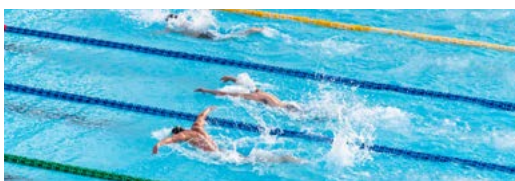
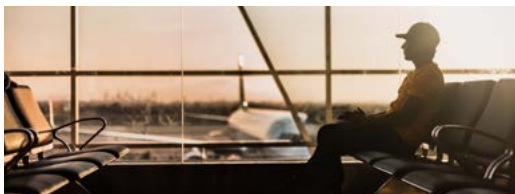


The FBC Weekly Briefing - Covid-19 Outbreak

18 JUNE 2020

This edition at a glance...

- UAE will allow travel to some destinations from June 23, and steps up efforts to bring back residents stuck overseas.
- Citizens and residents may leave Abu Dhabi emirate without a permit. Entry is allowed with a permit issued by Abu Dhabi Police.
- Dubai announced reopening of marine and water sports events, as well as resumption of a new set of economic, cultural and recreational activities.
- Emirates resumes flights to/from Bahrain.
- Saudi Arabia unveils 3.7bn riyals stimulus package to support industries.
- Kuwait has announced a phased approach towards recovery and reopening of businesses.
- “We predict regional business to return to 2019 levels within 18 to 24 months as countries relax quarantine measures and re-open borders.” said Marc DESCROZAILLE, Chief Operating Officer Middle East for Accor in our Sectorial focus.



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by Marc DESCROZAILLE

Chief Operating Officer Middle East

Accor

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| IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE GCC ECONOMIES & ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLANS



| UAE - COVID-19'S IMPACT, RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS AND STIMULUS PACKAGES

| UAE

UAE will allow travel to some destinations from June 23. Travel will be allowed to certain destinations according to a strategy that has classified all countries of the world into three categories: the first is classified as low risk nations to which all citizens and residents are allowed to travel. The second is medium-risk nations to which only a limited category of citizens are allowed to travel to in case of emergency, namely for necessary medical reasons, visiting first-degree family members, or for military, diplomatic and official missions. The third are high-risk countries to which travel is categorically banned.¹



The National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority is stepping up efforts to bring back residents stuck overseas for months. UAE residents have been slowly returning to the Emirates since June 1 on a series of special flights as restrictions in place to stem the spread of Covid-19 continue to be eased.²

| DUBAI

Supreme Committee of Crisis and Disaster Management announces resumption of a new set of economic, cultural and recreational activities. Decision is part of the gradual reopening of various sectors in the emirate. Inspections to continue to ensure enforcement of precautionary measures; violators face fines.³ [Read the Guidelines & Protocols for Reopening.](#)

COVID-19 Command and Control Centre: Dubai on track to curb spread of virus. The precautionary measures implemented in the emirate to combat COVID-19, and the concerted efforts of the public and private sector as well as the community, have helped Dubai achieve marked progress in curbing the spread of the virus. The sustained implementation of precautionary measures and the public's continued commitment to observing preventive guidelines in the period ahead are critical to fully contain the COVID-19 crisis. The Centre, tasked with managing the emirate's response to the pandemic, said Dubai's progress is borne out by the rise in the recovery rate, and the decline in the number of identified cases and people with COVID-19 symptoms visiting hospitals in the last few weeks.⁴

Emirates resumes flights to/from Bahrain. The airline is set to operate seven weekly flights from Bahrain to Dubai utilising its Boeing 777-300ER aircraft to carry cargo as well as passengers travelling home or for essential purposes.⁵

Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), an initiative of Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, recently organised a webinar examining the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the arbitration landscape and practical solutions for ensuring the efficiency of dispute resolution. Addressing participants

1 <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302849598>

2 <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/coronavirus-uae-launches-initiative-to-bring-200-000-residents-home-1.1032275>

3 <https://www.mediaoffice.ae/en/news/2020/June/17-06/Supreme-Committee-of-Crisis-and-Disaster-Management-announces-resumption-of-work>

