID-19.

He also expressed his utmost thanks and appreciation to the officials in the video call for their efforts in implementing the precautionary measures to combat the pandemic.

HH Shaikh Khalid praised the response of Bahrain's sports men and women in their execution of the precautionary measures.

Unacceptable!

Speaker, Foreign Affairs Minister deplore Qatar's irresponsible conduct, blatant interference

● Council of Representatives Speaker rejects, condemns "irresponsible" measures taken against Bahraini travellers, as well as fallacies in statement from Qatar's communications office

● Foreign Affairs Minister disapproves of Qatari authorities transporting Bahrainis from Iran without taking the necessary preventive measures to ensure their safety, as well as that of the crew and other passengers



Officials at the meeting

the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Speaker of the Council of Representatives Fawzia bint Abdulla Zainal and Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani were among those who expressed their disapproval of actions taken by the relevant authorities in Doha.

Their stances were made during a meeting between a number of ministers and the Representatives Council's Bureau, chaired by

Speaker Zainal. The joint meeting further discussed the national plan to bring home Bahraini citizens abroad.

Speaker Zainal expressed the Representative Council's rejection and denunciation of Qatar's "irresponsible" measures towards Bahraini travellers, as well as the fallacies included in the statement of their Government Communications Office.

Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Al Zayani expressed

the Kingdom's disapproval of Qatar's transporting Bahraini citizens from Iran without any pre-coordination with authorities in Bahrain.

He said this was also done without taking the necessary preventive measures to ensure their safety, as well as that of the crew and other passengers, as recommended by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The Foreign Affairs Minister indicated that authorities in the Kingdom are constantly in

contact with relevant parties to facilitate the return of Bahraini citizens who are still in Mashhad, through coordinated direct flights to Bahrain, after receiving the permission of the Civil Aviation authorities. The necessary precautionary measures will be taken, as adopted by the Kingdom to deal with COVID-19, to protect the health and safety of the citizens, residents and passengers.

The minister expressed the

Foreign Affairs Ministry's condemnation of the statement issued by the Government Communications Office in Qatar, and the fallacies included therein, as they reflect hidden intentions.

Minister Al Zayani stressed that the Qatari conduct represents a blatant interference in the Kingdom's domestic affairs, and a rejected stance aimed at causing harm to Bahrain and undermining the solid national unity shown amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

Qatar must adhere to GCC Health Ministers' decisions, says Information Minister

TDT | Manama

Information Minister Ali bin Mohammed Al Romaihi asserted last night that GCC Health Ministers underscored in their meeting the existence of tough preventative measures concerning movement between the GCC countries, which Qatar did not adhere to.

In a brief statement on the "A Conscious Society" programme broadcast by Bahrain TV, the Information Minister stressed that taking advantage of the exceptional circumstances for political ends is no stranger to the Qatari mass media.

He added that bringing a group of people from Iran to Qatar and, then, the Sultanate of Oman without the knowledge of any competent authority in Bahrain raises many question marks.

The Information Minister pointed out that the discontent of many Qatari nation-



Minister Al Romaihi

als in many countries in the world, with not allowing them to return to Qatar, is evidence that the current circumstance requires many preventative measures and medical preparations that are being made by the Kingdom of Bahrain in a well-studied way, and in cooperation with the relevant parties.

The Information Minister affirmed that it is unacceptable from a humanitarian perspective to exploit this issue by the Qatari mass media.

Foreign Minister holds call with Omani counterpart

TDT | Manama

Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani held a phone call with Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah.

They discussed cooperation between both countries in fac-



Minister Al Zayani Abdullah

ing the coronavirus pandemic, which poses a challenge to the

region and the whole world.

The Foreign Affairs Minister expressed the Kingdom's appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for its cooperation in facilitating the return of Bahraini nationals arriving from Iran.

He affirmed that this noble gesture reflects the strength of brotherly relations between the two countries.

Shura Council calls for national unity to overcome COVID-19

TDT | Manama

The Shura Council stressed yesterday the importance of cooperation of all citizens and residents during these exceptional circumstances, through their commitment to the measures taken by the government to limit the spread

of COVID-19.

It affirmed that the current critical period requires more national unity, cohesion and solidarity in order to overcome the situation.

The Shura Council reiterated its full support for all the national efforts and measures to address COVID-19.

It expressed confidence in

the ability of the Kingdom, under His Majesty the King's leadership, and the follow-up of HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to overcome this period safely.

Joint committee formed to follow up on work-from-home directives

Civil Service Bureau, Supreme Council for Women to follow up implementation of HM the King's order for public sector working mothers

TDT | Manama

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) and the Supreme Council for Women (SCW) yesterday formed a joint committee to follow up on the implementation of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's directives on allowing mothers affiliated with ministries,

entities and government departments to work from home.

The joint committee shall also ensure the effective implementation of the resolutions of the Government Executive Committee, chaired by HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, aiming

mainly to achieve maximum levels of family stability amid the current circumstances the Kingdom is going through, in line with the set of precautionary measures in force to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The panel has held three consecutive meetings to support government departments' implementation of the work-

from-home system for working mothers.

They addressed the challenges that may face the application of the system, in accordance with the top interests of work institutions, and put forward suitable mechanisms to ensure its ideal application, according to the needs of various work sectors and in a way that would support the kingdom's efforts to

curb the COVID-19 spread.

The joint committee said that it will continue following up on the implementation of the work-from-home system for working mothers while relying on the best administrative practices to ensure that the policy is implemented to the fullest, and also make the necessary recommendations whenever need arises.

Striving to improve healthcare

A total of 609 complaints were lodged against public hospitals, health centres in 2019

TDI | Manama

The Ministry of Health received a total of 609 complaints against public hospitals and health centres in 2019, the Tribune has learnt. Health Minister Faega bint Saeed Al Saleh recently confirmed this in her reply to a par-

332 is the number of complaints submitted through Tawasul, while 123 were personally lodged at the ministry's Patients' Complaints Office and 146 through the complaints and suggestion boxes at health centres

liamentary query submitted by MP Sawsan Kamal, who asked her about the number of complaints received from patients against the medical staff in hospitals and health centres operating under the Ministry's umbrella and the mechanism for receiving complaints.

The Minister explained that 332 out of the received complaints were submitted through the National Suggestions and Complaints System, Tawasul, while 123 were personally lodged at the Patients' Complaints Office in the ministry. A further 146 were made through the complaints and suggestion boxes installed at health centres.

"The Patients' Complaints Office at Salmaniya Medical



MP Kamal



Minister Al Saleh

Complex (SMC) receives the complaint and addresses the concerned authority to resolve it in an optimal way and as quickly as possible," said Minister Al Saleh in her reply. "The Office also implements solutions to deal with patients'

complaints in a timely manner. It receives the complaint from the patients and their families so that appropriate solutions are found for them at the same time without delay, in line with the directives of the Prime Minister and the ministry's vision

The ministry is concerned with all complaints that it receives from all channels, including complaints related to the quality of services and the behaviour of workers.

MINISTER OF HEALTH FAEQA BINT SAEED AL SALEH

to provide the best experiences and patients' rights."

She also noted that the ministry constantly strives to ensure patients' rights at every stage of their treatment and at every step of the services provided to them, their families

and their companions.

The Health Minister added that, in the event that the complaint is not resolved or if there is a suspicion of negligence or a medical error, the complaint will be referred so the necessary legal procedures can be taken in accordance with the regulations of the Civil Service Bureau and the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA).

"In order to develop services and to control the behavior of its staff and the quality of its services, the ministry is concerned with all complaints that it receives from all channels, including complaints related to the quality of services and the behaviour of workers," Minister Al Saleh said.

Bahrainis' jobs are safe, says Labour Minister



The Labour Minister, right, with Al Shehabi and Al Halwaji during their meeting

TDI | Manama

Bahraini nationals' jobs are not to be affected by any developments or economic challenges, the Minister of Labour and Social Development said yesterday.

Minister Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan was speaking during a meeting with General Federation of Workers Trade Unions in Bahrain (GFWTUB) secretary-general Abdulqader Al Shehabi, in the presence of deputy secretary-general Hassan Abdulla Al Halwaji.

The minister, who is also the

Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) Board of Directors chairman, highlighted the government's adoption of initiatives aimed at providing decent work for the citizens, and that Bahrainis' jobs are not affected by any developments or economic challenges.

Minister Humaidan congratulated Al Shehabi on winning the confidence of the representatives of Bahraini trade unions and election as GFWTUB secretary-general. He noted that he is looking forward to enhancing cooperation between the Labour Ministry and GFWTUB, in order

to increase labour gains during the prosperous era of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, who laid the rules for trade union work, and its first supporter in the kingdom.

The Labour Minister underlined the constant keenness of the government, led by HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, and supported by HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier, to support and facilitate the work of trade unions, being a major part in the three production

parties, and an important engine in enhancing the kingdom's development and progress.

Al Shehabi praised the existing cooperation between the Labour Ministry, GFWTUB and all trade unions. He noted that GFWTUB is keen to strengthen joint work among the three production parties and enhance bridges of communication, trust and constructive dialogue among them to serve national interests, and achieve balance and ensure the labour market's stability and development, which will contribute to supporting the economic development in Bahrain.

Bahrain condemns Houthi militia attack

The ministry stressed Bahrain's solidarity with Saudi Arabia, affirming its support to all measures taken to preserve the safety and security of all citizens and residents within its territory.

TDI | Manama

Bahrain has strongly condemned the firing of ballistic missiles by the Iran-backed Houthi militias against Riyadh and Jazan in Saudi Arabia.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commended the vigilance of the Royal Saudi Air Force in intercepting and destroying the missiles and denounced the terrorist act that reflects the insistence of Houthi mili-

tias to undermine the security of Saudi Arabia and the region.

The ministry stressed Bahrain's solidarity with Saudi Arabia, affirming its support to all measures taken to preserve the safety and security of all citizens and residents within its territory.

The Royal Saudi Air Defense intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles launched by the Houthi militia on Saturday.

No casualties, up until the issuance of the information by the Saudi Press Agency, were recorded.

The interception of the missiles resulted in debris scattering on some residential areas in Riyadh and Jazan.

This attack does not target the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its nationals and expatriates only, but targets international unity and solidarity, especially under such difficult and bitter conditions in which the world unites in combatting the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, stated the SPA.

