

2 Seas set for Gulf 12 Hours title-defence

Bahraini-British motorsport team headlines 15-car grid with two GT3 cars in the fray in gruelling 2022 endurance race taking place this weekend in Abu Dhabi P12

WORLD 6 Houthis seize vessel off Yemen that Saudi say carried medical equipment

THE DAILY **tribune**



Nicolas Cage doesn't consider himself an actor 10 CELEBS

BUSINESS 5 OPEC votes to appoint Kuwaiti candidate as new sec-general

Bahrain condemns Houthis' UAE cargo ship hijacking

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain strongly condemned the terrorist Houthi militia's hijacking of a UAE-flagged cargo ship, which was heading from Socotra Island to the port of Jizan, Saudi Arabia.

The Foreign Ministry denounced the terrorist operating which targeted the cargo ship transporting equipment for a field hospital, describing the acts as a flagrant violation of the international law of the sea.

It affirmed that terrorist Houthi militia had committed a maritime piracy that poses a great threat to the freedom of maritime navigation in Bab al-Mandab and the Red Sea.

It said that the terrorist acts show the militia's terrorist drive to subvert regional security and stability, calling on the international community to condemn this dangerous terrorist act and compel the Houthis to immediately release the ship and its crew.

Bahrain also condemned Houthi drone attacks towards Najran in Saudi Arabia.

4th King Hamad award for youth empowerment P2

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL TESTED
8093554

ACTIVE CASES

4930

DEATHS

1395

DISCHARGED

277899

NEW CASES

880

CRITICAL

0

220 fils (includes VAT)



HM King hailed by Cabinet on prestigious Arab humanitarian award



The Cabinet has extended its congratulations to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on being awarded The Abu Bakr Al Siddique Medal-First Class, by The Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organisation (ARCO), in appreciation of His Majesty's humanitarian efforts. The Cabinet commended the visions of His Majesty the King, which has showcased the Kingdom of Bahrain as a model of success in providing humanitarian relief. His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday chaired the weekly Cabinet meeting, at Gudaibiya Palace. (Full report on Page 2)

Drainage solutions vow

HRH Prince Salman orders compensation for those affected by recent rainfall

Royal call for swift documentation of all flood-related damage

Plans underway to enhance quality of Kingdom's infrastructure

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, has directed the swift documentation of all flood-related damage and compensation for those affected by the rainfall.

HRH Prince Salman also ordered the development of sustainable drainage solutions in areas where rainwater has accumulated.

This came as His Royal Highness yesterday met, at Gudaibiya Palace, with Council of Representatives Speaker Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal, MP Mahmoud Makki Al Bahrani and Zainab Al Darazi, Member of the Municipal Council, representing the 12th District in the Northern Governorate.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister noted the importance of developing sustainable rainwater drainage systems to further enhance the quality of the Kingdom's infrastructure



HRH Prince Salman being briefed on the development of sustainable drainage solutions

in line with international best practice, and to ensure their quality and sustainability.

accompanied by the diligent implementation of the proposed ideas and innovative solutions in all fields. HRH Prince Salman also noted that the priorities of government work are based on achieving the aspirations of citizens according to the requirements of the present and the future.

ent and the future. He emphasised that collective effort which transforms challenges into opportunities remains key to the Kingdom's ongoing comprehensive development.

His Royal Highness highlighted the importance of continued cooperation between the executive and legislative authorities to achieve the Kingdom's development goals.

"It is important to develop sustainable rainwater drainage systems to further enhance the quality of the Kingdom's infrastructure in line with international best practice, and to ensure their quality and sustainability."

- HRH PRINCE SALMAN BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA, THE CROWN PRINCE AND PRIME MINISTER

Preserving workers' rights

Wages Protection System third phase underway

TDT | Manama

All labour categories across the Kingdom can benefit from this system. LMRA Chief Executive Officer Jamal Abdulaziz Al Alawi hailed the employers' ongoing commitment and positive participation in the WPS.

Al Alawi noted that it has greatly contributed to eliminating delayed salary payment, reducing labour disputes and guaranteeing workers' rights with full transparency, in addition to safeguarding the rights of employers and proving their compliance with completing salary payments, thus preventing complaints and grievances.

LMRA statistics have indicated that all employers (CRs with 500+ workers) have completed salary payments, along with 88% of employers (CRs with 50-499 workers) since joining the system initiative. "These statistics are a vivid

testimony of the successful system which has been launched since last May, upon a cabinet resolution and pursuant to Labour and Social Development Minister's Edict 22 of 2021 on the phases of applying the WPS system for workers of the private sector, under the umbrella of business and investment development towards fostering the stability of national economy through the creation of stable work environment by establishing stable labour relations in private sector organisations on the basis of transparency and protection of workers' rights," Al Alawi said.



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testimony of the successful system which has been launched since last May, upon a cabinet resolution and pursuant to Labour and Social Development Minister's Edict 22 of 2021 on the phases of applying the WPS system for workers of the private sector, under the umbrella of business and investment development towards fostering the stability of national economy through the creation of stable work environment by establishing stable labour relations in private sector organisations on the basis of transparency and protection of workers' rights," Al Alawi said.

Spirit of 'nationalism'

Cabinet commends collective efforts of government authorities and citizens to cushion impact of rains

TDI | Manama

The Cabinet has praised the efforts of the Interior Ministry, General Directorate of Civil Defence, General Directorate of Traffic and Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning in managing the impact of the recent rainfall.

The Cabinet also thanked the citizens of Bahrain for their cooperation, spirit and sense of national responsibility when faced with this situation.

This came as His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday chaired the weekly Cabinet meeting, at Gudaibiya Palace.

HRH Prince Salman directed for the swift documentation of all damage caused by the rainfall, and to compensate those who have been badly affected.

HRH also ordered the development of sustainable drainage solutions in areas where rainwater has accumulated, in addition to ongoing work to modernise and develop storm water infrastructure. This took place following an assessment of the impact of recent rainfall.

The Cabinet discussed and



HRH Prince Salman chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting

approved the following memorandums:

1. A memorandum by the Government Executive Committee concerning the formulation of legislation that strengthens the rule of law, safeguards rights and supports development.

2. A memorandum by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs regarding a draft law to implement the terms of the agreement between

the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Nations Development Programme.

3. A memorandum by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs regarding an MoU for cooperation in renewable energy between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Morocco.

4. A memorandum by the Minister of Finance and National Economy regarding subscrip-

tion rights for the sixth general increase in the capital of the Islamic Development Bank. The decision follows the Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment to enhancing the use of the bank's services and initiatives, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

5. A memorandum by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs regarding a proposal submitted by the Council of Representatives.

Quarterly economic report review

The Cabinet also reviewed a memorandum by the Minister of Finance and National Economy regarding the quarterly economic report for the third quarter of 2021.

The preliminary results of the nominal GDP (at current prices) showed that the economy grew by 10.2% compared to the same period in 2020, supported by growth in the non-oil sector of 5.9%.

