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# Kuwait to amend residency law to cut expat numbers

Assembly to finalize demographic laws by Oct • Human traffickers targeted

Op-Ed

## Global wake-up call



By Antonio Guterres

Secretary-General of the United Nations

From COVID-19 to climate disruption, from racial injustice to rising inequalities, we are a world in turmoil. At the same time, we are an international community with an enduring vision - embodied in the United Nations Charter, which marks its 75th anniversary this year. That vision of a better future - based on the values of equality, mutual respect and international cooperation - has helped us to avoid a Third World War that would have had

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By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry will submit to the National Assembly within two weeks a draft law proposing changes to the residency law, as the Assembly prepares to complete legislation to facilitate the reduction of expats in the country within a few months, officials said yesterday. Speaking to state-run Kuwait Television, Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh said the government has a complete draft law proposing to "upgrade the residency law", which will be sent to the Assembly within the next two weeks.

The draft law calls to benefit from neighboring and advanced countries with the aim to encourage only those expats that are needed to stay in the country, the minister said without elaborating. The statement is a clear reference to the intention to cut expat numbers.

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem also told Kuwait TV that he and a group of lawmakers will submit to the Assembly a comprehensive draft law calling for a gradual reduction of expats in the country. Ghanem said it is difficult at this stage to impose quotas with specific percentages for differ-

ent nationalities, in reference to another draft law cleared on Thursday by the legal and legislative committee that assigns specific percentages for various foreign communities.

The speaker said that Kuwait has a real problem in its population structure, in which 70 percent are expats, adding that what is more serious is that 1.3 million of the 3.35 million expats "are either illiterate or can merely read and write", who is not the people Kuwait really needs. He said 100,000 of these people are workers who are illiterate.

"I understand that we recruit doctors and skilled manpower and not unskilled laborers. This is an indication that there is a distortion. Visa traders have contributed in increasing this figure," Ghanem said. The speaker said the draft law they intend to file will propose to impose a cap on the number of expats, whose numbers must decrease gradually by stating that this year expats will be 70 percent, next year 65 percent and so on.

The draft law also proposes to determine the number of expats that can be recruited every year, including their specialization and other details, he said. Ghanem said the Assembly is determined to complete the population structure legislation before

the end of this Assembly term. The term ends in October and new elections are scheduled for November.

Meanwhile, MP Khalil Al-Saleh, head of the Assembly's manpower resources development committee, said the panel will start this week looking into a number of draft laws on the population structure. Ghanem stressed visa trading is "brutal, which amounts to trafficking in persons and must be countered".

The interior minister said since the start of a campaign targeting visa traders a few months ago, 282 cases involving 417 companies have been referred to the public prosecution for interrogation over visa trading offences. The cases relate to 526 people including 49 Kuwaitis, the minister said.

He said the interior ministry has supplied all information regarding the case of the Bangladeshi MP who is detained in the country over a suspected corruption scandal involving high-profile people like MPs, senior officials and others. "There is no red line" in the fight against visa traders, Saleh said. "All those who took part in this cancerous disease must be held to account ... The file of visa traders must vanish and we will eradicate it from Kuwait".

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ALSAYER

## Local

# Amir urges watchdog to fight corruption, disprove 'unjustified claims' against Kuwait

## Sheikh Sabah receives new 'Nazaha' members

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Seif Palace yesterday. His Highness also separately received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir, with the presence of His Highness Sheikh Nawaf, received His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, who presented to His Highness chairman of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim, deputy chairman Nawaf Al-Mehmel, members Khaled Al-Khaled, Dr Mashael Al-Hajri, advisor Hossam Behbehani, Nawaf Al-Bader and Abdulaziz Al-Mansour to swear the oath for their new positions.

During the meeting, His Highness Sheikh Sabah congratulated the newly-elected members and wished them the best of luck in their current position, also hailing the efforts of previous Nazaha members. His Highness Sheikh Sabah expressed his deepest regret for unjustified media and online reports accusing Kuwait of being a center for corruption. He called on Nazaha to face these false claims with evidence and protect Kuwait's bright picture on every level. His Highness the Amir also affirmed the need to execute further efforts to immediately bring those accused of corruption to justice,



KUWAIT: (From left) His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

in accordance with the articles of Kuwait's constitution. Meanwhile, His Highness said he is proud of Kuwait's just and transparent judicial system. He also encouraged Nazaha to cooperate with NGOs in fighting corruption and spread awareness among citizens to play a role in reporting any suspected acts of corruption.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anas Khaled Al-Saleh. — KUNA



KUWAIT: (From left) Tareq Al-Saleh, Deputy General Manager of the Economic Research Unit at Gulf Bank, Kareen Haffar, General Manager of Costa Coffee, Laila Mutairi, CEO of INJAZ-Kuwait and Dawood Marafie, Partner and CEO of KB Soft.

## Gulf Bank announces Injaz Kuwait's competition winners

KUWAIT: Last week, Gulf Bank concluded its sponsorship of Injaz Kuwait's annual 'Company Program' competition as part of its long-standing partnership with the non-profit organization. This year, nine students participated in the annual competition, and pitched a variety of business ideas and projects to a panel of judges.

This year's competition was held virtually through various telecommunications applications, with youth-led company, Playstic, announced as the winner at the high school level. Playstic works to develop interactive and entertaining games composed of recycled materials in an effort to reduce obesity rates in children and minimize pollutants that harm the environment. Sayarti, an online platform that connects drivers to various auto repair services, took home the 'Company Program' prize at the university level. The winners will compete with others at the regional competition scheduled to be held in Morocco later this year.

The 'Company Program' competition took place



Ahmad Al-Amir

over the course of two days from July 3-4. On the first day of the competition, the students' various projects were scored by a panel of judges who met at the Chairmen Club in KIPCO, with Tareq Al-Saleh, Deputy General Manager of the Economic Research Unit at Gulf Bank, representing the Bank on the judging panel this year. On the second day of the competition, Injaz Kuwait announced this year's winners.

Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, commented: "We would like to congratulate Playstic and Sayarti on winning this year's Company Program

competition, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors, as they start preparing to represent Kuwait at Injaz's annual regional competition. We would also like to thank Injaz Kuwait for organizing this program, and are proud to continue this partnership that enables us to support the next generation of young entrepreneurs."

INJAZ Kuwait, part of the global network of Junior Achievement worldwide, is a non-profit (NPO), non-governmental organization (NGO) driven by Kuwait's private sector. Through strategic partnerships with Kuwait's business and education sectors, and with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers, INJAZ delivers both Arabic and English language educational programs on entrepreneurial and leadership skills to build successful careers.

Gulf Bank continues to sponsor Injaz Kuwait as part of its commitment to encourage and develop professional work skills among young adults. It is worth noting that Injaz Kuwait is a non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to educating and training Kuwait's youth in workforce readiness, financial literacy and entrepreneurship. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust social sustainability program, heading various educational initiatives throughout the year that have a sustainable impact on the lives of youth and society.

## Kuwait to amend residency law...

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Minister of Social Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel told the same TV program that around 12,500 expat workers were found to be affected by the visa traders already referred to the public prosecutors. She said that during the coronavirus months, the Public Authority for Manpower received 2,500 labor complaints and the files of 2,207 companies have been suspended.

She said that a leading official at the manpower authority has been suspended for involvement in the Bangladeshi MP case and that three other employees are being interrogated for their suspected involvement.

Attorney General Mohammad Al-Duaij meanwhile said that since the start of the year, the public prosecution has received 59 cases of human trafficking involving 300 suspects. He said trafficking in persons cases in Kuwait are mainly of two types: The first involves employers refusing to pay the salaries of their workers or even reducing those salaries. The second involves people "trading" in domestic helpers like a "commodity".

Duaij said suspects connected to such cases are normally arrested and detained at the central jail. He said between 2015 and end of 2019, as many as 157 suspects in human trafficking cases were tried and 84 of them were handed harsh sentences ranging between 15 years in jail to life in prison.

## Global wake-up...

Continued from Page 1

catastrophic consequences for life on our planet. Our shared challenge is to channel that collective spirit and rise to this moment of trial and test. The pandemic has laid bare severe and systemic inequalities both within and between countries and communities. More broadly, it has underscored the world's fragilities - not just in the face of another health emergency, but in our faltering response to the climate crisis, lawlessness in cyberspace, and the risks of nuclear proliferation. People everywhere are losing trust in political establishments and institutions.

The emergency is compounded by many other profound humanitarian crises: conflicts that are continuing or even intensifying; record numbers of people forced to flee their homes; swarms of locusts in Africa and South Asia; looming droughts in southern Africa and Central America; all amid a context of rising geopolitical tensions. In the face of these fragilities, world leaders need to be humble and recognize the vital importance of unity and solidarity. No one can predict what comes next, but I see two possible scenarios.

First, the "optimistic" possibility. In this case, the world would muddle through. Countries in the global North would engineer a successful exit strategy. Developing countries would receive enough support and their demographic characteristics - namely, the youth of their people - would help contain the impact.

And then perhaps a vaccine would appear in

the next nine months or so, and would be distributed as a global public good, a "people's vaccine" available and accessible to all. If this happens, and if the economy starts up progressively, we might move towards some kind of normality in two or three years.

But there is also a second, bleaker scenario in which countries fail to coordinate their actions. New waves of the virus keep occurring. The situation in the developing world explodes. Work on the vaccine lags - or even if there is a vaccine relatively soon - it becomes the subject of fierce competition and countries with greater economic power gain access to it first, leaving others behind.

In this scenario, we could also see greater movement toward fragmentation, populism and xenophobia. Each country could go it alone or in so-called coalitions of the willing to address some specific challenges. In the end, the world would fail to mobilize the kind of governance needed to address our shared challenges. The result may well be a global depression that could last at least five or seven years before a new normal emerges, the nature of which is impossible to predict.

It is very difficult to know if we are moving in one direction or the other. We must work for the best and prepare for the worst. The pandemic, as horrible as it is, must be a wake-up call that prompts all political leaders to understand that our assumptions and approaches have to change, and that division is a danger to everyone.

This understanding could lead people to recognize that the only way to address global fragilities is through much more robust mechanisms of global governance with international cooperation.



## Something new

By Abdellatif Sharaa

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It is amazing how things are going on now as the country is opening up again. I went to my favorite cooperative earlier in the week and I really liked what I saw - people were complying with health rules without being told to do so at all, particularly at the cash counters, where distance was maintained. It seems that it is in human nature to take time to come to terms with things they are not accustomed to - they do not like change and it will be hard to get used to it.

I was also glad to hear from friends that COVID-19 gave them the opportunity to learn and get used to new habits and use time more efficiently. The pandemic will not stop them from going to diwanis and other meeting places, but it will be timed and measured.

A very important comment I heard was that "we became true family men" - being at home more often made them tend to their children, oversee their homework for example, give them more time to talk and have the chance to reduce dependence on domestic help to take care of certain needs. Some women said they had time to go to the kitchen and do the cooking from A to Z, and they assured me that even the flavor of the food became more authentic than when the helpers were doing the job.

Sometimes we should believe that some hardships can be a blessing in many ways, and one should always look at the positive side and take every opportunity to take advantage of a situation. When efforts went into full swing to have control over the virus, we saw all official government departments being mobilized, as well as NGOs and volunteers, who were brought in to help organize things.

They were deployed to cooperative societies, supermarkets and other shopping venues where they did a relatively good job, but I still believe there was a need to train the volunteers on how to deal with the public and handle their frustration. It is never too late to train volunteers so they can be ready at any time when they are called upon whatever the event may be.

It is known that all voluntary teams are registered at the social affairs ministry and a department called "Baader", which means "Take the Initiative", so it will not be difficult to organize certain programs for volunteers to be trained for various activities to back up official organizations. We owe everyone that contributed and is still contributing to the fight against the coronavirus a big thank you indeed.

Final word: "Be ready when opportunity comes... Luck is the time when preparation and opportunity meet." - Pierre Elliot Trudeau

After all, we cannot simply return to the systems that gave rise to the current crisis. We need to build back better with more sustainable, inclusive, gender-equal societies and economies.

In doing so, we must reimagine the way nations cooperate. Today's multilateralism lacks scale, ambition and teeth - and some of the instruments that do have teeth show little or no appetite to bite, as we have seen in the difficulties faced by the Security Council.

We need a networked multilateralism, in which the United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, regional organizations such as the African Union and European Union, trade organizations and others work together more closely and effectively.

We also need a more inclusive multilateralism. Governments today are far from the only players in terms of politics and power. Civil society, the business community, local authorities, cities and regional governments are assuming more and more leadership roles in today's world. This, in turn, will help lead to an effective multilateralism with the mechanisms it needs to make global governance work where it is needed.

A new, networked, inclusive, effective multilateralism, based on the enduring values of the United Nations Charter, could snap us out of our sleepwalking state and stop the slide towards ever greater danger. Political leaders around the world need to heed this wake-up call and come together to address the world's fragilities, strengthen our capacity for global governance, give teeth to multilateral institutions, and draw from the power of unity and solidarity to overcome the biggest test of our times.

Local

# PCR certificates required for expats' travel through Kuwait airport Aug 1

## Expat MoH staff allowed to re-enter Kuwait

KUWAIT: Official government sources told Al-Anbaa daily that travel restrictions on expats will be lifted soon, as they will be included in the government plan to gradually resume commercial flights at Kuwait International Airport from Aug 1, 2020. In this regard, informed source said having an accredited PCR certificate proving passengers are clear of COVID-19 will be one of the main conditions for passengers on departure. The sources added that the certificate fee will be between KD 10 and 20 and will be determined by ground service officials.

The sources explained that passengers would have to obtain the PCR certificates four days prior to departure, but added they are not required to enter some countries, such as Egypt and Turkey. On the other hand, citizens and expats returning to Kuwait would have to obtain PCR certificates from health centers accredited by Kuwaiti embassies abroad without having to endorse them at Kuwaiti consulates in order to avoid overburdening embassies abroad and avoid crowding observed previously outside Kuwaiti

embassies in a number of countries.

Moreover, the sources said a specialized approved health lab will be set up at Kuwait airport under Ministry of Health (MoH) supervision to issue health certificates to departing passengers proving them to be clear of COVID-19. In addition, the sources said the Shlonik app is available for both citizens and expats and that travel will be open for both departing and arriving citizens and expats until further MoH instructions.

Meanwhile, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Director Yousef Al-Fauzan issued a directive allowing the entry of expat MoH staff members and their first-degree relatives even if their residencies had expired, said Al-Qabas. In this regard, official sources stressed that over 1,000 medics (doctors, nurses and lab and radiology technicians) who had been stranded abroad, mainly in India, have already returned through Kuwait airport upon MoH request to allow them back to Kuwait to support medical staff.

### ARRIVING PASSENGERS

**Health Restrictions:**

- Must obtain an approved health certificate (PCR) confirming negative infection with COVID-19 disease.
- Required to register in (Shlonik) platform before boarding the aircraft.
- Need to sign a commitment to comply with the Ministry of Health instructions with respect to either home or institutional quarantine.
- Body temperature of all passengers will be taken before boarding the aircraft and upon arrival.
- Upon arrival, a random (PCR) test will be conducted on the passengers at a rate of 10% for every flight.
- Must abide by the health instructions about wearing masks and gloves, using the sanitizers and adhering to physical-distancing.

### DEPARTING PASSENGERS

**Health Restrictions:**

- Must obtain a health certificate issued by medical laboratories approved by the Ministry of Health, proving negative infection with COVID-19 disease, if required, according to the requirements of each country (which is provided by the Ground Services Companies at Kuwait International Airport).
- Should abide by the health instructions about wearing masks and gloves, using the sanitizers and adhering to physical-distancing.

Kuwait\_dgca | www.dgca.gov.kw

Kuwait: Instructions the Directorate General of Civil Aviation posted on its social media accounts recently for health restrictions to be followed when travel resumes at Kuwait International Airport.



KUWAIT: Health teams fumigate the Hawally Traffic Department building in Jabriya yesterday as a precaution to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



News in brief

Delivery for civil IDs?

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) plans to offer a tender for companies to provide a home delivery service for civil IDs, Al-Rai reported yesterday quoting civil registration department manager Mohammad Al-Shamali. The service would be made optional in exchange for a certain fee, Shamali said, adding that it would help save time and effort, as well as limit crowding at the PACI building. He did not provide a timeframe for when the service could become available to the public.

PACI hotline

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) announced that it is available to answer inquiries from citizens and residents through its hotline (1889988). Inquiries can be made from 9 am to 1 pm on weekdays.

Workers' complaints

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower allocated offices to receive complaints from workers in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Farwaniya and Mahboula. Workers can contact the authority on the following numbers: 50726492 (Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh), 50726493 (Farwaniya), 50726246 (Mahboula).