Pedestrian killed

TDI | Manama

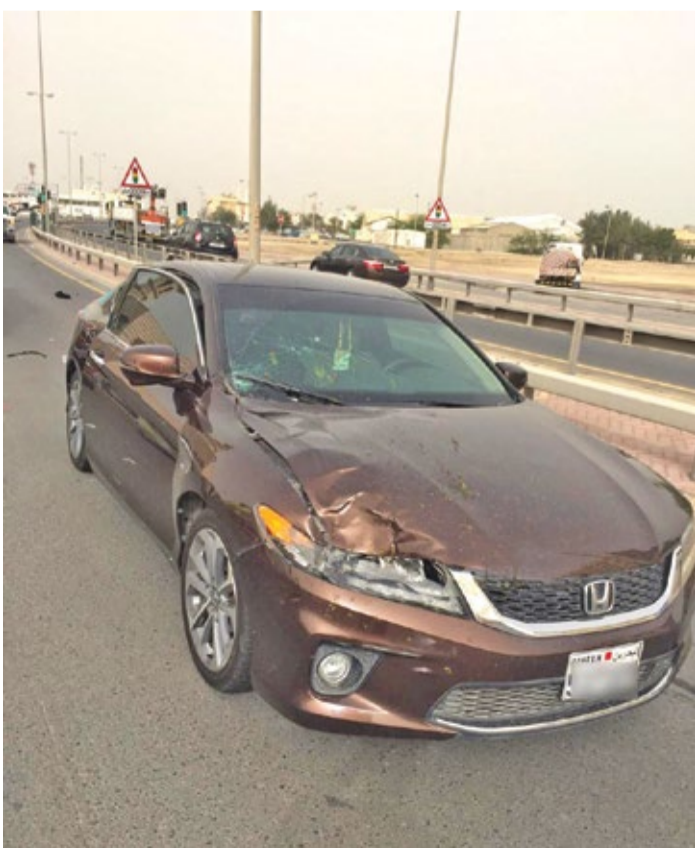
A 34-year-old Asian woman was killed yesterday after she was hit by a car while crossing Shaikh Salman road.

The victim was later identified as Indian national Naga Durga Saidu, who was employed as a cleaner in a local private company. She hailed from the state of Andhra Pradesh.

The Ministry of Interior said in a social media post that the accident happened near Bilad Al Qadeem on the lanes headed towards Manama.

Relevant procedures are being taken, the ministry added.

No other details were available.



The car that hit the pedestrian at the location of the incident

Additional online teaching tools launched



Minister Al Nuaimi, standing second from right, with other officials at the launch

TDI | Manama

The Ministry of Education launched yesterday an additional online service that allows teachers to reach out online to thousands of students at the same time, through the Microsoft Teams and Office 365 programmes.

The subject teacher presents the lessons and specialised sup-

porting teachers answer questions by the students.

"This additional service enriches and enhances the ones that have been activated during the past weeks through the ministry's portal, video lessons via the TV channel, and 14 channels on YouTube," Education Minister Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi said as he attended the launch.

"The ministry is committed to

providing the best online opportunities for students and diversifying the means of learning, so that they can continue studying at home and interact with their teachers."

The minister praised the efforts of the teachers, specialists, school administrators and all those involved in easing and maximising remote learning for all Bahrain students.

business

Ithmaar Bank revises branch, office timings

● All Ithmaar branches are operating from 8 to 1 pm

● Head office opens from 8:30 to 2:30 pm only

● All 42 ATMs continue to operate

TDT | Manama

Ithmaar Bank, a Bahrain-based Islamic retail bank, yesterday said it revised branch and office timings and has taken additional precautionary measures to help contain the Coronavirus (COVID-19) virus.

Starting 24 March 2020, all Ithmaar branches are operating from 8 to 1 pm and its head office from 8:30 to 2:30 pm only.

Besides, the bank closed its Galali and Salmabad branches on Saturday, which will continue like that until further notice.

Earlier last week, Ithmaar Bank closed Budaiya and Manama Souq branches.

All 42 ATMs continue to operate.

As part of its public awareness campaign, the Bank is urging customers to bank online as almost all Ithmaar Bank transactions can be completed

“These are challenging times for all of us. However, if we all do our part, we can collectively overcome even the greatest of challenges

AHMED ABDUL RAHIM

ITHMAAR BANK CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



online.

The bank, already following MOH recommended sanitation protocols, also started limiting the number of customers present in a branch at any given time and providing appropriate waiting arrangements to ensure customers are seated at least a meter from one another.

“These are challenging times for all of us,” said Ithmaar Bank Chief Executive Officer, Ahmed Abdul Rahim. “However, if we all do our part, we can collectively overcome even the greatest of challenges,” he said.

“This is a responsibility we have always taken very seriously, and we remain as committed as ever to playing a real and meaningful role in the community,” added Abdul Rahim assuring that it is closely fol-

lowing all relevant directives, from both the MOH and the CBB.

Ithmaar Bank also initiated its own public awareness campaign, including sending out SMS messages to customers and reposting MOH public awareness messages on the bank’s social media platforms.

In 2019, Ithmaar Bank launched a customer-centric chat service on the WhatsApp Business social media platform to help further improve its customers’ banking experience.

Customers can message Ithmaar Bank Call Centre on 13303030 to request information through WhatsApp about products and services, as well as make general inquiries like Thimaar draw dates and winners list, as well as ongoing promotions and campaigns.

Saudi Arabia assures India of uninterrupted LPG supply: Dharmendra Pradhan



Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih addresses the media flanked by India’s Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan (L) and Saudi Aramco Chief Executive Officer Amin Nasser (R) during International Energy Forum (IEF)

Reuters | Dubai

India’s oil minister said yesterday that he had discussed global oil market developments with Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman and Aramco’s Chief Executive Amin Nasser as well as uninterrupted LPG supplies to India.

“Prince Abdulaziz assured (me) of LPG supplies in the coming days to support our domestic requirement,” Dharmendra Pradhan posted on his Twitter account.

On Friday, two Indian refiners declared force majeure on crude purchases from the Middle East after fuel demand plummeted due to a nationwide lockdown to stem the spread of coronavirus and the companies’ tanks are full, sources said.

RAMEZ Group ensures clients and employees’ safety against Coronavirus

TDT | Manama

RAMEZ Group, a retail network in the GCC and Asia, said it is implementing precautionary measures in all its branches to ensure the safety of shoppers and employees to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19) spread.

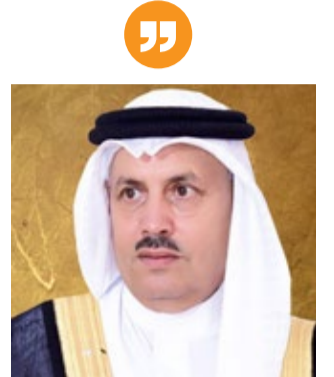
To ensure safety and cleanliness, RAMEZ Group said it has formed special committees to monitor the daily safety and cleanliness measures, in addition to replacing the employees’ work fingerprint with an eye scanner system.

Besides, RAMEZ Group said it has distributed more than 40,000 free respirators and is disinfecting all shopping carts and surfaces all times, and wrapping shopping carts grips with plastic as a new procedure.

The group said it has also installed dedicated shopping hour for the elderly and vulnerable, from 8:00 am till 9:00 am, giving them the priority to do their shopping easily and safely.

Other measures taken include dispersing awareness posters in offices and branches, imposing a 1-metre-distance procedure between customers in a queue close from cashier desks.

Commenting, RAMEZ Group Chairman Ramez Al Awadi said, “Our main target now is to help the national efforts to mitigate coronavirus spread and flattening the curve, we have taken all the appropri-



Our main target now is to help the national efforts to mitigate coronavirus spread and flattening the curve, we have taken all the appropriate precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our dear customers and employees, and we assure all consumers that food of all kinds and other daily needs are available in all our branches

RAMEZ AL AWADI
RAMEZ GROUP CHAIRMAN

ate precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our dear customers and employees, and we assure all consumers that food of all kinds and other daily needs are available in all our branches, and we are always keen to provide the best safe and clean shopping experience for all.”

Most major Gulf stocks gain on coronavirus measures

● Saudi flight and workplace suspensions extended indefinitely

● Qatar records first coronavirus death

● Qatar stock market retreats

● Egypt limits daily withdrawals, deposits

Reuters

Most major Gulf bourses rose yesterday as the states took more stringent measures to contain the coronavirus, though Qatar’s index fell after the nation’s first death from the virus.

In Abu Dhabi, the index advanced 2.9 per cent, led by a 6.2pc gain for First Abu Dhabi Bank and a 3.2pc gain by telecoms company Etisalat.

The Dubai index added 1.3pc, with blue-chip developer Emaar Properties jumping by 5.7pc and



Traders watching stock movements (Courtesy of Gulf Business)

Dubai Investments up 3.7pc.

The United Arab Emirates’ attorney-General, Hamad Saif Al Shamsi, issued a statement detailing coronavirus-related fines, including 50,000 dirhams (\$13,613) for non-compliance with home quarantine orders and 3,000 dirhams for individuals violating curfew.

The UAE, the region’s tourism and business hub, has also halted passenger flights at its main airports, except for evacuation trips.

Last week the UAE cabinet approved an additional 16 billion dirhams (\$4.36 billion) for

a total stimulus package of 126 billion dirhams to counter the coronavirus outbreak.

Saudi Arabia’s benchmark index closed 0.8pc up, extending gains from the previous session. Al Rajhi Bank rose 1.9pc while Jabal Omar Development advanced by 4.8pc.

On Sunday the kingdom said it was extending indefinitely the suspension of international passenger flights and workplace attendance in both the public and private sectors as part of its efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

In Qatar, however, the index

lost 0.6pc. Most stocks closed lower, including a 1.4pc decline for Industries Qatar.

The Gulf state on Saturday recorded its first death from the coronavirus and 28 more cases to take its total to 590 infections, the health ministry said.

Outside the Gulf, Egypt’s blue-chip index dropped 1.5pc. Commercial International Bank and Egypt Kuwait Holding both retreated by 2.2pc.

Egyptian banks have been instructed to apply temporary limits on daily withdrawals and deposits in a move seemingly designed to control inflation and hoarding as concern grows over the spread of the coronavirus.

