



6 World virus cases top 6m as leaders disagree on response



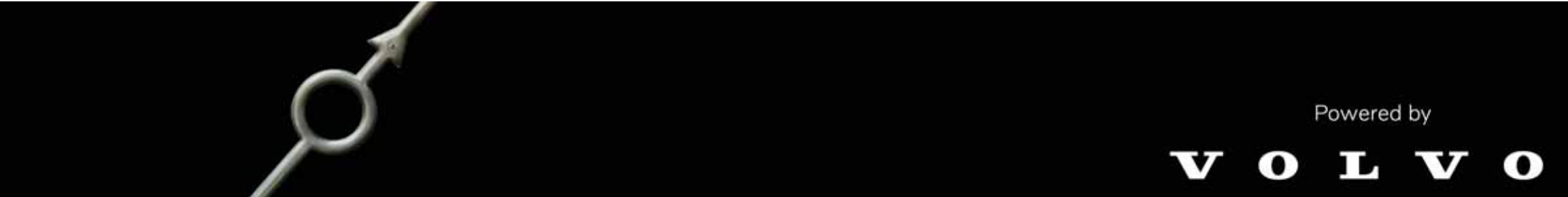
15 Going viral: Online gags soothing youthful angst



16 Trump says he will delay G7 summit, invite other countries



20 Lewandowski hits brace as Bayern go 10 points clear



Lockdown eased; Harbi resists MPs' calls to end school year

Pressure mounts over alleged corruption, money laundering

Expired visas extended till Aug 31 for free

KUWAIT: In implementation of instructions by Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh and in view of the suspension of commercial flights in most countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, security sources said the interior ministry will automatically extend the validity of all types of expired visit and residency visas until August 31.

The sources added that starting

from June 1, visas of visitors who had been facing problems renewing them, such as having their fingerprints registered, would be automatically renewed until Aug 31. Notably, the ministry had earlier extended the validity of such visas until May 31.

The sources stressed that students who are almost 18 and Bangladeshis and Nepalis who need to be mandatory fingerprinted to renew their visas are not included in the exemption. The ministry had started online visit visa renewals for a KD 1 fee for a few days before the service was suspended and replaced by the automatic extension. — Al-Anbaa

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Authorities yesterday began implementing the first of a five-stage plan to return to normal life by mid-September by easing the lockdown on most areas in the country, while keeping over a million expatriates under total isolation. Barring the predominantly expat areas of Hawally, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Farwaniya, Khaitan and Mahboula, which are placed under total isolation, other areas will enjoy a 12-hour easing of the curfew every day.

Authorities however said that shopping at cooperative societies and supermarkets will continue by prior booking through the same online sites. The same applies to isolated areas. The interior ministry explained that people in isolated areas can move freely within those areas but are not

allowed to leave them without a valid permit from the government.

The current phase will last for three weeks and health authorities will assess progress before moving to the next phase. The ministry of Islamic Affairs said it will start cleaning and sterilizing mosques and taking all necessary health precautions before reopening them later this week.

Meanwhile, scrapping the school year as has been repeatedly demanded by MPs has become a political issue, with MP Faisal Al-Kandari vowing to file to grill Education Minister Saud Al-Harbi for not ending the school year because of the coronavirus. Harbi said on Kuwait Television Saturday night that the final decision on the school year will be taken on July 15 after evaluating all the developments on the coronavirus crisis.

Harbi said the ministry prioritizes the safety of students and staff but also takes into account the huge negative repercussions of a hasty decision in this regard. He pointed out that ending the year and giving students marks based on their performance in the first semester would harm nearly 60,000 students, mainly those who failed to attend first semester exams for medical or other reasons and those who performed badly and were counting on the second semester to improve their scores.

The statement was strongly criticized by a number of lawmakers, who want the academic year prematurely ended over health concerns. Kandari said his grilling will center only on the minister's insistence not to end the school year, thus endangering the lives of hundreds of thousands of students.

Continued on Page 16

Aqsa mosque reopens after two months

JERUSALEM: Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Islam's third holiest site, reopened yesterday after being closed for over two months because of the coronavirus pandemic. Dozens of worshippers in protective masks were let into the compound before the first prayers of the day, held in cool and windy conditions.

Chanting "God is greatest, we will protect Al-Aqsa with our soul and blood", the worshippers who gathered in front of the large wooden doors were welcomed by mosque director Omar Al-Kiswani, who thanked them for their patience. The prayers followed a fraught previous day in annexed east Jerusalem, where the compound is located.

Israeli police on Saturday shot dead a disabled Palestinian they mistakenly thought was armed, prompting furious condemnation from the Palestinians. The religious site, which houses Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, had closed its doors in March as part of measures to limit the spread of COVID-19.

As part of ongoing efforts to tackle the virus, worshippers' temperatures were taken and staff distributed masks to those entering the compound. Tape inside the mosque and on the stones outside marked where people should pray at a safe distance. Israeli soldiers were stationed at the gates to the site, which has often been a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Muslims believe Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ascended to heaven there, and it is Islam's third holiest site, after Makkah and Madinah.

On the first day of the Eid holiday earlier this month, scuffles had broken out between Israeli police and Palestinians as worshippers tried to break through barriers to enter the compound. The holiday marked the end of the holy month of Ramadan, during which Muslim leaders asked worshippers to pray at home.

"For me as a muezzin, when I say at the end 'pray in your homes', it breaks my heart," said Firas Al-Qazzaz last month, whose family has led prayers at Al-Aqsa for more than 500 years. Known to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif, the site is under the custodianship of neighboring Jordan, which controlled the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, up until occupation by Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967.

With the number of COVID-19 cases declining, in recent days both Israel and the Palestinian

Continued on Page 16



JERUSALEM: Palestinians perform Fajr prayers inside the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City yesterday after a two-month closure. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: Demonstrators smash a police vehicle in the Fairfax district as they protest the death of George Floyd on Saturday. — AFP (See Page 8)

Curfews, clashes as race protests escalate in US

MINNEAPOLIS: Curfews were imposed on major US cities as clashes over police brutality escalated across America with demonstrators ignoring warnings from President Donald Trump that his government would stop the violent protests "cold". Minneapolis, the epicenter of the unrest, was gripped by a fifth consecutive night of violence on Saturday with police in riot gear firing tear gas and

Continued on Page 16

Ambulance start-up joins Mumbai battle

MUMBAI: With bodies piling up in wards and patients sharing beds, the coronavirus has crippled Mumbai's healthcare system. But an ambulance service launched by three 20-somethings is trying to do its bit. But even though the non-profit's services cost as little as a few dollars, many in the teem-

ing slums of the Indian megacity — ideal breeding grounds for the virus — cannot afford to use it.

Aditya Makkar, 20, was inspired to start HelpNow three years ago when his father suffered a cardiac arrest and was told he would have to wait 47 minutes for a government ambulance. Fortunately his family owned a car, enabling his father to receive prompt medical treatment. Many others in Mumbai, a city of 18 million where the high-rises of the super-rich soar over the shacks of the dirt poor, are not as lucky.

Together with two former classmates at the elite Indian Institute of Technology, also in their early

Continued on Page 16



CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida: US Vice President Mike Pence and US President Donald Trump watch the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying the SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule lift off from Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Saturday. — AFP



MUMBAI: In this photograph taken on May 24, 2020, ambulance staff from HelpNow put on protective gear before starting a journey. — AFP

Local

UK hosts Global Vaccine Summit with Kuwait's participation

By Michael Davenport, British Ambassador to Kuwait

The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest public health challenge we have faced for generations. Currently, there is no vaccine. Without one, we risk seeing recurrences of the disease and a return to the various strict measures we have seen around the world, including in the UK and Kuwait. These measures have helped to shield our health services, and bought us time, but economies have been hit, incomes reduced and jobs lost. Decisive and coordinated action is now needed on a global scale to find an effective vaccine and ensure it is distributed widely and affordable for all.

To kick-start the monumental international effort required, on 4 May we joined the European Commission, Germany, France, Spain, Norway, Italy, Canada, Japan and Saudi Arabia to host the Global Coronavirus Response Initiative, in which Kuwait also participated, to raise over \$7.5 billion for research and development. The United Kingdom contributed \$475 million to that initiative for Coronavirus treatments, vaccines and tests.



Michael Davenport

Only by working together can we win this battle. The international effort to develop a vaccine is already under way. In the UK, scientists are working at pace at Oxford University and Imperial College, London, supported by British government funding. Human clinical trials are now taking place and delivering preliminary results.

No single country, and no single pharmaceutical company, will be able to develop or produce a vaccine alone. The more we pull together and share our expertise, the faster our scientists will succeed. We need global coordination and global resources – from development to delivery. Crucially, we must ensure that

any effective vaccines are available to those who most need them, including in the world's poorest countries.

This is where Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, comes in. In its 10 years of operations, Gavi has delivered vaccines to over 700 million children worldwide. Over the next four years Gavi's goal is to deliver vaccines, including any future Coronavirus vaccine, to a further 300 million children, saving 8 million lives. The UK is Gavi's largest donor and has made a fresh commitment of over \$2 billion to Gavi for 2021-2025. Gavi needs at least \$7.4 billion dollars to achieve its goals. That's why the UK is virtually hosting the 4 June Global Vaccine Summit – to ensure that Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has the funds needed to deliver vaccines against diseases such as measles, polio and cholera in the world's poorest countries, and to guarantee equitable access to effective new coronavirus vaccines, especially in developing countries. I am delighted that Kuwait, which is already contributing generously to the World Health Organisation's international effort to tackle COVID-19, will be represented by Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister.

As a world-leading and pioneering research hub, the UK is offering scientific leadership to develop new vaccines to tackle this major global health threat. We are supporting the vaccines, treatments and tests development process 'end-to-end' – from research and development, through to access and delivery – working closely with our international partners, Kuwait included.

We have all been impressed by Kuwait's sober assessment at an early stage of the pandemic, with robust measures put in place swiftly and efficiently. Kuwait has used innovative measures to track those returning to the country and embraced technological solutions to problems such as access to food and essential services.

We are proud to be standing side by side with our international partners in tackling coronavirus. Through learning from each other, we can be prepared for future challenges. Through sharing our knowledge and pooling our resources, we can react more quickly and more effectively to new outbreaks. And through our support for global institutions like Gavi and the WHO, we can ensure vaccines and treatments will be made available as widely as possible.



KUWAIT: People jog in Salmiya on May 30, 2020 during the two-hour exercise period, one day before the total curfew was eased. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 26,192 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of Saturday, in addition to 205 deaths. With the exception of 206 cases in intensive care, all infected cases are in stable condition and are recovering in quarantined locations designated by the government for this purpose, while thousands have been discharged from quarantine after exhibiting no symptoms during their 14-day quarantine period, the Ministry of Health confirmed. Meanwhile, 11,386 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 14,601 people receiving treatment and 23 quarantined.

Curfew

Kuwait imposed a three-week partial curfew starting May 31, as part of a five-phase plan for a gradual return to normal life, brought to a standstill by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The first phase also includes a total lockdown on Farwaniya, Khaitan, Hawally and Maidan Hawally, joining Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh which were put under lockdown earlier.

Activities to resume in first phase included home deliveries of restaurants, telecommunication companies, food retailers, companies' transportation of employees, gas stations, private clinics and car workshops. The second phase will see the curfew shortened to be between 9:00 pm and 6:00 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, malls opening for eight hours and according to special instructions, parks and pickups from restaurants.

The third phase would see an end of curfew, and health authorities would be assessing situation of areas under lockdown. It would see increase of workforce to less than 50 percent. Visits for social care homes would be allowed, reopening of hotels, resorts and hotel apartments. Taxis will be allowed to operate with only one passenger, and Mosques would be allowed to perform Friday prayers.

Phase four would see an increase in workforce, restaurants would be receiving customers but with restrictions, and public transportation resumed but with distancing. All activities would resume in phase five, government and private sector returned to normal, families could gather, weddings and graduation ceremonies, health clubs and gyms to reopen, as well as cinemas and theaters.

Earlier, Kuwait imposed a total curfew from May 10 to May 30, allowing room for people to walk out for daily exercise between 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm, and to shop at co-ops and supermarkets once every six days

during the curfew hours by making an appointment through www.moci.shop. Before that, Kuwait enforced a country-wide partial curfew from 5:00 pm to 6:00 am, which was later extended to start from 4:00 pm until 8:00 am during Ramadan, while allowing restaurants and food stores to make home deliveries from 5:00 pm until 1:00 am. The government also locked down Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in a bid to contain the spread of the virus and enable health workers to test inhabitants. Earlier, the government decided to close all shopping malls, beauty salons and barber shops as part of its measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The government also allowed supermarkets, restaurants and shops to host a maximum of five people at a time and in case there are lines, the distance must be at least one meter between people. The Ministry of Commerce launched a website (www.moci.shop) to enable people to book appointments to shop at co-operative societies in their areas. The Public Authority for Industry also announced that companies can apply to evacuate their workers from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Mahboula. To do so, they must fill a 'workers evacuation form' available on www.pai.gov.kw, and send the form via email to: Jasiri@moh.gov.kw.

Precautions

Kuwait halted all commercial flights until further notice, and has sent special flights to repatriate Kuwaitis back home from countries affected with the virus' spread. Kuwait took all measures to test Kuwaitis repatriated from infected areas for potential infection. Kuwait had required all expatriates who arrived from travel on March 1 and beyond to visit Kuwait International Fairground where the Ministry of Health has set up a center to test people for possible infection. Meanwhile, the Cabinet announced on April 9 the operation of all airline flights for expats who are wishing to return back to their countries. Authorities also announced a public holiday in the country from March 12 to May 28, with work resuming on May 31, while entities providing vital services will remain open. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has suspended classes for March at all public and private schools (for both students and teaching staffs); first from March 1 to March 12, and later extended it until March 29, before eventually suspending schools until August for grade 12 and October for other stages. State departments have been on high alert to take precautions against the potential spread of the virus. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has taken measures to make sure that facial masks, hand sanitizers and other goods remain accessible to

the public.

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

Hotlines

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

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

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

Medicine delivery

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

Amiri Hospital: 50880699
Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital: 50880755
Farwaniya Hospital: 50880852
Adan Hospital: 50880908
Jahra Hospital: 50881066

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

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

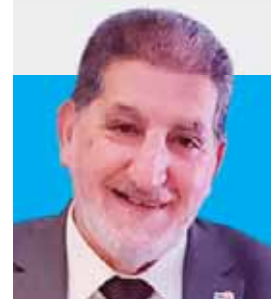
Mental health assistance

The Kuwait Psychological Association (KPA) is providing consultation through the phone for people suffering from the psychological impacts of coronavirus. Different doctors are working on the hotline in different timings as follows:

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

In My View

Being nostalgic



By Abdellatif Sharaa

local@kuwaittimes.com

I hope that by now everyone knows which area they reside in as far as the lockdowns are concerned after the confusion of determining the area of Maidan Hawally. I have lived in Kuwait for over 50 years and witnessed the development of this beloved country - areas were expanded and new ones were created. For example, in the early 70s Jabriya was an empty land with very few Arabic style houses mostly adjacent to the current Fourth Ring Road: the same was for Rumaihiya.

I remember the main street of Kuwait City with elegant top class shops on both sides. I remember the market guards, who were appointed by the interior ministry to roam the streets of the city day and night to make sure the markets were secure.

At that time, there were areas called Hawally, Nugra and Maidan Hawally, and realignments throughout the years kept changing the boundaries until we reached the current situation. Nugra is remembered by a police station named after it, and Maidan Hawally has the same - a police station and a traffic department named after it as the area shrunk significantly as far as boundaries are concerned.

We the old generation are aware of areas when they are mentioned and have no problem with that, and I believe the confusion was with those who came to Kuwait in the 1990s and are familiar with the current situation only.

When the government news conference was broadcast and areas to be under lockdown were announced, many were worried and confused for not knowing where Maidan Hawally is, and some people asked me if it really exists. I do not blame them because their civil IDs read Salmiya - again it is realignment that caused this.

Life goes on, and changes do happen, and here it is very important for those who visit countries with plans to stay for some time to read about them and their laws, customs and what is right or wrong, because cultures differ from one place to another, so that they do not find themselves in violation of the law or customs.

Let this Maidan Hawally drama be an example and a call for all officials, citizens and expats that announcements should be as clear as possible to avoid confusion and misunderstanding.

Final word: "Nostalgia is the heart's way of reminding you of something you one loved. It travels in many forms: on a song, in a scent or in photographs... but no matter how it comes to you it will always have the same bittersweet taste." — Ranata Suzuki

Firefighter, policeman hurt in Mubarakiya restaurant blaze

Three fire stations tackle Jabriya building fire



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen put out a blaze in a Mubarakiya market restaurant Saturday, which spread to a nearby office

and traditional clothes store. A fireman suffered a wound in his hand while tackling the flames, and a policeman suffered smoke inhalation while securing the area. Both men were taken to

hospital.

Meanwhile, firemen from three fire stations worked together to put out a blaze reported in a Jabriya building Saturday. They evacuated the building

before fighting the fire which had broken out in the basement that was turned into a warehouse to store cosmetics. No injuries were reported.

Separately, firemen put out a blaze

that gutted a truck at the Nuwaiseeb border outlet north of the country. No injuries were reported. Investigations are underway in all three cases to determine the cause of the fire.



Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf



KuwaitTimes



94488888

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti children, wearing protective facemasks due to the coronavirus pandemic, cycle in a street in Salwa on May 29, 2020. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwaitis can book flights back home: Civil Aviation

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said Saturday that Kuwaiti nationals, their first-degree relatives, as well as accompanying nannies and house workers will be allowed to book flights back to the country. A press release by the DGCA indicated that the decision was made in coordination with the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This measure came after the end of the repatriation plan sponsored by the government for Kuwaitis abroad. Airlines and carriers were notified and will be allowing flight booking for Kuwaitis abroad, it reaffirmed, adding that the decision will be carried out until further notice. —KUNA

Parallel markets can operate before curfew hours

KUWAIT: Parallel markets will be able to operate between 6:00 am to 5:30 pm prior to the partial curfew, said the Kuwaiti Municipality Saturday. The policy began yesterday, indicated a municipality

press release. The partial curfew will take place between 6:00 pm and until 6:00 am as part of the first stage of the government's plan to resume normal life. Similar establishments will be operating 24 hours in areas under full lockdown, it added. The Kuwaiti government had recently issued a five-stage plan to bring back some sense of normalcy in the country as part of the measures countering coronavirus (COVID-19) spread. Each stage will take weeks to fulfill and the authorities will determine whether to proceed with easing restrictions according to the situation. —KUNA



KUWAIT: People line up to use an ATM in Salmiya block 10 on May 29, 2020. —Photo by Fuad Al-Shalkh

Kuwait Embassy urges citizens in US to be careful

KUWAIT: Kuwait Embassy in Washington Friday urged Kuwaiti citizens living in areas witnessing violence and demonstrations, calling on them to avoid gatherings. Kuwait Embassy, in a statement to KUNA, said citizens should stay indoors and take appropriate measures to guarantee their safety, as well as comply with instructions of local authorities. The embassy said

it did not receive any information that any citizen was hurt by those violent actions. It urged nationals to contact the diplomatic missions when necessary: Kuwait Embassy in Washington D.C.: (+1) 202-262-0758 Kuwait Consulate in New York: (+1) 917-242-6688 Kuwait Consulate in Los Angeles, CA.: (+1) 310-279-3644 Kuwait Cultural Office in Washington D.C.: (+1) 202-364-2104 Kuwait Health Office in Washington D.C.: (+1) 202-320-2415 Kuwait Military Office in Washington D.C.: (+1) 202-390-3416 Kuwait Cultural Office in Los Angeles, CA.: (+1) 424-666-4214. The US National Guards deployed forces in Minneapolis in a bid to restore calm following three days of riots after an African-American man was killed when he was arrested by police. —KUNA

- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait
 Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621
 E: info@kuwaittimes.net

Local

Kuwait State Audit Bureau reviews KD 883 million govt transactions

Auditing saved KD 30 million in public funds

KUWAIT: Kuwait's State Audit Bureau (SAB) said it reviewed 545 transactions with a value of around KD 883 million (\$2.8 billion) since March 12 up until Saturday. Fatma Darwish, SAB's senior auditor at prior supervision for social affairs, said in a statement to KUNA that auditing saved KD 30 million (\$96 million) in public funds. She said 57 percent of the transactions were coronavirus-related, or KD 377 million (\$1.2 billion). A SAB team is scrutinizing government contracts and transactions during the pandemic.



