



## 5 Dahlan in crosshairs of ire over UAE deal



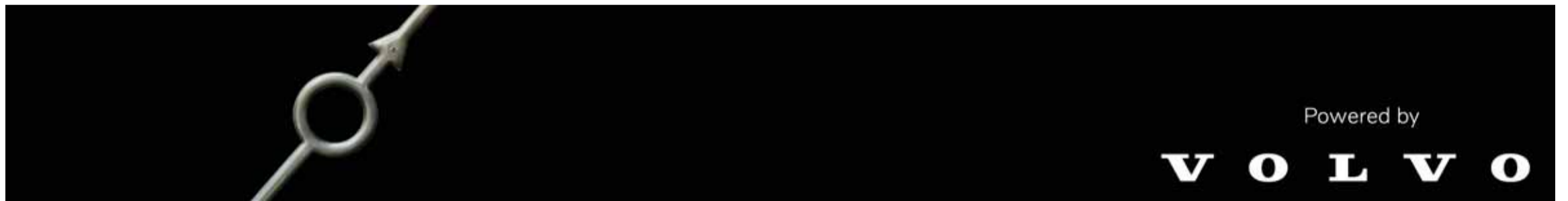
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# Assembly bill on demography eyes expat quotas, visa curbs

## Domestic helpers, health and education workers among those exempt

**KUWAIT:** The parliamentary human resources committee recently finalized a draft bill regulating and administering Kuwait's demography pending voting on it after receiving the government's responses. According to the bill, the Cabinet, within six months of putting the law into practice, will issue a decision on setting a maximum limit for expatriate workers according to certain ratios compared to the population of citizens as well as per community.

The draft exempts 10 categories of workers, including GCC nationals, domestic helpers, medical staff members and educators from the abovementioned terms. In addition, the draft also sets three restrictions to be followed by various government bodies, including banning the transfer of domestic helpers to work for either the private or the oil sectors, banning the transfer of visit visas into work or dependent visas and renewing residencies of laborers recruited to work on government contracts after

the concerned government projects are executed, unless they are needed in other government projects.

The bill also stipulates forming a committee to be known as the 'National Committee for Regulating and Administering Kuwait's Demography'.

**In detail, the draft bill recommends the following:**

- Preparing a study on the reasons of demographic imbalances in Kuwait and setting a general policy to regulate Kuwait's demography in a way

that best serves the state's general development plans.

- Assessing the state's actual needs of specialized foreign labor and determining excessive numbers compared to actual needs.

- Submitting recommendations to relevant bodies so that the outcome of the education process could be directed to fill gaps in the local labor market.

- The Cabinet will, within six months of putting

**Continued on Page 2**

## Kremlin critic Navalny 'stable' in Berlin clinic

**BERLIN:** Kremlin critic and opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who has suffered a suspected poisoning, was in a stable condition in hospital yesterday after being flown to Berlin following a standoff over his medical evacuation from Russia. An air ambulance carrying Navalny, chartered by the German NGO Cinema for Peace, touched down at 8:47 am local time (0647 GMT) at the military wing of Berlin's Tegel airport. His spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh tweeted that "the plane with Alexei just landed in Berlin".

"Navalny's condition is stable," Jaka Bizilj, the head of the Cinema for Peace foundation, told AFP after the landing. Berlin's Charite hospital confirmed in a statement that it had admitted Navalny and was carrying out an "extensive medical diagnosis". The 44-year-old

lawyer and anti-corruption campaigner, one of President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics, went into a coma after falling suddenly ill Thursday on a plane to Moscow that had to make an emergency landing in Omsk.

Aides say they believe Navalny was poisoned, apparently by a cup of tea at the airport, and blamed Putin, though Russian doctors said tests showed no trace of any poison. Doctors treating him in Omsk had refused to let Navalny leave but reversed course after his family and staff demanded he be allowed to travel to Germany.

As the plane left Omsk at around 8:00 am local time (0200 GMT), Navalny's wife Yulia posted a picture on Instagram of him being carried on a covered stretcher and thanked supporters for their "persistence". "Without your support, we wouldn't have been able to take him!" she wrote. Russian doctors have said he is in a coma and breathing through a ventilator in a grave state.

They have said tests did not find any trace of poison, however, that Navalny appeared to have a

**Continued on Page 2**



**BERLIN:** German medics carry out Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny on a stretcher yesterday after he arrived by air ambulance at Tegel airport. — AFP

## Turkey makes biggest gas find in Black Sea

**ISTANBUL:** President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday said Turkey had made a historic discovery of gas in the Black Sea, but would still speed up contentious exploration in the Mediterranean that has pitted it against Greece and the EU. Turkey hopes the discovery can help wean it off imported energy, including from Russia, which comes at a high cost at a time when the local currency is weakening and the economy is more fragile because of the coronavirus.

Erdogan said the 320-billion-cubic-metre deep sea find was made at a site Turkish vessel Fatih began exploring last month. He added that he hoped to see the first gas reach Turkish consumers in 2023, the 100th anniversary of the birth of the modern republic. "Turkey made the biggest discovery of natural gas in its history in the Black Sea," a delighted Erdogan said during a speech in Istanbul's Dolmabahce Palace. "My Lord has opened the door to unprecedented wealth for us," he enthused.

The Fatih, Turkey's first drilling vessel, is named after Fatih Sultan Mehmet, the Ottoman Sultan who conquered Constantinople - current-day Istanbul - in 1453. The vessel made the discovery in the Tuna-1 field off the coast of Ereğli town in the northern province of Zonguldak after beginning the search on July 20, Erdogan said. "This is Turkey's biggest-ever find by a wide margin, and one of the largest global discoveries of 2020," said Thomas Purdie of consultancy Wood Mackenzie.

The Turkish lira gained value against the dollar on Erdogan's promise on Wednesday to report "good news" on Friday, but fell after the

**Continued on Page 2**

## Warring Libya rivals announce surprise truce

**TRIPOLI:** Libya's warring rival administrations announced separately on Friday that they would cease all hostilities and hold nationwide elections, drawing praise from the UN, the EU and several Arab countries. The surprise announcement followed multiple visits by top foreign diplomats to Libya in recent weeks, and came after a series of agreements and pledges that, however, have failed to be implemented.

Friday's statements were signed by Fayed Al-Sarraj, head of the UN-recog-

nized unity Government of National Accord (GNA), based in the capital Tripoli, and Aguila Saleh, speaker of the eastern-based parliament backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar. The UN's top official to Libya, Stephanie Williams, welcomed the move and called for "all parties to rise to this historic occasion and shoulder their full responsibilities before the Libyan people".

European Union diplomatic chief Josep Borrell hailed an "important and positive" initiative, adding it was "crucial now that all parties stand by their statements". Sarraj called for "presidential and parliamentary elections next March", and for the "end of all combat operations". Saleh also backed elections - though he did not specify a date - and urged "all parties" to

**Continued on Page 2**



**TRIPOLI:** Libyan men, wearing traditional costumes, ride horses during a popular equestrian festival near the capital on Friday. — AFP

## Gandhi's gold glasses sell for \$340,000

**LONDON:** A pair of gold-plated glasses worn by Indian independence hero Mahatma Gandhi has sold in Britain for £260,000 (\$340,000), the auction house said. "We found them just four weeks ago in our letterbox, left there by a gentleman whose uncle had been given them by Gandhi himself," East Bristol Auctions wrote on Instagram after the sale late Friday. "An incredible result for an incredible item! Thanks to all those who bid."

Gandhi was known for giving out old or unwanted pairs to those in need or those who had helped him. The non-violent protestor gave the glasses to the vendor's uncle while he



**A pair of glasses that once belonged to Mohandas Gandhi are seen. — AFP**

was working for British Petroleum in South Africa during the 1920s or 30s, said the auction house. The sale price smashed the original estimate of around £15,000. Auctioneer Andrew Stowe told Sky News earlier this month that the vendor had told him: "If they're no good, just throw them away." When he suggested they might be worth £15,000, "I think he nearly fell off his chair." — AFP

## 'Unofficial' world's oldest man dies

**JOHANNESBURG:** A 116-year-old survivor of the 1918 Spanish Flu believed to be among the world's oldest people died yesterday in South Africa, his family said. Born on May 8 1904, Freddie Blom had "lived this long because of God's grace," he told AFP this year. Guinness World Records lists the oldest currently living man as Briton Bob Weighton, aged 112, but South African media have described Blom as "unofficially" the world's oldest.

Blom's entire family was wiped out by the Spanish Flu pandemic when he was just a teenager. But he



**DELFT, South Africa:** In this photo taken on May 8, 2020, Freddie Blom celebrates his 116th birthday at his home. — AFP

himself survived and went on to raise the three children of his wife of 46 years, Jeanette, as his own, becoming grandfather to five over the years.

Born in the rural town of Adelaide, tucked near the Great Winterberg mountain range of South Africa's Eastern Cape province, Blom died at Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town. — AFP



## Local

# Kuwait COVID-19 cases near 80,000 mark, 688 new infections recorded

## Recovered cases reach 71,770 with 506 in past 24 hours

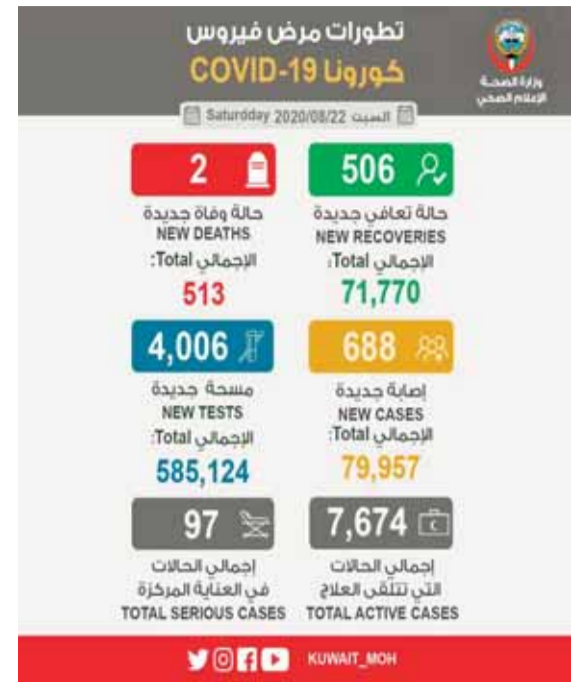
KUWAIT: Kuwait registered 688 new cases of infection with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the past 24 hours, raising the total number of infections to 79,957, the Ministry of Health announced yesterday. Meanwhile, two people having succumbed to the pandemic within the same period, as the death toll reached 513, a health ministry official

confirmed. The new infected cases include people who have come into contact with infected individuals, and others whose source of infection is currently being investigated, ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said. The health ministry had announced earlier yesterday that 506 people recovered from the virus in the past 24 hours, raising the total

number of those to have overcome the disease to 71,770.

In terms of health zones, 194 of the new cases were reported in Al-Ahmadi, 139 in Hawalli, 129 in Jahra, 119 in the Capital and 107 in Farwaniya, added the official. There are 7,674 people currently receiving treatment from COVID-19, including 97 patients in intensive care units,

Dr Sanad revealed. Meanwhile, 4,006 swab tests were taken in the last 24 hours, out of a total of 585,124 so far, added the spokesman. He reiterated the strict need to abide by health precautions, urging nationals and expatriates alike that following social distancing rules is the only way to keep the virus at bay. — KUNA



## 136 workers in Mahboula 'abandoned' by employer

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Workers from various countries in Africa and South Asia have been left without electricity and water at their camp in Mahboula for two months now. The spokesman of the group, Chengetai, a 45-year-old Zimbabwean, claimed their management abandoned them since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"For the last six months, we don't have a salary - we are surviving on donations. We have a Kuwaiti sponsor but he is not involved in the operation. Our actual employer is a Singaporean who left before the lockdown. So we are abandoned, literally. We staged a sit-in protest in June and they promised us to pay our salaries, but it was only a promise. The sponsor did not deliver on his promise, maybe because he is not involved directly in our company," Chengetai said.

"Since March, he has given us only KD 800, which we divided among 136 workers from various countries, so barely KD 6 in the last six months, meaning we only got KD 1 per month! In this company, the majority of us are from Zimbabwe - 51 - and 29 from Mozambique, with the rest from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka," he said.

"We are destitute here and want to go back home to our countries, but we need our money. We need to help our families survive too. One of our colleagues died of COVID, some are sick, but we are trying to survive. Some of our fellow workers have no iqamas too," Chengetai said.

He said harassment by the building's haris started in



KUWAIT: Pictures provided by the workers showing mattresses they say some of them placed in the corridors to be able to sleep after electricity was cut from their apartments.

April, when the building owner cut their electricity and water to force them to leave the building. "After some negotiations, they reinstated the electricity and water, but they continue to pressure us. Now they cut it once in a while - in June they completely stopped the water, while electricity is cut erratically to pressure us to leave the building. Some of us are forced to sleep in the corridors to get fresh air in the middle of the night. This is a terrible situation for us and I hope the government and our respective embassies help us," he said.

The men mostly work at a division at KOC under a



subcontracted company to dispose explosive devices and ordnance. However, there are drivers, machine operators and others who have been working in the company for years.

According to Chengetai, the embassies of Zimbabwe and Mozambique were earlier informed about their situation, but little has been done for them. "We are very sad and some of us have been experiencing medical problems because of stress and anxiety. But we want to get our salaries before we go back to our countries. How can we start a life back in our countries without money in our pockets," he asked.



## Turkey makes biggest gas find...

Continued from Page 1

size of the find was less than half of that suggested in initial reports. Analysts were also wary of overplaying the discovery's significance, pointing out that deep sea drilling is expensive and takes time.

"There are reasons to be cautious," said Jason Tuvey, senior emerging markets economist at Capital Economics. "For one thing, it will take time for the necessary infrastructure to be put in place before the gas can be extracted," he said in a research note. Tuvey added "the boost to Turkey's external position may only be temporary". Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, Ankara director of the German Marshall Fund, tweeted the discovery was "not bad at all (but) not a game changer either." The volume of gas announced by Erdogan would cover Turkey's total natural gas needs for six years, at current consumption rates.

Turkish Finance Minister and Erdogan's son-in-law, Berat Albayrak, speaking aboard the Fatih, said the discovery and future potential finds could reduce Turkey's import-heavy trade balance by cutting its high energy import bill. Turkey's energy import bill corresponded to two percent of total economic output last year, according to Capital Economics, with most purchases coming from Russia, Iran and Iraq. Turkey's Energy Market Regulatory Authority said in January the country's annual cost of energy imports was between \$12 billion and \$13 billion.

This month, Erdogan ordered the resumption of controversial energy exploration off the southern



In this file photo taken and released by the Turkish Defence Ministry on July 9, 2019 shows a Turkish Navy warship patrolling next to Turkey's drilling ship "Fatih" dispatched towards the eastern Mediterranean near Cyprus. — AFP

coast close to a Greek island in disputed eastern Mediterranean waters. The issue has put Turkey on a collision course with Greece, Cyprus and the European Union, and exacerbated tensions with France, which has stepped up its military presence in the region.

But Erdogan showed no sign of yielding to the EU's repeated call to immediately end the eastern Mediterranean search. "We will accelerate our activities in the Mediterranean with the deployment by the end of the year of (drilling ship) Kanuni, which is currently under maintenance," he said. "God willing we expect similar good news," Erdogan added. Turkey dispatched the seismic research ship Oruc Reis accompanied by warships to the region on August 10, angering Greece who said the move threatened peace. —Agencies

will include:

- 1- GCC nationals.
- 2- Members of the judiciary and the public prosecution.
- 3- Heads and members of diplomatic missions designated in Kuwait, their families and mission staff, provided reciprocal treatment is received.
- 4- Military missions (and their workers) of countries with whom Kuwait signs security treaties.
- 5- Aviation operators including pilots, co-pilots and cabin crews.
- 6- Workers recruited from outside Kuwait by foreign companies executing infrastructure or other economic development projects in Kuwait until the projects are concluded and turned over to relevant bodies.
- 7- Domestic helpers.
- 8- Citizens' spouses and children.
- 9- Medical and educational staff members.
- 10- Other categories to be determined upon Cabinet decisions. — Al-Qabas

## Warring Libya rivals announce

Continued from Page 1

observe "an immediate ceasefire and the cessation of all fighting". Both leaders called for the resumption of the production and export of oil, a cornerstone of Libya's wealth.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, who backs Haftar and had threatened to deploy troops in neighboring Libya, said he supported the ceasefire declarations. "I welcome statements by Libya's presidential council and the House of Representatives calling for a ceasefire," Sisi said in a tweet. Libya's former colonial power Italy also welcomed the move, as did France, Germany, the Arab League, Qatar and Jordan.

"The announcement of the ceasefire in Libya is an important step in the relaunching of a political process that will promote the stability of the country and the welfare of the people," Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said. The French foreign ministry said the ceasefire announcements "must be realized on the ground" and called for an end to all foreign interference in Libya.

## Kremlin critic Navalny 'stable'...

Continued from Page 1

"metabolic disorder" and to have suffered a sharp drop in blood sugar levels. The regional interior ministry said police detected an industrial chemical after swabbing Navalny and his luggage, although doctors said this would not have caused his condition. The air ambulance arrived in Omsk on Friday morning but Russian doctors initially said Navalny was too "unstable" to be moved.

They announced on Friday evening they had agreed to let him be transferred after German doctors examined him and the Cinema for Peace foundation said they were "willing and able" to transport him to Berlin. The turnaround also followed a letter from Navalny's wife with a direct appeal to Putin and after aides asked the European Court of Human Rights to intervene with the Russian government.

Navalny is the latest in a long line of Kremlin critics who have fallen seriously ill or died in apparent poisonings. His wife told journalists that she wanted Navalny to be "in an independent hospital, whose doctors we trust". Yarmysh tweeted that "the battle for Alexei's life and health is just beginning... but at least now we've taken the first step."

The air ambulance was dispatched to take Navalny to Berlin after Chancellor Angela Merkel extended an

Sarraj said a ceasefire would allow the creation of "demilitarized zones" in Sirte, the gateway to Libya's eastern oil fields and export terminals, and the Al-Jufra region, currently under the control of pro-Haftar forces. Saleh did not mention the demilitarization zones, but proposed the installation of a new government in Sirte. Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) also welcomed Friday's announcement.

Libya sits atop Africa's largest proven crude oil reserves, and earnings from its lucrative oil fields have been a source of intense disagreement between the two sides, including a months-long blockade of oil terminals. "NOC reiterates its call for all oil facilities to be freed from military occupation to ensure the security and safety of its workers," the state oil producer said in a statement. "Once this has been done, NOC should be able to... re-commence oil export operations."

International pressure has sought to bring Libya's rival leaders to an agreement several times in past years, but has failed to secure a lasting peace. Analyst Jalel Harchaoui, research fellow at The Hague-based Clingendael Institute, said there was a long road ahead before peace. "The question is, is this announcement fully achievable? In all likelihood, implementation will be difficult," said Harchaoui, noting the multiple regional forces who could act as spoilers of a deal. — AFP

offer of treatment. European Union leaders including Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron have voiced concern for Navalny, who has faced repeated physical attacks and prosecutions in more than a decade of opposition to Russian authorities. Navalny lost consciousness shortly after his plane took off on Thursday from Tomsk in Siberia, where he was working to support opposition candidates ahead of regional elections next month.

Yarmysh said he had seemed "absolutely fine" before boarding the flight and had only consumed a cup of tea at the airport. She said she was sure he had suffered from an "intentional poisoning" and blamed Putin. She also claimed Russia's refusal to evacuate Navalny was a ploy to "play for time" and make it impossible to trace poison, posing a "critical threat to his life".

Navalny has made many enemies with his anti-corruption investigations, which often reveal the lavish lifestyles of Russia's elite and attract millions of views online. He is the latest in a long line of Kremlin critics who have fallen seriously ill or died in apparent poisonings. The director of the Anti-Corruption Foundation that Navalny founded, Ivan Zhdanov, confirmed on social media that the organisation was "continuing its work".

Many supporters expressed relief he was going for treatment outside Russia. "I feel as relieved now as if terrorists had freed a hostage after long negotiations," fellow opposition politician Ilya Yashin tweeted, criticising the delay in Navalny's departure. "I want to believe that this wasted time won't cost Alexei his life." —AFP

## Assembly bill on demography...

Continued from Page 1

the law into practice, issue a decision setting a maximum limit for expatriate workers compared to the total number of citizens and set a certain ratio per expat community.

Based upon the numbers set in the above provision, the Cabinet will issue a decision on the maximum numbers to be recruited from outside Kuwait the following year.

The Cabinet will, within five years after putting the law into practice, review expats numbers to lay off expats exceeding the local market's actual needs.

