

Bahrain1 Racing make it three in a row

Khalid Al Balooshi powers NHRA Pro Mod world champions to another dominant victory in Bahrain Drag Racing Championship at BIC | P 12

WORLD 6 Indonesian landslide kills nine, 10 missing

THE DAILY **tribune**



Nadal closes on Slams record, Barty raises home hopes

11 SPORTS

BUSINESS 5 BBK reports Q4 profit, declares dividend

Public Awareness Campaign to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Do not leave home unless necessary

#Commit4Bahrain

HM King arrives in UAE on private visit

TD | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain arrived in the UAE yesterday on a private visit.

HM the King and his accompanying delegation were welcomed upon arrival by Shaikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in Al Dhafra Region, UAE Ambassador to Bahrain, along with a number of Shaikhs and senior officials as well as Khalid bin Abdullah bin Ali bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Bahraini Ambassador to the UAE.

Royal decree

TD | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued decree (18) of 2021, making the following appointments at the Finance Ministry.

Amna Ahmed Rashid Al Romaihi (Undersecretary for National Economy); Noor Ali Sultan Al Khalif (Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Affairs); Osama Saleh Hashem Al Alawi (Assistant Undersecretary for Competitiveness and Economic Indicators).

A solid show of support

Bahrain condemns Houthi militias' continuous attacks against Saudi Arabia

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister chairs weekly Cabinet meeting

TD | Manama

Bahrain has reaffirmed its strong condemnation of the deliberate and systematic attacks from the terrorist Houthi militia targeting Saudi Arabia, and expressed its support for the Kingdom's response to preserve its security, stability and solidarity.

The Cabinet stressed the firm position of Bahrain during yesterday's weekly online meeting chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

This came following the Iran-backed Houthis' bomb-laden drones fired towards Abha International Airport in Saudi Arabia last week.

The Cabinet said that the series of attacks in recent weeks endangered the lives of innocent



HRH Prince Salman during the remote session

civilians, calling it a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

It expressed support for any measures taken by the Kingdom to confront the cowardly acts.

The Cabinet also expressed its sincere congratulations to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister on the National Action Charter's 20th anniversary.

It affirmed that the Charter forms the basis of the political, economic, and developmental achievements and modernisation efforts experienced in the Kingdom over the past two decades.

The Cabinet reiterated its commitment to achieving the objectives of the Fiscal Balance Programme despite the challenges posed by low oil prices and the global repercussions of COVID-19, as well as its com-



The Cabinet said that the series of attacks in recent weeks endanger the lives of innocent civilians, calling it a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

mitment to continue to adopt flexible and dynamic economic initiatives that support the Kingdom's sustainable development goals.

Likewise, the Cabinet expressed its sincere congratulations to the UAE President His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, government and people on the success of the UAE Hope Probe mission.

The successful mission is evidence of the advancement made

by the UAE across space science, which qualifies the country for a seat among leading nations in space exploration, the Cabinet stated.

Memorandums were discussed by the Cabinet and outlined the following outcomes:

The Approval of the following memorandums:

1. A memorandum from the Civil Service Council regarding the amendment of the organizational structures of a number of ministries and government entities by abolishing certain positions and directorates and changing the subordination of others, with the aim of increasing efficiency, improving performance and avoiding duplication. The amendment will abolish three positions of Undersecretary rank and three other positions of Assistant Undersecretary rank and will create one position of Director rank.

2. A memorandum from the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs regarding the government's response to nine proposals submitted by the Council of Representatives.

Iran 'behind plot to attack UAE embassy in Ethiopia'

London

Iran was behind a recent plot to attack the UAE embassy in Ethiopia, US and Israeli officials have revealed.

Iranian intelligence services activated a sleeper cell in Addis Ababa late last year to also gather intelligence on the US and Israel embassies, the officials told the New York Times.

The operation was part of a wider move to by Iran to seek out softer targets in Africa for revenge attacks after the killings of Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani by the US and Iran's main nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, reportedly by Israel.

Ethiopia earlier this month arrested 15 people and seized weapons and explosives as part of the plot against the UAE

embassy. "The group took the mission from a foreign terrorist group and was preparing to inflict significant damage on properties and human lives," Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) reported.

A second group was planning to attack the UAE's mission in Sudan, EPA said.

A key link to Iran came with the arrest of the ringleader Ahmed Ismail in Sweden.

Rear Adm. Heidi K. Berg, director of intelligence at the Pentagon's Africa command, told the New York Times that Iran was behind the plot.

"Ethiopia and Sweden collaborated on the disruption to the plot," she said.

A senior US defense official said the arrests were linked to an Iranian plot to kill the US ambassador to South Africa reported in September.

Explosive-laden drone intercepted

Riyadh

The Arab Coalition intercepted and destroyed an explosive-laden drone fired by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis towards Saudi Arabia, state news agency SPA reported yesterday.

The Coalition Spokesperson, Colonel Turki Al Maliki, said the drone was the latest in a series of attempts by the Houthi militias to "target civilians and civilian targets in the Kingdom."

The Coalition has reported in recent weeks increased aerial attacks launched by Houthis in Yemen towards civilian areas in the Kingdom using remote-operated, explosive-laden drones.

The latest announcement by the Coalition marks the sixth such attack in five days, all of which the Houthis say struck an air field or base in southern



A Houthi drone shot down by Saudi air defenses

Saudi Arabia.

Earlier on Sunday, the Coalition said it destroyed two explosives fired into Saudi Arabia in an attack the Houthis said hit

Abha airport in the Kingdom's South.

Last Wednesday, Riyadh said an attack caused a fire in a civilian aircraft at Abha airport.

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL TESTED
2913540

ACTIVE CASES
7400

DEATHS
406

DISCHARGED
105784

NEW CASES
848

CRITICAL
58

210 fils (includes VAT)



HM King 'vision' for regional peace hailed

HRH Prince Salman discusses bilateral ties with visiting South Korean National Assembly Speaker

● Bahrain has been making great progress in various fields, thanks to royal leadership and constant care: Park

TDI | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's vision to promote peace and co-existence in the region was hailed by South Korea's National Assembly Speaker Park Byeong-seung.

This came as His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Prime Minister and Crown Prince, received yesterday the Speaker at Riffa Palace. "The Bahraini leadership has stressed ambitions to establish peace and coexistence in the region. And HM the King pays great attention to achieving peace in the region and prosperity in Bahrain," said Park, the first Korean Speaker to visit the Kingdom.

He noted that "HM the King is very interested in developing the living standards of the Bahraini people and Bahrain has paid great attention to combating the COVID-19 pandemic through the preventive measures it has taken."

Park said that thanks to the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad and the constant care of His Royal Highness Prince Salman, Bahrain has been making great progress in various fields. "After 45 years since the es-



HM the King



His Royal Highness welcomed Park's visit to Bahrain, noting the importance of mutual visits towards bolstering strategic partnerships and providing quality opportunities.

establishment of diplomatic relations between Bahrain and South Korea, it is a great honour to visit the country especially as it coincides with the 20th anniversary of the National Action Charter (NAC), which is an important milestone in the development of Bahraini democracy," said the Speaker.

During his visit to the Kingdom, Park met HM the King, HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Council of Representative and the Chairman of the Shura Council.



HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister receives Speaker Park



Speaker Park visits the Bahrain National Museum, along with a South Korean parliamentary delegation

The meeting with HM the King stressed the importance of cooperation between Bahrain and Asia in general and South Korea in particular, he said, adding there is ongoing cooperation in the field of construction and infrastructure.

Steady growth of relations

During his meeting with HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, they highlighted the steady growth of relations between Bahrain and South Korea. His Royal Highness noted

the importance of mutual visits towards bolstering strategic partnerships and providing quality opportunities. He also emphasised the benefits of international parliamentary and legislative co-operation.

His Royal Highness stressed the Kingdom's commitment to furthering joint co-operation with various countries across Asia, noting South Korea's prominent economic role and industrial expertise, which has contributed to promoting sustainable development across the region and the globe.

RERA action against money laundering

TDI | Manama

The Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has taken measures against a number of licensees for non-compliance with the requirements to combat money laundering.

RERA clarified that in implementation of Resolution (3) of 2019 on the Obligations related to Procedures of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Prevention in Licensed Real Estate activities, violations have been detected by a number of licensees, including some real estate developers who have not complied with

RERA's guidelines regarding the National Risk Assessment Report and the filling out of the electronic off-site inspection questionnaire related to anti-money laundering.

RERA also stated that it will not hesitate to take any legal action towards all that affects the national anti-money laundering framework against its licensees, in accordance with law and resolution (3) of 2019 related to anti-money laundering and terrorist financing and in line with the strong national efforts of the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain in this matter.