KD 377 million contracts virus-related

1,230 recoveries
In other news, Health Minister Dr Basel Al-Sabah announced, on Sunday, the recovery of 1,230 people from the coronavirus (COVID-19), bringing the tally to 11,386. In remarks to KUNA, the minister said analyses and medical examinations and tests proved that these cases were cured of the coronavirus. The recovered will be transferred to the hospital recuperation ward, pending

their discharge within the next few days, he said.

13 flights
Separately, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that 13 flights departed Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying a total of 2,478 passengers. They include six flights to Egypt, four flights to India, one flight to Qatar, one flight to Saudi Arabia, and one to the Philippines.

Oman cyclone
In an unrelated topic, Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent on Saturday two cables to Chairman of the Council of State of Oman Yahya al-Mantheri and Chairman of Oman's Majlis Shura Khalid Al-Mawali to offer condolences to families of the victims of the powerful cyclone which recently hit the Omani province of Dhofar, leaving many people either dead or injured. He also wished mercy for the dead and swift recovery for the injured.



KUWAIT: Police man a checkpoint on Fahaaheel Expressway on May 30, 2020, one day before the total curfew was eased and three areas - Hawally, Farwaniya and Khaitan joined Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Mahboula under total lockdown. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh





Curfews imposed in several US cities

Iran berates US over police killing, slams racism



LIMA: Relatives bury the coffin of a suspected COVID-19 victim at the Nueva Esperanza cemetery, one of the largest in Latin America, in the southern outskirts of Lima. — AFP

World virus cases top 6 million

Leaders disagree on pandemic response

BRASILIA: The number of coronavirus cases worldwide topped six million yesterday, with Brazil registering another record surge in daily infections as divisions deepened on how to deal with the pandemic. Latin American countries are bracing for difficult weeks ahead as the disease spreads rapidly across the region, even as much of the world exits lockdowns that have wrecked economies and stripped millions of their jobs.

In Brazil—the epicenter of South America's outbreak with nearly 500,000 confirmed cases, lagging only behind the United States—disagreement among leaders over lockdown measures has hampered efforts to slow the virus as the number of fatalities in the country nears 30,000.

President Jair Bolsonaro, who fears the economic fallout from stay-at-home measures will be worse than the virus, has berated governors and mayors for imposing what he calls “the tyranny of total quarantine”. As the global death toll from the pandemic surpassed 368,000, US President Donald Trump's decision to permanently cut funding to the World Health Organization has been broadly criticized.

The number of confirmed cases worldwide is more than six million, according to an AFP tally. “Now is the time for enhanced cooperation and common solutions,” the European Union said in a statement, adding: “Actions that weaken international results must be avoided.” Trump initially suspended funding to the WHO last month, accusing it of not doing enough to curb the early

spread of the virus and being too lenient with China, where COVID-19 emerged late last year.

On Friday he moved to make that decision permanent in a major blow to the agency. The US is the WHO's biggest contributor, supplying \$400 million last year. German Health Minister Jens Spahn said the “disappointing” decision was a setback for global health, while Chancellor Angela Merkel declined to attend an in-person G7 summit that Trump had suggested he would host.

Richard Horton, editor of The Lancet medical journal, said it was “madness and terrifying both at the same time”.

Lockdowns ease

As the virus progresses at different speeds around the globe, there has been pressure in many countries to lift crippling lockdowns, despite experts' warnings of a possible second wave of infections. In Britain, which is set to begin lifting its lockdown on Monday, senior advisors to the government warned that it was moving too quickly. “COVID-19 spreading too fast to lift lockdown in England,” tweeted Jeremy Farrar, a member of the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies. India said Saturday it would begin relaxing the world's biggest lockdown in stages from early June, even

as it marked another record daily rise in infections.

Iran meanwhile announced that collective prayers would resume in mosques, despite infections ticking back upwards in the Middle East's hardest-hit country. Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound—the third-holiest site in Islam after Makkah and Medina in Saudi Arabia—reopened to worshippers yesterday. With infection numbers falling in many of Europe's most affected countries, the push to restart economies was gaining steam.

Italy's Leaning Tower of Pisa reopened on Saturday, while in Paris, parks and the famed Galleries Lafayette department store flung open their doors. In Austria, hotels and cinemas were allowed to take in customers, provided they wear masks. “It is very important that things return to normal,” film buff Rotraud Turanitz said at Vienna's historic Admiral Kino cinema on trendy Burggasse. Across the Atlantic, the US capital Washington resumed outdoor dining, while on the West Coast, restaurants and hair salons in Los Angeles reopened.

New York City, the worst-hit American city with about 21,500 coronavirus deaths, is on track to begin reopening the week of June 8. The overall US death toll has topped 103,000 out of more than 1.7 million cases

of the virus. Global sport has also started to rev back into action, with Austria announcing it will host Formula One's delayed season-opener on July 5, and the NBA eyeing a July 31 return. Britain approved the return of domestic competitive sport on June 1 - with no fans present—while South Africa has given a provisional green light for training to resume.

Economies shattered

But the economic damage from weeks of lockdowns continues to pile up, with Chile and Peru securing credit lines worth billions from the IMF. India's economy grew at its slowest pace in two decades in the first quarter, while Canada, Brazil, France and Italy also saw their GDP figures shrink ahead of an expected worldwide recession. As the virus hits the world's poor particularly hard, Pope Francis called for a “more just and equitable society” in the post-coronavirus world and for people to act to “end the pandemic of poverty”.

Even the animal world has not been left untouched by the pandemic. Gibraltar has banned tourists from touching the British enclave's famous Barbary macaques over fears they could spread coronavirus. Singapore's beloved otters meanwhile have been popping up in unexpected places during the city-state's lockdown, but their increasingly daring antics have angered some and even sparked calls for a cull. “I simply don't understand anyone who could not like them. They are really cute,” said 35-year-old Singaporean Pam Wong. — AFP

With fact-checks, Twitter takes on a new kind of task

WASHINGTON: In addition to disputing misleading claims made by US President Donald Trump about mail-in ballots this week, Twitter has added fact-checking labels to thousands of other tweets since introducing the alerts earlier this month, mostly on posts about the coronavirus. The company does not expect to need additional staff for the undertaking, Twitter spokeswoman Liz Kelley said on Saturday.

Nor is it partnering with independent fact-checking organizations, as Facebook and Google have, to outsource the debunking of viral posts flagged by users. Social media platforms have been under fierce scrutiny over how they police rapidly spreading false information and other types of abusive content since Russia exploited the networks to interfere in the 2016 US presidential election.

Fact-checking groups said they welcomed Twitter's new approach, which adds a “get the facts” tag linking to more information, but said they hoped the company would more clearly lay out its methodology and reasoning. On Friday, Chief Executive Jack Dorsey acknowledged the criticism, saying he agreed fact-checking “should be open source and thus verifiable by everyone.” In a separate tweet, Dorsey said more transparency from the company was “critical.”

The company's move to label Trump's claims about mail-in ballots separates it from larger competitors such as Facebook, which declares its neutrality by leaving fact-check decisions to third-party partners and exempts politicians' posts from review. “To a degree, fact-checking is subjective. It's subjective in what you pick to check, and it's subjective in how you rate something,” said Aaron Sharockman, executive director of US fact-checking site Politifact, who said Twitter's process was opaque.

Twitter telegraphed in May that its new policy of adding fact-checking labels to disputed or misleading coronavirus information would be expanded to other topics. It said this week - after tagging Trump's tweets - that it was now labeling misleading content related to election integrity. Twitter's Kelley said the team is continuing to expand the effort to include other topics, prioritizing claims that could cause people immediate harm.

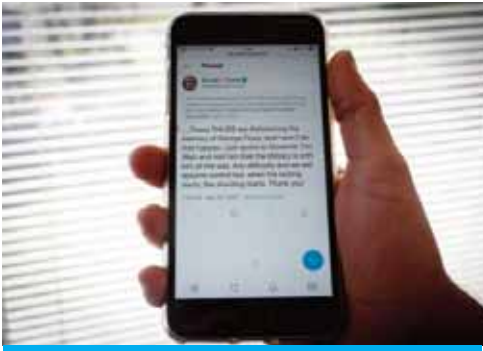
A Twitter spokesman said the company's Trust and Safety division is tasked with the “leg-work” on such labels, but declined to give the team's size. This week, Twitter defended one of these employees after he was blasted as politically biased by Trump and his supporters over 2017 tweets. Twitter also drew Trump's ire for putting a warning over his tweet about protests in Minnesota over the police killing of a black man for “glorifying violence,” an enactment of a 2019 policy that was long-awaited by the site's critics.

In the tweet, Trump warned the mostly African-American protesters that “when the looting starts, the shooting starts,” a phrase used during the civil rights era to justify police vio-



Brazil registers another record surge

lence against demonstrators. Facebook did not take action on the same post. The Twitter spokesman said decisions on the labels are made by a team of executives, including Sean Edgett, Twitter's general counsel, and Del Harvey, the vice president of Trust and Safety. Chief Executive Officer Jack Dorsey is informed before actions are taken. The company's curation team aggregates tweets on the disputed claims and writes a summary for a landing page. The team, which includes former journalists, normally pulls together content in categories including Trending, News, Entertainment, Sports and Fun. Twitter, whose executives at one time referred to it as “the free speech wing of the free speech party,” has been tightening content policies for several years after recognizing that abuses had grown rampant. — Reuters



Vaasa: The Twitter page of US President Donald Trump is displayed on a mobile phone in Vaasa, Finland. — AFP

Divert weapons funding to research to prevent pandemic, pope says

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis on Saturday urged politicians to divert funds spent on weapons to research to prevent another pandemic, as he led the largest gathering in the Vatican in nearly three months. Francis presided at an outdoor prayer service with about 130 people, including many directly affected by the pandemic.

They prayed the rosary in the Vatican gardens as tens of thousands of people in about 50 Catholic shrines around the world joined in. A large screen in the gardens showed video links with about 25 locations. Among those who prayed were Italian doctors, nurses, and ambulance drivers, as well as people who had recovered from coronavirus or lost family members. More than 33,000 have died in Italy. Most wore masks except for when they led prayers at the microphone. Francis, 83, sat several metres away from most people during most of the service and did not wear a mask.

In his closing prayer, Francis said national leaders should take a far-

sighted attitude, helping the most needy now and putting in place long-term economic and social solutions. He prayed that the Madonna would “touch (leaders') consciences so that enormous sums spent to possess more armaments and to perfect them be instead destined to the promotion of sufficient research to prevent such catastrophes in the future”. Earlier this month, Francis called for international scientific cooperation to develop a vaccine and said any successful one should be shared globally.

For nearly three months, Francis has led televised Masses, general audiences and Sunday addresses from inside the Vatican with no public. St Peter's Basilica and St Peter's Square were fully reopened on May 18 as Italy entered the second phase of easing restrictions. Yesterday, Francis said a Mass with only about 50 people inside the basilica but later delivered his Sunday message from his window overlooking the square for the first time since early March. — Reuters

International

China media, Hong Kong bristle at Trump's pledge of curbs, sanctions

Protests planned against national security laws

HONG KONG: China's state media and the government of Hong Kong lashed out yesterday at US President Donald Trump's vow to end Hong Kong's special status if Beijing imposes new national security laws on the city, which is bracing for fresh protests. Trump on Friday pledged to "take action to revoke Hong Kong's preferential treatment as a separate customs and travel territory", and to impose sanctions on unspecified individuals over Beijing's new laws on the Asian financial center. But China's state media pushed back, saying this would hurt the United States more than China.

"The baton of sanctions that the United States is brandishing will not scare Hong Kong and will not bring China down," China's Communist Party mouthpiece, the People's Daily, wrote in a commentary. It used the pen name "Zhong Sheng", meaning "Voice of China", often used to give the paper's view on foreign policy issues. The Global Times wrote, "China has already prepared for the worst. No matter how far the US goes, China will keep its company."

A Hong Kong government spokesman expressed regret the United States continued to "smear and demonize the legitimate rights and duty of our sovereign" to safeguard national security. In a sign of diplomatic manoeuvring, the US government said it would put one of its prime Hong Kong properties up for sale - a luxury residential complex worth up to HK\$5 billion (\$650 million). A spokesman for the US

consulate in Hong Kong said this was part of a global program that "reinforces the US government's presence in Hong Kong" through reinvestment in other areas.

China and Hong Kong officials have justified the laws that will be directly imposed by China to restore order to a city that has been wracked by sometimes violent anti-China, anti-government protests over the past year. They said the laws will only apply to a small number of "troublemakers." Protesters, however, have said they are railing against China's deep encroachment on Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms despite Beijing's promise to grant the city a high degree of autonomy under a so-called "one-country, two systems" formula since it reverted from British to Chinese rule in 1997.

More protests are planned in the coming weeks. Countries including the United States, Canada and Britain have expressed deep concerns about the law, with Britain saying it may grant expanded visa rights to large numbers of Hong Kongers. Demosisto, an advocacy group led by prominent young Hong Kong democracy activist Joshua Wong, said the security law will be "the death of freedom in Hong Kong".

A senior Hong Kong official, Erick Tsang, said he couldn't care less if he were sanctioned by the Washington. "I wouldn't even go to Canada, just in case they try to catch me" there, Tsang told local radio.



US govt to sell prime property site in Hong Kong



HONG KONG: A pro-China activist steps on an effigy of US President Donald Trump during a protest outside the US consulate in Hong Kong in response to US President Donald Trump saying he would strip several of Hong Kong's special privileges with the United States and bar some Chinese students from US universities in anger over Beijing's bid to exert control in the financial hub.— AFP

Details of the laws remain unclear, even to Hong Kong officials, but are expected to be enacted by China's parliament this summer. The laws will outlaw seces-

sion, subversion, terrorism and foreign interference in Hong Kong, and will be imposed without any local legislative scrutiny.— Reuters

Chinese media use race clashes to slam US over Hong Kong

BEIJING: Chinese state media took aim at the US government over the weekend as many American cities were gripped by raging protests and clashes, comparing the unrest with the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong. Beijing has long been infuriated by criticism from Western capitals, especially Washington, over its handling of the pro-democracy protests that shook Hong Kong last year.

And as unrest erupted across the United States over racial inequality and police brutality after the death during arrest of an unarmed black man, Chinese government spokespeople and official media launched broadsides against American authorities. "US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi once called the violent protests in Hong Kong 'a beautiful sight to behold.'... US politicians now can enjoy this sight from their own windows," Hu Xijin, editor-in-chief of nationalist tabloid Global Times, wrote Saturday. It was "as if the radical rioters in Hong Kong somehow snuck into the US and created a mess like they did last year", he added. China has insisted that "foreign forces" are to blame for the turmoil in Hong Kong, where pro-democracy protesters - described by Beijing as rioters - have marched in the millions since June last year and often clashed with the police.

Beijing sparked outrage and concern earlier this month with a plan to impose a law on Hong Kong that it said was needed to protect national security and curb "terrorism", but was condemned by pro-democracy activists and Western nations as another attempt to chip away at the city's unique freedoms. Following President Donald Trump's announcement that he would strip Hong Kong of its special privileges, a commentary published yesterday in China Daily - a mouthpiece of the ruling Communist Party - said US politicians dreamed of "victimizing" China. "Better give up that dream and come back to reality," it said. "Violence is spreading across the US... US politicians



MINNEAPOLIS: Demonstrators protest the killing of George Floyd near the city's 5th police precinct in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was taken into custody for Floyd's death. Chauvin has been accused of kneeling on Floyd's neck as he pleaded with him about not being able to breathe.— AFP

should do their jobs and help solve problems in the US, instead of trying to create new problems and troubles in other countries."

The back-and-forth over Hong Kong has exacerbated US-China tensions, which were already high over a number of issues - including trade and the coronavirus pandemic, over which Trump has accused Beijing of a lack of transparency. As violence broke out in the US over the weekend, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying also took aim at Washington on Saturday. "I can't breathe," she said on Twitter, with a screenshot of a tweet by US State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortogus that had criticized the Chinese government over its Hong Kong policy. Hua was quoting the words George Floyd was heard saying repeatedly before his death - after a police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes - which sparked the current unrest in the United States.

In another development, Turkish President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan has denounced the US police killing of an unarmed black man as "racist" and "fascist". Erdogan's comments are likely to irritate Turkey's NATO ally, with relations between the two countries already strained over their differing stances on the Syria conflict. George Floyd died on Monday night after being arrested on suspicion of using a counterfeit banknote, a video of the incident showing an officer kneeling on his neck as he is pinned to the ground. Rioting has broken out in several US cities over this incident and several others where police have killed black men. "The racist and fascist approach that led to the death of George Floyd in the US city of Minneapolis as a result of torture has not only deeply saddened all of us, but it has also become one of the most painful manifestations of the unjust order we stand against across the world," Erdogan tweeted in English. "I believe that the perpetrators of this inhumane act shall receive the punishment they deserve," said Erdogan. "We will be monitoring the issue."— Agencies

Walls close in on Thailand's poorest; virus hits economy

BANGKOK: Shuffling around their tiny slum home which is too small to stand up in, Thanapat Noidee and his wife Papassorn share donated noodles with their sons and worry about bills, as the coronavirus pushes Thailand's poor deeper into penury. The wood and breeze-block hut which is their home stands in the heart of a Bangkok commercial district festooned with five-star hotels and upmarket restaurants.

They share the small space in the shadow of the nearby high-rise developments with their children Woraphat and Kittipat, aged six and seven respectively. Under the 1.2-metre-high (four feet) ceiling, the adults have to kneel to move around the single room which is the bedroom, living room and dining area.

Downstairs, a tap provides a shower and a flat concrete surface serves as a kitchen area, a space shared with rats which clamber over their washed dishes. Papassorn lost her job as a messenger as Thailand locked down to control the coronavirus in late March. "I have to borrow money for the electricity from my father and grandfather," she says. "The school term opens again soon (July 1) and I have to find money for those expenses as well."

Thailand's parliament is due Sunday to vote on whether to approve a near-\$60 billion stimulus to revive an economy battered by the pandemic. If agreed, it will be the biggest state cash injection in Thai history. Thailand has long paraded low unemployment as a symbol of its economic success. But millions like



BANGKOK: Photo shows motorcycle taxi driver, Thanapat Noidee with son Kittipat looking from the window of their home in Bangkok.— AFP

the Noidee family rely on informal work or day wages for survival, jobs imperiled by a feared 6-7 percent contraction in the economy. Two months after the lockdown and with the outbreak under control, Bangkok is gradually creeping back to life.

But Papassorn's work has not returned while her husband has seen the roughly 1,000 baht (\$31) he earns each day as a motorcycle taxi driver more than halved because of a fall in customers. The family have depended on the nearby Holy Redeemer Church for daily food handouts—a charity service which is being closed down as the city reopens. "Without food donations, I'll have to fight harder for my family to survive," said Thanapat as he moved on his knees inside his lodgings, occasionally knocking his head on the ceiling.— AFP

Growing US-China rivalry seen fueling paralysis at the UN

UNITED NATIONS: For nearly a decade, the UN Security Council has been frequently paralyzed by Russia's obstinacy over the Syrian crisis. Today, however, it is the US-China rivalry that has infected a growing array of issues, according to officials and diplomats. As recently as 2017, an understanding between Washington and Beijing allowed the United Nations on three occasions—involving separate sets of economic sanctions—to project international unity in the face of the North Korean nuclear threat.

Three years later, the COVID-19 pandemic has seen a ferocious competition erupt between the UN's two main contributors, prompting the organization's chief, Antonio Guterres, to bemoan a "lack of leadership" during the world's worst crisis since 1945. "Where we see power, we sometimes do not see the necessary leadership," he said recently.

Even after more than two months of negotiations, the 15 Security Council members were unable to reach agreement on a resolution supporting a call from the UN secretary-general for a global cease-fire while the world battles the novel coronavirus. The sole reason? US-Chinese differences over a passing mention in the draft resolution to the World Health Organization (WHO), with which President Donald Trump on Friday said he planned to sever ties. Both UN officials and diplomats say the US-Chinese conflict seems to be spreading, leaving them increasingly pessimistic.

"The Security Council has been frozen for 45 years between 1945 and 1990, because of the Cold War," one ambassador said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The last thing we need is another Cold War that would freeze again the Security Council." "Importing bilateral disputes in the Council would be a disaster," he said. Added another ambassador: "We really shouldn't enter in a new Cold War. But it doesn't look very good at the moment," whether regarding leadership, the pandemic or US-Chinese relations, three subjects "very closely tied to each other."

Fragility and humility

At the UN, there is a sense of a dangerous drift into new and dysfunctional territory. "In the past, when you had disagreements among members of the Council, it was compartmentalized," said a UN official, speaking on grounds of anonymity. "So your adversary one day on a particular issue was your best ally the next day on another issue. What we see now is everything spilling over."

