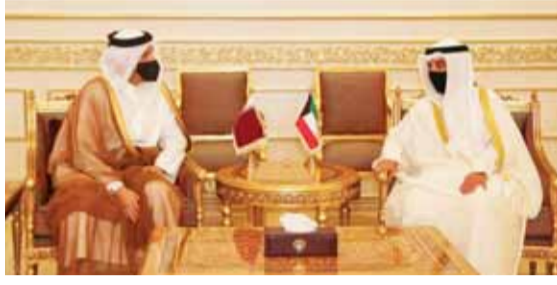




3 Kuwait, Qatar FMs hold talks on regional, international issues



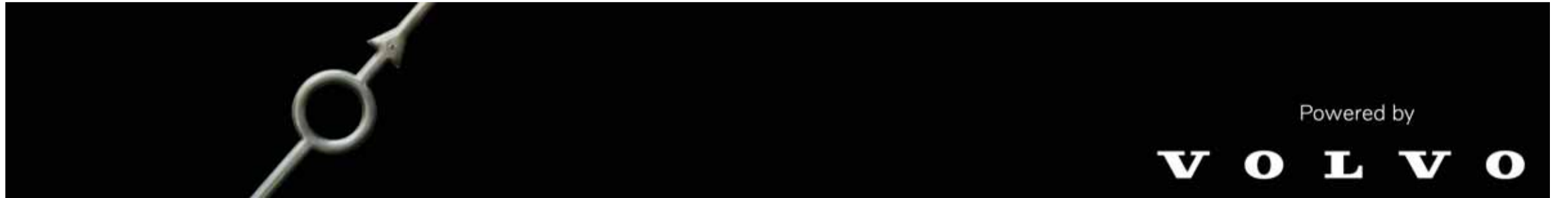
7 Kurdish Iraq goes after media as unrest grows



8 It's not the economy, stupid: Bourses soar to record highs



16 PSG hoping academies will challenge appeal of rivals



Deputy Amir: Those guilty of security leaks will be punished

Interior minister suspends state security chief, officers over sensitive leaks

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah warned yesterday that all those involved in the security leaks issue will be punished and called on all to stop circulating the "harmful material" that undermines Kuwait's unity and security. In a speech to the nation, Sheikh Nawaf described what is happening as an act of "chaos" that undermines the foundations of the country, adding that the recent leaks are "abnormal" acts that are totally rejected.

Sheikh Nawaf delivered his speech after meeting earlier yesterday with the prime minister, speaker of the National Assembly and the interior minister. The issue revolves around a video showing senior officials

plotting to tap social media accounts of certain people. The video, recorded in 2018, was specifically focused on people linked to the Malaysian sovereign fund scandal, which is currently under investigation in Kuwait.

Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh immediately suspended the state security agency chief and seven officers pending interrogations. He also referred the entire issue to the public prosecution for criminal investigations. The interior minister also ordered an investigation by the interior ministry and gave the investigation panel just 48 hours to submit its report.

HH Sheikh Nawaf warned in his speech that no one is above the law including ruling family members, adding any member of the ruling family found guilty will be held

to account. He said that the entire leaks issue has been sent to the judiciary for a fair investigation and that the matter is receiving his personal attention. He also called on the public to stop circulating the leaked material, cautioning that the leaks are an attempt by some to create divisions in the society.

"This requires everyone to stop the spread of such harmful material, which only the enemies of the nation will benefit from, and those who seek to achieve their own interests and goals at the expense of our national security," he said. HH the Amir had himself repeatedly warned of the "deviating nature" of some social media reports, HH Sheikh Nawaf said, indicating to their "demolishing and sabotaging" effects on the structure of the Kuwaiti society.

This information may be slanderous and "stir up strife, spread frustration and pessimism and launch accusations without any evidence," he underlined. "We will not allow a misguided few to drag our country into a state of division and chaos in the name of false freedom," Sheikh Nawaf warned.

The issue came to the limelight following a grilling of the interior minister by leading opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, who immediately called on the interior minister to resign. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said the leaks will add further legal burdens on the Kuwaiti government, as it can now be accused of not only failing to inform about the Malaysian fund crime, but also attempting to provide a cover-up for the crime.



HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

News in brief

India virus tally tops 3m

NEW DELHI: India's confirmed coronavirus cases crossed the three million mark yesterday with nearly 70,000 new infections, as the disease continues to surge in the world's second most-populous nation. The health ministry said 69,239 cases were detected yesterday, with 912 deaths taking the total number of fatalities to 56,706. — AFP

Troops withdraw from Taji

CAMP TAJI, Iraq: US-led international coalition troops withdrew from Iraq's Taji military base yesterday and handed it over to Iraqi security forces, Reuters witnesses and the coalition said. "The movement of coalition military personnel is part of a long-range plan coordinated with the government of Iraq," the coalition said in a statement, adding that Camp Taji has historically held up to 2,000 coalition members, most of whom have departed this summer. — Reuters

Missiles hit 25 secs apart

DUBAI: Analysis from the black boxes of a downed Ukrainian passenger plane shows it was hit by two missiles 25 seconds apart and that passengers were still alive for some time after the impact of the first blast, Iran said yesterday. The announcement by the marks the first official report on the contents of the cockpit voice and data recordings. — Reuters

Hezbollah down Israeli drone

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement said Saturday it had downed and seized an Israeli drone that flew over the UN-demarcated Blue Line border. The Israel Defense Forces said that "earlier today, during IDF operational activity along the Blue Line, an IDF drone fell in Lebanese territory". Hezbollah said its fighters had downed the drone near the town of Aita Al-Shaab. — AFP

Tower Bridge gets stuck

LONDON: London's iconic Tower Bridge suffered "technical issues" Saturday when it was raised to let a ship through - and was unable to close. Traffic around the area became deadlocked after the bridge was closed to vehicles for several hours during the afternoon and evening. Built between 1886 and 1894, the bridge lifts around 800 times a year and on Saturday was scheduled to be raised for the historic charter boat Sailing Barge Will. — AFP

Taxi drivers grapple with bitter reality

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Taxi driver Imthias Hussain had high expectations when he returned to the road after the government lifted a four-month-long lockdown on taxis on July 28. But a flurry of private vehicles transporting people up and down for a 'consensual fare' dashed his hopes and upended his livelihood. While hundreds of illegal taxis, camouflaged as private vehicles, carry three passengers, licensed taxis can carry only one passenger at

a time amid coronavirus restrictions.

"I had high hopes when I took my taxi out after a gap of four months. But to my dismay, I found that people are wary of hiring a taxi these days amid virus fears, especially families, as they cannot travel in one vehicle," said Hussain, a Pakistani expat who has been a taxi driver in Kuwait for the last 15 years.

Many other roaming taxi drivers who ply on Kuwait's roads also echoed despair and frustration as they grapple with a bitter post-lockdown reality. They feel that illegal taxis are stealing their livelihoods. Now, as buses are back on the streets, the plight of taxi drivers has become even more compounded.

As part of lockdown restrictions, the government suspended public

Continued on Page 2



KUWAIT: A taxi driver picks up a passenger after taxis were allowed back on the streets in late July. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

UAE deal puts Israeli reach on Iran doorstep

DUBAI: Israel's landmark deal with the UAE to normalize ties could see businesses from the Jewish state operating on archrival Iran's doorstep, but are unlikely to disturb Emirati economic ties to Iran. It could also pave the way for direct economic engagement between Israeli and UAE-based Iranian business people that would reap benefits from politics, experts say.

Cinzia Bianco, a research fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said it would be "a while" before Iranians in the UAE come face to face with Israelis. "It is important to stress here that most Iranians with real ties in the Islamic republic were either expelled or moved away in the past years," she said. "Those who remained in Dubai or the UAE in general are the ultra-pragmatic business people, who refuse to get enmeshed in any kind of politics. So some of them view this deal as an opportunity, not a challenge," she added.

The oil-rich United Arab Emirates was the first Gulf state to establish ties with Israel, in a deal that came amid rising tensions with Iran, accused by its neighbors of fuelling regional instability. Abu Dhabi accuses Tehran of occupying three Emirati islands

since 1971, and downgraded ties with Iran in 2016 amid rivalry between UAE ally Saudi Arabia and the Islamic republic, which is also targeted by painful US economic sanctions.

Despite tensions, the UAE and Iran, which lie 70 km apart across the strategic Strait of Hormuz, have maintained diplomatic exchanges and crucially protected their economic ties, generating billions for both sides. "Tehran is not in a position to forego its economic ties with any country - especially not the UAE which is practically next door," said Ellen R Wald, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global Energy Centre. "Iran also has close ties to countries like China that work alongside Israel," she told AFP.

Continued on Page 2

Kuwait to rebuild Lebanon's only large grain silo

BEIRUT: Kuwait said it will rebuild Lebanon's only large grain silo that was destroyed by the massive Beirut port explosion, raising fears of food shortages in a country already in financial meltdown. The destruction of the 120,000-tonne capacity structure at the port, the main entry point for food imports, meant buyers must rely on smaller private storage facilities for their wheat purchases with no government reserves to fall back on.

Kuwait's ambassador to Lebanon, Abdulaal Al-Qenaie, said in comments to local radio VdL at the weekend that the silo was first built in 1969 with a Kuwaiti development loan. Kuwait will now rebuild the silo so it remains a symbol of "how to manage relations between two brotherly countries that

Continued on Page 2



BEIRUT: Diggers remove earth at the blast site next to silos at the port of Beirut on Aug 16, 2020, in the aftermath of the massive explosion there that ravaged Lebanon's capital. — AFP

Local

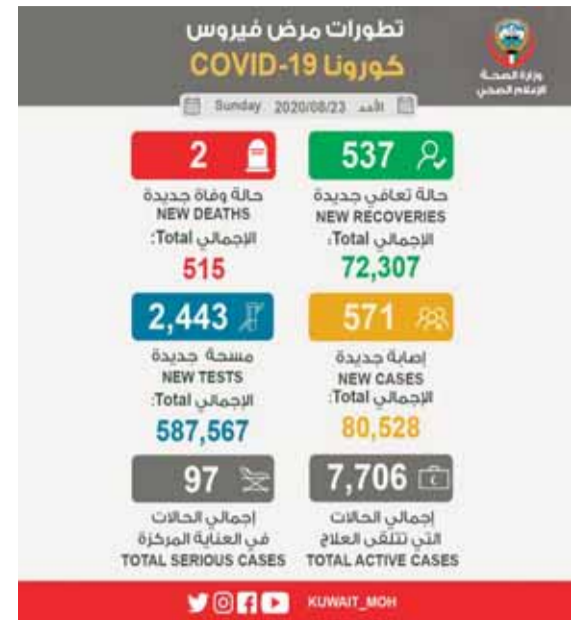
Kuwait COVID-19 cases reach 80,528, total recoveries 72,307

571 new cases, two deaths, 537 recoveries

KUWAIT: Kuwait announced yesterday it registered two deaths resulted from the coronavirus pandemic while 571 people tested positive for the virus in the past 24 hours. Ministry of Health spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said total deaths reached 515, and the tally of registered cases topped 80,528. He said the new cases were

registered in health areas as follows: 162 in Ahmadi, 126 in Hawally, 113 in Farwaniya, 105 in the Capital and 65 in Jahra. The ministry announced earlier yesterday the recovery of 537 COVID-19 patients in the past 24 hours, with total recoveries reaching 72,307. Dr Sanad said 97 patients were receiving treatment in the intensive

care units, while a total of 7,706 people were receiving medical care. Health care workers conducted 2,443 swab tests in the past 24 hours, said Dr Sanad, raising total tests since the outbreak of the virus to 587,567. He urged the public to abide by the health preventive measures including social distancing. — KUNA



National Guard honors Mahboula field hospital team



KUWAIT: Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Undersecretary Lt Gen Hashem Al-Refaie honored the administrative and medical team which operated the field hospital in Mahboula while the area was under lockdown. Lt Gen Refaie conveyed appreciations of KNG Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to the teams for their efforts in offering medical services to around 30,000 residents in Mahboula for four months.



Pedestrian killed in expressway accident

KUWAIT: An Indian man died when a police patrol vehicle ran him over while he was crossing Fahaheel Expressway between Sabah Al-Salem and Messilah, said security sources. The patrol driver is being interrogated, the sources said, noting that he initially reported that the man suddenly appeared in front of him.

Officer injured

A female officer was rushed to hospital when a woman wanted for a KD 50,000 financial claim violated the partial curfew and ran her over when stopped at a checkpoint.

Case papers indicate that the suspect's vehicle was stopped during the partial curfew hours by a female captain and a police-woman, who found she did not have any curfew permits and was wanted. When asked to step out and get into the patrol vehicle, she resisted arrest and drove off, running over the officer and tried to run over the police-woman. The woman was chased all the way to her house, where a police force negotiated with her family before they turned her in. The officer sustained several bruises and injuries in her arm and leg. A case was filed and the suspect was referred to relevant authorities.

Shuwaikh fight

A Syrian mechanic and an Egyptian customer sustained various injuries in a fight, as the latter was not satisfied with the service he received at the former's garage in Shuwaikh industrial area, said security sources. Case papers indicate that a police force was dispatched to stop the fight and due to their injuries, they were initially taken to hospital for treatment before they were taken to the area's police station, where the officer in charge tried to make them reconcile, but they refused and insisted on filing a case. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Afghanistan added to flights ban list

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait suspended flights to and from Afghanistan as of yesterday, raising the number of countries from and to which commercial flights are still suspended to 32, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced. Meanwhile, a total of 17,692 passengers arrived in Kuwait from different countries since Kuwait International Airport launched operations of commercial flights on August 1, until August 22, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said, adding that 45,083 passengers left Kuwait in the same period. A total of 837 flights were scheduled

during that period, including 415 inbound flights and 422 outbound flights, DGCA explained.

Upon resuming commercial flights, Kuwait announced a list of countries to and from which flights remain suspended until further notice due to COVID-19 fears. The updated list now stands as follows: Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Northern Macedonia, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Serbia, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka and Syria.



LONDON: The Tower Bridge in central London is stuck open on Saturday, causing traffic chaos. — AFP

Kuwait to rebuild...

Continued from Page 1

respect each other", Qenaie was cited as saying. The port explosion killed at least 180 people, injured thousands and wrecked swathes of the Lebanese capital, pushing the government to resign.

The now caretaker economy minister, Raoul Nehme, has reassured the public that there would be no flour or bread crisis in Lebanon, which buys almost all its wheat from abroad. Plans for another grain silo in Lebanon's second largest port

Tripoli were shelved years ago due to a lack of funding, a UN official, port official and regional grain expert told Reuters earlier this month.

Humanitarian aid has poured into Lebanon. But foreign donors have made clear they will not bail out the state without reforms to tackle entrenched corruption and negligence. Gulf Arab states who once gave Lebanon financial support have grown weary in recent years of the Iran-backed Hezbollah's expanding role in state affairs. — Reuters

Taxi drivers grapple with...

Continued from Page 1

transport buses on March 18 and taxis on March 22. Hundreds of people, who till then depended on buses and taxis for commuting to and from workplaces, began to rely on private vehicles for transportation under a partial curfew. Many taxi drivers believe that the official ban on licensed transportation services paved way for the mushrooming of an illegal private taxi network in the country.

"They are flourishing now because private vehicles can take up to three passengers at a time. Even families go for private taxis because they prefer to travel together," said Manoj Madathil, an Indian taxi driver. According to Madathil, the post-lockdown scenario presents an uncertain future for taxi drivers in Kuwait. A driver who pays a rental fee of KD 7 or KD 8 a day to his company will not be able to make a living with the job today when the one-passenger rule is in force. He hoped the authorities would soon lift the rule, which could improve the plight of taxi drivers. Luckily, some taxi owners are not insisting on the daily rent now, he added.

Several taxi drivers expressed hope that the authorities would take measures to stop the plying of illegal private taxis in the country so that licensed taxi drivers would feel secure. Most of the cabbies - who endured a harrowing time during the lockdown

without work and money - spoke to Kuwait Times of their misery, sacrifices and fears for the future. Some who had their families here sent them to their home countries, while others resorted to taking up menial jobs like food delivery or restaurant catering to earn a living. Partially offsetting their misery, most taxi owners had exempted their drivers from paying the daily rent during most of the lockdown period.

Rajamanikkam, an Indian taxi driver, said he had to depend on his wife Muthulakshmi's salary when he became jobless during the lockdown. Muthulakshmi, a domestic servant, has been working as a cook at a restaurant in Salmiya during the last two months of the lockdown.

Youseff, an Egyptian expat driver, said he has decided to leave Kuwait for good as he cannot support his family with a taxi driver's job now. "Probably, I could make around 10 or 12 dinars a day if I roam the streets until 8 pm. But what is left after paying the daily rent of KD 7, petrol charges and maintenance or repair costs?" he asked. According to some estimates, around 10,000 roaming taxis and 5,000 call taxis are plying on Kuwaiti roads, in addition to a few hundred orange taxis and airport taxis.

More than 50 owners representing taxi companies held protests outside the interior ministry's headquarters in Subhan last week against the decision to ban taxis from serving more than one passenger at a time, according to media reports. They demanded that the decision be scrapped as it had caused substantial losses to their businesses, the reports added.

UAE deal puts Israeli reach on...

Continued from Page 1

Two days after US President Donald Trump's shock announcement of the deal, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani warned the UAE "against opening the path of Israel to the region". The UAE summoned Iran's envoy to protest the "threats", although it insisted the next day the agreement "was not directed against Iran".

But feelings are still running high in the Strait of Hormuz - a vital corridor connecting the petroleum-rich states of the Middle East with markets in Asia, Europe, North America and elsewhere. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), 35 percent of the world's seaborne oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Iran last week said it seized an Emirati boat and arrested its crew after two Iranian fishermen were shot dead in an incident in the Gulf. But the foreign ministry in Tehran conceded the UAE had promised "compensation for any damage caused".

Trade between the UAE and Iran is worth billions of dollars, with Dubai historically serving as a center for Iranian offshore business. Exchange between the two oil producers was worth \$8.3 billion last year, according to official Emirati statistics, down from \$15.2 billion in 2018 - before US sanctions reached their peak in May 2019.

Iranian businesses and individuals complain those sanctions mean their banking services are often suspended or withdrawn, but fail to actually stop them trading. Mobiles phones, cars, frozen meat, clothes and other goods flow between the two countries' ports almost constantly. More than 8,000 Iranian companies and 6,000 traders operate across the UAE, making it highly likely they will encounter the expected wave of Israeli merchants and investors.

"Iranians in the UAE are not in a position to complain about the Israel-UAE relationship, but there is little indication that the typical Iranian would be disturbed by this," Wald said. She noted that before the 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled the Western-backed Shah, "Iran and Israel had a cooperative relationship".

The UAE is also home to a sizeable Iranian community that owns hundreds of properties and has invested heavily in the infrastructure of the country since its formation in 1971. According to Emirati media, tens of thousands of Iranians live in the UAE while Iranian officials estimate their number to be closer to half a million. Around 350,000 Iranians visit the Emirates each year.