4 <http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302849212>

5 <https://www.mediaoffice.ae/en/news/2020/June/15-06/Emirates-add-Bahrain>

during the webinar Rashid Shahin, Director of DIAC, elaborated on the UAE Arbitration Law and pointed out that the law provides flexibility for adapting arbitration procedures in line with the changing needs of businesses, adding that DIAC has been swift in its response in dealing with the Covid-19 situation, by utilizing digital solutions to deliver high-calibre arbitration services.⁶

The Dubai Diamond Exchange (DDE), the world's largest diamond tender facility, is open for business and ready to host regular activities, including tenders, in line with the easing of restrictions across the Emirate. The trade of precious metals and stones is a key pillar of the UAE's economic diversification plan. In Dubai, the highest traded commodities by value in 2019 were gold, jewellery and diamonds, which contributed AED 370 billion, a 7% growth from 2018. While according to the Abu Dhabi General Administration of Customs, the value of trading in precious metals and gemstones in the capital reached AED 5.42 billion in the first quarter of 2020, up from AED 4.03 billion year-on-year, representing a 34.4% increase.⁷

As part of its ongoing efforts to support UAE businesses during the ongoing COVID-19 situation, Emirates Islamic, one of the leading Islamic financial institutions in the UAE, is offering Business Banking debit cards free of charge to eligible SME clients. Emirates Islamic's Business Banking debit card offers an alternative channel to customers seeking access to cash and supports their ongoing cash flow requirements. SME clients will have access to their accounts through the network of Emirates Islamic's ATMs and CDMs. The debit cards will be issued free of charge to eligible business banking customers, and in partnership with Visa, accepted at millions of locations worldwide for retail and online purchases.⁸

Dubai Sports Council announce reopening of marine and water sports events. No fans or visitors will be permitted at the venues, and

the age limitations remain. No children below 12, or people above the age of 60 are allowed to compete. "Staff older than 60 years of age will also not be allowed inside the facilities, along with anyone suffering from chronic or respiratory illness," the Sports Council said. "Wearing of masks will be mandatory for everyone, and the Council also recommends use of protective goggles, or face shields."⁹

Public and private swimming pools have been permitted to reopen and water sports activities



can resume in Dubai as long as sports clubs and communities follow strict guidelines issued by municipality authorities. Pools can operate across residential zones, commercial facilities, recreational clubs and gyms. Hotels too reopened swimming pools from Friday after being shut for two months.¹⁰

| ABU DHABI

Abu Dhabi Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Committee for the Covid-19 Pandemic, in collaboration with Abu Dhabi Police and DOH, have announced that citizens and residents may leave Abu Dhabi emirate without a permit. Entry to Abu Dhabi emirate is allowed with a permit issued by Abu Dhabi Police. Precautionary health measures will apply upon entry. Movement between Abu Dhabi's regions (Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Dhafra) is also allowed using the permit system. Movement within each region is allowed in line with National Sterilisation Programme timings. Movement of

6 <https://www.mediaoffice.ae/en/news/2020/June/16-06/Dubai-Chamber>

7 <https://www.mediaoffice.ae/en/news/2020/June/15-06/Dubai-Diamond-Exchange-ready-to-host-regular-activities>

8 <https://www.mediaoffice.ae/en/news/2020/June/14-06/Emirates-Islamic>

9 <https://www.thenational.ae/sport/uae/dubai-sports-council-announce-reopening-of-marine-and-water-sports-events-1.1034725>

10 <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/coronavirus-swimming-pools-in-dubai-reopen-with-strict-guidelines-1.1032641>

workers remains restricted within Abu Dhabi's regions of Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Dhafra. Entry and exit of workers to Abu Dhabi emirate is still prohibited.¹¹

ADDED regulates reopening of restaurants, cafeterias, coffee shops outside shopping malls in Abu Dhabi. The Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development, ADDED, recently issued a circular on the reopening of restaurants, cafeterias, and coffee shops operating outside shopping malls in Abu Dhabi along with the precautionary measures that must be taken before resuming their commercial activities.¹²

