



**7** A quarter-billion children getting no education: UN



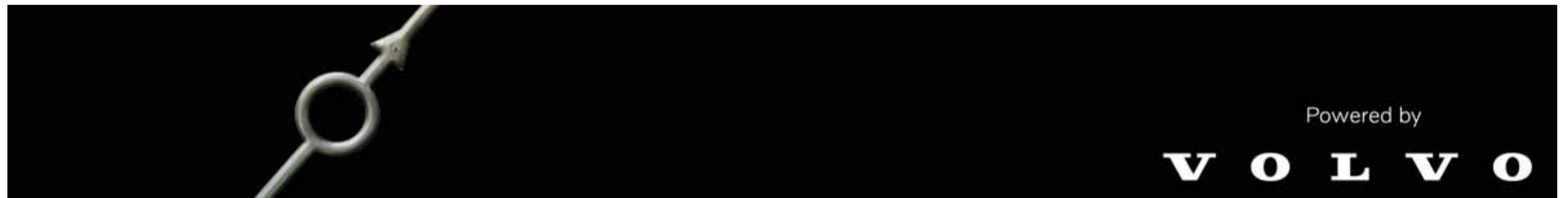
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# Female prisoner dies of virus; global cases top nine million

Over 100,000 expats leave Kuwait in 3 months • WHO says pandemic 'accelerating'

## Saudi to hold 'limited' hajj, outsiders barred

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia has announced it will hold a "very limited" hajj this year, with pilgrims already in the kingdom allowed to perform the annual ritual as it moves to curb the biggest coronavirus outbreak in the Gulf. The decision marks the first time in Saudi Arabia's modern history that Muslims outside the kingdom have been barred from performing the hajj, which last year drew 2.5 million pilgrims.

The move to scale back the five-day event, scheduled for the end of July, is fraught with political and economic peril and comes after sev-

eral Muslim nations pulled out of the ritual that forms one of the main pillars of Islam. The kingdom's hajj ministry said the ritual will be open to various nationalities already in Saudi Arabia, but it did not specify a number.

"It was decided to hold the pilgrimage this year with very limited numbers... with different nationalities in the kingdom," the official Saudi Press Agency said on Monday, citing the ministry. "This decision is taken to ensure the hajj is performed in a safe manner from a public health perspective... and in

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By B Izzak and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry said yesterday that a female prisoner died of coronavirus, becoming the first incarcerated victim of the deadly disease in Kuwait. Meanwhile, global coronavirus infections topped nine million as the World Health Organization warned the pandemic was accelerating.

The interior ministry said in a statement the 59-year-old woman was taken to hospital in stable condition around 10 days ago, but her condition deteriorated four days ago and she was admitted to the intensive care unit, where she died. The woman was battling a number of chronic diseases, the statement added. The interior ministry has said that dozens of prisoners have been infected with the coronavirus and that precautionary health measures have been taken, including sanitizing prisons.

The Cabinet reviewed a new report on the disease by the health minister, who

informed the council that the recovery rate from the disease has increased to 79 percent. But the report also expressed concern about the rise of infections among Kuwaitis. The Cabinet is expected to decide on Thursday whether the country can finally move into the second of the five-phase return to normal life. The Cabinet last Thursday decided to delay the move by at least one week because of the steep rise in the number of cases among citizens, which has continued in the past five days.

The civil aviation authority said yesterday that over 100,000 expats left the country during the past three months, when Kuwait closed its airports and grounded the Kuwait Airways fleet. About a quarter of those who left are expats who were living illegally in the country but registered to benefit from an interior ministry amnesty to leave without paying fines or even the airfare. Special flights continue to operate out of Kuwait Airport taking expats to their home countries. Yesterday, over 2,000

expats were due to leave.

MP Khalil Al-Saleh said yesterday that a local bank has laid off a number of Kuwaiti employees and called on the government to intervene. The lawmaker, who heads the manpower development committee in the National Assembly which debates with the government to find jobs for nationals, said the decision is unacceptable. He warned that failure to take stern actions against such a move will threaten job security for Kuwaitis in the private sector.

Europe has steadily eased its travel lockdowns in recent weeks, and France on Monday took its biggest step back to normality by allowing millions of children to return to school. But many parts of the world, including Latin America and South Asia, are only beginning to feel the full force of the pandemic, while other regions are being hit with second waves.

"The pandemic is still accelerating," the WHO's director general Tedros Adhanom

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## Black Arab women tackle racist beauty ideals, stereotypes

**AMMAN:** Black Arab women are drawing inspiration from global anti-racism protests to fight back against long-standing discrimination and Middle Eastern beauty standards that favor light skin and straight hair. Black Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, who descend from sub-Saharan Africans, suffer social marginalization and unequal job prospects, and are often subjected to racist abuse and derogatory portrayals in the media.

Black women, some of whom are African migrants, suffer a double discrimination, activists say. "The standard of beauty in our society is to be white," said Khawla Ksiksi, a feminist and anti-racism activist who co-founded the Voices of Black Tunisian Women group. "Black women are pressured to straighten their hair, get rid of their curls and to whiten their skin in order to be accepted by society and fit in by its standards," Ksiksi told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Emboldened by the global Black Lives Matter movement, she said Black Arab women wanted to highlight the day-to-day racial prejudice and abuse they face in a region where there is widespread denial about the issue. Somali-Yemeni activist Amna Ali founded the Black Arabs Collective this month, an Instagram platform that aims to raise awareness about race and racism in the region.

She recalled watching adverts for whitening cream on TV showing women growing happier as their complexion gradually became lighter. "It's so damaging to brown and Black girls that watch that and think my skin color is bad and if it's lighter, it's better," she said by phone from Dubai.

A surge of global criticism about whitening creams has forced brands to react, however. Johnson & Johnson said on Friday it would stop selling its range of such products in Asia and the Middle East. In Tunisia, leading sanitary pad brand Nana caused outrage on social media after sharing a post on June 9 meant to celebrate diversity that featured a white, blue-eyed model painted in different skin-tone shades. Nana Arabia, which swiftly replaced the controversial post, did not respond to requests for comment.

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## Palestinians rally against Trump's Middle East plan

**JERICO:** Thousands of Palestinians on Monday demonstrated against US President Donald Trump's plan for the Middle East that includes Israel's annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank. The protest in Jericho, in the south of the Jordan Valley, came in response to a call by Fatah, the party of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, AFP reporters said.

It was the largest rally of its kind since Trump in January unveiled his controversial plan for Israeli-Palestinian peace, which gives Israel a green light to annex West Bank settlements and the Jordan Valley. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to announce as soon as July 1 his strategy to implement Trump's plan. The Palestinians have rejected the plan and have been trying to rally international support against it.

"If Israel annexes there won't be any land left for a Palestinian state," said protester Mohammed

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## Japan's Fugaku supercomputer world's fastest

**TOKYO:** Japan's Fugaku supercomputer, built with government backing and used in the fight against coronavirus, is now ranked as the world's fastest, its developers announced Monday. It snatched the top spot on the Top500, a site that has tracked the evolution of computer processing power for more than two decades, said the Riken scientific research center. The list is produced twice a year and rates supercomputers based on speed in a benchmark test set by experts from Germany and the US.

Fugaku was jointly developed by Riken and the firm Fujitsu and has a speed of roughly 415.53 petaflops - 2.8 times faster than the second-ranked US Summit supercomputer's 148.6 petaflops. A supercomputer is more than 1,000 times faster than a regular computer, according to Riken. Summit had topped the last four rankings over the previous two years. Fugaku, meaning Mount Fuji in Japanese, has been under development for six years and is expected to start full-time operation from April 2021.

But it is already being put to work on the coronavirus crisis, running simulations on how droplets



JERICO: Palestinians wave flags during a rally on Monday to protest against Israel's plan to annex parts of the occupied West Bank. — AFP



KOBE: This picture taken on June 16, 2020 shows Japan's Fugaku supercomputer at the Riken Center for Computational Science. — AFP

would spread on office spaces with partitions installed or packed trains with windows open. "I hope that the leading-edge IT developed for it will contribute to major advances on difficult social challenges such as COVID-19," Satoshi Matsuoka, the head of Riken's Center for Computational Science, said in a statement.

Fugaku has also topped several other supercomputer performance rankings, becoming the first to simultaneously sit atop the Graph500, HPCG, and HPL-AI lists. Supercomputers are vital tools for advanced scientific work because of their ability to perform rapid calculations for everything from weather forecasts to missile development. A Riken-developed forerunner to the Fugaku has held the title of world's fastest supercomputer, but in recent years the race to develop the powerful machines has been dominated by the US and China. — AFP

## Trump suspends entry of certain foreign workers

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump suspended the entry into the United States of certain foreign workers on Monday, a move the White House said would help the coronavirus-battered economy, but which business groups strongly oppose. Trump issued a presidential proclamation that temporarily blocks foreign workers entering on H-1B visas for skilled employees, and L visas, for managers and specialized workers being transferred within a company.

He also blocked those entering on H-2B seasonal worker visas, used by landscapers and other industries. The visa suspension, which takes effect today until the end of the year, will open up 525,000 jobs for US workers, a senior administration official said on a call with reporters. The official, who did not explain how the administration arrived at that figure, said the move was geared at "getting Americans back to work as quickly as possible."

But businesses including major tech companies and the US Chamber of Commerce said the visa

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# Kuwait banks offered \$8.9 billion credit facilities to businesses in 100 days

## Central Bank: 80 percent of finances given to businesses impacted by COVID-19

**KUWAIT:** The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) unveiled on Monday that the local banks have provided credit facilities at a total value of KD 2.7 billion (about \$8.9 billion) to different businesses since the launching in early last April of a government package to stimulate the national economy. In statements obtained by KUNA, the CBK said that 80 percent of the finances, KD 2.16 billion or \$7.1 billion, were given to the businesses impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It pointed out that all economic sectors have benefited from the granted facilities.



### Preventing long-term solvency issues

On April 2, the CBK announced that it has adjusted its regulatory instructions and macro prudential policy tools to empower local banks' ability to perform their vital role, provide financing to productive economic sectors, and offer liquidity to help businesses continue operations. It pointed out that the move aims to avoid turning a shortage in liquidity from turning into long-term

solvency issues. The CBK also noted that the instructions issued include a reduction in liquidity requirements such as the liquidity coverage ratio, the net stable funding ratio, and the regulatory liquidity ratio. In addition, they increase the maximum limits for the negative cumulative mismatch and the maximum lending limits to providing financing.

In an effort to target more support for small and medium enterprises, the credit risk weight has been reduced from 75 percent to 25 percent to calculate the capital adequacy ratio, in order to empower banks to provide more financing to this sector. Moreover, the CBK instructions allowed banks to release capital conservation buffers within the capital base, thus reducing capital requirements. On financing for private housing and development, the new instructions included increasing the ratio of loans to value of the property or the cost of development. — KUNA



The Central Bank of Kuwait

## Coronavirus in Kuwait: What we know so far

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has recorded 40,291 cases infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as of Sunday, in addition to 330 deaths. With the exception of 181 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, 32,304 people have recovered completely after previously being infected with the virus, while there are 7,657 people receiving treatment and 23 quarantined.

### Curfew

Kuwait imposed a three-week partial curfew starting May 31 (from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am), 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 curfew hours were later reduced to start on 7:00 pm and end at 5:00 am, starting from June 21, 2020. The first phase also includes a total lockdown on Farwaniya, Khaitan, and Hawally, joining Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh which were put under lockdown earlier. The lockdown ended in Hawally and Khaitan on June 21, 2020.

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.

Mosques in the so-called 'model residential areas' reopened their doors for worshippers on June 10 amid strict health precautionary measures. Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs Mohammad Al-Afasi said that mosques in commercial, markets and heavily-populated areas will remain closed for the time being. Worshippers must wear face masks, keep social distancing between queues and between worshippers must be strictly observed. Worshippers must bring their own mats so they do not get in contact with mosque carpets. Mosques will reopen five minutes before prayer time and close 10 minutes after prayer.

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](http://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 Mah-

boula 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](http://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](http://www.pai.gov.kw), and send the form via email to: [Jasiri@moh.gov.kw](mailto: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

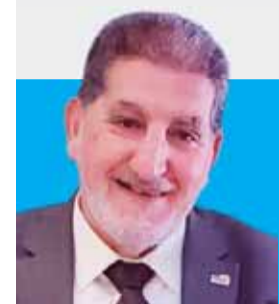
The Kuwait Psychological Association (KPA) is providing consultation through the phone for people suffering from the psychological impacts of coronavirus. Different doctors are working on the hotline in different timings as follows:

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

For information and other concerns, call 9401-4283.

In My View

## What goes around comes around



By Abdellatif Sharaa

[local@kuwaittimes.com](mailto:local@kuwaittimes.com)

A few days ago, I received a message from my daughter saying "Happy Father's Day". How sweet it was, because I did not expect it as I was not aware it was Father's Day. I believe that girls are a blessing God grants fathers because they have tender hearts and are very close to their fathers, and give them a lot of warmth. Thank you my little girl - you will always be your daddy's baby.

Allow me to share a story - I believe that it has lots of meanings and examples that one should learn from. The story goes as follows - a stranger entered a restaurant in Damascus and ordered a piece of [Arabic] bread. He ate one half and left. He did the same for a few days, until a Damascene man noticed what was going on, approached the stranger and asked politely: Why do you eat half of the bread and leave the other half? Where are you from?

The stranger said I am from Baghdad - I visited many countries but did not find anyone who keeps and remembers favors, so I eat one half and I cannot find anyone who deserves the other half. The man from Damascus, who was living with his mother and cousin, invited the stranger to lunch. When the stranger went to the house, the cousin opened the door for him and he immediately fell in love with her. When lunch was over, the stranger asked his host who the woman was. He told him she was his cousin. The stranger said he wanted to marry her, and his host agreed. The stranger took his bride to Baghdad and lived there.

The mother of the man from Damascus died after some time, and he became poor, so he sold his house to support himself, but the money did not last long, so he decided to go and visit his friend in Baghdad. Once there he learned that his friend was rich and lived in a palace. The man went to his friend's palace and asked one of the maids to tell the friend he wanted to see him. The maid instead came back with a bag of gold coins, but he threw it away and told her I am here to see the friend.

The man from Damascus was now out of money and was sleeping outside on the streets, and all he had was to pray for a better life. An older man came by and asked him about his condition, so he told him he can barely find something to eat and told him his story. The older man offered to employ and teach him how to trade, which he learned well and became very knowledgeable. Within three years, the Damascene man became very rich and built a palace like no other.

One day, an elderly woman asked the man to allow her to work for him and he agreed, then later told him about a poor girl who also wanted to work for him, to which he agreed. The elderly lady groomed the girl well and gave her beautiful clothes - when the man from Damascus saw her, he wanted to marry her. On the wedding day, merchants and rich people were invited. When the man from Baghdad entered the palace of the man from Damascus, he told him I came to visit you, but you sent your maid with money as if I was begging, so now what do you want, and almost kicked him out of the wedding party.

The man from Baghdad told him I looked out of the window and saw how you were, so I wanted you to look good in front of your cousin. Then when I found that your pride and dignity made you reject the money, I did not know what to do for you. Then he asked - do you know who was the elderly man who taught you to trade? He is my father; and the woman who serves you - she is my mother; and I am here today to attend the wedding of my sister.

The cousin of the man from Damascus came in with a boy and a girl, then the bride came in and sat next to her, followed by the man from Baghdad and the man from Damascus. The man from Baghdad took half a piece of bread from his pocket and divided it among them all, and they ate it together.

It is good manners not to throw a stone in the well from which we drink. We are in need of those who keep our bread!

Local

# Kuwait's COVID-19 recovery percentage at around 79 percent

## Health Minister briefs Cabinet on coronavirus situation



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs a Cabinet meeting via videoconference on Monday. —KUNA



Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah attends the meeting.



Deputy Premier, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh attends the meeting.

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said Monday the percentage of recoveries from the novel coronavirus was around 79 percent, but there was a rise in infections among citizens due to gatherings. Sheikh Basel, addressing a Cabinet meeting via videoconference chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, said the Ministry of Health has been conducting measures to curb spread of COVID-19 to ultimately terminate it. The Ministry of Health (MoH) had announced Monday that 641 people were infected with the novel coronavirus during the previous 24 hours, putting total number of contaminated cases at 40,291. Ministry spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said in his daily briefing the virus took lives of four people during the same period, with the total number of deaths from the infectious disease amounting to 330 since its outbreak in the country several



Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attends the meeting.

## Kuwaiti, Algerian FMs discuss latest developments



Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received, late on Sunday, a telephone call from his Algerian counterpart Sabri Boukadoum, holding talks on dealing with latest developments on the regional and international arenas. Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser later received phone calls from his Tunisian and Egyptian counterparts, respectively Nouredine Erray and Sameh Shukri respectively, discussing identical issues.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah

received on Monday a telephone call from Sudanese Prime Minister Dr Abdalla Hamdok who invited the premier to partake in the "conference of Sudan's partners" due in Germany on June 25, 2020. The conference is set to be held in partnership with the European Union and the United Nations. The two sides discussed during the call means of boosting further the solid bilateral ties, exchanging views on a host of regional and international topics of joint concern. The two premiers also examined latest developments and measures in the two countries to stem spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). — KUNA

Deputy Premier, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said in a statement. He said His Highness the Prime Minister assigned Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah to represent him at the conference of Sudan's partners, which is due in Germany on June 25, 2020. Sheikh Dr Ahmad will also represent His Highness the Prime Minister at the international pledges summit, on June 27th, to mobilize additional funding to develop and deploy coronavirus vaccines. The government, on the other hand, condemned the Turkish and Iranian military intervention in northern Iraq, considering them blatant violations of Iraq's sovereignty and a threat to the nation's security. Kuwait, said Saleh, supported all measures conducted by the Iraqi government to preserve the country's sovereignty, security and stability. — KUNA



## Gatherings led to rise in infections

months ago. The total caseload of the infections included 383 Kuwaiti citizens and 258 non-Kuwaitis, Dr Sanad added. The ministry also said 530 people recovered, bringing the total number to 31,770.

### Laborers' cities

Meanwhile, the Cabinet discussed a report by the services committee about addressing obstacles facing the construction of cities for laborers,

### News in brief

#### Bedoon student attempts suicide

KUWAIT: A bedoon (stateless) medical student attempted suicide in Sulaibiya by attempting to overdose on medications, according to police. The young man was rushed to hospital where he remains in a critical condition inside the intensive care unit after undergoing a gastric lavage operation. His family told police that he was suffering from mental problems as of late, and a suicide attempt case was filed.

#### Thirteen flights

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that 13 flights were to depart from Kuwait International Airport yesterday, carrying a total of 2,010 passengers. They included seven flights to Egypt, three flights to India, one flight to Qatar, one flight to Nepal, and one flight to Iran.

#### Oil price down

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 70 cents to \$36.92 per barrel on Monday after it was \$37.62 pb last Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. At the global level, the price of the Brent crude went up by 89 cents to \$43.08 per barrel, the same case with the West Intermediate, which rose by 90 cents to \$40.73 pb.

#### Kuwait condemns terror

KUWAIT: An official source at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday expressed the State of Kuwait strong denunciation of the terrorist operation that happened in the city of Reading, the United Kingdom, where a number of people were killed and wounded. The official source affirmed the State of Kuwait's solidarity with the United Kingdom with respect of measures it may take to face various forms of violence, terrorism and extremism. Moreover, the foreign ministry source expressed sincere condolences and solace for the victims' families wishing the injured quick recuperation.

Stay safe. Stay home. Stay informed.

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## Local

# UK welcomes int'l students, re-opening of visa application center in Kuwait

By British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport

More Kuwaitis are studying in the UK than ever before. I am delighted that during the academic year just ending we welcomed over 6,000 Kuwaitis at British universities and colleges in a wide range of different disciplines. I would like to congratulate Kuwaiti graduates from UK universities for this academic year. The UK offers prestigious and high quality education, which is recognized all over the world and enables graduates to get ahead in their careers. There are long standing connections between Kuwait and the UK, and for many Kuwaiti families the UK is very much their second home. Kuwaitis are an integral part of local communities all over Britain, including in cities where they have studied, often to PhD level, and developed deep connections, both professional and personal.

The UK is a highly tolerant, multicultural society, with a rich diversity of cul-

tures, languages, and faiths. International students contribute significantly to this enriching environment, which makes the UK such a stimulating place to study. UK higher education providers consistently do their utmost to ensure international students feel welcome on university campuses; they are clear that everyone with the talent and potential to succeed in higher education should have the opportunity to do so, regardless of nationality or ethnicity.

The UK is a global powerhouse of science and research. With so many universities at the cutting edge of global discoveries and emerging technology, our students graduate with insights and experience that are in high demand around the world. Oxford University and Imperial college research into COVID-19 vaccines is a typical example of UK universities' remarkable capabilities in science and research. Most UK universities are intimately connected with business and industry in the UK and around the world and pursue research projects in a wide

range of subjects.

UK degrees are of a high standard and enjoy international renown whether they are delivered in person or online. Their quality is guaranteed by UK quality assurance agencies. There are some fantastic and innovative examples of high-quality online learning being delivered by institutions across the UK, and the sector is already working hard to prepare learning materials for the summer and autumn terms.

International students studying at British universities will from Summer 2021 be able to benefit from two years' work experience in the UK upon graduation via the new graduate immigration route. This means that graduates from the summer of 2021 can stay and work, or look for work, in the UK at any skill level for a period of two years.

Admissions processes and modes of teaching might look slightly different this year, taking account of the challenges of COVID-19. However, the UK's world-class universities are continuing to recruit

international students, who are encouraged to apply even if they are unable to travel to the UK to meet the usual timelines.

We are delighted to announce that the UK Visa Application Center in Kuwait will re-open in Kuwait on Sunday June 28, 2020. So, now is the time for students to familiarize themselves with UK visa requirements and talk to their chosen university about English language evidence they will need to supply for a visa application. The UK has a high visa acceptance rate for students: 98 percent of Tier 4 (General) student visa applications were granted to international students in the last year.

The UK is a safe place to study, and UK universities are prioritizing students' safety and wellbeing. The national and global response to the spread of COVID-19 continues to develop quickly and our collective knowledge of the virus is growing. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) regularly publishes papers outlining the scientific advice pro-



British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport

vided to the government. Her Majesty's Government and the governments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are adhering closely to this guidance, and our advice will change to match the level of the threat. In doing so, the UK's top priority remains the health and safety of all UK and overseas nationals in the UK, including international higher education students studying at our universities and colleges.

