



**3** US ambassador discusses how embassy serves US citizens



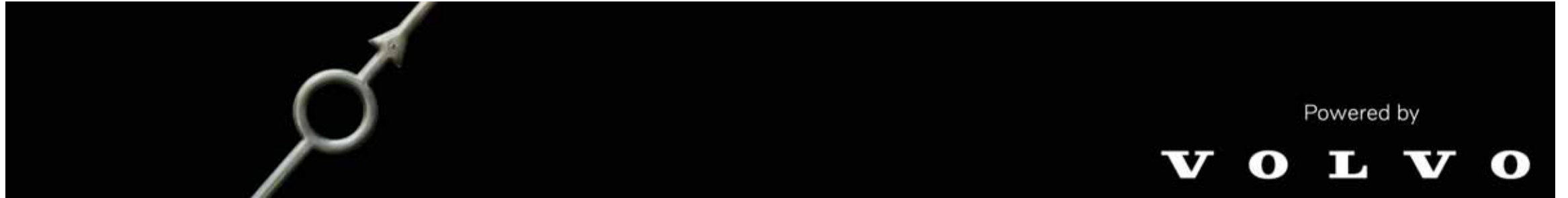
**8** Facing a crisis, NY hopes to reinvent itself again



**13** Ancient Golan rock art sheds light on mysterious culture



**16** Rahm wins PGA Memorial to seize number 1 ranking



# First Arab space mission to Mars launches from Japan

Amir sends congratulations • Astrophysicists unveil biggest 3D map of Universe

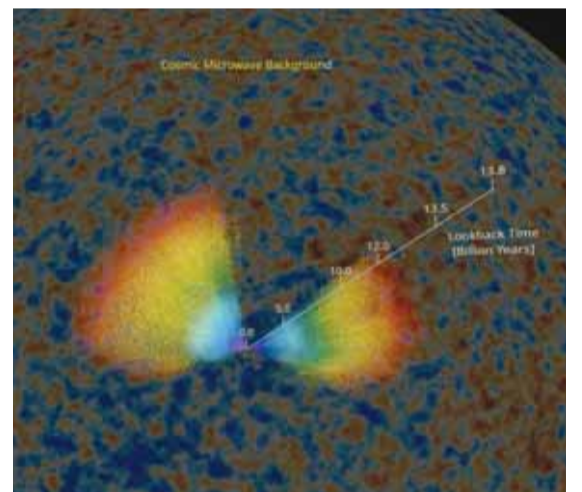


TANEGASHIMA, Japan: An H-2A rocket carrying the "Hope" probe blasts off from Tanegashima Space Centre yesterday. — AFP

TOKYO: The first Arab space mission to Mars, an unmanned probe dubbed "Hope", blasted off from Japan yesterday, in a bid to reveal more about the atmosphere of the Red Planet. The Japanese rocket carrying the probe developed by the United Arab Emirates lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Centre in southern Japan right on schedule at 6:58 am local time. The launch of the probe, known as "Al-Amal" in Arabic, had twice been delayed because of bad weather, but the liftoff yesterday appeared smooth and successful.

Almost exactly one hour later, a live feed showed people applauding in the Japanese control room as the probe successfully detached. "The launch vehicle trajectory was executed as planned and separation of the Hope spacecraft was confirmed," rocket manufacturer Mitsubishi Heavy Industries said. In Dubai, the launch was met with rapturous excitement, with the Burj Khalifa - the world's tallest skyscraper - lit up hours before liftoff with a symbolic 10-second countdown in anticipation.

III The Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables of congratulations to UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and to Vice President, Premier and Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. In the cables, the Amir expressed sincere pride, and wished utmost prosperity for the UAE after the historic and successful launch of "Hope", the first Arab interplanetary space mission to Mars. III The Crown



GENEVA: An image grab from a computer animation made available on Sunday shows a map of the universe in expansion. — AFP

Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and III the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

"This mission is an important milestone for the UAE and the region," said Youssef Hamad Al-Shaibani, director of the UAE's Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre, at a post-launch press

Continued on Page 2

## Commercial flights hampered by PCR test requirements

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is ready to restart commercial flights at Kuwait International Airport and Saad Al-Abdullah Airport from August 1 with a total capacity of 10,000 passengers daily in the beginning. But travelers - both those departing Kuwait for holidays or other travel and those arriving - have many outstanding questions that are yet to be answered.

All passengers arriving to Kuwait will need a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result no older than 96 hours. "Furthermore, we will choose 10 percent of arriving passengers for random PCR tests upon arrival to make sure their tests were proper," Director General of the DGCA Youssef Al-Fouzan told Kuwait Times in an exclusive interview.

Those traveling should undergo the PCR test in Kuwait, but it's not yet clear where it can be done. Currently, only the health ministry can administer the PCR test and provide a negative certificate. The call center of the health ministry told Kuwait Times that Kuwaitis can have their PCR test done at Sabah Hospital, while expats should arrange one through their embassy. When contacting European embassies, they said they have no clue about where the test can be done.

"We are now finalizing the procedure of performing 1,000 PCR tests daily by National Aviation Services (NAS), which should be clear before August 1. We also proposed to let private clinics conduct PCR tests so more people can travel. When the plan of conducting the PCR tests at the airport is finalized, we will announce



Youssef Al-Fouzan

Continued on Page 2

## Saudi king admitted to hospital

RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz has been admitted to hospital in the capital Riyadh for gallbladder inflammation, the royal court said yesterday. The king was "admitted today to King Faisal specialist hospital in Riyadh for some medical tests due to chole-

cystitis," inflammation of the gallbladder, the royal court said in a statement released by the official Saudi Press Agency. It did not disclose any further details.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi's scheduled visit to Saudi Arabia, which was due to start on Monday, has been postponed after the king's hospitalization, according to the kingdom's foreign minister. "In recognition of the extremely important visit and a desire to make it a success, our wise leadership in coordination with our brothers in Iraq have

decided to postpone the visit," Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan wrote on Twitter.

Under the king's rule, Saudi Arabia launched ambitious economic reforms for a post-oil era and gave more rights to women, but also adopted a more assertive foreign policy. King Salman took the throne in 2015 after the death of his half-brother Abdullah. King Salman, the custodian of Islam's holiest sites, spent more than 2-1/2 years as the Saudi crown prince and deputy premier from June 2012 before becoming king. — Agencies



Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz

## BLM skirts North Africa despite everyday racism

ALGIERS: The global wave of anti-racism protests sparked by the US police killing of George Floyd has barely touched North Africa, despite everyday discrimination in a region with a long slave-trading history. Black citizens in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia,

as well as migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who come to work, study or try to reach Europe, say they suffer endemic day-to-day racism. "Floyd's death awakened the anger and rage dormant within us," said Fabrice, an undocumented Cameroonian in his 40s who lives in Algiers, adding that it twisted "the knife in the wound".

But the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, most observers agree, has not triggered a major debate on racism or police violence against black Africans within the Maghreb region itself. Only Tunisia saw a small demonstration in early June of around 200 locals and foreigners, at the call of the association Mnemty. The

protest was "a message for African Americans from Mother Africa to say 'We are with you,'" said its leader, Saadia Moshah, a dark-skinned Tunisian.

In both Morocco and Algeria, however, the BLM movement has generated only a few messages of solidarity online - not enough to challenge a long-standing culture of silence about race. Most often the racism is verbal, but "sometimes words hurt more than being hit", said Aisha, a woman from Niger who also lives in Algiers. She said black people often endure slurs such as "kahlouche", black in Arabic, or "Mamadou", a common name in West Africa.

Continued on Page 2

## Erdogan visits Hagia Sofia after reconversion to mosque

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan paid a surprise visit to Hagia Sofia on Sunday just days before the first Muslim prayers are due to be held at the Istanbul landmark since it was reconverted to a mosque last week. In a lightning visit billed as an inspection, Erdogan took stock of the conversion work, the president's office said, providing pictures showing scaffolding inside the building.

Diyanet, the country's religious authority, said Christian icons would be curtained off and unlit "through appropriate means during prayer times". "Our goal is to avoid harming the frescoes,

icons and the historic architecture of the edifice," Erdogan's spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said in a television interview on Sunday. It was unclear whether Erdogan planned to be among some 500 worshippers set to attend Friday prayers.

Turkey's top court paved the way for the conversion in a decision to revoke the edifice's museum status conferred nearly a century ago. The sixth-century building had been open to all visitors, regardless of their faith, since its inauguration as a museum in 1935. Earlier this week, Diyanet said the building would continue to be open to all visitors outside the hours given over to prayer. — AFP



ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan visits the Hagia Sophia on Sunday. — AFP

## Local

# Kuwait Crown Prince receives call from Bahraini King on Amir's health

## Turkish President, Iraqi officials inquire about Amir's health

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday a phone call from Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa bin Salman Al Khalifa, inquiring about the health of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and wishing him everlasting good health. His Highness the Crown Prince expressed deep gratitude to the Bahraini Monarch, thanking him for the sincere and gracious sentiments.

His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received a phone call from Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al

Khalifa who inquired about the health of His Highness the Amir. The Bahraini Crown Prince, also Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, wished His Highness the Amir everlasting good health and wellbeing. His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait thanked his Bahraini counterpart for his sincere sentiments and expressed best wishes for him and the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain.

Furthermore, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received a phone call from Bahraini Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, inquiring about the health of His Highness the Amir

and wishing him everlasting good health. His Highness the Crown Prince expressed deep gratitude to his Bahraini counterpart, thanking him for the sincere and gracious sentiments.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received a phone call from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who inquired about His Highness the Amir's health. President Erdogan wished His Highness the Amir everlasting good health and wellbeing. His Highness the Crown Prince thanked the Turkish leader for his sincere sentiments, expressing best wishes for him and the friendly

Republic of Turkey.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received a telephone call from Iraq's parliament speaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi, inquiring about the health of His Highness the Amir and wishing him everlasting wellbeing. His Highness the Crown prince expressed deep gratitude to the Iraqi parliament speaker on the gracious and sincere gesture. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received similar calls from Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi and from former Iraqi Prime Minister Dr Nouri Al-Maliki. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

## Zain offers distance learning solutions in partnership with Classera

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the offering of distance learning services and solutions to corporate customers in partnership with Classera, a global leader in e-learning platforms. Through this partnership, Zain offers a complete set of e-learning services to meet the needs of the education sector during the COVID-19 pandemic over Zain's superfast network.

Zain's offering of these solutions comes in line with the company's belief in the importance of continuing the education process amid the exceptional circumstances the country is currently undergoing. As a leading Kuwaiti private sector organization, Zain is extremely keen on making its tech capabilities available to serve the needs of Kuwait's public and private education organizations as per the highest international standards by offering world-class distance learning solutions.

Zain now offers a complete set of e-learning services in partnership with Classera, an internationally renowned online platform with several e-learning and digital transformation awards. Classera, which serves over 3 million users in more than 14 countries around the world, offers virtual school solutions that are in line with the digital transformation goals of public and private schools in Kuwait. The solutions comprehensively serve

Kuwait's schools' needs, especially urgent ones due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Classera's solutions are bundled with Zain's superfast Internet via a variety of flexible plans to guarantee the best operational efficiency.

Classera's services and solutions, offered by Zain, include a wide range of unique features, such as Learning Management System, Student Information System, Student Behavior Management System, Advanced Student Attendance Management, social learning, adaptive learning (Smart Mate), virtual classrooms, Bursar System, Assessment System, surveys and evaluations, Gradebook System, Messaging System, student calling, System Intelligence and BI, e-certificates, training management, announcements, instant notifications, and much more.

Zain strongly believes in the crucial role played by private sector organizations in supporting social and economic sustainability projects, especially during crises. Springing from its growing commitment towards practicing its social responsibility, the company is committed to printing a positive print through all its activities. This has led Zain to embrace the most crucial issues in the community, including the support of the country's education process by making its tech capabilities available.

**zain BUSINESS**

**LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)**

**VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS**

## Commercial flights hampered...

Continued from Page 1

the dates, procedure and fees," explained Fouzan. For those travelling for one or two days, they can use the same PCR test done before departure, as it's valid for three days," he added.

The problem of the PCR tests is one of the key issues limiting traveler numbers. As Fouzan explained, the number of daily passengers was set by the ministry of health. "This number was set as there is no capacity to conduct more PCR tests in a day, which is an essential condition for travel to most countries. The rules are changing almost daily, and some countries have stopped requiring the PCR test," he said.

"The three-phase plan for the airport's operating was prepared about a month

ago, and since then, many rules and requirements have changed in various countries. So the 30 percent operating capacity from August 1 till February 2021 may change in the coming weeks. The DGCA will evaluate the situation after the first week of operations. I expect an increase in the number of flights and passengers, especially departures," Fouzan said.

Passengers should check with the country of destination on the latest updates of their requirements. "The rules are changing every day, so passengers should keep an eye on the news before leaving. For instance, the UAE does not require a PCR test, as they do it for all arrivals at their airports. The same applies for Lebanon and Turkey. The UK, for instance, announced obligatory quarantine for all arrivals for 14 days with strict penalties for violators," he said.

The DGCA is in the phase of preparing the flight schedule. "We are now receiving the schedules from the airlines so we can set the total flights. There won't be any

privilege or priority given to any category of passengers. In the past, we were operating about 400 flights daily on average, but now the number won't exceed 100 flights," Fouzan pointed out.

Passengers should be present at the airport four hours prior to departure. "This period was set due to safety measures and to avoid crowds. The stores and restaurants at the airport are open, including the duty-free shops. We have started applying social distancing measures at the airport through stickers on the ground and other instructions at the airport advising people to wear gloves, wash hands and maintain social distancing. Barricades will be placed at the counters to distance passengers from the staff. Also, onboard meals will be given in pre-packed boxes. Also, nobody will be allowed to enter the airport without a facemask," said Fouzan.

Thermal cameras will check the temperature of all passengers. If any passenger has a high temperature, a PCR test will be done. If the result is positive, they will be sent to hospital.

## BLM skirts North Africa...

Continued from Page 1

In the worst cases, they are called "Ebola and now COVID", she said. Her seven-year-old son refused to go back to school, Aisha said, after classmates told him "you don't belong here".

"We have to wage a permanent struggle against these verbal abuses," said Algerian sociologist Mohamed Saib Musette. "Some Algerians forget that they themselves are Africans." Interracial marriages are rare in North Africa, he said, and "very few TV stars, civil servants or political leaders are dark-skinned". Over the years there have been occasional campaigns that echo the goals of the BLM movement.

In Morocco, a coalition of associations in 2014 launched an anti-racism campaign in support of sub-Saharan migrants with

the message "Massmiyich Azzil", literally, "Don't call me a black man". After a string of attacks in Tunisia, including a violent assault against an Ivorian woman, Mnemy successfully lobbied parliament into adopting a law against hate speech in Oct 2018. And the Algerian parliament followed suit in April 2020, reflecting, according to Musette, the fact that the reality of racism "is there and must be fought".

Musette said the priority must be to "decondition" children and teach them to avoid derogatory terms for black North Africans, such as "abid" or "oussif", which literally means "slave". Slavery was first formally abolished in the region by Tunisia in 1846. French-colonized Algeria partially followed suit two years later, while Morocco under French mandate only did so in 1922. Though not representative of the wider region, modern-day slave markets have been reported in war-torn Libya, where desperate migrants suffer horrific abuse at the hands of human traffickers. — AFP

## First Arab space mission to Mars...

Continued from Page 1

conference in Japan. "It has already inspired millions of youth regionally to dream big and work hard to achieve what seems to be impossible," he said.

The Emirati project is one of three racing to Mars, including Tianwen-1 from China and Mars 2020 from the United States, taking advantage of a period when the Earth and Mars are nearest. In October, Mars will be a comparatively close 62.07 million km from Earth, according to NASA. "Hope" is expected to enter Mars orbit by Feb 2021, marking the 50th anniversary of the unification of the UAE, an alliance of seven emirates.

Unlike the two other Mars ventures scheduled for this year, it will not land on the Red Planet, but instead orbit it for a whole Martian year, or 687 days. While the objective of the UAE's mission is to provide a comprehensive image of the weather dynamics, the probe is a foundation for a much bigger goal - building a human settlement on Mars within the next 100 years.

Dubai has hired architects to imagine what a Martian city might look like and build it in its desert as "Science City", at a cost of around \$135

million. The UAE also wants the project to serve as a source of inspiration for Arab youth, in a region too often wracked by sectarian conflicts and economic crises.

On Twitter, the UAE's government declared the probe launch a "message of pride, hope and peace to the Arab region, in which we renew the golden age of Arab and Islamic discoveries". Several dozen probes - most of them American - have set off for the Red Planet since the 1960s. Many never made it that far, or failed to land. The drive to explore Mars flagged until the confirmation less than 10 years ago that water once flowed on its surface.

Omran Sharaf, the mission's project manager, has said the Hope probe will offer a special perspective on the planet. "What is unique about this mission is that for the first time the scientific community around the world will have an holistic view of the Martian atmosphere at different times of the day at different seasons," Sharaf told a pre-launch briefing.

Hope is expected to begin transmitting information back to Earth in Sept 2021, with its data available for scientists around the world to study. The UAE already has nine functioning satellites in Earth orbit, with plans to launch another eight in coming years. And in September, it sent the first Emirati into space on a mission to the International Space Station.

Meanwhile, astrophysicists yesterday published the largest-ever 3D map of the Universe, the result of an analysis of more than four million galaxies and ultra-bright, energy-packed quasars. The efforts of hundreds of scientists from around 30

institutions worldwide have yielded a "complete story of the expansion of the universe", said Will Percival of the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. In the project launched more than two decades ago, the researchers made "the most accurate expansion history measurements over the widest-ever range of cosmic time", he said in a statement.

The map relies on the latest observations of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS), titled the "extended Baryon Oscillation Spectroscopic Survey" (eBOSS), with data collected from an optical telescope in New Mexico over six years. The infant Universe following the Big Bang is relatively well known through extensive theoretical models and observation of cosmic microwave background - the electromagnetic radiation of the nascent cosmos. Studies of galaxies and distance measurements also contributed to a better understanding of the Universe's expansion over billions of years.

But Kyle Dawson of the University of Utah, who unveiled the map yesterday, said the researchers tackled a "troublesome gap in the middle 11 billion years". Through "five years of continuous observations, we have worked to fill in that gap, and we are using that information to provide some of the most substantial advances in cosmology in the last decade," he said.

Astrophysicist Jean-Paul Kneib of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL) in Lausanne, who initiated eBOSS in 2012, said the goal was to produce "the most complete 3D map of

the Universe throughout the lifetime of the Universe". For the first time, the researchers drew on "celestial objects that indicate the distribution of matter in the distant Universe, galaxies that actively form stars and quasars".

The map shows filaments of matter and voids that more precisely define the structure of the Universe since its beginnings, when it was only 380,000 years old. For the part of the map relating to the Universe six billion years ago, researchers observed the oldest and reddest galaxies. For more distant eras, they concentrated on the youngest galaxies - the blue ones. To go back even further, they used quasars, galaxies whose supermassive black hole is extremely luminous.

The map reveals that the expansion of the Universe began to accelerate at some point and has since continued to do so. The researchers said this seems to be due to the presence of dark energy, an invisible element that fits into Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity but whose origin is not yet understood.

Astrophysicists have known for years that the Universe is expanding, but have been unable to measure the rate of expansion with precision. Comparisons of the eBOSS observations with previous studies of the early universe have revealed discrepancies in estimates of the rate of expansion. The currently accepted rate, called the "Hubble constant", is 10 percent slower than the value calculated from the distances between the galaxies closest to us. — Agencies

Local

# Americans in Kuwait: US Ambassador discusses how embassy serves US citizens in Gulf state

## Welfare of 30,000+ Americans in Kuwait is embassy's top priority

By Jamie Etheridge

**KUWAIT:** There are around 30,000 American citizens living and working in Kuwait, yet many are unaware of the services their embassy provides. In an interview with US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina L. Romanowski, Kuwait Times asks about the services Americans can avail and what they can do for more information in times of crisis.

**Kuwait Times:** What is the US Embassy's duty of care toward US citizens in Kuwait?

**Ambassador Alina L. Romanowski:** My first priority is the health and safety of American citizens in Kuwait, which we estimate number over 30,000. During normal times, our consular officers provide a wide range of services for American citizens, which includes passport services, notariats and the issuance of consular reports of birth abroad to name a few.

Though our in-person operations are more limited during COVID-19, our officers are still very busy helping Americans. They are assisting those who need to travel back to the United States, for example. They are fielding questions and working to get important updates out to our American citizens through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, or STEP. They are also providing some in-person services such as urgent passport renewals.

Our consular officers are also assisting Americans in emergency situations. For example, if an American citizen is arrested, or if we receive word that an American citizen is in danger, we will work with the Kuwaiti authorities to check on that individual and to make sure they are safe. Consular officers are also keeping in close contact with American prisoners in Kuwait to ensure their welfare is being safeguarded. Our consular officers are extremely dedicated and I could not

be more proud of the services they provide.

**KT:** How does the US Embassy connect with and engage with US citizens in Kuwait?

**Ambassador Romanowski:** The embassy has traditionally connected with American citizens through our alerts in STEP and through our Citizen Liaison Volunteers. For those American citizens who register in STEP, we send the latest updates on COVID-19, voting and other issues. If you are an American citizen and haven't already, please enroll in STEP at [www.step.state.gov](http://www.step.state.gov).

We also work with a group of Citizen Liaison Volunteers, who support us in spreading important messages to the American community and who help us understand what issues US citizens face in Kuwait.

With more than 30,000 US citizens throughout Kuwait, this is no small effort during COVID-19. The Consular Section has been able to connect with Americans via social media, WhatsApp, Zoom meetings and phone.

We also update our embassy website and social media sites frequently to make sure that US citizens have the latest information.

If any US citizen would like to engage with us directly, we are also available via email. Consular officers read and respond to all emails sent to [Kuwait-ACS@state.gov](mailto:Kuwait-ACS@state.gov). For emergencies we can be reached by phone at +965 2259-1001.