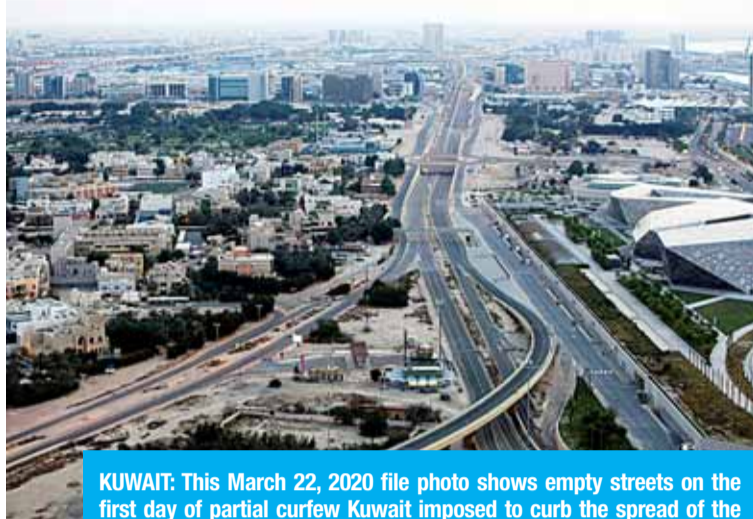
According to the bill, the exempted categories



Local

# Kuwait braces to end five long months of curfew next week

Longest curfew in Kuwait's history in a bid to fight COVID-19 spread



KUWAIT: This March 22, 2020 file photo shows empty streets on the first day of partial curfew Kuwait imposed to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).



This April 7, 2020 file photo shows barbed wire at the entrance of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, one day after the area was placed under total lockdown.



This April 25, 2020 file photo shows a large gathering of people at a point to distribute food aid in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh during Ramadan, while the area was still under lockdown.



This May 9, 2020 file photo shows heavy traffic near the main bakery and other food stores in Shuwaikh, where people had flocked to stockpile on necessities ahead of a total curfew that started the following day.



This July 25, 2020 file photo shows workers removing barriers at an entrance to Farwaniya, ahead of the lifting of its lockdown the following day. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and Fouad Al-Shaikh



This August 18, 2020 file photo shows people seated inside a public transportation bus, while observing social distancing, on the first day of phase four of the plan to return to normal life.

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Cabinet has decided to lift a countrywide partial curfew as of August 30, but some activities will remain restricted. The decision was announced by the Kuwaiti government's Spokesman Tareq Al-Mezrem on Thursday evening. Restrictions on large gatherings, including weddings, social gatherings, banquets, receptions and funeral ceremonies would remain unchanged in a bid to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the spokesman stressed.

The announcement marks the end of over five months of curfew in Kuwait, the longest in the country's history as the government scrambled to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus by imposing periods of partial and total lockdown. Kuwait had first enforced a countrywide curfew on March 22, from 5:00 pm to 4:00 am, which was later extended to end at 6:00 am (modified during Ramadan to start from 4:00 pm until 8:00 am), while allowing restaurants and food stores to make home deliveries from 5:00 pm until 1:00 am.

In its early steps to counter the spread of COVID-19, the government had decided to close all shopping malls, beauty salons and barbershops, while allowing supermarkets, restaurants and shops

to host a maximum of five people at a time and in case there are lines, the distance must be at least one meter between people. The Ministry of Commerce had launched a website ([www.moci.shop](http://www.moci.shop)) to enable people to book appointments to shop at co-operative societies in their respective areas.

#### Total curfew

Kuwait then moved to total curfew which was imposed from May 10 to May 30, allowing room for people to walk out for daily exercise between 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm, and to shop at co-ops and supermarkets once every six days during the curfew hours by making an appointment through [www.moci.shop](http://www.moci.shop). Following the end of the total curfew, the government announced a five-phase plan for a gradual return to normal life.

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. 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 second phase, which started on June 30, 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.

Phase three began on June 28. 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.

#### Fourth phase

Kuwait moved to the fourth phase on August 18, allowing more businesses to resume operations including sports gyms and stadia, barbershops,

beauty salons, health resorts and tailors. State departments and privately-owned establishments were allowed to have over 50 percent of their workforce in attendance as part of phase four. Meanwhile, the fourth phase allowed customers to be seated at restaurants and cafes, and public transport to resume while committing to social distancing rules. Kuwait had placed several densely-populated areas under total lockdown for various periods throughout all stages of curfew. Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh were first put under lockdown on April 6, followed by Farwaniya, Khaitan, and Hawally which remained under lockdown after the country moved on from total curfew on May 31. The lockdown ended in Hawally and Khaitan on June 21, in Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on July 9, and in Farwaniya on July 26.

There is currently no timetable for the start of the final phase of return to normalcy, which is likely to remain on hold pending the availability of a vaccine that allows life to go back to normal as it was before COVID-19 emerged. Until then, it also remains possible that the government re-imposes a curfew at some point if it is deemed necessary to counter a potential coronavirus outbreak.

#### News in brief

##### Security chief suspended

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh has decided to suspend the director-general of the State Security Agency and seven officers over leaked recordings that date back to 2018. The decision came following investigations carried out by a probe committee, the Interior Ministry's public relations and security media department said in a statement on Thursday. The minister, who doubles as Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, also decided to send the case to the Public Prosecution, it added.

##### Power outage

KUWAIT: A main power transformer in Hawally went out of service at 22:19 on Friday, which resulted in power outages in some parts in Hawally, Daiya, Mansouriya, Qadsiya, Nuzha and Abdullah Al-Salem, the Ministry of Electricity and Water announced on its social media accounts yesterday. Ministry technicians fixed the problem and restored electricity gradually starting from 23:45, the ministry explained.

##### Libya ceasefire

KUWAIT: Kuwait on Friday welcomed an announced ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities across Libya, said an official source of the country's foreign ministry. The source, in a press statement, hoped that planned inter-Libya dialogue would lead to a permanent solution that ensures Libya's security, stability and territorial integrity, fulfills people's hopes and puts an end to foreign interference that jeopardizes Libya's security, stability and Arab national security.

##### Oil price up

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 12 cents to \$45.33 per barrel Friday after it was at \$44.21 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. Globally, the price of the Brent crude went down by 55 cents to \$44.35 per barrel, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate, which decreased by 86 cents to \$42.34 pb.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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## Kuwait: Shuaiba's containers have no dangerous materials

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) and the General Administration of Customs (GAC) affirmed on Thursday that the containers at Shuaiba Port have "environmentally friendly and not dangerous raw materials" after being examined by competent authorities. In a joint press statement, the two authorities confirmed keenness on following up standards of security and safety, and abidance by international protocols towards all imported commodities mainly that are designated as "very dangerous."

All imported materials which may have security and safety perils are placed in a certain place in accordance with the procedures and requirements of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization and the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code. The ports receive about one million containers with varied materials, including very dangerous ones, every year, it said. It noted that the containers carry either military or industrial materials, and authorities deal with them in line with international criteria.

It pointed out that after the explosion of Beirut Port on August 4 that killed at least 170 people, injured about 6,000 and caused severe material damage, Director General of the KPA Sheikh Yusuf Abdullah Al-Sabah issued a decision to form a commission led by him to inspect periodically the stores and warehouses in the ports in order to ensure they are free of dangerous materials. The dangerous materials are dealt with in a special way as they are immediately delivered to the owner, it stated. —KUNA

# Zain main partner of Kuwait Virtual Graduation 2020

## Under patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its main partnership with the Kuwait Virtual Graduation 2020, a unique online event that will be streamed online and via Kuwait TV to celebrate the graduation of over 40,000 students from the class of 2020, including high school, university, and vocational college graduates from both the public and private sectors. The virtual event comes under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Zain took part in the press conference held to announce the details of this national initiative, with the attendance of National Creative Industries Group (NCIG) Chairman Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Sustainability and Innovation Department Manager Haya Al-Mana, as well as representatives of partners and sponsors from both the public and private sectors.

During the press conference, Haya Al-Mana, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Sustainability and Innovation Department Manager, commented: "I am very pleased today to announce that Zain will be the Main Partner of the Kuwait Virtual Graduation 2020. We, as institutions and individuals, are extremely proud to come together as one family to celebrate over 40,000 graduates who did not get the opportunity to celebrate their graduation this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is surely the least we can do to prove our pride in their achievement."

Mana added: "Our participation today comes as part of our keenness to show our commitment towards the nation during these unusual times. Since the beginning of this crisis, we were very eager to reflect our active role as a national private sector leader by launching many innovative digital solutions that facilitate the continuous operation of government entities and companies of all sizes, while serving their unique needs during the current



**KUWAIT:** Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah with Haya Al-Mana and the initiative's partners during the press conference.

situation, all while empowering them into digital transformation. In addition, we supported many social and non-profit programs to help the community overcome these unusual times."

Mana continued: "Distance learning solutions were a gamechanger and a necessity during the past period. For this, Zain was one of the first companies to launch virtual school solutions as part of our belief in the importance of continuing the education process amid the exceptional circumstances the country is facing. We made our tech capabilities available to serve the needs of Kuwait's public and private education organizations as per the highest international standards by offering world-class distance learning solutions. In addition, we have also implemented remote working policies to empower our employees to fully work from home. The best example for this is our 107 Contact Center, where our agents receive all customer requests 24/7 directly from their homes with high efficiency."

Mana further explained: "The year 2020 has been exceptional for everyone, and so it was our duty to celebrate this year's graduates together in an exceptional and unique manner. Everyone came

together, from government officials to academics, artists, media figures, as well as both private and public sector representatives, all as one family to make this initiative a success and produce it in a way that our youth well deserve, because they are Kuwait's future and tomorrow's leaders. The patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is the ultimate proof of the country's eagerness to stand along Kuwait's youth and celebrate their success in front of the entire nation."

Mana concluded: "We look forward very much to this historic virtual event that will be aired online and on Kuwait TV. We wish our partners all the best of luck in organizing this great initiative, and we hope our dear graduates enjoy this event and make wonderful memories from this unique celebration."

Zain believes in the development of the communities in which it operates, and it is a very important part of its overall success. The company considers education as a core element in the community development process, and it will continue to support it to contribute to the further progress of the country's youth.

## KRCS distributes aid to Syrian refugees in Lebanon

**BEIRUT:** The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) continued on Friday distributing clothes, food and medical supplies to 350 Syrian refugee families in Beqaa Valley, east of Lebanon. Head of

the society's delegation to Lebanon Musaed Al-Enezi said the society's continued support to Syrian refugees in Lebanon came within the framework of humanitarian projects to the Syrian people that are carried out by the society since the beginning of the crisis in the country.

The society implements projects to back Lebanese farmers through purchasing the product of sweet potatoes from them and distribute the production to the Syrian refugee families, he added. He noted that the aid, distributed in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross and in coordination with the Kuwaiti Embassy in Lebanon, contributes to backing the refugees to face living conditions challenges that have increased burdens since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). He said Kuwait has been paying much attention to the refugees in response to the orders and directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, a Humanitarian Leader, since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, adding that the aid has been continuing until today.

The KRCS carries out several humanitarian initiatives to back the Syrian refugees in Lebanon like the projects of dialysis, bakeries, food baskets, treatment of chronic diseases and kidney transplant as well as clothing and fast-breaking meals in the holy month of Ramadan and the distribution of meat during the holidays. In addition, the society has a field team in Beirut so as to aid the family and hospitals affected by the explosion that hit Beirut Port on August 4. —KUNA



## Firemen battle Amghara scrap yard blaze

**KUWAIT:** Firemen from four different fire stations battled a blaze that broke out yesterday morning in Amghara scrap yard. Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said firemen from Tahrir, Jahra industrial, Sulaibikhat and the backup fire stations rushed to the scene in response to an emergency call, and managed to contain the flames before they could spread to adjacent sites. The fire was controlled without reporting any casualties, KFSD confirmed, adding that investigations went underway to determine the cause of the blaze.



## Fire department inspects Husseiniyas

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's public relations and media department said that the prevention sector's inspection teams have inspected Husseiniyas in various governorates around Kuwait to make sure they all followed safety and security precautions in order to ensure the safety of their visitors. The department explained that KFSD teams would take part in quick intervention checkpoints formed by the prevention and firefighting sectors in order to be able to intervene until backup arrives from the nearest fire station in cases of emergency.



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'The bogeyman gone':  
'Golden State Killer'  
sentenced to life

## Turkey leader converts another Orthodox church into a mosque

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LIMA: Relatives carry the coffin of a suspected COVID-19 victim at the Nueva Esperanza cemetery, one of the largest in Latin America, on the southern outskirts of Lima. — AFP

# WHO sees virus over in two years

## Millions of Lebanese wearily enter a new lockdown

GENEVA: The world should be able to rein in the coronavirus pandemic in less than two years, the World Health Organization said, as millions of Lebanese wearily entered a new lockdown following a spike in coronavirus infections. Western Europe was also enduring the kind of infection levels not seen in many months, particularly in Germany, France, Spain and Italy-sparking fears of a full-fledged second wave.

In the Spanish capital Madrid, officials recommended people in the most affected areas stay at home to help curb the spread as the country registered more than 8,000 new cases in 24 hours. But WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus sought to draw favorable comparisons with the notorious flu pandemic of 1918. "We have a disadvantage of globalization, closeness, connectedness, but an advantage of better technology, so we hope to finish this pandemic before less than two years," he told reporters.

By "utilizing the available tools to the maximum and hoping that we can have additional tools like vaccines, I think we can finish it in a shorter time than the 1918 flu", he said. With no usable vaccine yet available, the most prominent tool governments have at their disposal is to confine their populations. Lebanon is the latest country to reintroduce severe restrictions, beginning two weeks of measures on Friday including nighttime curfews to tamp down a

rise in infections, which comes as the country is still dealing with the shock from a huge explosion in the capital Beirut that killed dozens earlier this month.

"What now? On top of this disaster, a coronavirus catastrophe?" said 55-year-old Roxane Moukarzel in Beirut. The capital's streets largely emptied of cars at the start of the curfew, but some locals were unenthusiastic. "There's no point in this lockdown," said Samer Harmoush, running along the Beirut seafont. "Some shops are complying completely, while others aren't at all." Officials fear Lebanon's fragile health system would struggle to cope with a further spike in COVID-19 cases, especially after some hospitals near the port were damaged in the explosion.

### 'We lead the world in deaths'

The Americas has borne the brunt of the virus in health terms, accounting for more than half of the world's fatalities. "We lead the world in deaths," said Joe Biden while accepting the Democratic nomination for the US presidential election late on Thursday. He said he would implement a national

plan to fight the pandemic on his first day in office if elected in November. "We'll take the muzzle off our experts so the public gets the information they need and deserve-honest, unvarnished truth," he said.

Further south, Latin American countries were counting the wider costs of the pandemic-the region not only suffering the most deaths, but also an expansion of criminal activity and rising poverty.

Without an effective political reaction, "at a regional level we can talk about a regression of up to 10 years in the levels of multidimensional poverty", Luis Felipe Lopez-Calva of the UN Development Program said. His warning came after World Bank

President David Malpass said on Thursday that the virus may have driven as many as 100 million people back into extreme poverty.

### 'No apres-ski'

Economies around the globe have been ravaged by the pandemic, which has infected more than 22 million and killed nearly 800,000 since it emerged in China late last year. New financial figures laid

bear the huge cost of the pandemic in Britain, where government debt soared past £2 trillion (\$2.6 trillion) for the first time in the UK after a massive program of state borrowing for furlough schemes and other measures designed to prop up the economy. "Without that support things would have been far worse," said finance minister Rishi Sunak.

Even Germany, famed for its financial prudence, was waking up to a new reality with Finance Minister Olaf Scholz conceding his country would need to continue borrowing at a high level next year to deal with the virus fallout. Western European politicians are also beginning to ramp up restrictions to tackle infections that are rising to levels not seen for months. While Spain has responded with confinement measures and Germany with updated travel guidelines, the UK is now watching clusters in northern England and suggesting some towns could soon face lockdown.

"To prevent a second peak and keep Covid-19 under control, we need robust, targeted intervention where we see a spike in cases," said health secretary Matt Hancock in a statement. Irish politicians, meanwhile, fell foul of their own updated rules this week. Two politicians resigned after attending a restrictions-busting anniversary dinner of parliament's own golf society that involved more than 80 guests, including lawmakers and a supreme court judge. — AFP



## Western Europe enduring new infection levels

## Branded 'a traitor' Dahlan in crosshairs over UAE deal

JERUSALEM: Branded "a traitor" in street protests, exiled Palestinian dissident Mohammed Dahlan is being marked out as a behind-the-scenes architect of the Israel-UAE deal that has provoked fury back home. He serves as an adviser to one of the Middle East's most powerful men, Abu Dhabi's crown prince and effective leader of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, otherwise known as MBZ.

On August 13, US President Donald Trump made an out-of-the-blue announcement of an accord between MBZ and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to normalize ties between their countries. The next day, angry protesters in the West Bank and Gaza Strip trampled and torched portraits of Trump, Sheikh Mohammed and Netanyahu.

The picture of "traitor" Dahlan, who is no stranger to controversy, has suffered the same fate in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Now aged 58, Dahlan served as security chief in Gaza but fell out with his comrades in president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party when it was driven out by Hamas in 2007. Four years on, he was kicked off Fatah's central committee on charges of "subversion". After security forces raided his home, it was clearly time to pack and leave. He travelled and has settled in Abu Dhabi.

The rival factions of the Palestinian leadership, Fatah and Hamas, have both condemned the agreement as a "betrayal" of their people's aspirations to an independent state. And they see Dahlan's hand behind the UAE becoming the first Arab country in a quarter century, since Jordan in 1994, to normalize ties with the Jewish state. "We're sure he was an accomplice and the sponsor of this normalization," is the firm view of Adnan al-Dumairi, spokesman of the security services in Ramallah. A source close to Hamas said they agreed.



Palestinian senior Fatah official  
Mohammed Dahlan

### Role in deal 'irrelevant'

On the other side of the argument, a former head of Israel's Shin Bet domestic intelligence service, Yaakov Peri, said Dahlan had not been the driving force. He has known Dahlan ever since the time they coordinated on security issues in Gaza and the two men have stayed in contact, on personal terms. "In Abu Dhabi, he has become very, very close to the ruler as economic adviser, one who knows Israel quite well," Peri said.

But "those who are blaming Dahlan for the agreement with the Emirates are not really saying something which is true," he said, although the exile had met with "many Israelis" on visits to Abu Dhabi prior to the deal. In the West Bank political capital of Ramallah, where Fatah leader Abbas is based, Dahlan is still regarded as "the enemy", allegedly as part of a failed coup against the president, said Peri.

"Abu Mazen decided he wants to get rid of him, meaning to kill him or not to let him come back to the arena, to the Palestinian arena in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," he said, using Abbas's nom-de-guerre. If Dahlan is planning to return with the ambition of succeeding 84-year-old Abbas, "the least you can say is that he's not welcome", said Peri. Over the past decade, many of Dahlan's supporters have followed his example and left the Palestinian territories. Dimitri Diliiani, a senior Fatah member, said that Dahlan still has supporters on the ground, but they do not go public. — AFP

## UAE, Israel: 5 areas of 'shared interest'

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates and Israel are gearing up to open their doors for business after the surprise announcement they will normalize relations. Here are five key areas expected to bring the economies of the two countries closer:

### Research

Even before the deal was announced last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country was collaborating with the UAE on ways to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Research in various fields - including medicine, disease and fertilizers - is important for both countries. Last month, before the agreement, two Israeli companies signed a deal with an Emirati firm to collaborate on the development of a non-invasive coronavirus screening test.

Another collaboration on coronavirus research between firms from the two countries was signed on Sunday, days after the deal was announced. "It seems as if the immediate priority will be cooperation on research and development to combat COVID-19," said Kristian Ulrichsen, from Rice University's Baker Institute in the United States. "This could be a popular way of normalizing people, both in Israel and the UAE, to the idea that coordination on such an urgent issue is in the greater good of both countries."

### Tech and startups

Israel's high-tech sector — an industry that has earned it the nickname "start-up nation" — makes up more than 40 percent of the country's



TA'IZZ: Demonstrators chant slogans with signs depicting Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock and flags of Palestine during a protest in Yemen's third city of Ta'izz against the US-brokered deal between the United Arab Emirates and Israel to normalize relations. — AFP

exports, according to the economy ministry. The UAE, especially the glitzy emirate of Dubai, attracts such companies because of its accommodating environment, with government support and investment. More than a third of start-ups in the Middle East and North Africa are reported to be based in the UAE, which seeks to be a powerhouse in the technology sector.

### Smart farming

In 2016, Israel exported \$9.1 billion (7.6 billion euros) worth of agriculture technology products, according to the agriculture ministry. The UAE, with a population of over nine million people from all over the world, has seen its food needs grow and diversify. But with little arable land and extreme temperatures, it wants to overcome its dependence on food imports. "There are opportunities in medical and agricultural technologies, and scope for coordination in startups and innovation policy," said Ulrichsen. Collaboration in agriculture could "later make it easier to expand the scope of cooperation

into more overtly political and diplomatic arenas", he added.

### Desalination

Israel has world-leading desalination firms, including IDE Technologies, which has 400 plants in 40 countries. The arid UAE is dependent on desalinated water. The amount of desalinated water used in the Gulf country is about 3,688 million cubic meters a year, but is expected to increase to 5,806 million cubic meters in 2025.

