



2 Patient denied medicines over unpaid hospital bills



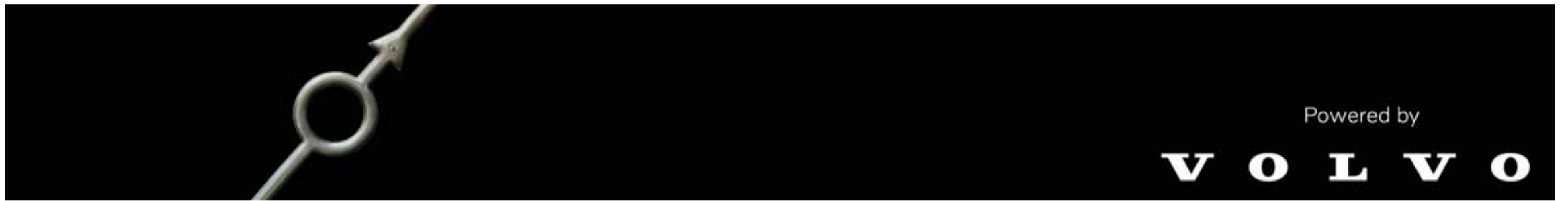
7 Concern over Sydney cluster as Aussie virus cases surge



12 Wildlife reserves threatened in Kenya as tourists stay away

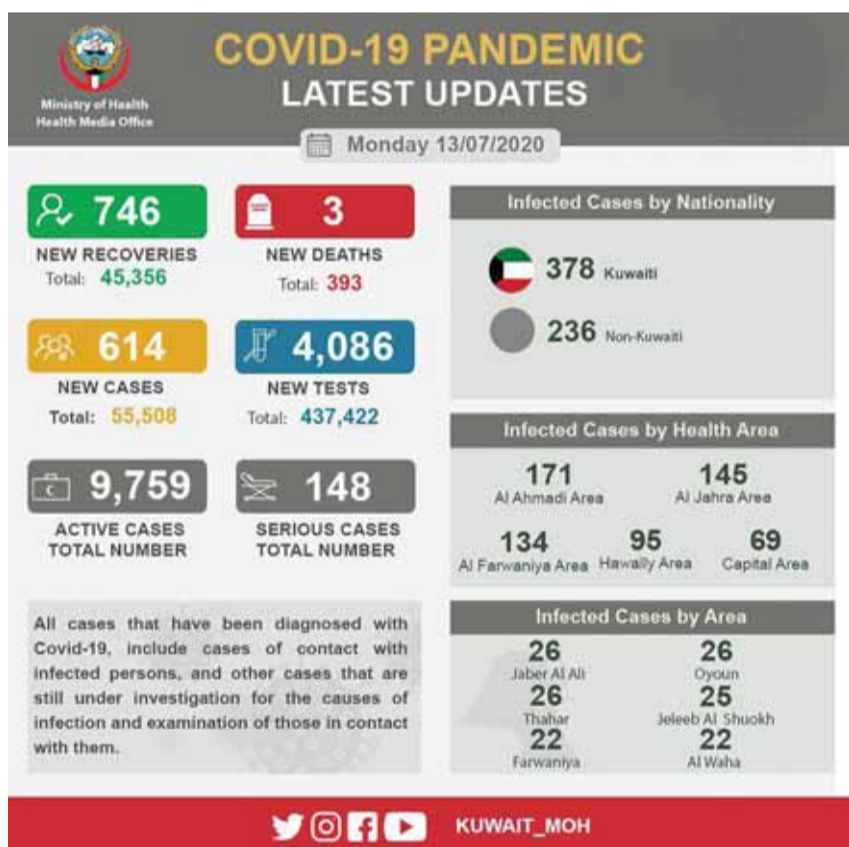


14 Redskins to change name after sponsor pressure over racism



Assembly cancels session after virus cases detected

Kuwait reports 614 new coronavirus cases, three deaths



By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday that he decided to cancel a regular session of the Assembly today after the health ministry detected that a number of MPs and employees are infected with the coronavirus. The Assembly was scheduled to convene today and tomorrow to discuss a number of issues and debate a grilling against Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan.

Ghanem said he received a letter from health minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah and later spoke with him, confirming that an unspecified number of lawmakers and employees were infected with the virus. He declined to provide details about the names of those infected or suspected of being infected, adding that some of the lawmakers and employees have to undergo the virus test once again. Ghanem said that he took the decision to cancel the meeting after consultations with the Assembly office and that a new date will be set for the next meeting.

The Assembly held its last session about three weeks ago. The speaker later announced that one of the lawmakers was suspected of testing positive for the dis-

ease and called on those who attended the session to undergo testing. Local media reported the name of MP Hamdan Al-Azemi, who denied it and said that his tests were negative. The ministry of health yesterday reported 614 new coronavirus cases, of which 378 are Kuwaitis, who have been taking top spot for several weeks now. It also reported three new deaths.

The Assembly was also scheduled to discuss a draft law allowing private companies affected by the coronavirus pandemic to reduce salaries of their expat staff, in addition to debating a grilling against Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan. Rapporteur of the health and labor committee MP Saadoun Hammad said the panel added a new provision to the private sector law stating that it does not apply to Kuwaiti employees in the private sector.

The bill allows private sector companies to reduce salaries of their employees by up to 50 percent, provided they do not go below minimum wage. It also allows the firms to ask their employees to take leave by paying them just 30 percent of their salaries. Hammad said the provision the committee added exempts some 72,000 Kuwaitis working in the private sector,

although the government has already pledged it will pay the difference to any Kuwaiti employee impacted by the measures.

The Assembly was to also discuss the grilling filed by MP Riyadh Al-Adasani against Sheetan, which is the second in less than a month. Adasani is holding the minister responsible for a document he presented to the Cabinet calling for imposing charges and taxes on public services. He also accused him of pushing a government draft law seeking to borrow some KD 20 billion, although the government has enough sources of finance.

But even though Adasani is grilling the minister over the debt legislation, the Assembly's financial and economic affairs panel appears headed to approve the law. Head of the panel MP Safa Al-Hashem said voting on the law will take place on Sunday, adding that there is no objection for the government to raise debt, provided it can repay. She also said that the coronavirus crisis has exposed government finances after projections show this year's budget deficit will be around KD 15 billion instead of the initially-estimated deficit of KD 7 billion.

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Virus has claimed over 20,000 lives across Mideast

PARIS: The novel coronavirus pandemic has killed more than 20,000 people across the Middle East, half of them in Iran, according to an AFP tally based on official tolls. But despite having 907,736 reported infections and 20,005 deaths from the COVID-19 illness, the Middle East has been relatively lightly hit by the virus which has killed over half a million people across the globe.

Iran, which has been struggling to contain the outbreak since announcing its first cases in February, has reported more than 12,829 deaths and 257,303 infections, according to Sunday's official figures. With a population of more than 80 million, Iran is the 9th worst-affected country in the world and has seen the region's deadliest outbreak. Infections in the Islamic republic have been on the rise since early May, prompting authorities to make wearing masks mandatory in enclosed public spaces.

On Sunday the country's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called the resurgence "truly tragic" and urged all citizens to help rein it in. In the region covered by Iran in the north and east, Israel in the west and Yemen in the south, the other worst-hit countries are Iraq and neighboring Kuwait, regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia and war-torn Yemen.

Iraq is the second-most affected nation in the Middle East with 3,055 deaths and 75,194 infections, followed by Saudi Arabia with 2,181 deaths and 229,480 infections. Yemen, one of the world's poorest nations, has recorded 464 deaths and 1,380 infections, while Kuwait has confirmed 393 deaths and 55,508 infections.

Iran also ranks as the region's worst-affected country on a per-capita basis, with 153 deaths per million - 25th worldwide - followed by Kuwait with 90 deaths per million and Saudi Arabia with 63. According to the AFP tally, the average number of deaths in the region is 43 per million inhabitants, against a global average of around 70. The Middle East represents around 3.5 percent of all global deaths, far behind Europe (one third), North America (one quarter) and Latin America and the Caribbean (one quarter). — Agencies

Sudan allows alcohol drinking, decriminalizes leaving Islam

KHARTOUM: Sudan is to allow non-Muslims to drink alcohol for the first time in decades and has scrapped laws that had made leaving Islam potentially punishable by death, the justice minister said. The raft of amendments comes a year after Islamist dictator Omar Al-Bashir was toppled following mass protests against his three-decade rule.

Sudan now "allows non-Muslims to consume alcohol on the condition it doesn't disturb the peace and they don't do so in public," Justice Minister Nasredeen Abdulbari said in an interview Saturday evening on state television. While Islamic tradition forbids the faithful from drinking, Muslim-majority Sudan has a significant Christian minority. Alcoholic drinks have been banned since former President Jaafar Nimeiri introduced Islamic law in 1983, throwing bottles of whisky into the Nile in the capital Khartoum.

Abdulbari, part of a transitional

government that took power after Bashir's ouster, also announced that converting from Islam to another religion would be decriminalized. "No one has the right to accuse any person or group of being an infidel... this threatens the safety and security of society and leads to revenge killings," he said. Many Muslim-majority countries apply Islamic laws making leaving the faith punishable by death.

Bashir, who had enforced such rules after coming to power in an Islamist-backed 1989 coup, was toppled by the army following mass protests over the country's worsening economic crisis. Sudan's transitional government, installed under a deal between protest leaders and the generals who took charge after Bashir's ouster, has pursued a string of reforms including on Friday criminalizing female genital mutilation. Women will also no longer need a permit from male members of their families to travel with their children.

Melt yields old headlines: Indira Gandhi is PM

CHAMONIX, France: The Mont Blanc glacier in the French Alps yields more and more secrets as it melts - this time a clutch of newspapers with banner headlines from when Indira Gandhi became India's first and so far only woman prime minister in 1966. The copies of Indian newspapers the National Herald and The Economic Times were probably aboard an Air India Boeing 707 that crashed on the mountain on January 24, 1966, claiming 177 lives.

The trove of around a dozen

newspapers was found last week by Timothee Mottin, who runs a cafe-restaurant, La Cabane du Cerro, perched at an altitude of 1,350 m near the Chamonix skiing hub. "They are drying now but they are in very good condition," Mottin, 33, told AFP. "You can read them." The modest cafe is around 45 minutes by foot from the Bossons glacier where the plane named after the Himalayan peak of Kanchenjunga mysteriously crashed.

Mottin said he was lucky to discover the papers when he did because the ice in which they were encased for nearly six decades "had probably just melted". Once the papers have dried out, they will join a growing collection of found items from the crash that

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OMDOURMAN, Sudan: A man walks by a mural in the Sudanese capital Khartoum's twin city on July 8, 2020. — AFP

A constitution adopted for the three-year transition period omits mention of Islam as a defining characteristic of the state. Official figures say Christians represent only three percent of Sudan's 40 million inhabitants, although Christian leaders say the real figure is much higher. Human rights

groups regularly condemned the toppled autocrat's treatment of non-Muslims, especially the Christian minority. Copts, Catholics, Anglicans and a number of other denominations are present in the country but Bashir's regime had driven many of them underground. — Agencies



CHAMONIX, France: A picture taken on July 9, 2020 at the Bossons glacier shows a 1966 copy of Indian newspaper The National Herald with a headline announcing the election of Indira Gandhi. — AFP

Local

Mubarak Hospital patient sent home without medicine over unpaid bills

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: An expat patient is struggling to pay hospital bills as the global pandemic continues to ravage Kuwait and many other nations around the world. Hannah, an Indian national living and working in Kuwait, brought her mother-in-law to Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital on July 9, 2020. Her mother-in-law, aged 58, was admitted at the public hospital as she was diagnosed with pancreatic illness. When she was discharged three days later, her hospital bill came to KD 125,500.

"Obviously we weren't able to pay the hospital bill because we do not have money due to this pandemic. We are struggling even to bring food to the table and pay the rent," Hannah explained. Since she

had no money, she left after signing a promissory note saying she'll return to pay the bill.

"They finally allowed us to leave, but only after I promised that I will pay the bill in two weeks' time. But the problem is I went home without medicine, because they said they can only dispense the medicine once the bill is paid," she said. "Until now, I have no medicine for her, because I have to get the money first, then go back to the hospital to pay. Only then can I get the medicine," she said.

Hannah said her father has been residing in Kuwait since 1975 and that all of them pay medical insurance required before renewing their residencies. Hannah's mother-in-law underwent a series of tests including ECG, ultrasound and urine tests. Expats are required to pay for each test as well as for their stay

in the hospital and for seeing the doctor.

Expats in Kuwait have to pay a KD 10 fee to access medical treatment at government hospitals in Kuwait. The said fees were only KD 2 before 2017, when the new healthcare regulation was imposed. According to the health ministry, the aim of the fee increase is to cut congestion at public hospitals and allow government-run clinics to take in more patients. Along with this new regulation came an increase in medical test fees, charges for hospital beds when admitted, and several others.

"I want to ask the Kuwaiti government - if they want to charge us this huge amount of money, why are they taking health insurance from us when we renew our parents' visas. I hope they reconsider the payment, especially for people who have served

Kuwait for many years," Hannah told Kuwait Times.

Just for seeing a doctor, a public hospital charges a patient KD 10, and if there's no serious problem, they can go home. But if there are alarming health issues, the patient is placed under observation and a series of tests are conducted. From those tests, the doctor will determine if admission is needed. If admitted, staying in a general ward costs KD 10 per day.

Additional charges will be registered including for tests conducted, and payment will be itemized depending on the number of procedures taken - for example for the urine and blood tests, a patient will pay KD 12, for an ultrasound, KD 10, etc. On the day of discharge, the patient will get a breakdown of the bill.

Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 55,508 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of yesterday, in addition to 393 deaths. With the exception of 148 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, 45,356 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 9,759 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 in 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 Mohammad 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 starting from March 12, 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 facemasks, 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)

Medicine delivery

Kuwait's Ministry of Health (MOH) launched a new medicine delivery service for people in Kuwait, which they can use to order medications to be delivered during curfew hours. The medications will be delivered within 72 hours after the order is submitted. To place an order, patients should send a WhatsApp to the numbers for the hospitals and medical centers as listed below. The patient should include their name, Civil ID number, hospital or clinic file number, mobile phone number and the medicine needed to the following numbers:

- Amiri Hospital: 50880699
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital: 50880755
- Farwaniya Hospital: 50880852
- Adan Hospital: 50880908
- Jahra Hospital: 50881066
- Sabah Hospital: 97632660
- Jaber Hospital: 96992079
- Ibn Sina Hospital: 99613948
- Chest Hospital: 99258749
- Razi Hospital: 97633487
- Kuwait Cancer Control Center: 96735242
- Psychiatric Hospital: 97350113
- Physiotherapy Hospital: 99824037
- Maternity Hospital: 98559531
- As'ad Al-Hamad Dermatology Center: 98514508
- Zain Hospital: 97552031
- NBK Hospital: 96931761
- Al-Rashed Allergy Hospital: 94162470
- Infectious Diseases Hospital: 96989164
- Palliative Care Hospital: 94024786
- Sabah Al-Ahmad Urology Center: 90952469
- KFH Addiction Treatment Center: 94169363

Meanwhile, all licensed pharmacies in Kuwait delivering medicine are allowed to continue their services 24 hours a day. The Ministry of Health is also asking doctors and nurses affiliated with the private medical sector to volunteer in order to contribute to the fight against the virus. Volunteering is available through the link: <http://volunteering.q8-health.com>. The ministry had closed all private clinics and medical centers effective March 22, 2020 until further notice.

Mental health assistance

The Kuwait Center for Mental Health provides help through its suicide hotline: 24621770 (8 am - 5 pm). Meanwhile, the Kuwait Psychological Association (KPA) is providing consultation through the phone for people suffering from the psychological impacts of coronavirus. Different doctors are working on the hotline in different timings as follows:

- Dr Rashed Al-Sahl: on Monday and Wednesday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. Call 9797-6168.
 - Dr Fahad Al-Tasha: daily from 8:00 pm - 12:00 am. Call 9904-8258.
 - Dr Othman Al-Asfour: daily 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Call 9938-5350.
 - Dr Mohammed Al-Khalidi (head of this team): daily 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. Call 9903-6470.
 - Dr Ahmad Al-Khalidi: daily 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Call 9910-7965.
 - Dr Muneera Al-Qattan: Monday and Wednesday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Call 9953-3108.
 - Dr Zainab Al-Saffar: Sunday and Thursday 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Call 9954-9908.
 - Dr Sameera Al-Kandari: Tuesday 9:00 pm - 12:00 am. Call 6770-9434.
 - Dr Kawthar Al-Yaqout: Monday and Wednesday 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Call 5521-0088.
- For information and other concerns, call 9401-4283.

In My View

Be careful



By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com

Yesterday morning while I was driving to work in downtown Kuwait, I noticed a driver driving erratically - with the full meaning of that word - so when at a point I was next to him keeping in mind to try to get away from him, he motioned to me to stop. I obliged, which is something that one should be careful nowadays because of several factors including the coronavirus and crime. The man seemed to be normal, in good health and frankly was not under the influence of anything.

He asked me if there was anything wrong with me. What?! I told him I am ok and thanked him for his care, and said that you also should drive straight and have control, because I thought something is wrong with you! There was something wrong with him, as it did not take more than three kilometers before he was pulled over by two police patrols!

I mentioned the story to remind myself first and all my friends out there to always be careful on the road, be aware of what's going on and not stop when not absolutely necessary. If there is something wrong with somebody, you can call for police help and they will take care of everything. Just a reminder.

In my previous article, I wrote about some sayings that can translate into wisdom. Allow me to continue today with writing some more of what I consider as food for thought.

• As you let some foods to cool down a little so they can be easier to eat, let some differences subside to become easier to resolve.

• Beautiful things are within us and not in events - when we have a beautiful eye we see everything beautiful, and when we have a satisfied spirit, we will accept the least of things.

• Relations are not measured by how long they are - rather by their effect and beautiful manners.

• Whoever shows interest in you, do not neglect them.

• The elegance of the tongue is an interpretation of the elegance of soul, so during a dialogue do not raise your voice - rather raise the level of your words.

• They said: Poor are those do not know English - they may have difficulty in understanding people, and I say: Poor are those who do not know Arabic - they may find difficulty in understanding the words of the Lord of the people.

• Good hearts are like gold - they never rust even if they become exhausted, because a mere wipe with a good word brings their glitter back again.

Finally, allow me on a personal note to express how happy I am that today marks the first month of the birth of my first female granddaughter Lana, who arrived after three boys. Lana and her parents live in Florida, and I pray to Almighty Allah to protect them and the entire humanity from the pandemic and give those in authority the wisdom to fight it the right way!

Thank you.

Assembly cancels session after...

Continued from Page 1

The government has said that it wants to use KD 8 billion to meet the budget deficit and the remaining KD 12 billion for devel-

opment projects. The panel is also preparing to cancel a requirement that 10 percent of revenues should be transferred to the Future Generations Fund. Adasani is also accusing the finance minister of not sending all documents to the public prosecution regarding the major scandal of the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund.

Adasani said yesterday that all issues related to the Malaysian fund scandal should be opened and debated. His state-

ment comes after the public prosecution yesterday freed the two main suspects in the case on KD 50,000 bail each pending further investigations. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari meanwhile held the prime minister and the interior minister responsible for preventing the two suspects from fleeing the country after the public prosecution freed them on bail. He said the scandal has international ramifications and has tarnished Kuwait's image.

Melt yields old headlines...

Continued from Page 1

Mottin has put on display at the Cabane du Cerro. He said he preferred to share his finds with visitors rather than "hide them in an attic waiting to sell them" - something

he said had become a "business" for less scrupulous climbers. Human remains were found in the area in 2017 that could have come from the 1964 crash or that of another Indian plane, the Malabar Princess, that came down in the same area in 1950.