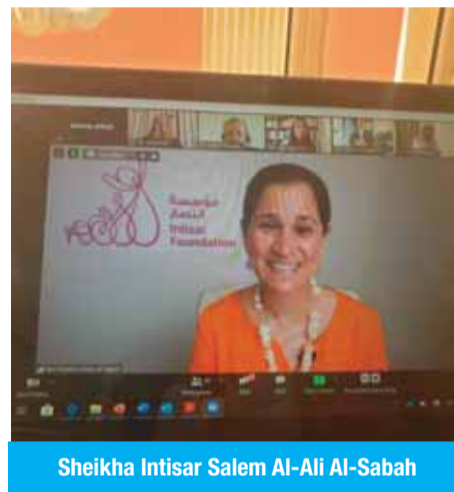
## Kuwaiti foundation alleviates Arab women wars' suffering: UN

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Intisar Foundation has been using a "unique and innovative" approach to support women suffering from wars by ultimately improving their living conditions, a UN official said Monday. Tareq El-Sheikh, Secretary General's Representative and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait, said Intisar Foundation has been active in this domain for 20 years and contributed to alleviating shock of a million Arab women by using psychological therapy.

Sheikh was speaking in a virtual seminar, co-organized by the UN and Intisar Foundation, about psychological therapy to help Arab women overcome impacts of conflicts. The UN, he said, believes that women peacekeepers improved performance of

peacekeeping missions, promote human rights, protect civilians and encourage women to be influencers in peacekeeping missions. President of Intisar Foundation, Sheikha Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, said the foundation made large strides in rehabilitating a large number of women who were victims of wars.

She said two groups had recently graduated from a training program in Lebanon, part of a plan to rehabilitate a million Arab women suffering from agonizing wars. Hundreds of graduates, she added, were training other women now. "They have become peace-makers in Arab societies," she said. Dr Samer Haddadin, head of the UNHCR office in Kuwait, said the State of Kuwait was not only a strategic partner



Sheikha Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah

for the UN refugee agency but a "role model." He said since 2013, Kuwait contributed \$430 million to help millions of refugees and internally displaced persons in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iran. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Participants in a virtual seminar co-organized by the UN and the Intisar Foundation about psychological therapy to help Arab women overcome impacts of conflicts. — KUNA

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## ACK successfully conducted its first virtual audit

**KUWAIT:** The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) conducted its first virtual audit to ensure the effectiveness of its Quality Management System ISO 9001: 2015. In light of the current circumstances that swept the world, Australian College of Kuwait continues its commitment to provide the best educational programs and training services in accordance with international standards, hence, during the second and third of this month, it was ACK's first experience to un-

dergo virtual external audit on its Quality Management System ISO 9001:2015, by Lloyd's Register Professional Auditors.

The auditors team praised the actions taken by the college to mitigate the risks resulted from coronavirus pandemic, as well as all the processes, functions and plans that were implemented to overcome the crisis, especially with regard to distance learning (e-learning) system, which turned out to be very successful in dealing with the crisis in an effective and dynamic manner.

The effectiveness of ACK Quality Management System confirms the commitment of the executive, academic and administrative staff to meet the needs of all relevant bodies, including students, graduates, trainees, and the labor market, in addition to the quality assurance and continuous improvement.

## Kuwaiti athletes tested for resuming training

**KUWAIT:** Public Authority for Sport (PAS) Deputy Director General for Competitive Sports Dr Saqer Al-Mulla said on Monday the authority started implementing a strategy for resumption of sports training. In the preliminary steps, athletes of track and field, fencing and shooting have been examined to ensure they are free of the infectious disease, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), he said in a statement. He indicated at plans to sanitize sports facilities and enforce health terms set by the Ministry of Health (MoH), noting that there would be follow up on implementation of the anti-coronavirus scheme by sports clubs and associations. A tripartite committee grouping representatives of the authority, the MoH and the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee announced on June 17 the adoption of a mechanism for resuming sports activities as of June 28. — KUNA



Local

# Zain partners MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab to hold 'Virtual' Startup Competition

All-digital conference and awards ceremony will be held today

BEIRUT/KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa confirms its digital partnership of the 2020 edition of the highly impactful MIT Enterprise Forum (MITEF) Pan Arab Startup Competition. This year's collaboration represents the sixth consecutive year Zain has partnered the region's leading startup competition, which has produced numerous successful ventures over the years.

Undeterred by logistical challenges raised by the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, rather than cancel this year's competition, the decision was taken to host it in a virtual setting. The MITEF Pan Arab Startup Competition has seen over 4,000 applications this year, with Zain joining other distinguished organizations including Community Jameel (Main Partner) and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (Innovation Partner) in partnering the competition this year.

The MITEF Pan Arab Startup Competition is an annual event designed to empower entrepreneurs and foster an eco-system of innovation and entrepreneurship across the Arab region. The conference and competition pits entrepreneurs in three tracks: Ideas, Startups and Social Entrepreneurship. Winning teams are in the running to participate in prize money and equity-free funding, and are set to also benefit from a

range of other activities including top tier training, mentorship, coaching, media exposure and networking opportunities.

**53 semi-finalists**

In total, 53 semi-finalist teams across the three tracks are through to the semi-finals of the competition (16 semi-finalists in the Ideas track, 21 in the startups track, and 16 in the Social Entrepreneurship track). This year, the semi-finalists hail from Saudi Arabia (nine participants)



**Over 4,000 applications this year**

Egypt (nine), Jordan (seven), Lebanon (six), Bahrain (four), UAE (four), Tunisia (three), Palestine (two), Morocco (two), and one semi-finalist from Algeria, Germany, Luxembourg, Qatar, Syria, Turkey and the UK, respectively.

Zain has been partnering this competition over the years on the firm belief that today's innovators are tomorrow's differentiators. Zain's management is impressed by the high caliber of entries from across

three continents in this year's competition and expect the virtual nature of proceedings will result in a truly inspiring international event.

Maya Rahal, Managing Director of MITEF Pan Arab said, "We all are truly excited about the opportunity to collaborate with Zain Group for our first all-digital competition. It is through such partnerships with transformational players in the digital ecosystem that we can overcome the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic. In times such as these, we are only as strong as the entities we cooperate with, and we are proud to have established lanes of synergy over the course of 13 years organizing the MITEF Arab Startup Competition. I want to take this opportunity to invite everyone to join our upcoming virtual conference on June 24, which will mark a turning point in all our future programs and initiatives."

Included in the semifinalists are six winners from Zain Jordan's 'Zain Al-Mubadara' competition, with the main industries that most of the 53 semifinalists are operating in are Education Technology, Consumer Services and Productivity Apps, Digital Technologies, and Construction/Engineering.

The virtual competition will see all semi-finalist teams face a panel of judges remotely, to pitch and answer any questions about their business models, value propositions, and growth plans. All teams



An initiative by Enterprise Forum Pan Arab Region. In partnership with Community Jameel. Innovation partner جامعة الملك عبد الله للعلوم والتقنية King Abdulaziz University of Science and Technology. Digital Partner zain.

will also receive an intensive remote training session organized by King Abdullah University of Science and Technology. For more information on the MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Startup Competition, visit [www.mitarabcompetition.com](http://www.mitarabcompetition.com). The Virtual Conference and Awards Ceremony will be held today.

## LAPA launches MobArt Project

KUWAIT: Despite the lockdown due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) continues its cultural and artistic season presenting dozens of creative activities, helping children and youth make the best of their time during curfew hours. In this regard, LAPA recently launched the MobArt project in collaboration with LOYAC to provide families with limited income inside Kuwait with online interactive educational and recreational activities.

Ebtisamah Arafah, the project's leader, explained that the project is designed for children aged 6-13, offering them special training courses in formative arts, crafts, drama, performance arts, music, English language and interactive stories presented by professional specialized trainers who are volunteering to help children overcome anxiety during the COVID-19 crisis.

"Kuwait's MobArt project is similar to a project LAPA launched in Lebanon three years ago to help Syrian refugee children overcome war psychological traumas through art and sports, which helped develop their skills in adapting and integrating with the society," Arafah added.

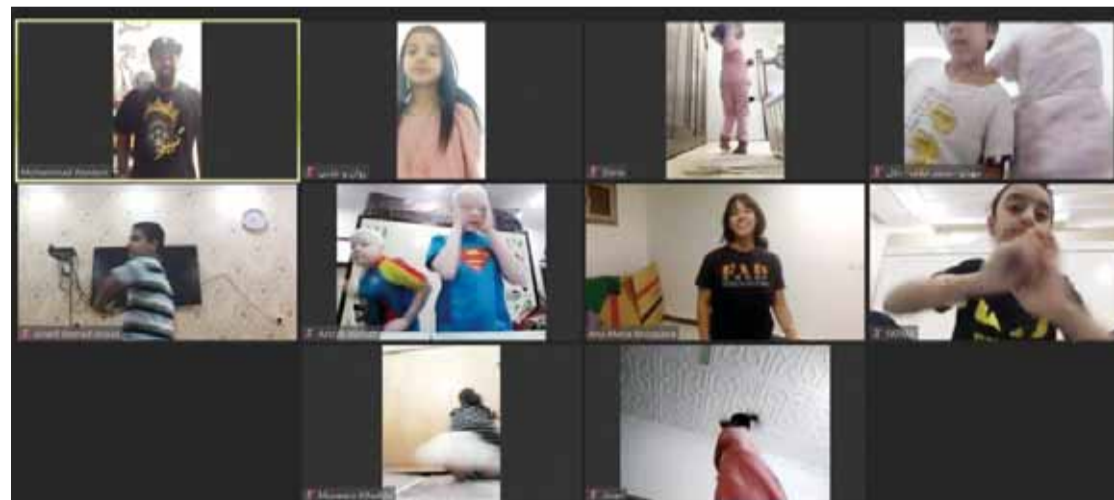
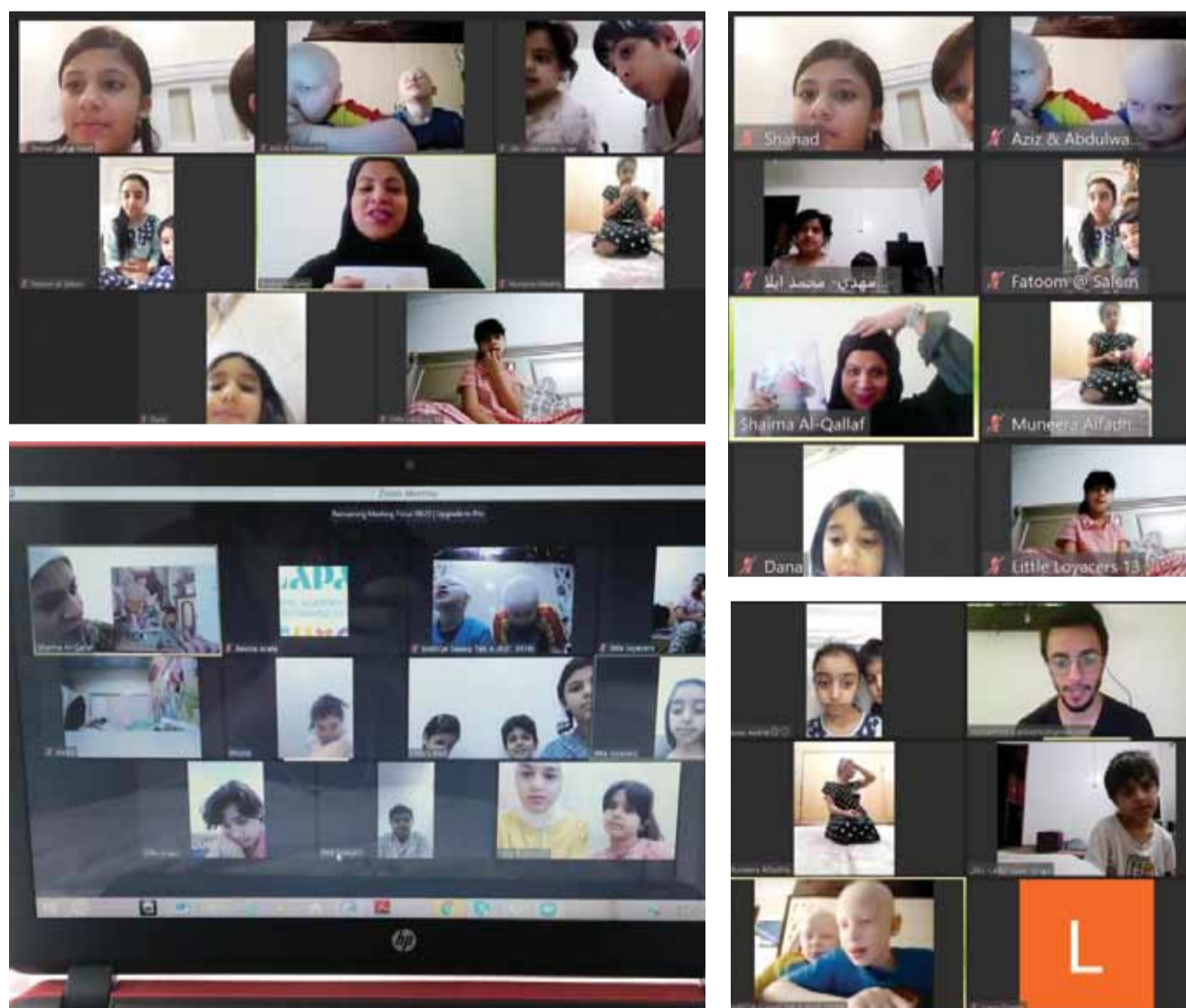


Ebtisamah Arafah

Further, Arafah stressed that, ever since launching the project in May, it has achieved remarkable success in providing children with limited income with emotional and psychological support in view of COVID-19, the curfew and education's suspension. "We provide children with online education and recreation to enhance their creativity and help them spend their leisure time fruitfully," she elaborated.

In addition, Arafah stressed that 14 families and 30 children from various areas around Kuwait have so far participated in the program and that each family was provided with an iPad with the Zoom application downloaded, while LOYAC volunteers trained children on using them by. Arafah also noted that the this unique project does not only provide art education, but also provides health and environmental awareness and charity and humane projects.

Meanwhile, LOYAC's voluntary work manager Yosra Al-Essa stressed that providing education to families with limited income through MobArt is one of LOYAC's chain of creative charity communal initiatives. Essa reiterated that LOYAC fully believes that such voluntary social activities are integral to its objectives as a non-profit institution.



# International

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24 2020



Baby dies after Palestinians cut ties with Israel

## Jobless Sudanese in Lebanon risk life on the Israel border

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NEW YORK: People sit on tables, respecting social distancing at Times Square as New York City enters phase two of reopening. — AFP

# US passes 120,000 virus deaths

## Former virus hotspot New York reopens as cases spike elsewhere

WASHINGTON: The United States on Monday passed the grim benchmark of 120,000 deaths from the coronavirus outbreak when it added another 425 fatalities in 24 hours, the Johns Hopkins University tally showed. The world's largest economy is the hardest-hit country by the pandemic, with more than 2.31 million official cases - out of which about 640,000 people have fully recovered, according to the Baltimore-based institution at 8:30pm. The previous day's toll of 305 deaths in 24 hours was one of the lowest in months, but numbers have tended to be lower during the weekend and just after, depending on the feedback from local health authorities.

Many states have largely lifted lockdown measures, and New York - the country's epicenter for the pandemic - took a big step Monday by allowing non-essential businesses to reopen. But some 20 states, primarily in the south and west, have seen a rebound in infections. Among them, Florida passed 100,000 cases, of which nearly 3,000 were diagnosed on Monday alone, according to local health officials. President Donald Trump said Monday that the virus death toll in the US could surpass 150,000, though he insisted that two to four million lives would have been lost if the country had not taken steps to slow the spread of the disease.

### Cases spike

Meanwhile, New York businesses opened their doors to returning waves of workers Monday as the city that was once the epicenter of the global pandemic marked an important milestone in its return to normalcy, even as

other US states were seeing an alarming rise in COVID-19 cases. Nationwide, cases have been on the rise for the past two weeks following a long plateau in the spring, with California hitting levels of new infections not seen since March and Florida passing the 100,000 cases benchmark on Monday. President Donald Trump acknowledged that the US death toll - which has surpassed 120,000 - could reach 150,000 people. "It could go beyond that," he said.

But for many in hard-hit New York, where more than 20,000 people succumbed to the disease, the return to normal meant resuming their small everyday rituals. For some, that meant getting a haircut. "I've been cutting it myself and doing a very bad job, so I was very excited to see (the barber)," said Jeremiah Zinn, a man in his 50s who was the first client to walk through the door at Benny's Barbershop in Brooklyn. Yury Ykubov, the owner, told AFP he had opened the shop six months prior, and negotiated with the landlord to make rent during the lockdown.

Ykubov himself contracted COVID-19 but, like the city itself, has recovered and has antibodies for protection. But all the barbers in his shop took online courses on how to be safe, which included using special gowns, wearing masks, and no blow-drying. "I'm slightly nervous, like it's the first day I come to work, the first day



## US death toll could hit 150,000

somebody hired me," he laughed. In Manhattan, Sam Karalis, owner of The Windsor Florist, said his business was one of the lucky ones to have survived with the help of the government and his landlord. He was relieved to be able to open his doors to paying customers. "If you can't look at the stuff, you can't really buy it," he said.

### Nationwide cases rising

Statewide, Governor Andrew Cuomo reported 10 new deaths Sunday while the rate of positive test results has fallen to one percent - which has paved the way for incremental lifting of restrictions. New York City is now in the second of its four-phase reopening, which began two weeks ago when construction and industries were allowed to resume working. But the picture is far less positive in other parts of the United States, with the virus spiking in several states despite predictions that summer heat, humidity and bright sunlight would limit its spread. Cases were soaring in California, Texas, Arizona and in the Midwestern state of Missouri. In Florida, which reopened bars and restaurants earlier this month, emergency physician Rajiv Bahl said cases were rising across age groups.

"Personally, I am seeing more patients who are in their 20s, 30s, and 40s with upper respiratory symptoms than I did before," he told AFP. "While it is not ex-

actly known why this is the case, it may be because of the opening of bars and restaurants," he added, with service industry workers accounting for a high volume of the cases. The Sunshine State saw almost 3,000 new cases on Monday, according to the latest official data, and Bahl urged would-be tourists to think carefully about their plans. "You may want to rethink mass gatherings and opt for more isolated adventures such as national parks, isolated beaches, or enjoying a pool with more strict distancing rules," he said.

### 'No second wave'

Top officials from the Trump administration, meanwhile, continued to downplay the severity of the pandemic, a nearly constant theme since the virus was first reported in the United States in January. "There is no second wave coming," White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow told CNBC, adding that lawmakers will likely present another stimulus package by the end of next month. At a campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma on Saturday, President Trump said he wanted to slow down testing, on grounds it was making the United States look bad. Former FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, however, told CBS News on Sunday: "We're seeing the positivity rates go up."

"That's a clear indication that there's now community spread underway. And this isn't just a function of testing more." Trump's campaign announced Monday that two more staffers who helped organize the Tulsa rally had tested positive for coronavirus, taking the total number to eight. It said the two attended the rally - but "were

## Anti-racism protests turn spotlight on icons of US history

WASHINGTON: As the wave of anti-racism protests rocking the United States brings down monuments to figures linked to the country's history of slavery, the spotlight is shifting to historic characters long considered untouchable. Although protesters initially focused on removing statues of Confederate generals, the movement has begun to turn its focus to icons of US history, including the nation's founders Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, and President Theodore Roosevelt.

The death of George Floyd, a black man, in Minneapolis police custody on May 25 has sparked debate around statues and monuments honoring people central to the US' slave system, some of which have been pulled down or vandalized. The ongoing protests are "a battle over the narrative of American history in the realm of statues," Carolyn Gallaher, a professor at American University in Washington, told AFP. "In the South, people decided to venerate confederates. Protesters are saying, 'No more.'" Slavery served as the economic backbone of the American South until the end of the American Civil War (1861-1865), and has left a lasting mark on both daily culture and stereotypes and perceptions of the region.

In Virginia, where some of the first English colonies were established before becoming the heart of American slave country, protesters have called for the removal of a statue of General Robert E Lee, the leader of the



BOSTON: A healing team makes a shrine and offerings to their ancestors during a Juneteenth Protest and march in honor of Rayshard Brooks and other victims of Police Violence in Boston, Massachusetts on June 22, 2020. — AFP

Confederate army. The statue, whose pedestal has already been covered with anti-racist graffiti, has held pride of place for a century in Richmond, the Confederate capital during the Civil War. In Washington, a statue of Confederate general Albert Pike was torn down last week. Increasingly, other figures who hold large places in American history are also not safe, and on Monday evening a crowd tried to topple the statue of Andrew Jackson, the seventh president, in Lafayette Park, close to the White House.

Thomas Jefferson, the third US president, has been the target of some protesters, with many statues of the leader vandalized. Even though he was one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence, he also owned more than 600 slaves and viewed black men as inferior to white, according to the website of his Virginia plantation-turned-museum, Monticello. — AFP

## Renewed clashes in Tunisia's deprived south

TATAOUINE: Protesters demanding jobs and the release of an activist in Tunisia's marginalized south clashed Monday with security forces for a second straight day after weeks of tensions. Police fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of demonstrators who threw stones and burned tyres in the centre of Tataouine city, an AFP correspondent said. Defense ministry spokesman Mohamed Zekri said the army was deployed outside state establishments. Protesters in the region have been demanding authorities make good on a 2017 promise to provide jobs in the gas and oil sector to thousands of unemployed. For weeks they have blocked roads and sought to prevent trucks from delivering supplies to the remote El-Kamour pumping station, but the protest had been largely peaceful. "The government has no intention of keeping its promises. It wants to trample us," said Khalifa Bouhaouech, who is involved with the El-Kamour sit-in.

On Sunday, demonstrators in Tataouine city burned tyres and pelted security forces with stones to demand jobs and the release of activist Tarek Haddad, who was arrested the night before, as security forces responded with tear gas. Haddad is a key figure in the protest movement. The governor of Tataouine, Adel Werghi, said Haddad was "wanted" by the authorities, without providing further details. Protesters denounced Haddad's arrest as "political". The interior ministry said 10 people were

arrested Sunday after a group of protesters tried to attack police stations with Molotov cocktails.

### Unkept promises

"The protesters' demands are legitimate... as long as they do not obstruct state institutions," Employment Minister Fethi Belhaj said in a radio interview. The government was committed to respecting the 2017 agreements, he added. In 2017, protesters blockaded Tataouine's El-Kamour pumping station for three months demanding jobs.

The sit-in ended after the then employment minister signed a deal with representatives of the protesters, brokered by the UGTT, pledging to invest 80 million Tunisian dinars a year (almost \$28 million) in Tataouine. The UGTT branch in Tataouine said the promise was never kept. President Kais Saied, who was in France on Monday, met with activists from the southern region earlier this year. The powerful Tunisian trade union confederation UGTT had called for a general strike Monday in Tataouine, denouncing an "excessive and unjustified" use of force against protesters. Shops were open but public services and state institutions remained closed in adherence to the strike, AFP correspondents said.

