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# Amir undergoes 'successful' surgery after medical checks

## Crown Prince assigned to take over some of Amir's responsibilities

### Expats with expired iqamas need new visas to return

KUWAIT: Around 40,000 residency permits held by expatriates who are abroad are considered void as they were not renewed, Residency Affairs Director General Brig Hamad Rashed Al-Tawala told Al-Rai daily, adding they can only return on new visas. He said that during the coronavirus crisis, the interior ministry took the humanitarian aspects of expats abroad who had valid residency permits into consideration by automatically renewing the absence permit as long as the residency permit remains valid.

Tawala said instructions of the higher ministry leadership facilitated procedures for expats whose passports expired in Kuwait by allowing them to extend their passports at their embassies and get an official letter authenticated by the foreign ministry to renew their residency permits, adding the number of such expats is nearly 70,000. He said 7,000 expats asked for the can-

cellation of their residencies and left the country during the coronavirus crises, most of them "bachelors".

Tawala said a draft law is being prepared to amend the fees for residency and various types of visas, adding that Kuwait is considered the cheapest country in the world with regards to foreigners' residency permit fees.

Meanwhile, Director of the Public Authority for Manpower Ahmed Al-Moussa announced banning visa transfers from the government to the private sector. Moussa explained that the authority has set new conditions for transfers from one employer to another as per resolution number 842/2015, amended by resolution number 367/2020, which bans transfers from the government to the private sector, with the exemption of citizens' spouses and children, holders of Palestinian passport documents and specialized medical staff members. — Agencies

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah underwent "successful" surgery yesterday morning, Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah said. He prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow HH the Amir with rapid recovery and wellbeing. HH the Amir had entered hospital on Saturday to undergo a number of medical checkups. Later on Saturday, Sheikh Ali announced an Amiri order was issued assigning HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to temporarily take over some constitutional jurisdictions of HH the Amir.

Also on Saturday, HH the Amir received separate telephone calls from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani for assurances about the Amir's health. The Saudi monarch and Qatari leader wished HH the Amir best health and wellbeing. In reply, the Amir expressed deep gratitude for their gracious and sincere sentiments, admiring the brotherly gestures that depicted depth of the sol-



HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

and historic relations between the brotherly countries and peoples. HH the Amir expressed identical wishes to King Salman and Sheikh Tamim. — KUNA



**MAY GOD PROTECT OUR BELOVED LEADER...**

Wishing His Highness the Amir continued prosperity and well-being.





## Local

# Crown Prince receives calls reassuring about Amir's health

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a phone call on Saturday from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who got reassured about the health of His Highness the Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Qatari Amir wished His Highness the Kuwaiti Amir good health and wellbeing. His Highness the Crown Prince thanked the Qatari Amir for his sincere sentiments. His Highness the Crown Prince also received a phone call from Iraqi President Barham Saleh, who got reassured about the health of His

Highness the Amir. The Iraqi President wished His Highness the Amir good health and wellbeing. His Highness the Crown Prince thanked the Iraqi leader for his sincere sentiments.

Moreover, His Highness the Crown Prince received a phone call from Ammar Al-Hakim, leader of Iraq's National

Wisdom Movement, who got reassured about the health of His Highness the Amir. The senior Iraqi politician wished His Highness the Amir good health and wellbeing. His Highness the Crown Prince thanked Hakim for his sincere sentiments and expressed best wishes for him and sisterly Iraq. — KUNA

## Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has recorded 58,904 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of Saturday, in addition to 407 deaths. With the exception of 137 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 tens of thousands have been discharged from quarantine after exhibiting no symptoms during their 14-day quarantine period, the Ministry of Health confirmed. Meanwhile, 49,687 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 8,810 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 6:00 pm.

Friday prayers resumed at around 1,000 mosques around Kuwait on July 17, with strict social distancing and health precautions observed. Mosques in the so-called 'model residential areas' had reopened their doors for worshippers on June 10 amid strict health precautionary measures. 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.

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.

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.

### School year ended

The Ministry of Education announced on July 17

ending the 2019-2020 school year, with the remaining part of the curriculum of the year's second half will be integrated into the first chapter of the next academic year 2020-2021 virtually effective as of October 4, after modifying the curriculum. Pre-school pupils, students of elementary and intermediate levels will be promoted to the higher classes. As to the high school level, students who desire to improve their grades can re-enroll in the scholastic year. As to class 12, the remaining period of the second semester was set at six weeks, while curricula were amended in tandem with the complementary study period, due between August 9 and September 17, and that will be via electronic means. Students' assessment will be on weekly basis through interaction and virtual presence at the set educational website. Earlier, the Ministry of Education had 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.

### Commercial flights

Commercial flights are set to resume on August 1, while the airport will operate at 30 percent capacity during the six-month first phase of a three-stage airport reopening plan. Kuwait had earlier sent special flights to repatriate Kuwaitis back home from countries affected with the virus' spread. Meanwhile, the Cabinet announced on April 9 the operation of all airline flights for expats who are wishing to return back to their countries.

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-Khaldi (head of this team): daily 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. Call 9903-6470.

Dr Ahmad Al-Khaldi: 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

## Life is short

By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com

Many, if not all of us, have faced several events that made us feel uncomfortable or let down. These can be painful if caused by a friend or someone we trust. It is normal to feel down and upset, but we must remember that we are not the first to be betrayed and certainly not the last, and we shouldn't be disappointed more than what is necessary. You are not the first to feel lonely among millions, and you yourself must have committed a sin or made mistakes with others.

It is always when things become grim or seem to close from all directions, one will find some way out at the end. When you feel uncomfortable and cannot figure out things, sit down and reconsider your priorities in life. Every one of us has dreams and ideas, but when one sees the hope of fulfillment vanish, they should remember right away that nothing is permanent - even the life we are living will one day end and our presence here is anyhow temporary.

So please take things easy and try to always be positive, even under the most dire circumstances, because this is the only act that will take you out of any bad situation. Be positive like this girl who was in a bus when a woman came along and sat next to her with her bags taking up the entire space and giving the girl a hard time. Yet the girl kept smiling and did not show any disappointment or bad feelings.

In the meantime, a man was watching what was going on, so he asked the girl why didn't she say something and admonish that unruly woman. The girl with her bright smile said: "It is not necessary to be tough and argue over every trivial thing - the trip is short and I will leave the bus at the next stop." We must remember what she said - "the trip is short" - as this applies to just about everything in our life. We should not spend our life in darkness and be engulfed with disputes. We must adopt a forgiving attitude towards others; otherwise, much of our efforts that can be used for productive actions will be lost for nothing.

Be cool when someone mistreats you. Regardless of what type of injustice you suffer, keep calm and remember our presence here is temporary. I am one hundred percent sure that many of us faced ingratitude from those we once helped, and there wasn't any appreciation. But be forgiving and keep your calm.

Our trip is short in this life and once we go, that's it - we are not returning. The only thing is that we do not know how long the trip is and when it will end. The only thing that you will leave here is your reputation, so let your deeds speak about you and make your loved ones after you depart proud!

Final word: "Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good." - Holy Quran (3:134)

## Stranded on ships, 200,000 seafarers struggle in limbo

**MANILA:** Indian ship worker Tejasvi Duseja is desperate to go home after months stranded offshore by coronavirus border closures and lockdowns that have left more than 200,000 seafarers in limbo. From engineers on cargo ships to waiters on luxury cruise liners, ocean-based workers around the world have been caught up in what the United Nations warns is a growing humanitarian crisis that has been blamed for several suicides.

Many have been trapped on vessels for months after their tours were supposed to end as travel restrictions disrupted normal crew rotations. "Mentally, I am just done with it... but I'm still holding up because I have no other option," Duseja, 27, told AFP via WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger in late June as the Indian-owned cargo vessel he works on floated near Malaysia.

Duseja, one of roughly 30,000 Indian workers unable to leave their ships, had extended his seven-month contract a few months before the pandemic struck. "The last time I stepped off from this 200-meter ship was in February," he said. Seafarers typically work for six to eight months at a stretch before disembarking and flying back to

their home countries, with new crews taking their place.

But as the deadly virus whipped around the world and paralyzed international travel, that was suddenly impossible. Underscoring the growing urgency of the situation, more than a dozen countries at a UK-hosted International Maritime Summit this month vowed to recognize seafarers as "key workers" to help them get home.

Philippine luxury cruise ship technician Cherokee Capajo spent nearly four months on ships without setting foot on land due to virus shutdowns. The 31-year-old had barely heard of COVID-19 when he boarded the Carnival Ecstasy in Florida in late January. Soon, a number of Carnival-owned cruise ships were stricken with severe outbreaks - including the Diamond Princess in Japan.

After the Ecstasy passengers disembarked in Jacksonville on March 14, Capajo and his colleagues were forced to stay on board for the next seven weeks. Finally, on May 2, the ship sailed to the Bahamas where Capajo says he and 1,200 crew members were transferred to another boat that took them to Jakarta before arriving in Manila Bay on June 29.

He wanted to "kiss the ground" when he came ashore nearly two weeks later after finishing quarantine. "This could probably be the hardest part of my experience as a seaman because you are not sure what will happen every day," Capajo told AFP via Facebook Messenger last week, as he



**MANILA:** This handout photo taken in May 2020 shows Philippine coastguard personnel taking swab samples from a Filipino crewmember onboard a cruise ship anchored at Manila Bay. — AFP

endured a second quarantine near his hometown in the central Philippines. "You worry if you'll ever come back home, how long will you be stuck on the ship. It's difficult. It's really sad."

Filipinos account for around a quarter of the world's seafarers. About 80,000 of them are stranded because of the pandemic, according to

Philippine authorities. The ordeal has taken a toll on the mental health of many seafarers, with reports of some taking their own lives. In one case, a Filipino worker died of "apparent self-harm" on the cruise ship Scarlet Lady as it anchored off Florida in May, according to the US Coast Guard. — AFP



Local

# Central Bank governor affirms strength of dinar exchange rate

## Kuwait financial status solid: Finance Minister

**KUWAIT:** Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel affirmed the financial strength of Kuwait and the resilience of the Kuwaiti Dinar's exchange rate vis-a-vis other currencies. "Among the fundamentals of the CBK monetary policy is to maintain the stability and strength of KD exchange rate," Dr Hashel said on Saturday. "The reports of the world-renowned credit rating agencies, including the latest report of Standard and Poor's (S&P), affirmed that Kuwait pursues a prudent and resilient monetary policy," he pointed out. Dr Hashel attributed the stability of the exchange rate to the KD pegging to a basket of currencies and the maintenance of robust reserves of foreign

currencies.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan said that Kuwait's financial status is solid, however reforms in the public financial sector must be pursued to ensure "longevity of institutions and citizens' prosperity." The minister, reacting to the latest statement by the global rating agency Standard & Poor's regarding Kuwait, said fixing Kuwait's sovereign classification at (AA-) is one of the top 27 ratings globally. The latest grading places Kuwait among states such as Taiwan and Ireland and atop most of the Gulf states, reflecting the state solid credit and financial status, totally backed up by assets' volume of the next generations' fund, he said.

However, the finance minister noted that as a result of liquidity dwindling in the general reserves (the state treasury), the executive and legislative authorities are seeking to find a solution to this challenge and the government is aspiring to cooperate with the legislative authority (parliament) in this respect. He indicated that the finance ministry presented to the government "available options" for securing sufficient liquidity, noting that the cabinet replied by requesting that such proposed plans be activated. Against this backdrop, an interim financial reform scheme has been worked out and the government has asked the ministry to follow up on its mechanisms. — KUNA



Central Bank Governor  
Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel



Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan



## Fire near Kuwait airport doused

**KUWAIT:** Firemen on Saturday put out fire that erupted at a building of a food company near Kuwait International Airport, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate said in a statement. The blazes erupted at a 4,000 sq-m building packed with food supplies,

prompting the firemen to scramble and reach the scene only two minutes after receiving information about the incident. The fire was extinguished and the site was evacuated within an hour. The incident did not affect aviation to and from the nearby airport. — KUNA

## Kuwait establishes '6-month' strategic stock of masks

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Public Authority for Industry (PAI) announced on Saturday the continuation of establishing a strategic stock of protective masks for a period of six months amid an outbreak of COVID-19. The authority said in a press statement that the daily local production of eight factories and local crafts is estimated at more than

5,000,000 masks, as there are 522 tons of raw materials currently available at industrial facilities and 133 tons of imported raw materials to increase production capacity. When the outbreak of the crisis, there was only one factory for masks manufacturing, as for now they reached nine, the statement added. PAI confirmed its support to national factories by facilitating approval process for industrial facilities to produce basic material for the production of masks, as well as providing the necessary strategic stock to citizens and residents. Establishment of those local factories came in coordination with the Ministry of Health to meet the product requirements, it said, stressing that the industrial sector plays a prominent role in easing the effect of this crisis. — KUNA

## Capital governorate thieves arrested

**KUWAIT:** Criminal investigators arrested five people responsible for multiple thefts reported in the Capital governorate yesterday. Detectives had managed to identify four men and a woman, all of African nationalities, as prime suspects in the case, then arrested them red-handed with possession of fake documents and driver's licenses, the Interior Ministry said in a statement released by its public relations department. The suspects reportedly used the documents to rent vehicles to use in their illegal operations, and procure equipment that they used to break into victims' vehicles. Police also found money which the suspects confessed to have stolen from cars they broke into, the statement reads. According to the statement, the suspects carried out their thefts by waiting outside bank branches and looking for clients who would leave after withdrawing large amounts of money. They would follow their victim, and wait until they leave



their car while leaving the money envelop inside. They would then break into the car and steal the money, the Interior Ministry explained. The suspects were referred to relevant authorities pending further investigations and legal actions.

### News in brief

#### Diwan mourns Sheikh Nasser Al-Humoud

**KUWAIT:** The Amiri Diwan on Saturday mourned the demise of Sheikh Nasser Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Sheikh Nasser, who passed away at the age of 89, was laid to rest early yesterday. The Diwan announced received condolences via text messages on the following numbers: Men: 69685670-99732003. Women: 94131644

#### Salary certificates

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Manpower announced it started receiving requests for salary certificates for more than 50 workers. Requests for salary certificates can be made on the number: 50983891.

#### Five hours

**KUWAIT:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that passengers are only permitted to enter the terminal five hours prior to departure of their flights. Passengers are not allowed to enter the terminal without wearing a facemask, it added.

#### Ten flights

**KUWAIT:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that 10 flights were set to depart Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying a total of 2,355 passengers. They included five flights to Egypt, three flights to the UAE, one flight to Qatar and one flight to the Philippines.

#### Illegal fishing

**KUWAIT:** Environmental police took legal action against violating fishermen who were found using illegal tools to fish at Kuwait Bay. Police seized boats, 56 kilograms of fish, and 419 kilograms of crabs during a campaign conducted recently in cooperation with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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## Local

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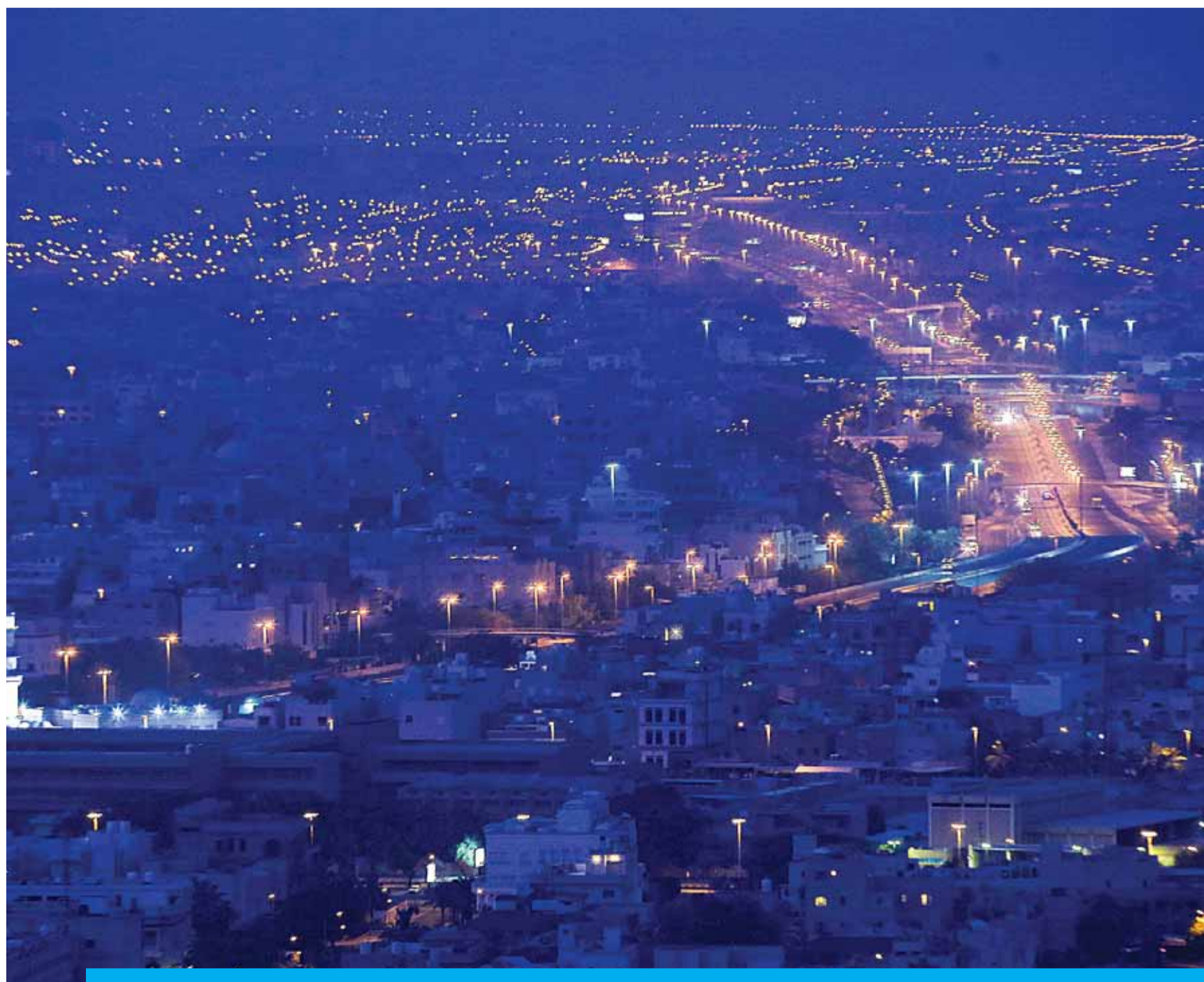
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## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A photo taken on July 11, 2020, shows a general view of Kuwait City at sunrise. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Private schools worried about 'reduced fees'

**KUWAIT:** Several private school owners threatened to resort to courts and file complaints against the education ministry if it reduces fees for the new academic year, which will commence through online learning for all stages. High-ranking educational sources said the new decisions announced by the ministry with regards to the new year and its work mechanism may create disputes with private school owners due to disagreements over school fees, adding that the ministry informed owners that in case the online system is applied, the fees may be reduced.

