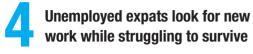


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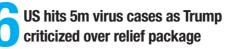
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Govt, Assembly near deal on plan to cut expat numbers

Ministry proposes to deport 360,000 expats soon

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government and the National Assembly appear to be nearing to approve a plan that envisages short-, mid- and long-term measures to drastically cut the number of expats in the country, with the government proposing to deport as many as 360,000 workers in the short-term.

Member of the Assembly's manpower resources development committee MP Osama Al-Shaheen said the government's plan calls to deport 120,000 illegal workers, 150,000 expats aged over 60 - employees, dependents or those suffering from chronic diseases - in addition to deporting 90,000 marginal and poorly-educated laborers.

The plan also proposes to cut tens of thousands of other expats through replacement, adopting technology and tightening the screws on recruitment, the lawmaker said. Shaheen said government plans show that the Kuwaiti population grew by 55 percent to 1.33 million between 2005 and the end of last year, while expats grew by more than 130 percent to 3.08 million during the same period.

Head of the committee MP Khalil Al-Saleh praised the government's plan, presented to the panel by Minister of Social Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel. He said the panel asked the minister to submit timelines for implementation, like setting an exact timetable for the next five years showing the size of cuts each year. He said the panel asked the government to

submit legislation needed to implement the plan by the end of this week. This will allow the committee to complete its report next week and submit it to the Assembly for voting.

Saleh said the discussion with the minister focused on steps needed to introduce a quota system that creates a balance between communities and takes care of security requirements. He said the government's plan is more than excellent as it provides many solutions regarding the numbers of expats, nationalities, domestic helpers and trafficking in persons.

The committee is also expected to review seven draft laws presented by MPs, all concerning measures to amend the population structure, currently tilted in favor of expats who make up 70 percent of the population.

lation. Shaheen said the government plan shows that one of the main problems for the small number of Kuwaitis in the private sector is the huge difference between benefits in the public and private sectors.

He said the plan shows that the average monthly salary for Kuwaiti males in the government is KD 1,769 and KD 1,265 for females, with 154 average monthly working hours. At the same time, average salaries in the private sector are KD 1,387 for Kuwaiti men and KD 835 for Kuwaiti women, with 187 monthly working hours, far more than the government sector. Shaheen said that the plan also shows that the state budget rose 15.5 percent with each 5 percent increase in the number of expats as a result of spending on health, subsidies and infrastructure.

Iran rejects GCC call for extension of arms embargo

DUBAI: Iran has rejected as "unrealistic" a call by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for the United Nations to extend an international arms embargo on Tehran that ends in October, state TV reported yesterday. The GCC, made up of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, said on Sunday that Iran's continued interference in neighboring countries made an extension necessary.

The arms embargo is currently set to end on Oct 18 as part of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which the United States quit in 2018. "The GCC is currently at the apex of its incompetence and its unrealistic policies have rendered it ineffective," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi told a televised news conference. "The council, swayed by the wrong and destructive policies and behavior of certain member states, has turned into a mouthpiece for anti-Iran elements inside and outside the region."

Continued on Page 2

PM: Kuwait eager to help Lebanon; world vows €250m

KUWAIT/PARIS: Kuwait stands ready to support Lebanon by any means necessary in the wake of a horrific port explosion that ravaged Beirut, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said on Sunday. Kuwait's support for the Lebanese people stems from its conviction in the deep camaraderie between the two countries, the Kuwaiti premier told an international donor conference for Lebanon via video link, co-hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron and UN chief Antonio Guterres.

The Kuwaiti relief package comprises previous pledges worth nearly \$30 million, in addition to medical supplies and food aid of up to \$11 million, he revealed, citing contributions from local charities as well. World leaders on Sunday pledged more than €250 million for disaster-struck Lebanon, France said, with the emergency aid to be delivered "directly" to a population reeling from the deadly port blast in Beirut.

Fifteen government leaders including US
President Donald Trump took part in the virtual
Continued on Page 2



KUWAIT: Lebanese residents donate blood for the victims of Beirut's blast at Kuwait Central Blood Bank during a campaign organized by the Banking Association on Sunday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Mt Sinabung blasts smoke, ash into sky

MEDAN, Indonesia: Indonesia's Mount Sinabung erupted yesterday, belching a massive column of ash and smoke 5,000 m into the air and plunging local communities into darkness with a thick layer of debris. The volcano on Sumatra island has been rumbling since 2010 and saw a deadly eruption in 2016. Activity had picked up in recent days, including a pair of smaller eruptions at the weekend.

There were no reports of injuries or deaths from yesterday morning's blast, but authorities warned of possible lava flows and more eruptions. "This is an alert for all of us to avoid red-zone areas near Sinabung," said Armen Putera, a local official with Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Centre. However, the crater's alert status remained at its second-highest level.

No one lives inside a previously announced nogo zone around the volcano. Small communities nearby were coated in a layer of thick ash as at least one village went from day to night in a matter of minutes. "It was like magic - when the ash came it went from being very bright to dark as night," said Rencana Sitepu, the head of Namanteran village, adding that some of the community's crops were destroyed by the fallout. "The village went dark for about 20 minutes."

The coronavirus pandemic complicated matters as scared residents violated safety rules.

Continued on Page 2

Cows on a wet tin roof: Floods strand animals

SEOUL: Dozens of cows were stranded on rooftops by floods in South Korea, leaving rescue crews facing a problem the size of several bovines. The cattle floated upwards as floodwaters mounted at the weekend in Gurye, a farming town in the country's south, and scrambled to safety on the roofs of several houses and other buildings. When the deluge receded, the animals found themselves stranded high and somewhat damp, and on the

horns of a dilemma with no way to get down.

Pictures showed as many as nine of them standing on one battered rooftop, looking mildly nonplussed. "The cows were swimming as the water level surged and made their way up onto the roof and stayed there even after the floodwaters subsided," one resident told television channel JTBC. Rescuers brought in a crane and lowered the cattle one by one from the rooftops, hoisting them onto a

But while the cows eventually did come home, many were showing symptoms of pneumonia, according to a veterinarian volunteering with the relief efforts. South Korea has been inundated by weeks of heavy rain that have caused widespread flooding, recording 31 deaths since the start of the



GURYE, South Korea: This photo taken on Sunday shows cows stranded on a rooftop at a farm in Jeolla



KARO, Indonesia: Mount Sinabung spews thick ash and smoke into the sky yesterday.—AFP

Local

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Kuwait records 687 new COVID-19 cases, four deaths

Recoveries up to 64,028 with 509 new ones

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Health said yesterday 687 people tested positive for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) while four persons died of the disease in the past 24 hours. MoH spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said that the total registered infections reached 72,400 while deaths increased to 482. He added that 443 cases of the new infections were Kuwaiti citizens, or

64.48 percent, and 244 were non-Kuwaitis, or 35.52 percent. The MoH had announced earlier the recovery of 509 people from the virus in the past 24 hours, as total recoveries reached 64,028.

Dr Sanad said 168 of the new cases were registered in Al-Ahmadi medical zone, 168 in Jahra, 147 in Farwaniya, 117 in Hawally and 87 in the Capital. He added that 117 patients were in

the intensive care units, and that people receiving treatment were 7,890. Medical workers conducted 3,450 swab tests in the past 24 hours, raising the total number of swabs since the outbreak of the disease to 535,803. Dr Sanad called on the public anew to abide by physical distancing and follow hygienic regulations. — KUNA



Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 72,400 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of yesterday, in addition to 482 deaths. With the exception of 117 cases in intensive care, all infected cases are in stable condition and are recovering in quarantined locations designated by the government for this purpose, while tens of thousands have been discharged from quarantine after exhibiting no symptoms during their 14-day quarantine period, the Ministry of Health confirmed. Meanwhile, 64,028 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 7,890 people receiving treatment.

Curfev

Kuwait moved to the third phase of a five-phase plan for a gradual return to normal life on June 28, 2020. The curfew is set from 9:00 pm to 3:00 am, government and private offices are able to operate with up to 50 percent capacity, mosques are allowed to host Friday prayers with strict social distancing and health precautions observed, malls can operate from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm, taxis are allowed to resume operations but they are allowed to carry only one passenger, while resorts, hotels and furnished apartment businesses are allowed to reopen.

Kuwait had moved to the second phase on June 30, 2020. The second phase saw the curfew shortened to be between 8:00 pm and 5:00 am, while resuming work in the government and private sectors with the workforce being less than 30 percent, in addition to resumption of constructions, banking sector, pickups from restaurants, as well as reopening of commercial complexes, malls, parks, and other places of leisure between 10:00 am and 6:00 pm.

The first phase began on May 31, and during which a daily curfew was imposed from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am, which was later reduced to start on 7:00 pm and end at 5:00 am starting from June 21 2020. Activities resumed in the first phase included home deliveries of restaurants, telecommunication companies, food retailers, companies' transportation of employees, gas stations, private clinics and car workshops. Phase four would see an increase in workforce, restaurants would be receiving customers but with restrictions, and public transportation resumed but with distancing. All activities would resume in phase five, the curfew would end, government and private sector returned to normal, families could gather, weddings and graduation ceremonies, health clubs and gyms to reopen, as well as cinemas and theaters.

The first phase included a total lockdown on Farwaniya, Khaitan, and Hawally, joining Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh which were put under lockdown earlier. The lockdown ended in Hawally and Khaitan on June 21, 2020, in Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on July 9,2020, and in

Farwaniya on July 26, 2020.

Commercial flights

Commercial flights resumed on August 1, while the airport will operate at 30 percent capacity during the six-month first phase of a three-stage airport reopening plan. However, flights to and from the following countries are suspended until further notice: Armenia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Northern Macedonia, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Serbia, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka and Syria.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation presented a set of rules for the safe resumption of air travel. The new rules mandate all travelers to wear protective facemasks and keep a hand sanitizer in their possession, besides strictly abiding by social distancing guidelines and keeping hand luggage to a minimum. Departing passengers are required to register to the 'Kuwait Mosafer' app, and provide negative COVID-19 test results before boarding their flights to destinations where such tests are required. Citizens are also required to obtain travel insurance that covers COVID-19 treatment. Manual checks of tickets have now been scaled back as a result of the pandemic in favor of the more popular digital e-tickets, whose scanning requires no physical contact. Passengers must be present at the airport no less than four hours before departure to ensure a smooth and convenient journey.

Meanwhile, arriving passengers must register to the 'Shlonik' app before boarding, and obtain an accredited PCR certificate showing negative COVID-19 test results valid for 96 hours from the test's date. Passengers will have their temperatures checked before boarding the plane and upon arrival, while a random PCR test will be conducted for 10 percent of passengers on each flight. All arriving passengers must home quarantine for 14 days upon arrival. Kuwait had earlier sent special flights to repatriate Kuwaitis back home from countries affected with the virus' spread. Meanwhile, the Cabinet announced on April 9 the operation of all airline flights for expats who are wishing to return back to their countries. Kuwait suspended issuing entry permits and visas unless those issued through diplomatic missions.

School year ended

The Ministry of Education announced on July 17 ending the 2019-2020 school year, with the remaining part of the curriculum of the year's second half will be integrated into the first chapter of the next academic year 2020-2021 virtually effective as of October 4, after modifying the curriculum. Pre-school pupils, students of elementary and

intermediate levels will be promoted to the higher classes. As to the high school level, students who desire to improve their grades can re-enroll in the scholastic year. As to grade 12, the remaining period of the second semester of the 2019-2020 school year was set at six weeks, while curricula were amended in tandem with the complementary study period, due between August 9 and September 17, and that will be via electronic means. Students' assessment will be on weekly basis through interaction and virtual presence at the set educational website. The ministry is still expected to release regulations regarding the start of the 2020/2021 school year at foreign private schools. Earlier, the Ministry of Education had suspended classes at all public and private schools (for both students and teaching staffs); first from March 1 to March 12, and later extended it until March 29, before eventually suspending schools until August for grade 12 and October for other

Hatlines

The Ministry of Health has set the following hotlines to receive inquiries about the coronavirus 24/7: 24970967 - 96049698 - 99048619.

The Education Ministry set the following hotlines to receive inquiries on school closures related to the anti-coronavirus measures:

- 24970967 (24/7 hotline)
- 51575591 (Capital Educational Zone)51576117 (Hawally Educational Zone)
- 5157617 (Hawany Educational Zone) • 51576576 (Farwaniya Educational Zone)
- 51577055 (Jahra Educational Zone)51577655 (Ahmadi Educational Zone)
- 51577951 (Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Zone)
- 51578171 (Religious Studies Department)
- 51588599 (Private Education Department)
- 51592515 (Services Department)51594544 (Public Relations Department)

Medicine delivery

Kuwait's Ministry of Health (MOH) launched a new medicine delivery service for people in Kuwait, which they can use to order medications to be delivered during curfew hours. The medications will be delivered within 72 hours after the order is submitted. To place an order, patients should send a WhatsApp to the numbers for the hospitals and medical centers as listed below. The patient should include their name, Civil ID number, hospital or clinic file number, mobile phone number and the medicine needed to the following numbers.

Amiri Hospital: 50880699 Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital: 50880755 Farwaniya Hospital: 50880852 Adan Hospital: 50880908 Jahra Hospital: 50881066 Sabah Hospital: 97632660 Jaber Hospital: 96992079 Ibn Sina Hospital: 99613948 Chest Hospital: 99258749 Razi Hospital: 97633487 Kuwait Cancer Control Center: 96735242 Psychiatric Hospital: 97350113 Physiotherapy Hospital: 99824037 Maternity Hospital: 98559531 As'ad Al-Hamad Dermatology Center: 98514508 Zain Hospital: 97552031 **NBK Hospital: 96931761** Al-Rashed Allergy Hospital: 94162470 Infectious Diseases Hospital: 96989164 Palliative Care Hospital: 94024786 Sabah Al-Ahmad Urology Center: 90952469 KFH Addiction Treatment Center: 94169363

Meanwhile, all licensed pharmacies in Kuwait delivering medicine are allowed to continue their services 24 hours a day. The Ministry of Health is also asking doctors and nurses affiliated with the private medical sector to volunteer in order to contribute to the fight against the virus. Volunteering is available through the link: http://volunteering.q8-ehealth.com. The ministry had closed all private clinics and medical centers effective March 22, 2020 until further notice.

Mental health assistance

The Kuwait Center for Mental Health provides help through its suicide hotline: 24621770 (8 am - 5 pm). Meanwhile, the Kuwait Psychological Association (KPA) is providing consultation through the phone for people suffering from the psychological impacts of coronavirus. Different doctors are working on the hotline in different timings as follows:

Dr Rashed Al-Sahl: on Monday and Wednesday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. Call 9797-6168.

Dr Fahad Al-Tasha: daily from 8:00 pm - 12:00 am. Call 9904-8258.

Dr Othman Al-Asfour: daily 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Call 9938-5350.

Dr Mohammed Al-Khaldi (head of this team): daily

9:00 am - 12:00 pm. Call 9903-6470. Dr Ahmad Al-Khaldi: daily 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm.

Call 9910-7965. Dr Muneera Al-Qattan: Monday and Wednesday

9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Call 9953-3108. Dr Zainab Al-Saffar: Sunday and Thursday 7:00

pm - 9:00 pm. Call 9954-9908. Dr Sameera Al-Kandari: Tuesday 9:00 pm - 12:00

am. Call 6770-9434.
Dr Kawthar Al-Yaqout: Monday and Wednesday

Dr Kawthar Al-Yaqout: Monday and Wednesday 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Call 5521-0088.

For information and other concerns, call 9401-4283.

Iran rejects GCC call for extension...

Continued from Page 1

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday that the United Nations Security Council will vote this week on a US bid to extend the arms

PM: Kuwait eager to help Lebanon...

Continued from Page 1

conference, pledging solidarity with the Lebanese people and promising to muster "major resources" in the coming days and weeks. A joint statement issued after the meeting in which representatives of nearly 30 countries as well as the EU and Arab League participated, did not mention a global amount. But Macron's office said the total figure of "emergency aid pledged or that can be mobilized quickly" amounts to €252.7 million (\$298 millon), including €30 million from France.

Macron was the first world leader to visit the former French colony after Tuesday's devastating explosion of a huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate which killed more than 150 people, wounded some 6,000 and left an estimated 300,000 homeless. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told ZDF broadcaster that "more than 200 million euros of emergency aid have been collected," including €20 million from Germany.

The joint statement from the world leaders and their representatives underscored concerns about Lebanese government corruption. "The participants embargo on Iran, despite warnings by some diplomats that the measure lacks support. If the United States is unsuccessful in extending the embargo, it has threatened to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran under a process agreed in the 2015 deal.

In May, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani threatened a "crushing response" if the embargo on Iranian trade of conventional arms was extended. Iran has breached parts of the nuclear deal in response to the 2018 US withdrawal and Washington's re-imposition of sanctions. — Reuters

agreed that their assistance should be timely, sufficient and consistent with the needs of the Lebanese people, well-coordinated under the leadership of the United Nations, and directly delivered to the Lebanese population, with utmost efficiency and transparency," it said.

USAID acting administrator John Barsa also said in a conference call Sunday that American help, some \$15 million announced so far, "is absolutely not going to the government". The donor nations urged Lebanon's authorities to "fully commit themselves to timely measures and reforms" in order to unlock longer-term support for the country's economic and financial recovery. And they said assistance for "an impartial, credible and independent inquiry" into Tuesday's explosion "is immediately needed and available, upon request of Lebanon."

The UN said some \$117 million will be needed for an emergency response over the next three months, for health services, emergency shelter, food distribution and programs to prevent further spread of COVID-19, among other interventions. Lebanese President Michel Aoun, who was also on Sunday's group call, thanked Macron for the initiative. "Much is needed to rebuild what has been destroyed and to restore Beirut's luster," the Lebanese presidency quoted him on Twitter as saying. "The needs are many and we need to address them quickly, especially before the arrival of winter, which will accentuate the suffering of homeless citizens."

Mt Sinabung blasts smoke...

Continued from Page 1

"Locals were gathering after the eruption without using face masks because they were all panicking," said local disaster agency chief Natanael Peranginangin. Sinabung had roared back to life in 2010 for the

At least 21 people are still missing from the huge blast, and the Lebanese army said Sunday hopes of finding survivors are dwindling. Lebanese people enraged by official negligence blamed for the explosion have taken to the streets in anti-government protests that have resulted in clashes with the army. Macron said it was now up to the authorities of Lebanon "to act so that the country does not sink, and to respond to the aspirations that the Lebanese people are expressing right now, legitimately, in the streets of Beirut". "We must all work together to ensure that neither violence nor chaos prevails," he added. "It is the future of Lebanon that is at stake."

Trump also called for calm, according to the White House, which said he agreed with other leaders on the group call to "work closely together in international response efforts". "President Trump also urged the government of Lebanon to conduct a full and transparent investigation, in which the United States stands ready to assist," it said. "The President called for calm in Lebanon and acknowledged the legitimate calls of peaceful protestors for transparency, reform, and accountability."

Apart from heads of state and government ministers, Sunday's conference was attended by UN aid coordinator Mark Lowcock, representatives of the World Bank, the Red Cross, the IMF, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Israel, with whom

first time in 400 years. After another period of inactivity, it erupted once more in 2013, and has remained highly active since.

In 2016, seven people died in one of the eruptions, while another in 2014 killed 16. In late 2018, a volcano in the strait between Java and Sumatra islands erupted, causing an underwater landslide and tsunami which killed more than 400 people. Indonesia is home to about 130 active volcanoes due to its position on the "Ring of Fire", a belt of tectonic plate boundaries circling the Pacific Ocean where frequent seismic activity occurs. — AFP

Lebanon has no diplomatic relations, did not participate, though Macron said it had expressed a wish to contribute, nor did Iran which wields huge influence in Lebanon through the Shiite group Hezbollah.

Key Arab states in the Gulf, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq and the UAE were represented, as were Britain, China, Jordan and Egypt. Macron said Turkey, with which France's diplomatic ties have been icy over the Libyan conflict, and Russia had indicated their support for the initiative, though they did not take part in the conference.

