



COVID-19 takes one more life; 534 new cases

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The Ministry of Health announced yesterday the death of an 85-year-old female citizen from the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Her passing brought the overall number of coronavirus-related deaths in the Kingdom to 84, including 11 in just three days.

The Health Ministry expressed its condolences to the victim's family.

Meanwhile, it was announced early this morning that out of 8,609 COVID-19 tests conducted yesterday, 534 new cases were detected.

From these, 326 were expatriate workers, 200 were contacts of active cases, and eight were travel-related.

There were also 411 additional recoveries from the virus yesterday, the Health Ministry said. After confirming that the patients were free of COVID-19, they were released from their respective isolation and treatment centres, bringing the total number of discharged in Bahrain to 20,928.

The total number of current active cases went to 5,227, of which 79 are receiving treatment, with 43 in critical condition. The remaining 5,184 cases are stable.

The total tested increased to 545,125.

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03 The Kingdom's business elite

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL CASES
26,239

ACTIVE CASES
5,227

DEATHS
84

DISCHARGED
20,928

NEW CASES
534

CRITICAL
43

210 fils (includes VAT)



New stimulus package

Government approves additional measures to mitigate economic impacts of COVID-19

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The Cabinet approved yesterday a number of initiatives aimed at mitigating the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19)

They include paying 50 per cent of the salaries of insured Bahrainis in the most-affected private sector companies for three months, shouldering the electricity and water bills of all Bahraini subscribers for their primary residences for the same three-month period, and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen) supporting the most-affected economic sectors.

These initiatives are in line with the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to unify national efforts to confront the repercussions of the pandemic at the local level, and to protect the health and safety of citizens and residents, along with the continuity of the Kingdom's programmes to enhance the sustainable development march.

They are also in line with the decisions of the government, led by His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and the national efforts, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Pre-

mier, to combat COVID-19 in Bahrain.

The approvals came during the Cabinet's regular weekly session yesterday, chaired by HRH the Prime Minister and attended by HRH the Crown Prince.

Based on its consultations with the legislative branch and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), and according to their visions, the government's decision to pay half of the salaries of insured Bahrainis in the most-affected private sector institutions, starting from July, is in accordance with terms and conditions to be set by the Labour and Social Development Ministry, and in coordination with relevant authorities.

The payment of electricity and water dues of all Bahraini subscribers from July for three months is based on their bill not exceeding that of the same period last year.

Tamkeen's support for the most-affected economic sectors in Bahrain is in accordance with the terms and conditions that will be approved by its Board of Directors.

Following the government's announcement of the new initiatives, Minister of Finance and National Economy Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa commented: "We review our necessary and targeted



HRH the Crown Prince attends the session

economic interventions on an ongoing basis, always ready to make adjustments or take additional steps, where we anticipate emerging pressures or particular sector requirements.

"This additional package of measures announced today will further reduce pressure on householders and families across the Kingdom, at the same time as supporting the many jobs of those employed in the private sector, as their employers continue to respond to the unique economic challenges posed by COVID-19.

"Our COVID-19 response objectives remain unchanged—to protect the health and employment of our citizens, and the long-term strength of our economy.



HRH the Prime Minister chairs yesterday's Cabinet session

Gratitude for HM the King's support

The Shura Council yesterday hailed the fatherly care of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for Bahraini citizens, and his keenness to provide them with great support during the challenging times caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic across the world.

The Council said it valued the decisions taken by the Cabinet based on HM the King's directives. They added that they are proud of the efforts by the government, under the leadership of HRH the Prime Minister and with the support of HRH the Crown Prince, to set up programmes and launch initiatives to support citizens

and the establishments in the private sector.

The Council said it would remain supportive of all royal initiatives and directives that achieve the interests of Bahrain and citizens.

Council of Representatives Speaker Fawzia bin Abdullah Zainal also expressed deep gratitude to the government for its new economic stimulus package.

The Speaker affirmed the Representative Council's keenness to provide full support for all decisions and measures aimed at enabling the country to overcome the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Until such time as we can return Bahrain to delivering strong and sustainable economic performance and growth, the Government remains committed to early, targeted and effective economic intervention and support."

SECURITY CALL

'Arms embargo on Iran a must for stability and peace'

BY P UNNIKRISHNAN
 TDT | Manama

An urgent call has gone out for the United Nations to extend an expiring weapons embargo on Iran to maintain peace and stability in the region.

This appeal was made by U.S. Special Representative for Iran and Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary of State, Brian Hook, who spoke at a Press conference last night alongside Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani.

"I stand here today, shoulder to shoulder with Bahrain, to call on the UN Security Council to extend the UN embargo on Iran," said Hook.

The U.S. Special Representative highlighted U.S. efforts in working with regional governments to maintain security and stability in the Middle East, while warning of drastic consequences with a failure to extend the arms embargo, which



Hook, left, with Dr. Al Zayani at yesterday's conference

expires in October.

"From maritime security to economic prosperity to religious freedom, we will continue to work together; but if our restrictions on Iran are permitted to expire, this work will become much harder," he said. "The world cannot allow this to happen."

Hook stressed that the U.S. partnership with Bahrain is strong, and that it is based on trust and will continue to grow. "We remain committed to Bahrain's security and to our deep

and effective partnerships to counter Iran-backed terror," he said.

He blamed Iran on spending major revenues for funding terrorism, and noted that the country is in big financial trouble while not being bothered to spend on its citizens' welfare.

Hook called on the brotherly countries in the region to support extending the arms embargo.

"They are unanimous in their view that the last thing this region needs is more Irani weap-

ons," he said. "They must extend the embargo and give stability in the region a chance so that future generations can flourish."

Hook intends to visit countries who believe that the embargo is a must to maintain peace and stability. He has already been to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, and is planning to visit three more nations.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Minister mentioned that Hook held a meeting with His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Dep-

"We remain committed to Bahrain's security and to our deep and effective partnerships to counter Iran-backed terror"

U.S. SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR IRAN AND SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE, BRIAN HOOK

uty Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

He thanked the U.S. and Fifth Fleet for their continuous support to Bahrain.

The Foreign Minister accused Iran for funding nearly 29,000 attacks, which has disrupted civilian life in Bahrain, and also blamed Iran for being behind the Saudi Aramco attack.

On these circumstances, he demanded that the UN continue its arms embargo on Iran for peace and stability in this region.

HRH the Crown Prince issues edicts

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His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, issued a number of edicts yesterday, appointing directors for various departments and authorities within the ministry.

Shaikh Ali bin Salman bin Ali

Al Khalifa has been appointed as Future Generation Reserve Fund director at the Ministry of Finance and National Economy.

For his part, Mohammed Mohmood Sahreef has been appointed as Public and International Relations director at the Electricity and Water Authority.

Meanwhile, Adnan Saeed Mohammed Al Mokhraq has

been appointed as Production Development director at the National Oil and Gas Authority; and Yousif Ahmed Isa Dakhil has been appointed as Programme Development director at the Labour Market Regulatory Authority.

The edicts come into effect on the date of their issuance and are to be published in the Official Gazette.

BAHRAIN-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING



Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani received yesterday U.S. Special Representative for Iran and Senior Policy Advisor to Secretary of State, Brian Hook, who was in Bahrain on a tour in the region. The meeting covered the deep-rooted relations and the strategic partnership between Bahrain and the U.S. as well as efforts to maintain the security and stability of the region. Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for International Affairs Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa and U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain Justin Siberell also attended the meeting. Above, officials at the meeting.

HRH Princess Sabeeka congratulates Shaikha Hessa on IOC Achievement Diploma

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HRH Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, Wife of HM King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and Supreme Council for Women president sent a cable of congratulations to Shaikha Hessa bint Khalid Al-Khalifa, on obtaining the 'International Olympic Committee Achievement Diplo-

ma 2020', in recognition of her role in promoting women's football, supporting women's sports and raising women's awareness on the importance of exercising.

HRH Princess Sabeeka hailed the Bahrain Olympic Committee board member and the Bahrain Football Association (BFA) Women's Committee head's efforts and initiatives in support of wom-

en's football, which contributed to developing this competitive sport and earned Bahrain good achievements. She lauded Shaikha Hessa's activities to represent Bahrain at different regional and international sports arenas, and her keenness to reflect Bahraini women's honourable image, paying tribute to HM the King for his directives and aspirations.

HH SHAIKH NASSER RECEIVES PRIME MINISTER'S COURT UNDERSECRETARY



HM the King's representative for humanitarian work and youth affairs, National Security Advisor and Supreme Council for Youth and Sport chairman, HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa received yesterday, the Prime Minister's Court Undersecretary Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. HH Shaikh Nasser (right) wished Shaikh Mohammed success in assuming his responsibilities as the Prime Minister's Court Undersecretary. He also lauded Shaikh Mohammed's administrative experience and discussed with him ways of boosting joint cooperation mainly in the sport and youth sectors.

Preserve heritage mosques

Final anti-dumping duties to be imposed on Bahraini imports of tiles and ceramic products from China and India

TDT | Manama

Necessary procedures are to be taken to preserve historical and heritage mosques such as the Ahmed Al Fateh Mosque and the Ahmed Al Fateh Grave in Manama.

This was directed yesterday by His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa as he chaired the regular weekly Cabinet session yesterday, attended by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier.

HRH the Prime Minister requested the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments to cooperate with the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) on the preservation work.

Final anti-dumping duties to be imposed on certain products

The Cabinet also agreed yesterday to impose final anti-dumping duties on Bahraini imports of tiles and ceramic products from China and India, in compliance with the resolution of the Industrial Cooperation Committee of the GCC states.

The session instructed the Ministry of Finance and National Economy and Customs Affairs to take the necessary measures, as highlighted in the memorandum submitted for this purpose by the Finance Minister and the Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister.

Athletes' bonus scale approved

The Cabinet approved the bonus and allowance scale for athletes, in appreciation of their

achievements for the Kingdom at regional and international sports gatherings.

The scale determines the value of bonuses to be granted to the athletes of national clubs that clinch one of the first three places at GCC, Arab, Asian or international individual or collective sports competitions.

Vessel Traffic Management System charges cancelled

The Cabinet agreed to cancel Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS) charges included in the sixth schedule accompanying the ministerial edict 15/2017 on Ports and Maritime Navigation charges.

Bahrain's accession to Bonn Convention endorsed

The session endorsed the Kingdom's accession to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) issued by the UN Environment Programme.

The move is within the framework of the government's keenness to enhance the conservation of migratory species and their habitats.

Students congratulated

HRH the Premier extended congratulations to graduates from the General Certificate of Secondary Education for their success and distinction, despite the exceptional circumstances and challenges resulting from the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19), calling on them to continue their success path.

HRH the Prime Minister extended thanks to parents, and the Education Ministry's affiliates for their dedication and perseverance to finish the academic year. Also during yesterday's session, HRH the Prime Minister lauded the Kingdom's achievements in the field of housing, and extended thanks to service ministers for their field visits to villages and towns to collect first-hand information about local citizens' needs, citing the Housing Minister's recent visit to the Al Salhiya village.

Parliamentary Proposals

- » The Cabinet approved a proposal on naming several imams and muezzins in the Kingdom's main mosques. Imams and muezzins will be named for 10 mosques this year.
- » The session endorsed a plan under which the Ministry of Health will create a one-day surgery hospital system. The new medical facilities will be provided with the necessary facilities and modern equipment.
- » The Cabinet endorsed the government's response to a proposal on granting housing units for those who served Bahrain in the media, academic, and other fields in case of their infirmity or accidents, or to their families in case of their death.