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ 0.8pc to 6,377 pts
ABU DHABI	▲ 2.9pc to 3,879 pts
DUBAI	▲ 1.3pc to 1,832 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.6pc to 8,431 pts
EGYPT	▼ 1.5pc to 9,760 pts
BAHRAIN	▼ 1.9pc to 1,362 pts
OMAN	▼ 1.7pc to 3,480 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 3.4pc to 5,102 pts

UAE opens drive-through coronavirus testing site



An Emirati man wearing a protective face-mask walks past graffiti in Dubai

Dubai

The United Arab Emirates said it has launched a drive-through coronavirus testing facility as part of the Gulf state’s efforts to fight the disease.

The facility, inaugurated by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, will provide screenings within five minutes, using state-of-the-art equipment and a medical team, the Abu Dhabi government’s media office said.

“A new drive-through testing facility for COVID-19 has launched ... to offer safe testing procedures,” the office said Saturday on Twitter.

According to official state news agency WAM, the facility can serve 600 people a day, with priority given to senior citizens, pregnant women and those with chronic illnesses.

The media office said people should book an appointment in advance.

Tests “for the wider community for reassurance only” would cost 370 dirhams (\$100), according to government advice on Twitter.

The UAE, which on Sunday had 570 officially declared COVID-19 cases, including three deaths, has imposed restrictions on night movements and taken steps to sanitise outdoor areas and public transport.

US could take equity shares in coronavirus-hit airlines: officials

● Mnuchin said any such transactions would take the form of warrants

● The massive financial rescue plan passed by the US Congress designates \$50 billion for the airline industry

AFP | Washington

The US government could take equity shares in airlines and other troubled but vital American corporations as it moves to stabilize an economy amid the new coronavirus pandemic, top US officials said yesterday.

White House economics adviser Larry Kudlow said the government should get a stake in companies that receive direct cash grants from the federal government.

"I think in return for direct cash grants, which is what the airlines have asked for, I see no reason why the American taxpayer shouldn't get a piece," he said on "Fox News Sunday."

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, speaking on CBS's "Face the Nation" talk show, also said the government could take equity positions in return for infusions of taxpayer money.

"As the president said, we'll



US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin

look at each one of these situations," he said.

"Some of them are very good companies that just need liquidity and will get loans. Some of these companies may need more significant help and we may be taking warrants or equity as well as that."

"The president wants to make sure the American taxpayers are compensated. This is not a bailout."

Mnuchin said any such transactions would take the form of warrants, a type of security that gives its holder the right to buy or sell an asset at a certain price up to a certain date determined when it is emitted. Warrants can thus be converted into shares.

The massive financial rescue plan passed by the US Congress designates \$50 billion for the airline industry.

Half that sum would take the form of loan guarantees, and the rest direct cash payments.

Invoking their importance to the economy and the social risks if they fail, Boeing and the US airlines have demanded an unprecedented government bailout.

Govts, central banks must boost efforts to cope with crisis - BIS chief

Reuters | London

Governments and central banks need to step up efforts urgently to support their economies in the face of the coronavirus crisis, the head of the Bank for International Settlements said yesterday.

General Manager Agustín Carstens, who heads the BIS - an umbrella group for the world's central banks - wrote an opinion piece yesterday saying "urgent" solutions beyond those used during the 2008 financial crisis were needed.

Rules brought in after the 2008 crash were designed to prevent banks overextending themselves, but the worry now is that they are not stepping in and lending when the capital markets have slammed shut for many firms.

"To give viable businesses a lifeline to tide them over the economic sudden stop wrought



Bank of Mexico Governor Agustín Carstens gestures during the delivery quarterly report from the Bank of Mexico in Mexico City, Mexico

by Covid-19, a solution is needed to complete the last mile from potential lenders to those firms at the edge of the precipice," Carstens said.

Major central banks have rushed to pour trillions of dollars worth of emergency funding into the global banking system but that money needed to reach those who need it, Carstens said.

A first step towards bridging what he called "the last mile" would be for banks to use their capital buffers while "a global freeze on bank dividends and share buybacks," was also needed. A second step he recommended would be government-guaranteed loans by banks to small and medium firms, equal to the amount of taxes each paid last year, although

it should only go to those that were profitable last year to limit scope for corruption.

These "tax deferral loans" could be securitised and re-financed by the central bank, with any losses to be borne by governments.

Finally he said, these principles must "go global", building on central bank dollar swap lines to channel liquidity toward preventing global supply chains from unravelling.

Government-guaranteed loans by banks to finance receivables, such as invoices for exports, could also be securitised and financed by a central bank facility.

"For central bank liquidity to reach the far corners of the financial system, it must directly target individuals and businesses that need it most. Otherwise, central bank actions may be just pushing on a string," Carstens said.

Outrage in Germany as Adidas, H&M stop rent payments

Frankfurt am Main

Global retailers including Adidas and H&M sparked outrage in Germany yesterday after announcing they planned to stop paying rent on stores that have been forced to close over the coronavirus outbreak.

Finance Minister Olaf Scholz urged leading companies to refrain from taking rash action that could hurt property owners.

"It's irritating when large companies simply announce a halt on paying rent," Scholz told the Bild daily, urging retailers to reach out to landlords to find solutions.

"Now is the time to work together," he said.

The retailers' move comes after the German government unveiled a major rescue package to protect companies and jobs from the economic impact of the pandemic.

It includes a provision that temporarily shields tenants from being kicked out of their homes or business properties if they experience financial hardship over the coronavirus measures.

But Justice Minister Christine Lambrecht warned company bosses not to take advantage. "It is indecent and unacceptable if financially strong firms now just stop paying their rents," she said in Berlin on Saturday.

German sportswear maker Adidas, which made a net profit of nearly two billion euros (\$2.2 billion) in 2019, has been hard hit by a slump in Chi-



nese sales and massive store closures.

The Bavarian company, one of Germany's best-known brands, told DPA news agency that it was "temporarily suspending rental payments, just like many other companies".

German Transport Minister Andreas Scheuer told Bild he was "disappointed by Adidas", pointing out that many small, private landlords would be left out of pocket.

Swedish clothing giant H&M said it too would not be paying rent on its roughly 460 closed stores in Germany, telling DPA that it had informed landlords and hoped to find "a mutually acceptable solution" soon.

German shoe store chain Deichmann intends to suspend rent and service charges from April for the duration of the government-ordered closures.

A spokesman for the Esen-based company told DPA that it expected those with political responsibility "to compensate for the lost rental income of the affected parties".

Other German media outlets reported that electronics retailers Saturn and MediaMarkt as well as Adidas rival Puma also planned to halt their rent payments for now.

AMERICAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY BAHRAIN BRANCH

Statement of financial position At 31 December 2019

	2019 BD	2018 BD
ASSETS		
Property and equipment	6,307	7,882
Right-of-use asset	2,848	-
Loans to policyholders	1,127,532	1,130,097
Investment securities:		
Available-for-sale	40,709,326	37,043,851
At fair value through profit or loss	26,443,130	25,668,807
Reinsurance contract assets	221,576	371,328
Premium debtors and other receivables	781,335	973,963
Cash and bank balances	1,286,964	5,382,514
Total assets	70,579,018	70,578,442
HEAD OFFICE EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Head Office equity		
Head Office account	8,911,552	7,127,027
Available-for-sale fair value reserve	1,328,695	(527,608)
Total Head Office equity	10,240,247	6,599,419
LIABILITIES		
Provision for employees' end of service indemnity	10,684	29,870
Insurance contract liabilities	55,151,966	60,659,021
Due to policyholders	3,015,940	978,211
Accounts payable	2,157,298	2,311,919
Lease liability	2,883	-
Total liabilities	60,338,771	63,979,021
Total Head Office equity and liabilities	70,579,018	70,578,442

Country Manager
Fadi Abou Ghali

About MetLife

MetLife, Inc. (NYSE: MET), through its subsidiaries and affiliates ("MetLife"), is one of the world's leading financial services companies, providing insurance, annuities, employee benefits and asset management to help its individual and institutional customers navigate their changing world. Founded in 1868, MetLife has operations in more than 40 countries and holds leading market positions in the United States, Japan, Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

For more information, visit www.metlife.com.

About MetLife in the Gulf

MetLife is a pioneer of life insurance with a presence of nearly 65 years in the Gulf. Through its branches, MetLife offers life, accident and health insurance along with retirement and savings products to individuals and corporations.

For more information, visit www.metlife-gulf.com.

Statement of income For the year ended 31 December 2019

	2019 BD	2018 BD
Income		
Gross insurance premium	12,707,323	12,913,571
Insurance premium ceded to reinsurers	(2,349,779)	(2,296,962)
Net insurance premium	10,357,544	10,616,609
Interest and other investment income	1,736,912	1,750,257
Commission income	288,672	286,723
Allowance for doubtful debts no longer required		
written back	48,254	36,150
Net income	12,431,382	12,689,739
Expenses		
Insurance claims and loss adjustment expenses	(3,392,536)	(3,540,919)
Insurance claims and loss adjustment expenses recovered from reinsurers	1,227,659	1,438,099
Insurance benefits	(5,668,834)	(5,433,839)
Expenses for the acquisition of insurance and investment contracts	(437,154)	(716,101)
Other operating expenses	(1,077,470)	(1,126,051)
Profit for the year	3,083,047	3,310,928

Statement of comprehensive income For the year ended 31 December 2019

	2019 BD	2018 BD
Profit for the year	3,083,047	3,310,928
Other comprehensive income/(loss):		
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:		
Net changes in the fair value of available-for-sale investment securities	1,856,301	(1,278,731)
Total other comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	1,856,301	(1,278,731)
Total comprehensive income for the year	4,939,348	2,032,197

Auditors
Deloitte & Touche (M.E.)

American Life Insurance Company

P.O.Box 20281, Bldg 452A, Road No. 1010, Block 410, Sanabis, Kingdom of Bahrain
Tel: +973 17 556608 - Fax: +973 17 311229

A lesson in leaders

CORNELIA MEYER

The G20 comprises the world's most powerful economies — 19 countries and the European Union. It was founded in 1999, when it became obvious that the leading industrial nations of the G8 needed to be supplemented by the growing emerging economies, particularly by rising Asia.

G20 territories account for 90 percent of the world's GDP and 66 percent of its population. The group has only three majority Muslim members — Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom is the only Arab member, and has assumed the group's rotating presidency this year for the first time.

The G20 was the vital framework coordinating a global response to the 2008-09 financial crisis. The new global crisis is the coronavirus and the disease it causes, COVID-19.