The protests come as Tunisia, until now largely spared the worst of the novel coronavirus, faces tensions within its coalition government and the impact of restrictions imposed to combat the spread of the pandemic that have accentuated inequalities. Almost 10 years after the country's revolution, Tataouine - where most of Tunisia's slim hydrocarbon resources are found - is still underdeveloped, NGO Oxfam said in a new report. The region was the worst-hit in the country for unemployment, at 28.7 percent, it said, and there were zero intensive care beds for every 10,000 people, compared to 10.2 in the capital, Tunis. — AFP

## International

# 'I am suffocating': France probes delivery man's death after arrest

## Man shouted 'I'm suffocating' 7 times in 22 seconds

PARIS: French investigators have questioned four police officers over the January arrest of a Paris delivery driver who died after they allegedly pinned him to the ground as he repeatedly shouted "I'm suffocating", sources said Monday. France has seen demonstrations in recent weeks against alleged brutality and racism by the police, a controversy that has gained resonance since protests erupted in the United States over the killing by police of George Floyd. Cedric Chouviat, 42, had been stopped by police close to the Eiffel Tower in Paris on January 3 for a traffic control, which degenerated.

In video footage collected by investigators, he can be heard saying "I'm suffocating" seven times in 22 seconds as police hold him down, according to a report on the incident written in April, revealed Wednesday by newspaper Le Monde and website Mediapart, which AFP has also seen. Video footage appears to show Chouviat with the weight of the police on his torso. According to two witnesses, the delivery driver was held in a chokehold. "Apart from the

arrest, we did not notice any flagrantly violent words or noises," said an expert who analyses footage of the incident.

**'Involuntary homicide'**  
"The exchange is relatively civil, even if we can sense a form of 'provocation' or 'defiance' in (Chouviat's) words," the expert added. According to analysis of the footage, Chouviat calls the policemen 'clowns' and one of them a 'loser' and tells them several times not to touch him. "At 11 minutes 16 secondes (Chouviat) tells the policeman that he's a 'fool'. The officer decides to arrest him," said the expert. "In the next 22 seconds we can hear different sounds we cannot identify. The arrested person says several times 'I'm suffocating'.



### Four police officers questioned

And we can hear one of the policemen say 'All good, all good, cuffs on.'" Chouviat' plea echoes Floyd's last words "I can't breathe", which have rallied protesters across the world. Father of five Chouviat died in hospital two days after the arrest from asphyxia, with "a fracture to the larynx", according to elements of the autopsy released by Paris prosecutors. Prosecutors have opened a case for "involuntary homicide".

who will now decide whether the four officers will be charged. Chouviat's family has condemned what they term an act of unjustified police violence caused by what they said were "dangerous" restraint techniques. His death came after that in 2016 of a young black man, Adama Traore, after he was similarly pinned to the ground with the combined body weight of three arresting officers, according to the testimony of one of them.

Following recent demonstrations against alleged police brutality, which young black and Arab men say is often directed at them, the French government this month announced the ban of the chokehold technique which critics say is too often deadly. But a few days later, the government backtracked after a backlash by police unions, who demonstrated across France, throwing their handcuffs on the ground in protest. In the days following Chouviat's death, Interior Minister Christophe Castaner promised sanctions against officers "if wrongdoings are established". — AFP

## Trump looking to reverse fortunes after Tulsa fiasco

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is in desperate need of a political boost after a fiasco of a campaign rally in Tulsa left him looking like a leader detached from the multiple crises gripping the United States. In addition to the poor attendance, Trump's performance at the Oklahoma rally on Saturday had the air of a tired showman seeking to recapture the energy that drove him to an upset victory over Hillary Clinton in 2016. Tie undone, Trump's demeanor was sullen when he exited his helicopter on his return to the White House from the Tulsa event, which had been billed as the president's triumphant return to the campaign trail after the coronavirus pandemic put things on hold. His gloomy appearance summed up the reality of the situation - the November 3 election is 133 days away and his campaign is struggling.

And if Trump's tweets on Monday morning are any indication, a golf outing on Sunday did nothing to improve his mood. "RIGGED 2020 ELECTION: MILLIONS OF MAIL-IN BALLOTS WILL BE PRINTED BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES, AND OTHERS. IT WILL BE THE SCANDAL OF OUR TIMES!" he tweeted. The tweet was Trump's latest salvo against mail-in voting, which is expected to take on added significance this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. Trump has frequently claimed with no evidence that mail-in voting is particularly susceptible to fraud.

Poll after poll shows Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden with a comfortable lead over his Republican rival. The billionaire real estate tycoon who crafted a stunning political upset in 2016 has shown his resilience on numerous occasions and cannot be counted out yet. But confronted with twin crises - the COVID-19 pandemic and nation-



TULSA: US President Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally at the BOK Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. — AFP

wide protests for racial justice - the 74-year-old president has appeared overmatched, unable, his critics say, to capture the pulse of the country. The strong economy which Trump has touted endlessly is in a shambles, ravaged by COVID-19.

### 'One-term president'

With the coronavirus death toll in the United States reaching 120,000, Trump defied the advice of health authorities to hold a rally in an indoor stadium. In his Tulsa speech, Trump said he had asked his staff to "slow the testing down" to prevent discovery of more virus cases, a remark his campaign staffers tried to pass off later as just a "joke."

He spent more than 14 minutes of his one hour and 43 minute speech explaining why he had haltingly descended a ramp following a speech at the West Point military academy. Trump said he was wearing leather-bottomed shoes and was trying to avoid "falling on my ass." Trump did fling a few barbs during his Tulsa speech at Biden, accusing his November opponent of being a "puppet" for both China and the "radical left." But the president is still clearly searching for an angle of attack against a rival who is leading in the polls while making few campaign appearances.

As Trump struggles, his former National Security Advisor, John Bolton, is promoting a tell-all book that paints a damning portrait of the president. "I hope (history) will remember him as a one-term president who didn't plunge the country irretrievably into a downward spiral," Bolton said in an interview with ABC News. He expressed fears about potential damage to the world's flagship democracy if Trump wins a second term. "The concern I have, speaking as a conservative Republican, is that once the election is over, if the president wins, the political constraint is gone," Bolton said.

Washington is rife with rumors of a potential shake-up in the Trump campaign with campaign manager Brad Parscale in the firing line. No changes have been announced for the moment. White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany, who promised when she took the position in May that she would never lie to journalists, pushed back on Monday at reports Trump was angry about the empty seats at Tulsa rally. "The president was not angry at all," McEnany said on Fox & Friends. "The president was quite energized. 'I was with him after the rally, it was a huge success,' she said. "His speech got rave reviews." — AFP

## A quarter-billion children getting no education

PARIS: Nearly 260 million children had no access to schooling in 2018, a United Nations agency said in a report yesterday that blamed poverty and discrimination for educational inequalities that are being exacerbated by the coronavirus outbreak. Children from poorer communities as well as girls, the disabled, immigrants and ethnic minorities were at a distinct educational disadvantage in many countries, the UN's Paris-based education body UNESCO said. In 2018, "258 million children and youth were entirely excluded from education, with poverty as the main obstacle to access," the report found. This represented 17 percent of all school-age children, most of them in south and central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The disparities worsened with the arrival of the coronavirus crisis, which saw over 90 percent of the global student population affected by school closures, the report said. And while children from families with means could continue schooling from home using laptops, mobile phones and the internet, millions of others were cut off entirely. "Lessons from the past - such as with Ebola - have shown that health crises can leave many behind, in particular the poorest girls, many of whom may never return to school," UNESCO's director general Audrey Azoulay wrote in a foreword.

## Virus decimating indigenous Latin Americans

MONTEVIDEO: Indigenous people in Latin America have been decimated by the coronavirus pandemic due to weak immune systems and centuries of state neglect. The threat posed to indigenous communities was highlighted last week with the virus death of Brazilian chief Paulinho Paiakan, an iconic defender of the Amazon rainforest, which is home to 420 indigenous communities.

Paiakan's death in a hospital in the north of Brazil was one of more than 300 amongst the country's 100 indigenous communities, according to the Articulation of the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) group. That was five times as many deaths as in the whole of 2019. The APIB accuses the government of far-right Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro of having "done nothing" to prevent the relentless spread of coronavirus in areas where 750,000 indigenous people live. So far, more than 5,300 have been infected.



TEGUCIGALPA: Relatives carry the coffin of an alleged victim of the new coronavirus at the Parque Memorial Jardín de los Angeles cemetery, 14 km north of Tegucigalpa. Honduras is overwhelmed by deaths caused by COVID-19. — AFP

## North Macedonia faces 'necessary evil'

SKOPJE: To choose your leaders or your health? Voters in North Macedonia are facing this conundrum as the country heads towards key elections just as a second wave of the coronavirus is rising. The Balkan state has for months been weathering the pandemic in the hands of a divided caretaker cabinet whose mandate was supposed to expire in April when a snap poll was initially scheduled. After months of delay and political bickering over when to reschedule it for, the country's main parties agreed on July 15. But now the virus count is rising - and at a far faster clip than the initial outbreak in early March. "If the situation does not change, I'm not going to vote," said Bojan Sarlandzhev, 37, a dental technician from the capital Skopje, where public unease is mounting.

"I don't think that it is of the utmost importance to have elections when the number of newly infected citizens is rising at this high rate," he said. A poor country with an underdeveloped healthcare system, North Macedonia went into lockdown in early March, imposing strict weekend curfews and other measures. It appeared to work, with daily infections brought down to a trickle by mid-May. But towards the end of the month as restrictions loosened, the infection rate jumped, with more than 100 cases now logged almost every day of June. That has seen cases more than double in a matter of weeks - surpassing 5,000 in the country of less than two million, with more than 230 deaths.

### Easter, Ramadan

The Balkan state's bitterly divided political camps initially expected to campaign around



SKOPJE: People wearing protective face masks walk past a statue in central Skopje. — AFP

efforts to join the European Union—a goal that led the former government to controversially add "North" to the country's name, to resolve a row with Greece that had been obstructing its path. When the EU then failed in October to open membership talks for North Macedonia, despite heavily pressuring it to pass the name-change, then-Prime Minister Zoran Zaev stepped down and called the early election to save face.

Several months later EU members eventually did give the green light, in what could have been a boost for Zaev's Social Democrats against their right-wing rivals. But after months of virus delay, the coronavirus crisis now looks set to overshadow the campaign, with both parties trying to blame the other for the growing outbreak. Health experts, meanwhile, say the main culprit is citizens who have been violating self-isolation orders and holding large gatherings at home. The

recent escalation of cases is "exclusively due to total disrespect of the preventive measures", said Zarko Karadzovski, who leads the commission for infectious diseases.

His colleague Dragan Danilovski says some measures were also lifted too early, giving the public a false "perception that the epidemic is over". Throughout the crisis, the lack of a united government and parliament further contributed to confused messaging and enforcement of restrictions. Although authorities imposed a curfew over Orthodox Easter weekend in April, churches held services before and after the holiday, doling out communion on a common spoon as per tradition. A month later during Ramadan, a weekend curfew was shortened to allow Muslim believers to attend morning prayer, while a series of clusters emerged from iftar dinners that were held after curfew hours. — AFP

## International

# Britain reels from latest terror-linked stabbing, American among the dead

## Government says risk of lone attackers growing

**READING:** The English town of Reading held a minute's silence on Monday for the victims of a stabbing that killed three people, in an attack that police called a terrorist incident. Three people were also hospitalised after a man wielding a five-inch knife went on the rampage in a park on Saturday, randomly stabbing people enjoying a sunny, summer evening. A Western security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that the suspect was a 25-year-old Libyan called Khairi Saadallah. Calling the incident terrorism, police said a 25-year-old had been arrested and they were not hunting others. "What we saw here on Saturday evening in Reading was the actions of one lone individual," Home Secretary Priti Patel said.

Patel later told parliament that the risk from lone attackers was growing, and that if further government action was needed to stop such incidents, she would not hesitate to act. The Philadelphia Inquirer said one of the dead was US citizen Joe Ritchie-Bennett, 39, who had lived in Britain for 15 years. US ambassador Woody Johnson sent condolences to the families of the victims.

"To our great sorrow, this includes an American citizen," he said on Twitter. Teacher James Furlong, 36, who was friends with Ritchie-Bennett according to media reports, was also killed. "He was beautiful, intelligent, honest and fun," his parents said. The BBC and other British media named the third victim as David Wails, a scientist.

### On Mi5's Radar

The security source told Reuters that Saadallah had been on the radar of Britain's domestic security agency, MI5, last year, over intelligence he had aspirations to travel for extremist purposes, although his plans then came to nothing. "The security services have records on thousands of people and rightly so,"

said Patel, adding she was limited in what she could say because the investigation was live. Shocked residents of Reading, about 40 miles (65 km) west of London, held a minute's silence at 0900 GMT. The attack was reminiscent of some recent incidents in Britain that authorities have also called terrorism. In February, police shot dead a man, previously



**READING:** Police forensic officers dressed in Tyvek protective PPE (personal protective equipment) suits and wearing masks, conduct a search of a drain near to Forbury Gardens park in Reading, west of London - the scene of the June 20 stabbing spree. — AFP

jailed for promoting violent Islamist material, who had stabbed two people on a busy street in south London. Last November, another man who had

been jailed for terrorism offences stabbed two people to death on London Bridge before he too was shot dead by police. — Reuters



### Three dead and three injured in Reading attack

## Israel reaches record number of openly gay MPs

**JERUSALEM:** Israel swore in its latest openly gay lawmaker on Monday, marking a record for the country considered a regional pioneer on LGBT rights despite opposition from religious conservatives. Yoram Leshem, a member of the centrist Blue and White alliance became the latest politician to join the 120-seat Knesset, bringing to six the number of openly gay lawmakers.

All are men and represent parties from across the political spectrum, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party. Lahav Hertzanu's appointment came after a law change allowing ministers to leave their parliamentary seat and be replaced by another member of their own party. Five percent of Israeli lawmakers are now openly gay, the fourth-highest figure in the world, according to political scientist Andrew Reynolds. It comes "after Britain, 8.1 percent, Liechtenstein, 8 percent, and the Scottish parliament, 7.7 percent," said Reynolds, who directs an LGBT representative program at the University of North Carolina in the United States.

Israel's first LGBT lawmaker, Uzi Even, was appointed in 2002, and the community in the Jewish state has far more rights than those in most Middle Eastern countries. Openly gay soldiers serve in the military, while Israel recognizes same-sex marriages conducted abroad, and gay and lesbian couples have surrogacy rights. "There have been very positive developments in recent decades," said Or Keshet from Israel's leading LGBT organization Aguda. "It's

very encouraging that there are six lawmakers representing different parties from the community," he said, adding that their success made them role models for young people. "But we expect all those elected to represent us and advance equal rights," said Keshet. "And there is still a lot to do."

### First openly gay minister

While Tel Aviv's Gay Pride parade usually draws huge crowds from around the world, the equivalent march in conservative Jerusalem is held under a heavy police presence. Security was increased after the 2015 killing of Shira Banki, a teenager who was stabbed to death during the parade by ultra-Orthodox Jew Yishai Shlissel. Several other people were wounded by Shlissel, who had been released just three weeks earlier after spending 10 years in prison for a similar attack. Annual Gay Pride events in both cities have been cancelled this month due to the coronavirus pandemic. The day before last year's parade, Netanyahu appointed Israel's first openly gay minister.

Amir Ohana took on the justice portfolio, switching to public security as part of a new Netanyahu-led coalition sworn in last month. Left-wing politician Itzik Shmuli, who is openly gay, also joined the government ranks as minister for social affairs. They sit alongside Rafi Peretz, an Orthodox rabbi who last year endorsed controversial therapy to convert gay people to heterosexuality. Peretz, who was education minister at the time, backtracked on his comments following protests. While Aguda praised the record number of lawmakers, Keshet said the next step would be even greater diversity. "We'll love it when lesbians and trans people are also in parliament. That's already the case in the United States," he said. "It will happen." — AFP

## China launches final satellite to complete rival to GPS

**BEIJING:** China yesterday launched the final satellite in its homegrown geolocation system designed to rival the US GPS network, marking a major step in its race for market share in the lucrative sector. Footage from state broadcaster CCTV of the launch in southwestern Sichuan province showed the rocket blast off against a backdrop of lush mountains as a small group of onlookers filmed on their phones. The launch of the Beidou-3 GEO3 satellite from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center was originally scheduled for last Tuesday but was delayed over unspecified "technical issues," China's space agency said.

Completing the satellite network makes China a key player in the billion-dollar geolocation services market, observers said. Beidou - named after the Chinese term for the plough or "Big Dipper" constellation - is intended to rival the US's Global Positioning System (GPS), Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo. "I think the Beidou-3 system being operational is a

big event," Jonathan McDowell, an astronomer at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, told AFP.

"This is a big investment from China and makes China independent of US and European systems." China started building its global navigation system in the early 1990s to help cars, fishing boats and military tankers navigate using mapping data from the country's own satellites. Now the service can be used on millions of mobile phones to find nearby restaurants, petrol stations or cinemas, to guide taxis and missiles and fly unmanned drones. The coverage provided by Beidou, which has been in commercial use since 2012, was first limited to the Asia-Pacific region, but worldwide service has been available since 2018.

The system works on a network of about 30 satellites. Around 120 countries including Pakistan and Thailand are using Beidou's services for port traffic monitoring, to guide rescue operations during disasters and other services, according to Chinese state media. Beijing is counting on its trillion-dollar Belt and Road global infrastructure project to convince other participating countries to use its technology as it attempts to grab market share from GPS - although some experts have cast doubt on its ability to do so. McDowell told AFP he did not think Beidou would be able to "supplant GPS in the next 10 or even 20 years". — AFP

## Baby dies after Palestinians cut ties with Israel

**JERUSALEM:** Baby Omar Yaghi was eight months old when he died, unable to travel from Gaza to Israel for life-saving heart surgery after Palestinian officials cut coordination. The baby's mother Raneen has been unable to speak or eat since losing her son last week, his uncle Mohammed Yaghi told AFP. They are one of a number of families caught up in a high-level dispute, after the Palestinian Authority last month ended security coordination with Israel over its plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank. The move has had a dramatic impact on scores of Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza who need Israeli paperwork to access treatment which is not available closer to home. "Omar was supposed to undergo major surgery on May 24, but they told us that our travel to Israel was prevented because coordination was stopped," said the infant's uncle.

Several human rights organizations lobbied successfully for a new date, but Yaghi died on June 18 just three days before the planned operation. Gaza's two million residents have lived under a crippling Israeli blockade since 2007, with Palestinians having to apply for exit permits to leave the enclave. Israel's military branch responsible for civilian affairs in the Palestinian territories, COGAT, said the Erez crossing with Gaza is "ready and well prepared" to facilitate transfers. COGAT "keeps allowing, also at these times, an entrance of residents from the Gaza Strip for life-saving medical treatment and in other humanitarian cases," a spokesperson said in an English statement.

## Jobless Sudanese in Lebanon risk life on the Israel border

**BEIRUT:** Covering in a pipe after fleeing Lebanon, a man desperate for work became the latest Sudanese national to risk his life in a perilous trek across the Israeli border. With Lebanon facing its worst economic crisis in decades, soaring unemployment has sparked a new trend at the country's southern frontier. Since the start of May, around 16 Sudanese men have been caught trying to sneak across the heavily militarized border under the cover of night. The latest was found Wednesday in a pipe and interrogated by the Israeli army, before being sent back across the border.

While Israel remains on high alert for border breaches by Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, against which it fought a devastating war in 2006, both sides say the Sudanese are economic migrants. "According to the initial investigation, the attempted infiltrations into Israel are not motivated by security or spying, but are solely tied to the economic and monetary crisis in Lebanon," a Lebanese security source told AFP. Lebanon's currency plunged to record lows earlier this month, causing food prices to skyrocket in a country where more than 45 percent of the population were already living below the poverty line.

At their embassy in Beirut, many Sudanese have been calling on their government to take them home. "I want to go back to Sudan because life has become so



**GAZA:** Palestinian youths, using the traditional keffiyeh scarves as masks due to COVID-19, march during a demonstration against Israel's plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, in Gaza City. — AFP

### 'Completely destroyed'

Yaghi was born with complex heart problems and he started treatment at Israel's Sheba Medical Center when he was just one month old. Having been unable to return for the surgery, Yaghi suffered heart failure on Wednesday and was resuscitated at a Gaza hospital. "They told us that the situation was very serious," said Mohammed Yaghi, who tried desperately to arrange an emergency transfer to Israel while his nephew was put on a ventilator. "At 10:00 am, the hospital management called and told us he had died."

The boy's father, also named Omar, found out his son had not survived while he was on the way to hospital. "My brother was completely destroyed, especially when he received the child's body," said Mohammed Yaghi. Physicians for Human Rights Israel said the baby boy died because of the surgery delay, which was caused by the Palestinian Authority's (PA) Civil Affairs

Committee ending its coordination with Israel. "Patients have described how the Palestinian agencies in charge of coordinating their travel with the Israeli authorities stopped transferring their application for exit permits on medical grounds," said the organization, which had helped get a new operation date.

Haitham al-Hadra from the Palestinian health ministry, who is in charge of medical transfers, said he remained "categorically" committed to the PA's decision to stop working with the Israelis. "We do not even pick up the phone or answer emails," he said. According to the health official, since the PA's decision, some Palestinians have accessed treatment in Israel by coordinating with authorities directly. Hadra said the majority of patients can get treatment within the Palestinian territories. "Ninety-five percent of medical conditions can be treated in Palestinian hospitals, whether government or private one," he said. — AFP



**TRIPOLI:** A boy looks out from a balcony along an alley in the Bab Al-Tabbaneh neighbourhood of Lebanon's northern city of Tripoli. Thousands of residents of Lebanon's northern Tripoli struggle to put food on the table, as the country's worst economic crisis in decades has picked up in speed in recent weeks, with food prices rising by more than 70 percent since the autumn. — AFP

expensive here and my salary is worth nothing. I can barely get enough to eat," said 27-year-old Issa. His monthly wage of 500,000 Lebanese pounds from working at a supermarket has dropped from \$333 to just under \$100 due to the currency devaluation. More than 1,000 Sudanese have registered at the embassy hoping to be repatriated, out of at least 4,000 living in Lebanon, according to Abdallah Malek from the Association of Young Sudanese in Lebanon.

