

5 Hungry, homeless: Philippine 'jeepney' drivers hit by virus



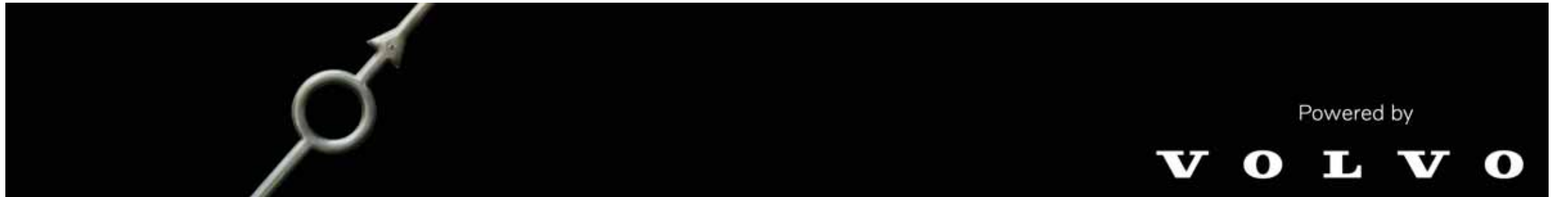
8 Bling no longer king in India as gold loses shine



13 As pandemic lingers, one DJ tests virtual 'tours'



15 India legend Dhoni retires from international cricket



Kuwait will be 'last country' to normalize ties with Israel

UAE phone lines to Israel open • Israeli, UAE firms join forces in COVID research

Sudden reduction of expats could backfire: Panel

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's human resources panel studying ways to reduce the number of expats in the country said in a study that a sudden reduction of large numbers of expats could have a serious negative impact on the domestic economy. The panel said a swift reduction will diminish the market's purchasing power, severely impact the real estate market, as many apartments will be vacant, impact the labor market, as the private sector strongly depends on foreign workers, and finally hit the private education market.

The committee, currently studying a number of proposals submitted by lawmakers and one filed by the government to substantially cut the number of expats, said the government must be allowed to set a certain ceiling for expats - whether they will be equal to Kuwaitis or just half their numbers - and also recommended that no percentages or quotas should be set now to provide authorities with flexibility to deal with the issue.

The government's proposal envisages cutting as many as 360,000 expats almost immediately, most of them illegals and senior expats above 60 years of age. According to the latest figures, expats number 3.35 million against 1.45 million Kuwaiti citizens. All the population structure proposals exclude as many as 750,000 domestic helpers from any solution. In addition, the committee's recommendations, which are not final, call for barring expats from certain government jobs and accelerating the replacement of expats in public sector jobs with Kuwaitis.



ABU DHABI: A handout image yesterday shows representatives from the Emirati company APEX National Investment and the Israeli TeraGroup signing an agreement to develop research on the novel coronavirus. The agreement is the first between firms from the two countries since the announcement a normalization of relations. — AFP

Normalization with Israel feels anything but normal in Gulf

DUBAI: The shock announcement that the UAE and Israel are normalizing relations has been applauded by allies and booed by rivals, but for many Gulf citizens there is deep unease over the embrace of a longtime enemy. Palestinian leaders have cast the deal as a "betrayal", a view shared by many in the capitals of the oil-rich region, even if the allegiance to that cause has faded somewhat among the younger generation.

After becoming the first Gulf country to establish

ties with the Jewish state, the United Arab Emirates is being portrayed in the local media as the champion of peace in a divided region that needs to join forces against Iran. "I'm planning a trip to Tel Aviv already," a young Emirati who works in marketing said wryly. "How long will we live in conflict? The world is going through enough already, so let's have some peace," he told AFP.

"I trust the strategy and the wisdom of our leaders. What the UAE did was for the Palestinians in the first place," he told AFP, in a country where political criticism is rare. On Thursday, the UAE said the accord included an agreement to stop any further annexation of Palestinian territories, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly insisted he had agreed only to delay, not to cancel, the plans.

In the other five countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council - Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain,

KUWAIT/DUBAI: Kuwait's position towards Israel is unchanged after its accord with the United Arab Emirates and it will be the last country to normalize relations, Al-Qabas newspaper reported yesterday citing Kuwaiti government sources. Israel and the UAE announced an agreement on Thursday that will lead to a full normalization of diplomatic relations between the two states, making the UAE the only third Arab state to do so.

A Kuwait foreign ministry official was not immediately available to comment. "The Kuwaiti position is consistent with its decades-old foreign policy approach in support of the Palestinian cause, as it is the premier Arab issue, and only accepting a solution if it is what the Palestinians accept," Al-Qabas said. Palestinians denounced the Israel-UAE deal, while Saudi Arabia and Qatar have remained silent. Fellow Gulf nations Oman and Bahrain praised the deal.

Telephone lines between the UAE and Israel were open yesterday, calls made by Reuters reporters showed. It was not clear when exactly a block on telephone calls made from the UAE to Israel was lifted, but historically calls were not possible. More Israeli news websites that were previously blocked in the UAE were also now able to be viewed on UAE internet connections yesterday.

Continued on Page 2

Kuwait and Oman - citizens are not convinced. While diplomatic and business contacts with Israel have been growing in recent years, in the public arena the idea of official ties remains taboo. On social networks, the hashtag "Normalization is Treason" has been trending across the region in the past few days, particularly among young Saudi activists.

Riyadh, the leading Arab power and the custodian of Islam's holiest sites, has not yet made any comment on the move by the UAE, its close ally. Although all eyes are on whether it will adopt the same policy, analysts say that although it has also been moving quietly closer to Israel in recent years, it will proceed with caution and wait to see the reaction in the Arab world.

Kuwait, another close US ally, has also been silent on the Israel deal. The state is the only country in the

Continued on Page 2



TEHRAN: A woman walks past a newspaper stall on Saturday. — AFP

Trump vows 'snapback' of Iran sanctions

BEDMINSTER, New Jersey: US President Donald Trump vowed Saturday to use a controversial technique to unilaterally reinstate UN sanctions on Tehran, a move with huge repercussions for the Iran nuclear deal. His declaration came a

day after the UN Security Council overwhelmingly rejected a US resolution to extend an Iranian arms embargo. "We'll be doing a snapback," Trump said during a news conference at his New Jersey golf club. "You'll be watching it next week."

The president was referring to the contested argument that the US remains a "participant" in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal - despite Trump's withdrawal from it - and therefore can force a return to sanctions if it sees Iran as being in violation of its terms.

Continued on Page 2

Trump's brother dies; Amir sends condolences

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's younger brother Robert died on Saturday after being hospitalized for an undisclosed illness, the US president said in a statement mourning his loss. "It is with heavy heart I share that my wonderful brother, Robert, peacefully passed away tonight," Trump said in a White House statement. "He was not just my brother, he was my best friend. He will be greatly missed, but we will meet again. His memory will live on in my heart forever. Robert, I love you. Rest in peace."

HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday conveyed condolences of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President Trump and his family. HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable.

The 74-year-old president had visited his brother on Friday at a hospital in New York, staying for about 45 minutes. US media reports had said Robert Trump was seriously ill, although there were no details. Donald Trump, who was stopping in New York on the way to his golf club in nearby Bedminster, New Jersey for the weekend, told reporters Friday only that "he's having a hard time". He has previously called his brother Robert "wonderful" and said they have "had a great relationship for a long time, from day one."

Media reports said Robert was 71. "Uncle Robert, we love you. You are in our hearts and prayers, always," Donald Trump's daughter and adviser Ivanka said on Twitter. Her brother Eric said Robert Trump would be "deeply missed by our entire family". "Robert Trump was an incredible man - strong, kind and loyal to the core. Anyone who encountered him felt his warmth immediately," he said on Twitter.

Born in 1948 and the youngest of the five Trump siblings, Robert worked on Wall Street before joining the family real estate business. Quieter and less famous than Donald, Robert nevertheless became an integral part of the Trump Organization and was fiercely loyal to his older brother. "I support Donald one thousand percent," Robert told the New York Post in Jan 2016 as Donald was making his bid for the White House. "I think he's doing a great job. I think he's got a great message."

The New York Times however said the two had been estranged for years before Donald's run for president.

The brothers were very different, and the brash Donald once described Robert as "soft-spoken and easygoing". "I think it must be hard to have me for a brother, but he's never said anything about it and we're very close. He is definitely the only guy in my life whom I ever call 'honey'," Donald said in his



NEW YORK: In this file photo taken on Nov 9, 2016, President-elect Donald Trump hugs his brother Robert after delivering his acceptance speech. — AFP

1987 bestseller "The Art of the Deal". While usually avoiding the limelight, earlier this year Robert unsuccessfully tried to block publication of a book by his niece Mary Trump, arguing that she was violating a non-disclosure agreement signed in 2001 after the settlement of her grandfather's estate. Robert divorced his long-time wife Blaine in 2009 and in March this year married Ann Marie Pallan, a Trump Organization employee, the New York Post reported. Before Robert's death, the couple had been living a quiet life at their home in Millbrook, in the Hudson Valley, media reports said. — Agencies

Local

Kuwait reports 508 new COVID-19 cases, three deaths

Total infections 76,205 compared to 68,135 recoveries

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Health said yesterday 508 people tested positive for the novel coronavirus, while three persons died of COVID-19 infection in the past 24 hours. Ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said that total

registered infections reached 76,205, while the tally of fatalities topped 501. Earlier yesterday, the ministry announced the recovery of 616 people, raising the total number of recovered COVID-19 patients in Kuwait to 68,135.

Dr Sanad said that there were 7,569 COVID-19 patients still receiving medical care as of yesterday, including 117 patients in intensive care units. Health care workers conducted 2,863 swab tests in the past 24 hours, said Dr Sanad, rais-

ing total tests since the outbreak of the pandemic in Kuwait to 558,800. Dr Sanad urged the public anew to maintain physical distancing and hygienic measures, as well as getting information from official sources. — KUNA



Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 76,205 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of yesterday, in addition to 501 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, 68,135 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 7,569 people receiving treatment.

Curfew

Kuwait is set to move to the fourth phase of a five-phase plan for a gradual return to normal life tomorrow. Businesses allowed to resume include sports gyms and stadia, barbershops, beauty salons, health resorts and tailors. State departments and privately-owned establishments are allowed to have over 50 percent of their workforce in attendance. Meanwhile, customers are allowed to be seated at restaurants and cafes, and public transport is allowed to resume while committing to social distancing rules.

Kuwait had moved to the third phase on June 28, 2020. The curfew was set from 9:00 pm to 3:00 am, government and private offices were able to operate with up to 50 percent capacity, mosques were allowed to host Friday prayers with strict social distancing and health precautions observed, malls were opened from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm, taxis were allowed to resume operations as long as they carry only one passenger, while resorts, hotels and furnished apartment businesses were 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.

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 stages.

Hotlines

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)
- 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-health.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 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Call 5521-0088.
For information and other concerns, call 9401-4283.

Kuwait will be 'last...'

Continued from Page 1

The UAE's Telecoms Regulatory Authority did not immediately respond to a request to comment. An official in Israel's Communication Ministry told Reuters that any previous block on calls between the two countries had come from the UAE side. "Now I understand that calls are going through," the official said.

Meanwhile, firms from the UAE and Israel have signed an agreement to jointly develop research and studies on the novel coronavirus, the UAE's state WAM agency reported. The business deal comes days after a surprise political agreement between the UAE and Israel to normalize relations, a historic shift which will make the Gulf state only the third Arab country to establish full diplomatic ties with the Jewish state.

The UAE's APEX National Investment and Israel's TeraGroup signed the "strategic commercial agreement" late Saturday in Abu Dhabi, WAM said in a statement. "We are delighted with this cooperation with TeraGroup, which is considered the first business to inaugurate trade, economy and effective partnerships between the Emirati and Israeli business sectors," APEX chairman Khalifa

Yousef Khouri said.

APEX is an investment company with a particular focus on the health-care sector. The deal would be "serving humanity by strengthening research and studies on the novel coronavirus," Khouri added. The two companies hope to develop a rapid test for coronavirus. "We are thrilled with our agreement with APEX National Investment, and hope that we will achieve the objectives outlined in this agreement, which in turn will benefit everyone economically," TeraGroup chairman Oren Sadiv said, according to WAM.

Last Thursday the UAE and Israel agreed the US-brokered deal to establish full diplomatic ties. Under that agreement, Israel pledged to suspend its planned annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank, a concession welcomed by European and some pro-Western Arab governments as a boost for hopes of peace.

However, before the political deal, two Israeli defense companies last month signed an agreement with an Emirati company to collaborate on the development of a non-invasive coronavirus screening test. State-owned Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), the country's largest aerospace and defense firm, as well as the government's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, signed a memorandum of understanding with Abu Dhabi-based technology company Group 42 in July. — Agencies

Trump vows 'snapback' of...

Continued from Page 1

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the US had failed to kill off what he called the "half alive" deal with major powers that gave Iran relief from sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

"The United States failed in this conspiracy with humiliation," said Rouhani. "This day will go down in the history of our Iran and in the history of fighting global arrogance." Only two of the Council's 15 members voted in favor of the US resolution seeking to extend the embargo, highlighting the division between Washington and its European allies since Trump withdrew from the nuclear accord in 2018.

The Europeans on the Council all abstained, and Iran mocked the Trump administration for winning the support of just one other country, the Dominican Republic. "In the 75 years of United Nations history, America has never been so isolated," foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi tweeted.

European allies have been skeptical on whether Washington can force sanctions, with experts saying a "snapback" threatens to plunge the Council into one of its worst-ever diplomatic crises. Trump also said Saturday he would "probably not" take part in a

summit proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin on addressing the situation. "I think we'll wait until after the election," he said, with the US set to hold its presidential poll in November.

Putin had appealed to China, France, Britain, the US, Germany and Iran to convene an emergency video summit to avoid an escalation of tensions in the Gulf. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on a visit to Poland on Saturday, made it clear the United States would press on. "It is unfortunate that the French and the United Kingdom... didn't support what the Gulf states have demanded, what the Israelis have demanded... I regret that deeply," Pompeo told reporters. "The United States is determined to make sure that the Iranians and this regime, this theocratic regime does not have the capacity to inflict even more harm on the world."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced a "scandalous" UN vote. "Iranian terrorism and aggression threaten the peace of the region and the entire world. Instead of opposing weapons sales, the Security Council is encouraging them," he said.

The embargo on conventional arms is due to expire on Oct 18 under the terms of a resolution that blessed the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The US text at the Security Council on Friday, seen by AFP, effectively called for an indefinite extension of the embargo on Iran, which diplomats said would threaten the nuclear deal. — AFP

Normalization with Israel feels...

Continued from Page 1

Gulf with a genuine political and parliamentary life, and permits sometimes lively public debate. "I don't see any problem with normalization, because it existed in secret anyway and each country has its own political interests. But at the same time it doesn't feel normal," said Ibrahim Chihab, a Kuwaiti pensioner.

Bahrain was the first Gulf state to welcome Thursday's agreement, which the United States helped broker, but several opposition parties issued a joint statement rejecting "any normalization with the Zionist entity". Bahrain, a staunch US ally in the region and - like Israel and the UAE - particularly hostile to Iran, is seen as the likely next candidate to establish ties with the Jewish state.

"Unfortunately, I would not be able to do anything but protest on social networks because of the security situation," said one Bahraini man, referring to the authorities' crackdown on critical voices. "It is a betrayal, a stab in the back of the Palestinian brothers," he told AFP, asking not to be identified.

Qatar, which did not respond to Thursday's announcement, has since 2017 been out in the diplomatic cold with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt, who accuse it of supporting Islamist movements and conniving with Iran. Doha, which at the same time remains close to the US, denies the allegations. It has an on-again, off-again relationship with Israel, hosting an Israeli economic interests office from 1996 until 2000.

It is also heavily involved in underwriting calm in the Gaza Strip, managing and funding welfare payments to the people of the impoverished coastal territory with Israel's blessing. "I don't believe Israel is a real country," one angry Qatari student told AFP, adding that meanwhile the Palestinians "are fighting for their land with rocks against tanks." — AFP

Local

Deputy Amir meets Chief Justice, state officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Deputy Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-

Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as President of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional Court Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. Furthermore, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister and Minister of State of Cabinet Affairs Anas

Khaled Al-Saleh, as well as Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled received Chief Justice Mutawaa at Seif Palace yesterday. — KUNA

Shamal Az-Zour Company debuts on Boursa Kuwait

KUWAIT: Shamal Az-Zour Al-Oula Power and Water Company KSCP yesterday made its debut on Boursa Kuwait's Premier Market at 9:00am. The company is the first power generation and water desalination company to list on the exchange, and the first Private Public Partnership (PPP) project listed on the exchange.

Chairman of Shamal Az-Zour Al-Oula Power and Water Company, Engineer Husam Abdullah Al-Roumi, said: "We are happy to announce this historic milestone in the Kuwaiti power and water desalination sector and capital markets in the region, as Kuwait's first Public-Private Partnership project and the first power generation and water desalination company listed on Boursa Kuwait's Premier Market. We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to those who contributed to our success, for without the efforts of those directly and indirectly involved, this milestone would not be possible."

Prior to the listing, the company's board of directors issued a recommendation during a meeting on August 6, 2020, for a cash dividend payout of 25 fils per share, subject to lenders' approval. This will be the company's first dividend and relates to the retained earnings for the period from 2017

to 2019. The company plans to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of shareholders following the listing. The dividend recommendation, following the lenders' approval, will be on the AGM agenda for shareholders' approval.

The listing follows the successful distribution of 50 percent of the company's shares to Kuwaiti citizens during the last quarter of 2019, which was oversubscribed by 1.27x and attracted close to 127,000 investors. The remaining 50 percent of shares are owned by different public and private entities as follows: 40 percent is owned by a private investor Azour North One Holding Company K.S.C.C., which is owned by a consortium comprising ENGIE, Sumitomo Corporation, A.H. Al Sagar & Brothers; and 10 percent is owned by the Kuwait Investment Authority and the Public Institution for Social Security, each with a 5 percent ownership.

Shamal Az-Zour Al-Oula Power and Water Company KSCP is Kuwait's first company established under the Independent Water and Power Plant ("IWPP") Law. The Company operates the Az-Zour North One Power and Water Plant, which commenced commercial operations in November 2016. The plant supplies about 10 percent of Kuwait's installed power capacity and 20 percent of Kuwait's water desalination capacity. Power and water produced by the company is entirely supplied to the national power and water grid operated by the Kuwait Ministry of Electricity and Water under a 40-year long-term Energy Conversion and Water Purchase Agreement ("ECWPA").



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets virtually with the Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Irani.

Foreign Minister receives new ambassadors

KUWAIT: Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday copies of credentials of Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sibi George and Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Moro Aguilar. Sheikh Dr Ahmad wished them best of luck in their new missions, and for their countries further progress and prosperity. Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Dhari Al-Ajran and Assistant Foreign Minister for the Minister's office Saleh Al-Loughani attended the meetings. In other news, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah held a virtual meeting yesterday with the Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Irani. The two sides discussed bilateral relations, regional and international topics. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah receives credentials of Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sibi George. — KUNA photos



Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah receives credentials of Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Moro Aguilar.

NGOs call for ending corruption

KUWAIT: Kuwait Transparency Society issued a statement to local media yesterday calling on His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to draft a law for greater transparency in hiring. KTS wants all candidates hired in senior administrative and financial positions at state departments to go through a more transparent process that will eliminate favoritism and is compatible with all international anticorruption requirements.


In the appeal, the non-government organizations blamed what they called 'weak auditory bodies' and 'corruption of the administrative and financial system in Kuwait' for various money laundering and other corruption-related crimes revealed recently in the country. "It has become a national duty for the head of the executive authority to eliminate administrative and financial corruption that has become prevalent in the country, due in part to a policy of appointing senior officials based on favoritism as opposed to competency," the statement reads. "The recent events prove that the state's auditory bodies have failed to do their auditory role in accordance with internationally recognized standards and controls, which happened due to the lack of patriotic competencies with integrity in senior state posts."

The petition was signed by 28 Kuwaiti civil society organizations including Kuwait Transparency Society, Kuwait Society of Lawyers, Kuwait Association for Protecting Public Funds, Kuwait Accountants and Auditors Association and Kuwait Human Rights Society.

Indian Embassy marks independence day

KUWAIT: The Embassy of India in Kuwait celebrated the 74th Independence Day of India on Saturday. Keeping in view the prevailing circumstances on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, the celebrations were held in consonance with the COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

The official program was held from 8:00 am to 9:00 am at the Embassy premises. Floral tributes were paid to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi followed by unfurling of the Indian flag and singing of the Indian National Anthem and patriotic songs. On this occasion, President of India's message to the nation was read out.



Established 1961
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.



KuwaitTimes     94488888

Local

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian GulfTHE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYANEDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netLocal pharmacies
see shortage
of some meds

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times visited pharmacies in various parts of Kuwait City, Salmiya and Fahaheel this past week in search of particular medicines including one for high blood pressure, but found that all the pharmacies were out of stock. Pharmacists at several of the shops confirmed to Kuwait Times that various medications are in short supply due to supply disruptions caused by the global coronavirus pandemic.

"Because of the pandemic, the regular supply chain was interrupted and we do not know when it will be available. They said it will come soon, but Kuwait has run out of [a well-known blood pressure medicine] since two weeks," a pharmacist said on condition of anonymity.

Certain medications are not dispensed at government hospitals and clinics in Kuwait to expatriates though they remain available for Kuwaiti citizens. Medicines are distributed free of charge to Kuwaitis at government hospitals but expats have to pay a minimum fee of KD 10. Other drugs that are low or out of stock in local pharmacies include ones for high blood pressure, diabetes and other conditions.

"We were informed these drugs will be available soon, but we do not know how soon is soon - the most logical reason I heard why they are out of stock is because the regular flow of supplies was affected by the global pandemic. I heard it's a global problem and not just in Kuwait," one pharmacist who asked that his name be withheld told Kuwait Times.

No one from the ministry of health pharmacy department was available to confirm or deny if they are experiencing a shortage as well, although Kuwait Times has learned some government hospitals and clinics are also running low on supplies.

Salon owners fear massive
losses due to long list of bans

Health ministry sets requirements for salons, gyms reopening

KUWAIT: Many salon owners in Kuwait were not happy with the Cabinet's decision to move the resumption of work in barbershops and salons from phase five to phase four, which they say has caused public dissatisfaction due to the limited services that will be provided, as services such as beard shaving, scrubs, Moroccan and Turkish baths, sauna, Jacuzzi and others remain banned.

Kuwait local daily Al-Rai visited a number of barbershops to check their readiness to resume work from tomorrow, but found most of them closed because the resumption conditions are not suitable for them. Many prefer to keep their shops closed and wait for the fifth phase to start so that they can provide all services their clients want instead of limiting them to haircuts.

