



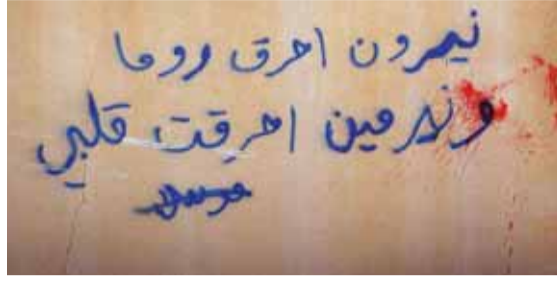
7 China reports virus spike as global cases pass 16m



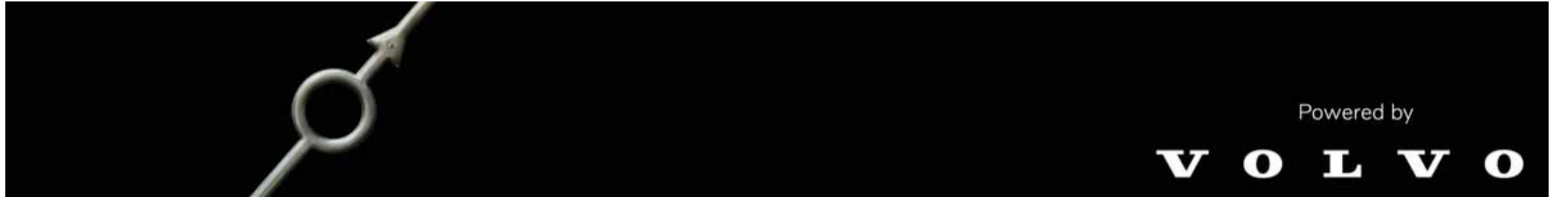
9 stc records KD 136.4m revenues, KD 15.9m profit during H1 2020



13 In Iraq's Kurdish capital, all's fair in love and walls



16 Ronaldo powers Juve to ninth straight Serie A title



US lobbies for extension of arms embargo against Iran

US envoy says Gulf dispute has gone on for too long, thanks Kuwait for mediation

Amir's health 'very assuring': Speaker

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday that reports about the health condition of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, undergoing medical treatment in the US, are "very assuring". His statement came in the National Assembly after a meeting with HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Ghanem also said he has conveyed to the US ambassador to Kuwait the appreciation of the National Assembly to the United States for sending a medical transport plane to take HH the Amir for treatment and for the care they provided to Sheikh Sabah. HH Sheikh Sabah departed aboard the flying hospital to the US

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By Jamie Etheridge

KUWAIT: Failure to extend a UN arms embargo on Iran could result in an intensification of conflicts in the region, a US envoy warned while on a diplomatic tour of the Gulf yesterday. "If the Security Council fails to extend the arms embargo by October 18, Iran will be able to freely buy and sell these weapons," Brian Hook, US special envoy for Iran, said during a virtual press conference in Kuwait.

In place for 13 years, the arms embargo prevents the Islamic Republic from purchasing conventional weapons including attack helicopters, submarines, missiles, fighter jets and other military hardware. Its removal could result in ever greater threats to energy infrastructure and freedom of navigation, Hook explained. An increase in the purchases of arms and weapons by Iran could also stoke a regional arms race, the special envoy suggested.

Prior to the press conference, Hook

met HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah to discuss the upcoming UN Security Council vote. Hook's visit is his second to the region. He has also visited Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates as well as Israel to lobby for the embargo's extension.

There are five permanent members of the UN Security Council - China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States - who all hold veto power. Russia has said that it will not support an extension of the embargo. "Therefore, our position is clear, we are against such attempts, and we do not see any grounds for these attempts to succeed," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at a news conference in Moscow following a meeting with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif last week.

In Kuwait, the US special envoy also thanked Kuwait for its ongoing role in mediating in the Gulf dispute.



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah receives US Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook yesterday. — KUNA

"This dispute has gone on for too long and ultimately it harms our shared regional interests in stability, prosperity and security," Hook said. He noted that Washington supports unity among GCC members and wishes HH the Amir health, reaffirming that the

US supports the Amir's efforts for Gulf unity. "The United States also remains as committed to the security and stability of Kuwait as we were 30 years ago," he added, in reference to the US role in supporting Kuwait's liberation from Iraqi occupation.

News in brief

Two Baghdad protesters dead

BAGHDAD: Two demonstrators died in Baghdad early yesterday after being shot with tear gas canisters in confrontations with security forces, medics said, the first victims of protest-related violence under Iraq's new Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi. On Sunday, demonstrators staged angry rallies over power outages in the capital and several southern cities, where temperatures topping 50 degrees Celsius have overwhelmed electricity generators. In a statement overnight, Kadhemi's office acknowledged "unfortunate events" in protest squares, but insisted security forces had been instructed not to use violence unless absolutely necessary. — AFP

Qatar to bid for 2032 Olympics

DOHA: Qatar will seek to host the 2032 Olympic Games, it said yesterday, joining a crowded field. India, Australia's Queensland state, the Chinese city of Shanghai and a potential joint bid between South and North Korea are also being touted for the 2032 summer games. "Today's announcement marks the beginning of a meaningful dialogue with the IOC's Future Host Commission to explore our interest further and identify how the Olympic Games can support Qatar's long-term development goals," Qatar Olympic Committee president Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani said in a statement. —AFP (See Page 16)

Iran moves mock US carrier

DUBAI: Iran has moved a mock-up US aircraft carrier to the strategic Strait of Hormuz, satellite images show, suggesting it will use the look-alike vessel for target practice in war games in a Gulf shipping channel vital to world oil exports. The use of dummy American warships has become an occasional feature of training by Iran's Revolutionary Guards and its naval forces, including in 2015 when Iranian missiles hit a mock-up resembling a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier. One of the images taken on July 26 showed an Iranian fast attack boat moving toward the model US carrier in the strategic waterway. — Reuters

MP slams 'money laundering' influencers

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Riyadh Al-Adasani called yesterday on authorities to boost monitoring of suspected money laundering operations and urged them to refer such issues to the public prosecution. His comments came after public prosecutor Dherar Al-Asousi issued a decision to freeze the accounts of a company and 10 popular influencers and ban them from leaving the country.

Gazans get first taste of coffee to-your-door

RAFAH: With a practiced hand, a courier balances a tray of steaming cups and with the other grips his bicycle handlebars as he weaves between cars in the crowded Gaza Strip. Shaaban Hamuda's modest coffee on wheels business is giving the coastal Palestinian territory its first taste of a delivery service inspired by the likes of Uber Eats or Deliveroo. There are no vividly-colored bulky backpacks as is customary in Europe and North America, just a tray and a few cups of hot Arabic coffee, covered with foil to avoid splashing and cooling.

Hamuda, 31, a business management graduate, launched his two-wheeled hot drink service in May, from his small stand near Rafah market, in the southern Gaza Strip. A stove, a few saucepans and dozens of cardboard cups: Everything to prepare cafe au lait, Arabic coffee and mint tea. Customers only need to contact him on WhatsApp for one of his employees to prepare the order.

Then a delivery man gets on his cycle and rushes the steaming drink to the customer. "People like what is new. I have received encouragement from many people," said Hamuda, who charges only for the beverage. Delivery is free. "We use cycles to attract the attention of the public and it has proven to be effective," he told AFP. It was through watching YouTube that the father-of-two came across the trend of home-delivery meals by bicycle, a service that has grown popular worldwide.

The young entrepreneur reports satisfactory rev-

enues, but said sales have fallen since the outbreak of COVID-19. The Gaza Strip, with an estimated population of two million, has been relatively spared by the pandemic, with just over 75 cases, one of whom has died. But as elsewhere the crisis has depressed economic activity in Gaza, where poverty and unemployment rates are both above 50 percent. The coastal enclave has been under an Israeli-enforced blockade since 2007, the year the Islamist movement Hamas took power.

The decision was taken over reports by the finance ministry's financial intelligence unit, which constantly monitors any suspicious bank account movements.

The 10 influencers are very famous in Kuwait and some of them are TV presenters. Adasani recalled that he had cautioned authorities in Dec 2018 about the suspicious activities of such influencers, saying that transactions by some of them exceeded KD 5 million a year, which is a lot bigger than their type of business. He said some of the suspects made highly suspicious financial transactions that indicated some illegal business behind them, adding that they have been dealing with unlicensed companies abroad.

Head of the National Assembly committee that investigated alleged violations in the oil sector, MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei, yesterday launched a



GAZA: Shaaban Hamuda gives instructions to his delivery employee carrying a tray of steaming cups of coffee in front of his small stand near Rafah market on July 13, 2020. — AFP

scathing attack on the CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC) Hashem Hashem over the investigation report. The committee demanded in its reports that a large number of former and present executives in the oil sector should be referred to the public prosecution over alleged financial violations.

Hashem responded by criticizing the report, saying most of its findings were based on old remarks by the Audit Bureau, adding that the oil sector can easily refute the allegations, preferably to a neutral committee. But Subaei said that if Hashem is right, he should take the report to the Supreme Petroleum Council, the highest oil decision-making body in the country, which is headed by the prime minister. Subaei also warned that if the government does not take the report seriously, the prime minister could be grilled.

Faltering Trump banking on the 'silent majority'

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump mounted a strident defense Sunday of his wavering reelection bid with 100 days to go in a campaign that has seen him underwater in the polls - and banking on the "silent majority" he vowed will bring him victory. The 74-year-old Republican has struggled on numerous fronts, facing mounting criticism over his handling of the coronavirus outbreak and the resulting economic pain, and failing to land punches on his opponent, Joe Biden.

In the latest blow to his hopes of returning to the White House after Nov 3, polls released Sunday showed his support cratering in three critical battleground states. "The Trump Campaign has more ENTHUSIASM, according to many, than any campaign in the history of our great Country - Even more than 2016," Trump thundered on Twitter. "Biden has NONE! The Silent Majority will speak on NOVEMBER THIRD!!! Fake Suppression Polls & Fake News will not save the Radical Left."

Trump's 77-year-old Democratic rival Biden, who says he is fighting for "the soul of America", implored voters to make Trump a one-term president. "In 100 days, we have the chance to set our nation on a new path. One where we finally live up to our highest ideals and everyone has a fair shot at success," he tweeted.

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Local

Kuwait's Deputy Amir receives state officials

Bahraini King inquires about Amir's health



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. - KUNA photos



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Deputy Amir received on Sunday a telephone call from King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Bahraini Monarch inquired about health of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing him life-long health and wellbeing. His

Highness the Deputy Amir expressed deep gratitude to King Hamad, appreciating such brotherly gesture that depicted depth of the historic and solid bonds between the two countries and peoples. He further wished the Bahraini King good health and welfare. — KUNA

Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 64,379 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of yesterday, in addition to 438 deaths. With the exception of 121 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, 55,057 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 8,884 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 from 9:00 pm to 3:00 am, government and private offices will be able to operate with up to 50 percent capacity, mosques will host Friday prayers with strict social distancing and health precautions observed, 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, pick-ups 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 would return 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.

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 Mosafer' 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 'Shlonik' 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: 97632660
Jaber Hospital: 96992079
Ibn Sina Hospital: 99613948
Chest Hospital: 99258749
Razi Hospital: 97633487

Kuwait Cancer Control Center: 96735242
Psychiatric Hospital: 97350113
Physiotherapy Hospital: 99824037
Maternity Hospital: 98559531
As'ad Al-Hamad Dermatology Center: 98514508
Zain Hospital: 97552031
NBK Hospital: 96931761
Al-Rashed Allergy Hospital: 94162470
Infectious Diseases Hospital: 96989164
Palliative Care Hospital: 94024786
Sabah Al-Ahmad Urology Center: 90952469
KFH Addiction Treatment Center: 94169363

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

Mental health assistance

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

Dr Rashed Al-Sahh: 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.

Gazans get first taste of coffee...

Continued from Page 1

Ali Abu Jayab, one of the four deliverymen, could not afford university studies because he comes from a poor family. "There is no hope for young people in the Gaza Strip," said the 25-year-old, who is delighted to have found work with Hamuda.

Amir's health 'very assuring'...

Continued from Page 1

on Thursday to complete medical treatment following successful surgery in Kuwait.

"Cycling is all about freedom of movement, it's sport, it's fun and free. It's a good idea and people love it," he said.

Sameh Juda, who owns a perfume shop, was seduced by the smell of Hamuda's coffee. "I started by ordering a small weekly coffee and now it's one a day," he said with a grin. "Shaaban's idea is good and innovative, and in addition it is very profitable since the bikes do not require fuel," he said, adding that he appreciates the speed of delivery and ordering via the messaging app. Despite crippling poverty in Gaza, "young people have innovative ideas that can enable them to find sources of income," said Juda. — AFP

Ghanem also said that he has received a government decree rejecting a law passed by the Assembly which allows challenging verdicts by judges. To overrule the government rejection, the Assembly needs a two-third majority vote. The Assembly office will hold a meeting today to decide the date of the next regular session, adding that he received a request signed by 10 lawmakers to allocate two hours to debate educational issues.

Faltering Trump banking on the...

Continued from Page 1

With the coronavirus killing more than 1,000 Americans a day, the president - who is at his best soaking up the adulation of supporters at live events - has been forced to cancel his rallies and ditch the Republican convention in Florida next month.

The pandemic, which has infected 4.2 million Americans and killed almost 150,000, is ravaging the US economy and - with the outbreak largely under control in Europe and Asia - has highlighted the shortcomings of the US response. The president has also lost support over his handling of historic uprisings against racism and police brutality, angering local communities with incendiary rhetoric and a pledge to "surge" federal agents into numerous major US cities.

That all is not well in Team Trump's misfiring reelection bid was perhaps most evident in the presi-

dent's recent demotion of bravado campaign manager Brad Parscale. With overall approval ratings permanently stuck in the low 40 percent range, he is the first president to seek reelection after impeachment. Trump is offering a vision of chaos under his opponent, in which Biden's desire to "abolish the American Way of Life" would turn US cities into crime-infested wastelands. But he has largely failed to expand his fervently loyal base with a pitch that boils down to claiming Biden will have Americans "covering to radical left-wing mobs". On Sunday, Trump also tweeted his oft-repeated complaint that mail-in voting will corrupt the election "& everyone knows it", despite there being no evidence of fraud during such voting in previous elections, nor that it would be a factor in November.

New polling of registered voters from three swing states released Sunday showed Trump trailing badly. In Florida, the president garnered 46 percent support against 51 percent for Biden - while in Arizona, the challenger was four points ahead, with 49 percent. In Michigan, Biden's lead stands at 52 percent to 40 percent - a larger lead than the RealClearPolitics average of recent national polls, which puts the former vice president ahead by 8.7 points. — AFP

Local

Hundreds of bookings canceled due to 14-day quarantine rule

Association says compulsory quarantine damages travel operations

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has mandated 14 days of quarantine for all arriving passengers as one of the conditions applied with the start of commercial flights from Aug 1, 2020. Quarantine is compulsory although all passengers are obliged to have a negative PCR test result before boarding. This will negatively affect travel operations in Kuwait, according to a statement by the Kuwait Travel and Tourism Agencies Association.

Travel agencies have received requests for hundreds of cancellations of bookings they made after announcing the opening of Kuwait International Airport. "The quarantine rule affected the majority of my bookings, causing losses of thousands of dinars. Our industry was already badly hit by the pandemic, when we had to change or cancel previous bookings, but we are now receiving cancellation

requests even for new bookings due to this rule," Sulaiman Al-Habib, owner of Al-Raya Travel, told Kuwait Times.

"After the announcement of the 14-day quarantine, people started canceling their trips as they don't want to remain this long in quarantine, especially since these days will be deducted from their leaves. The majority of our bookings were to Turkey and Dubai, which are nearby destinations. The pandemic and the curfews have affected people's mental health and they need to travel, but this rule is a great obstacle for them," he added.

According to him, this rule is illogical. "Many people - and I'm one of them - travel for business,

which are usually short trips. So it's not logical to travel for three days and then be in quarantine for two weeks. We have sent our complaint against this rule to the DGCA and the Cabinet and we hope it will be canceled," stressed Habib.

The requirements in many countries are either a PCR test or quarantine. In Qatar for instance, which will also start operating commercial flights from Aug 1, the quarantine period is for seven days. In Dubai, which resumed commercial flights earlier this month, quarantine is seven days for countries listed as less dangerous or for certain professions, and 14 days for the rest. In Bahrain, where commercial flights are also operat-

ing, quarantine is for 10 days. Oman hasn't resumed operations yet, and has not set any date for launching commercial flights.

The 14-day quarantine rule has led to the cancellation of over 50 percent of reservations at some travel agencies. "Official decisions are made very quickly every day. Some countries have canceled the quarantine rule for arrivals to promote tourism, but imposing it here made many people cancel their bookings with our agency, causing us great losses," said Saeid Radwan of Al-Madar Travel Agency.

Different airlines apply different rules. "Some airlines have very good policies as they refund or change the booking without any additional charges. Other carriers are not providing the refund option, and only accept changes in booking without charging fees, but they still charge for the difference in price between the canceled ticket and the new one. And this causes problems for us with our clients," added Radwan.



