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Kuwait: First coronavirus recovery case

KUWAIT: The first case of recovery for a 34-year-old coronavirus patient in Kuwait was announced by the Health Ministry yesterday. Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said that tests were carried out on the patient and results showed that he was free of the global-spreading virus. The patient will be leaving hospital today after further regular tests, affirmed Sheikh Dr Basel.

The Ministry of Health had earlier yesterday reported two more coronavirus cases, bringing

the country's total count of confirmed virus cases up to 58 before the first recovery case was announced. The fresh virus infections are for two Kuwaiti women who had recently returned from Iran, said the Health Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Butheina Al-Mudhaf. Meanwhile, the two virus-infected women who were admitted to the intensive care unit earlier on Wednesday are receiving necessary medical care, she said, elaborating that one of them is still in a critical condition while the

other's condition is stable. However, all other quarantined cases are stable and fine, the Kuwaiti health official told the daily briefing.

In the meantime, she noted that the ministry had held a meeting on Wednesday to weigh precautions taken in order to control the novel coronavirus in the country. The meeting also discussed a planned evacuation of Kuwaiti citizens from Iraq and concerted efforts involving various state agencies to fend off a looming virus outbreak. Coronaviruses (CoV) form a

large family of viruses that can cause mild colds to severe pneumonia in humans. Other coronaviruses can cause a variety of infectious diseases in animals. Coronaviruses are transmitted between animals and humans. Coronaviruses include the MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV), which first appeared in humans in 2012, and the SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV), first detected in 2003. In 2020, a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was identified in China that has never been detected in humans before. — KUNA

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STUDIO

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Local

Health awareness



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai
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I think the worst part about the coronavirus is not only the absence of an appropriate vaccination or affected states, but the emergence of an important subject - health awareness among people. This topic may not constitute a problem or importance for governments in the West. But it is certainly an important issue for Arab countries because it is an important means to change wrong habits and negative thoughts among individuals in the society to ensure that such emergency matters are addressed in a way that does not cause panic and spread rumors.

In the past, the media, such as newspapers and television, had a fundamental role in educating people, but today, with the introduction of technology, smartphones and social media as part of our lives, it has fallen on the responsible authorities in the state to deal with all these tools to reach the goal, which is to support a healthy media for awareness among members of the society. So, using the media for health education is important for achieving comprehensive development.

The low health awareness in the community has repercussions related to the security, social and economic situation, as prices of goods can rise. Therefore, finding a cure for the virus does not mean forgetting the importance of seeking to upgrade the level of health awareness among people through media campaigns throughout the year for everything that touches and concerns people's health.

For example, several advertisements for facemasks supposed to be worn to protect from the coronavirus in many colors including white, black and blue have spread in many stores, and people are running around to buy these masks. But some of them are only for dust and have nothing to do with protection from the coronavirus. Also, many people are keen to wear masks without using hand sanitizers or gloves!

There have been several calls for people to wash hands regularly, and for those who are feeling ill to stay at home. Yet people are still thinking that putting a mask is enough. I think that health media in the Arab region is neglected, which makes it easier for shops to promote many of their goods without making sure of their authenticity.

It is time to change incorrect behaviors to create a suitable environment capable of spreading integrated health awareness, and communicating with all means of media to confront health issues to educate the community and disseminate knowledge to all citizens and expatriates.

I think the absence of health awareness in society is one of the most important reasons that lead to an increase in diseases. I believe that governments must compel companies working in the health service to set an allocated budget to support health awareness to improve the lives of society members. The media today can play a pivotal role in directing health policies, because health awareness campaigns will contribute to avoiding the spread of many diseases in the region.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: A cigarette and hookah seller wearing a protective mask looks through the front of his store in Kuwait City yesterday. The State of Kuwait issued a decision to ban hookah (shisha) in public cafes until further notice in order to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

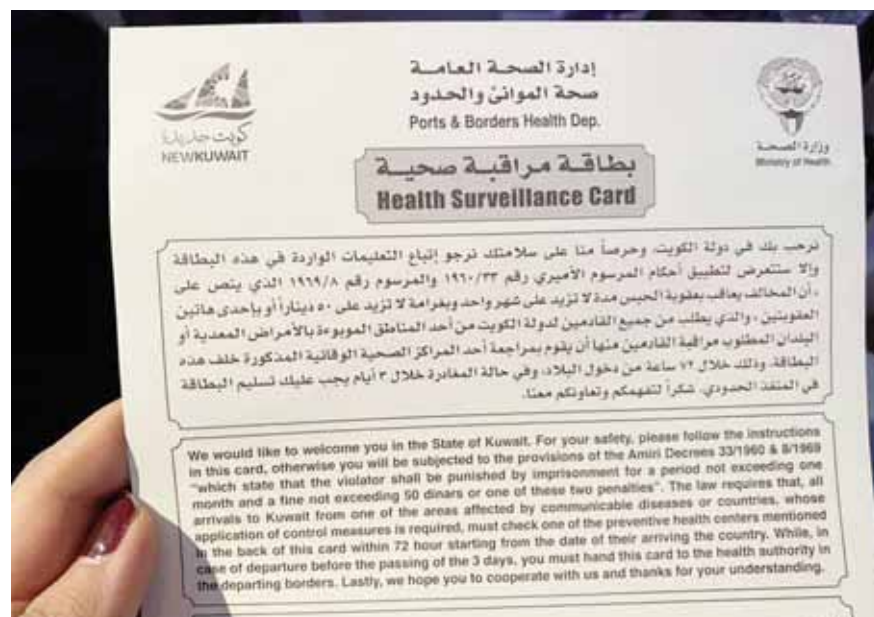
Kuwait-bound passengers handed 'health card'

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation in Kuwait announced last Tuesday that passengers from 10 nations need health clearance to enter the country, whereby they must undergo medical tests and procure certificates that yield negative results for coronavirus infection before getting onto a Kuwait-bound plane.

The decision will be implemented on March 8, where the examination certificate must be issued by medical centers approved by Kuwaiti embassies in the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Egypt, Syria, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Georgia and Lebanon. But during this period, many Egyptians reported new procedures for comers from Egypt at the airport.

Hagar Goda told Kuwait times that one hour after the plane took off heading to Kuwait, the flight attendants handed her a paper to fill up. The paper titled 'health surveillance card' says: "For your safety, please follow the instructions in this card, otherwise, you will be subjected to the provisions



A copy of the 'health surveillance card'.

of the Amiri Decrees 33/1960 and 8/1969 which state that the violator shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding one month and a fine not exceeding KD 50 or one of these two penalties. The law requires that all passengers arriving to Kuwait from one of the areas affected by communicable diseases, or countries from where passengers should be monitored, to check one of the preventive health centers mentioned on the card within 72 hours starting from the date of their arrival to the country." Goda added that she went through procedures including a temperature check to

make sure that she was in good health.

Another Egyptian woman, who prefers to remain anonymous, said that temperature checkpoints "were everywhere" and she filled up the health card with the information needed, but she also was obligated to sign a pledge for home quarantine for 14 days and to avoid mixing with people at work. Also, she was handed health instructions for individuals under personal health monitoring on how and what to do in addition to instructions on symptoms of the virus and where to go if she develops any of them.

CONDOLENCES

**Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief,
management and staff convey their
deepest condolences to**

Al-Saleh family

on the sad
demise of

Khaled Nasser Al-Saleh

(Father of Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh)

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him

'Exploring Abu Al-Hasaniya'

Where foxes once roamed



By Faten Omar

As part of our occasional series exploring various areas of Kuwait, Kuwait Times visited Abu Al-Hasaniya to discover the main features of this area, which is a part of Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate. Historically, the area was known as a hunting ground for foxes, which Kuwaitis used to call "Abu Al-Hasani", thus the area came to be known as Abu Al-Hasaniya, according to a report on the history of the name of the area published by the Kuwait Municipality.

Abu Al-Hasaniya is a well to do area with seaside villas and several restaurant complexes in southern Kuwait. These complexes are distinguished by their design and selection of international and local restaurants and

cafes. Most of the complexes are located near Fahaheel Expressway and designed in modern European style. They have created an environment of entertainment and shopping in the area, with an artificial lake and green areas in some complexes.

The area also has a police officer's club, Mall 30 and uniquely designed mosques. One of the mosques is named after the martyrs who died in the terrorist attack on Imam Al-Sadiq Mosque. The area has only two blocks - blocks 10 and 11 - with an entrance and an exit from Fahaheel Expressway. When you enter the area, you will see Kuwaiti flags on every houses and villas. One of the most interesting installations here is a tree with small Kuwaiti flags. It seems like the flags are growing on the tree.



Local



Resident of the area Mohammad Al-Ansari, 32, said Abu Al-Hasaniya is a beautiful coastal suburb of southern Kuwait. "The area's character is about luxury and entertainment, but in the evening, with that many restaurants in such a small area, cars start to park in front of our homes, with traffic congestion in the streets. The municipality did not study the traffic situation before licensing investors, and residents are suffering from the crowds," he said. Ansari noted that the area also suffers from a lack of medical and educational services. "We do not have hospitals or schools in the area, so when we need anything, we go to Abu

Fatira, to buy groceries for example," he told Kuwait Times.

Nour Al-Enzi, 24, said the most interesting thing about Abu Al-Hasaniya is its location, where you have a seaside view, restaurants and a mall, and the streets are super clean unlike other areas. Saad Al-Ajmi, 18, told Kuwait Times that the area is mostly commercial, and most of the residents are annoyed by customers frequenting the cafes and restaurants because of their behavior during weekends.

— All photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Local

Kuwait Times speaks with Private Education manager to clarify school, teacher concerns

'No salary deductions for teachers during closure'

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: On Thursday Kuwait Times interviewed Sanad Al-Mutairi, Manager of Private Education Department within the Ministry of Education, to clarify some issues related to private schools.

Kuwait Times has received many complaints regarding the school closures. One school principal threatened to cut the salaries of any teacher not in Kuwait during the period of the closures. Other schools have been forcing teachers to meet and come to campus despite the closures. Another concern is that some schools may deduct their teachers' salaries due to

the two weeks, which was a Cabinet decision to suspend schools for students and administrative bodies working in public and private schools and institutes, starting from March 1, until March 12, 2020.

Replying to that, Mutairi said, "The decision is due to circumstances and a crisis in the country and based on the decision of the Council of Ministers, no school has the right to deduct the two-week suspension of schools from teachers' salaries."

He advised any teacher that faces problems in this regard to file a complaint to the Private

Education Department in order to do the necessary actions toward these schools.



Sanad Al-Mutairi

Regarding E-learning that was implemented in some schools, he revealed that his department did not receive any official decision yet. "Although nothing is official, I believe that e-learning in schools will be activated through the so-called 'educational television' to make teachers interact with students, and until this moment we have not received any new instructions regarding that," he said.

"The schools' e-learning is optional to parents and students and

there is no decision yet to obligate both sides. The e-learning now is an agreement with both sides," he added.

Mutairi added that the decision to extend the school suspension is up to the health ministry to make. "Till now the cases are stable in the country, and it is expected that students will back to schools on March 15. But if the situation worsens and the number of cases rises, it is possible to extend the suspension for the educational institutions," he said.

Some schools are considering canceling the spring break to catch up on what was missed. In

'Spring Break dates may not be changed without Education Ministry approval'

Clarification on e-learning in private schools

E-learning means different things to different schools.

1. - Some private schools have an e-learning process already approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE) prior to the current closure.

2. - The e-learning that is forbidden is for public schools and private schools that had wanted to implement an e-learning platform that would grade students on homeschool work and that does not have prior approval.

3.- Until now, the ministry of Education has NOT issued a circular on e-learning but it has said that any e-learning that private schools adopt has to be OPTIONAL and that students may not be graded or tested during the closure.

There is discussion within MoE to release an e-Learning plan should the closures be extended but no final circular has been issued and as of now, MoE are prepping for schools to reopen on March 15th. Of course that can change at any time.

this regard, Al-Mutairi told Kuwait Times that: "The school does not have the right to cancel the spring break without the approval of the Ministry of Education, An official circular must be issued to approve that decision, and nothing was released yet."

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education announced on its official Instagram on Wednesday that teachers and students in Arabic schools (public and private) can use the "Siraj" application to keep on track if they choose to do so. This e-learning platform has not been mandated as a requirement.

The Ministry affirmed that the student and teacher can use the remote study through the

educational channel "Siraj" that has been started broadcasting since 2013 where it includes approximately 700 records of reviews and previous exams for high school.

Officials from the health and education ministries met to determine the latest preparations for the return to schools, in the context of precautionary measures to counter the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The gatherers agreed to start distributing thermometers to schools from Sunday with two for each school, besides providing nursing bodies for new schools and launching awareness campaigns for students, teachers, and administrative staff to prevent the virus from spreading.

Only 1 testing center for corona health certificate in Manila

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Kuwait requires that all people traveling from the Philippines must produce a health certificate confirming that they are free from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This certificate is known as the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR).

This however will most likely create a bottle neck for those planning to come to Kuwait and for those hoping to travel back to the Philippines any time soon. As there is only one available testing center for the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) in the Philippines - the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).

According to the instructions from the Directorate General Civil Aviation in Kuwait all passengers from the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Egypt, Syria, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Georgia and Lebanon are obliged to obtain a PCR-certificate confirming they are free from COVID-19 before boarding a plane coming to Kuwait. Absence of the said certificate will result in deportation on the same carrier airline that brought them.

"If they really implement that, it is a difficult task for those who are on vacation, or newly-hired workers because what we have here is a single laboratory and per instructions, the people who can be allowed a PCR-test are those persons under investigation. If they are not, they cannot carry out the test," said a doctor who spoke to Kuwait Times on the condition of anonymity since he is not authorized to speak for the Philippines Ministry of health. He works with San

Lazaro Hospital, also an Infectious Diseases Specialized Hospital in Manila. "The test is being conducted free of charge but only to people who are suspected of carrying an infectious disease such as coronavirus or AIDS," the doctor mentioned. The new travel restrictions will be carried out by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation starting March 8, 2020.

From the time the regulation circulated on social media, many Filipinos turned to a so-called list of accredited medical health facilities in the Philippines, which went viral on social media platforms and mentioned clinics where people could visit and allegedly get the certificate from. Only yesterday morning however that the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait came out with an advisory telling Filipinos that it has not received any official information from the Kuwaiti government regarding the list of health clinics.

"The Filipino Community in Kuwait is informed about the alleged list of Philippine health centers that has been circulating on social media. This list is unconfirmed and unverified. The embassy continues to be in touch with the Kuwait government regarding this matter," the advisory reads.

There are thousands of Filipinos arriving in Kuwait from the Philippines almost every day. To date, the Filipino population in Kuwait numbers around 250,000. The Philippines Embassy encourages Filipinos to get the verified advisories and updates about COVID-19 from the embassy's social media account: www.facebook.com/PHinKuwait, www.twitter.com/PHinKuwait.

PUBLIC ADVISORY **On the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Medical Certificate (PCR)**

The Philippine Embassy in Kuwait informs the Filipino community in Kuwait that **at present, it has not received any official information from the Kuwaiti government regarding the list of health clinics in the Philippines, which are accredited with the Kuwaiti Embassy in Manila** to issue medical certificates (PCR) that state that Kuwait-bound passengers are free of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The Filipino community is also informed that **the alleged list of Philippine health centers that has been circulating on social media is unconfirmed and unverified**. The Embassy continues to be in touch with the Kuwaiti government regarding this matter.

The Embassy advises everyone to get official advisories and updates on the COVID-19 from the Embassy's social media accounts:

- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/PHinKuwait
- **Twitter:** www.twitter.com/PHinKuwait

Finally, the Embassy encourages the more than 240,000 Filipinos in Kuwait to continue taking precautions in order to stay healthy during this time.

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Local

Kuwait reiterates backing to Palestinian people

Arab FMs hail Kuwait efforts, support to Palestinian rights

CAIRO: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah re-affirmed his country's principled support to Palestinian people. Kuwait also believes that the just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict should not ignore any of the well-established rights of Palestinian people or go counter to relevant UN and international references, particularly the UN resolutions No 242, 338 and 2334, Sheikh Dr Ahmad said in his speech at the 153rd session of the Arab League ministerial council on Wednesday. He underlined that at the forefront of the internationally-accepted points of references, is the establishment an independent Palestinian state on 4th June, 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. The minister noted that the Israeli occupiers have to stop their illegal practices which threaten the Arab, Muslim and Christian, presence and historic rights in East Jerusalem. Sheikh Ahmad vowed that Kuwait will continue its support to the UN Palestinian refugees agency (UNRWA) to help it full its mission of serving Palestinian people and alleviating their sufferings.

On Syria, the minister expressed deep concerns over the escalating military operations in northwestern Syria and their impacts on the humanitarian situation. He asserted that the fighting against terror does not absolve any party from its obligations as per the international law. The Kuwaiti top diplomat stated that there is no military solution to the crisis in Syria, but rather a political settlement that goes in line with the UN resolution 2254 and Geneva Declaration of 2012. He hoped the recently formed committee to write the new Syrian constitution would start its work soon. He urged all warring parties to abide by the UN resolution No 2401 of 2018 for allowing unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid and conducting medical evacuations throughout Syria.

Dr Sheikh Ahmad voiced Kuwait's support to the efforts exerted by the UN envoy to Syria to help resolve the crisis. He emphasized that Golan Heights are occupied Arab territory and seizing and annexing it by forces is illegal and violates international law and UN resolutions. On Yemen, the minister pointed out that Kuwait is gravely concerned about the continuity of the conflict and suffering of Yemeni people. He underlined that a political solution based on the three main references and relevant UN resolutions is the only effective way to address

such a crisis. He also called on all parties to adhere to Stockholm agreement provisions and to support the UN envoy's efforts to find a political solution to the crisis. The minister strongly condemned all attacks launched from Yemen against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other countries of the region.

On Libya, Dr Sheikh Ahmad expressed Kuwait's backing to all international efforts to heal Libyan rift and unite Libyan people to restore peace and stability in the north African Arab country. He also voiced support to the outcome of Berlin conference on Libya peace and called for a ceasefire. On the Arabian Gulf, the minister cautioned that the unrest in the region threatens maritime navigation in this vital region. He urged all parties to show self-restraint and respect provision of the Law of the Sea. He underlined the need for collective international actions to protect this crucial maritime route. On the recent global outbreak of the new coronavirus (COVID-19), Dr Sheikh Ahmad called for world synergy and coordination at all levels to address the negative repercussions of this disease on all sectors.

Relentless efforts

Arab Foreign ministers praised the relentless efforts exerted by the State of Kuwait in monitoring the developments of the Palestinian issue and supporting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, during its previous membership in the Security Council. The remarks came in the final communique issued by the council at the end of its 153rd regular session entitled, "the Palestinian case and the Arab-Israeli Conflict." The Council reaffirmed its rejection of the so-called Amer-

ican peace plan, considering that it "does not meet the minimum rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, and contradicts the terms of reference of the peace process based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions."

The council stressed not to deal with this "unfair deal" or to cooperate with the American administration in implementing it in any way, rejecting attempts to end the Palestinian issue by limiting its solution to humanitarian and economic solutions without a just political solution, and rejecting any political or financial pressure exerted on the Palestinian people and their leadership with imposing unfair solutions to the Palestinian cause. The council also stressed on the centrality of Palestine to the entire Arab nations, Arab identity in the occupied East



CAIRO: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah attends the 153rd session of the Arab League ministerial council. — KUNA

Jerusalem, as the capital of the State of Palestine, and its right to sovereignty over all of its land occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, its air and sea space, its territorial waters, its natural resources, and its borders with neighboring countries.

The council also emphasized on the adherence to peace as a strategic option and resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with international law, international resolutions, and the Arab peace initiative with all its components. The council, therefore, warned of intentions and policies by the Israeli occupation government to take advantage of the illegal cover provided by US "unilateral" decisions, including the goal of annexing parts of the occupied West Bank by force, and condemning any Israeli-American action that would help in implementing this action. The council also called on United Nations and its General Assembly to bear responsibility and curb such dangerous illegal action, and to hold the Israeli and American governments responsible for the dangerous consequences of that approach, which really destroys the chances for peace.

Turkey's interference

Meanwhile, the Arab foreign ministers condemned Turkey's interference in domestic affairs of Arab countries, urging Ankara to pull out its forces from Arab lands. This came in a resolution by the top diplomats who condemned Turkey's military intervention in Libya and its alleged transport of "foreign terrorists" to the north African country. This move, they said, posed a direct threat to Arab national security, international peace and security, and a breach of relevant UN resolutions. The foreign ministers also

condemned Turkey's aggression on Syria as a blatant violation of UN charter and UN resolution 2254. The senior officials rejected Turkish forces' incursion into Iraqi territories, and urged Ankara to refrain from interfering in Arab affairs.

In the meantime, the Arab foreign ministers welcomed a peace agreement between the US and Taliban, signed by the two parties in Doha, Qatar, last Saturday. The agreement is a very important step towards a comprehensive and lasting peace in Afghanistan, Oman foreign minister Yusuf bin Alawi told a joint news conference with Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul Gheit. Alawi, at the conclusion of a meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo, commended the US efforts to bring about success to negotiations with the Taliban that resulted in the agreement. He also praised Qatar for sponsoring the talks.

Moreover, the Arab foreign ministers expressed support to Egypt in its dispute with Ethiopia over rules of filling and operating the Great Renaissance Dam. In their final statement following the session, the ministers rejected any action that threatens Egypt's historical rights in river Nile waters. Egypt's water security is inseparable of the Arab national security, the ministers stressed. They expressed solidarity with Egypt against the expected dangers, threats and negative impacts of Ethiopia's decision to fill the dam's water reservoir and operate the dam before reaching a fair and balanced agreement on the rules of filling and operating the dam. They also opposed any unilateral decision taken by Ethiopia in this regard. — KUNA



Arabs back Egypt in dam row

Local

Kuwait to dispatch \$3 million worth of medical supplies to China: Ambassador

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait's Ambassador to China Samih Johar Hayat announced yesterday that the Kuwaiti Cabinet decided to dispatch medical supplies to China to back up the nation's efforts for containing coronavirus (COVID-19). Ambassador Hayat said in a statement to the press that the \$3 million donation would be in the form of urgent medical aid, to be delivered in coordination with the Chinese government. He has also expressed admiration of the measures that have been taken by Beijing "in the war on the novel coronavirus."

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang, discussing with him issues pertaining to the bolstering of ties. Sheikh Dr Ahmad said, during the meeting, that Kuwait would continue to support China in all fields especially during the current fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). He affirmed that it was important to coordinate international efforts against the global-spreading virus. Meanwhile, the Chinese ambas-

sador commended Kuwait's stance with China against COVID-19. Senior officials at the Foreign Ministry attending the meeting.

Kuwait, represented by its embassy in Beijing, robustly supports the "sagacious Chinese leadership and the friendly people in these hard circumstances," Ambassador Hayat said, adding that the mission works nonstop to tackle issues that arise in the shadow of these extraordinary conditions with the Chinese leadership. The Kuwaiti diplomatic mission, since the break out of the coronavirus, has set up hotlines for emergencies and coordination with the foreign ministry in Kuwait and Chinese officials.

He confirmed that there were no coronavirus infections among Kuwaitis in China — who were evacuated safely back home. The ambassador expressed gratitude to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, all Kuwaiti leaders and ordinary citizens for backing up the mission tasks in the Asian nation. The Kuwaiti mission is reachable round the clock on the phone number: 00861501111537. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang. —KUNA

Municipality checks shisha ban compliance

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality said emergency teams conducted field tours in the Capital Governorate to inspect cafes, men and women salons, shops, and restaurants to make sure about compliance with the health ministry's decisions to ban shisha and have all workers wear masks and gloves, which were taken as a precaution against the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Director of Capital Municipality branch Bader Burquba said field teams were told to intensify their tours and make sure relevant decisions are being complied with. Head of the inspection and municipality services follow up department Iman Al-Kandary said 13 citations were issued for some cafes and restaurants. Meanwhile emergency team leader Zaid Al-Enezi said 15 undertakings were made for restaurants and cafes to comply with the decision.

In other news, the Joan Resort was officially handed over to the Health Ministry yesterday to use it as a health quarantine, in coordination with Kuwait National Guard and Finance Ministry. Assistant Undersecretary for services affairs Abdelaziz Al-Tosha, public relations director Khaled Al-Ardhi, general and hotel services manager Mohsen Al-Rasheedi, and general coordinator Dr Aseel Al-Sabiri represented the Health Ministry.

Various anti-coronavirus measures at schools

KUWAIT: All necessary cleanliness measures have been taken at buildings and facilities of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education, the ministry said in a statement yesterday. The department is taking all needed preventive precautions, providing all buildings, classes and installations with sanitation and sterilization materials, as part of the efforts to combat coronavirus, said Usama Al-Sultan, the ministry assistant undersecretary, as quoted by the offi-

cial statement. Sultan, who headed a meeting of the department senior officials, said clinics at the education facilities have been equipped with the needed items and materials including disinfectants.

Meanwhile, Faisal Al-Makseed, the assistant undersecretary for educational development, affirmed keenness on securing the facilities health wise, ahead of resuming studies, also noting that necessary medical staff would be also secured. On planned

further precautions, Makseed said students would be relieved of morning pre-class assemblies, extra scholastic activities and trips. Moreover, the students, teachers and supervisors will be subject to thermal testing every morning. Rajaa Bou-Ekri, the assistant undersecretary for administrative affairs, said contacts had been conducted with cleaning and transport companies to ensure that all necessary hygiene would be secured on their part. —KUNA

Interior Ministry urges use of online platforms

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: As part of the precautionary measures taken by security authorities to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and due to the extraordinary circumstances the country is going through, citizens and expats as well as employers are urged to take advantage of the e-services the interior ministry presents online at www.moi.gov.kw and on its official smartphone applications, the ministry said yesterday. Assistant Undersecretary for Residency Affairs Maj Gen Talal Maarafi said residency renewals can be done online for domestic helpers and other 'article 20' visa holders, in addition to 'article 18' visa holders, adding that those services help speed up transaction processing and limit crowding. He said the ministry's e-services are free of charge.



KUWAIT: One of the sunken boats moved to the beach in Bneid Al-Qar.

Stray dogs attack child

A child was admitted to Sabah Hospital after he was medevaced following an attack by stray dogs yesterday. The child was with his family in an Abdali farm when the dogs suddenly attacked him, which left him with injuries in the head, neck, chest, hands and legs, according to the police report. The child was admitted to the

intensive care unit.

Sunken boat

Salmiya and Shuwaikh sea fire stations dealt with a sunken boat in Bneid Al-Qar yesterday. The boat was moved to the beach and no injuries were reported. The coastguard men were also present. An investigation was opened into the case.