The Department of Health Abu Dhabi, DoH, in collaboration with the Abu Dhabi Public Health Center has launched the COVID-19 Home Isolation Program Smart service on its verified WhatsApp business channel. The new service, which is free-to-use, provides a central source of services for the enrolled patients in the programme, along with accurate, trustworthy and up-to-date information about COVID-19 related to home isolations for everyone who want to request the information in the UAE.¹³

The Abu Dhabi government's Department of Culture and Tourism is offering a new learning programme to help owners of small and medium-sized enterprises respond to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Organised by the department's Maktaba libraries arm, the Open Minds initiative will train 200 entrepreneurs through a series of courses addressing issues such as dealing with the commercial challenges brought by the pandemic or bringing a passion to life through business, the DCT said in a statement on Tuesday. The programme will run until October.¹⁴



| FUJAIRAH

Fujairah oil products stocks dip amid signs of rebound. Stockpiles of oil products at the UAE's East Coast port of Fujairah dropped for a second consecutive week amid signs of a rebound in trading. Stockpiles stood at 30.113 million barrels as of 15th June, down 1.3 percent on the week, after falling 0.7 percent a week earlier, data from the Fujairah Oil Industry Zone, FOIZ, showed today. Stockpiles had been climbing to record highs for most of May and early June amid curbed demand for gasoline, jet fuel and marine bunkers.¹⁵

| AJMAN

1884 establishments in Ajman benefit from third economic incentives package. Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Nuaimi, Director of Planning and Business Development Department, has said that the third economic incentives package aims to support investors and Small and medium-sized enterprises, SMEs, in facing the challenges posed by the current situation. Incentives package includes exempting economic establishments whose business has been temporarily suspended during the crisis due to the implementation of the precautionary measures from licence renewal fees for one year.¹⁶

11 <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302849288>

12 <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302849516>

13 <https://www.gulftoday.ae/news/2020/06/15/department-of-health-launches-covid19-home-isolation-program-smart-service-on-whatsapp>

14 <https://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/coronavirus-abu-dhabi-s-department-of-culture-and-tourism-offers-new-entrepreneurship-programme-1.1034500>

15 <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302849400>

16 <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302849371>

| KSA - COVID-19'S IMPACT, RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS AND STIMULUS PACKAGES

Saudi Arabia has emerged from three months of oil market volatility as the world's biggest oil exporter once more, knocking the US off the top slot it gained last year. Industry experts calculated that in April — when oil prices crashed because of pandemic lockdowns — the Kingdom exported nearly 11 million barrels of oil per day, a record, and the US about 8.6 million barrels. Both countries' exports fell in May, after the historic OPEC+ deal to cut output, but the Kingdom was still ahead. The trend is likely to continue for most of this year, as American production suffers from shut-ins and bankruptcies in its price-sensitive shale oil operations, despite continuing Saudi cuts.¹

1 <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1690806/business-economy>

2 <https://www.thenational.ae/business/saudi-arabia-unveils-3-7bn-riyals-stimulus-package-to-support-industries-1.1034849>

3 <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1683376/business-economy>

Saudi Arabia unveils 3.7bn riyals stimulus package to support industries. The new initiative will benefit 536 industrial facilities in the kingdom. The scheme will support small and medium enterprises within the industrial sector by deferring or restructuring their loans and by offering a line of credit to finance up to three months of operating expenses.²

The Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) is set to inject \$13.333 billion in the banking system to enhance the liquidity in the sector, the Saudi central bank said. The stimulus package aims to enhance its liquidity and enable banks to continue providing credit facilities to their clients, SAMA added. The new support follows SAMA's decision in March to provide SR50 billion for banks to provide debts and delay overdue loan installments for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to help them maintain jobs.³

| KUWAIT - COVID-19'S IMPACT, RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS AND STIMULUS PACKAGES

Kuwait has announced a phased approach towards recovery and reopening of businesses.