The real GDP growth rate (at constant prices) was 2.1% on an annual basis, with the non-oil sector recording growth of 3.8%.

Bahrain thanked by South Korea

TDI | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime

Minister, yesterday received a cable of thanks from President Moon Jae-in of South Korea, in reply to their condolences over the passing of former Korean President Roh Tae-woo.

HH Shaikh Nasser mother hails RHF

TDI | Manama

The mother of His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, received at her Majlis a number of mothers affiliated with the Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) who are contributors to "Nitaj" project.

The meeting was held in the presence of RHF Secretary General Dr Mustafa Sayed and a number of female affiliates to RHF and employees.

She expressed sincere thanks and gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for his personal follow-up to support Bahraini widows and orphans registered with RHF.

She commended the royal



A commemorative shield presented to RHF by HH Shaikh Nasser's mother

paternal care for them and keenness on providing a decent and stable life to them, wishing HM the King abundant health and happiness and a long life.

She praised "Nitaj" project, stressing her support for it to achieve its noble goals.

King Hamad award for youth empowerment

TDI | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HM the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, has announced the launch of the 4th edition of King Hamad Youth Empowerment Award to Achieve SDGs.

In a statement marking the occasion, HH Shaikh Nasser described the award as a message of appreciation and pride from the Kingdom of Bahrain to youth all over the world, especially those with achievements, influential creativity and innovative solutions in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This is evident in the launch of the new edition of the King Hamad Youth Empowerment Award, which is among Bahrain's most important initiatives towards world youth, aiming to motivate youth to think "outside the box" and come up with ideas on the best ways to achieve UN goals in a youthful way.

HH Shaikh Nasser indicated that the prestigious award has always attracted new ideas that cope with global changes, noting that the fourth edition will encourage youth to provide ideas and projects on achieving SDGs in a post-pandemic world with youth vision.

He affirmed that the strong partnership between Bahrain and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has promoted the award at the international level, and contributed to attracting a great number of participants from various countries.

HH Shaikh Nasser noted that



HH Shaikh Nasser

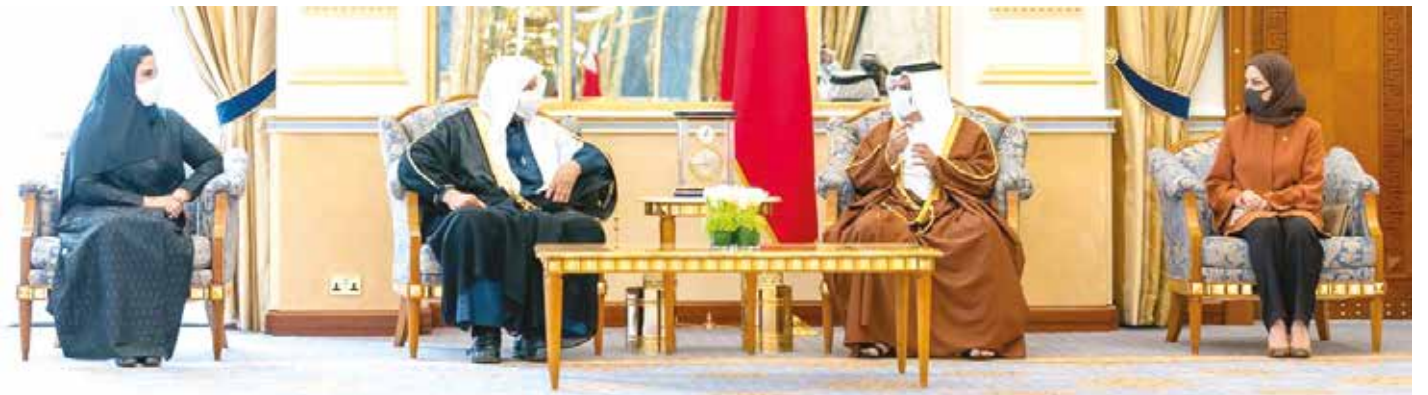


The award is among Bahrain's most important initiatives towards world youth, aiming to motivate the youth to think "outside the box".

partnership between the kingdom and many UN agencies has been expanded in order to ensure wider youth participation and achieve the award's noble goals.

He expressed confidence that this year's edition will be more successful than the previous editions, expressing hope that the international community, public and private entities and youth sectors will urge the youth of the world to participate in the award, being their perfect platform to showcase their ideas on ways to achieve SDGs.

HRH Prince Salman receives Saudi Arabia's Shura Council Chairman



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday met with the Chairman of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Shura Council, Shaikh Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al Al Sheikh, and an accompanying delegation, at Gudaibiya Palace. HRH Prince Salman highlighted the historical ties between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which continue to receive the support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister noted Bahrain's commitment to strengthening cooperation across various fields for the benefit of both countries. Shaikh Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed highlighted His Royal Highness's continued support to bolstering bilateral relations. Council of Representatives Speaker Fawzia Abdullah Zainal and Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh also attended the meeting.

BDF Commander-in-Chief receives US and UK Commanders



Above, Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa received Admiral Charles Bradford Cooper, Commander of United States Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) and Commander of United States Fifth Fleet (C5F). Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Theyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi was present. The meeting discussed issues of common interest. Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed

praised the Bahraini-American relations and the development witnessed by both countries at all levels, especially in the military field. The BDF Commander-in-Chief also received the outgoing UK Maritime Component Commander Edward Ahlgren, below, and praised the efforts exerted by the outgoing UK Maritime Component Commander throughout his tenure, wishing him success in his future endeavours.

NIHR lauds Filipino community contributions

TDI | Manama

The important contributions of the Filipino community in the Kingdom of Bahrain have been praised by the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR).

NIHR President Ali Ahmed Al Derazi, who received Philippines' Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Sarah Lou Arriola, praised the growing relations and cooperation between Bahrain and the Philippines.

The meeting discussed NIHR's efforts to support human rights for expatriate workers.



