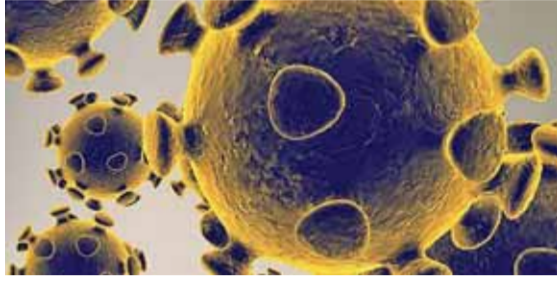




**6** When the coronavirus robs you of your sense of smell



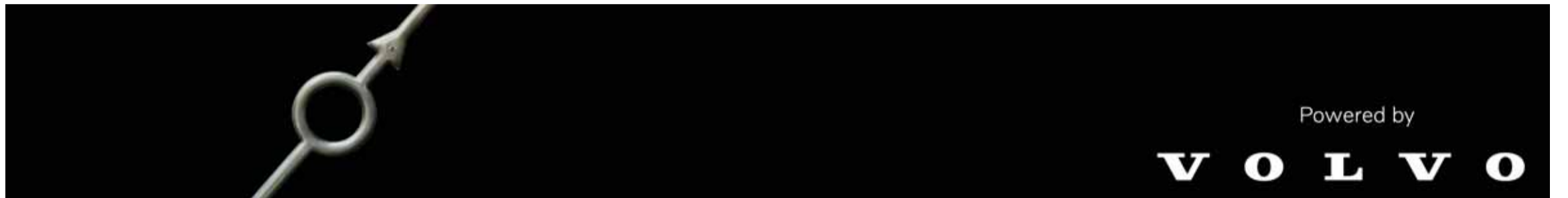
**9** Back to work? Not without an app, immunity passport



**13** Louvre museum reopens after 16-week shutdown



**16** Bottas wins Austria GP; Hamilton challenge hit by double penalty



# India surges to third highest in cases; virus slams US hospitals

## Hundreds of drones light up Seoul sky with virus messages



SEOUL: This handout photo released yesterday shows a drone display showing messages of support for the country amid the COVID-19 pandemic above the Han River. — AFP

**NEW DELHI:** India yesterday became the third-highest coronavirus caseload in the world, as officials warned hospitals in the United States were in danger of being overwhelmed by a surge in infections. Despite signs of progress in parts of Europe - where the Louvre in Paris reopened yesterday - total global infections are fast approaching 11.5 million, with more than 533,000 deaths.

The Indian government - like many around the world - has gradually lifted virus restrictions to help the battered economy, but the number of cases has continued to climb, with 24,000 reported in 24 hours to take the total to nearly 700,000 yesterday. India's major cities including New Delhi and Mumbai are the hardest-hit, and critics say too few tests are being conducted and that many COVID-19 infections are likely to go undiagnosed.

The surge has forced authorities in India to convert hotels, wedding halls, a spiritual center and even railway coaches to help provide care to coronavirus patients. The Kerala state capital, Thiruvananthapuram imposed a new lockdown from yesterday with public transport shut and only pharmacies allowed to open. The clampdown came after hundreds of new cases were reported across the state, which had been praised for its action to curtail the pandemic.

And in Australia, where the virus outbreak had largely been brought under control, a new spike in cases in Melbourne forced authorities to effectively seal off the state of Victoria from the rest of the country. There was an illustration of the lingering threat of the virus in Fiji, with the Pacific nation confirming yesterday its 78-day run without any cases had ended with a 66-year-old man testing positive.

The US - the worst-hit nation - has struggled to respond to the devastation wrought by the virus, with its national death toll rising to nearly 130,000 out of 2.8 million confirmed cases, and many states hit by increasing infections after lockdowns were eased. Hospital beds are full in parts of Texas, while calls for fresh stay-at-home orders are growing. Some mayors have said their cities reopened too early, as President Donald Trump tried to downplay the disease that has gripped much of the country.

The annual July 4 holiday weekend was overshadowed by growing evidence that the fractured pandemic response has exacted a heavy price across the south and west of the country, after previous hotspots such as New York emerged from the worst of the virus. "Our hospitals here in Harris County, Houston, and 33 other cities... they're into surge capacities."

Continued on Page 2

### News in brief

#### Oil production resumes

**DUBAI:** Oil production resumed early July at the Wafra oilfield, shared by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, after a five-year halt, the Kuwaiti oil ministry said on Twitter yesterday. Production also resumed at another shared field, Khafji, on July 1, after a one-month halt, it said. Output from Khafji oilfield is expected to be about 80,000 barrels per day on July 1, before rising to 100,000 bpd two months later. Production is expected to reach 175,000 bpd by end of the year. Wafra field's initial output is expected at 10,000 bpd, before rising to 70,000 bpd at the end of August, and then up to 145,000 bpd by the end of 2020. — Reuters

#### New hajj health measures

**CAIRO:** Saudi Arabia announced health protocols to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus in the 2020 hajj season, banning gatherings and meetings between pilgrims, the state news agency said yesterday. Touching the Kaaba will be banned during the hajj this year, and a social distancing space of a meter and a half between each pilgrim during the rituals including mass prayers and while in the Kaaba circling area will be imposed. — Reuters

#### Israel launches spy satellite

**JERUSALEM:** Israel yesterday launched a new spy satellite that it said would provide high-quality surveillance for its military intelligence. Israel has been building up its surveillance capabilities to monitor enemies such as Iran, whose nuclear program it sees as a major threat. The satellite, called Ofek 16, was shot into space early yesterday morning from a site in central Israel by a locally-developed Shavit rocket, which was used to launch previous Ofek satellites. The first images will be received in about a week. — Reuters

## Panel discusses jails, bedoons, isolated areas

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The Assembly's human rights panel yesterday discussed with the interior minister a number of issues including visa trading, prisoners and the living conditions of workers in isolated areas. Head of the panel MP Adel Al-Damkhi said the committee discussed the situation of expatriate workers living in locked down areas (Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Mahboula and Farwaniya) and the number of work-

ers living in one room in a bid to safeguard their basic rights.

Damkhi said the committee also discussed the civil and social rights of stateless people (bedoons) and visits to jails, adding that a total of 2,200 prisoners will be pardoned and around 1,000 others will have their jail terms reduced. Damkhi said the committee demanded that the government release certificates to bedoon graduates to be able to seek jobs.

MP Yousef Al-Fadhlah called yesterday on the health ministry to allow the private sector to carry out coronavirus tests which are currently limited to the government sector. His call comes after it has become increasingly difficult for people to take the tests at public clinics and hospitals.

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday the National Assembly

will not hold its session this week because the results of the coronavirus tests of MPs have not yet been sent by the health ministry. Ghanem said that 38 MPs have been tested and a few others should take the test. As a result, the Assembly office decided not to hold this week's sessions, which could be held next week depending on the results.

Two weeks ago, the ministry of health informed Ghanem that an MP who attended the session was suspected of being infected with the coronavirus. All MPs who attended the session were tested for the virus. Later, the lawmaker under suspicion, Hamdan Al-Azemi, said he tested negative for the disease after he took the tests twice, but the health ministry decided to test all other members as a precaution. Ghanem said the Assembly office will meet later this week to decide a new date for the sessions.

## Scientists say coronavirus is airborne

**NEW YORK:** Hundreds of scientists say there is evidence that the novel coronavirus in smaller particles in the air can infect people and are calling for the World Health Organization to revise recommendations, the New York Times reported. The WHO has said the coronavirus disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or speaks.

In an open letter to the agency, which the researchers plan to publish in a scientific journal next week, 239 scientists in 32 countries outlined the evidence showing smaller particles can infect people, the NYT said. "We are aware of the article and are reviewing its contents with our technical experts," WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said in an email reply to a Reuters request for comment.

Whether carried by large droplets that zoom through the air after a sneeze, or by much smaller exhaled droplets that may glide the length of a room, the coronavirus is borne through air and can infect



MANILA: Passengers travel on a jeepney with seat dividers to ensure social distancing yesterday, after thousands of jeepneys hit the road again after over three months. — AFP

people when inhaled, the scientists said, according to the NYT. However, the health agency said the evidence for the virus being airborne was not convincing, according to the NYT.

"Especially in the last couple of months, we have

been stating several times that we consider airborne transmission as possible but certainly not supported by solid or even clear evidence," Dr Benedetta Allegranzi, the WHO's technical lead of infection prevention and control, was quoted as saying by the NYT. — Reuters

# Kuwait premier hosts newly assigned Nazaha officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) board members. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Seif Palace Chairman of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim and board members on the occasion of taking their offices. His Highness the

Prime Minister, addressing the guests, alluded to instructions by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to combat corruption, protect public funds, refute baseless allegations broadcast by some outlets and social media sites, as well as his underlining of the

necessity to affirm law sovereignty. Moreover, His Highness the Premier cited His Highness the Amir as underlining that it is the responsibility of the government and the Anti-Corruption Authority to fight corruption through cooperation. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled pledged the gov-

ernment would put all its resources at disposal of such cooperation and supporting various State sectors to boost integrity and transparency, as well as for combating corruption, expressing good wishes to the new chairman and board members. — KUNA

## Solar power project at risk?

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait may retender or even cancel the Dabdaba solar power project given a long

delay in awarding the tender and the current pandemic crisis. Kuwait National Petroleum Company, which is overseeing the project, is awaiting government approval for either the awarding to the tender to the lowest bidder at KD 439 million or canceling the current tender, reported Al-Rai Arabic newspaper. Bidding for

the solar power project, which would be the largest in Kuwait, has been extended several times since the tender was published in 2019. Four companies have been shortlisted but their bank guarantees expire mid-July. Dabdaba is planned to produce 1.5GW of electricity to Kuwait's power consumption.

ernment would put all its resources at disposal of such cooperation and supporting various State sectors to boost integrity and transparency, as well as for combating corruption, expressing good wishes to the new chairman and board members. — KUNA

## Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has recorded 49,941 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of Sunday, in addition to 368 deaths. With the exception of 157 cases in intensive care, all infected cases are in stable condition and are recovering in quarantined locations designated by the government for this purpose, while thousands have been discharged from quarantine after exhibiting no symptoms during their 14-day quarantine period, the Ministry of Health confirmed. Meanwhile, 41,001 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 8,572 people receiving treatment.

### Curfew

Kuwait imposed a three-week partial curfew starting May 31 (from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am), as part of a five-phase plan for a gradual return to normal life, brought to a standstill by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The curfew hours were later reduced to start on 7:00 pm and end at 5:00 am, starting from June 21, 2020. The first phase includes a total lockdown on Farwaniya, Khaitan, and Hawally, joining Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh which were put under lockdown earlier. The lockdown ended in Hawally and Khaitan on June 21, 2020, and will be lifted on Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on July 9, 2020. Activities resumed in the first phase included home deliveries of restaurants, telecommunication companies, food retailers, companies' transportation of employees, gas stations, private clinics and car workshops.

Kuwait moved to the second phase starting from June 30, 2020. The second phase saw the curfew shortened to be between 8:00 pm and 5:00 am, while resuming work in the government and private sectors with the workforce being less than 30 percent, in addition to resumption of constructions, banking sector, pickups from restaurants, as well as reopening of commercial complexes, malls, parks, and other places of leisure between 10:00 am and 06:00 pm.

The third phase would see an end of curfew, and health authorities would be assessing situation of areas under lockdown. It would see increase of workforce to less than 50 percent. Visits for social care homes would be allowed, reopening of hotels, resorts and hotel apartments. Taxis will be allowed to operate with only one passenger, and mosques would be allowed to perform Friday prayers.

Phase four would see an increase in workforce, restaurants would be receiving customers but with restrictions, and public transportation resumed but with distancing. All activities would resume in phase five, government and private sector returned to normal, families could gather, weddings and graduation ceremonies,

health clubs and gyms to reopen, as well as cinemas and theaters.

Mosques in the so-called 'model residential areas' reopened their doors for worshippers on June 10 amid strict health precautionary measures. Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs Mohammed Al-Afasi said that mosques in commercial, markets and heavily-populated areas will remain closed for the time being. Worshippers must wear face masks, keep social distancing between queues and between worshippers must be strictly observed. Worshippers must bring their own mats so they do not get in contact with mosque carpets. Mosques will reopen five minutes before prayer time and close 10 minutes after prayer.

Earlier, Kuwait imposed a total curfew from May 10 to May 30, allowing room for people to walk out for daily exercise between 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm, and to shop at co-ops and supermarkets once every six days during the curfew hours by making an appointment through www.moci.shop. Before that, Kuwait enforced a country-wide partial curfew from 5:00 pm to 6:00 am, which was later extended to start from 4:00 pm until 8:00 am during Ramadan, while allowing restaurants and food stores to make home deliveries from 5:00 pm until 1:00 am. The government also locked down Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in a bid to contain the spread of the virus and enable health workers to test inhabitants. Earlier, the government decided to close all shopping malls, beauty salons and barber shops as part of its measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The government also allowed supermarkets, restaurants and shops to host a maximum of five people at a time and in case there are lines, the distance must be at least one meter between people. The Ministry of Commerce launched a website (www.moci.shop) to enable people to book appointments to shop at co-operative societies in their areas. The Public Authority for Industry also announced that companies can apply to evacuate their workers from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Mahboula. To do so, they must fill a 'workers evacuation form' available on www.pai.gov.kw, and send the form via email to: Jasiri@moh.gov.kw.

### Precautions

Kuwait halted all commercial flights until further notice, and has sent special flights to repatriate Kuwaitis back home from countries affected with the virus' spread. Kuwait took all measures to test Kuwaitis repatriated from infected areas for potential infection. Kuwait had required all expatriates who arrived from travel on March 1 and beyond to visit Kuwait International Fairground where the Ministry of Health has set up a center to test people for possible infection.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet announced on April 9 the operation of all airline flights for expats who are wishing to return back to their countries. Authorities also announced a public holiday in the country from March 12 to May 28, with work resuming on May 31, while entities providing vital services will remain open. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has suspended classes at all public and private schools (for both students and teaching staffs); first from March 1 to March 12, and later extended it until March 29, before eventually suspending schools until August for grade 12 and October for other stages. State departments have been on high alert to take precautions against the potential spread of the virus. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has taken measures to make sure that facial masks, hand sanitizers and other goods remain accessible to the public.

Kuwait suspended issuing entry permits and visas unless those issued through diplomatic missions. The Interior Ministry issued an amnesty allowing residency violators to leave the country between April 1 and April 30 without paying any fines or airfare with a chance to return to Kuwait later. The amnesty was issued in view of the circumstances the country is currently going through and as part of the precautionary measures taken to fight the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). During the amnesty period, individuals desiring to procure valid residencies in Kuwait and were willing to pay the fines without being subjected to investigations were allowed to pay the fines and legalize their status if they meet the required conditions.

### Hotlines

The Ministry of Health has set the following hotlines to receive inquiries about the coronavirus 24/7: 24970967 - 96049698 - 99048619.

The Education Ministry set the following hotlines to receive inquiries on school closures related to the anti-coronavirus measures:

- 24970967 (24/7 hotline)
- 51575591 (Capital Educational Zone)
- 51576117 (Hawally Educational Zone)
- 51576576 (Farwaniya Educational Zone)
- 51577055 (Jahra Educational Zone)
- 51577655 (Ahmadi Educational Zone)
- 51577951 (Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Zone)
- 51578171 (Religious Studies Department)
- 51588599 (Private Education Department)
- 51592515 (Services Department)
- 51594544 (Public Relations Department)

## India surges to third highest in...

Continued from Page 1

So their operational beds are taken up," said Lina Hidalgo, chief executive of Texas's Harris County, which includes Houston.

Steve Adler, the mayor of Austin, Texas, also expressed concern that the healthcare system could buckle as the disease spreads rapidly. "If we don't change the trajectory, then I am within two weeks of having our hospitals overrun. And in our ICUs, I could be 10 days away from that," he told CNN. The US is now recording 40,000 new cases a day, with a peak of 57,000 on Friday alone.

In South Africa, dozens of military medics were deployed on Sunday after a surge in infections in East Cape province. Like India, South Africa imposed some of the strictest stay-at-home measures in the world in late March in a bid to limit the spread of COVID-19, but the number of infections is rising daily as lockdown rules are gradually eased.

Iran announced 163 new deaths, the country's highest official one-day toll since the outbreak began, while Morocco discovered an outbreak in a fish-canning factory, with 300,000 inhabitants placed under lockdown. Latin America's grim virus battle continued, with Chile passing 10,000 deaths on Sunday, while Mexico has had 30,000 fatalities.

Meanwhile, hundreds of drones lit up the night sky in Seoul for a spectacular showcase of motivational and awareness messages as the world battles the coronavirus pandemic. Three hundred unmanned aerial vehicles were programmed to form images

above the Han river - which runs through the South Korean capital - for the eye-catching flash mob.

The show began with messages reminding people of key precautionary measures, including wearing masks, washing hands and keeping a two-meter distance from others. The drones created images of a mask surrounded by coronavirus particles, quickly shuffling to form two hands and water droplets against the dark night sky.

The 10-minute show shifted to messages of gratitude for medical personnel in the frontlines of the pandemic as well as all South Koreans for their collective efforts. "THANKS TO YOU," the drones wrote in the sky next to a heart shape, then formed a silhouette of the Korean peninsula with the message: "Cheer up, Republic of Korea." The government-organized event on Saturday night was not advertised in advance in consideration of social distancing rules, the transport ministry said. — Agencies

In My View

## Be a pioneer, entrepreneur

By Abdellatif Sharaa

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Watching the newscast two days ago, I saw a segment about a man who was not able to sit around and be idle during the pandemic, and as the prominent rule was to stay at home, an idea came across his mind to recycle and make use of things that are usually discarded and thrown away. The man collected used tires and empty oil barrels in his backyard and started to paint them. Then he asked city officials if he can use his creations to decorate a street.

He got the approval and the idea caught their attention. The city backed him and he started getting paid for it. The man used the barrels to make bathroom sinks and other things, to the point that he is receiving orders today to customize things out of items otherwise thrown away for his steadily growing clientele. He said that he is seriously thinking about turning this into a career.

This is a prime example of using spare time in a positive fashion, which protects the environment, in addition to making a living out of it at the same time instead of spending time on the couch watching TV, eating and sleeping. Unemployment is an ugly word and unpleasant situation - it keeps one always worried about their tomorrow and future and how things will be. Employment means that there is a source of income for families and individuals.