Many prominent Emirati families are originally from Iran, with some members holding government jobs. Some Iranians, like public relations executive Fariba, say they are not concerned by the UAE-Iran deal to normalize ties. "I am a divorced mother, and I need to work to raise my son. That's all I care about," said the 45-year-old, who did not give her surname. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Deputy Amir, Crown Prince receives Speaker, Premier, Deputy PM

Lesotho King inquires about Amir's health in letter



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



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. — KUNA photos

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

Deputy Amir and Crown Prince also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for

Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince received a message from Lesotho King Letsie III inquiring about health condition of His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing him wellbeing. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince thanked King Letsie III, in a cable, for his sentiments and wished him a good health. —KUNA

Kuwait, Qatari FMs discuss regional issues

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with the visiting Qatari Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Thani on regional and international developments, and bilateral relations. The talks were held shortly after arrival of Sheikh Mohammad in Kuwait, the foreign ministry said in a statement. The talks were attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Dhari Al-Ajran, Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Nasser Al-Muzayyen, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Ministry's office Saleh Al-Loughani and his Deputy Ahmad Al-Shuraim, as well as Ajran's Deputy Abdulmohsen Al-Zaid. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with Qatar's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Thani. —KUNA photos



Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah welcomes Qatar's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Thani upon his arrival in Kuwait.

Plan proposed for primary school classes

KUWAIT: The special committee formed by Hawally educational zone to set the timings to be followed during the 2020-2021 new school year in the primary stage (grades 1-5) in public and Arabic private schools proposed that students will only go to school for two days a week and study online in the remaining days in case a partial curfew is placed, and do all schooling in actual classes in case of no curfew.

According to the suggested plan published by Al-Rai daily yesterday, classes will be of 30 minutes each and the school day will be for three hours and a half, during which pupils will study the Holy Quran, Islamic studies, Science and Social Studies, in addition to three daily periods for Arabic, English and Maths. The plan also suggested that Art, PE, Music and Computers should be co-curricular interactive activities.

The plan also focused on assessment of pupils of grades 1-5 and allocated 80 percent of the grades to activities, participation and

assignments, 10 percent for conduct and 10 percent for the final assessment. It also suggested doing all assignments through the smart educational portal and using social media programs to meet parents in view of the global uncertainty concerning COVID-19 and the fact that no cure has yet been developed.

Accordingly, the plan includes three possible scenarios - the first phase (code red) of total curfew, phase two (code yellow) of partial curfew with strict preventive measures and phase three (code green) of the end of the pandemic and resumption of normal life. The 2020/2021 academic year starts on October 4 for all stages. The current plan is to have intermediate and high school students take their classes online, while the ministry is still exploring options regarding teaching of kindergarten and primary school students.

In other news, Al-Anbaa daily reported yesterday that a number of public school teachers arrived from Tunisia recently, as teaching staff prepare to return to work September 1 ahead of the start of the new school year. The returning teachers will remain in home quarantine for one week from the date of arrival before they are allowed to report to work, said sources quoted in the report.

News in brief

Corruption convicts detained

KUWAIT: A female suspect convicted in an Interior Ministry corruption case turned herself in to police yesterday morning, the ministry announced. This comes a day after police apprehended another female convict in the same case, the ministry said in a statement.

Investigations team

KUWAIT: An investigations team from the United States is expected to visit Kuwait soon in a mission that includes collecting information about money laundering cases that surfaced lately in the Gulf state, most importantly the case involving the Malaysian fund, Al-Qabas reported yesterday. The team will submit information to security and financial authorities in Kuwait on transfers made from the Malaysian fund, which were then transferred to local and regional banks, said anonymous sources quoted in the report.

Contracts 'frozen'

KUWAIT: Around 1,183 contracts under which expatriates are hired in 48 state departments have been frozen in the 2020/2021 fiscal year's budget, as a first step before they are terminated as part of the plan to replace expatriate manpower in the public sector with Kuwaiti employees, Al-Rai daily reported yesterday.

Licenses available

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's General Traffic Department announced that citizens and expatriates can now receive their driver's licenses from its offices around Kuwait, or from its machines located in the following malls: Avenues Mall, Marina Mall, Kout Mall, Souq Sharq, and Al-Khaima Mall.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf

The advertisement shows two smartphones side-by-side. The left phone displays a news article with a 'TOP NEWS' header and a sub-header 'THE CORONA SPREAD - THE LIVE NUMBERS'. The right phone displays another news article with a 'TOP NEWS' header and a sub-header 'THE COVID-19 SITUATION'. A large, detailed 3D model of a coronavirus particle is superimposed over the phones and the background. At the bottom of the advertisement, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, along with the Kuwait Times logo and a WhatsApp icon with the number 94488888.

Local

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KUWAIT: The International Women's Group's (IWG) board held a meeting recently, during which Ambreen Mustafa, the wife of the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, took charge as the President of IWG Kuwait (2020-2021) from outgoing President Anita de Vogel, the wife of the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Kuwait.



Amateur fishermen protest Kuwait Bay closure

KUWAIT: A number of amateur Kuwaiti fishermen gathered Saturday in Bnaid Al-Gar harbor in protest against the closure of Kuwait Bay for fishing with light gear and not keeping promises that had been made by relevant bodies concerning resuming fishing inside the bay. Protestors urged the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources to allow fishing in Kuwait Bay waters and stressed that violations were committed by fishermen of other nationalities.

Spokesperson of the Kuwait Sea Amateurs Team Ahmed Al-Bannai demanded opening Kuwait Bay for fishermen using fishing rods without setting any incapacitating conditions. "The closure decision and depriving fishermen is a fatal mistake. Unlike what some people claim, the closure did not resolve environmental issues," he said, noting that boats help move the water and increase oxygen levels in the water.—Al-Rai



KUWAIT: Shiite Muslims listen to a sheikh reciting the story of Ashura in Kuwait City on August 22, 2020. Ashura is a period of mourning in remembrance of the seventh-century martyrdom of Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) grandson Imam Hussein, who was killed in the battle of Karbala in modern-day Iraq, in 680 AD. — Photos by Yasser Al-

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New Palace of Justice 34% complete

KUWAIT: The Amiri Diwan recently announced that construction on the new Palace of Justice is progressing according to plans, having reached 34 percent completion in record time. The project, which broke ground during the first quarter of 2019, is a collaboration between the Amiri Diwan and Kuwait-based architecture and engineering firm, Pace. Set to be the largest judicial building in the Middle East, the new Palace of Justice covers an area of 33,384.50 sq m and is located in the heart of Kuwait City, overlooking the Arabian Gulf. The landmark building will have more than 141 courtrooms and around 131,000.00 sq m of office space spread over 26 floors.



KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry conducted inspection tours at around 30 barbershops in Hawally Governorate. During the campaign, inspectors issued four citations against barbershops for failure to place signs showing their services' prices.

International

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2020



Series of killings plunges Iraq activists into a familiar fear

Page 7

As social unrest grows, Kurdish Iraq goes after the media

Page 7



BEIRUT: Photo shows an aerial view of the flattened warehouse at the port of Lebanon's capital Beirut next to the crater left by the explosion at the other warehouse that housed a huge cache of ammonium nitrate and which ravaged the city in early August. — AFP

Blast shatters taboos around Hezbollah

Special status, fear torn down by deadly Beirut explosion

BEIRUT: Hezbollah's emphatic defense of the political status quo in Lebanon has exposed it since the deadly Beirut blast to levels of public contempt and anger it was once shielded from. The powerful Shiite movement remains the dominant player in Lebanon, but the special status it enjoyed and the fear it instilled were torn down by the explosion. In a scene that was almost unthinkable only a few months ago, an image of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah was among the cardboard cutouts protesters hanged from their mock gallows this month.

"In the hours that followed the explosion, many blamed Hezbollah," said Fares Al-Halabi, who has been active since an unprecedented anti-government protest movement that erupted in October 2019. Last year, he said, "there had been a tacit agreement among the revolutionary camp not to raise the issue of Hezbollah and of its weapons." The group is the only faction to have kept its weapons long after the 1975 to 1990 civil war. Its military might rivals the state's and is seen by many as one of the main obstacles to democratic reform.

The verdict of a special court based in The Netherlands on Tuesday found a Hezbollah member, Salim Ayyash, guilty in absentia of murder over the 2005 assassination of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri, a Sunni. The investigation did not establish a direct link with Hezbollah's leadership but it stressed the evidently political nature of the crime. "Hezbollah operatives do not freelance," was how US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo put it. By jumping into the mainstream political swamp, the militia group has exposed itself to being held responsible, if not accountable, for the shortcomings of the state.

Whatever investigations come to reveal of what triggered the August 4 port blast that killed more than 180

people, many Lebanese already agree one thing: that their entire corrupt ruling elite is the real culprit. Whoever may have owned the stock of ammonium nitrate that blew up and devastated swathes of Beirut, the main powerbrokers of a system that Hezbollah dominates and protects all knew about it. When protesters, in a rare show of non-sectarian unity, last year sought to bring down the system, it was Hezbollah that came to the rescue of Lebanon's reviled class of hereditary political barons.

"To me that was a significant move. Hezbollah could have shielded itself from this role but chose to protect this house that's collapsing," said Sami Atallah, who heads the Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies. Hezbollah has long enjoyed some level of popular legitimacy over its history of resistance against Israel, which has spared it some of the spite directed at other parties.

The fervor surrounding Nasrallah as a religious leader also created a lese-majeste rule that made his fiercest opponents think twice about voicing their opinions with the same bravado they would use against other politicians. That restraint was laid to rest after the August 4 deadly blast as an angry public let rip at their political leadership, Nasrallah included, in ways not seen before.

Many Lebanese saw the explosion as the starkest evidence yet that corruption kills. Tongues have loosened now and ridiculing Hezbollah is no longer sacrilege. A widely shared meme had a screen grab of Nasrallah choking back tears over the killing of Iranian spy master Qasem Soleimani in a US drone strike in Iraq earlier this year, contrasting with another of him looking composed and smiling after the Beirut blast. Lebanon's worst peacetime disaster left more than 6,000 people



BEIRUT: Photo shows an aerial view of the historic 19th-century Sursok Palace along the eponymous street in the Ashrafiyeh neighborhood of Lebanon's capital Beirut, damaged by the monster blast. — AFP

wounded and maimed, 70,000 jobless, and hundreds of thousands without a home.

Many victims said they will never forgive the state for failing to prevent the blast, and also for failing to respond adequately. Activist Najji Abou Khalil said that before the explosion "Hezbollah had managed to cast itself as an anti-establishment party." "Now Hezbollah's image as a governing party like any other dominates that of the resistance party," said Abou Khalil, also an executive committee member of the reformist and sec-

ular National Bloc party. Hezbollah long had the best of both worlds, wielding considerable behind-the-scenes power without having to answer publicly for its decisions. Now it is finding that being the boss comes with drawbacks, Halabi said of the movement which dominates parliament and government with its allies. "Hezbollah is the de-facto ruler and everything that happens falls under its authority, and the... ruler is always the one who bears responsibility for any negative consequences that occur," he said. — AFP

How big gatherings spread coronavirus

LEIPZIG: Around 1,500 volunteers equipped with face masks, hand disinfectant and tracking gadgets attended an indoor concert in Germany on Saturday as part of a study to simulate how the novel coronavirus spreads in large gatherings. As part of the so-called Restart19 study, researchers from the University Medical Center in Halle want to find out how cultural and sporting events can safely take place without posing a risk to the population.

Volunteers were handed protective facemasks of the type typically used in hospitals and bottles of fluorescent hand sanitizer at the concert of German singer-songwriter Tim Bendzko in an indoor arena in Leipzig. "I am extremely satisfied with the discipline displayed by the participants," Stefan Moritz, the head of the study, told a news conference after the concert. "I was surprised how disciplined everyone was in wearing masks." He said results of the study, which is being financed by the states of Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, were ex-

pected in 4-6 weeks.

The participants were also given contact tracers to help track the distance between concertgoers and to identify in which parts of the arena, such as entrance halls and grandstands, people might crowd too closely together. Researchers asked participants to regularly disinfect their hands using the fluorescent sanitiser so scientists can identify - with the help of ultra-violet light - which surfaces are touched frequently and pose a risk for spreading the virus.

Sporting events such as Liverpool's Champions League soccer match against Atletico Madrid and the Cheltenham Festival, a horseracing event, in Britain in March have been blamed for playing a role in spreading COVID-19. Most events with big crowds have been put on hold. A decision to grant approval for a concert of German singer Sarah Connor with 13,000 attendees on Sept. 4 in Duesseldorf has faced sharp criticism by virologists and local politicians. — Reuters

Tens of thousands flee as California fires rage

LOS ANGELES: Some of California's largest-ever fires raged across the state Saturday, forcing tens of thousands from their homes as forecasters warned of further blazes sparked by lightning. Several thousand lightning strikes in recent days ignited fires that left thick smoke blanketing the region. The total area burned for all the fires in California this week is "close to 1 million acres (400,000 hectares)," according to CalFire public information officer Jeremy Rahn. "More lightning is anticipated tomorrow and into Tuesday - everyone must remain alert and have an evacuation plan," the agency said on Twitter.

Added the National Weather Service: "With severe drought and exceptionally dry fuels present, dry thunderstorms could spark additional wildfires this weekend." "The western US and Great Plains are shrouded under a vast area of smoke due to ongoing wildfires that extend from the Rockies to the West Coast." The two largest blazes - dubbed the LNU Lightning Complex and the SCU Lightning Complex - have burned about 600,000 acres and

destroyed 565 structures.

The LNU fire covered 314,207 acres by Saturday morning, making it the second-largest fire in California history. It was 15 percent contained. The SCU fire had burned 291,968 acres and was the third-largest fire in state history. It was 10 percent contained. About 2,600 firefighters are tackling the two blazes, out of 13,700 battling "nearly two dozen major fires," according to Rahn. "We simply haven't seen anything like this in many, many years," California Governor Gavin Newsom said on Friday. Wineries in the famed Napa and Sonoma regions, which are still reeling from blazes in recent years, are under threat. "Many of these firefighters have been on the lines for 72 hours, and everybody is running on fumes," Assemblyman Jim Wood of the Healdsburg district in Sonoma told the Los Angeles Times. "Our first responders are working to the ragged edge of everything they have."

Some refuse to evacuate

Five deaths have been linked to the latest

flare-ups, with four bodies recovered on Thursday, including three from a burned house in a rural area of Napa County. But many residents have refused evacuation orders. "At least if we're here, we know exactly what's going on," Napa resident John Newman, 68, told the San Francisco Chronicle as he sat in a lawn chair in his driveway. "Family is worried, but it's a little different if you're here firsthand." Nature reserves were also ravaged. The Big Basin Redwoods State Park said that some of its historic buildings had been destroyed by flames. The park, where giant redwood trees of well over 500 years old can be found, was "extensively damaged," it 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 counties south of San Francisco, evacuees opted to sleep in trailers along the Pacific Ocean as they fled nearby fires, while tourists were urged to leave to free up accommodation. Fire crews, surveillance equipment and other firefighting hardware was being sent from states including Oregon, New Mexico and Texas. But faced with the sheer scope of the disaster, Newsom also asked for help from Canada and Australia, which he said had "the world's best firefighters." — AFP

International

World virus deaths top 800,000 as nations ramp up measures

Infection levels spark fears of a fully-fledged second wave

PARIS: The global death toll from the new coronavirus has surpassed 800,000, according to an AFP count on Saturday, with numerous countries ramping up restrictions in an effort to battle an eruption of new cases. Western Europe, particularly Spain, Italy Germany and France, has been hit with infection levels not seen in many months, sparking fears of a fully-fledged second wave. And in Asia, South Korea became the latest country to announce it would boost restrictions to try to stem a new outbreak, after largely bringing the virus under control.

Across the world, the number of deaths has doubled to just over 800,000 since June 6, with 100,000 fatalities in the last 17 days alone, while more than 23 million cases have been reported. Latin America is the region the most affected, while more than half the global fatalities have been reported in the hardest-hit United States, Brazil, Mexico and India. The surging numbers come after the UN health agency said Friday that the world should be able to rein in the pandemic in less than two years.

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus sought to draw favorable comparisons with the flu pandemic of 1918 which cost the lives of as many as 50 million people. "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 said. "(By) utilising 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." The WHO also recommended children over 12 years old now wear masks in the same situations as adults as the use of

face coverings helps stop the virus spread.

'Very precarious stage'

With no usable vaccine yet available, the most prominent tool governments have at their disposal is



More than 23 million cases reported

to confine their populations or enforce social distancing. South Korea announced ramped up restrictions on Saturday, after 332 new cases were reported in the past 24 hours—the highest daily figure since early March. "We are at a very precarious stage where we could see the beginning of a nationwide second wave," Health Minister Park Neung-hoo said at a press briefing. The expanded measures include restrictions on gatherings and activities including professional sports, which will be played behind closed doors again, while beaches nationwide will close.

'Don't feel invincible'

Italy—once the European epicenter of the virus—said Saturday it had registered more than 1,000



TEGUCIGALPA: Relatives carry the coffin of an alleged victim of the new coronavirus at the Parque Memorial Jardin de los Angeles cemetery, 14 km north of Tegucigalpa. — AFP

new infections in the past 24 hours, the highest level since the end of a punishing lockdown in May. The story is similar across Spain, Germany and France. The Rome region also said it had recorded a record number of cases in the past 24 hours, a rise health officials blamed on people returning from holiday. Most of those infected are young people who are not showing symptoms, the Italian capital's health official Alessio D'Amato said, warning them to stay at home. "Don't feel invincible," he urged them. In

Germany, a university launched a series of pop concerts under coronavirus conditions, hoping the mass experiment with 2,000 people can determine whether large events can safely resume. Elsewhere, Lebanon launched two weeks of measures on Friday including nighttime curfews, as the country is still dealing with the fallout from a huge explosion in Beirut that killed scores of people. "What now? On top of this disaster, a coronavirus catastrophe?" said 55-year-old Roxane Moukarzel. — AFP

News in brief

At least 13 crushed to death

LIMA: At least 13 people were crushed to death or asphyxiated as playgoers tried to flee a Lima nightclub raided by police because it was open in violation of restrictions imposed to fight the coronavirus pandemic, officials said. At least six were injured, including three police officers, as around 120 people tried to escape the Thomas Restobar club on Saturday night as police arrived to break up a party on its second floor, national police and government officials said. Neighbors had alerted police about the raucous event at the club in the Los Olivos district of the Peruvian capital. "In these circumstances when people begin to fight to get out, it's tumultuous, everyone goes against each other," Orlando Velasco of the National Police told local radio station RPP. — Reuters

Trump sister's secret recordings

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's older sister described the US president as cruel and a liar whose lack of principles meant he could not be trusted, according to secretly made recordings published Saturday. It was the latest unflattering insider account to target the president, only instead of a jilted aide or business associate, it was from one of his closest relatives. Maryanne Trump Barry, a former federal judge, slammed her brother over his immigration policy that saw children separated from their parents at the border and sent to detention centers. "All he wants to do is appeal to his base," she said in recordings obtained by the Washington Post. "He has no principles. None." "His goddamned tweet and lying, oh my God." — AFP

12 killed in Congo militia attack

BENI, DR Congo: At least 12 civilians have been killed by suspected members of a notorious militia in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, local officials said Saturday. Armed members of the Allied Democratic Forces rebel group attacked the villagers on Thursday as they worked in the fields in the Beni region, local administrator Donat Kibwana said. He said 12 bodies were found buried after a search in the village of Matiba on the Mbau-Kamango road, where ADF fighters have been waging a string of attacks. Philippe Bonane, head of a civil society group in the Beni regional capital Oicha said 13 people had lost their lives including three women, while another four were missing. Currently under repair by Congolese military engineers, the Mbau-Kamango road is a busy supply route across the highly unstable region. — AFP

India forces shoot dead 5 men

AMRITSAR: Indian security forces shot dead five men trying to smuggle heroin across the border from Pakistan on Saturday, a spokesman has said. The five were killed in an early-morning shoot-out after opening fire at Border Security Force (BSF) paramilitaries near a frontier fence in the Tarn Taran district of Punjab state, according to BSF spokesman Krishna Rao. An AK-47 rifle, four pistols, ammunition magazines and nearly 10 kilograms of heroin were recovered, the representative told AFP. In western markets, the heroin would have a street value of about \$1.5 million, according to experts. Punjab state is a major transit route for drugs entering India from Afghanistan and Pakistan. India has a high-security fence along most of the roughly 3,350-kilometre frontier with arch-rival Pakistan. — AFP

Can Trump thread the electoral college needle again? It'll be tough

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump loves recounting how everyone told him he wouldn't win in 2016, but he now has his work cut out to prove the doubters wrong a second time on November 3.