The sources said this made the owners worried and they rejected it categorically, adding that the education ministry gave a solution through which it hoped to satisfy the owners - by not collecting the annual rent they pay to the finance ministry, which is estimated in the tens of thousands.

The sources said all private schools will comply with the plan announced by the education ministry, adding that classes will start on Oct 4 at all private schools online unless the health situation changes. As for the fees parents paid for the second term, the sources said the reimbursement of these fees is the demand of the education ministry and parents, emphasizing that if this does not happen, parents will go to court to recover their money.

The education ministry is preparing a calendar for the new school year 2020/2021, which will start on Oct 4 and end in July 2021. Educational sources said extending the 2019/2020 school year is not justified especially when it is done through online classes. —Al-Anbaa

## Ministry to regulate online trade

**KUWAIT:** The future seems dark for money launderers, headed by famous people on social media who were used for this purpose, because supervi-

sion and accountability will be toughened. Informed sources told Al-Qabas that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is planning to reorganize online sales and auctions, in addition to ads by popular social media personalities to promote certain products. Sources said the commerce ministry is contemplating the introduction of new commercial licenses for online trade - be it for selling or promoting products or auctioning watches, jewelry, gems, cars, etc. all the way to home businesses that sell food or accessories. They said the proposed

online licenses will be similar to regular licenses and can be issued to one person and do not need a premises, such as those for small businesses.

The sources said the commerce ministry seeks to combat money laundering operations that are done online via social media personalities - a practice that hurts the economy. Moreover, the organization of online marketplaces has become an important demand as selling products and promoting them is the future of trade, which may be a good source of revenue for the government.

## ICSK organizes 'Sunshine Live' summer camp

**KUWAIT:** Sunshine Live 2020, the very first Virtual Summer Camp conducted by the Indian Community School Kuwait (ICSK), has been one of its kind all over Kuwait. When the current pandemic came as a hurdle towards our annually planned and successfully executed Summer Camp, instead of abandoning the plans, ICSK decided to execute the Virtual Summer Camp, Sunshine Live 2020. With wholehearted support and guidance from the ICSK Management, Dr V Binumon, Senior Administrator and Principal, ICSK Senior and Sherly Dennis, Principal, ICSK Junior, Team Sunshine Live lead by Dr Mary Isaac, Vice Principal, ICSK Amman took the first baby steps towards the Virtual Summer Camp. Participants from classes LKG to 10 were divided into three age-based categories: Sunny Smiles, Dreamers and Dazzlers.

The Camp began on June 14 with an Inaugural Ceremony and ended with a bang on July 13. Amol Vaidya, Senior Director, Operations Global Indian International School, UAE was the Chief Guest for the closing ceremony. The ceremony was attended by all the participants, their parents, resource persons from UAE, Kuwait as well as India. Glimpses of each of the categories left no doubt in the viewers' mind on how much the participants enjoyed each day. Certificate distribution was a delightful event for the campers when each participant saw their names on the screen.

The ceremony began with Islamic prayer by Azlan Ghansar and was followed by a video presentation by the tiny tots of Sunny Smiles, singing "God's love is so wonderful," a prayer song they sang every day at camp. The prayers were then followed by a very crisp and yet descriptive welcome address by Dr Mary Isaac, Vice Principal ICSK, Amman and Coordinator. There were video presentations of not only the activities, competitions for

the tiny tots, dance video compilation but also an amazing song sung by the participants. Chief Guest Amol Vaidya expressed his delight in the colorful presentations and congratulated everyone present for the event. Vaidya was himself a part of one session for Team Dazzlers and knew from his experience there, how each session was planned, executed and followed up with yet another zest-filled activity. He shared a few slides during the closing ceremony encouraging everyone present to make the most of the current situation and keep themselves updated. He mentioned a quote, "Sun has no Sunday," on which he went ahead and elaborated how there is no difference left between a weekday and a holiday anymore due to work from home scenario. We should yet stay positive and make the most of our possible options. Participants, Nurjannah Aga from Sunny Smiles, Arisha Jilan from Dreamers and Lovis Liza Pothen from Dazzlers were very expressive about their happiness when sharing their feedback with everyone.

Saumya Vivek, Roshna Vinai and Dr Eldho George, representing the parents shared their thoughts on how they found the Summer Camp to be extremely informative, productive and yet entertaining for kids of all age groups. Felicitation for the external Resource Persons was done virtually through Mementos presented by Dr Mary Isaac. She also shared her heartfelt gratitude to all the in-house resource persons, the teachers who put forward their best efforts to make sure every activity was a huge success. The vote of thanks by Jaya Nirmal was extremely gracious and made everyone present understand how it took a great team and incredible team efforts to make the camp a huge success. The Ceremony ended with a live dance session on the theme song.

The overwhelming response from the parents and participants encouraged ICSK and Team Sunshine Live 2020 to proceed with Sunshine Live Camp 2 from July 18 to August 17. The registration link for Camp 2 is active. Those who wish to register may visit the ICSK school website (www.icsk-kw.com) to utilize the opportunity of participating in the upcoming activities under Camp 2 and make productive use of their vacations in this crisis hour.

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Hong Kong security law sends jitters through city's feisty press

## Virus spurs crackdown on controversial Nigeria Quran schools

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GREATER NOIDA, India: Doctors and nurses wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) suits look after a COVID-19 coronavirus patient in the intensive care unit of Sharda Hospital on July 15, 2020. — AFP

# Global virus death toll tops 600,000

## EU grapples over coronavirus recovery

**BRUSSELS:** European Union leaders met for a third day yesterday to try and agree on a giant post-coronavirus economic recovery plan as the global death toll climbed to more than 600,000, an AFP tally showed. The pandemic, which has spawned economic mayhem worldwide, also saw the G20 - the world's most industrialized nations - consider extending debt relief for coronavirus-hit poor countries in the second half of 2020. EU leaders in Brussels remained deadlocked Saturday over the COVID-19 recovery plan due to resistance from the Netherlands and its "frugal" allies: Austria, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

European Council president Charles Michel was expected to propose another plan to the 27 leaders at noon after his blueprints for a 750-billion-euro (\$850 billion) package were refused by the richer northern member states. Michel's latest proposal would keep the total recovery budget at 750 million euros, but shift the balance slightly from grants - down from 500 million to 450 million - to loans, which rise from 250 million to 300 million, according to a document seen by AFP.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has insisted member states retain final approval of any funding - an effective veto - for recipients. He says EU oversight is necessary to oblige countries like Spain and Italy to reform their economies to handle future crises better. Michel's latest plan includes a "super emergency brake" that gives any country a three-

day window to trigger a review by all member states of another's spending plans.

### 'It's a disaster'

Meanwhile Barcelona, one of Europe's most visited cities, effectively went back into lockdown Saturday. Spain's COVID-19 death toll of 28,420 is



**COVID-19 infects over 14.2 million worldwide**

one of Europe's worst and the country has identified more than 150 new virus clusters across the country. The regional government of Catalonia urged nearly four million residents of metropolitan Barcelona to stay home unless absolutely necessary, banning gatherings of over 10 people and shutting cinemas, theatres and nightclubs, after the number of new cases tripled in a week.

The virus has now killed 600,523 people and infected over 14.2 million worldwide, an AFP

count based on official data showed, as the disease continues to surge across the globe despite months of unprecedented lockdowns. The number of deaths linked to COVID-19 has doubled in just over two months, and more than 100,000 new deaths have been registered in the three weeks since June 28. The US, the hardest-hit country in the pandemic, on Saturday added more than 60,000 new cases, raising its total to 3.7 million, with almost 140,000 deaths.

### Watching clusters

France, where masks will be compulsory in indoor public spaces from today, was closely watching coronavirus clusters in neighboring Spain. Prime Minister Jean Castex said, less than a month after the border between the two countries was reopened. When asked about possible border closures, Castex responded: "It is a real issue that we also need to discuss with the Spanish authorities". India hit one million cases on Friday, the day Brazil topped two million - although the World Health Organization said Brazil's contagion has "plateaued" with the rate of infection stabilizing after 77,000 deaths.

World Bank President David Malpass on Saturday called for a debt suspension initiative for poorer coronavirus-hit countries to be extended through the end of 2021, while multiple charities said it needs to be stretched through 2022 to avert a

"catastrophe for hundreds of millions of people". In their final statement after virtual talks hosted by Riyadh, G20 ministers and bankers said they would "consider a possible extension of the (debt suspension initiative) in the second half of 2020." So far, 42 countries have applied for the initiative, asking for a cumulative \$5.3 billion in debt to be deferred.

Addressing the impact of the virus on the world's poorest, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the pandemic had revealed the "fragile skeleton" of societies and could push 100 million people into extreme poverty. "Entire regions that were making progress on eradicating poverty and narrowing inequality have been set back years, in a matter of months," he warned. In Israel, police fired water cannons to disperse anti-government protests attended by thousands on Saturday, as public anger mounted over the handling of the coronavirus crisis.

Demonstrators outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence in Jerusalem and at a park in Tel Aviv voiced frustration over the government's response to a growing epidemic that has taken a devastating economic toll. With Israel recording more than 1,000 new coronavirus infections a day in recent weeks, the government on Friday announced a broad range of new restrictions. Shops, markets and other public venues have closed on weekends, while restaurants have been restricted to take away and delivery. — AFP

## Man questioned over Nantes cathedral fire

**RENNES, France:** French investigators were yesterday questioning a man who worked at the cathedral in the city of Nantes which was badly damaged by fire a day earlier, a prosecutor said. The man "was responsible for locking up the cathedral on Friday evening and investigators wanted to clarify elements of the schedule of this person", prosecutor Pierre Sennes told AFP. But he emphasized that "any interpretation that could implicate this person in what occurred is premature" adding the questioning was part of

"normal procedure".

Prosecutors launched an arson investigation after the fire broke out on Saturday morning in three places at the gothic Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul. The blaze destroyed stained glass windows and the 17th century grand organ - a star attraction of the cathedral. About 100 firefighters saved the main structure, built between the 15th and 19th centuries.

Sennes confirmed that experts from a police unit specialized in fire investigations were at the scene. They were awaiting authorization from firefighters to examine the platform on which the grand organ had stood. Cathedral rector Father Hubert Champenois said Saturday "everything was in order last night," and that "a very close inspection was made before it closed, like every other evening." — AFP



NANTES, France: A French police officer looks at the partially burnt facade of the Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul Cathedral yesterday. — AFP

## Syrians vote for new parliament amid war, economic turmoil

**DAMASCUS:** Syrians voted yesterday to elect a new parliament as the Damascus government grapples with international sanctions and a crumbling economy after retaking large parts of the war-torn country. More than 7,400 polling stations opened across government-held parts of Syria, including for the first time in former opposition strongholds, in the third such polls since the war started nine years ago. Several lists were allowed to run across the country but without any real opposition. President Bashar al-Assad's Baath party and its allies are expected to take most of parliament's 250 seats.

The president and his wife Asma cast their votes in the capital, the presidency said, posting photos of the smartly dressed couple wearing white face masks to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus. Volunteers stood outside polling stations carrying the programs and pictures of their favourite candidates, and tried to woo passersby to come in and vote. Among the first to cast his ballot in Damascus was 50-year-old Khaled Al-Shaleh.

"My demands today are for the parliament to realize what laws need changing in the interest of the citizen," said the government employee. "The conditions in the country have changed for the worse as the war drags on. But our demands before, during and after the war have always been to do with the economy," he added. Hanan Sukriye, 29, an employee at the finance ministry, said she was voting for the first time in her life. "My vote alone



DAMASCUS: Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and his wife Asma vote at a polling station in the capital during parliamentary elections yesterday. — AFP

won't make a difference, but if we all come together to choose worthy candidates, there will be an impact," she said.

On the eve of the polls, one person was killed and another wounded in a blast in Damascus, state news agency SANA said. The cause of the explosion was not immediately clear. Portraits of the contenders have been displayed across the capital for weeks, with the 1,658 candidates including several prominent businessmen. The elections, twice postponed from April due to the coronavirus pandemic, come at a time when most Syrians are worried about the soaring cost of living. Many candidates are running on programs pledging to tackle inflation and improve infrastructure ravaged by the conflict. "Lawmakers are going to have to make exceptional efforts to improve services," said Umaya, a 31-year-old woman who works in a dentist's practice. — AFP



## International

# 'Ugly face': US and China trade barbs in Myanmar

## South China Sea rift deepens

BEIJING: China's embassy in Myanmar yesterday accused the United States of "outrageously smearing" the country and driving a wedge with its Southeast Asian neighbors over the contested South China Sea and Hong Kong, as tensions mount between the superpowers. Responding to US claims Beijing was undermining the sovereignty of its neighbors, the Chinese embassy said US agencies abroad were doing "disgusting things" to contain China and had showed a "selfish, hypocritical, contemptible, and ugly face". The United States last week hardened its position on the South China Sea, saying it would back countries in the region that challenge Beijing's claim to about 90% of the strategic waterway.

In a statement on Saturday, the US embassy in Yangon called China's actions in the South China Sea and Hong Kong, where Beijing has imposed tough new national security laws, part of a "larger pattern to undermine the sovereignty of its neighbors". The US statement drew parallels between China's actions in the South China Sea and Hong Kong with large-scale Chinese investments projects in Myanmar that the United States warned could become debt-traps, along with trafficking of women from Myanmar to China as brides, and the inflow of drugs from China into Myanmar.

"This is how modern sovereignty is often lost -

not through dramatic, overt action, but through a cascade of smaller ones that lead to its slow erosion over time," the US embassy said. In its rebuke, China said the statement showed a "sour grapes" attitude by the United States towards "flourishing China-Myanmar relations" and was "another farce on a global tour by the US authorities to shift the attention on domestic problems and seek selfish political gains". "The US should first look in the mirror to see whether it still looks like a major country now," it said.

The Chinese embassy in Yangon did not answer phone calls seeking further comment. The US embassy was not immediately available for comment. Myanmar has increasingly become a battleground for influence between the two countries since relations between the government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and the West became strained over its treatment of the

Rohingya Muslim minority.

Author and historian Thant Myint-U told Reuters in an email although the country was of negligible economic value to the rivals, its strategic importance as a bridge between mainland China and the Bay of Bengal was hard to ignore. "Myanmar's instincts since independence in 1948 are to try to be friends with everyone, but it's not clear that's going to remain possible, in this coming period of increasingly febrile superpower rivalry," he said.



### US hardens its position on South China Sea

## Bikes wedge their way into Paris traffic

PARIS: Stein van Oosteren was cycling along the Avenue Denfert Rochereau in Paris when, to his surprise, he found himself in a "caravan" of bikes. "Not too long ago, I was all alone on that street," he said. An avid cyclist and spokesman for the community-led biking advocacy organisation Collectif Velo Ile-de-France, van Oosteren has plenty of company these days.

Since France emerged from its two-month lockdown in May, the number of cyclists in Paris has skyrocketed, increasing by more than 50 percent, according to the city council. Videos on social media of packs of cyclists along the Rue de Rivoli—a historic, bustling thoroughfare that cuts across central Paris—elicited astonished reactions online. Fifty kilometers of temporary bike lanes were set up during the lockdown within the ring road, and another 100 km in the surrounding suburbs.

However, the two-wheel boom, experts and advocates say, is not a happy accident but the result of years

of planning to cut polluting traffic on choked roads accelerated by several crises. "The great thing about Paris is not so much that they made some pop-up bike lanes, that's just the tip of the iceberg," said Stefan Bendiks, director of Artgineering, a Brussels-based mobility design firm. "They worked for years on a consistent strategy for improving the city and having a good narrative about it."

### A tale of two crises

During a massive, weeks-long transport strike in December and January, the number of cyclists on some streets more than doubled, said van Oosteren, a dual Dutch-French citizen. That happened again in the weeks after the virus lockdown eased, he added. More than 15,000 riders took out an annual subscription for Velib', the Paris public bike share system, in the first week of May. Many Parisians have also dusted off their old bikes, taking advantage of a state-funded nationwide scheme that offers 50 euros (\$57) towards bike repairs.

The initiative, launched on May 11, cost an estimated 20 million euros. It aimed for 300,000 repairs by year's end but nearly reached that figure within a month and a half, said Olivier Schneider, head of the Federation des Usagers de la Bicyclette, an umbrella organisation of 365 cycling advocacy



BORDEAUX, France: A man wearing a protective mask walks past a bike in a street on Saturday. — AFP

groups across France. Bike repair shops contacted by AFP had waiting times of between one and a half and three months, even for the simplest fix.