According to the UN, at least 15 medical facilities, including three major hospitals, sustained structural damage in the blast, and extensive damage to more than 120 schools may interrupt learning for some 55,000 children. Thousands of people are in need of food and the blast interrupted basic water and sanitation to many neighborhoods. Pope Francis called Sunday appealed for "generous help" from the international community.

France has been sending tonnes of medical and food aid, dozens of search and rescue personnel and forensic experts to aid the investigation, as well as reconstruction materials. On top of cash aid pledged so far, Egypt and Qatar have promised field hospitals, Brazil said it would send 4,000 tons of rice, and Spain 10 tons of wheat. "In these horrendous times, Lebanon is not alone," concluded the conference statement. — Agencies

Tuesday, August 11, 2020 Local

Kuwait delivers medical devices to Lebanon's hospitals

Two Kuwaiti aid planes land at Beirut airport



BEIRUT: Kuwait Red Crescent and Lebanese Red Cross workers move a hospital bed as part of a shipment of medical equipment donated by Kuwait to Lebanon's hospitals. — KUNA photos

BEIRUT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) on Sunday delivered medical equipment and supplies to hospitals affected by the blast that recently rocked Beirut port in Lebanon. The society's field team visited five affected hospitals and was briefed on their conditions, and handed those facilities the medical devices and supplies, Musa'ed Al-Enzi, head of the society's mission in Lebanon, said in a press statement. He stressed the importance of supporting the affected hospitals to help them resume their roles in treating those injured by the incident and provide immediate healthcare to them. He pointed to the society's keenness on offering necessary needs, including medical and resuscitation devices, beds, wheelchairs, and protection and safety equipment, to hospitals. Such aid aims to enable hospitals to assume their humanitarian and national roles towards the Lebanese people in these difficult circumstances that require concerted efforts and potentials to serve the country, he noted. He expressed Kuwait's solidarity with the Lebanese people in this plight, stressing the society's continued support to the brotherly Lebanese people.

Meanwhile, head of Karantina Hospital Careen Saqar lauded, in a statement the press, the society's backing to the affected hospitals, affirming Kuwait's stance supporting Lebanon and its people. She said that the medical devices received by the hospital will contribute to the reconstruction process and the treatment of patients during the coming period. In addition to its field work to back those affected by the Beirut blast, the KRCS has been continuing its humanitarian aid to the Syrian and Palestinian refugees as well as needy families in Lebanon.

Aid planes arrive

Earlier on Sunday, two Kuwaiti Air Force planes carrying food supplies land at Beirut International Airport just a few days after a seaport explosion in the Lebanese capital. The pilot of the first plane, Colonel Firas Al-Khulaifi, said that this was the sixth plane carrying 50 tons of food and flour to the peo-



A Kuwait Air Force plane carrying aid relief to Lebanon lands at Beirut International Airport.

ple affected. The second plane's pilot said that his plane was the seventh of its kind and was carrying 60 tons of flour. The Kuwaiti aid is meant to ease out the impacts of a powerful seaport blast near central Beirut on Tuesday, which killed more than a hundred people and left thousands displaced.

In the meantime, two European diplomats praised the prompt aid Kuwait has given Lebanon after a port blast there left its capital Beirut in a heap of ruins, in addition to its simultaneous efforts to fight the coronavirus pandemic. KRCS' gracious endeavors epitomize the country's overwhelming support for the Lebanese people in the wake of the blast, Germany's ambassador to Kuwait Stefan Mobs and his Czech counterpart Martin Dvorak agreed, saying they were both "saddened" over the horrific death toll. KRCS teams in Lebanon had surveyed the destruction triggered by the powerful port explosion in Lebanon, subsequently putting together a proper aid program, the charity's chief Dr Hilal Al-Sayer was cited as saying in a statement on Sunday. He promised the Lebanese people that Kuwait would never "abandon" them, saying Beirut is in dire need of urgent aid to emerge from the tide of destruction that tore through the city. — KUNA





ing donations from Kuwait to Lebanese hospitals



Flour loaded into one of the planes to be donated to people affected by Beirut's blast.

LOYAC concludes first phase of KON program

KUWAIT: LOYAC recently concluded the first phase of the 'KON' entrepreneurship program organized in collaboration with Babson College-USA and sponsored by NBK, Agility and Zain telecom. In this regard, LOYAC's

Deputy Board Chairman and Managing Director Fadya Al-Marzouq said she had never imagined she would be delivering a speech without real audience from the comfort of her living room. Marzouq expressed her joy for celebrating the conclusion of the KON program, through which 32 students competed in seven projects. Meanwhile, KON program manager and the head of the training department Eman Al-Omar said that the program targets children aging 12-16, and helps develop their talents and skills in order to prepare them for the labor market.



News in brief

Outdoor labor violations

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower filed 375 citations for violations of the law that bans outdoor labor from 11 am to 4 pm every day during the period between June 1 and August 6, Al-Qabas daily reported yesterday. The majority of violations took place as companies rushed to complete construction projects after Kuwait ended its total curfew on May 31, the daily reported.

10,000 IDs per day

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information released a statement in which it issued an apology to citizens and residents for the delay in issuing civil IDs, which it attributed to the four-month suspension of work during the curfew. Despite that, 10,000 civil IDs were delivered per day since work resumed, PACI noted.

Crossroad open

KUWAIT: The General Traffic Department announced the opening of a crossroad connecting Jaber Al-Malek Street with Musaed Abdulla Al-Sayer Street. The crossroad, opened yesterday, is part of the South Surra Road Development Project, it added.



KUWAIT: The Public Health Department team carried out tests for employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through nasopharyngeal swabs, as part of the Ministry of Health's efforts in fighting the spread of COVID-19.







Local

COMMERCIAL



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CORRECTION

The Kuwait Times published an article August 9 incorrectly stating that a gate blocking beach access was placed on state property. The property is privately owned and not state property. Kuwait Times apologizes for this and regrets the error.

Woman stabbed in family dispute

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti woman narrowly escaped death after her nephew stabbed her while she was sleeping, due to some family disputes. Security sources said the woman was rushed to Adan Hospital in critical condition, while the suspect, who stabbed his aunt eight times in her sleep, was detained for attempted murder.

Jleeb fight

An expat was rushed to hospital after he was stabbed during a fight with some of his compatriots in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, said security sources, noting that the assailants were arrested and referred to relevant authorities.

Armed robbery

A Kuwaiti reported that the driver of a vehicle fired some shots at him from a Kalashnikov machinegun and stole his mobile phone and KD 1,500 in cash after forcing him to stop while he was driving in Kabd, said security sources. The man said he was driving his car in Kabd accompanied by a friend, when the driver of a vehicle with tinted windows stopped him, pointed the weapon at him and fired a few shots to frighten them before he stole the cash and mobile. A case was filed.

Money laundering

State security detectives continued interrogating Saad Al-Tamimi, who was arrested a few days ago by state security forces and is due to be referred to the public prosecution, said informed security sources. The sources added that investigations showed strong suspicions that the suspect's wealth had grown significantly though money laundering operations but remarked that investigations conducted so far had not yet shown any financial transactions with lawmakers or officials despite his strong connections with some of them.—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Unemployed expats look for new work while struggling to survive

More than 25,000 Filipinos unemployed or have left Kuwait

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Philippine Embassy in Kuwait has revealed that more than 25,075 Filipinos have lost their jobs or left Kuwait as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Exact numbers of those who have lost their jobs permanently or temporarily and who have left Kuwait for good are not available. The embassy is unable to determine how many may have lost their jobs but remain in Kuwait, looking for new employment.

"We've got the number of unemployed Filipinos based on the number of applications for cash assistance, an aid program organized by the Philippine's Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to Filipinos who were abandoned by their employers," an official at the embassy told Kuwait Times. The official did not want to be named.

Of the more than 25,000 Filipino nationals in Kuwait who sought financial assistance from the DOLE, a total of 19,587 were approved and received aid. "The cash assistance being handed over by DOLE is worth KD 60 (\$200) each and the distribution continues as we speak," he said. "Until now there are Filipinos who aren't back at work and those that have no work are still being assisted by the embassy through food packs," he added.

Financial woes

After more than five months of the coronavirus pandemic, many private sector companies in Kuwait have laid off staff or cut salaries. Early estimates from March and April suggested that as many as 250,000 expatriates had lost their salaries or income. Though the economy has begun

to reopen with the move to phase two and now phase three of Kuwait's resumption of public life, many private sector businesses - and by extension their employees - remain financially strapped.

"I worked for four years in a company, and during the lockdown, many of us were called by the human resource department of our company. We expected to receive some cash assistance because of the lockdown, but we were wrong. We were called to receive a termination letter. We were about 50 people in the company who were called just to receive the letter," one Filipino worker said.



Kuwait Times asked if he wished to continue working in Kuwait by seeking other employment. "Yes, but my problem is my visa. It's article 18 but under a government project, and according to them, it's non-transferable. It means we need to go back to our country and return if we want to continue working in Kuwait. I want to stay because my mother is here and I want to be with her. But because of the restrictions, I have no choice but to return to the Philippines," he said.

"Many of us are working for government proj-

ects and our company is included, I heard," he rued. "It was the hardest chapter of my life because we all come to work and are doing our best to showcase our skills in the job. Unfortunately, COVID-19 happened and suddenly we are all affected," he said.

'Everything closed'

Another terminated barista said his company decided to close the coffee shop in March due to lack of customers. "We closed on March 1. We were given time by our employer to look for another job so he could transfer the visa. But at that time, everything was closed - Kuwait imposed curfews and lockdowns. So I stayed at home with a friend. I am not paying anything and he said he will do so until everything is settled and I get a job. I know the situation is really very hard now, but we cannot do anything. Even going home costs KD 300 for a one-way plane ticket," he said.

The most affected workers within the Filipino communities are those working in salons, barbershops and spas, as well as tailors and those connected to mass transportation (bus drivers) - all of these businesses remain closed.

"Until now we do not have work at the salon. We cannot provide home service as well because houses are prohibiting visitors. Our shop is closed and I don't know if they are going to reopen even when salons will be allowed to reopen, because our employer hasn't communicated with us since we closed our shop," salon worker Dina told Kuwait Times. "I am still surviving because my flat mates are working in the hospital and they are bringing food, and sometimes we get aid from organizations or the government," she added.

Sabah Hospital team conducts 'successful' surgery

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: General Surgery and Obesity Consultant at Sabah Hospital Dr Mohammad Al-Saleemi revealed that a medical team succeeded in carrying out a rare and complicated operation on a patient's abdomen and colon. The procedure follows two previous surgeries performed on the patient; a woman in her 50s who is suffering from hypertension and diabetes in addition to depression, he explained. "Such procedures are usually carried out abroad with several teams involved, including one to remove the colon and another to cut out intestinal adhesions. But in Kuwait, it was performed by one team and was 100 percent successful as the patient no longer suffers any problems," he said, adding that the procedure was carried out in February 2020.





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Firefighters put out fuel truck blaze

KUWAIT: Five Kuwaiti firefighting squads have extinguished a large fire that broke out in a fuel truck after it overturned on Jahra Road, the country's fire agency said. The fire of the truck, which carried 36,000 liters of diesel fuel, was put under control within a relatively short period of time, the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate said in a press release on Sunday. However, the truck's driver was injured in the accident and was immediately taken to hospital, it added. —KUNA





A way of life



ometimes one receives messages on social media that are meaningful and have a purpose – in other words, not everything is bad. I agree that mobile phones are now very important in our lives to the point that I do not exaggerate to say that it is the third element without which we cannot live – blood, oxygen and mobile phones.

Of course, phones and their social media applications are multi-edged, not double-edged only. They can be used for many beneficial purposes and help in many aspects, and of course they can be used in a lethal fashion, or actually misused by those spreading false rumors that are detrimental to the society and can cause much chaos and create rifts between society members and even strife. We saw and learned how social media is used by terrorists to communicate and even plan their heinous activities.

communicate and even plan their heinous activities.

We also must be careful and know how to avoid invasive social media by abusive operators who have the means and knowledge how to get into your computer or mobile phone and download all what you have stored and turn around to start blackmailing, and this is worse than hacking, as it is more personal and may destroy families and break up marriages. Of course one should not give in to the blackmailers - rather they must resort to authorities who can in most cases identify and hold them to account, instead of becoming virtual slaves of those scavengers.

On a different page, I received messages that I would like to share with you:

At one stage of your life you will recognize that respect is more important than love, and that consensus is more important than proportionality, confidence is better than envy and patience is the greatest evidence of sacrifice.

Staying at a distance from problems does not mean weakness - rather it means that you are more able to enjoy your life.

When you forgive you will not change the past, rather will make the difference in the future!

rather will make the difference in the future!

There is a fine line between gaining and breaking hearts. Everything around us will disappear except for good deeds which will always be instilled in the heart, and congratulations to those who plant the seeds of goodness on all paths and congratulations for he who gifted those who came across his life with part of his kindness. The purity of heart is not stupidity - rather it is a good deed that you will be rewarded for.

International

'Holy warrior' selfies: Pakistan teen feted for killing US blasphemy suspect

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US hits 5 million COVID-19 cases

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Pressure mounts on Lebanese government

Government ministers resign over blast, failure to reform

BEIRUT: Two members of Lebanon's government have quit over a deadly blast that unleashed public rage against the country's ruling class, with protesters and police fighting running battles in the capital for a second day. As hopes faded of finding any survivors of Tuesday's explosion, information minister Manal Abdel Samad and environment minister Damianos Kattar both announced their resignations Sunday, in a further hit to the embattled government of Prime Minister Hassan Diab. Calling the explosion an "enormous catastrophe", Kattar said he had lost hope in a "sterile regime that botched several opportunities".

Several MPs also quit and local media reported Diab was mulling announcing the entire government's resignation, a day after protesters briefly occupied and ransacked government ministries. Hundreds gathered again in and around Martyrs' Square, a short walk from the port where the devastating explosion occurred, killing at least 158 people and injuring a staggering 6,000, many bloodied by flying glass. "Those who died paid the price of a state that doesn't care about anything except power and money," said protester Tamara, 23, whose friend Rawan, 20, was killed in the blast.

"It's not enough that ministers resign," said her friend Michel. "Those who put the explosives there must be

held accountable. We want an international tribunal to tell us who killed (Rawan)." Police later fired tear gas in an attempt to disperse protesters who hurled stones and let off fireworks near a street leading to parliament, AFP correspondents said. Many wore helmets and gas masks, some wielded makeshift shields and others rushed to pick up smouldering tear gas shells and threw them back towards police.

'My government did this'

While it is not known what started the fire that set off a huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate, protesters say the disaster could not have happened without the corruption and incompetence that have come to define Lebanon's ruling class.

A picture went viral online showing the city's devastated port, with a low wall in the foreground bearing the spray-painted message: "My government did this." The disaster has revived anger at a ruling class seen as living in luxury while millions endure job losses, deepening poverty, power blackouts and garbage mountains piling up in the streets. The Lebanese army had "fading hopes" of finding any more survivors, Colonel Roger Khoury told reporters Sunday. Human Rights Watch's Lebanon researcher Aya Majzoub said some security

forces had indiscriminately fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters.

"Instead of deploying the army to help residents clear rubble from their homes, businesses, and communities, the Lebanese authorities chose to deploy them and other security forces against protesters." Saturday's violence injured 65 people, the Lebanese Red Cross reported, while lawyers supporting protesters said security forces made 20 arrests. The August 4 explosion came as Lebanon was already reeling from an economic crisis that has seen its currency collapse, plunging swathes of its population into poverty, and struggling with a spike in coronavirus cases.

Aid and investigation

On Sunday, French President Emmanuel Macron oversaw a UN-backed virtual donor conference that pledged 250 million euros (\$294 million) in aid for the cash-strapped country, where some 300,000 people were rendered homeless by the disaster. In a joint statement, donors pledged the assistance would be "directly delivered to the Lebanese population" under the supervision of the UN. The UN said about \$117 million would be needed over the next three months for health services, emergency shelter, food distribution and programs to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, among other interventions.

The donors also offered support for an "impartial, credible and independent inquiry" into the disastersomething Lebanese President Michel Aoun has dismissed, saying it would only "dilute the truth". US President Donald Trump urged Lebanese authorities "to conduct a full and transparent investigation, in which the United States stands ready to assist". The revelation that Lebanese state officials had long tolerated a ticking time-bomb in the heart of the capital has served as shocking proof to many Lebanese of the rot at the core of the state apparatus.

Diab said Saturday he would propose early elections to break the impasse that is plunging Lebanon ever deeper into political and economic crisis. Parliament speaker Nabih Berri called a meeting of the legislature on Thursday "to question the government on the crime that struck the capital", state media said. Politics in multi-confessional Lebanon is dominated by former warlords from the 1975-1990 civil war who have exchanged their military fatigues for suits, or were replaced by relatives. While there are Sunni Muslim, Christian and myriad other groups, the most powerful is the Shiite Hezbollah movement.—AFP

David and Goliath: China and Taiwan's military mismatch

TAIPEI: Few geopolitical contests are as mismatched as China and Taiwan. One is an authoritarian regional superpower of 1.4 billion people that boasts the world's largest standing army and spends more on its military than any other country except the United States. The other is a self-ruled democracy of 23 million, a comparative economic and military minnow that lives under the threat of constant invasion. The Taiwan Strait remains one of the world's most dangerous flashpoints. Tensions are on the rise again with the US sending its highest-level delegation to Taipei since Washington switched diplomatic recognition to China

Why are they enemies?

Taiwan and China split in 1949 when Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists fled to the island to set up a separate authoritarian government after losing a civil war on the mainland to Mao Zedong's communists. Both sides claimed to represent China and for the first three decades, the conflict remained hot with China regularly shelling Taiwanese islands close to the mainland. In the worst attack in 1958, the People's Liberation Army fired 470,000 shells for 44 days, killing 618 servicemen

As late as the 1970s, China was still bombarding the islands, although by then the shells were stuffed with propaganda leaflets. A detente set in, followed by a tacit agreement in the early 1990s where both sides settled on there being "one China" but agreed to disagree on what that meant. Since then, a more distinct

Taiwanese identity has emerged that sees the island as a de facto independent state with a separate destiny from the Chinese

Where is Taiwan weak?

In sheer numbers and money, it is dwarfed by China's military. Taiwan has around 215,000 soldiers and a defence budget of \$12 billion compared with China's estimated two million armed forces backed by a budget of \$178 billion. China is a nuclear-armed state with a growing arsenal of state-of-the-art weaponry including advanced fighter jets, two aircraft carriers, and more on the way. It also has a growing number of missiles, some of them hypersonic, positioned just across the Taiwan Strait and more than 60 submarines, including nuclear-powered vessels. Taiwan's 300 or so fighter jets have all been in services since the 1990s. Its navy is massively outgunned by China's-two of its four ageing submarines were built in the 1940s.

Where is Taiwan strong?

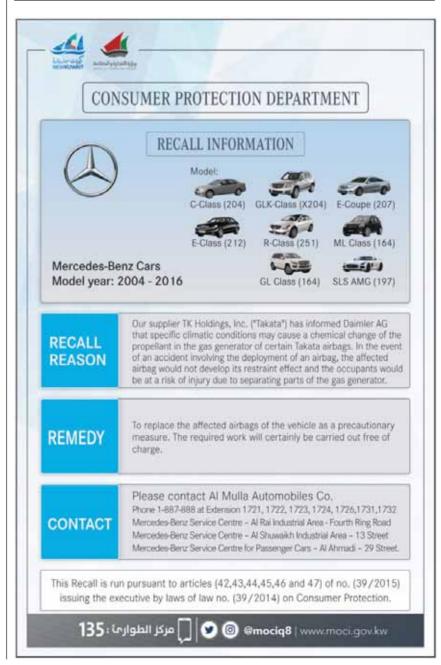
Military might is no guarantee of victory-insurgents have managed to bog US-led NATO forces in Afghanistan for two decades. Taiwan assesses that it does not need to match China dollar for dollar. It has long planned for asymmetric warfare, safe in the knowledge that defending an island is far easier than taking it. With many Western nations-until recently-reluctant to sell big-ticket military items lest they incur Beijing's wrath, Taiwan developed a vibrant and innovative domestic weapons industry. Comparatively cheap missiles, including some hypersonic variants, have become a big priority to make any Chinese invasion hugely costly.