### Slim chances

Some of those trying to cross the southern frontier may have contacts among the Sudanese community in Israel, but the jour-

ney still comes with serious risks. Lebanese soldiers found the bullet-ridden body of a Sudanese man on their side of the border who they believe was headed south, although the precise circumstances of his death remain unclear. Another was arrested in the same area. Five other Sudanese were arrested last month for trying to slip illegally into Israel, the Lebanese army said. While it is impossible to say how many people may have evaded border patrols and made it into Israel, just one is known to have been picked up by Israeli authorities this year and remains in the country. Muhammad Abshar Abakar was stopped in January by the Israeli army, before being handed to the police and detained. — AFP



## Business

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NEW YORK CITY: People wait in line outside an Apple store on Monday in the Brooklyn Borough of New York City. Apple Inc on Monday said it will switch to its own chips for its Mac computers, saying the first machines will ship this year.—AFP

# Apple switches to own chips for Mac computers

## Cook signals dawn of a major new era for a product line

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple Inc on Monday said it will switch to its own chips for its Mac computers, saying the first machines will ship this year and ending a nearly 15-year reliance on Intel Corp to supply processors for its flagship laptops and desktop.

Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook said it marked the beginning of a major new era for a product line that powered the company's rise in the 1980s and its resurgence in the late 1990s. "Silicon is at the heart of our hardware," Cook said during a virtual keynote address recorded at the company's Cupertino, California headquarters for its annual developer conference. "Having a world class silicon design team is a game changer."



### New features, privacy controls

The silicon switch brings the Mac into line with the company's iPhone and iPads, which already use Apple-designed chips. Cook said that Apple expects the Mac transition to take about two years and that Apple still has some Intel-based computers in its pipeline that it will support for "many years."

But the move will give software developers for Apple's largest pool of third-party apps - those built for iPhones and iPads - new access to its laptops and desktop for the first time. Apple software chief Craig Federighi said that for those offerings, "most apps will just work, with no changes

from the developer" on the new Macs. He also said the "vast majority" of existing apps for Intel-based machines can be modified to work in "just a few days."

But analysts said Intel would likely to continue to supply Apple with data center chips that power services such as iCloud. In a statement, Intel said Apple remained a customer "across several areas of business" and that it was still focused on the PC market.

"We believe Intel-powered PCs — like those based on our forthcoming Tiger Lake mobile platform — provide global customers the best experience in the areas they value most, as well as the most open platform for developers, both today and into the future," Intel said. Ben Bajarin, an analyst with Creative Strategies, said Apple's two-year window at moving to its own chips was likely aimed at holding on to Mac sales to corporations, where Apple has double-digit market share.

"There are just standards there (in corporate software) that run on x86" chips from Intel, he said. Apple "cannot abandon that as quickly as they want if they want to maintain the enterprise and commercial share for Mac, which is one of their major segments."

As with previous Macs, the new Apple-chipped machines will remain able to download software from outside Apple's official app stores, in contrast to iPhones and iPads, which for the most part can only run software from Apple's stores. Apple shares gained 2.7 percent to a record high, helping the Nasdaq Composite to a record close of its own.

### Focus on the App Store

Apple announced the moves at its Worldwide Developer Conference. The conference has gained new prominence since paid services sold through the App Store have become central to the company's revenue growth as



SAN FRANCISCO: Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks at The Apple Worldwide Developers Conference.—AFP

consumers have slowed the growth of iPhone upgrades. Apple takes a 15 percent to 30 percent cut of the sales developers make through the App Store, which is the only way to distribute software onto Apple's mobile devices. Those fees, and Apple's strict app review process, have come under antitrust scrutiny in the United States and Europe, where regulators last week unveiled a formal probe into the company. In what appeared to be an acknowledgement of some critics, Apple said it would let users select non-Apple apps as default apps for tasks like email and web browsing on iPhones and iPads.

Apple this year added privacy protections, saying it would let users only share their approximate location with app developers and would require those developers to seek permission before sharing user data with other apps and websites. Apple also said it would require a privacy and security label, akin to a food nutrition label, to be shown to users before they download apps.—Reuters

## Global trade set to shrink 18.5% in Q2, says WTO

GENEVA: Global trade is expected to drop around 18.5 percent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2020 in a huge coronavirus-driven plunge which nonetheless could have been much worse, the WTO said yesterday. "Initial estimates for the second quarter, when the virus and associated lockdown measures affected a large share of the global population, indicate a year-on-year drop of around 18.5 percent," the World Trade Organization said in a statement.

The global trade body said that in the first quarter, the volume of merchandise trade shrank by three percent year-on-year. Giving its initial estimates for the second three months of the year, the expected drop of 18.5 percent was better than the WTO's worst predictions.

"The fall in trade we are now seeing is historically large—in fact, it would be the steepest on record. But there is an important silver lining here—it could have been much worse," said outgoing WTO director-general Roberto Azevedo. "This is genuinely positive news but we cannot afford to be complacent." In its annual trade forecast issued on April 20, the WTO forecast volumes would contract by between 13 percent at best and 32 percent at worst in 2020.

"As things currently stand, trade would only need to grow by 2.5 percent per quarter for the remainder of the year to meet the optimistic projection," the WTO said. "However, looking ahead to 2021, adverse developments, including a second wave of COVID19 outbreaks, weaker than expected economic growth, or widespread recourse to trade restrictions, could see trade expansion fall short of earlier projections."

Azevedo said policy decisions had softened the ongoing blow and would help determine the pace of economic recovery from the crisis. "For output and trade to rebound strongly in 2021, fiscal, monetary, and trade policies will all need to keep pulling in the same direction," said the Brazilian career diplomat, who is leaving his post a year early at the end of August. Meanwhile, private sector economic activity in the eurozone shrank further in June but the rate of decline slowed compared to during the coronavirus lockdown, IHS Markit said yesterday.—AFP

## UAE's ADNOC to keep tight lid on costs

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi National Oil Company will keep a tight lid on its costs amid low oil prices and a gradual recovery in global energy demand, the company's chief executive told Reuters.

Sultan Al-Jaber also said that ADNOC will continue to work with strategic investors to attract foreign capital and focus on maximizing value from its resources. ADNOC said yesterday it had signed a deal with a consortium of infrastructure investors who will invest in select ADNOC gas pipeline assets valued at \$20.7 billion.

"In today's low price environment we must focus on the things we know we can control and that is of course our

cost, we need to remain agile," Al-Jaber said in a phone interview.

"We will continue to stay laser focused on cost, efficiency, optimization and preserving our resources." The world's top oil and gas companies are cutting spending and reducing their workforces in response to the coronavirus crisis which has hammered oil demand and prices. The state-run oil and gas producer, long seen as one of the most conservative energy companies in the Gulf region, has been transforming itself to become more proactive and adaptive to market changes. Al-Jaber said that the OPEC+ pact to cut oil supply has boosted confidence and there have been signs of a tighter oil market in recent weeks. "Global economies are beginning to reopen and we are beginning to see a recovery in global demand particularly in China," he said. "We are optimistic that this trend will continue to the second half of the year."—Reuters



## Business

# US home sales hit 9-1/2-year low as price growth cools

## Data points to a sharp contraction in housing market

WASHINGTON: US home sales dropped to their lowest level in more than 9-1/2 years in May, strengthening expectations for a sharp contraction in housing market activity in the second quarter following disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report from the National Association of Realtors on Monday also showed the smallest annual home price increase in more than eight years. The slump in existing home sales reflected closings on contracts signed in March and April, when nearly the whole country was under lockdowns to slow the spread of the respiratory illness.



Existing home sales fall 9.7%

With applications for home loans surging to an 11-year high in recent weeks amid record low mortgage rates, May was probably the nadir for the existing housing market. Data last week showed a sharp rebound in building permits in May. But nearly 20 million people are unemployed and housing supply remains tight.

"Home sales may bounce with pent-up demand following the shutdown of the economy starting in March, but the massive scale of job losses and cautious consumers rebuilding their savings may limit sales," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFJ in New York. "There is still a long road to recovery for the broader economy."

Existing home sales fell 9.7 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.91 million units last month, the lowest level since October 2010. It was the third straight monthly drop. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast existing home sales would fall 3 percent to a rate of 4.12 million units in May.

Home resales, which make up about 90 percent of US home sales, decreased 26.6 percent on a year-on-year basis in May, the largest annual decline since 1982. There were 1.55 million previously owned homes on the market in May, down 18.8 percent from a year ago.

Stocks on Wall Street were trading higher as investors weighed stimulus-fueled recovery hopes against an increase in US coronavirus infections. The PHLX housing index was little changed. The dollar fell against a basket of currencies. US Treasury prices rose.

### Shift to suburbs

Home sales fell in all four regions last month. The NAR said with many companies allowing greater flexibility for employees to work from home amid the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for housing was skewed towards single-family homes, mostly in the suburbs.

Economists believe the migration to suburbs from city centers could ease some of the housing shortage. A homebuilder survey last week showed strong demand in June for single-family homes in inner and outer suburbs featuring lower density neighborhoods. Single-family home sales dropped 24.8 percent in May from a year ago, while multi-family homes plunged 41.4 percent.

The median existing house price rose 2.3 percent from a year ago to \$284,600 in May. That was the smallest gain since February 2012. Though single-family home prices increased, the median condominium price fell.

"Although demand certainly dropped in March and



WASHINGTON, DC: US home sales dropped to their lowest level in more than 9-1/2 years in May, strengthening expectations for a sharp contraction in housing market activity in the second quarter following disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. — Reuters

April due to the crisis, supply dropped even more, and has thus far kept home prices from declining," said Mike Fratantoni, chief economist at the Mortgage Bankers Association in Washington. "We expect that home price growth will pick up over the summer due to insufficient supply levels."

Last month's slump in home sales, together with a modest rise in homebuilding in May, suggested a big drop in residential investment this quarter after it grew at its fastest rate in more than seven years in the first quarter.

Economists are forecasting residential investment will decline at around a 20 percent annualized rate in the second quarter. That would contribute to gross domestic product sinking at as much as a 37.5 percent

pace during that period, they say.

The economy contracted at a 5 percent rate in the first quarter, the sharpest since the 2007-2009 Great Recession. At May's sales pace, it would take 4.8 months to exhaust the current inventory of pre-owned homes on the market, up from 4.3 months a year ago. A six-to-seven-month supply is viewed as a healthy balance between supply and demand.

Last month, houses for sale typically stayed on the market for 26 days, down from 27 days in April, but matching the duration a year ago. Fifty-eight percent of homes sold in May were on the market for less than a month. First-time buyers accounted for 34 percent of sales in May, down from 36 percent in April but up from 32 percent a year ago. — Reuters



TEHRAN: The Iranian rial plunged to new depths against the US dollar on Monday in what economists said was a slump partly induced by the Middle East's deadliest coronavirus outbreak. — AFP

## Iranian rial plunges to new depths

TEHRAN: The Iranian rial plunged to new depths against the US dollar on Monday in what economists said was a slump partly induced by the Middle East's deadliest coronavirus outbreak. At Tehran's foreign exchange hub on Ferdowsi Street, the currency was being traded at around 192,800 to the dollar at midday, according to AFP journalists.

The rial has hit rock bottom in the past month, collapsing even below the 190,000 rate it fell to in the wake of the US decision in 2018 to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and reimpose sanctions.

Reza looked dispirited as he went from exchange to exchange hunting down better rates for dollars needed to pay for a family member's overseas university fees.

The value of the rial against the dollar is "beyond awful now", said the 35-year-old, who has a job in Tehran's Grand Bazaar. "We're seeing a different rate every day," he told AFP.

The street was busier around government-owned exchanges, as people formed long queues to take advantage of a central bank scheme offering discount rates. One of those standing in line was a 30-year-old physiotherapist planning to emigrate to Australia.

"The more I work, the less dollars I can buy," she said, only giving her name as Niki.

"This has affected my welfare, made me more stressed. It's a bad situation," she said as she eyed a digital board displaying the latest rates in red.

Iran's already fragile and sanction-hit economy started deteriorating after it reported its first coronavirus cases on February 19, and it has since struggled to contain the outbreak. US sanctions reimposed in 2018 mainly targeted Iran's oil sales lifeline, prompting the

Islamic republic to focus on its manufacturing sector with exports mostly aimed at its neighbors.

### Coronavirus crisis

Iran earned just \$8.9 billion from the sale of oil and related products in the year to March, down from a peak of \$119 billion less than a decade ago, according to Mohammad Bagher Nobakht, the head of planning and budget organization. Coupled with the lower revenues, the coronavirus pandemic led to a temporary shutdown of the economy, border closures and a halt in non-oil shipments.

"The main cause of the current crisis is the coronavirus," said economist Saeed Laylaz, who has acted as an adviser to Iranian presidents. "Our non-oil exports have virtually stopped, particularly to neighboring countries" due to the COVID-19 outbreak, he noted in a phone interview.

Iran's health ministry on Monday announced 119 new coronavirus deaths and another 2,573 cases of infection. That takes the overall toll to over 9,742 dead out of more than 207,500 cases in the outbreak, with official figures showing an upward trajectory in new cases of infection since early May.

Iran's government closed non-essential businesses in March in a bid to stem the spread of the virus, but it refrained from imposing a mandatory lockdown on the population. Restrictions have been eased gradually since April with officials arguing the economy cannot remain shut down. But the rial's sharp decline was "not unpredictable", said Laylaz, given the considerable growth of liquidity which leads to rising inflation. The economist said the forex market turmoil had led to "increasing social and political pressure on the government".

According to Yaser Shariat, a market analyst heading a stock brokerage, the rial's troubles may "continue until the epidemic is brought under control" and borders are reopened. Most of Iran's border crossings with its neighbors remain closed, save for few at Iraq's Kurdistan region, according to Iranian authorities. — AFP

## Nigeria's WTO candidate gets regional backing

GENEVA: The West African regional bloc ECOWAS is backing Nigeria's candidate to head the World Trade Organization (WTO) and calls on other African countries to follow, a document showed on Monday, in a possible step towards uniting Africa behind her. "The ECOWAS authority of heads of state and government...calls on other African countries as well as non-African countries to endorse her candidature," the document, signed by Niger's President and ECOWAS chairman Mahamadou Issoufou said, referring to Nigeria's Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.

It was dated June 19 but was not finalized until Monday. Brazil's Roberto Azevedo is stepping down as WTO head a year early at the end of August.

His successor will need to steer reforms and negotiations in the face of rising protectionism, a deep recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and growing trade tensions, notably between the United States and China. There is broad support for an African candidate and a woman, since neither have headed the Geneva-based body in the past, sources following the process said. Supporters of Okonjo-Iweala, a former minister and World Bank managing director, vaunt her negotiating skills, including clinching a multi-billion dollar debt relief package for Nigeria.

Africa has previously struggled to unite behind one WTO candidate and this time has so far been no different. The African Union (AU) was due to officially endorse one of three pre-selected candidates from Benin, Egypt and Nigeria. But the process was disrupted by COVID-19 measures and Nigeria swapped its candidate this month, prompting Egypt to protest to the AU, sources following the process said.

The latter found that Nigeria had broken AU rules by changing its submission, a document showed. An AU official declined to comment. Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala's spokeswoman said: "Dr. Ngozi's goal is to earn the support of all African countries, and she's humbled by the support she's already received. There is time for most if not all of Africa to unite behind one candidate."

Diplomats acknowledge that Africa may be in line for the post since the continent has never before provided a WTO director-general. Nigeria's foreign ministry said in a statement that ECOWAS heads of state had thrown their support behind her candidacy due to "her long years of managerial experience at the top echelons of multilateral institutions". — Agencies



Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

## SoftBank to sell \$21 billion in T-Mobile shares

TOKYO: Japanese tech investment behemoth SoftBank Group said yesterday it will sell T-Mobile shares worth over \$21 billion as it sheds assets to shore up its financial health. The move comes a month after SoftBank announced an eye-watering \$8.9 billion annual net loss, hit hard by troubles with its unicorn investments including WeWork, as well as market plunges caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

SoftBank Group, which holds about 24 percent of the US telecom carrier, said it will sell up to 198.3 million of more than 300 million shares in a transaction involving the telecom firm itself. The exact price of the sale will be determined later during US trading hours, SoftBank said.

T-Mobile shares closed Monday at \$106.60, suggesting the sale would net SoftBank over \$21 billion. Deutsche Telekom AG, which already holds a 43-

percent stake in the mobile firm, will have the option to buy an additional 101.5 million shares from SoftBank, the Japanese firm said. The series of planned transactions would leave SoftBank Group with less than one percent of the US carrier.

The Japanese firm said the move was a part of its plan to sell up to 4.5 trillion yen (\$41 billion) of assets within a year from March to reduce debts, as the firm faces financial storms including global market selloffs and soured investments. SoftBank's flamboyant founder Masayoshi Son said his investment funds have seen operating losses of 1.9 trillion yen.

Originally set up as a telecoms company, SoftBank Group has become an investment and tech behemoth with stakes in some of Silicon Valley's hottest start-ups through its \$100-billion Vision Fund. — AFP



TOKYO: People walk past a SoftBank telecommunications store along a street in Tokyo yesterday. Japanese tech investment behemoth SoftBank Group said yesterday it will sell T-Mobile shares worth over \$21 billion as it sheds assets to shore up its financial health. — AFP

## Google ad revenues to dip as market becomes 'triopoly'

WASHINGTON: Google is expected to see its first decline in US ad revenues this year as the coronavirus pandemic hits travel advertising, a market tracker said Monday. New research by eMarketer indicates Google will still be leading digital advertising but with a smaller share as the market evolves into a "triopoly" with Facebook and Amazon. Google's net US digital ad revenues will drop 5.3 percent to \$39.58 billion to bring its market share down to 29.4 percent, according to the eMarketer forecast which was sharply revised due to the pandemic.

Google's decline is "primarily because of a sharp pullback in travel advertiser spending, which in the past has been heavily concentrated on Google's search ad products," said eMarketer analyst Nicole Perrin.

"Travel has been the hardest-hit industry during the pandemic, with the most extreme spending declines of any industry. E-commerce-related ad spending has also been dampened to some extent: Amazon reportedly pulled its ads from Google search earlier this year as it struggled to meet customer demand for

its e-commerce services." A big part of the decline will come from "search advertising," or paid messages deployed by Google when a user enters a search query.

Search ad revenue, in which travel is a major component, is expected to drop by 7.2 percent in the US, eMarketer said.

Facebook is expected to see growth in its US ad revenues of nearly five percent to \$31.43 billion, driven by Instagram, according to the report. That would give Mark Zuckerberg's firm a 23.4 percent market share.

Amazon, meanwhile, is extending its strong growth in online advertising with an expected 23.5 percent rise to \$12.75 billion, putting its market share at 9.5 percent, eMarketer said.

Until recently, analysts had described the digital ad market as a duopoly dominated by Google and Facebook, but Amazon has been rising quickly. Google has been growing at a slower rate than the overall digital ad market since 2016, "so this year will continue a trend of Google losing digital ad market share in the US," Perrin said. — AFP

## Business

# URC presents an overview of major achievements of 2019 fiscal year

## Company holds ordinary AGM for financial year ended 31 Dec 2019

KUWAIT: United Real Estate Company K.S.C.P (URC), a leading real estate developer in Kuwait and the MENA region, held its Ordinary Annual General Assembly Meeting for the financial year ended 31 December 2019, along with Shafafiyah Forum transparency presentation, at the Business Center on the 56th Floor of KIPCO Tower in Sharq. The meeting was held virtually through an online platform and chaired by Mazen Issam Hawwa, URC's Vice Chairman & Group Chief Executive Officer, in the presence of URC Management Team and URC's external auditors.

Following the Ordinary Annual General Assembly Meeting, Hawwa presented the Shafafiyah Forum with an overview of URC's major achievements over the past year and highlighted the significant financial highlights from the annual report for the year ended 31 December 2019. The report demonstrated the resilience in adapting to different economic conditions and challenges to achieve both balanced financial results and substantial project milestones.

### URC performance in 2019

URC revenues increased by 10 percent to reach KD 113.8 million in 2019 as compared to KD 103.5 million in 2018. Gross profit increased by 12.5 percent to reach KD 24.5 million in 2019 as compared to KD 21.8 million in 2018, and net loss decreased by 19.7 percent to reach KD 7.2 million in 2019 as compared to KD 9 million in 2018.

The total value of URC's assets increased 1 percent to reach KD 623 million at the end of 2019 as compared to KD 617 million at the end of 2018.

Commenting on the financial results, Hawwa said that URC improvement in 2019 attributed to the increase in revenues and profits of its Subsidiaries operating in the contracting and services sector, an increase in rental revenues from its commercial shopping centers, and stable revenues from its hotel properties. He added that URC was also successful in its cost optimization program, which contributed to significant reductions in general and administrative expenses and financing costs.

Regionally, Hawwa added that URC's mall operations in the Kingdom of Jordan, Abdali Mall, witnessed a significant increase in its occupancy and was able to close the financial year ended 2019 with leased occupancy reaching 78 percent, which significantly improved the Mall's revenues during the year.

Despite ongoing challenges, Hawwa assured that URC is continuing its efforts to rationalize its portfolio of assets and investments, identify future growth and expansion opportunities, diversify sources of revenue, monetize non-core assets, optimize debt, and target an efficient capital structure. These measures aim at enhancing the operating results of URC and position it to provide a sustainable return to its shareholders.



Revenues rose by 10% to reach KD 113.8 million

### A new leadership

Internally, URC has achieved significant milestones in its human capital strategy. Early in the year 2020, URC announced the appointment of its Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mazen Issam Hawwa, as URC's Group Chief Executive Officer. As he was part of the KIPCO Group senior management team, Hawwa brings over 19 years of diverse experience in various industries which include real estate and financial services.

URC also onboarded new members to its Management Team, in Kuwait and in Egypt. With growth in business in the contracting and services sectors, the workforce of URC also increased significantly during the year.

### Local and regional development projects

In Kuwait, Hawwa emphasized URC's continued developments in Hessah Al-Mubarak District, which includes the residential components of Hessah Towers and Byout Hessah, and a Commercial District, with a total expected development cost of KD 250 million, of which KD 120 million has been securely financed by a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait and in partnership with other investors from the KIPCO Group companies. The Hessah Al-Mubarak District project features



Hanadi Al-Musallam

required information such as local mobile number, e-mail, copy of Civil ID and other information required for opening the account. Al-Musallam said that the Mobile Account Opening Service also allows customer to issue debit card and select PIN as well as the preferred means to have the debit card either delivered to him or collected from the branch, stating that this service is currently available for opening Al-Najma, Salary and YOU accounts.

Al-Musallam concluded her statement advising the public to familiarize themselves with this new service and other e-services offered by the Bank, outlining that customers can get further information by communicating through Live Video Banking & Live Chat via CBK Mobile or through the Bank's website www.cbk.com.

cial told AFP that it would make counter-proposals in order to show that France is an attractive country for industrial firms. France is planning to auction off 5G frequencies in September ahead of a commercial rollout by telecom providers by the end of this year. "Nokia will continue to be a major employer in France, with a solid base in terms of R&D, sales and services," Nokia France chief Thierry Boisson said in the statement.