### The Dutch model

"For 40 years, we were under the impression that nobody was listening to us," Schneider said. "But the bike always comes around in times of crisis." After the 1973 oil crisis, The Netherlands was the first European country to heavily invest in bike infra-

structure. In the late 1970s, Denmark developed cycling after a proposed highway infrastructure network was deemed too expensive. Paris, however, did not wait for a crisis. Since 2015, it has invested 150 million euros as part of a goal to become a "world cycling capital". The five-year plan included doubling Paris cycle lanes from 700 to 1,400 km, creating 10,000 bike parking spots and upgrading the Velib' system, which had been falling into disrepair. — AFP

## In Belarus, three women unite to fight Lukashenko

MINSK: Three women have teamed up to fight presidential polls in Belarus, pitting "female solidarity" against strongman Alexander Lukashenko, who insists the country is not ready for a woman president. Their campaign comes as the rights group Amnesty International on Friday released a report condemning the ex-Soviet country's discriminatory treatment of women opposition activists, citing threats of sexual violence and taking their children into care.

Lukashenko is standing for a sixth term in August 9 polls in the authoritarian country bordering Russia and the European Union. The vote's result is in little doubt given his total dominance of previous elections, not recognised as free or fair by Western observers. Law enforcement forces detained hundreds at opposition protests this week and three prominent opposition figures are in custody.

### 'Out of love'

But the contest has been shaken up by the decision of one woman, Svetlana Tikhonovskaya, to stand for president in place of her husband, a popular opposition YouTube blogger, after the authorities prevented him from submitting his candidacy by detaining him. In a surprise move, the central electoral commission registered Tikhonovskaya as a candidate on Tuesday. The 37-year-old languages teacher has said she has no gift for public speaking and never thought the authorities would register her.

"Everyone knows how I ended up here: out of love for my husband," she told a news conference in Minsk on Friday. It's a story Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta called "pure Hollywood". However, analysts reacted with skepticism, saying the opposition was too divided to make an impact after the central electoral commission dropped two stronger opposition candidates. These were Viktor Babaryko, an ex-banker seen as Lukashenko's strongest rival who has



MINSK: Veronika Tsepikalo, the wife of opposition figure Valery Tsepikalo, who was barred from running for presidency, presidential candidate Svetlana Tikhonovskaya and Maria Kolesnikova, Viktor Babaryko's campaign chief, pose during a press conference on July 17, 2020. — AFP

been detained on suspicion of financial crimes, and Valery Tsepikalo, a popular opposition figure.

Then on Thursday the campaign teams of Tikhonovskaya, Babaryko and Tsepikalo announced they were joining forces. Tikhonovskaya posed for a campaign photo with Maria Kolesnikova, Babaryko's campaign chief, and Veronika Tsepikalo, the wife of the former diplomat turned opposition politician.

Tikhonovskaya defiantly punched the air, Tsepikalo made a V sign and Kolesnikova linked her fingers in a heart shape. The picture quickly went viral with Belarusians posting memes. "The main item on yesterday's news was a photograph with three beautiful Belarusian women together" wrote political analyst Alexander Feduta on the website of Warsaw-based Belsat opposition television channel. "It seems all of society was waiting right now for this union."

The women repeated the gestures in Minsk on Friday as Tsepikalo urged Belarusians to "vote for Svetlana!" "We decided to unite and show what female solidarity is," she said. "We're not second-class, we're equal to men and we believe we'll win." At the same time, Tikhonovskaya acknowledged: "I still haven't got rid of my fear," saying she is "very worried" about her husband. — AFP



YANGON: Myanmar's State Counselor and Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi wears gloves and a facemask as she pays her respects to her late father during a ceremony to mark the 73rd anniversary of Martyrs' Day yesterday. — AFP

"The sheer weight of China's giant industrial revolution next door is already transforming Myanmar; if multi-billion dollar infrastructure projects are added to the mix, the border between the two countries will become increasingly difficult to see,"

he said. "It's important to remember that Myanmar was one of the few countries in the world where the last Cold War led to proxy armed fighting which in turn led to military dictatorship and decades of self-imposed isolation." — Reuters

## Burkina fighters stir praise and controversy

OUAGADOUGOU: To some, they are doughty fighters who with meagre resources put their lives on the line. To others, they are an undisciplined band—a "death squad," according to one—that has carried out summary justice and inflamed ethnic tensions. The force at the heart of this controversy is the newly-created Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland (VDP, to use its French initials), a militia fighting jihadist raiders who have sown terror in rural Burkina.

President Roch Marc Christian Kabore unveiled the idea of the VDP last November as the shocked Sahel nation mourned the massacre of dozens of people in an ambush in Semafo. They were the latest victims of a jihadist insurgency that began in neighbouring Mali and now casts a shadow over states to the south.

In Burkina Faso, one of the poorest countries in the world, more than 1,100 lives have been lost and nearly a million people forced from their homes. On January 21, after another bloody attack, parliament approved a law creating the VDP. Under it, citizens who join the VDP undergo 14 days of military training, are equipped with light arms, communication and observation equipment, and carry out surveillance and protection missions.

They are unpaid, although each local unit receives 200,000 CFA francs (\$350, 300 euros) a month to pay for petrol and other operating expenses, according to VDP members. Volunteers often also get help from local people and monetary tips from traders or others they escort. "We were fed up getting slaughtered like chickens," says "Rambo," a 32-year-old farmer who joined the VDP in Kongoussi, in northern Burkina Faso. "We had the choice of sitting back and watch death come to us or to confront it head on, hoping that we could at least save our families, our villages. We prefer to fight."

### Weak army

Commentators say the VDP is both a symbol of the weakness of the armed forces and de-facto recognition of unofficial militia that existed before. "Recruiting volunteers sounds like an admission of the inability of the FDS (defence and security forces) to ensure the defence of the country by themselves," a local grassroots group, the Observatory for Democracy and Human Rights (ODDH), said. Drissa Traore, a specialist in Burkina Faso, said the authorities "found a compromise between institutionalising (armed) groups and dissolving them."

Self-defence groups proliferated in rural Burkina Faso after 2015. These "koglweogos"—Guardians of the Bush in the Moore language—sprang up in several regions, notably to fight criminal gangs. They have often been accused of torture, extortion and summary justice, but were also popular. Government reports about jihadist attacks persistently report the presence of the VDP at these incidents—a clear sign that the battered, under-equipped and poorly-trained armed forces are making extensive use of the group. — AFP

## Baloch families seeking answers from Pakistan as more disappear

KARACHI: For over 11 years relatives of people who disappeared in the murk of a separatist insurgency in southwestern Pakistan have gathered outside the Press Club of Quetta wanting to know who took their fathers, husbands and sons. The daily sit-in protest in the provincial capital of Balochistan began on June 28, 2009 after a doctor, Deen Muhammad, was abducted by "unknown men".

Relatives suspect Muhammad, like many other missing ethnic Balochs, was snatched by Pakistani security forces hunting separatists, who for decades have waged a campaign for greater autonomy or independence. Sometimes less than a dozen join the daily protest, other days many more, but Muhammad's two daughters have been among the regulars since they were eight and ten years old.

"Our little hands were holding pictures of our father back then; now we have grown up and we still have no clue if he is alive," Sammi Baloch, now 21, told Reuters by telephone from Quetta. Even when the weather is too extreme in Quetta to hold protest, a sit-in is observed by Balochs in front of the press club in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and a melting pot for different ethnic groups. The insurgency in Balochistan, a sparsely populated, mountainous, desert region bordering Afghanistan and Iran has sometimes waned and sometimes intensified over the years.

But for all the durability of the Baloch struggle, the conflict has seldom drawn international attention. It grabbed headlines however, in late June when a group of young Baloch militants launched an attack on the Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi. On Tuesday, three soldiers were killed and eight wounded in an area known for attacks by Baloch fighters. — Reuters



## International

# Floods in India and Nepal displace nearly 4 million, kill at least 189

## Dozens missing; Brahmaputra River overflows

**GUWAHATI:** Nearly four million people in India's northeastern state of Assam and neighboring Nepal have been displaced by heavy flooding from monsoon rains, with dozens missing as deaths rose to at least 189, government officials said yesterday. The overflowing Brahmaputra River, which flows through China's Tibet, India and Bangladesh, has damaged crops and triggered mudslides, displacing millions of people, officials said. More than 2.75 million people in Assam have been displaced by three waves of floods since late May that has claimed 79 lives after two more deaths were reported overnight, a state government official said.

"The flood situation remains critical with most of the rivers flowing menacingly above the danger mark," Assam water resources Minister Keshab Mahanta said. Assam is facing the twin challenge of combating floods and the coronavirus pandemic. Out of 33 districts, 25 remained affected after the current wave of flooding, beginning a fortnight ago. India is grappling with the novel coronavirus, which has infected nearly 1.1 million people and 26,816 have died from the COVID-19 disease, government data showed on Sunday.

In neighboring Nepal, the government asked residents along its southern plains on Sunday to remain alert as heavy monsoon rains were expected to pound the Himalayan nation where more than 100 have died in floods and landslides since June, officials said. Some 110 people were killed and another

100 injured as landslides and flash floods washed or swept away homes, upended roads and bridges and displaced hundreds of others in 26 of the country's 77 districts, police said. Home ministry official



### Assam faces twin challenge floods and coronavirus

Murari Wasti said the death toll was expected to rise as 48 people were still missing.

"Search and rescue teams are looking for those who are missing in different places but chances of finding them alive are slim," Wasti told Reuters. Barun Paudel of the weather forecasting office in the capital, Kathmandu, said heavy rains were expected to pound much of the mainly mountainous nation in the next four days. "We have urged residents to remain alert against possible landslides and floods," he said. Landslides and flash floods are common in Nepal, India's Assam and Bihar states during the June-September annual rainy season. — Reuters



AMRITSAR: A dog chases a motorcyclist along a waterlogged street during heavy rain yesterday. — AFP

#### News in brief

##### Glacier tour bus rolls over

**MONTREAL:** A glacier-viewing bus overturned on Saturday at a popular tourist spot in the Canadian Rockies, killing three people and seriously injuring several others, news reports said. The all-terrain vehicle rolled off the road near the Columbia Icefield in Jasper National Park, Alberta, national broadcaster CBC said. Photos published by media outlets show the upturned red-and-white bus, equipped with monster-truck style tires for crossing ice, on a rocky slope below the road across the glacier's moraine. The bus lost control and rolled down the hill, witness Vanja Krtolica told the Globe and Mail. "All of a sudden, everybody started screaming because they saw the coach lose control," said Krtolica, who was on a similar bus. "It was careening down that 33 degree ... steep hill and lost control," he told the newspaper. — AFP

##### Israeli police disperse protests

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli police fired water cannons to disperse anti-government protests attended by thousands on Saturday, as public anger mounts over the handling of the coronavirus crisis. Demonstrators gathered outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence in Jerusalem and at a park in Tel Aviv, voicing frustration over the government's response to a growing epidemic that has taken a devastating economic toll. Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said officers had allowed demonstrations to take place but took action against unauthorized "disturbances," including road blockages. Rosenfeld said protesters in Tel Aviv sprayed pepper spray at police, leading to multiple arrests. With Israel recording more than 1,000 new coronavirus infections a day in recent weeks, the government on Friday announced a broad range of new restrictions. — AFP

##### Mask-wearing compulsory

**MELBOURNE:** Australia's second-biggest city will make it compulsory to wear a mask in public, authorities announced yesterday, as Melbourne steps up efforts to bring a coronavirus outbreak under control. Victoria state, which includes Melbourne, now has nearly 3,000 active cases of COVID-19 after a further 363 infections were reported yesterday despite a 10-day lockdown. Premier Daniel Andrews said more than five million people in Melbourne and neighboring Mitchell Shire would be required to wear a mask or other face-covering in public spaces from midnight Wednesday into Thursday. "Most of us wouldn't leave home without our keys, we wouldn't leave our home without our mobile phone," he told a press conference. "You won't be able to leave home without your mask and then wear it where it is absolutely essential to stop the spread of this virus." — AFP

##### Brazil's chief hospitalized

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Indigenous leader Raoni Metuktire, one of the Amazon rainforest's best-known defenders, was transferred between hospitals Saturday due to weakness and a "worsening" state of health, one of the medical facilities said. Raoni, a chief of the Kayapo people in northern Brazil, was likely suffering from a digestive hemorrhage, said Santa Ines Hospital, in the small town of Colider in Mato Grosso state, where he was admitted Thursday. Raoni was already showing "signs of improvement" including a rise in blood pressure after being administered first aid, according to Dois Pinheiros Hospital in the city of Sinop, where he was transferred. The hospital said it would conduct exams beginning Sunday to detect whether Raoni might be suffering from a gastric ulcer, estimating that he would remain at the facility "at least three days." — AFP

## More than 9 years of conflict in Syria

**BEIRUT:** Syria's war since 2011 has involved a host of regional and international players, forced millions of people from their homes and left more than 380,000 people dead. Here is a summary of the main events in the nine-year conflict:

#### Revolt to repression

In March 2011, protests break out calling for political change after four decades of repressive rule by the Assad dynasty, Bashar having succeeded his father Hafez in 2000. President Bashar al-Assad's regime cracks down on demonstrations, but rallies continue. In July, an army colonel, who has defected from the military, sets up the Turkey-based opposition Free Syrian Army (FSA). An armed rebellion erupts with support from Western and Arab countries. The rebels seize key territory, including large swathes of third city Homs and a chunk of Aleppo, Syria's second city.

#### Air strikes

In 2012, the regime carries out bloody operations, notably in the central city of Hama, a bastion of opposition to the Assad regime. FSA fighters in July launch a battle for Damascus. The government retains control of the capital, but rebels seize parts of the suburbs. From 2013, regime helicopters and planes unleash air strikes, some of them using barrel bombs, on rebel zones, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

#### Hezbollah, Iran

The Iran-backed Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah says in 2013 it has deployed fighters to back Syrian government forces. Iran also boosts its support for Assad.

#### US steps back

On August 21, 2013, a chemical attack on two rebel-held areas near Damascus reportedly kills more than 1,400 people. The regime denies responsibility. US president Barack Obama pulls back from threatened punitive strikes, instead agreeing a deal

with Moscow meant to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons arsenal.

#### Islamic State group

In June 2014, the jihadist Islamic State group (IS) proclaims a "caliphate" over territory it has seized in Syria and Iraq. In September, a US-led coalition launches air strikes against IS in Syria. Kurdish groups, which since 2013 have set up autonomous administrations in Kurdish-majority areas, join with Arabs to form the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The alliance ousts IS from key areas, including its de facto capital Raqa, in 2017, and then in 2019, the group's last Syrian holdout in the village of Baghouz near the border with Iraq.

#### Russia rescues Assad

In September 2015, Syria's main ally Russia launches air strikes in support of Assad's beleaguered troops, a turning point in the war. In a string of deadly campaigns, the regime retakes key rebel bastions, from Aleppo in 2016 to Eastern Ghouta on the outskirts of the capital in 2018.

#### Chemical attacks

In April 2017, a sarin gas attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhun kills more than 80 people. US President Donald Trump unleashes missile strikes against the regime's Shayrat airbase, from where the gas attack was allegedly launched. In April 2018, the US, France and Britain launch retaliatory strikes after an alleged regime chemical attack on the then rebel-held town of Douma, near Damascus.

#### Turkey offensive against Kurds

On October 9, 2019, Ankara launches an offensive targeting Kurdish forces in Syria, whom it brands "terrorists" linked to Kurdish insurgents in Turkey. The operation allows Turkey to take control of a 120-kilometre-long (75-mile-long), 30-kilometre-wide strip of territory along the border.

#### Battle for Idlib

In December 2019, the regime launches a deadly offensive to retake Idlib, the last major jihadist bastion in Syria. A ceasefire is reached in March 2020 after months of bombardment and fighting. — AFP

## Hong Kong security law sends jitters through feisty press

**HONG KONG:** Hong Kong's status as a bastion of press freedom is in crisis as authorities toughen their line against international media and fears grow about local self-censorship under the city's sweeping new security law. For decades the former British colony has been a shining light for journalists in Asia, lying on the fringes of an authoritarian China where the ruling Communist Party keeps a tight grip on public opinion. The civil liberties that have stewarded the city's success were promised to Hong Kongers for another 50 years under a deal that returned the trading hub to Chinese rule in 1997.

But Beijing's new national security law-imposed in response to last year's huge and sometimes violent pro-democracy protests-has sent a shiver through the financial hub's media landscape.

"It's a body blow. It's the end of press freedom as we knew it in Hong Kong," Yuen Chan, a former local reporter now lecturing at London's City University, told AFP. The New York Times, CNN, Bloomberg, the Wall Street Journal, CNBC, the Financial Times and AFP are among numerous international media outlets with a presence in the city, many basing their regional headquarters there.

Free from the harassment, censorship and restrictions pervasive on the authoritarian Chinese mainland, semi-autonomous Hong Kong has thrived as a safe haven for both local and foreign reporters. But signs of the sands shifting have begun to emerge since China introduced its draconian new law earlier this month. On Tuesday the New York



HONG KONG: People are seen on the waterfront in the West Kowloon cultural district on Saturday. — AFP

Times announced it would relocate a third of its staff to Seoul, saying it faced unprecedented trouble obtaining visas.

Hong Kong authorities recently launched a review of independent but state-funded broadcaster RTHK following accusations it was overly sympathetic to pro-democracy protests. Immediately after the security law was passed, two columnists quit the city's rambunctious Apple Daily newspaper, a staunch advocate for greater democracy. The tabloid is owned by Jimmy Lai, a tycoon who Chinese state media has labeled a leading "black hand" colluding with foreign forces to destroy the mainland.

#### 'Open season'

Beijing has made little secret of its desire to rein in Hong Kong's media, both domestic and foreign.