Panel hears of risks to Indian Muslims

‘Written in blood’: Engineer urges reform after MAX deaths

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ANDHRA PRADESH: Students wearing facemasks or scarves to protect the face attend a class at a government-run high school in Secunderabad, the twin city of Hyderabad as part of health measures taken against the COVID-19 outbreak. — AFP

290 million students out of school

Global virus battle intensifies; Virus fears prompt ban kisses, handshakes

ROME: Almost 300 million students worldwide faced weeks at home with Italy the latest country to shut schools over the deadly new coronavirus, as the IMF urged an all-out global offensive against the epidemic. More than 95,000 people have been infected and over 3,200 have died worldwide from the virus, which had reached some 80 countries and territories.

In California, Governor Gavin Newsom declared an emergency following the state's first coronavirus fatality-raising the US death toll to 11 - and a cruise ship was kept offshore after passengers and crew members developed symptoms. The vast majority of global deaths and infections are in China, where the virus first emerged late last year, prompting the country to quarantine entire cities, temporarily shut factories and close schools indefinitely.

As the virus has spread, other countries have also implemented extraordinary measures, with UNESCO saying Wednesday that 13 countries have closed schools, affecting 290.5 million children, while nine others have implemented localized closures. While temporary school closures during crises are not new, UNESCO chief Audrey Azoulay said, "the global scale and speed of the current educational disruption is unparalleled

and, if prolonged, could threaten the right to education." Italy on Wednesday ordered schools and universities shut until March 15, ramping up its response as the national death toll rose to 107, the deadliest outbreak outside China. South Korea - the country with the largest number of cases outside China with nearly 6,000 - has postponed the start of the next term until March 23. In Japan, nearly all schools are closed after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for classes to be cancelled through March and spring break, slated for late March through early April.

Economic threat

The German health minister said the outbreak was now a "global pandemic" - a term the World Health Organization has stopped short of using - meaning the virus is spreading in several regions through local transmission. Thousands of people were stranded on the Grand Princess off the California coast Wednesday as officials delayed its return to carry out tests on people on board. A 71-year-old man who had been aboard the same ship during its previous voyage to Mexico died after contracting COVID-19.

The vessel belongs to Princess Cruises, the same company which operated a coronavirus-

stricken ship held off Japan last month on which more than 700 people on board tested positive, with six dying from the disease. Infections are now rising faster abroad than they are in China, where 31 more deaths and 139 new cases were reported yesterday. China's death toll now stands at 3,012, with over 80,000 infections. AFP reporters even saw a handful of people trickling back into Wuhan, the quarantined city at the centre of the epidemic, at the train station this week.

Beijing is now concerned about importing cases, with 20 infections brought from abroad so far, including Italy and Iran - prompting the capital to require people arriving from hard-hit countries to go into self-quarantine. Japan announced yesterday that a state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping this spring has been postponed because containing the epidemic was "the biggest challenge" for the two countries. Stock markets have rumbled over fears of recession, but Asian shares rallied yesterday after a surge on Wall Street buoyed by global stimulus measures.

The IMF said it was making \$50 billion in aid available for low-income and emerging-market countries to fight the epidemic, which it sees as a "serious threat" that would slow global growth to below last year's 2.9 percent. "At a time of un-

certainly... it is better to do more than to do not enough," IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said, calling the epidemic "is a global problem calling for global response". In the United States, lawmakers reached a deal to provide more than \$8 billion to fight the outbreak.

No kissing

Governments are scrambling to contain the spread of the virus. The outbreak in Italy has swelled despite tough measures, including quarantining 11 towns with 50,000 people. New measures include a month-long nationwide ban on fan attendance at sports events, and advising people to avoid greetings like kissing on the cheek or shaking hands. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said Italy could tackle the outbreak as long as it remained contained.

"But in case of exponential growth, not just Italy but any other country in the world would not be able to manage the situation," he said. In Iran, where 92 people have died from the disease, schools have been shut and major cultural and sporting events suspended. Saudi Arabia has suspended the year-round Islamic "umrah" pilgrimage, an unprecedented move that raises fresh uncertainty over the annual hajj. — AFP

International

Saudi Arabia risks fallout with coronavirus curbs on holy sites

Kingdom suspends 'umrah' year-round pilgrimage

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is treading a tightrope as it bars Muslim pilgrims from Islam's holiest sites to contain the coronavirus, rolling out restrictions that while essential could prove both expensive and politically perilous. The kingdom has suspended the "umrah" year-round pilgrimage over fears of the disease spreading to Makkah and Medina, raising uncertainty over the upcoming hajj—a key pillar of Islam.

The pilgrimages, which pack millions of people into relative small religious sites, could be a major source of contagion and the move mirrors a precautionary approach across the Gulf to cancel mass gatherings—from concerts to sporting events. But the issue is still a potential powder keg in a volatile region where it risks riling fringe hardliners for whom religion trumps health considerations. And some devout Muslims view the pilgrimages as an important rite of passage, whatever the risks.

Already reeling from slumping oil prices, the kingdom also risks losing billions of dollars it earns annually from religious tourism as it tightens access to the sites. Its management of the crisis also shines a spotlight on the Saudi role as the custodian of the holy sites—a pillar of its political legitimacy. The coronavirus turmoil gives its critics and regional rivals fresh ammunition to "raise questions about Saudi control over Islam's holiest sites", said Middle East expert Yasmine Farouk from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

State media has published a series of endorsements by Islamic bodies—from the grand mufti of

New Zealand to Malaysia and beyond—which suggest "a concern in Riyadh that such a move might be politicized and used against it," Farouk told AFP. Pro-Saudi observers have sought to deflect the focus onto the kingdom's rivals, with some on social media provoking ridicule after they called the virus "the work of Qatar" or a conspiracy by Iran. Authorities in Saudi Arabia, which on Wednesday reported its second case of the virus, did not respond to requests for comment.

Its measures stand in contrast to that of its regional nemesis Iran, which has struggled to contain the spread of coronavirus from its own Shiite holy sites as pilgrims and clerics appeared to defy health warnings. "Saudi Arabia is trying to project itself as more responsible than Iran," Umar Karim, a visiting fellow at the Royal United Services Institute in London said. "But there is apprehension that its decision could reignite the political debate in the Muslim world about whether it should be the sole authority on the hajj and the two holy cities." The kingdom already appears wary of a potential conservative backlash from a liberalization drive by Saudi rulers that has allowed what was once deemed un-Islamic—cinemas, concerts and mixed-gender parties. Saudi Arabia has said its umrah restrictions are temporary but they have not gone down well with many pilgrims who endure years-long waiting lists and invest their life savings to make the trip. One foreign pilgrim in Makkah told AFP last week that he would happily die a "martyr" if he got infected, rather than skip the pilgrimage.



Makkah: Muslim worshippers wearing protective face masks walk in the sahn (mosque courtyard) surrounding the Kaaba at the Grand Mosque complex in Saudi Arabia's holy city of Makkah. — AFP

The Indonesian embassy in Riyadh said it was appealing to Saudi authorities to permit its nationals to press ahead with their plans, after many voiced disappointment over the decision. Religious tourism, vital to Saudi finances amid efforts to pivot away from oil, adds \$12 billion to

the economy every year, according to government figures. Capital Economics said the effects of curtailing the pilgrimage will be "substantial", especially around the holy Ramadan period starting in April, seen as an auspicious period to undertake umrah.—AFP

Yemen cafes shut, women harassed; Houthis impose harsh morals campaign

DUBAI: The Houthi rebels arrived without warning, heavily armed and in a furious mood, as they barged into Ophelia, the only cafe for women in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, and demanded it be shut down immediately. When owner Shaima Mohammed asked for a little time to allow her customers to gather their things, one of the Houthis snapped at her: "Women should be in their homes. Why are they going out in public?" "Armed men filled the street, directing obscenities at the women as they left," Shaima recounted in a Facebook post as she announced the cafe's closure.

The tense incident, one of a series in the rebel-held north, illustrates the Houthis' determination to impose their own moral order on Yemenis who have already endured five years of grinding conflict. In recent months, restaurants where men and women mingle have been shut down, scissor-wielding militia have policed men's hairstyles, and rebel forces have patrolled college campuses to enforce dress codes.

Much of the crackdown has been rolled out without any official decree or documentation, but AFP saw a copy of a Houthi letter sent to non-government groups, illustrating the new mood as it laid out rules for workshops. "Exclude all activities that aim to stir laughter, joy

or entertainment among the trainees, and that lead to the lowering of barriers and modesty between women and men," it read. "This is something that completely contradicts the teachings of Islam and the ethics of our Yemeni society." Yemen's long war has pitted the Houthis, who are backed by Iran and control large swathes of the north, against the internationally recognised government which has the support of a Saudi-led military coalition. The conflict in what was already the Arab world's poorest nation has killed tens of thousands and triggered what the United Nations calls the worst humanitarian crisis on Earth, with millions displaced and in need of aid.

"The situation in Houthi-controlled areas is getting tighter and tighter. People are scared," said Nadwa Al-Dawsari, a Yemeni conflict analyst. She confirmed accounts of women being harassed for wearing belts around their traditional abaya robes, with rebels tearing them off, saying the silhouette they create is too "exciting"

"This is shocking for Yemeni society because it's one thing to denounce certain behavior and what people are wearing, and it's another thing to go and abuse these women like Houthis are doing," Dawsari said. "It goes

against our tribal values, it goes against our Islamic values... The difference now is that Houthis can force it down the throats of people living under their control." The Houthi campaign collides with a society which, although conservative, traditionally allowed space for individual freedoms and cultivated an appreciation of music and leisure, said Adel al-Ahmadi, a Yemeni academic.

The rebels, who hail from the mountainous north, have proved themselves to be a formidable fighting force since they swept into Sanaa in 2014, rallying behind their slogan: "Death to America! Death to Israel! Curse on the Jews! Victory to Islam". The militia, which rose up in the 1990s over alleged sectarian discrimination, hail from the minority Zaidi Shiite sect of Islam which makes up about one-third of the population. "It is an ideological movement... which has evolved from the status of oppressed to that of oppressor," Ahmadi said.

Valentines banned

Witnesses in Sanaa told AFP of a rising number of disturbing incidents since late 2019, a period which has also seen the Houthis rack up battlefield victories and crank up a confrontation with UN agencies attempting to deliver

humanitarian aid. On February 13, on the eve of Valentine's Day, young people were beaten in the street for failing to comply with the new notions of acceptable dress.

Unlike the days before the conflict, when people were free to celebrate with chocolates and flowers, one young man had his red shirt torn off by assailants who saw it as a symbol of an event that runs counter to Yemeni values. In January, men's hair salons were told fashionable styles were banned. Young men who fell foul of the rule with longer styles have been hauled onto major intersections where their locks were publicly chopped back with large scissors. Another cafe owner in Sanaa told AFP his establishment had been shut down twice in three months by armed rebels.

"We are completely opposed to these abusive measures and the restrictions being imposed on people in the capital," he said. Houthis have also campaigned in schools and on college campuses against young people being "improperly dressed", said Hemdane al-Ali, a journalist and human rights activist who lives in self-exile. At Sanaa University, they have formed squads that "patrol the corridors to prevent any contact between students of different sexes," he told AFP.—AFP

International

In a bind over Turkey, EU finds money to contain immigration

Idlib is latest flashpoint in Syria's war

BRUSSELS: European Union countries offered more money for border policing in Greece and humanitarian aid in Syria's Idlib, but they were in a bind over Turkey as they sought to avert a mass influx of migrants. EU interior ministers met in Brussels on Wednesday for emergency talks, to be followed by foreign ministers on Thursday and Friday, as some 25,000 refugees and migrants gather on the Greek border, seeking to cross into Europe.

That came after Turkey - citing the latest fighting in Syria - backed away from a 2016 deal with the EU to keep refugees and migrants away from Europe. In a joint statement, EU ministers recognized "the increased migratory burden and risks Turkey is facing" but also denounced "Turkey's use of migratory pressure for political purposes." "This situation at EU's external borders is not acceptable," they said, in calling on Ankara to stick to the 2016 pact.

Greek riot police used water cannon and tear gas on Wednesday against migrants at the frontier, while the EU was sounding out President Tayyip Erdogan on his demands in exchange for Ankara's reverting to keeping refugees at bay. "Turkey is not an enemy, but people are not weapons either," the EU's top migration official, Margaritis Schinas, said in explaining that 700 million euros' worth of extra EU funding for Greece would fortify the bloc's external border

there. The EU is also preparing to offer 60 million euros in new humanitarian aid to Idlib, diplomats said. The city has been the latest flashpoint in the nine-year-old war in Syria, where Russia-backed Syrian forces fight rebels supported by Turkey. Humanitarian efforts to support nearly 1 million people who fled the fighting have been overwhelmed, said the UN aid chief, Mark Lowcock.

Turkey

EU member states are divided over Turkey. Greece and Cyprus push a tough line, focusing on border tensions and condemning what the bloc sees as Erdogan's migration "blackmail". Others are willing to offer further aid to support some 3.7 million Syrian refugees stranded in Turkey, on top of the 6 billion euros already granted in 2016. The EU is desperate to avoid any repeat of 2015 and 2016, when more than a million refugees arrived on its soil, overwhelming security and welfare systems and fuelling support for euro-sceptic and nationalist groups across the bloc.

But EU's ties with Turkey, a NATO ally, are strained over human rights and security issues, as well as Ankara's hydrocabons drilling in east Mediterranean. At the same time, EU countries have been at loggerheads since 2015 over how to share out people arriving in the bloc, leaving



LESBOS ISLAND: Migrants run from riot police after being pushed to go back to Moria camp from the port of Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos, where they were hoping to get on a ferry to Athens. — AFP

some - like Greece or Italy - weighing under the burden, and others - like Poland or Hungary - refusing to host refugees.

With bitter divisions damaging the bloc's unity, the EU turned to Turkey to prevent arrivals in the first place - and put itself at the mercy of Erdogan. Human rights groups decried Athens' hard-nosed

action on the border and its decision to suspend accepting asylum claims, but the EU expressed solidarity with Greece. "The right to asylum does not mean that Erdogan can send how many migrants he wants into the European Union," EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson told journalists on Wednesday. —Reuters

For Putin, a victory in Syria is personal

MOSCOW: When Turkey's president visited Russia last summer, the sun shone as he shared ice cream and admired fighter jets with a friendly Vladimir Putin. But ahead of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Moscow yesterday, clouds have gathered with the pair in a standoff over Syria. Fighting has intensified between Turkish troops and Moscow-backed regime forces in the northwestern Syrian province of Idlib. The strongmen are entrenched on opposing sides and determined to hold their ground. There are hopes the two leaders can at least agree a ceasefire at the talks. But Erdogan is unlikely to dent the Russian leader's resolve to back the regime in its offensive to recapture the last rebel stronghold in Syria. For Putin, observers say, victory in Syria is not just political, it's personal.

"Putin's rise as a masterful strategist is associated with Syria," said Yury Barmin, a Middle East analyst at the Russian International Affairs Council, established to advise the Kremlin. "Victory in Syria has become a matter of prestige for Russia - and for Putin personally," he said. Russia charged into Syria in late 2015 with an air campaign that turned the tide of the conflict in favor of the Damascus regime. The intervention helped President Bashar Al-Assad reclaim swathes of territory his forces had lost to Islamists and Western-backed opposition groups.

Reclaiming old glory

Putin, a former KGB agent who described the Soviet Union's collapse as a catastrophe, spied an opportunity to reclaim the Kremlin's former military glory and challenge the West. Moscow has invested heavily in two bases on the Syrian coast - the Tartus naval port and the Hmeimim air base - so that Putin's warships and bombers can project military power throughout the Mediterranean, says Russian military analyst Pavel Felgenhauer.

"Russia is not that interested in Syria per se, but it's important to keep Assad in power because he guarantees that Russia has these bases," Felgenhauer said. Apart from anchoring Moscow's hold in the Mediterranean, the conflict in Syria has proved a valuable training ground for the military, with thousands of Russian troops gaining battlefield experience and hundreds of new weapons tested, says Dmitry Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center. "It is a material example of what Russia can accomplish through a combination of military and diplomatic instruments," he says.

The conflict has personal resonance for Putin too, Trenin adds. The Russian president rose to power 20 years ago during the Kremlin's war against insurgents in the Muslim-majority republic of Chechnya. Putin famously vowed to "waste them in the outhouse". Rights groups have accused the Russian air force of war crimes in Syria with indiscriminate attacks on schools, hospitals and mosques, drawing comparisons with the destruction of the Chechen capital Grozny two decades ago.

A 'Russian' compromise

With some 4,000 Russians travelling to join the ranks of Islamist groups in Iraq and Syria in recent years, Putin "has his own scores to settle with the terrorists", Trenin says. "He came to prominence, and then to power, by defeating their predecessors in the North Caucasus." Putin is also looking for a foreign policy victory that could boost his popularity in the face of approval ratings that have dropped because of economic stagnation. The last time he scored a major win abroad - the 2014 annexation of Crimea - Putin's ratings jumped to nearly 90 percent.

Observers say that doesn't mean Putin won't be willing to make some compromise at Thursday's talks with Erdogan. The two presidents are keen to avoid direct clashes that would jeopardize their trade or defense ties. "Putin knows he has substantial military and political advantages over Erdogan", but will find a way to allow the Turkish leader to "back off while saving face", Trenin said. Put more bluntly: "Putin is definitely seeking compromise with Turkey over Syria, but a compromise devised by Russia," Barmin said. —AFP

Extremist surveillance was flawed: US report

WASHINGTON: Surveillance of "homegrown" US extremists by the FBI was flawed until 2019, a watchdog report said Wednesday, saying that the weaknesses may have allowed deadly attacks to occur. The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report said that the FBI had closed several assessments of suspects who went on to launch attacks. "Since September 11, 2001, HVE (home-grown violent extremists) have carried out over 20 attacks in the United States, some of which occurred after the FBI closed a counterterrorism assessment or investigation," it said.

"The FBI had not taken a comprehensive approach to resolving deficiencies." According to the FBI, the extremists were jihad-inspired individuals radicalized in the United States and not receiving orders from abroad. The report focused on one of the Boston marathon bombers, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, who planted two home-made bombs near the finish line of the race in 2013, killing three people and injuring 264 others.

It said database searches and questioning of Tsarnaev, his parents and Tsarnaev's former girlfriend and wife "would have resulted in a more thorough assessment" before the attack. The FBI also closed an assessment of Omar Mateen, who later shot and killed 49 people in Orlando's Pulse night club in 2016. The case agent "was also assigned to work criminal matters and had little formal counterterrorism training," the report said. — AFP

Delhi's displaced scrape a living after deadly riots

Houses with Hindu symbols largely left untouched

NEW DELHI: Mohammed Anees fled his home in northeastern New Delhi last week as Hindu-Muslim clashes erupted in his area, escaping with his family of four to a relative's home. He had only a few hundred rupees in his wallet, leaving everything else behind. Now the 37-year-old Muslim mechanic is among more than 1,000 people sheltering in a large open-air mosque that has been turned into a relief camp in the Mustafabad area of the Indian capital and opened on Monday.

"I don't have any money left now," Anees said, showing pictures of his ransacked home that he visited on the weekend on his cracked mobile phone. With jewelry and savings looted and afraid of more violence, he moved to the camp with his wife and three children, victims of the worst communal riots in New Delhi for decades. More than 40 people were killed and hundreds injured.

Anees lived in Shiv Vihar, where two large mosques and dozens of Muslim houses surrounding it were torched. Houses with Hindu symbols were largely left untouched. In total, some 2,000 people are believed to have been displaced, local politician Amanatullah Khan said. Hundreds of those are taking shelter on the floors of private homes. "The police brought us and left us here," said Mohammed Uddin, 70, outside a cramped house where dozens of peo-

ple packed into an entrance foyer. "They didn't even check if we were hurt."

Many of those displaced, who are overwhelmingly Muslim, have moved to the Mustafabad camp, where a kitchen provides free meals and volunteer doctors are treating victims. Rashid Ali, a local resident helping organize the camp, said they had received some help from the Delhi government, run by a regional party. On a long desk outside the mosque premises, a small group of lawyers helped the victims of riots file for compensation ranging from 25,000 rupees (\$341.34) to 100,000 rupees.

Seema Joshi from Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party, who was helping the legal team, said around 500 applications had been made, though many people showed up without any paperwork since they fled in a hurry without documents or had belongings burnt. In the narrow streets surrounding the mosque, women jostled for food supplies as children rummaged through piles of second-hand clothes donated to victims. On a loudspeaker, an announcer asked for volunteers to clean an overflowing toilet attached to the relief camp.

"A lot of people are facing depression," said Wasim Qamar, a doctor at the camp. "People saw terrible things. Some of them can't eat or sleep. They are very fearful." Describing the violence as "one-sided and well-planned" against



NEW DELHI: Volunteers serves food for displaced people of sectarian riots in India's capital over the controversial citizenship law, at Eidgah Masjid in Mustafabad area of New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

Muslims, the Delhi Minorities Commission - a government-appointed body that focuses on minority groups - said the Delhi government's compensation package was inadequate after

surveying riot-hit areas on Tuesday. Saurabh Bharadwaj, a lawmaker from Aam Aadmi, said the party was trying to improve its response to the emergency. — Reuters

UK's bullying row exposes government tensions

LONDON: Three months after his triumphant re-election, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is battling to save one of his top ministers from a bullying scandal that has exposed tensions at the heart of his government. Interior minister Priti Patel has faced calls to resign over allegations that she mistreated staff in both her present and previous roles-claims she strongly denies.

Johnson on Wednesday offered his full support for Patel, a fellow veteran of the Brexit campaign in the 2016 EU referendum, telling MPs she was doing an "outstanding job". But the allegations keep on coming, and under pressure, the prime minister launched an internal inquiry into whether Patel has broken the ministerial code of conduct. The row erupted after the top civil servant in the Home Office Patel leads resigned on Saturday, accusing her of involvement in "vicious" briefings against him after he raised concerns about her behavior.

"I have received allegations that her conduct has included shouting and swearing, belittling people, making unreasonable and

repeated demands," Philip Rutnam said. In an extraordinary televised press statement, he also said he would be suing the government for constructive dismissal-effectively alleging he was forced out of his job. Patel has strongly denied bullying and one aide accused "dark forces" in the civil service of trying to undermine her. Supporters point to one explosive newspaper report that intelligence chiefs do not trust Patel, who is in charge of security-something the government emphatically denied.

Perfect storm

Alex Thomas, from the Institute for Government think-tank, said the row at the Home Office showed an "extreme and extraordinary breakdown in relations at the very top". It comes as the ministry faces the grueling challenge of delivering two of Johnson's key promises from the December election. This is to provide 20,000 new police officers, and introduce a new post-Brexit immigration system by the end of the year.

"It is, if not impossible, then very near impossible to deliver everything that it has to do over the next 12 months," Thomas, an expert in the civil service said. "And distractions like this do take away from the leadership." Rutnam himself, meanwhile, was under pressure over a forthcoming report into the dismal treatment of so-called Windrush Britons originally from the Caribbean. Thomas added: "It feels to me that the Home Office was a bit of a perfect storm, with personality types and a par-

ticularly difficult agenda that created this confrontation."

Will of the people

But the row also broke out against a backdrop of tensions between Downing Street and the permanent, politically neutral civil servants who run the British government. Johnson's senior adviser, Dominic Cummings-who also worked on the Brexit campaign-has been open about his desire to shake up what he sees as a slow-moving establishment.

Last month, it was reported that No 10 had drawn up a list of top civil servants it wanted to replace because they were "at odds" with Johnson's team-Rutnam among them. "People take their cues from Number 10," Thomas noted of the Home Office row. Patel has strong support among her fellow Conservative MPs, many of whom have long complained about civil servants trying to thwart Britain's exit from the European Union.

After Brexit on January 31, some still suspect officials are trying to stymie plans for Britain to forge its own independent path. "Civil servants are crown servants and, as I am sure they would agree, they really do have to carry out the will of the people," Tory MP Bill Cash said in support of Patel this week. But there has been resistance even among ministers to Cummings-inspired reforms. Sajid Javid quit as finance minister last month rather than accept changes that would have seen him unable to appoint his own political aides. — AFP

Panel hears of risks to Indian Muslims

WASHINGTON: Experts warned a US government panel on Wednesday that India's Muslims face risks of expulsion or other persecution under a citizenship law that has triggered major protests. The hearing held inside Congress was called by the US Commission on International Freedom, which has been denounced by the Indian government as biased.

Ashutosh Varshney, a prominent scholar of sectarian violence in India, told the panel that the law championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalists amounted to a move to narrow the democracy's historically inclusive and secular definition of citizenship. "The threat is serious, and the implications quite horrendous," said Varshney, a professor at Brown University. "Something deeply injurious to the Muslim minority can happen once their citizenship rights are taken away," he said.

Varshney warned that the law could ultimately lead to expulsion or detention - but, even if not, contributes to marginalization. "It creates an enabling atmosphere for violence once you say that a particular community is not fully Indian or its Indianness in grave doubt," he said. The Indian parliament in December passed a law that fast-tracks citizenship for persecuted non-Muslim minorities from neighboring countries.

Responding to criticism at the time from the US commission, which advises but does not set policy, India's foreign ministry said the law does not strip anyone's citizenship and "should be welcomed, not criticized, by those who are genuinely committed to religious freedom." Fears are particularly acute in the northeastern state of Assam, where a citizens' register finalized last year left 1.9 million people, many of them Muslims, facing possible statelessness. — AFP

International

Bereaved engineer urges reform after MAX deaths

Aviation regulations 'are written in blood'

CAMBRIDGE: After his sister died in the crash of an Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX one year ago, Javier de Luis, an engineer who once designed software for space stations, became a crusader. Though his expertise is not in airplanes, 57-year-old de Luis has a simple goal: convince the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to change the way it certifies aircraft so the 737 MAX crashes that killed hundreds and led to the plane's worldwide grounding won't happen again.

Aviation regulations "are written in blood," de Luis, 57, told AFP in an interview. "They usually are written because somebody died, something went wrong." "It's important as we go forward here that we really understand what went wrong, so the rules can be changed or modified or enforced, so that never happens again." Working from his apartment in Cambridge, Massachusetts, de Luis has written several letters to the FAA as part of his campaign, and was invited to speak to employees at their headquarters in Washington following his sister's death.

Known to friends and family as Gachi, Graziella de Luis y Ponce was a 64-year-old freelance interpreter for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Vatican. She was among 157 people killed when their flight to Nairobi crashed southeast of the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. Months prior, another 737 MAX crashed in Indonesia, killing 189, and the model was grounded worldwide days after the Ethiopian crash.

With gray hair and rectangular glasses, de Luis grows animated when discussing why the plane crashed, how the FAA failed and what

could be done to stop it. Ethiopian Airlines flight 302 took off at 8:30 am local time on March 10. Just 90 seconds later, the aircraft's nose began to pitch down, as a sensor sent incorrect information to the MCAS, the automatic anti-stall flight system.

The pilots tried to counter the downward movement, but the MCAS overrode them. Six minutes after take-off, it crashed. "An airplane shouldn't fall out of the sky if one single sensor fails," de Luis said. "They should have grounded the airplanes" after the first crash on October 29, 2018, de Luis said. "If they had done that, then my sister and... the 156 other people would be alive."

