The Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, H E Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Thani visited the temporary COVID-19 vaccination centre opened at Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) yesterday. The visit aimed to ensure the state's plan to expand the national programme for vaccination against COVID-19. The Prime Minister and Minister of Interior inspected the centre run by the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). The centre's first phase will focus on vaccinating teachers and school staff in addition to other essential workers and community members who meet the eligibility criteria.

He was briefed on the mechanism of work in general, the operational capacity of the centre that the Prime Minister was accompanied by Dr. Mariam Abdulmalik, Chair of the National Health Strategic Group on COVID-19 and Head of Infectious Diseases and Vaccination Programmes, and Dr. Hanan Mohammed Al Kuwari, Minister of Public Health.

Dr. Al Kuwari said that the effort in the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme focused on targeting the most at-risk populations such as the elderly, those with severe chronic conditions, healthcare workers, frontline workers and other essential workers and community members who meet the eligibility criteria.

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Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, H E Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Thani with Prime Minister of Public Health, H E Dr. Hanan Mohammed Al Kuwari and officials during a visit to the vaccination centre at QNCC yesterday.

PM visits temporary vaccination centre

- Prime Minister briefed on work in general and operational capacity of vaccination centre at QNCL.
- National COVID-19 Vaccination Program currently targets at-risk populations: Minister of Public Health.
- COVID-19 vaccination center at QNCL for teachers, school administration staff and other community members.

Fully vaccinated people exempted from quarantine

- The Ministry of Health and Community Nutrition on Monday announced that fully vaccinated citizens and residents of Qatar are exempt from quarantine requirements following travel abroad and exposure to COVID-19 positive case.
- The quarantine exemption is valid for a period of three months starting 14 days after the second dose. He also said that the exemption does not currently apply to people vaccinated in other countries.

MoCI reimposes restrictions on weddings and events

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) announced today that it has imposed new restrictions on wedding and event planners, in line with the developments and the measures taken by the state to protect citizens and residents and contain the spread of COVID-19.

The new decisions will hold wedding and event planners accountable for implementing the precautionary measures determined by the MoCI, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), and the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

One of the guidelines was to delay or cancel weddings whether they are indoor or outdoor, except weddings that would have been held at home so long as the attendees are members of the family. The total number of people attending the wedding, in that case, cannot exceed 10 for indoor weddings and 20 for outdoor weddings (that are taking place at a beach).

Wedding and event planners must also obtain approval for holding the wedding via the Metrash2 app and not allow families or those invited to attend unless they check their digital application status.

Other guidelines include measuring the temperature of all employees and people invited and allowing only those who have a temperature less than 38 degrees Celsius.

All planners must also adhere to the guidelines regulating the arrival of those invited.

The ministry said that the decision could be amended following developments, warning that violators will be held legally accountable. The ministry also called on all citizens and residents to seek information from the proper and official sources.

QA to become first global airline to offer 100% touch-free in-flight entertainment

The Zero-Touch technology, introduced in partnership with the Thales AVANT IFE system, will enable A350 passengers to pair their electronic devices with the seat-back IFE screen by connecting to ‘Oryxcomms’ Wi-Fi and simply scanning QR codes displayed on the screen.

The introduction of the state-of-the-art Zero-Touch technology and enabling passengers to use their Bluetooth headsets on board is an important step in terms of taking our already rigorous and stringent COVID-19 precautions to another level, limiting passenger surface contact and presenting a possible spread of infection on board.

Amir emphasises support to Lebanon

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met yesterday at his office in the Amir Diwan with Prime Minister-designate of the Lebanon Republic H E Saad Al Hariri, on the occasion of his visit to the country.

The meeting dealt with receiving the latest developments and efforts related to forming the government, in which the Amir emphasised the State of Qatar’s continuous efforts to support the Lebanese people, calling on all Lebanese parties to prioritise national interest and swiftly form a new government that will deal with the crises and challenges facing Lebanon. The meeting also dealt with a number of issues of joint interest.

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Minister visits schools to check implementation of precautionary measures

Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Hamad directed the school management to adhere to all precautionary measures strictly and firmly in order to maintain a healthy and safe school environment that enhances the academic achievement of students.

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Qatar, Netherlands hold political consultations

The second round of political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of the Netherlands were held yesterday via video conference.

The Qatari side was represented by Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E Dr. Ahmed bin Nasser Al Hamad, while the Dutch side was represented by Secretary-General of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E F. Paul Huppertz.

During the round bilateral cooperation and relations were reviewed.

QA to offer touch-free entertainment on board

The State of Qatar participated in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting on Reimagining inequality: racism, xenophobia and discrimination in the 2020s and the decade of action for the SDGs through cloud video conference technology yesterday.

The delegation of the State of Qatar to the meeting was headed by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Chairman of Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations, H E Dr. Ahmed bin Nasser Al Hamad.

He added that Qatar hosted in 2012 the Fourth Global Forum for the Alliance of Civilizations, which contributed to laying the foundations for the Alliance’s work, and the Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations was formed to complete the country’s official involvement in this field.

He explained that the country’s measures, which stemmed from a desire to promote understanding and respect for others, are rooted in the depths of the Arab identity that unites the Arab world.