What does China say?

Beijing continues to claim Taiwan and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary. Under President Xi Jinping, it has become more aggressive, especially after the 2016 election as president of Tsai Ing-wen, who rejects the idea of a "one China" and sees Taiwan as a de facto sovereign state. Last year, Xi gave his most bellicose speech yet, warning that Taiwan's reunification with the mainland is "inevitable". Military drills have been ramped up with Chinese fighter jets routinely flying into Taiwan's defence zone. Xi faces pressure from hardline nationalists who see Taiwan's independence from the mainland as a slap in the face to the Chinese Communist Party. Despite the pressure campaign, Taiwanese voters reelected Tsai for a second term earlier this year in a landslide.

What is America's role?

Washington is bound by Congress to provide Taiwan with arms to defend itself. It recognizes Beijing as China's government but maintains a deliberately more opaque stance on Taiwan's future status, saying any change must be achieved peacefully. Since the mid-1990s, to placate China, US presidents were wary of selling major weaponry to the island, which frustrated Taipei. That has changed under President Donald Trump, who has greenlit a number of major deals, including 66 next-generation F-16 fighters and an upgrade to the island's Patriot missiles. Taiwan is also one of the few issues that generate bipartisan support in the Trump era, with two recent bills upgrading diplomatic ties and exchanges.—AFP



Tuesday, August 11, 2020 International

Belarus police, protesters clash after claims of 'rigged' election

Belarus declares landslide Lukashenko win after crackdown

MINSK: Belarus yesterday declared a landslide election victory for long-serving leader Alexander Lukashenko after police used stun grenades, tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters denouncing the vote as a fraud. Prominent rights group Viasna said one man was killed, dozens wounded and more than 300 arrested during the police crackdown overnight Sunday to Monday. The protests erupted after an exit poll showed Lukashenko soundly beating main opposition challenger Svetlana Tikhanovskaya-a result confirmed by election officials yesterday.

Central Election Commission chief Lidia Yermoshina announced Lukashenko had won 80.23 percent according to preliminary results, handing him a sixth term. Tikhanovskaya won 9.9

percent, while three other candidates each won less than two percent. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping both quickly congratulated Lukashenko, but Poland called for an emergency European Union summit on the

"The authorities have used force against their citizens, who are demanding change in the country. We must support the Belarusian people in their quest for freedom," Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said in a statement. Tikhanovskaya, a 37-year-old stay-at-home mother and political novice, galvanised the opposition during the election campaign, attracting tens of thousands of supporters to the ex-Soviet country's biggest

demonstrations in years. Thousands took to the streets of Minsk and other cities on Sunday night to denounce the result, sparking clashes with police that Viasna said led to more than 300 arrests. Shocking images released by pro-opposition media and posted online showed police firing stun grenades and rubber bullets into the crowds and a police van ramming into the demonstration and running down a protester. Young protesters were seen covered in blood, lying immobile on the ground or being dragged away by police.

'Mockery of our people'

Viasna said one protester had died after suffering a "traumatic head injury... as a result of being run over by a police vehicle". It said dozens of protesters were injured including at least 10 who

One killed,

dozens injured

and more than

300 arrested

had to be taken to hospitals. An interior ministry spokeswoman denied there had been any deaths. The Belarusian Investigative Committee launched a criminal probe on charges of organizing and participating in "mass unrest"-punishable by jail terms of eight to 15 years. Alexander, a 35-year-old protester in Minsk,

accused Lukashenko of blatantly rigging the vote. "I came out to protest because the country needs a change in power," he told AFP. "This is a crime, a mockery of our people."

In a news conference after polls closed Tikhanovskaya said she did not trust the results. "I believe my eyes, and I see that the majority is with us," she said. "We have already won, because we have overcome our fear, our apathy and our indifference." She also called on members of law enforcement to stop using force. Her ally, Maria



Kolesnikova, said the government was "incapable of running the country" and an "unprecedented" political crisis was setting in. Tikhanovskaya decided to run for president after the authorities jailed her husband, popular blogger Sergei Tikhanovsky, and barred him from running.

On Sunday afternoon, huge queues formed outside polling stations in Minsk and other cities, after Tikhanovskaya urged her supporters to vote late to give authorities less chance to falsify

the election. Many wore white bracelets that have become a symbol of the opposition. Tikhanovskaya said that if she won she would release political prisoners and call fresh elections to include the entire opposition. Lukashenko has sought to boost his support by warning of outside threats and raising the specter of violent mobs. Authorities have detained 33 Russians, describing them as mercenaries sent to destabilize the vote. —AFP

US hits 5 million **COVID-19** cases

WASHINGTON: The United States has reached the extraordinary milestone of five million coronavirus cases as President Donald Trump was accused of flouting the constitution by unilaterally extending a virus relief package. The US has been hammered by the COVID-19 pandemic, recording nearly 163,000 deaths-by far the highest of any country, ahead only of Brazil, which on Saturday became the second country to pass 100,000 deaths.

The global death toll is at least 727,288 since the novel coronavirus emerged in China last December, according to a running tally from official sources compiled by AFP. Nearly 20 million cases have been registered worldwideprobably reflecting only a fraction of the actual number of infections. As around much of the globe, the small African country of Malawi on Sunday imposed tight social restrictions to try to contain the disease, shutting all bars and churches, while hot weekend weather drew crowds in Europe to the beach.

In Washington, the new virus relief packageannounced by Trump on Saturday after talks between Republican and Democrat lawmakers hit a wall-was "absurdly unconstitutional," senior Democrat Nancy Pelosi told CNN. Fellow Democrat and Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer, appearing on ABC, dismissed Trump's unilateral measures as "unworkable, weak and far too narrow." But with the nation's economy still struggling to dig itself out of an enormous hole, Democrats appeared skittish about any legal challenge to a relief package they see as seriously inadequate.

The four executive orders Trump signed Saturday at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey will, among other things, defer payroll taxes and provide some temporary unemployment benefits. The president was seen as keen to

show himself taking decisive action ahead of a November 3 election that could see him ousted from office, with polls showing a large majority of voters unhappy with his handling of the crisis. On Sunday night, Trump blamed what he called Democratic stubbornness for his being forced to take executive action. "The Democrats were unwilling to do anything," Trump told reporters as he boarded Air Force One to return to Washington. "It was time to act," he said. "We have to get money out to the people."

Summer crowds

Democrats say the president's orders infringe on Congress's constitutional authority over the federal budget. But Pelosi demurred when asked about possible legal action, saying, "Whether (it was) legal or not takes time to figure out." White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow defended the new measures. "Maybe we're going to go to court on them. We're going to go ahead with our actions anyway." he said.

Trump's Democratic opponent in the presidential election, Joe Biden, tweeted that five million coronavirus cases was "a number that boggles the mind and breaks the heart. "It shouldn't have gotten this bad," he said. The US on Sunday had added 47,197 new cases in 24 hours, with 532 additional deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University. US fatalities now total 162,913, and the number of infections is 5,041,473, the Baltimore-based university said.

Elsewhere, growing infections in and around Paris prompted French officials to make face masks compulsory outdoors in crowded areas and tourist hotspots in the city and surrounding areas from yesterday. The mask will be obligatory for all those aged 11 and over in "very crowded zones," said a police statement, including the banks of the Seine River and more than 100 streets in the French capital. As temperatures soared across western Europe, holidaymakers crowded beaches at the weekend despite warnings about the risk of infection.

Local authorities in Germany warned that some beaches and lakes would be closed if there were too many people.

were-and that one person remained missing. One woman was found after being reported missing.

The ANA news agency said a helicopter had spot-

ted the missing woman, who had been swept away

by the floodwaters from her home in Bourtsi.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis voiced his

"profound pain for the loss of lives" and said he

would visit Evia, Greece's second largest island

'A nightmare'

Evia, which lies about 100 kilometers northeast of

Athens. Some tourists were unable to leave one

campsite on the island, ANA reported. "We are expe-

riencing a nightmare, we are using every possible

means" to combat the floods, said Ana Fanis Spanos, a

lawmaker from the central Greece region. Storm

Thalia battered several regions of mainland Greece

Saturday, though the weather was improving on

Sunday. Hundreds of homes were flooded in Politika

and several surrounding villages. Blocked roads pre-

mud, local authorities said. The ground floors of many

Two rivers burst their banks and filled roads with

vented fire trucks from reaching the affected sites.

Torrents of water blocked roads in the west of

after Crete, yesterday.

DEADWOOD: Motorcyclists ride through downtown Deadwood, South Dakota during the 80th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. —AFP

Belgian police meanwhile arrested several people Saturday at the resort of Blankenberge after a brawl broke out on a beach between officers and youths they had told to leave for refusing to respect virus safety measures. Around 5,000 people demonstrated in Vienna for increased financial support for nightlife and relaxing coronavirus regulations.

In Peru, indigenous people armed with spears and angry over what they consider government neglect of their communities in the pandemic assaulted a settlement for oil workers deep in the Amazon, triggering a clash with police that left three natives dead, the government said Sunday. Back in the US, in another burst of defiance over health warnings, thousands of bikers converged on a town in South Dakota for what is billed as the largest cycle gathering in the world. In past years, the 10-day rally in Sturgis has drawn hundreds of thousands of bikers to socialize, drink and party together-raising fears among some locals that this year's version could be a superspreader event. —AFP



lowing a storm at the village of Politika, on Evia island, northeast of Athens. —AFP

houses were flooded. Manos Anastasiou, a hotel employee in Politika, told AFP how astonished he was at seeing so much rain in such a short time. "I'm 51 years old and it's the first time I have seen something like this," Anastasiou said. About 100 firefighters and two helicopters as well as the coastguard were deployed to rescue those trapped.—AFP

after he left, found 12.4% said he had nothing to answer for and 7.3% did not voice an opinion.

Despite the disapproval, reflecting Juan Carlos' sinking opened an investigation. —Reuters

News in brief

Eleven from one family drown

PANAMA CITY: Eleven people from one family died Sunday in Panama when their home was swept away in a flash flood as they slept, officials said. Nine of them were minors, said Carlos Rumbo, head of the national civil protection service. Two other people are missing in the sudden rise of the Bejuco River in Veraguas province west of Panama City. President Laurentino Cortizo expressed his condolences on Twitter. The civil protection service had warned Sunday of heavy storms with lightning and gusting winds in much of the Central American country.—AFP

Gunmen kill eight in Niger

KOURE, Niger: Gunmen on motorcycles killed eight people including a group of French aid workers as they visited a part of Niger popular with tourists for its wildlife, officials said. "There are eight dead: two Nigeriens including a guide and a driver, while the other six are French," the governor of the Tillaberi region told AFP on Sunday. France confirmed its nationals were among the dead, without giving a figure. French aid group ACTED said several of its workers were among those killed during a tourist outing. "Among the eight people killed in Niger, several were Acted employees," said the NGO's lawyer Joseph Breham. It is believed to be the first such attack on Westerners in the area, a popular tourist attraction in the former French colony thanks to its unique population of West African or Niger giraffes. —AFP

Taleban pledges peace talks

KABUL: The Taleban said yesterday they were ready to hold peace talks with the Afghan government after a contentious prisoner exchange, which authorities said would begin in the next two days. "Our stance is clear, if the prisoner release is completed, then we are ready for the intra-Afghan talks within a week," Taleban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said, adding that the first round of talks will be held in Doha, Qatar. Thousands of prominent Afghans on Sunday agreed to the release of hundreds of Taleban prisoners accused of serious offences, overcoming a key hurdle in starting negotiations. "The Afghan government will start releasing the 400 Taleban prisoners within two days," National Security Council spokesman Javid Fasial said. —AFP

Journalist faces verdict

ALGIERS: An Algerian journalist faces years in prison if convicted yesterday in a trial rights groups call a test of press freedom in a country recently rocked by anti-government protests. Khaled Drareni, 40, was arrested on March 29 on charges of "inciting an unarmed gathering" and "endangering national unity" after covering demonstrations by the "Hirak" protest movement. Weekly protests rocked Algeria for more than a year and only came to a halt in March due to the novel coronavirus crisis. The prosecutor called for Drareni to be sentenced to four years in prison, fined 100,000 dinars (\$784) and stripped of his civil rights at the opening of his trial at the Sidi M'hamed court in Algiers on August 3. Drareni, editor of the Casbah Tribune news site and correspondent for French-language channel TV5 Monde, denied the charges when he appeared via video-conference due to coronavirus measures. —AFP

7 dead as floods hit Greek island

ATHENS: A baby was among seven people who died as torrential rains and floods swept the Greek island of Evia, damaging dozens of houses and blocking roads, authorities said Sunday. The eightmonth-old baby was found dead in a house in the village of Politika on Sunday, said a spokesman for firefighters involved in rescue efforts. The baby's parents were unharmed.

Hours earlier, a man and woman in their 80s were found unconscious by firefighters in two houses in the same village, the spokesman said. They were confirmed as dead at the hospital. Two other people who died, a 74-year-old man and a 73-year-old woman, were from the village of Bourtsi, the ANA news agency reported. The five dead were among an earlier official toll, which also listed one person as missing, following torrential rains late Saturday and early Sunday.

In a new toll, firefighters said seven people had died-but gave no immediate details of who they

Protesters call for an end to Spanish monarchy

BARCELONA: Protesters on Sunday called for an end to the Spanish monarchy after the sudden departure of the former king Juan Carlos from the country this week amid a corruption scandal. Juan Carlos, who abdicated in 2014 in favour of his son Felipe, abruptly announced his decision to leave yesterday but

there has been no official confirmation of where he went, setting off an international guessing game. "We have to clean up the system of corruption and we should start with the crown," said Jose Emilio Martin, a bus driver, who was among about a hundred protesters in Madrid on Sunday. Protests against the royal family have spread across Spain since the ex-monarch's dramatic exit, with about 100 republicans demonstrating in Valencia on Sunday and more protests planned in Mallorca this week during King Felipe VI's visit to the island.

A poll by SigmaDos published on Sunday in the conservative newspaper El Mundo found 63.3% of those questioned felt it was a bad idea for the 82-year-old ex-monarch to have left, while 27.2% agreed with his departure. Some 80.3% said they thought Juan Carlos should face any potential legal proceedings. The poll, carried out between Aug. 4-6

popularity in recent years, some 69.2% of those questioned in Sunday's poll said he played an important role in the transition from dictatorship to democracy after the death of Francisco Franco in 1975, while 24.4% said he played "little or no" role. In June, Spain's Supreme Court opened a preliminary investigation into Juan Carlos' involvement in a highspeed rail contract in Saudi Arabia, after Switzerland's La Tribune de Geneve newspaper reported he had received \$100 million from the late Saudi king. Switzerland has also

International

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Egypt mulls law to protect identity of women amid 'MeToo movement'

Parliamentarian committee approves a draft law

CAIRO: Egyptian lawmakers are pushing for a new law to protect the identity of women coming forward to report sexual abuse and assault as the nation's MeToo movement picks up speed. An Egyptian parliamentarian committee has approved a draft law that would give survivors of sexual assault and harassment the automatic right to anonymity, with the law expected to go to vote at a general session of the parliament later this month.

The moves comes as hundreds of women have started to speak up on social media about sexual assault in Egypt, with the public prosecution and National Council for Women supporting the movement and offering legal and social protection. Spurred on by the growing MeToo movement, data entry specialist Bassant Abdel Wahab, 22, went public recently about being sexually abused by a human rights activist when she was 17 and reported him to the civil society group where he works.

The man has now been suspended from his job while his organisation investigates Abdel Wahab's complaint along with those of other female colleagues who accused him of assault. "Sexual assault incidents that have been hidden for years are continuing to surface and in a raging way," Wahab said. "It is like a tsunami that could change attitudes and laws on sexual assault against women."

The frequency of such cases being reported in the conservative Muslim country began to rise after the 2011 revolution as reports of sexual assaults, harassment and rape in Cairo's Tahrir Square made local and international headlines. But this year there has been a spike in reporting about cases of sexual assault since early July when an Instagram page revealed the case of a university student who is accused of sexually assaulting and blackmailing multiple women. Within five days of the case being disclosed, the National Council for Women said that it had received 400 complaints mainly about violence against women.

Game changer

Lawmaker Magda Nasr said the new law to allow anonymity of sexual abuse survivors will be a game changer for women in Egypt as it will give greater protection to report such cases. "There is an apparent political will to protect women rights and attempt to reduce as much as possible violence against women," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Nasr said the latest wave of complaints came after an Instagram page in July accused a university student of sexually assaulting and blackmailing multiple women. The student was arrested and the case is being investigated by the authorities.

The same Instagram account also exposed a gang



Women victims speak up on social media

rape said to involve six men from wealthy and powerful families that prosecutors are now investigating. Since then Egyptian actresses have spoken up against how they were subjected to sexual assault. One actress, Rania Youssef - who faced charges in 2018 that were later dropped after wearing a seethrough outfit to the film festival - published photos of those responsible on social media.

In other cases two other human rights activists were accused of sexual assault against female employees and a Coptic priest was defrocked on sexual assault allegations. "It is a moment where women can have more gains in their fight against sexual abuse," said lawyer Entessar El-Saeed, executive

director of Cairo Foundation for Development and Law. El-Saeed said several non-governmental organisations and parliamentarians were also pushing for a unified law on violence against women that would provide greater protection for women and girls from sexual assault and blackmail.

The bill toughens penalties against sexual abuse in all forms, criminalizes rape within marriage, and includes better reporting mechanisms, confidentiality guarantees, and protection for witnesses and survivors. "The bill has been in the parliament for two years and it is now the perfect time to approve it," said El-Saeed, who is the head of one of seven NGOs that drafted the bill. A 2017 Thomson Reuters Foundation poll found Cairo to be the most dangerous megacity for women, and 99% of women in Egypt interviewed by the United Nations in 2013 reported sexual harassment.

An outcry over attacks on women near Tahrir Square during President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's inauguration celebrations in 2014 prompted a new law punishing sexual harassment with at least six months in jail. But women rights activists view the law as too weak. "The penalty needs to be toughened and there needs to be legal mechanisms that make it easier for women to report and get their rights," El-Saeed said. — Reuters

News in brief

Landslide kills 43 in India

NEW DELHI: At least 43 bodies have been recovered after a massive landslide triggered by monsoon rains swept away dozens of tea estate workers in southwestern India, police said Sunday. The landslide in Idukki district, around 250 kilometers from Kerala state's capital Thiruvananthapuram, occurred Friday but the ongoing search and rescue efforts have been hampered by torrential downpours. The toll rose to 43 on Sunday afternoon, Idukki district's police chief, R. Karuppasamy, told AFP. Twenty-six of the bodies were recovered on Friday night, a police official said earlier Sunday. Local media reported that some 78 people were believed to live in the area, with many still missing. Kerala has been hit by deadly floods during the annual monsoon. At least 18 people died in a passenger jet crash in Kerala on Friday when an Air India Express jet overshot the runway while trying to land in a storm and plunged down a bank. — AFP

Sudan floods kill 20 more

KHARTOUM: At least 20 people were killed and 13 others wounded Sunday in torrential rains and flooding, the latest victims of days of flooding in Sudan, the civil defense said. Heavy rains typically hit Sudan between June and October each year, and this week the country has been badly battered by the downpour. "20 people have died and 13 have been injured while 345 houses were destroyed or badly damaged" across the country Sunday, the civil defense said. The latest toll brings to 35 the number of people killed since the end of July and to more than 7,000 the number of houses destroyed or damaged as a result of heavy rains and flooding. The UN said on Wednesday that more than 50,000 people had been affected by the flooding. — AFP

Bolsonaro assails TV network

RIO DE JANEIRO: President Jair Bolsonaro lashed out Sunday at the "cowardice" of Brazil's most widely viewed TV network for suggesting he bore heavy blame for the nation's more than 100,000 coronavirus deaths. The far-right president accused TV Globo of treating the death milestone as if it were "a World Cup final," saying on Twitter that it had been both "cowardly and disrespectful of the dead." On Saturday night, shortly after the official announcement that the 100,000-death mark had been passed, TV Globo opened its news report with a long editorial highly critical of Bolsonaro's handling of the health crisis. News anchors pointedly noted that an article in the Brazilian constitution states that "health is the right of all and the duty of the National Government." They then asked, "Has the president of the republic done his duty?"—AFP

Mauritania's new government

NOUAKCHOTT: Mauritania's president appointed a new government Sunday, a top official said, after the names of several former ministers appeared in a report on the financial dealings of ex-leader Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. Adama Bocar Soko, the secretary general of Mauritania's presidency, told reporters in the capital Nouakchott that the move would allow all those named in the report "the time they need to prove their innocence". The move comes after President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani announced a government reshuffle and replaced his prime minister on Thursdayfor reasons that were not disclosed at the time. Sunday's announcement marks the first time Ghazouani's office has admitted that the reason behind the reshuffle was the controversial report on Aziz. — AFP

Xi or Tsai? Taiwan's opposition jumps on US envoy 'vocal slip'

TAIPEI: Taiwan's opposition party demanded a clarification yesterday after a US envoy who is visiting appeared to mispronounce the name of the island's president for her arch rival in China. Health chief Alex Azar met with President Tsai Ing-wen yesterday in the highest level visit to Taiwan since the United States switched diplomatic recognition to China. In his opening statement he fluffed the name of President Tsai-pronounced "ts-eye"-and instead said something closer to "shee". That sounded uncomfortably close to the pronunciation of Xi Jinping, the president of China, a country that views Taiwan as its own territory and has vowed to one day seize it.

