



8 India expels Pak embassy officials for alleged spying



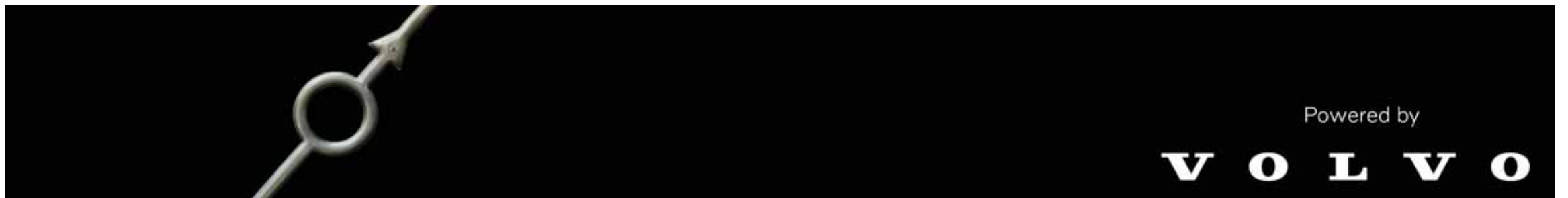
9 Stalled Aussie migrant boom derails golden economic run



16 Traced Bashir regime assets 'tip of iceberg'



20 Sancho nets hat-trick, protests US killing as Dortmund cruise



MPs demand probe into graft charges; Nazaha cooperating

MP files to grill education minister • Lawmakers want rent relief for small shops



KUWAIT: Troops are deployed around the densely-populated area of Farwaniya, which is under complete lockdown. — KUNA (See Page 5)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Five MPs have submitted a proposal calling to form a parliamentary committee to investigate allegations of money laundering and corruption related to the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund and illicit activities in North Korea. The government has already referred the issue to the public prosecution for investigations as MP Hamdan Al-Azemi called for publishing the names of those allegedly involved in the scam.

The Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) stressed Sunday that it is fully cooperating with the public prosecution regarding global reports of a relationship between Kuwait and the Malaysia Development Berhad, known as IMDB, including charges of money laundering operations and suspicions of corruption.

In a press release, Nazaha said it is cooperating with the prosecution because it is a responsible local judicial investigation authority that will provide any information and data obtained by the authority regarding the issue to the general prosecution, including information obtained that has a direct or indirect relationship with damage to state funds.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly office was to meet later yesterday to decide on holding a session after MP Faisal Al-Kandari filed to grill the educa-

tion minister for refusing to scrap the school year over the coronavirus. Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem said the Assembly is likely to meet within the next two weeks and the grilling has been placed on the agenda of the first session.

Kandari said his grilling of Education Minister Saud Al-Harbi comprises just the issue of the minister's insistence to resume the school year amid the outbreak of the pandemic, thus endangering the lives of hundreds of thousands of students and teachers. He said the minister has ignored repeated appeals by several lawmakers to end the year and has been the only minister who did not live up to government efforts of fighting the disease.

Kandari also accused the minister of mismanagement of the education process during the coronavirus crisis, causing severe harm and damage to students. He charged that the minister's policy of refusing to end the school year will help spread the deadly disease among students, teachers and school administrations, threatening their lives and the lives of their families and consequently the health of the whole society.

MP Saadoun Hammad said he supports the grilling and advised the minister to step down, calling on his successor to immediately announce the end of the school year.

Continued on Page 16

Masks and no ablution: Saudis flock to mosques

RIYADH: Mask-clad worshippers flocked to Saudi mosques that reopened nationwide Sunday, except in the holy city of Makkah, more than two months after congregational prayers were halted under a coronavirus-triggered lockdown. Complying with stringent social distancing rules, worshippers kept a minimum of two meters apart as many voiced elation over the government decision to allow more than 90,000 mosques across the kingdom to re-open.

They had been instructed to bring their own prayer mats and to perform the cleansing ritual, or ablution, at home, instead of in mosque grounds. "Worshippers rushed to the home of God to perform their obligatory duty (prayers) after the reopening of mosques," the ministry of Islamic affairs said on Twitter. The ministry posted a video showing a mosque with many worshippers wearing face masks and reaching out for a large bottle of hand sanitizer after prayers.

Hundreds of people headed to Riyadh's Al-Rajhi mosque, where they had their temperatures checked before entering. Multiple television screens inside the mosque displayed written instructions, including the need to maintain distance between the worshippers to prevent the

spread of COVID-19. Authorities have instructed mosques to avoid crowding and the distribution of food, drinks, incense and miswak twigs used to clean teeth, according to the ministry.

"My feelings are indescribable. We are so happy. Thank God we are back in (his) house," Abdulrahman, 45, told AFP at Al-Rajhi mosque. "All the precautionary measures have been put in place here." But some took to social media to complain that worshippers in other mosques were not strictly complying with the rules. "I prayed, praise be to God, in the neighborhood mosque... and it was a beautiful feeling," said one Twitter user. "But I swear to God that some people do not care about anything. No face mask. No rug."

Continued on Page 16



RIYADH: Worshippers observe a safe distance as they perform noon prayers at Al-Rajhi Mosque in the Saudi capital on Sunday. — AFP

US astronauts enter ISS after landmark trip

WASHINGTON: NASA astronauts entered the International Space Station on Sunday after a landmark 19-hour journey on the first crewed US spacecraft in nearly a decade, a triumph for SpaceX and private enterprise. The arrival completed the first leg of the trip, designed to test the capabilities of the Crew Dragon capsule. But the mission will only be declared a success when the astronauts return safely to Earth in a few months' time.

The spaceship's hatch opened at 1:02 pm Eastern Time (1702 GMT) as Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley carried out final procedures before crossing the threshold about 20 minutes later. Wearing black polo shirts and khaki pants, they were greeted by fellow American astronaut Chris Cassidy, as well as Russia cosmonauts Anatoli Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner. The five men posed for photos and then NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine spoke to the crew from mission control in Houston.

"Welcome to Bob and Doug," said Bridenstine. "I will tell you the whole world saw this mission, and we are so, so proud of
Continued on Page 16

Clashes outside White House; curfew in cities

WASHINGTON: Police fired tear gas outside the White House late Sunday as anti-racism protesters again took to the streets to voice fury at police brutality, and major US cities were put under curfew to suppress rioting. With the Trump administration branding instigators of six nights of rioting as domestic terrorists, there were more confrontations between protesters and police and fresh outbreaks of looting.

Violent clashes erupted repeatedly in a small park next to the White

House, with authorities using tear gas, pepper spray and flash bang grenades to disperse crowds who lit several large fires and damaged property. Local US leaders appealed to citizens to give constructive outlet to their rage over the death of an unarmed black man in Minneapolis, while night-time curfews were imposed in cities including Washington, Los Angeles and Houston.

One closely watched protest was outside the state capitol in
Continued on Page 16



WASHINGTON: Protesters jump on a street sign near a burning barricade during a demonstration against the death of George Floyd near the White House on Sunday. — AFP

Manila comes back to life as threat lingers

MANILA: Millions of people returned to work in the Philippine capital yesterday as one of the world's strictest and longest coronavirus lockdowns was eased to help resuscitate an economy that has been bat-

tered by the closure. Public transport such as trains and shuttle buses were allowed to operate in Manila but on a limited scale, forcing commuters to wait in long queues for hours, and leaving hundreds of workers stranded.

"I have to go back to work," said Steven John Cabusao, who walked several kilometers on his first day of work after being confined to his home for 11 weeks. Cabusao, 24, who works as a maintenance planner at an aviation firm, said his need to earn a living
Continued on Page 16



MANILA: Passengers travel on a train yesterday, usually packed during rush hour, with plastic sheets spacing out seats to ensure social distancing. — AFP

Local

Parliament Speaker: Kuwait Education Minister's grilling on table of 1st session

MP charges minister with mismanagement in shadow of coronavirus crisis

Pandemic Diaries

Our new normal



By Jamie Etheridge

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Day two of Phase 1 of the return to normal life in Kuwait. Streets are busy, drive thru queues in the double digits and people out walking everywhere. We took our daughters to the beach at 6:00 am, careful to stay the appropriate social distance away from everyone else standing or sitting along the seashore, dipping their toes into the warm waters of the Gulf.

It felt amazing to be outside, to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine and to relax, for just a few precious moments, in the outdoors. It felt peaceful, almost.

But unfortunately there are tens of thousands in Kuwait still on lockdown, unable even to enjoy the simplest pleasures like a walk on the beach. And even those of us who can go out are still quite limited in what we can do. Parks are closed, malls are closed and even going to the grocery store runs the risk of coming in contact with others who might be infected.

We are both eager to resume something close to normal but still anxious about the deadly coronavirus and the possibility of getting sick. The result is a jerky, awkward rush to reconnect with the outside world while trying to stay as safe as possible.

While my children built a sand castle, masks covering their mouths and noses, I pondered the situation we now find ourselves in. Every day since this crisis began in late February has seemed like some surreal science fiction movie. Are we seeing the end of days? Or like the many pandemics that have come and gone before this, is this a rare but normal circumstance for the human race?

Today's coronavirus pandemic has often been compared with the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, where the death toll estimates range from 17 million to as high as 100 million. That pandemic came on the heels of World War I and was fueled more by malnourishment, poor hygiene and the complications caused by the war.

I wonder what the people living at that time thought. Did they imagine the pandemic to be the start of the end of the world, the decline of the human race? After having already suffered four years of one of the world's bloodiest and most atrocious conflicts. Security, stability and peaceful life weren't a part of their reality.

Nor are they part of ours.

KUWAIT: A motion to grill the education minister will be on agenda of the first forthcoming parliament session, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem announced on Sunday. In a statement at Abdullah Al-Salem Hall inside the National Assembly building, Ghanem affirmed his adherence to the parliament by-laws in this respect, notifying His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the minister to be grilled, Saud Al-Harbi, in addition to including the motion into the agenda of the upcoming parliamentary session.

“Session in one or two weeks”

The National Assembly Bureau was set to hold a meeting yesterday to set a date for the next session, “which may be held either next week or the week after,” he said, indicating that parliamentary committees would need some time to hold their sessions and finalize all required reports under examination, ahead of the session. Article 135 of the National Assembly Bylaw stipulates that, in such cases, the Speaker should inform the prime minister or the concerned minister instantly after receiving the interpellation motion: which in turn should be included in agenda of the coming session to set a date for debating the axis or axes, after listening to a statement

Kuwait flour Company touts ‘success’ during crisis

KUWAIT: Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company has succeeded in securing consumers' needs for some of the basic food supplies since breakout of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the company Chief Executive Officer Mutlaq Al-Zayed said yesterday. Zayed said in a statement to KUNA that the total amount of bread production, since March 1 until May 30, amounted to 411.5 million loaves of bread. Highest volume of daily output, during the coronavirus crisis, reached 7.2 million

Commerce Ministry penalizes 45 law breaking shops

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Commerce and Industry said yesterday that its inspection teams had filed reports against 45 multiple shops and shut down another shop in May for breaking law and guidelines put in place to rein in the



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem attends a parliament session in this file photo. — KUNA

by the minister addressed with the motion.

Earlier, it was announced that MP Faisal Al-Kanderi had submitted a motion to the parliament speaker, requesting interpellation of the Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Saud Al-Harbi. The single-axis motion charges the minister with mismanagement of the educational sector in shadow of the coronavirus crisis. Article 100 of Kuwait Constitution stipulates that each member of the National Assembly has the right to grill the prime minister or members of his cabinet about matters falling within their jurisdictions. — KUNA

loaves and lowest production per day, during the same period, amounted to 1.9 million loaves. Production in March stood at 169 million loaves, in April 130.5 million, and from May 1 until May 30, some 112 million loaves. The company has succeeded during the extraordinary circumstances in “translating concept of food security into reality,” he said, indicating that the experience during the crisis resulted in boosting confidence in the national company, which was established in 1961. — KUNA

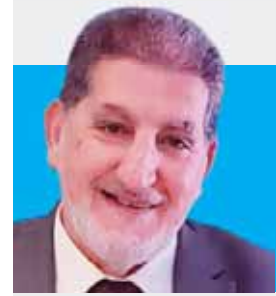


Mutlaq Al-Zayed

spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The ministry's trade control and consumers' protection sector had monitored a total of 2,938 cooperative societies and shops during the reported month in order to make sure they complied with the determined prices of products, the ministry said in a statement. It added that its teams had also inspected a total of 1,779 supply shops with a view to verifying the smooth process of selling and delivering food commodities to citizens, and re-opened another shop. It noted that its emergency center had received some 4,267 complaints through its hotlines 135 and 206, while 2,109 supply cards were renewed. — KUNA

In My View

COVID-19 and us



By Abdellatif Sharaa

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The fight against COVID-19 has been raging for six months, and still there is no apparent end to it. Yet we the people can bring about a virtual victorious end sooner than we expect, and possibly decisively! Yes, do not wonder. It has been proven during these six months that a potent immune device does exist with us and its cost is absolute zero, while its yield is priceless.

This device is our behavior and common sense. When health authorities talked about social distancing, many were skeptical, but as the days went by, it became evident that this is a strong remedy against this lingering virus. Then the curfews came because we did not take social distancing seriously, or did not practice it as it should have been done.

The curfews in many countries, including Kuwait, helped a lot in controlling the spread of the infection, and some countries have dropped to four or five daily cases, mostly imported ones, because of this measure. Here in Kuwait, the high numbers are not alarming because they seem to be in the same areas, and the numbers are coming out due to the aggressive testing that is taking place.

Now that the partial curfew is restored and for longer hours, please, please follow instructions. Mind you, all these instructions are coming from health authorities and no one else. I am not tired of saying wash your hands correctly and frequently and wear a fresh mask each time you go out. Wash your clothes more often. Take off your shoes at the doorstep when you return home. Sterilize door handles. All this to ensure that coronavirus remains on the ground, because only we allow it to move up and enter our breathing system.

Television personality Ahmad Al-Shuqairi wrote a number of points and called them lessons we learned from the coronavirus pandemic crisis, and I would like to share some of them with you:

- China won the so-called WWII without firing a single bullet.
- European countries are not educated and developed to the point we thought they were.
- Rich people are less immune than the poor.
- There is no monk or sorcerer who can cure coronavirus.
- The health community deserves more recognition than sports and show business legends get.
- Oil has no value in a society without consumption.
- Even animals feel the health quarantine.
- The planet gets renewed without human intervention.
- Most people can work from home.
- We all can live without unhealthy fast food.
- Getting used to a healthy lifestyle is not difficult.
- Media is full of nonsense.
- Men can prepare food.
- Life is very fragile, so deal with it cautiously.
- Crises bring out people's true behaviors.
- We must reset our life's priorities, most important of which is building more schools and hospitals.
- We learned the feelings of animals while caged.
- We can spend our vacations at home normally and travel is not a must.

Final word: “This is a historic moment in global public health demonstrating the international will to tackle a threat to health head on.” —Gro Harlem Brundtland

Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 27,043 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of Sunday, in addition to 212 deaths. With the exception of 200 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, 12,899 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 13,932 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.

Local

Kuwait watchdog asserts cooperation with prosecution regarding 1MDB

Communication channel opened with Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) stressed Sunday that they are fully cooperating with the Public Prosecution regarding global reports of a relationship between Kuwait and the Malaysian sovereign fund, the 1Malaysia Development Berhad, also known as 1MDB, including charges of laundering operations and suspicions of corruption.

In a press release, Nazaha said they are in cooperation with prosecution because they are a responsible local judicial investigation authority that will provide any information and data obtained by the authority regarding the issue to the general prosecution, including information obtained that have a direct or indirect relationship with the damages to state capital.

In the statement, the spokesperson and Assistant Secretary-General for Nazaha Dr Mohamed Buzubar said, "the authority followed closely and with great interest news about Kuwait's relationship to money laundering operations and suspicions of corruption in the case known as 1MDB." Buzubar added that the authority has started collecting information and data at the local level, communicating with relevant authorities, and opening a communication channel with

the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MICC) to exchange information and collect inferences.

He stressed that this comes in recognition of their ethical role to exercise its rights entrusted to it under the law of executive regulations, and in accordance with its obligations towards the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). In addition to cabinet assignment to follow up on this matter, the statement added.

MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari on Sunday demanded forming a parliamentary investigations committee to look into alleged involvement of former state officials in suspected corruption and money laundering operations worth billions of dollars that included funding North Korea's nuclear programme and corruption related to Malaysia's sovereign wealth fund.

The lawmaker 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 the North Korean nuclear activities in which the name of Kuwait was mentioned. "The image of Kuwait and its financial institutions is at stake because of a number of international scandals," he said.



In accordance with int'l obligations



KUWAIT: Signs remind residents to remain vigilant, as they drive along a highway in Kuwait City on May 31, 2020, after authorities eased some of the restrictive measures put in place during the coronavirus pandemic crisis. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

News in brief

COVID-19 patient commits suicide

KUWAIT: A Nepalese man committed suicide at the field hospital in Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref, where he was recovering from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The victim's body was found hanging from a rope inside a toilet at the facility.

Co-op employee dies

KUWAIT: Omariya Co-op Society announced that employee Mahmoud Ahmad Al-Shabarikhiti passed away from coronavirus. He was among five staff members who recently tested positive for the virus. The co-op was closed yesterday to allow testing for all of its employees.

Fish market open

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce announced that people can book an appointment through www.moci.shop at fish markets around the country. They can also use the online portal to make appointments to shop from the Forda for fruits and vegetables market.

Eleven flights

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced that 11 flights departed Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying a total of 2,546 passengers. They include seven flights to Egypt, one flight to Qatar, two flights to India, and one flight to Bangladesh.

WHO lauds Kuwait

ADEN: The World Health Organization has hailed Kuwait's generous backing to the health sector of the war-torn Yemen. In a press statement on Sunday, the WHO office in Yemen said that the Kuwaiti aid has helped keep operation of the Yemeni healthcare facilities. It pointed out that Kuwait has helped provide drugs, fuel and drinking water for 109 hospitals and health centers across Yemen.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Vehicles queue in front of a drive thru fast food restaurant in Kuwait City on May 31, 2020, after authorities eased some of the restrictive measures put in place during the coronavirus pandemic crisis. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Facing pandemic with art: 'Kuwait is Our Home' online gallery extended



.KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) launched part two of its 'Kuwait is Our Home' online gallery, featuring works by 58 artists from Kuwait and the Arab world. NCCAL had decided to extend the gallery, which it had launched in Ramadan, after the strong turnout it received. Secretary General Kamel Al-Abduljaleel said. The idea behind the gallery came about to allow artists to share their works in hopes of alleviating some of the mental and psychological pressure people feel under lockdown and other measures taken around the Arab world due to the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), said Ibtisam Al-Asfour, Free Art Atelier member. The participating artworks can be viewed on the Free Art Atelier's Instagram account @kwti_artist. — KUNA

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Local

Kuwaiti troops deploy around top densely-populated district



KUWAIT: Kuwait Army troops were deployed on Sunday around Farwaniya in line with a Cabinet resolution in this respect. The Army said in a statement the "Duty Force Al-Sanad" was stationed around the district, implementing a government decision to impose full isolation on a number of residential districts in the country. The squad had been established to back up other state authorities amid current circumstances prevailing in the country due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The Cabinet, in its latest session, decided to isolate a number of densely-populated districts including Hawally, in one of latest measures in the face of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Farwaniya is considered the top densely populated district in Kuwait, with an estimated population of 24,000 people. Kuwait has taken a series of measures to cope with the outbreak. A total lockdown has been eased into a partial one, with residents allowed to venture out from 6 am to 6 pm. The easing process is in five phases, each lasting three weeks, until reaching full restoration of regular life, tentatively due in middle of September. All food supplies and other necessities are secured for the isolated areas. Vehicles of companies distributing products and goods to groceries and other stores are allowed to pass through security checkpoints around the confined districts. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Shuwaikh Industrial area was overcrowded on Sunday when car repair shops were allowed to reopen following the end of total curfew on most areas around Kuwait. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh





Hong Kong: What losing US 'special status' mean for?

At least 50 die in Burkina attacks



NEW YORK: A refrigerator truck to be used as a makeshift morgue is parked at NYU Langone Hospital in New York City. — AFP photos

Latin America cases top 1 million

UK and Russia ease COVID lockdowns

BRASILIA: Confirmed coronavirus cases in Latin America have surged past one million, while hard-hit Britain and Russia eased lockdowns yesterday, despite not having their outbreaks fully under control. Governments around the world are moving to ease restrictions that have wrecked their economies, even as the number of cases tops 6.1 million and virus deaths exceed 371,000. With more than half a million known infections, Brazil now has the second-highest caseload in the world, but its anti-lockdown President Jair Bolsonaro again defied social distancing recommendations on Sunday. Wearing no face mask, the far-right leader met a tightly packed group of supporters in the capital Brasilia as the crowd chanted "Myth! Myth! Myth!" - echoing his dismissal of the virus threat.