He compares the failure of the 737 MAX to his experience working on software deployed on the Mir and International Space Station. Holder of a doctorate in aerospace engineering from the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he also teaches, de Luis was chief executive of Payload Systems, which worked on nearly 30 space flights before being bought by Aurora Flight Sciences, now owned by Boeing.

"I would have to go down to NASA, and I would have to present our design and tell them why it was safe," he said. "I got up in front of the table, and there were experts in the room, and they would start asking me questions, and I had to be able to keep answering until they got tired." "That's how it should work for... aerospace when it comes to design reviews," he said. Since the MAX's grounding, de Luis has watched as more and more details have emerged about malfunctions in the plane's development. Boeing engineers were the ones



NEW YORK: (Left to right) Tor Stumo, Zipporah Kuria Waithaka and Nadia Milleron stand together, holding photos of their family members lost in the crash, during an interview in Central Park. It is an unlikely friendship that grew out of grief and has become a source of support and activism in the aftermath of the Boeing 737 MAX Ethiopian Airlines crash one year ago. — AFP

who inspected the MCAS under a procedure adopted by US regulators in 2005 under pressure from the aeronautics lobby. The FAA, which only partially understood how the software worked, merely validated their conclusions. De Luis fears the agency relies "very much on what Boeing tells them" and questions whether safety is really its top priority.

De Luis's parents left Cuba after the revolution, and he recalls how he saw his 94 year-

old father cry publicly for the first time when he learned of Graziella's death. The steady stream of information about the 737 MAX hasn't made it easy to get grief. Most recently, it was news that debris had been found in the jets' fuel tanks. "I opened up my iPad every morning, and there's always a story or two about something," he said. "This way of dying... is just a nightmare because it doesn't go away." — AFP

Five key questions about MH17 trial

THE HAGUE: Four suspects are to go on trial in the Netherlands next week accused of playing a role in downing Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over Ukraine on July 17, 2014. All 298 passengers and crew on board the Boeing 777 jet died in the crash, which international investigators said was caused by a Russian-made BUK surface-to-air missile. Here are five key questions about the trial:

Who is on trial?

Three Russians - Igor Girkin, Sergei Dubinsky and Oleg Pulatov, and a Ukrainian, Leonid Kharchenko - are on trial. All have been linked to separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine. Girkin, 49, also known by his pseudonym "Strelkov", is a former Russian spy and a historical re-enactment enthusiast who helped kickstart the war in eastern Ukraine and ruled part of its territory with an iron fist. Dubinsky, 57, is a former Russian

military intelligence officer who also served as military intelligence chief for the separatists. Pulatov, 53, is a former Russian special forces officer who served as Dubinsky's deputy. Kharchenko, 48, also known as "Krot", allegedly commanded a separatist combat unit and is accused of securing the missile launcher.

What are they accused of?

They are charged with murder and deliberately and unlawfully destroying an aeroplane, leading to the deaths of the 298 people on board. The four suspects "closely worked together to obtain the BUK missile and (set) it up with the aim to shoot down a plane", according to Dutch prosecutors. Under international law, the men are accused of being "co-perpetrators", which does not mean they physically pushed the button but rather that their deliberate actions enabled MH17 to be shot down, said

Marieke de Hoon of Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. If found guilty, sentences can range from 30 years to life as well as a fine of up to 87,000 euros (\$95,000).

Will the accused show up?

Russia and Ukraine do not extradite their citizens so none of the four suspects is expected to show up for the trial. Only Pulatov has appointed a Dutch law firm to represent him, according to media reports. The trial however is being conducted under a combination of Dutch and international law, which enables the suspects to be tried in absentia. "The Dutch legal system is respected and acts with some authority. It has gone through a lot of judicial scrutiny," said De Hoon.

Will the families be there?

Yes. Relatives of the victims are expected to play an active role from the start,

being present in the courtroom and able to watch proceedings at a secure location away from the media. Relatives will also be asked later in the trial if they would like to make representations as well as eventually asking the court to award compensation.

Why is trial in Netherlands?

The trial takes place at The Hague District Court's high-security facility next to Schiphol international airport - a stone's throw from where the ill-fated flight took off. The trial is taking place in The Netherlands largely because the plane to Kuala Lumpur left from Schiphol, and 196 of the passengers were Dutch. The Netherlands also took the lead in the subsequent Joint Investigative Team (JIT), which also involved Australia, Belgium, Malaysia and Ukraine. The trial will be conducted in Dutch, with translations available in English. — AFP

International

Mexico school teaches students to shun sex trafficking tradition

The threat is serious, and the implications quite horrendous: Scholar

SAN LUIS TEOLOCHOLCO: At a spacious, tree-lined high school at the foot of the Matlal-cueytl volcano in central Mexico, students gathered outside to play a game of snakes and ladders with a twist. One boy stepped on a panel that read: 'Sexual relations should never be forced'. A female classmate took a ladder away from a square warning men against becoming human traffickers. "Do women have the right to decide what to do with their bodies?" one student asked her peers during another exercise.

This was not a normal lesson but a unique workshop designed to prevent boys from becoming sex traffickers and stop girls from falling prey in Tlaxcala state, which has become synonymous with the crime after more than a decade of high-profile cases. Some of the pupils' families are known to traffic women for a living, to other states and also the United States, and often encourage their children to one day join the family business.

"I want to be a trafficker like my grandfather' ... is what you'll usually hear at least from some of them," one of the teachers running the project, who requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue said. Mexico is an origin, transit and destination country for human trafficking. Victims range from men forced to kill for criminal groups to indigenous women in domestic work under slave-like conditions and girls coerced into the sex trade.

"It's important for them to see that it's not normal ... that it's violence." If the workshops

changed the attitudes of just a few students, they were worthwhile, the teacher added. Yet such schemes are few and far between in a country where concern is rising over widespread violence against women and the use of young people as footsoldiers for organized crime groups.

Mexico suffered its highest homicide rate in years in 2019 - with 23 victims per 100,000 people - while femicides rose almost 10 percent against the previous year, according to government data. The recent murder of a 7-year-old girl in Mexico City sparked outrage across the region over violence against women in a nation where at least three quarters of women reported feeling unsafe, a 2019 survey by national statistics body INEGI found. In Tlaxcala, the normalization of sex trafficking is related to broader discrimination against women and gender-based violence, said Alejandra Mendez, head of the Centro Fray Julian Garces, the nonprofit group that started the workshops in 2014.

"What we're attempting here is a relationship of equals, saying men and women can reach their potential," Mendez said. During one workshop, a 14-year-old assumed the role of teacher and asked her younger schoolmates - split into small groups - several stark questions such as: "What is violence?"

Some of the scenarios dealt explicitly with trafficking, others were about trying to develop healthy relationships and preventing other forms of violence against women. "I want you to answer freely, to feel trust," one of the older school

girls urged her peers.

Soon after starting the workshops, the Centro Fray Julian Garces and teachers at the school realized they would have more impact if delivered by older pupils to the younger ones.

The student leaders have even held sessions for some of the parents of children at the school in a bid to change mindsets. Yet prevention efforts are rare and fragmented in Mexico despite growing violence, said Juan Martin Perez, head of nonprofit the Network for Children's Rights in Mexico (REDIM). "We don't have a national strategy, no program or public action to talk about violence against women, girls or the armed violence the country is living with," he said, adding that there was no support for teachers who addressed the issues themselves.

Government in 'denial'

Federal security forces periodically raid communities in Tlaxcala to arrest suspected traffickers, usually for extradition to the United States. Federal police and the newly-formed National Guard last year stormed nine properties in Acuamanala - a municipality located just a few kilometers from the school - and arrested seven people allegedly linked to international sex trafficking.

Santiago Nieto, head of the finance ministry's Financial Intelligence Unit, said this week that his team had blocked bank accounts containing millions of dollars of a sex trafficking group that operated in Mexico City, Tlaxcala and other

states. The alleged perpetrators forced girls as young as 12 into commercial sex and kept most of the proceeds, he said. Yet Mendez of the Centro Fray Julian Garces said it was tough to get people to recognize trafficking as a problem in the state, which opened three investigations into the crime in 2019.

Former governors have dismissed the phenomenon as minor and accused Mendez' group of damaging the state's reputation, she said, adding that they have been in "denial" about trafficking. Tlaxcala's government said trafficking had gone unaddressed for decades but that it did not "evade its responsibility" and was working to tackle it - with measures ranging from a shelter for victims of serious crimes to training for civil servants. Yet a spokesman for the state said that efforts to combat human trafficking should not be focused on just one region.

The federal government has yet to publish its anti-trafficking strategy, nearly a year after it was expected, while an independent auditor has said the former administration's efforts to curb the crime were "disjointed" and "lax". At the school, girls walked around the playground arm-in-arm - joking and laughing - the teacher involved in the project recounted some of the harrowing stories shared by the students. "They start telling you, that in my town there's a basement where they take the women ... they tried to take my neighbor," the teacher said. "(But) they never tell you who or where, obviously." —Reuters

US lawmakers want Secret Service to guard candidates

LOS ANGELES: US lawmakers on Wednesday sought Secret Service protection for Democratic presidential candidates after Joe Biden's wife and a senior staffer shielded the former vice president from protesters during a victory speech on Super Tuesday. Biden's remarks in Los Angeles were briefly interrupted on Tuesday night when a pair of protesters leapt onto the stage, Jill Biden and senior adviser Symone Sanders charged them and ushered them away from the candidate. The activists opposed the dairy industry, and protesters with the same agenda have disrupted events with Biden's presidential rival Senator Bernie Sanders.

"We're OK," Biden said after the incident, which highlighted a glaring hole in security for him and other top contenders seeking the Democratic nomination to take on Republican President Donald Trump in the Nov. 3 election. A Secret Service spokeswoman confirmed that no Democratic candidate was currently being protected. Any decision to provide protection would be made by Chad Wolf, acting secretary of homeland security, in consultation with congressional authorities. No Democratic candidate has begun the multi-step process to obtain Secret Service protection, DHS spokeswoman Heather Swift said

in a statement. A new procedure was established by former DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson, which requires that a candidate make a formal request, Swift said.

"The Democratic Congress is worried," Representative Cedric Richmond, a Biden supporter, told reporters on a conference call. The US House of Representatives' Homeland Security Committee requested Secret Service protection for both Biden and Sanders.

The Secret Service provides security for the president and his family, including lifetime support for former occupants of the Oval Office. Major presidential candidates are also provided with protection on a case-by-case basis. Federal law authorizes Secret Service protection for vice presidents and their families for up to six months after they leave office.

There have been a number of serious attacks on presidential candidates in the past. Senator Robert Kennedy was fatally shot in Los Angeles in 1968 after his victory in the California Democratic primary and Alabama Governor George Wallace was left paralyzed from the waist down after being shot at a campaign appearance in Maryland in 1972. — Reuters



LOS ANGELES: Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden delivers remarks in Los Angeles. Joe Biden reclaimed frontrunner status in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination after notching up stunning Super Tuesday primary victories. —AFP

International

Emergency in California as cruise ship held off coast over virus fears

COVID-19 death toll in US rises to 11

LOS ANGELES: California declared a state of emergency over the novel coronavirus Wednesday as a cruise ship was held off the coast over fears of a new outbreak.

Separately, the federal government said it was going to buy 500 million respirators to stockpile for use by healthcare professionals. The measures came as the death toll in the United States hit 11, including the first fatality in California, and lawmakers in Congress agreed to provide more than \$8 billion to fight the rapidly spreading disease.

California Governor Gavin Newsom announced the emergency measures as he reported the death of an elderly person who had taken a cruise to Mexico. "The State of California is deploying every level of government to help identify cases and slow the spread of this coronavirus," Newsom told reporters.

The emergency proclamation would help the state prepare "in the event it spreads more broadly," he said. Thousands traveling aboard the Grand Princess—the same cruise ship on which California's first victim was thought to have contracted the virus—were held offshore Wednesday night. The ship cut short its current voyage back from Hawaii after passengers and crew members developed symptoms. But its planned return to San Francisco was held up in order to carry out testing on board for those potentially infected. "We're holding that ship, which (has) thousands of passengers as well, off the coast, and we'll be conducting those tests," Newsom told a press conference.

Eleven passengers and 10 crew members were potentially infected with the virus, Newsom said. Some 62 guests who remained on board from the earlier

Mexico voyage were being restricted to their cabins for testing, the Princess Cruises company said in a statement to AFP.

"In an abundance of caution, these guests and other potential close crew contacts have been asked to remain in their staterooms until screened by our on-board medical team," it said. In total, some 2,500 passengers plus crew—typically up to 1,150—were on board for its Mexico voyage, said Newsom. The Grand Princess belongs to Princess Cruises, the same company which operated the coronavirus-stricken ship held off Japan last month on which more than 700 people on board tested positive.

'Necessary protections'

Earlier in the day, health officials in nearby Washington state said a 10th person had died there. Los Angeles County officials reported six new cases in the West Coast metropolis, while the number of confirmed cases in New York state rose to 11.

One of the Los Angeles cases concerns a medical screener at the city's international airport checking overseas travelers for symptoms. The Department of Homeland Security said the worker was under self-quarantine at home along with family members and was showing mild symptoms.

"DHS is happy to report that this individual was highly trained and did everything right both on the job and when they began to feel sick," a statement said.

"We are told the individual wore all the correct protective equipment and took necessary protections on the job." Nationwide, more than 130 people have been infected, with the virus detected in more



The Grand Princess—the same cruise ship on which California's first victim was thought to have contracted the virus—was held offshore Wednesday night.

than a dozen states. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Republicans and Democrats had reached a deal to fund the response to the outbreak to the tune of \$8.3 billion. The House of Representatives passed the measure, and the Senate was to vote yesterday. Vice President Mike Pence, the White House's pointman on the crisis, told reporters he would be traveling to Minnesota Thursday to visit a plant manufacturing personal protective equipment including masks.

He will then visit Washington state and meet with

Governor Jay Inslee to review containment efforts in the Seattle area.

All of the newly infected individuals in Los Angeles were exposed to COVID-19 through close contact, health officials said. Barbara Ferrer, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, said three of the cases concerned travelers who had gone together to northern Italy—a virus hotspot with more than 100 deaths. Two other cases involved individuals who had come in contact with a family member who had the virus and the last was the airport screener. —AFP

Chaotic climate, chaotic cities fuel Brazil's flood toll

GUARUJA, Brazil: Violent rain has killed scores of people and forced thousands from their homes this year in Brazil's most populous states, a disaster experts blame on climate upheaval but also rampant urbanization. Flash floods, landslides and other havoc wrought by torrential rain have killed at least 29 people in recent days in the states of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Another 25 are missing.

That comes after more than 50 people were killed by heavy rain that devastated the state of Minas Gerais in January. The same scenes of destruction have played out in all three southeastern states, together home to more than 83 million people: poor neighborhoods wiped out by tidal waves of brown mud; houses and cars swept away by flash floods; residents evacuated by boat and helicopter as their streets turn to gushing rivers.

More than three million people live in high-risk zones in Brazil's southeast, which has been hit by record rain this year—in some places, a

month's worth in a matter of hours. As dozens of rescue workers dug through the debris of wrecked houses for his missing mother, stepfather and sister-in-law, one of those affected, 24-year-old Yago de Sousa Nunes, voiced frustration that the authorities did not do more to protect the at-risk population.

"The city government knew this was a high-risk zone, they knew how much rain was going to fall this week, but they didn't do anything to evacuate people," he said alongside the ruins of the Barreira de Joao Guarda neighborhood, in the coastal city of Guarujá, Sao Paulo.

Extreme weather

Is climate change to blame? Experts say more studies are needed to be sure.

But there is no doubt the region is experiencing "an increase in extreme weather events," said Andrea Ramos of the National Meteorological Institute. This year, the rainy season in southeastern Brazil has been marked by extremes, said Marcelo Seluchi of the Natural Disaster Monitoring and Alert Center (Cemaden): very dry in the first half of the summer, then very wet from mid-January on.

"The planet is heating up, that's beyond doubt. It's more humid than 50 or 100 years ago, which means the same weather systems have more potential to create rain," he said. —AFP

Former UN chief Javier Perez de Cuellar dead

LIMA: Former UN chief Javier Perez de Cuellar, who was known for his peace-making efforts including brokering a ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war, died Wednesday in his native Peru, aged 100, his son said.

Perez de Cuellar served as UN secretary general from 1981 to 1991, when he was often described as a "pacifist by vocation and nature." Lauded by his countrymen as one of the most illustrious Peruvians of his era, Perez de Cuellar led the United Nations through a period marked by the fight against world hunger, the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, as well as the civil war in US-supported El Salvador which led to UN-mediated peace talks. "My dad died after a complicated week. He died at 8:09 pm tonight (0109 GMT Thursday) and is resting in peace," his son Francisco Perez de Cuellar told RPP radio.

Perez de Cuellar was known for his efforts to reconcile warring parties. He played a crucial role in ending the Iran-Iraq war, securing the release of American hostages held in Lebanon and in peace agreements in Cambodia and El Salvador, the UN said. Perez de Cuellar considered the 1990 independence of



Javier Perez de Cuellar

Namibia, one of the last colonial enclaves on the African continent, his greatest accomplishment as secretary general.

Current UN chief Antonio Guterres said he was "profoundly saddened" at the passing of his predecessor. "I extend my deepest condolences to Mr. Perez de Cuellar's family, the Peruvian people and so many others around the world whose lives were touched by a remarkable and compassionate global leader who left our world a far better place," he said.

Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra expressed deep regrets on Twitter over the death of "a distinguished Peruvian, a democrat through-and-through, who dedicated his entire life to working to improve our country." Perez de Cuellar's popularity prompted him to accept the presidential nomination from one of Peru's leading political parties—the Union for Peru—in 1995, which pitted him against then-incumbent president Alberto Fujimori. —AFP

International

As India's coronavirus cases spike, experts warn of South Asia spread

Pakistan officials gloomy about the prospects of tackling a major outbreak

MUMBAI: India has ramped up the screening of travellers to keep the coronavirus at bay but a flurry of new cases has experts warning that it may be hard to contain a spread in densely populated South Asia with its generally poor medical infrastructure. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are home to some 1.7 billion people, or more than a fifth of the world's population, but their over-stretched health systems could struggle to handle the type of intensive care required for coronavirus patients.

On top of that, a prevalence of existing health problems such as diabetes could spell trouble while the sort of sweeping restrictions China has imposed to stifle the virus would be hugely difficult in South Asia's more unruly cities.

"The way Indian society is structured, the kind of lockdown that many countries including China and Japan have instituted, is pretty much impossible even under good circumstances," said Vivekanand Jha, executive director of the George Institute for Public Health, in New Delhi.

India's total confirmed coronavirus rose to 29 on Wednesday, from six early this week.

The coronavirus, which emerged in China late last year, has infected more than 95,000 people globally, and killed more than 3,200, most of them in China. Some health experts fear that even with the recent spike in cases, India's actual tally could be much bigger. "There is a strong possibility that the number of cases in India is much higher than what has been detected," Arunkumar G, director of the Manipal Institute

of Virology, said, citing a virus incubation of up to two weeks. Fears were fanned this week when India's health minister disclosed that 16 foreign tourists who have tested positive had been touring since mid-February. Last week, US intelligence sources told Reuters that India's available countermeasures and the potential for the virus to spread its dense population was a focus of serious concern.

'All initiatives'

India's government says it has screened more than one million travellers, boosted its testing capabilities and set up isolation wards in all major cities with international airports. But 450 million of India's 1.3 billion people are estimated to be migrants, with vast numbers packing its rail and road systems daily meaning controlling any spread would be a huge challenge.

India's high number of diabetics - 77 million - and high rates of problems like kidney disease could lead to higher morbidity, or protracted treatment, experts said. "One particular risk of India is the co-existence of other non-communicable disease epidemics," Dr Rajib Dasgupta, who is a professor of community health at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government says it is confident of its ability to arrest the spread of the virus. "Coronavirus is a challenge, but the government of India has taken all initiatives to ensure that it is stopped," said D V Sadananda Gowda, minister of chemicals, who

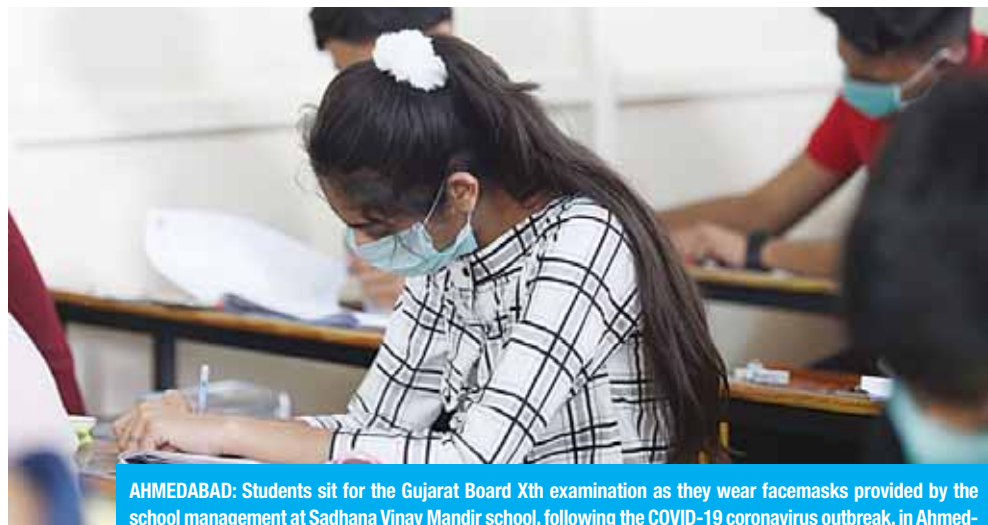
oversees the pharmaceuticals sector. Neighboring Pakistan has found five coronavirus cases. A top health official was gloomy about the prospects of tackling a major outbreak. "We don't have human resources, we don't have the required inventory, we don't have a capacity to cope with a big emergency with the given resources," Shahid Malik, secretary general of the Pakistan Medical Association, told Reuters. Bangladesh has not confirmed any cases of the coronavirus but five Bangladeshi

workers have tested positive in Singapore. Bangladesh's health ministry said more than 300,000 people have been screened at airports and other border entry points. But one passenger was not impressed by what he considered lax screening upon arrival in the capital, Dhaka. "Many of us could skip the screening. Just imagine what would happen if someone infected with the virus enters. It'll be a total disaster," Farid Yamin, a Bangladeshi working in Singapore, told Reuters. —Reuters

riety, with city authorities themselves sometimes reorganizing neighborhoods that entrench that segregation," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Apartheid cities are being created due to political, planning and gentrification processes that divide communities further, impoverish the poor, and makes it easier to target vulnerable communities again." Displacements caused by flooding, beautification of cities, and major sporting events such as the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi and the 2016 Rio Olympics, also led to ghettoisation of the poor, said Kothari, a former United Nations special rapporteur for adequate housing.

Delhi has long drawn migrants from neighboring states, who often live in informal settlements because of high rents. Like in other Indian cities, Delhi's informal rules and deep-rooted biases also discriminate against religious minorities and even unmarried people, or those with certain food preferences or professions. Deadly communal clashes in Mumbai in 1992-93 and in the western city of Ahmedabad in 2002, led to Muslims being pushed out of mixed neighborhoods to the fringes of the city, said Darshani Mahadevia, a professor at Ahmedabad University.

"The Muslim poor especially ... choose to live in all-Muslim neighborhoods because they feel insecure," she said on the sidelines of a land conference in Delhi. —Reuters



AHMEDABAD: Students sit for the Gujarat Board Xth examination as they wear facemasks provided by the school management at Sadhana Vinay Mandir school, following the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, in Ahmedabad yesterday. —AFP

More 'apartheid cities' seen in India after deadly riots

NEW DELHI: India risks greater segregation in its cities after deadly riots in Delhi last week, with minority and poor people likely to be blocked from accessing housing in desirable neighborhoods, human rights experts said yesterday.

The Hindu-Muslim clashes in the city's northeast - the worst communal riots in Delhi for several decades - killed more than 40 people and injured hundreds. Thousands have been displaced after their homes were torched. Many of those uprooted were Muslims, while there were Hindus among the dead and injured.

The capital city of more than 20 million people is likely to now see greater segmentation along religious lines as has happened in other Indian cities, such as Mumbai and Ahmedabad, said Miloon Kothari, a housing and human rights expert.

"We generally see greater ghettoisation in a city after a riot because of fear and insecurity," he said.

Sri Lanka seizes record drugs haul at sea

COLOMBO: Two foreign trawlers packed with over \$33 million worth of heroin and crystal methamphetamine were seized in Sri Lanka's biggest-ever drugs bust at sea, a navy spokesman said yesterday.

Troops found 400 kilograms (about 880 pounds) of heroin and 100 kilograms (about 220 pounds) of the drug "ice" on board the two vessels, spokesman Isuru Sooriyabandara said. The street value of the seized narcotics was estimated by officials to be 6,000 million rupees (\$33.5 million).

The vessels, as well as a Sri Lankan fishing boat, were yesterday escorted to a harbor near the capital Colombo. Sixteen foreign crew and five Sri Lankan crewmen were detained for questioning, Sooriyabandara added. The nationalities of the foreigners were not disclosed by authorities.

"The two foreign vessels were trying to offload the drugs onto a Sri Lankan fishing boat," Sooriyabandara said. The foreign vessels, which carried no registration, were intercepted in international waters some 1,100 kilometers (687 miles) from Sri Lanka's coast.

Sooriyabandara said investigators were checking GPS data on board the vessels to establish the route and the point of origin. Authorities said initial investigations suggested the Iran-Pakistan coast was the point of origin. In 2016, the navy arrested 10 Iranians, two Pakistanis and one each from India and Singapore for allegedly trying to smuggle 110 kilograms of heroin into the island nation via a trawler.

The country's previous largest drug haul was in December 2016 when police seized 800 kilograms of cocaine on a ship at Colombo's port from Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah port. Six months earlier, authorities discovered 301 kilograms of cocaine inside a shipping container at Colombo. Authorities believe the Indian Ocean island is also being used as a trafficking transit point. —AFP

International

China seeks to recast itself from virus pariah to helping hand

Beijing shares treatment plan with 'many countries'

BEIJING: From being ostracized by the international community as the center of the deadly coronavirus outbreak, China is seeking to reframe itself as a global expert that can help hard-hit regions battle the disease.

Beijing is keen to reposition the virus as a global outbreak and not just a China malaise as it sends testing kits and experts overseas and translates treatment manuals into foreign languages. The deputy foreign minister said at a press conference yesterday that China had shared its treatment plan with "many countries". An expert team has already been sent to Iran, where 92 people have died, along with 5,000 testing kits and 250,000 face masks. Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said China has sent testing equipment to Iran, Pakistan, Japan and some African countries.