A few sentences later, Azar clearly pronounced President Tsai's name correctly. But the opposition Kuomintang party (KMT), which favors warmer ties with China, jumped on the gaffe. "The KMT expresses shock and disapproval

while urging the presidential office to sternly protest to the US side and clarify that the president of the Republic of China is surnamed Tsai, not Xi," the party said in a statement. Xavier Chang, Tsai's spokesman, dismissed the KMT's demand. "There is no doubt Secretary Azar was addressing (her) as President Tsai," he said in a statement.

"We suggest all sides to focus on (Taiwan's) diplomatic accomplishments and anti-pandemic cooperation. Closer Taiwan-US relations is the joint fruit of the efforts made by all people." Social media reactions were mixed, with some netizens saying Azar's pronunciation sounded like "President Xi", others musing it might have been the word "presidency". The American Institute in Taiwan, Washington's de facto embassy, declined to comment. Its transcript of Azar's speech contained the phonetic spelling of Tsai's name as "ts-eye". — AFP



'Holy warrior' selfies: Teen feted for killing 'blasphemy' suspect

Presidential Office in Taipei yesterday. — AFP

American of Institute in Taiwan, Brent Christensen look on during their visit to the

ISLAMABAD: Faisal Khan, a 15-yearold Pakistani, beams for selfies with lawyers and police. Thousands hail him in the streets as a "holy warrior." His claim to adulation? Allegedly gunning down in open court an American accused of blasphemy, a capital crime in this Islamic republic. Khan is charged with murder, which also carries a death sentence. But while lawyers line up to defend him, the attorney for Tahir Naseem, the US citizen, has gone into hiding. The teen, according to officials and witnesses, got through three security checkpoints on his way into a courtroom in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar on July 29, pulled out a pistol and fired multiple shots into Naseem, 57, at a bail hearing.

Naseem died on the spot, onlookers spattered with his blood. His killing grabbed global headlines, put a fresh spotlight on Pakistan's blasphemy laws and drew criticism from abroad, even as many in the country praised the shooter. The United States and human rights groups decried the killing and urged changes to Pakistan's blasphemy statutes, among the harshest in the world. Closer to home, Khan is a hero.

"It's one of those cases where everyone wants to be his lawyer," Inamullah
Yusufzai, who represented Khan at his
first court hearing last week, told Reuters.
Yusufzai said lawyers from across
Pakistan had called to defend Khan for
free, to support what they see as the justified killing of a heretic. The case has not
reached the stage for Khan to enter a
plea. Thousands rallied, calling for Khan's

release. Delegations of well-wishers lawyers, clerics, local politicians - have visited the Khan family home in Peshawar to congratulate the family. He has received messages of support from the Pakistani Taliban.

Pakistani Taliban.

A selfie shot by Elite Force police guards in a van escorting Khan to court after his arrest was shared widely on social media. Wearing all white, the teen grins broadly. Several officers smile, one gives a thumbs-up. A senior police official, who said the force had looked the photo, said it was authentic. Reuters could not independently confirm its authenticity. Another selfie shows a crowd, some black-clad lawyers, escorting a beaming Khan into court.

Blasphemy

The US State Department, in an unusually blunt statement, said Naseem "had been lured to Pakistan from his home in Illinois by individuals who then used Pakistan's blasphemy laws to entrap him." It called on Pakistan to reform its blasphemy laws and prosecuting Naseem's killing. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry says a special team is investigating the case and it "will be dealt with in accordance with the law." But prosecuting Khan and any potential accomplices will be an immense challenge. In blasphemy cases in Pakistan, "an accusation becomes a death sentence, whether carried out by the state or by mobs or vigilantes," Omar Waraich, head of South Asia for Amnesty International, told



HK tycoon arrested under security law

HONG KONG: Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai became the highest-profile person arrested under a new national security law yesterday, detained over suspected collusion with foreign forces as around 200 police searched the offices of his Apple Daily newspaper. Lai, 71, has been one of the most prominent democracy activists in the Chinese-ruled city and an ardent critic of Beijing, which imposed the sweeping new law on Hong Kong on June 30, drawing condemnation from Western countries.

His arrest comes amid Beijing's crackdown against pro-democracy opposition in the city and further stokes concerns about media and other freedoms promised to the former British colony when it returned to China in 1997. It "bears out the worst fears that Hong Kong's National Security Law would be used to suppress critical pro-democracy opinion and

restrict press freedom", said Steven Butler, the Committee to Protect Journalists' Asia program coordinator.

Ryan Law, chief editor of Apple Daily, a staunch anti-government and pro-democracy tabloid that also does investigative work, told Reuters the paper would not intimidated. "Business as usual," he said. The security law punishes anything China considers subversion, secession, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces with up to life in prison. Critics say it crushes freedoms, while supporters say it will bring stability after prolonged pro-democracy protests last year.

Lai had been a frequent visitor to Washington, where he has met officials, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, to rally support for Hong Kong democracy, prompting Beijing to label him a "traitor". Hong Kong police said they had arrested seven men, aged between 39 and 72, on suspicion of breaching the new security law, without naming them, adding that further arrests were possible. Apple Daily, which posted on its Facebook page a livestream of police officers roaming through its newsroom and rifling through files, reported that Lai had been taken from his home early yesterday. — Reuters

Talabat Launches #lunchforlebanon Initiative In Support Of

BEIRUT

- Talabat launches
 #LunchforLebanon initiative donating all talabat's order
 profits generated between
 12-4pm on Wednesday 12
 August to Lebanon.
- 100% of all profits made from #LunchforLebanon will be donated to Lebanon.
- Talabat encourages all aggregators to join the initiative.

Tomaso Rodriguez, Chief Executive Officer of talabat, says that talabat employees feel a strong sense of solidarity with the people of Lebanon.

'I think we have all been affected by the tragedy which unfolded in Beirut, and the outpouring of support from the region has been testament to that. Many of our employees, customers, and partners are Lebanese and are heavily affected by the situation in Beirut, and our hearts and thoughts are with them and their families. We - not only as talabat but as individuals - want to make

Beirut, we are with you #LunchForLebanon

talabat

sure that we're doing everything we can to help.' 'This means using our platform as a vehicle for support.

Through #LunchforLebanon, every order placed between 12pm - 4pm across all the region will contribute to Lebanon. We will be donating 100% of our profits to the recovery efforts in Lebanon.

'We are calling on other aggregators in our sector to join us, and make sure that
#LunchforLebanon is an initiative right across our industry. Beirut needs us, and this is a time where we need to combine our forces to help our beloved Lebanese people recover from this tragedy.'

Customers can download the talabat application from the Google Play Store or IOS App store to order their meals during #LunchforLebanon.

Business

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020

Zain receives 'Kuwait's Fastest Fixed Broadband Network' award for Q1-Q2

Unlimited 5G internet with all-new Huawei 5G CPE PRO 2 for KD 17 monthly only

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, received 'Kuwait's Fastest Fixed Broadband Network' award for O1-O2 2020 from Speedtest by Ookla, the global leader in transparent Internet testing applications, data and analysis. Zain took this opportunity to launch a limited time offer with unlimited 5G Internet downloads along with a number of revolutionary Internet devices, including Huawei's next generation of fixed routers; Huawei 5G CPE PRO 2, as well as the Zain 5G HUB; powered by HTC, and more.

achievement from Ookla, the global leader that is

widely considered to be the first, most transparent, and most reliable source for Internet testing applications, data and analysis around the world. The achievement reflects Zain's efforts in offering the largest and most powerful 5G network in Kuwait since commercially launching fifth generation wireless technology

(5G) back in June 2019. Zain was the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas. The company succeeded in designing the first integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure, ultimately transforming the telecom sector across the country and region.

Ookla, the company behind the renowned Speedtest Internet testing platform, is the global leader in fixed broadband and mobile network testing applications, data and analysis. Every day, over ten million unique tests are actively initiated by Speedtest's users, making it a reliable source for measuring the quality and performance of Internet networks around the world. Since its founding in 2006, an unparalleled total of more than 25 billion tests have been taken with Speedtest, and the company's services are used by businesses, universities and government agencies alike who trust OOKLA's commitment to quality and neutrality.

Zain took this opportunity to launch a limited Zain expressed its pride in this prestigious time offer with unlimited 5G Internet downloads to its postpaid customers along with a number of

> revolutionary fixed and mobile Internet devices, including Huawei's next generation of fixed routers; the all-new Huawei 5G CPE PRO 2 for KD 17 monthly only, as well as the Zain 5G HUB; powered by HTC, for KD 27 monthly only, and more. Customers can easily get the offer by visiting Zain's branches or through the

Zain Online Store (kw.zain.com/5G) and enjoy FREE delivery to their doorstep, noting that Zain follows strict health protocols that adhere to official health guidelines to ensure the safety of customers and staff.

Zain continuously works on improving all its services to continue its tireless efforts towards adopting the latest and most advanced solutions, with the aim of maintaining its leadership position in the Kuwaiti market. The company affirms its



promise to always offer a variety of services and solutions to meet the personal and professional needs of Kuwait's largest family of subscribers.

Zain's current strategy is centered around digital transformation leadership and empowering the

community to enjoy a smarter lifestyle, as well as using advanced technology to enable an easier and more flexible life. The company places itself as an active partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait.

Gulf Bank posts KD 11.8m in net profit for H1 2020

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. announced its financial results for the first quarter ending 31 March 2020 and the first half ending 30 June 2020. For the six months ending 30 June 2020, the Bank recorded a net profit of KD 11.8 million, a decline of KD 12.2 million or 51 percent compared to the first half of 2019 net profit of KD

24 million. This reduction was mainly due to lower interest income on loans and lower fee / foreign exchange income. However, favorable liquidity conditions have resulted in the Bank's interest expense declining by 6.3 million or 22 percent from the first quarter to the second quarter of 2020. Similarly, the Bank's prudent cost reduction efforts have resulted in the Bank's operating expenses dropping by KD 4

million or 21 percent from the first quarter to the second quarter of 2020.

Net Loans and Advances to Customers were KD 4,189 million at the end of June 2020, up KD 234 million or 6 percent compared with the end of June 2019. As of the end of June 2020, Gulf Bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) remained strong at 16.8 percent, well in excess of regulatory requirements.

Commenting on the results, Jassim Mustafa Boodai, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "We are going through unprecedented times. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted the global economy and financial sector. Kuwait, just like all other countries, has been affected by the pandemic. In response to the pandemic, the Central Bank of Kuwait took early action by (1) lowering its Discount Rate by 125 basis points in March, providing immediate

(2) relaxing capital and liquidity requirements to promote favorable liquidity conditions. To support the cash flow needs of retail customers, the banking community agreed to defer loan installments and credit card payments for six months and Corporate customers could elect to defer principal payments due between April and September. Finally, a new government scheme for Corporate and SME customers was rolled out to support their cash flow needs until the end of 2020."

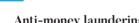
Award from

Speedtest

by Ookla

Boodai then added: "During these challenging times, Gulf Bank continued to provide uninterrupted services to its

clients. We maintained close relationships with all our customers - corporate and retail clients alike - and attended to their needs, providing them with the necessary solutions to support their businesses and financial requirements during these tough times. Our digital platform, including online banking, mobile banking and our 24/7 call center, continued to operate without disruption."



Commenting on the recent issues

Anti-money laundering

related to suspicious money laundering/financing of terrorism transactions in Kuwait, Boodai said: "We would like to reiterate that at Gulf Bank, we have performed our role as part of the Kuwaiti banking industry in reporting any suspicious transactions to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU). We are continuously in full compliance with Central Bank of Kuwait regulations, instructions and Law 106/2013 in relation to money laundering. We have a dedicated, independent Anti-Money Laundering (AML) unit and our staff are well-trained and continuously updated on matters related to illegal and suspicious operations." Boodai added: "We truly appreciate the role of the Central Bank of Kuwait in taking the necessary supervisory measures to maintain mone-

 Gulf Bank's prudent cost reduction efforts resulted in a 21% decline in Q2-2020 vs. Q1-2020 operating expenses.

Jassim Mustafa Boodai

 The Central Bank of Kuwait played a vital role in protecting the Banking System from Money Laundering

 The Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) remained strong at 16.8%, which is well above regulatory requirements.

cash flow relief to corporate borrowers in the form of lower interest payments and tary and financial stability as well as protecting the banking system from the risks

China inflation

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of international creditworthiness and financial strength, and is an "A" rated bank by all four leading credit rating agencies.

• Fitch: Long Term Issuer Default Rating "A+" rating with a "Stable" Outlook

 S&P Global Ratings: Issuer Credit Rating "A-" rating with a "Negative"

· Moody's Investor Services: Long Term Deposits "A3" rating with a "Stable" Outlook

· Capital Intelligence: Long Term Foreign Currency "A+" rating with a "Stable" Outlook

Employees wellbeing & development

Gulf Bank continues to support its human capital training and development during these exceptional times. The Bank has utilized various digital tools and has safely resumed employee training and development through remote and virtual training programs that prioritize the health and safety of its employees.

In response to the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Gulf Bank has launched its "Employee Wellbeing Program" to help its employees cope with the changes brought about by the pandemic and their effects on emotional and mental wellbeing. The program, which offers employees access to professional counseling through a series of focused workshop sessions, is designed to target specific challenges facing the Bank's workforce, particularly the frontline employees who work directly with customers. These workshops, exclusive to Gulf Bank employees, offer a focused approach towards raising awareness on various topics such as mental health, human relations, creative problem solving, and motivation.

Appreciation Boodai concluded his remarks by stating: "During these challenging times, I would like to thank everyone that contributed to these results, specifically our shareholders for their ongoing trust, and our employees for their commitment and dedication. I would also like to thank the Central Bank of Kuwait for their exceptional efforts in supporting the banking system in Kuwait. And finally, I want to thank our customers for their loyalty, especially during these unprecedented times.'

edges up on food prices

BEIJING: China's consumer inflation edged up in July, official data showed vesterday, partly because of rising food prices from flood-related disruptions and as the country recovers from the coronavirus outbreak. The consumer price index (CPI), a key gauge of retail inflation, had been pushed up over the past year by livestock prices after China's pig herds were ravaged by African swine fever, with the COVID-19 outbreak later hitting supply chains.

Consumer inflation has been easing since January but ticked up again in recent months, with the CPI hitting 2.7 percent last month, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), slightly better than forecasts in a Bloomberg News poll of analysts.

NBS senior statistician Dong Lijuan said yesterday that food prices rose 13.2 percent from a year ago, nudging the CPI up-with pork prices climbing 85.7 percent. "With the gradual recovery of catering services, demand for pork continued to increase," said Dong, adding that this was accompanied by floods in many areas across the country, which hit the transportation of

Prices of vegetables rose also, affected by "unfavorable weather", according to Dong. Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said

"floods that have swept across China since late June appear to have disrupted supply chains and production in the Yangtze River Delta, where around half of China's agricultural production takes place". But Nomura chief China economist Lu Ting told AFP he expects the CPI "to resume its downtrend soon in coming months", with the temporary disruptions fading.

In a sign of the weakness outside the food sector, core inflation, which strips out food and energy costs, came in at a ten-year low of 0.5 percent. Meanwhile, the producer price index (PPI) fell 2.4 percent from a year ago in July, better than the three percent drop the month before. The reading-which measures the cost of goods at the factory gate-was also better than the 2.5 percent drop forecast by analysts.

Factory gate prices had been dragged by the pandemic fallout but started rising again in June, with analysts noting a recovery in industrial demand. China is working to bounce back from a historic economic contraction in the first quarter caused by the virus, which had shut down most activity in the country. Evans-Pritchard said: The key driver continues to be the rebound in commodity prices, with the oil and metal processing sectors seeing the fastest rises in output price."

"This is consistent with broader evidence of a stimulus-led recovery in construction and industrial activity," he added. He noted a further ramp-up in fiscal stimulus should continue to shore up infrastructure spending in the coming months, and support further recovery in economic activity and producer prices. — AFP



SHENYANG, China: Customers buy vegetables at a market in Shenyang, in China's

northeastern Liaoning province yesterday. — AFP

Tuesday, August 11, 2020 Business

Al-Tijari declares operating profit of KD 42.3m for first half of 2020

Commercial Bank continues its prudent policy, maintains sizable precautionary provisions

Operating profit

KD 42.3 million

for half year

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced its financial results for the first quarter ending 31 March 2020, as well as, for the half year ending 30 June 2020. The bank reported an operating profit of KD 21.8 million for the first quarter and an operating profit of KD 42.3 million for the half year, compared to KD 24.0 million and KD 58.3 million for the respective periods last year. The Bank continued its prudent policy of allocating a major portion of its operating profit to precautionary provisions and ended up with a net profit of KD 1.2 million for the first six months of year 2020, compared to KD 9.8 million for the same period of 2019.

Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah, the Bank's Chairman, commented "the outbreak of pandemic forced various governments to take different steps to limit its spread. Kuwait government also took measures like social distancing and lockdowns, which lead to disruptions in business activity in all sectors. The banking industry also faced unprecedented challenges in the first half of the year. The negative impact of the pandemic out-

break, drop in oil prices and interest rates had an unfavorable impact on revenue streams and net margin, however, timely adoption of various policies by the Government and

Central Bank of Kuwait are expected to expedite the economic recovery and stabilize financial sector.'

Sheikh Ahmad highlighted the important role Al-Tijari played in supporting all the Government's and Central Bank of Kuwait's efforts to ease the pressure caused by the pandemic on our customers, by deferring all instalment payments of personal and credit card loans for a six-month period effective April 2020, without charging any additional interest or other fees for the deferral pe-

riod. Similar relief was extended to corporate customers, with deferred interest and instalments for a period of six months, without additional charges thereon.