As former US Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke has pointed out, a natural disaster such as an earthquake is limited in terms of

geography and time frame, which allows other parts of the world to come to the rescue. COVID-19, however, affects the whole world simultaneously, with no predictable timeframe. In other words, this is a global crisis necessitating global solutions. The G20 is one of the most global economic frameworks, and therefore ideally placed to co-ordinate efforts to address economic hardship inflicted by the pandemic.

Last week it proved its leadership, with a heads of government summit via video conference, hosted by King Salman of Saudi Arabia. He wasted no time driving home to global leaders that the world is seeking leadership, help and compassion from the G20: "This human crisis requires a global response. The world counts on us to come together and cooperate in order to face this challenge. Despite the importance of any country's individual responses, it is our duty to strengthen cooperation and coordination in all aspects of the adopted economic policies."

It was the group's "responsibility to extend a helping hand to de-



Saudi Arabia's King Salman chairs a video conference of world leaders from the Group of 20 and other international bodies and organizations, from his Arabia, March 26, 2020.

Coping with the coronavirus pandemic for people

JOHN SHARP

These days, we all have to accept the anxiety inherent in living in the time of the coronavirus pandemic and COVID-19. If there was a way to dispel all anxious feelings, I'd tell you, but there isn't. The one exception might be someone who could summon such a degree of denial that they carry on as if everything was normal. And that, as I'm sure you can see, would prove to be very, very unwise.

Anxiety helps us prepare to respond in a more adaptive and healthy way. Some people find it possible to tolerate some degree of discomfort and can manage their anxiety in a healthy manner. Often that's because some people have done well under this kind of challenge already, albeit in very different contexts. Life has a way of requiring this. Yet other people — particularly people who have anxiety disorders — may understandably be having a great deal of trouble coping.

How can I cope with the coronavirus outbreak if I have a pre-existing anxiety disorder?

Anxiety disorders take many forms and affect many people. So, what happens now if you're someone who has suffered way too much already with a pre-existing anxiety disorder? For example, perhaps you have been, or could be, diagnosed with panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder

(PTSD), or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Hopefully, you may find that the tips below will help you cope more successfully with what we are all facing together in these unprecedented times.

Seek support from a mental health professional

Talking to a mental health professional can bolster your ability to address present concerns, and help you clarify where your feelings are coming from, as explained below. When you're feeling extra worried or overwhelmed, it could be that some of your feelings are from the present challenge and some are from challenges you have faced in the past.

Many psychotherapists and health plans are offering telehealth visits during this time. Ask your therapist or insurance plan if this is an option. More therapists than ever before are moving their practices online. If you search for therapists in your area, their websites may tell you whether they participate in telehealth. Additionally, some national telehealth apps offer therapy via video or audio chat.

Work toward separating out where your feelings are coming from

Doing this work can allow you to take a breath and divvy up the different emotional contributions that feed how you're feeling.

- Try saying this, for example: "Of course, I'm more



concerned than (my roommate/my friend/my family), because I'm practiced at feeling anxious or helpless."

- The next step is to recognize that the percentage of feelings that stem from the past do not have to govern how

you necessarily feel in the present. Try saying this out loud: "Well that was then, this is now." A simple state-

ment like open the significant Gently

1855

Origins of the American Civil War: "Border Ruffians" from Missouri invade Kansas and force election of a pro-slavery legislature.

1856

The Treaty of Paris is signed, ending the Crimean War.

1861

Discovery of the chemical elements: Sir William Crookes announces his discovery of thallium.



1863

Danish prince **Wilhelm Georg** is chosen as King George of Greece.

ship



office in Riyadh, Saudi

The G20 was the vital framework coordinating a global response to the 2008-09 financial crisis. The new global crisis is the coronavirus and the disease it causes, COVID-19.

veloping countries and least developed countries to enable them to build their capacities and improve their infrastructure to overcome this crisis and its repercussions." These were important and inspiring words.

"Whatever it takes" was pretty much the mantra when it came to the G20 response to the pandemic. While the communique may be weak on specifics, there was clear solidarity and a sense of purpose among the leaders of the world's

most powerful economies. It cannot be stressed enough how important that show of solidarity was to so many who are both physically and economically affected by the pandemic. The specifics can always be worked out later with the help of the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD and other organizations.

Compare that with the EU, which could not find a common approach to the crisis, leading an exasperated European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen to exclaim: "When Europe really needed an all-for-one spirit, too many initially gave an only-for-me response."

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis of epic proportions. It has been likened to the Spanish flu outbreak in 1918. That may be so. However, the world was a lot less interconnected then, which means that both the ramifications of the pandemic spread more rapidly throughout the globe and that the solutions need to be global as well. This is truly the moment of leadership for the G20 and for Saudi Arabia, which holds its presidency.

e with anxiety disorders



Many psychotherapists and health plans are offering telehealth visits during this time. Ask your therapist or insurance plan if this is an option. More therapists than ever before are moving their practices online.

of this crucial separation, cleaving the past from the present. And kindly and reassuringly remind yourself that you have the resources — both internal and external — to manage your feelings and reactions in the now. This is crucially important.

Keep providing yourself with guidance

As often as you need to hear it, tell yourself the following: "I can manage. I can practice what I know to be helpful, and I know that in managing my feelings and reactions I can seek support from a few close friends. Further, I can seek the support of a mental health professional when needed. By combining these strategies, I will be able to settle my nerves in order to be able to make healthy choices." This kind of mantra bears re-

peating over and over. This is not "fake it till you make it." This is believing in yourself and believing in a course of action that you can set in motion. Try to believe that, together with supportive others, this self-guidance and this plan will work for you. Know that in many instances, people who have known tremendous adversity and even trauma are able to demonstrate a strength forged from those circumstances. This is entirely consistent with human abilities.

Drawing on what you've learned can help you cope

We are wired for fight or flight. But as a colleague of mine noted, the present situation does not require either of these. If you're a human who's been challenged, or somewhat disabled, by anxiety in the past, I encourage you now to draw upon what you've learned in terms of how you can manage successfully.

Separating out feelings from the past, reminding yourself that you have the strength and ability in the present to prevail, seeing a path forward for yourself and setting yourself upon that path is the way forward. If along that way you should stumble and fall, picture yourself as able to pick yourself back up and carry on. Reassure yourself that the basic provisions for your safety and well-being are within your power to meet. In my book, every day that you are able to do so, counts as a very good day indeed.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Two things I've learnt the value of in this time: local government over central government, Cuomo over Trump, Kejriwal over Modi. The other is reporting, like @BDUTT and @BBCWorld have done, over studio-insularity, as we see on most of the Indian/American channels, including @CNN

@AatishTaseer

02



We are one human family. Let us bring all hostilities to a halt. May our joint fight against the #COVID-19 pandemic bring everyone to recognize the great need to reinforce brotherly and sisterly bonds. #globalceasefire @antonio-guterres @UN

@Pontifex

03



The enemy may be invisible, but @realDonaldTrump is fighting a war against this crisis. His leadership is all the more reason we need to re-elect him in November.

@GOPChairwoman

04



We need global coordination for the development of a #COVID19 vaccine. @WHO stands ready to convene a scientific advisory mechanism of the highest quality to drive this forward and to work with @gavi to save lives! We welcome G7 & @g20org support.

@DrTedros

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

The challenging menace of plastic



KOTA SRIRAJ

A recent research has discovered that due to rampant rising role of plastics in our daily lives, we humans are now consuming plastic equivalent to a credit card every week! According to a study commissioned by Worldwide Fund for nature, formerly World Wildlife Fund (WWF) humans are unwittingly consuming nearly 5 grams of plastic every week which is approximately the same weight as that of a credit card. Further broken down, this consumption can be categorized as ingestion of 2000 tiny plastic particles out of which nearly 1700 fibers are from drinking water alone.

There is an urgent need to divest plastic from our daily lives and especially from our diets! The difficult part is the fact the almost every facet of our lives is interlaced with the role of plastics and no matter how hard one tries the presence of plastic just keeps becoming the common factor for people and businesses alike. The percolation of plastic has been very deep in human life be it food containers, water bottles and groceries packing material are all plastic as they are cheap, durable and unfortunately for the environment — reusable as well and non-recyclable. The Supreme Council of Environment, Bahrain took the commendable initiative of banning single use plastic in July 2019, this included a ban on plastic bags as well. This step alone has led to immense progress in the battle against plastic, but still Bahrain has a long way to go win the war against plastic. This can be understood by the fact that a volunteer group engaged in cleaning public places recently cleared up to 12.5 kg of used plastic bags from the Arad beach alone.

However, given the adverse effects of plastics it is probably time for the community to take the lead and work hand in hand with the governmental authorities to put a definitive end to plastic use so that the health of the common man and immediate environment are both protected. The involvement of the community is critical as no widespread initiative is successful without the support and positive involvement of the community. So, in order to ensure the comprehensive involvement of the community, authorities must run awareness programmes at school and society levels to drive up the knowledge among the general public and when people become aware, the results are instantaneous and positive. The awareness among the people regarding the ongoing corona virus disease is an apt example.

For any nation the health of the citizens and its environment are of paramount importance and plastic stands in the way for achieving the same.



This potent awareness generated couple with some innovative steps can be used to control the spread of plastic use. For instance, community entrepreneurship programme can be launched with the objective of creating eco-friendly alternative packing solutions for the society. This initiative can not only lead to social empowerment, employment generation but also provide added financial support for the households. This step will encourage local government authorities to popularize these eco-friendly packing solutions as substitutes to plastic usage in all walks of life and also reduce the use of plastic in the respective housing communities. This will automatically check the proliferation of plastic by local vendors.

Similarly, the super-markets operating in Bahrain must be encouraged to give up plastic in substitute with eco-friendly packing options. Majid-Al-Futtaim which operates Carrefour and Vox cinemas already announced in February 2020 that it will discontinue the use of single plastic in its businesses by 2025 and has started the process in Middle East. According to estimates this move will remove 500 million plastic bags from Carrefour alone! Large scale measures such as this will make the much-needed difference and put plastics on their way out.