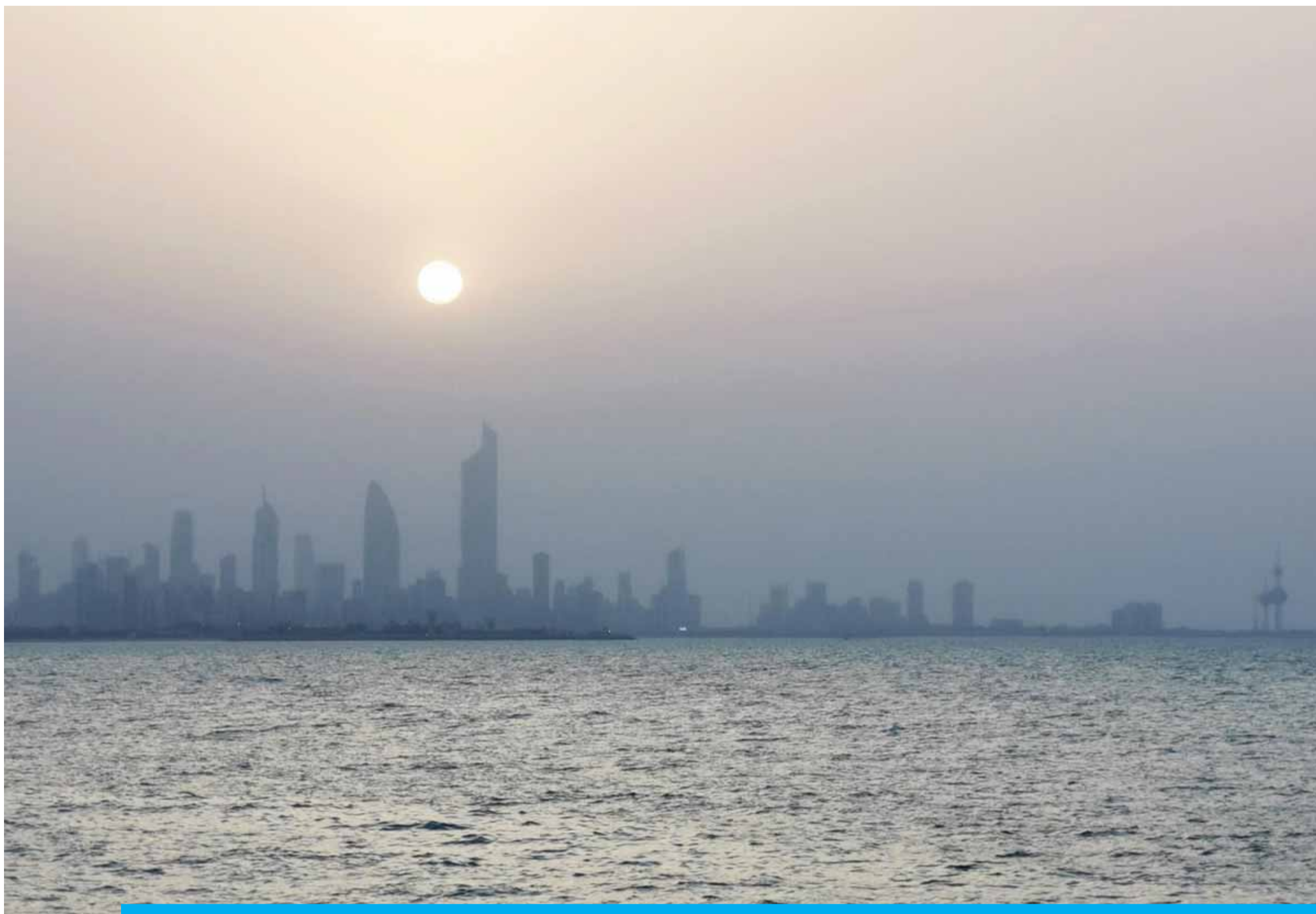
4,240 passengers

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that 24 flights were set to depart from Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying a total of 4,240 passengers. They included ten flights to India, nine flights to Egypt, one flight to Qatar, one flight to Nepal, one flight to Tunisia, one flight to Lebanon, and one flight to UAE.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed



## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunset over Kuwait City's skyline on Saturday. — Photo by Islam Al-Sharaa

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## Kuwait, Pakistan cooperate to combat COVID-19

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Health Ministry announced Saturday the signing of a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Health in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to combat the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The Director of the International Health Relations Department Dr Rehab Al-Watyan said that the agreement would enhance cooperation between the two sides and would provide an opportunity to benefit from their experiences in dealing with disasters and epidemics, and to address the COVID-19 epidemic. She added the agreement was signed at the headquarters of Kuwait's Health Ministry represented by the Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Reza and the Ministry of Health in Pakistan, represented by the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait Syed Sajjad Haider. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality inspectors conducted tours at markets in Jahra to check on prices and adherence to regulations set to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

In my view

## Co-ops' major role

By Fatima Nasser Al-Azmi

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**T**he first attempts of cooperative work in Kuwait were in 1941 at Al-Mubarakiya School, where the school cooperative society was successful. This was expected as the Kuwaiti society was accustomed to cooperation, until law 20/1962 to establish cooperative societies was issued. The law included the basic principles of cooperative action approved by international cooperative conferences. This was the start of the cooperative movement in Kuwait.

Co-ops have played a major role during crises, as in 1990 when the Iraqi invasion took place. Co-ops were a major factor in supplying food and other goods to citizens and expats. They also contributed through volunteer committees to provide citizens with money when banks shut down, and provided residence for those who needed it to change their address. Their role did not stop there – they provided hospitals, power stations and fire centers their food needs.

During the health crisis and the discovery of the first COVID-19 case on Feb 24, 2020, and with the start of preparations by all sectors to face the pandemic, the cooperative sector had a major role to provide food security for all citizens and expatriates. It coordinated work through administrations and volunteers and gained the trust of citizens and expatriates. It delivered their needs to their homes all day long during the partial and full curfews and is still doing it.

Once again the cooperative sector in Kuwait proved its effective and important role. Kuwaitization is required in this important sector and we hope that this does not come out of tribal and sectarian considerations or appeasement of relatives and friends. Rather it should be through specialized committee from the ministry of social affairs and should be subject to evaluation to safeguard the sector and its sustainability.

We do not want some current experiences to be repeated, as when a cooperative was scrapped in an area in the Capital governorate and the private sector replaced it, which constitutes a preliminary warning to abolish the cooperative sector in Kuwait. It was a good move by the social affairs ministry to follow supervisory jobs at cooperatives and work towards Kuwaitizing them. We hope this Kuwaitization will be sound, good and not nominal. We hope that our colleagues at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and the College of Commercial Studies in particular to introduce a training program for cooperative work at a diploma level for Kuwaitis who are qualified to work in this sector and cover the shortage of Kuwaitis in this field.

Final word: Voluntary teams played a positive role in the COVID-19 crisis, and the drawbacks were at a minimum and do not include all teams. We hope cooperative societies reward their volunteers morally and materially, as many of them dealt at close proximity with the pandemic and the risk of infection.

# International

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2020



Dreams of Myanmar  
'unwashed' miners  
buried by disaster

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## Ethiopian pop star's murder reveals political rifts

Page 6



WASHINGTON: US Army Golden Knights Parachute Team descend at the National Mall, during the Independence Day celebrations in Washington DC on July 4, 2020. — AFP photos

# Angry words, virus darken July 4th

## US president bashes domestic opponents and China

WASHINGTON: The United States marked an unusually somber Independence Day on Saturday, with President Donald Trump bashing domestic opponents and China-but praising the country's coronavirus response, despite a record surge in cases. Across the country, virus fears dampened or nixed Main Street parades, backyard barbecues and family reunions on a day when Americans typically celebrate their 1776 declaration of independence from Britain.

Instead of adopting a unifying tone, Trump-facing a tough re-election and eager to mobilize his political base-railed against protesters demanding racial justice after unarmed African American George Floyd was killed by a white police officer. "We are now in the process of defeating the radical left, the Marxists, the anarchists, the agitators, the looters," Trump said.

Anti-racism protesters who have marched in cities across America are "not interested in justice or healing. Their goal is demolition," he said. Speaking from the White House lawn, Trump addressed a crowd that included frontline health workers battling COVID-19, which has killed nearly 130,000 Americans. He accused China-where the outbreak originated-of a cover-up that allowed the illness to race across the globe, but hailed American "scientific brilliance."

"We'll likely have a therapeutic and or vaccine solution long before the end of the year," he said. Some of the US leader's sharpest words were for the media, which he accused of a campaign to smear opponents as racists. "The more you lie, the more you slander, the more you try to demean and divide, the more we will work hard to tell the truth and we will win," Trump said, with four months to go until the election.

### Summer bubble

Trump's divisive address came as popular beaches on both coasts-normally packed on July 4th-were closed as California and Florida suffer alarming surges in COVID-19 infections. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti warned citizens to "assume everyone

around you is infectious." Florida on Saturday marked a new daily high in confirmed virus cases at 11,458 — far more than any other state. Miami Beach imposed a curfew and made mask-wearing mandatory in public, yet some Florida beaches remained open.

The beach at New York's Coney Island was also open and crowded, with few wearing masks. Mark Ruiz came with his wife and two children, despite being "definitely worried" about the virus. "I just can't stay home on the Fourth of July, I got to take my kids out," he told AFP. "We can't be in a bubble all summer."



### Trump vows to defeat 'radical left'

Coney Island also hosted a special socially distanced version of the annual Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest-won for the 13th year in a row by Joey Chestnut, who set a new world record downing 75 hot dogs in 10 minutes. Health officials have been bracing for a new spike in virus cases after this weekend, which they see as a potential tipping point for more infections. The US virus death toll is fast approaching 130,000, roughly one-quarter the world's total.

### Fireworks canceled

Fireworks displays are typically a high point of the holiday, but an estimated 80 percent of the events have been canceled this year. Washington was host-



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump watch as the US Navy Blue Angels and US Air Force Thunderbirds fly over as they host the 2020 'Salute to America' event in honor of Independence Day on the South Lawn of the White House.

ing a fireworks show on the National Mall, and some said they were compelled to come at a moment when the US is both grappling with the virus and undergoing a historic reckoning on racism.

"It's time for us to stop bragging that we are super special, that the world should follow, we need to look inside to see what's wrong with us. We never honestly asked ourselves about race in this country," 54-year-old Mary Byrne told AFP.

Trump's challenger in November, Democrat Joe Biden, struck a sharply different tone on Saturday, tweeting: "Our nation was founded on a simple idea: We're all created equal. We've never lived up to it-but we've never stopped trying. This Independence Day, let's not just celebrate those words, let's commit to finally fulfill them." Protests have continued in many US cities since Floyd's killing, and more than a score took place Saturday in Washington. — AFP

## Egypt arrests alleged serial sexual predator

CAIRO: Egyptian authorities on Saturday arrested a man who allegedly sexually abused dozens of girls and women, in a case that has sparked outrage online, a security source said. Allegations have been widely circulating on social media since Wednesday detailing horrific sexual abuse and related blackmail suffered by women at the hands of the same man.

One allegation claimed that he attempted to abuse a 14-year-old girl. "The person accused of harassing the girls has been arrested and will be facing the prosecution following the allegations carried on social media," the security source said. "Those affected

should submit formal reports of the harm they endured," the source added.

The source did not identify the suspect. In a later statement, Egypt's public prosecution identified the man and said the investigation was launched. According to the social media reports, the first of which was published on an Instagram account, the abuse had been going on for years. The public prosecution had said it received a complaint from one woman against the alleged abuser dating as far back as November 2016.

Trending hashtags carrying the alleged abuser's name widely circulated on Twitter and Facebook, urging government action. Egypt's National Council for Women (NCW) lodged an official complaint with the public prosecutor to investigate the allegations on Saturday. "The NCW has followed the social media account on Instagram, which was launched by girls and women complaining that a man raped some of them and sexually

assaulted and harassed others," it said on Facebook.

It also said that several victims, who reached out to the council, recounted that the man "blackmailed and threatened to defame them using photos and clips documenting his heinous crimes". The council urged the women to submit official complaints to the prosecutor. Some online reports suggested the perpetrator was a university student. The American University in Cairo acknowledged the suspect had studied there but said he left the university in 2018.

He "is not a current student at the American University in Cairo," a statement said. Sexual harassment is highly prevalent in Egypt. United Nations surveys have found that most Egyptian women have been subject to harassment, ranging from catcalling to pinching and groping. Egyptian authorities have criminalised sexual harassment since 2014, but many women complain that the problem remains rampant. — AFP

## Algeria expects France to apologize for colonial past

PARIS: Algeria is waiting for an apology from France's colonial occupation of the North African country, the president said, expressing hope that Emmanuel Macron would build on recent conciliatory overtures. A global re-examination of the legacy of colonialism has been unleashed by the May killing of unarmed African American George Floyd by a white police officer, which sparked mass protests around the world. "We have already had half-apologies. The next step is needed... we await it," President Abdelmadjid Tebboune said Saturday in an interview with news channel France 24.

"I believe that with President Macron, we can go further in the appeasement process... he is a very honest man, who wants to im-

prove the situation." France's 132 years of colonial rule in Algeria, and the brutal eight-year war that ended it, have left a legacy of often prickly relations between the two countries. In what has been seen as a thaw in ties, Algeria on Friday received the skulls of 24 resistance fighters decapitated during the colonial period. The skulls will be laid to rest in the martyrs' section of the capital's El Alia cemetery on Sunday-the 58th anniversary of Algeria's independence-according to media reports.

Tebboune said an apology from France would "make it possible to cool tensions and create a calmer atmosphere for economic and cultural relations", especially for the more than six million Algerians who live in France. In December 2019, Macron said that "colonialism was a grave mistake" and called for turning the page on the past. During his presidential election campaign, he had created a storm by calling France's colonization of Algeria a "crime against humanity". UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet has urged countries to make amends for "centuries of violence and discrimination". — AFP

## International

# Algorithm bias in focus amid reckoning on 'police racism'

## Concerns over artificial intelligence programs

WASHINGTON: A wave of protests over law enforcement abuses has highlighted concerns over artificial intelligence programs like facial recognition which critics say may reinforce racial bias. While the protests have focused on police misconduct, activists point out flaws that may lead to unfair applications of technologies for law enforcement, including facial recognition, predictive policing and "risk assessment" algorithms.



The issue came to the forefront recently with the wrongful arrest in Detroit of an African American man based on a flawed algorithm which identified him as a robbery suspect. Critics of facial recognition use in law enforcement say the case underscores the pervasive impact of a flawed technology. Mutale Nkonde, an AI researcher, said that even though the idea of bias and algorithms has been debated for years, the latest case and other incidents have driven home the message.

"What is different in this moment is we have explainability and people are really beginning to realize the way these algorithms are used for decision-making," said Nkonde, a fellow at Stanford University's Digital Society Lab and the Berkman-Klein Center at Harvard. Amazon, IBM and Microsoft have said they would not sell facial recognition technology to law enforcement without rules to protect against unfair use. But many other vendors offer a range of technologies.

**Secret algorithms**  
Nkonde said the technologies are only as good as the data they rely on. "We know the criminal justice system is biased, so any model you create is going to have 'dirty data,'" she said. Daniel Castro of the Information & Innovation Foundation, a Washington think tank, said however it would be counterproductive to ban a technology which automates investigative tasks and enables police to be more productive. "There are (facial recognition) systems that are accurate, so we need to have more testing and transparency," Castro said.

"Everyone is concerned about false identification, but that can happen whether it's a person or a computer." Seda Gurses, a researcher at the Netherlands-based Delft University of Technology, said one problem with analyzing the systems is that they use proprietary, secret algorithms, sometimes from multiple vendors. "This makes it very difficult to identify under what conditions the dataset was collected, what qualities these images had, how the algorithm was trained," Gurses said.

**Predictive limits**  
The use of artificial intelligence in "predictive policing," which is growing in many cities, has also raised concerns over reinforcing bias. The systems

### Activists point out flaws

have been touted to help make better use of limited police budgets, but some research suggests it increases deployments to communities which have already been identified, rightly or wrongly, as high-crime zones. These models "are susceptible to runaway feedback loops, where police are repeatedly sent back to the same neighborhoods regardless of the actual crime rate," said a 2019 report by the AI



WASHINGTON: Washington Police officers watch demonstrators as they march on the street at the fence in Lafayette Park, near the White House. — AFP

Now Institute at New York University, based a study of 13 cities using the technology. These systems may be gamed by "biased police data," the report said. In a related matter, an outcry from academics prompted the cancellation of a research paper which claimed facial recognition algorithms could predict with 80 percent accuracy if someone is likely to be a criminal. — AFP

have been touted to help make better use of limited police budgets, but some research suggests it increases deployments to communities which have already been identified, rightly or wrongly, as high-crime zones. These models "are susceptible to runaway feedback loops, where police are repeatedly sent back to the same neighborhoods regardless of the actual crime rate," said a 2019 report by the AI

## UK historian quits Cambridge over slavery claim

LONDON: A British royal historian who said slavery was not genocide has quit his honorary position at Cambridge University and been dropped by his publisher HarperCollins. The comments from Professor David Starkey came during a period of soul searching in Britain over its colonial past.