HRH the Premier also directed the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning to reschedule the financial dues with the Ministry on some of the butchers in the Manama Central Market and the Jidhafs Market. The Cabinet condemned the Houthi militias' terrorist attacks against civilians and civilian targets in Saudi Arabia using ballistic missiles and drones, and commended the success of the Saudi Air Defence Forces and their efficiency in dealing with these attacks.

The session further welcomed the resolutions of the Arab League Council at the ministerial level on Libya, noting that they reinforce the efforts and initiatives to resolve the Libyan crisis peacefully. The Cabinet also backed the Arab League Council's resolutions in support of the stances of Egypt and Sudan regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The session condemned the Iranian and Turkish military intervention in northern Iraq, noting that it violates the sovereignty of a sisterly Arab country, constitutes interference in Iraq's internal affairs and poses a threat to regional security and stability.

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The Kingdom's business elite

Forbes Middle East names five Bahraini companies among region's top 100 Arab family businesses

● **YK Almoayyed and Sons, Yusuf Bin Ahmed Kanoo, Abdulla Yousif Fakhro Group, Al Zayani Investments, and Haji Hassan Group all included in prestigious list**

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Five Bahraini companies have been named on a prestigious Forbes list of the Top 100 Arab Family Businesses in the Middle East.

They include YK Almoayyed and Sons, Yusuf Bin Ahmed (YBA) Kanoo, Abdulla Yousif Fakhro Group, Al Zayani Investments, and Haji Hassan Group.

YK Almoayyed and Sons was the list's top-ranked Bahraini business (30th in the top 100), while YBA Kanoo was second (39th). Abdulla Yousif Fakhro Group was ranked third in the Kingdom (74th), Al Zayani Investments fourth (80th), and Haji Hassan Group fifth (99th).

"We are of course very proud to be one of the region's top family businesses, and the first ranked in Bahrain," YK Almoayyed chairman Farouk Yousif Almoayyed told TDT yesterday.

"We are keen to continue the tradition of supporting the Bahraini economy, especially during these difficult economic times."

Almoayyed said that one of the keys to his company's success over the years is its open-door policy to both customers and staff.

"When I came into the business as a young man, I always



"We are very proud to be one of the region's top family businesses, and the first ranked in Bahrain; we are keen to continue the tradition of supporting the Bahraini economy, especially during these difficult economic times."

YK ALMOAYYED CHAIRMAN FAROUK YOUSUF ALMOAYYED

"This honour is a true testament for the Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo family, and adds more pride to our 130th anniversary celebrations"

YBA KANOO DIRECTOR NABEEL KANOO



thought that I should put myself in the customer's place whenever I make a decision, even if I lose sometimes; and that has kept our customers happy," he explained.

"We always have an open-door policy—we deal with all kinds of feedback, either from our staff or from a customer—and try to solve the problem effectively."

"We've had a lot of repeat customers over time. I think that somebody who buys from you once and they get bad treatment, they will not come again; but if satisfied, they will come back 10 times."

Addressing the current economic challenges brought about by the coronavirus (COVID-19), Almoayyed said that his company has been able to manage the impact of the pandemic, and has even been able to keep its Bahraini and expatriate staff fully intact throughout the crisis.

"With the help of the government's economic stimulus package initiatives, we have been able to overcome the most severe times over the last three months," Almoayyed explained.

"We have not laid off any of our staff, both Bahrainis and ex-

patriates, and we hope that the worst is over. "It is a difficult time but we have managed to get through it, and we have also been benevolent in relieving a lot of the pressure with payments from some of our clients."

Almoayyed said that despite the current economic climate, a positive outlook must be maintained by businesses, especially young entrepreneurs who may be looking to launch their ventures in the near future.

"This is the worst time unfortunately for young entrepreneurs to start, but we must take it day by day and be optimistic rather than pessimistic," he encouraged. "We must deal with something when it happens, rather than keep worrying about it."

Meanwhile, YBA Kanoo director Nabeel Kanoo expressed his delight in his company being included in the Forbes list, especially as it is marking 130 years in operation.

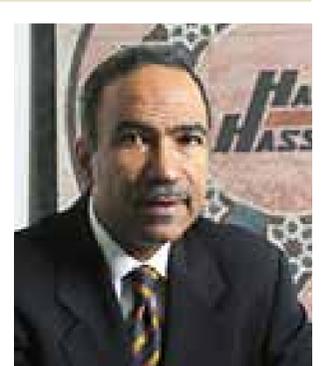
"Being one of the Top 100 Family Businesses in the Middle East, and the second ranking in Bahrain, is a true testament for the Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo



Abdulla Yousif Fakhro Group chairman Dr. Esam Fakhro



Al Zayani Investments chairman Nawaf Khalid Al Zayani



Haji Hassan Group chairman Adel Hassan Al A'ali

family, and adds more pride to our 130th anniversary celebrations," Kanoo told TDT.

"The success that the brand has achieved in its long years in business is attributed to the hard work of six generations of Kanoo family members who dedicated their lives to growing and expanding the group."

"I would like to thank the leaderships of the GCC countries for their continuous support to our business which has been pivotal in our journey in trade. I would also like to thank both our loyal

clients who continue to trust our brand and our hardworking employees who without them the Group wouldn't have achieved this prestigious status."

Approximately 200 Arab family-owned businesses in the region were studied by Forbes Middle East in compiling the top 100 list.

Forbes considered group investments in regional and global stock exchanges and real estate assets; business diversification and the number of sectors in which they have significant operations; types of business ac-

tivity and to what extent they have been affected by the current crisis; the companies' number of employees; the number of countries they are present in and geographical diversification; and their dates of establishment.

Atop the ranking is Mansour Group from Egypt, while Al Futtaim Group from the UAE was ranked second and Olayan Group from Saudi Arabia third.

Saudi had the highest number of businesses in the top 100 with 36.

The full list can be viewed on forbesmiddleeast.com.

Bahrainouna nationalism plan 81 pc complete

TDT | Manama

Nearly 81 per cent of the initiatives launched as part of the 'Bahrainouna National Plan' to promote loyalty and patriotism among citizens here are progressing steadily, said a top official.

The plan, launched in March last year by Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, comes as part of a comprehensive vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to reinforce the spirit of belonging to the nation and reinforce the values of nationalism. Some 105 initiatives, targeting various sections of society, especially youth, were rolled out as part of the plan.

In yesterday's announcement, Hala Sulaiman, Bahrainouna's Executive Office Director, said the project is attracting great interaction and engagement both from partners in the private-public sector and NGOs.

The plan's initiatives, as per the directives of the Follow-up Committee led by the Minister of Interior, have five main streams focusing on belonging, public relations, media cam-



"We are honoured to play a part in reinforcing our unique culture and values for all those who live in Bahrain"

BBK GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DR ABDULRAHMAN SAIF

paigns, curricula and legislative.

A set of national performance indicators are also being developed to gauge citizens' patriotism and attitude towards 'national values'.

The effectiveness of the initiatives launched and their impact on the community will also be reviewed.

On the role of the private sector, Hala hailed the role of Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK) in implementing "Bahrainouna" initiatives.

BBK Group Chief Executive, Dr Abdulrahman Saif, thanked the Interior Minister for ensuring the successful implementation of the plan's initiatives.

"The Bahraini identity is gen-

uine and solid in all Bahrainis, and all of us are ambassadors of our beloved country, Bahrain, and we are honoured to play a part in reinforcing our unique culture and values for all those who live in Bahrain," he said.

He highlighted the bank's role in achieving community responsibility and partnership, especially during the current situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The bank, he said, is supporting the 'Feena Khair' and "Together We Care" campaigns to back workers affected by the coronavirus and postponed installments. They are also contributing to national campaigns to promote precautionary measures against the virus.

BDF Commander-in-Chief receives outgoing

U.S. ambassador



Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa received the outgoing US Ambassador to Bahrain, Justin Siberell yesterday. The Commander-in-Chief praised the efforts exerted by Siberell during his tenure to consolidate relations between the two countries and wished him success in his future missions. Above, the BDF Commander-in-Chief (right) with the Ambassador.

BDF commander-in-chief receives UK ambassador



Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa met with the British Ambassador to Bahrain, Roderick Drummond yesterday. The Commander-in-Chief hailed the exceptional and long-standing relations between the two countries and lauded their cooperation across several areas, including the exchange of military expertise and cooperation. Above, the BDF Commander-in-Chief (right) receiving the British Ambassador.

Court revokes conviction of terror cell member

● The case initially involved 24 defendants including a lawyer, a businessman and a policeman from Bahrain and Saudi.

● The terrorist cell, Imam's Army, initially planned to attack the Interior Ministry, Bahrain International Airport, Bahrain International Circuit, the US Navy base, Bahrain Defence Force, Shaikh Isa Air Base

TD | Manama



Representational image

The First Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal yesterday ordered to revoke the conviction of a Saudi national who was earlier sentenced by a local court here to 15 years of imprisonment for his involvement in a terrorism case that is commonly known as the Jaish Al Imam (Imam's Army) case.

The court's decision came after acknowledging that the man has been already convicted in the same case by Saudi courts, which upheld his conviction twice, according to his defence attorney.

The lawyer presented the

court with documents proving that her client has already been sentenced to imprisonment in Saudi Arabia and lost his final appeal against the verdict in 2018, demanding to waive the sentences issued against him here.

According to court files, the case initially involved 24 defendants from Bahrain and Saudi, and the list of defendants included a lawyer, a businessman and a policeman. They first received different sentences in 2013 after being convicted of forming and joining a terrorist cell, Imam's Army, which carried out and planned terrorist

attacks on military and vital establishments in the Kingdom.

Four of the defendants, including two fugitives, were sentenced to life in prison; six, including the appellant, got 15 years of imprisonment; while 14 were acquitted.

The defendants, excluding the appellant, got their sentences upheld after challenging it before two courts here; the Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal and the Court of Cassation.

The evidence submitted to the court proved that the cell planned to attack several vital sites around the Kingdom, including the Interior Ministry,

Bahrain International Airport, Bahrain International Circuit, the US Navy base in Juffair, Bahrain Defence Force, Shaikh Isa Air Base, and other important sites.

The terror cell was reportedly waiting for instructions from Iran for a "zero hour" to carry out massive attacks in Bahrain using light and medium weapons, in addition to homemade explosives and ammunition.

Witness testimonies indicated that it is run from Iran by a member of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, who reportedly allocated around \$80,000 (BD30,160) to finance the group.

Capital Police arrest two for robbery attempt



Representational image courtesy of Reuters

TD | Manama

Two individuals have been arrested while attempting to steal the contents of cars in parking lots in the Capital Governorate, the Interior Ministry has announced.

The Ministry said yesterday that the Capital Governorate Police director-general reported the incident.

He noted that a police patrol suspected the men while they were trying to open the door of a car with tools. After searching them, some stolen items were found, including pills that were suspected to be narcotics, which were confiscated.

Legal proceedings have been taken against the pair, said the director general.

Meanwhile, two other individuals have been arrested for forced robbery after stealing a wallet from a man, the Interior Ministry also announced yesterday.

The Criminal Investigation



On searching the two arrested robbers, stolen items including suspected narcotics pills were found.

and Forensic Science director-general reported the incident.

He said that the directorate had received a case from the victim, in which he highlighted that while walking in Karana, two men approached him and took his wallet after threatening him with a knife.

The director-general added that an investigation into the case led to identifying and arresting the criminals.

Legal proceedings are being taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution.