## Virus spurs crackdown on controversial Quran schools in Nigeria

**KANO:** Two dozen boys read verses of the Quran aloud on the dilapidated veranda of one of the thousands of informal Islamic schools studding northern Nigeria's biggest city Kano. To some in this conservative region, the centuries-old system-known as almajiri locally-is an invaluable bastion of tradition and religious learning. But critics have long condemned the institutions for squalid conditions, forcing children to beg and denying them a proper education. Now the spread of coronavirus has sparked renewed efforts from the authorities to close down the schools and send the pupils home to their families.

Governors of 19 states across northern Nigeria in May announced a ban on the informal Islamic centres over fears they would become hubs for spreading the disease. "We are prohibiting that system. We want every child to be with his parents," Kano governor Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai explained recently during a virtual conference on the issue. He said the aim was ultimately to replace the schools with a hybrid Islamic and modern education system regulated by the authorities. "The COVID-19 pandemic provided a window of opportunity to have the almajiris in a fixed location, document them, test them and repatriate them."

Leaders in Nigeria have repeatedly spoken about the need to reform the system-but so far there has been little progress toward changing the deeply ingrained practice. For generations it has been tradition in Muslim-majority northern Nigeria for parents to send their sons from as young as six to local clerics to learn the Quran. The lessons are free but the children must fend for themselves-meaning many end up begging in the streets or doing menial jobs. Crowds of young boys pleading for money or food in tattered clothes are a common sight on Kano's roads. They often sleep rough or on the floors of the overcrowded dormitories provided by their teachers with poor or no sanitation. — AFP

One provision of the national security law orders authorities to "strengthen the management" of foreign news organizations. "It seems like they are starting to at least consider using the visa as a means to punish the people they don't like," said Keith Richburg, director of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong and a former foreign correspondent for the Washington Post.

In 2018, Financial Times journalist Victor Mallet was refused a visa renewal weeks after he hosted a talk at the city's foreign press club with an independence activist, Sharron Fast, deputy director at Hong Kong University's journalism program, said the clause about foreign media in the new law "sounds ominously like Hong Kong will move towards a China-style press credential requirement". — AFP



# Business

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2020



FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida: People check in at the American Airlines counter in the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Some US states are even imposing quarantines on visitors. — AFP

## Americans see travel horizons narrowing

### As the pandemic surges, most countries bar US citizens

WASHINGTON: After months of working from home, stir-crazy Americans have finally reached the long, hot days of summer only to watch their vacation horizons dim, with travel options shrinking as the country's coronavirus cases soar.

"All I've been doing this year is canceling trips," 61-year-old Keith Gibbons said with a sigh, a new reality that the government contractor called "very frustrating." Trips abroad are mostly out: The overwhelming majority of countries now bar American citizens amid a sharp US resurgence of COVID-19. The country's caseload has climbed to over 3.7 million—more than one-fourth the world's total—and deaths have reached over 140,000.

As for cross-country trips, it's not that simple: In the vast US, laws on mask-wearing and social distancing vary dramatically, and sometimes confusingly, from one jurisdiction to another. Some states are even imposing quarantines on visitors. Hawaii, for example, has ordered those arriving on the Pacific archipelago to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Its governor, David Ige, announced Thursday that beginning September 1, visitors will also have to submit to a coronavirus test within 72 hours of departing for the state and present proof of a negative result upon arrival in Hawaii. Meanwhile, New York has extended

its list of US states—totaling 22 now—whose citizens will be required to self-quarantine after arriving in the northeastern state.

And in the city of Chicago visitors from 17 states must self-isolate for two weeks—or face fines of up to \$500 a day. Complicating many Americans' travel plans, the summer destinations of Florida and California are among the hardest-hit by COVID-19, even if the popular Disney World park in Orlando, Florida has partially reopened and a Disney-linked shopping district in California reopened earlier this month. As for ocean cruises, a highly popular travel option in normal years, they remain banned by a federal "No Sail Order" through September.

#### 'It doesn't seem wise'

At this point, Gibbons said, "It doesn't seem wise to go anywhere, either because of the local health situation or because the hotels and other establishments are taking steps to deal with COVID in a manner that makes the trip less interesting." So if "you want to go to a nice hotel for the weekend but the restaurants are closed, the pool is closed, services are limited, it doesn't sound like a lot of fun."

Saher Rizvi, a 40-year-old neurologist in Washington, was supposed to leave in early July for a

poorest countries had requested a freeze in official bilateral debt payments through the end of the year, amounting to about \$5.3 billion in deferred payments. Reflecting concerns raised by the World Bank that China, a G20 member and the largest creditor to developing countries, was not participating fully, the officials urged all official bilateral creditors to implement the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) fully and transparently.

They also "strongly encouraged" private creditors to participate on comparable terms, and said they would consider extending the debt standstill in the second half of 2020. Private creditors had not received any formal requests from countries for debt service suspension under the G20 initiative, the Institute for International Finance (IIF) said on Wednesday, ahead of Saturday's meeting. "We encourage the private sector investors to participate in this, but we need to be very careful not to interfere on private agreements," Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan said in a press conference at the end of the meeting.

Saudi Arabia is the current G20 chair. The officials also reaffirmed their commitment to resolving differences over how to tax digital services and reaching a broad, consensus-based solution this year.

They said they expected to see proposals on international tax reform by October, when they meet again. "Fair taxation of international companies and large digital groups is more urgent than ever," German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said after the meeting.

#### Digital tax

The United States has been at loggerheads over the issue with Britain, France and other key allies, who have adopted or are considering digital service taxes as a way to raise revenue from the local operations of big tech companies. Critics say those firms profit enormously from local markets while making only limited contributions to public coffers, but Washington contends the taxes discriminate against US tech firms such as Google, Facebook and Apple Inc.

The Trump administration this month ratcheted up pressure on France over its 3 percent digital services tax, saying it would impose additional duties of 25 percent on French imports valued \$1.3 billion but would hold off on implementing the move while talks continued in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. G20 finance ministers and central bankers on Saturday acknowledged that the coronavirus pandemic had slowed work toward an international plan, but said they expected concrete proposals to emerge before their next meeting in October.

"We remain committed to ... overcome remaining differences and reaffirm our commitment to reach a global and consensus-based solution this year," they said after a virtual meeting.—Reuters



Domestic travel spending may drop by 40%

10-day vacation to Monaco with her husband and two sons, aged five and seven. The trip had to be canceled.

Today, she draws a sharp red line: Her family will not travel by plane or by train. "I don't think it is safe," said Rizvi, who as a physician has followed the evolution of the pandemic closely.

While some people may have to travel by plane or train for important professional purposes or for family emergencies, "for pleasure, it just seems like the risk/benefit doesn't seem worthwhile," Rizvi said. Instead, her husband had been trying to persuade her to rent an RV for a road trip, but she has her doubts.

"From a Monaco vacation to the RV, well," she burst out laughing, making clear that the lure of traveling in a compact camper was not compatible with the level of

luxury she expected from a hotel overlooking the Mediterranean. Summer vacation has long been a staple for Americans. This year has not been kind to them. The recent surge in COVID-19 infections—coupled with the devastating blow to the economy and jobs—has sharply impacted travel plans, according to the US Travel Association (USTA): Bookings for future airplane and hotel reservations dropped a sharp 73 percent year-over-year in early July.

A recent survey by the research institute Longwoods International found that 76 percent of Americans were prepared to change their travel plans for the next six months because of the pandemic. Indeed, 45 percent have already canceled their plans. "I can't complain," Gibbons said. "A lot of people have lost their lives, or are sick; others lost their jobs. So I'm fortunate that I've still got a job and have these choices to make."

At this point, Gibbons has successively canceled planned trips to Florida, Delaware and Portugal. USTA, which represents the hotel, restaurant, leisure and air-travel sectors, said most Americans are now planning to travel by car and to stay relatively close to home, even if a few hardy souls are taking the chance of traveling to national parks. Result: With domestic travel spending expected to drop by 40 percent, this year will be no holiday for the travel and leisure sectors. — AFP

## G20 officials vow to bolster ailing global economy

RIYADH/WASHINGTON: Finance officials from the Group of 20 major economies vowed on Saturday to continue using "all available policy tools" to fight the coronavirus pandemic and bolster the global economy, warning that the outlook remains highly uncertain. The finance officials also pledged to resolve major differences over taxing big tech companies and reach a broad, consensus-based solution on international taxation this year.



RIYADH: A handout picture, shows Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan (center) chairing a virtual meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors from G20 nations, in the capital Riyadh. — AFP

G20 finance ministers and central bankers, in a communique issued after a virtual meeting on Saturday, said the global economy would recover as economies gradually reopen, but said further actions were needed to ensure growth. "We are determined to continue to use all available policy tools to safeguard people's lives, jobs and incomes, support global economic recovery, and enhance the resilience of the financial system, while safeguarding against downside risks," they said in statement after the meeting ended.

COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, has infected more than 14.14 million people and killed 596,576, according to a Reuters tally. The United States, the world's largest economy, tops the list of deaths.

Sweeping shutdowns aimed at halting the spread of the disease have caused massive disruption to the global economy, and are hitting the world's poorest countries hardest. G20 finance officials said 42 of the world's 73

## Communities get bigger role running Pakistan's parks

ISLAMABAD: For 20 years, Khunjerab National Park was a point of tension between Pakistan's government — which established the park in 1975 as a sanctuary for rare species — and locals who had grazed their livestock on the land for generations. As disputes over the land raged, poachers decimated Khunjerab's wildlife, villagers say — until 1995, when local people and the authorities decided to work together to better protect the park. "Our communities knew about natural resource management (and) we were well organized," said Muzaffar ud Din, a founding member of the local Shimshal Nature Trust, which contributed members to a community-led management group set up to run the park. "Now I would say Khunjerab is better managed than many other parks in the country. The local people look after it. The wildlife population has increased manifold," he said. In its latest move to generate jobs amid the COVID-19 pandemic while boosting conservation and curbing the impacts of climate change, Pakistan has announced the creation of Pakistan's first National Parks Service, modeled on the US agency.

Under it, the country aims to get more local communities involved in running national parks and earning an income as they protect nearby conservation areas. The first phase of the Protected Areas Initiative, launched on July 2, will focus on 15 national parks that make up a total of 7,300 sq km (2,800 sq miles), spanning from Khunjerab in the north to the area around Astola Island in the south. The project aims to create up to 5,000 new jobs, mainly for young people who will work as park guards and cus-

todians, and boost eco-tourism in the country, authorities said when the initiative was announced. Malik Amin Aslam, climate change advisor to Prime Minister Imran Khan, said the parks plan fits into Pakistan's post-coronavirus "green stimulus" vision, which also includes hiring thousands of unemployed day labourers to plant trees as part of the country's 10 Billion Tree Tsunami program. "The dual objective is to protect nature while also generating jobs for unemployed youth," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "All this green activity will aid in addressing the unexpected spike in COVID-linked unemployment across the country."

#### 'Paper parks'

Pakistan currently has about 30 national parks that are supposed to be protected and preserved by law. But most are "paper parks" — areas classified as national parks but with little or no management, said Aslam, who helped design the new initiative.

Conservation expert Anis ur Rahman estimates only about 5 percent of the country's parks are properly managed. The others suffer from clashing priorities and a lack of cooperation between the government and the communities that live around them and rely on them for grazing, hunting and firewood, he explained. "In many cases, the government changed the status of these old community-managed forest areas or grazing areas into national parks where (suddenly) everything is prohibited by law," said Rahman, who heads the management board for Margalla Hills National Park, one of those included in the new project. "But there is weak enforcement. The government does not have the resources to pay for adequate protection," he said. Many of the country's environmental experts see Khunjerab, the country's oldest and largest national park, as a model of successful community-led management. The park was established 45 years ago as a way to protect the area's glaciers, alpine pastures, streams and ravines.—AFP



In a bid to create green jobs, Islamabad looks to give 5,000 mainly young people work protecting 15 national parks. —Reuters



## Business

## NBK Money Markets Report

# US consumer prices, retail sales edge up, but dollar shows decline

## ECB in 'wait-and-see' mode, leaves key rates unchanged

**KUWAIT:** Economic data from the US are starting to show signs of a recovery for the world's largest economy. Consumer spending and homebuilders' confidence had returned to levels last seen before the pandemic struck. US consumer prices rebounded in June increasing 0.6 percent m/m - the biggest gain since 2012. The rise follows three months of declines and was driven by a 12.3 percent jump in gasoline prices. The recovery is painting signs of an economic improvement even with a reversal of reopening plans as some states saw a second wave of coronavirus cases.

The retail sales figure released last Thursday showed that June sales were up 7.5 percent compared with the preceding month, exceeding economists' estimates of a 5 percent growth and following a rise of 18.2 percent in May. The figure in June is less than 1 percent from levels recorded before the crisis and comes as more Americans return to work and retailers emerging from pandemic related shutdowns. The National Association of Home Builders' Housing Market Index also showed a surge, climbing to 72 in July from 58 in the previous month and exceeding the 60 figure forecasted by economists. This jump has coincided with a decline in mortgage rates, which have slipped to their lowest on record.

The number of Americans collecting unemployment has also shown improvement, with the figure easing for the sixth week in a row, dropping to 17.3m from 17.8 million. The ease comes as businesses rehired workers, even as lay-offs continued for the fourth month in a row. Employers had added a combined 7.3 million payrolls in May and June, following a record loss of 20.5 million in April.

It is yet to be seen if the V-shaped recovery pic-

ture being painted by the figures can be sustained. For that to happen the momentum needs to continue despite several states rolling back reopening by ordering dine-in restaurant services and other indoor activities to shut down again.

### Stocks rally

The equities market showed gains over most of the weeks as investors shrugged off coronavirus worries. Corporate earnings, new virus cases and vaccine hopes were the main movers of markets during the week. Optimism was driven by reports Pfizer and Germany's Biontech Se gained FDA fast-track approval for two of their four vaccines. The approval meant that they'll be able to speed up the go-to-market process, allowing them to enroll up to 30,000 patients for trials by the end of the month, and potentially developing a vaccine by the end of the year. The S&P 500 closed the week 0.58 percent higher at 3,224.73 while the Dow Jones Industrial average showed a rise of 1.70 percent closing the week at 26,671.95.

With that, investors have shown that they are practicing "controlled optimism" as they see the resurgence in cases throughout the US. Their caution led the 10-year Treasury yield to slip by 0.3 percent coming close to the 0.6 percent, as investors sought haven assets. The greenback showed a decline as it sold off against most major currencies, dropping 0.70 percent and closing at 95.942.

### Bank of Canada holds rates

The Bank of Canada predicts economic activity will not return to pre-pandemic levels until 2022 and interest rates will remain low for at least two



## Britain's GDP improves in May

### Rates - 19th July, 2020

| Currencies | Previous Week Levels |        |        |        | This Week's Expected Range |         | 3-Month Forward |
|------------|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------------|---------|-----------------|
|            | Open                 | Low    | High   | Close  | Minimum                    | Maximum |                 |
| EUR        | 1.1299               | 1.1451 | 1.1295 | 1.1428 | 1.1335                     | 1.1625  | 1.1449          |
| GBP        | 1.2610               | 1.2666 | 1.2478 | 1.2565 | 1.2465                     | 1.2765  | 1.2566          |
| JPY        | 106.89               | 107.42 | 106.65 | 106.99 | 105.10                     | 108.95  | 106.86          |
| CHF        | 0.9415               | 0.9467 | 0.9369 | 0.9384 | 0.9180                     | 0.9590  | 0.9356          |

years. In its meeting on Wednesday, it again held its key overnight rate steady, mentioning it will remain so until the 2 percent inflation target is sustainably achieved. "We recognize that households and businesses are facing an unusual amount of uncertainty. Against that background, we are being unusually clear that interest rates are going to be low for a long time," BOC Governor Tiff Macklem said. Canada will also face fallout as its largest trading partner, the US, faces a rapid rise in coronavirus cases. GDP is projected to fall 7.8 percent in 2020, then rise 5.1 percent in 2021, and reach pre-pandemic levels in early 2022.

### ECB enters a "wait and see" period

In its monetary meeting held on Thursday, the Governing Council of the European Central Bank decided to leave its key rates unchanged, while keeping its Pandemic Emergency Purchase Program steady at 1.35 trillion euro. ECB president Christine Lagarde states that the Eurozone's fresh recovery from the economic damage done by the coronavirus pandemic faces several threats. The ECB has now hit a pause after four months of ramping up its monetary stimulus and has entered into what investors are calling "a wait

and see" period, aiming to assess the speed of economic recovery before launching new measures.

### UK GDP edges higher

The UK's GDP edged higher in May rising 1.8 percent following the record 20.4 percent plummet in April and 6.9 percent contraction in March. In the three months to May, GDP fell by 19.1 percent as government restrictions in response to the coronavirus outbreak dramatically reduced activity. The data leaves the economy nearly a fifth below pre-lockdown levels. This compares to the 2008 recession where GDP shrunk by just 2.1 percent in a single quarter. Retail sales in the UK returned to growth in June, boosted by online, food and furniture spending. The figure indicates that the piled-up demand from the pandemic lockdown could help struggling stores as they reopen. Data showed retail sales increased by 3.4 percent in June compared with the same month last year, its first expansion since the lockdown and fastest pace of growth since May 2018.

### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD closed the week at 0.30715.

## HSBC named Best Investment Bank in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** HSBC has been named the Best Investment Bank in Kuwait at the 2020 Euromoney Middle East Awards for Excellence. HSBC collected a total of six Middle East awards, once again featuring prominently in Euromoney's list of honors which

are considered the most prestigious in the financial services industry.