Bolsonaro has been a staunch opponent of lockdowns as a tool for containing the coronavirus, saying they are unnecessary and harmful to the economy, but he has faced intense criticism from worried state authorities and angry citizens. Despite his skepticism, the virus rages on in Brazil and other parts of South America, with the situation in Chile, Bolivia and Peru also worsening. While South America and parts of Africa and Asia have only just started to feel the full force of the pandemic, hard-hit European countries have cautiously begun easing lockdowns as they seek a return to some form of normality. But experts have cautioned that moving too fast could spell disaster, with no vaccine or effective treatment yet for COVID-19.

In Britain, where schools were set to partially reopen, some senior government advisers warned things

were happening too rapidly. "COVID-19 spreading too fast to lift lockdown in England," tweeted Jeremy Farrar, a member of the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies. Hard-hit Russia, which saw an explosion of infections in recent weeks, was also set to re-open shopping malls and parks in Moscow, despite the still-high number of cases. While Muscovites welcomed the opportunity after weeks of being cooped up at home, many ridiculed Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin's "experiment" aimed at regulating people's walks and exercise based on their home address. Popular comedian Maxim Galkin even released a sketch about President Vladimir Putin and Sobyenin discussing a "breathing schedule" for the capital's residents.

Global death toll exceeds 371,000



'A beautiful feeling'
The pandemic has devastated the global economy, which is facing its worst downturn since the Great Depression, and with businesses and citizens growing tired of confinement, there is pressure on many leaders to press on with reopenings - especially in nations where outbreaks appear to be slowing. In the United States - the worst-affected nation in the world - Washington and Los Angeles resumed outdoor dining, while New York City is on track to begin re-opening from June 8.

In France, parks in Paris opened on the weekend for the first time in months, ahead of restaurants, cafes and bars being allowed to serve on sidewalks and terraces on Tuesday. But health experts have continued to warn of the possibility of a second wave of infections if authorities and citizens let their guard down, especially if they risk large gatherings of people like concerts, fes-



LIMA: Relatives carry 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.

tivals and religious services. With the outbreak in Italy slowing, Pope Francis made his first address to the faithful in Saint Peter's square in nearly three months. In Saudi Arabia, mask-clad worshippers thronged mosques that opened nationwide - except in the holy city of Makkah. "I prayed, praise be to God, in the neighborhood mosque... and it was a beautiful feeling," said one worshipper, though he was concerned about others not taking necessary precautions. "I swear to God that some people do not care about anything. No face mask. No rug."

'Distancing is impossible in Dhaka'

Asia was the first continent hit by the virus after it emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year, and neighboring countries saw their economies hammered by the outbreak - especially the aviation and

tourism sectors. Some Asian countries have started on a tentative path to recovery, such as Thailand, which relies heavily on tourist spending. The kingdom has now re-opened beaches nationwide after two months of lockdown to try to revive tourism. But other, much more populous nations have moved to relax restrictions despite not entirely containing the disease. India announced it would begin easing the world's biggest lockdown in early June, even as it marked another record daily rise in infections. Neighboring Bangladesh, meanwhile, lifted its lockdown on Sunday, with millions heading back to work in densely populated cities, even as the country logged record spikes in new deaths and infections. "I tried to avoid crowds when I walked to my office," banker Badrul Islam told AFP in the Bangladeshi capital. "But social distancing is impossible on Dhaka's footpaths." —AFP

For Russia, SpaceX success 'wakeup call'

MOSCOW: Russia has lost its long-held monopoly as the only country able to ferry astronauts to the International Space Station following the flawless manned launch by US company SpaceX. The Russian space agency congratulated the United States and Elon Musk's SpaceX on the first crewed flight ever by a private company, but experts said the launch should be a wakeup call for Roscosmos. "The success of the mission will provide us with additional opportunities that will benefit the whole international program," cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev, Roscosmos executive director for crewed space programs, said in a brief video address.

Saturday's launch was the first of American astronauts from US soil since the mothballing of the US shuttle program in 2011 that left Russia's more basic and reliable Soyuz spacecraft solely responsible for transporting crews. Astronauts since then have all trained at Star City outside Moscow and studied Russian before blasting off from Baikonur launchpad in Kazakhstan. "These flights have been an unexpected chance for Moscow to keep producing Soyuz and retain a significant voice in negotiations over the ISS," said Isabelle Sourbes-Vergier, a specialist in space policy at the French National Centre for Scientific Research. The Russian space agency has also earned large sums by ferrying astronauts: a seat in the Soyuz costs NASA around \$80 million.

If SpaceX starts taking up all US astronauts, "the annual losses could be more than \$200 million, a significant loss for Roscosmos's budget of around \$2 billion," said Andrei Ionin, an expert at the Tsiolkovsky Space Academy in Moscow. While Musk, the ambitious entrepreneur behind SpaceX, has named the price of a seat on his spacecraft as \$60 million, Roscosmos chief Dmitry Rogozin has announced Russia is working to cut its price by 30 percent. Ionin voiced scepticism over the plan. "SpaceX is saving money by using cheap engines and manufacturing almost all its own parts," he said. "To do this, Russia would have to change its production process." Another option is a barter system proposed by NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine: for every Russian riding in a US spaceship, one American would take a Soyuz.

'Wakeup call'

In a broader sense, the appearance of a rival such as SpaceX should be a "wakeup call" for the Russian space industry, which is "in far worse shape than those in charge admit," said Ionin. A decade ago Russia was behind a large proportion of the world's launches, but that is no longer the case today due to competition from China and SpaceX. "When we were losing the launches market, Roscosmos said everything was fine because we were the only ones sending people up to the ISS. Now that fig leaf has fallen off."

Russia's space sector is marred by corruption, with multiple scandals over the construction of the new Vostochny launchpad in the Far East. The country's space industry has also failed to innovate, concentrating on modifying "Soviet technology without any major evolution," Ionin said. The Russian space program is renowned for having sent the first man into space in 1961 and launching the first satellite four years earlier, and its achievements remain a major



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying the Crew Dragon spacecraft takes off from launch complex 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. — AFP

source of national pride. But more recently it has endured a series of setbacks, notably losing expensive spacecraft and satellites in recent years. The rise of private companies like SpaceX, which has ambitions to conquer Mars, risks leaving Russia irreversibly far behind, experts said.

Mars next?

For Russia to keep up, a government body independent of the space sector's main players needs to develop a new strategy, Ionin said. "US President (Donald) Trump reestablished a body - the National Space Council - to set policy goals. We need to do the same thing." Some observers sense a lack of political will from President Vladimir Putin who appears to be

more focused on using rocket science to develop military capabilities, particularly hypersonic missiles. "For Putin, space exploration isn't a priority when it comes to showing off the might of the state," said independent space expert Vitaly Yegorov.

For Ionin, reinvigorating the Russian space program requires international cooperation, too. Sourbes-Vergier suggested any manned international mission to Mars "could be an opportunity for Russia to regain its standing by sharing its skills." But, she said, the costs of any such mission would be so high that China - now the world's second space power in terms of launches - would need to be included. Yet that prospect seems unlikely, she added, given that "the US Congress refuses any space cooperation with China." —AFP

International

Sadness on border as France turns back Belgian trippers

EU nations struggle amid lockdown

SAINT-AYBERT: For hundreds of Belgians hoping to spend time with French friends and relatives after almost three months of lockdown, the sunny holiday weekend proved a grim disappointment. While families with ties in the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg were able to put the coronavirus epidemic out of their minds for a short while, the French border remained shut. Belgian travellers without written proof that they were on essential business were turned back by French police, despite an announcement from their own government that reunions and shopping trips can resume.

Renee-France Ringard had tears in her eyes as she told AFP how she had hoped to cross into France to see her elderly father in the suburbs of Lille for the first time in more than two-and-a-half-months. "The police officer told us there had been no coordination between the French and the Belgians," she told AFP at the frontier, before turning back for the 100-kilometre reverse trip to Brussels. The European Commission has attempted to coordinate the EU response to the global pandemic, but health measures are a matter for member states and the once largely border-free bloc is now a patchwork of regulations. Capitals are beginning to relax their rules, hoping they can revive the devastated tourism industry in time for the summer season, but the return to work is just as chaotic as was the scramble to lock the continent down.

"Since this morning, more than 100 vehicles have had to turn around," a French police officer told AFP in the border town of Saint-Aybert. "We've received no new orders so we're running the checks as be-

fore." Under French lockdown rules, travellers must have a signed statement explaining a pressing need for a journey - such as an essential work mission, a cross-border commute or transporting a child to a parent with joint custody. But on Friday, Belgium's Interior Minister Pieter De Crem announced that Belgians could from Saturday once again visit their loved ones, or even just do their shopping, in neighboring countries. Luxembourg welcomed this, and travellers crossed into Germany and the Netherlands without much trouble, but no-one seems to have told France.

'Seems unfair'

"We saw the Belgian minister on the television," said Yvon Mathurin and Paule Wetz, a couple in their fifties, who were looking forward to seeing their daughter and grandchildren in Aniche, 50 kilometers inside France. "It seems unfair. There's no coordination in Europe," Wetz complained. Mathurin, meanwhile, reflected a mood of frustration in a Belgium that has adapted to a continent without borders: "The governments should agree something." In a mark of how banal popping into France had become before the epidemic, Andre Dhaeyer just wanted to get some cheese and mineral water. He was bemused but less upset than those divided from loved ones to be turned back after hearing news of a re-opening on the radio and setting off for France. "Well, I'm not going to die of thirst," he said. A Belgian government spokesman admitted there has been some "confusion in the press" and the interior ministry said French residents can visit their families in Belgium, even if the reverse will not be true until at least June 15. — AFP



QUEVY: A Belgian Police officer controls the documents of a person in a car at the border between Belgium and France during a police patrol in Quevy. — AFP

Spot where 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 un-



MINNEAPOLIS: Tear gas rises above as protesters face off with police during a demonstration outside the White House over the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police. — AFP

folded 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."

'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. — AFP

Thousands face homelessness in relocation push

PIRAEUS: The 44-year-old Syrian and his family are among thousands of recognized refugees about to lose the temporary homes they were given under Greece's asylum seeker housing scheme. As of yesterday, authorities started moving more than 11,200 people out of flats, hotels and camps on the mainland, to make room for other asylum seekers currently living in dismal island camps. Rahmoun's family has been given until the end of June to vacate his small EU-funded flat in the port of Piraeus. But he has little confidence that they will find alternative accommodation by then.

"We risk finding ourselves on the street," the haggard former taxi driver and father of two told AFP. Greek officials say housing must be secured for other vulnerable asylum seekers on the islands, many of whom "sleep under trees", Manos Logothetis, the migration ministry's asylum secretary, said earlier this week. The migration ministry says the ESTIA accommodation system, managed by the UN refugee agency UNHCR, is designed for asylum seekers. Once they become full-fledged refugees they have the right to apply for Greek tax and social insurance numbers, and should therefore find jobs, the ministry says.

Refugee support groups note that although this is technically true, in reality applicants face insurmountable difficulties. The country was recovering from a decade-long debt crisis and jobs were already scarce before the coronavirus pandemic, which is expected to bring additional layoffs. Refugees



PIRAEUS: Asil Nadawi, an Iraqi recognised refugee, sits with one of her twins, at her family apartment in the working class district of Piraeus near Athens. — AFP

with precarious incomes also face reluctance from Greek landlords when they seek to rent lodgings on their own. "UNHCR is seriously concerned about thousands of recognized refugees expected to leave Greece's reception system from the end of May," Boris Cheshirkov, UNHCR spokesman in Greece, told AFP. "Recognized refugees are expected to leave assistance but they do not have effective access to social benefits and support," he said, adding that the language barrier is a further impediment.

The International Organization for Migration runs a separate integration program, IELIOS, that offers language courses, help with job-hunting and accommodation support. But at most the scheme can assist only 3,500 people at a time. As he is now expected to fend for himself, Rahmoun says his monthly benefit of 400 euros (\$440) will also be cut. The family from Idlib changed homes several times to protect themselves from bombardment during Syria's civil war, before eventu-

ally fleeing the country. Now, after "struggling to survive" for the past decade, they must "start from zero again", Rahmoun said. Several neighbors in the block of flats where Rahmoun's family live face a similar predicament. Out of 10 families in the building, six have been told they must leave in June.

One family from Iraq includes a father in a wheelchair and a five-year-old girl who requires assisted feeding through a gastric tube. "We have a disabled father and sister. How could the Greek government be throwing us out into the street? This is cruelty," says the family's eldest son Mustafa. Migration Minister Notis Mitarachi has said the housing transfer process had been due to start in April but was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Refugees used to be able to keep their accommodation for up to six months after receiving protected status. The new conservative government of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has reduced this period to just a month. — AFP

Londoners rally outside US embassy

LONDON: Hundreds of Londoners defied coronavirus restrictions and rallied outside the US embassy on Sunday in solidarity with protests raging across the United States over the death of an unarmed black man during an arrest. The death of George Floyd in Minnesota has sparked five consecutive nights of often violent protests that resulted in National Guard troops patrolling majority US cities on Sunday.

The London protesters chanted: "No justice, no peace" and "Enough is enough" as they marched towards the US embassy compound on the southern bank of the Thames River. Shouting "Say his name! George Floyd!" they held up "Black Lives Matter" signs outside the embassy building. Earlier, a few hundred had earlier gathered in Trafalgar Square in the heart of London for a vigil that saw everyone kneel for nine minutes - the amount of time

Pastor preaches love, and firmness

MINNEAPOLIS: In the Shiloh Temple church's parking lot, a pastor releases two doves into the Minneapolis sky on this Pentecost Sunday before a mainly African-American congregation sitting in their cars and seeking comfort in troubled times. The birds, their plumage as white as the pastor's suit, fly high over a city shaken by violent protests since a black man, George Floyd, died prostrate on a city street, his wrists shackled behind him and with a white policeman's knee crushing his neck. "People are sick and tired, and we see a lot of frustration, a lot of anger," said pastor Andre Dupree Dukes.

"However, we are not riotous people, we are peaceful people. And so we do our best to try to maintain the peace." For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the country, Dukes organized services on his church grounds, but only on a "drive-in" basis to limit any risk of spreading the virus. Parked in their cars, the faithful honked their horns to signal "Amen's" - and in noisy support when Dukes issued a warning to rioters, saying, "If they come to destroy our community, we cannot allow that, we cannot tolerate that kind of behavior."

'To get some clarity'

"What we hope to hear today is really to lift us up ... and that's gonna keep us going beyond the hate that's going on in the world, and give us what we need to go out and be world changers," said Jalila Abdul-Brow, a 38-year-old pastor in a neighboring

community, who was filming the service with her cell phone. Another woman, children's book author Tina Turner, sat alone in her car, wearing a mask. "With the rioting, the protesting and the looting, it can be quite confusing. And so to be able to pull up to this point, to get some clarity, means a lot to me," she said. In his sermon, Dukes addressed the younger generation, congratulating them for their capacity to mobilize and their commitment to creating a more just world. But he also warns them against violence. Words of caution also came from 62-year-old Jack Burnett, a church manager who oversaw the logistics of Sunday's services. "Our children have been pathologically enthusiastic about getting out because they've been in for so long, no school, they needed a cause, they need a reason to get out and now they have a cause and it's bigger than themselves," he said. "So they're out (but) it's hard to put that genie back in the bottle."

Love and firmness

A few white faces could be seen in the gathering. Most were not members of the church but came with offerings for a food bank. At the end of the service, a few of the faithful emerged from their cars, stretched and engaged in some lively dance steps before heading home. Pleased at the chance to preach in person for the first time in two and a half months, Dukes said he tried to strike the right balance, "to always show love," but to also "stand firm." Young people, he said, are "very vocal about the injustices" and are adept with modern technology, so that George Floyd's death was filmed on Monday morning and "by that evening, the entire world knew." "So we try to walk alongside of them. But if they come to destroy our community, we cannot allow that... People are already suffering here." — AFP

International

India expels Pakistan embassy officials over 'spying activities'

India's foreign ministry slams 'baseless' allegations

NEW DELHI: Two officials at Pakistan's High Commission in New Delhi were being expelled for "espionage activities", India's foreign ministry said late Sunday, allegations its nuclear-armed rival called "baseless". Tensions are already heightened between the neighboring foes over the Himalayan region of Kashmir, which was split between them in 1947 when they gained independence from Britain.

"The government has declared both these officials persona non grata for indulging in activities incompatible with their status as members of a diplomatic mission," the ministry said in a statement. The pair had to leave the country "within 24 hours" and Pakistan's charge d'affaires was issued with a "strong protest" over their alleged activities, the ministry said. Pakistan's foreign ministry said it "strongly rejects the baseless Indian allegations" and called Delhi's action a "clear violation of the Vienna Convention... especially in an already vitiated atmosphere".

Kashmir has become a bigger source of tension in relations between the regional powers after New Delhi last August scrapped the Muslim-majority region's semi-autonomous status and imposed a curfew. In response, Islamabad at that time said it would recall its ambassador from Delhi and send back the Indian envoy. Late Sunday, Pakistan summoned India's

charge d'affaires to express its "condemnation" of the expulsion order. India and Pakistan have fought three wars against each other since independence, including two over Kashmir where they have rival claims.

There have also been numerous flare-ups between the two foes, including in February 2019 when they conducted tit-for-tat air strikes. Rebel groups in Indian-administered Kashmir have battled for decades for the region's independence or its merger with Pakistan, and enjoy broad popular support. Since 1989 the fighting has left tens of thousands dead, mostly civilians. India has more than 500,000 troops stationed in

Kashmir, where clashes are a common occurrence but last month extended into the regional capital Srinagar. Police said a key rebel leader was killed during the first shootout between Indian government forces and militants to hit the city's center in two years.

Friction with neighbors Sunday's expulsion

order came after a German court in early May said an Indian national will stand trial there in August accused of spying on Sikh and Kashmiri communities for New Delhi's secret service. India is also experiencing increased friction with its other neighbours China and Nepal. India has several disputes with regional superpower China along their 3,500-kilometre (2,175-mile)



Kashmir tensions heighten



NEW DELHI: A motorist rides past the main gate of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

border. Hundreds of Indian and Chinese troops are involved in the latest face-off concentrated in India's Ladakh region just opposite Tibet. New Delhi has turned down US President Donald Trump's offer to mediate that dispute. The Nepalese government in

mid-May drew up a new political map that includes strategically important territory it disputes with India. The new map followed protests in Nepal after its bigger neighbor inaugurated an 80-kilometre road in Uttarakhnad state leading up to a disputed pass. — AFP

Deadly Storm hits El Salvador and Guatemala

SAN SALVADOR: Tropical Storm Amanda, the first named storm of the season in the Pacific, killed at least 14 people as it lashed El Salvador and Guatemala on Sunday amid flooding and power outages. El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele declared a state of emergency for 15 days to cope with the effects of the storm, which weakened later in the day as it moved into Guatemala. The fatalities were all recorded in El Salvador, interior minister Mario Duran said, warning that the death toll could rise. Amanda knocked down trees, triggered flash floods and landslides, caused power outages, and damaged about 200 homes, the head of the Civil Protection Service William Hernandez said.

One person is still missing, senior government official Carolina Recinos added. San Salvador Mayor Ernesto Muyschondt said half of those killed died in the capital. "We are experiencing an unprecedented situation: one top-level emergency on top of another serious one," he said, referring to the coronavirus pandemic. About 4,200 people sought refuge in government-run shelters after losing their homes or being forced to leave because they were in high-risk areas, Muyschondt added. In some flooded areas, soldiers worked alongside emergency personnel to rescue people. "We lost everything, we've been left with nowhere to live," said Isidro Gomez, a resident of hard-hit southeastern San Salvador, after a nearby river overflowed and destroyed his home. Another victim, Mariano Ramos, said that at dawn residents of his San Salvador neighborhood were slammed by an avalanche of mud and water. An elderly man died in the area, officials said. El Salvador's Environment Ministry warned residents of the "high probability" of multiple landslides that could damage buildings and injure or kill people. — AFP

Hong Kong: What losing US 'special status' mean for?

HONG KONG: Washington's declaration this week that Hong Kong is no longer sufficiently autonomous from China was a historic moment with potentially far-reaching consequences for the finance hub - though much depends on President Donald Trump. The revocation of special status could radically rearrange the fortunes of a city that has served for decades as the global economic gateway to China. On Friday, Trump vowed to strip the city of certain trade privileges, saying Beijing's plan to impose a sweeping national security law on the semi-autonomous city was a "tragedy". But he was light on specifics and the declaration could end up being little more than symbolic.

What is special status?

In the run-up to Britain returning Hong Kong to China in 1997, a "one country, two systems" deal was forged to allow the city to maintain certain freedoms and autonomy for 50 years. Those liberties included a free market economy, an independent judiciary, free speech and legislative autonomy. As a result, many countries, including the United States, brought in laws that allowed them to treat Hong Kong as a separate trade entity to the authoritarian and economically restrictive mainland.

