

## NOTICE

Kuwait Times will not be published from Wednesday, February 26, 2020 to Friday, February 28 due to the National Day and Liberation Day holidays. Our next issue will hit the newsstands on Sunday, March 1. However, readers can stay updated on breaking news and events on our digital media channels including our website [www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net) and on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.



# National celebrations canceled as coronavirus reaches Kuwait

3 cases detected among Iran returnees • Evacuees quarantined in hotel • MPs slam govt

• MoCI sets facemask prices, bans export of medical supplies  
• Iran denies virus cover-up after claim of 50 deaths

• Bahrain, Iraq and Oman also report first cases  
• WHO tells world to brace for 'potential pandemic'



KUWAIT: A picture taken yesterday shows a view of a hotel in Mangaf where Kuwaitis returning from Iran are quarantined and tested for the coronavirus. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday reported its first three cases of novel coronavirus among hundreds of people returning from Iran, causing panic and triggering strong criticism of the government. The ministry of health said a 53-year-old Kuwaiti man, a 61-year-old Saudi man, and a 21-year-old bedouin man had tested positive for the deadly disease. They all had come from the Shiite holy city of Mashhad. The Saudi health ministry later announced that the Saudi national will remain in Kuwait until he fully recovers.

The Kuwaiti Cabinet ordered the cancellation of all celebrations of the National and Liberation Days today and tomorrow, when thousands of Kuwaitis and expats normally take to the Gulf Road every year. Ministries, companies and even The Avenues mall all cancelled their planned celebrations on the occasion of the national and liberation days. The government is contemplating to suspend school next week as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread

of the virus. Schools are off for three days, starting today, on the occasion of the national holidays.

A large number of MPs strongly lashed at the government, claiming the ministry of health failed to take adequate measures to combat the disease and blamed the health minister for bowing to political pressure by MPs to allow a number of people who returned from Iran to go home instead of keeping them in quarantine. The lawmakers called on the government to cancel all celebrations and suspend schools for one month in a bid to prevent the deadly disease from spreading.

Thousands of Shiites from Kuwait and other Gulf states travel to Iran regularly to visit holy shrines. The coronavirus cases could increase as hundreds of Kuwaitis who were brought back to the country aboard special flights from Iran are still quarantined inside a five-star hotel in Mangaf. Police with masks stood guard outside the Al-Kout Hotel, and no one from outside was allowed to come close.

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## News in brief

### Calls to arrest Saudi rapper draw ire

RIYADH: Official calls to arrest a Saudi female rapper who appeared in a music video have sparked an online backlash with many calling the move hypocritical as the kingdom invites Western women to perform. In the video, the young rapper from Makkah, who identifies herself as Asayel Slay, praises what she describes as bold women in Islam's holiest city. Wearing a headscarf and sunglasses, she describes the women as "sugar candy" in the song titled "Mecca Girl". But Makkah governor Khaled Al-Faisal has ordered the arrest of those behind the video, saying in a statement on Twitter that it "offends the customs and traditions" of local Saudis. The statement sparked indignation on social media, with many tweeting their support under the hashtag "Mecca girl represents me". — AFP

### Omani cricketer banned for fixing

HONG KONG: Oman's Yousuf Abdulrahim Al-Balushi has been banned for seven years for match-fixing, the International Cricket Council said yesterday. Balushi admitted the four charges against him, which stem from the men's Twenty20 World Cup qualifiers held in the United Arab Emirates last year. The 29-year-old attempted to fix games and tried to enlist a teammate to help him, the ICC said. "This is a very serious offence where a player attempted but failed to get a teammate to engage in corrupt activity in high profile games and this is reflected in the severity of the sentence," said ICC integrity general manager Alex Marshall. "Without Mr Balushi's admission of guilt and full cooperation throughout our investigation, the ban could have been significantly longer." — AFP

### Weinstein convicted of rape

NEW YORK: Former movie producer Harvey Weinstein was convicted of sexual assault and rape by a New York jury yesterday and handcuffed in court, a milestone verdict for the #MeToo movement that inspired women to go public with misconduct allegations against powerful men. Once one of Hollywood's most influential producers, Weinstein, 67, was convicted of sexually assaulting former production assistant Mimi Halesy in 2006 and raping Jessica Mann, a onetime aspiring actress, in 2013. Weinstein was acquitted on the most serious charges that carried a potential life sentence. Justice James Burke ordered Weinstein to be held in custody and he was put in handcuffs by officers in court. — Reuters

## Qatar offers 10,000 jobs to Jordanians

AMMAN: Qatar's ruler offered 10,000 new jobs specifically for Jordanians during a two-day visit to Amman, Qatar News Agency said Sunday, a sign of warming relations between the two states. Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani announced the creation of "10,000 jobs in Qatar for our Jordanian brothers, in addition to the 10,000 jobs already announced in August 2018", state-run QNA wrote on Twitter. Lacking in natural resources and reliant on foreign aid, Jordan's unemployment rate is 18.5 per-

cent and the poverty rate over 15 percent, according to official figures.

The kingdom reduced its diplomatic presence in Doha in June 2017 after Saudi Arabia and its allies Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt severed diplomatic ties with Qatar, accusing it of supporting "terrorists" and of being too close to Iran. The Qatari amir, who arrived in Jordan earlier Sunday, also pledged "\$30 million in assistance" to the kingdom's military pension fund, QNA added.

King Abdullah II and the amir discussed "regional crises and the need to find political solutions", a statement from the royal palace said. The pair also discussed the need to support the Palestinians in obtaining their rights, in particular to "a sovereign state... with east Jerusalem as its capital", the statement added.

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## Turmoil in Malaysia as Mahathir quits

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad resigned yesterday in a shock move as his alliance that came to power less than two years ago unraveled, but he was reappointed as interim leader by the king. It

came after months of rising tensions in his "Pact of Hope" coalition, which toppled a corruption-mired government in 2018, and as some maneuver to block the ascent of leader-in-waiting Anwar Ibrahim.

But there were calls for Mahathir, the world's oldest leader at 94, to stay in office from allies who said he had quit in protest at a plot to form a new government and keep Anwar from power. The political drama began on Sunday when Anwar's rivals from the ruling coalition and opposition politicians held a series of meetings around Kuala Lumpur, stoking speculation a

new alliance was taking shape.

That coalition would reportedly have excluded Anwar, a former opposition icon who was jailed for years on sodomy charges, dashing his hopes of finally becoming premier. With the fate of the government still uncertain yesterday, Mahathir submitted his resignation to the king. The monarch accepted it, but appointed him interim leader until a new premier is found, the chief secretary to the government said. The appointment of all ministers was also revoked, he added.

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Mahathir Mohamad

## Trump hails Modi at huge India rally

AHMEDABAD, India: US President Donald Trump got a rapturous and romantic welcome to India yesterday, addressing a huge rally and holding hands with his wife at the Taj Mahal, in a maiden official visit big on photo opportunities but short on concrete results. Casting a cloud over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's welcome however, a policeman was killed in clashes in New Delhi over a contentious citizenship law hours before the US president was due in the Indian capital.

In the world's biggest cricket stadium in Modi's home state of Gujarat in western India, Trump heaped praise on the Indian rightwinger as an "exceptional leader, a great champion of India" in front of a crowd of around 100,000. "America loves India. America respects India, and America will always be faithful and loyal friends to the Indian people," Trump told the ecstatic crowd, many in Trump-embellished baseball caps.

Name-checking Bollywood films and Indian cricketers, Trump - with an eye on elections in November - paid tribute to the four-million-strong Indian-American diaspora as "truly special people". "President Trump's visit opens a new chapter in our relationship - a chapter that will document the progress and prosperity of the people of America and India," Modi said.

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AGRA, India: US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump pose as they visit the Taj Mahal yesterday. — AFP

## Local

# Kuwait's chest hospital director demands 'immediate decision to set things right'

## Ministries rush to control foodstuff and medical goods' prices



KUWAIT: Women wear protective masks at the Mubarakiya Market in Kuwait City yesterday. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Members of the Kuwait National Guard wearing safety masks keep yesterday watch outside a hotel where Kuwaitis returning from Iran are quarantined and tested for coronavirus COVID-19.

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Director of the Chest Diseases Hospital Dr Reem Al-Assoussi stressed all returnees from Iran and those who had contact with them in their respective homes, including domestic helpers, should be re-quarantined, and those who refuse should be legally held accountable. In a tweet, Assoussi stressed the need for what she described as "an immediate decision to set things right" instead of allowing home quarantine.

Pharmaceutically, informed sources noticed an increase in demand on N95 facemasks, which pushed its prices to KD 2.5 per piece at one point yesterday before the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) set the price back to KD 1.320 per piece to prevent a further increase because importers are already finding difficulty in obtaining them at current prices. In the meantime, government sources reassured the public that all needed requirements and facemasks were abundantly available as the ministry had already prepared an emergency plan for the situation.

MoCI undersecretary Abdullah Al-Afasi stressed that in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH), the ministry inspectors had already started inspecting local markets to make sure all foodstuff and medical goods are available and reasonably priced. He also warned of any unjustified price hikes made to profit from the situation at the expense of citizens and residents' food and health security. "All statistics show that prices are so far stable," Afasi stressed, urging the public to report any violation by calling hotline 135.

Further, in an attempt to placate public fears of facing short-term food shortages, Afasi stressed quantities and prices of food and medical supplies are being checked



Women wear protective masks as they sit in a restaurant inside the Mubarakiya Market in Kuwait City yesterday.

hourly, adding that MoCI had already met the Kuwait Supplies Company and customs department to facilitate increasing imports and speedy customs release of goods. "Our strategic reserves of supply goods are enough for 6 to 12 months," he reassured.

### Flights suspended

In the meantime, Kuwait International Airport deputy director Saleh Al-Fedaghi issued a directive to all airlines operating at the airport to suspend all flights to Iraq and prevent passengers arriving from there from entering Kuwait, including those who hold residency or entry visas. The directive also includes transit passengers arriving from Iraq. Meanwhile, Kuwait Ports Authority Director Sheikh Yousef Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah yesterday banned all ships arriving from Iraq to Kuwaiti ports until further notice.

Kuwait's General Administration of Customs also said it has taken stringent

precautionary measures after the country reported its first new coronavirus case. Kuwait's customs has put in place protective measures to make sure its staff members are not at risk of contracting the pneumonia-causing virus, its director general Jamal Al-Jalawi said in a statement. Among the measures taken is a seminar to raise awareness on the disease, in addition to previous actions including suspending the movement of people to and from Iran until further notice because of concerns about the coronavirus outbreak in the country, he added.

Head of the custom department's registration and member of the supreme committee of implementing international health

regulations in customs Anwar Al-Jabah said that the custom department asked MoH to provide its inspectors with prevention gear including facemasks, gloves and attire so that they can avoid being infected while doing their duties. Jabah added that the customs department had organized a public awareness seminar for its employees on the ideal way to handle inspection of goods and individuals.

### KOC staff examined

KOC has implemented special precautionary measures to fight the spread of coronavirus by cancelling a festival that had been planned to celebrate the national anniversaries, cancelling special receptions at Kuwait airport and subjecting all its field staff members,

namely Chinese nationals, to medical tests to make sure they are free of the virus, said oil sources.

In the meantime, Chairman of the Ministry of Social Affairs employees syndicate Yahya Al-Doussayri said after detecting three infected cases amongst returnees from Iran, which included a ministry employee, the syndicate contacted Minister Mariam Al-Aqeel, who granted employees a two-week leave pending subjecting them to further medical tests.

In another preventive measure, Acting Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs for Social Care Affairs Mislum Al-Subaei issued a decision cancelling all ceremonies, visits, activities, excursions and the entry of foods cooked outside all social care sector departments and houses so as to protect the inmates. Subaei added that in collaboration with MoH, special isolation rooms have been prepared for possible cases.



## Celebrations canceled, staff examined

## Everything you should know about the coronavirus

**KUWAIT:** In early 2020, a new kind of virus began generating headlines all over the world because of the unprecedented speed of its transmission. From its origins in a food market in Wuhan, China in December 2019 to countries as far-flung as the United States and the Philippines, the virus (officially named COVID-19) has infected tens of thousands, with a rising death toll now over 2,600.

### What are the symptoms?

Doctors are learning new things about this virus every day. So far we know that COVID-19 may not initially cause any symptoms.

You may carry the virus for 2 days or up to 2 weeks before you notice symptoms.

Some common symptoms that have been specifically linked to the 2019 coronavirus include:

- feeling short of breath
- having a cough that gets more severe over time
- a low-grade fever that gradually increases in temperature

### When to seek help

If you experience any of the symptoms above and have traveled to China or been exposed to someone in a country where COVID-19 has been detected in the past 14 days, or have been in close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 within the last 14 days, call your doctor right away.

### What causes coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are zoonotic. This means they first develop in animals before developing in humans. For the virus to pass from animal to humans, a person has to come into close contact with an animal that carries

the infection.

Once the virus develops in people, coronaviruses can be spread from person to person through respiratory droplets. This is a technical name for the wet stuff that moves through the air when you cough or sneeze.

The viral material hangs out in these droplets and can be breathed into the respiratory tract (your windpipe and lungs), where the virus can then lead to an infection.

The 2019 coronavirus hasn't been definitively linked to a specific animal. But researchers believe that the virus may have been passed from bats to another animal - either snakes or pangolins - and then transmitted to humans. This transmission likely occurred in the open food market in Wuhan, China.

### Who's at increased risk?

You're at a high risk for developing this virus if you come into contact with someone who's carrying it, especially if you've been exposed to their saliva or been near them when they've coughed or sneezed.

Washing your hands and disinfecting surfaces can help decrease your risk for catching this or other viruses.

Older men seem to be especially susceptible to the virus. A report by the World Health Organization (WHO) found that the median age of people testing positive for this coronavirus was around 45 years, and that over two-thirds of those people were male.

### What treatments are available?

There's currently no treatment specifically approved for the 2019 coronavirus, and no cure for an infection, although treatments and vaccines are currently under study. Instead, treatment focuses on managing symptoms as the virus runs its course.

Seek immediate medical help if you think you have COVID-19. Your doctor will recommend treatment for any symptoms or complications that develop.

Other coronaviruses like SARS and MERS do have vaccines and treatments. Some treatments for these similar viruses include:

- antiviral or retroviral medications
- breathing support like mechanical ventilation

steroids to reduce lung swelling  
blood plasma transfusions

### How to prevent coronaviruses

The best way to prevent the spread of this virus is to avoid or limit contact with people who are showing symptoms of the virus and have traveled to infected countries in the past 14 days. The next best thing you can do is practice good hygiene to prevent bacteria and viruses from spreading.

Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds at a time with warm water and soap.

Don't touch your face, eyes, nose, or mouth when your hands are dirty.

Don't go out if you're feeling sick or have any cold or flu symptoms.

Cover your mouth with the inside of your elbow whenever you sneeze or cough. Throw away any tissues you use to blow your nose or sneeze right away.

Keep any objects you touch a lot clean. Use disinfectants on objects like phones, computers, utensils, dishware, and door handles.

### Other types of coronaviruses

A coronavirus gets its name from the way it looks under a microscope.

The word corona means "crown," and when examined closely, the round virus has a "crown" of proteins called peplomers jutting out from its center in every direction. These proteins help the virus identify whether it can infect its host.

The condition known as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) was also linked to a highly infectious coronavirus back in the early 2000s. The SARS virus has since been contained and found to be successfully treatable.

### COVID-19 vs SARS

This isn't the first time a coronavirus has made news - the deadly 2003 SARS outbreak was also caused by a coronavirus. As with the 2019 virus, the SARS virus was first found in animals before it spread to humans. The SARS virus is thought to have come from bats and then was transferred to another animal, and then to humans.

## General advice for travelers to prevent the spread of respiratory infections

- Fever, Cough, Shortness of breath
- Wash your hands often with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid crowded areas
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- If you feel unwell, seek medical care
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin and wash hands with soap and water
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

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Once transmitted to humans, the SARS virus began spreading quickly among people.

What makes COVID-19 so newsworthy is that a treatment or cure hasn't yet been developed to help prevent its rapid spread from person to person. SARS has been successfully contained and treated.

### What's the outlook?

First and foremost, don't panic. You don't need to wear a mask or be quarantined unless you've been diagnosed with this coronavirus. Following simple hygiene guidelines may help prevent you from developing this and other viruses.

The 2019 coronavirus probably seems scary when you read the news about new deaths, quarantines, and travel bans.

But in context, the coronavirus is much less severe and widespread than more common and more threatening infectious conditions, like the flu. Stay calm and follow your doctor's instructions if you're diagnosed with a coronavirus infection so that you can recover and help prevent it from spreading.

## Local

# Cabinet cancels Kuwait national days' festivities due to virus fears

## High-level taskforce formed to follow up COVID-19 developments

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet decided yesterday to cancel all festivities marking the National Days sine die, urging the public to understand the measures taken to face the novel coronavirus and embody purposeful cooperation for the safety of citizens and expats. The Cabinet highlighted that this is an exceptional situation, which needs exceptional and restrictive procedures to maintain the safety of both citizens and expats as well as evade the spread of the epidemic and its risks.

Upon the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister, a taskforce on COVID-19 has been formed to follow up the developments of this epidemic and take required steps to curb its spread into the country. The team, led by Minister of Health, includes representatives of ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Finance, Information and Commerce and Industry, as well as Kuwait General Administration of Customs. They will keep watch on the possible spread of coronavirus and the measures on both internal and external levels as well as the provision of all preventive and curative supplies. The Cabinet lauded the measures taken by, and strenuous efforts made by the Ministry of Health and other concerned bodies internally and externally, and logistic and medical preparations in this matter. The Cabinet affirmed that it follows up permanently and continuously the development of the spread of the virus. It emphasized that it would not tolerate taking any measure necessary for the protection of all people on this land. It stressed the necessity of doubling efforts to deal with all possibilities in the face of this epidemic which has affected a number of countries all over the world. It also appealed to people to stick to the instructions issued by the official bodies to escape liability, praying to Allah Almighty to protect the dear homeland and its people from any evil.

### Preventive measures

During the Cabinet's weekly meeting held yesterday at Al-Seif Palace and

chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Humoud Al-Sabah - the chair of the taskforce on COVID-19, gave a briefing on the latest developments of the virus and the preventive measures adopted by the competent authorities in keeping with the advice of the World Health Organization (WHO). Confirming the detection of three infections in Kuwait earlier yesterday, Sheikh Dr Basel told the Cabinet that the three cases are kept under close observation. The Ministry of Health is in contact with the Ministry of Interior, the General Directorate of Civil Aviation (GDCA) and the ports authority to verify the health conditions of arrivals from countries hit by the deadly virus, the minister affirmed.

### National days

On the glorious occasion of Kuwait's 59th National Day and the 29th Liberation Day, the Cabinet members offered heartfelt congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the people of Kuwait. They recalled the valiance of the sons of Kuwait who remained steadfast in resisting injustice and aggression and defending the dear homeland against aggressors, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh told reporters following the meeting. They spoke highly of the brave stances of the sisterly and friendly countries which played a decisive role in helping Kuwait regain liberation and restore sovereignty and freedom. The Cabinet members paid homage to the valiant martyrs who sacrificed themselves for the dignity of the homeland, praying to Almighty Allah to lodge them in paradise, and maintain the country's security and progress under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince. Wishing the citizens of, and resi-



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

dents in Kuwait to enjoy the festive holidays of the national days, they highlighted the importance of avoiding negative behavior that could cause unnecessary nuisance or go against the precautionary measures recently adopted to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Meanwhile, the ministers reviewed a report on following up the third quarter, from the first of April until the end of December, of the 2019-2020 plan. In this context, Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel made a presentation on what has been achieved during the mentioned period, challenges facing the projects, the percentage of execution of these schemes, spending and the pillars of Kuwait's 2035 vision. She noted that about 80 percent of the challenges have been addressed. The Cabinet thanked the efforts made to follow-up on the implementation of the annual development plan. It decided to task the minister with referring the report to

the National Assembly.

### Al-Mutlaa accident

The Cabinet members were briefed by Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr Rana Al-Faris on the results of investigations into the accident in Al-Mutlaa housing project; the probes held the contractor directly responsible for the accident. She also briefed the Cabinet with the decisions taken based on the investigation committee results and referring the report to the General Directorate of Investigations to include it in the case before it in addition to the procedures within the institution based on the proposals submitted by the investigation team.

They also discussed the political affairs in light of the reports regarding the current developments on the political arena on Arab and international levels. Regarding the recent regional and global developments, the cabinet congratulated the President of

Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, following his reelection. The Kuwaiti cabinet has deplored, in the strongest terms, the "suicide" shooting incident at two shisha bars in the German city of Hanau near Frankfurt, killing some people on Thursday. Moreover, they denounced the terrorist attack on a church in northern Burkina Faso, which resulted in dozens of deaths and injuries, affirming the consistent position of the State of Kuwait in rejecting all acts of violence and terrorism. On the other hand, the cabinet followed with deep regret the news of the earthquake that struck the Turkish Republic on Sunday, which claimed the lives of a number of people and left huge material damage, expressing sincere condolences to the friendly Turkish people. Furthermore, the cabinet expressed condolences to President of Indonesia Joko Widodo, over victims of flash flood that hit a high school group of students who were hiking along a river on Indonesia's main island of Java. — KUNA

## Kuwait FM receives message from Qatari counterpart



**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah reads a letter from Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah yesterday received a written message from Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani,

dealing with the close bilateral relations between the two countries. This came during a reception of the Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait Bandar bin Mohammad Al-Atiyah. Ministry officials attended the meeting. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti farmers back measures to ban imports

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of Kuwait Farmers Union Abdullah Al-Dammak said the union's board of directors fully approves the measures taken by the government to ban imports of fruits and vegetables from Iran after detection of coronavirus infections there. He added that the ban

also includes a number of other Asian countries and others around the world where the disease has been detected. Dammak stressed that Kuwaiti farmers are ready to make up for any agricultural products' supply shortages and dedicate their farms to serve the country, noting that Kuwaiti farmers always work hard to provide local quality products.

## Kuwait contributes to WHO's fight against coronavirus

**GENEVA:** Kuwait donated \$500,000 for the World Health Organization (WHO), its annual voluntary contribution and part of which to be diverted to help fight the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, Kuwait's top diplomat to UN in Geneva said. Jamal Al-Ghunaim, Kuwait's permanent representative to UN and international organizations, said yesterday that he made the donation during a meeting he had with Dr Michael Ryan, Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Program. "WHO Health

Emergencies Program will use Kuwait's voluntary contribution in many pressing regional and international projects," he said. Kuwait, he added, supported WHO's endeavors to fight coronavirus and Kuwait's delegation to the UN in Geneva was in contact with WHO on a daily basis to get latest updates about COVID-19 to send them back to Kuwait. Ghunaim, meanwhile, said relations between WHO and Kuwait would witness "an important leap" following the opening of an office of WHO in Kuwait. —KUNA



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## Local

# Amir receives congratulatory cables on Kuwait's National Day

## Kuwait celebrates 59th National Day under Amir's leadership

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday congratulatory cables marking the 59th National Day and 29th anniversary of the Liberation Day from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir received cables from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, Chief of the Kuwait National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. They expressed loyalty to the beloved homeland, praying to His Almighty Allah to protect and preserve Kuwait under the wise leadership, whom they wished and prayed for long lasting health and prosperity. In return, His Highness the Amir expressed his appreciation and sincere prayers for well-wishers and Kuwaiti people. His Highness the Amir also received cables from GCC leaders. In addition, His Highness the Amir replied in a cable expressing deep appreciation for the GCC leaders and wishing good relations between Kuwait and brotherly countries for further development and growth.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah exchanged yesterday greetings with local officials on the advent of the 59th National Day and 29th Liberation Anniversary. His Highness the Crown Prince received a cable from Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and MPs who congratulated His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the national occasions. The cable wished the Kuwaiti leadership and people ever more progress and success. His Highness the Crown Prince sent a cable in return, thanking Speaker Ghanem and MPs on their sincere wishes. Furthermore, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf exchanged national day's greetings with Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Chief Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also exchanged cables with Deputy Chief of KNG Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as ministers, govern-

ments, in addition to a number of citizens and expatriates.

Kuwait celebrates today the 59th National Day, which coincides with the 14th anniversary of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assumption of office as the ruler of Kuwait amid celebrations of patriotism and loyalty. Kuwait celebrated its first national day back in 1962, one year after gaining independence in June 19, 1961. The first national day celebration also coincided with the first steps Kuwait took to establish its political system with a constitution that would organize the governmental work based on democratic principles compatible with the reality of Kuwait and its goals. The draft constitution was the most prominent achievements of that historic phase approved by the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah in November 1962, announcing the start of the constitutional legitimacy stage with the first legislative elections that took place on January 23, 1963.

### Balanced foreign policy

Since its independence, Kuwait has endeavored to pursue a moderate and balanced foreign policy, taking into account a number of principles, including communication with other countries, friendship and peace, human development, economic prosperity, cooperation with regional and international organizations, and support efforts aimed at bringing security and stability to the world. Kuwait was able to establish strong relations with brotherly and friendly countries due to its pioneering policy and its distinguished role towards developing cooperation. It had a distinguished role in strengthening the work of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as supporting international peace and security efforts. Kuwait also committed to principles of the regional cooperation and international legitimacy through the United Nations and its affiliated organizations, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Organization of Non-Aligned Countries.

On the humanitarian level, Kuwait has been keen, since its independence, to provide humanitarian assistance and remove injustice from those in need, the humanitarian action has become a feature of its foreign policy that granted His Highness the Amir the title 'Leader of Humanitarian Action' by the UN in September 2014. Manifestations of the national holidays' celebrations, it went through many stages throughout history, but all have



**KUWAIT:** Children wave Kuwaiti flags during a previous National Day celebration. — KUNA

embodied memories and beautiful days started since the 1960s until the present day. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, the celebrations used to be held along the Arabian Gulf Street with the participation of various state and private institutions, schools, sport teams, and governorates. In 1985, the Flag Square was set up on the occasion of the 25 years of independence, located near the seashore with an area of 100,000 square meters, and a 36-meter-high flagpole.

Currently, Kuwait celebrates its national day under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Kuwait is working to develop a plan to build vital projects that would help make the country an international financial and commercial center. These projects include Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City, both Abdullah Al-Salem and Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centers, Kuwait Motor City, Jahra Medical City, and the new passenger Terminal 4 at Kuwait International Airport, in addition to Jaber Al-Ahmed Hospital and Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway, and others. — KUNA



## Zain family celebrates national holidays

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, held a special event for its staff to celebrate Kuwait's national holidays in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The celebration, which featured the presence of the company's top executive management and the stars of Zain's latest televised national production TVC, witnessed the broadcasting of a live episode of the Diwaniya radio show from Zain's main HQ over 90.4 Marina FM.

The event, held in Zain's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, witnessed the presence of Zain Kuwait Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan, the company's top executive management, as well as some of Zain's national TVC stars: actress Mariam Al Saleh, Kuwait National Football Team's star Jassem Yaqoub, historian Fahad Al Abduljalil, as well as Marina FM hosts Ali Khajah, Bashar Al Jazaf, and Ali Najim.

The annual national holidays celebration is one of Zain's main social events held for its employees during the month of February every year. The event brought together staff and senior executive management, further strengthening the links between members of the Zain family, and renewing the spirit of teamwork it enjoys being the leader in the Kuwaiti telecom market.

The event featured many exciting recreational activities that centered around Zain's new national TVC, where the

company's employees gathered together in a family atmosphere filled with national pride. The event also witnessed many competitions and valuable prizes over the radio for Marina FM listeners, while a traditional band played wonderful traditional Kuwaiti pieces throughout the celebration.

Zain has long considered itself a key partner of the Kuwaiti society, especially in such national celebrations. The company launched this national production to show its commitment in sharing the joys of Kuwait as a leading national company, and will spare no efforts in being an integral part of the many occasions that are of interest to the local community.

As part of its social contributions during the national holidays season, Zain recently organized a number of social visits to Zain Otolaryngology Hospital and the Ministry of Social Affairs' Care Centers to share the joys and happiness of Kuwait's national holidays, reflecting the family spirit and noble values of the Kuwaiti people.

The social visits, which were conducted by Zain's volunteers, embodied a special family spirit filled with national pride and joy. Zain's team distributed gifts and toys to children, their families, and the medical staff taking care of them in Zain Otolaryngology Hospital. The team also distributed gifts and toys to orphans, the elderly, and people with special needs who reside at the Ministry of Social Affairs' Social Care Centers.

Through such annual social visits during special occasions, Zain aims at enriching its commitment to celebrating Kuwait's national holidays through ongoing social activities that generate a sense of generosity and caring. As a responsible telecommunications company, Zain looks to improve the lives of the people within the communities it serves.



## Palestine greets Kuwait on national holidays

**KUWAIT:** Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub released the following statement yesterday, congratulating Kuwait on its national days:

"On behalf of the Palestinian community in Kuwait, myself and the Palestine Embassy personnel in Kuwait, we convey congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq



**Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub**

Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on the occasion of the National and Liberation Days. We pray to Allah Almighty to bless these joyous occasions for this beloved country and bestow the bounty of safety and security on it. We also pray that He blesses His Highness the Amir with everlasting

health to stay as a supporter for his people, the Arab nation and the entire humanity. May Kuwait enjoy safety and prosperity always."

## Volunteer group organizes visit to 'Bait Al-Qurain'

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The 'Kuwait in Our Hearts' volunteer group, in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), organized a tour of Al-Qurain Martyrs House Museum (Bait Al-Qurain) yesterday. Twenty-eight volunteer teams participated in this tour, in addition to some school students, to commemorate the martyrs who died during the battle at Bait Al-Qurain.

Head of the group Al-Anoud Al-Dhafiri said for the past four years, the group conducts a tour of Qurain Martyrs House to commemorate this occasion. "This is the house of martyrs and we are holding this activity to commemorate them. We aim to highlight the great role of the martyrs who gave their lives to defend Kuwait during the invasion and teach the new generations of the braveness of these martyrs, their sacrifices and their love for Kuwait," she told Kuwait Times.

