

# International

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Hydroxychloroquine shows no virus benefit, raises death risk: Study

## Morocco inmates make masks for fellow prisoners

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RIYADH: Saudis shop at a supermarket at the Panorama Mall in the capital Riyadh as Muslims prepare to celebrate the upcoming Eid Al-Fitr, that marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. — AFP

# Khashoggi family forgive killers

## Pardon criticized by UN rights official, fiancée

RIYADH: The family of slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi said on Friday they forgave his murderers, paving the way for a reprieve for five defendants sentenced to death for a crime that severely damaged the image of the kingdom's de facto ruler.

"If a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah," Khashoggi's son Salah tweeted, citing a verse from the Quran on forgiveness. "Therefore, we the sons of the martyr Jamal Khashoggi announce that we pardon those who killed our father".

In Saudi Arabia, which lacks a codified legal system and follows Islamic law, forgiveness from a victim's family in such cases can allow for a formal pardon and a stay of execution. The murder caused a global uproar and tarnished the image of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Some Western governments, as well as the CIA, said they believed he had ordered the killing. Saudi officials denied he played a role, though in September 2019 the prince indicated some personal accountability, saying "it hap-

pened under my watch".

The court which issued the five death sentences in December said the killing was not premeditated, a ruling which backed assertions by Saudi officials but which contradicted the findings of a UN-led inquiry into Khashoggi's killing. Khashoggi was last seen at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct 2, 2018, where he had gone to obtain documents for his impending wedding. His body was reportedly dismembered and removed from the building, and his remains have not been found.

Eleven suspects in all were put on trial in secretive proceedings in the capital Riyadh. In addition to the five sentenced to death, three were jailed and another three had the charges against them dismissed. Khashoggi's son Salah said last December that verdict had been "fair to us and that justice has been achieved." However, the trial was condemned by the United Nations and rights groups. Agnes Callamard, the UN special rapporteur for extrajudicial summary or arbitrary executions, accused

Saudi Arabia of making a "mockery" of justice by allowing the masterminds of the 2018 killing to go free.

A Saudi prosecutor at the time said there was no evidence connecting one of those officials, Saud al-Qahtani, to the killing and dismissed charges against Ahmed al-Asiri, a former deputy intelligence chief. The Saudi prosecutor had previously said that Qahtani, a former high-profile Saudi royal adviser, had discussed Khashoggi's activities before he entered the Saudi consulate with the team which went on to kill him. The prosecutor said Qahtani had acted in coordination with Asiri.

On Friday, Callamard criticized the potential pardon. "The Saudi authorities are playing out what they hope will be the final act in their well-rehearsed parody of justice in front of an international community far too ready to be deceived," she posted on Facebook. Khashoggi's fiancée Hatice Cengiz also condemned the pardon, tweeting: "Nobody has the right to pardon the killers. We will not pardon the killers nor those who ordered the killing," she said in a tweet. Salah Khashoggi and his three siblings still live in Saudi Arabia. News reports have said the family received money and real estate from the Saudi ruling family as compensation



**Murder triggered a global outrage**

## Amityville horror: Dad stabbed during Zoom chat

NEW YORK: A New York suburb was in shock Friday over a gruesome murder that saw a 32-year-old man stab and kill his father, who was attending a Zoom conference that included about 20 participants. Dwight Powers, 72, was participating in an e-meeting via the Zoom video chat platform at approximately noon on Thursday when his son, Thomas Scully-Powers, emerged and began beating him, police in Long Island's Suffolk County said. Several participants in the virtual chat called emergency authorities, police said, as the horrific events unfolded.

After his arrest, Scully-Powers told police he stabbed his father approximately 15 times in the back, neck and torso, switching knives because the blades were bending, according to prosecutors. The county medical examiner said Powers sustained multiple stab wounds to his chest and back - with one slash across his neck nearly decapitating him. The murder took place in the town of Amityville - known in particular for the horror book series bearing its name and related film, which came out in 1979. "This is a shocking and disturbing case," Suffolk District Attorney Timothy Sini said in a statement. "By the defendant's own admissions, he brutally stabbed his own father repeatedly until he

was certain he was dead." When officers arrived at the scene, Scully-Powers jumped from a second-story window, police said, attempting to flee on foot. He ran to a nearby deli and allegedly began pouring Dr. Pepper soda on himself in a bid to wash off the blood. Police quickly apprehended him nearby, they said. They also found evidence at the apartment, which Scully-Powers shared with his father, of apparent attempts to clean the scene, including a mop and bucket in the bathroom along with a blood-soaked bed sheet found in a garbage bag.