1 <https://www.rli.uk.com/kuwait-plans-for-phased-re-opening/>

The country has shared a five-phase approach towards reopening, with each phase lasting for three weeks and success determining the start of the next phase.¹

| BAHRAIN - COVID-19'S IMPACT, RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS AND STIMULUS PACKAGES

Bahrain's King Fahd Causeway set to open new gates on the Saudi side. Bahrain's King Fahd Causeway has completed a renovation project which will see the bridge's passenger capacity by 45 per cent when it reopens. The project was carried out by the King Fahd Causeway

1 <https://gulfbusiness.com/bahrains-king-fahd-causeway-set-to-open-new-gates-on-the-saudi-side/>

Authority (KFCA) when passenger travel was suspended in March to stop the spread of the Covid-19. The causeway connects Bahrain and Saudi Arabia and "bears considerable economic importance for both countries, particularly for their tourism sectors", a statement said.¹

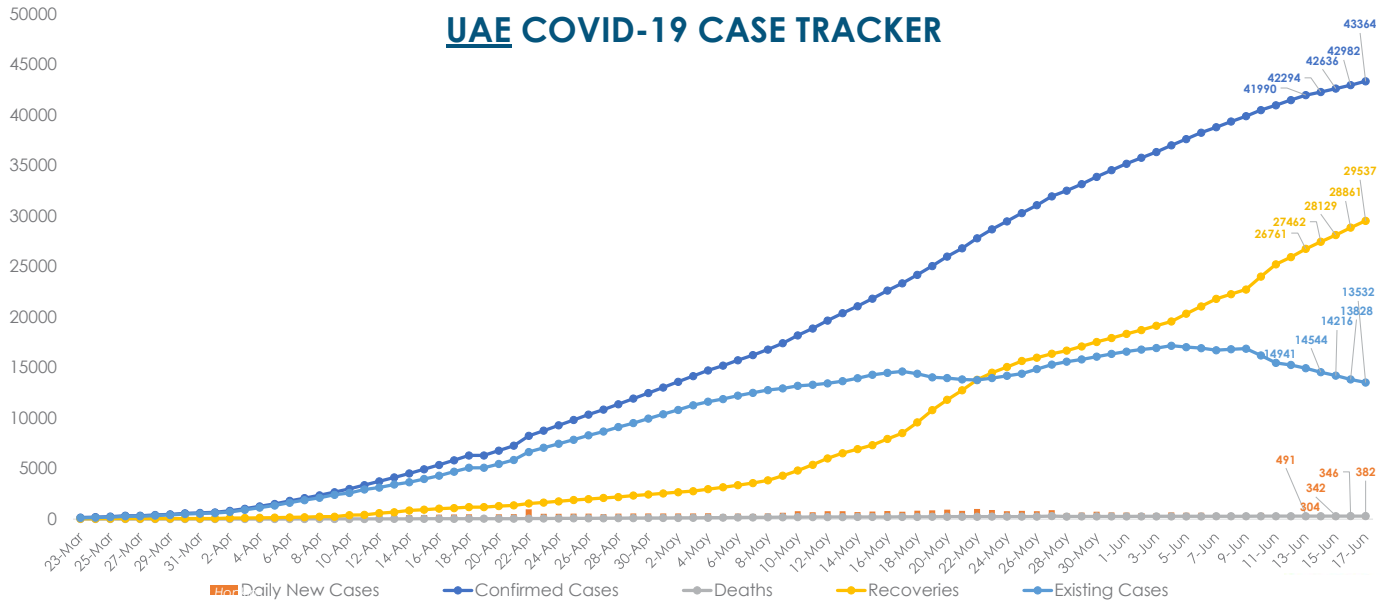
| OMAN - COVID-19'S IMPACT, RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS AND STIMULUS PACKAGES

Oman closes off largest free zone after a spate of new infections. Duqm is home to more than \$10 billion worth of business investments.