"We will keep organizing this tour every year to teach the kids about this memory. We also organize other national activities during the year on other occasions. This museum represents part of our history, and is a live picture of Kuwait's resistance and fight against the aggressor," added Dhafiri. Salman Boland, Supervisor of Museums at NCCAL, said this house witnessed the fight of the Messila Group of resistance fighters who defended the country



**KUWAIT:** Al-Qurain Martyrs House Museum (Bait Al-Qurain).

with simple guns, while the Iraqi army was fighting them with heavy weapons that destroyed a great part of the house. The group resisted for 10 hours until they were overwhelmed by the invaders, he added.

"The late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah ordered to preserve Bait Al-Qurain and transfer it into a museum in the early 1990s to be a witness of an important part of Kuwait's history. Since then, every year on the same days - February 24, 25 and 26 - we cooperate with volunteer groups to visit this place along with students. And we hope that more people come to visit this museum during the whole year to see the heroic role of the Kuwaiti nation," Boland said. The museum is open daily from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm and from 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm except Friday. On National and Liberation Days, it's open the entire day.



**DOHA:** Qatari artist Noor Al-Shammari. — KUNA photos



**Qatari artist Mona Al-Badr**

## Kuwaiti, Qatari artists display works in embassy

**DOHA:** A number of paintings by Kuwaiti and Qatari artists were exhibited at Kuwait's Embassy in Qatar yesterday portraying the rulers of the two countries on Kuwait's national celebrations. Qatari artists Mona Al-Bader and Noor Al-Shammari made portraits of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin

Hamad Al Thani, as well as Qatar's Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, representing the deep-seated relation between the brotherly countries. Meanwhile, Kuwaiti artist Ibrahim Al-Attayah, from the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters had a similar contribution expressing appreciation for both wise leaderships. — KUNA

# Federation of Arab Journalists condemn 'Deal of the Century'



CAIRO: Members of the secretariat general and permanent bureau of the Federation of Arab Journalists (FAJ) attend a meeting in Cairo.



A view of members in attendance.

CAIRO: The Federation of Arab Journalists (FAJ) condemned the US Middle East peace plan that was announced by President Donald Trump under the name "Deal of the Century," and said it is a flagrant encroachment on Palestinian rights, homes, property and freedoms. This came in the closing statement of the secretariat general and permanent bureau of FAJ following a two-day meeting in Cairo.

The federation said the American plan gives legitimacy to the Israel occupation of Palestinian territory contrary to all international laws and principles of international peace, and actual participation in aggression and crimes committed by the Zionist occupier against the Palestinian people. The federation said the American administration, in view of the dangerous stands it took with total bias in favor of the Israeli enemy, shed all the specifications and conditions of mediation because it can never be a judge and an antagonist at the same time.

It called upon unions and the Arab elite to make Arab people aware of the dangers of this deal on the Palestinian cause and the Arab world, which gives Jerusalem to the Israeli occupation as a unified capital and instills the legitimacy of its occupation of the Palestinian territories, "and there is no presence of the name of a Palestinian state in reality in this

deal." It said the "deal" represents encroachments on Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese and Jordan borders, and appreciated the positive reactions by the honest Arab and world people. The federation urged media organizations in the Arab world to hold activities and programs to face this Zionist plan and be keen to intensify messages and calls to face normalization, which represents a breach of popular and professional steadfastness.

The federation appealed to its colleagues in unions, federations and journalism societies to open means of cooperation with Palestinian journalists, support and coordinate with them over what they face in the form of naked aggression against their rights. It confirmed its adherence to the unity and sovereignty of Arab countries and rejection of fragmentation, separation and foreign interference.

It expressed its conditions and criminalization of any attack against journalists, and condemned the treatment of journalists in Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon, in addition to targeting of Syrian journalists during the "Turkish aggression against Syria." The federation asked Arab governments to deal with the journalism profession in light of the recent developments, and the necessity to review legislations that restrict freedoms, and issue legislations that allow the Arab media to practice a wider hori-

zon of freedoms.

The federation expressed its full support to the Sudan Journalists Federation against the "direct attack against freedom of unions," calling for coordinating efforts with the International Journalists Federation in order to find solutions to support Sudanese journalists and their legitimate right to choose their representatives. It also expressed its intention during its next conference to follow issues in a way that serves journalism and journalists.

The federation said the freedom of journalism and expression is under the worst form of attack and restrictions, and that is in jailing journalists, use of the judiciary to convict them and deliberate killings, in addition to other means of restriction and discrimination that limit this freedom. The federation renewed its extreme condemnation of all these regressive practices and demanded the immediate release of all journalists and to activate the principle of not escaping punishment for those who commit crimes of murdering journalists.

It called for immunizing the freedom of journalism with legal guarantees so media can carry out its role in supervision and publishing news and information, in addition to hosting general discussions of various important issues that are of interest to the Arab people



Kuwait Journalists Association Secretary Adnan Al-Rashed (center) attends the meeting.

and provide a suitable environment to get a new generation of political, social and economic reforms. It said this will not materialize without reconsidering legislations regulating freedom of journalism and expression so they become void of punishments that take freedom away.

FAJ members agreed to hold their next conference in Lebanon during the first week of April and accepted membership of the

Djibouti journalists union, in addition to welcoming the return of the Jordanian Journalists Union. The federation's meetings were attended by Kuwait Journalists Association Secretary Adnan Al-Rashed in his capacity as Vice-president of the Federation, KJA Treasurer Jassem Kamal, Member of Freedoms Committee Dhairan Aba Al-Khail and KJA member of the board Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan

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Our Amir is our reliance  
Our unity is our strength

Home of Joy

The Permanent Committee for National Celebrations and Events  
kuwaitfestival

Ministry of Information



Fresh clashes rage in New Delhi over a contentious law

## US accuses Assange of risking lives of intelligence sources

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BEIJING: Security officers and residents wearing protective facemasks to protect against the COVID-19 coronavirus stand at the entrance of a residential compound where temperature and special cards access are needed to enter or exit yesterday. — AFP

# Virus cases rise in Italy, Korea, Iran

## Investors flee to safety as coronavirus spreads outside China

BEIJING: Italy, South Korea and Iran reported sharp rises in coronavirus infections yesterday, triggering concern from the World Health Organization (WHO), but China relaxed some curbs on movement, including in Beijing, as the rate of new infections there eased. The virus has put Chinese cities into lockdown, disrupted air traffic to the workshop of the world and blocked global supply chains for everything from cars and car parts to smartphones.

The surge of cases outside mainland China triggered steep falls in global share markets and Wall Street stock futures as investors fled to safe havens. Gold soared to a seven-year high, oil tumbled nearly 4% and the Korean won fell to its lowest level since August. But US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin cautioned against jumping to conclusions about the impact on the global economy or supply chains, saying it was simply too soon to know.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said it no longer had a process for declaring a pandemic, but that the coronavirus outbreak remained an international emergency. "We are specially concerned about the rapid increase in cases in ... Iran, Italy and the Republic of Korea," WHO head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a news conference in Sweden via video link from Geneva.

South Korea reported 231 new cases, taking its total to 833. Many are in its fourth-largest city, Daegu, which became more isolated with Asiana Airlines and Korean Air suspending flights there until next month. Iran, which announced its first two cases last Wednesday, said it had confirmed 43 cases and eight deaths. Most of the infections were in the Shi'ite Muslim holy city of Qom.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Bahrain and Iraq reported their first cases and Kuwait reported three cases involving people who had been in Iran. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan imposed restrictions on travel and immigration from Iran. Afghanistan also reported its first case, officials said. The WHO has been saying for weeks that it dreads the disease reaching countries with weak health systems. Europe's biggest outbreak is in Italy, with some 150 infections - compared with just three before Friday - and a fifth death.

### 'Severe and complex'

Scientists around the world are scrambling to analyze the virus, but a vaccine is probably more than a year away. "Worryingly, it seems that the virus can pass from person to person without symptoms, making it extremely difficult to track, regardless of what

health authorities do," said Simon Clarke, an expert in cellular microbiology at the University of Reading in Britain.

China postponed the annual meeting of its parliament in Beijing. But there was a measure of relief for the world's second-largest economy as more than 20 province-level jurisdictions, including Beijing and Shanghai, reported zero new infections, the best showing since the outbreak began. President Xi Jinping urged businesses to get back to work, though he said the epidemic was still "severe and complex, and prevention and control work is in the most difficult and critical stage".

Excluding the central Hubei province, centre of the outbreak, mainland China reported 11 new cases, the lowest since the national health authority started publishing nationwide daily figures on Jan 20. The coronavirus has infected nearly 77,000 people and killed more than 2,500 in China, most in Hubei. Overall, China reported 409 new cases on the mainland, down from 648 a day earlier, taking the total number of infections to 77,150 cases as of Feb. 23. The death toll rose by 150 to 2,592.

Outside mainland China, the outbreak has spread to about 29 countries and territories, with a death toll of about two dozen, according to a Reuters tally. Xi said

on Sunday the outbreak would have a relatively big, but short-term, impact on the economy and the government would step up policy adjustments to help cushion the blow. Mnuchin, speaking to Reuters in the Saudi city of Riyadh, said he did not expect the coronavirus to have a material impact on the Phase 1 US-China trade deal. "Obviously that could change as the situation develops," he added.

In northern Italy, authorities sealed off the worst-affected towns and banned public gatherings across a wide area, halting the carnival in Venice, where there were two cases. Austria briefly suspended train services over the Alps from Italy after two travelers coming from Italy showed symptoms of fever. Both tested negative for the new coronavirus but Austrian Interior Minister Karl Nehammer said a task force would meet to discuss whether to introduce border controls.

Japan had 773 cases as of late Sunday, mostly on a cruise ship quarantined near Tokyo. A third passenger, a Japanese man in his 80s, died on Sunday. In South Korea, authorities reported a seventh death and dozens more cases yesterday. Of the new cases, 115 were linked to a church in the city of Daegu. Drone footage showed what appeared to be hundreds of people queuing in a neat line outside a Daegu supermarket under the winter sunshine to buy face masks. — Reuters

## 'No one cares': Wuhan residents adapt to find food

BEIJING: The lockdown of Guo Jing's neighborhood in Wuhan—the city at the heart of China's new coronavirus epidemic—came suddenly and without warning. Unable to go out, the 29-year-old is now sealed inside her compound where she has to depend on online group-buying services to get food. "Living for at least another month isn't an issue," Guo told AFP, explaining that she had her own stash of pickled vegetables and salted eggs.

But what scares her most is the lack of control—first, the entire city was sealed off, and then residents were limited to exiting their compound once every three days. Now even that has been taken away. Guo is among some 11 million residents in Wuhan, a city in central Hubei province that has been under effective quarantine since January 23 as Chinese authorities race to contain the epidemic. Since then, its people have faced a number of tightening controls over daily life as the death toll from the virus swelled to over 2,500 in China alone.

But the new rules this month barring residents from leaving their neighborhoods are the most restrictive yet—and for some, threaten their livelihoods. "I still don't know where to buy things once we've finished eating what we have at home," said Pan Hongsheng, who lives with his wife and two children. Some neighborhoods have organized group-buying services, where supermarkets deliver orders in bulk.

But in Pan's community, "no one cares". "The



WUHAN: Medical staff transfer a patient infected by the COVID-19 coronavirus at a hospital in Wuhan in China's central Hubei province. Authorities in Wuhan yesterday reversed a decision that would have allowed some people to leave the quarantined city at the centre of China's deadly virus epidemic. — AFP

three-year-old doesn't even have any milk powder left," Pan told AFP, adding that he has been unable to send medicine to his in-laws—both in their eighties—as they live in a different area. "I feel like a refugee." The "closed management of neighborhoods is bound to bring some inconvenience to the lives of the people", Qian Yuankun, vice secretary of Hubei's Communist Party committee, said at a press briefing last week.

### Grocery groups

Demand for group-buying food delivery services has rocketed with the new restrictions, with supermarkets and neighborhood committees scrambling to fill orders. Most group-buying services operate through Chinese messag-

ing app WeChat, which has ad-hoc chat groups for meat, vegetables, milk—even "hot dry noodles", a famous Wuhan dish. More sophisticated shops and compounds have their own mini-app inside WeChat, where residents can choose packages priced by weight before orders are sent in bulk to grocery stores.

In Guo's neighborhood, for instance, a 6.5-kilogramme (14.3-pound) set of five vegetables, including potatoes and baby cabbage, costs 50 yuan (\$7.11). "You have no way to choose what you like to eat," Guo said. "You cannot have personal preferences anymore." The group-buying model is also more difficult for smaller communities to adopt, as supermarkets have minimum order requirements for delivery. — AFP

## Human rights under assault worldwide

GENEVA: UN chief Antonio Guterres launched a "call to action" yesterday against rising attacks on human rights, highlighting the persecution of minorities and "alarming levels of femicide". "Human rights are under assault," said the secretary-general as he opened the UN Human Rights Council's main annual session in Geneva. "People are being left behind. Fears are growing," he said, pointing to swelling divisions and political polarization in many countries.

"A perverse political arithmetic has taken hold: divide people to multiply votes," he said, warning that "the rule of law is being eroded". Guterres said civilians were being "trapped in war-torn enclaves, starved and bombarded in clear violation of international law" as well as "human trafficking, affecting every region in the world, preying on vulnerability and despair". He also said women and girls were being "enslaved, exploited and abused", "activists tossed in jail, and religious and ethnic minorities groups persecuted".

UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet also stressed the need for urgent action on human rights. "Let us not deliver to our young people and to their children an uncontrollable firestorm of intersecting and escalating human rights crises," she

told the council. Guterres launched a "call to action" to "people everywhere" to take action in seven areas—including halting violence against women and girls, boosting protection for people trapped in conflict and recognizing the challenges created by the climate crisis and new technologies.

### 'We will speak out'

"We see a pushback against women's rights, alarming levels of femicide, attacks on women human rights defenders, and the persistence of laws and policies that perpetuate subjugation and exclusion," Guterres said. He said work towards gender equality "starts within", stressing that the UN had already achieved gender parity across its most senior ranks and promised to achieve the same throughout the UN system by 2028.

Guterres, who mentioned no countries by name, has faced criticism for not speaking out more forcefully against rights violations carried out by powerful countries like the US, Saudi Arabia and China—appearing to opt instead for behind-the-scenes diplomacy. Former UN rights chief Zeid Raad al-Husseini told Foreign Policy magazine this month that historians might interpret Guterres's reluctance to speak out as weakness rather than prudence. Kenneth Roth of the Human Rights Watch NGO welcomed the call to action but said it would succeed only if Guterres "does not shy away from naming abusers". Guterres said the UN could sometimes work alongside governments, behind the scenes or at other times "we will speak out, identifying both violations and violators". — AFP

International

# Islamic Jihad launches new round of rockets, mortars towards Israel

## Flare-up trigger school, road, train closures in southern Israel

**JERUSALEM:** Islamic Jihad fired a further volley of rockets and mortars from Gaza towards Israel yesterday, following a flare-up between the group and the Jewish state that triggered school, road and train closures in southern Israel. Israel's army said in a statement that 20 "projectiles" had been fired from the Palestinian enclave yesterday, 18 of them intercepted by its air defense systems.

Israeli police images showed that at least one of the projectiles landed in an empty children's playground. On Sunday, in response to Israel's killing of a militant along the border, Islamic Jihad launched more than 20 rockets from Gaza into Israel. Israel's military said it responded to the rockets with airstrikes targeting "terror sites" throughout Gaza as well as near the Syrian capital.

The Damascus strike killed two Islamic Jihad fighters and four other Iran-backed militants allied to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor. Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes in Syria, mainly targeting government troops as well as allied Iranian forces and the Tehran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah. Israel rarely confirms responsibility for such strikes, but did so on Sunday, describing the target as a base "used as a hub" for Islamic Jihad activities in Syria.

### Schools, roads closed

Israel took a series of precautions amid the rocket fire from Gaza. The education ministry ordered 65,000 students in towns near Gaza to stay home, postponing

exams at universities in Ashkelon, Sderot and Netivot. The transport ministry cancelled trains between Ashkelon and Beersheba, a major southern city roughly 50 kilometers from Gaza. The military said Zikim Beach on the Mediterranean Sea just north of Gaza had been closed to visitors.

Sunday's fighting was the most intense between Israel and Islamic Jihad since November, when an Israeli airstrike killed Rasmi Abu Malhou, described as a senior group commander. That strike also killed nine members of a Palestinian family unrelated to the armed group, and was followed by a three-day conflict that left 35 Palestinians dead and more than 100 wounded, according to official figures.

There were no Israeli fatalities. Islamic Jihad is allied with Hamas, the Islamist group that has controlled Gaza since 2007. But it has not accepted the informal truce Hamas has agreed with Israel in exchange for an easing of the crippling blockade on Gaza. Hamas and Israel last fought a full-scale war in 2014, but smaller flare-ups are relatively common.

### Bulldozed

The latest escalation with Islamic Jihad came after Israel's military said Sunday it had killed a militant in Gaza who had tried to plant an explosive device near the border fence. Israel later confirmed that it extracted the militant's body with a bulldozer. A video emerged later on social media, which was authenticated by AFP, showing a bulldozer approaching a body while a group of young, apparently unarmed men, were trying to retrieve it. The sound of gunfire is heard and



**GAZA:** Photo shows smoke trails from rockets fired by Palestinian militants in Gaza City. Islamic Jihad militants claimed responsibility for another round of rockets fired towards Israel yesterday following a new flare-up between the group and the Jewish state. — AFP

the men ultimately run away as the bulldozer scoops up the body.

Israel's hawkish Defense Minister Naftali Bennett has pursued a policy of retaining the bodies of militants from Gaza as bargaining chips to pressure Hamas, which has held those of two Israeli soldiers since 2014.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh, speaking before a weekly cabinet meeting, called the bulldozer incident "a heinous crime." "(Israel's) occupation kills Palestinians in cold blood and with images that should shame humanity, and in violation of international law which Israel breaches day and night," he said. — AFP

## Ethiopian-Israeli MP says seeking equality

**HADERA:** The first Ethiopian-born Jewish woman elected to Israel's parliament, who said she is fighting for racial equality, has become a key player in the effort to oust Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Pnina Tamano-Shata, a former television journalist first elected to the Knesset (parliament) in 2013, represents an Ethiopian-Israeli community that experts say could be pivotal in the country's March 2 vote.

The election is Israel's third in less than a year and polls show another tight race between Netanyahu's right-wing Likud and the centrist Blue and White party, of which Tamano-Shata is a member. Sitting in a cafe in Hadera, a city north of Tel Aviv that is home to thousands of Ethiopian Israelis, Tamano-Shata argued that racial inequality remained rampant after Netanyahu's 14 years in office.

"There are more Ethiopians in prison, more police brutality against us, higher poverty and a higher suicide rate," she told AFP in an interview. The killing last year of 19-year-old Solomon Tekla by an off-duty police officer inflamed long-standing grievances among Ethiopian-Israelis, who claim they have repeatedly been targeted by police due to the color of their skin. Tamano-Shata



**HADERA:** The first Israeli Jewish woman of Ethiopian origin to be elected to the Knesset (parliament) Pnina Tamano Shata (2nd left), visits members of the Ethiopian community in the coastal city of Hadera. — AFP

said her generation of Ethiopian-Israelis had a duty "to fight tirelessly for our acceptance." "We must assert that we are no different, that we are equal," she added.

### Operation Moses

Israelis of Ethiopian descent have historically backed Likud as a legacy of gratitude for the 1984-1985 "Operation Moses" that brought an initial 8,000 Ethiopians to the Jewish state. That seven-week clandestine extraction after a devastating Ethiopian

famine was carried out under the premiership of former Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir.

Tamano-Shata's family was part of that operation. She recalls travelling with her pregnant mother and sisters to a camp for the displaced in Sudan from where she and thousands of others were exfiltrated to Israel. "We dreamed of Jerusalem for generations," she said. "I was born in a village without electricity." The Ethiopian-Israeli community has since grown to 140,000-strong, including 50,000 born in Israel. — AFP

## How Mauritania is fighting jihadism

**NOUAKCHOTT:** In the middle of the desert, just inside the Mauritanian border, stands a tent. Inside is a VHF radio. If an outsider passes by, the locals operate the device to warn the authorities. The radio is a simple but effective link in a security system which, combined with grassroots work, has helped shield Mauritania from the Sahel's escalating jihadist peril.

To Mauritania's east, the death toll in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso has been rising inexorably—but this largely desert country of four million has not experienced an attack in almost nine years. Today, Mauritania takes over the rotating presidency of the G5 Sahel, which coordinates the anti-jihadism fight of five countries in the region. "Mauritania is a player which was able to overcome terrorism in 2011," said a French source. "We expect a lot from their presidency." In 2005, Islamist groups expanded in Algeria, a neighbor to the north, and Mauritania began to come under attack.

In 2008, the former head of presidential security, General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, took power by force and a year later was elected president. Any qualms that Western countries had about

his rise to power were put to one side. Given the numbers of Mauritians in emerging jihadist groups in northern Mali, the sense was "the jihadist threat could spread to Mauritania," said a French expert, speaking on condition of anonymity.

France and, to a lesser extent, the United States began sending instructors to support anti-terrorist units and strengthen Mauritanian intelligence. The Mauritanian authorities, for their part, began investing in training and retaining soldiers. Military spending increased, providing better and newer equipment, and soldiers' pay was paid directly into the bank rather than through officers, and soldiers were given social benefits.

### Security, hearts and minds

Today, that program to boost military morale and competence has borne fruit, as shown in the tight policing of the border—a notorious weak point in the other Sahel countries. Dozens of checkpoints have been installed on every major highway, and a huge buffer region bordering Mali has been classified a "military zone" barred to civilians. "Any car driving there would be spotted and checked," said Hassane Kone, researcher at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) think tank in Dakar. The measure has enabled the authorities to nab armed gangs of cannabis traffickers, he said. At the same time, Nouakchott launched a battle of the minds—to deter vulnerable young people from joining the jihadists. — AFP

## 'Several injured' as car rams Germany carnival procession

**BERLIN:** Several people were injured yesterday when a car drove into a carnival procession in central Germany, police said, adding that the driver had been arrested. A spokeswoman for police in the town of Volksmarsen where the incident took place told AFP "it is too soon" to say whether the driver ploughed into the crowd on purpose. "According to first reports, several people have been injured," police from nearby Kassel city said in a statement.

A picture from the scene showed police officers and rescue vehicles next to a silver Mercedes with its doors open near a pile of debris on the side of the road. The local Waldeckische Zeitung daily cited witnesses as reporting some 15 people injured, "including small children". In many parts of Germany residents are celebrating Rose yesterday, a highlight of the annual carnival festivities that sees adults and children dress up and attend parades where people play music and throw candies from floats.

The incident comes as Germany is still reeling from a shooting spree in the city of Hanau, in the same German state of Hesse, that left 10 people dead last Wednesday. The gunman, who left behind a racist manifesto, first opened fire at a shisha bar and a cafe, killing nine people, before shooting dead his mother and himself. Germany's deadliest terror attack in recent history happened in 2016 when a jihadist drove his truck into a crowded Berlin Christmas market, killing 12 people. — AFP

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## International

# US accuses WikiLeaks founder of risking lives of intelligence sources

## Assange's extradition hearing opened in a London court

**LONDON:** A lawyer for the United States yesterday accused WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange of risking the lives of intelligence sources by publishing classified US government documents, as his extradition hearing opened in a London court. Assange faces charges under the US Espionage Act for the 2010 release by his whistleblowing website of a trove of files detailing the realities of US military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. Assange spent much of the past decade holed up in Ecuador's London embassy to avoid separate legal proceedings in Sweden, but Washington is now seeking his transfer from Britain to stand trial.

Making the US government case on the first day of the extradition hearing in London, lawyer James Lewis denied the prosecution was motivated by embarrassment over the WikiLeaks release. "It is solely where risk of harm is caused," he told Woolwich Crown Court as Assange, who is being held in the high security Belmarsh prison next door, listened attentively in the dock. "The United States is aware of sources whose unredacted names and/or other identifying information was contained in classified documents published by Wikileaks who subsequently disappeared."

### 'Journalist activities'

WikiLeaks initially worked with a string of high-profile newspapers to publish details from the leaked State Department and Pentagon files, which caused a sensation - and outrage in Washington. One video from 2007 showed an Apache helicopter attack in which US soldiers gunned down two Reuters reporters and nine Iraqi civilians in broad daylight in Baghdad.

But after falling out with their editors, WikiLeaks released hundreds of thousands of documents in their original form - including the secret identities of diplomats and local sources. Assange and his supporters claim the prosecution is politically motivated, and the case has alarmed free speech advocates. The Australian lawyer, Edward Fitzgerald, told the court that the details in the US indictment were "misleading" and insisted his client was

undertaking "journalist activities". "We do not accept that this constitutes an extradition crime," he said. Protesters gathered outside court holding up banners saying "Free Assange". The Committee to Protect Journalists has previously warned that "for the sake of press freedom, Julian Assange must be defended". But Lewis, for the US government, told the court, "Julian Assange is no journalist." It is inconceivable that any member of the press would disclose any of the names of their sources."

### Years of legal battles

Assange, 48, could be jailed for 175 years if convicted on all 17 Espionage Act charges and one count of computer hacking he faces. It is the most serious phase of a long-running legal saga that has seen him detained in some form for most of the last decade. In 2010, Assange was accused of sexual assault and rape in Sweden and after a legal battle, was ordered by a British judge to be extradited there.

He always denied the Swedish allegations and the investigation has since been dropped. To avoid extradition, he claimed asylum in Ecuador's London embassy, where he spent seven years until Quito gave him up last year following a change in government. He has since served a jail term for breaching his UK police bail but remains in Belmarsh prison awaiting the US extradition case. Some US legal experts think Assange has a case.

"Use of the Espionage Act has a very checkered history in the century since Congress passed it," University of Richmond law professor Carl Tobias said. Many think "extradition and US prosecution would have a chilling effect on press efforts to expose government information that is important to the public interest." Assange's father John Shipton, who attended the hearing with Assange's brother Gabriel Shipton, decried the "ceaseless malice" of the authorities against his son. "We're all here to vigorously and firmly support Julian in this 10-year long oppression and political action," he told reporters.

### Trump claim

In a new twist last week, Assange's defence team



**LONDON:** Supporters of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, hold placards calling for his freedom outside Woolwich Crown Court in southeast London yesterday. — AFP

claimed US President Donald Trump promised to issue a pardon if Assange denied Russia leaked the emails of his 2016 election rival's campaign. "In August 2017, Donald Trump's administration tried to pressure Julian Assange into saying things that would be favourable to President Trump himself," defense coordinator

Baltasar Garzon said. "When Julian Assange refused, he was charged and an extradition request was issued alongside an international arrest warrant." The White House called the allegation "another never-ending hoax and total lie" but a judge agreed to add it to the case file. — AFP

## Hammered in Hamburg, Merkel's party meets on leadership crisis

**BERLIN:** Senior members of Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives gathered yesterday to decide on a leadership accession plan, after a state election drubbing in Hamburg added urgency to their search. Voters handed Merkel's conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) their worst-ever result in Hamburg on Sunday, punishing them for flirting with the far-right in an eastern state and descending into a messy leadership battle.

The succession debate was blown wide open earlier this month, when CDU leader Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer unexpectedly said she would no longer seek to succeed her mentor Merkel. Mass-selling daily Bild dubbed the Hamburg result a "debacle" for the CDU, whose leadership crisis has raised questions over the future course of Europe's largest economy. The CDU slipped into third place in Hamburg, scoring just 11.2% in the northern port city, behind the Social Democrats (SPD), for whom the city is a stronghold, and the Greens.

"The dismal result for Merkel's centre-right CDU ... adds to the pressure on the party to resolve the leadership crisis fast," Berenberg bank analyst Holger Schmieding said. Nationally, the Greens are second, behind Merkel's conservative bloc, and many commentators expect them to have a role in the next federal government. Merkel, chancellor for almost 15 years, has said she will not run again in the next federal election, due by October 2021.

Kramp-Karrenbauer's decision to give up her ambition of succeeding Merkel came after an eastern branch of the CDU defied the national party and voted with the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) to install a state premier from a third party. That broke a postwar consensus among established parties of shunning the far right. Kramp-Karrenbauer will brief reporters after yesterday's meeting of senior CDU officials and is expected to set out a timetable for a decision on the party chair and possibly the candidate for chancellor.

The n-tv broadcaster cited CDU sources as saying the party will hold an extraordinary congress either in April or May to elect a new leader. Four or five candidates are jockeying for the jobs. Daniel Guenther, premier of the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein, told broadcaster SWR that the CDU should clear up the leadership question quickly and hold a party conference "well before the summer break". — Reuters



**BERLIN:** The leader of Germany's conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer addresses a press conference following the city-state elections of Hamburg yesterday. — AFP

## 2 sides claim victory in Togo's election as challenger cries foul

**LOME:** Two sides have claimed victory in Togo's presidential election as the main challenger to incumbent Faure Gnassingbe cried foul, citing "revelations of fraud". The national electoral commission Ceni has yet to announce results from Saturday's election, which passed off peacefully in the West African nation. But Gilbert Bawara, minister of public functions and a strong supporter of the president, told AFP Sunday: "The lead of President Faure Gnassingbe is well above 50 percent, and even more than 60 percent."

"Victory is assured but it is up to the Ceni to independently proclaim the results," he added. "We are optimistic and anticipate a clear victory in the first round" of voting. A source in the president's office added that "UNIR (the ruling party) has held on to all its traditional strongholds and has even done better everywhere, including in difficult areas in the south and in Lome."

A widely expected win by the incumbent would extend more than a half century of dynastic rule over the former French colony by Gnassingbe's family despite broad disillusionment over its failure to drag many out of poverty. Agbeyome Kodjo, who was prime minister under Gnassingbe's father, had emerged as a dark horse challenger looking to stop Gnassingbe's bid for a fourth term in office, after winning the backing of an influential former Catholic archbishop. He invited journalists to his home late Saturday to claim a thumping victory for himself while alleging fraud.

