Locust outbreaks are expected to become more frequent and severe under climate change.
Arianne Cease
Assistant professor, Global Institute of Sustainability



Spotlight

ENVIRONMENT

What's 740 sq km in size, flies 400 km a day, and eats more food than 25 camels?

A swarm of hungry desert locusts will devour everything in its path — which is why Saudi Arabia is on high alert

Jennifer Bell Dubai

It is considered one of the world's most dangerous pests due to its ability to reproduce rapidly, fly vast distances and devastate crops. Now the desert locust is threatening large swaths of Saudi Arabia in one of the worst outbreaks of recent times.

Last month, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) issued a warning on the surge in desert locust numbers threatening the Arabian Peninsula, particularly the Kingdom. The UN alert follows heavy rainfall in eastern Sudan, which created favorable conditions for locust reproduction and migration.

And while the organization praised Saudi Arabia for its advanced national programs to combat outbreaks of the fearsome insect, international experts warn that the weather conditions that encouraged recent swarms may be a symptom of climate change that could leave its mark on food security in the region.

"One of the scenarios under climate change is an increase in the frequency of unusually heavy and short-lived rainstorms," Keith Cressman, senior locust forecasting officer at the FAO, told Arab News. "If this is the case, then it could result in a greater frequency of favorable breeding conditions for outbreaks to develop."

The FAO said last month's locust outbreak in Sudan and Eritrea spread rapidly along both sides of the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, threatening crops.

"Good rains along the Red Sea coastal plains in Eritrea and Sudan have allowed two generations of breeding since October, leading to a substantial increase in locust populations and the formation of highly mobile swarms," it said.

At least one swarm crossed to the northern coast of Saudi Arabia in mid-January, with further swarms a week later.

Arianne Cease, assistant professor at the Global Institute of Sustainability and School of Life Sciences, and director of the Global Locust Initiative at Arizona State University, said the Red Sea coast is a common area for winter/spring breeding, so an outbreak is not unusual for this time of year.

However, she warned that global warming could lead to further plagues of locusts, with devastating effects on agriculture, in the future.

"Because insects are typically the same temperature as their environment (unlike people), small changes in temperature can have a dramatic effect on populations," said Cease. "Rising temperatures can hasten maturation time, meaning more locust generations in a shorter period, and can also allow locusts to spread to higher elevations.

"In general, locust outbreaks are expected to become more frequent and severe under climate change."

Locusts are harmless when solitary, experts say. Problems arise when they congregate in groups, becoming more abundant and voracious. A desert locust swarm can cover 740 sq km, with up to 80 million insects, and can travel up to 400 km a day.

In the immature adult phase, a locust can consume its own weight — about 2 g — in vegetation every day, according to the FAO. A small part of an average swarm can eat the same amount of food in one day as 10 elephants, 25 camels or 2,500 people.

In turn, swarms can threaten crop production. "Desert locusts are known to attack farmers' fields and can eat their crops in a single morning," warned Cressman.

When a locust swarm lands, they can cause crop losses of between 80 to 100 percent.

"This is particularly devastating for subsistence farmers, who depend on their crops to feed their families," said Cease.

The FAO said rain from two cyclones in 2018 had triggered locust breeding in Saudi Arabia's Empty Quarter, near the Yemen-Oman border, and swarms from two generations had reached the UAE and southern Iran.

"Despite advances in technology, communications and awareness, there will always be times when locusts increase in number due to favorable climatic and ecological conditions," said Cressman. "Unusually good rains on the Eritrean coast last July followed by good rains in eastern Sudan at the end of last summer created favorable conditions for locust reproduction."



Recent rain around the Red Sea has raised the locust threat level. Shutterstock

Each generation, said Cressman, takes about three months, and locust numbers increase 20-fold.

As vegetation dries out, locusts concentrate in green vegetation to form hopper bands and adult swarms.

In January, a massive swarm of locusts descended on Makkah, forcing experts to send specialized sanitation crews to tackle the plague.

"We have harnessed all efforts available to speed up the eradication of the insects in the interest of the safety and comfort of guests to God's house," Makkah's municipal authority said at the time.

Cressman said the FAO Desert Locust Information Service maintains contact with all countries and monitors the situation carefully. But the next few months will be a testing time for the Kingdom, he said.

"As conditions dry out along both sides of the Red Sea, any swarms that are not detected or controlled will almost certainly migrate to the spring breeding areas of the interior of Saudi Arabia.

"There is a low risk that a few adult groups or a few small swarms may appear in southern areas of Jordan and Israel during periods of southerly winds that can carry the locusts from the northern Red Sea coastal plains of Saudi Arabia to these areas.

"Both countries are on alert. Similarly, a few more small infestations may arrive on the southern coast of Iran, which is also another area of breeding during the spring," he said.

The next three months will be "critical" to bringing the locust situation under control before summer breeding starts, Cressman said.

Countries are considerably better equipped to deal with locust swarms than before, he said, thanks to more sophisticated control and monitoring capacities.

He praised Saudi Arabia for introducing stringent measures to protect crops from the pests. "The FAO and its regional locust commission have spent decades building up the national capacities of countries to manage outbreaks. Twelve outbreaks in the past five years were all controlled successfully."

Cressman said that this success showed that countries such as Sudan, Egypt, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia have the resources and trained manpower to cope with an outbreak.

Cease said that monitoring and treatment of high-density pockets of juvenile locusts before they mature could stop swarms from developing.

"Once they are adults and can fly, locusts become much more difficult to track, manage and stop from flying into agricultural areas," she said.

Managing locusts requires a "tremendous team effort of individuals working together across sectors and borders."

Without that, locusts — which can survive and breed in countries from West Africa to the Indian subcontinent — will present a growing threat, destroying crops in the most impoverished countries and threatening food security in wealthier nations.

10,000
Altitude in feet that locust swarms have been known to reach.

80
– 100. Percentage of crop losses that can be caused by a locust swarm.

25
camels or 2,500 people: A small part of an average swarm (or about one ton of locusts) eats the same amount of food in one day as these.

740
Size in square kilometers a desert locust swarm is capable of reaching.

40–80 million
Number of locusts in a swarm.

400
Distance in kilometers that a locust swarm can travel in a single day. Locusts swarms have been known to cross oceans.

423 million
Number of pounds of plants that a pack of between 40 and 80 million locusts can eat in a single day.

Evolution of the Game Boy

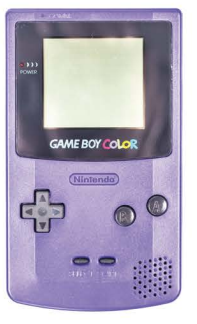
1989 Classic



1994 Pocket



1998 Color



2001 Advance



2003 Advance SP

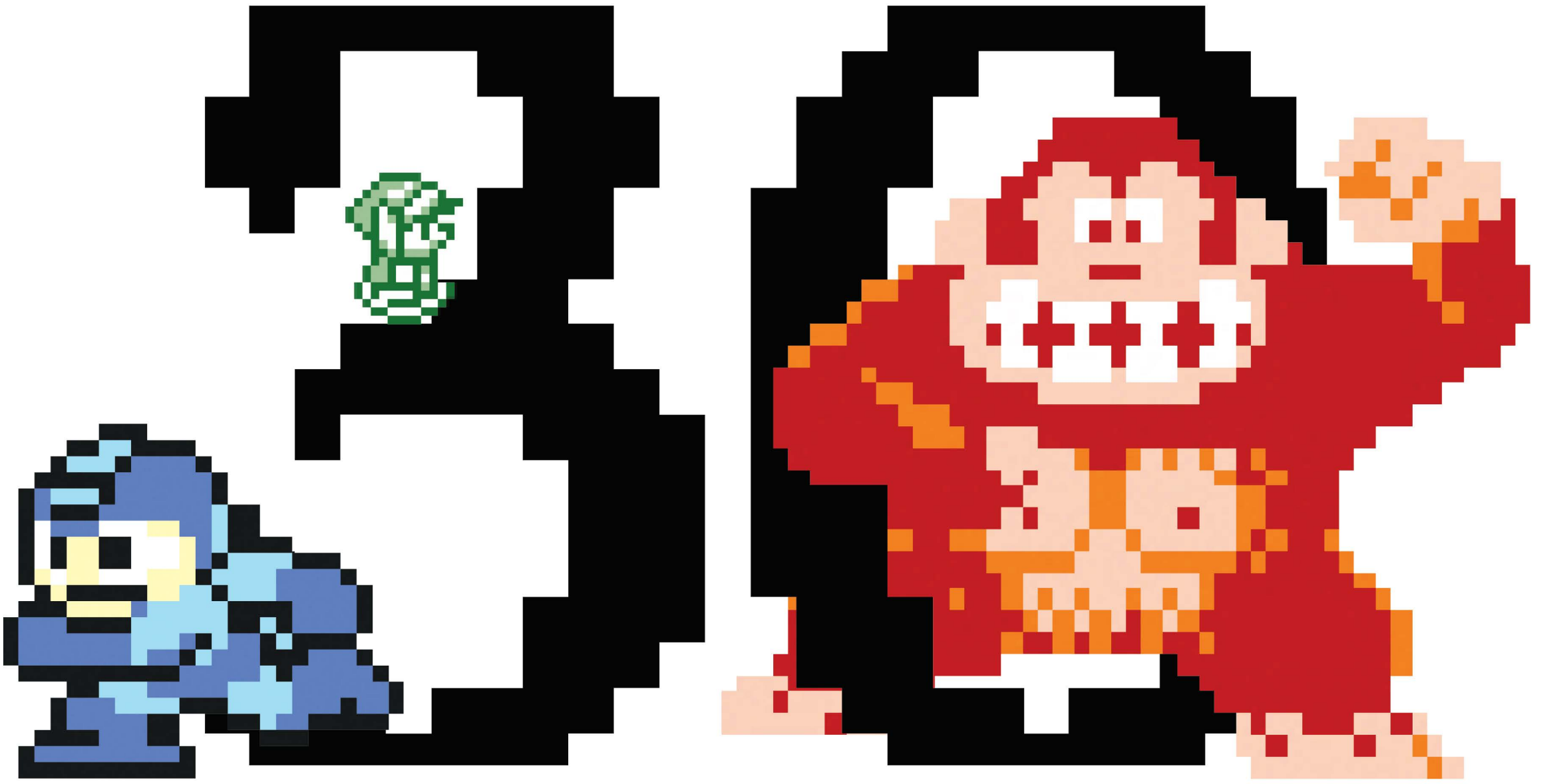


2005 Micro



Spotlight

ANNIVERSARY



years of Game Boy magic

Nintendo was arguably the prime form of entertainment for Saudi kids in the 1990s

Rawan Radwan Jeddah

Thirty years ago this week, Nintendo changed video gaming forever by introducing the Game Boy handheld console.

Youths in Saudi Arabia and worldwide were hooked, and the grey block was one of the first major successes for Nintendo.

With a black and green reflective screen, an eight-way direction pad, two action buttons, and a start and select button, it used game cartridges that were inserted in the back. Six years after its launch, colored versions of the Game Boy were introduced to the market, although old-school grey was the favored choice for many Saudis.

Jeddah-based photojournalist Iman Al-Dabbagh recalls when she got her first Game Boy. "I shared it with my brother," she said. "We got it with a few games. 'Super Mario' and 'Tetris' were my favorite. We also had the 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' game."

In Game Boy's 30 years, more than 1,000 games were manufactured. Puppeteer and voice actor Ammar Sabban said: "The accessories were the coolest. You had a magnifier, a camera where we'd take selfies, and this was back in the 1990s. You could print stickers as well."