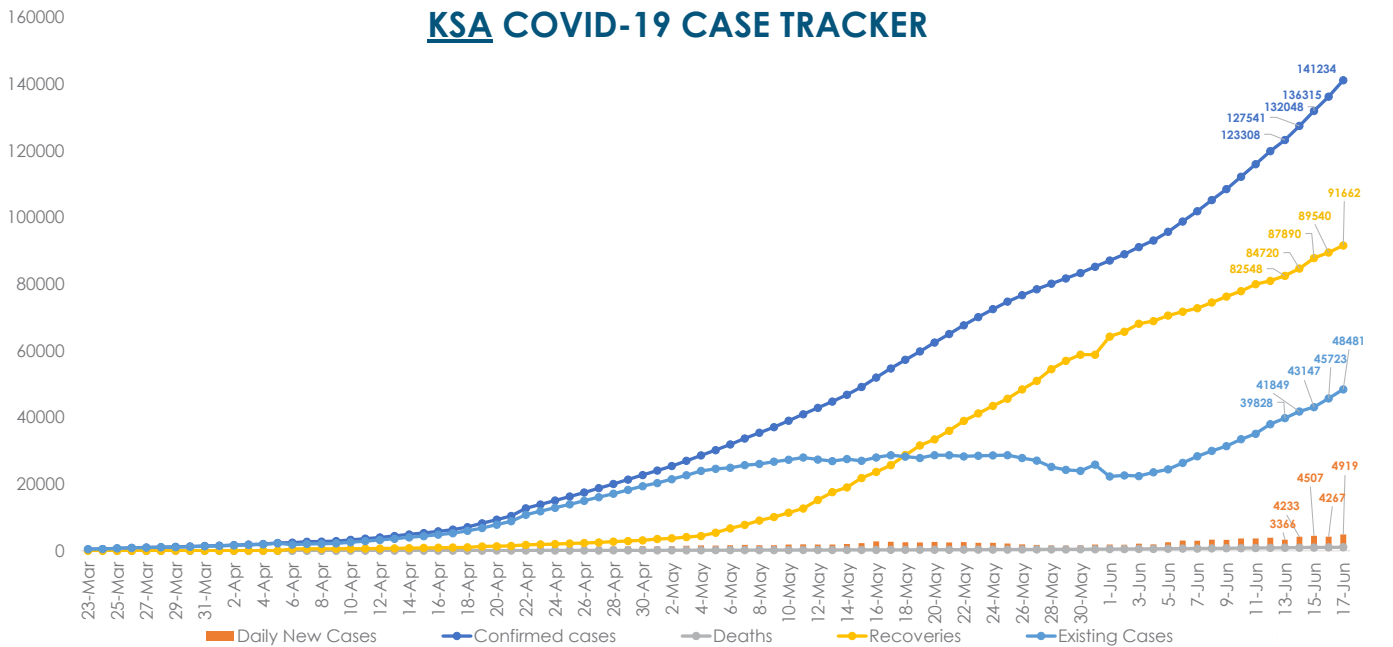
1 <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/coronavirus-oman-closes-off-largest-free-zone-after-a-spate-of-new-infections-1.1032277>

Oman will close off the coastal city of Duqm and its free zone, the largest in the country, for three weeks from Saturday after a spate of new coronavirus infections there.¹