94 Basic Food Products NOT subject to VAT



Water	
Natural water	Sparkling water and Soda Water (Except sweetened and flavored)
Artificial mineral water	
Ice	



Infant Formula
Infants and young children food based on milk or malted milk prepared as substitutes of mother's milk (Except those containing cocoa)



Milk	
Milk: Fresh or long life milk (the types available in the market) not containing added sugar or any other sweetener	Fresh (unripened or uncured) cheese, including whey cheese, and curd cheese: Like Ricotta cheese, Brocciu cheese, cottage, double cream and mozzarella
Yogurt: Includes all categories of yogurt whether condensed or with added sugar or any other sweetener or flavored, or includes added fruits, nuts or cocoa	
	Processed cheese: Includes sliced cheese and spreadable cheese types and parmesan
	Other dairy products: Cream and Labneh



Bread products	
Ordinary bread of any kind Bread, Pies, Bagel (Except gateau)	Other bakery products including ones that contain stuffing (salty or sweet like cocoa)
Biscuit	



Vegetables and fruits	
Potato, fresh or chilled: All types of Potato (Except frozen types and sweet potato) Tomatoes, fresh or chilled: All types of tomatoes	Other vegetables, fresh or chilled: Aubergines (egg-plants), Capsicum, Spinach, New Zealand spinach and orache spinach (garden spinach), Olives, Pumpkins, Squash, Marrow, Okra, Parsley, Corriander
Onion and Garlic, Fresh or chilled: Onions (green or dry rind)	
Cabbage lettuce, Fresh or chilled: Cabbage lettuce (head lettuce)	Citrus Fruits, Fresh or dried: Oranges, Mandarins (including tangerines and satsumas), Lemons
Cucumbers and gherkins, fresh or chilled: Cucumbers and gherkins	
Carrots and turnips Corned beans, peeled or not, fresh or chilled: Peas, Beans	Fresh or dried fruits: Fresh dates, Pressed dates, Pineapples, Guavas, Mangoes
	Fresh fruits: Grapes, Watermelons, Melons, Apples, Pears, Apricots, Sour cherries, Kiwifruit, Pomegranates (Except frozen types)



Meat and Fish	
Birds (fresh or chilled): whole or parts (with bones or boneless)	Meat of camels and camelids (Camelidae) (fresh or chilled): meat, intestines and other edible parts of frozen camels
Beef meat: Carcasses, half-carcasses and other cuts whether with bone or boneless (Except frozen types)	
Sheep or Goat meat (fresh or chilled): Carcasses, half-carcasses, half-carcasses of lambs and other cuts whether with bone or without, goat meats, edible intestines, and limbs of lamb and goat (Except frozen types)	Fresh or chilled fish: Yellowfin tuna, Bigeye tuna, Atlantic and Pacific bluefin tuna, Southern bluefin tuna, Longtail tuna, Kawakawa, Mackerel (Kingfish), Trevally, Seabream, Groupers (Hamor, Bertam, Chenino, Cato, Nagel, Samman), Shei'ri fish (Sheoor), Hamra fish (Alesmaudi), Nagroor fish, Bori (Meed and Biyah), Safi fish (rabbit fish), Barracuda (Except frozen types)



Coffee beans, tea and cardamom
Coffee beans: Not roasted, Roasted (Except decaffeinated)
Tea, including flavoured: Green tea (not fermented) in packaging (Except Above 3 Kilograms) , Other green tea (not fermented) (Except fermented) , Small tea bag (Except Above 3 grams) Other black tea (fermented) and other partly fermented tea
Cardamom: Whole Cardamom, and Crushed or ground cardamom



Oils
Olive oil: Virgin olive oil



Egg
Bird's egg, fresh or preserved or cooked: Egg with shell



Sugar and Salt
Sugar: Fine crystals Salt: Table salt



Wheat and rice	
Wheat: Normal wheat, Thin wheat, Wheat flour (Except wheat flour mixed with cocoa)	Rice: Semi-milled or wholly milled rice, whether polished or glazed (Except brown rice)



1820 Governmental Services NOT subject to VAT

Anger over rising 'online vice trade'

Interior Ministry intensifies efforts to curb immoral behaviour and human trafficking to protect Kingdom's image

- Concerned citizens express outrage through social media
- Capital Police arrests three women behind 'immoral video'
- All social media platforms being misused by vice network
- Posting women's indecent pictures to attract customers

Staff Reporter
TDT | Manama

Many citizens have taken to social media to express their outrage over 'growing online flesh trade across social media platforms'. This follows the arrest of three women who were behind an "immoral video" currently being circulated on social media. "The Capital Police arrested

“During the pandemic, the vice network also started going online like other sectors. It is high time the authorities put a brake on these activities or else it will affect the image of our great nation.”

- CONCERNED CITIZEN

three women in relation to a social media video that went viral," the Interior Ministry tweeted. The ministry added that relevant legal procedures have been taken before referring the case to the Public Prosecution. Retweeting on the issue, Mona Al Bassam commented: "Congratulations to the Interior Ministry. Such arrests will end online immoral behaviour and flesh trade in the Kingdom." Al Bassam also posted a screenshot along with the retweet showing a social media



Flesh trade has moved from the street to the Internet



Social media are fuelling online prostitution and sexual exploitation profile with a woman's picture engage in flesh trade". All social media platforms are

“There has to be tough action to curb such activities on social media or else it could adversely affect the future of our young generation.”

- CONCERNED CITIZEN

allegedly being misused by the vice network to boost flesh trade in the Kingdom. Speaking to The Daily Tribune, a citizen who doesn't want to be named, said: "All social media platforms are filled with links posted by members of the vice network, which is very well established. They post vulgar and indecent pictures of women with an aim to attract potential customers. "During the pandemic, the vice network also started going online like other sectors. It is high time the authorities put a

brake on these activities or else it will affect the image of our great nation." Another citizen said he received a WhatsApp call from a foreign number that he hadn't seen before. "It was a woman on the other side. She asked me to turn the video call on. I did so and all I could see was a nude woman on the other side, asking me to come to an apartment in Juffair. I abruptly disconnected the call. "There has to be tough action to curb such activities on social media or else it could adversely affect the future of our young generation," he lamented. The Interior Ministry has intensified its efforts against vice trade and its associated crime human trafficking. The Daily Tribune recently published a report in which Global Organized Crime Index highlights the Kingdom's success against human trafficking. Attributing the Kingdom's low criminality score to its high success in combating human trafficking, the report called for increased caution to maintain the success record.

First COVID-19 death in Kingdom after 42 days

Staff Reporter
TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Health reported a COVID-19 death on Sunday night – the first of the current year, taking the number of deceased in the Kingdom to 1,395. The last COVID-19 death was reported on November 20, 2021. "The Ministry of Health expresses its sincere condolences to the family of the patient that died from COVID related illness and to all those families that have lost loved ones, with the hope for a full and speedy recovery to those receiving treatment at present," the ministry tweet says. "There are currently 4,269 active COVID-19 cases, and all are stable. Presently no individuals are in critical condition." The ministry also reported the formation of three clusters last week.

"The contact tracing of a symptomatic 34-year-old female citizen revealed 23 primary infections and 8 secondary infections, resulting in a total of 31 positive cases across 17 different households. "The cases detected include family and friends, where the primary cases had direct contact with each other during a wedding." The second cluster was formed after 12 people belonging to five different households were infected by a symptomatic expatriate couple, aged 62 and 56. The infected were friends of the couple, who had contacts during a gathering, according to MoH. Meanwhile, the contact tracing of a symptomatic 68-year-old female citizen revealed eight positive cases across three different households. The infected include relatives and a domestic help.