Who could forget such hits as "Super Mario Land", "Tetris", "Kirby's Dream Land", "Final Fantasy", "The Legend of Zelda", "Donkey Kong" and "Wario Land"? Game Boy made "Tetris" a global phenomenon, and it is still played to this day.

When Russia cosmonaut Aleksandr Serebrov visited the MIR space station in 1993, he was allowed to take his Game Boy, but with the weight restriction he was only allowed one cartridge: "Tetris" was his choice.

The Game Boy was originally sold in the US for $89.95; the cost in Saudi Arabia was around SR500 ($133) or more.

Saudis interviewed by Arab News recall how they bought their Game Boys during their travels to the US for holidays; the downside was having to wait a long time to buy new games. That is how the concept of swapping cartridges came about.

Dina Azeez and Fahda Al-Magbool, both 35, recall hiding their Game Boys under their school desks. "Fahda's (Game Boy) was yellow and mine was red," said Azeez. "We had one class that was one of the most boring, so we spent most of the time playing. We often swapped games, but only swapped the ones we never wanted in the first place."

Al-Magbool replied to Azeez: "I remember you giving me one of the silliest games — I can't recall the name at the moment — and I threw it in the trash because I hated it so much."

Alaa Sendi, an English-language instructor at King Abdulaziz University, said: "My favorite was Mario. Swapping games was the highlight of the summer — out with the old and in with the new." She added: "I'd love to play with it (the Game Boy) again. I had the original grey one, and when the ones with color came out I got the red one."



Abdulaziz Al-Ayesh, a 20-year-old gamer and collector, has two Game Boy Advances, three Game Boy Colors, three Game Boy Advance SPs and more. He collects many different consoles and their variations.

"I got my first Game Boy in 2003. It was a Game Boy Advance SP, and my favorite games were 'Pokemon' and 'Kirby: Nightmare in Dreamland.' I missed out on the Mario craze," he said.

The consoles can sell for a high price depending on the model and year of manufacture, he added.

"If I were to sell my rarest Game Boy (Advance model), I might be able to get around $200 or higher," Al-Ayesh said. "People online tend to be more knowledgeable about the worth of retro games. Local retro shops in Saudi usually sell items for exaggerated prices, and they have loyal customers."

Swapping games was the highlight of the summer — out with the old and in with the new.

Nintendo was arguably the top form of entertainment for Saudi kids in the 1990s, whether it was the Game Boy or the Super Nintendo. Although discontinued in 2003, more than 200 million Game Boys were sold worldwide.

"I had all versions of the Game Boy," said Sara Fakieh, founder of the ArabicTypo notebook brand. "Every year it just had to be the latest Game Boy."

TEN FACTS ABOUT THE GAME BOY

1 The Game Boy Advance SP was originally supposed to support 3D.

2 Its creator, Gunpei Yokoi, was hired by Nintendo as an electrician to maintain their assembly lines.

3 The original Game Boy line was discontinued in 2003.

4 The cover for singer Neil Young's album "Silver and Gold" was taken with a Game Boy camera.

5 The Game Boy had a different name in Korea. Nintendo licensed it through Samsung and sold it under the name Mini Comboy.

6 The Game Boy was the first video game system in space. Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr Serebrov visited the MIR space station in 1993, taking his Game Boy and "Tetris."

7 The original name of the "Kirby" game was "Tinkle Popo," but was changed as it was decided it would not sit well with American consumers.

8 The Game Boy made "Tetris" a global phenomenon. It is still played to this day.

9 Original Game Boy games can be played on Sony's PlayStation through a small device called the Gold Finger, which plugs into the back of the PlayStation.

10 You could only play the original Game Boy for 10-30 hours before its 4 AA batteries died.

TOP 5 GAMES

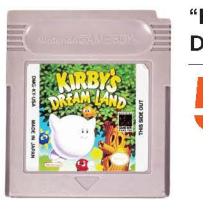
Worldwide sales of Saudi Arabia's favourite titles.



"Tetris"
35m



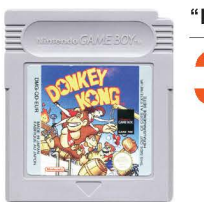
"Super Mario Land"
18.1m



"Kirby's Dream Land"
5.1m



"The Legend of Zelda"
3.8m



"Donkey Kong"
3m

Spotlight



The natural world has connections all over the place. If you damage one, you can't tell where the damage will end.

Sir David Attenborough
Davos 2019



ENVIRONMENT

Saving the coral kingdom

Saudi Arabia is stepping up efforts to protect one of its natural wonders — the dazzling marine habitats of the Red Sea

Rawan Radwan Jeddah

Adjusting the large oxygen tank on his back and with face mask in place, Khalid Al-Dahlawi takes a deep breath and plunges into the waters off Jeddah. A mesh bag in tow, he gathers plastic debris from the seabed, helping to preserve one of the world's natural wonders: The Red Sea coral reefs, a colorful network of marine life, coral and mangrove forests.

He can only do so much. This delicate world is under constant threat from overfishing, climate change, pollutants and litter.

"I've been diving since 1990," said Al-Dahlawi, an instructor at Scuba Diving International in Jeddah. "Plastic strewn across the sea floor, textiles and fishing nets tangled between the coral are just some of the rubbish I see. The ideal solution is to punish offenders. Regulations need to be reinforced and rangers deployed to save our reefs."

Help may be on its way. In January, the Saudi Shoura Council approved a draft proposal for environmental rangers to help preserve different environments from the effects of pollution. They would enforce standards, and impose penalties for violations.

In September 2018, a framework agreement between the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the Public Investment Fund's Red Sea Collection was signed in relation to sustainable development and marine conservation. The agreement paves the way for an exchange of expertise to help safeguard marine biodiversity, protect coral reefs and combat plastic pollution.

Regulations need to be enforced and environmental rangers employed to preserve our reefs.

These protections will be essential as Saudi Arabia moves forward with sustainable development plans for the West Coast, including the Neom smart city project and the Farasan Islands tourism initiative. Major environmental studies have already been done to ensure the area's sensitive ecology will be protected.

But there are many threats to these unique habitats, especially from plastics. Dr. Susana Carvalho, a research scientist at the Red Sea Research Center at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), said: "Plastics can directly affect marine megafauna, such as turtles and dolphins, which are frequently entangled and also ingest them, which can lead to death."

Plastic in the water can also affect humans. "Contaminants ingested by commercial fish species can accumulate in our bodies when we consume them," she added.

Carvalho believes greater public awareness is needed on the effects of plastic, along with more mangrove and coral reef "clean up" initiatives, and moves to ban plastic bags and straws. "We are working with schools from Thuwal, in a project related to plastics in the environment," she said. "Students have been quantifying plastics on beaches and also looking at the stomachs of fish from the market."

The Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation is another Saudi organization that has been working to protect and restore the world's oceans through research, action and education. It was founded in 2000 by Prince Khaled bin Sultan, an avid diver driven by a passion to preserve the oceans for future generations. "During the past decade, we have supported projects to study, survey and map coral reefs globally, and to educate the public about the need for protection and conservation of coral, knowing that healthy reefs are a crucial measure of the vitality of the Earth itself," Prince Khaled said in 2012.

"We at the foundation are committed to help sustain habitats," Princess Hala bint Khaled, a director of the foundation, said. "We launched the Global Reef Expedition in 2011, the world's largest reef survey and high-res mapping expedition, with more than 1,000 dive sites across 15 countries.

"The areas covered in Saudi were Farasan Islands and Farasan Bank, Yanbu and Al-Wajh, and Ras Qasabah. We aim to share the information freely, to plan strategies to protect these habitats."

The foundation has already released satellite imagery covering thousands of individual reefs to help other countries with their own conservation efforts.

According to a KAUST report in 2014, the Kingdom's reefs are fortunate due to the relatively low population level along the Red Sea coast, minimizing the human impact on marine ecology.

In various regions, many reefs showed signs of damage and had little live coral cover.

A 2015 publication on coral reefs suggested "coral cover throughout the (Red Sea) region averaged about 20 percent with higher cover (often more than 50 percent) in shallow water and rapid decline with increasing depth. In various regions, many reefs (15 to 36 percent) showed signs of damage and had less than 5 percent live coral cover."

Alexandra Dempsey, the foundation's director of science management, suggested more could be done to slow the damage.

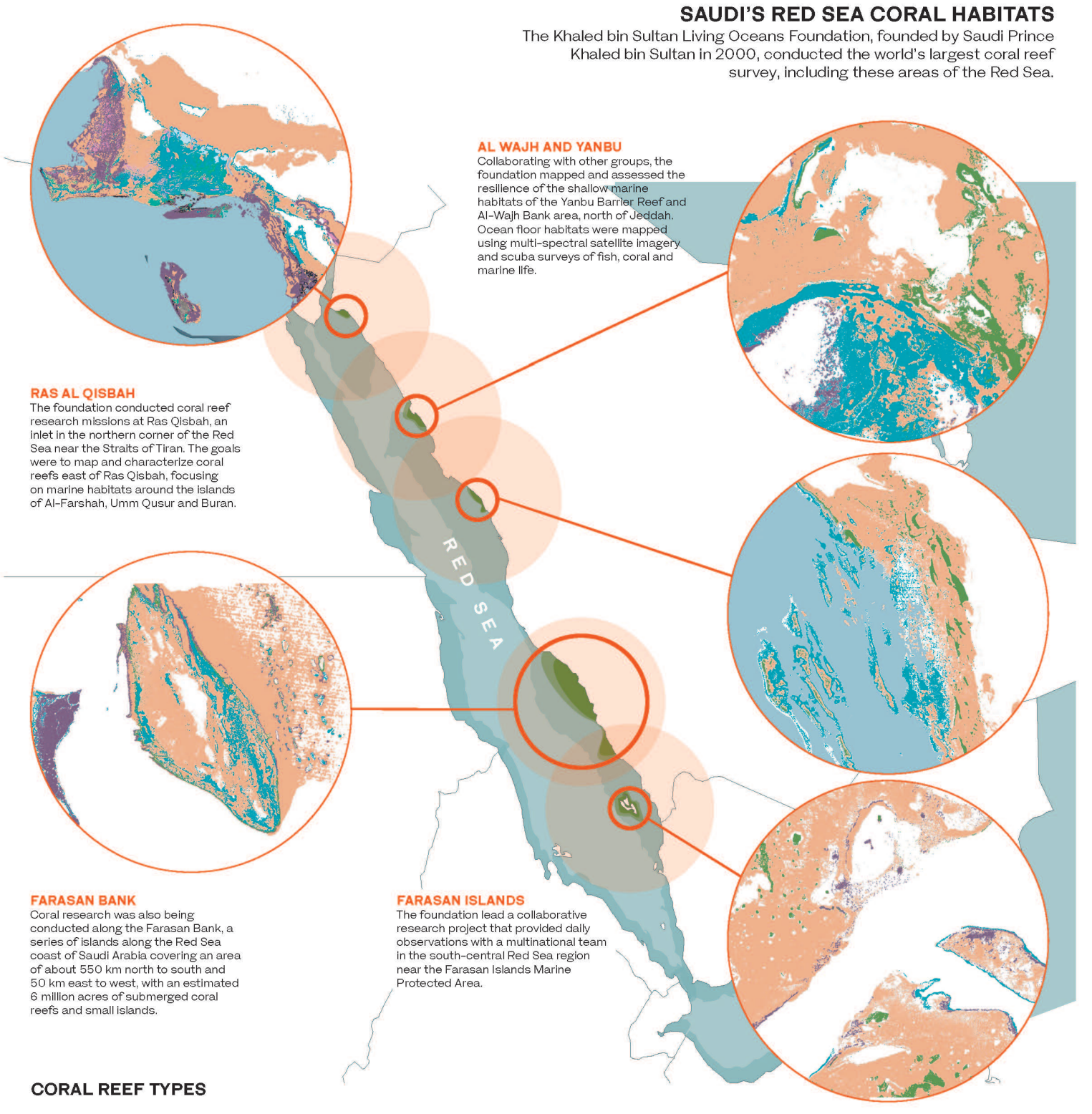
"As a logical first step, it is imperative for Saudi Arabia to develop a management protocol to assess threats to the coastline and reef habitats," she told Arab News.