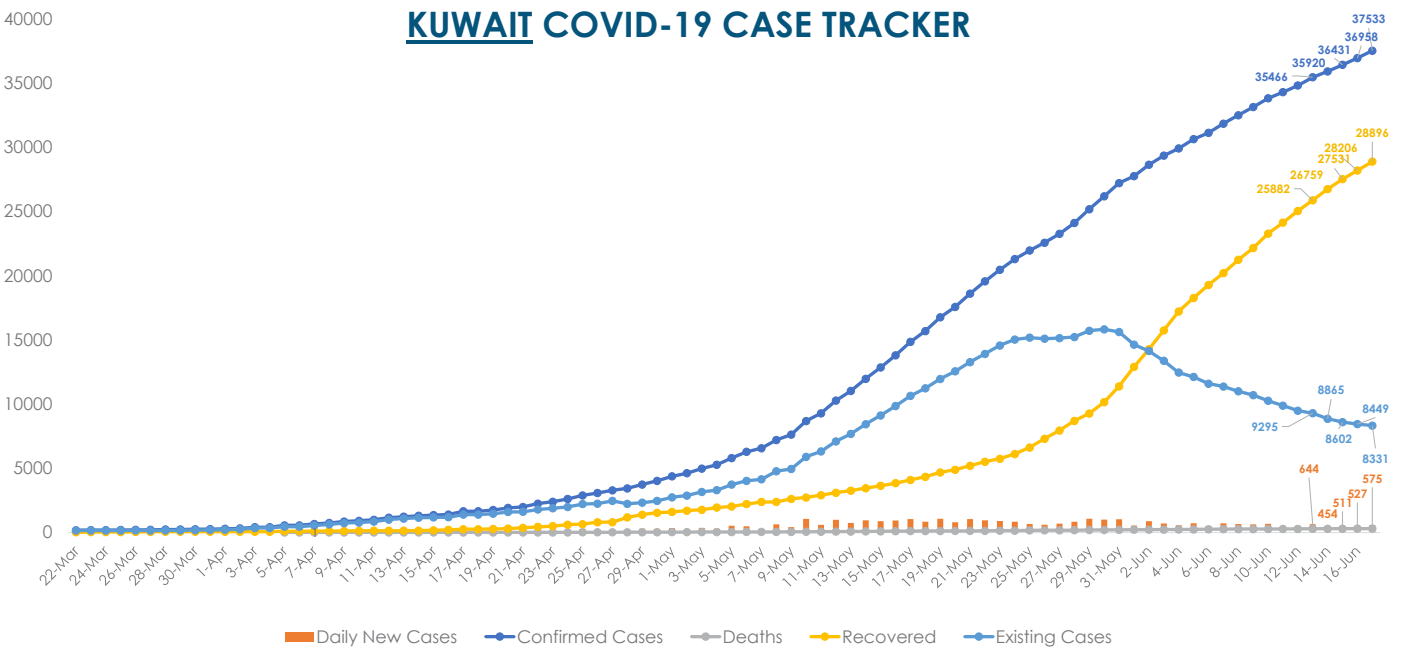
UAE COVID-19 CASE TRACKER



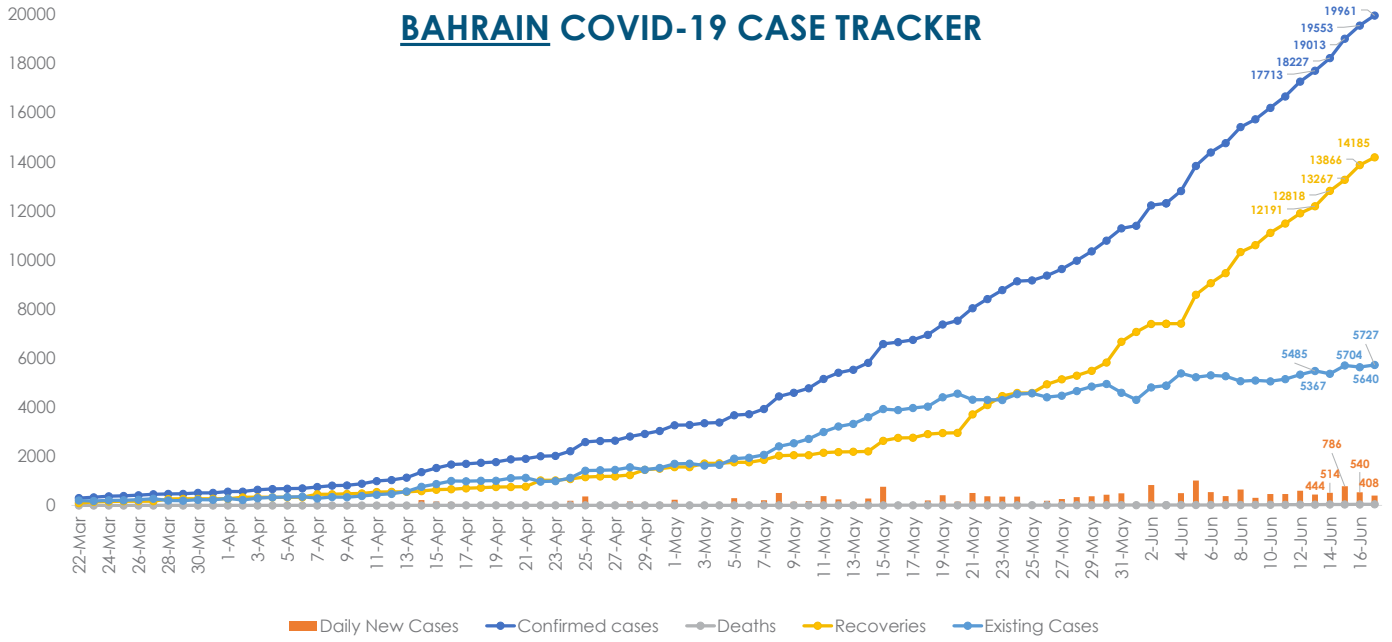
KSA COVID-19 CASE TRACKER