Complaints sent to DGCA, Cabinet



KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti man stands in front of Al-Qurain Martyr's Museum yesterday. Kuwait marks on August 2, 2020 the 30th anniversary of the 1990 Iraqi invasion. Al-Qurain Martyr's Museum is the home of a battle which lasted 10 hours between invading Iraqi troops and a group of Kuwaiti fighters during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The battleground house has been converted to Al-Qurain Martyr's Museum. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait's GDP drops one percent

KUWAIT: Kuwait's quarterly gross domestic product (GDP) dropped one percent in Q1 2020 compared to the same period of 2019, amounting to KD 9.7 billion (\$32 billion), according to Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau. The bureau said in a statement to the press on Sunday the quarterly domestic product with current rates dropped by 8.8 percent in Q1 2020 in contrast to the past year period, where the GDP was estimated at KD 9.1 billion (\$30 billion). Contribution of the oil sector to the GDP in Q1 2020 amounted to KD 3.7 billion (\$12.2 billion), 40.3 percent of the domestic product, where this value rose to KD 5.2 billion (\$17 billion), with a contribution proportion estimated at 54.2 percent. Non-oil domestic product in Q1 2020 dropped by 3.5 percent versus the corresponding quarter of last year, where its estimated value was KD 4.4 billion (\$14.5 billion), with an estimated contribution to the domestic product of 45.8 percent. Contribution of the oil and natural gas product climbed by 53-54 percent, it said, adding that the added value of this activity dropped by 16.9 percent of the value of the past year first quarter — amid slump of the oil prices globally. —KUNA

News in brief

Co-op worker assaulted

KUWAIT: Sabah Al-Ahmad Co-op Society President Nasser Al-Otaibi submitted his resignation Sunday in support of a cashier who was physically assaulted by a shopper in an incident that was caught on security camera tape and leaked to social media. Otaibi said he and the Egyptian employee lodged a complaint at the police station for legal action to be taken against the attacker.

Employee tests positive

KUWAIT: The Public Authority of Manpower announced that one of its employees at the inspection department in Eqaila tested positive for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The department will remain closed until fumigation is completed and health measures are taken, it explained.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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Zain recognizes efforts of Interior Ministry frontliners

Company visited them on field to express its gratitude

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, recognized the great efforts exerted by the Ministry of Interior's frontliners at traffic checkpoints by visiting them on the field as a sign of gratitude for their great efforts in protecting the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The initiative came to complement the company's ongoing efforts since the beginning of the crisis in supporting the various government entities, including the ministries of Health, Interior, and others, in combating the spread of this pandemic. Zain was extremely keen on reflecting its national commitment towards the nation during this crisis early on by serving the needs of government entities that work tirelessly to protect everyone's health and safety.

Zain's team visited one of the traffic checkpoints with the presence of MOI Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs Major-General Jamal Al-Sayegh and a number of MOI officials. The company presented a number of MOI frontliners with a number of electronic devices as a sign of gratitude for their great efforts during this crisis, especially that they face extreme heat and the danger of infection every day to save lives and ensure everyone's safety.



KUWAIT: Major-General Jamal Al-Sayegh with Zain's team and MOI frontliners.

40,000 meals

Zain also offered over 40,000 meals in collaboration with the Kuwait Food Bank, where a large number of the meals was distributed during the week dedicated by the Ministry of Health at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref to conduct tests for residents who recently entered the country. The meals were a contribution by the company to ease the long waiting times while waiting in line. Many meals were also being continuously distributed at Kuwait International Airport's gates dedicated for residents who are returning to their home countries because of this crisis.

Zain also offered many smartphone charging stations at Kuwait International Airport to serve Kuwaiti citizens who were returning home as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' evacuation plan to bring Kuwaitis back from all over the world during this crisis. This contribution aimed at facilitating communication between returning Kuwaitis and their families as soon as they arrived at Kuwait. Zain also continuously distributed a large number of meals to them in collaboration with the Kuwait Food Bank and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Since the beginning of the crisis, Zain launched a social media campaign entitled "This is Your Time" to send positive messages to the public about the importance of being a responsible citizen in this time of crisis, not

listen to rumors nor spread them, take part in volunteer efforts, commit to staying at home, as well as abide by the authorities' directives.

In March, Zain also collaborated with the Ministry of Health to offer its customers free calls to any of MOH's hotlines, enabling them to inquire about any health or medical information related to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) directly from the ministry's specialized team while ensuring taking the correct information from the official and certified sources.

Free SMS

As part of its continuous collaboration with the various ministries, Zain also provided the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior with free bulk SMS messages to send medical and awareness content to the community during this period. In addition, the company sent a number of awareness messages in collaboration with MOH's team through its official social media channels. Zain also broadcasted official MOH awareness videos on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in seven languages: Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Farsi, Filipino, Bengali, and Santhali.

In March, Zain changed its network's name to STAY HOME in line with the directives of the Council of Ministers to remind its customers to commit to staying at home as much as possible and contribute to ending this pandemic.

Kuwait eager to implement digital education



Education Minister Dr Saud Al-Harbi

KUWAIT: The Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Saud Al-Harbi confirmed on Sunday the importance of transforming into digital education under the current circumstances, as the ministry has been working hard on setting a plan for the last three months. The Education Ministry is coordinating with the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) on listing the digital transformation in the country's development plan, to work in accordance with the cabinet's program, the Minister said in a press statement. Harbi assured the Education Ministry's keenness in implementing modern technology in the education program, and working to develop such methods to present a new generation that was capable of self-education and coping with the rapid and urgent international developments. —KUNA



Supporting
fight against
COVID-19

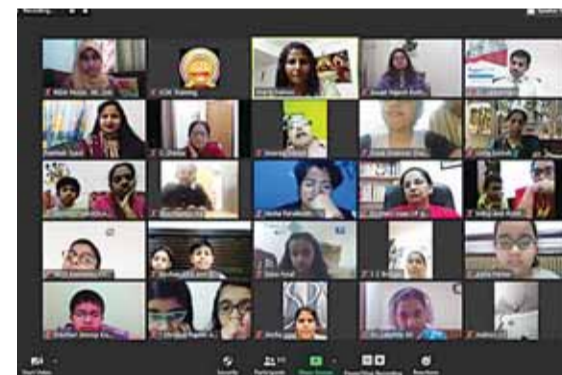
As part of its past and ongoing initiatives during this crisis, Zain collaborated with the Ministry of Health to launch the 'Shlonik' app, which coincided with the inauguration of the government's plan to evacuate citizens stranded abroad. The app was developed by Zain's team in joint collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT). Zain's development of the app came as an initiative on the company's part to support the country's efforts in fighting the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The company also changed its network's name to 'Shlonik' to remind everyone of the importance of downloading the app and help the nation's efforts in stopping the spread of this disease.

ICSK hosts webinar on reading's importance

KUWAIT: The Indian Community School Kuwait (ICSK) takes pride in serving our students to educate them virtually through our Digital Library System, the first of its kind. In this regard, a webinar under the title 'Effective use of ICSK Online Library' was organized recently for children on how to use digital library effectively. Parents and students were encouraged to attend the webinar.

Sherly Dennis, Principal of ICSK, Junior Branch, welcomed the Guest Speaker and Presenter, Dr Veeramani Marimuthu, Head of Library Services at Dasman Diabetes Institute. She aptly said, even at a very young age, it is possible for a parent to read with the child. This will not only develop a stronger relationship with them but also cultivate the habit of reading in them that will prove to be a lifelong investment for the child. Only when we sit with our kids and read to them aloud, it gives them the skills they need for when they begin to read by themselves.

Dr Veeramani kept the session very interesting and lively. He showed step-by-step procedures to



be followed to search the books that the students need. He further guided students on how they can avail the online facility by downloading books in the required format.

After completing his step-by-step presentation, he answered the queries of parents as well as students. At each step, Dr Veeramani stressed on how important it is to guide our kids in the right path to cultivate their habit of reading.

Sunish Theethunni, Librarian at ICSK, Senior Branch, expressed gratitude to the attendees. Sherly thanked the participants and appreciated the librarians at ICSK branches for their dedication and hard work towards making reading more than a hobby for today's generation.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced distributing clothes to 5,000 families in need in Kuwait on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. —KUNA photos

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Citing his own weight battle, Johnson urges Britain to 'get fit'

Guns and glory: Two Koreas mark armistice

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CHENGDU: A police stand guard in front of the US Consulate in Chengdu, southwestern China's Sichuan province yesterday. The American flag was lowered at the United States consulate in Chengdu, days after Beijing ordered it to close in retaliation for the shuttering of the Chinese consulate in Houston. — AFP photos

China seizes US consulate in Chengdu

American flag lowered at US consulate

CHENGDU: China took over the premises of the US consulate in the southwestern city of Chengdu yesterday, after ordering the facility to be vacated in retaliation for China's ouster last week from its consulate in Houston, Texas. The seizure capped a dramatic escalation in tensions between the world's two biggest economies that began when employees at China's Houston consulate were seen burning documents in a courtyard last Tuesday, hours before Beijing announced that it had been ordered to leave the facility.

The US consulate in Chengdu, in Sichuan province, was closed as of 10 am yesterday, and Chinese authorities had entered the building from the front door, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. On Friday, Beijing announced that it had asked the United States to close its Chengdu post, and gave the Americans 72 hours to vacate, the same amount of time China was giv-

ing to leave its Houston mission, which was shut on Friday. "We are disappointed by the Chinese Communist Party's decision and will strive to continue our outreach to the people in this important region through our other posts in China," a US State Department spokesperson said in an email to Reuters.

At midday yesterday, police removed a roadblock that had restricted access to the Chengdu facility, and dozens of passersby stopped to take photos and videos. One man stood across the street and played the Chinese national anthem from his phone. Grey sheet-like material was placed over the spot near the entrance where a plaque had been affixed, and over the place where there was large lettering saying "US Consulate General".

The US embassy issued a video in Chinese on its Twitter feed: "The US consulate in Chengdu has been proudly promoting the mutual understanding

between Americans and the people in Sichuan, Chongqing, Guizhou, Yunnan and Tibet since 1985. We will forever miss you," it said. The American flag was no longer flying at the consulate having been lowered at 6:18 am yesterday, according to video shot by a journalist and shared by state broadcaster CCTV on its Twitter-like Weibo account. The eagle on top of the flagpole remained.

On Sunday night, a crane was seen entering the consulate compound and hoisting at least one container onto a large truck. The Chengdu consulate opened in 1985 and had almost 200 employees, including about 150 locally hired staff, according to its website. It was not immediately clear how many had been working there at the time of its closure, after US diplomats were evacuated from China because of the coronavirus pandemic.

US-China relations have plunged to their worst in decades over a range of



CHENGDU: A man holds a banner and shouts 'Chinese government is great' in front of the US Consulate in Chengdu, southwestern China's Sichuan province.

disputes, from trade and technology to the COVID-19 pandemic, China's territorial claims in the South China Sea and its clampdown on Hong Kong. On

Thursday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave a speech calling a more assertive approach to China the "mission of our time". — Reuters

Rights icon Lewis in a final solemn crossing of an Alabama bridge

SELMA: In a deeply symbolic tribute, a lone caisson drawn by two black horses on Sunday slowly carried the body of John Lewis across the Alabama bridge where in 1965 a policeman fractured his skull during a protest that helped forge his reputation as a fearless civil rights leader. The procession across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in the city of Selma came on the second of six days of solemn commemorations for the revered rights activist and 17-term Georgia congressman, who died of cancer on July 17 at age 80.

It also came in a year when "Black Lives Matter" protests against police brutality have brought thousands onto US streets, underscoring the still-raw depths of the country's racial history. The procession on a warm and sunny Sunday morning was saluted by a line of Alabama state troopers — a starkly different reception from what Lewis received in the March 7, 1965 march in Selma, when a trooper beat the then-25-year-old to the ground with a nightstick, nearly killing him.

That day's march, later dubbed "Bloody Sunday," was considered a turning point in the rights movement. Lewis, then chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee,

led hundreds of marchers across the bridge along with fellow activist Hosea Williams. When police met them and ordered them to disperse, the group knelt in prayer. Police then charged, swinging billy clubs. The day's events left a scar on Lewis's head that he bore for the rest of his life.

'Keep the faith'

The horse-drawn wagon carrying Lewis on Sunday paused briefly at the midpoint - where the African-American driver, dressed in traditional black tails, briefly removed his top hat in respect - before completing the crossing over the bridge, strewn earlier with rose petals. Lewis's casket was draped in an American flag. Walking a short distance behind were family members, some wearing black "Good trouble" T-shirts in honor of Lewis's call for constructive protest. On the far side, well-wishers saluted the coffin, singing the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome."

The casket was then transferred by military honor guard into a hearse, to lead a procession through the city of Montgomery before arriving at the State Capitol around 2:00 pm for public viewing two hours later, according

to local media. The tributes will move Monday to the US Capitol, where Lewis will lie in state through Tuesday evening, a rarely granted honor. There, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Sunday on CBS, Lewis will be "sharing that resting place with Abraham Lincoln," the man who ended slavery in the US.

On Sunday, a diverse crowd of well-wishers - some who had come from hundreds of miles away - began assembling near the bridge hours early. Many wore protective masks. Lewis had last appeared there in March, to mark the 55th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday." Though ill from the pancreatic cancer that killed him, he had insisted on being present. Hoisted on the shoulders of two supporters, he told the crowd, "We cannot give up now, we cannot give in."

"We must keep the faith. Keep the eyes on the prize. We must go out and vote like we never, ever voted before." Lewis grew up in the Alabama city of Troy. His parents were sharecroppers, and he once worked in a cotton field. While attending segregated schools, Lewis was inspired by the peaceful protests of rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. On Thursday, solemn commemorations for Lewis will end in Atlanta, Georgia, where he will be remembered in a private service in the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King once preached. Lewis's burial will follow. — AFP

US envoy shaves off controversial moustache

SEOUL: The most controversial moustache in South Korea has fallen victim to the razor's blade, with US ambassador Harry Harris visiting a traditional barbershop months after his facial hair became the object of unusual criticism. Seoul and Washington are security allies and the US stations 28,500 troops in the country. But their relationship has been strained in recent years by differences in their approaches to North Korea and over cost-sharing responsibilities.

Harris has several times been the object of controversy in the South, and accused of high-handedness. Even his facial hair became an issue of debate. The envoy's mother was Japanese and, with Koreans still bitterly resentful of Tokyo's 1910-45 colonization of the peninsula, commentators claimed the moustache alluded to the fashions of imperial governors-general from the period. In January Harris retorted that his grooming was a matter of personal choice, and that his critics were "cherry picking history".

But over the weekend he uploaded a video to social media of him getting the moustache shaved off at a traditional Korean barbershop, saying he did so to keep cool in the Seoul summer, while



SEOUL: This combination of images shows US Ambassador to South Korea Harry Harris after a group interview in Seoul; and a screenshot (right) of ambassador Harris after having his moustache shaved at a barbershop in Seoul. — AFP

wearing a mask to fight the coronavirus pandemic. "Glad I did this," the envoy said in a tweet. "For me it was either keep the 'stache or lose the mask. Summer in Seoul is way too hot & humid for both. #COVID guidelines matter & I'm a masked man!"

Seoul and Tokyo are both major US allies, democracies and market economies faced with an overbearing China and nuclear-armed North Korea, but are locked in bitter disputes over historical issues. Earlier this year Harris said: "I understand the historical animosity that exists between both of the countries but I'm not the Japanese American ambassador in Korea, I'm the American ambassador to Korea. "And to take that history and put it on me simply because an accident of birth I think is a mistake." — AFP

International

Citing his own weight battle, Johnson urges UK to 'get fit'

More than 60% of British considered obese or overweight

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson used his own struggle with weight yesterday to urge the British to get fitter and tackle widespread obesity that could heighten coronavirus risks. New government measures to help people shed weight include banning TV and online adverts for junk food before 9.00 pm, ending "buy one get one free" deals on such foods, and flagging calories on menus of large restaurants plus possibly on alcohol. Johnson, 56, who has lost more than a stone (6 kg) since a life-threatening brush with COVID-19, was responding to research showing that those who are obese or overweight are at increased risk of death or severe illness from the disease. The prime minister has a reputation as a bon vivant, who in the past has spoken of enjoying an expensive bottle of red wine and late-night binges on chorizo and cheese. But he has also championed cycling to work and introduced so-called "Boris bikes" in London for public use when mayor of the capital. Last month, Johnson said British people were fatter than most European counterparts apart from Malta and his government targeted "tackling the obesity time bomb".

'I was too fat'

"I've always wanted to lose weight for ages and ages and like many people I struggle with my weight. I go up and down. But since I recovered from coronavirus I have been steadily building up my fitness," he said in a Twitter video on Monday. "When I went into ICU (intensive care) when I was really ill, I was way overweight ... and, you know, I

was too fat," he added, describing his new regime as a gentle run in the morning which gives him more energy during the day. Johnson, who has often mocked state "nannying", said he hoped the new health campaign was not "excessively bossy" but



British PM loses weight since battle with COVID-19

rather a gentle nudge for Britain to get fitter.