"While fighting the epidemic at home, we will continue working with other sides and offer them assistance," Zhao told a press briefing this week.

As the number of new infections drop in China and swell overseas, the country now worries about importing cases, with 20 reported so far, including from Italy and Iran. Several cities and provinces including Beijing have imposed a 14-day quarantine on people arriving from hard-hit countries.

A loudspeaker message at Beijing's airport asks passengers to register on arrival.

And this week Beijing flew 146 citizens back from Iran—a symbolic turn of events since governments were scrambling to fly their citizens out of virus-hit China only a month ago.

Ready for export

A few weeks ago, Chinese officials were putting

in calls to try and shore up overseas support as countries imposed travel bans. Now, outgoing calls are to offer technical advice, sharing China's experience through video conferences with the European Union and other nations.

State media reported that a manual offering advice on controlling the spread of the virus had been translated into Persian and made free to download. After scrambling with a huge shortage of medical equipment, China is now looking to export material. An industry ministry spokeswoman this week said China's production of hazmat suits now exceeds demand from Hubei province—where the virus first emerged in December—and encouraged companies to adapt to meet foreign demand.

China is likely to keep "claiming authority" over the epidemic based on its achievements, said Dorothy Solinger, an expert on Chinese politics at the University of California at Irvine.

"Of course the trouble is most other parts of the world aren't in a position to command the population the way the Chinese government can, so it's unlikely that China can truly become a model," she said.

"But it's a brilliant move to pretend that they've discovered a way that can be useful to other countries." China has also been stressing the outbreak is a "global fight" and casting doubt over the source of the virus.

The foreign ministry said this week the origin of the virus is "not necessarily in China"—contradicting an earlier official assessment that it likely came from wild animals sold at a seafood market in Wuhan.

Superior governance

The government came under a torrent of criti-



BEIJING: Workers wear face masks as they remove seating from a public area at the Beijing Capital Airport in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

cism online after a Wuhan doctor who had been reprimanded by police for warning about the virus in December died from the disease himself. Authorities in Hubei have also been accused of seeking to cover up the outbreak in early January.

But state media has used signs of success to flag a victory for China's political system. "It's impossible for European countries to adopt the extreme measures that China has implemented," the nationalistic Global Times wrote in an editorial. Beijing is keen to use the epidemic to show "its system of governance is superior to the Western

liberal democracy's system of governance," said Yun Jiang, researcher at Australian National University.

"The propaganda within China has been focused on what it perceives as its competitive advantage... including the speed of construction of hospitals and locking down cities," she said.

Yun added that if other countries struggle to contain COVID-19, it will allow Beijing to deflect the criticism it has also faced over its own handling of the outbreak. "This would be a huge boon for its propaganda efforts," she said. — AFP

With N Korea border shut, China warns citizens to keep away, or else

SINGAPORE/SEOUL: Chinese authorities have told people to stay away from the border with North Korea, which has banned people from China to keep out the coronavirus, or risk being shot by North Korean guards, residents of the area said. Residents said the warning came in a printed notice that Chinese authorities in the area issued this week, the latest indication of how seriously North Korea takes the threat of the virus.

Close allies China and North Korea share a 1,400-km (880-mile) frontier that is especially porous in winter, when rivers separating the countries freeze, allowing people to cross.

Residents of the Chinese cities of Jian and Baishan were warned that people who get too close to the border might be shot, according to three people who received the notice, which was reviewed by Reuters.

"We're told that we may get killed if we get too close to the border area," said one restaurant owner in Jian, which is separated from North Korea by the Yalu River, declining to be identified given the sensitivity of

the matter. Residents are prohibited from fishing, grazing livestock or throwing rubbish near the river, according to the notice issued this week.

North Korea asked China to tighten border controls to avoid its citizens getting shot and killed as North Korea had raised its coronavirus threat assessment to its highest level, it said. "The public security organs will monitor the border 24 hours a day and anyone found will face administrative detention" by Chinese police, authorities said in the notice, which was seen by Reuters. "Violators will be shot," it said, meaning by North Korean guards.

A Jian propaganda official, who declined to be identified, confirmed by telephone that the city's border control office issued a similar warning in a text message. "During the epidemic prevention period, any activities including fishing on the Yalu River or shouting to North Koreans across the river are strictly prohibited," the office said in the message, although it stopped short of warning of shots. The official said the wording on such messages may have

gone too far in some areas. Reuters could not reach city officials in Baishan. It was not clear if other cities issued such warnings. China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Entry bans

Isolated and impoverished North Korea has imposed strict entry bans during past global epidemics, including a 2014 ebola outbreak. North Korea has not reported any coronavirus cases, but experts say its measures in recent weeks go beyond those it took previously.

North Korea moved quickly to restrict travel and trade from China, where the coronavirus emerged late last year.

The coronavirus has infected more than 80,000 and killed more than 3,000 in China and is rapidly spreading around the world. Most flights and trains in and out of North Korea have been restricted, foreign diplomats in Pyongyang were quarantined for a month, and authorities have cracked down on cross-border smuggling.—Reuters

Japan to suspend visas for Chinese, S Korean visitors

TOKYO: Japan will suspend existing visas for visitors from China and South Korea and quarantine them for two weeks in response to the widening coronavirus, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said yesterday.

The measures will go into effect on March 9.

Indonesia: Indonesia will ban entry and transit of foreign visitors who have visited cities hit by coronavirus outbreaks in Iran, Italy and South Korea in the last 14 days, starting March 8, the country's foreign minister said yesterday. Travellers coming from other places in the three countries will need to provide a certificate issued by health authorities to declare that they are healthy, Minister Retno Marsudi said.

The measures follow a similar ban on entry and transit of visitors from mainland China to limit the spread of the virus. Indonesians coming home from the three countries, especially those who had travelled to outbreak-hit areas, will also face an extra health examination, Marsudi told reporters.

Thailand: Thailand's postal services began disinfecting all packages received from overseas yesterday to counter the spread of the coronavirus, although the World Health Organisation has said it is safe to receive post from badly affected countries, like China. —Reuters

Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2020

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of tattooed headhunters**

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In this file photo Daniel Craig attends the 77th Annual Golden Globe Awards at The Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

No time to release a film: Latest Bond delayed on virus fears

The makers of the new James Bond movie due for global release next month said on Wednesday it would be delayed until November amid fears over the new coronavirus outbreak. The film, “No Time to Die”, had been set to have its premiere in London on March 31, before its rollout worldwide in April. “MGM, Universal and Bond producers, Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli, announced today that after careful consideration and thorough evaluation of the global theatrical marketplace, the release of NO TIME TO DIE will be postponed until November 2020,” said a tweet from the official 007 Twitter account.

“The film will be released in the UK on November 12, 2020 with worldwide release dates to follow, including the US launch on November 25, 2020.” The postponement of the latest chapter in the legendary franchise came as concern over the COVID-19 epidemic continued to mount globally. The virus, which first emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year, has since infected more than 93,000 people worldwide and killed more than 3,200, mainly in China, with numerous countries now struggling to contain its spread. Some have begun to cancel events like football matches, carnivals, concerts and commercial gatherings such as the Geneva International Motor Show.

The organizers of the London Book Fair, one of the largest book-publishing trade fairs in the world which was due to take place from March 10 to 12, said on Wednesday it had scrapped this year’s event. Britain had confirmed 85 COVID-19 cases as of Wednesday but no deaths. The government has not ordered the cancellation of events, but said it may be required to take such action if the virus continues to spread. “No Time to Die”, the 25th installment of the fictional British spy saga, sees Bond drawn out of retirement in Jamaica by his old friend and CIA agent Felix Leiter.

It is expected to be actor Daniel Craig’s last outing as 007, after starring in four previous films. Reports emerged last month that the filmmakers had cancelled its Beijing premiere as well as a promotional tour originally set for April. China, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, is a key market for Hollywood blockbusters, with its population of more than a billion people and where cinema-going has soared in popularity in recent years. The last Bond film “Spectre”—released in 2015—set box office records for a 2D film in China, while grossing more than \$880 million (971 million euros) worldwide, according to movie industry magazines. — AFP

Pro-Polanski ‘Matrix’ star booed after French Oscar night fiasco

Protesters booed a French star who has condemned attacks on the controversial film director Roman Polanski as an “abominable public lynching” as he performed onstage. The group whistled and shouted slogans as actor Lambert Wilson, who plays Merovingian in “The Matrix” films, gave a concert of Kurt Weill songs in the northern French city of Lille late Wednesday. “Polanski rapes and Wilson endorses it!” they shouted after the actor criticized actress Adele Haenel for walking out of the “French Oscars”, the Cesars, on Saturday after Polanski won best director.

Haenel was subject to an ugly attack on Facebook earlier this week from the French casting director of Quentin Tarantino’s “Inglourious Basterds”. Olivier Carbone said she and her supporters were “fat wh***s who behaved like hyenas with Polanski”, before later amending his post to drop the “w” word. Polanski, wanted in the United States since 1978 for the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl, sparked fury when he got 12 nominations for his historical drama “An Officer and a Spy”.

A call for a boycott of the movie did not stop it becoming a box office hit in France after it won two of the top prizes at the Venice film festival last September. Haenel, who shook the French film industry last year by accusing the director of her first film, Christophe Ruggia, of sexually harassing her when she was only 12, stormed out of the Cesars ceremony when Polanski won the third of the three awards for his movie about the Dreyfus affair.

Toxic atmosphere

“It’s an unacceptable lynching,” Car-



In this file photo French-Polish director and former president of the Jury, Roman Polanski, arrives on the red carpet of the 45th Deauville US Film Festival.



In this file photo French actor Lambert Wilson poses during a photo session in Paris. — AFP photos

bone wrote on Facebook, in comments that echoed Polanski’s when he and his cast snubbed the ceremony saying he “feared a public lynching”. And Carbone warned Haenel—one of France’s most admired actresses—that she would be frozen out of the industry for speaking out. “She is going to have a big surprise soon, a well-deserved omerta will be hung from her nose,” said Carbone, who now works mostly as an acting coach.

Wilson, who won international acclaim for “Of Gods and Men” in 2010, was less vociferous, telling French radio, “You do not walk out of a ceremony because Polanski receives a prize. It is not done.” Haenel—who had been nominated for best actress for “Portrait of a Lady”—was heard to say “Shame!” and “Bravo the paedophile!” as

she left the theatre with the film’s director Celine Sciamma, her former partner.

Polanski won two other awards, including best adapted screenplay, at the rancorous awards ceremony, which protesters chanting “Lock up Polanski!” tried to storm before being pushed back by police firing tear gas. The atmosphere inside was not much better, with the French film industry at war with itself with pro- and anti-Polanski factions at daggers drawn.

Adding to the toxicity, black actress Aissa Maïga delivered a scathing critique of casual racism in the French industry, including skewering the presenter Florence Foresti for once donning blackface. With the entire board of the Cesars forced to resign amid a backlash over their garlanding Polanski with the most nominations, some question if the awards can recover. — AFP

Making a mark: Qatar warns desert monolith vandals

Towering over the Qatari desert, American sculpture artist Richard Serra’s four steel monoliths called “East-West/West-East” look virtually unassailable. But the 15-metre-high (50-foot) rust-coloured works have been blighted in recent months by visitors intent on leaving their mark and carving names and slogans into the work, authorities said yesterday. “Vandalism of any kind to our public art, not only affects the community’s enjoyment of the piece but also harms Qatar’s cultural heritage,” said Abdullatif Al-Jasmi, cultural heritage protection director at Qatar Museums, which is responsible for the work.

The installation is located in the Brouq desert reserve in the Gulf country’s far northwest, a secluded area only accessible by 4X4s and renowned for sweeping landscapes, sand dunes and vivid sunsets. It will now undergo a “specialized cleaning process” after “significant and deliberate damage caused by visitors to the sculpture in recent months”, Qatar Museums said in a statement. “It is important that people understand the social impact of the damage

to the artworks but also that they can receive substantial fines and may be responsible for restoration,” added Jasmi.

Energy-rich Qatar has gained a foothold on the global cultural scene by lavishing billions of dollars on renowned artworks in recent years. Damien Hirst’s “Miraculous Journey”—a group of 14 bronze foetus

sculptures—caused a stir when it was installed in front of a medical centre on the outskirts of the capital. Sheikha Al-Mayassa, a sister of emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, has led the push for artistic acquisitions.

“Being able to build the piece in the desert at this scale is like meeting the Medicis in the 15th century,” Serra said following the work’s inauguration in 2014, referring to the Florentine family’s patronage of Renaissance artists. “Those kinds of opportunities are rarely given to an individual. In my country, art comes after football and entertainment.” — AFP



US artist Richard Serra. — AFP

Rhymes to riches:

Def Jambanks on Southeast Asia rap stars



This picture shows rapper Yung Raja recording in a studio in Singapore. —AFP photos



Thai-American rapper Prinya "DaBoyWay" Intachai, who was recently signed by hip-hop label Def Jam, performing at a club in Bangkok.



Thai-US rapper Prinya "DaBoyWay" Intachai (center) shooting a music video for his latest single "Baby U" in Bangkok.

When Singapore's Yung Raja remixed "Gucci Gang" by US rapper Lil Pump, he swapped the original's flashy cars and a prowling tiger for a beer can and Tamil food in a viral YouTube video that reeled in hip-hop label Def Jam. His 2018 version—"Poori Gang"—was a trial run for the "concoction of Tamil and English" the 24-year-old says defines his flow. The overnight success, even among non-Tamil speakers in ethnically diverse Singapore, proved to Yung Raja that he could embrace his own identity without copying other Western artists he admired.

He is among a growing number of artists from Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines snapped up by the label behind superstars from LL Cool J to Jay-Z and Rihanna. Def Jam is hoping to capitalize on a new wave of regional rap stars from the untapped Southeast Asian market where streaming platforms are flourishing. "It's just exploding," says Yung Raja, who has drawn comparisons to US superstar Kendrick Lamar. Moving from DIY passion projects to big stage shows, regional rappers are now touring beyond their borders, delivering verses in slick videos streamed online.

'Put your hands up'

In a secluded patch of forest on Bangkok's outskirts, Thai-American DaBoyWay is shooting "Baby You". Bonfires and dancers illustrate verses about being cast under a spell for a track from his new album—due March 6—that will be Def Jam's first major Southeast Asian test. A pioneer of Thailand's rap scene, DaBoyWay raps in both Thai and English, in a nod to his US background. Singles on the album vary from the gritty "Gangsh!t" to the more club-friendly "Kaow Ma", which means "Welcome" in Thai. The 39-year-old—who now has a million Instagram followers—remembers the early struggles of a genre that rubbed against Thailand's conservative norms, where fans had to be prodded into letting go at concerts.

"They would not move until you tell them it's okay to move," he tells AFP at a studio in Chonburi province, near the resort town of Pattaya. Fast forward to 2018 and popular

Thai talent show "The Rapper" racked up tens of millions of views on YouTube in its first season. That same year a collective of underground artists known as R.A.D.—or Rap Against Dictatorship—released searing verses criticizing the country's military that drew well over 60 million views on YouTube.

Fan Pornchai Puthinarabul, who attended a recent DaBoyWay show, credits his "idol" for the genre's growth in Thailand. "He's opened a market for us Thais," Pornchai told AFP before re-joining concert-goers jammed into a popular Bangkok bar. Asia's dominant music-streaming platforms like Tencent-owned JOOX have been swift to take notice. In 2020 its user base reached 290 million in Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia and Hong Kong, according to company data. Hip-hop became the second most popular genre, after pop, on JOOX in Thailand late last year.

Gamelans and traffic jams

The new roster of rap artists weave heritage, local culture, and their roots into their music. Asked for his influences Singapore's Yung Raja ticks off a melange spanning continents, from Canadian artist Drake to famed Indian actor Rajinikanth. Jakarta-born artist A. Nayaka, the first Indonesian rapper signed to Def Jam, has rhymed about the Indonesian capital's gruelling traffic and other local landmarks in a longstanding hip-hop tradition of name-checking neighbourhoods, streets, and communities. "Basically if Jakarta kids heard my lyrics they're gonna say, 'oh my god, that's that,'" he tells AFP.

The diversity of Southeast Asia—with dozens of languages, religions, cultures and ethnicities—is its strength, according to Joe Flizzow, a Malaysian considered the godfather of the region's rap scene and a Def Jam executive. Whether snatching samples from the traditional gamelan—a brass glockenspiel-like instrument—or with lyrics touching on corruption and oppression, artists are representing their origins in different ways. "You are not going to see some Bentleys and Rolls Royces," he says. "You are gonna see some Honda NSXs and GTRs... we want to be unique." —AFP

Country trio The Dixie Chicks announce first album in 14 years

More than a decade after their unceremonious black-listing from music, The Dixie Chicks on Wednesday announced their first studio album since George W. Bush was in the White House. The Texas-based country trio released their comeback single "Gaslighter" along with a music video, and said they would release their first new album since 2006 on May 1. The group that soared to fame in the late 1990s all but vanished from music's main stage after lead singer Natalie Maines told a show in London she was "ashamed" that Bush hailed from Texas—and that the band did "not want this war, this violence," referring to the then-imminent invasion of Iraq. The comment went viral and many country radio stations quickly ditched their music—which included hits like "Wide Open Spaces," "Goodbye Earl" and a popular cover of Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide." "Can the words that I said / Send somebody so over the edge / That they'd write me a letter / Saying that I better Shut up and sing / Or my life will be over?" Maines sings in the group's only mainstream success post-incident to date, "Not Ready To Make Nice." —AFP





Visitors look for carnival masks in a salon of the Venice art Mask workshop.—AFP photos

Made in Albania: Carnival Cocor that travel the world



Edmond Angoni, owner of the Venice Art Mask workshop, speaks to AFP at a quite studio in northern Albania.



Artists work on a carnival mask at the Venice Art Mask workshop in Shkoder, Albania.



An artist works on a carnival mask at the Venice Art Mask workshop in Shkoder, Albania.

In a quiet studio in northern Albania, artists delicately paint, gild and bejewel tens of thousands of Venetian masks that revelers around the world have been donning for carnival season. Some 50 staff hand-craft the one-of-a-kind pieces from their factory in lakeside Shkoder, which exports up to 30,000 masks around the globe every year. “At first every (mask) is a mystery, you have to be patient to do it, but you can’t wait to see the final product,” explained Nora Gjonaj, a 41-year-old artist who has been working in Albania’s Venice Art Mask Factory for two decades.

The masks range from relatively simple eye-coverings to towering, ornate head pieces, with costs running from 20 euros to 1,500 euros (\$21 to \$1,620) in the showroom next door. While most of the masks are destined for the Venice market-whose carnival was suddenly cancelled this year amid a coronavirus outbreak—others are shipped off to some 40 other countries, including France, the US, UK and Australia. The company also gets orders year-round from those attending masquerade balls, as well as filmmakers and theatre producers looking for costumes. Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise, for example, famously wore two of the studio’s masks in the 1999 Stanley Kubrick film “Eyes Wide Shut”.

Gold, feathers and pearls

The studio was founded in 1997 by Edmond Angoni, a 64-year-old Albanian who worked in Italy before returning home to open his own shop. “Each mask has its own beauty, magic and mystery,” he told AFP. The artists start by building a clay mold which they fill with plaster to create the base of the mask. That piece is then smoothed over with paper mache. A series of other meticulous steps follow, which Angoni says set his pieces apart from their mass-produced counterparts.

“We put a lot of emphasis on the artistic side of the masks, treating them with passion and love like works of art,” he said. The mask showroom is also becoming a attraction of its own for tourists who can peruse the dizzying display of faces, including luxury masks adorned with silver and gold leaf, feathers, diamonds and pearls. Interested visitors can purchase a mask—or simply don one of the disguises for the three-euro entrance fee.—AFP



A visitor looks for a carnival mask.



Artists work on a carnival mask at the Venice Art Mask workshop in Shkoder, Albania.

Paris Fashion week



Models present creations by Issey Miyake during the Women's Fall-Winter 2020-2021 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris, on March 1, 2020. —AFP photos





North West raps at dad Kanye's Yeezy show

North West proved to be a big hit at her dad Kanye West's Yeezy show on Monday when she performed a rap on the catwalk. The six year old showed off her rhyming skills during the presentation of Kanye's latest collection held at the Espace Oscar Niemeyer venue as part of Paris Fashion Week. Kanye, 42, joined North on stage halfway through her rap solo and looked on proudly as she confidently performed to the star-studded audience dressed in a custom-made Yeezy bright fuchsia padded gilet.

Her rap included the lines: "I will never do bad things / Walk to the street / What are those / I have new shoes, they're really cute." It was an

interpretation of five-year-old rapper ZaZa's track 'What I Do'. Her mother Kim Kardashian West was sat in the front row and watched on proudly as her daughter wowed the crowd. Kim, 39, was say next to her sister Kourtney Kardashian and her seven-year-old daughter Penelope and she took to her Instagram Stories to share her pride over North's musical talents to her 161 million followers. She said: "I'm so proud of my Northie!!!! Her 1st performance had me in tears! She had an impromptu performance on stage at her dad's Yeezy Season 8 fashion show! Shout out to @zazathecreator, North hopes you like the remix!!!" Kanye's new Yeezy collection included a line-up of monochromatic designs as well as a preview of the highly anticipated Adidas Yeezy 451 sneakers, which will be available to buy later this year. —Bang Showbiz



Gisele Bündchen: I hate being called a stepmother

Gisele Bündchen hates being called a stepmother. The 39-year-old model - who has kids Vivian, seven, and Benjamin, ten, with Tom Brady - has admitted she feels blessed that she's also been able to play an instrumental role in the life of her husband's 12-year-old son John, who he had with actress Bridget Moynahan.

In a Q&A on her Instagram Stories, Gisele shared: "I don't like the word 'stepmom'. I like the word 'bonus mom' because I feel like it's a blessing in my life. I feel so lucky that I got to have an extra wonderful little angel in my life."

Gisele has been married to the

sports icon since 2009, but has insisted there's no "secret recipe" to managing her family life. She said: "I think we just try our best to be present with the kids when we are with the kids. I think it's not so much [about] the amount of time. I think it's the quality of time." The model also stressed the importance of creating a "loving and safe" environment for her children.

She said: "I think what's really important as well is the energy that is around the children. I think they really see how much we love each other and how much we support each other." What's more, Gisele thinks it's crucial that she and her husband exhibit good communication skills in front of their children. She explained: "We never raise our voices. We never have arguments. We just talk things over if we have any issues." —Bang Showbiz



This photo shows Ngon Pok, 80, a tattooed Lainong tribesman, at his house at Lahel township in Sagaing region of Myanmar, wedged in a semi-autonomous zone near the Indian border. — AFP photos



Houn Ngo Kaw, 75, a tattooed Konyak tribesman, at Longwa village.



Nok Tan, 75, a tattooed Konyak tribesman.

Myanmar's last generation of **tattooed headhunters**

Ngon Pok remembers his father and grandfather returning triumphantly to his tribal village in Myanmar's far north with a human head—and the agony of the tattoo he was given to celebrate their victory. He is a proud member of the Lainong, one of dozens of Naga tribes—many with grisly histories—wedged in a semi-autonomous zone near the Indian border. Ngon Pok, who believes he's around 80, gestures to his six-year-old grandson, saying he must have been about the same age when he received his tattoo. "People had to catch me and hold me down," he tells AFP, removing his jumper to reveal his chest adorned with parallel, vertical stripes and two warrior figures.

Tribes and villages commonly waged war over land, and there are reports of warriors hacking off their enemies' heads for trophies as late as the 1960s. To celebrate, a thorn would be used to drive tree sap under the warrior's skin to ink a permanent reminder of his headhunting prowess—and his family would often follow suit. Ngon Pok's wife, aged about 75, says she chose to have the geometric designs etched on her arms, legs and face as a teenager.

"It was so painful," Khamyo Pon Nyun remembers, hoisting up her skirt to expose her legs. "But I told myself if my mum and my aunts could do it then so could I," she says, adding with a smile that—unlike her husband—she did not need to be restrained to withstand the pain.

Naga nationalism

The Naga consist of dozens of tribes in a region so isolated that neighboring villages often speak completely different languages and dialects. Divided between India and Myanmar by a border many deem as artificial, today a proud sense of nationalism unites the disparate tribes. This is one of the poorest corners of Myanmar, where many must walk for days to reach the nearest



A Naga tribesman checking an old hunting rifle at his home at a village in Sagaing region of Myanmar.

Lifestyle | Feature

Friday, March 6, 2020



A Naga tribesman standing in front of his house decorated with skeletons of buffalo heads.



Man Chen, belonging to Konyak tribe, walking in a village shelter in Sagaing region of Myanmar.



A Naga tribesman standing in front of his house decorated with skeletons of buffalo heads.



Nok Tan, 75, a tattooed Konyak tribeman, cooking in his house.



Ku Myo, 35, a tattooed Lainong tribeswoman, carrying her child in their house.

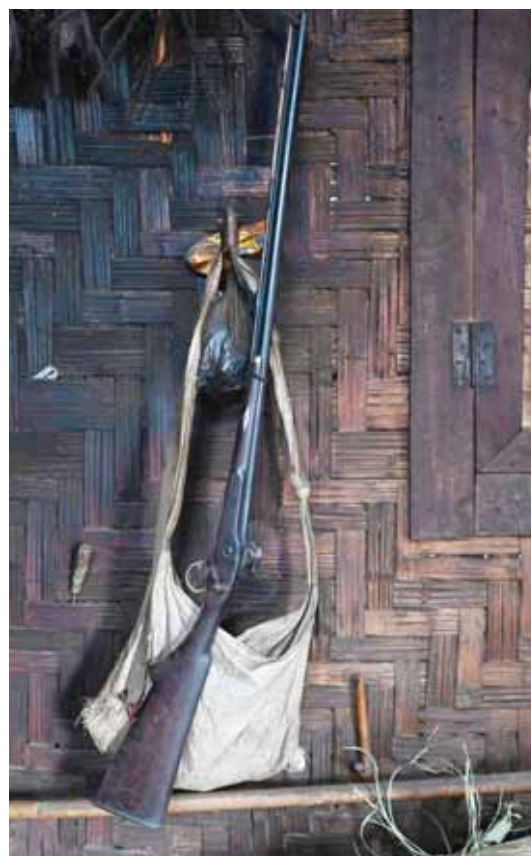
town, few children progress beyond primary school education and only 40 percent of villages boast electricity. People subscribe to a complex patchwork of customs, blending animist beliefs with various forms of Christianity brought by missionaries in recent decades—and intertwining their warrior traditions.

American anthropologist and author Lars Krutak has travelled the world studying tribal tattoos, including among the Naga. “What strikes me as unique is the diversity of Naga tattooing patterns,” he says, adding there are more than 20 tribes that tattoo across both sides of the border. They can signify tribal identity, life accomplishments or the completion of a rite of passage. In some cases, people believed they would need the designs to transition to the afterlife, Krutak explains.