Spectra art competition winners honoured



Indian Ambassador Srivastava with the winners
TDT | Manama

The Indian Community Relief Fund (ICRF) has honoured the 13th Faber-Castell 'Spectra 2021' art competition winners at a ceremony held on 2 January at the Indian Embassy hall, Seef. On the same day, the ICRF released the Calendar 2022 containing the winning paintings. The annual art carnival, organised by the ICRF, had an overwhelming response this year which saw students from 17 countries joining the competition. More than 550 children from around 80 schools spread across 17 countries participated in the art competition held online on 10, 11 and 26 December. In ad-



dition, a competition for adults group (18 years and above) in Bahrain was held as well. Indian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain Sri Piyush Srivastava, the Chief Guest of the ceremonial event, distributed trophies and certificates to the winners. Sri Ravishankar Shukhla, Sec-

ond Secretary at Embassy of India, and Sri Ihjas Aslam, Second Secretary at Embassy of India, also joined the ceremony. Present at the ceremony were ICRF Chairman Dr Babu Ramachandran, General Secretary Pankaj Nallur, Vice Chairman Adv. V K Thomas, Advisor Bhagwan Asarpota, Advisor/Ex Officio Aruldas Thomas, Joint Secretary and Spectra Convener Aneesh Sreedharan, Treasurer Mani Lakshmanamoorthy, Spectra Joint Convenors Nithin Jacob and Muralikrishnan and Mr Sanjay Bhan of title sponsor Faber Castell and ICRF Excom members Suresh Babu, Raman Preeth, Murli Nomula, Javad Pasha, and Pankaj Malik. The Title Sponsor of the event was Faber Castell, who has been supporting this event from its inception in 2009. Net proceeds from the competition is going towards a Family Welfare Fund to provide relief to support the families of deceased Indian labourers drawing wages below BD100 per month.

Stage set for largest children's art festival in expat world



Bahrain Keralaleeya Samajam (BKS) will organise Devji BKS Balakalotsavam 2022, the largest children's art festival in the expatriate world, from January 15 onwards. The last date for registration is January 7, said P V Radhakrishna Pillai, BKS President, at a press conference held yesterday. BKS General Secretary Varghese Karakkal, Devji Group Retail Sales Manager Shaji C K were among those who attended the event. The festival will feature around 200 events across seven venues. Registration can be done through the website www.bksbalakalotsavam.com.

610 rain-related cases recorded

TD T | Manama

The Police Directorates in Governorates and Security Directorates have exerted tremendous efforts during the recent heavy rain in the Kingdom, including regulating traffic and dealing with cases received by the main operations room. The Operations Directorate activated the emergency plan in coordination with police directorates, civil defence and traffic that included field procedures that brought situations to normal. The Operations Room dealt with 292 cases from December



Authorities directing traffic

30 to January 2, including 100 cases related to rain floods. The concerned security authorities were contacted, and legal, and security procedures were taken. Traffic patrols dealt with 234 accidents, including 197 minor damages and pulling 125 vehicles with technical faults in flooded areas. They also regulated traffic in 15 junctions because of faulty traffic signals and carried necessary road diversion on roads and tunnels.

BDB grants SMEs preferential profit rate on finance schemes

● Preferential profit rates for small and medium enterprises holding the SMEs Classification Certificate

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Development Bank announced a new initiative for providing preferential profit rates for small and medium enterprises holding the SMEs Classification Certificate from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism.

This initiative is part of the cooperation and coordination between the MOICT represented by SMEs Development Directorate and BDB aiming to enhance the support programs for the SMEs sector and increase the competitiveness of these enterprises in the Bahraini market.

Obtaining the Classification Certificate also includes a package of additional benefits, most notably the allocation of a 20% share of the value of government purchases and tenders for SMEs, giving SMEs a 10% advantage in the bidding of service facilities that are held within government departments and in government tenders as well in addition to the opportunity to benefit from a training programme for building the capacity of SMEs in cloud computing for free.

Dalal Al Qais, CEO of Bahrain Development Bank said: "The Bank will begin applying the grants of preferential rate



Dalal Al Qais

to SMEs, who hold the SMEs classification certificate, from January 2022, only for new financing applications that meet the terms and conditions of the Bank and in accordance with the bank's funding standards and requirements."

Shaikha Al Fadhel, Director of SMEs Development at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism said: "Providing preferential profit rates for SMEs by Bahrain Development Bank will have a fundamental role in facilitating access to finance for this sector, which is a key driver of the national economy, where facilitating access to finance is considered one of the most important strategic pillars of the SMEs Development Board."

Al Fadhel also invited SMEs' owners to take this opportunity and benefit from this initiative and the rest of the advantages associated with the classification certificate.

NBB and BIPA Host First 'Government Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic' Forum



The National Bank of Bahrain, in partnership with the Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA) and key entities across the Kingdom, organised the first 'Government Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic' Forum, with the intent to identify the Kingdom's best government practices and key learnings in the various fields and subfields of Public Management and Administrative Sciences during the ongoing pandemic. NBB was a sponsor of the Forum, with Haitham Jasim Seyadi, Group Head - Property, Property and Administration at NBB, participating as a speaker. The forum provided a platform for key stakeholders, including local and international practitioners, scholars, policymakers, executives, operational managers from all sectors, public management students and researchers, to exchange knowledge and experiences in light of global crises management and discuss the adoption of the latest technologies and digitalisation of public services.

OPEC votes to appoint Kuwaiti candidate as new sec-general

● Al-Ghais succeeds Nigeria's Mohammad Barkindo

● He will take over the role on Aug. 1

● Al-Ghais said a top priority for him is to keep the group's pact with Russia and other producers in place

TDI | agencies

The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) voted to appoint Kuwaiti candidate Haitham al-Ghais as its new secretary-general, four sources from the group told Reuters yesterday.

Al-Ghais -- a multilingual technocrat whose three-decade oil industry career includes stints in Beijing and London -- will become Secretary-General in August, taking over from Mohammad Barkindo, according to a statement from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries yesterday.

"He knows OPEC inside and out," said Johannes Benigni, chairman of consultant JBC Energy Group in Vienna. "At



Haitham al-Ghais

the same time, he knows the ins and outs of the market. He's very smart and a good analyst."

While the secretaries-general don't set OPEC production policy, they do act as the group's public face -- and as an intermediary seeking compromise between often-fractional members.

Having previously served as a diplomat, he subsequently held several positions at state-run Kuwait Petroleum Corp., most recently as deputy managing director for international mar-

keting. Al-Ghais also acted as the country's liaison to OPEC from 2017 until last year.

The appointment of a Kuwaiti as OPEC chief marks a shift for the group, which has typically awarded the post to candidates from smaller producers to offset the concentration held by its Gulf heavyweights. Smaller members will likely monitor whether he can act as a counterbalance to the group's most influential nation, Saudi Arabia. Al-Ghais was the only candidate

and was appointed by acclamation rather than a ballot on Monday.

"I would like to offer my cordial congratulations to HE Haitham Al-Ghais on his appointment, by acclamation, as the next Secretary-General of OPEC," Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Prince Abdulaziz said in a statement.

As incumbent secretary-general, Barkindo steps down in July after completing the full six years permitted by the cartel's rules, having played a pivotal role in the creation of OPEC+ in late 2016.

