

Bahrain shift focus to Iran test
 Senior men's national football team looking to ride their momentum from 8-0 drubbing of Cambodia on Thursday into their crucial qualifier against Iranian counterparts on Monday | P12

THE DAILY tribune



9 CELEBS Ariana Grande gifted a tandem bike from PETA

BUSINESS 5 RDIF, RosCongress, EDB, Mumtalakat sign deal

Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Getting vaccinated, booster shots and vaccines for 12-17 year olds protects everyone

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Facebook suspends Trump's account for two years



Reuters

Facebook Inc yesterday suspended former US President Donald Trump from its platform until at least January 2023 in a decision that has been watched closely for signals on how the company will treat rule-breaking world leaders in the future.

The social media giant's independent oversight board in May upheld its block on Trump, which was enforced in the wake of the Jan. 6 riot at the US Capitol over concerns that his posts were inciting violence.

However, the board ruled it was wrong to make the ban indefinite and gave it six months to determine a "proportionate response."

Trump's suspension was effective from the initial date in January and will only be reinstated if conditions permit, Facebook said in a blog post.

Details of booster dose to be revealed soon: Dr Al Qahtani

TDT | Manama

Bahrain will announce the details of receiving the booster dose in the next few days, said Dr Manaf Al Qahtani.

"The authorities in the coming days will announce all details regarding the planned booster dose, selection of beneficiaries, causes, and vaccine types," said the Infectious Diseases Consultant & Microbiologist at the BDF Hospital and Member of the National Taskforce Combating the coronavirus pandemic.

"We will explain the medical and scientific aspect of the concept of the booster dose, which is one of the strategies in place for eliminating the



Coronavirus pandemic," he added.

Dr Al Qahtani further stressed that Team Bahrain is exerting all its capabilities to achieve this goal, considering the local and regional situations.

All team members, including the vaccination committee, public health specialists, doctors, medical team staff, are working to put this strategy into practice.



Last update - 9:00 pm
4 June 2021

Individuals vaccinated



US turns up heat on Iran-backed Houthis

TDT | agencies

Iran-aligned Houthis are to blame for the ongoing brutal conflict swallowing Yemen, said the United States Yesterday.

Houthis, the US State Department said, are responsible for the failure of a ceasefire to take hold in Yemen and accused them of not taking other steps toward ending the brutal conflict.

"While there are numerous problematic actors inside of Yemen, the Houthis bear major responsibility for refusing to engage meaningfully on a ceasefire and to take steps to resolve a nearly seven-year conflict that has brought unimaginable suffering to the Yemeni people," the State Department said.

The US special envoy for Yemen, Tim Lenderking, returned on Thursday from a trip to Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan, where he discussed the humanitarian and economic crisis in Yemen with government officials, Yemenis and international partners, the department said



Armed Houthi followers ride on the back of a truck after participating in a funeral of Houthi fighters killed in recent fighting against government forces in Yemen's oil-rich province of Marib, in Sanaa, Yemen

in a statement.

Since taking office in January, US President Joe Biden has made Yemen a priority and appointed Lenderking to help revive stalled UN peace efforts.

After Lenderking returned from a visit last month, the State Department accused the Houthis of worsening Yemen's humanitarian crisis by attacking Marib, the last northern stronghold of the Saudi-backed government that the Houthis drove out of the capital.

The situation has not changed.

"The Houthis continue a devastating offensive on Marib that is condemned by the international community and leaves the Houthis increasingly isolated," the State Department said.

Lenderking had talked to Yemenis about strengthening "inclusive processes" that could help citizens discuss the country's future and increase efforts towards peace, it said.

Yemen fuel tanker could explode at any moment

TDT | Manama

Greenpeace warned Thursday that a long-abandoned fuel tanker off war-torn Yemen's coast could "explode at any moment," urging UN action to prevent a catastrophic Red Sea oil spill.

The 45-year-old fuel vessel FSO Safer has 1.1 million barrels of crude onboard, and has been abandoned near Yemen's western port of Hodeida since 2015.

"The FSO Safer is rusting



at anchor and could break or explode at any moment," said Greenpeace spokesman Ahmed El Droubi.

"It's not if, it's when," Droubi added.

Egypt sends building equipment to begin Gaza reconstruction -state TV **P6**



BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL TESTED

4702914

ACTIVE CASES

25573

DEATHS

1069

DISCHARGED

221508

NEW CASES

1492

CRITICAL

319



Cheering for Bahrain's National Team



Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal, the Speaker of the House of Representatives



Dr Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi, the Education Minister



Aymen Tawfiq Almoayyed, the Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs



Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, the Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs



Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Minister of Finance and National Economy



Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, the Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications

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As the Reds push hard to win a spot in the FIFA World Cup 2022, Bahrainis are coming out in full strength to cheer on the team.

Yesterday, Education Minister Dr Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi came out wearing red to cheer the team.

The team on Thursday grabbed a thumping win by blasting eight goals against none scored by Cambodia to rise to the top of Group C with 12 points in a joint qualification for the FIFA World Cup 2022.

Bahrain now has two more games ahead of them in their bid to make it to the next round.

Works Minister Essam Khalaf also posted thumbs up



Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, OII Minister



Bassem bin Yacoub Al Hamer, the Minister of Housing



Ali bin Mohammed Al Rumaihi, the Minister of Media Affairs

for National Team on the ministry's Instagram account.

Also, coming out to encourage the team were: Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Minister of Finance and National Economy, Bassem bin Yacoub Al Hamer, the Minister of Housing, Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the Minister of Oil, Aymen Tawfiq Almoayyed, the Minister of Youth

and Sports Affairs, Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, the Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs and Ali bin Mohammed Al Rumaihi, Minister of Media Affairs.

The ministers affirmed their full support to the Bahrain National Team, wishing them all the best in their march ahead to the World Cup.

The show of support was part of an initiative by HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the representative of His Maj-

esty the King for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs.

The Reds had come close twice to qualify for the FIFA World Cup but lost those chances to Trinidad and New Zealand in 2006 and 2010, respectively.

Now, with a new breed of talent, Team Bahrain is well on their way to realising its World Cup dreams once more.

The entire nation is watching with bated breath as the likes of Alaa Hubail, Ali Husein Baba,

and Mohamed Salmeen lead the way. Portuguese coach Helio Sousa is grooming the team that won the West Asian Football Federation Championship and the Gulf Cup in 2019 to complete the job and take Bahrain to the world Finals for the first time in their history.

The team will return to action on Monday night against Iran, which has 11 points. They will play Hong Kong in their final match on June 15.

Boosting Bahrain-Russia ties

Minister Dr Al Zayani continues meetings with top Russian officials

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, continued to hold meetings with top officials and ministers on the sidelines of his participation in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in Russia.

The meetings focused on enhancing bilateral and trade ties with Russian Federation and boosting business opportunities.

During a discussion with Viktor Zubkov, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gazprom, Dr Al Zayani expressed Bahrain's keenness to continue strengthening ties, especially in the energy industry.

Their talks also focused on benefiting from the economic, commercial and investment opportunities in both countries.

Mikhail Murashko, the Minister of Health of the Russian Federation, discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the health sector with minister Dr Al Zayani.

They discussed joint efforts to address the coronavirus pandemic and appreciated the constructive partnership of both countries in Sputnik V COVID-19

Plenary session with President Putin



Dr Al Zayani also took part in an official plenary session with Vladimir Putin, the Russian President.

Putin said the Russian market is returning to the pre-crisis level, stressing the need for equitable distribution of vaccines.

Russia, Putin said, had not produced COVID-19 vaccines but is also working with international partners to manufacture these vaccines abroad.

vaccine manufacturing and distribution.

Dr Al Zayani also held discussions with the President of the Russian Republic of Adygea, Murad Kombilov, and Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani,



Dr Al Zayani with Viktor Zubkov, the Chairman of the Board of Gazprom



Dr Al Zayani with the President of Russian Republic of Adygea, Murad Kombilov



Dr Al Zayani with Mikhail Murashko, the Minister of Health of the Russia

Minister of Foreign Affairs, on enhancing bilateral and trade ties.

Present during the meetings from Bahrain side were Ahmed Abdulrahman Al-Saati, the Ambassador of Bahrain in Moscow, Khaled Amr Al-Rumaihi, the CEO of Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company, Khaled Ibra-

him Humaidan, the CEO of the Economic Development Board, Eman Ahmed Al-Dosari, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce Tourism, Talal Abdul Salam Al-Ansari, Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ministry closes four mosques, opens new treatment halls

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments announced closing four more mosques for finding existing COVID-19 cases among worshippers.

The closure, the ministry said, is for carrying out sterilisation, contact tracing and ensuring the correct practice of preventive measures.

Separately, Health Ministry announced opening new facilities to treat COVID-19 patients who are not critical.



Sterilisation of mosques progressing

"The halls are prepared to function as medical centres for examining and treating existing patients, who are not critical and undergoing home isolation," Health Ministry tweeted.



Metro mulls rolling into sports city

Bahrain is to begin a feasibility study to extend the metro corridor to Sports City

● **Ministry is to start a feasibility study of the project**

● **Plan is to extend metro corridor from King Hamad Railway Station at Alramli area to the new sports City and the International Exhibition Centre at Sakhir area.**

TDI | Manama

Plans are on the anvil to extend Bahrain's metro corridor to Bahrain sports city, for which the Kingdom is to start a feasibility study.

The plan is to extend the Bahrain metro corridor from King Hamad Railway Station at Alramli area to the new sports City and the International Exhibition Centre at Sakhir area.

The Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications said they are looking forward to appointing a technical consultant to study the feasibility of the route for completion in the first phase.

The study will evaluate the



possibilities of a different alternative corridor, the project's economic benefit, station allocation, concept and preliminary design of the corridor and cost estimate of the project.

The ministry had also launched a tender for the pro-

ject in March, which attracted huge interests.

Eleven companies had expressed their willingness in the project. The bid values are undisclosed.

Egis, Gulf Markets International, Mo-

hamed Salahuddin Consulting, AECOM Middle East Limited, SENER Ingenieria y Sistemas and Intecsainarsa are among the bidders.