The most stunning find occurred in 2013, that of a box of precious stones - emeralds, sapphires and rubies worth between \$145,000 and \$275,000 - thought to have come from the 1966 crash. — AFP

Local

Education Ministry looks to speed up optical fibers project for fast e-learning

University students exempted from 2020-2021 fall semester

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Saud Al-Harbi announced taking measures to eliminate obstacles stopping the optical fibers project, which is essential to proceed with e-learning, after completing about 80 percent of it in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications (MoC). This came in a press statement after Harbi's meeting Sunday with the supervisors of the project for installing optical fibers networks from the MoC, in the presence of the MoE Acting Undersecretary Dr Bader Al-Mutairi.



Education Minister Dr Saud Al-Harbi

Harbi underlined the need for this project since it is linked to the ministry's plan for e-learning and distance education, considering that it is part of the government's e-transformation program, linking educational agencies and schools to facilitate services and develop the educational process. Previously, the ministry accomplished vital steps, then it stopped for technical matters, which led to the delay in its completion, but all obstacles will be resolved with MoC to work on it and operate it soon, he noted.

Extremely fast

Meanwhile, the project's superintendent Maali Al-Jasser said in a statement that the project was launched in 2012, with an implementation period of 18 months, aiming to connect all Kuwaiti schools and the ministry's general office with optical fibers. This network is ex-

tremely fast as the student, teacher and administrator can benefit from it to transfer information electronically, nonetheless the ministry is in the process of extending the time completion, Jasser indicated.

The education ministry has asked grade 12 students to register in an online platform it recently launched as it prepares to potentially launch online classes before allowing high school seniors to take their finals by September. The education ministry had suspended school on March 1, with the current plan is to resume classes in August for grade 12 and October for other stages. However, the ministry is widely expected to make an announcement in the coming days to end the school year for all stages except for grade 12, while rescheduling the finals for grade 12 students in September after

completing the remaining curricula through online classes next month. Over 95 percent of eligible 12 grade students have registered in the online platform, the education ministry had announced last week. Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Special and Qualitative Education in the Ministry of Education Dr Abdul Mohsen Al-Huwaila announced Sunday the activation of e-learning in Arab schools, with the participation of 45 private schools and 7,190 students.

Exemption

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Higher Education announced Sunday that university students registered for the fall semester of the academic year 2020-2021 online and those due to file for accrediting their certificates later on would be exempted from studying a number of subjects.

In this regard, the ministry's official spokesperson and assistant undersecretary for cultural affairs, accreditation and scholarships Fatima Al-Sannan said the decision was made by the accreditation committee during its meeting last Thursday and that it was taken upon reports from Kuwait cultural offices abroad concerning many universities in scholarship countries shifting to online learning. Sannan added that the current dangerous health situation worldwide prompted the health ministry to recommend avoiding travel, and thus the decision was made to exempt the fall semester from the mini-

mum number of subjects to be studied as per the ministry regulations.

Further, Sannan pointed that the Ministry of Higher Education met Sunday with US embassy representatives to discuss the US immigration department's recent decision on the departure of international students from the

US if they can do the fall semester online. She added that the embassy representatives responded to many questions in this regard and that coordination is still in progress with the embassy to prepare those responses and circulate them amongst Kuwaiti students in the US.



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Masato Takaoka visited Kuwait Times yesterday and discussed matters of mutual concern with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ACK earned re-accreditation from leading body

KUWAIT: The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) has earned re-accreditation for a further three years from one of the world's leading people management accreditation bodies, the Investors in People. The results demonstrate ACK's commitment to quality through the talent management framework implemented by the Human Resources Department, which is aligned with global best practices.

Founded in 2004, ACK is one of Kuwait's leading higher education providers with over 400 employees. It has evolved to become a pioneer in providing higher education in the disciplines of Engineering, Aviation, Maritime and Business studies.

ACK is committed to establishing excellence in teaching, expanding its academic environment, and sup-

porting research and innovation. In addition, ACK strives to provide a career nourishing experience for their staff members where career paths are clearly defined, staff recognition and engagement initiatives are utmost and professional development opportunities are identified and implemented.

Investors in People is the international standard for people management, defining what it takes to lead, support and manage people effectively to achieve sustainable results. Underpinning the standard is the Investors in People framework, reflecting the latest workplace trends, essential skills and effective structures required to outperform in any industry. Investors in People enables organizations to benchmark against the best in the business on an international scale.

On this Occasion, CEO of Investors in People, Paul Devoy, said: "We'd like to congratulate the Australian College of Kuwait. Being accredited with "We invest in people" is a remarkable effort for any organization, and places ACK in fine company with a host of organizations that understand the value of people."

From his end, the President of ACK, Professor Isam Zabalawi welcomed the news, congratulating the ACK community for its commitment and hard work. "ACK cannot offer the best learning environment for students



unless it has the best team of staff members," Professor Isam Zabalawi said. "Individual dedication is not enough. There must also be a strong sense of teamwork. The one thing better than a team of champions is a champion team. This conforms with our value of enabling human

potential within a culture of care. Retaining this accreditation reaffirms our commitment to attract, retain the best talent, and foster a healthy working environment. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Human Resources team for this great accomplishment."

News in brief

Suicide hotline launched

KUWAIT: Kuwait Center for Mental Health launched a suicide hotline at: 24621770, urging people suffering from mental distress to reach out daily between 8am-5pm. This service is highly confidential, and the callers will be greeted by a nurse who will take down their details, before a doctor calls back within a few minutes, it explained.

Observations settled

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh said Sunday that 80 percent of observations made by the State Audit Bureau were settled for the past fiscal year, and five tenders were transferred to Public Prosecution. In statements on his Twitter account, Saleh said that some 20 percent of the regulatory observations were partially settled as well.

Nineteen flights

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that 19 flights were scheduled to depart Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying a total of 3,599 passengers. They included seven flights to Egypt, three flights to India, two flights to Pakistan, two flights to Nepal, two flights to the UAE, one flight to Qatar, one flight to Jordan, and one flight to Lebanon.

Shops closed

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality said Sunday it closed 18 shops in Hawally Governorate in June for violating preventive measures designed to curb spread of coronavirus. The Municipality said in a statement its teams have also registered 133 fines and 565 warnings for shops, coffee shops, hair dressers, restaurants, grocery shops, markets, butchers and fish shops for failing to abide by coronavirus-related regulations of the Ministry of Health and the Cabinet. The Municipality said its teams were conducting regular inspections to make sure retailers were abiding by the regulations.

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Local

Kuwait companies pin hope on Q4 of 2020 trading: Experts

Global recession had direct impact on investment activities

KUWAIT: Several companies listed in the Bourse Kuwait are pinning hope on trading of the last quarter of 2020 to compensate decline in their shares' prices due to repercussions of coronavirus to avoid impacts on yearly profits, economists said. In separate interviews, they said that the global economic recession had a direct impact on the investment activities of these companies, so their chairpersons of boards of directors took preventive measures to reduce the losses caused by the crisis.

Salah Al-Sultan, an advisor at Arzak Capital company, extolled the rapid measures taken by the Kuwaiti government to absorb the shock against local economic sectors, similar to the steps taken by a number of governments across the globe as a result of the repercussions of the pandemic on all activities. He added that the technical part of the trading of the market's stocks witnessed variables during the past seven months of 2020 that can be divided into three levels: The successive setbacks due to the unclear vision vis-a-vis the pandemic, the attempts to compensate losses of portfolios and funds for the first quarter as well as the return of selective purchase during the current period. He noted that most transactions in all movements at the market were speculative and on the cheapest stocks, adding that this method is still present and will remain for a period of time due to the repercussions of the coronavirus in the world. He urged people to be careful and not to enter into buying or selling operations until they find real opportunities.

Meanwhile, member of the board of directors at Sorouh Educational Company, Sulaiman Al-

Wuqayan said the pace of trading at the market was greatly affected during the first quarter of 2020, but the impact reduced as traders understood steps taken to decrease the losses of stocks. He anticipated a balance in the economic cycle in the last quarter due to banks' solid ability to finance companies, including those in the real estate sector. Chairman of Traders Association Mohammad Al-Tarrah expected the market would



Measures taken to reduce losses

return to the positive performance during the last quarter of 2020, when the economic cycle will be back to normal.

This will have a quick movement on some pivotal and driving sectors of the market, topped with the banking sector and investment, as they are the basic trading, he noted. He said that the technical track of the market performance during the fourth quarter of 2020 would rely heavily on major companies' announcements of contracts and projects thus making their stocks lucrative for buyers.



KUWAIT: A photo taken on July 11, 2020, shows the tops of the Liberation Tower and other landmark skyscrapers in Kuwait City at sunrise. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Many service companies and banks managed to overcome the crisis due to their projects and price levels at the market, he made clear. They try to

end the final quarter with the same pace so as to guarantee better distributions to their shareholders, he said. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister Mubarak Al-Haris and DGCA officials tour Kuwait International Airport. — KUNA

Minister inspects preparations for resuming flights

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Services Affairs and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Mubarak Al-Haris on Sunday praised preparations of the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for resuming commercial flights next month. In a statement to the press while meeting DGCA officials, the minister said that relevant preparations were in full swing.

Haris also toured Kuwait International Airport after the meeting to inspect the preparations taken there ahead of commercial flights' resumption by August 1. This visit came to get the latest developments, technical and professional preparations at Kuwait International Airport, the minister said, adding that relevant requirements would be met in order to curb the coronavirus COVID-19. Haris stressed the importance of providing necessary high-quality services to travelers in all terminals, and ensuring safe operations in line with health standards. During the meeting, they briefed the minister on the DGCA's plan for the return of commercial flights in accordance with the cabinet decision regarding the plan for a gradual return to normal life in the country. Haris stressed the importance of following all protective and precautionary measures issued by the health authorities. — KUNA

KOC cut 25% of budget, 18% of operating plan

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) said yesterday it succeeded in cutting 25 percent of its budget as well as slashing around 18 percent of its operating budget for the fiscal year 2020-2021, all with objective of contributing to "the state's financial stability." KOC was reacting, in a statement, to a local newspaper report that it cancelled huge projects after spending hefty sums on designs, which allegedly reflected "lack of experience and failure to plan."

State-owned KOC underlined keenness to execute its strategic plan which aimed at maintaining and increasing production as part of a five-year plan. It said the five-year plan included these

reported projects but the global economic recession caused by outbreak of coronavirus resulted in record drop of oil prices, which largely affected State of Kuwait's revenues. These extraordinary circumstances forced the Government of the State of Kuwait to direct all state institutions, including Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiary companies, to review its capitals and operating budgets, said KOC.

Accordingly, it said, KOC specified the important projects and postponed others including those under the designing process but "in a way that would not affect its medium-term strategic objectives." KOC said it also cut 25 percent of its capital budget and 18 percent of operating budget. KOC will always carry out its projects with the objective of maintaining and ultimately increasing production, and therefore will keep on reviewing its five-year plan in line with circumstances of the global market, as well as setting the best time to decide upon its "postponed projects including those who were already designed." — KUNA

LOYAC launches program for social entrepreneurship

KUWAIT: For the fifth year in a row and in collaboration with Babson College-USA, LOYAC recently launched its "KON" program for social entrepreneurship, which is sponsored by NBK, Agility and Zain. In view of the health precautions due to COVID-19, the program will be open online for students aged 12-16.

In this regard, LOYAC's General Manager Al-Razi Al-Bedaiwi said that the program targets children aged 12-16 and helps develop their talents and skills, in order to prepare them for the labor market. KON (be) program has a message urging youth to take initiatives, he explained. "An intense curriculum has been prepared in collabo-



Al-Razi Al-Bedaiwi



ration with Babson College for social entrepreneurship, and students will get accredited certificates from the college," he added.

Meanwhile, LOYAC's training and development department manager Iman Al-Omar said that the program has three phases: preparation, academic training on how to make feasibility studies, set budgets and risk management, and finally, displaying participants' projects before a jury panel. "Social entrepreneurship is a basic element in societies seeking to develop tier economies. Performance assessment in this project depends on the social value the project provides for the society rather than on profits," she said, adding that in view of the current health precautions, the program would be presented online through the Zoom app.



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International

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Two US bases on Okinawa locked down over virus

Counting burials: African nations scrambling to track coronavirus

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KARACHI: Islamic religious students wearing facemasks as a preventive measure against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, attend their final examination at an Islamic Jamia Binoria seminary in Karachi yesterday.—AFP

Virus surge sparks S Africa curfew

Spain's Catalonia region under lockdown

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa re-imposed a nationwide curfew on Sunday while Spain's Catalonia region forced hundreds of thousands of residents back into lockdown as coronavirus cases accelerated in many parts of the world. Since the start of July nearly 2.5 million new infections have been reported, a record level since the first outbreak of the disease in China last year, according to an AFP tally. In just a month-and-a-half the number of cases worldwide has doubled, according to the count based on official figures.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said his country faced a "coronavirus storm" that was "far fiercer and more destructive than any we have known before" as he re-imposed a night-time curfew and also a ban on alcohol sales lifted barely six weeks ago. "As we head towards the peak of infections, it is vital that we do not burden our clinics and hospitals with alcohol-related injuries," Ramaphosa said. New coronavirus infections have topped 12,000 per day—or 500 per hour—in South Africa in recent days, making it the fourth-biggest contributor to new worldwide cases after the United States, Brazil and India.

The government of Spain's Catalonia region on Sunday

told residents in and around the northeastern town of Lerida to go back into home confinement. "The people must stay at home," regional health official Alba Verges said. The area, with a population of more than 200,000, had already been isolated from the rest of the region last weekend. US President Donald Trump meanwhile wore a face mask in public for the first time, during a Saturday visit to wounded veterans in a hospital outside Washington.

Surveys show most Americans are unhappy with how Trump, who is trailing Democrat Joe Biden in opinion polls ahead of the November election, has handled the public health crisis. The United States is the world's worst-hit country with 135,171 deaths from 3,301,820 cases. Despite the resurgent infections, the Trump administration is pressing for full reopening of schools, with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos warning that "families need for kids to get back in the classroom. And it can be done safely." London-based charity Save the Children



Coronavirus cases accelerate in many parts of the world

warned that the pandemic has caused an "unprecedented education emergency" with up to 9.7 million children affected by school closures at risk of never going back to class. Across the planet, the pandemic has infected nearly 13 million people, killed over 566,000 and triggered massive economic damage in the seven months since it was detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan. Mexico became the country with the fourth-highest number of COVID-19 fatalities in the world on Sunday, climbing to a total of 35,006 deaths and surpassing Italy. The latest-high profile personality to test positive for COVID-19 was Bollywood superstar and former Miss World Aishwarya Rai.

Despite Sunday's lockdown move in Spain, life in parts of Europe has been returning to some semblance of normality, although the continent remains the worst affected with more than 202,000 deaths from over 2.8 million cases. Elections were held in Spain and Poland on Sunday after being postponed because of the virus, with strict hy-

giene measures in place. The tourism industry across Europe has been battered, with many businesses forced to shut because of the impact of punishing lockdowns. "Everything's dead," said Jesus Maldonado, owner of the Santos Bar just across from the Mesquite, the mosque-cathedral in the Spanish city of Cordoba. In neighboring France, where reopened bars and restaurants are bustling in the summer heat, officials have warned of rising cases as the death toll topped 30,000.

The French government said it plans to introduce systematic testing at airports for visitors from so-called category "red" countries where COVID-19 is still prevalent. In Paris, demonstrating nightclub workers demanded a reopening of their venues, arguing that strictly-controlled club visits would be safer than unregulated beach parties. Across the border in Germany, Berlin offered financial help for the city's famous nightclubs which have remained shut for four months. In Iran, the supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the situation was "truly tragic" and urged all citizens to help stem what has been the Middle East's deadliest outbreak. There is little chance of a 100-percent effective coronavirus vaccine by next year, a French expert meanwhile warned Sunday. —AFP

Iran's Khamenei urges fight against 'tragic' virus resurgence

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Sunday called the resurgence of the novel coronavirus in the country "truly tragic" and urged all citizens to help stem what has been the region's deadliest outbreak. "Let everyone play their part in the best way to break the chain of transmission in the short term and save the country," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a video conference with lawmakers in the capital Tehran.

Iran has been struggling to contain the outbreak since announcing its first cases in February, and has reported more than 12,800 deaths since then. Khamenei's speech was his first to MPs since the new parliament took office at the end of May, dominated by conservatives and ultra-conservatives elected in February polls. According to his official site, Khamenei praised healthcare workers for "their sacrifices".

But he also strongly criticized "some people who do not even do something as simple as wearing a mask", saying he felt "ashamed" of such behavior. Khamenei's comments came as infections have again been on the rise in Iran since early May. According to figures announced Sunday, 194 deaths from the COVID-19 disease and 2,186 new cases were recorded in the past 24 hours. The health ministry announced a record 221 deaths in a single day on Thursday.

In total, 257,303 cases have been reported in the country, including 12,829 deaths, health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said Sunday in a televised press conference. The rising toll has prompted authorities to make masks mandatory in enclosed public spaces and to allow the hardest-hit provinces to reimpose other measures against the virus. Iran had closed schools, cancelled public events and banned movement between its 31 provinces in March, but the government progressively lifted restrictions from April to reopen its sanctions-hit economy. On Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani said the country could not



TEHRAN: A handout picture shows Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei wearing a protective mask amid the COVID-19 pandemic, during a virtual meeting with lawmakers in the capital Tehran. — AFP

afford to shut down the economy, even as the outbreak worsened. Iran must continue "economic, social and cultural activities while observing health protocols", Rouhani said during a televised virus taskforce meeting. But he reminded Iranians that restrictions, such as a ban on public and private gatherings, remained in place. "Gatherings, whether for funerals, weddings, parties, seminars or festivals are all harmful" to public health, Rouhani said. Authorities have previously reported the spread of the virus in areas where such bans had been ignored.

On Sunday, Khamenei also told lawmakers that "parliament has the right to question... but is not permitted to insult or slander government officials". His comments came a week after a session in which MPs heckled Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, largely over his key role in negotiating a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The deal had given the Islamic republic relief from international sanctions in return for limits on its nuclear program, but Iranian conservatives staunchly opposed the multilateral agreement, arguing the US could never be trusted. The US unilaterally abandoned the accord in 2018 as a prelude to reimposing biting sanctions. — AFP

Houthis allow UN team to visit 'time bomb' tanker

DUBAI: Yemen's Houthi rebels have given UN inspectors the green light to inspect a decaying oil tanker abandoned off the coast with 1.1 million barrels of crude on board which experts say could rupture at any time. A breach of the vessel would have disastrous results for Red Sea marine life and tens of thousands of impoverished people who depend on fishing for their livelihood. The 45-year-old FSO Safer is anchored off the port of Hodeida under the control of the Iran-backed Houthis, who have previously blocked efforts to send inspectors to assess its condition.

The UN Security Council will hold a special meeting on July 15 to discuss the crisis, after water entered the vessel's engine room "which could have led to disaster", UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Friday. Dujarric said prospects had been revived for an inspection team to conduct light repairs and determine the next steps, and a UN source said Sunday that the Houthis had agreed to the visit. "They officially approved the visit of the UN assessment and repair team to the tanker," the source told AFP on Sunday. Effectively a floating storage platform, the Safer has had virtually no maintenance for five years since war broke out in the country where the Houthis have seized much of the north from the internationally recognized government. The Yemen government has warned the Safer could explode and cause "the largest environmental disaster regionally and globally". Top Houthi leader Mohammed Ali Al-Houthi said on Twitter last month that the rebels want guarantees the vessel will be repaired and that the value of the oil on board is used to pay salaries of their employees.