Modern BDF training facilities inaugurated

● Include a training wing, lecture hall, building similar to archery, and shooting field

TDI | Manama

Under the patronage of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, a ceremony was held to inaugurate modern training facilities that included a training wing, lecture hall, building similar to archery, and shooting field.

The ceremony coincided with the anniversary of the establishment of the BDF on 5 February.

Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Theyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi toured the premises where he was briefed on



Lt. Gen. Al Nuaimi tours the premises

the modern training facilities, equipment and technologies in the military field.

During the ceremony where he represented the BDF Commander-in-Chief, Al Nuaimi affirmed the close follow-up by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of all BDF units and his interest in developing them in terms of management, advanced and modern weapons, preparedness and upgrading all military installations.

Housing Ministry's plans and projects discussed

● Enhances cooperation with Muharraq Governorate

TDI | Manama

Housing Minister Bassim bin Yacoub Al Hamar yesterday received the member of the Council of Representatives, MP Yousif Al Thawadi, and discussed with him topics related to Muharraq Governorate's eighth constituency.

The two sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the Council of Representatives and the Housing Ministry, as well as supporting the Ministry's plans to meet the housing demands on the waiting lists, through accelerating work at the ongoing housing projects.

They also reviewed the progress of the housing projects in Bahrain's new towns, and the Ministry's plans to meet the housing demands across the kingdom's governorates, especially Muharraq.

First semester success for 845 students



Minister Al Nuaimi
TDI | Manama

A total of 845 regular and home students have graduated in the first semester, a rate of 81 per cent.

The results were endorsed yesterday by Education Minister Majed bin Ali Al Nuaimi who expressed gratitude to all ministry staff for their outstanding efforts in confronting the challenges posed by the pandemic to the students and to the education process.

Al Nuaimi also praised the students and their parents and families for their dedication and sacrifices to ensure steady learning despite the formidable challenges.

The Ministry had provided stay-at-home students with online and televised lessons.

Saudi and Omani Ambassadors congratulate Bahrain leaders

● Wider bilateral cooperation emphasised

TDI | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Royal Family and the people were congratulated by Saudi Arabia and Oman's Ambassadors on the National Action Charter's 20th anniversary.

Saudi Ambassador HRH Prince Sultan bin Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al Saud said the referendum and endorsement of the Charter represented the beginning of a new era of aspirations to accomplish further achievements and gains.

The Charter, as a set of comprehensive reforms at all levels, has established the foundations for a modern state, and prompted Bahrain to reach an advanced status thanks to HM King Hamad's insightful vision, he added.

"On this auspicious occa-



Omani Ambassador

sion, I affirm the solid and deep-rooted brotherly relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Bahrain at all levels, based on the fraternal ties, values and visions that unite them," HRH the Ambassador said.

"The special bonds have been strengthened by the shared keenness of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on building distinguished relations between the two countries."

Oman's Ambassador Abdullah bin Rashid bin Ali Al Muddilwi also congratulated the Royal leadership and the people of Bahrain on the occasion.



Saudi Ambassador

The Ambassador said the Charter is the basis and the general framework for the comprehensive development process in Bahrain during the past two decades led by HM King Hamad towards further prosperity.

Under a royal wisdom, Bahrain's development and modernisation was linked to a pure national vision stemming from the civilisational and cultural heritage of the Bahraini people and fulfilling their aspirations for a bright and prosperous future, he added.

"I highly commend the progress of the Omani-Bahraini relations at all levels, based on their solid historical and fraternal relations," the Ambassador said.

Riffa restaurant fire put out



Civil defence extinguished a fire in a restaurant in Riffa. No injuries were reported. Accumulated oil inside the chimney was the reason behind the fire.

BBK B.S.C- Consolidated Financial Statements 31 December 2020



CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As at 31 December 2020 BD millions

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
Cash and balances with central banks	256.5	376.4
Treasury bills	487.8	484.4
Deposits and amounts due from banks and other financial institutions	318.9	278.3
Loans and advances to customers	1,555.8	1,670.9
Investment securities	957.3	875.0
Investments in associated companies and joint ventures	65.5	70.6
Interest receivable, derivative and other assets	83.1	74.2
Premises and equipment	35.5	35.2
TOTAL ASSETS	3,760.4	3,865.0
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Deposits and amounts due to banks and other financial institutions	330.3	363.1
Borrowings under repurchase agreement	399.2	313.4
Term borrowings	188.5	333.0
Customers' current, savings and other deposits	2,167.4	2,169.5
Interest payable, derivative and other liabilities	160.5	139.0
Total liabilities	3,245.9	3,318.0
Equity		
Share capital	136.2	129.7
Treasury stock	(5.2)	(5.2)
Share premium	105.6	105.6
Statutory reserve	66.8	61.6
General reserve	61.6	54.1
Cumulative changes in fair values	(11.4)	11.2
Foreign currency translation adjustments	(12.8)	(12.2)
Retained earnings	125.6	144.6
Proposed appropriations	45.4	54.5
Attributable to the owners of the Bank	511.8	543.9
Non-controlling interests	2.7	3.1
Total equity	514.5	547.0
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	3,760.4	3,865.0

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS For the year ended 31 December 2020 BD millions

	2020	2019
Interest and similar income	137.7	176.4
Interest and similar expense	(56.9)	(69.1)
Net interest and similar income	80.8	107.3
Fee and commission income - net	19.6	26.6
Investment and other income	18.3	17.6
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME	118.7	151.5
Staff costs	(35.1)	(38.1)
Other expenses	(25.6)	(25.1)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	(60.7)	(63.2)
Total provisions - net	(5.6)	(18.9)
NET OPERATING INCOME	52.4	69.4
Share of (loss) / profit from associated companies and joint ventures	(0.1)	6.8
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR BEFORE TAX	52.3	76.2
Tax write-back / (expense)	0.3	(0.2)
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR AFTER TAX	52.6	76.0
Attributable to:		
Owners of the Bank	52.0	75.4
Non-controlling interests	0.6	0.6
	52.6	76.0
Basic and diluted earnings per share (BD)	0.039	0.056

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the year ended 31 December 2020 BD millions

	2020	2019
Profit for the year	52.6	76.0
Other comprehensive (loss) / income:		
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss		
Fair value through other comprehensive income (equity instruments)	0.8	7.6
Items that are or may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss		
Movement in translation reserve:		
Foreign currency translation adjustments	(0.6)	(0.5)
Movement in hedging reserve:		
Effective portion of changes in fair value	(0.7)	(1.1)
Movement in fair value reserve:		
Net change in fair value	(19.2)	30.6
Net amount transferred to profit or loss	(3.4)	(2.7)
Other comprehensive (loss) / income for the year	(23.1)	33.9
Total comprehensive income for the year	29.5	109.9
Attributable to:		
Owners of the Bank	28.9	109.3
Non-controlling interests	0.6	0.6
	29.5	109.9

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY For the year ended 31 December 2020 BD millions

	Attributable to the owners of the Bank					Non-controlling interest	Total equity
	Share capital	Others	Retained earnings	Proposed Appropriations	Total		
Balance at 1 January 2019	108.2	196.0	148.9	44.6	497.7	2.7	500.4
Profit for the year	-	-	75.4	-	75.4	0.6	76.0
Other comprehensive income	-	35.8	(1.9)	-	33.9	-	33.9
Total comprehensive income	-	35.8	73.5	-	109.3	0.6	109.9
Share-based payments	-	-	0.6	-	0.6	-	0.6
Distribution on perpetual tier 1 convertible capital securities	-	-	(3.6)	-	(3.6)	-	(3.6)
Conversion of perpetual tier 1 convertible capital securities	21.5	(21.5)	-	-	-	-	-
Dividends paid	-	-	(12.8)	(43.0)	(55.8)	(0.2)	(56.0)
Donations	-	-	-	(1.6)	(1.6)	-	(1.6)
Movement in treasury stock	-	(2.7)	-	-	(2.7)	-	(2.7)
Transfer to statutory reserve	-	7.5	(7.5)	-	-	-	-
Proposed appropriations	-	-	(54.5)	54.5	-	-	-
Balance at 31 December 2019	129.7	215.1	144.6	54.5	543.9	3.1	547.0
Profit for the year	-	-	52.0	-	52.0	0.6	52.6
Other comprehensive loss	-	(23.2)	0.1	-	(23.1)	-	(23.1)
Total comprehensive income	-	(23.2)	52.1	-	28.9	0.6	29.5
Share-based payments	-	-	0.4	-	0.4	-	0.4
Modification loss net of government assistance	-	-	(20.9)	-	(20.9)	-	(20.9)
Dividends paid	-	-	-	(38.5)	(38.5)	(0.1)	(38.6)
Stock dividends	6.5	-	-	(6.5)	-	-	-
Donations	-	-	-	(2.0)	(2.0)	-	(2.0)
Transfer to statutory reserve	-	5.2	(5.2)	-	-	-	-
Transfer to general reserve	-	7.5	-	(7.5)	-	-	-
Movement in non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-	-	(0.9)	(0.9)
Proposed appropriations	-	-	(45.4)	45.4	-	-	-
Balance at 31 December 2020	136.2	204.6	125.6	45.4	511.8	2.7	514.5