### Services during emergency

**KT:** What are the kinds of services offered for American citizens during COVID-19 and in emergency cases?

**Ambassador Romanowski:** During COVID-19, the way we do work has changed, but our top priority - the welfare of American citizens - has not. For emergency situations, our officers are on call at all hours and ready to assist.

Just to illustrate a few examples, consular officers are keeping in close contact with American prisoners to ensure their welfare is being safeguarded. Consular officers have used all forms of communication to make sure a missing American is safe, or to relay messages from hospitalized Americans or notify their family members in tragic situations. Consular officers have helped Americans travel back home urgently to be with their loved ones. These are just a few of the emergencies with which our consular officers can help. I am proud of what our consular officers have done on behalf of their fellow Americans.

**KT:** Why doesn't the US Embassy do more in terms of helping American citizens who have legal problems?

**Ambassador Romanowski:** The US Embassy in Kuwait as well as all US embassies and consulates overseas are prohibited by regulation from acting as agents or attorneys on behalf of US citizens involved in legal disputes. Embassy personnel, including consular officers, do not provide legal advice to the public.

While the embassy may not recommend a specific foreign attorney, we can provide the names of several attorneys who have identified themselves as willing to assist US citizen clients.

### Disputes with sponsors

**KT:** What can the embassy do to help American citizens who have disputes with their sponsors in Kuwait?

**Ambassador Romanowski:** While I am sympathetic to the difficulties faced by Americans navigating the legal system of a foreign country, we are prohibited by US law from acting as agents or attorneys on behalf of US citizens involved in legal disputes. We can provide a list of attorneys who are able to work on these issues in Kuwait.

**KT:** Do you have any advice for American citizens in Kuwait?

**Ambassador Romanowski:** Actually, I have been



US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina L. Romanowski

"in-country" for a much shorter time than many of the Americans I have met in Kuwait, so I have valued the advice they've given me. I have been inspired by the American community here and their perseverance and concern for each other.

A key piece of advice I have mentioned before but it is worth mentioning again is that I urge American citizens in Kuwait to be there for one another and lend a helping hand. I encourage you to regularly check in on the welfare of your coworkers, friends and family members. Maintain your mental and physical health, be prepared for emergencies to the extent you can, and seek medical assistance as needed. You are not alone. We, together with the Kuwaiti people, will emerge from this COVID-19 crisis together.

## Hit hard by COVID-19, Kuwait's real estate calls for incentives

**KUWAIT:** There is no denying that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had caused worldwide woes since the spread began in late 2019 and continued in 2020. Within the boundaries of Kuwait, the Gulf country - like the rest of the world - had taken precautions to prevent the spread of the virus, which affected the various business and investment sectors including real estate. A number of real estate brokers spoke about how the market was affected during the first half of this year, saying that despite the gloomy picture, real estate is faring better than other businesses, but required more incentives to overcome the

impact of COVID-19.

Head of Al-Dulaijan real estate office Suleiman Al-Dulaijan indicated that demand had increased for chalets in areas such as Sabah Al-Ahmad seaside city and other similar areas. The reason was that clients were eager to buy real estate, which they can invest in like renting chalets and other facilities for families and leisure seekers, a positive step for the market, affirmed Dulaijan. However, the story was the opposite for commercial and investment real estate, which saw a drop in demand due to fears connected to COVID-19, he pointed out.

### Sales down

Maitham Al-Shakhs, head of Athra real estate, provided a bleaker picture, saying that sales were down as a result of coronavirus restrictions. Some deals were struck via online services launched by the real estate registration department during the easing of restrictions: however, this affected previous deals

prior to the whole COVID-19 debacle, he added. Major real estate owners are now faced with fewer options to sell and buy properties especially within areas still under full lockdown as well as commercial and investment real estate, indicated Al-Shakhs who added that financing in housing complexes and buildings was weak due to the freezing of rents.

Meanwhile, Head of Al-Muhaini real estate center Ibrahim Al-Muhaini said that price of real estate went up in some areas such as Sabah Al-Salem, Khaldiya, Adailiya, and Faiha to name a few. On the other hand, there was an increasing clientele interest in distant areas such as Sabah Al-Ahmad and Abdaly, Muhaini said, adding that renting real estate was impacted heavily by the departure of expatriates to their countries of origin. While brokers will continue to provide their own outlook on real estate in Kuwait, they seem to share a common belief that despite the hardships, real estate will "fall ill but never die." —KUNA



KUWAIT: An archive photo showing residential buildings in Shaab.

### News in brief

#### Palestinian Ambassador congratulates Amir

**KUWAIT:** Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on his successful surgery. "On behalf of the Palestinian community in Kuwait, I extend my sincerest congratulations to His Highness the Amir on the occasion of the successful surgery he underwent, praying to Allah Almighty to save His Highness, keep him healthy, extend his life and keep him as a supporter to Kuwait and its people, to Palestine, its people and its just cause, as well as a wise protector of the Arab nation. May Allah protect His Highness the Amir, the leader and father," Tahboub said.

#### Book fair postponed

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri decided to postpone this year's cultural and artistic festivals and activities of the National Council of Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL) to 2021. Jabri, acting upon a recommendation of NCCAL's Committee of Trustees, also postponed Kuwait 45th International Book Fair, originally scheduled for November, due to the coronavirus pandemic. NCCAL Secretary General said yesterday.

#### App for unpaid citizens

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Maryam Al-Aqeel announced on Sunday launching the application, "Kuwaitis without salaries" to aid citizens who could no longer be paid due to effect of the coronavirus crisis. Minister Aqeel said that the app had begun receiving information from this segment of nationals. The minister has recently declared a government proposal to set up the electronic website to enable these citizens post information about their financial status, pending examination of each case to allocate compensations. Applicants must not have another financial source.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netMP Adasani says  
govt should correct  
statement on rating

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Riyadh Al-Adasani, who has filed to grill Finance Minister Barrak Al-Sheetan for the second time, said yesterday that the minister's statement on Standard and Poor's rating is not entirely correct.

The lawmaker said S&P agency has confirmed Kuwait's ratings but changed its outlook from stable to negative which was ignored in the minister's statement, and called on the government to rectify the error. In his statement, the minister said the report shows that Kuwait's financial position is strong but reforms in the public finances must continue to ensure welfare for citizens continues.

In a new report released over the weekend, S&P Global Ratings said that, as a result of lower oil prices, implementation of the April 2020 OPEC+ oil production cuts, and the COVID-19 pandemic, "Kuwait's central government deficit will widen to almost 40 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 from an estimated 10 percent in 2019."

This means Kuwait's budget deficit this fiscal year will widen to KD 17 billion, well over government forecasts. S&P also estimated that the government's main source of budget deficit funding, the General Reserve Fund, will be insufficient to cover this deficit on its own. A timely and sufficient policy response to address a potential hard budget constraint in the coming months has yet to emerge. The government has sent a draft law to the national assembly to authorize the government to borrow KD 20 billion over the next 10 years to finance the budget deficit.

## Kuwaiti youth demonstrated qualitative skills during coronavirus crisis: Minister

Youth ministry, UN office release joint statement on World Youth Skills Day

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri, Dr Tarek El-Sheikh, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator to the State of Kuwait and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr Meshaal Al-Shaheen Al-Rabie' released the following joint press release on World Youth Skills Day:

This year we are commemorating World Youth Skills Day in a challenging context. The outbreak of the COVID-19 enforced countries to take precautionary measures including the lockdown of schools, universities, and other institutions. Currently nearly 70 percent of the world's learners are affected by school closures across all education levels, with more than one in six young people are out of work due to COVID-19. Hence, the World Youth Skills Day this year will be focusing on resilience and taking stock of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on skills development and explore strategies in response to the unfolding economic crisis. This entails preparing young people with the capacities to respond to rapid changes in employment and entrepreneurship in the sectors that are hardest hit by the crisis. This will ensure that the great skills possessed by the youth are utilized for the greater good rather than being wasted.

## Top priority

Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri stated that, in light of Kuwait's celebration of the International Day for Youth Skills adopted by the United Nations on July 15 of each year, we are interested in recalling the Kuwaiti government's efforts in empowering young people and preparing them to face future challenges by adopting a number of programs and the support that was reflected positively on Kuwaiti youth, whether from a scientific, intellectual or sporting aspect, as well as in the relevant aspects of entrepreneurship.

Jabri stressed that the Office of the Minister of State for Youth Affairs works to implement the national youth policy adopted by the Council of Ministers by setting a road map for its implementation in order to revitalize the role of youth in Kuwait and support it by all means in implementation of the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and activate the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He explained that the Ministry is making great efforts in developing modern strategies to keep pace with the developments of the events imposed by the pandemic.

Minister Jabri praised Kuwaiti youth, who were highly responsible, as they demonstrated qualitative skills during the coronavirus crisis and stressed that it is one of the important aspects that depend on them in times of crisis. Confronting the spread of the virus, and their sincere national efforts contributed to reducing the burden on the facilities that they volunteered with such as: the assistance of elderly, the sick and others, and their com-

mitment to the health measures adopted by the government to reduce the spreading of the virus, following the preventive measures, obtaining official information from its source, confirmed the extent of the high level of awareness among Kuwaiti youth which greatly contributed to the fight against inaccurate information.

Minister Jabri indicated that the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs had launched a number of programs and events through remote communication, in which a large number of young people participated, taking advantage of the quarantine period that the country went through during previous periods to raise the level of their skills and communicate with them effectively and that the Ministry would spare no effort in implementing its vision to support youth, as it will launch a number of programs during the coming periods that will be in line with the conditions of the stage the country is going through. Minister Jabri indicated that the State of Kuwait celebrates the International Day for Youth Skills confirms its continuation of its regional and international role in the success of all endeavors aimed at empowering youth and providing job opportunities appropriate to their aspirations.

## Resilient youth

Dr Tarek El-Sheikh added that this day offers an opportunity to be reminded of the vision of the Incheon Declaration: "Education 2030" that is captured by Sustainable Development Goal 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." Education 2030 devotes considerable attention to technical and vocational skills development, specifically regarding access to affordable quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); the acquisition of technical and vocational skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship; the elimination of gender disparity and ensuring access for the vulnerable. Kuwait is a leading country in fostering youth skills and providing all the needed support to equip them with the needed skills for the future. The Kuwaiti youth set a global example on the efforts exerted by them during the COVID-19 pandemic as we have seen them as volunteers in the frontline delivering aid to the most vulnerable, complementing the Government's efforts in the response and initiating local advocacy campaigns. The youth in Kuwait constitute most of its population, thus: stressing on the importance of the role of the youth in the advancement and development of the society.

Building on this, and in alignment with the 75th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Kuwait in collaboration with the UNESCO Office for the Gulf States and Yemen, and UNICEF Regional Office for GCC, will be organizing a discussion on the meaning and promise of inclusive education in the COVID-19. The UN75 Talk on Education aims to unpack the above challenges and

opportunities, take stock of the current education situation in Kuwait and, with support of education partners and stakeholders, identify opportunities and map out recommendations to address them. In doing so, this talk will draw lessons and build upon insights and perspectives from speakers and participants to the support the ongoing efforts of the State of Kuwait in developing and enhancing its response to education disruptions.

Minister of Information  
and Minister of State  
for Youth Affairs  
Mohammad Al-Jabri

## Renewed vision

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, Dr Meshaal Al-Shaheen Al-Rabie' stressed that the office is currently working on developing its perceptions to keep pace with the changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic through the creation of programs and setting priorities that are in line with the issues imposed by this crisis of issues that require us to keep pace with the state's efforts in preparing and empowering young people. Rabie' said that Kuwait, as it celebrates the International Youth Skills Day, has set a series of government measures to meet the needs of young people in all fields to reduce the consequences and negative effects of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Dr Rabie' explained that this pandemic imposed on us the renewal of our strategies to implement the vision of the Office of the Minister of State for Youth Affairs to ensure the development and participation of community-based youth and enable them to lead and create leadership in the State of Kuwait. Before the distinguished cabinet, the state's efforts to gradually return to life will be kept up with a simulation of the ministry's perceptions of the future. Dr Rabie' also indicated that the role of the Minister of State for Youth Affairs in empowering and supporting youth comes within the state's direction in directing youth towards work and scientific expansion and protecting them intellectually and physically. The role of the Ministry will be the guide for the Kuwaiti youth to enable and support them in their academic, knowledge or sporting interests, and the Ministry will have a role in preparing young people to join the labor market and innovative entrepreneurship.

Designated by the General Assembly in 2014, the World Youth Skills Day is an opportunity for young people, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, and public and private sector stakeholders to acknowledge and celebrate the importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.

stc sponsors first  
virtual Kuwaiti  
Media Forum 2020

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its main sponsorship of the Kuwaiti Media Forum, a first of its kind virtual forum organized by the Kuwaiti Society for Media and Communication (KSMC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Information Kuwait, where stc has provided Microsoft Teams solution to enable this event.

Through its sponsorship and active participation in the virtual event which commenced with an opening key note speech from Mohammad Al-Jabri, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, stc contributed towards backing the local media presence through key industry insights within the media and communication arenas. The company also focused on providing an educational and informative overview of the industry, while interlinking academics, media specialists and those in charge of local media affairs in a collaborative arena to share views and exchange experiences related to local, regional and international media outlets.

This sponsorship builds on stc's strategy to support innovative projects, technological transformations, small and medium-sized enterprises, and empowering young talented entrepreneurs to pursue crafts and skills in various disciplines.

Based on its corporate social responsibility agenda, stc participated and sponsored the event, which was held over the course of three days on Microsoft Team's virtual conferencing platform, a solution set up by stc. The purpose of the webinar was to discuss evolving media topics in Kuwait under the title "Searching today... to look into the

future." A broad range of academics, media representatives, journalists, and public relations specialists participated in the interactive webinar, sharing their unique opinions and knowledge.

Commenting on the sponsorship, Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc said, "stc's sponsorship of this event stems from the Company's progressive strategy to drive innovation especially within the realms of communication and information technology. In line with stc's vision towards enabling digital transformation, this initiative serves as an additional platform in which stc can fulfill its ongoing commitment to deliver a variety of programs and solutions that benefit the Kuwaiti society and local economy."

Jasem expressed her gratitude and appreciation to all parties involved in organizing the virtual event, which confirms the revolutionary step taken in hosting interactive conferences online, a service that stc offers its customers. The level of participation and engagement witnessed during the virtual conference elevated and enriched the user experience, while providing participants with convenient and reliable access.

She also thanked Madi Al-Khamees, Chairman of the Kuwaiti Society for Media and Communication (KSMC) and its representatives, for their solid effort and dedication in organizing such a lucrative and high calibre event that connects both Kuwaiti and Arab experts operating in various media related fields.

It is worth noting that KSMC aims to focus primarily on media and communication developments, conducting specialized reports, and performing research on various media fields in the State of Kuwait. KSMC also specializes in providing consultations to entities within the public and private sectors concerning their areas of expertise.



Danah Al-Jasem

Kuwait's trade surplus  
with Japan 'halved'

TOKYO: Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan dived 46.3 percent from a year earlier to JPY 18.1 billion (\$169 million) in June, down for the third consecutive month on slumping exports, government data showed yesterday. But Kuwait remained in black ink with Japan for 12 years and five months, as exports still offset imports in value, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Kuwaiti overall exports to Japan plunged 47.0 percent year-on-year to JPY 24.2 billion (\$226 million) for the third monthly decline. Imports from Japan also tumbled 48.9 percent to JPY 6.1 billion (\$57 million), down for the second month. Middle East's trade surplus with Japan plummeted 65.8 percent to JPY 163.4 billion (\$1.5 billion) last

month, with Japan-bound exports from the region sliding 61.0 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 90.1 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, fell 63.3 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan slipped 48.1 percent, reflecting weak demand for automobiles, steel, machinery, manufactured goods and electric equipment. Japan posted a global trade deficit of JPY 268.8 billion (\$2.5 billion) in June for the third straight month of red ink, as exports remained weak amid the coronavirus pandemic. Exports from the world's third-biggest economy shrank 26.2 percent from a year earlier, chiefly due to weak sales of motor vehicles and parts. Imports also went down 14.4 percent with lower crude oil bills. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. —KUNA

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Macron, Rutte, Kurz clash at EU summit

## No kissing, disinfect microphone: Japan nightlife sets its virus rules

Page 7

Page 6



SANTAREM, Brazil: Indigenous nurses from the Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health (Sesai) of the Arapiuns ethnic group and Tapuia ethnic groups perform a rapid COVID-19 test on Chief Domingos from the Arapium tribe on the banks of the lower Tapajos River in the municipality of Santarem in western Para. — AFP

# COVID wreaks havoc, kills over 600,000

## EU leaders try to save \$860-billion coronavirus aid plan

**BRUSSELS:** EU leaders resume their fractious summit yesterday to save an \$860-billion coronavirus aid plan, hoping to offset some of the economic destruction unleashed worldwide by the pandemic. The disease has killed more than 600,000 people globally out of nearly 14.5 million known infections, and with new clusters across the planet, alarm is growing about the virus spreading out of control. Europe remains the worst-hit continent, with more than 200,000 deaths, but there is bitter dispute among European Union leaders on how to help its worst-hit - and most indebted - members such as Italy and Spain.

"Are the 27 leaders, responsible for the people of Europe, capable of building European unity and trust?" EU Council President Charles Michel asked the attending leaders, reminding them of the human cost of the crisis. A handful of EU countries led by the Netherlands are reluctant to hand over such vast sums - 750 billion euros - to nations they regard as profligate, particularly Spain and Italy. The summit will resume at 1400 GMT. Many countries in the continent had largely brought their outbreaks under control and were considering further easing of

restrictions before fresh clusters were detected. France has made face masks compulsory in public indoor spaces, Spain asks millions to stay at home again, while the German state of Bavaria said it would soon offer free virus tests at airports. But an anti-mask demonstration in London on Sunday



**Coronavirus unleashes economic destruction**

highlighted the challenge still facing authorities and health experts despite the mounting COVID-19 toll. Dozens gathered to protest the face mask requirement in England's shops and supermarkets, many of them holding banners with widely discredited con-

spiracy theories — such as coronavirus prevention measures being used for "mind control".

### Deadly US surge

The United States - the worst-hit country in the world - has reported more than 60,000 new daily cases for six days. With close to 3.8 million cases and more than 140,000 deaths, American authorities are struggling to contain the surge and US President Donald Trump has been criticized for his response to the crisis. The devastation has left tens of millions jobless, and the poorest have been hit hardest by the economic downturn.

To help the less privileged and the homeless, one charity in Los Angeles has started a "community fridges" program. It involves seven colorful, clean and well-stocked refrigerators for anyone to access. "If you need to empty the fridge, no one will judge you. If you need to take one tomato, or you only put one tomato in there, do it," said Marina Vergara, an organizer for LA Community Fridges.

### Mask measures

Despite the vocal and stubborn opposition to

lockdowns and face masks in some parts of the world, they remain among the few options for authorities to control new outbreaks in the absence of a vaccine. There was grim evidence of how quickly the virus can spread over the weekend, with Iran's president saying an estimated 25 million people in the country have already been infected. While Hong Kong's daily case count of 108 on Sunday was far below other parts of the world, city authorities tightened distancing measures further, pointing to the fear of uncontrolled infections.

That followed the Australian state of Victoria making face masks mandatory for millions in and around Melbourne last week. But the tightened restrictions have also come with increased frustration over the economy and the inability to interact with others. In the latest illustration of such a situation boiling over, police in Germany - where bars and clubs remain closed - said they were hit by a "hail of bottles" when they tried to break up an open-air party in the city centre. "What I find especially abhorrent is that bystanders cheered and clapped when bottles hit my colleagues," said Frankfurt police chief Gerhard Bereswill. — AFP

## Biden 'not competent' to lead the US: Trump

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump assailed likely opponent Joe Biden as "not competent" to lead the United States, speaking as polls over the weekend showed deepening voter disenchantment with his own handling of the coronavirus pandemic. "He's shot, he's mentally shot," Trump said about Biden in a wide-ranging interview with "Fox News Sunday."

He said that if Biden is elected on November 3, he will "destroy this country." Facing the multiple challenges of a spreading pandemic, racial unrest and a struggling economy, Trump made several unfounded or highly speculative accusations against the former vice president, saying Biden would "triple your taxes" and "defund the police."

He added broadly that "religion will be gone," referring to Democratic officials banning large church services to stem the virus spread. Asked whether he would accept the election result in November, even if he loses, Trump echoed his position of 2016, saying, "I have to see ... I'm not going to just say yes." The interview, which was taped in advance, came as new polling results showed support for Biden increasing as doubts about Trump's handling of the pandemic grow amid a resurgence of infections in many states.

Interviewer Chris Wallace told the president that a new Fox opinion poll showed Biden with a substantial lead over Trump not only on his ability to manage the pandemic (with a 17-point edge) and to deal with racial unrest (by 21 points), but even-by a single point-on handling the economy, long a Trump strong point. And a new Washington Post-ABC News poll has Biden leading Trump among registered voters nationwide by a resounding 15-point margin, 55-to-40 percent. Trump dismissed such polling as "fake," saying White House surveys show him winning both nationally and in key swing states.

### 'Mommy, Mommy...'

He repeatedly pummeled Biden, who has kept a relatively low profile amid the restraints imposed by the pandemic. Trump claimed that the Democrat wanted to "defund the police"-a battle cry of some anti-racist protesters-and insisted that such language was in a Biden policy document, though he was unable to produce it when challenged by Wallace. As Trump, who is 74, repeatedly questioned his rival's mental acuity, Wallace asked him directly if thought Biden, 77, was senile. "I don't want to say that," Trump replied. "I say he's not competent to be president."