Monther Al-Amri, a barber, told Al-Rai that the decision is good but stressed that following four months of closure, limiting the services to haircuts will not be profitable enough for barbers. "Over 50 percent will suffer considerable losses," he warned, adding that reopening entails rent payment, which would be impossible in view of the limited income made by haircutting, limiting the number of customers allowed into the shop and forcing them to book appointments beforehand.

"Most barbershops need retrofitting to match the decision's conditions," said barber Rushdi Abdul Aal, noting that banning beard shaving will lead to unaffordable losses, and that the same tools are already used for both haircuts and shaving. "Most customers come to have their hair cut and beards shaved", he pointed out.

Another barber, Ahmad Badee, said most barbers spent the closure period doing house calls, which is more lucrative because they do not have to pay rent. "The decision to ban beard shaving will automatically increase the price of haircuts," he warned, calling for reconsidering some of the conditions to put an end to barbers' sufferings.

Businesses allowed to resume as part of phase

3. Sauna, steam rooms, massages, baths (Moroccan/Turkish) and hot tubs (Jacuzzi) are strictly prohibited until further notice.

4. Using disposable tools and equipment as much as possible.

5. Encouraging clients to bring their own kits for shaving, etc.

6. Equipment must be thoroughly disinfected between clients.

7. Home services are not allowed.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health set a number of conditions to allow reopening gyms and spas. The preventive guidelines include training coaches and staff members on all safety protocols, and following prevention measures to prevent infection. Gym instructions include checking visitors' temperatures, having visitors wear face masks, and using one entry gate. Meanwhile, visitors must be aged 15-60, and entry will be for a limited period set by appointments booked beforehand. Fingerprint devices are not allowed to be used and constant sterilization of the premises is required.

The regulations also include daily checkup of staff members and keeping a record of these checkups, inquiring about visitors' health conditions on records, training staff members on how to handle suspected cases and allocating a special team to deal with them. Further, the health ministry stressed the need to observe social distancing, reduce the number of staff members, using marks on the ground for social distancing, reducing training periods, dividing trainees into groups, using elevators only for the disabled and ensuring the safety of staff members.

Barbershops
prefer to wait
for phase five

four include gyms, barbershops, beauty salons, health resorts and tailors.

Health requirements for women's salons and barbershops that was set by the government are:

1. Any services that requires touching the face are strictly prohibited until further notice, such as threading, facials, beard shaving/trimming, eyelash and eyebrow tinting, tattooing, makeup, piercings, etc.
2. Gatherings and communal activities are strictly prohibited.

according to strict health and legal conditions.

The sources explained that the proposals currently discussed by the government include mandating arriving passengers to a 14-day quarantine period in some hotels allocated as institutional quarantines at their own expense, which is already followed in Jordan and UAE. "This will help implement health conditions in a different way, instead of spending 14 days in a third country outside the 31 banned countries and instead of home quarantine in Kuwait," the sources explained.

"These procedures are necessary for practical reasons, on top of which is allowing employees working in some sectors to return to work, namely teachers who are scheduled to commence work at schools by the beginning of next month," added the sources. They further indicated that the study reviewed the positive sides of allowing resident expats to return while progressing into the phases of resuming normal life, taking into consideration that many expats had already started 14-day quar-

antines in neighboring countries pending their return to Kuwait after getting PCR certificates from that country.

Upon reopening of commercial flights on August 1, Kuwait announced that flights to and from the following countries remain 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.

In other news, educational sources told Al-Rai that the Ministry of Education's financial sector has allocated payments of KD 3,700 to KD 5,000 per school in the four stages to provide the needed health conditions and purchase sanitizers. The sources added that another payment of KD 1,700 to KD 2,000 would be allocated by the end of March within the 2020-2021 fiscal year budget.

Proposal to allow
expats from 31
nations into Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kuwait's government is currently reconsidering its decision to ban the entry of expat passengers from 31 countries and accordingly is coordinating with health and civil aviation authorities, Al-Rai daily reported yesterday quoting well-informed sources.

"The ban is being reviewed on a weekly basis," the sources stressed, pointing out that the supreme ministerial committee for combating COVID-19 and the supreme committee for resuming flights at Kuwait airport are currently preparing a comprehensive study to resume flights with various countries - including the 31 on the ban list -

Sixty forged
visas sold
for KD 20,000

KUWAIT: Detectives arrested a man who sold 60 forged visas to a domestic helper's office in Kuwait for KD 20,000, Al-Qabas reported yesterday. In their statements to police, the Hawally office's managers said that they had agreed to pay the money to the man, Pakistani, back in February after he convinced them he can help them issue visas for 60 Indian domestic helpers, using his connections since he works as a 'mandoub' (company representative). When the managers went to extend the visas after the end of lockdown, they were told that all visas were forged, so they went to police and lodged a complaint. Investigations led detectives to the suspect, who was arrested at his house where police also found imported equipment used for forgery. The man was sent to the proper authorities to face charges.

Engine damaged

A fuel truck collided with a cargo plane at Kuwait International Airport, security sources told Al-Rai. The accident resulted in material losses only as the plane had one of its engines damaged, but no injuries were reported, the sources noted. Further investigations are in progress.

Under the influence

An Arab man was arrested after he entered a mosque in Sabah Al-Salem and took off his clothes while being under the influence of drugs, Al-Rai reported. Case papers indicate that the mosque's caretaker reported the matter and called police. The suspect was arrested and referred to state security, where initial investigations showed that there were no religious motives behind his actions, and that he was only under the influence of drugs. The suspect was referred to Sabah Al-Salem police station. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Beach fight

Three people were arrested for fighting at Fintas Beach, Al-Rai reported. One of the individuals involved in the fight, Kuwaiti, told police that he confronted a man, Jordanian, for allegedly sexually harassing his wife, and the two engaged in a fight during which the alleged harasser was joined by his son. The man also admitted in his statements to police that he chased after his foes with a knife in hand. The trio were referred to relevant authorities pending further investigations.

In my view

Our children - Part 2

By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com



As I said yesterday, we should not let an evil-minded person take over the minds of our children and destroy all we have built over the years. Even if we do not have fears towards our children out of confidence that we raised them well, reality has it that we should be careful towards those who are waiting for the opportunity to corrupt them through social communications.

The issue has gone beyond corrupting the morals of our children, to corrupting their ideas and beliefs. It is easy to accuse reformists and consultants of exaggeration, but believe me we all will pay the price if the matter gets out of control, so we must caution them before handing them devices.

A social advisor said parents must learn about an app before allowing their children to download it, because parents' lack of knowledge about these applications is part of the problem. Follow up and guidance is also necessary every now and then. When one of the children gets in trouble or faces a problem, there should be a balanced reaction, because some children may get into extreme trouble, but the reaction is very cold.

Rationalizing children's use of the devices is beneficial, but it is not a decisive remedy because children may get lost in a moment, so we should keep guiding them as much as we can. Part of the solution is not allowing children to have passwords on their devices or allowing parents to have access to the devices. May God give us the wisdom and ability to take the right decision at the right time for the right reason.

Experiences - be they personal that you went through yourself - or what others have gone through, are beneficial under all circumstances. Successful people are those who benefited from their failures and success equally. The failed experience teaches me how to rise from my failure and not consider what happened at the end and keep trying. The honor of trying is an achievement and gain, and it expresses the determination of the person who tried. Because failure does mean the failure of an idea, as normally things do not come about from just one trial; rather it may be after a series of attempts.

What is important is not to bow to failure because it will prevent you from gaining skills. We must remain on the go at all times, so as not to waste one single minute of our lives for nothing. Once again I say perseverance brings results!

KUWAIT TIMES
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED

- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621
E: info@kuwaittimes.net



Returning Brits begin quarantine as Russia rolls out vaccine

Israel's shift on annexation sparks right-wing anger

Page 7

Page 6



MANILA: A resident walks past jeepneys serving as temporary homes parked along a road in Manila. — AFP

Philippine 'jeepney' drivers hit by virus

Hungry and homeless: COVID wreaks havoc

MANILA: Forced off the road by coronavirus lockdowns, Philippine "jeepney" driver Daniel Flores now plies the streets of Manila on foot begging for money to feed his hungry family. The 23-year-old has not picked up a passenger since March when public transport was halted and people ordered to stay home as President Rodrigo Duterte's government tried to slow the fast-spreading contagion.

Jeepneys—first made from leftover US jeeps after World War II—are a national symbol in the Philippines, and serve as the backbone of the country's transport system, providing rides for millions of people across the country for as little as nine pesos (\$0.18). But drivers like Flores, and millions of others, are out of work after the months-long restrictions crippled the economy, plunging it into recession.

With no income and debts piling up, Flores started living in the jeepney with his wife, two of his children and a fellow driver after they were evicted from their apartment because they could no longer pay the rent. Instead of sitting behind the wheel, Flores has spent many days begging for alms just to get by. Other drivers

carry plastic containers and cardboard signs around their necks to catch the attention and sympathy of passing motorists.

"We have absolutely nothing left to spend," Flores told AFP as he sat inside his jeepney, parked in a street and crammed with cooking pots, clothes and other humble possessions. A sign asking for help from passers-by sits on top of the vehicle, which his empathetic boss has loaned him. Flattened cardboard boxes cover the side windows and rear entrance to give the family some privacy—and a feeling of protection from the virus they fear is lurking outside.

As the number of confirmed infections in the Philippines surges past 157,000 — the highest in Southeast Asia—and Manila endures another lockdown, Flores has no idea when he will be allowed to drive again. He occasionally picks up odd jobs selling scrap metal, painting or welding. But it is not enough to feed his family. "Often we will eat just once a day. Sometimes, if no one helps us, we don't eat at all," Flores said.

So dire is their predicament the couple sent their seven-month-old baby to live with relatives outside

Manila to ease pressure on themselves and ensure the child gets enough food.

'Growling stomachs'

Sesinando Bondoc, 73, started driving a jeepney when he was 28 and at his age finding another job seems impossible. Standing on the side of a busy road in sweltering heat with other drivers asking for money, Bondoc says the desire to eat overrides his fear of the virus or speeding cars. "One time we were almost hit by a car but we don't really have a choice. We have to leave our homes and take our chances in the streets just to have something in our growling stomachs," Bondoc said, his voice cracking as he fought back tears.

Drivers have received some money and food hand-outs from the government. But it does not make up for their lost income. In June, six jeepney drivers were arrested by police for allegedly violating a ban on mass gatherings and rules on social distancing after they protested over the loss of their livelihoods. They were later released on bail.

Even when the initial lockdown restrictions in

Manila were eased in June only a fraction of the city's roughly 55,000 jeepneys were allowed to operate under strict rules. Drivers had to make their vehicles virus-safe by installing plastic seat dividers and reducing capacity to comply with social-distancing regulations. Those used to pocketing as much as 1,500 pesos a day had to settle for much smaller takings. Then a new lockdown imposed nearly two weeks ago in Manila and four surrounding provinces—home to a quarter of the country's population—forced those lucky few off the road.

Some are worried they may never drive again as the government phases out smoke-belching jeepneys that are 15 years or older. The program to modernize the vehicles was due to finish this year. The government has not announced if the deadline will be extended. Renato Gandas, 57, who has been a driver for 30 years, said the owner of his vehicle had already sold a jeepney due to the phasing-out program and the lockdowns. With his livelihood at risk, Gandas is losing hope. "We might just beg for alms for the rest of our lives," he said. — AFP

Indonesia and Kuwait: 75 Years of Progress, 52 Years of Friendship

Message by H.E. Tri Tharyat, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the State of Kuwait

August is a month of festivities for Indonesia. Indonesians all over the world joyfully celebrate the country's Independence Day every August 17. This year's 75th Independence Day commemoration is very exceptional, as we are marking it very modestly - in a "new normal" way.

Today, we face a great challenge of combating and adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic. We must be able to cope with its socioeconomic impacts, including a global recession, rising unemployment, and ensuring food and energy security. No single country can overcome these challenges alone. Closer cooperation among countries is therefore a must.



H.E. Tri Tharyat, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the State of Kuwait

We welcome Kuwait's swift financial assistance to the World Health Organization and other international organizations. In collaboration with other countries, Indonesia is also developing COVID-19 vaccines that are expected to be available by the end of this year.

Nurturing Bilateral Relations

It is truly an honor for me to serve in Kuwait, a small country with a big heart. I admire the leadership of His Highness the Amir of

Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his pivotal global humanitarian role as recognized by the United Nations, which feted him as a Humanitarian Leader, and by the World Bank.

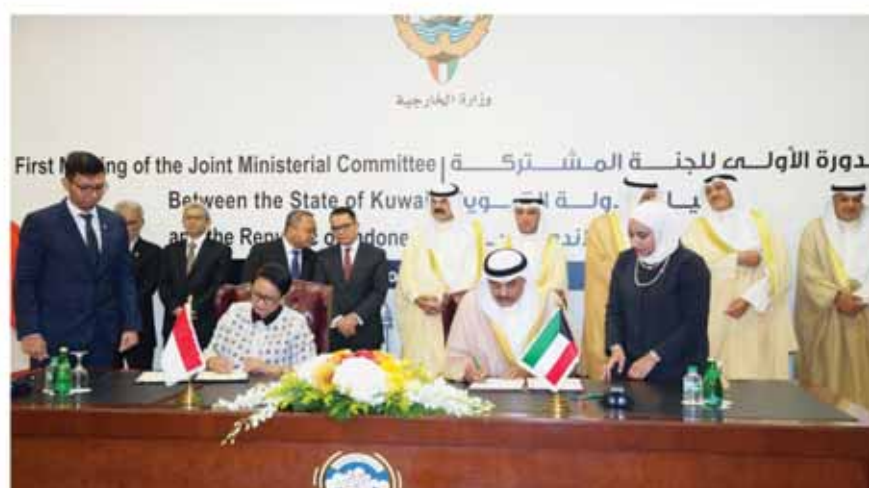
These humanitarian assistances have also been rendered to Indonesia during our 52 years of cordial relations. It has also extended beyond the bilateral realm. We lend each other unrelenting support in global forums including during our tenure as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council last year.

Our relations have entered a new phase as we held the first Joint Foreign Ministerial Committee meeting in September 2019, during which H.E. Retno L. P. Marsudi and H.E. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah signed various agreements on cooperation in the fields of oil and gas, higher education and visa exemption for diplomatic and special passport holders, as well as diplomatic training.

Afterwards, we worked to achieve progress until the pandemic temporarily halted these efforts. However, amid "work from home" measures, we continue to cooperate in the fields of trade, investment, legislative and judiciary. I welcome the establishment of an Indonesia-Kuwait parliamentarians friendship group. I also look forward to witnessing closer cooperation between our supreme courts.

Optimizing Economic Potentials

Being an active member of the Group of 20 (G20), Indonesian President Joko Widodo introduced his Vision of Indonesia 2045. He envisioned Indonesia to become the world's fifth largest economy, a century after our independence. We are committed to achieving the goal and have been undertaking various reforms, including finalizing an Omnibus Law to ensure ease of doing business and protection of foreign investment. Recently, the World Bank upgraded



Indonesia from the "lower middle-income country" to "upper middle-income country" category. This recognition complements McKinsey & Company's projection that Indonesia is on course to become the world's seventh-largest economy in 2030 after being ranked 16th in 2012.

The enhanced economic cooperation between Indonesia and Kuwait will contribute to this purpose. I note an

increase of 7.36% in our exports to Kuwait in the last four years as our total trade reached 504 million USD in 2019. This figure, however, does not fully reflect our economic potentials.

I warmly welcomed the convening of the Indonesia-Kuwait Business Forum by the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry in September 2019 and the establishment of the Indonesia-Kuwait Business Council. I was also pleased to

lead a Kuwaiti business delegation to the Indonesia Trade Expo and Employment Business Meeting in October 2019, that brought about very positive results. Regrettably, this year's events must be rescheduled to 2021.

I am confident to offer the participation of competitive and experienced Indonesian state-owned and private companies in the execution of various development projects in the context of the New Kuwait 2035 vision. Similarly, I welcome continued Kuwait's investment in Indonesia and praise the recently signed gas exploration contract between KUPPEC and Indonesia.

Strengthening People-to-People Contact

Knowing that Kuwaitis are keen travelers, I cannot wait to welcome them back to Indonesia. We are proud that Toba Caldera in North Sumatra Province was recently designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark. It adds to our tourist destinations beyond the already-famous Bali Island as part of our "Ten New Bali" project.

We will certainly never compromise the health of our foreign tourists. Thus, we developed a "new normal" tourism protocol incorporating cleanliness, health and safety. To this end, I warmly welcome Kuwait Airways' plan to resume its direct flight service to Jakarta.

Today, Kuwait is home to approximately 6,000 Indonesians. I hope to see an increase of our skilled and professional workers to meet Kuwaiti companies' demands including through the annual Indonesian Labor Market program.

Finally, I humbly convey our best wishes for the continuous good health of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. May Allah the Almighty always protect the State and the people of Kuwait. I fervently hope that this diamond jubilee of Indonesia's Independence Day will be a fulfilling one for all of us. Merdeka!



International

Battling protests, Lukashenko says Putin offers help; pressure builds

Calls to step down growing after week of protests

MINSK: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said he had secured a pledge from Russia to provide comprehensive assistance if needed to ensure the security of his country in a phone call with President Vladimir Putin on Saturday. The two presidents spoke as tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Minsk once again urging Lukashenko to quit and staff at the Belarusian state broadcaster BT considered joining a wave of strikes and mass protests.

Accused of rigging last Sunday's election, Lukashenko had earlier appealed to Putin for help as he grapples with the biggest challenge to his 26-year rule and the threat of new Western sanctions. Ties between the two traditional allies had been under strain before the election, as Russia scaled back the subsidies that propped up Lukashenko's government. Russia sees Belarus as a strategic buffer against NATO and the EU.

The state news agency Belta cited remarks by Lukashenko that "at the first request, Russia will provide comprehensive assistance to ensure the security of Belarus in the event of external military threats". A Kremlin statement made no mention of such assistance but said both sides expressed confidence that all problems in Belarus would be resolved soon. Statements by both sides contained a pointed reference to a "union state" between the two countries.

The neighbors had signed an agreement in 1999 which was supposed to create a unified state. The unification project was never properly implemented and more recently Lukashenko had rejected calls by Moscow for closer economic and political ties as an assault on his country's sovereignty. Russia has been wary of unrest on its borders since Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution, Ukraine's 2003-04 Orange Revolution and 2014 Maidan protests—events in which it says

the West backed the protesters.

The European Union is gearing up to impose new sanctions on Belarus in response to a violent crackdown in which at least two protesters have been killed and thousands detained.

'Outside meddling'

On a visit to neighboring Poland, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington was discussing the situation with the EU. The leaders of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania called on Belarus to conduct new "free and fair" elections. Lukashenko said he did not need foreign governments or mediators. Ramping up the rhetoric, Lukashenko said an air assault brigade would move to the border with Poland, after expressing concern over the NATO military exercises being conducted in Poland and Lithuania, which he sees as an arms build-up. In Minsk, people gathered to lay flowers where one of the protesters was killed this week, waving flags and chanting "go away" and "Lukashenko is a murderer".

The crowd also converged outside the state broadcaster BT. Several staff, including presenters, walked out of the building, saying they had resigned, while a red-and-white opposition flag was mounted outside. Later riot police were seen going inside. Some of the country's biggest state-run industrial plants, the backbone of Lukashenko's Soviet-style economic model, were hit by protests and walkouts this week. He plans to go to the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant, whose workers have joined the protests.

In a video posted by TUT.BY media on Saturday, the head of the plant, Rimashkevichy told workers that he voted for Lukashenko but "I accept that he lost them (the elections)"—unusually outspoken comments from an official at a state-run factory. Lukashenko has ac-

deadline must self-quarantine for 14 days, with the measure already in place for people coming from several other countries including Spain and Belgium. Eurotunnel reported roaring business. "The Le Shuttle Passenger Service carried almost 30 percent more leisure traffic yesterday than its initial forecast, adding 22 extra departures to the peak summer timetable carrying over 30,000 passengers," a statement said Saturday. France is facing a resurgence of the disease that emerged in China late last year.

French authorities have reported more than 2,500 new cases on each of the past four days and over 3,000 on Saturday — levels not seen since France was in a strict lockdown in the spring. With cases still rising around the world, Moscow said the first consignments of its "Sputnik" vaccine had been produced, just four days after President Vladimir Putin announced Russia had won the global race to approve a vaccine. The claim has drawn a sceptical response from Western scientists and the World Health Organization, which have said the vaccine still needs a rigorous review.

France has vowed to impose a "reciprocal measure" on Britain's quarantine move, leaving French holidaymakers set to face tough choices in the coming days. Germany added most of Spain—where cases have surged in recent weeks—to its list of regions from where arrivals must show a negative COVID-19 test or quarantine for two weeks. The restrictions include the island of Mallorca, a highly popular resort for German sunseekers.

Austria urged its citizens to return from popular Mediterranean destination Croatia before similar rules come into effect Monday, while Serbia introduced mandatory testing for travellers from four neighboring countries. Malta meanwhile posted its highest ever one-day rise in coronavirus cases on

US postal slowdown sparks claims of plot to undermine vote

WASHINGTON: The United States Postal Service is popularly known for delivering mail despite snow, rain or heat, but it faces a new foe in President Donald Trump. Ahead of the November 3 elections in which millions of voters are expected to cast ballots by mail due to the coronavirus, Trump has leveled an unprecedented attack at the USPS, opposing efforts to give the cash-strapped agency more money even as changes there have caused widespread delays in delivering letters and packages. "They need that money in order to have the post office work so it can take all of these millions and millions of ballots," Trump told Fox News on Thursday, calling the money "fraudulent." "But if they don't get those... that means you can't have universal mail-in voting." On Saturday, Trump continued his assault on mail-in voting by telling reporters it would be a "catastrophe" and retweeting articles and comments alleging fraud. The Democratic opposition has sharply condemned Trump's statements, with some lawmakers claiming that the president is plotting to snarl the post office to undermine voting, create uncertainty and win a second term. "Pure Trump. He doesn't want an election," said Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

Biden's running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, tweeted: "We cannot let Donald Trump destroy the United States Postal Service." Trump, asked by a reporter Saturday if he was trying to hobble the USPS, replied: "No, not at all." But the concerns are unlikely to disappear. Reflecting the escalating nature of the controversy, former president Barack Obama has also weighed in. "What we've never seen before is a president say, 'I'm going to try to actively kneecap the Postal Service ... and I will be explicit about the rea-



MINSK: Belarus opposition supporters shout as they hold posters reading 'Stop lying!' (left) and 'Show people the truth!' (right) near the State TV and radio company during a protest rally against police violence recent rallies of opposition supporters, who accuse strongman Alexander Lukashenko of falsifying the polls in the presidential election in central Minsk. — AFP

son I'm doing it," Obama said in a podcast with a former aide. On Saturday, protesters gathered at the Washington home of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, blaring horns and banging pots in anger. USPS spokesman David Partenheimer attributed changes at the agency to its poor financial state. "We are not slowing down election mail or any other mail," he told AFP. "The Postal Service is in a financially unsustainable position, stemming from substantial declines in mail volume and a broken business model," he explained. "We face an impending liquidity crisis," Partenheimer said, calling on Congress and regulators to enact reforms.