The market value of the oil is now estimated at \$40 million, half what it was before crude prices crashed, although experts say poor quality could push it even lower. Like other economic and aid issues in Yemen, the plight of the

tanker has become a bargaining chip, with the Houthis accused of using the threat of disaster to secure control of the value of the cargo. Yemeni Prime Minister Maen Abdulmalik Saeed on Thursday said the money for the oil should be spent on health and humanitarian projects.

'Ticking time bomb'

Apart from corrosion to the ageing vessel, essential work on reducing explosive gases in the storage tanks has been neglected for years. Experts said the latest problem emerged in May with a leak in a cooling pipe. "The pipe burst, sending water into the engine room and creating a really dangerous situation," said Ian Ralby, CEO of IR Consultium, a global maritime consultancy which follows the vessel closely.

A team from Yemen's Safer Exploration and Production Operations, a public oil company partly controlled by the Houthis, sent divers in to fix the leak, narrowly avoiding the ship sinking, Ralby said. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned last week that if the tanker ruptures "it will devastate the Red Sea ecosystem" and disrupt key shipping lanes. "The Houthis must grant access before this ticking time bomb explodes," he said.

Hodeida port is a lifeline for northern Yemen with 90 percent of all supplies coming through it. Any disruption would inflict further hardship on a country which is again on the brink of famine after long years of conflict. If the vessel ruptures "you're going to have two catastrophes", said Lise Grande, the UN's humanitarian coordinator for Yemen. "There's going to be an environmental catastrophe that's bigger than almost any other similar kind... and it's going to be a humanitarian catastrophe because that oil will make the port of Hodeida unusable," she said. Independent Yemen-based environmental group Holm Akhdar - Arabic for "Green Dream" - warned an oil spill could stretch out from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and into the Arabian Sea. The region's ecology would need over 30 years to recover from an oil spillage of that size, it said in a recent report, adding that about 115 of Yemen's Red Sea islands would lose their biodiversity and natural habitats. In a country where the majority of people already rely on aid to survive, an estimated 126,000 fishermen, including 68,000 in Hodeida, would lose their only source of income. —AFP

International

Counting burials: African nations scrambling to track coronavirus

Doctor tracks deaths by monitoring burials at city graveyards

ADDIS ABABA: Long after the funding for his project was frozen, Bilal Endris has kept a lonely watch over cemeteries in Ethiopia's capital by slipping cash to gravediggers to alert his team to any sudden spikes in burials. In a nation where fewer than 2% of deaths are registered, an increase in burials may be one of the first signs that a killer disease is on the loose. The program was set up to monitor deaths related to HIV/AIDS a decade ago. Now doctor Bilal monitors for a spike in fatalities linked to COVID-19. He has yet to see one, but projects like his are being set up in other African countries where many deaths go unrecorded, making it hard to assess the scale of a disease. In some cases, nations are dusting off programs set up during Ebola outbreaks.

Bilal himself has secured additional funding to restore the program to all 73 of Addis Ababa's cemeteries from just 10 now. Only eight countries in Africa - Algeria, Cape Verde, Djibouti, Egypt, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa - record more than 75% of deaths, according to the United Nations. In other regions, where official data is readily available, researchers have used the number of deaths from all causes that exceed the average for the time of year to help gauge the number linked to the coronavirus pandemic.

"In Ethiopia and everywhere across Africa ... we go blind," Bilal told Reuters. "I wanted to turn the health care system into one based on evidence." In the capital Addis Ababa, less than 20% of deaths

occur in hospitals, Bilal said, so monitoring deaths requires talking to community leaders and burial grounds. In Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, media reports citing gravediggers alerted authorities to an undetected COVID-19 outbreak in the northern city of Kano in April, when deaths surged from a daily average of 11 to 43.

Counting the dead

Bilal's project began tracking burials at all graveyards in Addis Ababa a decade ago. But in 2018, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) froze its funding, as the country had started using other methods to track HIV mortality, according to a CDC spokeswoman. Bilal scaled back his surveillance to 10 cemeteries and began working for free, paying sources with a tiny grant from Addis Ababa University - until May. City officials called him for a meeting, desperate to know whether COVID-19 was cutting swathes through their city, he said. The Ministry of Health did not respond to requests for comment.

Although official figures are still low - 6,973 confirmed cases and 120 deaths as of Thursday night - Ethiopia's outbreak is accelerating. The university has now given Bilal enough support to restart the program in all 73 graveyards. "It used to be funded by the CDC but now it is funded by Addis Ababa University as everyone, including the government, thinks the program is very important," said Dr Wondwossen Amogne, an associate professor in



PORT ELIZABETH: Sello Headbush (unseen), the owner of a Funeral Parlor uses the light from his mobile phone during load shedding to check on a heap of discarded personal protective equipment (PPE) left on a stretcher in front of the cold storage room in Port Elizabeth. "People were not taking this seriously" said the owner of the family run business, as numbers in South Africa of COVID-19 related deaths soars. — AFP

infectious diseases at Addis Ababa University and director of research at the university's Black Lion Hospital. Health minister Lia Tadesse confirmed the study was being used by the government to monitor any spikes in death.

As a separate initiative, New York-based public

health initiative Resolve to Save Lives is working with five other African nations to set up similar programs, including Rwanda and Senegal. The other three don't want to be named. They will establish the usual death rate by interviewing community leaders, then watch for spikes. — Reuters

Serbia-Kosovo talks 'back on track' after video meet: EU

BRUSSELS: The EU said Sunday that long-stalled talks between Serbia and Kosovo were "back on track" after a video meeting between the two leaders. Kosovo's Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic held a virtual meeting chaired by senior EU officials as they seek a solution to one of Europe's most intractable territorial disputes. Serbia has refused to recognize Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence since the province broke away in the bloody 1998-99 war that was ended only by a NATO bombing campaign against Serb troops.

Sunday's round follows another virtual meeting held on Friday, attended by French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, as Europe tries to re-energize a process that has stalled for nearly two years. The EU's special representative for the dialogue, Miroslav Lajcak, thanked Vucic and Hoti for their "constructive engagement". "I'm glad to say that after the Paris summit and today's meeting, the EU-facilitated dialogue on comprehensive normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo is back on track after 20 months," Lajcak said in a video statement from Brussels after the talks.

Hoti told reporters in Pristina that he believed the dialogue could resolve the outstanding problems and that Kosovo expected "mutual recognition" with Belgrade. "We are ready to take a seat at the table of dialogue to defend the statehood of Kosovo and to demand the normalization of relations and the reciprocal recognition between the two countries," Hoti said. Attention now turns to a planned meeting in person between Vucic and Hoti in Brussels on Thursday. "As a result of today's meeting we agreed on the main elements of the process and we also agreed on the agenda of our next meeting," Lajcak said.

No details of the process or agenda were made available immediately. At the start of Sunday's meeting, EU diplomatic chief Josep Borrell, who chaired the talks with Lajcak, called on the two sides to cooperate to find a way forward, saying the lack of a solution was restricting economic progress and risking instability. "These talks will require political courage from both sides, will require commitment and engagement in the spirit of compromise and pragmatism," he said. "It has never been easy to find solutions to problems that have been so lasting and so painful but this is why we are here today - to try again."

'Beginning of the story'

EU efforts to get the two sides to talk productively have dragged on for nearly a decade with little progress, with the most recent effort breaking down in late 2018. Ahead of the meeting, a senior Brussels official warned that significant challenges lay ahead, saying Sunday's talks marked "the beginning of the story". "We've been talking for 10 years now without much success - let's hope that now is the good time to make progress," the senior official said. Both Kosovo and Serbia have been facing mounting pressure from the West to resolve the impasse which is seen as crucial to either side joining the EU. The new push comes after prosecutors in The Hague last month charged Kosovo's President Hashim Thaci with war crimes. Thaci's indictment led to the postponement of a White House summit between Serbia and Kosovo that was due to be held at the end of June. — AFP

US federal executions on brink of resuming after 17 years

WASHINGTON: A US appeals court has issued a ruling that would allow for the first federal execution in 17 years yesterday, pending a last-minute application to the Supreme Court. President Donald Trump's administration has scheduled three more executions in the coming months, saying it is acting in the interest of crime victims. Daniel Lee, a 47-year-old white supremacist, was convicted in 1999 of killing a gun dealer, his wife and her eight-year-old daughter in Arkansas. He is scheduled to die by lethal injection at Indiana's Terre Haute prison. Relatives of his victims - including Earlene Peterson, the grandmother of Lee's youngest victim - have asked for the execution to be delayed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But a temporary injunction by the Southern



Daniel Lee

prison is safe, he said. "The federal government has put this family in the untenable position of choosing between their right to witness Danny Lee's execution and their own health and safety," Kurrus said.

It comes as the Bureau of Prisons said Sunday a member of Terre Haute prison staff had tested positive for the virus. Most offences

in the US are tried at the state level but the federal government takes up the most serious cases, such as terror

attacks or racist crimes. The last execution at federal level was in 2003. In the last 45 years, only three people have been put to death by the federal government, including Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted of bombing a federal government building in 1995, killing 168 people, and executed in 2001. "There's no reason for anybody to be carrying out executions right now because of the pandemic," said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, accusing Trump's administration of "political use of the death penalty."

Trump faces a tough election in November to secure a second term in office. Peterson, the mother and grandmother of Lee's victims, opposes the sentence and has asked the administration several times to grant him clemency. A Trump supporter, she called on the president to intervene: "The scheduled execution of Danny Lee for the murder of my daughter and granddaughter is not what I want and would bring my family more pain." — AFP



SKOPJE: Zoran Zaev (left), leader of the ruling SDSM party greets supporters during an election campaign rally in Skopje. — AFP

North Macedonia: PM, the protege and the analyst

SKOPJE: North Macedonia heads to the polls tomorrow in its first parliamentary election since the country added "North" to its name to end a long-running row with Greece more than a year ago. Yet the campaign has instead been overshadowed by a second surge of coronavirus cases. Social Democrat leader Zoran Zaev is hoping to renew his premiership but faces a stiff challenge from the right-wing opposition led by Hristijan Mickoski. The country's third-largest party, which represents the ethnic Albanian minority and has played a traditional kingmaker role in previous elections, is also running a prime minister candidate. Here are the main players:

Zoran Zaev

Former prime minister and leader of the Social Democrats, Zoran Zaev hails from the eastern city of Strumica, where his family is one of the country's top producers of ajvar, a red pepper relish beloved in the Balkans. He entered politics in 2003, eventually becoming a three-term mayor of his hometown and then leader of the Social Democrats in 2013. He rose to the top office in 2017 after helping oust the right-wing strongman Nikola Gruevski, who dominated North Macedonia for a decade until 2016.

But Zaev's next challenge was even tougher, pushing through legislation to add "North" to the country's name in order to end a decades-old argu-

ment with Greece, who claimed exclusive rights to the name Macedonia for its own province. The EU had promised to start membership talks with North Macedonia in exchange for the historic accord, a painful compromise for many in the Balkan state. So when the bloc failed to do so in October, a red-faced Zaev called a snap poll and stepped down. Several months later the EU finally gave the green-light. Yet his party is still polling neck-and-neck with its right-wing rivals, VMRO-DPMNE.

Hristijan Mickoski

A protege of former strongman Gruevski, who has since fled a corruption sentence and sought refuge in Hungary, Hristijan Mickoski is now chief of the exiled leader's right-wing VMRO-DPMNE. As head of the opposition the 42-year-old has focused on lambasting the name-change deal with Greece as "treason" and accusing the Social Democrats of corruption. Born in 1977 in the capital Skopje, Mickoski is a professor at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Skopje, a job and degree he received while working as an assistant to his father in the faculty, drawing accusations of nepotism. Under the slogan "The renewal is coming", he is hoping to win over voters who are still angry about the name-change and a separate deal with Bulgaria to work out their own tussles over history and heritage. But he has stopped short of threatening to repeal the name-change accord with Athens which ushered North Macedonia into NATO and has put it on path to EU membership talks.

Out of politics for more than 10 years, Naser Ziberi has come back with a bang as the proposed prime minister candidate of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI). — AFP

Amid Stone flap, US senator to allow Mueller testimony

WASHINGTON: The Republican chairman of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee said Sunday that he will accede to Democrats' request to call former special counsel Robert Mueller to testify, after Mueller offered a rare public defense of the Russia collusion probe he led. "Apparently Mr. Mueller is willing - and also capable - of defending the Mueller investigation through an op-ed in the Washington Post," Senator Lindsey Graham said in a statement.

Though the committee's Republican majority had previously said it was time to move on, Graham said the Democrats' repeated requests for Mueller to appear would now be granted. It was unclear what Graham's motivations were, or indeed whether Mueller - who has maintained silence on the matter since testifying reluctantly and in measured terms before Congress last July - would necessarily appear. Graham, once sharply critical of Donald Trump, is now considered a close confidant of the president. Democrats were outraged when Trump on Friday commuted the jail sentence of a friend and political ally, Roger Stone, who faced a 40-month jail term after being convicted on seven felony charges flowing from the Mueller investigation. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the commutation a case of "staggering corruption." Only a few Republicans have spoken up against Trump's move.

A White House statement Friday about the Stone matter denounced the Mueller probe as part of a "witch hunt" by "overzealous prosecutors" looking into what Trump has often called the "Russia hoax." The two-year-long Mueller investigation did not establish collusion between Trump's campaign team and Russia. But Mueller said it did establish that Moscow had intervened in efforts to boost Trump's election chances; and he pointedly said it did not exonerate Trump of obstruction of justice. The latest round of White House criticism apparently prompted Mueller to break his longtime silence.

In The Washington Post op-ed published Sunday, he defended his probe as being of "paramount importance," dismissing White House claims that he was out to get Trump or his allies. "Stone was prosecuted and convicted because he committed federal crimes," including lying to Congress about his contacts with WikiLeaks and with "individuals known to us to be Russian intelligence officers." "He remains a convicted felon, and rightly so," Mueller wrote. Prosecutors, he added, "acted with the highest integrity. Claims to the contrary are false." — AFP

International

Malaysia PM unseats speaker in a crucial 'test of support'

Uncertainty over PM's ability to push through policies

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin cleared a major hurdle in parliament yesterday, with lawmakers narrowly backing his bid to remove the lower house speaker in a vote seen as an important barometer of his support. While not officially a confidence vote, the outcome - a win by just two votes - was the first real litmus test of how much legislative support Muhyiddin could muster to push through policies and government business. Muhyiddin's bid to remove speaker Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof, who was appointed by the previous administration led by Mahathir Mohamad, was backed by 111 lawmakers, with 109 against it.

Southeast Asia's third-largest economy has been grappling with political uncertainty since Muhyiddin, who was part of Mahathir's administration, was unexpectedly made prime minister in March. Muhyiddin forged an alliance with the graft-tainted UMNO party that was defeated in a 2018 election. The opposition has accused him of grabbing power by shifting alliances instead of earning it at the ballot box. The win, however, has done little to ease the uncertainty and only reinforces how slim Muhyiddin's majority is in parliament.

He is preparing for snap election by the end of

the year to seek a firm mandate, Singapore's Straits Times newspaper reported in June, amid questions over his legislative clout. Mahathir has pushed for a confidence vote on Muhyiddin's leadership, but the



Bid to remove speaker wins by just 2 votes

premier avoided that in the last parliament session in May, when the lower house convened for only one day due to the coronavirus pandemic. Mahathir and others in the opposition, including Anwar Ibrahim, have vowed to oust Muhyiddin. Under the federal constitution, a prime minister who has lost the confidence of parliament must dissolve his cabinet, unless requested otherwise by the king.— Reuters



KUALA LUMPUR: In this file handout photo, Malaysia's Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin wears a face mask during the opening ceremony of the third term of the 14th parliamentary session in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia's prime minister narrowly won a vote to remove the parliament speaker during a rowdy session of the legislature July 13, a key test of support for the embattled leader.— AFP

Concern over new Sydney cluster as virus cases surge

SYDNEY: Sydney residents were warned yesterday to put the brakes on partying as a new coronavirus cluster emerged at a city pub on the heels of a major outbreak in Melbourne. Three pubs in Sydney and its surrounds were closed after being linked to outbreaks or failing to comply with social distancing requirements, while other events were under investigation with Australia on edge over a resurgence of the virus.

The new cluster emerged after Melbourne entered a six-week lockdown on Thursday, and surrounding Victoria state was sealed off from the rest of the country in an effort to contain the virus. Authorities reported 177 new infections in and around Melbourne yesterday, marking a week of triple-digit increases.

New South Wales police assistant commissioner Tony Cooke yesterday slammed the "moronic behavior of people at dance parties", after local media published footage of large private get-togethers in Sydney's wealthy eastern suburbs. City residents are allowed a maximum of 20 visitors to their homes under restrictions which have been gradually eased in recent weeks as the number of infections dwindled. At least 21 infections have now been linked to a growing cluster at Sydney's Crossroads Hotel—a popular drinking spot on a major traffic route—raising concern the virus could be spreading in the state.

A dozen military personnel who visited the pub while poised to deploy on an anti-virus mission were yesterday in isolation at an army base in rural New South Wales. The state's police minister David Elliott warned that if the situation was not brought under control, pubs could be closed again. "If we have to close hotels and clubs again, the patrons will have to take some of the ownership of that," he told a press conference yesterday. "I will, however, work to my dying breath to make sure that that doesn't happen." Police have stepped up penalties for breaching coronavirus restrictions in recent days, with almost Aus\$220,000 (\$153,000) in fines handed out across Melbourne in the past 24 hours.— AFP

Disgruntled driver blamed for China bus tragedy

BEIJING: A Chinese bus driver upset that his home would be demolished had been drinking at the wheel before plunging his vehicle into a reservoir, killing 21 people including students heading to their college entrance exams, police said. The bus careered into a lake in the city of Anshun in the southwest province of Guizhou last Tuesday. The driver, surnamed Zhang, "was unhappy about his life and about the demolition of the public-owned house he rented," Anshun city police said in a statement on an official social media account Sunday.

Anshun emergency authorities have said five students heading to their university entrance exams were among those killed, while fifteen other people were hurt. On the morning of the incident, Zhang saw that the house was about to be demolished and rang a government hotline to complain, the police statement said. But police said Zhang had signed an agreement in June authorizing the demolition and had been promised more than 72,000 yuan (\$10,000) in compensation which he left unclaimed. Zhang is suspected of deliberately "conducting an extreme crime", the statement said. Police found that Zhang, 52, had been drinking alcohol while passengers got on and off the bus, the statement said.— AFP



OKINAWA PREFECTURE: Photo shows multi-mission tiltrotor Osprey aircraft at the US Marine's Camp Futenma in a crowded urban area of Ginowan, Okinawa prefecture.— AFP

Two US bases on Okinawa locked down over virus

TOKYO: Two US Marine bases in Japan's Okinawa have been put into lockdown after dozens of coronavirus infections, with local officials criticizing the American military's containment efforts. There are tens of thousands of US servicemen stationed on the southern Japanese island, which has recorded roughly 150 civilian COVID-19 infections. Government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said yesterday that 62 cases have been detected in recent days in US forces, most of them at US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and Camp Hansen. The spike in infections has created tensions with local officials, including Okinawa governor Denny Tamaki.

In response to the outbreak, almost all off-base travel was halted from Sunday, according to guidelines posted on the Marine Corps Installation Pacific Facebook page. Marine Corps service members, dependents, and civilians can move freely on the base but require permission to leave, including for medical appointments. "Those orders are in place until further notice and limit base access and opera-

tions to essential personnel," the force said in a separate post. The post did not specify which bases were affected and US military officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

An Okinawa official said the prefecture had been informed that the order applied to only Futenma and Camp Hansen. He added that the number of forces on the bases is not disclosed for "security reasons." US military presence on the island is a longstanding sore spot, with many in the region arguing they bear a disproportionate share of the burden of hosting American forces.