Al-Tijari also contributed to the establishment of a KD 10 million CBK fund to support the State's efforts to combat the

Sheikh Ahmad added that during the crisis our top priority was to deliver efficient and quality banking services while ensuring the health and safety of our emplovees and customers. This was possible due to high focus on digitalization adopted by Al-Tijari in the previous years. The Bank provided uninterrupted banking services through the Bank's website, mobile app and self service

Sheikh Ahmad further added that in spite of exceptional circumstances the Bank has successfully maintained strong capitalization and liquidity levels. The capital adequacy ratio at the end of June 2020 was 17.9 percent, the leverage ratio at 11.5 percent, net stable funding ratio at 109.7 percent and liquidity coverage ratio at 149.1 percent, comfortably exceeding the regulatory requirements set by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Sheikh Ahmad took the opportunity to thank all the front-line workers from across all governmental organizations for their exceptional efforts in combating the pandemic, and all the management and



staff of the Bank for their dedication and untiring efforts to serve the customers in such an unprecedented situation.

stc deploys expanded 5G network on 2.1 Ghz frequency band in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications stc, a Company digital world-class leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation Kuwait, announced the successful trial of its expanded 5G network on a 2.1 GHz frequency band, the first of its kind in Kuwait, with the ability



Fahad Al-Ali

to provide better 5G solutions to its customers. The deployment of a 2.1 GHz 5G network not only improves the overall user experience for customers, but it also prepares for the exploration and development of 5G vertical industry applications. As the first operator to deploy nation 5G coverage, stc has leveraged its expertise in its stride to offer the most advanced technical solutions to strengthen its 5G offerings. The new deployment, led by project owner Nasser Al-Hamlan, Access Manager at stc, is in sync with stc's ongoing partnership and collaboration with Huawei aiming to deliver an agile, next generation 5G network capable of introducing new 5G serv-

ices within the shortest time to market. The upgrade will enhance 5G indoor coverage, complemented by the uplink of existing 3.5 GHz frequency bands, offering even lower latency connectivity. Low-frequency bands such as 800 MHz, 900MHz, 1.8 GHz and 2.1 GHz, can extend the 5G mobile experience to wider areas and enclosed indoor environments. With 5G low-frequency band deployment, CA (Carrier Aggregation) for NR 3.5 GHz and NR 2.1 GHz, stc can provide an extreme 5G experience for CA mobiles in the future. Ultra-reliable low-latency communication (uRLLC) and massive machinetype communications (mMTC) services can also greatly benefit from this superior coverage at the low-frequency bands.

Commenting on this initiative, engineer Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Ali, Chief Technology Officer at stc, said, "Currently, mobile operators are working with vertical industries to jointly explore applications and network architectures for 5G services. Live uploading of HD videos, for example, and other industry applications require significantly greater uplink capacity at specific locations in the mid- to long-term. Accordingly, new solutions are needed to enhance the uplink performance of TDD 5G-NR at cell edge. While the use of existing FDD bands are interlinked with mid-band spectrums as an initial "supplemental uplink" solution, the option of using new "uplink bands" which can accommodate large spectrum bandwidths for uplink should also be assessed for further uplink capacity enhancements.'

He added, "The deployment of our upgraded network will provide our enterprise customers with enhanced connectivity options that will boost indoor coverage, thereby accelerating smart developments and promoting digital transformation. This initiative builds on stc's commitment to continuously offer its enterprise customers with less restricted solutions that accelerate digital transformation with an aim to increase productivity and operational efficiency."

It is also worth mentioning that due to the propagation characteristics and downlink-centric structures used today, uplink coverage and data rates face greater challenges than at lower frequencies. Restrictions in uplink coverage and throughput have a negative impact on the overall user experience. To improve the uplink performance, especially the capacity of TDD 5G-NR at the cell edge, low band 5G can compensate for the insufficient uplink experience of the 3.5 GHz frequency band, meeting the capacity requirements of vertical services at greater lengths.

Egypt's annual urban consumer inflation falls

CAIRO: Egypt's annual urban consumer price inflation fell to 4.2 percent in July from 5.6 percent in June, the central statistics agency CAP-MAS said yesterday. Month on month inflation increased to 0.4 percent in July from 0.1 percent in June mainly on the back of an increase in electricity and energy prices, the agency said.

Allen Sandeep, head of research at Naeem Brokerage, called the fall in the annual rate a "positive surprise", highlighting a 0.9 percent monthly drop in the price of food. Consumer demand ahead of and during the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, which fell on July 31, had slowed likely due to concerns over spending at a time of uncertainty, Sandeep said.

July's inflation rate however remained well below the central bank's target of 9 percent plus or minus three percentage points. At its last monetary policy meeting, the central bank held the overnight lending rate at 10.25 percent and the overnight deposit rate at 9.25 percent.

"We still feel that Egypt's central bank will hold its horses for a couple of months as we see through all the effects of the pandemic," Sandeep said. Egypt's economy was hit hard by the coronavirus lockdown that paralysed tourism and other vital sectors, leading to a cut in growth forecasts for the 2019/2020 fiscal year to 4.2 percent from 5.6 percent prior to the crisis.—Reuters



European stocks flat as tech losses offset data optimism

LONDON: European shares were largely flat yesterday as renewed US-China tensions hit technology stocks, but a slowing decline in China's producer prices and rising oil prices limited losses. The pan-European STOXX 600 index edged up 0.1 percent at the start of a week that could see subdued trading as traders head out for summer holidays in Europe.

Sectors seen as sensitive to economic health such as banks, oil and gas firms and miners rose after data showed China's factory deflation eased in July, driven by a rise in global oil prices and as industrial activity climbed back towards pre-coronavirus levels. Energy majors BP, Royal Dutch Shell and Total rose between 0.8 percent and 2.5 percent as crude prices gained after Saudi Aramco raised optimism about Asian demand and Iraq pledged to deepen supply cuts.

Heavyweight technology index fell 1.2 percent, capoing gains in the broader market amid worries over the S-China rift ahead of a scheduled trade talks on Aug. 15 to review the agreement signed in January. Dutch tech investor Prosus slid for a third day running as the US prepares ban on two popular Chinese apps, WeChat and

"President Trump's decision is yet another one that could prompt a counter response and possible escalation from Beijing, with US companies operating in Hong Kong and China, particularly vulnerable," Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets, wrote in a note. With the bulk of earnings season over, investors were monitoring the ongoing negotiations between White House officials and Democrats over a fifth bill to address the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. US President Donald Trump on Saturday signed executive orders and memorandums aimed at unemployment benefits, evictions, student loans and payroll taxes. Meanwhile, a resurgence in COVID-19 cases in Europe was also investors' radar as Britain on Sunday recorded its highest daily rise in new infections since late June. French engineering company Spie jumped 4.2 percent after a double upgrade to "buy" from Jefferies, while Norwegian energy firm Equinor rose 1 percent after it appointed a company executive Anders Opedal as chief

executive officer. In Britain, fashion retailer Superdry jumped 18.7 per-

cent agreed to a new 70 million pounds (\$91.5 million) lending facility, while AA surged 14.6 percent after Sky News reported that Apollo Global Management was weighing a 3 billion pound takeover bid for the roadside recovery group. — Reuters in saving 104 m3 of landfill. This have positively impacted the amount of waste that poses a threat to the environment, this initiative contributed to promoting the recy-

AUB continues plastic waste recycling

KUWAIT: As part of its social efforts that prioritizes and focuses on the environment, Ahli United Bank (AUB) continues its success journey of plastic recycling in partnership with Omniya plastic Recycling Factory and collecting over 104,000 KG during the first half of 2020, which is about double the amount collected in end of

Through this initiative, AUB placed plastic recycling boxes in its Head Office and all its branches, as well as installing collection points in a number of areas of Kuwait, such as Salwa, Rumaithiya, Bayan, Jahra and Yarmouk. The main collection points were placed close to the Bank's branches to increase the presence and number of collection points to serve the residents of

During the first half of 2020, this initiative succeeded

cling culture that has become part of the development of societies and a source of economic income. Commenting on the success of this initiative, Sahar Dashti, General Manager of Customer Protection and Head of the Social Responsibility Team at AUB, said: "This hike in the collection of plastic waste affirms the increase in the society's environmental awareness in regard of the massive harms of plastic waste. Based on such a prospective, caring for and preserving the environment is a priority of our social responsibility which goes in line with the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah for a New Kuwait 2035. In this sense and as part of our activities to preserve the environment and protect it from pollution, we continue our efforts to recycle plastic waste and spread environmental awareness.

Dashti added: "Although the idea of recycling is relatively new to our society, in recent years people have responded positively to this initiative. Therefore, it is our role as a national organization to work together and raise the community's awareness to create an environment friendly culture.

Sterling rises ahead of UK job data

LONDON: Sterling rose 0.2 percent against a slightly stronger dollar yesterday ahead of UK unemployment and GDP data this week after hitting its biggest daily fall since June against the greenback on Friday. Sterling resumed its role as a risk-driven currency on Friday, with a sharp fall against the dollar as global investors sentiment turned sour amid more friction between China and the United States.

The British currency rose 0.2 percent \$1.3053 at 0900 GMT yesterday against a slightly stronger dollar with investors also focusing on fiscal stimulus in the United States.

Versus the euro, sterling gained 0.2 percent at 90.05 pence per euro. The pound was still below a five-month high of \$1.3185 touched last week when it rose to a five-month high on Thursday as the Bank of England struck a less pessimistic tone about the coronavirus-battered British economy.

ING analysts said it is not the case of being too optimistic on sterling as consensus expects a rise in the June unemployment rate from 3.9 percent to 4.2 percent. "GBP could not hold on to last Thursday's BoE (Bank of England)-inspired gains and instead is consolidating ahead of key employment data released tomorrow," analysts at ING

"We prefer not to chase the story of upside surprises in UK activity nor a stronger GBP".

Speculators' net short position on the pound got smaller in the week to August 4, weekly CFTC positioning data showed . "Speculators are still short GBP and while a short squeeze is still possible, we prefer not to chase the story of upside surprises in UK activity nor a stronger GBP," the ING analysts added.

Britain's finance minister Rishi Sunak said on Friday that extending a furlough scheme which is due to expire at the end of October would leave some workers trapped in the false hope that they could return to their jobs after the pandemic. UK second-quarter GDP data is also due this week. — Reuters

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Tuesday, August 11, 2020 Business

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait's GDP contracts in Q1 as lockdown measures hit activity

Non-oil sector weakens, exacerbated by COVID-19

Oil sector

increases on

higher output

activity

Statistical Bureau (CSB) showed that Kuwait's economy in the first quarter of the year (1Q20) contracted by 1.0 percent year-on-year (y/y) in real terms. This is the second consecutive quarter of negative output growth, following 4019's decline of 1.1 percent y/y, and was made worse by

the pull-back in business activity in March due to the coronavirus pandemic. Output on a quarteron-quarter basis (q/q) fell by 2.5 percent, the slowest rate since 1Q19.

The fall in headline GDP was a reflection of the decline in non-oil sector activity (-3.5 percent y/y; -5.4 percent q/q). Oil GDP, in contrast, expanded (+1.2 percent

y/y; +0.1 percent q/q). Their relative contributions higher output compared to the previous year. to overall growth were -1.6 percent and +0.6 percent, respectively.

Non-oil activity weakens

The annual rate of contraction in non-oil activity was the most severe in the eight quarters of published data. Business activity likely weakened in March after staff were sent home and partial curfew imposed by the government

KUWAIT: Recently published data by the Central in response to the spread of coronavirus in Kuwait. Output falls were recorded in several sub-sectors including public administration and defense (-5.9 percent y/y), financial intermediation & insurance (-0.5 percent y/y), education (-17.2 percent y/y) and telecommunications (-12.2 percent y/y).

The decline in public administration defense was surprising given that public administration output is usually quite rigid and its growth trend is usually upwards. In contrast, the manufacturing (+3.8 percent y/y), wholesale and retail trade (+10.2 percent v/v) and 'other services' (includes real estate) (+1.2 percent

y/y) sectors all recorded

Higher crude output

Oil GDP expanded for the first time since 1Q19, rising by 1.2 percent y/y. This closely matched the annual increase in crude oil production over the same period (+1.1 percent y/y), from 2.71 mb/d to 2.74 mb/d (average), according to official sources. March saw output reach a near-four year high of 2.9 mb/d after the dissolution of the OPEC+

Chart 1: Real GDP growth in 1Q20 1Q18 2Q18 3Q18 4Q18 1Q19 2Q19 3Q19 4Q19 1Q20 Source-Kowait Central Statistical Bureau (CSB)

agreement which left producers free to pump at will. Comparing 1020 with 4019, however, the 2.2 percent q/q increase in crude production was not reflected in the official GDP figures: growth was negligible at 0.1 percent q/q. As these figures are preliminary, revisions are expected.

Economic activity in 2Q20 to weaken further

Looking ahead, non-oil growth will almost certainly fall significantly in 2020 given that this quarter was spent entirely under some form of curfew amid rising coronavirus cases in the country. Full curfew was imposed in May and only began to be eased in June. Judging by the economic impact witnessed in those advanced economies that have reported figures for 2Q, the decline could be very severe and most certainly more than the 3.5 percent recorded in the first quarter. This is to be expected given that businesses were largely shuttered, employees forced to stay at home or laid off, domestic consumption mostly limited to foods and necessities and government capex spending put on hold. Moreover, with the reinstatement of OPEC+ production cuts in May and June, oil production was drastically curtailed. Therefore, the headline growth rate is expected to reflect declines in both the oil and

Chart 2: Non-oil growth rate in 1Q20 according to sub-sector: Wholesale and retail trade Taxes less subsidies* Electricity, gas and water Manufacturing Health and social work Construction Transpor Source: Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (CSB); "became more negative

Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma **Account draws**

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly and monthly draws on Al-Najma Account and Salary Transfer Campaign on Sunday. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Ahmad Al-Basman.

The results of the draws were as follows:

Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000 went to the winner Yousef Hamzah Abbas Bager. Salary account campaign - the prize of up to KD 1,000 went to the winner Mohammad Abdullah

The bank stated that the salary campaign is aimed at customers who transfer their salaries of KD 500 or more to the Bank, especially Kuwaiti employees and residents working in the government, oil sectors and companies listed with the Bank as well as retirees, and take advantage of the benefits of this campaign and get an instant cash gift from KD 250 to KD 500 or an interest-free loan of 5 times the salary and a maximum of KD 10,000, in addition to the cash gifts, there will be a weekly draw for new and local Kuwaiti customers who transfer their salaries to the Bank to earn an amount equal to one salary of the salaries they receive

The Bank stated that Al-Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer

The bank revealed that Al-Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al-Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are: Saber Abdulhai Awaid Mohammad

Fatemah Masoud Saad Almasoud

Salem Nayef Salem Alhajri

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

China's Geely seeks launchpad to enter auto giant orbit

TAIZHOU, China/SHANGHAI: Chinese carmaker Geely plans to use a platform developed with input from Volvo to build new models in Malaysia for its partly owned Proton brand, a strategy that shows how it aims to accelerate its push to become China's first global auto giant.

The yet-to-be-finalized plans for Proton are just one strand of a Geely project to revamp factories at home and abroad using joint platforms it has been perfecting with Volvo since 2013. Geely bought the Swedish brand 10 years ago for \$1.8 billion - a deal that raised its international profile and sent shockwaves through the global auto trade. Senior Geely officials and engineers told Reuters that a project dubbed Compact Modular Architecture (CMA) will allow them to develop, design and build different types of compact cars with similar mechanical layout faster than before - and at lower cost.

They said CMA, along with a platform for smaller cars known as B-segment Modular Architecture (BMA) that Geely plans to roll out for Proton, allow them to harness the Swedish automaker's technologies and Geely's capabilities in cost control, supply chain management and local production.

"CMA will be the core of Geely's future architecture design ... We learn technologies and build up talents through developing it," said Li Li, vice president at Geely Automobile Research Institute, confirming the Proton plan during an interview in Ningbo, south of Shanghai. Li declined to disclose details of general investment, financial targets or a timetable for expansion

From its lowly foundation in 1986 in Taizhou

on the east coast as a maker of refrigerator parts, Geely has grown into one of the biggest players in China, the world's largest auto market accounting for nearly one in every three passenger cars sold around the planet. Geely now sells more than 2 million cars a year across all brands, ranking it not far from the world's top 10 automakers by unit sales.

The CMA platform in particular will allow Geely and Volvo to design vehicles more quickly and cost-effectively, Li said, providing a technological springboard towards a higher market share at a time when the auto industry must embrace a future featuring electric and autonomously driven transport.

Global ambitions

Like Geely - an anglicisation of the Chinese word for 'lucky' - domestic peers Great Wall Motor and GAC have branched out with their own versions of vehicle platforms, harbouring greater ambitions for selling cars in major Western markets.

But grand plans have previously been delayed, or simply cancelled, amid a lack of practical preparedness, analysts have said, against a backdrop of years of trade tensions between China and the United States that have roiled the global economy. At the same time, attention has been diverted to deal with stalling sales at home as the pace of China's growth has slowed.

In its pursuit of global automaker status, Hangzhou-based Geely is now holding talks to merge the Volvo Cars business with its Hong Kong-listed Geely Automobile - worth about \$22 billion by market value, bigger then famed industry names like Fiat Chrysler Automobile and Nissan Motor.

As well as the 49.9 percent stake it took in Proton three years ago, the broader Geely group - Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, led by Taizhouborn billionaire Li Shufu - now also comprises a 9.7 percent stake in Germany's Daimler AG and a majority stake in British sport car brand Lotus.



non-oil sectors.

And while giants from Toyota Motor Corp to Volkswagen AG and General Motors Co have followed a similar shared platform projects for their respective brands, Geely's strategy is a first for a Chinese company.

The automaker plans to develop all its future models for the Geely and Lynk & Co brands or CMA or other related product platforms, like BMA. It is also developing a new architecture to accelerate the launch of pure battery electric vehicles with intelligent connectivity functions, said Li, a former Ford engineer. In addition, Geely wants to shift development of next generations of some popular existing models, like Borui and Emgrand sedans, to those architectures, he said. It takes around 18 months for Geely to significantly change a CMA-based car, versus 24-30 months to do so on a non-CMA-based model.

Using CMA, plant managers can switch production of different models to maintain smooth overall capacity utilization rates at production lines, said Oskar Falk, the Volvo-trained head at Geely and Volvo's first joint production site in

The plant already exports Volvo Polestar 2 electric sedans to the United States and Europe, and is preparing to make Volvo's first batterypowered electric vehicle, Falk said. Geely also plans to start exporting China-made Lynk & Co 01 SUVs to Europe this year. —Reuters

Singapore company director charged over Wirecard scam

SINGAPORE: A company director has been charged in Singapore with falsifying letters linked to scandal-hit German payments giant Wirecard, according to court documents, as the fallout from the firm's collapse spreads further around the world.

The fintech company filed for insolvency in June after admitting that 1.9 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) missing from its accounts did not exist, revelations that stunned Germany and drew comparisons with the Enron accounting scandal. R. Shanmugaratnam, director of a business administration firm in Singapore at the center of investigations into the case, has been charged with falsifying letters showing it held money in escrow for Wirecard. The 54-year-old of Citadelle Corporate Services claimed in the letters in 2016 and 2017 the firm held amounts ranging from 30 million euros to around 177 million euros in accounts on behalf of Wirecard, according to court documents seen by AFP Friday. But the accounts did not hold such amounts and the letters were produced with the "intent to defraud", according to the charges, filed last month.

Shanmugaratnam could not immediately be reached for comment. Authorities in the city state last month launched an investigation into Citadelle and another company over suspicions they falsified accounts, and Shanmugaratnam is the first person to face charges. Wirecard's woes began in January 2019 with a series of Financial Times articles alleging accounting irregularities in its Asian division,



headed by chief operating officer Jan Marsalek. German and Philippine authorities want to question Marsalek as part of separate investigations into Wirecard, but his whereabouts are unclear.

