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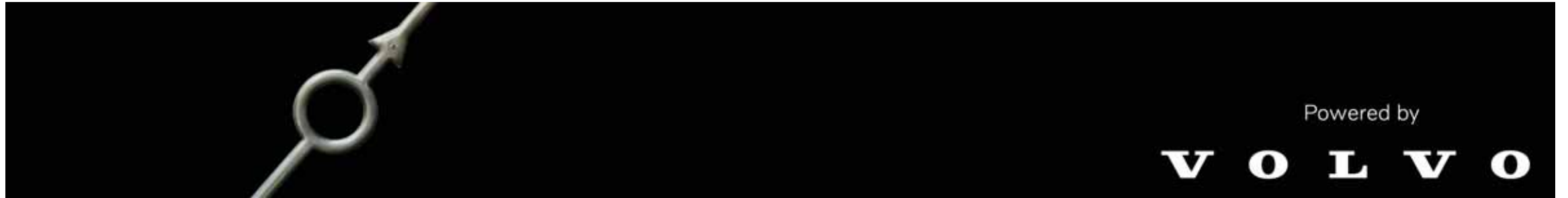
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News in brief

France to test Kuwait travellers

PARIS: France will require on-the-spot coronavirus tests for people arriving from 16 countries including Kuwait, US and Brazil where the pandemic is circulating widely, Prime Minister Jean Castex said Friday. The tests will be for "French citizens who live in these countries or citizens of these countries with an established residence in France," Castex told reporters at Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport. Travellers testing positive will have to spend 14 days in isolation to prevent the spread of the virus. — AFP

US: No new foreign students

WASHINGTON: The US announced Friday it will not take in any new foreign students seeking online-only study, after rescinding a hotly contested order to expel those already here and preparing for that because of the pandemic. The policy change was announced in a statement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. President Donald Trump has made a tough line on immigration a cornerstone of his message and has suspended several kinds of visas for foreigners during the coronavirus crisis. — AFP

'Virtually unhackable' Internet

WASHINGTON: US officials and scientists have begun laying the groundwork for a more secure "virtually unhackable" Internet based on quantum computing technology. At a presentation, Department of Energy officials issued a report that lays out a blueprint strategy for the development of a national quantum Internet, using laws of quantum mechanics to transmit information more securely than on existing networks. The aim is to create a parallel, more secure network based on quantum "entanglement", or the transmission of subatomic particles. — AFP

Emirates to cover costs

DUBAI: Emirates, the largest airline in the Middle East, will cover customers' coronavirus-related medical costs in a bid to "boost travel confidence", the Dubai Media Office said. "Emirates will cover its passengers for COVID-19 related medical expenses and quarantine costs when they travel on board Emirates, to and from the UAE and around the world, free of charge," the emirate's media office said in a statement. Passengers can claim up to €150,000 in medical expenses and up to €100 per day for 14 days in quarantine costs, should they be diagnosed with the disease, the statement said. — AFP

Fears of space arms race

WASHINGTON: The United States has accused Russia of having tested an anti-satellite weapon in space, a charge Moscow has denied, saying the device was a "special instrument" for inspecting orbiting Russian equipment. Whatever it was, the incident marks for Washington a rare military escalation in space. Last week's incident may be seen as a message to the US, which under President Donald Trump is building up a new "Space Force" wing of its military. Space Force's commander, General Jay Raymond, on Friday reiterated that "space is a war-fighting domain just like air, land and sea". — AFP (See Page 5)

KUWAIT: HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday addressed a message of thanks and gratitude to US President Donald Trump for sending a US Air Force plane to fly HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the US to complete his post-surgery treatment. In the cable, HH Sheikh Nawaf expressed sincere appreciation to Trump for his kind gesture, which reflected historical and firm relations between both friendly countries, wishing him well and progress and prosperity for the US.

HH the Amir arrived on Thursday in the United States and is in a stable condition to complete medical treatment. The Amir was accompanied by Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Upon arrival, HH the Amir was received by Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Nawaf also received a handwritten message from United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, expressing his greetings and wishes for the speedy recovery and wellbeing of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah. The UN chief expressed his appreciation of HH the Amir's efforts in continuing to strengthen relations with the UN and support its various functions, his leadership and decisive work to promote regional stability and his hopes to continue close cooperation in support of joint action aimed at furthering peace and security in the region and beyond.

In response, HH the Deputy Amir expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the warm sentiments, underlining Kuwait's unwavering commitment to the UN and its efforts to maintain global security and stability.

Meanwhile, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah said on Friday that a photo circulated on social media and purported to be of HH the Amir is "untrue". The minister emphasized that everyone should seek accuracy and obtain news and photos from the Amiri Diwan and official outlets. Anyone who fails to do so could face legal accountability. Sheikh Ali prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow perpetual good health and wellbeing on HH the Amir and to protect him from any harm. — KUNA

First Muslim prayer held in Hagia Sophia

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan joined thousands Friday in the first Muslim prayers in Hagia Sophia since the Istanbul landmark was controversially converted back into a mosque. Massive crowds gathered inside and outside the UNESCO World Heritage site, some draped in Turkish flags and others waving Islamic banners. Erdogan put their number at 350,000 but that figure could not be independently verified.

Some scuffles broke out between worshippers and police as crowds scrambled to get into the overcrowded plaza in the historic Sultanahmet district of Istanbul, where people had camped out the night before. Inside, the faithful, wearing protective face masks, took photos as they waited for prayers to begin.

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ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (center) and invited guests attend Friday prayers at the Hagia Sophia during its official opening ceremony. — AFP

Trump could lose - and US is on the edge

WASHINGTON: Cratering in the polls, canceling his showcase convention event, and struggling to land punches on his opponent, Donald Trump has only 100 days from today to save his presidency - and it's not going well. In the latest blow to momentum ahead of Nov 3, the president announced late Thursday that he was ditching the razzmatazz-filled Republican convention in Florida for next month because of coronavirus

fears.

An indication of how badly Trump wanted the made-for-TV affair in Jacksonville, complete with screaming crowds, warm-up acts and constant adulation, is that he'd moved it to Florida when coronavirus fears had already scotched his original plans for North Carolina. "It's a different world," Trump said.

Coronavirus has not only upset Trump's pageant. The disease is ravaging the US economy, adding steadily to a death toll of well over 140,000, and undermining public confidence in government. Add explosive protests against racism and police brutality, leftist-led riots, flourishing right-wing conspiracy theories, and the specter

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BEDMINSTER, New Jersey: US President Donald Trump steps off Air Force One upon arrival on Friday. — AFP

US consulate in China readies for closure

CHENGDU, China: Workers removed the US insignia from the consulate in the Chinese city of Chengdu yesterday, a day after Beijing ordered its closure as relations deteriorated in a Cold War-style standoff. The Chengdu mission was told to shut in retaliation for the forced closure of Beijing's consulate in Houston, Texas, with both sides alleging the other had endangered national security.

The deadline for the Americans to exit Chengdu remains unclear, but AFP reporters saw a worker on a small crane removed a circular US insignia from the front of the consulate, leaving just an American flag flying. Three moving company trucks entered the US consulate building yesterday afternoon.

Cleaners were seen carting big black bags of rubbish from the consulate in the early hours of the morning. One of them had split and appeared to contain shredded paper. At least ten bags were removed from the building. Other staff were seen moving trolleys around inside, one carrying a large empty metal bin, while some wheeled suitcases.

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CHENGDU, China: A worker removes the sign at the entrance to the US consulate yesterday. — AFP

Local

Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 63,309 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of yesterday, in addition to 429 deaths. With the exception of 123 cases in intensive care, all infected cases are in stable condition and are recovering in quarantined locations designated by the government for this purpose, while tens of thousands have been discharged from quarantine after exhibiting no symptoms during their 14-day quarantine period, the Ministry of Health confirmed. Meanwhile, 53,607 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 9,273 people receiving treatment.

Curfew

Kuwait is set to move to the third phase of a five-phase plan for a gradual return to normal life on June 28, 2020. The curfew will be shortened to be from 9:00 pm to 3:00 am, government and private offices will be able to operate with up to 50 percent capacity, taxis will be allowed to resume operations but they are allowed to carry only one passenger, while resorts, hotels and furnished apartment businesses will be allowed to reopen.

Kuwait moved to the second phase on June 30, 2020. The second phase saw the curfew shortened to be between 8:00 pm and 5:00 am, while resuming work in the government and private sectors with the workforce being less than 30 percent, in addition to resumption of constructions, banking sector, pickups from restaurants, as well as reopening of commercial complexes, malls, parks, and other places of leisure between 10:00 am and 6:00 pm.

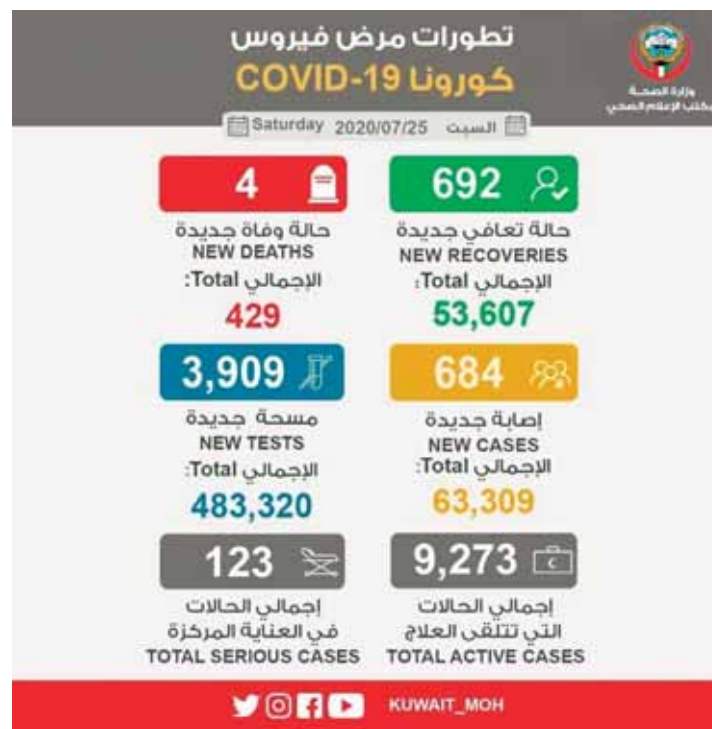
The first phase began on May 31, and during which a daily curfew was imposed from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am, which was later reduced to start on 7:00 pm and end at 5:00 am starting from June 21, 2020. Activities resumed in the first phase included home deliveries of restaurants, telecommunication companies, food retailers, companies' transportation of employees, gas stations, private clinics and car workshops. Phase four would see an increase in workforce, restaurants would be receiving customers but with restrictions, and public transportation resumed but with distancing. All activities would resume in phase five, the curfew would end, government and private sector returned to normal, families could gather, weddings and graduation ceremonies, health clubs and gyms to reopen, as well as cinemas and theaters.

The first phase included a total lockdown on Farwaniya, Khaitan, and Hawally, joining Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh which were put under lockdown earlier. The lockdown ended in Hawally and Khaitan on June 21, 2020, in Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on July 9, 2020, and in Farwaniya on July 26, 2020.

Friday prayers resumed at around 1,000 mosques around Kuwait on July 17, with strict social distancing and health precautions observed. Mosques in the so-called 'model residential areas' had reopened their doors for worshippers on June 10 amid strict health precautionary measures. Worshippers must wear face masks, keep social distancing between queues and between worshippers must be strictly observed. Worshippers must bring their own mats so they do not get in contact with mosque carpets. Mosques will reopen five minutes before prayer time and close 10 minutes after prayer.

School year ended

The Ministry of Education announced on July 17 ending the 2019-2020 school year, with the remaining part of the curriculum of the year's second half will be integrated into the first chapter of the next academic year 2020-2021 virtually effective as of October 4, after modifying the curriculum. Pre-school pupils, students of elementary and intermediate levels will be promoted to the higher classes. As to the high school level, students who desire to improve their grades can re-enroll in the scholastic year. As to class 12, the remaining period of the second semester was set at six weeks, while curricula were amended in tandem with the complementary study period, due between August 9 and September 17, and that will be via electronic means. Students' assessment will be on weekly basis through interaction and virtual presence at the set educational website. The ministry is still expected to release regulations regarding the start of the 2020/2021 school year at foreign private schools. Earlier, the Ministry of Education had suspended classes at all public and private schools (for both students and teaching staffs): first from March 1 to March 12, and later extended it until March 29, before eventually suspending schools until August for grade 12 and October for other stages.



Commercial flights

Commercial flights are set to resume on August 1, while the airport will operate at 30 percent capacity during the six-month first phase of a three-stage airport reopening plan. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation presented a set of rules for the safe resumption of air travel. The new rules mandate all travelers to wear protective facemasks and keep a hand sanitizer in their possession, besides strictly abiding by social distancing guidelines and keeping hand luggage to a minimum. Departing passengers are required to register to the 'Kuwait - Traveler' app, and provide negative COVID-19 test results before boarding their flights to destinations where such tests are required. Citizens are also required to obtain travel insurance that covers COVID-19 treatment. Manual checks of tickets have now been scaled back as a result of the pandemic in favor of the more popular digital e-tickets, whose scanning requires no physical contact. Passengers must be present at the airport no less than four hours before departure to ensure a smooth and convenient journey.

Meanwhile, arriving passengers must register to the 'Shlonck' app before boarding, and obtain an accredited PCR certificate showing negative COVID-19 test results valid for 96 hours from the test's date. Passengers will have their temperatures checked before boarding the plane and upon arrival, while a random PCR test will be conducted for 10 percent of passengers on each flight. All arriving passengers must home quarantine for 14 days upon arrival. Kuwait had earlier sent special flights to repatriate Kuwaitis back home from countries affected with the virus' spread. Meanwhile, the Cabinet announced on April 9 the operation of all airline flights for expats who are wishing to return back to their countries.

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

Hotlines

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

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

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

Medicine delivery

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

- Amiri Hospital: 50880699
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital: 50880755
- Farwaniya Hospital: 50880852
- Adan Hospital: 50880908
- Jahra Hospital: 50881066
- Sabah Hospital: 96732660
- Jaber Hospital: 96992079
- Ibn Sina Hospital: 99613948
- Chest Hospital: 99258749
- Razi Hospital: 97633487
- Kuwait Cancer Control Center: 96735242
- Psychiatric Hospital: 97350113
- Physiotherapy Hospital: 99824037
- Maternity Hospital: 98559531
- As'ad Al-Hamad Dermatology Center: 98514508
- Zain Hospital: 97552031
- NBK Hospital: 96931761
- Al-Rashed Allergy Hospital: 94162470
- Infectious Diseases Hospital: 96989164
- Palliative Care Hospital: 94024786
- Sabah Al-Ahmad Urology Center: 90952469
- KFH Addiction Treatment Center: 94169363

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

Mental health assistance

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

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

For information and other concerns, call 9401-4283.

First Muslim prayer held in...

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As the call to prayer reverberated from the Hagia Sophia's four minarets, huge crowds spread prayer mats on the lawns outside.

Inside, the president, wearing an Islamic skullcap, recited a verse from the Holy Quran. In a sermon, the head of the state religious affairs agency, Ali Erbas, said the reopening "is the return of a sacred place, which had embraced believers for five centuries, to its original function". Also in attendance was Erdogan's ally and leader of the ultranationalist MHP, Devlet Bahçeli, but no opposition party leaders were present.

The Hagia Sophia was built as a cathedral during the Christian Byzantine Empire and converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. In 1934, modern Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ordered it be turned into a museum. But Turkey's highest administrative court, the Council of State, cancelled that decision earlier this month, arguing that the building had been registered as a mosque in its property deeds.

Experts see Erdogan's move to turn Hagia Sophia back into a mosque as an attempt to galvanize his conservative and nationalist base amid economic uncertainty exacerbated by the virus outbreak. The timing of the first prayer is significant as it coincided with the 97th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne, which set modern Turkey's borders after years of conflict with Greece and Western powers.

Greece has condemned the move as a provocation to the "entire civilized world". "What is happening in (Istanbul) this day is not a show of force, but proof of weakness," Greek premier Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a statement. "Especially to us

Orthodox Christians, Hagia Sophia today is in our hearts more than ever. It is where our heart beats."

Greece's reaction "once again revealed Greece's hostility towards Islam and Turkey," Turkish foreign ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said yesterday. Aksoy "strongly condemned" the burning of the Turkish flag in Thessaloniki, and accused the Greek government and parliament of "provoking the public with hostile statements". "The spoiled children of Europe, who cannot accept renewed prostration in Hagia Sophia, are once again delusional," Aksoy added in a statement.

One of the EU's most senior officials warned that Ankara was undermining its ties with Europe. "As a Greek, I'm quite bitter. I'm feeling quite angry about it," European Commission vice-president Margaritis Schinas told a press briefing. "I think that Turkey at a certain point should decide what their geopolitical stance should be, and who they want to align themselves with in the future," warned Schinas, going further than the EU's statements of concern to date.

In Greece, church bells pealed at midday and flags were flown at half-mast as the head of the Church of Greece, Archbishop Ieronymos, described the conversion back into a mosque an "unholy act of defiling". Ankara has dismissed international criticism, and insisted that tourists - some 3.8 million last year - would still be able to visit the mosque and see its famous Byzantine mosaics.

The mosaics, plastered over for centuries when the building served as a mosque, will now be hidden by curtains during prayer times since Islam bans figurative representations. For many Muslims, the reconversion is nevertheless a landmark event. "We see this as the second conquest of Istanbul," said Selahattin Pamukcu, 33, who had come especially from the Aegean region of Izmir. "This is the moment when Turkey breaks its chains. Now it can do whatever it wants, without having to submit to the West," added Selahattin Aydas from Germany. — AFP

US consulate in China readies...