### Security and surveillance

Israel is home to several leading surveillance companies, including spyware firm NSO Group, which developed the sophisticated eavesdropping Pegasus tool. British watchdog Privacy International reports that, as of 2016, there were some 27 surveillance firms headquartered in Israel. The UAE is also base for security, surveillance and data analysis companies. It has set up a formidable network of cameras as part of its "Falcon Eye" security monitoring system. — AFP



## International

# Battered by Democrats, Trump fires back against 'total anarchy, madness, chaos'

## Biden vows to end US 'darkness,' accepts democratic nomination

WASHINGTON: After being accused by Democrats of being a chaotic and dishonest leader, President Donald Trump countered on Friday that Democrats, not he, would bring chaos to the United States if Joe Biden wins the White House in November. "If our opponents prevail no one will be safe in our country," Trump told conservative activists in his first speech since the Democratic National Convention ended late on Thursday. "I'm the only thing standing between the American dream and total anarchy, madness and chaos," Trump said.

In a preview of what Republicans will argue at their own convention next week, Trump hammered at the law-and-order theme he has embraced in response to anti-racism and police brutality protests in US cities including Portland, Oregon. He said police had been weakened in "Democrat-run" cities and cited a spike in murders in Chicago, Minneapolis, New York and Philadelphia. He urged Americans to turn back "radical left socialists and Marxists." He called protesters in Portland "crazy."

"So the future of our country and indeed our civilization is at stake on Nov 3," he said in the speech in Arlington, Virginia, to the 2020 Council for National Policy. Biden and his running mate, US Senator Kamala Harris, accepted their party's nomination at the four-day Democratic convention, where speaker after speaker characterized Trump's four years in office as chaotic. The convention, held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, showcased scathing criticism of Trump's character and his handling of the health crisis, in which more than 170,000 people in the United States have died.

Democrats sought to present a diverse, united front with the integrity and faith they said Trump

lacks. Biden opened his acceptance speech on Thursday night by saying, "The current president has cloaked America in darkness for much too long. Too much anger. Too much fear. Too much division." In his speech on Friday, Trump called it "the

“ Too much anger, too much fear, too much division ”

darkest and angriest and gloomiest convention in American history."

He also suggested, without providing an explanation or evidence, that the Democratic speaker of the House of Representatives could become president if the results of the Nov 3 election were not clear by the end of the year. "I don't think you'll know two weeks later. I don't think you'll know four weeks later," he said. "There's a theory that if you don't have it by the end of the year, crazy Nancy Pelosi would become president," he said. Trump has sought to cast early doubt on the integrity of the election, and bringing up Pelosi, who is deeply unpopular with many Republicans, appeared aimed at motivating his base to vote.

**Economy and law & order**  
Vice President Mike Pence, who gave a round



WILMINGTON: Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, his wife Dr. Jill Biden, Democratic Vice Presidential nominee Kamala Harris and her husband Douglas Emhoff raise their arms on stage outside the Chase Center after Biden delivered his acceptance speech. — AFP

of television interviews on Friday morning, outlined what he said would be the thrust of their four-day convention starting on Monday, appropriating a line from Biden's speech that character, decency, science and democracy "are all on the ballot." "The economy is on the ballot. Law and order is on the ballot, and the American people know it," Pence said.

Pence deflected criticism over the coronavirus response. "We lost 22 million jobs in the course of

this coronavirus pandemic. But because of the solid foundation that President Trump poured of less taxes, less regulation, more American energy, more free and fair trade, we've seen 9 million Americans already go back to work," Pence told CBS "This Morning." Biden's vice presidential selection of Harris confirmed that the Democratic Party had been taken over by "the radical left," Pence told Fox Business Network, describing her as a "California liberal." — Reuters

## Why do 'non-lethal' weapons maim and kill protesters?

NICOSIA: Riot police from Beirut and Baghdad to Hong Kong and Minsk often use so-called "non-lethal" weapons for crowd control—so why do protesters keep dying and being maimed? As street protests worldwide have multiplied, rights groups have sounded the alarm about tear gas, rubber bullets, stun guns and other anti-riot weapons causing serious wounds and fatalities.

Law enforcement use them to avoid firing live munitions at violent protesters who may attack them, hurl rocks, bottles and Molotov cocktails, start fires or try to blind them with laser pointers. But malicious and excessive use, often but not only in authoritarian states, has long since earned riot control tools the official designation of "less-lethal weapons". The arsenal also includes truncheons, shields and restraints, chemical irritants, electric shock devices, baton rounds, flash-bang grenades, water cannon and high-decibel acoustic devices.

Police forces "have at their disposal a dizzying array of weapons and kit that, while known as 'less-lethal', can cause serious injury or even death", says an Amnesty International report. "Some of the equipment we've surveyed is worthy of a torture chamber and should be banned outright," said the group's specialist Marek Marczyński in a 2015 report on the subject. In Iraq, which has been torn by repeat anti-government protests since last year, dozens of protesters have been killed by tear-gas canisters fired directly at them.

They have died of blunt force trauma to their eye sockets, skulls and chests as security forces have shot the grenades in flat, not upward, trajectories and at close range. Amnesty documented that several such deaths were caused by military-grade tear gas and smoke grenades made in Serbia and Iran that are about 10 times heavier than standard-issue canisters. "This has had devastating results, in multiple cases piercing the victims' skulls, resulting in gruesome wounds and death after the grenades embed inside their heads," said Amnesty's Lynn Maalouf.

### 'Excessive use of force'

Human Rights Watch reported similar severe injuries in the protests that shook Beirut in the aftermath of the massive August 4 explosion that leveled parts of the Lebanese capital and killed more than 180 people. HRW said it observed "security forces fire a tear-gas canister directly at a protester's head, in violation of international standards, severely injuring him". Security forces were also beating demonstrators with clubs and "firing rubber bullets and birdshot pellets indiscriminately", it said in a blog posting.

Amnesty said it had "monitored the largely peaceful protests on 8 August where tear gas, rubber bullets and pump-action pellets were fired recklessly into crowds". Deaths have also been caused elsewhere by so-called kinetic impact rounds, such as plastic and rubber bullets, first used by the British army in Northern Ireland 50 years ago. Protesters have lost eyes to them in the French yellow-vest demonstrations, Palestinian anti-Israel protests and in the unrest that followed the George Floyd killing in the United States.

The force of such munitions, designed to bounce off the ground and hit people's legs, can break bones, tear vessels and cause internal bleeding when fired directly at them. — AFP

## 'The bogeyman gone': 'Golden State Killer' sentenced to life

SACRAMENTO: A former California police officer who lived a double life as the "Golden State Killer" was sentenced to life in prison on Friday for a string of 1970s and '80s murders and rapes that were solved through the use of public genealogy websites. A Sacramento County judge granted prosecutors' request that Joseph James DeAngelo, 74, serve life in prison without the possibility of parole following emotional statements from victims or their family members in open court.

A seemingly frail DeAngelo showed no emotion during the nearly two-hour sentencing, held in a makeshift courtroom inside a ballroom at Sacramento State University so that victims and family members could spread out amid the coronavirus pandemic. When given the opportunity to speak, DeAngelo rose from a wheelchair, took off a mask, looked around at surviving victims and rela-



SACRAMENTO: Defendant Joseph James DeAngelo looks on in the courtroom during the third day of victim impact statements at the Gordon D Schaber Sacramento County Courthouse in Sacramento, California. — AFP

tives of those he murdered and said: "I've listened to all your statements. Each one of them. And I'm really sorry to everyone I've hurt."

Prosecutors afterward said they did not think DeAngelo's apology was sincere. They also showed video of him in his jail cell, climbing on a desk and standing on one leg while cleaning, which they said

proved he did not need to use a wheelchair. In June, DeAngelo confessed to 13 murders and 13 rape-related charges for crimes carried out between 1975 and 1986 as part of a plea deal with prosecutors sparing him from a potential death sentence.

DeAngelo, whom a prosecutor on Friday called a bogeyman who haunted California for decades, also publicly admitted to dozens more rapes for which the statute of limitations had expired. Prosecutors said he invaded 120 homes across 11 counties during his crime spree, initially identified with a series of rapes and murders around the state capital of Sacramento. The identity of the Golden State Killer remained a mystery, his crimes unsolved, for decades until DeAngelo's arrest in Sacramento County on April 24, 2018.

Investigators tied DeAngelo to the crimes using a then-novel technique of tracing him through family DNA from commercial genealogy websites. Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert pushed for decades to find a way to solve the cold case that shook the state and region. DeAngelo's crimes, she said, had traumatized generations in the capital region. "For folks in Sacramento that lived through this, I hope you open the windows tonight and feel the breeze," she said. — Reuters



CALIFORNIA: Photo shows a large area covered in thick smoke from the CZU Lightning Complex Wildfire burning in the Santa Cruz mountains, near Santa Cruz, California. — AFP

## California's fires spread, fouling air and spurring evacuations

LOS ANGELES: Thick smoke blanketed large areas of central and northern California on Friday as more people fled some of the biggest fires in the state's history which have raged largely uncontrolled through the week. One of the largest group of fires, dubbed the LNU Lightning Complex, has scorched nearly 220,000 acres, burned nearly 500 structures and forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people.

By midday Friday, the fire, which erupted on Monday and is now the 10th largest in the state's history, was just seven percent contained. Some of the fires in that complex threatened wineries in the famed Napa and Sonoma regions which are still reeling from similar deadly blazes in recent years. Officials said five deaths have been linked to the latest fires, ignited by more than 12,000 lightning strikes. Four bodies were recovered on Thursday, including three from a burned house in a rural area of Napa County. Fire officials said lightning strikes had ignited 560 fires in the past week, the largest of

which are the LNU, the SCU and CZU complex fires in the Bay Area. Daniel Berlant, Cal Fire's assistant deputy director, said although firefighters had made progress in the last 24 hours, ongoing triple-digit temperatures and bone dry conditions were not helping. He added that although temperatures were expected to cool slightly at the weekend, there is the potential of more dry lightning as early as Sunday evening.

"We could again experience a lightning storm so that has us remaining on high alert," Berlant said. About 119,000 people have been evacuated, with many struggling to find shelter and hesitating to go to centers set up by authorities because of coronavirus risks. Some in San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties, south of San Francisco, opted to sleep in trailers in parking lots or on beaches along the Pacific Ocean as they fled the CZU Lightning Complex, the seventh largest fire in the state's history. Tourists in Santa Cruz County were urged to leave to free up accommodations for people fleeing the blazes. Governor Gavin Newsom told reporters in an update Friday that most of the fires are burning in unpopulated areas and statewide have chewed through some 771,000 acres — an area the size of the state of Rhode Island. He also walked back his criticism of President Donald Trump from Thursday. Newsom had taken aim at the US leader in a pre-taped speech to the Democratic National Convention, saying Trump had threatened to pull California's funding for wildfire suppression for alleged poor forest management. — AFP

## Thousands celebrate Mali leader's ouster; diplomatic pressure builds after coup

BAMAKO: Thousands of Malians took to the streets of the capital Bamako on Friday to celebrate the military ouster of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, as West African envoys prepared to join diplomatic pressure to resolve the crisis triggered by the coup. Rebel soldiers seized Keita and other leaders after a mutiny on Tuesday at Kati, a military base outside the capital, dealing another deep blow to a country already struggling with an Islamist insurgency and wide public discontent over its government.

Keita's ouster was met with celebration in the capital on Friday, as thousands gathered in Bamako's central square draped in the national flag and blasting on vuvuzela horns. The rally, originally organized as an anti-Keita protest staged by a loose coalition that has led months of mass rallies against him, was recast to "celebrate the victory of the Malian people". "I am overjoyed! We won," said Mariam Cisse, 38. Speaking at the rally Ismael Wague, spokesman for the new junta, paid tribute to the public. "We merely completed the work that you began and we recognize ourselves in your fight," he said.

### High-level ECOWAS delegation

The West African bloc ECOWAS will send envoys to Mali on Saturday, the new junta said, after it gave the UN access to the ousted president and released two other leaders held in the dramatic rebellion that has drawn widespread international condemnation. The delegation to Bamako will be led by former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan, an ECOWAS source said, describing the trip as aiming "to help the search for solutions". He will be joined by the president of the ECOWAS Commission, Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, and Niger's foreign minister, Kalla Ankouroa. A junta official told AFP that the envoys would be received "with pleasure... it is important to talk to our brothers." ECOWAS—the 15-nation Economic Community of West African States—on Thursday announced it would dispatch a high-level delegation "to ensure the immediate return of constitutional order". ECOWAS has demanded Keita be restored as president and bluntly warned the junta that they bore "responsibility for the safety and security" of the detainees. — AFP



## International

# Turkey leader converts another Orthodox church into a mosque

## Istanbul museum to be turned back into Muslim place of worship

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday ordered another ancient Orthodox church that became a mosque and then a popular Istanbul museum to be turned back into a place of Muslim worship. The decision to transform the Kariye Museum into a mosque came just a month after a similarly controversial conversion for the UNESCO World Heritage-recognized Hagia Sophia.

Both changes reflect Erdogan's efforts to galvanize his more conservative and nationalist supporters at a time when Turkey is suffering a new spell of inflation and economic uncertainty caused by the coronavirus. But the moves have added to Turkey's problems with prelates in both the Orthodox and Catholic worlds. The Greek foreign ministry called the decision "yet another provocation against religious persons everywhere" by the Turkish government.

### 'Steeped in history'

The 1,000-year-old Kariye building's history closely mirrors that of the Hagia Sophia—its bigger and more famous neighbor on the western bank of the Golden Horn estuary on the European side of Istanbul. The Holy Savior in Chora was a Byzantine church decorated with 14th-century frescoes of the Last Judgment that remain treasured in Christendom. It was originally converted into the Kariye Mosque half a century after the 1453 conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans.

It became the Kariye Museum after World War II as Turkey pushed ahead with the creation of a more secular new republic out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. A group of American art historians

then helped restore the original church's mosaics and opened them up for public display in 1958. But Erdogan is placing an ever greater political emphasis on the battles that resulted in the defeat of Byzantium by the Ottomans. Turkey's top administrative court approved the museum's conversion into a mosque in November. "It's a place steeped in history which holds a lot of symbolism for a lot of different people," said 48-year-old French tourist Frederic Sicard outside the building. "For me, (these conversions) are a little difficult to understand and to follow. But we would visit if it were a mosque. We might just have to arrange visits around prayer times."

### 'Shame for our country'

The sand-coloured structure visible today replaced a building created as a part of a monastery when Constantinople became the new capital of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. It features a minaret in one corner and small cascading domes similar to those of other grand mosques whose calls to prayer echo across the hills of Istanbul.

But inside it is filled with magnificent frescoes and mosaics that represent some of the finest examples of Byzantine art in the Christian world. Turkey's tumultuous efforts to reconcile these two histories form the underpinnings of the country's contemporary politics and social life. Opposition HDP party lawmaker Garo Paylan called the transformation "a shame for our country". "One of the symbols of our country's deep, multicultural identity and multi-religious history has been sacrificed," he tweeted.

Ottoman Empire historian Zeynep Turkeyilmaz



**ISTANBUL:** A priest (left) and a woman visit the Chora or Kariye Museum, formally the Church of the Holy Savior, a medieval Byzantine Greek Orthodox church in the Fatih district in Istanbul. — AFP

called the conversion "destruction" because the building's walls are lined with Christian art that would have to be either covered up or plastered over—as it was by the Ottomans. "It is impossible to hide the frescoes and mosaics because they decorate the entire building," the historian told AFP. Yet

some locals fully supported the change. "There are dozens, hundreds of churches, synagogues in Istanbul and only a few of them have been opened to prayer as mosques," said Yucel Sahin as he strolled by the building after the morning rain. "There is a lot of tolerance in our culture." — AFP

### News in brief

#### Tunisia reimposes curfew

**TUNIS:** Tunisia authorities have reinstated a curfew in El Hamma after a spike in novel coronavirus cases there, the mayor said, as rail links servicing the town were suspended. El Hamma, home to some 100,000 people, has recorded 441 cases of infection and five deaths from the COVID-19 illness, mayor Nacef Ennajej said. He said a curfew had been imposed from 5 pm to 5 am for one week in the town, located some 325 kilometers south of the capital Tunis. The North African country has registered a total of 2,543 cases and 63 fatalities since the start of the outbreak. Trains from Tunis to the city of Gabes, which services El Hamma, have also been cancelled, the national rail company said. Ennajej said the town's hospital was struggling to cope. — AFP

#### Bar Nigerians and get barred

**LAGOS:** Nigeria will bar entry to nationals of countries that do not allow Nigerians to enter amid the new coronavirus pandemic, the aviation minister said on Friday. Nigeria is preparing to re-open its airports to international flights on Aug. 29, for the first time since March, and is developing the rules and protocols to enable the resumption. Minister Hadi Sirika told airline and travel industry representatives on a Zoom call late on Friday that a reciprocal ban on travel would apply to both airlines and citizens. "If they ban both the passengers and the carriers together, then that's what's going to happen," Sirika said. A day earlier, a spokesman for Sirika said the reciprocal ban targeted landing rights for aircraft, rather than citizens. But Sirika said completely reciprocal measures were a matter of fairness to Nigerians. — Reuters

#### Schoolgirl 'raped, murdered'

**PARIS:** The former wife of a convicted French serial killer has said he kidnapped, raped and killed a schoolgirl who disappeared 17 years ago, her lawyer said, renewing hopes of finding a body in one of France's most notorious unsolved cases. Killer Michel Fourniret's ex-wife Monique Olivier gave key testimony in November last year, and in January said her ex-husband was guilty of nine-year-old Estelle Mouzin's murder-prompting Fourniret's confession in March. But Olivier's fresh disclosure—which has resulted in her being charged with complicity—have renewed hopes of finding the schoolgirl's body that investigators failed to locate in June, despite a four-day-long thorough search of the serial killer's properties in the Ardennes. "Monique Olivier declared to the investigating magistrate... that Michel Fourniret abducted Estelle Mouzin, kidnapped her, took her on January 9, 2003 to Ville-sur-Lumes to hold her captive, and raped and strangled her," Olivier's lawyer Richard Delgenes said. — AFP

#### Slovakia 'shocked' at brutality

**BRATISLAVA:** Slovakia's foreign minister on Friday expressed shock at footage showing Belgian police brutality that led to the death of a Slovak citizen in 2018. Ivan Korcok also called on Slovak authorities "to investigate the whole matter without delay, responsibly and vigorously". "Like the entire Slovak public, I am shocked by the footage published by the Belgian media," Korcok wrote on his Facebook page. On Thursday, a video emerged showing a Slovak man, Jozef Chovanec, being violently pinned down by airport police officers, in images that recalled the fate of George Floyd in the US. The CCTV images, seen by AFP, date to February 2018, when Chovanec was taken off a plane in Charleroi, Belgium, after refusing to show his ticket as he boarded. — AFP

## The Gazans speaking Hebrew 15 years after Israel left

**KHAN YUNIS:** When Abdel Rahman Al-Najjar works among the plants in his Gaza nursery, Hebrew words still slip from his lips, a legacy of Israel's long presence which ended 15 years ago. "Taazov!—Leave it alone! — he suddenly snaps at a visitor holding flowers at his business in the Al-Mawasi area, in the southern Gaza Strip. Then he smiles and takes a break from working under the hot August sun. "Some words from everyday life, names of pesticides and plants are still there in Hebrew," says Najjar, a father of nine.

On August 22, 2005, the Israeli army completed its evacuation of the 21 Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, before leaving the Palestinian territory. Two years later, it would be under the control of the militant Islamist group Hamas, leading Israel to impose a blockade on the narrow strip of land now populated by two million people. Without Israelis in Gaza, and with little chance of leaving the fenced and closely guarded enclave to work in Israel, some Gazans have nevertheless maintained their knowledge of Hebrew. Najjar learnt the language when he worked at a nursery in Israel. He later worked in Gaza's Jewish settlement of Neve Dekalim.

### 'Life came back'

"I worked in a flower nursery in that settlement, but the (Israeli) army destroyed everything before leaving," he said. He expresses no nostalgia for the times before the evacuation. The settlements were like fortified islands, sometimes surrounded by high walls of concrete and barbed wire and protected by military posts. Like thousands of other farmers and workers, he was subject to strict military controls in order to enter Neve Dekalim.

After the Israeli pull-out, Hamas and the Gulf emirate of Qatar, which provides financial aid to the Gaza Strip, set up projects to cultivate the land. Najjar's view now takes in an olive grove, orange trees and palm trees—a scene that could almost make a visitor forget the conflict and bloodshed this territory has seen. Ismail al-Astal, a farmer in his



**AL-ZAHRA:** Palestinian youths sit in a pendulum ride at the Sharm Park amusement park in the area formerly occupied by the Jewish settlement of Netzarim, south of Gaza City. — AFP

mid-forties, did farm work in some of the settlements, where between 7,000 and 8,000 Israelis lived until their eviction.

He fondly remembers their departure, which took place on a night when he was at home in bed. "My brother came to wake me up and said to me: 'Praise be to God, the last tank is leaving.' I cried for joy," he says. "We were like prisoners... and all at once, life came back," says Astal, who received a plot of 15 dunams (3.7 acres, 1.5 hectares) for himself and his seven brothers. For the past two weeks, the Israeli air force has bombed the Gaza Strip almost every night, in retaliation for incendiary balloons and rockets launched from the enclave. Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008.

### 'Who are you going to talk to?'

Astal later passed his knowledge of Hebrew to his son, Mohammed. "I love learning Hebrew. Sometimes I hear my father speak Hebrew with relatives or friends," the younger Astal says. "I myself took lessons at a language school in Khan Yunis, but it was really difficult," he says, referring to a nearby city. "Who are you going to talk to? Israelis are not allowed to go to Gaza."