The Black Lives Matter movement that gained momentum after the death of George Floyd in US police custody in May saw the statue of a major slave trader dumped in an English harbor as protests hit cities across the UK. Starkey is an expert on Britain's Tudor period—a time in the 1500s when the slave trade was growing as European colonies across the Caribbean and the Americas expanded. He said in a June 30 online interview with



LONDON: In this file photo, Britain's Prince Charles, Prince of Wales (left) speaks with Natasha Kaplinsky and David Starkey (right) during a reception at Clarence House, St James's Palace. — AFP

the right-wing UK commentator Darren Grimes that the BLM movement represented "the worst side of

American black culture". "Slavery was not genocide. Otherwise, there wouldn't be so many damn blacks in Africa or in Britain, would there? An awful lot of them survived," Starkey said. "We had Catholic emancipation at pretty much exactly the same time that we got rid of slavery in the 1830s. We don't go on about that because it's part of history, it's a question that's settled," he added.

The remarks prompted Sajid Javid—a former finance and interior minister who has talked about how his Pakistani father faced discrimination after coming to Britain—to call Starkey a racist. "We are the most successful multi-racial democracy in the world and have much to be proud of," Javid tweeted on Thursday. "But David Starkey's racist comments ('so many damn blacks') are a reminder of the appalling views that still exist." Javid's tweet was picked up by British media, and Cambridge University's Fitzwilliam College accepted Starkey's resignation the next day.

Canterbury Christ Church University in south-eastern England also terminated Starkey's contract as a visiting professor. — AFP

## Ethiopian pop star's murder reveals political rifts

LEGETAFO: Firaol Ajema and his friends, dressed in black T-shirts, have been meeting each afternoon in recent days to listen to the music of Ethiopian pop star Hachalu Hundessa. The home-made shirts bearing the dead singer's portrait and the slogan "I am also Hachalu" are their way of honoring the man whose murder Monday sparked violence that killed nearly 100 and highlighted Ethiopia's simmering ethnic tensions.

"We haven't been able to properly mourn," said Firaol, a university student in the town of Legetafo outside Addis Ababa, where security has been tight since the killing. "We are suffocating inside our own houses." Hachalu's death, which remains unsolved, was destined to become a political flashpoint. In uptempo pop songs riddled with political references, Hachalu gave voice to feelings of marginalization among fellow members of his Oromo ethnic group, Ethiopia's largest.

His music was the soundtrack to anti-government protests that swept Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the country's first Oromo leader, to office in 2018. Yet, as Ethiopia prepares for elections that will test its democratic transition under Abiy, many Oromo nationalists feel betrayed, arguing the prime minister has failed to champion their interests.

Opposition politicians claim many of the protester deaths were instigated by security forces who have fired on protesters in multiple locations in Addis Ababa and the surrounding Oromia region. Firaol and his fellow young Oromos in Legetafo agree. "The killing has caused a lot of sadness among us, but the way the government is handling it is even worse," said Birhanu Gadisa, also a student. "It's totally unacceptable."

### Contested capital

The issue at the centre of this week's crisis is the historic Oromo claim to Addis Ababa, which many ethnic nationalists refer to as Finfinne, the name given to the territory before Emperor Menelik II founded the capital in the late 19th century. The catalyst for protests that swept Abiy to power was the unveiling in 2015 of a master plan for Addis Ababa's expansion into Oromia. Hachalu's resting place has been contested with some arguing he should be buried in Addis Ababa, rather than his native Ambo to the west. "He needed to be buried with respect inside Addis Ababa. Finfinne belongs to the Oromo people," Firaol said.

Government officials and some of Hachalu's relatives, however, wanted him buried in Ambo, leading to an unseemly tussle over his corpse. According to an account provided by federal police commissioner Endeshaw Tassew, a group of Oromo nationalists, among them prominent opposition politician Jawar Mohammed, intercepted the body en route to Ambo on Tuesday and tried to take it back to Addis Ababa, where they clashed with security forces. One police officer was killed and Jawar was arrested, further inflaming tensions in Oromia. Two days later the funeral in Ambo turned deadly when soldiers opened fire on crowds of mourners in a botched attempt at crowd control. At least nine people were shot, two of them fatally, triggering fresh grief for Hachalu's fans. "Even when many people go out to mourn his death, we lost more lives," said student Chala Tola. — AFP



NEW YORK: A Hawaiian song is performed as members of the Indigenous People's Day New York City Committee held a Circle of Belonging in Columbus Circle. The group's long-term goal to remove the statue at Columbus Circle and change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day has been reignited by the current protests against racism. — AFP

## Columbus statue toppled by race protesters

WASHINGTON: Protesters in the US city of Baltimore pulled down a statue of Christopher Columbus on Saturday, local media reported, the latest monument to be toppled in anti-racism demonstrations. Statues of figures connected to colonialism and slavery have been ripped from their plinths in the United States and around the world since Black Lives Matter protests were sparked by the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis in May.

Footage published by the Baltimore Sun showed protesters using ropes to pull down the statue of Columbus—the Italian navigator who reached the Americas in 1492 — near the city's Little Italy district and rolling it into the Inner Harbor on the night of July 4. Long hailed as the so-called discoverer of "The New World," Columbus is considered by many to have spurred years of genocide against indigenous groups in the Americas. He is regularly denounced in a similar way to Civil War generals of the pro-slavery South.

President Donald Trump earlier mentioned the sailor in his speech to mark the July 4 holiday, when Americans typically celebrate their 1776 declaration of independence from Britain. "Together we will fight for the American dream, and we will defend, protect, and preserve American way of life which began in 1492 when Columbus discovered America," he said in an address in which he railed against protesters demanding racial justice.

"We are now in the process of defeating the radical left, the anarchists, the agitators, the looters, and the people who, in many instances, have absolutely no clue what they are doing," he said. "We will never allow an angry mob to tear down our statues, erase our history, indoctrinate our children." The president last month signed an executive order pledging to enforce prosecution for protesters who vandalize public memorials, promising "long prison terms" for "lawless acts against our Great Country!"

A statue of Columbus was taken down in San Francisco last month because the explorer's actions "do not deserve to be venerated," city officials said, and another was removed from California's state capital Sacramento. Elsewhere, a statue of Belgium's King Leopold II—who ruled over a brutal regime in Africa—was removed in the port city of Antwerp and a monument to slave trader Edward Colston was ripped down in Bristol in the United Kingdom. — AFP

## Could Malawi's historic election inspire Africa?

BLANTYRE: The opposition triumph in Malawi's recent landmark election re-run after last year's fraudulent polls were overturned could spur similar democratic change across the continent, analysts and historians say. Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party comfortably won the June 23 election with 58.5% of the vote — beating Peter Mutharika, whose re-election last year was nullified by the courts over "widespread and systematic" irregularities. Chakwera's official inauguration is set for Monday, to coincide with the country's 56th anniversary of independence from Britain.

The election set the impoverished African country apart from many on the continent, making it only the second sub-Saharan African country to have presidential election results overturned in court, after Kenya in 2017. It was also the first time in Africa that an election re-run has led to the defeat of an incumbent. The unprecedented political feat was credited to a cohesion of several powerful forces — including the resilience of the judiciary that handed down the historic judgment.

In extraordinary scenes, Constitutional Court judges came sporting bullet-proof jackets and under military escort to deliver the ruling on February 3 overturning Mutharika's re-election. That was after six months of hearing evidence during a groundswell of civic society-led street protests. "For a year they persevered with mass demonstrations against the wanton theft of their votes despite threats and repression by the beleaguered and discredited government," said historian Paul Tiyambe Zeleza.

The election result showed that despite the power of incumbency, an organised and smart opposition can win, Zeleza said. "This election will certainly influence subsequent elections across the African continent," said Grant Masterson, program manager at the Johannesburg-based Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). He expects that elsewhere on the continent "opposition leaders will become emboldened by this success... and ramp up post-election protests against results that did not go in their favor, combined with court challenges." Opposition leaders from neighboring countries are drawing inspiration, hailing the "professionalism" displayed by Malawian institutions and "citizens' vigilance". Nelson Chamisa, Zimbabwe's main opposition Movement for Democratic Change—Alliance (MDC-A) leader, failed in his legal bid to have the courts overturn the 2018 election which he said was stolen from him by President Emmerson Mnangagwa. He saluted Malawi's judiciary and security services "for acting as a bulwark against authoritarianism and defending the constitution". — AFP

## International

# Identifying migrants who died at sea 'meticulous work for Tunisia'

## Dozens of migrants lost without a trace

**SFAX:** The identity of dozens of migrants who drowned off Tunisia last month might have been lost without a trace, like thousands of others who have disappeared on the treacherous sea route to Europe. But when authorities recovered 61 bodies near the eastern port city of Sfax, they carefully took note of any details that could one day help lead to their identification. Tattoos, moles, fingerprints, dental impressions, DNA, even clothing brands and sizes - "every clue must be noted and recorded", forensic scientist Samir Maatoug said.

He and his team have gathered photos, medical data and other information on the 30 men, 29 women and two children aboard the migrant boat that capsized off the Tunisian coast in early June, leaving no survivors. The boat's local captain was quickly identified, but for the passengers - all from sub-Saharan Africa - the task was much more difficult. The migrants were buried in a Muslim cemetery near Sfax, in numbered and indexed graves, in case one day someone should come to claim them or discover their fate.

Dozens of bodies of foreign migrants are recovered from the sea off Tunisia every year, casualties of journeys toward Europe across the Mediterranean that ended in tragedy. Tunisian authorities long interred them anonymously in makeshift cemeteries. But in recent years, the identification process has improved, in Tunisia as well as some other Mediterranean countries.

### Clues to identity

Italy has been regularly taking DNA samples since 2014, according to forensic pathologist Cristina Cattaneo, who heads an unprecedented operation that seeks to identify migrants who died at sea. Data is centralized through a broader government entity for missing persons that also handles shipwreck victims, but procedures are not yet harmonized, she said, calling on European

institutions to take over the responsibility. More than 20,000 migrants have died in the Mediterranean since 2014, according to the United Nations - more than 80 percent of them in the deadliest zone, traced out between Italy, Malta, Libya and Tunisia. Only a third of the bodies have been recovered.

War-torn Libya, a departure point for migrants of all backgrounds, buries bodies without keeping records, and gathering information there is difficult.

“ Every clue must be noted and recorded ”

But Tunisia, despite its limited means, has harmonized its testing procedures, after a series of consultations with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that began in 2017. "The bodies of migrants who drown must be systematically analysed by forensics for fingerprints and DNA samples, said Maatoug, who is the head of forensic medicine at the Habib Bourguiba University Hospital in Sfax.

When they arrive at the hospital, the corpses are assigned a number that is written on their file and finally, on their grave. In the Sfax morgue, the team busily notes the clothes and the physical characteristics of the bodies, bloated and wrapped in seaweed, their faces disfigured. "These clues can help the victims' families recognise them and finally mourn them," Maatoug told AFP. But "DNA analysis



**SFAX, Tunisia:** Gravediggers at a cemetery near the coastal city of Sfax, wear protective outfits as they carry out the burial of one of the 52 African migrants, who died at sea when their boat capsized near Tunisia's Kerkennah Islands yesterday. — AFP

remains the most reliable way of identifying a person, even decades later", he added.

### 'Reliable records'

His team alone has carried out 412 DNA tests since Tunisia's 2011 revolution, which marked a sharp increase in departures from the country's coasts. A growing number of bodies recovered belong to foreigners, whether they took boats from neighboring Libya or were among a rising number

of West Africans trying to depart from Tunisia. Identifying them requires a large amount of coordination. Hospital samples are supplemented with those from police forensics and the information is sent to the courts, said Shahir Jdaim, assistant director of the police forensics laboratories. But "the centralization of data and the procedures for sharing it" are yet to be worked out, said Bilal Sablouh, the ICRC's regional coordinator for forensic medicine. — AFP

## Dreams of Myanmar's 'unwashed' jade miners buried by disaster

**HPAKANT:** Five Yay Ma Hsay - or 'unwashed' as the jade miners of northern Myanmar are known - arrived early Thursday at the pit to scrape out a living on a scraggy hillside, lured by the prospect of finding a stone that could transform their lives. But only three would return, the others victims of Myanmar's worst-ever mine disaster after a landslide in heavy rains entombed at least 174 people, with scores more feared missing.

Sai Ko, 22, survived the spin-dryer of rock and heavy sludge by clinging to the corpse of a fellow miner, and battling to land. His friend Zaw Lwin, 29, and his younger brother San Lwin were miraculously spat out from the churning torrent and delivered naked onto the shore, their clothes ripped off by the deluge. But two of the crew didn't make it.

Than Niang was cremated on Saturday, while Thet Shin is missing presumed dead, one of scores victims still unaccounted for from the accident at the Hwekha mine, in northern Kachin State. "We have many dreams of helping our families," a shaken Sai Ko told AFP. "But it's not worth it. I will never go back." The hillside which buried his friends harbours



**HPAKANT:** Damaged houses are seen next to the site of a deadly landslide in an area where miners work in open-cast jade mines near Hpakant in Kachin state. — AFP

jadeite, a stone which goes for a fortune over the Kachin border in China in a multi-billion dollar industry dominated by firms linked to Myanmar's military. But for the poor migrants from across Myanmar who travel hundreds of miles to prospect in Hpakant, big paydays are few and far between. "Sometimes we hunt for ten days and only find a piece worth \$7-\$14. If we find a big stone they (the mining company) will take it," said Sai Ko. Dabbling at the raw cuts on his face, his wife Pan Ei Phyu said they will abandon the mines and head home to near Mandalay. "I don't want him to dig stones in this life. I just want our family to be together," she said.

## Virus sours 'July 4' celebrations in US; Mexico cases soar

**WASHINGTON:** A surge in coronavirus cases sapped the fun out of July 4 celebrations in the United States as the pandemic also accelerated through neighboring Mexico, the rest of Latin America and South Africa. Even Europe, which has largely been celebrating reopening, saw some setbacks, with authorities placing 200,000 people back under lockdown in Spain after a spike in infections that underlined how easily hard-won progress can be reversed.

The United States remains by far the world's hardest-hit country, logging a further 43,000 cases Saturday that brought its total number of infections to more than 2.8 million, with nearly 130,000 deaths. The spiraling caseload cast a pall over traditional Independence Day celebrations, with beaches closed and the National Mall in Washington, usually crowded with spectators ready for fireworks, near deserted.

Main Street parades were canceled, boisterous backyard barbecues scaled down and family reunions put off. Despite the somber mood, President Donald Trump insisted the end was in sight in the fight against COVID-19. Speaking from the White House lawn, Trump addressed a crowd that included frontline health workers battling the virus. He accused China - where the outbreak originated late last year - of a cover-up that allowed the illness to race across the globe, but hailed American "scientific brilliance."

"We'll likely have a therapeutic and/or vaccine solution long before the end of the year," he said. If so, it will be in high demand. As the virus continues its relentless march around the world, Latin America is also grappling with rising cases. Mexico's toll crossed 30,000 on Saturday, propelling it past France to become the fifth-hardest-hit country in the world.



**CIUDAD NEZAHUALCOYOTL:** A man with symptoms of COVID-19 lies in bed after he was checked by a paramedic, in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico State. — AFP

And Brazil, which has defiantly opened bars and restaurants in Rio de Janeiro, notched up nearly 40,000 new cases and more than a thousand deaths, keeping it in second place behind the US in the bleak global rankings. Across the Atlantic, South Africa reported more than 10,000 new infections Saturday, its highest ever daily jump. Africa's most economically developed country now has the greatest number of cases on the continent.

### 'Can't be in a bubble'

American beaches that would normally be packed on July 4 are shut on both coasts as California and Florida suffer alarming surges in cases, while bars in states such as Texas and Michigan have had to close on what should be one of their busiest weekends of the year.

New York's public beaches reopened earlier in the week but locals in the city that was once the global epicenter of the crisis remain wary of a resurgence. Mark Ruiz, who came to New York's Coney Island beach with his wife and two children for a picnic, said he was "definitely worried" about the virus and his family would scrupulously respect social distancing rules.

"I'll have my mask on as soon as we leave the beach, so we came prepared," said Ruiz, who works as an ice cream distributor to restaurants around the city. — AFP

## Fire breaks out at Iran power plant

**DUBAI:** A fire broke out at a power station in southwestern Iran on Saturday, Iranian media reported, the latest in a string of fires and explosions, some of which have hit sensitive sites. The blaze, which affected a transformer in the power station in the city of Ahvaz, was put out by fire fighters and electricity was restored after partial outages. Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, a spokesman for state-run power company TAVANIR, told the semi-official news agency Tasnim.