Not a popular man

Pollsters are more wary than four years ago, not least because this time the variables are off the chart. Election season got into gear just as the coronavirus pandemic began sweeping through the United States, so far killing more than 170,000 people and pushing the previously booming economy off a cliff. This has also been a summer of mass protests against racism, as the US faces a historic reckoning over racial injustice and police brutality. And due to coronavirus restrictions, the challenger Joe Biden has barely been out of his Delaware home. Despite the volatility, there is broad agree-



LAS VEGAS: Protesters rally against a mask mandate, many showing support for US President Donald Trump, in Las Vegas, Nevada on August 22, 2020. — AFP

ment that Trump has no chance of winning the popular vote, just like in 2016.

The Democrats' strongholds of California and New York alone give them millions of extra votes. Also, Trump is a historically unpopular president, with approval ratings jammed in the low 40s. American University politics professor David Barker rates Trump's chances of a popular vote win at "maybe 1:100." But US presidents are chosen via

the state-by-state electoral college, not overall national tallies. And in 2016, Hillary Clinton won nearly three million more votes than Trump, yet still lost the electoral college by a whopping margin. The Democrat got just 227 delegates to 304 delegates for Trump.

Can he turn the tide?

Trump often claims to have private polls showing him headed for a second term. "Right now we're leading in so many polls that they refuse to put out," he said again Thursday. The latest average of public, national polls from fivethirtyeight.com, however, has Trump down at about 43 percent to Biden's 51 percent. The Economist's model, updated daily, currently gives Biden an 88 percent chance of winning the presidency, while Trump has just 12 percent. Its electoral college counter predicts a Biden landslide of 343 to Trump's 195, with only 270 required to win.

Republicans talk optimistically about a steep economic recovery in the next two months and maybe a dramatically early release of a coronavirus vaccine. Others muse over the possibility of Biden self-sabotaging. He is renowned for awkward gaffes and has so far faced almost no difficult questioning from journalists. — AFP

Mexico passes somber coronavirus milestone

ECATEPEC: Standing in a graveyard on the outskirts of Mexico City decked out in a cowboy hat to cover his rugged features from the sun, guitar player Eberardo Vargas this week had fewer funerals to play at than he has for most of the coronavirus pandemic. Even as Mexico passes a grim new milestone in its battle with the pandemic - 60,000 fatalities - signs of relief are beginning to emerge in the country that has registered more dead than any other bar the United States and Brazil.

Vargas, 49, said May, June and July were the busiest months he could recall as a musician as mourners in the municipality of Ecatepec northeast of Mexico City paid him and his band to hear favorite songs of lost loved-ones during their last goodbyes. But that demand has eased lately as public life gradually returns to normal in the sprawling Mexican capital, prompting the government to declare this week that the coronavirus scourge is in "sustained decline" in Mexico.

"We sometimes had 10 or 15 performances a day at the peak of the pandemic, but it's come down," said Vargas, who had little to do at the Ecatepec graveyard for much of Friday. "Now, it's more like three, or sometimes five." Deaths due to coronavirus are on track to hit their lowest weekly total for two months, and new cases have eased since reaching a record daily number at the start of August. "Our whole band used to wait here, there was always work," said Vargas. "Now, we take turns because it's become so quiet."

Still, the health ministry on Saturday reported 644 additional fatalities, taking the total to 60,254. Earlier in the pandemic, Mexico's coronavirus czar and Deputy Health Minister Hugo Lopez-Gatell had cast a figure of 60,000 dead as a "catastrophic" outcome. Despite signs of improvement, Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum said Friday there was no cause for complacency. "This week we lost some momentum in the trend of falling number of infections and hospitalizations," she said.

While Lopez-Gatell said his "catastrophic" remarks were taken out of context and has hailed Mexico's crisis management, analysts offer a more critical appraisal of the country where testing for the virus has been among the lowest worldwide.

By focusing on the sickest patients, Mexico has logged a far higher proportion of infected people per test than most countries - almost one in every two. — Reuters



ABIDJAN: Supporters holding flags cheer as Ivory Coast's president Alassane Ouattara speaks at the Felix Houphouet-Boigny stadium in Abidjan during his investiture by his ruling party as presidential candidate. — AFP

Violence as party nominates Ivorian leader to run again

ABIDJAN: Sporadic violence flared in Ivory Coast on Saturday after President Alassane Ouattara was chosen by his ruling party to run for a third term in an October election, despite furious opposition charges the move is unconstitutional. Ouattara, in power since 2010, said in March he would not stand again but changed his mind after the death of prime minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly—seen as his anointed successor—of a heart attack in July.

After his official nomination on Saturday, Ouattara vowed to score a first-round knockout victory before tens of thousands of supporters at an Abidjan rally. "Going back on my decision was not easy," said Ouattara, who insisted: "There is nothing preventing me from standing." "I did not have the right to place my personal project above the urgent situation in which the country finds itself," he said.

But his party's decision provoked outrage among young opposition supporters who took to the streets to voice loud and violent protest in several major cities. The constitution limits presidents to two terms, but 78-year-old Ouattara and his supporters argue that a 2016 constitutional tweak reset

the clock, allowing him to seek a third. Opposition and civil society groups say his standing again amounts to a "coup" that risks triggering chaos in the world's biggest cocoa producer.

'No third term'

Violence erupted in several towns, notably Divo, a cocoa-growing centre 200 kilometers northwest of Abidjan where pro-opposition youths clashed with young supporters of the ruling party. "There are people wounded. The small bus station, bars and shops have been set on fire and looted," Davo's political representative Famoussa Coulibay told AFP. "There have been police reinforcements. We will try to calm things down with the leaders of the community," Coulibay added.

Gagnoa, the home town of former president Laurent Gbagbo further to the northwest, also saw unrest. "Young people close to the opposition burned tyres and set up barricades in different parts of town," one resident told AFP, adding that protesters shouted "we don't want a third mandate." There were further incidents in the southwest at Bonoua, the hometown of former first lady Simone Gbagbo, which also saw unrest Friday. Coaches, the central market and about 30 shops were set ablaze, according to resident Georges Vangah. After Ouattara's re-election announcement earlier this month, mass protests descended into three days of violence in which six people died and a hundred were injured. His ruling Houphouetist Rally for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) party nominated Ouattara as its candidate at the rally. — AFP

International

India lawyer, convicted by Supreme Court over tweets, faces a deadline

Case sparks debate on freedom of speech in India

NEW DELHI: One of India's most prominent lawyers faces today's deadline to apologize to the Supreme Court or risk jail in a case testing the judiciary's openness to criticism and sparking a debate on freedom of speech in the world's largest democracy. Prashant Bhushan, 63, was found guilty of criminal contempt for attempting "to scandalize the entire institution" with Twitter posts depicting the chief justice on a motorcycle while the court's work was curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and criticizing previous top judges.

The top court on Thursday ordered Bhushan, who has championed public interest litigation, to issue an "unconditional apology" today. He faces up to six months in jail or a fine of 2,000 rupees (\$27) or both. "Any apology would be insincere," Bhushan told Reuters, declining to comment further as the matter is before the court. He told the court in a statement on Thursday that he would "cheerfully submit to any penalty" over the two June tweets, which he said "represented my bonafide beliefs, the expression of which must be permissible in any

democracy." If Bhushan apologizes, the court has said it would hold a hearing tomorrow. It was not clear when or how the court would respond if he does not apologize. Regardless of the outcome,



Supreme Court orders Bhushan to apologize

Bhushan's case is putting the Supreme Court, one of India's most respected institutions, on trial, testing how much judges may be openly criticized in a society known for free-wheeling debate. Freedom of speech is a fundamental right in India and highly

contentious. The top court often hears cases where litigants argue their right to express themselves is being infringed.

Some lawyers and media editorials support Bhushan, saying the court is being too harsh, arguing that his tweets amounted to legally protected criticism. "A bar silenced under the threat of contempt will undermine the independence and ultimately the strength of the court," more than 2,400 Indian lawyers wrote in an online petition. Others criticized Bhushan, who has 1.7 million Twitter followers. "A lawyer is not above the law, nobody is," said Satyadarshi Sanjay, a lawyer who signed an open letter by more than 100 people, including former judges, who support the court's decision.

Two tweets

Judges too sometimes chastise the judiciary. In 2018, four sitting Supreme Court justices held a rare press conference criticizing the court's distribution of cases to judges and raising concerns about judicial appointments. The Supreme Court,

in its 108-page order in Bhushan's case, noted it is "required to be magnanimous" to criticism - though it said "such magnanimity cannot be stretched". In his first tweet, Bhushan posted a viral photo of Chief Justice S.A. Bobde astride a Harley-Davidson. He wrote Bobde was sitting on a 5 million rupee (\$67,000) bike without a mask or a helmet when citizens were being denied justice as the court was in lockdown.

The Supreme Court ruled the tweet was "patently false" and had the "tendency to shake the confidence of the public", as the court was hearing matters even during the coronavirus shutdown. In the other tweet, Bhushan wrote that when historians look at how democracy has been destroyed in India in the past six years, they will mark the role of the court and the past four top justices. That tweet "has the effect of destabilizing the very foundation of this important pillar of the Indian democracy" and "directly affronts the majesty of law", the court said. Both of Bhushan's tweets have been suspended by Twitter. — Reuters

Costly, but transparent masks are boon for the deaf, hard of hearing

PARIS: Transparent facemasks and shields are costly compared with classic counterparts but could prove a boon for the deaf and hard of hearing battling to communicate in the coronavirus era. The concept has started to take off, aided not least by YouTube tutorials or the likes of American football coach Nic Saban, who makes a point of wearing his pitchside. Other proponents include French secretary of state for people with disabilities Sophie Cluzel, who donned a mask with a see-through section to speak in parliament, and a sign-language interpreter at a Portsmouth hospital in southern England.

As Cluzel pointed out, the transparent window facilitates communication by permitting lip-reading and showing facial expressions. "Lip reading is a plus for me," says Vivien Laplane, born deaf and author of the French blog "Apprendre à Écouter" (learn to listen). "You can imagine - or not - that with masks it's tougher" to understand others and make oneself understood. A deaf Indonesian couple working as tailors on the isle of Sulawesi, make and have been selling transparent masks since April.

Without them "it is impossible for a lip-reading deaf person to understand what others are saying," says Faizah Badaruddin who, along with her husband, turns out around two dozen a day. Such efforts are boosting communication during the COVID-19 pandemic not least for the deaf and the hard of hearing who number 70 million globally, according to the World Federation of the Deaf. The French federation of speech therapists says that classic facemasks mean "patients find themselves deprived of the main source of the oral message: the mouth and facial expressions".

Teachers say they too like the transparent model. Rory Burnham Pickett, a professor based in Sapporo in northern Japan, says "I know it is frustrating that my pupils don't see my mouth or facial expression. I made my own transparent mask as they are difficult to find." Governments are taking a proactive approach and placing orders. Authorities in Quebec have placed an order for 100,000 for distribution across the health network in the Canadian province, local media say.

The provincial APDA association for the hard of hearing made an order for 100,000 washable transparent masks through local textile company Madolaine. "Sales are going briskly," says association director Marie-Helene Tremblay. In the United States, private US medical firm ClearMask LLC said Tuesday it had received clearance from the Food and Drug Administration for a fully transparent surgical mask for use in hospitals and clinics but also schools, retail and hospitality settings. The Baltimore-based firm was already producing non-surgical versions.

Anissa Mekrabech, a 31-year-old deaf French woman, decided to create her own transparent prototype after finding that communication was difficult when she visited the local pharmacy wearing a standard mask. — AFP



RHONE: People with protective mask walk on a pedestrian street in Lyon on the first day of mandatory mask wearing in parts of city centre. — AFP

Series of killings plunge Iraq activists into a familiar fear

BASRA: In under a week, two activists have been assassinated and three more narrowly survived murder attempts in southern Iraq, where tensions between pro-Iran groups and a Western-leaning government are claiming new victims. One of them was Riham Yaaqub, a 29-year-old athletics coach who was deeply involved in anti-government protests and who was shot dead in the southern province of Basra on Wednesday. Five days earlier in Basra, activist Tahsin Al-Shahmani died after being shot more than two dozen times.

The targeted killings sent shivers down spines in Iraq's civil society, already deeply disturbed by the July killing in Baghdad of Hisham Al-Hashemi, a government adviser and widely respected scholar on jihadism. "The government and security forces have done nothing, but everyone knows the killers are the same... (they) killed Riham, Tahsin, and Hisham al-Hashemi," said Ammar Al-Hilfi, a prominent activist in Basra.

The list of victims is long: dozens of activists have been killed in Iraq in recent years, including during bloody protests in 2018 over a public health crisis in Basra that had put more than 100,000 people in hospital. Then, in October, widespread rallies erupted across Baghdad and the south against a government seen as corrupt, inept and beholden to neighboring



BASRA, Iraq: Mourners sit near the Iraqi-flag draped coffin of slain activist Riham Yaaqub during her funeral in the centre of Iraq's southern city of Basra. — AFP

Iran. Protest-related violence left nearly 600 dead, including some shot dead while walking home from demonstrations. Still others were kidnapped, assaulted or threatened. On Monday, three more activists in Basra-Ludia Rimon, Fahad Al-Zubaydi and Abbas Al-Subhi-were heading to the Shahmani family home to offer their condolences when a car full of armed men began firing at them. The trio managed to escape, wounded and shaken but alive.

Spree of violence

The city's activist collectives have been left reeling by the sudden spree of violence. "During the month of August, there have been six assassinations or attempted killings," said Mehdi al-Tamimi, who heads the city's Human Rights Council. In total over the last year, Tamimi told AFP, the city has been hit by eight such murders and seven attempted killings.



SULAIMANIYAH: Protesters gesture during a demonstration at the Azadi (Freedom) Park at the centre of Sulaimaniyah in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region, demanding the resignation of the local government, accountability for corruption, and the holding of early elections. — AFP

As social unrest grows, Kurdish Iraq goes after the media

SULAIMANIYAH: Kurdish authorities in northern Iraq are cracking down on media outlets covering anti-government protests, journalists and rights defenders told AFP, shattering the region's reputation as a liberal refuge. For decades, Iraqis fleeing pressure by paramilitary groups, tribes and powerful politicians in the more conservative south sought safe haven in the Kurdish region.

But public anger at the Kurdish regional government (KRG) has grown in recent months, prompting protests over unpaid state salaries and Turkish incursions into border areas. Demonstrators and rights defenders say the rallies have been met with a heavy-handed response from security forces-with reporters increasingly targeted.

"Despite laws guaranteeing press freedom in the region, when political and economic crises intensify, the limits on press reach a point of strangulation," warned the region's Metro Center for Journalist Rights and Advocacy. In the first half of 2020, Metro recorded 88 violations against 62 journalists and media outlets, and says the pressure has intensified since mid-June. This week, the Kurdish security forces, known as Asayish, forcibly shut down the Dohuk city offices of local television broadcaster NRT, which had been covering protests in nearby Zakho.

"After midnight, security forces stormed our Dohuk bureau and confiscated all coverage equipment," NRT's deputy chief Hawnar Ihsan told AFP.

"Our Zakho correspondent Ahmad Zakhawi was arrested and has yet to be released." Hours later, police shut down NRT's bureau in the regional Kurdish capital of Arbil, prompting condemnations from local and international rights groups. "This escalating harassment of NRT is unfair and undemocratic, and begs the question why authorities are so scared of the broadcaster that they have to shutter its offices," wrote the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists.

Like the rest of Iraq, media outlets in the Kurdish region are nearly all linked to political figures or parties. NRT is owned by a dissident from the New Generation Movement, a Kurdish opposition party. Press freedoms in Kurdish Iraq are guaranteed by a regional law from 2009, which was commended by the US-based Freedom House rights group at the time for giving reporters "unprecedented freedoms".

"Theoretically, the KRG has a margin of freedom because it has a law that is acceptable to a certain degree," said Yassin Taha, an independent journalist in the region. In reality, few criticized the ruling elite-until the economic and public health situation became unbearable. Salaries for state workers have not been paid in months, further straining a consumer economy hit hard by lockdowns imposed in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Protests erupted against government graft and waste, and discontent grew further when Turkey launched a rare ground and air assault against Kurdish militants in the region in June. The Kurdish government kept silent on the operation, prompting criticism and accusations it was turning a blind eye to the deadly raids. "The situation in Iraqi Kurdistan is going from bad to worse, with the failures accumulating and the protests boiling," said Taha. — AFP

Basra is oil-rich but infrastructure-poor: electricity grids, water networks and roads are some of the most badly maintained in the country and the rule of law is weak. Yaaqub began speaking out during Basra's 2018 protests, appearing on several media outlets despite limits on the public role of women in her conservative hometown.

Two years ago, she was targeted by an online smear campaign for having met with the US consul in Basra. This week, online accounts began republishing a 2018 article from Mehr, an Iranian news agency close to Tehran's ultra-conservatives, accusing Yaaqub and others of belonging to a "network woven by the Americans to target Iran in the region." Other activists, journalists and researchers have faced smears accusing them of links to Western embassies or intelligence services.

No group has officially claimed responsibility for the propaganda campaigns or the killings and authorities have yet to hold anyone to account. But online accounts that appear to be supportive of Iran and its allies in Iraq have become increasingly bold in their threats to activists. The United Nations and Western embassies have blamed "militias," urging Baghdad to fully protect free speech. "It is unconscionable that the perpetrators of these horrible acts continue to act with impunity," the US State Department said after Yaaqub's killing.

Yaaqub was killed just as top US diplomat Mike Pompeo was meeting his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein in Washington, part of the first senior Baghdad delegation to visit the US in several years. Heading the team was Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi, who has struggled to fulfill his pledge to rein in powerful Tehran-backed groups who act independently of state forces. — AFP

With China tensions rising, US joins Taiwan to mark anniversary

KINMEN: Amid rising tensions with Beijing, the de facto US ambassador in Chinese-claimed Taiwan took part yesterday for the first time in commemorations of a key military clash and the last time Taiwanese forces joined battle with China on a large scale. China has stepped up military activity around the democratic island, moves denounced by Taiwan's government as an attempt at intimidation to force them to accept Chinese rule. Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen laid a wreath and bowed her head in respect at a memorial park on Kinmen island, which sits a few kilometers off the Chinese metropolis of Xiamen, to mark the 62nd anniversary of the start of the second Taiwan Straits crisis.

In August 1958, Chinese forces began more than a month of bombarding Kinmen, along with the Taiwan-controlled Matsu archipelago further up the coast, including naval and air battles, seeking to force them into submission. Brent Christensen, head of the American Institute in Taiwan and Washington's de facto representative, offered his respects too, standing behind Tsai, in a symbolic show of US support for the island.