For any nation the health of the citizens and its environment are of paramount importance and plastic stands in the way for achieving the same. Many nations across the world are continuously failing to get a grip on the menace of plastics and in the process unable to get any meaningful traction in the fight against this problem. These global failures can serve as examples for Bahrain to draw observations and conclusions so that the national plan to control plastic is a resounding success. Out of the box efforts are the need of the hour when extraordinary circumstances take shape and the current crisis triggered by plastic is an extraordinary threat that must be neutralized as early as possible.

world



Global

Covid-19 Cases:

702,998

Deaths

33,205

Recovered:

149,219

Active cases

520,574

Closed cases

182,424

Saudi expands partial lockdown

● **Entry and exit bans in place on Jeddah**

● **Oman halts passenger flights**

● **UAE announces virus-related fines**

Reuters | Dubai

Saudi Arabia halted entry and exit into Jeddah governorate yesterday while hundreds of German tourists were repatriated from the Unit-

ed Arab Emirates.

The Gulf Arab region has taken drastic measures to try to combat the disease.

Oman, where a suspension of international passenger flights went into force yesterday, documented 15 more infections and Kuwait reported 20 new cases, taking the total in the six Gulf Arab states to over 3,100, with 11 deaths.

Saudi Arabia, which has the highest tally at over 1,200, imposed entry and exit bans on Jeddah, after doing so for Riyadh, Mecca and Medina last week, state news SPA reported. The kingdom late on Satur-

day extended indefinitely its suspension of international passenger flights and a bar on workplace attendance in both public and private sectors.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have imposed partial curfews and the UAE has put in place an overnight curfew until April 5 under a nationwide campaign to sterilise streets and public venues.

UAE Attorney-General Hamad Saif Al Shamsi issued a statement detailing coronavirus-related fines, including 50,000 dirhams (\$13,613) for non-compliance with home quarantine orders and 3,000 dirhams for

individuals violating curfew.

The UAE, the region's tourism and business hub, has also halted passenger flights at its main airports, except for evacuation trips. Kuwait has done the same.

The UAE emirate of Ras Al Khaimah said late on Saturday that hundreds of German tourists had been repatriated from its airport.

Qatar Airways, one of the few airlines maintaining scheduled commercial passenger services, will continue to fly, Chief Executive Akbar al-Baker said, but warned the carrier could soon run out of cash and seek state support.

Saudi death toll doubles to eight

Reuters | Riyadh

Saudi Arabia recorded four new fatalities from the coronavirus, bringing its death toll to eight, the health ministry spokesman told a news conference yesterday.

The kingdom has also registered 96 new infections, taking its total to 1,299, the highest among the Gulf Arab states.

Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	New deaths	Total Deaths
USA	131,833	+123	2,344
Italy	97,689	+756	10,779
China	81,439	+5	3,300
Spain	78,799	+624	6,606
Germany	60,887	+49	482
Iran	38,309	+123	2,640
France	37,575		2,314
UK	19,522	+209	1,228
Switzerland	14,829	+36	300
Netherlands	10,923	+132	772
Belgium	10,836	+78	431
S. Korea	9,583	+8	152
Turkey	9,217	+23	131
Austria	8,711	+18	86
Portugal	5,962	+19	119
Canada	5,886	+3	63
Australia	3,980	+2	16
Brazil	3,904	+3	117
Sweden	3,719	+5	121
Malaysia	2,470	+8	35
Japan	1,693		52
Russia	1,534	+4	8
Pakistan	1,526	+2	14
Philippines	1,418	+3	71
Thailand	1,388	+1	7
Indonesia	1,285	+12	114
India	1,024	+3	27
Afghanistan	120		4
Sri Lanka	117		1
Palestine	108		1
Bangladesh	48		5
Nepal	5		0

Things to get worse before they get better: UK's Johnson

Reuters | London



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is warning Britons in a letter to 30 million households that things will get worse before they get better, as he himself self-isolates in Downing Street to recover from the coronavirus.

Britain has reported 17,089 confirmed cases of the disease and 1,019 deaths and the peak of the epidemic in the country is expected to come in a few weeks.

In the letter to be delivered to homes, Johnson urges people to stick with the lockdown measures that his government has imposed to try to prevent the state National Health Service from being overwhelmed by a surge of cases.

"We know things will

get worse before they get better," Johnson writes. "At this moment of national emergency, I urge you, please, to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives."

Senior minister Michael Gove said yesterday the government is "very concerned" about the death toll.

He also said the country has boosted the amount of testing for the virus. "The number of tests being carried out has hit 10,000 a day. We want to increase that to 25,000 a day."

Record virus deaths in Spain

Madrid

32,000 lives.

Spain broke another national record of daily coronavirus deaths yesterday as more than 40 per cent of the world's population was asked to say home in hopes of halting the deadly march of a disease that has claimed more than

Worst-hit Italy and Spain, which together account for more than half of the world's deaths, are clinging to hope that they are nearing the peak of the crisis.

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Bahrain	499	+23	4		272	223	1	293
Saudi Arabia	1,299	+96	8	+4	66	1,225	12	37
UAE	570	+102	2		58	510	2	58
Kuwait	255	+20			67	188	12	60
Oman	167	+15			23	144		33
Jordan	246		1		18	227		24
Iraq	547	+41	42		143	362		14
Egypt	576		36		121	419		6

Corrigendum
In yesterday's edition, total deaths related to coronavirus in Nepal were wrongly mentioned as 7. As of today, Nepal has zero death cases. We regret the error.

Contingency plan



Medical vehicles to be used as field hospital, are seen at the parking of the King Fahad Medical City, amid fear of the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19), in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Modi seeks 'forgiveness' from India's poor over coronavirus lockdown

Reuters | Mumbai

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the nation's poor for forgiveness yesterday, as the economic and human toll from his 21-day nationwide lockdown deepens and criticism mounts about a lack of adequate planning ahead of the decision.

Modi announced a three week-lockdown on Tuesday to curb the spread of coronavirus. But the decision has stung millions of India's poor, leaving many hungry and forcing jobless migrant labourers to flee cities and walk hundreds of kilometres to their native villages.

"I would firstly like to seek forgiveness from all my countrymen," Modi said in a nationwide radio address.

The poor "would definitely be thinking what kind of prime minister is this, who has put us into so much trouble," he said, urging people to understand there was no other option.

"Steps taken so far... will give India victory over corona," he added.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in India rose to 979 on Sunday, with 25 deaths.

The government announced a \$22.6 billion economic stim-



A child wearing a mask waits to receive free food being distributed by Delhi government in a school



Migrant workers walk towards a bus station in Ghaziabad

ulus plan on Thursday to provide direct cash transfers and food handouts to India's poor.

In an opinion piece published yesterday, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo - two of the three winners of the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2019 - said even more aid for the poor is needed.

"Without that, the demand crisis will snowball into an economic avalanche, and people will have no choice but to defy orders," they wrote in the Indian Express.

World's largest glove maker sees shortage



An epidemiologist holds gloves

Reuters | Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's Top Glove Corporation Bhd, which makes one in every five gloves globally, expects a product shortage as demand from Europe and the United States spikes.

The company has extended shipping times to cope with the demand surge, Executive Chairman Lim Wee Chai said

Lim said orders received in the past few weeks, mainly from Europe and the United States, were almost double the company's production capacity. Top Glove can produce 200 million natural and synthetic rubber gloves a day.

"Some customers panic order; normally they order 10 containers a month but now they suddenly increase to 20 containers," he said.

"Definitely there is a shortage. They order 100% more, we can only increase 20% so there is a shortage of about 50% to 80%," he said.

Former French minister dies of COVID-19



Patrick Devedjian (Courtesy of BFMTV)

DW |

A close adviser of former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and former president of a Parisian administrative district has died from COVID-19, the Haut-de-Seine department announced on Sunday.

Patrick Devedjian was the minister in charge of dealing with French recovery from the 2008 financial crisis. The 75-year-old first publicly announced he was suffering from symptoms of the novel coronavirus on Wednesday.

North Korea fires more missiles

Reuters | Seoul

North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles into the ocean off its east coast yesterday, the latest in an unprecedented flurry of launches that South Korea decried as “inappropriate” amid the global coronavirus pandemic.

Two “short-range projectiles” were launched from the coastal Wonsan area, and flew 230 kilometres (143 miles) at a maximum altitude of 30 kilometres (19 miles), South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff reported.

Magnitude 5.8 quake hits Indonesia

Reuters | Jakarta

A magnitude 5.8 earthquake struck Indonesia on Saturday, the European Mediterranean Seismological Centre said, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties.

The quake’s epicentre was 105 kilometres (65 miles) south of Palu on the island of Sulawesi, and 40 km (25 miles) below the earth’s surface.

Covid-Worried’ German State Finance Minister Dies

IANs, DW | Berlin

German provincial Finance Minister, who was reportedly worried about the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic, has been found dead, having allegedly committed suicide, reports said yesterday.

The mutilated body of Thomas Schäfer, the Finance Minister of Hesse, where the country’s financial centre Frankfurt is, was found on a high-speed train line in the town of Hochheim, police said, local media reported.

Police said that it seemed to be a suicide case and investigations were on.

US Coronavirus deaths could reach 200,000, Fauci warns

Reuters

US deaths from coronavirus could reach 200,000 with millions of cases, the government’s top infectious diseases expert warned yesterday as New York, New Orleans and other major cities warned they would soon run out of medical supplies.

Dr Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, estimated in an interview with CNN that the pandemic could cause between 100,000 and 200,000 deaths in the United States.

Since 2010, the flu has killed between 12,000 and 61,000 Americans a year, according to the website of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The 1918-19 flu pandemic killed 675,000 in the United States, according to the CDC.

A shortage of ventilators in several major cities worsened



Dr Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases,

as the US death count crossed 2,100 on Saturday, more than double the level from two days ago. The United States has now recorded more than 123,000 cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, the most of

any country in the world.