Roger Winfield

In addition to the Best Investment Bank in Kuwait award, HSBC was also named the Best Investment Bank in the Middle East, the Middle East's Best Bank for Transaction Services and the Middle East's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance. The bank also collected an Excellence in Leadership award in recognition for the support it has provided to customers, employees and communities in the region throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. HSBC was also named the Best Investment Bank in Oman.

Roger Winfield, CEO for HSBC in Kuwait said: "Being recognized as having the best Investment Banking platform in Kuwait is excellent news. It is a privilege to support our customers, both international clients operating in Kuwait and Kuwaiti institutions, by leveraging our global network and expertise." Alex Lheritier, Head of Global Banking in Kuwait added: "Over the last year, HSBC has been at the forefront of financing, capital markets and investment banking activity in Kuwait and throughout the Middle East. We are also delighted to be supporting in attracting international investors into the country by playing an active role in Kuwait's MSCI emerging market index inclusion work."

HSBC was recognized by Euromoney for nurturing the development of the Middle East's sustainable finance market by not only helping execute large and complex deals but also by driving the innovation of new products such as sustainability-linked loans. In the transaction services space, HSBC has pioneered the use of new technologies such as blockchain to transform the future of international trade and invested in digital tools to make payments faster and more secure.

In more recent months, HSBC's values - being dependable; being open to ideas and cultures; and being connected to customers, communities, regulators and each other - have driven its response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Middle East. The bank accelerated digital transformation programs and introduced new solutions for customers such as video conferencing and digital signatures. Roger Winfield added: "The work to prepare for life after COVID-19 has already started and we are proud to be helping our customers, people and communities get in the best possible position for the eventual recovery." More information on the awarding bodies and awarding mechanism can be provided upon request.

## German finance minister under fire over Wirecard

**FRANKFURT:** German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz came under fire Friday after documents showed he knew about suspicions of misconduct at disgraced payments company Wirecard as early as 2019. Wirecard collapsed spectacularly last month after admitting that 1.9 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) missing from its accounts likely did not exist, in what auditors said appeared to be an "elaborate and sophisticated fraud".

Scholz has described the Wirecard scandal as "unparalleled in the financial world" and called for reforms of the country's finance watchdog Bafin. But a finance ministry report sent to the parliamentary

finance committee on Thursday showed that Scholz was told in February 2019 that Bafin was investigating Wirecard executives "on suspicion of a violation against the prohibition of market manipulation". Bernd Riexinger, leader of the far-left Die Linke party, said Scholz should urgently explain "why his ministry ignored" the warnings about Wirecard for so long.

"The sloppy oversight of multi-billion-euro companies is simply astounding," he said.

The Green party also demanded further clarifications. A finance ministry spokesman confirmed that the relevant departments were made aware of the Wirecard probe. "We kept parliament informed about this," he added. German authorities have faced mounting criticism for not scrutinising Wirecard more closely despite the persistent media speculation of accounting irregularities, particularly by the Financial Times.

Wirecard's ex-CEO Markus Braun was last month arrested on suspicion of market manipulation



Airbus has announced it will make the final delivery of a 251st A380 next year. The fact the planes have four engines means they consume more fuel, which means they can cost more to operate and cause more pollution if not full. — AFP

## Boeing 747, Airbus A380: End of the jumbos of the skies?

**PARIS:** The Boeing 747's slow descent into retirement from commercial service just got steeper with British Airways' announcement Friday it would be pulling the jumbo jet from the skies as the coronavirus pandemic forces it to cut back operations and cut costs.

BA's announcement follows moves by a number of other airlines that have retired their 747s and their Airbus A380, another jumbo-sized four-engine jet made by Boeing's European rival. The fact the planes have four engines means they consume more fuel, which means they can cost more to operate and cause more pollution if not full.

### Who has grounded their jumbos?

Lufthansa announced in April that it is grounding five of its 32 747s and 14 A380s, saying the move was related to their higher environmental and economic footprint. Air France, which had already planned to retire its A380s in 2022 because of their higher operating costs, also took advantage of the reduced demand for traffic due to coronavirus lockdowns to mothball them early. Australia's Qantas

also accelerated its phase out of its three 747s, and its A380s are also set to go. Korean Air is only flying 12 out of its 23 Boeing 747s — 11 cargo and one passenger jet, according to the airline. Air India's four 747s are being used to fly VIPs and take part in evacuations. America said goodbye to the Boeing 747 in December 2017, when Delta, the last US airline to use the jet, retired the aircraft.

### Coronavirus to blame?

"Coronavirus is an accelerant," said Remy Bonny, an aviation expert at Archery Consulting. Both the 747 and A380 "are much more difficult to manage in a fleet... They are not the easiest aircrafts to fill, they consume more" fuel, he said. Launched in 1970, Boeing's jumbo jet can transport more than 600 passengers in certain configurations. The A380 can carry up to 853.

"Even before the crisis there was a trend towards smaller and more flexible aircraft" that are less costly to operate and can be used very different types of routes, said Bonny. Aviation expert Sebastien Maire at Kea & Partners recently told AFP that the A380 offers airlines the lowest operating cost per seat, provided every seat is occupied. Filling the planes was proving difficult for airlines on many routes, however. "It is clear there won't be trend towards jumbos in the coming years," said Bonny, adding that the "manufacturers will above all focus on short-haul planes and single-aisle aircraft capable of assuring long routes." — AFP



German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier arrives for the weekly cabinet meeting in Berlin in this file photo. — AFP

and falsifying accounts. He has been released on bail. The company's former chief operating officer Jan Marsalek, who is also wanted by German prosecutors, is on the run. — AFP

## Indonesia cuts rates as virus batters economy

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia's central bank cut interest rates for the fourth time this year, with Southeast Asia's biggest economy battered by the coronavirus pandemic. Policymakers at Bank Indonesia reduced the key lending rate by 25 basis points to 4.00 percent, days after the government warned of a looming recession. Central bank governor Perry Warjiyo said the latest rate cut was a "further step" to boost the struggling economy, adding that there were signs of a recovery as a stimulus plan kicks in and virus restrictions are eased.

"But we're not back to pre-pandemic levels," Warjiyo warned.

Research house Capital Economics said it expected the bank to move again in the coming months.

"The main reason we think further easing is likely is the poor outlook for the economy," it said, adding that output remained "very weak". Finance minister Mulyani Indrawati has warned that Indonesia's economy is set to contract 4.3 percent in the second quarter and shrink again in the July-September period. Two consecutive quarters of negative growth would mark Indonesia's first recession since the 1998 Asian financial crisis. Indonesia has announced a stimulus package worth more than \$48 billion to help offset the impact of coronavirus, which forced a large-scale shutdown that hammered growth, including in the key tourism sector.

The Southeast Asian archipelago, home to nearly 270 million people, has been easing movement restrictions in a bid to head off economic collapse. But Indonesia's COVID-19 infections are mounting as cases top 80,000 with over 3,800 deaths. The true scale of the public health crisis is widely believed to be much bigger in a country with one of the world's lowest coronavirus testing rates. — AFP



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www.beautybeyond.com.kw



## DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery  
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery



**Academic Certificates – Training**

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

### Scope of clinical Practice.

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Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9-Clover Center Mazaya Building

## Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine

Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).



1802 555

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# Classifieds

Monday, July 20, 2020

**Kuwait Times**  
 THE FIRST COPY ON THE ARABIAN GULF  
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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

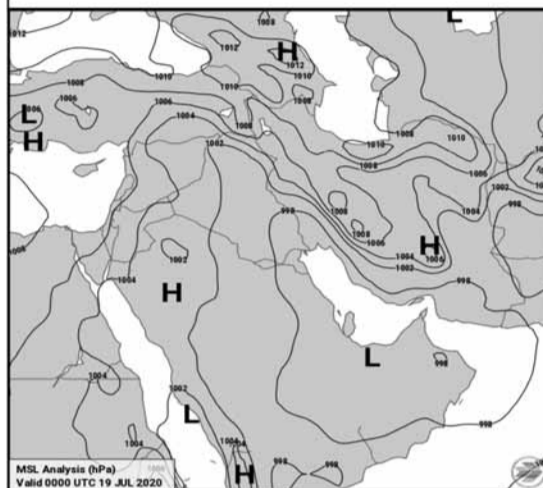
**BY DAY:** Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times over western areas north westerly wind to north easterly wind with speed of 12 - 40 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Hot to rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind with speed of 12 - 32 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING: No Current Warnings

| STATION        | MAX. EXP. | MIN. REC. |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| KUWAIT CITY    | 45 °C     | 35 °C     |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 47 °C     | 31 °C     |
| ABDALY         | 48 °C     | 31 °C     |
| BUBYAN         | - °C      | - °C      |
| JAHRA          | 48 °C     | 36 °C     |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 44 °C     | 30 °C     |
| SALMIYAH       | 44 °C     | 32 °C     |
| AHMADI         | 44 °C     | 33 °C     |
| NUWAISIB       | 40 °C     | 30 °C     |
| WAFRA          | 47 °C     | 29 °C     |
| SALMY          | 47 °C     | 31 °C     |

SFC. CHART 19/07/2020 0000 UTC



| 4 DAYS FORECAST |       |  |              |       |                |              |
|-----------------|-------|--|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| DAY             | DATE  | WEATHER  | Temperatures |       | Wind Direction | Wind Speed   |
|                 |       |  | MAX.         | MIN.  |                |              |
| Monday          | 07/20 | Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas                             | 47 °C        | 32 °C | NE-SE          | 12 - 40 km/h |
| Tuesday         | 07/21 | Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas                                       | 48 °C        | 33 °C | NW-S           | 12 - 38 km/h |
| Wednesday       | 07/22 | Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas                             | 48 °C        | 32 °C | S-SE           | 12 - 38 km/h |
| Thursday        | 07/23 | Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear | 46 °C        | 31 °C | SE             | 12 - 35 km/h |

| PRAYER TIMES |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Fajr         | 03:30 |
| Sunrise      | 05:01 |
| Zuhr         | 11:54 |
| Asr          | 15:29 |
| Sunset       | 18:48 |
| Isha         | 20:17 |

| RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT |            |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| MAX. Temp.                           | 45 °C      |
| MIN. Temp.                           | 34 °C      |
| MAX. RH                              | 33 %       |
| MIN. RH                              | 08 %       |
| MAX. Wind                            | NE 39 km/h |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.             | 0 mm       |

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

## CHANGE OF NAME

**I, Nanda Kumar Menon**, Indian passport no. Z3017844, have changed my given name as Nanda Kumar and surname as Menon for all purposes henceforth. **20-7-2020**

**I, Sruthi Vijay Kumar Menon**, Indian passport no. T8983320, have changed my given name as Sruthi Vijay Kumar and surname as Menon for all purposes henceforth. **(C 5500) 19-7-2020**

**Old name:** Galib Ahamed Ansari, **New name:** Talib Hussain Ansari, **DOB:** 23/03/1967, **Passport No:** J3969924. **(C 5499) 16-7-2020**

## EMERGENCY 112

### Airlines

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Kuwait Airways       | 171          |
| Jazeera Airways      | 177          |
| Turkish Airlines     | 1884918      |
| FlyDubai             | 22414400     |
| Qatar Airways        | 22423888     |
| KLM                  | 22425747     |
| Royal Jordanian      | 22418064/5/6 |
| British Airways      | 22425635     |
| Air France           | 22430224     |
| Emirates             | 22921555     |
| Air India            | 22456700     |
| Air India EXPRESS    | 22438185/4   |
| Sri Lanka Airlines   | 22424444     |
| Egypt Air            | 22421578     |
| Swiss Air            | 22421516     |
| Saudia               | 22426306     |
| Middle East Airlines | 22423073     |
| Lufthansa            | 22422493     |
| PIA                  | 22421044     |
| Bangladesh Airlines  | 22452977/8   |
| Oman Air             | 22958787     |
| Turkish Airlines     | 22453820/1   |

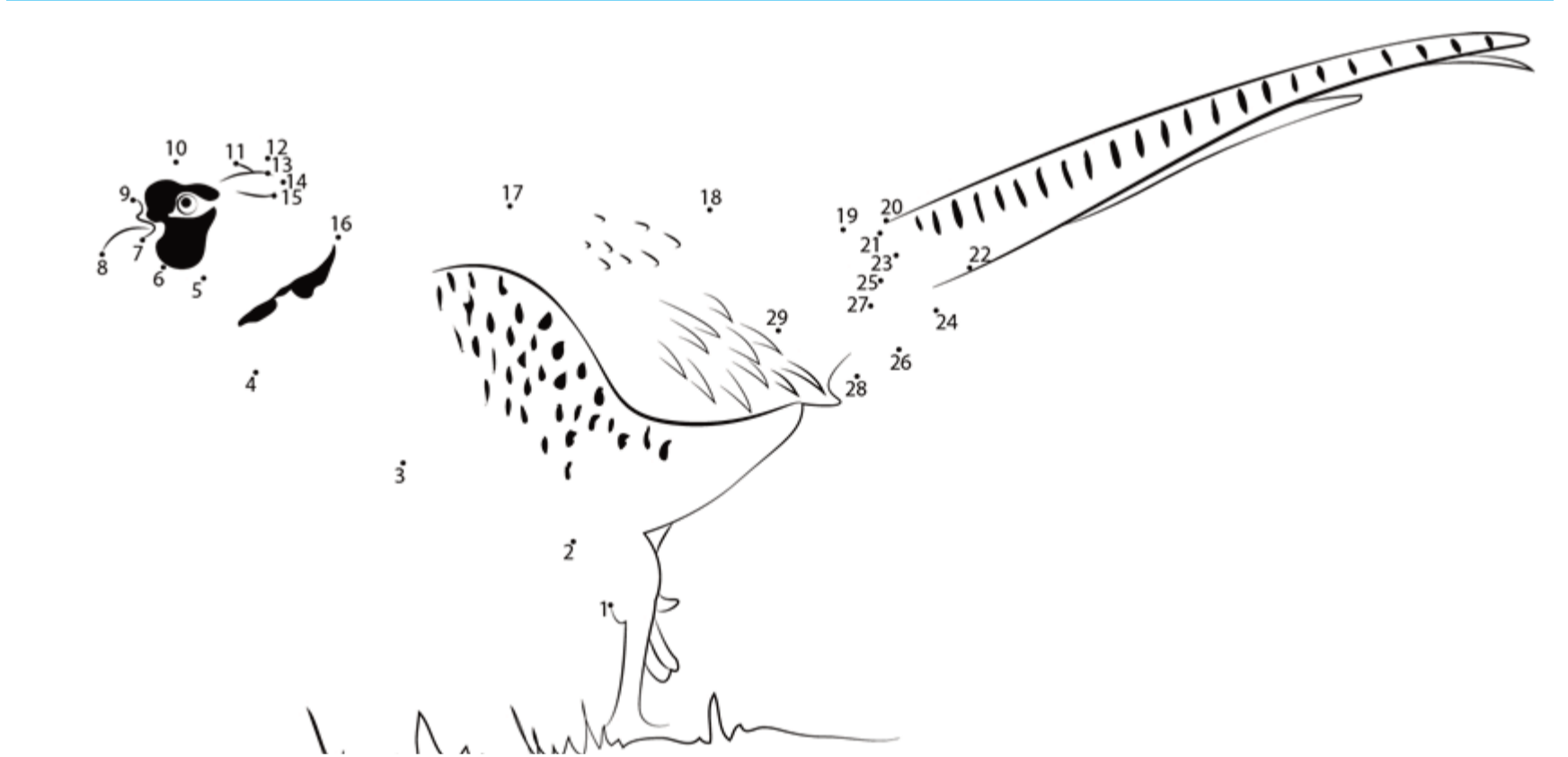
## Word Scramble

### Recycling Scramble

We've scrambled 20 recycling vocabulary words. Can you figure out the original words by unscrambling the letters?

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| NERVES        |  |
| OTCOPSM       |  |
| ECSYMEOS      |  |
| ECEDRU        |  |
| ERYMNINTEON   |  |
| ZOENO         |  |
| BOAEDBRAEIGDL |  |
| LISPECTA      |  |
| STAWE         |  |
| ERSUE         |  |
| COAGRNI       |  |
| ROLSA         |  |
| IOISESMNS     |  |
| AERPP         |  |
| SBASL         |  |
| NDALFLL       |  |
| SEFMU         |  |
| TRHAE         |  |
| GRNAED        |  |
| IRRPAE        |  |

## Join the Dot



## STAR TRACK

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**  
 New opportunities to advance your professional standing may arise, Aries. The aspects bode well for business and money. Promising new projects may present themselves. Your tendency to serve and nurture others should strengthen your work relationships, so morale on the job takes a tangible upswing at this time. Warmth and affection for friends, children, romantic partners, and even casual acquaintances should increase and enhance relationships.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**  
 Today your powers of persuasion are at an all-time high. This is a good day to ask for a raise or promote a new project. Your drive to gain recognition for your accomplishments may necessitate seeking the public eye, so if publicity is what you need, this is the day to go for it. Your observational skills are acute, as is your insight into others' feelings. This is definitely a good day to seek advancement.

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**  
 As a natural healer, you might find yourself experiencing a rush of transformative energy today, which you should put into practice. This is a great time to go for a massage or study natural healing modalities such as herbs or aromatherapy. Combine them with your innate healing abilities, Libra, and you might be happy with the results.

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**  
 Today it might suddenly hit you that you have a lot of unfinished tasks that need to be completed, and this might lead to a case of the blues. Take heart! The process appears more overwhelming than it is, Capricorn. A little planning and focused discipline should enable you to get through everything without stressing yourself out too much. In the evening, reward yourself with a meal out or a movie.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**  
 Restlessness may plague you throughout the day, Taurus, because you could be brimming over with physical energy but have no outlet for it. You might have to stay in and wait for something important, which could prove frustrating. Put on an exercise video and do aerobics while you wait. This isn't a good day to start new projects. Limit your social interactions to exercising with others at the gym.