Christensen also laid wreaths at a monument honoring two US military officers who died in a 1954 Chinese attack on Kinmen, the institute said. "Commemorations such as these remind us that today's US-Taiwan security cooperation builds on a long and proud history that exemplifies the phrase 'Real Friends, Real Progress,'" it said in a statement. Taiwan's presidential office thanked Christensen for participating on a day it said serves to remind Taiwan's people of the importance of defending freedom and democracy.

China's Taiwan affairs office did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment on the commemoration. Washington has no formal ties with Taipei but is its largest arms supplier. President Donald Trump's administration has made bolstering relations a priority, to Beijing's anger. Like Tsai, Christensen did not make public comments. Taiwan fought back at the time with support from the United States, which sent military equipment like advanced Sidewinder anti-aircraft missiles, giving Taiwan a technological edge. The crisis ended in a stalemate. Major General Liu Qiang-hua, spokesman for the Kinmen Defence Command, said it was important to remember an event that was crucial to ensuring Taiwan's security. "Of course we hope there is no war, but it is dangerous to forget about war. This is the spirit we need to safeguard," he told Reuters. — Reuters

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2020

Business

Boursa Kuwait reports net profit of KD 5.63 million for H1 2020

Net profit increases 46.5% despite pandemic situation

KUWAIT: Against the backdrop of the unprecedented conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Boursa Kuwait saw a net profit of KD 5.63 million for the six month period ended 30 June 2020, an increase of 46.5 percent compared to the same period in 2019, when the company recorded a profit of KD 3.85 million.

The company generated 28.05 fils earnings per share, which is an increase of 46.5 percent compared to its total of 19.15 fils over the same period in 2019, while the company's total assets came in at approximately KD 41.7 million, which is a 22.4 percent increase versus its 2019 total for the same period of KD 34.1 million. Shareholder equity increased 24.1 percent from KD 26.4 million in June 2019 to KD 32.7 million for the period ended 30 June 2020.

Total operating expenses were KD 3.12 million, a decrease of 27.7 percent over the same period's 2019 total of KD 4.31 million, while total operating revenue came in at KD 6.77 million, a marginal contraction of 4.6 percent over the same period in 2019, when the total operating revenue for the six

month period was approximately KD 7.1 million. Boursa Kuwait's Chairman Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi commented: "We are pleased to have recorded a net profit of KD 5.63 million, an increase of 46.5 percent compared to its 2019 total over the same period. The results we see today mirror the strength of the operational model and the solid strategy in place as well as the company's financial solvency, which have allowed us to

overcome the various challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and deliver an exceptional performance. These key components are the effective catalysts of our stability and growth, allowing us to drive the successful journey of transformation further and take the exchange to new heights. The company has demonstrated strong operational resilience since inception and we look forward to building on these results and further diversifying our operations and products."

"I would like to thank the Board of Directors and the Executive Team for their relentless efforts and commitment to creating an exchange that operates in line with world class standards and

Total assets grow to KD 41.7m



● **Al-Humaidhi:** The results we see today mirror the strength of the operational model and the solid strategy

● **Al-Osaimi:** We continue to work towards strengthening our infrastructure and operational model to withstand any challenges that come our way



Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi



Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi

best practices. We will continue to deliver on all fronts, with our mission driven strategy as our key driving force," Al-Humaidhi added.

Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi, Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer commented on the results, saying: "Throughout these trying times, brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, Boursa Kuwait remained focused on ensuring the seamless and efficient operations of the exchange, by rolling out a series of precautionary actions, and following through with existing development plans. Today, we continue to work towards strengthening our infrastructure and operational model to withstand any challenges that come our way. Boursa Kuwait will continue down the same path of market developments, elevating the overall status of the Kuwait Capital Market and contributing to creating a

diverse product base that serves the interest of all our stakeholders."

Boursa Kuwait continues to pave the way with its market development plans, with its investors' and stakeholders' best interest at the heart of its operations, and with the aim of developing a liquid and transparent capital market that provides diversified investment opportunities. The company continued to roll out market developments and reforms throughout the coronavirus pandemic, which led to significant progress in its journey to become a prominent stock exchange in the Emerging Markets.

S Africa retailers feel the pain from pandemic

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's retail industry is feeling the pain from the coronavirus pandemic on two fronts—store closures during lockdown and the sharply reduced purchasing power of households. South Africa, the continent's most industrialized economy, went into strict lockdown at the end of March, with people only allowed to shop for essential items such as food, medicine and winter clothing.

It is also the African country that has been hardest hit by COVID-19, with more than 600,000 cases and at least 2,500 deaths. Restrictions have been gradually rolled back since June. Alcohol and tobacco sales were allowed to resume this week and, generally, business is now almost back to normal.

Nevertheless, retailers are reeling from the economic effects of months of suffocating restrictions. South Africa's Massmart—majority-owned by US giant Walmart—said on Thursday that it expected half-year losses to widen by as much as 42 percent as a result of the nationwide lockdown. Massmart was already in dire straits before the pandemic and closed a 23-store electronic retail chain and 11 wholesale outlets shortly before the lockdown came into effect.

Can we survive?

"Retailers that were already taking the strain" in an economy that was contracting even before the outbreak have found themselves vulnerable to the virus fallout, said Casperus Treurnicht, portfolio manager at Gryphon Asset Management.

South African shoppers have had to get used to wearing a mask, having their temperature taken at the door and using hand sanitizers. And even as the economy reopens, shops will continue to enforce such measures in order to protect both staff and customers. Investment analyst Lulama Qongqo suggested that customers were likely to favor stores with visible hygiene measures. "Retailers who cannot signal that it's safe to shop in their locations are probably going to lose, and perhaps those are the ones more likely to be plagued by the question: 'Can we survive?'" Qongqo said. But the measures come at a cost. Since the start of lockdown, South Africa's second-largest supermarket chain Pick n Pay has had to budget for protective equipment, a voluntary severance program taken by 1,400 of its 9,000 employees and bonuses for front-line workers. The company, which has a market capitalization of over \$1.2 billion, warned that its profits in the first half could be halved as a result of the fallout from coronavirus.

Cash-strapped but tech-savvy

Faced with rising unemployment and uncertainty about the future, South African households are tightening their purse strings. And that, in turn, makes it difficult for retailers to draw in customers.

The central bank has slashed lending rates by 300 basis points since January to boost spending, but economists fear it will not be enough. "The consumer will be trading down and the operator with the best price and ease of buying will come out on top," said Treurnicht of Gryphon Asset Management.

On the other hand, digital services and e-commerce are booming. South Africa's largest online shopping platform Takealot, which had estimated sales of around one billion rand (\$57.9 million) per month between January and March, recently reported a surge in demand.

into their financial systems to avert a meltdown, and some companies in the S&P 500 upgrading their earnings forecasts for 2020 and even for 2021, the outlook could actually be rosier than the current economic data suggest. "The stock market is not the economy," said Richard Hunter, head of markets at Interactive Investor.

High tech

A number of companies are already starting to publish better-than-expected earnings with activity picking up again as many countries begin to ease the draconian lockdowns imposed in the second quarter.

At a time when working from home, online streaming and social networks are an increasingly integral part of everyday life, it is technology companies that are currently tending to shine, while other sectors of the economy pick up the pieces from the economic disaster wrought by the pandemic.

Apple, for example, booked net profit of \$11 billion in the three months to June. And its share price has doubled since March, taking its market valuation to over \$2 trillion, the highest ever seen on Wall Street.

In 2016, tech stocks accounted for 20 percent of the S&P index. But their share has since risen to a third, according to Nicholas Colas, co-founder of the US firm, DataTrek Research.

"Whether technology stocks have further to run is the multi-billion-dollar question," said Richard Hunter at Interactive Investor.

Patrick O'Hare, chief analyst at Briefing.com, appears to think they do. "The stock market remains convinced that the (US Federal Reserve) is never going to let any worst-case trading sce-



JOHANNESBURG: Customers at a mall in Johannesburg, South Africa. —Reuters

"South Africans have embraced online shopping in a more natural fashion and this trend is looking likely to continue," said Matthew Leighton, spokesman for OneDayOnly, another digital sales platform.

Traditional brick-and-mortar retailers are also developing their omni-channel trade. Durban-based apparel and homeware giant, Mr Price Group, saw online sales grow by 75 percent during the pandemic. Africa's largest retail group Shoprite extended its online grocery delivery service. However, analyst Qongqo said retailers should not lose sight of their target income group to avoid "throwing away money" on digital. Owing to limited internet access and high data prices, online sales still only account for a fraction of South African spending. —AFP

nario unfold for the stock market." By slashing interest rates to zero and rolling out massive bond purchasing programs, central banks such as the US Fed have placed a sheltering hand over their financial systems.

Riskier assets

In March, the US Congress approved a mammoth \$2.2-trillion recovery package, topped up by nearly \$500 billion in April, and another one is under discussion. This is encouraging investors to bet on ever riskier assets in their hunt for returns, with stocks the prime candidates. While Wall Street fizzles, financial markets in other parts of the world are also performing well—Japan's Nikkei index and Germany's blue-chip DAX are similarly near their all-time highs—even if the mood is not quite so exuberant.

"All the excess cash is systematically channeled into the American market, rather than to Asia or Europe," said Christopher Dembik at Saxo Banque. Some of the enthusiasm had petered out by the end of the week and Wall Street's performance on Friday was tepid.

"One can't necessarily take for granted that it will translate into a lower close for the stock market," said Briefing.com analyst O'Hare.

It was a "well-known fact that this stock market has generally greeted any weakness as a buying opportunity." Late August is a notoriously slow trading period, which can produce big price swings on the least bit of news.

But with a study by the US Fed showing that just over half of Americans own shares, it remains to be seen whether the current euphoria on Wall Street will last into November and swing the presidential election for Trump. —AFP

TikTok says to sue over Trump crackdown

NEW YORK: Video app TikTok said Saturday it will challenge in court a Trump administration crackdown on the popular Chinese-owned platform, which Washington accuses of being a national security threat.

As tensions soar between the world's two biggest economies, President Donald Trump signed an executive order on August 6 giving Americans 45 days to stop doing business with TikTok's Chinese parent company ByteDance—effectively setting a deadline for a potential pressured sale of the app to a US company. "To ensure that the rule of law is not discarded and that our company and users are treated fairly, we have no choice but to challenge the executive order through the judicial system," TikTok said in a statement.

"Even though we strongly disagree with the administration's concerns, for nearly a year we have sought to engage in good faith to provide a constructive solution," it said.

"What we encountered instead was a lack of due process as the administration paid no attention to facts and tried to insert itself into negotiations between private businesses." ByteDance said in a separate statement that the suit would be filed on Monday, US time.

TikTok's kaleidoscopic feeds of short clips feature everything from dance routines and hair-dye tutorials to jokes about daily life and politics. It has been downloaded 175 million times in the US and more than a billion times around the world.

Trump claims TikTok could be used by China to track the locations of federal employees, build dossiers on people for blackmail, and conduct corporate espionage. The company has said it has never provided any US user data to the Chinese government, and Beijing has blasted Trump's crackdown as political.

The US measures come ahead of November 3 elections in which Trump, behind his rival Joe Biden in the polls, is campaigning hard on an increasingly strident anti-Beijing message.

Trump has increasingly taken a confrontational stance on China, challenging it on trade, military and economic fronts. Shortly after Trump announced his moves against TikTok this month, the United States slapped sanctions on Hong Kong's leader over the Chinese security clampdown after last year's pro-democracy demonstrations.

Microsoft and Oracle are possible suitors for TikTok's US operations. —AFP



CULVER CITY, LA: The logo of Chinese video app TikTok is seen on the side of the company's new office space at the C3 campus in Culver City, in the westside of Los Angeles. —AFP

It's not the economy, stupid: Stock markets soar to record highs

PARIS: The record highs attained by Wall Street last week might come as welcome news for US President Donald Trump. But the booming stock markets will offer little solace to the many millions of people who have lost their jobs and livelihoods as the coronavirus pandemic pushes economies around the globe ever deeper into recession.

"This is the great American comeback!" tweeted Trump's deputy Mike Pence last Tuesday, after the S&P 500 stock index soared to a fresh historic high and the tech-rich Nasdaq notched up one record after the other in recent weeks. However, the disconnect between the financial markets and the real economy could not be starker as coronavirus lockdowns destroy untold numbers of jobs and push even traditional economic powerhouses such as the US, Britain and Germany into unprecedented contractions. The US economy, the world's biggest, contracted by 9.5 percent in the second quarter. Britain's economic output shrank by 20.4 percent and Germany's by 10.1 percent.

For many, then, the party mood on stock markets might appear "indecent", said Saxo Banque economist Christopher Dembik. But that was a "misunderstanding", he said, as it is an investor's job to place bets on the longer-term economic outlook. And with governments and central banks currently pumping vast amounts of money

Business

NBK Money Markets Report

Greenback hits a two-year low as Nasdaq reaches record high

Oil prices rise to 5-week highs, but demand pressures continue

KUWAIT: Many areas in the world are experiencing resurgences in COVID-19 cases, and without a vaccine it appears economic recoveries will remain mixed. Investors are balancing between bleak economic fundamentals, recoveries in some areas, and the highly anticipated vaccine. In the US, applications for unemployment benefits rose above the notable 1-million mark once again, and the FOMC meeting minutes illustrated policy makers fears of a slower bounce-back to the economy.

In Europe, PMI's pointed to an overall slowdown unlike the UK's far better than expected readings. However, the two remain in a deadlock regarding Brexit and a no-deal scenario appears likely. The greenback fell to a 2-year low of 92.127 against a basket of currencies, while gold prices traded below the \$2,000 mark for most of the week. The euro rose to a 2-year high of 1.1965 before falling back below the 1.18 level, while the sterling rose to a 5-week high of 1.3265 as gains were limited due to the Brexit news. Looking at oil, Brent crude rose to a high of 45.55 for the week as investors remain optimistic regarding a recovery, while subdued global demand continues to limit gains.

Jobless claims rise

Applications for US unemployment benefits increased last week by 135,000 to more than 1.1 million for the week ending August 15, according to the US labor department. The figures represented a setback for the struggling labor market crippled by the coronavirus pandemic, and damages the optimism seen in the previous week when new claims registered below 1 million for the first time since the pandemic began in March. On the bright side, continuing claims - which represents the total number of Americans claiming ongoing unemployment - decreased to the lowest level since early April at 14.8 million.

FOMC minutes reveal bleaker outlook

The US Federal Reserve has claimed it will not be implementing yield curve control any time soon, stating that "Many participants judged that yield caps and targets were not warranted in the current environment." There are many costs and risks associated with yield curve control, including buying bonds, which could lead to an unhealthy level of expansion of the balance sheet. The Fed maintained its purchases of Treasuries and mortgage-backed bonds in the period since the June meeting at the same \$120 billion a month rate.

Regarding an assessment of the economy, policy mak-

ers grew more pessimistic and downgraded forecasts for GDP growth and unemployment. According to the minutes, members agreed that "the ongoing public health crisis would weigh heavily on economic activity, employment, and inflation in the near term and was posing considerable risks to the economic outlook over the medium term." Most major gauges of economic health remain far from their pre-pandemic levels, though policymakers acknowledged there were improvements in some indicators.

Homebuilder sentiment

The current record-low mortgage rates have driven demand for new homes with a gauge of builder sentiment jumping to 78 percent, matching a 35-year record. Towards the end of 2019, the index was at a 20-year high before plunging in March as the coronavirus closed down the economy. Since then, the housing market has surprisingly been a positive performer in the economy, though remains threatened with record unemployment and higher home prices.

Trade talks

The US and China had been expected to begin trade talks over a week ago, though US President Donald Trump canceled those plans claiming he was unhappy with China's role in the Covid-19 pandemic. It appears tensions between the two nations remain high even after Beijing claimed on Thursday talks would be held "in the coming days". The

Trump administration denied any plans of the sort were made. As November elections approach, Trump has switched back to tougher rhetoric and actions against China.

Tech shares jump

It appears that investor belief in the potential of tech companies remains intact, with the tech-industry carrying the stock market through the economic crisis despite concerns of over-valuations. Equities had dipped earlier in the week following the disappointing employment benefit numbers, though the news did not stop the Nasdaq from reaching record highs.

Eurozone slowdown

A resurgence of coronavirus cases in Europe has forced new restrictions, once again highlighting the challenge of reviving growth in the midst of the pandemic and undermining hopes for a sharp recovery in Q3 of 2020. The slowdown was driven by the services sector,

Service Advisors across the region.

Five of Al Mulla Automobiles Service Advisors: Jijesh Unnikrishnan, Saleh S Ahmed, Beshoy W. Eskander, Karam O Shouly, and Renjit R Nair were selected among The Top 20 Service advisors in the region.

Commenting on the award, Michael Ruehle, General Manager and associates at Al Mulla Automobiles, said: "On behalf of all our colleagues and associates at Al Mulla Automobiles, we are delighted that five of our Service Advisors received this exceptional recognition in Mercedes-Benz Middle East's (MBCME) Circle of Excellence Awards program for the second half of 2019."

"For Al Mulla Automobiles to receive five out of twenty awards is a testament to the extraordinary dedication, effort and excellent performance of our Service team, as well as their commitment to always deliver the best in class service to our customers."

Al Mulla Automobiles service advisors presented with awards

KUWAIT: Al Mulla Automobiles Co, the sole authorized distributor and exclusive service partner for Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, received the best performing award for the second half of 2019 under the Circle of Excellence program for its Service Advisors from Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East.

The award aims to recognize the Service Advisors at all Mercedes-Benz General Distributors in the Middle East for their exceptional service to Mercedes-Benz customers. Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East (MBCME) awarded twenty



Fed's virtual retreat may stoke market's 'animal spirits'

NEW YORK: Investors could get a hint from Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell next week about how aggressively the US central bank will try to manage the long-term recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Powell will discuss the Fed's monetary policy framework review - a review it has been undertaking for nearly two years into how it conducts monetary policy - on the opening day of the Kansas City Fed's annual symposium on Thursday. Since the 2007-2009 financial crisis, Fed chiefs have used their keynote speaking appointment at the conference - not being held this year in the hunting and fishing resort of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, for the first time in nearly four decades because of the pandemic - to signal important shifts in monetary policy or the economic outlook. The market backdrop this time around could hardly be less dramatic. Spurred by Fed buying of assets, stocks have recovered their entire pandemic-related losses and are trading around record highs, while bond yields have been near record lows. "The stock market is telling you there is asset price inflation occurring when there is still a lot of underlying weakness in the economy. I think the Fed is unlikely to view that as a signal of success on policy and, therefore, decide there is nothing more to do," said Tony Rodriguez, chief fixed income strategist at Nuveen.

A major question - particularly ahead of the Fed's September policy meeting - is whether the central bank will shift its inflation targets to an

average, which would allow inflation to run higher than previously expected before interest rates are raised. "We fully expect that they are going down the path of average inflation targeting," said Bob Miller, head of Americas Fundamental Fixed Income at BlackRock.

'Rightly concerned'

Investors have been increasing their bets on inflation in reaction to the roughly \$9 trillion in stimulus measures from central banks worldwide. Gold, a popular hedge against inflation and a falling US dollar, is up 28 percent for the year to date and near record highs, while the dollar has fallen close to two-year lows. Benchmark 10-year Treasury yields hit near record lows of 0.504 percent earlier this month, before backing up to 0.638 percent after a rash of Treasury supply. Real yields for the notes, which show yield returns after adjusting for expected inflation, dropped this month to a record low of minus 1.11 percent. The shift to looking at an average measure of inflation would be a "big deal" and help the central bank avoid the same negative interest rate policies adopted by central banks in Europe and Japan, Miller said. The Fed is trying to spur inflation over the next several years in order to prevent a deflationary spiral as the global economy struggles to right itself from the COVID-19 shock.