There have been several other incidents at facilities across the country recently. A chlorine gas leak occurred at a unit of the Karoon petrochemicals plant near the port of Bandar Imam Khomeini on the Gulf on Saturday, injuring dozens, the semi-official ILNA news agency reported.

"In this incident, 70 members of the personnel who were near the unit suffered slight injuries (due to chlorine inhalation) and were taken to a hospital with the help of rescue workers," the plant's spokesman, Massoud Shabanlou, told ILNA, adding that all but two had been released. On Thursday, a fire broke out at Iran's Natanz nuclear facility but officials said operations were not affected.

A former official suggested the incident could have been an attempt to sabotage work at the plant, which has been involved in activities that breach an international nuclear deal. On Tuesday, 19 people were killed in an explosion at a medical clinic in the north of the capital Tehran, which an official said was caused by a gas leak. On June 26, an explosion occurred east of Tehran near the Parchin military and weapons development base that the authorities said was caused by a leak in a gas storage facility in an area outside the base. — Reuters

## Democracy books disappear from the Hong Kong libraries

**HONG KONG:** Books written by prominent Hong Kong democracy activists have started to disappear from the city's libraries, online records show, days after Beijing imposed a draconian national security law on the finance hub. Among the authors whose titles are no longer available are Joshua Wong, one of the city's most prominent young activists, and Tanya Chan, a well known pro-democracy lawmaker. Beijing's new national security law was imposed on Tuesday and is the most radical shift in how the semi-autonomous city is run since it was handed back to China by Britain in 1997.

China's authoritarian leaders say the powers will restore stability after a year of pro-democracy protests, will not stifle freedoms and will only target a "very small minority". But it has already sent fear coursing through a city used to speaking openly, with police arresting people for possessing slogans pushing independence or greater autonomy and businesses scrambling to remove protest displays. Wong said he believed the removal of the books was sparked by the security law.

"White terror continues to spread, the national security law is fundamentally a tool to incriminate speech," he wrote on Facebook, using a phrase that refers to political persecution. Searches on the public library website showed at least three titles by Wong, Chan and local scholar Chin Wan are no longer available for lending at any of dozens of outlets across the city. An AFP reporter was unable to find the titles at a public library in the district of Wong Tai Sin on Saturday afternoon.

The city's Leisure and Cultural Services Department, which runs libraries, said books had been removed while it is determined whether they violate the national security law. "In the process of the review the books will not be available for borrowing and reference," it said. The law targets acts of subversion, secession, terrorism and colluding with foreign forces. China says it will have jurisdiction in some cases and empowered its security apparatus to set up shop openly in Hong Kong for the first time, ending the legal firewall between the two.

Rights groups and legal analysts say the broad wording of the law - which was kept secret until it was enacted - outlaws certain political views, even if expressed peacefully. Any promotion of independence or greater autonomy appears to be banned by the legislation. Another vaguely worded provision bans inciting hatred towards the Chinese or Hong Kong government. On the authoritarian mainland, similar national security laws are routinely used to crush dissent.

The new security law and the removal of books raises questions of whether academic freedom still exists. Hong Kong has some of Asia's best universities and a campus culture where topics that would be taboo on the mainland are still discussed and written about. But Beijing has made clear it wants education in the city to become more "patriotic" especially after a year of huge, often violent and largely youth-led pro-democracy protests. — AFP

## Business

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2020



In this file photo, an aerial view of a crude oil storage facility is seen in Cushing, Oklahoma. Although crude prices have rebounded from coronavirus crisis lows, oil execs and experts are starting to ask if the industry has crossed the Rubicon of peak demand. —AFP

## Big Oil confronts terminal demand decline

### Oil experts believe the industry has crossed the Rubicon of peak demand

**PARIS:** Although crude prices have rebounded from coronavirus crisis lows, oil execs and experts are starting to ask if the industry has crossed the Rubicon of peak demand. The plunge in the price of crude oil during the first wave of coronavirus lockdowns-futures prices briefly turned negative-was due to the drop in global demand as planes were parked on tarmacs and cars in garages. The International Energy Agency (IEA) forecast that average daily oil demand will drop by eight million barrels per day this year, a decline of around eight percent from last year. While the agency expects an unprecedented rebound of 5.7 million barrels per day next year, it still forecasts overall demand will be lower than in 2019 owing to ongoing uncertainty in the airline sector.

Some are questioning whether demand will ever get back to 2019 levels. "I don't think we know how this is going to play out. I certainly don't know," BP's new chief executive Bernard Looney said in May.

The COVID-19 pandemic was in full swing then with most planes grounded and white-collar workers giving up the commute to work from home. "Could it be peak oil? Possibly. I would not write that off," Looney told the Financial Times.

#### Summited?

The concept of peak oil has long generated speculation. Mostly, it has been focused on peak produc-

tion, with experts forecasting that prices would reach astronomical levels as recoverable oil in the ground runs out. But in recent months, the concept of peak demand has come into vogue, with the coronavirus landing an uppercut into fuel demand for the transportation sector followed by a knock-out punch from the transition to cleaner fuels.

Michael Bradshaw, professor at Warwick Business School, said environmental groups are already lobbying to prevent the Paris agreements becoming another casualty of the pandemic, stressing the need for a Green New Deal for the recovery. "If they are successful, demand for oil might never return to the peak we saw prior to COVID-19," he said in comments to journalists.

The transport sector may never fully recover, Bradshaw posited. "After the pandemic, we might have a different attitude to international air travel or physically going into work," he said.

#### 'Science fiction'

Other experts say we haven't reached the tipping point yet, and might not for a while. "Many people have said, including some CEOs of some major companies, with the lifestyle changes now to teleworking and others we may well see oil demand has peaked, and oil demand will go down," IEA executive director Fatih Birol said recently. "I don't agree with that. Teleconferencing alone will not help us to reach our

United States from a multilateral deal aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear program and reimposed sanctions that have since battered the economy. A drop in oil prices and a slump in the global economy have deepened the economic crisis in the country, which also has the highest death toll in the Middle East from the pandemic. The rial's decline has continued despite assurances from Iranian Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati last week that the bank had injected hundreds of millions of dollars to stabilize the currency market.

The rial lost about 70 percent of its value in the months after May 2018 as Iranians snapped up dollars, fearing Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear deal and sanctions could shrink vital oil exports and severely impact the economy. The official exchange rate is 42,000 rials per dollar and is

private sector. "This is the first initiative of private investment for running passenger trains over Indian Railways network," the ministry said in a statement.

"The objective of this initiative is to introduce modern technology rolling stock with reduced maintenance, reduced transit time, boost job creation, provide enhanced safety, provide world class travel experience to passengers," it added. The project will require an investment of \$4 billion and private players will have to pay the government fixed haul charges and a percentage of profits determined during the bidding process.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to privatize a range of industries that have been under state control for decades, sparking criticism from the opposition Congress party. "Now the government is in a desperate mood to sell a great chunk of one of our largest national assets #IndianRailways," Congress politician Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury tweeted.

energy and climate goals, they can only make a small dent," Firol added while unveiling a recent IEA report. Moez Ajmi at consulting and auditing firm E&Y dismissed as "science fiction" the idea that a definitive drop in oil demand could suddenly emerge.

He expects a slow recovery in demand even if the coronavirus leaves the global economy weakened.

That weakness would also likely slow adoption of greener fuels. "It will take time for fossil fuels, which today still account for some 80 percent of primary global consumption to face real competition" from rival energy sources, he said. Meanwhile, the oil industry could face financing challenges.

Bronwen Tucker, an analyst at Oil Change International, says the industry is now under pressure from investors. After "a pretty big wave of restrictions on coal and some restrictions on oil and gas, the risks to oil and gas investment right now feel a lot more salient," she said.

The industry is already writing down the value of assets to face up to the new market reality of lower demand and prices. Royal Dutch Shell said this past week that it will take a \$22 billion charge as it re-evaluates the value of its business in light of the coronavirus. Last month, rival BP reduced the worth of its assets by \$17.5 billion. "This process has further to run, and we expect further large impairments to occur across the sector," said Angus Rodger of specialist energy consultancy Wood Mackenzie. —AFP



used mostly for imports of state-subsidized food and medicine. —Reuters

## UAE restructures govt, seeking more agility

**DUBAI:** The United Arab Emirates announced a broad government restructuring yesterday, merging government entities and appointing new economy and industry ministers, and giving it a year to achieve new targets. The head of Abu Dhabi's national oil company ADNOC, Sultan Al-Jaber, was named as industry and advanced technology minister and Abdullah Al-Marri was appointed economy minister, as part of the restructuring announced by UAE Vice President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum on his official Twitter account. The energy and infrastructure ministries were merged under a single portfolio to be headed by the current energy minister, Suhail Al-Mazrouei.

A source familiar with the matter said Al-Jaber would retain his post as ADNOC chief executive. The changes are being made to help the country deal with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, Sheikh Mohammed said last month when plans to restructure were first announced.

Changes include abolishing half of government service centers and converting them to digital platforms within two years and merging around half of federal agencies with each other or within ministries. Sheikh Mohammed, also the ruler of Dubai emirate, said the changes would speed up decision making and make the government more responsive to change. —Reuters



Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber

## Iran rial slides to new low as virus, sanctions weigh

**DUBAI:** The Iranian rial fell to a new low against the US dollar on the unofficial market on Saturday, as the economy comes under pressure from the coronavirus pandemic and US sanctions. The dollar was offered for as much as 215,500 rials, softening from 208,200 on Friday, according to foreign exchange site Bonbast.com. The economic daily Donya-e-Eqtasad's website gave the dollar rate as 215,250, compared with 207,500 on Friday. In May 2018, President Donald Trump withdrew the

## India opens vast rail network to private players

**MUMBAI:** India has opened up its vast railway sector to private companies, allowing firms to operate trains on certain routes, in a bid to boost its stuttering, virus-hit economy. The 167-year-old train network carries 20 million passengers daily but is plagued by deadly accidents, rickety infrastructure, lack of modern amenities and poor investment.

In an announcement late Wednesday, the railway ministry said it would now permit businesses to run trains along 109 routes, inviting bids from firms weeks after New Delhi opened up coal mining to the

"Privatization cannot be construed as a panacea of railways malady", he added. The tottering network is notorious for accidents, with 15,000 passengers killed every year according to a 2012 government report that described the deaths as a "massacre". Asia's third-largest economy has been clobbered by the pandemic and a months-long lockdown, growing at its slowest pace in at least two decades last quarter. The shutdown, which put millions out of work overnight, is widely expected to plunge the country into recession.

Fears for the economy prompted the government to allow many businesses to resume operations starting last month despite an ongoing increase in infections, which have now crossed 600,000. Even before Modi announced the lockdown in late March, the economy was struggling to gain traction with sluggish growth, record unemployment and a flurry of bad loans making banks reluctant to lend. —AFP



**CHENNAI:** A worker paints the ceiling of MGR central railway station in Chennai. India has opened up its vast railway sector to private companies, allowing firms to operate trains on certain routes, in a bid to boost its stuttering, virus-hit economy. —AFP





# Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons unveils the all-new Toyota Highlander SUV

Toyota introduces a new level of style & efficiency to the SUV segment

**KUWAIT:** Proving that large vehicles can also be eco-friendly, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons brings a new level of efficiency to Kuwait's SUV market with the launch of Highlander, Toyota's biggest Hybrid-Electric Vehicle (HEV) to date. Available exclusively with an HEV powertrain, the all-new Toyota Highlander takes its place at the pinnacle of Toyota's electrified SUV line-up.

Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. The all-new Highlander combines all the familiar Toyota SUV attributes of comfort, drivability, and safety with low emissions, greater fuel efficiency, Intelligent All-Wheel Drive (AWD), space on demand, and an impressive 1,500 kg towing capacity. The 2020 Highlander's sophisticated body is based on the brand-new Toyota

New Global Architecture (TNGA-K) vehicle platform. This robust foundation is complemented by a lightweight high rigidity bodyshell with a low center of gravity, which provides the SUV with exceptionally nimble handling and comfortable highway cruising characteristics. The all-new Highlander's thrilling drive personality is brought to life by a new electrified hybrid system that combines two power sources. The vehicle's 2.5-liter Atkinson-cycle petrol engine produces 183 hp and is paired with two electric motors that generate 191 hp. With a combined power of 240 hp, they are capable of delivering a maximum torque figure of 231 nm. The system is mated to a direct-shift Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT), which contributes to a minimum fuel consumption value of 20.0 km/L in the model equipped with Intelligent AWD while delivering enhanced driving pleasure. Drivers can also select from ECO, NORMAL, and SPORT driving modes to suit their driving styles.

#### Beyond expectations

- Enjoy the highest level of reliability, innovative technology, connectivity, comfort and Safety
- State-of-the-art engine technology and superb fuel efficiency means it is now time to enjoy a truly exceptional driving experience.
- The all new Highlander. Whether travelling around the city or embarking on an adventure further afield, you will get to enjoy masses of features and the latest technology, all at a highly competitive price.



In view of the current circumstances and complying with guidelines of Kuwait authorities, Al-Sayer held a digital premier, live streaming the event in Toyota Kuwait Youtube and Facebook accounts for valued partners of Toyota as well as distinguished members of the press and media. Martin Aherne, Business Director and Bader Faisal Al-Sayer, Deputy Marketing Manager represented Toyota Kuwait.

"Toyota is famous the world over for its Quality, Reliability & Durability. These qualities remain the backbone of Toyota but now they have taken Design, Technology and Performance to a new level. The performance is something that you must experience to believe. They are much more fuel efficient which is better for the environment," commented Martin Aherne. After setting a goal of developing a vehicle that would provide both unrivaled family security and heightened driving pleasure in every situation, Chief Engineer Yoshikazu Saeki turned his attention to establishing the highest standards for design and quality. Saeki commented, "With the Highlander, we want users to feel the joy of driving, go on new journeys, and drive even further. Ultimately, we wish to enrich the lives of our customers by bringing them unforgettable driving experiences. For the development team and I, being able to contribute to the memories of our customers in this way is a huge honor."

"We are delighted to launch the latest addition to our HEV line-up in the Middle East. In line with our commitment to contributing positively to the earth and its societies, the all-new Highlander has been engineered to offer outstanding fuel efficiency while delivering first-class comfort and performance," said Kei Fujita, Chief Representative of Middle East & Central Asia

#### Highlander - USPs

- Vehicle Integrated Dynamic Management (VIDM).
- Blind Spot Monitor (BSM).
- Lane Tracing Assist (LTA).
- Lane Departure Alert (LDA).
- Radar Cruise Control.
- Pre-Crash Safety System.
- 8 SRS Airbags.
- Alloy Wheels 20".
- Panoramic Roof.
- Power Back Door.
- LED Headlights + DRL (Day-time Running Lights) + AHB (Adaptive High Beam).
- Multi-information display 7".
- High Definition front display 8 inch + Apple Carplay & Android Auto System.
- 4 Cameras + PVM (Panoramic View Monitor).
- Head-Up Display (HUD).
- Drive Mode Select (Eco, Normal, Sport, EV).

#### Zero-fuel consumption

The all-new Highlander HEV can be driven entirely on electrical power with zero-fuel consumption and tailpipe emissions, or by combining the power generated from the petrol engine and two electric motors, depending on the vehicle's speed and driver behavior. Its hybrid-electric batteries are continuously charged by either the petrol engine or when decelerating and braking, eliminating the need to plug in a power cord. Furthermore, the HEV features a host of advanced technologies, yet drives like any conventional vehicle and does not require special fuel.

A sculpted shape with chiseled lines gives the 2020 Highlander a powerful personality, yet it exudes a modern, sophisticated attitude that makes it ideal for family-friendly adventures. The SUV's wide, stable stance is expressed through a two-stage trapezoidal upper and lower grille, which is accented with chrome trim for a premium look.

The solid, rear-sloping cabin structure and upward-flowing rear flare contribute to a dynamic feel. At the back of the vehicle, the all-new Highlander's width is emphasized through the distinctive shape that extends from the inside of the rear combination lamp toward the bumper corner. Meanwhile, the panoramic roof's large glass opening enhances the sense of openness and comfort for all occupants.

Moving inside, the 2020 Highlander offers a comfortable, premium quality environment with impressive flexibility. The seven-seat vehicle's second row of seats has a sliding range of 180mm to ensure spacious third-row accommodation for two adults, together with easy access. The cabin provides plenty of storage compartments, as well as five USB charger terminals for the front and second-row seats. Embracing a design philosophy that has created more space, more utility, and is more friendly, the all-new Highlander ensures that drivers and passengers enjoy maximum comfort and convenience throughout their journey, wherever they may be traveling to.