The postal troubles come as Congress remains deadlocked over a new stimulus bill to follow the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act package passed in March as the coronavirus crisis erupted. Democrats have proposed giving the USPS billions of dollars in funding, and Trump—after first saying he opposed that—said Friday that perhaps some new funds could be included in a compromise.

On Saturday he blamed the Democrats again, telling reporters they "aren't approving proper funding for postal, and they're not approving the proper funding for this ridiculous thing that they want to do which is all mail-in voting." "You're right, there has to be more resources, I agree," he said. —AFP



MOSCOW: People wearing face masks to protect against the coronavirus disease walk in downtown Moscow. — AFP

Saturday with 72 new infections. In Asia, South Korea tightened restrictions in Seoul and its surrounding areas as the country reported the highest number of new daily infections since March.

However several countries announced an easing of lockdown measures. South Africa said it would resume sales of alcohol and cigarettes—banned on March 27—on Monday. DR Congo opened up its airspace Saturday after five months with a flight from Kinshasa taking off for the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. In the US, museums, art galleries and other cultural institutions in New York will be allowed to reopen later this month following a five-month shutdown. Meanwhile, about 5,000 pilgrims attended the annual Assumption mass in the underground basilica in France's Lourdes Roman Catholic shrine Saturday—with strict health measures in place. "It's weird. There aren't many people this year," said Michel Clavel, a retired 66-year-old truck driver, who comes every year for the pilgrimage which usually attracts about 250,000 worshippers. —AFP



CHICAGO: Mail boxes sit in front of a United States Postal Service facility in Chicago, Illinois. President Donald Trump said that he opposes additional funding for the Postal Service because the lack of additional funding would make it more difficult to deliver mail-in ballots. —AFP

son I'm doing it," Obama said in a podcast with a former aide.

On Saturday, protesters gathered at the Washington home of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, blaring horns and banging pots in anger. USPS spokesman David Partenheimer attributed changes at the agency to its poor financial state. "We are not slowing down election mail or any other mail," he told AFP. "The Postal Service is in a financially unsustainable position, stemming from substantial declines in mail volume and a broken business model," he explained. "We face an impending liquidity crisis," Partenheimer said, calling on Congress and regulators to enact reforms.

The postal troubles come as Congress remains deadlocked over a new stimulus bill to follow the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act package passed in March as the coronavirus crisis erupted. Democrats have proposed giving the USPS billions of dollars in funding, and Trump—after first saying he opposed that—said Friday that perhaps some new funds could be included in a compromise.

On Saturday he blamed the Democrats again, telling reporters they "aren't approving proper funding for postal, and they're not approving the proper funding for this ridiculous thing that they want to do which is all mail-in voting." "You're right, there has to be more resources, I agree," he said. —AFP

Returning Brits begin quarantine as Russia rolls out vaccine

LONDON: British travelers returning home from parts of Europe and beyond began quarantine under new restrictions on Saturday, while Russia said it had produced the first batch of its controversial coronavirus vaccine. Latin America and the Caribbean, the pandemic's current epicenter, surpassed six million infections, even as Rio de Janeiro in hard-hit Brazil reopened major tourist sites including the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue.

"The reopening of the Christ (monument) symbolizes the reopening of Brazil to tourism," Environment Minister Ricardo Salles said at a ceremony at the base of the statue, where visitors will have to wear masks and socially distance. Latin America claims nearly one-third of the 760,000 coronavirus deaths worldwide. The United States is the worst-affected country with more than a quarter of the world's 21 million cases, as well as nearly 170,000 deaths. Brazil follows with 3.3 million cases and 107,000 deaths.

The UK removed France, the Netherlands, Malta and three other countries from its list of places exempt from self-isolation rules, as a second wave of virus infections threatens more disruption and economic chaos in Europe. The move, announced late Thursday, sparked a 36-hour scramble for plane, train and ferry tickets among some Britons desperate to get back home before the 4:00 am rule change.

All arrivals from the blacklisted states after the

Trump grabs spotlight but reclusive Biden leads in polls

WASHINGTON: Despite being gaffe-prone, getting up in years and barely heading out on the campaign trail, Democrat Joe Biden is leading in the polls as the coronavirus epidemic and economic crisis make the November presidential election a referendum on Donald Trump. The COVID-19 outbreak has stripped Trump of his beloved campaign rallies but he has made the most of his White House pulpit to remain in the public eye.

The 77-year-old Biden, on the other hand, has held few campaign events, spending most of his time since mid-March at home in Wilmington, Delaware. Biden's sparse public schedule has minimized the risks of his catching the virus while at the same time reducing his chances of making any faux pas. And if the polls are any indication, the Democratic candidate's low-key style is paying off. The election website Real Clear Politics has Biden with a 7.7-point lead over Trump nationally.

Allan Lichtman, a history professor at American University, has correctly predicted the results of every US presidential election since 1984, including Trump's upset 2016 victory. His 2020 forecast? Biden, president Barack Obama's two-term vice president, will win the November 3 vote. "This has nothing to do with Joe Biden," Lichtman said in an interview with AFP. "It's not dependent on Donald Trump's personality either. It's based on the record." The professor bases his predictions on what he calls the 13 "Keys to the White House." Among them: How strong is the US economy? Is there social unrest? Is the president an incumbent? Is the president charismatic? Is his opponent? Of this last "key," Lichtman says "Biden doesn't fit that bill." "He's a very empathetic, sincere man but he's not inspirational," he said. —AFP

News in brief

Surfer punches shark to save wife

SYDNEY: An Australian man has been hailed a "hero" after repeatedly punching a shark until it released his wife's leg. Police said the couple were surfing at a beach near Port Macquarie, four hours north of Sydney, on Saturday morning when she was bitten twice and injured on her right leg. "Her companion was forced to punch the fish until it let go," police said in the statement. Paramedics treated the 35-year-old at the beach before she was later airlifted to a major hospital for surgery. One witness who was surfing nearby when the attack occurred called the man a "hero" for taking on what appeared to be a great white shark up to three meters long. "He started laying into the shark because it wouldn't let go," Jed Toohy told the Daily Telegraph. "He saved her life... He was really incredible." —AFP

Lam returns Cambridge fellowship

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leader says she has "returned" her honorary fellowship to a Cambridge college after a row over whether the finance hub's academic freedoms are being suppressed as authorities crack down on pro-democracy opponents. Chief Executive Carrie Lam said she was cutting ties with Cambridge's Wolfson College after it began looking into the state of academic liberty in Hong Kong. Lam said she was "deeply disappointed by the college smearing a person on the basis of hearsay instead of facts". "Therefore I can hardly convince myself to maintain any relation with Wolfson College," she wrote on Facebook late Saturday alongside a photo of herself in leafy Cambridge. Wolfson College said it had recently raised concerns with Hong Kong's leader about "her commitment to the protection of human rights and the freedom of expression". —AFP

Indian, Nepali leaders speak

MUMBAI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepali counterpart KP Sharma Oli spoke on Saturday for the first time since a diplomatic spat over a map and a disputed area of territory erupted earlier this year between the South Asian neighbors. Oli called Modi on the occasion of India's Independence Day and congratulated him for the country's recent election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. India's external affairs ministry said in a statement. On the call, Modi "recalled the civilization and cultural links that India and Nepal share," the ministry added. Nepal approved a political map of the country in June that included a region controlled by India. India rejected the map, saying it was not based on historical facts or evidence. — Reuters

Deadly clashes in Ivory Coast

ABIDJAN: Five people have been killed and over 100 injured in three days of street clashes following President Alassane Ouattara's decision to seek a third term, the government said, urging calm. Ouattara's election announcement sparked fury among his critics, as he can only run a third time by arguing that a constitutional change entitles him to reset the clock. Earlier Friday security sources said six were killed in the violence, but Security Minister Vagondo Diomande later said the protests have caused "five deaths with 104 injured". Ten police officers and two gendarmes were among the injured, he added, calling for "return to calm throughout the national territory". Ouattara, 78, announced last week that he would contest the October 31 presidential elections, a move that came after his appointed successor Prime Minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly died of a heart attack. —AFP

International

Israel-UAE historic deal wins praise, shift on annexation triggers anger

Right-wing supporters and settlers fume

EFRATA: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's historic deal with the UAE won praise abroad - but generated discontent from right-wing supporters and settlers over the suspension of land annexation plans. "This agreement could signal a possible crisis in the relationship of Netanyahu and many of the settlers and their supporters in the Israeli right wing," said Yohanan Plesner, director of the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think-tank.

Figures on Israel's nationalist right have called for a replacement to Netanyahu. Netanyahu may have "gained a few points among centre-left voters, who like deals with the Arabs, but he lost several points with his right-wing base" whose "dream" of annexation of land has gone, said political commentator Ben Caspit, writing in Maariv newspaper.

The deal announced on Thursday sees Israel pledge to suspend its planned annexation of Palestinian lands, a concession welcomed by European and some pro-Western Arab governments as a boost for hopes of peace. But Netanyahu, neck-and-neck with political rivals during the three last election campaigns, had used the issue of annexation to woo voters from the radical right and the settlers. They are fierce opponents of any return of Palestinian territories, seized by Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967.

'Bitter pill'

Netanyahu's unity government had announced a strategy to annex parts of the West Bank and Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territory, including the Jordan Valley, a strategic strip along the Jordanian border. That plan was given the green light in Janu-

ary by US President Donald Trump. But the surprise deal with the United Arab Emirates appears to put annexation on ice; Israeli, Emirati and US leaders said they had agreed "Israel will suspend declaring sovereignty" over West Bank areas.

The normalization agreement is only Israel's third with an Arab country, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. For commentator Ben Caspit, the deal was driven by opposition to annexation by members of the ruling coalition - such as Benny Gantz and Gabi Ashkenazi. That "forced Netanyahu to recalculate", and made him look for a way to get his supporters to swallow a "bitter pill". But since Netanyahu has said annexation of parts of the West Bank is only "postponed" and that Israel had "not given up", some see it as only a matter of time before it resumes.

'Myth has disappeared'

In Efrata, an Israeli settlement near the Palestinian city of Bethlehem, the head of the local council Oded Revivi tempered his disappointment. "All these years people thought that peace with Arab countries could not be made, as long as there was a Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria," he said, using the Jewish name for the West Bank.

"We see that this myth has disappeared," Revivi, looking back over the decades since the 1967 war, believes annexation has only been paused. "It was put on hold, but nobody knows for how long," Revivi added. "We've been waiting for this for 53 years - maybe more than 2,000 years. I'm sure it will come back to the table and much faster than you think."

Fresh Israeli strikes on Gaza over balloon bombs and rockets

GAZA CITY: The Israeli army said yesterday it carried out fresh air strikes against Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip in response to rocket attacks and firebombs sent into Israeli territory attached to balloons. The strikes come after clashes broke out Saturday evening along the Gaza-Israeli border, the army said. Dozens of Palestinian "rioters burned tyres, hurled explosive devices and grenades towards the security fence and attempted to approach it," the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement. Over the past week Israeli forces have carried out repeated night-time strikes on targets linked to the Islamist group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip.

The army says they are in response to the use of makeshift firebombs, attached to balloons and kites,

which have been sent into parts of southern Israel, causing thousands of fires in Israeli farms and communities. There were 19 such Palestinian attacks on Saturday alone, according to Israeli rescue services. In response "IDF fighter jets and aircraft struck a number of Hamas military targets in the Gaza Strip," the army said in its statement, adding that among the targets hit were "a military compound and underground infrastructure" belonging to Hamas.

Early yesterday the IDF also said that two rockets had been fired into Israel from Gaza and intercepted by its Iron Dome defense system. "In response, our Air Force just struck Hamas terror targets in Gaza, including a military compound used to store rocket ammunition," it said. Israel has closed its Kerem Shalom goods crossing with the Gaza Strip and reduced the territory's permitted Mediterranean coastal fishing zone in response to the recent balloon launches.

Despite a truce last year backed by the UN, Egypt and Qatar, the two sides clash sporadically with rockets, mortar fire or incendiary balloons. The Gaza Strip has a population of two million, more than half of whom live in poverty, according to the World Bank. Hamas "is re-

Mozambique insurgency tests anti-conflict resolve in the region

JOHANNESBURG: The audacious attack and occupation of a strategic port in Mozambique's gas-rich province days before a summit of regional leaders will test southern Africa's counter-insurgency skills, analysts say. Extremist fighters attacked the small but key town of Mocimboa da Praia - the third such attack this year alone - culminating in the capture of its port on Wednesday.

Mozambique's northernmost province of Cabo Delgado, which borders Tanzania, has been ravaged by a jihadist insurgency since October 2017. But the government waited until April this year to admit the presence of so-called Islamic State militants in the country. The jihadists have grown bolder in recent months, escalating attacks as part of a campaign to establish an Islamist caliphate. Analysts hope the violence will be top of the agenda when leaders from 16 southern African countries meet for a routine annual summit on Monday.

During the summit - to be held virtually due to coronavirus travel restrictions - Mozambique takes over the rotating chairmanship of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from Tanzania. SADC should "urgently assist Mozambique to stem the violent insurgency" which has killed more than 1,500 people and displaced at least 250,000, said the Pretoria-based Institute for Security Studies (ISS) on Thursday. It said the upcoming summit presents a "crucial opportunity to take decisive action to help end the crisis".

Private military contractors

In May, SADC's security unit pledged to help Mozambique tackle the insurgency - one of the toughest challenges southern Africa has faced in recent years. But concrete action has yet to be seen. "It is really time for SADC to intervene," said Maputo-based activist Adriano Nuvunga, director of Mozambique's Centre for Democracy and Development. Struggling to regain control of the strife-torn region, the Mozambican army has hired private military contractors to help, including Russia's Wagner and the South Africa-based Dyck Advisory Group, according to various researchers.

But analysts say those efforts have been ineffective so far. "Military action by the Mozambique government, including the continued use of mercenaries, has not stopped the attacks," the ISS said. In a pre-summit meeting on Thursday, Mozambique's Foreign Minister Veronica Macamo spoke of the "need for consultation and coordination of our actions in combating terrorism which poses a major threat to our region". "Our region faces a threat... in the form of terrorism and violent extremism, which if not contained, has the possibility of spreading" throughout southern Africa, said the minister. —AFP

How climate change could expose new epidemics

PARIS: Long-dormant viruses brought back to life: the resurgence of deadly and disfiguring smallpox; a dengue or Zika "season" in Europe. These could be disaster movie storylines, but they are also serious and increasingly plausible scenarios of epidemics unleashed by global warming, scientists say. The COVID-19 pandemic that has swept the globe and claimed over 760,000 lives so far almost certainly came from a wild bat, highlighting the danger of humanity's constant encroachment on the planet's dwindling wild spaces.

But the expanding ecological footprint of our species could trigger epidemics in other ways too. Climate change - already wreaking havoc with one degree Celsius of warming - is also emerging as a driver of infectious disease, whether by expanding the footprint of malaria- and dengue-carrying mosquitoes, or defrosting prehistoric pathogens from the Siberian permafrost.

'Ignorance is our enemy'

"In my darkest moments, I see a really horrible future for Homo sapiens because we are an animal, and when we extend our borders things will happen to us," said Birgitta Evengard, a researcher in clinical microbiology at Umea University in Sweden. "Our biggest enemy is our own ignorance," she added. "Nature is full of microorganisms." Think of permafrost, a climate change time bomb spread across Russia, Canada and Alaska that contains three times the carbon that has been emitted since the start of industrialisation.

Even if humanity manages to cap global warming at under two degrees Celsius, the cornerstone goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement, the permafrost area will decrease by a quarter by 2100, according to the UN's climate science panel, the IPCC. And then there are the permafrost's hidden treasures. "Microorganisms can survive in frozen space for a long, long time," said Vladimir Romanovsky, a professor of geophysics at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

An Anthrax comeback?

As ground thaws, once-frozen soil particles, organic material and microorganisms that had been locked away for millennia are carried toward the surface by water flows, he explained. "That's how thawing can spread these microorganisms into present day environments." There are already examples of ancient, long-frozen bugs coming to life.

"When you put a seed into soil that is then frozen for thousands of years, nothing happens," said Jean-Michel Claverie, an emeritus professor of genomics at the School of Medicine of Aix-Marseille University in France. "But when you warm the earth, the seed will be



BEIT HANUN: Palestinian demonstrators hold slogans reading in Arabic 'normalization is betrayal' during a demonstration in Gaza City against a US-brokered deal between Israel and the UAE to normalize relations. —AFP

The nationalist right have reacted bitterly. They are angry that the deal "pauses" annexation - and thus keeps the idea alive of a viable separate Palestinian state alongside Israel.

"It is tragic that Netanyahu did not seize the moment, nor have the courage to apply sovereignty even over a centimeter of the Land of Israel, but sovereignty over the territories of our homeland will

come," said Naftali Bennet, leader of the radical right-wing nationalist Yamina alliance. "We cannot ignore the great dangers posed by relaunching the talks for a Palestinian state," said Bezalel Smotrich, another Yamina member, which sits in the opposition and draws much of its support from settlers. "To face the danger, the right has to present here and now an alternative" to Netanyahu's leadership, he said. —AFP



KHAN YUNIS: Smoke and flames rise after Israeli army war planes carried out airstrikes over Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip yesterday. —AFP

be responsible for all events transpiring in the Gaza Strip and emanating from it, and will bear the consequences for terror activity against Israeli civilians," the IDF said in its statement Saturday. —AFP

able to germinate," he added. "That is similar to what happens with a virus." Claverie's lab has successfully revived Siberian viruses that are at least 30,000 years old. These reanimated bugs only attack amoebas, but tens of thousands of years ago there were certainly others that aimed higher up the food chain.

"Neanderthals, mammoths, woolly rhinos all got sick, and many died," said Claverie. "Some of the viruses that caused their sicknesses are probably still in the soil." The number of bacteria and viruses lurking in the permafrost is incalculable, but the more important question is how dangerous they are. And here, scientists disagree. "Anthrax shows that bacteria can be resting in permafrost for hundreds of years and be revived," said Evengard. In 2016, a child in Siberia died from the disease, which had disappeared from the region at least 75 years earlier.

Two-million-year-old pathogens

This case has been attributed to the thawing of a long-buried carcass, but some experts counter that the animal remains in question may have been in shallow dirt and thus subject to periodic thawing. Other pathogens - such as smallpox or the influenza strain that killed tens of millions in 1917 and 1918 - may also be present in the sub-Arctic region. But they "have probably been inactivated", Romanovsky concluded in a study published earlier this year. For Claverie, however, the return of smallpox - officially declared eradicated 50 years ago - cannot be excluded. 18th- and 19th-century victims of the disease "buried in cemeteries in Siberia are totally preserved by the cold," he noted.

In the unlikely event of a local epidemic, a vaccine is available. The real danger, he added, lies in deeper strata where unknown pathogens that have not seen daylight for two million years or more may be exposed by global warming. If there were no hosts for the bugs to infect there would not be a problem, but climate change - indirectly - has intervened here as well.

"With the industrial exploitation of the Arctic, all the risk factors are there - pathogens and the people to carry them," Claverie said. The revival of ancient bacteria or viruses remains speculative, but climate change has already boosted the spread of diseases that kill about half a million people every year: malaria, dengue, chikungunya, Zika. "Mosquitoes moving their range north are now able to overwinter in some temperate regions," said Jeanne Fair, deputy group leader for biosecurity and public health at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. "They also have longer breeding periods."

'Climate change aperitif'

Native to southeast Asia, the tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*) - which carries dengue and chikungunya - arrived in southern Europe in the first decade of this century and has been moving rapidly north ever since, to Paris and beyond. Meanwhile, another dengue-bearing mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, has also appeared in Europe. Whichever species may be the culprit, the Europe Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has registered 40 cases of local transmission of dengue between 2010 and 2019. —AFP

Impasse leaves 'time bomb' storage tanker decaying off Yemen

SANAA: Houthi rebels and the UN are again at an impasse over a loaded oil storage tanker decaying off Yemen, despite parallels to this month's catastrophe in Beirut and Mauritius. The 45-year-old FSO Safer, abandoned near Hodeida port since 2015, has 1.1 million barrels of crude on board, and a rupture or explosion would have catastrophic environmental and humanitarian consequences. The Iran-backed Houthis, who control much of Yemen's north, have blocked the United Nations from sending a team of inspectors to assess the vessel.

In July they finally gave the green light, but the UN has said in recent days that the necessary permits have not yet been forthcoming. "The tragic Beirut explosion on 4 August, and the recent alarming oil spill in Mauritius demand the world's vigilance and urgent action to avert preventable loss of life and livelihoods," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's spokesman said Friday. The UN Security Council held a special session last month to express fears of a "catastrophe" if the tanker leaks into the Red Sea.

Its condition is "deteriorating daily" with no maintenance in the scorching Gulf heat, it said - like the cargo of hazardous materials abandoned for years at Beirut port that exploded like a time bomb. Used as a floating storage platform, the ship is laden with crude worth some \$40 million. Like other economic and aid issues in Yemen, where a long civil war has created poverty and chaos, the plight of the tanker has turned into a bargaining chip.

The Houthis stand accused of using the threat of disaster to secure control of the cargo's value. Hicham Charaf, foreign minister in the Houthi administration which is not internationally recognized, said Saturday the dispute now centers on the process for repairing the tanker. The rebels insist that a UN inspection team evaluates and repairs the vessel in a single visit, he said.

Independent assessment

"We want to have an assessment and work to start immediately," Sharaf told AFP. "Some UN teams take a lot of time and we don't want that." The rebels, who have accused the UN of bias towards Yemen's internationally recognized government, also demand that a third country, possibly Sweden or Germany, supervise the process. The UN said Friday it needs to first evaluate the problem and do immediate repairs, and then decide what further work is needed and what equipment and resources are required.

"Planning and executing a sustainable solution will not be possible without independent experts first assessing the damage," it said. "And the assessment cannot be completed if the experts are not granted the required visas and permits to deploy to the tanker." Apart from corrosion to the ageing vessel, essential work to curb explosive gases in its storage tanks has been neglected for years. Experts say the latest problem cropped up in May with a leak in a cooling pipe that sent water into the engine room. The UN has said an oil spill could destroy Red Sea ecosystems, shut down the fishing industry and close Yemen's lifeline Hodeida port for six months.