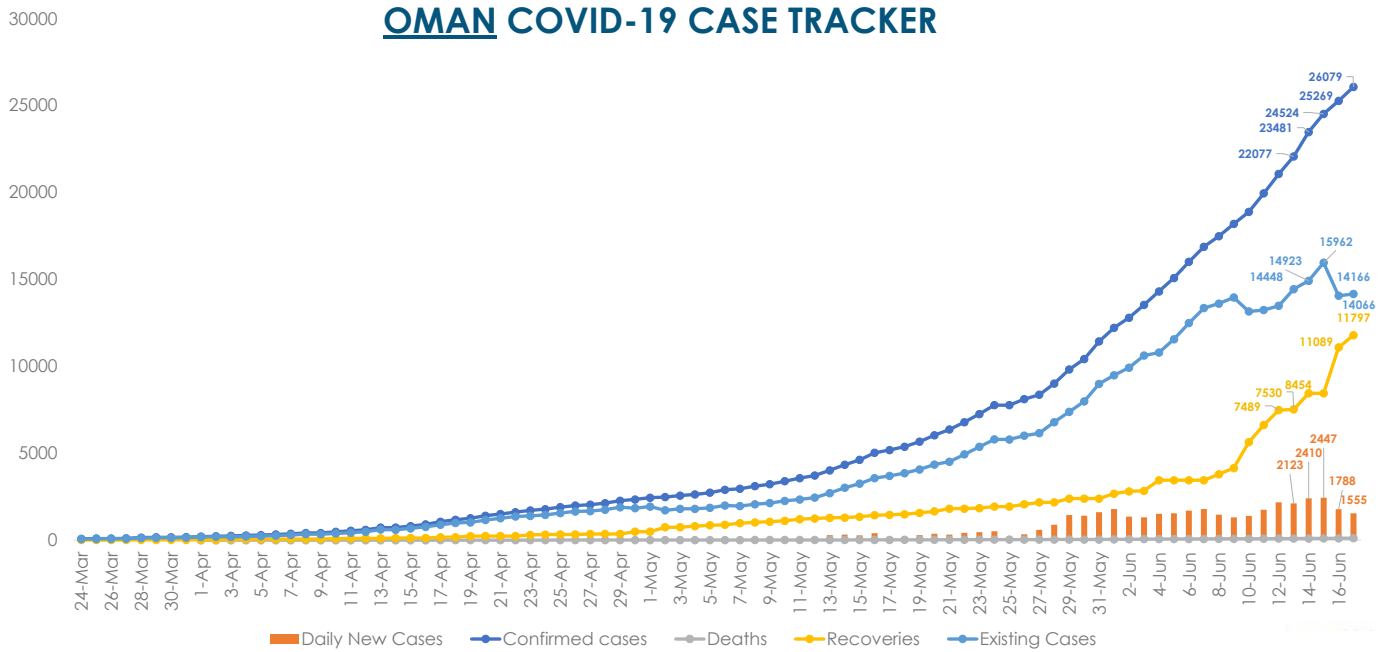
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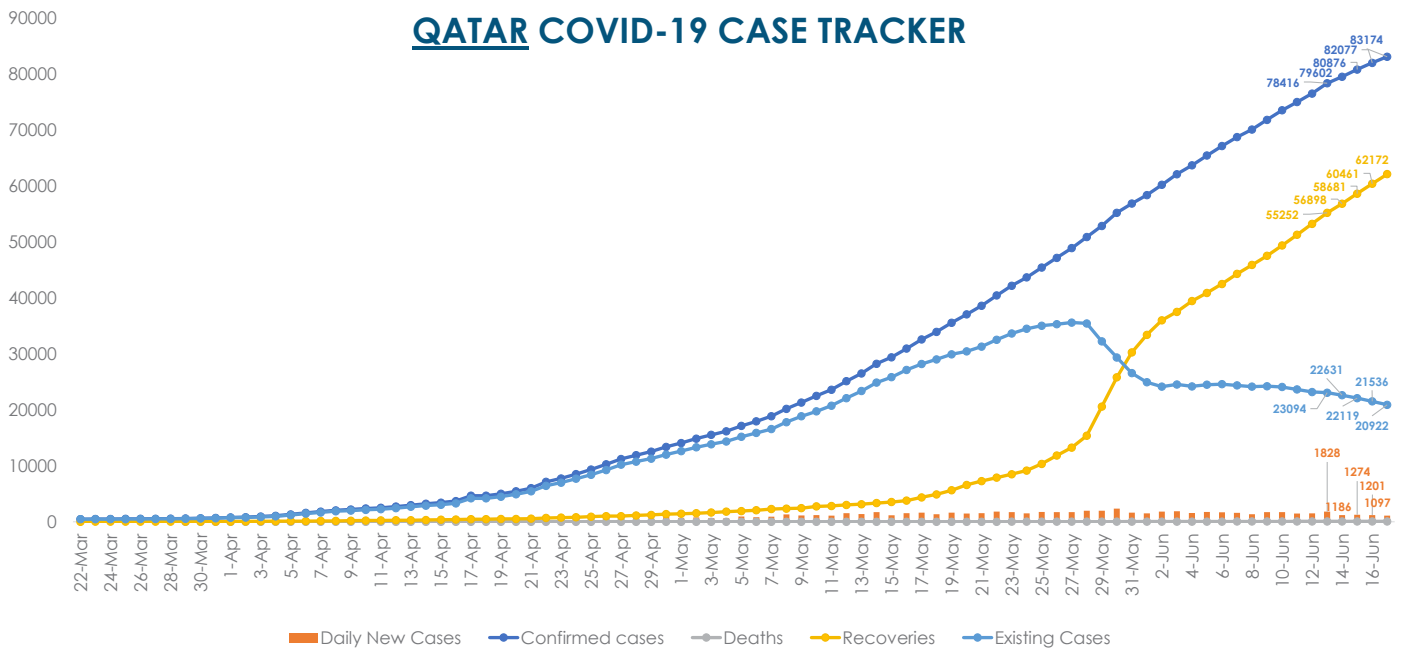
BAHRAIN COVID-19 CASE TRACKER