Gory tradition

One of the most feared tribes was the Konyak, now divided between India and Myanmar, their villages so remote Christianity only made inroads here in the 1970s. The Konyak village of Longwa actually straddles the border, set on a high ridge commanding a view of both countries and is the seat of the tribe’s king, whose house symbolically lies directly on the frontier. Only a handful of the village’s former headhunting warriors remain, sporting formidable tattoos that cover much of their faces in dark blue ink with skull-like patches left bare around the eyes.

Houn Ngo Kaw, 75, claims he helped put an end to the gory tradition in his village after he converted to Christianity in 1978 and admits “it’s better now.” Younger generations of Naga rarely wear the traditional tattoos associated with headhunting, but there are exceptions. Ku Myo, 35, says her parents were less than impressed after she came home aged 15 with her face tattooed. “I did it without them knowing and they beat me when they found out,” she says, admitting she too would be furious if her children exhibited the same rebellious streak. But few seem to lament the passing of a tradition that will soon be lost forever. “I wanted to be one of the last tattooed warriors and I am,” Konyak elder Houn Ngo Kaw says with a huge grin. “Of course I’m happy.” — AFP



An old hunting rifle, a bag containing gun powder and ammunition hanging inside the house of a Naga tribesman at a village in Sagaing region of Myanmar.



Khamyo Pon Nyun, 75, a tattooed Lainong tribeswoman, resting at her house at Lahel township.



An aerial photo shows the Ice Hotel in the village of Jukkasjärvi, near Kiruna, in Swedish Lapland. — AFP photos

Tourists brave sub-zero temperatures for a night at *Sweden's ice hotel*



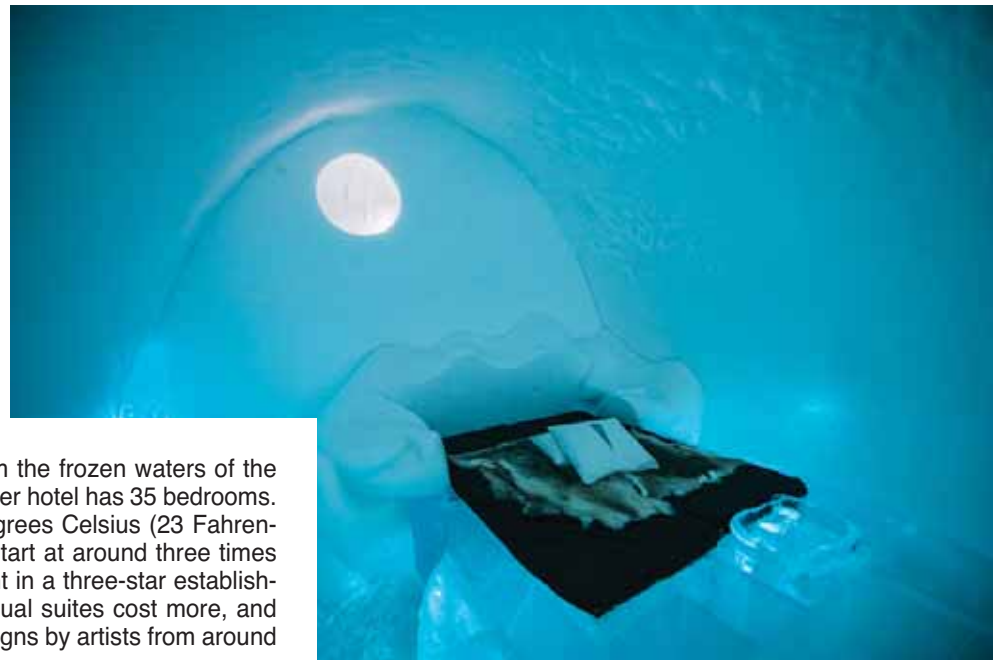
An aerial photo shows the Ice Hotel in the village of Jukkasjärvi.

High above the Arctic Circle and nestled in the snow-dusted forests of northern Sweden, gaggles of tourists gathered on a February morning for a glimpse of hallways, bedrooms and a wedding chapel sculpted from ice, part of the 30th incarnation of Sweden's ice hotel. Stopping in blue-white hallways to take snaps of a chandelier and ornately decorated bedrooms entirely carved from ice, the tourists are among the 50,000 day visitors to the hotel every year, founded in 1989 by a hotelier looking to attract visitors to the remote town of Jukkasjärvi, 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of the Arctic Circle.

Lifestyle | Feature



An ice chandelier hanging in the Main Hall of the Ice Hotel, designed by the artists Jens Thoms Ivarsson, Mats Nilsson.



The Spring Dream room, designed by the artists Lei Zhao and Yong Zhao, is pictured at the Ice Hotel.

Built every October from the frozen waters of the nearby river Torne, the winter hotel has 35 bedrooms. Temperatures reach -5 degrees Celsius (23 Fahrenheit) in the rooms, which start at around three times the average price of a night in a three-star establishment in Stockholm. Individual suites cost more, and feature sculptures and designs by artists from around the world.

One room inspired by the aurora borealis—the northern lights that can be seen in the skies nearby—features lighting that changes colour, as well as a giant snow sculpture of a reindeer’s head, all set to a soundtrack of ambient music and, occasionally, reindeer grunts. Around 20,000 guests spend a night in the hotel every year. But 25-year-old guide Julia Hansers said guests usually react less to the cold than to the tranquility. “A lot of people coming here live in the city, and there you always have some sort of sounds and noise around you, and inside the ice hotel it’s completely quiet,” said Hansers, peering out from under a thick woolly hat.



People visit the Ice Hotel.



A visitor stands on an ice tower on the grounds of the Ice Hotel.



A visitor walks past the Ice Hotel.

Lifestyle | Feature



A room at the Ice Hotel.

People visit the Main Hall of the Ice Hotel, designed by the artists Jens Thoms Ivarsson, Mats Nilsson and words by Petri Tuominen.

Bo Bjerggaard, a gallerist from Copenhagen, spent a night wrapped in a sleeping bag and a reindeer-skin throw. "During the night I had to get up and then it was of course cold," Bjerggaard said, standing outside in the hotel's dazzling white courtyard made from snow. "Then (it's) great again when you come back into the sleeping bag-you sleep so well because of the temperature," he said with a smile. Guests can also enjoy a drink in the ice bar, where all beverages are served in

glasses made from ice. Since 2016 the hotel has also used solar panels to generate electricity to cool a nearby building to below zero to allow them to keep 20 rooms frozen all year round. When spring arrives, the winter hotel's rooms are closed and it melts back into the river until October, when construction begins again. — AFP



A man takes pictures as he visits the Ice Hotel.



People visit the Ice Hotel.



People visit the Ice Hotel.



People visit the Ceremony Hall, Ginkgo, designed by Kauppi and Kauppi at the Ice Hotel.



People visit the Main Hall of the Ice Hotel.



The Main Hall of the Ice Hotel, designed by the artists Jens Thoms Ivarsson, Mats Nilsson and words by Petri Tuominen, is pictured.

Comic

Word Search

Old TV Shows 4

Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.

F A L L G U Y T I C N I P S L A R T
 I N P E R R Y M A S O N A T A D O N
 T E L O U G R A N T B G A D L O L U
 L M B A N A C E K A E L E E L H O H
 L A R A M I E H Y V I H K A Y R C A
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| ALIEN NATION | DUE SOUTH | HERE'S LUCY | PERRY MASON |
| ALLY MCBEAL | ELLEN | IN LIVING COLOR | PEYTON PLACE |
| AMEN | EMPTY NEST | LARAMIE | RHODA |
| BANACEK | F TROOP | LOST IN SPACE | RYAN'S HOPE |
| BAYWATCH | FALL GUY | LOU GRANT | SEA HUNT |
| BLOSSOM | FAMILY | MAJOR DAD | SPIN CITY |
| CHICAGO HOPE | FELICITY | MARTIN | THE ROOKIES |
| CHINA BEACH | FRAGGLE ROCK | MATLOCK | VEGAS |
| COACH | HART TO HART | MR BELVEDERE | WISEGUY |
| DEAR JOHN | HAZEL | NASH BRIDGES | ZORRO |

Yesterday's Solution

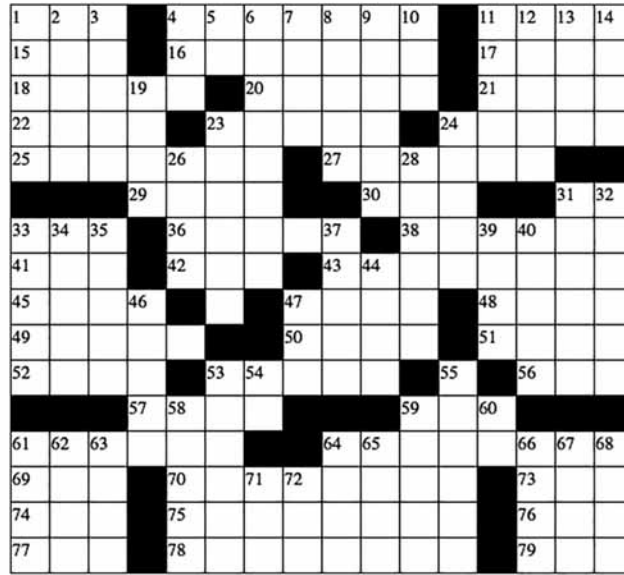
Old TV Shows 3

T N I A S E H T T P R E T E N D E R Q
 E O Y R R A H R E D N A L H G I H R U
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| ADDAMS FAMILY | FAMILY TIES | KNOTS LANDING | QUANTUM LEAP |
| AVENGERS | GET SMART | KUNG FU | QUINCY |
| BATMAN | GOLDEN GIRLS | LONE RANGER | ROCKFORD FILES |
| BEWITCHED | GUNSMOKE | MAGNUM P.I. | ROSEANNE |
| BRADY BUNCH | HAPPY DAYS | MANNIX | STAR TREK |
| CHARLIE'S ANGELS | HARRY O | MASH | THE SAINT |
| COACH | HIGHLANDER | MCCLLOUD | TWIN PEAKS |
| COLUMBO | HOGAN'S HEROES | MONKEES | WINGS |
| COSBY SHOW | HOTEL | NIGHT GALLERY | WONDER YEARS |
| CYBILL | I LOVE LUCY | PRETENDER | X FILES |
| DRAGNET | | | |

The hidden TV show is: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GRIZZLY ADAMS

Crossword 2451



ACROSS

- A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
- A bitter yellow powder used to treat skin diseases.
- (especially of promises or contracts) Not violated or disregarded.
- Inflammation of the urethra of unknown cause.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Monaco or its people.
- (prefix) Indicating difference or variation.
- Greek author of fables (circa 620-560 BC).
- A cravat with wide square ends.
- French physicist noted for research on magnetism (born in 1904).
- Fail to do something.
- Release from a clasp.
- Divide into two or more branches.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.
- Chiefly perennial grasses of cool temperate regions.
- A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- (Sumerian) Consort of Dumuzi (Tammuz).
- (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
- Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
- Striped hyena of southeast Africa that feeds chiefly on insects.
- The basic unit of money in Iran.
- Prevent from being included or considered or accepted.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Willing to face danger.
- Rock that in its molten form (as magma) issues from volcanos.
- (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
- The habitation of wild animals.
- An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
- Of an instrument of certain death.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Having the rafters especially having them visible.
- The cry made by sheep.
- The molecular weight of a substance expressed in grams.
- Heater that burns oil (as kerosine) for heating or cooking.
- A belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- Someone with an aggressively negative attitude.
- Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.

DOWN

- Snarled or stalled in complete confusion.
- An association of nations dedicated to economic and political cooperation in southeastern Asia.
- An artistic form of auditory communication incorporating instrumental or vocal tones in a structured and continuous manner.
- The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
- An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.
- Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
- Danish philologist whose work on Old Norse pioneered in the field of comparative linguistics (1787-1832).
- Come to pass.
- African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
- (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
- Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
- A mournful poem.
- Humble request for help.
- A fee levied for the use of roads or bridges (used for maintenance).
- Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- Someone who lends money at excessive rates of interest.
- A choice or delicious dish.
- Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
- The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
- Live so as to annul some previous behavior.
- A woman's dress style that imitates the caftan cloaks worn by men in the Near East.
- A projecting bay window corbeled or cantilevered out from a wall.
- Jordan's port.
- A pale rose-colored variety of the ruby spinel.
- Absent without permission.
- A member of a people who have no permanent home but move about according to the seasons.
- The highest level or degree attainable.
- Wood of a larch tree.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
- A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
- Horizontal beam used as a finishing piece over a door or window.
- American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
- Cause to be annoyed, irritated, or resentful.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- Very dark black.
- The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
- Stalk of a moss capsule.
- A system of weights used for precious metals and gemstones.
- Wading birds of warm regions having long slender down-curved bills.
- Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
- Fallow deer.
- (British informal) Not to be deceived or hoodwinked n l.
- Syndrome resulting from a serious acute (sometimes fatal) infection associated with the presence of staphylococcus.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings



00:20 Desperate Hours
02:15 UFO
04:00 Escape From L.A.
05:50 King Arthur
08:00 Tsunabee: The Wrath Cometh
09:30 The Quake
11:25 King Arthur
13:40 Scorched Earth
15:30 Avengers: Age Of Ultron
18:00 Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace
20:15 Dick Tracy
22:00 Stargate



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
02:00 PD Cam
02:25 PD Cam
02:55 Ghost Hunters
03:45 It Takes A Killer
04:10 It Takes A Killer
04:30 Live PD: Police Patrol
04:55 Live PD: Police Patrol
05:15 The First 48
05:55 Homicide Hunter
06:40 Homicide: Hours To Kill
07:30 It Takes A Killer
08:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
08:25 Homicide Hunter
09:10 Homicide Hunter
09:55 The First 48
10:45 The First 48
11:40 Homicide: Hours To Kill
12:35 Homicide Hunter
13:30 Crimes That Shook Britain
14:25 Live PD: Police Patrol
14:55 Live PD: Police Patrol
15:25 Homicide Hunter
16:20 Homicide Hunter
17:15 Homicide: Hours To Kill
18:10 Live PD: Police Patrol
18:40 Live PD: Police Patrol
19:10 Live PD: Police Patrol
19:40 Live PD: Police Patrol
20:05 It Takes A Killer
20:35 It Takes A Killer
21:05 The First 48
22:00 Homicide Hunter
23:00 Crimes That Shook Britain

14:25 Key And Peele
14:50 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
15:20 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
15:50 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
16:15 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
16:45 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
17:15 Friends
17:40 Friends
18:05 Friends
18:30 Friends
19:00 Friends
19:30 Martha And Snoop Potluck Party Challenge
20:00 The New Negros
20:30 50 Central
21:00 50 Central
21:30 50 Central
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
22:30 Goatface
23:30 Roast Battle UK



00:00 The Murder Tapes
01:00 Homicide City
02:00 Homicide City
03:00 Homicide City
04:00 Homicide City
04:45 Homicide City
05:30 Reasonable Doubt
06:20 Nightmare Next Door
07:10 Murder Comes To Town
08:00 Shadow Of Doubt
08:55 Shadow Of Doubt
09:50 Last Night In...
10:45 Last Night In...
11:40 Nightmare Next Door
12:35 Reasonable Doubt
13:30 Reasonable Doubt
14:25 Murder Comes To Town
15:20 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
16:15 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
17:10 Nightmare Next Door
18:05 Impact Of Murder
19:00 Impact Of Murder
20:00 Murder In The Heartland
21:00 Murder In The Heartland
22:00 Your Worst Nightmare
23:00 Primal Instinct



00:10 Evermoor Chronicles
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Alex & Co.
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Evermoor Chronicles
02:40 Alex & Co.
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Evermoor Chronicles
04:20 Evermoor Chronicles
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Violetta
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Rolling With The Ronks
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Shake It Up
07:25 Raven's Home
07:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:55 Bunk'd
08:20 Stuck In The Middle
08:45 K.C. Undercover
09:10 Bizaardvark
09:35 Jessie
10:00 Jessie
10:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
11:15 Bizaardvark
11:40 Bizaardvark
12:05 Liv And Maddie
12:30 Liv And Maddie
12:55 K.C. Undercover
13:20 K.C. Undercover
13:45 Bunk'd
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug

& Cat Noir
15:00 Shake It Up
15:25 Shake It Up
15:50 A.N.T. Farm
16:15 A.N.T. Farm
16:40 Bizaardvark
17:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
17:10 Amphibia
17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
18:00 Raven's Home
18:25 Raven's Home
18:50 Raven's Home
19:15 Raven's Home
19:40 Stuck In The Middle
20:05 K.C. Undercover
20:30 Shake It Up
20:55 Shake It Up
21:20 Liv And Maddie
21:45 Liv And Maddie
22:10 Jessie
22:35 Jessie
23:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
23:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
23:50 Lollipop



00:00 PJ Masks
00:15 PJ Masks
00:30 The Lion Guard
01:00 Sofia The First
01:25 Music Lullabies
01:30 Gigantosaurus
02:00 PJ Masks
02:30 PJ Masks
03:00 Zou
03:15 Zou
03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:00 Henry Hugglemonster
04:30 Paprika
04:40 Zou
04:55 Zou
05:10 Zou
05:25 Paprika
05:35 Paprika
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Gigantosaurus
06:30 PJ Masks
06:45 PJ Masks
07:00 PJ Masks
07:15 PJ Masks
07:30 Gigantosaurus
07:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
08:00 The Lion Guard
08:30 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Adventures
09:00 Vampirina
09:30 Bluey
09:40 Bluey
09:50 Bluey
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Elena Of Avalor
11:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
11:30 Bluey
11:40 Bluey
11:50 Bluey
12:00 Vampirina
12:30 PJ Masks
13:00 PJ Masks
13:30 Doc McStuffins
14:00 Puppy Dog Pals
14:30 Puppy Dog Pals
15:00 PJ Masks
15:30 PJ Masks
16:00 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Adventures
16:15 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Adventures
16:30 T.O.T.S.
17:00 Elena Of Avalor
17:25 Vampirina Ghouls Girls Rock!
17:30 Elena Of Avalor
18:00 Bluey
18:10 Bluey
18:20 Bluey
18:30 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Adventures
18:45 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Adventures
19:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
19:30 Vampirina
20:00 PJ Masks
20:15 PJ Masks
20:30 The Lion Guard
21:00 Sofia The First
21:25 Music Lullabies
21:30 Bluey
21:40 Bluey
21:50 Bluey
22:00 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Ad-

ventures
22:15 Mickey Mouse Mixed-Up Ad-ventures
22:30 Elena Of Avalor
23:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
23:30 Vampirina



00:15 Dual Survival
01:05 Richard Hammond's Big Abandoned Engineering
01:50 Abandoned Engineering
02:35 Impossible Engineering
03:20 Kindig Customs
04:05 Kindig Customs
04:50 How Do They Do It?
05:15 How Do They Do It?
05:35 Baggage Battles
06:00 Shed And Buried
06:20 Baggage Battles
06:45 Dual Survival
07:35 Deadliest Catch
08:20 Gold Rush
09:55 Alaska: The Last Frontier
10:45 Salvage Hunters: The Re-storers
11:30 Kindig Customs
12:20 Kindig Customs
13:05 Shed And Buried
13:30 Baggage Battles
13:55 Salvage Hunters: The Re-storers
14:40 Alaskan Bush People
15:30 Contact
16:15 Wheeler Dealers: Dream Car
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
17:50 Gold Rush
18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:05 How Do They Do It?
19:25 Kindig Customs
20:15 Kindig Customs
21:00 Wheeler Dealers
21:50 Wheeler Dealers: Dream Car
22:40 Mighty Truckers
23:30 Deadliest Catch



00:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
00:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
01:00 Space Chickens In Space
01:20 Space Chickens In Space
01:45 Counterfeit Cat
02:10 Counterfeit Cat
02:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
02:55 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:20 Space Chickens In Space
03:40 Space Chickens In Space
04:00 Counterfeit Cat
04:30 Counterfeit Cat
04:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
05:15 Furiki Wheels
05:35 Supa Strikas
06:00 Lab Rats
06:25 Lab Rats
06:50 Phineas And Ferb
07:15 Phineas And Ferb
07:40 Gravity Falls
08:05 Gravity Falls
08:30 Phineas And Ferb
08:55 Phineas And Ferb
09:20 Big City Greens
09:40 Big City Greens
10:05 Phineas And Ferb
10:25 Phineas And Ferb
10:50 Lab Rats
11:10 Lab Rats
11:35 Phineas And Ferb
11:55 Phineas And Ferb
12:20 Gravity Falls
12:45 Gravity Falls
13:10 Big Chibi 6: The Series
13:15 Phineas And Ferb
13:40 Phineas And Ferb
14:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
14:30 Phineas And Ferb
14:55 Phineas And Ferb
15:20 Big City Greens
15:45 Big City Greens
16:10 Supa Strikas
16:35 Supa Strikas
17:00 Big Hero 6 The Series
17:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
17:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
17:55 Phineas And Ferb
18:20 Phineas And Ferb

18:45 Lab Rats
19:10 Lab Rats Elite Force
19:35 Lab Rats Elite Force
20:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
20:25 Gravity Falls
20:50 Phineas And Ferb
21:15 Phineas And Ferb
21:40 DuckTales
22:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:55 DuckTales Shorts
23:00 Furiki Wheels
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost
23:50 Dude That's My Ghost



00:00 Flip It Like Disick
01:00 Flip It Like Disick
02:00 Nightly Pop
02:30 Nightly Pop
03:00 Flip It Like Disick
04:00 Flip It Like Disick
05:00 Botched
06:00 Botched
07:00 E! News
07:30 E! News
08:00 Pop Of The Morning
08:55 E! News: Daily Pop
09:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
10:45 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
11:40 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:35 E! News
13:00 E! News
13:30 Pop Of The Morning
14:25 E! News: Daily Pop
15:20 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
16:15 Botched
17:10 Botched
18:05 Very Cavallari
19:00 Very Cavallari
20:00 Very Cavallari
21:00 Meet The Frasers
21:30 Meet The Frasers
22:00 Meet The Frasers
22:30 Meet The Frasers
23:00 Nightly Pop
23:30 Nightly Pop



00:30 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
01:15 History's Most Hated
02:00 UFO Hunters
02:45 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
03:30 The Universe
04:15 Clash Of The Gods
05:00 Ancient Aliens
05:45 Knight Fight
06:30 America's Book Of Secrets
07:15 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
08:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
08:45 The Universe
09:30 Clash Of The Gods
10:15 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
11:45 America's Book Of Secrets
12:30 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
13:15 UFO Hunters
14:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
14:45 The Universe
15:30 Clash Of The Gods
16:15 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
17:45 America's Book Of Secrets
18:30 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
19:15 UFO Hunters
20:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
20:45 The Universe
21:30 Clash Of The Gods
22:15 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Cowboys & Outlaws
23:45 Mummy Forensics



00:20 Mountain Men
01:05 American Pickers
01:50 Pawn Stars
02:10 Pawn Stars

02:35 Storage Wars
03:00 Storage Wars
03:25 The Food That Built The World
05:05 Forged In Fire
06:00 Ice Road Truckers
06:45 Mountain Men
07:30 American Pickers
08:15 Pawn Stars
08:35 Pawn Stars
09:00 Storage Wars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 The Food That Built The World
11:15 Forged In Fire
12:00 American Pickers
12:45 American Pickers
13:30 American Pickers
14:15 American Pickers
15:00 Forged In Fire
15:45 Forged In Fire
16:30 Forged In Fire
17:15 Mountain Men
18:00 Mountain Men
18:45 Mountain Men
19:30 Mountain Men
20:15 The Unexplained With William Shatner
21:00 Swamp People
21:50 Swamp People
22:40 Ancient Aliens
23:30 American Pickers



01:00 Route Awakening
01:25 Peter Kuruvita's Mexican Fiesta
01:50 Sara's Australia Unveiled
02:15 Sara's Australia Unveiled
02:40 Food Lab
03:05 Food Lab
03:30 Ugly House To Lovely House With George Clarke
04:20 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
05:10 Cradle Of Mandopop
06:00 Extreme China
06:50 A House Of Its Time
07:15 A House Of Its Time
07:40 Warrior Road Trip
08:30 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
08:55 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
09:20 Heathrow
10:10 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
10:35 Route Awakening
11:00 Cradle Of Mandopop
11:50 Extreme China
12:40 A House Of Its Time
13:05 A House Of Its Time
13:30 Warrior Road Trip
14:20 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
14:45 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
15:10 Heathrow
16:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
16:25 Route Awakening
16:50 New Orleans: City Of Stories
17:45 Pond Stars
18:40 A House Of Its Time
19:05 A House Of Its Time
19:35 Eat: The Story Of Food
20:30 Food Lab
20:55 Food Lab
21:25 Bangkok Airport
22:20 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
22:45 Route Awakening
23:15 New Orleans: City Of Stories



00:00 Apocalypse: War Of Worlds
00:55 Primal Survivor
01:45 Locked Up Abroad
02:35 Nazi Megastructures
03:25 Cruise Ship Diaries
04:15 Apocalypse: War Of Worlds
05:05 Primal Survivor
06:00 Locked Up Abroad
06:55 Nazi Megastructures
07:50 Apocalypse: War Of Worlds
08:45 Primal Survivor
09:40 WWII's Greatest Raids
10:35 Brain Games
11:30 Big, Bigger, Biggest
12:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
12:50 David Rocco's Dolce India
13:20 WWII's Greatest Raids
14:15 Airport Security: Peru
15:10 Air Crash Investigation

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You could find the hardest person to face is you, Aries. You tend toward introspection, and you may find yourself shrinking into self-recrimination. You could analyze the important people in your life and yet fail to address the one you really need to look at – you. As you continually strive for perfection, give yourself proper credit. Do something nice for yourself today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Take advantage of the creative energy in the air today, Taurus. Keep your hands moving and your imagination flowing toward something fun and artistic. If you begin to doubt your work, you may fall down a spiral of creative blockage. Don't get into the habit of constantly judging the quality or outcome of your work. Give yourself free rein to open up and explore whatever comes to mind.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your sixth sense is right on target, Gemini, so trust your instincts today. You're likely to connect with someone in a wonderful partnership that will help you foster the very plan you want to develop now. Stay close to those things that resonate strongly with your morals. The answer is in front of you; you don't have to search too far afield in order to find it.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Take a break from your routine, Cancer. You might feel like you're leading an army into battle as you strive for new adventures and conquer new realms. Make sure you take a bit of time out today to stop and let your troops rest. You deserve a little rest yourself. Use this moment of stillness to form your plan of attack so you're sure about how to proceed.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

The key for you is to minimize your daily drama as much as possible, Leo. You may not realize how much you cripple yourself by the way you exaggerate every aspect of your life. Try not to give so much of your attention to things that really don't matter much. Petty jealousy and gossip about other people's lives are especially irrelevant in your world.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Be careful of advertising yourself as someone who is so strong and mentally competent that you're capable of handling everything, Virgo. Take note that the strongest mule on the trail usually ends up carrying the most weight. Your emotions are more sensitive than you may think, and certainly more than you demonstrate to others. Be honest about the way you feel and not just the way you think.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Things should flow well for you today with very little effort on your part, Libra. Take note that if any quarrel arises, it's an indication that the person you're arguing with isn't necessarily the right person to deal with or confide in. Emotional issues are likely to be the hardest ones to overcome, but this shouldn't be a problem for you. You have the ability to work through these like a pro.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is meant to be a nice, relaxing day, so treat it as such, Scorpio. There's no need for you to plan any great strategy at this time. Try to take it easy and not indulge in any unnecessary stress. This is your time to enjoy the moment. Don't tax your mind by overanalyzing everything that comes your way. Go with the flow and have a great time regardless of what you end up doing.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your sensual nature is heightened, Sagittarius, and you'll find yourself engaged in tender moments and languid peacefulness in the company of others. Soothe your soul by letting yourself slip into situations that give you the emotional freedom to do or say whatever comes to mind. Life should be like a love poem written by a great master. Accept the good energy that comes your way.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Allow your eager and restless nature to express itself in ways other than through the spoken word, Capricorn. Show someone that you care through your gentle touch or a big bear hug. Hold on a little bit more tightly than you might normally. There's an unspoken understanding that comes when you communicate through nothing but pure silence. Work on developing this kind of connection with those closest to you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a terrific day for you, Aquarius. You should find that your relationships, especially with men, go exceptionally well. Your tender and extremely sensitive nature is finally being recognized as the treasure chest it is. There are many times in which this type of personality is seen as weak, yet today is one of those times in which you're given the full credit you deserve.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

A selfish attitude on your part won't be tolerated today, regardless of the circumstances, Pisces. Don't make it worse for yourself by pretending that you don't notice others' hurt feelings. People are likely to be extra sensitive today, so be careful about trying to impose your will on someone who really wants nothing more than an ear to talk to and a shoulder to cry on.