The arrangement allowed Hong Kong to flourish into a world-class financial centre on a par with London and New York. Reciprocal visa-free travel deals, a dollar-pegged currency, the world's fourth-largest stock exchange as well as business-friendly laws, taxes and legal protections greased the wheels of commerce. If Washington opts for hardline measures it would risk "all of the financial connectivity that China has to the free market", according to Robert Spalding, a US-China expert at the Hudson Institute. "Once that goes away,



HONG KONG: Pro-democracy protesters gather during a 'Lunch With You' rally at a shopping mall in the Central district of Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

stocks, bonds, financial transactions, SWIFT, all of that is imperilled," he told Bloomberg News

What happens next?

Trump has certainly indicated he plans to follow up with some concrete measures. On Friday he instructed officials "to begin the process of eliminating policy that gives Hong Kong different and special treatment". "This will affect the full range of agreements, from our extradition treaty to our export controls on dual-use technologies and more, with few exceptions," he added. However, no specific plans were unveiled. Julian Ku, an expert on international law at Hofstra University, said the president has "lots of flexibility". "I expect him to take some major steps that would show China he is serious, but not to change every US law that applies to Hong Kong," he said. — AFP

How did this come about?

The decision to begin revoking Hong Kong's special status was sparked by growing fears that Beijing is prematurely stamping out freedoms. Of most recent concern is a plan to ban subversion and acts endangering national security after months of pro-democracy protests last year. Beijing says the law is needed to curb "terrorism" and "separatism". Opponents fear it will be used to snuff out dissent like on the authoritarian mainland. Hong Kong's fate has produced rare bipartisan support in Washington with lawmakers last year passing a bill punishing China. One of the provisions was for the State Department to certify each year whether Hong Kong maintains enough autonomy from China to justify its special status. On Wednesday the State Department decided it did not. — AFP

At least 50 die in Burkina attacks

OUAGADOUGOU: Ten people were killed when an aid convoy was ambushed in Burkina Faso, the government said Sunday, bringing to at least 50 the death toll from a string of attacks blamed on jihadists. The ambush occurred on Saturday near the northern town of Barsalogo, it said in a statement, adding that an attack on a livestock market in the east of the country earlier in the day had claimed 25 lives, according to a provisional toll.

The humanitarian convoy was returning from the northern town of Foubé after delivering food there, the statement said. At least five civilians and five gendarmes were killed and around 20 people were injured. Saturday's attacks came a day after a convoy of mainly shopkeepers escorted by a local self-defense unit came under fire in the north of the West African country, killing 15 people. That attack, in Loroum province, was also blamed on jihadists. The east and north of the former French colony are the hardest hit by attacks by jihadists, who have killed more than 900 people and caused some 860,000 people to flee their homes in the past five years. A local governor, Colonel Saidou

Sanou, said in a statement that the bloodshed underlined the need for the army and locals to work together to "defeat the terrorist hydra".

Increasingly frequent attacks

Burkina Faso, one of the world's poorest countries, has battled a jihadist insurgency since 2015. The conflict has provoked attacks on ethnic Fulani herders whom other communities accuse of supporting the militants. Burkina Faso's armed forces are leading counter-terror operations with increasing frequency. The Sahel country is part of a regional effort to battle an Islamist insurgency along with Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Chad. But their militaries, under-equipped and poorly trained, are struggling despite help from France, which has 5,000 troops in the region.

Attacks have in fact intensified in Burkina Faso since last year, becoming practically a daily occurrence. A security source said the country had become a haven for jihadists as a result of former president Blaise Compaore's role as a mediator, notably to obtain the release of Western hostages. Compaore was overthrown in 2014. Numerous foreigners have been kidnapped in Burkina Faso, with six believed held in a Mali camp near the Burkina border. The wife of one of them, elderly Australian doctor Kenneth Elliot, released a video on Friday appealing for him to be freed. Unrest in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger killed around 4,000 people last year, according to UN figures. — AFP

US anti-racism protests stretch to New Zealand

WELLINGTON: Protests sweeping the United States over the death of George Floyd reverberated on the other side of the globe yesterday as thousands marched in solidarity on the streets of New Zealand. The rallies were peaceful in contrast to the days of violent protests in the US after Floyd, an African-American, died after being handcuffed and as a white police officer, who has since been charged with murder, knelt on his neck. In Auckland, about 2,000 people marched to the US Consulate chanting "no justice no peace" and "black lives matter".

Another 500 gathered in Christchurch, and a large crowd was expected to maintain a candlelit vigil outside the parliament buildings in Wellington. Nigerian-New Zealand musician, Mazbou Q, who organized the protest, said the gatherings were not just about the death of Floyd. "The ongoing persecution of the black community is an ongoing phenomenon. The same white supremacy which has led to disproportionate killings of black people in the US exists here in New Zealand," he told the crowd.

"We pride ourselves on being a nation of empathy, kindness and love. But the silence from the government and the media



WELLINGTON: New Zealand protesters hold a vigil against the killing of Minneapolis man George Floyd in a Black Lives Matter protest outside Parliament in Wellington yesterday. — AFP

does not reflect that at all. In fact, it makes us complicit." In Christchurch, where 51 people were killed by a self-proclaimed white supremacist last year, one speaker, Josephine Varghese, told the crowd: "We demand racial and economic justice. Black lives matter, indigenous lives matter, Muslim lives matter." Police maintained a low-

key presence as the protesters defied strict coronavirus regulations demanding gatherings be restricted to a maximum 100 people, who must maintain social distancing. New Zealand is on the verge of eliminating coronavirus with no new cases for 10 days. Of 1,154 confirmed cases, only one remains active. — AFP

Business

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10 Asia's factory pain worsens as China's recovery falters



10 ECB plans to pump up eurozone support as pandemic persists



11 Russian small businesses reopen to uncertain future



SYDNEY: Shoppers with face masks walk through a shopping district in central Sydney. Australia's three decades of uninterrupted prosperity are coming to an abrupt end as the global coronavirus pandemic crashes one of its most lucrative sources of income – immigration. —AFP

Australia's migrant boom ends abruptly

Pandemic derails three decades of uninterrupted golden economic run

SYDNEY: Australia's three decades of uninterrupted prosperity are coming to an abrupt end as the global coronavirus pandemic crashes one of its most lucrative sources of income – immigration.

The country has been successful in managing the outbreak and reopening its A\$2 trillion (\$1.33 trillion) economy, thanks in part to an early closure of its borders. But the policy has led to a halt in mass immigration – a key source of consumer demand, labor and growth – in an economy which is facing its first recession since the early 1990s.

Net immigration, including international students and those on skilled worker visas, is expected to fall 85 percent in the fiscal year to June 2021, curbing demand for everything from cars and property to education and wedding rings. Gurmeet Tuli, who owns a jewelry store in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta, said his business is already hurting in a neighborhood which is home to tens of thousands of migrants.

"My main clientele is young people who come here to study, they find work here and settle down, fall in love and want to get married," Tuli said.

"I have not sold a single diamond ring in the past two months," he added, noting business is down about 40 percent so far this year. So critical is migration to Australia that analysts reckon the economy would have slipped into a recession last year without new arrivals to boost population growth.

AMP Capital Chief Economist Shane Oliver estimates that population growth in recent years has boosted the economy by about one percentage point per year.

But as migration stalls, education, housing and tourism sectors are seen among the worst hit. The drought in international student arrivals, who in recent years made up about 40 percent of the migrant intake, is expected to hit the A\$37 billion education sector. Australia's second largest services export after tourism.

A fall in new arrivals could also dampen the construction boom in Australia's all-important housing sector, which

has been fuelled by migrants in big cities like Sydney and Melbourne.

Real impact

Even though immigration is a politically divisive topic in Australia, there is a broad recognition that the country needs its 200,000 to 300,000 annual intake to grow consumption demand and fill skills shortages in various sectors.



Education, housing and tourism hit

While a large share of these migrants arrive on what are considered "temporary" visas, many later gain permanent residency and employment, adding to long-term population growth. Australia's population would grow an average 1.6 percent annually over the decade to 2027, according to the latest official projections from 2018. Without immigration, it was forecast to grow only 0.5 percent.

"During a slowdown and when the unemployment rate is high there is popular pressure to slow down migration," said AMP Capital's Oliver. "But if we want the economy working back again, we need migration to return." Concerns over immigration range from sustainability and housing affordability to more populist complaints about social integration and foreigners taking local jobs.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said last week Australia needed 160,000 to 210,000 arrivals to sustain GDP per capita growth, and acknowledged the great uncertainty current restrictions cast over the outlook.



forced to ground its fleet during the coronavirus crisis, but did not specify the extent of the layoffs. The Dubai carrier, the largest in the Middle East, announced in March temporary cuts of between 25 percent and 50 percent in basic salaries for most employees after halting its operations.

It employs a workforce that is around 100,000-strong, with a fleet of 270 wide-bodied aircraft. "We reviewed all possible scenarios in order to sustain our business operations, but we have come to the conclusion that we unfortunately have to say goodbye to a few of the wonderful people that worked with us," the airline said in a statement. "We continuously are reassessing the situation and will have to adapt to this transitional period," it said.

"We do not view this lightly, and the company is

"It's going to be one of the real impacts of this crisis because our borders aren't opening anytime soon," he said.

Safe bubble

That has prompted urgent calls for solutions from some businesses and political leaders. The premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian, is lobbying her federal counterparts to allow international students in to rescue universities, which contribute A\$13 billion to the economy of the country's most populous state. Australia's government is also working with New Zealand to establish a "Trans-Tasman bubble" that would re-open the movement of people between the two closely integrated economies.

New Zealand is a large source of labor for Australia, home to about 600,000 kiwi expatriates. To be sure, Australia still enjoys its "lucky country" status, benefiting from resilient global demand for some commodities and having been able to re-open large parts of the economy sooner than many other advanced economies.

But even though Australia's central bank expects the economy to expand 6 percent next year after a projected 6 percent contraction in 2020, analysts and businesses warn a sustained recovery is unlikely without the full resumption of immigration. Over the years, immigration has helped transform Australia's retail and urban landscape, reviving down-at-heel suburban high streets, spurring swanky commercial property development and creating new consumer markets.

Gotcha Fresh Tea is one of a host of bubble tea franchises that has expanded rapidly in Australia, with demand fuelled in large part by international students but also by growing interest for the Asian tapioca beverage from the wider community. Orlando Sanpo, business development manager at EFC Group Australia, the chain's franchisor, said the student freeze has hit sales by up to 80 percent in some downtown stores and even closed an outlet at a Sydney campus.

"We need people to come back to the country," Sanpo said. —Reuters

doing everything possible to protect jobs wherever we can."

Emirates said on May 10 that it would take at least 18 months for travel demand to return to "a semblance of normality", even after reporting bumper pre-pandemic profits. The carrier had suspended flights on March 22 before resuming some services two weeks later.

Last week, it began partial regular service to a number of mostly Western airports. The International Air Transport Association forecast in April that air traffic in the Middle East and North Africa was set to tumble this year by more than a half.

IATA said that MENA airlines' revenues in 2020 will be slashed by \$24.5 billion compared to last year, and warned the region's aviation shutdown threatened some 1.2 million jobs. State-owned Kuwait Airways recently said it was laying off 1,500 expatriate employees, who make up a quarter of foreign staff.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic paralyzed the aviation industry, Emirates, which transported 56 million passengers last year, had slimmed its orders from both Airbus and Boeing, cutting tens of billions of dollars' worth of aircraft.

The airline industry plays a key role in making Dubai a global hub for tourism and transport. Dubai government said in April it would inject fresh capital into Emirates to help it cope with the impact of coronavirus. —Agencies

Russia agrees to earlier OPEC+ meeting: Report

MOSCOW/LONDON: Russia has no objection to the next meeting of OPEC and its allies, known as OPEC+, being brought forward to June 4 from the following week, three OPEC+ sources familiar with the meeting's preparations told Reuters on Sunday.

Algeria, which currently holds the presidency of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has proposed the meeting planned for June 9-10 be brought forward to facilitate oil sales for countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. The lack of Russian opposition to an earlier date could indicate that it is moving closer to an agreement with OPEC's de facto leader, Saudi Arabia, on how to extend oil production cuts for the rest of the year.

OPEC+ decided in April to cut output by a record 9.7 million barrels per day, or about 10 percent of global output, to lift prices battered by a drop in demand because of lockdown measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Reduced production from OPEC+, combined with a record decline in output from non-members such as the United States and Canada, helped to lift oil prices towards \$35 per barrel, though they remain at only half the levels at the start of the year. On Friday a monthly survey by Reuters showed that OPEC's oil output hit its lowest level in two decades in May as Saudi Arabia and other members delivered record supply cuts.

However, the survey showed that overall compliance was about 75 percent because Nigeria and Iraq failed to comply fully with their share of reductions.

OPEC President Algeria has proposed bringing forward the next meeting of the oil producing group and its allies, known as OPEC+, to June 4 from an earlier plan to hold it on June 9-10, according to a letter from Algeria to OPEC+ members seen by Reuters.

Algeria's energy minister, Mohamed Arkab, said in the letter that he had held discussions with "some ministers" about bringing forward the dates, which would help "facilitate nominations".

Sources have told Reuters that Saudi Arabia is proposing to extend record cuts from May and June until the end of the year but it has yet to win support from Russia, which believes curbs could be gradually eased. On Friday, a monthly survey by Reuters showed OPEC's oil output hit its lowest in two decades in May as Saudi Arabia and other members delivered record supply cuts.

However, the survey showed the overall compliance was around 75 percent because Nigeria and Iraq failed to fully comply with their share of reductions. Arkab said in his letter the low compliance rates "may have an adverse impact as soon as markets are open on Monday". —Reuters

Emirates airline lays off trainee pilots, cabin crew

DUBAI: Emirates airline said on Sunday it had made some staff redundant due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, with two company sources saying trainee pilots and cabin crew had been affected.

"We reviewed all possible scenarios in order to sustain our business operations, but we have come to the conclusion that we unfortunately have to say goodbye to a few of the wonderful people that worked with us," a spokeswoman said. "The company is doing everything possible to protect the workforce wherever we can," she added.

The state-owned airline, which has around 60,000 employees and is part of the Emirates Group, did not say how many staff had been affected by the job cuts.

Emirates said on May 10 that a Dubai government commitment to provide it with "equity injections" would allow it to preserve its skilled workforce. Emirates Group's airport services subsidiary dnata has also laid off some staff and placed thousands of others on unpaid leave.

The airline said it will have to cut jobs after being

Business

Asia's factory pain worsens as China's recovery falters

IMF, private analysts expect prolonged global economic downturn

TOKYO: Asia's factory pain deepened in May as the slump in global trade caused by the coronavirus pandemic worsened, with export powerhouses Japan and South Korea suffering the sharpest declines in business activity in more than a decade.

A series of manufacturing surveys released yesterday suggest any rebound in businesses will be some time off, even though China's factory activity unexpectedly returned to growth in May. China's Caixin/Markit Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) hit 50.7 last month, marking the highest reading since January as easing of lockdowns allowed companies to get back to work and clear outstanding orders.

But with many of China's trading partners still restricted, its new export orders remained in contraction, the private business survey showed yesterday.

China's official PMI survey on Sunday showed the recovery in the world's second-largest economy intact but fragile.

Japan's factory activity shrank at the fastest pace since 2009 in May, a separate private sector survey showed while South Korea also saw manufacturing slump at the sharpest pace in more than a decade.

Capital Economics said the region's manufacturing sector is in deep recession. "Industry is likely to have seen an initial jump from the easing of lock-

down restrictions. And things are likely to continue improving very gradually over the coming months as external demand recovers," Capital Economics wrote. "But output is still likely to be well below normal levels for many months to come as domestic and global demand remain very depressed."

Taiwan's manufacturing activity also fell in May. Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines saw PMIs rebound from April, though the indices all remained

below the 50-mark threshold that separates contraction from expansion. Official data yesterday showed South Korea extending its exports plunge for a third straight month.

India's factory activity contracted sharply in May, extending the major decline seen in April as a government-imposed lockdown hammered demand.

Asia's economic woes are likely to be echoed in other parts of the world including Europe, where economies continue to suffer huge damage in factory and service sectors. With many countries starting to ease lockdown restrictions imposed to stop the spread of the virus, which has infected over 5.5 million people globally, equity markets are rallying on hopes for a swift return to health and prosperity.

But the trough in global economic activity will



SHANTOU: A worker assembles toy cars at the Mendiss toy factory in Shantou, southern China's Guangdong province. Cancelled shipments, returned goods and a dearth of new orders have left China exporters in crisis as the coronavirus hits its trading partners worldwide — accelerating a long-standing push towards domestic consumption. — FP

be deeper and the rebound is likely to take longer than previously predicted as the pandemic spreads in waves.

The International Monetary Fund warned last month the global economy will take much longer than expected to recover fully from the virus shock, suggesting a downgrade to its current projection for a 3 percent contraction this year.

A US-China spat over Hong Kong's status and

Beijing's handling of the pandemic could sour business sentiment and add to already huge strains on the global economy. The final Jibun Bank Japan Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell to a seasonally adjusted 38.4 from 41.9 in April, its lowest since March 2009. South Korea's IHS Markit purchasing managers' index (PMI) edged down to 41.3 in May, the lowest since January 2009 and below 41.6 in April. — Reuters

ECB to pump up eurozone support

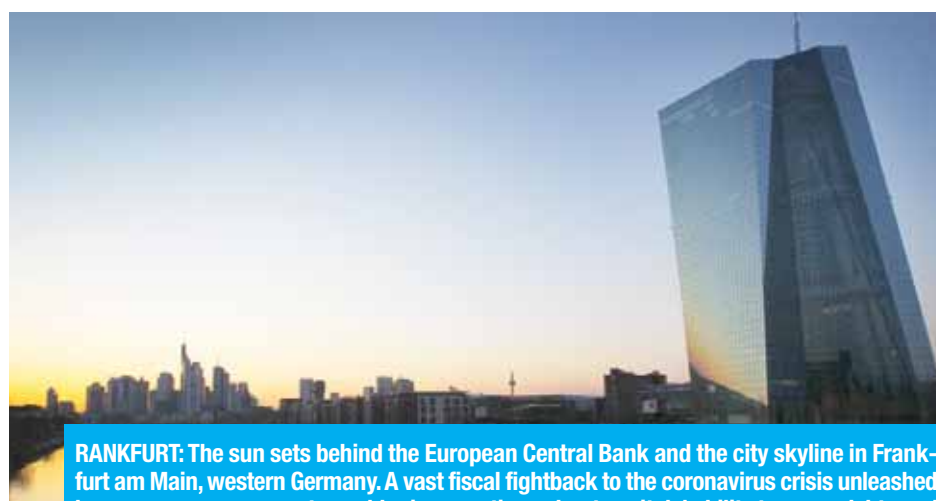
FRANKFURT AM MAIN: The European Central Bank could announce Thursday hundreds of billions of euros in new bond-buying to keep fighting the pandemic crisis, analysts predict, as EU governments prepare to wrangle for months over a joint response.

While some policymakers have urged abandoning the ECB's self-imposed limits on buying government debt to stoke growth and inflation, the meeting is also the first since a ruling by Germany's Constitutional Court urging restraint of the central bank's powers.

"At a minimum, we think (governors) will add a further 500 billion euros" (\$557 billion) to the 750-billion-euro Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP) decided in March, Capital Economics analyst Andrew Kenningham said. If the ECB keeps up its present pace of buying government and corporate debt, "the total envelope will be exhausted by early October", he added.

"The only questions are exactly what changes are announced and when." ECB board member Isabel Schnabel reiterated last week that the "size but also the composition and duration" of PEPP could all be increased, with some analysts forecasting an extension from the end of this year to September 2021.

As well as Thursday's policy moves, eyes will be on June's quarterly growth and infla-



FRANKFURT: The sun sets behind the European Central Bank and the city skyline in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. A vast fiscal fightback to the coronavirus crisis unleashed by eurozone governments could raise questions about capitals' ability to repay debts and revive the threat of countries exiting the single currency. — AFP

tion forecasts from ECB staff, as January-March figures were compiled before the virus struck.

Bank president Christine Lagarde last week predicted that the eurozone economy would contract by between eight and 12 percent in 2020, before a hoped-for strong rebound next year.

Inflation collapse

Meanwhile inflation in the 19-nation eurozone collapsed to 0.1 percent year-on-year in May—down from 1.2 percent in February before the pandemic and worlds away from the ECB's just-below-two-percent target.

The inflation outlook could fall as low as zero across the year, Capital Economics predicted, potentially offering a powerful justification for further measures to support activity and lift price growth towards the bank's goal. Governors will meet less than a

month after a German Constitutional Court (GCC) ruling that a 2.6-trillion-euro bond-buying scheme launched in 2015 may not have been "proportionate" to its price stability goal and demanding clarification.

If the ECB cannot satisfy the judges, the German Bundesbank, the central bank, may not be able to participate in bond-buying. While finding a face-saving solution to the immediate legal headache, policymakers must also consider how court challenges might limit their future options.

Bank of France governor Francois

Villeroy de Galhau last week said the so-called "capital key"—under which the ECB buys countries' bonds in line with their stakes in its capital—is an "uncalled-for constraint".