Al-Ghais said a top priority for him is to keep the group's pact with Russia and other producers in place since it is in the wider interest of the oil industry.

The OPEC+ alliance between OPEC and other oil producers, called the Declaration of Cooperation, has helped support the global oil market since 2017 when it was set up.

"That's one of my top priorities - to support the continuation of this Declaration of Cooperation," al-Ghais told Reuters, asked if he supported keeping the pact into 2023.

"It's in the wider interest of the industry and all the 23 countries that have signed up to this agreement."

I would like to offer my cordial congratulations to HE Haitham Al-Ghais on his appointment, by acclamation, as the next Secretary-General of OPEC

SAUDI ENERGY MINISTER PRINCE ABDULAZIZ BIN SALMAN PRINCE ABDULAZIZ SAID IN A STATEMENT.

Most markets fall as COVID-19 cases rise

Reuters

Most major stock markets in the Gulf ended lower on Monday amid a surge in COVID-19 cases, although the Qatari index bucked the trend.

In Abu Dhabi, the index (.ADI) fell 0.3%, with Alpha Dhabi Holding (ALPHADHABI.AD) retreating 3.9% after the conglomerate said it had bought an additional 17% in developer Aldar Properties (ALDAR.AD) to take its stake to 29.8%. Shares of Aldar gained 1%.

Dubai's main share index (.DFMGI) lost 0.2%, hit by a 7.4% slide in bourse operator Dubai Financial Market (DFM.DU).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), a tourism and commercial hub now marking its peak tourism season and hosting a world fair, on Sunday recorded 2,600 new coronavirus cases and three deaths. It said on Saturday it would ban non-vaccinated citizens from travelling abroad from Jan. 10.

Daily cases had fallen below 100 in October.

Separately, the Houthis move-



Traders wait at the Bahrain Bourse

ment that controls most of northern Yemen has hijacked an UAE-flagged cargo vessel off the Yemeni port city of Hodeidah, the Saudi-led coalition said on Monday, according to TV channel Al Arabiya.

The benchmark index (.TASI) in Saudi Arabia, the largest Gulf state with a population of around 30 million, ended flat as gains in financial shares were offset by declines in petrochemical stocks.

Daily coronavirus cases in Saudi Arabia have climbed above 1,000 for the first time since August, after having fallen below 100 in September.

Saudi Arabia's central bank has extended a deferred payment programme meant to help support the private sector by an additional three months until March 31, it said on Thursday.

The Qatari index (.QSI), however, gained 0.4%, ending two sessions of losses, helped by

Closing Bell

SAUDI	▲ at 11,328
ABU DHABI	▲ 0.3% to 8,466
DUBAI	▼ 0.2% to 3,191
QATAR	▲ 0.4% to 11,670
EGYPT	▼ 0.1% to 11,897
BAHRAIN	▼ 0.3% to 1,792
OMAN	▲ 0.6% to 4,172
KUWAIT	▲ 0.2% to 7,654

a 0.9% gain in petrochemical maker Industries Qatar (IQCD.QA).

Meanwhile, oil rose towards \$79 a barrel, supported by tight supply and hopes of further demand recovery in 2022.

Outside the Gulf, Egypt's blue-chip index (.EGX30) eased 0.1%, with top lender Commercial International Bank (COMI.CA) losing 0.6%.

The Egyptian market is also exposed to some price corrections after the increases from last week as investors move to secure their gains, said Wael Makarem, senior market strategist at Exness.

Tesla surmounts supply chain woes with blockbuster Q4 deliveries

Reuters

Tesla Inc (TSLA.O) on Sunday reported record quarterly deliveries that far exceeded Wall Street estimates, riding out global chip shortages as it ramped up China production.

It was the sixth consecutive quarter that the automaker posted record deliveries. Tesla shares were up 10% to a one-month high in early trading on

50%
Musk said in October last year that Tesla will be able to maintain an annual growth rate of more than 50% for "quite a while."

Monday. Tesla, led by billionaire CEO Elon Musk, delivered 308,600 vehicles in the fourth quarter, far higher than analysts' forecasts of 263,026 vehicles.

Tesla's October-December deliveries were up about 70% from a year earlier and nearly 30% higher from record deliveries the preceding quarter.

"Great work by Tesla team worldwide!" Musk wrote on

Twitter. His electric car company ramped up production in China even though competition rose and regulatory pressure mounted following consumer complaints over product safety.

Tesla ships China-made models to Europe and some Asian countries. On an annual basis, the automaker boosted its deliveries by 87% from a year earlier to 936,172 vehicles in 2021.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE. JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE
MARGARET MEAD

News in brief

◆ **Disconsolate passengers stuck on a cruise ship moored in Lisbon's port for five days due to a COVID-19 outbreak** began disembarking early yesterday, focused on clearing the final hurdle of a negative test before boarding homebound flights. The AIDAnova, carrying 2,844 passengers and 1,353 crew, had docked in Portugal's capital on Wednesday. The ship was en route to the island of Madeira for New Year's Eve celebrations, but the cruise was cut short after COVID-19 was detected among the crew, 52 of whom tested positive between Wednesday and Friday.



Passengers leave COVID-hit cruise ship after 5 days stuck in Lisbon

◆ **Two armed drones were shot down yesterday as they approached an Iraqi military base** hosting U.S. forces near Baghdad's international airport, Iraqi security sources said, adding that nobody was hurt in the incident. The attack came as Iran and its allies in Iraq marked the second anniversary of the assassination of top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani. Soleimani was killed in a drone strike near Baghdad airport ordered by then-U.S. president Donald Trump. Commenting on the attack, an official of the U.S.-led international military coalition said the base's defence system had engaged "two fixed-wing suicide drones. They were shot down without incident".



Drone attack on US base foiled, Iraqi security sources say

Soleimani. Soleimani was killed in a drone strike near Baghdad airport ordered by then-U.S. president Donald Trump. Commenting on the attack, an official of the U.S.-led international military coalition said the base's defence system had engaged "two fixed-wing suicide drones. They were shot down without incident".

◆ **Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan** said yesterday he will make a visit next month to Saudi Arabia, whose ties with Ankara have been strained in recent years. Asked about resolving issues in exports to Saudi Arabia as he left a trade event, Erdogan said he would travel to the Gulf state in February. "He is expecting me in February. He made a promise and I will make my visit to Saudi Arabia in February," he said in a video posted on social media, without giving a name.

Turkey's Erdogan says he will visit Saudi Arabia in February



◆ **The United States has urged Sudanese leaders to ensure civilian rule and end violence** against anti-military protesters after Abdalla Hamdok resigned as prime minister, throwing a transition towards elections deeper into uncertainty. Hamdok, an economist and former United Nations official widely respected abroad, had served as prime minister under a military-civilian power-sharing deal that followed the overthrow of former leader Omar al-Bashir in 2019. The military dissolved his government in an October coup, but he returned a month later under a deal to form a government of technocrats ahead of 2023 elections. Hamdok resigned on Sunday after being unable to forge a consensus to bring the transition forward.