A restoration program could also be implemented in areas of low coral cover, with monitoring of water quality and prevention of near-shore commercial fishing, pollution and coral diseases.

"From our experience, the recovery process is always slow," Prof. Sam Purkis, the foundation's chief scientist, said. "However, with a commitment from communities and the government, improving the reef is possible."

SAUDI'S RED SEA CORAL HABITATS

The Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation, founded by Saudi Prince Khaled bin Sultan in 2000, conducted the world's largest coral reef survey, including these areas of the Red Sea.



RAS AL QISBAH
The foundation conducted coral reef research missions at Ras Qisbah, an inlet in the northern corner of the Red Sea near the Straits of Tiran. The goals were to map and characterize coral reefs east of Ras Qisbah, focusing on marine habitats around the islands of Al-Farshah, Umm Qusur and Buran.

AL WAJH AND YANBU
Collaborating with other groups, the foundation mapped and assessed the resilience of the shallow marine habitats of the Yanbu Barrier Reef and Al-Wajh Bank area, north of Jeddah. Ocean floor habitats were mapped using multi-spectral satellite imagery and scuba surveys of fish, coral and marine life.

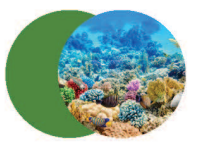
FARASAN BANK
Coral research was also being conducted along the Farasan Bank, a series of islands along the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia covering an area of about 550 km north to south and 50 km east to west, with an estimated 6 million acres of submerged coral reefs and small islands.

FARASAN ISLANDS
The foundation lead a collaborative research project that provided daily observations with a multinational team in the south-central Red Sea region near the Farasan Islands Marine Protected Area.

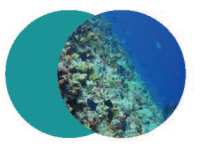
CORAL REEF TYPES



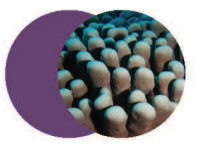
REEF FLAT SAND
One of the four main types of coral reefs, also known as "fringing reef," mainly growing directly near the shoreline and at times growing hundreds of yards seaward.



FORE REEF SLOPE WITH CORAL
The highest diversity of corals is found here on the ocean/sea side at a depth of 15 to 20m, continuing down into a sand plain.



REEF WALLS AND DROP-OFFS
A vertical reef edge that drops off suddenly from the shallow. Most reef walls are teeming with coral and marine life.



COLUMNAR FRAMEWORKS
One of the main forms of reef-building species that inhabit tropical waters, they help form hard coral skeletons that contribute to coral growth.

300
Hard coral species

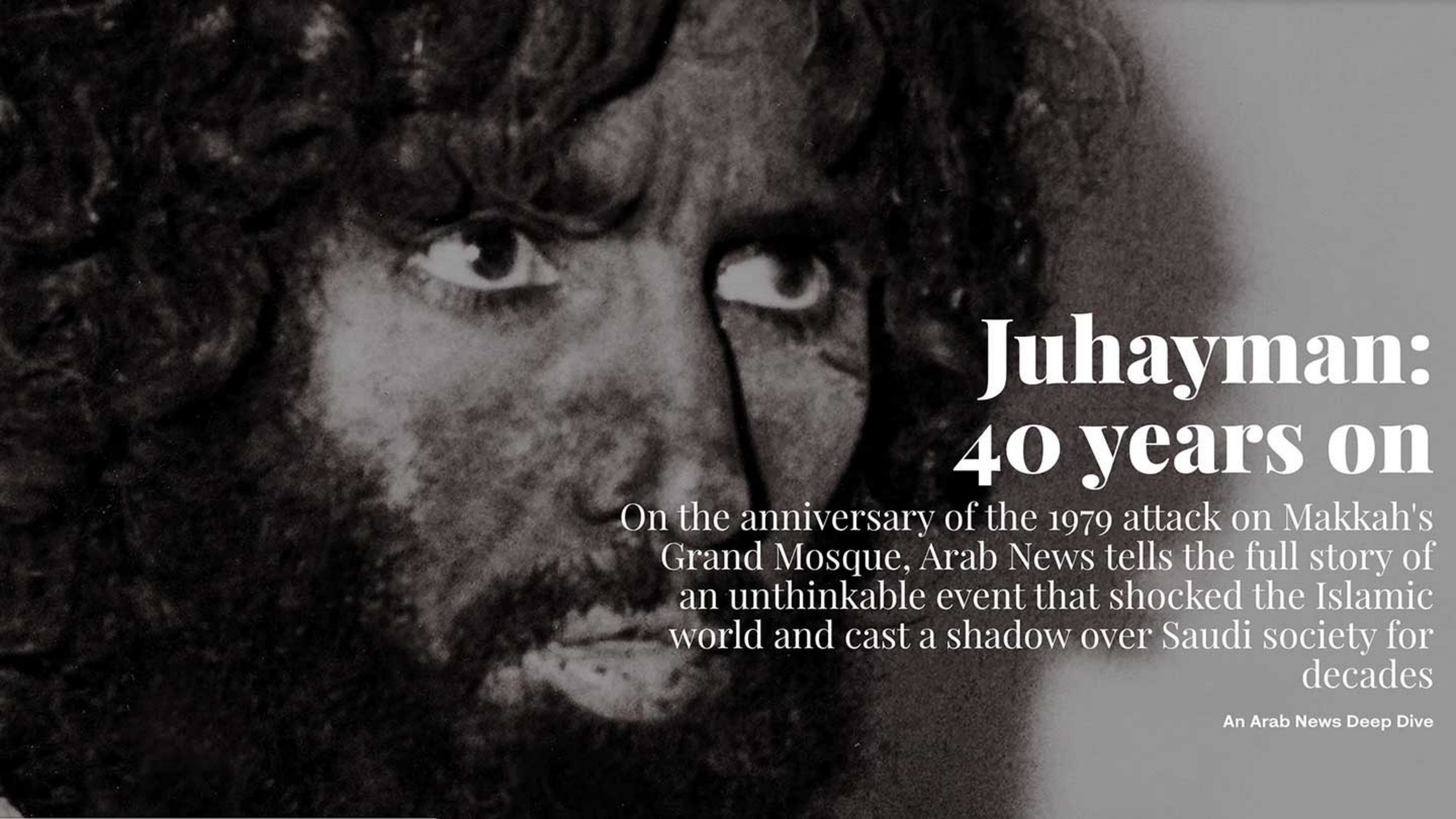
10+
Shark species

1,200
Species of fish, 10 percent of which are "unique" to the Red Sea

5,000–7,000
Age of fringing reefs of the Red Sea

1,850km
of reefs stretch parallel to the Saudi coastline

2,500
meters, maximum measured depth of the Red Sea



Juhayman: 40 years on

On the anniversary of the 1979 attack on Makkah's Grand Mosque, Arab News tells the full story of an unthinkable event that shocked the Islamic world and cast a shadow over Saudi society for decades

An Arab News Deep Dive

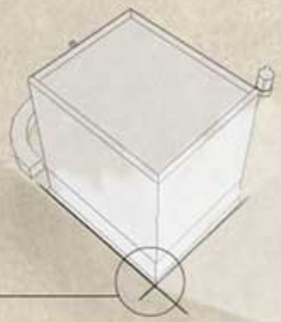


The most unholy outrage

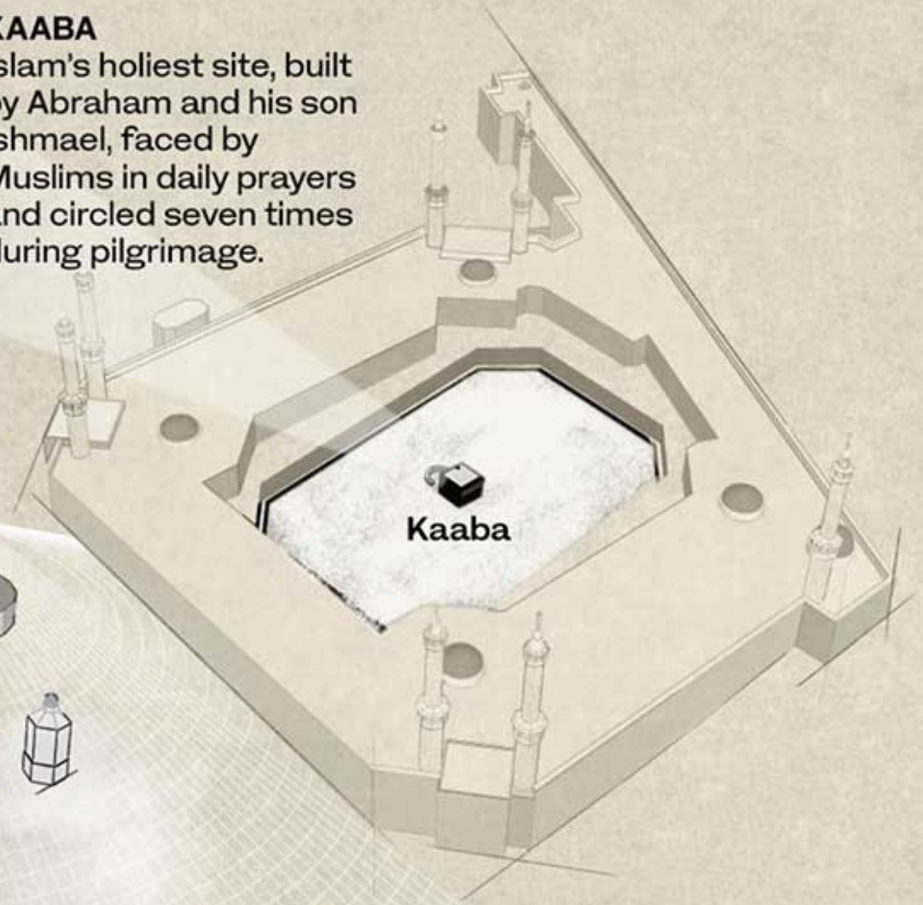
A plan to attack Islam's holiest place

INSIDE MAKKAH'S GRAND MOSQUE

RUKN AL-YAMANI
The southwestern corner of the Kaaba that Muslims believe will absolve sins when touched.



KAABA
Islam's holiest site, built by Abraham and his son Ishmael, faced by Muslims in daily prayers and circled seven times during pilgrimage.



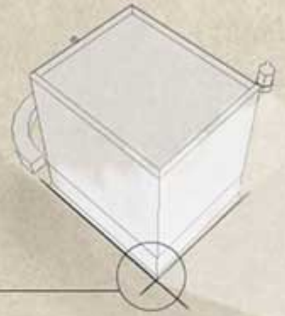


THE BLACK STONE
A relic dating back to the time of Adam and Eve, viewed through a portal in the Kaaba's eastern cornerstone.