With more than 60% of adults in Britain considered overweight or obese, according to Public Health England, a "Better Health" campaign will be introduced with weight management services expanded in the National Health Service. The opposition Labor Party said it had heard "big promises" from the ruling Conservatives before and criticized them for past health service cuts. "An effective obesity strategy needs action, not consultation," said Labor's health and social care policy chief Alex Norris. "The Tories (Conservatives) have pared public health to the bone and people are paying the price for ten years of this complacency." — Reuters



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson bumps elbows with a staff member during his visit to the Tollgate Medical Centre in Becton, east London. — AFP

News in brief

Zoroastrian priest killed in Iran

TEHRAN: A priest from the minority Zoroastrian community who lived in the United States has been killed on a visit to Iran, state news agency IRNA reported Sunday. The website of the Amordad weekly paper on Zoroastrian affairs said the body of Arash Kasravi was found alongside those of his bodyguard and a nurse who also did domestic work. They were discovered at a house in the southeastern province of Kerman, the area's prosecutor Dadkhoda Salari told state television, saying the triple murder could have financially motivated. "Three bodies were discovered in a villa in Mahan city and they were apparently murdered," Salari told state television. "Investigations showed that one of them was Arash Kasravi, a member of the Zoroastrian religious minority." — AFP

COVID cases surge in Florida

FLORIDA: Florida on Sunday became the second state after California to overtake New York, the worst-hit state at the start of the US novel coronavirus outbreak, according to a Reuters tally. Total COVID-19 cases in the Sunshine State rose by 9,300 to 423,855 on Sunday, just one place behind California, which now leads the country with 448,497 cases. New York is in third place with 415,827 cases. Still, New York has recorded the most deaths of any US state at more than 32,000 with Florida in eighth place with nearly 6,000 deaths. On average, Florida has added more than 10,000 cases a day in July while California has been adding 8,300 cases a day and New York has been adding 700 cases. The surge in Florida has continued as the state's Republican Governor Ron DeSantis has repeatedly said he will not make mask-wearing mandatory and that schools must reopen in August. — Reuters

Swastika daubed on mosque

AGEN: A swastika and graffiti were daubed overnight on a mosque in the town of Agen, southwestern France, the interior minister said Sunday, denouncing what he called an "odious" act. Gerald Darmanin expressed his "support for the Muslims of Agen" in a tweet in which he described the vandalism as "contrary to the values of the Republic". Messaoud Settati, president of the town's Muslim association, said he was alerted to the desecration at around 2:00 am. The mosque had handed over surveillance footage to the police, he added. It shows a man entering the grounds of the mosque shortly after midnight. Abdallah Zekri, head of France's National Observatory Against Islamophobia condemned the graffiti, noting that it came just five days ahead of Eid Al-Adha, the most important feast in the Muslim calendar. It was a "provocation and an insult to French citizens of the Muslim faith", he said. — AFP

Haiti religious faithful protest

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Several thousand members of Protestant churches demonstrated Sunday in Port-au-Prince against the country's new criminal code, which they consider "immoral" because it penalizes discrimination based on sexual orientation. "If a pastor doesn't want to marry two men together or two women, he will be arrested and at risk for one to three years in prison," Pastor Wismond Jeune said, incorrectly, during the protest in the Haitian capital. He wore a mask printed with the march's slogan: "No to immorality, long live the family." The new criminal code does not change the content of the Haitian civil code, which codifies marriage and only allows the union of a man and a woman. — AFP

By boat and on foot, India state hunts for plasma for patients

GUWAHATI: When doctors in a flood-ravaged Indian state urgently sought plasma of a particular blood type for a COVID-19 patient this month, health officials sent a boat for a marooned donor who had recovered from the disease weeks ago. With coronavirus cases surging in the northeastern state of Assam and critical medicines running low, local authorities are rolling out the red carpet for now-cured patients - all for their blood plasma believed to be rich in virus antibody, although research on its efficacy has not been conclusive.

Assam says that symptomatic patients who donate plasma four weeks after recovery will get preference in government jobs and housing. For example, a donor may get extra marks if he or she is tied in any test or interview for a job. It is also offering to cover travel and other expenses for donors from outside the state, and has been making its frontline workers scour the state - sometimes wading through flood waters - to bring willing partici-



HYDERABAD: A health worker wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) suit collects a swab sample of a resident at a free testing center for the COVID-19 coronavirus in Hyderabad yesterday. — AFP

pants to plasma donation centers.

The success of the overall effort is crucial for Assam, one of India's poorest states that is short of remdesivir and tocilizumab to treat severe COVID-19 patients. Delhi and Odisha states are also courting plasma donors as India's total infections have leaped to 1.4 million with nearly 33,000 deaths. "Recently, we wanted O-group plasma for a patient, a doctor," Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa



MELBOURNE: Ambulance officers remove a resident from the St Basil's Home for the Aged in the Melbourne suburb of Fawkner yesterday, with 84 cases of the COVID-19 coronavirus linked to the facility. — AFP

Australia posts daily virus record, more deaths expected

SYDNEY: Australia's Victoria state yesterday reported the country's highest daily increase in coronavirus infections, prompting the authorities to warn a six-week lockdown may last longer if people continue to go to work while feeling unwell. The second-most populous state reported 532 new cases of the virus which causes COVID-19, taking the national total to 549, the most new cases in a day since the pandemic arrived. Victoria currently has more than 4,500 active cases after weeks of triple digits daily rises. It reported six more deaths, taking the state toll to 77, almost half the total national death toll. Five of the deaths were in aged care facilities, which have been hit hardest in the state.

Australia has avoided the high COVID-19 casualty rates of other countries, but a wave of community transmission in Victoria has prompted a lockdown in Melbourne, the only Australian city to make it mandatory to wear a facemask in public. "If you've got a sniffle, a scratchy throat, a headache, fever, then you can't go to work," said Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews in a televised news conference. "This is what is driving these numbers up, and the lockdown will not end until people stop going to work with symptoms and instead go and get tested

because they have symptoms." Melbourne, home to a fifth of Australia's 25 million population, is halfway through a six-week ban on movement other than for work, buying food, giving or receiving healthcare, or daily exercise. Andrews added that he may announce additional measures later this week. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the high number of new cases in Victoria showed how transmission of the illness among younger people, who were considered lower risk, could spread to aged care facilities through family members.

"In Victoria there is still a long way to go," Morrison told reporters. "We are still seeing case numbers at elevated levels and ... when you get community-based transmission, it does take some time to get that down." Victoria has had a total of 8,173 cases. Neighboring New South Wales (NSW) state, the country's most populous, is also grappling with several virus clusters that have sprung up at a hotel, a Thai restaurant and a club. NSW reported 17 new cases yesterday. NSW has had 3,496 cases in total, about 1,100 active.

Australia has recorded a total 14,935 cases and 161 deaths and authorities yesterday warned more lives would be lost as infections continued to rise. "The tragedy of COVID-19 is that we know, with the number of new infections that we have seen today, that there will be many further deaths in the days ahead," Deputy Chief Medical Officer Michael Kidd told reporters. More than 16.13 million people have been reported to be infected by the novel coronavirus globally and 644,836 have died, according to a Reuters tally. — Reuters

Sarma told Reuters in an interview. "When we learned that a person was willing to donate, people went to his house by boat, brought him to the hospital and got the donation done."

He declined to identify the donor but said the recipient was doing well. Plasma from a previously infected person can be used to treat up to two moderately ill patients, Sarma said. Without timely treatment, such patients' condition can potentially worsen, further straining the limited pool for medicines. "We have seen that if you give plasma between moderate and critical stage, the results are very, very good," he said.

Assam, where floods have so far killed around 100 people and affected roughly 3 million, is predicting coronavirus infections will peak in mid-September. It has so far reported more than 32,000 cases with 79 deaths. Its push for plasma comes as India, the world's biggest suppliers of generic drugs, scrambles to end a local shortage of remdesivir and tocilizumab.

Although US drugmaker Gilead Sciences Inc has authorized six companies operating in India to make and sell generic versions of remdesivir, only three of them have so far been able to start making supplies available. Sarma said that until recently, Assam was receiving only 12-16 remdesivir vials a day, compared with a demand for at least 100. — Reuters

Fresh killings in Darfur as Sudan prepares to send troops

KHARTOUM: UN officials reported a fresh massacre of more than 60 people in Sudan's West Darfur, as the country's prime minister promised fresh troops for the conflict-stricken region. Attackers targeted members of the local Masalit community, looting and burning houses and part of the local market, a statement said. Around 500 armed men attacked Masteri Town, north of Beida, in Darfur on Saturday afternoon, said the Sunday statement from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"This was one of the latest of a series of security incidents reported over the last week that left several villages and houses burned, markets and shops looted, and infrastructure damaged," said the statement, from the OCHA's Khartoum office. Following Saturday's attack on Masteri, around 500 local people staged a protest demanding more protection from the authorities.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok said the government would send security forces to conflict-stricken Darfur to "protect citizens and the farming season." The force will include army and police, he said in a statement after he met a delegation of women from the region.

Land conflict

On Friday, armed men drove into a village and killed 20 civilians returning to their fields for the first time in years, an eyewitness and a tribal chief told AFP. Darfur has been devastated since 2003 by a conflict between ethnic minority rebels and forces loyal to now ousted president Omar al-Bashir, including the feared Janjaweed militia, mainly recruited from Arab pastoralist tribes. A government scorched-earth campaign to crush the rebels left 300,000 people dead and displaced 2.5 million. Violence in Darfur has eased since Bashir's ouster by the army amid mass protests against his rule last year. The government and a coalition of nine rebel groups, including factions from the region, signed a preliminary peace deal in January.

Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court over charges of genocide and crimes against humanity in the conflict. Farmers displaced by the fighting had since started to return to their land under a government-sponsored deal reached two months ago, in time for the July-November planting season. But the bloodshed has continued, particularly over land rights, according to expert Adam Mohammad. "The question of land is one cause of the conflict," he said. — AFP

International

Second wave of coronavirus in Asia prompts fresh lockdowns

China reports virus spike as global cases pass 16 million

SYDNEY: Countries around Asia are confronting a second wave of coronavirus infections and are clamping down again to try to contain the disease, with Australia recording a record daily rise in cases and Vietnam locking down the city of Danang. Mainland China is battling the most aggressive return of COVID-19 in months, confirming 57 new locally transmitted cases on Sunday, the highest level since early March, driven by fresh infections in the far western region of Xinjiang. In the northeast, Liaoning province reported a fifth straight day of new infections and Jilin province reported two new cases, its first since late May.

Hong Kong is expected to announce further restrictions including a ban on restaurant dining and mandated face masks outdoors, local media reported. The measures, which are expected to take effect from tomorrow, would be the first time the city has completely banned dining in restaurants. Australian authorities warned a six-week lockdown in parts of the southeastern Victoria state may last longer after the country registered its highest daily increase in infections.

Most of Australia is effectively virus-free but flare-ups in the two most populous southeastern states have authorities scrambling to prevent a wider national outbreak. "The tragedy of COVID-19 is that we know, with the number of new infections that we have seen today, that there will be many further deaths in the days ahead," Australia's Deputy Chief Medical Officer Michael Kidd told reporters. In Japan, the government said it would urge business leaders to ramp up anti-virus measures such as staggered shifts, and aimed to see rates

of telecommuting achieved during an earlier state of emergency.

"At one point, commuter numbers were down by 70 to 80%, but now it's only about 30%," Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said late on Sunday. "We really don't want to backtrack on this, so we have to explore new ways of working and keep telecommuting high." Japan has avoided mass infec-



Vietnam locks down Danang, tourists to be evacuated

tions but a record surge in cases during the past week in Tokyo and other urban centers has experts worried the country faces a second wave. Vietnam is evacuating 80,000 people, mostly local tourists, from the central city of Danang after three residents tested positive for the coronavirus at the weekend, the government said yesterday.

The Southeast Asian country is back on high alert after the government on Saturday confirmed its first community infections since April, and another three cases on Sunday, all in Danang. In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte is expected to focus on COVID-19 and the economy in his



DALIAN: People line up to undergo COVID-19 tests at a makeshift testing center in Dalian, in China's northeast Liaoning province yesterday. — AFP

annual State of the Nation Address yesterday. Manila is weighing whether to re-impose stricter lockdown measures after easing them saw a dramatic surge in infections and deaths, with 62,326 cases reported since the first lockdown was relaxed

June 1. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, Malaysia is expected to announce new measures to contain the outbreak as authorities struggle to contain more than a dozen new clusters that have appeared since curbs were lifted last month. — Reuters

News in brief

Explosion hits weapons depot

BAGHDAD: A weapons depot belonging to Iraq's federal police force exploded on Sunday in Baghdad's southern suburbs because of high summer temperatures and poor storage, the military said in a statement. Multiple explosions could be heard in Baghdad on Sunday evening. Security sources said the depot, which is part of a military base used by both the police and paramilitary forces, was one that had caught fire in August last year. That fire also set off explosions heard across Baghdad, killing one person and injuring 29 others. There were no casualties reported immediately on Sunday. Iraqi paramilitary groups with links to Iran last year blamed a series of blasts at their weapons depots and bases on the United States and Israel as tension escalated between Washington and Tehran. — AFP

All-out war unlikely: Hezbollah

BEIRUT: The deputy leader of Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement on Sunday dismissed the prospect of an escalation of violence between the Iran-backed movement and Israel despite increased tensions in the last week. "The atmosphere does not indicate a war ... It's unlikely, the atmosphere of war in the next few months," Sheikh Naim Qassem said in an interview with pro-Damascus television station al-Mayadeen. Tensions rose along Israel's frontier with Syria and Lebanon after Lebanon's Hezbollah militia said a fighter was killed in an apparent Israeli strike on the edge of Damascus last week. After two Hezbollah members were killed in Damascus in August 2019, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah vowed the group would respond if Israel killed any more of its fighters inside Syria. — Reuters

Israeli drone falls in Lebanon

JERUSALEM: The Israeli army said Sunday one of its drones had come down in Lebanese territory, following a reinforcement of its presence at its northern frontier near Lebanon. The drone fell "during IDF operational activity" along the border, the army said in a statement. "There is no risk of breach of information." Israel regularly deploys drones over Lebanon, in particular to monitor the movements of pro-Iran armed group Hezbollah, an arch-enemy of the Jewish state and a heavy-weight in Lebanese politics. During a visit on Sunday to a military base near the border, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said that "Lebanon and Syria are responsible for what happens on and from their territory". "We are not trying to escalate the situation, but whoever wants to test us will see a very strong reaction," Gantz warned, according to a statement from his office. — AFP

Douglas threatens Hawaii

HONOLULU: Hurricane Douglas threatened to become only the third storm of its size on record to hit Hawaii as it barreled through the Pacific late on Sunday, after the year's first major Atlantic weather system lashed Texas. The category one storm was around 75 miles (120 kilometers) north of capital Honolulu at 9:00 pm (0700 GMT Monday) and was moving away from the city, according to the National Hurricane Center (NHC). But Douglas was still packing winds of up to 85 miles per hour (140 kph) and approaching the western island of Kauai, the center's forecast said. It is rare for severe storms to make landfall in Hawaii and if Douglas does so it will be only the third in modern history after Dot in 1959 and Iniki in 1992. — AFP

Turkish philanthropist Kavala seen as threat by Erdogan

ISTANBUL: Osman Kavala, imprisoned in Turkey for nearly three years without ever being convicted of a crime, is a philanthropist and businessman who supporters say has tirelessly used his wealth to help society. He was not much known to the public before but he has been singled out by authorities under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as a threat in the wake of the 2016 failed coup.

Kavala has been behind bars for 1,000 days Monday, prompting his supporters to campaign on social media and elsewhere with the hashtag #FreeOsmanKavala. "We've had 1,000 days stolen from our life... my husband's mother is over the age of 90 and she doesn't know whether she will ever see her son again," his wife, Ayse Bugra, said during an online press conference Saturday.

The 62-year-old was excluded when April legislation allowed for the release of thousands of prisoners as a safety measure against the coronavirus outbreak. After his acquittal by a court in February over the 2013 anti-government protests, police held Kavala on a separate charge, linking him to the failed coup. He is now accused of seeking to overthrow the constitutional order and espionage. Kavala's lawyer Ilkan Koyuncu said Saturday there was "no evidence" to prove the businessman had committed any crime.

'Never patronized'

Born in Paris in 1957, Kavala graduated from the University of Manchester after studying economics and following his father's death in 1982, he took the helm of his business. But he always supported art projects, helped build bridges and turn ideas into a reality by funding them. Humble but stubborn, polite but direct, bossy but never patronizing: this is how his friends described him. "I would rather describe him as a colleague than a boss. Osman bey has never patronized us," Asena Gunal, director general of Anatolian Culture, told AFP, using an honorific title to show her respect for him.

Kavala is chairman of Anatolian Culture, or

Guns and glory: The 2 Koreas mark armistice

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was shown surrounded by pistol-toting generals while in the South masked veterans were socially distanced as the two sides yesterday separately marked the armistice that ended Korean War hostilities. The contrasting events marked 67 years since the ceasefire that left the peninsula divided and millions of families split by the Demilitarized Zone. In the North's capital, Kim handed out commemorative pistols to dozens of generals and senior officers, who pledged their loyalty to him, state media reported.

The North reported its first suspected case of novel coronavirus infection at the weekend - after insisting for months it had kept itself free of the disease that has swept the world - but pictures showed the generals all gathered close together for a group photo, none of them wearing masks. In Seoul, scores of veterans - in facial coverings and socially distanced seats - attended a ceremony paying tribute to their efforts, themed "Days of Glory".

On screen, dramatic reconstructions of the war were interspersed with interviews with foreign veterans, and messages of support from current leaders of the countries that sent troops to support the South, among them US President Donald Trump and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron. Millions of people were killed during the three-year conflict,



ISTANBUL: Director General of the Anatolian Culture Asena Gunal stands in front of Osman Kavala's portrait during an interview at Anatolian Cultur Center in Istanbul. — AFP

Anadolu Kultur in Turkish, which promotes human rights through art-including with neighboring Armenia, with which Turkey has no diplomatic ties. "He has never boasted of his wealth but has a humble personality who feels embarrassed of whatever he owns," said Gunal at the Depo arts centre in Istanbul's upscale Tophane district. It was a former tobacco depot-inherited by Kavala from his father that was restored in 2008 as a culture and arts centre.

Kavala, who is in the heavily guarded Silivri prison on the outskirts of Istanbul, has become a symbol of what critics say is a crackdown on civil society. Umit Kivanc, an author whose friendship with Kavala dates back to over 40 years, said the philanthropist was misunderstood by secular people and denounced the labels characterizing him as a rich man who leads a bourgeois life. "He's a man who works for justice in the world. His father died and he took over the business. Osman doesn't even lead a bourgeois life," Kivanc said. — AFP

'Virtual kidnappings' warning for Chinese students in Australia

SYDNEY: Elaborate "virtual kidnappings" are being used to extort money from the friends and relatives of Chinese students Down Under, Australian police warned yesterday, after a spate of transnational scams were reported. Police said that common claiming to be Chinese authorities had netted millions of US dollars in ransoms by scaring students into faking their own kidnappings. The scammers-often calling in Mandarin and claiming to be from the Chinese embassy, police or consulate-initially say the victim is accused of a crime in China or tell them their identity has been stolen before threatening them with deportation or arrest unless a fee is paid, police said.