Scully-Powers was briefly hospitalized for minor injuries sustained from his leap out the window in Amityville, located approximately 40 miles east of Manhattan. He was released from the hospital on Friday and arraigned on second-degree murder charges, police said. Prosecutors did not provide details about a possible motive. The man's lawyer, Jonathan Manley, entered a plea of not guilty, local media said. Scully-Powers is due back in court on May 26, and until then is detained without bail.

If convicted, he faces a sentence of 25 years to life in prison. He has had previous brushes with the law, with charges of reckless endangerment, drug possession and criminal mischief. The murder appeared to be the first carried out on Zoom, which has boomed in popularity since confinement measures forced people to stay at home during the coronavirus pandemic. Since many US state and local governments issued stay-at-home orders, interviews and meetings on Zoom - along with similar conferencing platforms from Facebook, Google and Apple - have exploded in use for business, school and socializing.—AFP

## 'It has even changed death': Virus disrupts burials in Turkey

ISTANBUL: In normal times, almost 200 people would have attended the funeral for Ahmet Ucuoku's 95-year-old father at an Istanbul cemetery. The coronavirus which took his life has changed all that. "Many of my relatives wouldn't come except for close family members and his sons who were authorized to attend only," Ucuoku told AFP. "We are just six or seven people." The scaled-down ceremony took place at a cemetery in the city's Beykoz district on the Asian side, which was built in March when Turkey confirmed its first virus case. It already houses the remains of over 700 people who died of contagious diseases including COVID-19. Ucuoku lost his father Ali to the virus after the old man was treated for 10 days. He also suffered from chronic illnesses.

Gathered around the grave, Ucuoku and his close family - all wearing protective masks and standing a few paces from each other - say prayers after the coffin is buried. Before the pandemic a shroud would suffice. Only an hour earlier, the group were at a nearby morgue where the body was washed by personnel in hazmat suits before being wrapped in cloth and placed in a coffin. A small collective prayer was then held outside the morgue with those attending respecting social distancing rules. The imam - also in a hazmat suit - led the funeral prayers for the deceased before the coffin was taken by hearse to the Beykoz cemetery.



In this file photo Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi attends a press conference in the Bahraini capital Manama. The sons of murdered Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi said Friday that they "forgive" the killers of their father.—AFP

for Khashoggi's killing. The family has denied this claim.— Reuters

### 'Speedy burial'

Ayhan Koc, head of Istanbul's cemeteries department, said a fast burial without traditional Islamic rituals was an efficient and correct method given the current situation. He said in the past there would have been a funeral prayer after the midday and afternoon prayers but now the aim was to ensure a speedy burial, without even taking the body to the mosque.

The government shut down mosques in March for mass prayers as part of efforts to stop the spread of the virus. And rituals are no longer allowed where people visit the family of the deceased to offer their condolences and where verses from the Koran are recited. "A virus which could only be seen through a microscope has changed the world order, everything; customs, traditions and funeral ceremonies. It has changed even death," said Koc. Turkey has recorded more than 4,200 coronavirus deaths and 153,000 confirmed cases but the daily death tolls have recently fallen below 100.

### 'Damn disease'

At the Beykoz cemetery, three women - a mother and her two daughters - wearing headscarves were sitting on the ground next to a headstone, reading the Koran, with tears in their eyes. "Mosques are closed because of the pandemic. We cannot bury our deceased in the way we wanted," said Filiz, who lost her 76-year-old father last week. He died from an infectious disease but was buried at Beykoz because he received treatment at a pandemic hospital although he tested negative for COVID-19. "Only six people could join the funeral prayer: his grandchildren, daughters and son-in-laws. We buried my dad altogether," she said, adding the ceremony was at least "conducted in a proper fashion".—AFP