Yes, education is very important and must be pursued, but under the current circumstances education must be targeted and directed towards needed skills, because graduates are entering the marketplace only to be turned away because their specialty is not required. In fact some specialties are oversaturated, and sometimes governments suffer from masked unemployment because they are compelled to employ a certain number of youth even if they are not actually needed.

There are some countries that take fresh graduates and retrain them or give them new skills to be able to accommodate them in needed areas and make them productive, rather than keeping them idle or giving them support for doing nothing. It is not bad for the youth to find something they are good at and become pioneers and create their own businesses, and believe me the government will be behind every sincere and feasible effort.

Staying home is bad from all aspects and may cause psychological and domestic problems, and this must be avoided. Make this your first day on the right track - let's go!

Final word: "The pioneering spirit is less about thinking up new ideas as ridding ourselves of dogmas and habits that hold us captive in thinking." — Bertrand Piccard

Local

# Kuwait an increasingly important partner to the EU: Ambassador Tudor

## List of countries whose citizens are allowed into EU reviewed every two weeks

By Dr Cristian Tudor, Ambassador of the European Union to the State of Kuwait

As Kuwait and the EU emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the outlook on the future of our bilateral relations is excellent in all fields: political, economic, social and cultural. In just a few days from now, we will mark the first anniversary of the establishment, on July 14, 2019, of a fully-fledged EU Delegation in Kuwait. On that occasion, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait joined the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

in jointly inaugurating the Delegation offices at the Al-Hamra tower. By opening an EU Delegation to Kuwait, the EU increased its footprint in the Gulf, enabling us to deepen further our engagement both with Kuwait and with other the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Contacts at high-level between the EU and Kuwait continue, just last week - one day before the 4th Brussels Conference on Syria - an important phone call took place between the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and his Kuwaiti counterpart, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

course depend on how well we manage to contain the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in the EU and in Kuwait, as re-opening our borders will very much depend on the success of these efforts. After several very difficult weeks when the WHO designated Europe as the epicenter of the crisis, the EU has by now as a whole finally managed to "flatten the curve" and our Member States are now carefully and gradually re-opening their economies and our borders - internal and external.

### Gradual lifting

The EU Member States agreed on June 30 to issue a recommendation for a partial and gradual lifting as from July 1 of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU+ Schengen (all EU Member States with the exception of Ireland plus the four non-EU Schengen Member States) that have been in force since mid-March 2020. This recommendation features a list of just 14 countries whose residents will be permitted to enter for 'non-essential' travel. The main criteria for determining the list is public health: residents of those countries that have a similar or lower rate of infection as the EU average over the last 14-day period and in which the trend of new cases over a 14-day



Dr Cristian Tudor

period is stable or decreasing were considered for inclusion. A second criterion during this first phase of the re-opening is reciprocity - that is, does the country in question already now or will soon allow EU nationals to enter for non-essential travel?

### Highly valued

Visitors from Kuwait are indeed highly valued in Europe. Considering the great economic importance of tourism to many of our EU Member States, the decision to begin lifting the temporary travel restrictions to the EU in a phased and gradual manner following strict public health criteria was not taken easily. As the Ambassador of the EU to Kuwait, allow me to state with full sincerity that I look very much forward to the inclusion of Kuwait on the list as soon as the public health criteria are met.

The pandemic is a global challenge. I would like to use this opportunity to commend Kuwait's response to it. I believe Kuwait responded firmly to the situation and began swiftly to take measures to protect the health and safety of people living in the country. The EU Delegation to Kuwait takes note of the positive daily recovery cases. It is important for all of us to continue to abide by the health authorities' directives. The EU Delegation to Kuwait would like to express gratitude to all MoH staff, front liners and volunteers that are supporting Kuwait's response to the pandemic.

### Important partner

The EU considers the State of Kuwait as an increasingly important partner and our ambition is to have a comprehensive and multi-dimensional cooperation covering political dialogue, economy and trade, sectoral and regional cooperation. The relations between the EU and Kuwait have been historically strong. Kuwait has played a key role in promoting region-to-region engagement between the EU and the GCC under the framework of the 1988 EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement. More recently, our bilateral relations have experienced a major impetus. Kuwait was the first country in the Gulf to sign a Cooperation Arrangement with the European External Action Service (EEAS) in July 2016 that provides a platform for regular political consultations covering common regional challenges in the Middle East and beyond. The second EU-Kuwait meeting of Senior Officials on the implementation of the Cooperation Arrangement is set to take place on July 16, 2020 under the joint leadership of Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Walid Al-Khobaizi and the Managing Director for Middle East and North Africa of the EEAS Fernando Gentilini. This meeting will be held via video-teleconference taking account of the continuation of COVID-19 related travel restrictions and social distancing measures.

EU-Kuwait relations are by no means limited to official government-level engagement and are deepened and enriched further by people-to-people exchanges, business-to-business dialogue, education and parliamentary exchanges as well as cultural diplomacy. The visit of a delegation from the European Parliament to Kuwait in December 2018 was hosted by the National Assembly and will, we expect, be reciprocated as soon as conditions permit with a return visit to Brussels by Kuwaiti parliamentarians. The full resumption of contacts at all levels will of

“Visitors from Kuwait are highly valued”

While it is true that neither Kuwait nor any of the GCC members were included in this first list, it is important to understand that the list will be reviewed every two weeks so that changes in the epidemiological situation (based on data provided by the EU Centre for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, complemented by qualitative information provided by EU Delegations in third countries) can be taken into account for the purpose of updating the list. Countries will be added whose epidemiological situation has improved and countries can be removed whose situation has deteriorated. Therefore, this is a first list and not a last list.

It is also very important to understand that the temporary restrictions introduced for non-essential travel already since mid-March - and that remain in force until further notice for the vast majority of countries - were neither intended nor implemented as a blanket ban. EU citizens and their family members as well as long-term EU residents and their family members are exempted as are a long list of travellers with an essential function or need. These trav-

local spotlight

## US and GCC



By Muna Al-Fuzal

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Amidst the US presidential election campaign, a wave of public anger against racism and the coronavirus pandemic, many of us are following analyses, statements and predictions published in the American media, especially since Gulf countries' interests are closely linked with American policy, and perhaps today this is stronger than ever. The big question is what the 2020 US presidential election means for the Middle East and the Gulf countries (GCC)?

When US President Donald Trump entered the White House in Jan 2017, leaders from the region welcomed him and prepared themselves to deal with the new administration. GCC officials congratulated the new president then and expressed their hope to strengthen the decades-old partnerships between their countries and the United States.

US-GCC relations have strengthened through time, despite political conflicts and economic challenges in the area. Ties between the two sides have been stable even with differences in political agendas between the Republicans and the Democrats. I believe the relationship was maintained by mutual interests and stable leaderships.

While we are witnessing massive global changes over many issues, I don't expect a huge alteration in US policy towards Gulf countries. Maybe the winner of the upcoming election may have a different perspective or agenda towards Iran's uranium enrichment program and the sanctions that have been imposed on Tehran for the past three years. But will we witness variations regarding Iraq, Syria and Yemen?

I remember very well that in 2017, I published an article in Kuwait Times in which I wrote that US policy has general rules, which none of the incoming presidents - whether Republican or Democrat - will disagree or ignore. Today, after four years, and with new elections looming, such expectations have returned, but in difficult circumstances all over the world with the continued spread of the coronavirus and a wave of public anger.

I am following the upcoming US elections because the results are important to us in the Middle East, especially Gulf countries. The decisions that are taken there will have a direct impact on our lives for years. I enjoy following American electoral debates, especially since elections in the Arab world differ from elections in Western countries.

Although the goal is known, the mechanisms and tools for monitoring the electoral process are diverse and open to the public. The candidates also are subject to difficult debates and confrontations that involve revealing much of their personal and practical lives. That is something we are not familiar with in the Arab world. The electoral process in the United States of America is a very complex and competitive process, and the media plays a strong role in the process.

The Arab world faces a dilemma in consolidating the concept of democracy because many countries face the fact that elections entrench differences. Even after the elections are over, the division is usually on sectarian or intellectual bases, which is the most dangerous, even with public participation. In many cases, elections lead to the emergence of other problems.

The economy is essential - this is a fact. What is happening in America is undoubtedly a private matter, but the American economy is affected by the results of elections, just as American decisions affect us directly, especially as we are oil-producing states. I believe speculations about the impact of the US elections on the Middle East will begin early, so I will join the millions watching the situation and hoping for good.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed

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## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A bird flies over the sun as it rises yesterday morning. — Photo by Islam Al-Sharaa

# Souq Mubarakia open but needs barcode appointment

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Souq Mubarakia is open for business but you cannot enter the fruit and vegetable, meat and fish markets without an appointment. Kuwait Times visited the market Sunday and witnessed several people being turned away as they had no barcode to show at the gate. However, shoppers can visit other areas of Souq Mubarakia and nearby markets like Souq Al-Kabeer, Souq Al-Wataniya and Souq Al-Safat without an appointment. The coronavirus outbreak led to the total closure of Souq Mubarakia on April 4. The souq reopened on May 31, but other souqs and malls nearby were only allowed to reopen on June 30.

A man guarding the area told Kuwait Times

entry to only the main meat, fish and vegetable markets were restricted because this is where customers normally converge. "To manage the crowd in the area, we needed to implement the appointment system. Without it, definitely there will be a huge crowd and that is what we are trying to avoid," he said.

"I came because I wanted to buy cheap fresh fish and meat, plus fruits and veggies, but the guard won't allow me to enter because I don't have an appointment," an Indian shopper told Kuwait Times. "I was just told by a friend that Mubarakia is open, so I came early to buy some food. I normally shop here once a week," he said. Souq Mubarakia is a popular shopping destination for citizens and expats alike, with its traditional shops, eateries, cafes and teahouses.

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KUWAIT: Shoppers at the Souq Mubarakia on Sunday. — Photos by Ben Garcia



Chile crosses 10,000 coronavirus deaths

## When coronavirus robs you of your sense of smell



AHMEDABAD: Supporters of Gujarat state Congress pay homage to Indian soldiers, who were killed in a recent clash with Chinese forces in the Galwan valley area, during a peace gathering at a war memorial in Ahmedabad. — AFP

# Indian soldiers 'caught by surprise'

## Three of the dead men had their 'arteries ruptured in the neck'

**NEW DELHI:** Indian soldiers who died in close combat with Chinese troops last month were unarmed and surrounded by a larger force on a steep ridge, Indian government sources, two soldiers deployed in the area and families of the fallen men said. One of the Indian soldiers had his throat slit with metal nails in the darkness, his father told Reuters, saying he had been told by a fellow soldier who was there.

Others fell to their deaths in the freezing waters of the Galwan river in the western Himalayas, relatives have learned from witnesses. Twenty Indian soldiers died in the June 15 clash on the de facto border separating the two armies. The soldiers all belonged to the 16th Bihar Regiment deployed in the Galwan region. No shots were fired, but it was the biggest loss of life in combat between the nuclear-armed neighbors since 1967, when the simmering border dispute flared into deadly battles.

Reuters spoke to relatives of 13 of the men who were killed, and in five cases they produced death certificates listing horrific injuries suffered during the six-hour night-time clash at 14,000 ft amid remote, barren mountains. Reuters contacted the military hospital in India's Ladakh region where the bodies were brought. The hospital declined to comment on the cause of death and said that the bodies were sent to the families along with the death certificates.

Reuters also spoke to two soldiers of the Bihar Regiment deployed in the area, who were among those who accompanied the bodies of fallen colleagues to their homes in the area. They were not directly involved in the melee. The soldiers cannot be named because of military rules and all the families asked for anonymity because they said they were not

supposed to speak about military matters. The Indian defense ministry did not respond to a request for comment on the fighting on June 15.

In response to a Reuters query, a China foreign ministry spokesperson repeated previous statements blaming the Indian side for crossing the de facto border and provoking the Chinese. "When Chinese officers and soldiers went there to negotiate, they were suddenly and violently attacked by the Indian

they could lay their hands on - rods, sticks, and even with their bare hands," said a government official in Delhi briefed on the clash. The Indian government has said that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) acted in a premeditated manner, but it has not provided a full account of the clash that stunned the country and stoked popular anger against China.

China has dismissed an Indian government minister's claim that China had lost 40 soldiers from the PLA's western theatre command deployed in Galwan. Its envoy to Delhi suggested in remarks to local media and posted on the embassy website that there had been losses on both sides. "The Indian army suddenly and violently attacked the Chinese officers and soldiers who went for negotiation, causing fierce physical conflicts and casualties between the two sides," Sun Weidong said.

Indian government officials have told Reuters that the conflict began when the commanding officer of the Bihar regiment led a small party to Patrol Point 14 to verify whether the Chinese had made good their promise to withdraw from the disputed site and dismantle structures they had built there. But instead they came under attack by Chinese soldiers using iron rods and wooden clubs with nails studded in them on a narrow ledge barely four metres wide overlooking the Galwan river.

that unarmed Indian soldiers were overrun by a larger force could further fuel resentment against China and raise questions about why Indian soldiers were sent to a tense frontline without being armed.

"How dare China kill our unarmed soldiers. Why were our soldiers sent unarmed to martyrdom?" Rahul Gandhi, leader of the main opposition Congress party wrote in a tweet, demanding the government provide a full account. A relative of one of the soldiers who accompanied Colonel Santosh Babu, the commanding officer, to the site of two tents erected by the Chinese troops told Reuters that members of the Indian patrol were unarmed.

They were confronted by a small group of Chinese soldiers and an argument ensued over the tents and a small observation tower the relative said, on the basis of conversations with two other soldiers who were present. Reuters was unable to establish all of the details of what happened, but government officials in New Delhi briefed on the incident said that at some point Indian troops took down the observation post and the tents because they were on India's side of the LAC. Soon after the Indian side came under attack from a large Chinese force that pelted them with stones and attacked them with sharp-edged weapons, according to the families of three dead Indian soldiers, based on conversations they had with survivors. Some soldiers retreated to safety on the ridgeline in the darkness, but when they could not find the commanding officer, they re-emerged and came under fresh attack, four family members said. Babu was among those killed in the fighting, the Indian government said. One of the soldiers deployed in the area that Reuters spoke to said the Indian patrol was outnumbered by the PLA. —Reuters



**Indian soldier's throat slit with metal nails**

troops," the spokesperson said. "The rights and wrongs of the incident are very clear. The responsibility absolutely does not lie with the Chinese." China has not provided evidence of Indian aggression. China's defense ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

### 'Arteries ruptured'

Three of the dead men had their "arteries ruptured in the neck" and two sustained head injuries caused by "sharp or pointed objects," the death certificates seen by Reuters said. There were visible marks on the neck and forehead, all five documents said. "It was a free-for-all, they fought with whatever

### Bodies found in river

In recent weeks the world's two most populous countries have mobilized more forces along the 3,488 km Line of Actual Control (LAC), and the renewed hostilities have triggered a diplomatic and commercial spat that threatens to escalate, experts including former Indian military officers say. The possibility

## Deadly Japan floods kill 50

**TOKYO:** Driving rain hampered the efforts of tens of thousands of rescue workers in southwestern Japan yesterday as they searched for survivors from deadly floods and landslides, with more torrential downpours forecast. Around 50 people were feared dead after heavy rain lashed areas of western Japan beginning early Saturday, causing rivers to burst their banks and flood low-lying regions.

Bad weather was preventing some rescue efforts, local officials said, with at least 13 people still unaccounted for. "Because of the heavy rain, we were forced to cancel some emergency flights of helicopters over the disaster zone," Tsubasa Miyamoto, an official from the Kumamoto region, told AFP. Although the rain has eased from its peak, the floods washed away roads and bridges, leaving many in isolated communities cut off. A local firefighter in the western region of Kagoshima told AFP they had deployed boats to rescue 11 people, but conditions were making it hard to reach others stranded.

"Calls came from people telling us that they wanted to flee their home but they could not do it on their own," he said. "Some roads are submerged and you cannot drive through them." In one of the hardest-hit areas, residents wrote out the words "rice, water, SOS" on the ground, while others waved towels and called for rescue and relief goods. At a nursing home for the elderly, 14 people were feared dead when water from a nearby river inundated the ground floor, leaving those in



ASHIKITA: A road is destroyed following torrential rain near the Kuma river in Ashikita, Kumamoto prefecture yesterday. — AFP

wheelchairs unable to reach higher ground. Emergency services, aided by locals in rafts, managed to rescue around 50 staff and residents from the facility, bringing them to safety by boat.

Heavy rain is expected to continue through Tuesday afternoon and the Japan Meteorological Agency issued a non-compulsory evacuation order for around half a million people in southwestern Japan. Up to 250 millimeters of rain is expected in the 24-hour period through Tuesday morning in the southern part of Kyushu Island, which includes areas already hit hard by the flooding, the agency said. "It's such a mess," resident Hirotohi Nishi told public broadcaster NHK as he swept debris from his mud-strewn front room. "Many pieces of wood came into my house. I don't know what to do." Hirokazu Kosaki, a 75-year-old bus driver in the town of Ashikita, told Jiji press: "It was nothing but water as far as I could see."

### Evacuation orders

Evacuation efforts are also being hampered by fears of spreading the coronavirus that has claimed almost 1,000 victims in Japan, with close to 20,000 cases. Partitions have been set up at evacuation centers to keep distance between families and evacuees are made to wash their hands frequently, sanitize and wear face masks. For some local business owners already battered by coronavirus, the natural disaster has compounded their problems. Yuji Hashimoto, who runs a tourism bureau in the hot-spring resort in Yatsushiro, one of the flood-hit cities in Kumamoto, told AFP that the "beautiful tourism spot dramatically changed overnight." "The damage was beyond our imagination. It's literally a bolt from the blue... The disaster is a double-whammy as our hot spring resort was struggling to weather the impact of coronavirus. We don't know what will happen to us next," he said. — AFP

## Lebanon clerics blast politicians as hunger and hardship bite

**BEIRUT:** Lebanon's Christian authorities slammed politicians on Sunday for failing to remedy an economic meltdown that has left many poor, piling pressure on the country's leaders as it spirals deeper into crisis. In a sermon, Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rai, the top Christian cleric, accused politicians of thinking only of their own vested interests and urged the president to take action. "It appears politicians want to hide their responsibility in emptying the treasury and not enact any reforms," he said. Hopes of salvation through an IMF deal have retreated, with the government unwilling or unable to enact reforms, hamstrung by the conflicting agendas of sectarian leaders who don't want to yield power or privileges.