The fraudsters then continue to threaten the victim, often over encrypted message services, until they transfer large sums into offshore bank accounts. In some cases, victims were told to cease contact with friends and relatives, then make videos of themselves tied up and blindfolded with the common using the footage to demand ransoms. Police said at least eight cases have led to more than Aus\$3 million (US\$2.1 million) in ransom payments this year in Australia.

Other incidents have been detected elsewhere around the world, and Australian police said the scams had been "developed considerably over the last decade by transnational organized crime syndicates". Victims are "traumatized by what has occurred, believing they have placed themselves, and their loved ones, in real danger", New South Wales Police assistant commissioner Peter Thurtell said. Over 1,000 "Chinese authority" scams were recorded last year by Australia's consumer watchdog.

Exiled Chinese dissidents and members of persecuted ethnic groups have also reported harassment from Chinese authorities, including threatening phonecalls. Chinese officials said no authority would contact students on their mobile to demand money. The warning comes as the university sector attempts to lure back lucrative international students online and prepare for any possible relaxation of virus travel restrictions. — AFP



SEOUL: Members of a military band play their instruments during a UN Forces Participation Day event marking the anniversary of the signing of the Korean War armistice agreement in Seoul yesterday. — AFP

which began when the Communist North invaded the US-backed South as leader Kim Il Sung-grandfather of the incumbent-sought to reunify by force the peninsula Moscow and Washington had divided at the end of World War II.

The Chinese- and Soviet-backed North fought to a standstill against the South and a US-led United Nations coalition. Hostilities ended on July 27, 1953 with a ceasefire that has never been replaced by a peace treaty. The North has subsequently built up a nuclear arsenal that it says it needs to protect itself against a US invasion, and has been subjected to multiple international sanc-

tions as a result. Pyongyang regards the conflict - which it calls the Glorious Fatherland Liberation War - as a victory and the official news agency KCNA reported that Kim presented his generals at the weekend with "commemorative pistols bearing his august name in token of his trust". The weapons were named after Mount Paektu, the dormant volcano on the Chinese-Korean border that is regarded as the spiritual birthplace of the Korean people.

In the pictures, the chief of the general staff Vice Marshal Pak Jong Chon, who was sitting to Kim's right, carefully pointed his pistol upwards rather than towards the leader. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2020

Global prospects dim for China's tech giants

Top tech players see contracts cancelled, products banned

SHANGHAI/BEIJING: Huawei Technologies' founder Ren Zhengfei's global ambitions are marked in bricks and mortar at a new company campus in southern China, where the buildings are replicas from European cities.

Zhang Yiming, founder of ByteDance, the operator of short video app TikTok, has plastered his Beijing headquarters with posters including a cover of former Google CEO Eric Schmidt's book "How Google Works", and has long said he will build a global firm that can compete with US tech giants.

But the two companies which best exemplify China's ambitions to challenge US tech dominance are now stymied by strains in relations between China and countries including the United States, India, Australia and Britain. Chinese companies with world-beating technology-including drone-maker DJI, artificial intelligence firms Megvii, SenseTime and iFlytek, surveillance camera vendor Hikvision and e-commerce conglomerate Alibaba Group-are also among those losing access to markets.

Smaller companies are being forced to re-think too. "What we are experiencing now is unprecedented," said a Chinese start-up founder who has operations in the United States and India but asked not to be identified as he is now considering walking away. "My entrepreneurial spirit has been dampened due to all this, let alone global ambitions." It's a big shift from even a year ago, when the US-led trade war with China and security con-

cerns about Huawei were having little impact on most Chinese tech champions.

SenseTime and Megvii, backed by US investors, were eyeing big IPOs. ByteDance's TikTok unit was enjoying unfettered global growth. Alibaba was touting the global prospects for its cloud business, and DJI was consolidating domination of the drone business. But then came new US sanctions against Chinese tech firms last October, prompted in part by repression of the Muslim Uighur population in the Western province of Xinjiang.

US President Donald Trump has ratcheted up anti-China rhetoric as he seeks re-election and Chinese President Xi Jinping has taken a tough line. Tensions have also risen between Beijing and other

countries over new security laws passed for Hong Kong, and a border skirmish with Indian troops led to an India government ban on 59 Chinese apps. Now China's top tech players are having contracts cancelled, products banned and investments blocked, with more restrictions on the horizon.

ByteDance could be forced to sell TikTok as Washington considers following India in banning the short video app, a global product that analysts say is worth at least \$20 billion. Huawei is set to lose billions of dollars a year in revenue from bans on its network equipment, and more countries could follow the United States, Britain and others in blocking the company's gear.

The US Interior Department has grounded the

metal's advance, gold has also been boosted by its attractiveness as a haven in times of turmoil with China-US relations souring by the day. "Strong gains are inevitable as we enter a period much like the post-global financial crisis environment, where gold prices soared to record levels as a result of copious amounts of Fed money being pumped into the financial system," said Gavin Wendt, senior resource analyst at MineLife.

The greenback was down against most other currencies, with the euro at its highest since September 2018, while higher-yielding units such as the South Korean won and Indonesian rupiah were also up.

US stimulus struggle

Stock markets were mixed as investors fret over the impact of the virus on the economy. Hong Kong, Tokyo, Singapore, Mumbai and Wellington were all in the red, while Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul and Jakarta were higher. The tech-rich Taipei market ended at a record high thanks to a 10 percent surge in heavy-weight Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, which has been riding a rally in the sector thanks to people working from home during the virus. London and Paris fell in the morning, but Frankfurt edged up.

Investors are growing concerned about slow progress on a new US stimulus program, with Republicans still to present proposals worth around \$1 trillion, which is less than a third of the plan set out by Democrats. There are concerns an agreement could take some time, hitting millions of Americans whose much-needed extra unemploy-

Germany's ECE operates nearly 200 shopping centers across Europe and told Reuters that centers in areas with a local customer base are approaching pre-lockdown footfall levels - whereas city-center locations were serving just two thirds of their usual customer base.

In Britain, shoppers are buying local not just for convenience goods, but other items such as clothes which they would usually buy on a day out in the center of town, said Jonathan de Mello of retail consultancy Harper Dennis Hobbes. "People are being very careful about where and how many times they shop," he said.

Half of Britons in a YouGov survey of 1,032 people said they would now feel uncomfortable visiting an enclosed retail space like a shopping mall. "What was once a fabulous shopping experience at a central location is now actually just a place full of risk," said Andrew Cosgrove, global consumer lead analyst at Ernst & Young.

At retail locations in central London and bigger UK cities footfall between 14 June and 12 July was between 69.2 percent and 75 percent lower than the same period last year, according to analytics firm Springboard. Local high streets in smaller towns saw a 42.1 percent drop and suburban outer London a drop of 40 percent - around a third better than central London fared, if still a substantial loss on last year.

Online/local shift not an offset

The loss of city center business has already prompted big retailers to retrench, notably in Britain where Marks & Spencer and John Lewis among others have announced store closures and hefty layoffs. Some smaller retail chains that were struggling before the pandemic have collapsed, while mall operator Intu Properties, owner of Manchester's



ZHENGZHOU: Two job seekers take a rest during a career fair in Zhengzhou, China's Henan province. Chinese tech giants are now stymied by strains in relations between China and countries including the United States, India, Australia and Britain. — AFP

privately held DJI's fleet and halted additional purchases because of data security risks, and more restrictions could be in the offing. Alibaba Group is cutting staff at its UC Web subsidiary in India after its popular mobile Web browser was banned by the government. DJI has put IPO plans on ice.

The companies are watching geopolitical developments "with white knuckles," said Daniel Ives, managing director of equity research at Wedbush Securities. Huawei, Alibaba, SenseTime and Megvii declined to comment. ByteDance and Tencent did not respond to requests for comment.

China's foreign ministry said it encourages and directs the country's "strong, reputable companies" to invest overseas in a compliant manner, and hopes other countries will safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies. "International investment is an important engine driver for economic growth. As the global economy is under tremendous downward pressure, all parties should take strong measures to jointly further liberalize and facilitate trade and investment, and create a fair, transparent, and predictable investment environment," it said in a fax. — Reuters

Gold hits record high on safe haven demand

HONG KONG: Gold hit a record high yesterday as investors rushed into the safe-haven on concerns about China-US tensions, a spike in virus infections around the world and a lack of progress on a new stimulus bill in Washington. After months of healthy rallies across equity markets-fuelled by trillions of dollars in government and central bank support-traders are beginning to step back as they weigh the long-term economic impact of the coronavirus.

With vast monetary easing measures put in place by the Federal Reserve pushing the dollar lower against most other currencies, gold is flying, with the spot price hitting an all-time high of \$1,944.71, well above its previous record of \$1,921.18 seen in 2011. It later pulled back slightly.

Eyes are on the Fed's next policy meeting this week, with some predicting further measures to boost the economy-possibly negative interest rates-that could put more pressure on the dollar and send bullion above \$2,000. There are also concerns that a worse-than-forecast reading on second-quarter US gross domestic product could spark another dollar sell-off.

While the weak dollar has been a key catalyst for

Pandemic turns Europe's retail sector on its head

LISBON: City center shops and malls may have lost their luster during the COVID-19 pandemic, but as lockdowns ease across Europe many stores in and around residential areas stand to benefit as consumers remain reluctant to venture far from home. While retail sales appear to be rebounding - surging 17.8 percent in the euro zone in May and approaching pre-lockdown levels in Britain in June - shoppers are increasingly staying local, leaving Europe's most renowned shopping districts from London's West End to Berlin's Kurfurstendamm struggling in the absence of office workers and tourists.

On Germany's main shopping streets in Hamburg, Cologne and Berlin, footfall in June was as much as 50 percent lower than a year earlier, according to the German Retail Federation, while in London's West End it was down 75 percent, according to the New West End Company, an association of retailers and landlords in the area.

Many consumers have shifted to buying goods online, but they are also heading out to shops in residential areas and 46 percent of consumers across Europe aim to shop more locally in the long term than they did before the pandemic, data from Ernst & Young shows. The trend could mean a significant shift in earnings patterns for major European retail landlords such as Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield, Klepierre, and Carmila with their mix of city center and suburban shopping malls.



HANGZHOU: A staff member places gold jewellery in a display at a store in Hangzhou, in China's eastern Zhejiang province yesterday. Gold hit a record high yesterday as investors rushed into the safe-haven on concerns about China-US tensions. — AFP

ment benefits are about to come to an end.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong's stock market launched a new index yesterday tracking China's tech giants. The Hang Seng Tech Index tracks the top 30 tech firms listed in the city, including Alibaba, JD.com, Tencent, Xiaomi and Meituan Dianping. Hong Kong has become an increasingly attractive place for Chinese tech companies to list, especially as they face greater scrutiny and restrictions in the United States. — AFP



LONDON: In this file photo, a sign is seen in the window of a shop explaining to customers that it has temporarily closed due to the coronavirus outbreak in Portobello Market in west London, following the easing of the lockdown restrictions during the novel coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

Trafford Centre and already battling high debt, was forced to bring in administrators.

In France, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the UK at least 40 percent of people are visiting physical stores less, according to Ernst & Young - and only 20-35 percent are ordering more online, not enough to make up the shortfall.

A recent rebound in sales as lockdowns have eased has also not been as robust as retailers might have hoped for. Springboard estimates that in the week beginning July 6, overall footfall at retailers across continental Europe remained around a fifth below the same week a year ago, and 40 percent lower in the UK, according to data shared with Reuters. — Reuters

Economic pitfalls risk Egypt's hot money inflows

CAIRO/LONDON/DUBAI: The threat of conflict in Libya, water security worries and a flatlining tourist sector risk upending a nascent rally in Egyptian bonds, bankers and economists say.

The North African country has attracted a wave of foreign investor interest in the past three months, emboldened by fresh financing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and short-term local debt offering yields of around 13 percent, among the highest in emerging markets. Bankers and economists warn, however, that the yield bonanza masks an economy with weak prospects and heightened political risk, with the Cairo bourse falling on several days this month on fears of a Libya intervention. Parliament gave President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi last week the green light for possible military intervention in Libya.

A deployment of armed forces into Libya could lead to higher military spending at a time when COVID-19 is already hitting the budget deficit. "Obviously the IMF support package has reassured foreign investors and that is why there has been an improvement in flows, but the fundamentals are still weak," said Zeina Rizk, executive fixed income director at Arqaam Capital.

"The virus is raging, tourism is down, and government spending - needed to boost the economy - will add further leverage," she added. Adding further uncertainty, Egypt has failed so far to reach a deal with Ethiopia to regulate flows from its Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) which threatens its main water source. "The political risk has deteriorated," said Hasnain Malik, head of equity research at Tellimer Research.

The tourism industry, meanwhile, which makes up as much as 15 percent of GDP, is unlikely to recover soon, analysts said. Egypt, unlike Tunisia and Morocco, has not been added to the European Union's list of safe COVID-19 countries. Egypt's reported COVID-19 cases have been falling in the past weeks but the number of new infections remains too high for now to lift the travel warning, diplomats said.

Tourist flights to Red Sea resorts have been rising since airports reopened on July 1, but normal occupancy rates would be only back by March or April next year, said Alaa Akel, head of the Egyptian Hotels Association Red Sea. More than half of the hotels are back in business after two months of lockdown and those still closed will probably re-open by November, he added.

The central bank and state press center did not respond to questions sent by Reuters. The government expected growth of 3.5 percent in the fiscal year 2020/21, which began in July, but growth could slow to 2 percent if the coronavirus crisis continues until year-end, Planning Minister Hala al-Saeed said in May. — Reuters

Business

stc records KD 136.4m revenues, KD 15.9m profit during H1 2020

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc), a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its financial results for the six-month period ended June 30, 2020.

On this occasion, engineer Maziad Alharbi, stc's Chief Executive Officer, stated: During the first half of this year, the telecommunications sector was amongst the least impacted sectors with regard to the losses and economic consequences when compared to the negative effects resulted from the current economic crisis, which have heavily affected numerous vital sectors worldwide.

Despite the negative consequences associated with the COVID-19 outbreak, which had an adverse impact on businesses and vital sectors in general, stc was able to achieve these results through adopting a flexible operating model, implementing its digital transformation strategy and offering integrated advanced solutions that support the Kuwaiti government's social distancing requirements for both individuals and corporates.

stc has focused its efforts on building on the 5G network to deliver a range of services, including entertainment and digital services, meeting the growing demand for broadband high-speed networks, in addition to the corporate and institutional requirements for online institutional and educational interaction with the highest quality and efficiency.

Alharbi added: stc has proven its ability to overcome the economic challenges and the potential risks, while keeping up its business operations and serve its customers during such circumstances. stc has been located amongst the first class companies of the private sectors, due to the great efforts provided and the dedication of its employees, who demonstrated their determination to address the health risks we experienced from the spread of corona pandemic. This was the main reason, which helped the company to continue providing services to its customers with the same quality standards despite the growing demand and the convergence of the communications with customers and customer delivery services to the digital platforms.

Being a pioneer and one of the most advanced companies in the telecommunications services industry and a digital transformation enabler in Kuwait, stc completed a number of projects in addition to introducing advanced services and products backed by the fifth generation technology, including the data link connection project between the International Hospital and the ministry of health (MOH), thermal cameras services, integrated solutions for Microsoft 365, 5G LIVEBUS and stc Digital Business services. In addition, launching the 5G E2E SA network with ARM based core and convergent billing services.

Commenting on these financial results, Alharbi stated: stc's total revenues stood at KD 136.4 million for the six-month period ended 30 June 2020 in comparison to KD 139.6 million for the same period last year. The decrease in revenue is attributed to the full and partial lockdown implemented in Kuwait due to the COVID-19 outbreak, which resulted in a decline in the revenues from the consumer segment, in addition to the significant decline in revenues derived from roaming services due to the shutdown and suspension of flights in most airports around the world.

Moreover, stc provided its customers with free unlimited local calls to all operators, as well as free 5GB daily data usage, which started on 22 March 2020 until 20 April 2020 in collaboration with the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) during the COVID-19 crisis. Meanwhile, the business and enterprise sector witnessed a growth in revenues, due to the growing need and demand for digital and information services.

On the other hand, EBITDA reached KD 35.9 mn during the first six-month period of 2020 compared to KD 38.6 mn during the same period in 2019. stc's EBITDA margin reached 26.3 percent during the period compared to 27.7 percent in 2019. As a result, stc recorded a net profit KD 15.9 million (earnings per share of 32 fils) with a profit margin of 12 percent for the first half of the financial year 2020.

The company has also been able to structure its capital expenditure, especially after the negative effects of the current economic crisis, in order to ensure liquidity of cash flows under the current circumstances. stc successfully achieved these results despite the economic challenges the world has witnessed following COVID-19. stc has managed to achieve good levels of revenues and enhance its operational efficiency to add value to its customers and achieve better returns for its shareholders.

Alharbi added: "stc's financial results for the first six-month period of 2020 demonstrated the company's ability to compete and enhance its position as the second largest telecom operator in the Kuwaiti telecom market with a revenue market share of 35 percent. With the ongoing repercussions and challenges we are facing due to the COVID-19 crisis, we at stc are implementing a cost optimization program in order to achieve the best results and enhance profitability through adopting a balanced and effective financial policy in relation to the operational and capital expenditure.

Considering the company's financial position as of 30 June 2020, total assets reached KD 403.7 million, while total shareholders' equity reached KD 206.3 million, with a book value of 413 Kuwaiti fils per share. Furthermore, stc boasts a strong financial solvency position, considered to be amongst the best in comparison to telecom companies in the Middle East. Furthermore, stc's customer base stood at 1.72 mn customer at the end of June 2020".