Country Codes

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antigua	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Nigar	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Friday, March 6, 2020

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

- ◆ Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally Invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally Invasive Microscopic Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
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DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
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- o Referee reviewer of International journal of Dermatology.

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- o Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- o Body & Face Contouring.
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@DrFahadS, @RenovaBB, @DardonaBB
Email: drfahad@beautybeyond.com.kw
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DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant Interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vasoukar Center

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- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4- Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

Dr. Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Consultant, Laryngologist

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

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

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complicated)
- ◆ VATS Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Rotoscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Substitutes & 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. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

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

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Dr. Hani Haider
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Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368 Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

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

Academic Certificates – Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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- Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- G.I. surgeries.
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- Anal surgeries.

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

Classifieds

Friday, March 6, 2020

CHANGE OF NAME

I Prashanth Karivellur, father of Aditya Prashanth holder of Indian Passport No. R2310839 issued at Kuwait on 05.03.2017, permanent address of Flat No. 103 Providence Abode 1 Bejai new Road Mangalore Karnataka and presently residing in Kuwait do hereby change my son's name as follows: Given Name: Aditya and Surname: Prashanth. Objections if any may be forwarded to Embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave Safat, Arabian Gulf St. Kuwait City 13015 (C 5702)

I Prashanth Karivellur holder of Indian Passport No P6278035 issued at Kuwait on 16.10.2016, permanent address of Flat No 103 Providence Abode 1 Bejai new Road Mangalore Karnataka and presently residing in Kuwait do hereby change my name as follows: Given Name: Prashanth and Surname: Karivellur. Objections if any may be forwarded to Embassy of India Diplomatic Enclave Safat Arabian Gulf St. Kuwait City 13015 (C 5702)

I, HAFSA, with Indian PP No.

T8196510 issued at Kuwait hereby declare that my name is changed to Given name: HAFSA Surname: SHAIK ANNWAR BASHA. (C 5701)

I, ZAINAB, with Indian PP No. M7066951 issued at Kuwait hereby declare that my name is changed to Given name: ZAINAB Surname: SHAIK ANNWAR BASHA. (C 5701)

I, HAMZA, with Indian PP No. M7067076 issued at Kuwait hereby declare that my name is changed to Given name: HAMZA Surname: SHAIK ANNWAR BASHA. (C 5701)

I, FATHIMA, with Indian PP No. M5456712 issued at Kuwait hereby declare that my name is changed to Given name: FATHIMA Surname: SHAIK ANNWAR BASHA. (C 5701) 5-3-2020

This is to inform that, I Gireeshkrishnan Oonnikrishnan, holder of Indian Passport Number H9245077 do hereby change my name format to Surname: Oonnikrishnan, Given name: Gireesh Krishnan. (C 5650) 4-3-2020

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Warm with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 35 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Rather cold with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	16 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	26 °C	09 °C
ABDALY	24 °C	10 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	25 °C	12 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	25 °C	12 °C
SALMIYAH	22 °C	17 °C
AHMADI	23 °C	15 °C
NUWAISIB	25 °C	10 °C
WAFRA	25 °C	10 °C
SALMY	23 °C	09 °C

SFC. CHART	05/03/2020 0000 UTC
<small>MSL Analysis (hPa) Valid 0000 UTC 05 MAR 2020</small>	

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	03/06	Warm	27 °C	10 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 35 km/h
Saturday	03/07	Warm with rising dust and some scattered clouds will appear	26 °C	11 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Sunday	03/08	Warm	26 °C	11 °C	NW	10 - 35 km/h
Monday	03/09	Warm	28 °C	12 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:51
Sunrise	06:10
Zuhr	12:00
Asr	15:20
Sunset	17:50
Isha	19:06

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	25 °C
MIN. Temp.	10 °C
MAX. RH	62 %
MIN. RH	22 %
MAX. Wind	NW 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Business

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2020

38 IMF chief says coronavirus erases hopes for stronger growth in 2020



39 Unpaid and unseen: Female workers bolster UK economy



41 OPEC agrees on large oil output cut amid virus outbreak if Russia joins



Exeter Airport		Flight Departures			10:50
Flight	Destination	Desk	Gate		
Thursday 05 March 2020					
flybe. BE 303	1040 DUBLIN	CANCELLED		1,2,3,4	
flybe. BE 494	1050 BELFAST CITY	CANCELLED		1,2,3,4	
flybe. BE 1533	1315 AMSTERDAM	CANCELLED		1,2,3,4	
flybe. BE 210	1335 EDINBURGH	CANCELLED		1,2,3,4	
flybe. BE 310	1435 GUERNSEY	CANCELLED		1,2,3,4	
flybe. BE 3505	1440 PARIS CDG	CANCELLED		1,2,3,4	
flybe. BE 375	1505 MANCHESTER	CANCELLED		1,2,3,4	

EXETER, Britain: An electronic flight departure board displays 'cancelled' status's for all Flybe flights due to have taken-off from Exeter Airport in Exeter, south-west England yesterday following the news that the airline had collapsed into bankruptcy. —AFP

Coronavirus hit to airlines could top \$100bn

Flybe collapses; IATA sees lost revenue of \$63-\$113bn due to virus

LONDON/SINGAPORE: The coronavirus epidemic could rob passenger airlines of up to \$113 billion in revenue this year, an industry body warned yesterday, more than three times a projection it made just two weeks ago as the virus continues to spread around the world.

The warning from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) came as British regional carrier Flybe became the first big casualty of the slump in travel demand due to the crisis. Norwegian Air also scrapped its profit forecast for 2020, while US budget carrier Southwest predicted a \$200-300 million hit to its first-quarter operating revenues.

"There are lots of airlines that have got relatively narrow profit margins and lots of debt, and a cash flow shock like this could certainly send some into a very difficult situation," IATA Chief Economist Brian Pearce told a media event in Singapore. Airlines across the globe are rushing to cut flights and costs, and warning of a hit to earnings, as a new virus that started in China spreads, raising fears of a pandemic that could plunge the global economy into recession.

In a sign of the difficulties this is creating for airlines, a Turkish Airlines jet was flown back to Istanbul without any passengers on board yesterday on orders from Singapore after a passenger who had arrived on the same plane on Tuesday tested positive for the virus. IATA projected the hit to passenger airlines in lost revenue from the crisis could be anywhere between \$63 billion and \$113 billion this year, depending on the virus's progression. On Feb. 20, it had forecast a hit of \$29 billion.

The latest estimates equate to a drop of between 11 percent and 19 percent compared with its 2020 industry revenue forecast in December. IATA said its lower forecast was based on the virus being contained in

current markets with over 100 cases as of March 2, while the higher estimate was based on a broader epidemic. Both scenarios assume there will be a recovery by late summer. The COVID-19 virus has killed more than 3,000 people and infected tens of thousands more, mostly in China. But it has now spread to more than 60 other countries, leading to travel and other restrictions. South Korea, Italy, and Iran have been particularly badly affected. Germany, Japan, France, Spain, the United States, Singapore and Hong Kong have all reported more than 100 cases. Among the latest events to be cancelled is the world air traffic management congress in Madrid, which had been scheduled for March 10-12.

'Inevitable'

The failure of British regional airline Flybe comes less than two months after a rescue deal for the company was agreed by its owners and the UK government. Despite its commitment to improving regional transport links, the British government backed away from that deal due to the scale of the hit to demand from the virus outbreak. "All flights have been grounded and the UK business has ceased trading with immediate effect," Flybe said as it entered administration, a form of protection from creditors. The failure of the airline, which has long struggled with losses, not only puts around 2,400 jobs at risk but could also see some regional UK airports struggle. Flybe carried around eight million passengers a year between 81 airports and was owned by a consortium of Virgin Atlantic, Stobart Group and Cyrus Capital. Its collapse came a day after Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary told Reuters it was "inevitable" the coronavirus crisis would lead to airline bankruptcies.

Cancellations

Norwegian Air, a pioneer of low-cost transatlantic travel, has also been struggling for years due to cut-throat competition and heavy debts built up during rapid expansion. The company, which has repeatedly raised cash from shareholders to stay in business, said yesterday it was scrapping its 2020 earnings guidance, which had predicted a return to profit after three years of losses, due to the drop in travel demand and disruption caused by the virus. It also said it would cancel 22 long-haul flights between Europe and the United States from March 28 to May 5, with routes from Rome to Los Angeles, Boston and New York seeing a reduced number of departures. Norwegian shares, which have lost more than 50 percent of their value this year, were down almost 7 percent at 1130 GMT. Analysts say few airlines are likely to remain unscathed, as both business and tourist travel is being affected.

The Global Business Travel Association said last week the crisis could scythe \$560 billion from spending on corporate travel this year, a 37 percent drop from its 2020 global expenditure forecast, as meetings and events are cancelled and companies limit travel to protect employees.

Data provider ForwardKeys said yesterday new flight bookings to Europe from elsewhere in the world fell by 79 percent in the last week of February, as the virus took hold in popular tourist destinations such as Italy. "The drop-off in bookings to Italy is even worse than we have observed in the past for some of the most disruptive events such as terror attacks," ForwardKeys Vice President Insights Olivier Ponti said. —Reuters

Business

IMF chief says coronavirus erases hopes for stronger growth in 2020

World growth to be below 2.9% in 2020: Georgieva

WASHINGTON: The global spread of the novel coronavirus has crushed hopes for stronger growth this year and will hold 2020 global output gains to their slowest pace since the 2008-2009 financial crisis, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Wednesday.

The IMF now expects 2020 world growth to be below the 2.9 percent rate for 2019, and revised forecasts will be issued in the coming weeks, Georgieva told a news briefing. Trade wars pushed global growth last year to the lowest rate since a 0.7 percent contraction in 2009. The changed forecast would represent a more than 0.4-percentage-point drop from the 3.3 percent growth the IMF had estimated for 2020 in January as US-China trade tensions eased.

"Global growth in 2020 will dip below last year's levels, but how far it will fall and how long the impact will be is still difficult to predict," Georgieva said. She declined to say whether the escalating health crisis could push the world into a recession. The IMF is making available \$50 billion in emergency funding to help poor and middle-income countries with weak health systems respond to the epidemic, she said after a call with the IMF's steering committee.

About \$10 billion of that can be accessed by the poorest countries at zero interest for up to

10 years, while many middle-income countries have access to a pool of about \$40 billion at low interest for up to five years. Ecuador used the latter program in 2016 to get a \$364 million loan after a devastating earthquake.

But larger emerging-market countries such as Brazil, China, and India are ineligible for such assistance, as are countries where the IMF has declared debt to be unsustainable, including Argentina.

Georgieva and World Bank President David Malpass underscored the importance of coordinated action to limit the economic and human impact of the virus. The World Bank said on Tuesday it was providing \$12 billion in immediate funds to help developing countries improve their health services, disease surveillance, access to medical supplies and working capital for businesses.

Deeper decline

Less than two weeks ago, the IMF told G20 finance leaders in Saudi Arabia that the virus could shave 0.1 percentage point off its January global growth forecast, a milder scenario based on expectations the coronavirus would be largely contained within China. That view changed over the past week as the virus spread rapidly outside China to more than 70 coun-



WASHINGTON, DC: IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva (left) speaks at a press briefing with World Bank Group President David Malpass on COVID-19 in Washington, DC on Wednesday.—AFP

tries, Georgieva said.

The shift has vastly increased uncertainty and caused demand worldwide to weaken, hitting trade and tourism hard and slashing demand for oil and other commodities as individuals and

businesses take precautionary measures to avoid infection. In China, even as the spread of the virus has slowed, growth will be below the IMF's most recent forecast for 5.6 percent in 2020, Georgieva said. — Reuters

Etihad posts fourth year of losses

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi's struggling carrier Etihad yesterday posted a \$870 million loss for 2019, its fourth year in the red, and said its restructuring plan still has "some way to go". The latest loss compared to a short-fall of \$1.28 billion in 2018, dropping by a third thanks to significant cuts in spending, the company said in a statement.

In the previous three years, Etihad accumulated total losses of \$4.67 billion mainly because of failed massive investments in global airlines, some of which went bankrupt. "Operating costs were reduced significantly last year," said Tony Douglas, CEO of Etihad Aviation Group.

Much progress had been made since 2017 under a restructuring plan but "there is still some way to go", he added. Etihad invested heavily in carriers around the world including Alitalia, airberlin, Air Seychelles, Virgin Australia and India's Jet Airways, some of which have faced financial difficulties, causing Etihad heavy losses.

Established in 2003 by the oil-rich emirate of Abu Dhabi, Etihad also faces stiff competition mainly from regional rivals Dubai's Emirates Airline and Doha-based Qatar Airways. The hard times have forced the airline to sharply reduce its orders from Airbus and Boeing, cancelling dozens of aircraft in the process.

Etihad said that last year it continued its fleet renewal program and took delivery of additional fuel-efficient aircraft, including eight Boeing 787-9s and three Boeing 787-10s, while retiring its Airbus A330s from the mainline fleet. By the end of last year, the carrier had a fleet of 95 passenger aircraft including Airbus A-380 superjumbos and Boeing 787 Dreamliners, in addition to six cargo aircraft, with 76 destinations served around the globe.

In a cost-cutting measure, Etihad in December signed an agreement with Seattle-based aviation finance company Allavair and investment firm KKR for the sale of the retired Airbus A330 fleet, and the sale and lease-back of the airline's in-service Boeing 777-300ER aircraft. Etihad transported 17.5 million passengers last year compared to 17.8 million passengers in 2018. Its revenues in 2019 dropped to \$5.6 billion from \$5.9 billion the previous year—far below the \$9 billion it posted in 2015 before the troubles started. — AFP

Fed says coronavirus causing disruptions, widespread concern

WASHINGTON: The coronavirus outbreak has already disrupted travel and access to goods for US industry, and businesses nationwide sounded the warning that things could get worse, the Federal Reserve said Wednesday.

While activity in the world's largest economy continued to grow at a modest to moderate pace in recent weeks, the outlook was becoming more uncertain, according to the Fed's beige book survey.

The report contains dozens of mentions of the deadly virus, which said "producers feared further disruptions in the coming weeks." Painting a picture of a widespread and growing impact, the report underscores the Fed's decision Tuesday to make an emergency interest rate cut to boost confidence and shore up the US economy.

"The coronavirus has entered the list of concerns, which still includes tariffs and tight labor markets," according to the Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank. And in Chicago, many manufacturers "expected a larger effect if the disruptions continued much longer." Meanwhile, "local customers have been avoiding some of Philadelphia's Asian restaurants and shops, as unfounded fears spread," the report said.

Rate cut, emergency spending

Amid rising concerns about the virus and the damage to the global economy, the Fed's policy-setting committee on Tuesday slashed its key interest rate by a half point to a range of 1.0-1.25 percent—the first inter-meet-

ing cut since late 2008 at the height of the global financial crisis. Fed Chair Jerome Powell said the move aimed "to help the US economy keep strong in the face of new risks to the economic outlook." Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin applauded the Fed's action, calling it "very precautionary and the right thing to do. We're taking a whole of government approach."

But most investors expect the Fed to cut the benchmark borrowing rate again at the March 17-18 policy meeting to stem the economic uncertainty.

The US Congress is set to approve a \$8 billion emergency spending package to combat the disease—both the health and economic consequences. The epidemic deflated the optimism felt after President Donald Trump signed a Phase One trade deal with China in January, calling a truce in the hostilities between the two economic powers, but leaving many tariffs in place.

Transportation, tourism and manufacturing all reported negative knock-on effects from the virus, as did the energy industry, since the outbreak has driven down oil prices.

The Richmond Fed noted that "several ports saw an increase in blank sailings—that is shippers cancelling ports of call—particularly from China." And farmers in the Chicago region "expressed frustration that Chinese purchases of US agricultural goods had not yet materialized following the announcement of the Phase One trade deal and were concerned that the coronavirus outbreak would be used as an excuse for missing future trade targets."

As part of the initial deal after months of escalating tariffs, Beijing agreed to buy an additional \$32 billion in American farm products over two years. Economic data this week echoed the findings in the Fed survey, showing employment holding up—with firms struggling to fill open positions. Services are still strong but concerned about the virus impact, while manufacturing already is feeling the pinch. — AFP

Business

Unpaid and unseen: Female workers bolster UK economy

Govt to support economy to get through coronavirus: Johnson

LONDON: Young women are totting up the hours of unpaid work they do - from childcare to housework - to invoice Britain's Treasury and highlight their undervalued contribution to the economy.

The Young Women's Trust (YWT) on Wednesday launched an online calculator enabling women to work out and share online the value of their unpaid work - from cooking and cleaning to caring for sick relatives and providing emotional support. "This is very much seen as women's work ... it's unpaid and unseen but it is still nonetheless banked by the government because that work supports economic choice for other people," said Sophie Walker, chief executive of YWT.

Using government data on women's unpaid work, the charity estimated that women aged 18 to 30 contribute about 140 billion pounds (\$179 billion) to Britain's economy - more than the finance sector.

Gender inequality has persisted across the globe, with women performing three-quarters of unpaid work, according to the United Nations' International Labour Organization. YWT research with young women with experience of unpaid work found many wanted paid employment but felt trapped by family obliga-

tions. Some feared negative responses from family members for not doing it.

"These testimonies are clear examples of economic abuse ... What we are demonstrating is that there is clear structural sexism that kicks in for young women's lives from very early on," said Walker, former leader of the Women's Equality Party. The charity is calling on the British government to recognize the contribution women make and to increase the carer's allowance, a benefit paid to people on low incomes who look after someone for 35 hours a week or more.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday Britain's economy was very robust and the government would give businesses the support they need to get through the coronavirus outbreak.

Asked during an interview on ITV about the impact of the spread of the virus, Johnson said he had spoken to finance minister Rishi Sunak and the governor of the Bank of England about their plans. "There is no doubt that the UK economy is very robust, we will make sure that we give businesses and the economy the support that it needs," Johnson said. "Watch out for the budget next week, we will be doing some things to help business and help the economy generally." —Reuters



LONDON: A pedestrian walks past perimeter boarding at the HS2 high speed rail link construction site in Euston, London. —Reuters

Data show US economy on solid footing as virus fears mount

WASHINGTON: US services sector activity jumped to a one-year high in February, suggesting strength in the economy before a recent escalation of recession fears ignited by the coronavirus epidemic that prompted an emergency interest rate cut from the Federal Reserve.

The economy's solid fundamentals were also underscored by other data on Wednesday showing private payrolls increased more than expected in February, in part as unseasonably mild weather bolstered hiring at construction sites and in the leisure and hospitality industry. A report from the Fed described the economy as growing at "a modest to moderate rate over the past several weeks," but noted rising concerns over the coronavirus.

The US central bank on Tuesday slashed its benchmark overnight interest rate by a half percentage point to a target range of 1.00 percent to 1.25 percent, in the Fed's first emergency rate cut since 2008 at the height of the financial crisis. Fed Chair Jerome Powell said, "The coronavirus poses evolving risks to economic activity." "Going into any potential coronavirus slowdown, the economy is in good shape," said Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economics in Holland, Pennsylvania.

The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said its non-manufacturing activity index increased to a reading of 57.3 last month, the highest level since February 2019, from 55.5 in January. A reading above 50 indicates expansion in the services sector, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index falling to a reading of 54.9 in February. The ISM said services industries remained "positive about business conditions and the overall economy," but also noted that "most respondents are concerned about the coronavirus and its supply chain impact."

The fast-spreading coronavirus has killed more than 3,000 people and sickened at least 90,000, mostly in China. In the United States, 10 people have died from the respiratory disease called COVID-19 caused by the virus and the number of infections exceeded 100, raising awareness of the disease among Americans starting the last week of February.

Investors fear the coronavirus epidemic could derail the longest US economic expansion in history, now in its 11th year, through disruptions to supply chains and exports. The damage to the services sector is expected to come mostly through the transportation and tourism industries. Economists expect the coronavirus to restrain economic growth in the first half of the year to around 1.0 percent. The economy grew 2.3 percent in 2019. The ISM reported on Monday that the manufacturing sector barely grew in February, with several industries saying the flu-like virus was impacting their businesses. So far, however, the vast services sector and labor market appear to be weathering the coronavirus storm. —Reuters

Brazil's economy slows in the first year of Bolsonaro

RIO DE JANEIRO: The Brazilian economy slowed in President Jair Bolsonaro's first year in office, according to official data released Wednesday, disappointing news for markets that bet on the far-right leader to engineer an economic take-off. And the outlook for Latin America's biggest economy is not much better for this year, given the damaging impact of the new coronavirus, analysts warned.

Brazil's economy grew 1.1 percent in 2019, down from 1.3 percent in each of the previous two years, said the national statistics institute, IBGE. Growth for the fourth quarter came in at 0.5 percent.

Bolsonaro, who has been dubbed a "Tropical Trump," took office on January 1, 2019, after storming to a shock election win in a Brazil fed up with corruption scandals and coming off a brutal recession.

The former army captain vowed during his presidential campaign to jump-start the economy, winning the support of the business sector despite his open admission that he knows little about economics.

Giving vast power to his University of Chicago-trained economy minister, Paulo

Guedes, he began implementing a sweeping agenda of pro-market reforms, austerity cuts and privatizations, including a long-sought pension reform that passed in October. When Bolsonaro took office, analysts forecast economic growth of around 2.5 percent for the year.

No laughing matter

The final figure came in at less than half that. "It was a cold bath of reality," said economist Victor Beyrute of Guide Investimentos. "Brazil is going through a transition period, and the problem can't be solved in a year." Bolsonaro faced criticism for refusing to answer journalists' questions about the economy. Instead, he made his daily appearance before the press corps with a surprise guest-comedian Marvio Lucio, decked out in a presidential sash to imitate Bolsonaro. The president referred all questions to his double, who asked, "What's GDP?"

Critics did not find it funny. "It takes a dumb president to find the 'humor' in growing poverty and inequality," tweeted Senate opposition leader Randolfe Rodrigues.

Guru Guedes threatened

Economy guru Guedes sought to downplay the news, saying it was "no surprise" and that Brazil could grow more than two percent this year "if reforms continue." But the powerful minister's role looks increasingly threatened. "He's not delivering what he promised.... The Paulo Guedes of today isn't the Paulo Guedes of January 2019," said Andre Cesar, of Brasilia-based consultancy Hold. —AFP

Business

China Jan-Feb exports, imports fall as virus hits output, supply chains

Many companies struggle to resume production amid worker shortages

BEIJING: China's exports and imports likely tumbled in the first two months of the year, a Reuters poll showed, as the health crisis triggered by the coronavirus epidemic disrupted businesses and production and wreaked havoc along global supply chains. Exports from the world's second-largest economy are expected to have sunk 14 percent in January-February from a year earlier, according to a median estimate from the survey of 25 economists, marking the steepest fall since February 2019.

Imports likely skidded 15 percent from a year earlier in the same period, the biggest contraction since January 2016 and a sharp contrast from the 16.5 percent growth posted in December.

China's customs said last month it would combine January and February preliminary trade data in line with how some of the country's other major economic indicators are released early in the year, which is intended to smooth distortions created by the long Lunar New Year holidays.

This year, Beijing extended the holidays and instituted widespread transport curbs and other tough public health measures to limit the spread of the virus, which have paralyzed large parts of the economy. The forecasts underlined the crippling effects of the coronavirus epidemic across the country, which also triggered the sharpest contraction in factory activity on record, with

sub-indexes for production and new export orders nosediving to levels before the global financial crisis.

Wary of the deepening economic costs, Beijing has urged less affected areas to resume work as soon as possible and rolled out a host of measures to help firms re-start operation, including cheap loans to companies hardest hit by the epidemic. But migrant worker shortage is still acute in the coastal provinces due to the quarantine rules and travel bans. Some factories that have restarted work are running below normal capacity.

Nomura's Business Resumption Rate (BRR), a gauge to measure the progress of business resumption, was at only 44.0 percent as of March 1, a pace well below normal operating levels.

Second wave of disruptions?

Many Chinese exporters say they faced difficulty in fulfilling overseas orders for February and months to come due to a shortage of workers and raw materials, while seaports that are operating at low efficiency also worsened the logistical problems.

Other producers also suffered suspension of purchases and cancellation of orders from foreign buyers. The disruptions are already rippling through global supply lines from Asia all the way to the United States, and is expected to lead to weaker foreign demand and patchy global trade

First-time job seekers will have their work cut out just to find work: About 8.74 million high school and university graduates will potentially look to join the workforce in 2020, up 5 percent from 2019.

To accommodate slackening labor demand caused by the coronavirus, the education ministry has said China will expand enrolment places in postgraduate programs by 189,000.

"Students have already been under big pressure, looking for jobs," education ministry official Weng Tiehui told a news briefing. "The coronavirus outbreak is making the pressure even bigger."

By Feb. 28, the Zhaopin survey found, 27 percent of employees were still not back at work, from among 9,038 respondents, with more than a third saying their companies remained shut or faced bankruptcy. More than 70 percent of the surveyed recruiters plan to cut staff, or remain uncertain about recruitment plans amid the virus outbreak.