Free of limits, the central bank might choose to buy more Italian, French or Spanish debt to keep financial conditions on an even keel across the eurozone. — AFP

S Africa loosens lockdown to help recovery

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa sought to revive its stuttering economy yesterday with the partial lifting of a coronavirus lockdown, letting people out for work, worship or shopping, and allowing mines and factories to run at full capacity.

President Cyril Ramaphosa was widely praised when he ordered a strict lockdown at the end of March, but the measures have battered the economy of Africa's most industrialized nation, which was already in recession before the coronavirus.

South Africa's central bank expects the economy, which has been hard hit by the impact of power cuts at crisis-hit state energy firm Eskom, to contract by 7 percent this year. But moving to "level 3" lockdown so soon has been questioned by some who say it will inevitably increase the number of coronavirus cases, which jumped above 30,000 over the weekend. "We are taking a gradual approach, guided by the advice of our scientists and led by the realities on the ground,"

Embraer seeks \$600m financing for exports

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazilian plane-maker Embraer SA, the world's third largest commercial jet builder, should obtain \$600 million in credit lines from Brazil's state development bank BNDES and private banks in June, government sources said on Sunday.

The loans will finance production to meet demand for passenger planes and executive jets, they said speaking on condition they were not named. A spokesman for Embraer confirmed that the company is in talks on financing proposals from the BNDES and private bank in Brazil and abroad to aimed mainly at providing working capital to

Ramaphosa said in a statement.

The rand was trading 0.74 percent up against the dollar at 0750 GMT after the easing of restrictions in South Africa, which has so far had fewer than 700 coronavirus deaths. Many more people, half of whom live below the official poverty line, are at risk from hunger because of the shutdown and industry officials said the outlook remained bleak.

Philippa Rodseth, executive director of the Manufacturing Circle, said she expected demand "first and foremost in medical textiles and equipment and PPE (personal protective equipment)" although this would not contribute to overall aggregate demand.

And Standard Bank, Africa's largest by assets, said it expected half year earnings to fall 20 percent on the same period a year ago. Although schools were ordered to open yesterday for the last years of primary and secondary, unions urged teachers and other staff to stay away, saying they were not equipped to keep employees and pupils safe.

The education ministry backed down on Sunday, saying pupils would now return the week after next. Teachers will report this week for training and to receive protective gear. "We have heard them (the teachers' unions) ... and are taking steps to address their concerns," Ramaphosa said. — Reuters

cover plane exports.

Embraer said it has firm orders for the years ahead worth \$16 billion on March 31. "This shows how sound and balanced the company is in the midst of the crisis hitting the aviation sector," one of the sources said.

"No one knows what the future holds in store for commercial aviation, but with less people flying it could well be an era of smaller planes and private aircraft," the source added, pointing to Embraer's forte as a leading maker of regional jets.

The Brazilian government has been negotiating a financial bailout for Brazil's airlines to help them cope with the dramatic loss of business during the coronavirus pandemic. The bailout involving BNDES should be decided by the start of July, and Embraer could receive some \$400 million of that aid package that is expected to include bond issues, the sources said. — Reuters

the FT said this would form a central part of its recovery program along with the retraining of workers. "We are trying to identify shovel-ready projects — we want to get a move on with this," it quoted one minister as saying.

Sunak said on Friday that employers hammered by the coronavirus shutdown would have to gradually start contributing to the government's hugely expensive wage subsidy scheme, but only from August.

The government has been paying since March 80 percent of the wages of workers who are temporarily laid off, and who now total 8.4 million, to limit a surge in unemployment.

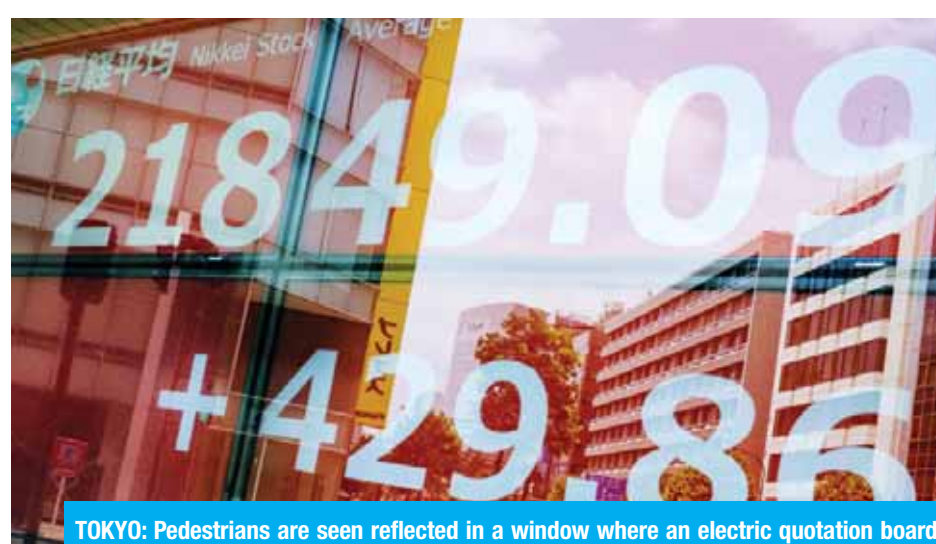
While that has been warmly welcomed by unions and business groups there are still fears that many jobs will go in sectors which will struggle to reopen, such as hospitality, retail and aviation. — Reuters

World stocks scale 3-month peak on reopening joy

LONDON: World stocks were just shy of three-month highs and the dollar weakened further yesterday as optimism on economies opening up boosted risk appetite, shrugging off worries over riots in the US and unease over Washington's power struggle with Beijing. After having risen a whopping 35 percent from a late March trough, stocks were set to kick off June with more gains. The MSCI all country world stocks index has covered two-thirds of the losses it incurred in the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak.

Yesterday's gains were also lifted by relief that while President Donald Trump began the process of ending special US treatment for Hong Kong to punish China, he left their trade deal intact. European stocks opened 1 percent higher led by virus-hit sectors such as travel & leisure, banks and miners but volumes were subdued as Germany, Switzerland and Austria were closed for holidays. "The Trump rhetoric against China and trade impediments against Hong Kong could have been a lot worse, hence the performance of those markets this morning, which has helped the risk backdrop for the European open," said Chris Bailey, European strategist at wealth manager Raymond James.

The safe-haven dollar, meanwhile, hit an 11-week low dented by risk-on mood among investors and riots in major US cities



TOKYO: Pedestrians are seen reflected in a window where an electric quotation board displays the morning numbers of the Nikkei 225 Index on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

over race and policing. "I agree the riots are not good but the perception is that this is a local issue...and the uncertainty has spilled over into a lower dollar," Bailey added. E-Mini futures for the S&P 500 were trading 0.4 percent higher, reversing a 1 percent loss earlier in the session.

In Asia, stocks closed higher led by China on signs parts of the domestic economy were picking up. Hong Kong managed to rally 3.6 percent, while Chinese blue chips put on 2.4 percent. An official business survey from China showed its factory activity grew at a slower pace in May but momentum in the services and construction sectors quickened. That helped lift MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan 2.1 percent to its

highest since early March. Japan's Nikkei added 0.7 percent to also reach a three-month peak.

The turmoil was a fresh setback for the economy which was only just emerging from a downturn akin to the Great Depression. Following poor data on spending and trade out on Friday, the Atlanta Federal Reserve estimated economic output could drop a staggering 51 percent annualized in the second quarter. The May jobs report due out on Friday is forecast to show the unemployment rate surged to 19.8 percent, smashing April's record 14.7 percent. Payrolls are expected to drop by 7.4 million, on top of the 20.5 million jobs lost the previous month. —Reuters

Business

Russian small businesses reopen to uncertain future

A third of Russian firms risk bankruptcy due to collapse in demand

MOSCOW: When Moscow authorities closed non-essential businesses to stop the spread of the coronavirus, Boris Kupriyanov began to personally deliver books to his customers. This, he said, has helped him and his indie bookstore survive over the past two months. "In many ways this has become our salvation," Kupriyanov, co-founder of Falanster, one of the country's most famous independent bookshops, told AFP.

"We've kept going only because people wanted to

buy our books and help us," he added. Many small and medium-sized businesses including Kupriyanov's bookstore were allowed to reopen yesterday as authorities gradually ease confinement restrictions in Russia, which has reported more than 396,000 coronavirus infections—the third-largest caseload after the United States and Brazil.

Not everyone will resume operations, however. According to a study by the Center for Strategic Research in April, about a third of Russian companies risk bankruptcy following a collapse in demand fuelled by the epidemic. Companies in the trade and services industries are among the hardest-hit, the think-tank said. While authorities have unveiled measures to prop up the economy, including tax payment deferrals and interest-free loans, many small and medium-sized busi-

nesses complain they pale in comparison with measures extended to enterprises in the West. Vladimir Gimpelson, head of the Centre for Labor Market Studies at Moscow's Higher School of Economics, said tax breaks and loans were of little help for companies on the brink of bankruptcy. "Deferrals are not a solution to the problem," Gimpelson said in a recent report, warning of a rise in poverty and inequality. The Russian government has refused to tap into the country's sovereign wealth fund, which had assets worth \$150 billion as of early March, and instead ordered companies to continue paying their employees in April despite the shutdown.

'No major support'

"We have not felt any major support from the state," said 47-year-old Kupriyanov, sporting a salt-and-pepper beard and a small silver ring in his left ear.

"This has been an ordeal and unfortunately for many companies it has become fatal," he added. The crisis has dealt a major blow to Falanster—a treasure trove of intellectual literature including small print-run books by little-known authors. Before the coronavirus struck, business had flourished and the shop had just moved to bigger premises on Tverskaya Street in the heart of Moscow. When operations ground to a halt in late March, staff launched a delivery service.

Kupriyanov said he was grateful for the opportunity to stay in touch with his customers, and the new tasks also helped him take his mind off the current crisis.

"When you make 10 to 15 to 20 deliveries a day you simply have no time to think about what's happening," he said.

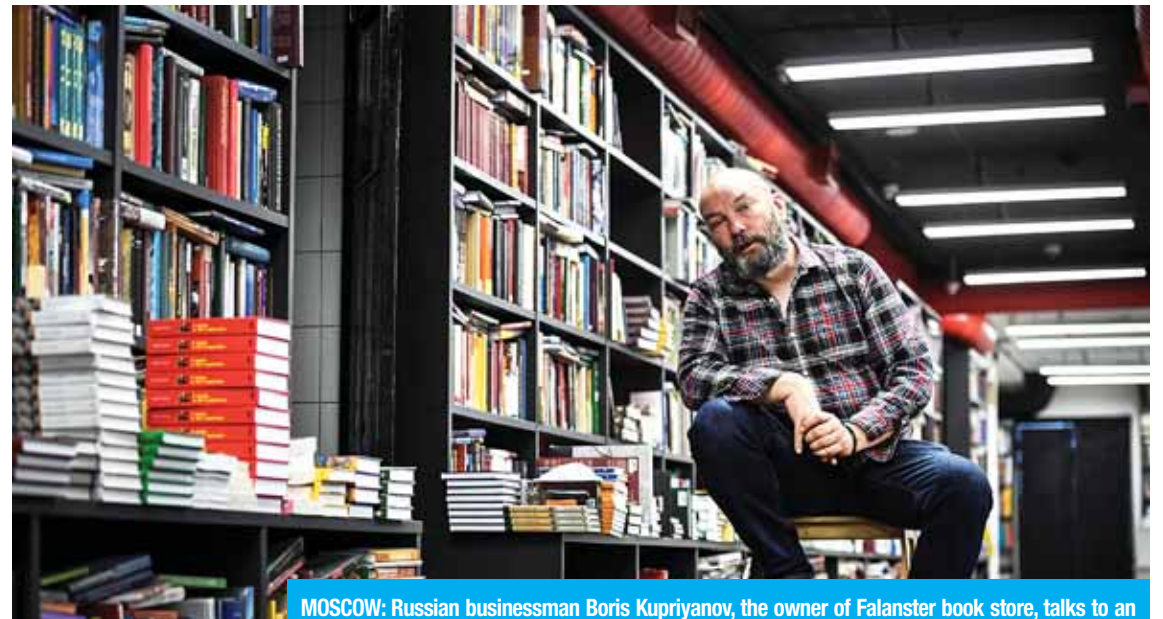
Five million unemployed

Economists say that even though authorities have tried to prevent mass layoffs and bankruptcies, hun-

reds of thousands of people have found themselves without an income. According to the Russian statistics service, unemployment increased to 5.8 percent in April from 4.7 percent the month before—hitting the highest level in four years. "Unemployment has significantly gone up," said Igor Nikolayev, director of the FBK Grant Thornton Institute of Strategic Analysis. He said the number of unemployed Russians stood around 5 million as of late May. Estimating the government's total anti-crisis spending at \$42 billion, The Bell, an independent Russian-language media startup, said that authorities

could have "easily spent much more" but did not want to. "Putin and the government prefer caution because of a traumatic experience in the 2008 financial crisis when Russia burned through almost all its reserves," it said this week.

"They likely also want to save the money for a populist spending spree ahead of the 2024 presidential election." Back at his Moscow store, Kupriyanov said he wanted to make a new website and develop online sales after they reopen. But uncertainty, he said, bothered him. "We do not know whether Russians can still afford to buy books," he said. — AFP



MOSCOW: Russian businessman Boris Kupriyanov, the owner of Falanster book store, talks to an AFP journalist in his closed shop in Moscow amid the COVID-19 outbreak.—AFP

teenagers about how to best monitor their behavior will ensure a common understanding is met and boundaries adhered to, while maintaining a sense of freedom.

It seems a more conscious measure, and parents who focus on positive ways to engage with their children, are more likely to build trust in a relationship with their teen and improve parent-to-child communication. When trust is formed in this way, the installation of parental control measures can be more easily justified. If a parent notices that something is not right with their child, they might cross the agreed boundaries, on the condition that such scenarios have been discussed and accepted by the child. After parents have established the rules for using the internet and explained the necessity of limited parental control, most teenagers will understand that if the application blocks the site they need to access then they can always ask a parent to add the site to the list of allowed sources if necessary.

The importance of doing it right

It is important to keep in mind that teens learn more from what their parents do, rather than necessarily what they say. It's therefore crucial to be a role model when it comes to communicating online and using the internet responsibly.

For instance, parents should lead by example. If they agree on what restrictive measures they are going to put in place with their teenager, they too must adhere to these established family rules. If parents tell children to turn off all of their devices, but they themselves are constantly behind a screen, any conversation or restrictive measures may look hypocritical and potentially be ineffective.

What is more, to reduce possible tension between limiting internet access and teenagers looking to assert their independence, when it comes to online behavior, parents can also allow teens to self-monitor, which is a key component of self-regulation. If parents increase the amount of time they spend offline with their teenagers, they will be able to establish a high level of trust and be one of the first to know what may have happened to their child while using the internet.

Finally, for adolescents to effectively self-regulate their online usage and habits, self-observation can help them understand their motivations and actions. Parental control is just one way to prevent potential risks, but it is not a silver bullet. The best parental control is an active parent that openly communicates and is there to help with their children's decision making. Note: Maher Yamout is Senior Security Researcher, Kaspersky

cents per liter. The 200 service stations will be "run by private contractors" who will be allowed to import gasoline, said Maduro, but he did not say who had been awarded licenses.

Public transport fares would not be affected by the changes, he added. Venezuela's oil minister Tarek El Aissami said diesel fuel—vital for industries—would remain "100%" subsidized.

The country is almost entirely dependent on oil



CARABOBO: Handout photo released by the Venezuelan Ministry of Popular Power for Communication and Information (Minci) showing the Iranian-flagged oil tanker Fortune docked at the El Palito refinery after its arrival to Puerto Cabello, in the northern state of Carabobo.—AFP



Five million in Russia unemployed

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A question of trust versus security

By Maher Yamout

There is no doubt that the internet plays an important part in teenagers' lives. It allows them to have fast and easy access to a vast range of opportunities. It can be a great platform for learning and sharing knowledge, taking part in social activities, and staying in touch with friends.

One such example is the prevalent use of real-time photos and video sharing, with services such as Instagram and Snapchat being at the peak of popularity among younger generations. These services can fuel adolescents' creativity and encourage them to develop their own videos and shareable content. This all plays a big part in teens leading a more active life, making it easier for them to find common ground with their peers.

However, increased use of online apps and services can also bring challenges for some teens – as well as their parents. Getting the balance right between online and offline activities can be hard to achieve. Too much time spent on the internet could limit how much time they spend on other important activities, such as quality time with family and friends, school work and studying, as well as physical exercise.

Besides, more time online could increase their exposure to potentially harmful content, as well as cyberbullying. Less savvy or vigilant users could fall victim to an online scam, making them more vulnerable to someone accessing their accounts without consent or disclosing private information unwittingly.

To ensure adolescents reap the benefits and advantages that the internet can bring, it is only natural for parents to want to protect their children from becoming over-reliant on online services or being impacted by potential threats. Parents need to be able to track any changes in habits or behavior of their children as a result of using the internet.

Only by understanding the problem can they pro-

Venezuela raises fuel prices after Iranian supplies

CARACAS: Venezuela will increase fuel prices in June, the president said, putting a limit on state subsidies that for decades had allowed citizens to fill their gas tanks virtually for free.

Although the country has huge oil reserves, production has collapsed and Venezuelans are facing dire shortages—exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. Under the changes, which will come into force on June 1, drivers will be allowed up to 120 liters of gasoline a month and up to 60 liters for motorbikes at a subsidized price of 5,000 bolivars (US\$0.025) per liter. Beyond that, individuals will be required to pay international prices.

It comes days after Iranian fuel tankers, carrying much-needed gasoline, arrived in Venezuela. "We have decided that 200 service stations will be allowed to sell this product at an international price," president Nicholas Maduro said Saturday, announcing an end to the state monopoly on fuel. Speaking from Caracas, he said prices at these stations would be set at 50 US



MOSCOW: The Kremlin is reflected in the company plate of the state-controlled Russian oil giant Rosneft at the entrance of the headquarters in Moscow.—AFP

Specter of Rosneft looms over Russian independent media

MOSCOW: Russian oil giant Rosneft, run by a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, is wielding growing influence over Russia's remaining independent media outlets, already squeezed by tightening press freedoms and pressure from the Kremlin.

Now, reporters at the country's top liberal business daily Vedomosti—shaken in March by an announcement from owner Demyan Kudryavtsev that he planned to sell the newspaper—have denounced censorship under its new acting editor-in-chief.

Andrei Shmarov was appointed in late March, ahead of the sale's completion. Journalists say they were barred from covering negative opinion polls of Putin, and that editors interfered in coverage of Rosneft. On Friday, the new owner was announced as the head of a little-known regional news agency called FederalPress, Ivan Yeryomin.

An investigation in May by several Russian news outlets including Vedomosti revealed that Rosneft leveraged control over the paper through debts owed by owner Kudryavtsev to the oil giant's bank.

Kudryavtsev denied these allegations while Rosneft has not reacted.

'Real owner Rosneft'

"The real owner is Rosneft through a chain of debt," said Vedomosti editor-at-large Maxim Trudolyubov, who has worked at the paper since it started in 1999.

Trudolyubov said the new editor-in-chief was "selected to run the newspaper favorably to the new owner".

"They just wanted to silence it." He described Rosneft chief Igor Sechin as "some sort of a hitman" employing aggressive tactics. "He plays a complicated game of takeovers to build his empire at the expense of other oligarchs. It's about assets, money, influence."

The newspaper wrote in a recent editorial: "Vedomosti will just become another dependent and controlled media outlet." On Friday, the newspaper wrote that the change of ownership deal undoubtedly had "not only commercial aims".

Its editorial suggested that "unnamed figures who really stand behind the official buyers... see the publication as an instrument of influence, not a business".

"This is a public humiliation of the Vedomosti brand and its editorial staff," Galina Timchenko, editor-in-chief of Meduza news site, said.

In May, it was the turn of another respected business daily, RBK. Rosneft is suing the newspaper for a record 43 billion rubles (\$612 million) over an article about the oil company's activities in Venezuela. "We aren't worried, because we know our work is correct and honest," said Timofei Dzyadko, an energy reporter at the newspaper.

But Pyotr Kanayev, the RBK editor-in-chief, said the lawsuit was surprising. "We published (an) article based on public information and we're not the source of this information," he said.—AFP

Scientists hunt hotspots in race to test vaccines

Low transmission rates may scupper fast vaccine trials

LONDON: The first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic may be waning. For vaccine developers, that could be a problem. Scientists in Europe and the United States say the relative success of draconian lockdown and social distancing policies in some areas and countries means virus transmission rates may be at such low levels that there is not enough disease circulating to truly test potential vaccines. They may need to look further afield, to pandemic hotspots in Africa and Latin America, to get convincing results. "Ironically, if we're really successful using public health measures to stamp out the hot spots of viral infection, it will be harder to test the vaccine," said Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health in the United States.