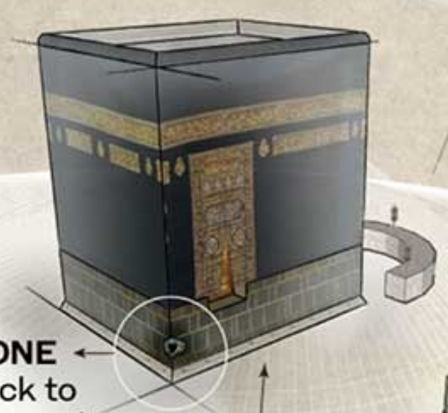


INSIDE MAKKAH'S GRAND MOSQUE

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The southwestern corner of the Kaaba that Muslims believe will absolve sins when touched.



KAABA
Islam's holiest site, built by Abraham and his son Ishmael, faced by Muslims in daily prayers and circled seven times during pilgrimage.



THE BLACK STONE
A relic dating back to the time of Adam and Eve, viewed through a portal in the Kaaba's eastern cornerstone.

21 m

ZAMZAM WELL
Containing the holy water that is believed to have sprung up for Ishmael and his mother Hagar.



ABRAHAM'S STATION
An imprint of Abraham's feet on a stone as he and Ishmael were building the Kaaba.

SAFA - MARWA PATHWAY
Contains the path between the two hills that Hagar travelled seven times in search of water.

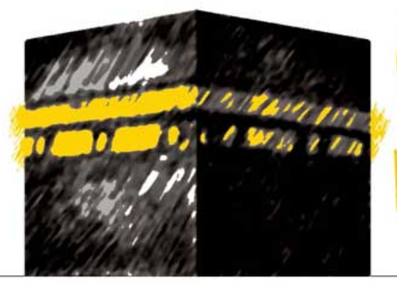
HOW JUHAYMAN'S GROUP TOOK OVER THE GRAND MOSQUE



Shoubra Hotel

Bullet from a sniper nearly hits Prince Turki Al-Faisal when he arrives at the Shoubra Hotel.

N



Spotlight HAJJ 2020

SPECIAL COVERAGE

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO HAJJ

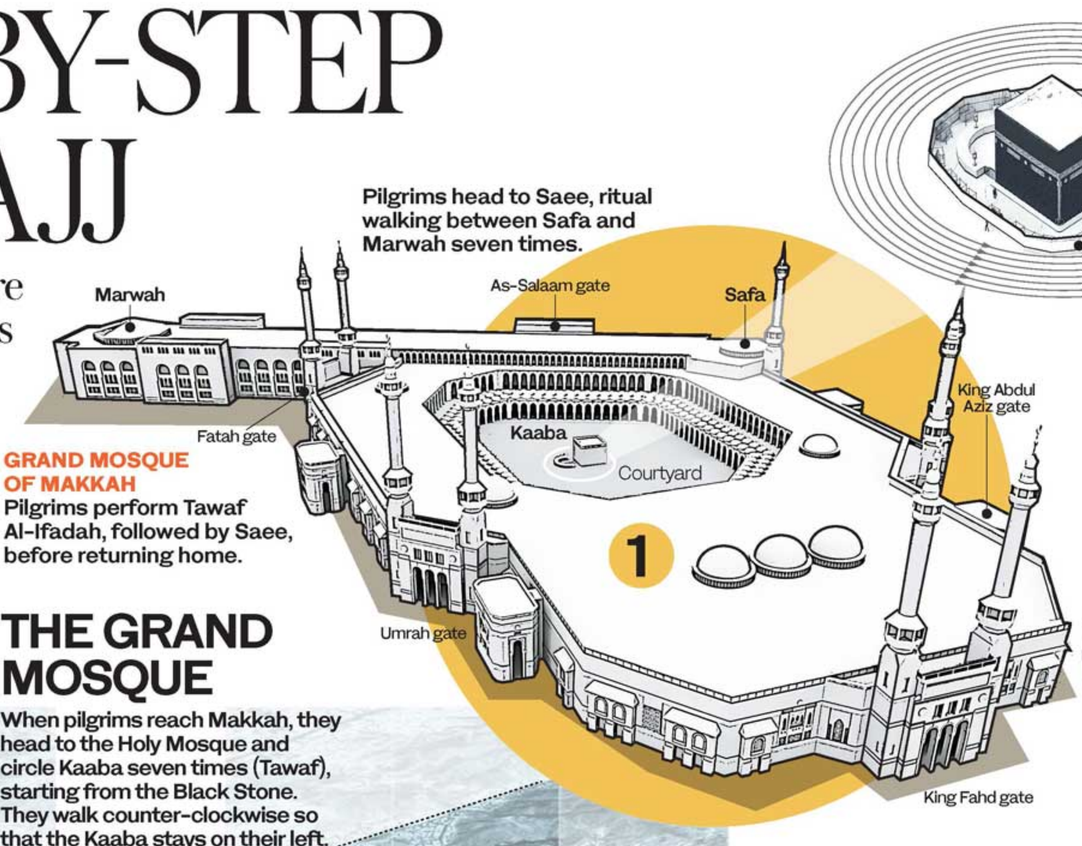
Due to the coronavirus pandemic, all measures are in place to ensure the health and safety of pilgrims

2,489,406

Pilgrims in 2019

Performing the Hajj

1 2 3 4 5 6



6 GRAND MOSQUE OF MAKKAH

Pilgrims perform Tawaf Al-Ifadah, followed by Saee, before returning home.

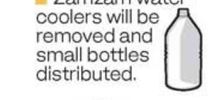
THE GRAND MOSQUE

When pilgrims reach Makkah, they head to the Holy Mosque and circle Kaaba seven times (Tawaf), starting from the Black Stone. They walk counter-clockwise so that the Kaaba stays on their left.

- Barriers will be placed around the Kaaba to prevent touching Kaaba and kissing of the Black Stone.



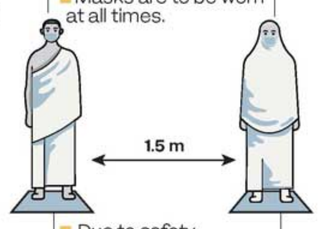
- Pilgrims perform Tawaf and circumambulate the Kaaba counterclockwise seven times.
- Zamzam water coolers will be removed and small bottles distributed.



- A cleaning crew will sanitize the floors after each group completes their ritual.



- Thermal screening checkpoints will be set up at all entrances.
- The pilgrims will have to quarantine before and after the Hajj, and they will be tested for the coronavirus.
- They will be divided into groups to perform rituals.
- Masks are to be worn at all times.



- Due to safety measures, pilgrims must maintain a 1.5 meter distance.

1-6

Makkah

- The throwing site will be regulated so that the number of pilgrims throwing stones at the same time does not exceed 50.

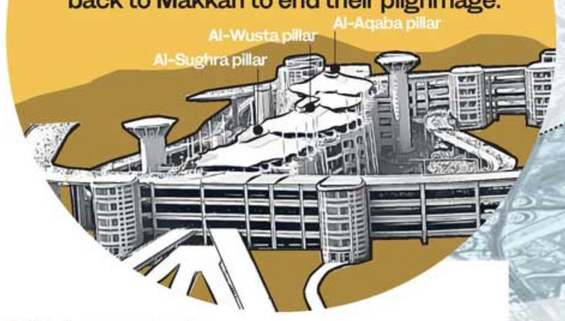


11TH OF DUL HIJJAH

Pilgrims throw seven pebbles at the second pillar, Al-Jamarah Al-Wusta (middle pillar).

12TH OF DUL HIJJAH

Pilgrims throw seven pebbles at the third pillar, Al-Jamarah Al-Sughra (last pillar), then head back to Makkah to end their pilgrimage.



- Pilgrims can return to wearing regular clothing after completing the stoning of the devil ritual and celebrate Eid Al-Adha.

AL-JAMARAT

10-12 OF DUL HIJJAH

Before the sun rises, pilgrims head back to Mina to perform a ritual meant to symbolize stoning the devil. Pilgrims will throw seven pebbles at each pillar.

5

Mina Station 2

Mina Station 1

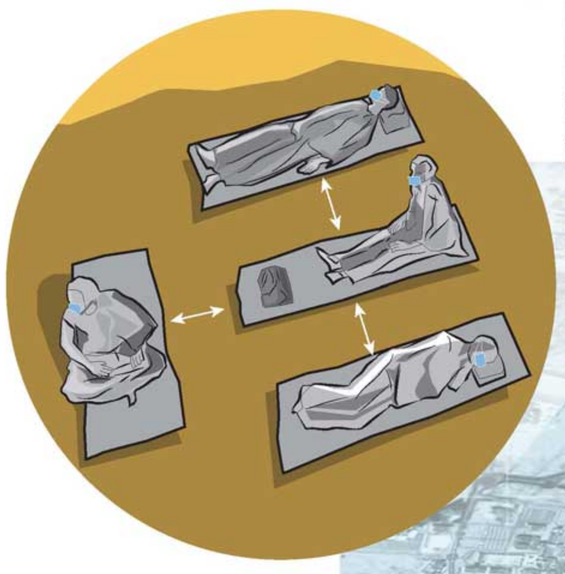
2

Muzdalifah Train Station 2

4

MUZDALIFAH

After sundown, pilgrims head to Muzdalifah, between Mina and Arafat. There, they offer evening prayers (Maghrib and Isha), collect pebbles and spend the night sleeping on the ground under the open sky.



- Health protocols mean that pilgrims must commit to residing in designated places and not deviate from the path indicated by their guide. Bags of sanitized pebbles will be provided.

Arafat Train Station 3

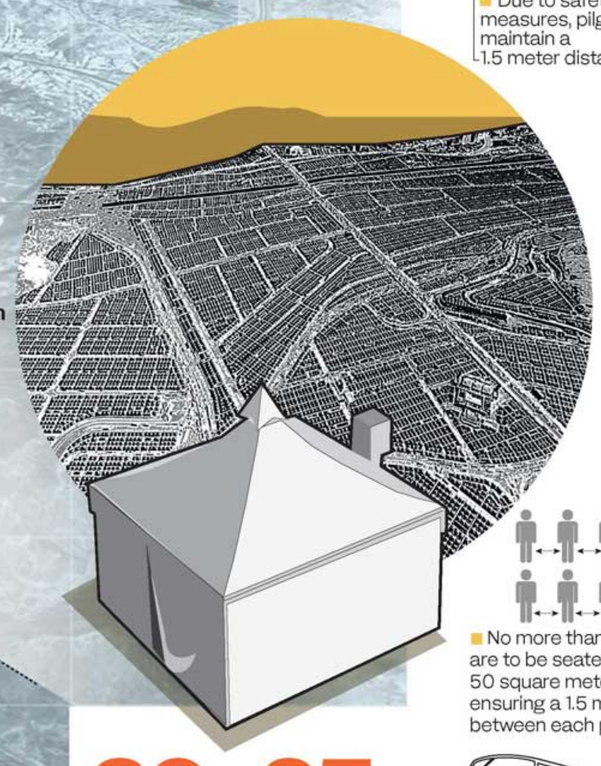
Arafat Train Station 2

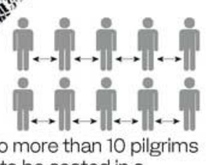
3 ARAFAT

MINA

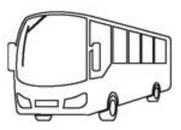
8TH OF DUL HIJJAH

Pilgrims will be transferred to Mina by buses and maintain a safe distance between one another. Pilgrims head to nearby Mina on Day of Tarwiyyah, where they will stay in their accommodation. Pilgrims chant the Talbiyah in faith and unity.