More suffering for Yemenis

That would lead to huge spikes in the cost of food and fuel, in a country where a large majority of people are already dependent on aid. If a fire breaks out, some 8.4 million people would be exposed to harmful levels of pollution. Other countries bordering the Red Sea would be affected, including Djibouti, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia. —AFP

Business

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020

Burgan Bank reports Q1, H1 results of 2020

Bank announces a net income of KD 17.2m for Q1 and KD 22.7m for H1 respectively

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank Group ("Burgan") announced yesterday its Q1'20 and H1'20 earnings for the financial year 2020. For the period Q1'20 and H1'20, Burgan reported a net income of KD 17.2 million and KD 22.7 million respectively. For the first half of 2020, Burgan Bank's revenue levels continued to be resilient while the reduction in operating expenses across the group reflects prudence in the current environment. Burgan's Net Income reduced due to higher provisioning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key highlights from Burgan's H1 2020 financial results are as follows:

- H1'20 Revenue lower at KD 107.6 million (down only 7.5 percent vs H1'19) due to the fall in interest rates and pandemic-related customer relief measures
- H1'20 Operating Expenses reduced to KD 46.7 million (improvement of 4.6 percent vs H1'19) due to Group-wide efficiency initiatives
- Customer Loans grew to KD 4,412 million
- Customer deposits grew to KD 4,263 million
- Burgan's capital levels continued to be strong with H1'20 CET1 ratio of 10.8 percent and H1'20 CAR of 16.2 percent
- Burgan continues to be very liquid; Liquidity Coverage Ratio of 133 percent and Net Stable Funding Ratio of 110 percent as of H1'20

During these difficult times, Burgan Bank is actively supporting its clients, customers, employees and the community through a host of exceptional services. These include the postponement of installments for 6 months on loans for retail clients and SME clients with no additional charges or penalties.



Revenue levels continue to be resilient

The corporate and private banking customers were personally informed that their limits are active and ready for utilization while ensuring smooth functioning of all client channels including 24/7 access to contact centers. Burgan also established the highest level of safety standards throughout its network of branches, ATMs and offices.

Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, Chairman of Burgan Bank Group said: "The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020 has been profound not

only on the Global economy but also on the way we live our day to day lives. Given the current challenges, our key priority is to help our customers and contribute to the economic recovery in collaboration with the all key stakeholders"

"During this period, Burgan Bank employees adopted a swift transition to 'work-from-home' with VPN access and controls in place. Maintaining an uninterrupted learning environment, Burgan employees were thoroughly engaged through online staff training and development sessions," added Al-Ajeel.

"I want to appreciate and express my sincere gratitude to our executive management team and all staff members for their dedication, discipline and commitment which allowed the bank to deliver its services to our customers effectively and uninterrupted throughout the pandemic" concluded Mr. Al-Ajeel.

Furthermore, Masaud M J Hayat, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of Burgan Bank said, "The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe supply and demand shocks to the global economy. These are truly unprecedented times and will require us to work in more collaborative & efficient manner in the face of such uncertain future."

Commenting on the H1'20 results, Masaud added, "Burgan delivered resilient financial figures despite these tough times with a revenue of KD 107.6 million and a net income of KD 22.7 million. We have also taken this period as a catalyst to further accel-



Majed Essa Al-Ajeel

Masaud M J Hayat

erate our efforts on digital transformation of the group and have made significant progress in the first six months of 2020."

Masaud concluded by saying, "We thank the Central Bank of Kuwait for its important role in protecting the banking sector and its customers during these difficult times." The consolidated financials encompass the results of the Group's operations in Kuwait, and its share of results from its subsidiaries, Burgan Bank Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria, Bank of Baghdad and Tunis International Bank. Through this regional reach, Burgan Bank has one of the largest regional branch networks with 164 branches across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Iraq, Tunisia, Lebanon and a representative office in the United Arab Emirates.

Algeria turns to Islamic finance to rev up growth

ALGIERS: Algeria has launched Islamic finance products in a bid to attract money from the informal market, but bankers warn it will take more to fix the country's struggling economy. Falling oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic have battered the North African country, triggering alarm bells among officials and experts. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast that Algeria's economy will shrink 5.2 percent this year.

Prime Minister Abdelaziz Djerad has warned of an "unprecedented economic situation", and experts have estimated unemployment at nearing 15 percent. In Algeria, Africa's largest nation and home to 43 million people, most transactions are done in cash circulating outside the formal banking sector, said professor Mohamed Boudjelal, an expert on Islamic finance.

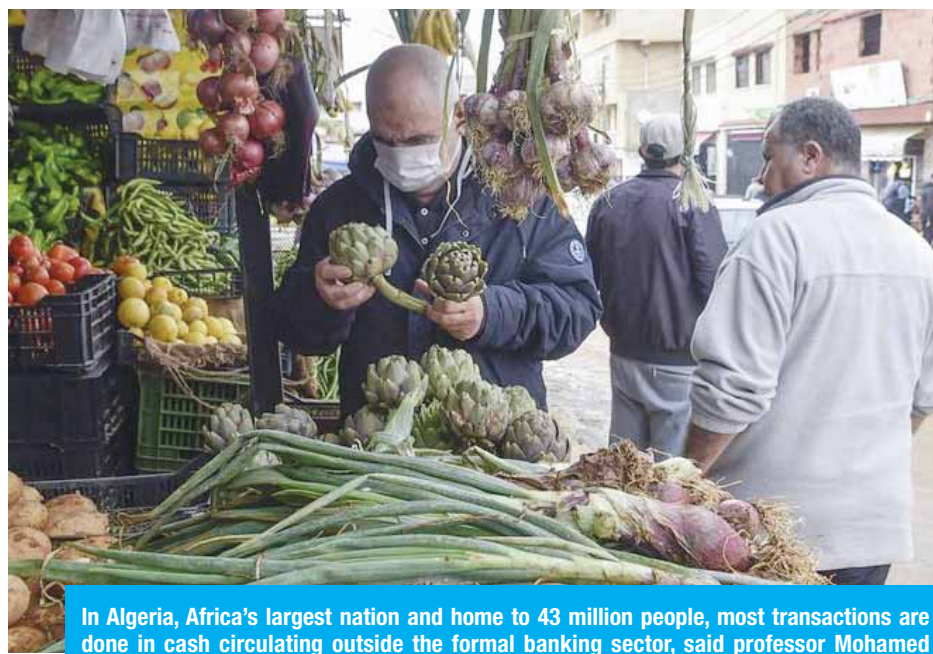
Many Algerians "turn their nose up" at conventional banking, Boudjelal said. Some Muslims believe that the traditional banking system is incompatible with their faith. Islamic finance—the provision of financial services in accordance with religious laws—is a fast growing sector that has been adopted in many Muslim countries.

The industry is based on shared profit and loss, while earning interest is banned as "usury". Funds are also blocked from investing in companies associated with tobacco, alcohol, pork or gambling. Algeria is hoping the new products could woo new investors into the market, following the success of Islamic finance products over the past decade in other countries, notably in the Gulf and Malaysia.

No miracle solution

The country's neighbors have already rolled out similar schemes. In Tunisia, Islamic finance has operated in the private sector since the 1980s, although the sector remains modest, while in Morocco it began in 2017, though it has recorded net losses it says are due to initial start-up costs.

But Algeria hopes to tap into the significant revenues of the informal market, esti-



In Algeria, Africa's largest nation and home to 43 million people, most transactions are done in cash circulating outside the formal banking sector, said professor Mohamed Boudjelal, an expert on Islamic finance. — AFP

mated to be as much as \$30-35 billion, according to Abderahmane Benkhalfa, a former minister of finance and ex-head of the banking association. "It is not only necessary to draw these resources, but to inject them into banks in order to bolster the economy," Benkhalfa said.

Earlier this month, state-run National Bank of Algeria offered nine Islamic financial services, receiving a certificate from Muslim clerics ensuring they were compatible with Islamic law. Only two other private banks, subsidiaries of the Bahrain-based Baraka Bank and Al Salam Bank, offer Islamic finance services in Algeria.

However, Algeria's other banks—all state-run—are now expected to follow suit by the end of the year.

Most foreign banks are also planning to sell Islamic finance products too. But Benkhalfa, who is also a member of a panel of African experts tasked by the African Union to mobilize international funds to help the continent combat coronavirus, warned that Islamic finance is not a "miracle solution".

Only a small slice of cash in the informal economy circulates because of people's religious beliefs.

Create trust in banks

The solution, Benkhalfa argues, are to make steps to modernize the traditional

Venezuelan migrants who have fled the social and economic crisis at home. Informal groups of workers called the strike to protest against Rappitenderos' accounts being blocked, low-paying orders, and a points system which sets impossible targets for deliveries, organizers said in interviews.

"Right now we are here for working rights," said Andres Reyes, 28, who had joined Rappi to find work after the coronavirus outbreak. "We feel we are treated badly," said Jorge Yaar, 30, a Rappitendero for two years, adding that Rappi is taking advantage of them.

Amid a cacophony of horns, whistles and chants demanding "no more points," Reyes said Rappitenderos want to end a points system which governs who, when and where people can work.

banking system—to make it more responsive—and develop in parallel with Islamic finance. Economist Abderrahmane Mebtoul was even more cautious in his assessment.

It is only viable if inflation can be brought under control and if households have faith in the government's management of the economy, Mebtoul said. According to several studies, Islamic finance products are often more expensive than those provided by the traditional banking sector.

By the end of the year Algeria's state banks are expected to propose several Islamic finance products, including "murabaha", "ijara" and "musharakah". Murabaha, or cost-plus financing, is among the most popular products, and is used to finance a variety of consumer purchases from cars to houses.

It involves the bank buying on behalf of a client a property or another product, which it sells back to the client at a certain profit that replaces an interest rate. Ijara is a way of buying a house through a lease and subsequent ownership, rather than through a mortgage. Musharakah is seen as a way of enabling a buyer to avoid taking an interest-bearing loan, though some Islamic scholars say it is too similar to the charging of interest. Algerian authorities are also considering issuing Islamic bonds. — AFP

Protesters said they needed to earn hundreds of thousands of points from deliveries to be able to work in high-demand zones, though deliveries are worth just a few hundred points each.

Rappi said in a statement it would listen to Rappitenderos and highlighted its efforts to protect them during the pandemic. Measures declared by President Ivan Duque to control the outbreak, including an ongoing national lockdown, have battered Latin America's fourth-largest economy.

The quarantine began in late March and is set to last until the end of August. Most sectors have begun returning to work under new safety protocols.

Joblessness has soared during the pandemic. Colombia's closely-watched urban jobless rate was 24.9% in June. — Reuters

Bling no longer king in India as gold loses its shine

MUMBAI: Jewelers in the traditionally lucrative Indian gold market are struggling—even while the metal's value skyrockets—as coronavirus fears keep sales down, craftsmen at home and shops shuttered. Months after India lifted its strict lockdown, the country's biggest gold market Zaveri Bazaar remains desolate, with most stores closed and no customers in sight.

"We have been running this shop for the last 40 years and I have never seen the business hit such lows," said 75-year-old Madhubhai Shah, one of only a handful of jewellers who decided to reopen. The Mumbai market was hit hard by the March lockdown, which saw millions of migrant workers—including many gold craftsmen—flee India's cities as their income dried up.

"Seventy percent of our artisans have left for their villages and manufacturing units are all closed," Shah told AFP. And with gold prices hitting record highs after soaring around 30 percent this year, there is little incentive for customers to splash out on jewelry.

Even the impending wedding season, which traditionally kicks off in October and sees families spend a small fortune, has failed to buoy spirits or boost spending as India braces for its first recession in four decades. Chiranjeevi Ahire and his fiancée decided to break with tradition for their December wedding by choosing not to buy any gold jewellery, even though it is considered auspicious and a status symbol.

"Previously we wanted the wedding to be a grand affair and follow all Indian traditions, just like our parents," the Mumbai-based marketing manager told

AFP. "But with the pandemic and uncertainty looming in the job market, we decided to cut down on our spending on gold and instead keep the money for a rainy day," the 29-year-old said.

Gold-backed loans

According to the World Gold Council (WGC), India's gold consumption fell by a staggering 56 percent during the first half of 2020 compared with the same period last year.

Demand during the April-to-June quarter plunged 70 percent to 63.7 tons, the lowest since the 2008 global financial crisis. The twin blows of the lockdown and high prices meant customers did not empty their pockets even during the Akshaya Tritiya festival in April, considered a lucky time for Hindus to buy the metal. In addition to jewelry, Indians have traditionally stockpiled gold bars and coins as a hedge against inflation. Many are now leveraging these to secure credit, exploiting the commodity's high value and securing lower interest rates on personal loans.

Bhadresh Gowda, a farmer in Karnataka state, used his wife's wedding jewelry to secure a 200,000-rupee (\$2,670) credit line after huge losses during the lockdown. "Initially, I was hesitant to use gold as collateral because these jewels are my family's legacy, but times are tough," the 39-year-old told AFP. In contrast to traditional loans, gold-backed credit "is very easy to access with less paperwork required", he said, making the process much faster.

"Gold offers more value for money right now. Once the economy improves, I'll pay back the loan and retrieve my gold," he added.

Some tech-savvy consumers are betting on prices rising even further as investors seek safe havens, and are pumping funds into so-called digital gold. "Consumers are buying digital gold in bits and pieces because it enables you to buy gold for... as little as one rupee," said Rajesh Khosla, spokesman for the India Bullion and Jewellers Association. —AFP



AHMEDABAD: A customer wearing a facemask as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 coronavirus tries a necklace made of gold at jewelry shop 'DB Zaveri Pvt Ltd' in Ahmedabad. As gold's value skyrockets, jewelers in India, traditionally one of the world's hottest markets, are struggling — with shops shut, sales down and craftsmen staying home due to coronavirus fears. — AFP

Rappi delivery workers in Bogota strike

BOGOTA: Close to 1,000 delivery workers for SoftBank-backed Colombian mobile application Rappi went on strike in the capital Bogota on Saturday to protest what they called unfair working conditions.

Tech unicorn Rappi counts on some 50,000 couriers, known as Rappitenderos, to deliver groceries and take-away meals, among other services, in the Andean country. Many are

Business

NBK Money Markets Report

Markets ignore US stimulus stalemate

KUWAIT: The greenback ended last week unchanged for the most part as investors weigh between the stalemate in Congress regarding a stimulus package and the ongoing economic recovery. The 10 and 2-year Treasury yields rose last week, with the 10 year yield rising to 0.7 percent for the first time in 5 weeks. The euro and sterling remain 11.34 percent and 14.75 percent higher respectively than their March lows, while the safe-haven yen maintains its demand with the pair trading below the 107 level for around 4 weeks. In New Zealand, the local currency fell sharply as the Reserve Bank delivered dovish comments and increased asset purchases. Looking at equities, US stocks ended the week slightly higher, the S&P 500 index and Dow Jones Industrial Average rising 0.5 percent and 1.61 percent respectively.

Prices of goods and services

US inflation has increased by the most in almost 30 years amid broad gains in the costs of goods and services. The consumer price index rose 0.6 percent last month, the largest gain since 1991, with gasoline representing a fourth of the gain. On a yearly basis, the CPI rose 1.0 percent in July following a 0.6 percent climb in June. The drastic jump in prices represents an unwinding of the sharp declines seen when businesses were shut down in March to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The figures somewhat dismiss earlier fears of deflation, characterized as the decline in general price levels due to a lack of demand. Looking at the numbers, auto and apparel costs have risen as expected, while energy prices fell massively in-line with the collapse in oil prices.

The US Federal Reserve has reacted to the global pandemic with extraordinary easing of monetary policy, sending interest rates to near zero as well as introducing large-scale asset purchases and providing loans to firms, among other measures. The economy officially entered a recession in February, suf-

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1786	1.1709	1.1864	1.1841	1.1740	1.2040	1.1867
GBP	1.3041	1.3003	1.3142	1.3084	1.2980	1.3285	1.3095
JPY	105.94	105.69	107.04	106.59	104.60	108.55	106.50
CHF	0.9128	0.9080	0.9198	0.9090	0.8895	0.9290	0.9071

fering the biggest blow since the Great Depression in Q2 of 2020. More than 30 million people are depending on unemployment benefits.

Jobless claims fall

Last week, unemployment claims totaled 963,000 versus estimates of 1.1 million. Jobless claims have been reported above 1 million for 20 consecutive weeks, and the recent data has provided an image of a continuous recovery to the labor market from the coronavirus pandemic. Nevertheless, figures are well above pre-pandemic levels and the effect is far beyond that seen during the financial crisis. The US has regained more than 9 million jobs in the past three months - about 43 percent of the over 21 million jobs lost in March and April.

Stimulus stalemate

Investors continue to await news on another economic stimulus package as Republicans and Democrats reach no resolution. According to various statements, Democrats claimed Treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin would not agree to a package larger than \$1 trillion, while Mnuchin accused Democrats of insisting on a \$2 trillion threshold for any agreement. Weeks of daily meetings have failed to produce an agreement on the overall cost, though

an eventual agreement and package is expected. This sense of assurance has kept the greenback in demand.

UK economy shrinks

The UK economy suffered a GDP drop of 20.4 percent q/q, with severe contractions across all sectors. This was greater than any slump recorded in major European economies, and double the decline seen in the US. The figures confirmed that the UK has been hit by the pandemic harder than other developed economy. Analysts claim the severity of the drop is due to the longevity of the lockdown, and the hit to consumer-facing services which account for 80 percent of the economy. The Q2 decline was followed by a recovery in June, with output growing 8.7 percent m/m - in line with the BOE's predictions. The recovery leaves UK GDP 11.3 percent higher than its April low, but remains 17.2 percent beneath its pre-crisis level.

Tariff threats

The US had previously threatened to increase the tariff rate on EU products from the current 15-25 percent levels to a shocking 100 percent, while increasing the amount of products targeted. The threats failed to materialize with the US Trade Representative's office announcing it was instead

making "modest" changes to the list of products subject to tariffs, while leaving the overall amount of goods unchanged. The EU "acknowledges the US decision not to exacerbate the ongoing aircraft dispute by increasing tariffs on European products," according to a European Commission post on Twitter. "Both sides should now build on this decision and intensify their efforts to find a negotiated solution to the ongoing trade irritants."

US oil inventories drop

Brent crude rose more than 2 percent last Wednesday after data revealed US oil inventories fell across the board. Still, the demand impact of the coronavirus pandemic continues to limit price gains. Crude inventories fell by 4.5 million barrels during the week ending August 7th according to the EIA, compared with expectations for a 2.9 million barrel drop. Still, at 514.1 million barrels, US crude oil inventories are about 15 percent above the five year average for this time of year.

According to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, global oil demand is expected to fall by 9.06 million bpd this year, higher than the 8.95 million bpd expected last month. Meanwhile, the International Energy Agency also cut its forecasts for global oil demand, and linked the decline to the damage on air travel. "The outlook for jet fuel demand has worsened in recent weeks as the coronavirus has spread more widely," said the agency. Despite the downgrades, the EIA still expects a recovery in consumption from the depths of the pandemic.

Gold investors take profits

Gold prices have retreated significantly from last week's record price of \$2,072.50 per ounce. Many found the retreat inevitable, leading investors to take profits as many believe that the safe-haven metal had been overbought for a while. Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30580

Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait announces H1 2020 results

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) delivered a total operating income of KD 69.1 million, with a net income of KD 36.4 million for the first half of 2020. Net loss stood at KD 4.6 million for the period ended 30th June. Customer deposits increased by KD 89 million to reach KD 3.4 billion, while shareholders' equity decreased by 5 per cent to reach KD 567 million. Asset quality remained at adequate levels, with the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio at 5.7 per cent, and NPL coverage at 118 per cent. The capital adequacy ratio stood at 18.8 per cent.

Talal Mohammed Reza Behbehani, Chairman of ABK said, "The economic impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the need for the



Talal Mohammed Reza Behbehani

Bank to take additional prudent provisions against facilities that are or may be adversely impacted in the future.

At ABK, our key priority as always, is the health and safety of all our employees and customers, as we continue to maintain operational stability across our business. Thanks to our strong capital base, stable liquidity and upgraded technological infrastructure, we were able to face this crisis efficiently through our digital services and working remotely. The Bank's dedicated teams were mobilized to



Abdulla Al-Sumait

help customers experiencing financial stress by providing financing options and personalized advice. The Bank remains well positioned from a capital and liquidity perspective, which enables us to overcome challenges and help our customers."

Commenting on the results, Abdulla Al-Sumait, Deputy Group CEO said, "The banking sector has been severely affected during 2020 on all local, regional and global levels, due to the prevailing uncertainty regarding the expected time for the end of this catastrophic pandemic affect-

ing health, social and financial levels, including that of the Bank's.

The Bank's decision to take additional specific provisions above regulatory requirements during this period is due to the slowdown in business activity, which has negatively impacted our clients. During the second half of 2020, the focus will be on remediation and recovery on facilities, which is expected to positively contribute to our overall 2020 financial results.

Our commitment to significant investments in technology over the past years has allowed us to support our customers without disruption during this challenging time, and it is encouraging to see a very large increase in customers now more digitally active on our secure platform. We have worked hard to ensure stringent measures have been taken in our branches to safeguard the health and safety of our employees and our clients. From the onset of the pandemic, we implemented an internal informative support program for staff. We have also continued our training and development of our employees through online learning & develop-

ment, while being in constant contact with our teams operating remotely. We take this opportunity to thank our employees who have worked relentlessly whether from the Bank or remotely during these critical times. As we move forward, we will continue to ensure we offer the best-in-class services, and we will further enhance our digital banking solutions to address our customer requirements in this new normal."

A recent Kuwait Banking Association and Visa survey highlighted that 65 percent of Kuwaiti consumers prefer digital payments. ABK has expanded its suite of digital services available to customers, positioning the bank to deliver seamless transactions during the nationwide lockdown.

ABK's credit ratings remained constant, with a rating of A2 from Moody's with 'Stable' outlook and A+ from Fitch with 'Stable' outlook. This reflects the bank's strong capital position, resilient earnings capacity, stable funding and liquidity sources, which are fully compliant with the Central Bank of Kuwait's conservative and robust regulatory system.

AUB congratulates winner of Al-Hassad Eid Al-Adha Draw

KUWAIT: In accordance with full preventive guidelines and measures set by health authorities, Ahli United Bank (AUB) held Eid Al-Adha draw of 12 August 2020 of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait and has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Al-Hassad Islamic account offers over 800 prizes, Over 12 Month Period and has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners.