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Beijing says closing the Chengdu consulate was a "legitimate and necessary response to the unreasonable measures by the United States", and has alleged that staff at the diplomatic mission endangered China's security and interests. Washington officials, meanwhile, said there had been unacceptable efforts by the Chinese consulate in Houston to steal US corporate secrets and proprietary medical and scientific research.

The last Chinese diplomats left the Houston consulate on Friday as a 72-hour deadline to close the mission passed. Officials there were seen loading large sacks of documents and other items onto trucks, and throwing some in bins. Friday night, a State Department spokesperson said: "We can confirm that the PRC Consulate General in Houston is closed." After the last of Beijing diplomats departed the complex, law enforcement cordoned off the area and US officials were seen

Trump could lose - and US...

Continued from Page 1

of Russian meddling - and you have a country more on edge than at any time since the cataclysmic 1960s.

Now Trump, who boasts he never tires of "winning", faces possible humiliation at the hands of Democrat Joe Biden, a man he derides as "sleepy" and mentally incompetent, yet who leads by double digits in some polls. In 2020, a year of historic uprisings against racism and sexism in the United States, the match-up between Trump, 74, and Biden, 77, might seem out of step. One is a billionaire born into extreme privilege, while the other, with three decades in the Senate and two terms as vice president under Barack Obama, is the epitome of the professional politician.

Yet Trump vs Biden will deliver all the upheaval a confused and bitter US electorate can stomach. Trump's pitch boils down to claiming Biden will have Americans "cowering to radical leftwing mobs". Biden, no less apocalyptic, says he's fighting for "the soul of America". Polls give Biden an

entering the consulate after using tools to force open a door.

Tensions have soared between the two powers on a range of fronts including trade, China's handling of the coronavirus and a new security law for Hong Kong, with the US this week warning of a "new tyranny" from China. China on Friday blasted the Houston move and blamed Washington for the sharp deterioration in relations.

Closing the Chengdu consulate was a "legitimate and necessary response to the unreasonable measures by the United States", the foreign ministry said in a statement. "The current situation in China-US relations is not what China desires to see, and the US is responsible for all this," it said.

Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters that some US staff in the Chengdu consulate "were engaged in activities outside of their capacity, interfered in China's internal affairs, and endangered China's security and interests". The Chengdu consulate, established in 1985, has been at the center of past controversy. It was included on a top-secret map leaked by intelligence analyst Edward Snowden showing US surveillance worldwide.

The Chengdu mission was also where senior Chinese official Wang Lijun fled in 2012 from his powerful boss Bo Xilai, who was then head of the nearby metropolis Chongqing, and has since been jailed for life for corruption. — AFP

advantage nationally, strong leads in swing states, and even a shot at Republican strongholds like Texas. Congressional Democrats, who already control the House, are eying recapture of the Senate.

Trump presides over mass unemployment - even if this was triggered by the coronavirus shutdown - racial unrest and a growing crisis of confidence. On the pandemic, the biggest issue of the day, polls show that two-thirds of Americans have no faith in his leadership. To boot, Trump, with overall approval ratings permanently stuck in the low 40 percent range, is the first president to seek reelection after impeachment.

Yet no one counts him out. Belittled as a clown in 2016, he handily defeated all the top Republican establishment names for the nomination. He then came from behind to defeat the Democrats' polished candidate Hillary Clinton. Trump believes he still has the secret sauce. "I'm not losing, because those are fake polls," he insisted on Fox News last weekend. "They were fake in 2016 and now they're even more fake."

COVID-19, which Trump calls "the invisible enemy", makes a frustrating target for a man used to dealing in large, tangible objects, like skyscrapers. But he's having an equally hard a time getting to grips with Biden. The Democrat is running a unique campaign from his Delaware home, with no rallies, few media interviews and even rarer press conferences. — AFP

Local

Phase three adoption does not mean end of virus threat: Minister

Complete lifting of curfew delayed 'to preserve public health'



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the meeting. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah attends a Cabinet meeting via videoconference on Thursday.



Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah attends the meeting.



Commerce Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan attends the meeting.

KUWAIT: The reduction of curfew hours from nine hours to six, as part of phase three of the reopening plan, does not mark an end to the coronavirus pandemic threat as no vaccine has yet been officially approved, Kuwait's health minister warned. Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah underlined that adhering to public health and safety measures was the only way to prevent infection during all five phases of the plan until a cure is found.

The transition from one stage to the other and reducing restrictions is aimed at adapting to the return to everyday life while applying health measures to reduce the spread of the virus, said the minister. He reiterated that these measures include staying at home and leaving only for necessity, covering the mouth and nose, social distancing and making sure to sterilize and wash hands regularly. He also urged ensuring the safety of the elderly, chronic disease patients and pregnant women.

Increase in cases

The partial curfew was originally set to be lifted completely at the third stage, but ministers instead saw the need to only reduce its duration "in order to preserve the public's health," he explained. Non-compliance with health requirements has caused an increase in cases amongst

Kuwaiti nationals, with daily numbers sometimes going up to 70 percent of the total cases, he warned. Most of these cases have been of the elderly members of the community, who in spite of staying at home, caught the virus from a family member who was not following health guidelines.

Phase three will witness an increase in public sector attendance by no more than 50 percent of the total workforce, visits to social care

plans to reportedly adopt a certain vaccine, the minister said health authorities have addressed companies that, according to their published studies, have reached advanced stages in trials. The World Health Organization gets hold of the first batch of vaccines from manufacturers, he said, therefore, "an agreement will be through this organization to obtain vaccinations, while for the second batch, (an agreement) will be with companies directly."

Incoming travellers

In relation to health guidelines placed on incoming travellers, as the country prepares to re-launch commercial flights in August, he said a 14-day home quarantine will be applied in order to ensure that the individual is not infected. The visitor will also be required to fill in their information in a government app and wear an assigned e-bracelet at all times. As for PCR tests proving that visitors are not infected, he said these will be taken from accredited laboratories and health centers in the country of departure, adding that the ministries of health and foreign affairs are currently in coordination with their counterparts in this respect. Around 500 incoming travelers will be taken in randomly for swab tests on a daily basis at Kuwait International Airport to make sure the results of their medical certifications are correct, he added.

The country's move to phase three comes after the government's adoption of a five-phase plan of reopening based on five criteria on May 28. These criteria are the scale of infections, stability of case numbers over a sufficient period, lower intensive care unit occupancy numbers, lower hospital bed occupancy numbers and lower numbers of positive cases detected by daily swabs. Each phase is assessed every three weeks, at least, whereby the government determines

whether to move on with the following phase.

Kuwait's Cabinet had approved moving on to phase three of the coronavirus reopening, starting on Tuesday, shortening curfew hours to 9:00 pm - 3:00 am until further notice. Ministers, during an extraordinary Cabinet meeting, also decided to remove the isolation measures imposed on Farwaniya as of 5:00 am today, government spokesperson Tareq Al-Mezrem told a press conference at Sief Palace. Meanwhile, a committee tasked with monitoring adherence to the COVID-19 health measures across the country will continue carrying out its role. Furthermore, worshippers will be allowed to attend Eid Al-Adha prayers across the nation at mosques approved by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs with health and safety standards applied, the official added. Slaughterhouses will remain shut on the first day of Eid Al-Adha, which falls on Friday July 31, with the need to schedule appointments to conduct the livestock sacrifice ritual.

Speedy recovery

During its extraordinary meeting on Thursday through videoconference, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah informed the Cabinet on the arrival of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Rochester Airport in the United States, to complete his medical treatment.

The Cabinet expressed wishes for a speedy recovery and good health so that he can return to the homeland safely, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said after the meeting. The Council of Ministers also expressed sincere congratulations to Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on the success of his surgery, expressing best wishes and good health to the Saudi leader. — KUNA



Non-compliance caused increase in infections

homes allowed, the reopening of hotels, resorts and apartment hotels and the reoperation of taxis, however, with only one passenger allowed on board. The coronavirus pandemic is the primary threat to human health to date, he said, citing the World Health Organization, which recommended the need to adhere to recommendations and guidelines issued by health authorities in each country.

The criteria for judging the success or failure of any country in combatting the disease is the nation's extent of compliance with medical requirements and their implementation of health procedures, he added. He also suggested that, based on reports, the negligence of some countries in handling the affair has negatively affected the safety of individuals and the health system in those countries. Asked about the government's

News in brief

Amiri decree pardons prisoners

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior (MoI) announced on Friday that 958 prisoners will be released immediately, in line with the rules and regulations applied in correctional institutions, while the penalty and financial fine will be reduced for the rest, according to the Amiri decree on pardoning 2,370 inmates. All those released have spent their sentences in correctional institutions with good conduct and behavior, aiming to give them the opportunity to return to society, it pointed out. The ministry said in a press release that the Amiri decree No 87/2020 was issued regarding amnesty for shortening the rest of the sentence or decreasing the fine imposed on 2,370 inmates.

Full refund

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) released a circular on Thursday indicating that travelers have the right to request a refund of the value of travel tickets, hotel reservations, and other tourist services that were canceled from March 14, 2020 to July 31, 2020 regardless of the reservation conditions (refundable or non-refundable) without deduction of any amounts from them. A traveler is entitled to choose between a cash refund reimbursement of the value into their credit card or a credit equal to the value of the canceled reservation, DGCA explained.

Twenty flights

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced that 20 flights were set to depart Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying a total of 3,660 passengers. They included 12 flights to Egypt, three flights to the UAE, one flight to Qatar, one flight to Lebanon, one flight to Jordan, one flight to Bangladesh and one flight to Pakistan.

Oil price down

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by \$1.33 to \$43.42 per barrel on Friday after it was at \$44.75 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. At the global level, the price of the Brent crude went up by three cents to \$43.34 per barrel, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate, which went up by 22 cents to \$41.29 pb.

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KOC: Ratqa's heavy oil project a boost for Kuwait's economy

Key part of company's 2040 vision



Ministry keeping eye on PCR test prices

KUWAIT: Kuwait's health ministry said on Thursday that all government-run hospitals are providing coronavirus diagnostic tests free of charge for citizens and expatriates alike, in line with specific health guidance, amid its efforts to rein in the spread of the infectious disease. Kuwait has ramped up its coronavirus testing and contact tracing in a bid to accurately assess the transmission rate, which in turn, would lead to large-scale research on demographic variables related to the spread of the contagion, according to a ministry statement. All medical facilities running PCR tests have been properly accredited, as per guidelines issued by the World Health Organization, the statement added, revealing that some seven labs applied for accreditation, one of which has been certified so far. As for private hospitals, the ministry is keeping a watchful eye as it seeks to clamp down on any price rigging, making sure that these facilities offer the tests at a fixed rate nationwide, which is largely an affordable cost when compared to other countries, it said. The statement highlighted that the ministry would take decisive action against any effort to "cash in at such times of uncertainty," including bumping up prices and other nefarious doings. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) heavy oil project in Ratqa oil field, northern Kuwait, is a vital addition to the country's economy, and part of the company's 2040 vision. KOC's biggest project will boost oil production, increase Kuwait's income and provide different products to international markets. It will also allow Kuwait's oil field to enter new markets and create new job opportunities for youth, despite the challenges of extracting heavy oil.



KOC's CEO
Emad Sultan

KOC's CEO Emad Sultan said that May 22 was a remarkable day as the company shipped its first heavy oil shipment to global markets. The first shipment included 500,000 barrels, while the second one in June included 700,000 barrels, he said. The project is KOC's most challenging operation which will meet Kuwait's energy needs.

Heavy oil was first discovered in 1979 in south Ratqa and the company conducted two production programs in 1982 and 1984, however operations stopped due to the Iraqi invasion in 1990, before resuming in 2006, he noted. The first phase of the project includes producing 60,000 barrels per day (bpd) from south Ratqa, and later producing environmental, low sulfur fuel in new Al-Zour refinery to use it in power stations.

The CEO said that KOC has been running tests on extracting and producing heavy oil since 2007, aiming to tackle difficulties facing the process. In 2015, the company signed a contract to build the facility in south Ratqa field, he added. The project included dig-



ging 1,518 oil wells, with 930 wells in the first phase, Sultan said. In addition to producing 60,000 bpd, the facility has the capacity to produce 22 million square foot of associated petroleum gas and 170,000 water barrels, he noted. The project also included building a storage capacity for 300,000 oil barrels, as well as another storage area with a capacity of 1,200 million barrels in the exporting section. The project started operating in the second half of 2019, while production started on February 24, 2020, said the CEO.

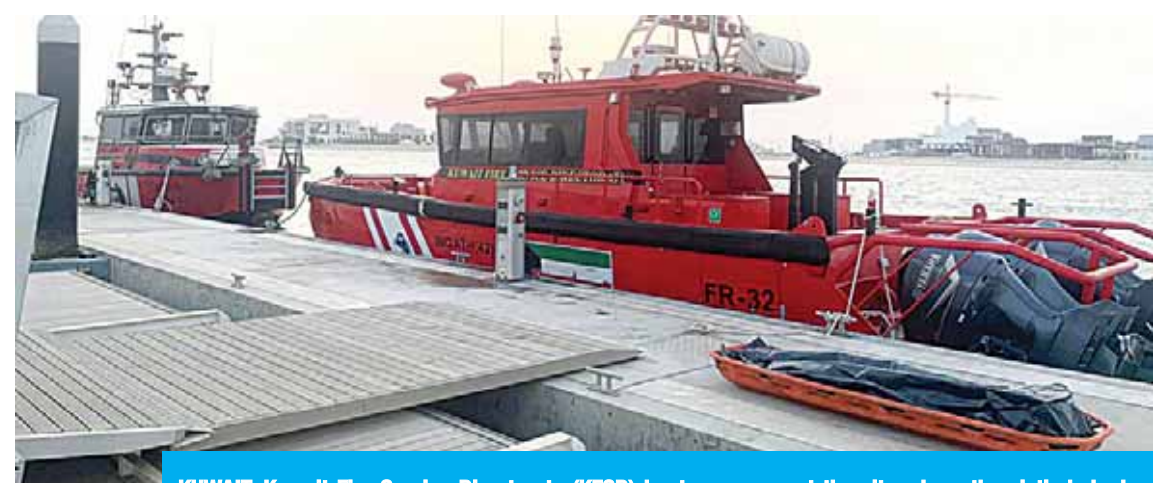
By end of May, the project reached a production capacity of 38,000 bpd and it is expected to reach the target rate of 60,000 by next September. This number will be added to production of 15,000 bpd

of heavy oil in Umm Niqa field north Kuwait, which had been operating since 2016, as the total number will become 75,000 bpd. Meanwhile, Sultan hailed the efforts of KOC and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) in marketing heavy oil in international markets, despite the challenges facing offer and demand due to the coronavirus. Heavy oil production is filled with challenges, yet, it also provides so many great opportunities including lowering capital costs on production and creating cooperation with the biggest global oil companies, he explained. KOC was established in 1934 and is a subsidiary of KPC. The company is tasked with oil and natural gas exploration and production. —KUNA

Body found off Khairan beach

KUWAIT: Firefighters located and retrieved the dead body of a man who went missing while swimming at Al-Khairan waters, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said on Friday. The victim's

body was found following a 23-hour search operation, which started after KFSD operators had received a report Thursday about an 18-year-old citizen who went missing while swimming off Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City's beach. In a separate case, KFSD announced that a construction worker sustained serious injuries when he slipped and fell from a high place. The Asian worker fell from the second floor of a house in Qortoba, it said, noting that an investigation was opened into the case.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) boats are seen at the site where the victim's body was retrieved.

Naval officers graduate from Polish academy



KUWAIT: Kuwait Ministry of Interior (MoI) stated that 18 of its naval officers graduated from the Polish Naval Academy on Friday, after they passed the final exams following a four-year study period. MoI's General Directorate of Relations and Security Media confirmed in a press statement that the security establishment always strives to advance its members through

study and constant access to the latest security systems in developed countries. The graduate officers would be in addition to their colleagues from MoI, the statement explained. The ceremony was attended by Kuwaiti Military Attache in Berlin Brigadier Pilot Adnan Al-Amer and Colonel Rear Admiral Ahmad Al-Dhubaib, a supervision officer in Poland. —KUNA

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Israel strikes Syria army targets after border unrest

'Milking their misery': Indian state makes returning migrants pay for quarantine

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DUBAI: In this file photo, an Iranian airliner Mahan Air Airbus A340 aircraft is seen at the tarmac at Dubai International Airport. The US said on July 23, 2020 it had intercepted an Iranian passenger plane as it flew over Syria, after Iranian state television accused Israel of being behind the encounter. —AFP

US fighter jets spark panic on plane

Iran protests to UN after US jets approach flight over Syria

TEHRAN: Iran protested Friday to the United Nations of a "flagrant violation" of international law after nearby US fighter jets sparked panic on an Iranian passenger plane over war-torn Syria. The incident on Thursday was the latest between arch-enemies Tehran and Washington since US President Donald Trump in 2018 walked out of a nuclear accord with Iran and imposed punishing sanctions. Iran's state television broadcast footage filmed on a mobile phone of screaming passengers as the pilot of a Mahan Air plane on a flight from Tehran to Beirut took emergency action.

A passenger with blood running down his forehead and another who had fallen to the floor were seen in the video, and one jet was visible through the window. State news agency IRNA said a protest letter would be submitted to the UN Security Council and secretary general over "the threat posed to the Mahan Air passenger plane". Iran's foreign ministry said protests had been lodged with the International Civil Aviation Organization—a UN agency—and the Swiss embassy in Tehran that handles US interests in Iran since ties were cut in the

aftermath of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

"If anything happens to the aircraft on its return flight, Iran will hold the United States responsible," foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi told IRNA. The US military said an "F-15 on a routine air mission... conducted a standard visual inspection of a Mahan Air passenger airliner at a safe distance of approximately 1,000 meters". US Central Command (CENTCOM) issued a statement after Iranian state television aired the footage of passengers in panic as the Mahan Air plane appeared to change course suddenly.