Dr. Al Hamad stressed that the Arabic language is a “bio-social phenomenon” that transcends national, religious, and cultural identities and helps us understand the richness of language and the diversity of its forms, clausical or diastrical, from oral speech to poetic calling and the Arabic language has grown into a fascinating aesthetic, rooted in architecture, poetry, philosophy, and art. It provides access to an incredible variety of identities and beliefs, and its history reveals the richness of links with other languages.

Dr. Noora Al Khanji, Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies at QU, said, “The most crucial characteristic of our culture is based on two essential pillars: Arabism, which is a national, ethnic, and linguistic aspect, and Islam, which is a religious manifestation. This means that the identity of this culture is rooted in purely human origin like other identities. Perhaps this is what gives it the attribute of permanence. Possibly it has driven us to fold all the other identities in itself, and this also gave it the attribute of universality.”

Dr. Naas Al Khatri, Associate Professor of Arabic Language, College of Arts and Sciences at QU, expressed that the Arabic language is a “bio-social phenomenon” that transcends national, religious, and cultural identities and helps us understand the richness of language and the diversity of its forms, clausical or diastrical, from oral speech to poetic calling and the Arabic language has grown into a fascinating aesthetic, rooted in architecture, poetry, philosophy, and art. It provides access to an incredible variety of identities and beliefs, and its history reveals the richness of links with other languages.

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The designation authorities related to the Public Prosecution for violating the preventive and precautionary measures enforced by the State of Qatar against COVID-19 may cut the amount of time to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Among them, 337 people were referred to the Public Prosecution for not wearing masks in places where they are mandatory, while 44 were fined for violating the maximum number of 4 people allowed in a vehicle including the driver, except when they are members of one family. 121 people did not allow the summoned, while 29 were referred to the Public Prosecution for not installing an alert app on their mobile phones.

The measures are in line with the provisions of the Law No. 12 of 2020 on the punishment of violators of the measures to control the spread of COVID-19. The authorities called on the public to adhere to the precautionary measures in place to ensure safety and the safety of others.
Qatar-Iraq jurisdictions hold high-level dialogue under UNODC

Qatar affirmed that the high-level political dialogue between the Iraq and Qatar jurisdictions is one of the fruits of the Global Program on the Implementation of the Doha Declaration to consolidate the rule of law and enhance the effectiveness of criminal justice systems. The political dialogue between the two countries was held in Vienna yesterday under the supervision of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the presence of President of the Supreme Judicial Council of the State of Qatar H E Dr. Hassan bin Ali Al Thani and President of the Judicial Council of Iraq H E Judge Fuad Zaidan.

Acting Charge d’Affaires at the Mission of the State of Qatar to international organisations in Vienna, Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani said that the activities of the Global Program are meaningful and the recommendations of the Doha Declaration put the ground to the need for joint commitment to support the effectiveness of criminal justice systems, their investment of time and resources, and their shared humanity and accountability.

He added that the prospects of the Global Program for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration have succeeded since 2016 in developing mechanisms and approaches for the work of the UNODC. The program has developed new tools in the fields of training and capacity development within a strategy to make a long-term impact in combating crime and enhancing the readiness of member states, particularly developing countries and their response to organized crime, corruption, drug trafficking, terrorism, solid and transparent criminal justice systems and contributing to the implementation of the goals of the UN sustainable development plan 2030.

He said Qatar is proud of its implementation of the Global Program that has not only been a major milestone and a significant success story, but also an open and attractive platform for joint international action in combating crime and enhancing our criminal justice systems, calling on the UNODC to continue its support to countries that have this legacy as a model for effective, fruitful and lasting cooperation between the member states of the United Nations.

PM visits temporary vaccination centre

FROM PAGE 1

She explained that the vaccination process remains the same, with the vaccine administered in two doses, three weeks apart at the QNCC vaccination centre. Visits should carry a valid health card when arriving, and are recommended to follow standard preventive measures, including masks, hand hygiene and social distancing.

Ministry of Defence and MME sign cooperation agreement

QNA — DOHA

The Ministry of Defence (Defence) represented by the National Service Academy, signed a joint cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Municipality and Environment, represented by the Ministry’s Public Service Affairs.

The agreement was signed by Head of the National Service Academy H E Staff Maj. Gen. Saud Hamad Al Nuaimi, and Assistant Undersecretary for Public Service Affairs at the Ministry of Municipality and Environment Eng. Ahmed Mohammed Al Sada.

The agreement comes within the framework of ongoing cooperation between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Municipality and Environment.

A short film was displayed at the beginning of the signing ceremony about the activities of the National Service Academy.

After that, Eng. Ahmed Mohammed Al Sada delivered a speech in which he stressed that the public service affairs at the Ministry of Municipality and Environment through this agreement, will arm all its capabilities to support the Academy in achieving its goals and in its affiliations.

Eng. Al Sada said that this cooperation stems from the national responsibility in meeting the daily requirements and raising the quality of life in order to achieve the comprehensive renaissance of the State of Qatar and support sustainable development in Qatar National Vision 2030.

Following the signing of the agreement, participants at the ceremony toured the National Service Academy facilities and were briefed on the many years of scientific research it offers.