"So there are camps, or there are disagreements which just spill over from one issue to another," the official said, clearly alluding to the situation in Hong Kong, where tough new Chinese security legislation has pitted the two leading permanent members of the UN against each other. "The tensions between the US and China are really problematic" for the world body, meaning the Security Council is "not able to move forward on a range of things," the official added.

Several ambassadors shared that view. "There is a huge fracture in the global multilateral architecture right now. And it's very serious," said Olof Skoog, the European Union ambassador to the UN. "We are witnessing a polarization in the Security Council," said Ambassador Christoph Heusgen of Germany, currently a non-permanent member of the council, alluding to an ever more bitter volley of tweets being exchanged by the US and Chinese missions. At a press conference Thursday, Guterres expressed his regret that the pandemic had not evoked a greater sense of humility from the big powers.

"If the present crisis shows something, it is our fragility. Collective fragility. When we are fragile, we should be humble. When we are humble, we should be united and in solidarity," he said, in remarks directed to members of the Security Council. He then made it abundantly clear that he had in mind the United States and China—which as permanent Security Council members enjoy the veto power that greatly magnifies their influence. "I have never seen the Council's work being paralyzed by (non-permanent) members," he said.— AFP

India extends lockdown in high-risk zones

NEW DELHI: India extended its coronavirus lockdown until June 30 in high-risk zones but permitted restaurants, malls and religious buildings to reopen elsewhere from June 8 despite a record high number of cases detected nationwide on Saturday. The home ministry ordered state governments and local authorities to identify "containment zones", or areas that should remain under lockdown, as they continue to report high number of infections. The government allowed hospitality and retail sectors and places of worship to open from June 8 and expected authorities to ensure physical distancing rules and staggered business hours.

India reported a record daily jump of 7,964 new COVID-19 infections on Saturday and has so far recorded 173,763 positive cases and 4,971 deaths, making the world's second-most populous country ninth on the list of most infections, Reuters data showed. Restrictions on international air travel and city train services have not been revoked but permission for intra-state travel was granted. The federal government expected states to make a call on reopening schools and colleges in July.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to address the nation on Sunday as his government wrestles to contain the pandemic despite imposing the world's longest lockdown.—Reuters

International

‘I can’t breathe’ protests heat up

Curfews imposed in several US cities



MINNEAPOLIS: Protesters gather outside of the Fifth Police Precinct in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Protests continue in Minnesota and around the country after the death of George Floyd in police custody. —AFP

MINNEAPOLIS: Civil unrest flared and curfews were imposed in several major US cities on Saturday as demonstrators took to the streets to vent outrage at the death of a black man shown on video gasping for breath as a white Minneapolis policeman knelt on his neck. From Los Angeles to Miami to Chicago, protests marked by chants of “I can’t breathe” – a rallying cry echoing the dying words of George Floyd – began peacefully before turning unruly as demonstrators blocked traffic, set fires and clashed with riot police, some firing tear gas and plastic bullets in an effort to restore order.

The sight of protesters flooding streets fueled a sense of crisis in the United States after weeks of lockdowns due to the coronavirus pandemic, which has seen millions thrown out of work and has disproportionately affected minority communities. In the nation’s capital, hundreds of demonstrators assembled near the Justice Department headquarters shouting, “black lives matter.” Many later moved to the White House, where they faced off with shield-carrying police, some mounted on horseback.

President Donald Trump said on Saturday that if protesters who gathered the night before in Lafayette Square, across from the White House, had breached the fence, “they would have been greeted with the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons, I have ever seen.” The full Minnesota National Guard was activated for the first time since World War Two after four nights of arson, looting and vandalism in parts of Minneapolis, the state’s largest city, and its adjacent capital, St. Paul.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz said the deployment was necessary because outside agitators were using protests over Floyd’s death to sow chaos. “We are under assault,” Walz, a first-term governor elected from Minnesota’s Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, told a briefing on Saturday. “Order needs to be restored.” Separately, US Attorney General William Barr also pointed the finger at extremist instigators, though he and Walz – neither offering evidence to support their assertions – suggested opposite ends of the political fringe were to blame.



Outrage over the death of a black man

National discontent reflected

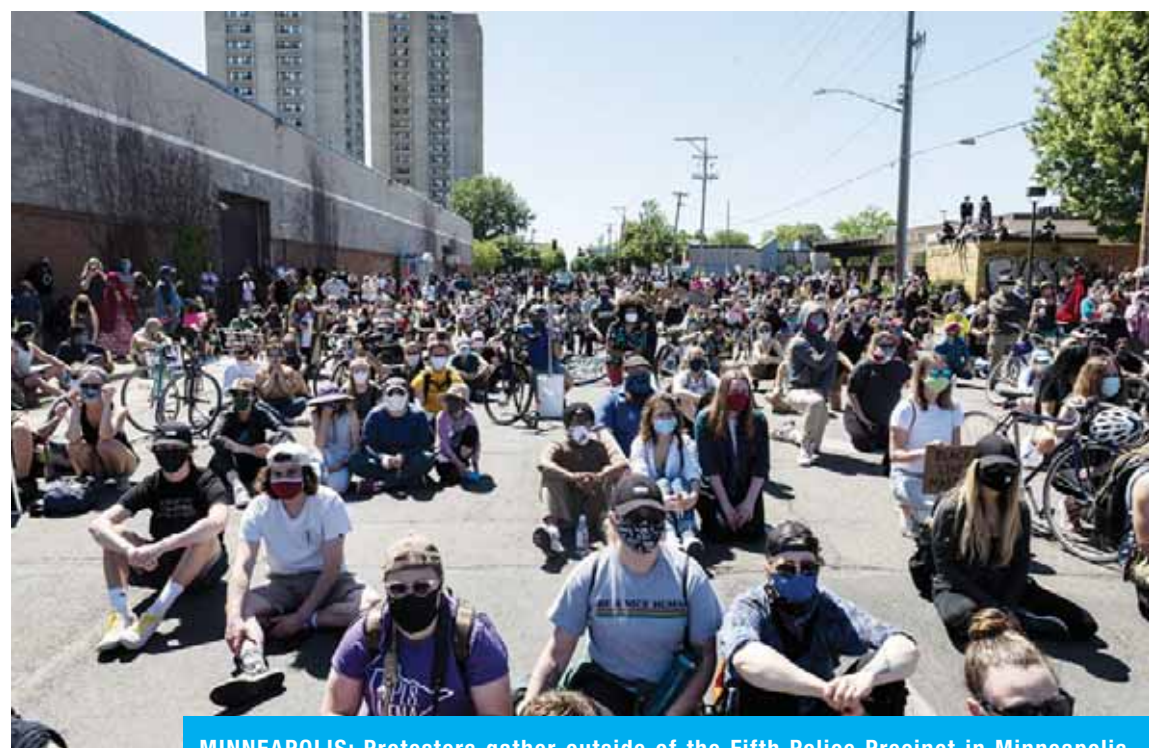
Civil rights activists said video of Floyd’s arrest on Monday – captured by an onlooker’s cellphone as he repeatedly groaned, “please, I can’t breathe” before he died – triggered an outpouring of rage long simmering over persistent racial bias in the US criminal justice system. But the rapidly spreading protests also coincided with a deep-seated national discontent over the social claustrophobia and economic carnage wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.

In a surreal moment for Miami on Saturday, police sirens and lights flooded downtown neighborhoods as fireworks began crackling and booming over Biscayne Bay to honor healthcare workers fighting the pandemic. Hundreds of police in riot gear swarmed the area, threatening to arrest anyone, including media, who ventured onto the streets.

Curfews were imposed in several major cities rocked by civil disturbances in recent days, including Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Denver, Cincinnati, Portland, Oregon, and Louisville, Kentucky. Protests also flared on Saturday in Dallas, Chicago, Seattle, Salt Lake City and Cleveland. In an extraordinary move, the Pentagon said it put military units on a four-hour alert to be ready if requested by the Minnesota governor to help keep the peace.

National Guard units also were mobilized by the governors of Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin and Tennessee. The streets of Minneapolis were largely quiet during the day on Saturday. Several armored National Guard vehicles were seen rolling through town and authorities later closed major highways leading in and out of Minneapolis-St. Paul. At dusk, as the curfew went into effect, police confronted some 500 protesters milling around a burned-out bank and opened fire with tear gas and plastic bullets, sending the crowd scurrying.

Tina Harrison, 32, gasping and coughing as she and two companions poured milk over their faces after being pepper-sprayed, insisted they were present to voice legitimate grievances as protesters, not to incite lawlessness. “We came here as white women ... to protect people of color,” Harrison said



MINNEAPOLIS: Protesters gather outside of the Fifth Police Precinct in Minneapolis, Minnesota. —AFP

while they took cover inside an apartment lobby. It marked the fifth night of such clashes, the second since Friday’s announcement that Derek Chauvin, the policeman seen kneeling on Floyd’s neck, had been arrested on murder charges in Floyd’s death.

Floyd, who had worked security for Minneapolis nightclubs, had been suspected of trying to pass counterfeit money to buy cigarettes on Monday evening. Police said he was unarmed. A store employee who had called for help had told a police dispatcher that the suspect appeared to be intoxicated. Three other officers dismissed on Tuesday from the police department with Chauvin, who was known to have worked off-duty security at one of the same nightclubs as Floyd, are also under criminal investigation in the case, prosecutors said.

‘Could’ve killed them’

Anger stoked by Floyd’s death was widespread. Thousands flooded Chicago streets for a second day of protests. Cellphone footage shared with Reuters showed an overturned SUV, a patrol car on fire, a

person burning the American flag and a skirmish between demonstrators and police.

In the Brooklyn borough of New York City, video footage recorded by onlookers showed a police squad car driving into a crowd of protesters during a second day of violence after more than 200 arrests were made on Friday. “They could’ve killed them, & we don’t know how many they injured,” US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez wrote on Twitter, demanding the NYPD officers be brought to justice.

At a late-night news conference, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio suggested protesters were to blame. “The video was upsetting, and I wish the officers hadn’t done that,” de Blasio said. “But I also understood that they didn’t start the situation. The situation was started by a group of protesters converging on a police vehicle, attacking that vehicle.” The mayor said flare-ups of violence were primarily instigated by small numbers of outsiders determined to goad police into confrontations, a phenomenon authorities said was playing out across the country. —Reuters

Iran berates US over police killing, slams racism

DUBAI:Iran, always keen to score points against its longtime foe the United States, took Washington to task on Saturday over the killing of a black man by a white police officer that has sparked angry protests over racial injustice. “Some don’t think #BlackLivesMatter,” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Twitter.

“To those of us who do: it is long overdue for the entire world to wage war against racism. Time for a #WorldAgainstRacism.” “The US government is squandering its citizens’ resources, whether its adventurism in Asia, Africa, or Latin America...,” Zarif said in a tweet partly based on a message that US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sent to Iranian street protesters in 2018, but with some of the words changed.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry earlier denounced the police killing of the unarmed black man in Minneapolis, which has sparked protests in several cities, some which have turned violent. A ministry statement condemned what it called “the tragic murder of black people and deadly racial discrimination in the United States”. “The voices of the protesters must be heard ... (and) the repression of suffering Americans must be stopped immediately,” the ministry statement said. —Reuters

Spot where George Floyd died now an impromptu forum

MINNEAPOLIS: George Floyd is surrounded by the names of other police brutality victims in a colorful mural that now looms over the spot where he died, located in a rapidly gentrifying Minneapolis neighborhood. Hundreds of people passed under his gaze Saturday, stopping to pay their respects with a bouquet or written message, and also at a microphone set up at what has become something of a public forum-frequented by a diverse array of mourners, united if by nothing else their pain.

“We are George, we can’t breathe,” the crowd chanted, repeating some of the 46-year-old African American’s last words as he lay dying under an officer’s knee that pressed into his neck for nearly nine minutes until well after he was motionless. On Friday the white officer was charged with one count of third-degree murder-unintentionally causing a death-and one count of negligent manslaughter. Standing beneath the mural with signs reading “Charge all four,” and “Jail all racist killer cops,” mourners said they wanted the other three officers who were present to be arrested as well.

Here, in broad daylight, speech is intended to be peaceful, in contrast with the looting and burning that has taken place during protests which have unfolded at night since Floyd’s death. The microphone was thus quickly snatched from a young man who began to pontificate on black citizens’ constitutional right to bear arms. But Christina Gonzalez, a 33-year-old New Yorker, quickly came to his defense: “When they pull the mic from that brother for saying something like that, I feel like I have to speak on it.”



LOS ANGELES: A driver burns-out tire while a passenger seats on the window gesticulating to the Police in Downtown Los Angeles. —AFP

‘It’s just draining’

Mixed together in the crowd were blacks, whites, young and old-one man was so enraged by Gonzalez’s comments that he began insulting her before being gently pushed away. “We’re emotional, we are the melting pot-more like a salad, because we don’t really blend well together, everybody’s coming from different places,” Gonzalez said, noting that some in the crowd had experienced police violence themselves, making them particularly sensitive. Alex Washington, a 37-year-old municipal worker, said he has been apprehended for biking on a sidewalk and even for running fast while crossing the street. “I can’t

tell you how many times I’ve been put in the back of police cars and I have a perfectly clean record,” he said.

“To walk in your own neighborhood and feel hated, it’s just draining. I’m sick and tired of feeling drained by hatred in my own community,” he said. Nonetheless, he felt the diversity of people who had come to pay respects to Floyd was “so beautiful.” Keira, who did not wish to give her last name, said the broad support was comforting. “I’m here because I no longer fear for my life as a black person. I feel comfortable now knowing that I got support from the community,” she said, hoping that the unity would last.

Business

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020

10 NBK is leading in cutting-edge payment solutions: Al-Othman

10 Volkswagen to invest \$2.2bn in Chinese electric vehicle sector

11 KIPCO announces 6% increase in net profit to KD 30 million for 2019



NEW YORK: Restaurant workers from Caffè Palermo in Little Italy pose for a photo in New York City. From baristas to hotel workers to tourism operators, people whose job requires them to show up in-person were among the hardest hit in the waves of layoffs. — AFP

US workers face an unequal future

Unemployment now at a level not seen since Great Depression

WASHINGTON: As the coronavirus worked its way across the United States, it cleaved the country's workforce in two: those who have the ability to work from home, and those who do not.

From baristas to hotel workers to tourism operators, people whose job requires them to show up in-person were among the hardest hit in the waves of layoffs, and also those on the low end of the US pay scale.

Unemployment is now at a level not seen since the Great Depression nearly a century ago, and moving higher, while the coronavirus is expected to threaten the country for months to come, factors analysts fear will only serve to deepen inequality for workers in the world's largest economy. "People who are well-off and highly skilled and work from home are going to demand that their employers make accommodations for them," said Jesse Rothstein, a former chief economist at the Labor Department who now teaches at the University of California, Berkeley.

But "lower skilled workers... are taking on more risk without more pay."

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has described the pandemic as "a great increaser of inequality," but experts say that is not inevitable, particularly if Congress passes new stimulus measures to support battered businesses and consumers.

"Every single cleavage we had before is widening," said Claudia Sahm, a former principal economist with the Federal Reserve who is now with the

Washington Center for Economic Growth. "We have an opportunity to do something better than what we were doing before, but it will not just happen. It has to be a policy effort."

An unequal recession

When the coronavirus arrived, the US economy had a tight labor market, with an unemployment rate near a historic low of 3.5 percent in February, while long-stagnant wages were just starting to rise. Yet the job market was not as healthy as it appeared.

The US Private Sector Job Quality Index (JQI) — which uses government employment statistics to gauge the balance between non-supervisory jobs with decent pay and those without—has been charting downwards for years. In February, the JQI was back near its all-time low reached in March 2012 as many of the jobs being created paid below the mean weekly wage, according to the index compiled by a consortium of academics and researchers.

And a study late last year from the Brookings Institution found 44 percent of US workers qualify as "low wage," with median annual earnings of just

\$18,000 a year.

When the pandemic hit and sent the unemployment rate to 14.7 in April and the economy into an almost-certain recession, low-paid workers in industries like leisure, hospitality and food services were laid off in such large numbers their absence skewed average wages upwards.

While government data show most consider their layoffs to be temporary, Michael Weber, an associate professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, warned that if businesses close or scale back staffing, job seekers will be forced to compete against each other, driving wages lower, as is typical in recession job markets.

Who's hiring?

Grocery store chain Kroger, e-commerce giant Amazon and several fast food companies have announced massive hirings since the pandemic hit, but offer no safe haven. "Those are the very jobs that are under criticism over the last few years given that they pay unreasonably low wages," Weber

said. And those type of jobs "come hand-in-hand with more precarious income situation."

Robert Hockett, a law professor at Cornell University who is a principal researcher on the JQI, said job seekers could demand risk premiums at workplaces where they face exposure to the coronavirus, or take equity stakes in struggling companies to help keep them afloat. In fact, the Fed reported this week that Boston area employers were giving workers temporary pay increases of up to 30 percent, in part to compensate for the increased risk and hold onto their employees.

But unemployed workers could end up forced to accept whatever jobs they can find, particularly if Congress fails to extend the small business loans and unemployment benefits temporarily expanded in the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act approved in March.

"We're kind of on a tightrope or a knife's edge at this moment," Hockett said in an interview. President Donald Trump's administration has been lukewarm towards further spending on aid for workers, predicting the coronavirus will be defeated and a strong economic rebound starting in July, even as many economists remain skeptical of a rapid, V-shaped recovery.

"It's all going to ride on how desperate workers are," Hockett said. "And that's going to ride on public policy positions." — AFP

China's factory activity cools

BEIJING: China's factory activity grew at a slower pace in May but momentum in the services and construction sectors quickened, pointing to an uneven recovery in the world's second-largest economy as businesses emerge from coronavirus-led shutdowns.

Manufacturing slowed for a second month although activity has revived from record lows in February, when the government imposed tough travel restrictions, quarantine rules and factory suspensions to curb the spread of the respiratory illness. The official manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) eased to 50.6 in May from 50.8 in April, National Bureau of Statistics data showed

yesterday, but held above the 50-point mark that separates expansion from contraction on a monthly basis. Analysts had expected a PMI reading of 51.

Export orders logged the fifth consecutive month of contraction, with a sub-index standing at 35.3 in May, well below the 50-point mark, as the coronavirus pandemic continued to take a toll on global demand. "Judging by the PMI sub-indices, the absolute levels of demand-related indices are way below the production-related ones, indicating a pronounced constraining impact from demand on production," said Zhang Liqun, an analyst with the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing (CFLP), adding that more than 50 percent of companies have reported a lack of demand.

Factories reduced headcount for the first time since they reopened, with a sub-index falling to 49.4 from 50.2 in April, the survey showed.

In May, the PMI index for medium-sized and small enterprises fell to 48.8 and 50.8, respectively, while large companies reported a faster expansion in activity.

In an encouraging sign, the forward-looking total new orders gauge showed an improvement to 50.9 from April's 50.2, suggesting domestic demand could be picking up soon. "In the near term, we expect monetary policy to continue the 'volume' of credit expansion in order to stabilize growth and help fiscal expansion. In this regard, China's domestic demand will likely continue to rebound," analysts with investment bank CICC said in a note after the data release.

Hampered by the health crisis, China's economy shrank 6.8 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier, the first contraction since quarterly records began. Analysts believe it will be months before broader activity returns to pre-crisis levels, even if a fresh wave of infections can be avoided. — Reuters



SHENYANG: Chinese employees work on the fuselage of Airbus A220 aircraft at a factory in Shenyang in China's northeastern Liaoning province. — AFP

Business

NBK is leading in cutting-edge payment solutions: Al-Othman

Bank launched payment solutions through Fitbit, Garmin Smartwatches

KUWAIT: As part of its efforts to provide cutting-edge payment solutions to its customers, NBK is committed to developing the technological infrastructure required to operate these innovative services, thanks to the progress achieved in implementing its digital transformation strategy and working closely with international companies that provide these services. In addition to the bank's leadership in providing digital banking services locally and regionally, and its strong relationships with these institutions, subject to the regulatory instructions and technical requirements set by the Central Bank of Kuwait for providing these services.

NBK was the first bank to introduce top-notch digital payment services through smart devices such as smartwatches, fitness trackers and stickers early this year, the latest of which was Fitbit Pay and Garmin Pay using smartwatches supporting this feature.

Commenting on this subject, Mohammed Al-Othman, General Manager of Consumer Banking, National Bank of Kuwait, said: "We are committed to offer-



NBK to offer advanced digital services

ing cutting-edge digital payment solutions to our customers to be the first to use them in Kuwait. The latest of these solutions were Fitbit Pay and Garmin Pay service, which reflect our leadership in providing digital banking services that would enrich our customers' banking experience."