'Professional intercept'

In an initial report, the state broadcaster said the military aircraft were believed to be Israeli. "After this dangerous action by the Israeli fighter, the pilot of the commercial plane quickly reduced the altitude of the flight to avoid colliding... injuring several passengers on board," it said. IRNA later said the Mahan Air pilot made contact on the radio with two US fighter planes, before the aircraft landed safely in the Lebanese capital.

CENTCOM, which covers the whole of the wider Middle East, insisted it was a "professional intercept... conducted in accordance with international standards". "Once the F-15 pilot identified the aircraft as a Mahan Air passenger plane, the F-15 safely opened distance from the aircraft," it said. Iranian television called the incident "provocative and dangerous". A security source in Lebanon said the Iranian aircraft landed safely at Beirut international airport with "four lightly injured passengers" on board.

Syrian state media said "planes believed to belong to the US-led coalition intercepted" the Iranian airliner over the Al-Tanf district on the border with Jordan and Iraq, forcing it to make "a sharp drop". The Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah, which is allied to both the Syrian government and Iran, denounced what it called "a terrorist act" by US fighter jets against an Iranian civilian plane. The US-led coalition operates a base in Al-Tanf to fight the Islamic State group in Syria, where Iran and Hezbollah support the regime in its nine-year-old civil war. — AFP



IN THE AIR: An image grab from a video released by state-run Iran Press news agency reportedly shows a passenger with blood dripping on his face, on an Iranian passenger plane after it was intercepted by a US F-15 while flying over Syria. — AFP

Mystery Russia space projectile raises fears

WASHINGTON: The United States this week accused Russia of having tested an anti-satellite weapon in space, a charge Moscow has denied, saying the device was a "special instrument" for inspecting orbiting Russian equipment. Whatever it was, the incident marks for Washington a rare military escalation in space. The ability of one satellite to attack another was until now merely theoretical.

The United States, Russia, China and, since 2019, India, have been able to target satellites with Earth-launched projectiles, but these explosions create millions of pieces of debris in orbit, prompting the world powers to refrain from such tests. This week's incident may be seen as a message to Washington, which under President Donald Trump is building up a new "Space Force" wing of its military. Space Force's commander, General Jay Raymond, on Friday reiterated that "space is a warfighting domain just like air, land and sea."

'Object E'

In November 2019, Russia launched a satellite named Cosmos 2542. A week later, that satellite surprised observers when it released a sub-satellite, Cosmos 2543, capable of maneuvering in orbit to observe, inspect or spy on other satellites. This sub-satellite moved close to a US spy satellite, USA-245, and to another Russian satellite. A game of cat and mouse began in orbit, easily observable from Earth by astronomers and the US military, which publicly expressed its concern.

On July 15 at around 0750 GMT, Cosmos 2543 (the sub-satellite with a surface area of less than a square meter, according to the US military), released an object at a high relative speed, around 200 meters per second, said astronomer Jonathan McDowell. Dubbed "Object E" by the United States, it is still in orbit and appears not to have hit anything.

Its size, shape and purpose remain a mystery, but that does nothing to diminish the threat it may pose.

A 'bullet'

In orbit, satellites speed through the void at tens of thousands of miles per hour. The smallest contact with another object risks smashing a hole in its solar panels or damaging or even destroying it, depending on the size of whatever it may hit. In space, the difference between a satellite and a weapon is therefore theoretical: whatever its function, "Object E" is a de facto "projectile" and therefore a "weapon," the US says. It is the equivalent of a "bullet" in space, said Christopher Ford, assistant secretary of state for international security and nonproliferation.

"There's no such thing as a fender bender up there," Moscow has implicitly admitted as much by accusing Washington and London of having satellite inspection or repair programs that can be used as "counter-satellite weapons." The United States has maneuverable military satellites in orbit which can launch smaller satellites. But it's unclear if the US has the capability to launch high-speed projectiles as the Russians have just done, said Brian Weeden, a space security expert at the Secure World Foundation in Washington. "But they probably could if they wanted to," he told AFP.

US highly dependent on space

"Russia may be trying to send a strategic message about the vulnerability of US systems," Weeden said. Spy satellites are enormous, extremely costly and rare. Russia is far less dependent upon satellites than the United States, and its satellites are much less expensive, he said. That was echoed by the Space Force commander on Friday, who noted that ever since the Gulf War in the early 1990s, the entire US military, from war planes to infantry, depend on space-based technology for navigation, communications and intelligence. "There's nothing we do... that doesn't have space enabled in it every step of the way," the general said. The United States and Russia will have the chance to hold direct talks next week in Vienna, during their first meeting on space security since 2013. — AFP

US eugenics program tried to 'breed out' black people: Study

WASHINGTON: A sterilization program that ran in the US state of North Carolina from 1929 to 1974 was explicitly designed to "breed out" black citizens and met the UN definition of genocide, a study said this week. Almost 7,600 men, women and children as young as 10 were surgically sterilized under the program that was created to serve the "public good" by preventing people deemed "feeble-minded" and others from becoming parents.

Most were coerced but some women who had no other means of birth control sought out sterilization by having themselves declared unfit mothers. The new paper was published in the American Review of Political Economy. It examined the years 1958 to 1968, a period in which more than 2,100 authorized sterilizations occurred across the state's 100 counties.

The authors found that, for the period they studied,

sterilization rates increased with the size of the unemployed black population—but unemployed whites and other races were not similarly targeted. William Darity Jr, a professor at Duke University and co-author, said the United Nations's definition of genocide cites intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

This includes, according to the text of the Geneva Convention, "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group." "North Carolina's disproportionate use of eugenic sterilization on its black citizens was an act of genocide," said Darity. Previous work had shown that the eugenics program had disproportionately targeted black people, but the new paper shed light on the mechanics by which the program worked and its motives.

"Controlling black bodies and their reproductive choices is nothing new," added co-author Rhonda Sharpe of the Women's Institute for Science, Equity, and Race. "Our study shows that North Carolina restricted reproductive freedom, using eugenics to disenfranchise black residents." The state set up a foundation in 2010 to compensate living victims of the program. The first checks, written for \$20,000 each, were mailed to 220 of those survivors in 2014, according to North Carolina's The News & Observer newspaper. — AFP

Video of woman begging Peru president goes viral

AREQUIPA: A video of a mother running behind a van carrying Peru's President Martin Vizcarra and begging him to save her husband from COVID-19, has gone viral. "Mr President, Don't go!" screams a tearful Celia Capira as she begs for a hospital bed for her husband in the video shot on Sunday in Peru's second largest city, Arequipa. But the 32-year-old mother of three's story did not have a happy ending, as her husband Adolfo Mamani, 57, died on Tuesday.

Arequipa's overwhelmed hospital system which lacks both beds and oxygen couldn't save him. "They killed him; he was well, they told us he was stable, in the morning I took him breakfast," Capira told local reporters on Tuesday. Images of Capira's tear-soaked cheeks covered with a mask and face shield have come to reflect the desperation of a local population that wants answers from

authorities. Outside the Honorio Delgado hospital where Mamani died, authorities have set up an overflow tent where he was initially given treatment.

"Mr President, you have to go to the tent, don't leave the hospital until you've seen the condition (patients) are in," sobs Capira in the video as the presidential cavalcade moves away. "Mr president, it's bad and inhuman," she screams. On Monday, Mamani was transferred from the tent to a hospital bed, but he died the next day. The couple ran a store in Arequipa, in the country's south. "What will I do with my children, how will I tell them their father isn't here any more?" Capira, who's children are aged one, six and 14, asked reporters. On Tuesday, Vizcarra apologized to the widow, saying he hadn't seen her.

"It's unfortunate that madam Celia's husband has died. I give her my condolences and sincere apologies for not having heard her, and we are at her service and everyone's that has lost a loved one," said Vizcarra. But soaring coronavirus cases in Arequipa show no sign of abating. With more than 370,000 cases and over 17,000 deaths, Peru is one of the worst affected countries in Latin America by the coronavirus. "Please can this moment serve as a lesson to everyone," implored Capira on Wednesday as she buried her husband in the La Apacheta cemetery in Arequipa. — AFP

International

COVID-19 surges worldwide as public loses faith in authorities

Coronavirus kills almost 635,000, infects more than 15.5 million

WASHINGTON: A surge in coronavirus cases across the United States and Europe has forced governments to strengthen containment measures as a survey released yesterday showed support for the handling of their pandemics has slipped. The disease has now killed almost 635,000 people around the world and infected more than 15.5 million, according to an AFP tally, with America the hardest-hit nation. For the second straight day on Friday the US reported more than 70,000 new cases and over 1,000 deaths as the virus takes hold in the country's south and west.

A similar resurgence in Europe prompted the World Health Organization to sound the alarm over the spread, as Britain joined France, Germany and Austria in tightening rules on masks and rolling out greater testing. Governments worldwide have struggled to contain the coronavirus despite long and arduous lockdowns imposed on millions of people, and a survey released Saturday showed faith in authorities to be dwindling in six rich nations.

Populations in France, Germany, Britain, Japan, Sweden and the US widely believed death and infection figures to be higher than recorded, according to the study, which polled 1,000 people in each nation. "In most countries this month, support for national governments is falling," the report by the Kekst CNC communications consulting group said.

'Cause for concern'

Europe accounts for a fifth of the world's case count so far. The WHO's European chapter

expressed concern Friday about the rise in cases on the continent in the past two weeks and warned tighter restrictions may be needed. A three-year-old girl this week died in Belgium, becoming the country's youngest victim of the virus. "The recent resurgence in COVID-19 cases in some countries following the easing of physical distancing measures is certainly cause for concern," a WHO Europe spokeswoman told AFP.

"If the situation demands, reintroduction of stricter, targeted measures with the full engagement of communities may be needed." Outbreaks have been seen recently in the Spanish regions of Aragon and Catalonia where officials have reintroduced curbs on daily life and urged Barcelona residents to only leave home for essential trips.

Testing drive

French Prime minister Jean Castex said on-the-spot testing would be rolled out for travellers arriving in France from 16

high-risk countries. Masks are now mandatory in enclosed spaces across the nation and there are fears that the summer holiday season could see a new spike in the disease as people flock to beaches and tourist spots. Britain on Friday also made it compulsory to wear a face covering in shopping centres, banks, takeaway outlets, sandwich shops and supermarkets.

Exceptions have been made, including for children under 11 or people with respiratory problems, but others who refuse to cover their nose and mouth in the UK risk a fine of up to £100 (\$130). Austria has reimplemented a similar policy with face masks mandatory again in a range of places from



SOWETO: Undertakers move the remains of a COVID-19 coronavirus patient into a coffin at the AVBOB funeral house in Soweto yesterday. —AFP

supermarkets to pharmacies—the rule previously having been relaxed. "It was a mistake to lift mandatory mask use so soon," said one Austrian shopper, Andreas Poschenreither.

'Wartime mode'

New outbreaks continue to wreak havoc elsewhere around the world, with fresh clusters emerging across Asia. South Korea on Saturday reported its highest infections figure in nearly four months,

and in Vietnam the first locally-transmitted case in nearly 100 days was detected. Authorities in China said Friday they would introduce a new wave of testing in the port city of Dalian, home to about six million people, after fresh infections were detected there. The local government's health commission said the city must "enter wartime mode" to prevent any spread as it announced on-the-spot nucleic acid tests for people using the subway system and new lockdowns for some communities. —AFP



Virus wreaks havoc across the globe

News in brief

Mafia fugitives nabbed

LYON: Six alleged members of the powerful Italian mafia group 'Ndrangheta have been arrested in Albania, Argentina and Costa Rica for suspected drugs and weapons smuggling, police agency Interpol said Friday. The suspects are thought to have links to the 'Ndrangheta's Bellocchio clan from Rosarno in southern Italy, which is implicated in importing South American cocaine by boat from Argentina and Costa Rica, it said in a statement. In a joint operation overseen by Interpol and Italian police, three fugitive gang members were arrested in Buenos Aires, one in the Albanian capital Tirana, and another in Costa Rica this week. A sixth suspect, who had evaded arrest last year under an operation of the 11-nation anti-'Ndrangheta I-CAN project, was picked up in Albania in May. —AFP

Man arrested for pulling gun

MIAMI: A man was arrested for pointing a gun at a fellow shopper who asked him to wear a mask because of the coronavirus pandemic at a Walmart store in Florida, police in the US state said. Vincent Scavetta, 28, was arrested for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and improper exhibition of a firearm, the Palm Beach sheriff's office said. "Welcome to PBC Jail, son. Let this be a lesson. It could have ended badly," the office wrote on Twitter on Thursday. Scavetta had drawn the gun during a verbal altercation over his refusal to wear a mask. Walmart, the world's largest retailer, has since July 20 required everyone in its stores to wear face coverings. But many Americans still refuse to wear them, and for months President Donald Trump and his political allies did not encourage their use. —AFP

Brazil's Bolsonaro fights on

BRASILIA: Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro refused to let his case of coronavirus keep him down, going for a spin on a motorcycle and chatting maskless with a team of groundskeepers outside the presidential palace. Bolsonaro, 65, has been in quarantine at the Alvorada Palace in Brasilia since testing positive for the new coronavirus on July 7. He had to cancel upcoming travel plans after a new test came back positive again Wednesday. The far-right leader admitted in a live Facebook video Thursday that he was feeling "a bit wretched at being imprisoned here." Photographs captured him taking a motorcycle for a spin on the palace grounds, stopping at one point to talk to a team of groundskeepers raking leaves—despite his positive test result and the fact that neither he nor the workers appeared to be wearing face masks. —AFP

S Korea sees surge in cases

SEOUL: South Korea reported a surge in new coronavirus infections yesterday, recording its highest figure in nearly four months with dozens of imported cases. The country added 113 new cases, including 86 among people who arrived from overseas, bringing the total to 14,092, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It was the second highest figure since March 31, when the country reported 125 new cases. It was also the first time it has seen more than 100 cases since April 1. All overseas arrivals are required to undergo a two-week quarantine. South Korea endured one of the worst early outbreaks outside China but brought it broadly under control with an extensive "trace, test and treat" program while never imposing a compulsory lockdown that was put in place in much of Europe and around the world. —AFP

In Portland, protests tackle racism, federal crackdown

PORTLAND: Balloons are perhaps not a frequent sight at protests, but the two clutched by Devon Fredericksen in the streets of Portland tell the story—together, they read 57. "I think it's crazy that it's been 57 days and we're still pushing for more change," Fredericksen told AFP. "How much longer is this going to take past 57?"

The city, the biggest in the US state of Oregon, has seen nightly demonstrations against racism and police brutality for nearly two months, initially sparked by the death in Minneapolis of unarmed African American George Floyd. It is also now the scene of a controversial crackdown by federal agents ordered by US President Donald Trump—one that is not supported by local officials. Thursday's mainly peaceful demonstration ended like many before it—in a showdown between protesters and police, which escalated in a haze of tear gas and flash bangs.

Clashes erupted by around midnight, though the two sides were separated by a protective fence reinforced by a barricade. Protesters targeted the federal courthouse, a flashpoint in the demonstrations—hurling trash and launching fireworks over the fence. Blazes sprang up. Federal agents wearing fatigues lobbed tear gas canisters back at demonstrators, used flash bangs and fired pepper balls, after declaring the gathering unlawful. At about 1:30 am, law enforcement

Bill Gates denies conspiracy theories 'he created virus'

WASHINGTON: Billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates has pushed back against some of the conspiracy theories spreading online accusing him of creating the coronavirus outbreak. "It's a bad combination of pandemic and social media and people looking for a very simple explanation," the Microsoft founder said during a CNN Town Hall interview.

Doctored photos and fabricated news articles crafted by conspiracy theorists—shared thousands of times on social media platforms and messaging apps, in various languages—targeting Gates have gained traction online since the start of the pandemic. A video accusing Gates of wanting "to eliminate 15 percent of the population" through vaccination and electronic microchips has racked up millions of views on YouTube.

"Our foundation has given more money to buy

Pompeo calls for 'free world' to triumph over China's 'new tyranny'

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called on "free nations" to triumph over the threat of what he said was a "new tyranny" from China. "Today, China is increasingly authoritarian at home, and more aggressive in its hostility to freedom everywhere else," Pompeo said. "If the free world doesn't change Communist China, Communist China will change us," he said at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba

Linda, California.

Speaking a day after the State Department ordered China to shut its Houston, Texas consulate, Pompeo laid out a stark view of Washington's rivalry with Beijing in strident language that recalled the US Cold War with the Soviet Union. And in an uncommonly virulent attack, he accused Chinese President Xi Jinping of being a "true believer" in the "bankrupt" totalitarian Marxist-Leninist ideology. "His ideology informs his decades-long desire for global hegemony built on Chinese Communism," Pompeo said.

They accuse the tycoon of exploiting the crisis, whether it is to "control people" or make money from selling vaccines. "I'm a big believer in getting the truth out," Gates told CNN. It is not the first time Gates has

moved from behind the fence into the streets, advancing on protesters.

'Everyone should be terrified'

Though most demonstrators initially took to the streets after Floyd's death in late May to call for police accountability and reform, some say they now have different reasons. On Thursday, the hundreds of protesters chanted "Black Lives Matter"—but also "Feds go home." "I never thought that I would have to be out here in the streets of my city having to do this," said one demonstrator, who only gave his first name, Steve. "It seems to me like it's one small step away from full-fledged military occupation of a free city that has every right to be here and to do this." He carried a sign with a quote from a postwar confessional speech by German pastor Martin Niemoller—"Then they came for me."

Steve also said he came out Thursday because he supports the Black Lives Matter movement, and because Floyd's death should frighten people of all races. "Black people have been struggling for an equal existence forever, so that's nothing new," he said. "But the fact that it's been recorded and distributed... (it) is really starting to get through to more people now, how atrocious the situation is," he explained. "I think it's a great thing that the message is getting out, but it had to happen in the most tragic way and the most terrifying way. Everyone should be terrified."