Last month, the Philippines justice minister said immigration officers falsified records to show he briefly visited the country after being sacked. Entries in the Bureau of Immigration database show Marsalek arrived in the

Philippines on June 23 — the day after he was fired-and left for China on June 24. But CCTV footage, airline manifests and other records prove Marsalek was not in the country on those dates, minister Menardo Guevarra said in a statement. The firm's troubles exploded in June when longtime auditors Ernst & Young said they were unable to find the 1.9 billion euros, and that they had been fed false statements. —AFP

Classifieds Tuesday, August 11, 2020

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind with speed of 15 - 40 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times over costal areas north westerly wind with

No Current Warnings

WEATHER WARNING		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	47 °C	35 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	32 °C
ABDALY	47 °C	31 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	48 °C	33 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	47 °C	35 °C
SALMIYAH	45 °C	36 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	47 °C	33 °C
WAFRA	47 °C	32 °C
SALMY	45 °C	29 °C

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MSL Analysis (hPa) Valid 0000 UTC 10 AUG 2020	

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures				
		MAX.	MIN.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed	
Tuesday	08/11	Hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	46 °C	33 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	08/12	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	46 °C	32 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Thursday	08/13	Very hot	48 °C	33 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Friday	08/14	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	48 °C	34 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h

PRAYER	TIMES
Fajr	03:46
Sunrise	05:13
Zuhr	11:53
Asr	15:29
Sunset	18:33
Isha	19:57

All times are local time unless otherwise stated.

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT 16	KUWAIT AIRPORT
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	35 °C
MAX. RH	19 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	N 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics	
Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401

Salmiya

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Antonio Jose D Cunha holder of Indian Passport No. M6716579 residing in Kuwait at present having permanent address Gurudev Shakti Flat S-3 P.O. Caranzalem Ilhas Goa Pin Code 403002 would like to change my father name from Mariano Santana D Cunha to Mariano Santana Da Cunha as per my birth

I, Antonio Jose D Cunha holder of Indian Passport No. M6716579 residing in Kuwait at present having permanent address Gurudev Shakti Flat S-3 P.O. Caranzalem Ilhas Goa Pin Code 403002 would like to change my mother name from Maria to Maria Augusta Carmelina Vicente as per mine and my motherís birth certificates.

I, Mary Fatima Justa D Cunha residing at Gurudev Shakti Flat S-3 P.O. Caranzalem Ilhas Goa Pin Code 403002 would like to change my name from Mary Fatima Justa D Cunha to Mary Fatima Justa Fernandes as per my birth and marriage certificates.

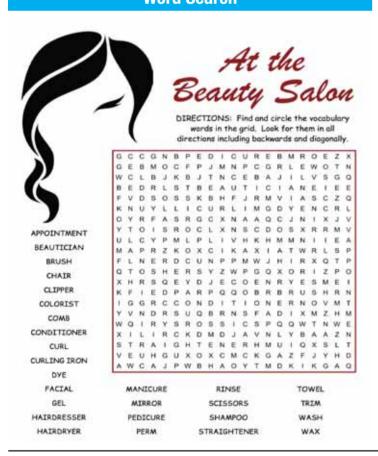
I, Antonio Jose D Cunha holder of Indian Passport No. M6716579 residing in Kuwait at present having permanent address Gurudev Shakti Flat S-3 P.O. Caranzalem Ilhas Goa Pin Code 403002 would like to change my name from Antonio Jose D Cunha to Antonio Jose Da Cunha as per my birth certificate. (C 5755) 11-8-2020

I, Virginia Gloria Romila D'Souza, r/o House No. 235, Raint, Moira, Bardez, Goa, was previously known as Verginia Gloria Romila D'Souza. Henceforth I will be known as Virginia Gloria Romila D'Souza in all my documents and dealings. (C 5754) 10-8-2020



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STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today you could be hit with some exciting news, Aries. This could involve new people or equipment coming onto the scene or an entirely new project or course of action that you'd never have dreamed of. This is likely to be a lucky break for you, as it probably suits your skills and talents nearly perfectly. Make the most of this opportunity. It could make a big difference to you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Information that you receive from others and from within your own heart could compel you to participate in some ambitious projects, Taurus. They may be work related, connected with a group, or your own. You'll find them interesting, challenging, and gratifying. New opportunities to advance and express yourself could open for you. It's best to move ahead now or they might pass you by.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

borhood, if possible, could put you in touch with new and

exciting people who eventually become friends, Cancer.

Shared goals and interests could give rise to plans for ambi-

tious projects. Whatever enterprises you start today are like-

ly to prove successful if everyone involved pitches in. This

evening, enjoy quiet time with your partner.

Group activities or social events in your neigh-

Have you wanted to move in a new direction, Leo? If so, this could be when you get the lead of a lifetime. You might receive unexpected information indicating possible new sources of income to pursue on your own. New opportunities are going to come that could make a big difference in your lifestyle and catapult you to a higher socioeconomic bracket. Make the most of it all.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

workshop or social event involving people in a spiritual,

metaphysical, or intellectual field, Libra. Fascinating talk

could lead to your own insights and revelations. You could

explore ways to harness your natural healing ability, per-

haps through Reiki, massage, or another discipline. You'll

be preoccupied with what you learn today.

Today you could decide to attend a virtual



Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Some fascinating new information, possibly spir-

itual or metaphysical, could come today from periodicals, TV, or the Internet. This could set you on a new course of study, Capricorn. Your insights and revelations could prove valuable in increasing your understanding of what you read. This evening, expect a surprising message from someone you haven't heard from in a while. Enjoy!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

New information could come at you from all sides today, Scorpio. Books, magazines, TV, the Internet, and conversations are likely to bring exciting knowledge your way that reinforces some of your convictions. Your intuitive abilities are strong, too. Insights could blend well with what you learn from others. Write down your thoughts. You'll want to put them to



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Dreams and meditations could lead to insights about how best to handle your finances, Aquarius. Your intuition is very strong. Also, you could receive some surprising ideas from media sources. No matter how outrageous an idea seems, consider it well before deciding. A written plan of action for anything you do would be helpful. You'll want to keep track of all



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You could meet some fascinating people, Gemini, and perhaps learn Earthshaking information that impacts your life. You might consider new lifestyle options. A group, possibly spiritual or metaphysical, could seem attractive. You might consider joining it. Expect some fascinating discussions with a significant other. Books and other publications could prove enlightening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Unusual circumstances could arise that change your creative orientation, Virgo. It's likely that they involve the gathering, sharing, and using of information. You may consider some unusual options that involve changing jobs, home, or another factor important to you. Think carefully first. Enjoy an intimate evening sharing these new developments with someone special.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Surprising news about your finances and the economy in general could cause you to feel confident and secure about your financial future, Sagittarius. An unexpected raise could be on the way, possibly because of sudden changes in the workplace. Some of the information may seem vague and uncertain at first, but later news should clear it up. It seems a celebration is in order!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

to be an exciting, stimulating day. Don't be surprised if new

doors to a great future open for you.

A small social event or group rally could put you in touch with some new, exciting people in interesting fields, Pisces. You might run into an old friend you haven't seen in ages. If you aren't romantically involved, an attractive new person could arrive on the scene. This promises

Lifestyle | Features



A woman is evacuated from the partially destroyed Beirut neighborhood of Mar Mikhael on August 5, 2020 in the aftermath of a massive explosion in the Lebanese capital—AFR photos



A man collects his belongings in the trendy partially destroyed Beirut neighborhood of Mar Mikhael.



An injured man sits next to a restaurant in the trendy partially destroyed Beirut neighborhood of Mar Mikhael.

Mar Mikhail: Beirut's 'beating heart' snuffed out by blast

eritage buildings, trendy bars and hip art galleries, all gutted: the vibrant Mar Mikhail district, once one of Beirut's gems, is now a wasteland of broken glass and destroyed cars. A short walk from Lebanon's main port, where a huge blast on Tuesday flattened buildings and killed more than 100 people, the bustling nightlife hotspot was among the hardest-hit areas. Today it is unrecognizable even to those who grew up there. "Mar Mikhail was Beirut's beating heart," said Lina Daoud, a 45-year-old volunteer distributing food and water. "Now, I feel like I'm entering an unfamiliar place," she said. "I never thought there would come a day... when I would see Mar Mikhail like this."

Inside a damaged house more than a century old, Michel Asaad gathered shards of glass in a bucket. In a room that looked like it was hit by a tornado, a toppled statue of the Virgin Mary had been resurrected-but was missing its head. "I've lived in this house my entire life," said Asaad, 53. "I could have died here."

'Worse than the war'

Asaad pointed to other architectural gems that gave the street its traditional character, popular with Lebanese and foreigners alike. The oldest among them have totally collapsed, while those that sustained less damage now have craters in their walls or are missing roofs. Beirut's governor has said the blast made nearly 300,000 people homeless. Asaad said he was "only one of the hun-



Volunteers and members of the civil society clean the rubble in a street of the damaged trendy Beirut neighborhood of Mar Mikhael.

dreds, if not thousands, of people" affected in the neighborhood. Mar Mikhail's concrete pavement was carpeted with broken glass that crackled underfoot as residents streamed in to check on their properties on Wednesday morning.

Mangled vehicles with air bags poking out of broken windows lined the sidewalk, their owners waiting for them to be lifted. Dozens of people dragging heavy suitcases made their way up a steep road, joining the exodus from a district rendered almost uninhabitable. Rescue workers carried an elderly woman out of her house on a wooden chair from her living room. Another frail and elderly woman pushed past crowds, four heavy tote bangs dangling from her

thin arms as debris fell overhead. Wearing a face mask, Mar Mikhail

Wearing a face mask, Mar Mikhail resident Khalil said he had lived in the neighborhood for 50 years, including throughout Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war. "During the war, we would see shells fall here and there," said the 78-year-old. "But we have never seen something like this. Not even in our worst nightmares could we have imagined it."

'Lost all hope'

People walking through the street did not know where to look: at the utter devastation around them, or overhead, where sharp stalactites of broken glass threatened to break off at any moment. "It looks like World War II," said one passerby, examining the damage.



An injured Lebanese woman sits in front of her damaged shop in the trendy Beirut neighborhood of Mar Mikhael.

Nearby, a woman broke down crying as she described the scene to a friend over the phone. Historically an Armenian district, Mar Mikhael counted several Armenians among Tuesday's casualties. Nurse Jessica Beckjian died under the rubble of her office at the heavily damaged Saint George Medical Center near the port. In more recent times it has been gentrified to become the heart of Beirut's cultural life, bustling with young crowds frequenting its galleries, restaurants and bars.

But Wednesday's traffic jams weren't caused by revelers heading to their favorite watering hole. Instead, cars lined the road bumper-to-bumper as people flocked to inspect their homes and shops. Tuesday's blast came on top

of a spiraling economic crisis compounded by a coronavirus lockdown, adding some \$3 billion-worth of damage to the heavy burden weighing on the small Mediterranean country. Sweeping shards of glass from the floor using a broom, volunteer Tala Masri said the damage done by the blast went well beyond its immediate economic impact. "Mar Mikhail is our second home, especially us the youth," said the 18-year-old student. "Even with the coronavirus, and everything else that has happened in the country, I always had hope," she added. "But now, I've lost it." — WFP



This file photo shows a tourist operating a stand up paddle board at Muri beach on Rarotonga, the largest island in the Cook Islands. — AFP

New Zealand eyes Cook Islands travel bubble

ew Zealand plans to open a virus-free "travel bubble" with the tiny Pacific realm of Cook Islands before year's end, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said yesterday, while expressing caution about a similar arrangement with Australia. Ardern said the quarantine-free travel corridor was possible because New Zealand and the Cooks-an archipelago of under 10,000 people-had successfully contained the cornavirus. "Our expectation is that it would be in place before the end of the year," she told reporters, adding that officials were being careful not to move too quickly on the proposal. "The last thing anyone wants is to reopen travel, only to have it closed down again because it has-nit been done properly."

New Zealand has recorded only 22

coronavirus deaths in a population of five million, and marked 100 days since its last case of community transmission on Sunday, while the Cooks declared itself virus-free in mid-April. The economic benefits of the travel bubble are expected to be felt mostly in the Cooks, a popular tourist destination where Ardern estimated 60 percent of pre-virus visitors were from New Zealand. A trans-Tasman bubble with Australia would be far more advantageous to New Zealand's economy, where international tourism screeched to a halt when borders were closed in March. The prospect looked tantalisingly close a few months ago, before Australia was hit with a second wave of infections centered on Victoria state. "We're still undertaking the foundational work for trans-Tasman travel arrangements but obviously that's going to be some time off," Ardern said. All interna-tional arrivals into New Zealand are currently required to spend at least 14 days in strictly supervised quarantine.—AFF

Italy resort lifts alert on melting glacier threat

n Italian Alpine resort on Sunday lifted a state of alert declared last week over fears that a chunk of glacier on the Mont Blanc mountain range might crash down on them. Around 15 people who were evacuated can now return to their homes in Courmayeur and traffic in the Cap Ferret valley is permitted again, said a statement from town officials. Climate change has been increasingly melting the world's glaciers, creating a new danger for the town of Courmayeur, a resort community in Italy's Aosta Valley region, near the French border. The town was put on high alert on Wednesday as a block of ice estimated at about 500,000 cubic meters-the size of the Milan cathedral, one official said-from the Planpincieux glacier risked falling and threatening homes.

But on Sunday, town officials announced that all security measures had been lifted. Some locals were dismissive of the closure, and said it further hit a tourism season already affected by the coronavirus measures. But the mayor's office said again on Sunday: "The evacuation was necessary and inevitable because of the glacier risk." While regreting what it said was the alarmist tone of some news coverage, officials insisted that the threat to the town had been real.

During a recent helicopter flypast, an AFP reporter saw a gaping chasm on the lower part of the Planpincieux, from which two cascades of water flowed towards the valley, as it hung from the mountainside like a gigantic block of grey polystyrene. In September and October last year, the Planpincieux glacier also threatened a partial collapse, after which extra surveillance measures were put in place. A study last year by Swiss scientists found that Alpine glaciers could shrink between 65 and 90 percent this century, depending on how effectively the world can curb greenhouse gas emissions. — AFP



A picture taken from a helicopter shows the Planpincieux glacier of the Grandes Jorasses, on the Italian side of the Mont Blanc massif, with the Courmayeur village in the background, Val Ferret, northwestern Italy. — AFP



Montenegro's medieval walled city of Kotor is suffering under a huge influx of visitors.—AFP

Montenegro hopes Russians can salvage its tourist season

eaches along Montenegro's Adriatic coast, normally packed with tourists in August, were largely empty last week in a sign of how badly the coronavirus is hurting the country's economy. Revenues from the summer tourist season are expected to drop by around 90% from 280 million euros (\$330 million) in 2019. Tourism accounts for more than 20% of Montenegro's economy. In the coastal resort of Budva, patrons in cafes were few and far between. Krsto Niklanovic gazed at the sea from his restaurant's empty terrace. "The turnover now is at about 12% compared to the same date last year," Niklanovic told Reuters on Sunday.

To salvage the season, Montenegro last week opened its borders to Russians, who normally make up a third of the 2.6 million tourists visiting annually. Russia must still adopt reciprocal measures before its tourists start arriving. Ties between Podgorica and the Kremlin soured after Montenegro joined NATO in 2016, but Russians still own around a third

of all the foreign companies and real estate in the country.

estate in the country.

Zeljka Radak-Kukavicic, head of Montenegro's Tourist Organization, said the arrival of the Russians would help. "I believe ... we will manage ... to at least minimize the effects of the previous seven months," she said. Montenegro in March closed borders, airports and seaports, and banned public gatherings and outdoor activities. Prime Minister Dusko Markovic declared the country coronavirus-free on May 25, but cases rebounded in mid-June. So far, 3,618 of Montenegro's 620,000 people have caught COVID-19 and 64 have died, far less than elsewhere in the region.

Zarko Radulovic, co-owner of the Montenegro Stars hotel chain, said an increase in cases could ruin hopes for a recovery this season. "If there are 300 (more) ill, God forbid, everything goes down the drain," he said. — AFP

Saudi Arabia's tourism landmark Al-Ula signs agreement with Accor

audi Arabia has agreed with Europe's biggest hotel group Accor for the group to expand and operate a resort at the \$20 billion Al-Ula tourism project in the kingdom's northwestern region, the Royal Commission for the project said on Sunday. Al-Ula, the site of an ancient civilization in a remote northwestern corner of the country, is part of plans by the world's top crude exporter to diversify its economy away from oil and open

up after decades of seclusion. The agreement will see Accor operate an expanded Ashar Resort under the Banyan Tree brand, with 47 new units bringing the resort's total capacity to 82 high-end villas, along with a spa and several gourmet restaurants, a commission statement said.

The project is located in the Ashar valley, 15 km (9 miles) from the Kingdom's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, Hegra. In April, Saudi Arabia's tourism minister

told Reuters the sector could see a 35-45% decline this year due to measures taken by the government to fight the coronavirus pandemic. The ultra-conservative Muslim kingdom, relatively closed off for decades, has in recent years relaxed strict social codes such as the segregation of men and women in public and the requirement that women wear all-covering black robes, or abayas.—Reuters



Al-Ula is notable for its natural heritage and rich history. It is home to important historical and archaeological sites. — RCU

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Lifestyle|Feature







This file photo taken on October 5, 2015, shows a view of the stained glass wir



This picture taken on August 8, 2020 shows a view from inside the damaged Sursock

This combination of pictures created yesterday shows (left) a night view of the Sursock Museum, once a private home built in 1912 and became a host to an impressive permanent art collection as photographed in the neighborhood of Ashrafiyeh in Lebanon's capital Beirut on October 7, 2015; and (right) a handout image obtained from the museum and taken on August 5, 2020, showing its damaged facade with empty windows after their stained glass was broken in the aftermath of the massive blast at the port of Beirut which ravaged entire neighbor

DEADLY EXPLOSION DESTROYS DECIMATES

BEIRUT'S CULTURE AND ART SCENE



This handout image obtained from the Sursock Museum shows a view of the damd of Ashrafiveh.



This handout image obtained from the Sursock Museum shows a view of a damaged

By Ali Tufekci

ast week saw a massive explosion in the Port of Beirut hit the global headlines. The death toll, as well as the economic damage, were indeed very serious. There were also political aspects of the issue. The incident will undoubtedly affect Lebanon and the Mediterranean in its entirety. In addition to all this political and economic chaos, however, arts and cultural venues also sustained some severe damages in the blast. Lebanon is one of the most interesting countries in the Middle East, in terms of its geography, ethnic makeup and style of administration. The earliest inhabitants of Beirut, the central city of a region which has been a battleground among many civilizations throughout history, were the Phoenicians. It is referred to as "Biruta" in the Amarna letters, which go all the way back to the 14th century B.C., and as "Biruta" and "Birutu" in the Ugaritic texts from the 13th century B.C. This name is derived from the Akkadian word "burtu." which means "well" or "spring."

Alexander the Great put an end to the Persian rule of the city, which had been previously been presided over by Egypt and Babylon centuries before the dawn of

nity both among themselves and in the country. In the 19th century, Egypt's Governor Mehmed Ali Pasha invaded Lebanon, leading the Christian subjects in the country to revolt - which had a devas-tating impact. In 1840, the Ottomans forced the Egyptians to withdraw with the support of British and Austrian forces.

During the Ottoman period, Maronites constituted almost half of Beirut's population, the rest being Orthodox, Catholic, Sunni, Shiite and Druze. This mosaic of cultures also paved the way for many disputes. Thinking that it had a right inherited from the Crusaders in the region, France provoked the Maronites against the Druze and the Ottomans in its own interests. In response, Britain provoked the Druze in turn. Thus, the tension between the two peoples mounted into a civil war. The Ottomans then moved in to take over the situation A multi-sectarian administrative structure was established in the region.

France was not happy with this situation, leading to constant chaos and tension. Although it seemed things calmed down for a time, World War I soon broke out, leading to France's occupation of the region. When tension in the country increased during World War II, the people revolted. France had to withdraw, and



This combination of pictures shows (left) a view of the stained glass windows at the Sursock rhood of Ashrafiyeh on October 5, 2015; and (right) an Museum, as photographed in the neighb image of the museum taken on August 8, 2020, showing its damaged facade with empty window their stained glass was broken in the aftermath of the massive blast at the port of Beirut.

Zeina Arida, who was in the museum at the time of the explosion, announced it had been destroyed, but that there were no casualties or injured, according to The Art Newspaper. "A lot of damage has been done to the structure of the building at a time when the dollar in Lebanon is so high that I don't know how we will afford to buy new glass for the skylights, the windows and the exit doors," Arida said. She noted that they had not had the opportunity to purchase new materials and that the gallery had not sustained such damage even throughout the civil war

ancient times in Beirut.