Verdicts upheld against human trafficking group

● The sentenced consisted of a Bahraini man, two Filipino men, and five women of the same nationality—with all six foreign defendants ordered to be deported after completing their imprisonment while also being fined BD2,000 each

TD | Manama



Representational image courtesy of Reuters

A group of men and women, who were earlier convicted of forcing two Asian women into prostitution, had their appeals rejected yesterday by the First Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal.

The eight appellants were previously sentenced by the First High Criminal Court to seven years of imprisonment

each, in addition to collectively paying for the repatriation expenses of the victims, who are both Filipino nationals.

The group consisted of a Bahraini man, two Filipino men, and five women of the same nationality. All foreign defendants

were ordered to be deported after completing their imprisonment sentences here and they were also fined BD2,000 each.

The case emerged when the authorities here were officially informed by its Filipino counterpart about an ongoing inves-

tigation into human trafficking, which involved a number of Filipino nationals, who exploited the victims by forcing them into the flesh trade and making a profit from the illegal activity.

The information received from the Filipino authorities also included that the victims' freedom was restricted, their passports were taken away, and they were physically assaulted to force them into prostitution.

A probe was launched and initial findings indicated that the victims were forced into vice in the past two years (2018, 2019), and that the defendants physically assaulted both women while threatening them of never being allowed to return to their country.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendants of restricting the victims' freedom and exploiting them, in addition to depending on vice for a living and running a brothel.

Virtual seminar to be held on protecting commercial accounts

TD | Manama

The Bahrain Chamber, in cooperation with the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security at the Ministry of Interior, will be holding on Thursday at 10.30am a virtual seminar themed "Pro-

tecting Commercial Accounts from Cybercrimes". In this regard, the Bahrain Chamber extends an invitation to members of the business community, calling them to join this important virtual seminar.

It added that the seminar will be conducted in Arabic via the Zoom application.

Man who tried to kill neighbour over parking dispute loses appeal

TD | Manama

The First Supreme Court of Appeal yesterday upheld the punishment of a Bahraini man who was earlier convicted of attempting to murder his neighbour because of a dispute over a parking spot here last year.

The appellant was sentenced by a first degree court to seven years of imprisonment, after deliberating the case for more than one year over uncertainty with regards to his mental competence. Medical reports eventually proved that he was mentally fit and responsible for his actions.

The 23-year-old had reportedly stabbed his neighbour, a 48-year-old Bahraini man, multiple times and escaped before the arrival of the authorities. The incident took place in February last year in a residential neighbourhood in the town of Galali.

Investigations showed that the perpetrator stabbed the victim a few hours after they were both involved in a verbal dispute over a parking spot in the area. He was arrested later on the same day, while

the victim was rushed to the hospital.

Investigations further revealed that the appellant had the intention to kill the victim, as he prepared a knife for this purpose and monitored the victim's movements. He reportedly stabbed the victim and continued stabbing him with the intention of killing him and later fled the scene, leaving the victim in a pool of blood.

Following claims about his mental incompetence, the court ordered to admit him to the psychiatric hospital.

The hospital's report mentioned that the defendant does not suffer from any organic diseases or auditory hallucinations; however, it showed that he suffers from a slight mental retardation and cannot judge complex or medium matters.

It was also shown that the defendant has a file at the hospital since 2011, but he has not followed up with the hospital on a regular basis.

The report indicated that he was fully aware and responsible of his actions at the time he committed the crime.

NOTICE

This is to inform all the concerned that **Mr. Taher Mustafa Salem** Holding Egyptian Passport No. A12595067 CPR No. 811266362, is **not employed by VEGGIUS GENERAL TRADING COMPANY W.L.L.**

CR No. 120174-1 effective 30th June 2020

He is no longer authorized to represent the company or enter any business dealing on behalf of the company.



Villamar is now 'Harbour Heights'

● Show apartments open for viewings

● 90pc of units now sold

● Five-year payment plan available

TDI | Manama

GFH Properties, the real estate arm of GFH Financial Group, rebranded its Villamar development to "Harbour Heights".

According to GFH, the new name better captures the development's location and the significant enhancements being made to the project.

"Harbour Heights", GFH said, is set to emerge as Bahrain's most advanced, luxury mixed-use residential, retail, hospitality and leisure complex spread over 35,900 sqm featuring a built-up area of more than



With over 150 residential units handed over in the completed Tower B, we continue to show our commitment to delivering value to buyers, investors and our partners

SHAIKH HAMED AL KHALIFA
CEO OF GFH PROPERTIES



250,000 sqm.

The project has been recognized at a recent holding of The Ministerial Committee for the Development and Infrastructure Projects by Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister, who applauded GFH for its commitment to finishing the project and achieving the further transfer of units to owners, GFH added.

Commenting, Shaikh Hamed Al Khalifa, CEO of GFH Properties, said, "We're extremely pleased to announce another major milestone for this iconic project and the unveiling of a new brand "Harbour Heights" that better encapsulates the essence of this project and the world-class lifestyle destination that we are establishing."

"With over 150 residential

units handed over in the completed Tower B, we continue to show our commitment to delivering value to buyers, investors and our partners."

Show apartments, which have been upgraded and furnished to the most exacting standards, are ready to view with a limited number of units available to purchase with a five-year payment plan, GFH said.

Alba achieves 23 million working-hours without LTI

TDI | Manama

Aluminium Bahrain (Alba), the world's largest aluminium smelter ex-China, achieved 23 million working-hours without any Lost Time Injury (LTI) yesterday.

Commenting on this first-time historical milestone, Alba's Chief Executive Officer Ali Al Baqali said: "A strong Safety culture is built over time; it is never given. Our pro-active commitment and uncompromising approach toward Safety has helped us achieve 23 million working-hours without any Lost Time Injury (LTI) for the first time in our soon-to-be Golden Jubilee of operations."

He added: "As we approach the hot summer months, we must be more Safety-Conscious to ensure the safety and well-being of all our people."

Alba has been consistently marking record-breaking Safety achievements -- 15 million working-hours without LTI



Chief Executive Officer Ali Al Baqali

on 21 December 2019 and 20 million working-hours without LTI on 07 April 2020. Alba has also been awarded in 2020 with international awards for its Safety performance -- five major International Safety Awards from National Safety Council, 2020 Gold Medal Health and Safety Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) and International Safety Award with Merit 2020.

Banks hold back Saudi Arabia

Reuters

Saudi Arabian stocks ended lower yesterday, hurt by losses in banking shares, while the indexes in Qatar and Dubai extended their retreat to a straight fourth day.

Saudi Arabia's benchmark index slipped 0.1 per cent in choppy trading, with National Commercial Bank, which closed up 5pc in the previous session, declining 4.5pc and Al Rajhi Bank losing 1pc.

NCB, the kingdom's biggest lender, said on Thursday it had signed an initial agreement with smaller lender Samba Financial Group to create a combined entity with almost \$214 billion in assets.

But Samba jumped 4.9pc, adding to the previous session's gains.

The offer would value each Samba share at 27.42 to 29.32 riyals (\$7.82), giving it a maximum market value of \$15.63 billion, 27.5pc above its market value of nearly \$12.3 billion based on Wednesday's closing price.

Dubai's main share index edged down 0.2pc, with sharia-compliant lender Dubai Islamic Bank DISB.DU falling 0.8pc and logistic firm Aramex down 1.7pc.

The Abu Dhabi index dropped 0.7pc, depressed by a 1.4pc fall in the country's largest lender First Abu Dha-



Traders on the floor of a stock market in GCC (file)

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▼ 0.1pc to 7,287 pts
ABU DHABI	▼ 0.7pc to 4,275 pts
DUBAI	▼ 0.2pc to 2,081 pts
QATAR	▼ 0.8pc to 9,052 pts
EGYPT	▼ 1.9pc to 10,750 pts
BAHRAIN	▲ at 1,278 pts
OMAN	▼ 0.1pc to 3,521 pts
KUWAIT	▼ 0.6pc to 5,620 pts

bi Bank.

Outside the Gulf, the Egyptian blue-chip index fell 0.9pc, hurt by a 1.2pc fall in Commercial International Bank Egypt.

Elsewhere, Palm Hills Development, which reported a drop in first-quarter profit, retreated 1.2pc.

Kim Kardashian sells 20pc stake in beauty brand to Coty



AFP | New York

Kim Kardashian West has inked a deal to sell 20 per cent of her make-up brand KKW Beauty to American cosmetics giant Coty for \$200 million, the pair announced yesterday.

The agreement values the three-year-old company at \$1 billion.

It will see Coty take "overall responsibility" for the brand's skincare, hair-care, personal care and nail products, they said in a statement.

"This relationship will allow me to focus on the creative elements that I'm so passionate about while benefiting from the incredible resources of Coty, and launching my products around the world," Kardashian said.

The purchase is expected to be completed in the third quarter of the fiscal year 2021 and sees Coty deepen its collaboration with the celebrity Kardashian-Jenner family.

In January, Coty, acquired a 51 pc stake in Kylie Jenner's cosmetics brand.

Al Hawaj, CrediMax present '5 Hot Days'

TDI | Manama

Big discounts and amazing prizes are at stake as Al Hawaj and CrediMax opens their "5 Hot Days" promotion from 1st to 5th of July 2020. Join the E-affle by shopping with a worth of at least BD 20 from participating Al Hawaj outlets. Pay by CrediMax card and customers will get an extra 5 per cent discount.

Cash prizes, gift items, home appliances and branded luxury items are to be given away to raffle-draw winners. Shoppers can enjoy discounted prices on Al Hawaj items such as perfumes, cosmetics, watches, leather goods, bags and luggage, accessories, and gift items.

Cash prizes include US\$1,500,



Al Hawaj and CrediMax open their "5 Hot Days" promotion 2020

US\$1,000, and US\$500 for the first, second and third prize winners, respectively. Other special prizes include Samsung LED TVs, perfume sets, valuable watches, Omnia gift cards, and luggage. Draw date will be on Tuesday, July 7th, 11 AM at Al Hawaj Salmanya.

Al Hawaj's participating

shops include Salmanya, Moda Mall, Bahrain City Centre, Al A'ali, Riffa, Bahrain Mall, Seef Mall, MCA, Muharraq, Watch Time shops (Seef, Bahrain Mall, and Oasis Mall Juffair), Samsonite (BCC), and American Tourister (Bahrain Mall). Please call 1616 0000 for more information.

Treasury bills fully subscribed

TDI | Manama

The BD 70 million Government Treasury Bills issued this week has been fully subscribed, said the Central Bank of Bahrain.

The bills, carrying a maturity of 91 days, are issued by the CBB, on behalf of Bahrain.

The issue date of the bills is 1st July 2020 and the maturity date is 30th September 2020.

The weighted average rate of interest is 2.31 per cent compared to 2.32pc of the previous issue on 24th June 2020.

The approximate average

price for the issue was 99.419pc with the lowest accepted price being 99.410pc.

This is issue No. 1815 (ISIN BH00040895U3) of Government Treasury Bills. With this, the total outstanding value of Government Treasury Bills is BD 2.110 billion.