On Saturday, Tamaki said he was "shocked" by the number of cases on the bases. "I can't help but feel serious doubts about US measures against infections," he told reporters.

Tamaki said he has asked US forces to halt the arrival of troops rotating into the country and to boost anti-infection measures. It is unclear where the bases' clusters of infections originated, but local media said there were concerns about incoming troops and their families who are being quarantined in local hotels off-base. An Okinawa government official said the prefecture would ask the central government and US forces to share information about cases among the military more quickly. The prefecture will also ask for incoming troops and their families to observe their arrival quarantine on-base, they said.— AFP

Leading Hong Kong activists charged for 'Tiananmen vigil'

HONG KONG: Thirteen prominent Hong Kong democracy activists appeared in court yesterday charged with holding an unauthorized gathering to mark the Tiananmen Square crackdown, the latest in a string of prosecutions against protest leaders in the restless financial hub. Last month tens of thousands of Hong Kongers defied a ban on rallies to mark the June 4 anniversary of Beijing's deadly 1984 crackdown against students pushing for democracy.

The annual vigil has been held in Hong Kong for the last three decades and usually attracts huge crowds. It has taken on particular significance in recent years as the semi-autonomous city chafes under Beijing's increasingly authoritarian rule. This year's vigil was banned for the first time with authorities citing coronavirus measures. At the time local transmission had largely been halted.

But thousands turned out to hold candles in their neighborhoods and in Victoria Park, the traditional site of the vigil. Police later arrested 13 leading activists who appeared at the Victoria Park vigil. All appeared in court yesterday to be formally charged with "inciting" an unlawful assembly, which carries up to five years in jail. Among them are Jimmy Lai, the millionaire owner of the openly pro-democracy Apple newspaper, veteran democracy activists such as Lee Cheuk-yan and Albert Ho as well as young campaigner Figo Chan.

When asked if he understood the charge, Lei invoked the hundreds who were killed by Chinese tanks and soldiers at Tiananmen. "This is political persecution," he said. "The real incitement is the massacre conducted by the Chinese Communist



HONG KONG: Millionaire media tycoon Jimmy Lai (center), and other supporters and activists, who led the June 4 candlelight vigil which commemorates the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown in Beijing, gather before attending a mention at the West Kowloon Magistrates Court in Hong Kong yesterday.— AFP

Party 31 years ago." Some of those charged yesterday—and many other leading democracy figures—face separate prosecutions related to last year's huge and often violent pro-democracy protests. China's leaders have rejected calls to give Hong Kongers universal suffrage and portrayed the protests as a plot by foreigners to destabilize the motherland.

Earlier this month Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law aimed at stamping out the protests once and for all. The law targets subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion, with sentences including life in prison. But its broad phrasing—such as a ban on encouraging hatred towards China's government—has sent fear rippling through a city used to being able to speak

Malaysian news site faces contempt of court case

KUALA LUMPUR: A Malaysian news site's chief editor was taken to court for alleged contempt yesterday over readers' comments on the portal, with his lawyer warning the case could have a "chilling effect". The case against Malaysiakini, an independent portal that has made a name for itself by reporting on the misdeeds of the ruling elite, and editor-in-chief Steven Gan was brought by the attorney general.

It relates to five readers' comments posted under an article that were critical of the judiciary, with the attorney general saying they had eroded public confidence in the courts. Proceedings began Monday at the country's top court, with prosecutors arguing that Malaysiakini had facilitated publication of the remarks. But lawyers for the site said it had not intended to publish them, and they were removed quickly once police notified the portal.

Malaysiakini's lawyer Malik Intiaz told the Federal Court that Gan "had nothing to do with" publishing the comments. "There is nothing to show (Malaysiakini) wilfully turned a blind eye to the publication," he said, adding the case could have a "chilling effect". The court said it would hand down a ruling at a later date. Gan, who co-founded Malaysiakini in 1999, could be jailed if judges rule against the site.

Since a scandal-mired party seized power in Malaysia earlier this year, criminal probes have been launched into journalists, activists and opposition figures, in what critics say is a sweeping effort to silence dissent. Last week police began an investigation into a group of Al Jazeera journalists, including five Australians, over a documentary about the plight of migrants in the country that had angered the government. Malaysiakini is one of the country's leading current-affairs websites and has long reported on corruption scandals linked to officials, in contrast to the traditionally pro-government mainstream media.— AFP

its mind. Police have arrested people for possessing pro-independence or autonomy material, libraries and schools have pulled books, political parties have disbanded and one prominent opposition politician has fled.

The law bypassed Hong Kong's legislature and its contents were kept secret until the moment it was enacted. It empowered China's security apparatus to set up shop openly in Hong Kong for the first time, while Beijing has also claimed jurisdiction for some serious national security cases—ending the legal firewall between the mainland and the city's independent judiciary. China has also announced global jurisdiction to pursue national security crimes committed by anyone outside of Hong Kong and China, including foreigners.— AFP

TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2020

Business

World shares approach 5-month peak

European stocks gain as focus shifts to earnings

LONDON: World shares were approaching a five-month peak and the dollar slipped yesterday as investors wagered the earnings season would see most companies beat forecasts given expectations had been lowered by coronavirus lockdowns. The US earnings season kicks off this week with major Wall Street banks JPMorgan, Citigroup and Wells Fargo reporting on Tuesday. It's expected to be the second-biggest quarterly earnings drop since 1968, according to Refinitiv data.

"There's a view that the bar has been set pretty low for them to report the almost obligatory 'better than expected' results - the absence of forward guidance from many firms notwithstanding," said Ray Attrill, head of FX strategy at NAB.

European shares rose yesterday, with cyclical sectors leading gains as investors hoped the upcoming earnings season and stimulus talks will feed into an economic recovery from the coronavirus-induced downturn. The pan-European STOXX index rose 0.5 percent, with miners gaining 1.7 percent on optimism over China's recovery and surging metal prices. Other growth-oriented sectors such as travel & leisure, banks, automakers and oil & gas rose between 0.6 percent and 1.2 percent. Global investor sentiment also brightened at the start of a week that kicks off the US and European quarterly earnings season and includes a summit over the European Union recovery fund and a European Central Bank policy meeting.

"There appears to be some optimism that forecasts have been lowered to such an extent that businesses will be able to clear this low bar and surpass expectations," AJ Bell Investment Director Russ Mould said. Companies listed on the STOXX 600 are expected to report a 54 percent drop in second-quarter profit, the worst ever reading for Europe,

according to Refinitiv data.

While the ECB is not expected to make a major move, European leaders will meet on July 17-18 to hammer out details on the \$750 billion euro recovery fund, a key factor for euro zone stocks. "Our economists are optimistic that an agreement on the European Recovery Fund can be reached, though it is touch and go whether this can happen in time for the summit," analysts at RBC wrote in a morning note. Financial markets have taken comfort from trillions of dollars in stimulus and progress in the development of a COVID-19 treatment even as the World Health Organization reported a record increase in global coronavirus cases on Sunday.

In company news, Finnish valves maker Neles surged 36.5 percent to hit a record high after Swedish industrial group Alfa Laval announced a recommended 1.73 billion euro (\$1.96 billion) cash bid. Nordic bank DNB rose 9.2 percent and Nordic Semiconductor gained 9.0 percent following better-than-expected earnings reports.

Norwegian blue-chips jumped 1.6 percent in their biggest one-day percentage gain in nearly a month. Swedish hygiene products group Essity was flat after reporting a marginal rise in second-quarter core earnings, as the initial bulk-buying of products eased as countries emerged from the lockdown.

French video games group Ubisoft fell 7.2 percent as it announced staff departures after a review in response to allegations of misconduct at the company.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan added 0.8 percent as Chinese stocks jumped 2.1 percent yesterday. Japan's Nikkei gained 2.2 percent and South Korea 1.7 percent. The optimism carried over to Europe, where stocks rose 1 percent, even as the US on Friday slapped additional

US earnings season kicks off this week



NANJING: An investor looks at screens showing stock market movements at a securities company in Nanjing in China's eastern Jiangsu province. —AFP

duties of 25 percent on French luxury goods valued at \$1.3 billion, in a tit-for-tat response to France's digital services tax. MSCI's All-Country World Index was just shy of hitting Feb. 26 highs. E-Mini futures for the S&P 500 ticked 0.5 percent higher despite record new cases of COVID-19 in the US over the weekend, a divergence that shows no sign of stopping.

"Ongoing grim US COVID-19 infection news continues to be summarily ignored in favor of ongoing optimism regarding the time-line for the discovery and rapid roll-out of an effective vaccine and/or more policy support for asset prices and the US economy," Attrill said. The risk-on rally saw the US dollar dip 0.2

percent against a basket of major currencies after three straight weeks of losses. The euro, meanwhile, rose 0.2 percent to \$1.132 to maintain its slow uptrend since late last month. Looming large for the common currency was a planned EU summit on July 17-18, where leaders need to bridge gaps on long-term budget and economic stimulus plans.

Oil prices eased in early trade, although that followed a sharp rise on Friday when the International Energy Agency (IEA) bumped up its 2020 demand forecast. Brent crude futures dipped 49 cents to \$42.75 a barrel, while US crude lost 52 cents to \$40.03. —Reuters

Top Trump aide warns of 'strong actions' on TikTok

SAN FRANCISCO: A top White House official said he expected President Trump to act firmly against the TikTok and WeChat social media apps, prompting an angry response from China yesterday.

China dismissed White House trade advisor Peter Navarro's comments as "ridiculous and narrow-minded", and slammed the United States as "the world's real hacker empire" amid rising tensions between the two superpowers.

"For a long time now, it (the US) has carried out indiscriminate and illegal cyber attacks, surveillance and theft of secrets on a global scale," said Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying at a routine briefing. "The US continues to have strong values, but why is it so scared of a fun video-sharing social media network loved by young people?"

Trump last week had said he is considering ban-

ning the wildly popular TikTok app as a way to punish China over the coronavirus pandemic. In an interview with Fox News on Sunday, Navarro argued that "what the American people have to understand is all of the data that goes into those mobile apps that kids have so much fun with... goes right to servers in China, right to the Chinese military, the Chinese Communist Party."

He said these apps can be used to steal intellectual property. "So expect strong actions on that" by Trump, Navarro warned. TikTok belongs to the Chinese group ByteDance and has nearly one billion users worldwide. It has sought to distance itself from its Chinese owners, pointing out it has an American CEO and consistently denying allegations that it shares data with Beijing. WeChat, owned by Tencent, is a versatile app with more than one billion users in China who use it for text messaging, mobile payments and social media.

Navarro also accused TikTok's new boss Kevin Mayer, former head of Disney's streaming platforms, of being a puppet. On Friday, Amazon said it mistakenly sent workers an email telling them to dump the TikTok mobile application from their cell phones because of security concerns. An Amazon spokesperson later told AFP "there is no change to



The social media application logo TikTok is displayed on the screen of an iPhone, in Arlington, Virginia. —AFP

our policies right now with regard to TikTok." Democratic campaign teams for the US presidential election have been asked to avoid using TikTok on personal devices and, if they do, to keep it on a non-work phone.

The research firm eMarketer estimates TikTok has more than 52 million US users, having gained about 12 million since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. TikTok is especially popular with young smartphone users. —AFP

Qatar's top bank Q2 profit slides over COVID-19

DOHA: Qatar National Bank, the largest lender in the Middle East, said Sunday its net profits for the second quarter sank over the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. QNB net profit in the second quarter plunged 25.8 percent to 2.84 billion riyals (\$780 million) compared to \$1.05 billion in the same period a year ago, the bank said in a statement. The first quarter net profit of QNB, which has operations in 31 countries including Turkey, Indonesia and India, dropped only slightly.

Its net income in the first six months of the year also dipped 13.6 percent to \$1.76 billion from \$2.04 billion a year ago, it said. The bank said it increased the loan loss provisions by \$320 million in the first half to safeguard itself from any adverse shocks from the pandemic, thus affecting its profitability.

Total assets rose 10 percent to \$267 billion on June 30, making it the largest lender in the Middle East and North Africa in terms of assets. —AFP



British trade fair industry warns 30,000 jobs at risk

LONDON: Britain's event organizers, venues and suppliers warned that about 30,000 jobs are at risk due to increased uncertainty about when trade fairs and exhibitions could resume in the UK, an industry body said yesterday. The Events Industry Alliance (EIA), an

industry body that represents the UK events sector, said companies would need at least eight to twelve weeks to restart exhibitions, calling on the government to set a date for reopening.

The coronavirus outbreak and the ensuing lockdown led to widespread cancellations and postponement of events to later this year or until 2021. The threat of a second wave of COVID-19 cases triggered further uncertainty about reopening plans worldwide. "The exhibitions sector is a vital enabler of economic activity in almost every sector of the UK economy and failure to provide a go-live date impacts the ability of almost 180,000 businesses to recover," said Chris Skeith, chief executive officer, Association of Event

Organizers. An estimated 60 percent of the sector's supply chain will not reopen in October, when the government's job-supporting furlough scheme ends, the EIA added.

Britain's finance ministry had said it spent more than 25 billion pounds (\$30.72 billion) on a furlough program that is supporting 9.3 million jobs. Earlier this month, the ministry also promised an additional 30 billion pounds to head off an unemployment crisis, funneling money to employers, homebuyers and beleaguered hospitality firms to drive a recovery. Informa, the world's biggest exhibitions organizer, held its first major event, the China Beauty Expo, in Shanghai this month. —Reuters

Jordan presses sweeping tax evasion crackdown

AMMAN: Jordan's Prime Minister Omar Al-Razzaz promised on Sunday to deepen a crackdown on tax evasion that officials say has deprived the country's cash-strapped economy of billions of dollars' revenue in recent years. The government has gone after senior businessmen and former politicians suspected of tax dodging, money laundering and customs evasion in a weeks-long campaign that has gained greater urgency with the hit to state finances from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Protecting public money and fighting corruption is a national duty," Razzaz said in his weekly television address to the nation. Tax authorities have raided around 650 companies so far, sometimes accompanied by security forces, according to officials who say this is the biggest campaign to combat tax evasion in decades.

The government said it had frozen the assets of dozens of companies and businessmen on suspected tax evasion charges. It added that it would track offshore havens where wealthy Jordanians have long parked cash to avoid taxes. Some critics have accused the government of using the campaign to carry out a witch hunt against its political enemies, including some of Jordan's leading business figures, including former ministers and senior politicians.

Officials deny that, saying the goal is to ensure justice and that no one is above the law. The government has been using its wider powers under a state of emergency since March to give prosecutors and the main anti-corruption agency greater powers, and stiffen penalties. A two-month coronavirus lockdown has crippled Jordanian businesses and slashed state revenues by tens of millions of dollars, leading to the sharpest economic contraction in two decades.

The government expects the economy to shrink by 3.5 percent this year, a far cry from an International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimate of 2 percent growth before the pandemic. The aid-dependent country, already undertaking a tough three-year IMF reform program tapped international debt markets this month to borrow \$1.75 billion. —Reuters

Business

NBK Economic Report

Global economic recovery hopes tempered by renewed virus threat

Eurozone economy shows early signs of revival

KUWAIT: Despite recent economic data generally pointing to a decent pace of recovery, a steady rise in global COVID-19 cases and fresh uncertainty about the easing of travel and business restrictions in some countries provided for a mixed but more subdued backdrop for financial markets in June. The US S&P for example rose a modest 2 percent after a 17 percent rally between March and May, though European stocks performed better. The IMF downgraded its already-weak forecast for global GDP growth in 2020 further to -4.9 percent, and warned both about continued uncertainty and that financial markets may have got ahead of themselves, risking a retightening of financial conditions in future. Meanwhile, the oil price rally continued into June with Brent settling at above \$40/bbl as OPEC+ announced an extension to supply cuts. However this recovery also ebbed later in the month as concerns over the demand outlook reasserted themselves.

Renewed virus threat

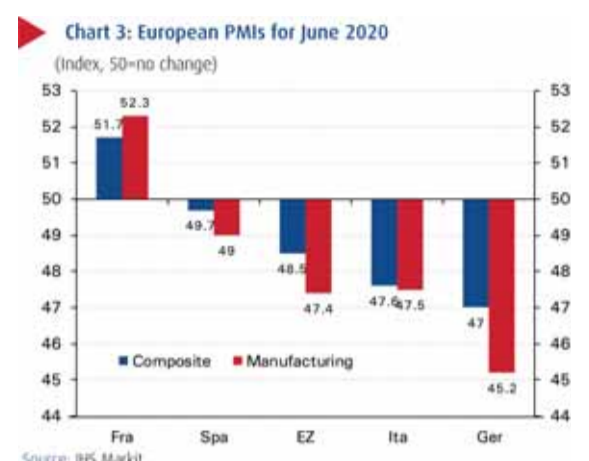
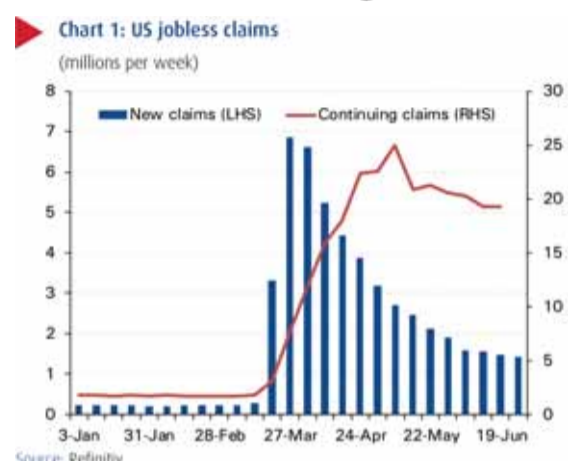
A largely positive run of economic data in recent weeks boosted hopes of a robust US recovery, albeit increasingly qualified by the renewed rise in Covid-19 cases that has seen some states reverse earlier lockdown-easing measures. ISM activity surveys bounced back strongly in June, with the non-manufacturing index hitting a four-month high of 57.1 (45.4 in May) on a surge in output and new orders.

Labor market data has also surprised on the upside, with non-farm jobs surging 4.8 million in June following a surprise 2.5 million jump in May and unemployment falling from 13.3 percent from 11.1 percent, as previously furloughed or temporarily laid-off employees returned to work as businesses reopened. However, the underlying picture remains blurred by the unprecedentedly large and volatile numbers, data classification issues, the potentially distorting impact of government support programs and the fact that weekly initial jobless claims remain extremely high at 1.4 million in the week-ending June 27 (continuing claims also rose slightly). The scheduled expiry of the enhanced unemployment benefit scheme at end-July could be crucial in testing the labor market's resilience, with millions of people likely to seek work more urgently as their incomes drop.

Still, the improved overall recent economic data have seen some forecasts for the inevitable plunge in Q2 GDP reined back in. The New York Fed's Nowcast now projects a decline of 'only' 15 percent on an annualized basis, though the Atlanta Fed and the consensus sees a bigger drop of 35 percent or so - but even this is less steep than a few weeks ago. GDP contracted 5 percent in Q1.

Signs of revival

A mild degree of economic optimism has returned to Europe amid signs that new Covid-19 cases have fallen to a sustainably low level, economies are reopening and greater activism on the policy front including the EU's planned €750 billion Recovery Fund, which is still under negotiation. Composite PMI activity indices remain below the 'no change' 50 mark, but are nevertheless well up from their sub-20 lows of April. The more internationally-exposed manufacturing sector continues to lag



the rest of the region's economy, which in turn is weighing on conditions in Germany despite its relative success in containing the spread of the coronavirus. The German government has discarded its traditional caution and announced a new fiscal stimulus package worth €130 billion (4 percent of GDP) including a 3 percent point cut in VAT from July to December, cash handouts for parents and investment in green energy. The package will be financed by extra borrowing and reduce the hit to GDP this year by 1.3 percent according to the DIW institute, though GDP could still contract 8 percent in 2020.