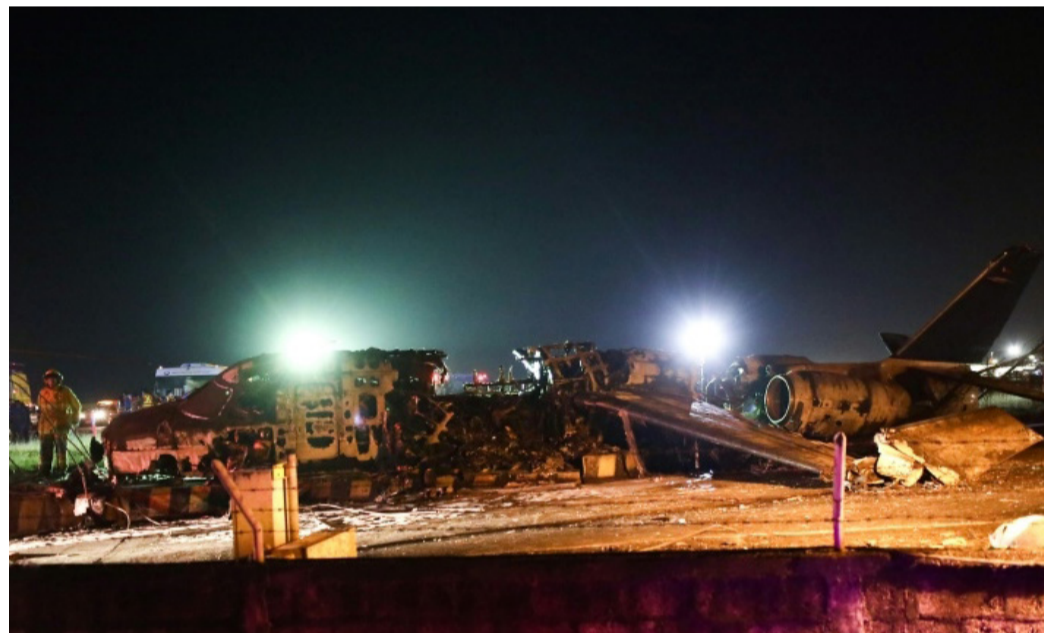
New York City will need hundreds more ventilators in a few days and more masks, gowns and other supplies by April 5, Mayor Bill de Blasio told CNN on Sunday.

New Orleans will run out of ventilators around April 4 and officials in Louisiana still do not know whether they will receive any ventilators from the national stockpile, the governor said.

Louisiana has tried to order 12,000 ventilators from commercial vendors and has received 192, Governor John Bel Edwards said on CBS’ “Face the Nation.”

“We haven’t yet been approved for ventilators out of the national stockpile. I continue to press that case and I hope we will be cut in for a slice of what they have left,” Edwards said. “It is the one thing that really keeps me up at night.”

8 killed as plane reportedly carrying medical supplies crashes in Philippines



The burnt out shell of an aircraft that caught fire at Manila airport late Sunday

CNN | Manila

A Tokyo-bound plane crashed while taking off from Ninoy Aquino International Airport in the Philippines capital city of Manila yesterday, killing all eight on board, airport personnel said.

All passengers on board Lion Air Flight RPC 5880 died after the plane caught fire as it was taking off from the airport, according to Manila’s Interna-

tional Airport Authority.

An American and Canadian were on board the flight, according to the flight’s passenger manifest.

The other six on board were Filipino, according to the manifest.

The passengers included medical personnel, according to Red Cross spokesman Richard Gordon.

The plane was reportedly carrying medical supplies, the Philippines News Agency said, adding that the plane caught



RP-C5880 (Courtesy of samchui)

fire on the runway.

The crashed aircraft, is an Israel Aircraft Industries IAI-1124A Westwind model. It was equipped with two General Electric GE-CJ610 engines, a report said.

Latest developments

President Donald Trump said that he would issue a travel warning for the hard-hit New York area to limit the spread of the coronavirus, backing off from an earlier suggestion that he might try to cut off the region entirely.

Detroit auto show canceled due to coronavirus

The World Health Organization (WHO) is closely following the development of the coronavirus in Taiwan and is learning lessons from how they are fighting it, the body said yesterday, after complaints from Taiwan it was being intentionally ignored.

Britain has placed an order for 10,000 ventilators to be made by a consortium of companies including Ford (F.N), Airbus (AIR.PA) and Rolls-Royce (RRL) as part of efforts to fight the coronavirus.

How the European Union responds to the coronavirus outbreak will determine its future credibility, a French minister said yesterday, after the bloc failed to agree last week on measures to cushion the economic blow from the pandemic.

Ireland’s government is to roll out a voluntary phone-tracking app to alert users if someone they have been in contact with develops COVID-19, its health service said on Sunday, two weeks before the pandemic is expected to peak in the country.

Uruguay confirms first coronavirus death, cases hit 303

South African police fired

rubber bullets towards hundreds of shoppers queuing outside a supermarket in Johannesburg as authorities battled to keep people at home in a bid to halt the spread of the coronavirus.



Confronts coronavirus head-on



Chennai policeman Rajesh Babu has found a creative way to get people to take precautions against the COVID-19 outbreak: a helmet made to make people think of the coronavirus. India has been under a countrywide lockdown from Wednesday, but the authorities are struggling to keep people in their homes.

The British government admitted yesterday that the coronavirus lockdown could last a “significant” time as a leading expert warned it could be in place until June. “I can’t make an accurate prediction but everyone I think does have to prepare for a significant period when these measures are still in place,” cabinet minister Michael Gove told the BBC.

Canadian premier Justin Trudeau’s wife Sophie Gregoire-Trudeau has recovered from the novel coronavirus, she said Saturday. “I am feeling so much better and have received the all clear from my physician and Ottawa Public Health,” she wrote on her Facebook page. “From the bottom of my heart, I want to say thank you to everyone who reached out to me with their well wishes.” She had tested positive for the virus on March 12 after returning from Britain, with her husband subsequently going into self-quarantine as a precautionary measure.



A federal court in Rio de Janeiro on Saturday banned the government from disseminating propaganda against confinement measures aimed at controlling the coronavirus pandemic. On Thursday night, President Jair Bolsonaro shared a video on Facebook showing a caravan of vehicles celebrating the reopening of businesses and schools in the southern state of Santa Catarina.

Hundreds of cruise ship passengers were due to board flights for Germany on Sunday, after spending days stranded at sea off the West Australian coast in a stand-off with authorities.

Dozens of prisoners broke furniture and smashed windows during a riot in a Thai jail on Sunday sparked by fears of a coronavirus outbreak in the facility. During the violence some convicts escaped from the Buriram prison where 2,000 are held, the justice ministry said. Seven have been arrested.



France staged yesterday its largest evacuation of coronavirus patients to date from hospitals in the hard-hit east, increasing efforts to free up intensive care units as officials brace for even more serious cases in the coming days. Two specially modified TGV high-speed trains carried 36 patients from Mulhouse and Nancy toward hospitals along France’s western coast, where the outbreak has been limited so far.



Hand-washing truck



An NGO in Costa Rica transformed a van into a hand washing station, as part of an effort in conjunction with the local government to limit the spread of COVID-19 and promote sanitary measures.

celebs

Dua Lipa was confused about releasing album amid COVID-19

Los Angeles



International pop sensation Dua Lipa, who recently released her new album "Future Nostalgia" was initially confused about dropping the songs due to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak.

Speaking on 'New Music Daily with Zane Lowe' on Apple Music, Dua Lipa spoke about her new album and why she didn't want to release it initially, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I felt very confident going into this record and I feel like I really found my lyrical language and what I wanted to say and I'm really proud of it. Of course during this time, I have felt very conflicted and I was very confused and I wasn't sure whether we need to be putting music out at this time because a lot of people are suffering and there's a lot going on in the world and you never really know when the right time is," she said.

Jennifer Garner's b'day surprise for assistant in the time of COVID-19 outbreak

Los Angeles



Actress Jennifer Garner made sure to celebrate her assistant Maureen Grosser's birthday by planning a sweet drive-by outside her California home, despite normal life being paralysed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maureen is currently isolating with Jennifer and her kids as Los Angeles remains on lockdown amid the coronavirus pandemic, but the actress was sure not to let the global health crisis halt the day's celebrations, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Garner had around 15 cars full of people drive by the house and sing "Happy Birthday to You" to Grosser, all from a safe distance.

She also shared a message in honour of her pal on Instagram, writing: "On my good days, people ask if we're sisters, but more often than I care to admit—the assumption is mother/daughter. We aren't actually related—but I'll claim her."



Mia Goth and Shia LaBeouf

Shia LaBeouf seen wearing wedding ring during outing with Ex

Los Angeles

Actor Shia LaBeouf was spotted wearing his wedding ring during a recent outing with his former wife Mia Goth.

During the outing, LaBeouf wore a wedding band on that finger and Goth also had on a diamond ring and a wedding band, reports people.com.

In the photos, the pair, who were both dressed casually, are sitting together on a bench outside, with Goth leaning towards the actor with her hand

on his knee.

LaBeouf was previously photographed wearing the ring at the Academy Awards in February.

The pair first met in 2012 while filming "Nymphomaniac: Vol. II", and Goth later appeared in a music video LaBeouf directed in 2014.

After dating for nearly four years, LaBeouf and Goth married in October 2016.

A representative for the actor had confirmed the pair had decided to officially part ways in 2018.

Ben Affleck, Ana de Armas enjoy afternoon walk

Los Angeles

Actor Ben Affleck and actress Ana de Armas were recently spotted enjoying a afternoon walk here.

The "Knives Out" actress' dog joined in on the stroll too. During the pair's outdoor stroll, they were photographed walking arm-in-arm and smiling at each other. They even put on public display of affection,

reports eonline.com. It's unclear how long the pair hung out for considering Los Angeles is enforcing a "stay at home" order amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The two kept things stylish with their outdoor outfits.

The actress wore red wine-coloured velvet jacket, fitted jeans and white sneakers. As for the actor, he also kept things chic but low-key with a charcoal coloured coat, denim pants, grey sneakers and a baseball cap.



Ben Affleck and Ana de Armas

Want to do more action movies, says Priyanka Chopra

New Delhi



Actress Priyanka Chopra has done some daring stunts in movies. She says she wants to do more as she enjoys action films.

"I have always done my own stunts. I trust my body immensely. I am athletic as a person. I just really enjoy action movies. I have done them in 'Don' and 'Quantico'. I hope to do more of them," Priyanka said.

The genre is generally seen as a hero's domain.

"I am someone who believes in a gender neutral world. I hope in my lifetime we reach a place where we say movies instead of female-centric movies, we say directors instead of female directors, we say athletes instead of female athletes," said the former Miss World.

"I hope my children don't have to worry about the fact that 'this is an Indian female cricket team or Indian female movie'. We don't say 'it is a male-centric movie, so let's go and watch it'. So why do we have to say that it's a female (centric movie)? I hope that happens and I am seeing it more and more as the conversation... where girls are coming out of their shells, and parents are supporting in finding their own feet. My parents supported me in all my dreams and ambitions," said Priyanka.

She has many projects in her kitty, including a superhero movie titled "We Can Be Heroes". Will the audience get to see her as a superhero?