"We are well prepared to provide more pioneering digital payment services, thanks to our proactive efforts in implementing digital transformation strategy, which established our strong foundations of technological infrastructure required to provide these services," he added. Al-Othman praised the efforts of the Central Bank of

Kuwait in supporting the banking sector in providing progressive digital banking services in general, especially the advanced digital payment solutions to the Kuwaiti market by providing the appropriate regulatory and supervisory environment.

Al-Othman continued: "We will spare no effort to carry on the diligent endeavors we have already started to provide leading-edge digital banking services and payment solutions to our customers. I also confirm that we are working to provide more advanced digital payment solutions in the near future, in light of our huge capabilities and inventive technological infrastructure, which make us ready to provide these services to our customers in Kuwait and the region, once they are provided in Kuwait."

Al-Othman affirmed that Consumer Banking Group sets the digital transformation and technological advancement as the basis of new banking services and products offered to customers, which we will continue to focus on during the coming period, as significant steps have already



Mohammed Al-Othman

been taken, especially with regard to digital platforms and applications used by our customers.

Al-Othman indicated that NBK continues to serve its customers under the current exceptional circumstances through its e-channels and various digital services, in addition to the new services provided, the latest of which was the mobile branch that witnessed unprecedented response from customers.

During the first months of this year, the Consumer Banking Group launched several

advanced payment solutions to minimize the use of cash, most notably the Fitbit Pay and Garmin Pay service.

Fitbit Pay allows NBK Customers to make seamless payments in a safe, convenient way using supported Fitbit smartwatch models. Similarly, NBK Customers can use Garmin Pay service to make contactless payments using their Garmin smartwatches at any NFC-enabled POS terminals, as they can activate it by entering their credit card details to the Garmin smartwatch, and use it to make payments quickly and easily.

It's worth mentioning that NBK was awarded the "Best Consumer Digital Bank" and the "Best in Mobile Banking" in Kuwait by "Global Finance" Magazine for 2019. NBK continues to consolidate its leading position through its largest local banking network in Kuwait, with 68 branches all over the country, in addition to a large POS network topping 13,500 devices, including over 11,700 NFC-enabled devices. Besides, the bank owns the largest ATM network in Kuwait, with 327 ATMs, including over 100 CDMs.

NBK Money Market Report

Risk appetite returns as markets reopen

KUWAIT: Risk appetite slowly returned to markets last week as economies around the world began to ease coronavirus restrictions and return to work. In the US, most states have begun a phased reopening, and consumers are cautiously venturing out of quarantine. In the UK, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Britain will reopen thousands of shops, department stores and shopping centers next month. Some stores could be opened as early as June 1 if they are able to meet the government's COVID-19 secure guidelines.

Spain, which has some of Europe's strictest lockdowns, urged foreign tourists to return from July as it eases restrictions. Spain's Foreign Minister tweeted "The worst is behind us" and "In July we will gradually open Spain to international tourists, lift the quarantine, and ensure the highest standards of health safety."

The story is the same with multiple other countries setting the guidelines for reopening their economies. The resulting optimism lead to a broad-based decline in the safe-haven US dollar and a push towards other majors such as the euro and sterling pound. On the other hand, Stock markets across the globe were higher, commodity markets rallied, and US Treasury prices fell. The S&P 500 index rose above the 3,000 level for the first time since March 5, as more US companies joined the race to test coronavirus vaccine candidates on humans and enroll its first participants. The rally however, was capped off the end of the week after US-China tensions came back into focus. Worries about the effect of a US response to China's proposed security law for Hong Kong kept risk appetite in check. President Donald Trump said the US was working on a strong response to China's planned national security legislation for Hong Kong and it would be announced before the end of the week.

China responded with a warning that it would retaliate against any new imposed measures. The Chinese yuan eased to a near nine-month low against the dollar over fears of a deterioration in US-China relations.

Mixed economic data

US consumer confidence nudged up in May, suggesting consumers may be feeling that the worst of the coronavirus-driven economic slump was likely in the past as the country starts to reopen. While below expectations, the Conference Board said its consumer confidence index edged up to a reading of 86.6 this month from a downwardly revised 85.7 in April.

The Core PCE price index to fell 0.4 percent in April while Personal Spending plunged -13.6 percent to a six-decade low. The drop in the US Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge took the annual core PCE rate to 1.0 percent from 1.7 percent. Finally, real gross domestic product decreased at an annual rate of 5.0 percent in the first quarter of 2020, according to the "second" estimate

released by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. In the fourth quarter of 2019, real GDP increased 2.1 percent.

The figures did little to affect markets as the downturn was widely expected by economists and the Fed. Forecasters believe growth will rebound sharply in the third quarter with the Congressional Budget Office predicting GDP will rise at an annual rate of 21.5 percent.

EU proposes new stimulus

The euro has struggled since falling in March, when investors rushed for the safety of dollars amid increased volatility in global financial markets. Last week, we saw the euro rebound as risk appetite steadily returned to markets and as the European Commission unveiled a new 750 billion euro stimulus package.

Brexit

While the British pound also saw gains against the US dollar, the currency and economy still seem hampered by the now four-year ongoing Brexit process. While some strides were made this week regarding rights of fishing waters, Britain is still a long way from agreeing on a trade deal with the European Union.

Regional trade increases in China

While the downturn of global trade has taken its toll on China, the trade relationship between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations members remains resilient despite the COVID-19 pandemic. China said that there was a 6.1 percent growth of China-ASEAN trade in goods in the first quarter of 2020 with a value exceeding \$140 billion. The ASEAN became China's largest trading partner for the first time, surpassing both the European Union and the United States.

Japan in a severe situation

Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda stressed the effects of the coronavirus on Japan this week. Kuroda stated that uncertainty remains extremely high for the economic outlook and the situation in Japan to remains in a "severe" state. Nonetheless, he mentioned the BoJ is ready to act by further expand lending programs, cut interest rates and ramping up purchases of exchange-traded funds.

Volatility in oil markets

Oil prices moved in a volatile manner last week as they adjusted to market developments. Prices initially rose, supported by growing confidence that producers are following through on commitments to cut supplies and as fuel demand picks up with coronavirus restrictions easing. However, prices plunged lower again over the renewed US-China tensions. The fall, due to fears over expected future demand, even overshadowed the latest news on cooperation between OPEC and allies to curb supply. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman agreed during a telephone call on further "close coordination" on oil output restrictions.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30865
The USDKWD closed at 0.30865 on Thursday.

likely to increase. The IATA official says the impact to the industry is even worse than the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

"We are going to have airlines that are not going to be able to recover, that will have to shut down their operations for good," he said. After almost three months of lockdowns and restrictions on movement across the region, airlines have run out of cash and government support is "urgent," he says.

'Not a rescue'

"What we are asking for is not a financial rescue. It's support, immediate relief that allows the industry to sustain operations," said Cerda. Airlines are seeking tax relief and credit guarantees from governments. Globally, government aid to the airline sector stands at \$123 billion, including \$300 million from Latin America, according to IATA. "Airports and airlines as well as governments are all losing out at this juncture," because of the lack of connectivity across the continent, says Fernando Gomez Suarez, an aviation industry analyst in Mexico. Governments are conscious of the broader effects and Chile is considering a bailout for LATAM, seeing the airline as vital to the economy, and seeking to preserve 10,000 direct jobs as well as the livelihood of up to 200,000 people the government says are dependent on the airline indirectly.—AFP



DORTMUND: Used cars of German car maker Volkswagen (VW) are for sale at a car dealer in Dortmund, western German.—AFP

Volkswagen to invest \$2.2bn in Chinese electric vehicle sector

BEIJING: Volkswagen said it will invest around 2 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) in two Chinese companies in the electric vehicle sector, calling it "the world's biggest market". The German car giant said it will take a 50 percent stake in JAG—the parent company of state-owned JAC Motors—and increase its holding in the JAC Volkswagen joint venture from 50 percent to 75 percent for around 1.1 billion euros.

The group said in a statement that "by gaining management control, Volkswagen is paving the way for more electric models and infrastructure". It will also buy a 26 percent share of Chinese battery supplier Gotion High-Tech for 1.1 billion euros.

China, which accounts for 40 percent of Volkswagen's sales, has become the world's largest auto market in recent years, with Beijing repeatedly pledging to support the electric vehicle industry. Volkswagen said it expects to sell around 1.5 million new energy vehicles in the country annually by 2025.

China's industry ministry said in December the country should seek to ensure one in four of all vehicles sold in 2025 were either hybrids or fully-electric vehicles. And Beijing decided in late March to extend the tax exemption for the purchase of electric vehicles by two years.

Car sales in China began to slide in 2018 and plunged further when the coronavirus pandemic paralyzed the economy, but they have rebounded as the country appears to have brought the virus under control.

The JAG investment is the first time the German carmaker will take "a strategic role in a state-owned company", Volkswagen China CEO Stephan Woellenstein said in a statement. China typically requires foreign

automakers to forge joint ventures with domestic firms when establishing manufacturing plants, which means sharing profits and technology with local partners.

But Beijing announced in 2018 that it would end a previous 50 percent cap on foreign auto firms' ownership of new energy vehicle joint ventures with local companies, while US electric car manufacturer Tesla opened a wholly-owned Shanghai factory last year.

Volkswagen does not intend to "throw away" its electric car venture with JAC, which launched in 2017, because of the advantage of having a "Chinese partner who understands the country", Woellenstein told reporters in a conference call Friday.

Car trouble

The lifting of coronavirus lockdowns in China has given the stuttering auto industry a jumpstart, with sales rising for the first time in two years as buyers return as the health crisis eases and restrictions on travel and businesses are lifted.

Sales rose 4.4 percent year-on-year in April, according to figures from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, driven by strong demand for commercial vehicles, which soared more than 30 percent. Woellenstein said May sales in the country could meet last year's level for the same month, and that the carmaker is currently "more optimistic" about the Chinese market's recovery.

However, the global car industry faces an existential crisis from the coronavirus pandemic, which has caused sales to plunge as governments forced citizens to stay at home to slow the spread of the virus.

The Volkswagen announcement came as French automaker announced 15,000 job losses worldwide, and a day after Japanese automaker Nissan reported a huge \$6.2 billion annual net loss. Nissan, already battling weak demand as well as the fallout from the arrest of former boss Carlos Ghosn, said the global outbreak had hit all aspects of its business.

Nissan said it will shut its Barcelona plant and slash production.—AFP



MAUBEUGE: A protester holds a banner reading " don't touch MCA, it's our plant" as they demonstrate against the Renault automaker's decision to cut 15,000 jobs worldwide, including 4,600 in France, in Maubeuge, on Saturday.—AFP

restore competitiveness in a market reeling from slumping sales since the COVID-19 pandemic forced millions of people into home confinement for weeks on end. Renault had been navigating turbulent waters even before the health crisis, starting with the shock arrest of its former boss Carlos Ghosn on financial misconduct charges in 2018 which led to deep rifts in its alliance with Japanese partners Nissan and Mitsubishi. In February, the company unveiled its first annual loss in a decade, followed quickly by the 2020 health crisis that saw new car registrations in the European Union plunge 76.3 percent year-on-year in April.—AFP

LatAm airlines face long haul to recovery

MEXICO CITY: Latin America's beleaguered airlines will take up to three years to recover losses due to the coronavirus pandemic, and in the meantime desperately need government help, according to experts surveying the damage to the industry. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) estimates it will take at least that time for the region's airlines to inch back to their pre-pandemic level for domestic and regional flights. Long-haul services to the United States and Europe will take until 2024 to come back, it says. "It's a long-range view; it will not be short term. It will take a lot of work," said Peter Cerda, IATA vice president for the Americas. Evidence of the severity of the crisis came last week when the region's two largest airlines, Chilean-Brazilian LATAM and Colombia's Avianca, filed for bankruptcy in the United States. With countries across the region in lockdown, flight activity has plummeted 93 percent from around 200,000 a day, with losses in revenue estimated at \$18 billion. Cerda says that figure is

Business

KIPCO announces 6% increase in net profit to KD 30 million for 2019

Company monitoring developments brought on by COVID-19: Vice Chairman

KUWAIT: KIPCO – the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – has announced a net profit of KD 30 million (\$99 million) for the year ended 31 December 2019, an increase of 6 per cent on the KD 28.3 million (\$93.4 million) reported in 2018.

Earnings per share for 2019 came to 10.1 fils (\$3.3 cents), compared to 14.8 fils (\$4.9 cents) per share reported at the end of 2018. This is owed mainly to the company's capital increase, as well as the one time increase in interest and other payments on perpetual capital securities held by a Group bank.

KIPCO's Board of Directors is recommending a cash dividend of 10 per cent (10 fils per share) subject to approval by the company's



Consolidated assets stood at KD 10.3bn

General Assembly and regulatory authorities.

Total revenue from continuing operations in 2019 came to KD 766 million (\$2.53 billion) compared to the KD 774 million (\$2.55 billion) reported in 2018.

As a result of changes in KIPCO's ownership of OSN over 2019 and Q1 2020, and in accordance with IFRS requirements, the pay-TV company has become a subsidiary of the Group. The details and impact are available in 2019 financial statements.

KIPCO's consolidated assets stood at KD 10.3 billion (\$34 billion), compared to KD 10.4 billion (\$34 billion) reported at year-end 2018.

Faisal Al-Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), said that 2019 was a year of relative growth because of the rise in local public spending and the stability of oil prices:

"Our 2019 results reflect the positive performance our core companies achieved during the year, despite the geopolitical tension and

economic struggles that our region is facing. This performance has exceeded our expectations in some areas, which is evident in the results that our banking and insurance sectors achieved."

He added: "In 2019, our banking operations reported positive growth in revenue and profits, while our insurance activities increased in profit and gross written premiums. We remain cautious about 2020, as we closely monitor the developments brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our businesses are carefully evaluating the situation and taking measures to minimize its impact, while putting in place courses of action in order to ensure readiness once the pandemic has subsided."



Faisal Al-Ayyar



WASHINGTON, DC: US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell gives a press briefing after the surprise announcement the FED will cut interest rates in Washington, DC. —AFP

Small business lending program near launch: Fed

WASHINGTON: The US central bank's program to help smaller businesses will roll out its first loans in coming days aimed at preserving jobs, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said Friday. Soon after the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world's largest economy, the Fed unveiled the Main Street Lending Program along with a host of other facilities to help support businesses.

But since early April, the central bank has expanded and modified the terms after receiving thousands of letters from lenders and potential borrowers. The facility aims to help ease financial strains of companies too big for the government's Paycheck Protection Program, which is targeted at firms with under 500 employees, but not big enough to have ready access to financial markets.

"This was for the companies that are in the middle," Powell said during an online forum. "It is very challenging because it's an extraordinarily diverse space, the credit needs of different kinds of companies in different industries are extraordinarily diverse." But after the modifications, "We're days away from making our first loans in Main Street," he said in the event hosted by Princeton University. He said the key aim is to help prevent more Americans from losing their jobs. "Everything we do is focused on creating an environment in which those people will have their best chance to keep their job or get a new job," Powell said. "That is the point of this exercise."

Government data on jobless benefits show more than 40 million workers have lost their jobs at least temporarily since mid-March when the lockdowns were imposed to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The unemployment rate spiked to 14.7 percent in April, and is expected to move higher still. The Main Street program offers four-year loans ranging from \$500,000 to \$200 million or more for the larger firms. —AFP

S Africa allows air travel for businesses

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa will allow domestic air travel for business purposes only from June 1 as the country further eases coronavirus lockdown regulations, the transport minister said on Saturday.

The country has been largely shut since a nationwide lockdown began in late March. South Africa has reported 29,240 cases of the new coronavirus, with 611 deaths. From next month, Africa's most industrialized economy will allow most economic sectors including mining and manufacturing to fully resume operations and has also allowed the sale of alcohol but for home consumption.

"As the country moves to level 3, with more industries resuming operations, learners returning to school, the transport sector must be responsive to enable mobility of both workers and learners," Minister of Transport Fikile Mbalula said in a televised briefing.

"In doing so, we must maintain a delicate balance between enabling mobility and arresting the spread of the virus." The resumption of domestic flights will be rolled out in three phases, with only four airports allowed to be opened under phase one, he added.

Separately, in an earlier briefing, the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture Nathi Mthethwa said professional teams and individual athletes who participate in contact and non-contact sport, including rugby and football can start training from Monday under strict social distancing rules.

He said it was important for all training to resume so that athletes could stay in shape for when contact sports resume matches. The regulations will also allow professional non-contact sports to host sports events without spectators. —Reuters

Tesla performance opens door to Musk payday

NEW YORK: Tesla has hit financial marks that let its colorful chief executive Elon Musk reap the first portion of a multi-billion dollar compensation package, the electric car maker said.

Musk has foregone a base salary in exchange for a shot at a fortune in deeply discounted Tesla shares, and is eligible for the first batch based on company performance, according to a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission. "In particular, 2019 was a record-setting year for Tesla's annual revenues, year-end cash balance, vehicle production and deliveries, and energy storage deployment," Tesla's board said in the filing.

Tesla shareholders will be asked to endorse the compensation at an annual meeting of investors in early July. "One of the 12 tranches under this award has vested and become exercisable," the board said.

Musk's compensation package announced two years ago promises to reward him with 20.3 million Tesla shares, equivalent to some \$56 billion, over the course of a decade if the company reaches certain financial and market performance goals.

There are twelve market capitalization thresholds to be crossed, the highest being a company value of \$650 billion by the year 2028. Tesla has passed the first threshold of reaching \$20 billion in revenue and a

Investors eye discretionary companies

NEW YORK: Investors are taking a closer look at the market's consumer discretionary companies as a reopening US economy fuels hopes of a turnaround for some of the sector's hardest-hit names.

Many companies in the sector have been battered by the country-wide coronavirus-fueled lockdowns that have weighed on growth and damaged retail spending over the last several months, though the stocks of a few, like Amazon, have soared. A gradual lifting of lockdowns in some states has stirred hopes for a bounce back for the retailers that make up much of the sector.

Some investors, however, say it may be months before consumers return to their previous shopping habits, making it unlikely that the companies will see a pickup in revenues in the near term.

Firms ranging from middle-income retailers such as Gap Inc and American Eagle Outfitters Inc to high-end destinations like Tiffany & Co and Vail Resorts Inc are expected to report results in the week ahead.

"This particular group is full of landmines," said Jamie Cox, managing partner for Harris Financial Group. "There is not going to be a lot of investor follow-through until we get some certainty with what future revenue prospects are going to be."

Shares of the Gap, for instance, are down 43 percent for the year to date. A recession that persists through the fourth quarter of this year would reduce the company's revenues by 40 percent, according to a note by research firm Trefis.

Next Friday's US jobs report is expected to show



HAWTHORNE: Tesla CEO Elon Musk speaks during the unveiling of the new Tesla Model Y in Hawthorne, California.—AFP

market value of \$100 billion, according to the filing.

Musk is therefore eligible to buy 1.69 million Tesla shares for \$350.02 each, according to the compensation scheme. Tesla shares were trading at \$805.81 at the close of market on Thursday, meaning the discount would amount to nearly \$775 million.

Musk would have to hold onto any shares for at least five years, according to the filing. The compensation package for Musk, who founded Tesla and built it into the leading electric car maker, is being challenged in court by a shareholder who accuses the board of having failed in its duties.

that the unemployment rate rose to 19.8 percent in May, smashing April's record 14.7 percent, according to a Reuters poll. Non-farm payrolls are expected to drop by 7.4 million, adding to the 20.5 million jobs lost the previous month. Cox is focusing on dominant players such as Amazon.com Inc, Walmart Inc and Target Corp, which have a mix of essential items such as groceries as well as electronics and games that can appeal to customers who may face extended lockdowns during a potential second wave of the virus.

Overall, retail companies in the S&P 500 are up 12.9 percent for the year to date, a gain powered largely by Amazon's 31 percent rally. Apparel companies, by comparison, are down 16.2 percent over the same time.

Brian Jacobsen, senior investment strategist for the Wells Fargo Asset Management Multi-Asset Solutions team, says retail companies will likely show rising expenses over the next several quarters due to items like more frequent sanitation of stores and technology purchases aimed at increasing the productivity of employees working from home.

"It's really going to be a challenge to get a clear read of the direction for quite a while," he said. Despite those headwinds, investors may still gravitate toward companies that are able either to tap the capital markets for funds or draw from their financial reserves, said Randy Frederick, vice president of trading and derivatives with the Schwab Center for Financial Research.