Tender Invitation

غرفة البحرين
BAHRAIN CHAMBER

Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI) invites specialized companies to submit proposals for the following :

Tender Title	Tender Document Fees	Initial Bond	Tender Closing Date
Tender for Upgrading and Replacing Computer Network Equipment at Bait Al Tijjar Building	BD 50/- (Non-refundable)	BD 1500/-	2:00 P.M 13th July 2020

Guidelines for the submission of bids:

- Collect the tender documents (RFP) from the Finance Affairs Department in the 4th floor of BCCI headquarters in Sanabis (Bait Al Tijjar), effective from 30th June 2020 after paying the tender documents' fee in favor of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry.
- Documents to be enclosed with the bids:
 - The initial bond as per the above table should be in the form of certified cheque, bank guarantee, or insurance policy valid for the duration specified in the tender document.
 - A copy of the Commercial Registration Certificate for the current year, and copies of any other documents specified in the tender document.
 - A copy of valid BCCI membership.
- All the documents submitted with the tender should be stamped with the company's official seal.
- Offers must be submitted in sealed envelopes subscribed with the title of the tender and addressed to the CEO of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry. They should be deposited in the tender box available in the Finance Affairs Department (4th floor, East wing) before the closing date.
- This invitation form is part of the tender document.

For more details

please contact :
Tel: 17380072
17380066



Email:
oraibi@bahrainchamber.bh and
m.darwish@bahrainchamber.bh

UK PM vows 'Rooseveltian' response to virus crisis

London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday the coronavirus crisis needed the type of massive economic response US president Franklin D. Roosevelt mobilised to deal with the Great Depression.

Johnson told The Times newspaper's new radio station that Britain was heading for "bumpy times" as it struggles through its biggest economic contraction on record.

He intends to unveil a spending programme in a speech Tuesday his office has simply dubbed "build, build, build".

"I think this is the moment for a Rooseveltian approach to



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says the country needs a 'New Deal' like that US President Franklin D. Roosevelt organised to tame the 1930s' Great Depression

the UK," said Johnson. "I really think the investment will pay off."

Roosevelt launched the New Deal programme in the 1930s that created a comprehensive social care system whose legacy lives on to this day.

The first part of Johnson's initiative earmarks £1 billion (\$1.2 billion, 1.1 billion euros) for school repairs.

"The country has gone through a profound shock," he said.

"We really want to build back better, to do things differently, to invest in infrastructure, transport, broadband -- you name it."

Vietnam economy unexpectedly expands, bucking global plunge



Vietnam's economy unexpectedly expanded in the second quarter, shrugging off a coronavirus pandemic-caused global downturn, but it was still the country's slowest growth in nearly three decades

AFP | Hanoi

Vietnam's economy unexpectedly expanded in the second quarter, shrugging off a coronavirus pandemic-caused global downturn, but it was still the country's slowest growth in nearly three decades.

Gross domestic product rose by 0.36 per cent April to June compared to the same period last year, the General Statistics Office in Hanoi announced Monday.

"It's the lowest ever GDP growth since Vietnam started publishing GDP figures in 1991," official Duong Manh Hung was quoted as saying in local media.

Border closures from coronavirus restrictions took a punitive toll on Vietnam's exports, which fell nine percent year-on-year and were down 8.3 percent against the first three months of the year.

The country's economy is heavily reliant on exports, particularly after reaping the benefits of a trade spat between Washington and Beijing over

the last two years.

Both sides imposed punitive tit-for-tat tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of goods, prompting many China-based businesses to migrate to the perceived safer and cheaper manufacturing hub of Vietnam.

The country now aims to re-boot its economy after its apparent success in minimising fallout from coronavirus.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in April predicted the Southeast Asian nation would take the lead in Asia with a GDP growth rate of 2.7 percent in 2020.

Vietnamese prime minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc has said his government would try to keep growth above five percent.

"It will be very difficult, even impossible, for us to reach our targets in the context of the pandemic and with the broken global supply chain," said Duong Manh Hung.

The country has reported just 355 coronavirus cases and no deaths, a record it puts down to strict quarantine policies and tracing measures.

Top financial official resigns as Lebanon crisis deepens

● Alain Bifani is the second member of the government's negotiating team with the IMF to quit this month

AFP | Beirut

A senior member of Lebanon's finance ministry who is part of a government team negotiating with the International Monetary Fund resigned Monday over the mishandling of the country's economic crisis.

The move comes as talks stall between Lebanon and the International Monetary Fund to lift the nation out of its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war.

Alain Bifani is the second member of the government's



The Lebanese pound has been tumbling on the black market as the country faces its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war

negotiating team with the IMF to quit this month over the handling of the crisis by Lebanese officials.

Speaking at a new conference, Bifani, who held the post of director general at the finance

ministry for two decades, said he quit because he refuses "to be a partner or spectator to the country's collapse".

He accused "political and financial" powers in the country of hampering a major reform plan adopted by the government this year, one he helped formulate and which serves as a basis for IMF talks.

He said those responsible for dragging the country into its current slump refuse to contribute to financial recovery, choosing instead to protect their personal interests.

"They want the people to pay with the collapse of the Lebanese pound, open-ended controls on bank deposits and horrifying inflation" he told reporters.

Lebanon is in the grips of its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war with more than half of the population liv-

ing in poverty.

The Lebanese pound officially remains pegged at around 1,507 pounds to the dollar, but the black market rate reached a new record of 8,000 Monday morning, according to several specialised websites.

Banks have gradually restricted dollar transfers abroad and withdrawals since last year, effectively trapping dollar savings in accounts unless their owners want to convert them into pounds.

The IMF since May has been in talks with Lebanon which is looking to secure \$20 billion in external funding to exit its crisis.

"We claim that we want an IMF program, but we are doing everything possible to thwart reforms," Bifani said.

"If we continue in this way, unfolding events will bury the reform plan."

EU, Britain intensify talks on post-Brexit future

AFP | Brussels

The EU and Britain launched yesterday an intense five weeks of negotiations on a deal to define their post-Brexit relations, with London keen to wrap things up quickly.

The new round of talks in Brussels was the first held face-to-face since the coronavirus shutdown combined with the two sides' entrenched positions to stall progress.

Hopes are that the intensification of the discussions will make it possible to deliver results after previous sessions, of mainly video-link talks, achieved little.

But tempers have flared in recent days and Prime Minister Boris Johnson insisted on Saturday that Britain was quite ready to accept the consequences of no deal if common ground cannot be found.

The meetings will alternate weekly between Brussels and London throughout July and at the end of August, with London hoping for a deal as soon as



Angela Merkel has questioned whether Boris Johnson's government even wants a deal

possible.

The EU "remains calm and united in its principles and values," the EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier said in a tweet.

"We will make the most of our intensified talks over the coming weeks and months," he said.

The teams learned on Sunday that Barnier's UK counterpart

David Frost will be promoted to become Johnson's national security adviser.

Some commentators immediately suggested this could break the British side's focus, but a UK spokesman insisted Frost's new title does not mean he will be distracted from the ongoing discussions.

"David will remain chief negotiator for the EU talks until agreement is reached or until the talks end," the official said.

"This will remain his first priority. As we have made clear we do not anyway wish these talks to run on into the autumn."

UK ready to accept no deal

German Chancellor Angela Merkel -- whose government takes over the presidency of the EU next week -- has also sharpened her public stance, questioning whether London actually wants a deal.

"Of course it would be in the interest of Great Britain and all member states of the European Union to achieve an orderly withdrawal," Merkel told the Sueddeutsche Zeitung daily.

"But that presupposes that both sides want this," she added.

Britain left the EU on January 30 and a post-Brexit transition period in which it still benefits from de facto EU membership will come to an end on December 31.

Without a new agreement, the two sides would see ties reduced to minimum standards set by the World Trade Organization with high tariffs and serious disruptions to business.

'Unrealistic'

The talks on Monday are more streamlined than the first rounds which involved hundreds of negotiators.

Barnier and Frost now lead smaller teams armed with the political authority to break logjams.

In a tweet on Friday, Frost said he was coming to Brussels in "good faith".

But he warned: "This needs to be a real negotiation and some of the EU's unrealistic positions will have to change if we are to move forward."

The discussions began with a meeting between the two men and will continue throughout the week with short sessions on

the most problematic topics.

These include the guarantees of fair competition demanded by the EU in fiscal, social or environmental matters in order to avoid the emergence of a low-regulation economy on Europe's doorstep.

Other sore points are the role for the EU Court of Justice, access to British waters for European fishermen, as well as the form of the agreement.

This could be either a very broad deal covering all areas of the relationship, as the Europeans want, or a simple trade agreement with small sectoral side deals as sought by London.



Britain's chief negotiator David Frost and his EU counterpart Michel Barnier held face-to-face talks in Brussels in March



At the minimum, London wants to agree on the bare bones of a trade deal this summer -- at least politically, if not legally -- in order to offer businesses clarity well before the end of the year.

The EU is less pressed for time and believes that the necessary ratification by the European Parliament and others would require a deal by late October.

BP sells petrochemical arm to Ineos for \$5 bn

BP is targeting "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050

● BP's aromatic and acetyls business consists of 15 sites

AFP | London

British energy group BP, hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic slashing demand for oil, announced yesterday the sale of its petrochemical business to privately-owned rival Ineos for \$5.0 billion (4.4 bn euros).

"The agreed sale... will further strengthen BP's balance sheet and delivers its target for agreed divestments a year earlier than originally scheduled," a statement said.

BP chief executive Bernard Looney added: "I recognise this decision will come as a surprise and we will do our best to minimise uncertainty. I am confident however that the businesses will thrive as part of Ineos, a global leader in petrochemicals."

BP said that 1,700 staff employed by its petrochemical business worldwide were expected to transfer to Ineos on completion of the sale that meets a \$15-billion divestment target one year early.

"Today's agreement is another deliberate step in building a BP that can compete and succeed through the energy transition," Looney said.

The Irish national, who be-



“I recognise this decision will come as a surprise and we will do our best to minimise uncertainty. I am confident however that the businesses will thrive as part of Ineos, a global leader in petrochemicals”

BP CHIEF EXECUTIVE BERNARD LOONEY

came CEO of BP in February, is targeting "net zero" carbon emissions for the company by 2050.

In the immediate future, BP

must rebuild its finances, having earlier this month said it would take a hit of up to \$17.5 bn in the second quarter.

With the coronavirus fallout

ravaging global oil demand, BP has decided also to axe around 10,000 jobs, or 15 per cent of its global workforce.

After companies worldwide

closed their doors and airlines grounded planes at the height of the COVID-19 outbreak towards the end of the first quarter, oil prices dropped off a cliff, causing them to briefly turn negative.

Prices have however rebounded sharply in recent weeks as governments ease lockdowns and businesses slowly reopen.

'Top-class business'

"We are delighted to acquire these top-class businesses from BP, extending the Ineos position in global petrochemicals and providing great scope for expansion and integration with our existing business," Ineos founder and chairman Jim Ratcliffe said in a separate statement Monday.

BP's aromatic and acetyls business consists of 15 sites -- five in the Americas, two in Europe and eight across Asia.



Ineos will pay \$4.0 billion to BP upon completion of the deal -- and the remaining \$1.0 billion by June 2021.

"Aromatics provides the building blocks for the global polyesters industry, key to fibres, films and packaging," Ineos said in its statement.

"Acetyls support a wide range of downstream industries in food flavouring and preservation, pharmaceuticals, paints, adhesives and packaging," it added.

Ineos will pay \$4.0 billion to BP upon completion of the deal -- and the remaining \$1.0 billion by June 2021.

The sale "raises cash for a firm that has been severely hit by the pandemic, while streamlining and potentially reinventing the oil giant (BP) into a different kind of energy company", said Connor Campbell, analyst at Spreadex trading group.

Ineos, majority-owned by British billionaire Ratcliffe, employs around 22,000 people across 26 countries.