"Considering the revelations of fraud which marked this ballot, it is impossible for the outgoing candidate to be elected in the first round," Kodjo said, adding that he based his assertion on 60 percent of the results. "I have the conviction that in the coming week, I will lead this country," he said, describing the vote as

## Libyan leaders slam international inaction amid surging violence

**GENEVA:** The head of Libya's UN-recognized government slammed his rival Khalifa Haftar before the UN yesterday as a "war criminal", and decried international inaction over hostilities raging on the ground. "The entire world has been able to see the escalation in hostilities and attacks against the capital Tripoli since April 4, 2019," Faye Al-Sarraj, who heads the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), told the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

But despite large numbers of people killed and displaced by the actions of "the war criminal Mr. Haftar", Sarraj lamented: "Until today, we have not seen action by the international community." The fighting has claimed more than 1,000 lives and displaced some 140,000, according to the United Nations. In the latest outbreak of fighting, Haftar launched his offensive on Tripoli last April but after rapid advances his forces stalled on the outskirts of the capital. "We have repeatedly asked that commissions of inquiry be established to investigate the violations, the forced displacements, the arbitrary detentions, the extrajudicial killings," Sarraj said.

GNA foreign minister Mohamed Taha Syala meanwhile voiced particular criticism about international inaction to force an end to Haftar's oil blockade, warning of the dire humanitarian consequences of cutting off the country's main source of income. The international community, he said, must "instruct opening the oil fields and opening the ports to feed the Libyan people." He told reporters in Geneva that major powers had acted quickly to force an end to a previous attempt by Haftar to blockade Libya's oil, but that today there seemed to be less interest in



**LOME:** Soldiers patrol the streets following the declaration of President Faure Gnassingbe and candidate of the ruling Union for the Republic (UNIR) party who was declared winner of the just concluded presidential election yesterday. — AFP

a "veritable tsunami" in his favor. After voting ended on Saturday, troops briefly surrounded Kodjo's home and that of the former Lome archbishop, Monsignor Philippe Kpodzro, a move the authorities said was for their "own safety".

Bawara played down Internet cuts and disruption to social media networks since vote counting began on Saturday, laying blame on mobile telephone operators Togocel and Moov and remarking: "These things happen." Kodjo claimed the authorities had used ballot stuffing to skew the results in the incumbent's favor. He said figures from various polling stations showed he was in the lead in the capital Lome and the coastal region and had "good scores" in other areas. The election commission has prom-

ised to release the official results yesterday. Gnassingbe has led the country of eight million people since taking over in 2005 following the death of his father Gnassingbe Eyadema, who ruled with an iron fist for 38 years. The situation around Lome was calm Sunday morning, an AFP journalist reported. Internet connections appeared to be sporadically interrupted however.

The authorities banned hundreds of local observers from monitoring the election and cancelled the system of electronic security at the last moment. Some 300 international observers were deployed, mainly from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, with many African states supporting the incumbent. — AFP



**TRIPOLI:** A damaged container is pictured at a port in Libya's capital Tripoli after it was hit by rocket fire. — AFP

boosting oil supplies on the global market. "I know they don't want the prices in the market to drop by putting in the market around one million barrels," he said, suggesting that "maybe this is behind the reason" for the international inaction. "If it is the reason, this is inhuman," he said. The GNA leaders' comments came as the UN announced that indirect negotiations between military leaders from Libya's warring sides had agreed on a draft ceasefire deal, which will now be discussed by the leadership on both sides.

Political negotiations are meanwhile scheduled to kick off in Geneva on Wednesday. UN envoy Ghassan Salame, who was scheduled to meet with Sarraj later on, has said the political discussions would go ahead despite the hostilities on the ground. But Syala said that the GNA had yet to receive an invitation to attend and that it remained to be seen whether the talks would go ahead as planned. — AFP

## Camels evacuated after Libya's port comes under fire

**TRIPOLI:** Three thousand camels have been walked out of Libya's capital Tripoli in an overnight evacuation after the port where they arrived came under artillery fire. The camels left Tripoli's port shortly after midnight on Wednesday, and were herded along a highway leading west to the city of Zawiyah, some 45 km away, where they arrived on Thursday morning, according to a local merchant.

However, he said that a local armed group had stolen 125 of the camels as they passed through the Tripoli suburb of Janzour. A Reuters reporter saw about 20 camel herders whipping the camels into line as they left central Tripoli, with some camels trying to search for food along the side of the road. Security forces temporarily closed the road to let them pass.

The merchant said a fellow businessman from Zawiyah bought the camels after hearing they were being sold off cheaply in Australia, where according to Australian media reports, thousands of camels that had begun searching for scarce water in residential areas have been culled. However, Australia's Department of Agriculture said Australia had not exported camels since 2007. Camels are often imported to Libya from Sudan along with goats, and camel meat is widely eaten. Tripoli's port, which is close to the city centre, was shelled on Tuesday by forces loyal to east Libya-based commander Khalifa Haftar, who has been waging an offensive to take Tripoli for more than 10 months. He has been battling forces aligned with the internationally recognized government, which is based in Tripoli. The Libyan capital has been the scene of several rounds of fighting since former ruler Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown in a NATO-backed uprising in 2011. — Reuters



## International

# Trump stumbles on Indian names and Hindi word in cricket stadium speech

## Trump remark draws laughter, cheers and jokes on Twitter

**AHMEDABAD:** US President Donald Trump yesterday managed to mangle his pronunciation of several Indian names and a Hindi word on an otherwise successful first day of his state visit to India. Cheered by more than 100,000 people at the opening of the world's largest cricket stadium, Trump tried to praise his host, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for achieving high office despite his humble origins as a tea seller, or "chai wala".

"The life of Prime Minister Modi underscores the limitless promise of this great nation. He started out by his father's side as a 'chee wala', a tea-seller," Trump said, drawing laughter, cheers and jokes on Twitter. Modi often invokes his humble family roots at political rallies, presenting himself as a man of the people who has fought his way to the top against great odds.

Trump, though from a much more privileged background, also likes to pose as a champion of ordinary Americans against a remote, uncaring elite. "When he (Modi) was a young man, he worked at a cafeteria in this city... I will tell you this, he's very tough," Trump said, pausing for a firm handshake with Modi, his "true friend".

Modi, a nationalist who won re-election last year and has shifted his country firmly to the right with policies that his critics decry as ethnically divisive, touts his relationship with Trump as proof of his own global standing. In his speech, Trump also cited a famous 19th century Hindu monk - often quoted by Modi himself - Swami Vivekananda, but it came out as "Vivekamumund", to the delight of the crowd, many of whom wore Trump masks and "Namaste (hello) Trump" hats.

Trump also stumbled over the names of Modi's home state of Gujarat and its biggest city Ahmedabad - where he was speaking - as well as the names of



**AHMEDABAD, India:** US President Donald Trump looks on as India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves during a 'Namaste Trump' rally at Sardar Patel Stadium in Motera yesterday. — AFP

two Indian cricket heroes, Sachin Tendulkar and current team captain Virat Kohli. Trump and his wife Melania later flew to the city of Agra to pay a sunset

visit to the Taj Mahal, the 17th century mausoleum of love and one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. — Reuters

## Fresh clashes rage in New Delhi over contentious law

**NEW DELHI:** Fresh clashes raged in New Delhi in protests over a contentious citizenship law yesterday, hours ahead of a visit to the Indian capital by US President Donald Trump. India has seen weeks of demonstrations and violence since a new citizenship law - that critics say discriminates against Muslims - came into force in December.

The latest unrest erupted between several hundred supporters and opponents of the law in a Muslim-dominated area of northeast Delhi on Sunday, and continued into yesterday with police seeking to restore order. The Press Trust of India said protesters torched at least two houses and a fire engine, with local TV channels showing plumes of black smoke billowing from buildings. And two Indian newspapers reported online that a police officer had died.

Riot police fired tear gas and conducted baton charges, local media said. Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi's chief minister, tweeted: "Very distressing news regarding disturbance of peace and harmony in parts of Delhi coming in." He urged the home minister to "restore law and order" and ensure "peace and harmony is maintained." Trump arrived in the western state of Gujarat yesterday and addressed a huge rally with Prime Minister Narendra Modi before he visited the Taj Mahal monument.

The US president was due in Delhi yesterday evening before official talks in the city today. The new law has raised worries abroad - including in Washington - that Modi wants to remould secular India



**NEW DELHI:** Policemen stand on a vandalized road following clashes between supporters and opponents of a new citizenship law, at Bhajanpura area of New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

into a Hindu nation while marginalizing the country's 200 million Muslims. A senior US official told reporters Trump would raise concerns about religious freedom in the Hindu-majority nation during the trip, calling them "extremely important to this administration". — AFP

## Afghanistan: Where things stand and what lies ahead

**KABUL:** As the United States and the Taliban stand on the verge of signing a historic deal that would see the Pentagon pull thousands of troops from Afghanistan, questions remain about what happens next. Here are some details about the accord and its implications for the war-ravaged nation:

### Have they agreed to ceasefire?

Not quite, but the Taliban, US and Afghan forces have committed to a "reduction in violence" or a partial, week-long truce. This is more significant than it sounds because it is only the second such lull in fighting since the US-led invasion of 2001. If it holds, it is expected to create the conditions for Washington and the insurgents to sign a deal in Doha on Saturday that would see thousands of US troops leave Afghanistan after more than 18 years, in return for various security commitments from the Taliban.

News of the truce has sparked joy across Afghanistan, with civilians pouring onto the streets to dance and celebrate the prospect of an end to the conflict that has cost tens of thousands of lives. Isolated attacks have continued, however, underscoring the difficulty of securing a permanent respite from violence. And details of what exactly the truce means are vague.

While the US has cited an "understanding" for a "significant and nationwide reduction in violence", Afghan forces have vowed to remain "on active defense status" during the week. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid meanwhile has insisted the pause does not amount to "a ceasefire", and said it only covers certain urban and military areas, seemingly leaving open the prospect of violence in remote rural areas. Fears that competing sides could exploit a lull to secure territorial advantage - dashing any hopes for peace - have also surfaced in the run-up to Saturday's meeting.

### What can we expect?

If the truce is successful, Washington will sign an accord with the Taliban. Under the terms of the deal, Washington is initially expected to reduce troop levels to



**KUNDUZ:** Private cell phone antennas are pictured in Kunduz province. Mobile phone services were restored across swaths of Taliban-contested areas of Afghanistan over the weekend as a partial truce with the militants held for a second day. — AFP

around 8,600 - down from the current level of 12,000-13,000. The remaining forces would stay behind on a "conditions-based" timeline to fight jihadists such as the Islamic State group, and monitor the overall security situation. Ultimately, if all goes well, the US troop presence could go down to zero - but few observers expect that to happen any time soon. The US and the Taliban have been tantalizingly close to a deal before, only to see President Donald Trump nix it at the eleventh hour.

### What happens next?

The key to a lasting peace depends largely on the outcome of talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government, rather than between the insurgents and the US.

## Iraqi nurse spends weekends stitching wounds at protest site

**BAGHDAD:** Hanna Jassem bends over a patient in a makeshift clinic on the edge of Baghdad's Tahrir Square, one of a handful of women in an overwhelmingly male world of demonstrations and political confrontation. The 24-year-old works as a nurse in a hospital in Iraq's capital during the week, and volunteers at its main protest site at weekends.

As teargas spreads outside, Jassem stitches up wounds in an open-fronted shack supported by metal poles with walls covered in national flags, banners and blue plastic sheeting. She said her brother initially supported her decision to look after people taking part in the wave of anti-government protests that have raged across Iraq since Oct 1. "He was proud that his sister was a medic in Tahrir," she told Reuters.

"But later he became apprehensive as things got more dangerous." Almost 500 people have died in the violence. Some politicians and influential clerics have been outraged by the sight of young women out in public during the demonstrations in Baghdad and across the impoverished Shiite Muslim south. But that hasn't stopped Jassem. "Change is what drove me to be a medic and go to protest sites. We are sick of the current situation in terms of rights or being safe or having any security in this country."

Since her father passed away in 2016, she and her eight brothers and sisters have had to contribute to the family income. On top of her nursing job, she also works part time as a portrait photographer. That still leaves her the weekends for the protest clinic. "I always say that if I had enough time I would go to Tahrir every day but my responsibilities at work and home get in the way." — Reuters

## Deadly coronavirus spreads worldwide

**BEIJING:** Fears of a global coronavirus pandemic deepened yesterday with a growing number of deaths in Iran and the worsening of other outbreaks across Asia, the Middle East and Europe. The number of fatalities in China - where the virus emerged late last year - also continued to soar, with 150 more confirmed deaths, taking its official death toll to nearly 2,600. Chinese authorities insist they are making progress in containing the virus, citing slowing infection rates thanks to unprecedented travel lockdowns and quarantines in or near the outbreak's epicenter.

But the spread of the virus in other parts of the world has accelerated over the past week, with Iran, South Korea and Italy emerging as the worst new hotspots. Afghanistan, Bahrain and Kuwait also announced yesterday their first cases of the virus, bringing the total number of countries with infections above 30. In Iran, the confirmed death toll climbed yesterday by four to 12 - the highest number of fatalities for any country outside of China.

There were also concerns the situation in Iran may be worse than officially acknowledged, with the semi-official ILNA news agency quoting a local lawmaker in hardest-hit Qom city that 50 people had died there. The Iranian government denied there had been 50 deaths and pledged transparency. Even so, authorities have only reported 64 infections in Iran, an unusually small number that would mean an extremely high mortality rate. In China, 2,592 people have died out of 77,000 infections.

### 'Red alert'

South Korea has seen a rapid rise in infections since a cluster sprouted in a religious sect in the southern city of Daegu last week. More than 200 infections and two more deaths were reported in South Korea yesterday, bringing the total cases to more than 830 - by far the most outside China. Eight people have died from the virus in South Korea, where President Moon Jae-in over the weekend raised the country's virus alert to the highest "red" level. As part of the containment efforts, school holidays were extended nationally and the start of the new K-league football season, scheduled for this weekend, was postponed. At the main high-speed train station in Daegu, a normally bustling city of 2.5 million people, just a small trickle of commuters were seen.

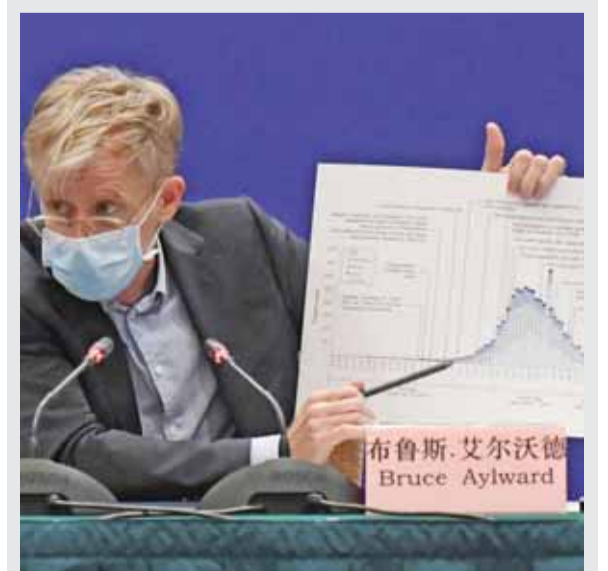
### Football, fashion curbed

In Italy, a fourth fatality was confirmed yesterday, deepening fears about the virus spreading through Europe. More than 150 people have been infected in Italy, where several Serie A football games were postponed over the weekend. The famed Venice Carnival was also cut short and some Milan Fashion Week runway shows were cancelled. More than 50,000 people in about a dozen northern Italian towns have been told to stay home, and police set up checkpoints to enforce a blockade. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has said that residents could face weeks of lockdown in an effort to sit out the virus.

### Economic toll

The virus is taking an increasingly heavy toll on the global economy, with many factories in China closed or subdued due to quarantines, and global travel choked. Stock markets in Asia and Europe fell yesterday following the surge in infections and deaths around the world. "While the coronavirus is probably slowing in China, it is speeding up elsewhere," said Charles Gillams at RJMG Asset Management. The International Monetary Fund warned Sunday that the epidemic was putting a "fragile" global economic recovery at risk.

G20 financial chiefs also voiced concern about its ripple effects around the world. Chinese President Xi Jinping acknowledged Sunday that the virus had become the country's "largest public health emergency" since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. "This is a crisis for us and it is a big test," Xi said in comments reported by state television. China's annual parliament meeting was yesterday postponed for the first time since the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. — AFP



**BEIJING:** Bruce Aylward, head of the WHO-China Joint Mission on COVID-19 speaks at a press conference about the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

## Analysis

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## With Podemos tamed, Spain's new coalition is happy - for now

Just last year, Spain's struggling prime minister said he would not be able to sleep at night had he made a pact with the hard left Unidas Podemos party to secure power. Now, Pedro Sanchez' new best friends are the once-radical movement, born out of anti-austerity "indignados" protests, who have enabled him to retain the premiership and joined him since January in Spain's first coalition government in decades. Once avowedly anti-establishment Podemos leaders stood in the front row to applaud the King of Spain in parliament this month and sit down weekly with members of Sanchez's Socialist Party at meetings nicknamed "matins" for morning prayers.

"We are living a sweet moment," one Socialist leader told Reuters, acknowledging surprise at the harmony, albeit still in early honeymoon stage, between the erstwhile rivals. After years of political instability and repeated elections in Spain, the coalition's early optics and concrete policy progress have soothed worries around the European Union and in the financial community of the bloc's fourth largest economy.

But the partners do not agree on everything, coalition sources stressed. So without a parliamentary majority, their so-called "pact of the hug" could be strained in looming negotiations with Catalan separatists and conservative opposition parties whose cooperation is needed for reforms.

### First test passed

Some fear the unlikely coalition could eventually unravel, as happened recently in Italy. For now, though, and despite a history of personal animosity between Sanchez and Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias - who previously avoided eye contact and seldom talked - there have been no rows and the junior coalition member is toying the line. That enabled them to pass their first major test earlier this month, agreeing on a multi-year fiscal framework that envisages a reduction of the deficit and debt.

"Unidas Podemos wants to launch measures that involve a lot of spending, and it is true that it's going to be difficult because of budgetary restrictions," a Podemos member of government told Reuters. "But we have accepted that the broad figures that have been put forward are the right ones." Embryonic tensions on issues from immigration to sexual crimes reform have been swiftly quelled by Iglesias, whose past criticism of the Socialists has given way to reassurances. "In Spain, there is going to be a united and firm government," he said last week.

Sources on both sides described a tight-knit communication system and regular meetings to deter in-fighting. Chief of staff Ivan Redondo and Unidas Podemos communications director Juanma del Olmo have been pivotal to that, the sources say, while former Socialist premier Jose Luis Zapatero is also providing Iglesias with advice. While last year Iglesias complained Sanchez would not even call him on his mobile, now the deputy prime minister lunches one-on-one with him every two weeks at his boss's residence, sources close to Sanchez said.

The early Monday morning "matins" meetings between senior members of both parties set the agenda for the week and iron out disagreements, officials said. And at a government retreat in the countryside, the cabinet shared a cake for a Unidas Podemos minister's birthday, one participant said. The party that once voiced the anger of the streets over the financial crisis is clear about its turn towards mainstream. "If to raise the minimum wage or to make a comprehensive law to protect the sexual freedom of all people we have to applaud the head of state, obviously we are going to do it without any doubts," said Irene Montero, a Podemos minister. Just a year earlier, the same Podemos lawmakers, then in opposition, had pointedly stayed seated as the king spoke.

### Catalan challenge

"It is good to have them in government rather than exerting pressure from the outside," a top Spanish banker told Reuters. A senior EU source said the bloc's institutions were also relieved. "We want Spain to have a government, any government," the source said, referring to the destabilizing string of four parliamentary elections in four years. How long the harmony can last may depend on restive Catalonia. Separatist party Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) is already conditioning its approval for the budget on talks to address the region's independence drive.

Podemos was traditionally more open to separatists' demands than the Socialists - in particular accepting the idea of a referendum - but have now said they will stand behind Sanchez who opposes that. The government also needs the support of the conservative People's Party to make senior appointments in major institutions like the Constitutional Court, which will not be easy. Broad support is also required for labor and pension reforms. "For now we can talk about positive surprises," said a Socialist source close to Sanchez. "But difficult times may lie ahead in the coming months." — Reuters

All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.



US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump listen to India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi as they sit next to a charkha, or spinning wheel, during their visit at Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad yesterday. — AFP

## Tycoon and tea-seller's son forge bonhomie

They hail from vastly different backgrounds - Donald Trump is the son of a property tycoon while Narendra Modi is a descendant of a poor tea-seller. Yet the two teetotalers, loved by rightwing nationalists in their home countries, share striking similarities that have seen them forge a close personal bond, analysts say. Ahead of the American leader's first official visit to India, which began in Modi's home state of Gujarat yesterday, the world's biggest democracy has gone out of its way to showcase the chemistry between them.

In Gujarat's capital Ahmedabad, large billboards with the words "two dynamic personalities, one momentous occasion" and "two strong nations, one great friendship" have gone up across the city. "There's a lot that Trump and Modi share in common, and not surprisingly these convergences have translated into a warm chemistry between the two," Michael Kugelman of the Washington-based Wilson Center told AFP. "Personality politics are a major part of international diplomacy today. The idea of closed-door dialogue between top leaders has often taken a backseat to very public and spectacle-laden summitry."

Since assuming the top political office in their respective countries - Modi in 2014 and Trump in 2017 - the two men have been regularly compared to each other. Trump, 73, and Modi, 69, both command crowds of adoring flag-waving supporters at rallies. A virtual cult of personality has emerged around them, with their faces and names at the centre of their political parties' campaigns.

### Nationalist, protectionist

A focus of Trump's administration has been his crack-down on migrants, including a travel ban that affects several Muslim-majority nations, among others, while critics charge that Modi has sought to differentiate Muslims from other immigrants through a contentious citizenship law that has sparked protests. Both promote their countries' nationalist and trade protectionist movements - Trump with his "America First" clarion call and Modi with his "Make in India" mantra.

And while they head the world's largest democracies, critics have described the pair as part of a global club of strongmen that includes Russia's Vladimir Putin and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro. "There are many qualities that Trump and Modi share - a love for political grandstanding and an unshakable conviction that they can achieve the best solutions or deals," former Indian diplomat Rakesh Sood told AFP.

Modi and Trump have sought to use their friendship to forge closer bonds between the two nations, even as they grapple with ongoing tensions over trade and defense. Despite sharing many similarities in style and substance, analysts say there are some notable differences between the pair. Modi is an insider who rose through the ranks of the Bharatiya Janata Party after starting out as a cadre in the militaristic hardline Hindu group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

Trump is a businessman and a political outsider who has in some sense taken over the Republican Party. "Modi

is a more conventional leader than is Trump in that he hasn't sought to revolutionize the office he holds in the way that Trump has," said Kugelman, a longtime observer of South Asian politics. He added that genuine personal connections between leaders of both countries have helped to grow the partnership. "George Bush and Manmohan Singh, Barack Obama and Singh, Obama and Modi, now Modi and Trump - there has been a strong chemistry in all these pairings that has clearly helped the relationship move forward," he added.

Trump has also stood by the Indian leader during controversial decisions, including his revocation of autonomy for Muslim-majority Kashmir and his order for jets to enter Pakistani territory following a suicide bombing. Analysts said the leaders would use the visit to bolster their image with voters. A mega "Namaste Trump" rally in Ahmedabad yesterday will be modelled after the "Howdy, Modi" Houston extravaganza last year when the Indian leader visited the US and the two leaders appeared before tens of thousands of Indian-Americans at a football stadium.

"The success of this visit... will have a positive impact on his (Trump's) re-election campaign and the people of Indian origin who are voters in the US - a majority of them are from Gujarat," former Indian diplomat Surendra Kumar told AFP. "On the Indian side, the fact that Prime Minister Modi... (shares) such warmth, bonhomie and informality with the most powerful man on Earth adds to his stature... as well as with hardcore supporters." — AFP

## Sanders is not a friend of Wall St, but has fans there

Democratic presidential frontrunner Bernie Sanders likes to take aim at Wall Street and everything it represents - big money, big power. But even in the world of New York finance, he has supporters. The self-described "democratic socialist" is riding high in the polls - the latest national average offered by RealClearPolitics puts him a full 10 points in front of former vice president Joe Biden at 27.8 percent. And some pundits are saying that if the 78-year-old senator from Vermont continues to do well, he might have an insurmountable lead in terms of delegates by Super Tuesday on March 3.

That would give him the right to take on Republican incumbent Donald Trump in November. Sanders' plans to hike taxes on the wealthy and tighten government controls of the banking and finance sectors have certainly spooked New York's finance leaders. Former Goldman Sachs chief Lloyd Blankfein has said Sanders is "as polar-

izing as Trump," and billionaire hedge fund manager Leon Cooperman has called Sanders a "communist" who poses a bigger threat to the markets than the deadly new coronavirus epidemic. But others in the finance industry have welcomed the possibility of a Sanders presidency with enthusiasm. "I'm not Lloyd Blankfein - I work in a family owned business, I'm a small business guy. I see the health insurance bill every month," said Wade Black, a founding member of Scarsdale Equities, an investment group.

### Political diversity on Wall Street

The 45-year-old Black - who spoke to AFP at his office in Rockefeller Center in the heart of Manhattan - is a card-carrying Democrat who says he has moved farther left with age. And he believes that Wall Street is not as conservative as political legend would have it. "A lot of people who work on Wall Street are just salaried - they're not overcompensated hedge fund managers. There are clerks and admin people," Black said. "I'd be shocked if they didn't reflect somewhat of the diversity of the political opinion that America has."

That opinion is shared by Dan Alpert, a 61-year-old co-founder of the New York investment bank Westwood Capital. "Wall Street has become younger. You don't know what the young people are really thinking because they can't talk - they're muzzled," Alpert said. "And those peo-

ple who are left who are older are generally in the C suite or near C suite level and just humming the party line."

Alpert thinks that income inequality in America has helped Sanders' underlying campaign platform to resonate, even in the world of finance. There are no polls that would indicate the percentage of those in banking and finance who support Sanders. But according to the Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks donations made by individuals and political action committees of \$200 or more, Sanders has received \$1.7 million from the finance, insurance and real estate sectors since he launched his 2020 campaign. Out of a total of \$108 million, it's not an insignificant amount, though it pales in comparison to the \$4.4 million raised from the sectors by Indiana moderate Pete Buttigieg, or the \$4.1 million raked in by Biden. Trump has taken in \$2.7 million from the same sectors. However, Sanders has taken in virtually nothing from hedge funds, private investment groups or venture capital funds - he brags that most of his campaign is funded by small-time individual donors. Black says he sent about \$400 to the Sanders campaign, and did it when he felt the senator was unfairly attacked. While Sanders regularly criticizes Wall Street and the world of high finance, bemoaning the whims of the "one percent" and championing the other 99 percent of Americans, his backers in the sector don't feel targeted. — AFP

## How Indian state's three-capital plan could spur growth

A proposal by the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh to have three capitals rather than one could be a model for more equal development and help release pressure from the country's overcrowded cities, say planning experts. Last month, the government of Andhra Pradesh passed the Decentralization and Equal Development of All Regions Bill to pave the way for three cities to be the executive, judicial and legislative centres, rather than build a new capital city.

Having three capitals is an anomaly in India, where state capitals have long been centres of power, drawing the bulk of investment and infrastructure building, and becoming magnets for thousands of migrants from the villages every day seeking jobs. But with increasingly crowded cities and lopsided economic growth in many states, decentralization is desperately needed, said Bhanu Joshi, a former member of a committee that studied the feasibility of the multi-capital plan.

"Indian states focus on putting all their capital into just one big city instead of giving a boost to decentralized development, where more cities are adequately empowered and sustained to allow for balanced development," he said. "Andhra Pradesh is endowed with different types of natural resources - a policy of balanced regional develop-

ment is the only way forward," Joshi, a political scientist, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Andhra Pradesh was split in two in 2014 after a decades-long movement for a separate state, with Telangana hived off the northwestern part in June 2014. Andhra Pradesh's capital, Hyderabad, became the capital of Telangana, but will also remain capital of Andhra Pradesh for a period of up to 10 years so the state can establish its own capital. Andhra Pradesh's former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who is credited with transforming Hyderabad into a thriving technology hub, decided to build a new capital, Amaravati, touted as a "smart city" with environment-friendly features.

But the plan was beset by protests of farmers unwilling to give up land, and warnings of the ecological impact and potential for flooding from building close to the river. A new government led by Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, who took office last May, commissioned studies into the feasibility of a multi-capital plan, then scrapped the Amaravati project based on their recommendations.

Amaravati - where some administrative buildings have been built - is to be the state's legislative capital, with the coastal city of Visakhapatnam becoming the executive capital and Kurnool the judicial capital, Reddy said. "We do not want to develop one area utilising all our available financial resources while other areas suffer due to lack of funds," he told reporters.

### Crowded capitals

Several countries, from Brazil to Myanmar, have tried to decongest their crowded capitals by moving or building new ones, but with mixed success. Bolivia, Chile, Malaysia and the Netherlands are among countries with two capi-



Auto rickshaws sit in a traffic jam in the old city in central Hyderabad in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh in this March 6, 2012 file photo. — Reuters

tals each, while South Africa - cited by Reddy as a model - has long had three capitals. In India, some states had summer and winter capitals during the British colonial era. A few states, in recent decades, have invested in developing smaller cities as manufacturing, academic or tourism hubs to create jobs and address sharp regional imbalances.

India has five megacities with populations of more than 10 million each, and is forecast to have two more by 2030, according to the United Nations. Each of these cities - including Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata - suffers from lack of adequate public transport and affordable housing, along with increasing congestion and pollution. While big cities create wealth and generate employment, they also drive climate change impacts, and worsen inequality and exclusion, said the UN. — Reuters

# Business

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**14** Most small firms in China yet to reopen after virus outbreak



## ABK records KD 105.5m operating profit for 2019

Bank achieved a net profit of KD 28.7m and earnings per share reached 14 fils

**KUWAIT:** Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced the Bank's results for Fiscal Year end 2019. Overall the bank had a steady year with both operating income and operating profit up by 2 percent to reach KD 172.5 million and KD 105.5 million respectively. The bank achieved a net profit of KD 28.7 million and earnings per share reached 14 fils. Based on this financial performance, the Board of Directors is proposing a dividend of 7 fils per share, subject to approval at the Annual General Meeting, and from the regulatory authorities.