But unions denounced a "betrayal," noting that Suri vowed to protect French jobs when securing French approval of the merger in 2015, when Emmanuel Macron was finance minister in the Socialist government of president Francois Hollande. "This fourth round of layoffs is a betrayal, not only for employees but also for the politicians. Everyone should feel betrayed," Tremulot said. — AFP



A combo of file pictures shows the logos of Finland's telecommunication company Nokia (up) and of multinational telecommunication company Alcatel-Lucent. — AFP

## Al-Tijari launches Mobile Account Opening Service

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait always endeavors to proactively communicate with customers and provide them with top-notch banking services through the most sophisticated e-platforms as a clear manifestation of the importance of digitalizing the banking services. Drawing on this, the bank announced the launch of Account Opening Service via CBK Mobile for the new individual/retail customers where this service shall enable customer to open account from anywhere, anytime in an easy, quick and safe way and through simple procedures.

On this occasion, Hanadi Al-Musallam, Acting General Manager – Retail Banking Division said "At Commercial Bank of Kuwait, we constantly strive to expand the e-channels employed to deliver excellent banking services to our Bank's customers base and attract more new customers, satisfy their banking requirements and help them save time and efforts when completing their banking transactions without need to visit any of the Bank's branches through CBK Mobile app with a new feature that would enable customers to open accounts in an easy, quick and safe way by following simple procedures".

## Nokia to cut 1,200 Alcatel-Lucent jobs in France

PARIS: Nokia plans to eliminate 1,233 jobs at its Alcatel-Lucent subsidiary in France, slashing its workforce in the country by a third as it grapples with intense competition in the telecoms equipment market amid the launch of 5G networks, the company and unions said Monday.

It is the fourth round of layoffs at Alcatel-Lucent in the four years since the hardware manufacturer was bought by Nokia in 2016, and the biggest by far. "It's a catastrophe," Bernard Tremulot of the CFDT labor union told AFP after a meeting where management unveiled the plan.

Nokia said the job cuts, mainly in research and support departments, were part of global cost-cutting efforts launched in late 2018, "in a market environment where pressure on costs remains very intense." "Our goal is to increase operational efficiency, improve productivity and become more agile in terms of R&D, so we can reinforce our competitive positions and guarantee the group's long-term performance," it said in a statement.

The move comes after Nokia's CEO Rajeev Suri said in March that he would step down in September, having overseen the company's transformation into a network systems company after its mobile phone business was decimated by the rise of Apple and Samsung.

Nokia's attempts to break into the 5G equipment market have struggled in the face of fierce competition from Huawei and Ericsson. Last year it had its first net profit—seven million euros (\$7.8 million)—since 2015.

Nokia said the French job cuts would be made through voluntary departures or transfers of some employees to other sites. But the French finance ministry said after the announcement that it would begin talks with Nokia, which must "improve very significantly" its plan. A ministry offi-

state-of-the-art developments, services, and facilities.

Meanwhile, Chief Development Officer, Architect Mishary S Al-Muhailan, announced that URC has recently signed a contract with Al-Ghanim International General Trading & Contracting Company for the construction of Hessah Towers. He added that the Hessah Towers project encountered minor delays in construction due to the (COVID-19) pandemic but is still expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

This luxury residential development generated excellent demand from its clients and over 40 percent of the units were reserved and sold, prior to the commencement of construction. Demand was primarily driven due to its premium location, which is situated opposite to the Daiya area and on the Arabian Gulf, in addition to URC's position as a trusted developer and a brand in developing world-class projects.

Al-Muhailan also revealed the second residential project in Hessah Al-Mubarak District, Byout Hessah, a high-end two 12-floor residential building development offering 105 upscale apartments, and 40 premium four-bedroom townhouses, set amidst landscaped surroundings with unobstructed view of the Arabian Gulf and Kuwait City.

He added that the design phase for Byout Hessah is awaiting municipal approval, and the enabling works for the project are ready to commence but pending municipal permits, while the tendering and awarding of the project's main works are contingent upon the government resuming their normal operation.

Hawwa also announced the latest mixed-use development project, the Commercial District, an all-inclusive community, lifestyle hub, located at Hessah AlMubarak District. He added that the project, which is currently in the schematic design phase, encompasses the latest architectural trends in office buildings, medical polyclinics, and serviced apartments, in addition to a retail mix of selected international and local brands and complemented by an offering of exquisite food and beverage outlets, which will cater to the District's residents and the nearby commuters.

In the Kingdom of Morocco, URC continued its progress in developing the infrastructure for its second phase of the 2.5 million square meters Assoufid project, a luxurious mixed-use combining tourism and a residential resort situated in the vibrant city of Marrakech. With a total expected development cost of KD 142 million, the Assoufid development comprises a

multiple award-winning 18-hole high-end golf club along with several luxury residential villas. The second phase of the project will consist of an iconic five-star hotel, alongside residential components, including branded villas and high-end apartments. While the third phase of the development will introduce additional premium villas and apartments.

In 2019, URC successfully signed an agreement with Marriott International, Inc. for the management and operation of The St. Regis Marrakech Resort in the Assoufid development. URC has also obtained a building permit for the construction of the hotel and awarded all main works contract to one of Morocco's leading contractors, Travaux Généraux de Construction de Casablanca (TGCC). Following the rapidly unfolding outbreak of COVID-19 global pandemic, the construction of the hotel has been delayed and is expected to commence after all curfew measures are lifted in the Kingdom of Morocco.

### URC's outlook in 2020

In regard to URC's outlook, Hawwa stated, "Due to the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic, we speculate a challenging year ahead in some of URC's operational sectors, both locally and internationally. URC has been proactively assessing the situation and has devised plans to address these challenges effectively."

Hawwa added, "The initiated steps include shoring up URC's liquidity through accelerated collections, especially from the governmental entities, and through continuous engagement with our tenants and customers. These measures are supplemented by various cost-saving initiatives, including ongoing discussions with our relationship banks to lower finance costs and extend debt maturities. Through these proactive measures, we are confident of minimizing the financial impact on our various businesses to the maximum possible extent."

### AGM resolutions

In addition to the above annual review, the present shareholders at the Ordinary Annual General Assembly Meeting approved all items of the agenda for the financial year ended 31 December 2019, which also includes validating the Board of Directors Report, the Financial Statements, and the Board of Director's recommendation to not distribute cash dividend to shareholders.

## CBK announces winners of Najma draws

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently announced the names of the winners in its Najma account weekly and 'Your Salary & More' draw winners with the attendance of MOCI representative, Zainab Fadhel Al-Shirazi.

CBK explained that Najma account prizes include a weekly KD 5000 award, a monthly KD 20,000 award, a biannual KD 500,000 award and the world's largest annual and Guinness world record certified award of KD 1.5 million.

CBK explained that the Najma account can be opened by depositing the minimum of KD 100 but explained that the account balance must be at least KD 500 in order to enter all draws and that each KD 25 provides an entry chance in the draw in addition to other benefits such as ATM card and credit cards and other banking services.

'Your Salary & More' campaign is designed to clients transferring their salaries to CBK, namely citizens and expats working for the government and oil sectors, companies listed with the bank and retirees. "Any Kuwaiti citizen with KD 500+ salary can transfer his/her salary to CBK and get KD 250-500 instant gifts or interest free loans equal to five times the salary with a maximum of KD 10,000 in addition to cash gifts", CBK explained noting that a weekly draw is held for the account holders who are offered five-year valid Visa Signature cards free of charge with up to 3% cash back in addition to the E-gov account and creative solutions such as the T-Pay service.

Notably, CBK clients can contact the customer care service by calling 1888225, the bank's website at www.cbk.com or visiting the nearest CBK branch where employees are always willing to respond to various inquiries and provide various banking services.

## QE bond sales should precede rate rises: BoE

LONDON: Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey said on Monday that the central bank should start to sell government bonds back to the market before it raises interest rates significantly, which would represent a reversal of long-standing BoE policy. Any bond sales are some way off, as just last week the BoE increased its bond purchase target by 100 billion pounds to 745 billion pounds (\$922 billion) to support the economy through the unprecedented slump caused by COVID-19. But Bailey said this level of central bank asset purchases, known as quantitative easing (QE), "shouldn't always be taken for granted" and stressed the central bank's independence from government.

"When the time comes to withdraw monetary stimulus, in my opinion it may be better to consider adjusting the level of reserves first without waiting to raise interest rates on a sustained basis," he wrote in an article for Bloomberg.

Under previous governor Mark Carney, the BoE said it would raise interest rates materially before starting to sell past asset purchases back to the market, as it viewed interest rates as a nimbler policy tool.—Reuters

## Ogilvy named Network of the Year by The One Show

KUWAIT: The One Show, the world's most prestigious award show in advertising, design and digital marketing, has named Ogilvy 2020 Network of the Year in recognition of outstanding work across disciplines on behalf of its clients. Ogilvy's focus on collaboration and big creative ideas in any form—from gaming and commerce to mobile and social media—also resulted in DAVID Miami, one of its specialty brand companies, capturing the Agency of the Year honor.

The Network of the Year honor is given to the network whose agencies have the most cumulative points for One Show Pencils won across all disciplines for the year. Over two dozen Ogilvy offices around the world contributed to the recognition by collectively winning 25 Gold, 17 Silver, 25 Bronze, 73 Merit awards for clients including Burger King, Coca-Cola, German Rail, IBM, Jimmy Dean, KFC, Kraft Heinz, Pernod Ricard, S C Johnson, and Sipsmith among others.

Burger King, a client of DAVID, was named Client of the Year with several campaigns recognized this year. "Moldy Whopper," a collaboration between agencies including DAVID Miami and INGO (a joint venture of Ogilvy and Grey based in Sweden), was named Best of Show. "Moldy Whopper" won Best of Discipline in four categories—Film, Integrated, Print, and Out of Home—while "Stevenage Challenge" created by the Miami and Madrid offices of DAVID was named Best of Social Media. "Burn That Ad," created by DAVID Sao Paulo, also took home pencils across several categories this year.

"This recognition is a testament to Ogilvy's ability to transform business and culture through creativity," said Piyush Pandey, Ogilvy Worldwide Chief Creative Officer. "We want to thank our clients who entrust us with their brands and congratulate Fernando Machado and everyone at Burger King for winning Client of the Year."

"Work by Ogilvy agencies delivered on what The One Show jurors look for: excellence in creativity of ideas and quality of execution," said Kevin Swanepoel, CEO, The One Club. "We congratulate the network for a year of great work that inspires the creative community."

This marks the fourth time Ogilvy has been named Network of the Year by The One Show. The previous three times were in 2017, 2014 and 2013—the year the category was launched.

Ogilvy has been producing iconic, culture-changing marketing campaigns since the day its founder David Ogilvy opened up shop in 1948. Today, Ogilvy is an award-winning integrated creative network that makes brands matter for Fortune Global 500 companies as well as local businesses across 132 offices in 83 countries.

# Zero-carbon goal? Spanish delivery start-up Glovo targets greener future

**BARCELONA:** On-demand delivery service Glovo, whose riders with distinctive yellow bags have continued to carry meals, medicine and other goods to city residents under lockdown, said on Monday it will offset all its carbon emissions by the end of 2021. The Barcelona-based company runs an app that lets its users in 22 countries buy, collect or send any product in the same city within an hour, with takeaway food accounting for about 70 percent of deliveries. In five years, the firm has expanded operations to about 300 cities, mainly in southern and eastern Europe, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. It employs more than 51,000 freelance couriers, who mainly use bicycles or motorbikes for deliveries.

Glovo said it will buy an initial 30,000 carbon credits - each representing one ton of planet-warming carbon dioxide - from a forest conservation project in Peru, via California-based platform Pachama, which also works with Microsoft Corp. "Today, we can't just go from A to Z (but) we've decided to begin compensating the negative part as much as we can," Glovo co-founder Sacha Michaud told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Michaud said the firm's delivery riders, known as "glovers", choose which mode of transport they use, with the global split roughly 50:50 between bikes and motorcycles and a very small percentage using cars. Emissions from deliveries account for about a quarter of

the company's carbon footprint, which it will offset going back to the start of this year, Michaud said.

Other sources of emissions in the company's direct value chain are offices, corporate travel and data centers, as well as food waste and packaging - for which it will compensate fully by the end of next year. Glovo also aims to reduce emissions with initiatives like better management of food waste, bundling orders, providing partners with sustainable packaging and supplying couriers with backpacks made from recycled and recyclable materials.

The start-up, which aims to become profitable by mid-2021, could also seek to negotiate discounts on electric bikes and other vehicles for its riders, Michaud said. Ride-hailing company Lyft Inc said last week every vehicle on its ride-hailing and rental car platform would be electric by 2030, but it would not provide direct financial support to drivers for switching from gasoline-powered cars.

Rival Uber, meanwhile, has not made a blanket commitment to electrification, but is partially subsidising drivers' electric-vehicle purchases in London. Michaud said Glovo is also sharing data with city authorities to help them plan where to expand cycling routes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been making pro-bono deliveries to vulnerable residents, sometimes in partnerships with companies that fund the work. "Coronavirus has raised



BARCELONA: On-demand delivery service Glovo said on Monday it will offset all its carbon emissions by the end of 2021. — Reuters

social awareness of how important it is to help your neighbor," Michaud said, adding that companies need to address both their environmental and social

impacts to be competitive in a post-pandemic world. According to Spanish media reports, the government is working on a new law aimed at boost-

ing labor rights for freelance delivery 'riders' working for large platforms such as Glovo and competitor Deliveroo. — Reuters

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- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fitzaloscope)
- Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- Laparoscopic mini bypass
- Transanal minimally invasive surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

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

**Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad**  
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Consultant of General Surgery  
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

**Academic Certificates - Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com **Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228** Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

## Lifestyle | Features

## Shakira, Miley, Usher, Beckham and ... von der Leyen



In this file photo Shakira and Chris Martin from Coldplay perform together on stage during the Global Citizen Festival G20 benefit concert at the Barclaycard Arena in Hamburg, northern Germany on the eve of the G20 summit. —AFP

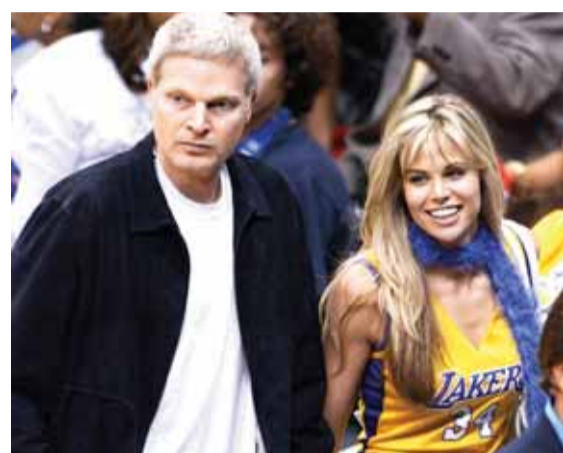
Coldplay, Justin Bieber, Jennifer Hudson, David Beckham, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen. Megastars of music, film, sport, fashion and regional governance will join online events on Saturday to support the search for a coronavirus vaccine. "Artists have the power to inspire change. They use their talents to serve great causes," von der Leyen said, announcing the conference and a concert. Along with US-based movement Global Citizen, the EU executive is sponsoring a fund-raising and coordination drive to boost efforts to control the epidemic.

Since a first fund-raising summit on May 4 the effort has raised pledges of almost 10 billion euros from governments and billionaire philanthropists. Von der Leyen says the money will help develop a vaccine for the novel coronavirus and help make sure it is

shared with the most vulnerable populations. Johnson, a former pro-wrestler turned movie star, will host the event. "This moment in history requires all of us, so let's join together to chart a better future, for everyone," he said, according to a European Commission statement. Star power will be brought to the online event by celebrity artists such as Miley Cyrus, Salma Hayek, Charlize Theron, Forest Whitaker and Angelique Kidjo.

They will be joined by the likes of former Nigerian finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, president of the Gavi vaccine alliance and candidate to lead the WTO.

Philanthropist Melinda Gates will be there, along with veteran activist Derrick Johnson, president of the US civil rights organisation NAACP.—AFP



Film producer Steve Bing, 55, has died reportedly by suicide from leaping from a building in Century City in Los Angeles, California.—AFP

Hollywood mogul  
Steve Bing dies  
aged 55

Hollywood producer Steve Bing, who financed Tom Hanks movie "The Polar Express" and fathered a child with actress Liz Hurley, has died aged 55, US media reported Monday. TMZ said Bing had died after falling from the 27th story of a luxury apartment building in Los Angeles' Century City, citing anonymous law enforcement sources. A Los Angeles police spokesman told AFP a male in his fifties had been pronounced dead at the same scene, without disclosing his identity. Both the victim's age and the location matched TMZ reports.

As well as producing and financing movies such as Sylvester Stallone's action flick "Get Carter" and Martin Scorsese's music documentary "Shine a Light," Bing co-wrote the 2003 comedy "Kangaroo Jack." He famously invested over \$80 million in "The Polar Express"—around half the Christmas animation's budget. The 2004 movie, starring Hanks as a lead voice actor, would gross more than \$300 million worldwide. Bing was also a prominent real estate developer, philanthropist and political donor.

He was a long-time friend and supporter to Bill Clinton, lending the former US president his private jet for a 2009 mission to North Korea to free two American journalists. At the age of 18, Bing had inherited around \$600 million from his grandfather, property tycoon Leo S Bing, after whom the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Bing Theatre is named. Bing had two children—Damian, whose mother is Hurley, and Kira, born to professional tennis player Lisa Bonder. Reports in TMZ and The Wrap said Bing had been suffering from depression and had died by suicide. Bing's publicist did not immediately respond to AFP request for comment.—AFP



This file photo shows a general view of Main Street at Disneyland Paris in Marne-La-Vallee, east of the French capital Paris.—AFP photos

'Batman Forever' and  
'Lost Boys' director  
Schumacher dies at 80

Joel Schumacher, the director of two flamboyant "Batman" films and cult teen classic "The Lost Boys," has died of cancer aged 80. The maverick who began as a costume designer before rising to the top ranks of Hollywood directors passed away in New York City, publicists ID-PR said in a statement to AFP. Schumacher "passed away quietly from cancer this morning after a year-long battle. He will be fondly remembered by his friends and collaborators," it said. The director is best known to wider audiences for the divisive "Batman Forever" (1995) and "Batman & Robin" (1997). Schumacher had taken over helming the highly lucrative comic book franchise from Tim Burton, and his first effort starring Val Kilmer performed well at the box office.



In this file photo Director Joel Schumacher speaks at "Trespass" press conference during the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto, Canada.—AFP

But both movies, notable for their camp and colourful style, were assailed by many critics and fans, who took particular exception to the nipples Schumacher added to Batman's suit. In a 2017 interview, Schumacher told Vice he wanted to "apologize to every fan that was disappointed" by "Batman & Robin," adding that he felt "like I had murdered a baby." The caped crusader's big-screen franchise was later reinvigorated by Christopher Nolan's 2005 "Batman Begins."

Schumacher started as a Hollywood costume designer in the 1970s, working on movies including Woody Allen's "Sleeper" (1973) and "Interiors" (1978). Brat Pack-starring coming-of-age drama "St Elmo's Fire" (1985) was Schumacher's first bona fide hit as a director. He followed up with teen vampire movie "The Lost Boys" (1987) and sci-fi "Flatliners" (1990) before helming the "Batman" titles for Warner Bros. Schumacher is credited with helping to launch several young A-list careers, including Matthew McConaughey in 1996's "A Time to Kill" and Colin Farrell in "Tigerland" (2000) and "Phone Booth" (2003). Prior to his Hollywood career, he attended art school and worked as a window designer for a New York women's accessories store.—AFP



In this file photo crowds watch as Snow White and her prince ride past on a carriage during the Main Street Parade at Disneyland Paris, in Marne-la-Vallee.

Disneyland Paris plans phased  
reopening from July 15

Disneyland Paris said Monday that it would begin a "phased reopening" of the theme park on July 15, with visitor numbers limited via a new online reservation system to ensure social distancing. Visitors aged 11 and older will have to wear face masks, and many shows and events will remain suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic, the resort said. A first hotel at the site, which usually has some 15 million visitors per year, will open July 15, followed by staggered openings of others through the summer.

The phased reopening will see "enhanced health and safety measures implemented for both cast members and guests," the company said in a statement. Same-day ticket sales will no longer be available, and people with non-dated tickets or annual passes will have to reserve spots. The park has also suspended the "FastPass" service that lets people reserve time

slots for certain rides "to allow for the necessary queue management." To encourage people to come despite uncertainty over how the coronavirus outbreak will unfold, the resort is allowing people to cancel or modify their Disney Hotel reservations without cost up to seven days before arrival.

Some 16,000 people work at the resort, which began halting shows and limiting the number of people inside even before France's nationwide lockdown took effect in mid-March, after some maintenance workers tested positive for COVID-19. "We are thrilled to see one of the main tourism destinations in Europe and the largest single-site employer in France reopen to guests and its employees," Sophie Huberson of France's SNECAC leisure industry association said in Disney's statement.



In this file photo General view of the red carpet set up at the Golden Globes 2020 at The Beverly Hilton, in Beverly Hills, California.—AFP photos



In this file photo the stage is ready ahead of the 77th Annual Golden Globe Awards nominations announcement in Beverly Hills, California.

Golden Globes set for Feb 28  
as virus delays award season

Next year's Golden Globes will take place on February 28, an unusually late date for the glitzy film and television award show as Hollywood scrambles to adjust to the coronavirus pandemic. The Globes, which are typically held in early January, will now take the weekend previously reserved for the Oscars, which last week were delayed by eight weeks to April 25. "The HFPA will provide further guidance around eligibility, voting period, and revised nominations announcement timing in the coming weeks," said the Hollywood Foreign Press Association in a statement Monday.

The Globes are the first major Hollywood awards gala of the year, and are seen as an early bellwether for the all-important Academy Awards. Monday's statement did not specifically mention the pandemic. But coronavirus has wreaked havoc on Hollywood, closing down productions and forcing studios to delay releasing movies while theaters remain closed. The Oscars' postponement had already triggered a domino effect, as other award shows including the Baftas and the Film Independent Spirit Awards pushed back their own ceremonies.

The delays have been prompted by concerns that a field consisting only of films released in 2020 would not be as broad or competitive as in previous years. After more than three months of coronavirus-mandated limbo, the first Hollywood-wide releases are headed back to the big screen in July—including Disney's "Mulan," and Christopher Nolan's "Tenet." But while top US theater chains plan to reopen next month, screens in badly-hit key markets including New York and Los Angeles don't yet have permission to reopen,

and fears of a possible "second wave" of virus cases are mounting.

The postponements also increase the chance that next year's award shows can remain live, star-studded ceremonies, rather than shifting to a "virtual" presentations. The HFPA did not provide details of the planned format for next year's Globes, but said that as usual it will "air live" from the Beverly Hilton hotel in California. The 78th Golden Globes will be hosted by Tina Fey and Amy Poehler, after provocative British comic Ricky Gervais returned this year for a record fifth—and reportedly final—stint.