Priyanka Chopra

Kangana Ranaut

Kangana Ranaut feels COVID-19 could be 'potential bio war'

Mumbai

Actress Kangana Ranaut feels the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic could be a "potential bio war" unleashed in a scenario where nations are trying to gain economic supremacy over each other.

"Our huge concern for economy has landed us all in the situation where we are with no concern for human well being. This could also be a potential bio war where countries are trying to get down

each other's economies," she told India Today, according to a report in hindustantimes.com.

The actress, who is currently staying in her Manali residence, further said the coronavirus pandemic was a warning to all of us, adding that it was time for us to reflect as a nation. "We have to reflect as where we have landed as people, as a nation and why are we letting our greed, our senses guide us and not our consciousness.



Bhushan Kumar to donate Rs 11 crore to PM CARES Fund

Mumbai



Bhushan Kumar

T-series honcho Bhushan Kumar has pledged to donate Rs 11 crore to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative PM CARES Fund and Rs 1 crore to the Chief Ministers Relief Fund, Maharashtra to lend support to the ongoing battle against the coronavirus pandemic.

Kumar took to Twitter on Sunday and tweeted: "Today, we are all at a really crucial stage & it's extremely important to do all we can to help. I, along with my entire @Tseries family pledge to donate Rs. 11 crores to the PM-CARES Fund. We can & will fight this together, Jai Hind @PMOIndia @narendramodi #IndiaFightsCorona."

He added: "In this hour of need, I pledge to donate Rs. 1 crore to the CM's relief fund along with my family at @Tseries. Hope we all get through this difficult time soon. Stay home, stay safe. @CMOMaharashtra @OfficeofUT @AUTHackeray #IndiaFightsCorona."

SUDOKU

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

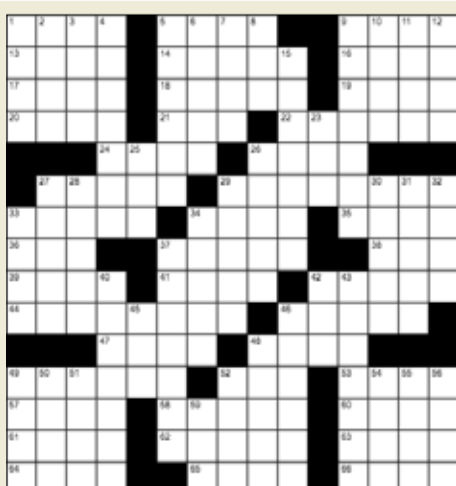
Yesterday's solution

3	6	5	8	1	2	9	4	7
8	4	2	9	3	7	1	6	5
7	9	1	4	5	6	8	2	3
5	3	9	2	8	4	7	1	6
4	7	8	1	6	9	3	5	2
2	1	6	3	7	5	4	8	9
6	8	3	7	2	1	5	9	4
1	2	4	5	9	3	6	7	8
9	5	7	6	4	8	2	3	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- Galoots; 5- Kit item; 9- Bingo call; 13- Push with the head; 14- Living in a city; 16- Rich deposit; 17- Ratio words; 18- Bring up; 19- The Emerald Isle; 20- Pad; 21- Hot time in Paris; 22- Light; 24- Manitoba Indigenous People; 26- Somewhat; 27- Killed; 29- Physically active; 33- Royal domain; 34- Kitchen addition; 35- Author Jaffe; 36- Globe; 37- Flight segment; 38- Kernel; 39- Ripened; 41- Bath powder; 42- Alamogordo's county; 44- Move; 46- Sidestep, circumvent; 47- X-ray units; 48- Minn. neighbor; 49- Reunion attendees; 52- She's a she; 53- Individually; 57- Poet Teasdale; 58- Anesthetized; 60- Look at lustfully; 61- Indication; 62- Decoration; 63- "Trinity" author; 64- Waste allowance; 65- Unit of computer memory; 66- Knocks lightly;

Down

1- Slightly; 2- Thrust; 3- Blues singer James; 4- Impassive; 5- Large soup dish; 6- Declaim; 7- Village Voice award; 8- Cruces, NM; 9- Electric appliance; 10- Actress Spelling; 11- Prepare for publication; 12- Branta sandvicensis; 15- Nor's partner; 23- Guy's counterpart; 25- Canyon edge; 26- Room at the top; 27- Twilled fabric; 28- Trademark; 29- of Two Cities; 30- In shape; 31- Accustom; 32- Roman censor; 33- Laugh loudly; 34- Les-Unis; 37- Sports arena; 40- Inactive; 42- Female gametes; 43- Food ordered to go; 45- Metal container; 46- English Channel swimmer Gertrude; 48- Perspire; 49- Kind of prof.; 50- Den; 51- Prod; 52- Whirlpool; 54- Mogul capital until 1658; 55- A good one gets you there in a hurry; 56- Shell competitor; 59- Kan. neighbor;

Yesterday's solution

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

SPORTS
sports

Juventus players, coach agree pay cut

Reuters | Turin

Juventus players and coach Maurizio Sarri have reached an agreement over a wage reduction that will save the Italian champions 90 million euros (\$100.26 million), the Serie A club announced on Saturday.

Sarri and the first-team players have agreed what amounts to a four-month pay reduction to help Italy's most successful club during the coronavirus crisis.

The effective one-third cut to the players' annual salaries will mean a huge drop in wages for a squad headed by marquee Portuguese player Cristiano Ronaldo, the best-paid footballer in Italy who is reported to earn 31 million euros a year.

The agreement comes at a time when many clubs around Europe have had to cut wage bills because of the dramatic impact of matches having had to be postponed or played behind closed doors due to the spread of the virus.

"The economic and financial effects of the understanding reached are positive for about 90 million euros for the 2019/2020 financial year", Juventus said in a statement.

"The understanding provides for the reduction of the compensation for an amount equal to the monthly payments of March, April, May and June 2020", it added, saying personal agreements with Sarri and the players will be finalised in the coming weeks.



Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (C) talks with Juventus' Italian coach Maurizio Sarri (R) as Juventus' French midfielder Blaise Matuidi looks on

The Turin-based club, in one of the regions hit hardest by the crisis, have suffered in recent weeks with three of their players having tested positive for the virus -- forward Paulo Dybala, defender Daniele Rugani and midfielder Blaise Matuidi.

Soccer around the world has been brought to a standstill by the pandemic with Italy having suffered more than 10,000 deaths from the virus, the highest number in any country.

Italy's top-flight Serie A league has been suspended since March 9 with Juventus, seeking a ninth successive title, leading the league by one point from Lazio

with 12 games each remaining.

Health emergency

"Juventus Football Club S.p.A. announces that, due to the current global health emergency (which) is preventing the performance of the sporting activity, it has reached an understanding with the players and the coach of the First Team regarding their compensation for the residual portion of the current sport season," the club statement said.

"The understanding provides for the reduction of the compensation for an amount equal to the monthly wages of March, April,

May and June 2020.

"In the coming weeks, personal agreements with the players and the coach will be finalised, as required by the current regulations.

"Should the current season's matches be rescheduled, the Club will negotiate in good faith with the players and the coach conditional increases of compensation according to the actual resumption and finalisation of official competitions.

"Juventus would like to thank the players and the coach for their commitment at a difficult time for everyone."

Long-standing defender Gior-



Juventus have suffered in recent weeks with three of their players having tested positive for the virus -- forward Paulo Dybala, defender Daniele Rugani and midfielder Blaise Matuidi

gio Chiellini led the players' negotiations amid reports in the Italian media that Ronaldo had agreed to sacrifice 3.8 million euros of his yearly wage to ease the financial burden on the club while Italy is in lockdown.

The agreement comes the day after leading Spanish club Atletico Madrid took the decision to cut the wages of their staff, including the players, to ease the financial burden on the club.

Atletico joined La Liga rivals Barcelona, who imposed a compulsory wage reduction on their players during the period of lockdown after Spain became the second-most affected country by the coronavirus in Europe behind Italy.

German Bundesliga clubs Borussia Moenchengladbach and Borussia Dortmund have also said their players would forego some of their salary.

Lampard discusses difficulty of preparing players for return after crisis

The Independent | London

Chelsea boss Frank Lampard accepts clubs cannot expect players to "push and push" themselves during the coronavirus pandemic with no concrete timetable as to when football will return.

The Blues squad continues to train at home during the lockdown initiated by the government, with an optimistic return date for the Premier League set for 30 April.

Lampard feels there is little else everyone at the club can do but try to stay focused on the bigger picture.

"It is very difficult at the moment, because we have got nothing concrete in front of us," Lampard said in a FaceTime interview with Chelsea's official club app.

"We have seen that things can change very quickly, so we can only go by the dates we have been given, at the moment it looks like 1 May or the end of April.

"But daily or probably weekly we are looking at it, saying: 'Well, how do we train? What does it look like?'"

Bruno Fernandes admits regret over Guardiola argument

The Independent | London

Bruno Fernandes has suggested that he regrets his touchline spat with Pep Guardiola during Manchester United's recent derby win.

Fernandes appeared to 'shush' Guardiola towards the end of the 2-0 victory over Manchester City earlier this month.

United's latest signing, who has had a transformational impact since arriving in January, later said that Guardiola did not deserve his "respect".

"I have respect for Pep and what he wins and what he did for football, because he changed some mentalities in football," Fernandes told Sky Sports.

"But I think in that moment, he didn't respect me, so he didn't deserve my respect at that moment on the pitch."

In an interview with Canal 11, Fernandes has now rowed back on those comments and "condemned" himself for his reaction to Guardiola.

"As everything in life, nothing is defined by what a person has had and won," he said.

"I condemn myself because the best response would have been to remain silent and he would have been left to speak alone."

Gundogan 'would be OK' with Liverpool being handed title

Goal | London

Manchester City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan says he "would be okay" with Liverpool being awarded the Premier League title due to the coronavirus pandemic, which has called a halt to all major leagues across Europe.

Liverpool boast a 25-point lead over reigning champions City in England's top-flight standings at the moment, having won 27 of their 29 fixtures.

Jurgen Klopp's men are now just six points away from glory, but it has been suggested that their achievements over the past eight months could be chalked off amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Premier League has been scheduled to return on April 30, but with the United Kingdom currently in a state of emergency, there is a chance football's hiatus

will continue through to the summer.

Some experts have called for the season to be voided, while others believe Liverpool have already earned the Premier League crown after establishing an unassailable advantage at the summit.