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**  
 This day bodes well for accomplishments in business and finance. Long-term investments of either time or funds may finally pay off. New opportunities could come your way. This is a better time to complete old projects than start new ones, Leo, but if you must, new projects started now should be successful. Celebrate by treating yourself to new clothes. Wear them for a longtime friend or lover this evening.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**  
 Be prepared to work diligently toward making your dreams a reality today, Scorpio. Success is definitely on the way, though it may not be approaching quite as quickly as you might like. A lot of significant letters and phone calls could come your way, keeping you busy. Don't allow yourself to get too frazzled, though. Take time periodically throughout the day to sit quietly and recoup your energy.

**Aquarius (January 20-February 18)**  
 Business and financial matters look promising today, Aquarius, but you could find yourself torn between the need to attend to these matters and the desire to relax at home. If you have to make a choice, it might be best to choose the former, because today's aspects promise opportunities that might not come around again for a while. The evening should be your own. Plan an intimate dinner with a lover. You'll like the results!

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**  
 Though current business and money matters could well encounter obstacles, at this time you may find yourself reaping the rewards of past efforts. Your naturally persevering nature practically assures more success in the future, Gemini, even though you might be blocked now. New insights as to how to continue to progress could come your way today.

**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**  
 Your insight, creativity, and inventiveness are in full swing, Virgo, and new ideas come thick and fast. However, you might find yourself too caught up in boring, mundane tasks to do very much about it. Yet physical energy is plentiful, so you have it in you to take care of chores and then have time to do what you enjoy. You'll produce results if you remember to pace yourself. Work too hard and you'll be too tired!

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**  
 You could find it harder than usual to wake up this morning, Sagittarius, as your energy may be flagging. Personal or professional pressures might stir feelings of futility, but don't fall into this trap. In spite of your momentary lethargy, everything on the horizon looks far better than it seems - primarily because of your own hard work. Retire early tonight and tomorrow you'll feel more energetic.

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**  
 Today, Pisces, matters surrounding business and finances need immediate attention, and this could prove a bit disheartening. Do you have a lot of unfinished tasks that have piled up? Gear up and get to them. They aren't going away, and you'll feel better about everything when they're out of the way. You might find that clearing up these old matters allows new opportunities to flow your way.



## Lifestyle | Features



This photo shows Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku (fifth right) posing with students for a photo after training at the Sengoku International Judo Hall in Gianyar on Indonesia's Bali island.—AFP photos



Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku (right) training with students.



Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku (right) watching as his students train.

## Japanese 'judo missionary' spreads the gospel in Bali

After four decades travelling in some 20 countries to spread the gospel of judo, Tsuneo Sengoku is not about to let a minor inconvenience like a global pandemic slow him down. The 75-year-old "judo missionary" has coached some 100,000 people in the martial art since embarking on a tour through Asia, Africa, Europe and North America in the late 1970s. "I'm just an ordinary old man without judo," said a smiling Sengoku, who was decorated by Japan in 2016 for his commitment to promoting the sport overseas, which he says is his reason for living. The former policeman moved to Bali in 2007 to train local people, mainly school students, free of charge on "the final leg" of his global mission to teach judo.



Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku (right) training with a student.

Sporting the white-and-red belt that marks him out as a high-ranking expert, Sengoku was coaching four days a week at his dojo, where Japanese body-armor adorned with the national flags of Japan and Indonesia is on display. Like the rest of the sporting world, Sengoku has been sidelined by the coronavirus pandemic and was forced to close his dojo where more than 50 locals used to train. All events and competitions in both Indonesia and Japan involving Sengoku and his trainees have been cancelled due to the outbreak.

But the thought of giving up his mission has never crossed his mind—indeed it has hardened his resolve. "I won't quit teaching. On the contrary, because of the coronavirus, my motivation to train children has grown," he said. "I will never let the coronavirus break my dream that I spent my life on. I want to share the wonderful world of judo with more and more people."



Students of Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku training. 'Kindness, discipline'

The coronavirus-wracked world could learn a lot from judo, Sengoku believes, especially its emphasis on patience and compassion for others. "Now I want to tell my students about the importance of patience, which is actually part of the philosophy of judo," he added. Sengoku also said judo requires compassion for other people, known as "Jita-Kyoei", or mutual prosperity for oneself and others, which is one of the main teachings of judo founder Jigoro Kano. "It's time to exercise grand master Kano's spirit of Jita-Kyoei," he said. "I want to call on people to hang on and work together."

Wayan Tulus Wiarta, a senior high-school student who has been trained by Sengoku for more than 10 years, says he dreams to be a top judoka in his country and compete in Japan where judo was established. Wiarta, however, said competition does not mean everything to him as he has learned much more than just judo from Sengoku.



Students of Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku walking to a training session.

"Mr. Sengoku taught me about a lot of things—kindness, discipline, being on time," he said. "Judo is about more than just competition," he said. Sengoku says he still vividly remembers the excitement of the 1964 Games in Tokyo, to which he contributed as a police guard. Although his own Olympic ambitions fell short, he said he was looking forward to watching young judoka compete for glory in Tokyo again—whenever the postponed Games eventually takes place. Sengoku, who runs his dojo with donations while he lives off his pension, has been working out by himself every day since the shutdown so he can be ready to reopen at any time. "I'm very much looking forward to seeing their smiles again when my dojo reopens," said Sengoku, who lives alone as his family members are all in Japan. "This dojo is my destination. I will spend the rest of my life here," he added.—AFP



Students of Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku training.



Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku (right) sitting in front students before a training session.



Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku watering flowers at his home near the Sengoku International Judo Hall in Gianyar on Indonesia's Bali island.



Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku posing for a photo after training at the Sengoku International Judo Hall in Gianyar on Indonesia's Bali island.



Japanese judo master Tsuneo Sengoku (right) helping a student before training.

### 'Judo therapy': Martial art with healing power

Judo is known for its killer throws and lightning-fast grappling moves but the sport has a lesser-known application popular in Japan: the ancient healing art of "judo therapy." Over its decades-long history, judo has branched into two areas. The "sappo" or "kill method" developed into the Olympic sport and the "kappo" or "resuscitation method" grew into the art of "judo therapy." Judokas use their knowledge of how joints, limbs and muscles move to defeat opponents but in "kappo", therapists attempt to speed up the body's natural healing mechanism to treat injuries that do not require surgery or hospital treatment. "Simply put, we are specialists in things such as broken bones, dislocations, bruises and sprains," said Hiroyuki Mitsuhashi, an executive at the Japan Judo Therapist Association. "Rather than performing surgery like in orthopaedics, we use our hands to heal," he told AFP.



Hiroyuki Mitsuhashi (left), an executive at the Japan Judo Therapist Association, treats Yoshie Takahashi, who broke her right wrist, at his clinic in Tokyo.

More than 73,000 licensed judo therapists work at more than 50,000 clinics across Japan. All of them are required to have some judo experience before becoming certified clinicians. They are especially popular with student athletes and those suffering from the nagging pains of old injuries that conventional doctors would consider already healed. Travel agent Yoshie Takahashi, 59, broke her right wrist in early January. She went to hospital but later X-rays showed her treatment had failed to align the fracture properly. She ditched her specialist in favour of Mitsuhashi, who used judo therapy techniques to manipulate the joints and realign the bones correctly. "I am much more comfortable here. I am feeling less pain," Takahashi said after a visit to Mitsuhashi's clinic where she received various treatments including dipping her wrist in a tub of warm water with ultrasound waves, a treatment said to accelerate healing. "I think (judo therapists are) more patient-focused. They are well-educated and explain things fully until you understand," she said.



Hiroyuki Mitsuhashi (right) treats a rugby player. —AFP photos

#### 'You stop falling'

As well as treating injuries, judo therapists are also finding a niche in keeping Japan's ageing population fit and healthy in the country's super-aged society, where more than 28 percent of people are 65 and older. Many judo therapists offer regular classes of low-impact exercise inspired by the martial art that are keeping pensioners sprightly and more resistant to falls. During one such evening class earlier this year, judo therapist Taisuke Kasuya put five elderly pupils through their paces in a small room with straw tatami mats at a Tokyo community centre. For some three decades, Kasuya has taught modified versions of a low-intensity exercise with slow movements, using a breathing technique similar to the Chinese practice of Tai Chi.

But the original exercise was devised by none other than Jigoro Kano, the revered father of modern judo. "Use your body efficiently. That promotes your metabolism and stabilises your mental state," said Kasuya, a judo black-belt reciting Kano's teachings. "Unlike other exercise, we use the philosophy of working on both your body and your mind," he said. The judo-based exercise has eased chronic pains for septuagenarian Yasue Ikezumi, a retired pharmacist who has taken Kasuya's exercise class for 15 years. "I feel this is different from other exercises. I feel my joints are becoming flexible," she said. "I was in such pain in my 60s. But I am now almost 80 and I am able to keep up my fitness. It's like I am able to restore my body," she said. Judo-based exercises can help improve the sense of balance and prevent falls for many elderly people, said Koichi Haramaki, a martial artist who teaches judo in the western Wakayama region.

He gives a weekly class to local senior citizens on how to fall at his "dojo" or martial arts training centre. "The ultimate purpose of it is not for the elderly to master the moves. But by rolling on mats and practising moves, they use their semicircular canals (part of the inner ear that governs balance) and stimulate their cerebellum," he told AFP. "If you practice how to fall, in the end, you stop falling. Your balance improves."—AFP



Lifestyle | Features



Japanese judoka Wakako Ueno (right), 64, who raised three daughters to become Olympic and World Championship champions, and her youngest daughter and a former junior world champion Tomoe Ueno, pose at the Toma Sports Centre in Toma, Hokkaido prefecture.



Japanese judo master Wakako Ueno, holds her dog at home in Asahikawa.



Japanese judo master Wakako Ueno (center) help mothers and children during a coordination abilities training session on her day off in Toikanbetsu, Hokkaido prefecture. —AFP photos

# Judo family matriarch shares passion with next generation

Wakako Ueno raised three daughters to Olympic or World Championship glory and now the matriarch of Japan's most-decorated judo dynasty is passing on her passion to the next generation. The 64-year-old puts around 10 children as young as seven through their paces in her tatami-mat dojo in the small town of Toma, more than 900 kilometres (560 miles) north of Tokyo on the island of Hokkaido. Each session starts with the children sitting on their knees to recite the teachings of judo founder

Jigoro Kano, who stares down at them from a small black-and-white portrait on the wall—"judo is about harnessing your mental and physical strength in the most efficient way possible."

But the coach says she wants to transmit the enjoyment of judo to the next generation. "Judo is fun. It's exciting. I want the children to experience that excitement," she told AFP. Ueno fell in love with the sport 40 years ago, learning it from her late husband. She still remembers feeling "exhilarated when she was able to

throw her opponent cleanly." But at that time, there were few female judokas around and she grew frustrated. "There were no women at all. So I practised with my husband but I had no chance of winning. I was upset." So, along with her husband, Wakako threw herself into preparing their eldest daughter Masae for international judo competition. She would go on to win Gold at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. "I had no choice. Judo was the same as eating. It was part of our lives," said Masae, now 41 and working as a part-time judo coach in Tokyo.

Her father took the lead in her training and he took no prisoners. She once had to stand in the middle of the tatami floor fighting against 10 boys one-by-one. Female judokas were rare at that time, so her training partners were almost always stronger boys. "I had to keep pushing forward even if I was thrown by my opponents," said Masae, adding that her father's methods stripped some of the enjoyment out of the sport. "He was strict so I have no memory of having fun doing judo. I did it because I had to!" she added, now able to laugh at the memory decades later.

Her sister Yoshie, who won bronze at the London 2012 Olympics, recalls similar brutality from her father, who would swing a bamboo sword while yelling at underperforming students. "It was scary. Even if we wanted to run away, we couldn't," said the 36-year-old, now a national team coach. But she nevertheless credits her upbringing with the family's astonishing success on the mat. "Judo education was ingrained in us at home. That's why we are who we are now," she told AFP. "There aren't many families whose members all do judo. Maybe a father but rarely a mother as well."

### '80 percent is tough'

The Uenos are keeping it in the family as youngest daughter Tomoe, a 30-year-old former junior world champion, is now helping her run the dojo. Wakako is aiming to spread the word about judo, which is declining in popularity—from a peak of 250,000 practitioners



Pictures of two-time Olympic judo gold medalist Masae Wakako of Japan on the podium at the Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, in the house of her mother, judo master Wakako Ueno (not pictured).

in 1993 to just under 150,000 in 2018, according to the All Japan Judo Federation. "Baseball is on TV every day. Football as well. Children are attracted to the sports that are shown on television," she said. While judo spikes in popularity during the Olympics, once every four days is not enough, she said.

Looking back, Wakako has realised that she and her husband may have driven their daughters too hard in their pursuit of victory.

She recalls being so shocked when Masae crashed out of the 2000 Sydney Olympics after losing three matches that she couldn't even speak to her. "I regret that. Athletes are already under so much pressure. I decided after that to remember it is the efforts they are making that are the most important. It's not all about the medals," she said. Now she wants to continue her husband's legacy in coaching and toughen up the younger generation—but without the strict training methods. "In judo, 20 percent is fun and maybe the remaining 80 percent is tough. But by overcoming this, you'll be strong physically and mentally." —AFP



Young judo students jump as they pose for a picture during a training session by Japanese master Wakako Ueno (not pictured).



Children warm up during a judo training session by Japanese master Wakako Ueno.



Young judokas exercise during a training session by Japanese master Wakako Ueno (not pictured).



Japanese judo master Wakako Ueno, shows Newaza ground grappling techniques, to girls during a training session.

## In Sweden, a 'second-hand' mall draws big crowds

Not content with the average neighbourhood thrift store, a city in Sweden has opened a whole shopping mall dedicated to giving pre-owned items new life. The mall, located an hour's train ride west of Stockholm in the city of Eskilstuna, consists of 13 stores and covers 5,000 square metres (54,000 square feet), employing between 50 and 65 people. It has been named ReTuna, a play on Eskilstuna, which began an effort to reinvent itself as an ecological city in the 1990s. "We are traditionally an industrial town, we have had our difficulties and we thought we have to find some things that can build confidence and where we can take responsibility," the city's mayor Jimmy Jansson told AFP, adding that city leaders were now trying to develop it "into a modern industrial town".

across two floors the boutiques sell used tech gadgets, books, children's toys and home goods, as well as a slew of other products.

"You can basically do all kinds of shopping here that you do in regular stores: furniture, clothes, flowers, sports articles, building materials, almost everything," Bergstrom said. The mall, where a slight hint of the signature smell of second-hand clothing reigns, also offers a one-year course in the design of recycled products.

### 'Kopskam'

Buying second-hand has seen a surge in Sweden, where "kopskam" (buying shame) and "flygskam" (flight shame) are weighing on the consciences of Swedes. Sweden is aiming to be an ecological leader by becoming carbon neutral by 2045. By then Eskilstuna wants to capture more CO2 than it emits and be independent of fossil fuels. Equipped with a state-of-the-art waste-sorting centre, the city already recycles or transforms most of its waste into energy. But the green image has some blemishes. Cars fill the city's streets and car parks, including the ReTuna car park.

Although the buses in the city centre already run on biogas, "there is still a lot to be done to reduce carbon dioxide emissions," Jansson, the city's social democratic mayor for the last 10 years, admitted. Eskilstuna - home to Volvo's construction equipment division and stainless steel giant Outokumpu of Finland - adopted a "Climate Plan 2020" in 2012 to become greenhouse gas neutral by the end of the decade. In 2016 a list of "50 environmental promises", ranging from the development of renewable energies to bicycle paths, was also adopted. Earlier this year, the opposition Green party noted that there are "a number of goals that have not been met." Citing worries over whether Eskilstuna would be able to reach the climate goals, they called on the city's leaders to step up their efforts.—AFP



An outside view of "ReTuna", a shopping centre dedicated to second-hand objects, in Eskilstuna, Sweden.

ReTuna, inaugurated in 2015, was named "the world's first shopping mall designated for repaired, recycled and restored items" by the Guinness Book of World Records in 2020. Some way from the giant shopping malls of major cities, the complex still attracts some 250,000 to 300,000 visitors a year, according to Anna Bergstrom, who was in charge of ReTuna until early 2020. Spread



A view of the "ReTuna", a shopping centre dedicated to second-hand objects, in Eskilstuna, Sweden. —AFP photos



Judokas wrestle during a weekly free-style training session called "randori" at the Kodokan, judo's headquarters, in Tokyo.



Young students train with fishing boat ropes during a judo training session at Kijukan.—AFP photos

## Japan and judo - an unbreakable bond

When the Tokyo Olympics eventually open a year late, one of the hottest tickets in town will be for judo. Invented in Japan and first introduced at Tokyo 1964, judo is coming home. Judo, Japan and the Olympics have an inextricable bond. The sport was created in the late 19th century by the revered Jigoro Kano, who would become Japan's—and Asia's—first International Olympic Committee member. Kano, whose portrait gazes down benevolently at every dojo, was the driving force behind Japan first taking part in the Olympics in 1912, travelling to Stockholm as team captain and meeting Olympics founding father Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

He was also instrumental in Tokyo being awarded the Games in 1940 — an Olympics that never took place due to Japanese aggression in China and the outbreak of World War II. De Coubertin believed Kano's judo philosophy and the Olympic ideal were perfect bedfellows. Kano named the martial art "judo" meaning "the gentle way" and saw it as a means of developing both the body and the mind.

Kano was way ahead of his time in terms of inclusivity. He encouraged women to take up the sport and at first did not charge for classes, believing everyone regardless of rank, wealth or social class should have the opportunity to enjoy judo. Judo's founder is also closely linked with the development of sport in Japan. He believed that "nothing is more important in this world than education" and oversaw the introduction of physical education as part of the school curriculum.