The crisis, which has decimated the local currency and raised fears of mass hunger, is seen as the biggest threat to Lebanon's stability since its 1975-1990 civil war. "Political officials...do not have the courage nor the freedom to meet and find ways out of the suffering," Rai said. He warned this was depriving the country of help it needs from foreign donors. Economic woes, rooted in state waste and corruption, came to the fore last year after capital inflows slowed and protests erupted against leaders in power since the war. Lebanon's sectarian political system parcels out state posts based on religious sect, with the presidency reserved for a Maronite Christian.

The largest Christian bloc, President Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement, is close to the Iran-backed Shiite Hezbollah movement. Both backed the current cabinet, which took office in January. In another sermon in a central Beirut church, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Elias Audi also lambasted the political elite on Sunday. "Oh respected leaders, I address whatever conscience remains in you," he said. — Reuters

## International

# Uneasy calm in Ethiopia after protests; death toll doubles

## Internet shutdown continues; death toll now at 166

**ADDIS ABABA:** More than 166 people were killed during anti-government protests in Ethiopia last week, the government said on Sunday, as the capital and other hotspots remained closely guarded by security forces and a blanket Internet shutdown entered its sixth day. Large protests broke out in Addis Ababa and spread to the surrounding Oromia region on Monday night after popular Oromo musician Haacaaluu Hundeesaa was shot dead by unknown gunmen in a killing Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said was "an evil act".

Haacaaluu sang in the Oromo language of Ethiopia's biggest ethnic group. His killing tapped into grievances fuelled by decades of government repression and what the Oromo describe as their historic exclusion from political power. The government initially said 80 people had been killed during the protests, which lasted for two days. The unrest is the deadliest since Abiy, who is Oromo, took power in 2018 with the promise of wide ranging reforms. But a senior regional security official told

Reuters on Sunday that the death toll was at least double that, with 145 civilians and 11 security personnel killed. Jibril Mohammed, head of the Oromia Security and Peace Bureau, said more deaths might be reported due to the number of injuries being treated in hospitals.

### Protests erupted after killing of popular singer

Another 10 people were killed in Addis Ababa, a source in the national police service said. The military, called in to quell the protests Wednesday, were out in the streets of Oromia towns, two residents from the town of Adama and another from the town of Shashemene told Reuters. Authorities shut down the Internet after the protests began, and they are yet to switch it on again, residents said. "The (Oromia) region is now relatively calm and there is no violence or protests at the moment. Businesses have also reopened," Jibril told Reuters by phone. International human rights watchdog Amnesty International has called on the government to bring Haacaaluu's killers to justice. — Reuters



**ST PAUL:** Members of the Oromo community watch fireworks as they gather to celebrate the life of musician and revolutionary Hachalu Hundessa at the Oromo Community Center in St Paul, Minnesota. — AFP

## News in brief

#### China detains professor

**BEIJING:** Chinese authorities yesterday detained a law professor who published essays criticizing President Xi Jinping over the coronavirus pandemic and his efforts to consolidate power, according to friends of the man. Xu Zhangrun, a rare outspoken critic of the government in China's heavily censored academia, was taken from his home in suburban Beijing by more than 20 people, one of his friends said on condition of anonymity. Xu published an essay in February blaming the culture of deception and censorship fostered by Xi for the spread of the coronavirus in China. The law professor at Tsinghua University, one of China's top institutions, had previously spoken out against the 2018 abolition of presidential term limits in an essay circulated online. A friend said a man claiming to be police had called Xu's wife, who had been living separately at a university residence, to say Xu was arrested for allegedly soliciting prostitution in the southwestern city of Chengdu. — AFP

#### Rocket fired at airport

**BAGHDAD:** A rocket landed near Baghdad airport overnight but did not explode, an Iraqi security source said, after two other rocket attacks targeted American diplomatic and military installations at the weekend. However, the Iraqi army said yesterday that no rocket had been fired. American soldiers are based at the airport. Since October, US diplomats and troops across Iraq have been targeted in around three dozen missile attacks blamed by Washington on pro-Iranian armed factions. Late last month, in the first move of its kind, elite Iraqi troops arrested more than a dozen Tehran-backed fighters allegedly planning a new attack on Baghdad's Green Zone, home to the American and other foreign embassies. — AFP

#### Chechen dissident shot dead

**VIENNA:** Austrian police have arrested two Russians from Chechnya over the fatal shooting of a Chechen dissident, officials said on Sunday, fueling concerns over the security of Chechen government critics living in exile. The 43-year-old asylum seeker, a vocal critic of the Chechen Republic's government, was found dead with gunshot wounds near the capital Vienna on Saturday. Police arrested a 47-year-old Russian from Chechnya in the city of Linz, some 200 kilometers from Vienna, shortly after finding the body. A second Russian, 37, also from Chechnya living in Austria, was detained Sunday for investigations into the murder. Police and prosecutors said the crime was still under investigation and it was too early to comment on any motive. The dead dissident-identified by Russian media as Mamikhan Umarov now using the name Martin Beck-had given evidence in a 2017 murder case in Ukraine, the Ukrainian interior ministry said. — AFP

#### 'Foreign air force' hit base

**TRIPOLI:** Libya's UN-recognized government Sunday condemned overnight air raids against a recaptured strategic air base in the west of the country, alleging they were carried out by a "foreign air force". Forces loyal to the Government of National Accord (GNA) seized back the Al-Watiya airbase, 140 kilometers southwest of Tripoli, from troops aligned with eastern strongman Khalifa Haftar in May. Haftar's forces allege Turkey—a key GNA backer—has subsequently made use of the base to help GNA loyalists to repel an offensive the strongman launched against Tripoli in April last year. "The raids last night against Al-Watiya base were carried out by a... foreign air force in support of the war criminal in a miserable and desperate attempt to achieve a morale boosting victory" for Haftar's forces, GNA deputy defense minister Salah Namrush said in a statement. — AFP

## Croatia conservatives hail 'great' re-election victory

**ZAGREB:** Croatia's conservatives scored a re-election victory in a parliamentary vote on Sunday, official results showed, putting them in a strong position to build a government that will inherit the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic. The vote was held under the shadow of the global health crisis, with the Adriatic country's tourism-dependent economy on course for its steepest decline in decades.

The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which has dominated the country for most of its nearly 30-year independence, fell short of an absolute majority but outperformed its main rival by a long-shot. The party took 68 seats in the 151-member house, followed by 42 for the centre-left coalition led by the Social Democrats (SDP), according to official results with nearly 90 percent of the ballots counted.

In third place with 15 seats was the new 'Homeland Movement' party led by a folk singer who appealed to hardliners on the right with nationalist rhetoric. "Our victory is not only great but binding," Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said



**ZAGREB:** Croatian Prime Minister and leader of the Croatian Democratic Union party (HDZ) Andrej Plenkovic (center) celebrates with party members after declaring the victory on parliamentary elections at the garden of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. — AFP

of his HDZ party's task to "work with all our hearts for Croatia". "We had a difficult mandate full of challenges behind us and the challenges ahead of us are even greater," he said.

The ruling party had campaigned on its relatively successful containment of the country's virus outbreak so far, reporting some 110 deaths and 3,000 infections in the country of 4.2 million. Plenkovic, a former MEP with strong backing from Brussels, was cast as a safe pair of hands to navigate the coming economic downturn. The SDP-led

opposition had accused their right-wing rivals of endangering citizens by "rushing" to hold the elections even as the country logged a new uptick in infections in recent weeks.

They had also highlighted HDZ's history of corruption, which was brought back to the spotlight by a recent scandal involving a top official. But despite polls putting the two camps neck-and-neck, the conservatives prevailed with a resounding lead. After the results came in Social Democrat leader Davor Bernardic said he was ready to step down and congratulated the "electoral winner which is HDZ and Andrej Plenkovic". Their camp was also hurt by the rise of a new green-leftist group, Mozemo, who garnered some seven seats in its parliamentary debut.

The HDZ's outgoing environment minister Tomislav Coric said he expected the party to find coalition partners in the coming days. There are "political options that are close to us from both ideological and program point of view", he told local television. One path to the 76-seat majority would be to ally with eight ethnic minority MPs. In that case HDZ would not need the votes of the 'Homeland Movement' led folk singer Miroslav Skoro, who lured away traditional HDZ voters disappointed with Plenkovic's more moderate stance. The singer founded the party after he finished third in the country's presidential election in December. — AFP



**LONDON:** (Left to right) Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Staff Nurse Luis Pitarma and Ward Sister Jenny McGee share a joke as the Prime Minister talks to the NHS staff that cared for him while he was in intensive care in central London. — AFP

## US, China left out as England slashes quarantine list

**LONDON:** Travelers from more than 70 "low-risk" countries and territories will no longer have to self-isolate when arriving in England, the UK government said in a major easing of its coronavirus quarantine scheme. The list of exemptions mostly covers Europe—but not Portugal—and the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, although the United States and mainland China are notably omitted.

The changes, which come into effect on July 10, represent a significant lifting of the mandatory 14-day self-quarantine imposed one month ago to stop new infections from abroad. Britain has suffered Europe's deadliest outbreak of COVID-19, with 44,000 deaths among confirmed cases, but is now slowly coming out of lockdown. "Today marks the next step in carefully reopening our great nation," Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said. Airlines, who had warned the quarantine would cripple an industry already on its knees due to global coronavirus shutdowns, welcomed the easing and three of them dropped a legal challenge.

But the exemptions will only apply to arrivals into England, with Scotland, Wales and Northern

Ireland so far sticking to the blanket ban. UK ministers had suggested the delay in announcing the list-it had been due earlier in the week—was down to a lack of cooperation from the devolved government in Scotland. But Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon denied this, and blasted Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government in London for a "shambolic" effort. She said the list her government was shown on Thursday had changed by Friday, while adding that Edinburgh would likely publish its own list in the coming days.

Under the new rules, a traffic-light system—red, amber and green—would be used for different countries depending on their prevalence of the coronavirus, Shapps said. Travelers from the green and amber countries will no longer have to self-isolate on arrival. The amber countries will have reciprocal arrangements in place with England, while the green countries are deemed to be safer than England, such as New Zealand. The amber countries include France, Italy and Spain, which are among the most popular summer holiday destinations for Britons, although not Portugal. The United States will be designated with a red light, requiring mandatory self-quarantine, because "they have got very high numbers of infections", Shapps said. British Airways, easyJet and Ryanair had taken legal action over the scheme they said would have a "severe impact on the travel and tourism industry", which was "already running on fumes". But their lawyer told the High Court of England and Wales in London on Friday that they had now agreed to withdraw the claim. — AFP

## When coronavirus robs you the 'sense of smell'

**PARIS:** "What I miss most is the smell of my son when I kiss him, the smell of my wife's body," says Jean-Michel Maillard. Anosmia—the loss of one's sense of smell—may be an invisible handicap, but is psychologically difficult to live with and has no real treatment, he says. And it is the price that an increasing number of people are paying after surviving a brush with the coronavirus, with some facing a seemingly long-term inability to smell. "Anosmia cuts you off from the smells of life, it's a torture," says Maillard, president of anosmie.org, a French group designed to help sufferers. If you have the condition you can no longer breathe in the smell of your first morning coffee, smell the cut grass of a freshly mown lawn or even "the reassuring smell of soap on your skin when you're preparing for a meeting", he says.

You only truly become aware of your sense of smell when you lose it, says Maillard, who lost his own following an accident. And it is not just the olfactory pleasures you lose. He points out that people with anosmia are unable to smell smoke from a fire, gas from a leak, or a poorly washed dustbin. Eating is a completely different experience too, as so much of what we appreciate in food is what we can smell, says Alain Corre, an ear, nose and throat specialist at the Hopital-Fondation Rothschild in Paris. "There are dozens of causes of anosmia," he says, including nasal polyps, chronic rhinitis, diabetes, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Now the new coronavirus has been added to that list, says Corre—with the symptom alone allowing a diagnosis of COVID-19 in some cases. "When people lose their sense of smell and don't get it back, we note a real change in the quality of life and a level of depression that is not insignificant," he adds. The problem is when the condition persists, he says. "To be deprived of your sense of smell for a month, it's not serious," says Maillard. "Two months, it starts to become a problem. But after six months, you're all alone under a bell jar. "There's a psychological aspect to this which is very difficult to live with," he insists. "You need to get help." There is no specific treatment for the condition. You have to address the cause, says Corre, but "the problem of the anosmias linked to the virus is that often, the treatment of the viral infection has no effect on your smell. "According to the first numbers, around 80 percent of patients suffering from COVID-19 recover spontaneously in less than a month and often even faster, in eight to 10 days." For others, however, it could be that the disease has destroyed their olfactory neurons—the ones that detect smells. — AFP

## International

# Australia closes state border for the first time in 100 years

## Officials seek to contain Melbourne coronavirus outbreak

**SYDNEY:** The border between Australia's two most populous states will close from today for an indefinite period as authorities scramble to contain an outbreak of the coronavirus in the city of Melbourne. The decision announced yesterday marks the first time the border between Victoria and New South Wales has been shut in 100 years. Officials last blocked movement between the two states in 1919 during the Spanish flu pandemic.

"It is the smart call, the right call at this time, given the significant challenges we face in containing this virus," Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews told reporters in Melbourne. The move will, however, likely be a blow to Australia's economic recovery as it heads into its first recession in nearly three decades. The number of COVID-19 cases in the Victorian capital of Melbourne has surged in recent days, prompting authorities to enforce strict social-distancing orders in 30 suburbs and put nine public housing towers into complete lockdown.

The state reported 127 new COVID-19 infections overnight, its biggest one-day spike since the pandemic began. It also reported two deaths, the first nationally in more than two weeks, taking the national tally to 106. NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said there was no timetable for reopening the border, which will be patrolled by the military to prevent illegal crossings from 11.59 pm local time.

The state line is highly porous, with 55 roads, wilderness parks and rivers. Some businesses straddle both sides and several workers, and school children, commute daily.

Lyn McKenzie, who runs a paddle steamer business along the Murray River from Mildura, a border city of 30,000 people, is waiting for more detail to gauge the full impact on her business. McKenzie lives on the NSW side of the river, the boats pick up passengers from the Victoria side and the river itself is classified as part of NSW. "I'm seeing this as possibly needing to shut down again, but it's a bit early for me, not knowing the exact details," McKenzie told Reuters. Berejiklian said people would be able to apply for daily permits to cross the border, but added there would be delays of around three days in issuing the passes.

Paul Armstrong, who runs a petrol station in Wodonga, a border town on the Victorian side, said his children live in New South Wales but go to school in Victoria. "I wonder if they will need permits," Armstrong said. Schools in Victoria are in their second week of the two-week winter vacation. Schools in New South Wales began their two-week term break yesterday. NSW Police Commissioner Mick Fuller said the military would provide round-the-clock aerial and other surveillance to enforce the closure. Victoria's only other internal border, with South Australia state, has been closed since March



**MELBOURNE:** Members of the Australian Defense Force take a swab sample at a drive-through COVID-19 coronavirus testing station in the Melbourne suburb of Fawkner. — AFP

### Number of COVID cases surges in recent days



22 under previous coronavirus measures.

#### Melbourne lockdown

Australia has fared better than many countries in the coronavirus pandemic, with just short of 8,500 cases so far, but the Melbourne outbreak has raised alarm bells. The country has reported an average of 109 cases daily over the past week, compared with an average of just 9 cases daily over the first week of June. Melbourne locals are concerned that renewed

social distancing measures have not been implemented uniformly across the city. "Without a full Melbourne lockdown, I am not super confident this is going to be contained," Jack Bell, a lifeguard who lives in Victorian suburb of Kensington, told Reuters. Kensington is one of the 30 suburbs that have reimposed social distancing measures. The nine public housing blocks that have been subjected to a complete lockdown, Australia's first, are in neighboring North Melbourne and Flemington. — Reuters

## Duterte's anti-terrorism law challenged

**MANILA:** Critics of a new anti-terrorism law in the Philippines called on the country's highest court yesterday to suspend the legislation, arguing it threatens human rights and freedom of speech. The law approved by President Rodrigo Duterte on Friday gives the security forces sweeping powers to go after terrorists, but critics fear it could be used to stifle dissent and target government opponents. Rights groups had called on Duterte to veto the law, which allows for a special council comprised of members of his cabinet to order the warrantless arrest of anyone they deem a terrorist.

It also allows for suspects to be detained for up to 24 days without charge and scraps heavy fines for law enforcers for wrongful detention. The government argues the law, which was approved by Congress last month, is needed to combat terrorism in the country's south where communist and Islamist groups have waged long-running insurgencies. In at least four separate filings to the Supreme Court yesterday, lawyers, professors and members of Congress called for the legislation to be halted before it takes effect later this month to allow for a judicial review and the removal of what they say are unconstitutional provisions.



**MANILA:** A protester attends an anti-terror rally at a university campus in Manila. — AFP

"In a democratic society, security must never be attained nor maintained at the expense of human rights and civil liberties," opposition lawmaker Edcel Lagman said in his petition. The Supreme Court confirmed the filings. Other groups have expressed plans to challenge the law. Critics say the broad definition of terrorism in the legislation could strengthen Duterte's campaign against critics. Some are already serving prison sentences or facing jail time after attacking his policies including his drug war that has killed thousands.

"The definition of terrorism... is so vague and broad such that it can be read to include legitimate and lawful gatherings

and demonstrations where people assemble to exercise their freedom of speech," a petition filed by a group of law professors said. The government has argued that the law has enough safeguards to prevent abuse. Duterte's spokesman, Harry Roque, said Sunday the government would respect the court's decision. UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet has expressed concerns the law could blur the distinction between criticism and criminality. Several critics of Duterte's administration have been put behind bars, including opposition Senator Leila de Lima who faces drug charges she insists were fabricated to silence her. — AFP

## Taj Mahal shut as India reports record cases

**NEW DELHI:** India's top tourist attraction the Taj Mahal will remain shut, officials said Sunday, as the vast nation registered a record daily number of coronavirus cases and opened a sprawling treatment centre in the capital to fight the pandemic. The health ministry reported just under 25,000 cases and 613 deaths in 24 hours—the biggest daily spike since the first case was detected in late January.

The surge took India's total tally to more than 673,000 cases and 19,268 deaths, pulling the country closer to surpassing badly-hit Russia, the world's third-most infected nation. The jump in infections came as local authorities in northern Agra city said the Taj Mahal, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, would remain closed to visitors even though the national government said it had permission to reopen yesterday. The shining marble mausoleum south of the capital New Delhi has been closed since mid-March as part of measures to try and combat the pandemic.