Talal Reza Behbehani, Chairman of ABK said: "Overall the Bank has continued to perform well with income levels increasing. The reduction in net profit witnessed in the current year was the result of a very conservative provisioning and write-off policy, which was applied on fully secured but non-performing legacy credits. The bank's asset quality remains very robust, with an NPL ratio at 1.46 percent and NPL provision coverage of 365 percent. The Capital



Talal Reza Behbehani

Adequacy Ratio also stood at a healthy 18.69 percent, comfortably exceeding the regulatory ratio, with shareholders' equity at KD 599 million."

ABK continued to maintain its strong investment grade ratings from international rating agencies Fitch A+ (Stable), and Moody's A2 (stable) which is the second best rated conventional bank in Kuwait.

These ratings reflect the Bank's strong capital position, resilient earnings capacity, stable funding and liquidity sources.

Commenting on ABK's performance from overseas operations Behbehani said: "International operations now contribute to around 30 percent of ABK's operating income. ABK-Egypt has had another very successful year with operating income up by 40 percent and net profit increasing by 52 percent while ABK's UAE operations have also performed well with an increase in income and profit. ABK-DIFC has been extremely successful since opening in 2018, offering a convenient offshore booking office for local and regional corporates, regional loan syndications, and large project finance transactions."

In closing he said: "For 2020 we will continue with our 'Simplify & Transform' strategy, an ambitious program of new customer experiences and digital transformation, which will enhance operational efficiencies and improve customer satisfaction."



## US sees no material impact from virus on China trade deal

**RIYADH:** US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told Reuters he does not expect the coronavirus outbreak to have a material impact on the Phase 1 US-China trade deal, although that could change as more data becomes available in coming weeks.

Finance officials from the world's 20 largest economies said on Sunday they would keep a close watch on the fast-spreading outbreak, but stopped short of identifying it as downside risk to the global economy. Fears of a coronavirus pandemic mounted even as they met in the Saudi capital of Riyadh, with sharp rises in new cases reported in Iran, Italy and South Korea.

Mnuchin, in an interview with Reuters late on Sunday, cautioned against jumping to conclusions about the impact of what he called a "human tragedy" on the global economy, or on companies' supply chain decisions, saying it was simply too soon to know.

China was focused on the virus for now, he said, but Washington still expected Beijing to live up to its commitments to buy more US products and services under the trade deal.

"I don't expect that this will have any ramifications on Phase 1. Based on everything that we know, and where the virus is now, I don't expect that it's going to be material," he said.

"Obviously that could change as the situation develops. Within the next few more weeks, we'll all have a better assessment as there's more data around the rate of the virus spreading."

Mnuchin met late on Sunday with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a senior US administration official said, but gave no details about the meeting. Mnuchin acknowledged the outbreak could also delay the start of negotiations on deepening the trade deal with Beijing and reaching a Phase 2 agreement, but said he was not worried about that at this point.

"If we get the right deal before the election, that's great. If we get the right deal after the election, that's great. We don't feel any pressure one way or another," he said, referring to the Nov. 3 US presidential election, in which President Donald Trump is seeking reelection.

Mnuchin noted that the contagion factor with COVID-19, the acronym for the virus, was higher than with the SARS outbreak in China in the early 2000s, but said the survival rate appeared to be much higher. In a separate news conference, he said there could be some short-term impact on supply chains, but cautioned against the idea that it could increase concerns about globalization. Big companies were always assessing risks and adjusting supply chains, he added. — Reuters

## Stocks and oil prices fall on pandemic fears

**LONDON:** World stock markets and oil prices tumbled yesterday, with Milan and Seoul falling hardest on growing fears of a coronavirus pandemic, as gold hit a seven-year peak on safe-haven buying, dealers said. In late morning deals, Milan's stock market dived almost five percent following reports of a fourth death amid the COVID-19 epidemic, an 84-year old man in the northern Lombardy region.

It was the third death in Lombardy, where villages have been sealed off and security measures enforced to stem the spread of the disease. Traders' screens were awash with red elsewhere in Europe too, with Frankfurt falling 3.7 percent, London losing 3.5 percent, Madrid down 3.3 percent and Paris shedding 3.8 percent.

Brent oil prices slumped four percent as the burgeoning crisis sparked global energy demand worries. Conversely, on the London Bullion Market gold surged to \$1,689.31 per ounce—a level last seen in January 2013 — as investors snapped up the precious metal as a safety measure amid the market turbulence.

### Equities 'deeply in the red'

"Fears over an escalation of the coronavirus outside of China have caused a major retreat in global markets and prompted wild swings in commodity prices," said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould. "Italy's lockdown, as the country tries to control the worst out-



break of the virus in Europe, has caused investors to panic about how business and society will be affected. A large spike in coronavirus cases in South Korea has also added to market concerns.

"The result is a large sell-off in equities with... Europe and Asia deeply in the red," Mould added. Seoul nosedived 3.9 percent as South Korea announced a surge in COVID-19 infections, while Hong Kong erased 1.8 percent but Shanghai retreated by only 0.3 percent. With the outbreak showing little sign of easing, investors are increasingly concerned it could have a much longer-term impact on the world economy.

Traders had been broadly optimistic that the virus—which has killed nearly 2,600 and infected 80,000 — was being contained outside China but a spurt of infections and deaths in other countries including South Korea, Italy and Iran has fanned fears of a global outbreak. — AFP

### ABK'S FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

**KD 28.7 Million** | Net Profit



Shareholders' Equity



Capital Adequacy Ratio

## Business

## NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

# Kuwait consumer price inflation eases in 4Q19, but ends 2019 up

## Food inflation gathers pace, housing costs continue to fall

**KUWAIT:** Consumer price inflation eased in 4Q19, ending the quarter at a low 1.5 percent y/y versus 1.7 percent at the end of Q3. On an annual average basis, however, inflation rose to 1.1 percent in 2019 from just 0.6 percent in 2018 and in line with our expectations. The pick-up in average inflation last year was led by a rise in 'core' inflation (which excludes food and housing) to 2.4 percent from 1.9 percent, spurred by solid consumer spending and by a faster pace of increase in transportation costs. As for the 'non-core' components, while food prices gathered pace in 2019, housing costs remained in decline due to continued weakness in rents.

Food price inflation stood at 1.8 percent y/y in December (close to a multi-year high) and unchanged from the end of the previous quarter. On an annual average basis, food price inflation leapt from a mere 0.1 percent in 2018 to 1.1 percent in 2019, mostly driven by a jump in prices in the volatile fish and seafood category. Global food prices remained largely soft and could keep local food prices in check, which are also subject to subsidies and price controls.

In contrast, housing costs declined at a steady pace of -0.9 percent y/y in December 2019, though the rate of deflation appears to be bottoming out. Prices in this segment - which are only reported every three months - were flat quarter-on-quarter for the second consecutive quarter. This may be indicative of some stabilization in the housing component, which has seen multi-year weakness due to oversupply in the apartment market. However, given reports of high vacancy levels, moderate economic growth and the impact on housing

Chart 1: Consumer price inflation (% y/y)



Source: Central Statistical Bureau / NBK

demand of weak growth in expatriate numbers, it is too soon to predict that the housing costs segment has decisively turned a corner.

On an annual average basis, housing costs fell by 0.8 percent in 2019, albeit a slight improvement on the 1.1 percent decline seen in 2018.

### Inflation in core components mixed in Q4

Core inflation came in at a solid 3.0 percent y/y in December, but slightly down from 3.2 percent in

Table: Consumer price inflation

CPI component	% y/y annual average		%m/m			% y/y		
	2018	2019	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec
Food & beverages	0.1	1.1	-0.1	0.1	0.2	1.3	2.0	1.8
Tobacco & cigarettes	11.5	3.7	0.1	0.7	0.1	1.0	1.7	1.8
Clothing & footwear	-0.5	1.3	0.0	0.2	0.2	2.4	2.3	2.3
Housing services	-1.1	-0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.9	-0.9	-0.9
Furnishings & household maintenance	2.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.4	3.1	2.9	3.0
Healthcare	1.9	2.7	-0.1	0.0	0.3	2.8	2.8	2.8
Transportation	1.3	3.4	0.0	-0.1	0.4	4.5	4.4	3.9
Communication	3.7	5.1	-0.1	0.0	0.4	4.7	4.2	4.5
Recreation & culture	4.1	2.8	0.2	0.1	-0.1	3.2	3.3	3.7
Education	1.4	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.4	3.9	3.9	2.9
Restaurants & hotels	1.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	-0.1	1.3	1.3	1.3
Other goods & services	3.5	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.2	2.2	2.4	2.6
<b>General index</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.5</b>
* ex food and housing	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>

Source: Central Statistical Bureau

September. Inflation trends across core components were mostly subdued during 4Q19. While inflation in miscellaneous goods rose from 2.1 percent at the end of Q3 to 2.6 percent (an over one-year high) at the end of 4Q19, inflation in most other core components were either broadly unchanged or fell. The strongest falls were in the education (down 1.0 percent to 2.9 percent), communication (down 0.9 percent to 4.5 percent) and transportation (down 0.6 percent to 3.9 percent) components. Meanwhile, inflation in clothing & footwear,

recreation and restaurants were almost unchanged.

### Inflation to edge higher in 2020

Inflation is expected to pick up modestly to 1.5-2 percent in 2020 as downward pressure from the housing component eases while inflation in core components including clothing & footwear, household and miscellaneous goods remains firm, not least because of continued gains in consumer spending. However prices will be kept in check by modest growth rates and stable oil prices.

## Egypt hails new 'furniture city' but craftsmen unconvinced

**DAMIETTA, Egypt:** Egypt has built a multi-billion-pound "furniture city" near the mouth of the Nile, a pilot for a series of industry mega-hubs it wants to throw up across the nation, but it could face a struggle to populate it. The sprawling industrial park, inaugurated in December, is 10 km (6 miles) outside the port city of Damietta, long the center of Egypt's once-flourishing but now languishing furniture trade. The aim of the 3.6 billion pound (\$230 million) project, and the other planned specialized parks, is to boost economic growth and create jobs badly needed in a country where about a third of the 100 million people live in poverty.

The idea is "to gather all the furniture makers and workshop owners to increase production and exports", said Bassem Nabil, chief executive of the Damietta Furniture City.

However only 400 of the 1,400 newly built workshops have been sold so far. "There is not a worker among us who will go to that city over there," said Osman Khalifa, the owner of a carpentry workshop in an old neighborhood of Damietta. "They should have first come and consulted the people." At least half a dozen craftsmen who spoke to Reuters said they would not move to the new city, citing the proximity of their current workshops to their homes and, at 300,000 pounds to be paid over 10 years to buy a workshop, the relatively high costs of being based in the new city.

"What's in it for us?" asked one, who declined to be named. However Osama Saleh, chairman of the state investment firm Ayady, which helped lead the project, pointed out that it was still early days. He said the new city hoped to sell the remaining 1,000 workshops over the next two years and predicted the city would create 100,000 jobs within four years. Saleh, also chairman of the furniture city, said the park had space for 157 big factories too.

### 'Don't you have dreams?'

Aesthetically, the new park is a far cry from Damietta's traditional furniture quarter, where workshops lie in a dense warren of narrow lanes,

often directly under the apartments of their owners and amid the din of table saws and machine lathes. Sawdust and scraps of wood lie scattered about. The furniture city stretches for 1.39 million square meters, filled with beige and orange concrete workshops trimmed with aluminum siding, resembling car garages built side-by-side.

At the inauguration ceremony in December, President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi had himself expressed surprise that demand for workshops was not stronger. The furniture industry has been in decline for some 20 or 30 years, hit by changing tastes and cheaper imports from Turkey and China, as well as depressed consumer spending.

"Hey, people of Damietta. Don't you have dreams?" Sisi asked. "What you are seeing here is a dream I have had for many long years." "I had thought the 1,300 or 1,400 (workshops) here, that we would need yet another 2,000. People are telling me the market is a bit slow and we are facing problems."

### Sisi said he was trying to tackle the problems.

The park remains sparsely populated, however, and during a visit Reuters saw only a handful of workshops up and running. Saleh said most of the old city's 30,000 workshops would remain in place and the new city would help them with advice and training.

### Parks in two dozen provinces

Egypt needs to absorb more than 3.5 million new entrants to the labor market over the next five years due to its burgeoning population, according to the International Monetary Fund.

To do this it will need to accelerate growth to 7.5 percent, above the 5.6 percent it recorded in the second half of 2019, some economists say. By building the industrial park, the government hopes to aid growth by reigniting success in the furniture industry. Furniture makers in Damietta, in the western delta near the Mediterranean coast, had been a favorite among Egyptians for many decades, famed for highly ornate and gilded pieces reminiscent of French furniture of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The new furniture city, three years in the making, opened at a particularly inauspicious time: towards the end of a three-year IMF program whose austerity measures drained consumer spending power and dampened demand for furniture. Much is riding on its fate, however.

If successful, it will serve as a prototype for a series of parks focused on different industries in



**DAMIETTA:** Egypt has built a multi-billion-pound "furniture city" near the mouth of the Nile, a pilot for a series of industry mega-hubs it wants to throw up across the nation, but it could face a struggle to populate it.

more than two dozen provinces, said Saleh. "We will study the comparative advantage in each governorate and see how we can invest in them."

### 'Distant, but not too distant'

Saleh said the furniture city, near two major ports, would provide training, technical and marketing support to craftsmen and furniture producers. It would also ensure that companies relocating there pay taxes and social insurance for workers. Recent Egyptian history instills little confidence though. It is littered with unproductive attempts to establish industrial parks, often far out in the desert and based on top-down decision making, with little consultation with the entrepreneurs and workers expected to relocate there, economists say.

Among the parks now struggling is Technology Valley (Wadi Technologia), designed in 1994 to house 400,000 people in the desert east of Ismailia but still largely empty.

Another is Robbiki Leather City, founded in 2015 in the desert 55km east of the central Cairo neighborhood that once housed the country's tanning industry, which has had a slow start, according to media reports. But David Sims, a Cairo-based urban economist, said the new furniture city's proximity to Damietta gave it a better chance of success than some industrial parks that had gone before. — Reuters

## Gulf Bank announces winners of Al Danah Weekly Draw

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on February 23, 2020 announcing the names of the winners for the week of February 16-20, 2020. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

### The winners this week are:

- Namshan Saod Namshan Alnamshan
- Thomas John Muttatheril
- Husseini Nader Mohd
- Abdullah Maziad Hamoud Alrawee
- Wael Abdulaziz Hamad Fayath

Gulf Bank announced that Al Danah is now bigger, and that the prize of the annual draw will be KD 1,500,000 as of 2020. The annual draw will be held on January 14, 2021, and the last chance to participate by depositing in the Al Danah account will be on September 30, 2020.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Furthermore, loyal Al Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year.

Therefore, the total chances earned by Al Danah customers in 2019, have been added to their 2020 chances, and the same process will take place in 2021, and so on. Terms and conditions apply. Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met.

Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al Danah 2020 quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw. Customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 59 branches, transfer online, place queries through the official Gulf Bank's WhatsApp service on 65805805 or call the customer contact center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance. Customers can visit the website to find out more about Al Danah and its winners.

## EXCHANGE RATES

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.746
Indian Rupees	4.279
Pakistani Rupees	1.984
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.682
Nepali Rupees	2.669
Singapore Dollar	221.020
Hongkong Dollar	39.421
Bangladesh Taka	3.598
Philippine Peso	6.044
Thai Baht	9.754
Malaysian Ringgit	78.376
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.775
Qatari Riyal	84.224
Omani Riyal	796.491
Bahraini Dinar	814.270
UAE Dirham	83.490
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	22.850
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	19.742
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.231
Tunisian Dinar	113.920
Jordanian Dinar	432.630
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.204
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.532
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	306.450

Euro	335.870
Sterling Pound	400.530
Canadian dollar	233.660
Turkish Lira	51.330
Swiss Franc	316.580
US Dollar Buying	299.200

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

#### Rate for Transfr

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	306.100
Canadian Dollar	231.470
Sterling Pound	397.605
Euro	332.740
Swiss Frank	302.835
Bahraini Dinar	814.035
UAE Dirhams	83.740
Qatari Riyals	84.985
Saudi Riyals	82.520
Jordanian Dinar	433.025
Egyptian Pound	19.730
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.682
Indian Rupees	4.259
Pakistani Rupees	1.984
Bangladesh Taka	3.570
Philippines Pessa	6.012
Cyprus pound	18.205
Japanese Yen	3.740
Syrian Pound	1.595
Nepalese Rupees	2.684
Malaysian Ringgit	73.960
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	43.985

Thai Bhat	10.690
Turkish Lira	50.615
Singapore dollars	221.522

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

#### CURRENCY BUY SELL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.389202	0.403102
Czech Korune	0.005209	0.014509
Danish Krone	0.040286	0.045286
Euro	0.323883	0.337583
Georgian Lari	0.107262	0.107262
Hungarian	0.000891	0.001081
Norwegian Krone	0.028666	0.033866
Romanian Leu	0.052107	0.068957
Russian Ruble	0.004745	0.004745
Slovakia	0.009195	0.019195
Swedish Krona	0.027261	0.032261
Swiss Franc	0.305704	0.316704
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.194009	0.206009
New Zealand Dollar	0.187265	0.196765
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225502	0.234502
US Dollars	0.302350	0.306900
US Dollars Mint	0.302850	0.306900
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002895	0.003696

Chinese Yuan	0.042304	0.045804
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037234	0.039984
Indian Rupee	0.003642	0.004414
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002659	0.002839
Korean Won	0.000241	0.000256
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069498	0.075498
Nepalese Rupee	0.002613	0.002953
Pakistan Rupee	0.001339	0.002109
Philippine Peso	0.005869	0.006169
Singapore Dollar	0.213198	0.223198
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001325	0.001905
Taiwan	0.009943	0.010123
Thai Baht	0.009384	0.009934
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.000013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.806689	0.814797
Egyptian Pound	0.019384	0.022124
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000201	0.000261
Jordanian Dinar	0.427331	0.436331
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000102	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021234	0.045234
Omani Riyal	0.790826	0.798774
Qatar Riyal	0.083515	0.084355
Saudi Riyal	0.080633	0.081933
Syrian Pound	0.001300	0.001520
Tunisian Dinar	0.110309	0.111039
Turkish Lira	0.043621	0.053466
UAE Dirhams	0.082799	0.083631
Yemeni Riyal	0.000996	0.001076

# KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE K.S.C.P.

(Incorporated in the State of Kuwait)  
Commercial Registration Number 26066

بيت التمويل الكويتي  
Kuwait Finance House



KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE K.S.C.P. VOLUNTARY CONDITIONAL OFFER TO ACQUIRE 100% OF THE ISSUED AND PAID UP ORDINARY SHARES OF AHLI UNITED BANK B.S.C. BY WAY OF A SHARE SWAP AT AN EXCHANGE RATIO OF 1 NEW KFH SHARE FOR EACH 2.325581 AUB SHARES

## OFFEROR'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISPATCH OF THE OFFER DOCUMENT TO THE OFFEREE

THE OFFER DOCUMENT IS A COMPLEX DOCUMENT AND THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY ONLY AND IS QUALIFIED IN ITS ENTIRETY BY, AND IS SUBJECT TO, THE CONTENTS OF THE OFFER DOCUMENT

### DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

THE CENTRAL BANK OF BAHRAIN, BAHRAIN BOURSE AND THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND TOURISM, IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN, ASSUME NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS OF THE STATEMENTS AND INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT AND EXPRESSLY DISCLAIM ANY LIABILITY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY LOSS HOWSOEVER ARISING FROM THE RELIANCE UPON THE WHOLE OR ANY PART OF THE CONTENTS TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT.

### DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

THE DIRECTORS OF KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE K.S.C.P. ISSUING THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, WHOSE NAMES APPEAR IN THE OFFER DOCUMENT, JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT. TO THE BEST OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF OF THE DIRECTORS, WHO HAVE TAKEN ALL REASONABLE CARE TO ENSURE THAT SUCH IS THE CASE, THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FACTS AND CONTAINS NO OMISSIONS LIKELY TO AFFECT THE IMPORTANCE AND COMPLETENESS OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT.

Reference is made to the notice of Firm Intention to make an Offer issued by Kuwait Finance House K.S.C.P. (the "Offeror" or "KFH") dated 5 February 2020 to Ahli United Bank B.S.C. (the "Offeree" or "AUB")'s board of directors. Capitalised terms used herein and not defined have the meaning as defined in the Offer Document.

#### The Offer

KFH's voluntary conditional offer to acquire 100% of the issued and paid up ordinary shares of AUB by way of a share swap and subject to the fulfilment, or waiver by KFH, of the conditions outlined below (the "Offer").

#### Dispatch of the Offer Document

KFH dispatched the Offer Document to the board of directors of AUB on Monday 24 February 2020.

Pursuant to TMA-2.7.7 of the Central Bank of Bahrain ("CBB") Rulebook, Volume 6, Takeovers, Mergers and Acquisitions Module ("TMA"), the Offer Document and the Offeree board circular must be sent to the Offeree shareholders by, or on behalf of, the Offeror within 21 calendar days of the date of receipt of the Offer Document by the Offeree.

#### The Offeror

Kuwait Finance House K.S.C.P.  
PO Box 24989 Safat 13110 Kuwait  
Telephone: + (965) 22445050

KFH is registered with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the State of Kuwait under commercial registration number 26066 as a Public Kuwaiti Shareholding Company whose ordinary shares are listed on Boursa Kuwait (the "BK").

KFH is licensed by the Central Bank of Kuwait (the "CBK") as a locally incorporated bank operating as an Islamic bank and provides a wide range of banking Sharia'a compliant products and services.

KFH has an authorized share capital of KWD1,117,648,920.200 and an issued and paid up share capital of KWD697,648,920.200 divided into 6,976,489,202 ordinary shares with a nominal value of KWD0.100 each.

Board of Directors of the Offeror	Title
Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al Marzouq	Chairman
Abdul Aziz Yacoub Alnafisi	Vice Chairman
Fahad Ali AlGhanim	Director
Muad Saud Al Osaimi	Director
Khaled Salem Al Nisf	Director
Noorur Rahman Abid	Director
Hanan Yousef Ali Yousef	Director
Motlaq Mubarak Al-Sanei	Director
Salah Abdulaziz Al-Muraikhi	Director

Management of the Offeror	Title
Mazin Al-Nahedh	Group Chief Executive Officer
Shadi Zahran	Group Chief Financial Officer
Waleed Mandani	Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer
Abdulwahab Al-Rushood	Group Chief Treasury Officer
Ahmed Al Kharji	Group Chief Corporate Banking Officer
Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem	Group Chief Strategy Officer
Gehad El-Bendary	Group Chief Risk Officer
Frederick Carstens	Group Chief Human Resources Officer
Srood Sherif	Group Chief Information Officer
Abdullah Abu Al-Hous	Group Chief Operations Officer
Wissam Sami El-Kari	Group Chief Internal Auditor
Dr. Khaled Mohammed Al-Jumah	Group General Manager Legal
Khaled Yousif Al-Shamlan	General Manager Corporate Banking Kuwait
Ahmad Eissa Al-Sumait	General Manager Treasury Kuwait
Fadi Elias Chalouhi	Group General Manager Retail Banking
Dharar Aldakhil	General Manager Group Risk Management
Abdulla Abdulmohsen Al-Mejhem	General Manager Private Banking

#### The Offeree

Ahli United Bank B.S.C.  
Building 2495, Road 2832, Al Seef District 428  
PO Box 2424, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain.

AUB is registered with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism in the Kingdom of Bahrain under commercial registration number 46348 as a Public Bahraini Shareholding Company whose ordinary shares are listed on the Bahrain Bourse (the "BB") and BK.

AUB is licensed by the Central Bank of Bahrain (the "CBB") as a locally incorporated bank operating as a conventional retail bank.

AUB has an issued and paid up share capital of USD2,193,611,070.250 divided into 8,774,444,281 ordinary shares with a nominal value of USD0.25 each.

#### Details of securities for which the Offer is made

The Offer is to acquire AUB shares that comprise 100% of AUB's issued and paid up share capital. That is inclusive of 8,774,444,281 (eight billion, seven hundred and seventy four million, four hundred and forty four thousand and two hundred eighty one) AUB shares of a nominal value of USD0.25 each and any AUB shares that are issued, whether as dividends shares, shares issued pursuant to AUB's employee stock option plan and/or otherwise, after the date of the Offer Document, but before the Effective Date (the "AUB Shares").

KFH has not purchased or sold AUB Shares during the 12-month period prior to the date of the Offer Document and does not hold any AUB Shares and has not held in the past any direct or indirect shareholding in AUB as of the date of the Offer Document. Mr. Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al Marzouq, the Chairman of KFH, currently owns 15,378,272 shares in KFH (0.220%) and 14,306,762 AUB Shares (0.163%).

#### Consideration for the Offer

The consideration for the offer is new shares in the Offeror at a share exchange ratio of 1 New KFH Share for each 2.325581 AUB Shares.

#### Conditions Precedent to the Offer

The implementation of the Offer will be subject to the fulfilment or waiver, where applicable, of the following Conditions Precedent. For the avoidance of doubt, the Offer shall not become unconditional unless the below Conditions Precedent are fulfilled or waived by KFH:

- Receipt of valid Acceptances in respect of AUB Shares that represent at least 85% of the total issued share capital of AUB at the time of the Initial Offer Closing Date (the "Requisite Acceptances").
- Following receipt of the Requisite Acceptances, the AUB Shareholders approving, amongst other things, and subject to any legal and regulatory requirements, converting the AUB business in Bahrain to Sharia'a compliant at the AUB EGM by a majority vote of two thirds of the AUB Shares represented at the AUB EGM.

- Receipt of all regulatory and statutory approvals, exemptions and/or waivers in connection with the Offer and the acquisition of no less than 100% of the issued and paid up ordinary shares of AUB, including receipt of the CBB and CBK final approvals, exemptions and/or waivers required to implement the Offer, receipt of the CMA approval for the issuance of the New KFH Shares and receipt of any other approval required from any regulatory or statutory authority as may be determined.
- KFH successfully completing a cross-listing on BB in line with the applicable rules and regulations of the CBB and BB.

In respect of Condition Precedent (b) above, the invitation to the AUB EGM will be published upon declaring the Offer unconditional as to Requisite Acceptances in line with the provisions of the TMA Module and the Commercial Companies Law.

AUB Shareholders and/or potential investors of AUB should note that the Offer is subject to the satisfaction or, with the exception of Conditions Precedent (a) and (d) above, waiver (where applicable) of the Conditions Precedent and conditional upon, the Offer becoming or being declared unconditional in all respects. Accordingly, the Offer may or may not become unconditional. Shareholders and/or potential investors of AUB should therefore exercise caution when dealing in the securities of AUB. Persons who are in doubt as to the action they should take should consult their licensed brokers, dealers, solicitors, professional accountants or other professional advisers.

#### Offer expected timeline and key dates

The key dates for the Offer will be determined in accordance with the CBB's regulations and, in particular, the TMA. The timetable set out below is indicative and may be subject to change. Any changes to the timetable will be announced by the Offeror.

Date of the Offer Document	24 February 2020
Last Trading Date for AUB Shares	22 March 2020 <sup>(1)</sup>
Suspension Date for trading of AUB Shares	23 March 2020
Record Date for AUB BB Shares	24 March 2020
Record Date for AUB BK Shares	25 March 2020
Offer Opening Date	26 March 2020
Initial Offer Closing Date	15 April 2020 (subject to extension)
Offer Acceptance/Rejection Announcement Date	15 April 2020
Last day for the Offer to become or declared unconditional as to Requisite Acceptances	24 April 2020
Right of Accepting AUB Shareholders to withdraw their Acceptance arises unless the Offer has become unconditional as to Requisite Acceptances	29 April 2020
AUB EGM	7 May 2020
Final Offer Closing Date	12 May 2020
Offer to be declared unconditional in all respects	Expected to be 12 May 2020
Release of the New KFH Shares to AUB Shareholders	Effective Date
Effective Date	Expected to be 18 May 2020

(1) If an official public holiday is declared in Kuwait, then the date in Kuwait shall be 19 March 2020.

#### KFH post acquisition strategy

Following the successful implementation of the Offer and acquisition of shares, KFH intends to maintain AUB's commercial registration, however, KFH intends on changing AUB's name to become "Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain", in due course. Given that KFH is a Sharia'a compliant institution and undertakes only Sharia'a compliant activities, the principal change to be implemented immediately post-Offer would be to commence the process of converting the business of AUB in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq and the United Kingdom to Sharia'a compliant offering full range of Sharia'a compliant banking products.

Following the successful completion of the offer, KFH will commence converting AUB's subsidiary in Kuwait to a digital bank as requested by the CBK. Immediately following the successful completion of converting AUB's business to Sharia'a compliant, KFH will commence the process of conducting a statutory merger to merge its two wholly owned subsidiaries in Bahrain, being AUB and KFH Bahrain.

Further details of KFH's post-acquisition strategy can be found in Section 11 of the Offer Document.

#### Procedures for accepting the Offer

AUB Shareholders of AUB BB Shares who wish to accept the Offer must submit the completed Acceptance and Transfer Form (along with the required documentation) at one of the Participating Branches of AUB or at the dedicated desk of the Bahrain Receiving Agent at Bahrain Bourse during the Offer Period.

AUB Shareholders of AUB BK Shares who wish to accept the Offer must submit their details to the Kuwait Receiving Agent (along with the required documentation) during the Offer Period.

Copies of the Offer Document can be obtained from the offices of the Receiving Agents, BB and the Participating Branches. Copies of the Acceptance and Transfer Form can be (i) in Bahrain, obtained from the offices of the Bahrain Receiving Agent, BB and the Participating Branches; and (ii) in Kuwait, provided and completed electronically at the offices of the Kuwait Receiving Agent.

#### Offer finance sources

Excluding the impact of fractional entitlements, issuance of AUB dividends shares for the year ending 31 December 2019 and the shares issued pursuant to AUB's employee stock option plan, the consideration of the offer will be financed through an issue of 3,773,011,682 New KFH Shares, which has been approved by the KFH extra ordinary general assembly held on 20 January 2020. The final consideration number of New KFH Shares will be determined and announced by KFH as part of the offer process on or around the Initial Offer Closing Date.

**Important note:** Pursuant to TMA-2.20 and TMA-2.21, the Offeror's associates are reminded of the restrictions to dealing and to disclose all dealings in any securities of Ahli United Bank B.S.C.