US urges civilian rule after Sudan's PM quits

Houthis seize vessel off Yemen t

Reuters, Al Arabiya

The Iran-aligned Houthi militia that controls northern Yemen hijacked a United Arab Emirates-flagged cargo vessel which it said was engaged in "hostile acts" but which the Saudis said was carrying hospital equipment.

The ship was heading to the Saudi port of Jizan, just north of Yemen, from the Yemeni Red Sea island of Socotra when it was attacked just before midnight on Sunday, Saudi state news agency SPA reported, quoting coalition spokesman Brigadier General Turki al-Malki.

Saudi Arabia is leading a military coalition that has been battling the Houthis for more than six years. The alliance has accused the Houthis of attacking shipping in the Red Sea, one of the world's busiest maritime lanes leading to the Suez Canal.

The cargo ship was hijacked off the western Yemeni port of Hodeidah, the coalition said.



A ship seized by Yemen's Houthi militia off the Yemen's Red Sea coast is seen in a frame grab from video handed out by the Houthi's media centre

The coalition called on the Houthis to immediately surrender the ship, adding that it will take all necessary measures to deal with the "piracy".

The Houthis' military spokes-

man, Yahya Sarea, confirmed seizure of the vessel which he said was carrying military equipment and engaged in "hostile acts targeting the security and stability of the Yemeni people". He added

that the crew, "of different nationalities", were still on board. In a press briefing broadcast on the group's Masirah TV, Sarea shared photos and videos that he said they were of the seized



The Houthis are a large clan originating from Yemen's northwestern Saada province. They practice the Zaydi form of Shiism. Zaydis make up around 35 percent of Yemen's population. A Zaydi imamate ruled Yemen for 1,000 years, before being overthrown in 1962. Since then, the Zaydis - stripped of their political power - have struggled to restore their authority and influence in Yemen

Iran vows revenge for Soleimani killing if Trump not put on trial

Reuters | Dubai

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi vowed revenge yesterday for the US assassination of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani two years ago unless former US President Donald Trump was put on trial.

Iran and groups allied with it in Iraq have been holding events to honour Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force, the overseas arm of the elite Revolutionary Guards.

He was killed in Iraq in a drone strike on Jan. 3, 2020, ordered by then president Trump.

"If Trump and (former secretary of state Mike) Pompeo are not tried in a fair court for the criminal act of assassinating General Soleimani, Muslims will take our martyr's revenge," Raisi said in a televised speech yesterday.



On Sunday, Iran urged the UN Security Council in a letter to hold the United States and Israel, which Tehran says was also involved in the killing, to account, according to Iranian media.

Days after the assassination, the United States told the United Nations that the killing was self-defence and vowed to take additional action "as necessary" in the Middle East to protect US personnel and interests.

Russian jets bomb rebel-held Idlib in Syria, witnesses say



An aerial view of Kafr Arouk camp for internally displaced after a heavy rainfall in Idlib, Syria

Reuters | Amman

Russian jets bombed areas near the northwestern Syrian city of Idlib on Sunday, witnesses and rebel sources said, marking a new year flare-up for the last opposition-held bastion.

War planes flying at high altitude, which tracking centres said were Russian Sukhoi jets, dropped bombs on several towns and a main water pump-

ing station serving the overcrowded city of Idlib, whose wider population is more than a million.

No immediate comment was available from Russia or the Syrian army, which says it targets the hideouts of militant groups who control the region but deny any attacks on civilians.

An official at the city's water utility service said it was out of action as a result of the strikes.

Fauci warns of da surge due to larg

● **The Omicron variant was estimated to be 58.6% of the coronavirus variants circulating in the United States as of Dec. 25**

Reuters

Top US infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci said there was still a danger of a surge in hospitalisation due to a large number of coronavirus cases even as early data suggests the Omicron COVID-19 variant is less severe.

"The only difficulty is that if you have so many cases, even if the rate of hospitalisation is lower with Omicron than it is with Delta, there is still the danger that you will have a surging of hospitalisations that might stress the healthcare system," Fauci said in an interview on Sunday with CNN.

The Omicron variant was estimated to be 58.6% of the coronavirus variants circulating in the United States as of Dec. 25, according to data from the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The sudden arrival of Omicron has brought record-setting case counts to countries around the world and dampened New Year festivities around the world.

"There will certainly be a lot more cases because this is a much more transmissible virus than Delta is," Fauci said on CNN.

However, "It looks, in fact, that



Dr Anthony Fauci speaks about the Omicron briefing at the White House in Washington

828k

US authorities registered at least 346,869 new coronavirus on Saturday, according to a Reuters tally. The US death toll from COVID-19 rose by at least 377 to 828,562.

it (Omicron) might be less severe, at least from data that we've gathered from South Africa, from the UK and even some from preliminary data from here in the United States," Fauci said.

Fauci added that the CDC will soon be coming out with a clarification on whether people with COVID-19 should test negative to



The most effective steps individuals can take to prevent COVID-19 is to keep a physical distance, wear a well-fitting mask, open windows to improve ventilation in crowded spaces; keep hands clean with soap and water, avoid touching the nose, mouth or eye; and get vaccinated

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	56,142,175	847,408	290,976,987
2 India	34,922,882	481,893	
3 Brazil	22,293,228	619,171	
4 UK	13,235,401	148,851	5,462,635
5 Russia	10,554,309	311,353	
6 France	10,250,358	123,942	254,741,991
7 Turkey	9,552,801	82,635	
8 Germany	7,213,067	112,897	New cases
9 Italy	6,396,110	137,786	
10 Spain	6,294,745	89,405	+307,744
11 Iran	6,198,590	131,702	
12 Argentina	5,694,930	117,204	New deaths
13 Colombia	5,181,173	130,026	
14 Indonesia	4,263,433	144,102	+2,184

Figures as of closing

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	387,159		21,797		321,568	43,794
Saudi Arabia	559,852	+1,746	8,881	+2	542,754	8,217
UAE	769,608	+2,515	2,169	+1	747,715	19,724
Kuwait	418,332		2,468		411,902	3,962
Oman	306,008	+176	4,117		300,532	1,359
Qatar	253,536	+1,177	618		246,076	6,842

Samuel Colt sells his first revolver pistol to the United States government

Luna 1 (Mechta) becomes 1st craft to leave Earth's gravity

The 110th United States Congress convenes and elects Nancy Pelosi as the 1st female Speaker of the House



1st Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines given to the general public with 82 year old Brian Pinker in the UK first to be jabbed

What Saudi say carried medical equipment



Military equipment is seen on a ship seized by Yemen's Houthi rebels

ship showing armoured vehicles, weapons and ammunition. He added the vessel had been taken to the Houthi-controlled port of Salif, north of Hodeidah. SPA said the vessel was carrying

equipment from a shuttered field hospital. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said late on Sunday it had received reports of an attack on a vessel near

Yemen's port of Ras Isa, which lies slightly north of Hodeidah, and an investigation was under way. In an advisory issued at 2150 GMT, 0050 local time, UKMTO

- part of Britain's Royal Navy - advised mariners to exercise extreme caution in the area. It put the vessel's position at approximately 23 nautical miles west of Ras Isa oil terminal in the

Red Sea. The last attack near Ras Isa was in late 2019 when the Houthis briefly seized a Saudi-flagged ship and two South Korean vessels.