In the wake of a fragile truce last year between Hamas and Israel, some Gazans were allowed across the border to work, such as in construction. The novel coronavirus pandemic put a stop to that. Fifteen years after the withdrawal, "Israel controls everything, the crossings, poverty, misery and unemployment," Mohammed al-Astal says. — AFP

## Brazil's squalid jails get even worse as COVID-19 spreads

**BRASILIA:** Squalid, overcrowded and prone to deadly riots, Brazil's prisons now face a new problem as COVID-19 spreads inside them, pushing already precarious health services to the brink and increasing inmates' isolation from their families. From the dingy, poorly ventilated cells to the limited rations of food and water to the violence to the overcrowding, which can reach up to four times capacity, Brazil's prisons were already bleak places before the coronavirus pandemic engulfed the country.

Now, for both inmates and their families, the virus has made the ordeal of incarceration even worse. "I'm afraid of losing my husband inside. There's never been adequate medical care, and now the worry is even worse because we're dealing with an invisible enemy," said one Sao Paulo inmate's wife, who asked her name not be used. Brazil has the third-biggest prison population in the world after the United States and China, with nearly 750,000 inmates—well over the official capacity of 440,000.

The South American country also has the second-highest number of infections and deaths in the pandemic, after the US: more than 3.5 million and 112,000, respectively. Since the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in a Rio de Janeiro prison in April, the virus has spread quickly through



**MANAUS:** Inmates are seen on the top of a tower of the Puraquevira prison during a rebellion to demand better conditions inside the prison in which seven guards were taken hostage in Manaus Brazil, amid the novel coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

Brazil's jails, despite the suspension of visits and transfers. More than 17,300 inmates have been infected and nearly 100 have died, according to the National Penitentiary Department.

But experts say the real numbers are probably much higher. Just 7.8 percent of inmates have been tested. "We have no idea what the real situation is," said Alexandra Sanchez, a researcher at Brazil's leading public health institute, Fiocruz. "Inmates' health was already a major problem. Now, with COVID-19, we don't know what's going to happen." In a recent, comprehensive study in the Sao Paulo prison Sorocaba II, 38 percent of the 2,095 inmates tested positive for the virus. That is around 13 percentage

points higher than even the worst-affected slums in Rio de Janeiro, Sanchez said. "That's an extremely high rate. The spread of the virus is stunning," she told AFP. A paper she recently co-authored warns of the impact the pandemic is having on prisoners. "Inmates' fears for their lives and health, combined with restrictions on movement within the prisons and the interruption of work, educational and religious activities, are aggravating tensions, with serious emotional implications for the prison population," it said. Another inmate's relative shared a letter from her 29-year-old son, incarcerated for drug crimes and sharing a cell with 41 other prisoners in Sao Paulo. — AFP



SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 2020

# Business

## British govt debt exceeds £2 trillion

### Pandemic crisis has put public finances under significant strain

LONDON: British government debt has exceeded £2 trillion for the first time following massive state borrowing as the coronavirus pandemic pushed the UK economy into a record recession, official data showed Friday. At the end of July, total accumulated debt hit £2,004 trillion (\$2.61 trillion, 2.2 trillion euros), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement.

That was equivalent to more than 100 percent of the country's annual gross domestic product, or total economic output, for the first time since 1961. By comparison, Apple this week became the first US company to have a market valuation totaling \$2 trillion (£1.5 trillion), boosted as it is seen as a key winner in the new post-coronavirus economy.

Compared with July 2019, UK debt increased by £227.6 billion, reflecting the huge increase in borrowing needed to tackle the pandemic.



**Pound drops more than 1.0% against dollar**

#### 'Significant strain'

"This crisis has put the public finances under significant strain as we have

seen a hit to our economy and taken action to support millions of jobs, businesses and livelihoods," finance minister Rishi Sunak said. "Without that support things would have been far worse."

Net borrowing between April and the end of July is estimated to have hit £150.5 billion, the ONS said. Last month's figure alone came in at £26.7 billion, as the UK emerged from a strict lockdown imposed at the end of March to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

"Today's figures are a stark reminder that we must return our public finances to a sustainable

footing over time, which will require taking difficult decisions," said Sunak, whose official title is Chancellor of the Exchequer. "It is also why we are taking action now to support the growth and jobs which pay for our public service, by helping businesses to reopen safely."

#### Pound pummeled

The pound fell by more than 1.0 percent against the dollar on Friday as the EU and Britain traded blame for the lack of progress after the latest round of post-Brexit trade talks, with Brussels warning that a deal looked unlikely. Sterling was changing hands at \$1.3074 in afternoon trade, compared with \$1.3214 late Thursday.

The pound is being punished "by Brexit talks which seem to be going nowhere," said Neil Wilson, analyst at Markets.com. "The two sides are still far from reaching agreement on key terms" of their post-Brexit relationship.

#### Retail recovery

Separately, data showed that British retail sales jumped by 3.6 percent in July from June as shops, restaurants and pubs reopened. "Retail sales have now regained all the ground lost during the height of the coronavirus restrictions as more stores open for trade and online sales remain at historically high levels," ONS statistician Jonathan Athow said.

"While still below their pre-pandemic levels, both fuel and clothing sales continued to recover. "Meanwhile, food sales fell back from their recent peaks as people started to venture back



LONDON: British government debt has exceeded £2 trillion for the first time following massive state borrowing as the coronavirus pandemic pushed the UK economy into a record recession, official data showed Friday —AFP

into pubs and restaurants," Athow said. Marks and Spencer, the British food and clothes retailer, announced this week that it was cutting 7,000 jobs as COVID-19 increasingly pushes customers to shop online.

The company joins the likes of UK department store chains Debenhams and John Lewis, as well as pharmacy group Boots, in cutting thousands of jobs owing to pandemic fallout. Britain's economy shrank by one fifth in the second quarter, more than any European neighbor, as the lockdown

plunged the country into its deepest recession on record.

Even though the UK economy is beginning to rebound as the government eases strict confinement measures-private sector output grew rapidly in August according to data Friday — analysts expect a surge in unemployment by the end of the year. In October, Sunak plans to end the government's furlough scheme that is paying up to 80 percent of wages for around 10 million workers during the pandemic. —AFP

## World Bank warns extreme poverty could surge by 100m

WASHINGTON: The coronavirus pandemic may have driven as many as 100 million people back into extreme poverty, World Bank President David Malpass warned.

The Washington-based development lender previously estimated that 60 million people would fall into extreme poverty due to COVID-19, but the new estimate puts the deterioration at 70 to 100 million, and he said "that number could go higher" if the pandemic worsens or drags on. The situation makes it "imperative" that creditors reduce the amount of debt held by poor countries at risk, going beyond the commitment to suspend debt payments, Malpass said in an interview with AFP.

Even so, more countries will be obliged to restructure their debt. "The debt vulnerabilities are high, and the imperative of getting light at the end of the tunnel so that new investors can come in is substantial," Malpass said. Advanced economies in the Group of 20 already have committed to suspending debt payments from the poorest nations through the end of the year, and there is growing support for extending that moratorium into next year amid a pandemic that's killed nearly 800,000 people and sickened more than 25 million worldwide. But Malpass said that will not be enough, since the economic downturn means those countries, which already are struggling to provide a safety net for their citizens, will not be in a better position to deal with the payments.

#### Recession or depression?

The amount of debt reduction needed will depend on the situation in each country, he said, but



MANILA: Men queue up to receive food aid in Manila after the Philippines economy plunged into recession. —AFP

the policy "makes a lot of sense." "So I think the awareness of this will be gradually, more and more apparent" especially "for the countries with the highest vulnerability to the debt situation."

The World Bank has committed to deploying \$160 billion in funding to 100 countries through June 2021 in an effort to address the immediate emergency, and about \$21 billion had been released through the end of June. But even so, extreme poverty, defined as earning less than \$1.90 a day, continues to rise. Malpass said the deterioration is due to a combination of the destruction of jobs during the pandemic as well as supply issues that make access to food more difficult. "All of this contributes to pushing people back into extreme poverty the longer the economic crisis persists."

Newly-installed World Bank Chief Economist Carmen Reinhart has called the economic crisis a "pandemic depression," but Malpass was less concerned with terminology.

Germany and France, the bloc's two biggest economies, also lost economic momentum this month, driven by the services slowdown. Apart from those economies, activity in the bloc decreased marginally in August, IHS Markit said.

In Britain, outside the currency union and who entered and exited lockdown later than its eurozone neighbors, the recovery from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic quickened again in August. British retail sales surged past pre-pandemic levels in July, the first full month shops selling non-essential goods were open since the country went into lockdown in March, although economists fear the retail recovery may not last.

However, snowballing job cuts sent an ominous signal for the months ahead. Stock markets made small advances on Friday following a huge rally that has wiped out coronavirus losses.

#### Services stall

Growth in the euro zone's dominant service sector stalled, with that PMI plummeting to 50.1 from 54.7, below all forecasts in the Reuters poll which predicted a small dip to 54.5. With demand waning, the bloc's services firms cut headcount for a sixth month and more sharply than in July. Economists noted the employment components of the PMIs suggested trouble in the job market. "Those numbers indicate that the worst is yet to be seen in the euro area labor market and clearly points to a gradual recovery path," noted Tuuli Koivu at Nordea Markets.

Factory activity - which didn't suffer quite as

"We can start calling it a depression. Our focus is on how do we help countries be resilient in working out on the other side."

#### More debt transparency

Malpass said he has been "frustrated" by the slow progress among private creditors in providing comparable debt suspension terms for poor countries. While the Institute for International Finance has set up a framework to waive debt service payments, as of mid-July member banks had not received any applications. Having a clear view of the size of each country's debt and the collateral involved also are key to being able to help the debtor nations, Malpass said. China is a major creditor in many of these countries, and the government has been "participating in the transparency process," but he said more needs to be done to understand the terms of loans in nations like Angola, where there are liens on the country's oil output. —AFP



European Central Bank headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany

sharp a decline as the service industry during the height of the pandemic - expanded for a second month. An index measuring output, which feeds into the composite PMI, rose to 55.7 from 55.3. However, suggesting factory purchasing managers don't expect a big pick up in activity, they again bought fewer raw materials than in the previous month.

European Union leaders agreed last month a 750 billion euro pandemic recovery fund but the relief won't kick in until next year. For its part, the European Central Bank is expected to keep monetary policy ultra-loose for a long time. A full bounceback from the euro zone's deepest recession on record will take two years or more, according to a recent Reuters poll of economists. —Reuters

## S&P downgrades Lebanon bonds to default

WASHINGTON: Credit ratings agency S&P on Friday downgraded more Lebanese government debt issues after missed payments, citing the country's worsening economic crisis following the devastating explosion in Beirut earlier this month. S&P Global Ratings maintained the "selective default" or "SD" rating for Lebanon's foreign debt, after the country first defaulted in March, but three more bonds were cut to "D" from "CC," the agency said.

"The recent catastrophic explosion in Beirut is deepening the country's economic crisis," S&P said in a statement. "A protracted political vacuum or weak new government could further delay policy reforms, external aid and debt restructuring negotiations." The capital was ravaged by a massive explosion at Beirut's port on August 4 that killed 181 people and wounded thousands. That was followed by protests against the government, leading the cabinet to resign.

Still reeling from the deadly blast, the country also entered into a new coronavirus lockdown Friday after a string of record daily infections tallies. "Even before these recent events, Lebanon had made limited progress in engaging creditors on debt restructuring negotiations," S&P said.

The IMF has been working with the government to try to reach an agreement on a new aid program that could undergird a debt restructuring and unlock billions more in aid.

Lebanon's government says it needs \$20 billion in external funding, which includes \$11 billion pledged by donors in 2018. However, this "remains elusive as the key Lebanese political institutions and players are unable to agree on the causes and scope of the country's crisis." "Without a strong commitment to implement structural economic, fiscal and monetary reforms, and absent a policy anchor provided by an IMF program, we expect restructuring negotiations will be drawn out beyond 2020," the agency said. —AFP

## Eurozone economic recovery falters

LONDON: The eurozone's recovery from its deepest economic downturn on record hit the brakes in August, particularly in services, as pent-up demand unleashed by the easing of coronavirus lockdowns dwindled, a survey showed on Friday. To contain the spread of the virus, which has infected over 22.5 million people globally, governments imposed strict lockdowns - forcing businesses to close and citizens to stay home, bringing economic activity to a near halt.

After many of those restrictions were relaxed, activity in the euro zone expanded in July at the fastest pace since mid-2018. But as infection rates have risen again in parts of the region, some earlier curbs have been reinstated. So in data likely to concern policymakers and diminish hopes for a V-shaped recovery, IHS Markit's flash Composite Purchasing Managers' Index sank to 51.6 from July's final reading of 54.9, below all forecasts in a Reuters poll that predicted no change.

"The fall back in the eurozone composite PMI in August suggests the initial V-shaped rebound following the lifting of the lockdowns is already fizzling out," said Jessica Hinds at Capital Economics. The flow of incoming new business for firms slowed and once again some of August's activity was derived by businesses completing backlogs of work.

## Chile slaps record fine on Norwegian salmon producer

SANTIAGO: Chile's environmental protection service said Friday it had slapped a record \$6.6 million fine on a Norwegian salmon producer for the 2018 escape of 690,000 antibiotic-fed fish. The fine, handed to salmon farming company Mowi, formerly known as Marina Harvest, was the largest ever for an environmental offense in the South American country. The charge of 5.3 billion pesos (\$6.6 million) was in response to the "irreparable environmental damage produced by the mass escape of salmon" from the Punta Redonda farm in Chile's Los Lagos region, around 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) south of the capital Santiago. The service also handed the company an additional 2.7 million peso fine "for not having adequate facilities to dispose of dead fish." —AFP



## Business

# EU, Britain trade blame after scant progress towards post-Brexit deal

## Both sides say chances for deal by year-end looking bleaker

**BRUSSELS/LONDON:** Britain and the European Union made scant progress towards a deal on future ties in talks this week, and their chief negotiators blamed each other for the stalemate as time ticks down to an end-of-year deadline. "Those who were hoping for negotiations to move swiftly forward this week will have been disappointed," the EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, told a news conference after two full days of talks in Brussels.

His British counterpart David Frost said a deal on post-Brexit relations was "still possible" and was still London's goal but would not be easy to achieve. "There are ... significant areas which remain to be resolved and even where there is a broad understanding between negotiators, there is a lot of detail to work through," Frost said in a statement. "Time is short for both sides."

British officials said London was willing to talk about any issue and that the EU's insistence Britain must accept its position on state aid and fisheries meant Brussels was responsible for slowing the talks down. On Jan. 31, Britain became the first country ever to leave the EU, which it had joined in 1973.

Their relationship is now governed by a transition arrangement that keeps previous rules in place while they negotiate a new partnership, to be effective from 2021, on everything from trade and transport to energy and security. The EU says Britain can only go on trading freely with its lucrative single market of 450 million people if London accepts "level playing field" rules to guarantee fair competition.



### Barnier: Talks often went backwards

#### The clock is ticking

Without an agreement, trade and financial ties between the world's fifth-largest economy and biggest trading bloc would break down, potentially deepening the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disagreements over state aid rules and fishing quotas have so far thwarted a deal, which the EU says must be in the making in time to be approved at an Oct. 15-16 summit of the bloc's 27 national leaders to enable ratification this year. Beyond the biggest stumbling blocks, differences also linger in discussions on migration, security, dispute-settling mechanisms, human rights guarantees and other areas.

With the coronavirus pandemic wreaking economic havoc and both sides of the Channel wanting to avoid an even deeper recession, EU sources had been relatively upbeat in recent weeks that an agreement could be reached on time. Barnier sounded downbeat on Friday, however, saying he was "disappointed and concerned" because British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had told the EU he wanted to speed up the negotiating process over the summer.

"This week, once again, as in the July round, the British negotiators have not shown any real willingness to move forward on issues of fundamental importance for the European Union," Barnier said. "And this despite the flexibility which we have shown over recent months." Barnier said no progress at all was made this

chosen so as to maximize the mutual benefits.

The whole deal is worth some 168 million euros (\$198 million), based on 2019 trade. The EU imported some 42 million euros of US lobsters and exported to the United States 126 million euros of the other products involved. The apparent mismatch is partly because the United States will only be halving, not removing, tariffs. Lobsters have been a big concern for Trump, who threatened in June to impose tariffs on Europe and China over lobster duties.

Lawmakers from Maine have repeatedly called for aid for the lobster industry, which supports the livelihood of 4,500 state-licensed lobstermen and an additional 10,000 people. US Senator Angus King said the agreement would help level the playing field for US producers whose European sales declined after a trade deal between Canada and the EU eliminated tariffs on Canadian lobsters. The US industry has also been hurt by Chinese tariffs imposed in 2018 and the collapse of sales to restaurants during coronavirus-related lockdowns. The agreement will still need approval from EU governments and the European Parliament. That could come within weeks.

Washington has subjected \$7.5 billion of EU products, including Scottish whisky, French wine and European cheese, to tariffs because of a

Federal Aviation Administration unveiled a list of recommended changes to ensure the safety of the Boeing 737 MAX. "Transport Canada remains committed to ensuring that flight restrictions in Canada remain in effect until the department is fully satisfied that the manufacturer and the FAA have addressed all safety concerns and that training requirements for flight crews are in place," the agency said.

The 737 MAX has been grounded since March 13, 2019 after the crash of an Ethiopian Airlines aircraft that killed 157 passengers and crew. The tragedy came just months after a Lion Air 737 MAX crashed, claiming the lives of 189 people. The MAX's anti-stall flight system, the MCAS, was partially to blame for both crashes.

But other technical malfunctions, including one involving electrical wiring, were subsequently detected during the aircraft's modification process, slowing down its recertification. —AFP

ture of a fitful recovery from the COVID-19 recession. Nonetheless, bets on technology-focused companies including Apple Inc and Amazon.com to ride out the economic uncertainty have set the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq on track to close out the week higher.

"The uncertainty and choppiness are driving people back to some of the more traditional trades that have stayed immune through the course of the pandemic," said Mike Stritch, chief investment officer at BMO Wealth Management in Chicago. On Tuesday, the S&P 500 clinched a record high, recouping the last of its losses caused by the coronavirus-driven slump and joining the Nasdaq in notching new highs.

The Dow still remains about 6 percent below its peak in February. Investors also worry about a stalemate in talks between House Democrats and the White House over the next coronavirus aid bill as about 28 million Americans continued to collect unemployment cheques.

"The market will move higher, but it will be very slow and irregular one, at least until there's a vac-



**BRUSSELS:** EU's Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier holds a news conference after a meeting with Britain's chief negotiator in Brussels on Friday. Barnier said he was worried and "disappointed" at the lack of progress in the latest round of Brexit trade talks. —AFP

week on the vexed question of fishing rights in UK waters, and overall negotiations often appeared to be going backwards rather than forwards and so, at this stage, an agreement looked unlikely.

"On the European side, we are very concerned about the state of play in our negotiations. The clock is ticking," he said. He did note, however,

some progress on energy and anti-money laundering cooperation from 2021.

An EU diplomat said few had expected significant progress this month, and there are better prospects for headway to be made in the next round of negotiations, which will be held in London during the second week of September. —Reuters

## US and EU hatch mini-deal to cut lobster, other tariffs

**BRUSSELS/WASHINGTON:** The United States and the European Union on Friday announced a mini-deal valued at around \$200 million to cut import tariffs on a small range of products, including US lobsters, in a sign of easing transatlantic trade tensions. The two, who have been at odds over aircraft subsidies and US President Donald Trump's imposition of punitive tariffs on EU steel and aluminum, announced the deal in a joint statement. "The importance of the deal is that it has unleashed positive results elsewhere," an EU official said.

Under the agreement, the EU will remove tariffs of 8 percent-12 percent on imports of lobsters, while the United States will halve its duties on imports of certain glassware, ceramics, disposable lighters and prepared meals.

To comply with World Trade Organization rules, the lowered and removed tariffs will apply to all WTO members, although the products have been



**BRUSSELS/WASHINGTON:** The United States and the European Union on Friday announced a mini-deal valued at around \$200 million to cut import tariffs on a small range of products, including US lobsters.

WTO case it won over EU subsidies given to planemaker Airbus. It had threatened to increase them. However, it carried out only very modest changes last week, a move welcomed by the European Commission as a sign of Washington's willingness to work through a range of trade disputes with Brussels. The WTO is expected to clear the way for European tariffs against US products in a dispute over subsidies given to Boeing this autumn. —Reuters



In this file photo, a Boeing 737 MAX jet lands following a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) test flight at Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington. Canada's transport agency said on Friday that it will take a Boeing 737 MAX out for a test flight, more than a year after two deadly crashes led to the jetliner's grounding around the world. —AFP

## Canada to take Boeing 737 MAX out for test flight

**MONTREAL:** Canada's transport agency said Friday it will take a Boeing 737 MAX out for a test flight, more than a year after two deadly crashes led to the jetliner's grounding around the world. In a statement to AFP, Transport Canada said it would conduct the test flights in US airspace during the week of August 24.

Agency staff will also conduct flight simulator tests at Boeing's facility in Seattle, Washington.