He questioned whether the Democrat could pass a cognitive ability test that Trump said he had "aced," and said the former vice president would fall apart under tough questioning. "Let Biden sit through an interview like this, he'll be on the ground crying for Mommy. He'll say, 'Mommy, Mommy, please take me home.'" Trump again defended his handling



This combination of file photos shows US President Donald Trump (left) and Democratic presidential hopeful and former Vice President Joe Biden during the Nevada caucuses. — AFP

of the pandemic, claiming that "we are the envy of the world" on testing; and, of his early prediction that the virus would someday disappear, said, "I'll be right eventually."

He again opposed any national mandate for mask-wearing, saying, "I want people to have a certain freedom." Biden responded on Sunday, saying in a statement focused on the pandemic that "it's long past due for President Trump to listen to somebody other than himself in how to fight this virus, because after six straight months of deadly mismanagement it is spiraling even more out of control. "Mr President, your ignorance isn't a virtue or a sign of your strength - it's undercutting our response to this unprecedented crisis at every turn," he added.

### 'Don't care what military says'

Asked by Wallace about statis-

tics showing American blacks are twice as likely to be shot and killed by police as whites, Trump replied, "Many whites are killed also. You have to say that." And he equated those who fly the Confederate flag with those saying that "Black Lives Matter," adding, "It's freedom of speech." Trump again stated his opposition to renaming US military bases named after Confederate generals-even after the military supported the idea. "I don't care what the military says," the president said. "We're going to name it after the Reverend Al Sharpton?" he asked rhetorically, referring to a prominent African-American civil rights leader. On other subjects, Trump said the economy was "doing very well," even as millions remain jobless, with some states reimposing lockdowns. The stock market, he said, was near record highs. — AFP

## Gunman kills son of US judge in attack at her home

**NEW YORK:** A gunman disguised as a FedEx delivery driver shot and killed the son of a US federal judge and wounded her husband in an attack Sunday at their New Jersey home, reports said. Judge Esther Salas was not hurt, ABC News said. Salas's son Daniel Anderl, 20, was shot dead when he answered the door, ABC and CNN said, citing sources. "He was shot through the heart," North Brunswick mayor Francis Womack, a friend of the judge, told ABC. The judge's husband Mark Anderl, a criminal defense attorney and former prosecutor, was in critical but stable condition after undergoing surgery, the New Jersey Globe reported.

The FBI's Newark office tweeted that they were "investigating a shooting that occurred at the home of Judge Ester Salas" and were looking for one suspect. The gunman appeared to be dressed as a FedEx driver, according to reports citing law enforcement sources. The motive was not immediately clear. "As a judge, she had threats from time to time, but everyone is saying that recently there had not been any," Womack told ABC.

Judge Salas, 51, was the first Hispanic woman to serve as a federal district judge in New Jersey and was nominated to her current position by President Barack Obama in 2010. "I know Judge Salas and her husband well, and was proud to recommend her to President Obama for nomination to New Jersey's federal bench," New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez said in a statement quoted by media. "My prayers are with Judge Salas and her family, and that those responsible for this horrendous act are swiftly apprehended and brought to justice."

The judge is currently assigned to a class-action lawsuit filed by a group of Deutsche Bank investors who say the bank failed to properly monitor customers it had deemed to be high-risk-including convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who killed himself last year while in prison awaiting trial. Salas has handled several high-profile cases and presided over the 2014 fraud trial of "Real Housewives of New Jersey" star Teresa Giudice and her husband Joe. — AFP

## International

# French President, Rutte, Kurz clash at EU summit

## EU leaders struggle to save deadlocked virus recovery summit

BRUSSELS: Tempers flared as the deadlocked EU coronavirus summit rolled over into yesterday, with French President Emmanuel Macron upbraiding his Dutch and Austrian colleagues and threatening a walk-out. Frustration had been building for three days as the 27 leaders wrangled over the size and form of an up to 750-billion-euro (\$860-billion) package of loans and grants to lift virus-ravaged countries out of recession. An alliance of so-called "Frugals", led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands and Chancellor Sebastian Kurz of Austria, has been resisting calls for the bulk of the funds to be doled out as non-repayable grants.

Macron, according to witnesses, bashed the table, attacked Kurz for leaving the room to make a call and accused Rutte of behaving like former British premier David Cameron-whose strategy "ended badly". Cameron often took a hard line at EU summits seeking concessions for Britain, but ended up losing a Brexit referendum-and his job. According to a European source Kurz was offended by Macron's behavior.

A member of the French delegation told AFP that some of the accounts of what had happened has been "a little caricatured" but confirmed that Macron had "taken a hard line on their inconsistencies". According to officials, Macron had denounced the two leaders for their insistence that the recovery funds take the form of loans with strict

conditions attached, rather than as grants-and had said he would rather walk away than make a bad deal. France wants at least 400 billion euros to be available as grants, but the Frugals want to cut that back substantially.

### Virus recovery summit

Squabbling EU leaders held a make-or-break dinner to try to break three days of deadlock in talks over a huge coronavirus rescue package. EU Council President Charles Michel, the summit host, gathered the 27 leaders for dinner after a day of small group meetings that failed to yield a major breakthrough in the search for a deal. He made a last-ditch proposal for the 750-billion-euro (\$860-billion) rescue deal aimed at bridging a gaping rift with a coalition of "Frugals"-the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, Denmark and Finland.

The Frugals, led by Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, have sought to slash the scale of the package of loans and grants that Brussels wants to help the countries hit hard by the epidemic. As fears rose that the summit would collapse without agreement, Michel suggested cutting the grant portion of the deal to 400 billion euros-down from his initial proposal of 500 billion-and raising the loan part to 350 billion, up from 250 billion.

In a heartfelt speech over dinner, Michel remind-



BRUSSELS: Netherlands' Prime Minister Mark Rutte (left) looks on next to Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel (2nd left), President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen (2nd right) and France's President Emmanuel Macron prior the start of the European Council building in Brussels. — AFP

ed leaders of the devastating human cost of the pandemic — 600,000 dead including 200,000 in Europe-and urged them to come together to complete a "mission impossible". "The question is this: are the 27 leaders, responsible for the people of Europe, capable of building European unity and trust?" Michel said, according to a copy of his remarks seen by AFP. "Or will we present the face of a weak Europe, undermined by mistrust?"

But a senior aide to Swedish Prime Minister

Stefan Lofven said they were only prepared to accept a maximum of 350 billion euros as grants in the package, and even this was subject to conditions. "It's about the rebates, higher climate ambitions, and that we include a mechanism that makes so that countries will not be able to get money from the EU budget or this recovery package if they do not follow the principles of rule of law," Paula Carvalho Olovsson told the TT news agency. — Agencies



### Bridging a gaping rift with coalition of 'Frugals'

## Racism in Cuba: Banned, but alive on the streets

HAVANA: Six decades on from Cuba's proclamation of equality and despite three top government officials being black, the Caribbean island nation has made little headway on racism. "Racism in Cuba is very hypocritical ... No-one says they're racist, even if they are," researcher Tomas Fernandez, 79, an author of several books on the subject, told AFP. Cuba used to have an open problem with racism until the communist revolution of 1959. Some buildings had signs saying "no dogs or blacks" while there was also racial segregation that saw black people barred from some clubs and schools.

The government has enacted policies to address centuries of inequality due to slavery, which was abolished in 1886, and to promote access to higher education and public office. But racism persists. In local jargon, a white woman with a black boyfriend is "burning oil" or "holding back the race" while he is "advancing" his. Ethnologist Jesus Guancho has identified around 20 definitions to describe skin color, including

"blue-black" for someone with very dark skin, while Cubans often describe frizzy hair as "bad."

"There's something that is a burden, it's very subtle, but it's a prejudice that keeps going," said painter Salvador Gonzalez, 71, who exhibits his work in El Callejon de Hamel, a bastion of African heritage in the capital Havana. Black activist Alexander Holl, 22, says skin color has a "huge influence" on relationships in Cuba. "It's common for white families to tell (their daughters) not to get involved with that (black) lad," said the history student. "When you want to be with a white girl, sometimes you realize this is an impediment."

### 'Hidden' racism

Recognizing the magnitude of the problem, President Miguel Diaz-Canel announced in November a program to "definitively eliminate the vestiges of racism." In Cuba, 9.3 percent of the 11.2 million population identify as black, 26.6 percent say they're mixed race, while 64.1 percent claim to be white, according to a 2012 census.

Manuel Cuesta, 57, an Afro-Cuban government opponent, says "there are the vestiges and remnants of symbolically cordial racism, structurally hidden, installed in the economic, institutional and political



HAVANA: Afro-Cubans wear face masks as a preventive measure against the spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, as they walk past a graffiti reading 'Long Live Fidel and Raul (Castro)' in Havana. — AFP

dynamics" of the country. The racial debate gained a new impulse following the murder of George Floyd in the United States, and the recent death of Afro-Cuban Hansel Hernandez. The 27-year-old was accused of theft and died during an alleged confrontation with police.

"Both events have once again pushed the racial theme into the discussion, although the true debate is on social media," said Cuesta. Those critical of the government find a link

between the cases of Hernandez and Floyd. Fernandez however believes that's a mistake and that the Cuban's death "cannot be associated or analyzed as if it was a racial crime." He says "racial hatred doesn't exist" in Cuba, but underlying racism does. Roberto Zurbano, a black researcher into issues regarding race, says an "itinerary of deficiencies" as well as "his social environment and low level of expectations" contributed to Hernandez's death. — AFP

## Dr Seade presents his work plan to lead the WTO

KUWAIT: With a commitment to bringing the institution back to the center of international governance and to promote global economic recovery through it, Dr Jesus Seade Kuri presented today in Geneva his candidacy to Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) before its General Council. "Extraordinary efforts with all members are urgently needed to repair and maintain the relevance of the WTO as the core of a robust and inclusive system that meets the demands of our people, businesses, consumers and their development needs," Seade told the Council.

Dr Seade Kuri -who has a decades-long career as a chief trade negotiator at the multilateral and bilateral levels- outlined for more than an hour and a half his vision of how the WTO can and should return to its vital role in promoting trade and economic development. In his presentation, Seade recalled his participation as the Mexican negotiator in the Uruguay Round that led to the creation of the WTO, of which he served as Deputy Director-General. He emphasized his experience in senior positions of two international economic agencies critical to global governance: The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Seade Kuri recognized the WTO's contributions to the liberalization of fairer and inclusive trade by establishing common rules. However, he pointed out that the organization's performance has fallen short of the expectations generated when created. Among other reasons, this has been because of its limited negotiating outcomes and the impasse in the appellate body preventing the resolution of disputes between member states.

This paralysis is compounded by the negative effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on

global value chains and international trade -which, according to WTO, may fall to a third during 2020. Given this outlook, Seade Kuri noted that today the WTO requires profound change. This involves unlocking negotiations, both on the current issues and in an agenda for the twentieth century; one that includes digital trade and the sustainability of global exchange of goods and services.

"It has been said that the WTO is like a bicycle that has fallen on its side due to lack of momentum, and by falling, it has broken. It needs to be thoroughly repaired. This requires a director who -as a chief negotiator- was present in the design of the device" he said. Seade spoke out about recovering the strength and certainty of the dispute settlement mechanism to make the WTO more effective, transparent and inclusive. He also noted that it is imperative that negotiations contribute to inclusion, diversity and plurality within the WTO.

Dr Seade Kuri presented his credentials for the post, including being Mexico's Ambassador to the GATT and Chief Negotiator for the Uruguay Round; GATT Deputy Director-General and Founding Deputy Director-General of the WTO. Also, Senior Advisor to the IMF and the World Bank, as well as Chief Negotiator of the Mexico-United States-Canada Agreement (USCMA).

Currently, as Deputy Minister for North America at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Seade oversees political and economic relations with the United States and Canada. He has been an academic in the United Kingdom, Mexico and China for about a decade. His career has allowed him to establish close relationships with heads of state, ministers, legislators and academia.

"My solemn commitment to you is to be an effective interlocutor, close to all members to the north and south, east and west, and to be fully equidistant from all", he said to the WTO General Council. Dr Seade's candidacy for the WTO is promoted and supported by the Government of Mexico, a country with a broad multilateralist tradition, a trade-oriented economy and a well-known vocation in favor of free and fair international trade.

## In Ecuador, families finally recover bodies lost in virus chaos

GUAYAQUIL: For Colon Ramirez, the agonizing search for the body of his grandmother is finally over. After almost four months, he has finally found and buried the missing 83-year-old Emilia Villon, who died in Ecuador's virus hotspot Guayaquil. The remains of his grandmother, together with more than 200 other unidentified bodies, were lost in refrigerated containers piled high with cadavers when the city's hospitals were overwhelmed with the sick and dying.

Ramirez says the last time he saw Villon was on March 29, when he took her to a local clinic. "She had a fever, her bones were aching. She had trouble catching her breath," he told AFP, adding that he had lost seven other relatives to the coronavirus, which was first detected in Ecuador in late February. While the hospital never directly informed the family of Villon's death or its cause, her death certificate declared she was a victim of COVID-19.

Once the family recognized her picture among a clutch of photographs of the dead put on display by court officers, her body was identified by her fingerprints. And on Thursday, the 26-year-old Ramirez finally was able to retrieve the coffin with her remains. According to Zaida Rovira, the city's deputy ombudsman, the body of Villon was one of 216 misplaced during the health crisis. So far, only 116 of them have been identified. This week, around 30 of the bodies were returned to the families.

Ramirez said that three days after his grandmother was admitted to the hospital, the family stopped receiving any updates about her condition from the doctors. So they started looking for her, even scouring morgues and refrigerated containers. "One of my cousins went in (a container) to look for her. It was horrible," he said. "He was almost crazy when he came out because there were so many dead people in there." In Ecuador, which has a population of 17.5 million, the pandemic has already infected more than 72,000 people and left more than 5,200 of them dead. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Virus spreading in Egypt prisons

BEIRUT: At least 14 prisoners have died from likely COVID-19 complications in scantily-monitored outbreaks of the disease at Egyptian detention centers, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. "At least 14 prisoners and detainees have died, most likely from Covid-19 complications, in 10 detention facilities as of July 15," the rights groups said in a statement. HRW based its report on witness accounts, leaked letters from prisons and reports by local rights groups. "Prisons had insufficient medical care and virtually no access to testing for the virus or symptom screening," it said. Information about the health situation in Egyptian prisons is strictly controlled by the authorities. HRW noted that Egypt had released some 13,000 prisoners since February, but this was "insufficient to ease overcrowding in congested prisons and jails". — AFP

#### Virus situation 'critical' in Ecuador

QUITO: The situation in the Ecuadoran capital Quito is critical due to the coronavirus epidemic, Health Minister Juan Carlos Zevallos warned on Sunday. Between April and July, public hospitals in Quito-home to 2.78 million-expanded their intensive care units from 61 to 162, Zevallos said in a nightly interview with the Teleamazonas network. Demand for hospital beds grew "by 1.6 times" over the same period, he added. "The situation in Quito, the situation in (the surrounding province) Pichincha, is in a critical situation, this means that the intensive care units are full," he said. However, he said hospitals had made adjustments to their inpatient and emergency departments so "there is not a patient who is not treated in Quito." — AFP

#### Mask: France introduces fine

PARIS: People in France will risk a fine of 135 euros (\$154) starting yesterday for failure to comply with a new decree to wear a mask in public places indoors, the government announced. As officials noted signs of an uptick in virus circulation, Prime Minister Jean Castex on Thursday said masks will become compulsory in enclosed public spaces from next week in a bid to prevent a second wave of coronavirus infections. Masks are already required on public transport, punishable with a fine of the same amount, in a country that has lost over 30,150 people to the epidemic. — AFP

#### 'Bandits' kill 23 Nigeria troops

KANO: At least 23 Nigerian troops were killed when they were ambushed by a gang of so-called "bandits" in a remote village in the northwest of the country, security sources said Sunday. The gang opened fire Saturday on the soldiers who were on foot in a forested part of the Jibia district in Katsina state, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The bodies of 23 soldiers have been accounted for while some are still missing," a military source said. In the past, the armed gangs, known locally as "bandits", have been involved in cattle rustling and kidnappings, but a number of experts have recently warned that they could be forging ties with jihadist groups in the region. One militia member said the toll could be "higher than 23", as the search for missing soldiers was underway. — AFP

## International

# Iran executes man convicted of spying for CIA and Mossad

## Iran arrests 'perpetrators' of last week's protests

**TEHRAN:** Iran yesterday executed a former translator convicted of spying for the US and Israel, including helping to locate a top Iranian general killed later by the Americans, the judiciary said. The killing of Major General Qasem Soleimani in a US drone strike near Baghdad airport in January brought decades-old arch enemies Iran and the United States to the brink of conflict. The judiciary's Mizan Online website said Mahmoud Mousavi Majd's death "sentence was carried out yesterday morning over the charge of espionage so that the case of his betrayal to his country will be closed forever".

Its spokesman said earlier this month that Majd had been sentenced to death for spying on "various security fields, especially the armed forces and the Quds Force and the whereabouts and movements of martyr General Qasem Soleimani". Majd had been found guilty of receiving large sums of money from both the US Central Intelligence Agency and Israel's Mossad, said the spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili. Soleimani headed the Quds Force, the foreign operations arm of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iran retaliated for his death by firing a volley of ballistic missiles at US troops stationed in Iraq, but US President Donald Trump opted against responding militarily. While the attack on the western Iraqi base of Ain Al-Asad left no US soldiers dead, dozens of them suffered brain trauma. Majd was arrested some two years ago and was not directly involved in

the killing of Soleimani in Baghdad, according to a statement the judiciary issued in June.

Majd had migrated to Syria in the 1970s with his family and worked as an English and Arabic lan-



### Majd found guilty of receiving large sums

guage translator at a company, Mizan said. When war broke out, he chose to stay in the country while his family left. "His knowledge of Arabic and familiarity with Syria's geography made him close to Iranian military advisers and he took responsibilities in groups stationed from Idlib to Latakia," the site added.

#### 'American dollars'

Majd was not a member of the Revolutionary Guards "but infiltrated many sensitive areas under the cover of being a translator". He was found to have been paid "American dollars to reveal information on adviser convoys, military equipment and

communication systems, commanders and their movements, important geographical areas, codes and passwords" until he came under scrutiny and his access was downgraded.

He was arrested in October 2018, Mizan said. Iran said last week it had executed another man convicted of spying for the CIA by selling information about Iran's missile program. Reza Asgari had worked at the defense ministry's aerospace division for years but retired four years ago, after which he sold "information he had regarding our missiles" to the CIA in exchange for large sums of money.

Iran in February handed down a similar sentence for Amir Rahimpour, another man convicted of spying for the US and conspiring to sell information on Iran's nuclear program. Tehran announced in December it had arrested eight people "linked to the CIA" and involved in nationwide street protests that erupted the previous month over a surprise petrol price hike. It also said in July 2019 that it had dismantled a CIA spy ring, arrested 17 suspects between March 2018 and March 2019 and sentenced some of them to death. Trump at the time dismissed the claim as "totally false".

#### Iran arrests 'perpetrators'

In another development, Iranian police said yesterday they had arrested people behind protests that broke out last week in the southwest of the country, state news agency IRNA reported. "All the

perpetrators of an illegal and norm-breaking gathering in Behbahan (city) were identified and arrested," Khuzestan province's police chief Heydar Abbas Zadeh was quoted as saying.

He did not say how many people were detained or identify them. The protests occurred on Thursday "with a limited number of Behbahan residents gathering and shouting norm-breaking chants," he said, a term usually used by Iranian authorities to refer to anti-system slogans. At the time, Behbahan's police said the crowd did not respond to calls to disperse and security forces broke up the protest "with firmness" and restored "calm" without there being any casualties or damage to property.

The gathering was "to protest the economic situation", it added. Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced on Thursday that they had arrested a number of "agitators" who had called for street protests in northeastern Mashhad city, and that they had also broken up a "terrorist group" linked to the People Mujahedeen of Iran (MEIK) in southwestern Shiraz. NetBlocks, a website that monitors international internet outages, said online access was restricted and disrupted for about three hours in Khuzestan around the time of the protest.

Khuzestan is a key oil-producing region that has often complained of official neglect. Bordering Iraq, it is one of the few areas in mainly Shiite Iran to have a large Sunni Arab community. — Agencies

## Fears of HIV spike in Jamaica as pandemic hits prevention efforts

**KINGSTON:** For about a month, John was woken by bad dreams, a side effect of missing his antiretroviral medication from late May, when he was unable to collect his prescription drugs due to COVID-19. John, 32, works in the liquor industry and has lived with HIV for 14 years. This has compromised his immune system, so he went into self-isolation after the coronavirus emerged in Jamaica in March.

"During the nights, it makes you jump out of your sleep with nightmares ... (but) you have to isolate yourself," said John - not his real name - who ran out of medicine because he could not afford private transport to take him to the pharmacy. Clarence did not miss any treatment, but sometimes struggled to get the medication that he has used for many years after contracting HIV 25 years ago.

"It did concern me," said the 49-year-old, who like John asked not to be identified, fearing prejudice. "I worried about the fact that ... I'm going to a pharmacy that may have a crowd." Clarence and John are among about 32,000 Jamaicans living with HIV, many of whom have missed treatment during the pandemic. Campaigners fear the impact of COVID-19 on treatment and on education and prevention efforts could mean a spike in new HIV infections or in deaths in Jamaica.

Even before the pandemic, about 14,000 HIV positive Jamaicans were not accessing care, said Ivan Cruickshank, executive director of the Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVCC). "COVID has affected the response significantly in that the clients are not able, because of lockdown ... to access services as they normally should," said Cruickshank, whose organization advocates for people susceptible to HIV infection. "We have had to improvise new ways of getting the service to the clients."

#### No time to slide back

Gay sex is a crime in Jamaica and discrimination against the LGBT+ community remains rife, including in access to healthcare. On HIV, the country was struggling even before the pandemic and was one of the few Caribbean nations not to register a decline in new infections between 2010 and 2018, according to UNAIDS data. Lockdowns globally are preventing some LGBT+ people with HIV from getting the life-saving treatment they need - and potentially putting their compromised immune systems at risk if they contract COVID-19, according to HIV/AIDS organizations. UNAIDS said this month that the global response to HIV/AIDS could be set back by 10 years or more if the COVID-19 pandemic results in severe disruptions to HIV services.