He is still held in reverence today by judoka all around the world, especially at Tokyo's Kodokan, the home of the sport, which attracts wide-eyed judo enthusiasts from all over the world for its famous winter training—open to all prepared to start at 5:00 am.

### 'Work together'

Modern sporting Japan relies on judo for a fair share of its Olympic medals and will be hoping for a large haul in Tokyo. Judo is top of the list in terms of Japanese Olympic success, with 39 golds—ahead of wrestling with 32 and gymnastics with 31. Japan is also by far the most successful nation when it comes to Olympic judo. Its 39 golds equals the next four best countries combined—France (14 golds), South Korea (11), China (eight) and Cuba (six).



A life-size statue of the Japanese founder of judo Jigoro Kano is seen at the Mikage Public Hall in Kobe, Hyogo prefecture.

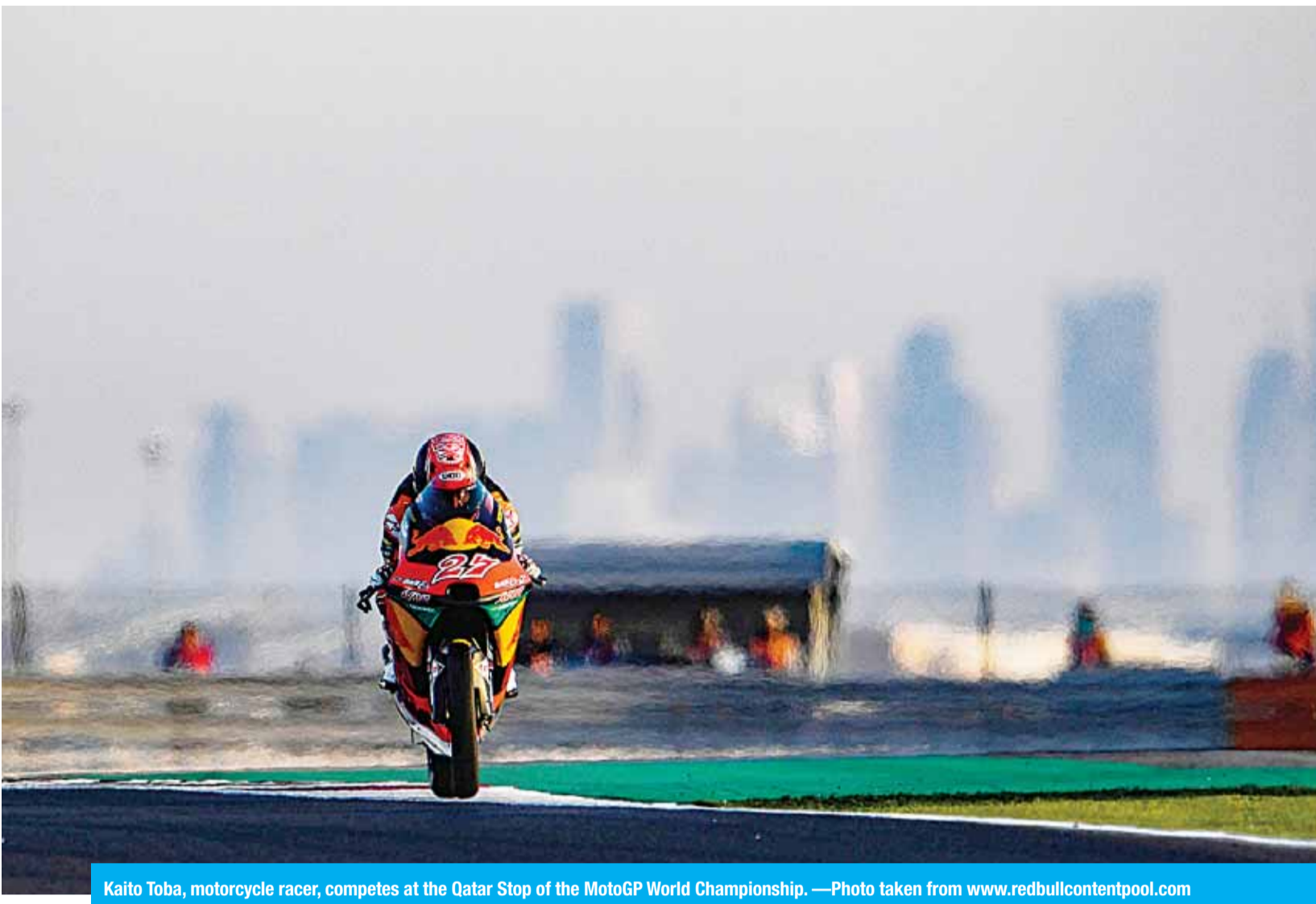
Before the one-year Olympic postponement due to coronavirus, the Japanese team was in dominant form, topping the medal table at the 2019 World Championship held in Tokyo with 15 medals including four golds. World champions Jوشيロ Maruyama and Shohei Ono are hotly tipped in the men's competition while Japan also boasts women's world champions in Uta Abe and Akira Sone.

To mark judo's importance for Japan ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, AFP publishes a series of multimedia stories looking at the sport and its deep cultural roots in the country. AFP journalists have visited Kano's hometown to meet members of his sake-brewing extended family, interviewed female champions past and present to gauge the standing of women's judo in Japan and profiled the extraordinary Ueno dynasty, where three daughters won Olympic or world championship Gold. — AFP



## Sports

Photo of the day



Kaito Toba, motorcycle racer, competes at the Qatar Stop of the MotoGP World Championship. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Blue Jays denied Toronto games by Canadian officials

**NEW YORK:** The Toronto Blue Jays will not play their 2020 Major League Baseball home games in their own ballpark after the Canadian government refused to give them a coronavirus travel exemption. The move leaves the club searching for a place to stage 30 home games without spectators, with Toronto's season opener on Friday at Tampa Bay and the first home game set for July 29 against reigning World Series champion Washington. The Blue Jays were given permission to stage pre-season workouts at their retractable-domed ballpark, Rogers Centre. But having clubs from across the United States visit without two-week quarantines was too great a risk to approve, said Marco Mendicino, Canada's minister of immigration, refugees and citizenship.

"Regular-season games would require repeated cross-border travel of Blue Jays players and staff, as well as opponent teams into and out of Canada," Mendicino said in a statement. "Of particular concern, the Toronto Blue Jays would be required to play in locations where the risk of virus transmission remains high. "Based on the best-available public health advice, we have concluded the cross-border travel required for MLB regular season play would not adequately protect Canadians' health and safety. "As a result, Canada will not be issuing a National Interest Exemption for the MLB's regular season at this time."

Mendicino held out hope the Blue Jays could stage playoff games in Toronto in late September and October if they advance and if the virus is less widespread in the United States. "We remain open to considering future restart plans for the post-season should the risk of virus transmission diminish," he said. The MLB season, shortened to 60 games per club, is finally set to begin next week in home ballparks without fans. Canada has not opened its border with the United States and requires a 14-day quarantine for anyone entering the country, which meant the Blue Jays needed an exemption. —AFP

## Hamilton breaks records as Mercedes lock out front row

## Hamilton takes record 90th career pole in Hungary

**BUDAPEST:** Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton celebrated a record-extending and "surreal" 90th career pole position on Saturday after a dominant Mercedes one-two in Hungarian Grand Prix qualifying. Championship-leading team mate Valtteri Bottas will start alongside the Briton on Sunday, with the Mercedes-powered Racing Point cars of Canadian Lance Stroll and Mexican Sergio Perez third and fourth. Hamilton is favorite to triumph for the eighth time at the Hungaroring and equal a record for most wins at the same grand prix held by retired Ferrari great Michael Schumacher, who won eight times in France.

The pole was his seventh in Hungary, equalling Schumacher's record for that race, and his Mercedes again looked to be in a class of its own after the team won the opening two rounds in Austria. "Hungary's always been a good hunting ground for me but also I'm aware that qualifying isn't everything here," said Hamilton, who lapped with a track record time of one minute 13.447 seconds, 0.107 faster than Bottas.

The six-times world champion said he had not realized immediately the significance of a pole that leaves him 22 ahead of Schumacher,

the next best qualifier in the history of the sport. "It feels very, very surreal...it doesn't seem real to have 90 poles," declared the 35-year-old, who also has 25 more than his Brazilian boyhood idol Ayrton Senna managed in his F1 career. Bottas hailed Hamilton for another great job but hoped to reverse the positions on Sunday.

"It's going to be a bit of a drag race into Turn One between us tomorrow, so I look forward to that; the first lap will definitely be interesting," he said. Perez was quicker than Stroll in final practice but the Canadian got the lap that mattered and looked forward to a strong race in the 'pink Mercedes', a controversial car very similar to last year's title-winning Mercedes and under protest by Renault.

The Ferraris followed the two-by-two team trend, with Sebastian Vettel lining up fifth and Charles Leclerc qualifying sixth—a positive after a tough afternoon in Austria last weekend where they collided in the Styrian Grand Prix. Red Bull's Max Verstappen, on pole last year, could only qualify seventh and ahead of the McLaren pair of Lando Norris—third in the championship—and Carlos Sainz. "I hope this is



## Verstappen only seventh on grid



BUDAPEST: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton steers his car during the qualifying session for the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix at the Hungaroring circuit in Mogyorod near Budapest. —AFP

going to be our worst weekend," said Verstappen, who felt something was "clearly not working" with his car.

Former champions Williams, who finished last overall in 2019, had something to cheer with both their cars through to the second phase of qualifying for the first time since September

2018. George Russell ended up 12th, and ahead of Red Bull's Alex Albon, with rookie team mate Nicholas Latifi 15th. The session was held without spectators, as at the first two races in Austria, due to the COVID-19 pandemic but some fans still gathered at vantage points on surrounding slopes. —Reuters

## Highlanders storm back to stun Chiefs

**WELLINGTON:** A dramatic 82nd-minute try by Sio Tomkinson capped a thrilling second-half Otago Highlanders fightback as they snatched a 33-31 Super Rugby victory over the Waikato Chiefs in Hamilton on Sunday. A dejected Chiefs captain Sam Cane said it was like "trying to hold back a wave" as the Highlanders, down 31-7 early in the second half, stormed home with four unanswered tries.

It was the second win for the Highlanders in New Zealand's post-coronavirus Super Rugby Aotearoa competition. And both have come against the winless Chiefs, whose coach Warren Gatland has now presided over five straight defeats. Gatland, the celebrated British and Irish Lions coach who returned to New Zealand after steering Wales to the World Cup semi-finals last year, had also seen his Chiefs team lose to the Highlanders in the dying seconds in their opening Super Rugby Aotearoa match last month.

On that occasion in Dunedin, Gatland watched as his son Bryn slotted the match-winning drop goal for the Highlanders just before the final whistle. A similar outcome in the return fixture Sunday did not look likely as the Chiefs raced into a 24-0 lead after 20 minutes with three converted tries and a penalty, aided by a string of mistakes from the visitors. The Chiefs had a 24-7 cushion at half-time and extended the lead to 31-7 with another try soon after the restart before the Highlanders

clicked and clawed their way back. Highlanders captain Ash Dixon said there were stern words at half-time to cut out their unforced errors.

## 'Hurts to lose like that'

"In that first half we were well off the pace and the Chiefs came out really well and we couldn't contain them and gave away a lot of silly penalties," he said. "But once we got to the right end of the field and played a bit of ball things happened." Cane said the Chiefs had enough opportunities to win but let themselves down.

"It certainly hurts to lose one at the death like that. We had the win in our grasp and we're pretty disappointed," he said. The opening burst from the Chiefs produced tries to Lachlan Boshier and Anton Lienert-Brown, capitalising on an ineffectual defence, while hooker Bradley Slater found the line from a lineout drive. Damian McKenzie landed all three conversions and a penalty to give the Chiefs a solid buffer before the Highlanders moved the scoreboard with a try to Marino Mikaele-Tu'u. Slater scored his second try, again from a lineout drive, two minutes into the second half to have the Chiefs ahead 31-7.

But they could not hold back the determined Highlanders who were fired up by All Blacks scrum-half Aaron Smith who featured in all four of their second-half tries, scoring one himself. Mitch Hunt, Jona Nareki also touched down before Tomkinson's dart to the line for a try from Smith's precision pass on the last play of the match levelled the scores 31-31. Hunt kept his cool to convert from almost in front of the posts and complete the comeback with the Highlanders scoring 26 unanswered second-half points. —AFP

## Quartararo storms to season-opening pole in scorching Jerez

**JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA:** Frenchman Fabio Quartararo powered to pole position for the season-opening Spanish Grand Prix on Saturday, setting a Jerez lap record time to edge out Yamaha's Maverick Vinales. The 21-year-old Quartararo, who rides for the Yamaha satellite outfit, posted a time of one minute and 36.705 seconds to claim his seventh MotoGP pole in only his second top-class campaign. "Today was a really great day," said Quartararo. "Of course it is a great feeling to be pole, especially after such a long time with no race, but this is only Saturday. We need to do the same on Sunday!" He will be bidding for his maiden victory on Sunday, having ended his rookie season in 2019 with four runner-up finishes in the last seven races. "I'm not obsessing over a first MotoGP win though, our goal tomorrow is to be on the podium," he said. "We have 13 races in a short space of time so we need consistent results." Spaniard Vinales was 0.139sec slower as temperatures passed 34 degrees celsius, testing riders but boosting lap times.

"I feel really good, honestly. I think we improved the bike quite a lot, especially in the hot conditions," Vinales said. "I can't wait for tomorrow!" The other Yamaha rider, Italian veteran Valentino Rossi who already knows he will be replaced next year when Quartararo steps up, could only qualify 11th. "When you look at the data, Maverick and Fabio are strong everywhere," said the 42-year-old. "The top-three guys are very strong and in Yamaha's case, Maverick and Fabio are riding very fast." Reigning world champion Marc Marquez will complete the front row for Honda as he starts his tilt at a seventh MotoGP title. "I knew even before we left the garage that my target was to try and be on the front row," said Marquez. "It was tough! The lap time with this high temperature was very good." "For some reason Yamaha and Suzuki over one lap are very strong with the new tyre. But we have been working for race distance."



JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA: Petronas Yamaha SRT's French rider Fabio Quartararo makes a wheelie during the third MotoGP free practice session of the Spanish Grand Prix at the Jerez racetrack in Jerez de la Frontera on July 18, 2020. —AFP

## 'Everything is so close'

Marquez's younger brother Alex, making his MotoGP debut as his sibling's Honda teammate, failed to even make it into the second qualifying session. "Unfortunately, I am struggling more in the hot conditions than I was expecting," said the 2019 Moto2 champion who will start from 21st on the grid. "Everything is so close in MotoGP," said the younger Marquez. "Every day I am on the bike I want to improve and learn new things—tomorrow will be a good opportunity to do this." The goal is to finish the race but still to push as hard as possible. "We saw many positives today but there's still some room to push a little more." There was bad news for Spaniard Alex Rins, however, as he crashed out of the competition after suffering a fractured-dislocated right shoulder in a heavy fall on his Suzuki in Q2. "He has had a fracture-dislocation of his right shoulder that caused him a lot of pain," in-house specialist Doctor Xavier Mir told the MotoGP website. "He has undergone sedation to put his shoulder in place, which is really much more painful than a fracture." Ducati's Andrea Dovizioso also crashed in the dying seconds of qualifying but had already posted the eighth quickest time. —AFP



## Sports

# Sumo resumes in front of fans despite rise in Japan infections

## Fans voice both joy and caution

**TOKYO:** Sumo began a new tournament in front of a live audience yesterday, despite a steady rise in coronavirus infections, with fans voicing both joy and caution about watching the Japanese spectacle during the pandemic. The tournament runs through August 2 at Ryogoku Kokugikan, the primary sumo arena at the heart of the Japanese capital.

The tournament comes a week after Japanese baseball and football opened stadiums to spectators, and as the government seeks to keep the economy open despite worrying signs of the virus's resurgence, particularly in Tokyo. "Well, it's scary, isn't it," said fan Katsuhiko Ochiai, 59, who travelled from neighboring Chiba region to attend the first day. "But I love sumo, so I want to watch this," he said.

Only 2,500 fans were allowed inside the 11,098-seat stadium, unlike in normal times when bouts are performed in front of sold-out crowds. They were asked to refrain from cheering and stick to applause to express their passion. "It will be different," said Kazuo Aoki, 49, also a frequent visitor to the arena. "I will cheer in my spirit." Anyone with a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius (99.5 F) or higher was denied entry. Spectators also had to

wear masks, sanitise their hands, keep a distance from others and refrain from touching wrestlers or approaching them for autographs.

One wrestler has died from COVID-19 since the epidemic first hit Japan, while several other fighters and officials have tested positive. Sumo was last held before live audiences in January, when Japan began to see its first cases of coronavirus. A March tournament was held behind closed doors before sumo authorities cancelled the May tournament altogether. The current tournament was originally due to be held in the central city of Nagoya, also behind closed doors.

But officials decided to switch the event to Tokyo to minimise the travel of wrestlers and officials, as well as allow a small amount of fans to watch. Still, Tokyo's coronavirus infections have been mounting in recent days and on Sunday, city authorities are expected to announce around 190 new cases. Fans said the excitement of sumo was worth the risk. "It's the feeling of being here, being present. You enjoy it by being a participant of this spectacle," Ochiai said. "That's what watching spectator sports is all about, isn't it. Like music. Like sumo," he said. — AFP



**TOKYO:** People sit apart to observe social distancing while watching wrestlers perform a ceremony ahead of their bouts during a new two-week sumo tournament at the Ryogoku Kokugikan - the main sumo arena in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

## Timbers advance in return tournament

**MIAMI:** The Portland Timbers punched their ticket to the round of 16 in Major League Soccer's restart tournament Saturday with a 2-1 win over the Houston Dynamo. Jeremy Ebobisse put Portland up 1-0 in the 35th minute, collecting a penetrating pass from Sebastian Blanco and firing an angled left-footed shot past Houston goalkeeper Marko Maric. The Timbers doubled their lead in the 61st when Diego Valeri's left-footed shot hit the post and rolled in.