Retailers such as J Crew and JC Penney have already filed for bankruptcy due in part to the coronavirus pandemic, leaving more opportunity for companies that are able to survive and grab market share, said Frederick. "You're getting set up for potential upside surprises," he said. "You may take a step back and look at this and say, 'No matter how awful these numbers may be, at least they're still in business.'" — Reuters



In this file photo a man passes the building before the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Wall Street in New York City. —AFP

Chile and Peru secure credit lines from IMF

WASHINGTON: The IMF approved a two-year \$24 billion credit line for Chile on Friday as the South American nation battles the growing impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The announcement came a day after Peru secured a two-year, \$11 billion credit line, and as Latin America becomes a growing hotspot for COVID-19. The Flexible Credit Line is a renewable funding mechanism granted to countries with strong economic policy track records, and Chile is only the fifth country to receive one. Along with Peru, Mexico and Colombia currently have FCLs in place.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva praised Chile for its "very strong fundamentals ... and track record of implementing prudent macroeconomic policies" that have helped the country to weather the economic shocks so far. However, "Chile's open economy is exposed to substantial external risks as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, including a significant deterioration in global demand for Chilean exports, a sharp decline or reversal of capital inflows toward emerging markets, and an abrupt tightening of global financial conditions," she said in a statement.

The IMF has ramped up lending and rolled out a series of new financing tools to help countries deal with the pandemic, which is expected to cause the worst global economic slowdown since the Great Depression.

The backstop should help to boost market confidence and Santiago intends to treat the credit line as "precautionary and temporary," and exit the backstop after 24 months, Georgieva said. Peru likewise sees the program as precautionary and will consider exiting once the crisis has passed and "the insurance provided by an FCL arrangement would no longer be necessary."

The IMF chief also praised Lima's "very strong policy and institutional frameworks" which, she said, "have helped it achieve impressive macroeconomic outcomes and reduce vulnerabilities." However, "The COVID-19 shock poses an extraordinary challenge, which is pushing the Peruvian economy into a recession," she said in a statement. "The authorities have responded decisively by putting in place stringent containment measures and a large policy package to limit the socio-economic fallout."

The country has seen a surge in cases this week, with the death toll topping 4,000. —AFP

Virus forces Brits to become own dentists

SALISBURY, UK: When Dominic Price's dentist told him in late March to replace a lost filling himself, the Briton was left in disbelief.

"But this is the situation we're in," Price acknowledged, one of many in the UK forced to play dentist during the pandemic as the country's surgeries shuttered. That is set to change when they reopen early next month but, for many, the damage has already been done.

"Two days into the lockdown and I was chewing one of the children's sweets... and suddenly felt a hard bit in my mouth and I think I pretty instantly knew," Price recalled.

His tooth implant had gone, and he was quickly on the phone to his dentist. "I thought they might have some sort of system running, but my suspicions were confirmed and there (was) no way they can see anyone."

Instead, Price learnt that emergency dental services were restricted to those needing an extraction and he was told to go online and buy a kit to fill the cavity temporarily himself. "I couldn't quite believe the dentist was saying you need to do your own dentistry," he admitted.

When the kit arrived at Price's home in Salisbury in southern England, his wife Susie sprang into action.

"It is easy to use and it's not too scary or anything," she said. "But it does say on the back, 'go to your dentist within 48 hours of using this' and that's just not an option at the moment."

'DIY dentistry'

The lack of dental care in Britain during its lockdown, introduced on March 23, is just one health-care area disrupted, with treatments for various conditions and illnesses avoided, cancelled or delayed. Some serious diseases such as cancer might be detected or treated later than usual, adding to Britain's already horrific death toll from the pandemic. The country has the world's second-highest tally of fatalities attributed to the virus,

behind only the United States.

However, a review this week by the Financial Times found globally it had the worst rate of excess deaths—how many more people have died in total than would normally be expected. "Increasingly patients have struggled to get access to those dentists, and even urgent dental centers, and they've resorted to doing DIY dentistry which is really scary," said Len D'Cruz, of the British Dental Association (BDA).

"We've kind of turned ourselves from a wealthy 21st century nation into Victorian-type dentistry where patients are doing their own things."

Patience needed

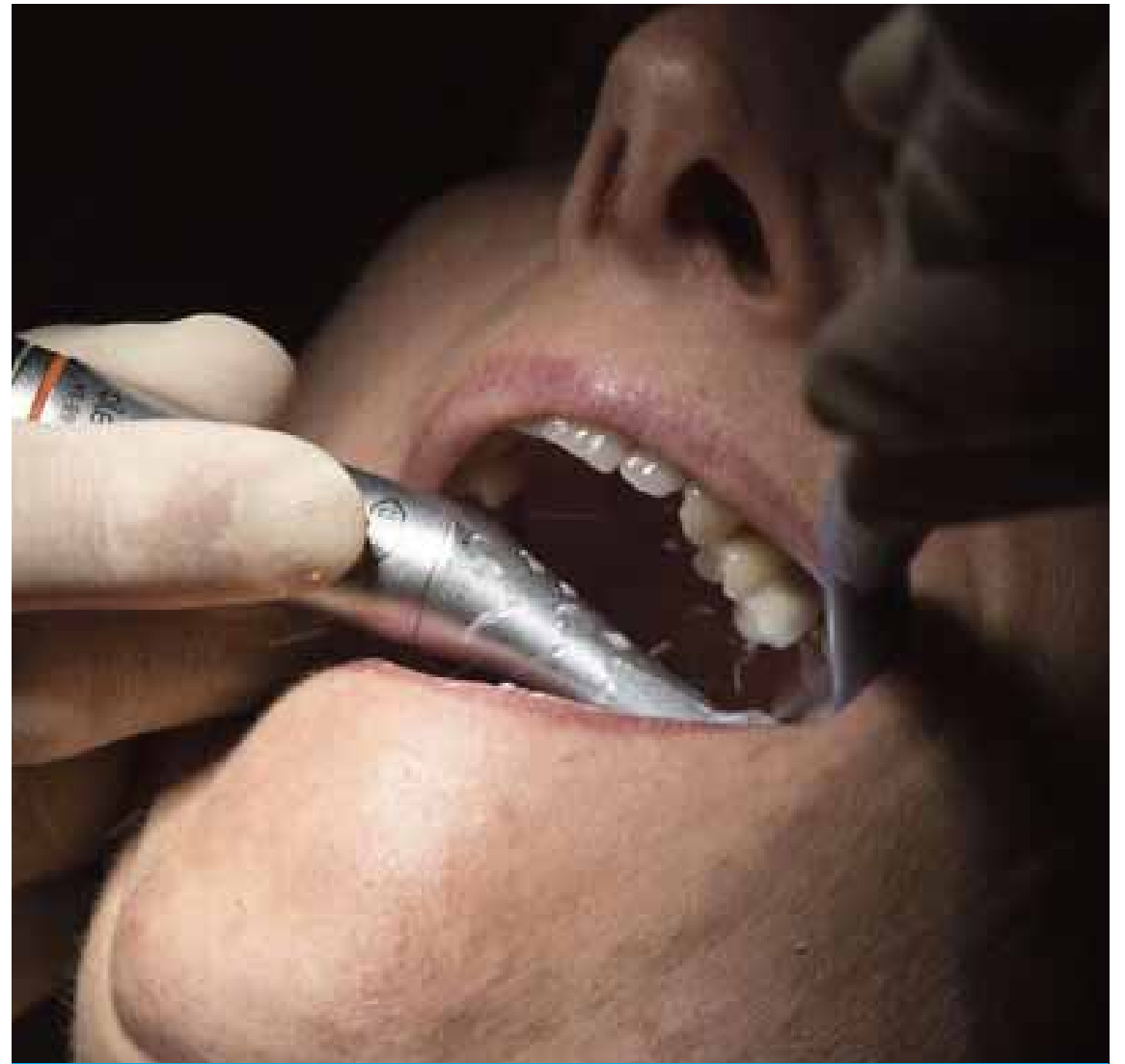
After more than two months, dental surgeries and other medical facilities will be allowed to reopen from June 8. However, they will need to implement the necessary infection prevention and control requirements, including personal protective equipment (PPE).

The BDA welcomed the plans, but warned control measures and social distancing could reduce capacity by up to two thirds. The availability of PPE could also vary among practices and limit the number of appointments possible, the dental trade union added.

"Dentists will be keen to start providing care as soon as safely possible, but we will need everyone to be patient as practices get up and running," said BDA chair Mick Armstrong. "Dentist can open their doors but won't be able to provide a full range of care without the necessary kit."

A spokesperson for the health ministry said it was "working around the clock" to ensure frontline healthcare staff, including those at 500 state-run urgent dental centers, had PPE.

"Dentistry is on the supply priority list and we have established new distribution routes for the sector to ensure continuity of supply across all urgent dental care centers." — AFP



A dentist wearing protective equipment treats a patient in Guebwiller, eastern France. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

These services include, but are not limited to, the below:

- Bone fractures and traumas
- Sports injuries
- Spine surgeries
- Arthroplasty surgeries and revisions
- Foot and ankle surgeries
- Limb deformities
- Pelvic fractures
- Hand surgeries



مستشفى طيبة
TAIBA HOSPITAL

1808088 taibahospital.com
@taibahospital

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY



Dr. Emad Selim
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Ahmed Emira
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Ibrahim Abed
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Mohab Al-Kilani
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Mohammad Shaheen
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Mohammad Arab
Orthopedic Surgeon

مستشفى طيبة
TAIBA HOSPITAL

1808088 taibahospital.com
@taibahospital

Opthalmology Services

Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally
Senior Registrar

Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid
Consultant

Dr. Abeer Khattab
Specialist

Follow Us On Social Media
@hadiclinic

Tel: 1828282
Whatsapp Us
+965-6000 2184

Cataract Surgery **Glaucoma** **Retina** **General Ophthalmology** **Follow-Up All Treatments**

To advertise on this Page



Call: 24833199 ext:101,102

To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617
or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

WELCOME

Dr. Tamam Abou Ali
Consultant ENT, Head & Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon.

Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
Snoring and OSAP Surgery
Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
Salivary gland and parotid surgery
Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
Micro laryngeal surgery

1 888 883
www.qmc-kuwait.com

Qmckuwait

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!



Dr. Kiran Turaka
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Zareena Zahir
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Hasan Khan
Senior Cardiologist



Dr. P. Seshendra Nath
Orthopedic Consultant (AUSTRIA)
Specialized in Neck, Shoulder
Hip and Knee



50721507
24551555
www.exircenterkw.com

EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER
Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES

Tel: 24568857 / 24568859 info@exircenterkw.com www.exircenterkw.com

/exircenterkw

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally Invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally Invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolaryngology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

@Malhajry

DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

- o Dermatology board certified.
- o Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- o Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- o Referee reviewer of International journal of Dermatology.

SPECIALIZED IN:

- o Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- o Laser Treatments.
- o Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- o Body & Face Contouring.
- o Injectable Fillers & Botox.

SHARQ, Ahmad Alalaber st., Building 88, Floor 13.
Tel.: (+965) 22060777
@DrFahadmed, @Renovabbb, @dardonabb
Email: drfahadmed@beautybeyond.com.kw
www.beautybeyond.com.kw

BEAUTY & BEYOND

To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102
or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617
or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta
at Dar Al Shifa hospital

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555

daralshifa

DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant Interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

- 1-Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4-Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

السالمية، شارع البلاج، تليفون: 1881122

Dr. Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Consultant, Laryngologist

- ◆ Kuwait Board of Otolaryngology.
- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship, McGill University- Canada.
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck surgery.
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association.
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society.
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.

Experienced In:

- Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Diagnosis and treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- Myringotomy and ventilation tube insertion.
- Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- Diagnosis and treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- Tympanoplasty.
- Diagnosis and treatment of vertigo.
- Thyroid surgery
- Diagnosis and treatment of snoring.

2536 0000
www.royalehayat.com

مستشفى زوال الحياه
ROYALE HAYAT HOSPITAL

IC
INTERNATIONAL CLINIC
السالمية، شارع البلاج، تليفون: 1881122

American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant

http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677**

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery – Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo – Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo – Rectal Surgeon

مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555

daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American
Board in Pediatrics-Canadian
Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates – Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com **Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228**

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

‘Cook Off’: The Zimbabwe film that defied all odds to reach Netflix

“Seeing myself on Netflix, I have to punch myself every day. Like, is that really me?” asked actress Tendai Chitima, star of the first Zimbabwean feature film acquired by the streaming pioneer. “Cook Off” was shot in 2017, just months before the fall of Zimbabwe’s despotic ex-president Robert Mugabe, whose iron-fisted rule brought the economy to its knees. The romantic comedy had a meagre starting budget of just \$8,000. “It was not like a luxury shoot where you have your own trailer and you are big on wine,” said 29-year-old Chitima, sparkly eyed as she recalled the experience from her parent’s house in Johannesburg, South Africa. “Everything was very minimalistic. We had to get things right the first time or the second time.”

Chitima plays main character Anesu, a single mother too busy making ends meet to pursue her passion for food... until her son and grand-mother sign her up for a reality cooking contest. For the Zimbabwean debutante, making it onto Netflix was a “miracle” given the filming conditions. Most of

“Cook Off” was shot on the set of Zimbabwe’s version of “Top Chef”, which airs on public broadcaster ZBC. “We used the costumes, the set, the cooking pots of Battle of the chefs,” confessed director Tomas Brickhill, referring to a programme now no longer airing. “Without that there would not have been any movie.”

Chitima admitted that none of the cast or crew had yet been paid for their work. Their budget barely covered food for the crew while on set. “At the time there was restriction on (cash) withdrawals,” Brickhill recalled. “Every day we had to source cash,” he said in an interview with AFP, adding that hard to get hold of notes were selling for more than their value on the black market. The daily limit was \$20 (18 euros) — not even enough for bottled water in a country crippled by hyper-inflation. “Other people think we are completely crazy,” he chuckled. “But we have been dealing with it for so long, that is normal for us.” With no running water on set and little cash to spare, the “Cook Off” crew resorted to drinking boiled water from a garden tap.



Tendai Chitima, the lead actress in the Zimbabwean film *Cook Off*, poses for a portrait at her home in Sandton. — AFP

Tear gas

The first days of shooting were also constantly disrupted by power cuts—a regular occurrence—forcing the team to stretch their paltry budget and hire a generator. One day, one of the actresses found herself

choked up in a cloud of tear gas fired to disperse an anti-government protest. “She called and said: ‘I can still come but I am crying and I don’t know if I am going to be able to act because I don’t have a crying scene,’” said Brickhill, smiling at the memory. Despite the challenges, “Cook Off” did not lose its sparkle and “feel good” effect. “Previously I was acting in a lot of TV shows in which my role as a Zimbabwean was either a maid, a prostitute, or I was being trafficked,” said Chitima, who had previously featured only in shorter productions.

“A role in which I could play an empowered character pursuing what she wanted was for me a great opportunity.” “The movie shows the other side of our story,” she added. “That we are resilient and have dreams.” Chitima hoped to eventually star in big budget productions. Meanwhile, the crew and the cast are still awaiting their cheques, after agreeing to deferred payments.—AFP



In this file photo taken on March 29, 1993, US actor Clint Eastwood (center) holds up his two Oscars at the 65th Annual Academy Awards, which he won for Best Director and Best Picture for “Unforgiven.”

Maybe a few movies more?

Clint Eastwood turns 90

Movie legend Clint Eastwood turns 90 on Sunday, but don’t count on the famously stoic and hard-working star of “A Fistful of Dollars” and “Dirty Harry” hanging up his cowboy boots just yet. The multiple Oscar-winning actor-turned-director, who churned out nine films in his 80s, has expressed no desire to retire ahead of the milestone—and in any case, he’s not a fan of birthdays. “We’re just going to do a family thing—very, very calm, very mellow,” his 34-year-old actor son Scott told “Access Hollywood.” “We’ll sneak a cake in there, definitely. He probably won’t like it.”



In this file photo Clint Eastwood poses with the Best Director and Best Motion Picture at the Kodak Theater in Hollywood, California, 27 February, 2005, during the 77th Academy Awards.—AFP photos

Eastwood, born in 1930, has enjoyed a career spanning seven decades and more than 50 films. He last trod the Hollywood red carpet as recently as November, for his Olympic bombing biopic “Richard Jewell.” It was released to mixed reviews—and sparked a backlash over its fictional depiction of a real-life female journalist trading sex for FBI secrets. But Eastwood’s career has weathered greater controversy, from accusations of excessive violence in the spaghetti Western “Dollars” trilogy, fascism in “Dirty Harry” and warmongering in “American Sniper,” to his portrayal of racism in “Gran Torino.”

As well as Oscars for “Unforgiven” and “Million Dollar Baby,” and a lifetime achievement Palme d’Or from the Cannes festival, Eastwood’s back catalog also contains a few critically savaged flops. “I would like to think it rolls off his back... he’s gotten beat up along the way pretty regularly,” Variety senior vice president Tim Gray told AFP. “I think he’s going to keep working as long as he can... he seems to have a creative drive that keeps him going.”

‘Just wants to work’

Known on the Hollywood circuit as polite but reticent as far as small talk or personal details, Eastwood has hinted at future projects, but had not yet confirmed any plans before the coronavirus pandemic shut down all productions in March. In a January interview with Britain’s ITV, Eastwood indicated he was still enjoying plying his trade. “I like doing it, it’s nice to be able to have a paying job,” he told “This Morning.” “I like being in films, I like making films and I started directing films because I thought one day I’m going to look up on screen and say, ‘That’s enough, Eastwood—you’d better do something else.’”

In other interviews, he has expressed confusion as to why luminaries such as Billy Wilder and Frank Capra quit the business at a younger age, and spoken of his desire to keep working as long as he finds projects that are “worth studying.” Despite previously announcing his retirement from acting after 2008’s “Gran Torino,” Eastwood returned in front of camera four years later in “Trouble with the Curve,” and again in 2018’s “The Mule.” “He’s pretty unpredictable,” said Gray, adding: “I get the feeling now, he does what he wants to do.” As well as continuing to oversee his Malpaso Productions, Eastwood—a former mayor of Carmel, California—remains politically engaged, endorsing Michael Bloomberg’s doomed presidential run earlier this year. And as a father of eight children and a grandfather many times over, Eastwood will likely have his hands full Sunday—even if he isn’t asking anyone to “make my day.” “He probably won’t even want us to acknowledge it. He hates his birthday,” daughter Alison told Closer late last year. “I think he just wants to work and enjoy his life but I don’t think he wants to celebrate it... So we’ll see.”—AFP

Julianne Hough and Brooks Laich have split

The couple - who have been quarantining separately amidst the coronavirus lockdown - have confirmed their marriage has come to an end after three years together. In a statement, they said: “We have lovingly and carefully taken the time we have needed to arrive at our decision to separate. We share an abundance of love and respect for one another and will continue to lead with our hearts from that place. We kindly request your compassion and respect for our privacy moving forward.” In the current lockdown, Brooks has been spending time in Idaho whilst Julianne has remained in California.



Julianne Hough and Brooks Laich

Speaking about their time apart, Julianne recently admitted she was having a “magical” time on her own. She said: “I’m really enjoying this time where I can connect to what’s really important in my life. Being on tour for three months and travelling and starting a business ... it’s a lot. So to be able to be home, and stop and pause, and look inward, and connect back to myself has been glorious. I’ve been on my own. My husband is in Idaho doing lots of yard work ... and so we’re kind of doing our separate things right now. But it’s really been a magical time.”

Whilst ice hockey player Brooks Laich added: “There’s a part of me that enjoys isolation and there’s a part of me that just gets drained when I’m around too many people. [His husky] Koda is awesome. I’m up in Idaho, I’m at his house in Idaho. I spend all day outside. I have 10-and-a-half acres here.

“Our property is pretty big. And I’ve just been a mass cleaning of it, everything. Building some rock walls, chainsawing down some trees, clearing brush, you name it.”—BangShowbiz



In this file photo US singer Taylor Swift arrives for Universal Pictures’ world premiere of “Cats” at Alice Tully Hall in New York City. — AFP

Taylor Swift

says Trump ‘stoking fires of white supremacy’

Pop icon Taylor Swift hit out at Donald Trump on Friday after the US president suggested law enforcement might shoot protesters angry over the killing of a black man by Minneapolis police. “After stoking the fires of white supremacy and racism your entire presidency, you have the nerve to feign moral superiority before threatening violence?” Swift wrote on Twitter, where she has 86 million followers. She cited Trump’s controversial tweet in which he said, “When the looting starts, the shooting starts,” before threatening: “We will vote you out in November. @realDonaldTrump.” Trump sparked controversy with a late-night tweet on violent anti-police protests in Minneapolis, when he called protesters “THUGS” and warned of military intervention.