Entertainment, sports, hotels and restaurants are among the worst hit by the coronavirus, after authorities banned public gatherings to limit the risk of contagion. Economists at brokerage and investment bank Nomura compiled a business resumption rate (BRR) index showing that Chinese businesses are resuming work, but at a slow pace, as overall activity remains constrained.

Ping An Bank estimated average work resumption among its 600 small- and micro-business (SME) clients climbed to 78 percent by Monday, from 59 percent the prior week. But a fifth of the companies that had already reopened operated at less than half of capacity. — Reuters



HANGZHOU: A worker packages cloth at a textile factory in Hangzhou, in China's eastern Zhejiang province yesterday. — AFP

in the coming months. "Even if China's factory production can recover in March, it will still face the risk of a low level of export orders. This is because the supply chain will continue to be broken, this time in South Korea, Japan, Europe, and the US, where COVID-19 has begun to spread. Exports will, therefore, continue to be weak in 1Q20 and even into 2Q20," said Iris Pang, Greater China economists at ING.

Analysts say the spread of flu-like disease which have infected more than 95,000 worldwide could mean a second wave of disruption to Chinese factories. "Some factories may run into problems resuming normal production if outbreaks in other countries mean they have trouble sourcing intermediate goods," Julian Evans-Pritchard, Senior China Economist with Capital Economics said in a note. — Reuters

China's jobseekers cast uneasy eye on prospects in virus-hit economy

BEIJING/SINGAPORE: China's job market is showing signs of recovery as firms resume operations and an easing of measures to contain a coronavirus allow hundreds of millions of people to leave their hometowns for big cities in search of work.

Twenty-one of mainland China's 31 regions have lowered emergency response levels on the flu-like epidemic, allowing greater movement of people and goods and a recovery in business activity.

Data from China's transport ministry showed three consecutive days this week of declining passenger flows nationwide, suggesting worker movement has peaked after the extended Lunar New Year holiday. A survey by major recruitment website Zhaopin, showed the number of job postings in China rose 21.4 percent, and applications increased 35.1 percent, last week from the prior week.

The "competition index" or number of resumes received per vacancy, climbed to 12.3 across the 38 cities monitored. That compares to 9.1 in the week after the prolonged holiday, and 18.1 in the corresponding 2019 period.

UBS hardens energy lending

LONDON: Switzerland's UBS said the value of its 'sustainable' investments rose by more than 50 percent to nearly \$500 billion in 2019, while lending to the energy and utilities sectors fell by 40 percent as it tightened its rules. UBS, which has assets of more than 3.6 trillion Swiss francs (\$3.76 trillion) and invests for some of the world's richest individuals, has increasingly looked to carve out a market-leading position in sustainable investing.

That comes as policymakers and regulators push financial institutions to do more to help accelerate a global push to a low-carbon economy and meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, tackling poverty and other global challenges.

"As the world's largest truly global wealth manager, we have a responsibility to take a leading role in shaping a positive future for everyone, including future generations," UBS Chairman Axel Weber said in a statement. "We aim to be the financial provider of choice for clients who want to engage toward the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) while helping achieve an orderly transition to a low-carbon economy."

What counts as 'sustainable' varies across institutions, but can range from simply reflecting environmental, social and governance-re-

lated risks in the investment process, to 'impact investing', backing projects aiming to provide a measurable positive impact on society.

UBS defines all of these as 'core' sustainable investments and said they had collectively risen to \$488 billion by the end of the year, or 13.5 percent of total invested assets, up from \$312.9 billion a year earlier. The value of equity and debt capital market deals and financial advisory services linked to climate change mitigation and adaptation hit \$87.2 billion in 2019, up from \$56.5 billion in 2018.

Bank lending to the energy and utilities sectors fell more than 40 percent to \$1.9 billion in 2019, equivalent to just 0.8 percent of its total gross banking products exposure, down from 1.6 percent at the end of 2018. Since the end of the year, UBS said it had further toughened its guidelines for lending to the sector, including not financing new greenfield thermal coal mines, offshore oil projects in the Arctic or greenfield oil sands projects.

It would also only provide financing to companies with greater than 30 percent of reserves or production in Arctic oil and/or oil sands if the money was to be used on renewable energy or conventional oil and gas assets. Transactions linked to Liquefied Natural Gas infrastructure and ultra-deepwater drilling, meanwhile, would face enhanced environmental and social due diligence, the bank said.

Corporate lending to climate-sensitive sectors was \$37.6 billion in 2019, or some 15.5 percent of the group's total \$242.6 billion in lending, with the biggest slice of that, \$15 billion, for the real estate sector. — Reuters

Business

OPEC agrees on large oil output cut amid virus outbreak if Russia joins

OPEC wants non-OPEC to cut 500,000 bpd of 1.5m bpd cut

VIENNA: OPEC agreed yesterday to cut output by an extra 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) in the second quarter of 2020 to support prices amid an outbreak of coronavirus but made it conditional on Russia joining in, two OPEC sources said. The oil demand outlook has been hit hard by measures to halt the spread of the virus, disrupting factories, deterring people from travelling and slowing other business activity. Forecasts for crude demand growth in 2020 have been slashed as a result.

Saudi Arabia had suggested OPEC and its allies, including Russia, cut up to 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) for the second quarter of 2020 while extending existing cuts of 2.1 million bpd, which expire this month, to the end of 2020. But Riyadh, the biggest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, and other members of the group have yet to win Russian support for such a deal. So far, Moscow has indicated it would back an extension but not a deeper cut. Russia, which has co-operated on output policy since 2016 in the informal group known as OPEC+, has in the past been hesitant during talks but signed up at and the last minute.

OPEC sources told Reuters that OPEC states expected non-OPEC countries, including Russia, to contribute cuts of about 500,000 bpd out of the overall additional cut of 1.5 million bpd.

Two OPEC sources said Russia was on board

for the cuts, not just for an extension, although Moscow has yet to comment. OPEC sources have previously signalled that preliminary discussions with Russia about the cuts held this week in Vienna were trickier than before.

"The worst case scenario is an extension," said an OPEC source when asked what would happen if Russia refused to join a new cut when OPEC, Russia and other producers meet today. The proposed OPEC cut, if approved, would be towards the top end of market expectations.

Brent oil prices pared gains by 1200 GMT, trading near \$51 a barrel after an initial 0.6 percent rise on news of OPEC's plan to cut, highlighting the uncertainty about the real impact of the virus on global demand as it continues spreading. This year's slide in oil prices by about 20 percent has made it tough for OPEC states to balance their budgets, while Moscow has said it can cope with current prices.

If OPEC+ was to decide to remove an extra 1.5 million bpd from the market, it would bring the group's overall output reduction to 3.6 million bpd or about 3.6 percent of global supplies.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak returned to Moscow for consultations on Wednesday after talks in Vienna this week but he will be back in the Austrian capital on Friday for the broader OPEC+ meeting.

"OPEC+ have little choice but to cut output



VIENNA: Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (center) and Iran's Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Kazem Gharib Abadi (left) arrives for the 178th Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting in Vienna yesterday. — AFP

substantially given the virus related demand losses," said Gary Ross, founder of Black Gold Investors. "The Saudis have accounted for over half the officially agreed cuts and they will lead the way with additional cuts and the others, including Russia, will join because it is overwhelmingly in their economic interests," he said.

Ehsan Khoman from Mitsubishi UFG said

that the measures by OPEC combined with stimulus by governments and central banks around the world would help reassure markets.

Meanwhile, the Iranian oil minister confirmed yesterday that OPEC ministers had agreed an extra 1.5 million barrel per day (bpd) cut in oil production and that Iran was still exempt from the reduction. — Reuters

Nigeria shoemakers tap national pride, nostalgia to spur local industry

LAGOS/ABUJA: Two men in grey jumpsuits brush glue onto rubber soles, while factory machines whir in the background. Elsewhere, women perched behind industrial sewing machines attach leather swatches to sturdy-looking men's shoes. The production line could be anywhere in the world. But Bertram Dozie, the chief executive of the newly opened Bata Nigeria shoes plant, hopes this Abuja facility heralds a renaissance for Nigerian-made shoes.

The factory, which opened in late 2019, can produce more than 500,000 shoes annually. It employs roughly 120 people. Bata Nigeria is a franchise tied to Bata, a historic shoe company based in Switzerland, and present in 70 countries. The Nigeria franchise has stores in the capital, Abuja, the southwestern megacity Lagos and southern oil city Port Harcourt. Bata Nigeria also sells shoes directly to Nigerian schools, for pupils as part of their uniform, and stocks other stores in the country. Nigeria's government hopes companies like Bata can spur the local manufacturing sector, create jobs and reduce Africa's biggest economy's reliance on oil sales.

It has tried to stimulate this with its

long-running "Made in Nigeria" agenda, which included placing import restrictions on shoes in 2007. The shift to locally-made goods is slowly taking effect. In 2010 Nigeria imported \$180 million worth of footwear. By 2018 this figure had fallen to \$100 million, mostly from China. Dozie, surrounded by shoes in one of the company's showrooms, described the market opportunities for locally-made mass-produced shoes in Africa's most populous nation of 200 million people as "glaring".



ABUJA: Women workers inspect shoes at a Bata shoe factory in Abuja. — Reuters

Memories

Bata, once a household name in Nigeria, closed its factory in the country around 20 years ago. Brand recognition has helped its return. It sells everything from strappy heels and protective work boots for adults to black leather school shoes. Prices range from 34,000 naira (\$111) for leather boots to just under 6,000 naira for plain casual shoes for children. Dozie, 39, remembers wearing the shoes as a child as part of his school uniform. Bata was founded 126 years ago in what is now the Czech Republic.

A local company began marketing Bata in Nigeria in the 1930s, and manufacturing the shoes in the west African country in the 1960s. Reuters archive footage from 1971 shows a Polish delegation touring a thriving Bata shoe plant in Lagos. — AFP

German industry fears 'longest recession' since reunification

BERLIN: The economic upheaval caused by the fast-spreading coronavirus threatens to plunge Germany's crucial industrial sector into "the longest recession since reunification", a powerful industry body said yesterday.

Germany's export-reliant industrial sector is already in the midst of a recession, with car manufacturers especially feeling the pain from months of China-US trade tensions and Brexit uncertainty.

As the deadly coronavirus wreaks havoc on international supply chains and saps consumer demand, Germany's BDI industry federation said worse was to come.

"German industry is facing the longest recession since reunification" of the country in 1990, BDI said in a quarterly report. The sector, a key growth driver in Europe's top economy, has already seen six consecutive quarters of shrinkage.

In the final quarter of 2019, German industrial production fell by 5.7 percent year-on-year.

The BDI said the combined effects of weak global growth, increased uncertainty and factory disruptions were having "a negative effect" on companies' willingness to spend money and invest.

The industry body now expects the German economy as a whole to grow by just 0.5 percent in 2020, compared to 1.1 percent growth forecast by the government in January before the virus spread across the world. The BDI urged the German government to use its fat budget surpluses to support affected industries and encourage investment. — AFP

Sports

Coronavirus forces teams out of Italian cycling races

Ineos cite coronavirus and sports director death

PARIS: Four teams, including Britain's Ineos, have pulled out of several cycling races in Italy under threat because of the coronavirus outbreak. Organizers RCS said on Wednesday they would communicate updates and details in the coming days, following meetings with the authorities, starting with the Prefecture of Siena yesterday. Italy has ordered that all sporting events be held without fans in a bid to curb Europe's worst coronavirus outbreak.

Three teams had already pulled out of Saturday's Strade Bianche, with Groupama-FDJ saying that with several team members being in quarantine in Abu Dhabi following the cancellation of the UAE Tour, they did not have the resources to set up a competitive team. Team Ineos cited the coronavirus situation as one of two reasons for their withdrawal until March 23 from all racing following the death of the team's sports director Nicolas Portal on Tuesday.

"We have taken this decision given the unique set of circumstances we are facing following yesterday's tragic news about Nico Portal," Ineos said in a statement. "And clearly we recognise there is also a very uncertain situation with Coronavirus more widely." Ineos will not take part in the Paris-Nice stage race in France starting on Sunday. Tour de France winner and Ineos team leader Egan Bernal was the defending champion.

Dutch team Jumbo Visma were the first to pull out of Strade Bianche on a day of uncertainty. "Team Jumbo-Visma will not partici-

pate in Strade Bianche and GP Industria this weekend," Jumbo-Visma said in a statement. "The decision has been taken on medical advice, the recommendation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as on practical grounds. "It's likely that the same decision will apply to other Italian races in March. However, we are also awaiting messages from the Italian government."

Strade Bianche is, along with Tirreno-Adriatico and Milan-Sanremo, one of three major Italian races in March and Mauro Vegni, the head of RCS, said they could all be cancelled. "Undoubtedly the news emerging from the coronavirus is clear: the indications from the Italian scientific committee leave little space room for manoeuvre and if they are to be adopted by the government we would be forced to cancel those three events," Vegni was quoted as saying by cycling website Tuttobiciweb.

Italy has been the European country worst affected by the coronavirus outbreak, with over 100 deaths and more than 3,000 cases. "Together with the management of our team, I am constantly considering and acting in the interest of the health and working conditions of our riders and staff members. That includes, for example, preventing them from quarantine abroad," Jumbo Visma team general manager Richard Plugge said. "We have to look at the broader picture and take responsibility for the health of riders, staff and fans."

Mitchelton-Scott they have pulled out of



ARDECHE: In this file photo, France's Nicolas Portal of Team AG2R rides on his way to win the second stage of the 56th Criterium du Dauphine Libre cycling race between Saint-Etienne and Aubenas. Nicolas Portal, the sports director of British cycling outfit Team Ineos, died suddenly at his home in Andorra aged 40, his team said. —AFP

seven other races scheduled until March 22 as a precautionary measure in response to the outbreak. Their men's team will be absent from GP Industria, Paris-Nice, Tirreno-

Adriatico and Milan-Sanremo, while the women's team will miss Ronde van Drenthe, Danilith Nokere Koerse and the Trofeo Alfredo Binda. —Reuters

Islanders' Boychuk needs 90 stitches

NEW YORK: New York Islanders defenseman Johnny Boychuk needed 90 stitches to his eyelid after taking a skate to the face but suffered no damage to his eye, the NHL team's general manager, Lou Lamoriello, said Wednesday. "Johnny Boychuk is OK," Lamoriello told reporters a day after Boychuk was injured when he was hit by the skate of falling Montreal Canadiens left wing Artturi Lehkonen.

"There's been no damage to his eye. Fortunately the skate blade just got the eyelid. It took 90 stitches for a plastic surgeon to fix," Lamoriello said, "but he'll be fine." Islanders goalie Semyon Varlamov had made a glove save and Boychuk tried to get Lehkonen out of the crease. Lehkonen tripped and when his skate came up it slid under Boychuk's helmet visor. Boychuk rose quickly and hurried to the locker room with his hand over his face.

The incident comes just over a year after Boychuk was cut in the neck by the skate of Toronto Maple Leafs forward Mitch Marner. Islanders forward Cal Clutterbuck had his wrist sliced by a skate in December, missing 30 games before he returned on Saturday. Teammate Casey Cizikas is still sidelined after sustaining a leg laceration on February 11. Toronto's Ilya Mikheyev was cut on the wrist in a December 27 game against the New Jersey Devils, an injury that required surgery to repair an artery and tendons.—AFP

How the coronavirus has hit global sport

PARIS: The International Olympic Committee insist that a potential cancellation or postponement of this year's Tokyo Olympics due to the global spread of the deadly coronavirus were "not mentioned" at a meeting of their Executive Board on Wednesday. However, the virus, which has killed 3,200 people while infecting 90,000 in more than 60 countries worldwide, is having a major impact on world sport. AFP Sport looks at the latest effects on Wednesday:

Tokyo Olympics

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said that the nightmare scenario of either cancelling or postponing the Tokyo Olympics was not discussed at a key meeting. "Neither the word cancellation nor postponement was mentioned today during the Executive Board meeting," Bach told reporters in Lausanne on Wednesday. "I will not add fuel to the flames of speculation. We are fully committed to the success of the Tokyo Games." The Olympics take place from July 24-August 9. Japan says it will, however, adjust the Olympic torch relay set to begin this month "as necessary". The Olympic flame is set to arrive in Japan on March 20 and depart less than a week later on a nationwide relay that will begin in Fukushima.

Football

In Italy, the hardest-hit European country with 107 deaths, it was announced that all matches—as well as all major sports events—will be played behind closed doors until April 3. "Closing doors but continuing matches is the right thing to do, so

the people aren't put at risk," Inter Milan chairman Steven Zhang told the BBC. This week's Italian Cup semi-finals were postponed to a date to be arranged while a number of league games were cancelled over the last two weekends.

Elsewhere, the start of Japan's J-League was postponed till mid-March while China suspended all domestic football and shelved indefinitely the top-flight Super League season which was due to kick off on February 22. The Swiss league has already suspended all Super League and second-division Challenge League matches until March 23. The Valencia v Atalanta Champions League clash on March 10 will be played behind closed doors.

Rugby Union

The Six Nations match between Ireland and Italy in Dublin, scheduled tomorrow, had already been cancelled. The Italy v England match set for Rome on March 15 will be played without spectators. Sevens World Series tournaments in Hong Kong on April 3-5 and Singapore the following weekend postponed.

Motor Racing

The Chinese Formula One Grand Prix, which was set for April 19 in Shanghai, was axed as was the March 21 Formula E race slated for Sanya on the Chinese island of Hainan. In motorcycling, the season-opening Qatar MotoGP, set for Sunday, and the Thailand MotoGP have also been scratched.

Golf

European Tour chiefs postponed the Maybank Championship in Malaysia and the China Open in Shenzhen—both set for April. The US LPGA Tour cancelled all three of its lucrative early-season events in Asia with a combined prize purse of more than \$5 million. The Abu Dhabi Ladies Open, due to start on Friday, was shelved Wednesday.—AFP

Seven F1 teams challenge secret Ferrari settlement

Seven F1 teams 'surprised and shocked'; threat of legal action

LONDON: Seven of Formula One's 10 teams put on a rare show of unity on Wednesday in threatening legal action against a confidential settlement between the governing FIA and Ferrari over the Italian team's 2019 power unit. The teams—all those not powered by Ferrari engines—said they had been “surprised and shocked” by an FIA statement issued at the end of the final day of pre-season testing in Spain last week.

That FIA statement provided little information, other than stating that the governing body and Ferrari had reached a settlement after technical investigations into the team's engine. It said “the specifics of the agreement will remain between the parties”, a position that raised questions about why the statement had even been issued.

The seven teams, including champions Mercedes, made clear in a joint statement that the

situation was not acceptable, with the sport preparing for the first race of the season in Australia on March 15. The non-signatories, apart from Ferrari, were Haas and Alfa Romeo who are closely aligned with the Italian team. “An international sporting regulator has the responsibility to act with the highest standards of governance, integrity and transparency,” the seven teams said.

“After months of investigations that were undertaken by the FIA only following queries raised by other teams, we strongly object to the FIA reaching a confidential settlement agreement with Ferrari to conclude this matter.” The teams added that they had a shared commitment “to pursue full and proper disclosure in this matter, to ensure that our sport treats all competitors fairly and equally”. “In addition, we reserve our rights to seek legal redress, within the FIA's

due process and before the competent courts.”

Fuel flow

Ferrari's engine was the subject of much speculation last year, with rivals suspecting the team were circumventing fuel flow sensors to gain performance. Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen angered Ferrari by suggesting last November that they were bending the rules. In one interview with Dutch television, the 22-year-old used the word “cheating”. Verstappen was more diplomatic on Wednesday after doing the first lap of the revamped Dutch GP circuit at Zandvoort.

“The answers I will leave up to the team, I'm not involved in that,” he told Sky Sports television. “But I think in every sport you want a level playing field.” Ferrari, who denied doing anything illegal, had started the 2019 season as early

favorites after impressive times in testing and a clear straight line speed advantage. The performance appeared to tail off, however, after the FIA issued several technical directives concerning fuel flow sensors later in the year. They have also been slower than Mercedes on the 2020 testing timesheets.

Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto said in December they had been one of the most checked teams on the grid and had not changed their way of operating the engine towards the end of last season. Ferrari finished runners-up to Mercedes in 2019, with three race wins. Formula One managing director Ross Brawn, a former Ferrari technical director as well as ex-principal of Mercedes F1, could not shed any light on the settlement when asked by Reuters on Tuesday. “I don't know and there's nothing I can say,” he replied. — Reuters

Barbie launches dolls to honor women sports stars

LONDON: British sprint world champion Dina Asher-Smith said she was “proud” to have her own Barbie as the toy brand announced a lineup of dolls to honor female sporting role models ahead of International Women's Day. Asher-Smith, who won the 200 meters gold at last year's world championships in Doha, was one of several sports stars to be recognized as role models. French women's football captain Amandine Henry and Ukraine's fencing world champion Olga Kharlan also have dolls.

It is part of the Barbie Dream Gap Project, a social initiative to raise awareness around factors that prevent girls from reaching their full

potential. “I'm so proud to have my own one-of-a-kind Dina Barbie doll,” said Asher-Smith. “It's an honor to work with Barbie as a ‘Shero’ and work together to inspire future champions. “Growing up, sportswomen were less visible in the media and there is still a gap when it comes to women's sports, which is why representation is so important.” She added: “I hope little girls will see my doll and be inspired to take up and continue to enjoy sports.”

Lisa McKnight, global head of dolls at Barbie, said the aim was to shine a spotlight on “powerful, diverse role models” ahead of International Women's Day on March 8. Heather Smith, associate head of innovation at Women in Sport, said too many girls were missing out on the physical and mental benefits of sport. “Sport and physical activity is a fantastic way to build girls' confidence and resilience, helping them become healthy and happy young women,” she said. “At Women in Sport, we're determined to help more girls enjoy these lifelong rewards of sport.”— AFP



LONDON: A handout picture shows Barbie dolls designed after leading female sports stars, including French women's football captain Amandine Henry (2nd left) and British sprint world champion Dina Asher-Smith (3rd left), ahead of International Women's Day. — AFP

Fury says has two fights left, Top Rank's DuBoef 'not so sure'

LOS ANGELES: WBC heavyweight champion Tyson Fury stunned boxing fans on Wednesday when he said he would only fight twice more but the president of his promotional company wouldn't be surprised if his career carried on longer than that. Fury soundly defeated Deontay Wilder last month to claim the WBC belt and the pair are expected to meet for a third time in early July after the American, who fought Fury to a draw in their first meeting, triggered a rematch clause.

Boxing fans hope to see an all-British battle between Fury and WBA, IBF and WBO champion Anthony Joshua, possibly in December, and Fury said he was then likely to hang up his gloves. “I've got two more fights left and then we're going to really think about what we're going to do from there,” Fury, 31, told British TV show This Morning while seated alongside his wife Paris.

“I'm undefeated in 31 professional fights, this is my 12th year as a professional, so yeah, that's what I want.” Top Rank president Todd DuBoef said he had seen fighters he's worked with say they are going to retire, only to be lured back into the ring later. “Manny Pacquiao was retired for a while and he's 42,” DuBoef told Reuters, referring to the Filipino legend who is planning to fight again this year. “Bernard Hopkins was never coming back. Conor McGregor retired. We'll see how it plays out,” he said.

“He may get inspired and there could be a Wilder-Fury four fight. There could be an Anthony Joshua one, two and three fights. Who the hell knows, right? “I'm not going to predict anything but I've been in the business a long time and I've seen people when



Tyson Fury

they've thought it was time to get out, come back.” DuBoef said despite the one-sided nature of the recent Wilder-Fury showdown, which set a Las Vegas gate record for a heavyweight fight, there will be no trouble drumming up interest in a third installment given Wilder's knockout power.

“Most people picked Wilder going into this fight,” DuBoef said of the Alabama native, who is 42-1-1 with 41 KOs. “Tyson shocked everybody in this one by executing a game plan but the one game plan he can't execute is defense against a guy that has dynamite in his hand,” he added. “As long as a guy can crack the way Wilder does, he's always in the fight. “Just because you got him on one night doesn't mean you can get him every night.”— Reuters

Sports

Doncic sets Mavericks triple double record

LOS ANGELES: Luka Doncic had a record-setting 30-point triple double as the Dallas Mavericks held off Zion Williamson's New Orleans Pelicans 127-123 in overtime on Wednesday. The score was tied three times in the extra session before Doncic drained a clutch three pointer with 70 seconds left to make it 121-118 in a thrilling matchup that featured two of the league's brightest young stars in Doncic and Zion Williamson.

Doncic finished with 34 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists, while Pelicans rising star Williamson scored 21 points in 35 minutes of playing time in the first back-to-back games of his NBA career. But Williamson couldn't match the heroics of the 21-year-old Doncic, who broke the Mavs' career triple double record with his 22nd overall. The Slovenian did it in just his 122nd career game.

Doncic also became the youngest player in NBA history to record a game with at least 30 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists. Doncic sprained his right thumb. He had it checked by team doctors and afterwards said it felt good. After the game, Pelicans coach Alvin Gentry got upset with New Orleans reporters asking whether the 19-year-old Williamson can handle playing back-to-back games. "He's fine. We worry about him too fricking much. He's 19-years old, he's fine," Gentry said as he walked away from the media scrum.

"Physically I felt fine," said Williamson. Seth Curry added 21 points, Tim Hardaway scored 18 and Delon Wright had 10 for the Mavericks,

who improved to 6-3 in the past nine games. Brandon Ingram scored 27 before fouling out, Lonzo Ball had 25 points and 11 rebounds for the Pelicans, who lost their third straight. Jrue Holiday had 19 points, Frank Jackson scored 12, and Derrick Favors added 10 points and 14 rebounds in the loss.

Bucks rebound

Elsewhere, reigning league MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo scored a game-high 29 points and 12 rebounds as the league-leading Milwaukee Bucks captured the season series from Indiana with a 119-100 win over the Pacers.

Khris Middleton scored eight of his 20 points in a third-quarter run that gave them the victory and helped the Bucks rebound from a 105-89 loss to Miami two nights earlier. "We just tried to get back on track," Antetokounmpo said. "We didn't just lose—we played bad against Miami and I think everybody in this locker room wanted to play ball and just get back on track and get a win." TJ Warren had a team-high 18 points for Indiana, which had a four-game winning streak stopped.

Antetokounmpo made all seven of his free throws, as the Bucks sank 20 baskets from the free throw line compared to just nine for the Pacers. Donte DiVincenzo finished with 19 points, Eric Bledsoe had 16 to go with a team-high seven assists for the Bucks, who have beaten Indiana three times this season and won seven out of their last eight games. A back-and-forth first half saw the Bucks open the game on



DALLAS: Luka Doncic #77 of the Dallas Mavericks drives to the basket against Derrick Favors #22 of the New Orleans Pelicans and Jrue Holiday #11 of the New Orleans Pelicans in the second quarter at American Airlines Center on March 04, 2020. — AFP

a 33-11 run. But the Pacers answered with a run of their own to get within 58-56 at halftime.