Danger of hospitalisation The number of COVID cases



US Defence Secretary Austin tests positive for COVID-19, symptoms mild

● Austin is fully vaccinated and received a booster in early October

● Austin is one of the most senior members of President Joe Biden's administration to test positive



Reuters | Washington

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said he tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday with mild symptoms and would attend meetings virtually as he quarantined at home for the next five days.

News of Austin's positive test comes after the Pentagon last week tightened restrictions at its headquarters over concern about the highly transmissible Omicron variant that has led to a sharp increase in COVID-19 infections throughout the world.

The military is faced with the challenge of maintaining military readiness for troops, often in close quarters on ships and planes.

Austin, who is fully vaccinated and received a booster in early October, said in a statement he last met President Joe Biden on Dec. 21, more than a week before he started experiencing symptoms.

"As my doctor made clear to me, my fully vaccinated status — and the booster I received in early October — have rendered the infection much more mild than it would otherwise have been," Austin added. Austin said he requested a test

earlier on Sunday after having symptoms while at home on vacation. He was last at the Pentagon on Thursday.

Austin is one of the most senior members of President Joe Biden's administration to test positive for COVID-19.

In October, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas tested positive for the virus.

US authorities registered at least 346,869 new coronavirus on Saturday, according to a Reuters tally. The US death toll from COVID-19 rose by at least 377 to 828,562.

Austin said he planned to attend meetings virtually when possible and he would retain all authorities in running the Defense Department and overseeing military activities around the world.

His deputy, Kathleen Hicks, would represent him in some matters, he added.

"I continue to encourage everyone eligible for a booster shot to get one. This remains a readiness issue," Austin said.

Roughly 98% of active-duty troops have received at the COVID-19 vaccine, which is now mandatory for them.

Russia, China, Britain, US and France say no one can win nuclear war

Reuters | Moscow

China, Russia, Britain, the United States and France have agreed that a further spread of nuclear arms and a nuclear war should be avoided, according to a joint statement by the five nuclear powers published by the Kremlin yesterday.

It said that the five countries - who are the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - consider it their primary responsibility to avoid war between the nuclear states and to reduce strategic risks, while aiming to work with all countries to create an atmosphere of security.

"We declare there could be no winners in a nuclear war, it should never be started," the

Russian-language version of the statement read.

"As the use of nuclear arms would have far-reaching consequences, we also confirm that nuclear arms - as long as they exist - should serve defensive aims, deterrence against aggression and prevention of war."

France also released the statement, underscoring that the five powers reiterated their determination for nuclear arms control and disarmament. They would continue bilateral and multilateral approaches to nuclear arms control, it said.

The statement comes amid increased geopolitical tensions between Moscow and Western nation.

Bolsonaro rushed to hospital with probable intestinal blockage



Agencies

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was rushed to hospital early yesterday morning for treatment of a probable intestinal obstruction, local media reported.

Bolsonaro, 66, who has been in power since 2019, was taken to Vila Nova Star hospital in Sao Paulo.

TV Globo showed images of him disembarking from the presidential plane on foot with his entourage.

Doctor Antonio Luiz Macedo, who has operated on Bol-

sonaro on other occasions, told news site UOL that the president would undergo several tests to examine his abdomen.

In July, Bolsonaro spent four days receiving treatment for an intestinal obstruction.

Since a knife attack that targeted him during a 2018 election campaign, in which he was stabbed in the stomach, he has undergone abdominal surgery at least four times.

About a month before he was elected president, Bolsonaro was stabbed at a campaign rally by a man who was found to be psychologically unfit for trial



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



BEFORE YOU SHARE, THINK:

- 1 WHO made it?
- 2 WHAT is the source?
- 3 WHERE did it come from?
- 4 WHY are you sharing this?
- 5 WHEN was it published?

#PLEDGETOPAUSE

Conspiracy theories, rumors and lies continue to spread at a troubling speed amid the pandemic. We can all do our part to stop the spread of misinformation: #PledgeToPause and take time to verify facts before you share something online.

@antonioguterres

02



With His Excellency the Prime Minister of Yemen at the Yemen Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai... When we talk about the depth of history and civilization, we talk about Yemen... And when we talk about the nobility of morals and values of honor, honesty, pride and brotherhood, we talk about the people of Yemen.

@HHSkMohd

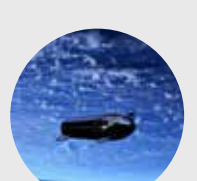
03



Get Boosted Now to protect yourself and your loved ones - it's the easiest New Year's resolution you can make.

@BorisJohnson

04



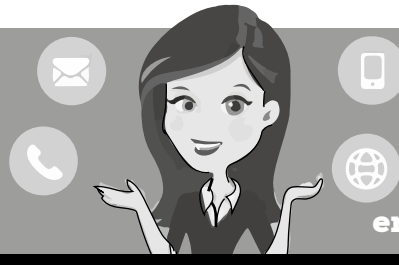
Let's make the roaring 20's happen!

@elonmusk

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

like to reduce the spread of the of at least 1 metre from others; improve ventilation; avoid poorly clean; cough or sneeze into a bent d when it's their turn.

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Mominul, Das build Bangladesh lead before Boult fights back



Bangladesh's captain Mominul Haque, right, with team mate Liton Das walk onto the field after tea

AFP | Wellington

Mominul Haque and Liton Das led Bangladesh to a historic first innings lead over New Zealand in the first Test on Monday before both fell to Trent Boult in a dramatic final session at Mount Maunganui.

At stumps on day three Bangladesh were 401 for six in reply to New Zealand's 328, a lead of 73 with four wickets in hand.

They had reached 361 for four before Boult ended a 158-run stand with the wicket of Mominul for 88, followed 11 deliveries later by Das for 86.

"It looks like it might go down to the wire," Boult said as the Bangladesh players left the field talking of extending their innings towards 500.

"The game's pretty well poised. Test matches which have been played here have gone late into day five ... and probably we'll be bowling last," Boult said.

"I presume Bangladesh want to bat once and bat big and put a lot of pressure on us."

“
The boys really got stuck in. We had a good day yesterday but we had to follow it up with another good day and the guys did exactly that

BANGLADESH BATTING COACH ASHWELL PRINCE

It is the first time Bangladesh have taken a first-innings lead batting second outside of Asia.

They led New Zealand at Wellington four years ago when batting first, although a disastrous second innings saw them lose that Test by seven wickets.