"The Fed is rightly concerned about the unstable economic recovery so far and the degree to which we still need to absorb the job losses over the last five months," said Gene Tannuzzo, deputy global head of fixed income at Columbia Threadneedle. An average inflation target would allow inflation to make up for the periods in which it fell below the Fed's target. The Fed, like most central banks, shoots for 2 percent inflation but has failed to meet that target for most of the past decade. With interest rates near historic lows, the central bank has fewer ways to help stimulate the economy. —Reuters

Rates - 23rd August, 2020

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1838	1.1753	1.1965	1.1795	1.1690	1.1995	1.1817
GBP	1.3084	1.3057	1.3267	1.3087	1.2985	1.3285	1.3095
JPY	106.61	105.09	106.65	105.78	103.95	107.95	106.50
CHF	0.9090	0.9008	0.9161	0.9115	0.8915	0.9310	0.9090

with a measure of the sector dropping to 50.1 in August following 54.7 in July. Manufacturing remained unchanged for the most part at 51.7 following 51.8 in the previous month. Employment, a key worry for governments, has declined for six straight months and fears are that joblessness may persist.

On the other hand, the UK economy seems to be heading in the right direction in terms of an economic recovery. The Flash Services PMI rose to 60.1 in August following 56.5 in the previous month, and far exceeds expectations of 57.0. Manufacturing rose to 55.3 following 53.3, and also exceeded the 54.0 anticipated. The figures followed positive retail sales in July which rose 3.6 percent m/m and 1.4 percent y/y - ahead of pre-pandemic levels for the first time.

No-deal Brexit fears

Discussions faltered last week between UK and EU officials with no breakthrough developments currently in sight. The optimism seen in June after Prime Minister Boris Johnson claimed he was serious about getting a deal done has now diminished. Last week, a Free Trade Agreement draft was submitted by UK negotiators which they believe shares common ground with the EU, though the efforts did little to break the stalemate. The document is meant to be the first version of the final treaty which involves wording of the agreement, as well as highlighting the areas of disagreement. The UK claims that the EU has prolonged this process, while EU critics feel Britain is asking for the same level of access to its single market as it did when it was a member.

On Friday, Michael Barnier said there had been "no progress whatsoever" on fisheries, the two sides are "far from agreement" for any deal and that major problems remain regarding EU protection of any sensitive data it shares with the UK. Both chief negotiators - EU's Michael Barnier and the UK's David Frost - are expected to discuss

and highlight the disagreements that remain as the deadline closes in. October 2nd marks the final negotiating round, and is considered the final deadline if any agreement is to be implemented in time for the post-Brexit transition period on December 31st.

China stimulus

The People's Bank of China is trying to provide the slowly recovering economy with enough funding, moving to inject 700 billion yuan through its medium-term lending facility while keeping borrowing costs unchanged at 2.95 percent for a fourth straight month. The addition will offset the 550 billion yuan in loans maturing this month, providing a net of 340 billion yuan into money markets. Stocks in the region advanced, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index advancing the most in nearly a month.

Oil rises

Alongside US equities, oil prices rose to five-month highs last week as recent optimism regarding an economic recovery raised hopes for an uplift in global fuel demand. Helped by an ongoing decline in US crude stockpiles, prices gained for three straight weeks despite the unexpected figures in the US and downbeat comments from the US Federal Reserve and OPEC+. US crude oil inventory data revealed a decline of 1.6 million-barrels last week even as net imports rose sharply. This compared to analysts' expectations for a 2.7 million-barrel drop, and brings the weekly average to 512.5 million barrels. Meanwhile, imports rose by 1.1 million bpd according to the EIA. Overall fuel demand remains 14 percent lower from last year, even though overall demand is usually subdued this time of year as the summer season comes to an end.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30530.

Burgan Bank reveals winners of Yawmi draw

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

The lucky winners are:

1. Awadh Ghayadh Obaid Alenezi
2. Mohammed Abdullatif Ali Mohammedi
3. Mona Mostafa Ibrahim Khaleel
4. Ibrahim Mohammad Alabboud

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan

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

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



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CONDOLENCES

The Management and Staff of
Kuwait Projects Company (Holding)
wish to offer their heartfelt condolences to

Mr. Lucas Pereira

on the sad demise of his

Father

May his soul rest in peace and may

God grant comfort and strength to the

bereaved family members

Business

Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons and Toyota unveil Hilux Adventure 2021

Adventure is everywhere with bespoke styling and premium levels of equipment

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Toyota yesterday launched the new Hilux Adventure offering customers bespoke styling and premium levels of equipment, without sacrificing any of the toughness, robustness and legendary Quality, Durability and Reliability (QDR) that have made Hilux the world's favorite pick-up.

In view of the current circumstances and complying with guidelines of Kuwait authorities, Al-Sayer held a digital streaming event in Toyota Kuwait Youtube, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts for valued partners of Toyota as well as distinguished members of the press and media in the presence of Savio Alvares, Deputy Group Manager and Bader Faisal Al-Sayer, Deputy Marketing Manager representing Toyota Kuwait and Mohammed Al-Abdulrazzaq, Kuwaiti Drift Champion who was the special guest at the event.

According to Bader Faisal Al-Sayer "Through today's online launch event you will notice that Toyota is placing high priority for customers feedback in order to keep making ever better vehicles. Over the years, Hilux has earned reputation for its phenomenal build quality, sophistication and quality of engineering. The new Hilux adventure is a yet another testimony - tougher than ever".

Since the introduction of the first Hilux in 1968, over 18 million have been sold in more than 180 countries and regions. The introduction of all-new model in 2016 the eighth generation of the Hilux in the Middle East in response to customer demands and feedback to exceed all their expectations, adds to its stellar reputation over the years. The unstoppable Hilux has proved its invincibility time and again, having conquered the North Pole, Icelandic volcanoes, the Antarctic and a win in the Dakar Rally in 2019.

"In the Middle East, of course, the Hilux led the field for a long time. Here in the Middle East people use the Hilux both for business and for personal support. Our customers expect a lot from it. The capability of Hilux has been proven under toughest circumstances across the globe. Hilux has won over every chal-



Bader Faisal Al-Sayer



Mohammed Al-Abdulrazzaq



Savio Alvares

ver's combi meter, black metallic and black chrome trim accents, and even a grade-exclusive smart entry key. On Double Cab, 'clear blue' front and rear door trim illumination and dual tone perforated leather seats are added to enhance the cabin appeal.

Design and on-board technology

The face of the new Hilux has been completely redesigned with a new bold & powerful three-dimensional grille and front bumper treatment, which significantly increases the pick-up's road presence and strong stature, whilst reinforcing its tough, robust, go-anywhere credentials.

This striking new exterior styling is further enhanced by the availability of newly designed front and rear LED light clusters, a new machine finish and

Driving dynamics

For the new Hilux, the engineers targeted was to keep legendary off-road capabilities while improving on-road comfort. To ensure extreme off-road conditions, Hilux in one of the few still true to its body-on-frame architecture which can withstand twisting forces better and more durably.

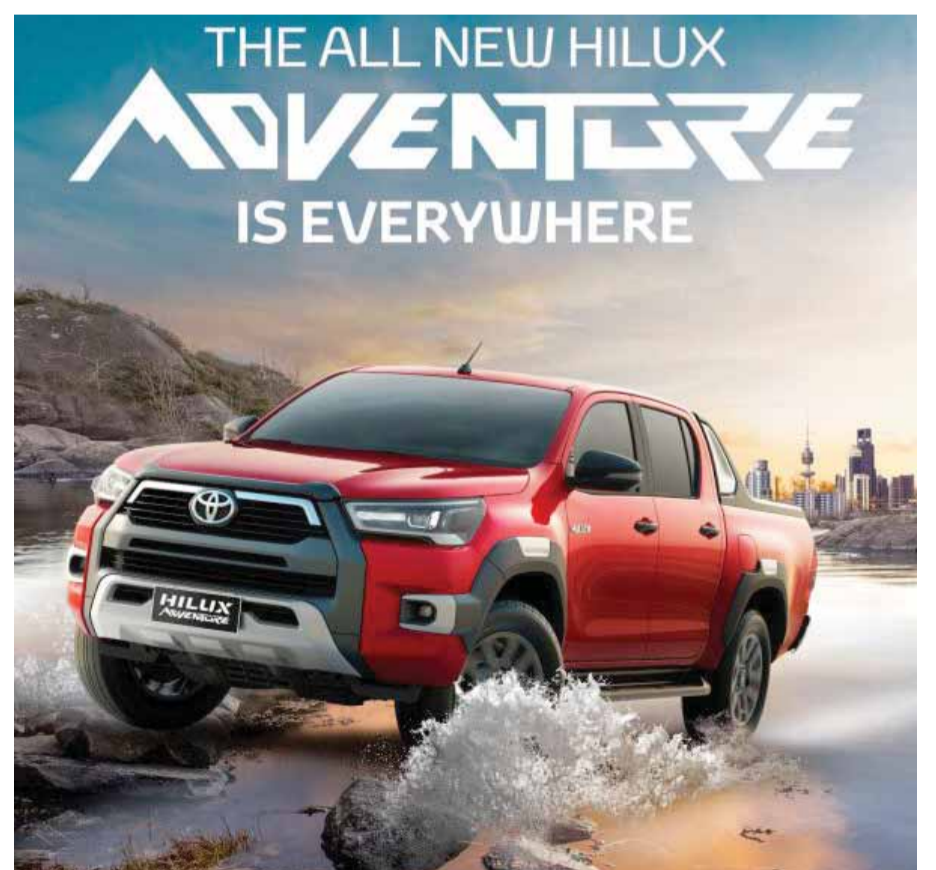
The comfort and drivability of the new Hilux has been enhanced through improvements to the suspension and power steering systems. The suspension benefits from front and rear shock absorber tuning, improved leaf spring design and new bushing to combine a smoother ride with reduced impact on steps and holes. The Hilux's already peerless off-road credentials have been further enhanced by a new electronic function replicating the effect of a mechanical LSD (on 2WD models); the lowering of engine speed at idle from 850 to 680 rpm and a tuned accelerator response for greater driver control; an updated VSC system; and a new tire angle monitor.

Comprehensive safety features

The new Hilux comes equipped with a vast array of safety features that highlight Toyota's focus on occupant and pedestrian protection such as Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Trailer-Sway Control (TSC), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), Tire Pressure Warning System (TPWS).

From SRS airbags for the driver and front passenger to a knee airbag for only the driver, the Hilux offers several active and passive safety measures. In addition to Anti-lock Brake System (ABS), which prevents the tires from locking during braking.

Other safety features include a three-point type Emergency Locking Retractor (ELR) seat belt equipped on all seats except the center seat (which features a two-point type seat belt), and the use of high-tensile strength steel sheets and supplementary materials throughout the body structure to help reduce passenger injuries, as well as extensive use of impact-absorbing structures for parts such as the engine hood, front fender and cowl in order to reduce impact force to the head and legs of pedestrians during a collision.



New Hilux 'Adventure' unique selling points:

- 4000 cc - 235hp - 6 Cylinder.
- Automatic transmission 6 - Speed - (All Wheel Drive).
- Hill-Start Assist Control (HAC).
- Trailer Sway Control System (TSC).
- 3 SRS Airbags.
- Front & Rear Sensors.
- Alloy wheels 18 inch. (Adventure)
- Front Fog Lamps. (Adventure)
- LED Headlights. (Adventure)
- Front Display 8 inch (Apple Car play & Android Auto).
- Rear Camera.
- Cooler box.
- Automatic Air-condition.
- Smart Entry + Start/Stop Button.
- Drive Mode Select (PWR - Eco).
- Cruise Control.

lenge. With such a remarkable history and strong global success, today we are going to introduce Hilux adventure," commented Savio Alvares.

Adventure grade

Top of new Hilux range, and available in Single Cab and Double Cab variants, the Adventure grade is tailored for dual-usage and leisure users who want all convenience and diverse capabilities of a pick-up combined with more adventurous and sophisticated styling and the highest levels of equipment specification.

Adventure-exclusive exterior styling details include bespoke front grille and bumper, skid plate, over fender, door handle, wheel and tailgate designs. On board, Adventure builds on the High-grade specification with an exclusive dri-

black 18" alloy wheel design and the addition of three new exterior colors - Emotional Red II, Dark Blue and Oxide Bronze metallic. The upgraded interior features a new driver's combi meter design, and a new, 8" center console-mounted infotainment screen which adopts mechanical buttons and dials for enhanced operability under all driving conditions. The enhanced multimedia system features faster software and screen response and incorporates both Apple CarPlay and Android Auto for smartphone integration.

An extensive equipment list includes smart entry and push-button start, automatic air-conditioning, front and rear parking sensors, and a 6-speaker Sound System incorporating an 800W 8-channel amplifier and CLARi-Fi technology.



Classifieds

Monday, August 24, 2020

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Civil Aviation
 State of Kuwait - دولة الكويت

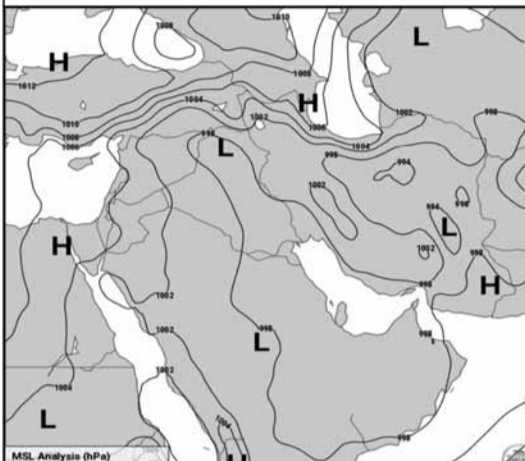


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 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly wind with speed of 06 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Hot to rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to light north easterly wind with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 23/08/2020 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	43 °C	33 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	28 °C			
ABDALY	45 °C	27 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	45 °C	31 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	43 °C	28 °C			
SALMIYAH	38 °C	33 °C			
AHMADI	- °C	- °C			
NUWAISIB	44 °C	30 °C			
WAFRA	46 °C	27 °C			
SALMY	45 °C	28 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	08/24	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	45 °C	29 °C	NE-NW	08 - 35 km/h
Tuesday	08/25	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with a chance for rising dust over open areas	46 °C	28 °C	NW-NW	12 - 42 km/h
Wednesday	08/26	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	47 °C	28 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Thursday	08/27	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	47 °C	30 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:57
Sunrise	05:20
Zuhr	11:51
Asr	15:25
Sunset	18:21
Isha	19:42

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	27 °C
MAX. RH	32 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	S 36 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

JOB VACANCIES

1- Engineer/Senior Engineer (Planning)

- Graduate in Mechanical Engineering or Equivalent.
- Should have sound knowledge of International Codes for Work Procedures, computer software i.e. MS Office, WBS, Primavera, MS Projects, etc.
- Should be excellent in written and spoken English language. Able to prepare feasibility study report, Project Plan, Cost Estimate, Budget proposals, Asset Reports, Work Schedule, Expenditure Plan, Bill of Material, etc.
- Total eight (10) years of experience in oil and gas oil and gas related projects as Planning Engineer

2- Mechanical Quantity Surveyor

- Diploma in Mechanical Engineering
- Proficient in reading Engineering Drawing.
- Minimum Eight (8) years' experience related to pipeline and Mechanical activities estimation.

3- Electrical & Instrumentation Quantity Surveyor

- Diploma in Electrical Engineering
- Proficient in reading Engineering Drawings
- Minimum Eight (8) years' experience related to Electrical & Instrumentation activities estimation

Requirements:

- Transferable Residency Permit is must.
- Only Eligible Candidates shall apply.

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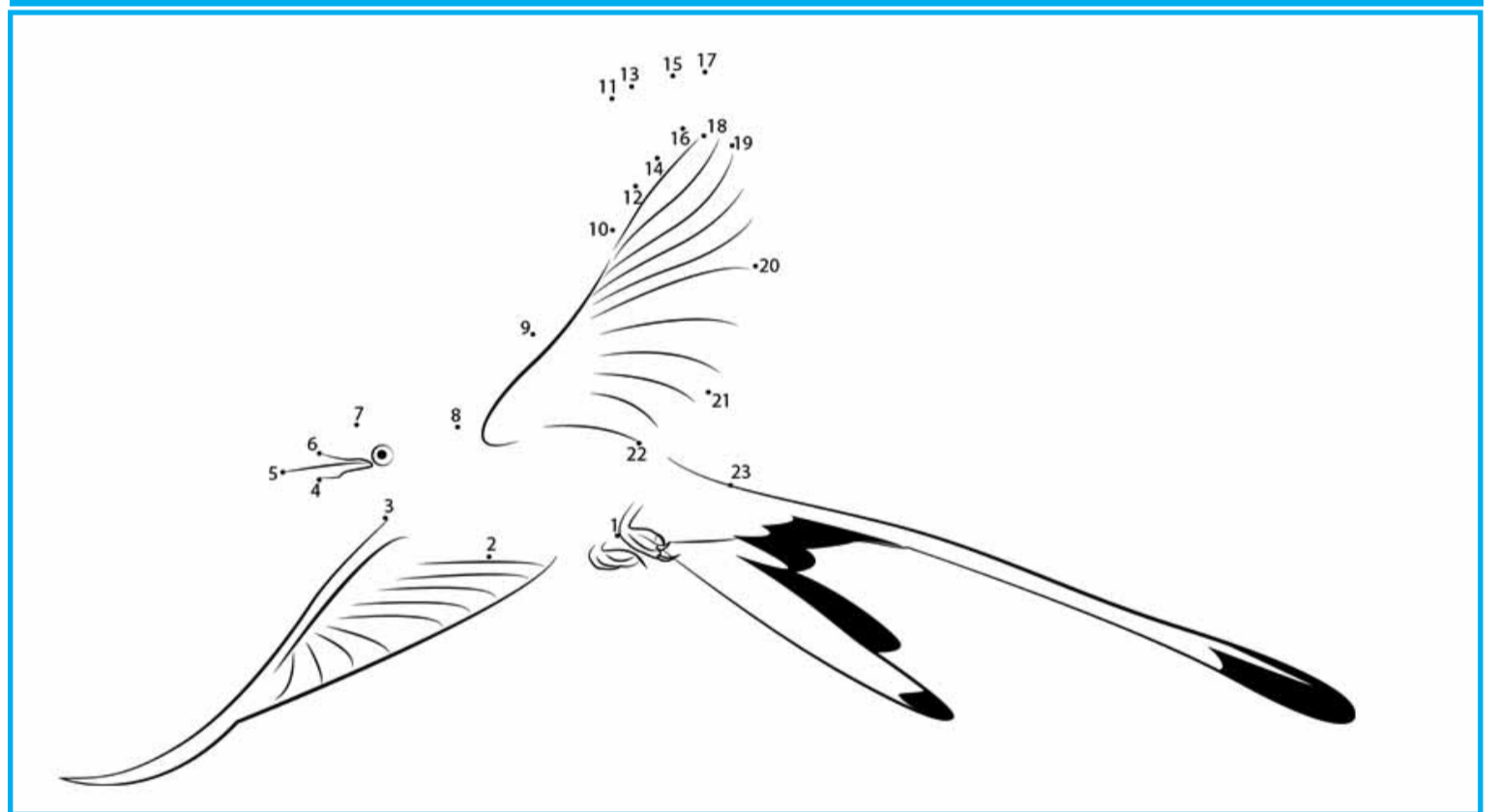
In the Chemistry Lab

Find all of the chemistry related words from the list below. The words can be up, down, forward, backward, or diagonal.