#### Advanced features

The car's cabin includes a range of advanced features, including a dual-zone automatic air conditioning system with rear control panel and Smart-flow (S-

FLOW) control that provides air conditioning to occupied seats only. The cluster gauge features a 7-inch color multi-information display (MID), which is complemented by an 8-inch display audio system, a large colored head-up display, Apple CarPlay, and Android Auto™.

Additional benefits for occupants include ambient illumination, a 6-speaker sound system, multi-adjustable power driver seat, 60:40 split-folding second-row seats, fully flat-folding third-row seats, power tailgate, and smart entry and start system. As with any other Toyota model, safety remains a top priority for the all-new Highlander that comes with an advanced safety system. This is complemented by Toyota Safety Sense, an advanced safety technology package that includes Pre-Collision System (PCS), Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC) with All-Speed Range, Lane Tracing Assist (LTA), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), and Automatic High Beam (AHB). In addition, the car features a comprehensive array of safety features to protect its occupants, such as 8 SRS airbags, including side-curtain airbags for all three rows, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Brake Assist (BA), trailer-sway control, Electric Parking Brake (EPB) with brake hold function, Blind Spot Monitor (BSM), Panoramic View Monitor (PVM), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), Tire Pressure Warning System (TPWS), driver and front passenger seatbelts with pretensioners and force limiters, and a clearance sonar featuring eight sensors located in the front and rear bumpers.

Available in eight distinctive exterior colors, the all-new Highlander provides customers the opportunity to express their individuality. These include four brand distinguished colors: Precious Galena, a solid, slightly bluish-silver that combines a lustrous texture with a bright finish; Premium Red, a high-quality, deep red that creates a stand-out look; Blackish Brown Mica, a calming dark brown with depth and luster; and Dark Blue Mica, a textured dark blue for an urban image. Meanwhile, the interior is available in a choice of Gray, Beige, or Black. The all-new Highlander comes equipped with new 18-inch or 20-inch alloy wheels, both of which are available in two designs and express strength and elegance through their three-dimensional spokes.



# Optimism on a V-shaped US recovery fuels risk sentiment

## Oil prices continue momentum as US labor market remains resilient

**KUWAIT:** The jobs report in June showcased the rebound in the US labor market as all US states started lifting their strict lockdown measures. The labor market made greater progress than expected in June. Thursday's simultaneous release of the monthly employment report and the weekly jobless claims data offered diverging snapshots of the economy. One reflecting a flood of rehiring, particularly at restaurants and retailers, as state economies reopened.

The other reflecting a jump in new virus cases, which has led many of those same states to halt or even walk back reopening plans. In details, payrolls rose by a more-than-expected 4.8 million in June after an upwardly revised 2.7 million gain in the prior month, according to Labor Department figures. The data, which offer a snapshot of mid-month conditions, also showed the unemployment rate fell for a second month to 11.1 percent. That was a bigger decline than anticipated, but the rate remains far above the pre-pandemic half-century low of 3.5 percent.

While President Donald Trump said the jobs figures proved the economy is "roaring back," the pace of recovery may slow or even stall if employers grow cautious and delay rehiring workers. In fact, some have already been laid off a second time. Paired with the coming expiration of the federal government's extra \$600 in weekly unemployment benefits, the economy could take another hit in the months ahead.

Another side of the labor market, the employment-population ratio has tumbled from 61.2 percent back in January to 52.8 percent in May. Suggesting 47.2 percent of Americans are unemployed, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics. This ratio takes a wider look at the employment picture. It considers adults not in the labor force and captures those who were

discouraged about the prospects of finding a job, whereas the unemployment rate looks at people actively looking for a job. With many Americans jobless, the pace of recovery may take time as the largest economy depends greatly on consumer consumption. US manufacturing rebounds

The US manufacturing ISM PMI jumped to a 14-month high of 52.6 for June, from a previous monthly reading of 43.1. A reading above 50 indicates growth, which accounts for 11 percent of the US economy. Economists polled by Reuters predicted earlier a

reading of 49.5. Weaker global demand and worries about a second wave of infections may pressure growth prospects.

Equities globally rallied as investors assessed the data coming from global economies and the much talked about V shaped recovery possibility. With labor market data and manufacturing data exceeding

expectations, equities flourished. Yet the gains were capped with the US recording record daily corona virus cases and fears of a second wave of infections spurred fear in investors' sentiment. Since we are at corporate earnings season, the corporate reports should shed some further light on the status of different sectors of the economy.

In the fixed income complex, we saw the US-10-year treasury yield fluctuate throughout the week amid a range of positive and negative news, hovering between 0.62 percent and a high of 0.71 percent. Finally retreating to 0.66 percent after the US recorded its highest corona virus daily cases of 50K+. In the FX sphere, the US dollar edged lower last week losing as much as 0.62 percent of its value against major rivals amidst increased risk-taking sentiment. The greenback had its first weekly drop in a month this past week.



### UK economy fighting on many fronts

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	High	Low	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1219	1.1297	1.1205	1.1247	1.1035	1.1445	1.1280
GBP	1.2336	1.2523	1.2266	1.2483	1.2380	1.2685	1.2500
JPY	107.22	108.13	107.08	107.51	105.55	109.50	107.35
CHF	0.9477	0.9523	0.9430	0.9458	0.9265	0.9655	0.9400

### Euro lower

French President Emmanuel Macron asked his government, including Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, to resign on Friday as the French president seeks a fresh start after a disastrous municipal election last month. Macron named Jean Castex as his new Prime Minister. As a result to these sudden political changes, the euro slipped to 1.1224 after reaching last week's high of 1.1303 on Thursday. On the data side, the Eurozone manufacturing PMI came at 47.4 beating expectations of 46.9. Germany and France both recorded higher PMIs than forecasts and previous readings. Nevertheless, global demand remains a constant worry especially with the fears of increased global COVID-19 cases.

### UK data

The UK economy is fighting on many fronts to stay resilient and rebound. On one hand we have the on-going Brexit situation, and on the other we have the effect of the global pandemic that's pressuring the UK and world economy. Last week, UK's Q1 GDP final figure report showed that the economy contracted by 2.2 percent on a quarterly basis, worse than the market expected 2 percent contraction. This contraction in the economy indicates that Q2 figures

might be worse, as more health restrictions were introduced in the second quarter which might hinder economic activity further.

On another note, the UK eased quarantine rules by exempting arrivals from 50 countries from the 14-day quarantine requirement said Transport Secretary Grant Shapps. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Boris Johnson urged his fellow Britons to act with responsibility as the leisure sector prepares to open for the first time in 3 months on Saturday. The Sterling pound had a stellar week gaining as much as 1.53 percent on the US dollar and broke the 1.25 level last week before retreating on Friday to 1.2450 levels.

### Oil regains traction

Oil prices rose after the highest quarterly increase of 92 percent in almost 30 years following a report pointing to the first drop in US crude stockpiles since May. The report said that inventories shrunk by 8.16 million barrels last week. While inventory levels spurred some optimism, the question remains on the demand outlook for the world's second largest economy remains blurry with questions on the success of the efforts to contain the outbreak. On a weekly basis, both Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate gained around 4 percent and closed the week at \$42.80 and \$40.32 respectively.

## ABK and Visa partner to offer cardholders a 35% discount with Aramex 'Shop & Ship' Flex membership

**KUWAIT:** Together with Visa, one of the world's leading payment solution providers, and Aramex, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has launched a promotion to bring customers greater savings when shopping online. Until 10th July 2020, all ABK Visa cardholders in Kuwait will receive a 35 per cent discount on the Aramex 'Shop and Ship' Flex annual membership simply by using 'VisaSnS' at checkout.

'Shop and Ship' is an e-commerce delivery platform launched by Aramex, targeted at individual users, who can buy from anywhere in the world and have it delivered quickly and cost-effectively to their homes.

With the Aramex Shop & Ship Flex membership, ABK Visa cardholders get access to 31 personalized global addresses including Australia, Canada,

China, France, Japan, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and USA, and further have it delivered to their doorsteps in Kuwait. In addition, Flex Members pay for the actual product weight - in 100 grams increments - rather than the dimensions, and also enjoy preferential rates on heavier items.

In addition to the Shop and Ship Select and Perfume tiers, ABK Visa Cardholders are offered Shop and Ship Protect for free. ABK Visa cardholders can shop online with ease and have all of their purchases valued between \$100 and \$2,500 protected against loss or damage. Reaffirming its customer-centric approach, ABK's promotion will offer customers a best-in-class banking experience and enhance the shopping experience by providing a gateway to the best deals and offers to customers in



Kuwait. This offer is especially fitting for the current crises, where ABK is encouraging digital banking and limited community contact wherever possible.

## Annexation to fuel West Bank real estate boom

**ARIEL, Palestinian Territories:** In the Jewish settlement of Ariel, Perri Ben Senior can't wait for Israel to annex this part of the occupied West Bank, hoping it will be a boon for her real estate firm. With its 20,500 residents, a university and shopping centers, Ariel has been tipped as one of the settlements likely to be included in a first wave of Israeli annexations taking advantage of support from US President Donald Trump.

A controversial peace plan unveiled by Trump in January promised US backing for Israel to annex swathes of the West Bank, including Jewish settlements considered illegal under international law. Speaking at her real estate agency, Ben Senior said she hoped Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would forge ahead with implementing Trump's plan.

"It will raise the price of apartments and land because there will be more demand," she anticipated. Elsewhere in the West Bank, other agents have seen a leap in sales since annexation began dominating headlines after the launch of the US plan. Daniel Wach, whose real estate business is in the Eli settlement a short distance from Ariel, told AFP he has done "as much business in the past two months as the last few years".

"We closed six deals in the past 10 days in Alfei Menashe," another nearby settlement. "The houses have been on the market for many months, so I asked the families why do you want to buy now," he said.

"They fear the prices are going to get higher because of the decision of the government" to annex the territory, he said.

### 'A normal place'

If Israel does annex any parts of the West Bank,



Palestinian workers wearing masks against Covid-19 lineup for a security check at the entrance to Israel's Mishor Adumim Industrial zone nearby the Maale Adumim settlement in the West Bank east of Jerusalem. —AFP

those areas will become subject to Israeli civilian law, rather than the military law currently in place. "It's another reason to come to Judea and Samaria because now they are considered as normal citizens of Israel, it's a normal place now," Wach said, using the Israeli term for the West Bank. While the details of the plan remain obscure, many assume that annexed lands will not become part of the future Palestinian state, which is also part of Trump's plan.

Currently, "people are afraid to buy in the territories because they say to themselves: 'What if tomorrow we give the territories back? Who will reimburse me? What about the house I bought?'" said Ben Senior. Since the Oslo accords of the 1990s, which were meant to lead to the formation of a Palestinian state, the population of Israeli settlements in the West Bank has more than tripled to 450,000.

In addition to those making their home in the West Bank for religious or ideological reasons, many Israelis have been drawn to the settlements by their housing costs, which are significantly lower than Israel's expensive real estate market.

### Opportunity

Just 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) west of Alfei Menashe, on the other side of the "green line" between Israel and the West Bank, lies Kfar Saba. There, a seven-room apartment on 200 square meters of land would cost around 4.5 million shekels (\$1.3 million, 1.1 million euros), Wach said. A similar property in Alfei Menashe would cost around half of that, he said. "Immediately after annexation, the prices will jump around 10 to 15 percent up, and in around five, six, seven years from now, it'll go around 30 percent up, not less." Zeev Epstein, who recorded a record number of sales last month, shares Wach's optimism.

"Annexation will make a big difference, said Epstein, whose real estate firm Harei Zahav (Hebrew for golden mountains) deals exclusively in Israeli settlements," he said. "It's gonna be a big market, we'll need to get ready, work hard for this opportunity." While Netanyahu has yet to make any concrete annexation moves, despite being able to do so from July 1 under the US plan, Wach can already feel a certain momentum. "When Israel decides this place is ours, the common reaction is-ah, finally!" he said.—AFP

## Kalyan Jewellers strengthens leadership team

**KUWAIT:** Kalyan Jewellers announced the appointment of its first Chief Executive Officer as well as the expansion of its board to include two new directors. With this announcement, the company elevated Sanjay Raghuraman to Chief Executive Officer from his earlier position as the Chief Operating Officer. Additionally, Salil Nair joins the company's board as Non-Executive Director, while Anil Nair was named Independent Director. The company already has 4 independent directors with banking and financial sector expertise. With these two new appointments, Kalyan Jewellers board will include both retail and marketing expertise.



Sanjay Raghuraman

Speaking about this announcement T S Kalyanaraman, Chairman and Managing Director, Kalyan Jewellers said, "We are extremely delighted to appoint Sanjay Raghuraman as the Chief Executive Officer of the company and warmly welcome Salil Nair and Anil Nair, who bring to the table expertise in the retail and marketing spaces, to the Kalyan Jewellers core team. With an aim to continue expanding the company's footprint to cater to newer audiences, we are confident that our enhanced team will take us to newer horizons and achieve bigger milestones, leveraging growth opportunities despite the challenges in the new COVID-19 era."

Sanjay Raghuraman joined Kalyan Jewellers in 2012, when the company began its journey of accelerated growth by expanding operations outside of South India. He was the Head of Operations at HDB Financial Services Limited prior to joining Kalyan Jewellers. Salil Nair holds expertise in retail management with over 30 years of experience, including his successful spell as Chief Executive Officer at Shopper's Stop. Anil Nair has been in the advertising industry for over 24 years, including serving as CEO & Managing Partner of L&K Saatchi & Saatchi as well as a member of the global leadership team of Saatchi & Saatchi, McCann and DDB.

The announcements come at a time when the retail sector is seeing constant fluctuations due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic globally. With these new appointments at the helm, the company aims to strengthen its growth strategy and drive creative and sustainable solutions during these challenging times.

Kalyan Jewellers' Board of Directors now include industry-leading figures such as:

- T.S. Kalyanaraman, Chairman and Managing Director, Kalyan Jewellers
- Rajesh Kalyanaraman, Whole-Time Director, Kalyan Jewellers
- Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Whole-Time Director, Kalyan Jewellers
- Anish Kumar Saraf, Non-Executive Nominee Director, Kalyan Jewellers (Director, Warburg Pincus India)
- Kishori Jayendra Udeshi, Independent Director, Kalyan Jewellers (Ex. Deputy Governor, RBI)
- Agnihotra Dakshina Murthy Chavali, Independent Director, Kalyan Jewellers (Member - Advisory board for Banking & Financial Frauds, Central Vigilance Commission)
- Mahalingam Ramaswamy, Independent Director, Kalyan Jewellers (Ex. MD, State Bank of Travancore)
- T.S. Anantharaman, Independent Director, Kalyan Jewellers (Ex. Chairman, Catholic Syrian Bank)
- Salil Nair, Non-Executive Director, Kalyan Jewellers (Ex. CEO, Shoppers Stop)
- Anil Nair, Independent Director, Kalyan Jewellers (Ex. CEO & Managing Partner of Law & Kenneth Saatchi & Saatchi Pvt. Limited)

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## Lifestyle | Features



Caroline Pozzo di Borgo poses in front of the Forbin castle as the building prepares to host a street art exhibition in Marseille, southern France.—AFP photos



Caroline Pozzo di Borgo (right) talks about a painting inside the Forbin castle.



Caroline Pozzo di Borgo talks about a painting inside the Forbin castle as the building prepares to host a street art exhibition in Marseille.

## New York graffiti artists showcased in French chateau

When New York graffiti artists spray painted their colourful and subversive work on subways in the 1980s, it was an illegal activity done only in the dead of night. Three decades later, their work is on show in a lavish sixteenth century manor that belonged to a French aristocratic family in

“People think the meeting of a French aristocratic family and American graffiti is impossible. And yet, this place allows them to meet,” said co-curator of the new permanent exhibition Caroline Pozzo di Borgo, a renowned collector of street art worldwide. “We want a place of sharing,” said di Borgo, away from aban-

### ‘Masters of graffiti’

The exhibition features drawings, paintings and photographs, all on display in the mansion's many living rooms and in the stairwell and library. “We're presenting the post-graffiti movement and the East Village scene in New York, focusing on the 80s,” said di

Caroline Pozzo di Borgo and her husband own the majority of the works on display. But the permanent exhibition will also showcase works owned by other collectors whose identities have not been revealed. Dondi White, known as “Style Master General” was among the first street artists to achieve success beyond the underground world.

Photographs by Martha Cooper and Henry Chalfant capture his and others ephemeral works that have since disappeared from New York's streets and subways, but now hang in frames. In a corner, a leather jacket signed by street artist and LGBT-rights activist Keith Haring and other famous graffiti maestros of the time sits proudly.