Portland 'being really seen'

Protests in Portland directly linked to Floyd's death started to lose steam in early July. But then reports emerged of federal officers taking demonstrators

vaccines to save lives than any group," Gates said, referring to his eponymous foundation. He has pledged \$250 million in efforts to fight the pandemic, and his foundation has spent billions of dollars improving health care in developing countries over the past 20 years. "So you just turn that around. You say, ok, we're making money and we're trying to kill people with vaccines or by inventing something," Gates continued.

"And at least it's true, we're associated with vaccines, but you actually have sort of flipped the connection," he said, adding he hopes the conspiracies don't generate "vaccine hesitancy." Since the start of the crisis, AFP Fact Check has debunked dozens of anti-Gates rumors circulating on platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram in languages including English, French, Spanish, Polish and Czech. A number of accusations, including posts claiming that the FBI arrested Gates for biological terrorism or that he supports a Western plot to poison Africans, share a common thread.

They accuse the tycoon of exploiting the crisis, whether it is to "control people" or make money from selling vaccines. "I'm a big believer in getting the truth out," Gates told CNN. It is not the first time Gates has



PORTLAND: People gather in protest in front of the Mark O Hatfield federal courthouse in downtown Portland as the city experiences another night of unrest on July 24, 2020 in Portland, Oregon. —AFP

away in unmarked vehicles. The city's Democratic mayor Ted Wheeler has accused federal officers of triggering a dangerous escalation of the situation with abusive and unconstitutional tactics.

As he met with protesters on Wednesday, Wheeler himself was hit by tear gas, an incident he described as "flat-out urban warfare." Trump has now vowed to deploy federal agents in other cities such as Chicago to help tackle an uptick in gun violence. But local officials have warned they would draw the line at any Portland-style deployment. "We're not going to allow the unconstitutional, state-sanctioned lawlessness we saw brought to Portland here in Chicago," Mayor Lori Lightfoot said on Twitter. —AFP



ESCUINTLA: A woman and her daughter walk by a coffin with a sign reading 'You decide, at home or in this box', in the streets of Escuintla municipality, 55 km south of Guatemala City, during a local authorities' campaign to stop the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. —AFP

found himself targeted by conspiracy theorists. When Zika virus broke out in 2015 in Brazil, he was one of several powerful Western figures blamed for the disease. Other rumors claim he is secretly a lizard, an old favorite among online trolls. —AFP

policy speeches by top administration officials, including White House National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, FBI Director Chris Wray and Attorney General Bill Barr, each of whom focused on one facet of the alleged China threat in ideology, espionage and commerce.

It also comes after Pompeo himself declared China's geopolitical claims in the South China Sea fundamentally illegal, and after the Pentagon sent two aircraft carriers to that region to underscore the point. Pompeo said Beijing had taken selfish advantage of US and Western generosity as it implemented reforms and joined the global economy in the past four decades. He strongly criticized previous US administrations for being too complacent with China and US companies for being too compliant with whatever Beijing demands of them. —AFP

International

USA vs Huawei 'Princess': A new phase in high-stakes court case

Meng accuses Trump of 'poisoning' her chances of a fair trial

SHANGHAI: Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou has accused Donald Trump of "poisoning" her chances of a fair trial, according to newly filed documents that outline her emerging strategy in fighting US fraud charges. The Chinese telecom giant's chief financial officer was arrested on a US warrant in December 2018 during a stopover in Vancouver, and court arguments had thus far been focused on the narrow question of whether a US extradition request was lawful.

But a Canadian judge ruled in May that extradition proceedings could go ahead against Meng-the 48-year-old daughter of Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei and known within the company as its "Princess"-and a new phase opens in coming weeks that pivots to the actual charges. Here are the main arguments and other key facts in a case with broad implications for US-China-Canada ties:

The indictment

A 2019 US indictment accuses Meng and Huawei, the world's largest telecoms equipment manufacturer, with conducting business in Iran in violation of US sanctions. US prosecutors say Huawei did so through Skycom Tech, a Hong Kong-registered firm that the Justice Department alleges was a poorly disguised Huawei front company.

The US says Skycom employees had Huawei email addresses and badges, and that Skycom's leadership were Huawei employees, including Meng, who has admitted previously serving on its board. Huawei also at one point owned a stake in Skycom but sold its shares to another company, which the



US accuses Meng and Huawei with Iran link

US says also was controlled by Huawei. The indictment says Meng fraudulently concealed all this from HSBC-a major Huawei banking client for years-and other banks, putting those financial institutions at risk of unknowingly violating Iran sanctions.

Exhibit A

In 2013, Meng made a presentation to an HSBC

executive after the British banking group, worried over potential Iran exposure, requested an explanation. Meng said Skycom was merely a "business partner" in Iran and that Huawei's dealings there did not violate global standards or US law. "These statements were all false," the US indictment says. In new documents that become public this week, Meng's lawyers deny any deception.

'Poisoned'

The new defense filings say the case was "poisoned" by statements from US President Donald Trump that Meng's lawyers say amount to political meddling. In particular, they cite Trump's statement in a media interview two weeks after Meng's arrest that he would "certainly intervene (in her case) if I thought it was necessary" to preserve difficult US-China trade talks.

Meng's team also points a finger at HSBC, which in 2012 was spared US charges for activities including laundering Mexican drug-cartel money and previous Iran sanctions violations. HSBC instead was ordered to pay a \$1.9 billion fine, take corrective steps, and avoid new violations. The new defense filings say HSBC was well aware of Huawei-Skycom activities in Iran but claimed ignorance to dodge further US punishment.

More accusations

The US in February filed additional charges accusing Meng, Huawei and several subsidiaries over an alleged "decades-long" scheme to steal technology from US companies. Huawei offered staff bonuses for such theft and recruited employees at other companies for the same, the charges say. Huawei rejects the accusations-which are not part of the current Canadian court action-as "unfounded".

Collateral damage

Meng's case has added to severe strain in Sino-US ties and created an unprecedented rift between Canada and China. Soon after Meng's arrest, China detained former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor. Espionage charges were filed against them in June, soon after Meng's bid to dismiss the US extradition effort was defeated. Critics accuse China of taking the two men hostage in retaliation over Meng. Former Canadian lawmakers and diplomats urged Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in June to drop Meng's case to free the "two Michaels", but he refused. Trump, meanwhile, has warned of a "complete decoupling" with China amid soaring tensions over Huawei, trade, Hong Kong's status and other disputes. — AFP

Australia rejects Beijing's South China Sea claims, backing US

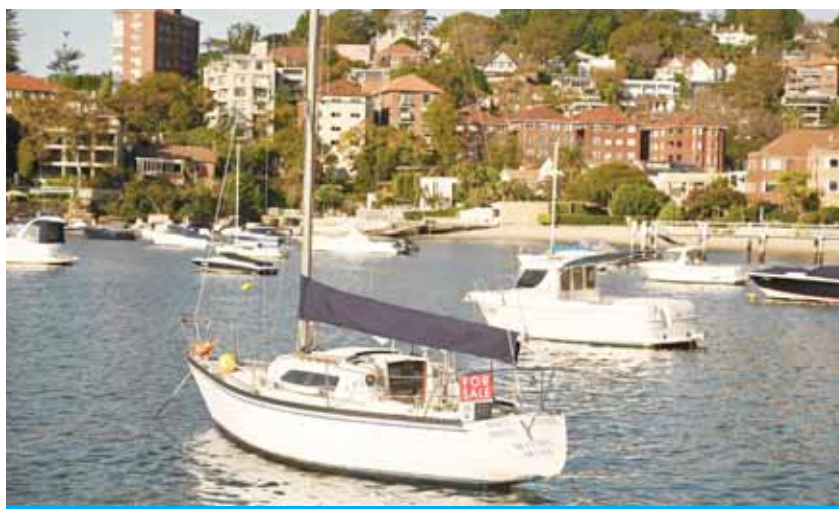
SYDNEY: Australia has rejected Beijing's territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea in a formal declaration to the United Nations, aligning itself more closely with Washington in the escalating row. In a statement filed on Thursday, Australia said there was "no legal basis" to several disputed Chinese claims in the sea including those related to the construction of artificial islands on small shoals and reefs.

"Australia rejects China's claim to 'historic rights' or 'maritime rights and interests' as established in the 'long course of historical practice' in the South China Sea," the declaration read. "There is no legal basis for China to draw straight baselines connecting the outermost points of maritime features or 'island groups' in the South China Sea, including around the 'Four Sha' or 'continental' or 'outlying' archipelagos."

The declaration comes after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

declared Beijing's pursuit of territory and resources in the South China Sea as illegal, explicitly backing the territorial claims of Southeast Asian countries against China's. Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea based on a so-called nine-dash line, a vague delineation from maps dating back to the 1940s.

The latest escalation comes ahead of annual talks between Australia and the United States, with ministers travelling to Washington for the first time since Australian borders were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The meetings come at a "critical time" and it is essential they are held face-to-face, Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Defense Minister Linda Reynolds said in a statement on Saturday. US relations with China have markedly deteriorated in recent months, especially over trade disputes, the coronavirus pandemic and Beijing's crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong.



SYDNEY: A yacht is seen up for sale in Double Bay in Sydney. Australia warned that its economy will shrink at its fastest pace in history during the second quarter, while the budget deficit will be the biggest since the Second World War as the country battles to contain the impact of the coronavirus. —AFP

On Friday, Beijing ordered the US consulate in Chengdu to shut in retaliation for the closure of its Houston mission over accusations of being a hub for intellectual property theft. Payne and Reynolds also penned an article in The Australian newspaper on Saturday, labeling national security

legislation imposed on Hong Kong last month as "sweeping and vague". "We face a public health crisis, economic upheaval and resurgent authoritarian regimes using coercion in a bid to gain power and influence at the expense of our freedoms and sovereignty," they wrote. —AFP

Israel strikes Syria army targets after border unrest

JERUSALEM: Israeli army helicopters struck military targets in southern Syria on Friday in retaliation for earlier "munitions" fire towards Israel from inside Syria, escalating tensions between the bitter rivals. The strikes came hours after America's top general Mark Milley made an unannounced visit to the Jewish state for talks on regional security including Iran, a key ally of the Syrian government.

Israel said early on Friday "munitions" were fired from the Syrian side of the security fence towards Israeli positions in the Golan Heights, which the Jewish state has occupied since the 1967 Six Day war. A vehicle and a civilian building were damaged, according to an earlier Israeli army statement.

In response, "attack helicopters struck military targets in southern Syria belonging to the Syrian Armed Forces". "A number of targets were struck, including SAF observation posts and intelligence collection systems located in SAF bases," the statement said. Syrian state news agency SANA reported that Israeli missiles hit three targets, leaving two

people "lightly wounded" while starting forest fires. Israel did not directly blame Syrian forces for the munitions fire, but said it held the Damascus government responsible for the incident.

Border reinforced

Israel has over the past two days announced a reinforced troop presence on its northern border. Several Israeli media outlets reported that the moves were made in response to an increased threat from the Iran-backed Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah, which has a significant presence in Syria. On Monday, five Iran-backed fighters were killed in an Israeli missile strike south of the Syrian capital Damascus, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Hezbollah, an ally of the Syrian regime, said one of its fighters was among the dead. Israel has launched hundreds of strikes in Syria since the start of the country's civil war in 2011, but rarely comments on such operations. Israel announced an initial enhanced troop deployment to the north on Thursday and additional measures on Friday, hours before the air strikes. The army said that in ordering the redeployment it had "elevated its readiness against various potential enemy actions".

It added that it held the Lebanese government responsible for all actions emanating from Lebanon, without referring to Hezbollah. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, held talks with Israeli

job in Qatar in March, said he had to take out a fresh loan to pay for a flight home in May and was falling ever deeper into debt. "The cycle (of repayment) is broken. My outstanding loan amount has gone up by three times," said Deepkonda, 38, who paid 15,000 rupees for a two-week hotel quarantine before Telangana reduced the fee and period in May as per government guidelines. "I earn 500 rupees as daily wages for farm labour in my village," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Jagtial. "I don't know when I will be able to repay this loan."

Arvinder Singh, Telangana deputy secretary for non-resident Indian affairs, said returning workers were charged for travel and quarantine "as per the government of India guidelines". The official declined to give further details, and did not specify how many returnees had been charged for quarantine. An estimated 9 million Indian migrants work in the Gulf states with most of them in low- and semi-skilled jobs, the United Nations International Labor Organization (ILO) says.

About 500,000 overseas citizens have returned home since May, either flown or sailed home by the government or put on chartered flights sponsored by companies and community groups. Kerala has received the most arrivals of all Indian states - with at least 135,000 people from the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar



AL QAHTANIYAH: A man drives a motorcycle past a makeshift refinery using burners to distill crude oil in the village of Bishiriya in the countryside near the town of Qahtaniya west of Rumaylan (Rmeilan) in Syria's Kurdish-controlled northeastern Hasakeh province. —AFP

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, alternate premier and Defence Minister Benny Gantz and Israel's army chief Aviv Kohavi, during his visit. Gantz said the trip underscored the close security ties between Washington and the Jewish state and warned Israel was "ready for any scenario and any threat". "I do not suggest our enemies to test us," Gantz said in a statement. — AFP



MUMBAI: A medical staff wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) gear rides a motorbike as he arrives to collect blood samples during a screening for plasma blood donation by people recovered from the COVID-19 coronavirus at a school in Dharavi. — AFP

alone, according to government data - yet the state has not imposed a quarantine fee on its returnees. "We did not consider charging people at any point ... even though they are coming from abroad, they are poor, they have lost their jobs," said Amar Fette, Kerala state's nodal officer for COVID-19. — Reuters

Water wars: Mekong River another front in US-China rivalry

BANGKOK: The Mekong River has become a new front in US-China rivalry, environmentalists and officials say, with Beijing overtaking Washington in both spending and influence over downstream countries at the mercy of its control of the river's waters. It's a confrontation in which the Trump administration - which has largely maintained funding for an Obama-era environmental and development programs in the Lower Mekong - is losing ground. The two powers' struggle recently moved into the realm of science - with the US and Chinese governments each touting different reports about whether China's 11 dams on the river were harming nations downstream.

China's dams have given it extensive control of the waters that flow down to Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, which have long depended on the river for agriculture, fisheries, and increasingly for hydropower in Laos. That control enables China to set the agenda for development linked to the waterway, and to exclude the United States from a role after decades of promoting Mekong projects as a way to exert its influence in the region.

"This is becoming a geopolitical issue, much like the South China Sea, between the United States and China," said Witoon Permpongsacharoen of the group Mekong Energy and Ecology Network. The state of the Mekong is an urgent worry for the 60 million people who depend on it for farming and fishing as it flows from China, where it is known as the Lancang, through Southeast Asia before emptying into the sea from Vietnam's delta.

Last year saw record drought, with Lower Mekong river levels the lowest in decades. Fewer and smaller fish catches have been reported for years. A US ambassador in the region described China as "hoarding" water in its 11 dams on its upper portion of the 4,350-km river, harming the livelihoods of millions of people in downstream countries. China also has been stepping up activities of its Lancang Mekong Cooperation group (LMC), a relatively new intergovernmental body that a second US ambassador decried as trying to "sideline" the 25-year-old Mekong River Commission (MRC).

The MRC traces its origins back to US efforts to promote development during the Cold War. It works with the governments of Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam to foster the sharing and sustainable development of the river and its resources. China's foreign ministry told Reuters any US suggestion that Beijing was trying to take over the Mekong conversation was groundless. "Countries outside the region should refrain from stirring up trouble out of nothing," the ministry said.

'Ill intent'

The US-China rivalry broke into a war of words after a Washington-funded study in April concluded that China's dams held back waters during last year's drought. The study by Eyes on Earth, a US-based research and consulting company specializing in water, built a prediction model based on satellite imaging and MRC data that it said showed "missing" waters downstream, starting in around 2010.

US Ambassador to Cambodia Patrick Murphy said he was "quite surprised" at the stark findings. "That was the same here in the region," Murphy told Reuters, referring to the reaction to the revelation. "To learn that a primary source for the diminished level of the Mekong, and changes in the Mekong in the Lower Mekong region, is what's happening upstream in China - with essentially the hoarding of water," Murphy said. — Reuters

'Milking their misery': Indian migrants pay for quarantine

MUMBAI: Coronavirus quarantine charges levied by an Indian state on migrant workers who are being flown home from Gulf nations will drive many returnees further into debt and put them at risk of destitution, campaigners and laborers said on Wednesday. India in May began a drive to repatriate nearly a million citizens from around the world as the pandemic left many jobless and struggling to survive. The arrivals are quarantined in hotels, college hostels or empty houses for about a week.

Most have returned from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, government data shows. The southern state of Telangana is charging at least 8,000 rupees (\$107) to put its returning citizens in quarantine at hotels for a week, raising concern among former Gulf workers who have large debts, little savings and few job prospects at home.

Mahender Deepkonda, who lost his security guard

Business

SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2020

Zain inks agreement with KOTC to offer latest digital solutions

Company committed to offering most advanced technologies to Kuwait's oil sector

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced signing an agreement with the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC), a subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), to offer the latest telecommunications solutions built on the most advanced technologies. The agreement is an extension of the long-term strategic partnership between the two companies throughout the past years.

As part of this agreement, Zain will provide KOTC with a number of the latest telecommunications and networking solutions that are built on world-class technologies to serve the company's technical needs as per the highest international standards. This agreement is an extension to the long-term strategic partnership between the two companies, which reflects Zain's keenness on offering the latest solutions and technologies to Kuwait's oil sector.

Zain expressed its delight to continue the strategic partnership with KOTC as part of the company's continuous efforts to serve the needs

of the Kuwaiti oil sector as per the highest international standards. Zain believes the private sector has a fundamental and active role in supporting the various vital sectors in the country, and as the oil and gas sectors represent one of the backbones of Kuwait's national economy, the company expressed its commitment to offer the latest telecommunications and networking technologies to the various oil institutions in the country, including KOTC.