It has been an exceptional Test for Mominul, a part-time spinning option who dismissed New Zealand's top two run-scorers Devon Conway and Henry Nicholls and then batted through 244 deliveries as he notched his 15th Test half-century.

Manama reclaim league top spot

Mohamed Yahya Al Hallak scores brace, Mahdi Abduljabbar adds third in resounding 3-0 victory over AFC Cup champions Muharraq in Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League

● **Manama claim fifth win in eight matches to improve to 18 points for first place**

● **Hidd and Al Ahli play to goalless stalemate in last night's other match**

TDT | Manama

Manama returned to the top of the table in the 2021/2022 Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League last night following a resounding 3-0 victory over AFC Cup champions Muharraq at the National Stadium in Riffa. Mohamed Yahya Al Hallak fired in a brace in a three-goal first half while also supplying the assist for teammate Mahdi Abduljabbar who scored their third.

The match was part of the first day of the league's eighth week of action.

Manama's win was their fifth of the season as they improved to 18 points, leapfrogging former leaders and defending back-to-back champions Riffa to the top spot. Riffa, however, have a game in hand and are in action tomorrow.

For Muharraq, it was their third loss in seven games as they stayed on eight markers.

Al Hallak opened Manama's account with a brilliant solo



Manama's Mahdi Abduljabbar, left, battles for possession with Muharraq's Mohamed Ali Husain

effort in the 33rd minute. He rounded Muharraq's Noor Aldeen Al Rawabdeh in the box and then fired in with a low effort from an acute angle.

Ten minutes later, Manama made it two. Muharraq failed to clear Abduljabbar's lob pass

to Al Hallak into the box, with Amine Binedi mistiming his kick. Al Hallak took full advantage in his one-on-one with Muharraq goalkeeper Sayed Mohammed Jaafar, and sent the ball home from close range.

Then in the third minute of

Standings

	P	W	D	L	+/-	Pts
Manama	8	5	3	0	8	18
Riffa	7	5	2	0	8	17
East Riffa	7	2	3	2	1	9
Al Khaldiya	7	2	3	2	1	9
Muharraq	7	2	2	3	1	8
Hidd	8	1	5	2	-1	8
Al Hala	6	2	2	2	-2	8
Al Najma	7	1	3	3	-5	6
Budaiya	7	1	2	4	-4	5
Al Ahli	8	0	5	3	-7	5

BETTER YOU KNOW
Mohamed Yahya Al Hallak scored two goals for Manama against Muharraq last night and also provided the assist that led to their third goal

first-half stoppage time, Abduljabbar gave Manama the 3-0 lead, with Al Hallak this time providing the assist. His precision cross from the edge of the area found an unmarked Abduljabbar, who needed only to tap the ball home in the face of goal.

In yesterday's other match at the same venue, Hidd and Al Ahli played to a goalless draw.

The two clubs took a share of the points but remained in the bottom half of the standings. Hidd went to eight points following their fifth draw in sixth place, while Ahli stayed last overall following their fifth draw, earning them five points.

League action continues tonight with A Khaldiya playing Al Hala at 5.45pm, followed by Al Najma taking on East Riffa at 8.20pm. Tomorrow, defending champions Riffa go head-to-head with Budaiya.

Bahrain handball team in Hungary camp

● **Eighteen-player squad currently training for 2022 Asian Men's Handball Championship later this month**

TDT | Manama

An 18-player Bahrain senior men's national handball team are currently in Hungary for an overseas training camp being held as part of their preparations for the 2022 Asian Men's Handball Championship.

The squad is coached by Icelandic tactician Aron Kristjansson, and it is spearheaded by skipper Hussain Al Sayyad. The other players include Mohammed Abdullhussain, Mohammed Mirza, Bilal Basham, Ali Eid, Mahdi Saad, Mohammed Habib Nasser, Hassan Al Samahiji, Mohammed Ali Abduredha, Abdulla Ali, Hussain Mahfouz, Mohammed Habib, Ahmed Al Maqabi, Ali Mirza, Ali Abdulqader, Ahmed Jalal, Qasim Qambar (Barbar) and Hisham Ahmed Issa.

The Bahrainis are in Group D for the continental championship alongside Uzbekistan, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Japan. There are 17 national teams in all in the fray, and games will be played in the Saudi cities of Dammam and Qatif.

The competition also acts as a continental qualifying event for the world championship



Bahrain players during training in Hungary

BETTER YOU KNOW
2022 Asian Men's Handball Championship also acts as a continental qualifying event for the world championship in 2023

in 2023.

Bahrain open their campaign against the Uzbeks on January 18. They then face their counterparts from Hong Kong on January 19, before taking on Vietnam the next day. They then have a rest day on January 21

and then play their last group match against Japan the following evening.

Bahrain must finish in the top two in their group to make it through to the main round. The bottom three squads face off in the consolation bracket for the Martyr Fahad Al Ahmad Al Sabah Cup.

Group A comprises South Korea, Kuwait, Jordan and Singapore; Group B features hosts Saudi, Iran, Australia and India; and Group C consists of defending champions Qatar, the UAE, Iraq and Oman.

In the previous Asian championship held in January of 2020, the Bahrainis finished fourth overall. Bahrain have never won the title, but were runners-up four times in the last six editions and bronze-medallists once.

Sakkari battles past Zidasek to open WTA season in Adelaide



Maria Sakkari
AFP | Adelaide

World number six Maria Sakkari battled past Slovenia's Tamara Zidasek in three sets to reach the second round of the Adelaide International on Monday and kick off the new WTA season.

The 26-year-old Greek was kept on court for just over two hours before seeing off Zidasek 6-2, 0-6, 6-4.

Third seed Sakkari, who broke into the top 10 in November, admitted she had been well below her best as she warms up for the Australian Open later this month.

"I didn't feel great to be perfectly honest," she said. "It wasn't a good match from my side but I found a way through it, which sometimes is enough, and I'm excited to be in the second round."

Sakkari looked to be in complete control when she won the first set, only for Zidasek to storm back and win the second to love.

Jansen grabs four as India struggle on first day of second Test

AFP | Cape Town

Four years after impressing Indian captain Virat Kohli as a net bowler, Marco Jansen produced a destructive spell of bowling for South Africa on the first day of the second Test at the Wanderers Stadium on Monday.

Jansen, 21, a tall left-arm fast bowler, took four for 31 as India were bowled out for 202 after winning the toss.

South Africa were 35 for one at the close.

Kohli was one of Jansen's five wickets on debut in the first Test in Centurion, which India won by 113 runs but was



Marco Jansen celebrates a wicket absent on Monday because of an upper back spasm.

Stand-in captain KL Rahul top-scored with a patient 50, while Ravichandran Ashwin made a hard-hit 46.

Jansen, who towers above most of his teammates at 2.03 metres, made the most of the steep bounce on offer at the Wanderers, troubling most of the batsmen with his pace and bounce.

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