In total 130 works by the pioneers line the opulent manor, including pieces by one of the movement's only women Lady Pink, designs by Rammellzee who has a room dedicated to him, and the abstract and figurative creations by Lee Quinones. Artists Rick Pro and Chris Daze Ellis, who were first celebrated in New York's East Village in the early 1980s, will be in residency for a month each from July or August depending on the coronavirus situation.—AFP



Caroline Pozzo di Borgo (right) talks about a painting by famous Dondi white (1961-1998) painter.



Caroline Pozzo di Borgo (right) talks about a painting by Rammellzee.



Caroline Pozzo di Borgo (right) talks about a painting by famous Dondi white painter.

the Mediterranean port city of Marseille. The Chateau de Forbin is a grand mansion perched in a vast park filled with plane and olive trees on the eastern outskirts of the city. Now works by American street art legends Dondi White and Futura are on display in panelled cream-coloured rooms where chandeliers hang from the ceiling—an intentional contrast.

done factories or urban galleries. “Marseille has always welcomed artists and had links with the United States,” di Borgo said. This was very much the case in World War II when American journalist Varian Fry who arrived in Marseille in 1940 and saved around 2,000 people from the Nazis, including the painters Marc Chagall and Max Ernst.

Borgo, who studied history and was first fascinated by Egyptian, Greek and Roman inscriptions—antique forms of street art—before turning to its modern manifestations.

“They're the masters of graffiti and the majority of the work that you will see here have been created by aerosol, without being pre-drawn,” she added.

## Touch The Sky: Kanye West announces 2020 presidential run

Kanye West, the entertainment mogul who urges listeners in one song to “reach for the stars, so if you fall, you land on a cloud,” claimed Saturday he is challenging Donald Trump for the US presidency in 2020. “We must now realize the promise of America by trusting God, unifying our vision and building our future. I am running for president of the United States! #2020VISION,” the born-again billionaire rapper tweeted as Americans marked Independence Day. West offered no further details on his supposed campaign, four months before the November election, and it is unclear if he has officially registered to run for office.

Hundreds of thousands of Twitter users reacted to the star's announcement and “Kanye” shot to become the top trending term on the platform, although many questioned whether the volatile rapper would go through with his plan and others claimed it was a publicity stunt. His wife, reality star Kim Kardashian, replied with a US flag emoji, while Tesla CEO Elon Musk wrote: “You have my full support!” The 43-year-old has mentioned running for president several times and he said last year he would run for president in 2024.

West long ago broke ranks with most of the left-leaning entertainment industry to loudly voice his support for Trump. In 2018, they met in the Oval Office—a surreal tete-a-tete that included a hug from the rapper as well as an on-camera rant featuring an expletive not often repeated for the White House press corps. That year, West also delivered a lengthy soliloquy to a president who many deem racist, telling him

he loved him—to the dismay of many Democrats and fellow artists. But in 2019, during an interview with Zane Lowe of Apple Music's Beats 1 show, he said his support for Trump had been a way to razz Democrats—and announced his own presidential ambitions.

“There will be a time when I will be the president of the US, and I will remember... any founder that didn't have the capacity to understand culturally what we were doing.” It was unclear to whom the artist was referring. The announcement came days after West, who has taken a very public turn towards Christianity in recent years, released a new song, “Wash Us In The Blood,” along with an accompanying video including imagery from recent anti-racism protests. West has also opened up about his mental health, particularly his struggle with bipolar disorder, telling talkshow host David Letterman he feels like he has “a sprained brain, like having a sprained ankle.”

Since 2018, Kardashian has formed her own contacts with the White House as she champions criminal justice reform: she has successfully lobbied Trump to pardon a sexagenarian woman for a non-violent drug offense. For weeks now Trump, criticized for his response both to the coronavirus pandemic and to anti-racism protests, has been lagging in the polls behind his Democratic rival, Joe Biden. There was no immediate response to West's announcement from either candidate Saturday.—AFP



People take photos from their car as they experience a drive-in immersive Vincent Van Gogh art exhibit in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.—AFP photos



## In Canada, art lovers head to drive-in for safe Van Gogh show

While some museums have had to cancel or postpone long-planned exhibits because of the coronavirus, organizers of a Van Gogh show in Toronto had a novel idea: offering art lovers a drive-in option. “Of course, because of COVID, we had to think creatively,” said Corey Ross, a co-producer of the exhibit, which was initial-

safe experience for people who are physically fragile, fearful of the virus or vulnerable. And it is a unique experience, said Ross. “You've never had an experience like this in your car,” said Ross. “The feeling is almost as if the car is floating through the art.” The show was set up in collaboration with the creators of “Van Gogh, Starry Night,” a

projection of the artworks, which is accompanied with music. The paintings are positioned so people can see them through their windshields.

Some people take photos with their kids in their lap as they spend 35 minutes in the bold, intense world of Van Gogh. Jessica Counti, 17, came with her family for the first drive-in edition on Friday to celebrate her sister's birthday. “It's just a really immersive experience that you can't really get in a regular art gallery. So I really appreciate that, even though we can't walk around art pieces,” she said. Another visitor, Patrick Corcoran, took in the show from the steering wheel of his vintage 1950 Plymouth.

“The whole thing of sitting in your car and being out and enjoying the art—it was comfortable, it was safe. With all the stuff that's going on in the world with the COVID, it was an experience. It was great.” Ross said the idea is turning out to be a hit but will just be temporary. “If you're a car enthusiast, it's a very special moment,” he said.

“But I think overall as soon as there's an opportunity for the public to go back to experiencing art in the way that we love to, in groups, beside other people, where you can talk and see strangers and see how they react and be part of a community, I think we will go back to that,” Ross said. The art hall for cars is booked almost solid through its end on August 9. The show will remain open to pedestrians through September.—AFP



People sit in their cars as they experience a drive-in immersive Vincent Van Gogh art exhibit in Toronto.

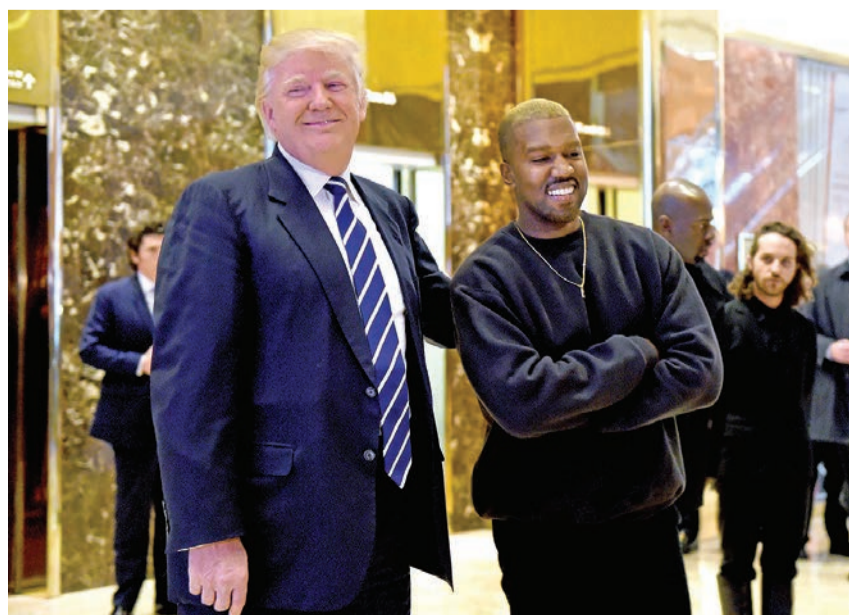
ly slated to start in May and was delayed by the pandemic. As Canada's largest city gradually comes out of lockdown, the exhibit began this week with two viewing areas in a huge Toronto warehouse: one area with social distancing circles on the ground for those who prefer taking in their art on foot, and another for people in cars that drive right into the building.

Viewing art from inside a car provides a

hugely popular exhibit presented last year at l'Atelier des Lumieres in Paris.

### Cruising in a Plymouth

The Toronto show features a similar, digital concept: works by the Dutch painter are projected in high definition on walls and floors. The warehouse has space for up to about 10 cars at a time, parking in designated spots. Car engines stay off during the



In this file photo taken on December 13, 2016 singer Kanye West and President-elect Donald Trump speak with the press after their meetings at Trump Tower in New York.—AFP

## Top Egyptian actor Ragaa Al-Geddawy dies from COVID-19

Famed Egyptian actor Ragaa Al-Geddawy died yesterday after contracting the COVID-19 disease, the actors union said. She was 81. “Ragaa Al-Geddawy passed away yesterday morning due to COVID-19,” union head Ashraf Zaki told AFP. “No public funeral was arranged for health reasons.” Geddawy tested positive for the illness caused by the novel coronavirus in late May and was treated in isolation at a hospital in Ismailia province, some 130 kilometres (80 miles) east of Cairo, local media reported. She had recently finished filming for her latest TV series “Laabet El Nesyan” (Oblivion Game), which aired during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

A veteran actor, Geddawy boasted a lengthy and varied career during which she gained fame across the Arab world. Geddawy started out as a model before taking on acting roles from the late 1950s, including her first film “Ghariba” (The Stranger) in 1958. She went on to act in more than 380 films, plays and television shows alongside some of the biggest names in Egyptian cinema. Geddawy was also the niece of renowned belly dancer and actor, Taheya Carioca. Egypt's health ministry has tallied 74,035 COVID-19 cases including 3,280 deaths since recording its first infections.—AFP



In this file photo taken on April 22, 2000 Egyptian former model and actress Ragaa Al-Geddawy is pictured during a visit to the Lebanese capital Beirut.—AFP

## Lifestyle | Features

## French theatre star accused of beating up vlogger

An actor from France's most prestigious theatre company, the Comedie Francaise, has been accused of assaulting and threatening to kill a vlogger, the theatre confirmed Tuesday. "La Comedie Francaise is hugely shocked to discover the intolerable violence one of its staff has been accused of," the theatre tweeted. "We condemn this in the strongest terms and will take all necessary measures," it added, without naming the man. There are some 30 male actors in the Comedie Francaise company, including some of France's most loved stars. Vlogger Marie Coquille-Chambel, who posts about plays on her YouTube channel, said she was beaten up three times by the actor, who also threatened to kill her.

The young woman described the beatings in a Facebook post and a series of tweets without naming the actor. "I was beaten... with punches to the face, the ribs and I was hit on the

back when I was on the ground. I was hit with books and shoes," she said. "He pulled my hair and threw me to the ground in his apartment. He tried to strangle me and left marks on my neck," Coquille-Chambel added, who also posted photos of bruises and a cut lip. She said she had audio recordings of the actor threatening to kill her.

Coquille-Chambel appealed to other women who may have been victims of the actor to come forward and to "break the silence" of abuse in the theatre. "I know that he had a reputation as a dangerous guy. So if there are other victims who should be heard, please contact me," she said. "I do not want anyone else to suffer, no matter how famous and influential he is," Coquille-Chambel said. The vlogger said she had gone to the police and was returning to see them Tuesday to add to the complaint she has filed.—AFP



Founder of Mosi Oa Tunya and Zimbabwe entrepreneur Shepherd Mafundikwa poses for pictures with his company's hand rolled cigars as he poses for a portrait at his factory in Harare.—AFP photos



Elias Lopez, a cigar making maestro from the Dominican Republic, lights a hand rolled cigar at the Mosi Oa Tunya.

## 'SMOKE THAT THUNDERS': FIRST 'MADE-IN-ZIMBABWE' LUXURY CIGARS

A Zimbabwean entrepreneur in Africa's top tobacco producer has launched the first local brand of hand-rolled cigars, defying coronavirus and economic odds to light up manufacturing. The southern African nation produced more than 252 million kilograms of tobacco last year, making it the sixth largest producer in the world. Nearly all of it is the "golden-leaf" Virginia used for cigarettes and most of that is exported to China, Germany and other international markets. Upon returning last year to his homeland after 15 years working in the United States, Shep Mafundikwa was determined to start a business that would "benefit" Zimbabwe.

"Though I am not a smoker, I noticed a preponderance of cigar lounges across the United States and decided I'd try to corner some of that market," said Mafundikwa, 54, who worked for an American airline. He started with trips to Cuba and the Dominican Republic, both premium cigar producers, where he recruited Dominican cigar-rolling maestro Elias Lopez. The pair selected air-cured Burley tobacco, a darker variety that accounts for a small percentage of local production. In May, Mafundikwa launched Mosi Oa Tunya Cigars—the local Lozi name for the Victoria Falls, which translates to "the smoke that thunders".

## Against all odds

"It was like building a house from scratch," Mafundikwa recalled. "Though I had settled on hand-rolled cigars there was still equipment needed." One of the first setbacks was the brittle nature of Zimbabwe's tobacco, which forced Mafundikwa to import special wrappers. When the coronavirus hit Zimbabwe in March, progress was delayed for weeks by a country-wide lockdown. Mosi Oa Tunya eventually opened in May and Lopez has since been teaching seven Zimbabwean women the craft of rolling cig-

ars. "They are rolling about half of the more than 200 cigars a day they should roll when they have the experience," said Lopez, whose eventual target is 2,000 cigars per day. Mafundikwa deliberately recruited an all-female rolling team to "empower women" and "provide them with an income".

Zimbabwe's economy has been crippled

by years of mismanagement and corruption under the late ex-president Robert Mugabe that forced millions to leave the country. Galloping inflation has wiped out savings and caused most companies to collapse or relocate. Manufacturing is limited and more than 80 percent of Zimbabweans are out of work. "I was unemployed but can now support my family," said cigar roller Gamuchirai Chibaya. "We all see a future here."



A woman rolls and cuts tobacco leaf into cigars at the Mosi Oa Tunya.

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## 'Ready' for export

Mosi Oa Tunya cigars come in different sizes, prices and flavours that send wafts of cherry and vanilla across the factory. Mafundikwa said he was targeting both seasoned and novice smokers. "The idea (of smaller size) is to provide an option for those who cannot afford to buy the cigars," he added. Restaurant-owner Peter Mubi is a member of Zimbabwe's small community of

Gun shop owner Preemesh Mohan Doolabh considers Zimbabwean cigars to be of similar quality to Cuban brands. "If you blindfolded me and made me smoke both, I wouldn't be able to tell the difference," he said. As the brand seems to have passed muster at home, Mafundikwa is eyeing new markets abroad, where he will go up against the Cuban and Dominican brands that inspired him. Mosi Oa Tunya also has African brands to compete against: Morocco's Habanos, which is seeking to expand to the US, and another new southern African manufacturer—Mozambique's Bongani luxury cigars. Mafundikwa is confident Mosi Oa Tunya is up to the challenge. "It will be fantastic for Zimbabwe to start earning some foreign currency from value-added Burley tobacco," he said.—AFP



## Runway revolution: Is this the end of fashion as we know it?

Paris fashion week goes online for the first time in its history Monday, with fashion rocked not just by the coronavirus but by a growing revolt from within the industry. The virus has brought designers' long-suppressed frustrations with the system and its unforgiving pace bubbling to the surface. Many are questioning not just the infernal rhythm and environmental impact of five and six collections a year, but whether fashion weeks or even fashion shows still make sense in a digital world.

"I can no longer cope with an industry built on abuse and consumerism, thriving on environmental destruction and perpetuating racial and gender-based injustice," declared the rising Brazilian creator Francisco Terra Wednesday, the brains behind the Neith Nyer brand. Terra—one of a wave of young designers to have broken onto the Paris catwalk in recent years—said that from now on he would only show once a year, "maybe twice". He is far from alone. Spanish wunderkind Alejandro Palomo told AFP that he is not sure if costly Paris shows really work for him while Colombian Esteban Cortazar said he has turned his back on them for now. "I love the shows," Palomo said, "but I am not going to put the pressure on my body of having to do one" every few months. Nor is the rebellion confined to smaller independent labels.

## Shows 'outmoded'

The tectonic plates began to shift in April when Saint Laurent designer Anthony Vaccarello said he was pulling out of Paris fashion week this year. From now on the label would "take control of its pace and reshape its schedule," he said. Gucci's Alessandro Michele delivered another bombshell in May, slashing his shows from five to two a year, and questioning the whole idea of seasons, on which the fashion calendar is built. "Clothes should have a longer life," he said, and should be "seasonless". Mugler designer Casey Cadwallader said Thursday he would follow the same path.

The cracks really began to show after several hundred industry players led by Belgian master Dries Van Noten signed an open letter in May arguing for a major overhaul of the industry.

Brands like Chloe, Thom Browne, Y/Project, Lemaire and Alexandre Mattiussi as well as some top-end department stores have since joined the call for "fundamental change that

will simplify businesses, making them more environmentally and socially sustainable." They want the fashion calendar redrawn so winter clothes hit the shops in winter and summer ones in summer—rather than months before as they do now. For others, the fashion show itself is as "outmoded" as the calendar.