Peter Sands, executive director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, said the global campaign to end HIV globally must not be allowed to suffer. "This is not a time to slide back," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in emailed quotes. "We must continue to mobilize resources to safeguard the progress we have achieved or we could find ourselves losing a decade's worth of gains. We cannot let that happen." Jumoke Patrick, executive director of the Jamaican Network of Seropositives, which advocates for the rights of people with HIV, fears a rise in infections or deaths due to the economic or social challenges of accessing medication. "What we are finding is some persons are not committed to taking their HIV medication because they have other problems that in their head are more important than medication," he said. — Reuters



FARIDPUR: A man walks through flood waters to collect drinking water at Faridpur. — AFP

## Bangladeshis shun virus testing after fake screening

**DHAKA:** The number of people being tested for coronavirus in Bangladesh has fallen by almost half, officials said Sunday, in the wake of a huge screening scandal. The number of tests carried out daily has fallen from about 18,000 in late June to just over 10,000 in the past two weeks, the health department said. The huge drop followed the arrest of more than a dozen people, including a Dhaka hospital owner, on charges they issued fake certificates to thousands of patients saying they were virus-free without testing them. "The panic among the people (over the virus) has gone," health department spokeswoman Nasima Sultana told AFP about the lower testing figures.

She added that monsoon floods, the cost of tests at 200 Taka (\$2.40) and fears of being quarantined were making people reluctant to get properly diagnosed. The low death rate-officially at 1.28 percent-

rather than concerns over the veracity of test results also meant people with virus-symptoms preferred to stay at home, she added. But leading public health expert Muzaherul Huq said there was increasing public distrust of testing following the alleged fake screenings.

Two hospitals and a testing centre in Dhaka were also shut by authorities over the scandal. "It naturally raises questions about the credibility of the (test) centers. It has strongly discouraged them to go for a check," Huq, the former head of the state-run Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, told AFP. Dhaka banker Muminur Rahman said he did not trust the testing regime as his 42-year-old brother received a negative result in mid-June even though he was suffering from virus symptoms.

His brother died a week later, and his sister-in-law, aged 34, followed him in early July. Neither was formally diagnosed as having the virus. Huq, a former World Health Organization adviser, said authorities urgently needed to ramp up testing to determine the real spread of the virus in the impoverished nation. The country of 168 million people has recorded more than 200,000 infections, but experts say the real figures are likely to be much higher. — AFP

## No kissing, disinfect microphone: Japan nightlife sets rules

**TOKYO:** Campaigners for Japan's nightlife workers say they need realistic guidelines for how to stay safe and remain in business amid the novel coronavirus, which has seen the government zero in on host and hostess bars as centers of contagion. Bar staff need practical rules on how to interact with customers, said Shinya Iwamura, a urologist and public health advocate who has been teaching infection control measures in Tokyo's Shinjuku district and other nightspots.

That means no kissing, no sharing plates and conversation should be at right angles to avoid droplet contamination. "As much as possible, kiss only with your partner, and avoid deep kissing," Iwamura told a news conference, outlining what he described as "kiss etiquette". Strategic testing in the nightlife districts of Tokyo has revealed rising daily cases of coronavirus, predominantly among people in their 20s and 30s. The clusters prompted the Tokyo governor to raise the city's alert to the highest "red" level on July 15.

With cases in Tokyo nearing 300 a day last week, officials excluded people travelling to and from the capital from a multibillion dollar government campaign aimed at reviving domestic tourism. The government is also considering toughening its special measures act that allows it to declare a state of emergency. Media reported Chief Cabinet



TOKYO: People wearing face masks cross a street in Tokyo. Tokyo is on its highest coronavirus alert level after a spike in new cases as experts said the rising infections were a clear 'red flag'. — AFP

Secretary Yoshihide Suga as saying there may be more spot checks of nightlife businesses. But concern has grown that nightlife has become a scapegoat for the failure of authorities to track and contain the disease. Masayuki Saijo, director of virology at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, said it was not appropriate to discriminate against people based on where or when they work. "There's no difference, working at night or working in the day," Saijo said. "The strategy to reduce human-to-human infection is the same." The host and hostess scene provides a kind of safety net for many Japanese seeking work, particularly single mothers,

## Floods kill scores in India's tea-growing Assam; rhinos drown

**GUWAHATI:** Intense rain and floods in the Indian state of Assam have killed at least 84 people and displaced more than 2.75 million since May, authorities said yesterday, as they tried to collect the bodies of nine rare rhinos drowned in the past 10 days.

Rescue teams were facing a double challenge of rising flood waters amid the novel coronavirus as villagers driven from their homes huddle in shelters. "It's hard to enforce social distancing when people are being ordered to move away from the rising waters," said Sanghamitra Sanyal, a member of the northeastern state's flood management force. "We're urging people to at least cover their mouth and nose with a piece of clean cloth."

Officials warned that the water level in the Brahmaputra river was expected to rise by 11 cm (4.3 inches), two weeks after it burst its banks swamping more than 2,500 villages. Assam, famous for its tea plantations, is hit by flooding every rainy season despite flood-control efforts. Rights groups accuse corrupt officials of siphoning off funds meant for flood projects, resulting in shoddy construction of embankments which are often breached.

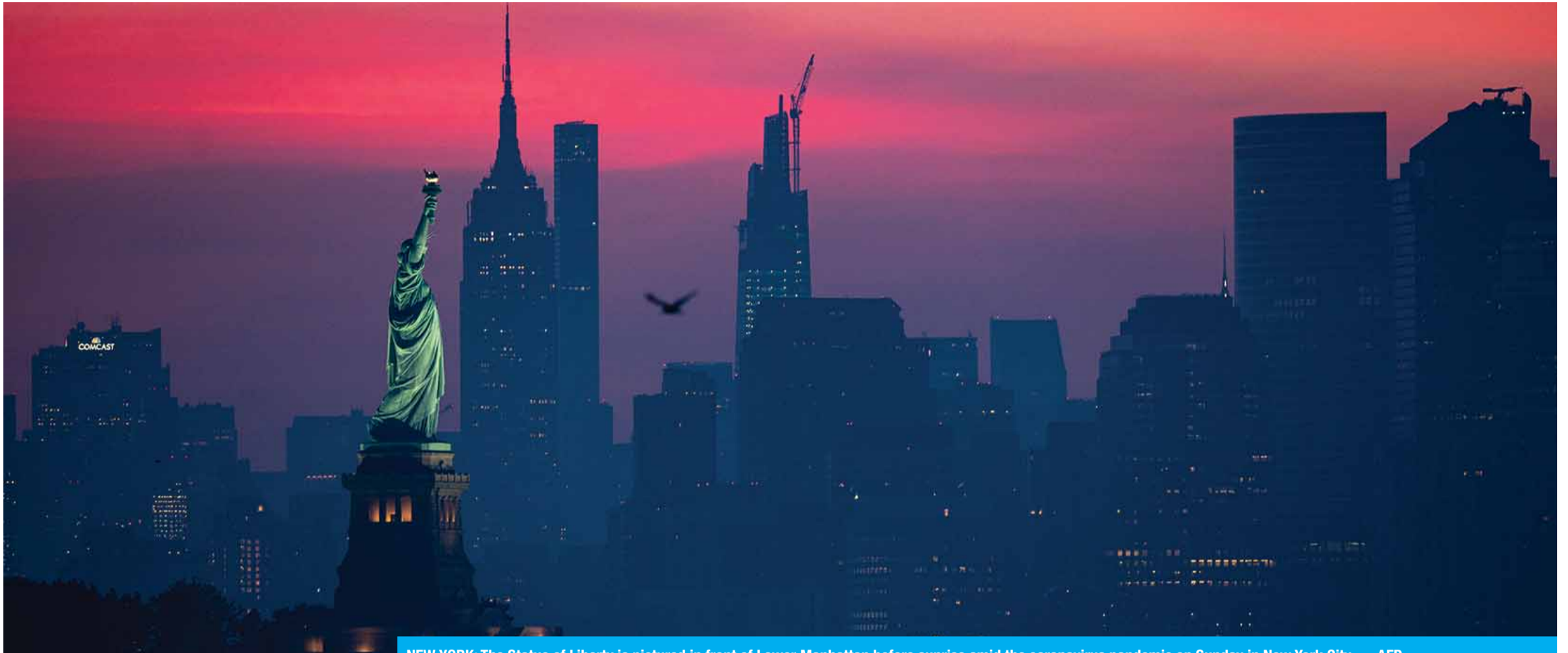
Floods have also inundated the Kaziranga National Park, home to the world's largest concentration of one-horned rhinoceros, with an estimated 2,500 out of a total population of some 3,000 of the animals. "Nine rhinos have drowned and over 100 other animals have been killed," Atul Bora, Assam's agriculture minister who is Kaziranga's member of the state parliament, told Reuters. With the park waist-deep in water, rhinos, elephants and deer have been forced to seek refuge on roads and in human settlements. — Reuters

said Kaori Kohga, representative director of the Nightlife Business Association.

More than a million people are estimated to work in the industry, she said. Her group has drafted its own safety rules for its members, including disinfecting karaoke microphones, as it found government recommendations, such as wearing masks and two-meter social distancing, were impractical, she told reporters. "Nothing will change if you're only criticizing us as the bad guys," Kohga said, adding the government hadn't acknowledged their rules nor offered enough financial help to businesses or workers. — Reuters

# Business

TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020



NEW YORK: The Statue of Liberty is pictured in front of Lower Manhattan before sunrise amid the coronavirus pandemic on Sunday in New York City. — AFP

## New York hopes to reinvent itself again

Pandemic plunges the dynamic city into crisis, but many see opportunities amid crises

**NEW YORK:** People fleeing town, widespread joblessness, a rising crime rate: the coronavirus pandemic has plunged New York into crisis, deeply concerning for many, but for others a chance for this famously dynamic city to reinvent itself. "We may be going through one of the most painful and exceptional moments in our history," Mayor Bill de Blasio said Friday. "We may be going through profound social dislocation." The epidemic has claimed more than 23,000 lives in America's economic capital, making it the hardest-hit Western metropolis.

Despite a sharp drop in the number of cases since May, the city has limited its reopening amid fears that a surge of infections felling southern and western states could strike New York.

With tourism evaporating, office towers nearly deserted, many stores shuttered, unemployment at 20 percent, and city services trimmed: this metropolis of 8.5 million people, synonymous with crowds and consumerism, has become a muted version of its former self. For the reopening of schools in September, city officials are planning on a maximum of three days of in-class time a week, frustrating parents desperate to return to normal work schedules.

And the crime rate, in decline since the mid-1990s, is surging: police have tallied 634 shootings and 203 mur-

ders since January, respective rises of 60 percent and 23 percent from the same 2019 period. Against that background, many New Yorkers have fled the city, leaving thousands of vacant apartments behind. Manhattan real estate rental prices declined slightly in this year's second quarter for the first time in 10 years, according to the StreetEasy real estate website.



### People flee city amid job losses

#### 'A perfect storm'

"This is a perfect storm, in some ways, of bad events," said Kenneth Jackson, a Columbia University professor who specializes in the city's history. For Jackson, who left Manhattan for the countryside as the pandemic struck, today's situation is reminiscent of the dark period in the 1970s and 1980s when New York, facing financial bankruptcy, was ravaged by crime and

an exodus to the suburbs. But like many New Yorkers, Jackson tries to keep matters in perspective. New York, after all, survived the cholera epidemics of the 19th century and the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, after which some predicted that people would no longer want "to work in a tall building."

And people are not fleeing urban hubs as they were in the 1970s. "There's been a rebirth of central cities," Jackson said, as US crime rates have fallen sharply and the quality of urban life has improved, with more personal, professional and entertainment opportunities.

#### 'Adjusting to the realities'

Thirty-year-old Kyle Scott, an online real estate specialist, agreed. He and his wife, a pediatrician, had left New York two years ago for a pleasant suburb, before growing disillusioned.

While in the suburbs "there's so much more space, you have such a better family life and much better sort of quality of living," he said, "you don't have the same benefits that the city has to offer."

Now back in New York, and parents of a seven-month-old baby, they plan to stay in the city that "always reinvents itself"—hoping a decline in real estate prices will allow them to own their first apartment. Eva

Kassen-Noor, an urban planning professor at Michigan State University, believes New York "will adjust to the realities that the epidemic is here."

Already, certain changes which environmentalists once thought unattainable have become reality: the number of cyclists, already on the rise in New York for years, has exploded. More than 100 miles (160 kilometers) of roads have been, or will soon be, closed to cars.

Meanwhile, nearly 9,000 restaurants opened outdoor terraces in recent weeks, after city authorities streamlined the approval process to help compensate for the loss of indoor dining.

Scott Ellard, who owns the well-known 55 Bar jazz club in Greenwich Village, is currently negotiating to have his street converted to a pedestrian zone. He hopes to use the outdoor space for the club's reopening after a painful four-month closure.

"We are doing whatever we can," he said. "Who the hell wants to close?" "You spend time building a reputation for a place: it would be a shame to let all that history go." Jackson, the Columbia University professor, said he is sure the city will come back and will gladly return to his Upper East Side apartment. "No later than the summer of 2021," he said, "...there will be clear signs that the city is recovering." — AFP



DUBAI: Emirates NBD, Dubai's largest bank, said yesterday its net profits plunged in the second quarter as it made huge provisions to counter the potential impact of the coronavirus crisis.

## Dubai's largest bank sees profit plunge over virus impact

**DUBAI:** Emirates NBD, Dubai's largest bank, said yesterday its net profits plunged in the second quarter as it made huge provisions to counter the potential impact of the coronavirus crisis. The United Arab Emirates' second-largest lender saw its net profit in the second quarter this year dive by 58 percent to \$545 million from \$1.3 billion a year ago. Its net profit in the six months ending June 2020 also slumped by 45.3 percent to \$1.1 billion from \$2.0 billion the same period last year, it said in a statement. The bank said it has set aside \$1.14 billion in impairments for potential risks from the coronavirus pandemic.

"The Group increased impairment allowances... in anticipation of a potential deterioration in credit quality in subsequent quarters related to the coronavirus pandemic," it said. CEO Shayne Nelson said the bank provided support to one-tenth of customers primarily through the deferral of over \$2.2 billion of interest and principal for periods of up to six months. The UAE's central bank said on April 5 that it had doubled to \$70 billion a stimulus package aimed at supporting the economy and domestic banks in the face of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The bank's total assets by the end of June rose 29 percent to \$189.2 billion from \$146.5 billion a year ago, mainly due to the purchase of Turkish lender DenizBank. — AFP

## Stocks drop as virus spikes around world

**HONG KONG:** Most equities fell yesterday as a spike in new coronavirus infections across the planet forced governments to impose fresh containment measures, fuelling fears about the stuttering economic recovery.

Traders are also keeping tabs on Europe, where leaders are struggling to unite over an \$860 billion rescue package for the battered European Union. The rally that has characterized equity markets since hitting a March low is showing signs of stalling as the pandemic rages, with new infections from Australia to the United States.

The spikes — Hong Kong saw a record rise Sunday, while Florida's has been described as "out of control" — have led leaders to unveil new measures to curb the disease's spread, including closing bars and restaurants and making masks compulsory. That has raised questions about the pace of the global economy's recovery from an expected recession this year. An index of US consumer sentiment last week showed it hit a three-month low in July.

"When coupled with the recent stickiness of jobless claims, the Michigan survey suggests some risk that the positive data surprises that dominated through June might have hit a brick wall," said AxiCorp's Stephen Innes. Shane Oliver, of AMP Capital Investors, added: "Our base case remains for the economic recovery to continue, but for the deep V rebound evident in much recent data to give way to a slower, bumpier recovery going forward."

"Shares are still vulnerable to a further correction or consolidation, with renewed lockdowns and the US presidential election being the main risks." Investors are keeping an eye on Washington, hoping lawmakers will press ahead with fresh stimulus measures for the world's top economy, with unemployment benefit bonus payments due to expire on July 31. However, there are disagreements over how much to pay and Donald Trump is trying to include tax cuts. Failure to extend the scheme would have a catastrophic impact on poor families.

"Depending on how ugly or not the bipartisanship becomes, this story has the potential to move markets later in the week," said Jeffrey Halley at OANDA. "Discussions are taking on more urgency as COVID-19

continues its rampage across the Southern and Western United States. Enhanced shutdowns are now a genuine possibility as the US failed to emerge from even the first wave of the pandemic."

#### EU stimulus deadlock

Shanghai jumped more than three percent, resuming a rally that saw the composite index jump around 15 percent in the first two weeks of July before a sharp drop last week. Tokyo rose 0.1 percent after reversing early losses, while there were also gains in Mumbai and Manila.

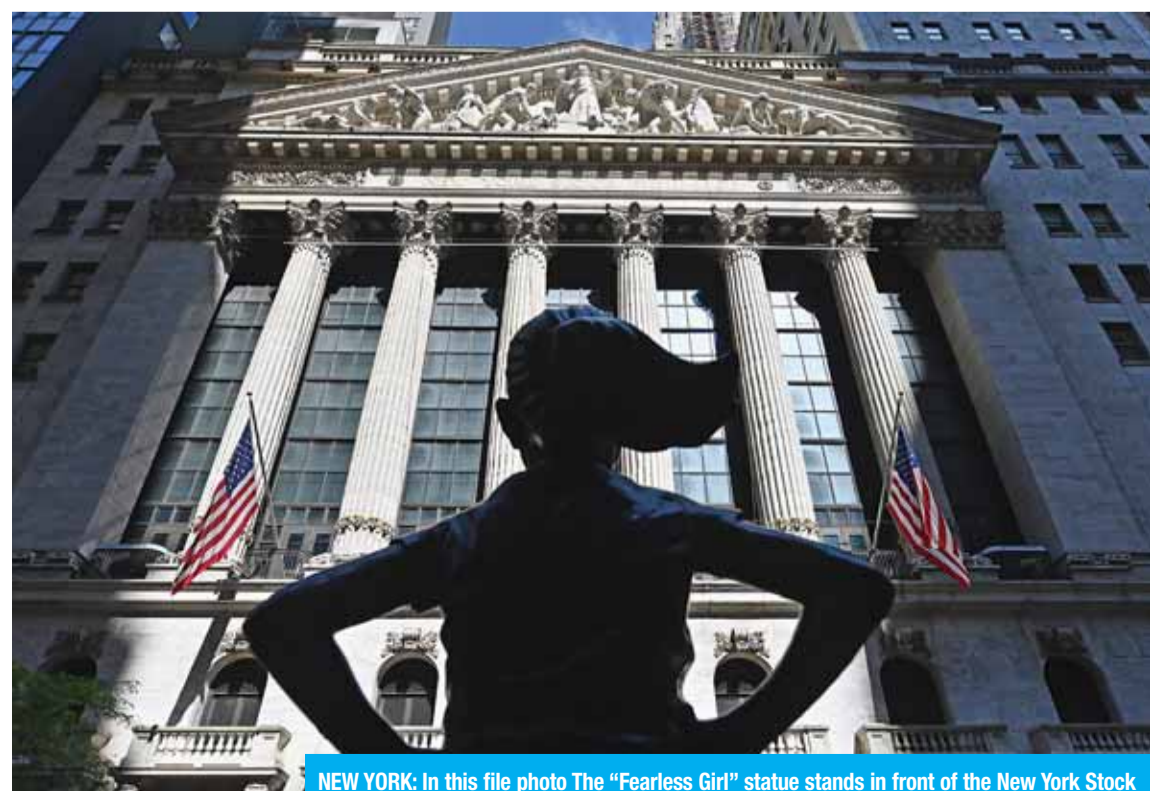
But Hong Kong dropped 0.1 percent, and Sydney, Singapore and Jakarta slipped 0.5 percent. Wellington gave back 0.3 percent, while Taipei, Bangkok and Seoul were also in the red. The corporate earnings season continues this week, with observers looking for companies' commentaries, seeking clues about their outlooks.

"These are the folks who genuinely have their fingers on the economy's pulse and can tell us with no uncertainty about underlying business trends and how those

changes in consumer consumption patterns could ultimately drive stock market capital reallocations over time," said Innes. European leaders remain unable to break a deadlock on their planned stimulus program, with a fraught summit going into a fourth day. The talks have failed to yield agreement over the size and rules for the package of loans and grants to help drag Europe out of recession, with the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, Denmark and Finland wanting to pare it back and impose strict rules on how it is used.

Still, analysts expect a deal to eventually be hammered out. "This is the pattern of negotiations and treaties in Europe, where European leaders really argue until the last minute before arriving to a consensus and a package," Mathieu Savary, of BCA Research, told Bloomberg TV. "We do not think that the absence of an agreement this weekend, at least so far until now, is the death knell of an agreement."

The euro bounced back against the dollar after initially dropping at the start of trade, though shares in London, Frankfurt and Paris all fell. — AFP



NEW YORK: In this file photo The "Fearless Girl" statue stands in front of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) at Wall Street in New York City. — AFP



## Business

# Pact to aid poor cocoa farmers in peril as COVID-19 hits demand

## Ivory Coast, Ghana to miss farmer income target

**LONDON/ABIDJAN:** The steepest dive in cocoa demand in a decade has thrown into jeopardy a plan by top producers Ivory Coast and Ghana to guarantee some two million farmers a living wage, sources within the countries' regulators said. Leading chocolate-makers agreed to a proposal from the African nations last year to charge the industry a premium for cocoa beans and guarantee a minimum income to farmers who earn just \$1 a day.

But the scheme, set to come into effect this October, was based on expectations that international cocoa prices would stay within average ranges. Instead, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on demand has driven them to their lowest in nearly two years and they are expected to stay weak for at least a year, the industry says. "It is not certain we will be able to guarantee farmers the amount originally expected," a source at Ivory Coast's cocoa regulator the Coffee and Cocoa Council (CCC), which sets the official farmer price each season, told Reuters.