Meanwhile, the Eurozone headline inflation rate ticked up in June but remains perilously close to zero at 0.3 percent y/y (and was negative in nearly half of all Eurozone countries), while the core rate edged down to 0.8 percent - well below the ECB's 'close to but below' 2 percent target. The central bank will meet in mid-July and having increased the size of its PEPP asset purchase program from €0.75 trillion to €1.35 trillion in June, may be tempted to wait and see how lockdown easing measures and fiscal stimulus programs play out before loosening policy further (perhaps September).

Japan's exports and imports both plunged in May, reflecting continued weakness in the external sector. Led by a drop in car shipments to the US and sluggish Chinese demand, exports fell a huge 28 percent y/y in May (22 percent in April), the biggest decline since the 2009 financial crisis, while imports fell by a comparable 26 percent (7.1 percent in April) on the back of subdued domestic demand and lower commodity prices. Japan's economy slipped into recession in IQ20, after contracting by a revised 2.2 percent (annualized, versus 7.2 percent in 4Q19), not least because of the weakness in the external sector and sluggish domestic demand. That said, the Bank of Japan (BOJ) stood pat on its monetary policy but did increase the size of its lending package for financially-constrained companies from the \$700 billion announced in May to \$1 trillion. The BOJ added that it still expects the economy to gradually recover from the virus outbreak this year thanks in part to the generous stimulus packages announced over the past couple of months.

Japan passed its second 'extra budget' in two months in June, in a desperate bid to counteract the

economic fallout from the Covid-19 outbreak. The extra budget, worth a record ¥31.9 trillion (\$298 billion), will help provide funding to struggling companies and the health system. However, it also adds to Japan's already high public debt levels (the government is expected to increase its debt issuance by ¥59.5 trillion to help fund the extra spending), which prompted S&P to lower its outlook on the country's sovereign credit rating outlook from positive to stable.

Chinese manufacturing

The latest manufacturing survey data continue to point to a slow economic recovery in China due to ongoing weakness in external demand. While both the official and Caixin manufacturing PMI both edged up in June to 50.9 (50.6 in May) and 51.2 (50.7 in May), respectively, they remained weighed down by a continued slump in export orders. In contrast, services activity witnessed stronger gains, with the official services PMI climbing to 54.4 in June (53.6 in May) and the Caixin services PMI jumping from 55.0 in May to 58.4 in June - a more than 10-year high - led by increases in new business activity. With the services sector making up 60 percent of the Chinese economy, the continued recovery in this sector no doubt bodes well for growth overall.

Tensions between the US and China continue to escalate over the recently passed Hong Kong security law by the Chinese authorities. The US House of Representatives passed new sanctions that will penalize banks that do business with Chinese officials. The yuan did, however, manage to eke out gains in June, rising by 0.9 percent against the US dollar to RMB7.07/\$1, which reflects in part the economic recovery, albeit a slow one.

India CA surplus

India's current account balance recorded a small surplus of \$0.6 billion or 0.1 percent of GDP in IQ20 (calendar year), marking the first quarterly surplus since IQ 2007. This contrasts with a deficit of \$4.7 billion in IQ19 and \$2.6 billion in the previous quarter. The surplus was due to a lower trade deficit, mainly on account of weaker domestic demand coupled with a large drop in oil import costs, which typically comprise the bulk of India's imports. The lower trade deficit came despite a

drop in exports due to the Covid-19 induced slow-down in global demand. The current account surplus reflects weakened economic activity, with GDP expanding at the slowest pace (3.1 percent y/y) in IQ20 since the financial crisis, and expected to contract in 2Q20.

Oil rally cools

May's oil rally continued into June, with prices topping three-month highs on reduced pessimism about the economic outlook and confidence that the oil market was tightening thanks to OPEC+ supply curtailments. Brent reached a high of \$43 before closing the month up 16 percent at \$41.0/bbl. However, anxieties about the pace of the oil demand recovery have resurfaced of late as Covid-19 infections surge in post-lockdown US states. Adding to this, there are concerns that global oil demand will never recover to pre-pandemic levels of 100 mb/d in the context of the clean energy transition. Nevertheless, the International Energy Agency (IEA) is still sticking by its forecast of pre-pandemic levels being reached in 2022: in its June oil market report, the agency expects oil demand to contract by 8.1 mb/d this year - one of the most severe contractions on record - before rising by 5.7 mb/d in 2021 to 97.4 mb/d.

On the supply side, OPEC+ in May (the first month of cuts) notched up a reduction of 8.44 mb/d versus the group's target of 9.7 mb/d, which represents a compliance rate of 87 percent. The oil producers' group agreed to extend the two-month duration of these maximum cuts for a further month to end-July, after pressuring serial non-complier Iraq, which only achieved 46 percent of its target cut, to compensate the group with deeper cuts over the next few months. Supply-side tightness was also helped by further declines in US shale production. Output as of 26 June was estimated at 11 mb/d, down an incredible 2.1 mb/d (16 percent) from its late February peak. This has coincided with US oil rig counts plummeting to an 11-year low of 185.

Overall, following June's supply-side curtailments, the narrative has now switched back to oil demand. For oil to break through the lower \$40s resistance level, demand will need to recover more quickly. And for that to happen, the global corona pandemic will need to be brought fully under control.

IAA, GALA launch 'Global Privacy Laws Handbook' virtually

KUWAIT: The International Advertising Association ("IAA") and the Global Advertising Lawyers Alliance ("GALA") had a virtual launch on 8th July of the two-volume set, Privacy Law: A Global Legal Perspective on Data Protection Relating to Advertising & Marketing. It is the first-ever guide to how privacy laws affect marketing and advertising around the world.

The more than 700 page guide provides a comprehensive look at how privacy and data protection laws affect advertising and marketing in more than 70 countries - from Argentina to Zimbabwe. The guide also provides detailed information about how to comply with privacy laws in the European Union. Organized by country, each chapter in the twin-volumes provides detailed information about how privacy is regulated in that country with respect to advertising and marketing, and covers such topics as, rules about collection and storage of personal data, data breaches, and regulatory enforcement. Each chapter also provides unique insights about how the privacy landscape has changed in recent years, where the changes will be in the future, and the challenges companies face.

"It's absolutely critical that the laws governing privacy and data security be top-of-mind for marketers around the world," said Jeffrey A Greenbaum, Managing Partner of Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz in New York and GALA's Chairman.



"We're thrilled to partner with the IAA to publish this indispensable guide."

Srinivasan Swamy

Srinivasan Swamy, Chairman & World President of the International Advertising Association, said, "We hope that this Global Privacy Laws handbook will be an excellent reference volume to all major marketing companies and governments around the world. I am happy to say this handbook will be available to all IAA members as a free download at IAA website. Members can also buy a hard copy of the handbook at a special price. Others can buy it of course at Amazon e-book store".

Nitin Paranjpe

Nitin Paranjpe, COO, Unilever was the guest of honor at the launch event. He said "The benefit of

this handbook is unimaginable - for brands, for companies, for advertisers - and more so for global companies such as ours, in current times. The book highlights another important aspect that data privacy is a fundamental human right and that is a big thing."

About 200 participants attended the virtual launch event of the book from 51 countries. It included a panel discussion on "How to engage with consumers while respecting their privacy in the post-Covid world". The panel included Cecilia Alvarez Rigaudias, Privacy Policy Director, EMEA at Facebook, Daniel Goldberg, Counsel in Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz and Gowthaman Ragothaman, Chief Executive Officer, Aqilz. For Q&A, they were joined by Dr. S'ren Pietzcker, Partner, Heuking Kuhn Luer Wojtek and a senior functionary at GALA and Srinivasan Swamy of IAA.

Profits at India's TCS slump 13.8% as virus hits demand

MUMBAI: India's largest software exporter Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) reported a 13.8 percent fall in quarterly net profits after the country's coronavirus lockdown disrupted its operations and pushed Western clients to cut spending. The Mumbai-headquartered firm said its consolidated net profit plunged to 70.09 billion rupees (\$934.94 million) for the three months to June 30, lower than the \$1.06 billion projected by a Bloomberg survey of analysts.

India's decision to impose a months-long nation-

wide lockdown in March caused huge disruption across the IT sector, forcing firms such as TCS to rapidly adopt a work-from-home model to cater to clients in Western markets. "The revenue impact of the pandemic... affected all verticals, with the exception of life sciences and healthcare, with varying levels of impact," chief executive Rajesh Gopinathan said in a statement. "We believe it has bottomed out, and we should now start tracing our path to growth," he added. TCS, India's second-most valuable company, was at the forefront of an IT boom that saw the country become a back office to the world as firms in developed nations subcontracted work, taking advantage of a skilled English-speaking workforce.

TCS earns more than 80 percent of its revenues from Western markets including Britain, the United States and Europe. But the COVID-19 pandemic has battered demand for the firm's services in the



MUMBAI: In this file photo taken on April 12, 2019, India's Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) CEO and Managing Director Rajesh Gopinathan speaks during a press conference. —AFP

financial and banking sectors. "Covid-19 impact has pushed companies to lower their IT spending and TCS revenues reflect this trend which will continue for the next quarter," Baburajan K, editor of industry news website TelecomLead said. —AFP

G20 urged to expand debt freeze for poorer countries

WASHINGTON: The International Chamber of Commerce, a global trade union and civil society groups urged the Group of 20 major economies to extend and expand a freeze in debt service payments to help not just the poorest, but also middle-income countries, weather the coronavirus pandemic and its economic fallout. The ICC, International Trade Union Confederation, and Global Citizen, a group pushing to end extreme poverty by 2030, also called on G20 finance ministers, who will meet online on July 18, to take additional steps to boost the participation of private creditors, who have been slow to engage.

In an open letter to be published Monday, the groups said further steps were needed since the global economy was facing an even deeper downturn than projected in April, when the G20 and Paris Club of creditors announced a freeze in debt service payments for the world's 73 poorest countries through year-end. Top global finance officials last week said debt restructuring may be needed on a country-by-country basis to help heavily indebted countries hit hard by the outbreak.

So far, 41 countries have applied for relief from debt servicing under the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), and the Paris Club has signed agreements with 20 countries ranging from Ivory Coast to Ethiopia and Pakistan. But many countries not eligible for the moratorium are also at risk of debt distress given the shocks caused by the novel coronavirus outbreak, the group said.

They urged the major economies to boost contributions to enable the International Monetary Fund to continue providing debt service relief to its poorest members through April 2022, and to create similar instruments at regional multilateral development banks. They also supported a request by debtor nations, which called for the creation of voluntary central credit facilities that would serve as senior debt instruments. These facilities would collect all interest and principal payments, with equal treatment of creditors in the form of proportional interest in the facility. —Reuters

Business

KFH 'Top Primary Dealer' for IILM sukuk program in 2019

Issuing an excess of \$9 billion in the primary sukuk market

KUWAIT: The International Islamic Liquidity Management Corporation (IILM) has ranked Kuwait Finance House (KFH) as a "Top Primary Dealer" for the IILM Sukuk Program in FY 2019 on top of 11 IILM Primary Dealers of regional and global banks and financial institutions. The IILM ranking is based on certified and professional criteria.

Rated "A-1" by S&P, the IILM Sukuk programme supplied liquidity with an excess of \$9 billion in 2019, across 29 USD Sukuk, where KFH occupied first place followed by First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) and Standard Chartered in second and third places respectively.

Group Chief Treasury Officer at KFH, AbdulWahab Al-Roshood expressed his pride that KFH gained the first position as the "Top Primary Dealer" in FY 2019 in a list that includes many regional and global banks and financial institutions. After receiving the Shield of Honor, Al-Roshood added that KFH's top ranking con-



KFH enjoys a leading position in sukuk market

firm the confidence of investors and the prestigious status of the bank in the Sukuk market as well as its efficiency and key role in activating, developing and restructuring innovative services and products in this field.

He emphasized that KFH enjoys a track record of achievements in Sukuk market, adding that the pioneering position of KFH in the primary dealers list in the IILM issuances came for the fifth year in a row.

This confirms the leading role of the Bank as a market maker and reflects its leadership position in achieving the highest standards of efficiency and professionalism in developing the Sukuk market.

Al-Roshood mentioned that KFH Bank managed to achieve remarkable development in the Sukuk market at the regional and global levels as it motivated and encouraged several conventional and Islamic financial institutions to enter the market, enhanced liquidity and supported the Islamic financial markets. Meanwhile, International Islamic Liquidity Management, (IILM) expressed appreciation for KFH's excellent and strong performance, praising their strong ties since the significant milestone of issuing the first highly rated, short-term and tradable Sukuk in 2013. It also said that KFH's top rank is well deserved and reflects its pioneer and key role in developing Sukuk market. It is worth noting that the (IILM) is an international organization



AbdulWahab Al-Roshood



established by central banks including the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), monetary authorities and multinational organizations to create and issue Shariah-compliant financial instruments to facilitate effective cross-border Islamic liquidity management.



NBK Money Markets report

Markets flat amid rise in COVID cases

KUWAIT: Last week's US labor report did not disappoint markets, with employment rising 4.8 million in June while May was revised slightly higher to 2.7 million. The unemployment rate fell from 13.3 percent to 11.1 percent, with the economy behaving as expected and adding jobs again as conditions improve and lockdown restrictions ease. With that being said, the job gains represent just a fraction of the jobs lost in March and April. In total, the US has recovered just 7.5 million of the 22.2 million jobs lost since the pandemic forced widespread lockdowns, with the unemployment rate peaking at 14.7 percent. The economy is experiencing a dramatic "stop-start" nature, the current sharp recovery is expected given the depth of the plummet due to immediate shutdowns.

So far incomes have been supported by the \$600 per week Federal boost. However, that support is scheduled to end July 31st, leading many to expect disappointing labor numbers ahead with a recovery that may last years.

Producer prices unexpectedly fall

As the US economy battles depressed demand, producer prices unexpectedly fell in June. The PPI dropped 0.2 percent last month following its 0.4 percent rebound in May. On a yearly basis, the index declined 0.8 percent after also decreasing 0.8 percent in May. Rising costs for energy goods were offset by weakness in services as the economy struggles with subdued inflation. And with a record 33 million people on unemployment benefits, inflation will likely remain soft even as businesses reopen.

The dollar drops, stocks remain still

Large parts of the country are currently struggling with reports of a spike of new coronavirus cases, specifically densely populated states like Florida, Texas, and California. This led authorities to scale back reopening of businesses, supporting expectations that the labor market is facing a long road to recovery. Illustrating the ongoing resilience, US equities were for the most part unchanged last week with the S&P 500 Index trading above 3,100 and the Dow Jones over 25,500, both recovering over 40 percent from their March lows. Looking at currencies, the greenback declined, nudging the euro 0.65 percent higher while the sterling enjoyed a 1.33 percent rally for the week. Investors are struggling off Brexit concerns and focusing on hopes of a coronavirus cure. Nevertheless, safe-havens were still in demand, with the yield on the 10-year US Treasury bond dropping to a low of 0.5690 percent last week and gold touching record highs.

UK economy

Britain's finance minister Rishi Sunak has promised an additional 30 billion pounds to fight the unemployment crisis, funneling money to employers, homebuyers, and hospitality firms to drive the recovery. Sunak said he would return public finances to a sustainable footing after borrowing over 130 billion pounds of initial coronavirus emergency measures - levels of borrowing that date back to WW2. "I want every person in this House and in the country to know that I will never accept unemployment as an unavoidable outcome," Sunak told parliament last Wednesday. The UK econo-

my fell by 25 percent in March and April, with unemployment expected to reach 10 percent. Britain has been hit the hardest among European countries, with close to 45,000 confirmed coronavirus-linked deaths. Brexit uncertainty remains, as British and EU negotiators kicked off a new round of talks last Tuesday. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she will push efforts to seal a deal by the end of the year, but preparations should be made for the possibility of a no-deal scenario.

China's economic activity steady

Data revealed China's manufacturing and services industries stabilized in June. The manufacturing PMI stood at 50.9, suggesting a better-than-expected growth in output for June. Meanwhile the non-manufacturing PMI marked the fastest growth since November 2019 coming in at 54.4 for June, up from 53.6 in May and also beating expectations of 53.6. Both PMIs have been in positive territory for four months now, illustrating a speedy recovery following the collapse in manufacturing to 35.7 and non-manufacturing to 29.6. Though economic output shrank by 6.8 percent in Q1 of 2020 (the first quarterly contraction in China's history), just last week the IMF revised its growth forecast now expecting 1 percent growth for 2020.

The local currency reached its strongest level since March as the stock market boomed following the reports of accelerating economic recovery. The renminbi reached a four-month high against the US dollar, alongside a rally in Chinese equities which saw the CSI 300 rise 10 percent just last week. China's currency has also benefited from the relative weakness in western economies, as it remains ahead in terms of the path to recovery from the pandemic. The recent rally for the renminbi follows events last summer which saw the PBOC allowing a weakening of the local currency sending the pair above the \$7 key threshold, prompting the Trump administration to accuse Beijing of currency manipulation while later revoking the allegations as part of a trade deal.

Oil awaiting a revival in demand

Oil prices remained pressured following a surprise increase in US crude oil stockpiles, signaling that oil demand could remain weak in the world's largest oil-consuming country. Commercial crude inventories rose by 5.7 million barrels for the week ending July 3rd, with the market expecting a decline of 3.1 million barrels instead. Adding pressure to the demand side, the risks over a second wave of coronavirus cases continue to keep the outlook for global oil demand weak. In its latest report, the IEA warned, "While the oil market has undoubtedly made progress since "Black April", the large, and in some countries, accelerating number of COVID-19 cases is a disturbing reminder that the pandemic is not under control and the risk to our market outlook is almost certainly to the downside." Despite the cautioning, the agency revised up its forecast and now expects demand to decline by 7.9 million bpd in 2020 and recover by 5.3 million bpd in 2021.

Gold prices push above \$1,800

Investors have continued to stock up on the safe-haven metal gold, expecting it to maintain its strength as the coronavirus damages the global economy. Gold prices have surged around 40 percent in the last 14 months, most recently powered by the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, leading central banks to slash interest rates and flood markets with cash.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar
USD/KWD opened the week at 0.30740

Ooredoo Group extends working from home until end of year

DOHA: In a pilot initiative aiming to adopt and support a more agile digital culture, Ooredoo Group has extended its Work-From-Home procedures, allowing employees whose work doesn't require being physically in the office to continue working remotely until the end of 2020. The company is one of the first in the region to make such a decision, paving the way to an innovative working environment that could reshape the contemporary workplace.

Ooredoo Group employees and contractors will be allowed to agree more flexible working arrangements from home or the office, subject to individual agreement and at management discretion. As for the Group's operating companies around the world, each will have flexibility to test more localized working arrangements in a way that works best for them and in line with the regulations and directions of the countries they operate in.

Based on key lessons learned in the recent period, the Group management team believes that this "experiment" will foster the creation of a more agile and modern work culture. As a leader in technology and telecommunications, the Group aims to leverage the insights of the recent period into competitive



Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser

Burgan Bank winners of Yawmi draw

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

- The lucky winners are:
1. Aliah Ahmad Abdulaziz Al-Qatami
 2. Shaymaa Ismaeil Mohammad Al-Ansari
 3. Essa Ali Abdulah Al-Abdulhadi
 4. Abdulkareem Mohammad Yousif Tayoun
 5. Sarah Mohammad Abdullah Al-Wazzan and Aliah

Virus bringing \$1tn of global corporate debt in 2020: Report

LONDON: Companies around the world will take on as much as \$1 trillion of new debt in 2020, as they try to shore up their finances against the coronavirus, a new study of 900 top firms has estimated.