A broad-based coalition called "Rewiring Fashion", uniting the likes of hot US labels 1017 ALYX 9SM, Rodarte, Proenza Schouler and Phipps with several Paris stalwarts has laid out another top-to-bottom reimagining of the system. "We find ourselves facing a fashion system that is less and less conducive to genuine creativity and ultimately serves the interests of nobody: not designers, not retailers, not customers—and not even our planet," they said.

## 'Time to slow down'

They too insist the "fashion calendar is out of sync with the customer, unsustainable for industry professionals and damaging for sales." "It's time to slow down," their manifesto declared. In a digital world staging fashion shows six months before the clothes hit the shops makes no sense, and was an open invitation to fast-fashion rip off merchants, it added. Like Van Noten, they also want an end to discounting and Black Friday-type sales which they blame for much of the industry's wasteful overproduction. However, some top luxury brands are not yet ready for revolution. Dior CEO Pietro Beccari defended both the calendar and shows, telling AFP that "a live performance is like nothing else. We believe there will always be a place for a live show."

But Palomo believes the video presentations forced upon Paris fashion week by the pandemic may be a blessing in disguise, opening the door to freeing up the way designers present their creations. While Paris fashion week prides itself on giving young guns a place in the schedule alongside iconic houses like Dior, Chanel and Hermes, Palomo and Cortazar say it was also "killing them economically". "Everyone is trying to keep up their image, to make out that everything is fine, and behind the scenes we are spending money that we do not have," Cortazar said.—AFP



Elias Lopez (left), a cigar making maestro from the Dominican Republic, inspects finely chopped tobacco leaves before serving it to the waiting production.



Zimbabwe entrepreneur Shepherd Mafundikwa (right) confers with business technical partner Dominican cigar maestro, Elias Lopez (left), at a display of some of his company's hand rolled cigars.



A woman inspects freshly rolled cigars under a spot light.



A woman places a branded label on a pack of cigars at the Mosi Oa Tunya, the first cigar manufacturing plant in Zimbabwe.

## UK film pioneer Earl Cameron dies aged 102



UK film pioneer Earl Cameron

Earl Cameron, who broke down racial barriers by becoming one of British film's first black stars in the 1950s, has died at the age of 102, his family said Saturday. The Bermuda-born Cameron appeared in the 1951 hit "Pool of London", notable for being Britain's first major film to feature an interracial relationship. He had a minor role in the 1965 James Bond film "Thunderball" and appeared in Sidney Poitier's 1973 movie "A Warm December".

While Cameron remained relatively unknown outside Britain, his death prompted a string of tributes from actors and politicians. The Guardian newspaper called him "Britain's first black film star". David Burt, the premier of Bermuda, said the entire Caribbean

island nation was "celebrating his long and remarkable life".

Cameron, who arrived in Britain in 1939 and started out as a stage actor in London's West End, said in 2017 that he never saw himself as a pioneer. "It was only later, looking back, that it occurred to me what I was," he recalled. Cameron's children said in a statement quoted by The Guardian that "as an actor, he refused to take roles that demeaned or stereotyped the character of people of colour". He also featured regularly on British television in the 1960s, including with a role in the popular "Dr Who" series.—AFP

## Sports

## Photo of the Day



DUBAI: Ahmad Daham performs during Red Bull Car Park Drift Qualifier at Dubai Marina Mall rooftop. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Barrett gets Hurricanes off the mark

WELLINGTON: Jordie Barrett highlighted a fine performance on his return from injury with a booming 60-metre penalty as he led the Wellington Hurricanes to a first win in Super Rugby Aotearoa, 25-18 over the Waikato Chiefs in Hamilton yesterday.

It was a morale-boosting victory for the 'Canes in New Zealand's revived Super Rugby competition even though they finished with only 14 players after Scott Scrafton was shown a red card after receiving two yellows.

But it added to a disappointing return to New Zealand for the Waikato-born and former Wales coach Warren Gatland as his side slumped to a fourth loss. In a much-improved second half for the Chiefs they improved from a 20-3 deficit at the turn to be one converted try from drawing level, and Hurricanes skipper TJ Perenara was relieved to hear the final whistle.

"It was awesome for us to get that win. It's been a tough couple of weeks for us," he said. "For us to be able to close that one out, even though the Chiefs put us under a lot of pressure at the end, was good for the boys." A dejected Chiefs captain Sam Cane said it was "hugely disappointing" to have lost four from four. "It's not like we're not giving ourselves chances to win the game, we're just not quite clinical enough to take them."

Barrett, who had been sidelined by a shoulder injury through the early rounds of the competition, made his presence felt from the start with a long cut-out pass that allowed Kobus Van Wyk to stroll over unmarked for the opening try in the fourth minute. — AFP

# Wolff fires 64 to lead Rocket Mortgage Classic by three strokes

## DeChambeau and veteran Armour are tied for second

WASHINGTON: American Matthew Wolff had nine birdies in an eight-under 64 to take a three-shot lead at the Rocket Mortgage Classic, where Bryson DeChambeau bombed his way up the leaderboard.

The 21-year-old Wolff, who is seeking his second USPGA Tour title, eagled the par-five 14th then seized the lead with a birdie on the next hole to reach 18-under.

Wolff closed with his ninth birdie of the round on 18 to reach 19-under 197, three shots ahead of fellow Americans DeChambeau and Ryan Armour heading into Sunday's final round at the Detroit Golf Club.

World No. 10 DeChambeau and veteran Armour are tied for second after both shooting 67s to get to 16-under 200.

Wolff, who missed the cut at this tournament last year, said he is doing a better job at keeping his mistakes to a minimum by controlling his emotions.

"My mindset going into the week was to tell myself to not care," said the southern Californian. "That helps to take the pressure off my shots and keeps the rhythm going. It worked out pretty well."

Wolff's lone Tour victory so far came last year at the 3M Open in Blaine, Minnesota. The win allowed him to join Tiger Woods and Ben Crenshaw as winners of a PGA Tour event and an individual NCAA US college title in the same year.

If he wins today, Wolff would become one of the youngest two-time winners on the Tour. Tiger Woods won his first two PGA tournaments at age 20. "I feel like I've improved," said Wolff. "You play on the Tour and you learn how consistent the players are week in and week out."

"The biggest thing is my mentality. I had a lot of expectations last year and I missed the cut at this tournament. I told myself at the start of this week that

I don't care, whatever happens, happens."

DeChambeau caught fire on the back nine, rolling in four birdies on his final six holes. He finished with six birdies and his only blemish came on a frustrating par-four sixth where he made bogey.

He hasn't won since 2018 but was one of the pre-tournament favorites after gaining 20 pounds of bulk during the pandemic shutdown. DeChambeau hammered one drive 374 yards on the par-four 13th, making it his longest of the day.

"I slowly built momentum until I hit that big bomb on 13," he said. "That was fun. I hit it up next to the green. I am trying to beat the house. The house isn't



**Biggest thing is my mentality**

always going to win. If I keep playing great golf it will happen on time."

DeChambeau was upset early in his round and took out his frustrations on a cameraman after posting a bogey on the sixth, accusing the lensman of hurting his brand.

### TEES OFF ON LENS MAN

"I understand it's his job to video me, but at the same point, I think we need to start protecting our



DETROIT: Matthew Wolff of the United States plays his shot from the 16th tee during the third round of the Rocket Mortgage Classic at the Detroit Golf Club in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP

players out here compared to showing a potential vulnerability and hurting someone's image," DeChambeau said.

"As much as we're out here performing, I think it's necessary that we have our times of privacy as well when things aren't going our way. I mean, we're in the spotlight .... For that to damage our brand like that, that's not cool in the way we act because if you actually meet me in person, I'm not too bad of a dude, I don't think."

Armour got off to quick start with three bogeys in his first four holes and was in contention throughout the round. He missed a chance at being on the

top of the leaderboard when he made double bogey on the par-five 17th.

He was kicking himself for trying to do too much on the hole instead of keeping a steady rhythm. "That's not my game," Armour said.

Chris Kirk, Seamus Power, Mark Hubbard and Troy Merritt are tied for fourth at 14-under, five strokes adrift of Wolff.

Former US Open winner Webb Simpson highlights a group of five players at 13-under 203.

"It is frustrating. Not my best stuff. I didn't hit it close to the hole and hit more drives into the rough. Just one of those days," said Simpson. — AFP

## Hamilton's path to seventh world title may begin on knees

SPIELBERG: Lewis Hamilton will begin his campaign for a record-equalling seventh world title on a grid where rivals are pushing back at his passionate anti-racism message after he suggested they lacked understanding of the issues.

Hamilton will start the delayed season opener at the Red Bull Ring in the foothills of the spectacular Styrian Alps second on the grid alongside Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas. However, before lights out, eyes will be on how many knees will be down on the tarmac in support of Black Lives Matter. Some of the 20 drivers may prefer to demonstrate their support by staying on their feet.

What appears to be a split became clear when Hamilton, the sport's only black world champion, revealed his thoughts following Friday's drivers meeting and a statement issued on their behalf by the Grand Prix Drivers Association (GPDA).

It is expected that the drivers will all wear t-shirts in support of their stance against racism, but Hamilton hinted their reluctance to go further and take a knee may be due to a lack of understanding of racism.

He said he had explained his views to his fellow-drivers, pointing out that silence is "generally complicit". "I think it is part of a dialogue of people trying to understand because there are still some who don't fully understand what is happening and the reason for these protests," said the 35-year-old.

"I continue to try to be that guider and try to influence as many people as I can." In a statement, the

GPDA chairman Alex Wurz said: "All 20 drivers stand united with their teams against racism," adding that they would show their public support for the cause ahead of Sunday's race, but recognising and respecting that each individual has the freedom to show their support in their own way.

### 65TH FRONT ROW LOCKOUT

After qualifying second behind Bottas for Sunday's race, Hamilton said he had acknowledged a lot of the drivers who had followed a message he posted by ending their silence and using their social media platforms "because they have a great voice and platform."

The drivers are expected to wear t-shirts bearing a message "End Racism" before the race. He said he had not decided what he would do before the race.

"I don't have any plans - I haven't thought that far forward, but I am sure that over the evening, we will. It was good that we are all at least in discussion."

On the track on Saturday, meanwhile, Finnish driver Bottas outpaced Hamilton with a best lap in qualifying in one minute and 2.939 seconds and then survived an 'off' into the gravel and a spin on his final lap to remain 0.012 seconds clear of the Briton.

It was Bottas' third pole at the Austrian Grand Prix and the 12th of his career. Max Verstappen was third for Red Bull, half a second adrift of the two newly-painted 'black arrows' cars whose dominating performance delivered a 65th front row lock out for Mercedes, equalling Ferrari's record.

Lando Norris was an impressive fourth for McLaren ahead of Alex Albon in the second Red Bull and Sergio Perez who was sixth in Racing Point's 'pink Mercedes'.

Charles Leclerc was a disappointed seventh for Ferrari ahead of his future team-mate Carlos Sainz in the second McLaren, Lance Stroll in the second Racing Point and Daniel Ricciardo of Renault. — AFP

## Tiafoe joins list of tennis stars testing positive for virus

PARIS: Frances Tiafoe on Saturday joined the list of tennis players to contract coronavirus, pulling out of an exhibition in Atlanta organised by former top 10 player John Isner who had controversially dismissed critics of the tournament as "coronabros".

Ranked 81st in the ATP rankings, Tiafoe said he had tested negative in Florida last week before travelling to Georgia where around 450 spectators have been watching the eight-man event each day.

"Unfortunately, I tested positive late Friday for COVID-19 and have to withdraw from the All-American Team Cup special event this weekend," the 22-year-old posted on Twitter.

"Over the past two months, I have been training in Florida and tested negative there as recently as a week ago."

On the eve of the tournament, Isner had lashed out at sceptics who claimed it could not be held safely.

"You coronabros can stay in your basement all you want. I choose to live my life and play/promote the sport I love in a safe manner," he said.

Fellow US player Sachia Vickery responded Saturday: "Now would be a great time to RIP this tweet for good..."

Tiafoe's announcement follows the slew of players who contracted COVID-19 after appearing at Novak Djokovic's exhibition event in the Balkans last month.

World number one Djokovic, Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki all tested positive at

an Adria Tour where social distancing was at a minimum, raising serious questions for professional tennis' return from lockdown in August.

Alexander Zverev, who tested negative in the Balkans, was then blasted as selfish for partying despite promising to self-isolate.

Organisers of the event in Florida reacted to Tiafoe's news on social media, saying that he and all the other players were tested on their arrival in Atlanta and subjected to daily temperature tests.

"Tiafoe has left the event site and will not participate in the remainder of the event. We will continue to diligently enforce all guidelines from local health officials."

The statement added: "Following his match (a win against Sam Querrey), he was showing symptoms and was retested and tested positive."

"Upon learning this information, we immediately began deep cleaning and sanitizing the event site, and enacted protocols in place for contact tracing and alerting individuals who may have been exposed."

The ATP Tour returns after its five month coronavirus hiatus with the behind closed doors Washington Open on August 14, with the US Open at the end of the month.

Also, Franco Davin, the former coach of Juan Martin del Potro and Gaston Gaudio, has tested positive for coronavirus. Davin is based out of Miami where he teaches tennis.

Former Indian doubles player Mahesh Bhupathi voiced his dismay at the rising number of positive tests.

"When both common sense and logic go out the window, someone with some influence and authority needs to step up and say what's going on just needs to stop," he tweeted Saturday.

"Sure everyone wants a pay day but this is poor leadership all round. 'safety first' RIGHT!!!" — AFP

## Sports

# Buffon breaks Serie A appearances record as Juve move seven points clear

## 42-year-old goalkeeper passed previous record of 647 appearances

**MILAN:** Gianluigi Buffon set a new Serie A appearances record on Saturday as Juventus beat Torino 4-1 in the Turin derby to move seven points clear at the top of the table after nearest challengers Lazio lost to a Zlatan Ibrahimovic-inspired AC Milan.

The 42-year-old goalkeeper passed the previous record of 647 appearances he jointly held with AC Milan great Paolo Maldini as he started the game at the Allianz Stadium.

"Maybe... He definitely won't beat the record for scoring goals, though," coach Maurizio Sarri told Sky Sport Italia when asked if Buffon could still play the 35 games he needs to equal Alessandro Del Piero's overall record total of Juventus appearances.

Cristiano Ronaldo was among the scorers, becoming the first Juve player to score 25 Serie A goals in a season in 59 years, as Sarri's men moved further clear of second-placed Lazio, who were beaten 3-0 by Milan at the Stadio Olimpico.

"We were a bit chaotic at the start of the second half, but when fatigue set in, that's when our quality emerged," added Sarri. Buffon, who spent last season at French club Paris Saint-Germain before rejoining Juve this term, signed a one-year contract extension earlier this week.

The record comes 25 years after Buffon made his Serie A debut for Parma and 19 years after he first signed for Juventus.

### RONALDO BREAKS FREE-KICK DUCK

The hosts wasted little time in taking the lead as Paulo Dybala scored in the third minute with an

excellent individual goal, collecting Juan Cuadrado's pass before jinking past two defenders and firing a left-footed shot into the roof of the net.

Juventus doubled the advantage just before the half hour as Ronaldo charged forward before laying the ball off for Cuadrado to drive low into the corner of the net.

Torino gave themselves hope when Andrea Belotti scored a penalty past Buffon in the sixth minute of first-half injury-time. Simone Verdi was denied an equaliser early in the second half by the linesman's flag, but Ronaldo put the game to bed in the 61st minute with a brilliant free-kick.

It was the first time the five-time Ballon d'Or winner had scored a free-kick in Serie A and it was his 25th league goal of the campaign, making the Portuguese the first Juventus player to achieve that feat since Omar Sivori in the 1960-61 season.

"I really needed that free-kick goal so I could get some confidence back," Ronaldo said after scoring his first direct free-kick at the 43rd attempt for Juve. Juve were not done and made it four with three minutes remaining as Torino defender Koffi Djidji put through his own net.

They received help in their bid for a ninth straight Serie A title later in the day as Ibrahimovic scored one goal and assisted on another in his first start since the coronavirus lockdown.

Lazio struggled to find their cutting edge without a recognised striker, as the league's leading scorer Ciro Immobile and his natural replacement Felipe Caicedo were both suspended.

since sacking coach Albert Celades on Tuesday.

Voro Gonzalez, in his sixth spell in temporary charge, oversaw defeat on Wednesday by Athletic Bilbao.

One win in seven games since La Liga restarted on June 11 have extinguished Valencia's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League but even making the Europa League next season looks increasingly unlikely.

They sit ninth, five points adrift of Getafe in sixth, having played a game more. Granada are one place below in 10th.

The home side took the lead in the 61st minute, winning a penalty after Fernandez beat Francis Coquelin to a pull-back to the edge of the area.

Fernandez scored the penalty but Granada's lead lasted only two minutes, Valjeo latching on to Denis Cheryshev's lifted pass through and whipping the ball first time into the corner.