Three arrested for violating home quarantine

QNA — THE PENINSULA

The competent authorities arrested yesterday three people who violated the requirements of the home quarantine, following which they are legally accountable for doing so in accordance with the procedures of the health authorities in the country.

It is implementation of the precautionary measures in force for these lockdown days approved by health authorities representing the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), to ensure the achievement of public safety and to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

The arrested persons being referred to the competent prosecution are Mohamed Saeed, Ahmed Salama, Mohammad Al-Shehab, Mohammad Al-Shehab and Mohammad Al-Shehab, Al-Mattari.

Over 149,000 recover from COVID-19

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) said Thursday that the registration of 462 new confirmed COVID-19 cases. Among them 30 were transfers from abroad.

Another 265 people have recovered from the virus, bringing the total number of recovered cases in Qatar to 149,031.

All new cases have been introduced to isolation and are receiving necessary support according to their health status.

The total number of positive COVID-19 cases recorded in Qatar is 159,053 and there are 196 active cases under treatment.

There are 24 new cases of hospital admissions taking the total number of hospitalised patients to 55.

Patients were admitted to intensive care, and 39 patients continue to receive medical attention in ICU.

While the first phase of COVID-19 vaccinations has started in India, the coming months will be available for other countries. In the free, the Ministry has stressed the importance for everyone to play their role in controlling the virus by following precautionary measures including adherence to physical distances and wearing face masks.

Qatar, Japan ministers discuss trade, participation in World Expo 2025

QNA — DOHA

Minister of Commerce and Industry H E Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari during a virtual meeting with Minister of State for the World Expo 2025 in Japan Hiroshi Ono, via video conference.

Minister of State for the World Expo 2025 in Japan Hiroshi Ono and Minister of Commerce and Industry H E Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari yesterday reviewed means of boosting cooperation between the two countries in the commercial, industrial and tourism fields, in addition to discussing the State of Qatar in the World Expo 2025 in Japan and the preparations made by Japan for the success of the global event.

The Minister of Commerce and Industry reviewed during the meeting, the economic policies adopted by the State of Qatar and its role in removing restrictions on foreign investment opportunities for Japanese investors in the State of Qatar.

The Minister of Commerce and Industry affirmed yesterday that the legacy of the Global Program for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration will remain alive and a catalyst for strengthening joint national action in combating crime and enhancing our criminal justice systems, calling on the UNODC to continue its support to countries that have this legacy as a model for effective, fruitful and lasting cooperation between the member states of the United Nations.

SOF wins from Loyola International School, Dubai campus.

Students of the Loyola International School recently participated in the annual SOF General Knowledge Olympiad Examination held online this year for students across the globe and they performed exceptionally well.

Science Olympiad Foundation or SOF is an educational organisation promoting academic, competitive and assisting development of creative spirit among school children.

SOF was established by leading academicians, scientists, and media personalities and has been serving in many years to promote scholarly attitude that involve school students across the globe.

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Africa's total reported death toll from COVID-19 was surpassed yesterday, a fraction of those reported in the first wave of the pandemic but rising fast as a second wave rages across some countries.

Reuters data show Africa's reported death toll surpassed 100,000 on Sunday, less than a month after reaching 50,000. The continent, Information Minister Constantino Chiwenga voluntarily offered an olive branch to the International Criminal Court on Monday, less than a month after reaching 50,000. The continent, Information Minister Constantino Chiwenga voluntarily offered an olive branch to the International Criminal Court on Monday, less than a month after reaching 50,000. The continent, Information Minister Constantino Chiwenga voluntarily offered an olive branch to the International Criminal Court on Monday, less than a month after reaching 50,000. The continent, Information Minister Constantino Chiwenga voluntarily offered an olive branch to the International Criminal Court on Monday, less than a month after reaching 50,000. 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The significance of the month of Rajab

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he Lunar Islamic calendar is of

thirty days, four months, four

sacred. Allah says in the Quran (as quoted in the hadith): “The month of Rajab is

honored by Allah.”

The month of Rajab is the period

during which the sacredness of the

month is honored by Allah. It is

considered a special time for spiritual

devotion and self-reflection. During

this month, Muslims are encouraged to

practise extra prayer, fasting, and

charitable acts.

This month also marks the

beginning of the Islamic New Year,

which is celebrated on the first day of

Rajab. The Islamic New Year is a

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The month of Rajab is considered sacred for various reasons:

1. It is the month in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) legislated the fast of Rajab.
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The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

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**Malaysian court orders graft trial of ex-PM Najib’s wife to proceed**

A Malaysian court yesterday ordered the graft trial of ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak’s wife to proceed despite Najib’s request for a retrial. The court rejected Najib’s appeal against the conviction of his wife Rosmah Mansor for corruption in a multi-billion-dollar project approved while she was his wife.

Rosmah has been charged in two separate cases, including one involving the 1MDB scandal, which had caused huge losses for Malaysia. The court also rejected Najib’s application to delay the trial to allow him to appeal against his conviction in another case.

The trial is expected to start later this month, with Rosmah facing charges related to her alleged involvement in the 1MDB project. The case has sparked widespread protests and political turmoil in Malaysia, with many calling for Najib and Rosmah to be punished for their alleged involvement in the scandal.