These details came as the tender and auction board, the independent regulatory body tasked

with overseeing government bidding and bidding practices, opened 57 bids received for eight tenders by five government agencies and ministries.

The ministry had said that it envisages completing an approximate length of 28.6km with 20 stations with two lines in the

first phase.

The first line will connect Airport to Seef District through Airport Avenue and King Faisal Highway. The second line will connect Juffair to the Educational area in Isa Town through King Faisal Highway, passing by the Diplomatic sector and Bab Al Bahrain.



The entire Bahrain Metro project is estimated to cost between US\$ 1 billion and US\$ 2 billion and comprises four metro lines totalling 109km.

The system, designed to carry 43,000 passengers per hour, will be carried out through a public-private partnership.

New FM station on the way

● **Ministry is auctioning the rights to operate and manage the FM channel with 89.2 MHz frequency**

● **Ministry is offering a five-year contract**

TDI | Manama

The Ministry of Information Affairs announced auctioning its FM Radio channel at 89.2 MHz frequency for five years.

The contract comes with all rights to operate and manage the FM channel Radio Studio 24x7 in the Kingdom.

The winning contractor, the ministry said, must provide FM Transmitter, Transmission Line, Pie Rack and connectivity to Pie Rack from the auctioneer's Radio Studio.



Representative picture

A tender launched on 19th April attracted two bidders, said the Tender board in a statement.

Group Plus for Advertising, which quoted BHD 327,625,000, was the highest bidder. The other bidder, Rami Productions Middleeast, quoted BHD 299,250,000, according to Tender board documents.

Stations by frequencies

Some of the other Radio stations in Bahrain by frequencies are Radio Sawa (89.9MHz) Deutsche Welle / Radio Monte Carlo Doualiya (90.9 MHz), Emarat FM (92.3 MHz), Sawt al-Khaleej (94.4 MHz), Sawt el-Ghad (94.8 MHz), BBC World Service in English (101.0 MHz), Panorama FM (103.0 MHz) and BBC World Service in Arabic (103.8 MHz).

Most of the radio stations in the Kingdom are state-owned, except for Radio Mirchi (104.1FM), which is a privately-owned radio station broadcasting in Hindi and Malayalam.

Maintenance of palace garden, house in Buri and much more

TDI | Manama

The Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning has announced plans for conducting the maintenance of Al-Qudaibiya Palace Garden.

The tender and auction board announced receiving three bids for the tender ranging from BHD 262,840,000 to BHD 287,622,500. Gulf Fencing & Specialist Surfacing emerged as the lowest bidder.

The board also opened four bids for supplying liquid chlorine to a tertiary treatment plant in the Tubli. The bids ranged between BHD 514,877,192 and BHD 608,110,508. Emma Gate emerged as the lowest bidder.

Works Ministry also announced plans to demolish an existing old house in Buri and constructing a new one there.

The house in block no: 754 is enclosed by buildings on two sides and roads 5405 and 5408 on the other sides.

A tender launched attracted 11 parties whose bids ranged between BHD 47,200,000 and BHD 76,371,715.

Sarab Contracting est quoted the lowest amount, according to the tender board.

The committee also opened a tender for the Electricity and Water Authority to rent truck-mounted cranes for four years. The work attracted eight bids. Finally, the committee opened two tenders in the aviation sector for the Bahrain Airport Company. The first tender for hiring skilled labourers for the support and maintenance at Bahrain International Airport found nine takers. The second for the supply of food supplies, find only one bidder.

Smuggling drugs in face masks: suspects to learn fate on 15 June

TDI | Manama

Four men, accused of smuggling Marijuana by hiding inside a consignment of face masks exploiting the coronavirus situation, will learn their fate on 15 June 2021.

The seizure, officials said, showed the lengths to which smugglers were willing to go.

Customs officers had seized undisclosed amounts of Marijuana that smugglers brought in using air freight services.

Court files say the suspects, all Asian nationals, hid the illicit drugs with the help of their accomplices abroad before sending

The seizure, officials said, showed the lengths to which smugglers were willing to go.

them to the Kingdom.

However, their attempts failed when customs officers grew suspicious of the sewing styles of the face masks that looked bulged.

Customs officials, however,

notified the suspects to come and collect their consignment.

Unsuspecting of the trap laid for them, the suspect walked straight into the custody of the police officers, who were quick to make the arrest.

During interrogation, the suspects confessed that they were tasked with importing drugs, while two others were responsible for distributing them in the Kingdom.

Public prosecution charged the suspects with smuggling and peddling outlawed drugs.

Suspects stood trial before the High Criminal Court.



Representative picture

Not the first time!

This, however, is not the first time that smugglers attempted to make use of the ongoing pandemic to their benefit.

British customs officers had reported a similar incident where smugglers tried to smuggle in 14 kilograms of cocaine worth more than \$1.25 million.

British Interior Ministry found the cocaine wrapped in 15 packages in boxes full of face mask when checked a Polish-registered van bound for Britain. Reports point out that Europe's cocaine market is worth more than \$10 billion.

Focus on reversing the climate crisis

Bahrain joins global nations in celebrating the World Environment Day

TDT | Manama

Bahrain yesterday marked World Environment Day by pledging its allegiance to the United Nations in the battle to reverse the climate crisis. "The day observed worldwide on June 5 provides us an opportunity to re-affirm commitment to protecting the environment," said HH Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HM the King's Personal Representative and President of the Supreme Council for Environment.

He added: "It also an opportunity to pledge to exert utmost efforts to restore and preserve the ecosystem to the fullest."

Bahrain, he said, is paying utmost attention to protecting the ecosystem and supporting international efforts to preserve biodiversity.

"Marine reserves set up by the Kingdom had helped it achieve 21% of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which calls for the establishment of conservation plans for species threatened with extinction," he stressed.

The Tubli Bay, the Mashtan Island, the Hawar Islands, the Dawhat Arad, the Northern Hayrat, and the Hayr Bulthamah are the six reserves in the Kingdom. Bahrain also has one wildlife sanctuary in the form of Al Areen.

There are about 323 species of wild birds in the Kingdom, of which 40 are Bahrain specific or 12.4% of the total number of registered species.

The Supreme Council for Environment, he said, had implemented several strategic initiatives and projects to protect and preserve the ecosystem here,

Natural Reserves in the Kingdom



Al Areen

Al Areen Wildlife Park, established in 1976, covers an area of 5.4 km². It is the first project of its kind in the region and aims to preserve endangered rare Arab animal species



Arad Bay

Arad Bay is one of the most prominent coastal mangrove reserves in Bahrain. The mangrove trees enhance the cohesion of the soil and provide a haven for small fish. Millions of small and micro-organisms that are important for the marine environment live in the sands of this protected marine sanctuary.



Hawar Islands

The Hawar Islands Reserve is approximately 26 kilometres southeast of Ras El Bar, the island of Bahrain. They include six major islands, in addition to more than 30 small ones, with a total area of about 51.4 square kilometres. The maximum length of the largest island, Hawar, is about 17 kilometres, and its width is 3 kilometres, while its maximum height is 19 meters.



Tubli Bay

Tubli Bay is a nature reserve as per Cabinet Resolution No (1341) issued on April 16, 1995. The reclamation and construction were regulated in the sanctuary covering a total area of 13.5 km². Tubli Bay was declared a protected reserve within the sites included in the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR) of 1997.



Mashtan Island

The Mashtan Island and the areas surrounding it are crucial for the biodiversity of Bahrain. There are many rare marine plants in it, of which identified seven different kinds. The island also homes many marine creatures that have direct economic returns.



Hayr Bulthama

The Hayr Bulthama Reserve is located 70 km north of Muharraq and covers an area of 7.8 km². With an average depth of 12 meters, Hayr Bulthama is not as deep as neighbouring areas. However, it is relatively deeper when compared to overall Bahrain's territorial waters, where the maximum depth reaches 69 meters. The weather at the Hayr Bulthama is better than the rest of the coasts of Bahrain, with temperatures less than 3 to 5 degrees Celsius.



His Highness Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa

ronmental crisis," added Shaikh Khalifa.

The focus is on "addressing high rates of animal and plant extinction, and continued rise in global temperatures, especially in light of the Coronavirus pandemic."

Bahrain's celebration of the world event, HH Shaikh Abdulla said, is in line with the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

"The initiatives and projects implemented by the SCE enjoy the support of HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, and are consistent with the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030," he added.

The theme of World Environment Day this year is "Reimagine. Recreate. Restore". The United Nations launched the day in the early 70s.

This year, the United Nations wants each nation to pledge for reversing the mindless practices that are polluting our cities, coasts and forests.

which includes the various laws to protect endangered species. "Bahrain is looking forward to enhancing its cooperation with the UN Environment Programme's Regional Office for West Asia in its studies and projects to confront the envi-

New Horizon School observes World Environment Day



The New Horizon School observed World Environment Day on 3rd June 2021 with the Theme Ecosystem Restoration. The school's Science Department conducted a special assembly with a skit "Protect Our Nature" on the importance of plants for existence. Students presented a song on 'Giving Back life to our Mother Earth'. Kindergarten students presented a video highlighting how best we can use waste to protect our environment. The students, as part of an activity 'Best out of Waste', created useful products using discarded materials

COVID-19 violations: actions taken against 27 restaurants



TDT | Manama

cafes. "Judicial control officers took necessary legal measures against the violators," the ministry said.

Health Ministry yesterday announced taking actions against 27 restaurants and cafes for COVID-19 violations.

The actions were during inspections conducted yesterday at over 187 restaurants and

Some of the stores, the ministry said, were alerted of their mistakes and were ordered to correct them immediately.

NMS Bahrain Environment day celebrations



NMS- Bahrain held the World Environment Day celebration through its online platform on the 2nd and 3rd of June 2021. Students took part in activities such as best out of wastes, poster designing, slogan and Jingle writing, PPT & movie-making, making paper and T-shirt bags and Orange peel bird feeder, group discussions and speech on environmental issues. Activities also included guided yoga sessions, drawing, singing songs and dancing to the songs on environmental sensitivity. Students also took part in an online pledge to develop a strong bond of love and care towards the environment. Principal Arun Kumar Sharma, School Chairman Dr Ravi Pillai and Managing Director Geetha Pillai appreciated the efforts of students, teachers and parents

RDIF, RosCongress, EDB, Mumtalakat sign deal



From left, Alexei Valkov, Director, RosCongress Foundation, Khalid Al Rumaihi, CEO, Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company, Khalid Humaidan, CE, Bahrain Economic Development Board, Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ahmed Alsaati, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Moscow

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Economic Development Board and Mumta-

lakat Holding Company yesterday entered into a deal with the RosCongress Foundation and the Russian Direct Investment Fund on the sidelines of the St.