S U J N V X L G T E P C G A S B Y
 E A M O U E P R S T F M N S C P X
 G S Z I N J E E E D L O W R I A
 L Q A N U K M S P S A L E E S E D
 G P U B A U T M I F S E L P V L B
 I F W E L T S W I L K C E A T E X
 G G B O U F T E M Z U U M P H C V
 Y M V B C H E M I C A L E S E T O
 T N E M I R E P X E O E N U R R D
 X N O I T U L O S I D I T M M O I
 S U B L I M A T I O N D B T O D U
 D H R J H E P O C S O R C I M E Q
 R I U Y Z I S U E L C U N L E X I
 S U L N I V L E K D E N S I T Y L
 J L W O E Q A Y L R X P D Q E W F
 E A H N S H S I D I R T E P R Z X
 S M O T A B U N S E N B U R N E R

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| ACID | ELECTRODE | KELVIN | SOLID |
| ATOMS | ELEMENT | LIQUID | SOLUTION |
| BASE | EXPERIMENT | LITHIUM PAPER | SUBLIMATION |
| BEAKER | FLASK | MICROSCOPE | TEST TUBE |
| BUNSEN BURNER | FUNNEL | MOLECULE | THERMOMETER |
| CHEMICAL | GAS | NUCLEUS | VOLUME |
| DENSITY | ION | PETRI DISH | |

Join the Dots



STAR TRACK

 <p>Aries (March 21-April 19) Today you should be looking especially good and feeling particularly passionate and sensual, Aries. This is a great day to buy new clothes online, as your fashion sense is probably right on target. Racy novels and romantic movies may seem more appealing than usual. This is a great day to be alone with a love partner, if possible. Try to do this early in the day so there won't be any conflicts.</p>	 <p>Cancer (June 21-July 22) Conversations with a friend whose good sense you trust could open your eyes to new career possibilities, Cancer. You might think about transforming your working life. These opportunities need careful consideration, since you've never contemplated them before. There's no rush to make up your mind, so don't feel pressured. Do give it some thought. You'll probably be glad you did.</p>	 <p>Libra (September 23-October 22) The formation of a new business partnership might transform your working life, Libra. The benefits may not appear for a while, so don't quit your day job. Nonetheless, it's definitely worth considering. Make sure you have all the facts before making any formal commitment. It's important to be aware of every possible contingency before you start a new enterprise, especially now.</p>	 <p>Capricorn (December 22-January 19) A powerful desire for a current or potential romantic partner might come over you today, Capricorn. This person could live far away or be on a trip, so you might have to be satisfied with a phone call or email instead of the meeting you'd prefer. Don't get frustrated. Distract yourself with an exciting novel or movie and look forward to when you can get together.</p>
 <p>Taurus (April 20-May 20) Your imagination should be flying high today, Taurus. Words, images, melodies, or whatever your artistic media are probably popping into your head faster than you can keep track of them. Write them down, record them, or do whatever you can to remember them or you could very easily forget them. You don't want that to happen. Take time to do this no matter what else is pressing.</p>	 <p>Leo (July 23-August 22) Strange dreams, insights, or visions could upend your spiritual orientation, Leo. These new ideas could have your mind going a thousand miles an hour and shake up concepts that you've embraced for most of your life. Think about it without making yourself crazy. What you're receiving is nothing more Earthshaking than information to consider and then accept or reject.</p>	 <p>Scorpio (October 23-November 21) Unfinished job tasks might have you wanting to pitch in and get them done no matter what it takes, Scorpio. This is likely to earn you a few brownie points with your colleagues but take care that you don't stress yourself out. You probably woke up feeling pretty good this morning, but you won't finish the day that way if you exhaust yourself. Pace yourself.</p>	 <p>Aquarius (January 20-February 18) A powerful need to reach someone either for business or personal reasons could have you spending a lot of time on the phone that may come to nothing, Aquarius. You might call every place this person could possibly be, and this could prove frustrating. Your friend may be away. Leave a message or two and let him or her call you back. Find something else to distract you.</p>
 <p>Gemini (May 21-June 20) Your financial goals are probably on the verge of becoming reality, Gemini, but it might seem as if the few tasks remaining are too monumental to face right now. Don't fall into gloom and despair. Try to find some workable ideas to get these obstacles out of your way with minimal effort. Remember, there's always a way if you take time to plan. Good luck.</p>	 <p>Virgo (August 23-September 22) A friend you may not have seen for a while could awaken strange new feelings for which you're unprepared, Virgo. You may see this person as a potential romantic partner. What you do about it depends on your situation. It probably isn't a good idea to pursue this attraction today. It may pass. Wait a few days. If it's still there, who knows?</p>	 <p>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) Today you're apt to feel very sensual and passionate, Sagittarius. Sexy clothes, racy novels, and romantic movies could be more appealing than usual. Don't be surprised if you attract admiring glances from strangers. This is an excellent day to schedule an evening alone with a lover, although you might not be able to get together now. You'll enjoy it whenever it happens. Better late than never!</p>	 <p>Pisces (February 19-March 20) Money matters could prove obsessive today, Pisces, as you might be trying to make an important purchase and need to revise your budget in order to do so. You'll be able to do it if you calm down and don't stress out. Be logical and methodical, and you'll probably accomplish what you want without too much frustration. Tonight, schedule a special date with a lover, if possible.</p>



Members of Mexican rock band Los Cogelones, the Sandoval Garcia brothers (From left to right) Victor, Gabriel, Beto and Marco pose for a photograph in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico state, Mexico. —AFP photos



Beto Sandoval Garcia (right), percussionist of Mexican rock band Los Cogelones, tests his microphone and instruments before a rehearsal in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico state, Mexico.



Victor Sandoval Garcia (right), vocalist and guitarist of Mexican rock band Los Cogelones, rehearses with his students - members of a marching band in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico state, Mexico.

Mexican rockers blend punk with indigenous soul

With a unique blend of punk rock, Aztec instruments and indigenous lyrics, five brothers from a struggling suburb of Mexico City are using music to preserve their cultural heritage. "It has been an adventure," said Victor Hugo Sandoval, 31. "What we wanted when this dream of having a punk band started was sex, drugs and rock and roll, but things just happened as we went along." At a recent rehearsal for Los Cogelones in the capital city's Nezahualcoyotl district, the wail of guitars and thunder of drums mixed with the soothing sounds of a conch shell.

The brothers, wearing traditional Aztec garments, sing in a combination of Spanish and the indigenous Nahuatl language, while young music students accompany on drums and brass instruments. "In 2012 we began to incorporate prayers like our Mexico (Aztec) grandparents did, and we integrated pre-Columbian instruments into this mix of our present and native past," Marco Sandoval, the 33-year-old drummer, told AFP. "We like to share music with the kids ... because it's our heritage," said Alberto Sandoval, 30, who plays indigenous instruments like the huehuetl, a tubular drum.

Grown from adversity

Los Cogelones are among Mexican bands seeking to preserve ancestral culture through rock, heavy metal or blues. The band was formed in 2009 in the El Sol neighborhood of

Nezahualcoyotl, named after a pre-Hispanic poet and ruler. When their parents moved to the area the roads were unpaved and the houses made of flimsy sheets of metal. Neza, as it is known, "is a place that grows from adversity," said Victor Hugo. Today the district of 1.2 million remains a tough place to live, with high rates of crime, including violence against women, and a dearth of basic services.

The harshness of life there is reflected in the songs of the brothers, whose uncle introduced them to the music of punk bands like the Ramones as well as the Nahuatl language. The neighborhood has been hit hard by the coronavirus, with around 860 deaths and 5,600 confirmed cases in the district. The outbreak forced the band to postpone live performances of its debut album "Hijos del Sol" (Sons of El Sol) that was released in July. But they have already had a taste of fame. Late last year in the capital's main public square, near what was once the main temple of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan, the band performed its song "500 Years," which touches on discrimination and racism.

The epidemic has also impacted their weekly Aztec ritual dance in the district's main square. Police recently intervened, citing measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus. The brothers ignored them and continued to dance, believing the authorities' real intention was to clear the area to facilitate drug dealing. "Days like these remind us that the struggle is not over. We live in eternal resistance," Marco said. — AFP



Members of Mexican rock band Los Cogelones perform an Aztec ritual dance with friends in the streets of Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico state, Mexico.



Members of Mexican rock band Los Cogelones, the Sandoval Garcia brothers (from left) Beto, Victor, Gabriel and Marco pose for a photograph in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico state, Mexico.

Netflix apologizes for artwork accused of sexualising young girls

Video streaming giant Netflix has apologized after its promotional material for a French-language film sparked accusations that it was sexualising young girls. The award-winning "Cuties" ("Mignonnes") follows black 11-year-old Amy as she grows up in a working-class area of Paris, defies her family and becomes aware of her burgeoning sexuality. The poster promoting the film in France shows four brightly dressed girls throwing confetti as they walk up a street.

However, in the United States and internationally Netflix chose an image showing the four young stars posing in tight costumes baring their legs and midriffs. "We're deeply sorry for the inappropriate artwork that we used for Mignonnes/Cuties. It was not OK, nor was it representative of this French film which won an award at Sundance," Netflix said on Twitter late Thursday. "We've now updated the



pictures and description." Tens of thousands signed a petition demanding the removal of the film from the platform, where it is due to be streamed from September 9, describing the film as "disgusting" and "for the viewing pleasure of paedophiles".

But social media users focused on the Netflix

artwork, helping to redirect the storm towards the hugely popular streaming platform. Directed by French-Senegalese woman Maimouna Doucoure, the film premiered at Sundance Film Festival in the US and at the Berlin festival, winning awards at both. — AFP

The party goes on for French ravers, despite pandemic and police

Summer time is rave time in France but this year battle lines have been drawn between authorities alarmed at the risk of coronavirus and serious party-goers determined to dance on. Ravers, called "teufeurs" in French back slang, speak of "resistance" against a crackdown by security forces encouraged by locals to restore order. "The more they stop us from partying, the more we party," said teufleur and activist Gregoire aka Pontu, who uses an alias to protect himself against the authorities. France's "free party" movement has since the 1990s brought together techno music lovers who follow a nomadic lifestyle, often living in small communities with a libertarian or anarchist ideology. "Because of the pandemic there have been fewer events this year than previous years," free party organizer Robin told AFP, asking not to use his full name. "But a lot of attention has been focused on those events and the crackdown has been much tougher."

He works for the Sound Fund, an association that offers legal support for rave organizers who face fines or have equipment confiscated by the police. The association has been called on to help in 22 confiscation cases this year, including four over the August 15 bank holiday weekend. The number is twice as high as in 2019, Robin noted. The national gendarmerie police force said it would not respond to AFP's questions on the situation. However one regional official said that the latest national strategy was to try to restrict the size of gatherings once they get started by blocking all access roads. The official added that site evacuations remained a rarity.

'Noise aggression'

"We cannot allow 5,000, 6,000 people to get together, without shirts, masks or any respect for virus rules," said junior interior minister Marlène Schiappa in July at the site of a rave that drew 4,000 people to the Nievre department in central France. Police in the southern Lozere region blocked off a plateau in the Cevennes national park where 7,000 people, including small children, attended an illegal three-day festival in mid-August. Lozere, France's least populated department, has been spared the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has so far claimed more than 30,000 lives nationwide. With infection rates rising again, locals were furious about the risks posed by the event. About 200 gendarmes blocked off the mountainous site before slowly filtering out ravers and seizing material such as speakers and electricity generators. Through the confiscations the authorities can sometimes track down the event organizers who risk fines of up to 3,500 euros for illegal parties. If the fine includes "noise aggression", the punishment can climb to a year in prison and 15,000 euros. — AFP



In this file photo Robert Pattinson attends the Go Campaign's 13th Annual Go Gala at NeueHouse Hollywood on November 16, 2019 in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Noir 'The Batman' footage thrills fans at DC virtual event

Robert Pattinson showcased "The Batman" footage and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson hyped up his new anti-hero movie "Black Adam" as Hollywood A-listers and their comic-book alter-egos hosted a sprawling online event Saturday. The virtual "DC FanDome" from Warner Bros comes after real-world extravaganzas beloved by comic-book fans—such as Comic-Con—were canceled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. Headline billing went to "The Batman," a dark, detective-style mystery take on the Caped Crusader which star Pattinson said had to shut down midway through production in March due to Covid-19.

Director Matt Reeves said his version—still due next year—is inspired by classic noirs like "Chinatown" and "Taxi Driver," and will meet a "very human and very flawed" Bruce Wayne in his second year as Batman, trying to solve a series of crimes. First-ever footage from the much-hyped movie left fans drooling online, with a myste-

rious villain leaving notes for Batman at crime scenes across Gotham—and the film's hero punning a street thug before growling: "I'm vengeance." Like the rival, record-breaking Marvel films, several movies featuring DC characters including Superman are inter-connected, with shared storylines and crossover cameos.

Saturday's all-day event premiered footage and panels for follow-ups to blockbusters "Wonder Woman," "Suicide Squad" and "Shazam!"—despite uncertainty over release dates, with many US theaters closed. Johnson—the world's top-paid movie star who is now making his first foray into the superhero "universe"—teased next year's "Black Adam," in which he will play a 5,000-year-old rebel slave determined to mete out ruthless justice. "Things will never be the same. Because the hierarchy of power in the DC Universe is about to change," the former wrestler warned rival stars in typically bombastic style. — AFP

Locals enjoy rare calm at London museums

Getting close to the animated T-Rex at London's Natural History Museum normally requires long queues and sharp elbows. But today, only a handful of children shriek in delight as it roars. With tourists staying away and visitor numbers limited due to coronavirus, the popular exhibit is unrecognizably quiet—as are many of the British capital's museums and galleries. It is tough for the institutions' finances, but the lack of crowds is a boon for the few foreign visitors and for locals, who are taking the opportunity to explore their own backyard. Lynsey Wheeldon, 39, from Dunstable, north of London, headed straight to the dinosaurs when she visited the Natural History Museum with her children on a hot August day. "We got in straight away

and it was only us and maybe six or seven families," she said. "We got to see things—it's been great!"

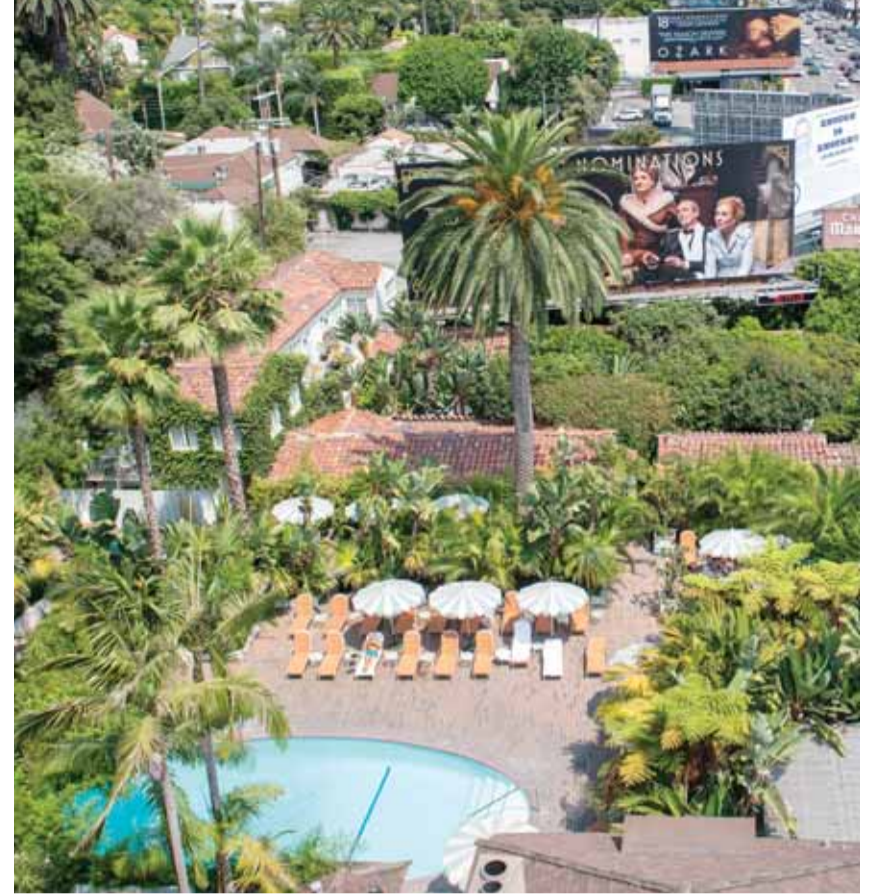
Still worried about catching coronavirus, she was reassured by the decision to let in just 20 percent of normal visitors. "We probably wouldn't have come if it wasn't this quiet," she told AFP. Foreign visitors usually make up 70 percent of entrants to the Natural History Museum but this has fallen to three percent since it reopened on August 5 — and 57 percent were Londoners. For those tourists who do run the gauntlet of Britain's rapidly-changing quarantine rules, the calm in the city is also refreshing. "There isn't the crush, there are no queues... for us tourists, it's paradise," said Frenchman Michel Besse, visiting with his family. — FP



In this file photo members of the restoration team clean 'Hope', a skeleton of a blue whale, hanging in the main Hintze Hall of the Natural History Museum in London. — AFP



View of Chateau Marmont on Sunset Strip, in West Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



View of the pool and bungalow area and Sunset strip from Chateau Marmont penthouse.

Hollywood's famed Chateau Marmont turns to 'hand-selected' members



View of the entrance of the lobby from the restaurant in Chateau Marmont on Sunset Strip.



View of the penthouse terrace in Chateau Marmont on Sunset Strip.



View of part of the restaurant at Chateau Marmont on Sunset Strip.



View of the Chateau Marmont penthouse living room on Sunset Strip.

For nearly a century Chateau Marmont has been an adopted home and playground for Hollywood's elite, discreetly hosting sophisticated Golden Age icons and raucous Brat Pack celebrities. Etched into Tinseltown folklore, it is where James Dean crashed director Nicholas Ray's bungalow to bag the lead in "Rebel Without a Cause," Jean Harlow and Clark Gable allegedly conducted a torrid affair, and comedy legend John Belushi died of a tragic drug overdose. More recently, the imposing Gothic hotel perched above the famous Sunset Strip has become a hub for swanky showbiz parties, from Leonardo DiCaprio's 21st birthday bash to Beyonce and Jay-Z's secret Oscars after-parties.

The hotel is so synonymous with Hollywood glamour that it has its own film credits, appearing in movies from 2018's "A Star is Born" remake to the musical "La La Land" and Sofia Coppola's "Somewhere." But the storied institution that prides itself on being highly selective about who it admits—and then keeping their secrets closely guarded—is about to get a whole lot more private and discerning, its owner told AFP. Later this year, it will become a member-owned hotel, offering dedicated domestic staff, private dining and long-term personal belongings storage to an invitation-only, financial-stake-owning inner sanctum. "I'd compare it to a superyacht... you can only deliver that kind of service—and have people on deck—if they're almost hand-selected," said Andre Balazs, the Boston-born hotelier who once dated Uma Thurman.

No details are yet available on the costs of membership. But Balazs had been mulling the transition for years, with that process now accelerated by the coronavirus pandemic. "Common sense, and even a modicum of understanding of health, requires that you surround yourself with less people," he said. "In this time, it allows you to be safer, and curate a more interesting crowd."