The bank announced Moudhi Abdullah Al-Enezi, the winner of KD 100,000. The draws of Al-Hassad include several cash prizes, such as KD 100,000 each Eid and the grand quarterly draw of KD 250,000 prize which continues to be a key aspiration for customers who are wishing to fulfill their dreams. On top of that, Al-Hassad offers a monthly draw of KD 100,000, as well as 20 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 for each winner. In addition to this attractive package of rewards, Al-Hassad Islamic account incorporates a Wakala contract for projected annual profits, making this account beneficial to all customer segments that are aspiring to build their short and long-term savings through a unique savings account with many advantages.

Furthermore, for the first time in Kuwait, the AUB Al-Hassad presents the "Privilege Draw", which is a quarterly draw of KD 25,000 exclusively for Al-Hassad customers who maintained their balances for more than one year and have not won a prize in the past five years. For all draws, the clients are eligible for one draw chance for each KD 50 deposited in their Al-Hassad account.

It is worth mentioning that Al-Hassad Islamic account has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Such features include the simplest and easiest program, highest number of winners, largest prize value, unique draws during Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, loyalty multipliers, unique online account opening feature, transparent draws held during radio shows with live broadcast on the Bank's social media platforms.

Biden victory? Wall Street prices in Nov outcomes

NEW YORK: Investors are girding their portfolios for market moves ahead of the US presidential vote, as election season kicks into higher gear with the Democratic National Convention in the coming week. Though elections have loomed large on investors' radar this year, their influence on markets has taken a backseat to the coronavirus pandemic and unprecedented stimulus from US policymakers.

That may change in coming weeks, investors said. Some are beefing up cash positions or making bets on a flare-up in volatility as they eye a range of outcomes, including the possibility that the contest between President Donald Trump and presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden may yield a result that is not immediately certain or likely to be disputed. "There's plenty of reasons to believe that the election outcome is going to be drawn out," said Lamar

Villere, a portfolio manager at Villere & Co. "That's going to show the cracks in a market that's been priced for perfection."

Villere's firm has raised its cash levels to as high as 20 percent of assets as a hedge against election-induced volatility in a stock market some say has become richly valued - the S&P 500 has rallied more than 50 percent from its lows of the year and trades at its highest forward price-to-earnings multiple in around two decades. Some investors believe the market's performance over the next few months could point to which candidate will triumph in November.

The incumbent president has tended to win the White House when the S&P 500 index has risen in the three months before the election, data from TD Securities going back to 1930 showed.

That may be bad news for Trump. While the index is up about 3 percent for this month, August kicks off what has historically been the weakest three-month stretch of the year for equities, where the average historic return stands at about 0 percent, according to data from BofA Global Research.

At the same time, no incumbent has been awarded a second term in the midst of a recession. TD securities wrote. Biden leads Trump by 8 percentage points,

drilling is illegal because it infringes on the island's exclusive economic zone.

But Turkey remains steadfast, saying it has a right to search for oil and gas in the eastern Mediterranean, where regional nations are racing for riches after the discovery of large energy deposits. "We strongly advise against going to the search area," the Turkish navy warned in its statement.

Last week, Ankara sent the seismic research vessel Oruc Reis, escorted by warships, to an area claimed by Greece, triggering the ire of Athens and the EU. On Friday, EU foreign ministers voiced solidarity with Greece and called for a de-escalation of the crisis. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Saturday that Ankara was ready for dialogue but insisted: "We will not back down in the face of sanctions and threats."

The defense ministry meanwhile published photographs of naval maneuvers in the eastern Mediterranean, showing warships escorting another seismic research vessel, the Barbaros Hayrettin Pasa. — AFP

Turkey vows to extend hunt for gas in east Med

ISTANBUL: Turkey said it plans to extend its search for gas in a disputed area of the eastern Mediterranean, despite EU calls to defuse a crisis that has seen tensions soar with other countries in the region. The navy said in a statement issued late Saturday that the drill ship Yavuz, which has been based off Cyprus for the past few months, will explore off the southwestern coast of the island from August 18 to September 15.

Turkey's actions in the eastern Mediterranean have put it at loggerheads with its uneasy NATO ally Greece and the rest of the EU, with France announcing last week it would bolster its presence in the region in support of Athens. The EU has repeatedly called on Ankara to halt its energy exploration off Cyprus, arguing that the

Career Opportunities

Water facilities department manager

- 5 to 7 years' experience
- Transferable residency

Sales manager

- 5 to 7 years' experience in electrical field
- Transferable residency

Sales officer

- 5 to 7 years' experience in elevator field
- Transferable residency

e-mail:

Career--job@outlook.com

Business

KAMCO Oil Market Monthly Report

Crude oil gradually inches towards \$45/b as OPEC raises production

Demand outlook improves as markets open after lockdowns

KUWAIT: Crude oil prices witnessed consistent modest gains over the last three months that pushed prices near the \$45/b mark by the second week of August-2020, from sub-\$20/b levels at the heart of the COVID-19 crisis. Gains came mainly on the back of improving demand outlook backed by an economic revival as markets open up post COVID-19 led lockdowns. The optimism more than offset fears of higher OPEC production after the producers decided to raise output in a meeting last month. Support also came from weaker USD making oil cheaper for oil importers. That said, lockdowns have also re-emerged in several countries as case counts have seen a spike.

A number of data points released this month pointed to positive trends globally that augurs well for oil demand and prices. European economic activity returned to growth last month with output growing for the first time since the lockdowns in March-2020. The composite PMI for the region reached 54.9, the highest activity in more than two years. Meanwhile, the manufacturing indicator the US showed the fastest growth since 2019 reaching 54.2 for July-2020. The US reported a fall in unemployment rates that reached 10.2 percent last month as compared to 11.1 percent during June-2020 after adding 1.8 million jobs. In addition, with stimulus packages being announced, the expectation of a faster economic revival is fast gaining pace that adds to the optimistic view of the oil market. On the other hand, global COVID-19 cases breached the 20 million mark recently with a number of countries reporting rising cases. The fears sent gold prices to a record high of over \$2,000/Oz that eased only after a rise in US bond yields. The successful launch of a Covid-19 vaccine in Russia also helped to calm down some concerns about the pandemic.

In terms of oil demand, Saudi Aramco has reported that oil requirements from its Asian customers have almost reached pre-COVID levels. In addition, the partial restart of commercial flights has also resulted in rising jet fuel demand as flight operations reach 50 percent of the last year's levels, despite the summer vacation season in the northern hemisphere. Demand for gasoline has also recovered to around 11 percent and 12 percent below last year's levels in the US and UK, respectively. Traffic data for China suggested normal levels as was the case with some capital cities in Europe and the Americas. Refinery utilization has also been positive across key locations but below historical levels as seen in the US where overall refinery utilization was 17 percentage points below last year's levels. That said, the optimistic view about the oil market from OPEC and IEA were toned down in the latest report. IEA lowered its demand forecast for 2020 by 140 tb/d led by rising covid-19 cases and weak aviation sector. 2021 demand forecast was also lowered by 240 tb/d also led by aviation weakness.

Oil prices

Spot crude prices reached a 5-month high level of around \$45/b following consistent modest gains since mid-June-2020. The average OPEC crude price for July-2020 reached the highest since Feb-2020 at \$43.42/b, a m-o-m increase of 17.2 percent. Brent crude prices averaged at \$43.3/b in July-2020 as compared to \$40.1/b in June-2020 while Kuwait crude grade averaged at \$43.25/b. According to the EIA's forecasts, Brent crude is expected to average at \$41.42/b in 2020, 2.3 percent more than its previous forecast, and at \$49.53/b in 2021.

According to reports, Occidental Petroleum reported a 95 percent decline in planned drillings with the driller having only one oil rig in the Permian Basin during 2H-2020. Some

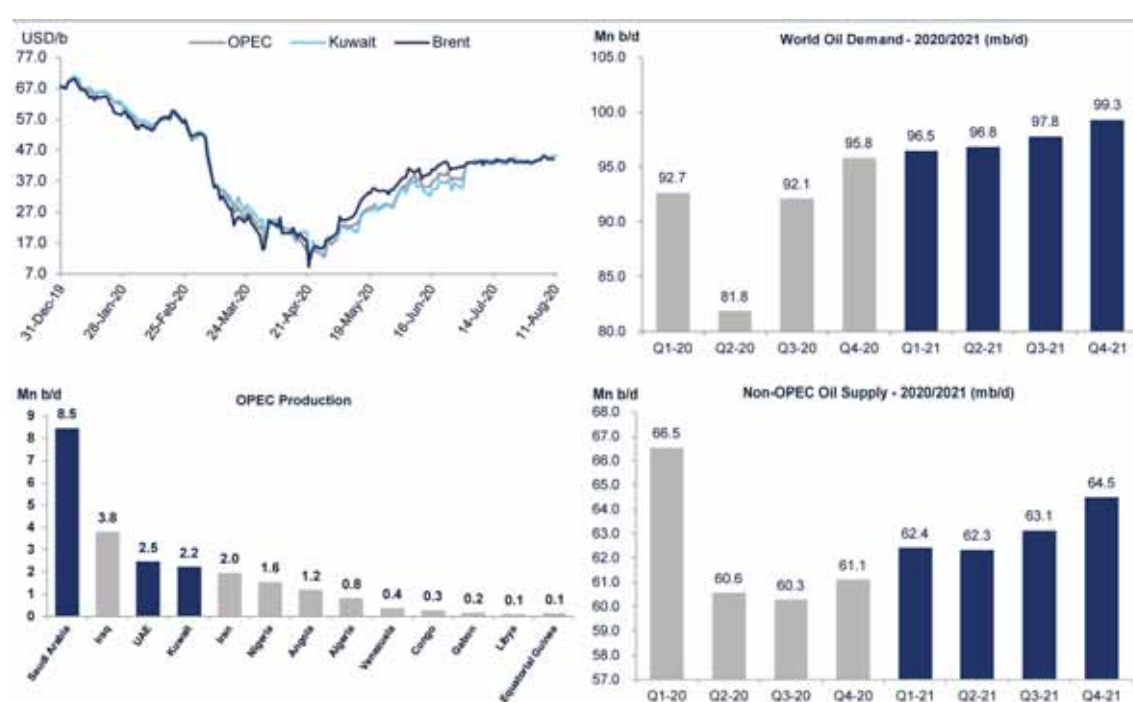
of the biggest companies in the region have forecasted a decline in production from the Permian basin, including Chevron and Exxon Mobil, and majority of the drillers don't expect to increase production from the current levels. According to reports, the two producers plan to operate around 14 rigs by the end of the year as compared to 70 rigs a year ago. The latest weekly report from Baker Hughes showed US oil rig count at 176, the lowest count since 2005. US rig count has shown growth only once in the last 21 weeks, according to historical weekly rig count data. A report from Rystad Energy showed that US rig count is not expected to materially recover by the end of the year with drilling permits at a 10-year low for a month in July-2020. The report stated that rig activity rebound is not likely to happen before 1H-2021 unless US crude oil prices reach \$50/b mark in the next few weeks.

On the supply side, the US EIA, in its latest Short Term Energy Outlook, further slashed US production forecast for 2020 from its previous estimate of 11.63 mb/d to 11.26 mb/d, while the estimate for 2021 was raised from 11.01 mb/d to 11.14 mb/d. The weekly inventory report from API showed higher-than-expected draw during the week ended 7-Aug-2020. The report showed crude inventories declining by 4.4 million barrels during the month. Gasoline inventories declined by 1.31 million barrels while distillate inventories were down by 2.95 million barrels.

World oil demand

Global oil demand estimate for 2020 was lowered by 0.1 mb/d to a decline of 9.1 mb/d in OPEC's latest monthly report. Oil demand is now expected to reach 90.63 mb/d in 2020 as compared to 99.69 mb/d in 2019. The downward revision reflected slower economic activity in certain non-OPEC countries during Q2-2020 that was partially offset by better-than-expected demand estimates for the OECD Europe region. Data for Q1-2020 saw an upward revision due to stronger demand in China, OECD Europe and Asia Pacific. For 2H-2020, demand was revised lower due to slow economic growth, mainly in non-OECD emerging economies. The expectations for the remainder of the year assumes a rebound in economic activities along with partial and localized lockdowns which remains a major uncertainty factor. Higher-than-expected demand in the OECD Europe region pushed demand estimates for the OECD region higher by around 0.1 mb/d in 2020. In terms of product category, the demand for heating fuels in Germany and Italy was better than expected, whereas in the OECD Asia Pacific region, demand for transportation fuels and petrochemical feedstock were better-than-expected in South Korea that led to an upward revision in 1H20. China's economic rebound has supported oil demand from the country, however, according to a WSJ report, the country continues to see a hoard of tankers lining up at its ports as it continues to grapple with overfilled storage facilities. Demand data from India continue to show a downward trend with July-2020 data showing a y-o-y decline for a fifth consecutive month by 11.7 percent.

For 2021, world oil demand growth forecast was kept unchanged at 7.0 mb/d with demand expected to reach 97.6 mb/d backed by demand growth in both OECD and non-OECD countries. Nevertheless, oil demand estimates for the OECD Americas region includes the impact of the pandemic that would be managed with stimulus measures that are expected to support a rebound in economic development. The estimates includes uncertainties across sectors and mainly for the transportation sector but petrochemical feedstocks are expected to provide strong sup-



Sources : OPEC, EIA, Bloomberg

port for demand growth in 2021, according to OPEC.

World oil supply

After declining during the previous two months, world liquids production witnessed a growth in July-2020 by 1.29 mb/d and averaged at 88.75 mb/d. The increase came primarily on the back of higher OPEC production whereas non-OPEC output grew by 0.31 mb/d m-o-m to reach 65.58 mb/d mainly led by higher output in Canada and Norway. The share of OPEC crude in total global production increased by 70 bps to 26.1 percent during July-2020.

Non-OPEC oil supply estimates for 2020 saw an upward revision of 235 tb/d in OPEC's latest monthly report reflecting better-than-expected recovery in 2H-2020. Oil supply is now expected to decline by 3.03 mb/d to average at 62.11 mb/d during the year. The upward revision primarily reflected higher supply mainly from Canada (+132 tb/d), US (+46 tb/d) and Mexico (+33 tb/d) owing to higher-than-anticipated production in 2H20 to now show a decline of 1.32 mb/d y-o-y for OECD. The revision in Canada's liquids production estimate reflected higher output in June-2020 led by a monthly increase in Alberta's bitumen output, whereas the revision for US output reflected higher-than-anticipated production in 2H-2020. Non-OPEC liquids production growth forecast was revised up for 2021 by 66 tb/d.

Production next year is expected to grow by 0.98 mb/d and average at 63.1 mb/d. The revision reflected a stronger production recovery in Canada (+120 tb/d) and Mexico (+10 tb/d) partially offset by a decline in production in China (-20 tb/d) and Australia (-30 tb/d).

OPEC oil production & spare capacity

OPEC crude oil production increased during July-2020 after declining by 5.9 mb/d and 2.02 mb/d during the previous two months. Average production during July-2020 stood at 23.4 mb/d, an increase of 0.9 mb/d as compared to previous month, according to data from Bloomberg. According to

OPEC secondary sources, production coming from the group stood at 23.2 mb/d. The monthly increase in

production came primarily on the back of higher output from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Nigeria that was partially offset by a decline in production reported by Angola and Gabon totaling 120 tb/d. The increase came before the implementation of the new OPEC+ curbs that are effective from 1-August-2020, indicating that the OPEC could see higher production in the coming month. Also, with the increase in production in July-2020, OPEC's spare capacity stood at 10.6 mb/d in July-2020 as compared to 11.4 mb/d at the end of June-2020.

Saudi Arabia increased its production by 0.92 mb/d and produced at an average rate of 8.45 mb/d. The Kingdom also increased OSPs for its fuel flows in September for its Asian and European customers, expecting higher demand in the near term backed by economic revival.

Production in Iraq remained flat during July-2020 at 3.79 mb/d but according to a recent report, the country has committed to cut its oil output by a further 400 tb/d in August-2020 and September-2020 to compensate for its overproduction in the past three months and comply with its share of cuts as per the OPEC+ accord. According to S&P Platts, the full implementation of the agreed upon compensatory cuts by Iraq, Nigeria, Angola and Kazakhstan would result in total cuts of 8.5 mb/d vs. the target of 7.7 m/d as per the last OPEC+ meeting.

Meanwhile, swing producers like Venezuela and Libya continue to struggle with production issues. According to reports, US sanctions have forced the last operating rig in Venezuela out of service resulting in no operating rigs currently in the country. On the other hand, oil production continued to decline in Libya due to export terminal blockades resulting in overfilled storage tanks at ports. A Bloomberg report showed that the country is expected to export 1.2 million barrels of crude in August-2020, a 40 percent drop from July-2020 exports.

Taiwan plans \$62bn purchase of F-16 jets from Lockheed Martin

WASHINGTON: Taiwan finalized the purchase of F-16 fighter jets from US aircraft manufacturer Lockheed Martin on Friday, a source confirmed to AFP, in a \$62 billion, 10-year deal sure to anger Beijing. Underscoring the sensitivity of the transaction, the Pentagon announced the contract without specifying the buyer, but a source familiar with the matter confirmed to AFP that it was Taiwan.

The self-ruled island, which China considers part of its territory, last year obtained the green light from Washington for the purchase of 66 new generation F-16s, which will allow it to modernize its defenses.

Taiwan already has a fleet of F-16s purchased in 1992. The new contract, which the Pentagon said is for an initial delivery order of 90 jets, provides for more modern aircraft with the newest technology and weaponry. Beijing insists that Taiwan-an island of 23 million people that has been self-ruled since 1949 — is part of its territory and has vowed to respond with force if Taipei ever formally moves towards declaring independence.

Washington, which switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, remains Taiwan's most powerful ally and its main supplier of arms. The Lockheed contract comes as Beijing flexes its political muscle in Hong Kong, imposing a sweeping security law on the international business hub, a move that has caused concern in Taiwan. It also comes two days after a visit to Taiwan by the highest-level US delegation since 1979, provoking fury from Beijing, with ties between the two superpowers severely strained over issues from trade to military and security issues, human rights and the coronavirus pandemic. —AFP

AUB announces winners in Hassad Characters campaign

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) concluded "Al-Hassad Characters" competition, which is the first of its kind in Kuwait, with utmost success and a very positive response throughout Kuwait.

On 12th of August, AUB held the fourth and final draw in "Al-Hassad Characters" competition. The prize of this draw totaling KD 1600 went to the winner Zahid Mohammed Ulde who correctly calculated the balance in the account of "Dalal" the fourth & last Character of Al-Hassad Characters' competition.

This competition gained an excellent amount of participation while being launched on AUB social media platforms and website. The competition was not limited to only the customers of Al-Hassad Account or AUB Clients as everyone in Kuwait had

Biden victory? Wall Street prices in Nov outcomes

NEW YORK: Investors are girding their portfolios for market moves ahead of the US presidential vote, as election season kicks into higher gear with the Democratic National Convention in the coming week. Though elections have loomed large on investors' radar this year, their influence on markets has taken a backseat to the coronavirus pandemic and unprecedented stimulus from US policymakers.

That may change in coming weeks, investors said. Some are beefing up cash positions or making bets on a flare-up in volatility as they eye a range of outcomes, including the possibility that the contest between President Donald Trump and presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden may yield a result that is not immediately certain or likely to be disputed. "There's plenty of reasons to believe that the election outcome is going to be drawn out," said Lamar Villere, a portfolio manager at Villere & Co. "That's going to show the cracks in a market that's been priced for perfection."

Villere's firm has raised its cash levels to as high as 20 percent of assets as a hedge against election-induced volatility in a stock market some say has

the chance to take part in the competition by accessing a microsite through a link available on AUB website (<https://www.ahliunited.com.kw/>).

On this occasion, Faten Al-Tameemi, Head of Marketing & Product Development at AUB expressed congratulations to the winner in the fourth draw and all other winners in the campaign. She affirmed that every participant saw himself/herself in one of these four characters "Aunt Ghanima", "Hamad", "Rami" and "Dalal", by solving the exciting puzzle, they had learned more about the features of Al-Hassad Islamic Account, which continues to achieve success as the first Islamic prize account known as the Best Prize Draws Account in Kuwait. Al-Tameemi added: This impressive accomplishment we witnessed through this campaign will be an incentive for us to launch more initiatives and competitions to continuously interact with our customers and society as a whole by providing them with the usual excellent services and products.

The idea of "Al-Hassad Characters" competition

become richly valued - the S&P 500 has rallied more than 50 percent from its lows of the year and trades at its highest forward price-to-earnings multiple in around two decades. Some investors believe the market's performance over the next few months could point to which candidate will triumph in November.

The incumbent president has tended to win the White House when the S&P 500 index has risen in the three months before the election, data from TD Securities going back to 1930 showed.

That may be bad news for Trump. While the index is up about 3 percent for this month, August kicks off what has historically been the weakest three-month stretch of the year for equities, where the average historic return stands at about 0 percent, according to data from BofA Global Research.

At the same time, no incumbent has been awarded a second term in the midst of a recession, TD securities wrote. Biden leads Trump by 8 percentage points, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released Wednesday after Biden had selected US Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate.

A Biden victory - as well as a possible Democratic sweep of the House and Senate - could threaten policies championed by Trump and generally favored by Wall Street, including lower corporate tax rates and fewer regulations, analysts said. "The full implications of a future Biden presidency could unsettle markets in the first instance," analysts at Oxford Economics said in a recent note.

A proposed corporate tax rate increase to 28

percent could shave about 5.5 percent off 2021 S&P 500 earnings, lower capital spending by

around \$50 billion and lead to a \$100 billion decline in stock buybacks, according to JPMorgan. At the same time, a Biden administration would likely move away from Trump's trade tariffs in Europe and China, helping international and emerging market stocks outperform US equities in the year ahead, said Stuart Katz, chief investment officer of Robertson Stephens Wealth Management. At least one of Biden's flagship policies - a \$2 trillion increase in infrastructure spending - could further weigh on the already weakened U.S. dollar, Oxford Economics said.

A Trump re-election, meanwhile, could allay concerns over higher taxes but spark renewed fears of US-China trade tensions, said Stephen Innes, Chief Global Market Strategist at AxiCorp.

A second term for Trump could also be positive for oil and gas companies which may benefit from a further relaxation of Obama-era regulations, Innes said. Investors should also prepare for the possibility that the president could cast doubt on the veracity of the vote or pull out of the race altogether, wrote Joseph Amato, CIO of equities at Neuberger Berman, said in a recent note.