"The Taj Mahal, which is in the Taj Ganj police station jurisdiction, is a 'containment zone,'" a document released by Agra's District Magistrate Prabhu N Singh stated late Sunday. Containment zones are where high infection rates have been detected, with all activity except essential services halted. Other major monuments, including



**MUMBAI:** A police vehicle is seen parked outside the Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai following threat calls from Pakistan to two Taj hotels, local media reported. — AFP

Agra Fort and Sikandra, the home of the tomb of Mughal emperor Akbar the Great, would also stay shut, the document said. The Taj Mahal and other major Agra monuments are located within highly populated residential areas, many of which are categorized as containment zones.

#### Mega virus facility

In the capital New Delhi, medical staff started treating patients at a spiritual centre converted into a sprawling isolation facility and hospital with 10,000 beds, many made of cardboard and chemically coated to make them waterproof. About the size of 20 football fields, the facility on the outskirts of the city will treat mild

symptomatic and asymptomatic cases.

State government officials fear Delhi, home to 25 million people, could record more than half-a-million cases by the end of the month. The city has repurposed some hotels to provide hospital care. It is also converting wedding halls and has several hundred modified railway coaches standing by. A strict lockdown in place since late March has gradually been lifted, allowing most activities after the economy nosedived during the shutdown. But the number of cases across the vast nation of 1.3 billion people has climbed steeply. Schools, metro trains in cities, cinemas, gyms and swimming pools remain closed and international flights are still grounded. — AFP

## Chile crosses 10,000 virus deaths

**SANTIAGO:** Chile recorded 10,159 coronavirus deaths on Sunday, as President Sebastian Pinera announced a \$1.5 billion aid package to help the middle class, which has been battered by the economic crisis. The death toll is compiled weekly by the Department of Statistics and Health (DEIS) and is considered to be the most accurate for reporting COVID-19 deaths by test results or by symptoms.

According to Sunday's report, there were 7,057 deaths confirmed via swab test and 3,102 "probable" deaths diagnosed via symptoms. The DEIS figure contrasts with the official daily report that on Sunday showed 6,308 deaths out of 295,532 cases since the first case was detected in Chile four months ago. Health Ministry epidemiological chief Rafael Araos explained Friday that the daily report's objective is provisional, recommending to use the DEIS figure instead.

## Why one party dominates Singapore

**SINGAPORE:** Singaporeans are expected to return the People's Action Party to power in a July 10 general election, extending its unbroken rule since the Southeast Asian island's independence in 1965. In that time, Singapore has had only three prime ministers: independence leader Lee Kuan Yew, his cabinet colleague Goh Chok Tong and Lee's son, the present Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. Having overseen rapid economic growth and prosperity, the PAP has become entrenched in power. But there are other factors that have kept rivals at bay.

#### Unique model

Voting in the former British colony is compulsory, and around 2.65 million will cast their ballots in the coming election. Singapore's electoral system is broadly based on the Westminster "first-past-the-post" model where the candidate who wins the most votes in each constituency is elected, and the number of seats is not proportionate to the vote share. In the last 2015 election, the PAP garnered 69.9% of the vote but secured about 93% of parliamentary seats. But there is also a twist in Singapore's electoral system. In some constituencies, candidates run in teams of up to six with at least one member from a minority group — a system designed to ensure better racial representation in the Chinese majority city-state.

Smaller and less well-resourced, some opposition parties struggle to

The grim milestone comes as Pinera announced \$1.5 billion in soft loans aimed at cushioning the blow of the economic crisis on Chile's middle class. The measure still needs to be approved by Congress. If approved, the package would provide for the delivery of a credit of up to \$3,200 over four installments, with a zero interest rate and four years to repay it, along with the postponement of dividend payments with a state guarantee. It also provides an extension of a subsidy for rent payment and a credit to pay for higher education.

"Chile is a mostly middle class country, which has progressed on the basis of its own merit, effort and work. The middle class knows this and is proud of its achievements. But it also deserves and needs assurances and opportunities for the future," Pinera said when presenting the aid package. Middle-class families had been excluded from state aid provided to weather the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic in Chile. Chile is one of the main global virus hotspots, as it was slow to implement lockdown measures and granted a large number of exceptions for "essential" workers once it did so on May 15. — AFP

find enough candidates for these so-called group representation constituencies. But the ruling party is sensitive to shifts in its overall vote share. After its worst result in 2011, when it secured 60% of the vote, the PAP accelerated foreign labor curbs to allay people's unease about immigration and jobs. Similar issues have dominated this campaign as Singapore braces for its deepest ever recession due to the coronavirus pandemic.

#### Constraints

Rights groups like ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights have long-flagged various other election processes that they say disadvantage the opposition. For example, Singapore's electoral divisions are revised regularly to reflect population growth and shifts. But the process is opaque and opposition figures have previously made allegations of gerrymandering. The prime minister can also call for an election, with presidential approval, at short notice, creating difficulties for the opposition to prepare. The campaigning period for the coming vote is just nine days. The financial cost of running can also be a deterrent. Candidates must put up election deposits of S\$13,500 (\$9,675) to stand, compared to 500 pounds (\$623) in Britain, and they need to win more than one-eighth of total votes to get their deposit back.

The opposition is fractured. A record 11 parties will be contesting the 2020 election: the PAP will stand in all 93 seats, followed by the new Progress Singapore Party (24), the Workers' Party (21) and the Singapore Democratic Party (11). The rest will stand in 10 or fewer. Political analysts say opposition parties tend to pitch themselves as a check against the PAP's dominance rather than offering a viable alternative government. — Reuters

# Business

TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2020



SHANGHAI: An investor looks at screens showing stock market movements at a securities company in Fuyang in China's eastern Anhui province yesterday. Shanghai stocks surged to a more than two-year high as investors piled in following a combination of rosy predictions for the market and strong economic data. — AFP

## China stocks soar on economic optimism

### World shares rally to 4-week high as investors bet on China revival

SHANGHAI: Shanghai stocks surged yesterday to a more than two-year high as investors piled in following a combination of rosy predictions for the market and strong economic data. The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index gained 5.71 percent, or 180.07 points, to 3,332.88, its best close since March 2018, while the Shenzhen Composite Index, which tracks shares on China's second exchange, gained 3.90 percent, or 79.70 points, to 2,121.59.

The Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong rose 3.81 percent, or 966.04 points, to 26,339.16.

Mainland Chinese shares have languished for much of the year because of economic shutdowns caused by the coronavirus, but have been on a spurt lately, rising more than 12 percent over the past week. Investors have grown increasingly optimistic, helped by data last week showing that factory activity picked up pace in June.

Zhang Gang, a strategist with Central China Securities, said that and other signs had raised expectations of stronger-than-expected second-quarter economic growth. Figures are due for release next week. He added that recent new policies aimed at boosting the securities sector had also lifted sentiment, and he expected the rally to continue.

"The epidemic has suppressed consumption too much and now there's a huge rebound. The growth of the consumer sector will quickly return to a normal pace and so will general economic growth," he said. Economists caution, however, that momentum may weaken in the second half as key overseas markets continue to struggle with the health crisis.

Meanwhile, global stock markets rallied to four-week

highs yesterday as investors counted on a revival in Chinese activity to boost global growth, even as surging coronavirus cases delayed business re-openings across the United States. MSCI's All-Country World Index, which tracks shares across 49 countries, rose 0.7 percent to its highest since June 6 after the start of European trading.



#### Virus resurgence delays US reopening

European shares jumped, with the pan-European STOXX 600 index rising 1.64 percent. Stocks exposed to China, like carmakers, industrials, energy firms and luxury goods makers rose strongly, while banks also rallied.

In Asia, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan climbed 1.6 percent to its highest since February, with the bullish sentiment spilling into other markets.

E-Mini futures for the S&P 500 firmed 1.2 percent. Among the reasons investors cited for the buying was improving economic data - UBS noted Citi's Economic Surprise Index for the US has risen to its highest level on

record. The index measures how well economic data releases are faring relative to consensus forecasts.

In Hong Kong, Jefferies chief global equity strategist Sean Darby said the positive sentiment towards Asian markets was the result of better than expected regional economic data and elevated liquidity levels. Most markets gained ground last week as a raft of economic data from June beat expectations, although the resurgence of coronavirus cases in the United States is clouding the future.

Better-than-forecast data on US jobs creation and factory activity have also provided a boost to confidence, as have hopes for a vaccine, which observers say is key to kickstarting any recovery. Traders have piled back into stocks in a major way in recent months-with the help of vast government and central bank support-and analysts have suggested the gains are also being helped by a fear of missing out on the rally. "The global economic data and positive coverage on potential COVID-19 vaccines and treatments represent a... whirligig of positive news that is overwhelming gnarly headline flows around the daily virus case counts in the US," said AxiCorp's Stephen Innes.

Jeffrey Halley at OANDA said: "Hong Kong concerns are fading as fast as they began, as the new China-imposed security laws allow money to talk without the annoying interference of protestors."

But he added that the "story still has more to run in a geopolitical context", pointing out that Donald Trump was still to sign a bill censuring Chinese officials linked to the law, which would likely lead to retaliation by Beijing. "The scale of those measures will dictate whether geopolitics will have more to say on global financial mar-

kets," he said in a note. Tokyo piled on 1.8 percent, while Singapore, Seoul, Taipei and Mumbai were all more than one percent higher, with Wellington and Jakarta also up.

#### Curbs reimposed

But there remains trepidation on trading floors as new infections spike around the world. Some US states are reporting record daily increases, with a number of officials considering reimposing lockdown measures, while Brazil and India are also seeing worryingly large rises. And Australia said it would effectively seal off the state of Victoria from the rest of the country as authorities struggle to control a surge in cases.

For the first time since the global pandemic began, the border between Australia's two most populous states-Victoria and New South Wales-will be closed, beginning midnight today, officials from both states said. The outbreak sent Sydney falling 0.7 percent.

Spain, South Africa, Japan and the Philippines are among several other countries to see an uptick in new virus cases. "For now the positive data surprises and huge fiscal and monetary stimulus are the overwhelming forces," National Australia Bank's Rodrigo Catril said in a note.

"But the increase in COVID-19 infections, not just in the US, means that they need to be closely monitored-the introduction of more severe containment measures has the potential to derail the positive vibes in markets," Shane Oliver, at AMP Capital Investors, said the recovery would likely be slower than the "Deep V" rebound that many are hoping for. "Trends in new coronavirus cases along with pressure on medical systems will continue to be watched closely, particularly in US states," he said. — Agencies



BERLIN: German aircraft engine manufacturer MTU Aero Engines said yesterday it is planning to cut at least 1,000 jobs as the impact of the coronavirus continues to hammer the aviation industry.

### 1,000 jobs to go at aircraft engine firm in Germany

BERLIN: German aircraft engine manufacturer MTU Aero Engines said yesterday it is planning to cut at least 1,000 jobs as the impact of the coronavirus continues to hammer the aviation industry. "By the end of 2021, the company aims to reduce capacity at its German and international locations by a total of around 10 to 15 percent," the company said in a statement.

Headquartered in Munich, MTU Aero Engines employs more than 10,000 people worldwide and provides maintenance services as well as engines for military and commercial planes. "As a result of the pandemic, the

aviation industry will remain under pressure for some time to come," CEO Reiner Winkler was cited as saying.

"It will be years before air traffic-which is the foundation on which our activities in series production and our maintenance business rest-returns to pre-crisis levels," he added. The company hopes however to avoid compulsory redundancies, making the savings instead through partial retirement, early retirement and other arrangements. Travel restrictions introduced to slow the spread of the coronavirus since March have put a stranglehold on the aviation industry around the world.

European aircraft maker Airbus said last week it is planning to cut around 15,000 jobs worldwide, 11 percent of its total workforce, in response to the "gravest crisis" the industry has ever seen. Germany's Lufthansa, Europe's biggest airline group, has been granted a nine billion euro (\$10 billion) bailout from the German government, saving it from bankruptcy as a result of crushed travel demand. —AFP

### Russian economy will shrink 6% in 2020: World Bank

MOSCOW: The World Bank expects Russia's economy to shrink 6 percent this year, the most since 2009, under pressure from the coronavirus pandemic and falling oil prices, before returning to growth in 2021-2022. Russia's economy has been pummeled by a health crisis that has slowed business activity and demand for oil, its main export, across the globe. Russia's unemployment has soared after lockdowns were imposed across the country earlier this year. Gross domestic product is now projected to shrink at its fastest pace in 11 years, the World Bank said on Monday, as it predicted the global economy would contract by 5.2 percent this year. In 2021, Russia's GDP is expected to expand 2.7 percent and 3.1 percent in 2022, the World Bank said.

"Even with positive projected GDP growth ahead, GDP levels in 2022 would have barely caught up to pre-pandemic levels," the World Bank said. In the absence of a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic that could force Russia to reimpose restrictions on business, a moderate recovery could get under way in the second half of 2020, led by household consumption, according to the World Bank. Although the Russian economy has suffered from the crisis, support measures announced by the government, if fully implemented, could help Russia contain the increase in poverty caused by the crisis, the World Bank said. "In the absence of any support from the government, our estimate shows that we would have seen a net increase in the poverty level in Russia," Renaud Seligmann, the World Bank's country director in Russia, told Reuters. —Reuters

### UK's Sunak plans tax cuts to boost COVID recovery

LONDON: British Finance Minister Rishi Sunak will try to restart the country's economy by giving homebuyers a tax break and cutting value-added tax for pubs, restaurants and other hospitality firms, The Times newspaper reported.

Sunak is due to announce tomorrow the next stage of his attempt to steer the world's fifth-biggest economy away from its 25 percent collapse in March and April, when the government's coronavirus lockdown shut entire sectors. Sunak's plan is expected to focus on measures to limit a rise in unemployment-including help for job-seekers and trainees-but the measures reported by The Times suggest he also sees a need to boost demand with tax cuts.

Sunak will say he will raise the property tax threshold to as high as 500,000 pounds (\$623,700), four times its current level. That would exempt most homebuyers from paying any stamp duty for up to a year, the newspaper reported. The tax break would be implemented in an official budget statement in the autumn, it said. Sunak will also announce a temporary VAT cut for hospitality firms to protect 2.4 million jobs in the sector, which began to reopen on July 4, The Times said.

The Observer reported on Sunday that Sunak was considering a different option-handing out vouchers of 500 pounds (\$625) for adults, and 250 pounds for children, to spend in sectors hit hardest by the lockdown. Sunak has already rushed out emergency measures that will cost an estimated 133 billion pounds this year to head off a surge in unemployment, chief among them a job-retention plan that pays furloughed workers 80 percent of their salary. That plan is due to expire at the end of October, raising fears of a jump in unemployment. Last week, several companies announced major job cuts, including travel food group SSP, which said it could cut about 5,000 staff. —Reuters



## Business

# Back to work? But not without a check-in app, immunity passport

For 5.6 million people in Singapore, these actions are routine

**BANGKOK:** To go anywhere in Singapore these days, Joni Sng needs mobile phone apps and other technologies: a QR code to enter shops, a digital map to see how crowded a mall or park is, and a tracker to show if she was near someone infected with the coronavirus. For the roughly 5.6 million people in Singapore, these actions are routine as the government eases restrictions placed to contain the spread of the disease.

"The apps are quite convenient and easy to use, and I feel a little safer knowing that everyone else is also using them," Sng, a videographer, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "It has become very natural to click on the apps while going somewhere, just like wearing a mask," she said.

Singapore, along with Taiwan, South Korea and China, was quick to embrace technology to map the coronavirus outbreak early on with contact tracing, robots and drones.

Now, countries and businesses are mandating technologies as people return to work and begin to travel, with apps, scanners, check-in systems, and so-called immunity passports. These are particularly

needed in big cities that tend to be more densely populated, with more points of contact for the population, ranging from public transit to bars and restaurants.

"As Singapore restarts its economy, data-driven tech solutions will play a crucial role in helping the nation safely and successfully get back on its feet," Singapore's Government Technology Agency said in a statement last week.



## Asian countries embrace apps to curb virus

nologies based on big data, such as facial recognition software, that have raised fears of surveillance and privacy risks, but which authorities say are needed to track the disease and keep people safe.

China's health code app was among the first off the block, showing whether a user is symptom-free in order to take the subway or check into a hotel.

In India, authorities have made the contact-tracing mobile app Aarogya Setu mandatory for everything from taking public transit and boarding flights to going to work. But these tools exclude vulnerable and marginalized populations, including those without smartphones, said Malavika Jayaram, executive director of the Digital Asia Hub think tank.

"When tools that are supposedly enabling exclude those without the right devices, the same technology that opens doors for some, closes them for others, and can serve as a barrier, not a leveller," she said. "This raises the risk of the digital divide turning into a new sort of 'privacy divide'," she said. "Those with new smartphones can stay safe, remain social and return to a semblance of normal life. Those with feature phones

will be barred from spaces and activities, or be unduly surveilled in order to participate in society." In some cases, lives are at stake.

Dozens of people are stranded between warring groups in eastern Ukraine because the government requires them to download a coronavirus tracking app, and is denying entry to anyone who doesn't have a smartphone, according to Human Rights Watch. "People have had to camp out, in some cases overnight, in the middle of an active military conflict, just because they didn't have a smartphone to download an app," said Laura Mills, a researcher at the advocacy group.

"This highly invasive app is clearly putting people ... further in harm's way," she said.

### Harm's way

COVID-19, the illness caused by the new coronavirus, has infected more than 10 million people worldwide and killed over 500,000, pushing governments and companies to innovate quickly on everything from quarantines to ventilators. Many have turned to tech-

## Argentina sweetens debt revamp offer, sets Aug 4 deadline

**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentina's government unveiled an amended debt restructuring proposal on Sunday and set a deadline of Aug. 4 for creditors to accept it, adding some key sweeteners as it looks to defuse recent tensions with bondholders and strike a deal.

The new proposal which comes after talks to revamp around \$65 billion in foreign debt stalled last month, would reduce principal haircuts, increase coupons and include a bond to account for accrued interest, the government said in a statement that described the amendments as the "final effort".

It said the move to sweeten the deal showed the country's "good faith and willingness to remain engaged with the international financial community", which it added was key to helping Argentina dig out of a deep economic recession. Argentina's center-left President Alberto Fernandez said in the statement the offer was the "maximum effort we can make".

"It is an enormous effort that we have made to

fulfill our word," he added.