Petersburg International Economic Forum.

The Memorandum of Understanding aims at exploring the organisation of a series of events

for highlighting the ongoing cooperation between Russia and Bahrain across various fields of mutual interest, said a statement released.

Nigeria says it suspends Twitter days after president's post removed

Reuters

Nigeria said yesterday it had indefinitely suspended Twitter's activities, two days after the social media giant removed a post from President Muhammadu Buhari that threatened to punish regional secessionists.

Information Minister Lai Mohammed said the government made the move because of "the persistent use of the platform for activities that are capable of undermining Nigeria's corporate existence".

He did not spell out what form the suspension would take or give more details on the undermining activities.

Twitter's website and app continued to work in Nigeria on Friday in tests conducted by Reuters.

A spokesperson for Twitter did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the suspension.

Germany investigates Google's news showcase

Reuters

Germany's competition authority is investigating Alphabet Inc's Google News Showcase, a platform which makes news available on the tech giant's news website, it said on Friday.

Cooperation with Google could be attractive for publishers and other news providers and offer consumers better information services, it said.

US job growth improves; desperate employers raise wages to attract workers

● Growth is being supported by vaccinations against COVID-19

● At least half of the American population has been fully vaccinated against the virus

● Government-funded benefits, including a \$300 weekly unemployment subsidy, are also constraining hiring.

Reuters

US employers increased hiring in May and raised wages as they competed for workers, with millions of unemployed Americans still at home because of childcare issues, generous unemployment checks and lingering fears over COVID-19. Though the pickup in job growth shown in the Labour Department's closely watched employment report on Friday missed economists' forecasts, it offered some assurance that the recovery from the pandemic recession remained on track.

Growth is being supported by vaccinations against COVID-19, massive fiscal stimulus and the Federal Reserve's ultra-easy monetary policy stance. April's nonfarm payrolls count, which delivered about a quarter of the new jobs economists had forecast, caused handwringing among some analysts and investors that growth was stagnating at a time when inflation was rising.

"There are still a lot of people unemployed, but there does not seem to be a lot of eagerness to



People line up outside a newly reopened career center for in-person appointments in Louisville, US

work," said Chris Low, chief economist at FHN Financial in New York. "There would have been many more hires if employers could find more people."

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 559,000 jobs last month. Data for April was revised higher to show payrolls rising by 278,000 jobs instead of 266,000 as previously reported.

That left employment about 7.6 million jobs below its peak in February 2020. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 650,000 jobs created in May. About 9.3 million people were classified as officially unemployed last month. There are a record 8.1 million unfilled jobs.

At least half of the American population has been fully vaccinated against the virus, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That has allowed authorities across the country to lift virus-related restrictions on businesses, which nearly paralyzed the economy early in the pandemic. But the reopening of the economy is straining the supply chain.

Millions of workers, mostly women, remain at home as most school districts have not moved to full-time in-person

learning. Despite vaccines being widely accessible, some segments of the population are reluctant to get inoculated, which labor market experts say is discouraging some people from returning to work.

Government-funded benefits, including a \$300 weekly unemployment subsidy, are also constraining hiring. Republican governors in 25 states are terminating this benefit and other unemployment programs funded by the federal government starting next Saturday.

These states account for more than 40% of the workforce. The expanded benefits end in early September across the country. That, together with more people vaccinated and schools fully reopening in the fall, is expected to ease the worker crunch.

Labour Secretary Marty Walsh said the argument that enhanced benefits were discouraging jobseeking was not supported by what workers were telling him.

"Working people across America are eager to work," said Walsh in a statement. "But workers also told me about the challenges they and their families face, finding affordable childcare, caring for elderly parents and grandparents"

Gulf Air returns to Alexandria, Sharm El Sheikh this summer

Two weekly flights beginning 30 June until 25 September

TDT | Manama

Gulf Air, the national carrier of Bahrain, announced the return of two favourite summer destinations to its expanding network; Alexandria and Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt.

Both seasonal destinations will be served by the airline's new Airbus A321neoLR with two weekly flights each starting from 30 June until 25 September 2021.

The seasonal summer routes to Egypt will boost the airline's network with popular seaside destinations that are favourite to many tourists and families in Bahrain and the region, especially, as travel demand gradually grows towards the summer holidays with travel restrictions easing off.

Captain Waleed Abdulhameed AlAlawi, Acting Chief Executive Officer at Gulf Air said: "Our passengers have been through this journey with us as we navigated 2020 as one of the few airlines flying at the peak of the pandemic. Today, we are one of the first airlines in the world to have announced that 100% of our crew are vaccinated, provided all our passengers' complimentary COVID-19 insurance as well as initiated the IATA Travel Pass which we launched on our flights to London, Athens, and Singapore."



The airline currently flies to and from Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Kuwait, Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Medina, Muscat, Cairo, Amman, Casablanca, London, Paris, Frankfurt, Athens, Mykonos, Istanbul, Bangkok, Manila, Singapore, Dhaka, Colombo, the Maldives and several destinations in India and Pakistan. In line with the airline's strategy, Mykonos and Santorini have been added as boutique summer destinations from June until the end of September as well as resuming flights to Larnaca starting from 15 June and Malaga in Spain starting from 25 June.

Passengers can purchase tickets starting today and will automatically be covered with complimentary COVID-19 insurance including health and quarantine expenses in the unexpected circumstances of contracting COVID-19 abroad. Moreover, passengers are advised to visit gulfair.com/covid19 to familiarize themselves with travel advice, network and our health and safety procedures.

Musk breakup tweets bruise bitcoin

Reuters

Bitcoin fell more than 7% yesterday, with tweets by Tesla boss Elon Musk that appeared to lament a breakup with the cryptocurrency again moving markets.

Tesla's big position in bitcoin and Musk's large personal following set crypto markets on edge whenever he tweets, and the price fell after he posted "#Bitcoin", a broken-heart emoji and a picture of a couple discussing a breakup.

Musk followed up by posting a breakup comic strip and replying "nice" to an illustration of rival crypto dogecoin posted by crypto exchange Coinbase. It was unclear what, if anything, any of the tweets meant.

Musk has previously said Tesla would not sell its bitcoin, but his tweets were enough to unsettle markets still fragile following May's crash.

"When Elon Musk tweets any crypto-related content, the market ... expects a reaction," said Nick Spanos, co-founder of ZAP Protocol, a crypto project in Switzerland.

Bitcoin's fall pushed it below its 20-day moving average to as low as \$36,263, and took some of the edge off its week-to-date gains. It is up 2% so far this week.

Musk has been a major promoter of cryptocurrencies but has turned critical of bitcoin since suspending Tesla plans to take it in payment for cars, owing to concerns about its energy use.

Many crypto specialists have struggled to understand the



motives behind his tweets.

"He's trolling the community," said Bobby Ong, co-founder of crypto data aggregator and analytics website CoinGecko.

Bitcoin and several other cryptocurrencies are still recovering from a crash last month in the wake of that decision and on news of renewed regulatory scrutiny in China.

Tesla stock has now fallen by a third since it announced a \$1.5 billion bitcoin purchase in February, and bitcoin is more than 40% below April's record peak of \$64,895.22.

The second biggest cryptocurrency, ether, which tends to move in tandem with bitcoin, also extended losses through the day. It was last down 8% at \$2,626 though on course for a second consecutive weekly gain.

Dogecoin, the cryptocurrency perhaps most sensitive to Musk's opinions as he helped to turn the coin started as a joke into a multi-billion dollar market valuation, also fell by more than 10% to around \$0.36 on Friday.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

THE GREATER OUR KNOWLEDGE INCREASES THE MORE OUR IGNORANCE UNFOLDS
JOHN F. KENNEDY

News in brief

France halts joint army operations with Malian forces over coup



France said it was suspending its joint military operations with local troops in Mali as part of efforts to pressure the military junta there to restore a civilian-led government. Mali's military arrested interim President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane last week and pressured them to resign, derailing a transition to democratic elections after another military coup last August.

The Canadian government said it would direct more resources to First Nations police and address systemic racism in the justice system and law enforcement to tackle violence against indigenous women, but gave no time frame for achieving its "transformative changes."

Canada vows action on violence against indigenous women



Brazilian army exonerates general criticized for appearance with Bolsonaro



army general who rankled feathers among many officials and fellow military officials for appearing at a campaign rally with President Jair Bolsonaro, will not be disciplined, the army said in a statement. Pazuella appeared at a political rally for Bolsonaro in May, where he spoke with the right-wing leader's arm draped over his shoulder. The incident alarmed many given Bolsonaro's open nostalgia for the nation's 1964 to 1985 military dictatorship and his cozy relationship with some elements of the armed forces, many members of which hold key positions in his government.

A four-storey building collapsed in western Rio de Janeiro before, killing at least one infant and one adult and damaging nearby residences, the city's fire department said. Four people were rescued from the debris.

The irregular construction consisted of four small homes built atop one another. A spokesperson for the fire department said. City officials confirmed to The Associated Press in an email that the structure had no licence.



A Guatemalan judge accused of ties to an influence peddling scheme was sworn in to the country's top court, just days before a visit by the US vice president that is expected to focus on regional anti-corruption efforts. Judge Nester Vasquez took the oath to serve on the Constitutional Court in front of lawmakers in Congress who ratified his controversial appointment earlier this week.