Trump escalated fears of a contested election in a late July tweet, suggesting the election be delayed until people can "properly, securely and safely vote." "The further behind he is in the polls, the more provocative his decision-making could become," Amato wrote. —Reuters



Faten Al-Tameemi

Classifieds

Monday, August 17, 2020

Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 66819 - 66817
 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind with speed of 15 - 45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

BY NIGHT: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate north westerly wind with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 16/08/2020 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	35 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	27 °C			
ABDALY	45 °C	27 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	45 °C	31 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	42 °C	36 °C			
AHMADI	- °C	- °C			
NUWAISIB	46 °C	28 °C			
WAFRA	45 °C	27 °C			
SALMY	43 °C	27 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	08/17	Hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	46 °C	28 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Tuesday	08/18	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	47 °C	31 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h
Wednesday	08/19	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	47 °C	31 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Thursday	08/20	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	48 °C	32 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:51
Sunrise	05:16
Zuhr	11:52
Asr	15:28
Sunset	18:28
Isha	19:50

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	30 °C
MAX. RH	25 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	NW 53 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. U.P.O. 2020/08/16 02:16 UTC V1.00 T2.4 2-1/ع.خ.ق

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	25746401

URGENT

LCL containers for Personal Effects and Household Goods closing on August 22, 2020 for direct sailing to Canada, USA and UK.

For booking space and details, please contact:
 Nisha Kailash - 90079810
 Email: knisha@global-freight.net

Major Company Require

- Sales Engineer (doors & windows)
 - Sales Executive (doors & windows)
- (Experience: 5 years)

jobk8783@gmail.com
 99999240

Word Scramble

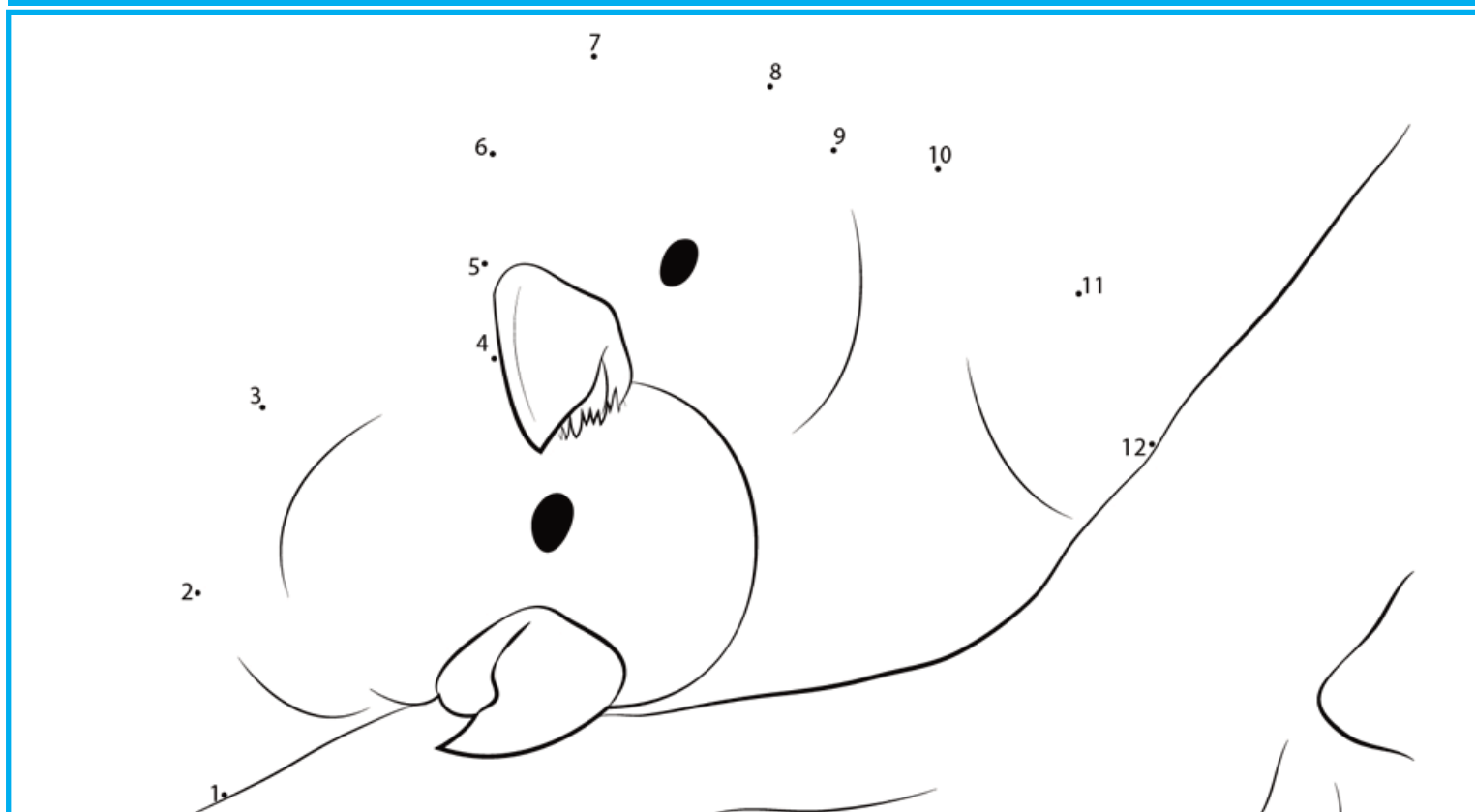
Fourth of July Word Scramble

Unscramble the words, then use the highlighted letters to write out the scrambled secret message.

ASTSET
 ENDEEEEPNICN
 DEARAP
 LUEB
 TENIUD
 TWEHI
 AEQTIULY
 ERIRFKWOS
 ARLANCDITEO
 FDREOME
 DER
 ILBEYTR

Highlighted letters: A, S, T, S, E, T, E, N, D, E, E, E, E, P, N, I, C, N, D, E, A, R, A, P, L, U, E, B, T, E, N, I, U, D, T, W, E, H, I, A, E, Q, T, I, U, L, Y, E, R, I, R, F, K, W, O, S, A, R, L, A, N, C, D, I, T, E, O, F, D, R, E, O, M, E, D, E, R, I, L, B, E, Y, T, R

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

<p>Aries (March 21-April 19) When was the last time you used a pen and paper, Aries? The keyboard has all but replaced these wonderful tools. In the same way that walking provides more than fresh air, the kinesthetic value of writing's rhythmic motion is far more soothing and healing than people realize. Moving your hand across the page can feel good. It unlocks places within that typing can't access. Try it.</p>	<p>Cancer (June 21-July 22) Welcome to another great day, Cancer! The energy from the planetary aspects is positive and encouraging, especially when it comes to communicating and interacting with others. Take advantage of this. Get together with friends and family for a pleasant visit, if possible. Consider inviting people over for games or dinner or do it virtually if need be. A potluck can be fun. You work hard all the time, so play gently today.</p>	<p>Libra (September 23-October 22) You might need to be alone today, Libra. You're probably surrounded by people most of the time. It can be unhealthy if you can't occasionally be alone with your thoughts and feelings. It's critical to take care of your emotional well-being, since you have a deeply sensitive nature. With all the continuous activity around you, make time to connect with this important part of you.</p>	<p>Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Serious thinking and communication are enhanced today, Capricorn. They're already strong qualities in you, and with this added boost, you'll need an outlet for expression. A journal is an excellent vehicle. Talking is another. If you have issues or worries, consider getting together with all involved and airing your thoughts. It's a perfect day to resolve problems.</p>
<p>Taurus (April 20-May 20) Today could bring a keen sense of empathy and understanding, Taurus. Verbal communication is likely to be enhanced. Take advantage of this by talking through any problems or issues with important people in your life. Go to visit or call to work things out. Most importantly, express your affection for those closest to you by telling them straight out what they mean to you.</p>	<p>Leo (July 23-August 22) You might be really interested in getting out and doing something with the special people in your life, Leo. You can thank the day's planetary aspects, which are conspiring to make this a perfect time to spend time together. Is there a place you're curious about and want to visit? Go today, if possible. Pack up the family and go for a fun day to check it out.</p>	<p>Scorpio (October 23-November 21) Today you may want to go your own way regardless of what anyone else wants, Scorpio. Your independence is important to you, but compromise might be needed in order to avoid conflict. Consider splitting your time between those close to you and yourself. Explain to your loved ones why you need alone time. If it's done with grace and humor, they'll undoubtedly support you.</p>	<p>Aquarius (January 20- February 18) You might feel cornered into doing something you don't want to do today, Aquarius. Perhaps you made a promise to handle a project. Maybe someone decides it's the day to call in an I.O.U. Either way, say so if you aren't comfortable following through. Today's energy enhances your ability to express yourself and be understood. Rescheduling may be far better than potential resentment.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21-June 20) Don't be surprised if your mind goes a thousand miles a second today, Gemini. Slowing down will be difficult, and you'll have to find a way to express what's in your head. The planetary aspects lend strength to communication. Perhaps talking out your ideas or writing to someone whose insight you value will help. Even doodling can give you a place to put your thoughts.</p>	<p>Virgo (August 23-September 22) Virgo, consider channeling your philosophical inspirations into creative writing, Virgo. It's probably something you'll enjoy. Even if you haven't expressed yourself in this way before, there's no better day than today to give it a whirl. Try your hand at poetry or fiction. If that seems too daunting, start a journal. This will give you a place to collect your thoughts and insights.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) Today may find you in the mood for an adventure or a visit if possible, Sagittarius. When was the last time you took a day for something like this? It's probably been too long. Not only will you enjoy it, but others will be thrilled to spend time with you, too. Whether you invite a friend along or go alone, seize the opportunity to visit people or see someplace new.</p>	<p>Pisces (February 19-March 20) You might find that someone close to you needs a hand today, Pisces. They could be too proud to ask for help. Don't let that stop you. If you see a situation in which you can help, do it. Don't wait for an invitation or request. Simply assess the situation and do what you can. Your efforts will be appreciated, and you'll feel good about making a difference.</p>

Lifestyle | Features

China restaurant apologizes for weighing customers

A restaurant in China has apologized for its controversial policy of asking diners to weigh themselves before entry in an overzealous response to a new national campaign against food waste. The beef restaurant in the central city of Changsha was heavily criticized on Chinese social media as soon as it unveiled the policy on Friday. Customers were asked to stand on scales and scan their data into an app that recommended food choices based on their weight

and the dishes' calorific value, according to a report by the state-run China News Service. President Xi Jinping this week urged the nation to stop wasting food, as the coronavirus pandemic and serious flooding last month have led to a rise in food prices.

In response, regional catering groups have urged customers to order one dish fewer than the number of diners at a table—an attempt to overturn the ingrained cultural habit of ordering extra food for group meals. Signs were

displayed in the beef restaurant reading "be thrifty and diligent, promote empty plates" and "operation empty plate"—referring to the nationwide campaign—according to photos published in local media. In a swift backlash, hashtags related to the incident have been viewed over 300 million times on the social platform Weibo. The restaurant said it was "deeply sorry" for its interpretation of the anti-waste campaign. "Our original intentions were to advocate stopping waste and ordering

food in a healthy way. We never forced customers to weigh themselves," it said in an apology posted online on Saturday morning. Chinese state media has also waged war on viral binge-eating videos, known as "mukbang", while livestreaming platforms have promised to shut down accounts promoting excess eating and food wastage. — AFP



PENTAGON TO SET UP NEW UNIT TO INVESTIGATE UFOS

The Pentagon said Friday it was setting up a new task force under the US Navy to investigate UFO sightings. With the creation of the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force (UAPTF), the Defense Department hopes "to improve its understanding of, and gain insight into, the nature and origins of UAPs," spokeswoman Susan Gough said in a statement. Rather than little green alien invaders, the US military is actually concerned about "unidentified aerial phenomena" connected with its terrestrial adversaries. Washington is particularly concerned about China's spying capabilities, using drones or other airborne means. "The mission of the task force is to detect, analyze and catalog UAPs that could potentially pose a threat to US national security," Gough said.

The Pentagon take "any incursions by unauthorized aircraft into our training ranges or designated airspace very seriously and examine each report," she said. "This includes examinations of incursions that are initially reported as UAP when the observer cannot immediately identify what he or she is observing." Deputy Defense Secretary David Norquist approved the establishment of the new task force on August 4. The US Senate intelligence committee in June said it wanted to regulate a Pentagon UFO program, confirming the existence of an informal working group which was revealed by the New York Times in 2017. In December 2017, the Pentagon acknowledged funding the secret multi-million-dollar program to investigate sightings of UFOs, although it said it had

ended in 2012. The announcement of a new task force comes after the Pentagon in April officially released three videos taken by US Navy pilots showing mid-air encounters with what appear to be UFOs.

The grainy black and white footage had previously been leaked and the Navy had acknowledged they were Navy videos. One of the videos was shot in November 2004 and the other two in January 2015. In one, the weapons-sensor operator appears to lose lock on a rapidly moving oblong object which seconds later suddenly accelerates away to the left and out of view. In another video tracking an object above the clouds, one pilot wonders if it is a drone. — AFP



The Sugar Loaf hill cable railway crosses the Guanabara bay during the reopening day of tourist attractions, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil amid the COVID-19 novel coronavirus pandemic. — AFP photos



Tourists visit the Sugar Loaf hill during the reopening day of tourist attractions, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Rio reopens Christ the Redeemer, other sites after virus closure

Major tourist sites in Rio de Janeiro, including the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking the Brazilian city, reopened to the public on Saturday after being closed for five months due to the coronavirus pandemic. "The reopening of the Christ (monument) symbolizes the reopening of Brazil to tourism," Environment Minister Ricardo Salles said at a ceremony at the base of the statue. Visitors will be required to wear masks and maintain social distancing, and will not be allowed to lie on the ground—as many do in attempting to get the best angle for photos at the feet of the huge Art Deco statue with its arms outstretched.

Located atop the 710-meter (2,300-foot) Corcovado hill in the center of Rio in Tijuca national park, the monument offers a spectacular panoramic view of the city. Since social-distancing measures forced its closure in March, Christ the Redeemer has continued to function as a religious sanctuary, offering public masses and holding vigils. Also reopening to the public on Saturday were the Pao de Acucar cable car, which offers its own panoramic view of the city, the AquaRio aquarium and the gigantic Rio Star, Latin America's largest Ferris wheel.

Brazil's National Confederation of Goods, Services and Tourism (CNC)



Tourists visit the Sugar Loaf hill during the reopening day of tourist attractions.

estimates that the country's tourism sector has lost 154 billion reales (\$28.4 billion) over the last five months, operating at only 14 percent of its capacity. The state of Rio de Janeiro, with 17 million inhabitants, has registered more than 14,500 deaths and nearly 190,000 cases of the novel coronavirus, according to official statistics. The capital itself, which in June began a gradual economic reopening, has seen 33 deaths and 1,365 new cases in just the last 24 hours.

'Main culprit'

Brazil, with 106,500 deaths and 3.2 million cases to date, is the second hardest-hit country in the world, after the US.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has dismissed the disease as a "little flu" and railed against lockdown measures imposed by state governors. He has been slammed by experts for his stance—but nearly half of Brazilians believe he is not responsible for the death toll, according to a survey published by the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper Saturday.

Forty-seven percent of those surveyed by the Datafolha Institute answered that Bolsonaro "is not to blame" for the high number of deaths, compared to 41 percent who consider him "one of the culprits (but not the main culprit)," and 11 percent who see him as the "main culprit". The survey also showed that Bolsonaro remains more popular than ever. With no certainty about when a vaccine might be available, Rio authorities have announced a new format for the year-end celebrations that traditionally bring millions of people to Copacabana beach for a huge fireworks display. This year, the authorities are working to organize a series of smaller celebrations around the city and are urging people to watch the events online. Rio's world-famous carnival, with its huge street parties, also risks being canceled by the pandemic. — AFP

New York museums, galleries to reopen from August 24

New York's museums, art galleries and other cultural institutions will be allowed to reopen starting August 24, state governor Andrew Cuomo said Friday after a five-month shutdown due to the coronavirus. However, there will be mandatory face masks, timed ticketing with staggered entry and just 25 percent occupancy, he tweeted. The reopening does not include performing arts venues, which will remain shut until the end of the year. New York's famed Metropolitan Museum of Art, which normally welcomes seven million visitors a year, said it would reopen on August 29. "After nearly six months, The Met's reopening will be a historic moment for the Museum and the City," Met president Daniel Weiss said in a statement.

"Throughout the recent months of uncertainty, isolation and grief, we have longed for the day when we can safely welcome everyone back to The Met, where all can find comfort, inspiration, and a sense of community." The Whitney Museum of American Art will reopen on September 3 but the Museum of Modern Art has yet to announce its reopening date. The Metropolitan Opera is scheduled to



New York's famed Metropolitan Museum of Art, which normally welcomes seven million visitors a year, said it would reopen on August 29. — AFP

resume on December 31, while Broadway theaters will remain closed until at least January. New York state was initially hard hit by the coronavirus and has recorded 25,232 deaths and 424,167 infections so far, Cuomo said in an update Friday. He highlighted the state's progress against the pandemic with under one percent of coronavirus tests proving positive over the past seven days. — AFP



Miss Piggy and Kermit

Miss Piggy wants to give Kermit a makeover

Miss Piggy wants Kermit the Frog to ditch the collar and finally start wearing clothes. Miss Piggy wants to give Kermit the Frog a makeover. The 'Muppets' star is not a fan of Kermit's style choice of just a collar and wants to get him to finally start wearing clothes. She told WWD: "I'd have him wear clothes. Except for that silly collar, he usually wears nothing. Oh sure, being naked works for frogs, but there are so many missed opportunities to dress and accessories him, as long as everything is wash-and-wear and waterproof."

And Miss Piggy is very proud of her own personal style, which she achieves with the help of a team of stylists. She said: "I astonish myself with the varied range and overwhelming bedazzlement of my wardrobe. But, I know that my fans and followers expect the best from moi, and boy do I bring it. I have a team of stylists, make-up artists and, of course, my personal assistant and majordomo, Uncle Deadly, who makes sure I never ever have the same look twice. It takes a lot of bookkeeping, but worth the effort."

Speaking about her signature style, she added: "I love wearing long gloves, preferably lavender and accented by a humongous precious gemstone ring. I also adore pearls. For moi, style is all about making a statement and the statement I like to make is, 'Hey, look at moi! Aren't I fabulous?' As for how many necklaces I have, you'll have to talk to Uncle Deadly, he's in charge of auditing moi's accessory inventory." — Bang Showbiz

Kylie Jenner blasted by designer Michael Costello

Kylie Jenner has been blasted by designer Michael Costello for only promoting big brands and not championing smaller labels. After Kylie shared a picture of herself in a new Balmain dress and tagged the brand's creative director Olivier Rousteing, Costello hit out at Kylie for not supporting up-and-coming designers. Kylie captioned her picture: "Thank you my love @olivier_rousteing for the most perfect bday dress," and Costello wrote: "Thank you Oliver [sic] for the perfect bday dress. And thank you to the no name designers who work tirelessly around the clock on custom looks who she won't tag, mention or @... Unless it's paid (sic)."

He added: "And thank you to the glam team who always gets tagged no matter what. (This post has nothing to do with me as Kylie only wears something from me once a year and I'm lucky if I get a decent pic to post. "No shade to any of her team who styles her and no shame to the glam team. Even though we know you cannot wait to unfollow me and drag me for filth! It's sad that designers work so so so so hard on these opportunities to dress these gorgeous popular women and they only tag the major high end designers like Oliver but forget about the other ones. "This has nothing to do with my brand but it definitely has a lot to do with the la designers why not tag at least one? Not all the time but maybe once in a while (sic)."— Bang Showbiz



Kylie Jenner wearing Balmain [Instagram]

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

As pandemic lingers, one DJ tests virtual 'tours'

Livestreamed concerts are now a common feature of the coronavirus age, with musicians vying for a spot on the overcrowded virtual stage even when they're doing it for free. This weekend, Haitian DJ Michael Brun hopes to find a way to make streams more profitable, with plans to test a model rarely used in music. The practice is known as "geofencing"-limiting virtual viewers to a specific geographic area. His strategy aims to draw an audience for a fee by catering to certain cities. Like many artists, the New York-based Brun-who's played top festivals and seen his remixes generate millions of streams-has delivered several free virtual shows from his apartment since the pandemic began.

His first three paid concerts since then will be geofenced to people within 100 miles of Los Angeles, Miami and Chicago, respectively, at five dollars per ticket. The 28-year-old will DJ from Manhattan's Le Poisson Rouge venue, with higher-quality production than the often-minimalist streams that have become the norm. Brun said he hoped making his shows location-specific can heighten the experience for fans, with each show limited to 500 viewers. "It's

not just a random live on a random day," he told AFP. "This feels like more of a moment." Brun said he was happy to do free shows from home-especially in the early days of the pandemic plagued by job loss, fear and uncertainty.

And though he made no money off of that work, he said that for many artists the makeshift streamed shows were a "necessity" to sustain their audiences. "Nobody really knows when live music is going to come back, so you don't want to just disappear," Brun said.

'Step forward'

Most artists make the vast majority of their income from touring, so the hiatus of in-person shows sent shockwaves through the industry. Brun hopes experimenting with ways to make digital streams more financially sustainable could alleviate the pressure. His set design and setlists will be specific to each show, which will air live via Zoom. Viewers will purchase access via the ticketing company Tixr. Beyond the entry fees to his digital shows, Brun is sponsored by the rum brand Bacardi, a type of partnership the electronic music producer said will likely be key to supporting musicians going forward. "The



In these file photos DJ Michael Brun poses for a picture during an interview with AFP in Brooklyn, New York.-AFP photos

brands that are associated with the entertainment industry benefit from artists," he said. "For them to be able to continue having someone to market to, you have to sustain the people creating the culture" that brands target.

Thomas Fiss, the VP of Marketing at AWAL-Brun's label and a producing partner on the show-said the last several months have been "trial by fire" as the industry crossed its fingers the pandemic would be short-lived. But it's now clear live performance won't be "back to normal" for quite some time, and Fiss said

the industry must rebuild creatively in the meantime. "Fans are craving connection again," he told AFP, saying "we've seen a slight dip in the wider live streams." Fiss said geofencing is "by no means a perfect solution." "But it's a genuine step forward," he said, which could hopefully "help other artists create their own model in the same regard." Brun thinks the model could prove useful even in a post-pandemic world, especially for reaching audiences outside the usual tour destinations-his native Haiti, for example.

And though digital shows can't replace actual in-person concerts, the producer said he does enjoy elements of streamed performances. "You're actually interacting with people on a scale that you would never be able to interact with them at a real show," he said. "People sending messages can feel really intimate." "It feels like you're in a community." — AFP

Slow motion recovery: Cautious Hollywood edges back to work

When veteran Hollywood actor Gregg Daniel was offered an audition for a new movie in Los Angeles, he nearly didn't show up-the pandemic was well under way, and "no one was shooting." "I almost hesitated even going to the audition," said Daniel. "I'm African-American, I'm over 50 and disproportionately black people were dying of COVID-19... but the script was so good, and I'm an actor at heart." Fast-forward to today, and Daniel has completed boxing drama "7th & Union," filmed in the streets of the eerily quiet California entertainment capital.