## Streaming permitted

The Globes have yet to confirm any changes to the awards' eligibility window. In an exceptional move, the Academy Awards last week extended the cut-off date for Oscar-eligible films by two months, to the end of February. But the HFPA was the first major show to loosen its rules for this year due to the pandemic. It announced in March that films that had planned "a bona fide theatrical release," but were forced to release only on streaming because of the coronavirus, will be permitted at the Globes.

In regular years, most award shows require movies must be shown in Los Angeles theaters for a minimum period to be considered. And while previously studios had to invite HFPA voters to private screening events, online links or DVDs will be permitted during the pandemic lockdown.—AFP

As lockdown lifts,  
Barcelona plants enjoy  
a day at the opera

The lights dim, the curtain rises and the music begins—all signs normal life has returned to Barcelona's Liceu opera house, were the seats not filled with some 2,300 plants. After months of silence, the emblematic opera house located in central Barcelona decided to throw open its doors with a unique performance—a metaphor for the months of lockdown when nature took back space from people. Seated in the plush red seats of the stalls, the dress circle and the boxes were an eye-catching array of 2,292 ficus trees, palms and Swiss cheese plants, their verdant green contrasting with the ornate gold columns and mouldings of the auditorium.

On the stage, which has stood empty since mid-March, a string quartet played the beautiful lilting melodies of Puccini's "Crisantemi"—or The Chrysanthemums. The idea of the concert came to conceptual artist Eugenio Ampudia during the lock-

down when the normal bustle of urban living was silenced, the sound of birdsong was much clearer and the plants around his house grew more vigorously. The idea was to have people reflect on the concept of sustainability and their relationship with nature. "I thought why don't we go into the Liceu like weeds, take it over and let nature start growing everywhere and turn it into something alive even when there are no people," he told reporters.

It was like "a visual poem, both a subtle metaphor but one which makes us smile," said the Liceu's artistic director Victor Garcia de Gomar. The concert was streamed live on the theatre's website so those who wanted to could put it on for their own plants at home to hear. "We are at the end of an era and that means that we have to change certain paradigms," Ampudia said. "We don't live in the same world as 90 days ago, and this means we have to reflect on everything that we do." "I think that all these plants somehow know in their inner being, in their cells, their photosynthesis that they have been at this concert," he said. After the concert, all the plants were to be donated to health-care professionals who have worked on the frontline fighting the virus over the past few months.—AFP



The Uceli Quartet perform for an audience made of plants during a concert created by Spanish artist Eugenio Ampudia and that will be later streamed to mark the reopening of the Liceu Grand Theatre in Barcelona following a national lockdown to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus.—AFP



This picture shows a general view of luxury hotels at Lara district in Antalya, a popular holiday resort in southern Turkey.—AFP photos



A tourist waits for his food behind a glass shield at a luxury hotel at Lara district in Antalya, a popular holiday resort in southern Turkey.



People keep social distance at Antalya International airport during an event.



A room cleaner disinfects a hotel room's balcony in a luxury hotel.



Deck chairs placed in social distance next to the pool of a luxury hotel at Lara district in Antalya.

# Turkey strives to revive virus-hit tourist sector

In normal times, tourists must rise at dawn to secure a free sunbed on the beach in Antalya, a popular holiday resort in southern Turkey. Today even after a lie in, the best locations are still available. As elsewhere, the coronavirus pandemic has hammered the tourism industry—a vital Turkish economic sector that welcomed a record 50 million foreign visitors last year. But with the lifting of restrictions around the world including the gradual opening of airline connections, Turkey is trying to lure tourists to save what it can of the summer season.

At a luxury hotel on the Mediterranean coast, floor markings invite customers to respect social distancing, disinfectant gels are placed at the entrance to elevators and restaurants and all staff wear protective face masks, AFP journalists saw on a press trip organised by the Turkish tourism ministry. "We have

taken strict measures to protect our employees and tourists," Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy told AFP in an interview. "Turkey is the best prepared country" to welcome travellers, he said.

The minister last week unveiled the "safe tourism" certificate, awarded on the basis of 132 criteria to hotels and restaurants able to accommodate customers in proper sanitary conditions. About 500 establishments have received that label and authorities hope to quadruple the figure in the coming month.

### Reconfigured hotels

To earn the tourism ministry's label, hotels must also set up a separate section to isolate tourists who test positive for COVID-19. "We had to reconfigure our establishments. Despite these additional expenses, we will not increase prices," said Sururi

Corabatir, president of the Federation of Turkish Hoteliers. The government has also introduced a health insurance scheme — 23 euros (\$26) worth—covering hospital expenses for COVID-19 patients. Travellers can sign up on arrival. The stakes are high: from hoteliers to restaurateurs, along with farmers who sell their products in the region, the pandemic has upended the lives of all those who live off tourism in Antalya.

The area nicknamed "Las Vegas without a casino" for its luxury resort hotels looks like a ghost town. Except for some pharmacies, all shops and restaurants are shut. "In 2019, we received 35 million passengers, including 15 million from abroad. Since the beginning of the year, the total number is less than a million," said Deniz Varol, director general of Antalya airport. In the airport, thermal cameras take passengers' temperatures, a quarantine room has been set up and a centre able to carry out 20,000 tests a day has opened.

### Negotiations

In the absence of foreign tourists, some Turks enjoy a quiet vacation. Deniz Kaya, who comes to Antalya every year, has never seen the city "so empty". "People are careful, they spend their holidays respecting social distancing rules," she said while tanning by the pool. Will the measures taken be enough to convince foreign tourists to visit? Much will depend on negotiations with their home countries including Germany which has placed Turkey on a list of destinations it considers "coronavirus risk areas", and Russia—one of the most infected countries in the world.



A Turkish official checks body temperatures of passengers at Antalya International airport in Antalya, a popular holiday resort in southern Turkey.

Turkey sends data on virus cases in its coastal resorts to Germany daily, and invited a Russian delegation to observe measures taken by hotels. According to official figures, Turkey has recorded 5,000 virus-related deaths and nearly 190,000 cases. The number of cases registered daily has recently increased after the lifting of restrictions that were in place. Despite all the difficulties, Ersoy remains optimistic. In 2016 — a year marked in Turkey by an attempted coup and several terror attacks, "there was a serious crisis followed by a very strong rebound," he recalled. "Bookings for 2021 are piling up: Tourists have not forgotten Turkey, on the contrary."



Photo shows closed shops at Lara district in Antalya, a popular holiday resort in southern Turkey.



Photo shows an empty swimming pier near the beach at Lara district in Antalya, a popular holiday resort in southern Turkey.

## Dior to hold first major live fashion show since coronavirus

Dior said Monday that it would stage what is likely to be the first major fashion show since the coronavirus outbreak next month—albeit with only "friends and family" there to witness the spectacle live. Designer Maria Grazia Chiuri said the world was hungry for clothes with "magic and emotion" and that luxury labels owed it to the artists and artisans who relied on them for a living to try to get back to normal as soon as possible. The cruise collection show—which was to have taken place in May—will be held in the baroque splendour of the Piazza del Duomo in Lecce on July 22.

The Italian designer said she was dedicating the show, which she said will have a more "natural and rural" feel to its flower motifs, to her late father who was born in the Apulia region in the heel of Italy. Chiuri, the first woman to lead the fabled French fashion house, said that her father "taught me to believe in myself, and during difficult times, to believe in the future." Which also meant trying to protect the army of artisans who work for Dior. "When we talk about sustainability we must not forget also the jobs of the workers," Chiuri said in a frank online press conference, a rarity in the highly-controlled fashion world. "We care about the work and we take care about the workers, I am one myself... and we want to work in the best way."

### 'Nothing beats live show'

Dior also strongly signalled that it would not join rivals Gucci and Saint Laurent in their decision to opt out of participating in Paris fashion week every year in order to follow their "own creative rhythm". Several other brands have also called for a major overhaul of the frantic fashion calendar. But Dior CEO Pietro Beccari said it would stick with Paris fashion week and made an impassioned defence of live catwalk shows. He said nothing beats "seeing and feeling" the clothes and the brand wants to "send out a message of rebirth after this period of great difficulty."

"Nothing carries emotion more than a real fashion show. A live performance is like nothing else, the electricity that we feel in that creative moment, the deadline, the adrenaline. "That is why we wanted to do a live fashion show and why we believe there will always be a place for a live show," Beccari added. While Dior's Paris haute couture week show in early July would not be live, he said, it would have "another big surprise". Rather than turn everything upside down, Beccari said Dior "decided to take a pragmatic approach to the crisis and live day by day. "When I see countries like China who came out of the crisis early, I feel people really want to restart the things they were doing before, and that is the approach we take.—AFP

Social distancing and face masks were largely forgotten as thousands of French people danced and partied well into Monday in the first big blow out since the coronavirus lockdown. The annual midsummer Festival of Music usually brings millions of people out onto the streets across the country for impromptu concerts in cafes and on street corners that go on long into the night. And despite emergency measures which ban gatherings of more than 10 people, thousands thronged the trendy Canal Saint Martin and the Marais districts of Paris late Sunday to dance and sing along to bands and DJs.

Not even heavy showers could dampen spirits, with few beyond those serving spicy merguez sausages from street stalls bothering to wear masks. "The Festival of Music is important, it's a national event," 28-year-old reveller Violette told AFP as she boogied to a band in northern Paris. And she laughed at the idea that people would be strictly respecting social distancing. "Not at all," she said.

Disgraced politician Patrick Balkany—whose lawyers persuaded a judge earlier this year that he was too ill to serve a five-year jail sentence for money laundering and tax evasion—was also spotted dancing in the street without a mask in the chic Paris suburb of which he is still the mayor. The 71-year-old right-winger, a close friend of former President Nicolas Sarkozy, further fanned the fury on social media by posting a video of himself partying in a pink sweater and white shoes on Instagram.

### Authorities 'too lax'

But many who watched the crowds on the streets were horrified, taking to social media to voice fears of a second wave of infections. "What a brilliant idea! A Festival of Music just as we are coming out of a major health emergency," one Twitter user commented. Although none of the usual big set-piece extravaganzas were held beyond what French electronic music legend Jean-Michel Jarre had billed as the world's first

## Paris throws off mask to party like the virus never was

live virtual "avatar" concert, many felt the authorities had been too lax.

A senior doctor at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, where many COVID-19 sufferers are still being treated, criticised the decision to let the festival go ahead. "This is not what a gradual end to the lockdown looks like," said Dr Gilbert Deray. "I understand that the Festival of Music is something of a liberation, but did we really have to have it this year?"

been waiting for this for 99 days," cinema manager Louis Merle told the 120 people who had queued up for their first big-screen experience since March 17. "Watching series on Netflix is one thing, but the cinema is something else," said the film's star Emmanuelle Devos.

Even though cinemas have reopened, they are far from back to normal. The authorities insist that screenings can never be more than half full with a free seat either



Members of Hermine Prunier's yoga group hold up placards as they perform a choreography to an Indian song for world peace and protest to show their support for the Black Lives Matter movement on the *Parvis des droits de l'homme*, place du Trocadero, in Paris during the French Festival of Music.—AFP

### Cinemas reopen

Cinemas also reopened in France on Monday for the first time since the lockdown began in March. The 5 Caumartin cinema in Paris opened one minute after midnight for a red-carpet champagne and popcorn sneak preview of the upcoming French comedy, "Les Parfums" (The Perfumes), about a prima donna perfume "nose", who comes up with new fragrances. "There are no words to describe what I feel. I have

side of each filmgoer. And everyone must wear masks as they queue for tickets and in the corridors. Even so, pollsters estimate that 18.7 million French people—almost a third of the population—plan to go see a film in the next month.—AFP



# Yemenis turn to herbal remedies as fears mount over virus toll

**TAEZ, Yemen:** As medicines run short and hospital wards overflow, Yemenis are resorting to traditional herbal remedies to protect themselves from coronavirus in a country broken by years of conflict. Yemen has so far officially recorded under 1,000 cases of the disease, with 257 fatalities, but most clinics are ill-equipped to determine causes of death and there are ominous signs that the real toll is much higher.

The country's health system has all but collapsed since war broke out between the government and Houthi rebels in 2014, and more than two thirds of the population of about 24 million need aid to survive, according to the United Nations. In the southwestern city of Ta'ez, market vendors stack bags of herbs and spices in front of their shops – from garlic, ginger and turmeric to costus root and fennel flower – at prices much more affordable than modern medicine.

"Many people are coming to buy medicinal herbs to make concoctions believed to be successful in combatting the virus," said one vendor, Bashar Al-Assar, at the popular Al-Shanini market. The remedies are "guaranteed, tried and effective"

to strengthen immunity, he told AFP. The virus crisis is just the latest hardship for Ta'ez's population of more than 600,000, who have long been trapped within the city limits.

While it is controlled by pro-government forces, Ta'ez is under siege from the Houthis who occupy the mountains that surround the city, from where they have launched repeated bombardments. Ta'ez has so far recorded 50 coronavirus deaths, the second highest for a Yemeni city after Hadramaut's 111 deaths, according to government data. But patchy accounts from overwhelmed hospitals, and scientific modelling, indicates this is just a fraction of the real impact. The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine said in a study that, with no mitigation measures in place, there may have been between 180,000 and three million coronavirus cases in the first three months of the outbreak in Yemen. Its model predicts there could be up to 11 million people infected, with between 62,000 and 85,000 deaths, in an eventual worst-case scenario.

According to residents and doctors in Aden, the southern city where the government is based, hos-

pitals are overcrowded and under extreme pressure because of the number of COVID-19 cases. "We have no preparations, no equipment, not enough medication, and not enough medical staff to combat the spread of the virus," Jalal Nasser, a doctor at a hospital in Aden, told AFP. "There is no trained staff to deal with the pandemic."

The situation in the rebel-held capital of Sanaa is unclear, with the true picture hard to determine as the insurgents have abstained from reporting cases other than two infections announced in early May. The outbreak comes on top of diseases such as cholera, malaria and dengue that continually ravage the country due to a lack of proper sanitation or healthcare facilities.

In a country that the UN has described as the world's worst humanitarian disaster, millions are on the brink of famine and others live in makeshift camps where social distancing is impossible. Ishraq Al-Sibai, the spokeswoman for Yemen's national emergency committee for COVID-19, warned that herbal remedies risked harming people's health, but that Ta'ez had little to offer in terms of modern treatment. "There are 40 isolation

beds, six ventilators, not enough medical staff... and a shortage of medicines," she said. "This is a big problem."

## 'Don't forget Yemen'

Munir Ahmed Ghaleb was one of the shoppers at the Ta'ez market looking to buy herbs. "The price of medication has increased insanely, and now a citizen must resort to the local market for essential medicinal herbs, such as garlic, to fight the virus," he told AFP. Before the coronavirus outbreak there was very little demand for herbal concoctions, said the vendor Assar, while today "it stands at 100 percent".

Aid organizations have warned that a full-blown coronavirus outbreak in Yemen would have dire consequences, and called on the international community for support. The UN raised some \$1.35 billion at a virtual donor conference co-hosted by Saudi Arabia in early June, but it fell far short of the \$2.41 billion target. "As the world continues its fight against this global pandemic, it must not forget countries like Yemen that need their support," the World Health Organization said. — AFP

## Trump suspends entry of certain...

Continued from Page 1

suspension would stifle the economic recovery after the damage done by the pandemic. Critics of the measure say Trump is using the pandemic to achieve his longstanding goal to limit immigration. The proclamation's immediate effects are likely to be limited, as US consulates around the world remain closed for most routine visa processing. The proclamation exempts those already in the United States, as well as valid visa holders abroad, but they must have an official travel document that permits entry into the United States. Immigration attorneys were working on Monday to determine what the order might mean for clients now out of the country.

The measure also exempts food supply chain workers and people whose entry is deemed in the national interest. The suspension will include work-authorized J visas for cultural exchange opportunities, including camp counselors and au pairs, as well as visas for the spouses of H-1B workers.

Republican Trump is running for re-election on Nov 3 and has made his tough immigration stance a central pitch to voters, although the coronavirus, faltering economy and nationwide protests over police brutality have overshadowed that issue. The president has faced pressure to restrict work visas from groups that seek lower levels of immigration, as well as some Republican lawmakers.

In a statement, BSA, the Software Alliance, whose members include Microsoft and Slack, urged the administration to "refrain from restricting employment of highly-skilled foreign professionals," adding, "These restrictions will negatively impact the US economy," and decrease job opportunities for Americans.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai – whose company has been a leading beneficiary of the H-1B visa system – said he was "disappointed" by the announcement. "Immigration has contributed immensely to America's economic success, making it a global leader in tech," he

## Black Arab women tackle racist beauty...

Continued from Page 1

"The use of blackface for me further indicates that black women are perceived as not beautiful," Ksiksi said. "(Brands) would rather use the image of a white woman and paint her face." Besides racist beauty standards, she said Black Arab women are frequently taunted over stereotypes that they have high sex drives. In Tunisia, as elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East, they are also disproportionately poor and suffer worse job prospects as well as increased sexual harassment at the hand of employers, or while out in the street.

"Economically and socially Black women are at the bottom of the pyramid. So if someone harasses a black woman, he knows she has no connections... and this makes it easier for her to be harassed," Ksiksi said. Tunisia became the first Arab country in Oct 2018 to criminalize racial discrimination, with the first conviction under the law taking place in Feb 2019.

## Palestinians rally against Trump's...

Continued from Page 1

Ishloon, 47, who came to the demonstration from the Aqabat Jaber refugee camp outside Jericho. "We will not let Israel steal our lands," added demonstrator Kamal Said.

Israel's annexation plan envisions the creation of a Palestinian state, but on reduced territory and without meeting the key Palestinian demand of having its capital in east Jerusalem. Protesters in Jericho held up signs that said "Palestine is not for sale" and "No Palestinian state without the Jordan Valley".

The UN's special Middle East envoy, Nickolay Mladenov, joined the protest and criticized Israel's US-backed annexation plan, saying it could "kill" peace and Palestinian statehood. "The UN believes annexation is against international law," Mladenov said. "If it happens it might kill the very idea that peace and statehood for the Palestinian people can

wrote on Twitter.

The move comes as Trump feuds with Silicon Valley after tech titans Twitter and Snapchat censored or hid posts by the president they claimed incited violence or were misleading. Last month Trump signed an order seeking to strip social media giants of legal immunity for content on their platforms in a move slammed by his critics as a legally dubious act of political revenge.

Doug Rand, co-founder of Boundless, a pro-migrant group that helps families navigate the US immigration system, said the fact that H-2A visas used to bring in foreign farmworkers were exempt signals that "big agriculture interests are the only stakeholder with any sway over immigration policy in this administration". H-2B visas, which were included in the suspension, have been used by Trump-owned- or Trump-branded businesses, including his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida.

Many business groups were lobbying against a temporary visa ban before it was announced. Sarah Pierce, a policy analyst with the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute, estimated that the new ruling would block 219,000 foreign workers through the rest of the year. "This is introducing more chaos into an already chaotic situation for a lot of US companies," she said. "The administration is making the assumption that these companies did not already look at the US labor market, which most of them do before they get involved in a complicated process of trying to bring in foreign workers."

Mitch Wexler, a managing partner at law firm Fragomen, said the order would hurt his social media and wireless communications clients and other tech companies. Employers "wouldn't pay a lot of money to file these applications and hire lawyers like me if they could hire an American for these positions," he said. Trump also renewed an April proclamation that blocks some foreigners from permanent residence in the United States, extending that measure until the end of the year. The senior administration official said that proclamation freed up roughly 50,000 jobs for Americans, but did not provide details. The visa suspension issued on Monday narrows an exemption for medical workers in Trump's April ruling to include only people working on coronavirus research and care. — would greatly limit asylum seekers' access to work permits. — Agencies

But from Egypt to the Palestinian territories, deep-rooted racist views are coming under attack. Earlier this month, Egyptian actor and singer Mohamed Ramadan called out a woman who commented on a photo of his son to say it was unfortunate the boy turned out black like his father instead of inheriting his mother's lighter skin. "I'm proud of my color... and I'm happy my children will grow up to be anti-racism," Ramadan wrote on his Facebook page.

In a viral Instagram video, Palestinian actress Maryam Abu Khaled said she hoped future generations would not endure the anti-black comments she grew up hearing, such as parents warning their children to avoid the sun so they would not look like her. For Ali, who was often told she was "pretty for a black girl", the protests sparked by last month's killing of Black American George Floyd by a white Minneapolis police officer had triggered some long-overdue soul searching closer to home.

"People are starting to understand that 'okay, maybe now I should be more socially aware of my anti-blackness,'" she said. "This is a huge change from the race conversation completely not existing in the Arab world to people now calling each other out." — Reuters

be achieved through negotiations," he added.

Mladenov urged the Palestinians to oppose the Israeli plan by peaceful means. "People of Palestine do not despair... do not stray away from the path of non-violence," Mladenov said. "You're not renting a home, this is your home. Do not lose sight of the goal of a free Palestinian state... next to Israel," he added.

The West Bank, which Israel occupied in 1967, is home to 450,000 Israeli settlers and 2.7 million Palestinians. Israel controls all access to the territory where Abbas's government is based. Jordan, which has a peace treaty with Israel, has warned it could review its ties with the Jewish state if it goes with annexation and other Arab countries have voiced opposition to the plan.

European Union countries have also voiced concern over any unilateral move by Israel to annex occupied Palestinian territory. On Monday, Chinese, Russian, European Union and Japanese diplomats also took part in the protest, AFP reporters said. Senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat told AFP that a "large international coalition" including Arab, African and European countries back the Palestinians against Israel's annexation plan. — AFP

## Saudi to hold 'limited' hajj...

Continued from Page 1

accordance with the teachings of Islam." The hajj – a must for able-bodied Muslims at least once in their lifetime – could be a major source of contagion, as it packs millions of pilgrims into congested religious sites. The decision comes as Saudi Arabia grapples to contain a major spike in infections, which have now risen to more than 161,000 cases – the highest in the Gulf – and over 1,300 deaths. But despite the surge, Saudi Arabia on Sunday moved to end a coronavirus curfew across the kingdom and lift restrictions on businesses, including cinemas and other entertainment venues.

Muslims expressed disappointment yesterday at Saudi Arabia's decision to scale back this year's hajj pilgrimage, but many accepted it was necessary as the kingdom battles a major coronavirus outbreak. But it will probably appease domestic pilgrims, who feared the ritual would entirely be cancelled for the first time in recent history. The move had looked inevitable for some time and several countries had already pulled out, but the announcement nevertheless added to disappointment for Muslims who invest huge sums and face long waits to go on hajj.

"My hopes of going to (the holy Saudi city of Makkah) were so high," said Kamariah Yahya, 68, from Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, which had already barred its citizens from the hajj earlier this month. "I've been preparing for years. But what can I do? This is Allah's will – it's destiny."