Boeing has been making strides towards getting the MAX certified to fly again, with test flights in late June, but authorities have not yet given the green light. In early August, the US

## Wall St drifts higher after upbeat US business surveys

**NEW YORK:** Wall Street's main indexes nudged higher on Friday with the tech-heavy Nasdaq notching another record high, as data highlighted the pockets of strength in the US economy. Business activity snapped back to the highest since early 2019 in the United States in August as companies in both the manufacturing and services sectors saw a resurgence in new orders, IHS Markit surveys showed.

Another report showed US home sales rose at a record pace for a second straight month in July and home prices hit all-time highs. The unexpectedly sharp increases in Markit's indexes continue a pattern of choppy US economic data this week - including weekly jobless claims - that paint a pic-

## Fearing shipping crunch, retailers set earliest-ever holiday sale plans

**NEW YORK/LOS ANGELES:** The coronavirus pandemic is upending the way US consumers shop and the holidays will be no exception as major retailers and shippers roll out their earliest-ever shopping season. Target, Best Buy and Kohl's have moved winter holiday promotions up to as early as October. They also joined rival Walmart in announcing store closures on Thanksgiving and plans to bypass the midnight Black Friday door-buster sales that traditionally mark the start of the holiday season but are incompatible with the pandemic's social distancing recommendations.

Kohl's Chief Executive Michelle Gass said that "a holiday season like no other" means emphasizing comfortable apparel, home essentials and kids' toys, all categories that have performed well as shoppers largely opt to remain at home. Target CEO Brian Cornell on Wednesday said the retailer will stress same-day delivery and add thousands of items available via these services, including more gifts and essentials during the "very different holiday season." Same-day delivery takes strain off delivery firms like United Parcel Service and FedEx because it's done by "gig" drivers for companies like Shipt, DoorDash and Postmates.

One supplier to a big box retailer told Reuters that the chain is bracing for a 30% decline in holiday spending this year, though the National Retail Federation (NRF) trade group has yet to release its holiday forecast. "It'll be interesting to see if stores even have Black Friday sales or are open on Black Friday," said Randy Hare, portfolio manager at Huntington Private Bank, who says he is "starting to think about how we want to be positioned into the holiday season."

Some logistics firms are urging retail clients to pace promotions - for example, pushing big-screen TVs one week and holiday sweaters the next - to ease the crush. "It can't be a blitz of every single product you have online. Let's pick and choose," said Scott Sureddin, DHL Supply Chain CEO for North America.

Ecommerce is expected to reach a record 15 percent of all US sales this year, according to research firm eMarketer, and retailers are scouring their operations for opportunities to wring out costs. They aren't getting any breaks from delivery companies, which are slapping hefty surcharges on holiday packages and cherry-picking business by limiting shipments on some customers. Logjams at the US Postal Service - which according to Rakuten Intelligence now handles almost 40 percent of last-mile home deliveries - are taxing the US shipping network, which is bracing for a holiday volume spike on top of pandemic-fueled demand that shippers characterized as a "second Christmas."

Average daily package volume at UPS hit 24.4 million during the second quarter, almost 92 percent what it was during the fourth-quarter holiday peak. Demand is so robust that the USPS announced its first-ever holiday surcharge - joining UPS and FedEx.

"We know that online shopping picks up over the holidays and the system is already pressed to meet that sort of demand," said Mark Mathews, vice president of research at the NRF. "If you've got a situation where you're adding another 10 or 20 percent to that, which is well within the realm of a possibility, that creates real challenges." —Reuters



## Business

# Kuwait budget records an actual deficit of KD 1,290.1 million

## CBK governor announces publication of Economic Report 2019

**KUWAIT:** Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr. Mohammad Y Al-Hashel announced the publication of the Economic Report for the year 2019, which is the 48th such report in a series prepared and published by the bank. Dr Al-Hashel indicated that the report contains the latest available data and statistics on various aspects of the economic performance of the State of Kuwait and is composed of six major parts, each dedicated to a key topic.



**GDP value up to  
KD 39,424.7m  
in 2019**

The governor pointed out that the first part addresses key trends in Kuwaiti economic performance in 2019 as reflected in data and statistics available on state accounts, domestic prices, population, and workforce. Within this context, the available statistics reveal growth in value added at constant prices in non-oil sectors by KD 532.4 million or 3.0 percent in 2019, to reach KD 18,541.5 million against KD 18,009.1 million in 2018.

Meanwhile, value added at constant prices in the oil sectors decreased by KD 370.5 million or 1.7 percent to KD 20,883.2 million in 2019 compared to KD 21,253.7 million in the previous year. As a result, the value of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant prices inched up to KD 39,424.7 million in 2019 against KD 39,262.8 million in the previous year, which

is a growth of KD 161.9 million or 0.4 percent.

Moving on to the inflation rate in the State of Kuwait, the relative change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was up to 1.1 percent in 2019 against 0.6 percent in the previous year. In terms of population and workforce developments in the State of Kuwait, the available statistics indicate that the growth rate of population in Kuwait was 3.3 percent at the end of 2019 compared to 2.7 percent in 2018. The total population, at the end of 2019, reached 4.776 million compared to 4.622 million at the end of 2018. As for workforce figures, the total workforce grew 5.1 percent in 2019 compared to a growth of 4.4 percent in 2018.

The second part of the report, the Governor added, reviews the main monetary and banking developments and CBK's activities in areas of monetary policy and banking supervision. In this regard, available data indicate sustained relative stability in the exchange rate of the Kuwaiti Dinar against major currencies in 2019, as CBK maintained an exchange rate system based on pegging the KD to a special weighted basket of currencies of countries that share significant financial and trade relations with the State of Kuwait, imposed since 20th May 2007. The data reveal that the USD exchange rate against the KD was confined within relatively narrow margins in 2019 compared to changes in USD exchange rate against the other major currencies. Meanwhile, there was slower growth in Money Supply in its broad definition (M2), 1.2 percent at the end of 2019, whereas resident private sector deposits with local banks dropped by 1.7 percent by end of 2019 compared to the previous year.

Dr Al-Hashel added that balances of credit facilities provided by local banks to various economic sectors were up by 4.3 percent at the end of 2019. In light of the CBK's continuous monitoring of developments in the local economic, monetary, and banking conditions on the one hand and developments in interest rate tra-

jectories of major currencies during the year 2019 on the other, the CBK lowered its discount rate by a quarter-percentage point from 3.0 percent to 2.75 percent, on 30 October 2019. In the regulatory domain, the CBK maintained supervision and oversight over the units of the local banking and finance sector, aiming to strengthen these units and further entrench financial stability. The CBK had intensified oversight to improve the sector's ability to serve the national economy.

### Banking sector

The third part of the report includes the developments seen in the financial indicators of the local banking and financial system, in light of the aggregate financial statements of the various CBK-regulated banking and financial units' groups including local banks, investment companies, and exchange companies. This review helps identify some aspects of growth and performance, as well as the trajectory of these indicators and the perceived impact on the financial position of these groups. In this context, the aggregate balance sheet of local banks on the domestic level (activity of local banks and their local branches) grew by 6.7 percent at the end of 2019.

The aggregate balance sheet of local exchange companies registered with and regulated by the CBK meanwhile posted a growth of 13.4 percent, while the aggregate balance sheet of local investment companies registered with the CBK dropped by 5.9 percent at the end of the year compared to the previous.

### Budget

The fourth part of the report outlines the key developments in the State's finances, where the general budget recorded an actual deficit of KD 1,290.1 million, compared to an actual deficit of KD 3,247.8 million the year before, before deducting the allocations for the Reserve Fund for Future Generations (RFFG).



Dr. Mohammad  
Y Al-Hashel

The fifth part of the report reviews the developments in the international trade and financial relations of the State of Kuwait with other economies, as reflected in the statistics on foreign trade and the Balance of Payments (BoP) of the State of Kuwait for 2019. In this regard, realized surplus in the balance on goods dropped by KD 1,650.4 million, 13.3 percent. This drop is mainly

due to decrease in the value of oil exports, resulting in turn from relative drop of global oil prices. As a result, the Current Account registered a surplus of KD 6,722.5 million against a surplus of KD 6,008.0 million the previous year. The overall position of the BoP of the State of Kuwait in 2019 accordingly recorded a total surplus of KD 821.1 million.

Lastly, the sixth part of the report showcases developments in the performance of Boursa Kuwait in 2019, indicating that the main trading indices (value and volume of traded shares) had posted notable gains by the end of the year, up 92.3 percent and 82.7 percent respectively, compared to 2018. The All-Share index meanwhile ended the year up 23.7 percent, compared to the year before. The Premier Market Index also posted a considerable increase of 32.6 percent, while the Main Market index posted a more modest increase of 3.6 percent. The market capitalization of listed companies increased by 24.6 percent at the end of 2019.

The Governor concluded by pointing out that the Economic Report for 2019 is now available on the CBK official website ([www.cbk.gov.kw](http://www.cbk.gov.kw)).

## Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account grand prize up to KD 1.5 million

**KUWAIT:** Starting this year, Gulf Bank's annual grand prize for the Al-Danah account has increased to KD 1.5 million becoming one of the biggest prizes associated with a bank account worldwide. This year's annual draw ceremony to announce the grand prize winner is scheduled to take place on January 14, 2021 with the last chance for customers to be able to deposit into their accounts, and therefore be eligible for the draw, on September 30, 2020.

Mohammad Al-Qattan, Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, encouraged Gulf Bank customers residing in Kuwait to take advantage of this opportunity, saying: "The Al-Danah account is one of the best savings accounts in Kuwait, with its periodic draws that award valuable prizes and its many advantages for account holders. Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account offers weekly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to five lucky winners, in addition to three quarterly draws with KD 250,000 prizes each, and a grand prize of KD 1,500,000. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind Gulf Bank clients that they can always open and deposit into their Al-Danah accounts online through the Gulf Bank app, or by visiting their nearest branch."

During the months of June and July, Gulf Bank held all the weekly and quarterly draws that had been previously postponed due to restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic. Gulf Bank also launched the mobile, "Al-Danah Run" game, which users enjoyed with friends during the country's lockdown period.

### Numerous benefits

The Al-Danah account is the only account that rewards customers for their loyalty by providing loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances gained at the end of the previous year, which are then transferred to the current year to reward the customer for their loyalty to the Bank.

In that way, all chances for existing Al-Danah customers from 2019 (from January 1 to December 31, 2019) have been transferred to the 2020 draws, provided that customers qualify for the draw and that their balances do not drop below KD 200 at any time during the year 2020. It is also worth noting that all account draws are attended by a representative from the



Mohammad Al-Qattan

Ministry of Trade and Industry, with the quarterly and annual draws also reviewed by Ernst & Young.

To increase their chances of winning, account holders must either keep their account with a minimum deposit amount of KD 200, or increase their Al-Danah savings - the more deposits into an account, the more chances accumulated over time. Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account holders also have the opportunity to enter and win cash prizes all year long through weekly, quarterly and annual draws.

### Opening an Al-Danah Account

To enter the upcoming draws, Gulf Bank customers can open an Al-Danah account today with only KD 200. To open an Al-Danah account, existing Gulf Bank customers can apply through Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services, or book an appointment at their nearest branch by using the new "Visit Gulf Bank" app for a faster and more convenient branch visit. New customers can also open an Al-Danah account by visiting their nearest Gulf Bank branch or by scheduling an appointment through the app.

### Deposit more for more chances to win!

With Gulf Bank, depositing into an Al-Danah account is easier and more secure than ever, as clients can deposit into their accounts through the following channels: Online/Mobile Banking App which includes the ePay service, ATMs and ITMs, the Customer Contact Center at 1805805 which is available 24/7, in addition to the free standing order service from other Gulf Bank accounts.

### Additional Features:

All Al Danah account holders will receive a special Al Danah ATM card for deposits, ideal for depositing money anytime.

Gulf Bank's Customer Contact Center is available on WhatsApp around the clock for any inquiries at 65805805.

Al-Danah account holders are eligible for free SMS alerts for all transactions.

Customers can now calculate their chances using the Al-Danah Calculator, available at Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking App.

## Zimbabwe holds rates steady to curb parallel market

**HARARE:** Zimbabwe's central bank Friday left its benchmark lending rate unchanged at 35 percent in a bid to curb speculative borrowing by illegal dealers who fuel the parallel foreign exchange market.

In a monetary policy committee statement, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe said its policy rate for overnight accommodation would remain at 35 percent annually. Early this year, it more than doubled the rate from 15 to 35 percent to curb speculative borrowing and manage foreign exchange pressures.

It said it took the action "to reduce excess liquidity on the market which could be channeled towards purchasing of foreign currency thus putting pressure on the exchange rate". Zimbabwe is being buffeted by its worst economic crisis in over a decade, including a scarcity of basics like fuel and commeal. Lately it has been grappling with hyperinflation, with the rate soaring to almost 840 percent in July. Until the government reintroduced the foreign currency auction in June, after stopping 16 years ago, the prices of goods were rapidly spiking as the local dollar trailed far behind the greenback.—AFP

## Lyft hits brakes on plan to stop ride service in California

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Uber rival Lyft hit the brakes on plans to stop its rideshare service in California Thursday, after an appeals court granted the companies a temporary reprieve from having to reclassify drivers as employees. A judge had given Uber and Lyft until Friday to comply with a labor law on the matter.

"The California court has granted our request for a further stay, so our rideshare operations can continue uninterrupted, for now," Lyft said in a blog post. Shortly before the appeals court decision, Lyft said it would suspend its rideshare service in California rather than classify drivers as employees entitled to benefits.

Uber had said it also expected to suspend its ride service in California. "This temporarily removes a major black cloud from ridesharing names with Lyft on the cusp of suspending its service throughout California," Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said in a note to investors about the ruling.—AFP



In this file photo, a "For Sale by Owner" sign is posted in front of property in Monterey Park, California. Sales of existing US homes surged a record 24.7 percent in July, the second straight record-breaking month, as sales are booming nationwide, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) said on Friday. — AFP

## Signs of recovery? US business activity, home sales surge

**WASHINGTON:** In signs an economic recovery may be picking up speed, US home sales rose at a record rate for a second straight month in July, and purchasing managers in both the manufacturing and services sectors report business activity has accelerated at a brisker-than-expected pace this month.

With mortgage rates holding near record lows and a work-from-home trend apparently enticing many Americans to move further from city centers, the National Association of Realtors said on Friday sales of existing homes rose 24.7 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.86 million units last month from 4.7 million in June.

Home prices also shot to a record \$304,100, and a shortage of inventory is making competition for houses fierce. The average time on the market fell to 22 days in July, a record low, from 24 in June, and nearly 70 percent sold in less than a month.

Combined with June's 20.2 percent gain, home sales have mushroomed by nearly 50 percent in two months to fully retrace the cratering in residential real estate activity in the spring after the COVID-19 pandemic started spreading across the country. July's sales rate was the fastest since December 2006, when the country was in the latter stages of the sub-prime mortgage housing boom. "The housing market is well past the recovery phase and is now booming with higher home sales compared to the pre-pandemic days," said Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. "With the sizable shift in remote work, current homeowners are looking for larger homes and this will lead to a secondary level of demand even into 2021."

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast sales rising 14.7 percent to a rate of 5.38 million units in July. Existing home sales, which make up about 85 percent of US home sales, rose in all four regions and were up 8.7 percent nationally from a year earlier. The 30-year fixed mortgage rate is at an average of 2.99 percent, hovering near levels last seen in the early 1970s, according to data from mortgage finance agency Freddie Mac. Data earlier this week showed homebuilding accelerating by the most in nearly four years in July.

Housing has been a bright spot in the economy even as other sectors suffer amid widespread coronavirus infections that have slowed commerce and

kept unemployment high. More than 28 million people were collecting jobless benefits under all programs at the end of July.

The pandemic tipped the economy into recession in February, ending a record-long expansion that had brought US unemployment to a 50-year low.

### Back to business?

Meanwhile, a purchasing managers' survey showed US business activity snapped back to the highest since early 2019 in August as companies in both the manufacturing and services sectors saw a resurgence in new orders even as new COVID-19 cases remain stubbornly high across the country.

Data firm IHS Markit said its flash US Composite PMI Index rose to a reading of 54.7 this month - the highest since February 2019 - from 50.3 in July. Its flash - or preliminary - indicator for the manufacturing sector stood at its highest since January 2019 and for the services sector it was the highest since March 2019. A reading above 50 indicates growth in private sector output.

"Driving the overall upturn in output was stronger client demand," Markit said in its report. "Total new business rose for the first time since February and at a solid rate. Manufacturing firms registered a steeper expansion in new order inflows than in July, while service providers signaled a renewed increase in sales." The survey's flash composite new orders index climbed to 54 in August - the highest since March 2019 - from a final reading of 49.7 in July. Foreign sales increased at the fastest rate since September 2014, it said, as more non-US markets reopened their economies.

The improvement in the PMI and home sales data comes even as US coronavirus infections continue to climb, and some authorities in the hard-hit South and West regions this summer have been forced to either shut down businesses again or pause reopenings. As of Aug. 20, more than 5.5 million US cases cumulatively had been recorded since the pandemic began, according to a Reuters tally, up from around 4.6 million at the end of July.

The unexpectedly sharp increases in Markit's indexes and home sales continue a pattern of choppy U.S. economic data that paint a picture of a fitful recovery from the COVID-19 recession, with pockets of both strength and weakness dotted across disparate portions of the economy and regions.

On Thursday, for instance, the US Labor Department reported that new claims for unemployment benefits shot back above the 1 million mark last week. Meanwhile, earlier in the week the government reported residential construction had accelerated by the most since October 2016 last month. — Reuters



# Classifieds

Sunday, August 23, 2020

**Kuwait Times**  
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 Now you can browse  
[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)  
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 Fax: (+965) 24348714  
[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)

## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

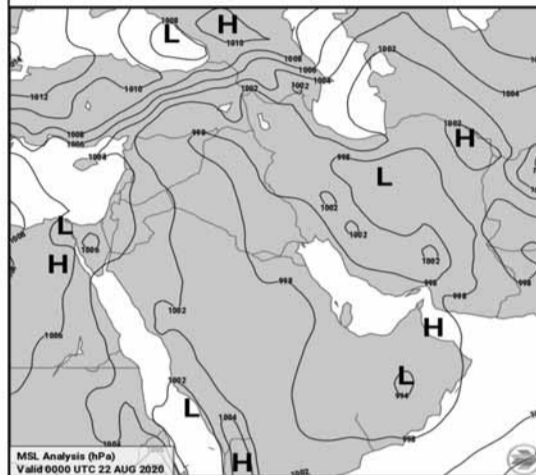
**BY DAY:** Very hot with light to moderate variable wind changing to south easterly wind with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

**BY NIGHT:** Hot to rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING: No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	33 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	27 °C
ABDALY	47 °C	28 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	47 °C	30 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	42 °C	35 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	44 °C	29 °C
WAFRA	47 °C	26 °C
SALMY	45 °C	28 °C

SFC. CHART 22/08/2020 0000 UTC



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	08/23	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	45 °C	28 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Monday	08/24	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	45 °C	29 °C	NE-NW	08 - 32 km/h
Tuesday	08/25	Very hot	47 °C	28 °C	NW-N	12 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	08/26	Very hot	47 °C	28 °C	VRB-NW	12 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:56
Sunrise	05:20
Zuhr	11:51
Asr	15:26
Sunset	18:22
Isha	19:43

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	26 °C
MAX. RH	25 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	N 60 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP.0

## 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

## REQUIRED

**Chef**  
 for a Kuwaiti restaurant,  
 with knowledge in  
 Kuwaiti food.

**Salads chef**  
**Assistant chefs**  
 Transferable visa

95557526 - 66210926

## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Turkish Airlines	1884918
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073

## Word Search

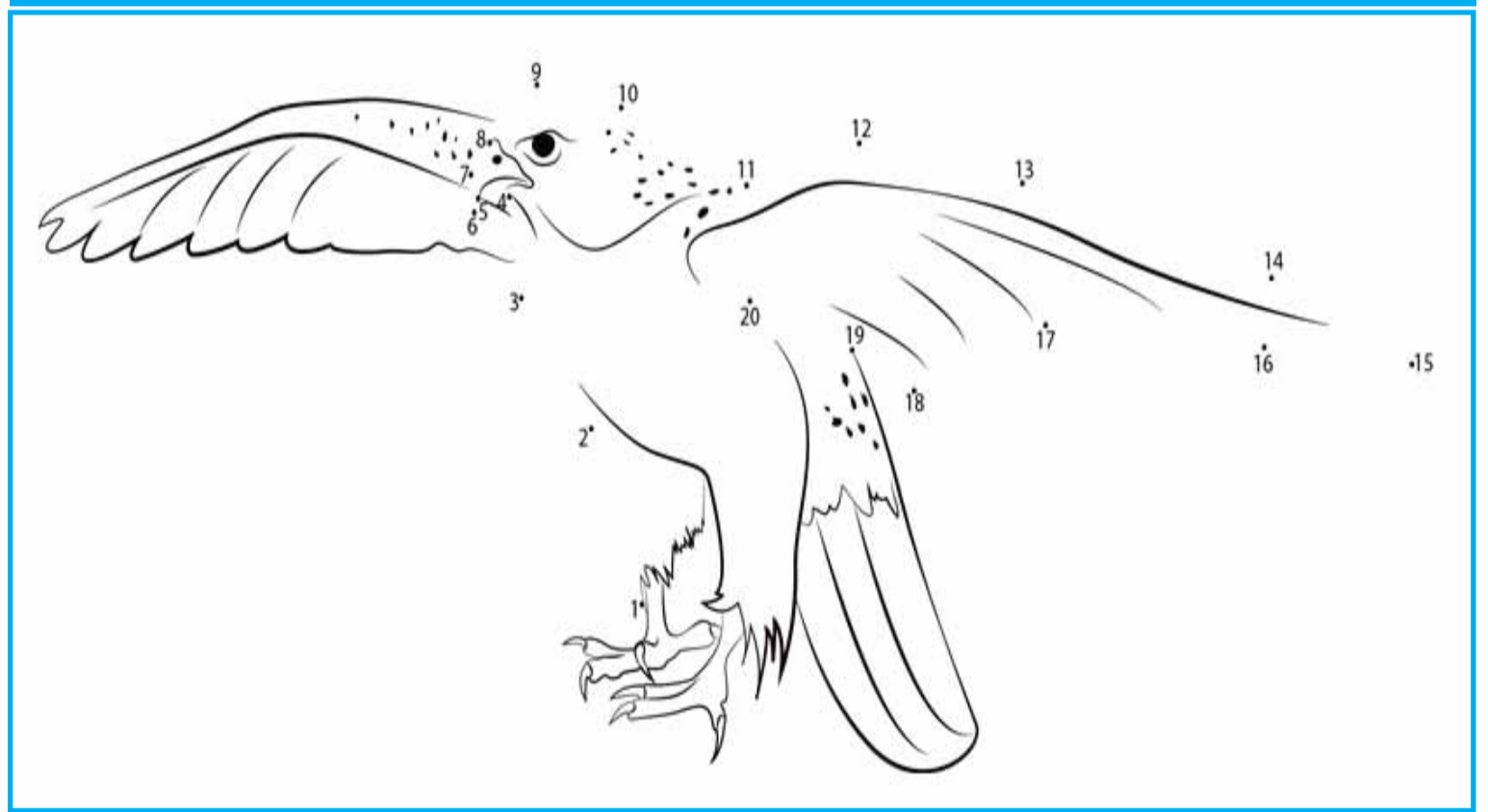
### Breakfast Favorites

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.