**Myanmar police use water cannon against protesters**

Protests demonstrated across Myanmar again yesterday to denounce the February 1 military coup, with an arrest of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, and police forcefully dispersed crowds, using water cannon and tear gas against the unprecedented demonstrations in a northern town.

The daily protests and strikes that have paralysed much of Myanmar’s government offices showed no sign of easing even as the junta has promised a new election and appealed for calm. The army has threatened to use lethal force if they do not.

“Don’t want to wake up in a different world”

A huge crowd dispersed outside the main University of Yangon, as protesters met in the streets a day after more than 150 people were injured at the shooting of demonstrators in a northern town.

Big crowds returned to Yangon’s central Sue Pau Gyi pagoda, while many young people made way to an anti-coup protest site, at an intersection near the University of Yangon, spilling into the streets as police used water cannons.

The marches have been met with increasing violence over the last few days, as the army suppressed demonstrations seen during an earlier half century of army rule, but the army’s disbandment movement has had a crippling effect on Myanmar’s business.

“Can we consider creating a new party”

In a surprise retaliatory move yesterday, Facebook blocked Australian newspapers and news websites from sharing news content, saying it was a last resort to force the government over its refusal to negotiatedanyautomatic solutions.

In a surprise move, Facebook blocks news access in Australia

Australians cannot share news or watch news content on the social media platform for collating and distributing news and other forms of communication.

Australian authorities on Wednesday blocked some news websites after the government said it would not reverse a decision to pass a law that would make it illegal for Facebook and Google to pay for news content.

The blocking comes after the Australian government and Facebook failed to reach an agreement to negotiate positions on a new law that would force platforms to pay for news content.

**Striking farmers block train tracks in northern India**

Thousands of protesting farmers block train tracks yesterday by sitting on railway tracks in parts of northern India to press their demand for the repeal of new agricultural laws that have triggered thousands of protests.

Farmers shout slogans while blocking a railway track at Nadiar railway station in Hodogbahar, Uttar Pradesh, India, yesterday.

Farmers have been protesting against the new farm laws for several weeks, demanding their repeal and a return to the previous system of minimum support prices.

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US supports Afghan peace process: Blinken

AP - WASHINGTON

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told a Washington audience Thursday that the US had committed to a peace deal in Afghanistan that includes a political settlement and permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.

"The Taliban agreed in the February 2020 deal to allow the US to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. The United States is committed to a peace deal that includes a political settlement and permanent and comprehensive ceasefire," said Blinken.

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People’s thoughts and behavior are shaped by the way we might interpret negative influences, which is not to say they may respond more strongly to negative events and situations than positives ones. However, the strong thing is, when we look from another angle, it is then when we hear a mixture of praise and criticism, we scrutinize the criticism and perhaps it appeals to the person instead of enjoying the praise.

Insecure people more likely to act negatively

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Italy's 5-Stars divided over Dragni, expel 15 senators

**AP — LONDON**

A French armed forces minister has called for a major review of national cyberdefence, warning that the country was vulnerable to a 'cyber-fighter jet' capable of overcoming the 'defence cooperation is an important part of our joint international cooperation'.

**AP — PARIS**

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday unveiled a new national cybersecurity strategy, aimed at boosting the French government's cyberdefence capabilities.

**AP — MADRID**

Dozens were arrested in fresh Spain riots over rapper's jailing

**AP — MADRID**

Almost 5% of Black and South Asians in UK have been vaccinated against COVID-19, more than double the national average, new data shows. The government has been accused of failing to vaccinate enough people from Black and South Asian backgrounds, with only 20% of the population in these groups having received a first dose.

**AP — MADRID**

Britain’s Prince Philip remains in hospital as ‘precaution’

**AP — LONDON**

Britain’s 99-year-old Prince Philip was admitted to a London hospital after being admitted earlier this week as a precaution due to feeling unwell.

Buckingham Palace said on Wednesday that the husband of Queen Elizabeth II was admitted to the private King Edward VII Hospital on Tuesday after feeling unwell, and that he was admitted as a 'precautionary measure', adding that he was still suffering from a 'common cold'.

He stressed the need for a four-week lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The French president said the lockdown was necessary to prevent the spread of the virus, which has killed over 100,000 people in France.

**AP — BERLIN**

Germany's Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said that the country was experiencing a 'cyber-fighter jet' capable of overcoming the 'defence cooperation is an important part of our joint international cooperation'.

**AP — BERLIN**

Germany will most likely have to extend border controls with the Czech Republic and Austria beyond March if outbreaks in all three countries continue, the Czech Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said on Wednesday.

**AP — BERLIN**

A major study has suggested that the fast-spreading virus could be overcome, with estimates suggesting the virus could be eradicated in two months.

**AP — BERLIN**

The fast-spreading virus could be overcome, with estimates suggesting the virus could be eradicated in two months. It is estimated that about 1 in 200 people in Europe have been infected by the virus.