- No more than 10 pilgrims are to be seated in a 50 square meter tent, ensuring a 1.5 meter distance between each pilgrim.



- The number of passengers inside the bus during the duration of the trip should not exceed 50 percent of the total capacity of the bus, and they should maintain physical distancing by leaving at least an empty seat between each passenger.

20-65

Pilgrims should be aged between 20 and 65, with no previous experience performing the ritual.

9TH OF DUL HIJJAH

On the second day of Hajj, pilgrims travel to nearby Arafat at dawn, where they will pray Dhuhr (noon prayer) and Asr (afternoon prayer).



- Pilgrims will offer supplication and prayers and seek mercy from God standing on Jabal Al-Rahma (Mount of Mercy).

7-14

Pilgrims must quarantine for seven days before Hajj and 14 days after finishing their pilgrimage.

70%

of pilgrims are expatriates residing in the Kingdom, 30% locals.

1,000

is the number of pilgrims expected for 2020.

ARAB NEWS HAJJ APP EXPLAINED

WHAT IT IS

The Arab News Hajj app is a free smartphone application designed to help pilgrims visiting Saudi Arabia perform the holy rituals. It offers information and contact details needed during their spiritual journey. This year's version of the app, endorsed once more by the Muslim World League, comes with a new design that provides an improved user experience. Features include live news updates and the signature 'Pilgrim Tracker,' which enables them to connect with their l oved ones back home.



WHAT IT DOES: MAIN FEATURES

Pilgrim Tracker

If you get lost in the crowd of Hajj pilgrims, there is no need to panic. This feature allows you to track and check on friends and family while performing Hajj. Each user has a unique code that can be shared with their loved ones to let them know where they are.



Hajj information

All you need to know about Hajj rituals. Key information, such as daily prayer times and weather updates, can also be found under this feature. It also has important contact details of all embassies and other useful numbers, such as hotels and restaurants.



Latest news

Pilgrims no longer need to worry about grabbing newspapers or checking online news outlets while performing Hajj. All the latest stories and developments from our team of journalists covering Hajj will be listed in detail under this feature.



Media gallery

In this section, we supply you with photos and videos from around Makkah, Madinah and the holy sites so you do not miss a thing.



Download free from the App Store for iOS or Google Play for Android

ARAB NEWS

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

How Saudis can stop social distancing from getting them down

Saudi government has taken several measures to check the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) to ensure public safety



Hala Tashkandi Riyadh

As Saudi Arabia entered its seventh week of the coronavirus outbreak, people throughout the Kingdom were facing up to the prospect of working and studying from home for the foreseeable future.



With gatherings such as conferences and weddings banned, all government employees working remotely, and mandatory sick leave now officially available for those susceptible to the virus, the government has been urging citizens to stay at home and only venture out when absolutely necessary.

Saudi Ministry of Health spokesman Dr. Mohammed Al-Abd Al-Aly reiterated the need for people to limit their movements and avoid gatherings and activities of any kind.

"We're all partners, citizens and residents of this country. All the steps and precautions are in the interests of this country, to protect us from the outbreak of this virus," he said.

However, with phrases such as social distancing, self-quarantine, and isolation being bandied about, many people have become confused as to what exactly the terms mean in relation to avoiding infection.

According to the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, in the US, the expression social distancing means to deliberately increase the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness, in other words staying at least 6 feet (1.8 meters) away from other people at all times.

All the steps and precautions are in the interests of this country, to protect us from the outbreak of this virus.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Abd Al-Aly
Health Ministry spokesman

Self-quarantine is for individuals who have been exposed to the coronavirus, perhaps through travel or work, and are at risk of contracting the COVID-19 disease. In most cases a quarantine period of 14 days should be enough time to determine if a person will become ill and therefore contagious to others.

Staying at home, not having visitors, and keeping 1.8 meters away from other people in your household are all part of self-quarantine.

Those confirmed to have COVID-19 need to be in isolation, which means keeping infected individuals away from those not infected.

Isolation can take place at home (self-isolation), in a hospital, or at a care facility. However, some people are struggling with the idea of keeping a distance from others, especially considering how much importance Saudi culture attaches to social interaction.

Khulood Al-Shareef, a Riyadh schoolteacher and mother, said: "Us Saudis are a very social people, so it's no surprise that people are finding it difficult to stay at home. For some I would even go so far as to say that they would rather put themselves at risk of contracting the virus than face the prospect of not seeing anyone."

However, she stressed the importance of everyone following government directives. "I worry for my children and my parents more than anything. One irresponsible person can bring destruction to hundreds of others. Please consider other people before you go out."



Others are finding it difficult adapting and disciplining themselves to working from home.

Salman Al-Qahtani, an architect, said that while being out of the office environment he was struggling not to slip into "vacation mode" when he got up in the morning.

"What I've found works for me is to get up when my alarm goes off, shower and dress for work as if I was actually still going to the office. I have set up a temporary workspace in our dining room, since we're not using it for guests right now," he added.

Marwa Qassim, a mom of three boys, said she had drawn up a schedule that gave each of them a chore, a fun activity, and a set time to learn a new skill each day in an effort to keep things interesting.

"In the morning, I take care of business while they attend their virtual classes and do their homework. In the afternoon, we rotate chores and each boy gets one task to do, helping to clean, picking up their toys, things like that. They then get to do an activity of their choice, playing video games or doing arts and crafts.

You are protecting yourself, your loved ones, and other people by choosing to practice social distancing.

Marwa Qassim Housewife

"We spend the evenings trying to pick up new skills: One is learning to cook with me, another is trying to get better at swimming, and there is also learning a new language," she added.

"You are protecting yourself, your loved ones, and other people by choosing to practice social distancing. And if you try to take it as an opportunity to re-forge your family bonds and spend quality time with them, you will start to see it as more of a blessing than a curse," Qassim said.



TECHNOLOGY

SFDA uses artificial intelligence to facilitate medical attention

Deema Al-Khudair Jeddah

The ideal way to receive medical advice during the current health crisis is through digital means, a recommendation emphasized by Saudi authorities while a nationwide lockdown is in force due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) has launched electronic services that contribute to promoting health awareness and interactive communication, while also tightening control and facilitating the performance of businesses.

The services include a WhatsApp chatbot called Sarah and an app called Tammni, in cooperation with the National Digital Transformation Unit, which use AI, business intelligence, and an electronic inspection system.

Sarah works around the clock and communicates directly with users through WhatsApp and Telegram. It allows users to inquire about drugs, send a complaint, and contributes to increasing health awareness as well.

The mobile app Tammni aims to provide accurate and easy information about all the products supervised by the authority. It allows users to search for drugs, their prices, and their alternatives, through the name of the product or the barcode.

Last November, the SFDA's director of systems development, Abdullah Al-Dokhail, said the authority chose the name Sarah because it was the most common female name in the Kingdom. It is also his mother's name.

"I don't think there is a household in the Kingdom without the name Sarah," he said. "It is definitely someone's daughter, mother or sister. It is a very common name, it is present in every region in the Kingdom, it is even popular globally. The name Sarah is derived from the Arabic word suroor, which means joy and that is what we want to bring to everyone."

He explained that the same idea lay behind tammni, which means reassure me.

"We want to reassure people about our food, drugs, cosmetics, and medical devices," he added.

A common question the authority received was why the two services were not rolled into one app.

We want to reassure people about our food, drugs, cosmetics, and medical devices.

Abdullah Al-Dokhail
SFDA's director of systems development

Al-Dokhail said the SFDA wanted the services to reach everyone inside the Kingdom and outside.

"That is why we diversified the platforms. We chose WhatsApp because there is a statistic that said 25 million people in the Kingdom use WhatsApp. Tammni is a mobile application and apps are popular among the youth."

The electronic inspection system contributes to reducing violations and maintaining the safety of citizens and residents in the Kingdom through direct follow-ups from the inspection operations room, updating facilities' data, archiving their files directly, and electronic scheduling of periodic inspections.

As of Sunday Saudi Arabia had confirmed 206 new coronavirus cases and five deaths, bringing the totals to 2,385 infections, 34 deaths and 488 recoveries.

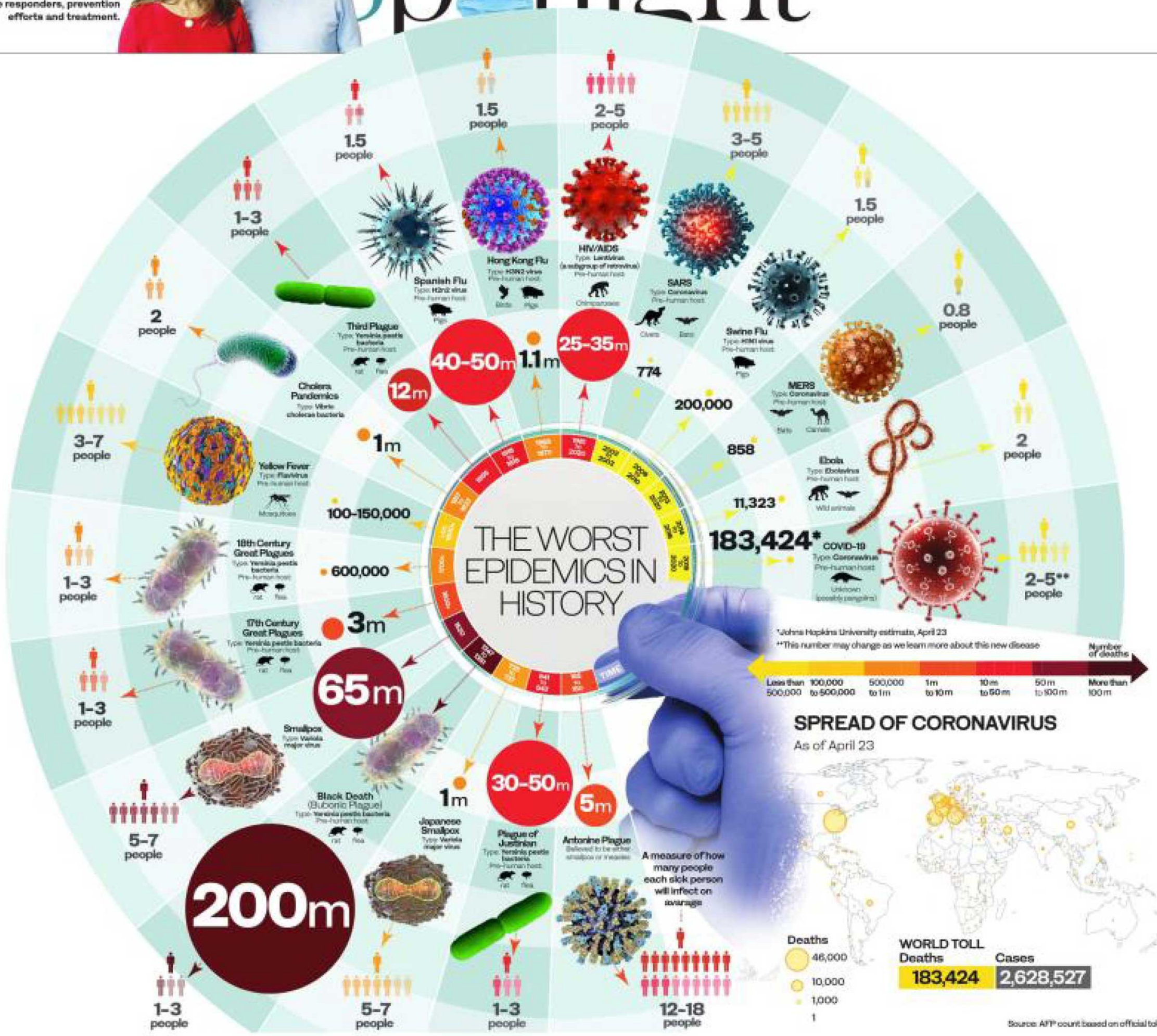
FASTFACTS

- **The services include a WhatsApp chatbot called Sarah and an app called Tammni. Sarah works around the clock and communicates directly with users through WhatsApp and Telegram.**
- **The mobile app Tammni aims to provide accurate and easy information about all the products supervised by the SFDA.**

Spotlight



The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has pledged to donate $100 million to fight the coronavirus, including funding for frontline responders, prevention efforts and treatment.