In 2005, Ineos spent \$9.0 billion on purchasing chemical assets and refineries from BP. Under previous CEO Bob Dudley meanwhile, BP kick-started a \$15-billion divestment programme.

In the past year, the energy major agreed also to sell its Alaska operations to Hilcorp Alaska for \$5.6 billion.

Together the disposals were initially aimed at recouping \$10 billion to finance BP's \$10.4-billion purchase of US oil and gas operations belonging to mining group BHP Billiton.

Zimbabwe halts stock trading, transfers to defend currency

Harare

Zimbabwe's stock exchange suspended trading yesterday following a weekend government order that also forced mobile money transfer platforms to temporarily halt business as authorities tried to protect the country's currency.

As galloping inflation has ratcheted up tension, the Information Ministry permanent announced in a surprise statement late Friday the immediate suspension of trade on the ZSE and transfers on mobile money platforms that are key to retail trade.

Information Ministry Permanent Secretary Nick Mangwana blamed mobile money transfer platforms for causing a gap between the market exchange rate for the Zimbabwean dollar and the official exchange rate.

He said government was in "possession of impeccable intelligence ... whereby mobile-based phone systems... are conspiring with the help of the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange -- either deliberately or inadvertently -- in illicit activities that are sabotaging the economy."

He singled out one service provider as "the central pivot of the galloping black market exchange rate therefore fuelling the incessant price hikes of goods and services that are bedevilling the economy and causing untold hardship to the



Inflation has been quickly eroding the value of the Zimbabwean dollar

Information Ministry Permanent Secretary Nick Mangwana blamed mobile money transfer platforms for causing a gap between the market exchange rate for the Zimbabwean dollar and the official exchange rate.

people of Zimbabwe."

Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE) chief executive Justin Bgoni then said "whilst we await guidance from our regulators on the operational modalities going forward, we notify out stakeholders that trading has been suspended until further notice".

The dramatic move to shut

the stock exchange and limit mobile money payments is "disturbing" according to economists.

"This is one more nail in the coffin for the economy and again no one can predict the long-term impact," said Professor Tony Hawkins of the University of Zimbabwe.

"It's going to cause uncertainty and negatively affect investor confidence. It means for those who have been using the stock exchange to secure their Zimdollars by buying shares, this has been closed up," said Hawkins.

- Another 'nail in the coffin' -

In the meantime, the central bank issued a statement that said mobile money transfers had not been completely blocked, but capped at the equivalent of

just about US\$87 per day.

It said "these unprecedented measures have been necessitated by the need to protect consumers on mobile money platforms which have been abused by unscrupulous... individuals and entities to create instability and inefficiencies in the economy."

But the latest announcements have added confusion to an already restless population in the crisis-ridden country.

The government order targeted in particular mobile money transfer agents who took in and paid out cash.

"For some people being a mobile money transfer agent was a means of livelihood though the commission they were getting from service providers so these people are going to find themselves with no income if that was their sole source of income," said Beavan Chirime, a Harare resident.

Zimbabwe is being buffeted by its worst economic crisis in over a decade, including scarcity of basics like fuel and cornmeal.

Prices of basic goods shoot higher every week as the value of the Zimbabwean dollar continues to tumble, pushing official annual inflation to 785.6 percent in May.

Last week the price of fuel went up by 152 percent after the central bank relaunched foreign currency auctions last held 16 years ago.

Broadway closed until at least Jan

New York

New York's iconic Broadway theater district will stay closed through the end of the year, its trade association said Monday, due to the unpredictability of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Broadway League did not set a date for performances to resume, but is offering refunds and exchanges for tickets purchased for all shows through January 3, 2021.

The association said plans to safely re-open New York's most bankable tourist attraction were being developed, including on screening and testing showgoers, along with cleaning and sanitizing protocols.

The Broadway League projected that performances could resume in early 2021

"over a series of rolling dates" to end its longest shutdown in history.

"The alchemy of 1,000 strangers bonding into a single audience fueling each performer on stage and behind the scenes will be possible again when Broadway theaters can safely host full houses," Thomas Schumacher, chairman of the board of The Broadway League, said in a statement.

"The safety of our cast, crew, orchestra and audience is our highest priority and we look forward to returning to our stages only when it's safe to do so," he added.

Along with virtually all events in the city, Broadway's theaters shut in mid-March, when 31 productions were running and eight were in rehearsals with spring opening dates.



The Broadway League did not set a date for performances to resume, but is offering refunds and exchanges for tickets purchased for all shows through

Iran to arrest Trump!



A portrait of Iranian Major-General Qassem Soleimani

Reuters

Iran has issued an arrest warrant for US President Donald Trump and 35 oth-

ers over the killing of top general Qassem Soleimani and has asked Interpol for help, Tehran prosecutor Ali Alqasimehr said on Monday, according to the Fars news agency.

The United States killed Soleimani, leader of the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, with a drone strike in Iraq on Jan. 3. Washington accused Soleimani of masterminding attacks by Iranian-aligned militias on US forces in the region.

Alqasimehr said the warrants had been issued on charges of murder and terrorist action. He said Iran had asked Inter-

pol to issue a "red notice" for Trump and the other individuals the Islamic Republic accuses of taking part in the killing of Soleimani.

Alqasimehr said the group included other US military and civilian officials but did not provide further details.

He said Iran would continue to pursue the matter after Trump's time in office ends.

The killing of Soleimani brought the United States and Iran to the brink of armed conflict after Iran retaliated by firing missiles at American targets in Iraq several days later.

Blast kills 23 at cattle market in southern Afghanistan

Reuters | Kabul

At least 23 civilians were killed in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province and dozens were wounded when rockets hit a cattle market yesterday, Afghan government and Taliban officials said.

The warring sides blamed each other for the attack on the open-air weekly cattle market in Sangin district, where hundreds of villagers from neighbouring districts had gathered to trade sheep and goats.

A spokesman for Helmand's governor said several rockets fired by Taliban insurgents landed close to the cattle market, killing 23 civilians, including children.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman said the Afghan army fired several rounds of mortar bombs on civilian houses and the cattle market, killing dozens of villagers.

Khushakyar, who goes by a single name, said he was trying to sell a calf when the rockets hit the market. He said his two nephews were killed and his son was wounded.

"I saw around 20 bodies on the ground," he said, adding that dozens were wounded and "livestock lay dead next to men."

Some residents of Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold, said the shelling occurred during fierce clashes between Taliban militants and government security forces in residential areas surrounding the market.

News in brief

● Abu Dhabi will allow people to enter the emirate if they have tested negative for COVID-19 infection within the previous 48 hours, the local government media office said yesterday. Abu Dhabi, the largest and wealthiest member of the United Arab Emirates federation, has had a ban on people entering since June 2. It eased some restrictions a week ago to allow movement between its cities for all residents.

Abu Dhabi permits entry to COVID-19 negative people



Brazil has record week for cases

Brazil had its worst week yet of the coronavirus pandemic in terms of new cases, registering 259,105 infections in the seven days through Sunday, according to health ministry figures. The country also reported its second-highest weekly death toll, with 7,005 people

killed, just below the record of 7,285 set the previous week. The latest grim figures came as protesters in various cities across the country and as far away as Stockholm, London and Barcelona held demonstrations against Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and his handling of the health crisis.

Philippine rescuers were searching yesterday for 14 people missing after a local fishing boat collided with a cargo ship, authorities said.

The boats crashed early Sunday in waters southwest of Manila, capsizing the Philippine fishing vessel Liberty 5 off the coast of Occidental Mindoro province. The captain of the cargo ship Vienna Wood, which is registered in Hong Kong, called for help "a few hours later" and the vessel was being escorted to land by the Philippine Coast Guard, said agency spokesman Commodore Armando Balilo. It was not immediately clear if the Liberty 5 had sunk.



Distorted Chinese, Russian virus news takes root in West

AFP | London

Coronavirus misinformation spread by Russian and Chinese journalists is finding a bigger audience on social media in France and Germany than content from the European nations' own premier news outlets, according to new research.

Whether it is distorted cover-

age or outright conspiracy theories, articles written in French and German by foreign state media are resonating widely on Facebook and Twitter, often with their origins unclear, the Oxford Internet Institute said in a report.

The institute, which is part of Oxford University, looked at content generated by leading

media outlets from Russia and China, as well as from Iran and Turkey. The institute looked at output from Russia's RT broadcaster and Sputnik news agency; China Global Television Network (CGTN), China Radio International (CRI) and Xinhua News Agency; plus foreign-language output from Iranian and Turkish networks.

Sorry! We shot it down

Iran prosecutor says human error led to shooting down of Ukrainian airliner

Reuters

The shooting down of a Ukrainian airliner in Iran in January was due to human error and not an order from senior military authorities, the military prosecutor for Tehran province, Gholam Abbas Torki, said yesterday, Tasnim news agency reported.

There was no indication that the downing of the airliner, which killed all 176 people aboard, was due to a cyber attack on Iran's missile or air defence systems, Torki said, adding that three people were under arrest related to the accident.

The airliner was shot down shortly after takeoff in Tehran, when Iran's air defences were on high alert, hours after Iran had fired missiles at a US base in Iraq in retaliation for the killing of an Iranian commander. Iran has already described the shooting down of the plane as a tragic mistake.



Holes are seen in the Ukraine International Airlines' Boeing 737-800 plane wreckage in a picture from investigation team release

The operator of the air defence system should have received orders from his superiors before firing two missiles at the airliner, Torki said.

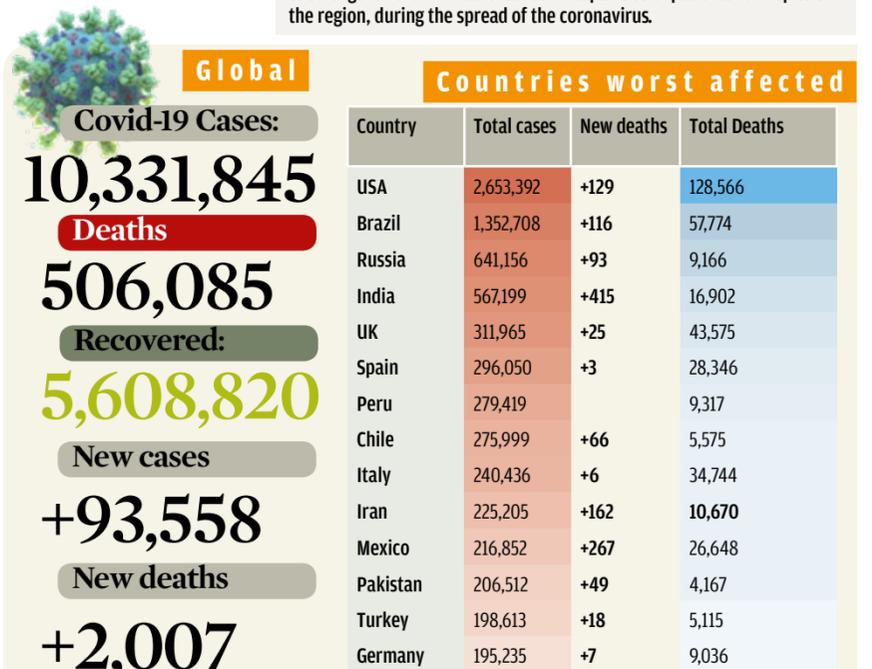
"Twenty six seconds passed between the first and second firing but unfortunately during this

time the operator also did not get permission for the second firing from the network," Torki said.

The black boxes of the airliner have been physically damaged and reading them is technically complicated, Torki said.