Twitter took the unprecedented step of hiding the tweet because it violated the platform’s rules against “glorifying violence.” Hundreds of troops were deployed to the streets of Minneapolis and St. Paul on Friday after a third night of rioting over police brutality against African Americans. The demonstrators are outraged over the videotaped death of George Floyd, 46, while handcuffed on the ground and in custody of Minneapolis police on Monday. He died after an officer knelt on his neck for more than five minutes. In the past few years Swift has opened up about politics after initially struggling to control her own voice as an artist who found massive fame at a young age.—AFP

Netflix acquires Hollywood’s historic Egyptian Theatre

Netflix completed its purchase of Hollywood’s historic Egyptian Theatre on Friday, helping to confirm the streaming giant’s newfound central position in the movie industry. The Los Angeles theater built in 1922 claims to have hosted Hollywood’s first ever movie premiere—“Robin Hood”—and will be used by Netflix for movie premieres as well as screenings and special events. “The Egyptian Theatre is an incredible part of Hollywood history and has been treasured by the Los Angeles film community for nearly a century,” said Netflix film head Scott Stuber in a statement confirming the deal.

Netflix, which did not reveal the size of its investment, will run the venue jointly with the nonprofit American Cinematheque, which bought the dilapidated theater from city officials in 1996 and renovated it two years later. The Egyptian Theatre’s landmark 1922 premiere of “Robin Hood” saw Charlie Chaplin and movie mogul Cecil B. DeMille join the film’s star Douglas Fairbanks and his wife Mary Pickford at the venue on Hollywood Boulevard. It would later host premieres of other key silent movies from Hollywood’s famed Golden Age, such as “The Gold Rush” and “The Ten Commandments.”

Netflix has spent billions in recent years to lure the industry’s top filmmaking talent, upstaging traditional Tinseltown studios with prestigious titles including “Roma” and “The Irishman.” Last year the streaming giant announced it would use New York’s historic Paris theater, which had been shuttered months earlier, for special events and screenings. The investments have been widely seen as a shot across the bows in Netflix’s battle with major movie theater chains and older Hollywood studios. Traditionally the waiting period before movies appear online agreed upon by studios and major theater chains is 90 days, but Netflix and other streaming giants have been running their movies in select theaters for briefer windows.

The Oscars and other major award shows require films in contention run in designated theaters for a certain period of time, although many have temporarily relaxed their rules this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. Hollywood trade IndieWire reported this week that Netflix will skip traditional major movie festivals this year such as Venice, Toronto and New York—should they take place—preferring to premiere its titles at independent venues. “Love for film is inseparable from L.A.’s history and identity,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. “We are working toward the day when audiences can return to theaters—and this extraordinary partnership will preserve an important piece of our cultural heritage that can be shared for years to come.”—AFP



In this file photo the sign of Grauman’s Egyptian Theater on Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood on April 15, 2019.—AFP

Grimes is legally selling a part of her soul in an auction

The 32-year-old singer - who welcomed her and Elon Musk’s son X Æ A-Xii earlier this month - has put up a legal document for sale as part of her online art exhibition, with bids starting at \$10 million to own a piece of her soul. She explained: “I didn’t want anyone to buy it, so I said we should just make it \$10 million and then it probably won’t sell ...” “The deeper we got with it, the more philosophically interesting it became. Also, I really wanted to collaborate with my lawyer on art. The idea of fantastical art in the form of legal documents just seems very intriguing to me.”

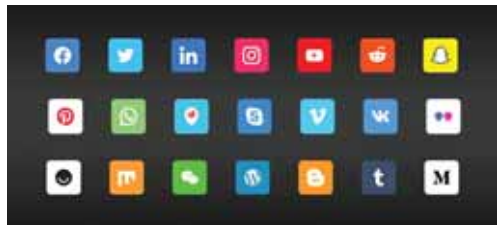
Elsewhere for sale includes a print illustration titled ‘Seldon Crisis’, which has been listed for \$500 in the auction. The ‘You’ll Miss Me When I’m Not Around’ singer also admitted she has been doing fine art for a long time, way before she even started songwriting and penning hit tracks. Of her art, she told Bloomberg: “I made art 10, 12 years before I ever touched a keyboard. I see myself as a visual artist first and foremost, and I’ve always felt strange that people know me for music.” —BangShowbiz

Going viral: the dark online gags soothing youthful angst

Climate change, debt, mental health struggles and now the coronavirus: life is no laughing matter. But for under-30s the best way to stay sane is often to wisecrack. "We joke that we post because none of us can afford therapy," says Chuck Wentzell, 26, a member of Twitter group chats where gallows humour is the order of the day. "Posting about it or making the jokes about it makes it feel somehow less real but also more manageable," the high school science teacher from New Haven, Connecticut, tells AFP.

The tone of the humour isn't to everyone's taste—some may find it a little on the nail, and not exactly laugh-out-loud funny. But for younger social media users, a gag that others could find flippant is sometimes a howl of frustration over the powerlessness of a generation unable to jam on the brakes in a world heading for the cliff edge. These callow comics have been particularly prolific during the pandemic, which has infected six million people, killing 360,000 and laying waste to the global economy. "Guys will stand 5'8" from you and call it six feet," tweeted a woman in New York, taking a sideways look at social distancing—and men's tendency to exaggerate their physical attributes.

Other humorists focus on the absurdity of the business-as-usual approach to a worldwide crisis. "People who are quarantining in jeans: what are you trying to prove?" tweeted New York-based writer @sarafcarter. Another meme of uncertain provenance, but widely-shared among millennials, displays the caption: "Looking at the map for some weekend travel ideas." The image underneath is not of some faraway tropical paradise, but a floor plan of a three-room apartment. The jokes, says academic Peter McGraw, are largely the product of "psychological distancing"—a mental retreat that gives the keyboard comedian the perspective to see through life's ridiculousness.



Humour "has this interrupting feedback loop," the behavioural economist and head of the Humour Research Lab at the University of Colorado Boulder told AFP. For McGraw, a joke "makes the moment more bearable, the bearable moment makes the joke more likely, and so on." Like meditating or stress-cleaning your apartment, humour is "a way to kind of give yourself a sense of control in a world that seems uncontrollable."

Embracing absurdity

Society has long turned to grim humour in dark times, of course, in political cartoons, comedy clubs, topical TV shows and numerous other forms. But the new generation of morose mirth-makers has been able to take gallows humour out of smoke-filled bars and into the pantheon of internet virality (pun intended). And as 2020 grows increasingly unpredictable and absurd, the onslaught of boundary-pushing irreverence has intensified. In January, budding wits flooded social media with jokes about getting conscripted for World War III, after the death of top Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani in a US airstrike. "Really looking forward to dying in the Strait of Hormuz just so Trump can get reelected," Nick Golden, 26, quipped in a now-deleted Facebook post, just after the news of Soleimani's death broke.

Golden, a government employee in Haverhill, Massachusetts, knew it was unlikely that the government would actually start drafting conscripts. But for young men turning 18, the reality of even having to be on a register from which they could be plucked for battle brings with it the ever-present, low-level thrum of existential angst. Joking, then, "is the only way to cope," says Golden. "We have no choice but to indulge in the absurdity." A key element of the jokes is that they stem from what McGraw, the academic, calls "benign violations." The idea is that a situation can be invidious—a violation of the norm—without actually doing you much harm. A joke acknowledges the fear but also points out its absurdity.

And that, says McGraw, is why much of the coronavirus humour focuses on the banal, ridiculous but essentially harmless aspects of life under lockdown, such as the annoyance of people hoarding toilet paper. Far less common are jokes about catching the virus or the pending global economic recession. "It might be too big a violation right now," McGraw said.

'OK to laugh'

Ultimately, the weird memes and the inappropriate jokes are a way for younger people to express their frustration with the world at large. By poking fun at problems, people achieve a sense of control, deflating their crisis into something less overwhelming. "One of the things that is incredible about the human condition is our ability to find moments of levity, even in the worst situations," said McGraw. "The fact that people are making jokes is a good sign, because it means that they're being connected."

Back in New Haven, science teacher Wentzell couldn't agree more. "If it's okay to laugh at something, then it's not so serious that it's the end of the world, right this second," he said. And if nothing else, "it's so much more comforting to be with 50 other people also screaming that than to be the only person yelling on the street that the world's about to end."—AFP



This photograph shows an aerial view of Chateau Chenonceaux on the River Cher, some 30kms east of Tours.



This file photo shows the Castle of Chenonceau, in Chenonceaux, Central France. — AFP photos



In this file photo tourists visit the Castle of Chenonceau, in Chenonceaux, Central France.

TIMID REOPENING FOR FRANCE'S LOIRE VALLEY CHATEAUS

Staff far outnumbered visitors to the elegant Chenonceau castle in France's Loire Valley as it reopened on Saturday with meticulously prepared safeguards against the coronavirus. The Renaissance jewel, which in a normal year attracts upwards of a million visitors, could not justify reopening on financial grounds until Parisians are again allowed to travel beyond a 100-kilometre (60 mile) radius from home, communications director Caroline Darrasse told AFP. But reopening a few days early—the relaxation takes effect on Tuesday—gave the site a chance to test the precautions the staff have put in place, Darrasse noted.

A strict one-way route has been marked out inside the castle, and parts that risk crowding were either cordoned off or restricted to small numbers at a time—such as the impressive kitchens on the lower level. "It's her first chateau," grinned Lucile Daron Van Gennep, 32, whose eight-month-old daughter was strapped to her front. She and her 35-year-old husband Coenraad had the castle's gallery spanning the Cher river—where Catherine de Medici once threw sumptuous balls—all to themselves. "It's a nice surprise," Lucile said, speaking from behind her obligatory face mask. The couple live in Saumur, just within the 100-km limit. Many smaller sites such as the Chateau d'Usse, famous as the purported backdrop of the Sleeping Beauty fable, reopened at the very start of France's deconfinement on



This file photo shows the reproduction of the apothecary of France's queen Catherine de Medici composed of more than 500 vials, pots and bottle at the Castle of Chenonceau, central France.

May 11. In the Renaissance town of Amboise, the Clos Luce, where Leonardo da Vinci spent the last three years of his life—the 500th anniversary of his death was last year—reopened on May 20.

'Intelligently done'

"We did all we could to reassure people" of the safety of visiting the imposing manor in the heights of the town, director Francois Saint Bris told AFP on Friday. "It's intelligently done." The lockdown

cost the site around one million euros (\$1.1 million) in lost revenues per month, with outgoings totalling around 250,000 euros, he said. On Friday however, visitors to the site were few and far between. Similarly, things were slow at another early bird, the royal fortress of Chinon, where the 17-year-old Joan of Arc had a pivotal meeting with Charles VII in 1429.

Marie-Eve Scheffer, the curator of the fortress, said the four-day Ascension weekend, normally the busiest of the year, drew some 450 visitors, compared

with a normal flow of around 3,800. "We expect a bigger return next weekend," Scheffer told AFP by telephone. Historian Stephane Bern, who spearheaded a regional pressure campaign to persuade French President Emmanuel Macron to allow the chateaus to start welcoming visitors again, urged patience. "It will take off again," he told AFP. "It's a matter of priming the pump, kickstarting the machine."

Bern, a champion of France's cultural and historical heritage who is a frequent radio host and television presenter, noted that as long as the sites cannot reopen their eateries and gift shops, visiting them is "less attractive". The doyen of the region that was once the playground of French kings—the sprawling Chambord castle—will not reopen until next Friday. Tourism accounts for 15 percent of the Loire Valley region's economy, compared with nine percent nationally. The sector normally brings in some 2.9 billion euros annually. The Loire Valley—collectively a World Heritage site—jostles with Paris and Provence as a top French tourist destination, and is well positioned to edge out the French capital as the country emerges from lockdown. At Chenonceau, one attraction has remained a constant throughout the confinement: a bucolic picnic area along the castle's canal, where a couple dozen visitors were enjoying lunch on Saturday.—AFP

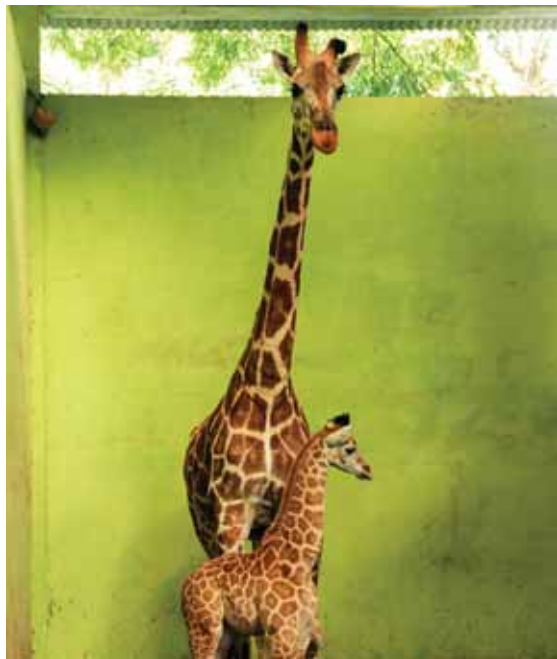
Italy unearths Roman mosaic after century long hunt Negrar

Archaeologists have discovered an exquisitely preserved Roman mosaic under a vineyard in northern Italy after a century of searching, the local mayor said on Thursday. The brightly coloured geometric design, partly unearthed outside Negrar di Valpolicella near Verona, is thought to have been part of a villa archaeologists first started looking for in 1922. "When I saw the mosaic it was very impressive because of the quality, the well-preserved colours, the preservation of the mosaic itself," mayor Roberto Grison told AFP.

Locals have known for years there were Roman artefacts in their part of the famous wine region, a survey and some initial digging a century ago hinted at what lay beneath—and the area of the discovery is called Villa, said Grison. But until now there had not been any big finds. Verona municipal archaeologist Gianni de Zuccato says the moment they came across the red, brown, grey and white mosaic deep underground was "like entering a time machine".—AFP



This photo taken on May 20, 2020 and handout on May 28, 2020 by the Superintendence of Fine Arts and Landscape of Verona, Rovigo and Vicenza shows an archaeologist uncovering an ancient Roman mosaic floor discovered under vines in Negrar, near Verona.—AFP



This handout picture shows a baby giraffe, which was born on April 9 and named "Corona", standing with its mother at the Bali Safari Park in Gianyar on the Indonesian resort island of Bali.—AFP

Bali zoo's newborn baby giraffe named Corona

Bali zoo has named a baby giraffe Corona in honour of her birth during the global pandemic. The calf was born on April 9 to mother Sophie and father Matadi, joining two other siblings at Bali Safari Park on the Indonesian holiday island. A video released by the zoo showed the calf being born in a small enclosure.

She was born during the COVID-19 pandemic so the environment minister... named her Corona," said zoo spokesman Anak Agung Ngurah Alit Sujana. "Corona is healthy and is still breastfeeding. We'll keep her under observation for three months." Bali Safari Park has been closed to visitors since late March as part of efforts to stem the spread of coronavirus infections.—AFP



In this file photo taken on April 10, 2020, monkeys eat fruits on a street during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 coronavirus in New Delhi. — AFP

Indian monkeys snatch coronavirus samples

Monkeys mobbed an Indian health worker and made off with coronavirus test blood samples, spreading fears that the stealing simians could spread the pandemic in the local area. Indian authorities often have to grapple with primates snatching food and even mobile phones. After making off with the three samples earlier this week in Meerut, near the capital New Delhi, the monkeys scampered up nearby trees and one then tried to chew its plunder.

The sample boxes were later recovered and had not been damaged, Meerut Medical college superintendent Dheeraj Raj told AFP on Friday, after footage of the encounter went viral on social media. "They were still intact and we don't think there is any risk of contamination or spread," Raj said. He added that the three people whose samples were stolen were retested for the virus. Coronavirus has been detected in animals, though there is no confirmation that the disease can then be passed on to humans. India's coronavirus death toll passed neighbouring China's on Friday, with 175 new fatalities in 24 hours taking the total to 4,706, according to official data. India, home to some of the world's most packed cities and a creaking healthcare system, is emerging as a new hotspot with record jumps in new cases in recent days. —AFP

Trump says he will delay G7 summit, invite other countries

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said Saturday he will delay the G7 summit scheduled to take place in June and invite other countries – including Russia – to join the meeting. “I don’t feel that as a G7 it properly represents what’s going on in the world. It’s a very outdated group of countries,” Trump told reporters on Air Force One. He said he would like to invite Russia, South Korea, Australia and India to join an expanded summit in the fall.

It could happen in September, either before or after the UN General Assembly, Trump said, adding that “maybe I’ll do it after the election”. Americans head to the polls in early November to choose a new president, with Trump keen for a return to normalcy from the coronavirus pandemic and a healthy economy as voters cast their ballots. Describing the event as a “G-10 or G-11”, Trump said he had “roughly” broached the topic with leaders of the four other countries.

Leaders from the Group of Seven, which the United States heads this year, had been scheduled to meet by video-conference in late June after COVID-19 scuttled plans to gather in-person at Camp David, the US presidential retreat outside Washington. Trump created suspense just over a week ago, however, when he announced that he might hold the huge gathering in-person after all, “primarily at the White House” but also potentially parts of it at Camp David.

“Cannot agree” to trip
German Chancellor Angela Merkel became the first leader to decline the in-

person invitation outright. “Considering the overall pandemic situation, she cannot agree to her personal participation, to a journey to Washington,” her spokesman said Saturday. Her response followed ambivalent to vaguely positive reactions to the invitation from Britain, Canada and France.

The 65-year-old chancellor is the oldest G7 leader after Trump, who is 73. Japan’s Shinzo Abe, also 65, is several months younger than Merkel. Their age puts them at higher risk from the coronavirus. The G7 major advanced countries – Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States – hold annual meetings to discuss international economic coordination.

Russia was thrown out of what was the G8 in 2014 after it seized Ukraine’s Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, an annexation never recognized by the international community. The work of the G7 is now more important than ever as countries struggle to repair coronavirus-inflicted damage.

Virus crisis

The White House had previously said the huge diplomatic gathering would be a “show of strength” when world economies are gradually reemerging from shutdowns. The virus is progressing at different speeds across the globe, with infection numbers falling in many of Europe’s most affected countries. Trump’s announcement came after he flew to Florida earlier in the day to watch the first launch of a commercial company rocket to carry humans into orbit, usher-



In this file photo taken on August 26, 2019 German Chancellor Angela Merkel (L) and US President Donald Trump speak during a bilateral meeting in Biarritz, south-west France. — AFP

ing in a new era in space travel.

The launch was a rare bright spot in the United States Saturday as clashes broke out and major cities imposed curfews amid ongoing protests over the death of George Floyd, an African

American who died after a police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes. The demonstrations are taking place against the ongoing US coronavirus crisis: The United States is the worst-hit country for COVID-19 infec-

tions, recording more than 1.7 million cases and over 103,680 deaths. Meanwhile the number of workers filing for jobless benefits since the virus arrived in country passed 40 million earlier in the week.— AFP

Curfews, clashes as race protests...

Continued from Page 1

stun grenades at protesters venting fury at the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, during an arrest in the city on Monday.

Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta were among two dozen cities ordering people to stay indoors overnight as more states called in National Guard soldiers to help control the civil unrest not seen in the United States for years. From Seattle to New York, tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets demanding tougher murder charges and more arrests over the death of Floyd, who stopped breathing after Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

In Los Angeles, officers fired rubber bullets and swung batons during a testy standoff with demonstrators who set fire to a police car. Police and protesters clashed in numerous cities including Chicago and New York, with officers responding to projectiles with pepper spray while shop windows were smashed in Philadelphia. Trump blamed the extreme left for the violence, including widespread looting and arson in Minneapolis, saying rioters were dishonoring the memory of Floyd.

“We cannot and must not allow a small group of criminals and vandals to wreck our cities and lay waste to our communities,” the president said. “My administration will stop mob violence. And we’ll stop it cold,” he added, accusing the loose-knit militant anti-fascist network Antifa of orchestrating the violence.

Democratic candidate Joe Biden condemned the violence of the protests, but said on Sunday that US citizens had every right to demonstrate. “Protesting such brutality is right and necessary,” he said. “But burning down communities and needless destruction is not.”

Peaceful protests occurred too, including in Toronto as

the movement spread beyond America’s borders. Demonstrators nationwide chanted slogans such as “Black Lives Matter” and “I can’t breathe”, which Floyd, who has become a fresh symbol of police brutality, was heard saying repeatedly before he died. “We’re not turning the cheek anymore. Black lives matter. They will always matter. And we’re here today to show that,” said makeup artist Melissa Mock, who joined several thousand in a daytime protest in Miami.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz said he was mobilizing the state’s entire 13,000-strong National Guard to deal with rioters who have looted shops and set fires in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. All major freeways leading into Minneapolis were closed Saturday night with military helicopters overhead as the state braced for more rioting, arson and looting, with locals saying much of the violence was being perpetrated by outsiders.

Earlier, people congregated and chanted peacefully in Minneapolis, carrying brooms to help clean up damaged shops and streets. Some placed flowers in front of the shop where Floyd was arrested on Monday, before his death in the hands of police was recorded in a horrifying cellphone video since seen around the world.