The source, who declined to be named because he is not authorized to speak to the press, said the country's cocoa sales for next season were some 30 percent below average levels for the time of year.

The CCC did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment. A spokesman for the Ghana Cocoa Board (Cocobod) said in a statement sent via WhatsApp the process of determining the price cocoa farmers will get was ongoing. He added, however, farmers would still get a better price than without any premium.

### Minimum wage eroded

Market weakness could appear a good thing for chocolate consumers offered discounts on the high street, but for farmers it could mean hunger. Already the closure of retail outlets during lockdowns to try

to contain the novel coronavirus stifled impulse-buying of chocolate, significantly denting demand.

Now widespread economic hardship is expected to limit sales just as the industry anticipates production will rebound when the new cocoa season starts, generating a large global surplus. A series of meetings between representatives of the cocoa industry, Ivory Coast and Ghana last year agreed a premium of \$400 a ton for all sales for the upcoming 2020-21 season, including any production sold ahead of the season's start in October. Because the market has suffered a sustained fall with prices now below \$2,000 a ton, even with the premium added, the earnings of Ivory Coast and Ghanaian farmers will fall below the guaranteed minimum wage.

Four sources in total at Ivory Coast and Ghana's cocoa regulators, all asking not to be named, predicted the income guarantee would be missed by around \$120 a ton. That would mean farmers get some increase in revenue, but far short of expectations. Calculations made by Ivory Coast and Ghana when the new pricing plan was agreed a year ago showed a \$400 premium would allow them to guarantee farmers 70 percent of a minimum \$2,600 a ton target price from 2020/21 onwards, or about 20 percent more than they currently receive. Farmers in Ivory Coast and Ghana said they had yet to be told they would receive any less and were counting on an increase for the upcoming season.

"Life is hard for us cocoa farmers and if the price is not good, we cannot live well. Everything is expensive and you don't earn enough to live like men. Here in the village we survive," Alidou Konate, a farmer with 7 hectares in Duekoue, in western Ivory Coast told Reuters. Francis Yeboah, who has 3 acres in the Ashanti region of Ghana said all farmers had "put a lot of hope in this new pricing system" and it was up to industry and the government to



**LONDON/ABIDJAN:** The steepest dive in cocoa demand in a decade has thrown into jeopardy a plan by top producers Ivory Coast and Ghana to guarantee some two million farmers a living wage, sources within the countries' regulators said. — Reuters

make up the difference in the event of any shortfall.

"Even if the coronavirus has an impact on the market and it lowers the price, it is up to the government to find a way to maintain a high price for the poor cocoa farmers that we are. It's not up to us to make a sacrifice but to the chocolate-makers and the government," he said.

### Trade also anxious

Figures from the industry offer little comfort. An internal report from Barry Callebaut, seen by Reuters, shows the world's biggest chocolate maker expects a global surplus of 317,000 tons in 2020/21, the biggest since 2016/17, when excess

supplies kept world prices below \$2,000 a ton for more than a year. Barry Callebaut also adjusted a previously expected 85,000 ton deficit for 2019/20 to a 6,000 ton surplus. The company's sales dropped 14.3 percent in the April to June quarter. It expects a gradual rebound over the next three years, but it will not be enough to balance the market in 2020/21. It is not just farmers who will suffer. Some traders fear for their livelihoods. "I'm concentrating my efforts on saving my job. Our business is getting impacted. Small trade houses will probably go bankrupt this year," the head of cocoa trading at a global commodities house said, also asking not to be named. — Reuters

## EU impasse caps gains for euro, but leaves hopes intact

**SINGAPORE:** European leaders stood at an impasse and markets on edge yesterday after three days of haggling over a coronavirus rescue plan had yet to produce an agreement. Diplomats are in a final push yesterday to reach what the chairman of the EU summit described as "mission impossible".

On Sunday a compromise failed when a deal envisaging 400 billion euros in grants was rejected by thrifty northern states, which said it saw 350 billion euros as the maximum. In early Asian trade the euro slipped almost 0.3 percent, but has recovered by mid-morning to sit at \$1.1414, not far below where it left off on Friday. Here are analysts' views on the possible outcomes from here and on how investors may respond:

**Christopher Wong, FX analyst, Maybank, Singapore:**

"There isn't an explicit statement to say if there is a deal or no deal. "Given that they can narrow down their differences to just 50 billion (euros), markets are somewhat still hopeful of a compromise agreement, though the risk of the deal being called off totally remains...which may suggest that euro upside can be limited in the near term

"Another push-back will dampen sentiment and the euro could reverse its earlier gains towards \$1.11-\$1.12 levels."

**Chris Weston, head of research, Pepperstone, Melbourne:**

"The failure of euro to really sell off is one indicator of where expectations were. I think expectations were that we weren't going to get a deal at this meeting anyway, but we needed enough in it to give us a belief that there was one coming in August or September.

"This is what we're so used to from Europe...it was always going to be a very controversial program where they needed to be seen defending the interests of the individual sovereigns. Ultimately there will be a deal and the market knows that. "I think market expectations have been met. If I held a long euro position, which I know most asset managers do, then I wouldn't be selling on the back of this."

**Michael McCarthy, chief strategist, CMC Markets, Sydney:**

"It's clearly not a positive, but at the same time because of the history of Europe and some very active expectations management from the participants, I don't think markets are taking it too hard. "The euro has come under only modest pressure and I don't think it was a surprise to the market that no agreement was reached over the weekend. The message has been that this will be a potentially difficult and long conversation." — Reuters

## UK retailer M&S to announce huge job cuts

**LONDON:** British retailer Marks and Spencer Group Plc plans to announce hundreds of job cuts in the coming week, Sky News reported yesterday, citing sources. The cuts would be part of redundancy plans the company will be announcing in the coming days, the Sky report added, part of a restructuring that could affect several thousand employees in coming months. The report did not specify the number of jobs at risk.

"We don't comment on speculation and, if and when we have an announcement to make, our col-

leagues will be the first to know," an M&S spokeswoman said.

In May, when the pandemic hit, M&S was already in the middle of a new plan to improve its fortunes, including reviewing headcount, cost cuts and store closures. The company furloughed around 7,000 employees and announced plans to close about 100-120 stores. London-headquartered M&S will be the latest retailer to join firms like health and beauty chain Boots and department store John Lewis in warning that thousands of jobs would be at risk.

British retail faces more than 5,000 job cuts as retailers warned customers were unlikely to return to their old shopping habits after the coronavirus crisis, in the latest blow to the country's ailing economy. COVID-19, a respiratory disease caused by coronavirus, has put an intolerable strain on retailers, already battling high rents, business rate taxes, tight margins and a rapid shift online. — Reuters



## Fund managers navigate 'Night of the Living Dead' in small caps

**NEW YORK:** Investors are searching for bargains in the world of US small-caps, as the beaten-down asset class prepares for what may be the worst earnings season in its history amid a resurgent coronavirus pandemic. Small-cap companies are expected to post a year-over-year earnings declines of approximately 90 percent as companies report their second-quarter results over the next several weeks, compared to a 67 percent hit for mid-caps and 44 percent for large-caps, according to Jefferies. That would be the largest drop since the fourth quarter of 2008, data from S&P Dow Jones Indices showed.

While some investors had counted on a third-quarter rebound, many are now concerned that potential coronavirus-fueled economic shutdowns in California, Florida and Texas will deal a disproportionate hit to smaller firms, which are more directly tied to domestic spending and have been among the biggest beneficiaries of stimulus measures delivered by the Federal Reserve and Congress. People fear a "Night of the Living Dead" of small-cap companies that would otherwise go bankrupt without the benefit of the stimulus and record-low interest rates," said Brian Jacobsen, senior investment strategist at Wells Fargo Asset Management.

Small-cap stocks are often considered a barometer of investor sentiment and tend to be among the first to recover in an economic revival. Their lackluster performance this year has led to concerns over the sustainability of a nascent recovery in unemployment and other key metrics after devastating declines. The Russell 2000 index of small-cap companies is down approximately 12 percent for the year to date, compared with a less than 1 percent decline in the S&P 500 index, according to Refinitiv data. The Russell 2000 is up just 16.5 percent over the last 5 years, compared with an approximately 52 percent gain in the S&P 500. There are signs that recent economic gains may already be faltering. — Reuters



**Dutch technology company Philips logo is seen at company headquarters in Amsterdam, Netherlands.—Reuters**

## Philips eyes return to growth despite virus hit

**THE HAGUE:** Dutch electronics giant Philips said yesterday that net profits fell in the second quarter due to the coronavirus outbreak, but foresaw a return to growth this year on the back of burgeoning health equipment sales. Soaring demand for equipment, including ventilators used to treat the pandemic, had boosted the order book for the firm, which recently abandoned its home appliance arm to focus on the health sector.

Amsterdam-based Philips said net profit in the second quarter sank 14.63 percent year on year to 210 million euros, compared to 246 million for the same period in 2019. Sales dropped 6 percent for the same period to 4.4 billion.

"As anticipated, COVID-19 caused a steep decrease in consumer demand," Philips chief executive Frans van Houten said in a statement. The

decrease in normal, non-virus hospital procedures involving Philips equipment had a particular impact, van Houten said.

However demand for equipment used to treat COVID-19 had caused orders to grow by 27 percent, he added. "We have tripled our production of ventilators, doubled our production of patient monitors, and there is big demand for CT imaging systems and X-ray equipment," van Houten added in a phone call with AFP. Philips was now targeting an improvement for the rest of the year despite the impact of the pandemic. "We feel we can get back to growth in the second half of the year, and then even for the whole year have positive growth," van Houten said.

Amsterdam-based Philips started off as a lighting company more than 100 years ago but has undergone major changes in recent years. It first divested its lighting division before announcing in January it was selling off its home appliance arm to fully concentrate on health sector products. Van Houten said the firm was still confident in this plan, due to health being a "higher margin" business, and increased need resulting from the pandemic for services such as tele-health care which Philips had focused on. —AFP

## Business

# NBKI is governed by UK regulators, applying strict AML/CFT controls

## In a disclosure to Boursa commenting on rumors about suspicious transactions

**KUWAIT:** In a disclosure to Boursa Kuwait yesterday regarding rumors circulating on social media about suspicious transactions made through National Bank of Kuwait - International (NBKI), National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced that NBKI, although being a member of NBK Group, is an independent legal entity, and not a branch of National Bank of Kuwait - Kuwait. Accordingly, NBKI is governed by the regulatory instructions and rules of local UK regulatory authorities like Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority, noting that these regulations are of the best, most prudential and strict controls in the AML/CFT area.

NBKI adopts strict policies and procedures in implementing AML/CFT rules and regulations, in line with the instructions of the local regulatory authorities, NBK added. Moreover, NBK empha-

sized that the AML/CFT Unit, reporting to NBKI's board of directors, ensures compliance with AML/CFT policies, and reviews/updates the same on continuous basis, to ensure that they are in line with the latest international requirements. It also submits periodic reports to the board of directors in this regard, and uses the most advanced technological systems and software in the AML/CFT practices that give automatic alerts for transactions alerted on customers' accounts according to various scenarios, for the purpose of monitoring them and

ensuring their consistency with the information available about those customers.

NBK noted that the Head of AML/CFT Unit at NBKI is fully independent and has a several reporting authority to the local authorities in the UK directly, without obtaining any internal approvals in the event of any suspicious transaction, as per the regulatory instructions applicable in this regard.

Additionally, NBK disclosure mentioned that NBKI applies very a strict and detailed process for "Know Your Customer" guidelines. This process covers all the necessary

requirements and controls to determine the acceptance of any customer as per the instructions, including reporting any suspicious transactions, with the proper supporting evidence, to the concerned UK authorities, which in turn carries out its own relevant procedures in this regard.

NBK also pointed out that all AML/CFT-related policies and procedures in place are applied at NBK Group level, taking into account to apply the most strict regulatory instructions in the countries where they operate.

Concluding its disclosure to Boursa, NBK affirmed that the bank reserves all legal rights against those who unrightfully publish or promote misleading information about the policies and procedures applicable in the bank or any of its subsidiaries, in a way that would negatively affect traders' investment decisions



### All NBK Group units apply more strict regulatory instructions

## Gulf Bank announces Al-Danah winner of KD 250,000 prize

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held Al-Danah's second quarterly draw on the 16th of July 2020, announcing Hamad Abdullah Asabb Al-Awadh as the lucky winner of the KD 250,000 cash prize. On the same day, Gulf Bank also conducted its weekly Al-Danah draws for the period between May 3-31, announcing a total of 25 weekly winners who will receive KD 1,000 cash prizes each. Gulf Bank also held a total of four weekly Al-Danah draws on the 19th of July 2020. The three weekly draws for June 7, June 14 and June 21 were held, in addition to the July 19th weekly draw; thereby announcing a total of 20 winners who took home a KD1000 cash prize each.

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

Anoud Abdulaziz Mahdi Al-Saffar  
Jawaher Abdulrasool Abdureda Maarafy  
Ohoud Abbas Soaan Al-Enezi  
Fawzya Oshban Al-Shammri  
Raja Mohammed Al-Dheferi  
The winners for the week of 3 - 7 May 2020 are:  
Rasool Marjan Haji Halim  
Laila Mohamad Ibrahim Abdulla  
Nadia Ali Mohammed Mubarak  
Amal Ahmed Hussain Al-Roomi  
Sara Tekrout

#### The winners for the week of 10 - 14 May 2020 are:

Mahmoud Ahmed Eissa Al-Radwan  
Asmaa Khaled Abdulghafoor Tifouni  
Awatef Mohammed Awadha  
Farhan Nouman Howaidh Alazmi  
Shaymaa Dekheil Oqal

#### The winners for the week of 17 - 21 May 2020 are:

Ribal Khaled Al-Ahmedeyah  
Ahmed Hasan Yousef Deyah  
Majeda Mahmoud Ahmed Ali Shaheen  
Gurmit Kaur Chadha Singh Bassan  
Silvana salem daou

#### The winners for the week of 24 - 28 May 2020 are:

Sarah Mohammad Jassim Maarafi Minor  
Maleehah Jaseem Mohammed Alshamaly  
Hamed Rashed Aqeel Alaqeel  
Hani Mohammed Ali Alsaleh  
Ahmad Salem Ahmad Albarjas  
The winners for the week of 31 May - 4 June 2020 are:  
Fawziyah Ali Abdullah Alzankwi  
Abdulmohsen Haider Sadeq Abulhasan  
Khaleda Ahmed Hussain Al-Ansary  
Adel Abdurassoul Abdurrahman Alawadi  
Kareem Mandani Hussain Hasan  
The winners for the week of 7 - 11 June 2020 are:  
Nezar Alzoghbi  
Ronald Louis Miranda  
Hosain Barakat Mohamad Alzoaby  
Bader Nasser Ali Alhouti  
Mahmoud Hammad

#### The winners for the week of 14 - 18 June 2020 are:

Yasmin Mohammad Abdelhamid Faras  
Fatima Abdulkareem Mohammed Alsaqer  
Ibrahim Habeeb Abdullah Shukrallah  
Ali Mohammad Shaban Sulaiman  
Hashem Sadeq Mahmoud Mohammad  
The winners for the week of 12 - 16 July 2020 are:  
Ebtessam Yousef Haider Mohammad  
Fares Yahya Mohammed Alrubian  
Reema Anwar Mahmoud Awadh (minor)  
Abdullah Maziad Hamoud Alrawee  
Adel Abdou Khloof

Al-Danah is now offering its biggest prize yet, with an annual draw prize of KD 1,500,000. The annual draw will be held on 14 January 2021, and the last chance to deposit into an Al Danah account to participate is 30 September 2020.

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

## Burgan Bank unveils 'Tijarati' to support local businesses

**KUWAIT:** In line with its support to Corporate businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Burgan Bank is pleased to announce a first-of-its-kind service in Kuwait named "Tijarati". Designed exclusively for the business community, the mobile application, "Tijarati" provides real-time data feed and information to business owners and entrepreneurs of their cash flow through the point of sale machines /payment gateways provided by Burgan Bank across all the outlets.

Driven by a customer-centric approach, the launch of the new application comes as part of Burgan Bank's dynamic digital strategy to under-

stand and address the current needs of its diverse customers and gaps that exist in the market presently.

Presently, business owners had to wait for the next working day to ascertain the funds which would be credited to the account along with the details of the transactions. "Tijarati" provides real-time dashboards, reports and aids in any service request and tracking of the same and is accessible from computers, tablets and mobile devices while being visually appealing and user-friendly.

"With the launch of "Tijarati", we are building on providing our customers with market-leading solutions to meet their growing expectations and also make them self-reliant. This application, which is the first of its kind service in Kuwait, will enable all customers to manage their fund flow on a real time basis and provide a single view over multiple locations, thereby delivering Burgan Bank corporate customers with the option to do just about everything that can be done in our branches, but online

## AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad draws

**KUWAIT:** In accordance with full preventive guidelines and measures set by health authorities, Ahli United Bank (AUB) held the weekly draw of 8 July 2020 and announced 20 winners of KD 1,000.

The winners are as follows: Venkatraman Rajaraman, Bader Hmoud Al-Shammari, Wagih Halem Rofail, Maitham Abdulaziz Hasan, Nasser Hmaid Jarah, Hatem Bahai Kothari, Lujain Jamal Alkhubaizi, Samiha Nasser Almisalam, Mohammad Abdulaziz Al-Subaie, Walid Rashid Al-Shibli, Mohammad Matlag Alazemi, Ahmad Saleh Aba Al-Khail, Nayef Nada Al-Nomas, Abdulaziz Fahad Al-Dosari, Shaikhah Abdulaziz Al-Muzaini, Abraje Keshava Bhat, Abdullah Ahmad Sheer, Monther Ahmad Abu Shaaban, Khorasani Abbas Yadollahi, and Hayat Modhaffar Ali.

AUB also held the postponed Eid Al-Fitr draw of 24 June 2020 for KD 100,000 with Abdulraouf Abduljabbar Theeb named as the winner.

During the same day, AUB also held the postponed weekly draw of 8 April 2020 and announced 20 Winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Sultan Asad Asad, Zainab Ali Mumen, Raced Fahad Al-Abaid, Abdurrahman Shamak Alrashidi, Nawaf Hameed Dhaidan, Ali Majeed Mohammad, Mahmood Mohammad Al-Awadhi, Saeed Kamal Jaafar, Munira Amer Ali, Helal Awwad Al-Dhafeeri, Abdurrahman Abdullah Abdurrahman, Othman Mehzen Al-Hashemi, Sarah Athal Edhaib, Awatef Mubarak Al-Rasheedi, Khaled Hassan Al-Ahmad, Naser Abdullah Al-Meqled, Soud Mohammed Al-Ajmi, Ghunaim Rajes Aladwani, Naffa Saoud Al-Harbi and Awatef Hamad Al-Subeeh.

AUB also held the postponed weekly draw of 1 April 2020 and announced 20 Winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Fouzeyah Hussain Alhadher, Abdullah Mohammad Al-Qaoud, Amirah Qasem Qasem, Arezou Samimi, Mohammad Salem Al-Senafi, Fouzeyah Fahad Al-Khaled, Hussain Fahad Al-Foudari, Taher Abdurrahman

## Some small firms could get 2nd US relief loan: Mnuchin

**NEW YORK:** Businesses suffering the most from the coronavirus crisis could receive a second round of financing under a federal emergency relief program, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said.

He said sectors that have been especially battered such as travel and restaurants are prime candidates for another round of support under the Paycheck Protection Program, which was launched in April to provide support to smaller enterprises devastated by coronavirus shutdowns. "There should be a second check available to the businesses that are the hardest hit," Mnuchin said in testimony before a House committee, noting the government has \$130 billion in unspent PPP funds.

However, he said he favored a revenue test to determine which companies should be supported, and pledged to work with Congress to determine the size of businesses eligible for a second round of financing. Mnuchin is leading the effort to negotiate a new support package with the Democratic-led House of Representatives as the coronavirus outbreak worsens in much of the country.

Hanging in the balance is \$600 per-week in additional unemployment benefits that is set to expire at the end of July. Economists have credited massive federal support programs with limiting the hit to households from the COVID-19 crisis thus far, even as more than 17 million workers remain jobless.

Bedair, Ahmed Salem Al- Ameri, Reyad Mohammad Al-Gedie, Moataz Shuaifan Al-Rasheedi, Abdullah Abdulaziz Al-Obaid, Fayza Khaqan, Khalil Ibrahim Al-Jaian, Changes Haji Baloch, Nasser Kareem Humaidan, Alaa Fadel Artee, Sandra Vena Nazareth, Sawsan Mohd Hamouda and Nabil Khalifa Al-Ajil .

AUB also held the postponed weekly draw of 18 March 2020 and announced 20 Winners Won of KD 1,000 as follows: Maryam Abdullah Ahmad, Sabreen Mohammad Toqan, Ali Murad Murad, Eissa Ali Buloushi, Saad Mohamad Al-Azmi, Faisal Ibrahim Al-Jeraiwi, Zainab Khaled Sabzali, Ahmed Abdulrehem Abdulrehem, Hasan Salah Al-Sadeq, Maryam Ahmad Al-Mailam, Najat Abd Al-Sayed Mohammad, Ahmad Abd Al-Mohsen Al-Homoud, Souzan Ameen Aboulainain, Lafi Sanut Al-Mutairi, Jehad Mostafa Shaaban, Wadhha Abdullah Al-Khaled, Mohammad Sulaiman Awadh, Soud Mohamad Al-Obaidi, Alawy Manfi Al-Enzi, and Huda Ahmad Al-Mutairi .

All postponed draws are held to preserve the full legal rights of all qualified AUB Al-Hassad customers who are eligible to enter the draws during the period of suspension.