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AstraZeneca faces resistance in Europe after health workers suffer side effects

Health authorities in some European countries have voiced concerns over stronger side-effects seen than with the alternative vaccine from Pfizer and BioNTech. AstraZeneca caused more side effects than the Pfizer vaccine, said Melanie Colin-Gallagher, communications manager at Saint-Luc hospital in Namur, Belgium.

In France, which started administering the AstraZeneca shot on February 6, staff at a hospital in Bordeaux expressed concerns over side-effects leading hospital staff and other health workers to fear for their health. Puts extra strain on already overstretched medical teams. This situation is worrying and is generating an intense response. They usually fall asleep within a few hours.

The other shots approved in Europe, Moderna and Pfizer, have been linked to less severe side-effects, including fever and fatigue.

But with the AstraZeneca shot, Belgium was the only country with health authorities in France and Norway had found guidelines to trigger giving the shot, two regions in Sweden passed vaccinations, and in Germany some essential workers have already received doses.

A spokesman for AstraZeneca said: “Currently, the reactions reported are as we would expect facing EU licence, following our clinical trials. People receiving the vaccine are being closely monitored.”

“Between 10% and 15% of the population may have side-effects from this vaccine, but it is only a handful, the safety, issues,法人 and within the normal range. These reactions are consistent with fever and muscle pain. The safety profile is consistent with the benefits,” a spokeswoman for the French medicines agency said on Thursday.

However, the ongoing concern over the side-effects is “known and described” and gives “no reasonable grounds for concern in accordance with article 15 of the ISMG consultation package,” the spokesperson added.

The issue in France high light some doctors and hospital are still learnt how to administer vaccines. As governments race to tame the pandemic and get on in arms as quickly as possible. It’s also the latest setback for the French vaccination campaign which has been criticized for a slow start. Last week, the government said just 75% of the people should have received their first dose.

In Sweden, two of 21 health regions passed vaccinations of workers last week after a quarter called in sick after getting the AstraZeneca shot. The Nordic and Baltic region said it had ordered 100 out of 400 vaccine named had reported fever or few-like symptoms. Most cases were mild and in line with previously reported side-effects. Both regions said they would resume vaccinations and the Swedish Medical Products Agency said no reason to change its vaccination guidelines.

AstraZeneca’s vector-based vaccine is the third to win regulatory approval in the European Union. France became the first country in the world to authorize the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine on December 27. In Britain, the AstraZeneca vaccine developed at Oxford University, the private company that has been involved in the production process, is considered safe. It is also effective at 63% against severe COVID-19 disease.

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AstraZeneca also faces criticism over the level of its side-effects, which have seen more than 100,000 people in the UK and Denmark have to go back for a second shot. In France, 20% of people returning for a second shot said they had side-effects, including fever and fatigue.

Two Belgian journalists sent to prison for covering protest

Two Belgian journalists were convicted yesterday of violating public order and sentenced to two years in prison after they showed a government official and a police officer to prevent them from covering a mass protest against the government’s handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

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Canada's slow-burn vaccine rollout puts pressure on Trudeau

Scientists widely agree that it is the US that has been slow to get all the promised doses. It’s believed it will take until the fall for the US to have enough of a handle on the variants to ramp up a rigorous genotyping surveillance system for tracking their spread. However, the US lags behind because of its slow rollout and low compliance rates.

The US President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris entered into a discussion with a labor leaders to discuss response legislation against the pandemic. The labor leaders in the discussion are looking to make changes to the US health care system in order to provide more access to health care.

**Canada's COVID-19 vaccination rollout puts pressure on Trudeau**

Canada's slow-burn vaccine rollout puts pressure on Trudeau. The country's vaccine rollout has been criticized for being too slow, putting pressure on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Trudeau's government has faced criticism for not investing enough in vaccines and for not procuring enough vaccines.

The lack of manufacturing capacity in the US has been a major concern. The Biden administration announced it will spend $200 million to build a new vaccine plant in the US to increase its vaccine capacity. The plant is expected to be operational by the end of 2021.

In addition to the vaccine rollout, the Biden administration has been working to address the pandemic's economic impact. The US has been slow to recover from the initial wave of the pandemic, and the country is still experiencing high levels of unemployment and economic distress.

However, the US has been making progress in its vaccination efforts. The US has administered over 100 million doses of vaccines, and the country is on track to reach herd immunity by the end of the year. The US has also been working to distribute vaccines to vulnerable populations, including those in rural areas and minority communities.

**Power restored to many in Texas, but water out for millions**

Hundreds of thousands of homes in Texas are coping without heat for a fourth day yesterday after utilities made some progress restoring electric power. As of Thursday morning, 400,000 Texas households were without power, with millions of people still without access to water. People are struggling to find food and water, and temperature extremes are expected to continue.

In Galveston on the Gulf Coast of Texas, a pop-up shelter was set up to aid people affected by the winter storm. The shelter was staffed by volunteers from local organizations.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has been monitoring the situation and has issued a warning to residents to stay away from areas affected by the winter storm. The TCEQ has also issued a boil water notice for some areas in the state.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reported that some areas in Texas had received aid from the federal government, but that aid was still needed in other areas. The agency has been working to distribute supplies and assistance to those affected by the winter storm.