Corporate Social Responsibility

Alharbi added: "The first half of 2020 witnessed launching a number of corporate social responsibility initiatives, including the "Far yet close" campaign in support of the preventive measures taken by the government concerning the Kuwaiti society's health, safety and awareness. stc has also worked with some government agencies and medical companies to prevent the infectious diseases through distributing facemasks, sanitizers and awareness leaflets to all the airport's staff as well as departing and returning passengers.

In one of its most important initiatives, stc collabo-



stc Chief Executive Officer Maziad Alharbi

rated with the Communication & Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) in a series of programs that aimed to alleviate the Kuwaiti society during the crisis, in line the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework. The initiatives were embodied with providing customers with free unlimited local calls to all operators, in addition to free 5GB daily data usage for a one-month period. stc also collaborated with Kuwait Airways and the Ministry of Health, to greet the returning citizens, where it distributed 25,000 free prepaid lines with internet bundles and free local calls".

Safety measures and procedures

Alharbi concluded: At the onset of the crisis, the company established a committee to deal with the crisis through activating the business continuity plan and adopting new initiatives as imposed by the pandemic crisis and the national measures taken to combat the virus outbreak. Through this committee, the company is mandated by all its sectors to carry out detailed plans for its continuity and to monitor the logistics required to ensure the business as well as services continuity in addition to minimizing the economic impact of the economic crisis on stc's business while ensuring the safety of its employees and customers.

stc also undertakes preventive precautionary measures and procedures to avoid outbreaks of contagious diseases, in accordance with the health guidelines and instructions provided by the ministry of health, in addition to sanitizing all facilities within the company and branches as well as installing sanitizing stations in the company's departments and elevators. stc also distributes face masks, gloves and sanitizers to all employees within the company's while distributing awareness leaflets and sending emails to its employees pertaining the health and safety precautions.

As for the branches, stc enforced various preventive measures during working hours throughout the full and partial lockdown periods in accordance with the government's plan to gradually return to the normal life in Kuwait. Hence, the company adopted the highest safety standards and instilled it into the culture of performance among stc's staff to continue offering high quality services while protecting its customers and employees.

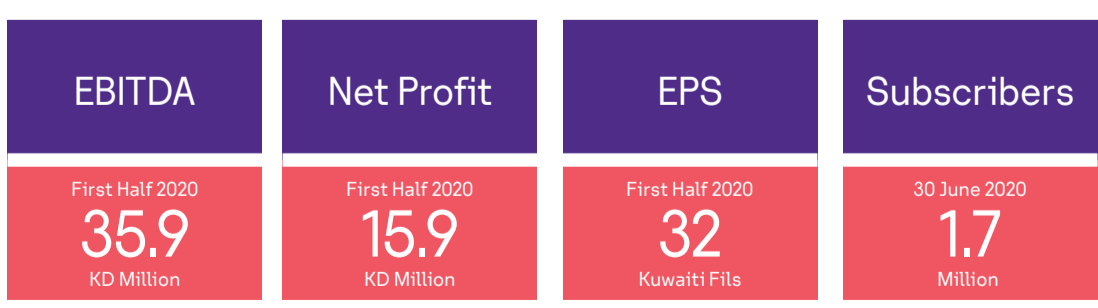
Installing thermal cameras, putting preventive intervals, distributing sanitizers, gloves and facemasks in all stc's branches in addition adhering to the social distancing protocols and health regulations were the key measures taken by the company to combat the pandemic. To ensure consistent safety measures, contracts were signed with specialized companies to ensure the continuous sterilization of all branches, machines, and workplaces, coupled with awareness posters and ongoing training for employees to maintain effective preventive measures".

- stc launched advanced products and services backed by 5G technology
- stc demonstrated its ability to overcome the economic challenges to keep up with the business operations and strengthen the digital transformation strategy
- stc enhanced its position as the second largest telecom operator in Kuwait with a market share of 35% in terms of sector's market share of revenues
- stc records an EBITDA of KD 35.9mn
- The decline in revenues from individual sales was offset by the growth in business and enterprise sales due to the growing demand for digital services.
- stc implemented advanced plans to ensure business continuity in order to enhance its profitability through the adoption of a balanced as well as effective financial policy for the operational and capital expenditures.
- stc achieved these results by the continuous efforts and professionalism of its staff, despite the global economic challenges resulted by COVID-19

The financial results for the six-month period ended 30 June 2020	
Revenue	KD 136.4 mn
EBITDA	KD 35.9 mn
Net Profit	KD 15.9 mn
EPS	32 Kuwaiti fils
Assets	KD 403.7 mn
Shareholder's Equity	KD 206.3 mn
Book Value Per Share	413 Kuwaiti fils
Customer base	1.72 mn



The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company has achieved a net profit of KD 15.9 million for the First Half of the Financial Year 2020.



Business

Al-Sayer committed to 'green facility' strategy

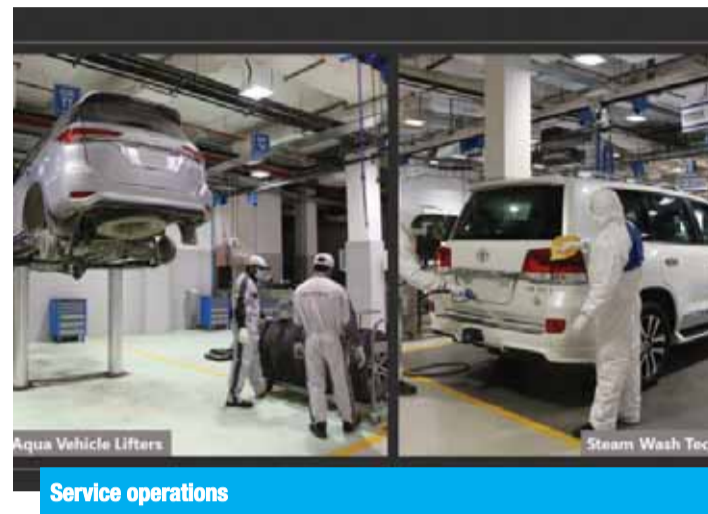
Energy-efficient business practices for a better tomorrow



Auto car wash with water recycling at Ardiya Delivery Center



Safe internal environment at spare parts warehouse



Service operations

KUWAIT: As part of Group's strategic focus on environment friendly and energy efficient business practices, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons is continuing to invest in clean and renewable energy technology.

Green building specifications

Renewable and Eco-friendly measures adopted by the Group for Toyota Sales, Service and Parts operations include:

- Light-colored Fire-rated Aluminum panels for the external walls,
- Solar power comprised of the best components and advanced technology,
- High-performance large glass facades for natural day light,
- Efficient heat insulation for the external walls and the upper roofs for effective air conditioning system,
- Latest LED light fittings,



Strategy to optimize power consumption

automated car wash technology from Germany which incorporates water recycling (designed and built locally) reverse osmosis system reducing out environmental impact. With this technology up to 80 percent of the water used is recycled and reused.

Optimize power consumption

The total electrical load that is generated daily from all the locations is 6500 kilowatt per hour and the annual energy yield is 24 45 megawatt per hour. Environment friendly measures in the building at Ardiya features a two-tunnel

• Photocell water mixers, which are available at first automotive center at Aswaq Al-Qurain, Toyota showrooms at Al-Jahra, Mega Toyota Delivery Center at Ardiya, recently opened multi-level Service Center at Fahaheel as well as at Parts Distribution Center at Subhan.

Al-Sayer has Installed solar power (PV panels) on grid system in the following locations:

Location	Capacity
New car showroom At Jahra	100 KW
New Car Showroom at Aswaq Al Qurain	100 KW
Toyota Service Center at Fahaheel	100 KW

To further enhance Mega Delivery Center, multi-level solar panel installation with a capacity of 1000 KW, is in progress which provides safe roof parking for up to 250 cars.

State-of-the-art Toyota's Fahaheel Service Center also features advanced energy efficient equipment such as:

- Steam wash machines for better washing quality with minimum water consumption, estimated efficiency of 50 liters of water to wash 50 cars,
- Aqua vehicle lifters - water and air powered vehicle lifters, with zero electricity consumption,
- Oil water separator for safe discharge of waste-

water

• Concealed garage furniture design ensuring safety of both customers and staff.

Toyota Parts Division recently changed to maintenance free batteries which does not require filling of battery acid before dispatch to the branches. This initiative enhances safety, air quality and overall internal environment of the warehouse.

NBK provides 24/7 concierge service to its customers

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) strives to provide its customers with convenient top-notch banking services that suit their lifestyles. In this context, it offers them concierge service 24/7, which provides them with a variety of services that meet their needs under the current exceptional circumstances, and give them more convenience, as part of the bank's aim to enrich their banking experience.

In this regard, NBK provides an integrated program for Premium Banking Customers (Private Banking, Privilege Banking and Thahabi Package) in partnership with Peacock Concierge.

Concierge service provides Premium Banking Customers with all their needs delivered to their doorsteps, as they can take advantage of express delivery service to receive orders and deliver them to their homes or chalets on the same day. Concierge service also includes various services including: cash delivery up to KD 10,000 (this service is available for Private Banking and Privilege Banking Customers), renewal of car insurance, delivery of grocery and pharmacy supplies, sterilization of house or office, hotel and restaurant reservations, limo service and luggage pickup from Kuwait Airport.

On this occasion, Amal Al-Duwaisan, Executive Manager- Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait, said: "At NBK, we are committed to provide top-notch banking services to our customers, as part of our efforts to stay



Amal Al-Duwaisan

closer to them and add more convenience to their life while keeping them safe, especially in view of the exceptional circumstances caused by coronavirus pandemic."

Al-Duwaisan added: "The wide range of services included in concierge service reflects our full understanding of customers' needs and expectations, which we identify through multiple communication channels and advanced analytical tools. It also affirms our keenness to provide them with ultimate convenience that suits the lifestyle of our Premium Banking Customers." "We attempt to upgrade concierge service by adding more services to meet customers' needs, especially in light of the current social distancing rules. To this end, we are keen to deliver our customers' requests to their doorsteps, and promise them to provide all new services to be up to their expectations," She concluded.

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 26th July 2020 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 19 - 23 July 2020. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:
Fakhriya Esmal Karam Ahmad
Lulwa Nasser Ghaleb Ali
Jennifer an Temeshy Voon Suleiman
Abdullah Abdulrasoul Mukhtar Al-khudhair
Maha Abdullah Fahad Allafi

Al-Danah is now offering its biggest prize yet, with an annual draw prize of KD

1,500,000. The annual draw will be held on 14 January 2021, and the last chance to deposit into an Al Danah account to participate is 30 September 2020.

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

lives of thousands lucky winners.

The bank announced 20 winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Ghala Bader Al-Rajhi, Fahad Lafi Al-Harbi, Abd Al-Emam Jassim Abdullah, Mohammad Esam Ali, Amal Eid Al-Sharekiah, Eiman Abdulrahman Abdulrahim, Ahmed Shah Haji, Mohalab Abdullah Al-Kandari, Malhan Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Ali Hasan Yaqoub, Sameerah Mohammad Al-Hajri, Bader Habeb Al-Awad, Safeyah Hasan Ghoul, Hessah Abdullah Al-Mutairi, Ebrahim Faisal Al-Houli, Fahad Ahmad Mohammad, Fatemah Sami Al-Keelani, Firoz Anwar Abdulaziz, Humoud Saud Al-Shammari and Abdulsatar Abdulsamad Al-Safar.

The draws of Al-Hassad include several cash prizes, such as KD 100,000 each Eid and the grand quarterly draw of KD 250,000 prize which continues to be a key aspiration for customers who are wishing

to fulfill their dreams. On top of that, Al-Hassad offers a monthly draw of KD 100,000, as well as 20 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 for each winner. In addition to this attractive package of rewards, Al-Hassad Islamic account incorporates a Wakala contract for projected annual profits, making this account beneficial to all customer segments that are aspiring to build their short and long-term savings through a unique savings account with many advantages. Furthermore, for the first time in Kuwait, the AUB Al-Hassad presents the "Privilege Draw", which is a quarterly draw of KD 25,000 exclusively for Al-Hassad customers who maintained their balances for more than one year and have not won a prize in the past five years. For all draws, the clients are eligible for one draw chance for each KD 50 deposited in their Al-Hassad account.

the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al-Danah customers in 2019, have been added to their 2020 chances, and the same process will take place in 2021, and so on. Terms and conditions apply.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2020 quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.

Burgan Bank reveals winners of Yawmi account draw

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

1. Awadh Ghayadh Obaid Alenezi
2. Ahmad Ismaeil Abdullah Albannay
3. Abdullah Osamah Fahad Aljarallah
4. Ghadeer Mohammad Ali Ramadhan
5. Abdulrahman Mohammad Albassam

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and

quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

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

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly and monthly draws on Al-Najma Account and Salary Transfer Campaign on Sunday July 26, 2020. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representatives Ibtisam Al Muna'ei and Shaikha Al-Rasheed.

The results of the draws were as follows:

- 1- Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000 was for the share of Mohammad Sayed Ibrahim Al-Qallaf and Fatima Sayed Ibrahim Al-Qallaf.
- 2- Al-Najma salary account - the prize of up to KD 1,000 was for the share of Dalal Saad Al-Azmi.

The bank stated that the salary campaign is aimed at customers who transfer their salaries of KD 500 or more to the

Bank, especially Kuwaiti employees and residents working in the government, oil sectors and companies listed with the bank as well as retirees, and take advantage of the benefits of this campaign and get an instant cash gift from KD 250 to KD 500 or an interest-free loan of 5 times the salary and a maximum of KD 10,000, in addition to the cash gifts, there will be a weekly draw for new and local Kuwaiti customers who transfer their salaries to the bank to earn an amount equal to one salary of the salaries they receive monthly.

The bank stated that Al-Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-

annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

The bank revealed that Al-Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al-Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time.

Classifieds

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

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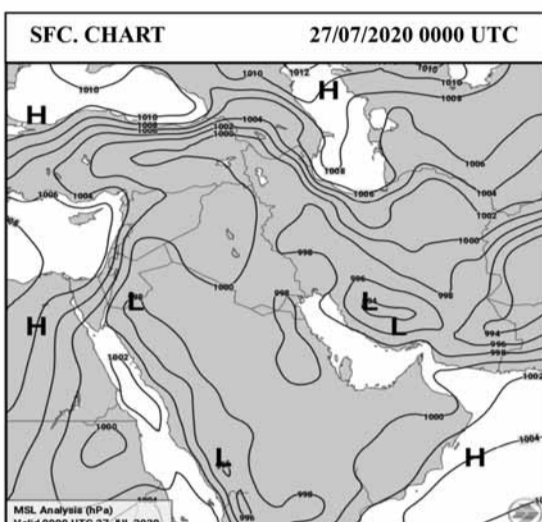
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Hot to rather hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind with speed of 08 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
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STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	37 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	49 °C	34 °C
ABDALY	49 °C	35 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	49 °C	36 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	34 °C
SALMIYAH	40 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	- °C	- °C
NUWAISIB	48 °C	33 °C
WAFRA	49 °C	33 °C
SALMY	49 °C	34 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	07/28	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	45 °C	33 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	07/29	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	43 °C	31 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 35 km/h
Thursday	07/30	Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	48 °C	34 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 32 km/h
Friday	07/31	Very hot with a chance for blowing dust	49 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:35
Sunrise	05:05
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:44
Isha	20:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	44 °C
MIN. Temp.	32 °C
MAX. RH	91 %
MIN. RH	29 %
MAX. Wind	SE 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated.