- |               |                |                |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| BACON         | CROISSANT      | MAPLE SYRUP    |
| BAGEL         | DANISH         | OATMEAL        |
| BISCUITS      | DONUTS         | OMELET         |
| BREAD         | EGGS BENEDICT  | ORANGE JUICE   |
| BUTTER        | ENGLISH MUFFIN | PANCAKES       |
| CEREAL        | FRUIT          | SAUSAGE        |
| CINNAMON ROLL | GRANOLA        | SCRAMBLED EGGS |
| COCOA         | GRETS          | SMOOTHIE       |
| COFFEE        | HASH BROWNS    | TEA            |
| COLD PIZZA    | HONEY          | TOAST          |
| CREPES        | JAM            | WAFFLES        |

## Join the Dots



## STAR TRACK

 <p><b>Aries (March 21-April 19)</b>                      Your intuition is likely to be very keen today, Aries. Accurate psychic insights could come to you thick and fast. Your imagination is also strong, and you might come up with ideas to enrich your home, work, or anything else on your mind. Don't be surprised if you seem to know what others will say before they even think of it. Write down any premonitions to verify later.</p>	 <p><b>Cancer (June 21-July 22)</b>                      Today you might learn about new and creative ways to increase your income, Leo, possibly involving technology in some way. So much new information could come your way that you find it hard to keep track of it, so make sure you take note of where you found it so you can consult the source later. Your mind could be going so fast that you need to take a walk to clear your head.</p>	 <p><b>Libra (September 23-October 22)</b>                      A friend or colleague could recommend some books that you want to read right away, Libra. Be sure you take breaks and rest your eyes from time to time to avoid eyestrain and headaches today. It's also important to remember to get out and go for a walk, weather permitting. Your body needs stimulation as much as your mind, and a walk will clear your head. Enjoy your day.</p>	 <p><b>Capricorn (December 22-January 19)</b>                      Don't be surprised if your inbox fills with email or your phone rings off the hook, Capricorn. Friends, relatives, and colleagues could have great news and useful information. One or more of these messages could inspire you to send a few of your own or even pay some visits. Most of what you learn should be positive and exciting, although some things may be confusing.</p>
 <p><b>Taurus (April 20-May 20)</b>                      Get-togethers with friends or meetings with a small group, if possible, should prove informative and enlightening today, Taurus, although some of it may be a bit perplexing. You may have useful information to share, but you'll probably spend as much time listening as talking. Your friends may have happy news. Don't be surprised if day's end finds you more tightly bonded than before. Enjoy!</p>	 <p><b>Leo (July 23-August 22)</b>                      Today you might learn about new and creative ways to increase your income, Leo, possibly involving technology in some way. So much new information could come your way that you find it hard to keep track of it, so make sure you take note of where you found it so you can consult the source later. Your mind could be going so fast that you need to take a walk to clear your head.</p>	 <p><b>Scorpio (October 23-November 21)</b>                      Today your mind will be quick, insightful, and inspired, Scorpio. Your creative impulses should go a thousand miles an hour and ideas should pop in and out of your head like crazy. Most likely you'll want to drop everything else and write down all your ideas. Make use of this inspiration while you can, as it may come in fits and starts. You could be surprised by what you produce.</p>	 <p><b>Aquarius (January 20- February 18)</b>                      Inspiration is the word for today, Aquarius. Your creative talent should blossom and motivate you to work on wonderful ideas. This could involve music, painting, decorating, or cooking. Relax and have fun with it. Whatever you do, you'll probably be pleased with the results. Feedback from others should be encouraging. Make notes of ideas you don't use today to remember them later.</p>
 <p><b>Gemini (May 21-June 20)</b>                      Today things could be rather hectic at work, Gemini. You'll probably be very busy and happy with whatever results you produce. You could tire yourself out, so be sure to take occasional breaks, and certainly don't forget to eat. Don't be surprised if colleagues pay you a lot of compliments. In the evening, get takeout for dinner and unwind. You deserve it.</p>	 <p><b>Virgo (August 23-September 22)</b>                      Social events could put you in touch with interesting people in intriguing professions, Virgo. You might get involved in some fascinating conversations that provide you with a lot of useful information. Some of what you hear could be so bizarre that you find it difficult to believe. New friendships or groups could result from this interaction, so get contact information. Enjoy!</p>	 <p><b>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)</b>                      If visitors are able to pop in and out during the day, Sagittarius, you'll be in the right frame of mind to enjoy their company. Expect interesting news and stimulating conversation. At the end of the day, your mind may be going like a house afire, so it might be a good idea to take a walk or get some other form of exercise or else you might not be able to sleep.</p>	 <p><b>Pisces (February 19-March 20)</b>                      Today your physical and mental energy should be operating at a very high level, Pisces. You probably won't spend much time inside if you can avoid it. Expect get-togethers with friends and colleagues, if possible, and some stimulating, animated discussions. You may want to get in a good workout. This is a great day to enjoy the evening, perhaps watching an online concert, play, or movie. Have a great day.</p>



## Lifestyle | Features



Photo shows Wu Qiuqiao holding her cat Liu Liu at her house in Changsha China's central Hunan province. — AFP photos



Cat Liu Liu wears a hanfu gown in Changsha, China's central Hunan province.



## CATWALK: PET CLOTHING DESIGNER INSPIRED BY CHINESE BEAUTIES

Liu Liu is a fashion designer's dream model and muse - happy to spend hour upon hour being measured and dressed, and posing in tailored couture outfits and artistic designs. Liu Liu is also a cat. Her doting owner, Wu Qiuqiao, makes a living from designing miniature versions of traditional flowing Chinese gowns known as "hanfu" for cats and dogs that sell for up to 500 yuan (\$70).

After quitting her job as a copy editor last year, the 26-year-old works from her apartment in the central city of Changsha designing pet-sized dresses out of pastel-colored chiffon and decorated with

embroidery, beads, frills and motifs that she sells online. Liu Liu ably models the creations inspired by the historic costumes of the Han ethnic majority that are seeing a resurgence in popularity among young people - and now pet owners. "Some of my regulars may have already bought all the clothing in my store and occasionally ask me to introduce new designs," Wu said.

Wu got the idea for making historic garb for pets after failing to find suitable styles for Liu Liu. And she clearly is not the only one who likes her furry companion dressed in something traditional. Wu sells up to a thou-

sand pieces a month from her online store Chunfeng Daxiaoqiao and she regularly rolls out new designs to satisfy demand. "I think hanfu is a heritage of history, and is also very beautiful," Wu said. "(My business) can allow people who enjoy traditional culture, or young people who enjoy hanfu... to be able to adopt ideas they like through pet clothing." — AFP

Wu Qiuqiao puts a hanfu gown on her cat Liu Liu at her house in Changsha China's central Hunan province.



## SPANISH GAZPACHO SETS OUT TO CONQUER THE WORLD

Long a staple of the Spanish diet, gazpacho-the chilled soup made from a puree of tomatoes and other vegetables-is gaining space on supermarket shelves further afield in Europe and beyond. While the dish is a specialty of Andalusia in southern Spain, the country's three top producers of gazpacho are all based in the neighboring region of Murcia, which is often called "Europe's orchard" because it is a centre of fruit and vegetable production. Alvalle, a unit of PepsiCo which along with Garcia Carrion and AMC Natural Drinks account for nearly three-quarters of the world's industrial production of gazpacho, was the first to make major inroads abroad.

It launched its gazpacho in neighboring France in 2009, 19 years after it was founded. Today the company exports over half of its production, mainly to other countries in Europe, with France its number one foreign market. "It was Alvalle that opened the door... Then all supermarkets started asking us for gazpacho," said Monica Perez Alhama, head of product development at rival firm AMC. AMC's main foreign market is France as well but it also exports to Canada, the United States and Japan.

The most frequently found gazpacho is made by pounding tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, water, vinegar, cucumbers and green peppers, with bread sometimes added to thicken the soup and soften acid from the tomatoes and vinegar. But Spain's big three producers have sought to expand their range by developing modern variations of gazpacho featuring rosemary, strawberries, wine vinegar, sherry, mangos and other ingredients, as well as launching brands that use organic vegetables. The aim is to "compete with homemade gazpacho," said Fernando Marin Romero, AMC commercial director for Spain and Portugal.

### Tailored recipes

Last year, Spain produced 67 million liters of gazpacho, according to market research firm Nielsen, with the bulk of it consumed in the warmer months between Easter and September. Machines crush, wash and filter thousands of kilos each day at AMC's sprawling gazpacho plant in Murcia, the capital of the region that shares the same name. Trucks loaded with barrels holding a thousand liters of extra virgin olive oil circulate between refrigerated tanks containing 25,000 liters of gazpacho.

The liquid is then poured into cardboard bricks decorated with pictures of bright red tomatoes which are folded by sophisticated machines at a frantic pace. Spain's top three gazpacho producers posted a combined turnover of 119.2 million euros (\$142 million) between April 2018 and April 2019, according to market research firm Alimarket. To enter markets abroad, they have tailored their recipes to foreign tastes. "In countries like France they like the product with less salt, in other countries in northern Europe they like it with a stronger tomato flavor," said Marin Romero, of AMC.—AFP

## Washington zoo welcomes 'precious' new baby panda

Washington zoo officials heralded the arrival of "a precious giant panda cub" Friday, following the much-watched birth of panda Mei Xiang's latest baby, four years after her last pregnancy. The new mother was exhibiting typical panda mom behavior like "nursing her cub and cuddling it close," the Smithsonian's National Zoo said on Twitter. "We're overjoyed to share that Mei Xiang gave birth at 6:35 pm and is caring for her newborn attentively," it

said, adding that mom and cub "appear to be doing well." Fans of the panda were able to follow her labor live thanks to a "panda cam" accessible on the zoo's website 24 hours a day - although high interest caused the feature to crash at some points.

Mei Xiang, who is 22 years old, was artificially inseminated on March 22 with the frozen semen of Tian Tian, another resident giant panda who will turn 23 later this month, according to the zoo. Since

the two pandas' arrival in 2000, Mei Xiang has given birth to three surviving cubs: males Tai Shan in 2005 and Bei Bei in 2015, and a female, Bao Bao, in 2013. The three were returned to China on their fourth birthdays under a partnership contract in which China owns the pandas.

Mei Xiang and Tian Tian themselves will be returned to China next December. Under the US-China agreement, the National Zoo pays \$500,000 per year towards panda conservation efforts in

China. Fewer than 2,000 giant pandas still live in their natural habitat in China, while some 600 more live in zoos and breeding centers around the world, according to the Washington zoo. Genetically similar to the bear, pandas feed exclusively on bamboo. They weigh in at approximately 220 pounds (100 kilograms) and measure up to six feet (1.8 meters) long. — AFP



A ferret used to chase and trap rabbits by professional rabbit catcher Steven McGonigal, are pictured as he prepares to hunt for rabbits in County Donegal, northwest Ireland. — AFP Photos



Professional rabbit catcher Steven McGonigal, applies an electronic tracking device to one of his ferrets, used to chase and trap rabbits.

## ON BURROWED TIME: HUNTING WITH THE IRELAND'S LAST RABBIT CATCHER

Steven McGonigal crosses a pock-marked field in the north of Ireland with a box of unruly ferrets while his dog, Fudge, sniffs out rabbit warrens. As the lurcher does his work, McGonigal covers the openings with nets before releasing a single ferret down the hole to flush out the occupants inside. For five minutes, the ferret races around the underground tunnels, poking its head out of dotted holes like a whack-a-mole. McGonigal looks on in twitchy anticipation. Then, in a split-second blur of grey fur, a rabbit emerges tangled in a net. McGonigal sprints over, grasps it by the legs and neck and dispatches it with a deft tug. "It's the traditional way," the 37-year-old former accountant told AFP in a field outside Carnadonagh at the northern edge of Ireland. "We don't damage the ground, we're not laying poisons, we give the rabbits a quick and clean death - and that's most important."

### Unique appeal

McGonigal is said to be Ireland's last traditional rabbit catcher, preferring fer-

rets, dogs, spades and nets instead of modern guns and poison. Rabbits - fluffy, cute and doe-eyed to many, and kept as household pets - are considered pests in the countryside. They are greedy consumers of vegetation, their warrens compromise buildings, and their breeding rate can quickly inflate numbers. As well as gardeners and farmers, McGonigal has built up a client list for his services including schools, golf courses and oil refineries.

Becoming the last rabbit catcher in Ireland's emerald outdoors is a far cry from his former accounting job. "I was getting to where I was looking forward to going out, I was starting to dread going back in," he said of his previous number-crunching profession. After a childhood spent owning ferrets, fishing and shooting, taking the career leap to full-time rabbit catcher in 2013 was a natural step, he said. But he admitted that the sometimes grisly demands of killing rabbits by hand is not for everyone. "It doesn't appeal to a lot of people," he conceded.

### Environmental impact

The practice of rabbit catching with ferrets dates back centuries. An illustration in the 14th-century manuscript, the Teymouth Hours, depicts a lady sending a dog or a ferret down a warren to drive a rabbit out into a net. McGonigal believes that while the ancient hands-on method may be distasteful to some, it remains the best way to cull numbers. "The problem is nowadays... people are building houses further and further and further, and they're encroaching into the countryside every day," he said.

As human and animal kingdoms become increasingly intertwined, less refined methods of hunting have become popular - and damaging. Lead shot from guns can taint the soil and poisons can be indiscriminate, leaving animal corpses underground with no indication of how many have been killed. McGonigal's technique leaves no trace and allows him to precisely measure the number of rabbits he has removed from the landscape, which he believes keeps the ecosystem and food chain better calibrated.—AFP



Ferrets used to chase and trap rabbits by professional rabbit catcher Steven McGonigal, are pictured in the case he prepares to hunt for rabbits in County Donegal.



Ferrets used to chase and trap rabbits by professional rabbit catcher Steven McGonigal, are pictured.

## TikTok pulls 380,000 videos in over 'hate'

TikTok said it has removed more than 380,000 videos in the US this year as part of a mission to "eliminate hate" on the platform. TikTok also banned some 1,300 accounts for breaking rules against hateful content or behavior, and deleted 64,000 comments on similar grounds, according to the video-snippet sharing sensation.

"These numbers don't reflect a 100 percent success rate in catching every piece of hateful content or behavior, but they do indicate our commitment to action," TikTok US head of safety Eric Han said in a blog post. "Our goal is to eliminate hate on TikTok." Han's overview of what TikTok is doing to combat hate comes as the app defends itself against what it calls "rumors and misinformation" about its links to the Chinese government. President Donald Trump has issued executive orders giving TikTok parent ByteDance, which is based in China, deadlines to stop running the app in the US and divest TikTok.

"TikTok has never provided any US user data to the Chinese government, nor would it do so if asked," the company said in a recent post. "Any insinuation to the contrary is unfounded and blatantly false." US user data is stored in this country, with a backup in Singapore, according to TikTok. Han on Thursday outlined rules and actions being taken to make it more difficult to find threatening, violent, or dehumanizing content on TikTok.

TikTok has a zero-tolerance stance against accounts linked to white nationalism, male supremacy, anti-Semitism and "other hate-based ideologies," Han added.

As tensions soar between the world's two biggest economies, Trump has claimed TikTok could be used by China to track the locations of federal employees, build dossiers on users for black-mail, and conduct corporate espionage. The US leader early this month also ordered a ban on the messaging app WeChat, which is used extensively in China. China meanwhile has slammed Washington for using "digital gunboat diplomacy" in the TikTok case. US technology firms Microsoft and Oracle are reported to be looking into the potential of buying TikTok. — AFP



Lifestyle | Features



An illuminated manhole cover of 'Haruhi Suzumiya' by Tanigawa Nagaru and Noizi Ito is seen in Tokorozawa, Saitama Prefecture. — AFP photos



A man stands next to an illuminated manhole cover of 'Lucky Star' by Kagami Yoshimizu in Tokorozawa, Saitama Prefecture.

# A HOLE NEW WORLD: JAPAN CITY LIGHTS UP SEWER COVERS

The humble manhole cover might not seem like much of a blank canvas, but one Japanese city is reimagining the possibilities with illuminated versions featuring anime characters. Tokorozawa, near Tokyo, is hoping the unusual additions will attract visitors, including enthusiasts of the painted decorated manhole covers that adorn some of Japan's streets. "They're Japan's first illuminated manhole covers," city official Junichi Koike told AFP. Japan is no stranger to decorative manhole covers, boasting everything from ornately engraved versions to ones painted with city mascots.

Cities have been sprucing them up for at least four decades, with the goal of improving the image of the sewerage system. A subculture of manhole cover fans has sprung up, with enthusiasts swapping information on social media about their favorite versions under the hashtag #manhotalk. "Manholers" enjoy discovering different kinds of manhole covers," Koike said. "We hope the new illuminated ones will further improve the dirty and smelly image of manholes and also revitalise the local economy by bringing in visitors."

A total of 28 manhole covers were

installed throughout the city on August 1, featuring anime characters like Gundam robot and from "Neon Genesis Evangelion" sci-fi animation series and "The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya" TV series. The covers light up from 6 pm to 2 am using solar power, illuminating the pavements that lead from the city's main train station to a new cultural complex, featuring an anime museum. They are part of the project in which the city collects revenue by allowing private companies - in this case major media group Kadokawa - to use manhole covers for advertising.

But while city officials say the extra street lighting could serve as a crime deterrent, security guards are having to expand their patrols to pass by the covers in case anyone tries to steal or damage them. The covers have had a positive reception so far, from enthusiasts and local residents alike. "They are more illuminated than I expected," manhole fan Kaoru Morita, 55, told AFP. "Usually when you are looking for manholes, they are actually not so easy to spot. But I can see where these are from far away, so it's helpful for a person like me looking for them."

Tatsuhiko Sato, 29, who lives in the



A man stands next to an illuminated manhole cover of 'Lucky Star' by Kagami Yoshimizu in Tokorozawa, Saitama Prefecture.

city, admits he was a bit surprised to see the covers at first. "But it was a good surprise. The animations I always watch can also be enjoyed in this way. It's also fun for children." There are some 15 million manholes in Japan, but only a fraction feature painted designs, which boost the cost of a cover from

around \$600 to sometimes double that. The cost of the illuminated covers has not been disclosed, but is covered by the sponsor, and the funky feature will stay in place for as long as the firm continues to pay for it. — AFP

## Masks, gel, empty seats for Venice Film Festival

The Venice Film Festival issued virus safety guidelines on Friday, as organizers hope the oldest such event in the world can maintain its international panache while remaining infection-free. The 10-day festival that begins next month on the legendary Lido in Venice is likely to be one of the festival's most atypical, given the masks and social distancing necessitated by the lingering threat of coronavirus. The Biennale di Venezia, as it is called in Italian, has taken on greater importance this year as film festivals across the globe have been cancelled, including Venice's main competitor, the glamorous Cannes Film Festival on the Cote d'Azur in France.

But recent spikes in coronavirus cases around Europe-including Italy-have raised the stakes for the festival, the first major international film event to be held in the midst of the ongoing pandemic. Festival organizers have already warned that the September 2-12 event will be a more scaled-down affair as thousands of filmmakers, actors, journalists and industry executives are unable to travel due to border restrictions. Still, the prestigious festival-now in its 77th year-will attract hundreds of journalists and a mostly European crowd of guests, including personalities such as Australian actress Cate Blanchett, president of the jury.