CORONAVIRUS

When history repeats itself

The clock is ticking for humanity to get its priorities right as it pays a high price for not being prepared for COVID-19

Jumana Khamis Dubai

"Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."

That expression, commonly used when a person falls for the same deceit twice, sums up the thoughts of leading epidemiologists as they watch the coronavirus disase (COVID-19) cause global havoc.

Since late last year, the world has been largely defenseless against a contagion whose death toll has surpassed 178,000 and is still rising, with more than 2.5 million confirmed cases as of Thursday.

In a few brief months, the coronavirus pandemic has thrown the future of public-health programs, employment and the world economy into question.

Many believe that the failure of governments and global bodies to contain not the first or second but the fifth strain of COVID-19 is unforgivable.

In recent decades, the world has dealt with at least a dozen outbreaks, with SARS (2003), H1N1 "swine flu" (2009), Ebola (2014) and MERS (2012) the most obvious examples.

MERS, or Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, is a COVID-19-like illness caused by the MERS-CoV virus, with direct contact with camels identified as a risk factor for human infection.

All cases of MERS have been linked — either by travel or residence — to countries in and near the Arabian Peninsula.

Now, much of the Middle East is under lockdown owing to the threat posed by a different coronavirus.

So far, there is no indication that certain groups of people in the Middle East are more prone to the COVID-19 virus than others.

Dr. Sundar Elayaperumalm, an Abu Dhabi-based microbiologist, said the new coronavirus poses a threat to all communities and knows no borders.

However, he said that it is too early to say "whether people who have already been exposed to other strains of coronavirus may be less symptomatic than others."

Local medical experts are also conscious of the debate surrounding the possibility of a cured coronavirus patient becoming infected a second time.

The human body's antibody response seven to 10 days after the onset of an infection "means it is unlikely that patients who recover from COVID-19 can become re-infected so soon after contracting the virus," said Elayaperumalm, who is also chairman of infection control at the UAE's Burjeel Hospital.

If anything is going to kill more than 10 million people in the next few decades, it's most likely to be a highly infectious virus.

That said, there is still no clarity on what kind of immunity a recovered patient has from re-infection — temporary or long term.

Elayaperumalm attributes the steady increase in the number of confirmed cases in the Gulf region to the scale and reach of mass testing programs.

The UAE has carried out more than 640,000 tests in a population of 9.6 million people, while as of April 19, Saudi Arabia had completed 180,000 tests.

"Mass testing helps to detect cases that are asymptomatic or had contact with positive COVID-19 patients," Elayaperumalm said.

Mass testing is useful in identifying infected people before they can spread the virus and in providing them with the necessary care.

Elayaperumalm believes ramped-up testing is particularly helpful in detecting infections among health workers.

The hope is that precautionary measures such as social distancing, effective handwashing, and the use of face masks and protective gloves will help "flatten the curve" of infections over time.

FAST FACT

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to SARS, MERS and COVID-19.

"Masks may help. But experts keep returning to social distancing as the single best tool to stop the chain of transmission," he said.

Lockdowns, cancelation of events, working from home and school closures also will slow the spread of the virus.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has emphasized that social distancing restrictions are only part of the response and are not cost-free.

"Shutdowns" and "lockdowns" can slow COVID-19 transmission by limiting contact between people, but can have a profound negative impact on individuals, communities and societies by bringing social and economic life to a near stop, a WHO spokesperson told Arab News.

"Such measures disproportionately affect disadvantaged groups, including people in poverty, migrants, internally displaced people and refugees, who most often live in overcrowded and under-resourced settings, and depend on daily labor for subsistence."

The WHO believes that public-health measures can be balanced with "adaptive strategies that are implemented with the full engagement of all members of society."

Such an approach aims to "encourage community resilience and social connection, protect incomes and secure the food supply," the spokesperson said.

While the fight against the coronavirus continues, the scale of the contagion has left many wondering if any action plan was in place, and whether a contingency strategy exists for future contagions.

There is no denying that humanity had been warned — in the form of science-fiction novels, Hollywood films and lectures by leading thinkers.

In a TED Talk in 2015 that went viral after the coronavirus outbreak in China, Microsoft co-founder and leading philanthropist Bill Gates cautioned that the world was "not ready for the next epidemic."

Misplaced government funding and lack of investment has resulted in under-strength health care systems and virus-fighting capabilities, he said.

"If anything kills more than 10 million people in the next few decades, it's most likely to be a highly infectious virus rather than a war — not missiles but microbes," he told the TED Talk audience.

The clock is clearly ticking for mankind to get its priorities right.

ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

Saturday, February 29, 2020 – Rajab 5, 1441 – www.arabnews.com



Saddle up... it's race day

Inside All you need to know about the inaugural $20m Saudi Cup in Riyadh, the world's richest horse race

ARAB NEWS Saturday, February 29, 2020

Saudi Cup special

HORSE RACING

The richest horse race in the world

As Saudi Arabia embarks on a new sporting era, a stellar line-up chases a record $29.2 million in prize money — and a place in history

Ali Khaled Riyadh

When the gates of King Abdul Aziz Racetrack open at noon on Saturday, Feb. 29, 2020, it will usher in a new era for sports and entertainment in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Cup, the world's most valuable horse race is finally here — and not for the first time in recent years the eyes of the sporting world will turn to the Kingdom.

The numbers tell their own story: Eight races, a total purse of $29.2 million.

Prize money for the main event and final race of the day, the Saudi Cup, will be a record-breaking $20 million, with the winner taking home $10 million and the rest of the field sharing $6.5 million.

The line-up features a formidable American presence, including the highly rated Maximum Security and the Bob Baffert-trained duo of McKinzie and Mucho Gusto, but there will be significant regional interest as well.

Prince Khalid bin Abdullah, owner of the Juddmonte Farms breeding operation, will watch his own horse, Tacitus, take on the strong field in the Saudi Cup.

"This is like the icing on the cake to be able to be here and participate in this race," said trainer Bill Mott of Tacitus.

"It's exciting. The great connections I've been fortunate enough to be able to be involved with at Juddmonte wanted to participate in (the Saudi Cup) and they're excited as well."

The Saudi Cup will also feature Godolphin's six-year-old Benbatl, trained by Saeed bin Suroor, who will also have pupil Final Song running earlier in the Samba Saudi Derby. A win for Benbatl, son of the famous Dubawi, will raise his career earnings to more than $15.7 million.

"It would mean a lot for us to win," bin Suroor said. "It is the first-ever Saudi Cup and the first big international race in Saudi Arabia. It is a very important race and it will be important for us to see him run well and win. He has been a very good Group 1 horse for us and very versatile. I'm very happy with him and I think he will have a good run."

In the run-up to the headline event, seven other races, with combined prize money of $9.2 million, will take place in front of the magnificent 5,000-seat main grandstand.

VIPs and members of the public arriving at the Golden Entrance will have plenty of time to acquaint themselves with the different facilities and services of the track, which include the Saudi Cup Pavilion, the Red Sea Pavilion, the Main and Saudi Cup Grandstands, the food court and picnic area, a tech zone and a children's play area.

The first race of the day, the 2,100m Mohamed Yousuf Naghi Motors Cup, will be run on turf at 4 p.m. local time. It will be followed by the stc 1351 Cup (1,351m), also on turf, at 4.35 p.m.

Meanwhile, Freddy Head, who has ridden and trained major winners all over the world, is hoping to add the inaugural running of the $2.5 million Longines Turf Handicap (5.10 p.m.) to his list of triumphs when he rides six-year-old Call The Wind.

"He is a very consistent horse," said the trainer. "Last year was a bit frustrating, though. He was unlucky a couple of times and had to carry a lot of weight. In France, when you win a Group 1 race, you have to carry a lot of weight."

Head said: "I think it is a worldwide thing to have these big races. It changes the way we train and plan the racing career of a horse. I remember coming here many years ago to ride. It's nice to come back with a horse and run in a big race. Hopefully, he runs well here and then he will go back to Dubai."

At 5.45 p.m. the Obaiya Arabian Classic, for purebred Arabian horses, will run over 2,000m on the dirt track before a 45-minute break.

Visitors will have the chance to observe the Maghreb prayers at 5.56 p.m. before returning in time for the fifth race of the day, the Jockey Club Local Handicap at 6.30 p.m.

This will be followed at 7.10 p.m. by the 1,600m Samba Saudi Derby, before the Isha prayer at 7.26 p.m.

No doubt the excitement will have built to fever pitch by the time of the penultimate race, the Saudia Sprint.

Gladiator King, Sheikh Rashid bin Humaid Al-Nuaimi's Dubai-based runner, will put his unbeaten 2020 record on the line in the 1,200m event — the same distance at which he won both his starts this year in Meydan's Dubawi and Al-Shindagha Sprint.

The showpiece event of the day, the Saudi Cup, will be run on dirt over one lap of the 1,800m King Abdul Aziz Racetrack.

The one-meter-high Saudi Cup trophy and a cheque for $10 million awaits the winner. Along with a place in history.

THREE CUP FAVORITES



BENBATL

Godolphin's Benbatl, son of Dubawi and trained by Saeed bin Suroor, will be among the favorites after winning 10 of its 20 races.



MAXIMUM SECURITY

The four-year-old thoroughbred trained by Jason Servis conquered all in 2019 with wins at the Florida Derby, Haskell Invitational and Bold Ruler handicap and the Cigar Mile.



MCKINZIE

The five-year-old trained by Bob Baffert had a stellar 2019 winning two races out of seven, and finishing runner-up on five occasions.