A vaccine is seen as essential to ending a pandemic that has killed nearly 370,000 people and infected more than 6 million so far, with world leaders looking at inoculation as the only real way to restart their stalled economies. But running large-scale clinical trials of potential vaccines against a completely new disease at speed is complex, scientists say. Showing efficacy in those trials during a fluctuating pandemic adds extra difficulty - and doing so when outbreaks are waning makes it harder still. "For this to work, people need to have a risk of infection in the community. If the virus has been temporarily cleared out, then the exercise is futile," said Ayfer Ali, an expert in drug repurposing at Britain's Warwick Business School. "The solution is to move to areas where the infection is being

spread widely in the community - that would be countries like Brazil and Mexico at the moment."

Vaccine trials work by randomly dividing people into a treatment group and a control group, with the treatment group getting the experimental trial vaccine and the control group getting a placebo. All participants go back into the community where the disease is circulating, and subsequent rates of infection are compared. The hope is that infections within the control group will be higher, showing the trial vaccine is protecting the other group. With COVID-19 epidemics in Britain, mainland Europe and the United States coming down from their peak and transmission rates of the coronavirus dropping, a key task for scientists is to chase fluctuating outbreaks and seek volunteers in sections of populations or in countries where the disease is still rife. A similar problem emerged when scientists were seeking to test potential new vaccines against Ebola during the vast 2014 outbreak in West Africa. Then, drugmakers were forced to drastically scale back plans for large trials because their vaccines were only test-ready late in the epidemic when case numbers were dwindling.

Among the first COVID-19 vaccines to move into phase two, or mid-stage, trials is one from

the US biotech company Moderna and another being developed by scientists at Oxford University supported by AstraZeneca. The United States in July is planning to launch vast efficacy trials of 20,000 to 30,000 volunteers per vaccine. Collins said US health officials will tap government and industry clinical trial networks in the United States first and use mapping

to detect where the virus is most active. They will also consider looking abroad if domestic disease rates fall too far, he said. The US government has experience in Africa of testing vaccines against HIV, malaria and tuberculosis. "Africa is now beginning to experience

lots of cases of COVID-19. We might very well want to run part of the trial there, where we know we can collect the data effectively," said Collins. Adrian Hill, director of the Jenner Institute at Britain's Oxford University which has teamed up with AstraZeneca, started mid-stage trials last month which he said would aim to recruit around 10,000 people in Britain. He told Reuters that with COVID-19 disease transmission rates dropping in the UK there is a possibility that the trial would have to be halted if they didn't have enough infections to yield a result. "That would be disappointing, and at the moment it's unlikely, but it's certainly a possibility," Hill said.

CHALLENGE TRIALS

Underscoring the level of concern in the industry, AstraZeneca's chief executive Pascal Soriot said his researchers were even contemplating running so-called "challenge" trials - where participants would be given the experimental vaccine and then deliberately infected with COVID-19 to see if it worked. Such trials are rare, high risk and hard to get ethical approval for. As a more practical and swifter option, Soriot and others are looking to Brazil and other countries in South America, as well as parts of Africa where COVID-19 outbreaks are still growing and peaking, as ripe drug and vaccine testing grounds. Difficulty recruiting candidates for mid-stage vaccine trials in countries where the COVID-19 pandemic is on the wane may be foreshadowed by the experience of doctors seeking infected cases for the World Health Organization's multi-country Solidarity trial of potential treatments for the disease - including the generic drug hydroxychloroquine and Gilead's remdesivir. In the Swiss portion of that trial, for instance, it took three weeks to get all of the ethical and regulatory approvals from authorities, and another week to get all the drugs, said Oriol Manuel, an infectious disease expert and national coordinator of the Solidarity study in Switzerland. "We were able to enroll some patients in (one trial centre in) Lausanne," Manuel said. "But when all centres were ready, the cases were fortunately disappearing." — Reuters



The hope is that infections within the control group will be higher

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Lifestyle | Gossip

Taraji P. Henson offers mental health support

Taraji P. Henson wants to help her community cope with their mental health amidst the coronavirus pandemic. The 'Empire' actress is keen to support the black community, particularly with their mental health, during the health crisis. She said: "When COVID happened, my heart went out and I just knew that people were suffering and they're suffering alone in isolation. I'm blessed. I can call my therapist. I can pay for it without thinking about it, but what about those who can't?" And Taraji wants to reduce the "stigma" surrounding mental health, particularly in the black community. Speaking to CNN, she added: "My hope is that we eradicate the stigma around mental health in the black community." Meanwhile, the 49-year-old actress previously revealed her "life's purpose" is talking about her mental health. Taraji - who has been honest about her own battle with depression and anxiety for several years - shared: "I feel like I found my life's purpose, talking about mental health. I was trying to find it through acting, but then people get caught up in the celebrity. This is real, this is straight to the chase. This is me." The actress wants more people to talk about mental health. She said: "The suicide rate has taken off. It amazes me that 5-year-olds are contemplating suicide. That's a word you shouldn't even understand at five years old. "We don't talk about mental health, we don't deal with it. For generations, we've been told it's a weakness, to pray our problems away - and that's just not gonna cut it. I'm only one voice. I need help. If we can teach children about sex education and physical education, why not mental? That's where we start attacking this issue: with the children."

**Naomi Campbell** loves being able to show her 'true' self

The 50-year-old supermodel has been curating her own content amidst the coronavirus pandemic and she really enjoys being able to be open and honest with her social media followers. She said: "What you get from me in these shows, what I'm saying on-camera - believe me, if the camera wasn't there, I would be saying the same thing. I'm not sugarcoating anything for the camera ... It's great, the connectivity of the way the world is today. I didn't realise it would get the reaction that it did, it wasn't planned. I loved the whole setup of having your own platform and owning your content and that was appealing to me. I feel safe to open myself, to show my true self because as everyone's seen me in magazines, you can't tell who a person is. So you're getting to see me on YouTube." And whilst Naomi understands the heartbreak some people have endured losing love ones due to the pandemic, she is "really happy" for the time and has adapted with the times to stay busy. Speaking to Time magazine, she added: "I'm not someone who's ever been bored in my life and I'm just trying to adapt with the time and keep busy. I really am happy for this still time, although I'm not happy for the circumstances and am definitely saddened by the lives that are lost and sad for the people that I've lost." Meanwhile, Naomi previously admitted she hates the word "retire" as she really enjoys being "active". She explained: "I don't like the word 'retire'. If I don't wanna do it anymore, I just won't do it. But I'm never gonna say that. I'm someone who's extremely active. I like to be active and I think I'm always going to be active."

**ADELE** felt like Jennifer after organizing Carr's wedding

Adele felt like Jennifer Lopez when she organised her friend Alan Carr's wedding. The 43-year-old presenter tied the knot with his long-term partner Paul Drayton in a ceremony officiated by the 'Skyfall' hitmaker in the backyard of her Los Angeles home two years ago, and his pal embraced her role of being in charge of the big day, comparing it to Jennifer's 2001 movie 'The Wedding Planner'. Alan said of his wedding: "It was amazing. Adele organised it in her back garden in LA - it was absolutely gorgeous and she paid for it all. "I tried to give her some money and she said, 'My treat ahahaha'. "She's just adorable. She's the sweetest person. "I get asked a lot of loaded questions about her, like, 'Has she changed? I suppose you don't see much of her now...?' But she has not changed one bit and she always has time for you. "She'll always pop in for a cup of tea or a drink." Asked if he asked her to officiate the ceremony, he added: "She offered. She brought her clipboard out and said, 'I feel like Jennifer Lopez in 'The Wedding Planner'. "The 'Epic Game Show' host was thrilled with the effort Adele went to and admitted if she hadn't intervened, he and Paul wouldn't have had such a "perfect" day. He said: "She even got photos of mine and Paul's parents and the dogs, so it felt like they were at the wedding. "It was the perfect day. It was the best day of my life. If I'd organised it, it would have been at a Harvester." Alan also recalled the drunken incident that kicked off his friendship with the 'Hello' singer. He told Heat magazine: "We met at the BRIT Awards. When I was younger, I would get invited along to present an award and I was always p***ed. "I went to an after-party one year and Adele was there. I said to her, 'I love you!'. Then I leant against a wall, only it wasn't a wall, it was a lift, and the doors open and I fell inside. "I hit my head so hard, I had to go home. It sobered me up."

Williams reveals his fear of break-ins during lockdown

Robbie Williams is worried about break-ins at his Los Angeles home. The 46-year-old singer and his TV presenter wife Ayda, 41, are quarantining at their Beverly Hills abode with their four children, amid the Covid-19 lockdown, but Robbie admitted he doesn't feel entirely safe as a number of other celebrities have been targeted by burglars and stalkers. According to The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "I feel there have been a lot of attacks on celebrities. People can say, 'Well you are all right in your mansions'. Yes, we are, but this is what is happening." While Robbie, Ayda and their four children - Theodora, seven, Charlton, five, Colette, 18-months, and baby Beau, born in February - are living in LA, Robbie is also worried about his parents, Pete Conway and Janet Williams, at home in the UK. Speaking on his and Ayda's podcast, '(Staying) At Home With The Williamses', Robbie explained: "My dad has got Parkinson's and my mum suffers with her mental health and they are thousands and thousands of miles away. "Real-life things are happening with our parents that are having health issues and we can't get to them. No matter if you are a celebrity or not, it does not help you with that s**t." And while Ayda's mother Gwen is with the couple in the US, they are currently dealing with her health problems, as she was diagnosed with stage two cervical cancer earlier this year and she is also battling Parkinson's and Lupus. Robbie said: "Ayda's mum has got cancer. That cancer's growth is not shrinking no matter how many times I show her the swimming pool."

**Teigen** doesn't want her own reality show

Chrissy Teigen is "too scared" to have her own reality show. The 'Chrissy's Court' star - who has children Luna, four, and Miles, two, with husband John Legend - has insisted she could never have cameras documenting her every move because she'd end up in "trouble" over her unguarded comments, and couldn't cope with negative feedback. She said: "I'm too scared. The things that I say on a daily basis ... I don't want to get into trouble. "My mum would love to have a show, I know that. I don't think I could ever do it. It's too scary. Having people talk c**p about you and watching that back? Oh, I would cry. I'm pretty sensitive." The 34-year-old model is known for her outspoken views on Twitter but insisted she's learned to be more guarded about what she says. She explained: "I'm much better about saying things and when not to say things now. The timing of how to say things is the trick. "Now, I sit back and watch everybody else get into trouble ... "What you are seeing is me, but it's tough sometimes. You want to be able to say more, but you can't. "Sometimes I'm not in the right headspace to deal with it. I have two kids. I have other stuff going on. "Sometimes I want to say something so badly but it's not worth it. I need my mind to be clear." And Chrissy insisted it's important to her to keep her social media activity light-hearted. She added to New! magazine: "Beyond physical fitness, I love to stay mentally healthy. "It's really important to keep your wits about you and be able to laugh things off. "I love social media but it can be a really weird place. That's why I love Twitter so much because you can curate your own feed and you can see things that make you happy. I love to laugh and see things that make me laugh."

Brinkley didn't know daughter was suffering from body image issues

Chris Brinkley didn't know how bad her daughter's body image issues were. Sailor Brinkley-Cook grew up overweight and struggled with body confidence as a result, something which she never really let her supermodel mom onto. The 21-year-old star told Good Morning America: "My mom didn't fully know the pain that I was going through when I was at my worst ... I grew up a little bit overweight and I felt the weight of my overweightness on me constantly from people teasing me and people looking at me differently. It's just crazy how that can really just shut down your self-esteem."

Sailor recently slammed body ideals on social media, admitting she had been "so down on herself recently". She wrote: "I've been so down on myself recently. Crying about my cellulite, letting the fat on my body ruin my day, getting mad that I'm not as skinny as I once was. The body dysmorphia and left over eating disorder tendencies have been coming in strong. As I come into myself as a young woman my body shifts and changes by the month, the 'control' I felt I once had over it has been completely stripped away from me. Hormones, emotions, growing pains. I go on Instagram and scroll through photos of girls that look

'perfect' ... shiny skin with not a bump to be seen, tiny little waist and thighs that look like chopsticks. "And I compare myself, as if how someone on an app on my phone looks should directly correlate to how I feel about my body? What I've learned is that I run every day. I go to the gym 6 times a week. I fuel my body with beautiful food. I am so LUCKY to have two legs and a healthy body that takes me through life. I'm so tired of thinking anything that makes up ME is something to be ashamed of. (sic)"—BangShowbiz

**Gadot** thinks about Wonder Woman all the time

Gal Gadot says she thinks about 'Wonder Woman' in real life. The 35-year-old actress plays the DC Comics superhero in the 2017 movie and its sequel and she admits she regularly thinks about her superhero alter ego in everyday situations. Asked how playing the character has affected her personally, she said: "Wow. That's a huge question. It's been an amazing journey that I never could have anticipated, and I've enjoyed every moment of bringing this character to life. But I will say that when I was told I was going to have my own movie, I was super nervous. "I'd never been the title. It was important for me to bring something good to the world and to bring a character that matters. I felt like the little girl looking at Mount Kilimanjaro and not sure how she's going to climb it. But Patty

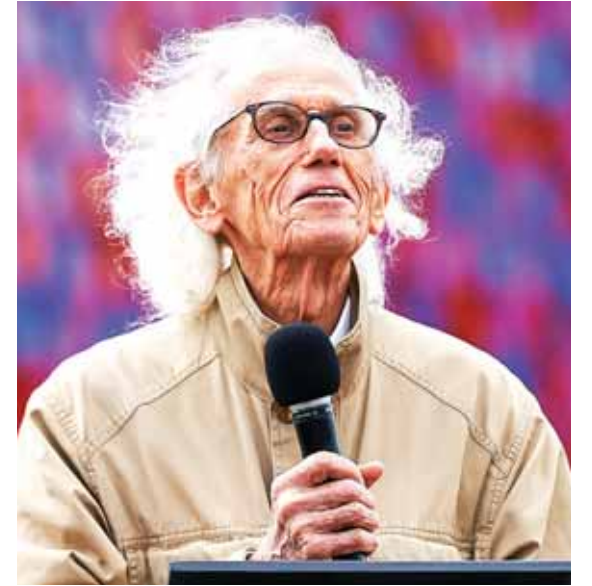
and Chris and I became family and this character became second nature to me. I actually think about the character in things that I do in my real life. I think about whether something is appropriate for Wonder Woman. She's become a big part of me." And Gal hopes to continue portraying the superhero for years to come so she can bring "light and positivity" in these dark times. Speaking to Parade magazine, she added: "I would do anything to keep bringing her stories to the big screen and to everyone. Patty and I are completely on the same page. Her vision is completely in line with what I want to do. "We want to bring some good things to the world. We're in such dark times, and it's important to shine some light and positivity."



Artists Christo (left) and Jeanne-Claude (right) watch the unrolling of one of the gates in the "The Gates, Central Park, New York, 1979-2005" exhibit at Central Park February 12, 2005 in New York City.—AFP photos



In this file photo taken on September 18, 1985, French culture Minister Jack Lang (left) chats with US Bulgarian born artist Christo, in Paris during the work in progress of the Pont Neuf wrapped by the artist.



In this file photo taken on June 18, 2018, Bulgarian artist Christo Vladimirov Javacheff, better known as 'Christo', speaks as he unveils his artwork, 'The Mastaba' on the Serpentine lake in Hyde Park in London.

Artist **Christo** who wrapped Reichstag in fabric dies aged 84



In this file photo taken on June 16, 2016, artist Christo Vladimirov Javacheff poses on his monumental installation "The Floating Piers" he created with late Jeanne-Claude during a press preview at the lake Iseo, northern Italy.

The artist known as Christo, who made his name transforming landmarks such as Germany's Reichstag by covering them with reams of cloth, died on Sunday aged 84, his official Facebook page announced. Christo Vladimirov Javacheff died of natural causes at his home in New York City, the statement said. The Bulgarian-born artist worked in collaboration with his wife of 51 years Jeanne-Claude until her death in 2009.

Their large-scale productions would take years of preparation and were costly to erect; but they were mostly ephemeral, coming down after just weeks or months. "Christo lived his life to the fullest, not only dreaming up what seemed impossible but realising it," said a statement from his office.

"Christo and Jeanne-Claude's artwork brought people together in shared experiences across the globe, and their work lives on in our hearts and memories." In accordance with Christo's wishes, the statement added, a work in progress, "l'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped", would be completed. The event is now scheduled to be shown from September 18, 2021, having been postponed from this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

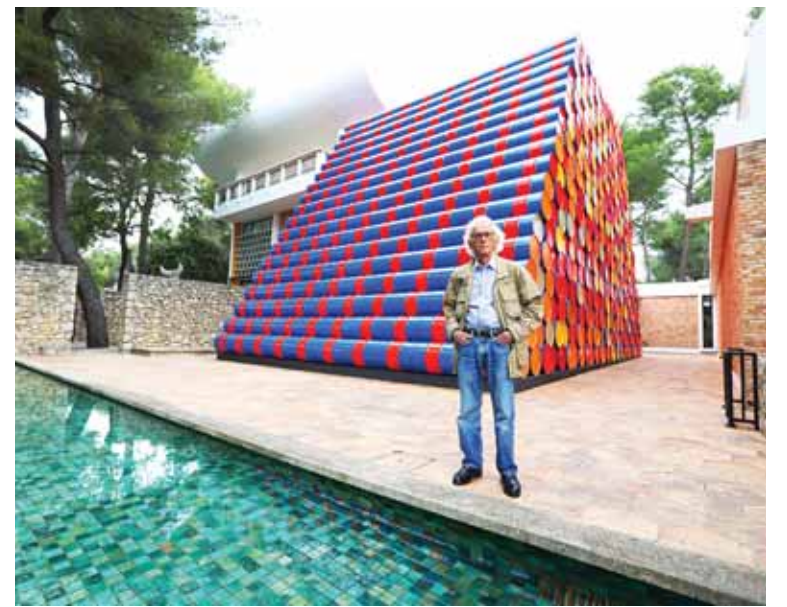
Born on June 13, 1935 in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, Christo left his home country in 1957, living briefly in several countries before arriving in Paris, where he met his future wife, a fellow artist. But in their subsequent collaborations, he was credited more as the artist and Jeanne-Claude as the organiser. "This is not the work of Christo, it's the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude," she would say. To finance their massive, ambitious projects and thus maintain their artistic freedom, the couple would sell their preparatory work, including collages and drawings, at exorbitant prices.

An 'enchanter'

Next year's work in Paris will be accompanied by an exhibition at the city's Pompidou Centre about their time in the city. That show is due to start in July this year, running until the end of October 2020. A statement sent to AFP by the Pompidou Centre on Sunday paid tribute to the artist as an "enchanter" who was "essential to the history of art of our time". "Christo was a great artist, capable of giving new depth to our everyday," said the Pompidou Centre's president, Serge Lasvignes.

The centre's director, Bernard Blistene, said they had worked "passionately" with Christo's team to put the exhibition together in parallel with the Arc de Triomphe project. "Let the exhibition that we will be opening on July 1 pay tribute to this exceptional body of work, bestriding all disciplines and so essential to the history of art of our time," he added.

The exhibition will focus on the time Christo and his wife spent in Paris, 1958 to



In this file photo taken on June 4, 2016, Bulgarian artist Christo poses in front of the monumental "Mastaba" art work at the Maeght Foundation (Fondation Maeght) on the opening day of the exhibition, in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, southeastern France.

In this file photo taken on June 4, 2016, Bulgarian artist Christo poses in front of the monumental "Mastaba" art work at the Maeght Foundation (Fondation Maeght) on the opening day of the exhibition, in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, southeastern France.

Christo: Five key works

The spectacular temporary installations of Bulgarian-born US artist Christo have appeared in many parts of the world, from far-flung landscapes to famous city landmarks. Here are five of the most memorable:

'Wall of Oil Barrels', Paris (1962)

One of Christo's first works with his wife and lifetime collaborator, Jeanne-Claude, was a wall of 89 rusting gasoline and oil barrels erected in a narrow street in central Paris. Subtitled "The Iron Curtain", their "art barricade" was a protest against the Berlin Wall built the previous year. Paris authorities had not given permission for the installation but the artists went ahead anyway, blocking traffic for eight hours before having to pull it down.

'The Umbrellas', US and Japan (1991)

Around 3,100 giant umbrellas were opened on the same day in valleys in California and Japan for a simultaneous installation that stayed up for 18 days, having taken months to erect. Around half the six-metre-tall (19 feet) umbrellas were blue and set up in Japan's Ibaraki prefecture; the ones in California were bright yellow. The work "reflected the similarities and differences in the ways of life and the use of the land in two inland valleys in Japan and the USA," the artists' website says. Online magazine Artsy described it as "one of the great land art projects of the era". The installation was marred by tragedy when a 33-year-old woman was killed by a falling umbrella at the US site and a worker killed in Japan during its dismantling.

'Wrapped Reichstag', Berlin (1995)

This signature work—in which the German parliament was wrapped in 100,000 square metres (1,076,390 square feet) of thick, silvery fabric—got the greenlight more than two decades after Christo first asked permission. Rejected by Berlin multiple times, it finally went ahead after a vote in parliament won through in 1994. "It was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen: 100 rock climbers abseiling down the facade of the Reichstag, slowly unfurling this huge silvery curtain," Christo said in The Guardian newspaper in 2017. The material was tied in place by more than 15 kilometres (nine miles) of blue rope. Visited by millions of people, it came down after two weeks even though the city wanted to keep it up longer. The vertical folds of the drapery highlighted the "features and proportions of the imposing structure, revealing the essence of the Reichstag", the artists' website says.