Those who arrive from outside Europe's Schengen area will have to submit results of a COVID-19 test just before their departure, organizers said, with a second test carried out in Venice. Thermoscanners will be set up at every entrance to the festival, with disinfecting liquid available in all screening rooms, halls and meeting points. Masks are mandatory not only inside theatres but in all outdoor areas. In a move sure to disappoint star-struck fans, the public will not be allowed on the sidelines of the red carpet, that much watched parade of fashion and finery, which will be reserved for photographers alone. —AFP



US singer Taylor Swift

## Taylor Swift donates \$30,000 to student's UK college fund

Taylor Swift has donated more than 23,000 pounds (\$30,000) to a Portuguese student living in Britain after she spotted an online page seeking donations to help her fund a maths degree at university. The Grammy-winning artist said she had been inspired by Vitoria Mario's drive and dedication as she sought to raise 40,000 pounds to cover accommodation and living costs while she studied maths at the University of Warwick.

Mario, who said she had arrived in Britain unable to speak English four years ago, wrote on her fundraising page that she had achieved top grades in her school-leaving exams and had been provisionally offered a place at Warwick. However she was not eligible for loans or grants due to her migration status and her family were not in a financial position to support her. She said her family always believed that if you can get a university education in the UK, you "will be set apart for life".

"My name is Vitoria Mario, and I am a young Black 18-year-old with a dream," she wrote on gofundme. "Though my story is not unique, my dream of becoming a mathematician is not only a chance at social mobility for my family and I, but to inspire people who have been in similar positions to aspire to be the best version of themselves and strive for their dreams despite gender/racial inequality, immigration issues and financial barriers."

Swift, who is known for giving donations after spotting requests for help online, said she wanted to complete the fundraising and by 1200 GMT Mario had raised almost 43,000 pounds. "I came across your story online and am so inspired by your drive and dedication to turning your dreams into reality," she said. "I want to gift you the rest of your goal amount. Good luck with everything you do! Love, Taylor." — Reuters

## MONSTER MUNCH: ANCIENT MARINE REPTILE DIED AFTER DINING ON FELLOW TITAN

More than 230 million years ago, a giant, dolphin-like marine reptile known as an ichthyosaur devoured its final meal - a creature almost its own size - then died a short time later. Inside its belly was the body of a lizard-like aquatic reptile called a thalattosaur, shorn of its head and long tail but undigested. Paleontologists digging in a quarry in southwestern China were surprised to discover the remains in 2010: it's almost unheard of to find the stomach contents of marine fossils. A decade on, in a paper published in iScience Thursday, researchers concluded that rather than feeding on much smaller cephalopods like squid, the five-meter long ichthyosaur was probably a megapredator.

What's more, this particular specimen might have died while ingesting its prey, literally biting off more than it could chew. "The most likely cause of death is the neck breakage, which likely prevented the predator from breathing," co-author Ryoosuke Motani, a paleobiologist at the University of California, Davis told AFP. The ichthyosaur may have sustained injuries while fighting the thalattosaur, he added, or while trying to swallow it - or both. But, Motani cautioned: "The interpretation of the death process involves speculation, because nobody was there filming it for us."

### Crocodile-like teeth

The team are a bit more confident that the thalattosaur, which was slightly smaller than its foe at four meters in length, met a violent end, rather than being scavenged after dying of natural causes. "There are no signs of rotting of the prey - if it was a rotten carcass, you would not

expect to see the fingers still attached to the body," said Motani. The thalattosaur's disconnected tail was found 20 meters away, leading the team to believe it was ripped off and left behind by the ichthyosaur. The ichthyosaur's stomach contents didn't show signs of advanced digestion by acid, meaning it likely perished soon after its final meal.

"At first, we just didn't believe it, but after spending several years visiting the dig site and looking at the same specimens, we finally were able to swallow what we were seeing," added Motani. Because the discovery of stomach contents in marine fossils is so rare, scientists generally rely on tooth and jaw shapes to discern what they may have eaten. Ancient apex predators are typically thought to have had large, very sharp teeth - even though some modern predators like crocodiles use blunt teeth to consume large prey using grasping force instead of cutting.

Ichthyosaurs have blunt teeth, but because there was no direct evidence of large prey consumption, researchers previously thought they must feed on small prey. "Now, we can seriously consider that (ichthyosaurs) were eating big animals, even when they had grasping teeth," added Motani. These events took place after the end of the Permian period, some 250 million years ago, when land vertebrates started moving back to the sea following a mass extinction event. The fact that predators arose shortly afterwards in the Middle Triassic was a sign that ecosystems were bouncing back, said Motani. — AFP



Photo shows a specimen of an ichthyosaur specimen with its stomach contents visible as a block that extrudes from its body, being displayed near the entrance of the Xingyi Geopark Museum in Wusha District, Xingyi City, Guizhou Province, China. — AFP

## X-rays shed light on animal mummies' secrets

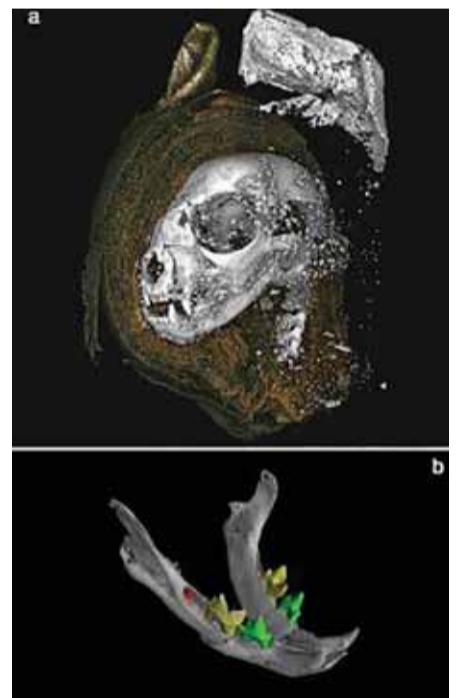
Scientists have used 3D imaging to examine the contents of three mummified animals - a cat, a snake and a bird of prey - to provide unprecedented insight into how they died, all without damaging the specimens. Ancient Egyptians frequently preserved domesticated animals alongside humans in burial chambers to help bridge the gap between the realms of the living and the dead. Animal sacrifice and mummification was so widespread that an entire network of farms and transport infrastructure was required to keep up with the demand. Numerous specimens are held in museums around the world today, but their contents have until now been hard to divine without damaging the mummies.

A team of Britain-based scientists used advanced 3D X-ray imaging to see into three mummified remains stored at Swansea University's Egypt Centre. The first, a house cat no more than five months old, was found to have been strangled - as evidenced by separated vertebrae. "Every day when we X-ray something in the lab we know we could be the first people to see the inside in that way," said Rich Johnston, co-Director of Swansea's Advanced Imaging of Materials Facility.

"But with animal mummies it provides a glimpse into the distant past, like a time capsule," he told AFP.

### Snake-gods

The second specimen was a small bird of prey, whose cause of death proved inconclusive. But it was the third mummy that really captivated the team. From the outside, the egg-shaped object appears to be nondescript and could contain just about anything. When the team conducted 3D scans of it however, they saw it contained juvenile Egyptian cobra. More astonishingly, they observed that it had been buried with its mouth forced open in accordance with an ancient Egyptian burial rite. "Opening of the mouth allowed statues of deities and the dead to regain their senses, to see thereby into the realm of the living," said Carolyn Graves-Brown, co-author



This undated handout picture shows a 3D-scan of a cat head (top) and the cat's jaw (bottom) as scientists have used 3D imaging to examine the contents of three mummified animals—a cat, a snake and a bird of prey—to provide unprecedented insight into how they died, all without damaging the specimens. — AFP

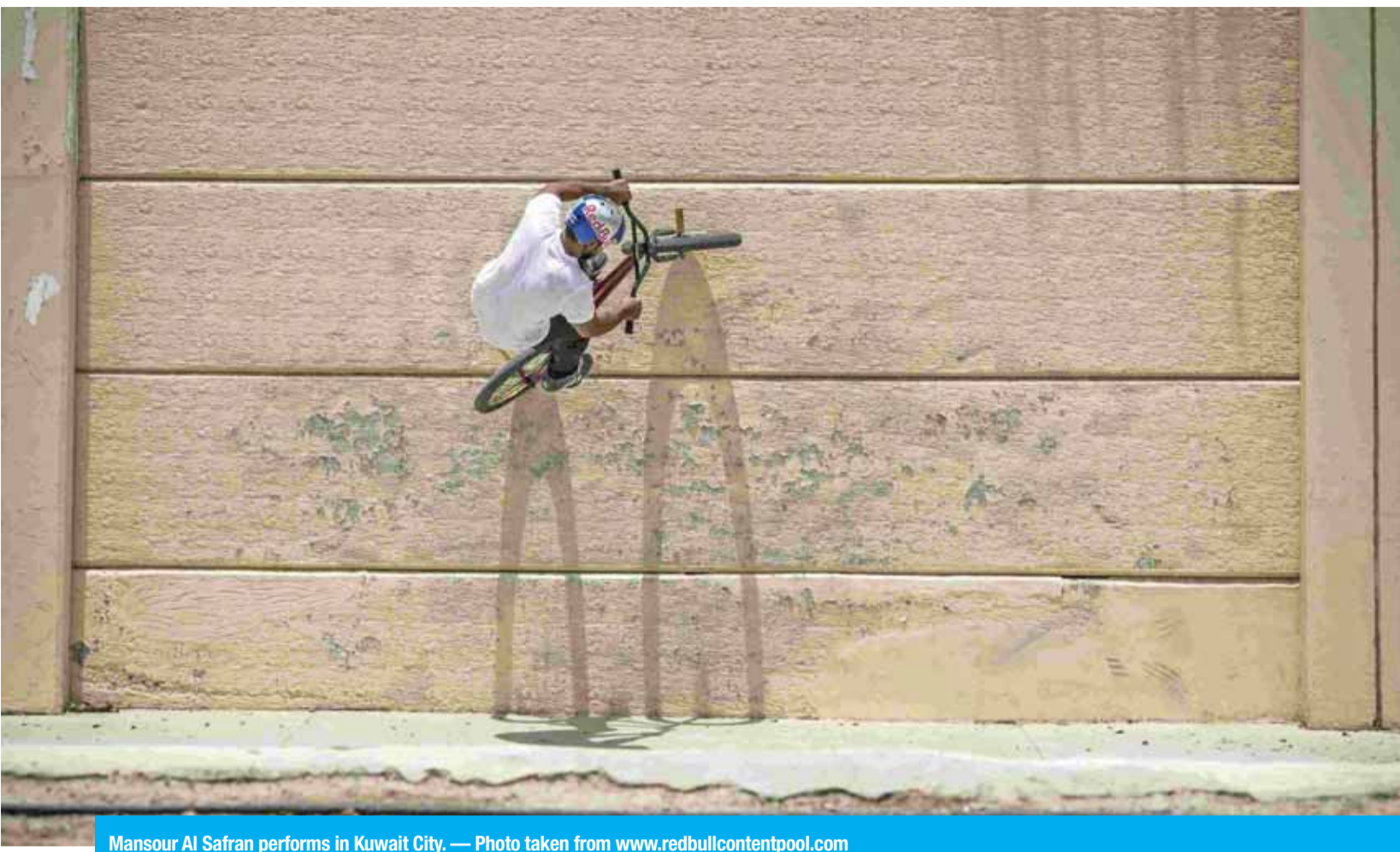
of the study released Thursday in Nature Scientific Reports.

A number of snake-gods appear in Egyptian mythology and the reptiles were associated with rebirth - most likely due to their ability to shed their skin. "They also are associated with the earth, and with fire and protection, as well as danger," Graves-Brown said. The team said they hoped their technique could be used to get ancient artefacts to disclose their secrets. "Only with the higher resolution imaging did we find evidence of how the snake may have been treated while alive, or that snakes may undergo ritual processes during mummification," said Johnston. "That hasn't been seen before." — AFP



## Sports

## Photo of the day



Mansour Al Safran performs in Kuwait City. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Radradra claims first Bristol try in Gloucester win

LONDON: Fiji centre Remi Radradra scored his first Bristol Bears try since joining from Bordeaux-Begles over the summer in Friday's 33-24 win at Gloucester in the English Premiership. Radradra, who signed a three-year deal with the Bears after the French club said they failed to match them financially, crossed after 28 minutes after a quiet debut last weekend as his new side kept hold of second place.

"I don't think he has to live up to anything, that boy," Bears coach Pat Lam said. "When the guys do their jobs it gives Semi the space and we saw what he can do and he's determined to do better than that. So it's exciting," the former Samoa back-rower added.

Former All Blacks full-back Charles Piutau, who reportedly earns £1million (\$1.3million), a season was rested with a busy schedule ahead including two midweek fixtures over the next month in a rescheduled season due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Max Mallins, Henry Purdy, Harry Thacker and Ben Earl also crossed in the Bears' first win at Kingsholm in 14 years. Elsewhere, leaders Exeter Chiefs beat Sale Sharks 32-22 with England hooker Luke Cowan-Dickie scoring the pick of the tries for last year's runners up.

"Everyone in the Sale team knew it was coming, and he still scored it, there's very few people that have got the ability to convert that kind of power and drive over that distance," Chiefs coach Rob Baxter said. — AFP

# Tigers end 20-game losing streak, A's cruise past slumping Angels

## Jays edge Rays in 10, run win streak to six

CLEVELAND: Rookie Isaac Paredes belted a grand slam to power Detroit past the host Cleveland Indians 10-5 on Friday, snapping the Tigers' 20-game losing streak between the two teams. Jonathan Schoop slugged a two-run homer among his four hits, Victor Reyes also went deep, and Jeimer Candelario had a two-run single for the Tigers. Detroit, which halted a nine-game losing skid overall, defeated Cleveland for the first time since posting a 4-1 win on April 10, 2019. Indians slugger Franmil Reyes launched a two-run shot, his fourth homer in seven games overall and third in his past two meetings with the Tigers. Reyes' blast in the third inning gave Cleveland a 5-0 lead before Detroit erupted for seven runs in the fourth.

### AS 5, ANGELS 3

Stephen Piscotty had two hits and drove in three runs. Marcus Semien homered, and Oakland held on to beat visiting Los Angeles. As starter Mike Fiers (3-1) benefitted from an early lead and was able to pitch into the sixth inning. Four Oakland relievers closed it out, including Liam Hendriks, who pitched a scoreless ninth inning for his ninth save in 10 chances. Mark Canha added two hits and two runs for Oakland, which won its third game in a row. Los Angeles dropped its fourth in a row and its eighth in the past nine. Anthony Rendon had four hits, David Fletcher added three hits, and Andreton Simmons had two in his first game since July 27. Angels starter Andrew Heaney (1-2) took the loss after giving up three runs in the first.

### BLUE JAYS 6, RAYS 5 (10 INNINGS)

Cavan Biggio cued a go-ahead double in the 10th inning to lead Toronto past Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Fla., for the Blue Jays' sixth straight win. Biggio's sliced a double near left field line off Aaron Loup (3-1), plating Brandon Drury, who opened the inning on second base. Following a sacrifice bunt, Lourdes Gurriel Jr. added a sacrifice fly for two-run lead. Reliever Jordan Romano allowed an unearned run on an RBI single by Yandy Diaz in the home half of the 10th but earned his first career save in relief of Thomas Hatch (1-1). Hatch posted his first career win. Biggio went 3-for-3 with two runs, and Teoscar Hernandez and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. banged back-to-back solo home runs for Toronto. Drury and Randal Grichuk had two-hit games in the opener of a four-game series.

### DODGERS 5, ROCKIES 1

Walker Buehler struck out 11 over six innings, and Corey Seager drove in two runs as host Los Angeles became the first major league team to reach 20 victories by knocking off Colorado. The Dodgers have won nine of their past 10 games overall and five consecutive at home. The Rockies have lost five straight and eight of their past nine. Buehler (1-0) gave up one run on four hits with no walks while delivering his first double-digit strikeout game of the season. The Dodgers' Cody Bellinger continued to emerge from his slow start, collecting two

## O'Ward, Dixon top last Indy practice, Andretti finds flaws

WASHINGTON: Mexican rookie Pato O'Ward and front-row starter Scott Dixon drove the fastest laps in Friday's final Indianapolis 500 practice while pole-sitter Marco Andretti was troubleshooting ahead of today's race.

A trouble-free final two-hour session at the 2.5-mile (4km) Indianapolis Motor Speedway oval saw most teams test their cars in race conditions after last weekend's time trials. O'Ward, starting on the

outside of row five in the 33-car field, set the practice pace at 225.355 mph in his Chevrolet-powered Arrow-McLaren.

"It has just been really important to try and get the best car under us for race day," O'Ward said. "Traffic running is going to be key. It's so important to have a car that's able to follow closely and get runs on people." New Zealand's Dixon, the 2008 Indy 500 winner starting in the middle of row one, was next on 224.646 mph. He won the year's first three IndyCar races and leads the chase for a sixth career season points crown.

"The car felt really good, fast in traffic," Dixon said. "It pulls up wicked fast. Hope that proves true in the race." American Alexander Rossi, who won the 2016 Indy 500 as a rookie, was third on 224.599 mph, just ahead of Japan's Takuma Sato, the outside front row starter who was fourth on 224.580 mph.

hits and an RBI against the Rockies after hitting home runs in each of his two previous games.

**WHITE SOX 10, CUBS 1**

Jose Abreu hit two home runs, leading a six-homer barrage, and Dallas Keuchel pitched eight strong innings to lift the White Sox to their sixth straight win, a rout over the host Cubs to start a three-game series between the Chicago rivals. The White Sox struck early against Cubs starter Jon Lester, reaching the left-hander for eight runs and nine hits in 3 2/3 innings. Lester (2-1) struck out three and yielded four home runs without issuing a walk. He entered the night with three home runs allowed in 23 innings. Keuchel (4-2) allowed one run and six hits in eight innings with one walk and three strikeouts. The left-hander retired the first 11 Cubs he faced.

### RED SOX 8, ORIOLES 5

Rafael Devers, J.D. Martinez and Xander Bogaerts homered to help Boston score six runs in the first five innings en route to a victory at Baltimore. The Red Sox have won three in a row after dropping nine straight. Baltimore has lost six in a row. Both teams went with pitching-by-committee, and Darwinson Hernandez (1-0) earned the win in relief. Starter Colten Brewer threw four shutout innings before Hernandez took over in the fifth and earned his first major league win with two scoreless frames. John Means (0-2) started for the Orioles and gave up two homers, leaving after Boston took a 3-0 through three innings.

outside of row five in the 33-car field, set the practice pace at 225.355 mph in his Chevrolet-powered Arrow-McLaren.

"You've got to be careful around this place not to get overconfident," said Rossi, who opens on the outside of row three. "Everything is trending in the right direction. I was happy in the traffic. I think we've got it and we'll pray it's all right today."

The annual IndyCar classic was moved from its usual late May date due to COVID-19 concerns that delayed the start of the season until June and will prevent spectators from attending an event that draws nearly 400,000 fans annually.

"Ultimately I don't think this year is going to be much different than the past couple of years," Rossi said. "It's going to come down to the last 10 laps again." Andretti, the grandson of 1969 winner Mario Andretti, was among the slowest when it came to fast laps, 28th at 221.314 mph, but quite pleased with what he learned about his car and himself.



CLEVELAND: Second baseman Jonathan Schoop #8 of the Detroit Tigers tries to tag Tyler Naquin #30 of the Cleveland Indians during the first inning at Progressive Field in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP

**PADRES 4, ASTROS 3**

Six relievers held visiting Houston to two runs on four hits over the final seven innings, and Manny Machado had two RBI singles as San Diego halted the Astros' winning streak at eight games. The win was the Padres' fifth straight. Javy Guerra (1-0) pitched 2 1/3 hitless innings after San Diego starter Garrett Richards lasted only two innings. Matt Strahm retired all three Astros he faced. After Craig Stammen and Cal Quantrill each allowed a run, Pierce Johnson worked a scoreless eighth and Emilio Pagan finished the game to earn his first save as a Padre. Jose Altuve and Myles Straw had two hits apiece for Houston.

### GIANTS 6, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Wilmer Flores hit a tiebreaking two-run home run against his former team, and host San Francisco beat Arizona. The Giants extended their season-high winning streak to four games. Evan Longoria also hit a two-run shot, the 300th long ball of his major league career. San Francisco has scored six or more runs in nine of its 12 home games this season. Logan Webb (2-2) struck out eight without a walk in seven innings, limiting the Diamondbacks to two runs on five hits.

### BRAVES 11, PHILLIES 2

Travis d'Arnaud and Marcell Ozuna hit long back-to-back homers to highlight a four-run third inning and send Atlanta past visiting Philadelphia. d'Arnaud clubbed a two-run homer, his fourth, and Ozuna followed with the first of his two homers on

the night. Johan Camargo completed the momentum-changing rally with an RBI double. Ozuna, now with seven homers, added a three-run blast as part of a seven-run barrage in the fifth. Philadelphia's Aaron Nola (2-2) pitched only 2 2/3 innings and was touched up for four runs on six hits and three walks. Max Fried (4-0) allowed one run on five hits with two walks and five strikeouts in five innings.