The unprecedented increase will see total global corporate debt jump by 12 percent to around \$9.3 trillion, adding to years of accumulation that has left the world's most indebted firms owing as much as many medium-sized countries. Last year also saw a sharp 8 percent rise, driven by mergers and acquisitions, and by firms borrowing to fund share buybacks and dividends. But this year's jump will be for an entirely different reason - preservation as the virus saps profits.

"COVID has changed everything," said Seth Meyer, a portfolio manager at Janus Henderson, the firm that compiled the analysis for a new corporate debt index. "Now it is about conserving capital and building a fortified balance sheet."

Companies tapped bond markets for \$384 billion between January and May, and Meyer estimates that recent weeks have set a new record for debt issuance from riskier "high yield" firms with lower credit ratings. Lending markets had slammed shut for all but the most trusted firms in March, but have been opened up wide again by emergency corporate debt buying programs from central banks like the US Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank and Bank of Japan. Companies included in the new debt index already owe almost 40 percent more than they did in 2014, and growth in debt has comfortably outstripped growth in profits.

Pre-tax profits for the same group of 900 companies have risen a collective 9.1 percent to \$2.3 trillion. Gearing, a measure of debt relative to shareholder finance, hit a record 59 percent in 2019, while the pro-

portion of profit devoted to servicing interest payments also rose to a new high. US companies owe almost half of the world's corporate debt at \$3.9 trillion and have seen the fastest increase in the last five years of any major economy with the exception of Switzerland where there has been a wave of major M&A deals. Germany comes in at number two at \$762 billion. It also has three of the world's most indebted firms including the most indebted, Volkswagen, which with \$192 billion of debt is not far behind countries like South Africa or Hungary, though it is inflated by its car finance arm.

In contrast, a quarter of the companies in the new index have no debt at all, and some have vast cash reserves. The biggest of these stands at \$104 billion and belongs to Google's owner Alphabet. Meyer said credit markets still had some way to go to get back to pre-COVID conditions and the ongoing threat of the virus, especially the recent surge in US cases, remained investors' central concern. "It is all a recipe for a more challenged outlook than we thought two months ago," he said. — Reuters

While the company will seek to incorporate and build upon the potential for improved work practices discerned in recent months, it will continue to operate within official public health guidelines, against a backdrop of rigorous emergency and business continuity planning. This will allow for changes of direction should the medical situation change.

"All this requires commitment, responsibility, and accountability - but given the positive experience of the past few months, I'm convinced that together we can further transform the Ooredoo culture," reflected Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al Thani.

Enforced changes saw hundreds of staff members working from home since March - an unprecedented scenario which can now be built upon leading to a positive outcome. Ooredoo is now testing these exciting new ways of working going forward, amid the economic and medical uncertainties accompanying the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

Mohammad Abdullah Al-Wazzan

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

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



NEW YORK: The unprecedented increase will see total global corporate debt jump by 12 percent to around \$9.3 trillion, adding to years of accumulation that has left the world's most indebted firms owing as much as many medium-sized countries.

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Classifieds

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

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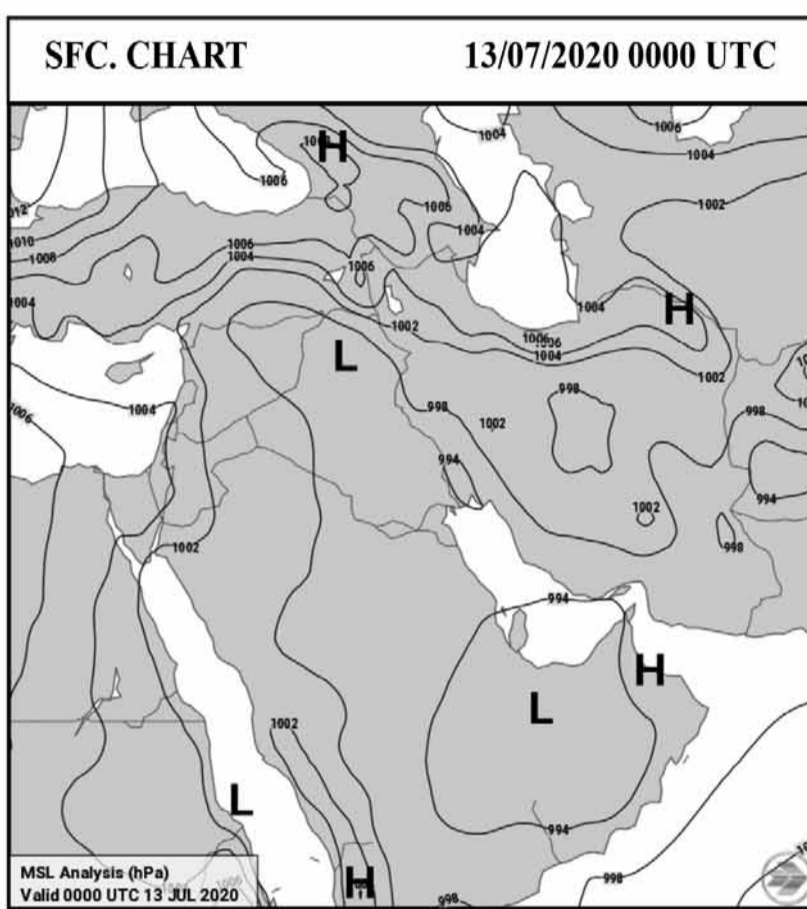
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light variable wind to light to moderate north easterly wind with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Hot to rather hot with light variable wind to light to moderate south westerly wind with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	34 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	31 °C
ABDALY	46 °C	29 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	47 °C	32 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	42 °C	30 °C
SALMIYAH	39 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	43 °C	30 °C
WAFRA	44 °C	28 °C
SALMY	45 °C	32 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	07/14	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	47 °C	31 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	07/15	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	49 °C	32 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Thursday	07/16	Very hot	50 °C	33 °C	NW	12 - 42 km/h
Friday	07/17	Very hot	48 °C	30 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:24
Sunrise	04:57
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:28
Sunset	18:50
Isha	20:20

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	48 °C
MIN. Temp.	37 °C
MAX. RH	27 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	NE 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

Old name: K. Jabarlahan, Father Name: Kasmeera, Passport no. J4326829. **New name:** K. Jabarullahkhan, Father Name: Kasimeera. Date of birth 25.03.1976. New address No. 31 Okottaiyanthoppu, Mimisal Post, Avudayarkovil Tk. Pudukkottai 614621, Tamilnadu, India. (C 5497) 12-7-2020

EMERGENCY ☎ 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)
 Your financial affairs could look especially rosy now, Aries. Some benefits are definitely coming your way, although everything isn't quite as promising as it seems. You could well find yourself with less than you were hoping for. Think of whatever gain may be coming as something extra, but don't count on it. That way, whatever comes will be a welcome bonus rather than an irritating disappointment.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)
 A female friend you haven't seen for a while could surprise you with a call. A lot of interesting news and useful information could be exchanged that benefits both of you. You may make a number of short journeys throughout the day. Cancer, as you have a lot that needs doing. A small increase in income could also be in the works. In the evening, rent a romantic video.

Libra (September 23-October 22)
 A small sum of money could come your way today, Libra. It could be that someone pays you what's owed you, or you could win a small amount in a lottery. You might find a \$20 bill lying in the street! Sex and romance are very much on your mind. If you can't get together with a partner this evening, you might curl up with a steamy novel or watch a romantic video.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)
 Romantic feelings blossom today, Capricorn. You may suddenly appear more attractive than usual. Lovers and potential lovers may seem unusually attentive. You could also be feeling very creative, and you might want to try your hand at poetry or fiction. Reading romantic novels or seeing romantic movies could also be appealing. Surround yourself with candles, flowers, and music, and enjoy!

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
 You should be happier than usual with what you see in the mirror, Taurus, because your inner beauty is more visible than usual. You could also feel especially sociable. Both old friends and new should find your company especially congenial. Romance blossoms, although there's a slight tendency today to see partners through rose-colored glasses. Hang onto your common sense, but not too tightly.

Leo (July 23-August 22)
 With the current aspects at play, Leo, you could find that the hard work you've done in the past finally brings financial rewards. This will make you very happy, but don't get carried away and go on a spending spree! Treat yourself a little. Celebrate with a friend, if possible. Take care to exercise a little good sense. You don't want to buy too much and have to take a lot of it back to the store.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)
 Your romantic side is flying high today, Scorpio. The opposite sex in general and your own partner in particular are going to seem especially attractive to you. You could also see in an entirely different light someone you think of as a friend. An increasingly busy social life in the future is possible, so expect to hear rumblings about parties or other social events.

Aquarius (January 20-February 18)
 You could wake up this morning, look around, and decide you want to spend as much time as possible working on your home, Aquarius. You could be bored with the decor and want to make some changes. Spend the day coming up with ideas and then tonight try to analyze the situation and see what's feasible now. Most likely you'll be able to do some but not all of what you want.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)
 Today you might find yourself more inclined than usual to actively explore your interests in the arts, Gemini. You might want to look at an online art gallery or attend a virtual concert or play. Your interest could be in the motivations of the artists as much as the works themselves. Don't be surprised if you're especially drawn to the more tormented great artists like Beethoven or Van Gogh.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)
 Today, Virgo, you might find yourself thinking longingly of exotic lands and possibly traveling to them in the future. You could also wonder about the people who live in those countries. Romantic daydreams may distract you from your day-to-day business, so it's important to stay focused. Read travel books and rent travel videos. In the meantime, you still have to get through each day.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)
 New people you meet today are likely to be favorably impressed by your manners, social skills, and, above all, excellent sense of humor. Don't be surprised if all of this brings you some new opportunities today! Your health is radiant, and you are probably looking great. This is an excellent time to plan an evening out with friends or, better yet, a romantic partner if possible.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)
 Today, Pisces, you could receive an affectionate, supportive letter or phone call from someone close to you. Communications with others should go smoothly, and intelligent conversations could well take place. A favorite author, musician, or actor could release a new book, album, or movie that you'll want to jump on right away. Or you might want to try your hand at such enterprises yourself. You do have the talent.



Cultural performers from the Maasai tribe wear cloth masks as they sing at their manyatta (village) in Talek in the Maasai Mara National Reserve, where their work of performing for visiting tourists has dwindled, in Talek in Maasai Mara, in the Narok county in Kenya.—AFP photos



Cultural performers from the Maasai tribe wear cloth masks as they sing at their manyatta (village).



Cultural performers from the Maasai tribe wear cloth masks as they sing at their manyatta (village).

KENYA WILDLIFE RESERVES THREATENED AS TOURISTS STAY AWAY

In the majestic plains of the Maasai Mara, the coronavirus pandemic spells economic disaster for locals who earn a living from tourists coming to see Kenya's abundant wildlife. Even before the virus arrived in Kenya mid-March, tourism revenues had plummeted, with cancellations coming in from crucial markets such as China, Europe and the United States. According to the tourism ministry, the sector has lost \$750 million this year—roughly half of the total revenue in 2019. "We were fully booked in June but now we have zero bookings. Nothing. It's terrible," said Jimmy Lemara, 40, the manager of an eco-lodge in the private Ol Kinyei conservancy.

In the Maasai Mara, one of Africa's most highly-rated wildlife reserves located in the vast flat plains of the Great Rift Valley, the local Maasai community, traditional herders who make up 2.5 percent of the population, now depend almost exclusively upon tourism for their livelihood. In a unique model set up to engage local communities in tourism, enabling them to see the value of wildlife and thus protect it, the Maasai now get revenue from renting their land to form private wildlife conservancies. Some work as cooks, guides and security guards in the lodges while others give tours of their traditional homes or sell homemade crafts to tourists.

'Survival mode'

People in Talek, a dusty town situated at one of the entrances to the Maasai Mara national reserve, are gloomily buckling down, hoping for better days. Kenya has announced international flights will resume on

August 1, but the high season is already lost. "Since December, work has been extremely low, and now we're in survival mode hoping to make 150 to 200 shillings (\$1.4 to \$1.9) a day, to be able to buy a meal," said Ibrahim Sameri, 38, whose small mechanic workshop can generate up to \$30 a day in the high season.

Nalokiti Sayialel normally sells bead necklaces and bracelets to tourists passing through. "It's been three months that I haven't sold anything," the 45-year-old told AFP. "This is terrible. Everything is stuck. Everything is shut down. (I have) never seen something like that", said tour guide Petro Nautori who has had no work since January. The Maasai Mara national reserve, run by the Narok county government, extends to the north with several privately-managed conservancies renting land from the Maasai who in exchange do not graze their cattle or settle there. This model has since 2005 allowed the doubling of the habitat for wildlife in this area. On average, each land owner earns \$220 per month, far more than the minimum wage in the area. However like other conservancies, Ol Kinyei is struggling and has agreed to only pay half the usual rent to the Maasai, after having to pay back deposits to tourists who cancelled their holidays. The salaries of lodge employees have also been cut by half.

Forced to sell livestock

Some Maasai families are having to turn to selling their precious livestock to earn money. "Because we're getting little and it's not enough to sustain the family for a living, I had to sell two goats worth about 12,000 shillings to put on top of what I'm getting to keep me



Cultural performers from the Maasai tribe wear cloth masks as they sing at their manyatta (village) in Talek in the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

going," said Julius Sanare, 41, head chef at the eco-lodge in Ol Kinyei. However livestock markets have been shut due to coronavirus prevention measures. Residents said the Maasai are instead selling their animals on the black market for a pittance to unscrupulous buyers taking advantage of their desperation. Mohanjeet Brar, managing director of Porini safari camps which run two conservancies and several lodges in the Mara, said the "catastrophic" situation could threaten the existence of the reserves.

"If the landowners are not getting any revenue, they can't feed themselves, they can't send their kids to

schools, they would have no option but to look at other forms of land utilisation," he said. "Fencing it off, selling it to people, building businesses... all those alternate land uses don't go together with wildlife and elephants and big cats and so this would be completely lost," he said. "And once it's lost, if you look at Kenya and its very fast population growth rate and good economic growth over the last few years, it would be lost forever. It would be a real shame."—AFP



A woman from the Maasai tribe constructs a wall by twining sticks around a wooden structure of a traditional shelter at their manyatta (village) in Talek.



Women from the Maasai tribe create beaded jewellery at a facility run by the Maa Trust.



A traditional Maasai woman, who sells bead necklaces, sets up her stand displaying hand-made beaded jewellery and leather belts in the hopes that she might receive a client.



A traditional Maasai woman, who sells bead necklaces, sets up her stand displaying hand-made beaded jewellery and leather belts in the hopes that she might receive a client in Talek.

French mayor regrets lack of rules respect at Nice DJ set

The mayor of the French Mediterranean city of Nice on Sunday said he regretted a lack of social distancing at a shoreside DJ set thronged by partying crowds, vowing that in future masks would be obligatory at such outdoor events. Prominent French electro house music producer The Avener hosted the set organised by the municipality late Saturday in his home city, with crowds massing on central Nice's famous Promenade des Anglais esplanade. The density of the crowd as people danced the night away provoked fury on social media at a time when France is wary of a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. "We regret that these rules have not been sufficiently

respected," mayor Christian Estrosi wrote on Twitter.

He said the city would ask the government to review national rules to make it obligatory to wear a mask at such events, even outside. "In Nice, it will now be mandatory for all our events," he added. All those attending events indoors such as concerts already must wear masks. The municipality insisted that the maximum number of 5,000 people allowed at any gathering in France had not been exceeded, even in an area that in usual times can accommodate 36,000. An AFP photographer said the crowds were denser in some areas as people sought to get closer to the loudspeakers due to poorer sound quality elsewhere.

The municipality insisted that clear written warnings on social distancing had been put up as well as audio and video messages urging people to be prudent. Government spokesman Gabriel Attal said the controversy over the event underlined the need for people to take care, even if current infection rates remained low. "The French have gone through difficult times with the lockdown, they want to go out but going out does not mean forgetting these rules," he told BFM-TV.—AFP



French DJ and producer The Avener spins during a concert.



People gather to listen to the set of French DJ and producer The Avener during a concert.

Berlin throws clubs 81,000 euro lifeline

Berlin's clubs and concert halls, closed for four months due to the coronavirus pandemic, have received an average of 81,000 euros each in aid from the city, according to figures published Sunday by the daily Tagesspiegel. The clubs, which are mainly techno and have helped to build Berlin's reputation as a "party city", find themselves in a difficult financial situation since their closure on March 14 due to the spread of the virus.

The Berlin authorities, however, decided to grant emergency aid to 46 clubs, festivals and concert halls, according to figures from Georg Kossler, a Green member of the state government, quoted by the Tagesspiegel. Among them are clubs known far beyond the German capital, such as the Tresor, the Kater Club and the gay club Schwuz. "I want people to be able to dance and party when the days of the coronavirus are over, so our clubs must survive," said Kossler. Despite a wide relaxation of the restrictions linked to the coronavirus pandemic throughout Germany, no date has been given for the reopening of clubs and discotheques.—AFP

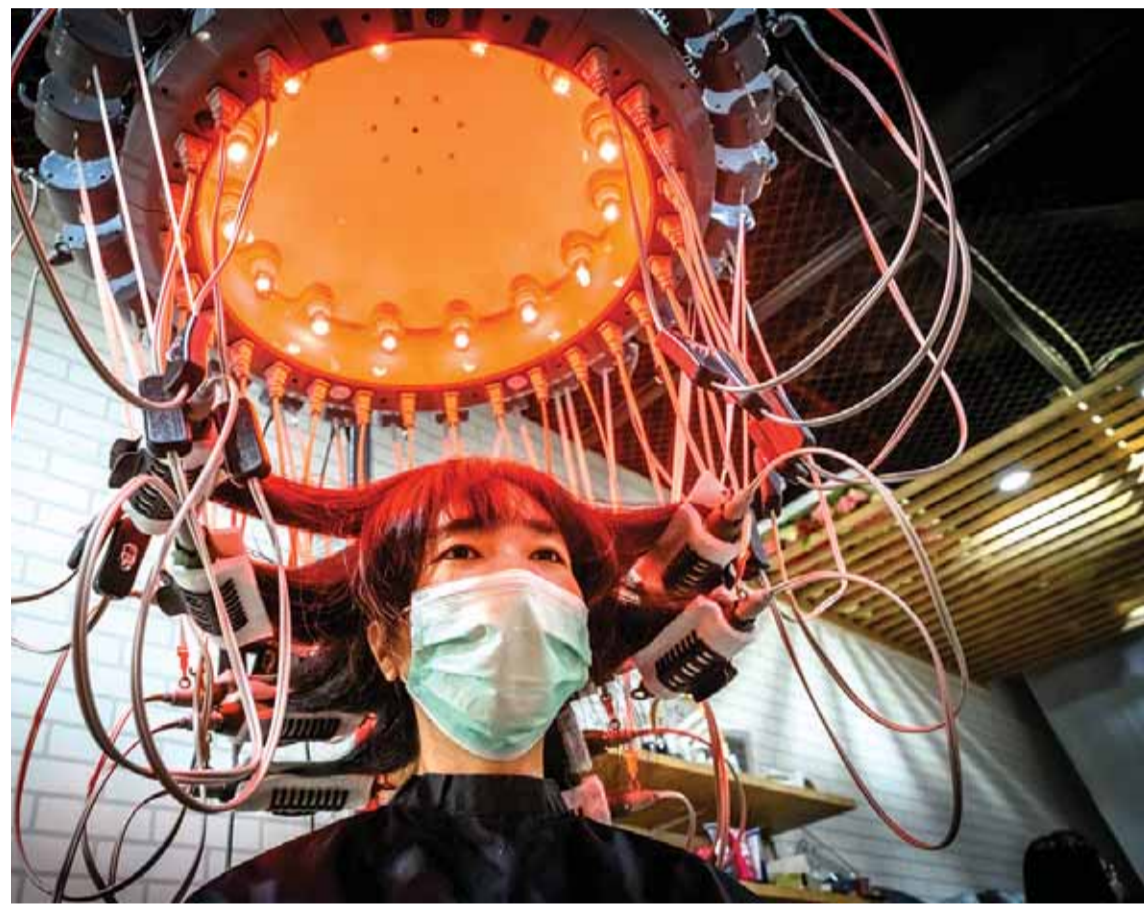
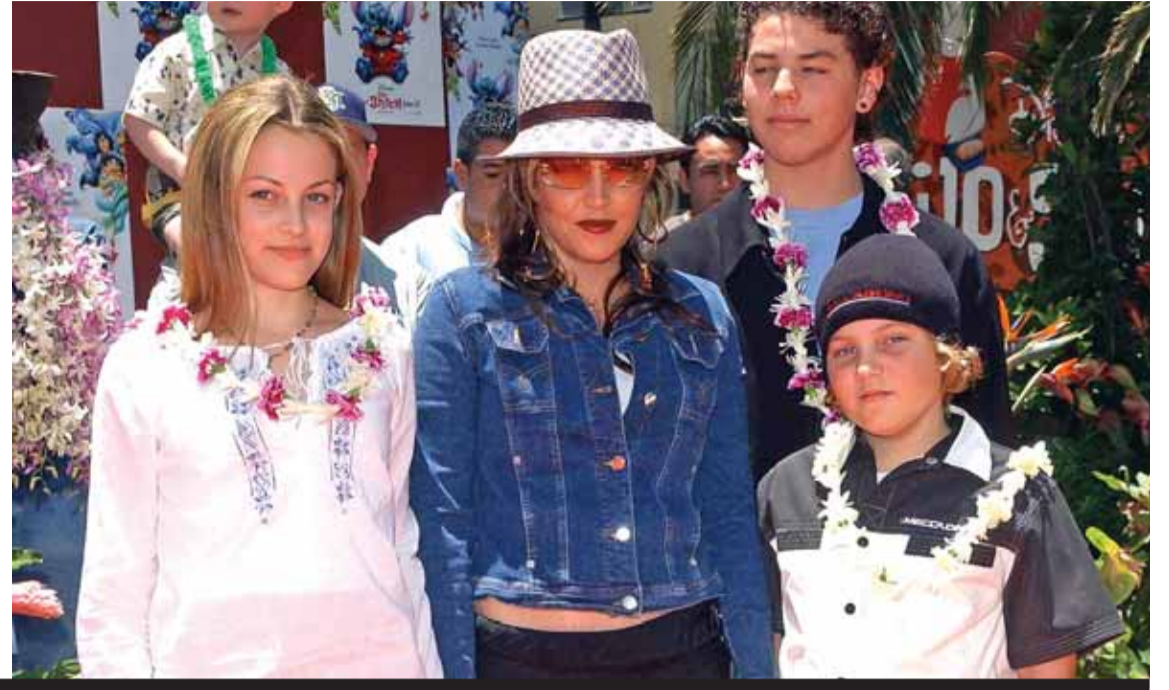
Elvis's only grandson dies aged 27