In the meantime, the Biden administration has been working to address the pandemic's economic impact. The US has been slow to recover from the initial wave of the pandemic, and the country is still experiencing high levels of unemployment and economic distress.

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In response to the winter storm, the Biden administration has declared a major disaster in Texas and other affected states. The US has also announced that it will provide assistance to those affected by the winter storm, including food, water, and other supplies.

**Biden to focus on COVID-19, China at G7 meeting**

US President Joe Biden will discuss COVID-19 and China at the G7 summit next week. The summit is expected to focus on the pandemic and efforts to rebuild economies and societies around the world.

Biden will also discuss climate change, competition among major powers, and human rights issues with the leaders of Germany, Italy, Japan, and Canada.

In addition to the pandemic, Biden will also discuss China's economic policies and the country's strategic competition with the US. Biden has been critical of China's human rights record and its treatment of ethnic minorities, including the Uighurs in Xinjiang.

Biden has also said that the US will work with its allies to address China's economic policies and its treatment of ethnic minorities. The US has been working with allies to develop a coordinated response to the pandemic, and the US has been working with allies to build economic resilience and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

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Moody’s affirms Ooredoo’s A2 ratings, stable outlook

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

The ratings agency Moody’s has affirmed Ooredoo’s A2 rating with a stable outlook, as well as the A2 backed senior unrated rating on Ooredoo’s DPLC. Furthermore, as well as the A2 backed senior unrated rating on Ooredoo International Finance International, and the A2/P1 unrated senior subordinated Medium Term Note Programme of Ooredoo Qatar. The outlook on all the ratings remains stable.

The affirmation of the ratings reflect Ooredoo’s solid revenue performance in 2020 despite the impact of COVID-19 lockdown. In 2020, revenue and EBITDA declined by 4 percent and 5 percent respectively compared to 2019. This was mainly due to a revenue reduction in the international roaming segment and a slight increase in revenue in the Qatari market.

The outlook on Ooredoo’s ratings is stable on the back of the company’s strong internal liquidity and high EBITDA margin. Moody’s expects the negative impact from revenue in international roaming and modest organic sales growth in the domestic market to be offset by strong internal liquidity that supports the company’s ability to withstand these challenges.

Further, the company’s ability to withstand these challenges is also supported by the expected 70 percent dividend payout ratio. Moody’s said that a dividend payout ratio of 60 percent is consistent with a stable outlook rating.

Moreover, Moody’s said that Ooredoo’s high quality and diversified customer base, as well as modestly working to recover from the pandemic, created another layer of resilience for the company.

Moody’s said that the rating action also reflects Ooredoo’s ability, albeit declining EBITDA margins when compared to peers. Ooredoo’s EBITDA margin declined to 18 percent in 2020 from 19 percent in 2019. The ratings agency expects Ooredoo’s EBITDA margin to improve to levels around 20 percent over the course of the next couple of years as the company will benefit from the positive impact of contract terms and temporary rate hikes.

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Ireland to provide more targeted financial supports from Q3

BLOOMBERG

Ireland will provide more targeted financial support from the third quarter for sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as aviation, tourism hospitality and arts, the country’s finance minister said yesterday.

“The government is very aware that these sectors are experiencing extreme challenges,” Paschal Donohoe said yesterday.

Leo Varadkar said Dublin will extend into the second quarter its three main support categories: higher direct payments for those temporarily laid off during the pandemic; a wage subsidy scheme and grants for businesses forced to significantly shut down.

“The government will extend into the second quarter its two main financial supports in place,” Varadkar, who is also Ireland’s deputy prime minister, told parliament.

“We will also provide more targeted financial support beyond quarter two for those sectors that have been particularly wounded by this pandemic such as aviation, tourism hospitality, the arts and entertainment.”

The Restaurants Association of Ireland welcomed Varadkar’s commitment to additional supports.

The government is expected to announce next week its plans for the first quarter of next year, with some elements set to kick in immediately.

Donohoe said Dublin will extend into the second quarter its three major support categories: higher direct payments for those temporarily laid off; a wage subsidy scheme and grants for businesses forced to significantly shut down.

In the third quarter, he said, the government will extend all three of these support measures.

The government plans to make a total of €49 billion in supports available to businesses, which is about €20 billion more than the amounts available in the first half of this year.

The government is also considering proposals for additional supports to be introduced in the second half of the year.

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Gulf International Services reports QR3bn revenue in 2020

FROM PAGE 12

In terms of topline performance, the aviation segment continued the growth momentum and was able to sustain its trend by expanding its operations internationally via winning several new routes and contracts during the year and further pushing ahead with the growth of the MRO and aircraft sales in the current market.

The insurance segment witnessed significant growth in premium income, amid successful renewal of existing contracts and entry into new markets with improved price terms. Moreover, the segment was able to achieve higher revenue from its medical line of business, which further added value to the group’s overall performance.

The group’s financial leverage continued to be strong, and the capital structure was the second-largest company in terms of gross written premiums within the medical insurance business in Qatar.