### ROYALS 7, TWINS 2

Jorge Soler and Hunter Dozier homered as host Kansas City defeated Minnesota. Danny Duffy (2-2) pitched five innings of one-run ball for the win. The Royals wasted no time in jumping on Twins starter Jake Odorizzi, scoring four runs in the first inning before an out had been recorded. Soler's three-run blast to left field capped the rally. Odorizzi (0-1) gave up five runs in three-plus innings, exiting after he was struck in the ribs by an Alex Gordon 103 mph line drive. He sustained an abdominal contusion, but X-rays were negative.

### REDS 4, CARDINALS 2

Matt Davidson launched a pinch-hit grand slam in the sixth inning to power visiting Cincinnati over St. Louis. Davidson's blast off reliever Tyler Webb erased the Cardinals' 2-0 lead and tagged Genesis Cabrera (1-1) with the loss. The slam came after a two-out St. Louis error, a walk and a hit batter. Michael Lorenzen (1-1), the second of five Reds pitchers, earned the victory. Raisel Iglesias closed out the ninth to earn his third save and atone for his loss Thursday night. — Reuters

uncomfortable circumstances possible," Andretti said. "I'm not planning on leading 200 laps. It was as uncomfortable as I thought it would be. "When it's not going right, that's the pressure." Andretti, a 2006 rookie runner-up in his best showing of 14 Indy 500 starts, spent time on small details so they are not surprises today. "We went through about 10-15 different things, not necessarily big things," Andretti said. "We found out stuff the car doesn't like. We're going to work on not having to deal with it. I'd rather do that today than on Sunday."

Andretti's pole win today raised hope that his family "curse" in a half-century of chasing a second Indy win might end today. "It has been a fairy tale," Andretti said. "It feels like a win even though it was just qualifying. "I'm in a good place mentally. We just have to execute on a lot of levels to win this race." — AFP



Sports

# How Bayern Munich grew into super club of German football

## Bayern have made knock-out stages of CL 19 times

BERLIN: Bayern Munich can complete only the second treble in their proud history by beating Paris Saint Germain in today's Champions League final to underline their status as Germany's super club. Bayern have cruised to the Lisbon final, scoring 42 goals in their Champions League matches.

In all competitions, they are on a 20-game winning streak stretching back to early February. "FC Bayern is a global football club that has an obligation to play at the top internationally. That is our focus," said Bayern board member Oliver Kahn.

Since the turn of the century, Bayern have made the knock-out stages of the Champions League 19 times, reaching five finals and winning two of them, in 2001 and 2013. In that time, they have won the Bundesliga 15 times.

Bayern last failed to win the German league in 2011/12, when Jurgen Klopp led Dortmund to the second of back-to-back titles. They responded in 2012/13 with the first treble in club history - Bundesliga, German Cup and Champions League titles - which they can repeat today.

Such is their grip on German football that Dortmund, Bundesliga runners-up for the last two seasons, have given up promising to end Bayern's domination. "We don't have to say anything more about Bayern Munich, because their opponents will no longer be beaten but destroyed," grumbled Dortmund chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke in the wake of the 8-2 quarter-final drubbing of Barcelona.

Bayern are Germany's richest club, with a turnover for 2018/9 of 750.4 million euros (\$883 million) and an operating profit of 146.1 million euros. The 2020 Deloitte Football Money League estimates that Bayern are the fourth richest club in

Europe, behind Barcelona, Real Madrid and Manchester United.

Building revenue has been a central element of club strategy under former president Uli Hoeness and current chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. Hoeness, a former Bayern and Germany striker, was at the helm for 40 years, interrupted by a brief stint in jail after being convicted of tax fraud in 2013.

He resisted selling stakes in the club to outside investors. Main sponsors Audi, Adidas and Allianz, all companies with their headquarters in Bavaria, hold 8.33 percent each. The remaining 75 percent is owned by club supporters.



### 20-game winning streak

Through a transfer policy of cherry-picking - sometimes ruthlessly - from other German clubs and adding affordable foreign imports, Bayern have dominated the Bundesliga since the 1970s.

After Dortmund routed Bayern 5-2 in the 2012 German Cup final, the losers took note. Bayern bought Dortmund's rising star Mario Goetze in 2013. They then added the striker who scored a hat-trick in the final Robert Lewandowski in 2014 and centre back Mats Hummels in 2016, as their



LISBON: File photo shows Bayern Munich's German midfielder Serge Gnabry (C) celebrates with Bayern Munich's German forward Thomas Müller (2ndL) and Bayern Munich's Polish forward Robert Lewandowski after scoring a goal during the UEFA Champions League semi-final football match between Lyon and Bayern Munich in Lisbon. — AFP

Dortmund contracts expired. They have already signed rising Germany stars goalkeeper Alexander Nuebel, on a free transfer, from Schalke and Leroy Sané from Manchester City for next season. Bayern players are expected to show the same self-confidence exuded in the club's Bavarian motto 'Mia San Mia', meaning "We are who we are".

### CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Head coach Hansi Flick, another former Bayern player, replaced Niko Kovac in November and has brought order and clarity. "What sets him apart is

his calm, level-headedness and his work with the coaching team," said Bayern captain Manuel Neuer.

"He showed that not only in the Bundesliga and the Cup, but also in the Champions League." Even when the personnel change, Bayern roll on. Rummenigge is grooming former club captain and Germany goalkeeper Kahn as his replacement.

Former Adidas CEO Herbert Hainer has replaced Hoeness as club president. Hoeness may be gone but his presence will still be felt for years to come. "I would be stupid if I didn't get his advice from time to time," said Hainer. — AFP

## Canucks send Stanley Cup champion Blues crashing out of playoffs

LOS ANGELES: Five players scored and Jacob Markstrom made 34 saves for the Vancouver Canucks on Friday in a 6-2 victory that eliminated the Stanley Cup champion St. Louis Blues from the NHL playoffs.

The win in the league's Western Conference hub in Edmonton gave the Canucks a 4-2 victory in the best-of-seven series and a second-round matchup with the Vegas Golden Knights.

It's the first time the Canucks have made it out of the first round since 2011, when they lost to the Boston Bruins in the Stanley Cup final.

In Toronto, the Philadelphia Flyers defeated the Montreal Canadiens 3-2 to complete a 4-2 Eastern Conference series win and line up a meeting with the New York Islanders.

Blues goalie Jordan Binnington allowed four goals on 18 shots before he was pulled in the second period and replaced by Jake Allen, who made five saves. Jay Beagle gave Vancouver a 1-0 lead 3:45 into the first period with a shot from the slot. Antoine Roussel made it 2-0 at 2:09 of the second after a turnover by Vince Dunn.

Troy Stecher's one-timer extended the lead to 3-0 at 6:49, and Brock Boeser beat Binnington short side with a one-timer on the power play to make it 4-0 at 8:06.

Jaden Schwartz cut it to 4-1 at 6:32 of the third, but Tyler Motte scored on a 2-on-1 to make it 5-1 at 13:19. Schwartz scored again at 18:38 with Allen



EDMONTON: Troy Stecher #51 of the Vancouver Canucks (R) scores at 6:49 of the second period against the St. Louis Blues in Game Six of the Western Conference First Round during the 2020 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Rogers Place in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. — AFP

pulled for the extra skater to make it 5-2 before Motte found the empty net to cap the scoring.

Philadelphia's win over the Canadiens gave the Flyers their first playoff series triumph since 2012. Kevin Hayes had a goal and an assist for the Flyers, who also had goals from Ivan Provorov and Michael Raffl and 31 saves from goaltender Carter Hart.

"It's great to get the first one out of the way but we're not done," Provorov said. "We're going to continue to get better, continue to play our game and go as far as we can."

Nick Suzuki scored two goals for Montreal and Carey Price made 14 saves. The Canadiens played without forward Brendan Gallagher, who suffered a

broken jaw on a cross-check by Flyers defenseman Matt Niskanen in game five on Wednesday. Niskanen served a one-game suspension.

"Obviously it's tough to replace a guy like (Gallagher), you just can't really do it, and I think everybody stepped up." Montreal captain Shea Weber said. "The commitment was there, the effort was there. They were just fortunate to get a couple bounces early and we just couldn't seem to find our break." Raffl's goal at 4:26 of the second period gave the Flyers a 3-1 lead. Suzuki got the Canadiens within 3-2 at 6:05 with a sharply angled shot. But Hart saved Montreal's final 19 shots, including 13 in the third period. — AFP

behind champions Juventus, and reached their first European final in a decade. "I think I have given a lot and received a lot, from this point of view I am very happy," added Conte.

"However, I did not like some situations I experienced this year," continued the former Italy coach. "I also have a family and I have to understand if my priority remains football, because there is a limit to everything. I don't want my private life to be affected too."

Conte regretted the defeat against the Spanish side who are "accustomed to winning" having won the Europa League trophy six times. "The certainty is that my lads worked hard, they grew up and got to play the important competition final. For many it was the first experience."

Inter Milan president Steven Zhang insisted that the season under Conte had made the club's Chinese owners "optimistic for the future." "It hasn't worked now but we'll try again next year," Zhang said.

"The most important thing is to continue to grow, because the future is bright. Conte and his technical staff are doing a great job. As I said, we'll rest for a few days and plan for the future." — AFP

Premier League with the Deccan Chargers, Royal Challengers Bangalore, and Sunrisers Hyderabad. "I've definitely finished up playing, that's for sure," White told cricket.com.au late Friday.

"I had a one-year playing contract with the Strikers. I only played a handful of games with them last year and in those games I would have needed to play really well to get another deal. "To be totally honest, I'm pretty content. I think my time is definitely up. I've had enough from a playing point of view and I'm ready to focus on coaching."

A destructive batsman and competent legspinner, White was primarily a limited-overs specialist, captaining Australia seven times in one-day and T20 matches. His four Tests were all in India on a 2008 tour, but he took only five wickets and was discarded. — AFP

## Maguire in court over police 'assault'

ATHENS: Manchester United captain Harry Maguire will appear before a Greek prosecutor to face charges of allegedly assaulting police on the island of Mykonos, with his lawyer promising a swift resolution.

"Everything is going well. Maguire denies the charges. If all goes well, we'll be done (today)," Constantinos Darivas told Greek sports website gazzetta.gr. Darivas added that the England centre-back was in "fine condition" despite spending two nights in detention since his Thursday night arrest.

Maguire will be taken before a prosecutor before midday. The case is being heard on the island of Syros, the administrative hub of the Cycladic island group that includes Mykonos. The £80-million (88-million-euro) defender was arrested early Friday after what Greek police described as an "altercation" between two groups of British tourists on Mykonos.

A Greek police statement on Friday said that three men aged 27, 28 and 29 had been arrested in Mykonos. Greek state agency ANA identified the suspects as Maguire, his brother and a friend.

The police said an officer was punched on the scene, and that a second fight had broken out at the local police station where the three men "strenuously resisted (arrest), pushing and striking three officers."

One of the suspects then tried to bribe the officers to hush up the incident, the police said. The suspects are accused of assault, resisting arrest, verbally insulting and threatening the arresting officers, and attempted bribery, the police said.

Four Mykonos officers sustained slight injuries in the fracas, the authorities said. Mykonos is popular with sports stars and celebrities for its all-night nightlife and beaches. United on Friday said in a brief statement they were "aware of an alleged incident involving Harry Maguire in Mykonos last night." — AFP

## Djokovic irked by exclusion of Pella, Dellien

NEW YORK: World number one Novak Djokovic is among the ATP players critical of a decision to bar Guido Pella and Hugo Dellien from the relocated Cincinnati Masters after their fitness trainer tested positive for COVID-19, ESPN reported Friday.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray of Britain also spoke out, saying players hadn't been given clear enough guidelines for such situations. Neither Argentina's Pella or Bolivian Dellien has tested positive for coronavirus since their fitness trainer Juan Manuel Galvan tested positive on Monday.

But officials from the tournament, which is being held at Flushing Meadows in New York as a warm-up for the US Open there, consulted US Open medical staff and the New York City Department of Health and sent the pair into quarantine.

"On a Zoom call a few weeks ago we got information from the chief medical doctor of the USTA that if a player is not sharing a room with his coach, or his physio, or anyone from his team that is infected, and his (own) results are negative, he can still compete in the tournament," ESPN quoted Djokovic as saying in a video news conference with reporters covering the event.

The Serb star said the call, attended by dozens of ATP players, was supposed to inform them of the health and safety protocols and procedures that would apply over the two-event period.

He said players asked multiple times about the protocol if team members tested positive "and that's what was communicated to us."

"That's why a lot of the players were — are — upset, including myself, when I see that Pella and Dellien are treated in this way."

Djokovic did note that the advice given was contrary to what was spelled out in a waiver players competing in New York had to sign — which said New York state health officials would initiate contact tracing in the event of a positive test.

USTA spokesman Chris Widmaier told ESPN that the exclusion of Pella and Dellien was in line with advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which "defines close contact as spending 15 minutes or more within six feet of another individual."

He said contact tracing confirmed that the players had "multiple instances" of close contact without protective face masks. "Simply put, the individuals in close contact with the infected individual must quarantine for 14 days. This is not a discretionary decision," Widmaier said.

Murray said in his news conference that those rules were not made clear to players. "Some of the players were saying, 'Well, I wouldn't have come with a trainer or a physio if I knew that was the case,'" he said. "I'm not saying that it's not the right decision, but the players were not clear as to what the rules actually were." — AFP

## Conte throws Inter future into doubt

COLOGNE: Antonio Conte cast fresh doubt over his position as Inter Milan coach saying the club must examine their future "with or without me" after Friday's 3-2 Europa League final defeat to Sevilla.

"Now we'll return to Milan, we'll take a couple of days off. We will meet, examine the season and everything in a very calm way. We will try to plan the future of Inter with our without me," Conte, 51, told Sky Sport.

"It has been a very tough season from all points of view, the best decision must be taken for the good of Inter, with the utmost cordiality. "There is no resentment, there are different points of view."

"For me it was a beautiful year, I thank those who gave me the opportunity to have a wonderful experience." Former Chelsea and Juventus boss Conte took over as Inter Milan coach in May 2019.

The club finished second in Serie A, just one point

## Former Australia captain White hangs up pads

SYDNEY: Australian all-rounder Cameron White, who captained his country seven times, has called time on a professional career that spanned almost 20 years. The 37-year-old played four Tests, 91 ODIs and 47 Twenty20s while featuring for a host of clubs, including Victoria, the Adelaide Strikers and Melbourne Renegades at home.

In England, he had stints with Northamptonshire and Somerset while enjoying time in the Indian



**14** Tigers end 20-game losing streak, A's cruise past slumping Angels



**15** How Bayern Munich grew into super club of German football



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COLOGNE: Sevilla's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the UEFA Europa League final football match Sevilla v Inter Milan, in Cologne, western Germany. — AFP

## Sevilla win sixth Europa League

### Sevilla edge Inter Milan in epic final

COLOGNE: Sevilla boss Julen Lopetegui said he does not look back at what might have been with Spain and Real Madrid after leading the Spanish side to a sixth Europa League title thanks to a 3-2 win over Inter Milan in a thrilling final in Cologne.

Lopetegui was sacked as Spain boss days before the start of the 2018 World Cup for accepting the role as Madrid coach and then also fired by Real just four months later. But in his first season in Seville, the former Madrid and Barcelona goalkeeper has restored his reputation with a fourth-placed finish in La Liga and seeing off European giants Inter, Manchester United and Roma in the latter stages of the Europa League.

"Fortunately I don't look back," said Lopetegui. "I have the luck to be in a club that has given me this chance to be with a real team with everything that word means." By contrast, Inter coach Antonio Conte suggested his time in Milan might be over after just one season despite finishing second in

Serie A and leading the Italians to a first European final in 10 years.

"It is only right that we analyse the entire season, look at everything in a very calm way and try to plan the future of Inter, whether it's with or without me," said Conte. "This year will always have a place in my heart, it's been such a strange year and exhausting year. It's been a worthwhile and incredible experience."

The outcome could have been very different had match winner Diego Carlos been sent off inside three minutes for hauling down Romelu Lukaku in the area. Carlos was only shown a yellow card before Lukaku confidently slotted home his 34th goal of the season to equal his idol Ronaldo's record in his first season at Inter, which ended in the club's last UEFA Cup win 1997/98.

Luuk De Jong has been far from that prolific in his first season in Spain, but the Dutch international suddenly hit form at the right time as after scoring the

winner in the semi-final against United, he powered home from Jesus Navas's cross and then looped another header into the far corner from Ever Banega's free-kick to turn the game around.

#### 'MADE FUN OF CONTE'S HAIR'

"I dedicate this to the Sevilla fans," said De Jong. "I got the feeling, even in the group stages, how important this cup is for them and we knew if we win this trophy if it also for them." Sevilla's lead only lasted three minutes as Diego Godin's bullet header saw the Uruguayan become the first defender to score in a Champions League and Europa League final.

But the Uruguayan has now lost both after scoring in Atletico Madrid's defeat to Real Madrid in the 2014 Champions League final. Tempers flared towards the end of a pulsating first-half with Conte booked for an altercation with Banega after the Argentine reportedly made fun of his hair.

Inter were made to rue wasting the better opportunities in the second half as their nine-year trophy drought continues. Lukaku had the best chance as he raced through on goal 25 minutes from time, but just as in the semi-final victory over United, Sevilla goalkeeper Bono produced a vital save when needed.

And like so many of their previous five Europa League final victories, Sevilla conjured up a moment of magic allied with a slice of fortune they needed to again take the trophy they call their own back to southern Spain.

Inter failed to clear another Banega free-kick into the box and Carlos more than made amends for some of his heavy-handed defending with an overhead kick that deflected in off the unfortunate Lukaku.

"We are very disappointed but we have to move on," said Inter captain Samir Handanovic. "We just hope to play many other important games like this in the future. The foundations are there." — AFP

### Raptors rip Nets, Boston hold off 76ers for NBA playoff leads

MIAMI: The defending champions Toronto Raptors pummeled the Brooklyn Nets while the Boston Celtics had to claw past a determined Philadelphia on Friday, both taking commanding 3-0 series leads in the NBA playoffs.

Pascal Siakam scored 26 points, pulled down eight rebounds and handed out five assists to lead the Raptors to a 117-92 victory over the Nets. Toronto connected on 50.5 percent of their shots from the field and 47.8 percent from three-point range.

Kyle Lowry came up just short of a triple-double with 11 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists for a

Raptors team that can clinch a second round berth in game four today. "We're just taking it a possession at a time," Lowry said. "We can't focus on anything else. Closeout games are always the toughest. We know they're not going to lay down."

Tyler Johnson led the Nets with 23 points, Caris LeVert added 15 and Chris Chiozza chipped in 14 off the bench. But as in Toronto's game-one blowout win, Brooklyn never led. The Celtics are also in control against the 76ers, although they had to battle a struggling but determined Philadelphia side to close out a 102-94 victory.

Kemba Walker scored 24 points and Jaylen Brown added 21 as the Celtics withstood a 30-point, 13-rebound performance from Philadelphia big man Joel Embiid in the NBA's quarantine bubble in Orlando, Florida. Josh Richardson and Shake Milton added 17 points apiece and Tobias Harris scored 15 with 15 rebounds for Philadelphia, who connected on just 29.5 percent of their shots from the floor but kept themselves in it with hustle.

The Sixers out-rebounded the Celtics 57-45 and scored 20 second-chance points to Boston's nine. "Defensively we did what we needed to do to win a game," Sixers coach Brett Brown said. "Offensively, the quantity of misses is hard to overcome."

Jayson Tatum added 15 points for Boston, after averaging 32.5 over the first two games. He was limited by early foul trouble that saw him sit out all of the second quarter. But Tatum came up with a key block of Embiid that led to the go-ahead basket late in the fourth quarter as Boston closed the game on a 10-0 scoring run. Brown said the Sixers are well aware that no NBA team has rallied to win a playoff series after trailing 0-3. Despite their dire situation, Embiid said he was focused on winning game four on Sunday.

"I don't want to be swept," Embiid said. "I don't want that in my resume." In Western Conference action, the Utah Jazz cruised past the Denver Nuggets 124-87, taking a 2-1 series lead with their second straight lopsided win.

And the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Dallas Mavericks

130-122 to edge ahead 2-1 in their series. Utah's Mike Conley played his first playoff game in the bubble after leaving for the birth of his son and then quarantining for four days upon his return.

Conley made seven of eight three-point attempts on the way to 27 points, leading three Jazz starters with 20 or more. Rudy Gobert added 24 points and 14 rebounds and Donovan Mitchell added 20 points and four rebounds. All got plenty of rest as well, sitting out much of the fourth quarter with the game well in hand.

Kawhi Leonard scored 36 points and grabbed nine rebounds, leading seven Clippers players to score in double figures. "I thought his playmaking was incredible tonight," Clippers coach Doc Rivers said of Leonard. "Obviously his scoring, his defense, but his playmaking sets a tone for everybody else." Leonard said he "just tried to be aggressive" as the Clippers bounced back from a game two defeat. "The whole team is being aggressive," he said. "They're helping me get easy shots. When you pass the ball they're making it, and that's how you get assists." — AFP