Elvis Presley's only grandson died Sunday, his mother Lisa Marie Presley's manager confirmed to AFP, with local media reporting the death as an apparent suicide. Benjamin Keough, 27, was found in Calabasas near Los Angeles from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, police sources told TMZ. Manager Roger Widnowski gave no details about the death, saying that Lisa Marie Presley—Elvis's only child from his marriage to actor Priscilla Presley—was "heartbroken, inconsolable and beyond devastated". "She adored that boy. He was the love of her life," Widnowski said, adding she was "trying to stay strong" for her daughters.

Keough seldom appeared in public, but the few photos of him showed his strong resemblance to his grand-

father. Lisa Marie Presley, who has three other children, had described Keough's resemblance to Elvis as "just uncanny." TMZ reported Keough was a musician who had done some acting and had attended the 40th anniversary of Elvis's death at the star's former home Graceland in Memphis in 2017. Rock'n'roll legend Elvis Presley died in 1977 aged 42.—AFP

Lisa Marie Presley and her children Benjamin Keough (right), Riley Keough (left), and her half-brother Navarone Garibaldi (back) attend the premiere of "Lilo and Stitch" at the El Capitan theatre in Hollywood on June 16, 2002.—AFP



A woman wearing a face mask has her hair curled by a special equipment at a beauty salon in Bangkok on July 12, 2020.—AFP

Video won't kill the catwalk, say critics of first digital fashion week

Video may have killed the radio star, but on the reaction to the first ever digital Paris fashion week, the queens of the catwalk can breathe easy. Forced online for the first time in its history by the coronavirus pandemic, brands both in haute couture and the Paris men's fashion week presented videos of their collections instead. While some had seen this as the advent of a long overdue opening up the cliquish salons of the fashion elite to the masses, the digital revolution has somewhat fallen flat. "The runway can't reopen for business soon enough," quipped Bridget Foley of the industry bible Women's Wear Daily, who like many felt the online shows—which end Monday—lack the buzz and razzamatazz of the real thing.

"Oh Lord, how pretentious are some of these film shorts," she wrote. "This digital fashion week is making the live show model feel plenty relevant, and even essential." Front row fixture Diane Pernet was not impressed by the early offerings either. "I am sorry, I think they can do more," the Paris-based American critic and curator told AFP. "I am all into digital, but it is not doing it for me," she added. But Laurent Coulier, head men's buyer for top French department stores Galeries Lafayette and BHV Marais, could see upsides. "The great advantage for us compared to a normal fashion week is the time we save," he told AFP.

No more mad rush

Rather than the mad race across the French capital from one show to the next "we can see them all every half hour online. Sometimes in a normal fashion week with the transport and meetings, it is difficult to get a global view of what is going on." He also liked how some labels, like Y/Project and the young Paris brand Egon Lab had used their films creatively to show the uniqueness of their clothes. Coulier said the films were very useful calling cards "giving us a good view of brands that we have not been working with already... so we can go and see them in their showrooms."

Still even he admitted digital lacked the magic of a live show. On the vexed question whether he would buy a collection on the back of an online show alone, Coulier was more careful. "You can see how the garments hang and fall, but with digital you cannot touch

or feel the material... that's what it lacks." Pernet cannot see fashion shows being rendered obsolete, "and I am not one of those people who cry at shows," she said. The digital revolution has already happened to some degree, she argued. "We have had live streaming of shows for five years now at least there is lots of digital showrooms."

Digital: 'Light years to go'

As for the designers themselves, Berluti's Kris Van Assche told AFP that you can't beat the drama and adrenaline of the runway. "I really love the emotion of the show, the history you can tell with the place you hold it in, the music and the people" who come. "But there is one thing in a fashion show you can't do, and that is to press pause and explain where things come from." Van Assche said this was "a once in a lifetime opportunity" to give people the background of how he worked on his collection with the American ceramicist Brian Rochefort.

Even so, Foley said that early signs "indicate that digital has a long way to go—light years—before it can replace the live fashion event." While she admitted that with the extraordinary circumstances labels did not have long to prepare themselves, she still found the digital experience lacking. And that included acclaimed Italian director Matteo Garrone's lavish film for Dior haute couture—which clocked up nearly 3.5 million Instagram views even as it was criticized for its lack of diversity in casting. "Exquisite" as it was, Foley said, "the film veered toward fashion satire".

While others noted that the quality of the digital shows improved in the men's collections—with heavyweights Louis Vuitton, Dries Van Noten and Rick Owens debuting their offerings—Foley said that for her, the digital experience did not have the "enjoyable intimacy of actually 'being there.'" There was one thing, however, that Coulier, Pernet and New York Times critic Vanessa Friedman all agree on—digital has cracked fashion show's eternal tardiness problem. "I'll say one thing... you don't have to sit there for the usual 20-30 minutes twiddling your thumbs and waiting for them to start," Friedman tweeted. —AFP



File photo shows a model is pictured on stage during the filming of the presentation of a creation by designer Xuan-Thu Nguyen (right) for fashion house Xuan as part of the Women's Fall-Winter 2020/2021 Haute Couture Fashion Week - released online.



Belgian fashion designer Kris Van Assche poses during a photo session in Paris.—AFP photos

Actress Kelly Preston dies aged 57 from breast cancer

American actress Kelly Preston, who featured in hit films "Jerry Maguire" and "Twins", has died from breast cancer, her husband John Travolta said Sunday. She was 57 years old. "It is with a very heavy heart that I inform you that my beautiful wife Kelly has lost her two-year battle with breast cancer," Hollywood star Travolta said on Instagram. "She fought a courageous fight with the love and support of so many." A family representative told People Preston died Sunday morning.

"Choosing to keep her fight private, she had been undergoing medical treatment for some time, supported by her closest family and friends," People quoted the representative as saying. Born October 13,

1962, in Hawaii, Preston studied drama and theatre at the University of Southern California.

She shot to fame for her role in the 1988 hit comedy "Twins", also starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito, and appeared in dozens of films and TV shows over a decades-long career. She played the ex-fiancee of the titular character in hit 1996 blockbuster romantic comedy "Jerry Maguire", which also featured Tom Cruise and Renee Zellweger. Travolta and Preston married in 1991, and had three children together. Their eldest son died in 2009 aged 16.—AFP



In this file photo taken on May 15, 2018 US actor John Travolta (left) and his wife US actress Kelly Preston pose during a photocall for the film "Gotti" at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



In this file photo US actress Kelly Preston poses during a photocall for the film "Gotti". — AFP photos

Ex-soldier who fled with puma turns himself over to police

A former Polish soldier who fled into a forest with his pet puma to avoid handing it over to a zoo, gave himself up to police on Sunday after a three-day manhunt. About 200 officers were deployed to track down the former Afghan war veteran and the big cat. The former soldier "Kamil Stanek voluntarily turned himself over to police in Zawiercie and was later released", the police in the southern Polish city said on their Facebook page. The puma was transferred to the care of a zoo following the drama. "We're pleased to report that (the puma called) Nubia is surrounded by the professional care of employees at the zoo in Chorzow," the police said.

Keeping such dangerous animals is banned in Poland, and the man had been ordered by a court to turn the animal over to a zoo. Zoo officials said people should be aware that big cats were not pets. "It's not a cuddly toy. It's one of the most dangerous animals in the world and it could be a real threat to people's lives," said Ewa Zgrabczynska, head of the Poznan zoo in western Poland. Zoo workers went to Stanek's house in southern Poland on Friday but were met with a hostile response. The army veteran threatened them with a knife before fleeing with the puma on a leash, according to local media reports.

Gazeta Wyborcza newspaper said the man had bought the animal six years ago in the Czech Republic and had been raising it at his home. Stanek's bid to keep Nubia had won support in some quarters. "Love for the animal and a heartless court decision forced him to flee. He is hiding in the forest," Dariusz Wojtowicz, mayor of the southern town of Myslowice, said on Facebook. "Maybe someone could take a more humane look at this case," he said, posting images of the man he identified as Kamil S. and the puma.—AFP

Fashion designers make Black Lives Matter plea

The Dutch brand Botter made an impassioned plea for the Black Lives Matter movement Friday at Paris men's fashion week. Its two designers Russhy Botter and Lisi Herrebrugh—who both have Caribbean roots—delivered a heartfelt plea for people to "unite against violence on the black community, against violence on any community" as they unveiled their online show. The couple, who were runners up in the prestigious LVMH Prize in 2018, made a one-and-a-half-minute call to action before showing two black models in gently poetic creations in white, black and brown creations. Such overtly political stances are extremely rare in the fashion world, where labels tends to fearful of attracting controversy.

Paris fashion week has been forced online by the coronavirus, with brands showing short films about their collections. Russhy Botter was born on the island of Curacao, part of the Dutch

Caribbean, while his partner Herrebrugh's mother hails from the Dominican Republic. They said that their collection "was the hardest we have ever done because it was trying to express a positive vision of the Black Lives Matter movement, so we just send story out without pics."

"We are standing against racism, ignorance and a lack of empathy," they added. "As designers we are dreamers and the power of the dream is that it brings a belief to life. We all need to believe it is possible to unite," they added. The couple, whose inspiration tends to come from black and mixed Caribbean cultures, said that prejudice and violence could be overcome "with our family, a family where nobody is left behind... a multi-cultural family in a global and diverse world." Paris fashion week, which began with three days of haute couture shows, ends on Monday. — AFP



The Botter label's inspiration often comes from black and mixed Caribbean cultures. — AFP

Sports

Photo of the Day



Fahad Al Musallam of Kuwait performs during the fifth stage of Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge in 2019. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Hamilton wants Ferrari to do more against racism

SPIELBERG: Six times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton praised his Mercedes team for taking a stance against racism but said after winning Sunday's Styrian Grand Prix that Ferrari and others should do more. The Briton took a knee with 11 drivers before the race while wearing a Black Lives Matter T-shirt and then gave a raised fist salute on his car and on the podium after winning at the Red Bull Ring.

It was the second weekend in a row that drivers have knelt before the start, although not all have done so. Taking the knee has become a common act of protest against racism and police brutality since the killing on May 25 of George Floyd, a Black American, by a white police officer in Minneapolis unleashed a global outpouring of sadness and outrage.

The gesture was not part of the official programme, as it had been before the season-opener at the same Austrian circuit when Formula One and teams emphasised an anti-racism message.

"We've seen Red Bull's mechanics take a knee, which I think is great, but as businesses and as teams...if you look at Ferrari who have thousands of people working with them, I've heard no word of Ferrari saying that they hold themselves accountable, and this is what they're going to do for their future," the sport's only Black driver told reporters.

"And we need the teams to do that. We need Formula One and the FIA to be more leading in those scenarios, saying 'hey guys, all of us together, everyone needs to pull together and fight for this.'"

"I think a lot of people don't know what the problem is," added Hamilton, who has set up a commission to push for equal opportunity and more diversity in motorsport. "Some people deny there is a problem."

There was no immediate comment from Ferrari, whose race on Sunday lasted about 20 seconds until Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc collided. Vettel has knelt alongside Hamilton before both races, however, while Leclerc remained standing but with 'End Racism' on his shirt. — Reuters

NFL's Redskins to change name after sponsor pressure over racism: Reports

'We believe it is time for a change'

WASHINGTON: The NFL's Washington Redskins will announce later they are changing their name, US media reported, following pressure from sponsors over a moniker widely criticized as a racist slur against Native Americans.

Team owner Dan Snyder had long resisted calls to change the name, but came under renewed scrutiny as the United States saw massive rallies and campaigns erupt against racial injustice following the death in May of George Floyd, an unarmed African American man in police custody.

Native American leaders had written to the NFL commissioner last week demanding an immediate change of the team's name, logo and mascot.

The team plans to announce the retirement of its name today, according to multiple sources cited by The Washington Post, ESPN and USA Today, among others.

Sports Business Daily said a new name will not be announced immediately because of ongoing trademark issues, but quoted one source as saying: "The team felt it was important to remove any doubts as to the future of the name."

The team was established in 1932 as the Boston Braves and took on its current name in 1933 before moving to Washington DC four years later.

It announced a "thorough review" of its name on July 3, citing "recent events around our country," the day after FedEx demanded to change the name.

The review prompted a defense of the current name by President Donald Trump. "They name teams out of STRENGTH, not weakness, but now the Washington Redskins & Cleveland Indians, two fabled sports franchises, look like they are going to be changing their names in order to be politically correct," Trump tweeted last week. The reported change would end years of opposition by Snyder, who bought the team in 1999.

"We'll never change the name," he told USA Today in 2013. "It's that simple. NEVER — you can use caps."

Intense pressure from the team's most powerful corporate partners and sponsors apparently helped force the move — led by FedEx, which purchased the naming rights to the team's stadium through to 2025 for \$205 million and confirmed earlier this month it had requested the change. "We believe it is time for a change," PepsiCo had said, while Nike removed the team's merchandise and gear from its website.

Bank of America said as a sponsor, it had "encouraged the team to change the name." The team did not immediately respond to comment. —AFP

Important to remove any doubts



Rising star Morikawa outguns Thomas in dramatic PGA playoff

LOS ANGELES: Collin Morikawa tapped in a putt on the third playoff hole to outduel Justin Thomas in a wild Sunday finish and capture the US PGA Tour Workday Charity Open.

Morikawa, who had been the pacesetter through the first two rounds, rallied from three strokes down with three holes remaining to force the playoff at Muirfield Village Golf Club.

He then stayed alive by draining a 24-foot birdie putt on the first playoff hole immediately after third-round leader Thomas had made a jaw-dropping 50-foot putt for birdie.

"Amazing," said the 23-year-old Morikawa, who carded a final round 66 to finish on 19-under par 269 and won for the second time on the US PGA Tour. Sunday's win made up for a disappointing loss in another dramatic playoff finish at the Charles Schwab Challenge four weeks ago in the PGA's return from the COVID-19 calendar shutdown.

World number five Thomas was trying to win for the 13th time on the Tour, but he was undone on the final hole of the playoff after his tee shot on the par-four 10th sailed right and landed behind a tree.

Thomas closed with a 69 but that included two bogeys in his final three holes after beginning his round with a two-stroke lead over Viktor Hovland, with Morikawa three adrift.

"I am pretty pissed off, it is the only way to explain it," Thomas said. "I had a three-shot lead with three to go and completely handed it over."

"Collin played great. He had a very tough hole at 17. "We both made two great birdies on the first playoff hole. I had two chances to win this thing in regulation and on the second playoff hole and I didn't get it done." This week's Workday Charity Open is the first of back-to-back events at the Jack Nicklaus designed Dublin, Ohio course. The Nicklaus-hosted Memorial will follow next week. After rain, wind and lightning led to two suspensions on Friday, organizers decided to move the tee times up on Sunday to avoid any more weather delays.

Morikawa started Sunday's round three shots back after opening with a 65 and 66 to lead the first and second rounds. He quickly fought his way back to the top of the leaderboard with two birdies and an eagle in his first five holes.

He made three more birdies on the back nine including the par four 17. Morikawa used an eight iron to spin his approach shot to eight feet then made the putt and celebrated with a fist pump.

His only blemish came on the par-four 13th when he made bogey as he closed with a four-under 66. The most dramatic moment of the round came on the first playoff hole as both players rolled in massive putts for birdies.

Thomas went first, making a 50-foot downhill putt for what appeared to be the victory. But Morikawa wasn't going anywhere. He stayed alive by draining his putt, from just inside 25 feet, to send it back to the 18th tee for a second playoff hole.

Morikawa sealed the win on the 75th hole, two putting on the green after Thomas missed the fairway off the tee and had to chip out from behind a small tree with his second shot.

The win was Morikawa's second in just his 24th start as a pro. "This is a huge kind of stepping-stone," Morikawa said. "We got number one (win) out of the way, we got number two — let the gates just open and let's keep going because obviously it was a tough loss at Colonial a month ago, but I learned a lot. "This is just more positives, more learning for me." —AFP



LANDOVER: An advertisement for "Women of Washington Redskins" is seen on the outside of FedEx Field on July 7, 2020 in Landover, Maryland. After receiving recent pressure from sponsors and retailers, the NFL franchise is considering a name change to replace Redskins. The term "redskin" is a dictionary-defined racial slur for Native Americans. —AFP

The sporting weekend

PARIS: Who said what in sport this weekend:

"Jack was the type of player and person that you need in a team to win a World Cup. He was a great and lovable character and he will be greatly missed. The world of football and the world beyond football has lost one of the greats. RIP old friend."

— Geoff Hurst on fellow 1966 World Cup winner Jack Charlton who died Friday night at the age of 85.

"When he is in that space, he is just unbeatable. I've never seen anything like this in top-class motor racing. It's like seeing a unicorn."

— Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff on Lewis Hamilton after the world champion cruised to his 85th career win at the Styrian Grand Prix.

"There are no player parties here."