COVID-19: Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths
1 USA	34,178,104	611,710
2 India	28,685,804	343,954
3 Brazil	16,803,472	469,784
4 France	5,694,076	109,857
5 Turkey	5,276,468	47,976
6 Russia	5,108,129	123,037
7 UK	4,506,016	127,823
8 Italy	4,227,719	126,415
9 Argentina	3,884,447	79,320
10 Germany	3,702,866	89,637
11 Spain	3,697,987	80,196
12 Colombia	3,488,046	90,353
13 Iran	2,954,309	80,813
14 Poland	2,874,411	74,101

Global tally

173,143,547

Deaths

3,723,139

Recovered:

155,925,296

New cases

+249,112

New deaths

+6,286

Figures as of closing

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	265,489		15,222		194,291	55,976
Saudi Arabia	455,418	+1,201	7,424	+16	438,206	9,788
UAE	579,009	+2,062	1,691	+2	558,584	18,734
Kuwait	314,569	+1,280	1,787	+4	298,485	14,297
Oman	220,702		2,385		202,021	16,296
Qatar	218,263	+183	565	+2	214,625	3,073

Egypt sends building equipment to begin Gaza reconstruction

The Egyptian equipment and crews will remove debris and rubble from buildings destroyed by last month's devastating Israeli air strikes on Gaza

Reuters | Cairo

Egypt has sent a convoy of engineers and building equipment to Gaza to begin reconstruction in the Palestinian enclave after the recent Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Egyptian state television reported yesterday.

Dozens of bulldozers, cranes and trucks flying Egyptian flags lined up along the border to begin crossing into the Gaza Strip, television pictures showed.

Palestinians lined the street on the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing to welcome the convoy as it rumbled into the small coastal enclave. A Palestinian border official said 50 vehicles had crossed.

"We rushed with all our money, equipment, and what we



Building equipment, sent by Egypt for Palestinians, arrive in southern Gaza Strip

owned to join the Palestinians in the rebuilding. Every Muslim and every Egyptian wishes to take part in [the reconstruction]," Egyptian truck driver Mahmoud Ismail told Reuters yesterday.

Eleven days of conflict between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist rulers of Gaza, erupted on May 10. More than 250 Palestinians were killed in hundreds of Israeli air strikes in Gaza. Rockets fired by Gaza militants killed 13 people in Israel.

Egypt played a major role in brokering a ceasefire between both sides and has said it would allocate \$500 million to fund the rebuilding of devastated

areas in Gaza.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem yesterday reiterated the group's appreciation of Egyptian contributions to the rebuilding efforts.

Gaza's housing ministry said 1,500 housing units were destroyed during the fighting, another 1,500 housing units had been damaged beyond repair and 17,000 suffered partial damage. A ministry official put the cost of rebuilding at \$150 million.

Egypt in February opened the Rafah crossing until further notice after Palestinian factions moved towards reconciliation following talks in Cairo.

It had previously been opening the crossing for only a few days at a time to allow stranded travellers to pass.



A woman walks past building equipment, sent by Egypt for Palestinians

"We rushed with all our money, equipment, and what we owned to join the Palestinians in the rebuilding. Every Muslim and every Egyptian wishes to take part in [the reconstruction]"

Egyptian truck driver MAHMOUD ISMAIL

Lebanon urges UN to find funds to keep Hariri trial alive

AFP | Beirut

Lebanon yesterday urged the United Nations to urgently consider "alternative means" to fund a UN-backed court on its ex-premier Rafic Hariri's murder that may close over a cash crunch.

"Taking into account the ongoing acute crises that Lebanon suffers from... (we) would be grateful to Your Excellency for urgently exploring different and alternative means of financing" the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, caretaker prime minister Hassan Diab wrote in a letter to UN chief Antonio Guterres.

The STL, set up to try suspects in the 2005 killing of Hariri, said this week it risks closure by the end of July without a cash injection.

The court based in the Netherlands on Thursday cancelled the opening of a new trial of a convicted suspect that had been set for June 16 "due to lack of funds".

The STL is estimated to have cost between \$600 million and \$1 billion since it opened in 2009.



A billboard bearing a portrait of late Lebanese premier Rafic Hariri is displayed with the Arabic slogan "The Era of Justice" on a main road in the Lebanese capital Beirut (file photo)

It draws 51 percent of its budget from donor countries and the rest from Lebanon, which is grappling with its deepest economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war.

The World Bank said this week that Lebanon's financial downturn is likely to rank among the world's worst since the mid-19th century.

In his appeal, Diab called on UN member states to keep the court alive.

"The most painful consequences of the cessation of the

STL's work lie in the reflection of a fragmented and incomplete justice," he said.

'Killed twice'

Sunni billionaire Hariri, who had stepped down as Lebanon's prime minister in October 2004, was killed in a February 2005 suicide blast targeting his armoured convoy.

The attack in Beirut also killed 21 other people and injured 226.

Born from a United Nations Security Council resolution, the

Sri Lanka disaster

Foreign experts deplo

Singapore-registered ship has been slowly sinking into the Indian Ocean since Wednesday

Reuters | Washington

Environmentalists yesterday sued the Sri Lankan government and operators of a container ship loaded with chemicals and plastic that burned offshore for almost two weeks, as international experts prepared to deal with a possible oil spill.

The private Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) petitioned the Supreme Court alleging that local authorities should have been able to prevent what they called the "worst marine disaster" in Sri Lanka's history.

The Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl has been slowly sinking into the Indian Ocean since Wednesday after a fire that raged for 13 days within sight of the coast.

Tonnes of microplastic granules from the ship have swamped an 80-kilometre (50-mile) stretch of beach which has been declared off limits for residents. Fishing in the area was also banned.

The CEJ said government inaction was "against the concepts and principles of environmental law". A hearing is yet to be fixed.

It said the crew knew of an acid leak on May 11, long before entering Sri Lankan waters, and local authorities should not have allowed the vessel in.

YOU
KNOW WHAT

Special Tribunal for Lebanon, set up to try suspects in the 2005 killing of Hariri, is estimated to have cost between \$600 million and \$1 billion since it opened in 2009

1873

Sultan Bargash bin Said under British pressure closes the infamous slave market of Zanzibar in modern day Tanzania



1963

State of siege proclaimed in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini arrested

1967

Six-Day War begins between Israel and the neighbouring Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria

1968

Palestinian Sirhan Sirhan shoots Robert F. Kennedy three times, who dies the next day, and wounds 5 others at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California

Lanka sued over ship er as oil spill looms

oyed for oil spill from 'dangerous cargo' that burnt for 13 days



MV X-Press Pearl sinks after burning outside Colombo's harbour

The legal challenge seeking unspecified damages came as foreign experts were deployed to help Sri Lanka contain a potential oil leak from the burnt-out wreckage.

Representatives from the International Tankers Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF) and Oil Spill Response (OSR) were onshore monitoring the ship, the operators of the vessel, X-Press Feeders, said.

"They continue to coordinate with MEPA (the Marine Environment Protection Authority) and the Sri Lankan navy on an established plan to deal with any possible spill of oil and other pollutants," the Singaporean company said.

Its chief executive, Shmuel Yoskovitz, apologised to Sri Lanka for the disaster.

"I'd like to express my deep regrets and apologies to the Sri

Lankan people for the harm this incident has caused to the livelihood and to the environment of Sri Lanka," Yoskovitz told Channel News Asia.

Second dive aborted

Choppy seas and poor visibility prevented navy divers from checking the hull for a second day yesterday, Sri Lanka navy spokesperson Indika de Silva said.

He said a team reached the sinking vessel and made a cursory inspection on Thursday, but could not carry out their mission because of poor visibility.

Meanwhile, the MEPA has readied oil dispersants and skimmers should the vessel leak its 350 tonnes of fuel oil, believed to be still in its tanks, and cause further massive environmental degradation.

An Indian coastguard vessel in the area has equipment to deal

with an oil slick, according to the Sri Lankan navy, which has requested assistance with the operation.

Sri Lanka's Harbour Master Nirmal Silva said yesterday that no oil had leaked 48 hours after the stern submerged.

"Looking at the way the ship burnt, expert opinion is that bunker oil may have burnt out, but we are preparing for the worst-case scenario," Silva said.

The vessel was carrying 81 containers of "dangerous cargo" including acids and lead ingots.

Sri Lankan authorities believe the fire was caused by a nitric acid leak which the crew apparently knew about nine days before the blaze started.

Ports in Qatar and India had refused to offload the leaking nitric acid and the vessel arrived in Sri Lankan waters with the leak.



The escape of microplastic granules from the ship's cargo has already forced a fishing ban and prompted concern for the marine environment as well as the local economy

Putin inks law to ban 'extremists' from elections amid Navalny crackdown



Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting with leaders of the United Russia party via a video conference
AFP | Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday signed legislation that bars members of "extremist" organisations from running for office, a move allies of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny say aims to sideline them from parliamentary election this year.

Putin's approval of the law comes days before a court will consider outlawing Navalny's anti-corruption foundation and regional campaign groups on the grounds they are extremist.

The law bars members or heads of groups declared extremist from running for seats in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, or taking part in other elections for periods ranging from three to five years.

The legislation effectively derails campaigns for the parliament announced by some Navalny allies, including Lyubol Sobol, who is being prosecuted over a protest in support of the opposition politician.

The signing by Putin coincides with Navalny's 45th birthday, which is he marking behind bars as he serves a 2.5-year sentence for embezzlement charges that he says are



The law bars members or heads of groups declared extremist from running for seats in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, or taking part in other elections for periods ranging from three to five years

trumped up.

Navalny's team -- which says the extremism allegations are an attempt to blunt their political opposition at parliamentary election in September -- said sarcastically that the law was "a special birthday greeting from the Kremlin".

In a post on his Instagram account, Navalny said he wasn't bothered by having to celebrate his birthday in jail and that he would celebrate all his missed birthdays once he is released.

S.Korean air force chief resigns over death, sexual abuse of sergeant

Reuters | London

South Korea's air force chief resigned yesterday, apologising and taking responsibility for the death of a member of the force who took her own life, according to her family, after being sexually harassed by a colleague.

Lee Seong-yong offered to step down a day after an air force master sergeant was arrested on charges of molesting and injuring a female colleague of the same rank in March.

The family of the victim said she had suffered mental distress and persistent bullying, and accused the air force of trying to cover up the assault and silence her over the past two months.

President Moon Jae-in immediately accepted Lee's resignation, his press secretary said, making him the shortest serving South Korean air force chief after appointing him in September.