Zain's fruitful partnership with KOTC is not a new one, and the collaboration today represents yet another step forward to expand this partnership and offer more of the most advanced services and solutions to power KOTC's digital infrastructure. This is especially true as KOTC is one of the oldest oil institutions in Kuwait and the region.

Zain's offering of these services and solutions comes as part of its commitment to offer the latest and most advanced solutions to Kuwait's business community, whether large companies or

SMEs, and as per the highest international standards. This commitment comes in line with the company's digital transformation strategy through which it aims at empowering a more efficient business sector in the Kuwaiti market. Kuwait Oil Tanker Company expressed its pleasure to continue this fruitful co-operation between both companies, as the mentioned contract is considered to be Kuwait Oil Tankers Company's goal towards a comprehensive qualitative shift in the Oil Sector in general and for the Subsidiaries in particular. The enhanced 5G network from Zain and wider area coverage in the region would be beneficial to all KOTC users and vendors, and the company believes this is just the starting point for benefits to pour in.

Zain continuously offers the latest and most advanced services and solutions to showcase its capabilities as an active partner in empowering a smart life, a safe community, and an efficient business sector. The company considers itself a main partner in the achievement of the goals of




the Kuwait National Development Plan (New Kuwait 2035), which is based on five expected outcomes and seven key pillars.

Turkish economy to shrink in 2020, recover next year

ISTANBUL: Turkey's economy is expected to contract this year for the first time in more than a decade as the coronavirus pandemic and related restrictions hit demand, but will bounce back next year, according to a Reuters poll published on Friday.

The median forecast in a July 21-23 survey of 42 economists in and outside the country was for a contraction of 4.3 percent in 2020, with drops in the second and third quarters of 12.2 percent and 3.1 percent respectively. But the Turkish economy is expected to grow next year by 4.5 percent, according to the median forecast.

"We are seeing a U-shaped recovery in the Turkish economy right now ... However, the uncertainties about a possible second wave of the outbreak necessitates a cautious approach to these economic recovery scenarios," said Enver Erkan, economist at Tera Yatirim.

There are downside risks to growth next year, Erkan said, adding that tensions between the United States and China will have an impact too. "I am not saying everything will be alright in 2021, we will be in a process of changing back," he said. The government had forecast 5 percent economic growth this year

before the coronavirus outbreak and has since maintained the economy could still grow this year, following a robust 4.5 percent expansion in the first quarter.

But economic activity declined sharply in the second quarter as Ankara shut schools and some businesses, closed borders and adopted weekend lockdowns to slow the spread of the coronavirus. It has started taking steps to re-open the economy since June.

Policy rate

Turkey's economy last contracted on an annual basis in 2009, by 4.7 percent. From 2010 to 2018, its average growth rate was more than 5 percent thanks mainly to a construction boom driven by cheap capital following the global financial crisis. A currency crisis in 2018 was set off by concerns over central bank independence and tensions between Ankara and Washington. That led to three straight quarters of economic contraction and a modest annual growth rate of 0.9 percent last year.

Since last year, the central bank has cut rates to 8.25 percent from 24 percent, at first to pull the economy out a recession and later to counter the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

In the poll, economists predicted the central bank would cut its policy rate to 8.00 percent by the end of this year. It has bought up government debt at record levels since the end of March in the face of the outbreak. Economists have said the bond buying scheme and use of reserves to boost the Turkish lira have left the central bank with less room to manoeuvre.

"(The central bank moves) bears the risk of raising



ANKARA: Economists said the Turkish bond buying scheme and use of reserves to boost the Turkish lira have left the central bank with less room to manoeuvre. — AFP

inflation, further deteriorating investor confidence and triggering another balance-of-payments crisis," Allianz said in a note. Allianz predicts Turkey will return to its pre-crisis level of GDP in mid-2022. Inflation, which has hovered around 12 percent the last few months, was expected to decline to 10.2 percent by the end of the year and to 9.9 percent by the end of 2021. The current account balance, which recorded a rare surplus last year as the economy slowed, has since returned to a deficit. The deficit is expected to stand at 2.3 percent of GDP this year and next, according to the poll. — Reuters



JOHANNESBURG: Sub-Saharan Africa's economy will contract this year after shutdowns disrupted activity and as daily cases of coronavirus are still rising in the region but a recovery is expected next year, a Reuters poll found on Friday.

Sub-Saharan Africa GDP to contract 3.1% this year

JOHANNESBURG: Sub-Saharan Africa's economy will contract this year after shutdowns disrupted activity and as daily cases of coronavirus are still rising in the region but a recovery is expected next year, a Reuters poll found on Friday. Following months of lockdowns which have muted economic activity a Reuters poll taken in the past week suggested the region will contract 3.1 percent this year but bounce back to around 3.5 percent growth in 2021.

Some countries have begun relaxing restrictions but virus cases are still increasing, unlike in many developed countries that have started to show signs of recovery, so the uncertainty meant the range of forecasts for next year was wide - between flatlining and 4.8 percent growth. South Africa has reported the most cases in Africa, partly reflecting more widespread testing, and it is harder to gauge the full extent of outbreaks elsewhere although there are no signs numbers are falling.

"Growth upgrades dominate in a region where external and fiscal buffers were already substantially eroded. The impact of COVID-19 will reduce growth even further," Standard Chartered wrote in a note.

Nigeria, Africa's biggest economy, was expected to contract 3.7 percent this year but bounce back to 2.0 percent growth next year. Continental peer South Africa was expected to grow 3.5 percent next year following an 8.0 percent contraction this year, a Reuters poll showed last week.

However, Ghana, one of the continents oil exporters, was still expected to grow, expanding 1.9 percent this year and 4.2 percent in 2021. "Despite the obvious downside risks from lower oil prices and headwinds from COVID-19, we believe Ghana has a decent growth outlook and reasonably comfortable external sector metrics relative to other African oil exporters," said Michael Kafe, economist at Barclays. — Reuters

Japan's digital ambitions stuck in piles of paper

TOKYO: Two decades after Japan rolled out an ambitious plan to go digital, the COVID-19 crisis has exposed the government's deeply rooted technological shortcomings as ministries remain stuck in a paper-driven culture that experts say is hurting productivity.

While Tokyo has made "digital transformation" its main policy plank this year, the switch may not prove so easy as bureaucrats from different ministries still aren't able to hold teleconferences together and little of their administrative work can be done online. Analysts say the lack of government digitalization could reduce the incentive for the private sector to go digital in a blow to Japan's efforts to boost productivity.

"Lack of digital investment by the government has hampered productivity and efficiency at the private sector,"

said Takuya Hoshino, senior economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute. In its mid-year policy strategy, the government vowed to accelerate digitalization of its outdated administration, which has delayed delivery of cash payouts to help citizens weather the pandemic.

Much of the problem stems from Japan's preference for paper documents and seal for approval at government offices. "Paper documents and seal are still prevalent. Politicians whom I deal with also prefer face-to-face meetings," a government official told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

Adding to its digital woes is Japan's vertically structured bureaucracy: each ministry as well as local governments, for instance, have developed their own computer systems that aren't compatible with each other. Currently, each ministry has developed its own LAN network with various vendors, making it difficult to hold teleconference with each other because of differences in their on-line security policy, a Cabinet Office official in charge of IT strategy, who declined to be named, told Reuters. — Reuters



TOKYO: In this file photo, parliament building (bottom) is seen in front of office buildings of government ministries in Tokyo. — Reuters

UK companies, shoppers send recovery signals

LONDON: British businesses have reported their fastest upturn in five years and shoppers pushed their spending back to near pre-lockdown levels, a survey and data published on Friday showed.

An early flash reading of the IHS Markit/CIPS UK Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) shot up to 57.1 in July from 47.7 in June, above the 50 threshold for growth for the first time since lockdown began in March. The figure, its highest since June 2015 and above the eurozone's reading for this month, was better than all forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists.

The surge suggested Britain's economy would return to growth in the third quarter after shrinking by more than 25 percent in March and April, Chris Williamson, chief business economist at PMI compiler IHS Markit, said. "Even with the July rebound, there's a long way to go before the output lost to the pandemic is regained and, while businesses grew more optimistic about the year ahead, a V-shaped recovery is by no means assured."

Separate official data showed retail sales jumped back almost to pre-coronavirus lockdown levels in June, when non-essential stores in England reopened. Sales volumes in June leapt by 13.9 percent from May, above all forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists, as spending on clothes and home improvements jumped. But economists said the shopping bounce was probably at the expense of spending on other things, such as eating out or going to the cinema, which remain hit by worries about the virus.

While the PMI indicated a quickening of growth, it did not signal a return to normal levels of output across businesses, which some economists think could take years. A Reuters poll this week suggested the economy could contract by more than 9 percent this year, its biggest downturn since the 1920s.

The PMI's gauge of employment worsened in July, chiming with other indicators that suggest a wave of job cuts is on the way. Government budget forecasters have warned the jobless rate could rise to its highest since the mid-1980s this year. On Thursday, Bank of England interest-rate setter Jonathan Haskel said Britain's economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis could be slow and it would depend on whether people felt confident that it was safe to go out.

Consumer sentiment is still below its level before the coronavirus struck, but employers have turned positive about hiring and investment for the first time since February, separate surveys showed earlier on Friday. The PMI for services, representing most of Britain's economy, rose to 56.6 in July from 47.1. But IHS Markit said demand was weaker than expected for some businesses after the lockdown lifted for bars and restaurants on July 4. Factories also reported a better July. The factory PMI rose to 53.6 from 50.1 in June, its highest level since March 2019. — Reuters

Business

US new home sales recoup losses; business activity picks up in June

Housing market outperforms the broader economy

WASHINGTON: Sales of new US single-family homes raced to a near 13-year high in June as the housing market outperforms the broader economy amid record low interest rates and migration from urban centers to lower-density areas because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The upbeat report from the Commerce Department on Friday followed on the heels of data this month showing a surge in homebuilder confidence in July, and an acceleration in home construction and sales of previously owned houses in June.

ers." New home sales rose 13.8 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 776,000 units last month, the highest level since July 2007. May's sales pace was revised upward to 682,000 units from the previously reported 676,000 units.

New home sales have now recouped losses suffered when non-essential businesses were shuttered in mid-March to slow the spread of the respiratory illness. New home sales are counted at the signing of a contract, making them a leading housing market indicator.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast new home sales, which account for about 14 percent of housing market sales, rising 4 percent to a 700,000-unit pace in June. New home sales accelerated 6.9 percent from a year ago in June.

But a resurgence in new COVID-19 infections, which has forced some authorities in the hard-hit South and West regions to either shut down businesses again or pause reopenings, could slow the housing market momentum. In addition, the labor market recovery appears to have stalled, with the number of Americans claiming unemployment benefits rising last week for the first time in nearly four months. A staggering 31.8 million people were receiving unemployment checks in early July.

Job losses have disproportionately affected low-wage workers, which could explain why the housing market is doing much better than other sectors of the economy, which slipped into recession in February.

Historically low mortgages

Sky-rocketing coronavirus cases are casting a shadow over business activity, though output is stabilizing.



WASHINGTON: Sales of new homes in the United States jumped 13.8 percent in June from the previous month, the Commerce Department said on Friday.

A separate report on Friday from data firm IHS Markit showed its flash US Composite PMI Output Index, which tracks the manufacturing and services sectors, rose to a reading of 50.0 this month from 47.9 in June. The increase ended five straight monthly declines.

A reading above 50 indicates growth in private sector output. IHS Markit said some service providers were struggling with the reintroduction of lockdown measures. The survey's flash composite new orders index slipped to a reading of 49.5 this month from 49.9 in June. Stocks on Wall Street were trading lower as US-China tensions and fears over mounting COVID-19

cases weighed on investor sentiment, erasing all gains for the benchmark S&P 500 index so far this week. The dollar slipped against a basket of currencies. US Treasury prices fell.

Still, the fundamentals for housing, which accounts for just over 3 percent of economy, remain favorable. The 30-year fixed mortgage rate is averaging 3.01 percent, close to a 49-year low, according to data from mortgage finance agency Freddie Mac. There are more first-time buyers in the market, with the average age 47 years. "This demographic is less likely to have been impacted by unemployment, will be more financially secure and have a better credit history versus younger members of the population who are more likely to work on lower wages in retail and hospitality," said James Knightley, chief international economist at ING in New York.

"Older home buyers are also more likely to be looking for an investment property or a vacation home." In June, new home sales soared 89.7 percent in the Northeast and jumped 18 percent in the West. They increased 7.2 percent in the South, which accounts for the bulk of transactions, and advanced 10.5 percent in the Midwest. The median new house price increased 5.6 percent to \$329,200 in June from a year ago. New home sales last month were concentrated in the \$200,000 to \$400,000 price range.

There were 307,000 new homes on the market in June, down from 311,000 in May. At June's sales pace it would take 4.7 months to clear the supply of houses on the market, down from 5.5 months in May. More than 60 percent of the homes sold last month were either under construction or yet to be built. — Reuters



New virus cases cast shadow on businesses

The coronavirus crisis has led companies to allow employees to work from home. The emergence of home offices and schooling has fueled demand for spacious homes in small metro areas, rural markets and large metro suburbs. Housing market strength could help to shore up the retail sector as homeowners buy furniture, garden equipment and other supplies. "Housing has a strong immune system," said Michelle Meyer, chief US economist at Bank of America Securities in New York. "The shock disproportionately impacted the lower-income population who are less likely to be homeowners."

Burgan Bank signs partnership with Best Al-Yousifi

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced that it has signed exclusive two years partnership with one of the leading electronics stores in Kuwait, Easa Hussain Al-Yousifi and Sons Co "Best Al-Yousifi Electronics", whereby Burgan Bank customers will be offered monthly exclusive discounts on selected products. Burgan Bank's prepaid and credit cardholders can now receive their preferred and premium quality products for the best prices through the revamped online and mobile platform. In line with the requirements of our customers, we have provided online shopping with "Best Al-Yousifi" to enjoy a safe and comfortable shopping experience, especially in the exceptional circumstances that the world is currently experiencing and the continuation of the "Covid-19" pandemic.

Treating the bank's loyal customers to their favorite items alongside better access to the latest trends, the new collaboration provides a variety of discounts ranging on certain products every month. Customers will be entitled to the discounts on selected products that have been chosen by Burgan Bank every second Saturday of the month followed by the chosen products by "Best Al-Yousifi" on the fourth Saturday of every month. Saket Jajoo, Head of Cards at Burgan Bank said, "We are delighted to be partnering with Al-Yousifi Company which currently owns the largest chain of electronic stores in Kuwait. This partnership fits perfectly with our ongoing goal of providing our customers with the best products and deals and best all-round service. This deal is the latest in our long-standing relationship with Al-Yousifi Company, in which we have



Saket Jajoo



Wael Deeb

secured numerous offers and promotions for the benefit of our clients in the past."

Saket continued: "We are always keen to provide the best exclusive offers for our valued customers to serve their lifestyle needs. Through the online shopping service available at 'Best Al-Yousifi', customers will have the opportunity to explore the latest devices available and make their purchases in a secure and easy manner at any time and from anywhere."

Wael Deeb, Electronics General Manager at Easa Hussain Al-Yousifi Company, spoke about the recently concluded agreement with Burgan Bank stating that Best Al-Yousifi Electronics, as one of the pioneers of its kind in Kuwait, strives to enhance its position in the market by bringing special collaborations and offers with established names to serve all types of customers. The cooperation will serve Burgan Bank's prepaid and credit card holders with special offers as they make purchases through the dedicated website."

Wael added, "Burgan Bank is considered one of the leading banks in Kuwait that addresses gaps and innovates its services accordingly throughout the year. We look forward to maintaining our relationship and presenting more offers in the future together."

Abdulwahab Abdullah Al-Wazzan, Ali Ahmad Far, Monther Abdulrahman, Saad Abdulla Al-Freih, Rehab Lahdan Yousef, Azizah Mohamed Abdulrazaq, Fahad Shareedah Al-Adwani, Reem Abdulwahed Zaman, Abdulrahman Yousef Al-Mutairi, Kawthar Abdullah Al-Sayed, Ali Abdulaziz Al-Saffar And Sami Dheyab Al-Tamimi.

In addition, AUB held the postponed weekly draw of 20 May 2020 and announced 20 winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Ahmad Sahbaan Alchaar, Wadha Naser Al-Hajri, Eman Abdulmohsen Anwar, Muwaidhi Mohammad Al-Assaf, Waddah Adeeb Al-Amoudi, Khalifah Mubarak Al-Mailam, Kannankirath Kochu Abdulrazak, Ahmad Eissa Al-Dousari, Mohammad Khalil Al-Foudari, Bashar Salah Eddine Arafah, Afaf Abdulraouf Al-Laiti, Ibrahim Ghareeb Mohd, Nabil Hashem Abdullatif, Basmah Faisal Hasan, Noureyah Ahmad Al-Fahad, Khalid Nabil Al-Ajil, Jamal Habeeb Al-Dhameer, Abdualqader Mohammad Al-Shahadah, Baqer Sayed Al-Husaini, And Bandar Jandal Al-Azmi.

All postponed draws were 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.

S&P affirms Gulf Bank rating at A-/A-2

KUWAIT: S&P Global Ratings has affirmed Gulf Bank's Issuer Credit rating at A-/A-2. According to the recently published S&P Global Ratings commentary, the outlook revision follows the same action on Kuwait on July 17, 2020. The sovereign action primarily reflects the risks stemming from fiscal pressure including the likely depletion of the General Reserve Fund, the government's main source of budget funding, while alternative financing arrangements are not yet in place.