— Edwin Weindorfer, the organiser of the 'Bett1Aces' exhibition tournament in Berlin, taking a pot-shot at Alexander Zverev and Novak Djokovic for taking part in the ill-fated Adria Tour which led to a series of positive coronavirus tests.

"It was so difficult for all of us with this weather and some of the time you can't see where you are going, but I loved it - though I did have a big aquaplane and had my heart in my mouth."

— Hamilton on taking pole for the Styrian Grand Prix at a rain-swept Red Bull Ring.

"What are we meant to do, cut our arms off? You can at most put your arms in front of your body."

— Atlanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini after his

team gave away two penalties through hand balls in the 2-2 Serie A draw at Juventus.

"We don't want the players to go all that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks. It is very, very depressing and disappointing."

— India cricket chief Sourav Ganguly confirming the tour to Australia in December but calling for a shorter quarantine period on arrival.

"I am disappointed in myself. I'm sorry but being sorry is not enough."

— Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc after colliding with teammate Sebastian Vettel in the Styrian Grand Prix, a rash move which put both men out of the race.

"I commend anyone that decides to put something on the back of their jersey. It is just something that didn't seriously resonate with my mission, with my goal."

— NBA superstar LeBron James on opting out of wearing a social justice message on the back of his jersey.

"It is very sad on the day of a game that a player wakes up to this cowardly and despicable abuse."

— Crystal Palace manager Roy Hodgson on the online racist abuse suffered by one of his star players, Wilfried Zaha. Police later said they had arrested a 12-year-old boy in connection with the incident.

"We don't give a damn about PSG, this match is first and foremost a way to get back together with our mates!"

— Johan Vattier, president of Le Havre's biggest supporters group, on the friendly with PSG which they lost 9-0. The game saw 5,000 fans attend, a first for the big leagues of Europe after the coronavirus lockdown. — AFP

Sports

Sevilla on the cusp of Champions League qualification after Mallorca win

‘We knew winning here would send out a strong message’

MADRID: Sevilla all-but secured Champions League qualification by beating relegation battlers Real Mallorca 2-0 on Sunday. Lucas Ocampos scored a first-half penalty before Youssef En-Nesyri added a second late on to move Sevilla nine points clear of fifth-placed Villarreal.

With three games left and the superior head-to-head, Villarreal are not mathematically out of contention but they would have to take maximum points and see Sevilla lose both of their remaining matches.

“Champions League qualification was our objective,” said Sevilla’s Fernando Reges. “We are very close and now we just have some small steps left to make it.” Finishing in the top four would be an impressive achievement for Sevilla and their coach Julen Lopetegui, who took over last year following his nightmares in charge of Spain and Real Madrid.

Lopetegui, together with sporting director Monchi, oversaw a dramatic overhaul of the first team squad but change has not come at the expense of consistency for Sevilla, who are now 13 matches unbeaten in La Liga.

They could even yet finish third, given they sit level on points with Atletico Madrid. Defeat damages Real Mallorca’s fading hopes of avoiding relegation. They remain three points behind Alaves, who have a superior record head-to-head and a game in hand against

Getafe on Monday.

“We knew winning here would send out a strong message. We couldn’t do it but we don’t stop believing,” said Mallorca’s Antonio Rallo. Leganes are also three points behind Alaves but have a glimmer of hope after they scored one penalty and saved another in a battling 1-0 win over Valencia.

Javier Aguirre’s side have an equal head-to-head with Alaves and are only two worse off on goal difference.

Leganes also had to play the last 36 minutes against Valencia with 10 men after Jonathan Silva was sent off, shortly before Leganes goalkeeper Pichu Cuellar saved Dani Parejo’s spot-kick.

Ruben Perez had converted his own penalty in the first half to give Leganes the lead and a victory that keeps alive their slim chances of avoiding the drop. “A few weeks ago people would never have dreamt we’d reach the last two games with a chance of staying up,” said Cuellar. “But we’ve never lost hope.”

Valencia’s miserable season continues, with the prospect even of Europa League qualification appearing increasingly remote. They sit ninth, three points behind Getafe in sixth, having played a game more.

Cadiz’s promotion from Segunda was confirmed after third-placed Real Zaragoza lost 4-2 at home to Real Oviedo. Zaragoza’s defeat means Cadiz are seven points clear, with two games left. —AFP



Superior head-to-head



SEVILLE: Sevilla’s Spanish midfielder Olivier Torres (L) fights for the ball with Real Mallorca’s Spanish forward Aridal Cabrera during the Spanish league football match between Sevilla FC and RCD Mallorca at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Seville. —AFP

City’s European ban quashed on appeal

LAUSANNE: Manchester City are free to play Champions League football next season after the Court of Arbitration for Sport yesterday lifted a two-season ban from European competitions imposed by UEFA.

An initial fine of 30 million euros (\$34 million, £27 million) was also reduced to 10 million euros on appeal. City were accused of deliberately inflating the value of income from sponsors with links to the Abu

Dhabi United Group, also owned by City owner Sheikh Mansour, to avoid falling foul of financial fair play (FFP) regulations between 2012 and 2016.

UEFA launched an investigation after German magazine Der Spiegel published a series of leaked emails in 2018. However, CAS found that “most of the alleged breaches reported by the Adjudicatory Chamber of the CFCB (UEFA Club Financial Control Body) were either not established or time-barred”.

UEFA recognised in a statement that many of the allegations fell outside the five-year time limit in its own regulations. “UEFA notes that the CAS panel found that there was insufficient conclusive evidence to uphold all of the CFCB’s conclusions

in this specific case and that many of the alleged breaches were time-barred due to the five-year time period foreseen in the UEFA regulations,” European football’s governing body said in a statement.

‘VALIDATION’

City welcomed the decision, which will have huge ramifications for the club’s finances and potentially the future of manager Pep Guardiola and star players such as Kevin De Bruyne and Raheem Sterling. The club made 93 million euros from UEFA prize money and TV rights alone from last season’s Champions League, with gate receipts and extra sponsorship revenue from Europe’s premier club competition added to that tally.

“Whilst Manchester City and its legal advisors are yet to review the full ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), the club welcomes the implications of today’s ruling as a validation of the club’s position and the body of evidence that it was able to present,” City said in a statement.

“The club wishes to thank the panel members for their diligence and the due process that they administered.”

Since Sheikh Mansour’s takeover 12 years ago, City’s fortunes have been transformed from perennially living in the shadow of local rivals Manchester United to winning four Premier League titles in the past eight years among 11 major trophies. —AFP

Olympics must go ahead next year: Tokyo governor

TOKYO: Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, often floated as a future Japanese premier, said yesterday the Olympics must go ahead next year as a symbol of world unity in overcoming the novel coronavirus, even as her city grapples with stubborn spikes in cases.

Japan has not seen an explosive coronavirus outbreak as suffered in some other places but a recent increase in cases in Tokyo, which accounts for more than a third of its more than 20,000 total, has fanned worries about a second wave of infections.

The 2020 Olympics were scheduled to start this month but were postponed because of the coronavirus. Koike has pledged to win public support for the Games, although a media survey showed a majority think they should be cancelled or postponed again.

“I want to host them as a symbol of the world coming together to overcome this tough situation and of strengthened bonds among humankind,” Koike told Reuters in an online interview. She declined to specify a deadline for deciding if the Games could go ahead.

A media-savvy former television announcer who speaks English and Arabic, Koike is to many a paradox: a global thinker with a nationalist tinge; a political outsider who advanced with help from old-boy mentors, and a risk-taker who shied away from the big gamble of running for parliament in 2017 as head of her upstart “Party of Hope”.

The party floundered after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called a snap election. Instead, Koike stayed on as Tokyo governor and has won plaudits for her straight-talking handling of the COVID-19 outbreak in contrast to what critics called Abe’s clumsy response.

She was re-elected by a landslide last week, reigniting talk she has a shot at becoming Japan’s first woman prime

minister. Yesterday, she sought to brush such speculation aside. “I’m happy that people have hopes for me but I received support for a second term as governor,” she said. “I want to protect the lives and health of the people of Tokyo by addressing the immediate issue of policies for the coronavirus. That is my greatest mission.”

POLITICAL MACHINE?

Tokyo’s jump in COVID-19 cases comes as Abe’s government prepares to launch a campaign to promote domestic tourism, but that has raised concern about spreading the virus outside the capital.

Koike said it was important both to contain the virus and revive the slumping economy. “At present, a tough situation continues but ... by taking a proper response in Tokyo, I want to advance both the prevention of infections and social and economic activity,” she said.

Tokyo accounts for about 20% of Japan’s economy. Koike, who clashed with Abe’s administration over the im-

ing of a state of emergency, and over which businesses to target for shut-downs, said she wanted greater clarity on local governments’ authority during the crisis.

A veteran member of parliament before defying Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to make her 2016 bid for governor, Koike also wants to make the metropolis a global financial centre by luring foreign talent. Still, speculation persists that she could yet aim for Japan’s top job. She has already broken several glass ceilings: first female governor of Tokyo, Japan’s first female defence minister and the first woman to run for LDP president. But creating a new political machine to vault her to the top would be tough, political analysts said.

“Does she have what it takes to be prime minister? Absolutely. But she doesn’t have the political machine that can make it happen,” said a source who has advised Koike for years.

A return to the LDP fold would also face obstacles, given that mutual antagonism runs deep. —Reuters

Dutch 70s legend Wim Suurbier dies

THE HAGUE: Netherlands and Ajax defender Wim Suurbier, a key member of the 1970s Dutch squad who played in two World Cup finals, died at the age of 75, his former club said on Sunday.

Suurbier, who won three European championships with the legendary Ajax side of the same decade, had been in hospital since suffering a cerebral haemorrhage in April.

“A great Ajax player is no more. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends,” the Amsterdam club said on Twitter. “509 matches for Ajax 1 (first team)... Rest in peace, brave warrior.”

Jordi Cruyff, son of the late Dutch footballing legend Johan, said Suurbier was “a great player and an extremely loyal friend to my father and family. I hope you get to reunite up there.”

Suurbier was an attacking full-back whose role epitomised the “Total Football” style pioneered by the Ajax and Dutch national sides during his heyday.

With Ajax from 1964 to 1977 he won three European Cups and seven national titles.

The club described him as the “first modern back of the Netherlands”, able to attack deep as well as defend.

He later played for Schalke 04, FC Metz, Sparta and a number of American clubs.

Suurbier was also part of the Dutch sides that lost in the 1974 and 1978 World Cup finals, to West Germany and Argentina. He ended his career with 60 caps.

The Argentina game was his last international match.

Ajax also paid tribute to him as the “king of Dutch football humour”, known for his pranks and as part of the comic duo “Snabbel and Babbel” with his team and club mate Ruud Krol.

“The anecdotes about Suurbier’s pranks are countless... Yet he took football dead seriously,” Ajax said in a statement. —AFP

Former players hail ‘incredible’ Windies win on resumption

SOUTHAMPTON: Former England captain Michael Vaughan hailed West Indies’ “incredible” victory over England in the series opener and said their performance had been all the more remarkable given cricket was just returning from the COVID-19 shutdown.

West Indies, No. 8 in the test rankings, arrived in England without batsmen Darren Bravo and Shimron Hetmyer and all-rounder Keemo Paul, who pulled out of the tour citing concerns about safety during the pandemic.

Few expected them to beat fourth-ranked England but Jason Holder’s team prevailed by four wickets in a see-saw contest. A “great week of test cricket,” Vaughan said. “For the West Indies to have come over to play is remarkable in these times... For them to have

played so well & won is incredible,” tweeted Vaughan. “I don’t even think England fans will be too disappointed...bloody love test cricket.” West Indies batting great Viv Richards was over the moon. “First game after the break belongs to us,” tweeted the former captain.

“Some gritty performance from the lads. This team deserves the win in this game. Congratulations boys. You make us proud.” Indian great Sachin Tendulkar praised the “good all-round” performance by both teams while captain Virat Kohli also hailed the “Top display of test cricket”.

“Cricket is so much better with @windiescricket doing well in the longest format of the game,” tweeted former India quick Irfan Pathan. The three-test ‘bio-secure’ series moves to Manchester for the second match from Thursday.

British actor Hugh Laurie summed up the impact of the Southampton test on the game’s followers. “What a game of cricket. It doesn’t solve anything, cure anything, make anything go away - but what a game of cricket,” he tweeted. —Reuters



SOUTHAMPTON: West Indies’ Shane Dowrich evades a short ball on the fifth day of the first Test cricket match between England and the West Indies at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton, southwest England. —AFP

14 NFL's Redskins to change name after sponsor pressure over racism: Reports



15 Sevilla on the cusp of Champions League qualification after Mallorca win



15 Former players hail 'incredible' Windies win on resumption



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's Belgian defender Toby Alderweireld (3L) heads the ball to score during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. — AFP

Spurs leave it late to beat Arsenal

Bournemouth boost survival bid with victory against Leicester

LONDON: Toby Alderweireld gave Tottenham a late 2-1 win over Arsenal as Jose Mourinho's men climbed above their north London rivals, while Bournemouth kept their survival hopes alive with a chaotic 4-1 victory against Leicester on Sunday.

Mourinho had endured a barrage of criticism as Tottenham slipped out of the race to qualify for the Champions League with just one win in three games.

But thanks to Alderweireld's winner with nine minutes left, Tottenham took the local bragging rights and got back in contention for a place in next season's Europa League. Tottenham are eighth, two points above ninth placed Arsenal and two behind Sheffield United as they try to avoid missing out on European action for the first time since 2009-10.

give them a goal again and we concede a set-piece and at this level, you cannot do it."

At Dean Court, Leicester scored after 23 minutes as Jamie Vardy bagged his 23rd league goal of the season to extend his lead in the Golden Boot race. But Bournemouth were handed a lifeline when Leicester imploded during two minutes of mayhem.

In the 66th minute, Leicester keeper Kasper Schmeichel booted a goal-kick into Wilfred Ndidi's back, forcing his team-mate to trip Callum Wilson. Junior Stanislas stepped up to score the resulting penalty and 101 seconds later Dominic Solanke's weak shot trickled under Schmeichel's woeful attempt to save.

Leicester defender Caglar Soyuncu sent off for kicking Wilson as he attempted to retrieve the ball from the net after Solanke's goal. Bournemouth's luck was in and Stanislas's strike went in off Leicester's Jonny Evans for an 83rd minute own goal before Solanke's composed finish made it four in the 87th minute.

Bournemouth's first win in 10 games, a drought stretching back to February 1, moved them to within three points of 17th placed Watford, with three games left for all the teams in the relegation fight.

Cherries boss Eddie Howe said: "The situation was as bleak as it could be at half-time. But goals always change games. "It was probably the first time in a long time where we've had some luck. We can still survive."

Fourth placed Leicester will drop to fifth if Manchester United beat Southampton on Monday, leaving their hopes of Champions League qualification in danger. "I didn't see that coming but we are not good enough to get too comfortable. We will finish where we deserve to," Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers said.

Second bottom Aston Villa also boosted their survival bid with a vital 2-0 win against Crystal Palace. Dean Smith's side kicked off at Villa Park languishing seven points from safety, but Egypt winger Trezeguet scored twice to keep them in with a chance of staying up.

Palace striker Christian Benteke was sent off for violent conduct after the final whistle. Villa's first win in 11 league games left them four points behind Watford. Wolves stayed in the Champions League hunt, climbing to sixth place after a 3-0 win against Everton.

Raul Jimenez's penalty and Leander Dendoncker's header out Wolves two up before Diogo Jota was gifted the third by keeper Jordan Pickford's blunder. — AFP

Milan eye Euro return after holding Napoli

ROME: AC Milan kept their hopes of European football alive on Sunday with a 2-2 draw at Napoli that leaves them with a strong chance of reaching the Europa League. Franck Kessie's penalty 17 minutes from time gave Milan a battling point in Naples after Giovanni Di Lorenzo and Dries Mertens had put the hosts deservedly ahead with an hour gone.

The draw leaves Napoli in sixth place and the final Europa League spot, but as Gennaro Gattuso's side have already qualified for the competition's group stage by winning the Italian Cup, seventh place currently offers a place into the qualifying rounds.

Milan, who are two points and one place behind Napoli, are favourites to take the third spot in the Europa, although eighth-placed Sassuolo look keen for continental football despite being four points further back.

"When you get results and put in strong performances against this kind of opponent, it really boosts your confidence," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli.

"We scored a great goal to take the lead, we fought back to equalise and a point is a good result."

Theo Hernandez gave the away side the lead against the run of play with 19 minutes gone when he met Ante Rebic's brilliant cross with a thumping volley, but Napoli responded brilliantly to going behind. They were deservedly level 14 minutes later thanks to a fizzing free-kick delivery from Lorenzo Insigne which Gianluigi Donnarumma patted out to Di Lorenzo, who tapped home. Mertens put the hosts ahead on the hour mark when he met Jose Callejon's low cross with a shot that was deflected past Donnarumma by Alessio Romagnoli. From there it looked like there would only be one winner but they were given the perfect chance to equalise when Nikola Maksimovic brought down Giacomo Bonaventura in the area. Kessie made no mistake from the spot, rifling his finish past David Ospina.

SAMP EDGE AWAY FROM DROP

Earlier Sampdoria inched towards safety after they came from behind to win 3-1 at Udinese while their local rivals Genoa climbed out of the relegation zone with a 2-0 win over SPAL that left their opponents on the brink of the drop.

Claudio Ranieri's Samp are 14th on 35 points, six ahead of third-from-bottom Lecce following their goal-less draw at Cagliari, after a gutsy display at the Dacia Arena.

Fabio Quagliarella volleyed Samp level in first half stoppage time of his first appearance since the league restart and Federico Bonazzoli put the away side in the lead with a spectacular bicycle kick six minutes from the end after Udinese twice went close.

Manolo Gabbiadini then made absolutely sure in the final seconds with a beautifully judged curling finish to spark jubilation in the stands between Ranieri and club owner Massimo Ferrero.

Samp's win came after Genoa had moved themselves out of the drop zone with a simple win over sorry SPAL, who are staring demotion in the face after their fifth defeat in six since top flight football returned in Italy.

Davide Nicola's Genoa are a point ahead of 18th-placed Lecce and four behind Torino in 16th ahead of their trip to Inter Milan later. SPAL are rooted to the bottom of the league on 19 points, 11 behind Genoa with six matches remaining.

Elsewhere Parma came back from two goals down to draw 2-2 at home with Bologna thanks to two stoppage time goals after announcing their entire matchday squad had tested negative for coronavirus a day after a positive result for a staff member.

Daniilo's glancing header and a curling effort from Roberto Soriano had Bologna two ahead within 16 minutes at the Ennio Tardini stadium. However Jasmin Kurtic pulled one back for the hosts in the 93rd minute and 10th-placed Bologna were left stunned two minutes later when Roberto Inglese prodded home from a few yards out to salvage the unlikely of points for Parma, who stay 12th. Their match wasn't the only one to feature a last gasp equaliser, as Patrick Cutrone scored in the 96th minute to give Fiorentina a 1-1 draw at home to Hellas Verona. — AFP



We made the fans happy

"We are happy because we made the fans happy, we are happy because we are still in the fight to win a Europa League position," Mourinho said. "To be honest, Mikel (Arteta) found a way for them to play, to be stable and to improve. We felt that we should adapt slightly to them and we did it very well."

In the first north London derby at the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Alexandre Lacazette put Arsenal ahead in the 16th minute with a stunning long-range strike. Arsenal's lead lasted just three minutes as Sead Kolasinac's sloppy pass was intercepted by Son Heung-min, who eluded David Luiz before chipping over Emiliano Martinez.

In the 82nd minute, Belgian defender Alderweireld rose above a cluster of Arsenal players to meet Son's corner and plant his header past Martinez. Arsenal could miss out on Europe entirely and boss Arteta said: "We