OMAN COVID-19 CASE TRACKER



QATAR COVID-19 CASE TRACKER



The hospitality sector

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to global economies, devastating travel, tourism and trade in its path. With the hospitality sector a major casualty, Accor has taken proactive steps to support its employees, business partners and guests during this unparalleled crisis.



Business recovery

We took the difficult decision to temporarily close several Middle East and Africa properties during the pandemic, but 28 of these have already re-opened since April as demand picked up and this number continues to increase daily. We predict regional business to return to 2019 levels within 18 to 24 months as countries relax quarantine measures and re-open borders. We believe there will be a three-phase recovery for tourism levels. Phase one focuses on local tourism and staycations, already successfully implemented in the UAE and reflected in positive Ajman and Fujairah occupancies; phase two targets short-haul travel as regional borders open; and phase three aims to re-boot international

travel when long-haul flights resume based on bilateral agreements in between countries.

ALL Heartist Fund

Launched in April, the ALL Heartist Fund of 70 million euros aims to provide financial aid to individual business partners, medical professionals and team members in financial distress or infected with COVID-19 with no medical insurance. The fund has already helped 10,000 team members and their families globally.

ALL Safe Accor programme

Protecting the wellbeing and safety of our guests is always a priority. Our newly launched ALL Safe programme is a set of rigorous health and safety measures designed to reassure them during these difficult times. It includes the appointment of a specially-trained ALL Safe Officer in every hotel, responsible for ensuring new procedures are implemented and to manage guest questions and concerns. The program encompasses partnerships with hygiene solutions specialist Bureau Veritas to introduce tailormade operating protocols, cleaning products, technology and staff training and insurance giant AXA, which from July, will provide guests with complimentary medical support. [Know more](#)



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