The draws of Al-Hassad include several cash prizes, such as KD 100,000 each Eid and the grand quarterly draw of KD 250,000 prize which continues to be a key aspiration for customers who are wishing to fulfill their dreams. On top of that, Al-Hassad offers a monthly draw of KD 100,000, as well as 20 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 for each winner. In addition to this attractive package of rewards, Al-Hassad Islamic account incorporates a Wakala contract for projected annual profits, making this account beneficial to all customer segments that are aspiring to build their short and long-term savings through a unique savings account with many advantages.

Furthermore, for the first time in Kuwait, the AUB Al-Hassad presents the "Privilege Draw", which is a quarterly draw of KD 25,000 exclusively for Al-Hassad customers who maintained their balances for more than one year and have not won a prize in the past five years.

For all draws, the clients are eligible for one draw chance for each KD 50 deposited in their Al-Hassad account.



WASHINGTON, DC: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin bumps elbows with Representative Kevin Hern after testifying before the House Small Business Committee at the US Capitol in Washington, DC. —AFP

In an interview with Fox Business Network, White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow said President Donald Trump's administration would like to see a new rescue measure passed by the end of July. "The president does want a payroll tax holiday, and that, along with restricting COVID liabilities for small business, restaurants and so forth, (is) one of the key aspects of our asks for the next round of the CARES Act," he said.

The House of Representatives in May approved a new \$3 trillion aid package, but Senate Republicans and the White House refused to support that plan, instead backing a payroll tax cut which would help only those currently receiving a paycheck. —AFP

and at their own convenience," stated Raed A Al-Haqhaq, Deputy Group CEO & Chief Executive Officer-Kuwait. "We at the bank have been focusing on enhancing our technological services to make banking experiences better for all our clients. With this new offering, we are providing our clients with a convenient and hassle-free option of interacting with the bank for all their financial needs. While developing the platform, the bank was constantly engaged with clients to understand their needs and expectations in order to develop a platform that will respond to their present-day needs. Future planned releases will enable us to provide more personalization based on the client's relationship with us."



Raed A Al-Haqhaq

## CBK announces Najma account draw winners

**KUWAIT:** The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the names of the Najma Account weekly and the 'Your Salary & More' winners in a weekly draw conducted in the presence of MOCI representatives, Abdul Aziz Ashkanani and Ibtisam Al-Munai. The winner of Al-Najma account weekly draw was Mohammed Abdullah Al-Wazzan, who won KD 5000 cash and the winner of the Your Salary & More campaign was Yahani Abdullah Al-Weqait. In addition, CBK explained that Al-Najma account offers the largest daily award in Kuwait of KD 5,000, a monthly KD 20,000 award, a biannual KD 500,000 award then the Guinness Book of World Record's largest annual award of KD 1.5 million.

CBK statement added that participants could open the account by depositing the minimum of KD 500 to enter all draws and that each KD 25 entitles account holder to an entry in daily draws after a week as of deposit and in mega draws after 3 months of deposit. "The more sums deposited, the bigger chances account holders will have to win one of the awards", the statement underlined.

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

## Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi draw

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

#### The lucky winners are:

1. Makeyah Ali Ahmad Al-Khudhari
2. Michael Montemayor Alcalá
3. Faisal Faleh Ayeed Al-Subaie
4. Laila Shaker Al-Hanbali
5. Saud Mohammed Saud Al-Humaidan

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

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

# Classifieds

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

**Kuwait Times**  
 Now you can browse  
[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)  
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 Fax: (+965) 24348714  
[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)

## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

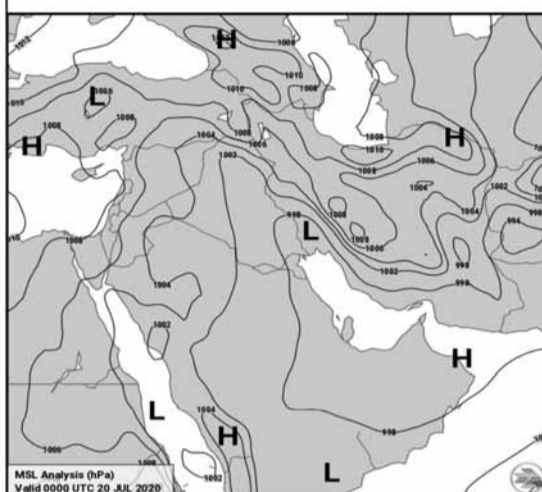
**BY DAY:** Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind to south easterly wind with speed of 15 - 40 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Hot to rather hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind to light variable wind with speed of 12 - 40 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING: No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	47 °C	36 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	49 °C	38 °C
ABDALY	50 °C	33 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	50 °C	37 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	47 °C	34 °C
SALMIYAH	41 °C	36 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	45 °C	33 °C
WAFRA	49 °C	34 °C
SALMY	49 °C	34 °C

## SFC. CHART 20/07/2020 0000 UTC



## 4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	07/21	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	48 °C	34 °C	NW-SE	15 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	07/22	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	48 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 38 km/h
Thursday	07/23	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	46 °C	30 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h
Friday	07/24	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	45 °C	30 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:29
Sunrise	05:01
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:29
Sunset	18:47
Isha	20:16

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	50 °C
MIN. Temp.	31 °C
MAX. RH	33 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	N 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## 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**

**EMERGENCY**  
  
**112**

## Requirement for a Leading Catering Company

The Following Positions :

- QHSE Officer (ISO-22000 Certified)
- Pastry Chef
- Butcher
- Cook
- Waiter
- Bakery Chef
- Storekeeper
- Assistant Cook
- Cleaner
- Filipino Cook

Only Transferable Visa.

Interested candidates to send CV to:

haytham.e@ahliacatering.com or hr.aslam@ahliacatering.com

For further inquiry please Contact: 94127501

## 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
Khalidiya	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

## 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

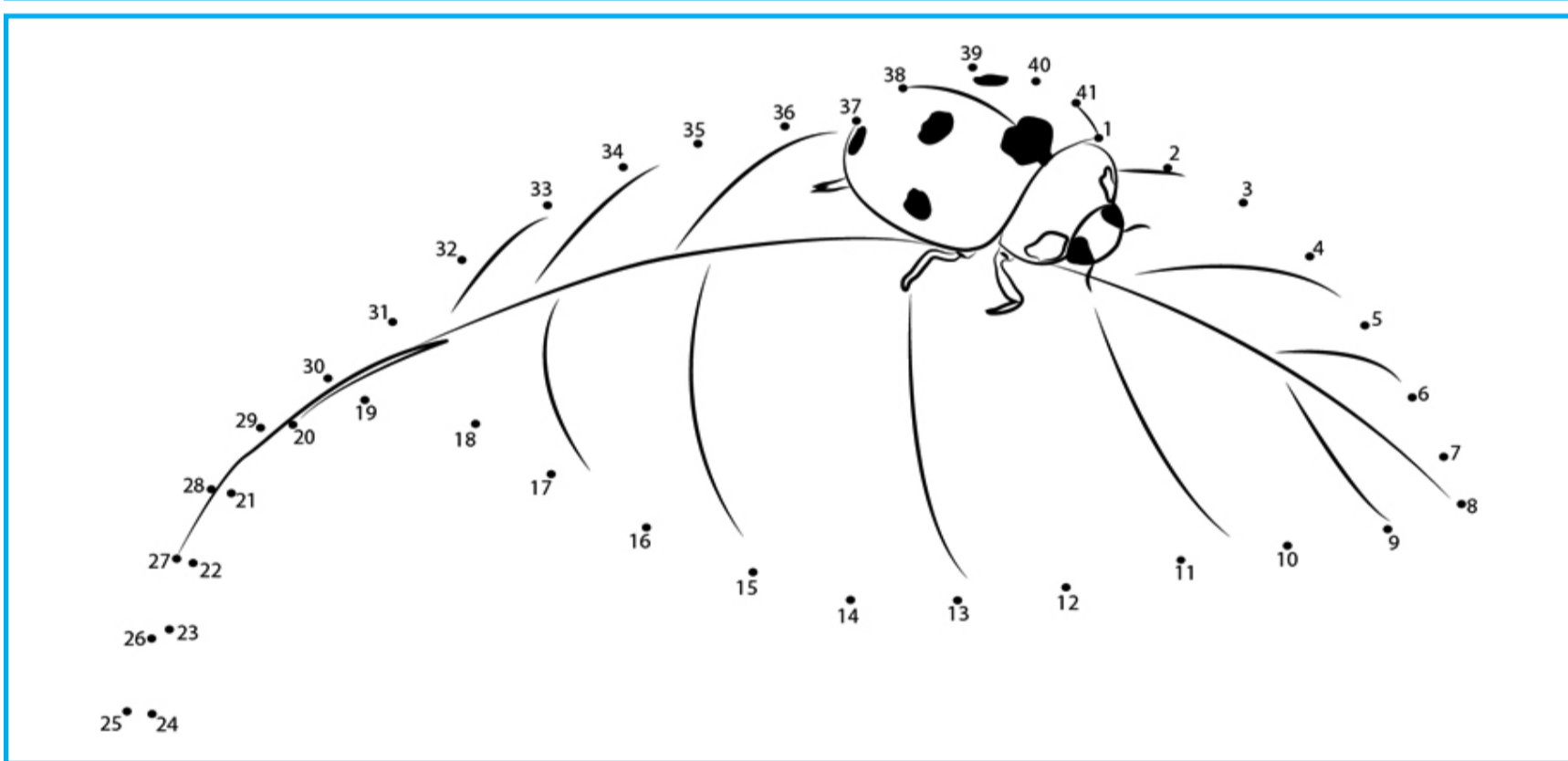
## Word Scramble

**Forest Mix-up**  
 Word Scramble

The wind blew through the forest and scrambled the trees in all directions. Can you figure out the tree names by unscrambling the letters?

TTCNHUSE	BBAABO
RPZEINU	HBCRI
FLOPAR	KEYURCE
BCEHE	OIMMAS
SAENP	YROSMACE
LJANAGOM	LKOECH
WDRDEO	TLUNWA
YERPCSS	ONGIGK
PMLA	ECUSRP
OKA	DAECR
LLIWWO	EALPM
LIEVO	CLIAL

## Join the Dot



## STAR TRACK

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**

Here's a reminder that it's OK to be you. You may feel more centered than usual, which encourages you to stand up for yourself and say the things you must to people who need to hear them. There may have been recent arguments with a partner, but those should subside now, thanks to today's serene feelings. Perhaps you've gained greater insight into the cause of the tension. Share this with the person you've been arguing with.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

It may feel as if something or someone is trying to keep you from moving ahead with your ambitious goals and aggressive nature. Cancer. At first you may resent this ball and chain attached to your ankle, but on closer examination, you'll see that this hindrance is actually a help. For now it's serving as an important reminder to slow down and do more thinking and planning before taking action.

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**

Other people are likely to be anxious to get up and moving with their plans. Libra. It might be better for you to hang back a bit and see how things pan out before you take action. Let others go across the river first to learn the best way. Do you take a boat, wade, or look for a bridge? Let someone else be the guinea pig so you'll have all the information you need to make the most prudent decision on how to proceed.

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**

Your relationships are going well from an intellectual perspective, Capricorn, but from an emotional one, you might feel like they aren't as fulfilling as you'd like. Perhaps you're letting your brain do too much of the driving. It's time to let your heart take over and have its needs be tended to for a while. As your energy shifts, so will that of people around you. Let them react however they will. Try not to be upset by the changes that follow.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**

You may have that awful feeling that you really need to get down to work yet something seems to stand square in the way of progress. Perhaps you feel like you're at a four-way stop with three other cars. Everyone is anxious to go first. You can't all go at once, yet no one knows whose turn it is. Don't put the pedal to the metal. Instead, ease slowly into the intersection and clearly signal your intentions.

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**

You're apt to feel more talkative than usual, Leo. There are many times when you may shrink from a situation in disgust or perhaps boredom. You're usually anxious to move from one scene and get on with the next. Feel free to call the shots and speak your mind. Others are more likely to listen to what you have to say, so be honest when someone comes to you with a question or situation that he or she needs help with.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**

Your heart has been active, Scorpio, and you're probably feeling the need to take charge of a certain relationship. Instead of being too hasty in your pursuit of this romance, you should probably do more planning. Look at the situation from a long-term perspective and see if the partnership is heading the way you want it to, based on how things are moving now. It could be that you're jumping ahead of the game.

**Aquarius (January 20-February 18)**

Concentrate on nurturing your needs right now instead of trying to accommodate the needs of others, Aquarius. There is a difficult tension that arises when you try to comfort someone who really doesn't want to be comforted. The best way to handle the situation is to leave the person alone and tend to your own emotions. If you're more stable and clear, you'll be better able to help others. Take this time to recharge your own batteries.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**

You're anxious to take action, Gemini, especially when it comes to matters of the heart. Be careful about acting too hastily. It's important that you and your loved one be on the same page first. You're probably ready to jump to the end of the book where everyone lives happily ever after. There's a whole story that has to play out first. Feel free to take aggressive action, but make sure that you temper it with a dash of common sense.

**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**

You may be anxious to try an uncharted path that speaks to your sense of risk and adventure, Virgo. It's important to temper these actions with realistic planning. You're much more likely to get a flat tire when you don't carry a spare. Make sure you have the proper resources to pull yourself out of any jam along the way. The old way of doing things is practical, tested, and tried and true for a reason, so don't dismiss it altogether.

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**

There is solid grounding to your emotions right now that is helping you stabilize your sensitive feelings, Sagittarius. As you become more attuned to your internal needs, you may discover that recent actions in romance and love may not have been particularly appropriate. They could have seemed satisfying at the time, but on closer examination you may discover that you were compromising in order to make it seem like everything was working the way you wanted it to.

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**

Things may roll along nicely in love and romance and then suddenly run into a snag, Pisces. Perhaps you failed to recognize an important birthday or anniversary. Perhaps you were expected to act a certain way or do something you failed to do. Approach the person you hurt honestly and apologetically. You write your own rules. Your way may differ from someone else's, but that doesn't make it better or worse.



Charge d'Affaires of the Lebanese Embassy to State of Kuwait Ambassador Jean Macaron.



Artist Svetlana Arndt, one of the jury's committee of the Lebanon History & Culture 2020 competition.

## Kuwait Times congratulates Lebanese Embassy and winners of Students Art Competition 2020

Contest held under the slogan of Lebanon History & Culture

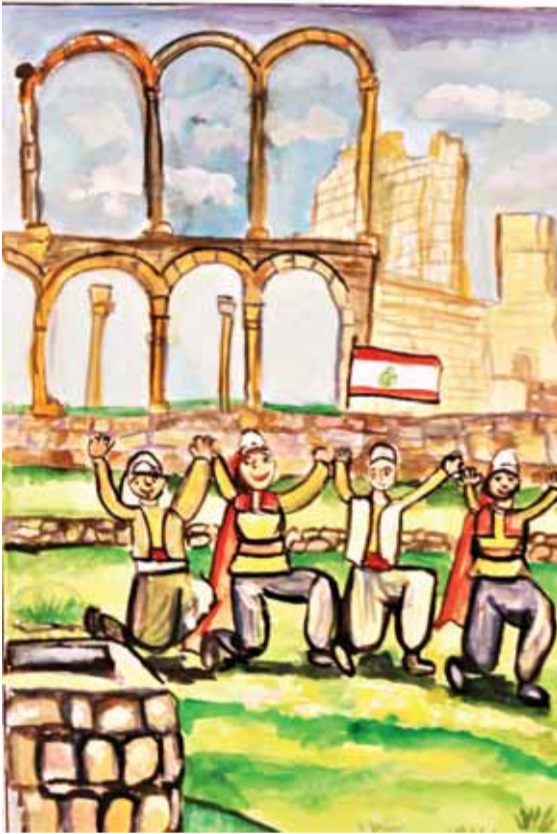
The drawing competition for students titled "Lebanon History and Culture", which ran from February 19 to March 26, concluded in Kuwait. The competition was held with the support of the Lebanese Embassy in Kuwait. The closing ceremony was held in the presence of Lebanese Ambassador to Kuwait Jean Macaron under the auspices of the ministry of education.

evening in the conference hall of the Lebanese embassy. In the presence of Chargé d'Affaires Basil Aouidat and some of the companies sponsoring the competition, Ambassador Macaron gave a speech in which he thanked the ministry of education for providing the opportunity for students in Kuwait to participate in the competition. He also thanked and appreciated the competition's committee and judges for their efforts.

"We can only express our thanks and praise for the great efforts made by school students in Kuwait, with their creativity and wonderful drawings, the range of which will reach students in Lebanon to contribute like Kuwaiti students contributed, by drawing distinguished paintings from Kuwait's civilization, heritage and colors," Macaron said.

Saad said the students were creative in their drawings and took the opportunity to express their emotions, feelings, skills and artistic abilities. The contest allowed students to affirm their self-confidence and gave them the opportunity to express their reactions, abilities, artistic sense and feelings of awareness.

"The students' work gained our appreciation, so we applaud all of you for what you have presented. We salute your teachers and parents who supported you to project your skills and abilities. Thanks to His Excellency the Lebanese Ambassador for his support in spreading a message of art to introduce Lebanon with this contest, in which more than 3,500 students of both genders participated by drawing expressive pieces about Lebanon, its civilization, heritage and colors, which were magnificent and beautiful, making it tough for the officiating committee to make a fair and just decision to decide the winning works. We thank all principals, teachers and students for your efforts, and thanks to your parents for their cooperation in drawing beautiful pieces on Lebanon History & Culture," said Saad.



Roy Asaad Marony, Armenian School winner.

The competition met with great success over the number of participants, especially as the subject of the competition relates to Lebanon, which is distinguished by multiple cultures from different civilizations that passed through it for thousands of years. It was home to the Phoenicians, conquered by the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Crusaders, Ottomans and French, and this diversity manifests itself in the population of Lebanon and its familiarity with a group of different religions, characterized by festivals, musical styles and literature.



Drawing of one of the winners.

Lebanon is famous for tourism, and the geography of the Mediterranean has played a role in shaping Lebanon's history and culture. Culture is a process of creativity - resulting in poetry, literature, painting, sculpture, theater, music, cinema and architecture.

The coordinating committee of the competition wrote: This was our message that we put in front of the students - to creatively draw distinctive paintings about Lebanon's history and culture. Unfortunately, as a result of the coronavirus outbreak in the world and Kuwait, and for the sake of the health of all, an official ban on gatherings was imposed in Kuwait.

Adnan Saad, the general coordinator of the competition, said the sponsoring companies were honored by Ambassador Macaron on Wednesday



Modi Husien Al-Azmi, Shaikhan Al-Farsi School winner.



Drawing of one of the winners.



Drawing of one of the winners.

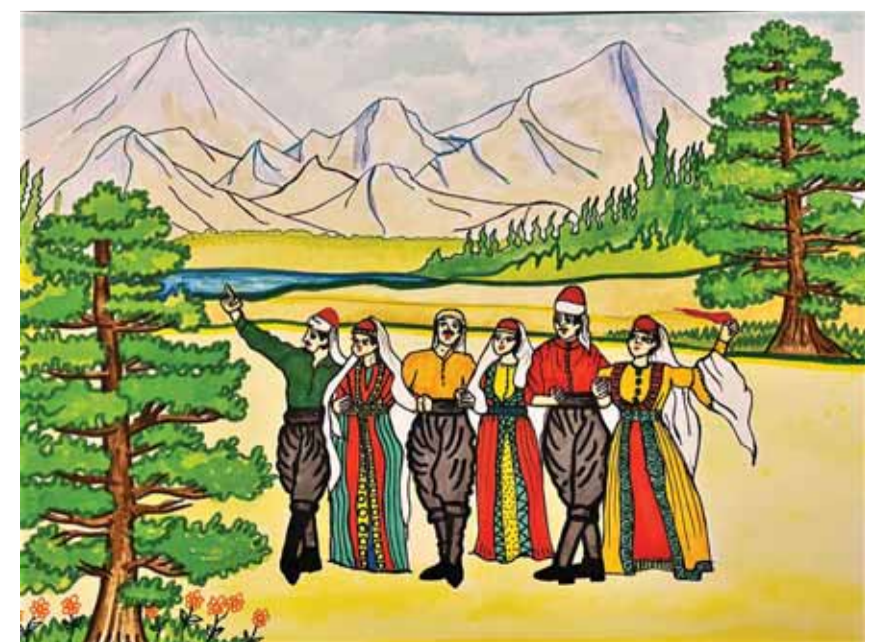
### List of the winners' names

1. MODI HUSIEN AL-AZMI, SHAIKHAN ALFARSI SCHOOL
2. JULIANA KABALAN, ARMENIAN SCHOOL
3. RWAN SAEED QARBAN, OM HANI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
4. SARA BILAL, BRITISH ENGLISH SCHOOL
5. ROY MARONY, ARMENIAN SCHOOL
6. HESSA MOHAMMED ALHAMED, MODI AL-OBIDI SCHOOL
7. ROWIDA EYHAB, NEW PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
8. ATAA AHMED KHAIRI, GULF ENGLISH SCHOOL
9. MELONIC KOURANI, BAYAN BILINGUAL SCHOOL
10. ANFALBASSEM BUHAMED, ANFAL TALENTED GROUP
11. RAWAN SADEQ AL-FODARI, ANFAL TALENTED GROUP
12. WADHA KHALED AL-NOWEH, ANFAL TALENTED GROUP
13. HABIB ABDALMAJED AL-AWADI, ALKHARAFI CENTER SPECIAL NEEDS
14. ZAINAB MAHMOUD TAHER, KHALIFA SCHOOL

15. ELFA EID, KHALIFA SCHOOL
16. LEON MARIAN PRESAD, CARMEL SCHOOL
17. ZAINAB RABIE NAZZAL, GULF ENGLISH SCHOOL
18. SARA AHMED ABDULLA, FAILAKA SCHOOL
19. AHMED ALI, HOPE SCHOOL
20. HAMAD AL-AJMI, HOPE SCHOOL
21. AMINA SARFARAD, CARMEL SCHOOL
22. JUDI BAITIE, ENGLISH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
23. QAIS MAHMOOD, NEW PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
24. ALICE BOYAJIAN, ARMENIAN SCHOOL
25. MALAK AHMED, NEW PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
26. GHALA SALEM AL-HAJRY, BARAKA BENT ALNOEMAN SCHOOL
27. RAYAN KHALED AL-AZMI, FAILAKA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
28. RAYDEN ZEKA CORDA, CARMEL SCHOOL
29. GRACE BITTAR, GULF ENGLISH SCHOOL



Qais Mahmood, New Pakistan International School winner.