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS For the year ended 31 December 2020 BD millions

	2020	2019
Net cash flows from operating activities	269.7	118.1
Net cash flows used in investing activities	(101.8)	(51.6)
Net cash flows (used in) / from financing activities	(184.6)	125.2
NET CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(16.7)	191.7
Foreign currency translation adjustments - net	(2.4)	(0.3)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	536.8	345.4
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF THE YEAR	517.7	536.8

The consolidated statement of financial position, consolidated statement of profit or loss, consolidated statement of other comprehensive income, consolidated statement of changes in equity and consolidated statement of cash flows have been extracted from the consolidated financial statements of BBK B.S.C. for the year ended 31 December 2020 which were audited by Ernst & Young, who have expressed an unqualified opinion on 15 February 2021.

Above information available on www.bbkonline.com

Audited by Ernst & Young

Murad Ali Murad
Chairman

Abdulla bin Khalifa
bin Salman Al-Khalifa
Deputy Chairman

Dr. AbdulRahman Saif
Group Chief Executive

BBK reports Q4 profit, declares dividend

● Fourth-quarter net profit attributable to the owners of the bank was BD 13.0 million

● Board recommended paying annual cash dividends of 20 fils per share and stock dividends of 10% per share equivalent to 1 share for every 10 shares

● Full-year 2020 net profit attributable to the owners of the bank was BD 52.0 m

TDI | Manama

Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait yesterday announced a fourth-quarter profit saying that the “impact of the global pandemic is reflected” in its financial results, which the



Dr Abdulrahman Saif, BBK's Group Chief Executive

bank said is “satisfactory given market conditions.”

Profit, the bank said, was also affected by deep cuts of global interest rates by central banks around the world.

However, the board of directors said, “Despite all the challenges and the drop in profitability across the banking sector, there were positive outcomes to the pandemic.”

They said the crisis “had led the bank to accelerate the im-



Murad Ali Murad, BBK Chairman

plementation of its 2019-21 digitisation strategy, by fast-tracking several technology projects to 2020, rather than 2021-2022, including the development and launch of BBKPlus mobile onboarding application.”

Considering the positive performance, the Board also recommended paying annual cash dividends of 20 fils per share and stock dividends of 10% per share equivalent to 1 share for every 10 shares for the shareholders

registered with the bank.

Quarterly results

Fourth-quarter net profit attributable to the owners of the bank was BD 13.0 million compared to BD 19.9 m in the year-ago quarter, a decrease of 34.7%. Earnings per share was 10 fils compared to 16 fils in the quarter, a year ago.

Total comprehensive income attributable to the owners of the bank stood at BD 56.6 m compared to BD 44.2 m last year, with an increase of 28.0%.

BBK attributed the increase to a valuation of investment securities during the quarter as financial markets continued to recover from the drop experienced in the first half of 2020.

Net interest income dropped by 12.0% to BD 20.5 m (BD 23.3 m in the corresponding period of last year), mainly due to interest rate cuts during early 2020. Net fees and commission income dropped by 31.9% from BD 9.1 m in 2019 to BD 6.2 m in 2020, mainly due to the impact of the

concessionary measures taken in response to COVID-19 to support the domestic business community, as well as new regulatory caps on loan fees that came into effect around mid-2020.

The net share of profit from associated companies and joint ventures decreased from BD 0.4 m to a loss of BD 2.3 m, as a result of the adverse impact of COVID-19. Operating costs dropped by 5.6% to BD 15.1 m from BD 16.0 m level reported in the corresponding period of 2019.

Full-year results

For the full-year 2020, net profit attributable to the owners of the bank was BD 52.0 m compared to BD 75.4 m in the year 2019, a decrease of 31.0%. Earnings per share reached 39 fils compared to 56 fils for the previous year.

Total comprehensive income attributable to the owners of the bank stood at BD 28.9 m compared to BD 109.3 m reported in 2019, representing a decrease of 73.6%, driven by the decrease in valuation of investment se-

curities due to COVID-19 impact on financial markets and lower net profit.

Net interest income dropped from BD 107.3 m to BD 80.8 m, a decrease of 24.7%. Furthermore, net fees and commission income was down from BD 26.6 m to BD 19.6 m, a drop of 26.3%.

Profit from associated companies and joint ventures decreased from BD 6.8 m during 2019 to a loss of BD 0.1 m during 2020. Operating costs decreased 4.0% to BD 60.7 m, as net provision charges decreased 70.4% to BD 5.6 m from a year ago.

Net loans and advances decreased by 6.9% to stand at BD 1,555.8 m (2019: BD 1,670.9 m). Customer deposits portfolio maintained its levels of around BD 2,167.4 m (2019: BD 2,169.5 m).

Dr Abdulrahman Saif, BBK's Group Chief Executive said, “Despite the unprecedented challenges of 2020, we continued to deliver value to our customers and shareholders, support and develop our people, and enrich the societies in which we operate.”

GFH reports Q4 profit of US\$45.1 m

● Board recommends a total dividend of USD 42m at 4.60% on par value

● Q4 net profit was US\$21.93 million

● Full-year net profit was US\$45.1 m

TDI | Manama

GFH Financial Group yesterday reported a fourth-quarter net profit attributable to shareholders of US\$21.93 million compared with US\$1.5 m in the year-ago quarter, an increase of 1362%. Prior year results included a significant impairment provision in the commercial banking subsidiary of the Group.

Earnings per share was US cents 0.65 compared to US cents 0.04 for the comparative quarter of 2019. Consolidated net profit was US\$19.04 m compared with losses of US\$8.1 m in the year-ago quarter.

The Board of Directors recommended a total dividend of USD 42m at 4.60% on par value, divided into 1.86% cash dividends amounting to US\$17 m and 2.74% stock dividends of US\$25 m for the shareholders.

Total income was US\$109.29 m compared to US\$76.62 m for the fourth quarter of 2019, an increase of 42.6%. This was achieved despite an impairment



Hisham Alrayes

loss of US\$12 m from an equity investment.

During the quarter, investment banking income included income from placement of the Group's investment in Hidd Mall in Bahrain, its second Lulu anchored retail centre asset, and from its investment in two strategically located Amazon designated logistics warehouses in Spain. Other income of note was gains in the Group's treasury portfolio, which benefited from the continuing recovery in the global equity markets, and income from the reversal of liabilities resulting from a successful conclusion of litigation.

Q4 expenses were US\$90.26 m compared to US\$84.72 m in the fourth quarter of 2019, an increase of 6.5%.

Full-year net profit attributable to shareholders was US\$45.1 m, compared with US\$66.03 m in 2019, a decrease of 31.7%.

GFH attributed the decline predominantly to slower contribution from business lines as a



Jassim Alseddiqi

result of the pandemic situation during the year.

Earnings per share for the year was US cents 1.35 compared to US cents 1.96 a year ago.

Consolidated net profit for the year was US\$49.34 m compared to US\$53.12 m in 2019.

Total Assets and Fund Under Management (AUM) increased from US\$10 bn in 2019 to over US\$12 bn in 2020, marking a year-on-year increase of 20%, primarily from the growth in the treasury portfolio of the Group along with inorganic growth through acquisition.

Full-year total income was US\$323.39 m versus US\$321.61 m in 2019, an increase of 0.6%. This is the result of ongoing contributions from all business lines despite difficult market conditions that persisted throughout 2020.

Total Expenses for the year were US\$274.05 compared with US\$268.03 m in 2019, an increase of 2.2%.

Commenting on the results,

Jassim Alseddiqi, Chairman of GFH, said, “While net profit for the period was impacted by disruptions to businesses and markets in the region and around the world, we are pleased to have maintained strong levels of income generation even reporting a moderate increase for the year. We're especially pleased with the momentum gained as we closed out the year, which has been successfully carried over into 2021 and on which we will continue to build.”

Alseddiqi, continued, “While we are still in the thick of fighting the pandemic globally, we hope to see signs of improvement in 2021 and remain focused on effectively managing our investments and delivering new, exciting and profitable opportunities benefiting the Group and our shareholders and investors in the months and year ahead.”