Actor Gregg Daniel attends the premiere of HBO's "True Blood" season seven at the Chinese theatre in Hollywood. — AFP

Cautious optimism

Permits to film in Los Angeles remain stalled at one-third of usual numbers, according to nonprofit FilmLA-and the vast majority of those are for making advertisements and reality television. The main hold-up for movie studios is talks between employers and unions to agree on a new set of standard, industry-wide safety protocols. "We've been working on it for many, many weeks... there are a lot of complicated issues," said Duncan Crabtree-Ireland, chief operating officer of actors guild SAG-AFTRA, which has joined forces with Hollywood's directors, technicians and Teamsters unions.

Among discussions are daily testing for actors performing "the more dangerous work from a COVID perspective," such as intimate sex or fight scenes. Once negotiations are completed-a deal

is expected by next month-the major problem of coronavirus insurance persists. The cost of restarting a production only to shut down again due to an outbreak is so high that insurers are excluding COVID-related claims from new policies. "What we're hearing... is that there's going to need to be governmental involvement," said Crabtree-Ireland, pointing to similar measures in California to incentivize earthquake coverage. "There are discussions going on at both federal and state levels about how that might happen."

Creative locations

For now, the trickle of film productions going ahead need to be approved by unions on a case-by-case basis-leading to wrangling over issues such as the frequency and type of COVID testing, especially on low-budget shoots. A "cottage industry of boutique testing companies" have sprung up to service film sets that can't afford in-house testing, said Crabtree-Ireland.

Meanwhile producers have learned to be creative about filming locations, with busy public areas not feasible, said FilmLA president Paul Audley. "Writers are really clever-so we know some of the shows may be writing for areas that are more isolated, like an industrial area," he told AFP. Another, far riskier approach has sprung up-filming without permission at all.

"Right now, the number one complaint that we've had on the books is for illegal filming," said Audley, adding that coronavirus-wary Los Angeles residents are more vigilant than ever in reporting guerrilla shoots. Still, despite the growth of other filming hubs such as the state of Georgia-where mogul Tyler Perry has set up a self-contained, 330-acre (133-hectare) production "campus"-many filmmakers appear determined to remain in Los Angeles. The silver screen's spiritual home boasts an abundance of support services, including six companies dedicated to movie-set recycling and garbage disposal alone, said Audley. "Our members prefer to work close to home, and I think especially in times of uncertainty like this they feel more comfortable," Crabtree-Ireland said. "In terms of what the prospects for Los Angeles are, I wouldn't suggest anyone should count LA out." — AFP



An empty street between sets at the Warner Bros lot in Los Angeles, where production has largely halted during the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

Liverpool's Cavern Club could close permanently

Liverpool's historic Cavern Club - where The Beatles made almost 300 appearances between 1961 and 1963 - could close permanently, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Liverpool's historic Cavern Club could close permanently, due to Covid-19. The iconic venue - where The Beatles made almost 300 appearances between 1961 and 1963 - was recently forced to lay off 20 of its employees, with more layoffs expected, after the pandemic led to business closures worldwide and Mayor Joe Anderson has warned that if its bid to the Government's Cultural

Recovery Fund fails, the club will close indefinitely. He told The Liverpool Echo: "The fact that the world-famous Cavern could close forever because of Covid-19 should bring home to the Government how much our hugely treasured music industry is in peril. This virus has caused unimaginable pain



and grief but it's proving to be an existential threat to our cultural scene. The prospect of losing a national jewel like the Cavern is a horrible scenario for all concerned, be they Beatles fans, music lovers and above all those whose livelihoods depend on it."

Bill Heckle, one of the club's directors, added: "We made a decision a few years ago to keep as much money in the bank as possible for a rainy day, not knowing it was going to be a thunderstorm. "It's a very vibrant part of the Liverpool economy, which is why we're reaching out at the end of August and reopening the Cavern for a week, virtually and bands from all around the world have sent messages and recorded sets. We know we're not going to make money, it's about really reminding people we're here and the sole aim is to get out the other side, I'm sure we will, but it is about survival." — Bang Showbiz

The Beatles

Miel Gibson: Chilean honey vendor in sticky situation with Braveheart star

Apun on the Spanish word for "honey" and the name of one of the world's most famous actors has landed a small scale Chilean vendor in a sticky situation. Yohanna Agurto used an image of Mel Gibson from the 1995 movie "Braveheart" to promote her honey, Miel Gibson, along with the slogan "only for the brave." This week she received a letter purportedly from the actor's lawyers saying her use of his name and likeness violated Gibson's rights, and threatening legal action if she did not withdraw the product immediately. The letter was signed by an assistant to Leigh Brecheen, a California-based lawyer. Neither a spokesman for Brecheen's law firm in Beverly Hills, nor Gibson's spokesman, immediately responded to requests for comment.



Agurto told Reuters from her home in the capital Santiago she was so frightened on receiving the letter on Wednesday that she deleted her work email account. She had only started repacking and selling the southern Chilean product in June after the spread of the coronavirus caused widespread unemployment, she said, adding she only earned enough to support her family. "This arose out of necessity. I was left without work due to the pandemic," Agurto said. After she shared the letter with Chilean media, she said, her following on social media grew "exponentially." On Thursday, she addressed an appeal directly to the actor on Twitter: "Dear #MelGibson, would you let us use your image on our honey please? Mis kids and me we would be infinitely grateful. Our honey is only for brave hearts." — Reuters



Virus spike pushes Sarajevo Film Festival online

The Sarajevo Film Festival was launched entirely online on Friday after a spike in coronavirus cases forced organizers to cancel plans to stage Europe's first in-person movie fair since the outbreak of the pandemic. Just ten days ago a huge projection screen was set up at a spacious open-air cinema and chairs placed according to physical distance rules. Organizers had said face masks and disinfectant at cinema entrances would be a must. But a sudden rise in coronavirus cases in the Bosnian capital since early July following relaxation of a strict lockdown raised concerns about the safety of audiences, staff and guests. "Even though we were looking forward to the festival with the audience, we decided to kick off without it, taking no risk," said festival director Mirsad Purivatra. "I think this was the only rational decision," Purivatra told Reuters.

The Sarajevo film festival was founded by a group of enthusiasts in 1995 as an act of defiance against a 43-month siege of the capital by Bosnian Serb forces. It has grown to become the largest film competition and industry platform in a region stretching from Vienna to Istanbul. The number of coronavirus cases and deaths in Bosnia has more than doubled over the past month, to 15,535 and 469 respectively on Friday. But organizers were prepared for the worst and arranged an online platform - ondemand.sff.ba - to make more than 180 films available to film-lovers in Bosnia, other Balkan countries and elsewhere in Europe. The film "Focus, Grandma" by Bosnian film-maker Pjer Zalica will open the festival, at which 49 movies will compete in four different categories for the Heart of Sarajevo awards. —Reuters

MURPH DOESN'T ASK WOMBATS BANDMATES FOR ADVICE ON SOLO TRACKS

Matthew 'Murph' Murphy doesn't ask his Wombats bandmates to give him their opinion on his solo music, but insists they are very encouraging about his side project Love Fame Tragedy. Matthew 'Murph' Murphy doesn't ask his Wombats bandmates to give him their opinion on his solo music. The indie rock group's frontman released his side project Love Fame Tragedy's debut album, "Wherever I Go, I Want To Leave," in June, and he didn't ask Tord Overland Knudsen and Dan Haggis to give him their feedback on the songs, though they have loved what he's done so far. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, Murph said when asked if he sends them his music for seal of approval: "No, not really. They've sent the odd encouraging text and stuff, but I am not really worried about anyone's opinions really, I just get on with it."

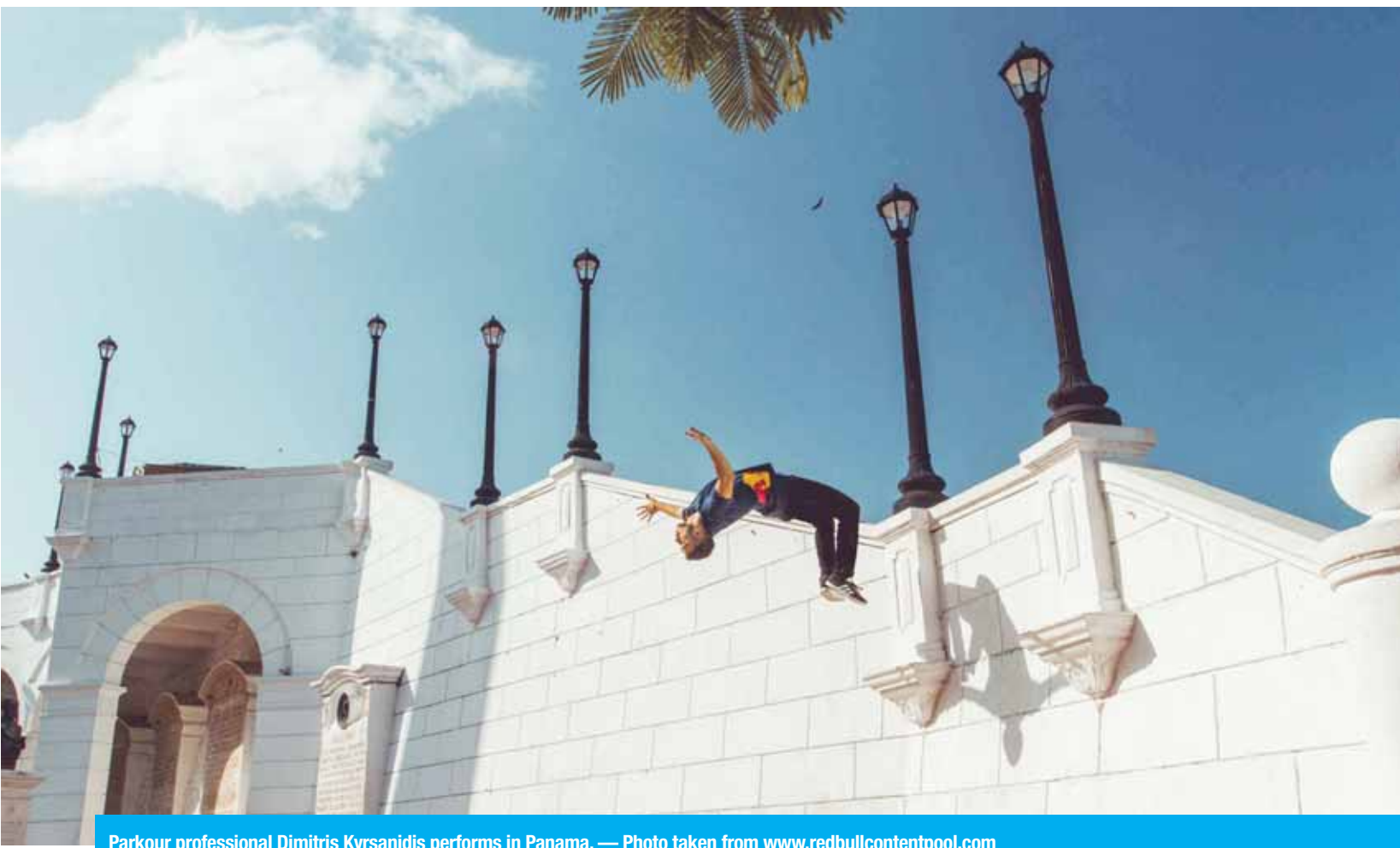
Murph doesn't wait around for inspiration and has been busy penning new music during the coronavirus pandemic lockdown, and he is confident he has at least seven standout tunes. The Los Angeles-based musician said: "I don't wait for creativity to appear, I am not a massive believer in inspiration. I just get on with it I suppose. "I have been working a lot. I've put a lot of songs together but probably only around seven that actually really good. Yeah, I've been busy." — Bang Showbiz



Matthew 'Murph' Murphy

Sports

Photo of the day



Parkour professional Dimitris Kyrsanidis performs in Panama. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Red Bull Bragantino seeking to become Brazilian Leipzig

SAO PAULO: Freshly infused with cash from energy drink giant Red Bull, Brazilian club Bragantino are seeking to follow in the footsteps of the beverage brand's most famous franchise, Champions League semi-finalists Leipzig. Bragantino returned to the Brazilian first division this season after a 22-year absence, thanks largely to an \$11.5-million investment from the Austrian company, whose football stable now includes the New York Red Bulls and Salzburg, as well as Leipzig. Based in Braganca Paulista, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) outside of Sao Paulo, Bragantino had just clawed their way back into the Brazilian second division when they announced a deal with Red Bull in March last year.

The deal merged the club with Red Bull Brasil, a franchise founded by the company in 2007 that was playing in a state-level league in Sao Paulo. Now known as Red Bull Bragantino, the club have been on a roll ever since. "We were looking for a club with a good story, devoted fans and a strong connection with their home city. We were lucky to find all that and more in Bragantino," said the club's executive director, Thiago Scuro.

Flush with Red Bull cash, Bragantino built a team that easily won the second division. The changes do not stop there. They are renovating their stadium and overhauling the club's internal machinery. "Red Bull took on Bragantino with the intention of raising the club's level across the board," Scuro told AFP. "We've had good results on the pitch. At the same time, we're also working hard on management, on improving the club's infrastructure." — AFP

Cardinals sweep DH vs White Sox in return

Athletics overpower Giants as Dodgers beat Angels

CHICAGO: Playing for the first time since July 29 because of a COVID-19 outbreak that ravaged the roster, the St Louis Cardinals swept the host Chicago White Sox in a doubleheader on Saturday. Taking the field with 10 players on the COVID-19 list, including catcher Yadier Molina and shortstop Paul DeJong, the Cardinals got a five-inning start from Adam Wainwright (2-0), who earned his 164th victory to move past Bob Forsch for third in franchise history, in beating the White Sox 5-1 in the opener.

In the second game, Tyler O'Neill broke a 3-3 tie in the fifth inning, and St. Louis won 6-3 to complete the sweep. Genesis Cabrera (1-0), the second of five Cardinals pitchers in the seven-inning game, got the victory as both teams treated it as a bullpen game. Dexter Fowler drove home two runs and scored another to pace the Cardinals' offense in the first game, while Wainwright gave up one run on two hits with three walks and three strikeouts to get the win. Paul Goldschmidt had two hits, two runs, two RBIs and a home run in the second game. Rookie Luis Robert and Eloy Jimenez each went deep for the White Sox in the second game.

ATHLETICS 7, GIANTS 6

Behind by two runs and down to its last strike, Oakland got a three-run, go-ahead home run from Mark Canha to cap a four-run ninth inning that lifted the American League West leader to a second straight improbable win at San Francisco. After blowing a five-run lead on a solo homer by Matt Olson and a grand slam by Stephen Piscotty in what turned into a 10-inning defeat in the series opener, Giants closer Trevor Gott (1-1) once again was tagged for a pair of homers in the ninth. The first was a leadoff shot by Sean Murphy that got Oakland within 6-4. A's closer Liam Hendriks worked around a two-out walk in the last of the ninth for his seventh save. T.J. McFarlane (2-0), who got the final out of the eighth inning, was credited with the win.

DODGERS 6, ANGELS 5 (10 INNINGS)

Kenley Jansen struck out Mike Trout on three pitches with the potential tying run on second base in the bottom of the 10th inning to give the Dodgers a victory over the Angels in Anaheim, Calif. Max Muncy's sacrifice fly scored designated runner Chris Taylor from third base in the top of the 10th, putting the Dodgers up and setting the stage for Jansen. Taylor, who began the inning at second base, stole third with Muncy at the plate, then scored on Muncy's fly ball off Angels reliever Keynan Middleton (0-1). Mookie Betts had two hits, including a home run, while Cody Bellinger and A.J. Pollock also had two hits apiece for the Dodgers.

YANKEES 11, RED SOX 5

Clint Frazier hit a three-run homer and tied a career high with five RBIs as New York continued its dominance over slumping Boston and remained unbeaten in games played at Yankee Stadium.

Frazier hit a three-run drive with one out in the sixth off Red Sox starter Nathan Eovaldi (1-2) to give the Yankees a 7-3 lead. He then added a two-run single in the seventh off Matt Barnes as the Yankees scored three more runs in the frame. Gio Urshela hit a two-run home run in the first open scoring, and Gary Sanchez hit a two-run homer in the fourth to give New York a 4-3 lead. It was Sanchez's third straight game with a homer.

BREWERS 6, CUBS 5 (10 INNINGS)

Avisail Garcia and Luis Urias drove in one run apiece in the top of the 10th inning, and Milwaukee held on to beat Chicago, handing the hosts consecutive losses for the first time this season. Garcia's opposite-field hit down the right field line drove in Christian Yelich, who started the inning as the Brewers' designated runner on second base. Urias followed with an infield single to drive in Garcia four batters later. The Cubs' Ian Happ delivered an RBI groundout in the bottom of the frame to cut the deficit to one run. Brewers reliever David Phelps (2-1) earned the win after pitching a scoreless inning of relief. Phelps gave way to fellow reliever Alex Claudio, who collected his first save after allowing one unearned run in the 10th. Cubs reliever Jeremy Jeffress (1-1) drew the loss after giving up two runs (one earned) in two innings of relief.

TWINS 4, ROYALS 2 (GAME 1)

Nelson Cruz homered and doubled, and Jorge Polanco and Luis Arraez each had two hits to lead Minnesota past Kansas City in the seven-inning first game of a doubleheader in Minneapolis. Cruz had two RBIs and two runs scored. Jake Odorizzi, making his second start after beginning the season on the 10-day injured list with an intercostal strain, retired the first 11 batters he faced, including six by strikeout, and pitched four shutout innings before allowing a double to Ryan McBroom and a two-run homer to Maikel Franco to open the fifth. Odorizzi then gave way to Tyler Duffey (1-0), who retired all three batters he faced to pick up the victory. Taylor Rogers pitched around a pair of singles in the seventh to earn his fifth save.

ROYALS 4, TWINS 2 (GAME 2)

Whit Merrifield went 3-for-4 with a home run, a double and four RBIs, and Danny Duffy picked up his first victory of the season as Kansas City defeated Minnesota to earn a split of their doubleheader. Duffy (1-2) allowed two hits and two runs though only one was earned, a fourth-inning homer by Nelson Cruz over five innings. He walked one and struck out eight. Trevor Rosenthal garnered his fifth save in five chances. The Royals defeated the Twins for the fourth time in five games this season. Jose Berrios (1-3) lost to the Royals for the second time in seven days, allowing four runs on five hits in four innings. He walked a season-high four batters and struck out seven.

to reveal the extent of his injury. "Unfortunately, the X-rays showed a fractured pelvis and a right lung contusion, which will keep him on the sidelines for the upcoming period.

"Our rider will remain in the hospital overnight under observation, before flying on Sunday to Belgium." Evenepoel had won four stage race this season in the Tour de San Juan, Tour of the Algarve, Tour de Burgos and the Tour of Poland last weekend. And he had been favorite to lift his first 'Monument' race on Saturday. Fuglsang, 35, crossed the line alone after the 231km race from Bergamo to Como, finishing 31 seconds ahead of New Zealand's George Bennett, riding for Jumbo-Visma.

The Dane's Russian Astana teammate Aleksandr Vlasov was third at 51sec. "George Bennett told me while we were riding that Remco had fallen," said Fuglsang. "I hope he's okay, it's not the way you want the race to finish for anyone. "In this difficult season with races being rescheduled, I'm delighted to have already won something big." Photographs showed Evenepoel conscious but grimacing in pain before being evacuated by ambulance, some 20 min-



CHICAGO: Dylan Carlson #3 of the St Louis Cardinals slides into second base with a double in the 5th inning ahead of the tag attempt by Tim Anderson #7 of the Chicago White Sox at Guaranteed Rate Field on August 15, 2020. — AFP

INDIANS 3, TIGERS 1

Shane Bieber struck out 11 in seven innings, Jose Ramirez smacked a two-run double and visiting Cleveland extended its franchise-record winning streak against Detroit to 19 games. The streak is the longest by the Indians against any opponent. It's also the longest losing streak in Tigers franchise history to a single opponent. Bieber (4-0) scattered three hits and walked one. Brad Hand gave up a run and had the potential tying runs in scoring position in the ninth, but collected his fifth save. Tigers starter Spencer Turnbull (2-1) gave up three runs on six hits in 4 2/3 innings.

DIAMONDBACKS 7, PADRES 6

Catcher Carson Kelly tagged out pinch runner Jorge Mateo at the plate on a close play for the final out in the top of the ninth inning, saving Arizona's win over San Diego in Phoenix. The Diamondbacks scored four runs in the sixth and two more in the seventh to lead 7-1, but they needed a big defensive play after closer Archie Bradley gave up three runs in the ninth. Nick Ahmed drove in three, Kelly had three hits and drove in two runs, and David Peralta tacked on three hits in Arizona's third straight victory, their longest winning streak of the season. Eric Hosmer hit a two-run home run and Fernando Tatis Jr. hit his ninth of the season for the Padres, who have lost a season-high four straight.

NIBALI MISSES OUT

Meanwhile, German Maximilian Schachmann suffered a fractured collarbone after being struck by a car a few kilometers from the finish line on Saturday but the Bora-Hansgrohe rider managed to get back in the saddle to finish seventh. The 'Race of the Falling Leaves' which is normally held in October, took place in the heat of August because of the rescheduled calendar.

Starting in Bergamo, the epicentre of the coro-

ASTROS 2, MARINERS 1

Cristian Javier worked six scoreless innings, and Yuli Gurriel blasted his fifth home run as Houston continued its dominance of Seattle. Javier (2-1) allowed one hit, a one-out single to Austin Nola in the fifth inning, and recorded five strikeouts over a career-high 88 pitches. The right-hander posted only 48 strikes yet managed to keep the Mariners at bay, as the Astros improved to 23-2 against Seattle since the start of last season. Gurriel drilled a two-out solo homer to straightaway center field in the fourth inning that extended the Houston lead to 2-0. His 420-foot blast came against Mariners left-hander Nick Margevicius (0-1), who pitched effectively in his second start of the season for Seattle. Margevicius allowed two runs on four hits and did not issue a walk over six innings.