Sara Ahmed Abdulla, Failaka School winner.

Lifestyle | Features



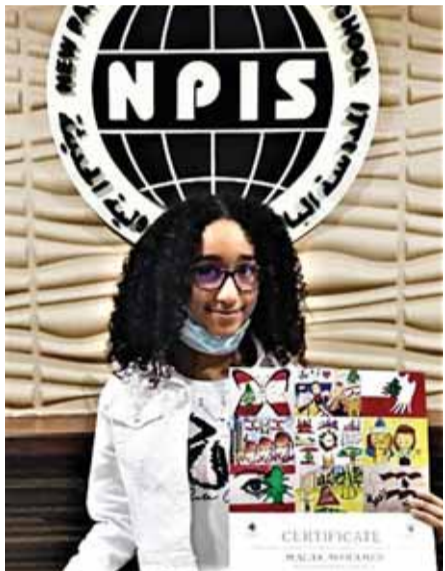
Attaa Ahmed Khairi, Gulf English School winner with her family.



Anfal Group



Roy Marony, Armenian School Winner



Malak Ahmed, New Pakistan International School



Leon Marian Presad, Carmel School



Rayden Zeka Corda, Carmel School winner



Rowida Eyhab, New Pakistan International School winner.



Sara Ahmed Abdulla, Failaka School winner.

## Ancient Golan rock art sheds light on mysterious culture

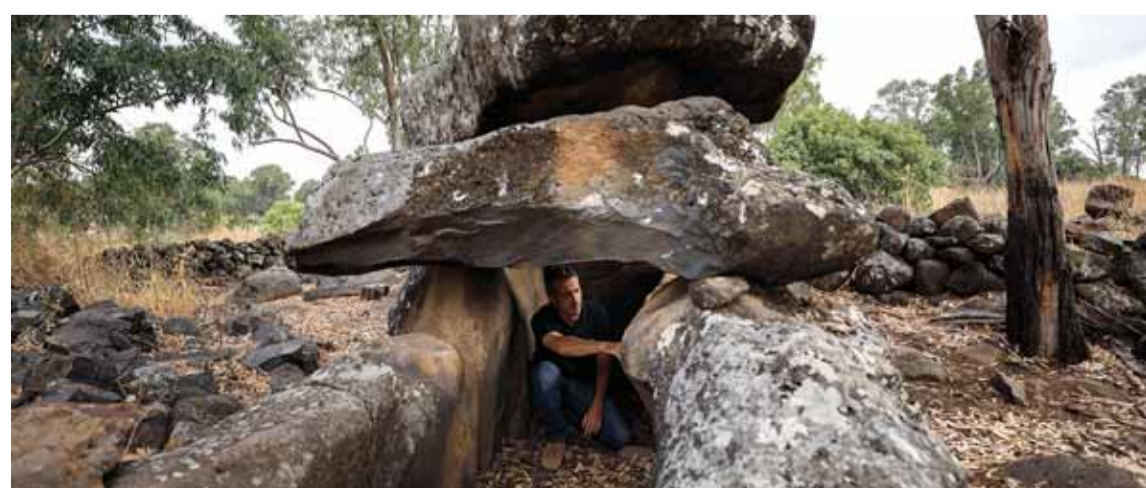
The chance discovery of lines carved into the boulders of an ancient tomb in what is now the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights could offer new insight into an enigmatic culture that thrived thousands of years ago. In a small clearing in the Yehudiya nature reserve, between yellow weeds and shaded by eucalyptus trees, huge dark basalt boulders and slabs form a small roofed chamber that opens to the east. The megalithic structure is one of the thousands of so-called dolmens scattered around northern Israel and the wider region, burial tombs erected some 4,000-4,500 years ago in the Intermediate Bronze Era.



A picture shows engravings in a rock bearing images of animals inside a dolmen from the intermediate Bronze age, in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights.

Today, on the plateau captured in 1967 from Syria, with Israeli soldiers securing the frontier just 23 kilometres (14 miles) away, scientists seek to shed light on the region's distant past. The identity and beliefs of those who built the monuments remain largely unknown. But a recent serendipitous finding of rock art might change that. About two years ago, "when one of the rangers here in the park walked her daily walk, she looked inside and saw something carved in the walls," recalled Uri Berger, an archaeologist with the Israel Antiquities Authority. The ranger contacted the IAA, and "when we looked inside we saw this is not just lines carved or some stains on the wall, this is rock art," Berger said.

The lines form the shapes of six horned animals of varying sizes, three facing east and three facing west, with two of them—likely a male and female—directly facing each other. Another horned animal is carved into the interior of one panel, facing the other six. The zoomorphic depictions, hidden in plain sight since study of the dolmens began 200 years ago, were the first to be discovered in the region and a major development for Berger and his research partner, Gonen Sharon.



Uri Berger, a regional archaeologist for the Israel Antiquities Authority, sits inside a dolmen from the intermediate Bronze age, in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights.—AFP photos

### 'Weird shapes'

Sharon, an archaeology professor at the Tel-Hai college in northern Israel, is responsible for a previous landmark discovery. Just north of the nature reserve, outside the northern Galilee kibbutz Shamir, Sharon was hiking with his children in 2012 on a field with some 400 dolmens spread across it. Crawling into the shade of the largest monument, Sharon sat down, looked up at the huge slab roof of the dome and said he noticed "weird shapes" that didn't look like natural formations. "It looked like someone made them," he recalled. The markings were found to be a series of man-made carvings resembling tridents. "It turned out this was the first artwork done in the context of dolmens in the Middle East," Sharon said.

The Shamir carvings, unnoticed by generations of researchers, reinvigorated archaeological study in the area. One of the sites revisited was inside an industrial zone near Kiryat Shmona, a town northwest of Shamir, where three small megalithic structures that survived the zone's development a few decades ago are surrounded by circles of stones. On the relatively rounded capstone of the largest dolmen there, two sets of short parallel lines are carved into each side of the rock, with a longer line carved below creating the image of closed eyes and a grinning mouth facing the sky. "The grooves don't seem to be functional," said Sharon. "To us they look like a face."

### 'Letter from the past'

The stone monuments have "altered the landscape" of northern Israel, said Berger. But their prominence has also made them targets for antiquities theft, which largely stripped remains that could provide clues to their creators. Small pieces of ceramics, metal spearheads and daggers, bits of jewellery and beads and some bones are found at the sites from time to time, Sharon said. "But it's very rare to find" anything, and such finds are very scattered. "We know very little of the actual culture of the people who built them." With the discovery of the art carved into the stones, "we can say something that is much more than what we knew for 200 years," said Berger.

The rock art findings—published in a recent article by Sharon and Berger in the journal *Asian Archaeology*—display the animal drawings in this ancient culture for the first time, and present the larger pattern of visual presentation in the region. Berger said the drawings raise new questions about the people who created them. "Why those animals? Why in these dolmens and not others? What made this one special?" The slow but steady accumulation of artistic finds brings scholars "closer and closer" to the subjects of their research, "to the civilisation you're looking to know about," Berger said. To Sharon, "this is like a letter from the past starting to suggest what was the world of culture and symbolism beyond just building and erecting very large stones."—AFP



This photograph shows life-sized sculptures of characters from the "Predator" film series made of scrap metal parts at the Ban Hun Lek museum in Ang Thong, some 100km north of Bangkok.—AFP photos



Tourists looking at a life-sized Spiderman sculpture made of scrap metal parts.



Children playing in a car made of scrap metal parts.



Tourists looking at a life-sized Transformer sculpture made of scrap metal parts.



Children playing in a car made of scrap metal parts.

## Thai metal workshop dazzles tourists with movie-inspired creations

Towering Transformers, life-sized Marvel superheroes and extraterrestrial lifeforms—a "House of Steel Robots" in Thailand has made a name for itself by transforming scrap metal into dazzling sculptures inspired by Hollywood blockbusters. Ban Hun Lek, an hour's drive north of Bangkok, has become a popular weekend spot for families eager for Instagram selfies against a backdrop that looks plucked from the silver screen. Visitors to Phairote Thanomwong's welding workshop gaze up at eight-metre-high (26 feet) sculptures modelled after the robots of the Transformers franchise and a jet-black King Kong hewn together from old car parts.

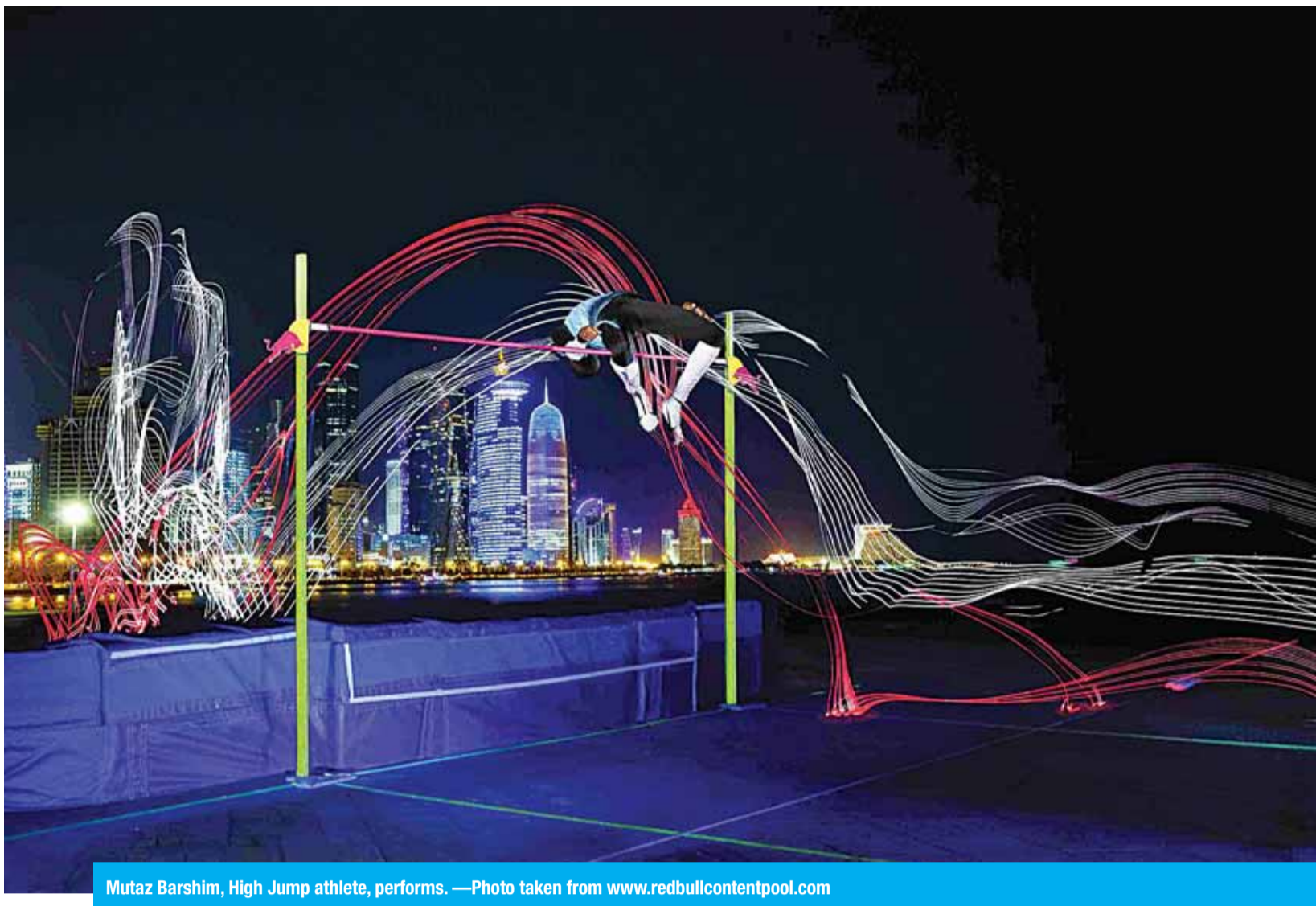
Phairote opened his welding workshop 20 years ago and eventually converted its front section into a gallery for curious tourists. "It was just a

hobby at first," he tells AFP. "When I was a child, I liked mechanics a lot... so I made what I liked into my work." Every sculpture is built using scrap metal and recyclables, which makes each creation unique, he said. A one-metre-high piece sells for up to 30,000 baht (\$950), and the majority of his customers are overseas buyers.

Since the coronavirus pandemic spread around the world and sent the global economy into a tailspin, Phairote says his art exports have been put on pause. Still, the towering metal brontosaurus at Ban Hun Lek, which can be seen from the main freeway, draws dozens of Thai visitors each weekend. "If they want to see something amazing, they should come here," Phairote says with a laugh.—AFP

## Sports

Photo of the day



Mutaz Barshim, High Jump athlete, performs. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Coach Rennie not committing beyond 2023 World Cup

**SYDNEY:** New Wallabies coach Dave Rennie has hinted he may not stay after the 2023 World Cup, with the New Zealander suggesting it would be better to have an Australian in charge in the future.

The 56-year-old took charge this month after seeing out his commitments with the Glasgow Warriors. He replaced Michael Cheika who departed following the country's disappointing 2019 World Cup quarter-final exit.

No other Australian coach was available or considered up to the task, with Rennie appointed to lift the Wallabies from their lowly seventh world ranking and help groom a successor. "I'm not certain," he told The Australian newspaper yesterday when asked if he planned to be around for the 2027 World Cup, which Australia are keen to host.

"The ideal scenario is that the next coach is Australian and there needs to be some thought around that. If there is someone ready to go after the (2023) World Cup, that may be in the best interests of Australian rugby."

"You can't think too far ahead in this game," added Rennie, who is on deal that takes him to the next World Cup. "I'm fully committed to the (2023) World Cup but what happens beyond that ... there has to be an emphasis around identifying and developing other coaches to coach Australia."

The Wallabies have almost exclusively had Australians in charge, with New Zealander Robbie Deans the last foreigner at the helm, for five years from 2008. With the coronavirus pandemic causing chaos with the international calendar, Rennie is still not sure when his first game will be.

In the meantime, he has been closely following Super Rugby AU, the domestic Australian competition that replaced the southern hemisphere tournament after it was shutdown because of COVID-19 in March. —AFP

## Broad boosts England's victory bid in second West Indies Test

## England are fielding a revamped attack in this match

**MANCHESTER:** Stuart Broad revived England's hopes of a series-levelling victory in the second Test with a trio of new-ball wickets even as the West Indies avoided the follow-on at Old Trafford on Sunday.

The veteran paceman marked his England return with a spell of three wickets for one run in 14 balls as the West Indies were dismissed for 287 on the fourth day in reply to England's first innings 469-9 declared.

England, looking to draw level in a three-match contest despite Saturday's total washout, were 37-2 at stumps — an overall lead of 219. "It's going to be a good day tomorrow (Monday)," Broad, controversially rested from the West Indies' four-wicket win in the first Test at Southampton last week, told Sky Sports.

"We need to set it up in the first 45 minutes, an hour," added Broad, who reckoned England would want a lead of at least 270. "In a dream world we get two new balls tomorrow. 'We've given ourselves a chance of winning this game, which is a great position.'"

England opened their second innings with Ben Stokes, 16 not out after top-scoring with 176 on Friday, and Jos Buttler in the hope of quick runs rather than regular first-wicket duo Dom Sibley and Rory Burns.

Sibley made 120 in the first innings but took nearly eight hours to reach three figures. Buttler, however, fell for a three-ball nought when he played on to Kemar Roach. Zak Crawley, in on a king pair, was then bowled by Roach for 11, with England captain Joe Root

eight not out at stumps.

Earlier, West Indies opener Kraigg Brathwaite made 75 and Shamarh Brooks 68 in the second match of a campaign that marks world cricket's return from the coronavirus lockdown. Roston Chase's 51, which followed the off-spinning all-rounder's 5-172 in England's first innings, then took the West Indies to the 270 they needed to avoid the follow-on.

Play resumed Sunday in bright sunshine with Wisden Trophy holders West Indies looking for their first series win in England since 1988. Brathwaite and Brooks shared an attractive fourth-wicket stand of 76.

But Braithwaite's hopes of following his 134 against England at Headingley three years ago with another hundred ended when he was caught and bowled by Stokes. It had taken Root until the 51st over of the innings to bowl his star all-rounder.

Stokes kept pounding the ball in before the paceman was rewarded with Brathwaite's wicket in his 10th successive over. The West Indies, who had been 242-4, lost their last six wickets for 45 runs in 16.4 overs.

## BROAD DEALS WITH PRESSURE

Broad did the bulk of the damage even without the adrenaline rush of a crowd roaring him on in this behind closed doors series.

He had Brooks plumb lbw before bowling Jermaine Blackwood, who made a match-clinching 95 in the first Test, for a duck with one that kept low. Shane Dowrich also fell for nought, lbw



## Buttler plan fails

## Pakistan's Abid Ali cleared of concussion

**MANCHESTER:** Pakistan opener Abid Ali has been cleared of concussion after being hit on the helmet Sunday while playing in an intra-squad match on the tour of England, a team statement said.

Abid was fielding at forward short leg on the third day of four at Derby when he was struck by a Haider Ali flick off Mohammad Abbas.

He will now miss Sunday's fourth and final day as a precaution although the team doctor said he had shown no sign of concussion even after a scan.

"Abid is absolutely fine and will be available to resume training on Wednesday following Tuesday's rest day," Dr Sohail Saleem said in a Pakistan Cricket Board statement.

"He underwent a precautionary

CT scan which has also returned normal (findings)."

But left-handed batsman Khushdil Shah, a Twenty20 specialist, has been ruled out for up to three weeks after suffering a fracture in his left thumb while batting during a training session on Saturday.

Khushdil, not playing in the ongoing intra-squad game, won't be available for the second four-day practice match, which also takes place in the Midlands town of Derby from July 24-27.

Pakistan are set to face England in a three-Test series that begins at Old Trafford on August 5 before concluding with two matches at south coast county Hampshire's Ageas Bowl headquarters.

They return to Old Trafford for three Twenty20 internationals with England at the Manchester ground from August 28 to September 1.

England are currently playing the West Indies in the ongoing second Test at Old Trafford as part of a three-match series that marks the return of international cricket from the coronavirus lockdown. —AFP

## Hamilton to push F1 bosses for better anti-racism effort

**BUDAPEST:** Lewis Hamilton intends to write to Formula One's bosses in a bid to create a more co-ordinated anti-racism stance and improve the sport's pre-race 'taking a knee' ceremony. Speaking at the Hungarian Grand Prix, the six-time champion said he will write an email to urge them to improve communications and do a better job.

"I think they can give us more time," he said, referring to Sunday's shambolic and rushed pre-race gesture by a group of drivers. "So, I'll probably send an email over the next couple of days — and try and co-ordinate with them to create a better way."

"They do want to do it... I guess there's not good enough communication." Hamilton revealed that there were clear rifts among the drivers and a lack of planning for the ceremony that is now a part of many other major sports events. He said that the shambolic and rushed ceremony that took place ahead of Sunday's race was not mentioned in the official drivers' briefing meeting and said the chairman of the Grand Prix Drivers Association (GPDA) Romain Grosjean did not believe it was necessary.

He is expected to make contact with Formula One's chief executive Chase Carey, who has donated one million dollars of his own money to the sport's battle for diversity and against racism, and the president of the ruling body, the International Motoring Federation (FIA). Hamilton made clear his disappointment and frustration at F1's



MANCHESTER: West Indies' Shannon Gabriel is bowled by England's Chris Woakes on the fourth day of the second Test cricket match between England and the West Indies at Old Trafford in Manchester, northwest England. —AFP

to Broad, who finished with 3-66 in 23 overs while fellow seamer Chris Woakes wrapped up the innings on his way to 3-42 from 21.

"I felt under a bit of pressure," said Broad, who had revealed his frustration and anger at being left out at Southampton during a mid-match interview. "You do feel an added mental pressure to hit your straps and it's different to bowling in a net," added Broad, second only to James Anderson in England's all-time list of leading Test wicket-takers.

England are fielding a revamped attack this match. Having already rested Anderson and Mark Wood, they had to omit Jofra Archer after the fast bowler admitted making an unauthorised trip home following the first Test that breached this series' bio-secure health regulations.

But Archer was in the nets on Sunday after the England and Wales Cricket Board announced Saturday that, following a disciplinary hearing, he would be available for the third Test at Old Trafford starting on July 24. —AFP

failings in presenting a united front by the drivers in the anti-racism drive. On Sunday, a cluster of drivers took the knee in parc ferme in the pit-lane, but several arrived late, some stood and some did not turn up at all. Hamilton said: "He (Grosjean) doesn't think it's important to do it - he's one of them that thinks it was done once and that's all we need to do..."

## LEADERSHIP LACKING

"So I tried to speak to him about what the problem is, that it's not going away and we have to continue to fight for it. I think this time he didn't mention anything in the drivers' briefing and neither did Sebastian (Vettel, also a director of the GPDA).

"Sebastian and I messaged each other and he stressed, as did I, the importance that we continue to do it." He added that the sport lacked leadership on the issues. "From the top, they need to come out with 'hey, this is what we're going to do guys and we want you all to be a part of it. Currently there is none of that."

"I try not to lean so much on the drivers because I don't want them to feel it's me that's doing it - and because, in some places, that might be why some are not doing it ... because it's why I'm doing it. "But I don't think it's being taken seriously. I think there are perhaps people who have not grown up around it so they don't understand it."