Houston pulled a goal back in the 86th with Alberth Elis's penalty conversion. That followed a video review that judged Portland's Jorge Villafana handled the ball in the penalty area. But Houston's hopes of mounting a charge dimmed two minutes later when Elis was sent off after receiving two yellow cards in as many minutes. The first was for a challenge on Villafana, and the second came after he got tangled with Portland's Bill Tuiloma. The victory gave Portland six points in Group F and put them through to the knockout stages of the World Cup-style MLS is Back tournament that marks the league's return from a coronavirus shutdown in a locked-down environment at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida.

### Rossi fireworks secure LA win

Los Angeles FC, fueled by four goals from Uruguayan forward Diego Rossi, moved to second in the group on four points with a wild 6-2 win over the Los Angeles Galaxy. LAFC rallied from a 2-1 deficit, scoring five unanswered goals. Bradley Wright-Phillips and Mohamed El-Munir also scored for LAFC, who are playing in Orlando without 2019 MLS Most Valuable Player Carlos Vela-who opted



**REUNION:** Zarek Valentin #4 of Houston Dynamo jumps for a header in the second half against the Portland Timbers during the MLS is Back Tournament at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex on July 18, 2020 in Reunion, Florida. — AFP

out of the event to remain at home with his pregnant wife. The clash of LA rivals suffered another loss of star power with the mid-week training injury to the Galaxy's Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez. But Rossi provided plenty of fireworks.

Rossi scored in the 13th, 45th, 75th and in the second minute of stoppage time to give LAFC the most lopsided result in the history of the cross-city rivalry dubbed "El Trafico". His first goal of the night came from the penalty spot after Wright-Phillips was pulled down by Perry Kitchen in the box. That pulled LAFC level after the Galaxy opened a 1-0 lead in the fifth minute via an own-goal from LAFC's Latif Blessing. The Galaxy regained a 2-1 lead in the

31st through Cristian Pavon's penalty conversion, but Rossi struck in first-half stoppage time to make it 2-2 and LAFC pulled away relentlessly after the break.

After Wright-Phillips scored in the 56th, Rossi completed his hat-trick in the 75th when a counter-attack sprung by substitute Jose Cifuentes was capped by the Uruguayan's tap-in goal. After El-Munir fired in a left-footed shot in the 80th, Rossi added one more flourish in the second minute of injury time. With a second defeat in as many matches the Galaxy are almost certainly eliminated from advancing in the tournament. LAFC will try to lock up a round of 16 place when they take on the Timbers on Thursday. — AFP

## Rahm aims at No 1 as late birdies bring lead

**WASHINGTON:** Jon Rahm, chasing the world number one ranking, birdied four of the last six holes to seize a four-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the US PGA Memorial tournament. The 25-year-old Spaniard birdied four holes in a row starting at the 13th, surging while Tony Finau stumbled from the lead on the back nine, to take command after 54 holes at Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio. Rahm, whose most recent victory came at the European Tour's November season finale in Dubai, fired a four-under par 68 to stand on 12-under 204 with Americans Finau and Ryan Palmer sharing second on 208 after 73s.

"I was perfectly happy making pars," Rahm said. "When I had that in mind, once I made it through 12, I thought 13, 14, 15 are holes you can attack if you put it in the right spot." Rahm can overtake Rory McIlroy and claim the world number one ranking for the first time on Sunday by converting a 54-hole lead into victory for the first time or placing second. With a win, Rahm needs McIlroy to finish worse than a two-way share of second. If Rahm is alone in second, he needs McIlroy outside the top 30 and Justin Thomas not to win.

"The number one key thing is nothing 'special' - 100% commitment to every shot I hit. That's what I need to keep doing. If I do that I'll be in good shape tomorrow," Rahm said. "If my short game is that good tomorrow, I can

keep it good tee to green and make it a good walk down 18." The Jack Nicklaus-hosted event is the sixth tournament since the US PGA Tour resumed following a three-month hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all events played without spectators.

Finau and Palmer shared the 36-hole lead at 9-under, one ahead of Rahm. Rahm sank a five-foot birdie putt at the par-5 seventh but found a bunker and made bogey at the par-3 eighth. In his late charge, Rahm sank a 13-foot birdie putt at 13, dropped his approach just beyond four feet and sank the putt at 14, holed a three-foot putt at the par-5 15th and rolled in a 26-foot birdie putt at the par-3 16th. "Sixteen was a complete bonus honestly," Rahm said. "I didn't see how anybody could hit that green. I got lucky."

Finau began the back nine with back-to-back birdies, holing an

impressive 50-foot putt at the par-4 ninth and reaching the green in two at the par-5 11th to set up a tap-in birdie to reach 12-under and seize a three-stroke advantage. Double-bogey disaster then struck Finau at the par-3 12th when he found the rough, needed two chips to reach the green and missed a 10-foot bogey putt. Finau sent his tee shot into the water again at 14 on the way to a bogey and, after a birdie at 15, took another double bogey at 17, needing two to reach the green from a bunker.

"It was good and then it wasn't good," Finau said. "Ran into some speed bumps on the back nine. Man, this course can get you quickly. I'm probably pretty fortunate to be within a few shots." Finau is a six-time PGA runner-up whose only win came at the 2016 Puerto Rico Open. England's Danny Willett was fourth on 210 with Australia's Jason Day and Sweden's Henrik Norlander sharing fifth on 211. Reigning Masters champion Tiger Woods, who battled back issues Friday and shot 76 to barely make the cut, fired 71 to stand on 218. — AFP



**DUBLIN:** Jon Rahm of Spain bumps fists with his caddy on the 18th green during the third round of The Memorial Tournament on July 18, 2020. — AFP

## Cricket returns to S Africa after week of race controversy

**CENTURION:** A week of race controversy for South African cricket ended on Saturday with the sport's return to live action in the country. An unusual match involving three teams was played in an empty SuperSport Park in Centurion, making it difficult to judge whether the new form of the game, branded 3T Cricket, had the potential for major spectator appeal.

It was the first major televised sporting event in South Africa since the coronavirus lockdown in March, and came days after 30 black former South African international players alleged in a letter that racism still affected the sport. The 24 players involved on Saturday were united in wearing Black Lives Matter armbands. Before play started there was a minute of silence for victims of the COVID-19 virus followed by all the players taking a knee in solidarity with the BLM movement.

Makhaya Ntini, the former Test fast bowler who played in 101 Test matches, was one of the commentators. He did not refer to an emotional television interview on Friday in which he said he felt lonely during his international career because he did not feel included in off-field activities involving groups of team-mates. Ntini said his loneliness extended to sitting alone in hotels at breakfast time. He also said his much-publicized habit of running between hotels and grounds rather than travelling with other players on the team bus stemmed from his feeling of exclusion.

Graeme Smith, South Africa's director of cricket, was one of Ntini's captains but if there was any ill feeling it was not in evidence when they were on air together on Saturday, with Ntini saying "we stand together" at one point in his conversation with Smith. Smith came out strongly in support of Black Lives Matter on Friday. Saturday's match featured three teams of eight players each, with no regional identity. The Eagles, a team captained by AB de Villiers, were the winners with a total of 160 for four from 12 overs, with six overs each bowled by the other two teams. De Villiers hit 61 and Aiden Markram scored 70. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Olympic figure skater dies

**MOSCOW:** Ekaterina Alexandrovskaya, who represented Australia at the 2018 Olympics in Pyeongchang, has died aged 20 after falling out of the window in Moscow, her coach said on Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Russian law enforcement agencies but Alexandrovskaya's coach Andrei Khokalo told AFP the young woman had fallen from a sixth-floor window in central Moscow. Russian media said she had left a note reading "Lyublyu (I love)", suggesting it could have been a suicide. Khokalo said Alexandrovskaya missed a training session in January and was afterwards diagnosed with epilepsy and quit the sport. Even before she was diagnosed with epilepsy she suffered from depression, he added. "I tried to get her to stay in sport at my own peril," Khokalo said. He said she was particularly good at pairs skating. "She was fearless. She was like a fish in the water," he added. — AFP

#### Rahm grabs four-shot lead

**NEW YORK:** Jon Rahm used a sizzling finish on a steamy hot afternoon at the Memorial Tournament to power four shots clear at the top of the leaderboard at Muirfield Village on Saturday, setting himself up for a run at the number one world ranking. Chasing a fourth career PGA Tour win, the big-hitting Spaniard got his day off to a quiet start by mixing a birdie and a bogey on his outward nine but he caught fire after the turn to card four straight birdies from the 13th for a four-under 68. It was the third consecutive round in the 60s for the world number two, putting him at 12-under for the tournament and four shots ahead of Americans Tony Finau and Ryan Palmer, who had shared the overnight lead. Finau had a much more adventurous back nine, mixing a pair of double-bogeys and a bogey with three birdies for a one-over 73, while Palmer also suffered a late stumble with bogeys at 16 and 18 for his 73. — AFP

#### Canada's Woods wins stage 5

**MONT VENTOUX:** Canada's Michael Woods won stage five of the men's virtual Tour de France on Saturday after turning in a strong performance on Mont Ventoux to finish ahead of NTT Pro Cycling duo Domenico Pozzovivo and Louis Meintjes. The virtual race is being held on the popular Zwift training platform after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of the actual annual July race until the end of August. EF Pro Cycling's Woods, who broke his leg in a crash during Paris-Nice in March, dominated from the start and won the 22 km simulation in 46 minutes, three seconds - 18 seconds ahead of Pozzovivo. "This is a big event for us. Zwift is a great platform. We wanted to get a win and we finally got one," Woods said. "Both Pozzovivo and Meintjes are super strong riders. Normally in a race you can look them in the eye and see how they're doing... I just kept hoping they'd crack a lot earlier than they did. Fortunately, I was able to keep it going." — Reuters

#### Wolff hits out at Ferrari, others

**LONDON:** Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff hit out at Formula One rivals Ferrari and others on Saturday for saying they were ready to sign a new commercial 'Concorde Agreement' setting out the sport's future to 2026. Ferrari and McLaren both said on Friday they could put pen to paper imminently. Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto indicated, however, that some teams were 'not fully happy yet'. "I don't know why some of the other teams made those ridiculous commentaries that they are ready to sign and there seem to be some competitors that are not," Wolff said in a video conference at the Hungarian Grand Prix. "They make themselves a laughing stock with those comments in the public. Negotiations should be taking place behind closed doors without a running commentary from competitors," added the Austrian. — Reuters



**14** Highlanders storm back to stun Gatland's Chiefs



**15** Sumo resumes in front of fans despite rise in Japan infections



**15** Rahm aims at No 1 after late birdies bring Memorial lead



LONDON: Arsenal's Gabonese striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (center) scores their second goal during the English FA Cup semi-final football match between Arsenal and Manchester City at Wembley Stadium in London, on July 18, 2020. — AFP

## Aubameyang fires Arsenal into final

### Arsenal reach record 21st FA Cup final

LONDON: Mikel Arteta hailed Arsenal's "great chemistry" as the secret to their shock 2-0 win over Manchester City as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang fired his club to a record 21st FA Cup final. Gunners boss Arteta outwitted City manager Pep Guardiola with an astute counter-attacking scheme and Aubameyang struck in each half as Arsenal executed the plan to perfection.

Arsenal will face Chelsea or Manchester United, who meet in the other semi-final on Sunday, in the final at Wembley on August 1. Arteta captained Arsenal to FA Cup triumph six years ago and, in his first season in charge of the north London club, the Spaniard has led them back to the final of a competition they last won in 2017. "We have great chemistry, they really believe in what we are trying to do and you can sense that. They deserve it," Arteta said.

"To beat the best you need to take your opportunities and when you have to defend you have to put everybody on the line. I'm extremely happy and proud of our players, but it's very sad we cannot enjoy this moment with our fans." Just days after beating Premier League champions Liverpool, Arsenal offered further evidence that Arteta could be the man to restore them to the glory days of the Arsene Wenger era. Arsenal had lost their previous seven

meetings with City, including a 3-0 drubbing in their first game after the coronavirus hiatus.

But, thanks to Arteta's masterstroke, Arsenal handed Guardiola's side a first Wembley defeat in their last 10 visits. "We've had an incredible week to beat the best two teams in Europe. It doesn't happen every day," Arteta said. "I don't care who plays, I can trust them. We made changes and everyone was ready. We had to suffer in many moments. We had to be really well organized and minimize the spaces." City, unbeaten in their previous 22 domestic cup ties, were well short of their best and Guardiola had no excuses.

"We didn't play good. The only regret is not to lose the game, that can happen, but it is that we did not play the first half like we play the second," Guardiola said after City mustered just one shot on target, their fewest since 2018 against Liverpool in the Champions League. "We started low and without the way you have to play. We are always ready many times but today we were not. I knew they play five at the back and with high pressing. They defended well. It happened against Liverpool too so we knew it. But we were not good."

With second place in the Premier League secured, City have to focus on the resumption of their Cham-

pions League challenge in August, when they defend a 2-1 first leg lead against Real Madrid in the last 16. "Now we have two weeks," Guardiola said. "We wanted to play the FA Cup final, one week before the Madrid game, to be in rhythm, but we missed this chance."

Arteta knows City well after his time as Guardiola's assistant and he set out to exploit their weakness against counter attacks, using Aubameyang and Nicolas Pepe to get behind City's attacking full-backs Kyle Walker and Benjamin Mendy. Aubameyang made them pay in the 19th minute. At the climax of an 18-pass move, Pepe's deep cross caught Walker dozing and Aubameyang eluded him to slide a fine finish off the far post from a tight angle. It was the kind of incisive, imaginative attack that City usually torment Arsenal with, but for once it was the men in red celebrating. The Gabon striker's 24th goal of the season was a reminder why Arsenal are so desperate to get him to sign a contract extension. Defending deep, Arsenal were putting their bodies in the way of everything to keep City at bay. Arteta's rope-a-dope plan brought a rich reward in the 71st minute. City left themselves open at the back and Aubameyang beat the offside trap as he accelerated onto Kieran Tierney's sublime pass before slotting under Ederson. — AFP



LONDON: Manchester City's German midfielder Ilkay Gundogan heads the ball during the English FA Cup semi-final football match between Arsenal and Manchester City at Wembley Stadium. — AFP

### Atalanta's Serie A title ambitions stall; Milan move to sixth

MILAN: Matteo Pessina grabbed the equalizer for Hellas Verona to hold his high-flying parent club Atalanta 1-1 in Serie A on Saturday. Atalanta move level on points with second-placed Inter Milan, but are six points adrift of Serie A leaders Juventus. On-loan Pessina tapped in just before the hour mark in Verona minutes after Colombian striker Duvan Zapata had put the visitors ahead. Atalanta move level on 71 points with second-placed Inter Milan, but are six points adrift of Serie A leaders Juventus.

Inter Milan travel to fifth-placed Roma on Sunday, with eight-time holders Juventus on Monday hosting fourth-placed Lazio, who are eight points off top spot. "Talking about the Scudetto was always exces-

sive," said Gasperini, whose side have now scored in a club record 22 games in a row. Atalanta's hopes of a first Scudetto in the team's 112-year history are all but over with four games left to play. "Since the restart (after coronavirus), we've been notching up results at Scudetto-pace, but that was never our objective because something extraordinary had to happen for us, but also for Juventus."

"We lack a point to get to the Champions League," continued Gasperini, whose side will play Paris Saint-Germain in the last eight of this year's edition next month. "It's true, our thoughts are on the PSG, a lot. We set some milestones in the championship, the record, the second place." But we use these games to prepare ourselves for even higher quality and the Champions League."

Promoted Verona, in ninth, are coached by ex-Croatia midfielder Ivan Juric, who played under Gasperini in Genoa and was his assistant at Inter Milan and then Palermo. "It was a good match against a difficult team who wanted revenge after a controversial loss to Roma," added Gasperini, who lamented his side's "lack of lucidity to close down the game." — AFP

### Burnley beat Norwich to keep Euro bid alive

NORWICH: Burnley kept their bid for Europa League qualification alive as New Zealand striker Chris Wood inspired a 2-0 win over nine-man Norwich on Saturday. Wood struck in first-half stoppage-time at Carrow Road after Emiliano Buendia and Josip Drmic of relegated Norwich had been sent off. Ben Godfrey's late own goal extended Burnley's unbeaten Premier League run to seven games as they climbed to ninth. They are one point behind seventh-placed Tottenham in the race for a spot in next season's Europa League.

The odds are still against Sean Dyche's side as they have just one game left, while Tottenham, Sheffield United and Wolves all have two games to

ensure they finish above the Claret. "I don't think I've played against a team with two sendings off. It was a bizarre game! We'll take the clean sheet and the win," Dyche said. "To have 15 clean-sheets and the wins on the table is very pleasing so I'm delighted for the players." Emphasizing their supreme organization under Dyche, Burnley keeper Nick Pope is in contention to win the Premier League's golden glove award for the most clean-sheets.

He leads with 15, while Manchester City's Ederson has 14. In their last home game before they return to the Championship next season, following a record fifth relegation from the Premier League, Norwich hardly covered themselves in glory. Daniel Farke's bottom-of-the-table team have lost their last 10 games in all competitions and this was an embarrassment. The Canaries have failed to score in a league-high 19 games this season, including 11 of the past 13.

They are the first English top-flight side to lose five consecutive home matches without scoring since Birmingham in 1922. "We walked into the trap and got two red cards. Naive, inexperienced, stupid, all the words are right. It's not acceptable." — AFP