According to Ukrainian foreign minister Vadym Prystaiko and a flight manifest released by UIA, out of the 167 passengers' citizenship, 82 were confirmed to be Iranian, 63 were Canadian, three were British, four were Afghan, 10 were Swedish, and three were German. Eleven Ukrainians were also onboard, nine of them being the crew



Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Egypt	65,188		2,789		17,539	44,860	41	637
Saudi Arabia	186,436	+3,943	1,599	+48	127,118	57,719	2,285	5,356
UAE	48,246	+449	314	+1	37,076	10,856	1	4,879
Kuwait	45,524	+582	350	+2	36,313	8,861	145	10,662
Oman	39,060	+910	169	+6	22,422	16,469	115	7,652
Qatar	95,106	+693	113	+3	80,170	14,823	203	33,872

Israel's annexation plans 'illegal': UN

AFP | Geneva

Israel's aim to annex parts of the occupied West Bank was clearly "illegal", the UN's human rights chief said on Monday, warning that the consequences could be "disastrous".

Just days before Israel intends to kick-start plans to annex its West Bank settlements and the Jordan Valley, Michelle Bachelet added her voice to the chorus urging Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to drop the proposal.

"Annexation is illegal. Period," the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said in a statement.

"Any annexation. Whether it is 30 percent of the West Bank, or five percent," she said, urging Israel to "listen to its own former senior officials and generals, as well as to the multitude of voices around the world, warning it not to proceed along this dangerous path."

International condemnation of the possible Israeli annexations has mounted ahead of July 1, when the Jewish state could take its first steps toward implementing part of a US-proposed Middle East peace plan.



Michelle Bachelet

'Shockwaves'

Bachelet urged Israel to shift course, warning that "the shockwaves of annexation will last for decades, and will be extremely damaging to Israel, as well as to the Palestinians."

"The precise consequences of annexation cannot be predicted," she said.

"But they are likely to be disastrous for the Palestinians, for Israel itself, and for the wider region."

The UN rights chief warned that "any attempt to annex any part of the occupied Palestinian territory will not only seriously damage efforts to achieve lasting peace in the

region, it is likely to entrench, perpetuate and further heighten serious human rights violations that have characterised the conflict for decades."

Her statement cautioned that such a move would almost certainly lead to increased restrictions on Palestinians' right to freedom of movement, as their population centres would become enclaves.

In addition, significant tracts of private land would likely be illegally expropriated, and even in cases where this does not occur, many Palestinians could lose access to cultivate their own lands.

And Palestinians who found them-

selves living inside the annexed areas would likely experience greater difficulty accessing essential services like healthcare and education, while humanitarian access could also be blocked.

'Highly combustible mix'

Bachelet's office warned that Palestinians inside the annexed area would come under heavy pressure to move out, pointing out that entire communities currently not recognised under Israeli planning would be at high risk of "forcible transfer".

And settlements, which are already recognised as a clear violation of international law, would almost certainly expand.

"This is a highly combustible mix," Bachelet said.

"I am deeply concerned that even the most minimalist form of annexation would lead to increased violence and loss of life, as walls are erected, security forces deployed and the two populations brought into closer proximity."

The UN rights chief warned that "the existing two-tier system of law in the same territory will be-

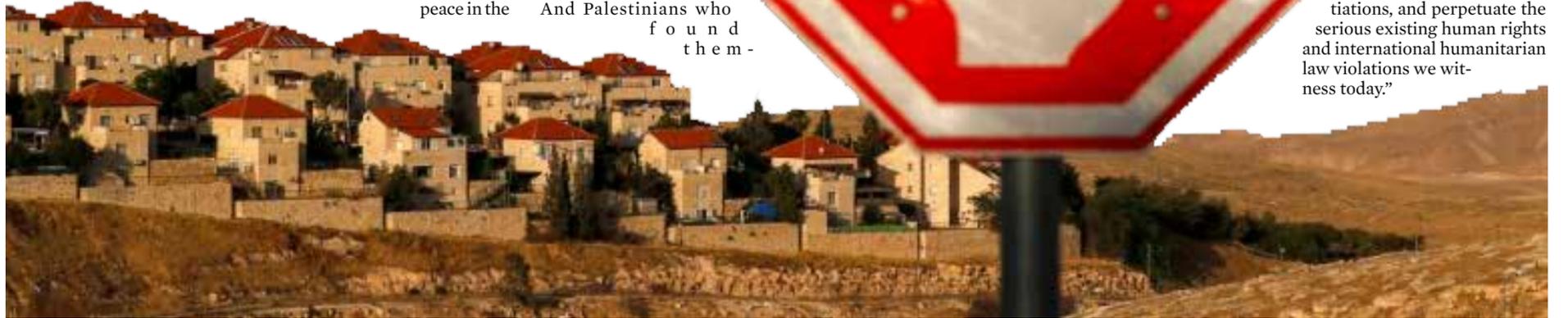


US President Donald Trump's proposals, rejected outright by the Palestinians, pave the way for annexing key parts of the West Bank, including settlements long considered illegal by the majority of the international community.

come embedded, with devastating impacts on the lives of Palestinians who have little or no access to legal remedy".

Bachelet said illegal annexation would not change Israel's obligations under international law as an occupying power towards the occupied population.

"Instead, it will grievously harm the prospect of a two-state solution, undercut the possibilities of a renewal of negotiations, and perpetuate the serious existing human rights and international humanitarian law violations we witness today."



UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet warned that "the shockwaves of annexation will last for decades"

Russian mining giant admits waste 'violations' at Arctic

Moscow

A Russian mining giant behind an enormous Arctic fuel spill last month said Sunday it had suspended workers at a metals plant who were responsible for pumping wastewater into nearby tundra.

Norilsk Nickel cited a "flagrant violation of operating rules" in a statement announcing it had suspended employees responsible for dumping wastewater from a dangerously full reservoir into wildlife.

The incident occurred at the Talnakh enrichment plant near the Arctic city of Norilsk, the company said, one month after the unprecedented fuel leak sparked a state of emergency declared by President Vladimir Putin.

More than 21,000 tonnes of diesel leaked from a fuel storage tank at one of the company's subsidiary plants near Norilsk. The fuel seeped into the soil and dyed nearby waterways bright red.

A source told Interfax news agency Sunday that in the most recent case, around 6,000 cubic meters of liquid used to process minerals at the facility had been dumped and that the discharge had lasted "several hours".

It was impossible to deter-



Employees of Russia's state-owned oil pipeline monopoly Transneft take part in the clean-up operation after the massive fuel spill in the Ambarnaya River last month



Independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta published videos from the scene showing large metal pipes carrying wastewater from the reservoir and dumping foaming liquid into nearby trees.

The journalists claimed the factory deliberately funnelled the wastewater into wildlife areas and hastily removed their pipes when investigators and emergency services arrived on the scene.

The Investigative Committee, which probes serious crimes, said it had received reports of "unauthorised dumping of liquid waste into the tundra" on the site of the facility, and had opened an enquiry.

Heavy machinery used to clear the pipes crushed a car delivering officials to the scene, Novaya Gazeta reported.

Interfax said no one was injured in the incident which was also being probed.

Norilsk Nickel spokeswoman Tatiana Egorova earlier Sunday said that employees of the factory had pumped out "purified water" and that an internal investigation was under way.

Russia's natural resources agency said the decision to remove water from the reservoir was taken to avoid an emergency after heavy rains and recent

Poland's Presidential election



Polish voters take part in Poland's Presidential election at a polling station in Warsaw, Poland

Boat ambulance in Parintins, Amazonas state



Health professionals help patients with symptoms of the new coronavirus

At least 30 die in Bangladesh ferry accident

● The Morning Bird vessel was hit from behind by another ferry

AFP | Dhaka

At least 30 people died and a dozen are missing after a ferry capsized and sank Monday in the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka following a collision with another vessel, rescue officials said.

The Morning Bird vessel was hit from behind by another ferry around 9:30 am local time (0330 GMT) during the morning rush hour, when the country's largest river port is packed with vessels. "We have collected 30 bodies, including 20 males, seven women and three children," Abul Khair, a diver in the fire brigade, said.

"There were at least 50 people on board... Our rescue divers are still searching," coastguard spokesman commander Hayat Ibne Siddique said.

The ferry -- which departed from central Munshiganj district -- sank as it was about to moor at Sadarghat, Dhaka's main river port used by hundreds of boats to travel to the country's south.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority's chief, Commodore Golam Sadeq, said the single-deck ship was "not overcrowded" and sank "due to



Divers were still pulling bodies from the wreck, with the deceased placed in body-bags and then laid in rows at the harbour-front



Boat accidents are common in Bangladesh, which is crisscrossed by more than 230 rivers. The South Asian nation is heavily reliant on ferries for transport but has had a poor safety record.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority's chief, Commodore Golam Sadeq, said the single-deck ship was "not overcrowded" and sank "due to carelessness".

cabins.

Divers were still pulling bodies from the wreck, in waters some 40-50 feet (12-15 metres) deep. The deceased were put in body-bags before they were laid in rows at the harbour-front.

Another boat would later arrive to lift the damaged vessel from the water, Siddique said.

Relatives gathered at Sadarghat despite coronavirus social distancing concerns to search for their family.

"I still don't know what happened to them," a man, searching for his cousin and another relative, told reporters.

Experts blame badly maintained vessels, lax safety standards at shipyards and overcrowding for many of the accidents.

In February 2015 at least 78 people died when an overcrowded ship collided with a cargo boat in a central Bangladesh river.

The number of accidents has dropped sharply in recent years as authorities crackdown on unseaworthy vessels.

carelessness".

He said the vessel had been cleared to carry passengers until September.

Witnesses told local television stations many passengers appeared to be stuck in the ferry's

Six killed in attack on Pakistan Stock Exchange

● Four security guards, a police officer and a bystander were killed in the melee

● The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) later claimed responsibility in a message

● Last year, the US State Department designated the BLA as a global terrorist group

AFP | Karachi

Baloch separatists opened fire and hurled a grenade at the Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi Monday, authorities said, killing six people including a policeman.

Four security guards, a police officer and a bystander were killed in the melee, while local police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon said all four assailants were also dead.

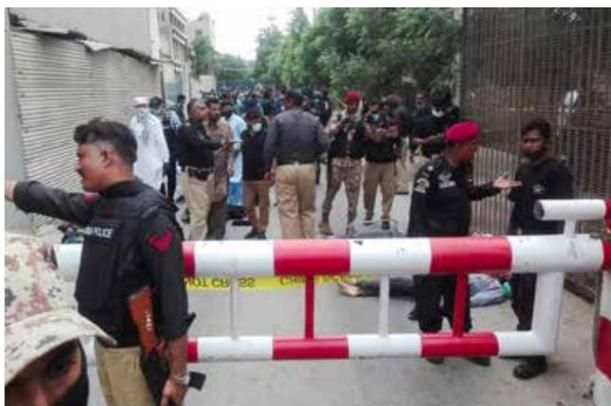
"Police have recovered modern automatic weapons and explosive materials from the terrorists," Karachi police said in a statement.

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) later claimed responsibility in a message sent to AFP, saying an elite unit of fighters had carried out the assault.

The separatists have carried out a string of high-profile attacks across the country in recent years -- including in the



Paramilitary soldiers patrol near the Pakistan Stock Exchange building in Karachi following an attack by Baloch separatists



Karachi was once a hotspot for crime and violence

southern port city.

The BLA is one of several insurgent groups fighting primar-

ily in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, which has been rocked by separatist,

Islamist and sectarian violence for years.