'Symbolic of Hollywood'

The concept of members-only institutions offering accommodation is well established in cities like London, but newer to Los Angeles, where Soho House launched its buzzy West Hollywood outpost

just a decade ago. At Chateau Marmont, shielded-off private quarters will serve an "essentially nomadic" wealthy and creative elite tired of traditional luxury hotels, Balazs said. But Balazs insists media reports that "the Chateau" is set to ape "exclusionary clubs" like White's in London, are wide of the mark.

Those reports triggered a backlash in Los Angeles among stargazers fearful they will no longer be able to dine across from their favorite celebrities. "There will always be a public component" to Chateau Marmont, Balazs told AFP, including "probably the restaurant... and then maybe some public aspect to the rooms as well." "Something that's become as, if not more, symbolic of Hollywood than the Hollywood sign itself... making that inaccessible is not the right thing to do," he added. Yet as a Los Angeles Times op-ed recently pointed out, Chateau Marmont has "long been a VIP club that only pretends to be open to the public," catering largely to a closely guarded list of repeat guests.

Shawn Levy, author of "The Castle on Sunset," also noted that "an infusion of initiation fees and membership dues would be a godsend, as the Chateau, like most hotels, has withered during the pandemic." The vast majority of hotel staff were laid off in March. "We've seriously had to downsize, obviously," said Balazs, who donated \$100,000 to a staff fundraiser.

'Shenanigans'

The new, member-owned model is a return to Chateau Marmont's original roots. It was constructed as a high-end apartment building in 1929, modeled after the Chateau d'Amboise in the Loire Valley. Balazs intends to roll out the scheme to cities such as London and New York—where he already owns hotels—and rural outposts including, ironically, "a spectacular chateau in the south of France." But the hotelier, 63, insists it is mere coincidence that he is starting the experiment at the legendary Marmont—his first hotel, purchased in 1990, long after many of its fabled Hollywood "shenanigans." "We don't traffic in glamour," said Balazs. "We traffic in service to our guests—discretion and safety, and privacy. That's what we make our money on." —AFP



View of the Chateau Marmont Bungalow living room.



View of part of the restaurant at Chateau Marmont on Sunset Strip.



View of one of the Chateau Marmont Bungalow bedroom.



View of the Chateau Marmont penthouse kitchen.



View of the Chateau Marmont Bungalow bathroom.

Iconic hotel Copacabana Palace reopens in Rio

The Copacabana Palace, an iconic luxury hotel on the Rio de Janeiro waterfront, reopened Thursday after the coronavirus pandemic forced it to close for the first time in its 97-year history. Four months after closing to all but two long-term residents—musician Jorge Ben Jor and the hotel's own general manager, Andrea Natal—the soaring art-deco building opened again for travelers and even locals looking to escape the daily grind of the coronavirus pandemic. Precautions for the reopening include "social distancing in high-traffic areas, such as the pool and restaurants," the hotel's owners, the Belmond group, said in a statement. The hotel is offering four packages, including a 30-hour stay, "perfect for anyone seeking rest and tranquility in the city."

Weekend prices for August in the hotel's

online reservation system ranged from less than \$300 to \$1,653 a night. A symbol of a city known for its breathtaking beauty, sultry nights and bossa nova beats, the Copacabana Palace has hosted the likes of Rita Hayworth, Brigitte Bardot, Mick Jagger, Princess Diana and Madonna. The reopening comes amid uncertainty over when and how Rio and Brazil—the country hit second-hardest by COVID-19 after the United States—will return to normal life. The country has registered nearly 3.5 million infections and more than 111,000 deaths in the pandemic. Rio has already announced it is seeking a new format for its traditional New Year's Eve party, which usually draws millions of revelers to Copacabana beach for a fireworks show. The city's world-famous carnival, held in February, also risks being canceled. — AFP



This file photo shows a general view of Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana Palace Hotel, an official FIFA hotel during the World Cup Brazil 2014. — AFP

Sports

Photo of the day



Brad Binder performs during a stop of Moto GP Championship in Brno, Czech. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Clinical Brumbies show title calibre in Waratahs win

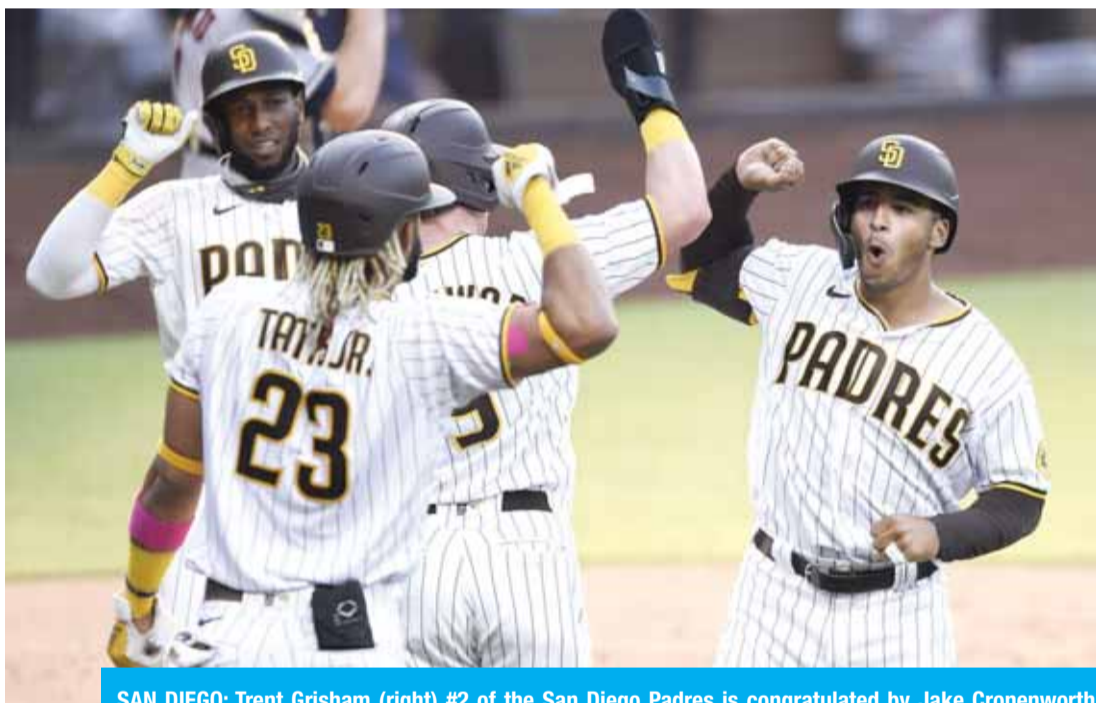
CANBERRA: A clinical ACT Brumbies reinforced their title credentials Saturday with an impressive 38-11 hammering of the NSW Waratahs to reclaim the lead at the top of the Super Rugby AU ladder. After an upset loss to the Melbourne Rebels in their last outing, wholesale changes were made and Allan Alaalatoa's new-look side made certain it didn't happen again on a freezing Canberra night. They went to the break 12-11 ahead then put their foot to the floor in a six-tries-to-one bonus-point victory. Pete Samu and Tom Wright bagged braces with Ryan Loneragan and Andy Muirhead also dotting down.

"The 'Tahs came out hard in the first half, which is what we expected, but the way we came out in the second half was a huge effort," said skipper Alaalatoa. "It was definitely an improvement from our last game." It was their ninth win from 10 against the 'Tahs and their sixth on the bounce, vaulting them back to the top of the five-team ladder, after they were briefly unseated on Friday when the Queensland Reds thrashed Western Force 57-5. The win gives them a two-point cushion from the Reds with two rounds left. The Waratahs stay third, a point clear of the Rebels.

The top-placed finisher goes straight to the season finale, with those in second and third playing off for the right to meet them. Defeat was a tough pill to swallow for the Waratahs, who came into the game full of confidence on the back of two wins. "We gave too many penalties away and the Brumbies, when they are in the attacking half, they are going to come at you all day," said captain Rob Simmons. — AFP

Dodgers shut down Rockies

White Sox beat Cubs; Mariners hammer Rangers



SAN DIEGO: Trent Grisham (right) #2 of the San Diego Padres is congratulated by Jake Cronenworth #9 and Fernando Tatis Jr #23 after hitting a three-run home run during the second inning of a baseball game against the Houston Astros at Petco Park on Saturday. — AFP photos



WASHINGTON: Trea Turner #7 of the Washington Nationals beats the tag by Brian Anderson #15 of the Miami Marlins to steal third base in the third inning during game one of a doubleheader baseball game at Nationals Park Saturday.

LOS ANGELES: Cody Bellinger hit a home run to lead off the bottom of the ninth, and the Los Angeles Dodgers rallied to defeat the visiting Colorado Rockies 4-3 on Saturday night. Chris Taylor also hit a home run, and Kenley Jansen (1-0) got the final out of the top of the ninth for the win as the Dodgers earned their 10th victory in their last 11 games. Sam Hilliard hit a home run, and Trevor Story had two hits for Colorado, which has lost six straight and 11 of 13. The Rockies have lost 15 of their last 16 games at Dodger Stadium. Bellinger won it when he hit a 1-0 slider from Daniel Bard (1-2) to right for his seventh home run of the season. After a slow start, the reigning National League MVP has three homers in his last four games.

PADRES 13, ASTROS 2

Trent Grisham had three homers and six RBIs, and Jake Cronenworth hit San Diego's fifth grand slam in a span of six games in a rout of visiting Houston. Manny Machado and Wil Myers added solo homers as the Padres totaled six homers in a game for the second time this season while extending their winning streak to six games. The Padres are the first team in major league history with five grand slams in a six-game span. Taylor Jones hit his first major league homer for the Astros' second run in the fifth.

WHITE SOX 7, CUBS 4

Jose Abreu went 4-for-4 with three home runs and four RBIs, and Gio Gonzalez pitched 3 2/3 innings of one-hit relief as the visiting White Sox defeated the Cubs for their season-high seventh straight victory. Luis Robert blasted a two-run home run, and Yasmani Grandal added a solo shot for the White Sox, who have homered 29 times in the past eight games. Abreu, who hit two of Chicago's six home runs in Friday's 10-1 victory, recorded his first career three-homer game and is the first White Sox player with consecutive multi-homer games since Matt Davidson in April 2018. Abreu's finale in the ninth inning Saturday followed a blast from Grandal.

ANGELS 4, ATHLETICS 3

Mike Trout drove in three runs over the first two innings, and Los Angeles ended a four-game losing streak with a win at Oakland. The A's saw their nine-game home winning streak come to an end. Oakland lost for just the third time in its past 10 games and fell in its own park for the first time since July 29 against the Colorado Rockies. Trout had an RBI grounder in the first inning and a two-run double in the second to give him 25 RBIs on the season as his

team approaches the midway point of its 60-game regular-season schedule. A total of 14 of those RBIs have come against the A's.

RAYS 2, BLUE JAYS 1

Pinch hitter Kevin Kiermaier lined a walk-off single in the 10th inning as Tampa Bay snapped Toronto's six-game win streak with a win in St Petersburg, Fla. Locked in a 1-1 game and with Manuel Margot placed on second base to start the bottom of the 10th, Yoshi Tsutsugo advanced Margot to third with a groundout. Reliever Anthony Bass (1-1) intentionally walked Ji-Man Choi. On the next pitch, Kiermaier stroked a clean single in front of left fielder Lourdes Gurriel Jr. for the win. Reliever Anthony Banda (1-0) induced a double play to end the top of the frame with the go-ahead runner on third. Rays opener Aaron Slegers fired four hitless innings, with five strikeouts, and would have faced the minimum 12 batters if not for a lead-off fielding error by second baseman Brandon Lowe in the top of the third.

ORIOLES 5, RED SOX 4

Pedro Severino delivered a bases-loaded single against a five-man infield to complete a two-run 10th inning as Baltimore rallied to beat visiting Boston. The win snapped a six-game losing streak for the Orioles, who fell behind in the top of the 10th when Mitch Moreland drew a bases-loaded walk off Cole Sulser. Baltimore tied it in the bottom half when Rio Ruiz scored on a wild pitch, before Severino delivered his hit toward center. The Red Sox had just two outfielders in at the time. Matt Barnes (1-2) took the loss, while Miguel Castro (1-0) escaped Sulser's jam in the 10th to earn the victory.

MARINERS 10, RANGERS 1

Rookie Evan White homered and drove in six runs, and Justus Sheffield pitched six strong innings as Seattle handed visiting Texas its seventh straight loss. White, who entered the game batting just .133, returned to the lineup after being sidelined since fouling a ball off his left kneecap Wednesday. He hit a two-run double in a three-run first inning, a three-run homer in the third off Rangers right-hander Jordan Lyles (1-3) and a run-scoring groundout in the eighth for the final run. Sheffield (2-2) posted his third consecutive strong outing, having allowed just two earned runs over his past 18 innings. The left-hander walked one and struck out five.

BRAVES 6, PHILLIES 5

Adam Duvall delivered a bases-loaded single with two outs in the ninth inning to score Dansby

Swanson and give Atlanta a victory over visiting Philadelphia. It was the 83rd last at-bat win for the Braves since Brian Snitker took over as manager on May 17, 2016. The Braves loaded the bases with one out in the bottom of the ninth against reliever Brandon Workman (0-1), who gave up four hits and one walk in 1 1/3 innings in his debut with Philadelphia. Duvall's sharp single to center field handed the Phillies their fifth straight loss.

CARDINALS 3, REDS 0

Kwang Hyun Kim allowed just three hits in six innings as St. Louis blanked visiting Cincinnati. Kim (1-0), a 32-year-old left-hander from South Korea who signed with the Cardinals in December, earned his first major league victory. Relievers John Gant, Andrew Miller and Giovanny Gallegos completed the four-hit shutout, with Gallegos getting the final four outs for his first save of the season. Harrison Bader paced the Cardinals' offense with a double, a solo homer and two runs scored. Tommy Edman drove in the other two runs with a single. Reds starting pitcher Wade Miley (0-3) took the loss. He allowed three runs on seven hits and three walks in five innings.

INDIANS 6, TIGERS 1

Triston McKenzie struck out 10 batters over six innings in his major league debut, and Domingo Santana ripped a three-run double to lift host Cleveland to a victory over Detroit. McKenzie's 10 strikeouts in a debut performance were one shy of the franchise record set by Luis Tiant, who accomplished the feat against the New York Yankees on July 19, 1964. The 23-year-old McKenzie (1-0) allowed just one run on two hits and struck out the side in the fifth inning to highlight his 80-pitch performance. Cesar Hernandez had an RBI single to cap his three-hit effort and Roberto Perez and Carlos Santana also drove in a run apiece for the Indians, who have won 21 of the last 22 encounters with Detroit. Willi Castro belted a solo homer in the fourth inning off McKenzie for the Tigers, who have lost 10 of their last 11 games.

GIANTS 5, DIAMONDBACKS 1

Tyler Anderson threw his first career complete game, leading San Francisco to a 5-1 victory over visiting Arizona. Anderson (1-1) did not allow an earned run in shutting down the D-backs on three hits. The Giants won their fifth straight game, while the Diamondbacks dropped their fourth straight. Mike Yastrzemski drew a bases-loaded walk to break a 1-1 tie in the seventh inning, and the Giants struck for four runs in the frame to break open a close game.

TWINS 7, ROYALS 2

Eddie Rosario belted a three-run, first-inning homer and Miguel Sano also homered and had three RBIs, as Minnesota ended a lengthy skid at Kansas City. Mired in a five-game losing streak at Kansas City dating back to last season, the Twins pounded out 10 hits to even the weekend series. They also got five solid innings of two-run ball from Randy Dobnak, who improved to 5-1 with a 1.78 ERA. Minnesota is 8-4 since dropping four in a row from Aug. 6-9, with three of those defeats to the Royals.

PIRATES 12, BREWERS 5

Gregory Polanco and Jacob Stallings each hit a two-run homer, and Adam Frazier added a solo shot as Pittsburgh won consecutive home games for the first time this season by dispatching Milwaukee. Frazier, Colin Moran and Bryan Reynolds each added an RBI double-one of three doubles for Moran—and Erik Gonzalez drove in two with a single for the Pirates. Starter Derek Holland (1-1) pitched five innings, allowing one run and four hits, with three walks and five strikeouts. Keston Hiura hit a three-run homer and Jedd Gyorko a solo shot for the Brewers. Josh Lindblom (1-1) took the loss after giving three runs and six hits in four innings, with one walk and four strikeouts.

NATIONALS 5, MARLINS 4 (GAME 1)

Trea Turner scored twice and finished with a perfect on-base percentage, powering Washington to a win over visiting Miami in the first game of a doubleheader. Turner went 1-for-1 with two walks, and the Nationals got seven key outs in relief in the seven-inning game. Washington's Max Scherzer, a three-time Cy Young Award winner, was cruising with four scoreless innings and a 5-0 lead but had to settle for a no-decision when he failed to get out of the fifth. He allowed five hits, one hit-by-pitch, one bases-loaded walk and four runs in that frame.

MARLINS 5, NATIONALS 3 (GAME 2)

Flashing a fastball that reached 100 mph, highly touted youngster Sixto Sanchez earned the win in his major league debut as Miami won at Washington. Both seven-inning games were played in Washington, D.C., although the Marlins were the designated home team in the second game, which was a makeup game from a previous postponement at Miami. Sanchez, widely considered the Marlins' top prospect, gave up three runs on six hits over five innings with no walks and four strikeouts. He allowed two home runs, both on fastballs. Corey Dickerson homered for Miami. — Reuters

Sports

England double century star Crawley in 'dream' world; Anderson rocks Pakistan

Crawley, Anderson and Buttler heap misery on Pakistan

SOUTHAMPTON: Zak Crawley said he "couldn't have dreamed for a better score" after converting his maiden Test hundred into a superb innings of 267 against Pakistan at Southampton on Saturday before England great James Anderson rocked the tourists with a late treble strike. Crawley and Jos Buttler, who made 152, shared a stand of 359 that powered England to 583-8 declared on the second day of the third Test. England, 1-0 up in a three-match contest and looking for a first series win over Pakistan in a decade, then saw Anderson reduce the tourists to 24-3 at the close—a deficit of 559 runs—as he moved to within four of becoming the first paceman to take 600 wickets in Tests.

"I couldn't have dreamed for a better score I'm absolutely delighted and we're in a very good position with Jimmy at the end there," Crawley told Sky Sports. Pakistan's Shan Masood was plumb lbw for four to Anderson before fellow opener Abid Ali (one) edged low to Dom Sibley at third slip. And with what became the last ball of the day, Anderson had star batsman Babar Azam lbw for 11 with one that cut back to finish with stumps figures of 3-13 in 5.5 overs.

'Fighting' Pakistan

Pakistan batsman Fawad Alam, however, insisted that "we don't think the match has finished". "We will fight it out and if we get two big innings everything will change. It's cricket and we are a fighting unit that can do that." England's total was their highest in Tests since they made 589-8 declared against Pakistan at Old Trafford four years ago. Three of Pakistan's frontline bowlers conceded over 100 runs each, with leg-spinner Yasir Shah (2-173 from 39 overs) and teenage paceman Naseem Shah (1-109 in 27) both going for more than four an over. Crawley's innings was the seventh highest maiden hundred in 143 years of Test-match cricket and the 10th highest score by any England batsman. "It's very humbling indeed. I don't see myself anywhere near their calibre but hopefully I can build on this," said Crawley.

'Flawless' Buttler

His partnership with Buttler was also a new England fifth-wicket record in Tests, surpassing the 254 shared by Keith Fletcher and Tony Greig against India at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai in February 1973. "Jos



SOUTHAMPTON: England's Zak Crawley plays a shot past Pakistan's Yasir Shah (left) on the second day of the third Test cricket match between England and Pakistan at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton. — AFP

was exactly the right man at the other end, telling me to calm down," said Crawley. "He played better than me today, he was flawless."