Hisham Alrayes, CEO of GFH, added, “As we look back on what was no doubt the most challenging year faced by governments, businesses and citizens around the world, we're very proud of how we've performed. We worked quickly to secure the safety of our colleagues, their families and our community, activated our continuity plans and provided support to investments as and where required.”

Continuing, Alrayes, said, “We are looking positively to the future and to keeping the market updated on our activities across all of our core business lines.”

AIB wins “Best Customer Service Bank” award

TDI | Manama

Al Baraka Islamic Bank (AIB), one of the leading Bahraini financial institutions in the field of Islamic banking, has been awarded the ‘Best Customer Service Bank in Bahrain’ in 2020 by the UK-based Global Business Outlook.

Commenting, Head of Retail Banking Department at Al Baraka Islamic Bank, Fatema AlAlawi said: “Winning the Global Business Outlook ‘Best Customer Service Bank in the Kingdom of Bahrain’ award stands as a testament to our success in driving customer satisfaction. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Quality of Service team for introducing a successful operation model to optimize customer experience by handling complaints more quickly



Fatema AlAlawi

and effectively.”

Global Business Outlook Awards recognises business excellence amongst companies that play an integral role in enhancing various sectors and honours organisations for achieving outstanding results that have been acknowledged across the global market.

Dubai airport boss warns tough year ahead after 2020 passenger numbers slide 70%

Reuters | Dubai

Dubai Airports' chief executive warned yesterday it would be another tough year for the Middle East's busiest hub, Dubai International, after passenger numbers slid 70% in 2020.

The airport, the base for airline Emirates and a major source of income for Dubai, handled 25.9 million passengers last year, mostly in the first quarter before the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

“We are planning for it to be a tough year. That's undoubtedly the case ... anyone that doesn't think it's going to be a tough year has clearly not been observing what's been going on,” chief executive Paul Griffiths told Reuters.

The number of flights handled in 2020 fell 51.4% to 183,993 while the amount of cargo dropped 23.2% to 1.9 million tonnes.

Bahrain Bourse launches capital markets apprenticeship programme

● To apply log on to Bahrain Bourse's website www.bahrainbourse.com.

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Bourse yesterday announced the launch of the Capital Markets Apprenticeship Programme.

The move follows the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to launch the

second version of the National Employment Programme, which aims to create 25,000 jobs in 2021 and provide 10,000 training opportunities annually.

“The programme which targets Bahraini nationals holding a Bachelor's degree or higher, is aimed at developing and en-

hancing the skills of Bahraini talented youth in the Capital Markets Sector, as well as preparing young Bahraini talents to further contribute to the development of the Capital Markets in the future,” Shaikh Khalifa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, the Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Bourse,

said. The interns will undergo job rotation across different core functions within Bahrain Bourse and Bahrain Clear, gaining full and diversified exposure to Bahrain Bourse and Bahrain Clear's operations and obtaining a full understanding on the Bahraini Market in specific, and the Capi-

tal Market sector in general.

The programme will also equip the interns with the set of skills required to occupy high-level employment opportunities within the Capital Market.

Those interested can apply through Bahrain Bourse's website www.bahrainbourse.com.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

WHEN YOU REACH THE END OF YOUR ROPE, TIE A KNOT IN IT AND HANG ON
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

News in brief

◆ **Iran said yesterday it will block snap inspections by the UN nuclear watchdog from next week, a challenge to US President Joe Biden's hope of reviving the accord.** The nuclear deal granted wide-ranging access to the International Atomic Energy Agency to gather information on Iran's nuclear activities. But under a law enacted last year, Iran's government is obliged to revoke that access on Feb. 21 if other parties are not complying with the nuclear deal.



Iran says it will end snap IAEA inspections

◆ **Israel has cancelled its planned participation in a major defence expo in the United Arab Emirates next week due to COVID-19 curbs on air travel, Israeli officials said yesterday.** Dozens of Israeli defence firms had been due to take part in the IDEX conference in Abu Dhabi from Feb. 21-25 - a first for both countries, which last September established formal relations after closing ranks given their shared worries about Iran. But officials from Israel's Defence Ministry and Regional Cooperation Ministry said the plan was cancelled. They cited Israel's Jan. 26 ban on international air travel, which is still in force as it tries to reverse a surge in COVID-19 contagion.



◆ **India's Serum Institute will ship COVID-19 vaccines to Canada within a month,** its chief executive said yesterday. Last week, however, Trudeau spoke to Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and they discussed the two countries' commitment to democracy. Modi also said India would do its best to supply COVID-19 vaccines sought by Canada. On Monday Adar Poonawalla, the chief executive of Serum Institute of India (SII) - the world's largest vaccine maker - reaffirmed that commitment. "As we await regulatory approvals from Canada, I assure you, @SerumInstIndia will fly out #COVISHIELD to Canada in less than a month; I'm on it!" Poonawalla said in a Tweet, using the brand name under which Serum produces the shot developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca PLC.

India to ship COVID-19 vaccines to Canada



◆ **India's government has shortlisted four mid-sized state-run banks for privatisation,** under a new push to sell state assets and shore up government revenues, three government sources said. The four banks on the shortlist are Bank of Maharashtra, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and the Central Bank of India, two officials told Reuters on condition of anonymity as the matter is not yet public. Two of those banks will be selected for sale in the 2021/2022 financial year which begins in April, the officials said. The shortlist has not previously been reported. The government is considering mid-sized to small banks for its first round of privatisation to test the waters. In the coming years it could also look at some of the country's bigger banks, the officials said. The government, however, will continue to hold a majority stake in India's largest lender State Bank of India.

India shortlists four banks for potential privatisation

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	28,268,565	497,265	109,505,562
2 India	10,925,208	155,836	
3 Brazil	9,834,513	239,294	Deaths
4 Russia	4,086,090	80,520	2,413,903
5 UK	4,047,843	117,396	Recovered:
6 France	3,465,163	81,814	81,615,172
7 Spain	3,056,035	64,747	New cases
8 Italy	2,729,223	93,835	+121,952
9 Turkey	2,586,183	27,471	New deaths
10 Germany	2,342,198	65,580	+2,819
11 Colombia	2,195,039	57,605	
12 Argentina	2,025,798	50,236	
13 Mexico	1,992,794	174,207	
14 Poland	1,591,497	40,832	

Figures as of closing

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	173,813		9,994		134,960	28,859
Saudi Arabia	373,046	+314	6,438	+5	363,926	2,682
UAE	351,895	+3,123	1,027	+13	336,731	14,137
Kuwait	178,524	+823	1,009	+6	166,791	10,724
Oman	137,592	+286	1,543	+1	129,291	6,758
Qatar	158,132	+448	255		148,677	9,200

Myanmar junta deploys more soldiers, armoured vehicles

● **The coup and arrest of Nobel Peace Prize winner Suu Kyi and others have sparked the biggest protests in Myanmar in more than a decade**

Reuters

Protesters in Myanmar kept up demands yesterday for the release of ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and an end to military rule, though crowds were smaller after the junta deployed armoured vehicles and more soldiers on the streets.

Suu Kyi, detained since a Feb. 1 coup against her elected government, had been expected to face a court on Monday in connection with charges of illegally importing six walkie-talkie radios, but a judge said her remand lasted until Wednesday, her lawyer, Khin Maung Zaw, said.

The coup and arrest of Nobel Peace Prize winner Suu Kyi and others have sparked the biggest protests in Myanmar in more than a decade, with hundreds of thousands coming on to the streets to denounce the military's derailment of a tentative transition to democracy.

"This is a fight for our future, the future of our country," youth activist Esther Ze Naw said at a protest in the main city of Yangon. "We don't want to live under a military dictatorship. We want to establish a real federal union where all citizens, all ethnicities are treated equally."

The unrest has revived memories in the Southeast Asian nation of bloody outbreaks of opposition to almost half a century of direct army rule that had ended in 2011, when the military began a process of withdrawing from civilian politics.

Violence this time has been limited, although police have opened fire on several occasions to disperse protesters. One woman who was hit by police fire in the capital Naypyitaw last week is not expected to survive.

On Monday, security forces used rubber bullets and catapults in the city of Mandalay, wounding



An armoured vehicle rides on a street during a protest against the military coup, in Yangon, Myanmar

two people lightly, media and residents said.

The government and army could not be reached for comment.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

As well as the demonstrations in towns and cities, the military is facing a strike by government workers, part of a civil disobedience movement that is crippling many functions of government.

Armoured vehicles were deployed on Sunday in Yangon, the northern town of Myitkyina and Sittwe in the west, the first large-scale use of such vehicles since the coup.