Argentina is racing to revamp the foreign bonds after tumbling into its ninth sovereign default in May. A deal is key to avoiding a messy and protracted legal standoff that would lock the country out of international credit markets. The debt talks had progressed well, helping lift local bond prices, until hitting turbulence in mid-June. Two key bondholder groups have since criticized a lack of engagement with the government and pushed for stronger legal protection in any deal.

Argentina's government addressed this concern, saying holders of eligible bonds issued under a 2005 indenture would now be able to exchange for new bonds issued under the same indenture, which give creditors greater protection. It also said the new proposal would include minimum participation thresholds, which had been sought by another of the three major creditor committees involved in the talks.

"We hope that our creditors understand the restrictions we have, and appreciate our willingness to reach an agreement that works for all parties," Economy Minister Martin Guzman said. Argentina will formally present the proposal to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the government said in a separate statement. Argentina's debt restructuring process has been buffeted by the novel coronavirus pandemic, which is pushing the country deeper into recession

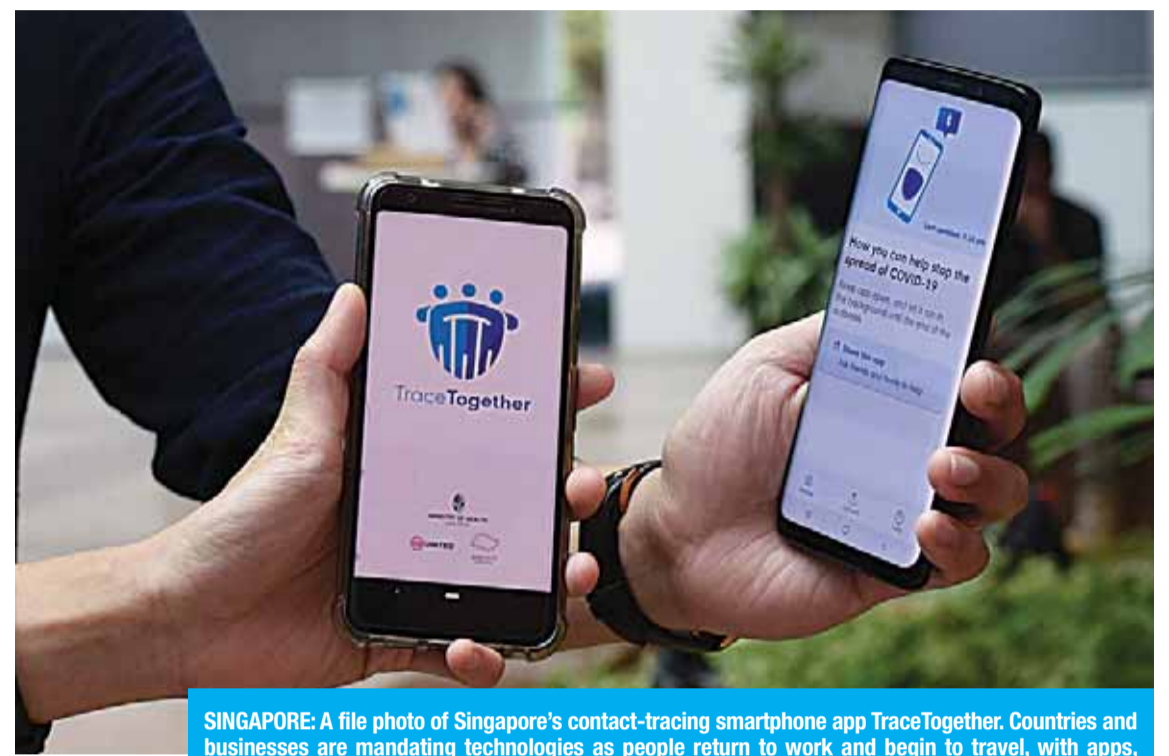
has been a welcome recovery in internet activity, site visitors and net reservations across both the industry and our business," Barratt said. However, Britain's largest housebuilder warned that the prospects for the wider UK economy and the subsequent impact of the pandemic on the housing market remains uncertain. Although the government relaxed restrictions on the housing market in mid-May, data published by the Bank of England last week pointed to the lowest number of mortgage approvals on record during the month.

Barratt acknowledged that the availability of higher loan-to-value (LTV) mortgages was at a reduced level, but said demand from first-time buyers looking to use the government's help to buy has been significant since the market reopened. Shares were indicated to open 3 percent higher as per traders, following a Times report that finance minister Rishi Sunak has drawn up plans to exempt most homebuyers from paying any stamp duty to kick-start the country's economic recovery. —Reuters

tionary bubble, former advisers to prime ministers Theresa May and David Cameron said in a report for the Onward think tank. "The volatile history of interest rates should make us wary of thinking low real interest rates are here forever," said the advisers including Mats Persson, former adviser to Cameron, and Raoul Ruparel, a former adviser to May.

"The possibility of surprise inflation still exists," they said. "In the 1970s, inflation peaked at over 25% in the UK, a level few had predicted only a few years earlier."

The advisers, including May advisers Neil O'Brien and Will Tanner, said reform of the UK's tax system was essential, including a digital tax. "This should be prioritized regardless of concerns from partners such as the US over a digital services tax," they said. The US has threatened trade retaliation against European countries that create their own digital taxes as a way to raise revenue from the local operations of big tech companies such as Alphabet Inc's Google and Facebook Inc.



SINGAPORE: A file photo of Singapore's contact-tracing smartphone app TraceTogether. Countries and businesses are mandating technologies as people return to work and begin to travel, with apps, scanners, check-in systems, and so-called immunity passports. —AFP

### Not fair

The debate around fairness and equity is set to intensify, with growing concerns that as workplaces open and international travel resumes, workers and travellers may be required to provide proof of immunity as a condition of entry. One of the options being considered is an immunity passport, which collects testing data and enables people to share their immunity status with an employer or airline.

Estonia has started to test one of the world's first digital immunity passports, with countries including Chile, Germany, Italy, Britain and the United States also said to be exploring the option.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has been

quick to discredit immunity passports and the notion that the presence of antibodies in a previously infected person makes them immune. "There is not enough evidence about the effectiveness of antibody-mediated immunity to guarantee the accuracy of an immunity passport or risk-free certificate," it said in April.

But that has not stopped firms from diving in: UK-based tech firm VST Enterprises said it has started shipping its digital health passport, Covi-Pass, to companies and governments in more than 15 countries including France, Canada and India. IDnow, a German technology firm, has said it is in talks with the UK government for immunity passports. —Reuters



BUENOS AIRES: A woman passes by a store for rent in Buenos Aires. —AFP

sion and driving up poverty. The South American country's economy is expected to contract around 12 percent this year.

The grains producing stronghold is also looking to strike a new deal with major backer the International Monetary Fund, to help replace a \$57 billion credit facility agreed in 2018. The government also said on Sunday it will send a bill to Congress in the next few days to restructure its local-law foreign currency debt under "equitable conditions" to the foreign debt revamp. —Reuters



LONDON: Barratt Developments said yesterday its deliveries had fallen by a third as the coronavirus crisis halted construction activity.

## Homebuilder Barratt's volumes drop

**LONDON:** Barratt Developments said yesterday its deliveries had fallen by a third as the coronavirus crisis halted construction activity, though the British homebuilder added that it was starting the new financial year with "cautious optimism". While completion volumes slipped to 12,604 homes for the period ended March 22 from 17,856 homes a year earlier, the UK company's forward order book carried a value of 3.25 billion pounds (\$4.06 billion) as at June 30 versus 2.60 billion pounds in 2019.

"Since the removal of government restrictions on housing market activity on 13 May 2020 there

## UK must be wary of debt servicing costs: Advisors

**LONDON:** The British government should be wary of assuming its mammoth debt pile will always be so cheap to service or that inflation is dead and so must ensure fiscal security by pushing ahead with a digital tax, six former government advisers said yesterday. The United Kingdom is facing its steepest economic decline in three centuries of modern British history and is borrowing vast amounts from the bond markets to inject money into the hemorrhaging economy.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government should beware of rising debt costs and the surprise of an infla-

Meanwhile, Britain's finance minister urged Saturday to "eat out to help out" the economy claw its way from a historic decline sparked by the coronavirus crisis. The comments by Chancellor Rishi Sunak were published on the day England finally reopened its beloved pubs and the rest of the hospitality sector after more than three months of lockdown.

Britain's shutdown has been one of Europe's longest because of an official toll — 44,131 — that only trails those of the United States and Brazil. Sunak said the closures have been especially painful for Britain because consumption makes up about two-third of its gross domestic product.

"That's more than most of our peers," he told The Times newspaper. "So we've got a situation like this, with social distancing we're obviously going to be particularly impacted by that."

Sunak said he "worried about a generation that is scarred by coronavirus"—especially younger people

who see the hospitality sector as their way into the job market. "For me this is really about social justice," he said. "People act responsibly, but ultimately if we eat out to help out we can protect those jobs. It's not abstract." The true scale of Britain's unemployment problem will only be revealed once the government starts winding down its jobs furlough scheme in August.

The state currently supports 80 percent of most people's wages. But jobless claims still surged 126 percent to 2.8 million in the three months to May. Sunak will make an economic statement to parliament next week that will be watched closely for signs of how much support the government intends to give businesses in the future. The government is running up debts but interest rates are low and borrowing costs remain at a historic low. The Bank of England's chief economist Andy Haldane created waves this week by predicting a "V-shaped" recovery that will see old levels of performance return soon. Sunak was less certain. —Agencies

## Canada should focus on boosting economy as debt soars: Analysts

**TORONTO:** Canada should focus on boosting economic growth after getting pummeled by the COVID-19 crisis, analysts say, even as concerns about the sustainability of its debt are growing, with Fitch downgrading the nation's rating just over a week ago.

Canadian Finance Minister Bill Morneau will deliver a "fiscal snapshot" on Wednesday that will outline the current balance sheet and may give an idea of the money the government is setting aside for the future. As the economy recovers, some fiscal support measures, which are expected to boost the budget deficit sharply, could be wound down and replaced by incentives meant to get people back to work and measures to boost economic growth, economists said. "The only solution to these large deficits is growth, so we need a transition to a pro-growth agenda," said Craig Wright, chief economist at Royal Bank of Canada.

The IMF expects Canada's economy to contract by 8.4 percent this year. Ottawa is already rolling out more than C\$150 billion in direct economic aid, including payments to workers impacted by COVID-19.

Further stimulus measures could include a green growth strategy, as well as spending on infrastructure, including smart infrastructure, economists said. Smart infrastructure makes use of digital technology. "We have to make sure that government spending is calibrated to the economy of the future rather than the economy of the past," Wright said. Canada lost one of its coveted triple-A ratings in June when Fitch downgraded it for the first time, citing the billions of dollars in emergency aid Ottawa has spent to help bridge the downturn caused by COVID-19 shutdowns. Standard & Poor's, Moody's and DBRS still give Canadian debt the highest rating. At DBRS, Michael Heydt, the lead sovereign analyst on Canada, says his concern is about potential structural damage to the economy if the slowdown lingers too long. —Reuters

## Business

# NBK Capital: Global markets continue to rise driven by plans to reopen economy

## Emerging markets outperformed by a large margin in June

KUWAIT: Global markets continued to build on the rally which started in mid-March driven mostly by economic reopening plans. Emerging markets outperformed with a large margin during the month as markets in the United States stumbled in June as worries about a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in some states impacted sentiment. The MSCI AC World Index advanced by 3.03 percent, narrowing its year-to-date losses as of mid-year to -7.14 percent, while the MSCI EAFE Index gained 3.22 percent in June. Emerging Markets recorded solid gains during the month with the MSCI EM Index up 6.96 percent bringing its year-to-date losses down to 10.73 percent.

Emerging markets outperformed by a large margin during the month supported by a robust performance in Asia and South America. The MSCI EM added 6.96 percent in June and narrowing its loss for the first half of the year to 10.73 percent. The MSCI Asia ex-Japan Index, on the other hand, rallied by 7.87 percent reducing its loss since the beginning of the year to -5.73 percent. The Shanghai Composite Index added 4.64 percent, while India's Nifty 50 and Taiwan's Stock Exchange Index outperformed with gains of 7.53 percent and 6.21 percent respectively. Elsewhere, Turkey's Borsa Istanbul 100 Index outperformed most global indices with a double-digit gain of 10.43 percent, lifting its year-to-date performance to positive territory with a gain of 1.84 percent, after recording

a 30 percent advance in the second quarter. Russia Stock Exchange Index, on the other hand, advanced marginally by 0.31 percent.

The performance of the GCC market was generally positive with some markets at par with the performance of emerging markets and other underperforming. The best performing for the month were the markets of the UAE. Dubai's DFM General Index added 6.18 percent enhancing its performance during the second quarter of 16.60 percent, while Abu Dhabi's ADX General Index added 3.48 percent for Q2



### Kuwait comes second among GCC markets

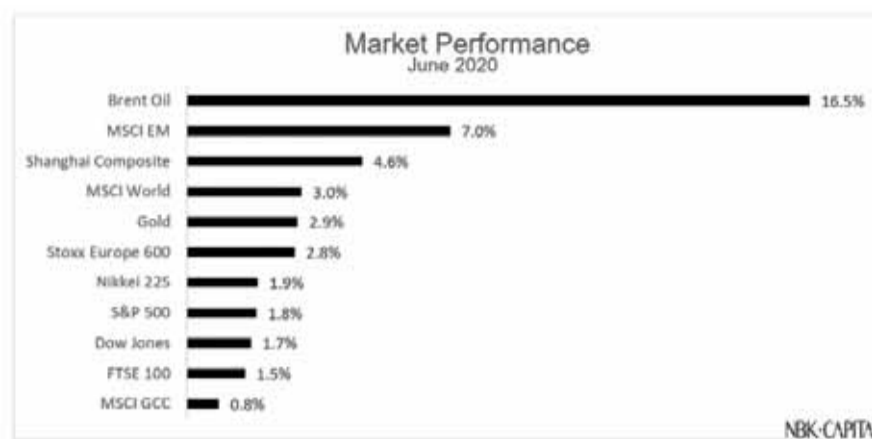
return of 14.76 percent. Both indices, however, are still down for the year by 25.3 percent and 15.6 percent respectively.

Kuwait came in second with the Kuwait All Share Index adding 2.70 percent in June, while the blue-chip Premier Market Index advanced 3.37 percent. In Doha, the Qatar Exchange Index added 1.74 percent, while Bahrain managed to record a marginal gain of 0.63 percent and Oman declined by -0.81 percent. The performance of the S&P GCC Index was weighed down by the

underperformance of the Saudi market. The S&P GCC added 0.94 percent while the Saudi Tadawul All Share Index advanced marginally by 0.15 percent. The broader S&P Pan Arab Index, on the other hand, was supported by a strong performance in Egypt as the EGX30 managed to add 5.33 percent in June.

Major US indices turned briefly negative during the month but managed to close in the green with modest gains. The S&P 500 closed up 1.84 percent while the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) was up 1.69 percent. For the first half of the year, both are still down with -4.04 percent for the S&P 500 and -9.55 percent for the DJIA. The NASDAQ Composite, on the other hand, continued to break new records with a gain 5.99 percent for the month and 12.11 percent as of mid-year. Volatility spiked briefly around mid-June reaching a high of 44.5 before receding back to the mid-30s levels by month-end. The treasury market was also volatile in June; the 10-year rate climbed from 0.66 percent at the beginning of the month to a high of 0.96 percent on June 05 before coming back gradually down to 0.65 percent by the month-end.

Economic indicators in the US continue to show signs of recovery. The ISM Manufacturing PMI for June surprised on the upside, climbing to 52.6 from 43.1 in May compared to expectations of 49.5. The ISM Manufacturing Employment Index also recorded a marked improvement, increasing to 42.1 in June from 32.1 for the previous



month. The US economy added 4.8 million jobs this June up from 2.7 million in May while the initial jobless claims 4-week average continued to decline from its April highs. It recorded 1.50 million for the week ending June 26 compared to 1.62 for the week ending June 19. The third estimate of the US Gross Domestic Product, on the other hand, confirmed an annualized contraction of 5.0 percent during the first quarter, while the unemployment rate declined to 11.1 percent in June from 13.3 percent as reopening spurred more hiring.

Revised estimates of the European Gross Domestic Product now point to a contraction of 3.6 percent during the first quarter of the year up from previous estimates that put the contraction at 3.8 percent. The Euro area Markit Manufacturing

PMI improved to 47.4 in June from 39.4 for the previous month. It was supported by the Markit Manufacturing PMI in France which recorded 52.3 in June, compared to 45.2 and 47.5 for Germany and Italy respectively. In terms of market performance, the Stoxx Europe 600 added 2.85 percent during the month. The market indices of the two largest European economies, Germany and France, recorded a robust performance for the month. The German DAX added 6.25 percent in June to the previous month's 6.68 percent narrowing its first half losses to -7.08 percent. The French CAC450, on the other hand, gained 5.12 percent compared to 2.17 percent for May. For the first half of the year, the French index is still 17.43 percent in the red.

## NBK reveals winner of KD 250,000 in Al-Jawhara draw

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait continues to reward its customers all over the year through a variety of draws, prizes and offers. In this context, the bank conducted Al-Jawhara quarterly draw and announced Sawsan Mohammad Wahbi as the winner of the prize worth KD 250,000, in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from NBK.

Al-Jawhara monthly and quarterly draws are supervised and audited by Deloitte. Having completed all postponed draws suspended due to the exceptional circumstances in the country because of coronavirus pandemic by end of June, NBK resumes conducting Al-Jawhara draws on the regular dates, after obtaining the approval of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to conduct the postponed draws during the past business closure period, while adhering to all precautionary health measures.

In the past few weeks, NBK announced the names of the winners of postponed draws as follows:

- Badriya Khedear Bo Shaaboun, the winner of the KD 125,000 prize of the postponed monthly draw dated 26th May 2020
- Ismail Abdulreda Qasem, the winner of the KD 5,000 prize of the postponed weekly draw dated 12th May 2020
- Yaqoub Mohammad Al-Awadh, the winner of the KD 5,000 prize of the postponed weekly draw dated 19th May
- Hadhel Mesri Al-Subaieci, the winner of the KD 5,000 prize of the postponed weekly draw dated 2nd June
- Hooreyah Mohammed Al-Bahamah, the winner of the KD 5,000 prize of the postponed weekly draw dated 9th June
- Badoor Salah Al-Hazeem, the winner of the KD 5,000 prize of the postponed weekly draw dated 16th June
- Asrar Jaber Hashem, the winner of the KD 5,000 prize of the postponed weekly draw dated 23rd June

Commenting on resuming Al-Jawhara draws, Mohammed Al-Othman, General Manager of Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait, said: "Rewarding our customers is a key pillar in the unique



Mohammed Al-Othman

banking experience we are offer them; and the exceptional circumstances will not dissuade us from rewarding them, but will rather make us more persistent on exerting extra efforts to give them more exceptional rewards that make them feel special and enable them to benefit from NBK excellence and leadership."