During the year, the aviation segment successfully won two new aircraft and two large aircraft contracts, with higher occupancy levels at the site camps. The group’s total revenue for the year ended December 31, 2020, largely remained unchanged, supported by growth in revenues within the aviation segment, the lack of strong operational performance owing to market expansion strategy, specifically in the international market, growth within the domestic fleet and MRO business. Similarly, insurance segment continued to remain strong, with growth in the domestic and MRO business. The group’s revenue from the insurance segment was influenced by new business and increased retention rates and strategic sales efforts.

The group also benefited from the continued strong revenue from insurance, which positively impacted the financial performance for the year 2020,

The group’s total assets decreased by 10 percent during the year, to QR12.3 billion, as compared to QR32 billion as at December 31, 2020, compared to QR11.1 billion. On the liquidity front, the closing cash and cash equivalents decreased by 27 percent, to QR10.4 billion, down by 24 percent as compared to QR13.1 billion.

The total debt at Group level stood at QR4.4bn as at December 31, 2020, compared to QR15.3 billion as at December 31, 2019.

The group’s total shareholders’ equity decreased by 10 percent, to QR7.9 billion, compared to QR8.7 billion as at December 31, 2019.

In terms of earnings performance, Moody’s expects the group’s operating performance will be positively impacted, supported by growth in revenues within the aviation segment, lack of strong operational performance owing to market expansion strategy, specifically in the international market, growth within the domestic fleet and MRO business. Similarly, insurance segment continued to remain strong, with growth in the domestic and MRO business. The group’s revenue from the insurance segment was influenced by new business and increased retention rates and strategic sales efforts.

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Moody’s sees a stable outlook for the group.

Moody’s affirms Ooredoo’s A2 ratings; stable outlook

Ooredoo’s A2 issuer rating reflects its standalone creditworthiness as expressed by a BCA of ba2, combined with a high level of dependence and a high level of support from the Government of Qatar (baa1 stable). Moody’s support is assumed to remain unchanged.

The outlook reflects Moody’s expectation of sustained operating performance in 2021, a gradual decoupling from Moody’s guidance for rating.
Sport

Serena exits news conference in tears after loss

REUTERS — When she described the Russian’s term he would use now, Williams said earlier in her news conference the difference today was errors. "I think he’s improving physically but again not quite yet," she said. "For him this is a bigger loss, because she is playing better and she is not really close to Osaka, so the Eurosport pundit said. "I feel that the emotions start - she’s probably thinking, what do I need to do now?"

Djokovic keeps perfect record in Australian Open semi-finals

Novak Djokovic has a perfect record at the Australian Open, but Osaka in tears after loss.

Women’s Singles Semi-Finals
Naomi Osaka (3), Japan, def. Serena Williams (10), United States, 6-3, 6-4.

Djokovic’s 100th Grand Slam semi-final appearance was his 158th, and he has yet to lose a set in the first part of a Grand Slam tournament after nine failed attempts. Di\dcokovic made only one unforced error in more than 50 points. It was his first for seven games before Djokovic sealed eight straight points to win the first set - and again when Karatsev was up an all-or-nothing rally in the second.

Serena Williams of the US leaves the court after losing to Naomi Osaka of Japan in their Women’s Singles semi-final match at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne, Australia, 14 February 2021.

If I ever say farewell, I wouldn’t tell anyone, I don’t know.

Serena Williams (10) Britain and Daniil Medvedev are two of the world’s most promising young players.

Medvedev, Tsitsipas set to renew rivalry in semis

Men’s Singles Semi-Finals
Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Aslan Karatsev, Russia, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

Hashimoto chosen as head of Tokyo 2020 organisers

Hashimoto has been chosen as President of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, replacing a man who resigned last week after being accused of sexual harassment.

Women’s Singles Semi-Finals
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Hashimoto has been chosen as the President of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Organising Committee, replacing a man who resigned last week after being accused of sexual harassment.

Preparation for an 18th major title, which would reduce the gap to Roger Federer and Nadal. Who share the record at 20.

Might have said in the past that he plays boring, "I said, leaving the room in tears.

Novak Djokovic had a perfect record in Australian Open semi-finals, and was playing almost flawless tennis to promise it. It didn’t matter that the opponent was Aslan Karatsev, a 148th-ranked, 27-year-old Russian who had come through qualifying to make his debut in a Grand Slam tournament after nine failed attempts.

The Australian Open, which was here to stay, had looked her sharpest in years before yesterday, Williams told a news conference. She said earlier in her news conference that the difference today was errors. "I think he’s improving physically but again not quite yet,” she said. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said. "She’s such an amazing champion, she’s been doing, and still does right at her age is extraordinarily impressive."

Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia, the 2017 French Open champion, met with集 her for the first time on the ATP Tour in Miami, between the two.

Federer was proven right in the decider at the 2019 US Open and showed that more than 80 percent of Japanese felt "I don’t want to lose"

Stefanos Tsitsipas and Daniil Medvedev have both been in action on the ATP Tour as they continue their dominance and rivalry on their respective Tours.

Hashimoto has selected her successor after submitting her resignation as Olympics minister in Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who encouraged her to make the Games successful. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said. "As someone with an athletic background, I can handle up against anyone, but again not quite yet," she said.

Sitting down in support of the underdog - there was a loud, nothing roll late in the second set. Given his past success in Melbourne Park and was back into the second round. "I feel that’s where the emotion starts - she’s probably thinking, what do I need to do now?"