'The Floating Piers', Italy (2016)

A three-kilometre (1.9-mile) undulating walkway across a northern Italy lake, this installation of 200,000 floating yellow cubes was a major hit with the public. It created paths for visitors to reach scattered islands on Lake Iseo, giving the impression of walking on water "or perhaps the back of a whale," Christo said. The 16-day installation was Christo's first after the death of Jeanne-Claude in 2009, but the duo had been planning it since 1970.

'The London Mastaba', (2018)

Christo stacked and floated 7,506 pink and purple barrels in a lake in London's Hyde Park in an imposing 20-metre-high and 40-metre-long piece. In place for several weeks, the flat-topped trapezoid structure, in a mastaba form, caused some puzzlement among viewers. "There are no messages: there is something in it to discover yourself," Christo told AFP.—AFP



Kamtim, 100, sits in her living room with her daughter-in-law Siti Aminah (right) in Surabaya, East Java on May 31, 2020, after being discharged from a hospital earlier this week after a month of treatment from the COVID-19 coronavirus.—AFP

100-year-old Indonesian woman beats coronavirus

A 100-year-old Indonesian woman has recovered from coronavirus, making her the country's oldest survivor of the deadly respiratory illness. Kamtim, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, was discharged from hospital this week after a month of treatment in her hometown Surabaya, Indonesia's second-biggest city, officials said. East Java Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa said she hoped Kamtim's story would give a boost to at-risk residents—the illness is especially dangerous for older people and those with chronic conditions. "I hope her recovery can motivate elderly people during the pandemic," Parawansa added.

Born in 1920, Kamtim was taken to hospital last month after showing symptoms and she was later confirmed to have contracted the virus. Siti Aminah, the woman's daughter-in-law, chalked up her recovery to "discipline and persistence". "Every day I checked her condition with nurses and they always told me that she was very strong and diligent about taking her medicine," Aminah told AFP. "She was very motivated to get better." It was not clear how the home-bound woman contracted the virus.

"She probably got it when people from the neighbourhood came around to visit since she never goes outside," Aminah said. Indonesia has confirmed more than 26,000 cases of coronavirus and 1,613 deaths. But the sprawling Southeast Asian archipelago of more than 260 million has among the lowest testing rates in the world. Researchers estimate the true number of virus infections and fatalities is several times the official toll.—AFP

Taj Mahal damaged in deadly India thunderstorm

A deadly thunderstorm that rolled across parts of northern India damaged sections of the Taj Mahal complex, including the main gate and a railing running below its five lofty domes, officials said Sunday. One of the New Seven Wonders of the World, India's top tourist attraction has been shut since mid-March as part of measures to try and combat the coronavirus pandemic. AFP images showed workers assessing the railing of the main mausoleum, after the storm on Friday night battered Agra city in northern Uttar Pradesh state. "One sandstone railing which was a part of the original structure has been damaged," Superintending Archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India, Vasant Kumar Swamkar, told AFP.

"One marble railing which was a later addition, a false ceiling in the tourist holding area and the base stone of the main gate has also been damaged." He added there was no damage to the main structure of the monument to love—built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan as a tomb for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died giving birth in 1631. Local media reports said thunderstorms and lightning on Friday killed at least 13 people in two Uttar Pradesh districts. Fatal lightning strikes are relatively common during



In this picture taken on Sunday, workers stand on the railing of the Taj Mahal after it was damaged due to heavy rainstorm in Agra.—AFP

the June-October monsoon season. Last year, at least 150 people were killed by lightning in August and September in Madhya Pradesh state in central India.—AFP



In this file photo taken on November 13, 2018, macaque monkeys gather near the Taj Mahal monument in Agra in India's Uttar Pradesh state.—AFP

Traced Bashir regime assets 'tip of iceberg'

KHARTOUM: Sudanese authorities have begun to recover billions of dollars of real estate illegally amassed by deposed dictator Omar Al-Bashir's regime, but other assets will be difficult to seize, experts say. "Initial estimates indicate that the real estate and properties owned by the former regime... range (in value) from \$3.5 to \$4 billion," said Salah Manaa, a spokesman for a committee tasked with fighting corruption and dismantling the old regime. "This is only the tip of the iceberg", in terms of the total assets illicitly accumulated and hidden under Bashir's rule, Manaa told AFP.

Bashir ruled Sudan with an iron fist for 30 years, but was overthrown in April last year by the military during mass protests against him. He has already been sentenced to two years detention in one corruption case – involving illegal possession of foreign currency – and is being held in Khartoum's Kober prison, on a range of other charges. The new anti-graft committee began work in December and is answerable to a power-sharing government of civilians and generals that was established in August.

Less than six months into its mandate, that committee is perusing a monumental paper trail on the former regime's assets. "The committee received large volumes of documents that filled three trucks," said a source close to the committee, who requested anonymity. "Each will be rigorously scrutinized."

The investigators have so far recovered hotels, farms, shopping centers, agricultural lands and other properties in Khartoum and other cities from the ex-leader's relatives and aides. Manaa said international experts will be brought in to help assess the assets' value – a task that has not yet moved beyond guesstimates – before transferring their ownership to the finance ministry.

"The former regime's corruption was extensive and diverse," said Osman Mirghani, a Sudanese analyst and editor-in-chief of Al Tayyar newspaper. He believes that Bashir's circle hid some assets "with skill, which would require time and expertise (for authorities) to uncover". One challenge facing the committee is the cash held by former regime members in banks. "The money is kept in banks governed by strict laws prohibiting its availability to anyone other than the depositors," said Sudanese economist Mohamed Al-Nayyer.

But some of the more easily recoverable assets could raise funds to support the country's ailing economy. "The real estate properties can be offered in public auctions and firms can be converted to joint-stock companies ... which will spur investment," said Nayyer.

Sudan has long suffered daunting economic challenges ranging from decades-long US sanctions to the 2011 secession of oil-rich South Sudan. While the US lifted sanctions towards the



KHARTOUM: This picture taken on May 30, 2020 shows a building owned by former Sudanese ruler Omar Al-Bashir in the capital. — AFP

end of Bashir's rule, Sudan remains on Washington's list of state sponsors of terrorism, deterring investment. The country also remains in deep economic crisis, suffering an acute shortage of foreign currency and soaring inflation, which reached around 99 percent in April.

Alongside the domestic charges, Bashir remains indicted by the International Criminal Court on long-standing charges including genocide over the conflict in the Darfur provinces, and the transitional administration has indicated it could hand him over to face trial. — AFP



This video frame grab shows NASA SpaceX's Crew Dragon astronauts Douglas Hurley (right) and Robert Behnken (second right) posing with other astronauts on Sunday after arriving at the International Space Station. — AFP

US astronauts enter ISS after...

Continued from Page 1

everything you have done for our country." "It's great to get the United States back in the crewed launch business and we're just really glad to be on board this magnificent complex," replied Hurley.

Russian space chief Dmitry Rogozin also offered his congratulations to both NASA and Elon Musk, the boss of the private aerospace company SpaceX that built the Crew Dragon capsule. The capsule spent 19 hours chasing down the station at speeds of up to 28,000 km per hour, before carefully aligning to its target and slowing to a crawl for the delicate docking procedure, which took place over northern China.

During their stay Behnken and Hurley will perform more checks on the capsule to certify its readiness as the United States transitions to using the commercial sector for rides to the ISS. The space agency has had to rely on Russian Soyuz rockets ever since the Space Shuttle program ended in 2011 – with 2015 the original target for a replacement program.

The United States has paid SpaceX and aerospace giant Boeing a total of about \$7 billion for their "space taxi" contracts. But Boeing's program has floundered badly after a failed test run late last year, which left SpaceX, a company founded only in 2002, as clear frontrunner. The launch comes as the world grapples with the coronavirus pandemic, and as the US faces nationwide protests after a black man died in Minneapolis while being arrested by a white police officer.

Speaking to Biden, Hurley said he hoped the mission would inspire young Americans. "This was just one effort that we can show for the ages in this dark time that we've had over the past several months to kind of inspire, especially the young people

in the United States, to reach for these lofty goals," he said.

On Twitter, however, some retweeted the song "Whitey On The Moon" which was released by Gil Scott-Heron in 1970, the year after the Apollo 11 lunar landing. The lyrics juxtaposed the injustice and economic conditions faced by black Americans with the enormous spending required for the space program.

SpaceX's two-stage Falcon 9 rocket began its voyage Saturday, blasting off flawlessly in a cloud of bright orange flames and smoke from Florida's Kennedy Space Center. "I'm really quite overcome with emotion," Musk said. "It's been 18 years working towards this goal." Hurley and Behnken had named their capsule "Endeavour" after the retired Space Shuttle on which they both flew.

Asked by a lawmaker how the Crew Dragon's handling compared to that of the shuttle, Behnken indicated the new ship was a rougher ride. "Dragon was huffing and puffing all the way into orbit, and we were definitely driving or riding a dragon all the way up," he said. "And so it was not quite the same ride, the smooth ride, as the Space Shuttle was."

While Russia saluted the United States, it also stressed Sunday it was puzzled by the frenzy unleashed by what many hailed as the dawn of a new era. "We don't really understand the hysteria sparked by the successful launch of a Crew Dragon spacecraft," Roscosmos spokesman Vladimir Ustimenko said. US-Russia cooperation is not expected to end once Crew Dragon goes into service. NASA still plans to use Soyuz rockets to send some astronauts into space, with each seat costing around \$80 million.

The United States, meanwhile, hopes to revive human space exploration, which has not risen to the expectations of the early space era. The idea of a crewed mission to Mars has been mooted since the 1950s, and NASA has commissioned numerous studies that have never gotten off the ground. The United States now plans to return to the Moon in 2024 under the Artemis mission, establishing a launching pad to the Red Planet by the 2030s. — AFP

Manila comes back to life as...

Continued from Page 1

outweighed his fear of the coronavirus. "The fear of contracting the virus will always be there."

With the third highest number of coronavirus cases and second highest official death toll in Southeast Asia, the Philippines also allowed the reopening of more businesses, and people can now leave home without government permits. Manila's measures were among the world's toughest, on par with those of the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus outbreak first emerged, and stricter than curbs at the peak of the contagion in Italy and in Spain, bringing the economy to a sudden halt.

In easing the measures, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte sought to walk the fine line between protecting the country's over 107 million people from COVID-19 while reviving the economic facing its biggest contraction in more than three decades. "This is his biggest gamble yet because

whatever happens, it's on him," University of Santo Tomas Political Science Professor Dennis Coronacion told ABS-CBN News.

The decision to ease measures came after the country saw a spike in the number of coronavirus cases it reports daily, which health officials attribute to increased testing and clearing of a backlog of tests. The Philippines has recorded a total 18,086 infections recorded, of which 957 led to deaths.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the country's positivity rate, or proportion of tests that come back positive, had been more than halved to 6.5 percent as of late May from 13.4 percent in April, suggesting the country was on its way to managing the pandemic. Health officials also said the lockdown had slowed the growth in coronavirus transmissions in the country from three to four people being infected by one other person to one.

But Dr Jose Santiago, President of the Philippine Medical Association, said the key to a successful transition to the so-called new normal is implementation. "As you know, the implementation (of relaxed rules) is very challenging. I don't know if they can really implement the social distancing and compulsory wearing of masks". —Reuters

hotspot, the curfew will be lifted between 6:00 am and 3:00 pm until June 20, and thereafter the curfew will be shortened by a further five hours.

Saudi Arabia has reported more than 85,000 coronavirus infections and 503 deaths from COVID-19. In March, it suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage over fears of the disease spreading in the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. That suspension will remain in place until further notice, the interior ministry said. Authorities are yet to announce whether they will proceed with this year's hajj – scheduled for late July – but they have urged Muslims to temporarily defer preparations for the annual pilgrimage.

Last year, some 2.5 million faithful travelled to Saudi Arabia from around the world to participate in the hajj, which Muslims are obliged to perform at least once during their lifetime. Makkah's Grand Mosque has been almost devoid of worshippers since March, with an eerie emptiness surrounding the sacred Kaaba – the large cube-shaped structure towards which Muslims around the world pray. But mosque employees and security personnel have been allowed to attend prayers. — AFP

August and for other classes in late September.

Five lawmakers called for resuming regular Assembly sessions to tackle urgent issues related to the coronavirus and other issues. The Assembly has suspended regular sessions for the past three months. MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli called on the government to pay a greater attention to the economic situation in the country, saying that the shutdowns have severely impacted small and medium businesses. He said lawmakers are working on a draft law that calls to suspend the payment of rent by shops for a few months and then compensate landlords through easy-term loans.

Masks and no ablution: Saudis...

Continued from Page 1

Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's holiest sites, had shut down mosques nationwide for more than two months to limit the spread of the virus. The kingdom, which has reported the highest number of coronavirus cases in the Gulf, is emerging from a full nationwide curfew imposed during Eid al-Fitr, the Muslim holiday that marked the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

Domestic air traffic also resumed on Sunday, with state media saying around 100 flights were scheduled. The interior ministry intends to ease restrictions in a phased manner, with the curfew lifted nationwide – except in Makkah – between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm (0300 GMT and 1700 GMT) until June 20. The kingdom will lift the lockdown entirely from June 21, Makkah aside. In Makkah, a virus

MPs demand probe into graft charges...

Continued from Page 1

The minister told Kuwait Television on Saturday that he will make the final decision on the fate of the school year on July 15, when the situation will be clearer. The ministry had already tentatively decided to resume the school year for 12th graders in early

Clashes outside White House...

Continued from Page 1

Minneapolis' twin city of St Paul, where several thousand people gathered before marching down a highway. "We have black sons, black brothers, black friends, we don't want them to die. We are tired of this happening, this generation is not having it, we are tired of oppression," said Muna Abdi, a 31-year-old black woman who joined the protest. Hundreds of police and National Guard troops were deployed ahead of the protest.

At one point, some of the protesters who had reached a bridge were forced to scramble for cover when a truck drove at speed after having apparently breached a barricade. The driver was taken to hospital after the protestors hauled him from the vehicle, although there were no immediate reports of other casualties. The New York Times said he was later arrested.

There were other large-scale protests in cities including New York and Miami. Washington's mayor ordered a curfew from 11:00 pm until 6:00 am, as a report in the New York Times said that President Donald Trump had been rushed by Secret Service agents into an underground bunker at the White House on Friday night during an earlier protest.

Looting was reported Sunday night in Philadelphia and the Los Angeles suburb of Santa Monica, and images on Fox TV showed ransacked Rolex and Gucci stores in New York city. Officials in LA – a city scarred by the 1992 riots over the police beating of Rodney King, an African-American man – imposed a curfew from 4:00 pm Sunday until dawn. "Please, use your discretion and go early, go home, stay home," the city's mayor Eric Garcetti said on CNN.

The shocking death last Monday of an unarmed black man, George Floyd, at the hands of police in Minneapolis ignited the nationwide wave of outrage over law enforcement's repeated use of lethal force against unarmed African Americans. Floyd stopped breathing after Minneapolis police officer Derek

Chauvin knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

Chauvin has been charged with third-degree murder and was due to make his first appearance in court yesterday. Late Sunday, as many were being arrested for curfew violations in Minneapolis, authorities moved Chauvin to another location from the Hennepin County Jail for his own safety, according to Minnesota's corrections commissioner. Three other officers with him at the arrest have been fired but for now face no charges.

Governor Tim Walz has mobilized all of Minnesota's National Guard troops – the state guard's biggest mobilization ever – to help restore order and extended a curfew for a third night Sunday. The Department of Defense said that around 5,000 National Guard troops had been mobilized in 15 states as well as the capital Washington, with another 2,000 on standby.

The widespread resort to uniformed National Guards units is rare, and evoked disturbing memories of the rioting in US cities in 1967 and 1968 in a turbulent time of protest over racial and economic disparities. Trump blamed the extreme left for the violence, saying he planned to designate a group known as Antifa as a terrorist organization.

Atlanta mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said Trump, who has often urged police to use tough tactics, was not helping matters. "We are beyond a tipping point in this country, and his rhetoric only enflames that," she said on CBS.

Joe Biden, Trump's likely Democratic opponent in November's presidential election, visited the scene of one anti-racism protest. "We are a nation in pain right now, but we must not allow this pain to destroy us," Biden tweeted, posting a picture of him speaking with an African-American family at the site where protesters had gathered in Delaware late Saturday.

Floyd's death has triggered protests beyond the United States, with thousands in Montreal and London marching in solidarity on Sunday. On the other side of the globe yesterday, thousands marched to the US consulate in Auckland chanting "no justice, no peace" and "black lives matter". In Germany, England football international Jadon Sancho marked one of his three goals for Borussia Dortmund against Paderborn by lifting his jersey to reveal a T-shirt bearing the words "Justice for George Floyd". — AFP

Stars

Daily SuDoku

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medium

Yesterday's Solution

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7	2	4	6	3	9	5	8	1
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hard

STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today you might feel the need to be of service to others. Your humanitarian instincts are high, Aries, though you might tend to over-idealize the concept a little. It's wonderful to help those less fortunate, but often the process involves a heavy commitment of time and energy. If you decide to do this, it could transform your life in a profound way. Be prepared for some pretty heavy changes.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

You're normally intuitive, Libra, but today you might feel more psychic than you ever dreamed you could. Information received from the media could have you picking up psychically on the thoughts and feelings of people you've never met. This can be emotionally overpowering, so protect yourself by keeping the white light around you. Channel your thoughts and feelings into art of some kind. It helps.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

The arts might seem especially appealing today, Taurus. Also, you could fall in love. If you're currently involved, expect circumstances to develop that show the exalted side of your partner that you sometimes forget. If you aren't involved, expect someone wonderful to appear. Remember to get to know the person before getting hooked. However perfect the person appears now, he or she is still human.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today you could feel especially intuitive and more sensitive than usual to unacceptable social and political conditions, Scorpio. Ideas for new goals, perhaps humanitarian, might come to you. You should be in an especially idealistic mood, so you might come up with wonderful possibilities that aren't workable now. Write your ideas down and consult with someone who shares your interests. Then decide how to proceed.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

A number of powerful events could increase the level of love and positive energy in your home, Gemini. Visitors with a spiritual or metaphysical focus could bring some new and exciting information. Good news that you never expected could raise everyone's spirits. Communication with a humanitarian or spiritual purpose might take place. Whatever it is, expect your home to buzz with great vibes. Enjoy.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today you might toy with the idea of making either the arts and humanitarianism or the spread of higher consciousness your life's work. Business and money are going well for you, Sagittarius, and you might be thinking in terms of a future in which you can write your own career ticket. Although the time isn't right to actually do it, you should formulate an action plan for the future.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may be in communication with some new people who appear interesting and excite your curiosity, Cancer. Spiritual or metaphysical conversations could take place today over the phone or video chat. The concepts might be deep, exalted, and inspiring, yet bring up more questions than answers. Books on the subject could prove enlightening. You might even want to write down your thoughts or memorialize them in a drawing or painting.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your mind could be focused on exalted spiritual concepts today, Capricorn. You might decide to try to study spiritual or metaphysical materials, or attend a virtual lecture, workshop, or meditation session with people who share this interest. You might also think about traveling to a country associated with a specific spiritual tradition, such as Israel, Egypt, or India at some point in the future.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

Experiences you never expected could come your way today, Leo. A talent that you didn't know you had could come to light. This might involve a combination of arts and technology, such as computer graphics or animation, or it might involve spiritual or humanitarian work. You might also try fundraising for a charity or a social or political cause. Don't hesitate. Go to it.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Though you naturally tend to be sensitive to the feelings of others, Aquarius, today you might be so in touch with the needs and desires of those around you that you sense what they want even before they know it. Spiritual, emotional, or psychological insights might come to you throughout the day. You could even have some prophetic dreams. Write down whatever seems particularly significant. You'll want to remember it later.