Al-Othman added: "Our strategy in rewarding our customers is characterized by being tailored to meet their needs and expectations thanks to our ability to identify these expectations by continuous communication with them through various channels, as well as our excellence in building a huge database over the past years and having sophisticated analytical tools."

"The coronavirus pandemic and resulting repercussions proved NBK's commitment to protect its customers rights by giving them the chance to enter all the postponed draws as well as extending the validity of NBK Miles Points and NBK Rewards Points to compensate them for the safety measures taken during the crisis to keep our customers' safe in line with the instructions of the concerned authorities."

Al-Othman concluded by expressing his happiness with resuming Al-Jawhara regular draws after completing the postponed draws. He stressed on NBK's strive to keep customers safe which is a top priority, as reflected in all measures and efforts made throughout the crisis, and further demonstrate its keenness to put customers' interest at the top of its endeavors and efforts throughout its history.

Since 2012, NBK has rewarded loyal customers with a total worth of prizes amounting KD 2,200,000 in the weekly, monthly, and quarterly Al-Jawhara draws. Al-Jawhara Account gives customers the opportunity to enter draws and win prizes of KD 5,000 weekly, and KD 125,000 monthly as well as the grand prize of KD 250,000 quarterly. Every KD 50 deposited into Al-Jawhara Account gives customers a chance to be one of the next lucky winners, and if no withdrawal or transfers occur on the account during the required period, customers will receive an additional chance to enter the draw for every KD 50 held in the account, doubling their chance to win. NBK strives to provide a variety of offers, rewards and prizes all year round, which are customized to meet the interests of all customers, in addition to providing them with first-class banking services that are highly advanced and secure.

## stc participates in 5G MENA Conference

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, confirmed that the Kuwaiti telecom market is a highly challenging and evolving market with an increasing demand for 5G services and digital solutions across a large segment of customers, both individuals and corporates.

During the 5G MENA virtual conference, stc showcased the continuous evolution in its networks through the adoption of new technologies injected into modern communication platforms. These developments have triggered a quantum leap in the range of telecom solutions offered by stc to its customers, providing a unique and unrivaled experience through integrated platforms that utilize the latest digital technology.

During his segment, Engineer Ahmed Al-Sherif, General Manager of Networks at stc, elaborated on the company's extensive strategy to tap into new digital realms and calibrate its operations to expand and maximize the greatest benefits to its customers. The actions taken by stc to invest in innovative technologies and apply new methods to its business model fortified its leadership position in the region. Al-Sherif highlighted that stc has become an industry pioneer in the applications of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and the implementation of digital platforms to enable digital transformation in Kuwait.

Al-Sherif also added that stc's 5G network currently covers over 90 percent of the populated areas in Kuwait and is the first telecom company to apply the FDD 8T8R technology on a global scale. The technology supports on-demand multi-sector deployments across 2G, 3G, and 4G software configurations to enable convenient capacity expansions to current hardware, achieving a streamlined transition to 5G.

As a digital pioneer in the telecom industry, stc has achieved numerous milestones throughout its journey. These include the Company's leader role amongst local operators in implementing the Mobile Broadband (MBB) technology in Kuwait. MBB is a communication method that includes or deals with frequencies on a large scale, transmitting data over

wireless internet access points. In preparation for the next phase of 5G technology, the Company is also the first operator in the GCC to successfully complete the real E2E 5G standalone (SA) network, as well as expand its B2C, B2H, and B2B solutions.

stc is also considered to be one of the first global telecom operators to implement CA & VoLTE technology, a standard high-speed wireless communication method for mobile phones and data terminals through the LTE wireless broadband service. This method allows high-definition voice quality to be transmitted through data flows without depending on the circuit-switched voice network to be in the call path. In addition to showcasing stc's journey, the virtual conference included numerous sessions covering key topics related to the industry. Digging deeper into the technical aspect, discussions were held by participating specialists from various sectors who presented their views and experiences based on the latest data and developments to-date, providing the audience with a rich and informative experience.

Aside from the informative sessions, industry experts presented some of the more lucrative opportunities that operators can take advantage of due to the conditions that have evolved since the pandemic. The ideas presented shed light on the prominent role of digital transformation as a key method to accelerate business growth, as well as the automation of telecommunication services to allow continuous growth in various sectors.

Overall, the event highlighted the pivotal role 5G technology has played in developing the telecom sector, introducing a new line of advanced solutions that otherwise would have not been attainable. Considering this breakthrough in telecom history, it is worth mentioning that stc cemented its leadership role by owning the largest 5G networks in the countries it operates in. This allows the Company to continue providing exceptional services to its customers and introduce new offerings such as artificial intelligence and machine learning applications.

Through its participation in the virtual conference, stc emphasized that it was critical for its Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain operating companies to participate, especially since the Company is a regional digital leader in the telecom market. The 5G MENA virtual conference allowed attending members from stc's executive team to network with global corporations in the telecom field, software developers, and other experts that presented collaborative opportunities in the interest of the company's regional customers.

## Gulf Bank holds 3 weeks of postponed Al-Danah draws

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held three of its postponed Al-Danah weekly draws on 5th July 2020, and announced the names of the winners for the period of 5 - 30 April 2020, in addition to last week's winners (from 28 June - 2 July 2020). The Al-Danah weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each.

The winners for the week of 5 - 9 April 2020 are:

- Moza Abdullah Eid Al-Dehani
  - Rami Hisham Mohammad Jaber
  - Jassem Mohammad Abdullah Alstad
  - Tahir Hussain Bul Bul
  - Salem Abduljabbar Alnaibari
- The winners for the week of 19 - 23 April 2020 are:
- Lafi Naser Fahad Al-Mutairi
  - Sharefa Aifan Sultan Jarboa
  - Duaa Abdulstar Mohammad Behbehani
  - Abdulmotleb Abas Waznah
  - Khuloud Ibraheem Hussain Albahrani

The winners for the week of 26 - 30 April 2020 are:

- Jeowallah Mohammed Hakeem
  - Farid Anabtaxi
  - Abdulmajeed Esmaeel Neamat Alla Mogadam
  - Ali Adel Mohammed Al-Matrook
  - Sharan Norma Noronha
- The winners for the week of 28 June - 2 July 2020 are:
- Hasan Hashem Sayed Hussain Almousawi
  - Amal Khalaf Saad Alanezi
  - Khaled Abdulnabi Awadh Behbehani
  - Jihad Hamdi Al-Hareeri
  - Waleed Khaled Al-Rasheedi
- Al-Danah is now offering its biggest prize yet, with an annual draw prize of KD 1,500,000. The annual draw will be held on 14 January 2021, and the last chance to deposit into an Al-Danah account to participate is 30 September 2020.
- Gulf Bank encourages customers to

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

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al Danah customers in 2019, have been added to their 2020 chances, and the same process will take place in 2021, and so on.

## CBK announces Najma Account winners

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the names of the Najma Account weekly and the 'Your Salary & More' winners in the presence of MOCI representatives, Anam Al-Fadhli and Mashael Al-Rasheedi. The winner of Al-Najma account weekly draw was Ahmed Salman Al-Shemali, who won KD 5,000 cash and the winner of the Your Salary & More campaign was Maha Hadi Al-Namshan.

In addition, CBK explained that Al-Najma Account offers the largest daily award in Kuwait of KD 5,000, a monthly KD 20,000 award, a biannual KD 500,000 award and the Guinness World Record's largest annual award of KD 1.5 million.

CBK statement added that participants could open the account by depositing a minimum of KD 500 to

enter all draws and each KD 25 entitles account holder to an entry in daily draws after a week as of deposit and in mega draws after 3 months of deposit. "The more sums deposited, the bigger chances account holders will have to win one of the awards", the statement underlined.

Further, CBK statement explained that the 'Your Salary & More' campaign is open to Kuwaiti employees with minimum KD 500 salaries who would enjoy getting instant cash gifts of up to KD 500 or interest free loans of up to KD 10,000 in addition to entering weekly draws to win amounts equal to holders' monthly salaries. Participants will also get 5-year valid Visa Signature cards free of charge with up to 3 per cent cash back, E-gov. cards as well as enjoy CBK's creative payment and transfer solutions using T-Pay service.

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## Lifestyle | Features



In this file photo taken on February 28, 2016 Italian composer Ennio Morricone poses with the Oscar for Best Original Score, "The Hateful Eight," in the press room during the 88th Oscars in Hollywood.—AFP photos



In this file photo taken on July 03, 2017 Italian composer Ennio Morricone poses during an interview in Rome.



In this file photo taken on November 30, 2016 shows Italian composer Ennio Morricone conducts a concert in Helsinki.



In this file photo taken on January 28, 2016 US film director Quentin Tarantino (left) and Italian composer Ennio Morricone pose during the premiere of the film 'The Hateful Eight' in Rome.

## OSCAR-WINNING COMPOSER ENNIO MORRICONE DIES AT 91

Ennio Morricone, one of the world's best-known and most prolific film composers, died in Rome yesterday at the age of 91. He composed the music for about 500 films, including his old childhood friend Sergio Leone's 1966 spaghetti western "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" and Quentin Tarantino's "The Hateful Eight" for which he won an Oscar in 2016. Morricone died in hospital where he was being treated for a fractured femur following a fall, according to a statement from a lawyer and family friend. A statement issued by lawyer and family friend Giorgio Assuma said Morricone "passed away in the early hours of July 6 with the comfort of his faith". He remained "fully lucid and with great dignity right until the end," the statement said.

### Adieu maestro

Tributes began pouring in for the maestro soon after his death was announced. "We will remember forever and with infinite gratitude the artistic genius of maestro Ennio Morricone," Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said. "He made us dream, he moved us and made us think, writing unforgettable notes that will remain forever in the history of music and cinema," he said on Twitter. Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza wrote in a tweet: "Adieu maestro, and thank you for the emotions you gave us."

Gilles Jacob, the former head of the Cannes film festival, described him as the "emperor" of film music. Born on November 10, 1928, Morricone began composing at the tender age of six, and at just 10 he

enrolled in a trumpet school at prestigious Saint-Cecilia conservatory in Rome. His film career began in 1961, when he was 33, with a collaboration with director Luciano Salce in "Mission Ultra-secrete" before going to gain fame with the score for "A Fistful of Dollars" starring Clint Eastwood in 1964.

Before winning the Oscar for best film score in 2016, the Rome-born son of a trumpeter had been nominated no fewer than five times before the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences—embarrassed that such a talent had not been recognised sooner—presented him with a lifetime achievement award in 2007. Morricone's previous nominations were for "Days of Heaven" (1978), "The Mission" (1986), "The Untouchables" (1987), "Bugsy"

(1991) and "Malena" (2000). Although he is most closely associated in the public mind with Leone's westerns starring Eastwood, Morricone's composition for Roland Joffe's Jesuit drama "The Mission" is considered by many critics to be his cinematic masterpiece, an epic and eclectic reflection of South America's musical melting pot. He also worked with some of cinema's most filmmakers—after his collaboration with Leone, he worked with Italian screen legends Federico Fellini and Pier Paolo Pasolini and later with the likes of Pedro Almodovar, Bernardo Bertolucci, Brian De Palma and Oliver Stone. — AFP

## LAPA present classic songs and concerts played by the A cappella style



LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) recently presented a number of classic songs and concerts played by the A cappella style; a unique art music involving group or solo performance without instrumental accompaniment. This unique experience in Kuwait was presented by maestro Yousif Para, the head of LOYAC music department, Nisreen Nasser and LAPA choral.

In this regard, Nasser stressed that A Cappella requires a great deal of effort and knowledge of human voices and music where the performer starts with the main stream of the song then his voice is accompanied with others mimicking various musical instruments and beats. On his part, maestro Yousif Para stressed that this type of music requires someone who masters the polyphony and a choral with good singing skills. "A performer can do the whole song alone by recording each sound alone then mixing the sounds or by using a choral having each individual perform a separate tune," he added. Responding to a question about organizing A Cappella training courses by LAPA, Nisreen Nasser stressed that the curfew periods inspired people to practice A Cappella to make up for the fact that many singers have no access to studios and instruments.



In this file photo Nick Cordero attends Opening Night Of Rock Of Ages Hollywood At The Bourbon Room at The Bourbon Room in Hollywood, California.—AFP

## Broadway actor dies aged 41 from coronavirus

Broadway and TV actor Nick Cordero, who spent months in intensive care being treated for the coronavirus and lost his leg from complications, died Sunday, his wife said. He was 41 years old. "My darling husband passed away this morning. He was surrounded in love by his family, singing and praying as he gently left this earth," Amanda Kloots wrote on Instagram. "I am in disbelief and hurting everywhere. My heart is broken as I cannot imagine our lives without him." "Elvis and I will miss him in everything we do, everyday," she added, referring to the couple's one-year-old son.

Kloots had documented her husband's struggle with the coronavirus on social media. She said he had battled the disease for 95 days. After nearly three weeks in intensive care, Cordero's doctors were forced to amputate his right leg because his blood flow had been impeded by a clot, another dangerous coronavirus complication. Cordero had been comatose for months but regained consciousness in early May, able to move and communicate through only his eyes.

According to Kloots, he had lost 65 pounds (29 kilograms) from muscle atrophy and was still unable to move or talk by mid-June. He had been awaiting a double lung transplant when he died. Cordero was known for his roles in the musicals "Waitress," "A Bronx Tale" and "Bullets Over Broadway," for which he was nominated for a Tony award. He had amassed fans worldwide through his wife's chronicling of his battle with the coronavirus.—AFP



## بكرة نهار جديد



LAPA

## Choreographers relish 'spontaneity' unleashed by virus restraints

How do you create dance in the age of coronavirus, when dancers are not supposed to touch each other and stay one or two metres apart? All across the world choreographers are grappling with the challenge of coming up with safe, socially distanced pieces that still set the heart aflutter. It may be completely counter-intuitive, but the very rigidity of the restrictions has been liberating for some—allowing them to play on the new taboos and the dramatic tension around personal space the virus has brought with it.

"It unleashed spontaneity!" declared the great German choreographer John Neumeier, the artistic director of the Hamburg Ballet. "In ballet, we are so used to being free in the way we touch," he told AFP. "Sometimes we take this for granted, because we touch everybody almost everywhere in doing pas de deux, in doing a lift. And now we have a situation where we cannot touch, where there is a distance, which immediately gives a new sense of tension." With all the usual advance planning thrown to the wind, Neumeier said the virus has allowed him to create without thinking about what the costumes or sets would look like. "I was working with the purest material—just dancers in an empty space,"

he said. The restrictions have forced him to "concentrate much more on the art of the solo" for his new work, "Ghost Light", which will premiere—virus permitting—on September 6. Neumeier is using 57 dancers, but he can't bring them all together for now. "It is a kind of mosaic," he told AFP. "I work with six dancers, then I work with eight dancers, then with two — but I don't know what it will be like when we put it all together."

### Zoom rehearsals

Annabelle Ochoa Lopez has become dance's queen of Zoom over the last few months, making a series of short pieces on the teleconferencing app. Like so much else in the lockdown, it happened by

accident, said the Belgian-Colombian choreographer. "Two French dancers who were retiring from the Norwegian Ballet approached me because they couldn't do their farewell show. They asked if I could make something for them on Zoom. "I thought, 'OK, that will be very awkward but let's do it,'" said the Netherlands-based creator. "They had three children... and sometimes the children would be there saying hello from the couch."

In the work they made together, "Where do the birds go?", which is now on YouTube, the couple—Julie Gardette and Francois Rousseau—actually dance on their sofa. Creating online has changed the way Ochoa Lopez works. "I have to talk a lot more to get my ideas across, and I have to direct their eyes

more too because the frame is so much more intimate than the stage," she said. "I am constantly coming in close to my computer and then going right out again to show the movement... sometimes I even lie on the ground to show them my feet," she added.

In a second video she made with a dancer from New York's Ballet Hispanico, she used the windows in her apartment as a framing device, and in another she channelled the French mime legend Marcel Marceau as well as using a live chicken for a piece set around a table with two dancers from the Tulsa Ballet.

"I miss the studio" - "Of course I miss the studio," Ochoa Lopez told AFP. "But I think that I will take something from this experience." Kader Belarbi, the artistic director of Capitole Ballet of Toulouse in southwest France, hopes digital direction will not be the end of actually being there with a dancer. With the screen there are "things that don't come across anymore as they do in a live performance", he argued.

Belarbi is now creating a ballet about the artist Toulouse-Lautrec, working with soloists and four couples on "single phrases that will later be combined". But for some the biggest thing to come out of the lockdown may be a trend towards shorter works. "A lot of companies are going to make small pieces which are cheaper and easier to handle in terms of social distancing," said Martin Harriague, a choreographer with the Malandain Ballet, Biarritz. He is working on a solo with a dancer from the company in his apartment, separated by the glass of his veranda. "A lot of freedom can come from restraints," he insisted.—AFP



Kader Belarbi (centre, blue shirt) instructs his masked dancers in Toulouse in May.—AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Maestro Harout Fazlian conducts rehearsals ahead of the Sound of Resilience concert inside the Temple of Bacchus at the historic site of Baalbek in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.—AFP photos

# In Lebanon, single-concert festival serenades empty ruins

A philharmonic orchestra performed to spectator-free Roman ruins in east Lebanon Sunday, after a top summer festival downsized to a single concert in a year of economic meltdown and pandemic. The Baalbek International Festival was instead streamed live on television and social media, in what its director called a message of "hope and resilience" amid ever-worsening daily woes. The night kicked off with the Lebanese philharmonic orchestra and choir performing the national anthem, followed by Carmina Burana's "O Fortuna", a 13th century poem set to music.

The programme, which ran for just over an hour, included a mix of classical music and rock and folk tunes by composers ranging from Beethoven to Lebanon's Rahbani brothers. Held in the open air

and conducted by Harout Fazlian, the 150 musicians and chorists were scattered inside the illuminated Temple of Bacchus, as drones filmed them among the enormous ruins and Greco-Roman temples of Baalbek. Festival director Nayla de Freige told AFP most artists performed for free at the designated UNESCO World Heritage site. The concert aimed to represent "a way of saying that Lebanon does not want to die. We have an extremely productive and creative art and culture sector," she said. "We want to send a message of civilisation, hope and resilience." Baalbek itself became a militia stronghold during Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, but conservation and tourism have revived the ruins over the past three decades.