One of the few false shots of his innings saw Crawley go to 200 when he edged a four past second slip off Naseem. But he still received applause from his teammates in a match being played behind closed doors because of the COVID-19 outbreak. The 22-year-old Crawley was the seventh England batsman to turn his maiden Test hundred into a double century and the first since Rob Key against the West Indies at Lord's in 2004.

Earlier, Buttler completed just the second hundred of his 47-match Test career and first as a wicketkeeper. Crawley lofted Yasir over long-off for six before a clipped boundary off Mohammad Abbas saw him to 250. But his near 10-hour innings end when he was stumped

down the legside by Mohammad Rizwan off part-time spinner Asad Shafiq. Crawley faced 393 balls, hitting 34 fours and one six. Together with Buttler, he had taken England from 127-4 to 486-5 against an increasingly ragged Pakistan. World Cup-winner Buttler saw his seven-and-a-half-hour innings—the longest of his career—end tamely when he chipped a gentle return catch to Alam, another occasional spinner. England resumed Saturday in a commanding position at 332-4. Crawley was 171 not out, in his eighth Test, with Buttler unbeaten on 87. Buttler, one ball after successfully reviewing a decision to give him out caught behind on 99, punched seamer Abbas through point to complete a 189-ball hundred with 10 fours and two sixes. It was just the 29-year-old's second century in 47 Tests following his 106 against India at Nottingham two years ago. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: Cristian Pavon #10 of Los Angeles Galaxy and Eddie Segura #4 of Los Angeles FC look for the ball during the second half in a 2-0 Galaxy win, in the season opening game at Banc of California Stadium Saturday. — AFP

Galaxy down LAFC 2-0 as Vela injured in 'El Trafico'

LOS ANGELES: Ethan Zubak and Sebastian Lletget scored as the Los Angeles Galaxy defeated LAFC 2-0 on Saturday in a Major League Soccer derby that saw LAFC star Carlos Vela exit with an injury. The result in the LA rivalry dubbed "El Trafico" was a reversal of LAFC's 6-2 thumping of the Galaxy at the MLS is Back tournament in Orlando, Florida, last month.

The Galaxy turned the tables despite the absence of Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez, who was signed in the offseason to help fill the void left by Zlatan Ibrahimovic's departure. But with Mexico's all-time leading scorer out with a calf injury, it was Zubak, starting in his place, who put the Galaxy in front in the 26th minute. The Southern California native was unmarked in the box when Julian Araujo's cross found him and he nodded a header behind Kenneth Vermeer. Lletget doubled the lead in the 54th, running unmarked into the penalty area and finishing off an Araujo cross.

Four minutes later, Vela limped off with an apparent knee injury. The league's reigning Most Valuable Player was playing his first match in more than five months, having opted out of the MLS is Back tournament to stay with his pregnant wife. Vela was brought up short by the non-contact injury as he received a short pass while cruising down the flank. "We'll need at least a day or two to fully assess, but just before that play he took a shot, the shot was blocked," LAFC coach Bob Bradley said, adding that it could be a medial collateral ligament injury. "That is usually an MCL-type situation so that's what we will look at in the next day or two." — AFP

Lille and Rennes players see red in opening draw

PARIS: Lille were held to a 1-1 home draw by Stade Rennais as both teams finished with 10 men in their first game of the Ligue 1 season on Saturday. The hosts went ahead in the first half thanks to Jonathan Bamba's strike after Rennes defender Sacha Boey's



KUWAIT: Kuwait Tennis Federation held a meeting at its new premises at Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex with sports clubs representatives. The meeting was attended by Tennis Federation Secretary General Faleh Al-Otaibi, Technical Director Abbas Al-Busairi and Head of Technical Committee Ali Al-Daihani. Secretary General Al-Otaibi welcomed the representatives and informed them that Tennis activities will resume on September 13th. He said that it is essential that the necessary precautions be observed during training or matches. Technical director explained the preparations for the upcoming season 2020/2021, which will start September 26th.

PSG hope academies will challenge appeal of rivals

DOHA: The young players of PSG's academy in Doha performed a range of drills under the watchful eyes of their mostly French coaches as the fierce Gulf sun set on the horizon. Their side's Champions League triumph against Leipzig, taking them through to Sunday's final against Bayern Munich in Lisbon, was on the lips of several students. "My expectation is PSG are going to win 3-1, hat-trick from Neymar," said Yassine el-Samman, 11. "But Bayern are a fantastic team."

Samman, like others at the under-12s training session, said his family were newcomers to the dominant French side. "I was watching a match with my dad once. He told me there was this club he didn't know about called PSG. And I saw them play really well, so we decided to watch more of them." The academy opened to fanfare in January 2019 at an event attended by PSG superstar Neymar and first team coach Thomas Tuchel.

Open to boys and girls aged between five and 16, it operates across four sites, charging 2,000 riyals (\$550, 465 euros) per month. PSG's network of more than 70 similar academies worldwide is a key

part of its ambitious, Qatari-funded project to expand its appeal globally and secure a place in the top echelon of world football. "It's important to promote our brand, but not only that. It's about values too," said academy technical director Cyril Klosek. "PSG is already one of the best brands in the sports industry, we develop branding, merchandising and these academies."

Twenty-two youngsters in immaculate dark-blue PSG jerseys performed a range of dribbles and passes, sporting Qatari shirt sponsor Ooredoo telecom, rather than the principal branding of French hotelier Accor. While the hardcore of PSG's support in the country were gathered at the training ground, the club is working to appeal to football fans in Qatar more widely. "Most of the (students) knew PSG, but maybe less than English Premier League clubs or Spanish clubs. But we talk a lot about the club's history," said Klosek. PSG's academy network is the cornerstone of the club's global ambitions as well as complementing Qatar's aim of becoming a footballing powerhouse by the time of the World Cup in 2022 which it will host. — AFP

red card. Lille's Reinildo Mandava was then sent off and the visitors levelled after the break courtesy of Damien Da Silva's goal. Angers got off to a perfect start when Ismael Traore's first-half goal earned them a 1-0 win at Dijon.

The Ligue 1 season started on Friday with a goalless draw between Girondins de Bordeaux and Nantes after a five-month hiatus due to the COVID-19 crisis. Rennes went down 10 when Boey was shown a straight red card for a high foot in the 34th minute, which resulted in the 19-year-old being carried off the pitch on a stretcher after falling heavily on his back. It was the turning point in a poor first half as Bamba fired home a low cross

shot from just inside the box - the first effort on target of the game - to put the hosts ahead five minutes from the break.

Lille also lost a player on the stroke of halftime as Mandava picked up a straight red card for a brutal tackle on Raiphinha. With new signing Jonathan David failing to make an impact up front, Lille coach Christophe Galtier brought in another recruit, Burak Yilmaz, but the Turkish striker was equally unimpressive. Rennes, who finished third last season, were the better side in the second half and they were rewarded in the 74th minute when Da Silva latched onto Eduardo Camavinga's headed cross to equalise. — Reuters

News in brief

Mir edges improved Quartararo

SPIELBERG: Spanish rider Joan Mir of Suzuki set the benchmark in Saturday's penultimate Styrian MotoGP practice session, with championship leader Fabio Quartararo second fastest after two frustrating run-outs 24 hours earlier. Japan's Takaaki Nakagami was third quickest on his Honda alongside last week's Austrian MotoGP winner Andrea Dovizioso who clocked an identical lap time. Frenchman Johann Zarco, penalised Friday for his role in a crash with Franco Morbidelli last weekend, was cleared to ride in the third practice session but could only manage 12th place. Quartararo has finished seventh and eighth since winning the opening two races of the coronavirus-hit campaign, and holds an 11-point lead over Dovizioso in the championship standings. He ensured direct entry into Q2 by comfortably posting a top-10 time on Saturday, having struggled with his brakes and then focusing more on his Yamaha's race pace in the opening two sessions at Spielberg. — AFP

Inter beat Atletico-MG 1-0

PORTO ALEGRE: Internacional moved to the top of Brazil's Serie A on Saturday with a 1-0 win over joint early season pace-setters Atletico Mineiro. The Porto Alegre club carried away all three points thanks to a nice finish from Thiago Galhardo, who took advantage of slack defending to slot home just eight minutes into the match. It was the second defeat in a row for Atletico. After winning their first three games of the season Jorge Sampaoli's side are now in third place in the league table. Inter go top with 12 points from their first five games. — Reuters

All-French Women's semis

BILBAO: Lyon stayed on course for a fifth successive Women's Champions League title with a 2-1 quarter-final win over Bayern Munich on Saturday. The victory set-up a last-four clash against French rivals Paris Saint-Germain who ended English hopes with a 2-1 win against Arsenal. English international Nikita Parris gave six-time champions Lyon a 41st minute lead thanks to a pass from Eugenie Le Sommer. Amel Majri added a second goal just before the hour off a curling free-kick. Carolin Simon cut the deficit for Bayern on 64 minutes and was desperately unlucky when she hit the crossbar 15 minutes later. Bayern may have failed to emulate their men's team by reaching the Champions League final but PSG can still make it a double for the French capital. Marie-Antoinette Katoto gave PSG a 15th-minute lead with a smart volley from a corner but Bethany Mead levelled for the Londoners, who were champions in 2007, six minutes before the break. — AFP

Ineos withdraw from Nationals

LONDON: Team Ineos withdrew its squad from the Italian National Championship as a precaution after one of its riders tested positive for the new coronavirus, the British cycling team said on Saturday. Ineos said in a statement that Leonardo Basso, 26, had tested positive on Saturday and showed no symptoms of COVID-19. Filippo Ganna, Salvatore Puccio and Gianni Moscon, who went on training rides with Basso, will also self-isolate for two weeks, as will four staff members who are considered secondary contacts, Ineos said. "Although they have been in contact with the riders wearing masks, observing social distancing and other protocols, the Team believes this to be a prudent precaution," Ineos said. "We will also support Leo with any contact tracing with any friends and family as appropriate over the coming period." — Reuters

Whyte's heavyweight hopes crash

LONDON: Dillian Whyte's hopes of a world heavyweight title fight suffered a major setback when former Olympic champion Alexander Povetkin twice came back off the canvas to knock out the British fighter. Whyte, 32, had been the WBC's number-one contender for over two years and was hoping victory behind closed doors on Saturday would pave the way for a world title shot at either defending champion Tyson Fury or Deontay Wilder. Whyte twice put Russian 40-year-old Povetkin down in the fourth round but was then knocked out in fifth by the former WBA world champion. "I didn't feel I would finish the fight like this. I was confident in the fourth round even after going down twice," Povetkin told Sky Sports after winning the bout courtesy of a devastating left hook. Promoter Eddie Hearn added: "When the punch landed, I thought it was a dream. I can't believe it." — AFP

14 Dodgers shut down Rockies; Mariners hammer Rangers



15 Englang's Crawley, Anderson and Buttler heap misery on Pakistan



15 Galaxy down LAFC 2-0 as Vela injured in 'El Trafico'



FLORIDA: Chris Paul #3 of the Oklahoma City Thunder shoots against Jeff Green #32 of the Houston Rockets during the first quarter in Game Three of the Western Conference First Round on August 22, 2020. —AFP

LeBron shines, Lakers take 2-1 lead

Heat top Pacers, take 3-0 series lead

FLORIDA: LeBron James recorded 38 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 116-108 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers in Game 3 of their Western Conference first-round series on Saturday night near Orlando. Anthony Davis scored 23 of his 29 points in the second half and finished with 11 rebounds, eight assists and three blocked shots as Los Angeles took a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven series ahead of Monday's Game 4. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 13 points, and Alex Caruso added 10 points and seven assists.

Portland star Damian Lillard contributed 34 points and seven assists while playing with a dislocated left index finger. CJ McCollum registered 28 points and eight rebounds, Carmelo Anthony had 20 points and four steals and Jusuf Nurkic added 10 points. Lillard made 5 of 11 shots from 3-point range and was 8 of 20 overall but made just 2 of 9 field-goal attempts in the second half. The Trail Blazers connected on 41.1 percent of their shots and were 12 of 35 from 3-point range.

OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER 119 - HOUSTON ROCKETS 107 (OT)

Chris Paul drilled a 3-point heave as part of a 12-0 run to open overtime, and Oklahoma City beat

Houston in Game 3 of a Western Conference first-round series. Paul finished with 26 points, six rebounds and five assists, as a three-guard lineup worked wonders for Oklahoma City, which now trails the series 2-1 with Game 4 set for Monday. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 23 points, seven rebounds and six assists, while Dennis Schroder scored a team-high 29 points off the bench along with five rebounds and five assists. James Harden posted a game-high 38 points, seven rebounds and eight assists with just one turnover but fouled out for the first time this season when he picked up his sixth foul with 4:07 left in overtime. Jeff Green paired 22 points with seven boards off the Houston bench, while Eric Gordon scored 18 points but missed 16 of 24 shot attempts. The Rockets shot just 15 of 50 on 3-pointers.

MIAMI HEAT 124 - INDIANA PACERS 115

Bam Adebayo had a hoop, two offensive rebounds and three free throws down the stretch as Miami staved off an Indiana rally to take a commanding 3-0 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round playoff series. Jimmy Butler finished with a team-high 27 points, including 17-for-20 from the free-throw line, for the Heat, who outscored the Pacers 43-21 from the

stripe, getting 24 more opportunities. Goran Dragic chipped in with 24 points and a team-high six assists, and Adebayo compiled a double-double with 22 points and 11 rebounds for Miami. Malcolm Brogdon recorded postseason career-highs with 34 points and 14 assists—both game-highs—for the Pacers, who outshot the Heat 48.8 percent to 45.3. T.J. Warren went for 23 points, and Victor Oladipo had 20 for Indiana.

MILWAUKEE BUCKS 121 - ORLANDO MAGIC 107

Giannis Antetokounmpo notched 35 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists to lead Milwaukee to a dominant victory over Orlando to take a 2-1 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round playoff series. Game 4 is Monday. Antetokounmpo, the favorite to repeat as the league's MVP, made his first eight shots and finished 12 of 14 from the floor. He finally received help from fellow All-Star Khris Middleton, who finished with 17 points, eight rebounds and six assists after struggling from the field in the series' first two games. Orlando's Nikola Vucevic finished with 20 points on 8-of-19 shooting and grabbed five rebounds. D.J. Augustin (24 points, six assists) and Terrence Ross (20 points) were the Magic's biggest contributors off the bench. —Reuters

Toronto's Nurse named NBA Coach of the Year



Coach Nick Nurse of the Toronto Raptors

TORONTO: Toronto Raptors coach Nick Nurse was named NBA Coach of the Year for the 2019-20 season on Saturday. The defending NBA champions had the league's second-best record during the regular season - 53-19 - and their .736 winning percentage set a franchise record. They have a 3-0 lead in their best-of-seven opening-round series against the Brooklyn Nets.

"When you see Nick on the sidelines, that's who he is as a person. Relaxed, but so hard-working. Creative and dynamic. Always setting the tone for our team-attacking our next championship, rather than defending our last," said Masai Ujiri, the Raptors president, in a news release. "That is who Nick is, that is why we believe in him. His journey to this tremendous honor has been a long one—we are so happy to see him recognized this way." Nurse, 53, is in his second season as the Raptors head coach after five seasons as an assistant. He was the ninth rookie head coach to win an NBA championship and has an overall 111-43 record with the team. Nurse kept the Raptors among the top teams in the league this season despite having NBA Finals MVP Kawhi Leonard depart as a free agent to sign with the Los Angeles Clippers.

"There's a player development segment, there's a way we play defense, there's a way we share the ball, there's competitiveness, there's a never-give-up attitude, there's all kinds of big-shot mentality, there's lots of things that have emerged from this team, but I think that the biggest one is the way we try to go out and play hard and try hard defensively and how we try to figure things out each, almost each and every possession, on each and every night," Nurse told reporters.

"We don't do it every night, but we come out fighting most nights, and that's the trait that I think I would say we should all be proud of." On defense, the Raptors led the NBA in points allowed (106.5 points per game) and opponent three-point field goal percentage (33.7) and ranked second in opponent field goal percentage (42.8). —Reuters

Murray makes triumphant start at US Open's tuneup

NEW YORK: Britain's Andy Murray made a triumphant ATP comeback Saturday, defeating Frances Tiafoe 7-6 (8/6), 3-6, 6-1 in his first match of 2020 at the Western and Southern Open. The 33-year-old Scotsman advanced in hot and humid conditions to a second-round date with German fifth seed Alexander Zverev at the COVID-19 quarantine bubble that will also be used for the US Open, which starts on August 31. Murray won the 2012 US Open as well as the 2013 and 2016 Wimbledon titles plus the 2012 and 2016 Olympic gold medals.

Former world number one Murray, now ranked 129th, suffered a pelvic injury at the Davis Cup last November and that, combined with the pandemic shutdown, kept him out of competition until he faced 22-year-old Tiafoe in a meeting of wildcard entrants. "I thought I moved well today," Murray said. "That was probably the thing I was most happy with and probably the thing I was most apprehensive about going into the match."

"My tennis could have been better. I did some things well at the end, but I could definitely improve in terms of my game." Murray broke Tiafoe for a 2-0 lead in the third set when the American missed a volley, broke again to 5-1 with a backhand return winner and held at love to finish matters after two hours and 28 minutes. Murray was the 2008 and 2011 winner in this Grand Slam tuneup event, usually staged

in Cincinnati but moved to New York due to the COVID-19 pandemic that wiped out much of the season, including Wimbledon.

He rallied from 2-5 down in the first set tiebreaker to gain the upper hand. But Tiafoe gained the first break of the match for a 5-3 lead in the second and held to force a third set. The match was played on the National Tennis Center Grandstand court, the event's feature court with no matches until the US Open scheduled at Arthur Ashe Stadium or Louis Armstrong Stadium. With no spectators in attendance, Murray said he missed the boost that fans can provide, and he had to make a conscious effort to early in the third set to energize himself with fist pumps and the like. "That helped a bit," he said.

Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime appeared to be at a loss as his 6-4, 6-1 victory over Nikoloz Basilashvili concluded, with no crowd to cheer or groan when Basilashvili buried a forehand in the net on match point. "I actually threw a ball at my coach," said Auger-Aliassime, who usually tosses a ball to a fan after a win. Auger-Aliassime had the distinction of being the first winner on the ATP tour as it resumed after a five-month coronavirus shutdown. Fellow Canadian Denis Shapovalov, the 12th seed, closed out the day's action with a brisk 6-3, 6-3 victory over former US Open champion Marin Cilic.

On the women's side, 20-year-old 16th seed Dayana Yastremska beat seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams 5-7, 6-2, 7-5. Facing the elder Williams sister for the first time, Yastremska let a 4-2 first-set lead get away after twisting her ankle, but after having it taped she rallied to win the next two. She gained the first service break in the



NEW YORK: Andy Murray of Great Britain serves the ball against Frances Tiafoe of the United States during their Men's Singles First Round match against Frances Tiafoe of the United States on day three of the 2020 Western & Southern Open on August 22, 2020. —AFP

third set for a 5-4 lead but was broken as she served for the match. She responded by breaking Williams to love then saved three break points to close out the victory over the American star who turned 40 in June. "I really wanted to withdraw because of the pain," Yastremska said. "But I played against Venus Williams, so I really wanted to finish that match, even with the pain." "It wasn't matter for me I'm going to win or I'm going to lose, but I have to give it everything I have, even with the pain." —AFP