Braves 2, Marlins 1

Adam Duvall hit a tie-breaking solo homer in the top of the ninth inning, leading Atlanta past host Miami to snap a four-game losing streak. Duvall appeared to be fooled on an 0-1 slider from reliever Brandon Kintzler (1-1), but he managed to reach for and pull the 83 mph pitch 387 feet down the left field line. The ball struck off the foul pole for Duvall's third homer of the season. Atlanta's only other run came from Marcell Ozuna's seventh-inning solo homer. — Reuters

Evenepoel suffers 'multiple injuries'

COMO: Belgian cyclist Remco Evenepoel has suffered multiple injuries after plunging several meters down into a ravine in a dramatic crash on the Tour of Lombardy Saturday, the one-day classic won by Denmark's Jakob Fuglsang. Race favorite Evenepoel lost control on the steep descent from the Colma di Sormano that leads to the race finish at Lake Como, hitting a bridge wall and plunging six metres into a ravine. The 20-year-old was taken to the Sant'Anna hospital in Como where he remains under observation for 24 hours, but early tests showed a fractured pelvis, right lung contusion, cuts and bruising.

Deceuninck-QuickStep team manager Patrick Lefevere conceded the rider's promising season was now "practically over". "Remco suffered multiple injuries," the team said. "(He) was conscious at all times as he underwent a series of examinations

navirus pandemic in Italy, with over 16,000 deaths in the Lombardy region, a minute's silence was observed before the race started. After Evenepoel's fall, six riders battled for victory. But Fuglsang attacked on the final climb towards San Fermo della Battaglia denying Bennett a second win this week after the Gran Piemonte. "I knew I had a good chance today," said Fuglsang after his second 'Monument' win after the Liege-Bastogne-Liege last year. "It's never easy to win and you need to be lucky to be in the right place at the right time."

Vlasov added: "With Jakob we did great teamwork, we raced united and always in front and in the end, it paid off for us. "Last year I finished third from last, this year third, on the podium, a big improvement!" Bennett added: "I can't help but feel disappointed. I really thought I could win today." Defending champion Bauke Mollema of the Netherlands finished fourth. Nibali, winner in 2015 and 2017, finished sixth with reigning Giro d'Italia winner Richard Carapaz of Ecuador 13th at 8min 15sec. — AFP

Sports

Hamilton on pole; Mercedes sweep Spanish GP front row

Bottas seals Mercedes front-row lockout

BARCELONA: Formula One championship leader Lewis Hamilton clinched a record-extending 92nd career pole position in a Mercedes front-row lockout with team mate Valtteri Bottas at the Spanish Grand Prix on Saturday. Six-times world champion Hamilton has won for the past three years at the Circuit de Catalunya outside Barcelona and he was quickest in all three phases of qualifying on another hot afternoon.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen, Hamilton's closest challenger in the standings, will start in third place with Mexican Sergio Perez lining up fourth for Racing Point on his return after missing two races due to COVID-19. "Physically it's tough," Hamilton, who will be making his 150th career front-row start, said of the heat. "It's the fastest we've ever been round here so the forces through your body are pretty intense."

"The first lap was decent I guess, which did the job thankfully," added the Briton, who was 0.059 seconds quicker than Bottas on the soft tyres. His second flying lap was slower than the first time of one minute 15.584 seconds. "I was here with the

guys until 10pm last night just looking over all the details-how can we improve, what are the areas, particularly for the race, because these Red Bulls are super fast," added Hamilton. The pole was his fourth of the season.

Bottas, who was on pole last year when the race was held in May, recognised the start would be his best chance of beating a team mate who has won three of five races so far this season. "I knew it was going to be close with Lewis, as always," said the Finn. "Of course it's annoying but he did a good job. And as a team, first row." Verstappen, 30 points behind Hamilton after winning at Silverstone last Sunday, had consistently been the closest challenger to the Mercedes pair in practice. "It seems like I have a subscription on P3 (third)," said the 22-year-old Dutch driver, who took the first win of his F1 career at the circuit on his Red Bull debut in 2016.

Canadian Lance Stroll will start fifth with Verstappen's Thai team mate Alexander Albon sixth and the McLaren pair of Carlos Sainz and Lando Norris seventh and eighth. Ferrari's Charles

Leclerc qualified ninth on another tough afternoon for team mate Sebastian Vettel, who failed to make the top-10 shootout for the second race in a row and will start 11th. AlphaTauri's Pierre Gasly completed the top 10. Further back, Alfa Romeo's Kimi Raikkonen had his best qualifying so far this year with 14th.

Vinales claims pole

In another development, Yamaha's Maverick Vinales took pole position for the Austrian Grand Prix, edging out Pramac Ducati's Jack Miller in a closely contested qualifying session in Spielberg on Saturday. Vinales did not set the fastest time in any of the four sectors at the Red Bull Ring but his time of 1 minute and 23.450 seconds was enough for his first pole since the Australian Grand Prix last year.

The Spaniard, who is second in the standings after three races, was 0.068 seconds faster than Miller while world championship leader Fabio Quartararo of Petronas Yamaha completes the front row. "I'm really happy because my objective was to be in the front row but suddenly I felt an

incredible feeling with the bike," said Vinales, who struggled for grip in last weekend's Czech Grand Prix as well as in practice on Friday.

"The team has done a really good job. We need to try to understand, for tomorrow's race, which is going to be the best tyre. The bike is working fantastic, a lot of difference from Brno." Andrea Dovizioso, who made headlines before the qualifying session when his manager confirmed he would not be renewing his deal with Ducati next year, will start fourth on the grid while KTM Factory Racing's Pol Espargaro was fifth fastest.

Dovizioso looked set for pole but Vinales bettered his time on his final lap before the Italian was demoted to the second row when Miller and Quartararo also set faster times as the top 11 riders finished within half a second of each other. While Vinales was able to get his Yamaha on pole, team mate Valentino Rossi only squeezed through to the second qualifying session after Ducati's Danilo Petrucci furiously accused Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro of blocking his racing line, which Espargaro disputed on Twitter.— Agencies

Bruins clip Hurricanes without Tuukka Rask

TORONTO: Jaroslav Halak made 29 saves in a surprise appearance, while Charlie Coyle and Brad Marchand each had a goal and an assist as the Boston Bruins overcame a roster change to win 3-1 in Game 3 against the Carolina Hurricanes on Saturday afternoon in Toronto. Sean Kuraly supplied Boston's other goal as the Bruins took a 2-1 series lead. David Krejci posted two assists. Game 4 in the best-of-seven series is Monday night. Bruins goalie Tuukka Rask opted out of the rest of the playoffs because of personal reasons, in an announcement that came about 90 minutes prior to the start of the game. Halak had played in only the opener of the first five games for Boston since the season resumed earlier this month. Nino Niederreiter scored Carolina's only goal on Halak's error playing the puck. Goalie Petr Mrazek, back in action after sitting out Game 2, made 36 stops for the Hurricanes.

COYOTES 4, AVALANCHE 2

A dazzling Darcy Kuemper made 49 saves to lead Arizona past Colorado, avoiding a 3-0 hole and finding new life in the playoff series, which resumes with Game 4 on Monday. Kuemper held strong despite an Avalanche onslaught for much of the afternoon. He recorded 20 saves in the first period alone, which set a franchise record for most saves in a postseason period. The Coyotes mustered just 23 shots total. With 80 seconds left in the game and the Coyotes leading 2-1, Arizona's Taylor Hall scored an empty-net goal, only to see Colorado's Mikko Rantanen score with 56.8 seconds remaining to set up a frantic finish. The Coyotes' Lawson Crouse sealed the deal with another empty-net goal with five seconds left in the game.

LIGHTNING 3, BLUE JACKETS 2

Brayden Point scored the go-ahead goal in a



TORONTO: Dougie Hamilton #19 of the Carolina Hurricanes and David Krejci #46 of the Boston Bruins battle for the puck during the third period in Game Three of the Eastern Conference First Round during the 2020 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs Saturday. — AFP

decisive second period, and Tampa Bay killed off all four power plays, including a lengthy five-on-three, to defeat Columbus. The victory gives the second-seeded Lightning a 2-1 lead over the No. 7 Blue Jackets in the best-of-seven series in the first round of the Eastern Conference. Game 4 is scheduled for Monday afternoon. Tampa Bay's Alex Killorn and Victor Hedman also scored, and goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 15 shots-facing just seven over the final two periods. Riley Nash and Eric Robinson netted goals. Nash added a helper and netminder Joonas Korpisalo made 31 saves for the Blue Jackets.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2, BLACKHAWKS 1

Marc-Andre Fleury made 26 saves in his first start of the Western Conference first round, leading Vegas past Chicago and into a commanding 3-0 lead in the series. William Karlsson scored short-handed, and Patrick Brown scored in his first game of the series for the top-seeded Golden Knights, who can sweep the best-of-seven series with another win in Game Saturday afternoon. Olli Maatta scored, and Corey Crawford made 24 saves for the 12th-seeded Blackhawks. — Reuters

'Captain Cool' Dhoni: From ticket collector to India cricket icon

NEW DELHI: When MS Dhoni smashed the six that won the World Cup for India in 2011, it instantly became an iconic moment in cricket and established the man who started out as a railway ticket collector as one of the game's greats. Hard-hitting, unflinched no matter the pressure, the record of 'Captain Cool'-and India's most successful captain - will be virtually impossible to beat.

Holding the inaugural World T20 trophy in Johannesburg, in a half-sleeved India vest in 2007 and hitting that six in the World Cup final against Sri Lanka at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium will forever remain etched amongst the most memorable Dhoni moments. Many will remember him as an accumulator of runs after being appointed India's one-day captain in 2007, but it was his style which set Dhoni apart.

From humble beginnings in the eastern city of Ranchi, before working as a ticket collector on the railways in Kharagpur in West Bengal, to Indian cricket's poster boy with a fleet of superbikes, Dhoni's life has even been chronicled in a Bollywood biopic. His countless endorsement deals and TV ads not only made him a sports superstar to rival Sachin Tendulkar but also put him in the Forbes list of the world's richest athletes.

In 2015, his income was estimated to be \$31 million. But he had to keep up the success on the field to fuel such a lifestyle. N Srinivasan, the industrialist who owns the Chennai Super Kings, where Dhoni will remain captain in the Indian Premier League despite announcing his international retirement on Saturday, hailed him as the supreme "instinct" player.

"We're awash with data just now," Srinivasan said in a recent interview with the Scroll news website. "They play videos of every batsman whom they're going to come against and they see how he got out, what's his strength, what's his weakness etc. "So, MS Dhoni doesn't attend this, he's a pure instinct man. The bowling coach, (head coach Stephen) Fleming will be there and everybody will be there, everyone is giving opinions, (but) he'll get up and go," Srinivasan said. — AFP



FLORIDA: Jonas Valanciunas #17 of the Memphis Grizzlies looses the ball to Hassan Whiteside #21 of the Portland Trail Blazers during the second quarter in the Western Conference play-in game one at The Field House. — AFP

Blazers out Grizzlies, to book NBA playoff clash with Lakers

MIAMI: The Portland Trail Blazers booked an NBA playoff showdown with the Los Angeles Lakers with a scintillating 126-122 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies on Saturday in a Western Conference play-in game. In the league's first play-in game to determine a post-season berth since 1956, Damian Lillard scored 31 points and Bosnian big man Jusuf Nurkic delivered 22 points and 21 rebounds as Portland rallied from an eight-point fourth-quarter deficit.

Lillard once again played a key role in Portland's fourth straight win in the NBA's quarantine bubble at Orlando, Florida, where a league champion is set to be crowned after a season disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. Lillard's offensive excellence—he scored 51 points, 61 and 42 in three must-win games — propelled the Trail Blazers to the play-in. On Saturday, he had plenty of help.

CJ McCollum, playing with a non-displaced fracture in his lower spine, scored 14 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter and Carmelo Anthony scored 21 as the Blazers withstood a career-best 35-point performance from the Grizzlies' rookie of the year frontrunner, Ja Morant. The first half was an old-school battle of big men with Nurkic scoring 15 points and pulling down 17 rebounds as the Trail

Blazers took a 58-52 lead at the break. Nurkic's aggressive performance came less than two hours after the Bosnian revealed on social media that his grandmother had died from COVID-19.

He had told reporters she was battling the deadly virus shortly after the NBA season resumed in Orlando in July, but opted not to leave the bubble. "People don't understand how serious this ... is," Nurkic said at the time, and his teammates empathized with his loss and the frustration of being away from family at such a crucial time. "I can't even fathom what he's going through," McCollum said. "It's something you never get over, you just try to get through it. We're just trying to support him and understanding that this is a very difficult time for him and his family."

Grizzlies center Jonas Valanciunas was also a force, scoring 14 of his 22 points in the second quarter as Memphis erased a 16-point deficit, briefly taking a narrow lead before finishing the half down by six. Memphis, with 10 points from Morant and 14 from reserve Brandon Clarke, outscored the Blazers 42-31 in the third quarter to seize a five-point lead, and led by eight with 9:55 left to play. McCollum's three-pointer knotted the score at 111-111 with 3:08 remaining and Nurkic followed with a put-back basket and free throw to give Portland a lead they wouldn't relinquish.

"I was thinking 'I don't want to play again tomorrow.' We had to get this done tonight," said McCollum, who made a three-pointer and a pull up jump shot to stretch Portland's lead to 119-113 with 1:21 to play. — AFP

Stance and deliver: Five batsmen who did it their way

SOUTHAMPTON: Pakistan's decision to recall Fawad Alam for the ongoing second Test against England in Southampton has shone a fresh light on cricketers with a distinctive batting stance. Below AFP Sport looks at five international batsmen who ignored the coaching manual.

Fawad Alam (Pakistan)

The left-handed batsman is immediately recognizable at the crease thanks to an open stance that sees both pads facing the bowler as he runs in. His unusual method has yielded plenty of runs at domestic level, while Alam's three previous Tests had seen him average a highly respectable 41. But the 34-year-old's 11-year wait for a Test recall saw him lbw for a four-ball duck to paceman Chris Woakes in Southampton this week.

Shivnarine Chanderpaul (West Indies)

One of the outstanding batsmen of his generation, the Guyanese left-hander managed an impressive average of over 51 during a 164-Test career that also saw him score 30 hundreds. Crabbing across the crease, he appeared a perennial candidate to be lbw and rarely played in the 'V' between mid-on and mid-off as instructed by the textbooks and scored few runs off the front foot. Yet a combination of clever deflections and a whiplash pull saw him become only the second West Indian after Brian Lara, one of the most stylish batsmen cricket has known, to score 10,000 Test runs.

Steve Smith (Australia)

Initially brought into international cricket as a leg-spinner, Smith is now arguably Australia's best batsman since the outstanding Donald Bradman. This is despite Smith's bat coming down from the direction of third slip or gully—a characteristic he shares with Bradman—rather than running in a straight line as ordained by the textbooks. Equally, most coaches insist on trying to remain as still as possible before playing a shot. Yet the fidgety Smith appears to be in a state of perpetual motion at the crease. None of this, or indeed a year-long ban for his role in a ball-tampering scandal during a tour of South Africa that rocked Australian cricket to its foundations, has stopped Smith from scoring over 7,000 runs in 73 Tests, including 26 hundreds, at a staggering average of nearly 63.

Rory Burns (England)

Alam is not the only batsman on show at the Ageas Bowl with an unorthodox technique. The left-handed England opener has a quirky style that sees him bat with his chin rubbing against his right shoulder as he takes his stance before crouching at the crease. Burns reckons all this helps him with his left-eye dominance to get a better sight of the bowlers and the ball. England have tried several openers since Andrew Strauss retired in 2012 but Burns averaging over 34 in 19 Tests, including two hundreds, is now the man in possession of a coveted place.

Peter Willey (England)

A fine player of fast bowling, Willey made 15 of his 26 Test appearances against the formidable West Indies side of the mid 1970s and 1980s. Both of his two Test centuries came against the Caribbean side, with Willey defying the celebrated 'fearsome foursome' of Andy Roberts, Michael Holding, Joel Garner and Colin Croft to score an unbeaten 102 at St John's Antigua in 1981. But he did this despite an increasingly eccentric stance that saw him face up chest-on to the bowler, although Willey was often in a more classical side-on position by the time he played a shot. — AFP

14 Fuglsang wins Il Lombardia as Evenepoel crashes into ravine



15 Blazers oust Grizzlies, to book NBA playoff clash with Lakers



15 'Captain Cool' Dhoni: From ticket collector to an icon



LISBON: Lyon's players celebrate their win at the end of the UEFA Champions League quarter-final football match between Manchester City and Lyon at the Jose Alvalade stadium in Lisbon on August 15, 2020. —AFP

Lyon stun Man City, book semis

Dembele delivers fatal blow as Cornet punishes Man City again

LISBON: Moussa Dembele broke his Champions League drought in timely fashion in Lisbon on Saturday after Maxwel Cornet again proved a thorn in Manchester City's side with his fourth goal in three games against the Premier League heavyweights. Quite remarkably, no player has struck more often versus Pep Guardiola's City since the start of the 2018-19 season than the Ivory Coast international, with only Tottenham forward Son Heung-Min breaching their defense as many times.

Converted into a wing-back this season by Lyon coach Rudi Garcia on the left of a 3-5-2 formation, Cornet has adjusted seamlessly to the new role after spending most of his time at the club as a right-sided attacker. While Cornet's magnificent first-time finish gave Lyon the lead against City on 24 minutes, it wasn't until the introduction of top scorer Dembele that the French side administered the knockout blow to one of the competition's favorites for the title.

Despite a haul of 22 goals in 44 games this term, Dembele had failed to register in eight Champions League outings and was again relegated to the bench as Lyon stuck with the same line-up that overcame Juventus on away goals last week. "When you're on the bench it's not always easy but

you've got to keep your spirits up and make sure that when the coach brings you on you play your part," Dembele told RMC Sport after Saturday's 3-1 win. He did that and more, running on to Houssem Aouar's pass to put Lyon back ahead within four minutes of his entrance—and then delivered the coup de grace three minutes from time after City goalkeeper Ederson spilled a tame shot in the area.

'Extraordinary'

Lyon, understandably viewed as rank outsiders following a dismal seventh-placed finish in a Ligue 1 campaign cut short by the coronavirus pandemic, had shown what they were capable of last season by taking four points off City in the group stage. However, that was close to two years ago, and Lyon's team in the latter encounter included three key players who have since departed. Captain Nabil Fekir, part of France's World Cup-winning squad in 2018, was sold to Betis, while midfielder Tanguy Ndombele left for Tottenham Hotspur and left-back Ferland Mendy is now at Real Madrid.

Lyon have reinvested money from those sales to acquire young, burgeoning talents such as Bruno Guimaraes, the Brazilian midfielder tipped by club legend and cur-

rent sporting director Juninho to become "one of the best in the world". It wasn't the new arrivals who swung the tie in Lyon's favor at the Estadio Jose Alvalade but Dembele has proved another shrewd purchase, joining from Celtic as a 22-year-old in August 2018 after two largely prolific seasons in Scotland. Cornet, meanwhile, cost a mere 400,000 euros (\$475,000) when he arrived from Metz five years ago. Former France youth international Cornet, now 23, was close to joining Wolfsburg at one point before staying put, a decision that has played out favourably for both player and club.

"These are extraordinary games to play in. A Champions League quarter-final doesn't come along every day," said Cornet. "It's true it fell against City and tonight was another success for me. "We play these matches to play against the best in the world, we're lucky to do it. If we're here, it's not by chance. We worked a lot in preparation, and that was seen today." Lyon could conceivably meet Paris Saint-Germain in an all-French final on August 23, but first must find a way past an irresistible Bayern Munich—the same opponents who ended their run in the 2010 semi-finals. —AFP



LISBON: Manchester City's English midfielder Raheem Sterling (right) is comforted by Lyon's French forward Moussa Dembele at the end of the UEFA Champions League quarter-final football match between Manchester City and Lyon at the Jose Alvalade stadium in Lisbon on August 15, 2020. —AFP

Champions League has become a thorn in Guardiola's side

LISBON: With the millions they have invested in top players and with the most respected coach of his generation in charge, Manchester City should be doing much better than going out of the Champions League in the last eight. But after their shock 3-1 defeat by Olympique Lyonnais on Saturday that is exactly what City have done in the last three years.

Guardiola was brought into the club, by their Abu Dhabi based owner Sheikh Mansour, after his predecessor as manager, Chilean Manuel Pellegrini had taken the club to the semi-finals of the Champions League, while also winning the Premier League title. And while Guardiola has brought two Premier League titles, smashed records and produced some of the most glorious football the club's fans have ever seen — European success remains elusive to

his team. Clearly it irritates the Spaniard greatly, indeed at times he appears almost obsessed with the competition. Throughout this season, Guardiola has frequently referred to the Champions League, without prompting, when asked questions about the domestic campaign. There is a noticeably different demeanour to Guardiola in the build-up to Champions League games, he is edgier, even in the group stage where he has a tendency to exaggerate the quality of relatively modest opponents.

The assumption had always been that City, as relative newcomers to the European elite, just needed to adjust to the different demands that the Champions League can place on a team. "One day we will break this gap to the semis," he said after Saturday's loss. "The team over last few years deserve it. Maybe one day we'll break this gap." But now questions are being asked of Guardiola himself and surprisingly for a man considered to be a master tactician, of his team selection and formation.

City had looked a mature, top European team while beating 13-times winners Real Madrid home and away in the previous round. But Guardiola changed the winning formula

from that game, replacing the attacking midfielder Phil Foden with an extra defender in 19-year-old Eric Garcia. It was an unexpected decision. Clearly Guardiola felt that he needed to neutralize a Lyon attack that can often take the form of a trident but it quickly became apparent that the move had handed the French side the initiative in midfield and City were unable to dominate in their usual manner.

Chasing the match

When he belatedly took off defender Fernandinho for winger Riyad Mahrez, in the 56th minute, City's attacking threat increased significantly and 13 minutes later they drew level. Guardiola's tactics don't explain how his side allowed a simple ball over the top to lead to Moussa Dembele's goal to make it 2-1, nor do they have anything to do with Raheem Sterling then missing an absolute sitter from close range. The third goal came with City desperately chasing the match in search of a leveller but there still remains the question of whether Guardiola had simply over-complicated the team's task.

Former England winger Chris Waddle, who

played in France with Olympique Marseille, reaching the final of the European Cup in 1991, had no doubts that Guardiola should have allowed City to play their normal way. "They didn't trouble them enough, it needed a David Silva playing between the gaps. They wouldn't have liked playing against Phil Foden tonight," he said. "Pep Guardiola has to put his hands up tonight and say I got it wrong." Lyon coach Rudi Garcia added to the debate with his assertion that his team had "won the tactical battle".

But Guardiola was dismissive of that notion. "In this competition the tactics are not the most important thing," Guardiola told a news conference. "They (Lyon) are so fast and our central defenders are not so quick so I didn't want to leave them two versus two. "We worked for three days on this, we discussed it and we reviewed this and when you play like we did in the last 20 minutes it shows the system is not the problem." But the fact remains that a City team which beat Zinedine Zidane's Real were good enough to beat Lyon and didn't. Working out exactly why, will be something that Guardiola is now likely to deeply ponder for many months. —Reuters