Lebanon is known for its summer music festivals,

which have in past years drawn large crowds every night and attracted performers like Shakira, Sting and Andrea Bocelli. Other festivals have not yet announced their plans for this year. Lebanon has recorded just 1,873 cases of COVID-19, including 36 deaths. But measures to stem the spread of the virus have exacerbated the country's worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war. Since economic woes in the autumn sparked mass protests against a political class deemed irretrievably corrupt, tens of thousands have lost their jobs or part of their income, and prices have skyrocketed. Banks have prevented depositors from withdrawing their dollar savings, while the local currency has lost more than 80 percent of its value to the greenback on the black market.—AFP



## Louvre museum reopens after 16-week virus shutdown



Louvre museum director Jean-Luc Martinez answers journalists' questions in front of the Louvre Museum in Paris today.

The Louvre, the world's most visited museum, reopens after its coronavirus closure yesterday, but with nearly a third of its galleries still shut. The vast former palace of France's kings has lost more than 40 million euros (\$45 million) in ticket sales during the near-four-month lockdown, and director Jean-Luc Martinez admitted it could have a few more lean years ahead as the world adapts to the virus. Although most of the museum's most popular draws, like the "Mona Lisa" and its vast antiquities collection will be accessible, other galleries where social distancing is more difficult will remain closed.

Nor will there be any crowding in front of Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece for a selfie, with visitors warned that they will have to stick to standing on well-distanced spots marked on the floor. To avoid bottlenecks, arrows will guide visitors through the labyrinth of galleries, with doubling back banned, the museum said. Some 70 percent of the Louvre's 9.6 million visitors last year were from overseas, and with tourism at a standstill, Martinez told AFP that numbers could drop sharply. "We are losing 80 percent of our public," he said. "We are going to be at best 20 to 30 percent down on last summer—between 4,000 and 10,000 visitors a day," he estimated. The museum hopes to attract more French visitors to fill the gap as it embarks on a campaign to shake off its elitist image before the Paris Olympics in four years' time.

Martinez, who comes from a working-class background, said he wanted to build on the outreach success of the Louvre's outpost museum in Lens, a poor former mining town in northern France. He said sometimes the Louvre can "intimidate" certain demographics and the museum needs to reassure people that its collections are also for them with improved presentation, labelling and curation.—AFP



People queue at the Louvre pyramid designed by Chinese architect Ioh Ming Pei, the entrance to the Louvre Museum in Paris.—AFP

## Britain to give \$2 billion to, virus-hit culture sector

Britain will spend nearly \$2 billion to help theatres, art galleries and other cultural institutions survive the coronavirus crisis, the government has said. The British arts and culture sector has been hit hard by the pandemic, with live performances still off the cards for now and venues facing an uncertain future under ongoing social distancing measures. A fund of 1.57 billion pounds (\$1.96 billion, 1.73 billion euros) will help museums and historic palaces as well as companies involved in live music and independent cinema.

"The money, which represents the biggest ever one-off investment in UK culture, will provide a lifeline to vital cultural and heritage organisations across the country hit hard by the pandemic," said a government statement released Sunday. The announcement followed an impassioned call last week from some 1,500 acts including Ed Sheeran and The Rolling Stones for authorities to save the country's live music industry from collapse.

Britain has Europe's highest pandemic death toll, with more than 44,000 reported COVID-19 fatalities and a quarter of a million confirmed cases. The nation's arts and culture sector employs 700,000 people, according to the government statement. In May, Shakespeare's Globe, the replica open-air theatre in London, warned that it could close without emergency funds to get it through the lockdown.

"This news is truly welcome at a time when so many theatres, orchestras, entertainment venues and other arts organisations face such a bleak future," said Andrew Lloyd Webber. "It is absolutely critical that Britain's cultural sector is restored to health as soon as possible." Simon Rattle, director of the London Symphony Orchestra, also hailed the new fund. "We hope it will be distributed as fast as possible... as so many institutions and individual artists have been staring into the abyss," he said. England lifted a number of virus restrictions on the weekend, allowing cinemas, galleries, museums and libraries to welcome the public again after three months—though fears remain of a COVID-19 resurgence.—AFP

## First-ever online Paris fashion week clicks off

The first-ever online Paris fashion week clicked off yesterday with the world of glitzy runway shows thrown into an existential crisis by the coronavirus. Paris haute couture and men's fashion weeks have been rolled into one, with labels making films to showcase their clothes instead of staging sometimes extravagant shows. The virus has not just made the traditional catwalk format—where a few hundred globetrotters are crammed into an overlit, overheated room and pummeled with thumping music—temporarily untenable on health grounds.

It has also prompted an unprecedented bout of soul searching within the industry and led usually conflict-averse designers to call for a revolution that puts a brake on its frantic pace. Some even say that seasons—the

frame on which the whole fashion calendar has been anchored—should be swept away altogether.

Gucci's flamboyant creator Alessandro Michele has slashed his shows from five to two a year while Saint Laurent is pulling out of Paris women's fashion week later this year. Its designer Anthony Vaccarello wants to set his own rhythm, a hitherto taboo idea which has become a rallying cry for many other creators. Fellow Belgian Dries Van Noten—the revered "King of Prints"—is also heading up one of two broad-based coalitions calling for root-and-branch reform to simplify the industry and make it "more environmentally and socially sustainable".

### Rebellion

There is so much rebellion in the air that the venerable French brand Hermes jumped the gun on the men's shows—which do not start until Thursday—by releasing its film on Sunday. In a typically classy offering shot by French theatre director Cyril Teste, the crew and technicians took starring roles along with the models. Designer Veronique Nichanian is seen adjusting a stripy sky blue jacket, and asking her model to put his hand in his pocket.

Stripes are Hermes' big thing for men next spring and summer, as well as its traditional leather of course. "I like

change," said Nichanian, catching the rule-breaking mood of the moment. "I am always looking to renew things and even if change panics me as much as it stimulates me, I prefer that anxiety to doing the same thing over again."

### Dior's 'Gomorrah'

Dior has called in the heavy artillery for its haute couture show, which was the yesterday's highlight. The Italian director Matteo Garrone, who took the glamour out of gangster life in "Gomorrah" and "Dogman", may not seem the obvious candidate to make a film about dreamy handmade dresses that can take thousands of hours of painstaking work. But Dior's Maria Grazia Chiuri—the first woman to lead the iconic label—told AFP that these were not normal times. "Creating this collection was very complex. From the start, it was clear that a real show would not happen. So we had to come up with something really dense and creative," she said.

Fellow Italian Maurizio Galante has also taken a cinematic inspiration for his show earlier yesterday "It's a great chance for us to get to a wider public," he said. "And with a film, people are also likely to be more concentrated on the images rather than who is sitting in the



front row," he added dryly.

Haute couture is the preserve of the super rich and film and music stars. Only the very wealthiest women can afford the intricate, made-to-measure creations, which are only shown in the French capital. The rising Vietnamese designer Xuan-Thu Nguyen, who has been invited as a guest into the elite couture ranks, told AFP she was using her "artistic video" as a teaser to tempt people into her creative universe. "If you have nothing, not even electricity, you still can create," she said.—AFP

## Sports

## Photo of the Day



AFQA WATERFALL: Kenny Belaey performs during filming Border to Border at Afqa waterfall, Lebanon. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Ganguly credits fitness for India's fast bowling rise

**NEW DELHI:** India's cricket chief Sourav Ganguly says improved fitness standards and a change in culture have led to the country developing one of the world's best pace attacks. Spearheads Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah are part of a battery of five formidable quick bowlers that have helped change India's traditional reliance on spin bowling.

"You know culture has changed in India that we can be good fast bowlers," Ganguly said in a chat hosted on the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Twitter feed. "Fitness regimes, fitness standards not only just among fast bowlers but also among the batters, that has changed enormously."

"That has made everyone understand and believe that we are fit, we are strong and we can also bowl fast like the others did." The West Indies dominated world cricket in the 1970s and 1980s led by a fearsome pace attack that included all-time greats such as Michael Holding, Andy Roberts, Malcolm Marshall and Joel Garner. Recently Indian quicks have risen to the top in world cricket with Shami, Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Bhuvneshwar Kumar in a deadly arsenal. "The West Indies in my generation were naturally strong," the former India captain said.

"We Indians were never such naturally strong... but we worked hard to get strong. But I think it is the change in culture as well that is very important." Shami last month claimed that the current Indian pace attack may be the best in Test history.

"You and everyone else in the world will agree to this — that no team has ever had five fast bowlers together as a package," said Shami. "Not just now, in the history of cricket, this might be the best fast-bowling unit in the world."

Shami took 13 wickets during India's 3-0 home Test sweep over South Africa last year, while Bumrah has claimed 68 scalps in 14 Tests since his debut. — AFP

# DeChambeau muscles his way to three-shot victory in Detroit

## Marks his fourth straight PGA Tour season with a triumph

**DETROIT:** A bulked-up Bryson DeChambeau, who has been knocking on the door since the PGA Tour's return from a COVID-19 hiatus, finally blew it open as he cruised to victory at the Rocket Mortgage Classic in Detroit on Sunday.

World number 10 DeChambeau, who arrived at Detroit Golf Club riding an impressive streak of six consecutive top-10 finishes, shot a seven-under-par 65 to reach 23 under on the week, three shots ahead of overnight leader Matthew Wolff (71).

DeChambeau, who re-emerged from the break in mid-June packing serious muscle and startling distance off the tee, began the day three shots back of Wolff but wasted little time taking over top spot on the leaderboard.

The American had four birdies through seven holes, and then added another at the par-four 10th where he drained a 22-foot putt to take complete control. DeChambeau's lone miscue came at the par-five 14th where he made bogey, which opened the door as Wolff shrugged off a rough front nine and made a late charge. But DeChambeau finished his round with three consecutive birdies to secure his sixth PGA

Tour victory. The win marks DeChambeau's fourth straight PGA Tour season with a triumph.

"This is a little emotional for me because I did do something a little different, I changed my body, changed my mindset in the game and I was able to accomplish a win while playing a completely different style of golf," said DeChambeau.

"And it's pretty amazing to see that and I hope it's an inspiration to a lot of people that if they set their mind to it, you can accomplish it. It just takes a lot of hard work." Wolff, who was seeking his second PGA Tour title, struggled early and was three over after 10 holes, five shots off the pace, and seemingly out of contention until the par-four 12th where he made the first of four birdies over a six-hole stretch.

Wolff had a chance to move to within one shot of DeChambeau but his 14-foot eagle putt at the penultimate hole stopped just short of the cup. Kevin Kisner (66) finished five shots back of DeChambeau in third place while former Masters champion Danny Willett (66) was among a group of four golfers a further two shots back. — Reuters

### Four birdies through seven holes



## Djokovic's event taught us to be cautious: French Open director

**MUMBAI:** French Open organisers are taking every precaution to ensure the Grand Slam does not meet the same fate as Novak Djokovic's Adria Tour, which was abandoned after several players tested positive for COVID-19, tournament director Guy Forget has told Reuters. Djokovic has come under fire after the charity event was played in front of packed crowds in Serbia and Croatia and saw players hugging at the net and posing for pictures together.

Djokovic, Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki have all tested positive for the new coronavirus. The French Open will allow up to 60% of the usual capacity inside the Roland Garros grounds when the rescheduled claycourt tournament starts on Sept. 27 and Forget said there was no chance of them repeating the mistakes of the Adria Tour.

"Maybe some people were overconfident there," Forget said by telephone. "Luckily no one got hurt really bad but even a few cases is too much and we want to avoid that as much as we can. We want to reassure everyone that having people getting ill will be terrible for us. Let's be really careful, really cautious."

France began easing restrictions in May but has been reporting over 500 cases daily in recent days. Protective masks will be mandatory for anyone on the move inside Roland Garros and they will be recommended for those sitting

courtside. The French Tennis Federation (FFT) expect some 20,000 spectators a day during the early stages of the two-week tournament and about 10,000 per day on the final weekend. Forget said a successful event needed to have some kind of a crowd.

"We all see soccer on television, it's wonderful but something is missing without the crowds," the former world No. 4 said. "We are working closely with the administration, the government, to make sure we can provide some crowd while still following very strict security measures." The US Open in New York, which is scheduled to start on Aug. 31, will have no spectators and operate under strict health protocols, including limiting the size of each player's entourage. Forget said French Open organisers were not planning anything as strict and were even hoping to ease restrictions.

"Luckily things are a bit more flexible in Europe and in France, especially," he said. "Hopefully, what we're going to announce will probably be even more flexible than what we did." The FFT drew heavy criticism in mid-March when it unilaterally moved the French Open to September from its scheduled May start amid the COVID-19 crisis, placing it in the middle of the hardcourt season.

Forget said he understood why some were unhappy about it but thought saving one of the most prestigious and lucrative tournaments in tennis was worth it. "We're not going to celebrate or congratulate ourselves for the decision we took," the 55-year-old said.

"We thought it's a risk worth taking. Of course we'll make people unhappy. But in mid-October, if we're able to come together and we've been able to provide revenue for 600 people, I think we will be very satisfied as a federation and I as a former player." — Reuters

## W Indies unleash latest 'Fab Four' in England

**LONDON:** West Indies are set to field their latest fast-bowling quartet during this week's first Test against England in Southampton, with the likes of Shannon Gabriel, Kemar Roach, captain Jason Holder and Alzarri Joseph all vying to make an impact.

The Caribbean has a long and proud history of producing top-class fast bowlers. AFP Sport looks back at some previous West Indies pace attacks in England: 1980: Andy Roberts, Michael Holding, Joel Garner, Colin Croft

— The original 'fearsome foursome' revolutionised world cricket under the captaincy of Clive Lloyd by ensuring there was no respite for batsmen even when the shine had gone off the ball.

Although all capable of being genuinely quick, the guile of Roberts, the

speed through the air of Holding, the steely bounce and crushing yorkers of the 6ft 8in Garner and the awkwardness of Croft, from wide of the crease or around the wicket, meant they each posed different problems for batsmen.

Meanwhile this series also saw Malcolm Marshall, arguably the greatest West Indies fast bowler of them all, start to establish himself in the side. Even so, the West Indies only won the series 1-0, with Roberts taking eight wickets in a two-wicket win in the opener at Trent Bridge before the other four matches were all drawn largely due to weather interruptions.

1984: Marshall, Garner, Holding, Eldine Baptiste

— The 'Blackwash' team hammered England 5-0. The writing was on the wall for the hosts when Marshall struck debutant Andy Lloyd on the head with a bouncer in the series opener, with the batsman never playing another Test.

Marshall's mastery was evident when he took seven for 53 in the third Test at Headingley despite a broken thumb as he finished the series with 24 wickets at

18.20 despite missing a match through injury. Barbados team-mate Garner took 29 wickets at 18.62.

1988: Marshall, Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Winston Benjamin/Patrick Patterson

— West Indies won 4-0 in a series where England's disarray was summed up by the fact they got through four captains. Marshall, capable of both sheer pace and late movement, led the way with 35 wickets at a staggeringly low average of 12.65 apiece, with Ambrose — soon to become the leader of the attack — and Walsh offering excellent support.

1995: Ambrose, Walsh, Kenny Benjamin, Ian Bishop

— With the likes of batting greats Gordon Greenidge and Vivian Richards having now both retired, the West Indies found themselves held to a 2-2 draw in a six-Test series.

But all four frontline bowlers still took more than 21 wickets each. Nevertheless there were signs the West Indies were not the force they had been and in 2000 England beat them in a series for the first time in 31 years. — AFP

## Japanese Olympics 'cannot be held' next year: Survey

**TOKYO:** A wide-ranging survey conducted by the Japan News Network (JNN) found that 77% of those questioned said that the Tokyo Olympics "cannot be held" next year, it was announced yesterday.

The Tokyo 2020 Games, originally due to start this month, have already been delayed for a year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

As organisers plan the rearranged Games, questions remain over whether it is suitable, or possible, to host the Olympics in Japan next year.

Organisers have previously said they will look to "simplify" the Games next year to lower costs and reduce risks related to COVID-19.

However, in the JNN poll, conducted over the weekend and that mostly centred

on Japanese politics, 77% of respondents said they think the Olympics "cannot be held" in 2021. They did not give a reason.

Just 17% said they thought it "can be held" next year. In March, the Japanese government and the International Olympic Committee made the unprecedented decision to postpone the Tokyo Olympics until 2021.

Since then, organisers have battled against an array of problems stemming from the postponement, including rising costs, athlete safety and securing the venues. — Reuters



DETROIT: Bryson DeChambeau of the United States celebrates with the trophy after winning the Rocket Mortgage Classic at the Detroit Golf Club in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP

Sports

# Inter title hopes all but over after 'gifting' Bologna surprise win

## Atalanta claim their 10th straight win in all competitions

MILAN: Inter Milan coach Antonio Conte said his team "gifted" Bologna a 2-1 win on Sunday after they blew a goal and a man advantage to see their Serie A title challenge all but ended in dramatic fashion.

Antonio Conte's men needed a win to move back to within eight points of leaders Juventus, and one of second-placed Lazio, but despite leading through Romelu Lukaku's 20th league goal of the campaign and playing against 10 men, contrived to collapse to defeat.

Juventus sit seven points clear at the top after beating Torino in the Turin derby on Saturday, when second-placed Lazio were thumped by AC Milan.

Inter, who also missed a penalty when 1-0 up, are now 11 points off the pace with only eight matches of the season remaining and just one point ahead of fourth-placed Atalanta who beat Cagliari 1-0.

"It's clear what happened, so there's not much I can say," Conte told DAZN. "We all have to take our share of the responsibility, first of all me as the coach, then the players who step onto that pitch. I think we gifted Bologna the game today and it's not the first time."

"We have to ask ourselves questions now, both myself and the players."

The third-placed hosts forged ahead midway through the first half as Lautaro Martinez headed Ashley Young's left-wing cross against the post, but Lukaku was on hand to tap in.

It was the Belgian's 20th league goal since joining Inter from Manchester United last year and his 26th in all competitions.

Mid-table Bologna always carried a threat,

though, and Riccardo Orsolini twice went close to equalising before half-time.

But Inter were gifted a golden opportunity to take total control 12 minutes into the second half when Bologna midfielder Roberto Soriano was sent off for dissent.