8 THE SAUDI CUP 2020

Time - KSA/GMT
8:40 pm/5:40 pm
Prize: $20 million



MAXIMUM SECURITY	MIDNIGHT BISOU	TACITUS	McKINZIE	MUCHO GUSTO	MAGIC WAND	GRONKOWSKI	NORTH AMERICA	BENBATL	CHRYSOBERYL	CAPEZZANO	GOLD DREAM	MJJACK	GREAT SCOT
7º	14º	12º	8º	10º	13º	6º	11º	1º	3º	2º	4º	9º	5º
122	119+4	116	123	118	115+4	116	116	125	118	118	117	105	112
RATING													
Age: 4 Owners: Gary and Mary West, Mrs John Magnier, Michael Tabor & Derrick Smith Breeder: Gary and Mary West Jockey: Luis Saez	Age: 5 Owners: Bloom Racing, Allen Racing & Madaket Stables Breeder: Woodford Thoroughbreds Jockey: Mike E. Smith	Age: 4 Owners: HH Prince Khalid bin Abdullah Breeder: Juddmonte Jockey: Jose Lezcano	Age: 5 Owners: K. Watson, M. Pegram & P. Weitman Breeder: Summer Wind Jockey: Joel Rosario	Age: 4 Owners: Prince Faisal Bin Khaled Bin A/Aziz Breeder: Teneri &Bernardo Alvarez Calderon Jockey: Irad Ortiz	Age: 5 Owners: Michael Tabor, Derrick Smith & Mrs John Magnier Breeder: Skymarc Jockey: Ryan Moore	Age: 5 Owners: Khalid bin Mishref & Phoenix Thoroughbred III Breeder: Epic Thoroughbreds Jockey: Lanfranco Dettori	Age: 8 Owners: President Ramzan Kadyrov Breeder: Qatar Bloodstock Jockey: Richard Mullen	Age: 6 Owners: Godolphin Breeder: Darley Jockey: Oisin Murphy	Age: 4 Owners: U Carrot Farm Breeder: Northern Farm Jockey: Christophe Soumillon	Age: 6 Owners: Sultan Ali Breeder: Darley Jockey: Mickael Barzalona	Age: 7 Owners: Katsumi Yoshida Breeder: Northern Farm Jockey: Christophe Patrice Lemaire	Age: 6 Owners: Prince Faisal Bin Khaled Bin A/Aziz Breeder: Derrymore House Syndicate Jockey: Abdullah Aloufi	Age: 4 Owners: Prince Faisal Bin Khaled Bin A/Aziz Breeder: Clyne, Mound, Thompson Jockey: Alexis Moreno
TRAINER Jason Servis Age: 63 Country: US 31	TRAINER Steve M. Asmussen Age: 54 Country: US 8	TRAINER William I. Mott Age: 66 Country: US 25	TRAINER Bob Baffert Age: 63 Country: US 4	TRAINER Bob Baffert Age: 63 Country: US 4	TRAINER Aidan P. O'Brien Age: 50 Country: Ireland 5	TRAINER Salem bin Ghadayer Age: N/A Country: UAE 88	TRAINER Satish Seemar Age: N/A Country: UAE 97	TRAINER Saeed bin Suroor Age: 53 Country: UAE 11	TRAINER Hidetaka Otonashi Age: 63 Country: Japan 53	TRAINER Salem bin Ghadayer Age: N/A Country: UAE 88	TRAINER Osamu Hirata Age: 59 Country: Japan 261	TRAINER Sami Alharabi Age: N/A Country: Saudi Arabia N/A	TRAINER Abdullah Mishrif Age: N/A Country: Saudi Arabia N/A

THE DRAW 1 GOLDEN DREAN (GB) 2 TACITUS (US) 3 BENBATL (GB) 4 NORTH AMERICA (GB) 5 GRONKOWSKI (US) 6 MIDNIGHT BISOU (US) 7 MAXIMUM SECURITY (US) 8 MUCHO GUSTO (US) 9 McKINZIE (US) 10 CHRYSOBERYL (JPN) 11 GREAT SCOT (GB) 12 MAGIC WAND (IRE) 13 CAPEZZANO (US) 14 MJJACK (IRE)

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. Gold Entrance
2. The Saudi Cup Pavilion Owners & Trainers
3. Media Center
4. Red Sea Pavilion, inc. Rolls-Royce Lounge
5. Pre-Parade Ring
6. Parade Ring
7. Main Grandstand
8. The Press Conference Area
9. Green Entrance
10. Information Point
11. Saudi Cup Grandstand
12. Food Court & Picnic Area
13. Male Prayer Room
14. Female Prayer Room
15. Kids Fun Zone
16. Tech Zone
17. Circus Live Shows
18. Secret Garden
19. Exhibitor's Square
20. Finishing Post Line





TICKETS

Gates open at Midday
First race starts at 4 p.m. (KSA)
Last race starts at 8.40 p.m.

Clubhouse Gardens
This ticket provides access to the Clubhouse Garden area, home of family entertainment, to the right of the grandstand.
Price: SAR180 (per person)

Family Tickets
This ticket provides entry for 2 Adults and up to 4 Children (aged 16 and under) to the General Admission area
Price: SAR400

Premium Paddock Enclosure
Enclosure is adjacent to the racetrack
Price: SAR220

The Saudi Cup Pavilion
Price: SAR1875 (per person)

Child Admission
(6-16 age)
Price: SAR90
(includes VAT @ 5%)

THE TROPHY

The Cup stands over a meter tall, its height helped by a triple-tiered base on which will be inscribed the victors' names. The trophy was created by Gerrard's craftsmanship. Handcrafted in sterling silver, the cup has been richly gilded, studded with coloured enamel and embellished with ornates.

WHERE TO WATCH:

Saudi Arabia
- Saudi TV

US
- Fox Sports 1
- FloSports

UK
- SKY Sports
- Racing
- Racing TV

News/ other
- Sports Unlimited
- Inverleigh
- Reuters
- SNTV

SAUDI CUP DAY

Saturday, Feb. 29th 2020

TIME - KSA/GMT	RACE	RACE NAME	DISTANCE	TRACK	PRIZE
4 p.m./ 1 p.m.	1st	The Mohamed Yousuf Naghi Motors Cup	2100m (1m 2½f)	turf	$1 million
4:35 p.m./1:35 p.m.	2nd	The stc 1351 Cup, Open	1351m (6¾f)	turf	$1 million
5:10 p.m./2:10 p.m.	3rd	The Longines Turf Handicap, Open	3000m (1m 7f)	turf	$2.5 million
5:45 p.m./2:45 p.m.	4th	The Obaiya Arabian Classic, (Purebred Arabians)	2000m (1m 2f)	dirt	$1.9 million
Maghreb prayer 5:56 pm/2:56 pm					
6:30 p.m./3:30 pm.	5th	The Jockey Club Local Handicap, Open	1800m (1m 1f)	dirt	$500,00
7:10 p.m./4:10 p.m.	6th	The Samba Saudi Derby, Open	1600m (1m)	dirt	$800,000
Isha prayer 7:26 pm/4:26 pm					
7:50 p.m./4:50 p.m.	7th	The Saudia Sprint, Open	1200m (6f)	dirt	$1.5 million
8:40 p.m./5:40 p.m.	8th	The Saudi Cup	1800m (9f)	dirt	$20 million



PRIZE MONEY DISTRIBUTION

Prize money will not be taxed by the KSA authorities

THE NUMBERS

- **5,000** seat Grandstand at King Abdulaziz Racetrack in Riyadh
- **$29.2m** total Prize purse for all races
- **8** races throughout the day
- **$10m** Saudi Cup Winner's purse
- **$3.5m** Saudi Cup Second place
- **$6.5m** shared among the rest

TURF TRACK (The Inner Track)
1. 1351 m
2. 2100 m
3. 3000 m

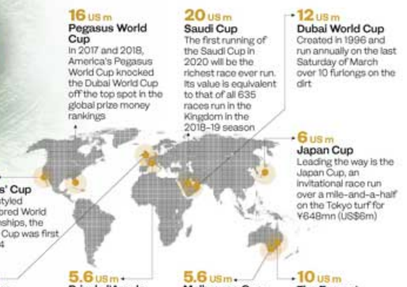
DIRT TRACK (The Outer Track)
1. 1200 m
2. 1600 m
3. 1800 m
4. 2000 m

Left-handed, it is a fair galloping track with minimal kickback and long, sweeping bends. This ensures that the King Abdulaziz Racetrack is fair as it allows horses to win regardless of their starting position



'The Saudi Cup Pavillion's lounge guests are able to watch the racing from the Pavilion's terrace or enjoy the Premium Paddock Enclosure and the elevated view from the Grandstand across the King Abdulaziz Racecourse.

WORLD RICHEST RACES



- **16 US m** Pegasus World Cup — In 2017 and 2018, America's Pegasus World Cup knocked the Dubai World Cup off the top spot in the global prize money rankings
- **20 US m** Saudi Cup — The first running of the Saudi Cup in 2020 will be the richest race ever run. Its value is equivalent to that of all 635 races run in the Kingdom in the 2018–19 season
- **12 US m** Dubai World Cup — Created in 1996 and run annually on the last Saturday of March over 10 furlongs on the dirt
- **6 US m** Japan Cup — Leading the way is the Japan Cup, an invitational race run over a mile-and-a-half on the Tokyo turf for ¥648mn (US$6m)
- **6 US m** Breeders' Cup — The self-styled Thoroughbred World Championships, the Breeders' Cup was first run in 1984
- **2 US m** The Derby — The sport's defining race, founded in 1780 and arguably one of the most prestigious
- **5.6 US m** Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe — Widely considered to be Europe's premier weight-for-age contest
- **5.6 US m** Melbourne Cup — Once famed as the race that stops a nation, these days the two-mile Melbourne Cup can claim to beguile much of the racing world
- **10 US m** The Everest — Unlike all the other richest races, it is a sprint over 1,200 meters (six furlongs)

THE RACES

1 MOHAMED YOUSUF NAGHI MOTORS CUP
Time - KSA/GMT
4:00 pm/1:50 pm
Prize: $1 million

For The Top	ARG	Port Lions	IRE
Imagen De Roma	ARG	Royal Youmzain	FR
Intellogent	IRE	Trais Fluors	GB
Mount Everest	IRE	Deirdre	JPN
Persian Moon	IRE		

2 THE stc 1351 Cup
Time - KSA/GMT
4:35 pm/1:35 pm
$1 million

Dark Power	IRE	Momkin	IRE
Ghoul	BRZ	Mubtasim	IRE
Glorious Journey	GB	Sir Dancealot	IRE
Graignes	FR	Speak in Colours	GB
King Maipic	FR	Suedois	FR
Larchmont Lad	IRE	Holy Day	ARG
Legends of War	USA	Royal Intervention	IRE

3 LONGINES TURF HANDICAP
Time - KSA/GMT
5:10 pm/2:10 pm
$2.5 million

Cross Counter	GB	Mekong	GB
Dee Ex Bee	GB	True Self	IRE
Call The Wind	GB	Contango	IRE
Called To The Bar	IRE	Hbou	GB
Prince of Arran	GB	Mafaaheem	IRE
Twilight Payment	IRE	Dramatic Device	GB
Downdraft	IRE	Main Street (Res1)	GB
King's Advice	GB	Asbab (Res2)	KSA

4 THE OBAIYA ARABIAN CLASSIC
Time - KSA/GMT
5:45 pm/2:45 pm
$1.9 million

Aoun	FR	Sehab	FR
Djelamer	FR	Shabah	GB
Hajres	TUN	Tallaab Al-Khaleidah	KSA
Mashhur Al-Khaleidah	FR	Zaqur	GB
Mehdaaf Athbah	GB	Ziyadd	FR
Mubasher Al-Khaleidah	KSA	Amwaj	FR
Mutawakel Al-Khaleidah	KSA	Wathabat Al Khaleidah	KSA

5 THE JOCKEY CLUB LOCAL HANDICAP
Time - KSA/GMT
6:30 pm/3:30 pm
$500,000

Ala Sawab	Alzahawi	Sharae	
Aljamee	Enayat Almajeed	Megh Naaj	
Be Azn Allah	Alnashaas	Maroof	
Motabain	Aenan Alaezm	Alnajim Albaaher	
Waqoor	Omsiyaatee	Merba'a	

6 THE SAMBA SAUDI DERBY
Time - KSA/GMT
7:10 pm/4:10 pm
Prize: $800,00

Bella Fever	URU	Mishriff	IRE
Aan Alawan	KSA	Rajee Allah	KSA
Billy Batts	USA	Rowdy Yates	USA
Cherokee Trail	USA	Down On Da Bayou	USA
Full Flat	USA	Final Song	IRE
Lake Causeway	USA	Mor'edah	KSA
Malafekh	KSA	Tamaarl	KSA

7 THE SAUDIA SPRINT
Time - KSA/GMT
6:30 pm/3:30 pm
Prize: $1.5

Captain Scotty	USA	Maypole	GB)
Drafted	USA	Muhtaram	GB)
Gladiator King	USA	New York Central	USA)
Imperial Hint	USA	Sobre Action	ARG
Indelible Ink	IRE	Beau Warrior	IRE
Manguzi	FR	Mesquite	GB
Matera Sky	USA		

SOURCES: THE SAUDI CUP, EQUIBASE AND HORSE RACING NATION
PHOTOS: SAUDI CUP, AFP, GETTY IMAGES, DUBAI RACING CLUB, RACING POST PHOTOS, CARROT CLUB/JAPAN

HUMANITARIAN FALLOUT

Beirut blast aftermath recalls Lebanon's civil war: MSF head

Lebanon's diaspora steps up to provide assistance following massive explosion

AFP Paris

With some 300,000 people left homeless by the massive explosion in Beirut, and fears of food and medicine shortages, MSF on Thursday likened the humanitarian fallout to that of Lebanon's civil war.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) President Mego Terzian said that after the initial rush to treat the injured, the next priority would be to provide food and shelter for the destitute.