In Houston – where Floyd was born and raised – an old friend of his, Sam Osborne, said as an African American he feared for his life. “I’m really messed up they killed him up. I’m wondering like, what could possibly happen to me?” he told AFP. Houston’s mayor announced at a press conference that Floyd’s body would be brought back to the Texas city. At least eight states – including Texas, Colorado and Georgia – activated the National Guard, who were also deployed around the White House to help handle the protests there.

In Washington, protesters faced off with secret service agents outside the White House for a second straight night as Trump faces the most serious spate of civil unrest of his presidency, in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. Looting occurred in Miami, where a curfew was also announced, while in New York mayor Bill de Blasio said a video appearing to show an NYPD police car drive into protesters in Brooklyn was “upsetting” but that he did not blame the officers. — AFP

International Criminal Court. The incident happened in the alleys of the walled Old City near Lions’ Gate, an access point mainly used by Palestinians, and police said they had opened an investigation.

Hundreds of people protested on Saturday evening outside the Jerusalem police headquarters and in Tel Aviv, carrying placards in Hebrew reading “Police violence kills” and “Justice for Iyad”. Photos of Hallak were published online alongside the hashtags #PalestinianLivesMatter and #Icantbreathe, in reference to the American Black Lives Matter movement and US protests against racism and police violence. There have been fears that Israeli plans to take advantage of a controversial green light from US President Donald Trump to annex swathes of the West Bank could stoke further violence. — AFP

stake because of a number of international scandals.

The government however has said that it has referred the case to the public prosecution for investigation, but MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said the government action was incomplete and he will provide full details during a planned grilling of the finance minister. Former MP Abdulrahman Al-Anjari claimed on Twitter that forming a parliamentary investigation panel is an attempt to “cover up” the case and involve suspicious maneuvering. He said that the entire case is with the prime minister and wondered why no MP has demanded to hand it over to the Assembly.

Meanwhile, the elder son of the former senior official categorically denied allegations that he was involved in any money laundering operations and profiteering, saying he is ready to be investigated by the Assembly and the public prosecution. He welcomed in a statement the government decision to send the entire case to the public prosecution. He said he issued the statement after he and some of his relatives were being targeted by foreign reports and social media posts about his alleged involvement in money laundering and corruption.

Ambulance start-up joins...

Continued from Page 1

20s, Makkar raised money to retrofit mostly rented vans to function as ambulances which hit the streets last year. Before the pandemic, HelpNow received around 800 calls a month and charged anything between 600 rupees (\$8) to 5,000 rupees, depending on the distance and equipment needed, just to cover costs.

But once the pandemic struck, demand skyrocketed, reflecting widespread shortages across the city’s overburdened health infrastructure, with morgues, wards and ambulances running at full capacity. The jump in calls to HelpNow – more than 4,000 last week alone – has been “way beyond our expectation and our preparedness”, said Makkar, energetic and quick to smile despite surviving on less than five hours of sleep a night.

He has hired 10 more staff to man the phones, and plans to add another 25 vehicles to their 347-strong fleet, with the aim of getting an ambulance to its destination anywhere in Mumbai within 15 minutes or less. Few have felt the brunt of rising demand as intensely as the drivers – in head-to-toe protective suits – who keep HelpNow’s red-and-white ambulances running.

“Ever since coronavirus hit I work 14-16 hour days. Earlier my shifts used to be eight hours long,” said driver Alam Shaikh, who described the job as “exhausting, but fulfilling”. Frontline workers like

Astronauts head to ISS on historic...

Continued from Page 1

ended in 2011 and the first crewed flight ever by a private company.

“I’m really quite overcome with emotion,” Musk said. “It’s been 18 years working towards this goal. This is hopefully the first step on a journey towards civilization on Mars,” the SpaceX founder said. NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine said it was a “great day” for NASA and SpaceX and an “important milestone for the nation”. “We’re not celebrating yet,” Bridenstine cautioned. “We will celebrate when they’re home safely.”

In a brief interview from space, Hurley said that in keeping with the tradition of having astronauts name their spacecraft, he and Behnken had named the Crew Dragon capsule “Endeavour” after the retired space shuttle on which they both flew. Behnken said the SpaceX capsule is a “lot different than its namesake” in that “it has touch display screens.”

The mission, dubbed “Demo-2”, ends a government monopoly on space flight and is the final test flight before NASA certifies SpaceX’s capsule for regular crewed missions. Behnken, 49, and Hurley, 53, former military test pilots who joined NASA in 2000, were scheduled to dock with the space station at 10:29 am (1429 GMT) yesterday. They will join US astronaut Chris Cassidy and Russian cosmonauts Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner aboard the ISS.

SpaceX said Crew Dragon was on the correct trajectory to link up with the space station orbiting 400 km above the Earth. The reusable first booster stage of the Falcon 9 rocket separated cleanly about 2.5 minutes after liftoff and landed upright on a floating barge off the Atlantic coast. The second stage also separated smoothly. The launch had originally been scheduled for Wednesday but was delayed because of weather conditions, which also

him also face the highest risk of contracting the virus. The ambulances – equipped with ventilators and oxygen systems – are sanitized after every trip and all workers are instructed to wear protective suits, said Makkar.

But fears linger. Even Shaikh, who told AFP he never worried about his own safety, admitted that he had not seen his family in several weeks because he did not want to risk infecting them. “I just speak to them on the cellphone,” the 32-year-old said. “I try to explain to them that if I don’t help people then who will?” India has seen an upsurge in coronavirus cases in recent weeks, and has now recorded almost 5,000 deaths – more than China, where the contagion was first detected. On Saturday the government announced major relaxations of its lockdown, although in areas with large numbers of cases – such as Mumbai – activities will remain restricted.

Experts have long warned that Mumbai’s densely populated slums and tenements are a health catastrophe waiting to happen, with shared toilets, sometimes eight people to a room and no possibility of social distancing. “A poor person cannot afford this disease,” said one inhabitant, Imroz Mansoor Khan, who works as a food delivery driver and worries constantly about contracting an infection from a customer. If he were to fall sick, paying for a private ambulance would be out of the question, the 23-year-old told AFP.

With HelpNow offering just 10 free trips a day to patients who cannot afford to pay, its service remains out of reach for many. “That definitely is the end goal... to provide (a) completely free, quickest and safest medical response”, said Makkar, who is seeking donations to fund more complimentary services. — AFP

remained uncertain on Saturday right up until liftoff.

The mission comes amid the coronavirus crisis and protests in multiple US cities over the death of a black man in Minneapolis while he was being arrested by a white police officer. US President Donald Trump flew to Florida to watch the launch and delivered remarks to NASA and SpaceX employees on what he called a “special day”. Trump first addressed the protests, saying he understood “the pain people are feeling” but that he would not tolerate “mob violence”.

Trump praised Musk and said the launch “makes clear the commercial space industry is the future”. He also repeated his vow to send American astronauts back to the Moon in 2024 and eventually to Mars. Behnken and Hurley blasted off from Launch Pad 39A, the same one used by Neil Armstrong on Apollo 11’s 1969 journey to the Moon.

The pair, veterans of two space shuttle missions each, were in quarantine for more than two weeks ahead of the flight and were regularly tested for COVID-19. They went through the same preparations Saturday that they went through on Wednesday, donning their futuristic SpaceX-designed spacesuits four hours before launch.

After saying goodbye to their wives – both former astronauts – they were driven to the launch pad in an electric car built by Tesla, one of Musk’s other companies. The Crew Dragon mission is a defining moment for SpaceX, which Musk founded in 2002 with the goal of producing a lower-cost alternative to human spaceflight. The US space agency paid more than \$3 billion for SpaceX to design, build, test and operate its reusable Dragon capsule for six future space round trips.

NASA has had to pay Russia for its Soyuz rockets to take US astronauts to space ever since the shuttle program ended. SpaceX conducted a successful test flight of Crew Dragon to the ISS in March 2019 with a sensor-laden mannequin on board named Ripley, after the character played by Sigourney Weaver in the “Alien” movies. The project has experienced delays, explosions, and parachute problems – but even so, SpaceX has beaten its giant competitor Boeing to the punch. — AFP

Aqsa mosque reopens after...

Continued from Page 1

territories have eased restrictions. Israel has reported more than 17,000 cases, including 284 deaths. Fewer than 500 infections and just three deaths have been confirmed in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, which have a combined population of around five million. Following the deadly shooting on Saturday, the Palestinian leadership demanded that whoever killed Iyad Khairi Hallak be brought before the

Lockdown eased; Harbi resists...

Continued from Page 1

MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said yesterday that he will demand forming a parliamentary panel to investigate a former senior official and a number of former ministers over suspected corruption and money laundering operations worth billions of dollars that included funding North Korea’s nuclear program and corruption related to Malaysia’s sovereign wealth fund IMDB.

The lawmaker urged HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to prove that his government fights corruption. Kandari said his move depends on a report published by the New York Times about a network involving Chinese and North Koreans running money laundering operations to finance North Korean nuclear activities, in which the name of Kuwait was mentioned. He said that the image of Kuwait and its financial institutions is at

Stars

Daily SuDoku									
			5			1	7		
		7		9			4		
5			7		6	8			
			1	7	4				
		3				6			
			9	6	3				
		1	4		8			2	
	2			3		5			
8	5			7					

hard

Friday's Solution									
7	6	2	8	3	4	1	5	9	
8	5	9	6	7	1	4	3	2	
3	4	1	9	5	2	8	6	7	
9	1	8	7	4	3	5	2	6	
5	7	4	2	6	9	3	8	1	
2	3	6	1	8	5	7	9	4	
1	2	3	4	9	8	6	7	5	
4	8	7	5	2	6	9	1	3	
6	9	5	3	1	7	2	4	8	

medium

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

If you've considered a career in publishing, Aries, this is the time to go for it. It's also a great day to enroll in law school, an advanced degree program, or any field of higher education. Love with someone from far away could well be in the offing. At the very least, you could make a new friend from a distant state or foreign land. This should be a satisfying day for you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your dreams could be vivid, pleasant, and full of information to help you make a decision. New and exciting contacts could come into your life today, Taurus, possibly proving helpful in showing you ways to increase your income. New careers, sidelines, and investments appear promising and worthy of consideration. Make the most of whatever comes your way. It could make a difference.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today you're likely focused on sex, romance, and committed relationships. The planetary energies surrounding love are promising, Gemini. If you're in a relationship, you and your partner could make plans to embark on a new enterprise together, which is likely to succeed. If you're involved but not committed, expect the relationship to move forward now. If you aren't with someone, who knows? By the end of the day you might be.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today you should be glowing with good health, energy, and stamina, and be doing well at work, whether career, volunteer work, or a personal project. Success should come your way on all fronts, Cancer, particularly since you've been working hard. You're finally likely to see the results of past efforts. Success feeds good health and good health feeds success. Make the most of both.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Love and romance are likely to be tops on your agenda today, Leo. You're feeling especially warm and loving now. Current and potential love partners could feel strongly drawn to you. Children might also prove a source of happiness and satisfaction. If you're artistically inclined, this is the day to start or finish an enterprise, which could well lead to fame and fortune. This should be a wonderful day.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Important enterprises centering on your home could take up a lot of your energy over the next few days, Virgo. Many people might come and go from your life. Perhaps you're moving to a nicer place, or maybe transacting a lot of business in your home. Whatever it is, it's likely to produce the results you're hoping for. Work hard and make the most of it.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Some absolutely wonderful news could come your way, Libra, possibly about career or financial success, perhaps involving positive changes in your neighborhood. If you've been thinking about working in writing or publishing - or any art, for that matter - this is the day to set events in motion. Your imagination is operating at a high level and so is your ability to communicate with others. Go for it.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You should feel especially warm and loving today toward just about anyone you meet, Scorpio. Good news about money may have caused you to feel especially positive. This could attract new people to you and bring closer those already in your life. If you've been thinking about starting an artistic project, this is the day to do it. Creative ideas should flow freely. Have fun.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, you should be looking beautiful and feeling especially positive, warm, and loving - attracting people of all kinds to you. Your self-confidence, optimism, and determination should peak over the next few days. Anything you've been thinking about starting - a new partnership, business, creative project, romance - is highly likely to succeed and bring good fortune your way. Enjoy.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Creative inspiration could come from deep within today, Capricorn. Visions, dreams - anything that excites your imagination - could bring ideas for new projects. You might also find that your understanding of others greatly increases, attracting new and old friends. The only downside is you could get so lost in ideas that you temporarily lose touch with the material world. Try to keep a foot in both camps.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

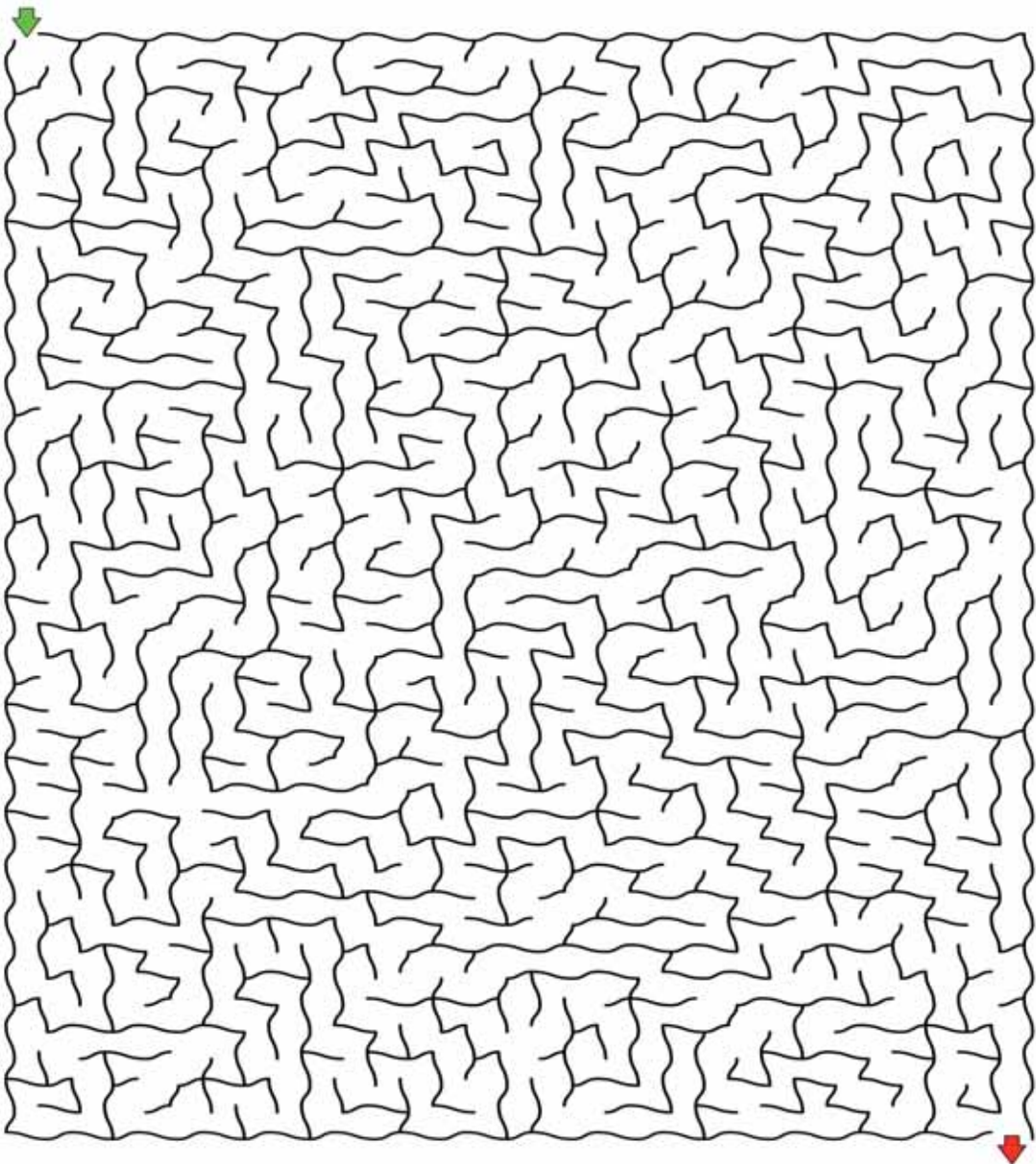
Group activities prove beneficial on several levels, Aquarius. You might project powerful warmth and love for all life. You're feeling especially optimistic about the future. Your enthusiasm could spill over to others, attracting them into your aura. Acquaintances become friends, friends grow closer, and love relationships grow stronger and more stable. You could gain a lot of intriguing, useful information, particularly about the arts.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You might find yourself in the public eye at some point today, Pisces. This is fine since you're looking and feeling great. You're likelier than usual to project warmth and friendliness to others. Acknowledgment for an artistic or creative activity could come your way. Whatever you start today is likely to succeed, whether it's a new artistic project, career, or romance. Enjoy.

Find the way



Join the dots



Word Scramble

Valentine's Day Word Scramble

DIRECTIONS: Unscramble the letters to form the names of 11 different Valentine's Day words. Then unscramble the shaded letters to answer the riddle.

LIRANGD	<div></div>
HAETR	<div></div>
OLCHAOTEC	<div></div>
DICPU	<div></div>
MOEP	<div></div>
LSWROFE	<div></div>
BOLEDEV	<div></div>
ANDCY	<div></div>
ORSSE	<div></div>
EOEVNPLE	<div></div>
RRABYUFE	<div></div>

What did the boy bear say to the girl bear on Valentine's Day?

!



Sports

Photo of the day



GLEINALPE: Miguel Oliveira races during MotoGP goes in Gleinalpe, Austria. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Thiem, Kyrgios to play July grass, hard-court

BERLIN: Dominic Thiem, Nick Kyrgios, Elina Svitolina and Kiki Bertens will compete in grass and hard-court events in Berlin in July featuring both men's and women's fields.

The behind-closed-doors competition will be held on grass at the Steffi Graf Stadium from July 13-15 and then switch to hard court in a hangar at Berlin's Tempelhof Airport from July 17-19.

With Wimbledon cancelled for the first time since World War II due to the coronavirus pandemic, this will be the first grass-court tennis of 2020. Six men and six women are set to take part.

"I am curious to see where I stand with my tennis," said Germany's Alexander Zverev, who joins Austria's Thiem, the highest ranked at third in the world, and Australia's Kyrgios in the men's event.

"I've been practising hard, but it's going to be my first time playing a competitive event in a long time. It's going to be exciting to play on two different surfaces in seven days."

In the women's field, Germany's Julia Goerges and Andrea Petkovic will join Svitolina of Ukraine and Bertens of the Netherlands, who are both in the top 10.

There will be no live spectators, electric line-calling will be used instead of judges and the matches will be played over two sets with a possible third as a tie-breaker.

The matches will be broadcast with prize money of 200,000 euros (\$222,000) at stake — 100,000 each for the men's and women's events.

The ATP and WTA tours are both suspended until late July due to the global health crisis.

The Steffi Graf Stadium was due to host the first WTA event of the grass season from June 13-20, but this year's tournament was cancelled following the virus outbreak.

Historic Tempelhof Airport has been closed since 2008, but the grounds remain open as a public park and was where planes landed during the Berlin Airlift in 1948-49. —AFP

F1 season to open in Austria after govt backs Spielberg double act

Plan involves regular testing and health check-ups for teams

VIENNA: Formula One's truncated coronavirus-hit season will finally get underway with the Austrian Grand Prix on July 5, the Austrian government announced on Saturday.

The Spielberg circuit has also been given the green light to stage a second race the following weekend. "The two Formula One races on July 5 and 12 at Spielberg will be staged without spectators," announced Austrian Health Minister Rudolf Anschober.

He said that the two races had been approved after F1 organisers "had presented a complete and professional plan" to combat the spread of COVID-19.

The F1 season was thrown into chaos with the cancellation of the traditional curtain-raising Australian Grand Prix in March only hours before practice was due to begin.

Melbourne was one of 10 races either cancelled or postponed, yet F1 boss Chase Carey believes a 15-18 race season is still possible. But Silverstone's hopes of also staging back-to-back races after Austria are in the balance after the British government insisted that all arrivals in the country undergo a two-week quarantine period.

Anschober added a caveat to Saturday's statement, insisting the season's belated restart would only go ahead if all the health assurances made by F1 were fulfilled.

"In addition to strict hygiene measures the plan also involves regular testing and health check-ups for teams and all the other employees," he said.

"The crucial element will be the close coordination between the organisers and the regional and local health authorities," he added.

Its remote location made the Red Bull Ring circuit a "logical" location to stage the season's first two races, F1 managing director Ross Brawn said this month.