Milwaukee used a 26-9 third-quarter surge to turn a one-point game into an 89-71 lead. Middleton had a pair of three-pointers in the decisive burst. Antetokounmpo, Wesley

Matthews and Brook Lopez added one apiece, and Bledsoe chipped in with a three-point play. The Pacers never made a game of it after that. The Bucks also outscored Indiana 39-21 on three-pointers while outshooting the Pacers 45.7 percent overall to 43.3 percent.— AFP

Virus hits NHL overseas travel, Europe scouting

MIAMI: NHL officials have banned overseas business travel due to the global coronavirus outbreak and are making contingency plans as the Stanley Cup playoffs approach, commissioner Gary Bettman said Wednesday. As a league general managers meeting concluded in Florida, Bettman said the league is in touch with medical experts and other sports leagues in trying to determine plans to cope with the growing health concern. "What we can do is take it a day at a time and see what the experts in the field are telling us," Bettman said.

Bettman says employees who make personal trips to countries impacted by the virus must be quarantined out of the office for two weeks upon their return as a precaution to see if symptoms arise. With one month remaining in the NHL regular season, the league has informed teams of its policy but allows clubs to make their own decisions on business travel, admitting that some European scouting of talent had been disrupted by the travel ban.

"Our clubs at the medical level, the training level and the player level are pretty informed

as to what is wise and prudent conduct under the circumstances," Bettman said. Bettman said the NHL is communicating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Health Canada as well as the NFL, NBA and Major League Baseball and constantly providing updates to clubs.

But Bettman is not saying what ideas the NHL has in mind should coronavirus become a more serious concern in the United States and Canada. "We're aware of and focused on all possibilities, but at this point it would be premature to pick any one of the possibilities, especially because it may or may not become necessary in North America, which is why we're staying current," he said. "We're staying in communication with everyone appropriate, and we'll deal with it if and when the time comes."

Six International Ice Hockey Federation world junior tournaments in Europe scheduled for this month have been canceled while the world governing body will wait until March 15 to address the World Championships set for May in Switzerland, where the Swiss government has banned events with more than 1,000 spectators.

"We're aware of what's happening in other places in the world, and we understand that things may evolve or change, and we also understand that we're going to have to react to it in a professional and timely and sensible basis," Bettman said. "But I don't think, as we sit here today, people should get too far ahead of themselves in terms of how they either react to this or report this. Let's see how it all evolves." — AFP

Old foes, invisible men and virus switch: Super Rugby talking points

WELLINGTON: A stand-in coach, disappearing stars and schedule changes forced by the coronavirus outbreak are among Super Rugby talking points ahead of this weekend's sixth round of the 2020 season:

Gatland puts Steamer in charge

Clayton McMillan has been named by Warren Gatland to take charge at Waikato Chiefs while the former Wales coach is off leading the British and Irish Lions in South Africa next year. McMillan, who has coached New Zealand Maori and the Bay of Plenty Steamers, is well-known to Gatland. The 50-year-old was in charge of the mostly part-time NZ Provincial Barbarians side that gave Gatland's 2017 Lions an opening tour match scare with some enterprising rugby before losing 13-7. McMillan, who has also coached in Japan, was pleased to have signed a one-year contract with the Chiefs for 2021. "Super Rugby has certainly been a goal of mine," he said.

Missing Bulls

Former Springboks coach Nick Mallett has branded recent Northern Bulls recruits Juandre Kruger and Josh Strauss "invisible men" after a dismal four-loss start to the season. "Kruger should be

leading from the front, but he was nowhere, and I hardly saw Strauss," said TV analyst Mallett after the Bulls suffered a round-four thumping at home to the Jaguares. "Juandre and Josh are vastly experienced players and should be bringing the younger Bulls along with them, but they are not producing enough aggression." The bottom-of-the-table, Pretoria-based Bulls will on Saturday host fellow strugglers Otago Highlanders, who are two places higher in the combined table having won just one of four matches.

Virus hits Sunwolves-Brumbies

First it was bushfire smoke, then a mumps outbreak and now the ACT Brumbies' season has taken another unexpected twist with their clash against the Sunwolves relocated from Osaka to the neutral venue of Wollongong, New South Wales, because of the coronavirus. "It's been an interesting year but the players have been very good," admitted the Australia Conference leaders' coach Dan McKellar.

"There's been no whinging or complaining. There's plenty of people who've had to experience a whole lot of things worse." The Brumbies had to relocate their pre-season training from Canberra to Newcastle, north of Sydney, due to bushfires. They then dealt with a mumps outbreak that sidelined several players, with the latest curveball meaning their showdown with the Sunwolves has not only been moved but will be played two days earlier than scheduled on Friday. New Coastal Sharks coach Sean Everitt has enjoyed a fantastic tour of Australia and New Zealand, winning three of four matches, but insists he is not pandering to politicians by regularly fielding up to eight black players in his starting line-up. — AFP

Sports

Indian women take reins in birthplace of modern polo

‘If men can play polo why can’t we do it too?’

IMPHAL: Laishram Thadoi’s face is a picture of concentration as she adjusts her helmet and prepares to play in Manipur, the remote Indian state regarded as the birthplace of modern polo. The 35-year-old, who is soon wielding her mallet and riding a pony at a full gallop, is among a group of women players challenging the rural region’s all-male traditions in the sport. “If men can play polo why can’t we do it too?” Thadoi, a member of the Linthoingambi Kangjei Lup Polo Club said.

“We want female junior players to think like this... We tell them ‘Don’t be scared, you will also play like us.’” Manipur, in the foothills of the Himalayas, has produced some of India’s top athletes including champion boxer Mary Kom. Even so, polo—which resembles horseback field hockey, and whose Manipuri version, “Sagol Kangjei”, is played with riders on indigenous ponies—is usually viewed as a male-only sport in the state.

“It was a men’s game. It was a martial arts form, it was warrior-like,” Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Association president Hawaiabam Deleep Singh said. “It was very brutal and rough-like practicing for a real war.” The game dates back centuries in Manipur, where it first came to the attention of British colonialists who formalized it as polo and spread it around the world. But by the late 1980s, few men were playing it in insurgency-wracked Manipur and the

ponies—sacred in the state, and central to its culture and identity—were dwindling in numbers as their habitat shrank due to urban development.

Fearing their beloved sport and ponies would die out, Singh and others banded together to revive the game by attracting new players. “The natural extension... was to start with women,” Singh said. “We are working to promote women’s polo and the government of Manipur now sponsors a women’s polo tournament every year.”

‘Deep connection’

The involvement of female players was intertwined with the survival of the ponies, which experts feared were on the brink of extinction. The ponies were once worth next to nothing but as more women started playing, demand rose and their value increased. Singh said some of the women have also become experts at caring for the animals, and rescue them from accidents like falling into construction pits and drains.

“Sometimes when we can’t save them they die. It’s very sad, we cry,” said Khundongbam Habe, who with her sister cares for more than 40 ponies. “You wouldn’t believe how much we love the ponies. We live with them from morning till night every day and they are like a part of us. “We have this deep connection with them.” Polo is a rich man’s game in other parts of the world but in Manipur, it is integral to regional traditions



IMPHAL: Thangmeiband Youth Polo Club players line up before their match against Linthoingambi Kangjei Lup polo club during the 15th Women’s State Polo Tournament at the Mapal Kangjeibung (Polo Ground) in Imphal. — AFP

and is embraced by all levels of society.

The women’s involvement flies in the face of the usual expectations in Manipur that they should primarily be caregivers. Thadoi is a mother of two and works as a PE teacher in the state’s sports department, as do the Khundong-

bam sisters. Teammate Okram Ashalucky, 23, who is an accountant, said her father initially did not want her to pick up the sport, fearing she would get hurt. “But still we are working hard and playing with courage and belief that we will play better than men,” she said. — AFP

Olympic swim champ, a rape survivor fights abuse in sport

NEW YORK: Three years after the trauma of being raped by a stranger while jogging outside a university campus, American swimmer Nancy Hogshead-Makar lit up the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles by winning three gold medals and a silver. Today, the 57-year-old lawyer, mother and activist devotes her life towards the fight for gender equality and the battle against sexual abuse in sport. In an interview with AFP ahead of International Women’s Day on March 8, Hogshead-Makar says she remains “unrealistically optimistic” about her work and life in general.

“I guess you have to be in order to try to win in the Olympics and try to address sexual abuse in sports,” Hogshead-Makar said. “They’re pretty audacious goals.” The day before the interview, Hogshead-Makar had been working until the early hours drafting a letter to the US Congress about bipartisan legislation that calls for tougher protections for amateur athletes against abuse by coaches and employees.

Hogshead-Makar’s work ethic mirrors the dedication that formed the cornerstone of her swimming career—from the age of 11, she would spend four hours a day churning the waters of her training pool. “My winning formula was to compete,” Hogshead-Makar said. “That’s how I was successful in life.” After retiring from swimming, the Iowa native channeled her energy into helping others. After becoming a lawyer, she focused on campaigning for gender equality and combating sexual abuse in sport.

‘Profoundly broken’

For decades, Hogshead-Makar did not talk publicly about the

traumatic events that occurred in the autumn of 1981 when she was 19. While out jogging outside the campus of Duke University in North Carolina, she was raped by a stranger. With help and support from loved ones, friends and coaches, she rebuilt her life but kept the attack private.

“I didn’t talk about it for 20 years because I would have started to cry, as I healed from it,” Hogshead-Makar said. Eventually, a friend and mentor, the human rights activist Richard Lapchick, suggested that talking about the attack could help. “He said, ‘You really need to start talking about your own experience,’” Hogshead-Makar said. “And he was right.”

She suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. “I felt profoundly broken. I felt forsaken by God. I was scared all the time,” she said. “I thought that I could overcome it by willing it away.” Hogshead-Makar said she benefited from two things that many sexual assault victims don’t receive. “Number one, everybody around me believed that it happened,” she said. “Number two, people believed in the depth of my emotional harm. Nobody told me, ‘Just get over it.’”

Gender equity

In her efforts to foster change in Olympic sports in the United States, she’s drawing from her experience as an elite swimmer. Hogshead-Makar believes that the nature of competitive swimming fosters equality. “It’s no coincidence that some of the best gender equity advocates come from the sport of swimming because we see equality,” she said. “I trained almost exclusively with guys. I was accustomed to having things be fair. We swam lap-for-lap and we lifted weight-for-weight.”

There have however been cases of questionable behavior. One of Hogshead-Makar’s former coaches, Mitch Ivey, was suspended from the sport for life in 2013 after evidence emerged of improper sexual relationships with multiple swimmers he had coached. “The boundaries are just not well spelled out the way they are for counselors, religious leaders or lawyers or teachers,” says Hogshead-Makar, who has founded the advocacy group Champion Women.— AFP

Rapinoe praises US men in support for equality fight

ORLANDO: Megan Rapinoe thanked the US men’s national team for showing solidarity in their fight for equal pay yesterday, adding she was “very confident” of a positive outcome in the long-running dispute. The US women have been fighting since 2016 for equality with their male counterparts and are seeking backpay totaling nearly \$67 million. On February 12, the union representing the US men’s team issued a statement in support of the women, accusing the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) of engaging in a “false narrative” as the legal battle rumbles on.

A group of 28 players from the US women’s national team has filed a class-action gender discrimination lawsuit against US Soccer with a trial expected to begin in May. Rapinoe, who has been leading the demands for equality, said the US women were grateful for the support from the US men. “It was much appreciated,” Rapinoe told reporters ahead of the USA’s SheBelieves Cup opener.

“(The men) have been a little light on statements before, you need to be educated if you weigh in and it seems like they took time to make the statement they wanted but I have been saying for a long time that we all have to stand together. “They think they deserve more money too and they said that. If they are being underpaid it’s likely we are being underpaid too so it was a nice show of support and I look forward to more solidarity between the two teams.” — AFP

Sports

PSG crush 10-man Lyon to reach French Cup final

Mbappe's treble fires PSG into final

LYON: Kylian Mbappe hit a hat-trick as Paris Saint-Germain cruised into the final of the French Cup with a thumping 5-1 win at Lyon on Wednesday. The World Cup winner took his goal tally in all competitions to 30 during a win that was eased by Fernando Marcal being sent off just before Neymar put the French champions ahead in the 64th minute from the penalty spot.

The defeat Lyon ends a five-match unbeaten run that included an impressive 1-0 win over Juventus in the Champions League and the weekend's triumph over local rivals Saint-Etienne. "It was a solid, serious display full of concentration," said PSG coach Thomas Tuchel. "After the Dortmund match (lost 2-1 in Germany), Mbappe has responded brilliantly. He uses his speed so intelligently ... he is in good form."

Mbappe equalized for the away side with a simple tap-in just three minutes after Martin Terrier had given the raucous home fans hope with a neat 11th-minute opener. The 21-year-old was also key to PSG taking the lead in the 64th minute from the penalty spot. Collecting the ball out on the left wing, he casually saw off two

Lyon defenders before floating over a cross to fellow forward Edinson Cavani, who controlled the ball only for Marcal to then handle before the Uruguay striker could let his shot go.

Neymar slotted home the subsequent spot-kick after confirmation of the handball by VAR, while Marcal had to leave the field after being handed his second red card. "I prefer to say nothing about the penalty," said Lyon boss Rudi Garcia, who side face PSG in the League Cup final next month. "When you are 10 against 11 playing such a strong team it's no longer a contest."

Mbappe made sure of the Parisian's visit to the Stade de France next month with a superb solo effort with 20 minutes left, embarrassing Bruno Guimaraes and Marcelo before calmly slotting past Anthony Lopes. Pablo Sarabia added a fourth with a stinging low strike 11 minutes later, and Mbappe completed his hat-trick in stoppage time, tapping home Neymar's cross after good work on the left from the world's most expensive footballer. Saint-Etienne and Rennes met in the second semi-final yesterday.—AFP



RHONE: Paris Saint-Germain's Spanish midfielder Pablo Sarabia (center) is congratulated by Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (left) and Paris Saint-Germain's Italian midfielder Marco Verratti after scoring a goal during the French Cup semi-final football match between Olympique Lyonnais (OL) and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) on March 4, 2020.—AFP

Italy orders all sports events to be played without fans

ROME: Italy has ordered all major sporting events throughout the country, including top-flight Serie A soccer games, to be played without fans for one month in a bid to curb Europe's worst coronavirus outbreak. The move, announced in a government decree, will also affect the Six Nations rugby international between Italy and England, due to be played in Rome on March 14, and the Champions League soccer match between Juventus and Olympique Lyonnais on March 17.

All schools and universities were closed on Wednesday to try to slow the spread of the coronavirus in Italy where there have been more than 3,000 cases and the death toll has reached 107. The ban on the public watching sports events, which had already been in force in three regions in the north but has now been extended nationwide, will last until April 3 at the earliest.

The decree said that "sports events and competitions of any order and discipline, carried out in any place, both public and private, are suspended" but could go ahead if there were no spectators. It added that "sports associations and clubs, through their own medical staff, are required to carry out appropriate checks to limit the risk of spreading (the coronavirus) among athletes, technicians, managers and all accompanying

persons participating." Until now, Serie A has preferred to call off games in the affected regions rather than play them in empty stadiums and 10 matches have been postponed as well as this week's two Coppa Italia semi-final ties. However, after a meeting of club and Serie A representatives earlier on Wednesday, Inter Milan chief executive Giuseppe Marotta said that playing without fans could be the only way of finishing the Serie A season.

"Playing behind closed doors could be the only way to complete the championship in the light of the emergency and the restrictions that the government is rightly adopting," he said as he left the meeting. "The aim is to finish the championship as normally as possible, without creating a competitive imbalance, but as you can see the scenario is constantly changing." Marotta suggested that the six matches which had been postponed last week - including the heavyweight Juventus v Inter clash - could be rescheduled for the coming weekend.

Six Nations organizers have postponed the match between Ireland and Italy in Dublin on March 7 but said on Monday that all other games would go ahead, including Italy's game against England in Rome, which was not affected by the original ban in the northern regions. The organizers and the Italian rugby federation could not immediately be reached for comment. UEFA has said it is in constant contact with local authorities and decisions over whether games should be played behind closed doors, or postponed, would be taken at the last minute.—Reuters

Real Sociedad into first Copa del Rey final in 32 years

MADRID: Real Sociedad ended the Copa del Rey hopes of second division Mirandes on Wednesday with a 1-0 win which moved them into the final for the first time in 32 years. Sociedad had already won the first leg 2-1 and cemented their spot in the decider when striker Mikel Oyarzabal scored a 41st-minute penalty after a handball in the area by a Mirandes player. The

April 18 final in Seville could be an all-Basque affair with Athletic Bilbao defending a 1-0 lead against fellow La Liga mid-table side Granada in their semi-final second leg on Thursday.

Mirandes were attempting to become the first second division club to reach the final since 1980. Real Sociedad, who were Copa del Rey winners in 1909 and 1987 and knocked out Real Madrid 4-3 in this season's quarter-finals, will be playing in their first final since 1988 when they lost 1-0 to Barcelona. With 23 titles, Athletic Bilbao are second on the all-time list of Cup winners behind Barcelona who have triumphed 30 times.—AFP

Ronaldinho accused of using fake passport to enter Paraguay

ASUNCION: Former Brazilian football star Ronaldinho and his brother have been detained in Paraguay after allegedly using fake passports to enter the South American country, authorities said Wednesday. "Ronaldinho will be heard at eight in the morning on Thursday at the prosecutor's office," Interior Minister

Euclides Acevedo told reporters.

Paraguayan police raided the hotel in Asuncion where the 2005 Ballon d'Or winner was staying during a trip to promote a book and found the false documents, the minister said. "We are also investigating the responsibility of the authorities who allowed them to enter the country with falsified documents," Acevedo said.

Ronaldinho and his brother had their Brazilian passports withdrawn in November 2018 after failing to pay a \$2.3 million fine for environmental damage incurred during the building of property in Rio Grande do Sul, in southern Brazil.—AFP

Sports

Manchester City, Leicester into FA Cup quarter-finals

Dier jumps into stands as Tottenham crash out of FA Cup

LONDON: Manchester City won a 20th consecutive domestic cup tie to move into the quarter-finals of the FA Cup with a 1-0 win at Sheffield Wednesday as Tottenham crashed out on penalties to Norwich on Wednesday. Sergio Aguero scored the only goal for the holders eight minutes into the second half as Wednesday goalkeeper Joe Wildsmith failed to get a strong enough hand to the Argentine's low strike. A solitary goal was scant reward for the dominance of Pep Guardiola's men as the Catalan was rewarded for naming a strong line-up against the Championship side.

Riyad Mahrez and Gabriel Jesus missed glorious first half chances, while Nicolas Otamendi and Benjamin Mendy hit the woodwork before Aguero finally made the breakthrough. Despite failing to add to their tally, City maintained hopes of a cup treble after lifting a third consecutive League Cup on Sunday and beating Real Madrid 2-1 in the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie. "He is a good manager and crazy," said Aguero of Guardiola's relentless demand to keep winning.

City will travel to Newcastle in the quarter-finals. Norwich will host Derby or Manchester United in their first quarter-final since 1992 after seeing off Spurs 3-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw. A bad night for Tottenham, who have now lost their last four games in all competitions, was compounded when midfielder Eric Dier climbed into the stands to confront supporters who had allegedly insulted members of his family.

Rangers' defeat to Hamilton allows Celtic to extend lead

GLASGOW: Steven Gerrard's Rangers suffered a dreadful 1-0 defeat at home to relegation-threatened Hamilton as Celtic snatched a late 2-2 draw at Livingston to move 13 points clear at the top of the Scottish Premiership. Already reeling from Saturday's Scottish Cup defeat to Hearts that forced Gerrard to consider his future, Rangers slipped up for the third time in four league games as David Moyo's winner moved the Accies off the bottom of the table.

Moyo snatched the only goal of the game when he seized on hesitation in the home defense to prod home after Marios Ogm-poe had powered an initial header off the crossbar. "We're playing bottom of the league and we've just lost to bottom of the league so I think you know how I'm feeling," Gerrard told Rangers TV. "I didn't think I could feel any worse than Hearts, but I do right now. There was an opportunity tonight. Celtic have blinked with one eye but we've blinked with two which is extremely disappointing."

Rangers' latest reverse shifted attention from a difficult night for Celtic who needed

"I think Eric did what we as professionals cannot do but when someone insults you and your family is involved, especially your younger brother," said Spurs boss Jose Mourinho. "This person insulted Eric, the younger brother was not happy with the situation and Eric was not happy. But we as professionals cannot do what he did." Jan Vertonghen headed Tottenham into an early lead, but Mourinho's decision to hand 36-year-old goalkeeper Michel Vorm his first appearance of the season backfired.

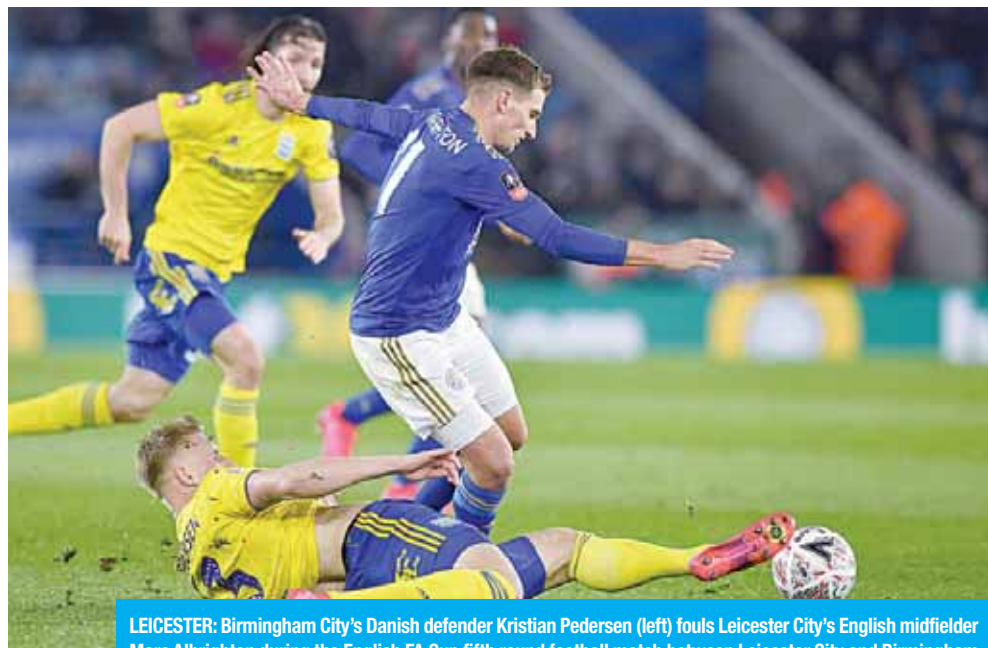
The Dutchman spilled a long-range effort from Kenny McLean and Josip Drmic bundled home the rebound to level. Both sides then tired badly in extra-time, but neither could find a winner and saves from Tim Krul to deny Troy Parrott and Gedson Fernandes allied to Erik Lamela's wild attempt that flew over the bar saw another shot at a trophy for Spurs slip by. Mourinho again blamed the absence of key personnel such as Harry Kane and Son Heung-min to injury for defeat.

"Some of my players were really in trouble and they made an incredible effort to try," said Mourinho. "I don't have one single negative feeling towards my players. I can cope with negative moments in football, but I feel really sorry for my players." Leicester also booked their place in the last eight with a much-needed 1-0 win over Birmingham thanks to Ricardo Pereira's late header. The Foxes have won just one of their last seven Premier League games to stall their charge towards the Champions

a stoppage-time strike from substitute Tom Rogic to salvage a point. The Scottish champions looked set to continue a run of 11 straight wins in domestic football when Calum McGregor opened the scoring on 16 minutes. However, the Tony Macaroni is the only away ground Celtic have lost in the league this season and lightning nearly struck twice after a 2-0 defeat for Neil Lennon's men in October.

Jon Guthrie capitalized on an error from Celtic goalkeeper Fraser Forster before Scott Robinson put Livie in front in the first minute of the second half. The visitors dominated the play, but were lacking in ideas for an equalizer until an inspired run and cross from Odsonne Edouard teed up Rogic to level. "I'm delighted with the performance and really annoyed with the two goals we gave away apart," Lennon told BT Sport.

"Individual mistakes for the goals from players who have been brilliant for me this season. I'm delighted with the relentlessness of the team to never give up." Allan Campbell scored twice as Motherwell hit back from behind to thrash Ross County 4-1 to earn their first win in nine matches and open up a three-point lead in third place. Fourth-placed Aberdeen battled back from two goals down to claim an entertaining 2-2 draw with Kilmarnock at Rugby Park. And a 0-0 draw with St Johnstone edged St Mirren two points clear of the bottom two. —AFP



LEICESTER: Birmingham City's Danish defender Kristian Pedersen (left) fouls Leicester City's English midfielder Marc Albrighton during the English FA Cup fifth round football match between Leicester City and Birmingham City at King Power Stadium on March 4, 2020. —AFP

League next season.

Brendan Rodgers' men were again without Jamie Vardy through injury and needed right-back Ricardo to get the only goal when he headed home Marc Albrighton's cross eight minutes from time. "I thought it was just a matter of

time," said Rodgers, whose side will host Chelsea in the quarter-finals. "In the second half we dominated - lots of quick combos and the goal was coming. It was an excellent display." Sheffield United will host Arsenal in the other quarter-final tie. —AFP

Rooney urges Manchester United's fans to be patient

LONDON: Wayne Rooney has urged Manchester United fans to be patient, saying it could take "two or three years" before they return to the top of the game. Rooney, United's record scorer with 253 goals, is set to face his old club in the FA Cup fifth round when the Red Devils travel to Derby yesterday. He spent 13 years at Old Trafford, during which he won every domestic honour along with the Champions League and the Europa League.

Rooney, 34, returned to boyhood club Everton in 2017 before embarking on a spell with Major League Soccer outfit DC United. He played his first game for Derby as a player-coach in January. The former England captain feels United are moving in the right direction under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer but need time before they challenge for major honors.

"It is going to take another two or

three years, I believe," Rooney told the British press. "The important thing is for them to try and get into the Champions League this year. "It is really tight at the minute. I think that will help them a lot if they can do that-but it is going to take time." Rooney added: "The United fans need to be a bit patient with what's going on and let these players try and prove themselves. "They need to bring some players in, they need to also get rid of some players, and within two or three years they have to be challenging again."

Derby, managed by former Dutch international midfielder Phillip Cocu, are 13th in the second-tier Championship and while Rooney knows the Rams are underdogs, he believes they can surprise his old club. While enjoying his current role as Derby's playmaker from a deeper midfield position, Rooney has his eye on a long-term future in the dugout. "I think it's a shame when you see great players walking away and not really having a go at management or coaching," he said. "I'm a player first and foremost and then a coach, to try and learn to help me in the long run." —AFP



LAUSANNE: A cameraman films the Olympic Rings at the International Olympic Committee (IOC) headquarters in Lausanne. — AFP

How coronavirus hits global sport

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