"Another priority will be taking care of people with chronic illnesses, those with cancer, HIV or respiratory diseases such as asthma, given the risk of an interruption of drug supplies," he said.

Terzian said warehouses storing medicines and vaccines in the port of Beirut were damaged in Tuesday's monster blast.

The provisional death toll stood at 137, but with dozens missing and 5,000 wounded the number of victims was expected to rise as rescue workers continued to comb through the rubble.

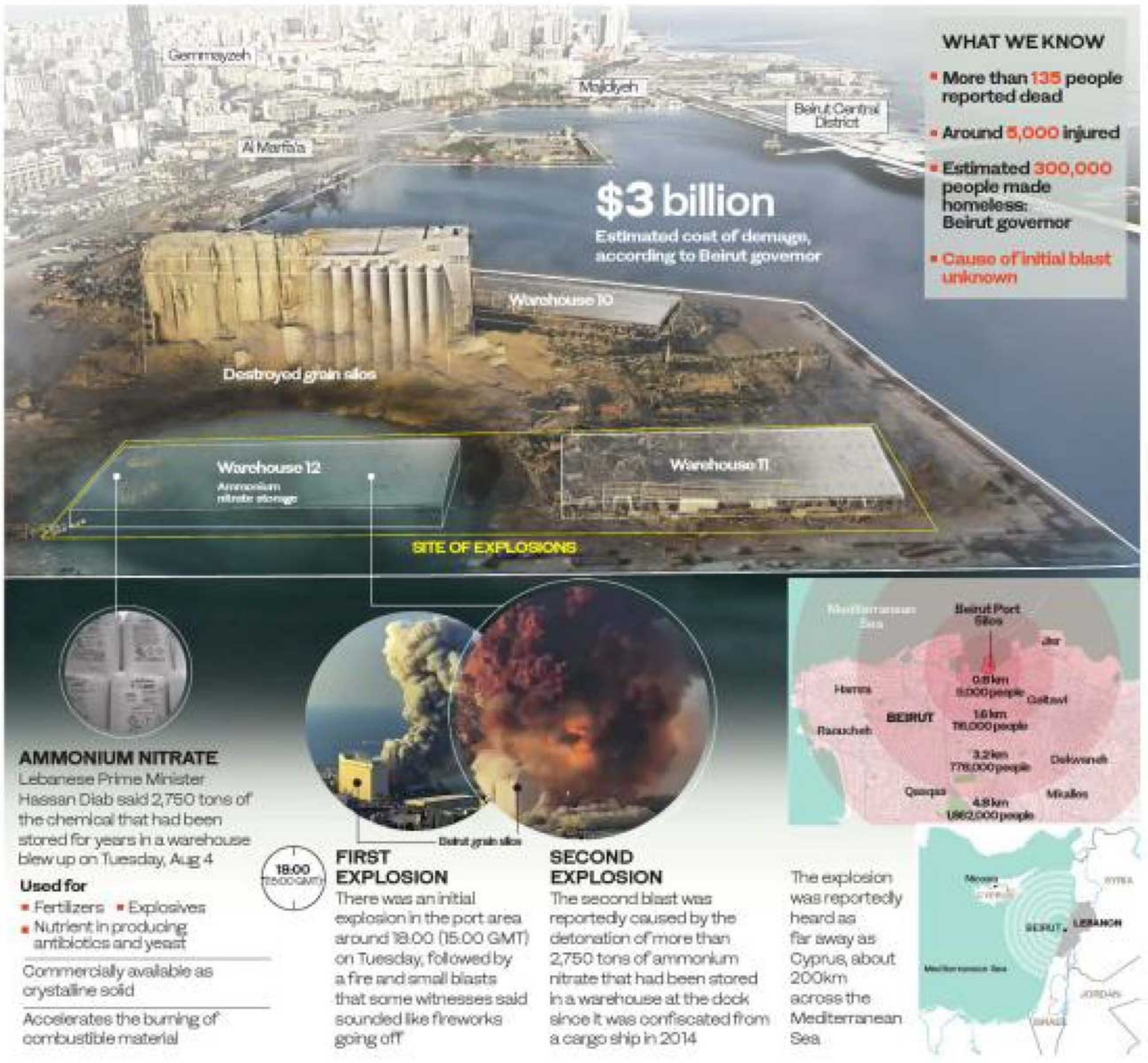
Three hospitals in the Achrafieh neighborhood of central Beirut, including one with 1,100 beds, were damaged in the blast.

"The dialysis center, which was the biggest in the country, was completely destroyed," Terzian said.

But hospitals that were quickly overrun on Tuesday, with overflowing emergency rooms, had a handle on the situation by Wednesday with many injured transferred outside Beirut, he added.

"Lebanese health care workers, especially those with experience of the civil war, were able to triage the emergency rooms very quickly and prioritize those patients who had to go to the operating rooms," he said.

Terzian said Qatar, Kuwait and Jordan were sending field hospitals, and attempts were being made to guarantee supplies of basic medicines such as antibiotics, painkillers and blood bags.



The blast sowed destruction like that caused by the country's 1975-90 civil war, leveling buildings several hundred meters away.

"We lived difficult and similar experiences during the Lebanese war," Terzian said.

Bombings of petrol warehouses near the port had yielded "similar scenes — the city was completely devastated, people were wandering the streets, wounded, desperate, without knowing where to go."

Lebanon's diaspora, estimated at nearly three times the size of the country's population of 5 million, has stepped up to provide assistance.

Lebanese expats rushed to wire money to loved ones who lost their homes or were injured in the blast, while others worked to create special funds to address the tragedy.

"I've been on the phone all morning with ... our partners in order to put together an alliance for an emergency fund in light of the explosion," said George Akiki, co-founder and CEO of LebNet, a nonprofit based in California's Silicon Valley that helps Lebanese professionals in the United States and Canada.

"Everyone, both Lebanese and non-Lebanese, wants to help."

Akiki said his group, along with other organizations such as SEAL and Life Lebanon, have set up Beirut Emergency Fund 2020, which will raise much-needed money and channel it to safe and reputable organizations in Lebanon.

Many Lebanese expats, who almost all have loved ones or friends impacted by the disaster, are also helping individually or have started online fundraisers.

"As a first step, my wife Hala and I will match at least $10,000 in donations and later on we will provide more help toward rebuilding and other projects," said Habib Haddad, a tech entrepreneur and member of LebNet based in Boston, Massachusetts.

He said many fellow compatriots are doing the same, channeling their grief and anger toward helping their stricken homeland, which before the blast was already reeling from a deep economic and political crisis that has left more than half the population living in poverty.

"They're asking Lebanese emigrants around the world to try and help," said Maroun Daccache, owner of a Lebanese restaurant in Sao Paulo, Brazil, a country that has an estimated 7 million people of Lebanese descent.

The dialysis center, which was the biggest in the country, was completely destroyed.

Mego Terzian
MSF president

"I'm trying to help with something but here the business is not very good because of the pandemic. Still, we are much better off than those over there," Daccache said.

Even before the tragedy, Lebanon heavily relied on its diaspora for cash remittances but these inflows had slowed in the last year given the country's political crisis.

Expats also usually visit home every summer, injecting much-needed cash into the economy. But the diaspora this year has largely been absent because of the COVID-19 pandemic and many had become increasingly skeptical and reluctant to send aid to a country where corruption is widespread and permeates all levels of society.

SYRIAN CONFLICT

First COVID-19 cases reported in Al-Hol camp

AFP Beirut

Three health workers in a displaced persons' camp in northeastern Syria have contracted the novel coronavirus, the UN said on Thursday, the first reported infections in the vast tent city.

The Al-Hol camp is home to tens of thousands of people, including the relatives of Daesh terrorists.

It is run by the autonomous Kurdish administration that holds most of the northeast and has reported 54 cases of COVID-19 in areas under its control.

"On Aug. 3, three health workers reportedly tested positive for COVID-19 at the Al-Hol IDP camp," said a spokesman for the UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"The contact tracing process is ongoing. As a precautionary measure, only critical staff, with personal protective equipment, are allowed to operate inside the camp," said David Swanson. A health official at the camp said the three staff infected work with the Kurdish Red Crescent in Al-Hol.



A Syrian municipality worker disinfects a bus in the northern city of Aleppo. AFP

We fear that the virus could have spread to camp residents visiting health clinics.
Spokesman for OCHA

"We fear that the virus could have spread to camp residents visiting health clinics," he said.

The latest infections raise to nine the number of Kurdish Red Crescent staff in northeastern Syria who have contracted the virus, a volunteer at the organization said.

Nine years of war have battered health care provision across Syria, but the situation in the northeast is particularly critical, as the Kurdish authorities have been left to cope with the coronavirus pandemic largely unaided.

TRAGEDY

Dozens feared drowned after migrant boat sinks off Mauritania

AFP Nouakchott

About 40 people are feared dead after a migrant vessel sank off the coast of Mauritania, the UN refugee agency said on Thursday.

In a tweet, the agency's special envoy for the central Mediterranean, Vincent Cochetel, said one person from the West African state of Guinea had survived.

The boat sank off the northern city of Nouadhibou, Mauritania's second largest, according to Cochetel, without specifying when the incident happened.

"New shipwreck off the coast of Nouadhibou #Mauritania of approximately 40 persons on board, there is one survivor (from Guinea)" Cochetel said on Twitter. Details about the event remain unclear, however, and accounts are conflicting.

A Mauritanian security official said that the sinking did not take place in Mauritanian waters.

FASTFACT

The boat sank off the northern city of Nouadhibou, Mauritania's second largest, according to Vincent Cochetel, the UN refugee agency's special envoy for the central Mediterranean.

The official interviewed the Guinean survivor from a hospital bed in Mauritania, however, who said that he and his friends had attempted to travel from Morocco to Spain's Canary Islands.

After the boat's engines failed, the passengers aboard the vessel reportedly leapt into the open sea.

"UNHCR & IOM (International Organization for Migration) along with authorities and partners are trying to step up efforts to prevent such tragedies, but traffickers keep lying to their clients," Cochetel tweeted.