A group representing about 250 companies in Indonesia that organize Saudi pilgrimages said it understood that the five-day event, scheduled for the end of July, would be "too risky" at the moment. But Syam Resfiadi, chairman of the Union of Hajj and Umrah Organizers, told AFP some of his group's members had "started laying off employees or even shutting down their operations – they've had no income for months".

Shahadat Hossain Taslim, head of a group representing Bangladeshi hajj travel agencies, said "many people will be shattered" by the decision but it was for the best. "Unlike other countries, the majority of Bangladeshi pilgrims are elderly people, and they are vulnerable to COVID-19," he said.

In neighboring India, the minister for minority affairs said more than 200,000 people had applied to go on hajj in 2020, and they would receive a full refund of any money deposited for the pilgrimage. The hajj ministry in Saudi Arabia, where virus cases have surpassed 161,000, has said the pilgrimage will still be open to people of various nationalities

## Female prisoner dies of virus...

Continued from Page 1

Ghebreyesus told a virtual health forum organized in the United Arab Emirates. Tedros said the greatest threat was not the virus itself, which has now killed over 470,000 people, but "the lack of global solidarity and global leadership". "We cannot defeat this pandemic with a divided world," he said. "The politicization of the pandemic has exacerbated it."

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is one of the leaders to have repeatedly played down the threat, comparing the virus to a "little flu" and arguing the economic impact of shutdowns is worse than the virus itself. More than 50,000 people have been confirmed to have died from the virus in Brazil, with the true number believed to be far higher.

Brazil's official death toll is second only to the United States, which has recorded 120,000 fatalities, and President Donald Trump's handling of the crisis has been widely criticized as erratic and chaotic. Trump on Monday said the American toll could surpass 150,000, as two more members of his team that helped organize a controversial weekend rally for him in Oklahoma tested positive.

Mexico, Peru, Chile and Argentina are also coping with crises – Mexico City being forced to delay plans for a broad reopening of the economy as the country's death toll raced past 20,000. With a vaccine still

already in the country but did not specify a number.

Mohamad Azmi Abdul Hamid, from charity the Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organizations, said Muslim nations should have been allowed to take a "collective decision", rather than it being left to Riyadh. The decision also risks annoying hardline Muslims, for whom religion may trump health concerns. Despite the disappointment, some Muslims were already looking ahead to 2021 and hoping they would be able to perform the pilgrimage then. "I'm still hoping to go on hajj next year, and pray that I'll stay healthy until then," said Yahya in Indonesia.

"Saudi Arabia has chosen the safest option that allows it to save face within the Muslim world while making sure they are not seen as compromising on public health," Umar Karim, a visiting fellow at the Royal United Services Institute in London, told AFP. "But there are lots of unanswered questions: What is the exact number of pilgrims that will be allowed? What is the criteria for their selection? How many Saudis, how many non-Saudis?"

Saudi authorities said the hajj ministry will hold a news conference to flesh out the details. In an apparent bid to give the decision a veneer of religious sanction, the Saudi-based Muslim World League said it endorsed the government move for the health and safety of pilgrims, according to state media. The prestigious Islamic institution Al-Azhar in Cairo also welcomed the move. "This decision is wise and based on Islamic jurisprudence", it tweeted.

And Youssef Al-Othaimen, secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, said in a statement carried by state media that he "appreciated the utmost care given... to the health and safety of the pilgrims".

A watered-down hajj would represent a major loss of revenue for the kingdom, already reeling from the twin shocks of the virus-induced slow-down and a plunge in oil prices. The smaller year-round umrah pilgrimage was already suspended in March. Together, they add \$12 billion to the Saudi economy every year, according to government figures.

"This has been a really difficult year, with Saudi Arabia facing declining revenue from all sectors – oil, tourism, domestic consumption, and now umrah and hajj," Karen Young, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, told AFP. A full-scale hajj with millions of pilgrims was unlikely after authorities advised Muslims in late March to defer preparations due to the fast-spreading disease.

Earlier this month, Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, emerged as one of the first countries to withdraw from the pilgrimage after pressing Riyadh for clarity. An Indonesian minister called it a "very bitter and difficult decision". Malaysia, Senegal and Singapore followed suit with similar announcements. — Agencies

far away, the WHO has called for a rapid increase in production of the steroid dexamethasone, which has been shown to have life-saving potential.

In Europe however, countries continued to ease their restrictions. Thousands of French people danced and partied in the streets well into Monday for an annual music festival, in the first big blowout since the lockdown. Many felt the authorities were too lax. "This is not what a gradual end to the lockdown looks like," said Dr Gilbert Deray. "I understand that the Festival of Music is something of a liberation, but did we really have to have it this year?" Swimming pools and cinemas also reopened while children up to the age of 15 returned to school.

In England authorities said cinemas, museums and galleries would reopen on July 4 in the next phase of easing lockdowns as infection rates there also slow. But illustrating the persisting risks, Portugal Prime Minister Antonio Costa said restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 people would be reimposed and cafes and shops ordered to close at 8:00 pm in Lisbon.

Australians were warned to avoid travelling to Melbourne as the country's second-biggest city tightened restrictions over fears of an upsurge in cases. China, Germany, South Korea and Japan are also battling new outbreaks, with some reintroducing containment measures.

The sports world has been slowly re-emerging from the virus darkness, although for every step forward it seems to take one back. Three of the world's top male tennis players tested positive after taking part in a tournament in the Balkans featuring world number one Novak Djokovic, raising questions over the sport's planned return in August.



Stars

Daily SuDoku

		3		2			5
1		6					7
	8		5	6			3
	2			5	8		7
	4		6	1			8
	3			4	5		1
8						3	4
2			8			5	

medium

Yesterday's Solution

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

very hard

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is a good day to add spark to your life, Aries. If things have seemed boring and stagnating lately, you may need to infuse a bit of excitement into the situation. Add flair and dynamism to the mix. Take matters into your own hands and actively pursue your goals. You have a strong inner sense of where you need to go. Trust your instincts and move in that direction. Don't hesitate.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

The fog has lifted and you're ready to take off, Libra. The dreaminess you may have experienced lately has been nice, but now it's time to get moving again. Use all that you have learned from that recent internal processing and put it to use in the practical world. Try not to get caught up in the crossfire of conversations that don't really pertain to you. Feel free to start something new.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You'll notice that your emotions are coming to a monthly climax today, Taurus. Don't be alarmed but do be cautious about lashing out at people for no reason. You may feel on edge. Unintended slights from others could push you over that edge in a fury of emotion. Harsh words spoken today can damage other people's feelings for a long time, so remain silent.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a terrific day for you, Scorpio, and you'll find that there is a great deal of power at your disposal. This is a day of new beginnings. You have the opportunity now to start over and create a solid emotional base from which to work. Rid yourself of negative feelings and self-doubt. Use this day as an opportunity to strike out on new ground and achieve whatever you set your heart on.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Extremes is the name of the game now, especially for you, Gemini. Today the emphasis is on action. You're the one to call to get the job done. You won't wait another second to simply go for it. Your emotions are flowing, and you have an endless well of internal strength and resources. Use this power to your advantage. Connect with others who share similar viewpoints, and watch the incredible results unfold.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

The fire is raging today, so be careful, Sagittarius. Try not to be too impulsive in your actions. Your natural tendency may be to lash out against others without really thinking about the consequences. If you find yourself getting hot under the collar, you might need to take a step back from the situation and settle down. Pursue your goals, but make sure that you don't do so at the expense of others.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Be adventurous and strike out into new territory, Cancer. Be a pioneer. Work to make some new discoveries in the world. Today isn't a day to worry about consequences. It's a day to get things started. There is a great deal of fiery energy in the cosmos helping you in your quest for the new and fresh. Take the lead and try not to get thrown off course by leeches and party poopers.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Go for the gold, Capricorn. Today marks the beginning of the rest of your life. Treat it with respect. You may be on a crusade and your combative instincts could be working overtime. There's a lot of fuel in your engine, so don't worry about running out. The only thing you really need to be concerned about is possibly stepping on other people's toes. Make sure you consider how your actions affect others.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Certain situations may be difficult to deal with today as they take an emotional spin, Leo. You're getting anxious. Things are getting started without the careful planning and consideration you feel is necessary. Try not to worry so much. Your own doubt is likely to hinder any project. Have faith that things will work out. Be bold. Take an active role in helping to get the ball rolling instead of holding it back.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may feel as if someone is poking you today, Aquarius, urging you to get up and get moving. Don't be surprised if someone seems to be picking on you for no reason. Other people's lack of sympathy and sensitivity could be acute on a day like this. Try not to take it personally. Your hard outer shell may be put to the test in terms of its ability to protect your soft vulnerability.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

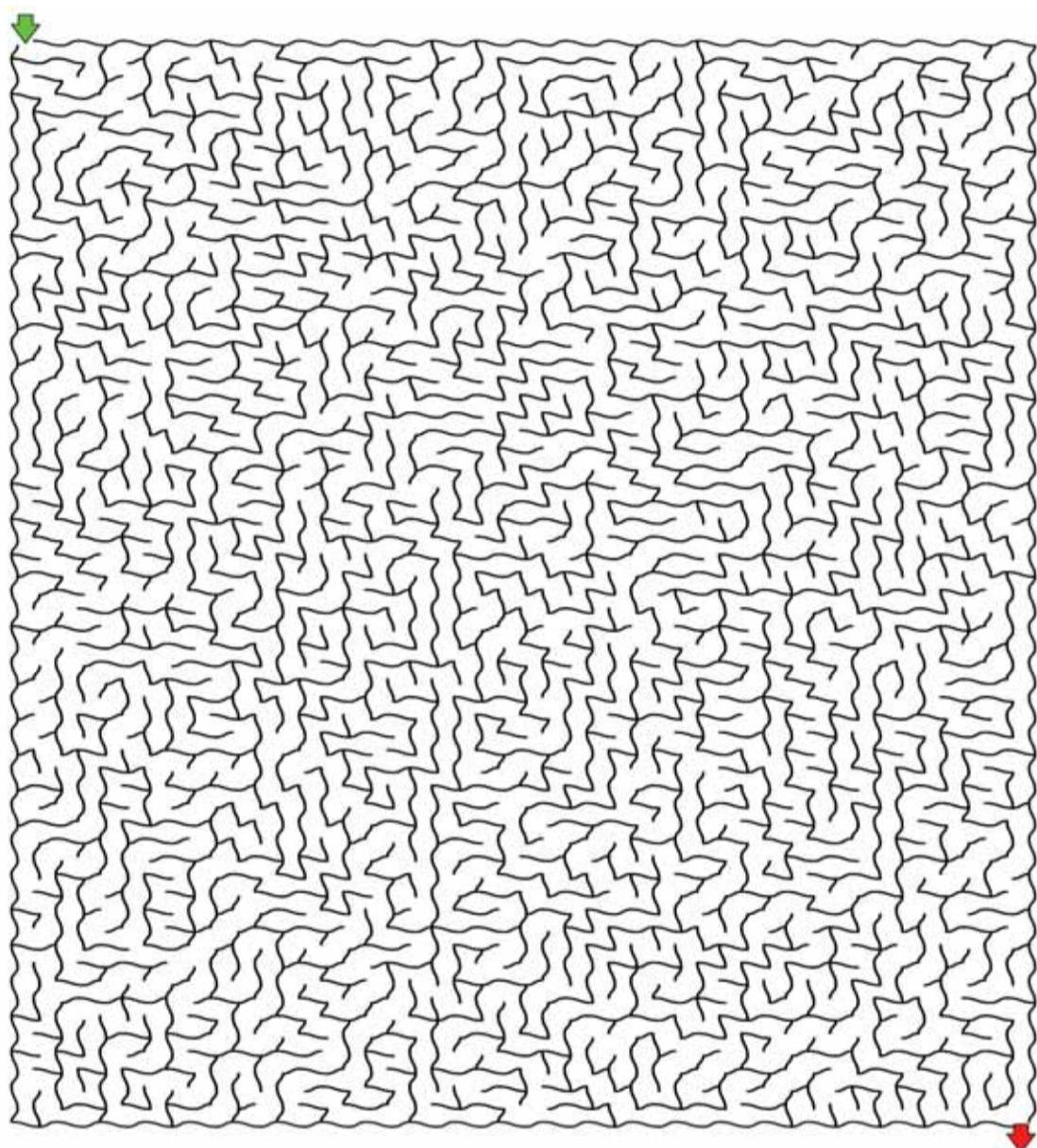
You should find that the general mood of the day is favorable to your personality style, Virgo. Take this opportunity to present more of your thoughts and ideas to the world. Let your voice be heard. Use it with strength and vigor. You have partners and friends who are eager to hear what's on your mind. Engage in verbal sparring. You'll find that you can learn a great deal about yourself and others.



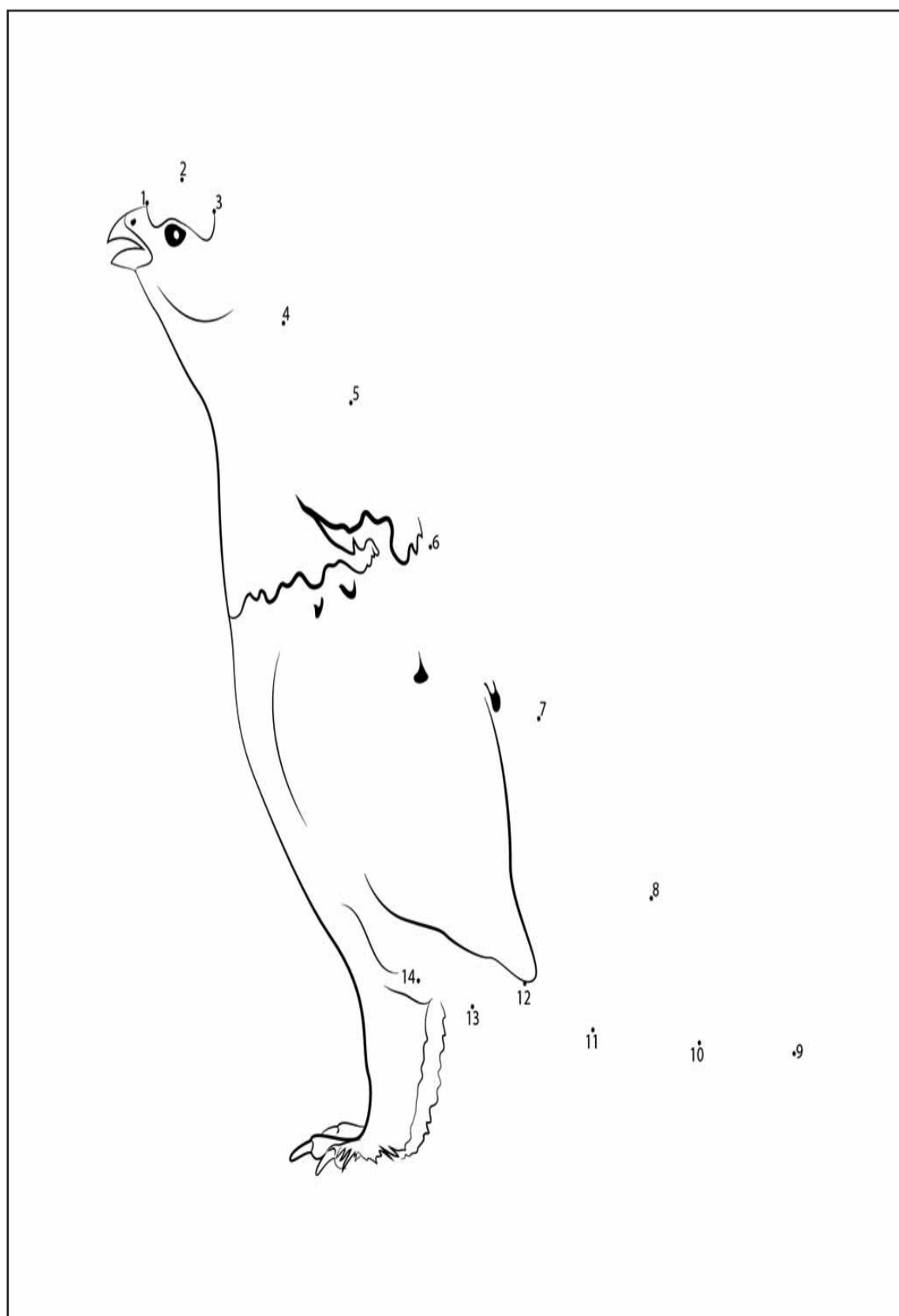
Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a great day for you to get up on stage and make your presence known, Pisces. Let people know that you're the leader of the pack. There is a great need for you to take the helm now, and you shouldn't back away from this responsibility. The warrior instinct inside you is probably strong, so don't hesitate for a second. Be brave and courageous in all situations.

Find the way



Join the dots



Word Scramble

Earth Day - April 22nd

WORD SCRAMBLE AND CROSS: Unscramble each of the words on the left and write them in the grid. When the puzzle is complete the shaded letters going down will spell out another name for your home.

ERTWA	→						
RSHTA	→						
AOCEN	→						
BLOGAL	→						
NLLTOIUOP	→						
AETUNR	→						
REEDCU	→						
OCSTPMO	→						
YLCCEER	→						
TWSAE	→						
NYGEER	→						
EREUS	→						
TEILTR	→						



## Sports

## Photo of the Day



Mansour Al Safran performs in Kuwait City. Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

## Baseball edges closer to season as row nears endgame

**LOS ANGELES:** Major League Baseball edged closer to a shortened season on Monday as bitter wrangling between team owners and players neared its endgame. MLB team owners on Monday voted unanimously to go ahead with the 2020 season under the terms of a deal reached with the MLB Players Association in March.

The owners' vote came after the MLBPA's executive board voted earlier in the day against a proposed 60-game regular season with expanded playoffs.

The rejection means MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred can now order teams to play a drastically shortened season — something the team owners have approved.

However, before formally inking the shortened season, the MLB has requested that the MLBPA confirm by 5pm Tuesday (2100 GMT) that players will be ready to return to training camp by July 1.

The players must also agree on the terms of the season operating manual, which includes health and safety protocols related to COVID-19.

The MLB and the MLBPA have been at loggerheads over how to salvage the baseball season, which should have started on March 26 but was put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic. The league proposed a succession of deals that would have seen the players receive only a percentage of their salaries, prorated by number of games played.

Players pushed back against the league proposals, noting that they had already agreed to a pay cut in March and should not be required to accept a further reduction in salary. The MLBPA had requested a longer regular season with no pay cuts, a proposal that has been firmly opposed by MLB owners, who will take a massive financial hit from a season that will be played out without spectators. — AFP

# Blaney and Wallace both claim victory at Talladega

## Race was overshadowed when a noose was found in Wallace's team stall

**TALLADEGA:** Ryan Blaney claimed a wild last lap victory at the rain-delayed Geico 500 at Talladega Superspeedway on Monday, in a race run under a cloud of racism and tight-security after a noose was discovered in the garage of Bubba Wallace.

With cars wrecking behind him and others banging and slamming down the home stretch Blaney held his nerve to take his fourth career victory in a photo-finish ahead of Ricky Stenhouse Jr., while Aric Almirola spun across the finish line in third.

But even all the action on the track could not pry the spotlight away from Wallace, the only Black driver in NASCAR's top series, who came home 14th but still declared victory after two days of racial turmoil that rocked the sport.

"Sorry I'm not wearing my mask but I wanted to show whoever it was that (placed the noose in his garage) you are not going to take away my smile."

Wallace, told a trackside reporter after walking over to the fence to salute a few of the 5,000 spectators, some wearing Black Lives Matter T-shirts, allowed into the race. "I am going to keep on going. I know I should've won that damn race but we ran out of gas. Just the stars didn't align for us completely but all in all we won today."

The race was overshadowed by events on Sunday when a noose, a symbol connected to lynching and America's slave history, was found in

Wallace's team stall.

A vocal supporter of Black Lives Matter and one of the loudest voices pushing NASCAR's decision earlier this month to ban the Confederate flag from its tracks, Wallace had become the target of those resisting change.

NASCAR immediately condemned the act and announced an investigation, while the US Attorney's office for the Northern District of Alabama said the FBI was reviewing the situation to determine whether there are violations of federal law.

Security at the sprawling superspeedway was stepped up on Monday and Wallace's Richard Petty Motorsports team allowed to inspect his number 43 Chevrolet to ensure it had not been tampered with.

In a moving show of support Wallace's fellow drivers and their crews marshalled behind the 26-year-old and helped push his car to the front of pit road for the anthems and ceremonies prior to the start of the 500 mile race.

For a moment an emotional Wallace leaned against the side of his car with his head buried in his folded arms before being hugged by the team's legendary 82-year-old owner "The King" Richard Petty, who made the trip to the track to support his driver despite the threat of the novel coronavirus.

"The pre-race deal was probably one of the hardest things I have ever had to witness," said



**TALLADEGA:** Bubba Wallace, driver of the #43 Victory Junction Chevrolet, takes a selfie with NASCAR drivers that pushed him to the front of the grid as a sign of solidarity with the driver prior to the NASCAR Cup Series GEICO 500 at Talladega Superspeedway on June 22, 2020 in Talladega, Alabama. — AFP

Wallace, fighting to maintain composure. "From all of the supporters from drivers, from crew members, everybody here, the bad ass fan base thank you

guys for coming out.

"It was truly incredible and I am proud to be a part of this sport." — Reuters



### Security stepped up

## Gabriel set to join Windies squad

**MANCHESTER:** West Indies fast bowler Shannon Gabriel is set to join the test squad having regained his pace and fitness, head coach Phil Simmons said ahead of next month's three-match series against England next month.

The 32-year-old right-arm quick arrived in England as one of 11 reserve players, with doubts about his fitness following an ankle injury.

Simmons told British media on Monday Gabriel could join the touring party and that he was looking fit.

"The last week he's been at full tilt and he looks fit," added Simmons. "He's bowling as fast as I've seen him for a while so he's ready and close enough to the test match."

West Indies will play two warm-up matches before the first test in Southampton from July 8 and Simmons will be keeping an eye on Gabriel's progress before deciding whether to add him to the test pool.

"When leaving home 14 were named in the squad," the coach said.

"Because of Shannon coming back from his injury, we had to let him get a little bit further and see how he is and then we'll decide whether to make it a 15-member squad.

"After that, injuries might be the cause for changes." Manchester will host the last two tests of the series, which will be played behind closed doors in a bio-secure environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. — Reuters

## MLB owners vote to proceed with 2020 season

**LOS ANGELES:** Even though months of haggling ended in an impasse Monday, Major League Baseball apparently will play ball this year.

After the players union executive board reportedly voted 33-5 against team owners' offer of a 60-game schedule, Major League Baseball announced that the clubs voted unanimously "to proceed with the 2020 season."

The implemented schedule will be for 60 games, according to multiple media reports. The regular season reportedly would run from approximately July 24 to Sept. 27.