The Fouad Debbas Collection: Memory of Lebanon As a result of coronavirus pandemic, many museums had started to put collec-



Debbas not only collected concrete visual material but was also moved to find out more about the hidden stories behind each shot. He also researched the context and background of the images. All this cultural memory was bring uploaded to the database of the museum. The most important feature of the collection was that it showed us the changes and transformations that have taken place in Beirut since the time since Ottoman rule. The collection, which forms a memory of Lebanon within the body of Beirut, was obliterated just as it was about to be made available online. This may lead to a delay in its publication considerably.



The blast caused heavy damage across an area of 2 square kilometers, and moderate damage across an area of 4-10 square kilometers, resulting in the windows of buildings to be shattered and broken. The explosion affected about 1.862,000 people across a 10-kilometer area. When we look at this location, find it the site of the oldest ruins in Beirut

history, the "Phoenico-Persian Quarter," 1.5 kilometers from the explosion site. We see a Crusader castle and Roman ruins in the part of the Phoenician quarter towards the port and explosion area. Also, near here, a little inside is the Archaeological Museum. These remains bear traces of



This handout image obtained from the Sursock Museum shows the damaged 1930 portrait of Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock by Dutch-French painter Kees Van Donger

There are also many other places of religious significance in the blast area. The Mohammad al-Amin Mosque, located 2 kilometers from the blast area, is one of them. The mosque was built in 1853 upon the order of Ottoman Sultan Abdulmecid. on land which was gifted to Sufi Sheikh Abu Nasr al-Yaf, one of Beirut's foremost religious functionaries at the time. Al-Yaf had established a dervish lodge on this land. The dervish lodge was severely damaged during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and it was decided to be turned into a mosque in 2002.

It was the prime minister, Rafik Hariri, who laid the first stone in the building, one of the largest mosques in Lebanon, Hariri mosque was inaugurated. The assassination trial still continues and the verdict was expected on the day of the explosion. The true extent of damage in many other historical, religious and cultural places will become clearer over time. — www.dai-



This combination of pictures shows (left) a view of the Sursock Museum on June 27, 2008; and (right) a handout image obtained from the muse um and taken on August 5, 2020, showing its damaged facade with empty window the Common Era. Fought over by

Alexander's would-be successors, Ptolemy, Seleucus and Antigonus, soon

enough the Romans would arrive, recon-

structing the city entirely. Beirut came to

be ruled by one Julia Augusta Felix

Berytus and thus was long referred to as "Berytos" or "Berytus." The city later

passed under Eastern Roman (Byzantine) rule and has never lost its charm in the

region. With the advent of Islam, it was



conquered by the Muslims during the time of Umar, the second caliph of Islam. a short period, the Crusaders occupied the area and established feudal structures there. However, Islamic rule once more returned. **Cultural mosaic** tense demographics
The Ottomans took control of the city

from the Mamluks in 1516 with the military expedition launched by Sultan Selim (aka Selim the Grim.) The country was administered through a native amir from among the Christian Maronites, affiliated mascus. These families were at odds with the Druze, a powerful commu-

This handout image obtained from the Sursock Museum shows the damaged 1930 portrait of Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock

by Dutch-French painter Kees Van Dongen as it lies face

down on the ground at Sursock's office at the museum prem-

ises in the neighborhood of Ashrafiveh.

Among the images of the extent of the damage after the blast, we also see arts and cultural centers. The remains of many galleries, museums and historical buildings can be found among the debris. Major art galleries, such as the Marfa d Galerie Tanit in the Port o Beirut, were completely destroyed in the blast. Both were the city's most vibrant cultural and artistic centers. The Sursock Museum was one of the worst-hit. The museum, a few kilometers from the site of the explosion, was hosted at a villa built in 1912. Founded in 1960 as one of the cen-

ters of Beirut's cultural life, it was

reopened in 2015 after comprehensive

Lebanon gained its independence. But

the tension did not end here. The civil war

that started in 1975 has had a lasting

impact on the country. Thus, Beirut bears

the traces of ancient history, a mosaic of

cultures and experiences. The artifacts in

the art centers as well as historical build-ings and ruins here offer us a glimpse of

Galleries destroyed

this colorful history.

restoration efforts.

This picture taken on August 8, 2020 shows a view of "The Weeping Women' sculpture, depicting a Christian and Muslim woman mourning together in the loss of sons to war, in the courtvard of the damaged Sursock Museum in the neighbor hood of Ashrafiveh in Lebanon's capital Beirut.



This picture shows a view of a Lebanese flag flying near the facade of the damaged Sursock Museum.



These handout images obtained from the Sursock Museum show a view of a damaged gallery inside the museum premise



Sports
Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Kuwait Cimes

Photo of the Day

Ferro is the first champion as WTA Tour returns

PALERMO: France's Fiona Ferro became the first WTA champion in five months on Sunday as she overpowered Anett Kontaveit 6-2 7-5 to win the Palermo Ladies Open, the first Tour event to be staged since the COVID-19 epidemic shut down the sport.

Ferro went 10 matches unbeaten in regional exhibition events after the Tour was suspended in March, and continued to gather further momentum with five more wins in Palermo this week as major tennis returned in the Sicilian capital.

"I think it was my best match of the week," the 23-year-old Ferro said after landing the second title of her career with a dominant display. "I was feeling relaxed... I don't know why because it was a final! I wasn't really feeling pressure."

Several exhibition events have taken place glob-

ally since the sport was halted in early March due to the pandemic but the women's claycourt tournament in Palermo was the first across both the elite WTA and ATP tours in five months.

There were strict health protocols, including lim-

ited number of fans and no handshakes between players after the match.

Players and officials underwent COVID-19 tests

Players and officials underwent COVID-19 tests every four days and one player who tested positive pulled out of the tournament last weekend.

"I had a good intensity throughout the whole match, I didn't miss a lot, made a lot of winners, so I'm really happy to have the trophy with me," said the Belgian-born Ferro.

She struck 51 winners and broke Kontaveit's serve five times in a clinical display as she clinched the title on her second match point. — Reuters

Verstappen claims 70th Anniversary GP win as 'sleeping' Mercedes wilt

That was a massive challenge, but congratulations to Red Bull: Hamilton

SILVERSTONE: Max Verstappen delivered Red Bull's first victory at Silverstone since 2012 on Sunday when he made the most of a superior strategy in sizzling conditions to beat both Mercedes and claim victory in the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix.

It was the Dutchman's first victory of the season and the ninth of his career and the first time a race had been won by a driver who did not start on pole position in seven races since last year's Mexican Grand Prix.

Verstappen owed his victory to a team decision to start the race on hard compound tyres while his main rivals all launched from the grid on mediums, the two Mercedes men struggling to manage tyre-wear throughout the race.

During the race, Red Bull asked him to ease off, but he replied saying "I don't want to drive like a grand-ma" before the team relented. Verstappen won by 11.326 seconds ahead of championship leader and six-time champion Lewis Hamilton who passed Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas in the closing stages. The Finn finished third. "I didn't see that coming, but after the first stint it seemed we were really good on tyres. I didn't have any tyre issues at all - a great day for us," said Verstappen.

Hamilton said: "That was a massive challenge, but congratulations to Red Bull. It was definitely unexpected to have the blistering (on tyres) as hard core as that." Bottas, who started from pole, said: "Very frustrating for me, to start from pole and finish third.

"It's not ideal and I think that as a team we were sleeping at some points in the race. My strategy was far from ideal." Hamilton's podium finish meant he equalled Michael Schumacher's career record of 155 podium finishes. It was also his record-extending 38th points scoring finish in a row.

Charles Leclerc came home fourth after a sterling drive for Ferrari ahead of Alex Albon in the second Red Bull, Lance Stroll and his Racing Point team-

mate Nico Hulkenberg.

rce Menzies competes in the Mint 400 in Las Vegas, Nevada USA in 2020. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Esteban Ocon finished eighth for Renault ahead of Lando Norris of McLaren and Daniil Kvyat of Alpha Tauri. On a hot day, the track temperature was 43 degrees when the lights went out, Bottas clinging to the lead from his 13th career pole position.

Unsurprisingly, Verstappen out-started Hulkenberg to take third, the German making his first start since last year after his call-up to replace Covid-19 victim Sergio Perez.

At the front, Hamilton piled pressure on his teammate while at the back, after an unforced spin, Vettel slipped to 20th and last for Ferrari. He was back up to 14th by lap nine as the pit-stops began and Verstappen, like Vettel on hard tyres, began to close in on the two Mercedes.



Almost immediately, Hamilton admitted "my rears are finished" shortly before Bottas pitted, leaving Hamilton to fend off Verstappen before he stopped to take a new set of hards.

This gave Verstappen the initiative ahead of Hulkenberg and Stroll with Bottas fourth, after rejoining, and Hamilton fifth, adrift by 3.6 seconds.

The 'Hulk' soon pitted and returned in seventh as the race settled to await Verstappen's need for new rubber.

League and South America's domestic tournament.

"We will do whatever is in the best interests of Australian rugby and we've been working hard on a variety of competition models, not just for Super Rugby but for every level of the game," said interim Rugby Australia chief Rob Clarke.

He added that discussions had taken place with the other countries, but gave no indication about how the plan was received.

"We're in no means cutting off our SANZAAR partners and we'll be looking to do things jointly with them beyond the Rugby Championship wherever possible," he said.

"That said, we do need to have a competition that has integrity to it and has an ability to grow our game here in Australia and grow our fan base and some of the options we're looking at we believe will do just that."

Super Rugby was launched in 1996, emerging

from the amateur South Pacific Championship as a 10-team professional competition featuring clubs from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Its 25th anniversary season this year has not

been one to celebrate, as the COVID-19 pandemic not only halted cross-border competition but brutally exposed its flawed format.

With 15 teams in five countries straddling 16 time zones, it has long been criticised as unwieldy, expensive to run, exhausting for elite players and difficult for fans to follow.

Part of the Australian broadcast package also included an annual 'State of Union' clash between New South Wales and Queensland, similar to rugby league's State of Origin. — AFP



'SOMETHING'S WRONG'

For Mercedes, it was a longer wait than expected. By lap 25, he led Bottas by 17 seconds and Hamilton by 20 with both battling rapid tyre-wear. Finally, on lap 27, the Dutchman came in for mediums allowing Bottas to pass him before he re-joined and swiftly repassed the Finn.

In third, Hamilton reported blistering. As if in response, Red Bull matched Mercedes' tactics on lap 33 when both Bottas and the leader pitted for hard compounds and Hamilton, with blisters, took the lead

with 19 laps to go.

"Something's wrong with the car to make the left rear do that, said Hamilton, who had an advantage of 11 seconds. After his punctured win last week, Hamilton was worried.

"The tyres aren't going to blow, right?" he asked. For Hamilton, a stop was inevitable and it came on lap 42 when he locked up as he entered the pit lane. Back on hards, he reeled off fastest laps in pursuit before regaining third on lap 46 and then second on lap 50. — AFP

O'Sullivan laments world championship 'morgue' after beating Ding

LONDON: Five-time champion Ronnie O'Sullivan ended Chinese star Ding Junhui's world championship dream on Sunday at a Crucible Theatre venue he described as a "morgue" due to the ban on spectators. The mercurial 44-year-old Englishman won an enthralling high-quality second-round encounter 13-10 to set up a quarter-final clash with three-time champion Mark Williams.

O'Sullivan — who will be bidding for a first semifinal appearance since losing to Mark Selby in the 2014 final — said playing in front of an empty auditorium was an unrewarding experience.

There were meant to be 300 fans allowed in for each session but the pilot scheme was cancelled by the government on the first day of the championships because of new concerns over the coronavirus.

coronavirus.

"It is better with the fans, of course it is,"
O'Sullivan told the BBC. "It is like playing in a
morgue out there. It feels like a village at the
moment, the players are much more relaxed, for the
top players it can be a nightmare."

O'Sullivan admitted he needed to pull himself together as he battled to focus properly. "I am just glad I found a way to try and compete with my mind out there," he said. "For a while I have been going out and slapping the ball about having fun, not caring if I won or lost. "Deep down I do care but treat it like a bit of fun."

Farlier Australia's 2010 world champion Noil

Earlier Australia's 2010 world champion Neil Robertson set up an enticing quarter-final with three-time winner Selby after completing an impressive 13-9 victory over Barry Hawkins.

The 38-year-old made short work of Hawkins in their final session having begun it locked at 8-8. He won five of the six frames to clinch a place in the quarter-finals for the eighth time. Selby will be a formidable opponent but, with three titles this season, world number two Robertson will not be lacking in confidence as he seeks to reach his first world final since his stunning success a decade ago.

Selby won their only previous meeting in the championships, getting the better of 'The Thunder from Down Under' 17-15 in the 2014 semi-finals. Robertson said he had few concerns about facing Selby as his "expectations are very high" for the tournament.

Robertson said the virus-prompted shift from the tournament's usual April date meant playing conditions were very different. "The table is playing very heavy, it is very humid out there and it does not feel like playing at Sheffield. "It feels like playing in Asia and it is tough to screw the ball back." Kyren Wilson will play defending champion Judd Trump in the last eight after he beat fellow Englishman Martin Gould 13-9. — AFP

Australia pitches 'Super 8' rugby with NZ, SAfrica, Japan

SYDNEY: Rugby Australia yesterday proposed a Super 8 series with teams from New Zealand, South Africa, Japan and Argentina to be played at the conclusion of either a domestic or trans-Tasman tournament. The plan was unveiled as part of its drive to secure a lucrative new broadcast deal, with the current one running out at the end of the year. Its vision includes options for either a domestic Super Rugby competition, as is being played currently due to the coronavirus pandemic, or a trans-Tasman one from 2021

New Zealand last month suggested a new event with its five existing teams, two to four from Australia and one from the Pacific in a shake-up of the struggling flagship southern hemisphere Super Rugby tournament.

But there was little consultation and the plan angered its SANZAAR partners, with Australia insisting all of its teams — ACT Brumbies, Queensland Reds, NSW Waratahs, Melbourne Rebels and Western Force — must play.

Rugby Australia's pitch includes a four-week Super 8 tournament featuring the top two teams from Australian, New Zealand and South African Super Rugby, and the leading one from Japan's Top

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Collin Morikawa takes first major at PGA Championship

Ko collapses as Kang snatches win at Marathon Classic

SAN FRANCISCO: Collin Morikawa claimed his a 293-yard tee shot onto the green, landing it just first major championship on Sunday, delivering an magical eagle on the 16th hole in a bogey-free round of 64 at the 2020 PGA Championship. The 23-year-old American, who turned pro just 14 months ago, did the unthinkable by winning in just his second career major appearance.

Morikawa, who is ranked 12th in the world, eventually finished at 13-under 267 at TPC Harding Park in San Francisco. "It's amazing. It's been a life goal, obviously as a little kid, kind of watching everyone grow up, all these professionals, and this is always what I've wanted to do," Morikawa said. "I felt very comfortable from the start.

'As an amateur, junior golfer, turning professional last year, but to finally close it off and come out here in San Francisco, pretty much my second home where I spent the last four years, is pretty special," added Morikawa, who grew up in Los Angeles but went to college at Berkeley in San Francisco.

Third round leader Dustin Johnson had to settle for a tie for second with England's Paul Casev. Johnson shot a 68 and Casey closed with a 66 to reach 11-under 269.

Jason Day, Matthew Wolff, Bryson DeChambeau, Tony Finau and Scottie Scheffler all finished in a tie for fourth, three shots adrift of Morikawa. Heading into the final round there were ten players within three shots of the lead. The packed leaderboard continued throughout Sunday's round as it looked like any of a half a dozen players could emerge vic-

When Johnson made the turn after his ninth hole he was tied with three others for the lead at 10 under. They were soon joined by two others making a six-way tie on the back nine.

SWEET 16TH

Morikawa had four birdies, including two in his first four holes as he got off to a hot start. But it was his eagle at 16 that separated him from the tight pack at the top of the leaderboard.

Morikawa put it all together in the fourth round, keeping pace with the leaders throughout then emerging from the pack with his eagle on 16. He hit

seven feet from the flag stick. Morikawa made the putt to take the lead for the first time in the round and kept it the rest of the way.

Johnson birdied his final hole, while Casey, who was trying to become the first Brit to win the PGA in almost 100 years, also made par there. Brooks Koepka failed in his bid for a historic three peat. The two-time defending PGA champion got off to a woeful start with four bogeys on the front nine en route to a four-over 74.

Tiger Woods rebounded from a frustrating third round to shoot a 67 and finish one under for the tournament. Woods struggled on the greens early in the tournament, but found his putting groove Sunday, needing just 21 putts in the fourth round.

China No. 1 Li Haotong, who this week became the first player from China to lead in a major championship, shot a 69 for a six-under 274 total.

Li had another solid round going on Sunday but finished with a double bogey on 18. Former world No. 1 Rory McIlroy shot a closing 68 to reach twounder 278, 11 shots back of Morikawa. McIlroy, of Northern Ireland said players who had the most success were the ones who drove the ball straight on the fairways.

"If you missed fairways you were doing well to make par," he said. It is the first major since the season was placed on hold due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Because of the coronavirus restrictions the 2020 PGA took place with no fans, which was a first. Meanwhile, Danielle Kang completed backto-back LPGA Tour triumphs with a one-shot victory at the Marathon Classic on Sunday after former world number one Lydia Ko suffered a dramat-

Ko, who had started the final round four shots clear, looked to be cruising to victory after opening up a five-shot lead with six holes to play at Highland Meadows in Sylvania, Ohio. But the 23year-old New Zealander, chasing a first win in two years, endured a nightmare finish down the stretch that included bogeys on the 14th and 16th before a disastrous double-bogey seven on the 18th.

Ko's stumble allowed Kang to sneak in and claim



SAN FRANCISCO: Morikawa of the United States celebrates with the Wanamaker Trophy and girlfriend Katherine Zhu after winning the 2020 PGA Championship at TPC Harding Park in San Francisco, California. — AFP

victory by one shot only a week after her win at last week's Drive On Championship in Toledo, the first LPGA event after a five-month COVID-19 hiatus.

"My caddie looked at me and said, 'You're right in it," Kang said afterwards. "I looked at him and said, 'I'm five down with six holes to go.' I kind of liked that mentality, made some good birdies coming in and kept it together."

Kang finished with a three-under-par 68 for a 15 under aggregate 269. Ko, meanwhile, posted a twoover-par 73 to finish tied for second alongside England's Jodi Ewart Shadoff on 14 under.

It was cruel finale for Ko, who had started steadily with two birdies and seven pars to reach the turn at two under for the day. Ko then looked to have taken a stranglehold on the contest when Kang bogeyed the 12th to fall five shots behind.

But Kang responded with back-to-back birdies

on the 13th and 14th, and when Ko bogeyed the 14th after failing to reach the green in two, the five-shot deficit had been cut to just two strokes with four holes remaining. After both players parred the 15th, Kang closed to within one on the 16th when Ko was left with a long putt to save par that lipped out.

Kang's chances of at least forcing a playoff looked to have gone when she missed a golden birdie chance on the 17th to leave Ko one clear heading to 18.

Players, caddies and officials were tested for the coronavirus before entering the grounds. The list of players who had previously tested positive for the virus included Cameron Champ who was in contention Sunday.

Champ, who was given the all clear before the tournament, shot a 70 in the fourth round to finish at eight under. — AFP

Champions League setback as Atletico report virus cases

MADRID: Spanish side Atletico Madrid on Sunday reported two positive coronavirus tests, just four days before they face Leipzig in Portugal for a place in the Champions League semi-finals.

"On Saturday, all members of the first team and the club's party to Lisbon underwent tests as required by UEFA protocols to participate in the quarter-finals of the Champions League," said a club statement.

"Among the results known today, two positives have appeared and they are self-isolating in their respective homes." It was not revealed whether the two positive cases involved players or backroom staff. Atletico said UEFA as well as the Spanish and Portuguese football and health authorities have been informed and that a fresh round of tests will be carried out on the squad and support team.