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, 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

EMERGENCY 112

Airlines

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

Word Search



Dragon Word Search

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| ADVENTURE | DREAM | MYSTICAL |
| AWE | FIRE | MYTH |
| BEHEMOTH | FLYING | REPTILE |
| CASTLE | GIANT | SCALES |
| CAVE | GREEN | SORCERER |
| CLAWS | HOWL | SPELL |
| COLOSSAL | KINGDOM | TAIL |
| CONQUER | LEGEND | TREASURE |
| CUNNING | MAGICAL | VANISH |
| CURSE | MEDIAEVAL | WINGS |
| DRAGON | MONSTER | WRINKLED |



Join the Dot



STAR TRACK

<p>Aries (March 21-April 19) You'll find that your brain is extra sharp today and you have a greater sense of clarity regarding your purpose in life. It could be that your nurturing instinct is high and your general self-esteem depends on how useful you can be to the people around you. It may seem as if you're everyone's parent or watchful older sibling. Give people the advice they need to grow and be wiser.</p>	<p>Cancer (June 21-July 22) It's OK to be wrong. Cancer: If you know you've made a mistake, feel free to admit it. Don't let your ego stand in the way of progress. Others won't want to deal with you if you insist that what you're doing is right all the time when perhaps it isn't. Your mind may be a bit more fragile on a day like this, so try to be more sensitive and receptive than usual.</p>	<p>Libra (September 23-October 22) One of the important lessons of the day for you is to remember that emotions are powerful things to recognize and honor. Don't discount your feelings. In fact, it's most important that you embrace them with your whole being. Once you relax and settle into your true emotions, you'll find that your mind clears and you can make conscious, rational decisions about whatever issues come your way.</p>	<p>Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Your receptivity to new ideas is stronger than usual today, Capricorn. Listen to what people say and remember that you can learn from every person you meet. There's a lesson in every situation. Remember to keep your brain exercised, just like any other part of your body. To keep it working properly, you must make sure you give it the daily stimulus that it requires.</p>
<p>Taurus (April 20-May 20) Many people conduct their lives without really making conscious decisions about their actions. People walk around like they're asleep. Don't fall into this trap, Taurus. This is a good day to dust off your thinking cap and take action. Don't let others make decisions for you. Take control of your destiny. To maintain the balance today, it's important that you swing toward the sensitive side of things.</p>	<p>Leo (July 23-August 22) Be careful about being too critical today, Leo. You're likely to turn people away if you aren't careful with how you express yourself. This is a good time to listen and receive as opposed to deliver information. Let things stew in your head for a while before you make any major decisions. You're likelier to find a greater balance in the situation if you slow down and back off a bit.</p>	<p>Scorpio (October 23-November 21) Someone may be calling you on certain behaviors today, Scorpio. It could be that your aggressive nature rubs someone the wrong way and they simply don't have thick enough skin to take it. You may not even be aware of how your warlike attitude affects those around you. This is a good day to see things from someone else's perspective in order to gain a bit more data on the situation.</p>	<p>Aquarius (January 20- February 18) Your mental clarity is astounding today, Aquarius. You'll find that your pattern of thinking reflects exactly who you are at the core of your being. The moment you walk out the door this morning, you'll find that your brain wants to process everything. This action will give you greater assuredness and insight, making this a terrific day to stand up and speak your mind.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21-June 20) Your thinking is clear today and you'll find that it's right in sync with who you are, Gemini. Find your strength in conversations in which you display your keen insight into the situation at hand. Your detective-like nature is especially active, and others will find it hard to pull the wool over your eyes now. Stay tuned in to what's going on around you.</p>	<p>Virgo (August 23-September 22) Your mental ability could be rather sluggish and lazy today. It could be that you aren't feeling as sharp as you'd like, Virgo. This is most likely a sign that you simply need to slow down and relax. Don't feel as if you always need to deliver the keynote address. Be more of an audience member today and take advice from the other people up on stage.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) Your mind is thinking quite clearly today, Sagittarius. You'll discover that you have a keen ability to tune into the subtle energies that are moving through your life right now. The good news is that your ego and brain are working together, and you may be able to strike a better balance between these two elements of your psyche much more easily than usual.</p>	<p>Pisces (February 19-March 20) Tune into the thoughts of others, Pisces. Focusing only on yourself means you're missing the beauty and wisdom that come from other people. Respect their opinions the way you want them to respect yours. Your ego might get in the way of your brain until you embrace the lesson of sensitivity that it's trying to teach you. Take a back seat and let someone else do the talking.</p>

Lifestyle | Features



In this file photo taken on November 17, 2008 then US President George W. Bush congratulates US actress Olivia de Havilland after presenting her with the 2008 National Medals of Arts award during an event in the East Room at the White House in Washington, DC.—AFP photos



In this file photo taken on September 09, 2010 British actress Jacqueline Bisset (right) and US actress Olivia de Havilland (left) pose after they were awarded chevalier of the Legion of Honour by French President Nicolas Sarkozy at the Elysee Palace in Paris.



In this file photo taken on June 15, 2006 US actress Olivia de Havilland attends the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' tribute to herself at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills, California.

Golden Age Hollywood star Olivia de Havilland dies at 104

Olivia de Havilland, a two-time Oscar winner and one of the last links to Hollywood's Golden Age, died Sunday at the age of 104. The actress, who starred in blockbusters like "Gone With the Wind" and played opposite such dashing leading men as Errol Flynn, personified the glamour and elegance of a bygone age of moviemaking. In a statement, her publicist Lisa Goldberg said de Havilland "died peacefully from natural causes" at her home in Paris, France, where she had lived for years. "She was a queen of Hollywood, and will go down in cinematic history as such," Thierry Fremaux, director of the Cannes Film Festival, told AFP. "There aren't many who deserve to be called a 'legend,'" tweeted Hollywood columnist Scott Feinberg, "but Olivia de Havilland... certainly was one."

And a Twitter account run by screen legend Humphrey Bogart's son said, "We have lost a true Classic Hollywood



This file photo taken on April 2, 1955 shows US actress Olivia de Havilland and French journalist Pierre Galante getting married in Yvoy-le-Marron, central France.



In this file photo taken on July 21, 1956 US actress Olivia de Havilland and her husband, French Pierre Galante look at their baby Gisèle at Neuilly-sur-Seine, near Paris.



In this file photo taken on December 14, 1939 US actress Olivia de Havilland (left) and British actress Vivien Leigh are pictured as they leave a plane upon their arrival in Atlanta for the premiere of "Gone with the Wind".

icon." De Havilland, who built a reputation for being a bankable star for any genre, starred in 49 movies from 1935 to 2009. She was also known for her colourful off-screen life, including a landmark legal battle against Warner Bros. and a secret and bitter feud with sister and fellow actress Joan Fontaine.

The De Havilland Law

She earned the enduring appreciation of fellow actors when a suit she brought against Warner Bros.—who had repeatedly extended her contract even as she rejected script after script—led to a far-reaching 1945 ruling that gave actors far more power to choose their own roles. Turner Classic Movies host Ben Mankiewicz tweeted that even beyond her two Oscars, "her greatest contribution came in court against Warner Bros, setting a template for labour rights in Hollywood." She took pride in the ruling, still known as the De Havilland Law.

Actor Jared Leto, himself an Oscar winner, tweeted that the law helped him extricate himself from an unfavourable

nine-year contract. He was able to thank the actress in person in Paris, and recalled: "It was amazing to meet her—she's a legend!" Though De Havilland was blacklisted for three years while the case was underway, her legal victory kickstarted her career.

Neither she nor sister Joan Fontaine ever spoke publicly about their feud, but in 1941 De Havilland lost out on an Oscar for her lead performance as Emmy Brown in "Hold Back the Dawn" to Fontaine, who won for Alfred Hitchcock's "Suspicion." They remain the only siblings in Oscar history to have both won lead acting honors.

Cast with Errol Flynn

Olivia Mary de Havilland was born on July 1, 1916 in Tokyo, the daughter of a British lawyer and actress mother Lilian Fontaine. When the couple divorced three years later, Fontaine took her two daughters to live in California. Still in her teens, de Havilland was discovered by director Max Reinhardt during an amateur theatre performance. In 1935,

Warner Bros. signed her to a seven-year contract; the same year, Jack Warner took a chance on the unknown actress, casting her across the swashbuckling Errol Flynn in "Captain Blood" and launching her celebrated career.

She and Flynn, whose on-screen chemistry spurred speculation about an off-screen relationship, joined up again three years later in "The Adventures of Robin Hood." And in 1939, De Havilland was cast as the noble, long-suffering Melanie Hamilton in MGM's Civil War epic "Gone With the Wind." She earned a best actress Oscar nomination. De Havilland lost out to co-star Hattie McDaniel, who played Mammy and became the first African-American to win an Oscar. But the film sealed De Havilland's reputation as one of Hollywood's top leading ladies.

'Personal strength'

De Havilland was married twice—first to author Marcus Goodrich from 1946 to 1953 and then to journalist Pierre Galante, editor of the French magazine

Paris Match. In all, she was nominated for five Academy Awards, winning best actress for "To Each His Own" (1946) and "The Heiress" (1949). Tributes poured in on Sunday.

"At a time when women's place in cinema and in society at large is being questioned, we must remember the personal strength she showed when she attacked the studio system to free actors from exploitative contracts," Fremaux said. And the Screen Actors Guild tweeted that her "grit to take on the studio system in 1945 helped her fellow actors for generations to come." The star had lived in Paris since the early 1950s, and received honours such as the National Medal of the Arts, France's Legion d'Honneur, and the appointment to Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.—AFP



In this file photo taken on March 27, 1950 US actress Olivia de Havilland poses with her Oscar for Best Actress in a Leading Role for the drama film "The Heiress" in Hollywood.

No dancing, just listening: Berlin club Berghain reopens doors

The coronavirus is keeping Berlin's legendary clubs closed but techno attraction Berghain has found a way to throw its doors back open, luring visitors with an unusual sound exhibition. Just 50 people are let in at a time to allow for physical distancing, but without the venue's notoriously picky doormen standing guard, no one has to worry about being denied entry. Once inside Berghain's imposing Kessel Hall, it's not the sound of techno that fills the space. Instead, visitors to the former power plant are enveloped by an eerie, almost surreal soundscape of rhythmic throbbing, soft city noises, murmurings and even the whirling of helicopter blades.

"You listen, you experience, you can close your eyes or leave them open and follow the sound across the room," said Carsten Seiffarth, co-curator of the Singuhr projects, a platform that organises sound art installations. The show, known as "Eleven songs—Hall at

Berghain" is the brainchild of artistic duo Sam Auinger and Hannes Strobl and runs until August 2.

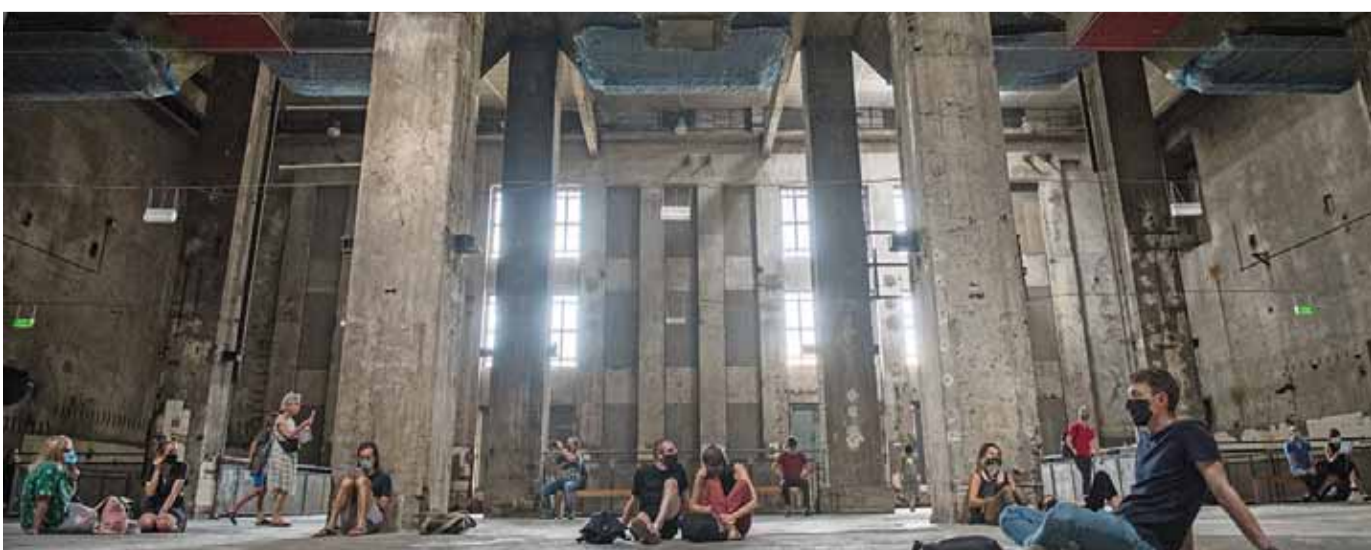
Fellow curator Markus Steffens said the pair were invited to come up with an acoustic experience "for and with the space"—a concrete, high-ceilinged former machine hall located behind the main club rooms worshipped by techno lovers worldwide. "The room itself is a kind of instrument to them," Steffens said, where the sound interacts with the architecture to create different listening experiences.

Queues and face masks

The project was conceived last year, well before Germany went into lockdown to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many of the restrictions have been lifted in recent months with shops, restaurants and museums allowed to reopen, nightclubs remain shut over concerns that huge crowds mingling indoors could fuel a surge in infections.

Organisers of Berghain's sound exhibition said they initially feared people wouldn't come. "We didn't really know what was going to happen. What if no one came because they were afraid of getting infected?" said Seiffarth.

But he needn't have worried. Visitors, wearing face masks, have already been queuing to get in. With crowd numbers capped at 50, culture fans can spread out comfortably across the vast hall, while the large open windows allow for plenty of fresh air, Seiffarth said. Besides, people are ready to get out of the house and do something different after weeks of confinement, he added. "Here, you can be with other people," Seiffarth said. "It's also about having an experience with this room and feeling emotions that go beyond just listening."—AFP



Visitors listen to the sound installation "eleven songs - halle am berghain" at Berghain club in Berlin.—AFP



This file photo taken on May 18, 2009 shows Japanese fashion designer and event producer Kansai Yamamoto (center) smiling with Japanese actress Rei Kikukawa (left) and Indonesian models in traditional dress during a promotional announcement for the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and Indonesia, at a press conference in Tokyo.—AFP

Japanese fashion designer Kansai Yamamoto dies at 76

Japanese fashion designer Kansai Yamamoto, considered a pioneer of the country's industry and known for his work with David Bowie, has died of leukaemia aged 76, his daughter announced yesterday. "He left this world peacefully, surrounded by loved ones," actress Mirai Yamamoto announced on Instagram. "In my eyes, my father was not only the electric and energetic soul that the world knew him as but someone who was also thoughtful, kind-hearted, and affectionate," she said. Yamamoto was known for creating bold avant-garde pieces that defied gender norms and featured brilliant colours and patterns.

He leapt to prominence with interna-

tional shows from the 1970s onwards and won popular acclaim for his collaboration with Bowie, producing a series of outfits for the singer's Ziggy Stardust alter ego. "I found David's aesthetic and interest in transcending gender boundaries shockingly beautiful," he told website The Cut in 2018. Yamamoto's designs often incorporated elements from Japanese culture, and he famously dressed Bowie in a cape covered in Japanese kanji characters. But his eye-catching designs, replete with saturated colours and vivid motifs, set him apart from many of Japan's more minimalist fashion icons.—AFP

Lifestyle | Features

BRAZIL'S MOST FAMOUS COBRA SPARKS TRAFFICKING PROBE, DRAWS FANS

A cobra that bit a veterinary student in Brazil, putting him in a coma, has turned into a celebrity by sparking an investigation into an alleged exotic animal trafficking ring. The monocled cobra, which is native to Asia, bit 22-year-old Pedro Krambeck Lehmkuhl on July 7 in Brasilia, sending doctors on a frantic search for the right antivenom—so rare in Brazil that the lone doses had to be rushed from Sao Paulo. Questions about how the snake ended up at the student's apartment soon turned into a police investigation that found 16 other snakes at a property belonging to a friend of

Lehmkuhl's, as well as three sharks, seven more snakes, a Moray eel and a Tupinambis lizard at another property. So far the probe has led to the firing of two officials at the Brazilian environmental regulator, IBAMA, over suspicions they facilitated fraudulent import permits for a wildlife trafficking ring. The student's mother and stepfather, a police colonel, were also questioned and fined 8,500 reals (about \$1,600) each on a charge of obstructing justice. Lehmkuhl, who spent six days in the hospital, was released and fined 61,000 reals. He is still under investigation.

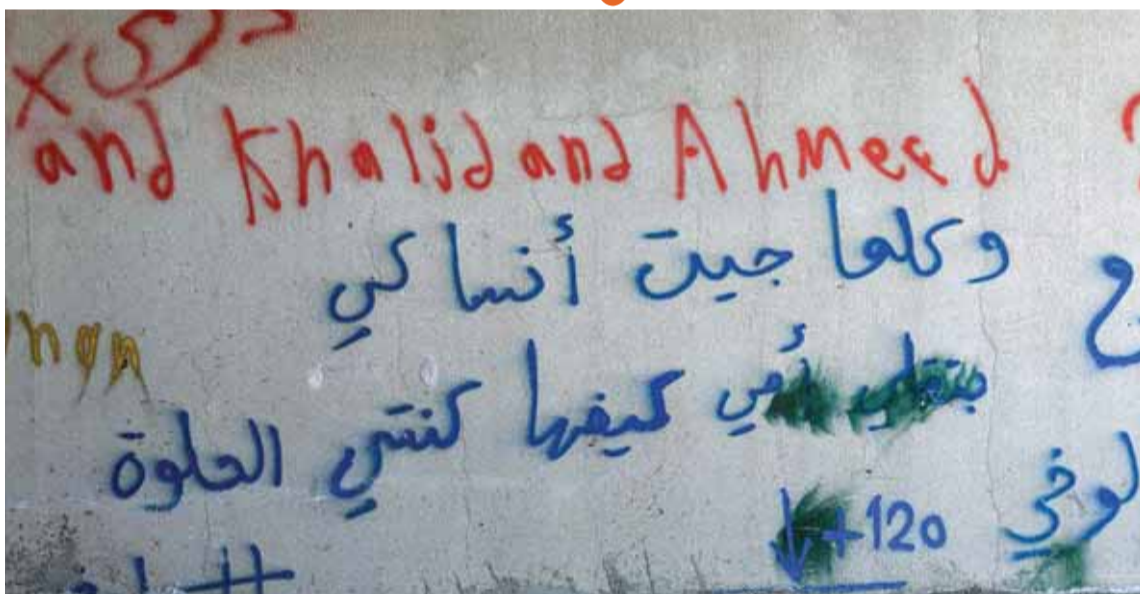
The cobra—"Naja," in Portuguese—has meanwhile become an internet sensation, after being found near a shopping center where it was allegedly abandoned by a friend of Lehmkuhl's trying to get rid of evidence. A Twitter account opened in the snake's name, @najaoriginal, has nearly 50,000 followers. "In less than a week, I have taken revenge on my oppressor, dismantled an animal trafficking ring, freed more than 16 friends, helped a shark and struck fear in the traffickers' hearts," it posted on July 11 — one of several tweets that have gone viral, mixing references to Brazilian pop music and

telenovelas with humorous jabs at animal trafficking. The snake is now living at the Brasilia Zoo, which showed off "Brazil's most famous cobra" in an Instagram live video Friday. The zoo's reptiles director, Carlos Nobrega, explained the 1.5-meter (five-foot) snake's care and diet to rapt fans as it slithered about its enclosure. Despite its ordeal, "everything seems to be OK" with the cobra, he said.—AFP

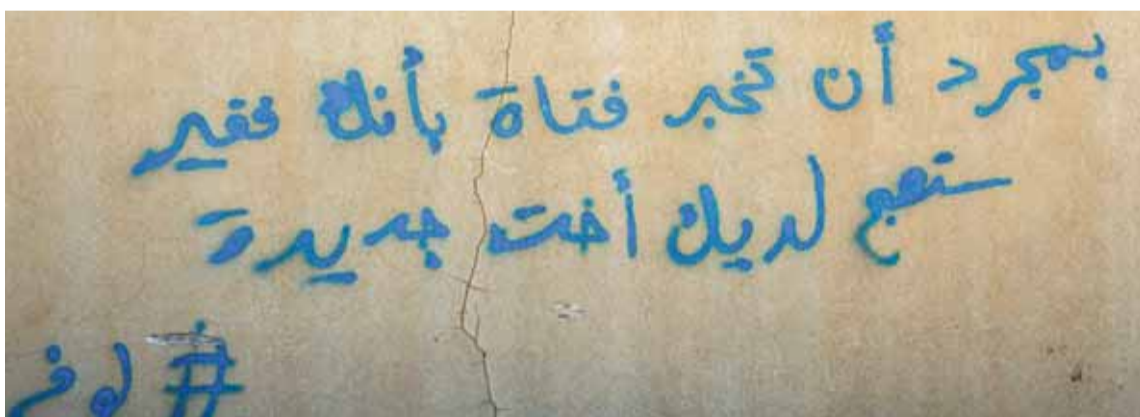


A view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, the capital of the northern Iraqi Kurdish autonomous region, reading in Arabic (from right to left) "as age progresses and passes, he found no happiness nor solace"; "when you do not find whomever you tell that you are not well, know that 'Suwar Pics' (Facebook page) is beside you and you can inform them"; "it's been one year and everything is perfect, my heart, Ala Ziad".