"And there are those that say 'because of that it doesn't affect me'. I have heard those comments - 'It doesn't do anything for me, so why should I do it?' "It's not about me, it's not about you. There are people out there who are experiencing discrimination, that's what we're fighting for — we're trying to change in organisations."

"I'll get in touch with Formula 1 this week. I will speak to Jean (Todd) because no-one else is going to do it." Hamilton hopes that all 19 drivers will agree to kneel with him by the end of the season. "I gave a lot of energy in Austria to try and convince a couple of the drivers, and it's a battle, but I think what's important is the ones that are doing it, the understanding, it's fantastic. —AFP

Sports

# Real Madrid draw relegates Leganes and Messi claims golden boot

## Real Sociedad, Granada take last two Europa League spots

**MADRID:** Newly-crowned La Liga champions Real Madrid dropped points for the first time since the season's restart on Sunday in a dramatic 2-2 draw that was not enough to save Leganes from relegation.

Leganes, who needed to beat Madrid and hope Celta Vigo failed to win against bottom club Espanyol, almost pulled off a miraculous escape but could not find a winner at the Butarque. The draw means a rotated Madrid side surrendered the perfect record of 11 victories out of 11 since Spanish football came back from its coronavirus-enforced suspension while Karim Benzema fell short of Lionel Messi in the battle for the golden boot.

Gareth Bale was left out of Madrid's squad completely for what might have been his last La Liga fixture for the club. Zinedine Zidane said afterwards it was a "technical decision". Messi had earlier scored twice in a 5-0 win over Alaves, enough for him to claim a record seventh 'Pichichi Trophy' and to give Barcelona a boost ahead of the return leg of their last 16 Champions League tie against Napoli next month.

The double took Messi's league tally to 25 goals for the season and put him four clear of Benzema, who endured a quiet night against Leganes, with Sergio Ramos and Marco Asensio on target.

The odds were always against Leganes but a miracle looked possible when Roger Assale equalised

with 12 minutes left to find a winner. But chances were missed and a penalty appeal was turned down, meaning they join Real Mallorca and Espanyol in Segunda next season.

"The lads are broken," said Leganes coach Javier Aguirre. "We had it within our grasp." Real Sociedad and Granada, meanwhile, took the last two Europa League spots, with Getafe and Valencia missing out. Villarreal had already secured fifth place.

Granada thrashed Athletic Bilbao 4-0 and qualification caps an incredible season for the club, who were only promoted from Segunda last term.

"Our aim was to stay up so to finish in the Europa League is a dream for us," said Granada striker Roberto Soldado.

Real Sociedad snuck into sixth place after Adnan Januzaj's 87th-minute goal clinched a 1-1 draw away at Atletico Madrid.

### Barca believe in Euro glory

Messi finishes as La Liga's top scorer for a record seventh time, pulling clear of Telmo Zarra's six while playing for Athletic Bilbao in the forties and fifties. "I'm never that bothered about the individual prizes and I would have preferred it to have come with a league title like before," added Messi.

Setien said on Saturday he still believes Barcelona, at their best, can win the Champions League next month.

And a sparkling attacking display certainly gave a glimpse of what is possible, even if Napoli in the last



**LEGANES:** Leganes' Greek midfielder Dimitris Stovos (L) and Leganes' Spanish defender Unai Bustinza (R) challenge Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior during the Spanish league football match Club Deportivo Leganes SAD against Real Madrid CF at the Estadio Municipal Butarque in Leganes. —AFP

16, and potentially Bayern Munich in the quarter-finals, will offer a completely different test.

There could be fitness concerns for Setien too ahead of the second leg against Napoli. Clement Lenglet hobbled off with what looked like a groin problem, with Antoine Griezmann and Samuel Umtiti

already out injured.

But Setien has increasingly been putting his faith in youth and the 20-year-old Puig impressed again in midfield while 21-year-old Ronald Araujo gave a composed, albeit largely unchallenged, performance in defence. —AFP

## Pearson sacked as Watford manager

**LONDON:** Nigel Pearson was sacked as Watford manager on Sunday with just two games left in the club's fight for Premier League survival. Pearson has been replaced by Hayden Mullins as interim boss for relegation-threatened Watford's final matches against Manchester City and Arsenal.

"Watford FC confirms that Nigel Pearson has left the club with immediate effect," a statement read. "Hayden Mullins, with Graham Stack as his assistant, will take up the position of interim head coach for the Hornets' final two Premier League fixtures of the 2019/20 season."

Former Crystal Palace midfielder Mullins had been working as Watford's Under-23s coach. Pearson is the third manager to be sacked by

the Hornets this season, following the departures of Javi Gracia and Quique Sanchez Flores.

Watford are in 17th place, three points above the relegation zone ahead of Tuesday's visit from City, with third-from-bottom Aston Villa having two games left and second-from-bottom Bournemouth just one.

The decision to axe Pearson is a big surprise after the 56-year-old hauled Watford off the bottom of the table following his arrival in December. After taking over with the club nine points adrift, he oversaw a resurgence that included a 3-0 win over Premier League champions Liverpool and a victory against Manchester United.

Recent wins against Norwich and Newcastle had given Watford breathing space over the bottom three. But British media reports claimed Pearson was dismissed following a heated discussion with Watford owner Gino Pozzo after Friday's dismal 3-1 defeat at fellow strugglers West Ham.

It is believed Pearson learned of his sacking at Watford's training ground on Sunday lunchtime, with the players



**LONDON:** Watford's English head coach Nigel Pearson (2nd R) speaks to his players during a drinks break in the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Watford at The London Stadium, in east London. —AFP

said to be shocked by the decision. Watford's board were thought to be keen on Pearson's assistant Craig Shakespeare taking over for the last two matches, but the former Leicester boss is reported to have refused out of loyalty to his manager.

Only last week, Pearson had spoken of his desire to extend the short-

term deal he signed with Watford last year. "Both Craig and myself, when we joined, our intention was to do what we can this year to retain our status and then go from there," Pearson had told Sky Sports. "I've really enjoyed working here and yeah I would love to stay if the circumstances are right and all parties are in agreement." —AFP

November, when Bale celebrated behind a banner that read "Wales. Golf. Madrid. In that Order", indicating his list of priorities. Bale insisted it was a joke, not initiated by him, but Madrid's fans expressed their disgust with screeching whistles when Bale came on their next game.

### UNIONISTAS BREACH MADRID

Their fans stayed long after the final whistle to sing and applaud, even though Unionistas de Salamanca had just lost in the Copa del Rey. The feeling was of a success after watching their team, launched in 2013 by its supporters, go toe-to-toe with Real Madrid. Unionistas sat 56 places below their opponents and while an incredible night ended in 3-1 defeat, Alvaro Romero's goal will never be forgotten.

### SILENT DERBY IN SEVILLE

The one match most synonymous with fans in Spain was the first to kick off without any as La Liga returned from its three-month suspension with Sevilla against Real Betis. The usually hot, fiery, frenetic Seville derby became the test case for Spanish football in front of empty stands as the game began to adjust to the new normal after the coronavirus pandemic.

### BENZEMA'S VALENCIA VOLLEY

Benzema's volley in Real Madrid's 3-0 win over Valencia last month was another contender for goal of the season, a brilliant piece of skill followed almost instantly by a stunning finish. He feathered the ball mid-air with one foot while simultaneously lifting it over defender Hugo Guillamon, before smashing it with the other into the top corner.

### ASPAS SINKS BARCELONA

Barcelona's title challenge included many stumbling blocks but the moment that turned the tide was Iago Aspas' curling free-kick that earned Celta Vigo a last-gasp point in June. Aspas exploited Barca's poorly positioned wall by bending the ball inside the near post and celebrated with his shirt off while yelling at empty stands.

### OCAMPOS HEROICS IN GOAL

Sevilla's Lucas Ocampos scored one goal as a winger and saved another as a goalkeeper while preventing Eibar's goalkeeper from scoring an equaliser. After putting Sevilla in front against Eibar this month, Ocampos took the gloves for the final few minutes due to an injury to Tomas Vaclik. Eibar keeper Marko Dmitrovic ventured up for a late corner and almost scored, only for Ocampos to make a crucial save during an incredible end to the match. —AFP

## The sporting weekend in quotes

**PARIS:** Who said what in sport this weekend: "Round One was multiple different punches that I wasn't ready for. But I have refocused and we've just been on point here right through the weekend."

— World champion Lewis Hamilton explains how he bounced back from defeat in the season-opening Austria Grand Prix to win two races in a row, including Sunday's race in Hungary.

"It wasn't how I wanted it, of course, but the mechanics did an amazing job to fix the car so to pay them back with second place is great."

— Red Bull driver Max Verstappen after finishing a remarkable second in the Hungarian Grand Prix after his team repaired severe damage to his car's suspension on the grid after the Dutchman hit a barrier on the warmup lap.

"It's the most beautiful day of my life." — An ecstatic Fabio Quartararo after the 21-year-old became the first Frenchman to win a MotoGP since 1999. His victory in the season-opening Spanish Grand Prix marks him out as the main challenger to current world champion Marc Marquez.

"We have a final to play this season and we will try and win a title for this club because this club deserves to win a trophy," Luiz told BT Sport.

— Arsenal defender David Luiz after the Gunners stunned holders Manchester City 2-0 at a spectator-less Wembley to reach the 21st FA Cup final of their history.

"I'm never that bothered about the individual prizes and I would have preferred it to have come with a league title like before."

— Lionel Messi after assuring himself of the 'Pichichi' trophy for La Liga's top scorer for the seventh time with a double in a 5-0 win at lowly Alaves. — AFP

## 10 best moments of the Spanish football season

**MADRID:** La Liga's longest season ended on Sunday after 12 months and an 11-game sprint finish, with Real Madrid being crowned champions for only the third time in 12 years.

Here, AFP Sport takes a look at 10 of the best moments from the domestic campaign in Spain:

### ADURIZ' PERFECT START

La Liga's goal of the season was arguably its first as the 38-year-old Ariz Aduriz delivered a dramatic 89th-minute winner against Barcelona with an incredible bicycle kick. Aduriz had announced this would be his final season before retiring and it was the perfect start to a long farewell.

### FATI EXPLODES INTO LIFE

Ansu Fati was 16 years and 304 days old in August when he became the youngest ever player to score a goal for Barcelona. The forward's header, six minutes after coming on against Osasuna, sent Spanish football into a frenzy and two weeks later he scored again while becoming Barca's youngest ever starting player.

### CLASICO OVERSHADOWED BY PROTESTS

For the first time in 17 years, a Clasico ended goalless but the match was overshadowed by what Catalan independence protests outside. Fans saw smoke drift over the stands while outside fires burned, objects were thrown and riot police tried to restore order. This was the Clasico that was postponed in October due to unrest in Catalonia but two months later, tension remained.

### MESSI'S EIBAR QUADRUPLE

There was talk of a drought as Messi went without a goal in four games but he made up for lost time by scoring four goals against Eibar in March. Messi hit a hat-trick within 40 minutes, which was his 36th La Liga treble, and his 'poker' took the Argentinian to 20 goals against Eibar in just 11 league matches.

### BALE PUNISHED FOR WALES JIBE

Gareth Bale's relationship with Real Madrid has long been complicated but matters came to a head in

## Inter held at Roma to leave Juventus closer to Serie A title

**MILAN:** Inter Milan missed a chance to keep the pressure on Juventus after being held 2-2 at Roma on Sunday, leaving the way clear for the Turin giants to close in on a ninth consecutive Serie A title.

Romelu Lukaku's penalty two minutes from time rescued a point for Antonio Conte's Inter, who are second, five points behind Juventus. Juve can open up an eight-point lead on the top of the table when they host fourth-placed Lazio today.

Stefan De Vrij had got Inter off the mark at the Stadio Olimpico when he headed home an Alexis Sanchez corner after 14 minutes. But Roma captain Edin Dzeko set up Leonardo Spinazzola for the equaliser in first half stoppage time and was again involved when Henrikh Mkhitaryan got the second in the 57th minute. Lukaku came off the bench and scored from the spot late after Spinazzola fouled Victor Moses. It was a stalemate which does little to help either team, and boosts Juventus' chances of extending their record Serie A run.

"We have to get used to playing these big games with so much pressure, which is something Inter have lost in recent years," said Conte, whose side have not won Serie A since 2010, when they won the treble under Jose Mourinho.

"I can't blame my players for anything, today we faced a team in good shape," he continued. "Our team is doing excellent things. Beyond the second place, we are into the Champions League." Inter cannot be caught by Roma, who are fifth and nine points adrift of the Champions League places, 14 behind Inter with four matches to play.

They are one point ahead of third-placed Atalanta, who have also qualified for Europe's top competition after Inter's draw in the Italian capital. Napoli coach Gennaro Gattuso was unhappy with the league's tight schedule as his side beat Udinese 2-1.

Napoli are two points behind Roma in sixth after Matteo Politano blasted in the winner five minutes into injury time to snatch all three points. "It was an important victory even if now we're playing another sport which worries me," said Gattuso.

"This is not football. Playing every three days and without fans is something different, the players are not robots." Gattuso's side are out of the running for the Champions League next season but are preparing to meet Barcelona in the second leg of their last 16 tie in this year's edition, with both sides locked at 1-1.

### SPAL RETURN TO SERIE B

At the bottom of the table Brescia, in 19th, won 2-1 to condemn SPAL to a return to Serie B after two seasons in the top flight. In another relegation dogfight Genoa beat Lecce 2-1 to move four points clear of the southerners who occupy the final relegation spot.

Genoa are four points behind Torino, who lost 2-0 at Fiorentina. City rivals Sampdoria are on the brink of securing Serie A survival after staging a thrilling comeback from two goals down to win 3-2 at Parma. — AFP

## 14 Broad boosts England's victory bid in second West Indies Test



## 15 Real Madrid draw relegates Leganes and Messi claims golden boot



## 15 Pearson sacked as Watford manager



LONDON: Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder Bruno Fernandes (2L) scores a penalty during the English FA Cup semi-final football match between Manchester United and Chelsea at Wembley Stadium in London. — AFP

# De Gea blunders put Chelsea in FA Cup final

## Chelsea will face London rivals Arsenal in the final

LONDON: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer admitted David De Gea's place is not guaranteed after the goalkeeper endured another error-strewn display in Manchester United's FA Cup semi-final defeat to Chelsea.

Chelsea will face London rivals Arsenal in the final on August 1 thanks to a pair of embarrassing blunders from De Gea in United's 3-1 loss at Wembley on Sunday. The Spaniard's nightmare season hit a new low as he was at fault when Olivier Giroud's shot trickled over the line late in the first half. And De Gea made an even worse mistake moments after the interval when he allowed Mason Mount's shot to evade his weak attempted save. Harry Maguire's own goal was also partly down to De Gea's slow reactions as United lost for the first time in 20 games in all competitions despite Bruno Fernandes' late penalty.

"He knows he should save that 100 times out of 100 but that's football for you," Solskjaer said. "I can't speak for David De Gea's confidence but he is mentally very strong. I made the decision to play him and mentally he was ready for it."

Asked if De Gea would be replaced by Sergio Romero when United return to action against West Ham in Wednesday's crucial Premier League clash, Solskjaer would not rule out dropping his star.

"Obviously, everyone has to perform. Everyone has a chance every time we perform to stake a claim in the team," he said. "David knows he should have saved the second goal, but that's done now and we have to look forward to Wednesday."

"It's hard for a keeper to make amends. David showed his character in the rest of the game with a few good saves." De Gea's future at United is sure to be scrutinised given the fine form of the club's on-loan keeper Dean Henderson during his spell at Sheffield United this season.

Solskjaer has already labelled Henderson a future England number one and it would be no surprise if he is back at Old Trafford to challenge De

Gea for the keeper's jersey next season. While the spotlight was on De Gea, Chelsea were by far the better team as they reached the FA Cup final for the first time since they last lifted the trophy in 2018.

United had beaten Chelsea three times this season, but Lampard had the last laugh. "To win a semi is a great thing, but to win a final is the thing," Lampard said. "We don't want to get too far ahead of ourselves but we can certainly enjoy the performance and the result." It is obviously right up there because of the size of the game and quality of the opponent."

### COMEDY OF ERRORS

United, who started with Paul Pogba and Anthony Martial on the bench, looked out of sync after switching to a back three formation and Solskjaer said: "You always question your decisions."

"Chelsea had an extra 48 hours rest, that's just a fact but it's no excuse. We lost concentration and that was disappointing. We were a little too late in some situations and the second goal was very avoidable."

Chelsea took the lead deep into first half stoppage-time with Giroud's fourth goal in his last five games. Anticipating Azpilicueta's low cross perfectly, Giroud made an astute run in front of Victor Lindelof and flicked his close-range shot past the slow to react De Gea with the outside of his foot.

If that was bad from De Gea, there was even worse to come one minute after half-time. It was a comedy of errors from United as Brandon Williams gifted possession to Mount in midfield. Advancing unchecked by United's back-peddalling defence, Mount hit a long-range drive that lacked power and should have been saved by De Gea, but instead it squirmed through his grasp into the net.

Chelsea put the result beyond doubt in the 74th minute when Mount found Marcos Alonso and Maguire turned the Spaniard's cross into his own net under pressure from Antonio Rudiger. — AFP



Everyone has to perform

## Jon Rahm wins PGA Memorial

LOS ANGELES: Jon Rahm became the first Spaniard since Seve Ballesteros in 1989 to hold golf's world number one ranking, fending off a late challenge Sunday to win the US PGA Memorial tournament.

Rahm holed out an amazing 31-foot chip shot at the par-3 16th and, despite a two-stroke penalty that turned it from a birdie to a bogey, took a three-stroke victory over American Ryan Palmer that boosted him over Rory McIlroy atop the rankings.

"I don't know how to describe it," Rahm said. "It has been a goal since I was 13-, 14- years-old."

Rahm was among the Spanish youth inspired by the feats of Ballesteros, a five-time major champion who died in 2011 at age 54 of brain cancer.

"Seve is a very special player to all of us, and to be second to him, it's a true honor," Rahm said. "Anytime I can join Seve at anything, it's incredible." Rahm said the moment was difficult to comprehend in part because his thoughts were with his family, two members of which have died from COVID-19. "It's hard to process right now," he said.

"There are so many things going through my mind right now that have nothing to do with golf."

Rahm fired a three-over par 75 in the final round to finish on nine-under 279 with Palmer second. England's Matthew Fitzpatrick was third on 283 after a closing 68 while Australia's Jason Day and England's Matt Wallace shared fourth on 284.

Rahm began with a four-shot edge and made the turn ahead by eight before dropping four strokes in a five-hole span with a bogey at the 10th, double-bogey at 11 and a bogey at 14 as Palmer pulled within three. That's when the 25-year-old made his amazing chip shot at 16. "That'll probably go down as my greatest chip shot. I don't know if I'll ever do better than that," Rahm said.

"Luckily, I pulled out probably the best short game shot I will ever have. That was unbelievable. For that to go in, that was exactly what I needed." Jack Nicklaus, the 18-time major winner who hosts the event at Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio, called the shot "spectacular" as he congratulated Rahm with a fist bump at the 18th green.

Rahm, who won a US PGA event for the fourth year in a row, was given a two-stroke penalty after television slow-motion cameras showed his ball moved when he pushed down on the grass behind it shortly before his incredible chip, although it didn't change the lie and was unperceptible to Rahm himself. "I did not see or feel anything," said Rahm, who

agreed with the decision after watching a video replay. "It did move. It is a penalty. I'll accept it," Rahm said. "Unfortunate as it is to have something like this happen, it was a great shot."

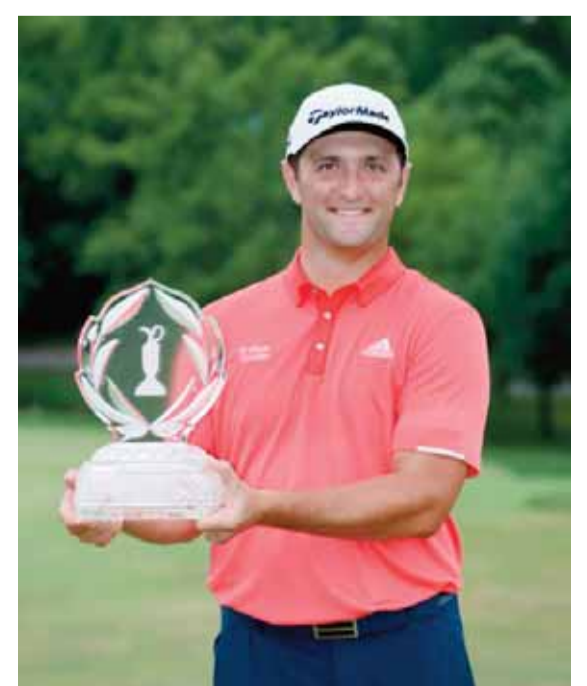
"Had I seen it, I would have said something, but the camera had to zoom in to see it." The tournament was the sixth of the season for the US PGA, all without spectators, since the tour returned in June from a three-month coronavirus pandemic shutdown.

Rahm, who won his first US PGA event when leading after 54 holes, was upset after a bogey at 10 and finding a water hazard off the tee at the par-5 11th, slamming his club into the ground on his way to double bogey.

"Conditions were so tough. I knew I wasn't going to play 18 perfect holes. I knew something was going to go south," Rahm said. "It was so firm, so windy, and then we started to get drizzle. Any little mistake was going to get punished."

Palmer sank a 13-foot birdie putt at the par-3 12th and Rahm stumbled again with a bogey at 14, finding a greenside bunker and missing a five-foot par putt, to leave the lead at three shots with four to play.

"When I missed the putt on 14, I said, 'That's enough,'" Rahm said. Palmer had a 12-foot birdie putt at 16 when Rahm blasted out of the deep grass, landed the ball just onto the green and watched it roll into the cup. Palmer settled for par, his charge blunted for good. —AFP



DUBLIN: Jon Rahm of Spain celebrates with the trophy after winning during the final round of The Memorial Tournament at Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio. — AFP