Japanese athletes have been chosen as the President of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, replacing a man who resigned last week after being accused of sexual harassment.

Might have said in the past that he plays boring, “I said, leaving the room in tears. He broke to open the third set and again retook the lead after missing a key point.

The Australian Open, which was held in Melbourne Park and was back into the second round. "I feel that’s where the emotion starts - she’s probably thinking, what do I need to do now?"

She was born days before Japan joined the 1956 Melbourne Games as a cyclist and a skater, now faces a tall of tough questions at the helm of one of the world’s biggest sporting events with less than half a year left before its delayed start.

Tsitsipas unforced error in more than 50 points. It was his first for seven games before Djokovic sealed eight straight points to win the first set - and again when Karatsev was up an all-or-nothing rally in the second.

Medvedev’s serve to Nadal. Who share the record at 20.

Djokovic, who is chasing Roger Federer and Nadal’s three Summer Olympics as a cyclist and a skater, now faces a tall of tough questions at the helm of one of the world’s biggest sporting events with less than half a year left before its delayed start.

Mad about tennis to protect it. "Might have said in the past that he plays boring, “I said, leaving the room in tears.

Serena Williams of the US leaves the court after losing to Japan’s Naomi Osaka in their Women’s Singles semi-final match at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne, Australia, 14 February 2021.
Vice-champion ridden by Mohammed Ghazali and ridden by Julian Auge, finished in second and established another - with Maxime Guyon in the saddle – new highest place in the Longines World Race.

On yesterday’s storied Al Zubara Trophies, five-year-old, Muqla, trained by Jassim Ghazali, came in third with Maxime Guyon in the saddle. The 2000m marathon on turf, The Big Tour, the day’s main competition. The riders and equestrians are waiting for this great annual event. All preparations are complete. We expect a still competition among the young riders as this is the Amir Sword Festival at Rayan Park from Friday.

Al Rumithi said the prize distribution ceremony tomorrow will be held jointly with Qatar Racing and Equine Club (QRE) at Al Rayyan Park.

Al Rumithi thanked the Bidi leadership for the continuous support for Qatar equestrian, adding that the Qatar Equestrian Federation works according to the directives of HH President of Qatar Olympic Committee, Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani. Al Rumithi also thanked the Equine Federation General of QEF said: “More than 100 riders will participate in this competition. The riders and equestrian equinists are waiting for this great annual event. All preparations are complete. We expect a still competition among the young riders as this is the Amir Sword Festival from Friday.”

Al Rumath said the popular event will be held in accordance with the rules and regulations of the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI). The value of prizes increases based on the ranking of the Amir Sword Festival. The Amir Sword Festival is a great opportunity for Equestrian Federation Hamad Abdulrahman Al Afroz.

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Wolves down Al Rayyan as Red Knights edge Al Gharafa in semis

Al Sadd, Al Duhail set up Qatar Cup final

Arch-rivals Al Sadd and Al Duhail will face off in the final of Qatar Cup – a rematch of last year’s edition – after both the Qatari football giants won their respective semi-finals yesterday.

Seven-time champions Al Sadd edged Al Rayyan 1-0 in a thrilling first semi-final before Al Duhail disposed of Al Gharafa 2-1 following a tense clash at Al Duhail Stadium. Al Sadd therefore clinched a 4-0 in the 2020 edition final.

Yesterday, Xavi Hernandez coached his team to victory in his first clash with a second-half penalty over traditional rivals Al Rayyan, following an action-packed first semi-final at Al Duhail Stadium.

Santiago Cazorla produced the game-winning goal in the 90th minute with a clinical spot kick. “We are happy with the performance as we were against a top side who are in a very good form,” he said of the match.

Al Rayyan coach Laurent Blanc said after the win, “Our aim is to win the title but we will still focus on our 2021 QSL campaign.”

The title clash between the top side who are in a very good form, Al Sadd’s Cazorla produced a low free-kick that hit the goalpost. The Red Knights edged Al Gharafa with a second-half goal on an action-packed first semi-final action.

Seven-time champions Al Sadd managed a 3-0 win over Al Rayyan, following a tense clash at Al Duhail Stadium. The Red Knights therefore clinched a 2-0 in the 2020 edition final.

Yesterday, Al Sadd coach Laurent Blanc said of the match, “I am happy with the performance as we were against a top side who are in a very good form.”

The more I win, the better I feel coming back. The love affair continues. Recovery is the priority right now. I’ve had enough match to play, enough practice.”

Chris Morris became the IPL’s most expensive overseas player after returning to the Rajasthan Royals for 16.5mn Indian rupees ($2.2m) following a fierce bidding war involving the Punjab Kings.

Maxwell also triggered a bidding war in which Royal Challengers Bangalore outbid Chennai to snap up the explosive all-rounder for 12.5m rupees.

Chris Morris of South Africa and Australia’s Glenn Maxwell (pic below) emerged as millionaires from the early round of the players auction for this year’s Indian Premier League (IPL), which welcomed back India’s Vivo as its title sponsor yesterday.

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Auction: Morris and Maxwell become IPL millionaires

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