Gundogan falls into the latter camp, despite his allegiance to City, as he told German broadcaster ZDF: "It would be okay for me [if Liverpool are handed the title], you have to be sporting."

When asked if he would be in favour of top players in England sacrificing their salaries in order to help clubs in the lower leagues survive, Gundogan responded: "Of course I would find that okay, of course."

"But the lower league clubs do not have it so easy."

Gundogan added on how he is coping in self-isolation at his

It would be okay for me [if Liverpool are handed the title], you have to be sporting

ILKAY GUNDOGAN

home in Manchester: "I have to admit that it is not that easy to deal with. It is an exceptional situation that cannot be fully grasped.

"You are sometimes afraid to go for a walk for 10 to 15 minutes outside.

"Even though it was oddly and ironically extremely beautiful from the weather here in Manchester."

The 29-year-old also expressed doubts over the season resuming next month, with the option to play out remaining fixtures behind closed doors reportedly under discussion.

"Honestly, I can't imagine that and I don't know how realistic it is," said Gundogan.

UEFA officials have insisted that it is their priority to make sure that club football is concluded, which is why the decision was taken to postpone Euro 2020 by a year.

Klopp says coronavirus impacted preparation ahead of Atletico loss

Goal | London

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has admitted that the confusion and concern surrounding the coronavirus pandemic affected his preparations for the Champions League defeat against Atletico Madrid.

More than two weeks ago, Atletico arrived on Merseyside holding a slender one-goal advantage over the Premier League leaders.

The game went to extra time level at 1-1 on aggregate, but three goals for the visitors in the additional 30 minutes cancelled out Roberto Firmino's 94th minute goal.

The result saw Atletico progress to the quarter-finals of Europe's elite competition at the expense of the 2019 winners.

The match, however, proved to be the last major game in England, with all football suspended in the top four leagues just two days later due to the coronavirus.

On the day Atletico landed in England, all education facilities in Madrid were closed with immediate effect, as Spain rapidly tried to get to grips with the pandemic that has since led to the country being in a strict national lockdown that enters its third week today.



Jurgen Klopp, Manager of Liverpool argues with the Assistant Referee during the match against Atletico Madrid (file photo)

Speaking to Liverpool's official website, Klopp admitted that Covid-19 fears impacted on his mindset ahead of the crunch game. "It is two weeks ago, but it feels like it is ages ago that we played Atletico," he said.

"I remember that we all knew about the situation with coronavirus around the world but we were still 'in our tunnel', if you want, and until then it didn't really arrive in our mind in England.

"We played the Bournemouth game on Saturday, we won it, and Sunday [Man] City lost, so the information for us was 'two wins to go'."



Tokyo organisers eye July 2021 for delayed Olympics

AFP | Tokyo

Tokyo Olympics organisers are eyeing next July as a start date for the postponed Games, Japanese media reported Sunday, following the historic decision to delay the event due to the coronavirus.

Given the ongoing pandemic and need for preparation time, the most likely plan would be for the Games to begin on July 23, 2021, public broadcaster NHK said, citing sources within the organising panel.

It came after Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike raised the idea on Friday of moving the event to a less hot and humid time of year.

She argued that this would make marathons and other races easier to endure, meaning they could be held in the capital instead of in northern Sapporo city, where the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had decided to move them.

The Tokyo 2020 team led by Yoshiro Mori is currently discussing possible dates with the IOC, according to the Asahi



A man wearing a face mask walks in the tunnel of a metro station with the board of the official 2020 Summer Olympics advertisement in Tokyo

Shimshun newspaper.

On Saturday, Mori told a Japanese TV station that "some kind of conclusion" would be reached within a week.

The Olympics were scheduled to open on July 24 this year with the Paralympics on August 25, but Japan announced last week it had secured agreement from the IOC to postpone the Games -- a decision unprecedented in

peacetime.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said they would be held in around a year instead as a testament to humanity's victory over the pandemic.

The decision had been seen to open options for Tokyo, with IOC chief Thomas Bach saying that "all the options are on the table" and rescheduling "is not restricted just to the summer



Olympic flame would be displayed for a month at the J-Village sports complex in Fukushima, which was used as a base camp for thousands of relief workers in radiation protection suits during the 2011 nuclear disaster

months".

Meanwhile, NHK said the Olympic flame would be displayed for a month at the J-Village sports complex in Fukushima, which was used as a base camp for thousands of relief workers in radiation protection suits during the 2011 nuclear disaster.

Star batsman Smith's leadership ban ends



Steve Smith plays a shot (file photo)

AFP | Sydney

A two-year leadership ban slapped on Steve Smith after the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa ended Sunday, leaving the master batsman free to skipper Australia again.

The 30-year-old captained the team until he was suspended for 12 months over a brazen attempt to alter the ball with sandpaper under his watch during a Test in Cape Town in 2018.

Part of his punishment included a further year-long exile from any leadership role, which has now expired.

Co-conspirator and former vice-captain David Warner was banned from any leadership role for life, although both have successfully resumed their international careers.

There have been calls for Smith to take back the Test captaincy from Tim Paine, but it remains unclear whether he wants to, with the 35-year-old seemingly intent on playing on.

Coach Justin Langer last year praised Paine's leadership as "brilliant" and said Smith may not want the "burden" of captaincy on top of batting pressures.

Aaron Finch is skipper of the

Twenty20 and one-day teams.

Smith told Channel Nine television on Sunday he was focused only on trying to stay physically and mentally fit during the coronavirus shutdown of Australian cricket.

He was supposed to be preparing for a big-money payday at the Indian Premier League, but the tournament has already been delayed until April 15 in response to the pandemic.

With India in a three-week lockdown in a bid to contain a spread of the virus, Smith admitted the IPL appeared unlikely to go ahead.

"I think the country's basically shut its borders until the 15th of April," he said.

"It's obviously not looking likely at the moment, I think there might be some meetings

over the next couple of days to discuss what the go is with it all.

"But just trying to stay physically fit and mentally fresh," he added. "If it goes ahead at some point, then great. If not, then there's plenty going on in the world at the moment. Just play it day by day."

All cricket in Australia has been cancelled, with the team's three-match T20 series against New Zealand this month a casualty after just one game.

"I'm just trying to stay physically and mentally fit and fresh and, if it goes ahead at some point, then great. And if not, there's plenty going on in the world at the moment"

STEVE SMITH

Giroud reveals he was desperate to join Inter

Goal | London

Chelsea striker Olivier Giroud has confirmed that he received offers from Tottenham and Lazio in January, while admitting that he found a potential move to Inter to reunite with Antonio Conte as his most appealing option.

Giroud found regular playing time hard to come by in the first half of the season, as new head coach Frank Lampard opted for Tammy Abraham as the main centre-forward in his Blues line up.

The World Cup winner is due to become a free agent in July, and was available to negotiate with any potential suitors during the last transfer window, but Chelsea were only prepared to sanction his departure if a replacement could be found.

Lampard was ultimately unable to bring in an extra frontman, meaning Giroud's services were retained, despite the fact that a number of clubs were chasing his signature - including Spurs and Lazio.

Goal reported that the 33-year-old had reached an agreement to join Inter, which would have seen him link up with ex-Blues boss Conte once again, two years after the Italian lured him to Stamford Bridge from Arsenal.

Giroud shook off the disappointment

of the failed transfer as Lampard restored the Frenchman to his starting line up, and he has since helped Chelsea solidify their place in the Premier League's top four.

It has been suggested that the veteran forward could now extend his stay at the Bridge beyond the summer, but he has conceded that he was eager to move onto pastures new at the start of the year.

"Everyone knows that the sporting project of Inter was the most interesting for me," Giroud told Telefoot.

"Lazio and Tottenham also looked for me. At one point, it was a question of where I wanted to go to play. I spoke to Conte on the phone."

When asked whether he would like to remain in west London beyond the current season, which has been suspended due to the coronavirus



"Everyone knows that the sporting project of Inter was the most interesting for me"

OLIVIER GIROUD

outbreak, Giroud responded: "Yes. Yes. Of course.

"There are a few months to go, games to win and maybe another trophy, and after, you know, I think I have two [or] three nice seasons in front of me.

"It's not the time to talk about contracts and everything but I will make a decision when it comes."

Barcelona donates 30,000 masks to help fight coronavirus

AP | Barcelona

Barcelona has delivered 30,000 masks to the Catalonia government to help fight the coronavirus pandemic, the club said Saturday.

The masks were made in China and donated by insurance company Taiping, a regional partner of the club.

Barcelona said the "daily use" masks will be distributed to nursing homes.

The club added it is working through its foundation "to do as much as possible to help with this crisis, both locally and internationally."

"The club has put itself at the service of the health authorities to help to fulfill and



The Camp Nou stadium is illuminated in Barcelona

enforce all its instructions, recommendations and orders to combat contagion of the virus and alleviate its effects as much as possible," it said in a statement.

Barcelona on Thursday reduced the salaries of its players because of the coronavirus crisis.

Olympic qualification process and late season being studied: Coe

Reuters | Tokyo

World Athletics is working to restart a shuttered athletics season and studying any changes that may be needed in the qualifying process for the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics, president Seb Coe said on Friday.

The governing body is hoping to offer a series of meetings that may begin in August and run to October so athletes can get back in to competition as quickly as possible when it is safe to do so due to the coronavirus pandemic, Coe said in a letter addressed to the athletics community.

"We don't yet know the date for the Games next year," Coe said, "but once they (the International Olympic Committee and the Japanese government) have made it, we will look at



Athletes run past a display of awards during the Diamond League (file photo)

what, if any, impact that decision has on our World Athletics Championships Oregon 21."

Many expect the championships in Eugene, Oregon, to be moved to 2022.

Athletics' global governing body also hopes to provide an answer as soon as possible to any changes to the Tokyo Olym-

pics qualifying process, Coe said.

World Athletics began reviewing its Olympic qualification process after the IOC and sports federations agreed that all athletes currently qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Games will remain qualified for next year's event.

"In athletics the primary qualification avenue is by meeting the entry standards set out in March 2019," Coe added.

"Once those places are allocated, the remaining athletes are drawn from the world ranking list. As of today, all athletes who have met the entry standards for their event will remain qualified for the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021. This is approximately 50% of the places."

A major review is also underway of the global calendar of events, not just for the next two years which will see some major disruptions, but for the long term.

The decision comes as athletics' Diamond League series announced on Friday it has canceled its meetings through June but hopes to have a late season.