With a local airport, the races can be held in an isolated environment, essential in the fight against the pandemic that has killed less than 700 people in Austria, and more than 364,000 worldwide.

"One of the logistical challenges is getting everyone tested and cleared to enter the racing environment," Brawn explained in an F1 Nation podcast.

"Once we do that, it's very attractive to keep everyone in that environment, within that biosphere that we want to create, for another race. Austria fits that bill very well. It has a local airport right next to the circuit, where people can charter planes into. It's not too close to a metropolis."

The 2020 F1 season was to have featured a record 22 races, now it is set to be one of the shortest campaigns for over a decade.

Carey outlined the blueprint for the reshaped season this month, involving additional European races through the traditional August break.

"We will then plan to race in Asia and the Americas in September, October, November before finishing in the Gulf in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi in December," he said.

He added: "We expect the early part of the calendar to be races without fans, but we hope to be able to allow fans to attend in the latter part of the year."

F1's tentative emergence from coronavirus lockdown follows the path trodden cautiously by other sports.

Germany's Bundesliga became the first of

Austria fits the bill



VIENNA: Two Formula One races on July 5 and 12 at Spielberg will be staged without spectators.

Europe's top football leagues to return this month with Spain's La Liga, Italy's Serie A and England's Premier League kick-starting their interrupted seasons over the next few weeks.

While there may have been no racing up to now there has been plenty going on behind the scenes, with Carlos Sainz replacing Sebastian Vettel at Ferrari for 2021 and Daniel Ricciardo joining McLaren.

Given the massive financial hit teams have taken

and the worry that some might go bust, the proposed all-new technical landscape due to be implemented next season has been pushed back to 2022.

And a spending cap of \$145 million has been introduced for next year in an attempt to stem the bleeding, with teams like McLaren making significant job cuts.

One man itching for the season to begin is Lewis Hamilton, who is hoping to equal Michael Schumacher's record of seven world titles. —AFP

English racing under starters orders on road to redemption

LONDON: English racing will today offer a beacon of hope after months of nationwide gloom when it becomes the first sport in Britain to emerge from coronavirus lockdown.

Criticised for pressing ahead with the Cheltenham Festival as the pandemic took hold in March racing now finds itself in the news in an altogether more positive light.

It returns at Newcastle with a surreal feel with no spectators to watch the 10 flat races restricted to 12 runners per contest and trainers, jockeys and grooms wearing masks.

There will be none of the usual celebratory hugs or shake of the hands between jockeys and trainers as social distancing officers will be on hand to ensure people stay two metres apart.

However, leading flat trainer Hugo Palmer told

AFP morale at his Kremlin Cottage Stables in Newmarket has been high due to the "sunniest spring for years" but admits it might have dipped had racing "not been around the corner".

The genial Englishman — who established himself among the top rank with champion miler Galileo Gold in 2016 — says racing resuming for the first time since March 17 is a "tremendous opportunity" for the sport.

"There is precious little else to watch although it coincides with the day the Government allows more people to meet outside," Palmer said. "My mother would have been furious if she caught me watching TV on a sunny day!"

"However, we have to hope people will stay inside and watch the racing."

"It is a real opportunity to pick up new followers." Palmer says racing owes a huge debt to the loyalty of owners through the crisis.

Palmer — who has around 100 horses — said they could have cut their training costs by taking them away whilst the sport was shut down. "People largely own racehorses for pleasure and amusement," he said.

"The sport is only able to go ahead today because of the thousands of horses owners have continued to pay to have in training. "The overwhelming majority of staff were not furloughed and we have not existed on government handouts."

"We all owe them (the owners) a huge debt of gratitude. "If they had pulled them out of training then we would not have been in a position to put sport on at all."

'AN INHERENT OPTIMISM'

Phoenix Thoroughbreds — who have over 60 horses in the United Kingdom — will have one runner on Monday, Luck on Sunday trained by John Quinn. "We made a commitment at the start of the lockdown not to take any of our horses out of training and we stuck to that," Phoenix Thoroughbred's CEO Amer Abdulaziz Salman told AFP.

"For us, we need to race not just for the prize money but also for the breeding side of our operation." Salman takes the same view as Palmer that it could be a new dawn for the sport.

"This is an unprecedented opportunity for racing in the UK to raise its profile," he said. "With no oth-

er sport to watch, you would hope a whole new audience and even generation will tune in."

Palmer has two runners at Newcastle — the racecourse where two-time Arc de Triomphe winner Enable opened her account in November 2016 — but will not be gracing the track with his presence. "I have a very experienced team of people who are very good at their jobs," he said. "With restricted numbers my presence would be unnecessary."

"Besides there is nowhere to get lunch, nowhere to get a drink. "People will be just going back to their cars (when they don't have runners involved in a particular race) and listening to the radio or watching the racing on their phones."

Palmer says it has been perhaps easier for trainers to keep going because equine viruses are the bane of their lives.

"There was a biography titled 'Months of Misery and Moments of Bliss (late trainer Bill Wightman),' he said. "To train horses you need an inherent optimism and a spring in your step to drag yourself out of bed long before the cock crows and to keep doing it because nobody is forcing you to do it." —AFP

Sports

Brazil leader wants football season back despite pandemic

Smaller regional leagues players have to survive somehow

RIO DE JANEIRO: The right-wing populist president of Brazil wants the football season to resume even though the five-time World Cup winning country is a hotspot of the coronavirus pandemic.

Brazil is for many synonymous with football and many of the all-time greats, from Pele to Neymar, hail from the nation. But Brazil is also the epicentre of Latin America's coronavirus outbreak.

The death toll from coronavirus in Brazil has hit 27,878, official figures showed on Friday, surpassing the toll of hard-hit Spain and making it the country with the fifth-highest number of fatalities.

Football has been suspended in Brazil since mid-March but President Jair Bolsonaro recently told Radio Guaiba that footballers would likely not fall very ill with COVID-19.

"As footballers are young athletes the risk of death if they catch coronavirus would be dramatically reduced," Bolsonaro said. Back in March Bolsonaro also claimed that thanks to his own sporting past he would only suffer a slight cold if he caught the virus.

The president says his chief motivation for wanting football to get back underway is to curb unemployment and the misery that accompanies it.

"The players have to survive somehow," he said, explaining that while some top footballers earn a fortune, those from smaller regional leagues need to play "to feed their families".

The way Brazilian politics works, it is not in

Bolsonaro's remit to restart football. This must be done by the regional states and municipalities.

When football was suspended, seasons at the regional level were underway, but the national championship had been due to start in May and as yet there are no solid plans to begin.

Bolsonaro and his son held meetings on May 19 with the presidents of two Rio superclubs, Vasco da Gama and Flamengo. Photos of Bolsonaro and his son wearing the shirts of the two clubs stunned social media, with official supporter groups claiming

their image had been sold out to politics.

"This is just political intolerance," said Flamengo president Rodolfo Landim, explaining that Bolsonaro just wants football back as soon as possible and he himself "is defending the interests of Flamengo."

The day after the meeting Flamengo were filmed by a TV Globo helicopter breaking the Rio lockdown rules by training without permission.

Rio state health secretary Ana Beatriz Bush said the act of defiance set a terrible example.

"Imagine all the young people who see Flamengo training, they'll want to go out of their homes and that is not possible," she said.

Rio mayor Marcelo Crivella, however, has authorised training to resume in June and sees matches taking place behind closed doors sometime in July.

Rio's two other major clubs, Fluminense and Botafogo, are on record as saying this seems pre-



PORTO ALEGRE: Handout picture released by Brazil's Gremio football club player Everton Soares (Cebolinha) undergoing tests before a training session at Arena do Gremio in Porto Alegre, Brazil on May 6, 2020. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has urged football clubs to begin league competition as soon as possible. —AFP

mature. One of Brazil's top sports journalists, Mauro Cezar Pereira, of ESPN Brazil also feels it is too soon.

"It reflects the fact that some clubs are deeply in debt and dependant on broadcasting income. The Bundesliga restart intensified the rush. But

unlike in Germany, the infection curve is still climbing in Brazil."

Players may have little say in the matter, with the president of the Internacional club saying any player refusing to come back to training should instead resign. —AFP

Hansie Cronje, flirted with greatness but succumbed to temptation

JOHANNESBURG: All-rounder Hansie Cronje, who died on this day in 2002, flirted with greatness but succumbed to temptation, exposing the dark world of bribery in cricket before his tragic death in a plane crash at the age of 32.

The perennially scowling South African averaged above 36 with the bat both in tests and one-dayers and was more than a handy medium pacer. But it was his inspirational skill as a leader which stood out.

Under the Bloemfontein-born Cronje, South Africa registered series victories against every other major cricketing nation except Australia.

In his 53 tests in charge, the Proteas won 27 and lost only 11 matches, although his hopes of leading South Africa to a World Cup title never materialised. "Hansie was a great leader," team mate Gary Kirsten said in his tribute after Cronje's tragic early death.

"He was an inspiration to me when I first came into the national team and he gave me confidence. It was impossible not to respect him."

Succeeding Kepler Wessels in the job, Cronje forged a fruitful partnership with Bob Woolmer, a coming together of an uncompromising leader and an innovative coach.

Their chemistry and tough-minded approach to the job was best illustrated in the 1999 World Cup.

In their tournament opener against India, Cronje had to be asked by the match referee to remove an earpiece he wore to communicate with Woolmer. But together they led the side through to the semi-final, where they were eliminated after a tied match against Australia.

Two years before his death, Cronje's admission that he had taken bribes from an Indian bookmaker



Hansie Cronje

to fix matches shook the sport to its foundations.

Delhi Police had been probing an unrelated extortion case when they stumbled upon a tape that eventually led to the unearthing of the scandal.

After initially denying fixing charges, Cronje confessed his role to an inquiry commission in South Africa and was subsequently banned from the game for life.

"In a moment of stupidity and weakness I allowed Satan and the world to dictate terms to me," Cronje, a devout Christian, said in a confession to a church leader, couching it in Biblical terms.

"The moment I took my eyes off Jesus, my whole world turned dark."

The lapse of judgment was all the more damag-

ing coming from a charismatic leader who commanded absolute loyalty in his team mates.

The widespread scandal also resulted in life bans for former India captain Mohammad Azharuddin and ex-Pakistan skipper Salim Malik, while several others were implicated.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) subsequently ramped up anti-corruption measures but traces of the scandal continue to haunt the game.

In February, extradited London-based Indian bookmaker Sanjeev Chawla, accused of involvement in an affair eventually nicknamed "Hansiegate", was taken into police custody in New Delhi. He was granted bail in May but the case continues. —Reuters

wait for more clarity regarding curbs on international travel before making a decision on the tour. On Saturday, South Africa also allowed training and playing of professional non-contact sport, a decision welcomed by its cricket board.

"This is a big boost for the operational side of our cricket," Cricket South Africa's (CSA) acting chief executive, Jacques Faul, said in a statement.

CSA's COVID-19 steering committee will meet on Monday to draw up a protocol for the return to training and playing, he added.

On Saturday, Britain allowed elite competitive sport in England to resume behind closed doors from Monday, in compliance with strict conditions. —Reuters

I know they will cherish dearly." Centre-back Simunovic joined Celtic from Dinamo Zagreb in 2015 and went on to make 125 appearances for the club while managing a knee problem during his time with the Glasgow giants.

The 25-year-old scored the winner against Kilmarnock after 67 minutes while wearing the number five jersey made famous by Billy McNeill — Celtic's captain when they won the European Cup in 1967 — in the first game after the former Hoops manager's death last year. Utility player Hayes, a Republic of Ireland international made 68 appearances after arriving from Aberdeen in 2017. —AFP

to Celtic over a number of years," said Celtic manager Neil Lennon.

"Jozo has been part of our great club for some time and has given us some wonderful times, playing a really important part in our success. Jonny, too, has been an important player for the club in recent years.

"Above all, both are great men and everyone at Celtic wishes Jozo and Jonny and their families all the very best for the future. We are sure they will continue to be successful in everything they do. "Both players leave Celtic as nine-in-a-row champions, something they have earned, an achievement they richly deserve and something

Kane warns Spurs they can't slip up in quest for CL

LONDON: Harry Kane believes Tottenham Hotspur will have to win eight of their remaining nine Premier League games if they are to qualify for next season's Champions League.

The north London club were seven points adrift of the top four when the coronavirus shut down the season in March.

Then it was thought the likes of Kane, Son Heung-min and Steven Bergwijn would miss the rest of the campaign through injury.

But the trio, as well as Moussa Sissoko, are all set to be fit in time for the planned restart of June 17, although young striker Troy Parrott will be sidelined after having his appendix removed.

Eighth-placed Spurs face crunch matches against Manchester United, Sheffield United, Arsenal and Leicester. Their hopes of Champions League qualification would also be boosted if Manchester City fail in an appeal against a European ban.

But Kane wants Spurs to take matters into their own hands. "We have got to finish in the top four, there is no doubt about that," he told the club's website. "We have got a massive game against Man United in the first game and realistically we are going to have to win seven or eight to get into the Champions League.

"That has got to be our aim. Of course we want to win every game but we have got to make sure we finish strong if we want to be playing Champions League football next season."

Kane suffered a hamstring injury against Southampton on New Year's Day but with the season suspended, the England captain has been able to recover without the worry of missing matches.

"From the hamstring point of view it is great to be able to give it a bit more rest," the star forward said. "I have not played a game for six months now, it has been a long, long time."

'SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM'

Spurs only sit four points behind Man United in fifth, which could be good enough for a Champions League spot depending on the result of Man City's appeal.

Kane, a two-time Premier League Golden Boot winner, has scored 17 goals for Tottenham in all competitions this season, including 11 from 20 appearances in the league.

"I am feeling good, I am feeling sharp," he added. "It has been good to do some individual training, a bit of finishing, a lot of individual drills to work on my game and improve.

"I am at a stage where I am looking forward to getting some games and hopefully I'll be back playing before too long.

"It is a good shock to the system. It has been very intense... "Hopefully I'll be back in a better place (than) before I was injured and look forward to a busy next year." —AFP

S Lanka begin training today

COLOMBO: A select group of Sri Lanka cricketers, mainly bowlers, will return to training on Monday, amid efforts to restart the game after the coronavirus shutdown, the cricket board said yesterday.

Professional cricket has been suspended since March because of the pandemic, with Sri Lanka's home series against England and South Africa among its casualties.

Thirteen players will check into a hotel for a

Simunovic, Jonny Hayes leave Celtic

LONDON: Scottish Premiership champions Celtic announced on Saturday they have decided against extending the contracts of both Jozo Simunovic and Jonny Hayes.

"I would like to sincerely thank both Jozo and Jonny, brilliant lads who have given their all

Sport Times

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020

18 F1 season to open in Austria after govt backs Spielberg double act



19 Brazil leader wants football season back despite pandemic



19 Hansie, flirted with greatness but succumbed to temptation



Bayern edge closer to 30th title

Records fall as Lewandowski has 43 goals in all competitions



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Polish forward Robert Lewandowski (R) and Fortuna Duesseldorf's German goalkeeper Florian Kastenmeier vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match FC Bayern Munich v Fortuna Duesseldorf on May 30, 2020 in Munich, southern Germany. —AFP

BERLIN: Bayern Munich opened a 10-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga on Saturday with a 5-0 drubbing of relegation-threatened Fortuna Dusseldorf behind closed doors with the league's top-scorer Robert Lewandowski scoring twice.

Duesseldorf defender Mathias Joergensen scored an early own goal before Benjamin Pavard, Lewandowski (2) and Alphonso Davies hit the target.

With five games left, Bayern, who have won their last eight league games, are comfortably on course for an eighth straight league title.

However, second-placed Borussia Dortmund could trim their lead later at bottom side Paderborn. Several records fell as Lewandowski now has 43 goals in all competitions, a season's best for the Poland striker with games in hand.

Also head coach Hansi Flick claimed his 22nd win in his first 25 games, bettering the start made by Pep Guardiola when he took charge in 2013.

"Statistics and records don't interest me, what's important is to have a successful season," said Flick, in his first season since replacing Niko Kovac in November.

"At Bayern Munich, you are expected to win. I am very happy, we were very aggressive and didn't give them any chances."

Lewandowski, who had never previously scored in six games against Duesseldorf, made amends with goals either side of half-time.

Fortuna, who were unbeaten in their three games since the league resumed after a two-month coronavirus-enforced hiatus, were humbled at the Allianz Arena where they last poached a 3-3 draw in November 2018.

They fell behind on 15 minutes when Joergensen turned the ball into his own net after Pavard mishit his shot.

Right-back Pavard then grabbed the second with a powerful header on 29 minutes before

Lewandowski made it 3-0 just before the break after being presented with a tap-in by Thomas Mueller.

Duesseldorf were floored with two goals in as many minutes as Lewandowski profited again with another poacher's goal after Serge Gnabry's good work. Davies then scored the game's best goal. After some high pressing, the Canadian teen won the ball in the Duesseldorf area, barged past a succession of defenders and fired home to make it 5-0 on 52 minutes. Werder Bremen boosted their survival hopes with a 1-0 win at Schalke, who are winless in 11

games and continue to plummet. Midfielder Leonardo Bittencourt scored a first-half winner.

"This is a very, very important away win," said Bremen coach Florian Kohfeldt. "We have taken seven points from the last three games, but if you look at the table, we are still behind."

Bremen have spent more seasons in the Bundesliga than any other club, but currently sit second from bottom.

However, Saturday's victory leaves them just three points from guaranteed safety with six games left. They are two points behind Duesseldorf in 16th, which carries a relegation play-off at the end of the season.

Werder could climb out of the relegation places for the first time since December on Wednesday if they beat Eintracht Frankfurt at home.

Bittencourt hit a stunning strike from just outside the box which beat Schalke's Bayern-bound goal-

keeper Alexander Nuebel on 32 minutes.

Schalke succumbed to their fourth straight defeat, piling pressure on head coach David Wagner. In the same game, Schalke's American midfielder Weston McKennie wore a 'Justice for George' armband as part of the growing protests over the death of an unarmed black man during a police arrest in the United States.

"To be able to use my platform to bring attention to a problem that has been going on too long feels good!!!!," tweeted 21-year-old McKennie.

"We have to stand up for what we believe in and I believe that it is time that we are heard," George Floyd died in Minneapolis in an arrest by a police officer who knelt him to the ground for several minutes by kneeling on his neck.

Hertha remain unbeaten with three wins and a draw since Bruno Labbadia took charge during the lockdown after their 2-0 win at home to Augsburg thanks for goals by Javairo Dilrosun and Krzysztof Piatek.

Having routed Leverkusen 4-1 away on Tuesday, Wolfsburg crashed to a 2-1 defeat at home to 10-man Eintracht Frankfurt.

Japan midfielder Daichi Kamada scored the winner 10 minutes from time while Frankfurt had replacement midfielder Lucas Torro sent off in the dying stages for a second yellow card.

Frankfurt took the lead when striker Andre Silva converted a penalty on 27 minutes, but Wolfsburg equalised when right-back Kevin Mbabu headed home on 58 minutes.

Hoffenheim are seventh after their 1-0 win at Mainz thanks to Ihlas Bebou who darted into the area, swept past two defenders, and fired home on 43 minutes.

On Friday, Leverkusen went third when Germany midfielder Kai Havertz became the first player in Bundesliga history to score 35 goals before his 21st birthday to seal a 1-0 win at Freiburg. —AFP



Game's best goal

UFC mixed martial arts back to Las Vegas

LOS ANGELES: Combat sport returned to Las Vegas Saturday as Brazil's Gilbert Burns defeated former welterweight champion Tyron Woodley in the main event of an Ultimate Fighting Championship mixed martial arts card.

As in the UFC's recent live events from Florida there were no fans in attendance at the UFC Apex and social distancing measures were in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

But it heralded the return of combat sports to Vegas, where the Nevada State Athletic Commission last week gave the greenlight not only to UFC but also to boxing cards in June.

Promoter Bob Arum's Top Rank has lined up cards to be held at the MGM Grand Conference Center, starting with a June 9 event featuring Shakur Stevenson, unbeaten in 13 fights, taking on Puerto Rican Felix Caraballo in a non-title bout.

Stevenson, the World Boxing Organization featherweight champion, had been scheduled to make the first defense of his belt on March 14 against Miguel Marriaga in New York, but that event was canceled because of the pandemic.

"The goal was to start out with really good, competitive fights, with names that people are familiar with, who have been on ESPN shows," Arum told broadcaster ESPN on Saturday, adding they opted not to start with title bouts to streamline the logistics.

Arum said the health protocols put in place by Nevada officials offered "a sensible way to push ahead." "You've got to make sure all the procedures are safe and so forth," Arum said. "Hopefully, what we're doing will serve as a template for other promoters to put on shows." — AFP