The group has targeted infrastructure projects and Chinese workers in Pakistan multiple times in recent years, including during a brazen daylight attack on Beijing's consulate in Karachi which killed four people in 2018.

In May last year, the BLA attacked a luxury hotel near the Afghan border at Gwadar, where a port development is the flagship project of a multi-billion dollar national infrastructure project funded by China.

Last year, the US State Department designated the BLA as a global terrorist group, making it a crime for anyone in the United States to assist the militants and freezing any US assets they may

Pakistan Stock Exchange attack



have.

Following Monday's attack Pakistani authorities vowed to strike back against any group found responsible for the onslaught, promising to dismantle their networks and destroy their bases.

Violent history

"An investigation has been launched and very soon we will reach their masterminds," interior minister Ijaz Ahmad Shah said in a video message posted after the attack.

Business continued as usual at the Karachi stock exchange after the attack.

"Trading is smooth and continuing. PSX benchmark index one of the Best Performer in Asia today so far," tweeted Mohammed Sohail, a broker at the exchange.

For a while after the attack the

bodies of at least two gunmen could be seen in a pool of blood near the exchange.

Karachi was once a hotspot for crime and violence, with heavily armed groups tied to politicians frequently gunning down opponents and launching attacks on residential areas.

But the situation has largely stabilised in recent years following operations by security agencies against armed political outfits and Islamist militants.

Militant groups still retain the ability to launch periodic attacks in many rural areas and occasionally in urban centres.

Monday's attack comes more than a week after a grenade was thrown at a line of people waiting outside a government welfare office in the city, killing one and injuring eight others, according to a statement from municipal authorities.

CELEBS

Beyonce dedicates award to BLM protesters

ANI | Washington

As she accepted the BET Humanitarian award during the 20th annual award ceremony on Sunday, musician Beyonce encouraged Black Lives Matter protesters to continue fighting for equality.

"Your voices are being heard and you're proving to our ancestors that their struggles were not in vain. I'm encouraging you to take action," The Hollywood Reporter quoted Beyonce as saying during the event.

The superstar was being hon-

ored for her philanthropic work over the years and the most recent relief efforts during the coronavirus crisis.

The former first lady of America, Michelle Obama delivered the award to the 'Crazy In Love' singer as she dubbed her as "the queen."

"You inspire me, you inspire all of us," Obama said to the singer.

While bringing attention to the Black Lives Matter movement, Beyonce also said that there's a lot of work that must be done and urged people to take action at the polls in November.

"I encourage you to take action, to continue to change. We have to vote like our lives depend on it, because it does," she said.

The win comes days after the singer dropped her latest single 'Black Parade' which is a rap number that celebrates Black culture and heritage.

The 20th edition of the BET Awards was hosted by Amanda Seales and was aired on Viacom-CNS networks.



Beyonce

Adele tells fan to 'be patient' for new album

ANI | Washington

English singer-songwriter Adele may have something up her sleeve, but she doesn't have a new album for her fans just yet.

According to People Magazine, the 32-year-old singer sent some of her fans into a tizzy on Saturday after posting a photograph of herself singing into a microphone, which she simply captioned with a cryptic smiley face emoji.

"Teaser? Albums coming out today????!!!! Tell me now!!!!!" wrote one excited fan, in an exchange highlighted by the Instagram account Comments by Celebs.

Unfortunately for fans, Adele was quick to shut down the speculation, telling the fan that they needed to "be patient."

"Of course it's not," she wrote. "Corona ain't over. I'm quarantining. Wear a mask and be patient."

Although Adele didn't offer up a timetable for her fans, they may only have a couple more months left to wait.

In February, while performing at her best friend's wedding, the

'Someone Like You' songstress was heard telling the crowd to "expect my album in September."

Last year, rapper Nicki Minaj also said the pair had recorded an 'epic' song together and shot a music video.

Minaj said during an interview with Entertainment Tonight, "Adele made me swear to secrecy that I'm not allowed to tell anyone that I'm working with her."

So far, the Grammy winner hasn't released new music since 2015's '25', which featured singles like 'Hello' and 'Send My Love (To Your New Lover)'.

The album, which was her third studio release, earned the artist five Grammys, including album of the year.



Adele

Sophie Turner, Joe Jonas and more to appear in 'Princess Bride' on Quibi

Fox | Los Angeles

A star-studded recreation of the iconic film "The Princess Bride" is coming to Quibi.

Sophie Turner, Joe Jonas, Jennifer Garner, Hugh Jackman, Jack Black, Rob Reiner and more are set to appear.

The reimaging, which will be broken into Quibi's 10-minute-or-less segments, was filmed at home by its stars while in quarantine and will begin airing Monday, Vanity Fair reported.

The program is set to raise funds for the World Central Kitchen, which has provided food relief amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"The week that the stay-at-home order came through in California, I just woke up one of



Sophie Turner

the first mornings, I think like most people did, feeling as though, All right, I need to be able to do something of value," filmmaker Jason Reitman told the outlet.

"I just thought, Can we remake an entire movie at home? And, I had seen that a fan-made 'Star Wars' had been done. I just started reaching out to actors I knew, saying, 'Is this something you'd want to do?' And, the response was kind of immediate and fast. It was like, 'Oh — that sounds like fun.'"

The outlet stated that the remake "utilizes absurd household props and back-of-the-closet costumes, and deploys multiple castings of the same roles to show that in a true fantasy, anyone can play anything."

Several clips from the show were shared on Instagram on Saturday, showcasing some of the techniques the remake intended to use, such as replacing crowds of people with legs and regular wear such as bathrobes in lieu of expensive studio costumes.

Garner, 48, and Tiffany Haddish appear as Buttercup while Neil Patrick Harris and Common play Westley.

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Garner, 48, and Tiffany Haddish appear as Buttercup while Neil Patrick Harris and Common play Westley.

Clarkson thanks estranged husband for 'Believing' in her after Daytime Emmy win

ANI | Washington

American singer-songwriter Kelly Clarkson had some kind words for estranged husband Brandon Blackstock following her Daytime Emmy Award win.

According to People Magazine, although the 47th annual Daytime Emmy Awards were held virtually this year due to the COVID-19, that didn't stop, the 38-year-old star from being over the moon after it was announced that she had won the award for outstanding entertainment talk show host. She wrote in an ecstatic Twitter message, "OH MY GOSH!!!!!! What is happening!!!!!! This is amazing!!! Thank y'all so much!!!! And a MAJOR thank you to my entire crew that really is the reason I won!!!! I can't wait to celebrate with our whole crew when humans can congregate again!! This calls for a PARTY!!!!!"

The 'The Kelly Clarkson Show' host went on to extend a special thank you to Blackstock, who is also her manager, for helping encourage her to launch the talk show back in September 2019. "Thank you so much to @BBlackstock for believing in me & convincing me to do @KellyClarksonTV show," she wrote. Clarkson also let friend and singer John Legend know that she was one step closer to joining him in the EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony) club, before signing off for the night.

Responding to a Tweet from the Daytime Emmys about how she was already "halfway to an EGOT," Clarkson quipped, "Watch out @johnlegend I'm comin' for that EGOT status."



Kelly Clarkson

Fox, Kelly spotted holding hands during date night in Malibu

ANI | Washington

American actor Megan Fox and rapper Machine Gun Kelly's romance is going strong.

According to People Magazine, on Thursday, the pair - who were first seen together last month before news broke of Fox and Brian Austin Green's split, were spotted holding hands on their way to a romantic dinner at Nobu in Malibu, California.

Fox and Kelly dressed casual but chic for

their night out. The 34-year-old actor Megan wore a pair of shiny black leather leggings, a black crop top and matching blazer accessorized with strappy black heels. Meanwhile, the 30-year-old rapper, whose birth name is Colson Baker, was seen dressed in dark pants and red corduroy jacket, which he left open to reveal a black undershirt.

Black and red lace-up boots complimented his look.

SUDOKU

			8	9	4			
	8		3		2			
		9		7	5	8		
	9			2	3	1		
			7					
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8	1	7	9					
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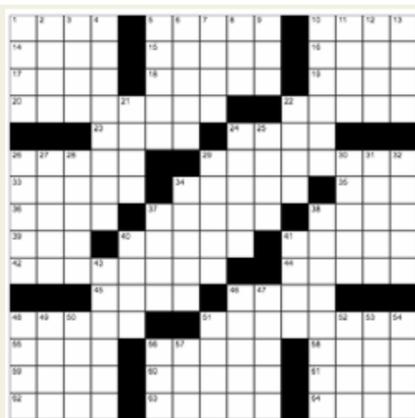
Yesterday's solution

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

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- Suffragist Carrie; 5- Godly love; 10- New Mexico art colony; 14- Wife of Jacob; 15- Sip; 16- Heavenly bodies; 17- He sang about Alice; 18- Agave fiber; 19- Military group; 20- Official paper; 22- Sporting blades; 23- Mariners can sail on seven of these; 24- Flexible tube; 26- Draw a bead on; 29- In the middle; 33- Acid type; 34- Assorted; 35- Summer drink; 36- Tear; 37- "Bolero" composer; 38- Swenson of "Benson"; 39- Siouan speaker; 40- Conclusion; 41- Celestial being; 42- Addictive substance; 44- Inactive; 45- One of the Baldwins; 46- Fix up; 48- Bottle; 51- Chosen; 55- Hawaiian outdoor feast; 56- Vertical passage; 58- Mother of the Valkyries; 59- Gillette brand; 60- Lover of Juliet; 61- Call for; 62- Faint, with "over"; 63- Severe; 64- Addition column;

Down

- 1- Decked out; 2- Prefix with -drome; 3- Apply powder to oneself; 4- Kilo; 5- Befuddled; 6- Profits; 7- Kind of prof.; 8- Mom-and-pop org.; 9- Slippery swimmer; 10- Man's wig; 11- "Judith" composer; 12- Village Voice award; 13- Fast fliers; 21- Take your leader; 22- Cornerstone abbr.; 24- Spells; 25- Like Nash's lama; 26- Biblical brother; 27- ... man with seven wives; 28- Lesser; 29- Honda model; 30- Scope; 31- Gardening tool; 32- Distributed cards; 34- Frenzied; 37- Ceremonial act; 38- Without sin; 40- People in general; 41- White House staffer; 43- Offhand; 46- Allude; 47- John of England; 48- Strong criticism; 49- Minstrel's instrument; 50- Bern's river; 51- Matching; 52- Family portrait?; 53- Steinbeck's East of ...; 54- Pops; 56- Grads-to-be; 57- Boiling;

Yesterday's solution

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

Meet Bangladesh's ground-breaking female coach who's 'married to football'

Mirona, of Dhaka City FC, is the first woman to coach a Bangladeshi football club

AFP | Dhaka

Not many Bangladeshis would quit a safe, public-sector job with perks and a pension to become a full-time football coach, especially not a woman in the conservative nation.

But Mirona, Bangladesh's first female coach at club level, has done just that. And the 27-year-old, who comes from a humble background, has no regrets.

"I have always dreamt of being coach of a top team and one day even the national side," said Mirona, who stands barely five feet (1.5 metres) tall.

The former Bangladesh in-

ternational was speaking as she coached a group of male players -- all much taller than her -- on the outskirts of Dhaka.

Mirona was an assistant coach at Dhaka City Football Club, a second-tier team, last year when Bangladesh Navy invited her to coach its women's team.

For most people in Bangladesh -- especially the lower middle-class -- this was like winning the lottery: a safe job with retirement benefits that many people can only dream of.