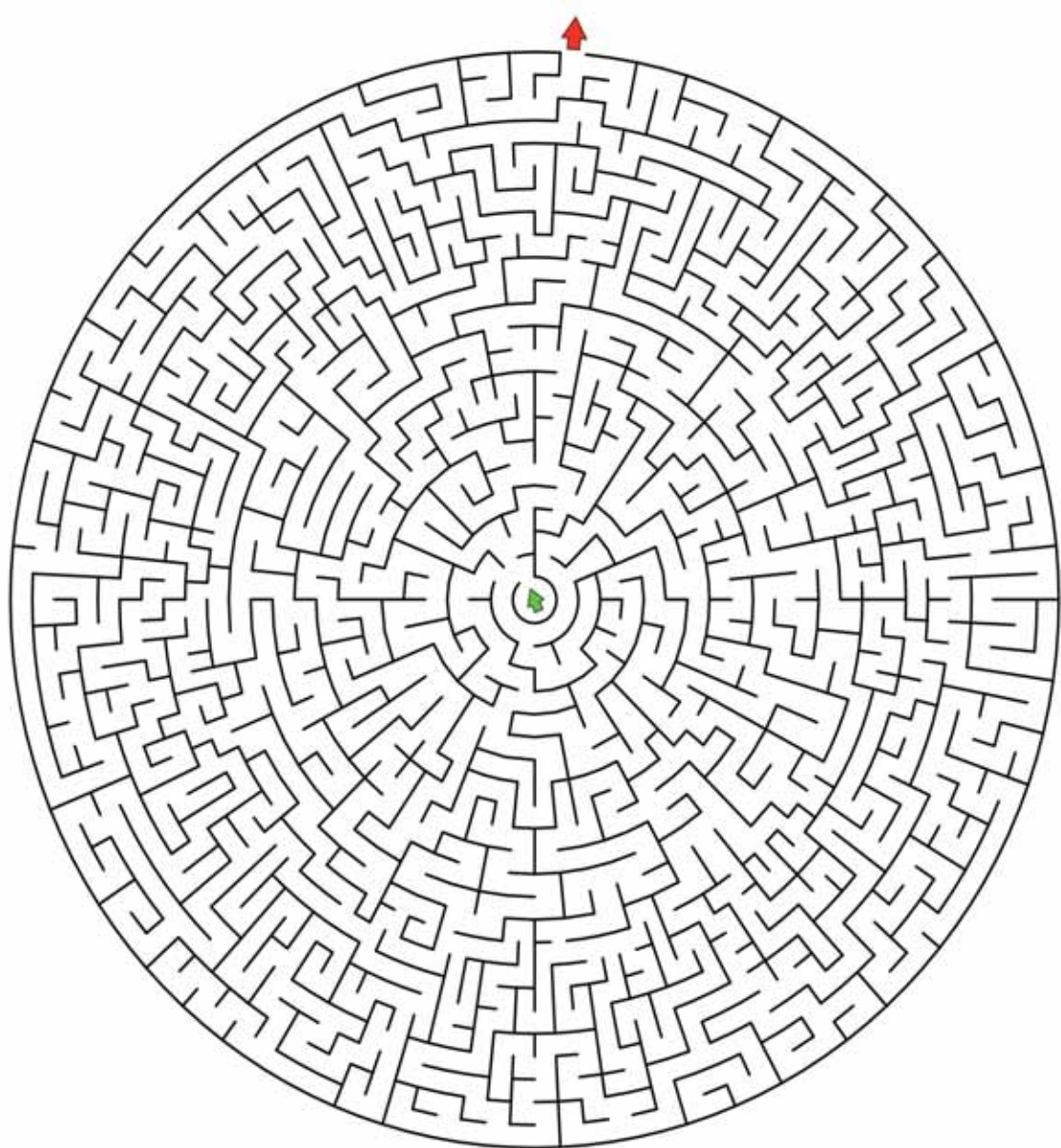
Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You usually tend toward rational and scientific ways of thinking, Virgo, but today you might be so intuitive that you're more likely to use your psychic abilities. This can be a mixed blessing. Your rational nature protects you from identifying too much with the world's less fortunate. Today this protection is greatly lessened, so be prepared to emotionally identify with everybody.

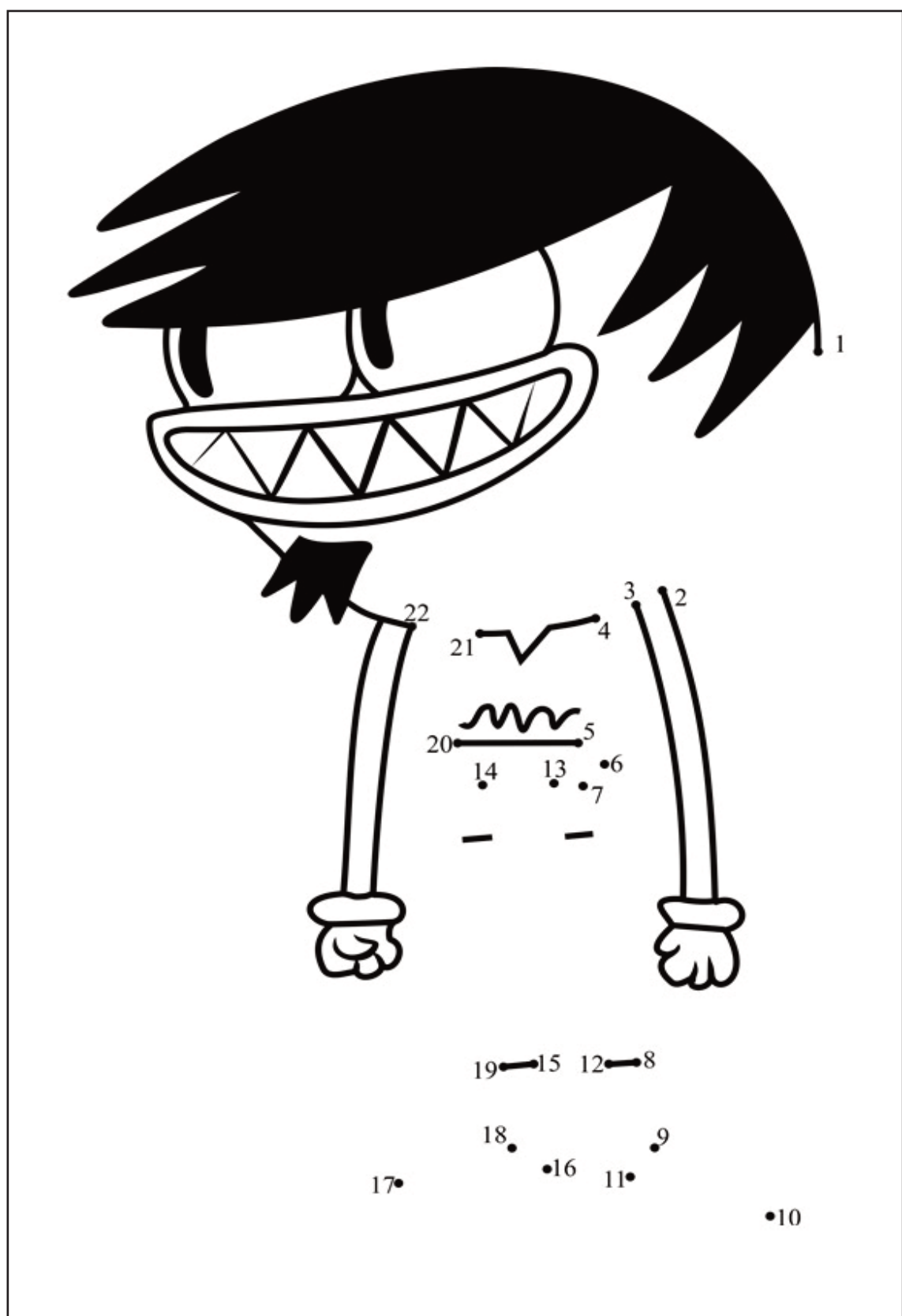
Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today you might feel especially idealistic regarding your relationships, Pisces. You're likely to see those closest to you in their best light. Romantic partners may seem like characters from a fairy tale. This is a good time to move a love relationship to the next level of commitment, as long as you don't forget your partner's foibles. It's easy to love someone who seems perfect, but more realistic to love their faults as well.

Find the way



Join the dots



Word Search

Charlie Chaplin
Word Search

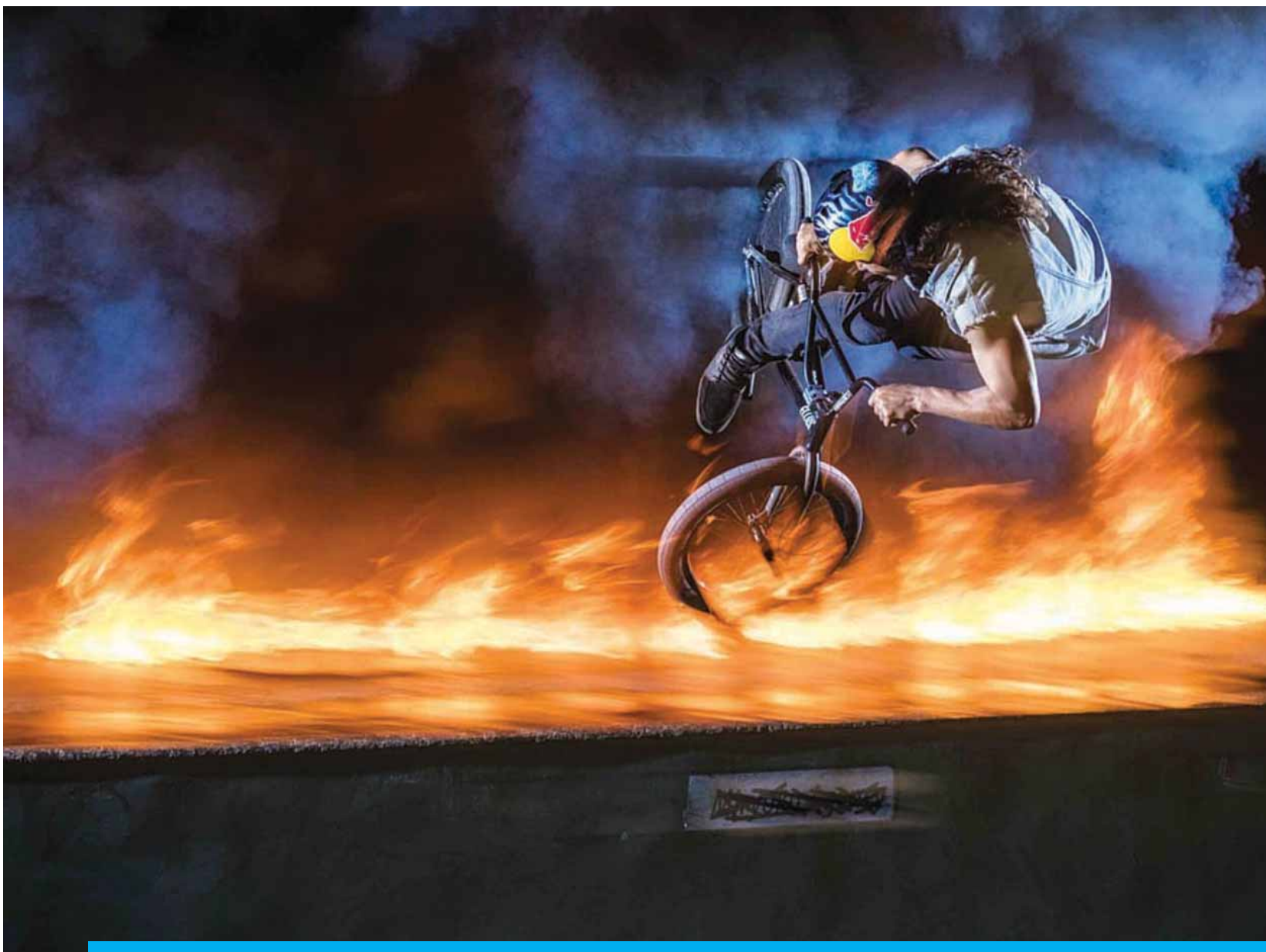
DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

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A	O	M	A	T	Q	P	C	S	O	T	K	N	T	M	V	U	T	N	X	L
R	N	O	L	S	I	B	U	Q	D	B	N	Y	K	L	P	O	R	Q	M	T
L	I	C	U	Y	K	L	Z	L	U	I	W	W	K	B	A	H	O	A	A	E
I	S	Y	D	E	W	K	Q	V	C	B	W	P	A	M	O	K	V	C	R	Z
E	T	B	A	K	W	R	R	G	E	M	J	F	H	Z	J	R	E	T	S	
T	Y	U	N	I	T	E	D	A	R	T	I	S	T	S	V	O	R	O	I	J
E	C	I	T	Y	L	I	G	H	T	S	T	Y	L	M	U	W	S	R	A	Y
Q	Q	A	M	D	N	A	L	R	E	Z	T	I	W	S	E	C	Y	N	G	F
I	P	M	F	Z	S	T	Q	T	H	E	G	O	L	D	R	U	S	H	E	D
V	X	P	I	T	P	N	M	P	F	R	B	P	V	O	O	X	H	A	S	O

Actor	England	Producer
Adulation	Filmmaker	Silent Film
Chaplin	Icon	Slapstick
Charlie	Keystone	Studios
City Lights	Marriages	Switzerland
Comic	Pathos	The Gold Rush
Composer	Perfectionist	The Tramp
Controversy	Politics	United Artists
Director	Poverty	Workhouse

Sports

Photo of the day



RITOQUE: Coco Zurita performs at Ritoque, Chile in 2019. —Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Hamilton slams F1 for silence over Floyd death

LONDON: World champion Lewis Hamilton criticised the “biggest of stars” in “white-dominated” Formula One for failing to speak out against racism as protests erupted around the United States.

The Mercedes driver warned “I know who you are and I see you” as he accused his fellow drivers of “staying silent” following the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, during his arrest in Minneapolis.

The videotaped incident has triggered unrest in several cities and led to an outpouring of condemnation from top athletes including Michael Jordan and Serena Williams.

“I see those of you who are staying silent, some of you the biggest of stars yet you stay silent in the midst of injustice,” Hamilton wrote on Instagram.

“Not a sign from anybody in my industry which of course is a white-dominated sport. I’m one of the only people of colour there yet I stand alone.

“I would have thought by now you would see why this happens and say something about it but you can’t stand alongside us. Just know I know who you are and I see you.”

Hamilton, the six-time world champion, said he supported only peaceful protesters, not those who have looted stores and set fire to buildings.

But he added: “There can be no peace until our so-called leaders make change. This is not just America, this is the UK, this is Spain, this is Italy and all over.

“The way minorities are treated has to change, how you educate those in your country of equality, racism, classism and that we are all the same!

“We are not born with racism and hate in our hearts, it is taught by those we look up to.”

Basketball legend Jordan joined a chorus of voices from the NBA, NFL and other US sports demanding change for black Americans, but the calls weren’t limited to the United States.

French footballer Marcus Thuram and England international Jadon Sancho both called for justice for Floyd after scoring in Germany’s Bundesliga. —AFP

Japan’s Sunwolves exit Super Rugby as Australia bid fails

‘We are bitterly disappointed to conclude the season in this way’

TOKYO: Japan’s Sunwolves bowed out of Super Rugby yesterday as they failed to join an Australian offshoot of the coronavirus-hit tournament. The Sunwolves, who are being kicked out of Super Rugby at the end of the season, said Australian officials had told them they won’t be able to take part.

The series between Australia’s four Super Rugby teams — Queensland Reds, NSW Waratahs, ACT Brumbies and Melbourne Rebels — along with the previously axed Western Force, is set to kick off on July 3.

Super Rugby, which also includes teams from New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina, has been on hold since March. “We are announcing that we have been told by the Australian rugby association officially that we are unable to participate in the competition,” a Sunwolves statement said.

The decision ends a nearly five-year run in Super Rugby for the Sunwolves, who won only nine games

in that time and were on the receiving end of some giant scorelines.

The Tokyo-based side would have had to quarantine for 14 days on arrival in Australia, and they also faced problems in securing a permanent base for 12 weeks.

They said they had consulted with Australia’s rugby authorities and government, but “we reached the conclusion that we will not be ready to join matches in Australia from July 3”.

“We apologise to people who had been looking forward to the resumption of matches,” said Sunwolves CEO Yuji Watase. “Following this decision, the

Sunwolves’ time with Super Rugby, which has seen us participate for the past five seasons, will end.

“We are bitterly disappointed to conclude the season in this way, but we also feel honoured to have participated in the best rugby competition.”

The Sunwolves, who also played home matches in Singapore and Hong Kong, were introduced in 2016 to bring rugby to new markets.

But southern hemisphere governing body SANZAAR (South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Argentina Rugby) were reluctant to bankroll the perennial wooden-spooners after Japan’s rugby board withdrew financial sup-

port. Rugby Australia’s interim chief executive, Rob Clarke, said officials had been trying to work through “significant challenges” to field a Sunwolves team in Australia.

“However, the reality is, given the timeframe available the team’s preparation for the competition would be severely compromised,” he said in a statement. “All parties agree that despite our collective efforts and desire to see the Sunwolves take part in the competition, under the current circumstances their participation will not be feasible.” The Sunwolves’ exit comes despite the success of last year’s Rugby World Cup in Japan and the lure of Japan’s well-heelied Top League, which has attracted a series of marquee players from overseas.

New Zealand, like Australia, is also planning a domestic competition, kicking off on June 13, to fill the hole left by Super Rugby’s postponement. —AFP

What now for tennis in 2020?

PARIS: Professional tennis has been in cold storage since March due to the coronavirus pandemic with tournaments unlikely to resume before August.

AFP Sport looks at three talking points as the sport heads into June:

FANS IN OR OUT AT US OPEN AND ROLAND GARROS?

● In 2019, the US Open attracted a record crowd of almost 740,000 to its sprawling Billie Jean King Tennis Centre in New York.

The French Open last year at Roland Garros brought in 520,000 paying customers.

However, the 2020 editions of the two remaining Grand Slam events on the calendar will look very different with the chance of them being played behind closed doors a real possibility to avoid the spread of the coronavirus.

Roger Federer, whose 20-Grand Slam title haul includes five titles at the US Open and one in Paris, is not keen on seeing rows and rows of empty seats.

“I can’t bear to see an empty stadium. I hope that won’t happen,” the Swiss star was quoted as saying by Brazilian media recently. Two-time Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova said she too has no desire to play a Slam with without spectators.

“I would like to play another Grand Slam, but if it’s like this, I’d rather cancel them,” Kvitova said.

“Playing without fans who are our engine doesn’t look nice to me and the Grand Slam doesn’t deserve it.” As far as the rescheduled Roland Garros in September and October is concerned, Jean-Francois Vilotte, the director-general of the French Tennis Federation (FFT), told AFP: “The aim is that there will be spectators.”

“But we will have the capacity to organise Roland Garros whatever the option decided, including behind closed doors.”

MONEY MATTERS?

● There has been no prize money to play for over the best part of three months but that hasn’t stopped it being discussed.

The ATP and WTA tours, the International Tennis Federation and the four Grand Slam tournaments — the Australian Open, Roland Garros, Wimbledon and the US

Open backed a fund worth more than \$6 million to support low-ranked players hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

World number one Novak Djokovic had already said that he, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal — the sport’s biggest earners with over \$100 million each banked in prize money alone — were also willing to help. However, world number three Dominic Thiem was not keen on giving money to lower-ranked players.

“Quite honestly I have to say that no tennis player will be fighting to survive, even those who are much lower-ranked,” said the Austrian. Marion Bartoli, the 2013 Wimbledon champion, chimed in last week by suggesting a reduction in doubles events with prize money diverted to struggling players. “You just don’t make the same effort (in doubles) as a singles player. You don’t practise so much, your routine is different. “I don’t know if we have to stop doubles completely, but to get less money and give that money to qualification and others, that could be the solution.”

ARE WE MAKING AN EXHIBITION OF OURSELVES?

● There is some tennis going on in the world at a series of tightly-controlled exhibition events.

Germany kicked it off on May 1 with an eight-man exhibition in the tiny town of Hoehr-Grenzhausen, near Koblenz which featured Dustin Brown, who famously defeated Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon in 2015.

Strict rules over health and safety meant there were no fans, no ball boys or girls and no line judges. There was just a chair umpire.

Handshakes were banned, players handled their own towels and brought their own water and fruit to the clay courts.

Similar events followed in the US before Petra Kvitova won an all-Czech event in Prague last week.

“The gloves, face masks, the fact nobody handed us the towels, no handshakes, that was definitely bizarre,” said Kvitova.

Other exhibitions are scheduled including a World Team Tennis tournament in West Virginia in July featuring Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin and 2017 US Open winner Sloane Stephens.

Andy Murray will return from his latest injury problem on June 23 in a charity tournament in London.

Nick Kyrgios joins Dominic Thiem at a grasscourt event - likely the only one this summer - at Berlin’s Tempelhof Airport from July 17-19. —AFP

We also feel honoured



New Zealand, Australia and Argentina Rugby) were reluctant to bankroll the perennial wooden-spooners after Japan’s rugby board withdrew financial sup-



Red Bull Solo Q – duel your way to victory

KUWAIT: Are you ready to duel? The official 1v1 League of Legends (LoL) tournament for players around the world, Red Bull Solo Q, starts online in Kuwait this month!

Red Bull Solo Q puts a twist on a typical League of Legends match, pitting player against player in a bracket of 1v1 duels. The first player to earn ‘First blood’, destroy the opponents’ tower or reach a 100-minion score wins the duel. National winners will proceed to the Red Bull Solo Q World Finals.

The online qualifiers in Kuwait kick off on June 9th and continue until the 11th with the semi finals held on the 12th and 13th. From then, the top 8 will battle it out at the national final.

As part of the partnership with League of Legends Global Esports Events, the winner of Red Bull Solo Q will get to experience the 2020 League of Legends all-star event firsthand! The Kuwaiti champion will participate in the league’s annual year-end celebration alongside some of the game’s biggest esports athletes and streaming personalities, playing in special showcases and attending exclusive parties.