On behalf of the Board of Kuwait Finance House K.S.C.P.

Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al Marzouq  
Chairman

Offeror  
Kuwait Finance House K.S.C.P.



Financial Advisor  
to the Offeror  
Goldman Sachs International



Legal Advisor  
to the Offeror  
Freshfields Bruckhaus  
Deringer LLP



Bahrain Receiving  
Agent  
Bahrain Clear B.S.C.(c)



Bahrain Receiving Agent, Bahrain Execution  
Advisor and Cross Listing Advisor  
SICO B.S.C.(c)



Kuwait Receiving Agent and  
Allotment Agent  
Kuwait Clearing Company  
K.S.C.



## Business

# AnadoluJet serves Kuwait and beyond with its new international flights

## 14 weekly flights from Kuwait to Istanbul and direct flights to Bodrum, Antalya and Trabzon



**KUWAIT:** Turkish Airlines' AnadoluJet brand goes global on March 29 with the launch of new international flights from Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen Airport. The move was announced during the pre-launch event held at JW Marriott Hotel in Kuwait with attendance of over 100 representatives from the travel industry.

Set to carry its service quality abroad, the airline's expanded flight network will include 14 weekly flights from/to Sabiha Gokcen at affordable fares. The service will be available from KWD 48 between Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen Airport and Kuwait International Airport respectively.

Since its inception in 2008, AnadoluJet has provided more than 100 million passengers with affordable, and comfortable flights between Turkey's domestic airports. Operating its flights with experienced Turkish Airlines cabin and cockpit crew, AnadoluJet will introduce international routes covering 27 destinations in 17 countries, taking its total 70 destinations in 20 countries.

With its fleet size also set to reach 57 aircraft, the brand will continue to grow abroad while offering affordability alongside the high quality standards, which Turkish Airlines is globally renowned for. This includes complimentary onboard catering by Turkish

DO&CO, free baggage allowance (20 kg checked plus 8kg cabin), as well as other advantageous additional services to make passengers' travel experiences convenient, and comfortable. Additionally, AnadoluJet's entire operational processes, from ground services to technical maintenance, will be covered by Turkish Airlines' stamp of approval.

Speaking at the press conference, Senior Vice President of Regional Flights at Turkish Airlines and Head of AnadoluJet, Said Samil Karakas, stated: "To this day, Turkish Airlines has carried millions of passengers to four corners of the world. From March 29 onwards, AnadoluJet will carry the world-renowned quality of its parent brand with its new international expansion by opening its doors to Kuwait and a number of abroad flight points as well. This expansion will allow us to offer our warm and welcoming Turkish hospitality to more passengers while providing them with affordable and comfortable travel options."

"We redesigned our AnadoluJet brand to become a meeting point of worldwide passengers with its new international expansion, just like its namesake Anatolia, the land that has long been the connecting point of numerous civilizations throughout his-

tory. I believe that after connecting Anatolia from one corner to another, AnadoluJet will successfully link cities of the world with its highly advantageous flight options," he added.

With its aircraft consisting solely of the economy class configuration, AnadoluJet will increase its passenger capacity by 22 per cent, offering an additional 1.2 million seats to more travellers at affordable fares. Moreover, new flight planning will offer 30 per cent better connectivity to domestic and international routes. Tickets for the new flights will be available from 29 March via AnadoluJet's and Turkish Airlines' sales channels.

**Direct flights from Kuwait is scheduled as:**

- Kuwait - Izmir flights depart at 22:25 every Thursday between 18.06.2020 and 10.09.2020.
- Kuwait - Antalya flights depart at 22:25 every Tuesday and Sunday between 07.06.2020 and 15.09.2020.
- Kuwait - Trabzon flights depart at 22:25 every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday between 18.05.2020 and 19.09.2020.
- Kuwait - Bodrum flights depart at 22:25 every Friday between 19.06.2020 and 11.09.2020.



## KFH continues to serve customers during holiday

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues to offer round the clock services for its customers in Kuwait and overseas during national days holiday. Customers can use KFH services through its KFHonline that offers a wide range of services, in addition to the alternative channels KFH Go, XTM, Mobi Baitak, Call Center and the 24/7 branch at the Kuwait International Airport.

The self-banking station (KFH Go) allows customers to conduct their transactions and perform many banking services in minutes in a very modern way using advanced tools through visual and audio communication options; conference call with KFH staff who are always available and ready to answer all customers' questions. Customers can purchase and receive Gold biscuits (10grams) and instant cheque printing through KFH Go smart branches.

KFH has uniquely rolled out innovative services that can be completed online and via mobile using robotics, AI, XTMs and the smart branches KFH Go. This contributed to adding value to the customer's experience, confirming that the easy banking services encourage customers to use KFHonline in their transactions. KFH offers online financial solutions, including local and telex financial transfers, opening deposits, adding beneficiaries, balance inquiry, cheque book request, opening KFH gold account, conducting gold



transactions (purchase, sell and trade), requesting financing, opening an account, applying for Al-Khair card, and checking the PINs for credit and debit cards.

Moreover, the Call Center will be ready to receive calls from customers and will work relentlessly to overcome any issues that might face customers in Kuwait and overseas during the holiday.

In addition, KFH continues to offer its IVR service on 1803333 that is available throughout the day. Customers can call to make account transactions, ask for financial transaction, pay bills, purchase cards to recharge cell phone, and other services. Further, customers can take advantage of KFH's ATM machines that offer a plethora of services. KFH offers Mobi Baitok vehicles that serve as mobile branches that allow people to deposit and withdraw cash in addition to other banking transactions.

KFH has additional technical privileges,



such as allowing customers to conduct several banking transactions through smart phones on kfhonline application.

## Primark owner: Virus threatens clothing supplies

**LONDON:** Primark owner Associated British Foods warned yesterday there was a risk of shortages of some clothing lines later this year if delays in factory production in China are prolonged because of the coronavirus. The virus has killed 2,442 and infected 76,936 people in China, and slowed growth in the world's second largest economy.

AB Foods, which sources more than 40 percent of Primark's product from China, said it typically builds inventories in advance of Chinese New Year, meaning it is well stocked for several months and does not expect any

short-term impact. The group, which maintained its overall financial guidance for the full 2019-20 year, said it was working closely with its suppliers in China to assess the impact of the virus on their factories and supply chains and their ability to fulfil its current orders.

"If delays to factory production are prolonged, the risk of supply shortages on some lines later this financial year increases," it said. "We are assessing mitigating strategies, including a step up in production from existing suppliers in other regions."

Shares in AB Foods, the majority of which are owned by the family of CEO George Weston, were down 2 percent at 0906 GMT, paring gains over the last year to 9.5 percent.

Shares in British clothing rivals Next and Marks & Spencer were down 2.5 percent and 3.8 percent respectively. Finance director John Bason said Primark was talking to suppliers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Vietnam,

Turkey and eastern Europe to fill the potential gap, although he said some items manufactured in China could not be replicated.

"There are in accessories or whatever, areas like that, that China is very good at that are harder to source from elsewhere...So I'm not guaranteeing that we can replace all of the shortfall from China," he told Reuters. AB Foods also owns major sugar, grocery, ingredients and agriculture arms. Several of its food businesses have operations in China. It said the China sugar processing campaign was completed in January before the coronavirus outbreak developed significantly.

However, its AB Mauri, AB Agri and Ovaltine factories are operating at reduced capacity because of labor and logistics constraints caused by the virus outbreak. Bason said the impact was not material to the overall group. For its first half to Feb. 29, AB Foods forecast sales and operating profit ahead of the previous year. — Reuters

## Most small firms in China yet to reopen after virus outbreak

**BEIJING:** Most small businesses in China have yet to reopen and are struggling with supply chain obstructions after the new coronavirus epidemic triggered a national shutdown, officials said yesterday.

Authorities extended January's Lunar New Year holiday and ordered the closure of schools, factories and railways to try and halt the spread of the outbreak, which has killed more than 2,500 people.

Some industries have since resumed operations but only around three in 10 small and medium-sized enterprises were back to work, industry ministry spokesman Tian Yulong said yesterday.

Ongoing transport disruptions make it hard for workers to travel and has prevented the shipment of raw materials, he added.

## Canada's Teck withdraws controversial oil sands project

**MONTREAL, Canada:** Canada's Teck Resources said Sunday it had withdrawn its application to develop a giant oil sands mine in western Alberta, a controversial project which the federal government had been set to vote on this week.

The Frontier project would have cost about Can\$20 billion (\$15 billion) and had been expected to produce 260,000 barrels of oil per day. But its impact on the environment had been denounced by environmentalists and the region's indigenous population: mine production would have generated 4.1 million tons of carbon dioxide a year, according to a study by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

The Vancouver-based natural resources company said in a press release it had sent a letter to the environment minister explaining its decision.

"We are disappointed to have arrived at this point," said Teck CEO Don

Officials pledged finance and aid for smaller enterprises yesterday, including preferential tax treatment for transport, catering and tourism businesses.

Key industries dominated by larger firms appeared to be in stronger shape.

Cong Liang, an official at China's top economic planning agency, said the steel industry was operating at nearly 70 per cent capacity while rail freight had almost returned to normal. Small and medium-sized businesses account for around 60 percent of China's economy, and the crucial sector is reeling from the impact of the global public health crisis.

At least six in 10 small firms risked running out of cash to cover regular payments in the next two months, the Economic Daily state media outlet reported last week, citing a survey by a national representative body for small business.

President Xi Jinping said Sunday the overall economic impact of the virus would be "short-term" and manageable. But economists have forecast a significant hit to overall growth, with Moody's Analytics revising full-year GDP projections down from 6.1 to 5.4 percent—the lowest rate in three decades. — AFP

Lindsay in his letter to the government. "Teck put forward a socially and environmentally responsible project that was industry leading and had the potential to create significant benefits for Canadians," he wrote, adding his company sought to balance economic development with environmental respect.

Lindsay said investors and consumers increasingly want a framework in place that reconciles resources development and climate change. "This does not yet exist here today and, unfortunately, the growing debate around this issue has placed Frontier and our company squarely at the nexus of much broader issues that need to be resolved," Lindsay said.

"In that context, it is now evident that there is no constructive path forward for the project."

Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson and Natural Resources Minister Seamus O'Regan said they appreciated that Teck had made a "difficult decision." "A strong economy and clean environment must go hand in hand. As Teck has rightly pointed out, and as many in the industry know, global investors and consumers are increasingly looking for the cleanest products available and sustainable resource development," they said in a joint statement. — AFP

What's On

# LAPA organizes oldies concert



In collaboration with NCCAL and for the fourth year in a row, LOYAC Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) recently organized an oldies concert for LAPA band led by maestro Yousif Bara and supervised by the head of LOYAC's music department, Nisreen Nasser. The concert included a number of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s Kuwaiti top hit songs from the most famous Kuwaiti singers sung by LAPA young singers, which highly appealed to the large audience at Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha theatre.

Speaking on the occasion, LOYAC chairperson, Fare'a Al-Saqqa stressed the need to build inter-generations bridges through art and music inspired by Kuwaiti heritage and presented in a way combining past and present.

Notably, another concert will be presented at 8 pm today evening, Tuesday February 25 within the same concept to celebrate the national anniversaries.



## Students organize 'May You Be Safe and Glorious' opera

Hamad Essa Al-Rujaib High School for Boys recently organized a special operetta titled 'May You Be Safe and Glorious' (Salemta Lelmajde) to commemorate and celebrate Kuwait national anniversaries.

The operetta lyrics were written by teacher Michel

Mounir and directed by teacher, Hamad Al-Zowayyed. The operetta idea was inspired by the colors of Kuwait flag; black, green, white and red, which are all pan-Arab colors inspired by a poem describing Arabs that goes: 'White are our deeds, black are our battles, green are our lands and red are our swords'. The operetta included four groups of students showing on stage one by one each carrying a flag with one the four symbolic colors and singing a few lyrics about it to indicate how benevolent, fierce and brave in battles and prosperous Kuwaitis are. It also called for national unity.

The operetta was supervised by the head of the school's social studies department, Soud Al-Mo'nes and school director, Ghaleb Al-Enezi.



## ACK sponsors innovation and entrepreneurship tour in UAE

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) recently organized and sponsored a highly successful 2020 Innovation and Entrepreneurship Tour to the United Arab Emirates, with nine impressive students participating from the School of Business and the School of Engineering.

The four-day international educational tour highlighted innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainability initiatives in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The program featured visits to the UAE's leading start-up incubators and accelerators, Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (the largest gathering of sustainability in the Middle East), Masdar City, 3M

Innovation Center and the forward-thinking Arbor School. The students met a number of entrepreneurs who generously shared their advice and insights, followed by an opportunity to pitch their start up ideas at Krypto Labs, where they received valuable feedback and encouragement to implement their start-up ideas.

Another highlight of the tour was visiting Expo 2020 Dubai, the first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region. The students received an overview of the expo, followed by presentations from the Expo 2020's innovation and sustainability experts and a fascinating behind-the-scenes bus tour of the expo's construction site.

Commenting on the great benefit the tour had on the participating students, ACK International Affairs Manager, Ms Johanne Flynn said, "UAE is widely known as an international hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, and this tour provides our students with opportunities to connect theory to a wide range of real-world initiatives, attend international events, meet inspiring entrepreneurs, innovators and educators, and to further develop their own entrepreneurial mindset and start-up ideas before they graduate."



Under auspices of the PAAET director, Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf and with the attendance of his deputy for applied education and researches, professor, Jassem Al-Ansari and deputy director for assisting academic services, Dr Jassem al-Ostath, the health sciences college recently organized a special ceremony to celebrate the National anniversaries at the college campus.

**A DAY FOR PALESTINE**

Entertaining... Cultural... Traditional... Musical

Tareq Bakri "Where we were, & still are now" Stories of Authenticity. Palestinian Dabkeh

Palestinian Traditional Band Love Academy of Performing Arts Kuwait Red Crescent Society

Kids Corner Funnies World Bazar Traditional Food - Games

Friday 6 March 2020  
4 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Women Cultural Social Society Location  
Khalidiyah- Block 2 - street 28

## KEA Kannur at National Day celebrations

As part of Kuwait National Day and Liberation Day celebrations, various programs were conducted at all six governorates. Under the aegis of the Farwaniya Governorate, numerous programs were staged at Kuwait Zoo, named as Kuwait Market. The cultural extravaganza showcased from 26 friendly nations were an eye-opener for the gathering.

Kannur Expats Association (KEA), Kuwait represented the Indian Embassy during the celebrations. The colorful performance by KEA's children enthralled the audience. The presence of the Indian Embassy second secretary Amithab Ranjan was a great support. President of KEA, Sherine Mathew expressed her heartfelt gratitude for the invitation that was extended to be part of the 59th National Day and 29th Liberation Day of Kuwait. The Farwaniya Governorate coordinator Hind Al-Rashidi was all praise for the cultural program performed on stage by KEA and lauded the Indians for their lively participation.



Health & Science

# Mapping coronavirus: South Koreans turn to online tracking as cases surge

SEOUL: As the new coronavirus spreads in South Korea, private software developers have set up websites and apps to help people track cases and shun places where infected people have been in the hope of avoiding the fast-spreading virus. The government, stung by criticism of how it handled past outbreaks, initially released very detailed information on confirmed cases, including the age, gender and daily routes infected people took before being quarantined. Identities were not published but the information that was enabled web developers to build detailed maps tracking the movements of patients.

"We experienced a public backlash after a mass infection took place during the MERS outbreak five years ago, because we didn't make public where those patients had gone," a health official, who declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter said. A button on one of the sites, Coronamap.live, is labeled "See whether I am safe". A click shows users if there are any known coronavirus cases in their vicinity.

Many South Koreans have been logging on to the sites, with some saying the thought of becoming infected and appearing on an online map is so mortifying it keeps them from going out. Seo Sung, a 21-year-old student who finds Coronamap.live the most useful, said the more information, the better for everyone. "It keeps society at ease to avoid the contaminated areas when you can," Seo said. "Otherwise I could not only harm myself, but also others around me."

Ryan Jun-seo Hong, 19, a computer science major who set up the Coronamap.live site while waiting for his mandatory military service to begin, said more than 300,000 people have been viewing the site every day. But the increase in cases over recent days with confirmed infections surging from 31 to more than 763, including seven deaths, in less than a week, has made it nearly impossible to keep up. "Currently adding 600+ places," said a message yesterday on Coronamap.live, which offers an interactive map in Korean, Chinese and English.

**'Taking a toll'**

Health authorities also just can't keep up with the new cases and in recent days have been forced to publish more general summaries and regional information on cases. Still, the government regularly releases updates and discusses cases in briefings, and Hong said he uses a wide range of other open-source resources like news reports to supplement official data. "I gather all kinds of information for updates, and I include personal feedback from users," Hong said. Another developer, Kwon Young-jae, runs a similar site with his wife, Ju Yeun-jin, who is also a software developer, but they've been overwhelmed by the surge in cases. Their Wuhanvirus.kr shows a real-time tally of the infections, deaths and discharged patients from both South Korea and the world. But Kwon said the soaring numbers meant he and his wife were hardly getting any sleep. "It was easy to update the page up until the beginning of last week," he said. "But with tens of new patients every few hours, it's starting to take a toll on us." — Reuters

## S Africa 'sterilized pregnant patients without consent'

JOHANNESBURG: A South African inquiry into the forced sterilization of dozens of HIV-positive pregnant women said yesterday that their rights had been breached and called for government action. The investigation was launched in 2015, when two women's rights organizations approached South Africa's Gender Equality Commission (CGE) with 48 documented cases of coerced sterilization. CGE obtained sworn affidavits from the complainants on the alleged procedures.

"All the women who had lodged the complaint were black women who were mostly HIV positive," CGE head Keketso Maema said in the report released yesterday. "Just before giving birth... they were coerced or forced to sign forms that they later learnt through various means were consent forms allegedly permitting the hospital to sterilize them." Investigators found that hospital staff threatened to deny women medical attention if they did not sign the

paperwork. Some of the complainants said they were given the forms in moments of "extreme pain" during which they could not fully grasp the content, the report said. The commission concluded that the women suffered several rights violations and were subjected to "degrading treatment". It also accused medical staff of breaching their "duty of care". The report, which has been sent to the health ministry, advises the government to review sterilization paperwork.

A cooling-off period between the signing of consent forms and the operation itself was also recommended. The health ministry's spokesman did not immediately respond to requests to comment. The total number of people living with HIV in South Africa increased to 7.97 million in 2019 from around 4.64 million in 2002, according to government statistics. Around 13.5 percent of the total population was found to be HIV positive last year. — AFP

## Doctor, parents face trial for girl's death after genital cutting

CAIRO: A retired doctor and the parents of a 12-year-old girl who died after female genital mutilation (FGM) surgery are to stand trial in Egypt, with child rights campaigners calling for jail terms to deter others from the illegal practice. Egypt's Prosecutor General Hamada El-Sawy this weekend ordered the referral of the trio to the criminal court. Doctor Abdel Fadel Rashwan and the parents of Nada Hassan Abdel-Maqsood were arrested last month after her death at a private clinic in Manfalout, close to Assiut in southern Egypt, but then released

on bail, causing public outrage. "It is a serious step towards putting the defendants behind bars," said Randa Fakhr El Deen, executive director of the NGOs' Union Against Harmful Practices on Women and Children, hoping a tough punishment would discourage other cases of FGM. Genital cutting of girls was banned in Egypt in 2008 but a 2016 survey by the UN Children's Fund found 87% of women and girls aged 15-49 had undergone the ritual, which typically involves the partial or total removal of the external genitalia. — Reuters

CLINIC

PAGE







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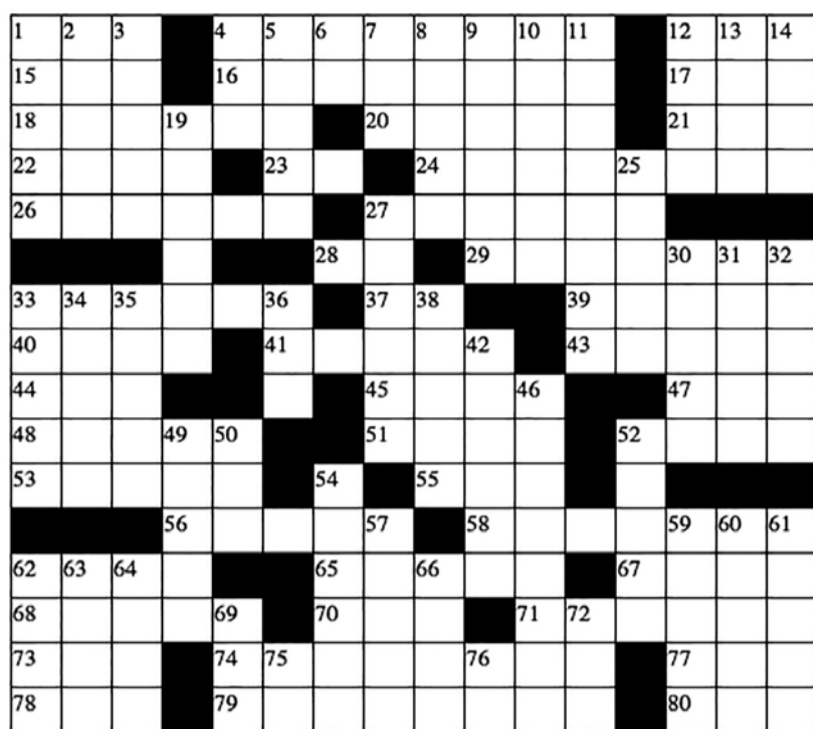
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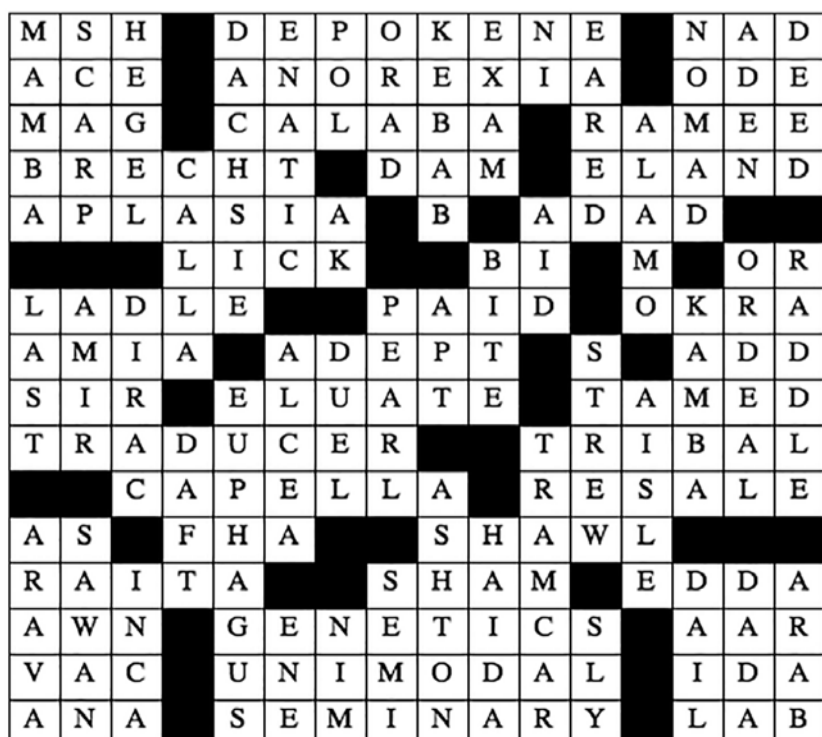
ACROSS

- Standard temperature and pressure.
- A device that controls amount of light admitted.
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- The quality of a color as determined by its dominant wavelength.
- Thorny Eurasian shrubs.
- (used especially of commodities) In the natural unprocessed condition.
- Third son of Elizabeth II (born in 1964).
- Ancient Athenian philosopher.
- Primitive pre-daceous North American fish covered with hard scales and having long jaws with needle-like teeth.
- United States physiologist (born in Germany) who did research on parthenogenesis (1859-1924).
- The district occupied entirely by the city of Washington.
- Having a slippery surface or quality.
- Goddess of love and fecundity.
- A heavy ductile magnetic metallic element.
- A white wax extracted from ozokerite.
- A loose skirt consisting of brightly colored fabric wrapped around the body.
- A Mid-Atlantic state.
- Any plant of the genus *Inula*.
- Type genus of the Anatidae.
- Of or relating to Iraq or its people or culture.
- A military trainee (as at a military academy).
- A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Tough Asiatic grass whose culms are used for ropes and baskets.
- European strong-scented perennial herb with gray-green bitter-tasting leaves.
- (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
- An intensive care unit designed with special equipment to care for premature or low-birth-weight or seriously ill newborn.
- A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
- The federal department responsible for safeguarding national security.
- Of or relating to or involving an area.
- A Powhatan Indian woman (the daughter of Powhatan) who befriended the English at Jamestown and is said to have saved Captain John Smith's life (1595-1617).
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- A populous province in northeastern China.
- Advanced in years.
- A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- Aman prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- (Old Testament) A son of Jacob and a forebear of one of the tribes of Israel.
- An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
- Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- A bin for holding coal.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- A support that consists of a horizontal surface for holding objects.
- Of or relating to a style of architecture in England in the 15th century.
- Small olive-colored woodland flycatchers of eastern North America.
- The month following March and preceding May.
- A genus of Ploceidae.
- Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
- A dissolute man in fashionable society.
- A major city of northeastern Oklahoma on the Arkansas river.
- A family of Ural-Altaic languages.
- A mineral consisting of titanium dioxide in crystalline form.
- Confined to and understandable by only an enlightened inner circle.
- An instinctive motive.
- A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
- Turned or twisted toward one side.
- An ancient Greek colony on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles.
- Doglike nocturnal mammal of Africa and southern Asia that feeds chiefly on carrion.
- Wish harm upon.
- A member of the lowest or worker Hindu caste.
- Blockage of the intestine (especially the ileum) that prevents the contents of the intestine from passing to the lower bowel.
- The fleshy part of the human body that you sit on.
- Squash bugs.
- The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
- Long and light rowing boat.
- Hoofed mammals having slender legs and a flat coat with a narrow mane along the back of the neck.
- The financial gain (earned or unearned) accruing over a given period of time.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of the Jews or their culture or religion.
- Jordan's port.
- 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
- Full of submerged reefs or sandbanks or shoals.
- The dialect of Malay used as the national language of the Republic of Indonesia or of Malaysia.
- Established by or founded upon law or official or accepted rules.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
- Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- German organist and contrapuntist (1685-1750).
- A form of entertainment that enacts a story by a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement.
- A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
- Conforming to truth.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You've always had psychic ability, and today it's at a peak, Aries. Perhaps not coincidentally, you're likely to be contacted by a close friend or lover from your past. He or she isn't calling to renew your relationship but rather for advice. Your heightened abilities today make you the ideal confidant. Listen closely and advise what your heart tells you is right.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Prosperity is just around the corner, Taurus, if it isn't here already. All your efforts are about to pay off and in a big way. It may be that a big proposal gets accepted at work, or perhaps a manuscript that you've penned lands you a publisher. Your innate talent and good fortune combine to bring wonderful things your way. Enjoy this welcome change of events!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is passion in the air, Gemini, and you're convinced that you're the one electrifying the air around you. To be blunt, you can think of little else but sex today. Perhaps it's a result of working too hard for too long and not taking the time to indulge your sensual side. Well, there's no time like the present. Why not invite a certain special someone for a home-cooked meal? Light a candle, open a bottle of wine, and see what happens.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your heart and intuition will rule today much more than your mind. Trust what your instincts tell you. Cancer. If you're in a sales profession, you can expect the orders to come rolling in today, as your extrasensory perception helps you know your clients' needs almost before they do. Plan a romantic encounter with someone you love, and put your ESP to work on him or her tonight.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You surprise yourself by signing up for a group lesson rather than a private one. This is unlike you; nevertheless, you find you enjoy the social interaction. Besides, whether you're learning cooking or rock climbing, it's always much more fun to learn with others. That way, you can learn from their mistakes and they from yours. It's bound to be a fun, adventurous day, Leo. Enjoy it.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You've been working especially hard and you're beginning to wonder if all your effort has been for naught. A restructuring at work leaves you wondering just exactly where you fit in or if you even fit in at all. You may have a troubling few days, Virgo, but will be relieved to learn that the higher-ups have big plans for you in the newly organized, streamlined company.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You're bubbling over with confidence and enthusiasm, Libra. Not surprisingly, those around you respond in kind. Your smile is contagious, and you have people joking and laughing with you throughout the day. You'll have much success in whatever you do today, although group efforts will likely prove more rewarding. Romance figures prominently in the evening, so make the most of it!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your natural intuition and sensitivity will be heightened today, Scorpio. You're able to read the thoughts and feelings of others and interpret them accurately. Alas, you can't use this skill as effectively on yourself. Some old issues have reemerged, causing you some distress. These issues are blocking you in some way. You won't be able to move forward with your life until you resolve them once and for all. Perhaps a professional psychic could help.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A new relationship is likely to form soon, and it will probably be with someone who's already in your life. Perhaps it's someone you knew in high school and you just recently got back in touch with, or perhaps a colleague at work suddenly begins to pay you a lot of attention. Romance is definitely in the air today, Sagittarius, so keep your eyes open for subtle cues from the people in your life.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your head is somewhat in the clouds today, Capricorn. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; it just means that it's difficult for you to get any work done. Much as you'd rather be elsewhere, you really do need to stay focused on the projects at hand. By all means, plan an exit strategy from the mundane routine of your day-to-day life, but don't expect to make your escape today.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Your heart and intuition will rule today much more than your mind. Trust what your instincts tell you, Aquarius. If you're in a sales profession, you can expect the orders to come rolling in today, as your extrasensory perception helps you know your clients' needs almost before they do. Plan a romantic encounter with someone you love, and put your ESP to work on him or her tonight.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your creative nature will no longer be repressed, Pisces! As you look around your home, you realize you feel the need to spruce it up a bit. Motivated by a desire to give dinner parties and invite family members who live far away to come for a visit, you get to work repainting, wallpapering, and maybe even sending that sofa out to be reupholstered. The final result will be fantastic, Pisces. You'll be proud.