More soldiers have also been spotted on the streets to help police who have been largely overseeing crowd control, including members of the 77th Light Infantry Division, a mobile force accused of brutality in campaigns against ethnic minority insurgents and protests in the past.

Crowds were smaller, though it was unclear if people were intimidated by the soldiers or fatigue was setting in after 12 days of demonstrations.

"We can't join the protests every day," said a laid-off travel officer worker in Yangon who declined to be identified. "But we

won't back down."

Earlier, more than a dozen police trucks with water cannon vehicles were deployed near the Sule Pagoda in Yangon, one of the city's main demonstration sites.

Protesters also gathered outside the central bank, where they held signs calling for support for

the civil disobedience movement. An armoured vehicle and several trucks carrying soldiers were parked nearby.

Later, police sealed off the headquarters of Suu Kyi's party in Yangon shortly before protesters arrived and chanted slogans, a witness said.

'OUR LEADER'

Police in Naypyitaw detained about 20 school students protesting by a road. Images posted on social media by one of the students showed them chanting slogans as they were taken away in a police bus.

Protesters then gathered outside the police station where they were being held, media reported. They were later released.

Media earlier showed ranks of protesters marching in Naypyitaw with pictures of Suu Kyi with the message: "we want our leader."

Suu Kyi, 75, spent nearly 15 years under house arrest for her efforts to end military rule.

The army has been carrying out nightly arrests and has given itself search and detention powers. At least 400 people have been detained, the group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said.



On Sunday, the military published penal code amendments aimed at stifling dissent and residents reported an internet outage after midnight on Sunday that lasted until about 9 a.m.

"It's as if the generals have declared war on the people," UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews said on Twitter.

Suu Kyi's party won a 2015 election and another on Nov. 8, but the military said the vote was fraudulent and used that complaint to justify the coup. The electoral commission has dismissed accusations of fraud.

Kremlin calls Musk's idea for Putin to join Clubhouse app interesting, seeks details

Reuters | Moscow

The Kremlin said yesterday that a proposal by Elon Musk for Russian President Vladimir Putin to join social networking app Clubhouse was interesting, but that it needed to see more details first.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was commenting after Musk tweeted to the Kremlin on Sunday: "Would you like join me for a conversation on Clubhouse?"



Russian President Vladimir Putin

Biden to discuss pandemic, economy and China in G7

Reuters | Washington

President Joe Biden will hold his first event with other leaders from the Group of Seven nations in a virtual meeting on Friday to discuss the coronavirus pandemic, the world economy and dealing with China, the White House said on Sunday.

The meeting is the first by top leaders from the G7 group of rich democracies since April, it said.

"This virtual engagement with leaders of the world's leading democratic market economies will provide an opportunity for President Biden to discuss plans to de-



feat the COVID-19 pandemic, and rebuild the global economy," the White House said in a statement.

American Charles Wilkes discovers Shackleton Ice Shelf, Antarctica

Howard Carter opens the inner burial chamber of Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun's tomb and finds the sarcophagus

Fidel Castro becomes the 16th Prime Minister of Cuba after overthrowing Fulgencio Batista



The Kyoto Protocol comes into force following its ratification by Russia.

Gulf expat exodus could continue until 2023, S&P says



General view of old Muscat

Reuters | Dubai

The population in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states declined by about 4% last year due to an exodus of expatriates after the coronavirus crisis and lower oil prices, S&P Global Ratings said in a report yesterday.

"We expect the proportion of foreigners in the region will continue to decline through 2023 relative to the national population, because of subdued non-oil sector growth and workforce nationalisation policies," S&P said.

The overall GCC population is unlikely to return to 2019 levels of 57.6 million people until 2023, S&P said.

"These changes could have repercussions for the regional economy and pose additional challenges to diversifying away from its heavy reliance on the hydrocarbon sector in the long run, if not met with economic and social reforms that foster human capital," it said.

S&P estimated the sharpest population decline last year occurred in Dubai, the Middle East business hub, where the impact of the pandemic on key employment sectors like aviation, tourism and retail led to an 8.4% population decline.

In Oman, where the government has in recent weeks intensified a long-standing policy, known as Omanisation, to create employment for its citizens, the expat population declined by about 12% last year, the agency said.

The region's largest economy, Saudi Arabia, saw its population shrink by 2.8% last year, and S&P estimates a growth of 0.8% by 2023.

The agency expects oil prices to remain at \$50 per barrel this and next year, and to rise to \$55 from 2023.

Indonesian landslide kills nine, 10 missing



Twenty-one people were initially reported missing, but three individuals were rescued after the disaster in a rural part of East Java

AFP News

At least nine people have died and 10 are missing after a landslide caused by torrential rains swept away several homes in Indonesia, officials said yesterday, with hundreds forced to flee their flooded homes.

Twenty-one people were initially reported missing after the disaster struck Sunday evening in a rural part of East Java.

Indonesia's Search and Rescue Agency said it had found nine bodies, but was still searching for 10 others.

The other two people had been rescued.

"We cannot bring heavy equipment to the site of the landslides currently. However, we are currently trying to make our way," the East Java Search and Rescue Agency told AFP in a written statement.

The landslide also seriously damaged eight houses, said the

agency. Pasuruan, a town in the province, was also flooded after a river overflowed due to the heavy rains, forcing more than 350 people to flee their homes, the agency added.

Fatal landslides and flash floods are common across the Indonesian archipelago, where seasonal downpours are frequent and relentless.

In January at least 21 people died and more than 60,000 fled the area after a series of major floods hit South Kalimantan.

Yemen donor conference expected in March

Reuters | Dubai

A fundraising event for Yemen's humanitarian crisis is expected to take place in early March, hosted virtually by Sweden and Switzerland, four aid sources said on Sunday.

A UN-backed push for international donors last June fell short of its \$2.4 billion target, raising only \$1.3 billion for what the United Nations describes as the world's largest humanitarian operation.

The proposed date for the new donors conference is



March 1, the four sources said, but the target amount and plans have yet to be finalised. Saudi Arabia co-hosted last year's fundraiser.

The United States' new

special envoy to Yemen, Tim Lenderking, on Thursday spoke to the president of Yemen's internationally recognised government about a possible donors conference, President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's office said.

The 2020 humanitarian response plan for Yemen received only \$1.9 billion of the \$3.4 billion required, the United Nations says. This underfunding led UN and other aid agencies to scale down or close various assistance programmes in Yemen.

Creator of much-mocked Romania statue accused of fraud



AFP News

A Romanian sculptor has been charged with fraud after a much-mocked sculpture of the Emperor Trajan -- and ten others -- turned out to be made of brass and not bronze as claimed, police said yesterday.

Ioan Bolborea, 65, is accused of selling the statues to the Bucharest municipality and thereby defrauding it of 3.7 million euros (\$4.5 million), a police spokesman told AFP.

One of the statues, a depiction of a nude Roman emperor Trajan holding a she-wolf in his arms, was widely mocked after its installation in front of Bucharest's National History Museum in 2012.

The artwork, based on a model by the sculptor Vasile Gorduz (1931-2008), portrays the genesis of the Romanian people from the merging of the Romans and the Dacians, with the wolf as a symbolic animal.

The strange posture and the nudity of the male character, as well as the appearance of the wolf with a scarf recalling the Dacians' flag around its neck, prompted a wave of mockery at the time.

Online critics quipped it was a monument to Bucharest's stray dogs, and even the museum's curator admitting it was of "doubtful artistic quality".

Suspicious about the material used were raised in 2017 when the statue was vandalised and the tail of the she-wolf was broken.

When trying to fix it, experts noticed that the statue was made of brass, not bronze.

Contacted by AFP, Bolborea refused to comment on the charges.

The investigation started following several complaints from the Bucharest municipality regarding the quality of Bolborea's work, which at the time he rejected as "non-sense".

Hariri sees no way out of crisis without Arab support

Reuters | Beirut

Lebanese Prime Minister designate Saad al-Hariri on Sunday said that his country could not be rescued from its current crisis without the support of Arab countries and the international community.

"There is no way out of the crisis ... without a deep reconciliation with our Arab brothers and an end to using the country as a staging point for attacking Gulf countries and threatening their interests," Hariri said in a televised speech marking 16 years since the assassination of his father, ex-premier Rafik al-Hariri.

A UN backed tribunal in December convicted a Hezbollah



16th anniversary of Lebanon's former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri assassination

member of conspiring to kill Rafik al-Hariri in a 2005 bombing. Hezbollah has denied any links to the attack.

Saad al-Hariri, a former prime minister himself, was given the task of forming a government in October but is struggling so far

to cobble together a cabinet to share power with all Lebanese parties, including Hezbollah.

After a meeting with President Michel Aoun on Friday, Hariri said there had been no progress on the formation of a government.