They admitted this could mean last-minute changes to travel schedules as well as accommodation plans in the Portuguese capital. "The club will coordinate the new schedules with UEFA and as soon as there is a new plan it will be made public," added the statement.

'We also request the utmost respect over the identity of the two positive cases." The team were due to travel to Portugal on Monday for the closing stages of the Champions League which is being held in Lisbon as a precaution against COVID-19 rather than risk having teams travelling across Europe for home-and-away ties. The self-contained eight-team tournament will be staged behind closed doors, starting on Wednesday with the final set for Lisbon on August 23.

Spain has so far been one of the countries worst affected by the coronavirus pandemic, with 310,000 registered infections and 28,500 deaths. Although most sports have returned from a monthslong lockdown caused by the virus, there are concerns that numbers of cases are beginning to rise again. In recent days, Spain has seen local quarantines imposed in the Basque Country, Catalonia and Aragon. Protective face masks have been made compulsory in several busy areas, especially in the Madrid region.

Last month, Atletico's city rivals Real Madrid announced forward Mariano Diaz had tested positive for COVID-19. Sevilla, meanwhile, reported an unnamed player had also contracted the illness.

Real have since been knocked out of the Champions League but Sevilla are still involved in the Europa League. They play English side Wolves in their quarter-final in Duisburg, Germany, on Tuesday.

The Champions League had been put on hold since March because of the virus with the last-16 stage only completed on Friday and Saturday.

In their statement on Sunday, Atletico were keen to reassure football authorities, explaining that they had followed a very strict protocol even after the end of La Liga season on July 19. Weekly tests were carried out on July 26 and August 2.

For its 'Final Eight' tournament in Portugal, UEFA has planned strict protocols — each team will have to provide test results before travelling to the country, and will be tested again on the eve of their first match. Each positive test will require the individual to self-isolate. — AFP



Lillard scores 51, **Embiid** injured in Blazers' win

ORLANDO: Damian Lillard poured in 51 points and added seven assists to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to a 124-121 victory over a Philadelphia 76ers' squad that lost Joel Embiid to injury on Sunday night near Orlando. Carmelo Anthony recorded 20 points and seven rebounds as Portland (33-39) moved within a half-game of the eighth-place Memphis Grizzlies in the Western Conference race. The Trail Blazers are a halfgame ahead of the San Antonio Spurs and one game in front of the Phoenix Suns for the play-in berth. Josh Richardson scored a season-best 34 points and matched a season high of six 3-pointers for the 76ers (42-28). Embiid exited with a left ankle injury with 6:18 left in the first quarter and had two points on 1-of-6 shooting and collected four rebounds. Anthony moved into 15th place in NBA history with 26,411 career points. He passed Paul Pierce (26,397) and John Havlicek (26,395).

HOUSTON ROCKETS 129 -SACRAMENTO KINGS 112

Austin Rivers scored 41 points off the bench, James Harden tallied 32 points, eight rebounds and seven assists, and Houston roared back from a sluggish start to top Sacramento. The Rockets (44-25) improved to 4-1 in the restart while the Kings (29-41) were eliminated from playoff contention when the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Philadelphia 76ers earlier Sunday. Houston played a second consecutive game without guard Russell Westbrook (right quad contusion), although Westbrook and guard Eric Gordon (left ankle sprain) are nearing a return. Rivers helped compensate for their absences with his career high scoring, including 19 points on 7-of-8 shooting prior to the intermission to help the Rockets erase an early 13-point deficit.

SAN ANTONIO SPURS 122 -**NEW ORLEANS PELICANS 113**

DeMar DeRozan scored 27 points and San Antonio kept its playoff hopes while helping to end those of New Orleans. The Spurs (31-38) improved to 4-2 during the restart and stayed in the thick of the tight battle for the eighth and ninth positions in the Western Conference. The Pelicans (30-40) fell to 2-4 in the

restart and, following Portland's win later in the day, were eliminated from the playoffs. Rudy Gay added 19 points. Derrick White scored 16 despite missing most of the second half because of a bruised left knee, Dejounte Murray had 18 and Marco Belinelli tallied 14. JJ Redick led New Orleans with 31 points, Zion Williamson scored 25, Brandon Ingram had 17 and Derrick Favors had 10 points and 12 rebounds.

TORONTO RAPTORS 108 -**MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES 99**

Marc Gasol capped a key third-quarter run with a 3-pointer in his first game against his longtime employer and Toronto clinched the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference with a win over slumping Memphis. Gasol was dealt from Memphis to Toronto last February and was a member of the Raptors' championship team in 2019. He contributed 10 points and six rebounds in 22 minutes to lift the Raptors to a fourth win in five games since the restart. The loss was a costly one for Memphis (33-38), which began the day in eighth place in the West but is locked into a tight battle with Portland, Phoenix, San Antonio and New Orleans. The loss prevented the Grizzlies from clinching a spot in the play-in game for the No. 8 seed.

BOSTON CELTICS 122 -ORLANDO MAGIC 119 (OT)

Gordon Hayward scored 31 points and Jayson Tatum added 29 to lift Boston past Orlando in overtime. Jaylen Brown collected 19 points and 12 rebounds for the third-place Celtics (47-23), who saw their slim chances to secure the second seed in the Eastern Conference go by the boards earlier on Sunday when Toronto wrapped up the No. 2 seed with a win over Memphis. Nikola Vucevic had 26 points and 11 rebounds and Terrence Ross added 18 points off the bench for the reeling Magic (32-39), who have dropped four in a row.

OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER 121 -

WASHINGTON WIZARDS 103 Darius Bazley scored a career-high 23 points to lead Oklahoma City past Washington, pulling ahead of Utah for fifth in the Western Conference in the process. For the second consecutive game, the Thunder jumped out to a big lead early. But unlike Friday's game against Memphis, where an 18-point first-quarter lead turned into a 29-point blowout loss, this time Oklahoma City was able to keep control to remain in the thick of the race for a top-four spot in the Western Conference. — Reuters

Jesus says City stronger for past disappointments

LONDON: Manchester City striker Gabriel Jesus says he can imagine his hands round the Champions League trophy and he and his team-mates are stronger for previous disappointments in the competition coveted by their Abu Dhabi owners above all others.

The 23-year-old Brazilian had a standout performance in Friday's 2-1 win over 13-time European champions Real Madrid that earned a place in the quarter-finals. Jesus's starring role eased concerns at the

likely absence of injured record goalscorer Sergio Aguero for Saturday's quarter-final in Lisbon. Guardiola — who has not lifted the Champions League since his second success with Barcelona in 2011 — and the squad fly to Portugal later.

We have to dream," Jesus told British media. "I'm a dreamer and can picture myself with the trophy on my hands. "But I know the reality is different, we have to work, to show our dedication. To win is the most important thing." Jesus — who scored in both legs and set up Raheem Sterling for their first goal in Friday's last 16 second leg — said the players had turned disappointments in Europe's premier club competition into a positive.

Under Guardiola they have exited in the quarter-finals the past two years to English rivals Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur and prior to that Monaco eliminated them in the last 16.

City's best performance so far was reaching the 2016 semi-finals under Guardiola's predecessor Manuel Pellegrini. "As a group, we have matured from being knocked out of the previous Champions League editions," said Jesus.

"We've learned to suffer." Sterling said Jesus is definitely not playing second fiddle to Aguero - indeed the Brazilian's goal on Friday drew him level on 23 for the season with the Argentinian veteran.

"He (Jesus) is not a sub, we've got two great strikers at this club," said Sterling. "Both strikers score goals and when you play with either one of them you know what you expect from each of them.

"They are both top players in front of goal. You saw from Gabby his calmness in front of goal was brilliant." Sterling's goal was his 100th for City and made him only the sixth English player to score 20 goals in the Champions League. "It's a good achievement but now I want some more in the next couple of games, to keep progressing," he said. "But the most important thing is my goals count for something and hopefully at the end of the competition they can do."

The 25-year-old England international said City had to "run their socks off" if they are to beat Lyon — who ousted Juventus on Friday – and reach the semi-finals. "They (Lyon) are a great team and it's going to be a difficult one," said Sterling. "But I keep saying the same thing

— there are teams in his competition with great quality. "We have to keep up the energy and play our football." — AFP

Sport Cimes

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020

Verstappen claims 70th Anniversary GP win as 'sleeping' Mercedes wilt

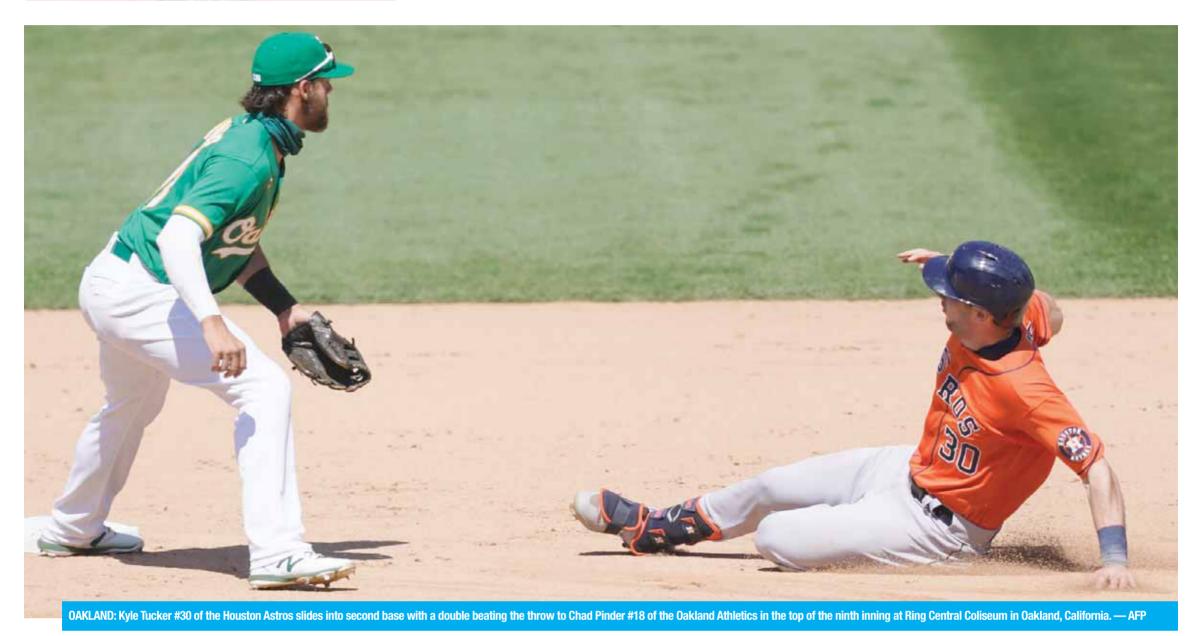


Collin Morikawa takes first major at PGA Championship



Lillard scores 51, Embiid injured in Blazers' win





Benches clear as A's sweep Astros

Padres top Diamondbacks behind Lamet's strong start

OAKLAND: Oakland tattooed rookie Cristian Javier for three early home runs and Jesus Luzardo recorded his first major league win by pitching into the sixth inning Sunday as the host Athletics completed a threegame sweep of the Houston Astros with a 7-2 victory in a game that saw the benches empty. After A's center fielder Ramon Laureano was hit by a pitch for the second time in the game with Oakland leading 6-2 in the seventh, Laureano exchanged words with Houston pitcher Humberto Castellanos before charging the Houston dugout from first base. Laureano was tackled by Astros players, Oakland catcher Austin Allen raced in and engaged aggressively with Houston counterpart Martin Maldonado. Laureano and Allen were ejected. The Oakland bullpen, which had allowed just one earned run over eight innings in the first two games of the series, was brilliant once again in the series finale, following Luzardo with 3 1/3 shutout innings to wrap up the Athletics' ninth straight win.

RAYS 4, YANKEES 3

Michael Perez's two-out single in the bottom of the ninth inning broke a tie and completed host Tampa Bay's comeback against New York, giving the Rays three wins in the four-game series. The winning rally began with Mike Brosseau's lead-off double. The Rays nearly didn't take advantage against reliever Zack Britton (O-1) until Perez came through with a single to right field. The Rays trailed 3-0 in the seventh until Brosseau's two-run home run followed by Brandon Lowe's solo shot allowed them to pull even with one out, resulting in Yankees starter James Paxton's exit. Ryan Thompson (1-0), a 28-yearold right-hander, earned his first big-league victory with one inning of relief.

DODGERS 6, GIANTS 2

AJ Pollock and Mookie Betts each hit late threerun home runs as Los Angeles rallied to beat San Francisco at Dodger Stadium, continuing its streak of not losing a series this season. Dodgers starter Walker Buehler gave up just one hit over 5 2/3 innings as Los Angeles improved to 4-3 against the Giants this season, all at home. Trailing 2-0 with just two hits heading into the seventh inning, the Dodgers got a one-out single from Cody Bellinger to chase starter Kevin Gausman. Justin Turner singled off right-hander Tyler Rogers (1-3), with Pollock hitting a two-out home run to left field for the lead. Betts' three-run insurance home run came in the eighth against right-hander Shaun Anderson. The long ball was Betts' fourth of the season with his new club.

PADRES 9, DIAMONDBACKS 5

Dinelson Lamet flirted with a no-hitter in a second

straight start and San Diego hit four of its six homers in two innings against Madison Bumgarner as the Padres beat visiting Arizona in the rubber match of a three-game series at Petco Park. Manny Machado hit two solo homers against Bumgarner. Wil Myers and Fernando Tatis Jr. both hit two-run homers, while Ty France and Francisco Mejia homered in the third against Diamondbacks reliever Taylor Widener. The six home runs were a Padres record at Petco Park and one shy of the franchise's single-game record. Lamet retired the first 14 Diamondbacks he faced before hitting Andy Young with a pitch. Kole Calhoun ended the bid for a no-hitter and shutout, leading off the seventh inning with his third home run.

ROYALS 4, TWINS 2

Rookie Brady Singer and three Kansas City relievers combined to beat visiting Minnesota as the Royals swept the three-game series and won their fourth straight game. Last season, the Royals failed to win any of their six series against the Twins. The Kansas City bullpen pitched 13 1/3 innings of relief in the series, allowing just two runs. Scott Barlow picked up his first save. Singer (1-1) earned his first career victory in his Kauffman Stadium debut after three starts on the road. He allowed two runs on five hits, with two walks and four strikeouts. He's pitched exactly five innings in each of his four starts. Jose Berrios (1-2) took the loss for Minnesota. He allowed four runs on eight hits in 5 1/3 innings. He walked three and struck out four.

RANGERS 7, ANGELS 3

Nick Solak's first home run of the season was taken away, but it didn't stop Texas from completing a three-game sweep of Los Angeles in Arlington, Texas. The Rangers had a 5-2 lead in the fifth inning when Solak lifted a fly ball to deep right field off Angels reliever Mike Mayers. Angels rookie right fielder Jo Adell attempted to catch the ball on the warning track, a few feet in front of the wall. But the ball glanced off the tip of Adell's glove and caromed over the fence. The play initially was ruled a home run but the official scorer later changed it to a four-base error

METS 4, MARLINS 2

Jacob deGrom struck out six, and speedy rookie Andres Gimenez scored three runs, smacked three hits and stole a base, leading host New York past Miami for the second straight day. Miami first baseman Jesus Aguilar's two-run homer did the only damage against deGrom (2-0), who lasted five innings. A two-time reigning National League Cy Young award winner, deGrom was not as sharp as usual, allowing

seven hits and two walks. The Mets, who won a home series for the first time this season, have won two straight games. Their bullpen did the job, producing four scoreless innings. Seth Lugo pitched the ninth for his third save of the season. Marlins starter Pablo Lopez (1-1) took the loss, allowing five hits, four walks and three runs (two earned) in five innings.

BRAVES 5, PHILLIES 2 (GAME 1)

Ronald Acuna Jr. homered and drove in two runs to lift Atlanta past host Philadelphia in the first game of a doubleheader. Adam Duvall doubled, singled and knocked in three runs while Freddie Freeman added three hits for the Braves. Freeman, who went O-for-4 on Saturday and had his average dip to .200, recorded his 119th career three-hit game. Atlanta southpaw Tyler Matzek (2-0) earned the win in relief and Mark Melancon tossed a scoreless seventh for his third save in three opportunities. Phillies starter Vince Velasquez tossed four-plus innings and gave up three hits and one run while striking out six and walking three. Deolis Guerra (1-1) picked up the loss in relief.

BRAVES 8, PHILLIES 0 (GAME 2)

Acuna Jr. added four more hits, including two more home runs, and drove in three runs as Atlanta completed the sweep of the road doubleheader. Freddie Freeman homered, doubled, tripled and knocked in three runs while Travis d'Arnaud and Marcell Ozuna contributed two hits each in the seven-inning contest for the Braves. Braves starter Max Fried tossed five scoreless innings and allowed four hits. Fried, who improved to 3-0, struck out six and walked one.

ORIOLES 5, NATIONALS 2 (SUSP.)

The game between Baltimore and Washington at Nationals Park was suspended in the top of the sixth inning with the Orioles leading and will resume next Friday. When the rains came, the grounds crew at Nationals Park had problems getting their tarp on the field. The resumption will be at Oriole Park at Camden Yards, as the two teams are set to play there next weekend. Nationals right-hander Stephen Strasburg struggled in his season debut before the storm. He lasted 4 1/3 innings, allowing five runs on seven hits - though he gave up only two hits and no runs through four innings. He struck out two and walked one. Orioles starter Asher Wojciechowski fared better, although his outing also was brief. The right-hander did not allow a run on three hits in 3 2/3 innings, walking two and striking out four.

TIGERS 2, PIRATES 1

Miguel Cabrera's RBI single in the eighth inning

lifted Detroit to a sweep of its three-game series in Pittsburgh. At 1-1 in the eighth and with two outs, Pirates reliever Richard Rodriguez (0-1) hit Jonathan Schoop. With Cabrera up, Rodriguez had a problem with his cleats on delivery and threw a wild pitch toward his own dugout, allowing Schoop to get to second. Cabrera followed with a single to left to drive in Schoop. It was the Tigers' first road series sweep since June 2018. Detroit starter Spencer Turnbull (2-0), who snapped a 19-start winless streak his last time out, pitched seven innings, giving up one run and five hits with four strikeouts and two walks.

BREWERS 9, REDS 3

Justin Smoak had two hits during a six-run sixth inning, including a two-run single, and Milwaukee avoided a three-game series sweep at the hands of visiting Cincinnati. After totaling four runs in losing the first two games of the series, the Brewers broke out to salvage a game in the weekend set. Smoak and Keston Hiura each had three hits as Milwaukee scored eight times over the sixth and seventh innings to record its first home victory of 2020. Jesse Winker went 3-for-4 with a homer and two RBIs for Cincinnati, which opened the scoring in the first inning but couldn't hold the lead.

RED SOX 5, BLUE JAYS 3

Mitch Moreland's second home run of the game, a two-run shot with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning, gave Boston a walk-off win over Toronto. It was the sixth homer of the season for Moreland, who also hit a solo shot in the second as the Red Sox won the rubber match of the threegame series. Rafael Devers also hit a solo homer for Boston. Cavan Biggio and Bo Bichette hit solo homers for the Blue Jays, who nearly won it despite Boston starter Nathan Eovaldi matching his career best with 10 strikeouts.

MARINERS 5, ROCKIES 3

Justus Sheffield pitched six shutout innings for his first major league victory and Seattle held off visiting Colorado to snap the Rockies' three-game winning streak. Dylan Moore homered for the Mariners, who stopped their own three-game skid and finished 3-7 on their opening homestand. Sheffield (1-2) was making his 10th major league start. The left-hander allowed four hits, didn't walk a batter and struck out seven. Right-hander Taylor Williams went the final 1 1/3 innings for his third save. For the Rockies, Charlie Blackmon went 2-for-3 to improve his batting average to a major league-leading .458. Third baseman Nolan Arenado, batting just .185, got the day off. — Reuters