No evidence mystery UFOs are alien spacecraft, report finds: NYTimes

AFP | New York

There is no evidence that unexplained aerial phenomena spotted in recent years by US military personnel are aliens, an upcoming government report quoted by The New York Times Thursday said, but officials still can't explain the mysterious aircraft.

The newspaper, which cited senior administration officials briefed on the findings of the highly anticipated report, said they were able to confirm the unusual vessels were not the product of secret Pentagon technology.

But the review of more than 120 incidents over the past two decades was unable to explain the mysterious movements of the craft, which include unusual acceleration, direction changes and the ability to rapidly submerge.

And while senior officials told the Times the lack of clear findings means that while there's no evidence of alien technology behind the phenomena, it's also impossible to rule out.

One senior official briefed on the report said intelligence and military officials increasingly worry the phenomena could be China or Russia experimenting



A still image from video released by the Department of Defense shows a 2004 encounter near San Diego between two Navy F/A-18F jets and an unknown object

with hypersonic technology.

The upcoming report -- expected to be released to Congress by June 25 -- will have a classified annex, officials told the Times, which will likely fuel speculation

that aliens are actually behind the encounters.

The Pentagon last year released videos taken by US Navy pilots showing in-flight encounters with the unusual aircraft.



Intelligence officials were able to confirm the unusual vessels were not the product of secret Pentagon technology -- but still couldn't explain the mysterious craft

And the mystery was further drummed up by former officials with access to classified intelligence.

"What is true -- and I'm actually being serious here -- is that there's footage and records of objects in the skies that we don't know exactly what they are," former president Barack Obama told "The Late Late Show" last month.

The US military no longer describes them as unidentified flying objects, or UFOs, instead using the term "unidentified aerial phenomena."



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Reviewed India's vaccination drive including the steps being taken to assist vaccine manufacturers and the need to further reduce vaccine wastage.

@narendramodi

02



This #VolunteersWeek, I want to thank all volunteers who have played a vital role throughout the pandemic -- from supporting the vulnerable during lockdown, to helping rollout the vaccine programme. Your contribution has been invaluable.

@BorisJohnson

03



Corruption betrays people and undermines democracies. It steals trillions of dollars from people everywhere -- usually those most in need. Turning the tide against this crime is essential if we are to achieve the #GlobalGoals, promote peace, and protect human rights.

@antonioguterres

04



"If anything, recent atrocities appear to have increased support for the" Tigray rebels. "One 19-year-old said she was raped by an Ethiopian soldier and is now six months pregnant."

@KenRoth

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

Belarus opposition condemn jailed activist interview

Opposition decries 'hostage' video as Belarus airs confession of detained journalist

● European powers slam interview

AFP | Minsk

Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhonovskaya on yesterday dismissed an interview shown on state television in Belarus with a journalist arrested after his plane was forced to land in Minsk.

Germany also slammed the interview with Roman Protasevich as a "disgrace", while British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said he was "clearly under duress".

Speaking during a visit to Warsaw, Tikhonovskaya said: "All such videos are shot under pressure."

"We should not believe any of the words of these people, including Roman Protasevich," said Tikhonovskaya, who ran against Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko in an election last year.

"They are done after torture," she said, adding: "The task of political prisoners is to survive".

Protasevich was arrested on May 23 along with his girlfriend Sofia Sapega when their Ryanair flight from Athens to Vilnius was diverted, intercepted by a Belarusian fighter jet and made



Belarus police detain journalist Roman Protasevich in Minsk (file photo) to land.

The interview with Protasevich, the co-founder and former editor of opposition Telegram channel Nexta which galvanised anti-government demonstrations, was broadcast on Thursday.

Looking uncomfortable in the video, Protasevich said he had called for protests last year and praised Lukashenko.

His supporters said he appeared to have marks on his wrists.

At the end of the 1.5-hour interview broadcast by Belarus state-run channel ONT Thursday evening, Protasevich began crying and covered his face with his hands.

The 26-year-old's father, Dmitry Protasevich, told AFP on Thursday that the video was

the result of "abuse, torture and threats."

"I know my son very well and I believe that he would never say such things," he told AFP.

"They broke him and forced him to say what was needed," he said, adding it pained him to watch the interview.

"I am very worried."

Belarusian authorities accuse Protasevich of organising mass riots, a charge that could land him in prison for 15 years.

'Contempt for democracy'

Raab called the interview with Protasevich "disturbing".

"Those involved in the filming, coercion and direction of the interview must be held accountable," he said on Twitter.

In Germany, government spokesman Steffen Seibert said

"We should not believe any of the words of these people, including Roman Protasevich. They are done after torture. The task of political prisoners is to survive"

SVETLANA TIKHONOVSKAYA

that Protasevich's supposed confession was "absolutely disgraceful and implausible".

He accused Belarusian authorities of "mentally and possibly physically" pressuring him to speak.

"That is a disgrace for the broadcaster showing (the interview) and for the Belarusian leadership which is once again showing its contempt for democracy and, it must be said, for humanity," Seibert said.

Protasevich and Sapega are accused of helping to coordinate historic demonstrations that broke out following Lukashenko's disputed re-election last August.

In response to the protests, Belarus authorities waged a brutal crackdown on the opposition and civil society, detaining and imprisoning thousands of demonstrators and pushing opposition leaders into exile.

Rohingya refugee boat lands in Indonesia after 113-day voyage



Rohingya refugees sit on a makeshift boat as they get interrogated by the Bangladesh Border Guard

AFP | Yangon

A boat carrying dozens of Rohingya refugees that set sail in February but had been adrift in the Andaman Sea with engine failure has landed on an Indonesian island after a voyage of more than 100 days, a human rights official said yesterday.

The vessel sailed on Feb. 11 from Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh carrying 90 Rohingya refugees, most of them women and children, with the hope of reaching Malaysia.

But the boat's engine failed four days after leaving Cox's Bazar, where refugee camps house hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims who have fled neighbouring Myanmar.

"We have learnt that the 81 (refugees) were fine, they landed on Idaman Island in Aceh (Indonesia)," said Chris Lewa, director of the Arakan Project, a group that monitors the Rohingya crisis.

"They are not 100% safe there yet. We hope they will not be pushed back," Lewa

YOU KNOW WHAT

The Rohingya are a minority group, most of whom are denied citizenship by Buddhist-majority Myanmar, which considers them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh

said. Of the 90 people who set out on the voyage, eight were found dead by Indian Coast Guards who had tracked and later repaired the vessel in February.

Indian authorities provided food and essential supplies to survivors but refused to let them set foot on their shores. Bangladesh, too, denied re-entry to 81 survivors.

New Israel finance minister to bring more Orthodox Jews into workforce



Ultra-Orthodox Jews take part in the "Mayim Shelanu" ceremony to collect water from a natural spring, near Jerusalem

Reuters | Tel Aviv

Israel's likely new finance minister, Avigdor Lieberman, said on Thursday that economic growth and raising the number of ultra-Orthodox Jews in the workforce would be his main goals.

Lieberman's nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu and seven other parties reached a coalition agreement on Wednesday night that would unseat Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if it is ratified by parliament.

"This coalition will focus mainly on economic issues," Lieberman, a former defence minister, told Israel's Channel 13.

He said one major challenge would be to bring Israel's "unreasonable" budget deficit under control.

Another was to bring ultra-Orthodox men into the

"We will do everything to provide them an education and enable them to learn a profession and stand on their own two feet, as opposed to charity and all the stipends"

AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN

labour force - currently only around half of them work, the others are devoted full-time to religious studies and rely on government allowances and handouts from donors.

"We will do everything to provide them an education and enable them to learn a profession and stand on their own two feet, as opposed to charity and all the stipends," he said.

Arctic sea ice thinning faster than expected, new study shows

AFP | London

Sea ice in the Arctic's coastal regions may be thinning up to twice as fast as previously thought, according to a new study, with worrying implications for climate change.

The analysis, led by researchers at Britain's University College London (UCL), concluded the ice in the coastal regions was thinning at a rate 70 to 100 percent faster than the established consensus.

The dramatic reassessment comes after the team used more up-to-date maps of snow depth on the ice, which has been retreating for decades as the planet warms.

"We believe our new calculations are a major step forward in terms of more accurately interpreting the data we have from satellites," said UCL professor Julianne Stroeve, who co-authored the study published in *The Cryosphere* journal.

"We hope this work can be used to better assess the performance of climate models that forecast the effects of long-term climate change in the Arctic," she said.

The region, home to millions of square kilometres of ice essential for keeping the planet cool, is warming at three times the global rate, Stroeve said.

Sea ice thickness is estimated by measuring the height of the ice above the water. But that measurement is distorted by snow weighing the ice floes down.

Scientists had adjusted for this using a map of snow depth



A polar bear jumps to an iceberg in the Arctic

in the Arctic that UCL said did not account for the impact of climate change.

"Previous calculations of sea ice thickness are based on a snow map last updated 20 years ago," said Robbie Mallett, a PhD student who led the study.

"Because sea ice has begun forming later and later in the year, the snow on top has less time to accumulate.

"Our calculations account for this declining snow depth for the first time, and suggest the sea ice is thinning faster than we thought."

Global tensions

The researchers used a European Space Agency satellite to time how long it takes for radar waves to bounce back from the ice, allowing them to calculate its height above the water and infer the ice's total thickness.

The UCL team complemented that estimate with a new snow model developed in partnership with Colorado State University in the United States.

It calculates snow depth and density using inputs such as air temperature, snowfall and ice motion data, to track how much snow accumulates on sea ice as it moves around the Arctic Ocean.

The combined results allowed the scientists to gauge the overall rate of decline in ice thickness, as well as its variability from year to year.

Mallett noted sea ice thickness from across the region is crucial because it is "a sensitive indicator of the health of the Arctic".

Thicker ice acts as an insulating blanket, stopping the ocean from warming up the atmosphere in winter, and protecting

BETTER YOU KNOW

Thicker ice acts as an insulating blanket, stopping the ocean from warming up the atmosphere in winter, and protecting the ocean from the sunshine in summer. Thinner ice is less likely to survive during the Arctic summer melt

the ocean from the sunshine in summer, he said.

"Thinner ice is also less likely to survive during the Arctic summer melt."