Under a power-sharing system, Lebanon's president must be a Maronite Christian and the prime minister a Sunni Muslim. President Aoun is an ally of Hezbollah, listed as a terrorist group by the United States.

On Sunday Hariri blamed Aoun for impeding progress, saying he had visited the president 16 times since his nomination as prime minister and proposed names to no avail.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



The Maple Leaf flag represents the values that make us Canadian, values we've seen on display more than ever this past year - values like courage, empathy, and generosity. Today, we celebrate our flag and all that it symbolizes. Happy Flag Day, Canada! Flag of Canada

@JustinTrudeau

02



Truly disgusting and shameful. "While Israel is still a critical ally, one source familiar with the White House thinking said there is some sense of payback in making Netanyahu wait for a call."

@NikkiHaley

03



Our government has taken a decision that will provide a huge impetus to Digital India. Liberalising policies governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data is a massive step in our vision for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

@narendramodi

04



Three years ago today, a lone gunman took the lives of 14 students and three educators in Parkland, Florida. In seconds, the lives of dozens of families were changed forever. As we mourn with the Parkland community, we mourn for all who have lost loved ones to gun violence.

@JoeBiden

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

celebs

Cardi B sparks Valentine's Day debate after saying men should spend more than women

Fox | Los Angeles

Cardi B sparked a Valentine's Day debate among her followers after suggesting that men should pay more for gifts than women.

The issue started when the rapper, 28, posted a tweet on Thursday sharing some blunt thoughts about the Valentine's Day holiday. She noted that she believes that women who date men should expect them to spend more money on gifts to celebrate the annual day of love.

"Yes! Men do deserve to get gift as well for Valentine's Day, but the gift have to be less expensive than the girls gift," she wrote. "Soo if he buys you flowers you buy him grass."

The artist caught a lot of backlash from social media users who disagreed with her stance on the matter and believe instead that couples should spend an equal amount of cash on one another for Valentine's Day. Some, however, agreed with the star and com-

mended her for saying it out loud. Others also commented that the wealthy celebrity, who is married to rapper Offset, doesn't have the same concerns about spending large sums of money on lavish gifts.

Despite the backlash, the following day Cardi B doubled down on her assertion.

"Ok so due to my Vday tweet men came on my twitter roasting me sayin 'but you bought your man a lambo' but remember...I got 550K ring on my left hand, 400k ring on my right, Thousands of dollars in Birkins, soo much jewelry, a lambo truck and rolls-Royce truck ..so we even in gifts," she wrote.

She continued in a follow-up tweet: "So if ya don't like the flowers & grass comparisons let me give ya one that make men happy. If you buy her thousand dollars Louboutin heels she should buy you a ps5 that's around 550\$. It's fair ...now if you think your gift should cost more then ur girl gift you are just a b----."



Cardi B

'Overjoyed' Harry and Meghan expecting second child

Reuters | London

Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, are expecting their second child, a spokesperson for the couple said on Sunday.

Harry, 36, and Meghan, 39, stepped back from royal duties in January 2020 and moved with their first son Archie to Southern California to live a more independent life and escape the British media.

"We can confirm that Archie is going to be a big



Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan arrive to greet members of the public

brother. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex are overjoyed to be expecting their second child," the spokesperson said.

Archie was born in May 2019. The Valentine's Day announcement was accompanied by a black and white photograph

of a visibly pregnant Meghan lying on grass with one hand on her stomach and her head resting on the smiling prince's leg. The photo was taken by longtime friend and photographer Misan Harriman.

Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip, Harry's father Prince Charles and the whole family were "delighted" and wished the couple well, a Buckingham Palace spokesman said.

Since ending their royal duties, Harry and Meghan have continued charity work and signed TV and other media deals, launching their debut podcast in December.

Kelly Clarkson details ideal date with herself

ANI | Washington

American singer-songwriter and television personality Kelly Clarkson recently opened up about how she will be having an ideal date with herself, post her divorce from Brandon Blackstock.

According to People magazine, during the latest episode of 'The Kelly Clarkson Show', the 38-year-old singer told audiences about what her perfect evening would look like, complete with wine and a warm fire, ahead of her first Val-

entine's Day since her split from Brandon Blackstock.

"We all know that we don't need someone by our sides to live our best lives," Clarkson said before opening up the discussion to a group of single women who feel "empowered" in "ways they could never have imagined," by their relationship status.

One of the fans then asked Kelly about how she dates herself, to which she replied, "To date myself -- this is going to sound real boring -- I'm a mom of little tiny tots, so I love, literally, having a glass of wine, I put the fireplace

on in my bedroom...and I read a book or I watch some Netflix."

She added, "Or I literally just hang out with my girls. I love that."

As per People magazine, Kelly, who shares daughter River Rose, aged 6, and son Remington Alexander, aged 4, with Blackstock, filed for divorce in June. She is also stepmother to Blackstock's 2 children from a previous relationship, Savannah, whose age is 19, and Seth, aged 14.



Kelly Clarkson

Nicki Minaj's father killed in hit-and-run

Reuters | Los Angeles

The father of rapper Nicki Minaj has died after being struck by a hit-and-run driver near New York City, police said Sunday.

Robert Maraj, 64, was walking on a road in Mineola, Long Island at 6:15 pm (2315 GMT) on Friday when he was hit, Nassau County Police Department said in a statement.

The driver left the scene of the accident, and Maraj was taken to hospital, where he was pronounced dead on Saturday.

"The investigation is ongoing," police added.

The statement did not specify Maraj's relationship to Minaj, but a police spokesman confirmed he was her father.

Minaj, 38, was born in Trinidad and



Tobago and raised in the Queens borough of New York City.

The rapper has been nominated for ten Grammy awards during her career.

Lana Condor: 'To All The Boys I've Loved Before' has been integral to how I'm today

IANIS | Los Angeles

Actress Lana Condor, who rose to fame portraying Lara Jean Covey in the 'To All The Boys I've Loved Before' franchise, says these movies have been a huge part of her life for years, and have been very integral to how she is today as a young woman.

The actress's latest release is the final movie in the series "To All The Boys: Always and Forever". She feels bereft, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"These movies have been such a huge part of my life for years, and have been very integral to how I am today as a young woman. It almost feels like you're saying goodbye to a part of yourself, a Condor told The Hollywood Reporter.

The actress also shared that she was shocked by the huge suc-

cess of the first movie and found fame difficult to adjust to.

She said: "We honestly made it as an indie. So we didn't even know if anyone would see it or pick it up let alone have the reaction it had on people. It's a very weird thing to watch your life change

for the better and for the worse right before your very eyes in a very short period of time."

Actor Noah Centineo, who portrays Peter Kavinsky, said he will treasure the friendships he made during filming of the franchise.

"You feel so comfortable working with (Condor). She gives so much, and I hope to continue working with actors that are as kind and as nurturing and giving as she is," he had said.



Lana Condor

SUDOKU

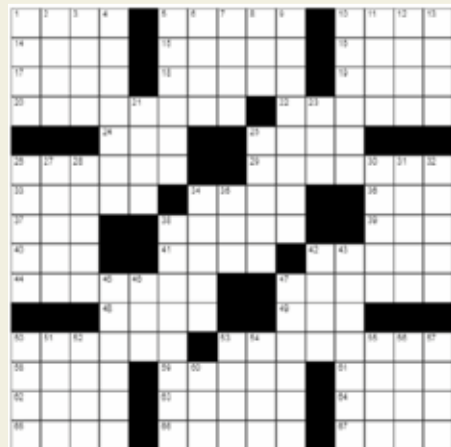
1			2	8	7	9		
2	7		4					
			3					5
5	3	1	9					
			5	7	6			8
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6	4	1	7					3

Yesterday's solution

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

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- On ... with; 5- Cavalry weapon; 10- The ... Valley is a Californian wineland; 14- Merlin, e.g.; 15- Let's Make ...; 16- Actor Stoltz; 17- K-6; 18- Yellowish brown color; 19- Fountain of jazz; 20- Dire warning; 22- Warm and cozy; 24- French possessive; 25- Orenburg's river; 26- Evoke; 29- Ape; 33- Turkish title of old; 34- Indonesian resort island; 36- Greek goddess of the dawn; 37- Madrid Mrs.; 38- Moist; 39- Shakespearean contraction; 40- Reproductive cells; 41- Serpents; 42- Campfire treat; 44- Apparatus; 47- Shares viewpoints; 48- Totals; 49- Mongrel dog; 50- Magazine VIP; 53- Repeats; 58- Essence; 59- Hilo hi; 61- Arrive; 62- Peak; 63- Herbert Hoover, for one; 64- Burrow; 65- Antlered animal; 66- Bank offerings; 67- Kitchen addition;