Five minutes later, Valencia pulled ahead in stunning fashion as Guedes' rocket from 25 yards flew into the top corner off the hand of Rui Silva.

But Granada hit back again, Vico's driven free-

## Valencia pegged back by late Granada equaliser

**MADRID:** Valencia's disappointing end to the season continued on Saturday as they conceded an 86th-minute equaliser to draw 2-2 away at Granada in La Liga.

Three goals in seven second-half minutes sparked a thrilling contest at Los Carmenes and Valencia had the better of them, with Manu Vallejo and Goncalo Guedes overturning Carlos Fernandez's penalty for Granada.

But Fede Vico's late free-kick found its way through a gap in the Valencia wall to salvage a deserved point for Granada, who stay level on points with their opponents after only being promoted last season.

Valencia are still searching for their first victory

## West Indies great Weekes dies aged 95

**PARIS:** With the death of Everton Weekes at the age of 95, cricket has lost one of its greatest batsmen. He was also the last of a legendary trio of cricketers, known as the Three Ws, who oversaw the rise of West Indies cricket after the Second World War.

The numbers alone make impressive reading: in 48 Tests, played between 1948 and 1958, Weekes scored 4,455 runs at an average of 58.61. He made 15 centuries including five in an extraordinary sequence that remains a record today. But it was the way he made those runs that caught the imagination.

Former West Indies captain Jeffrey Stollmeyer described Weekes as "a five foot six inch bundle of muscle". "There was no nonsense about Weekes, no tomfoolery. Once on the job, he was purposeful. His business was to score runs," said Stollmeyer.

"Playing strokes was the game he knew and loved best, and unless circumstances warranted discretion, Weekes would produce his smashing square cut, slashing cover drive, resounding hook and forceful on-drive for all to see and enjoy."

Everton de Courcy Weekes was born in Pickwick Gap, Barbados on February 26, 1925. He was one of three West Indies greats to be born within a mile and a half of each other over an 18-month period.

The others were Frank Worrell and Clyde

Walcott. Together they were the Three Ws. "Of the Ws, he (Weekes) was probably the most ruthless run-compiler, and his compact build and high-scoring performances inevitably invited comparisons with George Headley," wrote Denis Compton, one of the great England batsmen of the era.

It was thanks, in part, to Headley that Weekes found his feet in Test cricket. The 23-year-old had been picked to play in the first three Tests of the 1948 home series against a weakened MCC (England) team led by Gubby Allen but with a top score of 36 he was omitted for the fourth Test.

But when the 39-year-old Headley withdrew through injury, Weekes was summoned to Kingston, not a popular choice among the Jamaicans who favoured their own JK Holt. Weekes arrived midway through the first day after the journey from Barbados to be greeted with jeers and heckles but they turned to cheers a day later as he crashed an England attack that included Allen, Maurice Tremlett and Jim Laker for 141, leading to a 10-wicket win for the West Indies.

### 'BRILLIANT ARRAY OF STROKES'

Weekes was on his way and when the West Indies went on to tour India later in the year, he produced successive innings of 128 in Delhi, 194 in Bombay and 162 and 101 in Calcutta.

He ought to have had a sixth consecutive hundred but was run out for 90 in Madras, a decision that Walcott described as "rather doubtful".

In 1950 he played a key supporting role to spinners Sonny Ramadhin and Alf Valentine in West Indies' 3-1 series win in England. He made three half-centuries and then 129 at Trent Bridge where he was



**PORT-OF-SPAIN:** In this April 5, 2008 file photo shows Everton Weekes (left) attending a ceremony with Andy Gantaume in front of display honouring Frank Worrell in Port-Of-Spain.

watched admiringly by the former Nottinghamshire and England opener George Gunn.

"I have seen them all since Victor Trumper and including (Don) Bradman," said Gunn who was 71 at the time having played first-class cricket between 1902 and 1932. "I have never seen a more brilliant array of strokes nor heard the ball so sweetly struck."

Weekes returned to England in 1957 which, although disappointing by his standards, produced one truly memorable innings. It came in the second innings at Lord's with the West Indies, still trailing England by 217, on 80-4 and facing a heavy defeat.

The England attack of Fred Trueman,

Brian Statham and Trevor Bailey exploited the ridge at the Nursery End to make the ball rear spitefully. Weekes joined Garry Sobers and set about adding 100 in 95 minutes. Weekes took a blow to the hand which cracked a finger but in a three-hour stay at the crease, continued to carve the bowlers around Lord's, hitting 16 boundaries before being dismissed for 90. "Never was a more heroic batsman more deserving of a century. It was the innings of a genius," wrote Compton. With Weekes, Walcott and Worrell in the middle-order, the West Indies rose from being a lightweight Test nation to world-leaders, laying the ground for the likes of Garry Sobers, Rohan Kanhai, Clive Lloyd and Viv Richards. —AFP

match this week as the West Indies continued their preparations at Old Trafford.

### 'BACK AT SCHOOL'

Mark Wood, the England fast bowler, said the environment, "feels a bit like a sci-fi movie", with players subjected to repeated health checks.

"There is hand sanitiser at every turn, and on the floor there are arrows, lines and footprints to show the way to go," Wood told the BBC. He added meal times were "like being back at school", with players at individual desks "looking at the back of the person in front". But perhaps the most visible change will be the lack of any spectators. —AFP



**TURIN:** File photo taken on May 19, 2018 Juventus' goalkeeper from Italy Gianluigi Buffon reacts as he leaves the pitch for his last game with Juventus team during the Italian Serie A football match Juventus versus Verona, at the Allianz Stadium in Turin. —AFP

The away side took the lead midway through the first half when Ibrahimovic teed up Hakan Calhanoglu to score with a long-range deflected effort. The 38-year-old Swede netted a penalty in the 34th minute to score his fifth goal since rejoining Milan from LA Galaxy in January.

Ibrahimovic was substituted at half-time, but his replacement Ante Rebic put the result beyond doubt in the 59th minute as Lazio's dream of a first

league title in 20 years suffered a potentially fatal blow.

"We've got to look forward and prepare for the next match. We know the journey we have taken and have no intention of letting go," Lazio coach Simone Inzaghi told DAZN. Milan, unbeaten in four games since the resumption, moved above Napoli into sixth, which carries qualification for the Europa League. —AFP

## Leeds take another step towards EPL

**LONDON:** Championship leaders Leeds moved closer to their long-awaited return to the Premier League after a 3-1 win at Blackburn, while Bristol City sacked boss Lee Johnson after their 1-0 loss to Cardiff on Saturday.

Goals from Patrick Bamford, Kalvin Phillips and Mateusz Klich kept Leeds on course for automatic promotion as they seek to get back to the top-flight after a 16-year absence.

Marcelo Bielsa's side are four points clear of second placed West Bromwich Albion, who will have the chance to reduce the deficit against struggling Hull on Sunday, and six clear of third-place Brentford.

Bamford pounced on an error in the Rovers defence to put his side in front after just seven minutes and Phillips doubled Leeds' advantage with a 40th-minute free-kick.

Adam Armstrong dragged Rovers back into the game in the 48th minute but Klich made sure five minutes later when he struck a deflected effort from the edge of the box. Bristol City fired Johnson after their play-off bid suffered another blow as Danny Ward's late winner kept Cardiff in the top six.

City have gone nine games without a win and a fourth successive defeat proved the end of the road for Johnson. City chief executive Mark Ashton said: "Success in football is ultimately judged by results and league position and the board believes that a change of management is needed now for Bristol City."

Said Benrahma bagged a hat-trick as Brentford beat Wigan 3-0. Benrahma opened the scoring after 19 minutes then made it 2-0 just before the hour-mark with what looked like an intended cross.

The Algerian completed his hat-trick before the afternoon went from bad to worse for Wigan, who had entered administration this week, as Joe Garner was sent off for a bad challenge.

Fourth placed Fulham also kept up the chase as Josh Onomah lashed the only goal deep into stoppage time to sink Birmingham 1-0 at Craven Cottage. The Blues had chances through Jude Bellingham but it looked like they had snared a point late on when keeper Lee Camp produced a brilliant double save to deny Joe Bryan and Bobby Decordova-Reid.

Fifth placed Nottingham Forest's fading hopes of automatic promotion were hit as Chris Martin salvaged a point for Derby with a stoppage-time equaliser in a 1-1 draw at Pride Park. Joe Lolley fired Forest ahead after just 12 minutes and the visitors seemed in control when Derby's Martyn Waghorn was sent off in stoppage-time for a dangerous challenge.

But Martin's equaliser capped a dramatic East Midlands derby after Forest keeper Brice Samba fumbled a free-kick. Bottom club Luton's six-match unbeaten run crashed to an end as Yakou Meite scored four goals in Reading's 5-0 win at Kenilworth Road.

Tyrese Campbell scored twice as Stoke moved out of the relegation zone with a 4-0 win over fellow strugglers Barnsley. Huddersfield edged two points clear of the bottom three with a drab 0-0 draw against Preston. —AFP

## England-Windies opener a new frontier for Test cricket

**LONDON:** It will be Test cricket but not as we've known it when England face the West Indies in the opening match of a "bio-secure" series at Southampton starting on Wednesday.

With the coronavirus pandemic having brought the world game to a halt in March, there were fears this three-Test campaign might also fall victim to

COVID-19. But, with the West Indies agreeing to go ahead despite Britain's virus death toll of over 44,000 being the highest in Europe, the series is set to mark cricket's return from lockdown instead.

However, a number of anti-virus measures mean next week's match will look like few others in 143 years of Test-match history.

For a start, both sides will be staying at on-site hotels at Southampton's Ageas Bowl and Old Trafford in Manchester — the venue for the second and third Tests — in a series originally scheduled for elsewhere in England in June.

England have already settled in at the Ageas Bowl, where they played a three-day intra-squad

**14** Wolff fires 64 to lead Rocket  
Mortgage Classic by three strokes



**15** Buffon breaks Serie A appearances  
record as Juve move seven points clear



**15** West Indies great  
Weekes dies age 95



BERLIN: Bayern Munich's German goalkeeper Manuel Neuer raises the German Cup (DFB Pokal) trophy as he and his teammates celebrate winning the final football match Bayer 04 Leverkusen v FC Bayern Munich at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin. —AFP

## Bayern win 20th German Cup title

### Lewandowski passes 50-goal mark

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski passed the 50-goal mark this season as Bayern Munich completed the double with a 4-2 victory over Bayer Leverkusen behind closed doors to win a 20th German Cup on Saturday. Bundesliga champions Bayern dominated at Berlin's Olympic Stadium as David Alaba smashed home an early free-kick before Serge Gnabry added the second goal in the first-half.

Lewandowski has 51 goals in total this season after scoring twice in the second-half either side of a Sven Bender header for Leverkusen. Kai Havertz converted a penalty deep into added time for Leverkusen.

"In the second half we showed that we are the better team and wanted to be cup winners," said man-of-the-match Lewandowski. Bayern, crowned Bundesliga champions for the eighth straight year last Saturday, have won all of their 11 games since the season resumed in mid-May after a two-months hiatus due to the coronavirus.

They could finish the season winning the treble as

they are among the favourites for the Champions League finals in Lisbon next month. This was the 13th time in the club's history they have won the double.

Lewandowski, crowned Bundesliga top-scorer for the fifth time last weekend, netted six times in the cup, has 34 league goals and 11 more in the Champions League this season.

Leverkusen completed a hat-trick of defeats after also losing the 2002 and 2009 cup finals in Berlin. When Lewandowski was cluttered by defender Edmond Tapsoba on 16 minutes, it was Alaba who swung the resulting free kick inside the post to give Bayern the opening goal.

They doubled their lead after Joshua Kimmich won the ball in midfield eight minutes later. His pass split the defence, Gnabry

sprinted onto the ball and fired past Leverkusen goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky to make it 2-0 at the break.

"We are so happy that we got the double. In the first half we had the game completely under control," said Gnabry. With players' calls echoing around the near-empty terraces of the cavernous stadium, where Germany head coach Joachim Loew was one of a

handful of guests, the game was played in an eerie atmosphere.

"It's a bit of a sad moment," admitted Bayern forward Thomas Mueller, who lamented the lack of fans, after winning the German Cup for the sixth time in his career.

"If the fans are missing at such a cup final, it's not the same. "We've done well this season over long stretches, but it also hurts a bit."

Having skied a shot at goal moments earlier,

Lewandowski made it 3-0 when he controlled a clearance kick by goalkeeper Manuel Neuer and tried a long-range speculative shot at Hradecky.

The Leverkusen keeper parried the shot, but watched in horror as it rolled behind him and over the goal line on 59 minutes.

"I noticed that the goalkeeper was a bit off his line, so I thought I'd just give it a try," revealed Lewandowski.

"It was a little surprise it went in, but you always have to try." It fired life into Leverkusen, whose centre-back Sven Bender slipped his marker Leon Goretzka and headed home on 64 minutes.

Leverkusen nearly got a second moments later when Kevin Volland and Havertz both failed to connect with a cross. Lewandowski claimed his second when he fired home Ivan Perisic's pass on 89 minutes.

Bayern defender Alphonso Davies conceded the penalty in the fourth minute of added time which Havertz converted just before the whistle. —AFP



### Favourites for Champions League finals

### Chelsea win holds rampant Man Utd in race for top four

LONDON: Chelsea held on to their place in the Premier League's top four by bouncing back to beat Watford 3-0 on Saturday after Manchester United briefly powered past with a 5-2 rout of struggling Bournemouth.

Third-placed Leicester also got back on track with Jamie Vardy reaching 100 top-flight goals in a comfortable 3-0 win against Crystal Palace, while Arsenal dealt a blow to Wolves' Champions League chase by winning 2-0 at Molineux on Saturday.

United's fearsome front four of Marcus Rashford, Anthony Martial, Bruno Fernandes and Mason Greenwood, who netted twice, were all on the score-sheet as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men hit five goals in a home Premier League game for the first time since 2011.

"Confidence is sky high. You get energy and confidence by performances and results and we are getting that at the minute," said Solskjaer, who is feeling the benefits of a 16-match unbeaten run.

"I have enjoyed the last few games to be honest and it is healthy. You don't age as quickly!" Bournemouth are moving fast in the other direction as they remain second bottom and the Cherries' defensive problems were quickly exposed after they took a shock 16th-minute lead through Junior Stanislas. Greenwood got the comeback started as he smashed home from Fernandes's pass before Rashford, from the penalty spot and Martial, with a stunning shot into the top corner, scored their 20th goals of the season.

"Mason is one of the best if not the best finisher I have worked with and seen," added Solskjaer. "He is so calm. He knows where to finish if it is on the training ground, here or in his garden at home."

Bournemouth were given hope when Josh King scored from the spot after Eric Bailly handled inside his own box just four minutes after coming on as a half-time substitute.

But there was no stopping Solskjaer's men going forward and Greenwood restored their two-goal

cushion with another powerful drive, this time on his weaker right foot, before Fernandes then capped another influential display with a fine free-kick.

Chelsea shrugged off a shock 3-2 defeat at West Ham in midweek with a routine win at Stamford Bridge. Olivier Giroud was recalled up front and re-paid Frank Lampard with a smart finish to break the deadlock before Willian's penalty made it 2-0 before half-time. Ross Barkley added the third in stoppage time to move Chelsea back two points ahead of fifth-placed United.

"We needed a result after the last game," said Chelsea winger Christian Pulisic. "I think there was an extra bit of energy because of that loss, we wanted to prove a point."

A third defeat in four games since the restart leaves Watford still just one point above Bournemouth and Aston Villa in the battle to beat the drop. Arsenal kept their hopes of European football next season alive moved by ending Wolves' eight-game unbeaten run in impressive fashion to move up to seventh. Bukayo Saka celebrated signing a new long-term deal this week by hooking in the opener just before half-time and Alexandre Lacazette came off the bench to seal all three points for Mikel Arteta's

men four minutes from time.

"Every game you have no margin for error, we know that we try to win every game," said Arteta of Arsenal's top-four chances. Defeat leaves Wolves five points behind Chelsea.

Arsenal face Leicester next tomorrow, but the Foxes go into that game with a much-needed confidence boost after a first win in five games.

Leicester have struggled to score goals of late, but were helped back to winning ways by some calamitous Palace defending for Kelechi Iheanacho to open the scoring and Vardy to tap into an empty net for his Premier League century.

Vardy struck again in characteristic fashion in stoppage time, sprinting in behind before dinking the ball over the advancing Vicente Guaita.

"To get the two goals and the three points is all you can ask for," said Vardy. "We know it's down to us. We are in this position on merit and we have to keep going. If we play like that between now and the end of the season, we will pick up a quite a few points."

Norwich manager Daniel Farke conceded his side are heading for relegation after a 1-0 home defeat to Brighton left the Canaries still seven points. —AFP