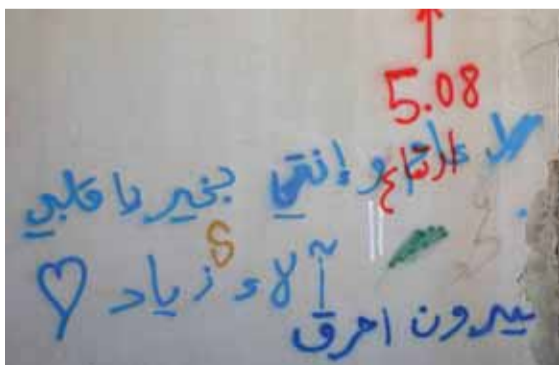
In Iraq's Kurdish capital, all's fair in love and walls



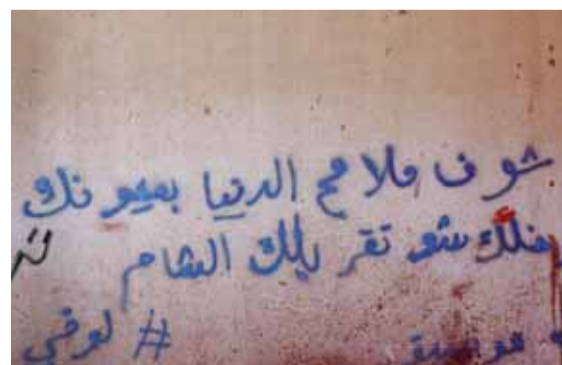
This picture shows a view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, the capital of the northern Iraqi Kurdish autonomous region, reading in Arabic (blue) "every time I'm about to forget you, my mother asks me how is my beautiful daughter in law".—AFP photos



A view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, reading in Arabic "simply by telling a girl you are poor, you will have a new sister #Luvy".



A view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, reading in Arabic (blue) "it's been one year and everything is perfect, my heart, Ala Ziad".



A view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, reading in Arabic "I see the whole world in your eyes — are you related to Damascus #Luvy".

"Nero set Rome on fire and Nermin set my heart on fire." Iraqi Kurds in Arbil are declaring their love on the city's walls, their only refuge in a conservative society. The confessions are scrawled in bright reds and blues, in Arabic and Kurdish, bringing life to otherwise bland alleyways, quiet cul-de-sacs and abandoned homes. Some are accompanied by dates and initials instead of full names, others by awkwardly drawn hearts or flowers. "M + M = life," reads one slanted message in a dark corner. Cracks in the walls or water stains from leaky pipes streak through the passionate declarations. "I hope you will stay my love for many more years, Ala Ziad."



A view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, reading in Arabic script "Hajoura" with heart and flowers around below, a diminutive in reference to a beloved woman called Hajar.

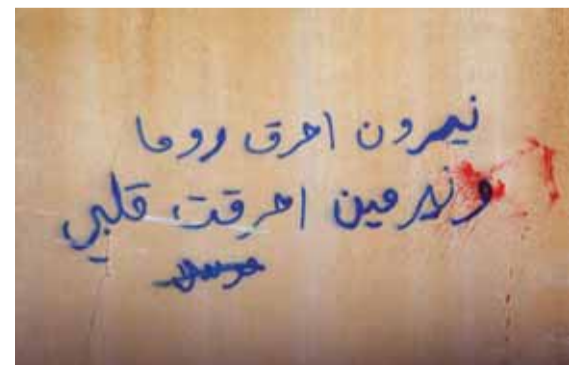
This message, scribbled under a bridge, includes the name of its recipient—a bold move in a society stuck between religious tradition and modern romance. Dotted with skyscrapers and bars, Arbil is the capital of northern Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region, widely seen as more open-minded than the federal south. Still, the



A view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, reading in Arabic "if I loved Allah (God) as much as I loved you, he would have sent me as a messenger (prophet) to mankind #Luvy".

region maintains many of the usual taboos: public displays of affection are looked down on, women complain of workplace discrimination and harassment, while activists say they have a long way to go to uproot the practices of female genital mutilation and forced marriage. But all's fair in love and walls—and Arbil is no exception.

One declaration even dares to flip religious expressions on their head: "If I loved God as much as I love you, he would have sent me as a prophet." Others take a more political tone, hailing the struggle for an independent state or lamenting the war in neighbouring Syria that forced thousands of Kurds to flee across the border into northern Iraq. "I see the whole world in your eyes—are you related to Damascus?" reads a message in deep blue. Another salutes Kobane, the Kurdish-majority town in northern Syria that fought back Islamic State group jihadists in 2015. In their own ways, these too are love letters.—AFP



A view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, reading in Arabic "Nero set Rome on fire and Nermin set my heart on fire".



A view of graffiti text sprayed on a blank wall in Arbil, reading in Arabic "Mervyn my love, I love you; Life = M+M".

SAO PAULO POSTPONES CARNIVAL OVER CORONAVIRUS

Sao Paulo, the biggest city in coronavirus hotspot Brazil, said Friday it was indefinitely postponing its 2021 carnival because of the pandemic. "Both the samba schools and the carnival 'blocos' (street parties) understand it's not viable to organize carnival for February next year," Mayor Bruno Covas told a news conference. Rio de Janeiro, home to the largest carnival in Brazil—and one of the most famous in the world—is considering a similar move. Brazil has recorded more infections and deaths from the new coronavirus than any

country except the United States: more than 2.3 million and 85,000, respectively.

Sao Paulo state is the national epicenter, accounting for nearly one-fourth of the death toll. Rio has also been hard-hit. Covas did not set a new date, but suggested "late May or early July." Though less famous than Rio's, Sao Paulo's carnival has turned into a massive event in recent years, drawing tens of thousands of revellers in the city of 12 million people. With its tightly packed street parties, throngs of parade-watchers and passionate

embrace of all things sensual and fun, carnival in Brazil would likely be an epidemiologist's nightmare during the pandemic.

Sao Paulo had already cancelled its Gay Pride parade in June, one of the world's biggest, and postponed from July to November a "March for Jesus" that draws millions of people each year. Sao Paulo state announced Friday it was extending its stay-at-home measures by another two weeks, to August 10.—AFP

Sports

Photo of the day



Neymar Jr. and Team Kuwait pose for a portrait at the Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five World Final in Praia Grande, Brazil.

—Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Rossi's heirs shine in Spain despite clumsy celebrations

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA: Valentino Rossi had plenty of reasons to smile in Spain on Sunday as his third-place finish in the Andalucia MotoGP capped off a day when his academy graduates also made the podium, even if their celebrations could benefit from being less clumsy.

Rossi, 41, helped Yamaha to a podium lockout in the second race of the season behind Fabio Quartararo and Maverick Vinales. It was the seven-time elite class world champion's first taste of post-race champagne since Australia last year.

However, the veteran Italian derived as much pleasure from seeing Luca Marini — his half-brother — and Marco Bezzecchi take second and third in Moto 2. In Moto 3, another graduate Celestino Vietti was third.

All three riders race for Rossi's own team — Sky Racing VR46 in the two feeder series. "I'm so proud of my guys because we have a great relationship. They never give up and being with them makes me less old, or let's say, younger," said Rossi.

However, Vietti, 18, needs to work on his podium skills. As he tried to uncork his champagne bottle, he cut his hand and needed 20 stitches. "It's a disaster," lamented Rossi. Marini, 22, and 21-year-old Bezzecchi also caused Rossi to miss a heartbeat or two despite their second and third-place finishes.

After congratulating each other as they crossed the finish line, they lost concentration and both ended up in the gravel. "When I saw my two motorcycles in the gravel, I said to myself 'this can't be happening'," explained Rossi. —AFP

Broad on brink of 500 club as England eye W Indies series win

'We haven't had any centuries in the series'

MANCHESTER: Stuart Broad was only one wicket away from becoming just the seventh bowler to take 500 Test wickets as England closed in on a series victory over the West Indies at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Broad's haul of 6-31 in 14 overs saw the West Indies bundled out for 197 in reply to England's first-innings 369 that featured his dashing 62. England's second-innings 226-2 declared saw opener Rory Burns make 90 as the West Indies were set a huge target of 399 for victory.

And there was still time for Broad to reduce the tourists, who had no answer to his late movement off a good length, to 10-2 at stumps on the third day. Broad had the struggling John Campbell caught at first slip for a duck by England captain Joe Root and then moved to 499 Test wickets when nightwatchman Kemar Roach was caught behind.

Broad bowled the final over of the day's play, with his last ball just missing Shai Hope's outside edge. The only bowlers with more than 600 Test wickets are a trio of former spinners — Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan (800), Australian Shane Warne (708) and India's Anil Kumble (619).

The only seamers ahead of Broad are his long-time England new-ball colleague James Anderson (589) and the retired pair of Australia's Glenn McGrath (563) and the West Indies' Courtney Walsh (519).

'RIDICULOUS ACHIEVEMENT'

Broad took all the West Indies wickets to fall on Sunday in a combined return of 6-22 in seven overs, with his burst of 4-11 in 22 balls ending the visitors' first innings after they had avoided the follow-on.

"It's a pretty ridiculous achievement to get to 500 (wickets)," said Burns. "Hopefully we can keep grabbing them for him."

England's second innings saw Burns and Dom Sibley (56) share a stand of 114 — England's first century opening partnership in a home Test since Alastair Cook and Alex Hales put on 126 against Pakistan at Edgbaston in 2016.

England captain Joe Root had made a brisk 68 not out when he declared, amid concerns Monday's play could be washed out. Burns, in common with Surrey team-mate Ollie Pope in England's first innings, got into the 90s without making it to three figures.

Not that the left-hander, who holed out against off-spinner Roston Chase, was too concerned. "It was good to set up the team in a good position though, that was the most important thing," West Indies coach Phil Simmons once again bemoaned the failure of his team's batsmen to back up the bowlers in a gruelling schedule of three back-to-back Tests that marks international cricket's return from the coronavirus lockdown.

"We haven't had any centuries in the series," he said. "There are two days left to bat and someone needs to get themselves a big hundred."

Ridiculous achievement



MANCHESTER: England's Joe Root plays a shot on the third day of the third Test cricket match between England and the West Indies at Old Trafford in Manchester, northwest England. —AFP

"There is plenty of time in the game so we need to be more determined to get big scores."

DOWRICH INJURY

West Indies wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich was hit in the face by a 90mph Shannon Gabriel delivery that burst through his gloves and had to leave the field. "He was lucky it came off the

gloves first," said Simmons. "He has a little cut on the inside of his lip, but no damage to his teeth."

One-day international wicketkeeper Hope initially took over behind the stumps before Joshua Da Silva, the back-up gloveman in the Test squad but not in the XI for this match, was allowed on. Da Silva nearly stumped Burns, on 12, off Chase but slipped as he tried to take off the bails. —AFP

Cricket one-day Super League launched

NEW DELHI: A new one-day international Super League to determine qualification for the 50-over World Cup in 2023 will launch this week, the International Cricket Council announced yesterday.

Thursday's one-day international between world champions England and Ireland in Southampton will be the inaugural match of the 13-nation league, with World Cup hosts India and the next seven highest-placed teams automatically qualifying for the 2023 edition.

The ICC's 12 full members and the Netherlands will take part with each side playing four home and four away three-match series. The coronavirus pandemic has caused havoc with the cricket calendar with the 50-over and T20 World Cups pushed back. The start of the Super League was also delayed due to COVID-19.

The ICC said it was working with national boards to find dates for series in the new Super League to be "safely and practically rescheduled." "The decision last week to move the (50-over) World Cup back to late 2023 gives us more time to schedule any games lost due to COVID-19 and preserve the integrity of the qualification process, meaning it will be decided on the field of play, which is important," said ICC general manager Geoff Allardice.

Under the previous qualifying system for last

year's World Cup in England, the top eight teams in the ICC rankings were joined by the top two sides from a qualifying tournament to make up the 10-team event.

"We're looking forward to playing cricket again and to the ICC men's World Cup Super League," said England's limited-overs captain Eoin Morgan. "Given the situation, it will be quite different to the last time we played at home, when we lifted the World Cup at Lord's, but it's nice to be starting our journey for the next edition of the tournament."

Ireland's captain Andrew Balbirnie said: "It is obviously going to be a huge challenge taking on the team that won the World Cup just a year ago, but we have prepared well and have taken confidence from our form over the early months of 2020.

"What is important is that we are getting back on the field. I hope international cricket's return is steady during these challenging times." The later qualifying tournament will feature five of the 13 sides that fail to get through directly against five associate nations.

The start of the Super League comes nearly a year after the ICC launched a world Test championship between the nine top-ranked teams. "The league will bring relevance and context to ODI cricket over the next three years, as qualification for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 is at stake," said Allardice.

"The Super League gives cricket fans around the world even more reasons to watch as the drama of league cricket unfolds," he added. Cricket came to a grinding halt in March due to the virus outbreak and it returned early this month with England hosting West Indies in a three-Test series. —AFP

Cricket: Socially distanced fans in coronavirus era

LONDON: Surrey cricketers Mark Stoneman and Ryan Patel on Sunday experienced something no other sportsmen in England have enjoyed since March when they strode to the wicket at The Oval — applause from a crowd desperate to witness live action in the flesh after the coronavirus lockdown. The Premier League football season has been played out in empty stadia — cardboard cut-outs of fans at some grounds proving no substitute for noise and atmosphere.

Frankie Dettori and wonder mare Enable were applauded into the winners enclosure at Ascot after a historic third victory in the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes on Saturday by 30 people.

However, they were on-course staff, trainers and owners. Stoneman and Patel had 1,000 members — mostly from Surrey but some from rivals Middlesex — to cheer them on a day that even the unpredictable British weather did not wish to ruin with the sun making welcome if sporadic appearances.

The spectators, some drinking beer, some in Panama hats, sat in alternate rows due to social distancing rules.

Those who came as a group or a couple could sit beside each other in the 1845 Stand named after the year the club was founded. Richard Gould, the long-serving Surrey chief executive, told AFP lessons had already been learned from Sunday's pilot scheme — others follow at the world snooker championships on Friday and Glorious

Goodwood racing festival next Saturday.

"Primarily how you allocate seats," he said. "Normally with online ticketing systems you fill your boots in terms of selling seats but this is a different scenario. "You don't really want to be a trained epidemiologist just to place people in seats. "We looked at a variety of models regarding socially distanced seating and that has been a challenge." The members may have been there for a day's live cricket but for long-time member David Wright it was one he doubted he would see. "Probably six or eight weeks ago I thought, no probably won't get to see anything," he told AFP. "But now I'm firmly of the view that this is perfectly possible. It's a nice moment. "We're back and it feels like you have never been away."

'PROVIDES REASSURANCE'

Wright, who fell under cricket's spell watching it on TV with his father back in the 1970s, says he would be fine travelling farther afield to watch his beloved Surrey. "I would be there like a shot," said Wright, who attended Sunday's game with three friends.

"This feels perfectly safe. Everyone wearing masks (when indoors) and one-way systems, the way we are seated in the ground. "I hope this is the start - not a one-off."

Gregory Mumford joked it was great for once the crowd at a friendly match "outnumbered the Surrey pigeons." Mumford had brought his wife with him although he said she had been initially reluctant.

"I think it got to the point when we started to visit family there was a natural progression to do different things. "Coming here it is nice to come back to familiar territory."

"It provides reassurance more than anything." Mumford acknowledges that unlike him and his wife, who live close to the south London ground, some might think twice about coming if they had to travel by public transport. —AFP

Sports

Man Utd, Chelsea seal top-four spots as Watford, Bournemouth relegated

Leicester, in fifth spot, will play in the Europa League

LONDON: Manchester United and Chelsea sealed Champions League places on Sunday as Bournemouth and Watford fell through the trapdoor on a dramatic final day of the longest Premier League season. Liverpool were crowned champions last month but there was much to play for in the final 90 minutes of a campaign that started on August 9 last year and was interrupted by a three-month coronavirus shutdown.

United finished third after a nervy 2-0 win in a Champions League shootout against Leicester, while Chelsea ended in fourth spot after beating Wolves by the same score-line at Stamford Bridge.