Down

1- From the U.S.; 2- " ... Rider" starred Clint Eastwood; 3- Got older; 4- Loser's request; 5- Current; 6- Hebrew month; 7- Salamander; 8- Able to; 9- Sheath-like; 10- Kathmandu resident; 11- Bellicose deity; 12- Big East team; 13- ...-deucey; 21- Sci-fi princess; 23- Dinghy thingy; 25- Citrus hybrids; 26- ... salts; 27- Insect stage; 28- Son of Abraham; 30- Admit; 31- French wine valley; 32- Hardy equestrian creatures; 34- Public transports; 35- Sound booster; 38- Banister; 42- Boot attachment; 43- Extraordinary occurrence; 45- Seller of Stetsons; 46- Altar words; 47- Vast seas; 50- Criley; 51- Gaming cubes; 52- Woe ...; 53- Caucus state; 54- Word of comparison; 55- Just right; 56- Radiate; 57- Shrivelled, without moisture; 60- Canterbury can;

Yesterday's solution

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

India sense win after Ashwin hurts England



Ravichandran Ashwin hits to the boundary during his century

Reuters | Chennai

India have continued their march towards a series-levelling victory after Ravichandran Ashwin's scintillating century on a turning track flattened England in the second Test.

England are chasing a record 482 for an improbable victory but they endured a top order collapse to finish day three on 3-53 yesterday, still 429 behind at Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium.

Joe Root was batting on two at close while Dan Lawrence was on 19 with England, who managed just 134 in their first innings, risking a defeat inside four days.

The nature of the spin-friendly pitch dominated discussions on the first two days but home captain Virat Kohli and Ashwin showed how to master suck tracks as India posted 286 in their second innings.

Resuming their second innings on 1-54, India lost five wickets in the morning session with Ben Foakes spending a busy 28th birthday behind the stumps.

Foakes ran out Cheteshwar Pujara in the very first over in a bizarre dismissal.

Having stepped out to defend a ball, Pujara was trying to make his ground when he

106 runs were scored by Ravichandran Ashwin in 148 balls after claiming five for 43 during England's sorry 134 all out in their first innings

jammed his bat on the crease and lost his grip. Foakes whipped off the bail before Pujara could get his foot back in.

The wicketkeeper then pulled off two sharp stumpings off Jack Leach (4-100) to send back Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant.

Ajinkya Rahane did not last long either but Kohli forged a 96-run partnership with Ashwin to steady the innings.

The India captain curbed his natural free-flowing game, rarely playing his trademark cover-drive, during his patient knock of 62.

Moeen Ali (4-98) dismissed Kohli for the second time in the match but Ashwin kept going at the other end.

Batting with number 11 batsman Mohammed Siraj, Ashwin smacked Moeen for a six to reach 97, took two runs off the next delivery, and followed it with a streaky four to reach a hundred in front of delirious fans at his home ground.

Nadal closes on Slams record, Barty raises home hopes

Rafael Nadal and Ashleigh Barty storm into Australian Open last eight

● Tsitsipas handed walkover after Berrettini pulls out

AFP | Melbourne

Rafael Nadal outclassed Fabio Fognini to close in on the all-time Grand Slam titles record yesterday as Ashleigh Barty ramped up hopes of becoming the Australian Open's first home winner in 43 years.

Nadal said his lower-back stiffness was continuing to improve after his 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 against the flamboyant Italian, which set up a quarter-final against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Fognini had registered a five-set win over Nadal at the 2015 US Open, but the Spaniard cantered to victory after recovering from 2-4 down in the second set.

Nadal is now into his 43rd Grand Slam quarter-final, staying on course for a title match with eight-time winner Novak Djokovic who battled through an abdominal injury to reach the last eight on Sunday.

"I'm happy to be in the quarter-finals today -- that means a lot to me, it's positive stuff," said Nadal, who is level with Roger Federer on 20 Grand Slam men's singles titles.

Next up for Nadal is world number six Tsitsipas, who went through on a walkover after Italy's Matteo Berrettini pulled out with an abdominal strain.

The Melbourne tournament remained fan-free for a third day yesterday during a five-day lockdown in Victoria state to curb a coronavirus outbreak.

As the action continued in



Australia's Ashleigh Barty in action

front of empty stands, top-ranked Barty beat big-hitting American Shelby Rogers in impressive fashion to reach the last eight.

Barty won 6-3, 6-4 to go into the quarter-finals without dropping a set as she bids to become the first Australian champion since Chris O'Neil in 1978.

"I love playing at home and sharing this with my friends and family," said Barty, who hit 21 winners.

The former French Open champion next plays Karolina Muchova, who came through two tight sets to beat Belgium's Elise Mertens 7-6 (7/5), 7-5.

Russians are coming

Earlier, unseeded American Jessica Pegula reached her maiden Grand Slam quarter-final with victory over Elina Svitolina, her first over a top-10 player.

Pegula, whose billionaire father owns the Buffalo Bills NFL



Rafael Nadal is level with Roger Federer on 20 Grand Slam men's singles titles

team, overcame fifth seed Svitolina 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to set up a meeting with fellow American Jennifer Brady, a 6-1, 7-5 winner against Croatia's Donna Vekic.

"I can't get more confident -- it is my best result yet and I'm playing good tennis and today was a hard-fought win," said Pegula, 26.

"Jen (Brady) is an awesome person. She's a great person," Pegula added. "She was texting me, 'I'm so happy, I'm so proud.



Rafael Nadal in action

This is awesome."

Elsewhere, fourth seed Daniil Medvedev and seventh seed Andrey Rublev both won to ensure an all-Russian quarter-final.

Medvedev, the 2019 US Open runner-up, blew away American world number 192 Mackenzie McDonald 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 to extend his winning streak to 18 matches.

Rublev, who is also unbeaten this year, went through when Norway's Casper Ruud retired after losing the first two sets.

The 22-year-old Norwegian had reached the last 16 at a Slam for the first time -- emulating his father, Christian, who achieved the same feat at the 1997 Australian Open.

With qualifier Aslan Karatsev already through to face Grigor Dimitrov in the top half of the draw, it means there will be three Russian men in the last eight of a Slam for the first time since the Open era began in 1968.

Belo thrilled yet 'pressured' to play under Black

TDT | Manila

Meralco's new prized acquisition, Mac Belo, is thrilled yet "pressured" to work with multi-titled coach Norman Black in their quest for a breakthrough title in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA).

The Bolts beefed up their roster before the start of the PBA season by acquiring the versatile 6-foot-4 forward from the Blackwater Elite in exchange for playmaker Baser Amer and veteran big man Bryan Faundo.

Apart from the chance to win more ballgames at Meralco, Belo couldn't wait for a chance to learn from his new teammates and of course, coach Black.

"I'm excited. I'm challenged and at the same time there's some pressure because it's coach Norman," said Belo, Blackwater's No. 1 overall pick in the 2016 special draft.

"I'm the type of person who loves to listen so I'm looking forward to learning more from him.

"I like the system that coach Norman is running. Meralco is a very disciplined team especially defensively and I want to be part of such a system."



Belo, right, is looking forward to learn more from his new mentor

Given his offensive and defensive skills, Belo feels he'd be a good fit for the Bolts.

"I'm more of a two-way player, I can defend multiple positions," he said. "I'll do whatever coach tells me so I can help the team."

Black said acquiring the services of Belo addresses their issues in the frontcourt, where Meralco needs a boost.

"We recruited Belo because our frontcourt is one of the areas where we need depth. We welcome him to the team and

look forward to seeing his impact on our team," said Black.

Belo is expected to play a prominent role on the Meralco frontline which still has veteran forward Reynel Hugnatan, center Raymond Almazan, hardworking Cliff Hodge and Noy Baclao, who is set to play in the season-opening Philippine Cup after nursing an ACL injury.

He can also provide the scoring punch that will compliment leading scorer Chris Newsome and swingman Allein Maliksi. Belo has never made it past

"I'm excited. I'm challenged and at the same time there's some pressure because it's coach Norman. I'm the type of person who loves to listen so I'm looking forward to learning from him

MAC BELO

the quarterfinals during his four-year stay with the Ever Bilena franchise.

Belo is now looking forward to a fresh start with Meralco, where he is expected to beef up a frontline anchored by Raymond Almazan and Reynel Hugnatan.

His transfer to All-Filipino semifinalist Meralco couldn't be more timely for Belo, who has made it his personal goal to reach greater heights this year.

"Right now, my goal is to win a PBA championship. With the Meralco team I have a big chance of seeing my dream come true," he said. "So I'll do my best to help the team win."