S&P Global Ratings stated that Gulf bank's financial profile is resilient to the current economic downturn, assuming a global recovery in 2021. Other positive factors that has led to the A-/A-2 long term and short term issuer credit rating affirmation includes the Bank's significant accumulated provisions (a coverage ratio of almost 500 percent at year-end 2019), sound market position as the fourth largest commercial bank in Kuwait factors in its improving revenue and business stability, comfortable forecasted risk-adjusted capital ratio and domestically comparable funding and liquidity levels.

KFH: 205% growth in opening gold account via FHome in H1 2020

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) achieved growth in customers interest in the service of opening gold account via FHome of 205 percent, during the first half of 2020, compared to the same period last year. The customers' demand for online gold purchases service increased by 358 percent, while the online gold sale service recorded a growth in the size of customer use, which reached 125 percent, for the same period.

The high demand from customers to benefit from KFH digital services via FHome on the website or through the mobile application, reflects the efficiency and quality of KFH's digital applications, services and its electronic platforms. This confirms the success of the bank's efforts in meeting customers' aspirations and requirements, while giving them a unique and sustainable banking experience in all circumstances.

Benefits of a gold account

Among the advantages of the gold account, the ease of opening the account, completing purchases and sales via FHome, choosing from gold biscuits with different weights from 10 grams to 100 grams. In addition to the ease of owning the purest gold (with a purity of 999.9), and the flexibility of storing gold at KFH, free and as per highest standards of security. Gold biscuits can be obtained through banking branches or KFH Go, with complete reassurance when buying KFH gold biscuits exported and approved by its security mark and sealed by the Ministry of Trade and wrapped according to the best security specifications. KFH provides competitive prices and flexibility in purchasing or selling.

Digital banking services

KFH Customers benefited from Swift GPI service through FHome, opening KFH gold account, online gold purchase and sell, KCC dividend subscription, transfer to KFH Trade, opening deposits, opening bank account, checking the PINs for credit and debit cards, money transfer to credit card, cheque deposit online, cardless withdrawals using QR code through mobile, or using ID, KYC update, update profile service, checking installment and dues online, transfer to KFH accounts, transfer to other banks as well as several high-quality digital banking services. KFH continues its efforts to increase its investment in FinTech and digital banking within the highest standards of efficiency and quality. This confirms the banks insight forward in efforts to enhance the customer's digital experience.



Dalal Al-Dousari

Commenting on S&P's credit rating announcement, Dalal Al-Dousari, Gulf Bank's Head of Investor Relations said: "We are pleased to receive the affirmation of our Bank's Issuer Credit Rating at "A-" by S&P Global Ratings. "The Bank's revised outlook from Stable to Negative is mainly reflecting the recent Kuwait sovereign action, which was expected, as Gulf Bank is considered a systematically important Bank and as part of the Kuwaiti banking system, it's naturally affected by the local economic situation. We hope that the economic downside pressures mainly resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and other fiscal pressures will be elevated within the foreseeable future," added Al-Dousari.

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of its credit worthiness and financial strength internationally as it is rated "A" by all four leading credit rating agencies. In addition to S&P's recent rating action, Gulf Bank has a Long-term IDR of "A+" with a "Stable" Outlook by Fitch Ratings, a Long-Term Deposits Rating of "A3" with a "Stable" Outlook by Moody's Investor Services and a Long-term Foreign Currency Rating of "A+" with a "Stable" Outlook by Capital Intelligence Ratings.

Boubyan launches Fitbit Pay & Garmin Pay services

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has recently announced the launch of its new payment service for its Visa debit, credit and pre-paid cardholders, using Fitbit and Garmin smart watches. This comes as a part of the bank's keenness on providing the best digital services to its customers. In this context, Yousef Al-Majed, Executive Manager - Cards Products stated: "This new service will enable our customers to make their payments via NFC-enabled P.O.S. machines using Fitbit Pay and Garmin Pay inside and outside Kuwait."

"This service is part of the UTap service being used by Boubyan Bank's customers in their contactless payment transactions, which was provided by Boubyan for the first time in Kuwait back then.", Al-Majed added. Al-Majed went on to stress that: "The creative perspective of our services and products builds on a realistic understanding of customers' needs, and cares for their ambitions while coping with the accelerating technological developments the world is currently witnessing, especially in light of the repercussions of COVID-19 crisis that have greatly changed our daily lives." "In this crisis, using innovative NFC-enabled digital payment methods has become a pressing need in a bid to avoid the direct use of cash in line with the instructions of Kuwait health authorities and the Central Bank of Kuwait," Al-Majed explained.

Simplicity and ease of use

Al-Majed pointed out that "The most prominent aspects about Boubyan Bank's services and products are their simplicity and smoothness. By using Fitbit Pay and Garmin Pay, all customers' purchases are fully protected against fraud. They can also shop without the need to save their cards' numbers on the smart watches used by customers in the process, which will provide extra protection for the data of banking cards." He went on to add: "This service can be activated by the bank's BIN for VISA debit and credit cards (including prepaid cards), and users may now add their cards to either payment service to make payments using their smart devices."



Yousef Al-Majed

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American
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Dr. Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj

ENT Consultant, Laryngologist

- ◆ Kuwait Board of Otolaryngology.
- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship, McGill University- Canada.
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck surgery.
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.
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- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

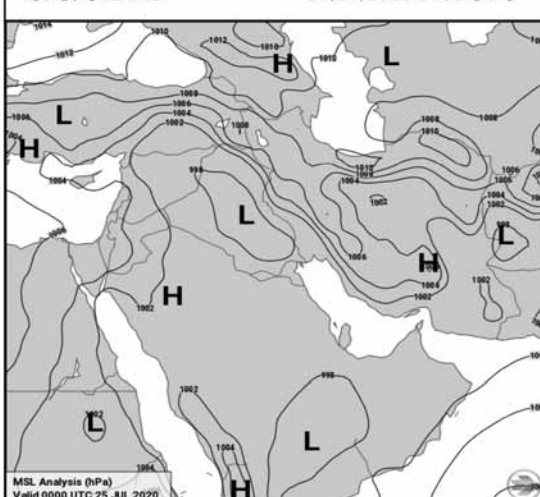
BY DAY: Hot and Partly cloudy to cloudy and Relatively humid with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind with speed of 08 - 40 km/h with a slight chance for rain that might be

BY NIGHT: Hot to rather hot and Humid with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind later on with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for fog forming over

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
-----------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	35 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	44 °C	34 °C
ABDALY	45 °C	34 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	45 °C	35 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	40 °C	33 °C
SALMIYAH	36 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	45 °C	32 °C
WAFRA	46 °C	32 °C
SALMY	46 °C	34 °C

SFC. CHART 25/07/2020 0000 UTC



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	07/26	Hot and Humid over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	45 °C	35 °C	SE-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Monday	07/27	Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	49 °C	37 °C	NW-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	07/28	Very hot and Humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	48 °C	35 °C	SE-S	10 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	07/29	Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	47 °C	36 °C	SW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:33
Sunrise	05:04
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:45
Isha	20:13

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	33 °C
MAX. RH	71 %
MIN. RH	20 %
MAX. Wind	SE 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Saji Yohannan, Indian Passport No. S0582077, have changed my given name as Saji and surname as Yohannan for all purposes henceforth. 24.07.2020.

I, Simi Saji Yohannan, Indian Passport No. N8641775, have changed my given name as Simi Saji and surname as Yohannan for all purposes henceforth. 24.07.2020.

I, Saji Yohannan, Indian Passport No. S0582077, have changed my daughter's name Kezia Saji Yohannan, Indian Passport No. S4690175, given name as Kezia Saji and surname as Yohannan for all purposes henceforth. 24.07.2020.

I, Saji Yohannan, Indian Passport No. S0582077, have changed my daughter's name Sharon Saji Yohannan, Indian Passport No. S4690176, given name as Sharon Saji and surname as Yohannan for all purposes henceforth. 24.07.2020. (C5752) 26-7-2020

URGENTLY REQUIRED

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Engineer Irrigation Engineer Snr. Technical Assistant Project Secretary 	7-10 Years Bachelor's Degree	FOR A LEADING COMPANY IN KUWAIT Email: hrkuwait28@gmail.com All Academic and Experience Certificates certified by the official authorities along with the originals must be presented upon request.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horticulture Foreman Irrigation Foreman 	5-7 Years Diploma	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety Officer Landscape Designer 	NEBOSH/IOSH (5-10 Years) Auto Cad (5-7 Years)	Trade Certificate 5-7 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pipe Fitter (Irrigation/HDPE/PVC/PPL) Heavy Equipment Operator (G.C.C. Driving License) 		Experience 5 Years

Airlines

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

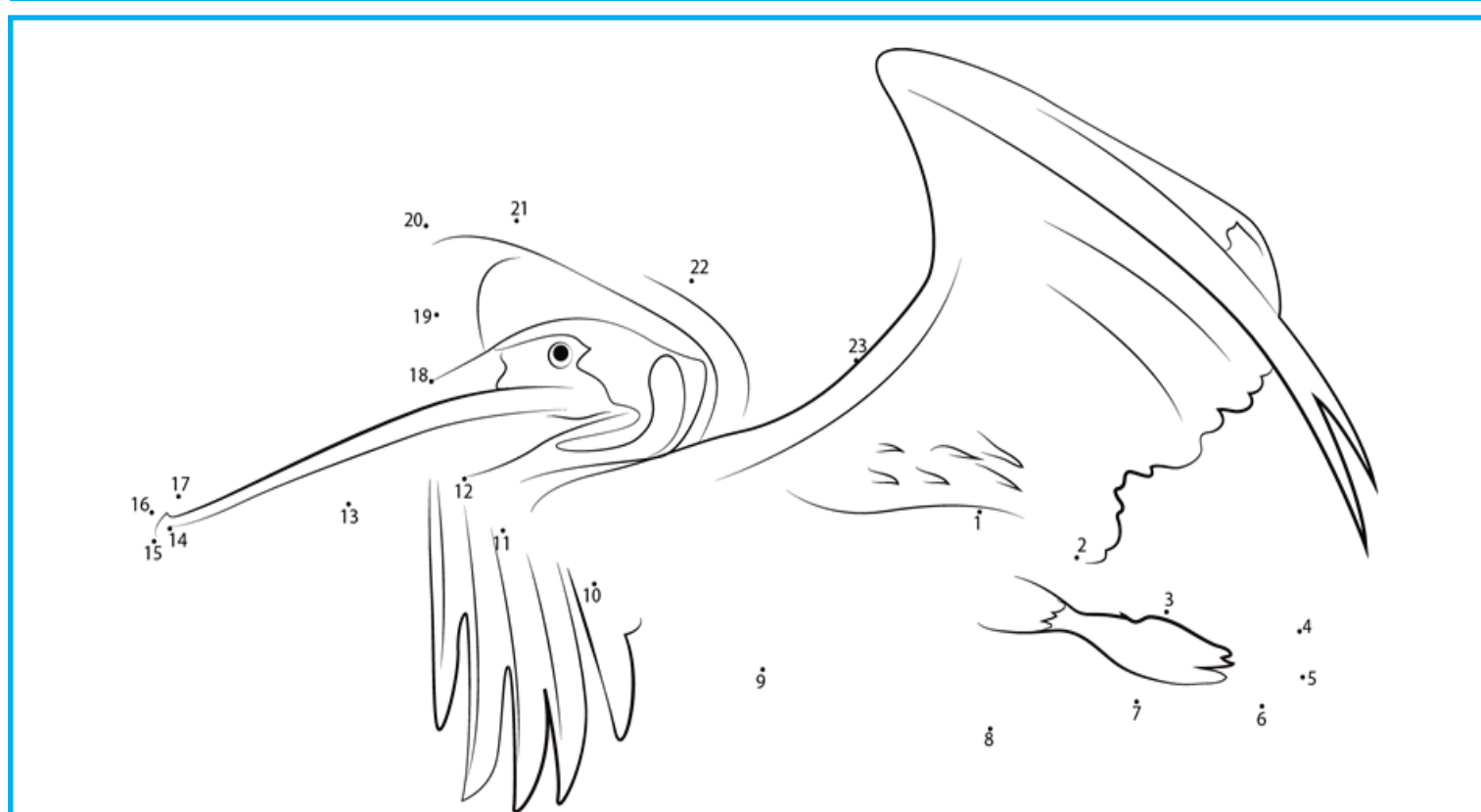
Word Scramble

Veterans Day Word Scramble

On November 11th of each year, Americans honor their citizens that have served in the armed forces. Can you unscramble the Veterans Day vocabulary words? Watch out! One of them is made up of two words.

ADEML	_____	OPTIART	_____
CEEVIRS	_____	AYODLHI	_____
EERANVT	_____	SHATKN	_____
RTEITUB	_____	IACFRERO	_____
AGOUOCR	_____	STYHIOR	_____
OREH	_____	IEMANR	_____
PADRAE	_____	RAVBE	_____
OHRN	_____	ACEEP	_____
RPEID	_____	VYAN	_____
MILMEARO	_____	SELRIDS	_____
RMLYIITA	_____	MERVONEB	_____
YTUD	_____	TCOMBA	_____

Join the Dot



STAR TRACK

<p>Aries (March 21-April 19) You might have to do a bit of adjusting today in order to experience a harmonious understanding with the people around you. Aries. Adopt a feistier and more aggressive attitude toward love and romance if you want to receive any attention in that area. Feel free to go for the gold. Sitting back and lying low will most likely get you nowhere. Take the initiative. Be brave and go out on a limb.</p>	<p>Cancer (June 21-July 22) Today is a very powerful day for you, Cancer. You may find yourself going to extremes in certain areas of your life, especially when it comes to your romantic nature. You could be pulled way over to one side and then to the other. At first you may give it your all and the next minute completely withdraw. Try to find a balance in this seesaw game.</p>	<p>Libra (September 23-October 22) There may be a great deal of charge in your battery today, Libra, but you could be unsure about where to put all this energy. Get up and do some exercise. Give your body the workout it needs. Remember what it's like to sweat. You'll feel much better about yourself afterward, and you'll be much more likely to continue on a healthy path if you push your body to its limits.</p>	<p>Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Consider going on a trip with a close loved one, Capricorn. A long-term break from the current reality may be just the thing needed to infuse a new blast of romance into your life. If you're unattached, you might find that going on an adventure to a foreign country results in meeting the love of your life. Broaden your horizons and look to new ways of thinking and believing.</p>
<p>Taurus (April 20-May 20) Your love life is a kaleidoscope of shapes and colors today, Taurus, full of complicated patterns and ever-changing displays of beauty. A new perspective is revealed everywhere you turn, and you learn something new about yourself and the people you're involved with. Remain open to partnership on multiple levels in which you experience different types of commitment with different people.</p>	<p>Leo (July 23-August 22) You may not understand what all the fuss is about today, Leo. Suddenly there's a fire burning all around and you may be left questioning the motivations behind others' actions. You may not be able to make heads or tails of the situation, so don't waste your time trying to figure it all out. Let it be. Take a hint from others that you may need to add a bit of spark to your life to spice things up a bit.</p>	<p>Scorpio (October 23-November 21) Let your love light shine today, Scorpio. There's a great deal of passion in your heart that needs to be expressed. Let your romantic nature take the reins, and allow your creative nature to blossom. Be assertive with regard to the ones you love. Muster your courage and feel free to take the lead. Be loving and caring without being smothering and clingy. Give others room to breathe!</p>	<p>Aquarius (January 20- February 18) Today is one of those days in which if you want love, you need to go out and get it, Aquarius. Don't waste your time sitting at home and sulking. Be adventurous and take that first step. You're the only one who has the ability to pull yourself out of the rut, so do it. There is a great deal of passion behind your romantic intentions at this time, Cupid, so be careful where you point your arrow.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21-June 20) Turn up your aggressive nature regarding your romantic life, Gemini. You may find that a small spark is all that's needed to rekindle a smoldering fire. You may be going through a period of transformation right now when it comes to this area of your life. If so, consider all the options and don't shy away from a new way of relating. Your partner may have the very answer you seek.</p>	<p>Virgo (August 23-September 22) Get your broom out of the closet today, Virgo. Your job is to brush away the cobwebs from the corners of your emotional bedroom. Use the intense transformative energy of the day to say goodbye to stale and unsatisfactory relationships that have left a bad taste in your mouth. Ignite the fire of a new situation and consciously try to establish new habits so that old patterns don't continue to repeat themselves.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) People might be a bit argumentative when it comes to romantic issues today, Sagittarius. Your instincts could be telling you to restrain yourself and hold back, while the prevailing winds are urging you to strike out for new ground. Realize that your heart may need a bit of freedom and detachment. Your sensitive nature could be causing you to read too much into the issues at hand.</p>	<p>Pisces (February 19-March 20) There may be a great deal of charge in your battery today, Pisces, but you could be unsure about where to put all this energy. Get up and do some exercise. Give your body the workout it needs. Remember what it's like to sweat. You'll feel much better about yourself afterward, and you'll be much more likely to continue on a healthy path if you push your body to its limits.</p>



Artist Salman Al-Ammari performing.



Artist Salman Al-Ammari.

Salman Al-Ammari to become a LAPA board member

Artist Salman Al-Ammari expressed his joy on joining the board of directors of LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA). "I have been cooperating with LOYAC since its inception and presented many concerts with LAPA", Al-Ammari said expressing gratitude for being selected as board member. Al-Ammari added that LAPA plans

to organize a number of arts and cultural workshops with the aim of linking youth to ancestors' heritage. In this regard, LOYAC's chairperson, Farea Al-Saqqaf said that LOYAC had been cooperating with Al-Ammari since launching LAPA adding that he is a welcomed addition to the board.



LOYAC's chairperson Farea Al-Saqqaf.

BOMBED AND LOOTED: YEMEN BATTLES TO SAVE ITS HERITAGE

The two facades of the National Museum in the Yemeni city of Ta'ez bear testament to the ravages of a war that has consumed the Arabian Peninsula country. One side has been beautifully restored to its former grandeur, recalling a traditional palace from earlier eras. The other is pocked with damage, crumbling away to reveal collapsed floors and shattered walls. The refurbished side is resplendent with curved ornamental mouldings juxtaposed with intricate ochre brickwork, reminiscent of the style of old Sanaa, one of Yemen's four UNESCO World Heritage sites.

including the capital Sanaa.