The UCL study follows a report last month by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme warning of an increased risk of the region's sea ice disappearing completely in summer, before reforming in winter.

The retreat of the ice is fueling geopolitical tensions as countries eye the polar north's untapped resources and the potential for new maritime routes.

Last month, Arctic countries including the United States and Russia pledged to fight climate change and to preserve peace in the region as its strategic importance rises.

CELEBS

Paris Hilton to release memoir

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Paris Hilton is set to release a memoir. The 40-year-old businesswoman has reportedly sold the rights to a new memoir to HarperCollins imprint Dey Street Books, who are the same company that published Jessica Simpson's best-seller, 'Open Book', in March this year.

According to Page Six, Paris shopped the memoir via literature agent Albert Lee at UTA, and the upcoming publication was acquired by Dey Street's editorial director Carrie Thornton.

Dey Street de-

scribes Paris' memoir as "both searingly honest and deeply personal," and added, "Hilton will share the real Paris Hilton as her celebrity persona evolved".

A publishing insider reportedly told Page Six the former 'Simple Life' star is hoping her own memoir can capitalise on "the success of Jessica Simpson's book, and nostalgia for early 2000s-era pop culture".

As of the time of writing, there is no title for the book and there is no confirmed release date.

However, Paris could be set to go into further detail about her life as a pop culture icon after previously opening up in her YouTube documentary series, 'This Is Paris'.

In the series, the beauty discussed the alleged abuse she suffered while attending Provo Canyon School in Utah when she was 17, and later said her traumatic experiences at the

school led her to film her infamous 2003 sex tape.

She explained: "That would never have happened if I hadn't gone to that school. I just feel when I got out of that school, I was so lost... I never would have let someone like that in my life if I hadn't gone through such experiences. And therefore, I would have never put myself in that situation. But I just wanted love so bad. I didn't really know. I was so naïve. And I trusted the wrong person. And that's something I'll regret for the rest of my life."

"I think when people see the film, they're going to see a completely different side. And, they're going to see I am human, and I do have feelings."

Paris also insisted she didn't speak about her time in the school for years, because she felt "so grateful and so happy to be free" that she "didn't want to bring it up".

Demi Lovato says being the 'breadwinner' changed family dynamic

Fox | Los Angeles

Demi Lovato's career in Hollywood started when the entertainer was a child.

The singer, who recently came out as non-binary and prefers they/them pronouns, first appeared on "Barney and Friends" and later worked on the Disney Channel show "Sonny with a Chance" and the Disney movie "Camp Rock".

Lovato told Drew Barrymore, also a former child star, on the "4D with Demi Lovato" podcast that being the "breadwinner" in the family made the dynamic hard.

"I noticed that when I came into the spotlight at a young age, and then was the breadwinner... there wasn't a dossier, there wasn't a manual for my parents to read and it say, 'Here's what to do to raise a child star,'" Lovato explained.

The 28-year-old said when their parents would try to discipline them, the reply would be: "I pay the bills."

"I cringe now when I think about that attitude," Lovato said.

Barrymore agreed that she also rebelled against being set boundaries. "I think it's the parent-child dynamic that gets completely re-

"I noticed that when I came into the spotlight at a young age, and then was the breadwinner... there wasn't a dossier, there wasn't a manual for my parents to read and it say, 'Here's what to do to raise a child star,'"

DEMI LOVATO

versed," she mused. "No wonder you won't take an order from an authority figure who's no longer an authority figure because you've now reduced them down with finances and responsibilities."

The talk show host, 46, said she now realizes as a parent to two daughters how important those boundaries are.

"When you're a parent, you try to compensate with so much love and you're almost afraid to get into the argument," Barrymore said. "So you let things slide and then you're like, 'Oh, there should've been a boundary in that place probably a while ago,' but I'm only realizing that now."

Demi Lovato

Ariana Grande gifted a tandem bike from PETA

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Ariana Grande was gifted a vegan tandem bicycle by PETA as a wedding present.

The 'Positions' hitmaker tied the knot with Dalton Gomez in a private ceremony at their home in Montecito, California, last month, and to celebrate the special occasion, the couple have received a thoughtful gift from animal rights organisation PETA.

Ariana and Dalton are both animal lovers, and so according to TMZ, PETA decided to ship them a vegan friendly tandem bike for their romantic dates riding around in the Californian sunshine.

The bike features a faux leather seat and is built from parts



Ariana and Dalton are both animal lovers, and so according to TMZ, PETA decided to ship them a vegan friendly tandem bike for their romantic dates riding around in the Californian sunshine

and paint that didn't use any animal products in their construction.

Meanwhile, it was recently confirmed 27-year-old Ariana was walked down the aisle by both her parents, Joan Grande and Ed Butera, on her wedding day.

Vogue magazine, who published a number of photos from the wedding, revealed last month: "As the lyrics of 'Thank U, Next' predicted ('One day I'll walk down the aisle / Holding hands with my mama'), Ariana's mother, Joan Grande, gave her

away, although in real life she did so alongside Ariana's father, Ed Butera, which was a personal high point and one of the most special moments for the bride.

"Dalton, wearing a Tom Ford suit, waited beneath flowers suspended from the ceiling. Then the couple said their vows, committing to happily ever after, in love forever."

According to the publication, Ariana and Dalton - who got engaged in December after just under a year of dating - "knew very early in the planning process" that they wanted to exchange their vows at their house.



Ariana Grande

Rachel Weisz 'missed' David Harbour's wedding news

Cover Media | Los Angeles

Rachel Weisz had no idea her Black Widow co-star David Harbour had married British popstar Lily Allen.

The Stranger Things actor tied the knot with British singer Lily Allen in a low-key Las Vegas wedding in September, and he recently reached out to Weisz for advice about kid-friendly places to check out with his new wife's two daughters, Ethel, nine, and

Marnie, eight.

However, The Mum star, who lives in Brooklyn with her husband Daniel Craig, their two-year-old daughter Ella, and her 15-year-old son Henry with her ex, Darren Aronofsky, was unaware of Harbour's recent change in relationship status, even though they've been in touch since.



Rachel Weisz

Dwayne Johnson shows off the large fish he raises as a hobby

Fox | Los Angeles

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson showed off the fish he's been raising while getting in some relaxation at his farm.

The actor took to Instagram on Wednesday to share that he's currently on vacation and taking in some nature. In a video post, he's standing outdoors near what appears to be a private pond while holding a large fish in his hands.

"I just want to show you guys



Dwayne Johnson with his fish

really quickly," he told his followers. "I just hauled out this good, I would say six, seven, possibly eight-pounder. Look at the beautiful belly on this fish, beautiful colours too as well. This is one nice healthy fish."

He holds the fish directly to the camera and continues: "As you guys know I raise my largemouth bass, I raise my stripe bass, [and] my variety of sunfish. There's a few other species in here, too. I work very closely with a university biologist. We come out here and cre-

ated a beautiful ecosystem out here for these fish. And we feed them - I feed these babies!"

With that, the "Hobbs & Shaw" actor gently released the animal back into the pond.

"So good to get away to my farm this past weekend to decompress, take mental inventory and of course - spend time with my babies," Johnson captioned the post.

He went on to list other species that he's been raising in the pond, including "largemouth bass, stripped bass, trout, carp, sunfish etc."

SUDOKU

				2				8
	4		1 3					9
			6 2					
8	9				1			
	5 3				8 4			
		1			7			9
			8 3					
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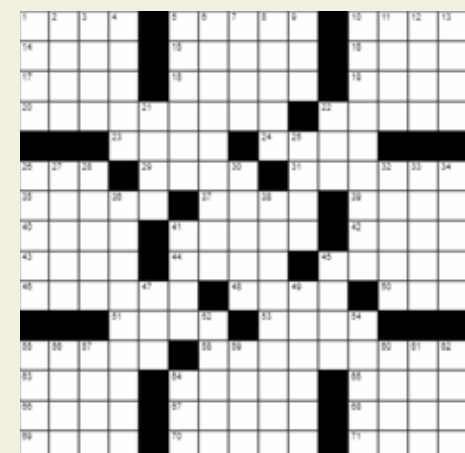
Yesterday's solution

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

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- Jessica of 'Dark Angel'; 5- Hate the thought of; 10- Super; 14- Overflow; 15- Butler's love; 16- WWII turning point; 17- Fit for service; 18- Umbilicus; 19- Brood; 20- Deformed; 22- Brought into being; 23- Hardens; 24- Summer coolers; 26- PBS benefactor; 29- Dodge model; 31- Atelier items; 35- Wrong; 37- Female rabbits; 39- OPEC member; 40- Breezy; 41- Heat home; 42- The last Mrs. Chaplin; 43- Skelton's Kadiddlehopper; 44- Repeat; 45- Below; 46- Allow; 48- Be up and about; 50- Allen's subj.; 51- Grandson of Adam; 53- Actress Swenson; 55- Smelling; 58- Sheets held in a binder; 63- Cupid; 64- Pooh's creator; 65- Spillane's "Jury"; 66- Actress Singer; 67- Mystery writer's award; 68- Sports figure; 69- Just; 70- Passed out; 71- Big brass;

Down

1- Molecular component; 2- Filmmaker Riefenstahl; 3- Apians; 4- Run up; 5- Make a contribution; 6- Ecstatic; 7- Gutter site; 8- Stadium used for sports or musical events; 9- Indian dish; 10- Entrance granted; 11- Smell or fragrance; 12- Neck part; 13- Looked at; 21- Female lobsters; 22- Multitude; 25- He played Ricky; 26- Civil rights org; 27- "South Pacific" hero; 28- Broadcaster; 30- Ark; 32- Eat away; 33- Ways to the pins; 34- Growl angrily; 36- Balanced; 38- Given to great feeling; 41- Take your leader; 45- Prod; 47- Social connections; 49- Put in; 52- Slip; 54- Elite group; 55- Room in a casa; 56- Old Testament book; 57- Knowledge; 59- Gymnast Korbut; 60- Famous last words; 61- Gregory Peck role of 1956; 62- Spanakopita ingredient; 64- Kind of school;

Yesterday's solution

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

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THE DAILY **tribune**

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Messi scores but Chile hold Argentina in WC qualifier

AFP | Santiago del Estero

Lionel Messi scored a penalty but Argentina missed out on the chance to take over top spot of South American World Cup qualifying from rivals Brazil after a 1-1 draw with Chile on Thursday.