At the other end of the table, Bournemouth and managerless Watford followed already-relegated Norwich down to the Championship while Aston Villa fans breathed a huge sigh of relief. Leicester, in fifth spot, will play in the Europa League next season where they will be joined by Tottenham, who drew 1-1 with Crystal Palace to leapfrog Wolves.

Wolves still have two routes to qualify for European competition next season — either into the Champions League by winning the Europa League next month or into the Europa League if Chelsea beat Arsenal in next week's FA Cup final.

Chelsea required just a draw at Stamford Bridge to seal their place in the top four, but won all three points in first half stoppage time as Mason Mount whipped in from a free-kick before Olivier Giroud

slid home. A top-four finish and a Cup final in his first season in charge is a coup for Frank Lampard, who had to cope with a transfer ban and the loss of Eden Hazard to Real Madrid last summer.

"There were a lot of unknowns when I came in, could we move forward without Eden Hazard?" Lampard told Sky Sports.

"We knew we had lost a massive player. We've a real spirit within the group now and it's a real team effort now. "Myself and the staff want to improve every time — the challenge now is to see what more we can do next season."

United, whose form has dipped in recent weeks after they pulled themselves back into contention for the Champions League, were locked at 0-0 at half-time at the King Power Stadium.

But they finally broke the deadlock in the 71st minute, when Bruno Fernandes scored from the penalty spot after Anthony Martial was upended. Jesse Lingard scored late to seal the win.

The result is a huge lift for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, whose team were 14 points behind the Foxes at the start of the year, but is a bitter blow for Brendan Rodgers, whose side have been camped in the top four for almost the entire campaign.

"I'm delighted," said Solskjaer. "We've come from way, way behind teams and gone past them. We've shown that we've got the consistency, the right mentality. We're building a group and a performance culture here that we can be proud of."



Chelsea come good



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's English midfielder Raheem Sterling shoots towards goal during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Norwich City at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England. — AFP

'INCREDIBLY PAINFUL'

Two goals from Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and a strike by Kieran Tierney gave Watford, who sacked Nigel Pearson earlier this month, an almost impossible task at Arsenal.

A Troy Deeney penalty and a Danny Welbeck strike gave them hope but it was not enough and the Hornets were relegated after five years in the top-flight following their 3-2 defeat. "This is a reflection of the whole year," Deeney told Sky Sports. "Not quite been good enough. Heartbreaking for the people who work behind the scenes and we feel sorry for

them." Bournemouth beat Everton 3-1 at Goodison Park but needed West Ham to beat Aston Villa to survive. Andriy Yarmolenko equalised after Jack Grealish's late goal for Villa but the away side held on, sending Eddie Howe's side down after five seasons in the Premier League.

"It's incredibly painful — we always believed we were capable of a last-minute escape," Bournemouth boss Eddie Howe told the BBC. An early goal by Harry Kane put Tottenham in front against Crystal Palace. Palace equalised early in the second half through Jeffrey Schlupp but the point was enough for Jose Mourinho's men to finish in sixth position. — AFP

Marlins postpone flight, Ohtani shelled in Oakland

LOS ANGELES: The Miami Marlins were forced to delay their travel plans out of Philadelphia on Sunday afternoon after several players were reported to have tested positive for the coronavirus, US media reported.

The Marlins decided to wait until Sunday after right-handed pitcher Jose Urena, first baseman Garrett Cooper and outfielder Harold Ramirez all tested positive, ESPN.com reported.

On Friday, catcher Jorge Alfaro also got a positive test result.

Manager Don Mattingly said the Marlins had decided to wait until Monday to leave Philadelphia. They plan to arrive in Miami hours before their home opener against Baltimore.

The tests results likely means that some players will remain in Philadelphia and miss the home opener. "The guys that tested positive are quarantined here in Philly," Mattingly said.

The Marlins' decision to postpone their flight home was made because of family concerns. "We were more comfortable flying as a group later," Mattingly said.

"We're talking about these guys travelling back home to their families and their kids, and it's the reason we want to be safe."

Urena was supposed to pitch in Sunday's series finale at Philadelphia, but that start was given to Robert Dugger. The Marlins finished play on the field on a positive note with an 11-6 victory to take two of the three games in the season-opening series.

"We're taking risks every day,"

Mattingly told reporters. "We're going to have to be adjustable, we're going to have to be flexible, we're going to have to be patient."

Meanwhile, Japanese two-way player Shohei Ohtani would like to forget his return to the mound Sunday after the Los Angeles Angels sensation failed to record an out in his 2020 pitching debut.

Ohtani, who pitched for the first time in 20 months, raised alarms about his ability to play two positions this season by giving up three singles and walking three batters in a 6-4 loss to the Oakland Athletics.

"He just didn't throw the ball very well," Angels manager Joe Maddon said. "I can't sit here and make excuses for him. I'm not gonna do that. The fastball wasn't coming out, there was no deception in his pitches."

Ohtani said he felt ready to play and he needs to throw more pitches in a competitive atmosphere.

"I just have to get that feel for the game back," Ohtani said. "Today I just felt like I was throwing the ball rather than pitching." Restricted to a designated hitter role last season, Ohtani belted 18 home runs with a batting average of .286.

Ohtani was the 2018 American League Rookie of the Year after batting .285 with 22 home runs, 10 stolen bases and 61 runs batted in plus a 4-2 record in 10 pitching starts with a 3.31 earned-run average and 63 strikeouts.

Babe Ruth, a legend from a century ago, was the only other player who managed 10 pitching appearances



OAKLAND: Shohei Ohtani #17 of the Los Angeles Angels pitches against the Oakland Athletics in the first inning at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum on July 26, 2020 in Oakland, California. The 2020 season had been postponed since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. — AFP

and 20 homers in an MLB season.

Mitch Keller also pitched five solid innings, and manager Derek Shelton engaged in American baseball's first socially distanced argument with an umpire as the Pittsburgh Pirates beat St. Louis 5-1 on Sunday.

In the third inning, Shelton donned his face mask and left the dugout to argue with Jordan Baker after the plate umpire threw Pirates pitcher Derek Holland out of the game for arguing balls and strikes.

PPE MASK MALFUNCTION

"Jordan did a really good job of it. We were trying to stay distant, which we were both aware of," Shelton said.

"Then his mask broke midway though (our argument), so I wanted to make sure that my mask stayed up and he was great."

Arguments between managers and umpires are a tradition in American baseball, with the dust-ups usually ending with the manager being sent to an early shower in the clubhouse.

But Baker allowed Shelton to vent from a safe distance before order was restored and the game continued.

"He handled it professionally," Shelton said. "I think it was the first time, and we were both in an unknown area, and then when I went out there later, we kind of got a chuckle out of it." — AFP

Liverpool to face tougher title fight next term: Klopp

LONDON: Liverpool turned the Premier League title race into a procession this season, but Jurgen Klopp expects his champions to face a much tougher fight to retain the trophy next term.

Klopp's side powered to their first English title for 30 years with a dominant campaign that left their rivals trailing in their wake. Liverpool wrapped up the silverware with a record seven games remaining and finished the season 18 points ahead of second-placed Manchester City.

The Reds' remarkable run forced City to surrender the title they had won for the last two years, with Pep Guardiola's team unable to muster the consistency required to keep pace.

With Liverpool having also won the Champions League in the 2018-19 season and the Club World Cup in December, some pundits believe the Anfield club are primed for a golden era of dominance.

All the pieces are in place for Liverpool to win consecutive titles for the first time since 1984, with Klopp signed to a long-term contract and key stars Virgil van Dijk, Sadio Mane, Mohamed Salah and Jordan Henderson all in their primes.

Liverpool also have a cadre of emerging youngsters capable of bolstering Klopp's squad next season. But the German insists Liverpool will take nothing for granted when the 2020-21 campaign kicks off because he expects a renewed push from City and stronger challenges from Manchester United and Chelsea.

"Whatever people say, it will not be important for next season because for sure we both have to be ready," Klopp said.

"We see United coming up. People thought they had no chance but we see with one or two players how good they are and how good they can be, and for sure they will not be worse next season, and now there is Chelsea as well.

"It will not be about City and us. For the last two years pretty much the top of the table was City and us, and City for four or five years before that." City clearly have the pedigree to take back the title.

They set a 100-point Premier League record total in 2018 that Liverpool were unable to match this season and pipped Klopp's men to the title again in 2019. Guardiola's side could yet underline their enduring class by ending the campaign as Champions League winners.

'ANYONE CAN BEAT YOU'

City were undeniably inconsistent this season, with defensive frailties exposed after failing to replace Vincent Kompany and losing Aymeric Laporte to injury for long periods.

Long-serving Spanish midfielder David Silva will

leave this summer, but Phil Foden's development gives Guardiola a potential replacement.

Klopp does not expect a drop-off from City, who made a point about their ability to compete with Liverpool when they crushed them 4-0 in the Reds' first game after clinching the title.

"I am very positive about my team but I cannot deny Manchester City are really good. That was always the case, and I cannot see the end of anything for Manchester City," he said.

FA Cup finalists Chelsea, who ended fourth, must improve a creaky defence and a costly lack of killer instinct if they are to close the 33-point gap to Liverpool. Frank Lampard's emerging young side have potential however and the additions of Timo Werner and Hakim Ziyech should add potency to their attack.

"Chelsea have incredible guys there in the squad and extra now with (new signings) Hakim Ziyech and (Timo) Werner," Guardiola said.

Third-placed United, who finished 15 points behind City, have improved dramatically since the January signing of Portugal playmaker Bruno Fernandes from Sporting Lisbon.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer can also deploy a lethal front three in Marcus Rashford, Anthony Martial and Mason Greenwood.

"That is why it is the best league in the world. Anyone can beat you and every season will be stronger," Guardiola said. "That is the reality of the Premier League. We are going to think about what we need to do to improve the team." — AFP

Ayew gives Swansea play-off lead against Brentford

LONDON: Andre Ayew fired Swansea to a 1-0 victory against 10-man Brentford in Sunday's Championship play-off semi-final first leg as the Ghana striker recovered from missing a penalty to grab the late winner.

Ayew saw his spot-kick saved by Brentford keeper David Raya in the second half at the Liberty Stadium. But the former Marseille and West Ham star shrugged off that blow to score with a superb strike nine minutes from full-time.

Brentford had Rico Henry sent off for a studs-up lunge on Swansea right-back Connor Roberts soon after Ayew's penalty miss. "We're playing two games for promotion to the Premier League and £170 million," Brentford boss Thomas Frank said.

"People need to be really sure when they make decisions. "I can't understand why we can't have VAR in these games. It was absolutely not a red card." Steve Cooper's side will take their slender lead to Griffin Park for the second leg on Wednesday.

"It was an eventful game. I'm pleased, it's a small advantage. But it is only an advantage if we use it well," Cooper said. "Andre brushed off the disappointment of the penalty and didn't let that affect him. That's what he does, step up in the big moments."

Swansea's south Wales rivals Cardiff host Fulham in the other play-off semi-final first leg today. Brentford and Swansea have taken contrasting routes to the play-offs. Heading into Wednesday's final day of the regular season, Brentford were in with a chance of automatic promotion to the top flight for the first time in 73 years.

But Frank's team were beaten by lowly Barnsley, while West Brom's draw with QPR was enough to clinch second place above the Bees. Swansea were underdogs to make the play-offs with just minutes left in their last game at Reading, but a late goal blitz gave them a 4-1 win.

That result combined with Nottingham Forest's 4-1 loss against Stoke was enough to lift Swansea into the top six on goal difference. Bidding to return to the Premier League after a two-year absence, Swansea were on top for long periods against Brentford.

Ayew's first-half header hit the post before Raya smothered the rebound from on-loan Liverpool forward Rhian Brewster. Brentford's Said Benrahma squandered his side's best chance when he blazed over.

Swansea won their penalty in the 63rd minute as Ayew found Brewster and he was brought down by Brentford captain Pontus Jansson. Ayew tried to fool Raya with a stutter-step before his penalty, but the keeper stuck his hand out to save.

Just moments later, Henry saw red for his foul on Roberts and Ayew made Brentford pay in the 81st minute. Conor Gallagher dinked a pass to Jay Fulton in the Brentford area and he laid off for Ayew to smash a half-volley into the roof of the net.

The 30-year-old's 18th goal of the season will prove priceless if Swansea can seal their place in the Wembley final. — AFP

14 Broad on brink of 500 club as England eye W Indies series win



15 Man Utd, Chelsea seal top-four spots as Watford, Bournemouth relegated



15 Marlins postpone flight, Ohtani shelled in Oakland



TURIN: Juventus fans celebrate outside the Allianz Stadium after Juventus secured its 9th consecutive Italian Serie A title (scudetto), following its victory against Sampdoria at the Juventus stadium in Turin. Juventus claimed a ninth Serie A title in a row on July 26 following a 2-0 win over Sampdoria. —AFP

Ronaldo powers Juve to Serie A title

‘This ninth straight title is dedicated to all Juventus fans’

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo powered Juventus to their ninth straight Serie A title on Sunday in a 2-0 win over Sampdoria that put them over the line with two matches to spare. Ronaldo opened the scoring deep into first half stoppage time in Turin and then had a hand in Federico Bernardeschi netting the second after 66 minutes.

The five-time Ballon d’Or winner missed a late penalty but Maurizio Sarri’s side moved seven points ahead of second-placed Inter Milan to seal a 36th ‘Scudetto’. The title is Sarri’s first and extends a record run which Antonio Conte started with three titles from 2012 and Massimiliano Allegri continued with the following five.

Sarri’s team had missed the chance to wrap up the title on Thursday when the ‘Old Lady’ of Italian football fell to a 2-1 defeat at Udinese. But they made no mistake at the Allianz Stadium despite being pushed hard by Claudio Ranieri’s Sampdoria, one of the most in-form teams since the return of Serie A from the three-month coronavirus lockdown.

“It is the most beautiful success, even the most difficult because we wanted it and suffered,” said defender Leonardo Bonucci. “We started on a new path with a lot of scepticism around us, we gave everything, despite some slip-ups. “It was a complicated year for everyone in the world, it was difficult to return after so many months not playing.”

RONALDO ‘DELIGHT’

Despite his 35 years Ronaldo shrugged off the quick succession of matches played in hot summer weather after the lockdown, bringing his tally to 31 this season. The Portuguese striker has scored 10 goals since football returned in Italy on June 20, more than any other player in Europe.

He also matched former Italy World Cup winner Felice Borel, who was the last player to score 31 goals for Juventus in the 1933-34 season. But he remains three goals behind Serie A’s leading scorer

Ciro Immobile, who scored a hat-trick earlier in Lazio’s 5-1 win over Hellas Verona.

“Delighted for the second consecutive championship and to continue building the history of this great and splendid club,” said Ronaldo on Instagram. “This title is dedicated to all Juventus fans, in particular

to those who have suffered and are suffering from the pandemic that has taken us all by surprise by overturning the world.

“It was not easy! Your courage, your attitude and your determination were the strength we needed to

face this tight final of the championship and fight to the end for this title that belongs to all of Italy. “A big hug to you all!” The breakthrough came in the final move of the first half, when Pjanic cleverly rolled a pass across the penalty area to allow Ronaldo to lash home his 31st league goal of the season.

Juventus made sure of the title in second half when Bernardeschi pounced on the rebound of a Ronaldo shot and tapped in a decisive finish. Sampdoria had no way back into the game and had to play the final 20 minutes a man down when Morten Thorsby was sent off for a second yellow card.

But the match could prove costly for Juventus before the return leg of their Champions League last 16 tie against Lyon on August 7, when they need to overturn a 1-0 deficit from the first match in France.

Daniilo took a knock, while influential forward Paulo Dybala limping off with a muscular problem early in the match will be a worry for Sarri with Lyon’s visit to Turin less than two weeks away. —AFP

Qatar confirms plan to bid for 2032 Olympics

DOHA: Qatar will seek to host the 2032 Olympic Games, it said yesterday, joining a crowded field and raising questions about scorching summer temperatures and underwhelming attendances at past events.

India, Australia’s Queensland state, the Chinese city of Shanghai and a potential joint bid between South and North Korea are also being touted for

the 2032 summer games.

Under changes put forward in 2014, interested countries submit a request to join the non-committal “continuous dialogue”, which Qatar confirmed to AFP it had done via a letter to the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne.

“Today’s announcement marks the beginning of a meaningful dialogue with the IOC’s Future Host Commission to explore our interest further and identify how the Olympic Games can support Qatar’s long-term development goals,” Qatar Olympic Committee president Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani told AFP in a statement.

Qatar unsuccessfully bid to host the 2016 and 2020 games, having proposed to host the former in October without first clearing it with the IOC.

It won a waiver to propose hosting the 2020 games, a joint bid with Baku, Azerbaijan, between September 20 and October 20, but failed to make the shortlist. The 2020 games, postponed to 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic, were awarded to Japan, which also experiences searing summer temperatures, leading officials to schedule events early in the morning when conditions are coolest.

“Qatar has earned the reputation of a world-class destination for major sporting events,” added Sheikh Joaan, brother of Qatar’s ruler Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

“It is this proven track-record and wealth of experience, along with our desire to use sport to promote peace and cultural exchange, that will form the basis of our discussions with the Commission.”

Summer temperatures can reach 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit) in the nation which abuts the Arabian desert. Heat and humidity were major issues during the road races at last year’s World Athletics Championships held in Doha. The poor attendance on the first few days also attracted criticism.

Qatar will host the 2022 World Cup after a bid process that has been attacked by some European nations and media outlets as corrupt, although Doha insists it won fairly.

Discriminatory labour practices and human rights issues facing the migrant labourers building infrastructure for 2022 have been subject to intense scrutiny and criticism since Qatar won the bid in 2010. —AFP