Thousands have died, millions have been displaced, and disease and famine stalk the cities and villages, in what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Yemen's rich cultural heritage has not been spared. Inside the museum in Ta'ez, a city ringed by mountains, ancient cooking utensils and priceless manuscripts lie exposed on wooden tables draped with old cloth.

Antiquities sold online

"The museum is packed with rare antiquities, including manuscripts and stone sculptures, swords and shields," Damini told AFP. "We've recovered some of it, but significant pieces are still missing," said the director as he stood in a courtyard piled with bricks and steel girders. He said he was in contact with the authorities and UNESCO to update them about the restoration works, but also to "recover articles smuggled out of the country". "It's a difficult process," said Mohamad Al-Sayani, head of Yemen's General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM), which works with UNESCO.

"We have two governments, a country in a state of war—and the trafficking of antiquities existed long before the conflict." Though there are no figures for the number of antiquities stolen, the authorities and UNESCO have undertaken inventories at several of Yemen's museums. Restoration work is also underway at historical sites in Sanaa, Zabid, Shibam and Aden, Sayani said. The war has "massively affected" archaeological sites, said Yemeni archaeologist Mounir Talal. He recounted the bombings of old Sanaa, of a museum in Dhamar that used to house thousands of artefacts, and of Ta'ez's Al-Qahira citadel, which blends into the mountainside. "Palaces which date back to the Ayyubid dynasty (12th and 13th centuries) and the Rasulid dynasty (13th to 15th centuries) were,



A picture shows the extensive damages at the National Museum.

unfortunately, destroyed inside the citadel," he said. "We find stolen Yemeni antiquities for sale online or at public auctions," Talal added, giving the example of a grand stone-hewn throne from the Saba kingdom, best known for the Queen of Sheba.

'Great pride'

"How did it get out? We don't know, but it was up for auction in Europe where it might have already been sold," said the archaeologist. Some Yemeni treasures have resurfaced in private collections in Gulf countries, including Qatar and Kuwait, said Jeremie Schiettecatte, an expert in the archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula at France's National Centre for Scientific Research. He said he believed the destruction of Yemeni heritage elicited less international outcry than the desecration of artefacts in Syria and Iraq because of the involvement of Saudi Arabia, a major market

for Western arms, in Yemen's conflict. "There's a very strong link between the Yemenis and their heritage—including pre-Islamic heritage," he said. "(There is) great pride in the period when southern Arabia (modern-day Yemen) was the most advanced society on the Arabian Peninsula."

At the end of June, a renowned French archaeologist and his husband were charged as part of a sprawling investigation into the trafficking of antiquities from the Middle East, including Yemen. A world away from the Paris probe, Ta'ez's museum plans to re-open its doors in 2023, by which time it is hoped the conflict will have abated. "Archaeological sites are being neglected and they are a major part of our appeal to tourists," said Ta'ez resident Hisham Ali Ahmed. "I'm hoping for a return to a normal life and a state that takes care of antiquities."—AFP



A vendor displays a traditional dagger known as Janbiya for sale.



A picture shows a facade, that has been restored, at the National Museum in Yemen's third city of Ta'ez.—AFP photos

Established as an Ottoman palace, then a residence for one of Yemen's last kings, it became a museum in 1967. It has since been "bombed" and "pillaged" according to its director, Ramzi al-Damini. Ta'ez, in Yemen's southwest, is under government control but surrounded by Huthi rebel forces. The renovated wings of the museum were restored in 2019 with assistance from the World Monuments Fund. Yemen's bloody five-year conflict pits pro-government forces, including a Saudi-led coalition, against the Iran-backed Huthi rebels who have conquered much of the country's north,



A section of the Ashrafiya Mosque is pictured.



A picture shows a facade, that has been restored, at the National Museum in Yemen's third city of Ta'ez.



A vendor arranges traditional daggers known as Janbiya and other items for sale.



A vendor displays a traditional dagger known as Janbiya for sale.



A vendor displays a traditional dagger known as Janbiya for sale.



A picture shows damaged artifacts at the National Museum.



A picture shows a facade that is not destroyed at the National Museum.



DIOR showcases Italian folklore in catwalk show at dusk



Christian Dior hosted a live but audience-free fashion show on Wednesday in the Italian city of Lecce, in a dazzling celebration of local crafts and traditions that included a dance spectacle in the middle of the baroque main square. Luxury labels are tentatively returning to the catwalk after the coronavirus pandemic, and Dior streamed the show live without the usual array of celebrities in the front row. But the French brand upped the ante by staging an extravaganza with a live orchestra and dancers performing a modern take on a traditional tune, while models wound their way through a gallery of lights called Luminarie in Lecce's Piazza del Duomo.

Outfits in the so-called "Cruise" collection included embroidered dresses with firework patterns, in a nod to Italian folklore, while artist Pietro Ruffo's wildflower drawings were translated onto colourful dresses. Dior's Italian creative chief Maria Grazia Chiuri said she had sought to showcase the craftsmanship of the Puglia region - her father's homeland - and help it endure by casting it in a fresh light. "I understood in this process where my passion and my origins are from and why I am so attracted to this type of work, this embroidery, this tradition," Chiuri told Reuters in an interview. "I saw my grandmother, my aunts, women used to sit outside their homes and create this beautiful work."

LVMH-owned Dior called on the Costantine Foundation, a centre involved in self-assertion of women, to manufacture cloth like macramé and lace in natural colour, handcrafted with old looms in the Italian countryside. One ivory dress, bejeweled with dozens of butterflies and roses in bobbin lace, was handmade by one of the few women still able to master

Models present creations for Dior at the end of the 2021 Dior Croisiere (Cruise) fashion show in Lecce, southern Italy.—AFP

the old lacemaking technique. Other looks featured shearing jackets, tie-dye prints or a black tulle dress sewn with ears of wheat in raffia.—Reuters



Sports

Photo of the day



Red Bull Sailing Team performs during the training camp in Musannah, Oman. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

IPL cricket to start Sept 19 in UAE

NEW DELHI: The star-studded Indian Premier League cricket will start on September 19 in the United Arab Emirates, its chairman told AFP on Friday, adding that players may need to undergo quarantine.

Although India's cricket authorities are still awaiting government approval, Brijesh Patel said the world's richest cricket tournament will be played for 51 days with the final on November 8.

Under current UAE coronavirus rules, all travellers must self-isolate for two weeks after arriving. "Whatever are the UAE rules for tourists will be followed by everyone," Patel told AFP.

"The IPL will take place between September 19 to November 8. This is confirmed and the rest we will decide in the (IPL) governing council meeting next week."

Top stars ranging from England's Ben Stokes to Australians Steve Smith and David Warner have been lined up by the eight IPL teams on lucrative contracts. Any quarantine period could clash with domestic seasons.

Patel said the Board of Control for Cricket in India will prepare operating procedures to combat the virus threat during the tournament.

"It is going to be a full-fledged 51-day IPL. We are in touch with the ECB — Emirates Cricket Board. And we will get clearance from the Indian government soon," he said.

The 13th year of the IPL was meant to have started in March but has been repeatedly postponed because of the pandemic. Dates were finally set after the T20 World Cup, which was scheduled to start in Australia in October, was postponed this week.

The IPL is the BCCI's main revenue earner. It has said it would lose more than \$500 million if this year's tournament had not gone ahead. —AFP

Formula One scraps US, Brazil, Mexico and Canada races

US Grand Prix in Austin scheduled for October 23

PARIS: The Grands Prix in the United States, Mexico, Brazil and Canada have been scrapped this year but three races in Europe have been added to the coronavirus-affected season, Formula One said Friday.

There will be an F1 debut for Portugal's Portimao track and a return for Germany's Nurburgring and Imola in Italy.

The US Grand Prix in Austin, Texas, had been scheduled for October 23, with a race in Mexico City a week later and Brazil on November 13, but with coronavirus infections rising in all those countries, organisers have abandoned attempts to hold races there.

The race in Canada had originally been scheduled for June, but plans to hold it later in the season have been scrapped due to Canadian travel restrictions.

The race at the historic Nurburgring circuit, which last saw F1 action in 2013, will take place on October 11.

F1 said it still intended to hold between 15 and 18 races "and end in the Gulf in mid-December".

The sport was hit hard by the pandemic, with the season postponed just hours before the opening practice of the traditional curtain raiser in Melbourne in March.

The season finally got underway this month with two races in Austria before moving to Hungary last weekend.

The next two races will take place at Silverstone in England on August 2 and August 9.

All events so far have been behind closed doors.

"We are pleased that we continue to make strong progress in finalising our plans for the 2020 season and are excited to welcome Nurburgring, Portimao and Imola to the revised calendar," said Chase Carey, chief executive of Formula One.

"We also want to pay tribute to our incredible partners in the Americas and look forward to being back with them next season when they will once again be able to thrill millions of fans around the world."

Imola, whose race will be on November 1, last held an F1 race in 2006 while Portugal's most recent grand prix was 24 years ago at Estoril near Lisbon.

The Algarve circuit in the south of Portugal intends to welcome fans for the October 25 race. "There will be spectators," promised Portugal's tourism minister Rita Marques.

"We are working on a number of scenarios depending on the health situation."

Organisers of the Russian Grand Prix at Sochi on September 27 have also said they will allow fans to attend.

Revised 2020 Formula One championship calendar:

July 31-August 2: British Grand Prix (Silverstone)

August 7-9: 70th Anniversary Grand Prix (Silverstone)

August 14-16: Spanish Grand Prix (Barcelona)

August 28-30: Belgian Grand Prix (Spa-Francorchamps)



NUERBURG: File photo taken on July 7, 2013, drivers take the first corner after the start at the Nurburgring race track in Nuerburg during the German Formula One Grand Prix. The Nurburgring race track will host a German Formula One Grand Prix again on October 11, 2020, its was announced on July 24, 2020. —AFP

September 4-6: Italian Grand Prix (Monza)
September 11-13: Tuscan Grand Prix (Mugello)
September 25-27: Russian Grand Prix (Sochi)
October 9-11: Eifel Grand Prix (Nurburgring)

October 23-25: Portuguese Grand Prix (Portimao)
October 31-November 1: Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix (Imola). —AFP

Pope leads England revival in WI decider

MANCHESTER: Ollie Pope's superb 91 not out helped England recover on the first day of the deciding third Test against the West Indies at Old Trafford on Friday with the batsman admitting "it's a weight off my shoulders".

England were in trouble at 122-4, with second Test century-makers Dom Sibley and Ben Stokes, as well as captain Joe Root, all out cheaply.

But Pope, who ended the day in sight of his second Test hundred and the under-pressure Jos Buttler, 56 not out, shared an unbroken stand of 136 that left England on 258-4 when bad light forced an early close.

Pope's effort was all the more admirable as his first three innings this series had yielded scores of just 12, 12 and seven.

He was unbeaten on another 12 as England completed a 113-run win in the second Test, also at Old Trafford, to leave this three-match contest all square at 1-1.

"It does feel like a little bit of a weight off the shoulders," Pope told Sky Sports.

INTENSE ENVIRONMENT

International cricket's first series since the coronavirus lockdown has seen both teams confined to on-site hotels at both

the Ageas Bowl, the venue in Southampton for the first Test, and Old Trafford.

Pope said he had struggled with being unable to return home between Tests. "To be honest, I've found it challenging being in such an intense environment — not being able to get out and see family," explained the 22-year-old Surrey batsman.

"You go back to your room and you're back looking over the cricket pitch." West Indies captain Jason Holder won the toss and his decision to field was defended by opening batsman Kraigg Brathwaite.

"There was moisture in the wicket, and we thought as a team we wanted to utilise it," he said. "They (England) got a good partnership, but I don't think we're out of it, to be honest." England brought in express quick Jofra Archer and veteran spearhead James Anderson for the dropped pair of batsman Zak Crawley and left-arm paceman Sam Curran.

Opening batsman Sibley, who made a near eight-hour hundred in the second Test, fell for a five-ball duck when lbw to fast bowler Kemar Roach.

ROOT RUN OUT

In came Root, who gifted his wicket on 17 when, going for a risky single, he was run out by Roston Chase's direct hit from backward point. Stokes, now the world's top-ranked all-rounder after innings of 176 and 78 not out in the second Test, was effectively playing as a specialist batsman after a quad injury cast doubt over his

bowling fitness.

He was, however, brilliantly set-up by Roach who, having tested him with a couple of short balls, clean bowled the left-handed batsman with one that seamed back.

Rory Burns made a composed fifty before the recalled Rahkeem Cornwall, belying his 6ft 6in and some 22 stone frame, held an outstanding one-handed slip catch following a fiercely-edged cut off fellow spinner Chase.

Pope had a lucky break on 30 when a miscued pull off Shannon Gabriel evaded a diving Chase, running back from mid-on.

World Cup winning wicket-keeper Buttler, whose Test place was under threat following 13 innings without a fifty, upped the tempo by hoisting spinner Cornwall for two sixes in four balls.

"The way Jos plays, if he's in, he's going to be scoring runs pretty fluently," said Pope, who entered the 90s with an elegant on-driven four off Roach. Archer had been omitted from the second Test after making an unauthorised trip home that breached England's bio-secure "bubble".

But even though no fans are allowed into grounds in a behind closed doors series, this year's #RedForRuth initiative still raised £282,385 (\$361,243) on Friday.

Former England captain Andrew Strauss helped establish a charity after his wife Ruth died from a rare form of lung cancer affecting non-smokers in 2018. The Ruth Strauss Foundation also assists families facing the death of a parent. —AFP

Werenski takes lead at depleted 3M Open

LOS ANGELES: Former reality television contestant Richy Werenski took advantage of a depleted field to storm into the lead at the PGA Tour's 3M Open in Minnesota on Thursday with an eight-under-par 63.

Werenski, who secured entry to his first PGA Tour event at the 2015 Barbasol Championship after winning a reality television program, reeled off nine birdies to lead by one at TPC Twin Cities in Blaine, outside Minneapolis.

The 28-year-old, who has yet to win on the PGA Tour, seized the lead on the final hole of his round, making a 16-foot birdie putt to go one clear of Michael Thompson, who shot a seven-under-par 64.

Werenski had started slowly, a birdie on the second nullified by a bogey five on the par-four third hole.

But he reeled off consecutive birdies on the 5th and 6th holes before rolling in a 28ft birdie putt on the 7th.

A further birdie on the ninth left him four under at the turn, and four more birdies on the back nine left him alone at the top of the leaderboard.

Thompson, 35, chasing only his second win on the PGA Tour after victory at the 2013 Honda Classic, carded a bogey-free round which

included seven birdies.

Thompson's flawless round included a 35ft birdie putt on his sixth hole of the day to move to three under. Back-to-back birdies coming down the stretch on his 14th and 15th holes left him at seven under.

Seven players are two shots off the pace after carding six-under-par 65s. That group includes Tony Finau, who went on a blazing run after the turn to move up the leaderboard.

Finau was two under over the front nine after a solid start, but then erupted with five birdies to move into contention. Finau's birdie spree included puts of 21ft, 12ft and 11ft. The only blemish was a bogey five on the par-four seventh.

Finau was joined on six under by Ryan Moore, Max Homa, Matthew Wolff, Nick Watney, Bo Hoag and China's Zhang Xinjun.

Teeing off on the back nine, Zhang, 33, got off to a flying start with an eagle on the par-five 12th, making the green in two and draining a 31ft putt for a three.

Three more birdies left him at five under at the halfway point, and despite a bogey on his 11th hole, two more birdies left him well-placed at six under.

Most of golf's elite have skipped this week's tournament in Minneapolis, and a line-up with only a smattering of star names was further depleted Thursday when former world number one Dustin Johnson withdrew after shooting a seven-over-par 78. Johnson pulled out from the remainder of the tournament citing a sore back. —AFP

Sports

Neymar wins French Cup final for PSG, Mbappe suffers ankle injury

Just 2,805 spectators attend including French President Emmanuel Macron

PARIS: Neymar scored the winning goal as Paris Saint-Germain defeated 10-man Saint-Etienne 1-0 in the French Cup final on Friday, the first competitive fixture in the country since March 11 following the coronavirus pandemic.

However, coach Thomas Tuchel faces an anxious wait over the fitness of Kylian Mbappe ahead of next month's Champions League quarter-final against Atalanta after the France star limped off in tears during the first half with an ankle injury.

The World Cup winner was later seen emerging from the tunnel on crutches following a dreadful challenge that resulted in the dismissal of Saint-Etienne captain Loic Perrin. "Everyone is worried. Everyone who saw the foul is worried. Of course I'm worried," said Tuchel.



A minute's
applause
was held

"I'm very happy because we won but we have to stay patient because we don't have any news. I think he will undergo tests tonight." PSG secured the first of a potential three trophies this summer, claiming a record-extending 13th French Cup with the League Cup final against Lyon to come next Friday before the resumption of their European campaign in Portugal.

"It was very difficult, which is perhaps the best thing," added Tuchel, whose side added to their Ligue 1 title awarded in April after the season was ended prematurely. The final at the Stade de France was the first official match in one of Europe's top football nations to allow fans to attend since March, albeit in severely restricted numbers with just 2,805 spectators — including French President Emmanuel Macron — inside the 80,000-seater venue.

A minute's applause was held ahead of kick-off for the victims of COVID-19, which has claimed the lives of over 30,000 people in France, and in support of frontline workers. PSG had racked up 20 goals without reply in three friendlies building up to the final, but Yann M'balli's crunching tackle on Neymar in the first minute suggested no such goodwill would be afforded by Saint-Etienne in their first French Cup final appearance since 1982. The challenge set the tone for a fractious opening period and Denis Bouanga was inches from firing Saint-Etienne ahead when his strike rebounded back off Kevor Navas's left-hand post.