Messi also clipped the woodwork and forced three impressive saves out of Chile goalkeeper Claudio Bravo but Alexis Sanchez earned the dogged visitors a point in Santiago del Estero.

The draw leaves Argentina a point behind Brazil, the only remaining side with a perfect qualifying record, who were to host Ecuador later yesterday.

Chile are down in sixth, still two points off the qualification places having won only one of their five matches so far.

Argentina captain Messi said he was happy with the result, despite failing to win.

"The team had a good dynamic, it wasn't easy playing again after so much time," he said. It was more than six months since the last round of qualifiers after two matchdays were postponed in March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"It was a special match given it was the first without Diego" Maradona, the legendary 1986 World Cup winning captain who died in November.

Sanchez ends Argentina jinx

The visitors, who were missing veteran midfielder Arturo Vidal -- hospitalized with Covid-19 -- had the first clear sight of goal on 15 minutes but Eduardo Vargas fizzed a low effort narrowly wide from 20 yards.

Argentina were on top,



Chile's Erick Pulgar (L) and Argentina's Lionel Messi vie for the ball

though, and the hosts were awarded a penalty following a VAR check when Guillermo Maripan recklessly brought down Lautaro Martinez in the box.

Messi casually rolled the ball low to the left of former Barcelona and Manchester City keeper Bravo, who dived the wrong way on 24 minutes.

The lead lasted only 12 minutes before Inter Milan forward Sanchez tapped home into an empty net from four yards out after a stretching Gary Medel turned Charles Aranguiz's freekick back across goal.

"I was missing a goal against Argentina, I'd never scored one before so I'm very happy," Sanchez said after the game.

In first half injury time Messi came close to restoring Argentina's advantage with a freekick from 20 yards that was heading for the top scorer until Bravo leaped to tip the ball away one

handed.

The hosts continued to carve out the better opportunities in the second period but Bravo saved comfortably from Angel Di Maria and Martinez.

At the other end, Sanchez fired over the bar with a long-range free-kick.

His Inter teammate Martinez was a livewire in the box and lashed a shot wide before coming inches from turning in a devilish cross into the danger zone.

Bravo denies Messi

Ten minutes from time, from an identical position to his first half free-kick, Messi went even closer to scoring but rattled the corner of bar and post with Bravo beaten.

The Barcelona magician came to life in the closing stages and forced Bravo into a sprawling save down to his left and then a minute later a leaping block high to his right.



On Tuesday Argentina travel to Colombia while Chile host Bolivia.

Without the suspended Edinson Cavani, whose partner gave birth to his fourth child earlier in the day, Uruguay labored to a 0-0 draw with Paraguay that kept the two sides locked on seven points and battling for the final automatic qualification spot.

In a game of few clear chances, Uruguay actually had the ball in the net through Jonathan Rodriguez in the first half in Montevideo but it was controversially ruled out for an offside against Matias Vina.

Marcelo Moreno scored a brace as Bolivia climbed off the bottom of the table with a 3-1 win over Venezuela in La Paz.

Jhon Chancellor had equalized for Venezuela in the first half after Moreno's early opener but Diego Bejarano put Bolivia back in front on the hour mark before the hosts' hero sealed the victory late on.

Singapore GP cancelled for second year in a row



A general view during the Formula One Grand Prix of Singapore in 2018

Reuters | Singapore City

The Singapore Formula One Grand Prix has been cancelled for the second year in a row due to the COVID-19 pandemic, race organisers said in a statement yesterday.

The BBC and Sky television had earlier reported the Oct. 1-3 night race at the Marina Bay circuit was off due to immigration restrictions.

"To cancel the event for a second year is an incredibly difficult decision, but a necessary one in light of the prevailing restrictions for live events in Singapore," said Colin Syn, deputy chairman of Singapore GP Pte Ltd.

"We would not be able to deliver a full event experience fans have come to expect over the years, while safeguarding the health and safety of our fans, contractors, volunteers and staff."

The race attracts tens of thousands of fans from around the world, with concerts and other entertainment around the sidelines.

Tickets for this year's race

We would not be able to deliver a full event experience fans have come to expect over the years, while safeguarding the health and safety of our fans, contractors, volunteers and staff

COLIN SYN, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF SINGAPORE GP

had yet to go on sale.

Singapore follows Canada off the calendar and is unlikely to be the last to fall victim of the pandemic with Japan, Brazil, Mexico and Australia all looking uncertain from the original list of 23 rounds.

Australia has already been rescheduled to November but travel to the country is heavily restricted.

A Formula One spokesman said the sport had alternatives to fill the gap.

History-chasing Serena eyes French Open second week

Sixth seed Alexander Zverev cruises into French Open last 16

Third seed Aryna Sabalenka crashes out

AFP | Paris

Serena Williams continues her quest for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title in the French Open third round yesterday as the highest-ranked player left in her half of the draw, while Alexander Zverev cruised into the last 16 for the fourth straight year.

World number four Aryna Sabalenka, who was the highest-seeded women's player still in the tournament, was dumped out by Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in yesterday's early action.

The Belarusian third seed, who has never reached a Grand Slam quarter-final, slumped to a 6-4, 2-6, 6-0 defeat.

The 31st-seeded Pavlyuchenkova will next face Victoria Azarenka, with a potential quarter-final against Williams up for grabs.

Azarenka, who stunned Williams in their 23rd meeting in last year's US Open semi-finals, cruised past Madison Keys 6-2, 6-2 to reach the Roland Garros fourth round for the first time since making the last four in 2013.

The 39-year-old Williams had already seen yet another of her potential title rivals exit



Serena Williams hits a return

the tournament on Thursday, when world number one Ashleigh Barty hobbled out during the second round with a hip injury.

After Naomi Osaka's shock withdrawal, Simona Halep failing to start the tournament through injury and early losses for Bianca Andreescu and Angelique Kerber, none of the players who have beaten Williams in Grand Slam finals since her last title in the 2017 Australian Open are still in the competition.

The former world number one, still just one short of Margaret Court's all-time record of major trophies, faces fellow American Danielle Collins for a last-16 berth.

Williams won her only previous meeting with Collins, a Ro-

land Garros quarter-finalist last year and 2019 Australian Open semi-finalist, in Melbourne earlier this year.

She says the pair get on well off the court, but it's unlikely the three-time French Open winner will take it easy on her friend on Court Philippe Chatrier.

"She (Collins) has been playing well," said Williams. "She's also a really awesome person off the court. I love seeing her in the locker room."

"Ideally it would be great if we didn't have to play each other, because I always want her to do super well, so... It's fine, though."

Zverev finds form

German sixth seed Zverev needed five sets to beat unher-

”
This is the main goal of my tennis career, to win Grand Slams, to reach the top of the rankings. I feel like the last year I'm on the right track again

ALEXANDER ZVEREV

alded compatriot Oscar Otte in the first round before edging Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin in three tight sets.

He cruised to a 6-2, 7-5, 6-2 win over Laslo Djere yesterday, though, setting up a last-16 clash with former world number four Kei Nishikori.

"This is the main goal of my tennis career, to win Grand Slams, to reach the top of the rankings. I feel like the last year I'm on the right track again," said Zverev.

Nishikori reached the fourth round when opponent Henri Laaksonen retired injured after dropping the first set.

The short outing would have been a relief for Japan's Nishikori, who spent more than eight hours on court over the first two rounds.

In-form Norwegian youngster Casper Ruud was knocked out by Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in a marathon match which lasted more than four-and-a-half hours.

Lewandowski understudy Choupo-Moting extends Bayern contract



Bayern Munich's Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting poses with the championship trophy

AFP | Berlin

Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich have extended the contract of back-up striker Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting by two more years, it was announced yesterday.

The veteran 32-year-old Cameroon striker, understudy to this season's Bundesliga top scorer Robert Lewandowski, was out of contract this month but has signed a new deal until 2023.

Choupo-Moting scored nine goals in 32 matches for Bayern last season in all competitions and helped the Bavarian giants win a ninth straight Bundesliga league title.

When Lewandowski was sidelined by a knee injury in April, Choupo-Moting scored against his former club Paris Saint-Germain in both legs of the Champions League quarter-final as Bayern bowed out on away goals.

"I am proud to be here. FC Bayern is a very special club, the number one club in Germany and also one of the best clubs in the world," said

9
goals were scored by Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting in 32 matches for Bayern last season in all competitions

Choupo-Moting in a statement.

"I want to continue to have success with the team, I'd like to reach the German Cup final in Berlin and ideally win the Champions League."

Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic described Choupo-Moting as a "very important player for us, who performed strongly last season" and who can "help us achieve our goals in the next two years".

Bayern are set to start the 2021/22 Bundesliga season with Oliver Kahn as the club's new chairman and Julian Nagelsmann as head coach, replacing Hansi Flick who will take charge of the Germany team after Euro 2020.

Champions League winner Tuchel extends Chelsea contract to 2024

AFP | London

Chelsea rewarded Thomas Tuchel for winning the Champions League in his first five months in charge with a new contract to 2024 yesterday.

The German joined in January with the Blues languishing in ninth in the Premier League.

But Chelsea were revitalised by Tuchel's arrival, climbing the table to finish fourth before winning European club football's biggest prize against Manchester City in Porto last weekend.

"I cannot imagine a better occasion for a contract renewal. I am grateful for the experience and very happy to stay part of the Chelsea family," said Tuchel.

"There is far more to come and we are looking forward to our next steps with ambition and much anticipation."

Tuchel was unceremoniously sacked by Paris Saint-Germain in December despite winning two Ligue 1 titles in his first two seasons in charge and leading the French giants to their first ever Champions League final in 2020.

The 47-year-old was handed just an 18-month deal when he arrived in London, but his success in guiding Chelsea to a second European Cup triggered a clause in his initial contract for an extension.