Alonso leaves hospital after cycling crash

AFP | London

Former Formula One champion Fernando Alonso has left hospital after having surgery on a jaw fracture suffered in a road accident while cycling last week, his team, Alpine, announced yesterday.

Veteran racer Alonso was hit by a car near his home on Thursday in Lugano in Switzerland, close to the Italian

border.

"After a period of 48 hours observation at hospital in Switzerland, Fernando Alonso has now been discharged to continue his recovery at home," said the F1 outfit, re-branded from Renault.

"He will now have a short period of complete rest before progressively resuming training to undertake preparation for the start of the season.

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Bahrain1 Racing make it three in a row

Khalid Al Balooshi powers NHRA Pro Mod world champions to another dominant victory in Bahrain Drag Racing Championship at BIC

● Seven Bahrainis triumph in their respective competition categories for both cars and motorbikes

● More than 90 competitors and their crews from Bahrain, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and the USA take part in season's third round

TDT | Manama

Khalid Al Balooshi powered Bahrain1 Racing, owned by His Majesty the King's Personal Representative His Highness Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, to a hat-trick of victories in the 2021 Bahrain Drag Racing Championship, after taking first place in the Pro Mod category for the third successive round held at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhr.

Al Balooshi extended his dominant run in the highly competitive category to headline an eventful week of intense racing down BIC's world-class drag strip, which is a member of the prestigious Worldwide Network



Khalid Al Balooshi in his 2019 Pro Charger Camaro during the third round

of the US-based National Hot Rod Association.

The meeting was organised and run by BIC, the Bahrain Motor Federation and the Bahrain Drag Racing Club, and was held with strict health protection measures in place, in line with government regulations and guidance.

Behind the wheel of Bahrain1 Racing's 2019 Pro Charger Camaro, Al Balooshi overcame a tough challenge from Bahraini Saad Al Marran in their final run, where the Emirati secured his triumph with an elapsed time of 3.722 seconds at a top speed of 323.08kph.

The result maintained Al Balooshi's perfect record so far in the current season, and he remains in the driver's seat in the race for the 2021 Pro Mod title.

Meanwhile, seven Bahrainis triumphed in their respective categories during the meeting.

Hussain Mohammed was among them, continuing his long-running success in the Super Street V8 class. He drove his supercharged Ford Mustang to first place despite a sub-par time of 15.830s at just 63.26kph in the final, where he beat Ali Al Joder.

Mahmood Mohammed won the Outlaw 4 category with a time of 10.508s at 205.61kph to



A competitor in a motorbikes class on the drag strip

outduel Ahmed Mohammed Zaman in their final run, while Nawaf Al Mannai claimed a victory in the Outlaw 6 class with a run of 5.300s at 230.99kph in his decisive elimination, where he beat Bashar Alameer.

Ali Abdulla and Sayed Hussain Salman were winners in two of the Index categories for cars, with Abdulla taking first place in the Index 10.5 and Salman in the Index 8.5. Abdulla (10.635s at 195.45kph) won over Abdulla Ghaloom in his final run, whereas Salman (8.542s at 250.39kph) overcame Yousif Khamiri in their concluding battle.

Rounding out the roster of

winning hometown participants were Ali Bahram in the Index 8.5 Bikes and Ali Basilar in the Super Street Bikes. Bahram registered a mark of 9.235s at 173.50kph as fellow-finalist Mohammed Hasan had a red light; while Basilar triumphed with a solo run in his last elimination.

Others to top their classes in round three were Hamdan Alkaabi from the UAE in the Index 9.0 category and Fadi Abu Jamus from Saudi Arabia in the Street Fight Bikes.

Alkaabi had a run of 9.044s at 239.03kph to beat Tariq Mohammed, who had a break out, while Abu Jamus clocked a mark



**YOU
KNOW WHAT**

The meeting was organised and run by Bahrain International Circuit, the Bahrain Motor Federation and the Bahrain Drag Racing Club, and was held with strict health protection measures in place, in line with government regulations and guidance

of 10.444s at 143.61kph to defeat Mohammed Al Taitoon, who did not register a time.

The third round marked the midway point of the 2021 Bahrain Drag Racing Championship. Racing resumes with the fourth and penultimate meeting of the season from February 23 to 26, which will then set the stage for the championship-finale from April 13 to 16 at BIC.

For more information on the region's premier drag racing series, visit bahraingp.com.

Bauhaus claims first stage win of 2021 for Team Bahrain Victorious



Phil Bauhaus competes during the race's final stage

TDT | Manama

Team Bahrain Victorious rider Phil Bauhaus won the final stage of the Tour de la Provence in France with an impressive technical finish.

The event was the debut race in the 2021 season for the Bahraini outfit, founded by His Majesty the King's Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs representative and Supreme Council for Youth and Sports chairman His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

It is part of this year's Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Europe Tour, which is under the UCI Continental Circuits series.

The final stage of 163.2 kilometres started in Avignon and saw a breakaway go off with four riders early on, only to be caught with two km to go.

The last few corners caused a frantic finish, as Heinrich Haussler took the lead for Bauhaus showing some impressive

handling to keep the German up the front and out of trouble. Bauhaus showed his power going past Ballerini as he kicked for the line and claimed the Team Bahrain Victorious' first triumph in 2021.

Bauhaus was delighted with the win. He commented: "It was a super-fast final, and the team did really really well today and wanted this result really really bad. I went for it, and I'm happy I could pass the guys at the front.

"I knew I needed to be in front with 600 metres to go, and then I was strong enough to finish it off. It's always good as a sprinter to win races. But I'm also happy for the team. It takes some pressure off us now we have that win. It gives us confidence for the next races."

Team Bahrain Victorious also took two top 10 finishes, with Wout Poels claiming fourth after his impressive display in stage three, and Jack Haig just behind in seventh.

New Mercedes-AMG GT3 cars for 2 Seas Motorsport in 2021

TDT | Manama

Bahraini racing team 2 Seas Motorsport, co-owned by His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, announced yesterday that it will be taking on the 2021 season with a new look, as the team confirms it will campaign a pair of the latest specification Mercedes-AMG GT3s.

The team intends to run the new cars across Europe. The final confirmation of the championships and drivers are due to be announced in the coming weeks as plans continue to develop.

After launching at the start of last year, 2 Seas Motorsport initially debuted in the virtual world, finishing second in the inaugural SRO E-Sports Championship and an impressive fourth overall at the 24 Hours of Le Mans Virtual, before contesting the real-world, rescheduled 2020 Intelligent Money British GT Championship, finishing third in the GT3 Teams standings.

Al Ahli closed out their campaign in the 2020/2021 Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) Cup last night with a 104-71 victory over Isa Town at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

The defending league cham-



A computer-generated image of the new Mercedes-AMG GT3 car of 2 Seas Motorsport

Since then, the 2021 season has started in winning ways with HH Shaikh Isa part of the driver line-up which claimed victory at the Gulf 12 Hours Bahrain last month.

The new season sees an exciting relationship established with Mercedes-AMG Customer Racing in Affalterbach, Germany, and delivery of two new Mercedes-AMG GT3s due shortly.

With the constantly evolving travel situation, the team continues to review the domestic and European competition options, while finalising preparations for the dedicated testing programme.

New partnership

HH Shaikh Isa commented: "I am extremely pleased to confirm the new relationship for 2 Seas Motorsport with

At 2 Seas Motorsport, we are always looking to take on the next challenge and to learn from our experiences...I am confident we will continue to build and get stronger throughout this coming season

HH SHAIKH ISA BIN ABDULLA BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA

Mercedes-AMG as the first exciting stage of our 2021 plans. Mercedes-AMG is at the top of its game in motorsport, and the AMG GT3 has been hugely successful across all competitions since its introduction.

"At 2 Seas Motorsport, we are always looking to take on the next challenge and to learn from our experiences, and as a team we have grown and developed hugely over the past 12 months, and I am confident we will continue to build and get stronger throughout this coming season."

Al Ahli beat Isa Town in BBA Cup

TDT | Manama

pions registered their only win of the competition with the result as they failed to make it through to the semi-finals.

Isa Town were the early aggressors in the contest, taking a 24-18 lead at the end of the first quarter. But Ahli were able to battle back and went up by two, 42-40, at the half. They then

blew the game wide open in the third where they outscored their opponents 35-19, and rode their momentum into a dominant fourth period to close out the game.

Ahli completed their run in Group A with a 1-4 win-loss record, similar to that of Isa Town. Cup action continues to-

night with two games in Group B. Currently unbeaten Al Najma go head-to-head with Al Hala at 5.30pm, followed at 7.45pm by Sitra taking on Manama.

All four teams are currently with a mathematical chance to make it to the final four from their division.