Wordsearch Puzzle

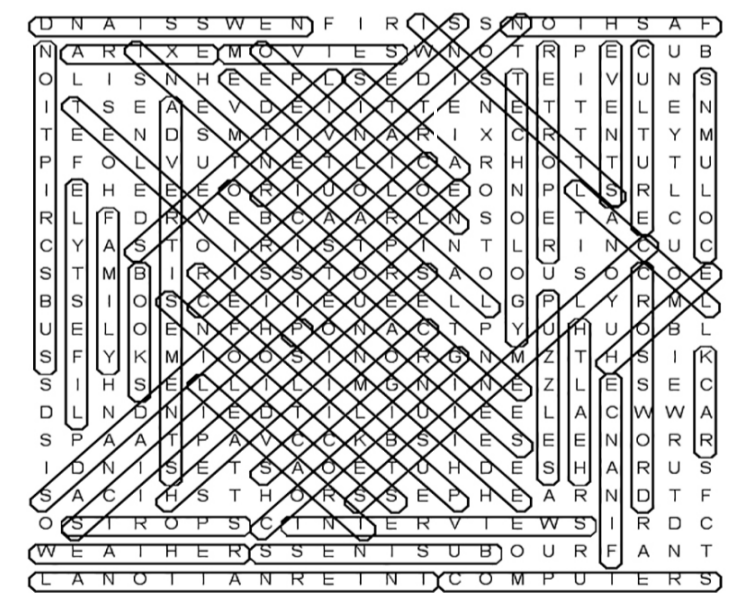
Nursing Home 1

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 47 letters spell a Mother Theresa quotation.



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|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| ACTIVITIES     | COMFORT       | HELP           | OUTINGS         | SING ALONG     |
| AIDES          | DENTURES      | INCONTINENCE   | PET THERAPY     | SLEEPING PILL  |
| ASPIRIN        | DINING ROOM   | LAUNDRY        | PHYSIOTHERAPIST | STAFF MEETINGS |
| BATHROOM       | DOCTOR        | LINERS         | PUZZLES         | SUPPER         |
| BEDS           | DRUGS         | MAGAZINES      | READING         | TABLES         |
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| BOARD GAMES    | FALLS         | MEMORY LOSS    | ROUNDS          | TRANSFER BELT  |
| BULLETIN BOARD | FLU SHOT      | MOISTURIZER    | SCRABBLE        | URINAL         |
| CANE           | FRAIL         | MUSIC          | SCRUBS          | VOLUNTEERS     |
| CARE           | GLUCOSE METER | NAIL CLIPPERS  | SENIORS         | WANDERING      |
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| CHARTS         | HALLWAYS      | NURSES         | SHOWER          |                |

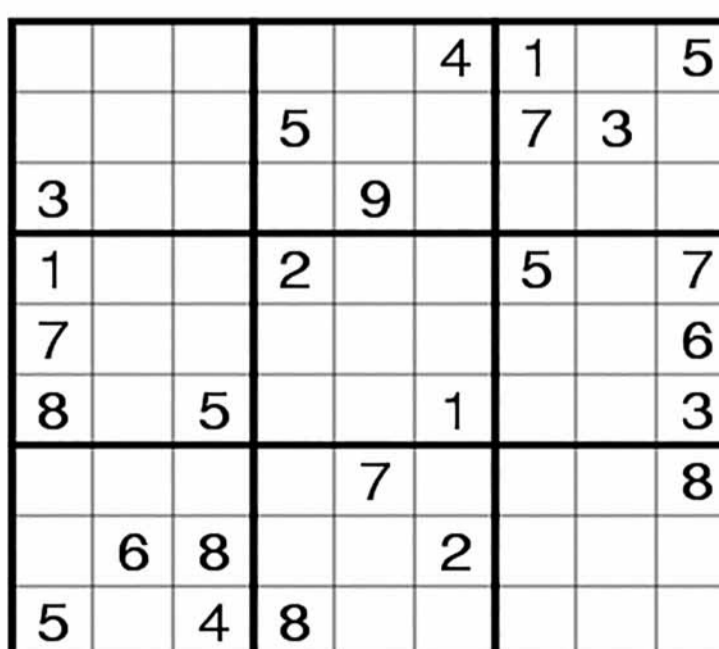
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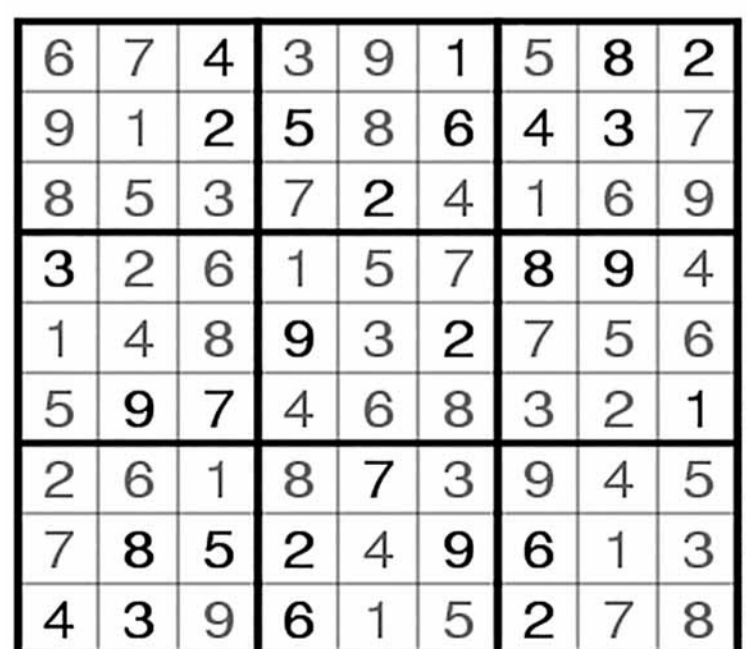
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Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2020



*The Carnival Rooster*



Revelers dressed as Zarramacos, wearing handmade costumes made with ropes, bones, or leaves, tasked with protecting a rooster, pose during the celebration of "El Gallo de Carnaval" (The Carnival Rooster) in Mecerreyes, in the northern Spanish province of Burgos, on February 23, 2020. The Carnival Rooster is a pagan festival in which people participate singing, dancing and attacking the 'Gallo' that is defended by 'Zarramacos'. — AFP photos

## Rubik's Cube Mona Lisa fetches 480,000 euros at Paris auction

A Mona Lisa as puzzling as the smile of Leonardo da Vinci's muse—made out of nearly 300 Rubik's Cubes—sold for nearly half a million euros at auction in Paris on Sunday evening. Created by the French street artist Franck Slama, famous for the pixelated Space Invader mosaics that have popped up on city streets around the world, the "Rubik Mona Lisa" sold for 480,000 euros (\$521,000), a record for the artist,

Artcurial auction house said. Its guide price was 120,000 to 150,000 euros. Slama, who works under the pseudonym "Invader", has playfully styled himself the founder of a new school of art that uses the iconic 1980s puzzle as the medium: "Rubikcubism."

The 2005 "Rubik Mona Lisa" was the first in a series of pieces inspired by the great paintings in history. Slama has also produced pixelated reproductions of

Edouard Manet's 1863 masterpiece "Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe" (The Luncheon on the Grass) as well as Gustave Courbet's "L'Origine du Monde" (The Origin of the World). — AFP

The "Rubik Mona Lisa" of French street artist Franck Slama . — AFP



# Super-high heels free women, says shoe king **Louboutin**

Super-high heels can free women, says legendary French shoe designer Christian Louboutin, who insists that wearing his towering six-inch stilettos is a "form of liberty". While some feminists see vertiginous heels as sexual enslavement, Louboutin believes the opposite—even if it means women have to walk slowly and carefully in his iconic red-soled creations. "Women do not want to give up wearing high heels," the designer told AFP before "The Exhibitionist", a retrospective of his 30-year career, opens in a Paris museum Wednesday.



French shoe designer Christian Louboutin poses with one of his creations during a photo session.

While Louboutin also makes trainers and flat shoes, he admitted that when it comes to the spike-heeled classics that made his name: "I don't think about comfort when I design." "No shoe with a 12cm (5 inch) heel is comfortable... but people do not come to me looking for a pair of slippers," said Louboutin, who helped bring high heels back into fashion in the 1990s and 2000s.

"They are not meant to be worn all the time, but super high heels allow women to express themselves and break free of crushing norms," he said. "To be a woman is also about enjoying one's freedom to be feminine if you want. Why renounce (high heels) when you can have them and flats," he said.

### Not meant to be comfy

"I don't want people to look at my shoes and say: 'They look really comfortable! The important thing is that people say: 'Wow, they're beautiful!'" Even if they can only totter around in their Louboutins, that is no bad thing, he told AFP. If the shoes "stop you running", that is something "positive", he added. Having learnt his art under Roger Vivier, the man who claimed to have invented the stiletto, Louboutin became a household name in the 1990s after Princess Caroline of Monaco fell for one of his first solo creations.

Pop stars from Madonna to Tina Turner and Jennifer Lopez were soon competing with half of Hollywood for fittings. But even as some luxury brands like Dior, led by feminist designer Maria Grazia Chiuri, have taken an axe to towering heels, Louboutin insisted they still had their place. "People project themselves and their stories into my shoes," he said, pointing to a particularly high pair of intricate lace boots called Corset d'Amour, embroidered with scenes of love-making.

Louboutin revealed his life-long fascination with heels was sparked when he was 10 years old and saw a sign banning the shoes at the Palais de la Porte Dorée—the museum now holding his retrospective. "I started to draw them because of that sign," he said, which was put up to save the museum's parquet floors.

### Forbidden pleasures

"I think the fact that high heels were forbidden played on the unconscious... there was also the mystery and the fetishistic side... the simple drawing of a high-heeled shoe is often associated with sexuality," he added. Louboutin also credited the sign with plunging him into "the universe of curves" which was to shape his art. And he insisted that art was not just about making heels higher and higher. He has also been working on making his



French shoe designer Christian Louboutin poses during a photo session at the Palais de la Porte Dorée in Paris a few days before the opening of his exhibition 'L'Exhibition-iste (The Exhibition-ist)'. — AFP photos

shoes disappear into the wearer's leg in a series which he calls Les Nudes—in a variety of skin colors—as well as designs which lengthen the leg. Other highlights of the often cheeky show, which runs until July 28, include a hologram of a shoe that turns into the burlesque star Dita Von Teese as well as a series of Louboutin-sporting nudes shot by the American film director David Lynch.

Louboutin rejoices in the fact that his shoes have now become so iconic that his name has become a shorthand for luxury and sexiness, popping up in rap songs, films and books. "Pop culture is neither controlled or controllable, so I am very happy about that," he added. — AFP



This picture taken in Jakarta on Sunday shows Indonesian designers Irna Mutiara (front row left), Itang Yunasz (second left), Hannie Hananto (second right) and Ivan Gunawan (first right) during the Muslim Fashion Festival in Jakarta.



## Muslim Fashion Festival



Models present creations by designer Ivan Gunawan.



Indonesian models presenting creations by designer Itang Yunasz during the Muslim Fashion Festival.



Indonesian models presenting creations by designers Oewi Wahyono, Adi Barlan and Kursien Karzai.— AFP photos



## COMFORT AND GLAMOUR AT **DOLCE & GABBANA** AS SHOW GOES ON IN MILAN

Dolce & Gabbana prepared for the winter chill on Sunday, staging a Fall/Winter 2020 show featuring oversized chunky sweaters, woolly socks and furry slippers. The Italian fashion house's presentation at Milan Fashion Week came shortly after Giorgio Armani announced he would hold his show, due to take place two hours after Dolce & Gabbana, in an empty theatre without any press or buyers present due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Some guests at the Dolce & Gabbana catwalk show could be seen wearing surgical masks as they took their seats. Designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana paid tribute to artisans and craftsmen with the collection titled "Made by Hand". Screens along the catwalk showed old black and white video of tailors, cobblers, leather cutters and knitters at work. "The past and the authenticity are linked to the future through a new interpretation/translation of the 'handmade'," the duo said in a

statement. Dolce & Gabbana dressed their models in comfy cardigans, knitted shorts and bralets, and thigh-high woolly socks.

But glamour was also present in the form of sensual corset dresses and see-through skirts and shirts, with sparkle often added to black. Bags were big and often twofold. High-heeled shoes were paired with stockings or thick woolly socks. Laced-up boots of varied heights offered a more casual option for the Dolce &

Gabbana woman. Feminine features and flowers were added to sharply tailored suits, with red roses also twirling around and above white shirts and dresses. Set to the songs of the late Amy Winehouse, the presentation featured a total of 121 looks by the hard-working design duo. — Reuters



Models present creations for Dolce & Gabbana's Women Fall - Winter 2020 fashion collection on Sunday in Milan. — AFP photos



This handout photo provided by Big Hit Entertainment yesterday shows K-pop group BTS members attending a press conference to promote their fourth album "Map of the Soul: 7" in Seoul. — AFP photos



This handout photo shows K-pop group BTS members posing for a photo before a press conference to promote their fourth album "Map of the Soul: 7" in Seoul. — AFP photos

## CORONAVIRUS FORCES BTS TO STREAM ALBUM PRESS CONFERENCE FROM EMPTY HALL

South Korea's coronavirus outbreak forced K-pop superstars BTS to livestream a conference promoting their new album from an empty hall yesterday, with members urging fans to take care of themselves. The country has so far confirmed more than 800 cases of the novel coronavirus, by far the largest national total outside China, the origin of the disease.

In light of the outbreak BTS streamed the conference on

Youtube, the band's management said, with the seven members waving and bowing to a virtually empty hall and answering previously selected questions from journalists. "Health is always on our mind these days and our messages of facing your inner self and loving yourself is ultimately possible when you're healthy," said singer Jimin. "Especially since it is very risky outside these days, I hope you take care of your health." BTS-or Bangtan Sonyeondan, which

translates as Bulletproof Boy Scouts-are the first K-pop group to top charts in the US and Britain.

Their latest effort was given a simultaneous worldwide release online on Friday, unleashing a flood of BTS chatter on social media. "Map of the Soul: 7" was the most pre-ordered South Korean album of all time, with more than four million copies sold before its release. The group had rolled out a 30-second preview "ON" exclusively on

TikTok Thursday, momentarily causing the short-form video app to crash.

BTS has topped the Billboard 200 on three occasions-a record for a South Korean group-and if their new album becomes number one, they will become the first group to lead the chart on four occasions in two years since the Beatles. — AFP



## 'Sonic' outpaces its rivals to again top N America box office

Paramount's adventure comedy "Sonic the Hedgehog" clung to a narrow lead in the North American box office this weekend, taking in an estimated \$26.3 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. "Sonic," starring Jim Carrey as the villainous Dr. Robotnik, recounts the adventures of a turbocharged blue hedgehog with supersonic speed. Films based on video games rarely excel at the box office, but this one set a record for the genre with its \$58 million opening last weekend.

20th Century's new adventure film "The Call of the Wild," starring Harrison Ford, placed second, taking in \$24.8 million for the Friday-to-Sunday period. The story of a man and a surprisingly realistic, computer-generated sled dog is loosely based on the 1903 Jack London classic, set in the wilds of Alaska and Canada's Klondike region. In third place, down one spot from last week, was Warner Bros. superhero film "Birds of Prey," at \$7 million. Margot Robbie stars as former Joker girlfriend Harley Quinn.

Fourth spot went to new supernatural horror film "Brahms: The Boy II," from STX Entertainment, at \$5.9 million. Katie Holmes stars in the frightfest-a sequel to 2016's "The Boy"-about a porcelain doll with an innocent face but sinister powers. And in fifth was Sony's action comedy "Bad Boys for Life," with Will Smith and Martin Lawrence as wise-cracking Miami narcotics detectives. It took in \$5.8 million, pushing its global total so far to \$391 million.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

"1917" (\$4.4 million)  
"Fantasy Island" (\$4.2 million)  
"Parasite" (\$3.1 million)  
"Jumanji: The Next Level" (\$3 million)  
"The Photograph" (\$2.8 million) —AFP



Members of the Viradouro samba school perform.



Members of the Viradouro samba school perform during the first night of Rio's carnival parade at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. — AFP photos



A member of the Grande Rio samba school performs.

## Rio's carnival parade



A member of the Grande Rio samba school performs.



Members of the Mangueira samba school perform.



Members of the Viradouro samba school perform.



Members of the Viradouro samba school perform.

## Protests in Chile hit LatAm's biggest music festival

Thousands of protesters armed with stones, sticks and Molotov cocktails clashed with police Sunday as Latin America's biggest music festival opened, in the latest spurt of a four-month old wave of grassroots anger over economic inequality and other grievances. Police blocked the entrance to a park where the festival was being held in Vina del Mar, a seaside resort about 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of Santiago.

Officers used a helicopter and a balloon with surveillance cameras and drove back the protesters with water cannon and tear gas. "Vandals and criminals are trying to do damage just four blocks from the entrance to the festival. But everything is under control," Jorge Martinez, the Valparaiso regional governor, told the 24-hour state news channel. After failing to get into the festival grounds, protesters attacked nearby shops and the renowned O'Higgins Hotel where many festival

artists usually stay. Tear gas drifting through the hotel forced many guests to flee. The protesters also burned at least seven vehicles.

Despite the official optimism, the festival's traditional Hollywood-style red carpet opening, one of Chile's most watched televised events, was canceled. The crowd was able to enter three and a half hours before the start of the show after filing through two security fences erected in at least four blocks around the park.

Multiple Grammy-winner Ricky Martin opened the show. After a two-hour set, he asked Chileans not to remain silent and to demand what they deserve with "love and peace." "That (Chileans) express themselves, that they demand the basics, human rights, is basic, we don't ask for anything. I am with you Chile, never silent, always with love and peace," said the 48-year-old Puerto Rican singer.

Hours earlier, at a press conference, Martin said it

was "important to let the leaders of our countries know what we need, provided we do so in an orderly manner." At the height of the protests, the singer addressed a message to Chile's President Sebastian Pinera on social media: "You have to know that the will of a people is respected, is obeyed, is fulfilled. Listen to your people."

Since authorities announced a modest hike in metro fares in the capital Santiago on October 18, more than 30 people have died in protests which mushroomed in an outlet for wider discontent over social and economic inequality and rejection of conservative billionaire Pinera and his government. A nationwide referendum on changing the constitution, which dates back to the era of military dictator Augusto Pinochet in the 70s and 80s, is set for April. — AFP



Puerto Rican singer Ricky Martin performs during the 61st Vina del Mar International Song Festival in Vina del Mar, Chile. — AFP

# Classifieds

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

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www.met.gov.kw

### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

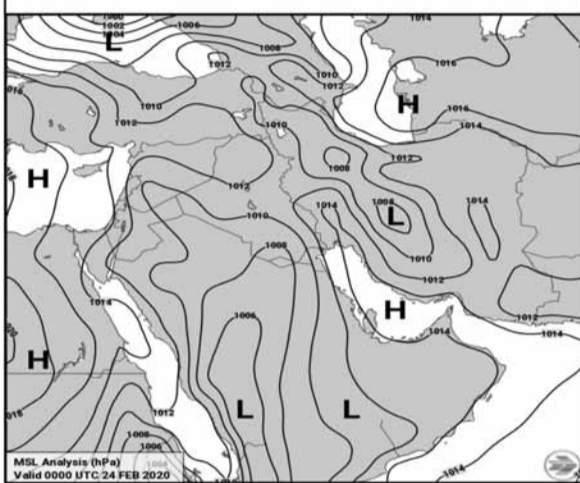
**BY DAY:** Warm and with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on.

**BY NIGHT:** Rather cold and Partly cloudy to cloudy with moderate to fresh south easterly wind to wind, with speed of 20 - 50 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

WEATHER WARNING: No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	27 °C	17 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28 °C	16 °C
ABDALY	27 °C	13 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	28 °C	16 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	24 °C	16 °C
SALMIYAH	21 °C	17 °C
AHMADI	22 °C	17 °C
NUWAISIB	26 °C	15 °C
WAFRA	28 °C	16 °C
SALMY	29 °C	17 °C

### SFC. CHART 24/02/2020 0000 UTC



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	02/25	Relatively hot and with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	30 °C	18 °C	SE-S	15 - 50 km/h
Wednesday	02/26	Dusty and A significant decrease in temperature and some scattered clouds will appear	21 °C	13 °C	W-NW	25 - 60 km/h
Thursday	02/27	Fair	22 °C	10 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Friday	02/28	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	24 °C	11 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:00
Sunrise	06:19
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:17
Sunset	17:44
Isha	19:01

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	25 °C
MIN. Temp.	12 °C
MAX. RH	97 %
MIN. RH	31 %
MAX. Wind	SE 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

### Hospitals

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

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

### CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my name from Iqbal Kader Nawab (old) to Mohd Iqbal Nawab Ali Shaikh (new) through Maharashtra Gazette No-M-19139997 dated 23/01/2020 CL-449. (C 5645)

**My son,** Mohammed Raqeeb, DOB: 05/07/2015, holder of Indian Passport No. T5333305 residing at No-18, Venkatesa Naicken 1st Anna road, Chennai, Tamilnadu - 600002, shall henceforth be known as Mohammed Raqeeb (Surname - Mohammed Shafullah, Given name - Mohammed Raqeeb) Mohammed Shafullah (father). (C 5646) 24-2-2020

**Surname:** SHAIK Given name: ABDULRASHEED (wrongly recorded in my Passport bearing No: K2091614) Proddatur, Srinivasanagar Door No: 7/4621-a hereby state that my actual & correct name as per my Adhar & voter ID cards is surname: SHAIK Given name: ABDUL RASHEED S/o: SHAIK.MAHA-BOOB BASHA. (C 5644) 20-2-2020

**I, Charesma** Kotapati Passport No. K5706852, D/o Kotapati Lingamma Naidu,

R/o D. No. 5-20, Medavada, Marripalli Dakshinapu kandriga, Chittoor District. A.P, India. My name was changed as Kotapati Charshima D/o Kotapati Lingama Naidu for the purpose wrong entries occurred in birth certificate SD No: BR/2008/06. (C 5495)

**I, Ashiney** Merin Joseph D/O Joseph Varghese holder of Indian Passport No. L3857701 issued in Kuwait has changed the given name in Passport from Ashiney Merin Joseph to Ashiney Merin Joseph, permanent resident of Malyackal Parambil, Chethackal P.O Ranni, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India. Solemnly declare. (C 5643)

**I, Agnelo** Basilio Lazaro Lourdes Fernandes, resident of House No. 330, Vass Vaddo, Velim, Salcete, South Goa - 403723, would like to state that, I have changed my name from Basilio Lourdes Fernandes to Agnelo Basilio Lazaro Lourdes Fernandes. Hereafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by the name Agnelo Basilio Lazaro Lourdes Fernandes. (C 5642) 19-2-2020

# EMERGENCY



Automated enquiry about the Civild card is **1899988**

## Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) **DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 25/2/2020					Departure Flights on Tuesday 25/2/2020				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
SGL	9031	IOA	00:01		JZR	231	Dammam	12:35	
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10		MEA	405	Beirut	12:55	
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10		JZR	115	Doha	13:00	
JZR	716	Sohag	00:35		QTR	1075	Doha	13:00	
JZR	254	Amman	00:45		GFA	210	Bahrain	13:05	
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50		MSR	611	Cairo	13:25	
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50		KAC	781	Jeddah	13:30	
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55		SAW	702	Damascus	13:30	
KAC	102	London	01:25		JZR	123	Dubai	13:40	
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30		KAC	541	Cairo	13:45	
RJA	642	Amman	01:40		UAE	872	Dubai	14:15	
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50		AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15	
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55		QTR	1079	Doha	15:00	
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55		FDB	060	Dubai	15:10	
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15		GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25	
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15		UAE	878	Dubai	15:40	
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30		KAC	775	Riyadh	15:45	
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30		KAC	673	Dubai	15:50	
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40		SVK	563	Amman	16:00	
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55		UAE	501	Jeddah	16:00	
JZR	724	Alexandria	02:55		KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00	
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:05		KAC	743	Dammam	16:20	
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10		EDD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20	
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15		KAC	785	Jeddah	16:30	
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00		OMA	646	Muscat	16:35	
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00		ABY	128	Sharjah	16:35	
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:00		JZR	735	Cairo	16:50	
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00		JZR	103	Bahrain	16:50	
PGT	7242	Istanbul	04:00		KAC	613	Bahrain	16:55	
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10		KAC	283	Dhaka	17:00	
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30		FEF	242	Alexandria	17:35	
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40		KAC	619	Doha	17:35	
JZR	540	KTM	04:45		KAC	357	Kochi	17:35	
JZR	702	Asyut	04:50		FDB	052	Dubai	17:45	
JZR	508	KHI	05:00		UAE	858	Dubai	17:45	
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00		JZR	539	KTM	17:50	
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10		KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55	
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20		QTR	1073	Doha	18:00	
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25		KAC	343	Chennai	18:00	
JZR	112	Doha	05:35		FDB	8066	Dubai	18:05	
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:45		JZR	733	Cairo	18:10	
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50		SVK	511	Riyadh	18:20	
UAE	873	Dubai	05:50		GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20	
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:55		KAC	301	Mumbai	18:35	
KAC	106	London	06:00		JZR	127	Dubai	18:35	
FEF	341	Sohag	06:05		JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40	
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05		KAC	381	Delhi	18:45	
KAC	332	Triyandrum	06:05		SYR	342	Damascus	18:55	
KAC	322	Colombo	06:30		JZR	721	Alexandria	18:55	
THY	6376	ISL	06:30		JZR	253	Amman	19:20	
JZR	120	Dubai	07:00		FDB	064	Dubai	19:20	
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00		UAE	876	Dubai	19:25	
BAW	157	London	07:05		MSR	621	Cairo	19:30	
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05		QTR	1081	Doha	19:55	
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10		FEF	342	Sohag	19:55	
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15		JZR	723	Alexandria	19:55	
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50		ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05	
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00		RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05	
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:10		JZR	653	OSS	20:05	
KAC	622	Doha	08:30		RJA	641	Amman	20:10	
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35		GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15	
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55		NIA	162	Cairo	20:30	
JZR	102	Bahrain	08:55		KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:35	
AHY	4019	Baku	09:00		JZR	501	Lahore	20:40	
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05		FDB	058	Dubai	20:45	
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30		JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55	
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30		QTR	1091	Doha	21:00	
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40		OMA	648	Muscat	21:20	
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40		DLH	624	Dammam	21:45	
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45		DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50	
JZR	410	Delhi	10:00		KAC	1089	Doha	21:55	
NIA	361	Alexandria	10:00		KAC	205	Islamabad	22:15	
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00		MEA	403	Beirut	22:20	
UAE	2535	Dubai	10:00		ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:25	
MEA	400	Beirut	10:00		ALK	230	Colombo	22:25	
JZR	114	Doha	10:20		GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30	
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40		ICV	6752	Hong Kong	22:30	
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	10:40		KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50	
JZR	714	Sohag	10:50		UAE	860	Dubai	22:55	
JZR	122	Dubai	11:15		ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05	
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35		RBG	214	Sohag	23:10	
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55		KAC	383	Delhi	23:20	
GFA	209	Bahrain	12:05		QTR	1083	Doha	23:25	
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25		KAC	543	Cairo	23:30	
SAW	701	Dammascus	12:30		KAC	795	Madinah	23:30	
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50		KAC	303	Mumbai	23:40	
JZR	130	Dubai	13:05		GOW	062	CNN	23:55	
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15						



A picture taken yesterday shows an explosion following an Israeli airstrike on Gaza City. — AFP

## Trump hails Modi at huge...

Continued from Page 1

"The whole world knows what President Trump has done to fulfill the dreams of America."

Excited spectators had queued from 4:00 am for the "Namaste Trump" rally, reciprocating a "Howdy Modi" event in Houston last year where Trump likened Modi to Elvis. Workers rushed to finish the stadium and erect a wall along the route that locals said was to hide a slum. Stray dogs, cows and monkeys were also kept away. "Events like these will galvanize people to start to cooperate in new initiatives," said Pramit Maakoday, an Indian-American in the stadium.

Before the speech, Trump and First Lady Melania visited independence hero Mahatma Gandhi's ashram, where Modi gifted him a "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" three wise monkeys statue. Later Trump and Melania - in an off-white jumpsuit and sash alongside her husband in a buttercup-yellow tie - flew to the Taj Mahal for a pre-sunset tour before heading to Delhi ahead of the main talks today. Parts of the Taj Mahal, the marble monument to love that UNESCO calls a "jewel of Muslim art", were given a mud-pack facial to remove stains, while efforts were made to lessen the stench of the adjacent river.

Behind the platitudes and blossoming bromance between the two leaders lies a fraught relationship as Trump's "America First" drive collides with Modi's "Make in India" mantra. Trump has slapped tariffs on Indian steel and aluminium and suspended duty-free access for certain goods, prompting India to raise duties

on US produce such as almonds. Trump has called India the "tariff king", and said before his visit that Asia's third-largest economy had been "hitting us very, very hard for many, many years".

Rather than a wide-ranging trade deal, reports said Trump and Modi may instead sign smaller agreements covering products such as Harley-Davidson motorcycles and US dairy products. "We are in the early stages of discussions for an incredible trade agreement," Trump told the rally, calling Modi a "very tough negotiator". "I am in no rush," he told reporters later.

With the US and India sharing concerns about China, the two men were expected to sign a number of defense deals during the visit, and to discuss the supply of six nuclear reactors. Russia, however, remains India's biggest supplier in arms, with India having agreed to buy Moscow's \$5.4-billion S-400 missile defense system despite the threat of US sanctions.

The US has pressured India to stop buying Iranian oil, while US businesses have raised concerns over New Delhi's plans to force foreign firms to store Indian consumers' personal data inside the country. India has bristled at Trump's offer to mediate in the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan which a year ago again brought the two nuclear-armed neighbors close to war.

In Washington, India has faced criticism over its clampdown in restive Kashmir, and the recently passed citizenship law that has led to ongoing protests across the nation, including in New Delhi yesterday. A senior US administration official told reporters Trump would raise concerns about religious freedom in the Hindu-majority nation during the trip, "which is extremely important to this administration". Trump also ridiculed Modi last year for "constantly telling me he built a library in Afghanistan". "That's like five hours of what we spend," Trump said. — AFP

Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan also issued a decision banning the export or re-export of all sanitizers, all types of medical gloves, facemasks, virus testing chemicals including 0.5-5 percent chlorohexidine and 70-95 percent ethanol, and preventive attire. The ban also includes coronavirus testing requirements such as RNA process control kits, nasopharyngeal swab-viral transportation medium, Wuhan CoV E-gene, Wuhan CoV N-gene, Wuhan CoV RdRP-gene and EAV extraction control.