"Chelsea Football Club is very happy to confirm that, following our triumph in the Champions League, Thomas Tuchel's contract has been extended by



Chelsea's coach Thomas Tuchel celebrates with the Champions League trophy

5
games were only lost by Chelsea out of the 30 games under Tuchel

two years, as agreed when he joined the Club," the club said in a statement.

Tuchel was keen to stress after edging out Premier League champions City in Porto last Saturday that he wants to use Champions League glory as a launchpad to greater success.

Chelsea finished 19 points behind City and have not been champions of England since

”
I cannot imagine a better occasion for a contract renewal. I am grateful for the experience and very happy to stay part of the Chelsea family

THOMAS TUCHEL

2017.

"I think it's good because nobody wants to rest," Tuchel said after the Champions League final. "I want the next one, the next title. I want to be a part of it and I demand to be a part of it and this is what comes next."

Of his 30 games in charge so far, Chelsea have lost just five.

He also guided the Londoners

to the FA Cup final which they lost 1-0 to Leicester.

Chelsea director Marina Granovskaia added: "When Thomas joined us in January there was still so much to play for domestically and in Europe. He slotted in seamlessly and immediately became an integral part of the Chelsea family."

"Returning us to the top four in the Premier League was crucial, and we could not be happier with our success in the Champions League which crowned a remarkable season at Chelsea."

"We are obviously extremely pleased therefore to retain Thomas for a further two years, and look forward to more achievements in the coming seasons."

Ex-Sri Lanka skipper Jayasuriya to coach low-key Aussie club

AFP | Colombo

Former Sri Lanka captain and chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya was appointed head coach of a little-known club in Australia yesterday, joining two fellow countrymen at the ambitious side.

Mulgrave Cricket Club, which plays in Victoria's Eastern Cricket Association, said the 110-Test veteran would be in charge for the 2021/22 season.

"We are thrilled to have Sanath at the club to coach and work with our players, providing a fantastic wealth of

experience for our seniors and juniors," it said on Facebook.

Jayasuriya, 51, will join fellow Sri Lankans Tillakaratne Dilshan and Upul Tharanga, who had already signed on as players.

Mulgrave president Malin Pullenayegam said Dilshan, who played with Jayasuriya in a Sri Lanka Legends' side earlier this year, was instrumental in helping secure his services.

"We've been having a chat to him for a while through obviously Dilshan as a contact," he told the Melbourne Herald Sun newspaper.

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Ducati's Zarco sets pace at Barcelona practice



Johann Zarco
Reuters | London

Johann Zarco of Ducati-Pramac was fastest over the two practice sessions for the Catalan Grand Prix at Montmeló yesterday and the Frenchman said he felt 'at home'.

The Barcelona-Catalunya circuit hosts the seventh race of 21 on Sunday, when second-placed Zarco is hoping to close the gap on world championship leader Fabio Quartararo of Yamaha.

Outsider, Franco Morbidelli led the session on his Yamaha before Zarco edged the session by 0.021sec, with Quartararo in third.

The 30-year-old Zarco signed an extension deal with Pramac to continue with the Ducati satellite until the end of 2022 this week and was in festive spirits.

"It's a great life, this is my team now, my bike," he said.

"This Catalan GP is a bit like a home GP for French people from the south," he said of the event some 25km north of Barcelona and an hour's drive from the French border," said Zarco, who is from Cannes.

"Most of the fans here are French too."

Bahrain shift focus to Iran test

Senior men's national football team looking to ride their momentum from 8-0 drubbing of Cambodia on Thursday into their crucial qualifier against Iranian counterparts on Monday

● Both Bahrain and Iran, along with Iraq, are battling for one of the top two spots in Group C at the end of their eight-match campaigns

TDT | Manama

Star midfielder Kumail Alaswad said that Bahrain's national team must now have their sights set on their biggest challenge yet following their blowout 8-0 victory over Cambodia on Thursday, in joint-qualifying for the FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023.

The Bahrainis face continental giants Iran on Monday in a match that could decide their fate in the qualification process.

Both Bahrain and Iran, along with Iraq, are battling for one of the top two spots in Group C at the end of their eight-match campaigns.

The top team get an automatic berth in the next round of World Cup qualifying while the runners-up will hope to go through as one of the four best second-placed sides from the eight groups in this stage. The top two also secure their berths in the Asian Cup.

With so much to play for in Monday's contest, Alaswad is looking for his team to ride their momentum from their Cambodia win into their crucial clash with Iran.

"We should now forget this



Kumail Alaswad stretches during training last night at Al Ahli Club in Zinj



Bahrain's match against Iran on Monday will be their penultimate fixture in this round of joint-qualifying for the FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023. In their previous meeting held in October of 2019, Bahrain won 1-0 with a Mohammed Al Hardan second-half penalty

win and start preparing for the match against Iran," Alaswad was quoted as saying on the-afc.com.

"The coach will meet us to talk about the positives and the negatives and we must have a good performance in the next match in order to get the three points."

Al Aswad also said that the Bahrainis could have won by a bigger margin on Thursday, considering the many other chances they had at goal.

"We had an excellent performance today and followed the instructions of the coach in the best possible way," he said. "We took advantage of the chances that we created."

"There is no doubt that winning with this result will boost our confidence. Despite scoring eight goals, we missed chances as well and this should not hap-



Bahrain national team players doing drills as they resumed training last night in preparation for their match with Iran on Monday

“We should now forget this win and start preparing for the match against Iran... We must have a good performance in the next match in order to get the three points

KUMAIL ALASWAD

pen in the next match."

The result put Bahrain in first place in Group C with 12 points, but they have played one game more than Iraq, who are second with 11 points, and Iran, who are third with nine.

Meanwhile, head coach Helio Sousa was pleased with his players' impressive showing, and said that their two first-half goals helped propel their second-half barrage.

"The early goal helped us a lot and the second goal at the end of the first half made things easy for us to score six more in the second half," said the Portuguese tactician in his post-match Press conference.

He added: "The preparation of the team in the previous period was excellent as we played many friendlies. The players had an excellent performance today and I hope they can continue this way in the upcoming matches."

"We have a great group of players who fit to the style of play that we want and hopefully, we can get good results moving forward."

On Monday, Bahrain and Iran face off at 7.30pm at the National Stadium in Riffa, while Iraq take on Cambodia in the earlier match at 5.30pm at Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Stadium at Muharraq Club in Arad.

Perez leads Red Bull one-two as Mercedes struggle in Azerbaijan

Reuters | Baku

Red Bull's Sergio Perez set the pace in Azerbaijan Grand Prix practice yesterday with championship-leading team mate Max Verstappen close behind while Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes failed to make the top 10.

The Mexican driver lapped the Baku street circuit with a best time of one minute 42.115 seconds, 0.101 quicker than Verstappen.

"We've done very good progress, after Monaco we did a very deep analysis and today was like 'Wow, I finally understand a bit more this car, how I need to drive it,'" said Perez, who joined Red Bull this season.

"In all regards I think this is the best Friday of the season, the most complete Friday in terms of data and how comfortable I feel with the car," added the man who has twice stood on the podium in Baku.

"I think we are definitely going to be in the mix."

Verstappen had been fastest in the first session with a time of 1:43.184.

The 23-year-old Dutch driver is four points clear of Hamilton, seizing the lead by winning in Monaco last month while Hamilton finished seventh.

"Performance-wise we had a great start to the weekend so



Red Bull's Mexican driver Sergio Perez steers his car during the second practice session

far," he said.

"The car in FP1 (first practice) felt really decent and I was quite comfortable. Then for FP2 we made a few changes to see if it would be better but I think we went a bit backwards."

Seven times world champion Hamilton, Verstappen's closest rival after five races, was only 11th and more than a second off the pace as the once-dominant team struggled again.

His Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas, the winner last time Azerbaijan hosted a race in 2019, was 16th and more than two seconds slower than Perez. He had been 10th in the first practice.

Hamilton said he had done all the laps required, without any mistakes, but the pace was miss-

ing as it had been two weeks ago in Monaco.

"We're definitely quite a chunk down and I think everyone will be scratching their heads and looking into the data trying to figure out how we can improve," he added.

"It didn't feel good in this session. I was pushing, I was on the limit but the car is limited. There's areas that it should be quicker but there's no more grip."

"It's not easy to be out of the top 10 in pace when we've had pace in other places but I don't really know why we're where we are."

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was third in both sessions.

His team mate Charles Leclerc was second fastest in first practice and fourth in the af-

“We've done very good progress, after Monaco we did a very deep analysis and today was like 'Wow, I finally understand a bit more this car, how I need to drive it. In all regards I think this is the best Friday of the season, the most complete Friday in terms of data and how comfortable I feel with the car

SERGIO PEREZ

ternoon, when he nosed into the barriers and smashed the front wing.

Ferrari still looked the team most likely to be challenging Red Bull for pole position on Saturday.

The "dirty" track proved slippery for drivers, who also had to contend with breezy conditions, as the sport returned to Baku without spectators due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The weekend has been dominated by a row over "bendy" rear wings, with the governing FIA keeping a close eye on the situation before introducing new tests at the following French Grand Prix.

Cycling's Egan Bernal has Covid-19



Team Ineos rider Colombia's Egan Bernal kisses the race's Trofeo Senza Fine (Endless Trophy) on the podium after winning the Giro d'Italia 2021

AFP | London

Colombian Egan Bernal is isolating with mild symptoms after contracting Covid-19, less than a week after he won the three-week Giro d'Italia cycling race, his personal communications team said yesterday.

Also a winner of the Tour de France Bernal and his girlfriend Maria Fernanda Gutierrez took a coronavirus test before traveling home to Colombia from Monaco "and have just been informed of the test results in which both are infected with the virus," the cyclist's press team said in a statement.

A source from the Colom-

bian Cycling Federation confirmed to AFP the authenticity of the statement.

The 24-year-old remains "in quarantine in Monaco" and neither he nor Gutierrez have shown any signs of "complications," the statement said.

Bernal stormed to Giro victory in May after dominating the first two weeks of the race, before holding off spirited resistance from Briton Simon Yates and Italy's Damiano Caruso in the final few days.

He stormed onto the scene in 2019 by winning the Tour de France, cycling's most prestigious race, even beating his Ineos Grenadiers teammate and reigning champion Geraint Thomas into second.