There had been concern that a minority faction of owners wanted to cancel the season completely, with players' salaries possibly outweighing the income that could be generated by holding games with empty stadiums amid the coronavirus pandemic.

MLB's statement read, "In order to produce a schedule with a specific number of games, we are asking that the Players Association provide to us by 5:00 p.m. (ET Tuesday) with two pieces of information. The first is whether players will be able to report to camp within seven days (by July 1st). The second is whether the Players Association will agree on the Operating Manual which contains the health and safety protocols necessary to give us

the best opportunity to conduct and complete our regular season and Postseason."

A short time earlier, the MLB Players Association tweeted a statement that read, "Earlier this evening, the full Board reaffirmed the players' eagerness to return to work as soon and as safely as possible. To that end we anticipate finalizing a comprehensive set of health and safety protocols with Major League Baseball in the coming days, and we await word from the league on the resumption of spring training camps and a proposed 2020 schedule."

"While we had hoped to reach a revised back to work agreement with the league, the Players remain fully committed to proceeding under our current agreement and getting back on the field for the fans, for the game, and for each other."

By rejecting MLB's latest proposal, the union preserves its right to file a grievance over the length and financial terms of the season, maintaining that owners didn't negotiate in good faith. Manfred has made the same accusation regarding the MLBPA's negotiation strategy.

Due to the union's vote on Monday, MLB announced that several facets of its final offer will not be enacted:

- Use of the designated hitter in both leagues in 2020 and 2021
- A guaranteed \$25 million in playoff pools in 2020
- \$33 million in forgiven salary advances, that, according to MLB, would increase the take-home pay of 61 percent of the players.
- Overall earnings for players that MLB stated would amount to 104 percent of their prorated salaries
- The removal of plans to expand the 2021

postseason "in order to address player concerns"

Last-ditch attempts for MLB and the MLBPA to reach an agreement reportedly were sought on Monday as the window to hold a season continues to close.

The Athletic analyst Jim Bowden tweeted that the proposal the union rejected Monday would have given players their full prorated salaries for 60 games, but it would not have guaranteed salaries if games weren't played.

The vote was initially due to be held Sunday, but a large number of positive COVID-19 tests caused a delay.

Citing two sources close to the situation, USA Today's Bob Nightengale reported that 40 MLB players and staff members tested positive in the last week. Nightengale added that Manfred and MLBPA executive director Tony Clark exchanged emails with "tweaks" to their proposals.

On Sunday, ESPN's Jeff Passan reported Manfred wrote a letter to Clark offering to cancel expanded playoffs and the universal designated hitter for 2021 (the owners' latest proposal had those elements in place for 2020 and '21). But, Passan added, "Players are concerned about giving up leverage of playoffs for naught."

Nightengale reported Manfred also promised that players on non-guaranteed contracts who were arbitration-eligible in 2019 but released during spring training would receive full termination pay. The regular season was scheduled to start March 26, but the coronavirus pandemic led to the ongoing delay. Spring training in Arizona and Florida was shut down March 12, but new training camps — reportedly with teams in their regular-season home cities — could start up by July 1. — Reuters

## Sports

# Australia, New Zealand favourites to host 2023 women's World Cup

## Next edition will have 32 teams for the first time

**SYDNEY:** A decade ago Australia spent millions of taxpayer dollars on a disastrous quest to host the 2022 men's World Cup, but its football boss is quietly confident that crushing defeat will not be repeated this week.

Australia and New Zealand's joint bid to host the 2023 women's World Cup, using the slogan "As One", is up against Colombia, with the decision due on June 25 after the field was whittled down from 10.

Japan, whose 'Nadeshiko' women's team won the 2011 World Cup, withdrew on Monday, a move seen as taking Australia and New Zealand's biggest rival out of the race. Thursday's announcement by the FIFA Council comes with women's football, and women's sport in general, on an upward trajectory. The last women's World Cup in France was a big success, watched by 1.12 billion people globally.

The next edition will have 32 teams for the first time, up from 24, with pressure on to take it to another level. Australia and New Zealand both have experience in hosting major events and their bid was regarded as the frontrunner after scoring strongly in FIFA's evaluation report.

"When you look at our bid, we think it ticks a lot of the boxes," Football Federation Australia chairman Chris Nikou told AFP. "Whether that's infrastructure, or the facilities, whether it's the legacy or the commercial outcomes for FIFA."

"Or just our genuine engagement with women's sport and women's issues... and Australia and New Zealand are great places to visit too, so as a package we hope it's a compelling proposition."

There was also optimism in 2010 when billionaire Frank Lowy, then FFA chairman, vigorously pursued

hosting rights for the 2022 men's World Cup, only to win just a single vote as the event controversially went to Qatar. It was a humiliating outcome for Australia, and was followed by bloodletting at FIFA as allegations unfolded of corruption at the world body's highest levels.

Nikou said it was a different ball game now, with FIFA having a new president in Gianni Infantino and a new constitution, while each vote will be public as opposed to the previous secrecy.

"Comparing the two eras, the previous bid to this one, I think it's like comparing apples to oranges," he said.

"FIFA have been very adamant about a transparent process, a fair and open process, and it's been very comprehensive."

If Australia and New Zealand win, it will be the biggest sports event to be held by either country since the Sydney Olympics 20 years ago.

Their bid has already won public support from the ASEAN bloc, with initiatives to not just

promote football in the host nations but also Southeast Asia, where it is hoped increased female participation can act as a driver for social change.

"A joint World Cup would also send a clear message to the Pacific islands about the rise of women's sport and certainly give them role models, and give us something to work with them to advance women's issues generally," said Nikou. Australia and New Zealand's prime ministers, Scott Morrison and Jacinda Ardern, promised the World Cup would "embody our passion for women's football" and attract record crowds. "Football is the game that connects us all," they wrote in a joint letter to the FIFA Council. "We sincerely hope that an Australia-New Zealand FIFA Women's World Cup will bring us all to-



**LYON:** This file photo taken on July 7, 2019 shows US's players celebrating with the trophy after the France 2019 Women's World Cup football final match between USA and the Netherlands at the Lyon Stadium in Lyon, central-eastern France. Australia and New Zealand's joint bid to host the 2023 women's World Cup, using the slogan "As One", is up against Colombia, with the decision due on June 25 after the field was whittled down from 10. — AFP

gether again in 2023, when we can all celebrate humanity, community and unity through football."

Australia and New Zealand have been ahead of the curve in promoting equal pay and gender equality in sport, which should sit well with FIFA's vision of having 60 million women and girls playing football by 2026. Nikou said he hoped the achievements would not go

unnoticed. "Those who delve into those details will genuinely see two countries committed to women's sport," he said. "When you look at it, we are living the values that are part of FIFA's broader game plan for sport." The two countries plan to share the tournament between 12 cities. —AFP

## Waratahs confirm Beale departure

**SYDNEY:** Australian utility back Kurtley Beale will not play again for the New South Wales Waratahs, the team said yesterday, releasing him early to take up a lucrative contract with French side Racing 92.

Beale, 31, had already announced a two-year contract with the star-studded, Paris-based side, but he had been expected to complete this season with the Waratahs.

"Following the COVID-19 shutdown it's been agreed that he take up that opportunity with immediate effect," New South Wales rugby said in a statement.

Beale played a record-equalling 148 times for the Waratahs, and has scored 156 points in 92 Tests for Australia.

## Virus cases raise questions over Djokovic tourney

**PARIS:** Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki have all tested positive for coronavirus after taking part in an exhibition tennis tournament in the Balkans featuring world number one Novak Djokovic, raising questions over the sport's planned return in August.

Croatia's Coric, ranked 33rd in the world, revealed Monday he had tested positive for COVID-19, with Troicki confirmed to have contracted the virus several hours later.

It follows Sunday's announcement by Dimitrov that he had also tested positive after pulling out of the exhibition event in Croatia, one of the biggest since the tennis season was halted because of the pandemic.

Coric tweeted: "I want to make sure anyone who has been in contact with me during the last few days gets tested!"

"I am really sorry for any harm I might have caused! I'm feeling well and don't have any symptoms (sic). Please stay safe and healthy!"

One of Djokovic's coaches and another member of Dimitrov's entourage have also reportedly tested positive for the virus, according to Croatia's N1 television channel. Troicki, meanwhile, played Djokovic last week in Belgrade.

Coric had beaten Bulgaria's Dimitrov in the second leg of the Adria Tour in Zadar on Croatia's Adriatic coast on Saturday.

Dimitrov withdrew from the Balkans tournament following that match, complaining of feeling unwell.

Sunday's final between Djokovic, who is president of the ATP Player Council, and Russia's Andrey Rublev was immediately cancelled as a precaution.

Australian star Nick Kyrgios pulled no punches in his reaction to Coric's tweet. "Boneheaded decision to go ahead with the 'exhibition,'" Kyrgios wrote on social media.

"Speedy recovery fellas, but that's what happens when you disregard all protocols. This IS NOT A JOKE."

Britain's Andy Murray called it "a lesson for all of us". "Once you start having mass gatherings with people coming in from all sorts of countries, it's a recipe for it to kick off," Murray said.

Also playing in the tournament were world number three Dominic Thiem, former US Open winner Marin Cilic, seventh-ranked Alexander Zverev and Filip Krajinovic.

Both Zverev and Cilic later took to Twitter to say they their tests had returned negative for the virus

"It's a bittersweet moment to be leaving a place you've called home for such a long time, but this is an exciting opportunity to play overseas and the time is right to begin the next chapter in my career," he said.

"I'm thankful for the many great people I've met over the journey and will cherish the memories I've made over the last 11 seasons."

Australia's director of rugby, Scott Johnson said Beale was "eager to get a head start with his new club. Under the current circumstances we viewed that as a reasonable request and he leaves with our full support".

Beale has expressed a desire to play for Australia at the next Rugby World Cup and be involved in new coach David Rennie's plans.

He remains eligible to play for his country because of the number of caps he has earned.

Meanwhile, former All Blacks hooker Mark Hammett will leave his role as assistant coaching at the Otago Highlanders at the end of the Super Rugby Aotearoa competition.

Hammett, who has also been head coach at the Wellington Hurricanes and Japan's Sunwolves and an assistant at the Canterbury Crusaders, has been with the Highlanders since 2017.

Hammett told reporters on Tuesday that he had spoken to Highlanders Chief Executive Roger Clark and coach Aaron Mauger at the end of November about moving on.

"There has been no decisions on what I will do. I love coaching and mentoring and that side of it," he added. "I'll do something but the decision hasn't been made yet."

Clark told Stuff Media the team would not be seeking to replace Hammett "at this stage".

Former All Blacks prop Clarke Dermody is instead expected to assume more responsibility from next season. The Highlanders, who had the bye in Super Rugby Aotearoa last weekend, face the Auckland Blues at Eden Park on Saturday, while the Crusaders play the Waikato Chiefs in Christchurch on Sunday. — Reuters



**ZADAR:** This photograph taken on June 18, 2020, shows (L/R):Croatia's Borna Coric, Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov, Serbia's Novak Djokovic and Germany's Alexander Zverev, tennis players as they pose for a group photograph ahead of an exhibition basketball match in Zadar. Croatia's Borna Coric announced on June 22, 2020, that he has become the second player to test positive for coronavirus after taking part in an exhibition tournament in Croatia featuring world number one Novak Djokovic. —AFP

which has killed over 465,000 people.

"I have just received the news that my team and I have tested negative for COVID-19," Germany's Zverev wrote. "I deeply apologize to anyone that I have potentially put at risk by playing this tour."

He said he would now be following "self-isolating guidelines" whilst Cilic announced his intention to quarantine for 14 days. Djokovic will reportedly speak to the public later after receiving the results of his test.

His brother, the tournament's director Djordje Djokovic, said the 17-time Grand Slam winner had taken the news of Dimitrov's result "very hard".

Details of Coric's positive test emerged as Serbian football league champions Red Star Belgrade reported that five of their players had gone down with coronavirus just 12 days after their derby clash with Partizan Belgrade.

The game was watched by 16,000 fans, the largest sporting gathering seen in Europe since the continent went into lockdown in March.

The Adria Tour had been organised to fill the gap in the virus-hit tennis calendar which has been on ice since mid-March and was played out to a daily crowd

of 4,000 fans at Djokovic's tennis centre on the banks of the Danube in Belgrade last week.

Dimitrov, Djokovic and Thiem, as well as the other players, were then seen partying at a packed Belgrade night spot. Thiem has since travelled to the south of France to play in another exhibition tournament in Nice.

The Adria Tour had already suffered an embarrassing setback when the planned Montenegro leg of the four-nation tournament was cancelled when it became apparent Serbia's health requirements did not match up to those of Montenegro.

Commenting on social distancing measures during the Belgrade leg, Djokovic argued that both Serbia and the region had been relatively successful in containing the virus.

"Of course you can criticise, you can also say this is dangerous or not, but it's not up to me to make the calls what is health-wise right or wrong," he stated.

Last week, the ATP and WTA said they were restarting their tours in August. However, the US Open in New York will be played behind closed doors and under strict health protocols which Djokovic has described as "extreme" and "impossible". —AFP

## Fifagate: Appeals denied for two key LatAm officials

**NEW YORK:** A US court on Monday dismissed appeals by two former leaders of Latin American football who were convicted over their roles at the heart of the "Fifagate" corruption scandal.

Paraguayan Juan Angel Napout, former president of Conmebol, was sentenced in 2017 to nine years in prison on racketeering and wire fraud charges in connection with awarding television and marketing rights of major events in exchange for kickbacks.

It was the longest sentence of any of the accused in the "Fifagate" scandal that rocked world football's governing body.

Jose Maria Marin, former president of the Brazilian Football Confederation, 88, was serving a four-year prison sentence for accepting millions of dollars in bribes until he was released from jail on humanitarian grounds in March.

Napout — head of Conmebol (the South American Football Confederation) between 2014 and 2015 — was denied early release in April, with the judge citing the risk of him fleeing house arrest. The appeals court ruling issued in New York said the two men claimed the convictions were "impermissible" as the incidents took place outside the United States. But the court concluded "the evidence presented at trial was sufficient to affirm the district court's judgment of conviction."

Marin was the first major football official found guilty and sent to prison in the United States as part of the "Fifagate" scandal.

In August 2018, a New York jury found him guilty of accepting \$6.6 million in bribes — along with his deputy, Marco Polo del Nero — in exchange for contracts to broadcast major tournaments. The \$200 million bribery scandal led to the arrests of dozens of soccer executives — many of them Latin American — and culminated in the downfall of FIFA boss Sepp Blatter. —AFP

## Sevilla go third as Villarreal's Bruno returns from injury

**MADRID:** Sevilla climbed back up to third place in La Liga on Monday after a 2-2 draw at Villarreal, as Bruno Soriano played for the first time in over three years following his injury nightmare.

Paco Alcacer put Villarreal ahead on 18 minutes and Pau Torres restored the lead on the stroke of half-time after Sevilla captain Sergio Escudero had drilled in from outside the area.

Munir El Haddadi ensured Sevilla came away with a point that put them back above Atletico Madrid, who face Levante on Tuesday, with an equaliser on 63 minutes to snap Villarreal's three-match winning run.

The draw pushed Villarreal into the Europa League spots at the expense of Real Sociedad, while the introduction of Bruno for the final few minutes marked the end of an injury-decimated spell dating back to May 2017. Bruno, who was part of the Spain squad at Euro 2016, made his first appearance in 1,128 days when he replaced Alcacer, having been sidelined for the best part of three seasons by a career-threatening knee injury.

"I don't know what to say," an emotional Bruno told Movistar. "It's been so long since I played that I almost don't know what to say."

"This is really important for me. I've tried to return a lot of times. I won't lie, at times I thought it would be better not to carry on." —AFP

**18** Blaney and Wallace both claim victory at Talladega



**19** Australia, New Zealand favourites to host 2023 women's World Cup



**19** Virus cases raise questions over Djokovic tourney



**MANCHESTER:** Manchester City's Algerian midfielder Riyad Mahrez (L) scores the second goal past Burnley's English defender Charlie Taylor during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Burnley at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England. — AFP

## Man City crush 'embarrassed' Burnley

**LONDON:** Manchester City thrashed Burnley 5-0 at an empty Etihad to ensure Liverpool will not be able to clinch the Premier League title when they face Crystal Palace today.

However, the match was overshadowed by a banner flown over the stadium at the start of the match reading: "White lives matter Burnley".

Black Lives Matter (BLM) has been printed on the back of all shirts for the first 12 matches of the Premier League restart. Players, coaches and referees have also taken a knee before kick-off in every match to show their support for the fight against racial injustice. "I am ashamed, I'm embarrassed, that a small number of our fans have decided to put that around the stadium," said Burnley captain Ben Mee.

"These people need to come into the 21st century and educate themselves as a lot of us do. I'm really upset that happened."

In a statement, Burnley promised to hand lifetime bans to those responsible. "We wish to make it clear

that those responsible are not welcome at Turf Moor," said the club.

"We apologise unreservedly to the Premier League, to Manchester City and to all those helping to promote Black Lives Matter." Former City defender Micah Richards described the banner as hurtful and disheartening after the Premier League's response to the BLM movement in the wake of American George Floyd's death in police custody that has sparked worldwide protests.

"After how far we've come in these last couple of weeks it really does hurt me," said former England international Richards.

### FODEN, MAHREZ SHINE

The disparity of resources between the sides was shown even before kick-off as Burnley boss Sean Dyche could not even fill his bench, while Pep Guardiola was able to make eight changes from a 3-0 win over Arsenal on Wednesday.

He converted a spot-kick earned by Matthijs de Ligt after 23 minutes for his 26th goal for the Turin giants in all competitions this season. Dybala curled in the second on 36 minutes off a Federico Bernardeschi back-heel flick as Juventus, chasing a ninth consecutive Scudetto, opened up a four-point lead on second-placed Lazio.

"We need confidence and this victory will help us," said Dybala. "It's not easy to be brilliant right now, we hadn't been playing for a long time. "If we had won the (Italian Cup) final everyone would have complimented us, because on a tactical level we have had a great game, even if we were not brilliant, but we conceded little."

"Today we played a great game, even if after 2-0 we gave up a bit." Lazio travel north to fourth-placed Atalanta in Bergamo today, looking to keep their bid for a first Serie A title in two decades on track. Inter Milan, in third, are nine points adrift of Juventus, and next host Sassuolo.

Dyche has been left frustrated by the Burnley board's refusal to extend contracts of five players who are out of contract at the end of the month.

Phil Foden made the most of his chance to start for City as the 20-year-old opened the floodgates with a sweet strike from outside the box.

Riyad Mahrez then killed the game as a contest with a quick double before half-time. The Algerian left Charlie Taylor trailing on the floor before firing into the far corner on his weaker right foot.

VAR awarded Mahrez the chance to double his tally from the penalty spot after Mee caught Sergio Aguero. The Argentine striker had to be replaced by Gabriel Jesus and Guardiola admitted Aguero's knee injury "doesn't look good".

"He felt something in his knee," said Guardiola. "He struggled in the last month with some pain in his knee." Retaining their Premier League title may be beyond City as they trail Liverpool by 20 points, but Guardiola's men still have the chance to add the FA

Cup and Champions League to the League Cup they won in March.

The fierce competition for places appears to be having an effect as there was no let-up after the break. Bernardo Silva's low cross was turned home by his namesake David for the hosts' fourth. Foden then rounded off the scoring at the far post after Gabriel Jesus failed to convert David Silva's cross.

"That was my best game in a City shirt," said Foden. "I am just happy how the team are playing at the moment. We're looking sharp."

There was another positive for City late on as Leroy Sane replaced Foden to make his first appearance since suffering cruciate knee ligament damage in August.

The German international seems certain to leave the club at the end of the season after rejecting a new contract amid interest from Bayern Munich. But Sane could still have a part to play in City's quest for a cup treble before the end of the campaign. — AFP

## Ronaldo, Dybala get Juventus back winning on return

**MILAN:** Cristiano Ronaldo and Paulo Dybala scored early as Juventus put their Italian Cup final woes behind them with a 2-0 win over Bologna on Monday to move four points clear of Lazio on top of the Serie A table.

Portuguese star Ronaldo had missed a penalty in the Italian Cup semi-final against AC Milan, and drew a blank in the final which Juventus lost 4-2 on penalties to Napoli. But the 35-year-old made no mistake in Juventus's first league game since beating Inter Milan 2-0 in Turin on March 8.

He converted a spot-kick earned by Matthijs de Ligt after 23 minutes for his 26th goal for the Turin giants in all competitions this season. Dybala curled in the second on 36 minutes off a Federico Bernardeschi back-heel flick as Juventus, chasing a ninth consecutive Scudetto, opened up a four-point lead on second-placed Lazio.

"We need confidence and this victory will help us," said Dybala. "It's not easy to be brilliant right now, we hadn't been playing for a long time. "If we had won the (Italian Cup) final everyone would have complimented us, because on a tactical level we have had a great game, even if we were not brilliant, but we conceded little."

"Today we played a great game, even if after 2-0 we gave up a bit." Lazio travel north to fourth-placed Atalanta in Bergamo today, looking to keep their bid for a first Serie A title in two decades on track. Inter Milan, in third, are nine points adrift of Juventus, and next host Sassuolo.

### 'IMPORTANT VICTORY'

AC Milan shrugged off the absence of Zlatan Ibrahimovic to sweep past Lecce 4-1 and keep their bid for European football next season alive as 10-man Fiorentina were held 1-1 by basement club Brescia.

Swedish star Ibrahimovic has yet to return from a calf injury but Milan put their exit in the Italian Cup semi-final behind them at relegation-threatened Lecce. "It's an important victory," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli.

"Roma (in fifth) are far away at the moment but we have to try to make as many points as possible. "Ibra is a fundamental player for us, without him we had to find other solutions." In Lecce, Samuel Castillejo opened the scoring after 26 minutes for the visitors, connecting with a Hakan Calhanoglu cross from the right to slot in his first goal this season.

Marco Mancosu pulled Lecce level from the penalty spot after 54 minutes, sparking an immediate Milan fightback with two goals in three minutes.

Lecce keeper Gabriel denied Calhanoglu with Giacomo Bonaventura on hand to finish off with Ante Rebic racing through the Lecce defence for a third — and his seventh goal this season.

Rafael Leao got his head to an Andrea Conti cross with Calhanoglu again involved in the build-up after 72 minutes. Milan move up to seventh equal on points with Napoli, who occupy the final Europa League berth before they play this week.

In Florence, Franck Ribery returned after nearly seven months out following an ankle injury but his side settled for a third consecutive stalemate against Brescia. Alfredo Donnarumma put Brescia ahead after 17 minutes from the penalty spot but Fiorentina captain German Pezzella responded with a diving header after half an hour. Fiorentina had two goals disallowed and played the final 20 minutes a man down when Martin Caceres was sent off for a second yellow card. The Tuscany club are 13th with Brescia ending their three-match losing streak. — AFP