The ministry added in its statement that the department of commercial supervision and consumer protection has devised a plan to monitor prices of medical supplies at pharmacies and medical centers to ensure adherence to the standard criteria and regulations. Special teams have been assigned to inspect prices of medical products in the local market, it said, urging citizens and residents to call on the hotline 135 to report any irregularities in this respect. Health officials warned that they will close pharmacies that increase prices and violate the law.

Like most issues in the country, the coronavirus has turned into a political row. MP Saadoun Hammad claimed five suspected cases are being tested at Jaber Hospital, and called on the health ministry to be transparent regarding the disease. He said that the government should stop repatriating Kuwaitis from Iran and instead should house them in a hotel and test them there. MP Saleh Ashour however said that under the constitution, no one can stop a Kuwaiti citizen from returning to his country.

Some MPs however criticized the health minister for allegedly allowing some of those who returned from Iran to leave quarantine, but the minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah categorically denied the accusation. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said after the current crisis is resolved, he plans to file to grill the health minister for bowing to pressure by some MPs to let some people leave the quarantine. MPs Adel Al-Damkhi, Farraj Al-Arbeed and Hamdan Al-Azemi immediately declared their support of the grilling.

MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf said people should be kept in a well-prepared quarantine at a hospital and not at a hotel, adding that the political price of such behavior will be heavy. MP Majed Al-Mutairi also said the health ministry with its multibillion-dinar budget failed to prepare a proper quarantine for the people and kept them at a hotel.

National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem

## Qatar offers 10,000 jobs...

Continued from Page 1

US President Donald Trump in January gave a green

## Turmoil in Malaysia as Mahathir...

Continued from Page 1

Despite speculation that Mahathir was driving the attempts to form a new coalition, Anwar and other coalition partners insisted he was not involved. Anwar - who has a famously stormy relationship with Mahathir - said the premier assured him "he played no part" in the plot, and was "very clear that in no way will he ever work with those associated with the past regime". The proposed new coalition was reportedly set to include the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) - the party of disgraced ex-leader Najib Razak which was ejected from office two years ago.

Anwar and Mahathir had put their differences aside and joined forces to take on a corruption-plagued coalition led by UMNO at the 2018 polls. Mahathir, who previously served as premier from 1981 to 2003, had made a pre-election pledge to hand power to Anwar but refused to fix a date. Lim Guan Eng - a senior member of the Democratic Action Party, which formed part of the "Pact of Hope" alliance - said Mahathir resigned in protest at

light for Israel to declare sovereignty over all of Jerusalem as part of his Middle East peace plan. The plan proposes making Abu Dis - a rundown neighborhood on the outskirts of Jerusalem - the capital of a Palestinian state. Key US ally Jordan, the custodian of Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, is one of two Arab countries along with Egypt to sign a peace treaty with Israel. More than half of the kingdom's population is of Palestinian origin. — AFP

the "nefarious attempt" to topple the government.

"Mahathir clearly stated that he cannot work with UMNO when we worked so hard to reject UMNO successfully in the 2018 general elections," he said, adding his party would nominate Mahathir to continue as prime minister. As political tensions surged, Mahathir's Bersatu party quit the ruling coalition and several lawmakers resigned from Anwar's party, leaving the Pact of Hope in tatters and fuelling suggestions efforts could be underway to form a rival alliance. Mahathir also quit as Bersatu chairman.

Ibrahim Suffian, who heads independent polling firm Merdeka Centre, said Mahathir could come back as premier and the crisis may ultimately work in his favor. "It gives him an opportunity to reshape the ruling coalition," he told AFP. The final outcome of the drama is far from clear, however, with analysts saying a snap election could be called. Anwar had teamed up with former nemesis Mahathir to oust the government of Najib, who had become embroiled in the massive 1MDB graft scandal.

The pair's difficult relationship has dominated Malaysia's political landscape for over two decades. Anwar was sacked from government in the 1990s by Mahathir and then convicted of corruption and sodomy, in what his critics said was a politically motivated case, and they only reconciled before the election two years ago. — AFP

## National celebrations canceled as...

Continued from Page 1

The people will remain in isolation for 14 days to make sure that no one is infected with COVID-19, as more Kuwaitis are expected to be repatriated from Iran, including 140 students of religious studies in the holy city of Qom and their family members.

Kuwait has already banned flights and shipping from the Islamic republic, where 12 people have died, and extended the ban to neighboring Iraq, which also reported its first case of the virus. Kuwait also banned the entry of legal foreign residents who have been to Iran, Iraq or China. The ban also applies to those who have obtained visas. The Iraqi authorities also closed the Safwan land exit border with Kuwait upon Kuwait's request. Coastguard patrols announced foiling an attempt by eight Iranians to infiltrate into Kuwait by sea. They were arrested to be subjected to medical tests pending deportation.

Health Ministry Undersecretary Mustafa Reda affirmed yesterday that all citizens who arrived from Tehran and Qom are subjected to compulsory quarantine in order to ensure their health and protect society from COVID-19. He added in a joint press conference held at Seif Palace that all citizens have been placed in quarantine for 14 days after applying medical protocol. He stressed all citizens were aware of these measures before boarding the plane. Reda said they are healthy and have not yet shown any symptoms of the virus, adding those showing any symptoms will be transferred to hospital in order to receive appropriate treatment.

Kuwait Oil Company cancelled its celebration of the national holidays while many others are expected to follow suit. Kuwait Football Federation said it had cancelled an Asian club game between a Saudi and Iranian clubs that was due to be played in Kuwait because of a sports ban on Iranian teams.

Prices of masks shot up immediately by more than double, although the commerce ministry set the prices of regular surgical masks at 100 fils and the more advanced N95 masks at KD 1.320. Minister of Commerce and

called on the government to take all necessary and precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease in the country. MP Mohammad Al-Mutair threatened to question the prime minister if he does not stop repatriating more Kuwaitis from Iran, saying the government should rent a hotel for them and look after them there. He said that authorities should quarantine all those who returned from Iran recently, along with their family members, friends, colleagues and visitors of their diwanias to prevent the disease from spreading.

Bahrain, Iraq and Oman also reported their first cases of the disease, joining the United Arab Emirates which has so far discovered 13 cases, all of them foreigners. Oman's health ministry said two Omani women were diagnosed with the virus after arriving from Iran. Iraq said the new coronavirus was detected in an Iranian theology student in Najaf, who entered the country before it banned the entry of non-Iraqis coming from Iran. The Bahraini health ministry said a Bahraini citizen who arrived from Iran had been diagnosed with the virus.

The three Gulf countries yesterday halted all flights to Iran, with UAE also banning its citizens from traveling to Iran and Thailand because of the disease. With yesterday's announcements, only Saudi Arabia and Qatar are still free of the coronavirus that has already killed over 2,600, the overwhelming majority of them in China, the epicenter of the disease. Qatar Airways said yesterday it would ask passengers arriving from Iran and South Korea to remain in home isolation or a quarantine facility for 14 days.

Meanwhile, Iran's government vowed yesterday to be transparent after being accused of covering up the deadliest coronavirus outbreak outside China, dismissing a lawmaker's claim the toll could be as high as 50. The government announced Iran's coronavirus death toll had jumped by four to 12 - by far the highest outside China. But Ahmad Amirabadi Farahani, a lawmaker from the holy city of Qom, south of Tehran, alleged Iran's government was "lying" about the death toll. "As of last night, about 50 people have died" from the COVID-19 outbreak in Qom alone, he was quoted as saying by ILNA news agency after a closed session of parliament on the crisis.

The government rejected the claim. "I ask our brother who declared this figure of 50 deaths to provide us with a list of their names," said Deputy Health Minister Iraj Harirchi. "If the number of deaths in Qom reaches half or a quarter of this figure, I will resign." Iran has been

scrambling to contain COVID-19 since Wednesday when it announced the first two deaths in Qom, a center for Islamic studies and pilgrims that attracts scholars from abroad. Authorities have ordered the closure of schools, universities and other educational centers across the country as a "preventive measure".

But it has not all been doom and gloom. A video has gone viral of young men greeting each other by tapping their feet together to avoid infection, instead of shaking hands or the increasingly common fist-bump. The government also vowed to be open about the disease's spread. "We will announce any figures (we have) on the number of deaths throughout the country. We pledge to be transparent about the reporting of figures," spokesman Ali Rabieei said.

Assadollah Abbassi, a spokesman for Iran's parliament, announced the latest four deaths among 61 infections after yesterday's session. Citing Health Minister Said Namaki, he said "the cause of coronavirus infections in Iran are people who have entered the country illegally from Pakistan, Afghanistan and China". After reporting two deaths in Qom, Iran has yet to give a breakdown of where the other patients died.

The province worst hit by infections is Qom, with 34 cases, according to official figures. The others are in Tehran with 13 infections, Gilan with six, Markazi with four, Isfahan with two and one each for Hamedan and Mazandaran. The health minister said one person who died in Qom was a businessman who had made trips to China. Namaki said direct flights between Iran and China had been suspended, but the Qom businessman had travelled there "on a connecting flight". Iran's Mahan Air said it had stopped China services this month, apart from eight flights to deliver virus aid to China and return people under the health ministry's supervision.

The World Health Organization yesterday said the new coronavirus epidemic had "peaked" in China but warned that a surge in cases elsewhere was "deeply concerning" and all countries should prepare for a "potential pandemic". WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the peak in China occurred between Jan 23 and Feb 2 and the number of new cases there "has been declining steadily since then." "This virus can be contained," he told reporters in Geneva, praising China for helping to prevent an even bigger spread of the disease through unprecedented lockdowns and quarantines in or near the outbreak's epicenter.



Sports

# Capitals down Penguins in battle for first place in Metropolitan Division

## Theodore nets winner in OT as Knights top Duck

WASHINGTON: T.J. Oshie scored the go-ahead goal midway through the third period Sunday as the Washington Capitals topped the visiting Pittsburgh Penguins 5-3 in a battle for first place in the Metropolitan Division. Oshie's goal came at 10:40 off a short-range rebound. Carl Hagelin added an empty-netter, his second goal of the game. The Capitals, who snapped a four-game losing streak, moved two points ahead of Pittsburgh, which has a game in hand. Jakub Vrana and Tom Wilson also scored for Washington. Braden Holtby made 32 saves. Patric Hornqvist, Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin scored for Pittsburgh, which lost its third straight. Matt Murray made 18 saves.

### GOLDEN KNIGHTS 6, DUCKS 5 (OT)

Shea Theodore scored the winning goal with 1:10 remaining in overtime and William Karlsson had a hat trick as visiting Vegas won its sixth consecutive game in defeating Anaheim. Karlsson snapped a 20-game drought without a goal for his third career hat trick. Mark Stone finished with four assists for Vegas, which has the longest active winning streak in the NHL. Max Pacioretty added two assists and Malcolm Subban finished with 25 saves. Adam Henrique and Nick Ritchie each had two goals and two assists, while Devin Shore also scored for Anaheim, which lost its fourth straight game. Gibson stopped 22 of 28 shots.

### ISLANDERS 4, SHARKS 1

Anders Lee scored twice for New York, which moved back into sole possession of a wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference by beating visiting San Jose in Uniondale, N.Y. The win was the second straight following a four-game losing streak for the Islanders, who snapped a three-way tie for the two wild-card spots with the idle Carolina Hurricanes and Columbus Blue Jackets. The Sharks fell to 0-3-0 on a four-game East Coast trip.

## Fury prepares for hero's return

LONDON: Tyson Fury will return to Britain hailed as a hero after his demolition of Deontay Wilder completed a remarkable redemption story as anticipation grows over an all-British unification bout against Anthony Joshua.

The self-styled "Gypsy King" brought Wilder's five-year reign as WBC heavyweight champion to a dramatic halt in the seventh round of their rematch in Las Vegas Saturday.

It is an astonishing comeback for the 31-year-old, who battled depression, drink and drug problems that threatened to end his career in the years after he beat Wladimir Klitschko for the WBA, IBF and WBO belts in 2015.

The controversial British heavyweight has made no secret about his battles with mental health issues and cocaine use and said at one stage he considered suicide. Fury's licence to box was suspended by the British Boxing Board of Control in 2016 pending further investigation into "anti-doping and medical issues".

He was cleared to fight again in December 2017 by UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) after accepting a backdated two-year ban for testing positive for the banned steroid nandrolone. At one point the boxer, named after fearsome former undisputed world heavyweight champion Mike Tyson, was drinking 18 pints of beer a day with whisky and vodka chasers.

"When you have a goal in mind from being a child — and you achieve it... I was lost, I didn't know what to do," he told the Joe Rogan podcast in 2018. "When I was an amateur I used to watch Wladimir Klitschko on TV and he was my target, when I beat him, that was my Everest.

## Ewan sprints to victory on UAE Tour

HATTA: Australian Caleb Ewan sprinted to victory in the second stage of the UAE Tour yesterday, taking the overall lead in the process, while Chris Froome was dropped by the peloton.

The 25-year-old Ewan, who also won two stages on the Tour Down Under earlier this year, edged out Irishman Sam Bennett on the up-hill climb at the finish to take the win at Hatta Dam for a second straight year.

"We thought today's stage was going to be harder, but because there was no wind, it turned out fairly easy," said Ewan. The Australian took the lead in the general classification as first-stage winner Pascal Ackermann fell away on the penultimate climb.

Four-time Tour de France winner Froome, racing for the first time since a horror crash during training at the Criterium du Dauphine last June, was dropped by the leaders eight kilometres from the finish, ending 111th at 3min 46sec.

Frenchman Arnaud Demare was third on the day after the 168km ride from Hatta to Hatta Dam. Tuesday's 184km third stage ends with a challenging final climb of 10.6km, with a seven percent average gradient, at Jebel Hafeet.

### Second-stage results:

1. Caleb Ewan (AUS/LOT) 168km in 4hr 18min 16sec, 2. Sam Bennett (IRL/DEC) at 2sec, 3. Arnaud Demare (FRA/FDJ) 4sec, 4. Diego Ulissi (ITA/UAE) same time, 5. Rick Zabel (GER/ICA) s.t., 6. Andrea Vendrame (ITA/ALM) s.t., 7. Luka Mezgec (SLO/MIT) s.t., 8. Adam Yates (GBR/MIT) s.t., 9. Tadej Pogacar (SLO/UAE) s.t., 10. David Gaudu (FRA/FDJ) s.t.

### SABRES 2, JETS 1

Kyle Okposo scored both goals, rookie goalie Jonas Johansson recorded his first NHL victory and Buffalo beat visiting Winnipeg. Okposo netted markers in the first and third periods and stretched his point streak to four games — four goals and one assist — in the five games since his return from a six-game absence. An American Hockey League All-Star this season for the Rochester Americans, Johansson won for the first time by making 25 saves in his third career start.

### OILERS 4, KINGS 2

Connor McDavid delivered a goal and two assists in his return to the ice, helping Edmonton over host Los Angeles. McDavid, Leon Draisaitl, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Josh Archibald scored for the Oilers, while Anze Kopitar and Dustin Brown had goals for the Kings. McDavid looked like he hadn't missed a step during his time on the injured list. The 23-year-old center, who missed six games with a quadriceps injury sustained Feb. 8 against the Nashville Predators, logged 19 minutes, 22 seconds of ice time and had six shots on goal along with his three points.

### FLAMES 4, RED WINGS 2

Andrew Mangiapane scored two goals, Sean Monahan had a goal and an assist and Calgary began a five-game road trip with a victory over Detroit. Johnny Gaudreau also scored for the Flames while Noah Hanifin had two assists. David Rittich made 27 saves to pick up the victory. Facing the club with the NHL's worst record, the Flames never trailed.

### BLUES 4, WILD 1

Oskar Sundqvist scored a goal and set up another as visiting St. Louis defeated Minnesota. Jordan Kyrou, Brayden Schenn and Ivan Barbashev also scored for

"I tried retiring, but it wasn't enough. I tried golfing, clay-pigeon shooting, 4x4-ing, strip clubs but I had an emptiness inside."

### SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Fury's weight ballooned to 28 stone (178 kilograms) and his mental state spiralled out of control to the extent that he considered ending his own life. "I would start thinking these crazy thoughts," he said. "I bought a brand new Ferrari convertible in the summer of 2016. I was in it on the highway and at the bottom, I got the car up to 190mph and heading towards a bridge.

"I didn't care about nothing, I just wanted to die so bad. I gave up on life, but as I was heading to the bridge I heard a voice saying, 'No, don't do this Tyson, think about your kids, your family, your sons and daughter growing up without a dad.'"

In his autobiography "Behind The Mask" he thanks his wife Paris, whom he met as a teenager, for sticking with him through the bad times. "I can't really put into words how much it means to me that Paris stuck with me and the pain it causes me when I look back to how low I brought her, because she didn't deserve it," he wrote. Fury has found himself helping others who find themselves in desperate circumstances.

"A random stranger came to my house tonight and told me he was about to commit suicide but that he needed to speak to me first before he did it," he revealed to his social media followers in December.

"So, obviously me being me I talked him out of it and took him on a three-mile run. He left as happy as Larry and it seems to have worked." While his openness and honesty have earned him plaudits, he has attracted criticism for his controversial comments on issues including homosexuality and the role of women.

Fury has said his outspoken remarks are linked to



WASHINGTON: Sidney Crosby #87 of the Pittsburgh Penguins in action against the Washington Capitals at Capital One Arena in Washington, DC. — AFP

the Western Conference-leading Blues, who have allowed just two goals during a four-game winning streak. Blues goaltender Jordan Binnington made 32 saves to win this third consecutive start.

### STARS 2, BLACKHAWKS 1

Tyler Seguin scored the go-ahead goal late in the

second period as Dallas skated past visiting Chicago. Joe Pavelski also tallied and Anton Khudobin made 31 saves for Dallas, which improved to 6-1-1 in its past eight games. Rookie Dominik Kubalik scored and Corey Crawford made 31 saves and even stopped a penalty shot for the Blackhawks, who dropped to 3-7-2 in their past dozen games. — Reuters



Tyson Fury

racism he experienced due to his Irish Traveller background. "I went into the paid ranks off the back of an amateur career during which I was aware of racism against travellers," he said in his autobiography.

"I felt I had to act out a role to seek publicity and to do that I had to be controversial and shock people with how I talked." Fury and Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn are both expecting Wilder, who has a re-match clause, to ask for a third fight with Fury but Hearn is impatient to stage "the biggest fight in the history of the sport". "No need for a third let's go straight to it in the summer!" he tweeted. Fury's feats have captured the imagination of a nation. He is potentially one fight away from immortality. — AFP

## Farah caught up in controversy over 2014 London Marathon injection

LONDON: Mo Farah repeatedly denied to the United States Anti-Doping Agency taking a legal supplement prior to the 2014 London Marathon, before changing his account once he learned the doctor who injected him had told the investigators he had taken it, the BBC reported yesterday.

The four-time Olympic champion had been asked by USADA whether he had been injected with L-carnitine, a naturally occurring amino acid, as part of its investigation into his former coach Alberto Salazar.

The supplement had been obtained through a contact of Salazar's in Switzerland. As a result of the overall investigation, Salazar has been banned from athletics for four years over doping violations.

Two of Salazar's violations relate to using a banned method to administer an infusion of L-carnitine. The US coach, who is appealing against his ban at the Court of Arbitration for Sport, led the Nike Oregon Project training group, where Farah was a star name from 2011-2017.

According to the BBC, Farah — who finished eighth in what was his first London Marathon in 2014 — was questioned by USADA officials investigating Salazar for nearly five hours a year after the injections took place. In a transcript of the interview seen by the BBC, Farah repeatedly denied he had been injected.

"If someone said that you were taking L-carnitine injections, are they not telling the truth?" asked a USADA investigator. Farah replied: "Definitely not telling the truth, 100 percent. I've never taken L-carnitine injections at all."

He is then asked: "Are you sure that Alberto Salazar hasn't recommended that you take L-carnitine injections?" Farah responds: "No, I've never taken L-carnitine injections." He is asked again: "You're absolutely sure that you didn't have a doctor put a butterfly needle... into your arm... and inject L-carnitine a few days before the London marathon?"

Farah says: "No. No chance." He then left the room but returned soon afterwards with a different account, apparently after speaking with UK Athletics (UKA) head of distance running Barry Fudge. Fudge had told USADA the previous day that Farah had been injected. Farah then returned to the investigators and said: "So I just wanted to come clear, sorry guys, and I did take it at the time and I thought I didn't." He is asked: "So you received L-carnitine... before the London marathon?" Farah answers: "Yeah."

He adds: "There was a lot of talk before... and Alberto's always thinking about 'What's the best thing?' 'What's the best thing?'" The USADA investigator then said: "A few days before the race... with... Alberto present and your doctor (Dr Robin Chakraverty, then UKA's chief medical officer) and Barry Fudge and you're telling us all about that now but you didn't remember any of that when I... kept asking you about this?"

Farah responds: "It all comes back for me, but at the time I didn't remember." Farah — who will bid for a third 10,000 metres Olympic title later this year in Japan having abandoned his experiment to switch to the marathon — declined to comment to the BBC but his lawyers issued a letter. — AFP

## India to host Commonwealth shooting event

LONDON: India will host a Commonwealth archery and shooting championships six months ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games, which are being held in the British city of Birmingham.

The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) said the event in Chandigarh in January 2022 and the main Games would be separately organised and funded. But a week after the Birmingham closing ceremony it will issue a medal table including the Chandigarh results "as a further and final legitimate ranking of competing nations and territories from the respective competitions".

Birmingham decided not to include shooting or archery in its programme for the 2022 Games, which will take place from July 27 to August 7. India, which has a good record in shooting at the Commonwealth Games, initially threatened to boycott the Games but dropped that threat in December.

CGF president Dame Louise Martin said: "I am delighted that we have approved India's ambitious proposal to host a Commonwealth archery and shooting championships in Chandigarh during 2022.

"Commonwealth archery and shooting athletes now have an unprecedented opportunity to compete in an elite event that will showcase the very best of Commonwealth sport and add value to the Commonwealth sports movement." The Commonwealth is an association of 54 countries, largely made up of former British colonies. — AFP



HATTA: Caleb Ewan of Lotto-Soudal cycling team waves as he poses holding the stage winner trophy after winning the second stage of the UAE Cycling Tour from Hatta to Hatta Dam yesterday. — AFP

### General classification

1. Caleb Ewan (AUS/Lotto) 7hrs 47min 19sec, 2. Sam Bennett (IRL/DEC) at 12sec, 3. Arnaud Demare (FRA/FDJ) 16sec, 4. Nikolay Cherkasov (RUS/GAZ) 17sec, 5. Alexey Lutsenko (KAZ/AST) 19sec, 6. Luka Mezgec (SLO/MIT) 20sec, 7. Andrea Vendrame (ITA/ALM) same time, 8. Rick Zabel (GER/ICA) s.t., 9. Wilco Kelderman (NED/SUN) s.t., 10. David Gaudu (FRA/FDJ) s.t.

### Selected:

18. Adam Yates (GBR/MIT) 20sec, 106. Chris Froome (GBR/INE) 4min 2.124sec, Mark Cavendish (GBR/BAH) 7:21. — AFP

## Sports

# New Zealand restore pride by thrashing India in first Test

## Victory was N Zealand's 100th since playing Tests in 1930

SCOREBOARD	
Final New Zealand v India first Test scoreboard on day four at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday:	
<b>India 1st innings 165</b> (A. Rahane 46; K. Jamieson 4-39, T. Southee 4-49)	
<b>New Zealand 1st innings 348</b> (K. Williamson 89, R. Taylor 44, K. Jamieson 44; I. Sharma 5-68, R. Ashwin 3-99)	
<b>India 2nd innings</b> (overnight 144-4)	
P. Shaw c Latham b Boult	14
M. Agarwal c Watling b Southee	58
C. Pujara b Boult	11
V. Kohli c Watling b Boult	19
A. Rahane c Watling b Boult	29
H. Vihari b Southee	15
R. Pant c Boult b Southee	25
R. Ashwin lbw Souttee	4
I. Sharma lbw de Grandhomme	12
M. Shami not out	2
J. Bumrah c sub (Mitchell) b Southee	0
Extras (w2)	2
Total (all out, 81 overs)	191
Fall of wickets: 1-27 (Shaw), 2-78 (Pujara), 3-96 (Agarwal), 4-113 (Kohli), 5-148 (Rahane), 6-148 (Vihari), 7-162 (Ashwin), 8-189 (Sharma), 9-191 (Pant), 10-191 (Bumrah)	
Bowling: Southee 21-6-61-5, Boult 22-8-39-4, de Grandhomme 16-5-28-1, Jamieson 19-7-45-0 (2w), Patel 3-0-18-0.	
<b>New Zealand 2nd innings</b>	
T. Latham not out	7
T. Blundell not out	2
Extras	0
Total (0 wickets, 1.4 overs)	9
<b>Bowling:</b> Sharma 1-0-8-0, Bumrah 0-4-0-1-0	
<b>Result:</b> New Zealand won by 10 wickets.	

**WELLINGTON:** With a dark cloud hanging over New Zealand cricket since last month's humiliating 3-0 defeat in Australia, Kane Williamson's side delivered the perfect response to their critics with a 10-wicket win over India in the first Test yesterday.

The victory was New Zealand's 100th since they began playing Tests in 1930. It came against a side unbeaten in their last nine tests and one that had won all seven of their previous World Test Championship matches.

The return of New Zealand pace spearheads Tim Southee and Trent Boult and the introduction of 2.03m-tall debutant Kyle Jamieson proved crucial against the tourists, also the world's top-ranked Test side.

They exploited a tricky Basin Reserve wicket to bowl India out for under 200 twice with Jamieson's height and delivery angle providing plenty of problems.

Virat Kohli's side lost their final six wickets for 47 runs as Boult and Southee combined to rip through the lower middle order and then finish off the tail. Southee completed his 10th five-wicket haul in Tests with 5-61.

Tom Latham finished seven not out while Tom Blundell was on two as they knocked off the nine runs needed for victory in just 10 balls after the visitors were dismissed for 191 in their second innings. "It was a great win and to beat a quality Indian side is very pleasing," said Southee, named man of the match for figures of 9-110.

Jamieson's emergence as a pace bowling threat who can also bat — he scored 44 in New Zealand's first innings — could create some selection issues with Neil Wagner coming back for the second game starting at Hagley Oval on Saturday.

"The performance across the board was a very good one," captain Williamson told reporters. "We know we have good days and bad days but guys came back ... and really focused on the areas we needed to move this team forward. "That was the most pleasing performance."

Kohli held his hand up and conceded his side had not been good enough but added that it was only one defeat. "Some people might want it to be the end of the world, but it's not. For us it's a game of cricket," he said. "We lost and we move on, we keep our heads high."

On the plus side for the visitors, Ishant Sharma took 5-68 in New Zealand's first innings after returning from a torn ankle ligament and was especially effective when they



**WELLINGTON:** India's Ishant Sharma plays a shot during day four of the first Test cricket match between New Zealand and India at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday. — AFP

reduced the hosts to 225-7 on day three.

India had started the day on 144-4, still 39 runs behind, and their hopes of setting a decent target rested with the last recognised batsmen — vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane and Hanuma Vihari — seeing out the first session unscathed. But Boult, in his second over, enticed an edge from Rahane when he was on 29 and wicketkeeper BJ Watling completed an easy catch. Vihari had not added to his overnight score of 15 when he was bowled by Southee in the next over.

Southee then had Ravichandran Ashwin trapped in front for four to reduce India to 162-7.

After taking India past New Zealand's first innings with a four off Jamieson, Ishant (12) was then trapped in front by Colin de Grandhomme in the next over before Southee had Rishabh Pant caught by Boult at fine leg for 25.

Southee wrapped up the innings on the sixth delivery with the second new ball when Jasprit Bumrah was caught in the slips for a duck. Kohli said being dismissed for 165 in the first innings had been crucial.

"As a batting unit we take pride in being competitive, but we weren't," he said. "Even scoring 220-230 would've been good. That first innings put us behind and then the lead put us under more pressure." — Reuters

## Australia avert elimination, India dominate Bangladesh

**SYDNEY:** Defending champions Australia returned from the brink of elimination to pip Sri Lanka but India underlined their title credentials with their second successive victory in the Women's Twenty20 World Cup in Perth yesterday.

Australia were stunned by India in Friday's tournament opener and the hosts looked patchy again as they edged out Sri Lanka by five wickets to keep alive their hopes of a fifth title.

Later at the same WACA Ground, India were much more clinical in their 18-run victory against Bangladesh. Sri Lanka captain Chamari Atapattu had led from the front with a belligerent 50 to help her team post 122-6 after electing to bat.

Free-scoring Atapattu smacked two sixes and seven boundaries in her entertaining 38-ball innings before falling to Nicola Carey (2-18). Umesha Thimashini (20), Anushka Sanjeevani (25) and Nilakshi de Silva (18) were unable to convert their good starts into match-winning contributions.

Australia, in reply, ran into trouble early and were reeling at 10-3 in the fourth over after Alyssa Healy, Ashleigh Gardner and Beth Mooney departed in quick succession. It was the 95-run stand between Rachael Haynes (60) and skipper Meg Lanning (41 not out) that rescued the hosts.

Sri Lanka did not help their own cause by dropping Haynes and burning their reviews which meant they could not challenge the not-out decision after Lanning had edged behind. "World Cup tournaments aren't easy. You have to keep winning, that's the nature of the beast," player-of-the-match Haynes said after Australia won with three balls to spare.

"I'm sure there were a couple of nerves today but to be able to get over the line right at the end will hopefully create some momentum for the rest of the tournament."

Put into bat in the later match, India posted a competitive 142-6 with opener Shafali Verma putting on a six-hitting display in her 17-ball blitz.

Playing without regular partner Smriti Mandhana, who missed the match with fever, the 16-year-old sensation Verma smashed four sixes before falling for 39. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur disappointed again but Jemima Rodrigues scored a breezy 34 and Veda Krishnamurthy made a quickfire 20 not out even though the 150-mark eluded India.