A crucial three points appeared almost certain when Martinez stepped up to take a 61st-minute penalty, but the Argentinian striker saw his effort saved by visiting goalkeeper Lukasz Skorupski.

That was the cue for Inter, chasing a first league title since winning the treble under Jose Mourinho in 2010, to collapse in the closing stages.

Musa Juwara, on as a substitute, fired home a 74th-minute leveller through the weak attempted save by Inter stopper Samir Handanovic, before the home side also saw their numerical advantage disappear shortly afterwards as Alessandro Bastoni was dismissed for a second yellow card.

The comeback was completed with 10 minutes left, as Gambian striker Musa Barrow finished off a sweeping Bologna counter-attack with a fine left-footed shot past Handanovic.

Inter piled on the pressure during six minutes of injury time, but failed to rescue even a point, with Alexis Sanchez denied by Skorupski.

### ATALANTA MARCH ON

Atalanta were not at their free-flowing best but still did enough to claim their 10th straight win in all competitions against 10-man Cagliari.

Gian Piero Gasperini's men looked set to battle Roma for the fourth and final Champions League place when Serie A restarted following the coron-

avirus lockdown, but are now closer to leaders Juventus than they are to the capital club.



MILAN: Inter Milan's Croatian defender Marcelo Brozovic (down) vies with Bologna's Italian midfielder Roberto Soriano during the Italian Serie A football match between Inter Milan and Bologna played behind closed doors at the Giuseppe-Meazza San Siro stadium in Milan. —AFP

Luis Muriel scored what proved to be the winner from the penalty spot in the 27th minute after teenage Cagliari defender Andrea Carboni was sent off.

Napoli moved level on points with Roma after Lorenzo Insigne's strike eight minutes from time grabbed Gennaro Gattuso's men a 2-1 win over the fifth-placed outfit. Jose Callejon put Napoli ahead 10 minutes after

half-time at the Stadio San Paolo, and although Henrikh Mkhitaryan equalised with his seventh league goal of the season, Insigne had the final say with a magnificent curling strike from the corner of the area.

Elsewhere, Brescia moved off the foot of the table and kept their survival hopes alive by beating Verona 2-0, their first victory since last December.

They are now six points from safety after 17th-placed Genoa rescued a 2-2 draw at Udinese thanks to Andrea Pinamonti's 97th-minute leveller. —AFP

## Messi will finish career at Barca: Club president

VILA-REAL: Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu has said that captain Lionel Messi will end his career at the Catalan club, dismissing a report saying the Argentine no longer wishes to renew his current contract when it expires next year.

"Messi has said he will end his working and footballing life at Barca,"

Bartomeu told Spanish network Movistar after his side beat Villarreal 4-1 away on Sunday in La Liga.

"I'm not going to explain the details because we are focused on the competition and we are negotiating with many players but Messi has explained to us that he wants to stay and so we're going to enjoy him for much longer."

The 33-year-old Messi, who signed his last contract in 2017, has become more outspoken against the club's hierarchy in the last year and radio station Cadena Ser said last Thursday he is unhappy with how Barca is being

run and wants to leave in 2021.

The win against Villarreal kept Barca in the title hunt with La Liga leaders Real Madrid, who hold a four-point advantage after beating Athletic Bilbao 1-0 on Sunday thanks to a late penalty by Sergio Ramos.

The spot kick was awarded following a VAR review while Athletic had their own penalty appeal turned down and Bartomeu said the technology was not being applied fairly since the season resumed following the novel coronavirus stoppage.

"I saw the game in Bilbao and although I don't like to say it, I'll

repeat that VAR is not being used as it should be," added Bartomeu.

"Since the season returned after the COVID-19 crisis it has not been equal, that has been reflected in the results and it looks as if it always favours the same team.

"VAR should be there to help out the referee but in the last few weeks everyone has been able to see the instances in which it has not been used fairly."

Real coach Zinedine Zidane said he was tired of his side's winning run being put down to marginal decisions going their way. —Reuters

## Porto hammer Belenenses 5-0

PORTO: Luiz Diaz scored a stunning late goal and Fabio Vieira notched his first for the club with a clever free kick as they hammered visiting Belenenses 5-0 on Sunday, taking their lead over Benfica at the top of the Primeira Liga back to six points.

The win put Porto on 73 points with four games left, ahead of second-placed Benfica, who beat Boavista 3-1 on Saturday. It was a night to forget for Belenenses defender Nuno Coelho, who left forward Soares unmarked to open the scoring for the hosts with a header in the 31st minute.

Coelho was at fault again a few minutes later as he failed to stop Mateus Uribe coming through the

middle to score, but his blushes were spared when the goal was ruled out by VAR for a handball by Uribe in the build-up.

Moussa Marega made it 2-0 after the break, latching on to Jesus Corona's through ball and rifling a crisp shot back across goalkeeper Herve Koffi to net in the 58th minute. Alex Telles added the third with a penalty after Diaz was hacked down by Cafu Phete before Vieira, who came up through the youth ranks at Porto, scored his first senior goal for the club with a low free kick.

The hosts saved the best for last though as Diaz picked up the ball in his own half and drove forward before unleashing a rocket shot that flew into the top corner in added time to complete the rout. The defeat was the fifth in a row in the league for Belenenses, who remain in 14th place on 31 points, four clear of the relegation zone. —Reuters



PORTO: Porto's Brazilian defender Alex Telles scores a penalty during the Portuguese League football match between FC Porto and Os Belenenses at the Dragao stadium in Porto. —AFP

## Samp move away from danger, Brescia win first game this year

VERONA: Sampdoria won a key relegation game for the second time in five days when they beat SPAL 3-0 in Serie A on Sunday while Brescia claimed their first win this year by beating Verona 2-0.

Two first-half goals from Karol Linetty and one from Manolo Gabbiadini moved Claudio Ranieri's Sampdoria seven points clear of the drop zone and left SPAL rooted to the bottom of the table.

Linetty pounced on a SPAL mistake to break the deadlock after 12 minutes and Gabbiadini curled in a free kick in the 45th minute. Further confusion in the SPAL defence allowed Linetty to add a third in first-half stoppage time.

Teenager Andrea Papetti head-

ed in from a corner and Alfredo Donnarumma finished off a counter-attack deep into stoppage time as Brescia, beaten 6-0 by Inter Milan on Wednesday, bounced back for their first win since Dec. 14, a run of 14 league games.

Genoa scored twice in the last 10 minutes as they hit back from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 at Udinese in another match featuring teams battling the drop.

Seko Fofana and Kevin Lasagna put Udinese in the driving seat but Goran Pandev pulled one back and Andrea Pinamonti levelled in the seventh minute of stoppage time, scoring from a rebound after having a penalty saved by Juan Musso.

Sampdoria, who also won 2-1 at Lecce in midweek, are 14th with 32 points, ahead of Udinese on goal difference, with Torino on 31 and Genoa on 27. The teams in the relegation zone are Lecce (25), Brescia (21) and SPAL (19).

Two first-half goals from Erick Pulgar gave Fiorentina a 2-1 win at Parma, their first since the restart of the season. Juraj Kucka replied for the hosts with a penalty early in the second half. —Reuters

## Barca outclass Villarreal after disappointments

VILA-REAL: Barcelona responded to a trying week by producing a scintillating display to thrash Villarreal 4-1 away on Sunday and stay alive in the Liga title race. The Catalans had drawn their last two matches to hand more momentum to league leaders Real Madrid but Sunday's win took them to 73 points after 34 games, four behind their arch-rivals who won 1-0 at Athletic Bilbao earlier in the day.

An own goal from Pau Torres put Barca in front in the third minute, with Villarreal's Gerard Moreno levelling on the rebound in the 14th before the visitors restored their lead through an outstanding curling strike from Luis Suarez six minutes later.

Antoine Griezmann stretched Barca's advantage just before the break with a sublime chip, having been dropped from the starting lineup in the last two games, while 17-year-old Ansu Fati added a fourth in

the second half with a low strike.

For Barca defender Gerard Pique, delivering such a slick performance was as satisfying as returning to winning ways. "It was crucial to get the three points to stay in the hunt but the way we played was important too because that's a part of our identity so we need to keep playing like that until the end of the season," he said.

Barca's confidence was rocked by draws with Celta Vigo and Atletico Madrid while the sense of instability at the club deepened amid reports captain Lionel Messi was unhappy with the state of affairs and did not want to stay beyond his contract.

There had been also plenty of speculation surrounding coach Setien after he had brought Griezmann on in added time against Atletico, a move described in the Spanish media as an act of humiliation against the World Cup-winning forward.

Griezmann was named in the lineup against a Villarreal side who had won five of their last six games and was lively from the kick off, helping force the opening goal as well as working tirelessly in midfield and combining well with Messi and Suarez. —Reuters

## Leeds face test of nerve as promotion looms

LONDON: After 16 years in the wilderness, Leeds United are on the brink of an eagerly awaited return to the Premier League — as long as they can hold their nerve with the finish line in sight. A 3-1 win at Blackburn on Saturday moved Leeds a step closer to the promised land from the long purgatory of the lower leagues.

Marcel Bielsa's side sit one point clear at the top of the Championship heading into their last five matches. With third-placed Brentford six points behind, Leeds look odds-on to secure the place among English football's elite that their legion of fanatical fans used to regard as their birthright.

But Leeds were in a similar position last season and squandered a chance for automatic promotion before imploding in the play-offs. When Leeds beat Sheffield Wednesday on April 13, 2019, a capacity crowd at Elland Road serenaded their jubilant team as if promotion had been secured.

Just 15 days later, after losses to Wigan and Brentford and a mad-cap draw against Villa — in which Bielsa told his team to deliberately let their opponents score following United's controversial opener — ended the Leeds top two challenge.

Leeds lost their nerve and Derby took full advantage in the play-off semi-final second leg, winning 4-2 to leave the Elland Road faithful in tears. From the ashes of that bitter evening, Bielsa has dragged Leeds back into promotion contention.

But, with last season's collapse in mind, Leeds fans might have been alarmed to hear Bielsa admit he is feeling the strain of the run-in. "Yes," Bielsa said when asked if he felt anxious during the Blackburn game.

"Every match in this period is very important. If we get distracted we will pay for that so we need to keep focused in every match."

### RICH HISTORY

With English football being played behind closed doors for the rest of the season amid the coronavirus pandemic, perhaps Leeds will benefit from playing in silence, rather than in front of their anxious fans.

"I'd love to be there more than anything. But it's such a nervous time and I do think that could impact the players," Leeds season-ticket holder Simon Sanders told AFP. "Nothing feels quite right with this virus and the way the world has changed but if we make it the party will go on for weeks."

Three of Leeds' remaining games will be played in the empty stands of Elland Road against struggling trio Stoke, Barnsley and Charlton. Win those games and taken a point from one of their two away games at Swansea and Derby and Leeds will be assured of promotion. It would be a moment to savour after such a long period in the shadows. Champions of England in 1969 and 1974 under Don Revie, then in 1992 when Howard Wilkinson called the shots, Leeds have a rich history. —AFP

**14** DeChambeau muscles his way to three-shot victory in Detroit



**15** Inter title hopes all but over after 'gifting' Bologna surprise win



**15** Porto hammer Belenenses 5-0



SPIELBERG: Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas celebrates with the trophy on the podium after the Austrian Formula One Grand Prix race in Spielberg, Austria. —AFP

## Bottas wins Austrian Grand Prix

### Hamilton challenge hit by double penalty

**SPIELBERG:** Valtteri Bottas stayed calm in a stormy race on Sunday to claim a measured victory for Mercedes as Formula One returned with a bang in a belated, dramatic and incident-strewn 2020 season-opening Austrian Grand Prix.

Seven months after the final race of 2019, the Finn, who had started from the 12th pole position of his career, led from start to finish to come home ahead on the road of team-mate six-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

The Briton, however, had been given a five-second penalty during the race and was demoted to fourth behind Charles Leclerc, who brought his Ferrari home second and Briton Lando Norris who claimed his maiden podium for McLaren.

Hamilton, hit with a late pre-race grid penalty that dropped him from second to fifth, had clashed with Red Bull's Alex Albon in the final laps, forcing him into a spin off track.

"There was definitely quite a bit of pressure on me there," said Bottas, speaking through a face mask afterwards. "One Safety Car was ok, but I was like 'another one? And come on?' Lewis was quick, but I was able to control it."

Leclerc admitted the result was a surprise after Ferrari's dismal form in practice and qualifying. "I did not expect this - it's a huge surprise, but a good one.

We did everything perfectly to finish second."

Norris said: "I'm speechless - there were a few points where I thought I had fudged it. I am so proud of the team for coming back from where we were a couple of years ago." In a race of three Safety Car interventions, run behind closed doors at the Red Bull Ring, Ferrari-bound Carlos Sainz finished fifth in the second McLaren ahead of Sergio Perez of Racing Point.

Pierre Gasly was sixth for Alpha Tauri and Esteban Ocon eighth on his return to racing with Renault ahead of Antonio Giovinazzi of Alfa Romeo and Sebastian Vettel, the four-time champion in his final season at Ferrari, finishing 10th. Before the race even started, there was drama when six of the 20 drivers opted against taking a knee to protest against racism.

Hamilton wore a Black Lives Matter t-shirt, while other drivers, who all lined up with him at the front of the grid, sported black tops saying "End Racism".

Leclerc and Red Bull's Max Verstappen had confirmed a split among F1 drivers when they said they would not take a knee on the grid, but that they remained committed to fighting racism.



### Six drivers opt not to take knee

Carlos Sainz of McLaren, Danil Kvyat of Alpha Tauri, Antonio Giovinazzi and Alfa Romeo team-mate Kimi Raikkonen also chose to stay on their feet.

On a very warm day in the Styrian Alps and following a late Red Bull protest that pushed Hamilton to fifth from second on the grid, Bottas was coolness personified. At lights out, he pulled clear to open a gap ahead of the battling duo of Verstappen and Norris behind him.

Hamilton, fired by his penalty for ignoring yellow flags in Q3 on Saturday, was soon in a rhythm and by lap ten was up to third, 10 seconds behind Bottas and seven off Verstappen. Within a lap, he was second when Verstappen slowed, his engine spluttering, gifting the champion a pass to pursue the leader as the 'black arrows' took control.

"I'm not quite sure what happened yet," said Verstappen after his retirement. "I think it would have been an easy podium and third would have been a decent start." A full 217 days after the last race, many teams struggled for reliability and it was clearly a battle of attrition led, almost inevitably, after their prac-

tice domination, by Mercedes until lap 25 when Kevin Magnussen went off at Turn Three in his Haas following brake problems.

This brought out a Safety Car. On resumption, the luckless Vettel tangled with his future replacement at Ferrari, Sainz, at Turn Three. The four-time champion spun after hitting the McLaren and fell to 15th while Sainz retained seventh. At the front, Bottas led, but Hamilton closed up.

On lap 52, Mercedes' meander was rudely interrupted when Haas' Romain Grosjean went off and George Russell stopped in his Williams and a second Safety Car was deployed.

With 17 laps to go, Mercedes stayed out as their rivals pitted, Albon taking softs for a late charge, but another crash when Raikkonen's Alfa Romeo lost its front right wheel at the final corner, brought a third Safety Car.

With 10 laps left, Bottas led and Albon attacked Hamilton, but, as in Brazil last year, the pair clashed and Albon spun into the gravel, rejoining in 13th. The stewards handed Hamilton a five-second penalty, followed by an identical penalty for Perez, for speeding in the pit lane.

"It's still quite fresh so I've got to be careful what I say but there's nothing to add apart from how frustrating that is," admitted Albon. —AFP

### Mane boosts Liverpool's record hunt

**LONDON:** Sadio Mane helped Liverpool keep alive their bid to set a new Premier League points record as the champions beat Aston Villa 2-0 to restore a 23-point lead over Manchester City, who were beaten at Southampton on Sunday.

Just four days after City thrashed Liverpool 4-0 to seemingly lay down a marker next season's title race, both sides showed why there has been a chasm between them in the Reds' romp to a first league title in 30 years.

Liverpool were far from their best in their first outing at an empty Anfield as champions, but still

ground out the three points in a manner they so often have this season in the final 20 minutes.

Mane broke struggling Villa's stubborn resistance by smashing Naby Keita's pass in off the underside of the crossbar from close range for his 20th goal of the season before substitute Curtis Jones rounded off a big weekend for the 19-year-old after signing a new five-year contract on Saturday.

Victory moved Liverpool onto 89 points and they need four wins from their remaining five games to surpass City's record 100-point total from 2017-18. "We are where we are because we win difficult games," Klopp said.

"It was not a brilliant performance but it was a good performance that gets us three points." Villa remain in the relegation zone, one point from safety as they battle to avoid an immediate return to the Championship.

City, by contrast, saw another dominant display go unrewarded as Che Adams's spectacular first goal for Southampton claimed a 1-0 win for the

Saints. Pep Guardiola's men had 74 percent possession and had 26 shots but could not find a way past Alex McCarthy as Fernandinho hit the post and Gabriel Jesus, David Silva and Bernardo Silva all wasted huge chances.

"It was a little bit of a resume of this season - one mistake and they punished us," said Guardiola. "We played a really good performance but it was not enough."

### WEST HAM BLOW LEADS

At the other end of the table, West Ham edged closer to survival despite twice blowing a lead to draw 2-2 at Newcastle. Shock winners against Chelsea in midweek, West Ham were ahead within four minutes at St James' Park when Michail Antonio pounced after Jamaal Lascelles failed to cut out Jarrod Bowen's cross.

Newcastle were level after 17 minutes as the influential Allan Saint-Maximin slipped in Emil Krafth and his cross was converted by Miguel Almiron.

Tomas Soucek restored West Ham's lead when he lashed home after Declan Rice headed Ryan Fredericks' corner against the crossbar.

But Newcastle equalised 92 seconds later as Jonjo Shelvey beat the West Ham offside trap, took Dwight Gayle's pass and beat Fabianski from close range. After earning their first away point since December, West Ham are four points clear of the relegation zone with five games left to guarantee their top-tier status. John Egan's first top-flight goal gave Sheffield United a 1-1 draw at Burnley as both teams' hopes of qualifying for the Europa League were dented. James Tarkowski put Burnley ahead just before half-time, but Irish defender Egan netted with 10 minutes left.

United remain in eighth place, which could be good enough for a place in next season's Europa League should Manchester City's ban from European competition be upheld on appeal, while Burnley move up to ninth, two points adrift of the Blades. —AFP