In Kuwait, Red Bull Solo Q is held in partnership with Room Service, X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Cyber



Sports League and Kuwait Times. The caster will be none other than Dell Gaming, making the national final even more engaging.

Red Bull also continues their collaboration with one of the most popular faces in the League of Legends community: sjokz, who will return as the global brand ambassador for Red Bull Solo Q. Last year, she was live on stage for the National Finals in Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom — and even cast some games. This year, she will be involved with the European Regional Finals as well as the World Finals. Top athletes and many more well-known faces from the LoL scene will also make special appearances throughout the tournament.

The Kuwaitonline qualifiers are already open for registration. The online qualifiers will start on June 9, with more countries rolling out their tournaments in the weeks to follow. To sign up and for more information visit www.redbull.com/soloqkuwait.

Sports

La Liga resumes on June 11 after 3-month absence due to coronavirus

Real Madrid to play their remaining home games at Alfredo di Stefano Stadium

MADRID: La Liga resumes on June 11 after a three-month absence due to the coronavirus pandemic. Real Madrid and Barcelona have been unable to pull away from each other at the top of the table while Atletico Madrid are involved in what looks like a four-way fight for Champions League qualification.

AFP Sport takes a look at some key issues ahead of the run-in.

TURBULENT TITLE RACE

When Real Madrid beat Barcelona 2-0 at the Santiago Bernabeu on March 1, it seemed they had halted a dip in form and seized control of the title race.

But a week later, they handed the initiative back as Barca regained first place by beating Real Sociedad and Madrid lost away at Real Betis.

A three-month break means a fresh start but Barcelona's two-point lead reflects badly on their challengers, given Barca's own problems off the pitch, including the switch to Quique Setien as coach in January.

Both sides' imperfections mean there will be more slip-ups to come but if this Barca make it five league titles in six years, Madrid will only have themselves to blame.

UNFAMILIAR HOMES

Real Madrid have been given permission by La Liga to play their remaining home games at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium at their training ground to allow planned construction work to go ahead at the Santiago Bernabeu this summer.

With games being held behind closed doors

there would have been little advantage to playing at their usual home and the players might even be better off avoiding an empty 81,000-seater stadium that they are used to being almost full.

UNEXPECTED RETURNS

Neither Eden Hazard nor Luis Suarez expected to play much, or perhaps any, part in the run-in after Hazard underwent surgery on a broken foot in March and Suarez had an operation on his right knee in January.

The break has allowed both players to recover and the question now is whether either can find peak form and fitness in time to make an impact in the remaining 11 games.

Suarez's return could be particularly helpful for Barcelona but Setien has said the Uruguayan, who has often taken time to regain sharpness, is not yet ready.

Real Madrid's Hazard, plagued by injuries in recent months, has had a nightmare first year in Spain but has an unexpected chance to turn things around.

Four-way Fight

FIGHT FOR ATLETICO

Atletico Madrid's momentous win over Liverpool in the Champions League offered Diego Simeone some relief after what has been a disappointing season in La Liga.

His team sit sixth in the table, having long fallen out of the reckoning for the title and facing a fight even to make the top four.

Ahead of them between fifth and third are Getafe, Real Sociedad and Sevilla, and with only two points between the four, Atletico could still scrape in.



MADRID: Press photographers raise their cameras holding a banner that reads "The right of information is not a game" as they protest in front of Spanish La Liga headquarters in Madrid, against the restrictions imposed to cover football matches due to the national lockdown to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 disease. —AFP

But the resilient Getafe and free-flowing Real will both be eager to finish off brilliant campaigns while Sevilla appeared to be hitting their stride before games were suspended. Atletico cannot afford to be complacent.

PRESSURE AT THE BOTTOM

At the other end of the table, Espanyol look doomed, sitting in last place, six points adrift of safety. Leganes, who still have to play away at Barcelona before hosting Real Madrid on the final

day, are only three points better off.

One point then separates Mallorca, Celta Vigo and Eibar, whose players have expressed concerns about the safety of football returning too quickly. Real Valladolid in 15th have a four-point cushion over the bottom three but two wins in their last 10 games suggests they could easily be pulled in too.

The economic hit from the coronavirus pandemic means the stakes are even higher for these clubs, as they battle to avoid the considerable financial blow of relegation. For all of them, the pressure is on. —AFP

Atalanta coach Gasperini reveals he had coronavirus

MILAN: Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini revealed Sunday he thought he would die as he suffered coronavirus symptoms when the Italian team played their Champions League match against Valencia in March.

Gasperini told the Gazzetta Dello Sport that he was sick when Atalanta beat Valencia 4-3 behind closed doors at the Mestalla stadium on March 10, to reach the quarter-finals with an 8-4 aggregate victory. "The day before the Valencia game I was sick, the afternoon of the game worse. I didn't look good on the bench," said Gasperini.

"It was March 10. The following two nights in Zingonia (Atalanta's training centre) I slept little. I didn't have a fever, but I felt shattered, like I had one at 40 (degrees).

"An ambulance passed every two minutes. There is a hospital nearby. It seemed like a war zone. At night I thought: 'if I go in there, what happens to me?' "I can't go now. I have so many things to do ... I was saying it jokingly, to lighten things. But I really thought so."

Gasperini, 62, said he was never swabbed as he had not suffered from a fever, but 10 days ago serological tests confirmed he had COVID-19. "I have antibodies, which does not mean that I am now immune," he added.

Valencia said on Sunday that they were "surprised" to see Gasperini say he was "aware of suffering symptoms theoretically compatible with those of coronavirus, without taking preventive measures". "Such actions, if this was the case, would have put at risk numerous people during the trip to — and stay in — Valencia," the La Liga club said in a statement. "This game was held behind closed doors amidst strict safety measures, on the order of the Spanish health authorities, to prevent the risk of COVID-19 contagion, precisely due to the presence of persons from an area already publicly classified as 'at risk' at that time."



Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini.

'CENTRE OF EVIL'

Gasperini said that four days after the Valencia game he felt the worst was over, after a workout like he hadn't had in years and running 10km on the treadmill, but he then lost his sense of taste.

A celebratory meal and vintage 2008 Dom Perignon sent by a Michelin-starred chef and Atalanta fan, tasted like "water and bread", Gasperini said.

Bergamo, in the northern Lombardy region, was one of the epicentres of the coronavirus pandemic, with many experts believing Atalanta's Champions League game at the San Siro on February 19 to be one of the key causes. More than 40,000 fans travelled the 60km to Milan, joining in celebrations for a historic 4-1 win in the club's first elite European campaign.

"Every time I think about it, it seems absurd to me: the historic peak of sporting happiness coincided with the greatest pain in the city," said Gasperini. "It will take years to truly understand what hap-

pened, because right here was the centre of evil."

'HELP BERGAMO START AGAIN'

Serie A will return to action after a three-month absence on June 20, and the former Inter Milan and Genoa coach backs the decision.

"We had every interest to keep the table as it was and play only the Champions League," said Gasperini, whose side are fourth, 15 points behind leaders Juventus.

"But from the lads to the club we just felt like playing." "Some consider it amoral to start again" he continued. "I saw people singing on the balconies of Italy while Bergamo loaded their coffins onto trucks. I didn't consider it 'amoral'.

"I considered it an instinctive reaction, an attempt to cling to life, to react. Atalanta can help Bergamo to start again ... the people of Bergamo are embers under the ashes." The team has remained connected with Bergamo's suffering and will bring it to the pitch." —AFP

However, it wasn't totally deserted as the club placed 1,000 plastic photos of players in the stands while giving fans the chance to do likewise for roughly 500 koruna (19 euros, \$20), half of which will go to Slavia's youth teams. Around 500 'fans' made it for kick-off.

To liven up the eerie atmosphere, Sparta Prague and Viktoria Plzen are pumping out team songs during their games. For Wednesday's meeting between the two they set up drive-in cinemas in both Prague and Plzen.

"We weren't able to go to the stadium because of the situation. I saw about this opportunity on social media so my friend and I bought tickets and came. It's very different, we're not really screaming and we miss the stadium, it's impossible to replace." Sparta fan Petr Svoboda, who watched the 2-1 loss to Plzen, told AFP.

STANKOVIC'S RED STAR CHAMPIONS IN SERBIA

Despite their reputation and the clinching of a title — the first in Europe since football's return — typically boisterous Serbian supporters remained calm as the league resumed Friday behind closed doors.

Rad Belgrade hosted city rivals Red Star in the biggest match, where a 5-0 victory for the visitors secured them a 31st league title.

Anyone expecting a sea of supporters flocking to

English football's second division set for June 20 restart

LONDON: English football's second-tier Championship is due to resume behind closed doors on June 20 after league officials agreed Sunday on a provisional return date.

The Premier League announced on Thursday the top-flight season will restart on June 17 following the coronavirus suspension that brought football to a standstill in mid-March.

The English Football League (EFL), which governs the three divisions below the Premier League, said the Championship would return around the same time, provided that all safety requirements are in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"Following Saturday's announcement by the government to allow elite sporting events to return behind closed doors, the EFL has this weekend agreed to a provisional restart date of the weekend of 20 June 2020 for matches in the Sky Bet Championship," it said in a statement.

"The date is subject to the strict proviso that all safety requirements and government guidance is met; and that clubs receive clearance from their local authorities in order to stage matches at their home grounds."

It added: "After discussing various approaches, and the importance of completing the season in a similar timeline to that of the Premier League to avoid any potential issues with promoted and relegated clubs, the Sky Bet Championship season is set to conclude with the Championship play-off final on or around 30 July 2020."

Leeds led West Brom by a point at the top of the table when the season was suspended with nine rounds of matches still to play. Fulham, Brentford, Nottingham Forest and Preston occupied the promotion play-off spots. —AFP

Snapshots of European football's return

PARIS: In the shadows of Germany's Bundesliga, football is gradually restarting in countries across Europe, in almost all cases behind closed doors, with the exception of Hungary where supporters have been allowed to return.

From plastic fans in Poland, to virtual fans in Denmark, drive-in spectators in the Czech Republic and a title coronation in Serbia, AFP takes a look at a weekend of football in times of the coronavirus.

FANS RETURN IN HUNGARY

Forgotten sounds resonated in grounds across Hungary this weekend as songs, the beating of drums and the sense of excitement which spreads throughout the crowd when the ball nears the goal all returned for the first time since March.

After two months without spectators, sports venues reopened their doors to the public this weekend in Hungary, the first country to welcome supporters back to the stands, on the condition that every other row is left empty and only one in four seats is occupied.

"We will respect the rules because there could be games behind closed doors again if we mess up," said Richard Kovacs, 36, one of the 2,255 fans at Diosgyor's match against Mezőkövesd.

"All that worries us is knowing if we're going to win or lose, not the epidemic," said Gabor Lengyel, 41, suggesting that football, and by extension life for some, is approaching a return to normal.

POLAND HOME TO PLASTIC SUPPORTERS

Poland will follow Hungary's lead with fans able to attend matches from June 19, although stadiums will be limited to a quarter of capacity.

In the meantime, the league restarted on Friday behind closed doors with noisy, hardcore Polish fans forced to adapt. Supporters of Pogon Szczecin arranged a guard of honour, holding aloft flares every 10 metres on the road leading to the stadium.

Lechia Gdansk relied on some private support on Sunday against Arka Gdynia, with photos of some 200 fans printed on plastic backgrounds and placed in the stands.

The photos cost 75 zlotys (17 euros, \$19) and will eventually be returned to fans taking part in the initiative once signed by their favourite player.

CZECH DRIVE-IN CINEMAS

The second weekend of the Czech league since the season's resumption saw defending champions and leaders Slavia Prague thrash Jablonec 5-0 at an empty Eden Arena on Saturday.

the streets to celebrate was disappointed. Only a hundred or so hardcore fans gathered outside Red Star's ground to toast the newly-crowned champions while mobbing the club's coach, former Inter Milan midfielder Dejan Stankovic, outside the Marakana.

VIRTUAL SUPPORTERS IN DENMARK

After a near three-month hiatus, the Danish league returned Thursday as AGF took on Randers in Aarhus in a 1-1 draw behind closed doors.

On the eve of the match the Aarhus club had invited eager fans to stick banners, flags and other cardboard cut-outs in the stands, far from the usual ambiance expected for a clash between two Jutland rivals.

Aarhus supporter Liva Hansen, 28, followed the match on TV and via popular videoconferencing platform Zoom along with a group of friends.

All five were part of a virtual audience of 30,000 people, whose images were beamed onto giant screens around the pitch.

"No doubt, that helped," Aarhus coach David Nielsen told Danish tabloid Ekstra Bladet. "It created a little alternative atmosphere, specific to 2020."

"It's a good solution but obviously I would have preferred to be in the stands," said Hansen. "It was nice to be able to see the other fans and their reactions, during the good moments but also during the less good!" —AFP

18 Japan's Sunwolves exit Super Rugby as Australia bid fails



19 La Liga resumes on June 11 after 3-month absence due to virus



19 Atalanta coach Gasperini reveals he had coronavirus



Sancho nets hat-trick as Dortmund cruise

Jadon Sancho joins 'Justice for George Floyd' protest



PADERBORN: Dortmund's English midfielder Jadon Sancho scores his teams sixth goal past Paderborn's German goalkeeper Leopold Zingerle during the German first division Bundesliga football match SC Paderborn 07 and Borussia Dortmund at Benteler Arena in Paderborn on May 31. — AFP

BERLIN: England winger Jadon Sancho scored a hat-trick and revealed a "Justice for George Floyd" protest message in Borussia Dortmund's 6-1 rout of bottom side Paderborn on Sunday that trimmed Bayern Munich's lead at the top of the Bundesliga to seven points. The outstanding Sancho, who now has 17 goals and 17 assists in the Bundesliga this season, joined a host of protests in the German top-flight over the weekend at the death of an unarmed black man in the United States.

Sancho later wrote on Instagram: "Delighted to get my first career hat trick, a bittersweet moment personally as there are more important things going on in the world today that we must address and help make a change."

Morocco international Achraf Hakimi lifted his jersey to deliver the same message as Sancho after scoring Dortmund's fourth goal at Paderborn.

George Floyd, 46, died in Minneapolis during an arrest by a police officer who pinned him to the ground for several minutes by kneeling on his neck, sparking protests across the US.

Earlier Sunday, Borussia Moenchengladbach's French forward Marcus Thuram took a knee to protest Floyd's death. Schalke's American midfielder Weston McKennie wore a "Justice for George" armband on Saturday.

At Paderborn, second-placed Dortmund kept their remote title hopes intact as Sancho stole the limelight with teenage striker Erling Braut Haaland sidelined by a leg injury. "We're going to give everything to win every game," said Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Buerki.

Bayern are firmly on course for an eighth successive title with just six matches left to play, and Dortmund's sports director Michael Zorc said the focus was now on securing Champions League qualification as quickly as possible.

"It's clear that Bayern will be German champions at the end," said Zorc. After Dortmund's attack struggled to break the deadlock, Hazard scored the opening goal on 54 minutes when presented with a tap-in by midfielder Emre Can.

Julian Brandt set up Sancho for his first goal three minutes later, with the England international receiving a yellow card after removing his shirt to reveal his political message.

Paderborn defender Uwe Huenemeier converted a penalty on 72 minutes to give the hosts brief hope,

but Dortmund responded with four unanswered goals. Just two minutes later, Sancho grabbed his second after good work from Hazard. Hakimi made it 4-1 on 85 minutes when he was set up by Marcel Schmelzer, who came on as a late substitute.

Schmelzer then scored Dortmund's fifth when he converted a low Axel Witsel cross on 89 minutes.

Sancho wrapped up the first hat-trick of his career by slotting home at the far post with the Paderborn defence once again shredded.

GLADBACH THUMP UNION
Earlier, Gladbach thrashed Union Berlin 4-1 to go third with Thuram scoring twice and taking a knee in protest at Floyd's death.

"Marcus has made the point. He has set an example against racism that we all support," said Gladbach coach Marco Rose. First-half goals by midfielder Florian Neuhaus, who bagged Gladbach's 3,000th goal in the Bundesliga, and Thuram put Gladbach 2-0 up at the break. After heading in a cross from compatriot Alassane Plea, the 22-year-old French striker then

took a knee on the Borussia Park turf. "No explanation needed," wrote Borussia Moenchengladbach on the club's official Twitter account.

Just after half-time, Union's Swedish striker Sebastian Andersson pulled one back after being left unmarked. However, Gladbach pulled away when Thuram added his second following another Plea assist. Plea then grabbed a goal of his own when he fired home off his left foot to wrap up the victory on 81 minutes.

After the final whistle, the Gladbach squad celebrated in front of stands filled with cardboard figures of fans. There were 15,000 cut-outs inside Borussia Park, with home supporters paying 19 euros (\$21) each to have their image at the game as fans remain shut out to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

After a 3-1 defeat to Leverkusen last weekend and a goalless draw with relegation-threatened Werder Bremen on Tuesday, this was an important win for Gladbach.

It lifted them to third in the table, but RB Leipzig can take their place if they win at Cologne on Monday. On Saturday, reigning champions Bayern Munich edged closer to the title with a 5-0 demolition of Fortuna Dusseldorf as the league's top scorer Robert Lewandowski netted twice. —AFP

Jordan joins sports world call for change after Floyd death

LOS ANGELES: NBA icon Michael Jordan decried "ingrained racism" in America Sunday as the sports world's reaction to the death of unarmed black man George Floyd leapt leagues and continents.

"I am deeply saddened, truly pained and plain angry," Jordan said in a statement Sunday, as protests over Floyd's death on May 25 spawned violence and looting. "I stand with those who are calling out the ingrained racism and violence toward people of color in our country. 'We have had enough,'" said Jordan, who was famously reluctant to comment on social issues during his playing career.

Floyd died on May 25 after a white policeman in Minneapolis had held his knee on the handcuffed man's neck for several minutes.

"We need to continue peaceful expressions against injustice and demand accountability," Jordan

said. Jordan joined a chorus of voices from the NBA, NFL and other US sports demanding change for black Americans, but the demands weren't limited to the United States. French footballer Marcus Thuram and England international Jadon Sancho called for justice for Floyd after scoring in Germany's Bundesliga. Thuram took a knee after scoring for Borussia Moenchengladbach in a match against Union Berlin, while Sancho marked one of his three goals for Borussia Dortmund against Paderborn by lifting his jersey to reveal a T-shirt bearing the words "Justice for George Floyd."

Thuram's gesture echoed the protest of US racism spearheaded by former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, whose decision to kneel during the national anthem at games in 2016 sparked outrage.

The gesture has now been heartbreakingly compared to the death of Floyd, who pleaded that he couldn't breathe as Minneapolis policeman Derek Chauvin kept his knee on his neck.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver sent an internal memo to NBA employees on Sunday that said the league shares "the outrage" that has followed the death of Floyd — which comes in the wake of the police killing in Kentucky of emergency health worker Breonna Taylor in her home, and the fatal shooting of

unarmed black jogger Ahmaud Arbery.

Commissioner Adam Silver sent an internal memo to NBA office employees Sunday, offering thoughts of frustration and sadness after watching the protests around the country over the weekend.

"We are being reminded that there are wounds in our country that have never healed," Silver said in the memo, which was obtained and published by Yahoo.

"Racism, police brutality and racial injustice remain part of everyday life in America and cannot be ignored." With US pro sports on hold amid the coronavirus pandemic, American athletes had no chance to demonstrate on the field of play.

Boston Celtics forward Jaylen Brown and Philadelphia 76ers forward Tobias Harris were among a number of NBA players who took part in demonstrations over the weekend. Brown drove 15 hours to lead a peaceful protest march in Atlanta, Georgia.

"First and foremost, I'm a black man and I'm a member of this community," the Georgia native said.

Los Angeles Clippers coach Doc Rivers, himself the son of a policeman, said that as violence escalated it was imperative to keep Floyd's death at the forefront. "The response we are seeing across the nation, to the murder of George Floyd, is decades in the making," Rivers said in a statement. "Too often, people

rush to judge the response, instead of the actions that prompted it. "We have allowed too many tragedies to pass in vain. This isn't an African-American issue. This is a human issue," Rivers said.

US tennis great Serena Williams posted a moving video on Instagram that featured a young African-American girl overcome by emotion as she addressed a public meeting, finally able to force out the words: "We are black people, and we shouldn't have to feel like this." Teenage tennis phenom Coco Gauff, who is black, had a simple question on her Instagram post: "Am I next?"

And two-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka, whose mother is Japanese and father Haitian, reminded her social media followers: "Just because it isn't happening to you doesn't mean it isn't happening at all." NFL commissioner Roger Goodell said the violent protests "reflect the pain, anger and frustration that so many of us feel."

With Kaepernick still unable to find a job in the NFL, not everyone was convinced by Goodell or by San Francisco 49ers chief executive Jed York, who pledged \$1 million to combat systemic racial discrimination. Former 49er Eric Reid, who knelt alongside Kaepernick tweeted: "Nobody wants your money Jed. We want justice." —AFP