Poonam Yadav's 4-19 had destroyed Australia on Friday and the 28-year-old tormented Bangladesh too with her loopy leg-breaks to claim 3-18. Opener Murshida Khatun (30) and Nigar Sultana (35) batted fluently but Bangladesh could never really accelerate and eventually managed 124-8. — Reuters

## Mushfiqur hits double ton to corner Zimbabwe

**DHAKA:** Mushfiqur Rahim hit his third Test double century as Bangladesh declared their first innings with a lead of 295 yesterday in their one-off match against Zimbabwe. Bangladesh ended their innings on 560 for six in the final session before spinner Nayeem Hasan then claimed two wickets in two balls in the first over in Dhaka.

The visitors reached nine for two at stumps on the third day, still needing 286 runs to make Bangladesh bat again on a wearing pitch at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. Mushfiqur, who became the highest run-scorer for Bangladesh in Tests, hit an unbeaten 203, while skipper Mominul Haque made 132, after the hosts resumed on 240 for three.

Mushfiqur and Mominul added 222 for the fourth wicket, while wicketkeeper-batsman Liton Das made 53 to give the hosts their highest-ever total against Zimbabwe. Mominul declared the innings soon after Mushfiqur reached the 200-run mark after Ainsley Ndlovu past extra cover for a boundary. Nayeem struck with the second ball of the innings, bowling Prince Masvaure for a duck, before dismissing nightwatchman Doland Tiripano.

Bangladesh made Zimbabwe wait until the second session of the day for their first success, when Ndlovu took a brilliant reflex catch off his own bowling to dismiss Mominul. Mominul had brought up his ninth Test

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the one-off Test between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday:	
<b>Zimbabwe first innings 265</b> (C. Ervine 107; Abu Jayed 4-71, Nayeem Hasan 4-70)	394 (Mominul Haque), 5-421 (Mithun), 6-532 (Liton Das)
<b>Bangladesh first innings</b> (overnight 240-3, Mominul 79, Mushfiqur 32)	Bowling: Tiripano 30-6-96-1 (nb2, w4), Nyauchi 27-3-87-1 (w1, nb2), Raza 30-2-111-1 (nb1), Tshuma 25-2-85-1, Ndlovu 42-4-170-2
Tamim Iqbal c Chakabva b Tiripano	41
Saif Hasan c Chakabva b Nyauchi	8
Najmul Hossain c Chakabva b Tshuma	71
Mominul Haque c & b Ndlovu	132
Mushfiqur Rahim not out	203
Mohammad Mithun c Chakabva b Ndlovu	17
Liton Das c Chakabva b Sikandar Raza	53
Tajjul Islam not out	14
Extras (b8, lb3, nb5, w5)	21
Total (6 wickets dec; 154 overs)	560
Did not bat: Ebadot Hossain, Nayeem Hasan, Abu Jayed	
Fall of wickets: 1-18 (Saif), 2-96 (Tamim), 3-172 (Najmul Hossain), 4-	
<b>Zimbabwe second innings</b>	
P. Masvaure b Nayeem	0
K. Kaszura not out	8
D. Tiripano c Liton b Nayeem	0
B. Taylor not out	1
Extras	0
Total (2 wickets, five overs)	9
To Bat: C. Ervine, T. Maruma, S. Raza, R. Chakabva, V. Nyauchi, A. Ndlovu, C. Tshuma	
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Masvaure), 2-0 (Tiripano)	
Bowling: Nayeem 3-1-4-2, Tajjul 2-0-5-0.	

hundred off 156 balls, joining teammate Tamim Iqbal as Bangladesh's most prolific century-makers in the five-day format.

Mominul, unbeaten on 79 overnight, struck 14 fours in his 234-ball innings — his first hundred since becoming Bangladesh Test captain in November. Mushfiqur, who resumed on 32, was one run short of his century at lunch but did not take long after the break to bring up his hundred, cutting Ndlovu for a boundary through cover point.

Ndlovu removed Mohammad Mithun for 17 to give Zimbabwe hope and slow the Bangladeshi scoring rate. Mithun got a bottom edge as he tried to cut Ndlovu as wicketkeeper Regis Chakabva took his fourth catch of

the innings.

Liton fell to off-spinner Sikandar Raza trying to cut a ball that was too close to his body as Zimbabwe wicketkeeper Regis Chakabva completed his fifth catch in the innings. After Liton's dismissal, it was Mushfiqur all over as the senior Bangladesh campaigner attacked in pursuit of his double century.

At 195 runs he also overtook Tamim to become Bangladesh's highest run-getter. He now has 4,413 runs from 70 Tests, with Tamim scoring 4,364 from 59.

Zimbabwe skipper Craig Ervine top-scored with 107 in the visitors' first innings of 265, while Bangladesh paceman Abu Jayed and Nayeem claimed four wickets each. — AFP

## Five talking points in European football

**PARIS:** Barcelona moved clear at the top of La Liga, while Paris Saint-Germain won despite having Neymar sent off, and the coronavirus wrought havoc with the Serie A fixture card.

AFP Sport looks at some of the main talking points from the weekend across Europe:

### BARCA WITH EDGE AHEAD OF CLASICO

Despite political in-fighting and alienating their star player, Barcelona moved top of La Liga to leave Real Madrid playing catch-up again ahead of next weekend's Clasico. Madrid have been the form team for the last few months, a 21-match unbeaten run seemingly putting them in pole position to become league champions for only the second time in eight years.

Yet a 1-0 defeat at Levante on Saturday, following a draw at home to Celta Vigo, has allowed their rivals back in, with Madrid failing to capitalise on the instability of Barca, who hammered Eibar 5-0.

Given both teams' inconsistencies, the Clasico at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday will not prove decisive. But the psychological impact of a defeat could be difficult to recover from.

### IS CAVANI THE MAN FOR PSG IN EUROPE?

While Neymar was sent off in Paris Saint-Germain's 4-3 win over Bordeaux, Edinson Cavani underlined his status as a supporters' idol by scoring his 200th PSG goal. The Uruguayan is the club's record goal-scorer but has been a bit-part player this

season, behind Mauro Icardi in the pecking order. He almost left for Atletico Madrid in January.

His goal against Bordeaux was his seventh of the season on just his ninth start, and maybe the 33-year-old should be in the starting line-up for their Champions League last-16 second leg against Borussia Dortmund on March 11.

"It was a difficult time for me, honestly," Cavani said as he reflected on his aborted transfer. Of the competition with Icardi, he added: "The competition for places is good, and is just part of football."

### LAZIO MAINTAIN PURSUIT AMID CORONAVIRUS FEARS

A first Serie A title in 20 years remains a real possibility for Lazio after their 3-2 win at Genoa kept them within a point of league leaders Juventus. Ciro Immobile scored his 27th goal of the season in the win for Lazio, who have won 16 of 20 games in an unbeaten run stretching back to September.

Juventus beat SPAL 2-1 away, but Inter are now six points off top spot in third after their game against Sampdoria was one of four Serie A fixtures postponed because of the coronavirus outbreak in northern Italy. Juve are due to host Inter next weekend, but that game could now be played behind closed doors as authorities battle to contain the outbreak.

### YES WE CAN

Teenage starlet Erling Braut Haaland has grabbed the column inches since arriving at Borussia

Dortmund. However, it is another January arrival in midfielder Emre Can who appears to have helped Dortmund address the area which has truly worried them for seasons now: defensive frailty.

After conceding nine goals in their first five games after the winter break, Can has established himself at the heart of Dortmund's midfield. The German international was outstanding in the 2-1 win over PSG last week, but while his physicality has been impressive, it is his maturity which appears to be the missing piece of Dortmund's puzzle.

After Saturday's 2-0 win over Werder Bremen, the former Liverpool, Juventus and Bayern Munich player said: "I am very happy to be here. I settled in very well in a few weeks and it's a lot of fun to play here in Dortmund."

### GALATASARAY CLAIM DERBY HONOURS

Galatasaray triumphed in Turkey's most explosive fixture, crossing the Bosphorus to the Asian side to beat Fenerbahce 3-1 in the Intercontinental derby, their first league victory over their rivals since 2014.

A Max Kruse penalty put Fener in front, but Ryan Donk equalised before Radamel Falcao's spot-kick and a Henry Onyekuru strike gave the visitors the victory. Both sides finished the game with 10 men.

Reigning champions Galatasaray are now in a three-way tie at the top of Turkey's Super Lig alongside Trabzonspor and Sivasspor. Fenerbahce, whose last title came in 2014, are seven points back in sixth. — AFP

Sports

# Neymar sent off as PSG beat Bordeaux in seven-goal thriller

## Cavani scores 200th Paris Saint-Germain goal

PARIS: Edinson Cavani scored his 200th Paris Saint-Germain goal and Marquinhos netted twice as the Ligue 1 leaders bounced back from their Champions League defeat by Borussia Dortmund to beat Bordeaux 4-3 on Sunday, but their victory was marred by Neymar's late sending-off.

After losing 2-1 in Germany in their Champions League last 16 first leg in midweek, PSG's defensive weaknesses were again exposed as South Korean international Hwang Ui-jo gave Bordeaux the lead at the Parc des Princes.

PSG turned it around thanks to goals by Cavani and Kylian Mbappe either side of a Marquinhos brace, but at the other end there was a bizarre goal credited to the Brazilian defender Pablo and a Ruben Pardo strike had the home side hanging on at the finish.

The evening concluded with Neymar being sent off in stoppage time for a second yellow card for grappling with Bordeaux's Yacine Adli, leaving the world's most expensive player facing a suspension.

Along with the shortcomings at the back, it is another problem for coach Thomas Tuchel to think about, even if his team are now 13 points clear atop Ligue 1 from Marseille, who lost 3-1 to Nantes on Saturday.

"He is human too and he was angry. The guy who fouled him just before was not even booked, so it was a bit bizarre," said Tuchel of Neymar's sending-off. "We have let in seven goals in the last two league games and that is not normal. It is difficult to get back confidence, but the best thing for us was to win. That gives us a base to build on."

Another domestic title has looked inevitable for some time, although it will all feel rather hollow should the Qatar-owned club fail to turn around the Dortmund tie when the sides meet again on March 11.

Tuchel came in for criticism after Tuesday's game,

including veiled criticism from Neymar over the handling of his latest injury. Tuchel also admitted he was less than impressed at his squad after videos appeared on social media of them out partying on Thursday night to celebrate the birthdays of Cavani, Angel di Maria and Mauro Icardi.

A banner at one end of the Parc des Princes on Sunday asked the players if they "deserved to wear the colours. Find out on March 11". They endured a bad start against mid-table Bordeaux, with skipper Thiago Silva going off hurt just before Hwang put the away side in front on 18 minutes, heading in a corner for his sixth Ligue 1 goal.

PSG were level in the 25th minute, though, as Di Maria's cross was headed in by Cavani, allowing the Uruguayan to reach a double century of PSG goals. He then hit the post from close range before Marquinhos put Paris in front in first-half stoppage time, using his shoulder to convert Di Maria's free-kick.

Nevertheless, there was still time for Bordeaux to equalise at 2-2 before the interval. Selected ahead of Keylor Navas in goal, Sergio Rico's clearance from a Marco Verratti back-pass struck Pablo and the Spaniard looked on in horror as the ball ricocheted back into the net.

However, Marquinhos netted from close range for his second of the night in the 63rd minute to make it 3-2. Then, when Ruben Pardo lost possession, Cavani set up Mbappe to score PSG's fourth, and his 16th in the league this season.

Pardo made some amends with a stunning strike for Bordeaux's third, and the ninth goal Paris have conceded in three games altogether. Icardi then had another goal disallowed before Neymar was sent off for his second yellow at the death.

"They have had quite a difficult week in terms of



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani (R) kicks the ball during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Girondins de Bordeaux at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. — AFP

results and their confidence has taken a knock too," said Bordeaux's Laurent Koscielny of PSG. "When you lose points and games then your confidence can quickly disappear but they are great players and they are

capable of overcoming that."

Earlier on Sunday, Rennes reclaimed third place from Lille by coming from behind to beat Nimes 2-1 as M'Baye Niang scored twice. — AFP



Matches on TV  
(Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

SSC Napoli v FC Barcelona	23:00
beIN Sports HD 1	
Chelsea FC v Bayern Munich	23:00
beIN Sports HD 2	

## Mueller ready to show Chelsea what Germany is missing

BERLIN: A year after being dumped by Germany head coach Joachim Loew, Thomas Mueller is set to showcase why he is so important for Bayern Munich - and Robert Lewandowski - at Chelsea in the Champions League.

Alongside Erling Braut Haaland, Bayern's star striker Lewandowski is joint top-scorer in the Champions League with 10 goals going into the last 16, first-leg clash today. In order to keep him fresh, Mueller was a second-half replacement in Friday's 3-2 league win over bottom side Paderborn when Lewandowski netted twice.

The Poland striker is on a career-high 38 goals after 32 games in all competitions and is happiest with Mueller alongside him. "It's easier with Thomas next to me, he helps me out a lot," Lewandowski has said of Mueller.

"We always have one player more in the penalty area when he plays, I have more space and not always two or three opponents against me." It's no coincidence that Lewandowski is enjoying his highest goal tally just when Mueller's 14 assists in Germany's top flight also puts him near his personal best.

The 30-year-old is back to his best after significant setbacks for club and country in 2019. Alongside fellow 2014 World Cup winners Mats Hummels and Jerome Boateng, Mueller was told last March he was no longer needed by Germany as Joachim Loew rebuilt his squad following the 2018 World Cup debacle.

Then last autumn, Mueller found himself repeatedly benched by Bayern to make room for Philippe Coutinho, who is on loan from Barcelona. When Niko Kovac was sacked in November, caretaker coach Hansi Flick restored Mueller to the starting line-up, often at Coutinho's expense, and he has flourished.

Mueller was superb in their recent 4-1 win at Cologne, drawing defenders to create goals for Kingsley Coman and Lewandowski as Bayern raced into a 3-0 lead after 12 minutes. Flick is probably wise to pick Mueller, who joined Bayern as a schoolboy in 2000 and made his first-team debut in 2009 just before his 19th birthday.

Such lengthy service means he has the ear of the club's senior bosses and an unhappy Mueller is never good for a Bayern coach in the long run. His relationship with Pep Guardiola became strained after Mueller was benched for the 2016 Champions League semi-final, first-leg defeat at Atletico Madrid.

Mueller was part of a disgruntled group of senior players whose complaints contributed to the sacking of Guardiola's successor Carlo Ancelotti in 2017 after poor results. Mueller then became so frustrated under Kovac that his wife Lisa criticised the coach in a social media post just before he was replaced by Flick.

What makes Mueller unique is that he is neither a striker, nor an attacking midfielder, but describes himself as a "Raumdeuter" - an interpreter of space. He is at his deadliest with perfectly-timed runs and quick passes so that his presence in the penalty area creates space for Lewandowski. "I like to be active in the space in behind the opposition's midfield," Mueller has said on his favourite position. "That's where I can hurt the opponent most. I'm a mix between a striker and a midfielder - I'm a 'Raumdeuter'." —AFP



MADRID: Villarreal's Spanish defender Alberto Moreno (R) challenges Atletico Madrid's Croatian defender Sime Vrsaljko during the Spanish league football match Club Atletico de Madrid against Villarreal CF at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium in Madrid. —AFP

## Felix back with a bang as Atletico beat Villarreal

MADRID: Atletico Madrid followed up their surprise win over Liverpool by beating Villarreal in La Liga on Sunday as Joao Felix marked his return from injury with a first league goal since September. Felix came off the bench at the Wanda Metropolitano after almost a month out with an ankle problem and the 20-year-old looked refreshed as he drove in Atletico's third in an impressive 3-1 victory.

Kieran Trippier was also back after recovering from a groin injury and he was involved in Atletico's second goal as Koke headed in. Angel Correa had earlier cancelled out Paco Alcacer's strike for Villarreal.

Atletico's inconsistency this season means they are out of the title race, 12 points adrift of leaders Barcelona, who thrashed Eibar 5-0 on Saturday. But momentum would be timely as Atleti bid to consolidate their place in the top four and capitalise on their 1-0 advantage against Liverpool next month in the Champions League last 16.

Diego Simeone's side move up to third in La Liga, level on points with Sevilla, who earlier struck a superb 3-0 win away at fellow top-four rivals Getafe. Liverpool are expected to overturn Atletico's lead at Anfield but it looks like Simeone will be able to field a bolstered side for the second leg. Diego Costa came off the bench on Tuesday,

although he was not involved against Villarreal, while Felix, Trippier and Morata are all fit again and available. Felix's recovery will be particularly welcome. The Portuguese, who signed for 120 million euros from Benfica last summer, has struggled to live up to expectations but perhaps some time away will have done him good.

He looked revitalised after coming on as a substitute and could prove a valuable addition during the run-in. Alcacer, who joined Villarreal from Borussia Dortmund last month, gave the away side the lead with a brilliant shot from the edge of the box in the 16th minute but Correa levelled before half-time, flicking in after a mistake by Raul Albiol. Koke completed the turnaround in the 64th minute, heading in Correa's chip after Trippier had cut it back to the Argentinian from the right. Felix then added a third with a driven shot, which squirmed through Villarreal goalkeeper Sergio Asenjo.

Sevilla delivered a huge boost to their own hopes of qualifying for next season's Champions League by beating Getafe for their first victory in six matches. A poor run of form had threatened to kill Sevilla's chances of securing a place in Europe's premier tournament but they dismantled usually solid Getafe with goals from Lucas Ocampos, Fernando Reges and Jules Kounde.

Getafe might still have been feeling the effects of their superb 2-0 win over Ajax on Thursday in the Europa League as Jose Bordalas' side lacked the defensive discipline that has thrust them into the mix again for a Champions League spot. Sevilla, meanwhile, were arguably the favourites to finish fourth at the start of the season and former Spain coach Julen Lopetegui will have been relieved to return to winning ways, just as the pressure on him was beginning to mount. — AFP

## Guardiola wants City to show 'personality' against Real Madrid

LONDON: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has issued a rallying cry to his players to show character and fight to the very end in their Champions League last-16 tie against Real Madrid.

City, who have not progressed beyond the semi-finals of Europe's elite club competition, have been banned by UEFA for the next two seasons following an investigation into alleged breaches of Financial Fair Play rules. They face a daunting task against the 13-times champions, who they take on in the first leg in Madrid tomorrow. "We have to show our personality. I know that my players, myself, all the club want to fight until the end for this title," Guardiola told reporters following

Saturday's 1-0 Premier League win over Leicester City.

"It's the real test. The kings of this competition against one team who aren't used to playing these kind of games much, as our best performance was one semi-final. "But if you want to do that (win the title) you have to face these teams sooner or later... you have to beat Madrid, you have to beat Barcelona, you have to beat Bayern Munich. You have to beat the big, big teams."

"If we're able to do it we'll be so happy. If not then next season... well, next season I don't know but when we are able to play we are going to come back." City, who plan to appeal their transfer ban, have not beaten Madrid in four previous meetings in the competition. — Reuters

## Lazio on Juve's heels, Roma back winning

MILAN: Lazio kept their bid for a first Serie A title in 20 years on track as they stayed one point behind leaders Juventus with a 3-2 win at Genoa on Sunday, but four Serie A matches were postponed amid growing coronavirus fears in northern Italy. Reigning champions Juve had edged out bottom club SPAL 2-1 on Saturday, but Lazio responded to keep the pressure on, extending their unbeaten away run in the league to 20 games.

Third-placed Inter Milan, who are six points behind Juve, saw their game on Sunday at the San Siro against the other Genoese club, Sampdoria, postponed, with Thursday's Europa League match against Bulgarian club Ludogorets at risk, along with next weekend's league clash with Juventus in Turin. Three other top-flight matches were also pushed back: between Torino and Parma, Atalanta versus Sassuolo and Hellas Verona against Cagliari.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced that all sporting events in two northern regions would be suspended on Sunday. Strong measures are being taken in Italy with over 152 confirmed cases of coronavirus in an outbreak that has claimed three lives in the country.

"I think it's right to take the necessary precautions," said Lazio coach Simone Inzaghi. "Do a lot of prevention, try to defeat and understand the problem by stopping the championship, because we shouldn't underestimate what is happening." On the pitch in Genoa, Adam Marcus scored the opener for Lazio with less than two minutes on the clock before Ciro Immobile, the top flight's leading scorer this season, netted his 27th Serie A goal of the campaign six minutes into the second half. The Italian striker pulled six goals clear of Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo who scored for a record-equalling 11th consecutive Serie A game in his 1,000th professional match against SPAL. Francesco Cassata pulled one back for the relegation-threatened hosts, but Danilo Cataldi secured Lazio all three points despite Domenico Criscito's late consolation.

"We're doing something great. The lads know it and I'm not hiding from saying it," said Inzaghi.

"In 21 games between the championship and the Super Cup we have won 17 times. In other championships we would be first, but here you have to fight with Juve and Inter. "We are there in the chase and we will try to fight." Fifth-placed Roma ended their four-match winless run, including three defeats, with a 4-0 success over lowly Lecce.

Paulo Fonseca's side keep touch with Atalanta, in fourth, who are three points ahead in the final Champions League berth, with a game in hand.

The under-fire Portuguese coach praised the players for improving in ever area as they followed on from their Europa league last 32, first leg win over Ghent. "I accept the criticism," said Fonseca. "If things are not going good the coach takes the blame, so in those moments I wasn't expecting flowers."

Turkish striker Cengiz Under picked up a Henrikh Mkhitaryan cross to fire Roma ahead after quarter of an hour in Rome. Edin Dzeko set up Mkhitaryan for the second eight minutes before the break with the Bosnian himself connecting with a low Aleksandar Kolarov cross for the third with half an hour to go.

Kolarov rushed through to neatly tap in a fourth after 79 minutes, following good work from both Dzeko and Carles Perez for a first victory in the Stadio Olimpico since December 15.

"When you are losing you don't feel good. I feel sharp," said Dzeko. "These two wins will give us a boost going into the next few games."

**25** Caleb Ewan sprints to victory on UAE Tour



**26** New Zealand restore pride by thrashing India in first Test



**27** Neymar sent off as PSG beat Bordeaux in seven-goal thriller



## LeBron gets Lakers past Celtics



LOS ANGELES: Gordon Hayward #20 of the Boston Celtics drives to the basket during the game against the Los Angeles Lakers at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

**LOS ANGELES:** Anthony Davis tallied 32 points and 13 rebounds and LeBron James recorded 29 points, nine assists and eight boards, and the Los Angeles Lakers weathered a career-high-tying 41-point effort by Jayson Tatum to beat the Boston Celtics 114-112 on Sunday at Staples Center. The historic rivals went back-and-forth throughout the game, and right down to the wire. The Celtics took a 110-108 lead with 1:17 remaining when Jaylen Brown, who scored 20 points, knocked down a 3-pointer. Missed shots on both ends set a final 37 seconds that took several minutes due to a handful of officiating reviews and a technical foul assessed to Celtics coach Brad Stevens. James' fade-away jumper with 30.4 seconds remaining gave Los Angeles the lead for good, with Davis making three free throws over the final 12 seconds to seal it.

**TORONTO RAPTORS 127 - INDIANA PACERS 81**

Pascal Siakam scored 21 points and Toronto led all the way to defeat visiting Indiana. Kyle Lowry had 16 points, 11 assists, seven rebounds and five steals for the Raptors, who have defeated the Pacers three times this month. The Pacers were without guard Victor Oladipo, who had a sore back. Serge Ibaka added 15 points and

15 rebounds for the Raptors, who have won 17 of their past 18 games. The Raptors' 46-point margin of victory marks the largest in franchise history.

**OKLAHOMA THUNDER 131 - SAN ANTONIO SPURS 103**

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored a career-high 22 points and Chris Paul narrowly missed a triple-double to lead Oklahoma City to a home victory over San Antonio. The Thunder got rolling in the second quarter, answering a Spurs run with 16 consecutive points to jump ahead. That stretch, like most of the game, came from a balanced scoring effort. Luguentz Dort, a rookie on a two-way contract, came up big for Oklahoma City with two big baskets in the 16-0 run, including a 3-pointer to finish off the stretch, and put the Thunder up 52-45.

**DENVER NUGGETS 128 - MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES 116**

Paul Millsap had a season-high 25 points, Nikola Jokic added 24, and host Denver beat shorthanded Minnesota, which had just nine players available. Jamal Murray had 19 points, Gary Harris and Monte Morris had 13 apiece and Jerami Grant added 12 for Denver,

which has won eight straight against the Timberwolves. Kelan Martin scored a career-high 21 points, including 19 in the first half, while Malik Beasley had 17 in a balanced Minnesota attack. Jordan McLaughlin had 15 points and 10 assists, Jarret Culver had 14 points and Naz Reid added 13 for the Timberwolves.

**CHICAGO BULLS 126 - WASHINGTON WIZARDS 117**

Coby White scored 33 points off the bench, Zach LaVine added 32 points, and Chicago pulled away to beat visiting Washington. Thaddeus Young finished with 23 points for the Bulls, who snapped an eight-game losing streak. Tomas Satoransky posted a double-double against his former team with 15 points and 13 assists. Bradley Beal scored a career-high 53 points in a losing effort for the Wizards, who have lost back-to-back games. Beal shot 15 of 27 from the field, 5 of 11 from beyond the arc and 18 of 20 from the free-throw line.

**NEW ORLEANS PELICANS 115 - GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS 101**

Rookie Zion Williamson scored 28 points, his most in a road game this season, and Nicolo Melli saved three of his six 3-pointers for the fourth quarter as New

Orleans rallied over Golden State. Williamson shot 13-for-20 and added seven rebounds, six on the offensive end, helping the playoff-hopeful Pelicans win for the fifth time in their last six games. Damian Lee had 22 points and Jordan Poole 19 for the Warriors, who lost their sixth straight. Andrew Wiggins was held to eight points on 3-for-16 shooting in the loss, but did have a team-high 10 rebounds to complement four assists and two blocks.

**PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS 107 - DETROIT PISTONS 104**

CJ McCollum scored a season-best 41 points, recorded a career-high 12 assists and also collected nine rebounds to lead Portland to a tight win over visiting Detroit. Carmelo Anthony tallied a season-high 32 points for the Trail Blazers, who played without star guard Damian Lillard (groin) for the second straight game. Hassan Whiteside added 16 points, 17 rebounds and four blocked shots as Portland halted a three-game skid. Christian Wood recorded 26 points and nine rebounds for Detroit, which has dropped six straight games. Brandon Knight and Derrick Rose scored 15 points apiece and Langston Galloway had 13 points. — Reuters

## Djokovic, Nadal return to action

**PARIS:** Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal return to action for the first time since the Australian Open while Qatar saw the latest tennis mum return to action.

World number one Novak Djokovic plays for the first time since lifting the Australian Open for the eighth time. However, his opponent in the Dubai first round, Malek Jaziri, was left wishing the 32-year-old Serb had stayed away a little longer.

The Tunisian, who made the semi-finals in the UAE in 2018, lost to Djokovic in the second round two years earlier when the Serb won his fourth title at the event.

The 36-year-old, now ranked outside the top 200, has also had to face Roger Federer, Andy Murray and Grigor Dimitrov in Dubai. Before the draw was made Saturday, Jaziri even said: "Hopefully this year the draw will be good for me. Usually I play a seeded player always here. I've played Roger. I've played Novak, I've played Andy. I played Grigor as well two years ago."

Djokovic, too, saw the funny side. "He is a super nice guy and we train a lot. It is unfortu-

nate. It is very odd that that happened."

**Nadal and Kyrgios: Loco in Acapulco?**

Rafael Nadal takes top seeding in Acapulco, 12 months after being knocked out in the second round by Nick Kyrgios in a match which sparked angry exchanges between the two. Nadal, a two-time champion at the Mexican event in 2005 and 2013 when it was still played on clay, accused the combustible Australian of "lacking respect" for serving underarm in the 2019 match which Kyrgios won in three sets.

Kyrgios described the Spaniard as "super salty". Nadal went on to win a bad-tempered Wimbledon duel in which Kyrgios speared a ball at the 19-time major winner and criticised what he perceived to be his rival's pedestrian pace of play.

This time around in Acapulco, the two are in separate halves of the draw with Nadal starting against compatriot Pablo Andujar and Kyrgios facing Ugo Humbert of France.

**Mums net: Shvedova joins tennis mothers**

Multiple Grand Slam title winners Serena Williams, Victoria Azarenka and Kim Clijsters are probably the best known of tennis mums on tour.

They have now been joined by Kazakhstan's Yaroslava Shvedova who returned to the WTA Tour in Qatar on Sunday after an absence of almost three years in which

she gave birth to twins. The 32-year-old was a top 30 player in 2016 and won two Grand Slam women's doubles titles. Her comeback in Doha was short-lived, losing to Germany's Laura Siegemund 6-3, 6-2 but there plenty of other mums on tour from whom to take encouragement. As well as Williams, Clijsters and Azarenka, India's Sania Mirza, Mandy Minella of Luxembourg and former US Open and Wimbledon runner-up Vera Zvonareva have all returned to the pro ranks after starting families.

**World rankings: ATP**

1. Novak Djokovic (SRB) 9,720 points, 2. Rafael Nadal (ESP) 9,395, 3. Roger Federer (SUI) 7,130, 4. Dominic Thiem (AUT) 7,045, 5. Daniil Medvedev (RUS) 5,890, 6. Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE) 4,745, 7. Alexander Zverev (GER) 3,885, 8. Matteo Berrettini (ITA) 2,860, 9. Gael Monfils (FRA) 2,860, 10. David Goffin (BEL) 2,555

**WTA**

1. Ashleigh Barty (AUS) 8,367 points, 2. Simona Halep (ROM) 6,076, 3. Karolina Pliskova (CZE) 5,200, 4. Bianca Andreescu (CAN) 4,665 (+1), 5. Sofia Kenin (USA) 4,490 (+2), 6. Kiki Bertens (NED) 4,335 (+2), 7. Elina Svitolina (UKR) 4,301 (-1), 8. Serena Williams (USA) 3,915 (+1), 9. Belinda Bencic (SUI) 3,875 (-5), 10. Naomi Osaka (JPN) 3,625. — AFP



Rafael Nadal