European football and survival up for grabs in EPL finale

LONDON: The Premier League will finally reach the end of its longest season today with plenty still on the line at both ends of the table. Manchester United and Leicester face each other in a shootout for a place in the Champions League next season with Chelsea also hoping to secure their place in the top four.

Wolves and Tottenham are vying for one place in the Europa League. And at the bottom it could not be closer with one goal separating Aston Villa just outside the relegation zone from Watford in the bottom three, while Bournemouth also have a chance of beating the drop.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE DREAMS

Leicester fell out of the top four for the first time since September in midweek after a run of three wins in 13 games either side of the coronavirus shutdown.

However, United's and Chelsea's failures to win on Wednesday means the door is still open for Brendan Rodgers's men to salvage all the good work they did early in the season with victory on home soil on Sunday.

Leicester are hampered by injuries to James Maddison, Ben Chilwell and Ricardo Pereira, but have had a full week to prepare in stark contrast to United's packed schedule. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men have looked jaded in the past week in losing 3-1 to Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-finals and being held 1-1 at home by West Ham. United have overturned an eight-point deficit to Leicester since the restart, but Rodgers is hoping it is the Red Devils who fold under the pressure. "We would love to be able to do that but when you are a club like Manchester United, or one of those super clubs, there is a need to be in the Champions League for many reasons," said Rodgers.

Chelsea just need a point at home to Wolves to seal Champions League football next season, but should Frank Lampard's men lose, then a draw between Leicester and United would see the latter two finish in the top four.

SPURS SURGE TOWARD EUROPA LEAGUE

Whoever misses out on the Champions League between United, Chelsea and Leicester will be guaranteed fifth and a place in the Europa League next season. Wolves are looking to go one better than their fine first campaign back in the top-flight last season by finishing in the top six and have the potential to upset Chelsea's push for the Champions League at Stamford Bridge.

However, any slip from Nuno Espirito Santo's men would give Spurs the chance to move into sixth. Jose Mourinho's side have won their last three and will be confident ahead of a trip to Crystal Palace, who have lost their last seven games.

Seventh could still be good enough for European football next season, but that depends on Chelsea beating Arsenal in the FA Cup final on August 1.—AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the French Cup final football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Saint-Etienne (ASSE) on July 24, 2020, at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. — AFP

NEYMAR SLAMS HOME

Unfazed by that scare, PSG led on 14 minutes as Mbappe burst into the area after an exchange with Angel Di Maria and Neymar crashed home the rebound via the underside of the crossbar after a fine save from Jessy Moulin.

Bouanga twice forced Navas to turn away while Moulin produced a sensational one-handed stop to tip over from Di Maria, earning plaudits from the Argentine himself.

Saint-Etienne's hopes of fighting back were hampered midway through the first half though when the

veteran Perrin, on likely his final appearance for the club, was sent off for a dreadful challenge on Mbappe.

He required lengthy treatment but was forced off after his right ankle was trapped between the legs of Perrin, whose yellow card was upgraded to red following a VAR review.

Emotions boiled over with five players booked in the aftermath following an ugly melee, but the greater concern for PSG will be the severity of Mbappe's injury. The France star reappeared from the tunnel on crutches in the second half, with less than three weeks before PSG's Champions League tie against Atalanta on August 12.

Bournemouth staring down the barrel in relegation tussle

LONDON: The Bournemouth players and coaching staff face "the biggest game" of their careers today as they battle to extend their surprising five-year stay in the Premier League, manager Eddie Howe says.

Bournemouth were widely tipped to make an immediate return to the second-tier Championship in their maiden season amongst the elite in the 2015/16 campaign, but Howe and the Cherries have defied expectations. However, the mathematics looks especially tough for them to extricate themselves this time round. They are second from bottom, three points adrift of safety and end their season with a challenging away trip to Everton today.

To preserve their status, Howe's side have to beat Everton and hope their goal difference is better if both third-from-bottom Watford and Aston Villa lose their matches. Watford and Villa have a three-point advantage over Bournemouth. Villa — who head Watford on goal difference — travel to West Ham on the back of

'We are not arrogant' Klopp tells Lampard

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has hit back at his Chelsea counterpart Frank Lampard by suggesting the Blues boss still has a lot to learn after branding the new English champions "arrogant."

During Liverpool's 5-3 win between the sides on Wednesday, Lampard became embroiled in a row with Klopp's assistant Pepijn Lijnders over a foul that led to the free-kick from which Trent Alexander-Arnold scored to make it 2-0.

"Fair play to Liverpool Football Club, they've won the league, but also don't get too arrogant with it," Lampard said in a post-match interview. Klopp rejected that suggestion and said Lampard should learn to let any confrontations during the 90 minutes go at full time.

"You cannot hit me and my bench with something like that because we are not arrogant," said Klopp. "Frank was obviously in a really competitive mood and I respect that a lot. From my point of view in this sort of situation you can say pretty much what you want. For me, after the game it is completely over."

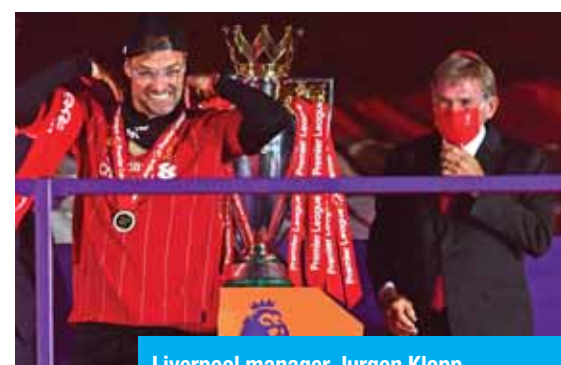
"I said a lot in the past because it is pure emotion, he came here to win the game or get a point, to make Champions League qualification, and I respect that a lot. But what he has to learn is to finish it with the final whistle and he didn't do that."

A clip of the foul-mouthed argument between the benches went viral with Lampard's words clearly audible in an empty stadium. "I think in terms of the lan-

guage I used, I do regret that, because I think these things get replayed a lot on social media," said Lampard.

"I've got two young daughters who are on social media, so I do regret that," Lampard later accused Liverpool's coaching staff of breaking a touchline code of conduct. "What is the code? I think when you speak between managers, and there are lots of decisions that go and you can hear it more clearly now without the crowd," said the Chelsea boss. "And lots of managers will call for decisions and it may be right or wrong. And then you speak with each other. But when people on the bench jump up and want to speak across to myself and then smirk and smile and then continue to do so for quite a while; I think that is past the code."

On the field, Lampard has to concentrate on getting at least a point from today's visit of Wolves to Stamford Bridge to ensure Chelsea secure a place in the Champions League next season. The visitors need a victory to guarantee a place in the Europa League next season.—AFP



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp

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Moulin kept Saint-Etienne in with a remote shot of ending their 43-year wait for a seventh French Cup title, repelling Mauro Icardi and Di Maria before spreading himself superbly to deny Pablo Sarabia. The goalkeeper even raced forward for a late corner but PSG held firm to atone for last year's defeat in the final by Rennes on penalties, clinching the trophy for the fifth time in the past six seasons.

"It's really tough to take, especially like that. We had chances and we pushed them," said Moulin. "There are things to be pleased about but losing a final is always hard to digest." — AFP

ed to have going into the last game," he said at his press conference.

"Results went our way in the week and we're above the dotted line (the bottom three) at the moment." The most important thing is to be above that dotted line on Sunday and we know we have to win to guarantee that. "We'll be going all-out to win."

Smith said the crammed match schedule since the resumption after the coronavirus lockdown had impacted on everyone but he drew on some advice from home to illustrate how his side had stood up to it.

"My wife has always told me that you cope with whatever is thrown at you and you deal with it," he said. "These lads have managed to deal with it so far." Morale appears to be in short supply at last season's FA Cup finalists Watford following the surprise sacking of manager Nigel Pearson on Sunday.

Goalkeeper Ben Foster said confidence was "so, so crazy low" following the 4-0 home hammering by Manchester City earlier this week. However, Hayden Mullins, who is caretaker manager for the second time this season, denies this is the case. "The game was a tough one to take because we got beat and secondly because Villa picked up points," he added. "That is how Ben felt at the time, I wouldn't say there is a blanket kind of feeling for everyone in the squad, it was probably just how he was feeling." — AFP

Atalanta's slim Serie A title hopes dim a little more

MILAN: Atalanta's slim hopes of pipping Juventus to the Serie A title dimmed further Friday after a 1-1 draw at AC Milan. The team from Bergamo stay second in the table, five points behind Juve but have just two games left.

Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta had routed Milan 5-0 when the teams met for the first time this season in December. However, they were a goal down after just 14 minutes on Friday thanks to a well-judged free-kick from Hakan Calhanoglu. Milan, who were on a run of three successive wins in the league, were indebted to goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma for saving a weak 24th-minute penalty from Ruslan Malinovskyi. However, Duvan Zapata brought the visitors level 10 minutes later.

Matteo Gabbia failed to clear and Colombian forward Zapata pounced to equalise. Milan stay sixth in the table, one point behind Roma and on course for a Europa League spot next season. Meanwhile, Crotone became the second club to be promoted to Serie A after Benevento thanks to a 5-1 win over Livorno.—AFP

14 Formula One scraps US, Brazil, Mexico and Canada races



15 Neymar wins French Cup final for PSG, Mbappe suffers ankle injury



15 'We are not arrogant' Klopp tells Lampard



OAKLAND: Ramon Laureano #22 of the Oakland Athletics is forced out at second base as Tommy La Stella #9 of the Los Angeles Angels turns a double play in the sixth inning during opening day at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum in Oakland, California. —AFP

Bieber fans 14, Indians top Royals

Olson's 10th-inning slam lifts A's over Angels

CLEVELAND: Shane Bieber struck out 14 batters to set an Opening Day franchise record and lift the host Cleveland Indians to a 2-0 victory over the Kansas City Royals on Friday. Bieber (1-0), who was last year's All-Star Game Most Valuable Player, scattered four hits over six innings before exiting after 97 pitches. His strikeout total eclipsed the Opening Day club record set by Gary Bell, who fanned 12 against Detroit on April 19, 1960. Oscar Mercado had a run-scoring single and Cesar Hernandez followed with an RBI double during a two-run fifth inning for the Indians, who won 12 of the 19 meetings against their American League Central rival in 2019. Danny Duffy (0-1) retired nine in a row at one point before running into trouble in the fifth inning for the Royals, who fell short in the debut of manager Mike Matheny.

ATHLETICS 7, ANGELS 3 (10 INNINGS)

Oakland became the first team to win a game under Major League Baseball's new speed-up, extra-innings rules, getting a grand slam from Matt Olson with one out in the bottom of the 10th inning to defeat visiting Los Angeles. The walk-off ending capped a busy night for Joe Maddon, who began his fourth stint as Angels manager — first as the full-time skipper — in a game that ended with the visitors employing a five-man infield after Oakland loaded the bases. The Angels sent the game into extra innings after Jason Castro bombed a solo home run to right field off Oakland closer Liam Hendriks in the top of the ninth inning, tying the game. The A's took advantage of the free inning-opening baserunner by starting Marcus Semien on second base. He was at third while Ramon Laureano, who was hit by a pitch, was at second, and Khris Davis, who had walked, was at first when Maddon brought in left-hander Hoby Milner to replace Hansel Robles (0-1) and he delivered the game-ending pitch to Olson.

CUBS 3, BREWERS 0

Kyle Hendricks became the first Chicago starter in 46 years to go the distance on Opening Night, firing a three-hit shutout as Chicago held off visiting Milwaukee. Hendricks fanned nine and walked none in a 103-pitch masterpiece, not allowing a single runner past first base. No. 9 hitter Orlando Arcia accounted for all three hits with singles in the third, sixth and ninth

innings. The dominant outing gave David Ross, who helped the 2016 Cubs snap a 108-year World Series title drought, a win in his debut as the team's skipper.

ASTROS 8, MARINERS 2

Michael Brantley clubbed a three-run home run in support of Justin Verlander, who worked six solid innings to pace Houston past visiting Seattle. Brantley drove home Jose Altuve and Alex Bregman by drilling a 2-1 splitter from Seattle's Zac Grotz into the right field seats with one out in the fifth inning. Grotz entered in relief of Marco Gonzales (0-1), who departed after surrendering an RBI single to Altuve that tied the game 2-2 earlier in the inning. Verlander (1-0), making his 12th career Opening Day start, proved effective and efficient. He surrendered just three hits to go along with one walk and seven strikeouts.

PADRES 7, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Eric Hosmer drove in a franchise Opening Day-record six runs with a pair of two-out, three-run doubles to lead San Diego over visiting Arizona. Padres starter Chris Paddack (1-0) held Arizona scoreless on four hits over six innings. After getting double plays to escape of jams in each of the first two innings, Paddack retired 12 of the last 13 hitters he faced. Madison Bumgarner (0-1) ended his Diamondbacks debut allowing three runs on four hits and three walks in 5 2/3 innings. He struck out four.

RED SOX 13, ORIOLES 2

J.D. Martinez and Kevin Pillar each drove in three runs as Boston rolled past visiting Baltimore. Nathan Eovaldi (1-0) stepped in for Boston and was solid as the fill-in starter with Chris Sale and Eduardo Rodriguez unavailable. He gave up one run on five hits in six innings, not allowing that run until his last frame. Non-roster invitee Tommy Milone (0-1) was the fill-in starter for Baltimore. Milone substituted for 2019 All-Star John Means (arm fatigue). Milone lasted just three innings, giving up four runs on four hits.

CARDINALS 5, PIRATES 4

Yadier Molina drove home a key run in his 16th consecutive Opening Day start as St. Louis held off visiting Pittsburgh. Cardinals starting pitcher Jack Flaherty (1-0)

allowed two runs in seven innings to earn the victory. He picked up where he left off last season, when he went 7-2 with a 0.91 ERA over his last 15 starts. Tyler O'Neill and Dexter Fowler hit solo homers off Pirates starter Joe Musgrove (0-1), who allowed three runs in his 5 2/3 innings.

BLUE JAYS 6, RAYS 4

Cavan Biggio slugged a three-run homer as Toronto produced consecutive three-run innings to beat Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Fla. The Blue Jays tallied three times in the fourth inning before Biggio hit the team's first homer with a three-run shot off Tampa Bay ace Charlie Morton (0-1) in the following frame. Reliever Jordan Romano (1-0), a native of Canada, earned his first career win in relief of starter Hyun-Jin Ryu.

DODGERS 9, GIANTS 1

Max Muncy hit two home runs, and Ross Stripling tossed seven strong innings as Los Angeles won for the second time in two nights, beating visiting San Francisco. Stripling (1-0) gave up one run on four hits with no walks and seven strikeouts in seven innings. Muncy and Corey Seager each had three hits for the Dodgers. Justin Turner and Will Smith added two RBIs apiece.

San Francisco went with an opener Friday as Tyler Anderson was announced a few hours before game time. Anderson (0-1) tossed 1 2/3 innings, giving up two runs on three hits with three walks and no strikeouts.

RANGERS 1, ROCKIES 0

Lance Lynn tied a franchise record with nine strikeouts by an Opening Day starter. Rougned Odor drove in the only run of the game, and Texas held on to beat Colorado to open its new stadium in Arlington. Lynn (1-0) allowed just two hits and walked four over six innings and threw 108 pitches. Jose Leclerc threw six straight balls to start the ninth but rebounded to strike out two and nailed down the save for Texas. David Dahl had all three of Colorado's hits and German Marquez (0-1) carried a no-hitter into the sixth inning in his first Opening Day start.

METS 1, BRAVES 0

Yoenis Cespedes, appearing in his first game in 734 days, hit a home run in the seventh inning to snap a scoreless tie and lift host New York over Atlanta.

Cespedes, who hadn't played since July 20, 2018, due to two heel surgeries and a broken right ankle, homered deep into the left field seats on the second pitch he saw from Chris Martin (0-1). Seth Lugo (1-0), who threw two one-hit innings in relief of starter Jacob deGrom, earned the win. Justin Wilson had a one-hit eighth, and Edwin Diaz worked around a one-out walk to Freddie Freeman in the ninth to earn the save.

TWINS 10, WHITE SOX 5

Max Kepler smacked two solo home runs, Jake Cave, Jorge Polanco and Luis Arraez had two-run singles, and visiting Minnesota opened the season with a victory against Chicago. The teams combined for 10 runs, 10 hits and three home runs in the first two innings, as starting pitchers Lucas Giolito of the White Sox and Jose Berrios of the Twins struggled. Twins reliever Trevor May (1-0) was the winner in relief, logging one walk and one strikeout in one scoreless inning. May followed a shaky start from Berrios, who gave up five runs in four innings.

MARLINS 5, PHILLIES 2

Jesus Aguilar homered, Corey Dickerson and Miguel Rojas each added two hits, and Miami defeated host Philadelphia. Marlins starter Sandy Alcantara tossed 6 2/3 effective innings, giving up three hits and two runs, one earned, while striking out seven and walking two. Alcantara (1-0), the club's lone All-Star last season, threw 87 pitches, 56 for strikes. Philadelphia right-hander Aaron Nola, who was making his third straight Opening Day start, lasted 5 1/3 innings and allowed five hits and four runs. Nola (0-1) struck out seven and walked one.

REDS 7, TIGERS 1

Sonny Gray struck out nine over six strong innings, newcomer Mike Moustakas homered to highlight a three-hit, four-RBI game, and host Cincinnati opened the shortened season with a rout of Detroit. Gray topped the 1,000-career strikeout mark while allowing one run on three hits and two walks. Gray's only blemish was a deep, solo homer by C.J. Cron in the fourth inning. Joey Votto homered in the fifth inning for one of his two hits for the Reds. Nick Castellanos finished 1-for-2 with a double and an RBI in his Cincinnati debut. —Reuters