But a few months later, Mirona got a call from her former club, which is owned by a garment entrepreneur.

She was offered the head

coach's position with full freedom -- from recruiting players to preparing the team -- to fight for its promotion to the premier league.

Mirona, who grew up in a village among six siblings, did not think twice and she quit the Navy immediately, despite consternation from her senior military colleagues.

Dhaka City's administrative manager Robin Ahsan, also a former national player, said the club made the right decision in hiring Mirona.

"Our team's performance has improved since she joined us. Her honesty and hard-working attitude are tremendous," said



Mirona (C background), trains players on a field on the outskirts of Dhaka



Head coach of Dhaka Football City Club, Mirona (R), reacts as she trains players

Ahsan.

"She can mingle with players better than many male coaches in this industry."

Mirona said she is having the time of her life, despite some barbs directed at her by male coaches.

"At first many people negatively commented about me being in this profession. Many male coaches couldn't take that, a woman becoming a club head coach," she said.

"I believe in quality. If I have it then I know I can prove that I can train up the players," she said.

Overcoming barriers

Her parents and most of her siblings, who still live in rural Bagerhat district, some 250 kilometres (155 miles) south of the capital Dhaka, want her to settle

down and get married.

But Mirona says she is "married to football" and that for now the sport "is my life and my family".

She says she has largely avoided criticism from the community, adding that her parents' support played a big role when she started out as a footballer more than a decade ago.

Mirona was a midfielder for the national side for eight years, and also played club football in the Maldives.

"There was no family pressure when I took up soccer. Besides, I love the sport so much that I overcome all the barriers," Mirona said.

Mirona's return to Dhaka City electrified the training ground.

"We love being in her training sessions. We can feel our improvement day by day. She made us believe in fitness," said midfielder Aatur Rahman.

"She made me play in the midfield when I was a winger. But now I understand midfield strategy, thanks to her, very well," the 19-year-old said.

The club was so impressed that it signed two more female coaches, one for goalkeeping and one as an assistant, said team manager Ahsan.

For now, Mirona's main focus is the battle for the title in the second-tier championship league, which usually starts in June but has been delayed due to the worsening coronavirus situation.

She has now gone back to her village where she spends much of her time watching matches of Barcelona and her favourite player, Lionel Messi.

"He is technically so gifted. He is a superstar, yet so gentle. My ultimate goal is to watch him play a match at Camp Nou," she said.



Mirona was a midfielder for the national side for eight years, and also played club football in the Maldives



Mirona (L), trains players on a field on the outskirts of Dhaka

Winning FA Cup would be ideal preparation for Real clash: Guardiola

AFP | London

Manchester City's slim hopes of retaining their Premier League crown have gone but they still have two trophies in their crosshairs, manager Pep Guardiola said after the club reached the FA Cup semi-finals with a 2-0 win over Newcastle United.

As well as the Cup, City are also still in the hunt for the Champions League title and hold a 2-1 lead over Real Madrid from the away leg of their last 16 clash in February before the competition was suspended due to COVID-19.

Europe's elite club competition will be completed with an eight-team mini-tournament held in Lisbon in August. The FA Cup semis will be held on



Newcastle United's Swiss defender Fabian Schar (front) get his head to the ball as he competes with Manchester City's English midfielder Raheem Sterling (back)



We have two competitions we can win. It will be good to arrive against Real Madrid in the best condition. To win this title would be the best way to prepare for Madrid

PEP GUARDIOLA

July 18-19 and the final is scheduled for Aug. 1.

"We have two competitions we can win," Guardiola told reporters on Sunday.

"It will be good to arrive against Real Madrid in the best condition. To win this title would be the best way to prepare for Madrid."

Guardiola also said he was pleased with City's response after last week's 2-1 defeat at Chelsea handed Liverpool the Premier League title.

"We're delighted after the defeat against Chelsea to be in London again at Wembley to play against Arsenal in the semi-final to try to reach the final of the FA Cup," he added.

"Always it's an incredible trophy and it gives us an extra bonus."

Mercedes go black in stand against racism

● Mercedes unveils black-liveried cars for the 2020 season

AFP | Paris

Mercedes announced yesterday an all-new black liveried car for the 2020 Formula One season in support of #BlackLivesMatter with their six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton a vocal supporter of the fight against racism.

F1 emerges from its coronavirus-enforced three-month hiatus in Austria this weekend to a markedly changed world, with the killing of African-American George Floyd in US police custody last month triggering outrage and a global anti-racism movement.

Hamilton, the only black driver on the F1 grid, has established a commission which hopes to steer more black youngsters into motor racing.

Mercedes in a statement noted that "in our organisation, just three percent of our workforce identify as belonging to minority ethnic groups and only 12% of our employees are women".

"This lack of diversity shows



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton in action during testing (file photo)

that we need to find new approaches to attract talent from many areas of society we do not currently reach," it added.

Whilst expressing pride at the team's "values and culture" the statement said "the Black Lives Matter movement has shone a searching light on how much we need new measures and actions in the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination".

"For 2020, we have chosen to race in an all-black base livery as a public pledge to improve the diversity of our team - and a clear statement that we stand against racism and all forms of discrimination."

Team Principal Toto Wolff

said "Racism and discrimination have no place in our society, our sport or our team".

The German added: "But having the right beliefs and the right mindset isn't enough if we remain silent. We wish to use our voice and our global platform to speak up for respect and equality, and the Silver Arrow will race in black for the entire 2020 season to show our commitment to greater diversity within our team and our sport."

Hamilton, who starts his quest for a record-equalling seventh title at Sunday's Austrian Grand Prix, said it was vital "we seize this moment and use it to educate ourselves whether you

are an individual, brand or company to make real meaningful changes when it comes to ensuring equality and inclusivity".

His Finnish teammate Valtteri Bottas said he was "proud to stand with the team, with Lewis and with Mercedes-Benz in making this important statement".

Since easing out of lockdown sports stars have been eager to take a stand against racism, whether by taking the knee, as footballers from the Bundesliga or Premier League have done, or wearing Black Lives Matters on the back of their shirts.

Earlier yesterday the West Indies cricket team announced they would be wearing "Black Lives Matter" logos on their shirts during next month's Test series against England in a show of solidarity with the global movement.



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton is the only black driver on the F1 grid

Kyrgios hits out at Zverev over partying video



Australian tennis player Nick Kyrgios (R) hugs German tennis player Alexander Zverev after winning the 2019 Mexico ATP Open (file photo)

Reuters | Sydney

Australian Nick Kyrgios has hit out at Alexander Zverev after a video appeared to show the German dancing at a crowded club on Sunday despite the world No. 7 pledging last week he would be self-isolating.

The video was posted on Instagram by German designer Philipp Plein and later deleted. There was no indication when the video was taken.

Zverev's team have yet to respond to request for comment.

Zverev, 23, took part in Novak Djokovic's Adria Tour exhibition event in Serbia and Croatia where Djokovic, Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki all tested positive for the novel coronavirus last week.

The German said he and his team had tested negative but

would self-isolate and undergo regular testing.

"So I wake up and I see more controversial things happening all over the world," Kyrgios said in an Instagram post. "But one thing that stuck out for me was seeing Sascha Zverev again man, again, again. How selfish can you be?"

Kyrgios previously criticised the organisers of the tournament and hit out at governing bodies for their plans to restart professional tennis during the pandemic.

Djokovic's event saw crowds packed into stands for the opening leg in Belgrade, while players hugged and posed for pictures, attended news conferences together and played basketball during the Croatia event.

Zverev was also pictured along with other players dancing at a club in Serbia during the event.

From the streets and illegal rooftop fights to representing Pakistan in MMA: the story of BRAVE CF's Mehmosh

TDT | Manama

Mehmosh Raza's story is one of perseverance and determination; going against all odds and pushing one self to the limits.

"Growing up, I was bullied a lot", says Raza, who split his childhood between his home country of Pakistan and Ireland. "I did not fit in Pakistan nor in Ireland, I was made fun of constantly, for my looks, my accent and so on.

In Ireland, I would be involved in a fight everyday after school. It was always the same crowd of boys, sometimes some girls too, and there I was in the middle, getting into a fight with someone. Thankfully most of the time I would always win and then walk home with my sister like nothing had happened".

But not all stories ended up well for the young Mehmosh. "In Pakistan, I was pounded by 15 guys. I remember I went to defend a friend that was being jumped by a few guys and all of a sudden, I was surrounded by 15 guys, beaten like hell. They hit me in the head a lot, up to the point I wasn't even aware of what was going on around me anymore. A friend of mine who was into bodybuilding came blazing through all of them, hurled me over his shoulder, and carried me away. That was



Mehmosh Raza

probably fun to watch for a third person but definitely it wasn't for me at the time (laughs)".

The daily scraps turned into a real passion and artform when a cousin visited from Canada and brought with him some tapes of Mixed Martial Arts fights - until that point, three words that Mehmosh had never heard next to each other.

"My cousin showed up with a few tapes of old PRIDE and UFC fights, he also had some boxing tips videos. Those are definitely the first memories I have of

getting to know the sport and falling in love with it", he recalled. "It was love at first sight, I spent several days watching fights and those tutorials over and over again but one fight in special stood out for me and was the one I watched more and that really made me a huge fan, it was Wanderlei Silva vs Quinton 'Rampage' Jackson in Japan".

With a newly found love for MMA, Mehmosh now faced the obstacle of how to train in Pakistan, where the MMA scene was virtually nonexistent.

Through a friend, Mehmosh heard about illegal fights that used to take place on a rooftop and thought that would be a good way to start. This experience would change his life forever.

"They called those 'smoker fights' beatdowns, if I'm not mistaken. Every few months, people would gather on those rooftops and participate in these secret fights.

You didn't need experience, you just signed up; send them your name and weight, and they

My legacy is everything to me. I want to put where I come from on the map for the right reasons. It'd be a very strong message to say that the best in the world is here, he comes from Pakistan, and he's doing positive things

MEHMOSH RAZA

would match you with someone to fight. Knowing that, I went to a gym, hit a heavy bag for like a week and a half and said 'this might be enough, I'm gonna sign up now'", Raza told.

"I showed up with my friend at this rooftop, they checked my weight and matched me up with a guy who had fought over there a few times before", he continued. "Well, as you can imagine, I got absolutely smoked (laughs). The only good thing about it was that right after it I knew I wanted proper mentoring and training and that was when I joined Team Fight Fortress and haven't looked back since".

Under the guidance of head coaches Sultan Ali and Ehtisham Karim Shaheen, Mehmosh Raza grew into one of the most promising and talented pros-

pects not only in Pakistan but in the whole South Asia scene. He went abroad, fought in different countries and had the toughest experience he can recall inside the cage so far.

"I fought Igor Grytskiv which is probably my toughest fight so far. He was coming off seven back-to-back finishes all first-round arm bars and I remember being smashed in the first round. He destroyed my patellar tendon, kicked it so bad that I had a Grade 1 ACL injury but I managed to turn it around and ended up winning. It's a great story overall because the fight started with me being beaten up pretty bad and still won, it was a dramatic comeback", he labelled.

Still relatively young, at age 25, and already competing at the highest level of the BRAVE Combat Federation, Mehmosh Raza has big plans.

"My legacy is everything to me. I want to put where I come from on the map for the right reasons. It'd be a very strong message to say that the best in the world is here, he comes from Pakistan, and he's doing positive things. I want to leave a good message, help people become the best, and let them know that they can do good things, spread positivity and make the world a better place, inshallah", Raza finished.